

Lorna Bomford

29th December 1883 – 25th February 1962

— Alan Lee —

The new, and largest local development in the town, is the £12.5m redevelopment of the former brownfield site at Harold Street. It provides sixty-five new homes with a mix of tenures, including social housing for affordable rent, shared ownership, and private sale.

The Dover District Council's social housing element comprises eighteen two-bedroom apartments, and six one-bedroom apartments in a three-storey building on Harold Street. The properties will be occupied by local people on the Council's housing waiting list.

In honour of one of the now largely forgotten heroines of Dover's Woman's Suffrage, Lorna Bomford, this element of the development has been named Bomford Place.



Bomford Place, Dover, 2021

Born on 29th December 1883 she was the daughter of Sir Gerald Bomford and Mary Florence Eteson. When in England they lived at Hillesdon, 14 Godwyne Road. Lorna was baptized in India on 23rd March 1884.

In later years Lorna lived at Milestone House, Temple Ewell, Dover, Kent, England.

On Thursday 22nd April 1909 the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, Dover Branch (NUWSS), held a public meeting at Dover's Maison Dieu, Town Hall. Lorna was elected as Honorary Treasurer.

In 1909 Lorna was one of the signatories to a letter published in the Dover Express. This, along with other points, stated that women should not be disqualified from voting solely on the grounds of their sex and they would be present with their petitions at the general election in January 1910. George Wyndham won the seat for the Conservatives and pledged to support the women's movement. The Liberals still held power and formed the government.

After this election the Dover committee became more militant and by the middle of the year, they voted to join the much more radical Woman's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Thus, distancing themselves from the NUWSS.

However not everyone agreed with women's suffrage. A powerful lobby was arranged against them led by the Anti-Suffrage League (ASL), founded by George Curzon, 1st Baron Curzon of Kedleston, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports 1905-6. Supporters of the aims of the ASL included the Trade Unions, the Socialists, the then Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and much of the popular press of the time. During one demonstration, outside Parliament, on Friday 18th December, 'Black Friday', over one hundred were arrested, many beaten,

when the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill called out the police to disperse the demonstration.

Lorna was, by now, even more committed to the cause with much of the Dover women's activities planned from 14 Godwyne Road. Near to the new Bomford Place.

With the suspension of most of suffrage activity during WWI Lorna volunteered to work as one of the main organisers with the Food Rationing Office in Dover. After the war, a change in the law allowed women to stand for public office. In January 1919 Lorna, a survivor of the 1917 Crabble Hill tram disaster, won a by-election at River and became the first female town councillor on the Borough of Dover Corporation, holding that seat until 1921. She became actively concerned with early Council Estate buildings sitting on the Housing, and Higher Education Committees. She was the driving force in the naming of the new roads at the beginning of the Buckland Estate project.

In April 1927 Lorna became the first woman from Dover to become a County

Magistrate, holding the office of Justice of the Peace (J.P.) for Kent until 1945.

During WWII she once again was a leading figure with the Food Rationing Office.

Much of her spare leisure time was devoted to painting in oils and pastels. She exhibited several her works in the Paris Salon "Salon de Paris" located on the Champs-Élysées. For many years this was the premier art exhibition in Europe.

Lorna had three siblings.

Sir Hugh Bomford KB, CIE, [12th August 1882 to 19th January 1939]. Indian Civil Service 1906. 1938 was acting Governor of the Central Provinces of India. He lived at Folkestone with his wife Margaret Evelyn Ord [born Dover 1886] Married on 6th September 1916.

Nora Bomford [24th March 1894 to 12th May 1968]. In WWI did social work among the poor in North London. Her WWI poetry collection "Poems of a Pantheist" was published in 1918. Married her cousin Major General Claude le bas Goldney CBE, CB, MC, on 8th June 1938. They lived at 38 Mount Hermon Road, Woking, Surrey.

Brigadier Guy Bamford OBE, MA, D.Sc., FRICS [29th June 1899 to 10th February 1996] Born River Road, Temple Ewell. Buried Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire. Married Audrey Edith Barclay, born at Kearsney, on 23rd May 1925 in India. Divorced 1934. Married his second wife Annette Isolde Brown on 7th November 1935. They lived at Hainton Lodge Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire.

Lorna Bomford never got married. She died, aged seventy-eight, on 25th February 1962 at her home Milestone House, Temple Ewell, Dover, Kent, England.



Lorna Bomford, 1933