

LOOSE THREADS

Journal of the Loose Area History Society



Loose Village circa 1870

Number 9



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'. Recently, the Loose Swiss Scout Group kindly made a room available at its HQ in Pickering Street for the society to use to store its growing collection of archives, and these are now more readily 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 Chairman, Noel Gibbons, 61 Westwood Road, Maidstone, Kent ME17 4LN. Tel. 01622 745036.

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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Welcome

The Loose Swiss Scouts celebrate their centenary this year, and we thought they deserved not just one but two articles in this edition of our journal; the first is an outline of the history of the group, and the second is about two of their members who died in WWI and whose names are on the memorial beside the road at Upper Crisbrook.

We have a piece about a gardener's boy at Linton Park at the end of the 19th century; another about a local surveyor who produced the fascinating Tithe Map for Loose (and other parishes too) around 1840; and memories of *Cherry Grounds Farm* which, until the 1930s, could be found where the houses of Heather Drive and Park Way are today.

The A229 main Loose/Linton Road is a notable feature of Loose parish today, and the story of its improvement during the 18th and 19th centuries, with special mention of the viaduct which has done so much to preserve the old village, is told in the Turnpike Road article. If you didn't know what a 'swallow hole' is, then the article about those in the Loose Valley will surely enlighten you; it's a reprint of a piece written nearly a hundred years ago by a geologist.

The longest piece in this journal, however, is a report on the interior of Loose Church following the reflooring that took place in 2003. We felt that it was important to record the discoveries made at that time, particularly as the new floor now covers up most of the evidence.

If you have any comments, please contact us, and remember, we are always on the lookout for new articles on our local history.

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Inside back cover: *Loose Threads* – back copies and list of articles.

Front Cover: Loose Village: a photograph taken from the viaduct in about 1870. In the distance and to the left of the church are the large group of oast kilns which belonged to the hop-growing Peale family (see pages 22-23). The fields in the background, either side of Busbridge Road, are covered with stacks of hop-poles.

Back Cover: Maps showing the site of *Cherry Grounds Farm*, Loose Road, in the early 20th century to illustrate the article on page 46 by Michael Tillett.

Designed and produced by Roger Thornburgh.

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SCOUTING IN LOOSE

TREVOR GALLAVIN

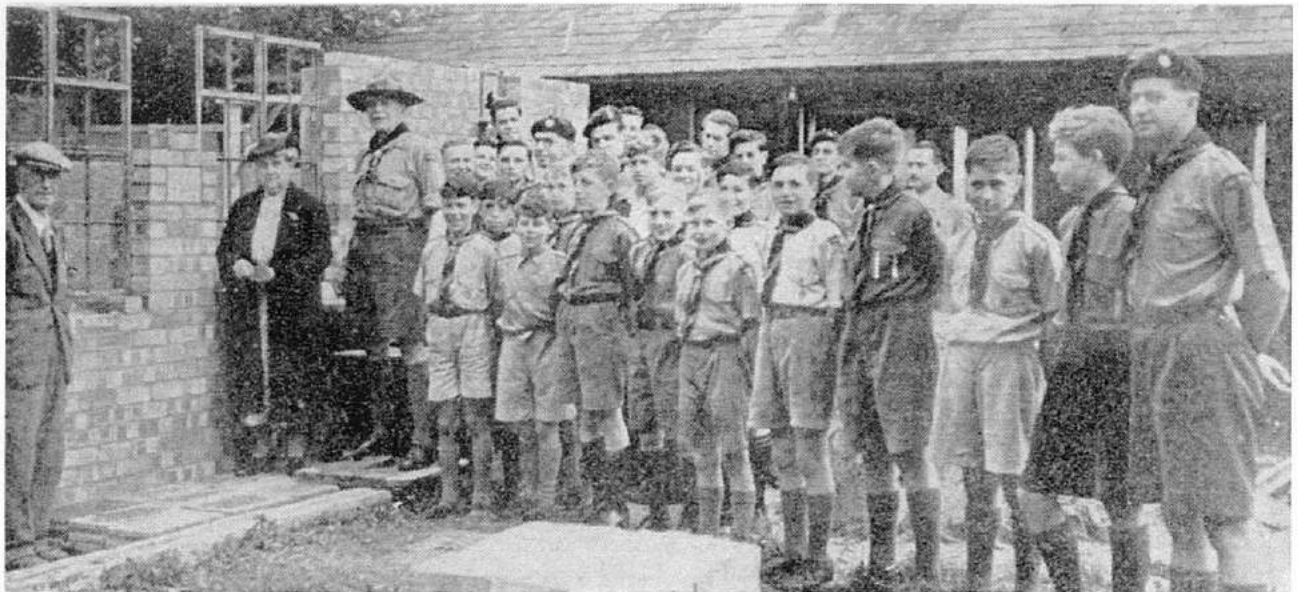
In 1907, Robert Baden-Powell (later to become Lord Robert Baden-Powell) started scouting with an experimental camp on Brownssea Island in Poole Harbour. This was based on an idea following his experience of using young native boys as scouts during the Boer War in Africa. In 1907 he produced a book called *Aids to Scouting* which was followed by a fortnightly magazine called *Scouting for Boys* in early 1908.

Jack Barcham Green (known as JB), a local papermaker and originally resident in *The Godlands* in Tovil, was approached by a number of boys, having read the *Scouting for Boys* magazine, to start up the new game of scouting. Originally scouts operated in small patrols and not in the troop and group structures that now exist. Two of the earliest known members were Harold Bennett and A.V. Langley. A number of patrols were started up in the area, and were originally known as the 11th Central Kent. No formal headquarters existed for any of these units but a number of 'Dens' were known to have been used in and around the area.

In 1910, Jack married a Swiss lady and moved to Loose, where his house was named *Swiss Cottage* (now 683 Loose Road). A few years later, JB

wrote to scout headquarters with a request to change the name to Loose Swiss from 11th Central Kent. This request was granted. Loose Swiss continued to operate with patrols in Loose, Boughton Monchelsea and at Crisbrook, only coming together occasionally for joint meetings. Scouting continued, and although some of the records of the early years are flimsy, log books written by the boys do exist covering some of the events. Early entries in the log books indicate that huts were built in the grounds of *Old Lakenham* overlooking Olive Bank in upper Loose Valley.

The earliest photographs in the Group's possession are of a camp at Rye in June 1914, and details also exist of the cost of food and other expenses necessary to run the camp including the services of a cook. When the First World War was declared in 1914, scouts were instructed by the Superintendent of Police to go to Dover along with the Scout Master (JB) and Assistant Scout Master (Fulkes) to patrol the area along the coast around Dover Castle to ensure that telegraph wires had not been tampered with. Later during the War, scouts were used on coastguard watch at Birchington. These scouts had to be over the age of 14. One boy kept a diary of his experiences and some of the activities they participated in.



A newspaper photo of July 1954 showing Skipper and Mrs Barcham Green performing the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Rover Crew's new headquarters in Pickering Street.

In 1916, JB enlisted into the Army and was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant. He joined the British Expeditionary Force in France. Fulkes and Langley both joined the army and were killed during the war; a memorial to their memory was erected at *Upper Crisbrook Mill*. JB left the army in 1919 and returned to run Loose Swiss. Over the next few years, a number of people became involved in the group and various locations were used as headquarters.

In 1930, it is known that there were Wolf Cub, Scout and Rover sections forming part of the Loose Swiss group. For some time, headquarters was established in the old Loose school at Malthouse Hill. Various camps and activities were known to have taken place during this period. JB had for a period of time left the group but returned to take over the running of the group prior to the camp in Belgium where the scouts rode their bikes on the cobbled roads out of Ostend.

In 1937, it was decided to build a log hut in the grounds of *The Godlands*. Sadly this scheme was never completed and only got as far as the foundations. The current headquarters in Pickering Street was purchased in 1941 for the sum of £125, JB paying the 10% deposit himself.

The original building had been used to make jam commercially prior to this date. Over the years,



JB Green in 1958.

the site has been developed with the erection in 1967 of a new troop room and in 1976 a new two storey building containing patrol rooms, meeting room, toilets and stores.

Many changes took place in scouting after 1966 when it underwent a major review. The introduction in the following years of Venture Scouts and Beavers resulted in the group growing in size. It reached its peak in the late 1980s when there were two Beaver Colonies, two Cub Packs, three Scout Troops and two Venture Units. The size of the group was partly due to the building of large estates in the area which brought many more families to the location. To keep up with the times, minibuses were purchased to transport boys to outside activities and camps. The cost of these was subsidised by collecting waste paper which started in 1973 and is now a major part of the group's income.

In 1981, the group had the opportunity to purchase approximately 40 acres of land in upper Loose Valley from Miss Joan Foster Clark. Following a very intensive fund-raising effort and support of the local community, the land was purchased and a dedication ceremony took place in May 1982. This land, now known as Swiss Valley, has given the group a valuable asset as a campsite and activity area, and not only for Loose Swiss, but for other scouting groups as well.

JB, (also known as 'Skipper') died in December 1982. Due to his dedication, the group was started and survived through two World Wars, and it continues today thanks to other dedicated leaders and supporters. As a memorial to JB, a book (now out of print) was written by Molly Proctor called *Never Give Up: The Story of Scouting in Loose 1908-1992*.

Sources

Loose Swiss Scout archives.
Molly Proctor, *Never Give Up*, Loose Swiss Scout Group, 1992.

A GARDENER'S BOY AT LINTON PARK

KEN KIMBER



Daniel Vernon Neale.

The reference to the name McKenzie in the Editor's note at the end of the article 'A Trustworthy Pony Boy: William Earl' in *Loose Threads 8* rang some bells regarding our own family history. A little delving revealed that we have a copy of a testimonial written for my grandfather by Mr McKenzie who was Head Gardener at *Linton Park*. Whether or not he was married to the Housekeeper, I do not know, but it seems a reasonable assumption.

My grandfather, Daniel Vernon Neale, was born in 1872 and began work as a Gardener's Boy at *Linton Park* at the age of, it seems, thirteen and remained there for some nine years before leaving to further his career elsewhere. As can be seen from the testimonial, he was obviously well thought of when he chose to leave in 1892. It is interesting to note that all the various testimonials in our possession for various members of the family in the Victorian period refer to them as

being 'sober' so one may assume that 'binge' drinking is not new!

A couple of anecdotes recounted by my grandfather are worth recalling. Possibly because of his age, unlike many of the gardener lads who lived in the bothy, my grandfather in his early days still lived at home. Now Mr McKenzie was apparently very strict about punctuality, but he was equally fastidious about tidiness. Like many youngsters, young Daniel was not always on time, which would have resulted in him getting into hot water had he not devised a strategy based on some fairly astute thinking. Whenever he knew he was running late, which must I feel have been fairly rare, he would stuff some old newspapers and general debris in his jacket. On arrival at *Linton Park*, he would then disappear into the shrubs or flowerbeds, emerging with the 'litter' as if he had been clearing it up. If spotted by Mr McKenzie, he would be congratulated on keeping the place tidy. Smart lad!

But Mr McKenzie himself was, according to my grandfather, also pretty astute at reading how his employer, Lord Cornwallis, was likely to react. On one occasion my grandfather overheard Lord Cornwallis telling his Head Gardener that the Estate costs were too high, and in order to reduce costs the garden staffing level would have to be reduced. Mr McKenzie knew how proud Lord Cornwallis was of his garden so raised no objection, simply saying in his broad Scottish accent, 'Aye my Lord, and which part of the garden would you like me to let go to rack and ruin?' After barely a moment's hesitation, Lord Cornwallis announced he would make economies elsewhere!

A year after leaving *Linton Park*, Daniel married Mary Louisa Lamb at Boughton Monchelsea Church on 20 May 1893 and after Mary had given birth to three other children, my mother was born on 10 February 1907.

Opposite is the testimonial written for Daniel Neale in 1892.

Luiton Gardens
Maidstone
23rd Jan 1892

Daniel Neale has been employed in the Gardens here under me for the past nine years from a Boy onwards. He has been through each department. Vines Peaches. plants & forcing in general. all of which he has a fair knowledge and aptitude. He is a clever and neat decorator. Sober honest & trustworthy. He leaves here to

better his position to which I recommended him

John M Kenzie
Head Gardener



A family photograph dating to just before WW1 and showing Daniel Neale with his wife Mary Louisa. The child next to Daniel is Dorcas, Ken Kimber's mother.

ALONG THE TURNPIKE ROAD TO LOOSE AND LINTON

PAUL TRITTON

This article is based largely on research carried out by Betty Sidebottom and Roger Thornburgh



A rectangular stone inscribed '39TH MILE STONE' embedded in a garden wall in Loose Road, Maidstone, is a rare relic of a network of highways that, for their day, were as ambitious in design and construction, and as expensive, as today's motorways. Nothing like them had been seen anywhere near Maidstone since the Romans constructed their Rochester-Hastings military road through the town more than 1,500 years earlier.

The stone stood beside the turnpike road to Cranbrook, the first of four roads built to provide

easier access between the county town and places to the east, south and west. As the forerunner of today's A229 it played an important part in the development of roads and transport in and around Loose and Linton. With the likely exception of the 'haul stones' on Old Loose Hill, the milestone in Loose Road and another, similarly obscured one on Linton Hill, appear to be the only artifacts that survive in south Maidstone, Loose or Linton from the time the turnpike road was built nearly 250 years ago. Nevertheless other, more tenuous, clues to its original route and subsequent improvements can be found as the road climbs



The 39th Mile Stone in Loose Road in 1978.



The milestone on Linton Hill.

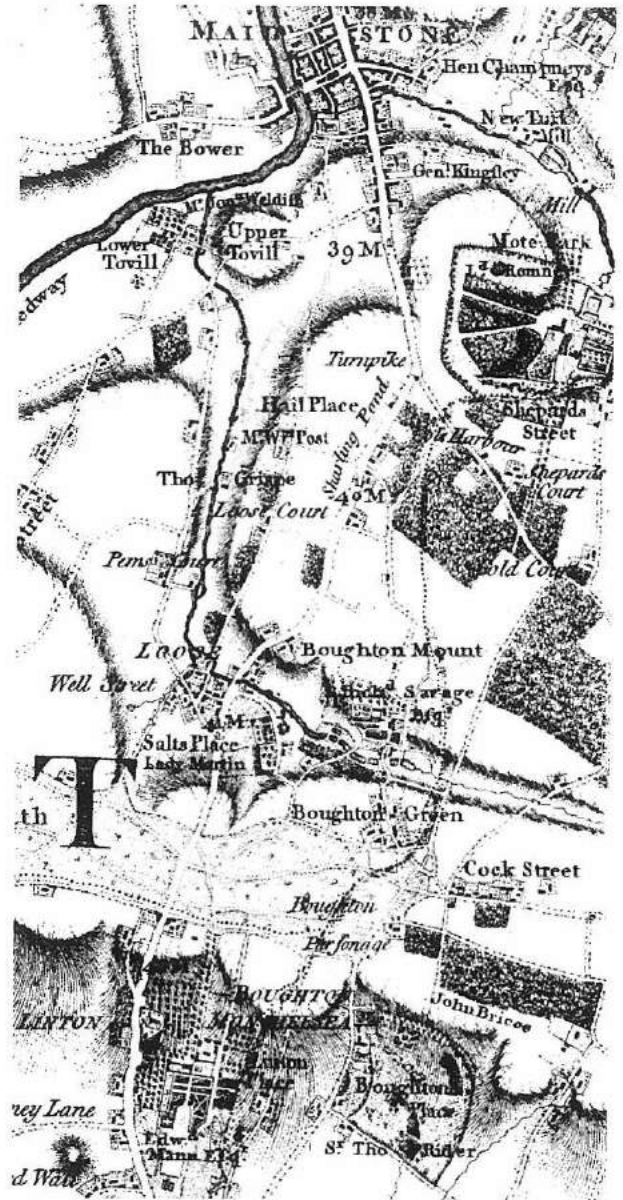
and descends the hills between Maidstone and the northern edge of the Weald of Kent.

Cannons and tree trunks

The turnpike movement developed when, after centuries of neglect, 'something had to be done' about the nation's roads, which were often impassable in winter – and little better than that in summer. In the 16th century every parish became obliged by law to employ a surveyor and four parishioners to work for six days a year to keep its roads in good repair. This was all very well for parishes whose roads carried mainly local traffic, but it was a huge liability for parishes on national routes.

Though not as busy as any of these, the road through Loose and Linton was used by many traders and travellers who were just 'passing through', often with heavy loads that imposed considerable wear and tear on the crumbling carriageway. Some of these burdens included cannons and tree trunks from Wealden ironworks and forests, destined for Chatham Dockyard; it could take two or three years to deliver them! In the 17th century the cost of maintaining the highways was transferred to those who travelled along them. Tolls were levied at turnpikes (moveable barriers or 'pikes') erected every few miles along the way. The roads themselves became known as 'turnpikes' and were managed by trustees (usually local landowners) who were responsible for appointing surveyors, collecting the tolls, raising capital and spending their income on building and repairing their roads. The first 'turnpike' to Maidstone crossed the North Downs from Rochester and was built in 1728; it is now the northern section of the A229. This connected with the Gravesend to Rochester turnpike, successor to the Roman's Watling Street and predecessor to the A2. Later the road from London to Maidstone via Wrotham (now the A20) was 'turnpiked'. These roads enabled stage coaches, mail coaches and passenger and goods vans to travel between Maidstone and London in about five hours.

The turnpike trust surveyors were in sole charge of building and maintenance work and were authorized to hire labour and buy materials. Loose and Boughton Monchelsea's ragstone quarries would have been convenient sources of



Extract from the Andrews, Dury and Herbert map of 1769, showing the turnpike road.

stones for the road through Loose and Linton and further afield, and we can imagine them being hauled along tracks and lanes from the quarries in, say, Well Street and Quarry Wood, whose abandoned faces can still be found. The turnpike would have provided very profitable business for the quarry owners and employment for local labourers who otherwise relied mostly on farm work.

