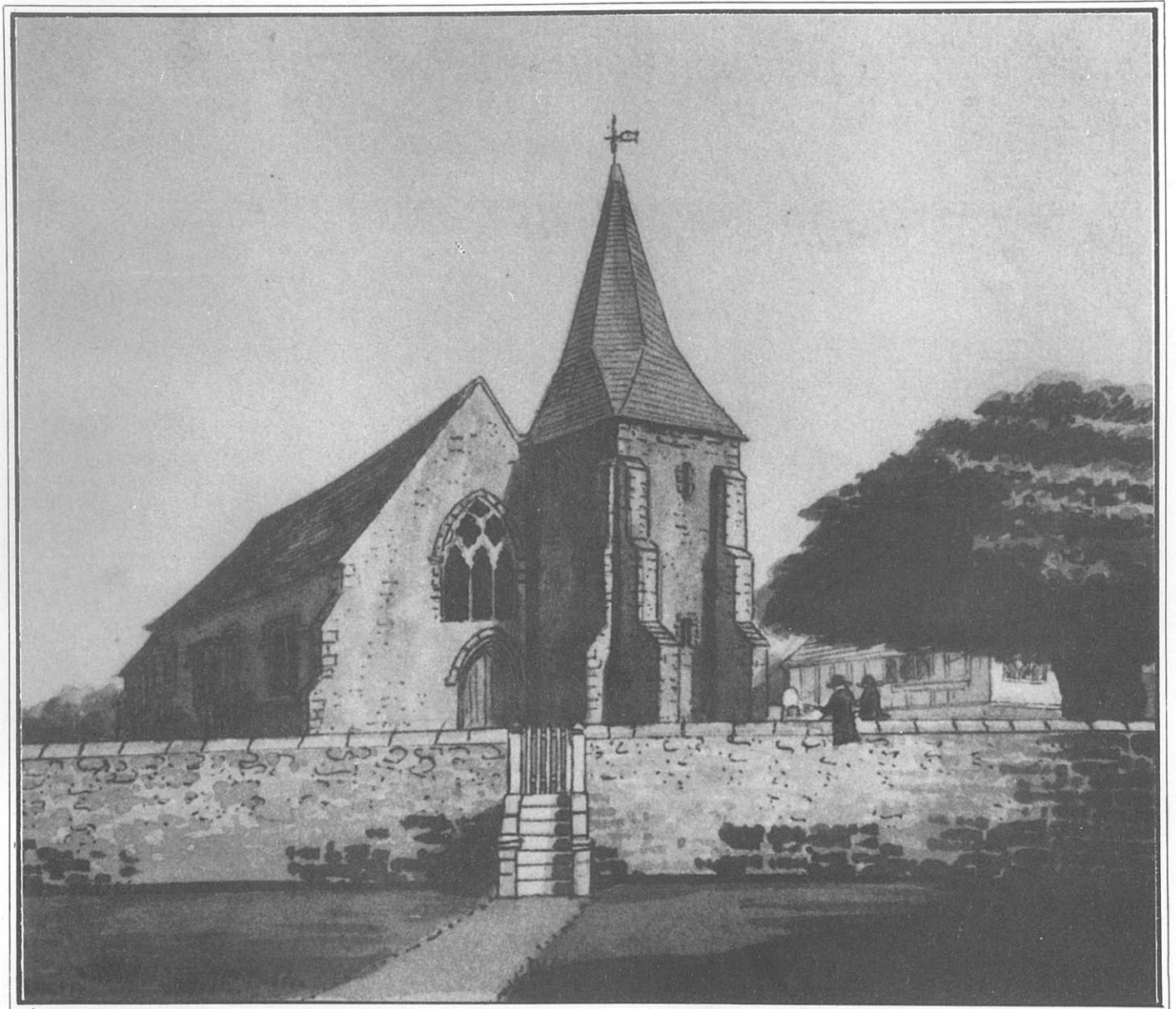


# Loose Threads

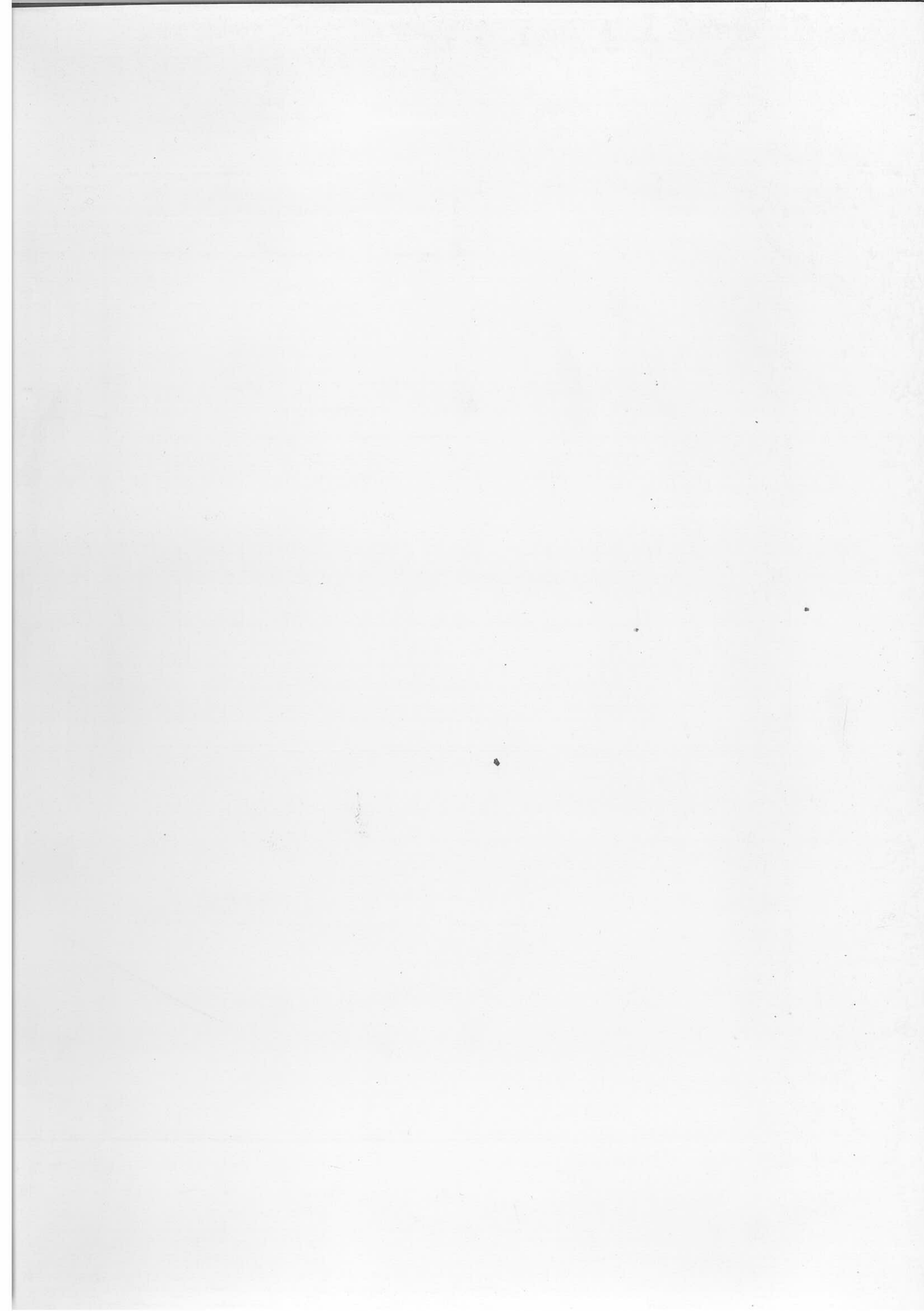
Journal of the Loose Area History Society



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Front cover: 'Loose Church, Kent', watercolour by Thomas Fisher, c1794, the earliest known picture of the parish church. (Reproduced courtesy of Kent Archaeological Society).		
Back cover : The Loose Valley as shown on the six-inch to the mile O.S. map of 1909.		

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## EDITORIAL

We begin this issue in the rather misty Middle Ages with a look at goings-on in the parish church in 1327 - the subject of Pat Jenner's talk to the Society last year; and proceed with articles on *Bagent's Cottages* (now no longer standing), a local mason-cum-farmer who once lived in what is now the *Swan* pub, the physical and financial trials of early residents of *Salts Place*, a connection between Loose and a manor house on the Isle of Wight, the ill-fated schemes for a Loose Valley railway, the influential and generous patron of Loose - George Marsham, and *Pear Tree Cottage* (perhaps the oldest dwelling in the parish) and its occupants. Finally, we have an edited transcript of an interview made in 1975 with the *Hayle Mill* papermaker and Loose Swiss Scouts founder, John Barcham Green - the subject of another and more recent talk by Clive Bradburn.

Readers who choose to consult the references at the end of articles will note the regular appearance of the letters 'C.K.S.'. These stand for the 'Centre for Kentish Studies' which came into being at the beginning of this year - the result of a merger between the Local Studies Collection, which had been housed at Springfield, and the Kent Archives Office. So the old K.A.O. reference has become C.K.S., though all the existing reference letters and numbers that went with the K.A.O. prefix have remained unchanged.

Pat Jenner, Roger Thornburgh,  
Editorial Committee.

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John Watson, 3 Rushmead Drive, Maidstone	Tel, 744360	Parish Church

## ONE DAY IN 1327

PAT JENNER

The message came that upon the morning of the Saturday following the Feast of St Hilary in the year 1327, Archdeacon Hugh de Forsham, Rector of Sundridge and Canon of Chichester, Canterbury, was to inspect the building and goods of All Saints Church, Loose. [Did it look much as our front cover picture of c1794 shows it? *Ed.*] Thirty-five years separated the last visitation which had been made by Richard de Clive.<sup>1</sup>

The dawn of the 17 January 1327 found the people of Loose assembled in the nave of the church. The church officers present were the Rector, two Questmen (forerunners of Churchwardens), the Constable - who was responsible for the parish armour and bow practice, the Dog Whipper and the Clerk (a lay single man who assisted at the services). It was still early when de Forsham, accompanied by his own Clerk arrived on horseback.

The inspection began immediately as the people were called outside to witness the poor state of the thatch on the tower and porch. Upon entering the church the Clerk was instructed to note that the font was broken and had no lock (necessary against the theft of font water much sought after for medicine and by witches). The nave, for which the people of the parish were responsible - and are still responsible today - caused no comment and, with the Dog Whipper keeping back dogs and small children, the Rector's Clerk ushered in the party through the screen door and into the chancel, an oblong space, empty except for a free-standing stone altar, a piscina in the south wall and the Parish Chest against the north wall.

