

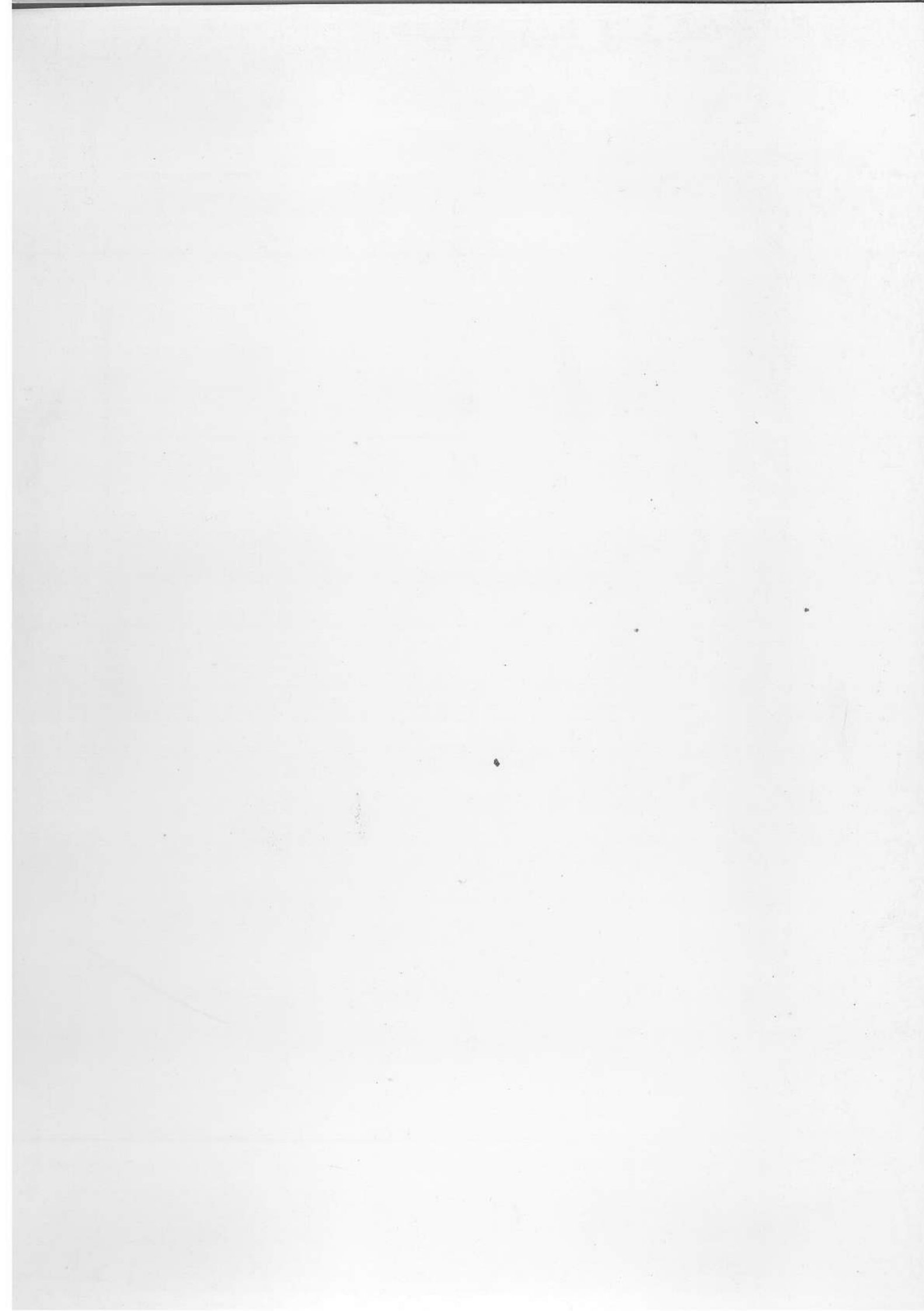
# Loose Threads

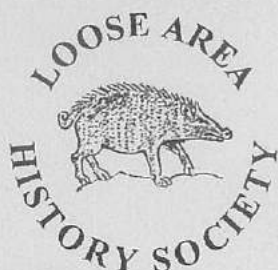
Journal of the Loose Area History Society



LOOSE COURT, NEAR MAIDSTONE.

**Number 5**





## LOOSE AREA HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society was formed in 1989 with the following aim enshrined in its Constitution: 'to research and record the history of Loose and its neighbourhood, and pursue these ends by means of a research group, lectures, exhibitions, publications and other events of a supportive nature'. The Constitution also states that 'the Society shall continue to collect evidence of Loose and its neighbourhood's history, and work towards acquiring a central repository at some future date'. The repository is still some way off, but the archive collection is growing steadily and is available for members of the Society and others to examine on application to the Archivist.

General meetings are held monthly, usually in the Loose Infants' School. The Research Group meets less frequently to discuss members' work, publications, the planning of exhibitions etc. For details of membership of the Society and its activities, please contact the Secretary, whose address and telephone number is opposite.

The name 'Loose' is usually taken as being derived from the Old English 'Hlose', meaning 'place of pigs', and the above logo showing a medieval pig has therefore been adopted by the Society.

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Front Cover: ‘*Loose Court*’, from a photograph on the 1888 Sale Particulars kindly supplied by Mrs Molly Proctor.

Back Cover: Coxheath as shown on the Andrews, Dury and Herbert map of 1769.

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## EDITORIAL

It has been an enormous pleasure to be in at the beginning of the production of *Loose Threads* No 5. The reader will find the usual divers range of subjects: from 'roughs' at Loose to 'nobs' at court, a 'bird' from South Africa, life in two very different schools and two neighbouring parishes, and much, much more. A response from David Cleggett, Archivist to the Leeds Castle Foundation, to John Watson's article in *Loose Threads* No 3, is included. Such interest is most encouraging to all concerned with the Loose Area History Society.

The contributors themselves, of course, are the principal makers of the publication, but, importantly, Roger Thornburgh's great knowledge of history and experience of writing it, together with his ability to access sources of illustrations and quotations, contribute much to the quality of *Loose Threads*.

I note that Roger's editorials in previous editions comment in some way on the time taken from conception to publication. The same applies to No 5 and I regret the frustration caused to the authors (all of whom met the dead-line for writing) whose wait for delivery has been long. The first, rough draft took me some time before handing it to Roger, Editor-in-Chief, to read and amend. (My qualifications as Editor were two skills: one to make my computer automatically add page numbers, the second, to type with eight fingers as opposed to Roger's two!) My grateful thanks to Roger for all the help he has given me.

Whilst offering thanks, I wish to extend these to our advertisers whose donations help to defray the costs of production.

Read on, learn and enjoy. If you have comments, corrections, additions, anything, in fact, that would enhance the knowledge of our area, please contact the appropriate contributor or me - we shall be delighted.

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## SMUGGLING IN AND AROUND MAIDSTONE

Sheila Wilson

The number of public houses in Maidstone and the amount of foreign wines and brandies coming into the country are matters of discussion in newspapers at this present time. They were also matters of debate in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In 1783, George Bishop, twice Mayor of Maidstone, petitioned Parliament to grant him a licence to open a distillery. Hollands, Gin or Genever was one of the most popular drinks at this period and he thought home-produced gin would help to stop smuggling. He said that "country gentlemen and farmers have their spirits, teas and wines much cheaper from smugglers than they can off the fair trader", pointing out "that there are 1607 public houses in Kent, licensed to sell spirituous liquors and 4821 unlicensed ... In the parishes of Barming, East and West Farleigh, Loose, Boughton, Linton and Hunton there are 11 public houses and 41 private retailers selling smuggled spirits". He did get his licence, although he was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Nineteenth century historians seem agreed that smuggling was one of the major industries of Kent in the mid-eighteenth century. There were large numbers of men available to engage in it, as other trades were in decline and people of all classes played some part in it. Accounts of the numbers of men the Hawkhurst Gang could call on illustrate the number of men involved. Records of local councils such as those of Folkestone show that some officials did not co-operate with customs men and, if they were prosecuted for this, they would be given financial help from corporate funds. People in the countryside allowed their barns and horses to be used by the smugglers.

There are romantic descriptions to be found in books and magazines of the nineteenth century of long trains of pack horses loaded with contraband travelling over the Weald. The most famous perhaps is Kipling's poem, "Watch the wall, my darling, while the gentlemen go by" If they did nothing else, they kept quiet. That they probably enjoyed the products of the smugglers can be seen from this recipe for Rich Raspberry Wine or Brandy:

*Bruise finest ripe raspberries with back of spoon .... allow 1 lb sugar to each quart of juice .... stir .... cover .... stand .... strain .... add 2 quarts of sherry or 1 quart of brandy cogniac to one quart of juice .... Bottle it .... it will be ready in a fortnight.*

Smuggling has a long history in Kent. The first tax on wool exporting was at the end of the thirteenth century. It was first imposed to raise money for the King to pay for the wars. Subsequent taxes imposed were to benefit the clothiers but this was to the disadvantage of the wool producers themselves. Those in Kent, therefore, who already had trade links with the continent started to send it out of the country clandestinely. This became known as "owling". By the eighteenth century there were taxes on tea, silk, tobacco, wines and spirits, among other things. A smuggling network being already in existence, the importation of contraband goods followed. The geography of the country was a great help to those engaged in it.

Smuggling was a lucrative trade. In the 1770s it appears that 4 gallons of brandy bought in France for £1, sold in England for £4, and a pound of tea that cost 3d (7p) would fetch 5/- (25p). One ship captured off Dungeness by a revenue cutter carried 600 lbs of tea and 400 casks of wine. These would have been taken back to the Excise Office and eventually sold, but for private use only.





One of the advertisements appearing in a *Maidstone Journal* of 1786 is about the escape of a prisoner, John Overy, also known as Captain Death. It is rather like an antique photo-fit: '.... five Feet ten Inches high, dark Complexion, straight brown hair, wide Mouth, and broad Teeth, round shouldered, thin Legs and Thighs, and turns his Feet rather out ....'. With such a distinctive description you would think he would be hard to miss, but there does not seem to be any record of his capture.

Coxheath seems to be the area where frequent seizures took place. The *Maidstone Journal* for 19 June 1787, for example, reported that:

*On Thursday night last, a light cart drawn by one horse and loaded with 13 cases of tobacco stalks and a small parcel of snuff was seized upon in Coxheath by Messrs Conder and Mullens, Excise Officers who safely conducted the same to the Excise Office in this town....*

There is no mention that the smugglers were arrested.

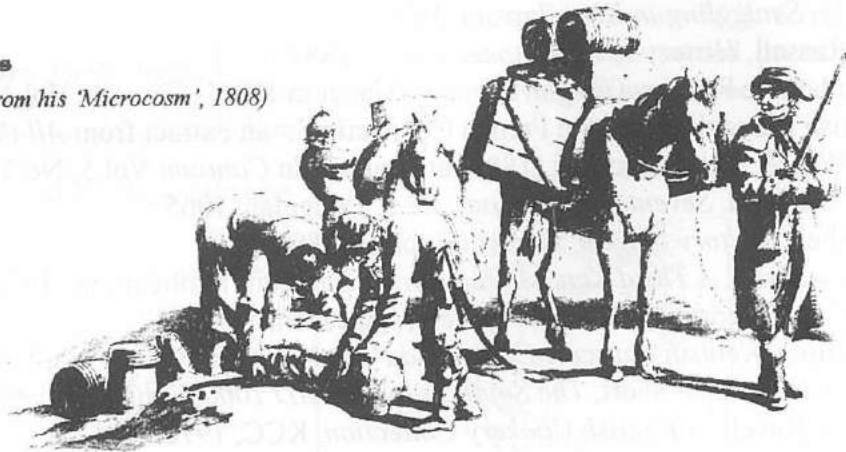
Another *Maidstone Journal* report, this time for 22 August 1786, reads:

*Early on Saturday morning, a desperate skirmish happened between Mr Rhodes, a Riding Officer of Maidstone and some smugglers near Offham in which one of the latter was so desperately cut and hacked about the head and face with a hanger [sword] that he now lies dangerously ill at the Red Lion at Offham; a seizure was made by Mr Rhodes and his assistants of four horses loaded with contraband goods.*

In July 1792 Mr Rhodes, now Customs Officer, "seized 10 horses loaded with 17 cwt tobacco and 2 tubs of Gin on Coxheath. A crowd of the 'lower orders' assembled and attacked his house breaking all the windows and drove off the horses. Next day he retrieved the situation and conveyed the contraband to the Custom House at Rochester." Perhaps they just wanted their horses back.

#### **Smugglers loading the horses**

*(drawn by William Henry Pyne; from his 'Microcosm', 1808)*



Most of these items are brief and to the point but one report in the *Maidstone Journal*, at the beginning of 1787 reads: "In consequence of information given, two Excise Officers went from this town to Linton and waited for the arrival of two 'Blackheath Arabians' loaded in appearance with red herrings. The Masters of these sagacious animals cried their commodity of 'Red Herrings, oh!' through the village, when the two officers approached and on close investigation found four tubs of foreign spirits curiously concealed in their panniers, which were brought to the office in this town;



*the asses and savory merchandise - after much supplication - were returned to the unfortunate adventurers."*

It is the only article like this and I am not sure if the reporter found the situation humorous or was sympathetic towards the smugglers. On 9 February 1790 another report of an escaped smuggler, one Thomas Adam, was printed in the *Maidstone Journal*. He was a labourer at Chatham Dockyard, a wheelwright by trade, the report has it that he was a dealer in Red Herrings. Red Herrings are, of course, herrings which have been cured. But did the meaning of 'a red herring' being a false trail indicate a connection here with smuggling?

Coxheath seems to have been a local distribution centre, and most of the loads seized in Coxheath by the Excise Officers seem to be about 9 tubs, a tub holding 4 gallons. The quantities would seem the size suitable to supply local wine merchants or a public house or inn. Their arrangements must have been greatly upset when the military camps were set up on the heath. There are stories of soldiers finding hidden goods and enjoying them.

Smuggling seems to have been widespread throughout the county in the eighteenth century, but by the end of the Napoleonic Wars there was change in public attitudes, there was an increase in the preventative measures and some taxes were repealed so that smuggling was no longer such a profitable and easy operation. It continued, but not so openly.

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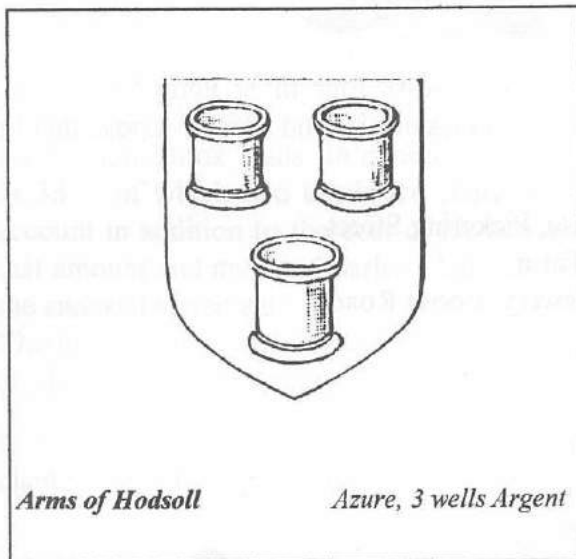
## THE HODSOLL FAMILY IN LOOSE

Anne Creasey

Picture this - a pretty village with its community of craftsmen and rural labourers, the stream that powers the busy watermills, a Manor House set amidst hops and orchards, the Lord of the Manor, master of all he surveys. Then the failure of the hop harvest and the sale of the family home, and eventually the success of two grand-daughters as Court dressmakers - a perfect plot for a TV costume drama!

