

# DID YOU KNOW...? Information sheet

As part of the Bridlington Quay Townscape Heritage project, a series of plaques that highlight places of special interest are to be installed, and we will like you to vote for your **four** favourites from the shortlist below:

These are intended to complement the Maritime Trail boards and markers and the plaque to the Victoria Rooms on Garrison Square, as well as the blue plaques in the Old Town.

The plaques, which will be funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, aim to commemorate a person, place or incident relating to Bridlington.

The **four** choices that receive the most votes will be selected for a plaque.

Alternatively, please feel free to take a copy of the information sheet away with you, and vote online at:

[www.bridlingtonheritage.com](http://www.bridlingtonheritage.com)

You will find links to the vote and an electronic copy of this sheet on the homepage!

## I. Charlotte Bronte stayed here - Garrison Street

The famous author visited the Yorkshire Coast on several occasions during her lifetime, and it is widely recognised that her first holiday was to Bridlington, or Burlington as it was then known as in 1839.

It was originally planned for Charlotte, and her friend Ellen, who arranged this holiday, to stay in a farmhouse outside of Bridlington. This was not considered acceptable however, as it was not deemed suitable for respectable ladies to take lodgings.

The two of them met in Leeds and made their way to Easton House Farm roughly two miles outside of Bridlington. Whilst enjoying her stay, Charlotte was desperate to stay next to the North Sea, which she had never seen before. After a couple of days on the farmstead, the two of them made their way to Bridlington via the Gypsy Race to the sea. At this point, Charlotte was “overpowered, and could not speak until she had shed some tears. It is believed that they stayed at a lodging house which is where number 5 Garrison Street now stands.



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## 2. The Waterloo Pierotts, 1839-1914 – Garrison Street

The Waterloo Pierotts were probably the first such troupe to entertain visitors in the North of England, and certainly in Bridlington. Hugely popular with visitors from 1893, they were often found performing in front of hundreds of people, usually on the north side of the harbour. It is believed the name originates from the groups links to the Waterloo Café, where they kept their costumes and got dressed for their shows.

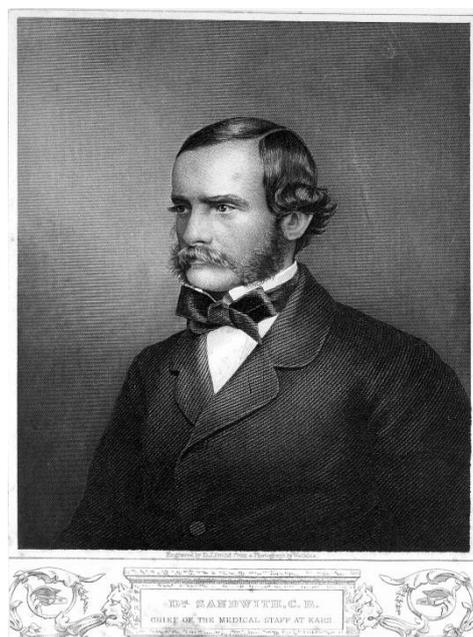


## 3. Humphry Sandwith - Prince Street

Sandwith, born in Bridlington, was a surgeon who then became an Army Physician, and was also known as a writer and activist. He served in the Crimean War as a surgeon. He was also appointed as inspector general of hospitals by the Turkish army, placing him at the head of the medical staff.

During the Siege of Kars, which was the last major operation of the Crimean War, Sandwith treated both Turkish and Russian soldiers, and on many accounts, had to rely on horseflesh broth for his patients!

Sandwith was also appointed as colonial secretary in Mauritius, and later had interests in the Balkans, where he became involved in Serbian politics and worked for the relief of the wounded and refugees of the Serbian-Ottoman War, later returning to England in 1877 where he lectured and spoke on behalf of the Serbian refugees. He took back financial aid in March, but later fell ill and returned home. He was awarded the Cross of Takovo – a Serbian state order.



It is understood that his father (Humphry Sandwith) had a medical practice on Prince Street.

#### 4. Thomas Hopper Alderson - Prince Street



Alderson was a British Air Rad Precautions (ARP) warden in Bridlington, and the first person to be directly awarded the George Cross shortly after its creation in 1940. On three occasions in August 1940, after attacks from the Luftwaffe on Prince Street and Cliff Street during World War II, Alderson led rescue teams and entered dangerous and damaged buildings to rescue several trapped civilians in this area, including six civilians in one rescue mission alone. It is reported that during a radio interview, he insisted that his award was for all the rescued parties in Bridlington.

Alderson then joined the East Riding of Yorkshire Council as an highways surveyor in 1946, and then later joined the new Civil Defence Corps, this time to protect the civilian population from nuclear warfare.