Law prescribed that each parish should have a chest made either of timber boards or carved from the solid, in which the church vestments, vessels, documents and all other goods were to be kept.<sup>2</sup> The single lock had three keys, one kept by the Bishop, one by the priest in charge and one by a godly layman of the parish. As it will be seen from the full quotation of the visitation at the end of this article, items needed to be replaced and repaired and Loose was very fortunate in only being fined; two days later the Rector at Detling was excommunicated, together with all his congregation, for a similar list of deficiencies, and it was alleged that the Great Tythe had been misappropriated, which the Rector denied. It would have taken some months to have that dire position righted, during which time noone could be baptised, married or buried in the rites of the church.

De Forsham and his Clerk rode immediately to the Church of the Blessed Mary in Maidstone (on the site of the present All Saints Church). He arrived so early everyone had to be fetched - which was duly recorded. While the parish goods and people were being assembled, Thomas Kershoke arrived carrying a bell and psalter belonging to All Saints, Loose and he was ordered to be sequestrated to answer as to his possession of them.

Meantime the Rector of Loose and his two Questmen considered as to how they could make sufficient money to do all the work required and avoid paying the fines. There were four options:

- 1) Money could be raised by holding a Church Ale, especially if the Lord of the Manor, Sir John de Fremingham, would give the ingredients.
- 2) The Questmen could make money by permitting burials in the nave of the church, which at that time had a beaten earth floor; there was no set fee and they could ask of the relatives as much as they thought they could get.
- 3) The Parish Chest held items of jewellery and trinkets which were hired to brides who had none of their own.
- 4) Money could be obtained by hiring out books, vestments and vessels - which seems to have been done already, to the church at Maidstone.

It is recorded that all the omissions were made good, with the exception of the repair to the chancel, the condition of which continued to deteriorate.

That Loose had a Rector in 1327 is a matter of some interest. He would be entitled to both the Great and Little Tythes and, since Christ Church, Canterbury had a resident Reeve in the parish<sup>4</sup> to oversee the selling and transport of crops from their land, Loose was a place of some importance. Bad harvests and starvation in the county in the early years of the century, together with minor outbreaks of plague, had been followed by some good seasons when the population of Loose expanded, causing too many people to live on too little land, hence the shortage of coinage and concern about replacements.

In 1327 the Church of the Blessed Mary at Maidstone had a priest in charge, the Rector of the parish being Cardinal Anibald de Cessano, Archbishop of Naples, who drew the value of the Great Tythes and never set foot in the town.

Loose lost the right to a Rector in 1395.<sup>5</sup> While staying at Leeds Castle, King Richard II granted to Archbishop Courtenay the licence to establish a College of Priests at Maidstone. In order to help finance this building programme, the incomes from Loose and Detling were used, thus reducing these two parishes to chapelries of the College which functioned from 1398 with Sir John Wotton as its first Master. It was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1546. Loose and Detling thereafter became parishes once again, although Loose never regained Rectors.

Archdeacons were feared persons in medieval times. They were judge and jury at their own courts (Loose had no offenders in 1327; Maidstone had three). Hugh de Forsham was assiduous in his task. He had been at Charing the day before his dawn arrival at Loose and early on Monday morning he was at Detling, continuing to Westwell the same day. French was his spoken language and the Rolls are written in Latin on parchment. It will be seen that the section for Loose has been sewn together in an inaccurate order - the exhortation which should have been read first is in the middle and the report begins abruptly:

'The bell tower of the church and porch at the entrance to the church are badly covered. The parishioners appeared and were enjoined to have the said defects repaired by the Feast of All Saints under penalty of forty shillings. The ceiling of the chancel is cracked and in bad repair, there is no pyx for the Body of Christ. The Rector appeared and was enjoined to have the defects made good by the Feast of St Michael under penalty of forty shillings. The Body of Christ is placed in a case without a lock. The censer is deficient in chains. The parishioners enjoined to have it repaired by St Augustine's day under penalty of half a marc. Two

candlesticks and two tapers for processions were lacking. The Rector was enjoined to find them by the Feast of St Michael. The Missal wants binding.

In the name of God Amen. We the Commissary above said, warn and enjoin you the Chaplains celebrating in the church and chapels that without licence of the Prior and Chapter of Christ Church, Canterbury, during the vacancy of the See, you exercise not jurisdiction nor intermeddle under pain of excommunication on all those who contravert [the said order] and of an interdict on the church and chapels which excommunication and interdict we forthwith publish in the writings.

A gradual is lacking; the psalter and manual want binding, all the albs are dirty, a stole and maniple are lacking, the principle cloths are lacking, there is no rochet, there is no surplice for the Clerk, the font is all broken and is without a lock, the churchyard is badly fenced'.<sup>6</sup>

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> C. Eveleigh Woodruff (trans.), 'Early Visitation Rolls', *Arch. Cant.*, xlv (1918).
- <sup>2</sup> Order of King Edward II in Council, 1287.
- <sup>3</sup> W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest*, CUP 1960.
- <sup>4</sup> Lecture by Dr Andrew Butcher of University of Kent, at Loose on 7 March 1988.
- <sup>5</sup> R.V. Hewett, ed., *Maidstone Official Charter Brochure 1549-1949*, Maidstone Borough Council 1949.
- <sup>6</sup> 'Early Visitation Rolls', as above, Roll No.2.

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### MISCELLANEA 1

from Pat Jenner's collection

#### Anglo-Saxon Bride's Contract

I take thee to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and health, to be bonny and buxom in bed and at board, till death do us part, and thereto I plight thee my troth.

#### Medieval Church Ale

Well is he that can get the soonest to it and spends the most at it, he is counted the godliest man of all the rest ... because it is spent upon his church forsooth.

#### The Scholar Parson

Incomprehensible on Sunday and invisible for the rest of the week.

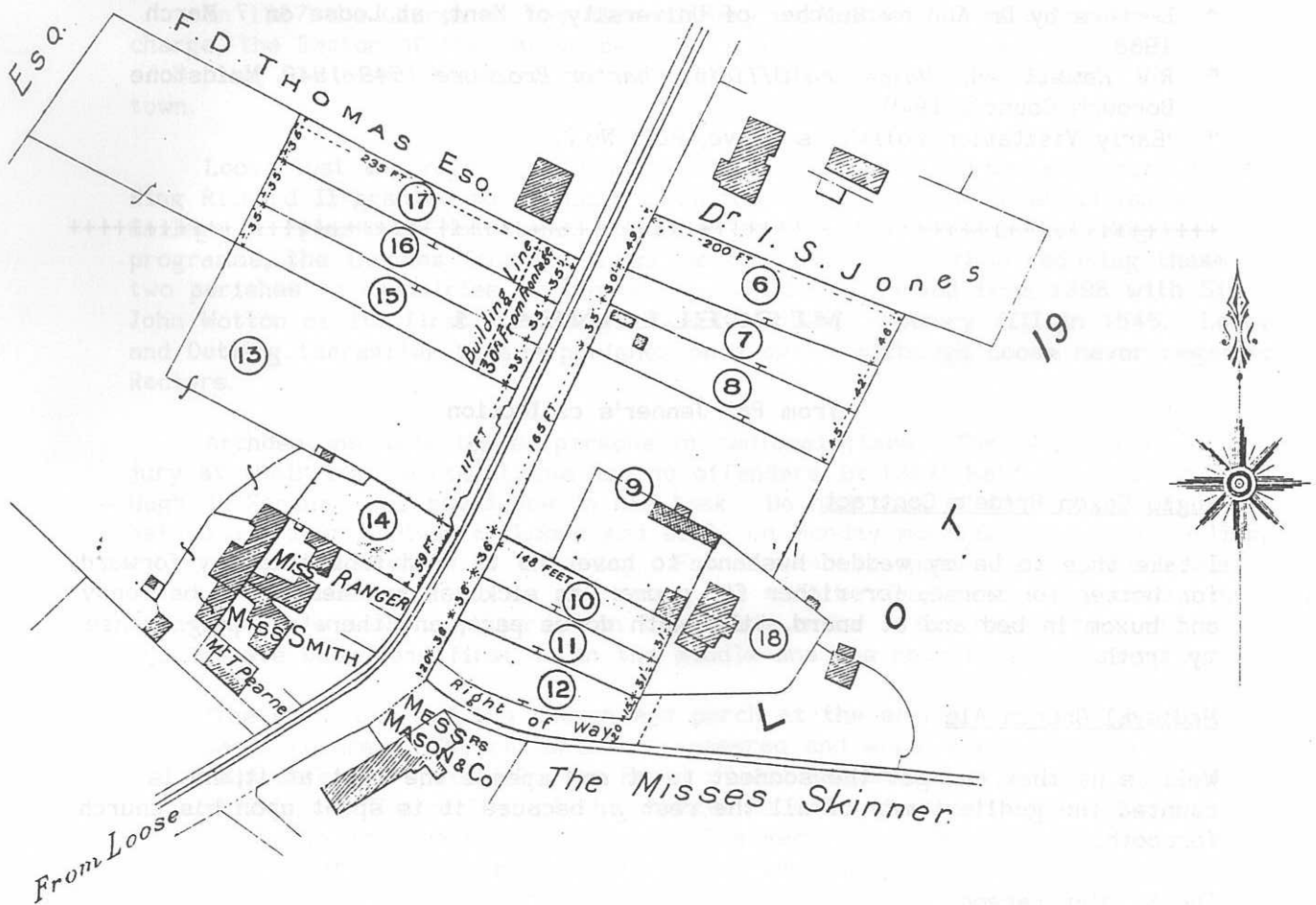


## BAGENT'S COTTAGES

BRENDA CORDING

If by chance you should be walking along the Walnut Tree Avenue footpath, by standing near the north-west corner of the King George V playing field and looking over in the direction of the houses called *Lyncroft* and *Wynsdale*, you can glimpse a kitchen-garden wall which was once part of one of the properties of the old Peale Estate. Still quite clearly visible, too, is an old stone, brick and tile stable (recently refurbished by its owner). The stable is complete with a coach house, inside which - and still intact - are the large harness pegs inserted into the thick ragstone wall and, overhead, a very spacious loft.

