

'Loose Threads'

Your local history magazine Number 12



In this issue ...

- * **Loose School Centenary**
- * **Coxheath Workhouse & Linton Hospital**
- * **Bockingford's 'Auntie Vi'**
- * **Hayle Mill**
- * **Loose's 'Valley of Dreams'**
- * **St Nicholas Church, Linton**
- * **Salts Place and Leeds Castle**
- * **Cricket at Linton Park**
- * **'Beating the Bounds' at Linton and Loose**
- * **'Lost shops' of Tovil and Loose**
- * **Boughton Monchelsea's naughty schoolboys**
- * **The wheelwrights of Little Ivy ... and much more!**

The Journal of the Loose Area History Society £4.00

Aquarius Wool Shop
Coxheath Village Centre. Est. 1976

HAND KNITTING WOOL

HABERDASHERY

*Ribbons, Buttons, Elastic
Tapestry Wool & Canvas
Cross Stitch Kits & Silks etc*

**COMPLETE CURTAIN MAKING SERVICE
AND UPHOLSTERY**

FABRICS

*Now suppliers of Casadeco, Concept, Crowson,
Blendworth and Prestigious
At very competitive prices*

**CURTAIN TRACKS, POLES AND
ACCESSORIES**

Telephone: 01622 744265 / 746454
e-mail: aquarius.1@btconnect.com
www.aquariussoftfurnishings.com

LOOSE POST OFFICE

NEWSAGENT · CONFECTIONER

TOBACCONIST

GROCER – including local produce
STATIONERY · GREETINGS CARDS · TOYS
PHOTOCOPYING 10p for A4
DRY CLEANING AND LAUNDRY SERVICE

OPENING HOURS

Monday - Friday: 7.00am - 5.30pm
Saturday: 7.00am - 4.30pm
Sunday: 8.00am - 12 noon
Bank Holidays 8.am – 12pm
Unless posted otherwise

LOOSE GREEN, MAIDSTONE, KENT

Tel. Maidstone (01622) 743233

**LUCKY'S NEWSAGENTS
NO. 1 BOUGHTON PARADE
LOOSE ROAD
TEL: 01622 747352**

Newspapers (delivered daily), magazines,
confectionery, cigarettes and tobacco,
soft drinks, snacks, National Lottery, Paypoint,
toys, games, greetings cards and gifts

**FANTASTIC RANGE OF
HELIUM PARTY BALLOONS**

Opening hours

Monday to Friday 5.30am – 7.30pm

Saturday 5.30am – 8pm

Sunday 5.30am – 4pm

**CONVENIENCE
STORE**

Located in the
VILLAGE POST OFFICE

Church Street,
Boughton Monchelsea

8.00am-8.00pm

7 days a week

General Store

Off Licence, Newsagent

Telephone: 01622 746022

From the editor ...

The 12 months that have elapsed since 'Loose Threads 11' was published have comprised a memorable year for local history in our area.

Loose Gardeners' Society and Loose Amenities Association decided to plant trees to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, continuing a local tradition that began with Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Oak on Loose Green in 1897 and was followed by Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation Oak on King George V Playing Field. We will feature the tree planting ceremonies in 'Loose Threads 13'.

Sixty-seven years after the end of the Second World War the names of four 'forgotten' members of the armed forces who served in it were inscribed on Loose War Memorial.

Loose School held a centenary exhibition and Open Day and Cornwallis Academy, successor to The Cornwallis School, looked back on its first year in its new building.

In Linton, Linton Park Cricket Club bowled and batted through its 225th season and members of St Nicholas Church marked the 150th anniversary of its remodelling and reconstruction by members of the Cornwallis family.

Almost 100 years to the day after Loose's first official 'beating the bounds' walk in modern times, Roy Hood led a parish boundary walk in aid of a local charity. This followed the publication by our society of Roger Thornburgh's comprehensive survey of the boundary and its stones.

Most of these important occasions are featured in this issue. Looking ahead, may we inform readers that the deadline for contributions for 'Loose Threads 13' is May 1, 2013. Please feel free to submit photographs, and either a few paragraphs or articles of up to 2,000 words on local and social history matters.

Our thanks to all the readers who contributed so many interesting items for publication in this issue.

Paul Tritton, Editor
Khanspur
2 Salts Avenue
Loose, Maidstone
Kent ME15 0AY
Tel. 01622 741198
Email: paul.tritton@btinternet.com

'Loose Threads' is on sale at Aquarius Wool Shop (Coxheath Village Centre), Boughton Monchelsea Post Office, Loose Post Office, Lucky's Newsagents (Boughton Parade), South Park News (192 Loose Road), The Victory pub at East Farleigh and at the Loose Area History Society's meetings. To order by mail within the UK please send the editor a cheque for £5.50, payable to the Loose Area History Society. Email the editor for overseas rates.

Contents

- 2 Donald Maxwell: Artist at Loose
- 5 Michael Finch of Linton
- 6 Boughton Monchelsea's naughty schoolboys
- 7 Bockingford's 'Auntie Vi'
- 9 Cornwallis Academy School
- 10 Loose cobbler's daughter finds her past
- 12 Linton parish church anniversary
- 13 The magnificent Cornwallis Chapel
- 14 'My father, Leonard Gould'
- 17 Your Picture Gallery
- 18 Linton Park Cricket Club
- 19 The Martins of Salts Place and Leeds Castle
- 21 Bible's Revelations led to Loose
- 22 Discovering our parish boundaries
- 24 Coxheath Workhouse and Linton Hospital
- 28 The wheelwrights of Little Ivy
- 29 Life and death in the Harris family
- 31 Childs' play on High Banks
- 33 Working and shopping in Tovil
- 34 Algernon Howard Marsh, shopkeeper
- 35 Questions & Answers
- 37 Loose School Centenary
- 39 The Sankey family's schooldays
- 41 Sir Hardy Amies and his Loose ancestors
- 43 The Amies' property portfolio
- 44 The Ladies of Rosemount
- 47 A History of Hayle Mill
- 49 History Society News

© No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without the publisher's permission.



Nearly 90 years ago the author and artist Donald Maxwell visited the Loose Valley for inspiration for two books, 'Unknown Kent' and 'The Enchanted Road'.

He was born in 1877 in Clapham, where his father, Dr Frederick Charles Maxwell, was a schoolmaster. His mother Lucilla (née Stanley) was a talented artist, related to Rudyard Kipling and Stanley Baldwin.

Donald began to make a name for himself in 1909 when the 'Daily Graphic' published his dramatic sketch 'The Battle Fleet off Southend'. This encouraged him to embark on a career as a naval artist.

During the First World War he drew some of the first pictures depicting air warfare and, as an officer in the RNVR, created an important pictorial record of naval operations. After the war he freelanced, working for 'The Graphic' weekly magazine, the 'Church Times' and many other publications.

Fascinated with topography, he enjoyed seeking out 'lost landscapes' and showing how they provided clues to the

Donald Maxwell



Artist at Loose

lives of those who had lived there many centuries ago.

Among the most popular of the 40 books he published was 'A Detective in Kent' and a volume on Kent in his 'Unknown Counties' series, with sketches of cement works along the Medway that exemplified how he saw form and beauty in objects others might regard as eyesores.

In 1907 Donald married Fanny Eveline Marie Morgan. Their first homes were a yacht moored on the Thames and a converted tug boat, but when their first child was expected they moved to Rochester and subsequently to Borstal, where their daughters, Audrey Eveline Lucilla and Veronica Edith Stanley were born.

Title picture: 'I do not say that the heart of the Black Forest is not farther from London than this spot, but it is not more silent on a starlit night'. An illustration of the Loose Valley from Donald Maxwell's 'The Enchanted Road'. Left: Donald pictured while serving as a Royal Navy artist.



In 1930 the family moved to East Farleigh House, a large detached property about half a mile from the centre of the village. In collaboration with printers Alabaster Passmore of Tovil, he published a series of tinted pen and ink sketches entitled 'County Prints'. Some were displayed by the Southern Railway in its carriages and under the glass tabletops on Isle of Wight ferries.

Other joint ventures with Alabaster Passmore were 'The New Domesday of Kent' (a pictorial and topographical survey of the county) and a set of William Turner sketches on blue grey hand-made paper matching that used by Turner himself.

In 1934, two years before the 850th anniversary of the publication of the 'Domesday Book', Donald started to make a set of decorative ceramic 'Domesday Tiles', depicting Kent villages and towns. These were sold by Bridgeside Studios of The Broadway, Maidstone.

Only 49 designs, measuring 6½ x 5½in, were marketed, plus five larger types depicting places in Eton and London as well as in Kent.

Relevant to our area were Yalding (Tile 1), Maidstone (4), Loose (5), Teston (9), Linton (24) and Hunton (43) but it appears that no examples of these have survived.

A copy of an article entitled 'Domesday Kent' that Donald wrote for the April 1934 issue of the 'Kent County Journal' is in the Loose Archives but sadly we have been unable to find a copy of the May 1934 issue of 'Motoring' magazine featuring his article 'The Remarkable Village of Loose', illustrated with seven sketches.



Top of this column: East Farleigh House, the Maxwell family's home from 1930 until 1936. Top right: Goddington, near Harrietsham, where Donald died in 1936. Right: the churchyard at St Mary's, East Farleigh, where Donald was buried. Above: Donald's grand daughters Shirley Parker and her husband John (left) and Sue Robotham and her husband John, at his grave in September 2005. With them is Michael Passmore, formerly of Alabaster Passmore & Sons Ltd, the company that collaborated with Maxwell when he published his County Prints.



Donald died suddenly in 1936 at the early age of 59. His painting 'Medway Country', a view of Teston Bridge, had been accepted for the Royal Academy's summer exhibition and soon after this event opened he went to Guildford to make what was to be his last sketch, of the site of the new cathedral.

It was a wet day, he caught a chill that developed into septicaemia, and died on July 25 at Goddington, a house on the North Downs near Harrietsham.

The Maxwells had only recently moved to Harrietsham and he was buried at St Mary's, East Farleigh. Canon Everett conducted the funeral service, assisted by the Rev. Rowland Maxwell and the Rev. Percival Stanley, respectively Donald's nephew and cousin. The grave can be found to the west of the cedar tree in the extension to the churchyard.





Although complete sets of all the Domesday Tiles that were issued may no longer survive, and examples of individual ones are rare, many of Donald's sketches and watercolours are in private or public collections. Maidstone Museum has a drawing of Bluebell Hill and a watercolour of Crisbrook Mill.

Donald's books are occasionally advertised for sale on Amazon and found in second-hand bookshops, and can be borrowed from Kent County Libraries. Loose Archives has copies of 'Unknown Kent' and 'The Enchanted Road'.

'Unknown Kent', published in 1921, contains a chapter on 'The Quest for the Mills of Maidstone', in which Donald describes how after travelling on 'a tram labelled Loose' he wandered up and down the valley, noting and sketching several old mills.

Near Loose Viaduct he noticed 'a skeleton or ghost of a mill. The mill had gone but sluices, walls and stonework foundations showed clearly where it had been'. He was at Gurney's Mill, which became the subject of his watercolour 'A Vanished Mill of Loose'. The miller's house, now called Old Millhouse, is in the background.

In Salts Lane, beyond Upper Mill, he took 'the delightful path clinging to the deep valley side' to Boughton Quarries. Here he drew what is probably the only surviving sketch of one of our local ragstone quarries

in the days when it was still working or had only recently closed (see 'Loose Threads 10'. Page 26) and noted, 'the stone from these hills was used in the building of Westminster Abbey and, by Royal Command, it was decreed that no Kentish stone should be carted to London for any other purpose'.

'Loose is a pleasant place of old mill-pools and green cottage gardens

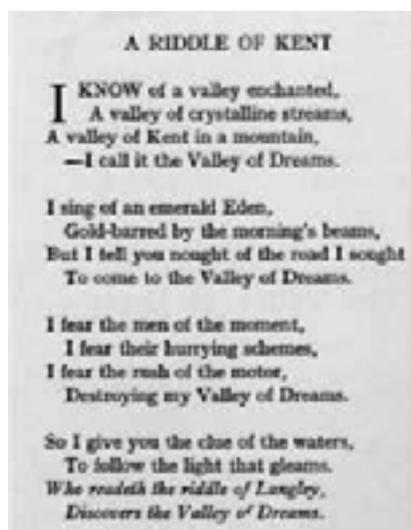
reflected in the still surface', wrote Donald. 'The stream is said to be the reappearance of a lost stream from higher up the valley. Hence according to some authorities the derivation of Loose - the water loses itself'.

In 1927 he completed 'The Enchanted Road', which contains two chapters about the Loose Valley - 'The Lost Waters of Langley' and 'The Valley of Dreams'. In the former chapter Donald tells how he was inspired by a man he met at East Hall Farm, near Boughton Monchelsea, to investigate a 'freak of geology' that he had not heard of before.

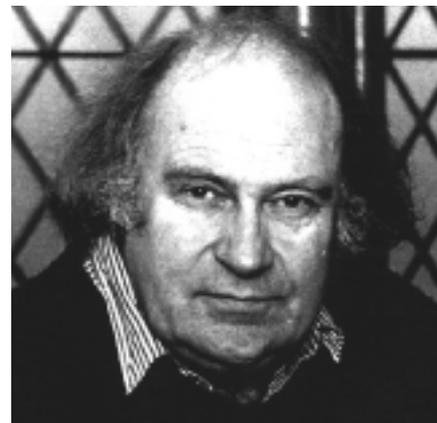
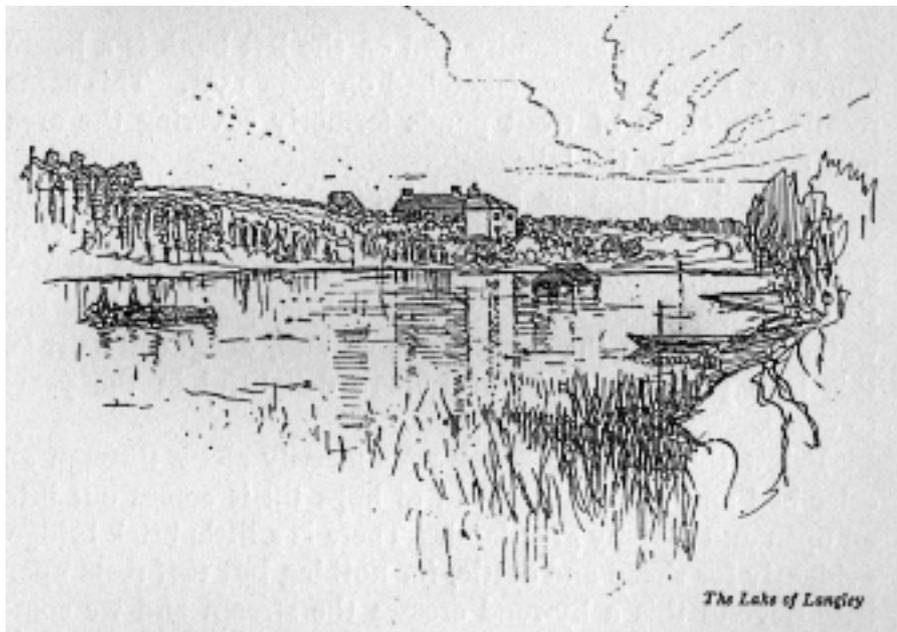
He discovered more by visiting the Hon. Henry Hannen at Rock House, Boughton, to read a description of the mysterious waters in a manuscript copy of Lambarde's 'Perambulation of Kent', written in 1576.

Donald then set off to Langley, to find the source of the Loose stream, about 200 yards east of Langley church. His account of his walk from there to Langley Park, Langley Ponds, and Brishing Farm, where the stream disappears underground, is illustrated with several delightful sketches.

In Donald's footsteps ...



Top of page: Donald entitled this watercolour 'The Vanished Mill of Loose'. We know it as Gurney's Mill, Salts Lane. Left: his ode to the Loose Valley.



Donald's grandson lived at Linton

At one time there was some doubt that the stream that disappears at Brishing, and the one that emerges at Boughton Quarries, are the same watercourse. On his walk Donald met an eye-witness to an experiment that had been conducted many years earlier, when paraffin was poured into the stream at the point where it disappears. For some time afterwards the oil contaminated the stream at the quarries - 'much to the indignation of people who used this as their water supply and objected strongly to experiments made in the interests of topographical science'.

'The valley', he wrote, 'stands apart from this work-a-day world. It is a valley where time stands still. I do not tell you the whereabouts of the Valley of Dreams, not because I am selfish or misanthropic but because I fear to write down in a book the position of this haunt, lest it may be opened to the prying of the vulgar and the attentions of the rich'.

Well, those who had thought for a moment about the last lines of his poem 'A Riddle of Kent' in 'The Valley of Dreams' and had read 'The Quest for the Mills of Maidstone' in 'Unknown Kent' soon deduced that Donald was following the Loose stream from Boughton Quarries westwards.

Furthermore, he sprinkled his text numerous clues and marked them on a map, so we soon know that the first one, 'the clue of the steps to the spring,' can be found at the foot of Bottlescrew Hill. From here, Donald peered over a ragstone wall and saw, down in the hollow, 'a little round basin and a stone-edged conduit running through gardens'.

This is where the Loose stream emerges into the daylight after running underground for about a half a mile from Brishing. The steps have now collapsed into the undergrowth but the views across the

gardens, and of the houses under what he called 'The Great Roofs', can still be enjoyed.

Further downstream Donald came to the enigmatic 'Field of Seven Wells', thus named, according to an old man Donald met, because seven springs rise here. We know the area as Banky Meadow. Springs ain't what they used to be and few of them are evident today. Opposite the field, Donald walked through what he was told were the 'Switzerland Hills' and came across a hydraulic ram pumping water from the site of Upper Mill to a house on the Foster Clark Estate at Boughton Mount.

Later, Donald admired the 'quaint riverside cottages, each with a little bridge across the stream ... there are little brooks gushing out of the hillside and hurrying merrily to join the main stream'. He had arrived in Loose and was at The Brooks and Bridge Street.

He concluded his narrative with the words, 'Below the village the valley turns and again there is silence under the hill. I have stood here by starlight, with just a light or two of the last cottage still showing at the bend. It is indeed a valley of dreams'.

His walk had ended at Kirkdale, or maybe a little further down the valley at Brickfield Cottage. We can imagine Donald retracing his steps from here to The Brooks, climbing Old Loose Hill, boarding a tram labelled Maidstone, and catching a late bus home to Borstal.

■ With thanks to Lucy Kent, Michael Passmore, Mary Price, Sian Price, Molly Richford, Sue Robotham and Veronica Tonge for their help during the preparation of this article.

The Maxwells' first daughter, Audrey, married Leonard Edwards, a colonel in the Royal Marines. They had two children: Shirley (now Shirley Parker) and Richard.

Veronica Maxwell married Robert ('Robin') Ffinch, who joined the Prison Service from the Merchant Navy and was at one time Governor of Maidstone Prison. Robin's uncle, Arthur Ffinch, was a Vicar of Borstal.

Robin and Veronica had two sons, Michael (pictured above) and Simon, and a daughter, Susan (now Susan Robotham). Michael and his wife Patricia (née Major) lived at The Old Rectory, Linton, in the 1960s.

Their first child, Simon, was born in Maidstone and baptized at St Nicholas, Linton, so through one of Donald's great grandchildren we have a direct link with the man who lent enchantment to our Valley of Dreams.

In 1995 Michael Ffinch published a painstakingly researched and copiously illustrated biography of his grandfather, 'Donald Maxwell: 1877 - 1936'.

He died in 1999, having lived at Kendal, in the Lake District, for the last years of his life. Audrey and Veronica died in 1987 and 2001 respectively.

There are currently at least 10 living descendants of Donald and Eveline Maxwell (she was always known thus, though her first name was Fanny).

Sue Robotham was born after Donald died but remembers visiting Michael at Linton, where she admired the beautiful view of the Weald of Kent from his garden - a view like so many of those that captivated Donald while he explored Kent.

Top of page: A sketch from 'The Lost Waters of Langley', one of the chapters in Donald's book 'The Enchanted Road'.

‘Six of the best’ for naughty Boughton boys

Discipline was strict at Boughton Monchelsea Parish School (predecessor of today's Boughton Monchelsea Primary School) in Victorian times, as these extracts from the head teacher's 1881 log book reveal (*writes Pat Tritton*).

February 14. 'Mr Skinner called and wished me to severely caution the boys about going into Mr Rider's woods and destroying the young shoots. I gave them a good talking to and hoped there would be no more complaints. The policeman from Chart called afterwards and took the names of the boys who were in the woods on Sunday 13th'.

August 8. 'Cautioned the boys about getting Mr Skinner's apples'.

October 14. 'Punished Richard Stokes for pulling Bristow's ears'.

Richard Stokes (9) may have been a son of Richard (a journeyman blacksmith) and his wife Annie who lived at Boughton Green. 'Bristow' was possibly Alfred or Charles, 9-year-old twin brothers, whose grandfather John Bristow ran a carpenter's shop and grocer's shop on the Green.

November 29. 'Miss Braddick's wedding. Caned the following boys for throwing turf at the carriages as they passed the school: Edward Seager, Harry Roberts, Albert Battin, Harry Head, Ernest Amies, Fred. Gillingham, F. Thompson, Harry Wilkens'.

Ernest was probably a son of Charles Amies, farmer and 'stone grubber' of Rock Mount, Loose.

The carriages were carrying the guests who attended the marriage of Emma Clara Braddick (32) and Arthur Ventis (29) at St Peter's Church.

Emma was a daughter of the local squire, John Wilbraham Braddick of Boughton Mount, who is reputed to have made a fortune out of the West Indies slave trade and to have 'fattened up' his slaves in his cellars before selling them at auction in London.

Among other aspects of school and village life recorded in the log book are:

May 2. Extract from Summary of Inspector's Report on the school. 'Tone and order are very good. With reference to the arrangements of the playground and the consequent alterations in the conditions by which the Offices [lavatories] may be approached, HM Inspector is of the opinion that the requirements of this



department may be sufficiently satisfied if the door leading from the playground to those used by the girls and infants be kept continually locked and if a screen similar to that agreed on between the Chairman of the School Board and himself be placed in front of the doors used by the Boys'.

August 24. 'A lecture was given at 11 o'clock in the school by Mr Evans on the Staffordshire Potteries. After explaining the process of clay making for the best sorts of china, he made several articles such as a cup and saucer, tea pot, etc. in the presence of the children, who expressed their satisfaction by constant clapping of hands. Mr Evans is no doubt a practical workman and his lecture was thoroughly instructive and amusing'.

October 19. 'Several children away on account of the opening of the Chapel in the Quarries'.



An undated archive photograph of Boughton Monchelsea School. (Contributed by Sue Black)

Affectionately known locally as 'Auntie Vi', Victoria Brown (née Esland) was born on December 19 1915 at No 3 Bockingford Mill Cottages in the Loose Valley, opposite the historic Bockingford Arms pub, now a private dwelling named Bockingford Steps (*writes Malcolm Whyatt*).

Her father was Albon (Ben) Esland, who travelled around Bockingford, Loose, Tovil, Coombe Farm Estate, College Road and King Edward Road selling greengrocery from his horse and cart.

My abiding memories of him from the Second World War are the coloured pictures of Fyffes bananas on his cart and wondering what a banana tasted like!

Coincidentally, after leaving school I worked on Bockingford farm and Hayle Place Estate from 1952 until 1958 and occasionally met Ben when I accompanied the tenant farmer, Edward (Ted) Sankey, when he had to walk through Ben's garden to re-prime the ram pump there that supplied water to the farm.

I never let on that I was one of kids Ben shouted at whenever we wandered along the stream behind his property!