This story is told in a handful of documents sent to us by Mary Day, a local historian of Capel, Surrey.

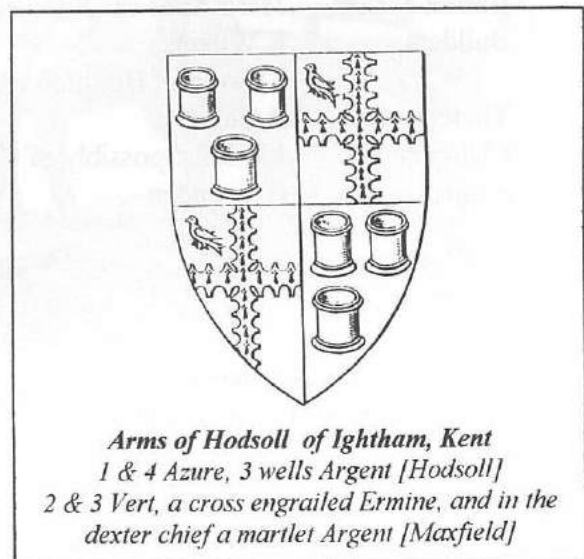
The Manor House is *Old Loose Court*, situated at the bottom of Lancet Lane, alongside the old road to Maidstone, and the Lord of the Manor is James Hackett Hodsoll, who bought the Loose Court Estate of 213 acres in 1860. He relished his title, holding a Court Baron every seven years to which his Bailiff called the tenants by ringing a bell and calling 'Come and do your duty'.<sup>1</sup> James was born in Wrotham in 1813 and could trace his ancestry back to Thomas Hodsoll of South Ash who died in 1553<sup>2</sup>. He had one son, Charles Maxfield Hodsoll, and two daughters, Laura and Caroline.



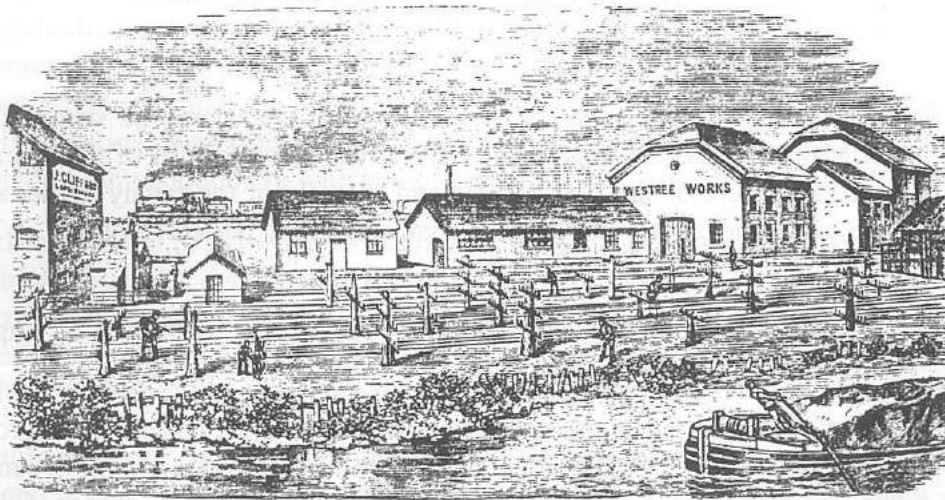
His Account Book for 1861-78 shows that the estate included *Little Ivy*, *Loose Mill*, *Crisbrook Mill* and *Woodlawn*. He also owned premises in Maidstone High Street, Stone Street and Earl Street.

The Farm Account Book for 1870-87 shows that he had a large acreage of hops which produced most of the farm profits. He built five square oasts beside the five round ones at *Loose Court*<sup>1</sup>, and in 1870 rented *Loose Farm* from William Peale, making a total of 380 acres. The 1871 Census Return states that he employed 50 men, 15 boys and 3 women.

Hops were the premier crop on both farms, and the list of fertilisers used is impressive: sprats, wool, rape dust, guano, night soil, rags, road scrapings and chamois skin, among others. Hop packeting, sieves and twine were bought from James Clifford of Bank Street. Flags and rushes were purchased for hop-tying, tents hired to house the pickers, and Dr Owens was called in to attend them. Hop varieties



grown were Goldings, Early Goldings, Grapes, Bramlings and White Earlys. Other major crops were wheat, oats, fruit and potatoes, and stock was bought and sold by Jarret & Co, probably of Sittingbourne.

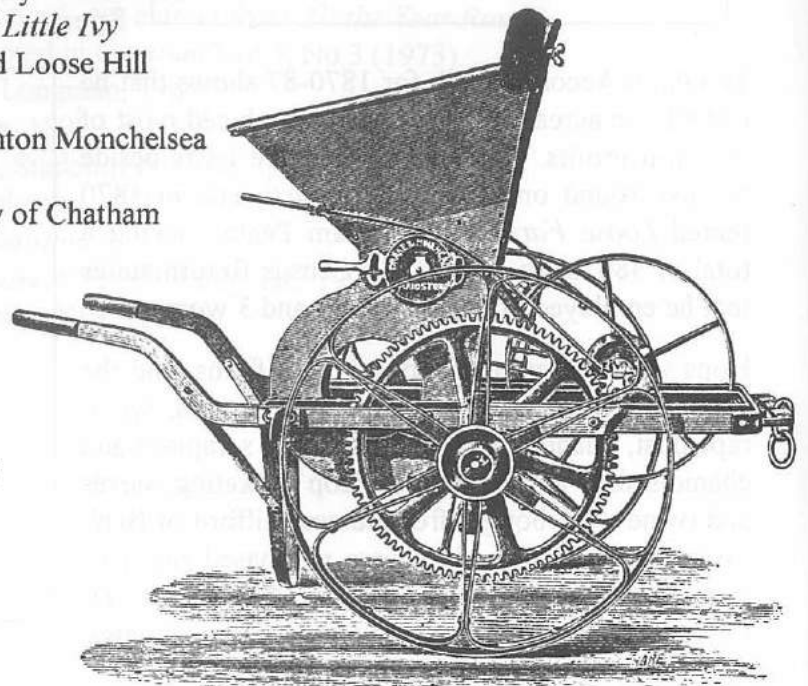


*James Clifford's  
Rope Walk,  
Westree*

Threshing and steam ploughing was contracted out, often to Jesse Ellis of St Peter Street, and Plomley & Crowhurst provided veterinary services. Other tradesmen in and around Loose that he used were:

Fruit merchants	Thomas Skinner of Olive House, Pickering Street E J Hartridge of Abbey Gate Farm
Brewer	Joseph Barker of Shernold Brewery, Loose Road
Miller	E J Antrum of Loose Mill
Blacksmiths	Henry Spurgeon of Coxheath John Harris of Well Street
Saddlers	J Evenden, next to <i>Chequers</i> M Hickmott of Loose
Wheelwrights	W H Fryer, possibly of <i>Star Inn</i> George Harris of <i>Little Ivy</i>
Basket Maker	Jesse Apps of Old Loose Hill
Builders	E Wilkins J Wood of Boughton Monchelsea
Thatcher	R Baker
Charcoal burners	J Weeks, possibly of Chatham G Evenden

**The Sulphurator**  
*made by Drake & Muirhead*



In 1870 an Inventory was taken for each of the farms. Both farms had hop growing equipment, but the horses and wagons were kept at *Loose Farm*, while special items, like the Sulphurator for hop spraying and the cyder mill and press, were at *Loose Court*. Of interest are the '6 portable railway trucks, 3 turn-tables and dipped and metalled rails and iron tyes complete' at *Loose Court*, which were twice loaned to neighbouring farmers. With each inventory is a count of hop poles in named fields.

The items and services bought and sold are listed; most are routine, but some are more interesting:

1870 a small bill for 'repairs to Peale's oasts' may indicate that James used the huge complex of oasts near the *Wool House*.

1871 A chimney-piece for *Loose Court* from Mr Ellis cost £2 16s 0d and paper hanging by Mr Cook cost £1 2s 9d.

1872 £250 was spent on a steam engine 'for the Mill' (*Little Ivy?*). Bells were hung at *Loose Court* by Mr Pankhurst.

1873 33 tree boxes were made and stone chippings bought which suggests a new driveway. James hosted a Ploughing Match and expenses included £3 16s 0d for beef for prizes.

1874 The ponds were 'mudded' by Mr Hickmott, a long job lasting several weeks.

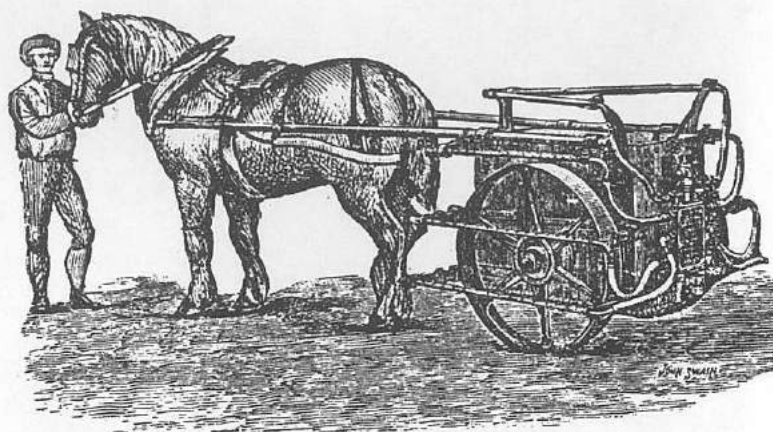
1875 A tent was hired and bread and cheese bought as refreshments for the men's Cricket Match.

James's wife Susanna had died in 1874 and then, in 1877, the hop harvest failed. The last entry in his Account Book reads 'In consequence of severe losses on our hops in 1877 amounting to £4854 9s 3d ... of which two thirds are charged to my account and one third to my son C M Hodsoll's account in addition to the cost of his house expenses for the year 1877 my property is reduced by that amount and my son Charles's balance has been swept away so that none appears to his credit in the annexed statement.'

Charles and his wife Georgiana shared *Loose Court* with James, and by this time they had five children.

In 1877 *Loose Farm* was relinquished and the equipment sold. At *Loose Court* fruit trees were planted and a Dairy established.

*A Hop Washer*



Georgiana was a very resourceful lady who took an active interest in the farm, and augmented their income by boarding children whose parents lived and worked abroad.<sup>3</sup> Hops were still grown and picked, fruit and stock sold and the dairy thrived. A mule shown at the Royal Agricultural Show in 1879 was later sold to Lord Arthur Cecil; a donkey cart and pony van were purchased and also a Brewer's licence and 100 gallon copper. Nevertheless, the relentless Farm Account Book shows a steady loss year-by-year until from 1883 onwards no totals are shown.



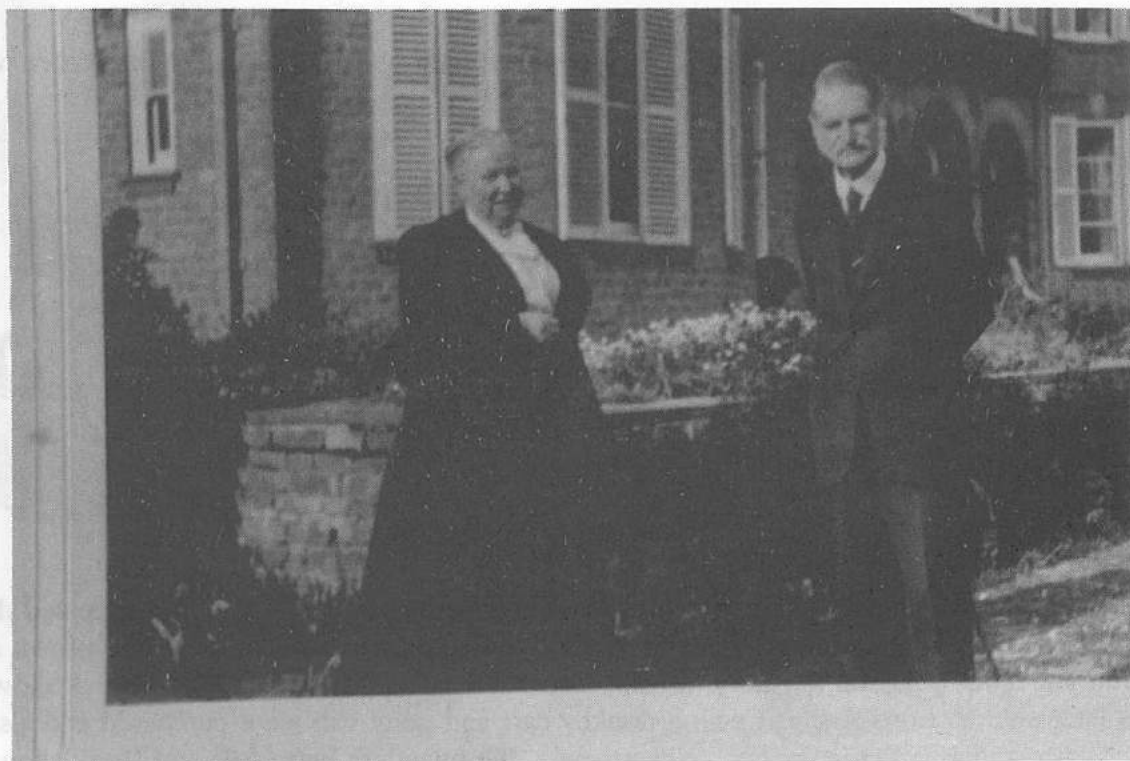
In 1888 James died at his daughter Laura Castleden's home, *Dennington Rectory*, Suffolk, and was buried in Maidstone Cemetery beside Susanna. The same year the estate was put up for sale. However, the 1891 census still shows Charles and Georgiana and six sons and daughters living at *Loose Court*, and an 1895 directory lists him as Lord of the Manor. By 1898 his address is given as *Ivy Glen*, Loose, and subsequent directories show no trace of them.

Now over to Mary Day for the rest of the story.

### THE HODSOLL FAMILY IN CAPEL, SURREY

#### Mary Day

Charles Maxfield Hodsoll and his wife Georgiana Mary arrived in Capel in 1911. They rented from the Mortimers of *Wigmore* a substantial house, *Farm House*, in the centre of the village next to the parish church. The house was formerly the farmhouse of *Churchgardens Farm* and is presently known as *Churchgardens* - now divided into two. When they died in the 1920s, Mr & Mrs Hodsoll were taken back to Maidstone for burial.



*Charles Maxfield Hodsoll and Georgiana Mary Hodsoll (née Pollock)*

Julia Henrietta, their first born, married her cousin Douglas, a clergyman, and had five children. Arthur Maxfield, their youngest son, became a successful wine merchant and lived in Godalming, Surrey. Two sons died comparatively young - George Bertram, a Captain in the 3rd Battalion Suffolk Regiment, was killed in action at Ypres in 1914, aged 39; Harold Edward died in Capel as a result of his injuries in 1921, aged 44. Both were buried in Capel churchyard where a granite cross marks their grave.

Charles Wilfred Maxfield Pollock Hodsoll, the eldest son, was married (in about 1920) to Audrey Julia Innes, a widow. She was the daughter of James Shudi Broadwood, a piano manufacturer, of Lyne House in Capel. Wilfred, as he was known, and his wife lived at *Playstowe House*, Capel, one of the earliest meeting places of the Quakers in Surrey. There is still a Quaker burial ground in the gardens. Wilfred died in 1966, aged 93, and his widow in 1973. Both are buried in Capel churchyard.