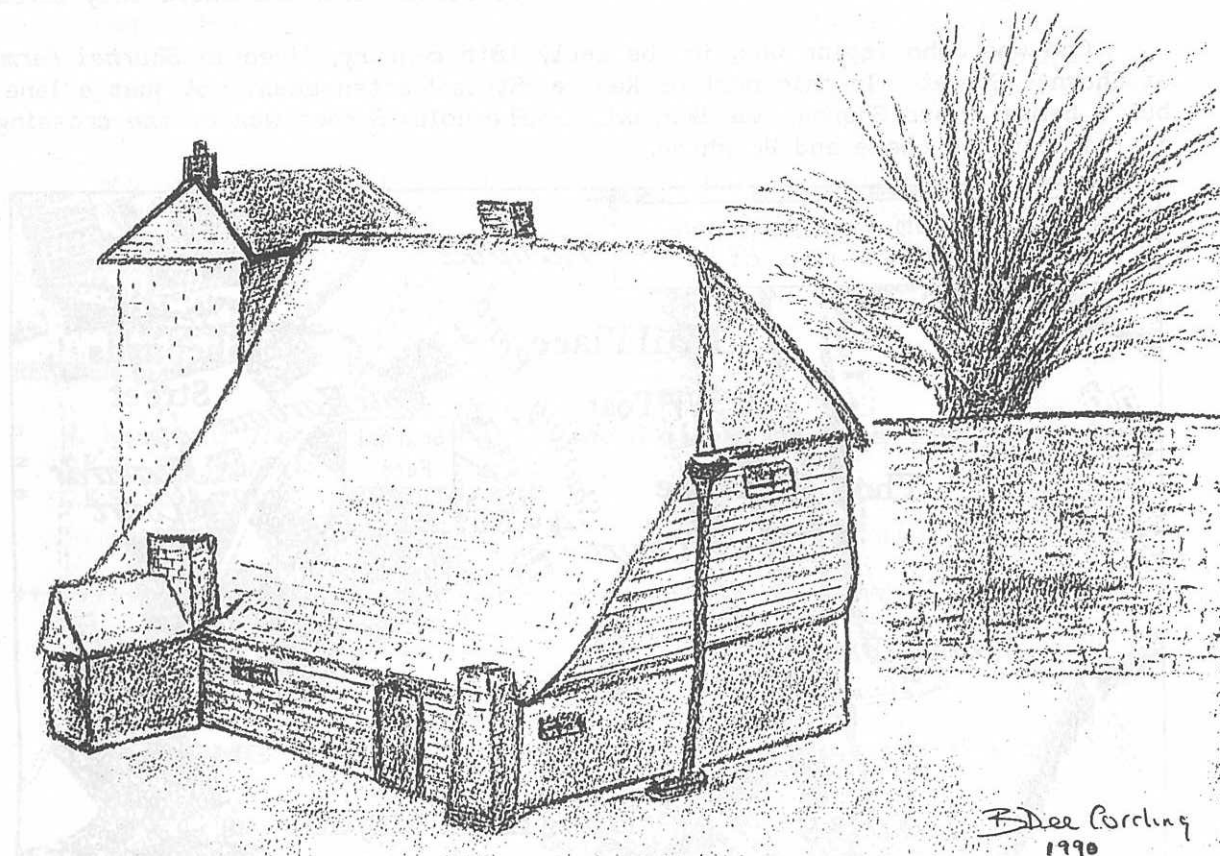
Adjacent to the back of this kitchen garden wall and stable block, once stood what the Peale Estate sale particulars of 1912 described as 'a pair of brick, plaster and tiled roomy dwelling houses, one being a genuine old house, dated 1677, and having a quantity of old oak, each containing six rooms and recently put into good repair, and having good gardens.' The tenants at the time were Messrs Gurr and King.



A plan from the Peale Estate Catalogue showing Bagent's Cottages (Lot 18)

These houses were known as *Bagent's* (sometimes spelt *Baigent's*) Cottages, presumably named after the person who is listed as the owner and occupier in the 1840 Tithe Apportionment, a Mr Bajant.<sup>2</sup> The cottage fronts actually faced west and looked onto, and were a short distance away from, the garden wall and stable; so not much of an outlook and little daylight. The rear offered a much better view, overlooking an orchard consisting of apple, damson and cherry trees on what is now Northleigh Close.

The sketch below was drawn from photographs which showed parts of the cottages, and on the left can be seen an addition or enlargement to the original building. What was it, and can anyone put a date to it?



Sketch of the rear of Bagent's Cottages, Pickering Street Farm

Miss Mary Busbridge, daughter of the late Mr Herbert Busbridge of *Grove Cottage*, Pickering Street, remembers quite well, during the last war, going to get rabbits from a Mr Farrant who lived in one of the cottages. Unfortunately, these dwellings of some character were demolished sometime around 1956/7 to make way for the pair of modern semi-detached houses that stand in their place.

#### REFERENCES AND SOURCES

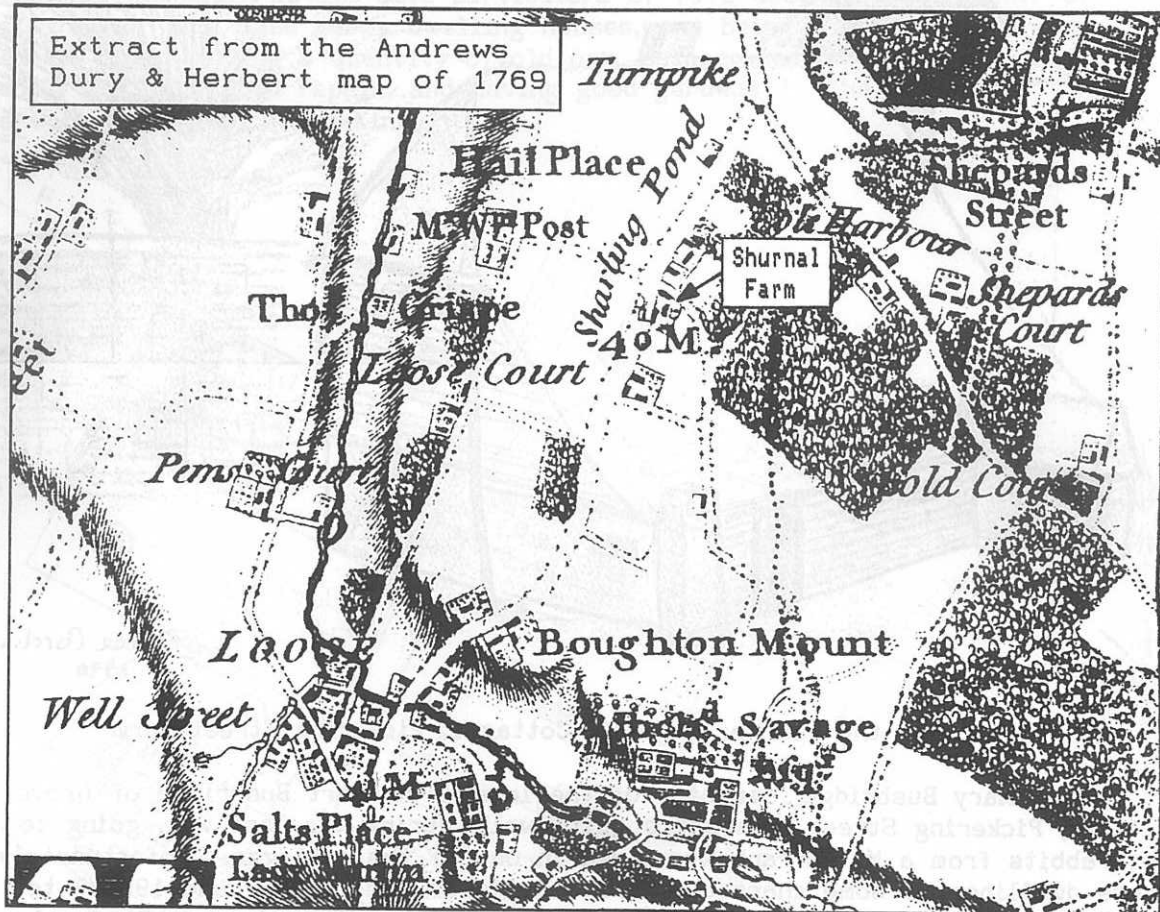
- <sup>1</sup> C.K.S., U24 T324 Peale Estate Catalogue, 1912.
  - <sup>2</sup> C.K.S., P233/27/1 Tithe Award Apportionment, c1840
- Miss Bessie King  
Miss Mary Busbridge

# JOHN TAYLOR, FREEMASON

ANNE CREASEY

Kentish ragstone has been quarried near Loose for almost 2000 years, yet we know very little about the men who worked it before 1841 when Census returns started to record individual names, ages and occupations. However, some clues can be gleaned from the wills, inventories and deeds that survive from earlier times about who those stoneworkers of Loose were, and where they lived.

One was John Taylor who, in the early 18th century, lived in *Shurnal Farm* at Shurnal Street. In this part of Kent a 'Street' often meant not just a lane but a hamlet,<sup>1</sup> and Shurnal (or Sharnall or Shernold) Street was at the crossing of the roads to Loose and Boughton.



John inherited the farm from his father James, and it had been in the family for at least a hundred years, although his grandfather lived in another property at Picking (or Pickering) Street.<sup>2</sup> John was both a mason and a farmer, his farm having barns, stables and an oasthouse as well as a stonemason's shop, and this was typical of most tradesmen of that time. Their trade occupied them and their workers during those quiet periods of the farming year that occur on non-arable farms, and also provided a welcome extra income.

John's family had at one time owned land on the side of the valley below Pickering Street and Walnut Tree Lane, and this land may have been a quarry like the neighbouring piece called Collier's Pits. John himself leased quarries, perhaps in the same area or in Boughton Monchelsea, and brought the stone by quarry cart to his yard where he could shape it to his customers' requirements before further high transport costs were incurred, because rag is an exceptionally heavy stone. Here is an extract from his will, dated 1736:

'I bequeath ... to my son James Taylor ... all my moiety or half part of a message ... in Loose ... at or near a certain place called Picking Street now in the tenure or occupation of James Crownage. Also I give and bequeath to my said son James Taylor all my implements tools and utensils which are or may be used about the quarries or elsewhere in the trade of a Freemason with all my interest and time to come in the quarry or quarries by me used together with all the stones to me belonging.'<sup>3</sup>

*Shurnal Farm* he left jointly to his wife Mary and his son for the term of Mary's natural life and afterwards to James. This farm later passed out of the Taylor family's hands, and around 1800 it belonged to a Mr Payne. Eventually it became the *Swan* public house.

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> W. Marshall, *The Rural Economy of the Southern Counties*, 1798.
- <sup>2</sup> C.K.S., PRC/34/241.
- <sup>3</sup> C.K.S., U82/T240.