Kent's first turnpikes were built many years before Britain's most famous road-builders – John Loudon McAdam (1756-1836) and Thomas Telford (1757-1834) – were born. The favoured

building materials were large and small stones bound together with clay or chalk, and sand. The large stones tended to rise to the surface and be pushed aside by traffic. In the 1780s McAdam and Telford designed more durable forms of construction. For repairs, McAdam advocated crushed stones bound with gravel, placed over a firm base of large stones. When building new roads he dispensed with foundations altogether. Telford specified large stones of more or less uniform size for the foundations and small, irregularly shaped stones, none larger than a hen's egg, for the surface. The iron-shod wheels of passing traffic ground the surface stones together and formed a grit that filled any gaps and created a compact and almost waterproof topping. The road was cambered and had drainage ditches on both sides, to keep the foundations and the soil beneath them dry.

39 miles from London

The aforementioned 39TH MILE STONE is at the foot of the wall near the front gate to No. 59 Loose Road, a few yards south of Upper Stone Street. The adjacent pavement has been built up by several inches since our photograph was taken, and today the stone is only just visible. It was originally erected 39 miles from London – but whereabouts in London? Some of the first English milestones indicated distances from Sir Christopher Wren's St Mary le Bow Church, London; later, Charing Cross, Hyde Park Corner and Marble Arch became datum points for cartographers, highway surveyors and publishers of travellers' guides.

The first of a series of Acts of Parliament that authorized the Maidstone to Cranbrook Turnpike Road was passed in 1759. The road was 16 miles long and ended at Tubslake, two miles beyond Cranbrook. Construction began soon after the first Act was passed. Tolls were payable at eight gates, about two miles apart, the first being where the road from Maidstone forked and travellers could continue towards Cranbrook or turn left on to Sutton Lane (now Sutton Road) to Langley, Sutton Valence and Biddenden; (in 1803 this road became the Maidstone to Biddenden Turnpike). The tollgate was called 'Shernold Pond Gate', though Shernold Pond (or 'Sharling Pond' according to some maps) was about a quarter of a mile away, opposite *The Swan Inn*. Today's

A229/A274 Wheatsheaf junction and *The Wheatsheaf* pub occupy the site of the turnpike junction and Shernold Pond Gate.

The next tollgate was at Coxheath, on or close to what we now call Linton Crossroads. There was also a 'weighing engine' here, operated by an 'engine keeper'. The engine was not, as might be supposed, a type of weighbridge but a cumbersome contraption that winched vehicles off the ground in order to weigh them. Thus the trustees of the Maidstone to Cranbrook Turnpike were able to use powers granted under their Acts of Parliament to take account of the weight of heavy vehicles when setting their tolls.

At Stilebridge on the River Beult – the southern boundary of Linton – the road to Marden and Goudhurst branched off; (this road became the Goudhurst, Gore and Stilebridge Turnpike in 1765). Stilebridge was a busy and important junction and the site of another 'weighing engine', erected in 1832 at cost of £63, and tollgate.

Along the road, guideposts as well as milestones helped travellers find their way and measure their progress. The first guidepost past Shernold Gate was erected near *The Swan Inn* where lanes branched off to Bockingford, Hayle Place and Tovil to the west and Boughton Quarries to the east. The signpost that stands at this junction today, near the corner of Cripple Street, is of a type designed in the 1930s. Readers with memories of the area in wartime may be able to recall whether or not it was removed in 1940 for the duration of the war. All road signs and signposts were supposed to be dismantled, to prevent German parachutists using them to find their way around. The Cripple Street signpost lost one of its arms some years ago and was in a



Signpost near the corner of Cripple Street.

shabby condition. It was repaired and repainted, but soon became rust-stained. In 2007 the Loose Amenities Association arranged to have it repainted by Bernard Hill.

Although the 1769 map indicated mileages from a datum point in London, the milestones marked on the first Ordnance Survey maps of the Maidstone area were the ones that were erected by the turnpike trust and denoted mileages from Maidstone town centre. There were milestones near the corner of Pickering Street (MAIDSTONE 2 CRANBROOK 12) and between Herts Farm and what is now the corner of Herts Crescent (MAIDSTONE 3 CRANBROOK 11). Both of these disappeared years ago. The next milestone (MAIDSTONE 4 CRANBROOK 10) has survived, in the base of a stone wall on the west side of Linton Hill. It is marked on the 1997 Explorer Series 136 Ordnance Survey map at grid reference TQ755498, about 15 yards south of the entrance to *Mullion Court* (formerly *Linton Vicarage*). Do not expect to see very much; only the rounded top of the stone is visible.

Beyond Linton a few more milestones can be found; also two surviving tollgate keepers' cottages and the sites of others that have been demolished.



'The Old Tollgate' at Cross at Hand in 2007.

Hard work for horses

The 'haul stones' on Old Loose Hill enabled horses to rest while hauling heavy carts, coaches and wagons up the hill. Presumably the procedure was to halt the vehicles, place chocks under the wheels, and secure the vehicles to the stones with ropes. When the horses had recovered it was 'chocks away' and the toil continued. It must

have been desperately hard work for even the strongest horses.



The view southwards down Old Loose Hill, c.1918, showing the 'haul stones'.

A medieval hall house halfway up the west side of the hill, called *The Change*, once had stables where horses could be hired; some of these may have been the equivalent of the 'bank engines' deployed many years later on the railways, to haul wagons up steep, short gradients.

There were probably many frightful accidents in which tired or lame horses were killed or injured, especially when ice and snow covered the hill. 'Haul stones' would have been necessary long before the turnpike road was built; perhaps those we see there today date back earlier than the 1760s and were retained when the road was tumpiked.

The perilous gradients in Loose and further south, on Linton Hill, challenged coachmen and wagon drivers for many decades. Eventually the turnpike trustees resolved to make them safer. In 1820 and 1821 Henry Robinson Palmer surveyed the hills and submitted plans for improvements, on behalf of Thomas Telford. Telford was by this time world-famous for his roads, bridges, canals and aqueducts and, at the age of 63, was nearing the end of his career; Palmer, 25, was just embarking on his and within a few years would be well-known as architect and engineer to the London Docks Company and the inventor of corrugated iron. In 1828 Palmer founded the Institution of Civil Engineers and Telford became its first president.

We cannot be sure to what extent Telford was personally involved in the Loose and Linton road

improvements. He had built hundreds of highways in Scotland and the north of England and was still involved in many big contracts, so it seems likely that he delegated or sub-contracted the detailed design work as well as the planning to Palmer. Palmer proposed that Linton Hill should be regraded, to reduce its steepness, or bypassed altogether; and that Loose should be bypassed.



Linton Hill in 2007, showing the road running through the cutting created when the turnpike road was regraded in the 1830s.

On Linton Hill the regrading option was chosen, and was achieved by building a cutting for the road at the top of the hill and an embankment lower down. Both features are clearly evident to this day. Imagine how much steeper the hill would be without them. No such solution was considered for Loose, whose two hills climb steeply from the Loose stream; it would have been impossible to create cuttings and embankments there. Only a bypass would do.

Palmer offered a choice of two easier routes between the summits, both branching off the original road at what is now the corner of Lancet Lane. His 'western line', 1,566 yards long, would have run across farmland to Kirkdale and Bridge Street, then west of All Saints' Church and Church Road and over High Banks. Mercifully this route was not chosen; it would have destroyed the heart of the village. Palmer's slightly shorter 'eastern line' had fewer existing roads and buildings in its path and was intended to run in a straight line through fields where Loose School now stands, veer eastwards from Loose Green to cross a new bridge over the narrowest part of the Loose valley, and join the original turnpike near *Herts Farm*. This in essence was the line that was

chosen but the original road was retained as far as Loose Green, which explains why to this day there is still a pronounced bend in the A229 between Lancet Lane and Loose Green.

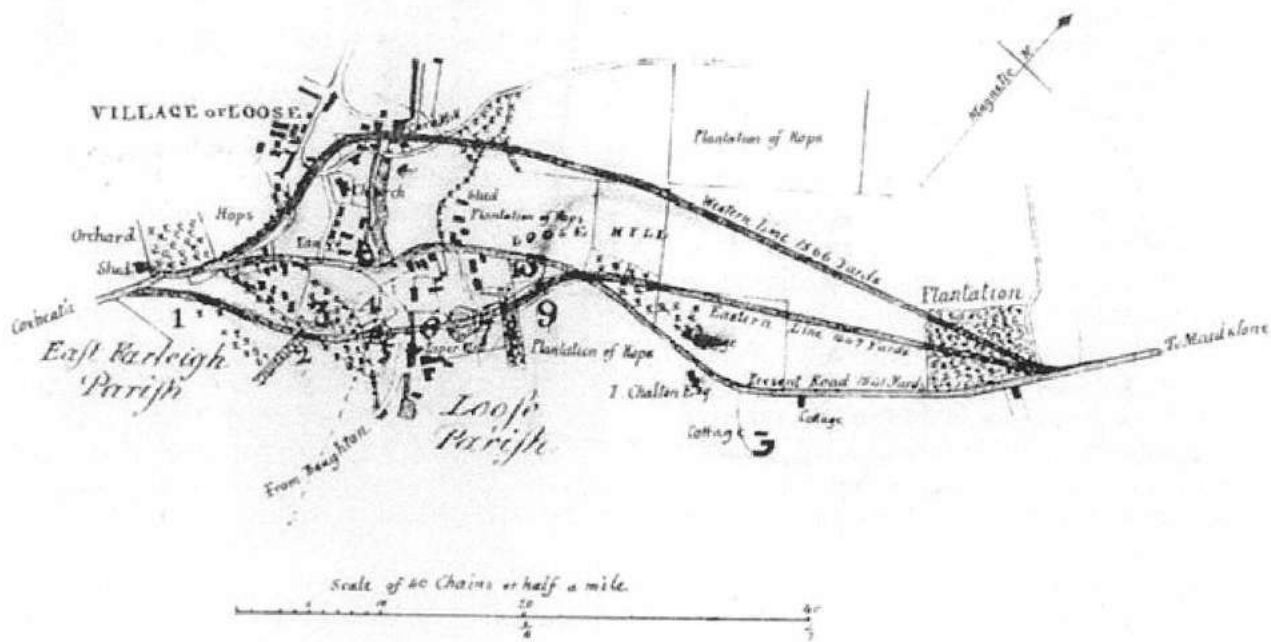
Details of the design and construction of the Loose bypass survive only in a meagre collection of documents. The Institute of Civil Engineers has no plans or drawings by Telford nor any knowledge of their existence elsewhere. H.R. Palmer, who died in 1884 (ten years after Telford), left all his papers to the ICE but by 1906 nearly all of them had been lost. Fortunately his plans for Linton and Loose were filed with the turnpike trust's solicitors, White & Miller of Goudhurst, and are now kept at the Centre for Kentish Studies. The plan for the Loose bypass shows the western and eastern lines and a tiny cross-section of the valley, captioned 'Plan of Foundation of Bridge'. Later the humble bridge, which has a span of only 26 feet, came to be called the Loose Viaduct, conjuring up an image (in the minds of those who do not know Loose) of a structure comparable to Telford's aqueduct at Pontcysllte!

The detailed drawing and specifications that the builders of the bridge's foundations and superstructure would have followed have, alas, been lost. They were, surely, similar to those that Telford had prepared earlier for more than 1,000 road and railway bridges. As for the new carriageways that were built at Linton and Loose, it seems safe to assume that Telford's tried and tested specification was used.

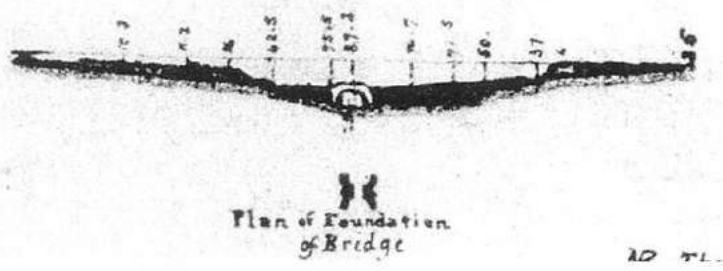
Income and expenditure

Ten years elapsed between the time Palmer submitted his plans and the time the Loose bypass opened. Fortunately the Maidstone to Cranbrook Turnpike Trust's records of income and expenditure and debts and credits for 1823-1867 have survived. They too are kept at the Centre for Kentish Studies, and itemize costs incurred and revenue received before and after the building work was completed. The earliest balance sheet in the collection shows that expenditure from 21 February - 23 September 1823, came to £1,179.8s.0¾d. This included £736.18s.6¾d. paid to labourers; £142.16s.9d spent on stones and materials for repairing the road; £13.8s.9d for land

Map of
LOOSE HILL and VILLAGE
 shewing the proposed Alterations of Road
Surveyed for Tho: Telford, Civil Engineer
By H. R. Palmer.
 1820.



Section of Loose Valley
 shewing the proposed improvement. -



H.R. Palmer's proposals for the Loose bypass (above), and his cross-section drawing of the bridge (below).

purchases; and £78.18s for the surveyor and clerk's salaries. Income from the seven tollgates came to £1,509.5s. Shernold Pond Gate was the busiest and earned £534.10s. Stilebridge tollgate, with an income of £249.17s.3d., was the second-highest earner.

The accounts for 23 September 1823 - 3 October 1824, reveal that two £500 Exchequer Bills were purchased – an enormous investment, equivalent to between £65,000 and £140,000 in today's values, depending on which conversion formula is used. These 'gilt-edged' government bonds yielded daily interest, at a rate that was fixed every six months. A footnote to the statement of accounts, presented at the trust's Annual General Meeting in Staplehurst on 6 October, reads: 'The said Roads [i.e. the sections between each tollgate] are in an excellent state of repair and they [the trustees] are of the opinion that the balance [£1,341.6s.8d] appearing on this statement will enable them shortly to undertake the Improvement of one of the two hills surveyed and reported upon by Mr Telford, Civil Engineer'. However, at the General Annual Meeting held at Coxheath on 13 October 1825, the trustees reported that the improvements had not started 'in consequence of the difficulties having arisen in making out the Title to the Lands purchased'.

The matter was not resolved for nearly four years. Then, on 19 May 1829, R. White, clerk to the trustees, published the following advertisement in the Maidstone Journal:

'Persons willing to CONTRACT for completing the intended improvement of the Turnpike Road leading through or near the village of LOOSE in KENT (consisting of a STONE BRIDGE and EMBANKMENTS) are requested to deliver TENDERS, sealed up, at the CHEQUERS at LOOSE before Eleven o'clock on MONDAY the 8th of JUNE next, when & where Persons offering Tenders are desired to meet the Trustees. Plans & Specifications of the Works may be seen at the CHEQUERS ... after Monday the 25th instant. Trustees will not engage to accept the lowest tender'. Later, in 1829, W.H. Ireland noted in his History of Kent that: 'At Loose, two and a half miles distant [from Maidstone] 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, will provide a great addition to the picturesque view of the surrounding scenery'.

A balance sheet published on 20 September 1830, records that during the preceding 12 months £1,785.19s.8d was paid to 'the Contractor, Engineer and Superintendents on account of the Works at Loose Hills'. The names of the contractor and superintendents are not known; presumably Telford was the 'engineer' and sent one of his assistants to take charge of the work.

While the contract was in progress, an accident on the night of Tuesday, January 19, 1830, proved just how dangerous the old road was. The *Maidstone Journal* reported:

'As Manwaring's wagon was on its return to Burwash, whilst descending Loose Hill, the skid broke, by which accident one of the horses was thrown down and unfortunately killed. This misfortune but too clearly shows the necessity of the extensive alterations now taking place at that very awkward spot, which we understand are rapidly proceeding. The public are highly indebted to the projectors of this undertaking for the very great facility it will afford to carriages of every description. The necessity of descending or ascending Loose Hill will be entirely dispensed with and in its stead a fine level surface of considerable extent will be presented'.

On Saturday, 10 April 1830, William Pettitt and John Brongar narrowly escaped being killed when 12 tons of earth fell on them while they were working on the bridge's foundations. The *Maidstone Journal* reported:

'Brongar was speedily extricated, only being buried up to his chin, but Pettitt was entirely hidden and remained buried six minutes before he could be discovered, when he was found completely bent double with a weight of about four tons resting on him. He was released with the utmost expedition and happily sustained no injury beyond some severe bruises and the loss of his clothes, which were completely torn from him. Brongar loudly vociferated that he was sure he was dead but fortunately he was neither killed nor wounded'.



Loose Bridge, later known as Loose Viaduct. The derelict mill in the foreground was demolished in 1918.

The bypass opened in 1830 but the bills kept coming in. During the year ending 26 September 1832, the contractor and engineer were paid £1,070.5s.8d for work at 'Loose Hills'. The contractor was owed a further £1,500. In January 1832, R. White invited tenders from:

'Such persons as are willing to CONTRACT for putting down, in the month of March next, a SINGLE POST and RAIL FENCE, four feet high, sawed, and heart of oak, the POSTS six inches square, and the RAILS three inches by four ... on each side of the new Road, about seventy rods [385 yards] in length, near the village of LOOSE, are requested to deliver Tenders at the Chequers, Loose, by 10 o'clock on WEDNESDAY the 18th of January next, on which day the Trustees will meet at the same place, at Eleven o'Clock, at which meeting new Trustees for repairing the said Road will be appointed in the room of such as are dead'. No record survives to say who won the contract – or who the 'such as are dead' were!



From the same viewpoint in 2007.

After the bypass was opened, what had until then been called Loose Hill (or Hills) became known as Old Loose Hill which, as we have seen, is actually two hills. They should, perhaps, have been called Old Loose Hill North and Old Loose Hill South but it's too late now.

The improvements to Linton Hill were completed in 1833. Annual accounts published on 28 September 1833, record that during the previous 12 months £1,016.17s.9d. was paid to White & Miller 'on account of Works done and compensation paid in the improvement of Loose Bridge and Linton Hill'. By now the income received from the tollgates exceeded £2,280. Details of expenditure and income in 19th century pounds, shillings and pence do not mean very much to us today but they can be brought up to date. So how much, for example, did the Loose bypass and Linton Hill works cost in today's values? When all the known expenditure for these schemes from 1830-1833 is rounded-up, the total comes to £5,373. Two economists, Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, have published various formulae for converting the cost of large-scale projects, such as the construction of bridges, carried out in any year since 1830. Perhaps the most appropriate formula is their 'Gross Domestic Product' indicator, based on the market value of all the goods and service produced in the UK in a year. This converts £5,373 into more than £12 million. This may seem astonishing but, according to the Roadblock Alliance Against Road-building, today it costs £10.6 million to build a mile of a new single carriageway.

