

# Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears

The Britten Pears Archive, based at The Red House in Aldeburgh, has shared extracts relating to Saxmundham from its collection.

These items, comprising bills and receipts, give us a fascinating insight into the links Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears had with our town.



British classical music composer Benjamin Britten was born in Lowestoft. He bought and redeveloped the Old Mill at Snape in 1937, a plaque there commemorates the creation of the English opera *Peter Grimes*.

In 1947, he and Peter Pears, the British tenor, moved to Aldeburgh, first to Crag House on Crag Path and then in 1957 to The Red House. Together with librettist Eric Crozier they created the Aldeburgh Festival, which continues to draw large numbers of visitors to the area each year.

While Britten and Pears were creating and performing their internationally renowned music, they had everyday needs for products and services from local businesses.



Britten and Pears at Snape, May 1975

## Household

For the household relocation from Snape to Aldeburgh the local furniture business, Ashfords, helped move and provide furniture. Flick and Sons provided estate agency services, property and contents valuations.



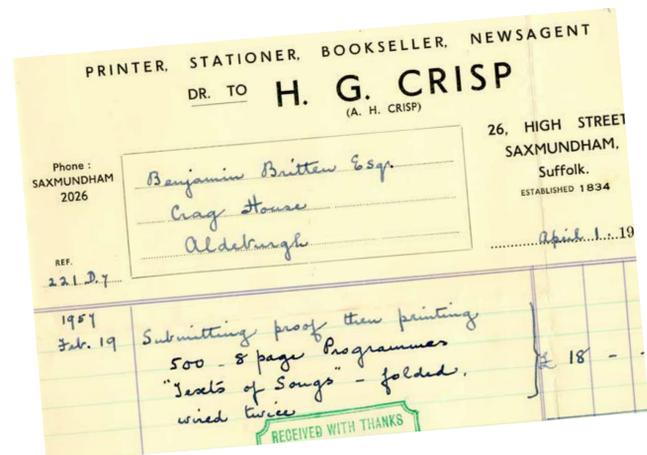
The Red House in 2020 ...



... and with Britten c1966.

Over the years Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears had several dogs who were looked after by Saxmundham veterinarians. The vets evolved from "Downie & Fishwick", then solely "R. Fishwick" to eventually "Fishwick, Hill and Button", moving from a practice on Rendham Road to Street Farm Road.

Hayward & Sons provided the water softener salt, whilst Hubbards supplied various household items.



## Motoring

Britten had a passion for cars, with servicing and insurance provided by local companies such as Smith & Wesby and W. J. Balls.

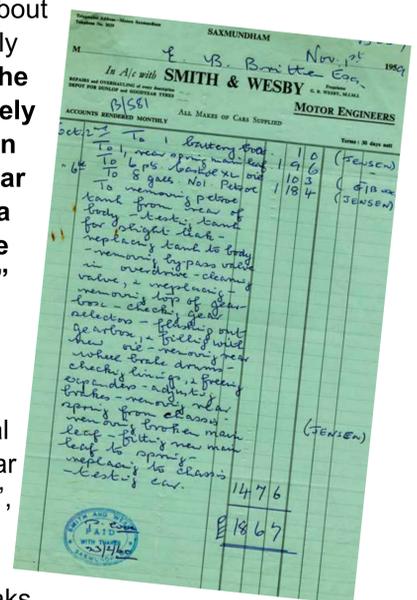
His motoring wasn't without problems though and writing a letter of complaint about his Rolls Royce in early 1957, he mentions "The car has been extremely unreliable - in fact, on going abroad last year I was forced to take a Morris Minor with me instead of the Rolls!"

He then swapped the Rolls for a Jensen Interceptor (TXU 989) but the archives reveal issues with the new car such as 'a breakdown', repairs to the clutch, new dynamo, a smell of petrol and water leaks.

Smith and Wesby carried out "substantial work" and "work inc. removing petrol tank" in 1959.

By April 1960 the Jensen had been accepted by Smith & Wesby as a trade-in for a Mercedes convertible.

The Jensen has since been restored on two occasions.



Britten and Imogen Holst with the Jensen Interceptor

## Stationery

H. G. Crisp supplied 'At Home' cards, address cards and in 1957, a run of 500 8-page programmes of "Texts of Songs".

It's possible to imagine that sheets of the Britten letterhead stock, regularly printed by H. G. Crisp, would have been sent to Buckingham Palace and to other places around the world!

Queen Elizabeth officially opened the Aldeburgh Festival Concert Hall at Snape Maltings in 1967 and attended again in 1970 when the hall had been rebuilt following a serious fire the previous year.

## Britten Pears Arts

The Red House  
Golf Lane  
Aldeburgh IP15 5PZ

A major heritage site and archive based at The Red House, Britten and Pears' Suffolk home.

<https://brittenpearsarts.org>