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## SALTS PLACE

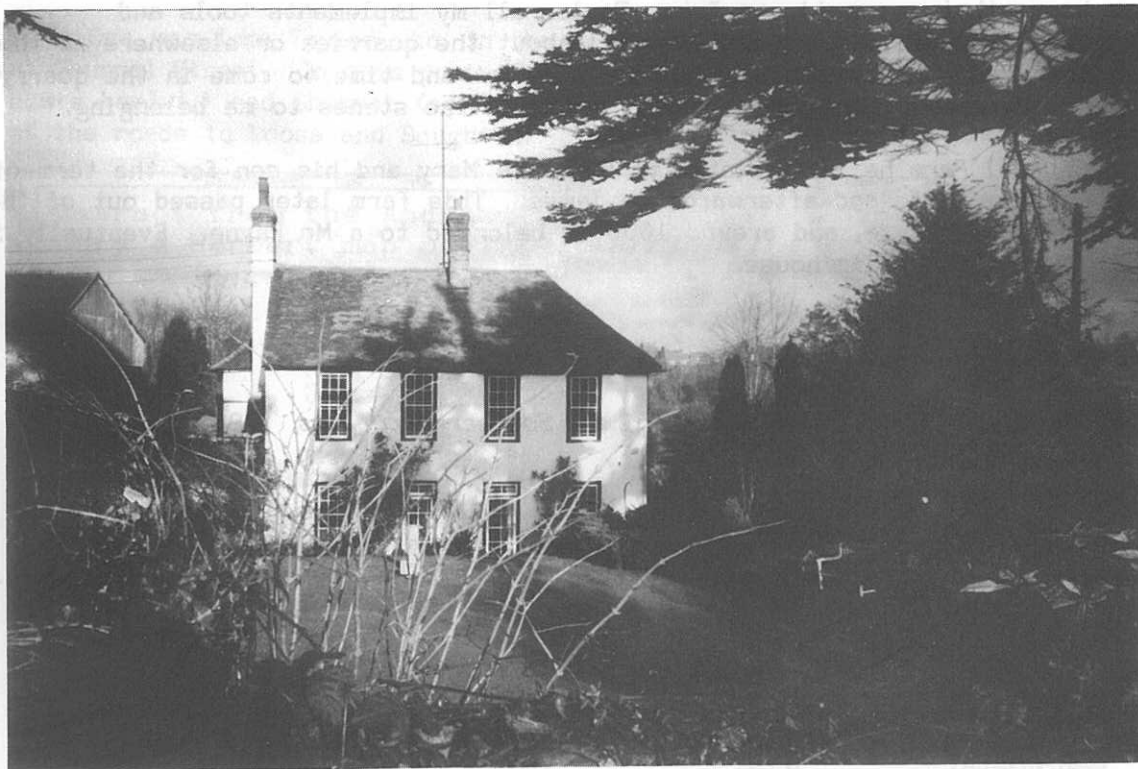
### SOME VOICES FROM THE PAST

JULIA PAGE

Old houses in a village are tantalising. They stand mute with only the bare, constructional bones to give a clue to past centuries, while their inhabitants, for whom 'no more blazing hearth shall burn', will mostly have disappeared without trace, taking their history with them to their Maker.

Yet, occasionally, we are lucky. A will may survive and we can identify kinsmen and assess financial status, or perhaps an inventory comes to light, compiled by local appraisers and allowing us to peep over their shoulders as, painstakingly listing every object, they tramp from room to room. Best of all for me, however, is the existence of correspondence connected with the owners, for then the names acquire voices and personalities and I can step into another's shoes. Literate owners who wrote and received letters - which their descendents forebore to destroy! - give us a wonderful glimpse into lives led during certain periods.

*Salts Place* in Loose is just such a house. Turn left at the *Chequers* into *Salts Lane* and it lies on the right of the steep hill leading up to *Hubbards Lane*, a cosy, warm Tudor manor, its windows catching the sun and proud cedars of Lebanon continuing to defy wind and hurricane. Anyone in the village will tell you how it got its name - except that the stories do not agree. It comes from mineral salts found in the neighbourhood, says one; its first owner was an admiral, an Elizabethan 'old salt', declares another; yet none can quote chapter and verse of incontrovertible proof and for the serious historian, who dares not deal in myth and legend, the mystery remains.



*Salts Place*, a recent view of the south front

But if we have not yet discovered who built the house, we do know from quite early on who lived there because in 1661, perhaps a century or so after its construction, Ralph Bufkin\*, kinsman to the Bufkins of *Gore Court*, Otham, and Captain of the Trained Bands for his area, on 20 March that year wrote from his home at *Salts Place* to the Constable of 'ye Hundred of Maidstone', warning him of the forthcoming Muster at the *Woolsack*, Linton, at 8 o'clock in the morning and reminding him that 'you are likewise to let them know that ye Mustermaster General will be there to view their arms...'.<sup>1</sup>

Bufkin was a man of some substance, a landowner, highly respected in the county and presumably regularly conducting his business in the neighbourhood, with the accompanying obligation of meetings with interested parties, as the following letter shows,

\* spelt either with one 'f' or two; it varies.

These For my honoured Friend Ralph Bufkin Esq

Hollingbourne  
Aprill 29th 1672

My Cousin Harlackenden and Mr Bradshaw are now here with mee, having brought downe the Decree of the Court, together with some Indentures engrossed for our sealing: We all make it our Request to you that you would meete at the White horse at Sandway on Wednesday about ten of the Clock in the Morning, where my Cousin Halfe I suppose will likewise bee; And where you will certainly find Sir

Your most humble Servant  
J Culpeper<sup>2</sup>

This meeting has quite a modern ring to it, with the participants riding over, or perhaps jolting through the lanes in their carriages instead of motoring along tarmacadam roads, the difference being the comfort and the time taken to do so, plus, of course, the absence of the telephone to set the whole thing up.

Presumably, having no children of his own, Bufkin bequeathed *Salts Place* to his distant cousin, John Martin, who may have been only slightly younger and, from the tone of these letters to Ralph, obviously a close friend.

Westmter Mar 30th 1699

Cosen,

This day I thank you I have gott abroad again, I am very thankfull to you for your Hearty Wishes that I may escape that greivous affliction, the Gout, I am very apprehensive that my lameness is too Near a Kin to it, this is the 3 or 4th time I have been touched with it; Mr Frewen was with me today and encourages me that he can help me to pills that may prevent it coming again or if it should happen to surprise me he hath other pills that will prevent its running to any great Extreamity ....

Your faithfull humble servt  
Jn Martin<sup>3</sup>

Twelve days later another arrived at *Salts Place* from him.

Cosen,

My feet as yet serve me but very lamely that I can't well get to Mr Smith. I can a make shift to hop along to the Excheqr and as for Skinners Hall I have nothing to doe there, for as I feared during my confinement and absence from thence, they made choise of another to fit in my roome ....<sup>4</sup>

One trusts that the lameness had disappeared before he inherited *Salts Place* in 1710, and the necessity of having 'to hop along' the lane, home from the village. That he and his wife frequently entertained in the house is suggested in a letter written by Mr Briggs. Martin's son and heir, Denny, was first married to a Harriet Briggs and this gentleman may have been the father-in-law. No year is given with the date but the letter was sent from North Street in London on 12 September, addressed to 'John Martin Esqr at Loose near Maidstone'.

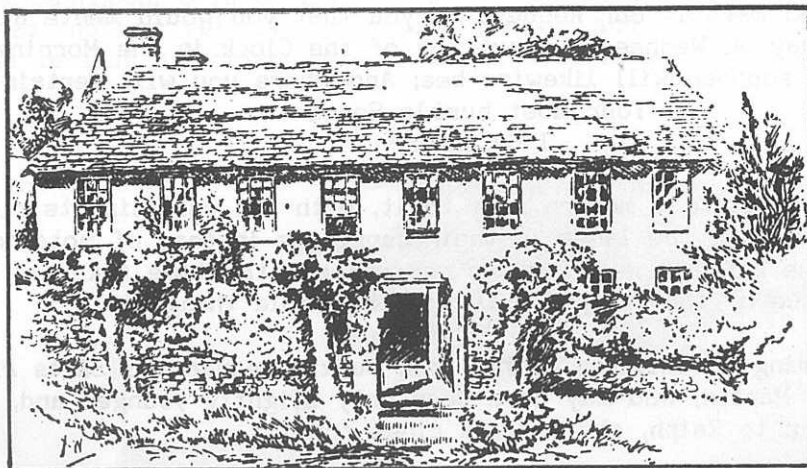
Sir,

We got well to London last night and promise ourselves the happiness of seeing our Kentish friends next week if we can dispatch our preparations for housekeeping by that time; my spouse would think herself very much obligd to

Mrs Martin if she would enquire for A good servant for her, being desirous of securing to herself that material piece of Household stuff as soon as she can. She joins with me in my very Humble service to your family and Friends,

I am your most obedient Humble Servt

H. Briggs<sup>e</sup>



The east front of Salts Place (from Charles Igglesden's *A Saunter through Kent with Pen and Pencil*, vol.ix, c1916)

Martin's sojourn in *Salts Place* may not have been long because by 1720 we find his son, Denny (not to be confused with the Revd. Denny later in the century), in residence, and, being also a well-to-do man, speculating on the Stock Market.

Despite the fact that Denny's own voice is not heard in the letters, it makes no matter because the content shows that, together with three other gentlemen, he was buying and selling shares in the South Sea Company.

The decade 1710-20 was one of increasing, intense, inflated commercialism, culminating in January 1720 with the First Lord of the Treasury welcoming a proposal from this South Sea Company (on apparently favourable terms) to take over the whole of the National Debt, excepting that held by the Bank of England and the East India Company, i.e. over £30,000,000 of the total of £51,000,000. As the Oxford History of England puts it, 'After some competition with an offer from the Bank, parliament was induced to accept the Company's revised proposal to incorporate three-fifths of the national debt in its own capital, to pay more than £7,000,000 for this privilege, and accept from the government 5% interest on the sum incorporated until 1727 and 4% thereafter. The Company expected to recoup itself partly by its profits from the South Sea trade and its Asiento concession\* but chiefly from the rise in value of its shares'.<sup>e</sup>

Initially, all appeared to go well and thousands of people, who could not really afford to lose, enthusiastically invested to their limits, and held on, while the more knowing, seeing the ready market, repeatedly bought and sold. The crash - the bursting of the South Sea Bubble - came nine months later, at the beginning of September, and one wonders how much Denny Martin, quite a canny speculator, gained and lost by his transactions.

\* The monopoly of the slave trade with Spanish West Indies.

Denny's main correspondent was his cousin, Charles Fox, who acted for him in the purchase of the shares, and the letters trace their fortunes over the weeks.

London  
ye 31 March 1720

Dr Cosin,

This is to advise you that today I have bought One hund. pound South Sea Stock at 308 perct which with broakeridge ammounts to £308-10-0. You are Concernd but ye  $\frac{1}{4}$  part which is 77-2-6 my Selfe ye same; -ye other halfe betwixt Mr Wallfree & my brother who have hitherto been Concernd in everything I have transacted; I durst not venture more because ye prise is high; however hope shall sell it to advantage as soon as I can meet with an opportunity of laying ye remaining part of your mony out will be sure to embrace it, at present everything is high, & as I am to be concernd with you, am very Cautious as I told you before; I shall send to you often; you must excuse Ceremonie, Yrs  
C Fox

A Gentleman in Company with me now gave this day 311 per cent for £500 Stock.<sup>7</sup>

London  
ye 22 Aprll 1720

Dr Cosin,

Munday last I bought ye £100 South Sea Stock in againe at 332 whereof you were concernd ye  $\frac{1}{4}$  part & yesterday Sold it out againe at 340. The Affrican we have still & Keats which remains much about ye same prise; I was in hopes South Sea would have been lower today yt so I might have come in againe, but it is now about 346 however I think to come in againe for people have a Strange Notion of its coming up to 400 quickly. Mr Brown & I talk of seeing you sometime next week. Dr Bromfield calld on me yesterday & told me yt you had been pritty successfull in Stock Jobbing, he gives his Service to you; when I do any further business shall acquaint you my service to everybody, I am, Yr Affect. Cosin, Chas Fox.

