

Loose Threads

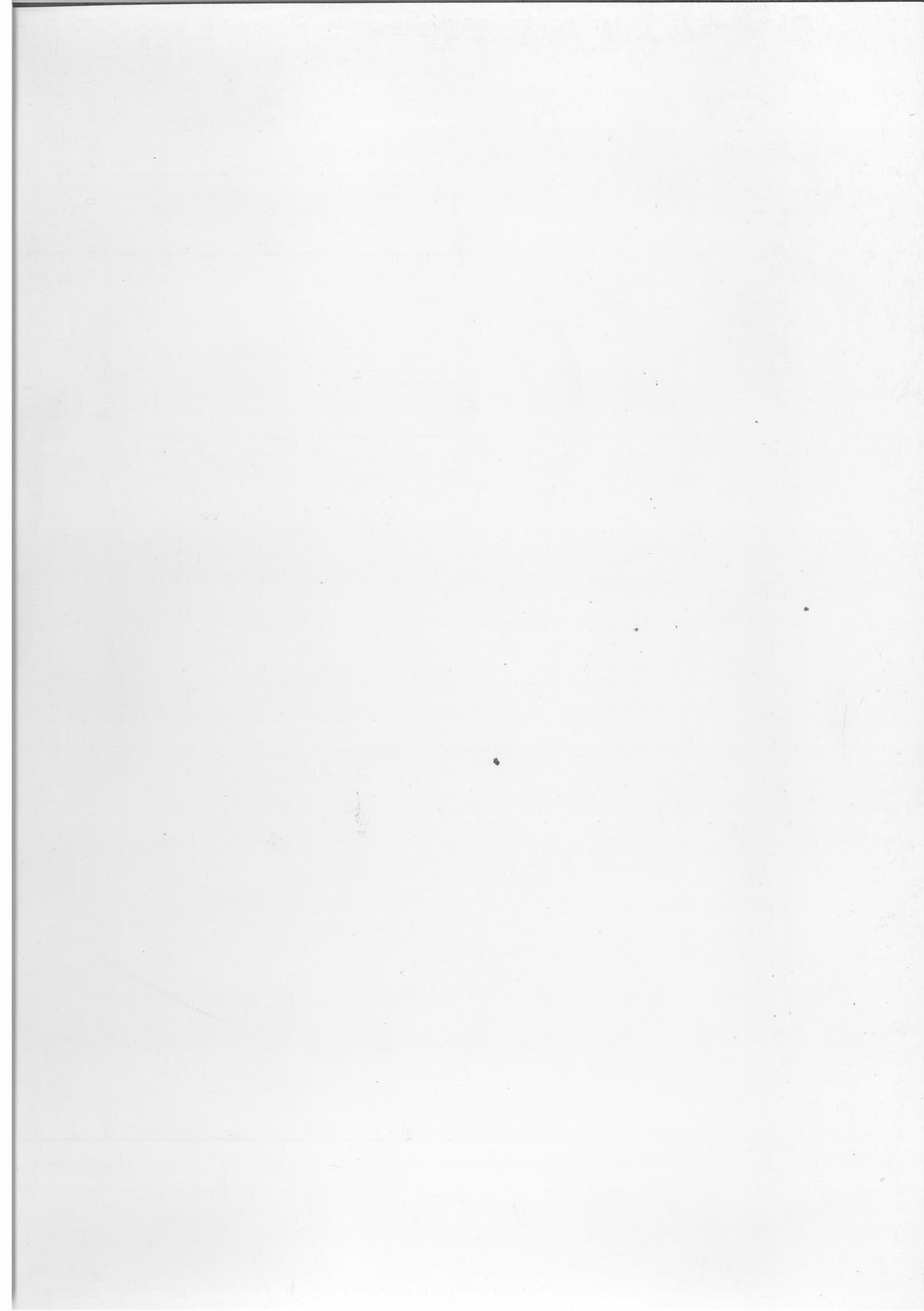
Journal of the Loose Area History Society



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Front cover: The Chequers Inn and Old Loose Hill: a drawing from Charles Igglesden's 'A Saunter through Kent with Pen and Pencil', Vol. ix, 1916.		
Back cover : The Loose Valley as shown on the second edition six-inch O. S. map of 1898.		

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EDITORIAL

This second issue of *Loose Threads* seems to have been much more of a problem to produce than the first, and appears far later than was originally planned. However, with the help of the Loose Parish Council, our advertisers, and Roy Sidebottom and Kent Enterprise for Youth (NW Kent Area), to all of whom the Society is extremely grateful, it has at last arrived.

Since this journal first appeared, the Loose Area History Society has come into being, but the members of its Research Group are virtually the same as those who contributed to that issue. And the pattern for this edition remains much the same, too - a variety of articles on the topics which the writers have been investigating over the past couple of years. We hope the mixture goes down as well as it seemed to last time.

Pat Jenner, Roger Thornburgh, Shirley Wilson.
Editorial Committee.

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PICKERING COTTAGE

B. DEE CORDING

I had a very interesting letter from the late Mr Geoffrey Day, once a Maidstone solicitor and the owner of *Pickering Cottage* from 1934 to 1950. He thought that he had paid £1600 and purchased it from a Mrs Wintour, a naval officer's widow. Then, it was known as the house next to the jam factory, as Mrs Wintour used to make home-made jams to help the needy people during the depression of the 30s. Mr Day recalled that on the right-hand side of the entrance-drive stood a large prolific walnut tree with a small pool at its roots which took up the surface water from the road. Apparently a large number of jam pots were found and buried in this pool. In the back-garden, besides a cesspool, there was a disused well. During the last war, when an invasion seemed imminent, Mrs Day wrote to ask her husband, who was away, how she should immobilize their car; he wrote back telling her to take the wheels off and put them down the well. At that time the garden included a red 'en-tout-cas' tennis court and about half an acre or more of orchard.



Photograph of Pickering Cottage, from the sale particulars of 1928

Mr Day thought the house to be Georgian or early Victorian with a hall-passage running from the front door to the garden door at the back. On the south side was a small sitting room and a lounge with French doors leading into the garden. On the other side of the passage were the dining room and kitchen. Upstairs consisted of two reasonably sized double bedrooms, two single bedrooms

and a maid's room. Mr Day told me of a splendid cellar, which disclosed the foundations of Kentish ragstone, and he found, left by the vendor, quite a large barrel of orange wine (home-made?) which he used for guests and special occasions, and which, by careful harbouring, lasted him the whole time he was at the cottage. It is interesting to learn that when the cottage was sold, it went to a Mr Maidment who, Mr Day believed, was a brewer with Messrs Style and Winch. At the time, Mrs Day did not think that the orchard should be included in the sale along with the cottage, but Mr Day felt that it 'made the property'. Later on, however, he thought he should have listened to his wife, because, not so long afterwards a road was laid through the orchard and eventually houses were erected, 'one of which is mine'!

Recalling the pot-holes in Pickering Street, he remembered being asked by a meeting of residents to get estimates for repairs. After failing to persuade the Borough Council that it was their responsibility, he obtained from the British Museum, for remarkably little cost, copies of all the early maps of the area, though these all proved to be very vague. He then happened on the old Tithe Map (c.1840) at the vicarage. This showed that the road was a separate 'tithe field' and the accompanying schedule indicated that the 'Surveyor of Roads' was owner. That, he felt, clinched it and he put up a 'Case for Council' to Mr Gerald Thesiger (later Mr Justice Thesiger), a very popular judge at the Kent Assizes. When his opinion arrived, the residents decided to take action under the old Road Acts of 1832, which most people had forgotten about, which enabled individuals to indict the Mayor and Corporation before the Assizes to show cause why they had neglected to maintain the road as a highway. The Town Clerk was informed of the proposal. Immediately, there was a telephone call from the then Mayor, Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake, asking, 'Geoffrey, what the devil does all this mean?' Mr Day explained that it was quite clear; all that was wanted was for the road to be made up to a reasonable standard, as a country road - no street lights, widening or frontages regularised. It was done, without any charge or Rating Assessment increases to the frontagers.

Mr Day lived in retirement in the Lenham area until his death earlier this year.

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THE BATTLE OF BOTTLESCREW HILL

OR 'THE REDCOATS ARE COMING'

KEN SEARLE

Well may you think that this is to be about the Wild West (where possibly there is a Bottlescrew Hill), but you would be wrong because this Bottlescrew Hill is on our doorstep - it is the one that goes down to Boughton Quarries no less.

The date is Saturday 30 October. All over Kent 'misdemeanors' (to quote the *Morning Post*) have been setting fire to haystacks and barns, damaging

property, and holding, for the most part peaceful, assemblies. Why? To try to get their employers to raise their wages. One such gathering at Cranbrook had demanded 2s 3d per day during the winter, and 2s 6d per day in the summer.

Because of the widespread unrest, local magistrates were seeking to appoint many extra special constables. So it came about that on the morning of Saturday 30 October, some three hundred farmers and other persons, who had been called by the magistrates to be sworn in as special constables, were gathered in Maidstone at the *Bull Inn* (presumably the one in Gabriels Hill). Afraid of provoking the vengeance of the incendiaries, most refused, and in the end only forty or so were prevailed upon to take the oath.

Whilst this was going on in Maidstone, just a few miles away at Sutton there was a gathering of a different sort - some three to four hundred labourers. They made for Linton Place from where, after being given refreshments, they let it be known they were heading for Maidstone. On news of this reaching the *Bull Inn*, the magistrates decided there and then to put a stop to the march. Being short of special constables, the assistance of the military was requested, and at about 2pm six magistrates, accompanied by the Mayor of Maidstone and the Town Clerk (seemingly in a carriage), several other gentlemen on horseback and a detachment of cavalry numbering between thirty and forty, set off 'at a brisk pace for the Quarries'.

On reaching Bottlescrew Hill the party saw the labourers on the opposite hill. Whilst the military remained some little distance behind and out of sight, the magistrates and the others went on to meet the approaching mob, most of whom it was seen were armed with, according to one account, 'short sticks', in another, 'heavy bludgeons'. Notwithstanding the mayor telling the mob that their conduct was illegal, one, a man named Adams, climbed on to the shoulders of another and proceeded to harangue him. On the mayor challenging Adams' statements, another spokesman pleaded he only received 1s 6d per day on which to keep himself, his wife and three children.

The mayor called on the mob to disperse. They refused. Thereupon the Riot Act was read. Adams again harangued the mayor saying '...that the Government was privy to the outrage and were using it as an excuse to send soldiers to spill the blood of half starved men'. At this point one of the spokesman took hold of one of the mayor's party. There was a short scuffle and Adams, along with two others, was taken into custody. Just at that moment the cavalry, according to plan, came into view, whereupon, with the cry '..the redcoats are coming!!!', the mob scattered.

Within ten minutes it was all over. Adams and the two others, Pattman and Halliwell, were taken by carriage to Maidstone Gaol arriving there between 4 and 5pm. The three were ordered to pay £100 bail money and to find two sureties of £50 to be of good behaviour for one year. Unable to produce the bail, the men were locked up.

SOURCES

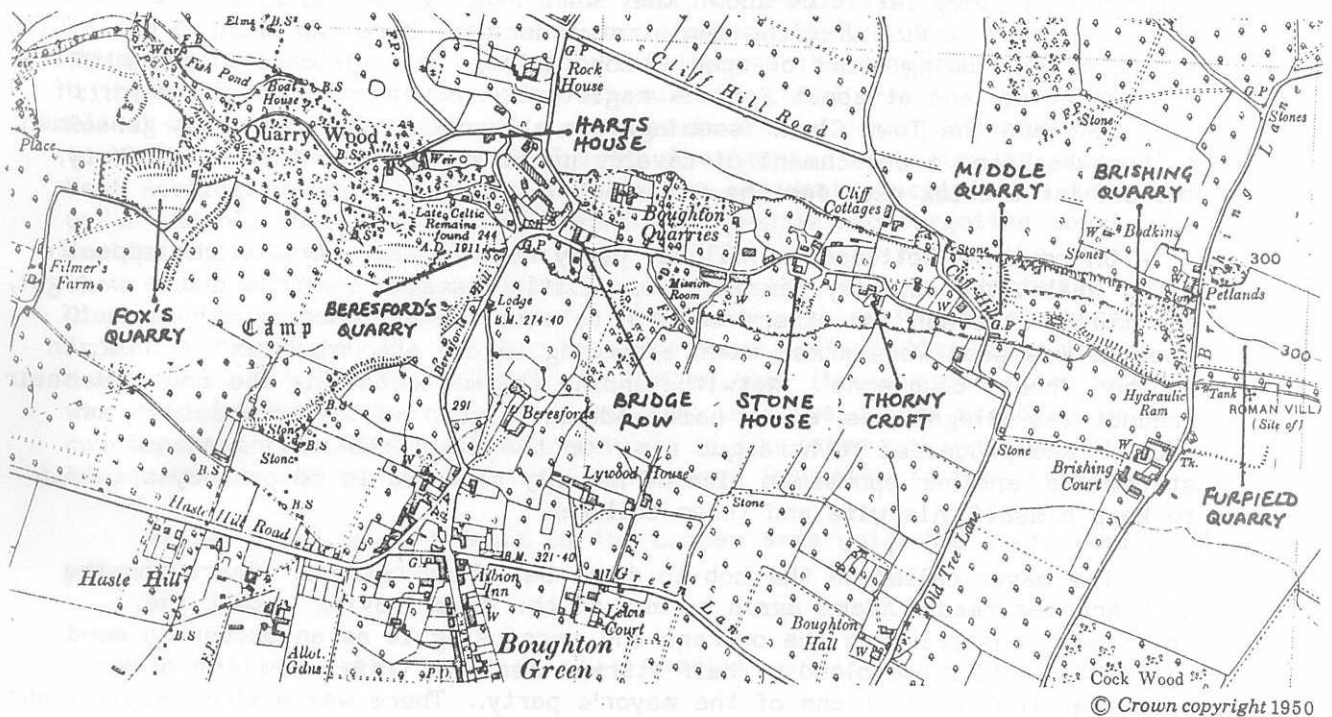
Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser and *Maidstone Gazette and Kentish Courier*, both dated 2 November 1830.