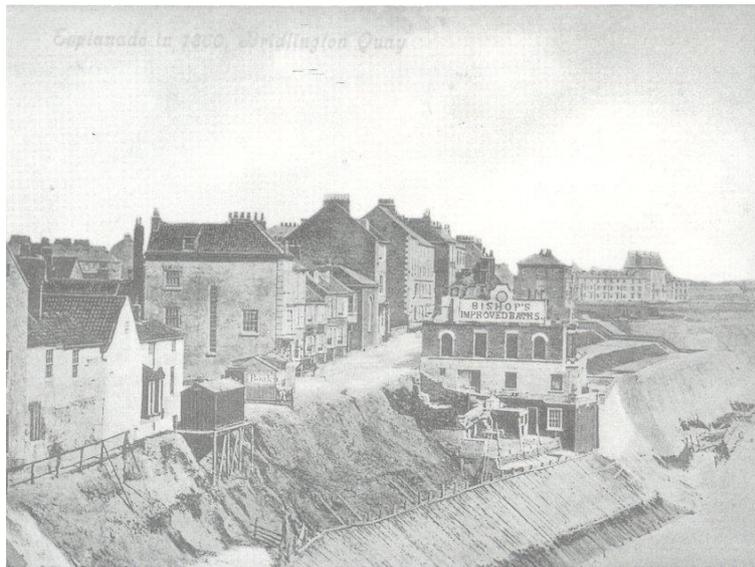
His George Cross is on display at the Imperial War Museum, alongside a medal from the RSPCA, awarded later in the war for rescuing two horses from a burning stable.

#### 5. Joseph Earnshaw G.W.Travis - The Crescent/Marlborough Terrace

Earnshaw and Travis were architects and builders from Sheffield, who travelled across to Bridlington. They are the architects behind many of the neo-classical late Georgian style terraces in the Quay Area which shaped much of the development in this area, including those on The Crescent and Marlborough Terrace. Designed in 1870, the terraces form some of the most striking and impressive buildings within the seafront, and Bridlington Quay Conservation Areas, and the town as a whole.



## 6. Bishop's Improved Baths – Garrison Street



The Bishop's Improved Baths were situated where the Rock 'n Candy store on Garrison Street currently stands. Erected in 1844, the Baths were reported to have, what were considered at the time, modern improvements, such as separate suites for men and women. The baths remained until about 1860 when they were removed during the construction of the new sea wall parade.

## 7. William Foster Brigham – 18 Prince Street

Brigham - a famous photographer, who in his day, was regarded to be one of the top six portrait photographers in the world. He had a studio called "Snaps" at 18 Prince Street, and other shops at 15 Promenade and in Middlesbrough. The "Snaps" studio opened in 1919, with his business employing eight photographers with an overnight film processing service. Brigham also produced a vast array of postcards depicting the busy seafront in Bridlington,



## 8. Captain George Symons (VC) – Garrison Square

Symons served as a sergeant in the Royal Regiment of Artillery in the British Army during the Crimean War. He was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal, and the Victoria Cross (VC) – the highest and most prestigious award of the British honours system, and one which is awarded for valour in the presence of the enemy.

Symons was awarded the VC for an act of bravery in 1855 at Sebastopol, where he volunteered to unmask the embrasures of a five gun battery under fire, which the enemy commenced immediately on the opening of the first embrasure, and increased on the unmasking of each one. Symons was wounded severely when a shell from the enemy burst.



Born in Cornwall, Symons retired to Yorkshire, and lived at Cliff Terrace (now Garrison Square), Bridlington. He died in 1871, aged 45, and was buried in the churchyard of Bridlington Priory.

## 9. Britannia Court - Prince Street



Bridlington was a target of the Luftwaffe during World War II, and was the victim of the German's "tip and run" style of bombing, with this being the site of one of the worst instances of this tactic.

At 3:45pm on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1940, a single bomb dropped without warning and destroyed the right side of the Britannia Hotel. A hotel maid and a soldier were killed in the raid, with a number of people trapped, but later rescued unhurt. The Woolworths store across the road was completely destroyed in the same raid.

## 10. Methodist Chapels - Chapel Street

There were two Methodist Chapels that gave the street its name. Both were subsequently demolished and replaced with Iceland and retail units at The Promenades Shopping Centre.



## 11. Bridlington's HorseBus service – Bridlington Quay (Prince Street)



Williamson's horse-drawn bus services ran between Prince Street and the Old Town and the Priory Church. Services continued to run between the Old Town to the Quay, and other areas in the town. The driver would blow a bugle to signal the service was about to run.

