

For a better Broadstairs



JUNE 2024

THE BROADSTAIRS SOCIETY WAS FORMED IN 1964 to do everything possible to keep the look and feel of the Broadstairs we know and love. Join us and help keep that heritage intact for generations to come.

DID YOU KNOW?

The BROADSTAIRS SOCIETY present a Civic Award each year to projects that have improved the appearance of Broadstairs and St.Peter's. The scope is intended to cover new buildings, restoration and conversions, but not re-decoration alone. And community projects that reflect a broader understanding of the heritage elements of our town.

This year the proud recipient was Mitch Swift for restoration of The Bottleneck. Tremendous care was taken during the project to restore original flint walls and create an outside space by sourcing authentic heritage materials rather than anything modern. The inside was also fully restored reusing the wood from the original shelving and repairing the original planked ceiling. So, nothing is new, in the best sense of the word!

Mitch has also taken over the previously titled 'The 39 Steps' now called 'Sonder' and he has started to take the same heritage-based approach. He was delighted to receive the award and we will include pics of it in-situ in the next newsletter.



HOT POTATO PLANNING

Article by Peter Lorenzo

Buckmaster House

I think most people who live or visit Broadstairs will know of Buckmaster House

Buckmaster House was built, furnished and endowed by Mrs. Jane Buckmaster in memory of her husband, Thomas Buckmaster, of Bruntsfield House, Grove Road, Brixton. It was built as a convalescent home for ladies of the Protestant faith without sufficient means to enable them to pay for holidays at the seaside.

Thomas and William Buckmaster were successful tailors in Saville Row. They became substantial property owners with two houses in Saville Row, a large house in Piccadilly and property in Brixton.

Thomas died in 1891 and the planning and design of the house was put in hand in 1893. The land was purchased in 1894 and the architect was H.B. Langham of Broadstairs and the builder, Wise of Deal.

Broadstairs was probably chosen because a nephew and two nieces of her late husband lived in Thanet – William Buckmaster's children (the Reverend John North Buckmaster, Maria and Marion. Maria's husband (the Reverend Alfred Whitehead) joined the Management Committee, to oversee the running of the Home.

The Ward Lock guide published around 1905 referred to the town as, "our watering place," and quoted Dickens describing it in 1894 as, "a good sea, fresh breezes, fine sands and pleasant walks. It is one of the freshest and purest little places in the world." The guide went on to say that the Buckmaster Memorial Home building, "is one of the most handsome in the town."

The original and many of the later Trustees were members of the Buckmaster or Cheyne families, mainly through William's line through his son, the Reverend John North Buckmaster, who was born in 1837, educated at Rugby and Oxford, ordained in 1863, married Catherine Tomson (of the Kentish Brewery firm of Tomson and Wotton) in 1872 and died in 1910.

John had two sons – William and Herbert. William was an original Trustee and his brother, Herbert, founded Buck's Club in London after World War 1 and ran it for 50 years. Buck's Fizz was first served at the Club. Herbert married Gladys (later Dame Gladys) Cooper and their daughter, Joan North Buckmaster, married the actor the late Robert Morley.

The Reverend John North Buckmaster's nephew Walter, who captained England at Polo and was for many years the Master of Warwickshire Foxhounds, founded the stockbroking firm of Buckmaster and Moore.

The last Buckmaster to serve as a Trustee was Mrs Joan Morley who retired after 47 years. The home was originally designed with twelve bedrooms upstairs built along three corridors leading off the main landing. Smaller rooms for domestic staff were at the back of the house. During the period 1982 – 1994 the home was enlarged: long term residence was given priority over short-stay. In 1995 there were 26 single bedrooms and only one or two were kept for holiday guests. Ronald C. McAlister and Molly G. Proctor wrote a history of the Home from 1895 to 1995

In 1988 the Abbeyfield Society took over the management of the House. Abbeyfield is a charity for older people providing housing across the UK and internationally and owns over 400 houses in seven countries.

However, as some of you may know the Society decided to sell the property and the last residents left on 26th March 2024.

HOT POTATO PLANNING cont'd

The Broadstairs Society suggested and the Town Council agreed that the property should be locally listed and is contained in the Town's Neighbourhood Plan as such, and there are hopes that, despite an original rejection, it will be Grade II Listed which would mean the property would be less liable to be demolished and flats built in its place.

Let's hope the appeal against the original decision is successful. In the meantime, the property will be on the market soon at around £3-4million. Wilton Morley, a son of the late Robert Morley, visited from his home in Tampa Florida when he learned of the closure and sale. He was, understandably, upset about the sale as was his sister - they had not been told about it by the Abbeyfield Society. Common courtesy should have been observed. He managed to retrieve the portraits of members of the Buckmaster family that used to hang in the hall and a table donated to the House by the late Mrs. Joan Buckmaster.



BEST OF BROADSTAIRS

JUNE 27 THANET COASTAL PROJECT SEAWEED AND THEIR SECRETS -BOTANY BAY

JUNE 29 ST PETERS CHURCH SUMMER FETE 10AM - 2PM

JULY 6 READING STREET VILLAGE OPEN GARDENS 10AM -4PM

JULY 24 75TH ANNIVERSARY - ARRIVAL OF THE DANISH HUGIN SHIP, PIERREMONT HALL 12NOON - 4PM

JULY 27 AFRO LATINO FIESTA AT THE BANDSTAND 1-5PM

AUGUST 9-16 BROADSTAIRS FOLK WEEK



@ THE SARAH THORNE



BROADSTAIRS, A Trip Down Memory Lane

(Article by Peter Such)

A POTTED HISTORY OF THE BROADSTAIRS SOCIETY

The Society was founded in the Autumn of 1964 by three people who had a great fondness for Broadstairs and St. Peter's.

The main stay of the Society was a lady by the name of Joyce Smith, a lifelong resident of the town who was involved in a number of community ventures amongst which was the annual Dickens Festival and the Dickens Fellowship. She was once described by the late Cedric Charles Dickens (24/9/1916 - 11/2/2006), who was the great-grandson of Charles Dickens, as 'the grand old lady of Broadstairs'. Joyce died in 2008 at the age of 84 at her home in Lancaster House, Serene Place, Broadstairs where she had lived since 1953. On the wall of Lancaster House there is a grey plaque in memory of Joyce bearing the inscription "She did so much for the town".

Working closely with Joyce were the other two founders and these were Geoffrey Sedgwick - who was Warden and Principal of Hilderstone College, Broadstairs from 1957 to 1981. In the grounds of Hilderstone it is possible to see a commemorative grey slate plinth to the gentleman. The final founder was Brian Gilham who had strong connections, for over 70 years, with the Thanet Wanderers.

Sixty years on one can only imagine what actually drove these three people to set up the society. Possibly a hint was given in the Society's motto which was "**We are but custodians of our heritage. It is our duty to protect and preserve our inheritance so that it may be said by future generations that we were worthy trustees**".

Over the years the Society, which is completely a voluntary community-based group, has continued to do all it can to keep faithful to this motto. There are now further active community groups within the town of Broadstairs and St. Peter's, a number of which fall under the umbrella of the Town Team, who do so much in so many ways in protecting and preserving this beautiful town.

As this is a particularly special year for the Society a 60th year cake marked the occasion!!



GET INVOLVED

Our next meeting is 10 September Pierremont Hall, Broadstairs @ 7.30pm, all are welcome, for details on speakers etc see our website.



The Broadstairs Society

www.thebroadstairsociety.org.uk