Before Victoria was born, Ben and his wife Sarah started renting No 3 Bockingford Cottages from Hayle Place Estate, and in 1928 they purchased all four cottages.

In June 2007 I interviewed 'Auntie Vi' and although she was suffering from Alzheimer's Disease her long term memory was brilliant, as was her sense of humour, as she reminisced about her childhood.

Before school, she and a friend walked up Tea Saucer Hill to collect milk

Bockingford's 'Auntie Vi'



'a very special lady'

from Bockingford Farm. On the way back they took turns in swinging the small metal milk churn, held by a piece of string, over and over without spilling a drop. Whether it was partially cheese when she arrived home,

Victoria didn't say, although she smiled as she remembered that 'milk was 1d ($\frac{1}{2}$ p) per pint, butter a shilling (5p) per lb and tea 1s 2d (about 6p) per lb'.

Returning home from school, Victoria at times picked five pounds of strawberries for her dad, who paid her sixpence ('a tanner in old money or $2\frac{1}{2}$ p today'). Strawberries in some shops can now cost up to 10p each! Not 'the Good Old Days'.

After leaving Maidstone Grammar School, Victoria worked for a greengrocer in Week Street, Maidstone. I wonder if that was Paynes, opposite Marks & Spencer? In 1934, when she was 16, she applied for the position of probationer nurse at the Kent County Ophthalmic and Aural Hospital in Church Street, Maidstone.

The matron turned her down because they 'didn't take local girls'. Victoria applied again, pointing out that her school friend, Violet Placket, was already working there. The matron relented and so began Victoria's awesome nursing career.

Victoria had many happy memories of her time as a nurse, although some were of sadness if a patient died.

Nurses could not be married. They had to live-in and there were no males nurses. Victoria had to buy, at her own expense, the very costly (£5) nursing uniform complete with white apron and stiff belt. The rules and regulations were daunting. While working nurses were not allowed to have their hair loose, wear make-up or jewellery, or paint their nails.

Night-nurses had just two nights off a month and day-nurses had half a day a week, plus one day a month. They had to be in by 10pm, when the doors were locked although when late climbing through an open window became de rigueur!

In addition to working on the wards and in the operating theatre, probationer nurses also had to attend lectures given by doctors and study the appropriate medical literature. Day-nurses were also expected to accompany Matron in chapel for a hymn and a prayer before clocking off for the evening.

While Victoria was a probationer nurse for two years she earned £30 (58p per week) in her first year and £35 in the second. 'Matron paid us in cash', she said. 'All in all, we nurses became family whether you were junior or senior'. In the 1930s Mars Bars, Kit Kats and Rolos were 2d (1p) each, a pint of beer 3d (about 2p) and cigarettes were 6d ($2\frac{1}{2}$ p) for 15.



Above: Victoria at home in Bockingford in June 2007. Left: Framed photograph of Victoria's parents, Albon (Ben) and Sarah Esland, at their cottage in Bockingford.



'All this may sound wonderful', she said, 'but it was actually an era of awful austerity and disease, especially lung cancer and TB. Being "On the Dole" meant £1 a week (£1.10s from 1932) no matter the size of one's family'.

Not many could afford such 'luxuries' as a small family car (£100), a small bungalow (£250) or a reasonable three- bedroom house for £400-£500.

In 1951, 21 years after Victoria began her nursing career, I started work at Drake & Fletchers in Broadway, Maidstone. My wages for a 40 hour week were 6½d (2½p) per hour after tax, £1.0s.6d (£1 + 2½p!) a week. Even so, I felt these were the 'Good Old Days'.

Early in the Second World War, Victoria spent time as a nurse at Hillingdon Hospital, Middlesex, worked for ICI as a nurse, and was a nurse in the Army. She had married Walter (Wally) Brown in 1941 and they had son Antony in January 1946.

Later she worked as a night sister in sole charge at Keycol Hospital, Newington, near Sittingbourne.

She finally ended her long nursing career as Sister Tutor at Linton Hospital, Coxheath. The number of patients she cared for is, of course, unknown but I'm sure most will have remembered her happy disposition.

Victoria's mother, Sarah, died in 1956 and Victoria's sister-in-law from a marriage to one of her brothers then decided to move to Tovil, leaving No 4 Bockingford Mill Cottage. Victoria returned Bockingford with her family in 1959 when her father, who was by then living in No 3, offered her the cottage next door, No 4. He died in 1966 leaving Nos 3 and 4 to Victoria.

A connecting doorway was opened on the ground floor, followed by another on the top floor. Thus the two cottages became one, quaintly numbered 3 & 4.

Victoria died on December 23 2009 at the grand age of 94. I shall always remember her sparkling personality and twinkling eyes during my two magical hours talking with 'A Very Special Lady' - Mrs Victoria Brown.

■ With thanks to Victoria's daughter, Sonia, for her considerable help with most of the family background and to the 'Kent Messenger' for permission to quote details about Victoria's nursing career that were published when the Ophthalmic Hospital closed in April 2003.

Top of page: Bockingford Mill Cottages in 2011. Above left: Bockingford Steps, with the gardens of Bockingford Mill Cottages in the foreground. Above: the nameplates of Nos 3 & 4 Bockingford Mill Cottages survive on No 2.



From classrooms to 'zoned learning plazas'

Academy school looks to the future

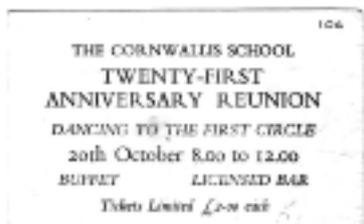
Cornwallis Academy, successor to The Cornwallis School, has opened its new building. **Jill Smith** reviews the school's origins more than 50 years ago and tells how it is equipped to educate future generations.

In the 1950s, with the further development of the Shepway Estate and surrounding areas, and the expanding population of Maidstone, Oldborough Manor School (the town's principal secondary school) was becoming oversubscribed. KCC's Education Department decided to build two new schools: Senacre Technology School on Sutton Road and The Cornwallis School in Hubbards Lane, Loose.

Senacre opened in 1957, taking pupils from Shepway and surrounding areas. Cornwallis had not been completed by then so the first 120 pupils from what would become its area, which included Sutton Valance, East Farleigh, Coxheath and Hunton, became temporary students at Senacre.

They were separated from Senacre's own pupils and taught on the top floor. Senacre's students were accommodated on the ground floor.

Edna Dennison (née Wallond), one of the students who was eventually transferred to Cornwallis, said that because they were the first students to go to both



the schools there were never any older children above them.

Judy Gough (née Smith) and Jean Anderson (née Brown) were students in the same year. They remember the following teachers who were at Senacre and then Cornwallis: Alan Sankey (Woodwork), Mr Hallam (Science), Mr Rosen (Religious Instruction), Mr Andrews (Maths and Sport), Miss Birkett (Music), Mr Marsh (Geography), Miss Spicer (Needlework) and Miss Peters (Domestic Science). The first headteacher was Mr Johnston.

Once the pupils had moved to Cornwallis, school buses took them from the villages to their new school.

There were three forms with 40 students in each. Their uniform consisted of black blazers, white shirts, and emerald green ties with black and white stripes. During the summer the girls wore green and white checked dresses. The white stag depicted on the school badge was from Lord Cornwallis's family crest and acknowledged his connection to the school.

The school was designed during 1957 and 1958 by John W Poltock of John W Poltock & Associates, Chartered Architects, of Gable End, Walnut Tree Lane, Loose, using the South East Area Consortium building system that Kent County Council and other local authorities adopted. It was designed on a grid and by using the same components in all new schools, the authorities could buy materials in bulk, making it a cheaper system of building.

The windows were made by Crittall to a standard size. However, John Poltock put his own stamp on Cornwallis with his own design for the brickwork and windows.

The building, consisting of a main hall, kitchens, classrooms, staffroom and toilets, was officially opened by Lord Cornwallis on June 29 1959. It was extended during 1960 and 1968 to include facilities for



Title picture: The new Cornwallis Academy building, opened in 2011. Centre: Souvenirs of the school's 20th and 21st anniversary celebrations. Pictured at a reception in 1979 before an evening of dancing are, left to right, Alan Sankey (woodwork teacher), Eric Johnston (head teacher), John Butcher (Humanities teacher) and Bob Cornwall with (foreground) Jean Anderson (née Brown), Judy Gough (née Smith) and Joan Cornwall. Left: Mr Rozen with his class in the 1960s. The only pupil identified is Jean Brown (second from left in front row). Can you name any of the others?

arts and crafts, needlework, domestic science and technical drawing; laboratories; a drama studio; and an administration complex. A sports hall was added, at a cost of £19,000, with a 160ft span to accommodate a full size indoor tennis court with an asphalt floor. There were viewing balconies at each end and exterior plastic cladding.

Once these new works had been completed the school was able to open classes for a Sixth Form.

During the following years the school changed its name from The Cornwallis School to The Cornwallis Secondary School and eventually The Cornwallis Technical School.

In 2002 it took part in a successful pilot project to introduce 'RM Tablet' Personal Computers for use by teachers and pupils. Later they were introduced to other Kent schools.

At the start of 2007 the South Maidstone Federation of Schools and KCC consulted the parents of pupils at Cornwallis, Oldborough Manor and Senacre Technology College about its proposal to close the three schools and replace them with two Government-funded Academy schools on the Cornwallis and Oldborough Manor sites.

On August 31 2007 Cornwallis Technical School closed and next day opened as The Cornwallis Academy, an all-ability school with a broad curriculum specializing in technology. It was intended that the school would be completely rebuilt, with 1,275 places for boys and girls aged 11-16 years and 550 Sixth Form pupils.

A ground-breaking ceremony on September 16 2009 marked the start of construction, by contractors Carillion, of the new building on the Linton Road side of the old school, in which to transform the teaching and learning environments in 'zoned learning plazas' where pupils could work individually or in small project groups.

On January 18 2011 pupils buried a time capsule beneath the floor of the new building's 'Heart' space, containing a working laptop, filmed student interviews with the Academy's Head and Deputy Head, a uniform, a school planner and objects contributed by local parish councils and primary feeder schools.

More than 600 past and present teachers and students, including Mr M Wood, headteacher from September 1985 to August 2005, attended a reunion on June 17 2011 to celebrate the imminent closure of the old building. This finally happened on August 31 2011 and when the new term began Cornwallis Academy moved into its new £38 million building.

Here, new technology is at the forefront. The students register their attendance at all lessons with swipe cards and each student has a computer tablet. For some subjects they are taught together with up to five classes in one plaza. Some of the plazas have a 'traffic light' system to measure noise levels: red means the class is too noisy, green means 'just right!' Consultations between school and students deal with any problems the students have.

Cornwallis Academy specializes in science and modern foreign languages and is run by the Future Schools Trust, which also manages the New Line Learning Academy in Boughton Lane.

The students who have black and white uniforms with a purple trim and the school logo. The boys wear purple ties with black and white stripes. The students contributed to the design of the new logo, produced by Pixelpig. The Academy's Principal is Mr D Simons.

■ With thanks to Trevor Gallavin for his help while I was researching this article.



Cobbler's daughter finds her past

Margaret (Peggy) Lamb (née Mercer) read about the Mercers of Kirkdale Cottages in Hilary Hunt's articles in 'Loose Threads 10' and 'Loose Threads 11' and told us about her family, who lived at No 2 Gurney's Cottages, Salts Lane, until the 1950s.

Peggy's father, John (Jack) Charles Mercer, had a bout of whooping cough when he was a child. This left him deaf and dumb but thanks to the Royal School for Deaf and Dumb Children he was apprenticed for two years to William Charles Betts of Snodland, to learn the art, trade and business of boot repairing.

He worked 12 hours every weekday and according to his Indentures he was given 'sufficient good meat, drink, lodging and washing', and earned two shillings a week in his first year, then four shillings a week.

In 1928, aged 29, he married Mabel Elizabeth Cornwell, a cook at Court Lodge, Boxley, and from this time (or perhaps earlier) he was self-employed, working from two sheds in the back garden of the cottage he and Mabel shared with Jack's parents, Edward Mannering Mercer, a quarry worker and Ellen (née Chevons).



Top of page: Peggy with her father's apprenticeship indenture. Above: Jack Mercer and his sign at No 2 Gurney's Cottages.



Peggy was born in 1935 and recalled the family's hard but happy life during her childhood.

'We all learned sign language so that we could talk to Dad. I helped him by delivering boots and shoes to his customers in the village and as far as Linton Corner and the Wheatsheaf, and caught a trolley bus to Maidstone once a week to collect leather for new soles and heels.

'It was also my job to collect buckets of water from a spring near Loose Viaduct and take the accumulator for our wireless to be recharged at Tomkin's shop in Church Street. We had oil lamps and candles for lighting, and coal delivered by a coalman in Linton Road for heating. It was several years before we had any "mod cons" like mains water, gas and electricity.

'The whole family had a bath once a week, sharing the same water! The children went in first, then mother and finally, father!

'We bought our groceries from Mr Larking's shop near the Walnut Tree and our sweets from Mr Piper's shop (now Florence House) on the corner of Bridge Street. Our bread was delivered on a horse-drawn cart; and a special treat was fish and chips from Mr Lloyd's shop at the top of Church Street.

'My mother taught me to sew on her old Singer machine, which had a foot treadle. I wasn't very strong, as I spent quite a long time in hospital during the war, and I found the machine difficult to work, so people in the village had a collection and bought a motor for the machine.

'I went to Loose School where my teachers were Mrs Stockwell, Mrs Jarrett, Mrs James and Miss Gordon. During the school summer holidays we went hop picking in East Farleigh'.

The ancestry of the Mercers of Gurney's Cottages has been traced back to Peggy's paternal great great grandparents, Edward and Elizabeth Mercer, who lived in Goudhurst in the 1840s and 1850s.

They had nine children, one of whom, Sophia (Peggy's great grandmother), had two illegitimate children - John Manwaring and Edward Manwaring Mercer. Sophia married their father, John Manwaring (Peggy's great grandfather) at Horsmonden in 1857.

The couple then had three more children - George (born in Marden) and William Peter and James (both born in Loose).

Edward Manwaring Mercer, Peggy's grandfather, married Ellen Chevons in Loose in 1878. In 1881 they and their first daughter, Minnie Jane, were living in Sendell's Cottages, Loose and Edward's parents, John and Sophia were living in Gurney's Cottages - though which one is not known.

By coincidence another Mercer family - James, his wife Mary and their children - were also living in Gurney's Cottages; again, we do not know which one. No link has been found between this family and Peggy's ancestors. James and his family later moved to No 2 Kirkdale Cottages.

In 1891, by which time Edward and Ellen had five more children - George, Ellen, Annie, Edward and Willie - they were living in Gurney's Cottages with Edward Manwaring Mercer's brother, John.

By 1901 they had two more children, Harry and Jack (Peggy's father) and were still living in Gurney's Cottages. Jack died in 1949, only 21 years after marrying Mabel. They left three children - Joan, Peggy and Peter - of whom Peggy is the sole survivor.

After the First World War, Jack's brother Edward married Hilda Dorothy White. They emigrated to Australia in 1927 and had six children and five grandchildren.

■ Gurney's Cottages adjoin the solid ragstone house, Stone Cottage, in Salts Lane. Nos 1 and 2 Gurney's Cottages are now one residence, named Hillfield Cottage; No 3 is now Gurney's Cottage.

All three were at one time owned by J F Towner of Salts Farm. The Mercer family name lives on, in Mercer's Wood, which covers the steep bank alongside Salts Lane and extends to the boundaries of Salts Place and Loose Valley Nursing Home (Loose Vicarage in Victorian times).

Among the trees there is a disused ragstone quarry, whose entrance was probably off The Cut, the track that was once a convenient short cut to Linton Road.

Above: Peggy and her brother Peter in their front garden at Gurney's Cottages in 1949. Below: Peggy's grandfather, Edward Mannering Mercer, in his back garden at Gurney's Cottages.



Just over 150 years ago St Nicholas Church, Linton, one of the most conspicuous landmarks on the Greensand Hills overlooking the Weald of Kent, was closed for a complete restoration, during which almost the whole interior was rebuilt, enlarged and beautified under the direction of R C Hussey, an architect who specialized in remodelling parish churches.

The entire cost of the work, though now no longer on record (?), must have been considerable and was born by their ladyships Louisa and Elizabeth Cornwallis, daughters of Charles Cornwallis, 2nd Marquis Cornwallis and his wife, the former Lady Louisa Gordon.

The 'Kentish Express' reported: 'Before the works were begun the church consisted of the west tower, nave, two aisles, three chancels and south porch.

'The tower was a rude and plain structure. The south aisle and porch were of late perpendicular date. There were two arches of decorated style between the aisle and the nave - the north aisle was modern.

'The three chancels were in the perpendicular style, the northern used as a monumental chapel being of a later date than the others.

'The pristine church seems to have consisted of the nave and chancel and to have been of early Norman date, as a portion of the original quoins remained at both ends of the building, formed of tuffa, a material not infrequently found in Norman churches in this country.

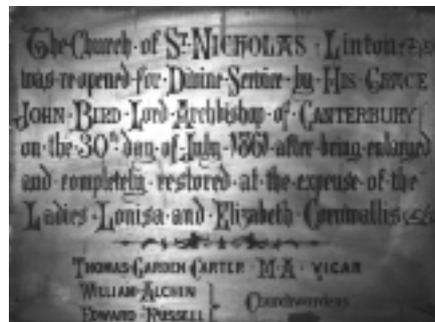
The church anniversary St Nicholas nearly missed



between the nave and the north aisle. The south chancel is to become a music area.

'Rev. T G Carter, Vicar, gave all the furniture within the communion rails, chairs and fittings. Mrs Carter made and presented the communion kneeling mat.

'Parishioners presented sets of service books. The font cover was presented by Mr William Alchin but was not yet ready in place for this ceremony.



Top of page: St Nicholas Church's 1861 tower and spire. Above: Plaque commemorating the re-opening of the church. The Cornwallis sisters: Louisa (left) and Elizabeth, from lithographs by Richard James Lane. © National Portrait Gallery



'The new works include a prolongation of the building towards the west, the rebuilding of the porch and the south aisle on the enlarged plan, in addition to the length of the chancel, the erection of a vestry on the north side of the chancel, a new tower with a stone spire at the west end of the aisle, and two stone arches

'Trustees of Lady Julia Cornwallis are restoring their family vaults and chapel'.

After the ceremony there was an 'excellent supper' at The Bull Inn for the workforce of Maidstone builders Sutton & Vaughan and a feast for 140 children at Linton School.

■ Lady Julia Cornwallis was the third wife of James Cornwallis, 5th Earl Cornwallis, who inherited Linton Park in 1824.

She died in 1847 leaving the equivalent of more than £8 million in today's values.

Louisa and Elizabeth died unmarried in 1872 and 1874 respectively, each leaving the equivalent £8-9 million.

St Nicholas was reopened on July 30 1861 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Bird, in a celebration that 'brought to a conclusion a series of rejoicing such as rarely falls to the lot of any parish and may be with truth said to have afforded as much pleasure to the benevolent and beloved Ladies Cornwallis, who provided them, as they did to all who participated'.

The 150th anniversary of the reopening was marked at a service of thanksgiving and commemoration on Sunday November 27 2011, conducted by the Rector of Linton, Rev Peter Walker and attended by many



local people and visitors who were returning to the village to celebrate the occasion.

The Archdeacon of Tonbridge, the Venerable Clive Mansell, preached on words from Psalm 122, 'I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord'.

The magnificent Cornwallis Chapel

Linton church's Cornwallis Chapel contains 21 family memorials, several of which were created by E H Bailey RA, whose most famous statue is that of Lord Nelson, 169 feet above Trafalgar Square.

Bailey's effigy (*below*) of Viscount Brome, third son of the 5th Earl Cornwallis, who died aged only 22, is regarded by art historians as a masterpiece. Nearby is a tribute to Captain Fiennes Wykeham Mann Cornwallis (MC, Croix de Guerre) of the 17th Lancers, killed by Sinn Fein in Ireland in 1921.

Among the many other distinguished Cornwallises was James Mann, 5th Earl Cornwallis, whose uncle, Lt General Lord Cornwallis, surrendered his Army at Yorktown during the American War of Independence. James was 'the last male heir'. His memorial (*right*) clearly states that he was 'buried in the adjoining churchyard' but the whereabouts of his grave is unknown.

A memorial to Lady Julia Cornwallis (*top of page*), whose trustees restored the chapel, bears a challenging Latin inscription. Their Ladyships Louisa and Elizabeth, who paid for the church to be rebuilt, were buried in the parish church at Culford, Suffolk, the Cornwallis's seat before the family moved to Linton Park. The sisters are commemorated at St Nicholas in a plaque above the font and in a window in the south chancel.

The chapel is a veritable family history in marble and alabaster and well worth a visit. (*Photos contributed by Paul Cooper*)



Kath Cooper, one of the organizers of the service, told 'Loose Threads': 'At the beginning of 2011 members of St Nicholas started to work with High Weald DFAS (Decorative and Fine Arts Society) to prepare a Church Trail. National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies Church Trails identify special characteristics in churches for children of up to 12 to follow, search and check against the ultimately revealed answers.

'Using line drawings by Mary Price, my computer skills and historical research by David and Jane Sawyer, the trail gradually

took shape and was launched at the anniversary service by Sarah Harris, Head of Church Trails at NADFAS. It was presented to the Rector by Jane Hoole, Chairman of High Weald DFAS who had supported the project.

'In preparing the Church Trail it became apparent that it was 150 years since the church was refurbished. The anniversary was almost passed by but the parochial church council, realizing its significance, arranged the anniversary celebrations'.

Documents and photographs showing the historic link between the

Cornwallis family and the church were on display.

■ To arrange a group or family visit to explore the Church Trail contact Kath Cooper on 01622 741494 (email: cooperkathryn@btopenworld.com). For more information about NADFAS visit www.nadfas.org.uk.

Above left: St Nicholas Church in 1807, from a watercolour by H Petrie, FSA, before the 'rude and plain tower' and the body of the church were rebuilt. Above: The church in 2012.

My father, Leonard Gould



Leonard Gould was born at Shernold Cottage, Loose in 1906 to Isabel and Hugh Tyler Gould, the seventh of nine children (*writes Valerie Boyd*). When he was six, and by then living in Bromley, Kent, his parents separated and his father vanished to Australia. Isabel returned to Loose to bring up her family with her father, Joseph Barker and mother Isabella at Hill House.

Joseph, a JP, twice Mayor of Maidstone and brother of Sir John Barker of Kensington, was a strict disciplinarian and played a prominent part in Leonard's upbringing. At the age of about eight Leonard contracted diphtheria and was very ill for a year. He was kept in isolation at the top of the house and during this time had his tonsils removed (badly!) while lying on a table in the house. His ill-health set him back in his education and to some extent throughout his life.

He attended Maidstone Grammar School but maintained that he was only good at art and woodwork. On leaving school he became an apprentice at Samuel P Sanders, a leading cabinet-maker in Week Street, Maidstone and when this was completed he bought a farmyard and some land with the assistance of his great friend and neighbour Frank Stannett of Stannett's Nurseries, Walnut Tree Lane.

The farmyard was in Pickering Street and had been part of Olive Farm, the Stannett family's poultry farm. It was a traditional 'horseshoe' arrangement with a two-storey Kentish ragstone and brick building to the north side, and an oast house and more ragstone outbuildings on the east side. The south side was bounded by Olive House (later called Slade House), owned

and occupied by Mr and Mrs. Arnaud. Olive House appears to have been built in the mid 19th century by William Skinner, and referred to as The Homestead. He is known to have grown hops, which explains the presence of the oast house. Behind the farmyard were about five acres of orchards and a cobnut plat, then rented to Charles Newman of Pear Tree Farm next door.