To Cranbrook in 90 minutes

Five years after the schemes were completed, typical journey times from Maidstone advertised by public transport operators using the turnpike road were one hour (Staplehurst), 90 minutes (Cranbrook) and 5¾ hours (Hastings). Today, Arriva buses cover the routes in about 30 minutes (Staplehurst), 50 minutes (Cranbrook) and two hours (Hastings).

In the 1840s the railways started to attract much of the long-distance traffic that used the turnpikes. Railways began to converge on Maidstone in 1844. Toll revenues fell and the turnpike trusts fell into debt. From 1860 tolls were abolished and

the trusts' responsibilities were taken over by publicly-funded Highways Boards. The Loose bypass opened during the dying days of the turnpike roads but has been a godsend for nearly 180 years, carrying the noise, pollution and congestion of through-traffic high above the village, which as a result is remarkably tranquil. Since the 1830s various other improvements have been carried out, notably the widening before the Second World War of the southern section of Linton Road (which was probably when the MAIDSTONE 3 CRANBROOK 11 milestone disappeared).

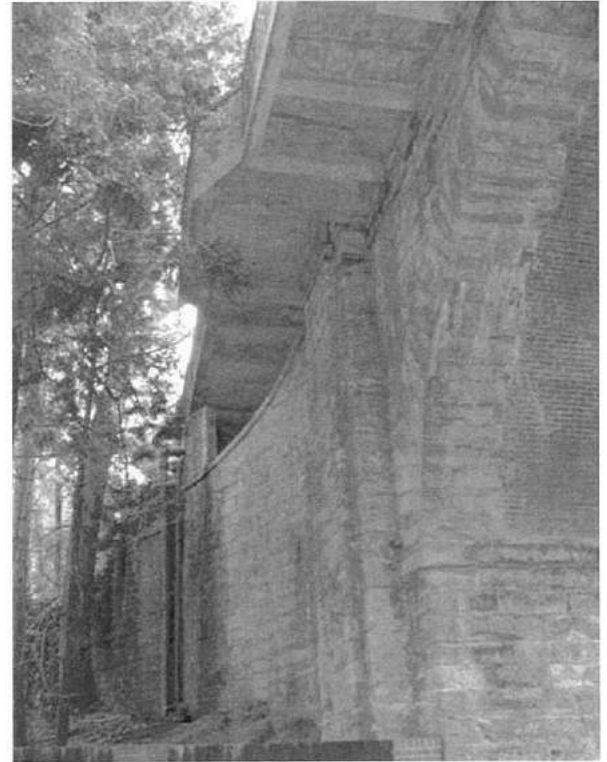


Looking north down Linton Road, Loose, soon after it was widened.

In 1937 the footpath on the west side of Loose Viaduct was built, on cantilevered reinforced concrete beams set into the original stonework. The benefits of the improvements to Linton Hill in the 1830s did not match those afforded by the Loose bypass. All Linton's through-traffic still hurries up and down hill, between and much too close to its historic and picturesque buildings.



The Viaduct in 2007, 70 years after the footpath seen on the left was added.

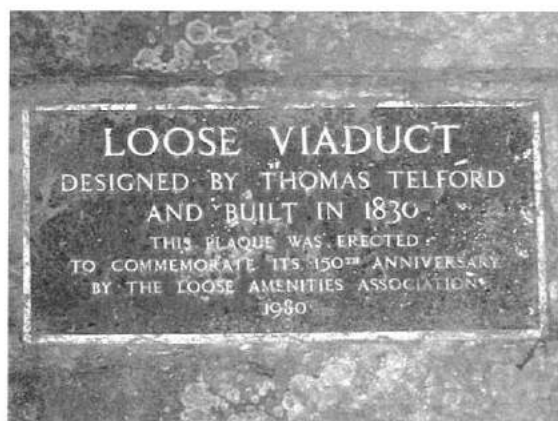


Cantilevered reinforced concrete beams supporting the viaduct footpath.

Yet, if a bypass was seriously proposed now, it would have to cut through Linton Park or across the countryside to the west of the village. Who would dare advocate either route? The A229 is as good as it will ever be, but thanks to Thomas Telford and H.R. Palmer it could be a lot worse.



When, in 2007, the Institution of Civil Engineers celebrated the 250th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Telford, the Loose Viaduct was the scene of the only event in Kent to commemorate the occasion. On 21 June, Quentin Leiper, president of the ICE, unveiled a plaque. The ceremony was attended by a group of Loose schoolchildren, one of whom, 10-year-old Bricanna Whyatt, said: *'The people who live in Loose and probably those who visit are very grateful to Thomas Telford for designing this lovely viaduct, which has kept Loose as a beautiful and peaceful village'*.



Left: Plaques in honour of Thomas Telford erected at Loose Viaduct in 1980 and 2000.

Above: Quentin Leiper, president of the ICE, and Brianna Whyatt at the ceremony commemorating the 250th anniversary of Telford's birth.

Acknowledgements and Sources

James Carley, *The Turnpike Roads of Kent*, Kent County Council, undated.

James Carley, *Public Transport Timetables 1838, Part 1, Kent & East Sussex*, undated.

'Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.K. Pound Amount'

(<http://measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/>);

CKS (HR Palmer's plans, ref. Q/RUM 69; turnpike trust accounts, ref. Q/RUt 34).

Thanks also to Clive Cheeseman, Noel Gibbons and Mary Price.

A full description of the Maidstone to Cranbrook Turnpike Road is included in *Cranbrook's Turnpike Roads 1759-1878* by Alan Sanders, published in 2004 by the Cranbrook and District Local History Society and on sale for £5 at the Crane Bookshop, Cranbrook. The 120 page book, with maps, colour photographs and an index to tollgates, features all the turnpike roads that led from Cranbrook to Flimwell and Rye; Tenterden; Wilsley and Kippings Cross; Bendenden; and Hawkhurst.

CHERRY GROUNDS FARM

MICHAEL TILLET

Does anyone remember *Cherry Grounds Farm*? It was bounded to the north by the old Loose Road Laundry (opposite Sheals Crescent), to the west by Loose Road, to the south by the beginnings of Plains Avenue, and to the east by far-away Mote Park. (See map on back cover).



Cherry Grounds Farm, with the drive that is now Heather Drive.

In the great farmhouse lived my 'Wakefield' grandmother, apparently surrounded by a bevy of aunts (grandpa had died long before). As little kids, my brothers, myself and all our cousins had free run of the whole place: cherry orchards, apple orchards, nut plantation, stables, cowsheds, dairy, barns, hen-house, kitchen garden and the house and garden itself.

Alas, when granny died in the mid-1930s, the house was demolished (sacrilege!) and all the farm land sold for residential building, soon to become much as we see it today, seventy years on. As the last survivor of that generation who knew and loved the place as children, I now have the opportunity to set down some of my memories of it all.

Let us start with the aunts. Aunt Nell married and moved away from the farm to Sutton in Surrey. Her daughter Olive was one of the first entrants to Girton College, Cambridge and became a much-respected doctor. I bless Olive's memory because when I was a mere teenager, she took me to one of the earliest pre-war Glyndebourne Opera Festival performances, which made a lasting impression on me. Under the pseudonym of Josephine Elder, Olive also wrote girls' school story books. Has anyone a copy of her story which gave me my first sight of the puzzling word 'meringue'?

The only aunt who actually lived in the farmhouse in its final years was Aunt Connie who, after so many years devotedly looking after Granny, ended her days in a 'home' at Hawkhurst, occasionally visited rather dutifully by my mother. Also resident at *Cherry Grounds* was bachelor Uncle Ted – perpetually dressed in a thick black suit with many waistcoats and watch-chains. He had a huge dog which I knew from my cigarette card collection to be a Borzoi Hound. He occasionally gave me a big bunch of keys, one of which enabled me to 'collect the eggs' - a big thrill for me, but probably a bit of a shell-shock for the hens. A much older cousin once told me, in hushed tones, that in later life Uncle Ted 'took to the bottle'. Dear me!

Aunt Lottie lived on the farm but in a little cottage at the far end of the drive near the entrance to the big cherry orchard. I did not like passing this cottage alone because Aunt Lottie's husband, Uncle John, had a horrible Dalmatian that leapt over the fence, put its front paws on my shoulders and tried to lick my face. Uncle John himself looked rather 'dalmatian' as he always wore a black and white check suit with trilby hat to match. But in any case, I always hurried past their cottage because in the garden was a Very Rude Statue, which I thought it better not to be seen looking at too closely. Later, when they had to move to a house in Plains Avenue, this statue was firmly planted in the front garden – an object of some comment by near neighbours and passers-by. In earlier days (I was told), Uncle John had been Captain Gates of Maidstone's Fire Brigade.

Our family – my parents, two brothers and me – lived in the end house of a terraced row at the top of St Philip's Avenue. Living directly opposite us was Aunt Emily; she was married to Uncle Robert (Craske) who had a shiny bald head and a walrus moustache. He was the Mayor's Marshal. An abiding memory of Uncle Robert is of him on Grammar School Speech Days sitting, mace in hand, at the foot of the steps leading down from the stage, ready to escort His Worship off the premises. My Craske cousin Brenda married a chap she always referred to as 'Fish'. They lived and worked on a farm near Flimwell.



A pre-WWI photograph of Granny Wakefield with Aunts Emily (kneeling) and Lottie on the left and Uncle Ted and Aunt Alice on the right.

Next door to Aunt Emily lived Uncle Harry (my mother's younger brother) with Aunt Hilda and my cousins Peter and Betty. So there was a little colony of us who lived within easy walking distance of *Cherry Grounds*. Before the 'new' Grammar School was built in 1929, it was only a short stroll across open land (where the Headmaster's house now stands) through a gap in the hedge into the apple orchard. Later, of course, we had to take the longer route via Barton Road and Loose Road to what is now Heather Drive, the site of the original farm entrance. Uncle Harry soon moved to Hollingbourne and managed a farm there (*Grove Mill House* still stands). Sadly he collapsed and died suddenly one day out in the fields.

The final aunt has to be Aunt Alice who may well be still remembered in Loose because she lived at

The Gables, just past the top of Lancet Lane (which was then 'Unadopted', whatever that meant). For some reason, when we were very young, my brother David and I often stayed at Aunt Alice's – maybe to get us out of the way when our other brother, Philip, was having measles or chicken pox. Aunt Alice's husband, Uncle Frank (Keeley), had died before I was aware of his existence.

The Gables is almost opposite Pickering Street 'where the trams went to sleep at night' in great sheds (long since gone). But of course we were there when the first trolley-bus came right through to Loose. In those days we kept our trolley-bus tickets in the hope of collecting a complete set. The only way to secure the very rare brown sevenpenny ticket was by doing a complete journey Loose to Barming (or vice-versa) in one go. As a special treat, my mother sometimes gave me enough money to take whichever trolley-bus arrived first at Barton Road (Upper Stone Street took two-way traffic in those days) to the appropriate terminus, then the complete journey, and finally back to Barton Road again. It always annoyed me that the conductor made me get off at each terminus and join the little queue of folk waiting to get on,

but I usually managed to get back to my favourite front seat upstairs.

If my mother had any qualms about her little boy doing such a hazardous journey all on his own (Barming was quite unknown territory – and wasn't there a Lunatic Asylum near the terminus?), she never showed it. But she did once say 'If a stranger offers you a sweet, just say *No, thank you* very politely'. Had she been reading *Emil and the Detectives*?

Aunt Alice was very fond of a well-known brand of cream cheese which was sold in circular boxes, each portion of cheese being separately wrapped and tapering to a point in the centre of the box. When empty, we were allowed to take it, and the lid, down to *The Chequers*, drop them into the

water on the far side of the road, wait for them to re-emerge, and then follow them all the way along the stream to the waterfall. On other days we walked under the echoing viaduct to 'Bedstead Pond' (there really was an old bedstead lying in the water), across Banky Meadow to *Merriehills* (where Joan Foster Clark then lived), and on to Pickering Street (via Leonard Gould's) and home. After such exertion, Aunt Alice had to rest and we boys had tea in the kitchen with Dorothy who wore a frilly cap and frilly apron, and looked just like a 'Nippy' advert for *Lyons Corner House*.

Over the kitchen door was a large box containing what looked like half-a-dozen little flags, each of which could be separately activated by pressing the push-button in the appropriate room. A great game was to rush round the house pressing each button in turn (upstairs and down), and get back to base while the first flag was still waving.

Cherry Grounds had a primitive version of the same apparatus. A large handle let into the wall by the fireplace in each room had to be jerked and far away, high up on the kitchen wall, a bell on a coiled spring began to jangle. It needed the



Cherry Grounds farmhouse.

collaboration of at least two strategically placed cousins and a pre-arranged starting signal to get all eight bells swinging simultaneously!

In all the few years that I knew *Cherry Grounds*, I never ever saw the great front door open. It was securely shut by two huge bolts on the inside. A metal plate on the outside stated, in somewhat Gothic lettering *No Hawkers, No Circulars*. Even if any circular person had rung the bell, it would have been a huge palaver to open the door to them!

In contrast, the back door was very rarely closed, let alone locked. The upper part was glass so one could see right down the passage to the front door, to the left of which was what had become Granny's bedroom, and to the right a huge dining room / drawing room. Here, on Sundays, 'tea with Granny' was a weekly ritual attended by as many of the nearby family members as cared. Granny was always well wrapped up in rugs and shawls, sitting close to the fireplace where, over the mantel-piece there was a huge mirror just like the *Alice through the Looking Glass* illustration. We youngsters 'jumped down' from tea as soon as possible, leaving the grown-ups to talk about goodness knows what. Sometimes in summer, Aunt Connie sent us off to the kitchen garden to pick raspberries, not all of which reached home!

Next to the dining room was Uncle Ted's 'office', consisting of a large round table draped with a heavy cloth with long dangly tassels. But opposite was my favourite room in the house – the large kitchen, presided over by the redoubtable 'May'. Where did Granny find such a treasure? On a shelf were gaily-coloured tins clearly marked TEA, SUGAR, RICE, COFFEE, TAPIOCA. Not knowing what this last was, on inspection the tin contained nothing but a faded photograph of a lad in uniform. Was this May's boyfriend killed in the (First) war? We never asked.

Two steps down from the side of the kitchen was the enormous stone-floored scullery, the main feature of which was the huge copper, with wooden lid, set in a brick frame with its floor-level opening through which logs were pushed on wash-days. Never have I seen such dazzlingly white sheets as billowed in the summer sunshine on Mondays. A hatchet-faced Mrs H. came in to 'help' on wash-days, and with 'heavy' work.

Opposite, across the passage, was the 'still room' where the giant mangle was kept, along with a knife grinder and a pail full of eggs in a strange liquid. Although water was laid on in the house, there was still a working pump in the yard. Upstairs there was the most commodious 'loo' which could be reached only through the dark scary passage where a huge stuffed owl glared at one from its glass case. An aunt once caught me coming out of the 'upstairs' with a book in my hand. 'No books allowed in there, dear', she said. 'But auntie, it's a book about the Lives of the Saints'. 'That makes no difference, dear', she said. Fortunately there was also a 'downstairs' but which could be entered only from outside the house – a very convenient convenience.



Cousin Betty (Wakefield), me and friend Gladys Cloke with Gyppo and Paddy in a corner of the orchard.

Cherry-picking time was always exciting as a lot of extra workers came in. It was amazing how they could climb to the very top of tall ladders and keep their balance even when weighed down by a heavy picking-basket. Periodically Cooper, the bird-scarer, would fire off a volley of shots. Later we would trudge through the long grass searching for spent cartridges.

Milking was of course all done by hand in those days. Algar, the cowman, used to speak to all his cows by name: Daisy, Rosie, Bessie, Molly, Queenie and so on. On some days I was allowed to write in a thick-lined exercise book the amount of milk yielded by each that day. Algar hung the heavy pail on the hook dangling from the primitive weighing machine in the corner of the shed, and always rounded up (or down) the

amount so that I could write an exact number of pints in each case.

My father, George William Tillett, spent all his working life with Haynes Brothers, the Ford agents, first in King Street, later further along near the railway bridge. My mother had always maintained that as a little girl she and her friends had stood at the top of Square Hill Road and waved to Queen Victoria as Her Majesty steamed by in the royal train, and that Her Gracious Majesty had waved back! Because of his work connection, Dad somehow arranged for an ancient covered Ford van to be parked in a remote corner of one of the *Cherry Grounds* orchards. This van, christened 'Dewdrop Inn', became the headquarters of all our childhood games and a hide-out away from the grown-ups.

But my most loved place was the circular brick-built thatched summer-house set in the wall dividing the private garden from the orchard. (It can just be seen in the top left hand corner of the photograph of Granny Wakefield and family). This summer-house had *two* slightly curved doors so that one could enter or leave from the garden or from the orchard. The upper part of each door was made up of panes of differently coloured glass so that one could look out onto a blue lawn or at a fiery-red orchard. Holding the door slightly open, I would look through my chosen colour, then suddenly leap out, but everything was always back to normal. *Next* time it *will* work, I always thought.

Happy days! I hope my readers had equivalent joys in *their* childhood.

THE LOOSE VALLEY AND ITS SWALLOW HOLES

Or a twice lost stream, and a twice lost valley.

FRANCIS JAMES. BENNETT, F.G.S.

The following article was originally published in 'The Invicta Magazine' in March 1910 and is an Edwardian geologist's survey of the watercourse that shaped the history of Loose by providing an abundant water supply for its first inhabitants and farmers, and for the milling, tanning, papermaking and other trades and industries that brought prosperity and employment to the valley. F.J. Bennett lived at West Malling and worked for the Geological Survey (now the British Geological Survey), which was founded in 1835. He was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society, the world's oldest national scientific and professional society for Earth scientists, in December 1875. The society was founded in 1807. Our thanks to Jill Smith for transcribing the article.