Two daughters, Miss Kitty and Miss Ethel, built up a successful business as Court Dressmakers. They were highly regarded in the village and continued the tenancy of *Farm House*. In 1941 they were joined by Miss Dunn who stayed with them to the end of their lives as friend and companion. In 1959 their tenancy was terminated and they left *Farm House* and bought a house, *Hurst*, in Vicarage Lane, just across the road. Miss Kitty died in 1961 aged 90 and Miss Ethel in 1971 aged 92, and they were buried beside their brothers. Miss Dunn still lives in Capel - a charming and lively lady. She has kindly agreed to show me some of the Hodsoll family papers and will allow them to be copied and deposited with the Loose Area History Society.



*The Misses Kitty (Georgiana Katharine) and Ethel Hodsoll with Miss JES Dunn*

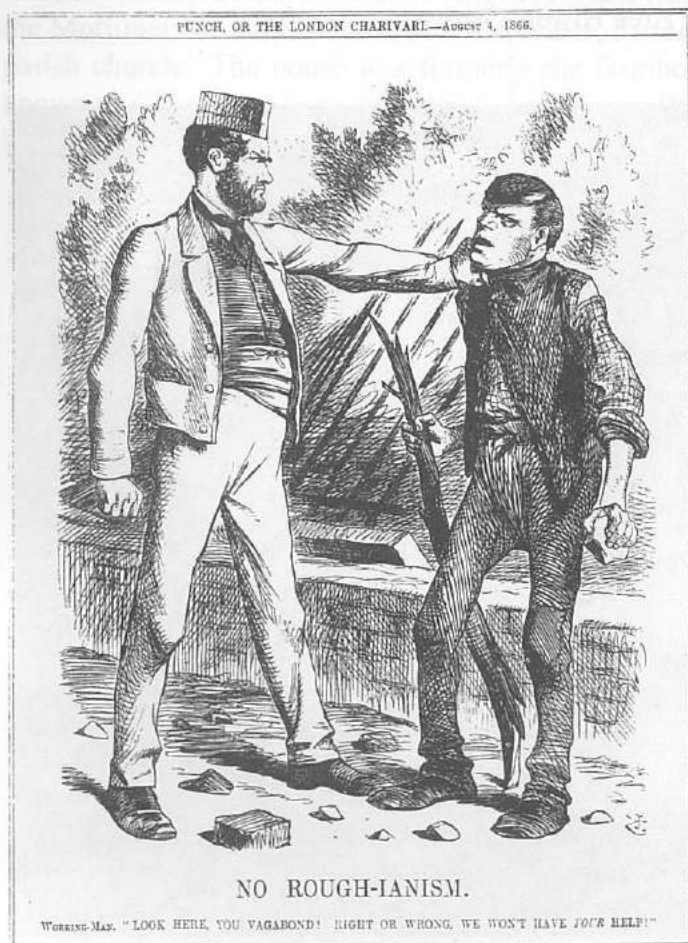
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- <sup>3</sup> Private notes made by H Busbridge, now in LAHS archive

## 'ROUGHS' AT LOOSE COURT

Roger Thornburgh

Looking through my one and only bound volume of *Punch* recently - the one for 1866 - I suddenly, and with some surprise, spotted a reference to *Loose Court*. Since James Hackett Hodsoll had bought the estate some six years earlier and was the current owner, it seemed appropriate to append it to Anne Creasey's article on the Hodsolls.



The background to the incident recorded in *Punch* is that there was in 1865-6 a certain amount of popular unrest which was affecting London and, apparently, other parts of the country too, (including Loose, if *Punch* is to be believed). Back in 1832 the famous Reform Act had come into effect, making a number of political changes, one of which had been the granting of the right to vote to nearly a quarter of a million extra people. This still meant that about five out of every six adult males could not vote, however, and by the 1860s there was a growing demand for more change.

In 1865 the elderly Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, died. He had been opposed to any further changes, so now one major obstacle was removed. For several months the new Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, and his Chancellor, William Gladstone, struggled to get agreement on a fresh Reform Bill. They had to contend,

however, not only with the Tory opposition but also with critics within their own (Liberal) party, and with the Radicals (led by John Bright) and trade unions who thought that the proposals didn't go far enough. Then, in mid-1866, the Liberals suffered a parliamentary defeat and Russell resigned.

With the new Tory administration under the Earl of Derby, the public pressure for reform grew. John Bright was making impassioned speeches at meetings and, in July, a huge demonstration was planned to take place in Hyde Park. The government decided to prevent it by closing the park gates, but the crowd, incensed at such action, broke down the railings for nearly a mile. The event was much debated in Parliament, and *Punch* reported Benjamin Disraeli, the new Chancellor, declaring that 'the real working man was no rioter and that the Scum of the Metropolis had taken advantage of the situation'. *Punch* also published a cartoon (above), echoing Disraeli's view.

By the autumn, popular demand for a Reform Bill was still strong, and *Punch*, in its issue of 13 October, published the following short piece - the one that referred to *Loose Court*:

#### BETTERING THE INSTRUCTION.

IN the "high-falutin" address presented by the Manchester Branch of the Reform League to MR. BRIGHT last week, we find, among other bursts of eloquence, the statement that "the voice of the metropolis of the empire has echoed through the land. Hyde Park and Parliament Street, to the venerable Abbey, have been compactly filled with law-respecting, freedom-loving multitudes of our fellow-countrymen, solemnly resolved to regain those rights which a proud and over-bearing minority still presumes to withhold from them"—including, we presume, the right to break windows, pick pockets, and tear down railings.

By way of practical comment on this, we read of the hop-pickers at Loose Court, in Kent, the other day, striking work, arming themselves with hop-poles, demolishing the bins in another garden, where abject country hands, who hadn't been taught their rights by the League, were engaged, and threatening their employers unless he raised the terms they had agreed to work for, "to show him what Hyde Park riot was like."

Evidently, the voice of the metropolis of the empire, if it have not echoed through the land, has echoed in the Maidstone hop-grounds. And the Loose Court hop-pickers seem to have viewed MR. HODSOLL, in the light of the Manchester Address, as one of "the proud and over-bearing minority" which "presumed to withhold their rights from the law-respecting, freedom-loving" "roughs" out of the slums of Westminster, the alleys of Whitechapel, and the courts of Bloomsbury. Who henceforth will deny that the majestic Hyde Park demonstrations have borne fruits—and that these are of them?

All of which must leave one in some doubt as to how far Mr Hodsoll's hop-pickers were real Reform Bill campaigners, and how far they were just using the Hyde Park riots to warn what could happen in Loose if they weren't paid more. An early case of copy-cat disorder, surely?



**PYKNAM IN PYKENSTRETT**  
**(Charlenton by the Brook and a 'Gatherer of Fleeces')**  
**(1534-1544)**

Margaret Chapman

*Pear Tree Cottage* in Pickering Street, which has been expertly dated to around 1370-1410, was the subject of an article in the third edition of *Loose Threads*, where a chronology of documentary evidence outlining occupants and owners was traced from this century right back to John Stace in 1664.

For most of these 300-odd years *Pear Tree Cottage* had never been named as such, but had been constantly described as a messuage in an area of about 20 acres in Pickett/Picking/Pickering Street. The house was, at one time, known as *Skinner's Cottage*, this being at the time when William Skinner was at the height of his farming activities and when he built his house next door, which he referred to as *The Homestead*. This later became *Olive House* and is now known as *Slade House*. As far as we know, there were no other dwellings in this area in the 16th century (*Pickering Cottage*, *Grove Cottage* and the above-mentioned *Homestead* were built in the 18th and 19th centuries) so we are confident that we have followed the right trail.

**Sheep Shearing, from a late 15th century manuscript**

From 'The Village in History'  
G Nicholson & J Faircett,  
Weidenfeld & Nicolson,  
The National Trust 1988



This trail went cold after the discovery of the 1664 Will of John Stace and we were at a standstill until two more 16th century Will transcripts<sup>1</sup> came to light recently, which contain a wealth of information for us to investigate - not least the references to 'PYKNAM in Pykenstrett'. The dates of the two Wills are 1534 and 1544, both in the reign of Henry VIII. It was, incidentally, 1534 when a decree was passed forbidding English farmers to own more than 2000 sheep<sup>2</sup>, which would have held some meaning for William Hercules, a gatherer of fleeces who was named in the 1534 Will. Then, a few years later, between 1540-1546, the price of wool rose from 3s 8d a tod (28lbs) to 20s 8d and increasing numbers of landlords converted their lands to sheep pasture so as to enjoy the higher profits.<sup>3</sup> The author of 'The Decaye of England' wrote:

*"The more shepe, the dearer is the woll,  
The more shepe, the dearer is the mutton,  
The more shepe, the dearer is the beefe,  
The more shepe, the dearer is the corne,  
The more shepe, the skanter is the white meat,  
The more shepe, the fewer eggs for a penny."*

The Wills in question are really very simple, with Thomas Herunden leaving everything to his wife until his seven children came of age - the girls at 21, John at 32 and Edward(e) at 30! But there are references to a number of other people, one of whom is William Hercules, the sherman, who lived in the house by the church. There are some of us who think that the house which William lived in must have been what we now know as *Church House* and that '*Charlenton* next to the Brook' is our present *Wool House*. But others amongst us believe that *Charlenton* could possibly be the house we know of as *Tylers*. Future research will, hopefully, answer these questions. If only the deeds of *Church House* and *Tylers* would fall into my lap!

As for the other lands which are mentioned, we know we are in Pickering Street because Little and Great Knollfield, Peensfield and Little and Great Co(o)mbe are mentioned in other documents connected with the area.

Ten years later, however, the Herundens seem to have disappeared and it is now John Orgar who owns the house in Pykynstrete, which he bequeaths to his son William. What happened between 1534-1544? Was there an epidemic of some kind which could account for the disappearance of the Herunden family?

At the beginning of the 16th century there were several outbreaks of what became known as the 'Sweating Sickness' - the last of which was in 1551<sup>3</sup>. Apart from profuse sweating and 'grete stynkyng', other characteristics of the disease were black spots and 'grete pricking in their bodies'. Apparently death came with great suddenness. Virulent as the sweating sickness was, however, the plague which broke out in England in 1563 was much more so. Could this sweating sickness have broken out in Loose?

The two Wills read as follows, (reproduced from the transcripts):

*Thomas Herunden, dwellynge in the parishe  
of Bocton Mownchilsey otherwyse callyd  
Bocton Quarrey in Kent. 4 August 1534. To  
be buried in xpen<sup>4</sup> buryall. To high altar of  
Bocton 20<sup>d</sup>. To Sir William Rudstone, curat  
of the saide parishe church 5<sup>s</sup>. To  
the vycary of Loose iuxta<sup>5</sup> Bocton 5<sup>s</sup>. To high aulter of  
Este Farley iuxta Loose 12<sup>d</sup>. Unto  
William Herunden my sone my howse that stonythe  
besides Loose church i the wyche William  
Hercules, sherman<sup>6</sup>, now dwellyth w<sup>t</sup> a  
medowe<sup>7</sup> before Charlenton iuxta Loose  
Brooke, also a crofte<sup>8</sup> lyinge by the house  
and a pece of londe lyinge in Este Farley  
callyd the Strete & a pece of Woodelande  
joynyng to the same towardes the weste*

& £10 owte of the house and landes of Pyknam  
otherwyse callyd Pykenstrett, as sone as he  
come owte of prentyssepe, and for faulte  
of heires male to his brother John and for  
faulte of issue to his brother Edwarde & for  
lake of heires to next of the Kynne of the male  
of Herundens.

To my sone John Herunden my howse  
callyd Pykenstret otherwyse callyd Pyknam  
w<sup>t</sup> Lytell Knollfylde and great Knollfild<sup>9</sup>  
Lytell Combe & Great Combe<sup>10</sup> w<sup>t</sup> the banks &  
woodes belonginge to the same & 4 pec<sup>s</sup> of  
lande joynynge to the howse in Pykynge Strete  
otherwyse callyd Pyknam & twoo  
pec<sup>s</sup> of lande joynynge to the same towards  
the Est callyd Peensfylde & one pece of  
londe in Bocton towards the Est callyd  
Stombybrede, w<sup>t</sup> an acre & more of woodeland  
marks<sup>11</sup> and bownes devided & shiste and oon pece of  
Bromelande lyinge in the parishe of Loosse  
towards the northe. And the said John shall  
not have nor enioye onny profetts re untill  
the tyme he come to the age of 32 yeres  
and as sone as he shall come unto his lawfull  
age of 32 yeres he shall paye owte of his  
lands yerely to his mother Elisabeth duryng  
hyr lyfe 16<sup>s</sup> 8<sup>d</sup>.

Unto Edwarde my sone my house & all the  
landes joynynge that I dwell in in the  
parish of Bocton & all the quarryes except  
4 rodde in lengthe and 2 in bredethe the  
wyche I will that John my sone shall  
have, one pece lyinge in the parishe of Bocton  
called Dyche Rede. Also I will that  
Edwarde my sone shall have two gardens  
callyd Bocton hundred gardens & a pece  
of medowlande lyinge uppon Willington  
Den in the paryshe of Bocton & a medowe  
lyinge uppon a Dean<sup>12</sup> callyd Lodyngton in  
the parishe of Maydeston & the said Edward  
shall not have nor enioye anny parcell  
of lande untill the tyme he come to the  
age of 30 yeres & then he shall pay unto his  
mother Elisabeth duryng hir lyfe 10<sup>s</sup> yerely.

To Rycharde Skalonde a welshe fryse-  
gowne<sup>13</sup>. To Every of them that hathe watchid  
w<sup>t</sup> me night and daye 6<sup>d</sup>. To the high awlter

*of Saynte Margaretts Churche in Westmyster  
16<sup>d</sup>. To eyther of my 4 doughters £10 when  
21. All my indentures & leyses & bargaynes  
unto Elisabeth my wyfe untyll the tyme  
my children come unto their age.*

*Executrice, my wyfe Elisabeth & John Clyffe  
of Este Farley, mason my supervysoure  
to help my wyfe in the sale of my stone  
& he to have for his paynes takinge 13<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup>, &  
Thomas Burseide of the parishe of Lynton  
overseer of my corne & cattall & husbandry.*

*In presence of Sir Henry Mott, curat of  
Saint Margaretts Churche in Westmynster  
William Forde & John Jonson.*

*(Proved at Lamehith 30 Sept. 1534 by Elizabeth relict.)*

*[P.C.C. 18 Hogen]*

Ten years later .....