In 1926 Leonard started a small business in one of the outbuildings, making hors d'oeuvre and butter dish holders, bread boards, cheese boards, trays, table lamps,



Top left: Leonard and Kathleen on their motorbike, with the sidecar in which he delivered his first products. Top right: Leonard as a young man. Above: Leonard and Kathleen at work in their porch while converting their oast house into Kiln Cottage, their first home.

etc. in English walnut and other hardwoods, under a contract from Mills Moore and Co. of No 10 Gee's Court, Oxford Street, London, W1. Other customers included Kent County Council, for the manufacture of school furniture.

Leonard's only form of transport was his motorbike and a box sidecar in which he delivered all his products.

Eventually he met my mother, Kathleen, and when they became engaged they embarked upon converting the oast house into a home, which became Kiln Cottage They married in 1932 and I was born in 1933.

During these years of economic depression Leonard's business struggled; customers were sometimes late with payments and orders dried up. For a while he worked for Mr Stannett in order to stay solvent, pushing produce to Maidstone market on a handcart!

Gradually business became established again. My sister Audrey was born in December 1934 and the two of us had a happy early childhood in the quaint converted oast house with its round lounge and parent's bedroom, containing Leonard's curved furniture, which he made to suit.

Our bedroom and the dining room were next door to the building used as a workshop. A small garden was created at the back, where we spent many hours playing.

I remember the ragstone trough at the back of our garden (see 'Loose Threads 10'). It just had weeds growing in it but it covered our cesspit! I remember also the timber stacks at the back and picking blackberries in the hedgerows behind them.



My mother kept hens and two geese (named 'Symphony' and 'Concerto!') on some of the spare ground. As the business expanded into more sheds (e.g. a cellulose shed for paint spraying and spraying a felt-like surface onto the base of the hors d'oeuvre dish holders) we became accustomed to a number of workmen around. My mother became even busier, as the sole secretarial staff looking after accounts and wages.

In May 1939 my brother Robin was born, giving my mother the added responsibility of a small baby to care for when war was declared in September. The factory then expanded hugely as it was commissioned by the War Office to produce goods for the war effort. It was at this time that a large single-span building was erected behind Kiln Cottage to house new machinery and to provide an assembly area.

War Office contracts came in for ammunition boxes and packing cases for military equipment. The workforce expanded towards 100 and many employees were women. Dad always worked with his employees, and even harder than the rest. He always said that he never asked anybody to do a job which he couldn't do himself. His standards were of the highest.

Frequently new jigs were required for mass-production of a new assignment. Timber was in very short supply and could only be purchased under a government licence. At times only reclaimed timber was available and the women spent hours pulling nails out of it before it could be used!

Opposite the big building three Army huts were put up. These had been made in the factory to a War Department specification. In them, mass production of more huts took place. The walls were made of 8 x 4ft panels comprising two asbestos sheets fitted into a wooden frame and forming a sandwich filled with woodwool dipped into cement slurry. This may have given my father the inspiration for the WasPak packaging system he later patented.

During the early war years Dad was often fire-watching in the factory grounds and he also joined the Auxiliary Fire

Brigade in Linton, where he met Albert Farrow, who drove a 'Green Goddess' fire engine. They became great friends. During the Battle of Britain enemy bombers could often be heard droning overhead; we were then trundled out of our beds and across the yard to the cellar underneath Olive House, where we spent many cold nights in simple bunks.

In 1944 a new horror developed. 'Balls of fire are rolling across the sky', my Dad announced one night while we were

sheltering under the billiards table in the lounge. My imagination ran riot. It transpired these were V1 flying bombs, or 'doodlebugs'. We dreaded the raucous sound but, even worse, the sudden silence as the engine cut out, meaning that the bomb was falling. Our airmen tried to shoot them down before they reached London and once, when one was about to fall on the factory, an airman caused it to fall a few hundred yards further away, blowing out Kiln Cottage's windows.

During the great freeze of 1947, when there were frequent power cuts, Dad's concern about lost production drove him to look for his own electricity generating capacity. By now Albert Farrow was driving a lorry for Bill Reeves (or was it Jack Lawrence of Linton Service Station?) and they took his lorry to an Army surplus sale, where Dad bought two big diesel-driven generators, which were installed in the building next to our dining room.



Top left: Kiln Cottage during conversion: Leonard built special furniture to fit within the round walls. Top right: Building The Lady Kathleen in the factory yard. Above (1): Valerie and Leonard's handcart outside his workshop c. 1936; (2): Valerie (left), her brother Robin and sister Audrey.

In 1946 he took us for a holiday on a cruiser moored on the Norfolk Broads, where he and Kathleen had spent their honeymoon. This was the beginning of a love of boating for us all. He also loved sea-fishing at Dungeness with Albert Farrow and became great friends with Ben Tart, who later became skipper of the local lifeboat.

Eventually Dad decided to build his own rowing boat so that he could fish off Dungeness. This took shape in one of the original workshops to the left of Kiln Cottage. He then built his own twin-engined fishing trawler, called The Heron (registration number FE177) which Ben Tart looked after for him.

Meanwhile, Dad was still a member of Linton Fire Service. He would recall the terrible fire at Sergeant and Parks paint store in Maidstone, which he helped fight one night with Albert Farrow. He was very upset when Albert was tragically killed whilst fighting the horrific fire at Oakwood Mental Hospital (see 'Loose Threads 11').

After many holidays on the Broads he decided to build his own motor cruiser.

He obtained an old Admiralty harbour launch and over many months renovated and converted it to create three cabins and all 'mod cons'. Some of his skilled tradesmen gave up their weekends to help. This all took place in front of Kiln Cottage and neighbours often asked how on earth we were going to get her to the sea?

My brother, then 11, who was with Dad whenever possible, learning his many skills, did all the wiring and much painting, varnishing and other tasks. The name The Lady Kathleen was painted on the cruiser by a local artist and signwriter, Mr Branscombe, who lived a lonely and secluded life in a little bungalow accessed only from The Walk, which ran from Pickering Street to the King George V Playing Field.

I well remember when she was ready to be launched. A large low-loading lorry was brought in to take her to Chatham Dockyard. She was so wide that a police escort was needed. I wanted to take a photograph of her passing the Cannon in Maidstone. I stood there with my camera, waiting and waiting, only to see that the police had taken her the wrong way round the one-way system and that she was gone! When she was finally launched we had many happy weekends and holidays on her. In the year after the Coronation we were present in the lower reaches of the Thames to salute the Royal yacht Britannia as she sailed past dressed overall, with the Queen and Prince Philip on board for the first time.

One of Dad's principal customers was Lowes of Sittingbourne, later to become Export Packing Services, whose contracts manager was William Sturgess. My father struck up a good relationship with him at the time and a lot of work came his way. Eventually Mr Sturgess showed an interest in joining my father's company.

In about 1950 Leonard had a bad attack of angina. He had never been robust since his childhood illness, and a few years before his heart problems started he had been very seriously ill with encephalitis. The



result was that he invited Mr Sturgess to join the company and made him a director. At the time this made good sense as he had many useful contacts in the packaging industry.

The board comprised three directors: my father (Chairman and Managing Director), my mother (Co-Director) and William Sturgess (Director and Contracts Manager). My father specifically retained financial control of the business. Initially the partnership worked well and the company grew. The Army huts were taken down and replaced with a large modern workshop. Another machine shop was built, encroaching on the old nut plat. New machining capability was installed and two lorries were bought to deliver the company's products.

After a year or two Dad's health began to deteriorate again and this became of great concern to our family. Reluctantly my parents agreed to sell the thriving business and, not wishing to burden the company with unmanageable debts, and having the interests of his employees in mind, my father, unfortunately in my opinion, sold the entire company and the freehold of the premises to Mr Sturgess for much less than it was worth.

In January 1953 we finally moved out of Kiln Cottage to a lovely house called Swallowfield in Wheelers Lane, Linton. Further down the lane Dad purchased a field in which he erected a building large enough to house some of his precious woodworking machines to pursue what had now become his hobby. On the rest of the land he grew strawberries. This became an enterprise into which he put his meticulous thought and skill until he was producing fruit which was in demand at Covent Garden to supply London hotels.

Meanwhile he created a beautiful garden, frequently enjoyed by his young grandchildren, and we all benefited from his flourishing vegetable garden.

When my parents finally downsized they moved to a bungalow in Trottiscliffe in June 1981 where Leonard spent his last years, still enjoying his garden, his shed and precious tools. He passed away in October 1990.

I'm very proud when I see that the company my father founded in very difficult times has grown into such a prosperous and successful business.

■ With thanks to my brother Robin who helped me research this article.

Top of page: Leonard and Kathleen after they retired. Left: Leonard at his strawberry patch at Swallowfield. Below: Setting a saw in his workshop at Swallowfield.



Your Picture Gallery ... featuring people, places and events illustrating life in our area in years gone by. Do you have a contribution for our next issue?



Friends and relations pictured in Church Road, Loose, in 1927. (1) Randall Beale, (2) Lilian ('Toddles') Bartlett (née Beale), (3) Marie Bartlett, (4) George Frederick Hood, (5) Mary ('Con') Hood, (6) Jack Coulter, (7) Donald Beale, (8) William (Bill) Coulter, (9) ? Lilian Coulter, (10) Sidney Coulter, (11) perhaps Lilian or Hilda Coulter, (12) Frank Tidey, (13) Roy Tidey, (14) Florence ('Queenie') Coulter, (15) Jack Wright, (16) Eric Beale, (17) Ada Dorothy ('Dolly') Hood (née Coulter), (18) Barbara Hood, (19)

Do you remember the Loose 'lengthsman', pictured here trimming the verge on Old Loose Hill? The photo was contributed by Linda Loe (now Linda Stewart) and was taken in 1974 for a school project entitled 'Portrait of My Village'. (See 'Loose Threads 8')

Lilian Beale (née Coulter), (20) 'Granny' Mercy Coulter (née Smith), (21) Albert (Bert) Coulter, (22) Beatrice Wright (née Coulter), (23) Gordon Wright, (24) Tryphena ('Tina') Coulter, (25) Margery ('Madge') Hood, (26) Brian Beale, (27) Norman Wright, (28) Joan Hood. Contributed by John Halls, whose mother Beryl Halls (née Coulter) was one of the four children of Bill and Lilian Doris Coulter of No 1 Rose Cottages. An article by John about his Coulter ancestors and his memories of Loose will be published in our next issue.

Below: Only here for the beer. In 'Loose Threads 11' we featured one of the William Wilberforce pub's dart team. Below we see a group from the pub, glasses charged, on an outing in the 1950s. Tell us who you recognize. (Contributed by John Hill)



This plaque on the corner of Church Road and Tovil Hill reminds us that Tovil was once the home of important paper mills whose raw materials were delivered by barges that moored at what is now Millers' Wharf, Tovil. The plaque was erected in 2007 by Tovil Parish Council, who also restored the drinking fountain above which it is mounted. (Contributed by Noel Gibbons)



For many generations children have played in the Loose stream and on the banks of The Brooks in their school holidays. These photos were taken in August 1983 and show (top) The Chequers many years before it was extended, and the gate into the garden was nearly always open. In the picture above the children on the bridge are, from the right, Suzie Pennie (now Erasmuson) Nicola Bissit and David Pennie. The girl with the bicycle is Nicola Knowles. (Contributed by Alan Pennie)



C H Hobbay's shop on the corner of Cripple Street and Loose Road and C G and W Pickering's garage and petrol station in the 1960s. The site is now occupied by a branch of Lloyds TSB and Intec, heating and control engineers. One of the proprietors of the garage was Charles Greenbank Pickering. In 1945 he married Joan, daughter of George and Henrietta Foster Clark, of Boughton Mount, Boughton Monchelsea. After he died in August 1962 she renounced her married name and reverted to her maiden name. In 'Loose Threads 11' (page 45) we published an appeal for information about the Pickering family from Shirley Bulley, whose great uncle George Pickering, was C G Pickering's father. We hope this picture will jog a few memories about the Pickering and Foster Clark families for publication in future issues. (Photo contributed by Sally Cars)

Linton club is as old as the MCC



CRICKET MEETING,
At COX-HEATH, to begin in 1787.

SUBSCRIPTION TWO GUINEAS A YEAR.

TO meet Once a Week, except in those Weeks when a great County Match is to be played, of which Notice will be Given on the Meeting previous to it, for the Encouragement of the best Players to come, to chuse as equal a Match as possible for one Innings.

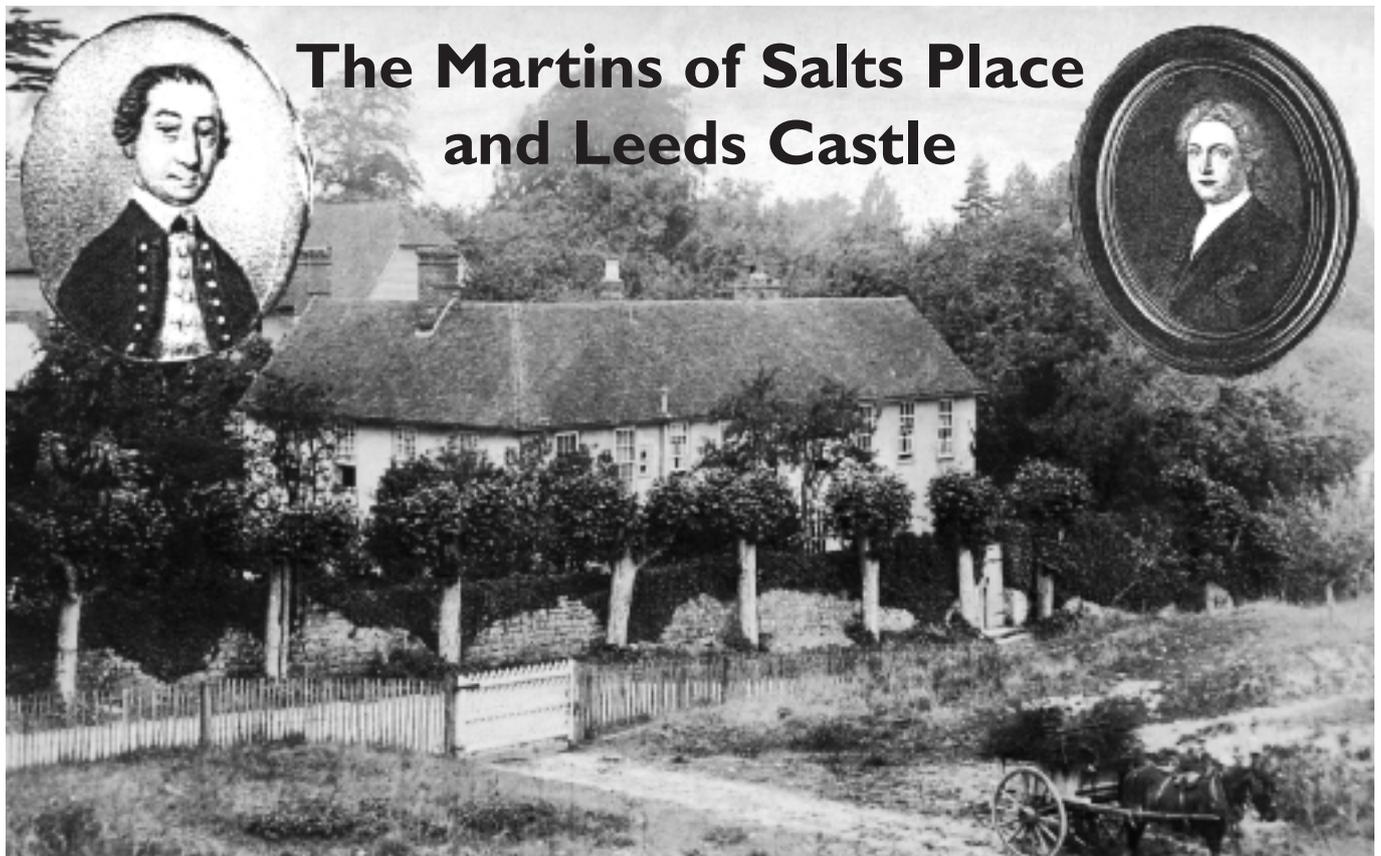
To allow FIVE SHILLINGS for the Winners, and TWO SHILLINGS and SIXPENCE for the Losers, to pay all Expences of Horse Hire, &c. To allow ONE SHILLING each Man for Eating, and SIXPENCE for his Drink.

AN ORDINARY to be provided at Two SHILLINGS for Subscribers, and THREE SHILLINGS Non-Subscribers. The WINE, &c. to be paid for exclusively.

NO FORFEITS of any Kind for Non-Attendance.



Linton Park Cricket Club (formerly the Coxheath Cricketing Society) celebrates its 225th anniversary in 2012. One of its founders was Sir Horatio Mann of Linton Park, who in 1787 also helped establish the MCC. Pictured above are notices announcing the first club's first matches, and (top of page) the team that played Tovil CC in a 'local Derby' 150 years later, in 1937. Left to right, standing: J Pocock, A Pratt, C Thomsett, O Fryer, R Harper, N Judge; seated: P Brattle, A Buckoke, F Sutton (captain), E Cheeseman, A Ash; foreground: N Hawkes (scorer). (Contributed by Derek Pantony)



The Martins of Salts Place and Leeds Castle

The inhabitants of Salts Place, Loose and Leeds Castle considered themselves neighbours when Denny Martin of Salts married Frances Fairfax of Leeds Castle in 1721 (*writes Margaret Chapman*). Fortunately nearly all the Martins were prolific letter-writers and many of their letters survive, giving us the opportunity to follow their lives with a certain degree of insight. The family never lost its connection with Salts Place even though, at various stages of their lives, nearly all its members resided at Leeds Castle - but for one, who settled in Virginia, USA.



Salts Place (known simply as Salts in days gone by) was built in about 1600, possibly earlier, with additions and alterations made over the next two centuries. Its two cedar trees, a well-known landmark, were damaged in a storm in 1836. Salts was owned by the Buffkin family from 1621, when Ralph and his wife Anne (née Berners) moved there from Gore Court after their marriage. Their children were born at Salts. Ralph, their second son, was born in 1626. He never married and in his will in 1700, his brother and sister having pre-deceased him, he left all his properties, including Salts, to a distant cousin, John Martin, grandson of Joan Buffkin who had married Richard Martin in about 1600.

John lived in Westminster. He and Ralph corresponded and on March 30, 1699, John wrote: *'Cosen, this day I thank you I have gott abroad again, I am very thankfull to you for your HeartyWishes that I may escape the grievous affliction, the Gout, I am very apprehensive that my lameness is too Near a Kin to it, this is 3 or 4th time I have been touched with it; Mr Frewin was with me today and encourages me that he can help me to pills that may prevent it coming again or if it should happen to surprise me he hath other pills that will prevent it running to any great Extreamit. Your humble servt. Jn Martin'*.

Poor John. He was only 47. We don't know how his lameness progressed but he obviously recovered, since he lived for another 31 years.

Following his fortunate inheritance he moved to Salts in the Spring of 1710, bringing with him his wife Sibylla Michelbourne and their son Denny. Denny was first married, in 1719, to Hannah Briggs, sister of Rev. Henry Briggs, Vicar of All Saints', Loose from 1712 to 1722. Hannah died within a year and in 1721 Denny married Frances Fairfax, daughter of Thomas, the fifth Lord Fairfax and Lady Catherine Culpeper of Leeds Castle.

Denny and Frances resided at Salts after their marriage and Frances lived 'a retired life' in Loose. Like her elder brother, Thomas, she died in her 89th year and was buried in the Martin vault in All Saints' parish church.

Denny and Frances's children - Edward, John, Denny, Frances, Sibylla, Thomas Bryan (always known by his second name), Philip and Anna Susanna - were remarkable for their longevity and the fact that not

one of them ever married, although one had a daughter and one of the girls certainly had a love interest. All of them were born at Salts and baptized at All Saints'. The boys particularly speak to us through their letters home to their mother and siblings.

Edward and John were boarders at King's School, Canterbury. Three letters dated 1733 from Edward to his parents survive and in one he assures them that he is drinking his milk each morning and evening and says, 'My brother is so very idle that Mr Evens doth not no [sic] what to do with him'. One wonders if Mr Evens was able to overcome the brother's basic unwillingness to be educated in the accustomed manner. 'I have begun to make Latin,' says Edward, '(and) I should be glad if you would [send] me and my brother a white wascoat ... and ten shillings quarter for daunsing'.

Title picture: An undated view of Salts Place. The horse and cart are approaching the ragstone quarry whose face can still be seen in the paddock in Salts Lane opposite Salts Place. Insets: Edward Martin (left) and Denny Martin jnr, two of Denny and Frances Martin's five sons. Centre of page: Thomas, sixth Lord Fairfax.

A few years later, through the influence of his Fairfax uncles at Leeds Castle, Edward obtained a commission in the army and went to Jamaica, where it seems he enjoyed life to the full. He writes in a new and jaunty style of tea parties, chariot rides and ladies who were 'exceeding handsome and very gay. I have the pleasure to be acquainted with a pretty many of 'em'.

The dancing lessons had obviously paid off - and by now his spelling had much improved!

In 1745 the Jacobite Rebellion meant that the troops were hastily recalled from the West Indies but Edward (now Major Martin) arrived too late to fight at the Battle of Culloden in January 1746. However, while on garrison duty at Fort William he had plenty of time for chasing rebels, sometimes successfully!

His letters home, from 1746 to 1748, show his poor opinion of Scotland and the Scots and the boredom he experienced.

Edward inherited Salts on the death of his father in 1762 and died in 1775.

John seems to have begun a career in the Royal Navy, joining the Marines but dying, unmarried, in Portsmouth at the age of 21. His death is not recorded in the Loose burial register or family manuscripts.

Denny Martin jnr matriculated at University College, Oxford, in 1722, where he became BA in 1748 and MA in 1751. Later he was also granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Taking Holy Orders, he became curate of St Margaret's, Broomfield, about a mile from Leeds Castle, and was so serving in 1760 when Hasted wrote his account of that parish. In 1782 he became a curate at Loose and presumably remained there until his death in 1800.

Denny received frequent letters from his brother Bryan, who had settled in Virginia with his uncle, Thomas, sixth Lord Fairfax. In 1781 Denny was vested with the Hon. Alexander Culpeper's one-sixth part of Northern Neck, a property in Virginia, as well as the manors therein, which Fairfax had reserved for his own use. The arrangement was made on condition that Denny changed his name to Fairfax, which he did in August 1782.

In 1783 he visited Virginia to establish his claim to the one-sixth ownership. This was possibly one of the most exciting events in his life. In 1791 he inherited Leeds Castle and when Lord Fairfax died in 1793 he also inherited, under the entail of his grandmother Catherine Fairfax's will, the remaining five-sixths, which, because of the outcome of the American War of Independence, was a mere technicality.

Now in his sixties, Denny quickly grew tired of the litigation involved in establishing his claim to the property. All he wished for was to enjoy living at Leeds Castle. This upset brother Bryan who on May 25 1794 wrote: *'I must own I am sorry to find the house [Salts] in which we were born deserted. It hurts my feelings. The extensive empty walls of L[Leeds] C[astle], ever destructive to its master, I detest the name, why so fond of a place only lent for an hour and go at last you know not where.'*

In 1797 Denny terminated his interest in the Virginia property. When he died he left equal shares in all his properties,

which were located in Loose, Brishing, Langley, Boughton Monchelsea and Maidstone, to his sisters, together with a legacy of £4,000 for each of them.