## 12. Bridlington's Original beach Boys – the origin of surfing in the UK

Bridlington is recognised as the home of British surfing (no, really!). A letter dating back to 1890 shows Bridlington is the place where the sport was first reported in the UK. The letter, written to the Hawaiian consul by the Hawaiian Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole Piikoi, documents how he went surfing with his brother, Prince David Kahalepouli Kawanaakoa Piikoi in Bridlington. The



pair, who were on a break from their studies at schools and colleges across Britain, are also thought to have had their surfboards made from local timber. There is a commemoration on the promenade facing out on to North Beach.



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### 13. Christopher 'Kit' Brown – Harbour Road

Recognised as a hero of Bridlington, and living on Harbour Road, Brown was part of the Lifeboat crew during the notorious Great Gale of 1871, during which six lifeboatmen lost their lives.

Another great storm hit in November 1893, and after being alerted by his son, Fred, Kit readied the lifeboat named Swiftsure. He and the crew made their way out to sea, with Swiftsure fighting her way through the storm and nearing a distressed vessel known as Victoria.

After receiving no response to their first shouts, two members of the crew climbed aboard to find a crew who could not believe they had been rescued. The crew quickly led the men to Swiftsure, unaware that the cook had been left behind. Bravely, they went back to rescue the unconscious chef. Shortly after the rescue, Victoria plunged beneath the waves. Despite the ever increasing strength of the storm, Kit brought Swiftsure towards the harbour mouth, steering the boat through the waves and crashing over the sandbank which protected the entrance and brought them all to safety. Kit Brown is quoted as saying: "If I'd known it was that bad I might not have gone. The hand of God was surely on the tiller last night."

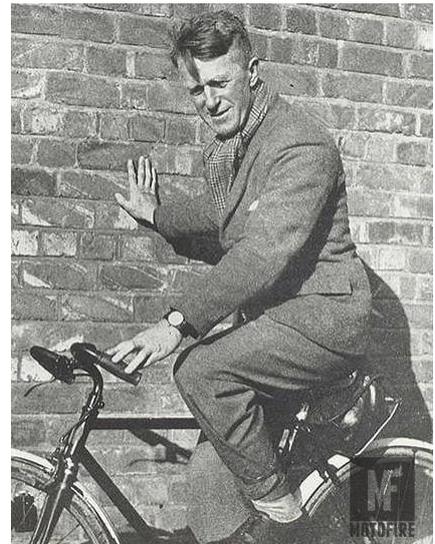


A further storm hit on the evening of Friday 25 March, 1898. Two lifeboats, the RNLI's William and John Francis, and the fishermen's Seagull, were launched to go to the assistance of a boat in danger. The seagull was launched against the advice of the coxwain, by a group of young fishermen. Kit was informed about the potential calamity by a friend. The Seagull quickly encountered difficulty and was smashed into the seawall. The crew were thrown overboard into the sea, and Kit ran down the steps to save his nephew. Kit was then swept into the sea by a big wave, but managed to cling on to the Seagull. Several attempts were made with rope to pull Kit to safety, but unfortunately he could not grip the rope and was washed out to sea where he drowned.



#### **14. Lawrence of Arabia (Thomas Edward Lawrence) – Bridlington Harbour**

Lawrence was a British archaeologist, army officer, diplomat, and writer. He was renowned for his role in the Arab Revolt and the Sinai and Palestine Campaign against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. While he will always be associated with the deserts of the Middle East, Lawrence also spent time in Yorkshire, and Bridlington. After joining the RAF in 1922, Lawrence was posted to the RAF Bridlington Marine Detachment Unit in 1932 and returned to the town between November 1934 and February 1935.



During his final stint in Bridlington, Lawrence stayed at the Ozone Hotel (now the Royal Yorkshire Yacht Club) at the convergence of Windsor Crescent and West Street.

Preferring the hustle and bustle of Summer, Lawrence would often ride his motorbike around Yorkshire, visiting York, Hull, Beverley, Goole and Skipsea amongst others during the quieter periods.

Lawrence had his final known photograph taken as he leant against the harbour wall the day before his departure from Bridlington. Lawrence was fatally injured in a motorbike accident after swerving to avoid two young boys on their bicycles. Lawrence lost control of his motorbike and was thrown over the handlebars. He passed away on 19 May 1935 – six days after the accident. Winston Churchill was one of the bearers at his funeral.

### **Want to know more about the above, or the history of Bridlington?**

**Then please make sure you visit the Bridlington Local Studies Library on King Street where there is an abundance of books and other resources which are full of interesting (and in some cases no doubt surprising) information about Bridlington and the wider area. It's definitely worth a look, and the friendly and helpful staff will be more than happy to assist you!**

**For more information on the National Lottery Heritage Fund, please visit:**

[www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk)

**And for more information on the Bridlington Townscape Heritage Scheme and information on the history of Bridlington, please visit:**

[www.bridlingtonheritage.com](http://www.bridlingtonheritage.com)