*John Orgar, citezen & Freemason of London,  
9 Oct. 1544. To be buried in xpen buriall  
where it shall please God to provide for the  
same. To Robert Draper of London, goldesmithe  
40<sup>s</sup> starling. To every one of my three  
doughters 40<sup>s</sup> starling a pece. To all my  
childerne the thirde parte of all my gooddes  
equally to be devided according to the goodd &  
lawdable custome of the Cytie of London.*

*My executor shall doo finde & kepe w<sup>t</sup>  
in the parishe churche of Boughton in Kent  
by the space of seven yeres one jerye obit or  
anniversary for my soule, my wiffes soule  
& all xpen soules expending yerely 6<sup>s</sup> 8<sup>d</sup>.*

*Unto Elisabeth my wife the second parte  
of my gooddes over & above the plate that  
she brought w<sup>t</sup> her.*

*Residue, my debtes paid re to my said  
childerne equally. Geoffery Orgar my  
sonne my sole executor & to the same Jeffery  
for his labor 40<sup>s</sup>. My trustie & loving sonne  
Edwarde Martyn myn overseer. Per me  
Robert Draper, per me Andrewe Woodcok  
Lawrence Owen, John Mucklowe, scriptor*

*Last will: of all my landes, tenements re  
in the parrishes, townes & feldes of Boughton  
Monchesey & Lowse in Kent. Elisabeth  
my wiffe shal have during her liffe all  
suche landes re whiche I have appoynted  
to her by a dede of feoffament indent &*



*afre her decase to remayne & revert  
unto all my childerne equalie to be divided.*

*I will Geffery Orgar my sonne my  
dwelling howse & the landes thereunto  
belonging in Boghton Quarell in Kent,  
whiche one John Turnor nowe holdith  
to farme. Also William Orgar my sonne  
my howse in Pykynstrete & all my landes  
in Pykenstrete in parrishe of Lowse in Kent  
except suche landes there appoynted to  
Elizabeth my wiffe for her ioyntor. To  
Henry Orgar my sone all my lands re  
called Purselands in parishe of Lowse &  
a howse in Boghton aforesaide called  
Millers w' twoo meddowes thereunto  
belonging, the one called Meremayde.*

*To Edwarde Martyn my sonne all that my  
tenement called Wychinden in Boghton*

*Witness: Robert Draper, goldsmithe, Andrewe  
Woodcocke, grocer, Lawrence Awen & John  
Mucklowe scryvener.*

*(Proved 9 Dec 1546 by Geoffrey Orgar executor)*

*[P.C.C. 34 Alen]*

An analysis of the Wills gives us the following names, places and properties to consider:

#### **THE PEOPLE**

Thomas Burseide	Overseer of Linton
John Clyffe	a mason of East Farleigh
Robert Draper	a goldsmith of London
William Forde	a witness
William Hercules	a sherman who lived in the house next to Loose church
Edward Herunden	son of Thomas Herunden
Elizabeth Herunden	wife of Thomas Herunden
John Herunden	son of Thomas Herunden
Thomas Herunden	stonemason, died 30 September 1534
William Herunden	an apprentice, son of Thomas
John Jonson	a witness
Edward Martin	overseer to John Orgar
Sir Henry Mott	curate of St Margaret's Church, Westminster
John Mucklowe	a scriptor
Elizabeth Orgar	wife of John Orgar
Geoffery/Jeffery/Geffery Orgar	son of John Orgar
Henry Orgar	son of John Orgar
John Orgar	a freemason, London, died 9 December 1546
William Orgar	son of John Orgar
Lawrence Owen	a witness
Sir William Rudstone	curate of Boughton church
Rycharde Skalonde	
John Turner	living in Boughton Quarries
Andrew Woodcock	grocer

## THE PROPERTIES

<i>Charlenton</i>	In front of Loose Brook (perhaps <i>Tylers</i> , or <i>Wool House</i> ?)
<i>Millers</i>	Boughton
<i>Pyknam</i> in <i>Pykenstrete</i>	<i>Pear Tree Cottage</i> in Pickering Street
<i>Wychinden</i>	in Boughton. The old name for <i>Boughton Mount</i> (see Hasted) was <i>Wychden</i>
A house beside Loose Church, with a meadow and a crofte	<i>Church House</i> ?
A house in Boughton Quarries	Owned and occupied by Thomas Herunden in 1534

## THE LANDS

Banks and woods adjoining Pyknam	Loose
Boughton Hundred Gardens	Boughton
Broomland	North Loose
Dyche Rede	Boughton
Great Combe	Loose
Great Knollfield	Loose
Lodyngton, a meadow in a dean	Loddington, a detached part of Maidstone to the south of Boughton
Little Combe	Loose
Little Knollfield	Loose
Meremayde, a meadow	Boughton
Peensfield, adjoining Pyknam	Loose
Purselands	Loose
The Strete	East Farleigh
Stombybrede	Boughton
Willington Den	Boughton
Woodland adjoining The Strete	East Farleigh

## REFERENCES & NOTES

- 1 L.L. Duncan, 'Wills, Canterbury Prerogative Court', Vol.VI, manuscript in Kent Archaeological Society library.
- 2 B Grun, *The Timetable of History*
- 3 C Hibbert, *The English - A Social History 1066-1945*
- 4 Xpen = Christian
- 5 Unxta = Next to
- 6 Sherman = Gatherer of fleeces
- 7 Medowe = A field mowed for hay
- 8 Croft(e) = An enclosed meadow or arable land, usually adjacent to a house
- 9 Knoll (Knowle) = A low round hill
- 10 Co(o)mbe = A narrow valley or hollow in the side of a hill
- 11 Markland = An area varying between 1 and 3 acres
- 12 Den(n) = A pasture, usually for pigs
- 13 Welshe Fryse Gown = A woollen gown

*The documents that Margaret has described leave much research to do and your comments and observations, however, tenuous, will be greatly appreciated. Margaret's address is to be found on page 2.-Ed*

**MEMORIES OF WARTIME SCHOOL DAYS  
AT SHERNOLD HIGH SCHOOL, LOOSE  
1940-1946**

Julia Page (née Newman)

On 4 November 1940, aged eleven-and-a-half, I began to attend Shernold High School in the Loose Road, where the present Hanover Housing complex *Lakelands* stands opposite the entrance to Anglesey Avenue. My previous school, Maidstone High, had been bombed on 1 October and, appearing unlikely to start again in the near future, my parents were anxious for my education; in the months since 4 June, when I was evacuated for six weeks, my schooling only added up to about 25 days and that at scattered intervals.

To my surprise, I see that in my diary for 4 November I wrote '*Clave School*' so the name must have changed to Shernold fairly soon after because I have no memory of describing it as other than Shernold High School. I believe *Clave* was originally a kindergarten, a one-storey, two-roomed hutted building in the garden of 346 Loose Road, one of a few bungalows just above the Wheatsheaf, on the opposite side. *Clave* first appears in the Kent Messenger Directory for 1937-38 and the electoral roll for 1939 shows the co-heads at this address to be Miss Alice Mabel Lilian Ellis, but always known as May Ellis, and Miss Vera Madeleine Beeching. There is, however, a little mystery about number 346 and Miss Ellis because from the 1930s on a Mary Ellis was living next door at number 344 and her name still appears on the 1947 electoral roll; I wonder now if she was a relation or if this was merely a coincidence.

***Clave School, Loose Road***  
***Possibly 1937 or 1938***  
*(Courtesy of Mrs Betty King)*



		Betty Barker	Betty Bowles	Freda Bonny	Barbara Marsh			
Pat	Sylvia	Sylvia	Mary Fuller	Valerie Cooper?	Eileen	Tommy	Peter	
Tilley	Harvey	Locke			Pinn?	Baarden?	Mayor	
	Michael	Haynes				Trevor?	Dennis?	Paul?
Robert Julius or	?	Anne Watson?		Billy Burrows:	Jimmy?	Leonard Leggett	Peter Berteaux	
Julia?								

The bungalow seems to have been May Ellis's home because Vera Beeching was the daughter of Cecil Gascoigne Beeching of *Orchard House*, 87 Boughton Lane, where she lived right up to a year before her name appears, as late as 1938, alongside Miss Ellis's at number 346 but only as a resident and not eligible for jury service. Miss Ellis possibly began the school and then brought in Miss Beeching as co-head, the pair of them consequently moving it up the road to a much larger house sometime between 1939 and 1940. The new site, *Shernold Cottage*, 477 Loose Road, had formerly been the home of Levi Barker, who had recently died and one assumes the Misses Ellis and Beeching seized the opportunity of a larger property to expand their business into a school accepting all ages, and then abandoned the name *Clave* in favour of the original house name.

The plan shown on pages 24 & 25 is what I roughly recall of the layout. Levi Barker's granddaughter, Betty, also a pupil at Shernold, believes it is fairly close to accuracy, give or take a few doubts. The two-roomed hutted building comprising the infant department was re-erected at the bottom of the garden in what might have been an orchard or kitchen garden - Betty's and my memories are of soft fruit bushes as well as small trees and certainly beyond a dividing wall separating it from the garden proper. The outside lavatories (for the pupils' use) adjoined the north boundary wall of the estate, a little above the neighbouring house; they were always cold and damp and I loathed them.

Shernold had rather a smart uniform, considerably more elegant than the garments I see schools require their pupils to wear these days. The main colour was a pleasant maroon, a gym slip, of course, stylishly cut, if I remember correctly, with white or cream blouses, maroon blazers with SHS embroidered in cream or silver on the pocket and a very chic beret. These had to be specially tailored and I didn't get mine for a few months. Summer dresses were cream, of any pattern one wished, and they looked very fresh under the maroon blazers.

Change never bothers me; new places and strange faces are a stimulant and this was the third school of my life. From infancy I had always nourished fixed ideas on the ideal desk and joy of joys, Shernold possessed them - *'double and open and shutting desks, jolly good'* I wrote that night. Exams came a month later, they were held at the end of every term - *'History is going to be pretty stiff, Miss Bunyard says so'*, I noted, thereby recording for posterity one of the teachers' names. I came second in the exam, with 21 marks, but out of what is not mentioned. We took the arithmetic one, too, that day and for sure I must have come bottom or nearly so; there is an ominous silence over the placing and marks. Both Maidstone High and Shernold have the doubtful distinction of never succeeding in teaching me any mathematics beyond the four rules.

In those days it was common for Wednesday afternoons to be a holiday, and since, at Shernold, Friday afternoon was always Games, the nitty gritty of education had to be packed into a four-day week. My diary in 1941 was a Charles Letts *School-Girl's*, with spaces at the back for, amongst other things, the Time Table, carefully filled in that year. The day began with Assembly at 9.00 and this would extend so that lessons proper did not start until 9.30. Break was at 10.45 until 11.00 and I think we ended the morning at mid-day. I always went home for lunch - a sheer joy - since, for a start I had a horror of school lunches and secondly, if I hung on all morning, I might not have to use the toilets until I got home. The afternoon session began at 2.00 and school concluded at 4.00.

Spring Term 1941 began on 9 January with a new form teacher, a Mrs Edmonds, and I see by the 15th she was getting a grip on the class because we were set to write a four page essay on *'Behaviour'*. By the 20th we were doing Needlework and my task was a pink cotton tea apron. I remember it well. It was gathered at the waistline and *'stroking the gathers'* was clearly part of the



exercise. I couldn't do this for the life of me; each time I presented the work I had to take it out and start again. When finally the teacher gave up, the apron was a crumpled mess and I had made the secret vow NEVER to stroke gathers again in all my years; henceforth I would sew my own way. The sequel, however, was that my mother-in-law, of whom I was very fond, had been a tailoress and her expression of total astonishment when she watched me sew had to be seen to be enjoyed.

Fellow pupils I recall during the early years were Hazel Masters from Norrington Road, Joyce Underhill from 24 Paynes Lane, Jill Noakes from 5 Berwyn Grove, Freda Bonny, my next door neighbour at home, and Maureen Eaton from Coombe Road, and we seem to have rubbed along fairly amicably, loving each other one minute and hating the next, only to be loving the day after as our emotions see-sawed through adolescence.

The summer term in 1941 commenced in May and another teacher joined the staff, a Mrs Usher; 'not bad, a bit stern, I think' was my comment for the first morning but by the afternoon we had games and with this Mrs Usher dropped sharply in my estimation, she 'wasn't at all good'. By the 23 May I was 'hating' her, so she must have sensibly put me well and truly in my place. Good for her!



*An Outing  
to London, 1942  
(Courtesy Mrs Betty King)*

*Standing, Left to Right: Maureen Eaton, Jill Noakes, Jean Knowler, Joyce Underhill, Pauline Beak, Florence Woolgar, Janet Verrall, Freda Bonny. Miss Ellis can just be seen behind Maureen. Crouching, Left to Right: Marie Brassington, Pamela Hulks, Marion Fuller, Julie Newman, Cicely Lihou, Betty Minett, Eileen Pinn*

One of the earliest lessons I recall vividly was Elocution. Miss Ellis taught it and we used a text book whose chapters were devoted to explaining how to make the correct sounds, alongside photographs of mouths in the right position. We were asked to bring a small handbag sized mirror to the class, and, gazing into it, solemnly pronounce the sounds in unison. Well! At least it was a novelty and not mathematics. But for me again it had a sequel. When I went for an interview for entry to teacher training, the Principal, a woman of academic distinction of a leading Oxford academic family, commenced by asking about Shernold High School as she had never heard of it. Her tone was a trifle ominous. Following this, she commented regretfully on my lack of science subjects and the only thing that seemed to please came when she gave me a passage to read from a book and complimented me on my clarity. I rather think I was eventually accepted on the strength of it. Many years later, at another interview, for the headship of a school in Berkshire, one of the

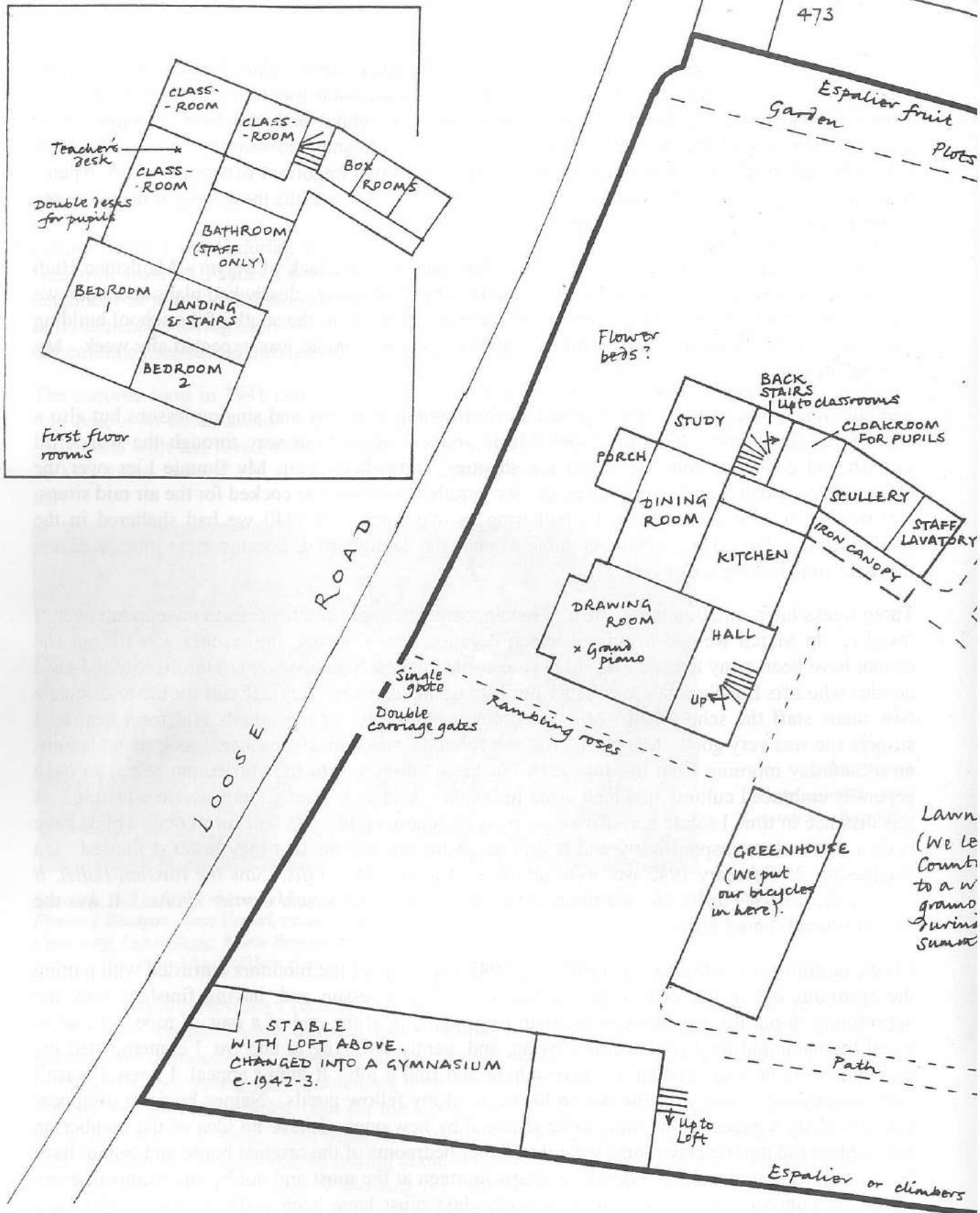
male school managers persisted in asking me how much importance I placed on elocution lessons for infants, to the despair of the County Advisor, I might say, who was trying to find an energetic woman to take on a run-down, extremely poorly housed school and transform, amongst many things, its teaching of the three R's. Well, I got that job too, and I do wonder now how far Miss Ellis's elocution lessons changed the course of my life on two important occasions. Also, when I hear the strangulated sounds coming from some young peoples' mouths these days, it occurs to me that maybe the school manager had a point.