To his youngest brother, Philip, Denny bequeathed Leeds Castle and his properties in Virginia, Kent, Sussex and elsewhere, which had been left to him by Lord Fairfax. He left nothing to Bryan, who was otherwise amply provided for.

In 1751, when he was 20, Bryan went out to Virginia on the invitation of his uncle Thomas, the sixth Lord Fairfax, and was established at 'His Lordship's quarter' in Frederick (now Clarke). When Bryan came of age he was vested with a 'quarter' and 8,840 acres of surrounding limestone lands on the west bank of the Shenandoah, across from Leeds Manor, in Virginia. This tract was then named Greenway Court in memory of the Culpeper family's manor of that name in Hollingbourne.

Once in possession of Greenway Court, Bryan never left Virginia. But to him came both joy and sadness. In 1785 his daughter Ann, (the child of a liaison with a housekeeper, Ann Crawford)

married Captain Francis Gildart, and Bryan gave him 908 acres of land. Ann died in the spring of 1789. Francis lived with Bryan for a year but then something obviously went disastrously wrong with the relationship, because in May 1792 Bryan wrote, 'so greatly has he deceived me I do not suffer him to come near me'. Many more of Bryan's interesting and informative letters survive.



Bryan died in 1798 having lived at Greenway Court for 46 years. He left the property and

its land to his housekeeper, Betsy Powers. To his sisters he left plate, a watch and money, worth £35,000. This sum, equivalent to about £2.75 million in today's values, was to feature largely in the future history of Leeds Castle. Had Bryan's daughter Ann lived and had children he might have left a completely different will.

Philip, who was Denny and Frances's youngest son and seventh child, joined the army and by February 1759 was a first lieutenant. At the Siege of Louisburg during the Seven Years War he came to the attention of General Wolf, who wrote glowingly of him. As the war progressed Philip was also present at the Siege of Bellisle. He became a captain-lieutenant in December 1763 and attained the rank of captain in January 1771.

At the Siege of Gibraltar the cock of his hat was shot off by a 26lb cannon ball. The hat is said to be still preserved at Leeds Castle.

Philip was mentioned in dispatches and promoted, emerging from that adventure as a major. He subsequently rose by seniority to be a major general. In 1765 and 1766 Philip visited Bryan at Greenway Court. The brothers had a wonderful time together and while there Philip purchased some property and bought some slaves to work the land. When he left Virginia he spent five years in Newfoundland and by the time he arrived home at Salts in 1771 he was a regular captain.

Above: Leeds Castle, detested by Bryan Martin, restored by his brother.

Revelations in Bible led family to Loose



Above: two archive photos of Salts Place and a recent view showing the property flanked by storm-damaged Cedars of Lebanon.

Sometime after this he contracted smallpox and by the late 1780s he was in the West Indies and Honduras. When brother Denny died Philip took up residence in Leeds Castle, where he was joined by his sisters, who were each charged £100 a year for their board and the privilege of living at the castle. So it seems that this was when the Martin family's occupation of Salts ended.

By 1817 Philip was advancing into extreme old age and wondering to whom he should leave his estate, now that all his brothers were dead. He traced one Fiennes Wykeham, great grandson of his grandfather's half sister. Accordingly he made the doubtless astonished Fiennes his heir but made it clear that £30,000 of the legacy Bryan had left to his sisters should be spent on refurbishing the castle.

It is ironic that the legacy of Bryan Martin, who detested the very name of Leeds Castle, passed through his sisters to Philip and was eventually used to render the castle into broadly what it remains today.

Philip died there in August 1821. His remains were deposited in the family vault at All Saints'. In his will he requested that Fiennes Wykeham take the arms and name of Martin in addition to his own. The change of name was granted by royal licence on October 18 1821.

■ Email Margaret Chapman at MChap53767@aol.com for a free copy of a more comprehensive version of this article.



When Jo Whitcomb's parents visited Tasmania in 2001 they found an old family Bible for sale in an antique shop and bought it for their daughter, who lives in Kent and collects Bibles. Jo noticed that on blank pages in the Bible many births, marriages and deaths in the Tinham family were recorded, including the births of George Tinham and Hannah Froud and their marriage at All Saints', Loose, on May 12, 1866.

Hannah's father was George Henry Moses Froud, Loose's parish clerk, whose brother Edward had a butcher's shop and slaughterhouse in Loose. A note in the frontispiece stated that the Bible had been presented to Ernest Barden Tinham on November 16, 1869, when he was one year old, by 'his loving godfather'.

Interested in returning the Bible to the family and learning more about the Tinhams and Frouds, Jo contacted Robin Froud of No 2 Pear Tree Cottages, Pickering Street, whose family history is being researched by Margaret Chapman.

Margaret posted details of the entries from the Bible on Ancestry.com, the family history website, and was soon contacted by Ernest Barden Tinham's great granddaughter, Sandra Revill Tremulis, who lives in San Francisco, and is researching the Tinham family history. Sandra was fascinated to discover that the Bible had been presented to Ernest on the day he was baptized.

Margaret put Sandra in touch with Jo, who handed the Bible over to Sandra's mother, Patricia, Ernest Barden Tinham's granddaughter: 'We are overjoyed to receive this very generous gesture and to have the Bible back in the Tinham family,' said Sandra.

In 2011 Sandra, her husband Steve, their daughter Alessandra and Patricia visited places in Loose associated with the Frouds including the sites of Edward Froud's shop and slaughterhouse; Edward was Sandra's 3 x great granduncle.

Among the incidental information Margaret has found about the Frouds is that theatrical stars Evelyn Laye, Sonnie Hale, Jessie Mathews and Frank Lawton appear on the family tree. Evelyn was Edward Froud's great granddaughter.

'I'm delighted to have helped the Bible to be returned to one of the families named in it', said Margaret. 'How it got to Tasmania will probably never be known'.

Top of page: Patricia Tinham (holding the Bible) with her daughter Sandra and granddaughter Alessandra during their visit to Loose.



Stones reveal history of ancient parish boundaries

Did you know that more than 50 stones, erected in some cases more than 170 years ago to mark Loose's boundaries with its neighbouring parishes, still survive - perhaps in a field, verge or hedge near where you live? And that part of our parish once belonged to East Farleigh?

The fascinating story of the boundary and the way it has been marked and realigned over the years is told in a report written by Roger Thornburgh and was published by the Loose Area History Society in 2012, one hundred years after the first official attempt to survey the boundary since Victorian times.

In 1995, in an article in 'Loose Threads 4', Roger described the course of the boundary as it had existed for most of the 18th and 19th centuries (and probably for several hundreds of years previously), before a number of alterations took place as a result of government action.

Among these were the transfers of a detached portion of East Farleigh to Loose in 1887 and the northern half of Loose to Maidstone in 1934. In his article Roger warned that there was more to follow and that he hoped to go into more detail in the future. That time has now come.

'Nowadays, to find out the boundary of a parish, you consult an Ordnance Survey map or the parish or district council', said Roger. 'To do the same 200 years ago, when maps were not so readily available or as accurate, and parish and district councils did not exist, you would have asked local people or looked to see where the boundary stones stood.'

'The latter would probably have been the more accurate! They were almost always large, shaped, stones, inserted deeply into the ground and therefore not easily moved, and usually inscribed with a number and the parish letter or name (and often the letter or name of the adjacent parish as well).

'Many of these stones have disappeared because of farming, building, carelessness or vandalism but some survive and are valuable indications of the old boundary of a parish, as well as being interesting local historical features.

'The Loose stones attracted the attention of a group of local people in both 1888 and 1912 and my report includes accounts of these two surveys, together with the results of my own recent investigations.

'I have also added information about stones that were put in place to mark the new boundary between Loose and Maidstone following the 1934 boundary changes, and a few others that Loose acquired after some further boundary changes in 1964'.



Title picture: 'Beating the bounds' at Pympe's Court during a Loose boundary walk in 1965. By tradition young parishioners were 'bumped' on each stone to remind them to keep within bounds! John Short, Clerk to Loose Parish Council, is standing on the extreme left. Left: Loose Boundary Stone No 1, on the corner of Old Loose Hill and Salts Lane.



The 1888 survey took place a year after the changes that gave Loose the detached part of East Farleigh and was recorded by Frederick Stace. Apart from running a grocer's shop on Loose Green he was Loose Postmaster (for 38 years, until 1916); Assistant Overseer for Loose; and Rate Collector to Maidstone Rural Council for 34 years, until shortly before his death in 1918. In 1894, when Loose Parish Council was created, he became the parish clerk.

Mr Stace undertook the survey in May 1912 with several other local inhabitants, among them Tom and Will Froud (also Overseers), James Fullager, Edward Wilkins, Ambrose Startup and George Froud.

The report of the 1912 perambulation is more detailed and interesting, telling us what the participants got up to on the way round as well as what they discovered on the boundary.

Roger's 28-page report, 'The Boundary Stones of the parish of Loose, Kent, 2004',

contains colour photographs of the 53 stones that survive and maps showing the old and current boundaries and the location of all the stones, lost and extant. It can be purchased at the Loose Area History Society's meetings, price £3.50 or downloaded free from our website.

Details of a similar boundary stone survey in Linton have been published on the parish council's website www.lintonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk.

Sixty-two stones have been identified on maps (a remarkable total for a boundary with a perimeter of less than nine miles) and of these 32 stones have so far been discovered still visible.

■ Long forgotten stones still come to light occasionally. One that marked Loose's original boundary with Maidstone was unearthed only recently during the development of Watermill Grange behind the Fire and Ambulance Stations in Loose Road.

Walking Loose and Linton's boundaries

An annual parish walk called 'Beating the Bounds' that originated many centuries ago is still held in Linton every Rogation Sunday.

In May 2012, following the publication of Roger Thornburgh's report, Roy Hood led a Loose boundary walk in aid of Children's Leukaemia to commemorate the 1912 walk.

Top of page: Roger Thornburgh (second right) leading members of the Loose Area History Society on a boundary survey in the Loose Valley in 2000. Below left: a group of Linton boundary project members in 2007. Below: a stone on Linton's boundary with Maidstone.





Poorhouse, Workhouse, Hospital

222 years of welfare and health care at Coxheath

During the Charles Dickens bicentennial celebrations, repeats on television of film dramatizations of *Oliver Twist* reminded us that until less than 90 years ago there was a Victorian workhouse in our midst.

Its site is now occupied by 'eco-friendly' homes in Clock House Rise, Coxheath but its chapel survives close to the entrance to the estate in Heath Road and is now Holy Trinity, Coxheath's parish church.

Institutions caring for the destitute and infirm first became part of our local history in 1771 when the parishes of Loose, Linton, East Farleigh, West Farleigh, Hunton, Barming and Detling built a 'poorhouse' on the northern edge of Coxheath, near the corner of Stockett Lane and what is now Workhouse Lane, East Farleigh.

Only those who had a Certificate of Origin from one of these parishes were admitted; the travelling poor were hustled off to the next parish as quickly as possible! Women in labour were cared for by the landlady of the Chequers Inn, Loose before being moved on.

Able-bodied inmates of the poorhouse worked on nearby Workhouse Farm and made hop bags. These were sold by auction every Easter Monday at the Chequers, the money raised going towards the cost of running the poorhouse, which was mainly funded by the local Poor Rate.

In 1835 the Maidstone Poor Law Union was formed for Maidstone and the parishes of Barming, Bearsted, Boughton Monchelsea, East Farleigh, Hunton, Linton, Loose, Nettlestead, Otham, Staplehurst, Teston, West Farleigh and Yalding.



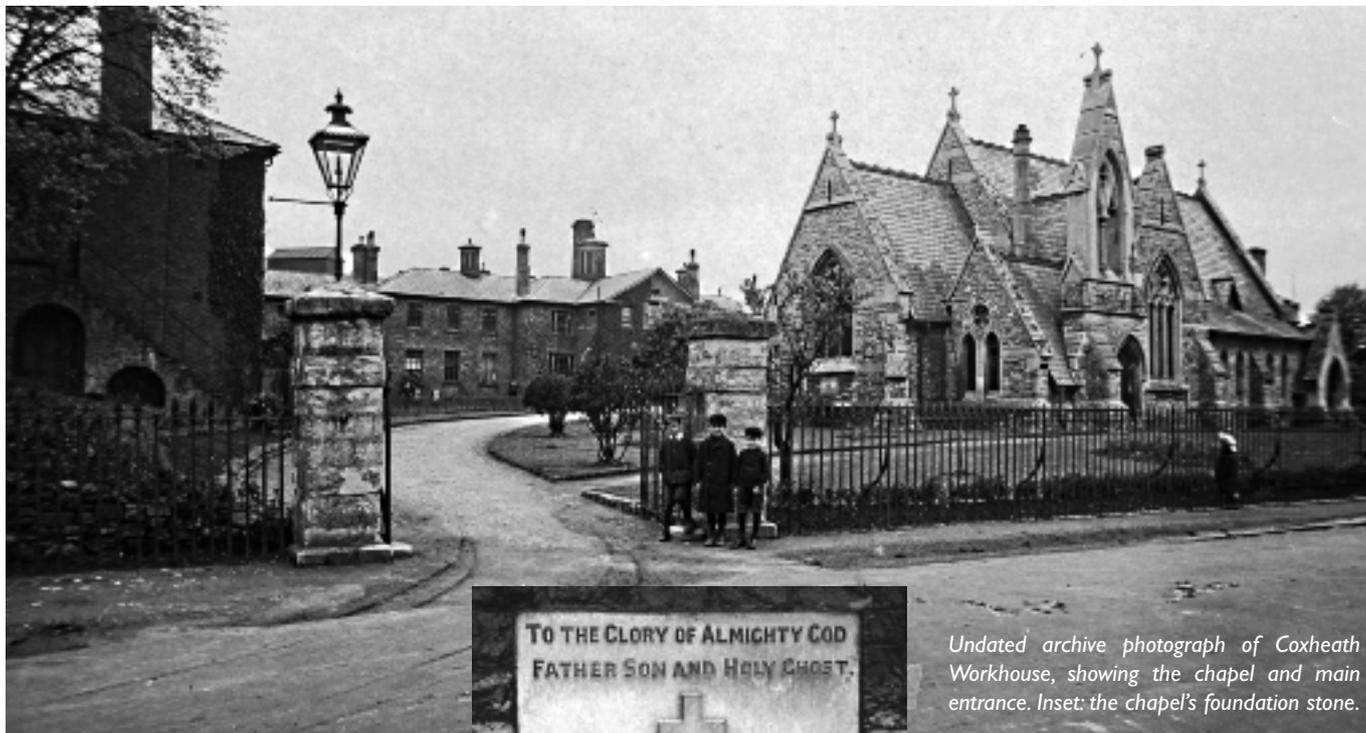
The poorhouse was too small to accommodate paupers from such a large area so in 1838 it was replaced with a new and larger institution, built at a cost of £7,000 (about £630,000 in today's money) on the south side of Heath Road, Coxheath. Known at various times as the Maidstone Union, Coxheath Workhouse and 'the Union', it opened in March 1838 and accommodated up to 600 people.

Later, on the opposite side of Heath Road, on the site now occupied by Heathside and

Coxheath Library, children's wards were opened. From 1857 the workhouse had its own school, with at one time nearly 200 scholars learning 'reading, writing and arithmetic' and useful skills. Boys were taught shoemaking and there were housekeeping and laundry lessons for girls.

The workhouse's inmates were classified as 'poor'; 'destitute'; 'elderly'; 'sick'; 'lunatics' or 'imbeciles' (for whom there was a padded cell); 'children'; 'deserted women'; 'widows' and 'casuals'. Casual paupers were admitted to special wards and had to carry out specified tasks in return for a night's board. Long-term residents were given such tasks as 'stone breaking' (hammering ragstone into small pieces for road building) and 'oakum picking' (reducing old tarred hemp rope into fibres for caulking ships' decks and hulls).

Title picture: Dinner time at a workhouse in 1902. (Contributed by Peter Higginbotham) Centre: One of Linton Hospital's wards in the 1950s. © Nursing Mirror. Foot of next page: Workhouse inmates picking oakum.



Undated archive photograph of Coxheath Workhouse, showing the chapel and main entrance. Inset: the chapel's foundation stone.

The tool used for this job was a spike, which explains why a workhouse was often referred to as 'the spike'.

Admission to the workhouse was a humiliating experience. New arrivals were listed in huge leather-bound registers (now kept at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone), their possessions confiscated, and they were then stripped, washed, examined by the Medical Officer and given workhouse uniforms.

Men, women and children, even from the same family, were allocated to separate wards but after 1847 married couples over the age of 60 could live together.

'Disorderly and refractory behaviour' - such as using obscene language; gambling, or 'filthy habits or clothing' - was punished, often by a bread-and-water diet for two days, though pregnant women and nursing mothers were exempt. Corporal punishment was allowed, but not for females.

The inmates were generally well-behaved. Over one 16 year period there were only four entries in Coxheath's punishment book. For example, George Playfoot and Alfred Ward were confined for 12 and nine hours respectively, on bread and



water, for disorderly conduct; and on two occasions John Baker received four strokes of the cane for using bad language and throwing stones.

Meals were adequate, with bread, gruel or cheese for breakfast. For dinner there were vegetables three times a week, and bread, rice, soup or a meat or suet pudding three times a week. The old, infirm and imbeciles received extra rations. Supper consisted of bread, gruel or cheese, with extra tea for the aged and infirm.

Too much food would have made the inmates' existence too comfortable; not enough food, and they would not have been strong enough to work.

Nettlestead's abandoned baby

The earliest census for the workhouse, taken in 1841, records that William Martin was the governor, with his wife Susan as matron, Duncan McPherson from Scotland as schoolmaster and Mary Ann Lock as schoolmistress. The inmates ranged in age from five-week-old William Cassen to Joseph Dudley (85).

He, like most inmates, was an impoverished agricultural labourer but there was also a waterman, a shoemaker, a papermaker, a bricklayer and a carpenter who had fallen on hard times.

In 1871 the school had 178 pupils, most of whom had been born locally although there were about ten from London. Their schoolmaster and

schoolmistress were John Seader and Mary Ann Locke and by this time the workhouse's staff had increased to include a resident shoemaker, William Robinson, and a laundress, Harriet Lewis. Many babies were born and baptized at the workhouse. Most of them were unmarried mothers' children although three, christened in 1851, were the offspring of John Dann (a gardener from Loose) and his wife Elizabeth.

Another baby (mother unknown), baptized in 1852, was named William Nettlestead, having been found abandoned in a barn in Nettlestead. Inevitably, many inmates died in the workhouse, which had its own burial ground in Stockett Lane, opened in 1840 and extended in 1899. Transcripts of the burial registers for 1840 - 1852 survive in the Loose Archives and on microfilm in other archives.

The first burial was that of Mary Anderson (75), from Marden. The youngest in the early registers was Mary Ann Driscoll, aged only two weeks. Poor William Nettlestead was buried just two weeks after he was christened and was said to be 'probably about 4 or 5 weeks old'.

The oldest inhabitant we have found in the registers is Jonathan Williams (98) from Maidstone.





Union Workhouse becomes Linton Hospital

In 1929 the workhouse became the Maidstone and District Public Assistance Institution and evolved into a hospital, caring mainly for the elderly. In 1931 a nurses' home was built on the site and from the 1950s there was a training school for assistant nurses. After completing their training female nurses were paid £427 a year (about £9,000 in today's money). Males earned £3 a year more!

Renamed Linton Hospital after the National Health Service was created in 1948, it finally closed in 1993, by when many of its services had been transferred to other hospitals. In 1994 it was demolished, leaving only the chapel (built in 1883) and nurses' home (now the headquarters of the South East Coast Ambulance Service). The chapel became Coxheath parish church in 1996.



Shortly before Linton Hospital was demolished it was visited by 10 pupils from Oldborough Manor School for a history project. One of them, Vicky McCallum, wrote in her report: 'After a talk by Mr Hinton he showed us the sewing room, and a bedroom in which workers had slept. It had original floorboards with dark patches where the beds were. I worked out that the room had 14 beds.'



Eliza's life in the laundry

In 1975 Bessie Gilbert, formerly of Palm Cottage, Well Street, reminisced about her mother Eliza Taylor's life and her time as a laundress at the workhouse: 'The Union used to take in "stragglers". If anyone went up there for the night they'd have a bed and they'd give them their breakfast, but they had to do a bit of work for their keep. Mothers had to come in with their children.

' Women were on one side and the men on the other. Married couples wasn't allowed to sleep together.

'They was only allowed to see each other for about two hours on Sundays. My mother had to work very hard, standing washing from seven in the morning until half past five. There was only a washing machine for what they called the dirty washing and a man had to do that. On Tuesdays I've seen my mother's hands red raw, right up to her elbows'.

■ Bessie's memories of her family's life in Loose and Hunton were published in 'Loose Threads 7'.



There were two fireplaces, which were the only way of heating the room. He showed us a redecorated room which was quite different from the workers' bedroom, which was dark and dingy. The stairs to the sewing room and bedroom were very worn, even though they were of heavy stone, which means that lots of people had used them.

'The windows in the workhouse were very small, making the rooms dark and dull. Those we went in were musty and there were only five small windows'.

W E Hinton, the hospital's Senior Domestic Supervisor, told his visitors: 'Having worked at Linton for the majority of my working life I'm really attached to the old place and will be really sorry to see it go'.

■ For our knowledge of the workhouse and Linton Hospital we thank Roger Thornburgh and his class from Oldborough Manor School who studied the subject for a history project in 1992 and



accumulated an impressive collection of documents and maps. These have now been catalogued and deposited in the Loose Archives. Among the contents are census returns for 1841-1881; the 1871 census for the Workhouse School; a workhouse project written by Vicky McCallum; 32 'clocking in' cards used by members of Linton Hospital staff - and a spoon engraved 'Maidstone Union'.

On opposite page: (1) Some of Linton Hospital's staff in the 1950s; (2) an anatomy lesson for trainee nurses; (3) handling a patient on a rudimentary trolley and a ramp consisting of two planks - not quite what today's Health and Safety regulations would accept! © Nursing Mirror. Top of this page: the hospital awaiting demolition, pictured by a pupil from Oldborough Manor School; Above left: pupils from the school recording details of the hospital's architecture; Above: W E Hinton, Senior Domestic Supervisor.

