

BLYTHE COURT

The block of flats built on the site of the Ritz/Classic cinema was named Blythe Court, in honour of the last manager of the Classic, Don Blythe.



Ritz Cinema:

June 12, 1937: The Ritz Cinema opened on the corner of Prospect Road and East Street. This Art Deco-style building was part of the Union Cinemas chain and featured George Formby starring in "Keep Your Seats Please." It seated 858 people, featured air conditioning, and had an exterior constructed of red brick with a plain façade.



October 1937: The cinema was taken over by Associated British Cinemas (ABC).

March 17, 1953: An independent operator assumed control from ABC.

1965: The Ritz closed for the first time and was transformed into a bingo hall under the management of Classic Cinemas.

April 27, 1971: After declining attendance led to the building's conversion, a small cinema with 275 seats (retained in the divided circle) was renamed the Vogue Cinema and reopened.

November 15, 1973: Mecca Ltd. took over the operation of the bingo section and managed the cinema as the Mecca Cinema.

1980: Classic Cinemas regained control and rebranded the venue as Classic Cinema.

August 7, 1984: The cinema closed for the final time after screening Harrison Ford in "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom."

Post-1984: The building was demolished to make way for the Blythe Court apartment complex.



Photographed before demolition in the mid-1980's. Courtesy Richard Jones

Donald Roland Blythe born 2/08/1935 Cheriton Died
1/1/1987 Ashford



Tributes to Don Blythe

Tributes have been pouring in following the death of Folkestone councillor Don Blythe, who passed away on New Year's Day from a heart attack. He had been hospitalized two weeks earlier due to complications from diabetes and a hiatus hernia, suffering a heart attack on Christmas Day before being moved to an open ward.

His funeral will take place on Monday at All Souls' Church in Cheriton at 10:45 AM. Aged 51, Mr. Blythe was a respected figure in the Shepway community, having joined the Liberal Party in 1979 and represented the Morehall Ward for seven years. Councillor Arthur Egan expressed his shock: "He seemed well on the way to recovery... His death has come as a great shock." Mr. Blythe is survived by three brothers residing in Glasgow, Hawkinge, and Australia.

Mayor Councillor Kelland Bowden reflected: "Don was very colorful in debate. His death is a tremendous loss."

Born in Cheriton, Mr. Blythe was educated locally and served in the Royal Navy before managing the Ritz cinema and later Pluto's Amusement Arcade. He was actively involved in many community organizations, including the Folkestone and Hythe Operatic and Dramatic Society and the Cheriton Royal British Legion.

Friend Chris Capon remembered him as well-known and admired. John Macdonald QC highlighted his significant role in the Liberal revival in Folkestone, noting his enthusiasm and tireless campaigning for the Alliance.

*Newspaper about Don Blythe's death.
Friday 9th January 1987*



Blythe Court is a highly regarded development of retirement apartments built in the late 1980s for residents aged 55 and over. It offers secure, independent living with a range of communal facilities.

Key Features and Amenities

Blythe Court is exclusively for residents aged 55 and over (with a provision for couples where one is over 60 and the other over 55). The development has an onsite House Manager and a 24-hour emergency Careline system accessible from all rooms. Apartments typically feature one or two bedrooms, a sitting/dining room, a fitted kitchen, and a shower room.

Residents can utilise various communal amenities, including a lounge and conservatory, a laundry room, a guest suite, a hairdressing salon, and storage for mobility scooters. Parking is available in a communal area. The location on Prospect Road is central and convenient for local amenities and transport.

Residents often organise social activities like bingo and coffee mornings. Pets may be allowed with permission.



Before the development of Blythe Court and cinema, there seems to have been no significant development on the plot of land area. "The Last Days of Hythe Harbour" by Maurice Young and Janine Umbers features a map that includes part of that area referred to as Knights Innings, dating back to 1555.

Tithe Apportionment for Hythe, St Leonard's 1841



Plot: 110
Landowner: Robert Tassell
Occupier: Thomas Pilcher
Pasture

Lloyd George Domesday

Between 1910 and 1915, the Valuation Office Survey—popularly known as the "Lloyd George Domesday"—recorded a significant plot of land in Hythe. Located at the prominent corner of Prospect Road and East Street, the site was documented under Reference No. 1997 and Map No. TH/ISE/U.



The land, spanning approximately half an acre (1 rood and 30 perches), was held by Bertha Munk Burden, who served as both the owner and occupier. She resided nearby at East Bridge Lodge on East Street.

During the inspection, the surveyor noted the site's high potential, describing it as being in a "particularly good position." Despite its suitability for construction, the records indicate the land remained undeveloped solely due to the owner's objection. While the surrounding area of Hythe saw growth, Bertha Munk Burden's refusal to develop ensured this corner plot remained open land until 1930's.

Summary of Auction Notice

This notice advertises an auction sale on Friday,
January 29, 1932,
at 3 p.m. at The Town Hall, Hythe.

Properties For Sale

The sale includes valuable Freehold Properties
in Hythe, offered in five lots:

Lot 1: "Eastbridge House"

Lot 2: "Eastbridge Lodge"

**Lot 3: Eastbridge Meadow (an important corner
building site)**

Lots 4 & 5: Nos. 3 to 11 (odd) East Street

The properties occupy an imposing position at
the East End of the High Street, with valuable
frontage and public services laid on. Vacant
possession is available for "Eastbridge House."

Parties Involved

Sellers (Under Instructions from): The Great
Stoke Estates, Ltd.

Auctioneer: Mr. Alfred J. Burrows
(amalgamated with Knight, Frank & Rutley)

Solicitors: Messrs. Seagrove, Woods and
Mitchell

Aerial view of Prospect Road and East Street 1929
(Open land on the site of Blythe Ct and Ritz cinema)