This Valley, though small in extent and size, is one of much beauty and of singular interest, throwing as I consider it does a new light on valley formation, and is situated between Maidstone and Langley, some five miles south-east of the former place.

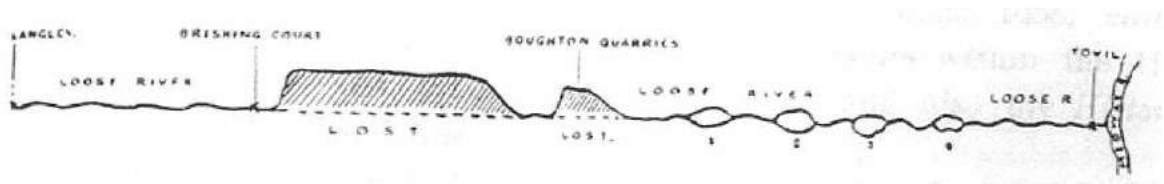
The river Loose, which begins as a stream and deserves only the name of river near its termination, starts a little east of Langley Church, but runs only as high up as this after heavy rains. West of the church the flow is feeble and the course easterly till it reaches *Loose Mill*, where it strikes almost due north, and being there reinforced by a copious spring, runs with much greater volume to Tovil, where it joins the Medway. This may be called the business part of the river, as here are situated several paper mills which, while testifying to its economical importance, mar the most beautiful part of the valley; but still ugly as these mills are, they perhaps serve to enhance by contrast the natural beauty of their surroundings. The feeble flow from Langley to *Loose Mill* I consider due to much loss by underground water capture.

The first instance, perhaps, of this underground water tapping takes place between the head of the Loose valley at Langley, and, with an underground connection perhaps, a much more powerful stream starting at *Leeds Abbey*, joining the Len after a rapid course of one-and-a-half miles. The well-marked, beautiful and secluded ravine with its picturesque lakelet, where the stream in question starts, is of much geologic interest, and here was the well-chosen site of *Leeds Abbey* balanced by that of Leeds Castle not far away. The site only, alas! And had any considerable portion been left it might perhaps

have compared even, for beauty of situation, with its far-famed sister Tintern. Leeds itself is most picturesque, and the church of much interest, and it would be difficult to find a more massive and impressive tower attached to a church of this size.

But we must leave Leeds, its Abbey, Church and ravine, well worthy of a much longer notice, and return to the Loose. The next underground loss this stream sustains occurs close to *Brishing Court*. Here the loss can be actually seen, and here too, the perhaps unique feature of one part of a stream running south, with the rest following its proper westerly course. This south flow is a very short one, and the water can be seen to sink at the foot of a steep bank. This water has an underground flow, south, of over one mile, coming out in a spring issuing about one hundred feet lower in Boughton Park, it then joins the Beult, in defiance, apparently, of the watershed separating the Loose from the river, and at a spot almost due south of the place where it is seen to disappear. For some time there has been a tradition of this re-appearance of the lost water in Boughton Park spring, and some fifty years ago this seems to have been put to the test, for some oil put in the disappearing water made its re-appearance, in two-and-a-half hours, in this Boughton Park spring.

Again, close to this loss of part of the Loose, the whole of the stream is seen to pass away underground in a small, but well defined Swallow-Hole, so called as the water disappears there. After very heavy rains this Swallow-Hole occasionally overflows, but the water soon sinks again in the farm-yard close by. It did so this winter in January. Not only does the stream disappear here, but another loss, as I have noted



for the first time, also takes place, viz., that of the valley itself.

To understand this remarkable and little-known fact a visit to the spot is necessary, but this diagram [above] shewing the course of the Loose, &c. may help the reader. The shaded parts shew where the valley is lost, interrupted, or bridged over; the dotted lines shew the underground course of the water; and Nos, 1, 2, 3 & 4 are pools along the river Loose.

The valley is what I have termed 'interrupted', bridged over, or lost where the stream also is lost — the one fact coinciding with the other. There is, it is true, just enough of a valley to mislead an ordinary observer; but this is a purely artificial one, and due to a long process of quarrying our

far-famed Kentish Rag, perhaps our earliest building stone, dating back maybe to Roman times, remains of this remote period occurring at more than one place in the Loose Valley. The first loss of the valley occurs for half-a-mile, the stream appearing again in Mr Atkins' garden at Boughton quarries. With this re-appearance of the stream at the foot of a steep bank the valley again becomes normal, but in a short distance valley and stream again are lost at the end of the garden, where another 'interruption' or bridging over occurs at the foot of a steep rise. The natural bridge does not extend far, and the stream again appears at the foot of another steep bank, whence it flows to the Medway without any further 'interruption' of valley or loss of stream. This part of the valley is, perhaps, its most striking and lovely part, and here also occur many



Heron Pond, where the Loose stream reappears after flowing through the garden of Harts House (1909).

picturesque pools along the course of the river. Where the pools occur the valley side is deeply scooped out and cirque-like in shape. These pools, as I consider, at some earlier stage of the formation of the valley – for the formation of a valley is a gradual process – occupied separate hollows or Swallow-Holes, something like the one mentioned where the first loss of the Loose takes place. The idea of the formation of a valley by a series of Swallow-Holes is a new one, and it first occurred to me as accounting for the forming of St. Leonard's Gorge at West Malling. Further and more striking evidence of this I found afterwards in the Willington or Otham Valley, commencing one mile north of Brishing Court. In this little-known valley I have found thirteen Swallow-Holes, the upper one always full of water while most of the others are dry. The valley I consider to be still in the Swallow-Hole stage, each hole shewing an interruption of the valley course. Near the end of this valley are many caves and caverns.

For a full description of this, and the Loose Valley &c., see a paper of mine in *Geographical Journal*, for September 1908, entitled, 'Solution – Subsidence Valleys and Swallow Holes with the

Hythe Beds area of West Malling and Maidstone', and also my *History of Ightham* (Homeland Association).

Along the course of the Loose Valley I have found several Swallow-Holes, as I term them, but all without any water, and also four on the watershed between the Len and Loose, all these never noticed before. I should add that the Loose Valley is situated in a limestone formation termed the Hythe Beds, but much better known as Kentish Rag. This rock is highly charged with water, to the underground action of which, acting chemically and mechanically, I consider the formation of the valleys in that formation largely due; but I must refer my readers to the above-mentioned papers for further information on that point. The Loose Valley would, if the limestone was not concealed by wood and vegetation, compare very well with far-famed Dovedale, another limestone valley.

But I must bring this article to a close, and hope it may lead some of our readers to visit an area perhaps unique in some respects, but, anyhow, one of great beauty and interest.

Additional Notes by Paul Tritton

A stroll down the valley from Langley to Loose, along public footpaths and lanes that generally run close to the Loose stream, will reveal many of the topographical features Bennett explored. West of the A274 at Langley the stream is easy to find, even though in places it is little more than a ditch. In the valley south of 'Langley Park Farm' there is a substantial expanse of open water, named 'Langley Loch' (surely the only lake in southern England to be called a 'loch'?) from where the stream flows on to and under Brishing Road.

Nowadays there is seldom much water in the stream hereabouts but that has not always been the case. In Roman times there was enough to supply a bath house, the remains of which were discovered south of the stream and immediately east of Brishing Road, in 1841. The valley's first swallow hole is a few yards to the west of the road and is concealed among nettles and brambles in a deep ravine.



Langley Loch in 2006.

The stream reappears 1,000 yards further on, at the bottom of Corkscrew Hill, and trickles (or very occasionally gushes) through the garden of a house appropriately named 'Honeymellow Springs'.

Beyond here the stream is 'swallowed' again for a few yards, flowing under the lane at the foot of

Atkins Hill and reappearing in a small lake in the garden of 'Harts House'.



The Swallow Hole at Brishing Road in 2007

The stream then gets lost again, below the often muddy track that runs past the 'House in the Wood' in Boughton Quarries. It soon emerges at Heron Pond, from which it cascades down a shallow waterfall and through a disused sheep dip into Leg o' Mutton Pond.



The waterfall and the disused sheep dip at Heron Pond in 2007

'Leg o' Mutton Mill' (also known as 'Black Mill'), the valley's most upstream watermill, stood on the west side of the pond and from here the stream's volume and flow rate are substantially increased by Springhead Pond. It now flows under open skies all the way to the Medway.



Springhead Pond, choked with waterweeds, in 2007

The three archive photographs of the Loose Valley, dated 1909, were taken by an unknown photographer and are reproduced by kind permission of Maidstone Museum and Maidstone Camera Club. They show the terrain as F.J. Bennett saw it and were found among a collection of 4,000 original glass negatives that had been stored in the basement of Maidstone Museum for many years and are now being digitally restored by Maidstone Camera Club. We hope we have identified the locations accurately but would be pleased to hear from any readers who may be able to correct us!



*Springhead Pond, Salts Lane
(1909).*



*An unidentified pond in the
valley (1909). Just north of
'Woodlawn' perhaps?*

JOHN QUESTED: SURVEYOR AND MAP MAKER

ANN HUGHES

The 1841 census for Loose shows John Qusted, aged 40 and a surveyor, living with Mary Hancock and her daughter Caroline in Loose Road. Close by are Thomas and Kate Qusted with their five children. From the Tithe Award (c.1840) it would seem that John and Mary were living in one of four cottages which are now 549-555 Loose Road (below, top picture) and Thomas and family in one of a block of cottages now 557-563 Loose Road (below, bottom picture).



My interest in John Qusted began over 15 years ago when I was researching the history of the Close Brewery in Hadlow and came across a survey and map of Hadlow in the Centre for Kentish Studies. There was also an account of a perambulation of the parish boundary in 1835 with instructions for the placing of stones at key sites to mark the boundary. Some years later I decided on the subject of maps for my dissertation for a

degree in history with the University of Kent and used John Qusted as an example of a map maker.

John Qusted was born on 13 December 1799 and baptised on 31 December 1799 at Deal Independent Church. His parents were George and Sarah (née Long), whose other children were Charles Henry, George, Charles, Thomas (presumably the Thomas living in Loose in 1841), Elizabeth, Mary Uzold, Maria and Anna. A daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was born on 5 November 1841 at Loose to John Qusted (Land Surveyor) and Mary, formerly Thorn. I have not been able to find a marriage between John and Mary Hancock/Thorn, although she is shown as his wife in the 1851 census at St Margaret's at Cliffe.

John is shown on the 1851 census as a Surveyor and Teacher of Surveying. He must have been in St Margaret's at Cliffe for several years as the *Dover Telegraph* of 3 January 1846 carried an advertisement stating that Mr John Qusted, Teacher of Surveying at Cliffe House School, proposed to give 'a course of twenty practical lessons in Surveying as adapted to Railways'. It seems likely that during his time as a teacher he wrote a book, *Qusted's Art of Land Surveying*, which went into at least ten editions. The title page states that it is 'For the use of schools and so arranged as to be also useful to farmers, stewards and others'. It gives detailed instructions on measuring fields of varying shapes and calculating areas. He also wrote *The Schoolboy's Steps to the Mathematics* and *A Treatise on Railway Surveying and Levelling*.

In addition to the Hadlow survey, maps by John Qusted which have survived are estate maps of William Fowler's land in Boxley and Aylesford (1837) and Reason Hill Farm, Linton, owned by Thomas Thompson (1840). He is also credited with the tithe maps of Loose, St Nicholas at Wade and Seal. His brother George also produced seven tithe maps and both are included in the *Dictionary of Land Surveyors and Local Map-Makers of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 1530-1850*.

John's wife Mary died of cancer at St Margaret's in December 1855 at the age of 59. It would appear that John moved away as he is not shown on the

1861 census for St Margaret's. The next record of him is entering Buckland Workhouse, near Dover, on 18 September 1866, described as being of 'weak mind'. He died in the workhouse on 25 March 1867 from 'serious apoplexy' and is buried in unconsecrated ground at Buckland (presumably because of his non-conformist background). A clue to his entry into the workhouse could be the death of 27 year-old Mary Elizabeth Qusteded, a tailoress, of acute spinal injuries in Westminster

Hospital on 6 September 1866 – presumably his daughter, although the age does not tally exactly. One wonders why his family apparently did not offer him help and support in his final years.

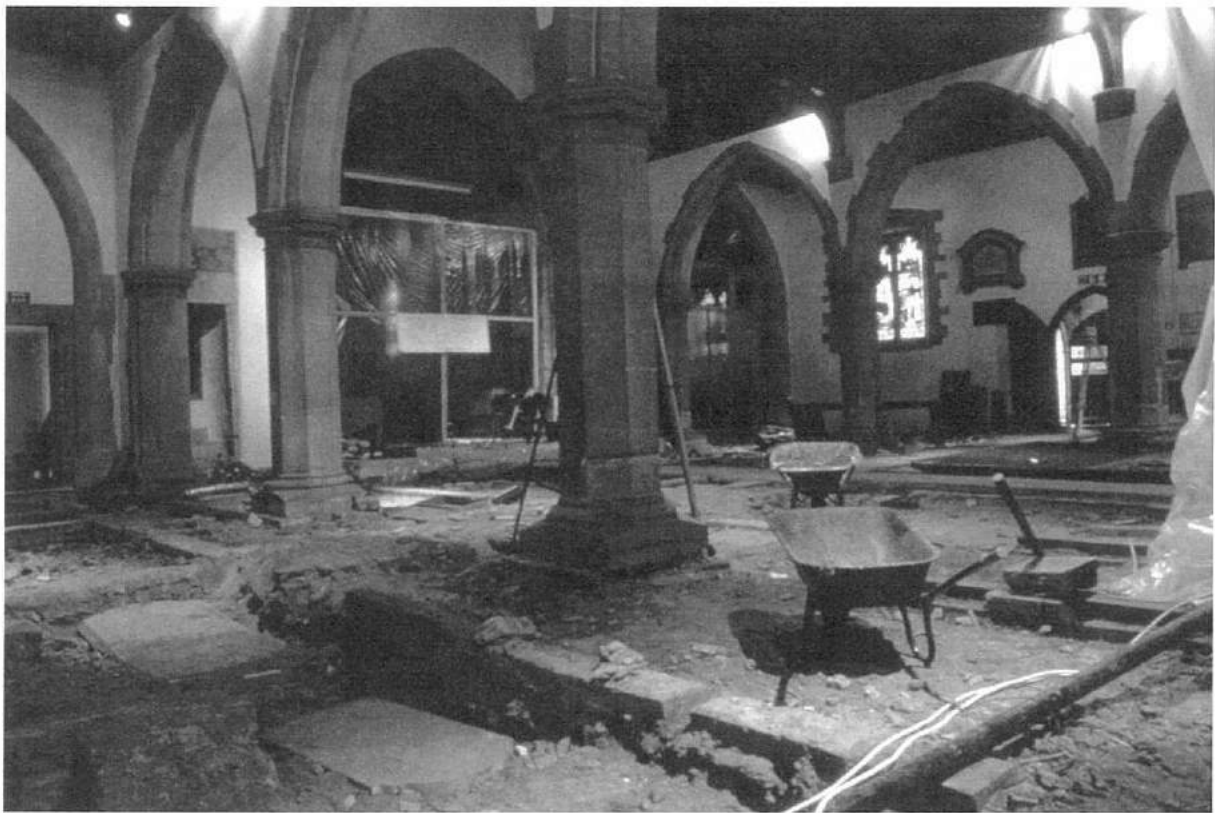
I would be pleased to hear from anyone who can shed light on the Qusteded family's time in Loose, or later. The map and survey of Hadlow may be seen in CKS, Maidstone.



An extract from John Qusteded's Tithe Map of Loose (c.1840), showing the Loose Road and the houses where he and his brother Thomas lived – directly opposite the piece of land numbered 204. Halfway down the map (which is oriented with North at the bottom) is Paynes Lane, and 'The Swan Inn' is below in the angle created by Boughton Lane; Cripple Street is bottom right. The map is in the Centre for Kentish Studies, catalogued P233/27/1B, and is reproduced with its permission.

INSIDE LOOSE CHURCH: ALTERATIONS AND REVELATIONS

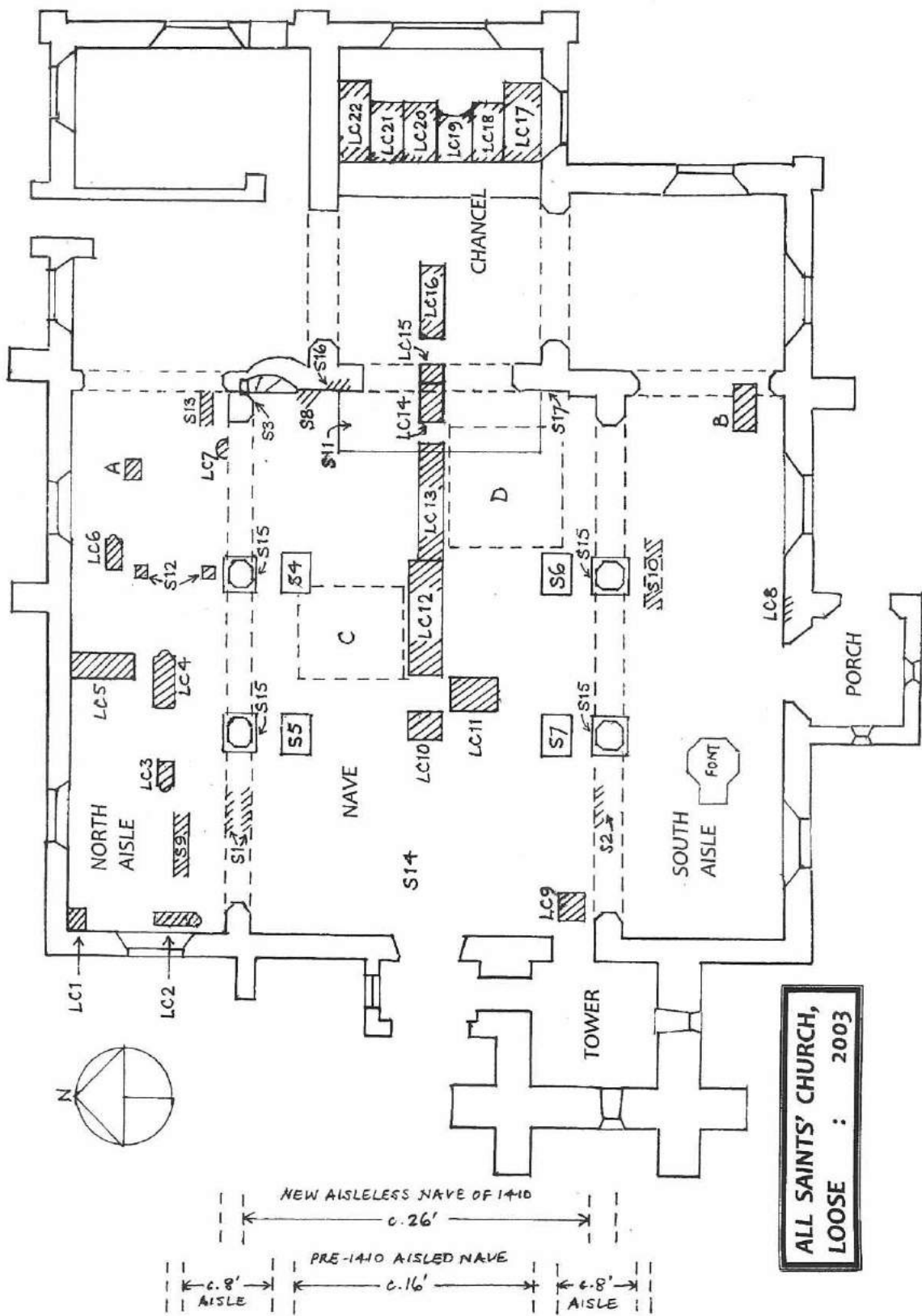
Churches down through the ages have all undergone alterations of one sort or another, and All Saints' Church, Loose has been no exception. Its most recent modification began in 1996 with proposals, termed a 're-ordering', that would provide a new west porch with toilets and a parish office, a raised floor at the east end, a more flexible nave without pews, better lighting etc. The relocation of the organ from its former site in the north chapel allowed the chapel along with the adjacent two-storey vestry to be redesigned to accommodate a full first floor and make space for a kitchen, disabled WC, vestry and large meeting room. The final phase of the re-ordering took place early in 2003 when the church was closed so that the floor of the nave and aisles could be completely replaced. The completion of all the work was celebrated with a special service of thanksgiving on Easter Day, 20 April 2003.