Yr Gaines in my last 12. 6. 6.

Yr Proffit on South Sea since 1. 19. 6

-----  
14. 6 =

The next letter from Fox, dated 6 May, is too torn to tell us anything except scraps of stock market news apparently unrelated to the South Sea Company, although this might be in the part that is missing, and Dr J. Bromfield, mentioned in Fox's previous letter, now writes to Martin on 'May ye 31st 1720'. The 'franks' referred to were the means of obtaining cheaper postage.

Dear Br

I hope you got well down on Saturday, my wife who had ye keeping of ye Franks was gone to sleep before I came home so yt I could not send ye news till this Post. Remember us both to my Br & let Him know my wife mends apace, yt my Sister Bromfield will send down ye Chairs on Thursday. The Stocks continue to get ground this day they are above 600. Grey proves very well. My Service attends yr good Family.

I am yrs Most Affectionately, Bromfield.

Our love to Br Briggs.<sup>8</sup>

Lastly, Charles Fox indicates the sorry end to these gentlemen's hopes of the South Sea Company.



London  
ye 1st November 1720

Dr Cos,

I cant yet send you any Comfortable News of Stocks for they all keep very lowe and unless they rise quickly I shall despair they ever will. The Dutch Tickets have been forcd to renew againe. I was to wait on Mr Brigs at Dr Broomfields but they was all from home pray my service to him & I wish him Joy. tell me in your next if you have heard from ye Gentleman you was to see at Dover and how his business is like to go forwards. I wish he may be prosperous in his undertaking. my Service to Everybody.

Yr affec. Cos, C Fox<sup>10</sup>

So much then for some of the inhabitants of *Salts Place* and their friends. But these letters are merely the tip of the iceberg, a few pieces of a massive jigsaw, and our Research Group would welcome anyone willing to fill in some more of the gaps. There is scarce another old house in Loose with quite the written rewards available.

In July 1947 I stayed in *Salts Place* for a week, while the then owner's daughter and I went plum-picking at *Fympes Court Farm*, and I have never forgotten those sunny days and the peace and quiet of this lovely house.

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## MISCELLANEA 2

from Pat Jenner's collection

### Church Festival

Tomorrow let us venerate Epiphany with deep devotion, for it is a very high and principal feast. I know not whether Epiphany was a man or a woman but whatsoever it may have been, this day must be observed by us with godly fear.

(From *The Country Priest in English History*)

THE REVEREND DENNY MARTIN,  
A LOOSE CONNECTION WITH THE ISLE  
OF WIGHT

JOHN WATSON

Foreword

I live in Loose but have a small holiday cottage at Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight. A few miles inland from Yarmouth is the Manor of Arreton, the history of which goes back to Saxon times and which is mentioned in the Domesday Book. On an early visit to Arreton, I was interested to see that the Lord of the Manor at the end of the 18th century was the Revd. Denny Martin, as I connected that name with Loose Parish Church. On checking, I found that Denny Martin was indeed a minister at Loose at that time. Fascinated by this link between the two places, I felt that a little research into the life and times of the Revd. Martin would be a worthwhile project, and what follows is the result of my preliminary enquiries.



Arreton Manor, Isle of Wight

The National and International Background

The latter years of the 18th century, when Denny Martin was at Loose, were eventful times. Abroad, to quote but two examples, America gained its independence, and France became embroiled in revolution. At home, George III

was king, with Robert Walpole and later William Pitt as two notable Prime Ministers. These years also marked the virtual end of the Agricultural Revolution and the development of the Industrial Revolution. In addition, there had been another revolution - of a different sort - that of the Methodist Revival, led by Wesley and Whitfield. This must have had its effect on priests of the Established Church like Denny Martin, although, in view of his family background, what G.M. Trevelyan wrote probably holds true for Denny Martin: 'under the Hanoverians the identity of the social class of squire and parson became more close. As the value of the tithe rose, the squire found it proper to put his younger son into the family living... The system had also its uses for the community: for, if there was any merit in the Anglican ideal of having 'an educated gentleman in every parish', this was how it came nearest to realisation... Such a clergy and such a squirearchy together were able to put down popular superstitions like witch-hunting that had flourished horribly in Stuart days, particularly under the Puritans.'

The century ended, as so often during its course, with conflict with the French, that is the Napoleonic Wars.

### The County of Kent

At the turn of the century when the first official census was taken (1801), the population of Kent was just over 300,000, compared with 1½ million today. Basically the county changed little during the 18th century: as Christopher Wright has written, 'the agricultural life combined with the large number of small county towns which served its needs, the widespread ownership of land, the presence of the Church as an influence both spiritually and economically, the large amount of woodland, the increasing pull of London as a market, the influence of the gentry coupled with the absence of a servile mass of agricultural labourers totally dependent on landlords and farmers - these remain at the centre of Kentish life'<sup>2</sup> until increased industrialisation and the growth of suburban London radically altered the county's life-style. Writing at about this time, William Cobbett of *Rural Rides* fame, said of Kent, 'it is a district of meadows, corn fields, hop-gardens, and orchards of apples, pears, cherries and filberts with very little if any land which cannot, with propriety, be called good'.

### The Village and Parish Church of Loose

What was Loose like in the last decades of the 18th century? Its population would probably have numbered between 600 and 700; the Census of 1801 gives it as 668. Like the majority of villages at this time Loose would have been a much more self-contained community than nowadays, with most of those living in it working on the land and in related industries - corn-milling (at, for example, the village mill at the bottom of Mill Street); ragstone quarrying; tanning - there were four tanneries in Loose; fulling - a process in the manufacture of cloth undertaken at some of the valley mills; and paper-making. The latter industry was reaching its peak in Loose at this time when over half the paper-mills in Kent were in the Maidstone area. In addition, there would naturally have been local representatives of occupations like blacksmiths, wheelwrights and brewers.

The viaduct was not built until 1829 and therefore, at the time we are considering, the main Hastings-Maidstone route still used Old Loose Hill where

some of the buildings we know today, like *The Limes*, *The Change*, and *Vale House*, were already in existence. There was also the original *Sugar Loaves* where the modern bungalow of that name now stands, and a blacksmith's forge in what has now become the garage of *Vale House*. The village stocks would have stood to the right and in front of the *Vale House* gateway.

Other buildings in the village which would have been there in Denny Martin's day, although not necessarily in their present form, include *Forge Cottage*, *The Chequers*, *Old Mill House*, *Tylers*, *The Dairy House*, *Florence House* and *Cottage*, *Randall's Row*, *The Wool House* and *Cottage*, *High Banks*, *Fern Bank*, *Brook House*, *Church House*, and *The Old Vicarage*, then probably called *The Parsonage*.<sup>3</sup> The parish church of All Saints would have been considerably smaller than it is at present, as the north and south aisles were not added until the 19th century. The chancel, the nave and the tower would, however, be similar to today, with the same bells in the tower - although the tenor bell was recast in 1886 - and the yew tree, already hundreds of years old, would have dominated the churchyard.

#### The Reverend Denny Martin and his Family

The Revd. Denny Martin was born in 1725, son of Denny Martin of *Salts Place*, Loose, and the Hon. Frances Fairfax, daughter of the fifth Baron Fairfax. He was educated at Maidstone Grammar School from whence he obtained a Gunsley Exhibition to University College, Oxford, in 1744.<sup>4</sup> He obtained his BA in 1748 and MA in 1751. Ordained a priest in 1749, he became Domestic Chaplain to Lord Fairfax, and served in some churches in Sussex and probably elsewhere before he was licensed as a curate at All Saints, Loose, in 1782. It seems that he never became Vicar of Loose, as, according to the list of incumbents in the church, the Revd. James Andrew held that office from 1782 to 1801, and Denny Martin died in 1800. However, he was made Doctor of Divinity in 1793.

Denny Martin was descended from both the Fairfax and the Culpepper families. His grandfather, the fifth Lord Fairfax (himself a descendant of the Parliamentary General Fairfax who defeated the Royalists at Maidstone in 1648) had married Katherine, daughter and heiress of Thomas, Lord Culpepper of Leeds Castle, Governor of the Isle of Wight and owner of *Arreton Manor* (a descendant of John, Lord Culpepper of *Leeds Castle*, who had been made Governor of the Isle of Wight in 1644 because of his services to the Crown). It was their daughter, Frances, who married Denny Martin of Loose, and it is their elder son who is the subject of this study.

When Thomas Culpepper died, Katherine Fairfax inherited both Leeds Castle and *Arreton Manor*. Following her death, her sons - the sixth and seventh Lords Fairfax inherited these properties in turn, and when the latter died in 1793 he bequeathed them to his nephew, the Revd. Denny Martin, who then lived at *Leeds Castle* until his death<sup>5</sup>, when he was buried at Loose Church. From 1793 he called himself Denny Martin-Fairfax. He never married.

Whether Denny Martin ever visited or lived at *Arreton Manor* I have yet to find out, but he certainly did not spend all his time in Kent. The Fairfax family had extensive connections with, and property in, America and the sixth Lord Fairfax (Denny's older uncle) spent the latter years of his life on his estates in Virginia; following his death, Denny Martin went out there in 1784 to sort out the details of the will.<sup>6</sup>

On Denny Martin's death, *Leeds Castle* and *Arreton Manor* passed to his younger brother, General Philip Martin, and ultimately, passing again through the female line, to the Wykeham Martin family which owned *Arreton Manor* until 1918.

Much remains to be investigated about the life of the Revd. Denny Martin, but I offer my thanks to all those who have helped me so far and I shall be very grateful to any who can give me further relevant information or correct any errors which occur in this article.

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## THE TRAIN NOW PASSING

CLIVE CHEESEMAN

*'There being paper mills and a polluted stream running through, what beauty there was has been spoiled long ago'. H.F. Stephens.*

This statement, referring to the Loose Valley, was made at an enquiry into the proposal for a Headcorn and Maidstone Junction Light Railway in March 1905. The proposal was, in fact, the last of several attempts over fifty years to construct a line through the area.

Following the 'railway mania' of the 1840s, by the 1850s the basic railway network of the country was virtually complete. A great deal had still to be done, however, particularly with filling gaps and linking by-passed communities into the system. Indeed, the number of railway Acts of Parliament passed in the 1850s was scarcely smaller than that for the 1840s - 831 against 863.

It was against this background that the South Eastern Railway built its first conventional branch line from Paddock Wood to Maidstone (West) in September 1844. A station at East Farleigh was opened a few months later, and in 1856 a line was built from Strood to Maidstone to join it.

The earliest scheme for a line through the Loose Valley emerged in 1856/7 as the Maidstone and Loose Valley Railway. It was purely a local scheme to serve the mills between Tovil and Loose and presumably the quarries at



Map showing the main routes of the proposals for a Maidstone-Headcorn railway, 1856-1904.