A WALK THROUGH BOUGHTON'S QUARRIES

ANNE CREASEY

Choose a sunny day and take a walk from Loose to Brishing Lane - it will be a good introduction to our local ragstone industry.

Boughton Monchelsea's quarries were famous for their building stone, which was used particularly in Roman times, the Middle Ages, and in the building boom of the the 19th century. The stone was also used for roadmaking until the last quarry there closed in the 1960s.



The best way from Loose lies through Quarry Wood, which grows on spoil heaps, clearly revealed by the gales of October 1987. When ragstone was quarried here, only about half the excavated material was usable stone, the remainder was dumped. The quarries involved were Fox's to the west and Beresfords to the east, but the area was known as Quarry Wood long before these two were developed, so was probably quarried along the slope above the stream from early times, then used as a dumping ground for the later quarries. Many of the trees were planted by Mr Foster Clark of *Boughton Mount*, resulting in the beautiful view from *Merriehills*, the house he built in the 1920s overlooking the valley.

At the Scouts' new gate take the left fork, and emerge from the woods near *Harts House*. This lovely timbered building was subdivided some time ago into three dwellings. In one part lived the Davies family. Bradley Davies and his son Tom worked just the other side of the pond in Beresfords Quarry, which at

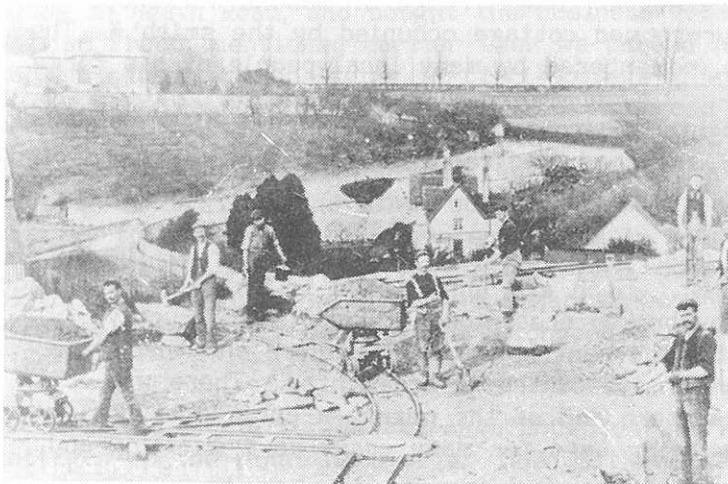
that time was quarried by the Skinner family, prominent local farmers and quarryowners, members of which lived at *Beresfords House*, *Coombe Bank* and *Brishing Court*. Lesley Davies, another son, can remember the stone being blasted in that quarry, the explosion muffled by huge sheets of iron which he says still lay in the quarry long after work there stopped. The fragments of stone would sometimes fall into the pond in front of their house.

The Froud family also lived in part of *Harts House*, and William Froud was the stonemason at the yard in Boughton Quarries - more about him later when we pass that yard. Beyond *Harts House* turn right, to reach Beresfords Hill. Here at the side of *Boughton Mount Cottage*, is the entrance to Beresfords Quarry which was used until about the 1930s. There was a quarry here at least from the early 19th century, which was responsible for the loss of part of the Iron Age Camp in the field above. In 1898 James Ellis & Co. Ltd. had the right to quarry here, later possibly the Smith family used it, then it was taken over by the Skinner family. Here is a description of ragstone quarrying in the 1830s:

'The operations of quarrying are peculiarly laborious and dangerous. The usual method is to undermine a portion of the cliff or face of the quarry, which is supported with props until it is thrown in, when it comes down with a severe concussion; there being sometimes as much as 2000 tons in one of these falls. Notwithstanding every care, accidents frequently happen, and there are few of the old quarrymen but have been severely injured in their time. The large fragments of rock are then blasted into smaller pieces by gunpowder, and afterwards broken up and shaped by sledges and other tools for use.'

The hole for the gunpowder was made using a long metal rod called a jumper, an example of which can be seen in Maidstone Museum together with the copper can for carrying the gunpowder - copper to avoid sparks. These were used well into this century and there are graphic accounts of the quarriers and their work in Dennis Tye's book *A Village Remembered*.

Once broken, the stone was carried to waiting skips on wheelbarrows, the men traversing the quarry on wooden planks high above the quarry floor. Later, narrow rail tracks were laid, but these still crossed the quarry by planks, and I am told that men would jump into the wagons for a ride across.



Quarry workers early this century at Beresford's Quarry - a view north towards *Rock House* at the top of *Bottlescrew Hill*.

Skinner's stonemason here was George Shoebridge. He was born about 1890 and started work at 13 in the maltings; but the work was seasonal and the remainder of the year he was employed in the quarry. He was not apprenticed as a mason, but learned his trade from the older men. The stone destined for roads was blasted out, but when a layer of good building stone was reached, he would stop the blasting and the stone would be levered out with a very long crowbar, using the combined weight of many men. To shape the stone George Shoebridge used only hammers of varying sizes. He would make a groove across it with a small hammer, insert metal pieces, then force wooden wedges between them with a large hammer until the stone broke. The stones were finished with smaller hammers, some for building, some for headstones which would be taken to the stonemason's yard for decoration. Ragstone was nearly always shaped at the quarry - for ease of transport because of its weight, and because it is more easily worked when it is freshly quarried.

George Shoebridge's work may be seen in Maidstone Police Station, repair work at the Tower of London, the wall and columns of Maidstone Crematorium, and at Westminster Abbey - he worked on these stones during the last year of his life.

From Beresfords Quarry, George Shoebridge moved to Brishing Quarry, working full-time until the age of 78, then part-time until his death at the age of 84. His sons spent some years working in the quarry too, and Harry continued with the closely related trade of roadmaking.

Walk across the bottom of Beresfords Hill towards Boughton Quarries road and you are confronted by the neat little cottages of *Bridge Row*. George Shoebridge lived in one of these, moving later to *Freedoms Hall* on the Heath Road, then to *Rose Cottage* (now *Gladstones*) at the far eastern end of Boughton Quarries. No 1 Bridge Row was the *Bridge Tavern* and shop earlier this century, run by Mr Brunger and owned by Style and Winch. Reminiscences in *A Village Remembered* are of the quarrymen stopping here on their way home from work. Earlier still this cottage was occupied by Henry Loveless, not only a grocer and beerseller, but also a master lime dealer, lime being another product of ragstone. Beyond the other end of Bridge Row, where the houses are set well back from the road, was the limekiln site. The 1866 O.S. map shows a quarry and single limekiln here, with a few small buildings, and by 1908 these have been joined by a double row of buildings. When the property of James Wood, the local builder, was auctioned in 1928, this site was 'LOT 9; The Quarries. Forge and shoeing room, coal store, tyre heater, lodge, range of masons workshops and stores, lorryhouse, also a four-roomed cottage occupied by the smith'.² The smith was probably Mr Mason, remembered by many local people at his forge.

If we walk through Boughton Quarries from the *Bridge Tavern* we can see quarry faces on each side of the road, and recognise this description from the 1830s in spite of the newer houses.

'The green of Boughton Quarry has charms for the admirer of the picturesque and romantic, which are unrivalled in this neighbourhood. The valley is bounded by broken precipices of rock, and abruptly rising grass banks: while the neat cottages peep here and there between the trees by which its centre is ornamented. There was formerly at the north-eastern end of the quarry a curious cavern named 'Tinker's Hole' from its being used for many years as a dwelling and

workshop by an itinerant brazier, during his stay in these parts, which he visited annually.¹³

The writer goes on to describe this cave, which was one of several reported in the area, and to say that it was destroyed 'eight years ago' which would have been about 1826.

Long before that, stone was being quarried in this area, and a series of deeds detail the leasing of land and quarries, from 1354 to 1641.⁴ An example from 1496 reads:

'Grant by Ralph Clerke of Boughton Monchensy to Laurence Kyng of the same, of a piece of quarry land in Boughton quarry containing five dayworks and a half in a place called Henschaw. Boundaries, land of the said Richard and the quarry of Thomas Hetnam east, land of Richard Clerke south, the quarry of Richard Crompe west, and the garden of the heirs of Henry Meryham north. Witnesses: Thomas Betyham, William Crompe, Alexander Meryham, Stephen Meryham.'

The Crump (Crompe) and Merriam (Merryham) families are familiar as medieval masons. In the 1840s there was still a John Merriam living in the Quarries, probably in *Quarry House*.

We pass *Quarry House*, another fine timbered building, about halfway through Boughton Quarries, and a little further on the right is *Stone House*. The census returns from 1841 to 1881 and the Tithe Award Map of 1840 show the prominence of the Seager family of stonemasons here at that time, with John Seager, master mason, living in *Stone House*, the older Richard Seager living opposite (in what is now No. 65) with a quarry behind, and other members of the family living throughout the Quarries. Only two Seagers were other than masons; Charles, who was a master blacksmith, and William, who was at first a stonemason in 1841 at home with his father, Richard, but later became a bootmaker. Interestingly his house, No. 65, was still the home of Mr White the cobbler within people's memory. John Seager's son took over as master mason, and appears in trade directories until 1913. The stonemason's yard was at the side of *Stone House*, now the motor repair shop, and on the opposite side of the road (a site recently auctioned, with a derelict building behind a fence) their work was displayed. The most recent owner of the yard was Henry Cole, appearing in trade directories from 1915 until the last war. He lived in *The Glebe* on Heath Road, and bought the business from James Wood, the local builder. William Froud, mentioned earlier when we passed *Harts House*, was the stonemason here, his family then living in *Cliff Cottage* which can be seen perched above the quarry face on the opposite side of the road from *Stone House*. He appears in the 1881 census as an 18 year old stonemason. He worked for James Wood, then for Henry Cole, not only in the yard but travelling all over the country working on churches and other buildings. An example of his work is the stone seat to the memory of the Reverend Meade in Boughton churchyard. Maidstone Museum has a scribe from the mason's yard, possibly the only memento of this historic business. The Tithe Award Map shows one more quarry in use: this lay directly below *Cliff Cottage* and belonged to John Sutton, a Maidstone mason, who also owned a quarry in Loose.

Walk a little further through Boughton Quarries and we come to a trio of cottages on the right hand side. One of these was the home of another family

connected with quarrying, the Thornycrofts, and is aptly named *Thorny Croft*. This connection takes us back to Roman times, as a Thorneycraft was in charge of the workmen excavating the Roman walled cemetery at nearby Joy Wood, Lockham, in the 1830s, and was called upon for expert advice on the origin of the ragstone, he 'having been accustomed to work in the quarries'. The excavation, carried out from 1832 to 1847 by Clement Taylor Smythe, revealed a family cemetery of ragstone cists, surrounded by a ragstone wall.⁵ Thorneycraft gave his opinion that the stone was from the nearby quarries, and presumably the settlement was at Brishing where a Roman bath-house was found.

At the turn of the century Frederick Thornycroft lived in this cottage, his father Joseph living over the road in *Gladstones*, which was then called *Rose Cottage*. Both men worked in the quarries, and Frederick once fell from one of the notorious planks when crossing Beresfords quarry with a wheelbarrow, suffering a broken leg. He made his father's tombstone himself from the local ragstone, and made the altar for a convent on Thanet. His son Victor was also a quarryman, working first at Brishing then at Spot Lane Quarry.

At the end of Boughton Quarries there is a choice of roads - left up Cliff Hill (formerly Policeman's Hill to locals) to *Cliff Cottage*; right up Old Tree Lane (again formerly known as Skinners Hill) to *Coombe Bank* and *Elm House*, former homes of the Skinner and Smith families; or we carry straight on to see the rest of Boughton's quarries. Derek Edward's woodyard is directly opposite, with the old malthouse which was used to store the quarrymen's tools (and, incidentally, the equipment for the local Gardeners' Society fête). To the left of the woodyard was the entrance to another quarry which Skinners opened in 1910. They called this Middle Quarry and it connects with Brishing Quarry adjacent to Brishing Lane, which had been quarried in earlier times. These quarries are almost unrecognisable now, as they have been filled with spoil from Furfield Quarry nearby. They were good quarries with a high ratio of usable stone, and most of it would have been used for roadstone. A footpath runs between the quarry and the woodyard, leading to Brishing Lane, and towards the end of it you can see *Brishing Court* across a pond to the right. Across Brishing Lane to the left lies Furfield Quarry, now filled in with rubbish. Tilbury Dredging Co. started this quarry in 1953, and later it changed hands so that by the time it closed in 1966 it belonged to the Amey Roadstone Corporation.

George Dowle, who worked at Furfield, told me a little about his life as a quarryman. Born at Ditton, he started work at Aylesford Paper Mill, but left at 19 and, due to the shortage of work, became a quarryman at Kiln Barn Quarry at Ditton, owned by Eagleton and Cochrane. Later he moved to Hudson's Quarry at Burial Ground Hill, Tovil, managed by C.E. Mills, then to Mills' own quarry near Preston Hall (now the industrial estate) where he remained for twenty-four years. He moved to Furfield soon after it opened and stayed until it closed, and was often employed loading the stone into barges at ARC's Tovil Wharf. When Furfield closed he moved to Offham and a modern era of quarrying - working the stone crusher by push-button, luxury after so many years of very hard physical labour, until he retired in 1976.