*Work in progress in the Nave of All Saints' Church, 23 January 2003.
Gravestones LC3 and LC4 can be seen in the North Aisle on the left.*

The work that took place in this last phase gave the opportunity to see and make a record of what was below the existing floor level. Peter Lambert (who has a good deal of experience of old buildings) and I spent time in the church while the work was proceeding, and while he examined the foundations, I recorded the graves and inscriptions on stones that had previously been hidden. The ones under the chancel floor I had already recorded in 1979 and 1989 when alterations to the floor had been made there. So, what we have here is Peter Lambert's report on the evidence of the earlier church structure, followed by my list of all the ground-level graves and inscriptions, and some information about the people concerned as far as I have been able to discover any.

Roger Thornburgh



1: EVIDENCE OF THE OLD CHURCH

PETER LAMBERT

It is recorded that in about 1410 John Wotton, Master of All Saints College, Maidstone, rebuilt the chapel of Loose 'as new' ('quasi de novo'). So, when the floor was taken up in 2003, we were keen to see whether there was any evidence for Wotton's rebuilding or, perhaps more interestingly, for the church or chapel that existed before he got his hands on it. The plan shows the main structural clues that were revealed, and relate to the 'S' numbered paragraphs below.

JOHN WOTTON'S 'NEW' CHURCH OF c1410

This consisted of a Nave, Chancel and Tower.

S1 The original north wall of the new Nave was proved in several places; squared ragstone rubble facings and rubble filling.

S2 The original south wall of c.1410 was also found. In both cases excavation was not possible but the side of the walls were probed to a depth of about three feet below floor level.

S3 The corner wall of the Nave and east wall under the Rood Stair was seen and appears to be of one build.

THE PRE-1410 CHURCH

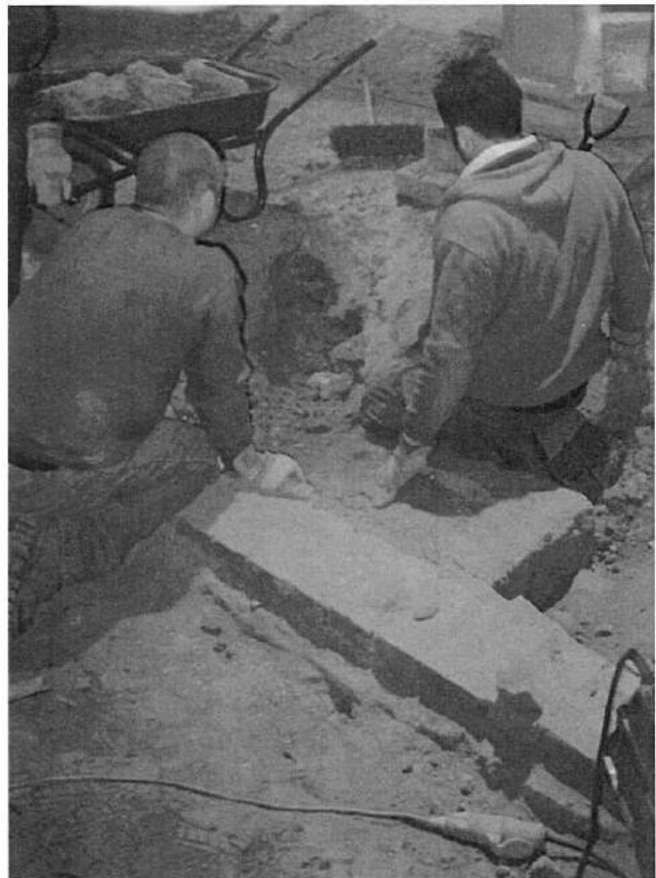
This consisted of a Nave and two Aisles, plus present Tower and probably a Chancel.

S4 North-east pier base: original size was about 43in x 47in (width x length); western end removed when the Walter vault was excavated; top of pier now levelled off at about 13in below floor level; ragstone rubble on an offset foundation of weak ragstone chippings/mortar. The pier was excavated on one corner to a depth of 3 feet (ie 4 feet below floor level) and probed to a further foot, where the calcareous tufa layer was found. The oversite round the pier was probed to a depth of about 3 feet but no other foundations were found.

S5 North-west pier base: original size was about 42in x 47in (w x l); appears to be complete, top now levelled off 13in below floor; ragstone rubble but no offsets seen in the restricted excavation that was possible; excavated to about 33in and tufa layer found

about a foot lower. The oversite around this pier was probed to a depth of about 3 feet (ie 4 feet below floor level) and no other foundations were encountered.

S6 South-east pier base: original size was about 42in x 46in (w x l); the eastern end was destroyed when the Peale vault was excavated; ragstone rubble levelled off 15in below floor level; no sign of any offsets but excavation was restricted due to building work; base of pier and tufa layer were not found, and no other foundations were found by probing.



Working in the Nave: the left hand of the man on the right is on the NE pier base (S4).

S7 South-west pier base: original size was about 41in x 52in (w x l); one corner was partly missing; limited excavation took place; one 3in offset on the north side 8in below levelled-off top, which is about 16in below floor level. Probed all round, but no other foundations to a depth of about 4 feet below floor level.

The oversite of the Nave around these four piers has been thoroughly disturbed by the original building work, by the rebuilding of c1410, by the excavation of the two large vaults and other burials, the construction of the sleeper walls in the 18th/19th centuries, and lastly the major rebuilding work after the fire of 1878. Fragments of tufa from the foundation level, small fragments of ragstone, lime mortar, tile, brick, burnt wood and other non-building material were found at irregular levels, and no stratification was possible in the time and space available. No worked masonry of any kind was found and no sign of an east-west (or north-south) wall connecting these piers.

S8 Nave, north-east corner: ragstone foundation – may be the remains of the spur wall forming the east end of the north arcade.

S9 North Aisle, western end: section of the north wall of the North Aisle of the pre-1410 church. Ragstone rubble, uncoursed, in weak mortar; 6in external offset about 30in below floor level; excavated to a depth of 4 feet and no base found; much walling stone tumbled down on the outside but also considerable disturbance from grave-digging in the 400 years that this was part of the graveyard. Width of aisle was 8 feet internal; wall thickness was 2 feet.

S10 South Aisle, near south-east pier: possible remains of the south aisle of the pre-1410 South Aisle. This was much disturbed by burials and by the construction of sleeper walls; also this region of the church was most

affected by the 1878 fire and a great quantity of burnt fragments was noticed, many of them well-buried in the oversite. A very restricted excavation gave inconclusive results, particularly since this wall seems to indicate an aisle width of 7 feet internal.

MISCELLANEOUS FEATURES RELATING TO THE EXISTING CHURCH AND 19TH CENTURY ALTERATIONS

S11 Chancel steps, north side of present step: evidence for several phases of steps from the Nave up to the Chancel, all very confused and obscured by modern concrete apron step.

S12 Mortared blocks of ragstone masonry supporting the bearer plates of the original 1820 North Aisle timber floor. These were later incorporated into continuous rubble sleeper walls for a later, perhaps post-1878, floor.

S13 North Aisle, east end: section of sleeper wall, probably for the 1820 floor; ragstone rubble on shallow foundation.

S14 Nave, mostly at the west end: ragstone paving slabs, worn very smooth; probably remains of the c1820 central aisle.

S15 Nave, foundations of the four existing piers: these date from after the fire of 1878, when part of the c1410 north and south foundation walls were removed and a concrete foundation pad was cast on top, incorporating brick and tile fragments; on this, four courses of red brick were laid, forming a 3 x 3 feet square foundation for the column base.

S16 Chancel arch, north side: evidence in the footings for reconstruction, probably of c1410; it was not possible to excavate in this area.

S17 Chancel arch, south side: change in footings here also, but could not be safely examined.

2: GRAVES AND INSCRIPTIONS

ROGER THORNBURGH

The inscriptions are fully recorded below, with square brackets to show where words or letters are missing; dots in the brackets give an indication of the number of letters that are missing. The 'LC' numbers (Loose Church) relate to the plan. Any churchyard gravestones that are mentioned have 'LCG' numbers (Loose Church Graveyard); these come from a survey that has been made in which all the gravestones have been recorded and allocated numbers. Only two of the gravestones listed as being inside the church are now visible – LC9 and LC16.

NORTH AISLE: gravestones LC1 – LC7 lying under the North Aisle date from the 18th and 19th centuries, before the North Aisle was built in 1820. They remain as found, under the new floor. There was no possibility of excavating under these stones: fragments of bones, wood and metal coffin fittings suggest that the bodies have been re-buried elsewhere. There were also various fragments of monuments, some re-used in the piers and sleeper walls supporting the timber floor. A on the plan marks the site of one piece with gadrooned decoration on two sides which was the corner of an 18th century monument.

LC 1: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: N. Aisle, NW corner. **Size:** 27in x 16½in x 12in.

Originally the end panel of a table tomb; other parts of the monument not found. This part was being used as a support for the floor joists and was probably not in its original place. The inscribed face, once vertical, is now laid flat. The face of the slab has a moulded edge on all four sides, and this moulding returns on the two short sides, but not on the two long sides.

Inscription:

EDWARD JONES
Son of TH^{OS} [And] Mary
Jones, died April 16th
1745 in t[he 2]7^H Year
of His [Age]

Notes: The name **Thomas Jones** appears in the East Farleigh Rate Books from 1678 to 1684 against the property now generally known as *Gurney's Mill*; in the Maidstone Rate Books from 1684 to 1685 against *Upper Crisbrook Mill*; and in the Loose Poor Assessments during the period 1683 to 1746 against *Bockingford Mill* (though in 1741 and 1742 the words 'Lower Mill' appear against the name). The evidence indicates that all of these mills were fulling mills at this time.

Interestingly, from 1757 to 1760 the entries in the Loose Poor Assessments against *Bockingford Mill* name a **Mary Jones** – presumably Thomas' wife, as stated in the inscription above.¹ The Loose Burial Register records the 20 April 1745 as being the date of Thomas' burial.

A table tomb in Loose churchyard (LCG104) records that a Thomas Jones, fuller, died on 13 Oct. 1746, aged 61, and his wife Mary died on 17 Oct. 1771, aged 80 – which, at first sight, seems to fit the information given above, except that Thomas wouldn't have even been born in 1678, the earliest of the dates, let alone running a mill! That problem is overcome, however, when we learn from another gravestone (LCG113) that Thomas' father was also called Thomas and was also a fuller (dying in 1709, aged 57).



Stone LC1 of Edward Jones.

The table tomb in the churchyard also records the death of Thomas' son, **Edward**, who died aged 27 in April – the exact date and year are illegible. Can we assume that it was April 1745, and that this is the same Edward as appears in the inscription on the stone in the church? If so, why does Edward seem to have had two memorials?

LC 2: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: West end of the N. Aisle. **Size:** 48in x 16½in x 6in.

Originally a gravestone: headstone with prettily decorated top.

Inscription:

MARY
Daughter of
NICHOLAS and
MARY BARBUR
died May y^e 9th 1766
Aged 12 Years
Tanner in this Parifh

Notes: The Loose Burial Register records that 'Mary the daughter of Nicholas and Mary Barber was buried May 13th 1766'. No other information about any members of the Barbur/Barber family has yet been unearthed.

LC 3: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: N. Aisle, near the westernmost of the two arcade pillars. **Size:** 46in x 23½in x 5in

Originally a gravestone: headstone, face up with head to the west. Broken at the bottom. Inscribed letters look as though they have been painted white.

Inscription:

In
Memory of
JOHN FARLEY of
this Parifh Victualler
he died March 5. 1776
Aged 54 Years
Left Iffue John, Edw^d.
Robert, Jofeph, Isaac,
and Eliz^h.
Alfo JANE Wife of the above
JOHN FARLEY died Dec^r.
1th 1797, Aged 83 Years



Stone LC3 of John & Jane Farley.

Notes: There is evidence in insurance documents dated 1770, that a **John Farley**, described as 'papermaker', was the tenant of a house in East Farleigh, and that he insured his utensils and stock in the 'Old Paper Mill' and the 'New Paper Mill' at the same time.¹ It is clear that these mills were in the Salts Lane area – where there was a small East Farleigh parish enclave – as East Farleigh and Loose Accounts Books at this time show that they were partly in each parish; and it seems likely that they were *Leg o Mutton Mill* and *Upper Mill* (by Salts Pond) – though it is not known which was which. The Rate Books show that this John Farley began to work these mills sometime in the early 1740s and continued until at least 1773 in the case of *Upper Mill*, and 1775 in the case of *Leg o Mutton Mill* – dates which fit neatly with the date of death of the John Farley recorded on the above gravestone which lies in Loose church. So, although he is described there as 'victualler', it would appear that he was also a papermaker. The Loose Burial Register states that he was buried on the 22 March 1776.

John Farley's wife, **Jane**, was buried on the 8 December 1797, according to the Loose Burial Register. Little is known at present about the 6 children, though the Loose Register of Baptisms does record an **Elizabeth** who was baptised on 3 May 1746, and the Register of Burials an **Edward** who was buried on 17 November 1816, aged 66.

LC 4: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: Middle of the N. Aisle. **Size:** 67in x 29in x 5in

Originally a gravestone: headstone, with head towards the east, but face down so name unknown. Top of the stone has a decorative shape and bevelled edge – 18th century type.

LC 5: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: N. Aisle, against north wall, about equidistant between the two windows.

Size: 72in x 25³/₄in x 5in

Originally a gravestone, a headstone, now with the head of the stone against the north wall. The bottom 18in of the stone, which would originally have been in the ground, has a rough surface. The inscribed letters look as though they were at one time painted black.

Inscription:

In Memory of
JAMES CROWDER
of the Parish of Maidstone
who departed this Life
October the 23rd 1799
Aged 67 Years
Alfo ELIZABETH Wife
of the above JAMES
CROWDER who departed
this Life Dec^r the 19th 1813
Aged 79 Years

Notes: The name of **James Crowder** appears in a conveyance dated 1772.² He is identified in this as a tenant – along with James Owlett and Thomas Nicholls – of three dwellings recently built by William Quelch in Loose to replace two which he had demolished. They were on or near the site of *Florence House* on the corner of Church Street and Bridge Street. The Loose Register of Marriages records that James was a witness at the wedding of James Oulet and Sarah Ransley in February 1769. The Register of Burials records that he was ‘of Maidstone’ and was buried on 27 October 1799. There is no information at present as to what he did for a living. James’ wife, **Elizabeth**, was buried on 26 December 1813 according to the Register.

LC 6: recorded 15 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: N. Aisle, near the easternmost of the two north wall windows. **Size:** 57in x 24in x 5in

Originally a gravestone, a headstone, head to the east and originally with the bottom 18in in the ground. The stone has a black surface on the inscribed face and white lettering. It also has a moulded border on the face and a decoratively shaped top. Above the first word (HERE) is cut a picture of an hour glass half empty. The spelling of the name REBOCA seems odd but certain. The last five lines have been inscribed by a different hand.

Inscription:

HERE
lieth y^e Body of
REBOCA the Wife
of ROBERT SMITH
of this Parifh *He* died
October y^e 19th 1761
Aged 60 Years
Here alfo Lieth the
Body of the Said
ROBERT SMITH
who died y^e 3^d of June
1774 Aged 72 Years

Notes: No information at present about Robert or Rebeoca Smith.

LC 7: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: N. Aisle, adjacent to the rood steps pillar. **Size:** ?in x ?in x ?in

Fragment of stone, consisting of a small curved top with a letter or two faintly discernible. Used as support for bearer plate of old floor.

Inscription: none really legible.

SOUTH AISLE: the South Aisle was built in 1860, and it appears that the graves and stones that were in the way of the construction were moved and are now huddled together outside the church. Only **LC8** remains inside, plus a coffin-shaped brick vault, examined by Peter Lambert and marked **B** on the plan. This latter is at the east end of the aisle, partly under the threshold of the South Chapel. Originally beneath a churchyard monument, the vault contains two wooden coffins placed one above the other and partly broken open to reveal some bones; it was considered unsafe to inspect the coffins. The top of the vault was closed by two dry-laid York stone slabs – and still is. Names of the occupants are not known.