The forgotten burial ground

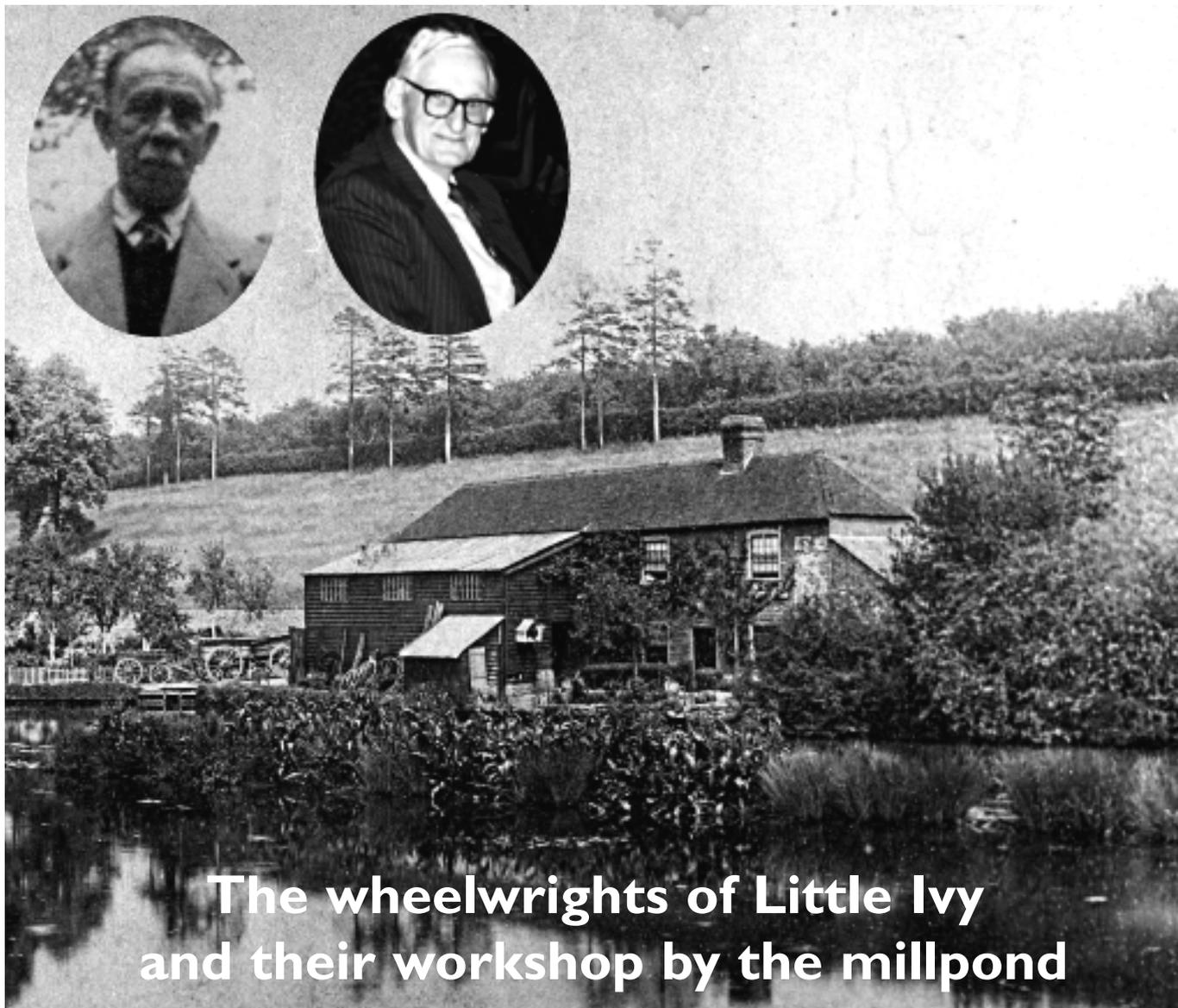
Workhouse Farm, where the inmates of the 18th century poorhouse worked, is now called Linden Farm. Its farmhouse survives, close to the site of the poorhouse and some cottages (which may have been where the staff lived).

The workhouse burial ground was where Coxheath Village Hall and playing field are today. Within living memory bodies from

the workhouse were wheeled down Stockett Lane in coffins on hand carts for burial.

There was a wooden chapel and hundreds of graves but only a few had headstones.

In the 1960s the Army was called in to clear and level the site. All visible traces of the burial ground were obliterated but evidently the graves are still there, concealed beneath the hall and playing field, which were opened in 1970.



The wheelwrights of Little Ivy and their workshop by the millpond

The Harris family has lived and worked in Loose and neighbouring parishes for many generations. Below we publish an extract from the memoirs of the late Lionel Harris, followed by an account by a daughter of Sidney Hugh Harris on how she discovered her Loose roots.

'My father was George Harris, eldest son of George Richard Harris (known as Richard or Dick) of Loose Valley, who owned the wheelwright's shop near Little Ivy Mill, which had been a flour mill. My great grandfather [also named George], nicknamed 'Jolly', also owned the wheelwrights.

'The mill had been turned into two houses. When it was working the flour was taken down Linton Hill to the Weald by a cart with two or four horses.

'When I left school I worked for six months at Ambrose's furniture shop, Maidstone, which was burned down. Then I was an apprentice carpenter at Joseph King in Market Buildings, starting at five shillings a week.

'After I finished my apprenticeship I worked at my grandfather's business for a year. My Uncle Dick [Harris] also worked for him at the time.



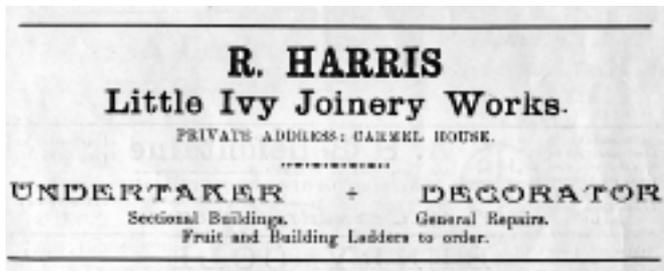
Title picture: Little Ivy and its millpond in 1898, showing George Richard Harris's joinery works and the adjacent cottage in which he and his family lived. Note the carts and wagons parked outside the workshop. Insets: George Harris (left) and Lionel. Above: Lionel as a schoolboy.

'The timber my grandfather used was cut in the valley just above the wheelwright's shop and sawn in a saw pit. The planks were laid out to season for two years. They made wheelbarrows, wagons, ladders and coffins.

'My grandfather ran a funeral service. Having measured for size an elm coffin was made and pitch was poured into the coffin, which was up-ended so the pitch flowed round and sealed the joints. It was lined with clean white linen and padding, and brass handles and a plate were added.

'There was no chapel of rest so the departed were kept at home until the funeral - 'bed cases' were kept at the Coxheath Infirmary.

'We worked from 7.30am to 5.30 or 6pm (12 on Saturdays), with a one hour break. No tea was drunk at morning break. They drank a pint of strong stock, either at



Family's Matters of Life and Death

the pub or from a barrel kept at home adjoining the wheelwright's shop. Midday food was usually a lump of beef or pickle.

'I went to the boys' school at Linton. Mr Williams taught the whole school and was also choirmaster and scoutmaster. The primary girls' school was just below the village hall, Boys went there until aged seven and then to the boys' school until 14. We had the Church of England parson every morning for one hour of scripture.

'I was in the cubs, run by Dorothy, Lady Cochrane, Lord Cornwallis's daughter. She was very kind to us and we often visited local big houses with her. She would take us into Linton Park House and we used to rope in Lord Cornwallis to help us with our first aid badge.

'We were allowed to go anywhere in the park, swim in the reservoir and even ride our bikes round outside the house.

'Linton Park Cricket Ground was very well kept. Mr Farley used to mow and roll it and his horse had leather shoes to protect the grass. On Easter Mondays there were flower shows before the cricket.

'Lord Cornwallis was Master of the Hunt and Bill Guess looked after the Beagles. They hunted stags and hares.

'When my grandfather died everything was left to one of his sons, Harold, who was blind. Uncle Dick went to work for the Gas Company and the business was closed'.

■ Lionel was born in 1912 and died in 1991. Our thanks to his son and daughter in law, Bill and Marion Harris, for their co-operation during the preparation of this article.

Further reading: 'Memories of Maidstone' (Maidstone Antiquarian Society/KCC, 1987)

Top of page: 1938 advertisement for R Harris's Little Ivy Joinery Works. Below: Harold Harris, who lost his sight during the First World War while serving with The Buffs, unveils the Loose War Memorial in July 1922. After training at a St Dunstan's hostel he set up a boot repairing business in the village.



Just by chance, two days before the visit to Loose which my daughter Catrin and I had planned for early June 2011, I discovered the Loose Area History Society (*writes Judith Evans*). We were fortunate to be able to make hasty arrangements to meet the society's archivist, Margaret Chapman and the editor of 'Loose Threads', Paul Tritton.



I had worked out a few ideas about the trail that Catrin and I would follow, but I was certainly not expecting the turn of events that came after our meeting with Margaret and Paul in The Chequers.

Over a very enjoyable lunch I tried to absorb as much as I could of the wealth of information concerning my Harris ancestors that had been brought for us, before being guided on a very exciting jaunt around the beautiful village of Loose to see some of the buildings where my relatives had lived.

Continued on next page

Top of page: Judith's great grandparents, John Nelson Harris and Maria (seated) and her grandfather Harry with workhouse staff, possibly at Coxheath. Above: Judith and her daughter Catrin visiting Charles and Jean Hitchcock, who live in the cottage at Little Ivy which was once the home of Richard Harris, Judith's second cousin twice removed.



Vale Cottage and Little Ivy Mill were highlights, as were meetings with Jean and Charles Hitchcock and Bill and Marion Harris.

Later I was able to contact a new-found cousin, Pauline, and since then we have corresponded a number of times to exchange family history.

These visits to places in and around Loose and meetings with living Harris descendants have greatly illuminated my perception of the past, and I thank everyone involved in making that happen.

Strangely enough it was my Welsh grandmother, Mabel, who told me about my connections with the garden of England. My grandfather, Harry Harris, died a few years before I was born but 'Nana Mabel', who lived until 1971, made sure I knew he had been born in Maidstone in 1889 and that he had been brought up in various workhouses.

Harry's parents (my great grandparents) were John Nelson Harris, born in Loose in 1865 and his wife Maria. She was the ninth of 11 children of Abraham Smith, and his wife Mary who had moved to Loose having lived in various parts of the country while working in a family team of papermakers.

John and Maria began their working lives in 1888 as porter and assistant matron at Maidstone Union Workhouse, Coxheath, where they lived and worked for about eight years, before moving on to their next post at Bromyard Union Workhouse, Worcestershire.

My grandmother carefully kept newspaper cuttings about their leaving Loose, which are now treasured family possessions. One of them, headed 'Presentation at the Maidstone Union Workhouse, reads: 'The Board Room ... was the scene of an interesting gathering of officers attached to that institution and the schools on Friday, for the purpose of bidding farewell to the porter and assistant matron of the Workhouse, Mr and Mrs Harris, who have been appointed Master and Matron of the Bromyard Workhouse. The chair was taken by the chaplain to the two institutions (Rev.W Jones), who remarked that for nearly eight years

the retiring officers had, by the conscientious discharge of their duties, their kindness and courtesy, gained the esteem, of both Guardians and fellow officers.

'He wished Mr. and Mrs. Harris success and prosperity in their new career and, on behalf of the officers, presented them with a handsome piece of plate. Mr. Robinson (headmaster at the schools) after apologizing for the unavoidable absence of the master (Mr Moss), said that although, strictly speaking, Mr Harris' duties did not extend beyond the Workhouse, he had always found him willing to aid as far as possible in any scheme to promote the happiness of the children at the schools. The Bromyard Guardians, he remarked, were to be congratulated upon securing the services of such officials as Mr and Mrs Harris. Mr. Harris made a feeling response and said he should remember his last night at Coxheath to the end of his life. The Chairman was thanked for presiding and the proceedings terminated with harmony, contributed by the officers'.

After some years at Bromyard, John, Maria and their son Harry moved again, this time to the Union Workhouse at Alton, Hampshire.

My own father, Sidney Hugh Harris and one of his brothers had also been born in Kent but had grown up in Wales, where Harry and Mabel brought up their family at the beginning of the First World War. Mabel kept in touch with the Harris family in Kent until she died. I remember her being very excited by the impending journey to Kent during the late 1950s to visit some of Harry's cousins, one of whom was Ethel Brooker, who lived in Payne's Lane, Loose.

Unfortunately I hadn't realized at the time that Mabel could have told me so much about the Harrises of Loose. As a result I have had to find out the hard way!

Continued on next page

Above left: Old Loose Hill in 1890 showing, on the right, Vale Cottage, where John and Jane Harris (Judith's 2 x great grandparents) and their family lived. Above: Vale Cottage in 2012. Below left: Church Street, c. 1916, showing Church Villas and William Tomkin's shop on the left; Below: 1938





Above: No 1 Church Villas, once W J Tomkin's shop, in 2012.



Childs' play on High Banks

John Nelson Harris, my great grandfather, was born in 1865 and was the youngest of five children of John Harris (who was born in East Farleigh in 1830) and his wife Jane (née Chittenden). I always include the year of John's birth when referring to him, so as not to confuse him with my 3 x great grandfather, John Harris, who was born in Loose in 1805, or with my 4 x great grandfather, John Harris, who was also born there.

My 2 x great grandfather Harris was a blacksmith and lived and worked at Vale Cottage, on Old Loose Hill. He and Jane's other children were Henry, who married Peggy Stammers; Anne, who married William Tomkin; Ellen, who married Henry Wooden; and James who married Fanny Roots.

Sometime before her father died in 1911, Anne and William lived with him at Vale Cottage and at one time two of their children, William and Mabel, ran a shop in Loose and lived at Church Villas, Church Street.

My 3 x great-grandfather Harris was born in Loose in 1805. He became a farm bailiff, and married Frances Seager. They had eight children, two of whom died in infancy. Of their other children, George married Elizabeth Larkin; Henry married Ellen Chittenden; Alfred wed Mahala Busbridge; Jane married Stephen Mason; and Francis married Alice Church. In 1851 John and Frances were living in Well Street but by the time he died in 1881 he was widowed, retired and had moved to Cripple Street.

When I went back another generation I found that my 4 x great grandfather John Harris was born in about 1779. His wife's name was Elizabeth - perhaps Elizabeth Woolley - but I have not yet been able to find out any more about her.

I believe that the father of this 1779 John Harris was yet another John Harris, a soldier, whose Army discharge details show that he was born in about 1760. However I need to delve into this a great deal further before deciding whether he is my 5 x great grandfather.

Perhaps someone reading this also has an interest in the Harris family and already has details about this soldier, or any other information about the family which would further add to my understanding and appreciation of my Kent ancestors. If so, I would be delighted to hear from you through the editor.

Many thanks to all those who have already helped me so much.

Sitting watching TV recently, imagine my surprise at seeing a signpost saying 'Loose ? mile' and a door with a 'Loose Women's Institute' sign on it (*writes Margaret Shorter*). The programme, 'Kirstie's Handmade Britain', featured the activities of the WI.

In 1940-1945 my sister Christine and I spent our school holidays in Loose with our grandparents, George and Marion (Minnie) Bennett, who lived at The Dell, High Banks. I always loved our visits.

They originally moved to Loose in 1922 but left for Glasgow in 1927 when Grandpa was promoted to be Chief Representative of the Great Western Railway for Scotland. On returning to The Dell in 1937, on Grandpa's retirement, they once again became involved in village life.

Grandpa was a member of Loose Parish Council and secretary of the Freewill Offering Fund for All Saints' Church. He was one of the founder members of Loose Bowls Club and was appointed captain after winning the singles championship. He took an active part in the formation of the Maidstone and District League in 1925, becoming its first Chairman.





Grandma was a keen member of the Women's Institute, being President of Loose WI for five years. She served as a parish councillor for many years and was a vice chairman of the Loose branch of the NSPCC.

She was a wonderful cook and her pantry was lined with rows of kilner jars, with plums, damsons, pickled onions and various chutneys, as well as elderberry and damson wines that Grandpa brewed in his shed.

Her handwritten cookery book included wartime recipes and recommendations from fellow members and friends. Some of the recipes were included in a Loose Amenities Association publication in 2000 to raise funds.

A particular favourite of mine was Gunner's Relish, made from apples, onions, white vinegar and chillies, which was wonderful with cold meat. I am not sure of the origin of the name. Maybe it was a wartime recipe, making the most use of windfalls.

The recipe for Aspidistra Dressing was not, however, a salad dressing but was used for the plant which stood in a brass holder, fashioned from a First World War shell, in the hallway at The Dell.

Grandma helped to run a canteen for soldiers in the Iron Room during the Second World War, whilst Grandpa watched many dogfights over Loose.

Grandpa was a keen gardener. I still remember the heady perfume of the hyacinth borders as you walked down the garden path towards High Banks and the summerhouse he fashioned partly from the hedgerows, from where you could look out across the valley towards Old Loose Hill.

This is where Christine and I first met Roy Hood and his younger brother, when they climbed up the bank to chat to us. At that time we used to call in for newspapers in the Hoods' shop in Church House.

Grandpa also built a cold store for apples in the bank underneath Mr Duncanson's orchard. We were allowed to choose one apple each day from the stacked shelves. I remember him keeping us amused many a time by trying to peel cooking apples without breaking their skins.

He used to go out in the early morning, up the stone steps alongside the house, to collect blewits, an edible fungus with a bluish stalk, which he cooked for his breakfast. They were huge and completely filled the frying pan.

His walks around the village as secretary of the Freewill Fund often resulted in him bringing back yet more produce for Grandma to preserve.

On one of these walks I was given a notebook by a man at Wool House, with little illustrations and data.

I had always thought that the man was Colonel Statham, the explorer, but on re-reading 'Exploring Loose Village' I found out that he had died before I was born.

Before my sister and I went out to play we had to help pump water (100 strokes) into the kitchen. We preferred to drink the sparkling water from the dip well in front of the house and were very disappointed when it was considered unfit to drink.

Christine always used to tease me by saying there was a dragon in the village, but the thump of the 'dragon's heart' was probably a water pump near Well Street.

We used to post Grandma's letters in the red post box in Church Street while on our way to spend our pocket money in the sweet shop at Florence House, then wade along The Brooks, turn somersaults over the iron bar at the rear of The Chequers, and run under the viaduct making loud noises to hear the echo. We made up a rhyme about the local milkman, singing to a popular tune of the time:

*Kirkdale dairy!
Kirkdale dairy!
Every morning on the dot
If you want milk or not
The Kirkdale dairy van
Is always round the town!*

In Loose village we rode our first bikes, made camps, and watched local boys fashion ammunition from old blackened conkers, which they filled with yellow cordite extracted from wartime shells and then fired across the village.

Two of the houses where we had fun were High Banks Cottage, the home of the Gladdens family, and Olde Hill House, the home of Margaret Pack, with its quarry tiled floor and outside toilet with newspaper on a string.

Previous page, top: Margaret (left) and Christine at The Dell. Bottom: George and Minnie Bennett (centre), with two unidentified friends. 'This represents a good likeness', says Margaret. 'Grandma was always smart'. Above right: Margaret's parents, Kitty (foreground) and Ernest Hammond (standing, second from left) at The Dell after their wedding at All Saints' Church, Loose, on October 16 1926. Also in the back row are Kitty's parents George (first left) and Minnie Bennett (third left), who celebrated their Silver Wedding that day, and Kitty's brother Victor (fourth left). Above left: George Bennett peeling apples outside his shed and cold store at The Dell.



Working and shopping in Tovil in days gone by

I first knew Tovil in 1968 when I started working at Reed Corrugated Cases (RCC) on Tovil Hill (*writes Noel Gibbons*).

Opposite, at Tovil Mill, Albert E Reed manufactured paper of varying grades. RCC converted much of their products into



packaging but despite the name, corrugated cases were not made there, although they were the main product of all their other branches in the UK.

Neither of Reed's very large plants are there today, having been demolished and replaced by housing. My office was situated in what is now a children's play area in Albert Reed Gardens.

In the 1950s, by all accounts, several hundred workers and office staff were employed at the plants and in the near vicinity there were also Alabaster Passmore, high class printers, and two more paper mills: Bridge Mill (owned by Reeds) and, before 1968, Allnuts Mill, a private concern.

The paper mills were 24-hour operations, so you can see that Tovil was a place where many people worked.

A bus service terminated at the bottom of Tovil Hill, at its junction with Farleigh Hill and Straw Mill Hill. Before the buses Tovil had a tram service.

Two railway stations served Tovil. The passenger station was the first one past Maidstone West, in the direction of Paddock Wood, just beyond the footbridge that crosses the Medway from Wharf Road to Bower Lane.

A goods station operated from where Lidl is now, bringing waste paper to Tovil Mill and despatching manufactured goods from RCC and paper from Reeds to the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond.

Tovil Mill's distribution was by road, as was 50 per cent of RCC's before the 1970s, but in the mid-1970s, following a substantial increase in the cost of rail freight, the newly created National Carriers took over British Rail's goods traffic and much of the freight then went by road.

With so many workers in the area they needed places in which to shop and relax. At one time Tovil Hill had three public houses: The Rose (at the bottom of Straw Mill Hill), The Royal Paper Mill, and another pub, almost opposite, at one time identified by a sign on the brickwork proclaiming that

Ales and Porters were sold there.

There was another pub, the Victory in Church Street.



At the foot of Tovil Hill, on the west side, there were cottages, some along the roadside, with front doors opening straight on to the street. There was also a little close of about five cottages, flattened in 1947 to make way for new offices for RCC and a medical centre for both RCC and the Reed mills.

Further up the hill there was an open-fronted greengrocer's and fruiterer's shop. There were no pavements on either side of the road up to the corner of Church Street. After that there were a few shops

Title picture: Tovil Hill before 1957. The cottages in the foreground were later demolished to make way for new offices and a medical centre. Further up on the left there was a greengrocer's shop. (Contributed by Sue Black) Left: One of Tovil's shops (perhaps Mrs Price's Sweetshop) c. 1974. (Contributed by Linda Stewart) Above: The Royal Paper Mill, now Tovil's only pub, in 2012.

which changed hands and purpose fairly often.

These included a fish and chip shop, an office supplies company, a ladies' hairdresser (formerly a butcher's) and Wright's coal yard, next to a piano showroom and piano tuner.

The general stores at the junction with Church Road later became a betting shop.

In 1968 there were several general stores on or close to the hill, one combined with a newsagents.

Among these were one at the junction of Tovil Hill and Church Road, another near The Victory and yet another in Church Road near St Stephen's Primary School.

There was a Post Office just past Church Street, before it later moved into the newsagent's and general store in Church Street.

At the bottom of Farleigh Hill, just beyond where the The Rose pub stood until to a year or so ago, and opposite where Lidl is today, is an unlikely building called The Forge, which has had several different uses.

This was a replacement for an earlier building, which really was a forge. June, who helped me with some of this information, told me that in earlier days she took her family's horse there to be shod.

Beyond the forge there was a tea room, followed by a vacant space, some more cottages and Mrs Price's sweet shop (opposite where Tesco is now).

On the west side of Farleigh Hill, until the mid-1970s, a grassy bank ran from the site of the goods station up to Burial Ground Lane.

There was no recycling centre or any commercial enterprises on this side of the road. A huge waste tip occupied a former quarry at the top of the hill on the east side.

After many years methane pollution made some local properties inhabitable, so the tip was closed and the present recycling station built off Burial Ground Lane. The 'tip' site is now being used as pasture land.

■ My thanks to June, whom I knew from the Post Office and to Colin, a work colleague, for much of this information. This is a first attempt to record Tovil's business history and there may be errors and omissions which readers can help us correct, or more photos of old shops that we could publish in our next issue.



RPM Installations, on the site of the Farleigh Hill forge.



Tovil Superstores and Post Office, the fish and chip shop, and the hairdresser's (former premises of an office supply company).



On the corner of Church Road, a betting shop that was once a general store.



Above: The entrance to what was Wright's coal yard on Tovil Hill and, right, the former piano showroom. Below: No 74 Church Road was another of Tovil's general stores.



Where we used to shop in Loose



Once upon a time there were several shops within the parish of Loose. Today there is only Loose Post Office. Pictured above at an unknown date is the Hood family's shop in Church House, Church Street. It was one of about four shops in the centre of the village and sold groceries, provisions, newspapers, coal, coke, wood and paraffin.

Shop assistant Algernon Howard Marsh, third from left, later opened his own shop at Gable Cottages, No 590 Loose Road, and later became the proprietor of Linton Road Stores at No 48 Salts Avenue, where he is pictured below standing on the right in the doorway. On the far right is his son Charles Marsh, who went on to become the proprietor of Linton Road Service Station.