Just glance across the road again to the cluster of houses and converted farm buildings called *Petlands*. In 1507 this land was sold to John Lytylhare, a mason, for £5^s, and its name is thought to derive from 'pit lands', suggesting that ragstone has been quarried hereabouts for a very, very long time!⁷

Our walk ends here. I hope it has given a few glimpses of Boughton's ragstone industry. I must thank everyone who helped me with information, especially Harry and Beryl Shoebridge, the Froud family, George Dowle, Elsie Elliott (née Thornycroft), Lesley Davies, William Skinner, Rene Killick and Jim Stout.

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- ⁴ 'Calendar of Ancient Deeds', presented by Charles Marchant, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, xxvii (1905), 167-176.
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- ⁷ J.K. Wallenberg, *The Place Names of Kent*, Uppsala, 1934, 221.

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THE LOOSE ISOLATION HOSPITAL (PART 2)

FRANK AND KITTY ALLCHURCH

Since the last issue of this Journal, which contained part 1, Mrs Velma Jeffery has helped us a lot by giving the story of the time her mother spent as a nurse at the Isolation Hospital, and also other information which either confirms some history which we already have or adds to it.

Mrs Jeffery's mother was Annie Maria Miller who, in 1910, was a nurse at the Isolation Hospital. The following year and again in 1912 she evidently wished to change jobs as we have copies of five letters of reference from various people recommending her for new posts. The first is signed by Joseph Barker, of *Hill House*, Loose, a member of the well-known local family connected with a London store, and dated August 1911. It states that 'Nurse Miller who has been in the Infectious Hospital for about a year informs me she is anxious to obtain a situation at Maidstone Union Infirmary. I beg to say that I can with confidence recommend her for the post she seeks'. The Maidstone Union Infirmary was the hospital of the Coxheath Workhouse on Heath Road, now known as Linton Hospital.

In our first article on the Loose Isolation Hospital, we mentioned that the Matron in 1903 was a Miss Myring. The second letter, dated 5 September 1911, reveals that she was A. Ruth Myring, and says that Nurse Miller 'has had one year's training at this hospital in Fever Nursing, from September 1910 to September 1911, during which time...she has been conscientious in her work, kind and thoughtful to the patients'.

Letter number three is also dated 5 September 1911, signed 'I.S. Jones, Surgeon' (Isaac Stephenson Jones, apparently the Medical Officer to both the Isolation Hospital and the Workhouse), and headed 'Loose, Maidstone' - he actually lived in *Derwent House* on the Loose Road; it, too, recommends Nurse Miller as being 'quite capable of fulfilling the post she seeks'.

The fourth letter, headed 'Maidstone Union Workhouse, Coxheath, Maidstone', and dated 12 November 1912, indicates that Nurse Miller did obtain the post at the Workhouse Infirmary. The letter heading shows Arthur Buttle as being the Master of the Workhouse, but it is again signed by 'I.S. Jones, Surgeon, Medical Officer'. It states that Nurse Miller had been Assistant Nurse on the male wards for about fifteen months 'to my entire satisfaction and in my opinion she is well fitted for promotion'.

The last letter, dated 10 December 1912, is on the same headed paper as the fourth, but is signed 'Florence P. Buttle (Matron)'. It states that Nurse Miller had worked in 'this Workhouse Infirmary for the past 14 months', and gives her a good reference regarding her character and ability. At this time Nurse Miller was seeking a post at the Royal West Kent Hospital and these last two letters were in support of her application, though it is not known if she was successful.

We have also obtained copies of three photographs, one of Nurse Miller with her sister Kathleen in 1911, and the other two showing Nurse Miller with another nurse, believed to be Matron Myring, at the Isolation Hospital in 1911. In 1913 Nurse Miller married Alfred Nelson Buckhurst, and gave up nursing.

Maidstone Rural District Council.

Matron : Infectious Hospital,
A. RUTH MYRING. Coxheath, Linton,
Sep 5 1911

Nurse A. Miller has had two years
training at this Hospital
in Fever Nursing from May 1910
to September 1911, during
which time her duties have
been satisfactorily performed.
She has been conscientious
in her work, kind &
thoughtful to the patients.
A. Ruth Myring
Matron.



Above : Nurse Miller with another nurse, believed to be Matron Myring.

Left : Letter of reference from Matron Myring.

Earlier this year, we saw Mrs Elsie Elliott, born in October 1912 as Elsie Thorneycroft, whose father was a journeyman mason and also worked in Boughton Quarries. Her earliest memory of the Isolation Hospital was as a girl of five years of age being a patient suffering from diphtheria during the First World War. At one stage of her working life, she worked for the Borough Surveyor, Mr Busbridge, but later became a Cook/General, and when she was twenty-six years of age, in March 1939, she obtained the post of Cook at the Isolation Hospital under Matron Gordon, and 'lived in'.

In October 1944, she married 'Jim' Elliott who was employed by Mr Styles of *Buston Manor*, and one of his jobs was to plough the land around the hospital which was at the time rented by Mr Brislee. Upon her marriage, she was required to live out and attend daily to do the cooking.

Mrs Elliott recalled that during the Second World War she had to do 'fire-watching' with another nurse, there being two nurses doing this duty each night. She told us they had to report to the Air Raid Warden's post, which was situated in All Saints Church, Loose, at midnight, when it was their turn to do duty. During one duty, she remembers that she and her colleague spotted a strange 'plane', with flames coming out of the back, flying over, and then hearing a big bang. They both ran to the church and reported it. The next day they found that it was the first German 'Doodle-bug' bomb. There were no air-raid shelters at the hospital, but protective walls were built around the wards. She also remembers that one day a 'shot-down' German plane flew low over their heads before crashing in the Well Street area.

Mrs Elliott told us that the Vicar at this time was the Reverend A.N. Hare, and the Verger, Mr Gray, both of whom they met whilst doing their 'fire-watching'. The ambulance driver during the war was Mr Winsell (Wincell?) whose wife did relief work at the hospital as required. Mrs Elliott left her post as Cook as soon as she could after the war had finished.

To end our story of the Isolation Hospital, we have been told by Mr Fred Marsh that his mother, Mrs Isobell Marsh, was the first tenant when the hospital was converted into residential flats; they were named *Gordon Court* after Miss Gordon who was Matron at the time the hospital closed

SOURCES

Mrs Velma Jeffery, the daughter of Nurse Annie Miller.
Mrs Elsie Elliott and her daughter Mrs Leppard.

BY CART, STAGECOACH AND WAGGON (OR MAYBE A 'BUS')

CLIVE CHEESEMAN

The following is a brief survey of some of the passenger transport which has passed through or by Loose Village prior to about 1918. Much of the information is taken from an initial study of local and county directories.

Introduction

It is difficult, if not impossible, to give a date for the introduction of organised passenger transport by road. The earliest such vehicle was the stage waggon from about 1500, which was slow and cumbersome. It had four large wheels and a body covered by cloth stretched over a wooden framework. They travelled at about two miles an hour or ten to fifteen miles a day, the charge to passengers being from a halfpenny a mile to a shilling a day. Goods travelled at about 2s 6d a hundredweight or £3 a ton. On most roads these carriers would not change horses but used the same animals throughout. In the Weald of Kent oxen were often used.

The state of roads at this time was at best appalling. Most travellers complained and many references are contained in the standard histories of the difficulty of traversing the Weald. In an effort to combat the mud and mire, both coaches and carriers increased the width of wheel used on their vehicles. This caused even more damage to bridges and roads (if they could be called that) and in 1662 laws were passed relating to the size of wheel and number of horses they could use. During the 15th and 16th centuries, wills made by the wealthy of Cranbrook often included bequests for repairing the road between Cranbrook and Linton Hill.

Early times

One of the earliest printed references is the *Carriers Cosmographie* of 1637. Although only a guide to services from London, it shows a considerable network of operators. Those to Kent appear to have departed from hostelries in the Borough of Southwark. Many entries are unfortunately generalised, but Staplehurst, Marden and Cranbrook are mentioned. In each case the carrier or waggoner arrived on a Thursday, returned on Friday (believed arranged around the London cloth markets) and probably took three days in each direction. I have still to trace a later directory for 1681 which I understand shows a large increase in operators.

Faster by far (stagecoaches arrive)

In the period from about 1730, trade began to blossom and better communication became essential. By 1728, roads from Maidstone to Rochester and Wrotham Heath had been turnpiked and this may have acted as an encouragement to a coach between Maidstone and London which is recorded as running by 1738.

During the following years there is a gradual increase recorded in coaches and carts along this corridor.

Although the road from Cranbrook to Maidstone was turnpiked in 1760, the first directory with local transport entries is the *Universal* directory of the late 1790s. This records a carrier's waggon as running weekly between Southwark and Loose, Linton, Hunton, Marden and Yalding. A similar service was still in existence in 1822, and continued to Tenterden. It was probably running well before this date as a descendant of those recorded earlier on. A stagecoach is also now recorded as running between Tenterden and Maidstone via Milkhouse Street, a hamlet near Cranbrook. It ran on a Thursday, connecting in Maidstone with coaches to and from London.

By 1811 the stagecoach is apparently run by 'Clarkes' and operates three days a week. A journey from Tenterden to Maidstone now took five hours, previously six. Also recorded is 'Palne's Caravan' from Maidstone to Cranbrook on Tuesday and Friday mornings, returning in the afternoon. There are also references to a stage waggon between Cranbrook and Maidstone four days a week, and one from Burwash and one from Battle to Maidstone on Tuesdays. They returned two days later.

In 1824 the coach from Tenterden is recorded as operating direct via Headcorn. Cranbrook now apparently had its own service on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (ex *George Inn* 7.30am). A variety of carts and waggons is also recorded.

One of the first reasonably comprehensive directories is *Moore's Kent Almanac* for 1827. This includes a wealth of information on stagecoaches serving Maidstone, including one from Cranbrook (possibly operated by W. Hyland & Co.) which completed the journey in two and a half hours. A van owned by Stickells is listed as departing Maidstone at 10am on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for Hawkhurst (where it met the Rye coach) and Hastings.

Around this period some directory entries are confusing, with vehicles being referred to as either coaches or vans. However, an excellent directory of stagecoach services in 1836 has been compiled by Alan Bates. This shows a coach from Maidstone to Cranbrook owned by a B. Taylor operating one return journey a day, Mondays to Saturdays, and licensed to carry four passengers inside and two out. A Barnabas Taylor was the proprietor of the *George Inn*, Cranbrook at this time. The coach to Hastings was still owned by H. Stickells and operated a single journey each day carrying four inside and two out.

For all!

Although the omnibus is generally accepted as having arrived in Britain in 1829 with Shillibeer's service in London, there is evidence of a service near Swansea two years before. Whichever is correct, it certainly proved popular and soon spread throughout the country. A local directory for 1839 referred to a pair-horse omnibus operating daily between Cranbrook and Maidstone and described Stickells as now running an omnibus.

In 1842, the South Eastern Railway opened its line from Tonbridge to Ashford and followed with a branch line to Maidstone West in September 1844. Such openings usually had an effect on the pattern of road services in the area,

but I still have to research this. However, in 1845 Stickells is recorded as running a passenger van daily, and there is an isolated reference to an 'Emery's' (possibly Reliance) coach also daily to Hastings. Local carriers at this time were becoming increasingly numerous and beginning to feed the railway system.

The Post Office directory for 1852 confuses matters, listing a coach and an omnibus to Cranbrook, plus Stickells' van and a Smith's omnibus to Hastings. Three years later only the Cranbrook omnibus and a Masters' van from Staplehurst to Maidstone (three days a week) are recorded.

In 1859 the Cranbrook omnibus is recorded as Taylor's, which may be a misentry for frequent services then linking Cranbrook with Staplehurst station. Future directories for 1862 and 1867 attribute this service to a Davis who had certainly previously only operated to Staplehurst. An interesting item in the 1859 directory is a conveyance from Goudhurst to Maidstone twice a week which by 1874 had become daily.

Thankfully, the position on the Cranbrook route appears to have settled down in the early 1860s. By 1867 the bus was operated by Williams and ran daily. There had been a Williams listed as a carrier between Cranbrook and Staplehurst or Maidstone as early as 1824, but it may not have been the same person as there were several Williams in Cranbrook.

Another odd entry in 1867 is for an 'Albion' omnibus between Staplehurst and Maidstone on Tuesdays and Fridays. As usual the directories are not completely helpful, as some Hawkhurst entries refer to some carriers on this road as conveyances for passengers. One of the 1867 directories includes a list of thirteen carriers serving Loose and Linton. They provided thirty-nine departures each week (Mon/Fri/Sat 6, Wed 5, Tues/Thurs 8). Although leaving from eight different inns, ten also called at the *Haunch of Venison*. One of these, Ward from Staplehurst, is recorded as using a 'bus on Tuesdays', but is then not mentioned again. A brief entry in 1874 is of a Day running an omnibus from Marden to Maidstone on Thursdays.

A daily service to Cranbrook continues to be run by Williams until after the end of the century. There are occasional references to a 'light spring van' of his, and later on what appears to be a duplicate luggage waggon. In 1882 the times from Maidstone are quoted as 2.45pm in winter, 3.15pm in summer, with a second vehicle on Thursdays at 5.30pm in winter, 6.00pm in summer. The first of these connected at Staplehurst with a down train for Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone etc. In the mornings it left Staplehurst - the *King's Head* at 8.45am and the *South Eastern Hotel* at 9.00am.

Interestingly, in 1887 they now refer to C.T. Williams, and a Richard Waghorn and an Edward Apps appear to be local Loose carriers, having taken over from William Hyde. It should be understood that, while only one or two carriers may have been based in Loose, others passing through would also have provided a 'service' if required.

A reasonably comprehensive range of Maidstone almanacs are held at Springfield for the 1888-1905 period. These are presumably fairly accurate, though they obviously only record departures from Maidstone. In the Omnibus entries for 1888, Williams is credited with a 3.00pm departure from the *Star*

daily, arriving in Cranbrook about 7.00pm. In 1890 the departure is advanced to 3.30pm, and in 1891 to 4.00pm. One can only guess why!