LC 8: recorded Jan. 2003 by PL.

Position: Built into the base of the wall of the S. Aisle, to the east of the porch door; immediately below floor level. **Size:** ?in x ?in x ?in

Remaining fragment of a larger gravestone.

Inscription:

[name not visible]
died 3 Nov. 1691
aged 37 years

Notes: The only adult recorded in the Loose Burial Register as having been buried in November 1691 is William Wilkens – ‘buried the 27th November’.

NAVE: there are five stones in the Nave, and all date from the 18th or 19th century. There are also at least two vaults, one belonging to the Walter family and the other to the Peales.

LC 9: recorded 2 July 2003 by RFT.

Position: Nave, SW corner in front of the door to the tower. **Size:** 55in x 26in x 3in

Ledger slab of York stone, with the head towards the west. The head is badly flaked, which makes the reading of the beginning of the inscription impossible. This slab is one of only two not now covered by new flooring.

Inscription:

[?In Memory of]
[AR]THU[R CHARLES]
APLI[N KING]
BORN
MARCH 16TH 1833
DIED
NOVEMBER 27TH 1835

Notes: The Loose Burial Register records that Arthur Charles Aplin King was buried on 30 November 1835, aged 2 years 8 months. He is also described as having been ‘of Chatham’, though why he was buried in Loose and why inside the church is not known.

The following four slabs, LC10-LC13, were visible in the Nave until the alterations of 2003, but are now about 12in below the floor.

LC 10: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: Nave, equidistant between the two westernmost arcade pillars. **Size:** 27¼in x 19½in x ?in
Ledger stone, with head towards the south.

Inscription:

XI
Mariæ Dorotheæ de
Starck. Ob. die
Oct. 24th. 1821 [æt]
menses VI

Notes: The inscription translates as ‘**Mary Dorothea de Starck** died 24th day of October 1821 aged 6 months’. It is unclear what the figure ‘XI’ represents. The Loose Burial Register records that the child was buried by J.A. Ashbourne, vicar of Linton, on 31 October 1821, aged 6 months. We have no information as to who her parents were, though a certain H.G. De Starck officiated at all the subsequent burials at Loose church until the beginning of 1823; was he Mary Dorothy’s father?

LC 11: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: Nave, just south-west of centre. **Size:** 49in x 24in x ?in

Ledger stone (broken), with the head towards the north.

Inscription:

Sacred
To the Memory of
M^{RS} ELZ^H FRANK
Late of this Parifh
Whofe Remains lie
Here interr'd.
She died Feb^{ry} y^e 4th
1778 Aged 85 Years
Alfo of the Rev^d
THOMAS FRANK
Rector of Cranfield
in Bedfordfhire
and for Sixty Years
Minifter of this Parifh
Died Sept^r 23^d 1782
Aged 83 Years.

Notes: There is a large Frank memorial on the south wall of the South Aisle of the church, near the porch door. It records the information that appears on the ledger stone above, but adds that **Elizabeth Frank** was the sister of the **Revd. Thomas Frank**, and that he, Thomas, was the eldest son of the Revd. Thomas Frank, Rector of Cranfield and Archdeacon of Bedford and his wife Anne, the daughter and heiress of Thomas Williams Esq. of Gloucester. The wall memorial goes on to mention various other members of the family, including the Revd. Walter Frank, the brother of Thomas (the younger) and Susanna his sister, who died aged 100. Although the Revd. Thomas Frank was vicar of Loose from 1722 to 1782, little else seems to be known about him, or his wife.

LC 12: recorded 15 Aug. 1989 by RFT.

Position: Virtually the centre of Nave. The vault to which the inscription refers is on the north side of the stone, and is marked C on the plan. **Size:** 95in x 39in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The side edges were cut to accommodate heating gratings, affecting some of the words of the inscription.

Inscription:

Here lyeth the Body of
Sarah the wife of HENRY
WALTER Minifter of Lo[ose]
who departed this life o[n]
Nov: the 26TH: 1700 Aged 7[]
years. Left iffue 8 Daught[ers]

Alfo
Here lyeth ye Body of A[. . .]
POST, & beloved Wife of
Willm: POST Jun: Braz[ier]
at Maidstone (Elder Daugh[ter]
of Henry WALTER Min[ifter]
of this Parifh, And of y^e a[bove]
named Sarah his Wife W[ifo]
departed this life Octo:
21th: In y^e year 1711 Aged 3[]
Years. Left Ifsue one Daugh[ter]
& 3 Sons.

[H]oc sub Saxo dormit, una cum charifs
[C]onjuge et prædilecta Filia ANN[?]
[H]ENRICUS WALTER A.M. h[ic]
[Pa]rochia Vicarius; Vir Pietate P[ro]bite[]
[. . .]orum Svavitare ac Literatura [.]
[. . .] ui Paftorali Munere in huic Eccle[sia]
LVI Annis functus non fine O[.]

Notes: The Revd. **Henry Walter** M.A. (Cantab.) was Vicar of Loose from 1666 to 1712. On 3 December 1672, he married **Sarah** Austen the daughter of Henry Austen, tanner of Loose. Her sister Phebe was buried in the Chancel of Loose Church. The date of Henry's death seemed to read '1719', but since the Loose Burial Register records the date of his burial as 26 December 1712, the apparent '9' must be a '2'. The Burial Register does not record the ages of either Sarah or the daughter who married William Post. Two of the eight daughters of Henry and Sarah are commemorated in this inscription: **Ann**, who married William Post, and **Martha**. We know about two 18th century William Posts (father and son, and described as Gent and Barrister at Law respectively). They owned a fair amount of property and land in Loose village and along the valley towards Maidstone, but their wives were both named Mary, so unless one or other remarried and changed to become a Maidstone Brazier, the William Post on this stone must be a third person of that name. On the north side of the ledger stone is the 18th

[. .]os instuxit Mærore decepsit xxi
 Decembris Anno {Salutis 1712
 {Ætatis 74
 [. .]ollarumantibus Septem [Fi]liabuis
 [. .]uarum MARTHA, Natu mini[. .]
 Hæc Parenti optimo dicavit.

century Walter family vault, about 7ft x 8 ft, and built of red brick with a semi-circular brick roof. Part of the roof was uncovered and the top of the south end was visible only.

LC 13: recorded 24 Jan. 2003 by RFT.

Position: Nave, to the east of the centre. The vault to which the inscription refers is on the south side of the stone, and is marked **D** on the plan. **Size:** 73in x 29in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The side edges were cut to accommodate heating gratings, affecting some of the words of the inscription.

Inscription:

Entrance of M^R PEA[LE'S vault]
 Within this Vault are deposited
 the Remains of RICHARD PEALE
 late of Maidstone Gent:
 Ob^t 4th November 1785 Æt, 51,
 leaving three Sons Edward
 Richard & John, him surviving.
 Also M^{RS} MARY PEALE his widow
 formerly Mary Osborne, Spinster
 of this Parish
 Ob^t 6th April 1795, Æt 60.
 Also the above named
 RICHARD PEALE their second
 Son, Ob^t 12th July 1802, Æt, 31.
 [l]eaving two Children, Elizabeth
 Mary & William, him surviving.
 Also ELIZABETH, the Wife of the
 [a]bove named EDWARD PEALE
 Ob^t 2nd November 1828, Æt, 41
 Also ELIZABETH the widow
 of the above named
 RICHARD PEALE the Younger
 Ob^t 24th Sep^r 1836, Æt 65.
 Also the above named EL[IZ^H]
 MARY PEAL^E their Daughter
 Ob^t 3rd Feb^y 1837. Æt 38
 Also the above named EDWARD
 PEAL^E Ob^t 29th Sept^r 1844. Æt 7[8]
 Also the above named JOHN
 PEALE. Ob^t 29th Sept^r 1860 Æt 8[7]

Notes: Richard Peale was in the medical profession and he and his wife, Mary, lived in Knightrider Street in Maidstone, and were neighbours and friends of William Shipley (the founder of the Royal Society of Arts) and his wife Elizabeth. Richard is described in the Loose Burial Register as being 'of Maidstone' – as are most of the Peales that were buried at Loose; his burial took place on 15 November 1785. Mary was buried on 14 April 1795.

Richard and Mary had three sons: Edward, Richard and John. Richard followed his father and became a surgeon in Maidstone and a champion of inoculation. He married Elizabeth (born 19 July 1771), the only surviving daughter of William Shipley, and they had two children (Elizabeth Ann and William). Richard, however, died aged only 31, apparently from a cold caught while attending a patient, and, according to the Burial Register, was buried on 17 July 1802. Richard's brothers, Edward and John, lived to a rather riper old age. They were successful London lawyers who owned and lived in *Knightrider House*. The house today has a plaque on it which announces it as having been the residence of William Shipley, but he and his wife probably lived nearby until old age made it convenient for them to move into and share that handsome property with the Peales. William Shipley died in 1803, having appointed Edward and John his executors. As well as practising law, the brothers also became considerable

landowners and farmers. They later moved to a large house on the site of the present-day Telephone Exchange on the Loose Road, calling it *Peale House*; it burned down in 1898.

Their estate, some of which was inherited but which they enlarged, included a lot of houses in Loose and many acres of agricultural land in East Farleigh as well as Loose; the Tithe Map and Apportionment of about 1840 give the details. Much of the land was given over to the growing of hops, and there survives a detailed Hop Diary kept by John about the ups and downs of hop-growing from 1829 to 1837. Mould and fly – a type of aphid – seem to have been the main problems, and John worried about it constantly.

It was the Peales who built the enormous range of oasthouses for the drying of the hops on the land behind *Wool House*; old photographs show the 34 cowls of the kilns (see front cover). Most of the buildings were eventually pulled down, but there is still a large barn – originally a cooling room – and one of the oasts was converted to produce 5 cottages, once known as *Oast Cottages* and *Spion Kop*, but now called *Fairview Cottages*.

Edward died in 1844 and John in 1860, by which time the estate had been passed on to their nephew **William**. Having been born in 1799, he had been helping with the running of the estate for many years already. A memorial to him and his wife Kate is to be found on the south wall of the South Aisle of the church, near the porch door. It records that he died on 26 September 1879, his wife the 15 April 1882, and that “their loss will be long felt by the poor of this and other parishes, to whom they were unceasing benefactors”. In 1912 the whole estate was split up and auctioned, the Sale Catalogue (copies of which survive) showing exactly what he had owned.³

During the reflooring work that took place in Loose Church in early 2003, it was possible to look into the Peale vault in the south-east corner of the nave, as a hole was made into the curved brick roof; this was subsequently covered with mesh and cement (and inscribed ‘2003’ together with the initials of the builders and PJCL [Peter Lambert]). The vault was built with 19th century red brick in lime mortar, and had a semi-circular roof. The internal size was 80in x 66in; the depth is not known due to debris from coffins and break-through of the roof. Through the hole, it could be seen that there were at least four coffins and quite likely six, piled up in pairs on wooden supporting beams which had rotted and collapsed. The coffins were lead-lined, the top two of elm boards covered with a woven material (baize?), now a dark brown colour. These top two coffins were of the brothers Edward and John Peale



A watercolour of 1807 by H. Petrie showing Loose Church without the South Aisle which was added in 1860. This is the church which most of those buried inside would have known. (Kent Archaeological Society collection).

and each had a small metal plate on the lid: that on the southerly coffin read ‘Edward Peale Esq/ OB SEPT 29TH/ 1844/AET 78’, and that on the northerly one read ‘John Peale/DIED/ 29th September 1860/ Aged 87 Years’. There were various other small decorative plates on the coffin lids too, and all were surrounded by rows of large-headed coffin nails. The vault is now partly under the southern section of the new Chancel step.

CHANCEL: nine stones lie under the present Chancel floor. The earliest inscribed date is 1590 which is on stone **LC20** under the high altar.

LC 14: recorded 15 Aug. 1989 by RFT.

Position: Nave, east end, but in the 1990s the stone was covered by a new Chancel step which projected into the Nave. Both sides of the stone had already been cut off to allow for the insertion of heating gratings. The first inscription is very faint; there must be some doubt about several of the letters, even one or two not in square brackets. It is not legible enough to identify a person. The second inscription is faint but rather more legible. **Size:** 36in x 27in x ?in
Ledge stone, with the head towards the west.

Inscription:

LIETH THE B[OD]Y [O]F [.....]
W[A]IT[E]D AN[D] D[....]E[?]
[...].D TIME V[N]TILL [.....]
H[O.]PE [.....]
LE[.] THE [.....]
AGED [.....]

[Here] lieth y^c Body of
[J]OHN COOMBE[R]
[C]arpenter who die[d]
[J]an y^e 3^d 1715 Aged
35 Years

Notes: The Loose Burial Register states that 'John Comber of Maidstone' was buried on 7 January 1715. Apart from that, we have no further information at present.

LC 15: recorded 15 Aug. 1989 by RFT.

Position: Under the Chancel arch. In the 1990s the stone was covered by a new Chancel step which projected into the Nave. Both sides of the stone had already been cut off to allow for the insertion of heating gratings. Faint inscription but the first three lines, in C17th style capitals, are legible. The fourth line is blank and the single word 'HERE'S' in the fifth line seems to be in C18th style Roman capitals. **Size:** 20in x 27in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the north.

Inscription:

SUBTER HV[NC] LAPIDEM
SEPVLTVM EST CORPUS
GRATLÆ NICHOLS MDCLXXVI

HERE'S

Notes: The Latin inscription means 'Under this stone is buried the body of **Grace Nichols** 1676', but the Loose Burial Register clearly states that 'Grace Nichols was buried ye 30th Aprill 1678'. The last two figures of the Latin date might have been cut off, but since the stone is now under the new floor, there is no way of checking. The word 'Here's' looks as though it was going to initiate a new inscription, but the stonemason or person commissioning the stone changed his mind.

LC 16: recorded 15 Aug. 1989 by RFT.

Position: Just behind the Chancel arch, in the middle. **Size:** 63in x 26in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The top 6 lines are in C17th capitals; the rest of the inscription is in C18th Roman lettering. The whole of the inscription is legible, though some parts, especially the last 7 lines, are less distinct. This slab, which may have a vault underneath, is one of only two not covered by new flooring.

Inscription:

HERE LYETH y^E BODY OF
PHEBE AVSTEN DAUGHTER
OF HENRY AND ALICE AVSTEN
OF THIS PARISH WHO WAS
BVRIED JVNE y^E 17TH 1690
AGED 34 YEARSE

In Memory of FRANCES
the Wife of Jn^o Austen
Tanner in this Parifh
died Febr^y the 14th 1759
Aged 57 Years

Notes: **Phebe Austen** was born 13 July 1656 (Loose Register of Baptisms). She was the ninth of eleven children born to Henry and Alice Austen. She remained single all her life, but she had an older sister Sarah who married Henry Walter, the Vicar of Loose from 1666 to 1712, and they are buried nearby in a vault under the Nave floor. **Henry Austen**, the father of Phebe and Sarah, had been born in 1614 and, as an adult, seems to have lived in what is now *Wool House Cottage* in Well Street, while his father

Alfo in Memory of the
Above faid JOHN AUSTEN
died the 3^d Day of May
1765 Aged 61 Years
Left Ifsue 4 Sons and 2
Daught^s Henry, Frances
Ann, John, Benjⁿ & Will^m

John lived next door in *Wool House*, then called the *Homestall*; the properties had been bought by his grandfather Nicholas Austyn. Both Henry and his father are described in documents of the time as being tanners, and the land behind their houses was almost certainly the tanyard where the hides were soaked in pits to turn them into useable leather. As well as being tanners, however, they also engaged in a certain amount of farming, for

when Henry died in 1687, the inventory of his possessions listed hops and hop poles – stored in the oasthouse which he had built – and a mare and 22 sheep.

Henry lived through 4 reigns – James I, Charles I, Charles II and James II – as well as through the Commonwealth period, but in spite of these unsettled times, he managed to prosper. He also married quite well – to Alice, daughter of Robert Withinbrooke, maltster of Maidstone and Mayor in 1643. He probably inherited property in Headcorn through her.

Henry's eldest son John carried on the tanning business, but John's eldest son Henry became a yeoman in Loose, and it had to wait until the younger Henry had a son before the family tradition was re-established. This son was the **John** of the inscription on the above stone. Having been born probably in 1704 (the Baptisms Register gives 11 June 1704 as the date of his baptism), one might suppose that he would have worked in the *Wool House* tanyard under his grandfather John (who died in 1723), but instead he became apprenticed to Robert Peene, the tanner who operated the tanyard at *Brook House*. When he was 21, he married **Frances** Martin, of whom nothing more is known at present other than that she bore him at least seven children – but none that became a tanner, it seems. (John's brother Benjamin was a tanner, however – at Holy Cross, Canterbury.) By 1754, John was wealthy enough to be listed as a freeholder in the Kent Poll book.⁴



'Wool House' and 'Wool House Cottage' (covered in ivy) as they were about 1920 before they were renovated by Col. Statham. These were almost certainly the properties owned by the Austens in the 17th century.

LC 17: recorded 24 Sept. 1979 by RFT.

Position: Chancel, under the E window on the south side. **Size:** ?in x ?in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The stone is now buried under the floor and altar. In good condition.

Inscription:

REMEMBER THY CREATOR IN
THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH
Here lieth the Body of WILLIAM
BUFKIN Esq^r. who died the 8th
Day of January Anno Domini
1648

Here also lieth the Body of
SIBYLLA Wife of JOHN MARTIN
Esq^r who departed this Life the
30th Day of May Anno Domini
1724 in the 78th Year of her Age.

Here also lieth the Body of JOHN
MARTIN Esq^r who departed this
Life June the 7th in the Year of our
LORD 1730 in the 79th Year of his age.

Here also lieth the Body of EDW^d
MARTIN Esq^r late Major in the
24th Reg^{mt} of Foot, Eldest Son of
DENNY and the Hon^{ble} FRANCES
MARTIN, he died Jan^y 12th 1775
in the 52nd Year of his Age.