Scale in miles

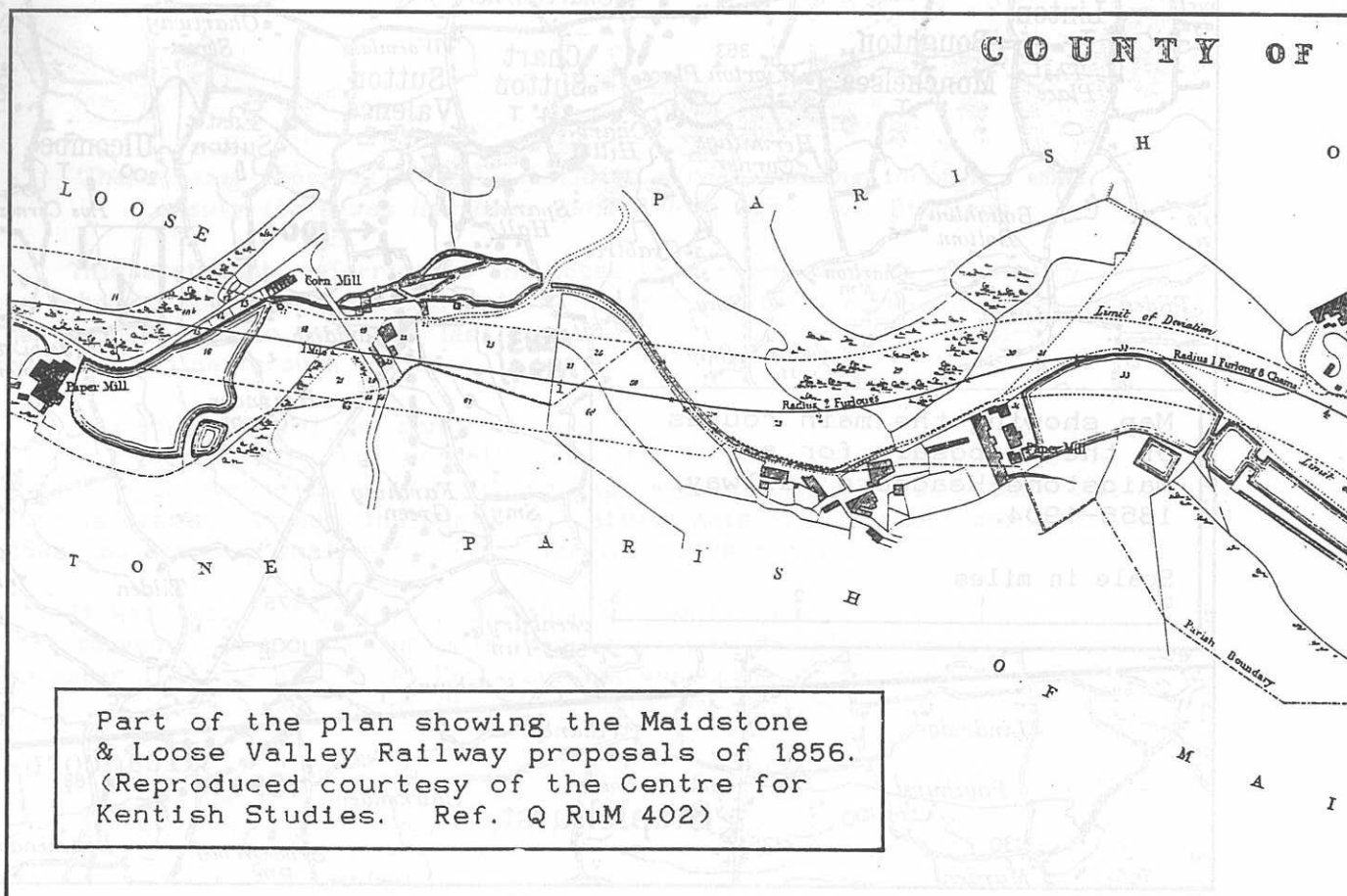
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Boughton. It would have followed the valley floor from Tovil, crossing the stream some six or seven times. At Loose it would have crossed the lower reaches of Brooks Field before going underneath the viaduct and then on to Boughton and its terminus near Chart Sutton. Part of the plan of this scheme is reproduced below; (see also R.J. Spain's redrawn version in the first of his two articles on the Loose Valley Watermills in *Archaeologia Cantiana*<sup>1</sup>). This scheme never materialised and very little about it is known.

It was twenty years later in 1876 when a new scheme, 'The Loose Valley Railway', revived plans for a line through the valley. This was more successful in that it obtained parliamentary approval, but after five years it had failed to compulsorily acquire the necessary property. If built, this line would have terminated in the village near *The Chequers*.

Following the failure of this scheme, the South Eastern Railway revived the powers in 1882 and obtained a further extension of time to purchase land and construct the line. At this point, we must look at developments which were taking place several miles south on the coast. By the early 1870s Dungeness, which was close to the shipping lanes, was being looked at as a possible port. With this in mind, the Rye and Dungeness Railway and Pier Company was incorporated to build a line from Rye to Dungeness where a pier would be built. Neither the railway nor the pier were built, but the powers passed to the South Eastern Railway in 1875.

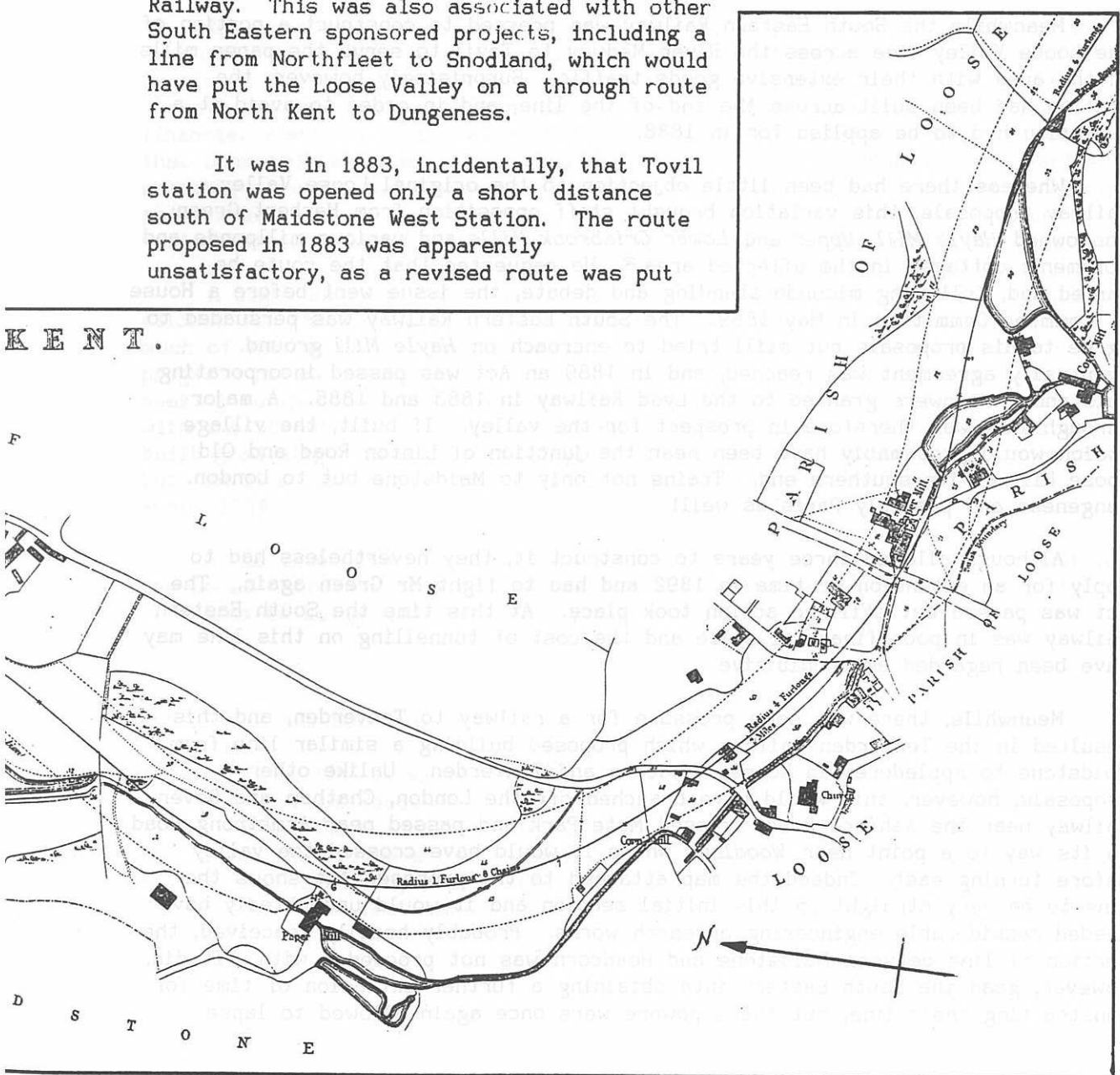
The Chairman of the South Eastern Railway was Sir Edward Watkin who was very keen on through routes and was also Chairman of the Metropolitan Railway



and the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway. For some time he had been involved in various schemes and ideas for achieving a rail link from Manchester and the north of England via London and the south east to the Continent. He therefore became very involved with the Channel Tunnel Railway scheme, excavation for which began in 1881 between Dover and Folkestone, but ceased after a short while when the Board of Trade stepped in and forbade him, to proceed on the grounds of infringement of the Crown's foreshore rights. At the same time, the independent Lydd Railway company was formed and authorised in April 1881 to build a line from Appledore to Lydd. It was intended that there would be a major seaport and that the shingle dug out would be used as ballast by the South Eastern Railway. The line was opened in December 1881 and in 1882 extensions were proposed - to New Romney (subsequently built) and via Tenterden to Headcorn. A further Extension Act in 1883 would have brought the proposals northwards from Headcorn via Boughton and south of Loose village to Bockingford, where it would have joined the authorised route of the Loose Valley Railway. This was also associated with other South Eastern sponsored projects, including a line from Northfleet to Snodland, which would have put the Loose Valley on a through route from North Kent to Dungeness.

It was in 1883, incidentally, that Tovil station was opened only a short distance south of Maidstone West Station. The route proposed in 1883 was apparently unsatisfactory, as a revised route was put

KENT.





forward in the Lydd Railway (Various Power) Act of 1885. This would have commenced north of Loose village and kept to the valley via Boughton Quarries before rejoining the existing proposal at Chart Sutton. It would, however have required two tunnels, one almost a mile in length, the cost of which was prohibitive and presumably resulted in the scheme lapsing.

One of the main reasons behind this continuous interest in building a line through Loose was competition. The London, Chatham and Dover Railway, a bitter rival of the South Eastern, had reached Maidstone from Otford in 1874. In 1880 a Maidstone and Ashford Railway Act was passed, and this line was opened in 1884. Until then traffic between Maidstone and Ashford had been forced to travel on the South Eastern with a change at Paddock Wood. This extension not only threatened this traffic, but implied that the company was aiming at Folkestone, Dymchurch and Lydd and increasing its share of the lucrative cross-channel traffic.