During this period, a sample of the carriers departing to or through Loose is as follows:

Year	No. of Operators	No. of departures					
		Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
1888	7	6	7	3	8	6	8
1892	8	6	7	4	8	6	8
1896	12	10	13	5	11	10	12
1905	9	8	9	5	9	9	9

The increase in 1896 is quite interesting. Also, from 1891 until at least 1905, Humphrey appears to be the local Loose carrier.

Carriers

It should be appreciated that the village carrier provided a unique function. The carrier's cart was the equivalent of a mixed train carrying both goods and passengers. Such activity usually started from some other business and often stayed linked to it. Anyone, such as a miller, farmer, publican etc., who had need to visit local markets could easily enter the carrying trade. The vehicle was usually a tilt cart which could easily have a bench fitted for a few people to sit on.

Many villagers, although less reliant on shops compared with people today, would obviously need other provisions at various times and it was left to the carrier to obtain them.

A carrier would set out on his (or her) route from his home village, and would stop at other settlements on the way, his attention being drawn perhaps by a pre-arranged signal such as a white card in a hedge, gate or window. A two-way service was offered, taking goods, livestock and produce to the markets and returning with fulfilled orders, goods on approval and maybe even medicines and local newspapers.

Unfortunately few, if any, firms kept records, and details can only be put together in piecemeal fashion from a variety of often contradictory sources.

Motorisation

The first motor bus in the area commenced on 31 October 1904 between Maidstone and Headcorn. This was operated by the Headcorn, Sutton Valence and Maidstone Motor Omnibus Company Ltd., two of the promoters of which were also involved in the projected Headcorn and Maidstone Joint Light Railway. Apart from a Clarkson Steam Bus and a trial with a Lifu, a vehicle built by Jesse Ellis, a Loose quarry owner involved in agriculture, road construction, haulage and steam engine design and construction is reported to have been used. Neither the vehicles nor the service were successful. The service ceased by March 1907, at which time Ellis was also in financial difficulties.

Further firms attempted to operate on the route to Sutton Valence in 1908 and 1909, but it was 1912 before a Captain E. Neve (trading as Reliance Motor Services) was able to commence a successful operation.

In the meantime the Commercial Motor Company, which had been formed in 1908 and operated to Boxley Road and Chatham, was taken over by Halls of Dartford and re-formed by 1911 as Maidstone and District Motor Services. The new company received further backing in 1913 from the British Electric Traction Company and expanded rapidly, including a new route to Cranbrook from 1 October 1913 which was extended to Hastings from 8 April 1914.

It should not be overlooked that Maidstone Corporation commenced running trams to Loose in October 1907, but as this has been well documented elsewhere I will not go into it.

A few carriers motorised their services before the First World War and this is currently being investigated. One previously unrecorded fact to come to light is that Williams (of Cranbrook) joined with Miles, who operated a horse bus to local stations, to form Williams, Miles and Company Ltd. They advertised that they had commenced motor services for passengers and goods on 25 March 1914. Initially a daily service to Maidstone (not Wednesdays) left Cranbrook at 11.45am and Staplehurst at 12.30pm, arriving at 1.00pm. It returned at 5.00pm. Services were also advertised to Hastings, Tunbridge Wells and Etchingham station.

At the same time as the advent of the First World War, fierce competition evidently broke out with Maidstone and District, and, it is believed, with a firm from Hastings. It is possible that Williams' service may have been diverted via Goudhurst, but by 1917/18 they had withdrawn from bus operation and concentrated on other activities.

Conclusion

There is still a lot of research to be undertaken to resolve queries raised in this article. The period between 1918 and 1930 is also known to be confusing as it was a period of intense competition for both carriers and bus operators. It is known that by 1929 the Maidstone firm of Bucks was operating bus services, competing with the Loose trams, to Coxheath and Chart Sutton.

If any readers can supply any more information on these or other operators, or correct any statements, I would be pleased to hear from them. It is hoped, in due course, to publish a more exhaustive study of transport in the Cranbrook and Tenterden areas.

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NOTES ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE LOOSE VALLEY

BETTY SEARLE

Unfortunately, very few natural history records of the Loose Valley seem to have been made before the 20th century, but there can be no doubt that the entire area was a delightful haven for all manner of wildlife.

Prior to 1940, the land between Kirkdale Road and Bockingford consisted of well-established meadowland with specimen trees, including Wych elm and hornbeam. In 1948, a massive ash tree (about 150 years old), which stood in the corner of *Woodlawn* paddock, was felled by cross-saw: Mr Hood and his son, Roy, commenced the work at 3 o'clock one afternoon and finished the task about 3 o'clock the following morning! A Scots pine, which still stands on the east bank near Kirkdale Road, once held a heron's nest and was also a favourite singing post for wrynecks - a bird rarely seen in Kent nowadays.

Wrynecks (or snake-birds) were regular summer visitors, arriving early in April a few days before the cuckoo - thus earning yet another name of 'the cuckoo's mate' - and easy to locate because of the loud ringing 'quee, quee, quee, quee' song of both sexes. Nesting in holes of trees, and finding their food-source of various ants and their larvae in the relatively short grass, the valley provided them with an ideal habitat. Mr Eric Philp, Keeper of Natural History at Maidstone Museum, vividly recalls twelve singing near Bockingford during the spring of 1952, and until their disastrous decline, at least three pairs held territory between Loose and Tovil. Several reasons have been put forward for the collapse, including pesticides, destruction of habitat, mortality on passage and increased predation, but as yet it is still something of a mystery.



During the Second World War, the valley was ploughed and put down to corn, as directed by the Kent War Agricultural Executive Committee. This, of course, meant the loss of a large selection of meadow flowers and grasses. However, the many water-side plants continued to flourish, including purple loosestrife, mimulus, marsh-marigold, golden saxifrage and meadowsweet. Kingfishers, heron, water rail, moorhen, snipe and mallard are but a few of the birds still to be seen along the stream, whilst robins, willow warblers, blackcaps and all manner of songbirds can be heard at various times of the year. Kestrels, still seen occasionally, must once have been a frequent sight hovering overhead, their keen eyes catching the slightest movement of mouse or mole far below. When the mills were still in use and the stream unpolluted and crystal clear, roach, perch and trout were common and nearly every deep pool held pike.

As there seems to be such a lack of information on this subject, I should be delighted to hear from anyone who may have old natural history notes tucked away, and so help me build up a picture.

COXHEATH CAMP
PART 2 : 1778
THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIGH RANK

JULIA PAGE

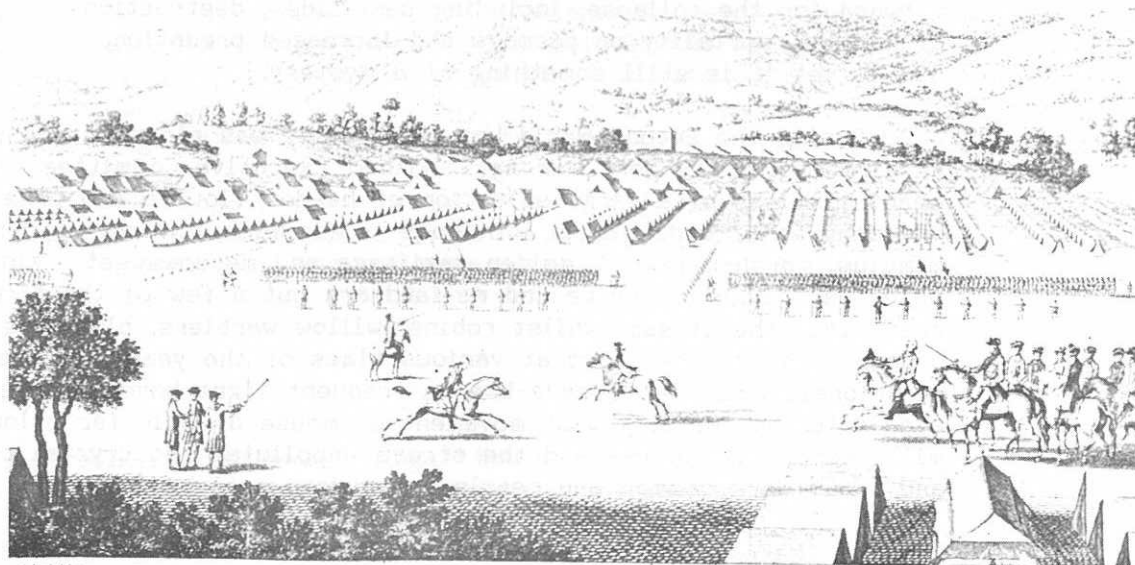
On Sunday 14 June 1778, Lieut. General William Keppel sat down to write to Lord Amherst, his superior officer at the Horse Guards and the Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty, King George III's Army.

'My Lord,

No post setting out yesterday for London prevented me from sending to your Lordship a report of my arrival at the Camp of Cox's Heath, and taking the Command of this Detachment of the Army...'

Cox's Heath, or Coxheath as we know it today, is a three-mile long plateau lying on the summit of the Quarry hills to the south of Maidstone and stretching west from Cock Street at Boughton, through Loose parish, and on to Farleigh; then an area of scrub and crossed by what was the comparatively new turnpike road to Cranbrook.

When General Keppel took up his pen, only twenty-two years had passed since the Heath had come into regular military use, beginning in 1756 when war



A Perspective View of COXHEATH CAMP representing a Plan

Published in the Art Studio by Boulton & Walker 21, Col. Fawcett St. London, E.C. 4

with Louis XV's France occasioned the encampment of 2,000 troops (and Hanoverians at that), followed, during the ensuing peace, by militia summer manoeuvres; but now, with hostilities breaking out again - this time against Louis' successor, Louis XVI - the military were returning in force with Britain's own stouthearted sons to man the defensive line that guarded the vital Medway bridges. And since, along with honour and glory, there are other more mundane considerations to take into account when waging war, no doubt the victuallers and their agents were rubbing their hands in anticipation of increased trade whilst, down in Loose itself, the villagers were possibly equally quick to realise that they could make an extra shilling or two. The presence of troops equates to a demand for all kinds of services and it is still a legend that soldiers were billeted in some of the cottages in Well Street.

But getting goes with giving and even before General Keppel had ridden in the Overseers had been obliged to hand out charity to a few of their new neighbours, as it turned out the first of many such acts and which must have somewhat diminished their resources.

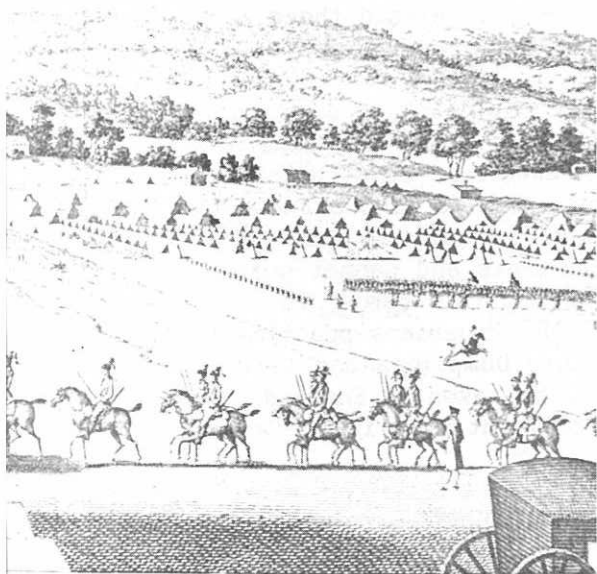
'May 28th - 7th June 1778

Gave a Soldier's Wife that was ill, by order of Mr Blomer, 3/-

Gave Stephen Boucher, a Soldier, his Wife being ill, 2/6

Gave Mr. Bragington, a Soldier, his Wife being ill, 2/6.¹²

ran the Poor Book entry written up by Thomas Charlton, one of the Overseers. He was a local farmer and can have entertained few starry notions of personal financial gain by the presence of the military, soldiers and missing poultry usually going together.



A Perspective View of Coxheath Camp representing a Grand Review of the Army.' This picture, printed in the *Westminster Magazine* in 1778, shows the scene from the present-day Heath Road looking north across the camp to the North Downs. Presumably a laidstone is hiding somewhere in between. The road on the right of the picture is Linton Road (marked as Maidstone Road' on the 1778 plan on page 23). The large house in the middle distance, left of centre, may or may not be *Forstal Farm*. The artist has probably employed a good deal of licence in his depiction of the camp and its environs.

(This illustration, together with that on page 23, were kindly supplied by Mr P.J. Fairbank.)

Review of the Army.

Keppel's task of setting up an orderly camp was an unenviable one; whole regiments were about to march in at the rate of two or three a week and not the least of his worries was getting the men under cover, fed and keeping them fit, after which came the reason for them being there in the first place, battle readiness, and all this with the French breathing bellicosity from their side the Channel.