A H Marsh died in 1934, aged 43. Among subsequent owners of the shop were D A Rowles, grocer, in the 1970s. It closed in about 1986 and (thankfully for only a short time) was taken over by a dealer in guns and ammunition. It is now the premises of Evans' Aerials. (Photos contributed by Chris Marsh)



Qs&As comments from readers of 'Loose Threads' and 'Loose & Linton - a Pictorial History', and questions and answers about people and places in our local history.



Did you know the Pruces?

Frances Maud Lane (née Pruce) recognized herself and some other members of Gertrude Jones's class in 'Loose Threads 10' (page 32). Frances is on the extreme left in the second row from the front; Henrietta Isabelle Mitchell is immediately in front of Frances; Eleanor Mitchell, who later married Tom Read, is fifth from the left in the second row; and Nora Perkins is fifth from the left in the third row from the front.

Frances was born in September 1914 and lived with her parents William James Pruce and Florence (née Maud) at White Cottage [now Culmore House] No 520 Loose Road until she married Horace Charles Lane. Our picture above shows the family in their back garden.

Frances's grand-daughter, Tricia Martin, would be pleased to hear from anyone who knew William and Florence, who died in November 1937 and April 1964 respectively. Please write to Tricia c/o 'Loose Threads'.

'That's me!' I am in two pictures in 'Loose & Linton - a Pictorial History' (writes *Helen Daniels*). I'm standing on the extreme left in the top picture on page 186 and in the centre of the picture at the foot of page 189. I was involved in the WI and I was the youngest of all the ladies.

'My grandfather William Charles Barnes was farm manager at Loose Court (following Mr Boon) until his death in the early 1940s. My grandmother was Adelaide Barnes. They had three daughters: Florence, Agnes and Edith.

'My brother Gordon Fullagar and I are the children of Edith Fullagar (née Barnes). Gordon lived at Loose Court with his mother Edith and his grandparents when he was a toddler'.

Foster Clark 'My wife Judith and her mother Rosemary Whitford (née Green) lived at Harts House, Boughton Quarries [featured on the cover of 'Loose Threads 11'] during the war, courtesy of Hubert Foster Clark while he lived in his flat in Chelsea (writes *Harry Wooldridge*).

'Rosemary and her sister, Yvonne Thom, are the daughters of Jack Barcham Green of Hayle Mill. Yvonne (94) lives in Loose Valley Nursing Home and Rosemary, who is nearly 99, lives in her own home in West Malling. Rosemary first married Alan Clark, eldest son of Harry Clark of Hayle Place.

'Sadly he was killed in July 1940 and Judith was born in February 1941. That was when they moved to Harts House. After the war Rosemary married Alan's 'best man', Jack Whitford, and they had three daughters.

'Jack Barcham Green's son Remy took over Hayle Mill and his grandson, Simon, followed him until recently'.

'An irascible old man' Ken Smith wrote from Honolulu to comment about William Reeves, the 'Bourbon conman of Woodlawn' (see 'Loose Threads 11, page 44).

'During the early 1940s I grew up at No 7 Busbridge Road and attended Loose Village School. We all knew of a "Prince Bourbon" who lived in one of the cottages next to the Chequers.

'He was an irascible old man who was always elegantly dressed and carried a walking stick, which he occasionally waved in our direction.

'In the period leading up to November 5 we made scarecrow-like Guys, put them in a soap box cart and wheeled them around begging for money to purchase masks and fireworks.

'We went to the bottom of the hill by the Chequers pub to solicit money but instead of making a Guy out of old clothes stuffed with straw or newspaper, one of us pretended to be a Guy and sprawled in the soap box.

'We received a lot of compliments and donations but unfortunately, annoyed at the commotion we were generating, the irascible old man came out of his cottage and started beating our Guy with his walking cane, saying "Here's what I'll give you for your Guy!"

'Was William Reeves the same individual we knew near the Chequers as Prince Bourbon or was he yet another poseur?'

'I was a scout in the Loose Swiss Troop and although we never camped there, the owner of Woodlawn gave J B Green (owner of Hayle Mill, and our Troop Scout Master) permission for us to explore his woods and have supervised camp fires for field cooking and badge practice.

'Early in 1944 the Germans launched a "Baby Blitz" on Southern England and along with many others in the area I was evacuated to Cardiff for several months'.

Ken finally moved away from Loose in the summer 1948 after nine years at No 7 Busbridge Road.



In Linton Road

'Whilst reading 'Loose Threads' I noted a request for the names of former occupants of the houses on Linton Road, below Salts Avenue (**writes Tom Sankey**). 'Starting at the corner opposite Miss Rowles's shop was taxi driver Mr Coppin, then further down the road the first bungalow was occupied by Cyril Woodham. He sold hay to various stables and farms. Always carried a small sample with him. Next was Ossy Smith, a dental mechanic; then Mamre, occupied by me and my wife Doreen; next Mr and Mrs Parslow and their son Tony; Mr and Mrs Horsey and their two daughters; and finally, at Rock-a-Nor, Mr and Mrs Allen Humphrey and their children, Janet, Maureen, Richard and John.

'Herts Farm, opposite, originally had cowsheds and storage sheds bordering the old main road. These, together with the farmhouse, were demolished and a new farmhouse and buildings were built further in so that realignment of the main road could take place.

'Before the First World War the farmer was Mr Wise. My father, Ted Sankey, and his brother Jack trained there in the basics for farming to qualify for assisted passages and emigration to New Zealand.

'My father returned in 1917 with the Anzac troops and fought in France but was gassed and had shrapnel wounds. He was invalided out of the army, convalescing at Haste Hill House. Here he met and married Winnie, one of the carers, the daughter of Mr Hartnup, the farmer at Bockingford Farm. Unfortunately she died during childbirth, together with the child.

'My mother, Ethel, was her best friend who also helped to look after the soldiers at Haste Hill House, and married my father in 1922.

'The article on pages 26/27 in 'Loose Threads 10' depicts a row of cottages on the west side of Linton Road. These were next to the original Star public house and were where Mr and Mrs Humphrey, my wife's grandparents, lived.

'To the rear of the premises were a yard and house where Dusty Kitchenam, the local coal merchant and carrier, lived. The cottages shown were where my wife Doreen was born, next door to Jack Lawrence's shop. Her family moved to East View, Hubbards Lane, in 1929/30. Her father helped build the house. Whilst digging the cesspool he was struck by a thunderbolt and happily survived.

'When my mother and father left Bockingford Farm [see 'Loose Threads 11,' pages 23-25] they lived in Oxen Hoath (now Landeck) on Heath Road, part of a development opposite the Police house'.

■ Tom has written a fascinating memoir of his early life at Bockingford and Loose, which we will publish in our next issue.

Bricks in the Wall

'My maiden name was Webb and I think the 'MW' initials in one of the photos of the wall at Hayle Mill were mine [see 'Loose Threads 10', page 19] (**writes Maggie Davis**).

'My father, Ernest Webb, worked at the mill when I was a child and I was born and grew up in one of the mill cottages in Bockingford. Dad was the foreman in the drying loft and when he was working a late shift my brother or I would sometimes take an early evening snack to him.

'I had to climb up stairs to a very long room where paper was hanging to dry, trying not to spill hot tea from a tin jug.

'I remember taking the rent down to the offices and asking Jack Barcham Green if I could pick some of the primroses that grew on the bank behind the mill.

'My Uncle Alf was the mill engineer and had his workshop in an old Nissen hut. My Uncle Stan was a papermaker and a couple of my aunts worked either in the rag room or sorting out the paper after it was made.

'Our cottage backed on to the other side of the mill pond so we could hear the mill hooter which sounded for coffee, tea and lunch breaks'.

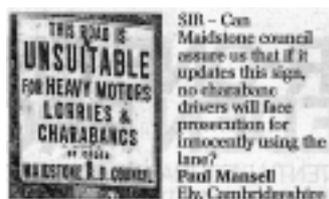
'My brick, one of many that my grandfather Jack Barcham Green gave his family to be laid on various different parts of the mill, is now in a small shed in the garden of one of the cottages, just downstream from the mill (**writes Fran Williams**). 'I think it has FRANCES 1959 on it.

'I am the daughter of Rosemary Whitford, daughter of Jack Barcham Green, who is 98 years old. My cousin, Simon Green, rescued about six or eight of the original bricks and, having been laid in many different sites, they were gathered together and are now in a special site, I think near the pond. They include two given by my grandfather to key workers at the mill, also to my mother and her sister'.

The Coulter family

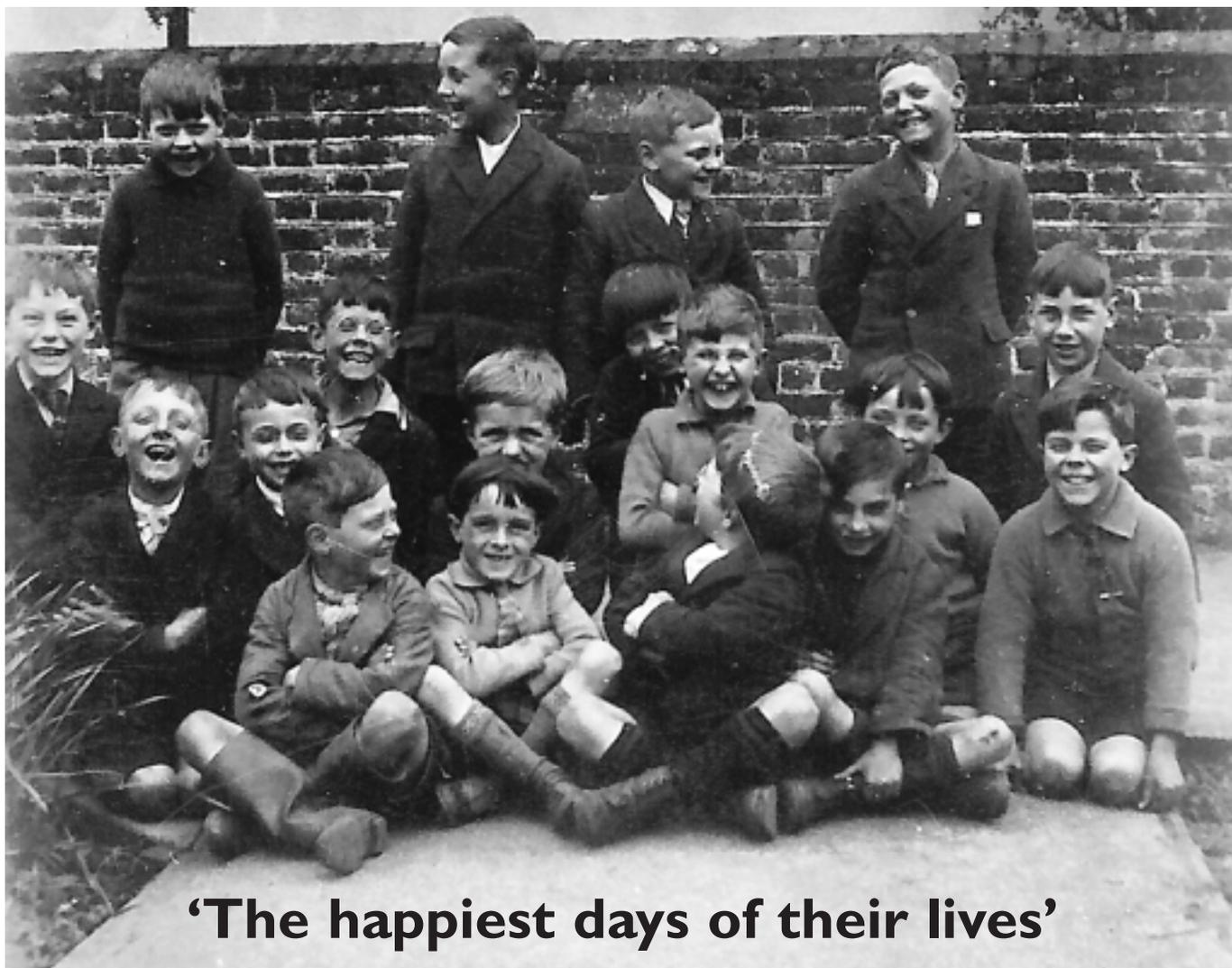
'Re 'Loose Threads 11', my mother was Beryl Halls (née Coulter), one of the four children of Bill and Lillian Doris Coulter of No 1 Rose Cottages (**writes John Halls**). 'In the photo of a ladies' darts team on page 19, my maternal grandmother Hilda Halls (née Enfield) is sitting third from the right in the front row. In the photo of Loose School's Class 3 on page 21, I believe Hilda's third eldest son Fred (my uncle and godfather) is on the extreme right in the middle row.

'On page 34 you featured the King George V Playing Field on which I played my first school football match for Loose County Primary School, aged 9, in 1964. I scored a goal! I also captained the Loose Eagles Football Club in the early 1970s, run by Ron Dooley and Roger Germaney. They were wonderful people and had a very successful side for many seasons. I designed the crest which was sewn onto our green football shirts and still have the original sample'.



Our thanks to the readers who told us about this letter in 'The Daily Telegraph', commenting on Collins Dictionary's decision that the word 'charabanc' was obsolete. The sign is on High Banks, Loose.

Above left: Tom and Doreen Sankey (on the right) with Tom's brother Alan (left) and Ted and Ethel Sankey (Tom and Alan's parents) at Mamre, Linton Road, in 1947.



Loose School was opened on Wednesday April 2 1913. Clark & Epps's tender of £4,296 (about £400,000 in today's values) for the building had been accepted in January 1912 and KCC's Elementary Education Sub-committee was confident that, before the end of the year, pupils from the original village school, on Malthouse Hill, would move into their new premises on Loose Road.

Then came a hiatus. In May the committee was informed that it had signed the contract to buy the site on which the school was to be built without receiving permission to do so from the education ministry in London.

It was June or July before amends were made and construction began. One of the bricklayers' first tasks was to cement a stone dated '1912' on the east gable, even though it was obvious by now that the school would not be completed until 1913.

When at last it opened, evidently without any ceremony, the names of 109 boys and 133 girls, ranging in age from 5 to 14, were entered on the first register.

The staff transferred from the old school. The headmaster was Tom Griffin Richards (57), who first taught at Malthouse

Loose School Centenary



Above: Standard 4 at Loose School in the 1930s. Classmates identified are (2) Gordon Wright, (3) Osbert Pierce, (4) Gordon Collins, (5) Billy Hartridge, (7) Gordon Swan, (8) George Wooding, (9) Ronald Perriman, (11) Tom Sankey (12) Alf Giles, (13) Percy Thorn(e), (14) ? Parker, (15) ? Ivans, (18) Joe Barker. Please tell us if you can complete this 'roll call'.

Hill in 1879 and went on to complete 42 years' service before retiring in 1921.

Until 1881 he lived in Hilly Cottage (now Olde Hill House) on Old Loose Hill

with his step-sisters Annie Williams, a pupil teacher, and Gertrude Williams, a supplementary teacher. In 1883 he married a schoolteacher's daughter, Emily Hewik Steeper, and they set up home in a house in Loose Road.

The school's headmistress was a 'Miss Cook', about whom little is known.

Tom Richards's successor was John Julett Knuckey, whose starting salary was £347 a year. He left 18 months later having accepted 'a more important post in Sevenoaks' and his place was taken by Richard Loftus Waldron, who was chosen from more than 40 applicants and had been an assistant teacher at the South Eastern Railway Company's New Town Council School in Ashford.

Mr Waldron retired in 1956 after 33 years' service and died in 1960.

Although the school's early records are incomplete an old punishment book survives, with only one entry up until November 1921 but 20 during Mr Knuckey's headmastership.

Did the pupils become more badly behaved in this period, or was Knuckey a stricter disciplinarian than his predecessor?



Since 1913 the school has been reorganized and renamed several times. At first it was called Loose Council School. By 1921 it was Loose Elementary School and it was proposed to separate it into junior and senior mixed departments, 'in order that provision may be made for the instruction of the older and more intelligent children in the village'.

One of its oldest surviving pupils recalls that, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, infants were taught in mixed classes and the older boys and girls were segregated.

The infant and junior departments became autonomous in 1968 and were named Loose Junior School and Loose Infant School, the latter occupying an extension to the original building.

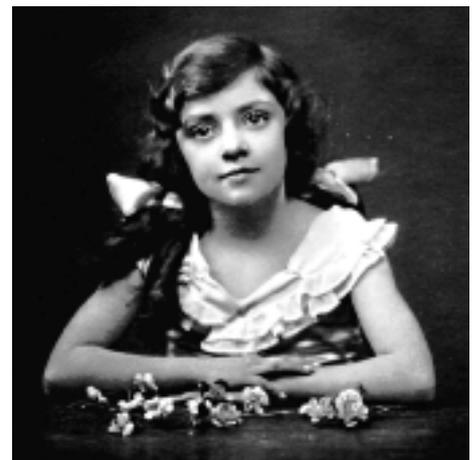
Since 2011 they have been part of the Loose Schools'



Federation. Loose Junior School has 270 pupils; Loose Junior School has 362.

■ With thanks to Robin Cross and Elizabeth Tristram for permission to draw on their research into the history of Loose School.

Above left: Miss Cook (seated), headmistress, with colleagues Miss Tupper, Winifred Apps, Miss Appleford and Miss Spears, pictured soon after the school opened. Above right: Teachers in 1960. Those identified are, left to right, back row: (1) Mrs Baker, (2) Miss Hoskins, (4) Mr Wyles, (7) Miss Stockwell; front row: Mrs Horsey, Mrs Jarrett, Mr Morton (headmaster), Mrs Henshaw and possibly Mrs Hughes



Four pictures from the school's photo albums. Left: A rural science class in 1938; the boys tended the school's garden and acquired skills needed by local farmers and estate owners. Above: Joan Panting as a Dresden doll in a 1932 play. Below: 'The Trip Sisters' and 'The Loose Lancers' in a 1933 'Revuelette'.

Work and play at school in the 1930s



Tom Sankey's schooldays

I attended Loose School and caught the tram at the Swan Inn, near where I lived at Bockingford Farm, to the Walnut Tree (**writes Tom Sankey**). If there was time I would nip round to the sweet shop in Walnut Tree Avenue. At times I walked along Loose Road, past the Papermakers' Arms, where there were railings to prevent you walking into the path of the trams.

During late 1929 and 1930 the trams were replaced by trolley buses, which led to the closure of the tram shed at the corner of Pickering Street. The old trams were broken up on waste ground opposite the Wheatsheaf, where there are now semi-detached houses.

The school's infants' class was in the large classroom at the front of the school, taught by Miss Spiers, who must have been near retiring age when I left in 1934.

The large classroom on the south side was divided into three rooms by two concertina-type doors. The infants' class was taught by Miss Agnue, the middle class by Miss Allen, and Mrs Parker taught Standard 4 at the west end, next to the headmaster's office.

On the west side of the quadrangle there was one large class of 11- and 12-year-olds; next to this the boys' entrance and cloakroom. A domestic science room and woodwork room completed the remaining side of the quadrangle, together with the girls' entrance and cloakroom.

A large wooden building with two classrooms was built to the north side of the front garden, one for senior boys, taught by Mr Butcher, the other for senior girls, taught by Mrs Bartlett.

The other teachers, as far as I can remember (I'm now 88) were 'Dickie' Waldron, headmaster; Miss Allen (who married Mr Butcher); Miss Spiers; Mrs Jarrett and Mrs Parker.

Sport was taught on the King George V playing field and once a year all the Maidstone schools held a sports day at Maidstone Athletic Ground off London Road.

Loose School was one of the first in the Maidstone area to give milk to pupils for their morning break. This was in special one-third pint bottles provided with a straw. In cold weather the milk was warmed up on the classrooms' radiators!

My father, tenant of Bockingford Farm [see 'Loose Threads 11', pages 14-25], started supplying the milk in the late 1920s and then to other local schools soon afterwards. Initially the milk was delivered locally by horse-drawn milk float, which looked like a Roman chariot! As well as bottled milk it carried a 17-gallon churn from which customers' jugs were filled.

This was replaced as the number of customers increased and milk was then delivered in the Loose Road area from Barton Road to Loose School, and up Sutton Road and in Mangravet Estate, by a bull-nosed Morris utility van, supplemented by two three-wheeled 'prams' delivering milk locally.

■ Tom left Loose School when he was 10 and went to Maidstone Grammar School. In 1954 his daughter Pauline started at Loose School, leaving in 1961, the year her sister Linda joined.

Top of page: Three former Loose School pupils at a family gathering in 2011: Pauline Thomas (standing, left), Linda Taylor (foreground, left) and their father, Tom Sankey. Also in the picture are Betty Fairman [née Parsons] (seated), who lived in Southampton and used to visit the Sankeys at Bockingford Farm, and Tom and Betty's cousins Gillian Skinner (née Marsh) on Tom's left and her sister Jane Marsh. Gillian and Jane once lived in Maidstone. Above right: Linda in 1964.



Linda, library monitor

I went to Loose School for six years, from 1961 until 1967 (**writes Linda Taylor, née Sankey**). My first memories are of Mrs Jarrett's class (year two or three). We were in a wooden building which had a large metal stove in it, at the front of the school. I remember making a papier mâché saucer and decorating it with vivid blues and greens.



The teachers were (I think): Miss Stockwell (year one); Mrs Jarrett (year two); Mrs Curtis (year three); Mrs Koning (year four); Mrs Holt (year five) and Miss Arnold (year six).

I remember having a piece of my writing put up on the wall and feeling very proud! My best friend, Kim Hellard, also had her writing on the wall.

Cycling proficiency was taught in the school grounds and I remember these lessons as being great fun.

I was a library monitor with Ian McCaulay in my last year and we had to choose books from the library van. It also meant that we worked in the library. I enjoyed this responsibility.

I always enjoyed the 'Singing Together' programmes from the BBC that we listened to and took part in. This was mainly in Mrs Holt's class.

In Miss Arnold's class we did dressmaking and I made a dress with wallpaper yellow stripes and yellow roses, which I hated and never wore.

Meals were taken at school and one of our favourites was gypsy tart, which was so sweet and sticky that latterly they gave you half an apple with it!



Pauline had to be wheeled to school!

I started in Miss Stockwell's class in 1954 (*writes Pauline Thomas, née Sankey*). In my first term I didn't want to go and had to be wheeled there on the back of Mum's bike and left queuing outside in tears as she left! I progressed to Mrs Jarrett's class and paid 6d into National Savings each week, keeping my money in a matchbox. Moving on to the Juniors I was first in Mrs Henshaw's class, in a room on the quadrangle. She always gave us a mental arithmetic test on a Friday morning; I found these so intimidating that one day I managed to make myself sick, so Mum kept me at home!

I tried the same trick the following week ... and the next. However Mum grew suspicious, as every week I got miraculously better as soon as my friends had left for school. On the third occasion she stuck me on her bike and took me to school, dragging me in front of the class and telling everyone what I had been doing. I never tried it again. Mrs Sutcliffe's class followed this and I was really proud to win the class's Scrapbook prize, 'The Observer's book of Butterflies'. My next teacher was Mrs Baker. There was a poster on the wall to help us with our spellings. It said, 'Which witch bewitches which?' It has always been a good reminder for me.

My final year was spent in a class of more than 44 children with Mr Wyles, my favourite teacher. I clearly remember our class making a papier mâché model of the Loose Valley, with orchards made out of pipe

cleaners. We also had great fun performing radio plays, hiding behind a moveable roller blackboard so that the rest of the class heard us as if we were on the radio!

We had bottles of milk at break time. In winter the milk was often sticking over an inch out of the top of the bottles when frozen, so they were thawed out on the heating pipes. During that year we went outside with photo negatives to watch a solar eclipse. Only those of us who brought a negative were allowed to look at the sun.