Meanwhile the South Eastern Railway was pressed to construct a portion of the Loose Valley line across the River Medway to Tovil to serve the paper mills in the area with their extensive goods traffic. Surprisingly however, the station had been built across the end of the line, and in order to avoid it a deviation had to be applied for in 1888.

Whereas there had been little objection to the original Loose Valley Railway proposals, this variation brought stiff opposition from Herbert Green who owned *Hayle Mill, Upper and Lower Crisbrook Mills* and various millponds and workmen's cottages in the affected area.<sup>2</sup> He requested that the route be varied and, following misunderstanding and debate, the issue went before a House of Commons Committee in May 1889. The South Eastern Railway was persuaded to agree to his proposals but still tried to encroach on *Hayle Mill* ground. Eventually agreement was reached, and in 1889 an Act was passed incorporating this and the powers granted to the Lydd Railway in 1883 and 1885. A major through line was therefore in prospect for the valley. If built, the village station would presumably have been near the junction of Linton Road and Old Loose Hill at its southern end. Trains not only to Maidstone but to London, Dungeness and possibly Paris as well!

Although allowed three years to construct it, they nevertheless had to apply for an extension of time in 1892 and had to fight Mr Green again. The Act was passed but still no action took place. At this time the South Eastern Railway was in poor financial state and the cost of tunnelling on this line may have been regarded as prohibitive.

Meanwhile, there was some pressure for a railway to Tenterden, and this resulted in the Tenterden Railway which proposed building a similar line from Maidstone to Appledore via Loose, Headcorn and Tenterden. Unlike other proposals, however, this would have branched off the London, Chatham and Dover Railway near the Ashford Road, crossed Mote Park and passed near Armstrong Road on its way to a point near *Woodlawn* where it would have crossed the valley before turning east. Indeed the map attached to the proposed Act shows the line to be very straight on this initial section and it would undoubtedly have needed considerable engineering or earth works. Probably hastily conceived, the section of line between Maidstone and Headcorn was not proceeded with. It did, however, goad the South Eastern into obtaining a further extension of time for constructing their line, but these powers were once again allowed to lapse.

The Tenterden Railway became the South Kent Railway and concentrated on trying to build a line from Headcorn to Appledore. This also fell through due to lack of financial support but acted as the impetus for the Rother Valley railway which later became known as the Kent and East Sussex Railway. Having opened from Robertsbridge to Rolvenden in 1900, this was extended to Tenterden in 1903, by which time an extension had also been authorised to Headcorn. While this was nearing completion, the Headcorn, Maidstone Junction Light Railway applied for a Light Railway Order for yet another line through the valley. Although promoted independently, it was intended as an extension of the Kent and East Sussex Railway. This proposal, without the costly tunnels envisaged by the South Eastern Railway would have been fairly severely graded and included seventeen ungated level crossings and only five bridges. It would have crossed Old Loose Hill on the level near the top end of Brooks Field. The station, presumably at this location, would have been of simple construction with corrugated roofing in standard Kent and East Sussex style.

In the event several objections were received, including one from Herbert Green of *Hayle Mill*. This time he was concerned at damage to the millpond and possibly to his paper by engine blacks. There was some considerable debate at the public hearing on this and other aspects of the scheme, including its financial viability.<sup>3</sup> It was at this stage that Col. Stephens made the remarks that open this article. After considering the evidence and details of earlier schemes, a tunnel was suggested between a point near *Upper Crisbrook Mill* to a point nearly opposite *Hayle Mill*. Its proposed length was extended twice and various other alterations, particularly in relation to road crossings, were made.

A Light Railway Order was then granted on 6 May 1906 and three years allowed for the completion of the scheme. The company proceeded to acquire much of the land along the intended route. However, in 1913, no further progress having been made, the Kent and East Sussex Railway stated that it was seeking further powers. There is no record of these having been obtained and, with the advent of the First World War, the prospect of the line ever being built gradually receded. In 1917 purchase monies were refunded to landowners, but the line continued to be shown as a proposed extension by the company until about 1934.

It is interesting to consider, with the recent purchase of valley land by the Loose Amenities Association, just how close the valley came on several occasions to being 'spoilt' - unless you are a railway enthusiast!

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## GEORGE MARSHAM (1849 - 1927)

HELEN GALLAVIN

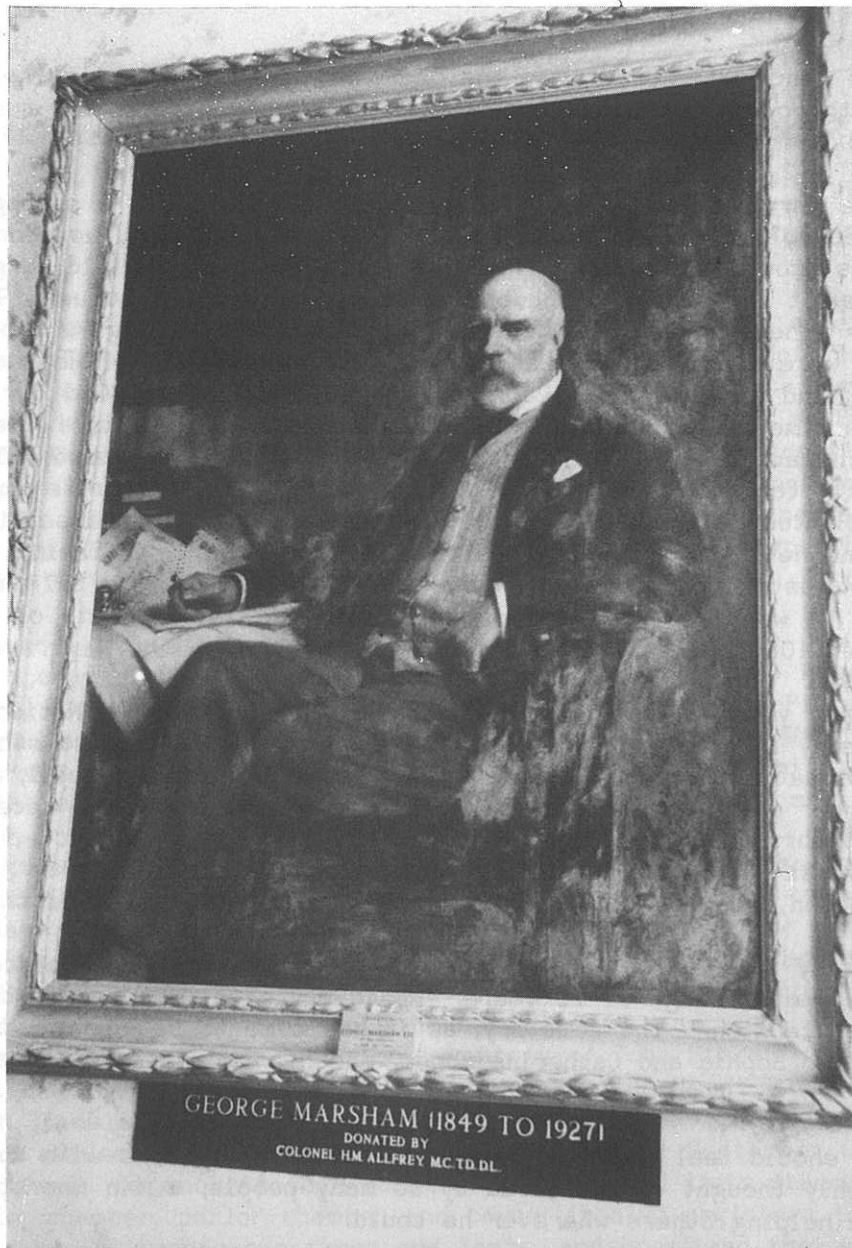
George Marsham, a cousin of the 4th Earl of Romney of *The Mote*, was born on 10 April 1849 at Allington Rectory, near Maidstone. His father, the Reverend George Frederick John Marsham, was rector there for eighteen years until his death in 1852; and his mother was the daughter of Lieut.-Col. Walter Jones of *Hayle Place*. George Marsham was the only son to survive infancy and was educated at Eton and then Merton College, Oxford, where he took a BA degree. Returning to Maidstone, he lived for a while with his aunts, the Misses Catherine and Sophia Jones, in *Hayle Place*, but in 1886, he moved to *Hayle Cottage* in Cripple Street.

From early on he was involved in county and other public work, becoming a J.P. and an active member of the Quarter Sessions. He was elected a member of the Kent County Council at its formation in 1889, was Vice-Chairman from 1890-1900 and Chairman from 1900-1910, continuing as a member until 1925. During the whole of this time he was also an Alderman, and he did much valuable work for the Education Committee. He was greatly interested in politics and chaired many local Conservative meetings. In recognition of his great public services to both the Borough and the County, on 20 June 1911, in Coronation Week, he was honoured with the Freedom of the Borough.

At various times he was Chairman of the Maidstone Gas Company, a director of the Maidstone Waterworks Company, Director for 50 years of the combined 'Kent' and 'Royal' Insurance Companies, and Chairman of the Board of Management of the West Kent General Hospital - he contributed very generously to the extension fund for the Hospital and endowed the Marsham Ward. He was one of the founders of the Kent Association of Workmen's Clubs and Institutes which started in 1882 and was President for 34 years. Large numbers of working men throughout Kent held him in high regard.

He had a great passion for cricket and played for Kent once in 1876 and twice in 1877. *Hayle Cottage* was often host to cricketers during county matches. In 1886 he became President of the Kent County Cricket Club and in 1887 was appointed one of the trustees of the Mynn Memorial Benevolent Institution for Kent Cricketers. He was also President of both the Mote Cricket Club and Hayle Place Cricket Club.

Loose, too, has much to remember George Marsham for. Because the welfare of the village was of prime concern to him and he always helped in times of trouble, he was affectionately known as the 'Grand Old Man of Loose', 'Squire of Loose', or the 'Village Fairy Godfather'. He became Chairman of Loose Parish Council from the date of its first meeting in January 1895 until 1907, and he was also president or chairman of most of the village organisations, including the Loose Working Men's Club and Institute, the Church of England Men's Society, the Loose Bowls Club and the Loose Cottage Gardeners' Society. The latter were much indebted to him for saving the Loose Hill allotments which were bought by the builders Clarke and Epps at the 1912 auction of the Peale Estate, and were in danger of being used for housing development. George Marsham purchased the



The portrait of George Marsham by Hugh de T. Glazebrook that hangs in George Marsham House, Linton Road

ground and let it to the Loose Cottage Gardeners' Society for a nominal rental; the Society had been the tenant since 1885.