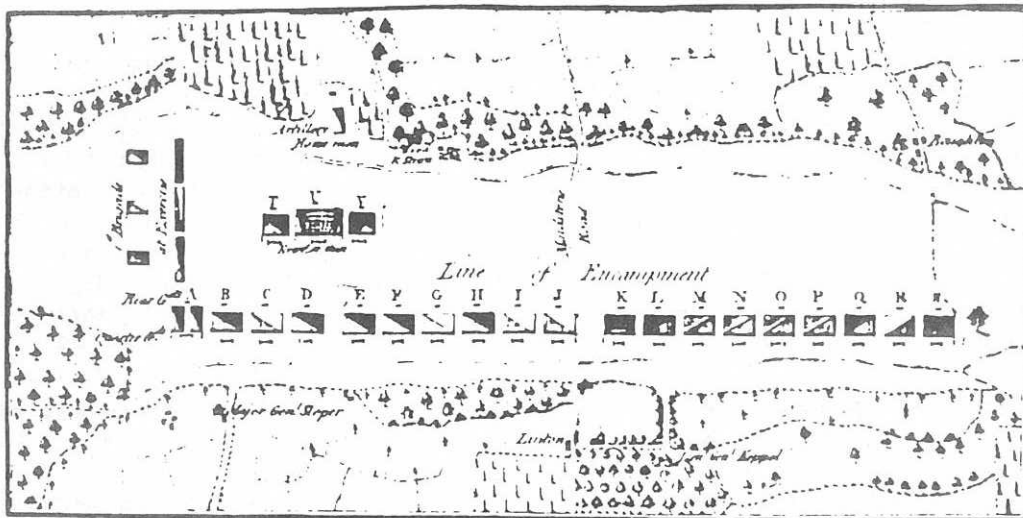
Good morale depends on the officers and on the day after his arrival not a few were expressing themselves very forcibly. 'I am very sorry to inform your Lordship,' he wrote to Amherst, 'that I perceived a very Natural discontent in many of the Officers this morning, from having passed a very unpleasant night in rain as the Tents they are (out of necessity from the short notice they had for encamping) obliged to lay in, do not turn off the Wet. They were absolutely soaked with it and some of them Grumbled much - which I could say nothing to excepting that I wished them better nights for the time to come, till their equipage arrived.'¹³ That the men fared worse goes without saying.

Nor was this all, for on the same day the rank and file 'refused to take their Bread'¹⁴, a serious matter in an eighteenth century army as it formed part of their pay. In the extreme they might take up the cry of 'No decent Bread, no fighting', which was enough to give any Commanding Officer nightmares. The trouble lay in the constituents of the loaves, which were very precisely laid down by the Government in the contracts with the bakers and contractors, some of whom made their 'bit on the side' by short measure and poor quality, etc. Keppel wisely defused the immediate situation. 'No severity has been used by the return of Bread, none has been sent back or rejected but what was bad in quality or Deficient in weight and I can suffer none of the men to be used by Treasury contractions'¹⁵ - a hint that he first suspected the Treasury of trying to save money. But the next day the situation worsened. 'The delivery that was to have been made to the Queen's regiment came half of it broken from their having been thrown Hot into the waggons and so bitter and sower [sour] that I could not eat it, who am not delicate when example is necessary. Yesterday better was achieved ... Captain Hawson thinks that the person who directs at the Bakery is not sufficiently intelligent in his business - I am afraid there is not ovens enough, and I am sure two wagons only cannot supply the Camp as it should be.'¹⁶

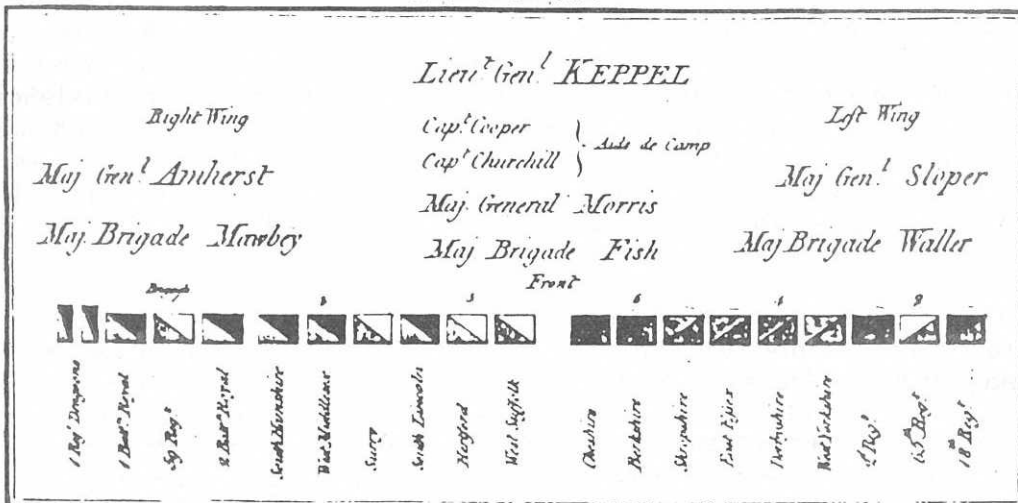
The Contractor, a Mr Atkinson, was summoned and sized up by the General who concluded that 'as Promises and Words go .. is an excellent constructor'¹⁷ and he hoped for the best, an ill-placed optimism as he was to find out and the difficulties went on for weeks. 'Your Lordship may find me warm on the subject, I confess it,' he told Amherst, 'for I am tired of complaints and cannot suffer to see the soldiers ill treated. And I dread a march from this camp. In America and in your Lordship's command, and I believe the Prussians practice it, Flower [flour] was delivered to the men who made it into Dumplings and were contented with it. Why should the like precaution not be taken in England, to guard against unforeseen accidents - a soldier can not fight well if not Well Fed.'¹⁸

And on the subject of fighting, there was another serious deficiency. On his first day Keppel had found 'no place .. at any reasonable distance from the Camp for the Regiments to Practice with Balls'¹⁹ [cartridge balls], and when three days later 140 men of the Artillery marched in bringing 'the Guns intended for the Park and twelve 6 pounders for the remaining battalions'²⁰ a complication

PLAN of COXHEATH CAMP 1774



Reg^t in Brigade



REFERENCES

A 1 st Royal Dragoons	500 F 6 West Middlesex	550 K 1 st Cheshire	500 Q 2 nd Co ^l Royal	710
Earl of Pembroke	Cook	Earl of Chelmsford	Jones	
B 1 st Batt ⁿ Royal	710 G 10 th Surry	900 L 3 rd Berkshire	500 R 65 th Reg ^t	710
Duke of Argyll	Hedgys	Voluntair	Emston	
C 50 th Reg ^t	710 H 23 rd South Lincoln	600 M 25 th Shropshire	200 S 18 th Royal Irish	710
S ^r D. Lindsay	Schtharp	L th Olive	S ^r J. Sibright	
D 2 nd Batt ⁿ Royal	710 I 52 nd Hereford	500 N 17 th East Essex	180 T Montgomeryshire	500
Duke of Argyll	L th Crantern	Rehow	Earl of Powis	
E 1 st South Hampshire	320 J 59 th West Suffolk	350 O 1 st Derbyshire	500 U Royal Artillery	500
S ^r S. Stewart	Duke of Grafton	Duke of Devonshire	Col ^l Hislop	
		P 1 st West Yorkshire	Radner Jones	100
		Harvey	Pembroke Owen	100

To the Hon^{ble} WILL^m KEPPEL. Lieut. Gen^l

and Command^r in Chief of the Forces Encamp^t on Coxheath

This PLAN by his Permission is humbly Inscribed

by his most Obed^t Servants

{ Jas^{ts} Bell & J^r

{ Ja^{ts} Black } Soldiers in the 1st Reg^t of Royals.

lay in that 'the ammunition is only part come and no Powder whatsoever for the Regiments to practice'¹¹, the lack of which continued for so long that he began to deliver some very sharp observations to Amherst. 'I must beg again that your Lordship would order some powder to be sent to this Camp, as I am shure if your Lordship chose to take the Command of it in Person you would rather think it an awkward thing to be obliged to borrow Powder of a Regiment to fire an evening gun ..'¹² This was written on 20 June and by 2 July desperation was setting in: 'Having nothing further to trouble your Lordship with,' he wrote stiffly, 'but to assure you that neither Powder, Balls, Paper [for cartridges] and Bread are arrived in Camp - and to wonder there could have been the least difficulty attending the sending me, at the head of 10.000 men, a Warrant to hold Court Martials.'¹³

But even as he wrote, the commodities at least were on their way and that evening '126 Barrels of Powder, with Paper and Bread' arrived.

One of Coxheath's main tasks was to defend Maidstone bridge and, should the French have landed at Hythe and advanced by way of Ashford and Lenham Heath, a battery of guns on the high ground at Langley stood a good chance of stopping them, and consequently Keppel's Lieutenant Colonel of Artillery had been busy. 'I hope that he will have finished his Battery by tomorrow', the General informed Amherst on the 3rd. 'It will be extensive. The Distance about four miles, on Langley Common.'¹⁴ Paying for the labour this involved was, of course, another matter. 'I should be glad to know upon what office I am to draw for these disbursements,' he enquired, adding with some feeling, 'I have once advanced money for Government and it has given me that Experience that I never wish to do the same again.'¹⁵

That the French were serious about their invasion plans was not in dispute; there was plenty of evidence. 'From the very good intelligence I am informed that the French fleet under the D. of Chartres consists of 28 ships of the Line, besides Frigates, that Four more of the Line are in great forwardness at Brest - and eight at Rochfort - That the French army is reinforced in Brittany and that orders have been sent to all their Northern Sea Ports to hire vessels for the transportation of Troops,' Keppel wrote anxiously. 'I wish we may not be under great difficulties should we be ordered to move on a sudden, for want of the Necessary Numbers of Stores to carry ... for I now look upon it as a certain thing that the French will make a landing in England, which will be attended with very serious consequences, should their Fleet (as I apprehend it) be greatly superior to ours ..;' and he recommended that 'Beacons along the Sea Coast, in the Bordering Counties, should be erected to give the alarm and for the removal of all cattle, corn, etc., etc., that may be transported, destroying the rest, that the Enemy may not come into a county of Plenty, as well as Confusion, which a Descent would occasion amongst the Ranks of People.'¹⁶

There was also another hazard - spies! In times of national peril they are seen behind every tree and Keppel had his share with one brought before him possessing 'a paper which indeed looked very suspicious, yet as he had been an Inhabitant in the country and lived upwards of 23 years at Cranbrook, I thought it proceeded from Curiosity and no bad intention towards government'.¹⁷ The man turned out to be a Dissenting Clergyman but after the General had 'kept him in custody for Legal examination and sent to two Justices of the Peace to take down the Depositions', by ten o'clock at night 'a witness was procured who knew

my Prisoner and from the favourable Character he gave of his acquaintance, he was sent about his business'.¹³

And so the summer continued, with Keppel gradually getting a grip of his Camp and to the extent that the *London Evening Post* was able to report on 4 August, 'Several of the regiments on Saturday exercised at targets with ball cartridges and performed exceedingly well; no accident happened except shooting a favourite dog'.¹⁴

But if Keppel had his problems, so too did the Overseers of Loose and in some ways they represent the welfare side of the picture. Every military camp suffered the men to bring their wives, and no doubt sweethearts were smuggled in, and it need hardly be said that if the Government was slow in sending supplies it was also dilatory when it came to paying the men, and financial hardship would certainly have been common. Keppel set up a hospital for his not inconsiderable sick (the numbers worried him greatly), but the women would not have been eligible and when illness struck they had to depend on themselves or the Overseers' humanity.

To Loose's credit, it seems to have risen to the challenge and between August and October in that year alone, over £5 of charity was disbursed, and of the nature that the SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors & Air Force Association) often pays out today:

'August 17th 1778

Gave Boucher, a soldier, his Wife being ill, 1/-

Henry Baldock, a soldier, whose Wife was brought to bed in an outhouse at Jos Charlton's, 6/-

October 2nd 1778

Gave Thomas Cross, a Soldier, at different times whose Wife was brought to Bed at the Chequers, 17/6

Paid Thomas Blanchett for a pair of shoes for Thomas Cross's wife, 4/3

Mr Elliot the fees for churching Thomas Cross's wife, 2/6

Paid a Woman in the Shropshire Militia for looking after a Sick Woman and laying her forth when she died, 5/6

For 1lb of Wooll to put in ye Woman's Coffin that died in ye Camp, 1/6

Dame West for nursing Cross's wife awhile, 3/-

Paid for 1lb of Wooll to bury a Soldier in, 1/6

Paid Mr Hyde for a Coffin for a Soldier's Child, 2/6

Gave a Soldier's wife that was ill, 2/-

Robt Niblett what he expended on a Soldier that died there beside what was left by ye Officer to support him, 4/2

Mr Elliot the burial fees for the Soldier ye Bell being Toll'd, 6/6

Four Men for carrying the Soldier to the Ground, 4/-

Mary Nicholls and an other for laying forth of Soldier at Niblett's, 2/-¹²⁰

These first few months were only the beginning of a long military sojourn up on Coxheath, and as time went by the place became better organised and to the point that it took on the appearance of a small, tented town, and life assumed a much more regular pattern. Lieutenant General Peirson eventually took over the command but it is pleasant to record that, in spite of all General Keppel's difficulties, just one month after he had arrived, 'The duke of Gloucester saw the many regiments at Coxheath form columns and march to

Langley Common where a mock fight was represented, and all the variety of bush-fighting, ambuscading, assaults and other military manoeuvres were performed²¹, and this in the very battle area where they might have been fighting the royalist French invaders. But to the pregnant question of 'Would the British have beaten them back?' there is no answer except that men defending the homeland have more to fight for, and readers will have to decide for themselves.

REFERENCES

- ¹ and ³⁻¹⁸ All quotations from Keppel's correspondence with Amherst can be found in the Kent Archives Office, U1350 086/1-55.
² K.A.O., P233/12/6.
¹⁹ *London Evening Post*, 4 August 1778, British Newspaper Library.
²⁰ K.A.O., P233/12/6.
²¹ *General Evening Post*, 16 July 1778, British Newspaper Library.

(Author's Note: Considerable new material has come to light about Coxheath Camp recently and this makes a book on the subject even more certain.)

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THE DE FREMINGHAM FAMILY OF LOOSE

PAT JENNER

The pew immediately in front of the lectern in All Saints Church, Loose, has a cover embroidered with seven coats of arms, the second from the right being that of the de Fremingham family who originated in the village which still bears their name - Farningham, on the River Darent.