While I was in the juniors, PE was on the King George V Playing Field in summer and in the playground the rest of the time. We did keep-fit exercises and also played netball. My favourite lesson was when we went out with two hoops held by children above a couple of coconut mats. We had to run and dive through the hoops and land on the mat doing a forward roll. Not much fun if you landed on the asphalt! We had a sports day on the playing field, stripping down to vest and pants. I remember being devastated at practising the three-legged race and being really good, only to fall flat on our faces just before we got to the line in the lead. To add more embarrassment I got a nose bleed!

Playtimes were held in separate boys' and girls' playgrounds and we had outside toilets which froze in winter. We played 'Five Stones', 'Jacks', 'Two Ball', 'He', 'Release' and 'Stuck in the Mud'. Skipping games were also popular: 'Under and Over' and 'When I call your birthday'. There were group games like 'The big ship sails on the Ally-ally-oh' and 'Oranges and Lemons'.

And then there were school dinners, eaten in our classroom on our desks (covered with oil cloth) and later on tables in the hall. Mostly I enjoyed them. If we left anything we were not allowed second helpings. One of my favourite desserts was chocolate pudding with green custard, flavoured with mint.

When I was in the Juniors' the school uniform of red candy-striped dresses and grey skirts/trousers with a red tie was introduced, as well as teams. I don't think these existed when I was in the Infants as I seem to remember some discussion about their colours and names. I was in Bader, which was blue. There were also Bannister (red), Campbell (green) and Hillary (yellow). This may have been at the time of Mr Pollard's arrival as our new headmaster.

Music took place in the hall [opened in September 1966] and previously in two classrooms. We used the radio programmes 'Singing Together' and 'Rhythm and Melody'. I can still sing some of those songs by heart!

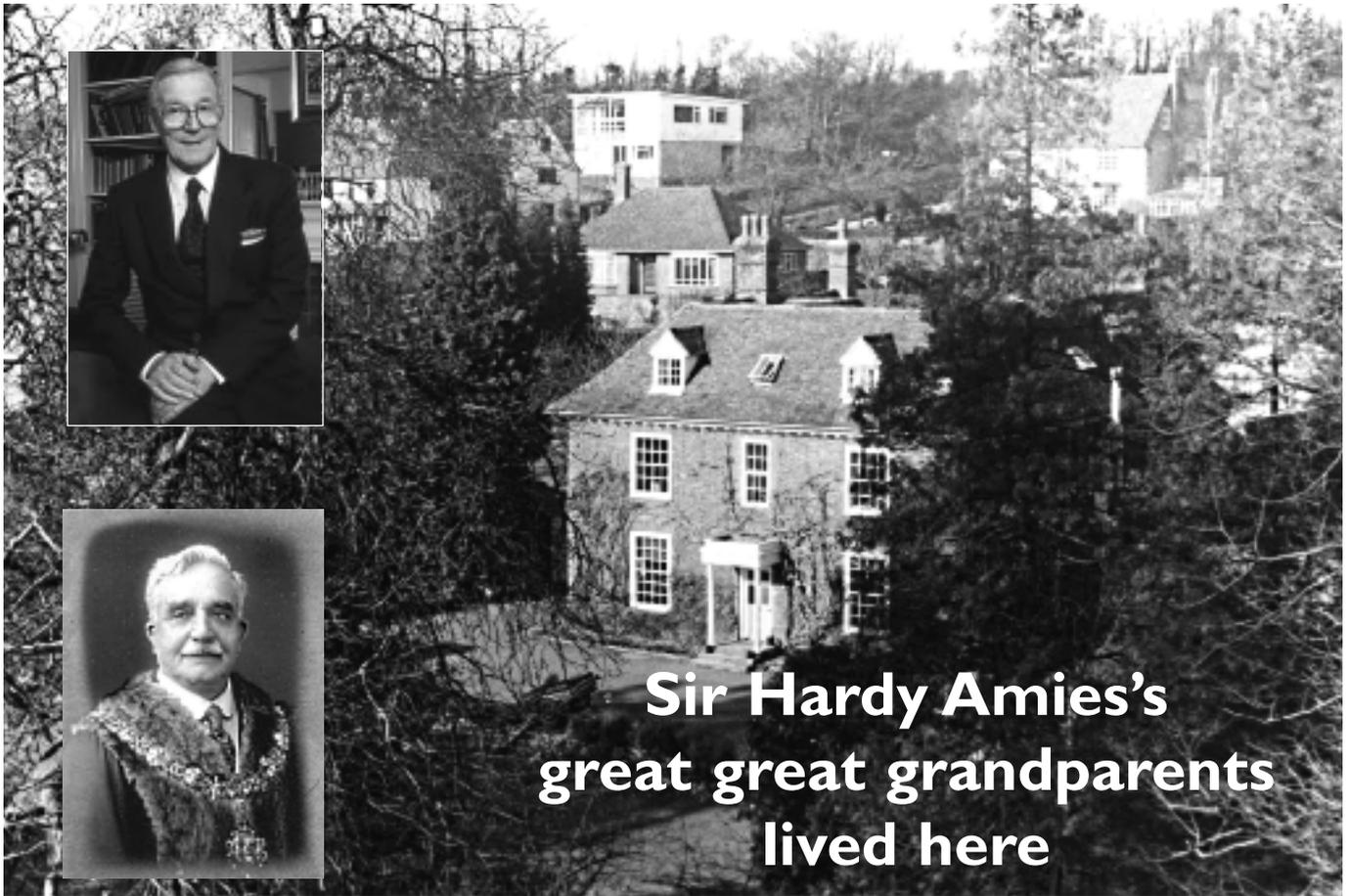
Top of page: Loose School's top junior class in 1960. Pauline Sankey is sitting on Mr Wyles's right. How many pupils can you identify? We will publish their names in our next issue.

Above: Pauline in her final year at Loose School.

Left: A 1967 class. Left to right, front row: Stephen Payne, Patrick Bourne, Gerald Krause, Peter Agnew; second row Susan James, Kim Hellard, Sara Witts, Sarah Lane, Miss Arnold (teacher), Linda Sankey, Janet Humphrey Janet Kinnersley, Susan Charlton; third row: William Holt, Cathy Witts, Robert Macmillan, Carol Young, John Mills, Gillian Sankey, Lindsay Cates, Carol Loseby, Ian Longman, Elaine Brading, Wendy Beardsley; back row: Andrew Lovell, Colin Lyle, David Holsworth, Peter Brunger, Peter White, Ian Macaulay, Duncan Robertson, Timothy Jennings.

■ Our thanks to the Sankey family for several of the photos published in this article. Send us your memories and pictures of Loose School for publication in 'Loose Threads 13'.





Sir Hardy Amies's great great grandparents lived here

Television and press coverage of the Queen's Golden Jubilee included many retrospectives of her Silver Jubilee in 1977 and bring back memories of her vivid pink outfit, specially designed for the occasion by Sir Hardy Amies, Royal dressmaker from 1950 until 1990.

But what connection does Hardy Amies have with Loose, you may wonder. Well, (*writes Margaret Chapman*), his great great grandfather Joseph Amies (1777 - 1859), a papermill superintendent, lived at Vale House, at the foot of Old Loose Hill and previously at Upper Mill House (now Watermill House) in Salts Lane.

Vale House has a brick in its west wall inscribed 'JA 1846' suggesting that he extended or rebuilt the property, which dates back to the early or mid-18th century or perhaps earlier.

Joseph's wife was Susanna Shewin (née Tooth), whose parents were hatters in Cranbrook. Joseph and Susanna had several grandchildren and great grandchildren, among the latter being Joseph Shewin Tooth Amies (Hardy Amies's great grandfather), who was at various times a papermaker, grocer and/or beer seller, and farmer. His wife's name was Harriet (née Coe).

Their son, Edwin (Hardy Amies's grandfather), was born in East Farleigh in 1828. He became a paper mould maker and also made Dandy rolls (for impressing watermarks) and employed nine men and an apprentice in Chancery Lane, Maidstone, while living at 8 Ashford Road, Maidstone. He was married twice - first to Elizabeth (née Sibley), who died in 1868, and then to Eliza (née Monk).

Edwin and Eliza had a son, Herbert William Amies, who married Mary Hardy in the Dover area. Their son, Edwin Hardy Amies, was born in 1909.

Mary was a vendeuse (saleswoman) in a court dressmaking establishment in London's Bond Street. From an early age Hardy (he dropped the 'Edwin') reckoned that dressmaking was in his blood, although he didn't enter the fashion world until 1934, when he was 25.

He first considered becoming a journalist and evidently prepared for this by spending three years abroad learning to speak French and German fluently. During the Second World War he was trained to organize sabotage in occupied Europe. One of his wartime colleagues was Enoch Powell, who many years later, as Minister of Health, commissioned Hardy to design uniforms for the staff of Broadmoor, the high-security psychiatric hospital.

When given the chance to run Lachasse, one of London's top fashion houses, Hardy realized at once that this was what he wanted to do. When he returned from work after his first day he told his mother, 'It was like coming home. I absolutely knew all about it'.

The Queen first came to him as Princess Elizabeth in 1950 and she was his only Royal client. The crowning moment in his career came when he saw her wearing his pink Jubilee dress. 'I had made her a scarf to go with it,' he said, 'because the Queen is what is called frileuse - she feels the cold ... when she got into the carriage to drive to Buckingham Palace she opened up the scarf and put it around her shoulders. I could have cried. I thought: my little scarf is being used for this marvellous occasion'.



Title picture: Vale House in 1978. Insets: Sir Hardy Amies (top) and William Gayton Amies, great grandson of Joseph Amies of Vale House. Centre: Mary, Hardy's mother.



Although Hardy was the archetypal English gentleman, he was very aware that he did not come from aristocratic stock. He wrote to various relations, seeking to discover colourful family members.

'There has not been much notoriety about the clan, so far as I know,' replied one of his uncles, Ernest Amies, who worked as a Dandy-roll maker in Maidstone. Writing in 1929 he added, 'no one has gone down in history as famous or infamous. My generation has had its chance, so that it rests with you and your contemporaries to see what you can do ... in 1687 one John Amies figured on the local council, and was turned out, with others, by order of the King. Those were quaint days and anyone holding office and administration was liable to get a brick at the head'.

Hardy's father, Herbert, had a lot more to say. In 1952, when he was 72 and living in Derby Nursing Home, Bournemouth, he wrote very frankly about the family: 'Your grandfather [Edwin] knew his London well and after I had completed my articles and was with the LCC [London County Council] our talks on London and its development were of great mutual interest.

'As a young man with pals, including the then Bandmaster of the Lifeguards, your grandfather used to visit ladies of easy virtue in Shepherd's Market and other haunts. He used to talk quite intimately of these things and I used to talk openly about my sex affairs.

'He and I used to have drinks together at the Star which he frequented and had a personal chair in a small room at the back. He told me he was never introduced to Mother [Eliza]. He saw her, in widow's weeds, from his window. She was a stunner. Lovely and over 6 ft tall. He put on his hat and followed her and started a friendship which soon led to engagement and marriage.

'It seems that there is no doubt that the first womb that conceived a Kentish Amies was attached to a prostitute (nameless) who gave birth in Coxheath Workhouse, Kent. She was known as Amy and the child was known as Amy's. Why worry more?

'I remember your great grandfather Joseph. A wonderful old countryman. I was a youngster, of course, and the old boy (with a strong resemblance to my brother Ernest and also to Julia [Herbert's half-sister], especially the largish nose) used to walk to No. 8 [Ashford Road, Maidstone] and trot around the garden. He was a tough old chap, about 80, and was short-sighted and couldn't differentiate between pears and apples. No glasses and never an overcoat or umbrella, and walked everywhere. He fell down the stairs at home, before I was born, and broke an arm. He had been a farmer at Loose where my father and family were brought up, and cultivated fruit - including the Amies Double Colonel (sic) Pippin

which was well known in Kent in his day as a good dessert apple.

'My father used to tell me that as a boy he used to play in Loose with John Barker and his brother. Old Grandpa Amies died in his sleep in his lodgings [at 26 Holland Place, Maidstone] when about 100.

'I suppose you only just remember my father. You saw him when you were just beginning to walk. He said, "Take that boy off his feet. He's getting bandy". I never did.

'As you know I met Mary (your mother) when in her twenties, after coming out of Chapples [sic] Music Shop (still there I think). She was walking to get a bus back to her home at Maxilla Gardens, W. Kensington, where her mother was living. I walked [Mary] home to Kensington after an hour or so in Hyde Park. Love at first sight and reciprocity of passion - dances and many, many happy times at Balliol House tied us up completely.

'I was in the Sharpshooters' Yeomanry then and had just got my foot on the permanent LCC ladder (£75 a year or about). Mary was earning pretty good money in those days and I, having had my voice trained, was able to earn a bit as a Baritone soloist at St Mark's Hamilton Terrace ... with weddings, concerts etc. I managed to gather about £150 a year plus LCC [money]. We weighed things up and made a nest at 100 Delaware Mansions and you know the rest onwards'.

Herbert's letter is full of such anecdotes. Let the final word be with Hardy. When asked, a few years before he died, to choose his own epitaph he suggested, 'He made a lot of women happy for 50 years'. But did those bandy legs, about one hundred years ago, walk upon Loose Green?

Alas, we may never know.

Above left: the west wing of Vale House, showing extensions and alterations to the original building. Top: the former gardener's cottage. Above: the disused bakehouse and privy.

The Amies property portfolio

■ The Loose Area History Society's archives has a comprehensive family tree of the Amies and Tooth families, dating back to the marriage of Joseph Amies, papermaker and property owner, to Mary Tooth (Hardy Amies's great great great grandparents) in 1776.

The graves of some of Hardy Amies's ancestors and relatives can be found at All Saints' Church, Loose, including Joseph and Susanna Amies, whose altar tomb is between the church path and the southern wall of the graveyard.

The Amies family lived in and/or owned several properties in Loose.

Vale House can only be glimpsed rather than seen to its full extent from public roads - from Loose Viaduct in winter, when the trees that at other seasons obscure the view are leafless, and from its entrance close to where the Loose stream runs under the road at the foot of Old Loose Hill.

It stands in nearly three acres of grounds and is a Grade II listed building, mostly early to mid 18th century, possibly with an earlier core. It has four reception rooms, 5-8 bedrooms and three bathrooms.

At the rear are what were the gardener's cottage, a bakehouse and a privy. Its front lawn is believed to have been the village green at one time.

In 1905 the house and its various outbuildings, kitchen garden and paddock were sold for £2,600.

The property was restored and modernized at a cost of £10,000 in the early 1960s.

In 1968 it was put on the market for £25,000. According to the Sale Particulars the main part of the house was rebuilt in 1719, without affecting its Tudor structure. The roof was partly retiled in 1979.

Half the kitchen garden was converted into a tennis court in 1984. While excavations for it were being carried out in wet weather, cracks appeared in the south wall of the adjacent property, Marcheta.

Work stopped after the ground had been levelled, a retaining wall was built, and Marcheta was underpinned.

The house was on the market for £1.55 million in 2005, the agents drawing attention to such features as a tiled floor of original black-and-white diamond-shaped tiles in the entrance hall, and a beamed family room with an inglenook fireplace.

In the 1830s Joseph Amies owned Mill Meadow, Banky Field and Banky Shaw, south of the Loose stream in Salts Lane.

This is almost certainly the Joseph Amies who owned the 12 cottages at Nos 613 to 635 Loose Road once known as Prospect Row (see 'Loose Threads 7').

The properties were sold in 1930, when its tenants were paying £193.1s a year rent.

The 1841 census lists Joseph and his family living at Upper Mill House (now Watermill House), Salts Lane, close to Upper Mill and the site of Leg o' Mutton Mill (aka Black Mill).

No 1 Linton Road (lately called Mexican House but previously known as Holly Lodge), built sometime after 1840, has above what used to be its front door a stone inscribed 'JA 1848' (perhaps indicating that it was built for Joseph Amies).

Forge Cottage (built c. 1830) at 2 Linton Road was a beerhouse in the 1830s, owned by John Tooth Amies but occupied by Charles Burgess. By 1851 J T Amies, described as a beer seller, was in residence but by 1859 he had sold the premises to his father, Joseph Amies.



Prospect Row in 2012



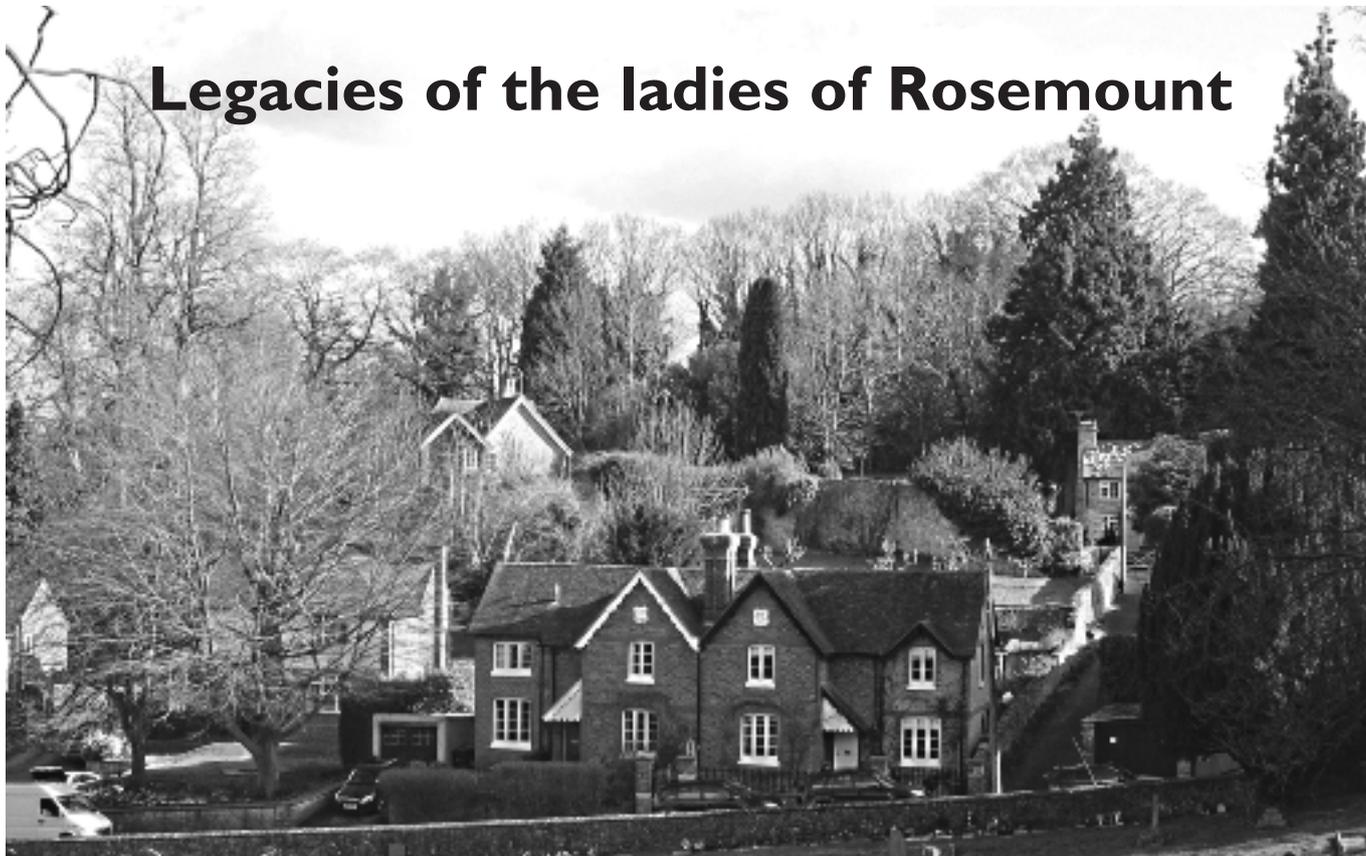
Watermill House in 2012



Mexican House in 2012. Below: Forge Cottage in 2007.



Legacies of the ladies of Rosemount



Almost concealed among trees on Old Loose Hill, Rosemount is a substantial ragstone house that was once the home of two women who contributed much to community life in Loose.

The first of these was Matilda Jane Moore (née Bell), who married John Moore, her several-times-removed cousin, in 1847. They were the first owner-occupiers of the house, built within about four acres of land that extended from Salts Lane to the junction of Old Loose Hill and Linton Road, bounded by Linton Road to the east and most of the southern incline of Old Loose Hill to the west.

For nearly 40 years John and Matilda enjoyed a life of ease and comfort, with a butler, cook and two live-in maids to cater for their domestic needs, and gardeners from the village to labour on their estate. It wasn't quite an 'Upstairs, Downstairs' lifestyle, but close enough.

John died in 1881. He and Matilda had no children but were aunt and uncle to five McAlpine siblings - Conyngham, Henry, Robert, Kenneth and Maria, all born in Leamington, Warwickshire. Their father, Robert, was a descendant of the land-owning Conyngham McAlpine family of County Sligo, Ireland, who in 1841 had married Jeanette Charlotte Bell, Matilda's sister.



Title picture: Rosemount (amidst the trees, centre, left), Old Loose Close (foreground, left), Rose Cottages (centre) and Malthouse Hill, leading to The Bothy, pictured from High Banks in 2012; Centre of page:(1) Maria Louisa McAlpine's memorial tablet in All Saints' Church; (2) Rose Cottages, Old Loose Hill, featuring John and Matilda Moore's initials and the date 1877 on the gables.

Matilda, who continued to live at Rosemount until her own death in 1891, must have been very proud of her nephew Robert (who was also her godson). He rose through the ranks of the Royal Navy from midshipman when he was 20 to Rear Admiral by the time he retired. Over the years Robert faced many storms and tempests, including one of the severest typhoons to hit the southern Pacific.

This devastated Apia, a port on the Samoan island of Upolu, in 1889 at a time when seven warships from the German, US and British navies were sheltering there. More than 140 sailors were shipwrecked and drowned.

The only British ship involved, HMS Calliope, survived without loss of life thanks to the efforts of her commander, Captain Henry Kane; Robert McAlpine, his second-in-command (aged 39 and now a lieutenant); and their crew.

The ship's company returned to England as national heroes and a few weeks later Robert travelled to Loose to visit Matilda. According to local lore nearly everyone in Loose turned out to greet him and some of the villagers unhitched his carriage from its horses and hauled him to Rosemount's front door.

Three of the McAlpine siblings - Maria, Henry (a stockbroker) and



Rosemount in 1987, showing the garden that was Maria McAlpine's pride and joy. Inset: Bob and Joan Ford, winners of the Loose Parish Council (McAlpine) Allotment Charity Trust cup and shield at the Loose Gardeners' Society's show in 2011.

Kenneth, none of whom married - eventually went to live at Rosemount. When Matilda died she left her Calcraft Estate in Lambeth to Robert and bequeathed Rosemount to Maria on condition that she in turn would leave it to one of her brothers 'and that he should never sell it'.

She also left £1,000 (about £104,000 in today's money) each to Conyngham, Henry and Kenneth; £200 each to George and Mary Anne Standen, her butler and housekeeper; £500 to Fanny Simpson, wife of Rev. George Simpson, a former Vicar of Loose; and £500 to the 'Clergyman of Loose [who in 1891 was Rev. J D Kingdon] ... to be invested by him at his discretion and the annual income to be distributed by him and his successors every Christmas among the poor of Loose in warm clothing, coals or bread'.

The legacy has been amalgamated with the Loose Parochial Charities which distribute money to needy parishioners as and when necessary. To remind us of Matilda and her husband we can see their initials cast in a plaque on a gable at Rose Cottages, Old Loose Hill, built on what was once part of the Rosemount estate.