To me, one of the original disappointments of Shernold was the lack of a gym - Maidstone High had possessed a super one. Miss Ellis and Miss Beeching, however, clearly had plans and when we returned to school for the Spring Term in 1942, the coach house to the south of the school building had been transformed into a wonderful hall, and the gym equipment was expected any week. My excitement rose.

Shernold now possessed not only a good hall for morning assembly and singing lessons but also a small stage for drama. Miss Ellis took Music and we worked our way through the wonderful English and American folk songs and sea shanties: Strawberry Fair, My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean, Shenandoah, Ten Green Bottles, etc, we carolled, with one ear cocked for the air raid sirens. Not that by now they seemed to be bothering us overmuch. In 1940 we had sheltered in the school's cellars but I don't remember doing so once the daylight raids became more infrequent and the night-time raiding took over.

Three weeks later, on 30 January, the new gym apparatus arrived and henceforth my cup ran over. I loved it. In March we had to miss a lesson because, Mrs Boucher, the teacher was ill, but she cannot have been away long or I would have recorded the melancholy event. Unfortunately, I have no idea who Mrs Boucher, nor Mrs Usher nor Mrs Edmonds were. It is difficult for me to calculate how many staff the school had. Miss Beeching was strictly for the infants and from hearsay I suspect she was very good. Miss Ellis first and foremost was a music teacher; I took piano lessons on a Saturday morning from her for years, but her contribution to the curriculum seems to have generally embraced culture, in which visits to London theatres and art galleries were a feature. At this distance in time I salute her. To take a party of school children to war-torn London must have been a tremendous responsibility and it says much for our parents that they never demurred. On Wednesday 25 February 1942 we *'went up to London with Miss Ellis. Saw the Russian Ballet, it was lovely, also St Paul's, etc, fed the pigeons, ate lunch at the Strand Corner House.'* It was the first of several school visits.

On the morning of my fourteenth birthday in 1943 I was one of the monitors entrusted with putting the apparatus out in the gym in preparation for the next lesson and, having finished, took the opportunity to put my legs through the twin rings hanging at the end of a pair of ropes. I cannot recall the name but they could form a swing, and, gently swinging to and fro, I contemplated the fact that I was now old enough to leave school and find a job. It didn't appeal, I knew I wasn't ready to earn my living yet. But not so for many of my fellow pupils. Names begin to disappear from the diary's pages at this time, to be replaced by new ones. I have no idea of the number on roll at Shernold but the classrooms were the former bedrooms of the original house and cannot have held many, despite the double desks - perhaps fourteen at the most and not by any means in every room. In consequence, the age range in each class must have been wide and those who were perhaps fifteen years old were beginning to leave, many of them to attend the Rogers School of Shorthand & Typing in Market Buildings or Miss Graham's Secretarial College in the High Street, opposite the Queen's Monument and I think over the top of Barratt's shoe shop. Others went



MEMORY of SHERNOLD HIGH SCHOOL LAYOUT,  
NOV. 1940 - JULY 1946.  
(Now 'Lakelands', the Hanover Housing Association)

CHILDREN'S  
LAVATORY

Espalier fruit

Gooseberry  
bushes,  
soft fruits  
etc.

Garden

Low wall

Plots

Low wall

SCHOOL  
ROOM  
6 year olds

Prefabricated building  
brought from Clave School  
and set in orchard.

SCHOOL  
ROOM  
5 year olds

t  
Dancing  
-up  
m, here  
e

• RT 1997 •



straight into jobs; Maureen Eaton, for example, seems to have found employment at the Eagle Star Insurance Company.

Thus life for me at school began to take on a new dimension and by late 1943 and into 1944, a year for which I have sadly lost my diary, I seem to have joined a class of girls of whom at least five of us stayed together until the summer of 1946, a period so marked with laughter and happiness and learning that certainly, for two of us, we have never forgotten it; it has to some extent influenced the quality of our lives.

Shernold, of course, as I realise now, was in its expansion period and therefore the upper school only grew as the pupils themselves grew older. In 1943 I think I must have changed classrooms from the one on the first floor left, above the front door in the photograph, to that where the one window shows correspondingly on the right. But I am positive that this latter room had two windows, and not one, and Betty Barker (now Betty King) and I believe it was added when the building became a school. My double desk was by the room's right hand window and Pamela Hulks (now Pamela Whaley) and I shared it, she came from Bearsted and our resulting firm friendship has lasted to this day. The class equated to a fourth form level and was the Top Class, so to speak.



**Shernold High School**, formerly the home of Levi Barker, dated 1824. Courtesy of Mrs Betty King

By now Miss Lloyd had become our form teacher and the news quickly spread round the girls that, unlike Miss Ellis and Miss Beeching, she was an experienced, trained teacher, from Brighton Teacher Training College, no less. A woman possibly in her mid-thirties but it is hard to say; she unfortunately screwed her rather thin dark brown hair into a small bun on the nape of her neck which did nothing for her, but she had an intelligent understanding air and above all was an exceptional teacher. I have experienced two such in my life and Miss Lloyd was one of them.

Under her tutelage, amongst other things, we moved in History from the Tudors and Stuarts to the eighteenth century, a welcome change for me because by now I'd been 'doing' the Tudors and Stuarts for about five years. We studied poetry with a wonderful anthology called *Verse Worth Remembering* (swiftly renamed by Janet Verrall into *Verse Worth Forgetting*) and went into Latin with a textbook entitled *Latin with Laughter* - the drawings were very amusing but I never really associated fun with Latin. Other girls in the class with me were the above Janet, who lived in *Salts Place*, Betty Barker from *Springhead*, Loose, Pauline Beak from *Lancet Lane*, (her young brother,

Derek, was in a lower class and Madeleine Fisher and Brenda Webb, née Bonnert, may have been with him), Pat and Pam Woolley, the twins from Lenham; Dianthe Forster-Browne who travelled on the bus all the way from Battle, something I found incredible at the time and even more so now; Audrey Skinner from Staplehurst way, Joyce Lane from Long Rede Lane, Barming, Pauline Croucher or Crowther, whose home area I cannot recall, Betty Minett from Shepway Avenue (now Cranbourne Avenue) and Florence Woolgar, whose father was in the police force up the Sutton Road and lived in a house there.

As 1943 merged into 1944 the army began what we now know as the giant ruse to confuse Germany over the proposed D Day invasion landing site. We wished them to believe it to be the Pas de Calais area and consequently to all intents and purposes gave the impression of a vast build-up of troops and equipment across the Weald of Kent. The constant movement of 3-tonners and small trucks on the main roads increased enormously. From my seat by the window I would watch convoy after convoy driving up and down the Loose Road, each truck with its distinctive divisional badge. Many of us rode our bicycles to school but the convoys moved at about 25 miles an hour, slowly and steadily, and the only apparent danger, if so it could be called, came from the troops in the back, bored and looking for amusement by whiling away the time wolf-whistling anyone in a skirt, and nubile 15 year olds were just about old enough to attract, despite the school uniform. We thought it was great and took to stuffing our berets in our saddle bags until we got within sight of school.

That summer my form began to take the College of Preceptors examinations, which were held in the hall. I remember them distinctly because it was the height of the Flying Bomb attacks. On hearing the throbbing sound in the distance, one began to listen intently but only took shelter if the noise grew louder and the bomb was 'coming one's way'. I vividly recall having to leap off my bicycle in the Loose Road, opposite Plains Avenue, and crouch down under a garden hedge, watching the bomb travel from the direction of Mote Park, down Park Way, over the lower end of South Park and off towards London. I wasn't afraid because everybody was aware that individual safety depended on the thing keeping going. The time to start praying came when the engine cut out into uncanny silence because then it would be coming down, and how close depended on how loud the noise had been. Constantly, throughout the summer exam period we were forced to scramble from our seats and take cover under the desks until the noise faded and adjudicator said it was safe to resume.

I believe it must have been 1944-45 when a Fifth Form became viable and just five of us moved into a small room on the side of the house facing north. I badly wanted to take School Certificate, having already worked out that Matriculation was beyond me; to matriculate one had to pass in Mathematics. In those days university entrance demanded Matriculation and therefore I already knew that tertiary education was unlikely for me but School Cert was a different matter; it could open non-university doors. Shernold, of course, had never before prepared pupils for the exam but Miss Ellis and Miss Beeching rose to the task and the syllabus was sent for. The other four girls were equally eager and thus Pamela Hulks, Janet Verbal, Virginia Budd, who was lodging with Janet, Florence Woodier - later replaced by Dorothy Finn when Florence left - and I, began an eighteen month preparation.

Mrs Scoble-Hodgins from the top of Pheasant Lane was our principal teacher and she suited us down to the ground. She was gentle, quiet, very humorous, sufficiently academic and wonderful with lively teenagers. Both Pamela and I probably owe much of our present enjoyment of plays, poetry and prose to her teaching. Mrs Haynes from *Byways*, Lancet Lane, took us for French and about 42 years later, when she was the Headcorn Local History Society's member who always opened up the hall for the meetings, I met her once more when I went to give a talk. Still lively and

interested in everything, she only died a few years ago having led a full life to the end. Mrs Howarth from Park Way took us for Mathematics - her daughter Mary worked in the County Library at Springfield - and by now Miss Beeching too was taking us once a week.

I think it may have been 1943 when the stage in the hall began to be used for theatricals because I distinctly remember two particular performances. We were studying 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and Miss Ellis decided to perform excerpts from it. Janet Verrall took the part of Puck, and Pamela and I enjoyed ourselves as Oberon and Titania. Unfortunately, I cannot remember who were Bottom, Flute, etc, nor the fairies, Cobweb, Peaseblossom and the rest, and if anyone knows I hope they will be in touch. We loved acting and entered into the spirit with great aplomb.

Another year, Miss Ellis tackled a children's story about the Sandman, set to music by Brahms, and I am sorry that it did not appeal to us. We had become drunk with the magnificence of Shakespeare's verse and wanted nothing more than to declaim it at great length upon every occasion. We regarded The Sandman a trifle scornfully, possibly as being too young for us. In retrospect I think this was a shame because it had potential, but I also suspect there were insufficient solo singers to carry it off and that Brahms, anyway, was too sophisticated a composer for our level.

By about the summer of 1945, Miss Beeching was taking us for Country Dancing once a week, usually on the lawn to the right of the back garden path. The fourth and fifth forms joined together and, to a wind-up portable gramophone and '78' records, we happily danced our way through Sellinger's Round, Gathering Peascods, Three Meet and even a Maypole dance. We loved it and looked forward to the session all week.

The following year Miss Ellis took us on another London visit, I believe principally to see the Old Vic Company perform Shakespeare, but on arrival at the theatre we were unable to procure seats and, desperate lest we missed out of a production altogether, we persuaded her to allow us to see Ivor Novello's 'The Dancing Years'. This worried her greatly on account of being non-scholastic, an idea we firmly scotched; 'I know my father won't mind', I said quickly, swiftly echoed by Janet and Virginia, so to 'The Dancing Years' we went. But it was not Miss Ellis's day. As we boarded the tube train the doors suddenly began to close, leaving her on the platform with only half the party. Pamela Hulks still treasures with guilty amusement the look on the poor woman's face as the door slid to and Miss Ellis realised she had lost half the group. Fortunately, I knew the way to the theatre and all was well.

As I look back I realise that, in its way, Shernold was unique. Its development was taking place against a wartime background of immense difficulties, with shortages of every description in terms of books, paper, apparatus, etc, and in an area fraught with enemy activity. Teachers were drawn from the married women returners, many with husbands serving in the forces, and their length of stay was bound to vary as, of course, did their ages.

I would like to end with a tribute to the school. Certainly my experience of secondary education has never seemed quite like anyone else's! But for all the lack of science and near innumeracy, I think I absorbed many other things that have been an advantage to me in my life. Children learn when they are happy and the days at Shernold, particularly in the latter years, were certainly some of the happiest I have known.

*The Loose Area History Research Group would like to gather as much information about the school as possible for the archives. Julia undertakes to put together whatever this article triggers in readers' minds and write it up for the next edition. So any one who can remember anything about Clave or Shernold School, please jot it down and let Julia have the notes. Her address is on page 2.*



## THE NATAL NIGHTINGALE

B Dee Cording

Reading '*On Safari*' by Ada Cherry Kearton I found it fascinating to learn what a very determined and self-disciplined woman she was.

Born Ada Forrest in Durban, South Africa, she became one of the first women to achieve international fame as a singer. Her maternal Grandparents emigrated from England to Durban in the early 1850s as early pioneers. When Ada was about nine her mother and stepfather decided to trek to the gold fields which had been recently discovered in Barberton (named, one assumes, after Graham Barber who found one of the richest gold reefs of the time in 1884). This journey took 101 days of fairly easy going across the Veldt, averaging 10 or 12 miles a day; later the trek was more arduous, passing through Zulu- and Swazilands.

Each evening it took hours to make camp, arranging their wagons in a rough circle, with the oxen on the inside to protect them from roaming lions, and lighting fires. The experience developed Ada's sense of adventure and appreciation of the wild life, which in later years she shared with Cherry Kearton, whom she married. Cherry Kearton was the well known photographer and explorer. In the mid-1920s they came to live in the Loose Valley, but more of this later.

After Ada and family reached the boom town of Barberton, her sister died at the age of 10 of enteric fever, and their property was mysteriously torched, there being a lot of anti-British feeling amongst the Boers at the time.