The family owned land throughout Kent, including an estate adjoining that of the de Pympe family in Loose (see *Loose Threads*, No. 1). This land may have been that between Busbridge Road and Dean Street where the hamlet of Malynhale has since vanished.¹

Early in the 14th century Sir John and Lady Agnes de Fremingham were interred in the Chapel of St. Mary at East Farleigh, their son Ralph inheriting the estates. In 1370 Reginald de Pympe married a daughter of Sir Ralph de Fremingham and took her to live in the newly built house at Nettlestead. Sir Ralph and his wife, the Lady Katherine, lived on their numerous estates in Farningham and Sundridge as well as at Loose, which became the principal home of their son and heir, John, and his wife Alice. Sir John was Sheriff of Kent in 1379 and again in 1394. He was also one of the founders of the chapel which stood on old Rochester Bridge.²

The 14th century was a violent one. The 1341 Black Death cut the population by about one-third with the result that labour was scarce. In 1380

the Chancellor-Archbishop, Simon of Sudbury, bore the responsibility for imposing a poll tax of three groats to be paid by each person of fifteen years and over to raise money for the wars with France.³ The men of the Brentwood area of Essex refused to pay and a subversive union of common people, named 'The Great Society', was formed, declaring that 'no tenant should do service or custom to the lords as they had aforetime done'.

In June 1381 the men of Essex and Kent rose up against their masters. On 6 June the Kentish men captured Rochester Castle and freed the prisoners before marching to Maidstone where they elected Wat Tyler of Essex to be their leader. On 9 June, augmented by men from Loose, Marden and the Wealden villages, the march to Canterbury began with the intention of holding Archbishop Sudbury. He was not in the city, and houses and documents were burned and three rich men beheaded before the peasants returned to Maidstone, this time releasing the priest John Ball and others from captivity in the Archbishop's Palace.⁴

The mob entered London, burnt the house of the Duke of Lancaster and caused great havoc. On 17 June 1381 Richard II, then 15 years old, left the Tower and at Mile End agreed the terms of a Charter of Liberty, while peasants who had remained in the City gained entry to the Tower and put to death the Archbishop and members of the Council. The following day Wat Tyler was killed at Smithfield in the presence of the King, who at once repudiated the Charter.

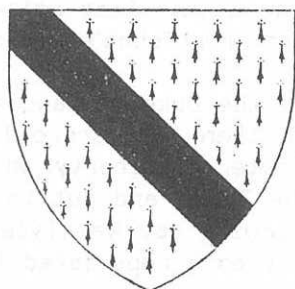
During this week Thomas Bordefeld of Hunton warned Sir John de Fremingham that he was to be one of the victims of an assassination plot. On the spur of the moment Thomas de Holland the Earl of Kent,⁵ John de Fremingham, Robert de Asshton, Constable of Dover, and Thomas Culpeper, with other law officers, set up a special commission and sent out their retainers, capturing John Cote, John Bordain, Adam Smyth, Thomas Bryght, Thomas Gyles and Colkin Fullere, all of Loose, as well as Thomas Bordefeld who had given the warning, and men from estates at Farleigh, Marden, Frittenden, Cranbrook and Staplehurst. These men appeared before the King at Deptford on 8 October 1381 charged with conspiring to 'cause the death of the King, Sir John de Fremingham and five other gentlemen of Kent'.⁶

John Cote, a mason, was not a native of Loose. He had originally come from lands owned by John, Duke of Lancaster (John of Gaunt, the king's uncle). Cote confessed to the charges and turned 'King's evidence' upon the others. At Westminster on 15 October 1381, nine of the accused, including John Bryght of Loose, were found guilty of felony and trespass. They were sentenced to be disembowelled and their eyes put out, after which they were to be hanged. At an adjourned hearing on 18 November 1381, while accusing John Cote of treason, Thomas Bordefeld appealed, saying it was he who had fled from the group to warn Sir John. He was pardoned and 'Sir John de Fremingham and three other gentlemen of Kent' stood surety for his future behaviour.

In all, twenty-four of the Kentish leaders were executed, and when John Cote finally appeared before Westminster Court on the 4 May 1382, he was pardoned for the information he had given. No-one from Kent appeared in support of him and four merchants of London each pledged £200 (a vast sum), and witnessed the proviso that 'Cote thereafter warn the King and his Council of all rumours and insurrections'.

Sir John de Fremingham continued as Lord of the Manor of Loose and served his second term as Sheriff of Kent. He died in 1412 leaving no heir, bequeathing his lands at 'Lose, Offeham, Merden, Westbarmeling, Testare, Linton, Bocton Monchensy, Hunton, East Farleigh, Yalding, Staplehurst and Maidstone' to John de Pympe, his nephew. The manors of Farningham and Sundridge were left to another kinsman, Roger Islay.⁷ Sir John and Lady Alice were buried near his parents at Boxley Monastery. The de Fremingham family then ceased.

In the east window at Loose Church, destroyed by fire in 1878, were two stained-glass representations of the de Fremingham arms - 'ermine a bend gules'.



The de Fremingham shield, from a window in Nettlestead Church



The seal of John de Fernnyngham from a deed of about 1376

Note: In fourteenth century documents the family name is variously spelled de Fremingham, Frenyngham, Fernnyngham, Farningham and Freningham.

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- ⁵ Thomas Holland or Holand, half-brother to King Richard II, their mother being Joan the Fair Maid of Kent.
- ⁶ *Arch. Cant.*, iv (1862). (Coram Rege Roll, 5 Richard II, 1381).
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MEMORIES OF LINTON ROAD

DOROTHY HARRIS

Linton Road in the early '20s was a quiet country way. On leaving the *King's Arms* there was *Forge Cottage* on the right - a footpath at the end of its garden led to Old Loose Hill; on the left-hand side were stone steps leading to Pickering Street, and *Mexican House*. Neither of these houses gave much light to the road which was dark at night, high hedges and trees adding to the gloom.

After crossing the bridge, there was a high wall on the left and tall trees; the branches hung over the wall. There was one house here which was called *Tettenhall*, and is now known as *Hillside*. Mr and Mrs Hodges could watch the new houses as they were built in the '20s. The high hedge was cleared and part of the cherry orchard was sold off for building. Often an apple tree, a cherry tree, or even a large ash tree was left to the new owner. No cherry or ash trees seem to have survived the 1987 storm and only one apple tree. Where the cherry trees in the orchard overlooked the garden - roots preventing the top of the garden being very productive - a basket of cherries was given to the owner. This was still being done in the '40s.

The new dwellings were mainly detached houses or bungalows. They had, in the terms of the '20s, a front parlour, a living room with a range for cooking, a scullery, and an outside shed and lavatory. Upstairs there were three bedrooms with a bathroom and lavatory. The houses had gas lighting and, with their large gardens, good outlook and easy distance from the trams, they were considered better than the small houses built within the borough in this period. Good materials were used in the building - oak for window sills and door steps, and good slate for the roofs. There was no main drainage so each house had a cesspool in the garden.

The owners seem to have enjoyed their new surroundings. One elderly resident spoke of it as a pleasant road for walking with a dog, and another described the view from her bungalow looking across the pear orchards in the spring as 'just lovely'. In the spring, each tree had a charcoal fire burning by it at night to protect it from the early frost, and the sight of the blossom was wonderful.

The trams were very popular. The last cheap ride for workers going all the way was 8am. The conductresses often rang their bells loud and long as the workers hurried up the hills. There was no shelter on the top of the tram, but a mackintosh sheet was provided. There seem to have been very few changes in the '30s except for the introduction of trolley-buses and the addition of an hourly bus service between Maidstone and Hastings.

Shopping was not a real problem. The village had some small shops; bread was delivered three days a week from horse-drawn vans, milk and papers daily, meat from the local butcher, and coal as required. Laundry was collected and returned by any of three laundries - at Maidstone, Bearsted and Staplehurst. Their services continued until the '60s. During the war years, the gardens were much appreciated as lawns were often dug up to grow vegetables. Food, if your emergency store ran out, could be obtained from the grocer's shop in Salts

Avenue, but residents were told not to use the main roads, in case of an attack. The instructions were to go along the lane towards *Salts Place* (on the left hand side of the road) and follow the footpath that led through to Salts Avenue. Actually the road suffered very little damage.

Changes came slowly during the '50s, '60s and '70s. Cesspools in the gardens disappeared when main drainage was put in; the cost was £1 per house and the garden was supposed to be left as found. Houses were sold and resold; the new owners built garages, put up new fences and gates, constructed new roofs and installed new windows, and interiors were altered to meet new requirements - electricity was more widely used. Few houses now have much left to show their early design and planning - just a slate roof, an oak doorstep or a window sill, or the high mantelpiece in the original kitchen.

The wall opposite the houses came down in the '30s, making the view more attractive. The trees were a great feature of the road, though many were damaged in the great storm of October 1987. In fact the road suffered more than it did in the war - trees in the gardens were uprooted, crashing onto greenhouses, windows and gates were damaged, and tiles seemed to be sliding off roofs all night. From 1am the storm raged on and on. Out went the road lights. Never was dawn so welcome, but what a sight of devastation. The main road was blocked by fallen trees, though the large ones stood up to the storm remarkably well. There was no electricity, but householders with gas could get a cup of tea. One resident provided flasks of hot water which were most welcome. Fortunately the morning was sunny with no wind so clearing up operations got under way. By 9.30am the fallen trees were at least removed from the road and piles of tree trunks and branches were to be seen on the grass verges. One wonders where so many men could come from to deal with the trees and branches and so keep the road open. Little could be done for the roof damage though plastic sheeting was forthcoming. Electricity was restored by 11.20am but the voltage was very low. Milk was delivered, but there were no papers and the schools were closed. There was little traffic. For most of the morning branches were still falling from the trees, and it was a week before they could be cleared and the green swathe we so much enjoy began to look more normal. Tiles were in short supply for a month but one day a lorry load arrived from Staffordshire.

In spite of all the damage no houses were completely destroyed, and no one was killed or seriously injured. We had much to be thankful for after the storm had passed. It was an experience in which one was filled with awe. The relief in the morning when everyone around was giving a helping hand will not easily be forgotten.

Today, a year and more on, our green swathe looks as good as ever, but many gardens still show signs of the havoc. It is good to note that daffodils and crocuses flourished in the spring under the trees - very few have been picked. It is to be hoped that the small patch of wild flowers will flourish in the future. Meanwhile the road is very busy, even with the 40mph sign and an extra warning sign to motorists approaching Maidstone; it is very dangerous for young children and elderly people to get across. On the credit side, it should be noted that the surface of the road has improved and large new lorries are quieter than the older ones. Maybe one day there will be a pedestrian crossing and the residents will be able to cross over with greater ease to enjoy the green swathe and the lovely view of the Downs from the path.

DIP WELLS IN THE LOOSE VALLEY

BRENDA HEATH

With water running so freely in Loose Village, there has always been a natural supply of fresh drinking water for the villagers before the mains water was laid on.

Some older residents called the wells 'spouts'. They are not like normal wells as they come to the surface, making washing and collecting the water in a container easy. The highest 'spout' is in Well Street, close to the junction with Vale Road. This is an attraction to visitors as it is pretty to look at and is large enough to 'water the dog' and to paddle in. This was recently well restored by local residents who laid stones around the edge, which of course is now largely used as a car parking space.

There are no signs now of the two 'spouts' which were lower down in Well Street outside numbers 11 and 14. These were used by the residents for household purposes. The water now surfaces outside the recently built houses lower down, making a small stream which flows into the trout pond at *Wool House Cottage*. The next dip well appears on the corner of Busbridge Road and was once used by the forge which stood opposite, on the corner of Mill Street and Busbridge Road.

A further dip well is at the top of High Banks close to *Southgate Barn* and another can be seen in the grounds of *The Old Vicarage* before the water runs into the brook. The water is seen again surfacing in *The Dairy House* and another dip well may be found by keen dog walkers in Kirkdale fields.

Walking down Old Loose Hill one can easily see a well in the grounds of *Sugar Loaves*, the bungalow built to replace the old cottage of the same name. Carry on walking to Malt House Hill and, behind *Rose Cottage*, there is a well which would have been used not only by the local householders but also by the village school nearby. Further up the road, outside *High Banks*, the cottage on the right, there is a well in the wall.



Collecting water from the Well Street/Vale Road dip well (in the 1930s?)

SHOPS AND DAILY LIFE IN LOOSE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

HELEN GALLAVIN

Despite the many hardships which people had to face during the last war, Loose at least was fairly lucky in the number of small shops it had. There were several general grocery stores, a Post Office, butchers, sweet shops and even a wool shop. Sadly most of these have now disappeared.

One general grocery shop called the *Walnut Tree Stores* (next to the *Walnut Tree* pub) was run at this time by Mr Herbert Larking and his wife. He was a huge man with thick 'pebble' glasses and he used to make daily deliveries round the village, taking his goods in an extremely large grocer's basket carried over his arm. His wife, in contrast was a very tiny lady, who also wore glasses and she used to serve in the shop where sweets, biscuits sold loose from the glass-covered tins, and various grocery items could be purchased.

On the other side of the road, was *Hawthorne Stores*, a shop run during the war by a Mr Huish. He didn't live on the premises but in a little house opposite the shop. This shop also sold grocery items and, although it was quite small, always looked extremely neat and tidy. At one time before the war, it used to be the Post Office as well.

A little further up the road was Mr F. Stannett's nursery. He owned land adjoining Walnut Tree Lane. Today Copper Tree Court stands on part of this land. My neighbour (Shirley Wilson) can remember being sent there when she was only about eight years old to buy potatoes, but she used to dread going as the potato basket was very heavy to carry home. The nursery also sold other vegetable crops.

Another errand my neighbour had was to take the accumulator for the wireless to the local garage (still known today as *Harvey's Garage* on the Loose Road) to have it refilled. This was an even heavier task than collecting potatoes. Next to *Harvey's Garage* was another grocer's and Miss Miller had a draper's shop next to this on the corner (where *Lloyd's Bank* is now).