Here also lieth the Body of DENNY
MARTIN FAIRFAX, D.D, 3^d Son
of DENNY and the Hon^{ble} FRANCES
MARTIN, he died April 3^d 1800
in the 74th Year of his Age.

Notes: William Bufkin was the eldest son of Ralph and Anne Bufkin. Ralph was described as being 'of Loose' (he lived in *Salts Place* from sometime in the 1620s), but Otham parish records state that on 3 February 1623 was baptised 'William, the sonne of Ralph Buffkyn and Anne his wife at his house, le Gore Court in the time of the great snow'. *Gore Court* had become Ralph's father's property in 1580, but other information tells us that the Fludd family took over the house and estate in 1620. So what was William doing being baptised there?

Although William was evidently of sufficient note to be buried in the Sanctuary of the church, there is no record of his burial in the Loose Burial Register. This might well be because of the disturbed political and social situation in 1648 – actually 1649 in modern terms since the calendar year then ran from 26 March to 25 March; King Charles I was about to be tried and executed and Parliament had yet to gain full control of the country. Official records were often not as carefully kept as they had been, and the parish records of Loose, where burials between 1643 and 1651 are completely missing, look as though they were badly affected by the state of things. The Buffkins had been linked with the Martin family since Joan Bovekin or Buffkin married

the Revd. Richard Martyn, rector of Iden in Sussex about 1600. When the males of the Buffkin family that lived in *Salts Place* died out, John Martin, the grandson of Richard and Joan, inherited it. This is the John Martin of the inscription above (buried 13 June 1730 according to the Loose Burial Register). He was born in 1652 and married Sibylla Michelborne. Their son was Denny Martin (see LC21) whose second wife was the Honourable Frances Fairfax, the daughter of the fifth Lord Fairfax of *Leeds Castle*. This couple had eight children, but none of them married. Two of them are commemorated on the stone above – Edward Martin (born 1722) and Denny Martin Fairfax (born 1725). Edward, as the inscription states, was a Major in the 24th Regiment of Foot, but in the CKS are preserved some letters from the young Edward which he sent to his parents in 1733 telling them how he was getting on at King's School, Canterbury, and asking for a 'white wascoat' and ten shillings per quarter 'for daunsing'. With him was one of his brothers, probably John (who was two years his junior), but it may have been the above-named Denny. Denny became the Reverend Denny Martin and was appointed curate in Loose in 1782.⁵ He also took the name Fairfax, inheriting the *Leeds Castle* estate when his uncle, the seventh Lord Fairfax, died childless in 1793. It was at *Leeds Castle* that Denny died in 1800 and the Loose Burial Register records that he, 'Minister of this Parish', was buried on 15 April.⁶



Major Edward Martin and Revd Denny Martin Fairfax

LC 18: recorded 24 Sept. 1979 by RFT.

Position: Chancel, under the E window towards the south. **Size:** ?in x ?in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The stone is now buried under the floor and altar. The stone has some flaking and surface damage.

Inscription:

AND · THOUGH · AFTER · MY ·
SKINNE · WORMES · DESTROY ·
THIS · BODY · YET · SHALL · I · SEE ·
G[OD] · IN · [MY] · FLESH
HERE · LIETH · ^E · BODY · OF ·
KA[T]H[ER]INE · FLVDD · THE ·
WI[F]E · OF · LEVIN · FLVDD
D · OF · PHYSICKE · AND
[D]AVGHTER · OF · RALPH ·
BVFFKIN · ESQ^R · TO
GETHER · WITH · HI[R] · 3
CHILDREN · MARY · LEVIN ·
AND · THOMAS ·

Notes: Katherine Fludd was the daughter of Ralph and Anne Buffkin of Loose (see LC21 and LC22 where they are commemorated). She married Levin Fludd MD (or 'Doctor of Physicke' as this stone puts it).

LC 19: recorded 24 Sept. 1979 by RFT.

Position: Chancel, under the E window just south of centre. **Size:** ?in x ?in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The stone is now buried under the floor and altar.

Inscription:

HERE · LYETH · THE · BODY · OF ·
XPOPHER · LAMB · GENT · ONE
OF · THE · SONNES · OF · ROBERT ·
LAMB · OF · LEEDES · IN · KENT ·
GENT · WHOE · DYED · THE · 20
OF · OCTOBER · ANNO · 1625
ÆTATIS · SVE · 89

Notes: The Loose Burial Register states that 'Cxpopher Lambe, gent., was buried the xxiiijth day of October 1625'. No other information about the individual is known at present.

LC20: recorded 24 Sept. 1979 by RFT.

Position: Chancel, under the E window just north of centre. **Size:** ?in x ?in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The stone is now buried under the floor and altar.

Inscription:

[CATHERINE] LAMB · WYF · XPO
[PHER · LAMB ·] GENT · A · DAFTER · OF
[MARGA]RET · GRIGSBY · DIED
[.....] OF · DECEMBAR · 1590

Notes: The Loose Burial Register records that 'Catherine Lambe, ye wife of Christopher Lambe, was buiried ye xxiiijth of Deceb.' 1590. No further information is known about her at present, except that she was the daughter of Margaret Grigsby – as the inscription states.

Margaret Grigsby was also entered in the Burial Register when she was buried on 11 October 1563. Her will survives, in which she asked for her 'boddye to bee bureyed in the channell of the parifthe church of Lose beside my father'. Her father (whose name at present is a mystery) may well be buried in the chancel, and so might she, but there is no stone or inscription recording either burial; in fact the other five stones in the chancel are all later than this one. Margaret's will, however, does provide us with the names of her former husband, John Grigesbye, and their children: apart from the above named Catherine, they were Mary Foxe, Margaret Crottenden, Elizabeth Mydleton, Alexander and Justynian. We are told the names of at least some of her grandchildren, too. By her will, Margaret Grigsbye distributed various properties to these members of the family, including 'hale' – presumably *Hayle Place* – which she left to Catherine (or Katheryn, as it is spelt in the will). Her other properties were in parishes elsewhere – Cranbook, Benenden, Biddenden etc. – and her 'pryncypall message' (unnamed) was in the parishes of Mersham and Brabourne; that went to her son Alexander.⁷

LC 21: recorded 24 Sept. 1979 by RFT.

Position: Chancel, under the E window towards the north. **Size:** ?in x ?in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The stone is now buried under the floor and altar.

Inscription:

BLESSED · ARE · THE · D[EAD · WHICH] ·
DIE
IN · THE · [L]ORD
HERE · LYETH · THE · BODY · OF · ANNE
BVFKIN · THE · WIFE · OF · RAPHE
BVFKN
[erased line]
ESQVIRE WHO DIED THE 27 DAY
FEBRVARY
ANNO DOMINI 1638
Here also lyeth the
Body of HANNAH
Wife of DENNY
MARTIN Gent: who
Dyed Auguft 9th 1719 in
The 32nd year of her Age
DENNY MARTIN
Esq^r died the 15th
Feb. 1762 Aged 71

Notes: Anne Bufkin was the daughter of William Berners of Tharfield, Herts, and wife of the Raphe (or Ralph) Bufkin named on the adjacent stone (LC22); there she is called Anna. Ralph died 22 December 1638, a couple of months before Anne's death, February 1638 being near the end of the year according to the old calendar. Her will, dated 5 February 1638, survives and in it she asked to be buried 'in the Chancell of the parish Church of Loose next to my deare husband'. She then listed a number of people, mostly relatives, to whom she had left either money or possessions such as rings ('for a remembrance') and silver; to her son William, she left six featherbeds as well as the 'lease of the Parsonage of Sibbertswould'.⁸ Denny Martin was the son of John and Sibylla Martin of *Salts Place*, whose names are inscribed on another stone in the sanctuary (LC17), and the great grandson of Joan Martyn, née Buffkin— hence presumably the reason for being commemorated

on a Bufkin stone. Denny's first wife was Harriett, or Hannah Briggs, the sister of the Revd. Henry Briggs, vicar of Loose from 1712 to 1722. She died childless when only 31, and was buried 11 August 1719 (Loose Burial Register). His second marriage – to the Honourable Frances Fairfax (see LC22), daughter of the fifth Lord Fairfax of *Leeds Castle* – produced eight children. Hannah presented Loose church with an alms dish; it bears the inscription 'The Gift of Mrs Hannah Briggs to the Parish of Loose, 1716' – though if she was Denny Martin's wife, why was she Mrs Briggs?⁹

LC 22: recorded 24 Sept. 1979 by RFT.

Position: Chancel, under the E window on the north side. **Size:** ?in x ?in x ?in

Ledger stone, with the head towards the west. The stone is now buried under the floor and altar. In good condition.

Inscription:

THE MEMORY OF THE
JUST SHALL BE BLESSED
Here lieth the Body of RALPH
BUFKIN, Esq^r of Loofe, in the
County of Kent, who died the 22nd
Day of Dec^r Anno Domini 1638
Here also lieth the Body of
RALPH BUFKIN Esq^r (the Son
of the above named RALPH and
ANNA his Wife) who died the 10th
Day of Feb^r in the Year of our
LORD 1710 in the 84th Year of his
Age.
Here also lieth the Body of the
Hon^{ble} FRANCES MARTIN

Notes: Ralph Bufkin was the husband of Anne (or Anna) Bufkin whose name appears on the stone next to this one (LC21), and the father of William (LC16), Katherine (LC17), and Ralph (also on this stone). Having lived at *Gore Court*, Otham (his father's house) until the 1620s, he then moved to Loose to take up residence in *Salts Place*. The Loose Burial Register records that 'Raph Bufkyn Esq^{re} was buried Decemb 24'. Ralph Bufkin, the second son of the above Ralph and Anne, was a captain of the trained-bands and subsequently promoted to Major. The Honourable Frances Martin was the daughter of the fifth Lord Fairfax of *Leeds Castle*, and became the second wife of Denny Martin (whose

Wife of DENNY MARTIN, Esq^r
Daughter of the RT. Hon^{ble}
THOMAS LORD FAIRFAX. she
[d]ied Dec^r 13th 1791, in the 89th
Year of her Age.

name is inscribed on LC21). She presented Denny with eight children, and though four of them lived to be over 80 years of age, none of them married. The Loose Burial Register states that she was buried on 20 December 1791.⁶



The interior of Loose Church c.1935. The postcard photograph shows the 19th century pews and tiled and carpeted floor that were removed to reveal the foundations of the early church and the gravestones listed above.

Sources

¹ R.J. Spain, 'The Loose Watermills', *Arch. Cant.* lxxxvii (1972) and lxxxviii (1973).

² Information derived from conveyances relating to *Florence House* and *Cottage* held by Mr Ansett.

³ Information about the Peales comes from various sources, including the Tithe Map and Apportionment (c1840), the Loose Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, the *Topography of Maidstone and its Environs* (1839), John Peale's Hop Diary 1829-1837 (in Maidstone Museum), the Peale Estate Sale Catalogue 1912 (a copy of which is in the LAHS archives), *William Shipley* by D.G.C. Allan (1968), and notes by John L. Short.

⁴ Information about the Austens has been mainly extracted from the researches of Mr Jim Hobbs (former Director of Tate & Lyle).

⁵ CKS U23 Q5/16.

⁶ Information on the Bufkins (or Buffkins) and Martins comes from various sources, including the Loose Register of Burials, documents in the CKS and the British Library, 'Families of an Atlantic Community' by David Cleggett in the journal *Virginia Cavalcade*, Miss Pat Jenner and members of the Buffkin family in the USA.

⁷ Copy of the Will of Margaret Grigsby in LAHS archives.

⁸ CKS U23 T58.

⁹ Loose Parish Magazine 1891.

THE LOOSE SCOUTS' MEMORIAL AT CRISBROOK (John Greville Fulkes & Alfred Vernon Langley)

MARGARET CHAPMAN

In 1922, when funds had accumulated, the Loose Swiss Scouts erected the memorial at Crisbrook in honour of Alfred Langley & John Fulkes. The following extract from a Kent Messenger report gives some details of the moving ceremony which took place on Monday 22 January 1922:



'Amid the peaceful surroundings of Crisbrook Bridge, Loose Valley, near Maidstone, a spot which has a dual advantage, geographically, being within the civil parish of Loose and the ecclesiastical area of Tovil, a war memorial was on Monday afternoon unveiled to the memory of two Loose Boy Scouts, who laid down their lives in France.

Notwithstanding the wintry conditions, a representative gathering witnessed the ceremony, and several troops of Scouts from the district took part in the solemn service. Brigadier-General C. Wingfield Stratford, C.B., C.M.G. (District Scout Commissioner for the Maidstone Area) unveiled the memorial, and the dedication was performed by the Lord Bishop of Dover. Standing some 5

foot high, with a protective railing, on land belonging to Messrs. J. Barcham Green & Son (who lent every support to the project), the memorial has a stone base with a Granite head-piece on which appears the inscription: 'Loose Boy Scouts - Assistant Scout Master J. Fulkes, Patrol Leader A.V. Langley. Died in France for God and Country. Lest we forget. 1914-1918'



Both John and Alfred were among the founder members of the Scout Group, which in those days was known as 11/CK.

John Greville Fulkes was born in Lewisham on 26 July 1887, to Edward and Eva. Quite when the family came to Loose is not known, but by 1910 Edward was living at *The Limes* on Old Loose Hill, and this is where John lived during the years in which he was involved with the scouts.

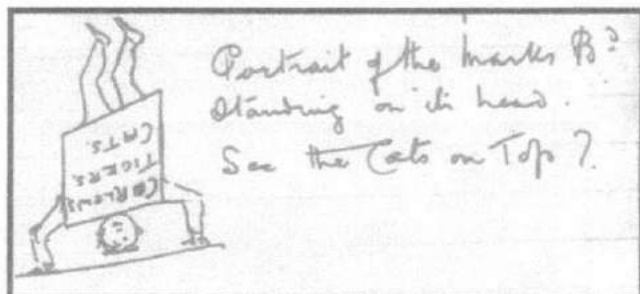
John was a very active member, and Assistant Scout Master (ASM) of Loose Swiss Scouts. It was he who instigated and edited the wartime log books which each scout was encouraged to write in each week or month. After he had signed up in September 1914, the log book was sent to him at the Front so that he was able to write his editorial each month – never failing to give encouragement and set assignments for the boys. His accounts



*John at a Scout Camp in Rye
in June 1914.*

were always informative and amusing as he described life in the army – illuminating the joys and horrors with humour and delightful sketches. The best way to describe some of his experiences is to let him speak for himself with some extracts from a few of his many log book entries.

In March 1915 he wrote from Epsom:
'Dear Old 11/CK – I have just got back from 30 hours of what is called 'Guard Duty' and was delighted to find the Swiss Group Magazine awaiting me. So after a feed, shave and – I must admit a short snooze, for Guard Duty is tiring work ... I must first compliment everybody concerned on the new volume ... especially good is that of the Chief Cat [Billy Antrum]. If all the Cats are as keen as their long whiskered Chief we should soon see that marks board standing on its head ...'



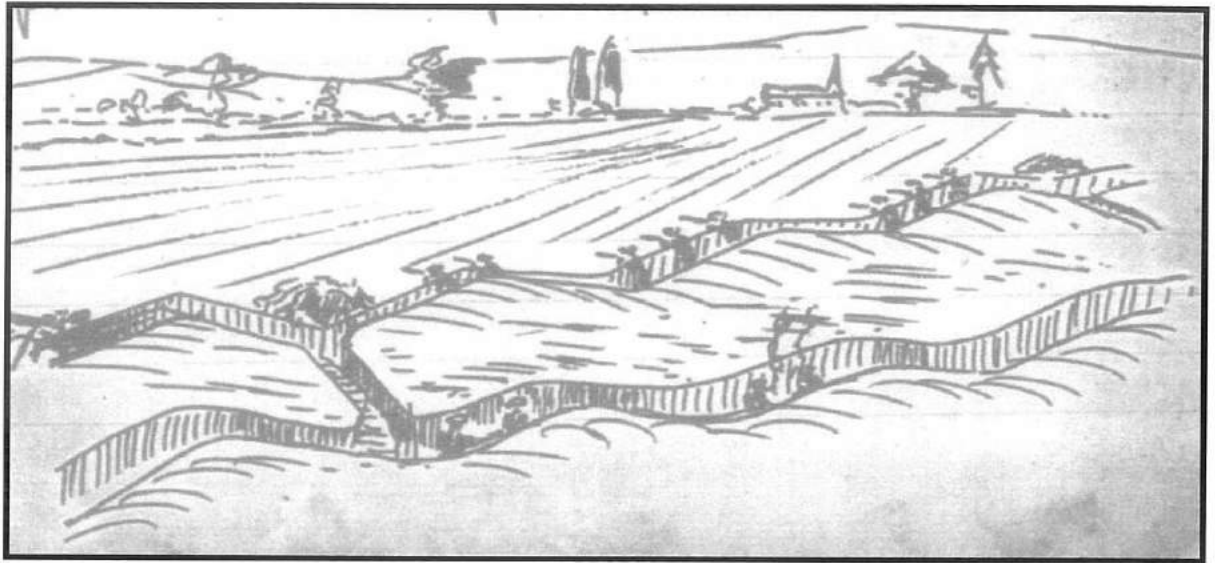
Last time I wrote to you I think I promised to give you a rough idea of what trenches for fighting are like. Of course you all know that trenches are dug so that soldiers can keep their bodies covered up except when they just put their heads up to fire.

The sketch [next page] shows a line of British Trenches attacking a line of German Trenches in the distance across a ploughed field. The front trench is called the 'Fire Trench' and is made zig-zag so that if the enemy manage to get round to one side (called flanking) they would not be able to fire right along the trench and kill all our men – (see eight soldiers firing and a machine gun in left hand corner). The rear trench is wider and deeper (at least 6ft deep) and is called a Communicating Trench, connected to the fire trench by little ones called 'traverses'. In the front of the traverse is a mound of earth to shield it from the enemy's bullets. A bullet from a rifle from a few hundred yards range will go through 4 or 5 feet of earth and kill a man, so the mound must be thick. The rear, or communicating trench is used for getting supplies of food and ammunition to the fire trench and it is also made wide enough to take a stretcher along for removal of the wounded ...'