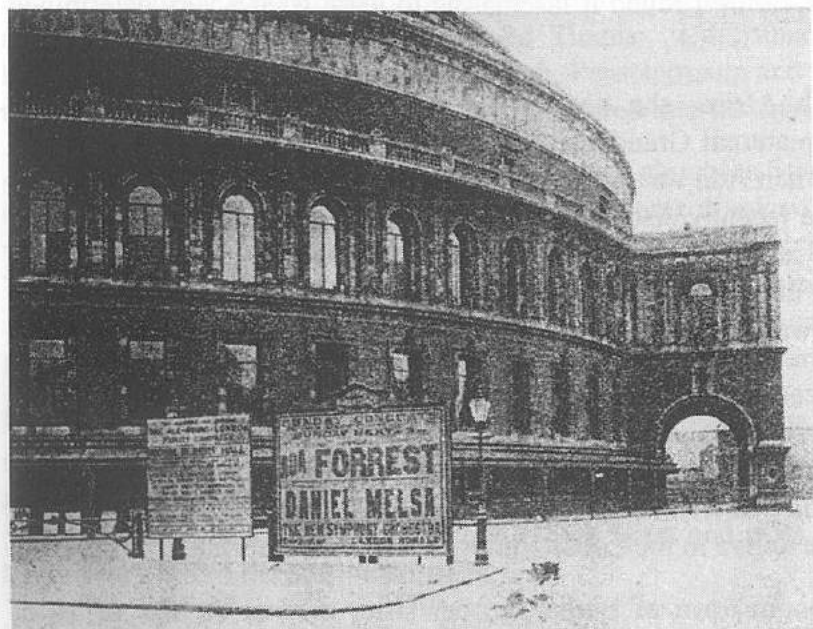
Returning to Durban after a few years away, Ada was sent to the local convent school where she developed a great love of music and the piano. She met Allen Hawes who played an important part in her life. It was he who encouraged her to enter the Eisteddfod where she won first prize. Later on she took and passed with honours the Trinity College, London, examination. To pay for and to finish her studies, for a few years Ada had to take in private pupils for piano lessons. Eventually, in the spring of 1898, she set sail for England.

In London she was amazed to find white men undertaking manual tasks normally allotted in South Africa to the natives. London was noisy, had horse-drawn buses and tall buildings and she did not know anyone. She went to Trinity College for a very short time but found that she was to study popular and sentimental songs. Ada felt she had more ability than this demanded and, fortunately, she was given an introduction through a friend to a professor at the Royal College of Music and congratulated on 'a beautiful singing voice'. Two years through her training, a letter came telling of the death of her beloved stepfather, so thinking that her mother would have need of her she decided to return to South Africa, only to find her mother had remarried. She also met Allen Hawes again who advised her to give concerts and he acted as her secretary. Six months later they married and after another four years, when he retired from teaching, they decided to return to London.

Ada was apprehensive at first because concerts in England were formal and of a high standard, but with the help and encouragement of Allen she was again offered more concerts. Her first was to deputise for Mrs Henry Wood and the second was at the Royal Albert Hall at the invitation of Clara Butt. Later on she sang under the baton of all the conductors famous prior to the 1914-18 war.



Several songs were written especially for her, and she undertook concerts on the continent and back in Africa. She was extremely happy, but soon Allen's health deteriorated and he died in 1914. At the outbreak of the Great War very few concerts were given, except for charity, but she kept herself busy by teaching pupils. Sir Henry Wood regularly sent for her to appear in concerts.



*Royal Albert Hall, London  
with poster advertising Ada Forrest*

In the autumn of 1920 she boarded the boat back to the land of her birth. This was to be a turning point in her life for, on the voyage, she met Cherry Kearton for the first time. By the time the boat docked they had become friends. They were married in 1923. It was then that she realised that it would be impossible to continue her career and devote her life to Cherry, but she made the choice readily and never regretted it, having realised what a remarkable man he was whose work had influenced greatly millions of ordinary people. Returning to England from a trip to the Sahara, it was felt necessary to find a larger property. Noticing an advertisement for an old mill in Loose Valley, she visited on a cold, bleak winter's day. She fell in love with the Valley and decided it would make an ideal home both for them and their menagerie, which included several dogs, a giant spider, squirrels and a snake. It is well known that a chimpanzee by the name of Mary was kept and taught to drink from a cup, the beginning of the now famous 'Chimps' Tea Party'. They lived at *Great Ivy Mill* during the mid-1920s (as is shown in the Rating & Valuation List for 1926/7).

*A letter to the author from Ms Jacky Cowdrey, Royal Albert Hall, London, 6 April 1996 is reproduced opposite:*



ROYAL ALBERT HALL

PATRON: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

JOHN CLELAND  
PRESIDENT OF THE CORPORATION

PATRICK DEUCHAR  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Mrs B Dee Cording  
21 Northleigh Close  
Loose  
Maidstone  
Kent ME15 9RP

April 9th 1996

Dear Mrs Cording

We have discovered some concerts for Ada Forrest at the Royal Albert Hall, later than you had assumed.

Sunday January 31st 1909 - with Mark Hambourg and the LSO. She sang Goldmark, Granville-Bantock, Bizet, Schumann, Max Stange

Saturday April 24th 1909 - London Ballad Concert

Sunday March 19th 1911 - with Frederick Rinalow. She sang 'Bel Raggio' by Rossini and 'How lovely are Thy Dwellings' by Liddle

Sunday April 30th 1911 - with Pablo Casals. She sang 'Adonais' by Landon Ronald & 'When I am laid to earth' and 'Nymphs and Shepherds' by Purcell

Sunday January 5th with Mark Hambourg and the New Symphony Orchestra. She sang Mozart and Liza Lehmann

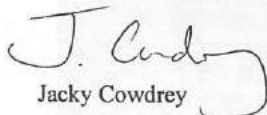
Sunday April 13th 1913 with Daniel Melsa and the New Symphony Orchestra. She sang Mascagni and Haydn Wood.

Thursday 17th April 1913 - she sang in 'Hiawatha' and 'A Tale of Old Japan' by Coleridge-Taylor

There are probably other occasions but it is a very time consuming job searching through our collection of programmes. As I said before we only have the Sunday concert programmes up until 1913, but they do have adverts for other concerts.

I hope this information will be of use.

Yours sincerely

  
Jacky Cowdrey



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## TWO GENTLEMEN OF LOOSE

Pat Jenner

*Here lyeth ye Body  
of ELIZABETH the wife of  
WILL<sup>M</sup> MUDDLE Clark [of] this  
Parish, she died ye 6<sup>th</sup> of]  
Decemb<sup>r</sup> 1747 Aged 84 Yea[rs]  
Also the body of WILL<sup>M</sup>  
MUDDLE Being Clark of  
this Parish 61 Years He died ye  
23<sup>d</sup> day of Sep<sup>r</sup> 1753 Ag<sup>d</sup> 90 Ye<sup>s</sup>  
Near this place lieth ye Body of  
JOHN MUDDLE  
Likewise Five More of their Chil  
3 Sons and 2 Daught<sup>s</sup>  
Left surviving Issue 4 Sons  
George, Will<sup>m</sup>, Edward and Tho*

So reads a tombstone on the south side of Loose Churchyard (shown below).



Amongst the silver in the care of the Vicar and Churchwarden of Loose are two 18th century pieces. The first is a paten silver marked 1704/5 engraved "Tho. Charlton, Jos. Tupeny, church wardens, 1714." The second is a flagon, inscribed on the lower rim "Gift of Henry Briggs, M.A., Minister of Loose 1716. To ye Parish of Loose 1716", and round the centre of the flagon, "Parish of Loose, Joseph Tuppeny Thomas Jones, Church Wardens".



The William Muddle of the tombstone became the Parish Clerk in 1692. The requirements for the post were that he should be able to read and write and keep records. The clerk attended weddings - banns did not become law until 1754. He also attended funerals to ensure that all bodies were buried in wool in accordance with two Acts of Parliament of 1666 and 1678, or the cash penalty paid. This was expected to assist the failing wool trade, and the Acts were not repealed until 1814. Mr Muddle also set the Poor Law rate for the parish and inspected the passes of travellers.

The first reference we have to Joseph Tupeny or Tuppeny was in 1685 when he took over *Little Ivy Mill* from the widow Chessemann. He lived there with his wife, Mary, and son Joseph, paying rates of £7 and £3 per annum plus £2 for "ye Comb Field". The water mill is described as having "3 pares of grinding stones".

Church Wardens were elected for service for one year, which could be extended or resumed after an interval. They took an oath to be concerned for all irregularities, the long 18th century list including "...schism, drunkenness, swearing, usury and all other wickednesses hindering the word of God being preached."<sup>1</sup> They maintained the fabric of the church and at the end of their tenure had to hand over all in good condition.

On Sunday mornings it was Mr Muddle's duty to stand on a tombstone or some height to give notices for the week and such worldly news of which he was aware.

The collection of money from the congregation only came into practice after the Commonwealth and the minister and church wardens had the disbursement of it. Ministers' stipends were very low, but in Loose it had been augmented in 1702 by Richard Beale of Hayle Place, a Hamburg Merchant.<sup>2</sup> Each year the Minister and one warden rode to Sittingbourne to present the accounts and the Terrier<sup>3</sup> to the Archdeacon. One horse only was hired and, as the Minister's house (now *The Old Vicarage*) had stabling for his own horse, it would seem to be a warden who took unaccustomed exercise.



On Sundays, Mr Muddle and Mr Tupeny would be similarly dressed - a skirted coat, knee breeches with long stockings turned at the top and gartered, buckled square toed shoes and a crowned hat with a wide brim known as a 'slouch'. For greater occasions, no doubt, Mr Muddle wore a tricorn hat. At work Mr Tupeny would have worn a smock, gaiters and stout shoes.

The village through which they walked had many houses known to us. As yet there were no village shops but by custom small purchases could be made at the back door of the inn. What is now the lower part of the church yard contained tanning pits and there was a further tannery opposite the Chequers. The north and south aisles of the church had not yet been built and the tower projected from the south west end.<sup>4</sup>

From the Parish Registers we know that Loose coped with smallpox in 1710 and 1737; strangers passed through on their way to take ship to New England producing passes at each place they came to. In 1741 there is a bare note, 'Woman gave birth of a child in the porch'. (This is not the present porch.) Payments were made to boys - one penny each for sparrows, 4 pennies for hedgehogs, £1 for a badger and ten shillings for half a badger. All these affairs were the concerns of our two gentlemen of Loose.

Joseph Tupeny was buried on the 9th January 1742 and his wife Mary, on the 17th October 1746. No tombstone has been traced. In that year *Little Ivy Mill* came into the possession of Nicholas Durrant and became a paper mill.

#### REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

- <sup>1</sup> WE Tate, *The Parish Chest*, 1946
- <sup>2</sup> A monument to this generosity is on the north wall of the Sanctuary.
- <sup>3</sup> Enjoined by Archbishop Langton in 1222 and continues to this day. It is a list of everything owned by the Church down to the last hymn book
- <sup>4</sup> See the front cover of *Loose Threads*, No 3, 1991.

*The position as Clerk required the incumbent to reside within the Parish. If any reader has deeds showing where the MUDDLE family lived, please contact Pat Jenner whose address is on Page 2.*

**LOOSE NATIONAL SCHOOL: THE BOYS' SCHOOL**  
**As Recorded In The Log Book, 1863-1865**

Helen Gallavin

Loose National School was established in 1843, as the inscription on the surviving main entrance at the top of *Malthouse Hill* confirms. The School Log Book, dutifully kept by the Schoolmaster /Head Teacher, shows that, certainly by 1863 (and probably from the start), a Boys' School was operating separately from the Girls' and Infants'. The present article concerns the Boys' School only and details of life there over the course of a little over two years as revealed by the Log Book.



One schoolmaster was in charge of the Boys' School but as numbers increased he was later assisted by a monitor. The normal school hours were from 9 am until 12 midday and from 2 pm to 4.20 pm, with a dinner break of two hours. There were 4 classes or divisions, division 4 being the lowest and youngest. Children progressed to higher classes by ability as set by standards rather than age. The standards ranged from I-VI, standard VI being the highest. The main subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic (particularly tables), scripture and geography, with frequent visits to the church for singing practice. The schoolmaster was assisted by visiting clergy who mainly taught and tested children in scripture but occasionally helped with other subjects. Regular visits were made by

school inspectors (HMIs) and also by various clergy to ascertain not only the standard of education but also the discipline and morals of the children. Tests in various subjects were set on a regular basis - usually weekly in the higher standards.

As attendance at school was not made compulsory until 1880, children only came to school when they could. Absence was the result of many things - illness, bad weather, fear of catching or spreading infectious diseases and, in the case of most older children, having to work whenever they could. In Loose, children worked in the orchards and the hopfields, assisted in general farm work, and some would work away from the area returning to school several months later. Also, a number of children had to walk long distances, from areas such as Coxheath and Farleigh, and they would sometimes be sent home again if they arrived at school in a very wet condition. Annual fairs held in the village or in Maidstone, or special events such as Sunday School treats also caused poor attendance. There was, too, a tendency for numbers to drop on Friday afternoons as children were often sent into Maidstone on errands for the family.

The first mention of Loose Boys' School that I could find was for the 1st July 1863 when an entry in the school log book by the schoolmaster Daniel Reakes<sup>1</sup> records that attendance was low owing to '... a bad disease (the itch)'. Ordinary schoolwork was done that day followed, for the last half hour, by a visit to church to practise singing. Attendance continued to be low as children were now working in the orchards either watching or gathering fruit. By the 8th July numbers had fallen to 40 from about 70. A 'medical man' visited the school to inspect children for the disease prevailing - there were no cases. On the 14th, the Rev W J Edwards visited to test children on their reading. Attendance on the 20th July was poor on account of the annual fair held in Loose village on the first Monday after the 15th July, and a week later on account of a club anniversary held annually the first Monday after the 20th July. On the 28th July, the two Bedford brothers absented themselves in the afternoon and were not heard of all night. They were found the next day! After this, harvest caused attendance to drop again. On the 5th August it was recorded that measles was still prevalent 'spreading tho' it has not assumed a bad character'. A reading test was held on the 11th with unsatisfactory results. The master noted the need for an assistant as the lowest class was mostly left in charge of older boys. As more children left to go gleaning, numbers dropped to 23. The school timetable was abandoned due to measles, harvest and the approach of hopping, and on the 28th August, school closed for one month's hopping vacation.

A new master, Mr G W Rook took over duties from Mr Reakes on the 28th September. Attendance did not improve until mid-October, but discipline was so lax that an hour was devoted to drill. There were frequent visits by the curate and lots of bible lessons that month. On the 2nd November, the Missionary Magic Lantern show was exhibited to the children in the evening. During Christmas week, attendance became scanty and school closed at 12 noon on Christmas Eve. School re-opened on the 4th January 1864, but there was severe weather for most of the term.

The following term saw the arrival of another new master, Mr George H Breadmore, who appeared keen to improve the standard and discipline of the school. There were many visits from the Rev Edwards. On the 4th April 'punishment was inflicted on two brothers for fighting'. It was recorded that attendance was still low and spelling very poor. On the 20th April, routine was interrupted owing to repairs in the classroom, and on the 22nd boys were dismissed in the morning so that the schoolroom could be whitewashed and painted. On the 3rd June, 3 boys were kept behind for being late - 'a prevailing custom among the boys'! On the 6th was recorded 'boys more punctual today'.



The Maidstone fair on the 20th June reduced numbers and attendance dropped further with many boys working in the hayfields or orchards. Following his visit, the school inspector recorded that he could not blame the present, new master for the unsatisfactory state of the school - 'boys are rough and undisciplined, few presented over 12 years of age. Only 10 passed in all subjects ... not nearly enough reading books'. The following year, a special report would be made to decide whether any or what improvements were to be made. It was also recorded. '...with great hesitation that a reduction [in the amount allowed to the school for upkeep] has not been made on account of the unfavourable report of the Boys' School'. On the 10th August, 50 boys and 72 girls attended the Sunday School treat when tea was served to the children in a field adjoining the school playground. There was, however, a poor attendance on the 11th! By the end of the term the higher classes practised for the first time drawing on slates a map of England and Wales, marking in Capes, Gulfs and Bays. Maps were then practised on paper provided by Rev Edwards, with the outline faintly traced on it. School then closed for a month for hopping.