There were several shops on Loose Green, one being the butcher's owned by Mr French. My neighbour can remember the previous owner particularly well as he gave her mother a bottle of home-made wine. Unfortunately he had the reputation of straining the wine through his old felt hat! Mr French bought the shop from Lacey Creed in 1936 and also owned a sweet shop in the village (now *Florence House*). His wife was in charge of the wool shop in Church Street. Beside the butcher's was a grocer's run by a Mr Saunders. He would come round daily to collect orders at 8am and would have them delivered by 10am!

On the other side of the butcher's was the Post Office. This is still there today but, during the war, the back part of the shop was used for stamping and sorting the mail which was then delivered. It was not sent to Maidstone for sorting as it is today. The front part was the Post Office counter and a little shop.

Mrs Bass used to run a grocery shop where *Davison's Wine Shop* is today, and there was yet another grocer's near the bottom of Pickering Street on the Loose side. Mr Harding owned this. He used to keep paraffin in a shed and my neighbour can remember buying it from there. They used it for their stoves to keep the hall and bathroom warm.

Rationing, of course, was brought in during the war. People would have to register with a general store in order to get their coupons. General shopping was mostly done in Maidstone. Two such shops were *Ashby's* and *Lawrence's* at the bottom of Maidstone High Street. A lady called Mrs White, who used to live in Walnut Tree Avenue, worked in *Ashby's* and my neighbour was always fascinated to see the skill and speed with which she used to pack sugar into blue paper bags. Typical rations for a week for one person were:

Meat 2s 2d per week - about 1lb meat including bone (1940)
1s 2d per week (1941)
Sugar 8oz.
Bacon 4oz.

A typical restaurant dinner would cost 7s 6d. Sugar cost 3d per lb, matches 1½d per box, beer 11d per pint, cigarettes 2s for 20, and a bottle of whisky 23s.

The recommended daily diet in 1940 was:

12oz. bread	1oz. fat (butter)
16oz. potatoes	6oz. vegetables
2oz. oatmeal	½pt. milk

Typical canteen prices were:

Soup 3d	Shepherd's Pie 6d
Tea 1d	Egg 3d
Coffee 2d	Toast 2d

My neighbour used to keep chickens during the war to help the 'War Effort' and can remember pickling the eggs in isinglass to preserve them. She also remembers 'Khaki knitting'; the whole family used to take part in this. As she wasn't very old at the time she found knitting extremely hard but managed to hide up in the scullery with their maid Joan who used to do some of her knitting for her. She used to knit scarves and gloves for the soldiers and her father took great pride in making blanket squares. He unfortunately had the habit of dropping stitches but always claimed that holes in blankets were good for you.

There used to be a milk delivery during the war, and the bottles had cardboard tops. Also the ice-man used to come round delivering ice to any one who had an ice box.

So, as you can see from the above, wartime Loose was very fortunate with its shops and services.

ANNA WINTERFLOOD OF FILMERS FARM

ROGER THORNBURGH

What follows is a transcription of the greater part of a tape recording of two interviews that I had in 1988 with Miss Anna Winterflood at St. Martin's Residential Home, Larkfield, shortly after she moved from her own home at 441 Loose Road. Although a rather frail 93 years of age, she had a lively mind and clear memories of living in Loose early in this century, and I am very grateful that she so willingly agreed to be recorded. She was born on 4 November 1895 and died on 21 January 1989. In transcribing - and, for this article, abbreviating - the interviews, I have included many of the conversational words and phrases that she used, so that, as well as seeing what she had to say, readers may perhaps discern something of the personality of Anna Winterflood. The words in square brackets are mine, and either summarise or explain what Anna said.

My mother was born at Pluckley, down Ashford way - they had a farm down there; and my father he was born at Manningtree, Essex, [and later became a farmer at Mistley Park]. My father had an aunt living in Loose, and I don't know what happened but the family left home and came up here with his aunt. [The aunt was an Antrum, one of the family of millers who ran the village mill at the bottom of Mill Street. Anna recalled both Edward Antrum and his son William.] My father's uncle was Edward Antrum's father - he was a William; his grandson was christened after him.

I had two brothers and two sisters. My eldest sister [Elizabeth] and my eldest brother [Jack], there was only two years between them, and then my next sister [Ellen, known as Nell] there was five years between her and the brother, and then me there was another big gap - I was five years; and my youngest brother and I, there was nine years and none in between. My eldest sister was twenty when my youngest brother was born - Herbert George his name was.

My father had a big [milk] round. He used to do all the big houses in Loose, 'cos father had a lot of Jersey cattle. [He] used to hire a lot of ground; where those houses are built opposite the *Chequers*, in that field, he used to have that - that was a meadow then. They used to call it the *Chequers Meadow*. And father had practically all the valley from *Filmers* down to the pond, right through to *Woodlawn*. And then he had some over Boughton. There was only ten acres to the actual farm, but father took it because it had such a lot of buildings and he wanted the building for cattle. He had a lot of Jersey cattle. He had a bit of everything; he used to grow fruit and he had hops. He had all kinds of fruit. He used to have what they call a mixed farm, 'cos he used to say if one season was wrong for one thing, generally he [succeeded] with another. His main object was cattle. The hop gardens were up Pickering Street, right up there. I'll tell you what he used to have, all the ground down in the valley there where the quarries are [below *Merriehills*]. The cattle [were] down in the valley part and on the top of the hill he had hops, but he used to say hops didn't do so well here. [The hops were dried] at Boughton, what they call *the Cliff* - there was oasthouses there.

[My father] employed three brothers and then some other men as well, and then in the busy time he used to have more. I don't know if you know hops - someone's got to understand them else they lose some money. Well, my father from Essex didn't understand them, and old Mr Martin he was the foreman on the farm and he was a proper hopper man. He knew anything there was to know about hops and my father didn't know anything. [So he handed over responsibility for the hops to Mr Martin] but nothing else. He looked after the cattle himself. [The three brothers were] Israel Kitchenham, Dick Kitchenham and George Kitchenham. They used to live up Well Street; one of them was married and two single.

[Anna was born on the 4 November 1895.] Dr Jones kept teasing my mother, he says 'Ah', he says, 'You nearly had a Guy Fawkes'. He was a good doctor though. He always seemed to be at our place. My father, he was a TB and my elder brother and I, when we were small, showed signs of it. My mother was always very particular what we had and what she thought was best for us, and we never had the TB. [My father] used to doctor himself a lot. He was a veterinary surgeon and he knew different herbs he used to take; but he lived till he was sixty. In the fields he used to find out where they were and he'd look after them and [he'd say] 'Don't you touch that 'cos I want that. Don't you interfere with that'. And we used to have to not touch the herbs what he wanted. And he was a big believer in dandelion. He used to have a shelf and nobody had to touch it, anything on that where he kept all... mind you they were all labelled, all his herbs in tins. Mother never used to interfere with them. I think it was when I had a bad turn and they thought I was going in consumption, and there used to be some gypsies used to come up from Headcorn, and mother used to give them lots of what we outgrew and that. And I was sitting out the back of the house, 'cos I wasn't well, and they said to my mother, 'What's the matter with her?'. And mother explained, and they said, 'What you want to do is keep the cows all shut up all night. You go down and open it in the morning and stay in there a little while and breathe in all their breath, the herbs in their breath. Well, that did cure [me], and mother told somebody else about it, and they said it cured their little [one] - what it was in the herbs. They used to get it out in the breath without letting any fresh air in. Of course you get the cows if it's shut up like that, oh it's ever so strong the herbs.

We used to [work on the farm]. Not a lot. With the milk, you see, more with that. My father and my nan used to do the milking, mother used to stand over the dairy, and we used to help her. We used to set the milk. All the fresh milk went out first, and what was left was always put in a big pan, white pan, and used to stand twelve hours, and then she used to take the cream off and make it into butter. And then some people used to come up for the skimmed milk - they used to get skimmed milk and whey rather than waste it. Father used to rear all his own calves. They used to have a meal, Thorley's meal, in with the skimmed milk which made up for the being taken all the cream off. See and if you do it by hand, skimming, you don't take it all off. There was only one corn merchant in Maidstone used to keep ['Thorley's meal'], and it was rather expensive but it was good. It used to come in linen bags, 10lbs bag. You used to give it to them... hot the milk and then you used to let it stand and cool a bit then stir this meal in it. I don't know what was in it, but it used to [give] a nice smell. We used to have a milk cart and had churns in it and take the lot round like that. And we used to do Allfree's at Boughton, Mr Marsham down in *Hayle Cottage* - all the gentry, 'cos he kept all Jerseys you see. He

never had any bother with it. He used to sell quite a lot of the calves; he never used to part with a heifer calf. He knew what he was doing, he used to pick out the best of the bull calves for stock for other people, and he used to save all the heifers himself and bring them up, keep them till they calved, and then he used to sell them what they used to call 'calf at the foot'. He never sold a heifer calf, he always used to keep them and then sell them when they was old enough - the calf would go with the mother; whoever bought one would buy the two. You could get a better price by putting them with a calf at foot. Nobody round here had Jerseys, only him. He had very big ideas my father did. He had to have the best of anything.

My father never had a job to get a workman. Well, of course, at that time the farm labourer's money was very low - it was starvation - and [he] got into trouble with all the other farmers 'cos he paid two shillings a week more than they did, 'cos he used to say, 'Well you can't expect anybody to be honest if you don't pay them a wage to live'.

[Mother] kept house - no [farm work], and neither did we until the 1914 war, and then we had to go and work on the farm. The cowman's wife used to always come, and we used to have a woman in the house to help mother 'cos she had a big house and there was five children, and she used to do all the cooking - she used to make all her own bread. She never bought anything what she could make herself - lots of pastry for pies and that. [She] used to make three big cakes every week, then sometimes Mrs Kitchenham that used to help work in the house, when she was making ours, she used to make her one. And that's how we went on - you know, there was none of this 'I'm better than you' or anything; they was all on a level. Mother never bought any fruit, never thought of buying a tin of fruit. [Most of the family's food came from the farm.] We used to have all our butter, and she used to make us eat a lot of cream with fruit, 'cos she used to think that it helped us, knowing the weakness of one in the family - there wasn't a day went by what we didn't have cream. My father, as I tell you he was TB, he always used to have a quarter of a pint of cream, hot, the last thing before he went to bed. He used to say it softened his chest from coughing. [Anna's parents] died within nine days of each other. My mother died first and my father went unconscious that night and he lived nine days. Mother was 54 when she died and dad was 60. [This was in 1917. After that] my aunt [Anna's mother's sister, Mrs Finch, who lived in Boughton Quarries] used to come in, and Mrs Kitchenham - she had seven children of her own. We all used to run one in the other, you know, there wasn't a lot of difference. Then when we got old enough we all had to go on the milk round; well, didn't have to, we used to go on the milk round, we girls. My brother was 18 or 19 and my uncle [Mr Spradbrow] lived near and he was a good farmer, and he used to come and look over it and tell my brother what he got to do. And then we had another old gent... well not old he wasn't - well he seemed old to us - he used to be in charge of all of them when my uncle wasn't there. My uncle used to tell him what to do. He lived down at Loddington. That's how we managed. Then in 1922 the farm was sold 'cos it was on the Park estate, and that's when we split up. [My father] never owned the farm.

[The previous occupant of the *Filmers Farm* had been a man called Hubbard - Hubbard's Lane was named after him.] It used to be Tylers Lane that went up to Coxheath. Tylers Lane started at *Filmers* and went right up to Coxheath. They've altered the name to Hubbards Lane after we were there. It was called Tylers Lane because Wat Tyler was supposed to have assembled some of his

forces up there on that heath when he went to London [during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381].

[The track between *Filmers Farm* and Boughton Quarries] was a road at one time, but it's gradually deteriorated. It's only used as a footpath now. [The cottage down this track, just before *Herts House*, was where Anna's grandmother, Mrs Spradbrow, lived.] The house in the wood we used to call it. Some of [her children] were born there and some of them at Pluckley. I was eight years old when she died.

We always had to go to church three times of a Sunday. As children we used to go in the morning, Sunday School first then go to church, then we used to come home midday; and then in the afternoon we used to go to Sunday School and when there was church services we had to go to that; and then as a treat - we thought that was a treat - we should go to church of an evening, not when we was very small but as we got older. There was no other houses [near us], so we used to meet people who we wouldn't otherwise. [The vicar was the Revd. Gardner-Waterman - nicknamed 'Old Bin and Gone'.] I don't know if it was true or not, but it was always said when he used to be at Huckling and Bicknor - he used to be vicar there - he'd got a christening, and he waited and waited, the people didn't come up, and so on the church door he put a label 'Been and gone'.

[Anna remembered the working quarries.] In Well Street - that ground that Piper's got - there was one quarry there; there was another one opposite *Salts House*; and one down below us at *Filmers* - that was a big one. All through there used to belong to Startups at *Salts Place* - they used to run the quarries as well, the farm [*Salts Farm*] and the quarries. Their ground finished on those quarries. And then there was *Gurney's Pond*, down by the bridge - that was quarried years ago [before Anna's time?]. I suppose [Piper's quarry in Well Street] ran out of stone worth quarrying, and then it was left vacant, a rough old place for a time, and then [Piper] tidied it up a bit, and it turned into a rough farm. See, he used to work in the mill, Mr Piper did, and he had his hand cut off by some machinery in there and he couldn't do his work. So his father bought that old piece of rough ground there for him, and then he was set up with chicken and pigs and like, and that's how he started. That was George Piper. There was Joe Piper [his brother] at the corner of the brook [*Florence House*, the shop]. He's blind he is; he's gradually gone blind, he wasn't blind when he was young.