In 1936 the cottages were sold to Hilda Coulter, who in 1948 gave one of them to her son Sidney (whose memories we published in 'Loose Threads 10' and 'Loose Threads 11'.) The Bothy, on Malthouse Hill, was also once part of the Rosemount Estate.



Matilda's grave and that of her husband can be found in All Saints' Churchyard, beneath a cross and slab that also bear inscriptions in memory of Susan Jane Bell and Dulcibella Bell, Matilda's mother and sister.

Maria outlived all her brothers - Henry died in 1894, Conyngham in 1917, Kenneth (suddenly, aged 63) in February 1923, followed seven months later by Robert (72) - so none of them inherited Rosemount. Maria lived there until she died in 1935, aged 88, leaving the property to Evelyn Marmaduke Gresham Leveson Gower of Surrey.

By then there had been McAlpines at Rosemount for 60 years or more. The estate was sold in 1935 and has changed hands many times since then.

Maria left £36,983 (more than £2 million in today's money) in her Will but before she died she bought the allotments on Old Loose Hill for Loose Gardeners' Society for £750 and arranged for them to

Above: Maria and Kenneth McAlpine, pictured at a Loose Conservative Association garden party at Rosemount in 1918, with William Henry Antrum in the foreground. Below: McAlpine and Rosemount street signs in Loose.



be bequeathed on her death to the Vicar and Churchwardens of Loose on condition that the site be used as allotments for the entire life of the society, and that any net income from them should go towards the upkeep of Loose churchyard and cemetery.

The gift became known as the Loose Parish Council (McAlpine) Allotment Charity Trust and every year its trustees buy a cup which is presented to the exhibitor who wins most points in the society's summer show.

Maria's other bequests included £100 (nearly £6,000 today) to Elsie Laurence, her maid, and to James Stainthorpe, her gardener, and endowed a bed at West Kent Hospital, Maidstone, in memory of her brother Kenneth.

In a tribute to Maria in Loose Parish Magazine, 'H E L' wrote: 'Her life was dedicated to the service of the community, and the happiness of others was to her a sufficient reward. The cricket, football and bowls clubs were all near her heart. Miss McAlpine was Chairman of the Loose Women's Conservative Association, an ardent supporter of the hospitals and local nursing association, and never spared herself in the service of these institutions'.

There is a memorial tablet to Maria on the north wall in All Saints' Church. Her grave and those of her brothers Henry and Kenneth are marked by a cross and kerbstone in Loose Cemetery.

'Taking the summer air'

In 1986 Joyce Brett wrote this memoir of Maria for the Loose Archives: 'By chance mother and I met Miss McAlpine while delivering parish magazines in the summer of 1933, when I was just eight years old. She was a charming, friendly person, tiny in build with delicate features - a small, upright figure dressed entirely in black with a full-length Edwardian high-necked dress. It was still customary in the early 1930s for elderly married ladies, widows and spinsters, to wear black dresses to ground length.

'Miss McAlpine was taking the air in the summer sunshine in front of a magnificent herbaceous border which slanted upwards towards Linton. The gardener was busy amongst the flowers and she asked him to pick some sweet peas, nodding at him several times to continue picking while she spoke with mother. Then she said to her, "These are for you, and your little girl shall carry them" (mother still had some magazines to deliver). My hands only just met around the bunch and I was wafted onwards by the sweet scent.

'Mr and Miss McAlpine gave the Loose Vale Cricket Club a pitch on the Rosemount estate, just above the garden of Old Hill House and near what is now the electricity sub-station on Linton Road. The spectators sat on the sloping ground near the footpath across the land, giving a good view of the state of play. On occasions when the team was not playing, mother would take me to picnic there and I would roly-poly down the slope'.

Joyce recalled a donkey paddock with a profusion of buttercups on what is now Old Loose Close, and a flight of steps from Rosemount's garden down to the paddock, on a private footpath used by the Vicar of Loose as a short-cut from the Vicarage (now Loose Valley Nursing Home) to All Saints' Church.

'After Miss McAlpine died Jack Gaynor bought the estate', said Joyce. 'He demolished the main part of Rosemount, leaving what was then the servants' quarters. He and his family lived there later. He built all the houses in Rosemount Close.

'During the Second World War a Mr and Mrs Brown lived at Rosemount. They were both keen church-workers and ran the Young Fellowship in the Vicar's Hall. Their inspirational leadership is still remembered'.

'He will live in our thoughts'



Kenneth McAlpine was educated at Halleybury, became a 'brewer's pupil' at Medway Brewery in St Peter's Street, Maidstone, and subsequently was a coffee-planter in India. When he returned to Maidstone he acquired a wine merchant's business in Market Buildings and was appointed chairman of local brewers Isherwood, Foster & Stacey.

In public life he was a magistrate, county councillor and chairman of Maidstone Conservative Association. A keen cricketer, he played for Kent three times, was a member of Lord Hawke's test team that visited America in 1894 and was secretary of The Mote CC.

In a fulsome tribute in 'The Times,' 'E H' wrote: 'He will live many years in our thoughts as a shining exemplar of conviction carried into devout practice and of duty nobly performed without thought of personal consequences'.

Kenneth was a founder member of Loose Gardeners' Society and its first secretary, but it seems he did not have 'green fingers'. In 1897 he planted an oak tree on Loose Green to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It died a few years later and was replaced.

A commemorative plaque (above) on a seat in the shade of the tree wrongly refers to 'Sir Kenneth'. He was never knighted nor, contrary to some stories, was he a member of the family that founded the McAlpine construction firm.

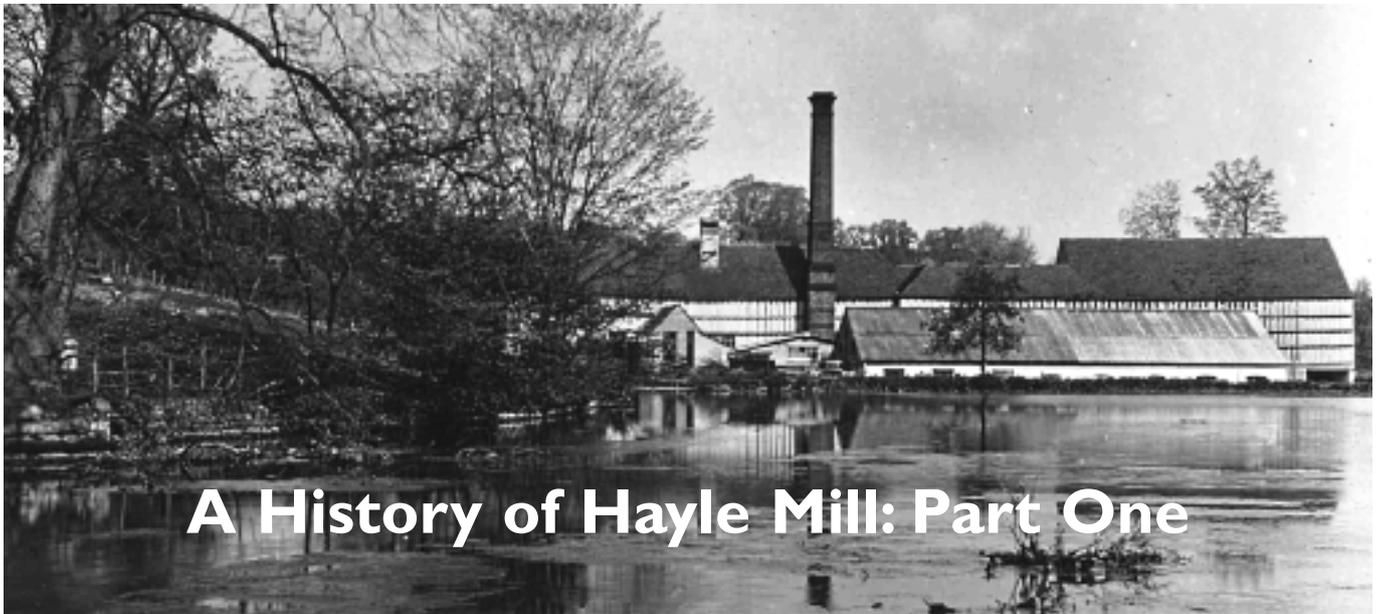
Inherited wealth

The Moores and McAlpines of Rosemount were able to leave generous legacies thanks to immense wealth inherited from their parents.

John Moore's father was Rev. Robert Moore, Vicar of Hunton, a son of Dr John Moore, 88th Archbishop of Canterbury. Robert was given a lucrative appointment in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury worth £10,894 (over £1 million today) and left the equivalent of £24 million, including property in London's Mayfair and Beamish, Co. Durham.

John's wife Matilda inherited her wealth from her father Henry Bell, and her mother, Susan Jane Bell. The immensely rich Bells hailed from Northumberland and the fortunes they accumulated from mining, brewing and other enterprises were handed down through successive generations.

The McAlpine siblings' wealth was bequeathed to them by their parents; and, as we have seen, by John and Matilda Moore. Thus, in one way and another, the intermarriages between the Bell, McAlpine and Moore families led to fortunes cascading down successive generations and, thanks to the generosity of Matilda and Maria, the people of Loose were among those outside the families to benefit.



A History of Hayle Mill: Part One

Hayle Mill originally formed part of extensive holdings belonging to the Hayle Place Estate (*writes Maureen Barcham Green*). The first known reference to the Mill can be found in the Loose Poor Assessment of 1627 which names Ralph Bufkin as sole occupier of the building and adjoining land. Although the Mill was probably used for grinding corn in Bufkin's time, by the eighteenth century parish and other records show it assessed as 'Clothworkers Land' and the Mill a fulling mill.

Through centuries, Hayle Place accommodated a number of differing families including the Pine family who are recorded to have paid rates on the estate between 1733 to 1745. R J Spain [author of 'The Loose Watermills', published in 'Archæologia Cantiana'] determined that the estate 'commanded one of the greatest property values', suggesting an estate of some importance.

By the mid to latter part of the eighteenth century, owing to competition from the north and west of England, as well as abroad, the cloth industry in Kent had all but disappeared. Many mills either ceased operating altogether, falling into a state of disrepair, or were converted to grist or paper mills. By 1774, Hayle Mill was the only mill left in the Loose Valley still engaged in fulling cloth.

However, by 1797 the designation 'Clothworkers Land' disappears from records and the estate is assessed at a rateable value of £80, one of the highest rates accorded a property within the district - signifying that, with or without a working mill, Hayle Place remained an estate of considerable importance and value.

The 'Loose Churchwarden's Accounts' (1780-1812) show Hayle Place Estate registered under the ownership of Thomas Smith between the years 1801 to 1807. Smith's purchase of the estate led to

the building of a new paper mill on the old fulling mill site.

It is difficult to determine when the conversion of the old fulling mill began, primarily because few documents from this time have survived. By studying early indentures, it is possible to surmise that by 1805 John Pine and Thomas Smith had formed a mutually beneficial partnership to erect a paper mill with part of Smith's share tied in his ownership of the land. For a man of means who could afford an estate as valuable as Hayle Place it is surprising how little remains which would give some understanding of who Smith was and why he was interested in the manufacture of paper, other than his living in close proximity to a number of paper mills - all of which appear to have been profitable concerns.

John Pine, however, came from a long line of well established papermakers who had settled in the Maidstone area. Successive members of the Pine family had been involved with the industry from the early part of the seventeenth century onwards. The Pine family were associated with Basted Mill, Wrotham; Otham Mill, Maidstone; Lower Tovil Mill, Tovil; and Great Ivy Mill, Loose, the latter two of which were within easy walking distance of Hayle Mill. John Pine had previously established a reputation for manufacturing fine paper in partnership with William Thomas at Lower Tovil Mill, as well as Basted Mill.

In the case of the partnership between Pine and Smith, it was common for papermakers to spread the burden of finance and as D C Coleman [author of 'The British Paper Industry 1495-1860'] observed: 'The very common use of the mortgage or the loan on bond as sources of capital at this time often brought people into contact with trades and industries with which they normally had little or no connection'.

In all probability Smith was a sleeping partner who happened to own a redundant mill and simply considered the new enterprise a good investment. Although the actual date when Pine and Smith began converting and adding to the existing buildings is difficult to establish, the year of the Mill's completion is recorded. James Phippen's 'The Topography of Maidstone and its Environs', (1839), mentions Hayle Mill. According to his account the Mill: '*Requires notice as an instance of such a structure formed late of years, which does not often occur in this part of the Kingdom. It stands on lands formerly belonging to Hayle Place, and after some difficulties arising from the novelty of the undertaking and other causes, was completed in 1808*'.

What Phippen refers to as 'other causes' relates in part to the sudden and untimely death of Pine's partner, Smith, in 1807. Aside from his partner dying, Pine lost a number of relations while engaged in building Hayle Mill, including his uncle, Thomas Pine in 1806.

Thomas Pine was a stationer who had an interest in Great Ivy Mill. He left his estate to be split between his nephews, John Pine of Tovil and Thomas Pine of Maidstone, stationer. Unfortunately, Smith's death left Pine with a partially finished paper mill on unsecured land, a situation which was not resolved until he bought out Smith's widow's interest in the property in 1808.

The amount Pine paid to Smith's widow remains a mystery but by June 29 1808 the 'Loose Churchwarden's Accounts' (1790-1812) lists 'Out-dwellers, Pine John late, Smith'. Once ownership of the land had been secured, Pine was left finishing and equipping the paper mill at his own expense.

Title picture: Hayle Mill, c. 1931.

An indenture dated April 17 1810 reveals that Pine entered into another partnership agreement in order to lessen the burden of his financial obligation. The new arrangement was between John Beeching and John Pine, whereby Beeching agrees to bear responsibility for the mortgage.

With the indenture is a 'pepper corn' lease agreement indicating that Beeching was a full partner and not just a mortgagee. The indenture also gives some insight into what Pine had built on the property and the assets upon which the mortgage was held: *'The said John Pine hath lately exerted and built on the said piece or parcel of Land or some part there of a Messuage or Tenement and also a paper mill together with Engine Houses Drying Lofts Rag Houses Warehouses and other buildings and Hath made sorted fixed up and placed in upon about and to the said mill buildings and premises wheels Engines Vats Chests Presses Trebles Lines and other Utensils and Implements necessary and proper for the purpose of carrying out or conducting and managing the Paper Manufactory in at and upon the premises'*.

Ironically, one year after this indenture was signed, the whole contract had to be amended and John Pine entered into another agreement dated August 12 1811.

This contract was with the executors of the late John Beeching's estate and put into effect another charge on the already mortgaged premises. In a draft copy of the agreement representing 'Bond to accompany further charge on Mortgaged Premises' John Pine promised to 'pay unto the above Thomas Beeching and George Davis [...] the full and just sum of One thousand and two hundred Pounds of lawful Money of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland [...] with interest for the same at and after the rate of Five Pounds for a Year'.

It appears in this document that Pine was originally named as one of John Beeching's executors, along with Thomas Beeching and George Davis. He then takes over the entire mortgage liability of 'Ten thousand Pounds of good and lawful Money of Great Britain'. This means that Pine had to pay a not inconsiderable annual sum of £1,260 as part of his continuing overheads. A comparison can be made with William Balston's mortgage which he took out on Springfield Mill in 1810. According to Balston, the mortgage was held on: "13,129 12s. 7d. per cent consolidated Bank Annuities. These then stood at about 70, and so represented about £9,200, of which £8,500 was the total of Susanna's

'Paper Mill to Let'

[Whatman] loans and the remainder unpaid interest".

Springfield Mill was a ten-vat, as opposed to two-vat, paper mill and traded under the renowned 'Whatman' trademark which would have acted as a guarantee to help secure and justify the size of the mortgage. Pine, on the other hand, was mortgaging a two-vat mill for roughly the same amount. It is not surprising then to find Pine attempting to lease the Mill, to help ease the financial burden.

**Two Vatt Paper Mill
To Let for a Term of Years
(and Possession given at Midsummer)
A Two Vatt Paper Mill, newly erected
and in every respect
in complete order
for making the
Finest Papers - specimens of which
may be seen, and further
Particulars known, by applying to
Messrs Else and Son,
Wholesale Stationers, Queen Hithe,
London.**

By June 23 1812, another advertisement appeared which read: *'To Paper Manufacturers, and Others wishing to engage in the Paper business. To be Sold by Private Contract, A Singularly Valuable Freehold Vat Paper Mill together with an excellent Cottage and Five Acres of Land, situate in the County of Kent, and amply supplied with water, form one of the most regular streams in that County, with Pen of nearly Two Acres'*.

This advertisement further states that this *'is a most complete Mill for manufacturing the finest Writing and Drawing Papers, on which it is now in full work'*. By September 8 1812 the Mill was advertised for sale by auction: *'On Tuesday, 13th October, 1812, at the Auction Mart, London at 12 o'clock (if not previously disposed of by Private Contract)'*.

It is evident that the Mill did not sell at auction for on Tuesday, November 3 1812 the paper carried another notice reading 'To be Sold by Private Contract, or Let'. This final version of the advertisement appeared in the 'Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser' every Tuesday until November 17 1812, when all mention of the Mill ceases.

The fact that these sale advertisements no longer appear does not indicate that Pine managed to sell the Mill. The Loose Poor Book (1811-1817) lists John Pine as paying a rateable value on the property and this continues with the

assessment of October 28 1813 reading 'John Green late Pine' at £45. The last entry reading 'John Green late Pine' occurs in April, 1818 and by October of the same year the Mill is assessed under 'John Green Hayle Mill £45'. Between the years 1812 to 1817 John Green leased the Mill from Pine until he found sufficient reserves to purchase the freehold.

These were troubled times. Drastic cutbacks in government spending in combination with the collapse of many country banks had adversely affected trade in general. There was a reduction in the demand for some makes of paper and this impacted upon the industry nationwide. The end of the Napoleonic War resulted in many mills losing valuable government contracts for ammunition and other papers, orders which mills had grown to rely on. In a report by the Master of the Mint written July 1816, it was stated that: 'Trade is gone, contracts are gone, paper credit is gone, and there is nothing but stoppage, retrenchments and bankruptcy'.

As if this alone could not be considered a desperate state of affairs, a disastrous harvest that year further exacerbated the situation. But John Pine had not only to deal with the heavy mortgage remaining on Hayle Mill, and weather cutbacks imposed during the depression; in addition a disastrous fire in 1814 had all but destroyed one of his other enterprises, Lower Tovil Mill.

Aside from bankruptcy, fire was one of the biggest risks facing manufacturers because the materials housed in paper mills were highly inflammable.

The terms laid out in the 1817 Indenture, to transfer the freehold of the Mill to John Green, included all the monies owing the Beeching Estate plus the remaining mortgage held on the Mill of '£5,000 three pounds per return consolidated Bank Annuities', to be paid in instalments of £1,200 per annum, plus 5 percent interest.

As well as undertaking the mortgage and loans tied to the property, a cash payment of £837 10s 0d was included in the particulars - payable to John Pine.

He was no doubt grateful for a cash settlement of any kind and relieved to have rid himself of any financial liability for the site. He continued manufacturing paper at Great Ivy Mill, Lower Tovil Mill and Otham Mill.

■ Maureen will continue her history of Hayle Mill in our next issue, with an article covering John Green's tenure at the Mill from 1817-1838.

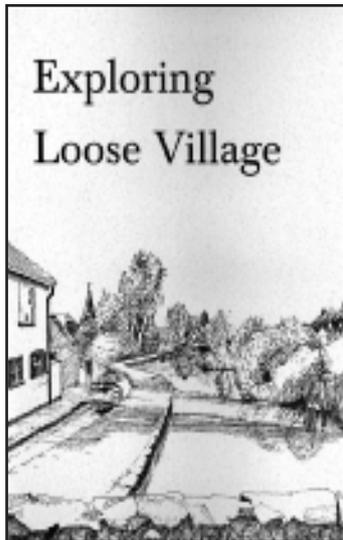
History Society News

Loose Area History Society meets monthly (usually on the second Monday of the month at Loose Infant School Hall) from October to May and has an outing every June and July.

In September 2011 we supported Loose Village Fete, where our exhibition of local history memorabilia and Hilary Hunt's children's quiz won the £50 prize for 'best display'. A few weeks later 'Bartholomew the Reeve', our entry in the Loose Scarecrow Festival (pictured right) was much admired. He was based on sketches by Mary Price, created by Jenny Harrison, Helen Gallavin and Jill Smith and stood proudly in Kirkdale.



While distributing a flyer to more than 2,000 addresses in Loose to announce their first Jumble Sale of 2012, Loose Swiss Scouts also dropped a new flyer promoting our society through the letterboxes. Thank you, Scouts.



Our Research Group's recent activities have included cataloguing our collection of

Coxheath Workhouse documents; transcribing Wills of eminent Loose residents; and collating our 18th, 19th and early 20th maps of Loose and adjacent parishes.

Two members of the group helped Loose Amenities Association to revise and republish 'Exploring Loose Village,' written by our President Roger Thornburgh. The new issue of the booklet follows the format of earlier editions, with seven walks lasting 1 - 2 hours, but has an extended walk from The Chequers to Loose Green via Salts Lane and an appendix describing the listed monuments in All Saints' Churchyard.

The booklet is on sale at £3.50 at the LAA's functions and Loose Post Office, and can be ordered on-line on <http://www.loose-amenities.org.uk>.

Our new website (www.looseareahistorysociety.org.uk) has news of forthcoming events and initially contains pages featuring LOOSE PARISH RECORDS (baptisms 1559-1843, marriages 1542-1837 and transcriptions of memorial inscriptions in All Saints' Church, churchyard and cemetery, with location plans); LINTON PARISH RECORDS (Baptisms 1775-1778); MAIDSTONE (aka COXHEATH) UNION WORKHOUSE (Baptisms 1841-1852, Burials 1840-1852); TOVILANABAPTIST BURIAL GROUND (transcriptions of memorial inscriptions); the 'Loose Boundary Stones Report'; and an index to the contents of all issues of 'Loose Threads' and 'Loose Ends'.



Our stall at the 2011 Loose Village Fete

**John and Jane welcome you to
The Victory
Farleigh Bridge, East Farleigh**



Open all day

Hot meals and snacks

Real ales, beers, lagers, wines and spirits

Children's play area with bouncy castle

**Sunny garden with panoramic views of the
Medway Valley**

Function room Parties catered for

Telephone 01622 298234

South Park News

**192 Loose Road
Telephone 01622 758749**

CONVENIENCE STORE & OFF LICENCE

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES (HOME DELIVERY)

***Confectionery *Cigarettes *Tobacco**

***Soft Drinks *Snacks**

***National Lottery *Health Lottery**

***Pay Point *Greetings Cards**

Opening Hours

Monday - Saturday 6am- 10pm

Sunday 7.30am - 9pm



Our front cover picture of Bockingford in the Loose Valley is from the 'Kent Messenger' War & Peace Collection of local photographs, published in 1945, and is one of hundreds of archive images on glass plate negatives that have been scanned and restored by Maidstone Camera Club and Maidstone Museum for their collaborative project 'Out of the Shadow, into the Light'. At the time this view was taken the triple-gabled property in the mid-distance was still the Bockingford Arms public house (licensee: Harry Rose)[®] 'Kent Messenger'. By 1954 the pub had closed and at about this time the property became a private residence, Bockingford Steps, owned and occupied by W Dravers. Many years earlier the group of buildings on the right had been converted into cottages, having been a fulling mill from about 1500 until the early 19th century, then a rag mill for nearby Hayle Papermill and, from 1856 until the late 19th century, a corn mill. Our comparison photo (left) of Bockingford Steps was taken in the late summer of 2011 by Malcolm Whyatt.