Attendance improved during the new term, Any boys arriving late were kept after school. Weekly exams were also improving. On the 1st November, the need for a pupil teacher or paid monitor was recorded, as often a class was left in charge of a schoolboy. Mumps took its course through November and, just before Christmas, severe snowy weather had begun. On Christmas Eve, prizes (such as gloves) were awarded to the most deserving children and extra prizes were to be given to boys who sang in the church choir on Christmas Day.

School re-opened on 2nd January 1865. The master was still concerned about children being behind in their work and that he was still in need of a pupil teacher. On the 17th January, school work stopped for an hour owing to the stove pipe being on fire. Snow still caused problems and children living at a distance went home early. A good improvement in standards and punctuality was recorded. On the 2nd February, the stove pipe was repaired! On the 6th February no school work was done as the master was ill. Miss Sankey regularly visited the school to give bible lessons. On the 31st March, Rev Edwards awarded prizes of books to all the children - attendance was good. In May, the school inspector visited again and was well satisfied with the progress made. He recorded that '...a great improvement has taken place under the present master in the morals of the boys which had been uncommonly low'. On the 3rd July, 'Frank Langridge entered on his duties as monitor'. School closed on the 31st August for hopping.

On the 15th November, Fred Coomber developed smallpox (prevalent at the time in Maidstone) and was the first case in Loose. Some children were vaccinated. Others just stayed away. Three weeks later, school attendance improved as the smallpox cases subsided. The school closed for one week for Christmas 1865.

## REFERENCES & NOTES

CKS,C/ES 233 1/1, Loose National School Log Book for 1863-1865.

<sup>1</sup> The 1861 Census records that Daniel Reakes was then aged 21 and unmarried. Described as a 'Certificated Schoolmaster', he lived in a house along the Loose Road (possibly No. 549 or 551). He was also a Loose Census Enumerator.



## HUNTON'S LOST RECORDS

John H Butcher  
(Records Officer for the Parish of Hunton)

The following account is based on research carried out on the HUNTON PARISH REGISTERS held at the Centre for Kentish History, County Hall, Maidstone, and is adapted from a series of articles written for the Hunton Parish Magazine (1995-6)

I shall begin with a little of the history concerning the keeping of Parish Records. It was Thomas Cromwell, principal advisor to King Henry VIII who, in 1538, passed a law that required each parish to purchase a 'sure coffer' - one key to be held by the parson, one by the Churchwarden and the records were to be deposited in the newly acquired parish chest. In many cases records at this time were kept on loose sheets of paper and have rarely survived.

It was late in Elizabeth I's reign - in 1598 - than an order was made that all subsequent records should be made in parchment books and that all previous loose-leaf material was to be transcribed into such volumes. How efficiently this was done to cover a period of 60 years remains a matter of conjecture - the amount of copying out involved makes the mind boggle! The fact is that many, but, as we shall see, not all, Parish Registers date from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign - 1558.

Early records usually have three sections in the same volume - dealing with christenings, marriages and burials. Sometimes they are in a jumbled order listed chronologically as they occurred. Most entries are single lines of brief information. These were witnessed by two Churchwardens and were read out each Sunday. A copy of the year's entries was sent to the diocesan Bishop each Easter. These were known as *Bishop's Transcripts* (they have a poor survival record in general).

How does all this affect Hunton? Hunton's Registers date from 1585, so nothing exists from the dates of the Cromwell mandate of 1538 to 1558 and some 16 years of the Elizabethan transcripts have not survived - always supposing that they were ever made. What is particularly regrettable is that most of the early registers belonging to Hunton Church were so badly damaged by the Rectory fire in 1945 that they are declared by the archivists at County Hall as "Unfit for production".

Nevertheless, I was surprised on a recent examination of the catalogues at the Centre for Kentish Studies how much material is listed under Hunton Parish - most of it fortunately transferred for safe-keeping since 1964, much now being on microfilm.

### **THE ARMADA YEARS - the parish Registers in the 1580s**

On looking at the microfilm, I was surprised to find that the pages are still quite readable, that is if you are an expert at reading palaeography (old handwriting) - which I am not! Much of the damage to the originals was caused by water from the firemen's hoses and none of the pages appear charred. The microfilm I studied was of the first Hunton Parish Register and lists Baptisms, Marriages and Burials from 1585-1707.

The first page of the Register lists four marriages, ten christenings and fourteen burials for 1585, and begins thus:

*An[no] Dom[ini] 1585. Marriag.*

- 1585 *Abram Usborne and ...des[?] Andrew were married vii June*  
1585 *Jerremye Evernden and Marye Pason were married xiii June*  
1585 *John ffowle and Elizabeth Rytche [?] were married xxvii September*  
1585 *Anthonye Heggors and Anne Gryffyn were married xii October*

These Elizabethan parishioners of Hunton were married, baptised or died just three years before the Armada.

### A CONSCIENTIOUS RECTOR

As one moves into the 17th century, the entries suddenly become much clearer and the fire and water damage to the Register lessens.

Quite a number of registers from other parishes throughout the breadth of the land contain interesting 'asides', apart from just a list of names and dates. Hunton has very few of these. There are no entries concerning the accession or death of a monarch, no comments by the rector on individuals who have just been buried (perhaps this is just as well!), no reference to the custom of 'beating the bounds' of the parish, nothing concerning the transfer of 'sturdy beggars' to other districts and no nice little attempts at verse by the incumbent!

However, an interesting section of the Hunton Register is that kept by the Rector between 1610 and the mid 1640s - one Theophilus Higgons. Most of his entries are in beautifully clear, legible handwriting (a blessed relief after the efforts of some of his predecessors).

It is recorded that on 16 August 1610:

*'Mr [?] Anthony Paul, Parson of Hunton was buried' and 'Heere begins the Register of Theophilus Higgons, Parson of Hunton, Anno Domini, 1610'.*

There follow two or three lines of Latin beginning:

*'Quam quidam Rectoriam [?] ... ex [?] Collectione [?] Vendisimi Pavis [?]'*

(Latin scholars please translate!)

The rest of the inscription is unreadable due to the frayed bottom of the page.

Our Theophilus (we are presuming he made the entries himself) has appended his signature at the end of each page. Under 1614, we read:

*'Ita restatum. Theoph Higgons. Rector de[?] Hunton'*

On each occasion, two Churchwardens, 'Gardian ecclesia' have been asked to sign. Gilbert Hall was able to do so very clearly. In 1627, Jonas Gore was unable to sign as he was probably illiterate, as many were at that time, but he has been asked to make his mark which he has done with a certain flourish! Under 1616 we are reminded that this is the 14th year of James I's reign: 'Regis Jacobi 14'.

By 1642, with the outbreak of the Civil War, entries have become less clear but outstanding is the sad record under burials:

*'Anne, the wife of Theophilus Higgons, Rector of Hunton was buried 9th January 1645'*

and again:

*'Burialls 1647 - Gabriell Higgons, some of Theophilus Higgons ..aged 24 years was buried Septemb 6th, 1647'*

The poor man had lost his wife and son within a space of less than three years. We must honour him for conscientiously keeping his register with such clarity for the period of his incumbency.

Around 1650, by the Cromwellian period, entries are very few. Was the successor to Higgons, George Latham - appointed 1649 - of Puritanical leanings who did not believe in keeping records in this matter? (Mere conjecture!) In fact, by 1653, under the Protectorate, the keeping of registers was officially transferred to the government. A fee of 1s was exacted for each entry which certainly discouraged registration.

There follows a summary showing the numbers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials in Hunton from 1585 to 1603 (Elizabethan entries). Whether any conclusions can be gleaned from these statistics is a moot point.

DATE	BAPTISMS	MARRIAGES	BURIALS	DATE	BAPTISMS	MARRIAGES	BURIALS
1585	10	4	14	1595	12	2	3
1586	8	4	9	1596	6	1	7
1587	12	1[?]	3	1597	13	0[?]	10
1588	10	5	6	1598	8	4	11
1589	10	6	5	1599	10	3	4
1590	13	1	10	1600	9	5	5
1591	7	2	4	1601	4	1	3
1592	9	3[?]	4	1602	11	1	9
1593	3	5	4	1603	14	1	10*
1594	14	1	5				
<b>TOTALS</b>					183	51	126

Note: [?] = damage obscures certain details

\* = some under James I who succeeded Elizabeth in 1603



*The Memorial in Hunton Church to Sir John (wrongly inscribed 'Thomas') Lane (Rt) and his wife, Dame Helen Somerset, both of whom died in 1606*

## A LOOK AT THE REAL THING

How delighted I was later to be given permission to study the actual Hunton Parish Registers at the Centre for Kentish Studies instead of having to be content with the microfilm! It is quite a thrill to be handling pages and reading material that was written over 400 years ago. From the condition of the originals it does not seem that they have been looked at for some time so, for the records, perhaps a note on the state of the first two volumes would not be out of place.

On being presented with two rather lightweight packages, wrapped in white paper and tied with ribbon and measuring about 40 x 25 cms, perhaps I was a little disappointed. Did I expect a couple of weighty ledgers charred at the edges and dampened after the Rectory fire?

The parchment pages have, in fact, become very compressed probably through a combination of the weight of material on the shelves and lack of use. The covers have separated into various layers but are still intact, though any traces of colour have faded away. As one turns the pages of the register, the clarity of the early entries (late 16th and early 17th centuries) is remarkable - even clearer than the microfilm, the camera having had difficulty in coping with the unevenness of the pages, especially the margins. The parchment seemed to respond kindly to handling - I have been told that oil on the hands is good for it.

All the records of Christenings, Marriages and Burials are readable to the calligraphic expert, both names and dates, at least up to the 1640s when careless entries and bad handwriting seem to have taken a hold. Signatures of the various Churchwardens stand out clearly and as noted before that very conscientious incumbent, Theophilus Higgons, has signed every page.

Of particular interest are the records of one of Hunton's most famous families, the Fanes, the owner of Buston Manor for several generations. It is possible to trace the baptisms, all neatly recorded and almost a yearly occurrence, of the four sons and three daughters of Sir George Fane, Kt, and his wife, Lady Ann, (daughter of Sir Oliver Boteler of Teston). Many will know something of their history from examining the memorials and tombs in Hunton Church and studying the various church guides by Marion Way, Flora Davies and the Rev D Morey, but by careful perusal of the Registers a family tree can be compiled which includes all the children of this couple.

Sir George Fane = Lady Ann  
(buried 2 July 1640) | (died 1664)

George	Spencer	Ann	Thomas	Francis	Margaret	Mary
born	bap	bap	bap	bap	bap	bap
11 July 1622	13 July 1623*	30 Sep 1624*	7 Sept 1626*	25 Nov 1627*	19 Nov 1628*	19 Oct 1630*
bap	d ?	d ?	d 1692	d 19 Dec 1651	d Nov 29 1628	d ?
27 July 1622						
d 25 Aug						
1625						
buried at						
Mereworth*						

\* Recorded in Parish Register

The first born son, George, died after his third birthday. The second son, Spencer, may well have died young (no record of death), as the third son (fourth child), Thomas, inherited the title and lived at Court Lodge, East Farleigh until his mother's death in 1664 when he moved to Buston Manor.



He died in 1692, unmarried. I have not yet discovered when Ann and Mary died, but Margaret lived only ten days.

Sir George himself was buried on 2 July 1640 in the chancel of the church. His monument has disappeared. Lady Ann gave birth to seven children (according to the Hunton registers) in the space of eight years (1622-1630). She deserves her memorial in the Church!

*Memorial in Hunton  
Church to Lady Anne  
Fane, died 1663, wife  
of Sir George Fane*



### **CIVIL WAR STRIFE**

In 1661, the 12th year of the reign of King Charles II (officially calculated from the death on the scaffold of his father, Charles I, but in fact the second year of the Restoration), the Rector of Hunton, George Latham, who had been appointed in 1649, wrote in tiny handwriting at the bottom of the page of that year's register (original spelling): *'Ye cause of incompleteness of this boke was ye passing of it through so many hands ... and not of wilful neglect. He often desringe ye*

*parisioners to bring in names of persons to bin registered, and they no so doinge, ye default must be imputed to them and not to him.* The reasons for this delightful apologia by the incumbent were certainly justified. This was undoubtedly a time of conflict both in church and country - a study of Maidstone's history during this period will bear out this and it must certainly have been the case in outlying villages such as Hunton.

There were, however, other problems connected with the keeping of Parish Registers at this time and these certainly affected Hunton's books from the early 1640s to the time of the Restoration in 1660. The last signature of the previous Rector, Theophilus Higgons, seems to mark the turning point. Entries of baptisms, marriages and burials are very few and those that are recorded are poorly written and often lacking order. In 1653, under the Cromwellian regime, the keeping of Parish Registers was officially transferred to the government. Registrars were appointed to keep the records but unfortunately many who took on this task were illiterate! This may or may not have been the case with Hunton. A further discouragement to registration which must have affected the village was the imposition of a fee of one shilling (quite a sum in those days) for each entry. Many could not afford this and failed to register - a pointer to George Latham's comments. In addition, an Act of 1654 made marriages the responsibility of JPs rather than the clergy and those couples opting for a religious ceremony also failed to register.

With all these missing entries it would appear as rather a pointless exercise in research, but on closer look it is quite fascinating. To see the Country's turmoil reflected in local issues is intriguing and a note on the few entries between 1643 and 1661 is worthwhile.

Date	Quality of Recording	Interesting Entries, etc
1643	Very few entries - dating muddled Poor Handwriting	
1644	Few Recorded (only one marriage, one burial)	(Date of ordinance instructing that birth dates should be noted as well as parents names; also date of death as well as burial.)
1645	Few entries - dating muddled	Anne, wife of Theophilus Higgons buried 9 January
1646		
1647	Ditto - badly written. Only one burial.	Gabriell Higgons (Rector's son) was buried 6 September
1648	Only one entry	
1649	Only three christenings	
1650	Only baptisms recorded	Ame(y) Snatt, daughter of Nicholas Snatt and Mary (of <i>Gennings</i> ), was baptised.
1651	Only baptisms	
1652-3	On same page - various hands	Mr Nicholas Snatt of <i>Gennings</i> departed this life 19 December 1652
1654	Very few entries	
1655-6	Same page - untidy writing	
1657	More entries - various hands	
1658-9	Dates muddled - no separate pages	
1660	Very few entries	
1661	Very few entries	George Latham's remarks

A very lean period for the Hunton Registers, though parish worthies were still being conscientious and could afford the fees. The legislation imposed by the Protectorate was revoked at the Restoration.

## INDUSTRIAL DECLINE IN THE 17TH CENTURY

*'Odious! In woollen! 'twould a Saint provoke ...  
No, let a charming Chintz, and Brussels lace  
Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face ...'*  
(Alexander Pope)

By the middle of the 17th century, the once flourishing Cloth Industry of the Weald was in a sad state of decline. Ever since Edward III had invited Flemish workers from the Continent to settle in England in the 1330s, thus introducing their skills to the Cranbrook-Maidstone areas, the production of woollen cloth had become an important industry in neighbouring villages such as Hunton, Loose, Yalding, Horsmonden, Frittenden, Goudhurst and Leeds.

Plentiful wool supplies from the Kentish flocks, fast flowing streams to drive the fulling mills and the ample deposits of fuller's earth in the Boxley area were key location factors. Few, if any of the old fulling mills survive, many were later converted to other uses, especially paper-making; the old Cloth Halls where the weaving was carried out can still be seen locally. Many of the processes such as spinning and carding (combing) were performed in humble cottages, probably well into the 17th century. Competition from the growing and more favourably sited cloth manufactories of the north and west of England, as well as from abroad, was killing off the Wealden industry.