We was between the two parishes - it was easy for us to go to either. We used the grocer's shop up top of Loose Hill, and then we used to go over Boughton, to Boughton Green, 'cos you see there wasn't much difference in the distance. When we was young, Stace [Frederick Stace] used to live at that grocer's shop, and then he went just a little way up the road where you go up those steps to the two houses, he moves up there and took the *Post Office*. Funnell [Harry Funnell, who had been Mr Stace's assistant] took it after him when he went to the *Post Office*. [Next to the grocer's was the *Working Men's Club*.] I remember that when they all used to go up there of an evening - all the young fellows. Man by the name of Bedford used to live there - he used to run the club. I don't know much about it but I think it used to be quite a good club - not a rowdy turnout at all. It belonged to Mr Marsham. I don't know why it faded out - oh, I think it was when they put the trams on into Maidstone. See, they used to get on the tram now and go to Maidstone; they used to have several places to go there, but until they had the tram they

always used to use the *Working Men's Club*. It used to be one big room at the back. [There was] just entertainment for the young fellows of the village, you know, keep them off the street. I think it was well patronised, the club. I'm not sure but I believe it was a man the name of Johnson - came from away somewhere - made it into a shop. [Creed's, the butcher's, was the other side of the grocer's.] They used to be friends of my mother and father, they were. The boys used to put a lot of the time up with us because they got room to move about - they only got a back yard there at the butcher's shop, it was only a narrow yard - and they could have the freedom. My brother was there, and Gilbert and Lacey Creed. I don't know how it was but Lacey made up his mind he wanted to go to Canada, and they got nobody out there, and my mother got two brothers and he went out to one of them. But he didn't stay long there - I don't think he could do as he liked there so much, he had to take his chances like the rest. Gilbert was a much nicer boy than Lacey. They used to come in age with my [elder] sister and I [Gilbert was sister Ellen's age and Lacey was Anna's age], and they used to spend most of their time up with us because they got freedom there. There was all the farm - we used to make the time up [playing] hide-and-seek and all sorts of games like that. And then in the winter time we used to play parlour games, 'cos they always seemed as if they were boxed up, up in the yard, and Lacey used to revolt against it, he didn't like it. And that's how my parents started - he got rather racketty and my parents says to him, 'Well, you'd better come up to our place where you got more freedom'. Sometimes they used to come up our place and not go home for a week. Although my elder brother was older than them, still they all agreed together.

When I first remember, people the name of Fulleger [ran the *King's Arms*]. When they came over there, they went along the Loose road to a house along there. There was a brother and sister and brother-in-law used to live there. They were quite nice people. Was it Moyes come after them? I fancy it was, I'm not sure, and he wasn't as popular as they were. [Old photographs show a large shed in the garden behind the pub and a sloping path up the bank to the garden.] The Fullegers had that shed built, where the people could go - [there was] no protection in the garden or there at all, only as you go in the bar. Well, everybody didn't want to go in the bar, so they turned the garden into a public garden. They had walkway to make it easier for people to get up there. See, there used to be such a lot of people come out from Maidstone for a walk, and they used to drop in there if the men wanted a drink and that, and perhaps a couple got several children, they got nowhere to take them, so they turned their own private garden into a public garden so there was somewhere for the wife and children to go. I remember when it used to be a flower garden and a vegetable garden. Out the back there's the stables, by Creed's side; they belonged to the pub.

[Below the *King's Arms* was *Forge Cottage*.] It used to be a forge there. It used to do a very good trade. Bonny used to keep that. [The forge was on the right of the house], joining up to the gardens of the *King's Arms*. I suppose it was when I was about twelve that was closed as a forge. [The Bonnys] had one daughter and she died suddenly when she was eleven, and I know it shattered them altogether and they came out of it. They were really a Coxheath family. [Anna thought there were two brothers, the one at Loose who had the daughter who died young, and one at Coxheath who had two sons and two daughters.] One of the [Coxheath] daughters was a teacher at Loose School - Emily Bonny. And then I think one of the boys was a teacher in Maidstone. By the bottom of Well Street, that used to be forge; and the house that lies up on

the bank in the corner there, that used to be the house with the forge. My father used to take his [horses] to Boughton. We used to have an old pony to do the milk round, and I used to take him there to be shoed.

[Opposite *Forge Cottage* is *Mexican House*. Who lived there?] Oh, that used to be a mystery. For years - as long as I can remember - there used to be.. what was the man's name? A sort of a hermit... Shadgett [Thomas Shadgett, and the house was then called *Holly Lodge*.] Nobody liked him. I don't know whether he died; I can't remember him going away. I think he died. He used to keep one maid and I think she had a rotten life of it. Then Staples bought it and he lived there for a long, long time. He had *Mexican Villa* and all that [built]. And then he had those houses built along by the Lancet, two pair of houses there, and he went and lived in one of those himself, and Miss Davis and Mr Storr come to live in *Mexican House*. Mr Storr was a corn merchant at Paddock Wood. Miss Davis was his sister - half-sister. They lived there for years. They used to have a corn merchant business over the bridge - between Peter Street and the river - they had a big corn store there. Most people used to have all the corn from there and then Cooper took it after him.

[At *Antrum's mill* in the village] they used to grind the corn. [Anna referred to William Antrum as 'Uncle Bill'] - he was my father's uncle. Then Edward Antrum followed his father, and he was a big man in his way and he didn't like to know people who had to work for his living. Then gradually the mills went down. Uncle had the other mill through the other end of the valley - near to *Woodlawn* [*Little Ivy*]. When Edward died, [they] gradually went down and down the mills did. I remember my father very put out about it. Bill Antrum, the grandson, he thought he was coming into a good business there, and instead of that, Edward was such a big man in his way, he had gone through the lot nearly - they were nearly broke and they had to sell. So the consequence was Bill hadn't got hardly anything, when he'd been brought up to think he was going to have those two mills - and they were good mills too. He used to supply everybody in the countryside and Maidstone with corn. Well, I remember quite well when they used to have extra rush on corn, he used to come to farmers to lend him horses to get it out. Oh, they were good businesses when Uncle Bill was alive, but it was Edward who was such a big man in his way, lived beyond his means. Course it went pop. [The younger William Antrum had a son], Bruce, and when things started going wrong at the mill, he went out to America and he died out there with TB. Then there were two girls, Phyllis and Joan.

[*Wilson's mill* by Springhead Pond in Salts Lane] was a good mill too. We used to be very friendly with all the Wilsons. All us kids used to play together. There's Charlie - he went to Canada, and then there was Jessie - she went to London, then there was Alan, Stanley, Douglas, Ron, Robert and Ken. When they got down on the rocks - I don't know where it was they went downhill - Ken came with us, the youngest one of all.

[*Gurney's mill* stood beside the viaduct.] I remember Gurney's there. There used to be old Mr Gurney, and then there was one, two, three.. four girls, and two boys.. yes, that's right, Joe Gurney and three more, no, two more. One of the girls married Brian, and they lived where Haynes lives now [*Watermill House*], that was there. Those two mills belonged to Wilson. It was a dirty looking old place, *Gurney's mill*, 'cos it was old paper which is made up into cardboard. I tell you where a lot of it went to - America. America used to buy a lot of it,

for temporary houses or something. But it used to stand a good knocking about. I know my father, when he was getting short of chicken coops, I think he bought half a dozen down there for the young chicken, and they did wear well 'cos they're soaked in oil after they're made, and they all used to keep out the water. They used to lay in tanks of oil.

[Turning to the subject of Loose School, at the top of Malthouse Hill, Anna recalled the layout.] The Infants is up the back, at the back of the main building, well it was joined on. The Girls' School was further in and the Boys' was just up the top of the hill. They were all separate. We used to have scripture first thing of a morning, then we used to have tables, then we went on to the main... like writing and arithmetic and all that, and geography and history the rest of the day. And then the last lesson used to be religion when I went to school. I don't know about the boys, I only know about the girls, because the schools were all separate. I always used to come in well with nature study. I always remember that because we were all on the farm and that, and we used to run about as we liked, and I used to always come out generally top for that. Friday afternoon was games afternoon, from half past two till four, till we came out. They used to have what games they could in the playground. They never had the games like they do now. The two playgrounds joined, but they had a brick wall between them. It was one big playground and then they had this brick wall to divide the boys and girls. It went up to the garden at *Rosemount*. There used to be a bank, and *Rosemount* gardens were on the top and our playground was underneath. There was always a lot of skipping in our lot, and rounders and all those sort of games. I don't know about the boys. They used to have football and cricket, I think; it was a fairly big playground, and they had to have it there. And very often their football used to.. we used to like that - the football used to come over in the girls' playground when they was playing and we used to have to leave off and take the ball back. Mr Richards was Schoolmaster when I went to school, and Miss Cook was the Headmistress at the Girls' School, and Miss Pearce in the Infants. [Miss Cook was strict and] she had such a lot of favourites - that's what she used to upset people over; if she didn't like 'em, didn't matter what they did they never did anything right, she never give 'em a fair deal. [Anna was a bit doubtful about whether she herself was a favourite.] Lot of things that I knew, being on a farm and that, and we was allowed to get about the farm and that, I could tell her what she didn't know, so she used to favour me a bit there; and I was fairly good at lessons. I went there when I was six and I stayed there until I was old enough to leave school - well, what was I? I suppose I was about eight or nine. And my mother's sister, [Miss Lindridgel], was a schoolmis.. er, private governess, and she had an accident and hurt her skull and so she couldn't keep on with it, so what she did she used to have just a few pupils, had them at home - she never had the school 'cos she couldn't do it. She used to live in Loose - well she didn't till she hurt her back - you know those houses just above the tram shed, tram terminus, that lie back off the main road. They were very nice houses at the time - well, I think they are now - and they always used to be known as *Post Office Avenue*. [Anna went to this aunt for some of her education.] My sister older than me [Ellen] she was ever such a good scholar; she went away to *Bromley College*. And my elder brother he wasn't much of a scholar, he didn't like school. If he could get out on the farm and away from school, he was suited like that; he liked farm better than school. [After she left *Bromley College*, Ellen] went away for a bit. She had a decent job in an office work. She didn't like that, that was too quiet for her. I forget what she did after that. I didn't like school like farming; that was more in my line.

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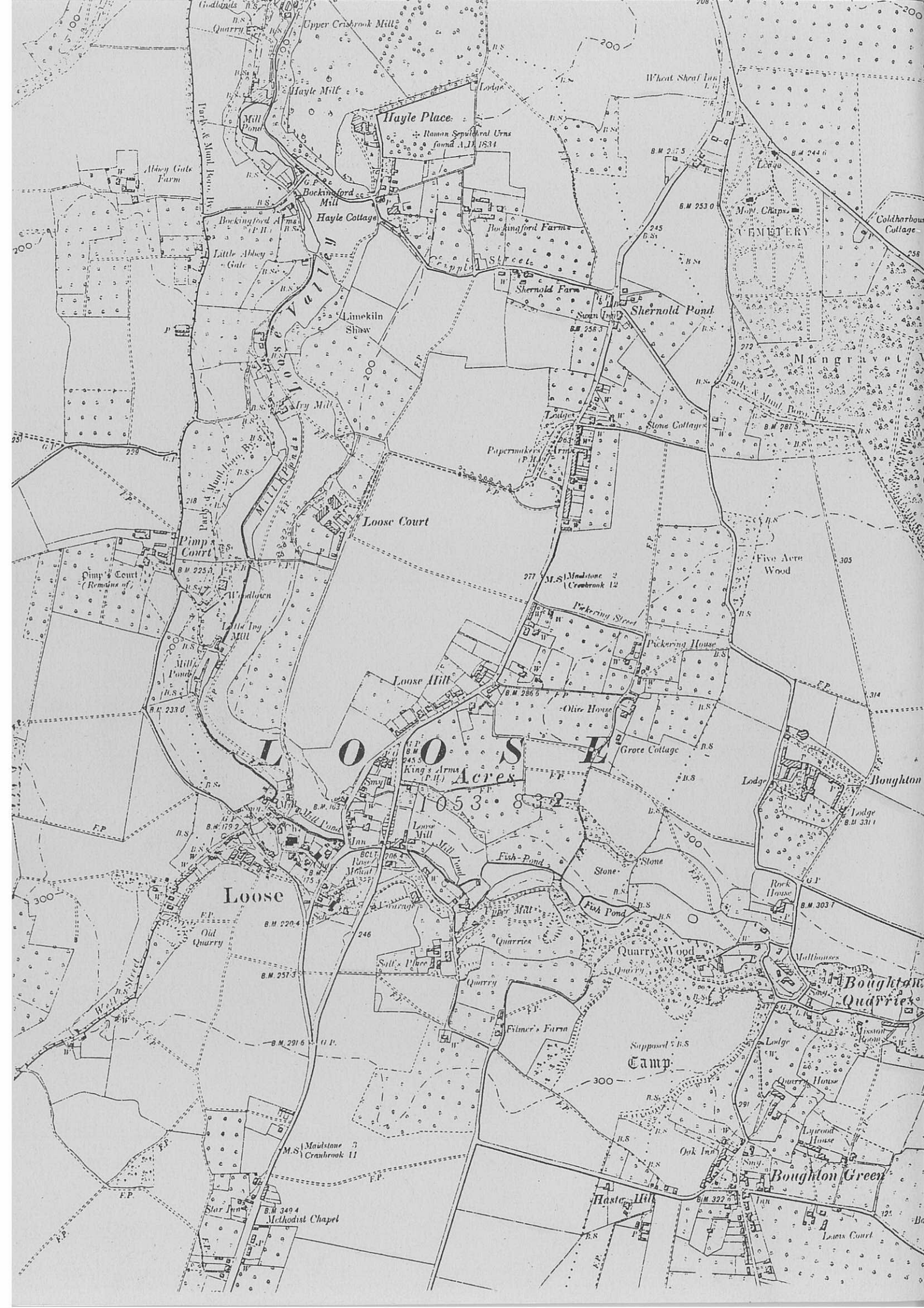
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