The short extracts above, from a long letter, show how John was able to both encourage and enlighten the boys – although he did sometimes have a little grumble, albeit in an informative and encouraging way!

July 1915: *'... A fortnight ago I had a spell of 70 hours without going to sleep. I was on guard one night, and the next we had some night manoeuvres. Part of them consists of the whole brigade – 4 battalions, marching through a dense wood with bracken and stuff almost as high as yourself, no moon and only a radium compass to march by. Of course it is impossible for 4000 men all to march in a column of [?] as they would straggle out too much and the end ones get lost, so it is done by battalions marching one behind the other in 'Lines of Companies in Fours' with 'connecting files' in between to see that the various units keep their proper distance and direction. Even then it is very easy to suddenly barge into another Company and have to stop and sort oneself out.*

... One thing that is rather trying in the army is that that they will insist on everything being exactly the same everywhere. One's bed and blankets must all be folded and put up exactly the same, and the toes of one's boots all level with the same crack in the floor. I have to see [that] the men do it, but I'd much rather form them into Patrols and say - 'now everything neat and tidy please, but please yourself how you do it'. And



John has sketched 'two men carrying a stretcher and also two having a smoke waiting for their turn to relieve their comrades in the fire trench. Sometimes barbed wire entanglements are made in front of the fire trench to make it difficult for the enemy to take it with a charge'.

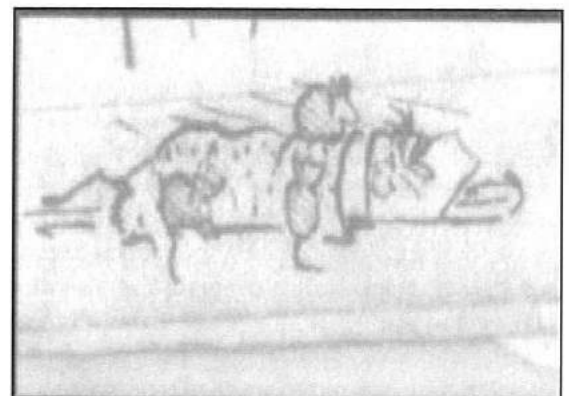
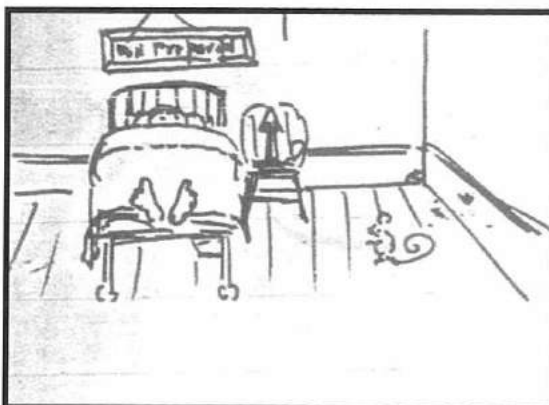
then if one patrol wanted to put their razors in their boots and hang their socks out of [a] window to air, they would be at perfect liberty to do so. That's where army discipline is different from Scout discipline. A soldier is told that he has jolly well got to do this or that with no more reason than that it always has been done, and a scout is told to think out the best way for himself and he generally finds it, if he does make a few mistakes first.'

December 1915: 'At last after many moons, I can write FRANCE on the top of my editorial. I have been out nearly a month now, and have had three spells in the trenches. ... All the ground around here is clay and very low so perhaps you can guess what it is like. One simply wallows in it, and wades about waist deep in stuff very much like pea soup. ... I had a copy of the Kent Messenger sent out to me and I saw a notice about Cpl Reginald Jones. I'm very sorry Boney,

for you and your people, I expect it will be a hard knock for them. Still, if one has to die, there is no better way of dying, is there, than on the Battlefield?'

In February 1916 John writes about the rats: '... There is nothing that gives a chap out here more pleasure than to hear from the folks at home. I'll take this opportunity to thank all the sportsmen scouts who have written to me. If any of you are short of a good turn to do, just sit down and write a note to a friend at the front. He'll appreciate it.

... I expect most of you have seen rats. I'll warrant you haven't seen any like the breed we keep in the trenches. They are as big as omnibuses with appetites like Winkle at his best. In fact I'm not at all sure that rats will not be the final factor in this war, by eating up all the rations. My last dugout swarmed with them and at night, when I slept I had to cover myself right





The Thiepval memorial where John Fulkes is memorialised.

over, because they would come and sit on my face and wash themselves. ... You sometimes see cats in the trenches at night too. You can always tell them because they are so much smaller than the rats. Remind me sometime, to tell you the yarn of the rat that 'stood to'....'

In his last entry in the log book (July 1916), John writes, rather poignantly:

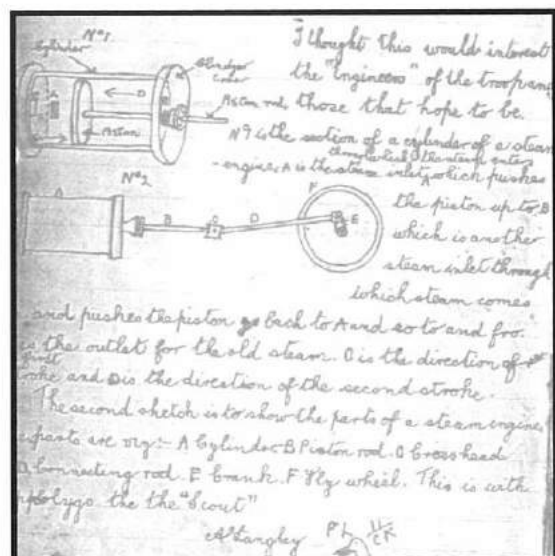
'Well, Cheery-oh my hearties, whether you're land lubbing in khaki like me, or boys in blue by the briny. Things are looking up over in Europe (there's a war on there, you know) don't you think? Of course, the time for [waving] flags and shouting hasn't come yet, but the allies are all fighting splendidly and the Boches don't seem to be very happy about it. We can't all be out in France helping to take the Trones Wood and places like that, but when it's all over it will be good to look back and think we did the job which came to hand to the best of our ability'

Second Lieutenant John Greville Fulkes was killed on Monday 13 November 1916, aged 30. He is memorialised at Thiepval, as well as on the Loose War Memorial and the Crisbrook Memorial.

We know rather less about **Alfred Vernon Langley**. He was born in 1897 to William and

Hannah (née Kemp) and the family lived at Upper Crisbrook. Alfred was one of the gang of boys who first approached Jack Barcham Green to ask if he could join this game called 'scouting'. He became acting ASM after John Fulkes had enlisted, and some of the letters and sketches which he wrote and drew in the scout log books survive.

In September 1913, when he was 16 years old, he wrote about steam engines for those boys who were interested, after which his log entries seem to have dried up.

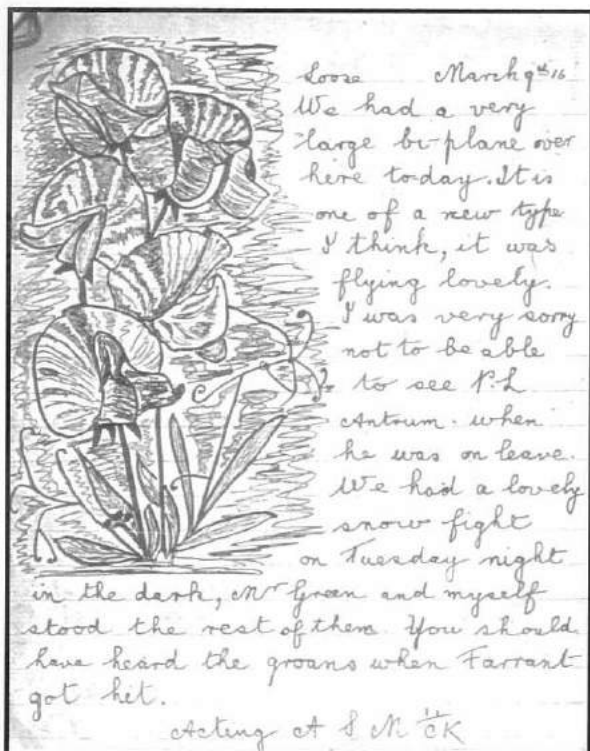


In December 1915, after he had been made acting ASM he wrote:

'Well I don't think I can say anything fresh about the meetings. Only perhaps, that they have been a little more orderly than they have been. I hope all of you away from home had a pleasant Christmas and I hope that you will all have a successful year in 1916. Perhaps it would be interesting to some of you to know that I have been attested for the army under Lord Derby's scheme and it is now in their hands as to whether I am to remain at my work and be of service to the nation in that way, or whether I am to join in the ranks of the big (or little as the Kaiser said) Army, by the side of the rest of you. I can assure you whichever way is found to be necessary I shall go that way cheerfully and like a true scout.'

In March 1916 he waxed lyrical (accompanied by a delightful floral illustration), about an aeroplane he had seen:

'We had a very large bi-plane over here today. It is one of a new type I think, it was flying lovely. I was very sorry not to be able to see p.l. [pack leader] Antrum when he was on leave. We had a lovely snow fight on Tuesday night in the dark, Mr Green and myself stood the rest of them. You should have heard the groans when Farrant got hit.'



A letter of March 1917 makes reference to John Fulkes:

'I have just received a letter from our S.M. and he thinks that our last copy of the mag has gone for good [it was later recovered] and so he asked me to start another.'

I cannot start this without saying how much I miss the usual breezy editorial by our old A.S.M. and I know it is the best wish of all of us that he, one day, may turn up to continue his scouting amongst us, as he was one of the very BEST. If he does not turn up we must still carry on, and every one of us try to make use of the splendid example he always set us. But let us pray that the One above Who watches over us is watching over him and has him in His keeping. That if we do not meet our old A.S.M. on this earth, we may meet him when we come to the end of [the] long trail at the last great Rally, where all true scouts will be found'

One month later, on 29 April 1917, Alfred wrote to say that he would be joining up on the morrow. He died five months later on Sunday 30 September, aged 20, and is buried in Dozinghem Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium (V11.F).



Dozinghem Military Cemetery where Alfred Langley is buried.

Sources

Loose Swiss Scout Archives
Kent Messenger
Census Records
Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

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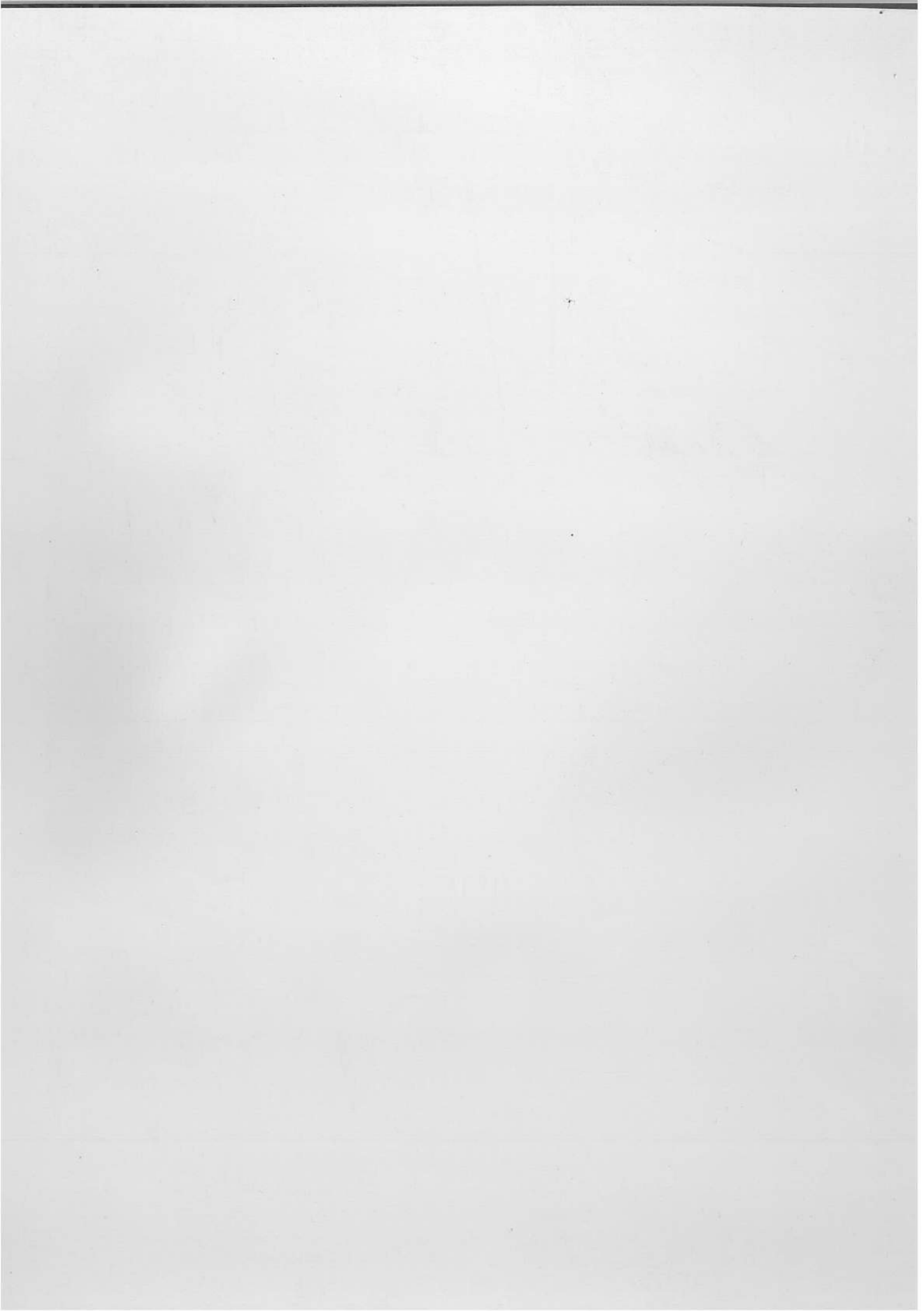
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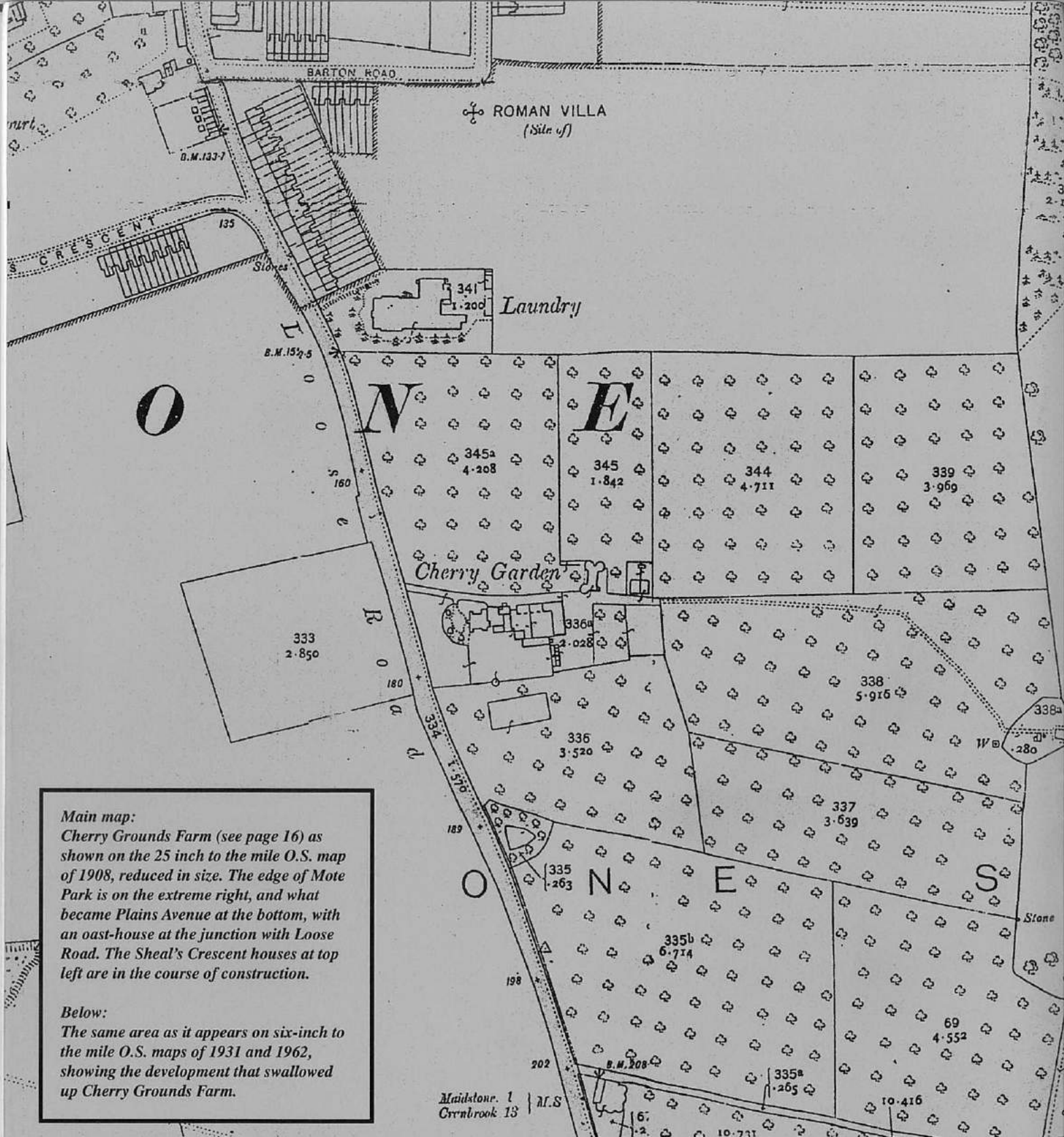
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Main map:
 Cherry Grounds Farm (see page 16) as shown on the 25 inch to the mile O.S. map of 1908, reduced in size. The edge of Mote Park is on the extreme right, and what became Plains Avenue at the bottom, with an oast-house at the junction with Loose Road. The Sheal's Crescent houses at top left are in the course of construction.

Below:
 The same area as it appears on six-inch to the mile O.S. maps of 1931 and 1962, showing the development that swallowed up Cherry Grounds Farm.