In an effort to revive the flagging wool trade, the government introduced two significant acts, one in 1666 and another in 1678 concerning 'Burials in Woollen'. They provided that: *'No corpse of any person (except those who shall die of the plague) shall be buried in any shirt, shift, sheet, or shroud or anything whatsoever made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or in any stuff or thing, other than what is made of sheep's wool only ... or be put into any coffin lined or faced with ... any other material but sheep's wool only.'*

Persons failing to comply with this Act were subject to a heavy fine which was levied on the estate of any person 'not buried in woollen'; on the householder in whose house he died; on persons connected with the funeral; on ministers neglecting to certify the non-receipt of an affidavit, and on overseers neglecting to levy the penalty. Since the fee mentioned is £5 per person it would seem likely that a total of at least £25 would be collected for each 'non-burial' - a useful contribution to a declining industry.

As an additional check, an Affidavit had to be completed within eight days of the funeral before a JP or clergyman. Some parishes kept special registers to record the affidavits, others made a note in their Parish Registers. I can find only one reference to an affidavit in the Hunton book and this not until 1701.

A rather nasty feature of this legislation is that people were encouraged to inform! Part of the fine - £2.10s - went to the informer. Thus any group of relatives who decided to deliberately defy the law could appoint one of their members to act as informer and so reduce the penalty by half! Naturally the 'Burials in Woollen' acts were not easy to enforce. The well-to-do regarded it as a tax worth



paying if they could line the deceased's coffin with something more elaborate than wool. For many years, up to the time of its repeal in 1814, the legislation seems to have been largely ignored.

There is an interesting exception to the persons exempted from the Burials in Wool Acts, that is victims of the plague. The years 1665-8 were disastrous years in this respect for Maidstone. All Saints' Parish Registers (still in the keeping of the Church) tell their story only too clearly. Russell records 347 deaths in 1666 (110 in October alone) and Clark estimates that one-sixth of the town's population died in those years. Whether this scourge of a disease affected outlying villages such as Hunton, it is impossible to tell. Our register was quite well kept during this period under Rector Thomas Yardley, but there is no reference to plague victims. One must hope that the village was spared the worst of this terrible ordeal.

### THE END OF A LONG STORY

The last readable entry in Hunton's first Parish Register records the burial on 4 March 1701 of Margaret, wife of John Catt (a recurrent family name throughout the period of the Register). As the second Register does not begin until the year 1707, in the reign of Queen Anne, it would seem that several years of entries are missing. There was a change of rectorship in 1701, Richard Burton being replaced by George Fage, but this does not explain the missing years. In fact, the 'new' register begins with an inventory of Church Furniture.

During the late 17th and early 18th centuries, many attempts were made through Parliament to make the keeping of parish registers more accurate - these largely failed because many believed that registration was merely a way of raising extra taxes. There was always a sizeable element of the population who avoided registering births and found ways of getting married outside church jurisdiction. Burials were more of a problem to get around! This is why local historians are reluctant to rely on parish registers as a reliable means of determining population trends before the advent of the first census.

In 1694, under William and Mary, Parliament was quite honest about the question of raising taxation through registration of all christenings, marriages and burials. They wanted the money so that the war with France could be 'carried on with vigour'. A duty of 2s per birth, 2s 6d per marriage, and 4s for burial of all non-paupers was imposed for a period of 5 years. If this seems an exorbitant amount for those days, this was just the beginning of a sliding scale! For the eldest son of a Duke the fee to register the birth was £30; for the Duke's marriage it was £50 with another £50 for his burial.

All births had to be notified to the rector or vicar within 5 days (penalty 50s for failing to do so). The incumbent was to record each birth for a fee of 6d (like penalty of 40s for failing to do so). Parents who decided not to have their child baptized in the expectation of avoiding the fee were to be charged for the birth. Although some incumbents zealously collected their fees, it is obvious that in many parishes births went unregistered. The Hunton Registers have very few entries around the turn of the century, especially of births.

That little regard was paid to the regulations may be judged from the fact that in 1705, an Act of Indemnity was declared on behalf of the clergy who had neglected to obey the provisions of the law and who in consequence were liable to colossal fines - no doubt many were in sympathy with their hard-pressed parishioners. Further Acts were passed by parliament during the 18th and 19th centuries in an attempt to tighten up the laws connected with Parish Registers.



As a final look at Hunton's first Parish Register I include a number of entries from the last few pages which are of interest:

- 1662 *Mary Woofter, ye faithfull housekeeper of ye aforesaid Geo Latham, Minister, departed this life Jan. 15. 1662 and was buried ye 20 of ye same month near ye chancell*
- 1664 *Memorandum that James Iden and Richard Iden the sons of Mr James Iden of the parish of Barested in Kent upon their fathers earnest desire and their own pious request were both baptised at the publique ffont according to the Booke of Common Prayer then in force - Aug 10th*
- 1664 *Lady Anne Fane - buried August 23rd.*
- 1666 *Mrs Mary Snatt [of Gennings] widdow buryed - Oct. 24th*
- 1667 *Old John Godden was buryed Aug 19th*
- 1670 *Abraham, son of Thos. Allen, shoemaker was baptized April 3rd. 1670*
- 1674 *Thomas, a bastard child was baptized [April?] - his mother a servant of James[?] Hollymans*
- 1683 (At top of page) *Seen and allowed by us 5th day of August*
- 1683 *[??]Twysden and [?] (unreadable) Seal appended - an apparent check by higher authority*
- 1685 *Tomas Gammon - an ancient inhabitant was buried August [?] 1685*
- 1701 *Mention of an 'affidavit'. Signature of new rector - Geo. Fage.*

## INVENTORIES, BRIEFS AND DULL LISTS

The second volume of the Parish Registers covers the period from 1707 (Queen Anne) to 1744 (George II). In 1711, an Act was passed ordering that proper registers should be kept with ruled and numbered pages, but this does not seem to have affected the Hunton Register which shows no change in style - they just continued with the same book! The handwriting varies almost from page to page from the fairly clear to the unreadable, from untidy scrawl to nice copper-plate, headings are in most cases quite readable so it is easy to distinguish between baptisms and burials, but on the microfilm some of the year dates have been lost in the book's margins.

I was disappointed with the second volume as it is really just a list of names and dates (what it is meant to be in fact) with no interesting asides or comments, not even signatures of the rectors or churchwardens of the time. After George Fage (1701-1728) came Herbert Taylor (1728-1763) but nowhere do their names appear in the actual register.

At the front of the volume, there is an interesting Inventory of Church Furniture dated 12 May 1716. It lists twenty-one items in all and begins with: '*One Communion Table, One Green Cloath (sic), One Draper ...*' etc. It is signed as follows: '*Witness our hands - Geo Fage, Rect. Tho Bishop, Jun., Churchwarden*'. It would be interesting to know whether any of the items listed are still around today.

Taking up twelve or so pages at the end of the volume is an Account of Briefs. These were apparently quite common in 17th and 18th Parish Registers and, according to WE Tate in his excellent work 'The Parish Chest' (still in print), were royal mandates for collections towards some supposedly deserving object. The brief was addressed to the minister and churchwardens and it was read 'in extenso' from the pulpit. At the close of the service, the clerk stood by the church door, saying as the congregation left: "Please remember the brief". The funds were handed to a

duly authorised collector. Later it became usual to hand the money to the chancellor of the diocese at the bishop's visitation.

The origin of Briefs predates the Reformation and the term may have originated as part of the vocabulary of the papal chancery. Obviously the system was open to abuse and attempts to regulate it were made by both Crown and Parliament. During our period, in 1704, there was a Parliamentary inquiry into the misuse of the system followed by an Act in 1705: 'For the better collecting of Charity Money on Briefs'.

Although some churches kept special 'brief books' in most cases spare pages of the Parish Register were used - in Hunton's case a dozen or so. Many of the entries refer to fires at various churches (eg at Shadwell, Middlesex; Bewdley and Towcester). Entries record collections for churches throughout the length and breadth of the Kingdom. Mostly they are for a few shillings, sometimes just pence. One entry lists individual contributors with Rector, George Fage, prominent at the top contributing 1s.0d!

The 3rd volume of the Register covers the period 1744 to 1812, a lengthy period extending across the reigns of three of the four Georges. From 1744, marriages were recorded separately for some 10 years in another volume. This pre-dated Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1754 which was designed to put an end to the mounting scandal of clandestine marriages and introduce the system of banns (with specially printed forms). No marriage ceremony could be performed except by a clergyman of the Church of England (Jews and Quakers were exempt).

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## THE ENDPIECE

Sally Carss

A copy of the three volumes of W H Ireland's *History of Kent*, published in 1829, has just come into my possession. Obviously, I immediately looked for references to Loose and found this small item on page 691:

"At Loose, two miles and a half distant, a *new road* is forming, in order to avoid two steep and dangerous hills rising from that village. It is about a quarter of a mile in length; a bridge being erected, forty feet in height and about the same width in the span, which, when finished, during the ensuing summer, will prove a great addition to the picturesque view of the surrounding scenery."

The road and bridge constituted a very early by-pass, but the engineer, who we now know was Thomas Telford, did not seem to have impressed Mr Ireland.

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# REFLECTIONS

From: David Cleggett (Archivist to the Leeds Castle Foundation), 39 Blythe Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7TS, regarding John Watson's article 'The Reverend Denny Martin: a Loose connection with the Isle of Wight' in *Loose Threads No.3*.

....some information on Dr. Fairfax which differs from that contained in No.3 *Loose Threads*.

The 5th Lord Fairfax (1657-1709/10) was not a descendant of Lord Fairfax the General. He was the son of the 4th Lord Fairfax (1631-88), a grandson of the 1st Lord (1560-1640). After the death of Lord Fairfax the General in 1671, his line continued only with his daughter Mary, the Duchess of Buckingham. With her death in 1702 the line of the General became extinct. Dr. Fairfax in consequence descended from the 1st and 4th Lords Fairfax.

We now know the 1st Lord Culpeper never owned Leeds Castle. It remained the property of Sir Cheney until his death in 1663 when it was purchased by Thomas, 2nd Lord Culpeper.

I have never found any reference to the 1st Lord Culpeper being governor of the Isle of Wight. Certainly the 2nd Lord was, being installed in July 1661, retaining office until 1669.

Catherine Culpeper, afterwards Fairfax, signed her name Catherine, not Katherine.

Denny Martin was not the eldest son of the union of Denny Martin and the Hon. Frances Fairfax. Denny had two older brothers, Edward (1722-55) and John (1724-46). Denny Martin assumed the title Fairfax on 10 August 1782 (*London Gazette No.12320*). From this date until his death in 1800, Denny was known as Denny Fairfax not Martin-Fairfax. It appears Martin became a second Christian name.

When General Martin died in August 1821, Leeds Castle was inherited by his distant kinsman Fiennes Wykeham of Banbury. In accordance with General Martin's wish the Wykehams changed their name to Wykeham Martin in October 1821. The name should never be written with a hyphen.

Among Dr. Fairfax's ecclesiastical preferments was a prebendal stall at Chichester.

<p>We are grateful to David Cleggett for responding to John Watson's article. It is most encouraging to our authors to know that the Journal is read by such experts.</p>
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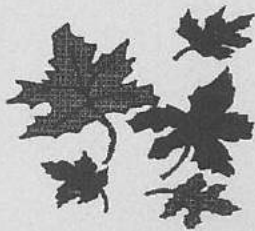
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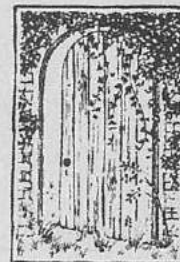
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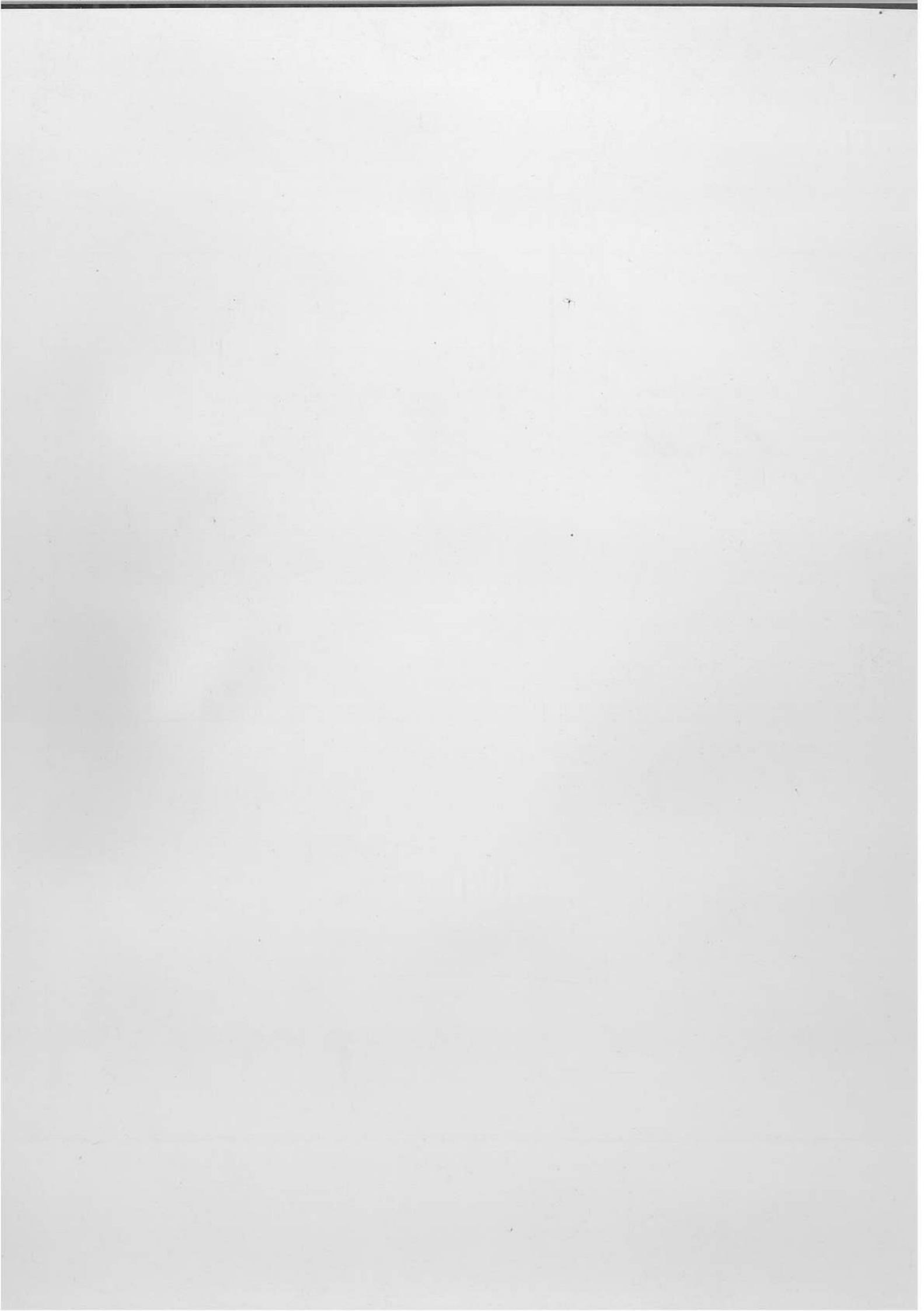
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