Another generous act George Marsham was remembered for in Loose, was his donation of the Parish Room - next to the churchyard gate and now a residence (*Hope Cottage*) - which was left to the Parish Church on his death. This building had been erected by him to house his carriage and two horses while he was in church, and the upper room lent to the Vicar and Churchwardens as a meeting room. Many of the distinguished visitors to *Hayle Cottage* attended morning service and were driven down to church and back by his coachman Mr Edward 'Teddy' Gibbons, a Loose man. Indeed, according to the *Loose Parish*

*Magazine* of January 1928, 'it was the Church that he had most at heart, especially the organ which has been moved, a new stop added, and tuned during the last 28 years, entirely at his expense'.

George Marsham became a Churchwarden in 1883 and was a strong supporter of Sunday School work. At the start of the First World War, he conducted open-air services around the village, the first being held at the old forge (now *Forge House*) at the bottom of Busbridge Road, on Sunday 6 August 1914. Other services were held on Loose Green and at Coxheath; he would give the address and then hymns were sung. It was called 'The National Mission of Hope and Repentance', and his aim was to strengthen people's faith in God during troublesome times. *Hayle Place*, which was empty at the start of the war, was loaned to the authorities as a convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers. Here he frequently took the church services and was a great favourite among the patients. He took a great interest in the welfare of both the soldiers and the hospital, and never missed a day visiting; he was often seen taking patients for a walk in Maidstone cemetery! He even offered hospitality to all the staff at Christmas. He was a devoted churchman and one of his last acts of generosity was to give £100 towards the fund for a church hall on the Mangravet Estate.

For many years George Marsham was a manager of the old National Schools, and was keenly interested in village education. He was first to send congratulations to the schoolmaster for any really promising pupil, and a certain number of the best boys and girls used to be chosen to receive presents from him at Christmas in recognition of their good work. In fact, I have been told by several people in the parish that they were among some of the last children chosen and they received a considerable sum of money as their 'prize'.

On Friday 2 December 1927 at 6.30pm, George Marsham died peacefully at *Hayle Cottage* at the age of 78 years. He is buried at the top of the Loose churchyard extension - the cemetery, as it has come to be known - together with his two aunts, Sophia and Catherine Jones, and his two sisters, Elizabeth and Marcia.

Loose should feel proud to have such close connections with such a great man, so highly thought of and loved by so many people; a man who spent so much of his life helping others wherever he could.

A portrait in oils of George Marsham (by Hugh de Glazebrook) used to hang in *Clock House*, Coxheath, the home of Col. Hubert Allfrey, who was related by marriage. When he moved, he donated the picture to the old people's home *George Marsham House* on Linton Road, and there it hangs today, on the staircase. There is an identical portrait hanging in County Hall.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES

I should like to thank Mr Alan Maynard and Mrs Sheila Wilson for their help with the research for this article.

*Kent Messenger*, 3, 7, and 10 December 1927.

*Loose Parish Magazine*, January 1928.

Notes on George Marsham by the late John L. Short.

PEAR TREE COTTAGE,  
SOME DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

MARGARET CHAPMAN AND DOT FROUD

Churchwardens' accounts for the 14th century are extremely rare, but we are fortunate in having preserved in the Cathedral Library at Canterbury those of the Loose Churchwardens for the years 1364-1366.<sup>1</sup> One of the two churchwardens who drew up these accounts was a man referred to as Richard, son of Michael of Pykeryng. Assuming that this 'Pykeryng' is to be identified with the present day Pickering Street, it seems that there is a distinct possibility that Michael, or his son, might have had some connection with - perhaps even built - Pear Tree Cottage, in Pickering Street, which has been expertly dated to around 1370-1410.<sup>2</sup>

Be that as it may, the earliest written evidence we have of the house seems to be a copy of the will of a certain John Stace, dated 18 August 1664.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Godden, his grandchild, inherited 'a messuage and land in Picket Street', which contained some 20 acres and was, at the time, occupied by William Charlton. He was also left other land in East Farleigh and Boughton Monchelsea. Thomas was the eldest son of Robert (deceased) and Mary Godden, and if he died without issue, all this property was to pass to his brother John. John Godden himself was given some land in Picket Street called Little Broomes together with 6 acres in Langley; if John died without issue, the property was to go to his brother Thomas. These and other details in the will clearly show that John Stace was a man of property and it would appear that the 20 acres in Picket Street that he left to Thomas is the area in which *Pear Tree Cottage* stands.

Compared to the detailed will, the inventory of John Stace's goods and chattels, dated 21 June 1665, is a most disappointing document, consisting of just fourteen lines and amounting to a total of £237 4s 6d.<sup>4</sup> Five years later, Thomas Godden evidently died, and his inventory, dated 21 September was slightly more informative.<sup>5</sup> It amounts to a total of £273 9s and lists items in the kitchen, haule, chamber, parlor chamber and barne; it also registers the fact that he had a horse, twenty-one sheep and lambs, and hops, and that he had several debts owing to him including an amount which had not been paid when he acted as executor to the will of his grandfather.

The death of Thomas Godden should have resulted, in accordance with John Stace's wishes, in the passing of the Picket Street messuage and land to John Godden. But a marriage settlement, dated 20 December 1677, between John Godden and Elizabeth, second daughter of John Charlton, seems to indicate otherwise.<sup>6</sup> It records that only now, as part of their marriage portion, did they receive the property in Picket Street (now called Picking Street) - the house, barn, garden, orchard land and a piece of land planted with hops called Bridge Croft - all of which was in the tenure of John's mother Mary, though there is no indication why. John already held 6 acres of arable land adjoining Bridge Croft, a piece of land called Wellfield in East Farleigh and 3 acres of pasture land called Broomcroft, also in East Farleigh, since it had been bequeathed to him by his grandfather John Stace. In all, John and Elizabeth had eight pieces of land for their use during their natural lives.

Mary evidently died in 1702, for her inventory is dated 17 August of that year; but while it is more detailed than either of the two previously mentioned, the sum total of her assets only amounted to £39 11s.<sup>7</sup> Her house in Picking Street is listed as having a kitchen, bakehouse and buttery, parlour, parlour chamber, kitchen chamber, and a bakehouse chamber.

For the year 1706, there is the inventory of Francis Godden, though without any clue as to his relationship to the earlier Goddens, or whether he occupied *Pear Tree Cottage*.<sup>8</sup> From the details of the inventory, it looks as though it could be the house: it lists items in the kitchen, hall, buttrey, brewhouse, washhouse, milkhouse, hall chamber, barn and stable. He also had 'two coves, a couht (calf), twenty sheep, ten lambs and a hogg', and 2½ acres of 'corne upon the ground'.

The next person to make an appearance is Frances Godden, spinster, through her inventory dated 1727.<sup>9</sup> She was worth only £19 when she died. It is interesting to note that she kept a matchlock musket in the kitchen! Amongst Frances' possessions were also two stone troughs in the bakehouse and buttery, one of which is possibly the trough in the garden of *Kiln Cottage*, next door to *Pear Tree Cottage*.

John Godden the Elder, Yeoman - as he now called himself - made his final will in 1727.<sup>10</sup> He had, he said, already given to his own son John, Broom Croft, Well Field and 5 acres of woodland in East Farley. Now, he bequeathed to him the adjoining Colliers Petts and also a messuage with 5 acres of hop ground and two pieces (6 acres) of pasture land in Picking Street which he, John the Elder, occupied at the time of the will - although some of the land was occupied by Thomas Stevens. The 20 acres which are of particular interest to us since they include his own house - *Pear Tree Cottage* - he bequeathed to his daughter Elizabeth. In addition, John (the elder) left £50 to his son-in-law Richard Russell, a butcher at Boughton Monchelsea, and to his son Thomas, £10 per annum to be paid by quarterly instalments; Elizabeth, as John's executrix, was to make the payments to her brother, but there were strict conditions. It seems that Thomas had behaved himself in a very refractory and undutiful manner towards his father and family, and had threatened to commence suits and to make all the disturbance he could after the death of his father. Therefore, if he carried out any of these threats, or molested or disturbed Elizabeth in the possession of the farmlands and tenements, or if he disputed the validity of the will in any way, Elizabeth was instructed to withhold the legacy. The remainder of John's money was left to Elizabeth, so there were presumably only the three children - John, Thomas and Elizabeth - unless there were others of a rebellious nature like Thomas and therefore unworthy of recognition in the will. One wonders if Thomas' attitude was the cause of, or resulted from, his small inheritance.

The inventory of John Godden the Elder was taken on 14 January 1729.<sup>11</sup> The sum total was £159 13s 6d, and of this, £30 was in seven bags of coppers. Did he keep his money under the mattress, we wonder? The rooms listed are kitchen, parlour, best chamber, chamber over the kitchen, closet, milkhouse, washhouse, cellar, the little room, and chamber over the washhouse - which might indicate an expanding house.

John Godden, son of John the Elder, made his will on 24 March 1737, though it was not proved until 2 July 1766.<sup>12</sup> It was very brief and to the point: he

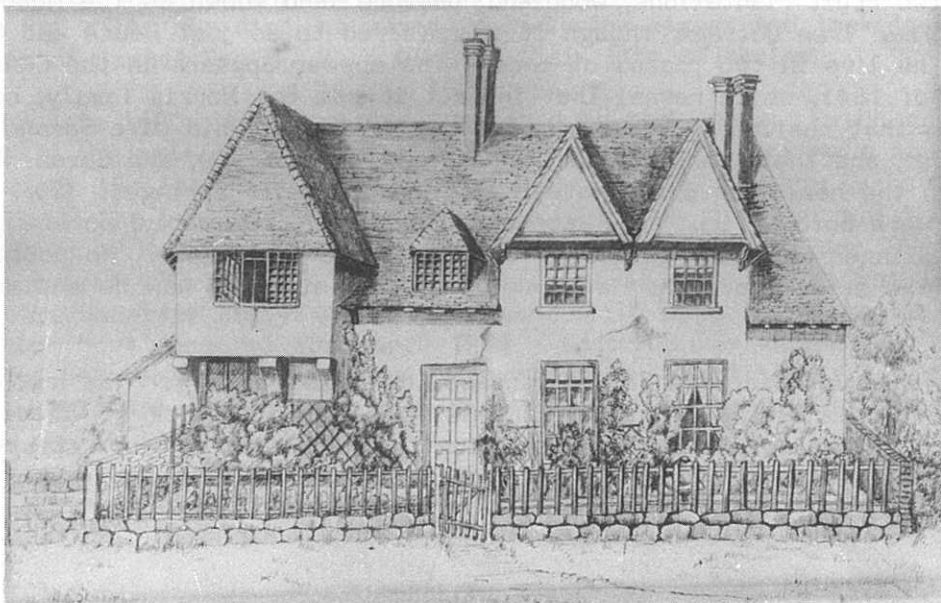
bequeathed to his daughter Mary (the wife of Joseph Topeny) the sum of 20s, having already sufficiently provided for her - presumably upon the occasion of her marriage to Joseph. To his son John (yet another one!) he left all his goods and chattels, his ready money, his debts and all the rest of his estate.

In 1752, a certain Mary Russell (née Godden) left to her son William, the 20 acre messuage and land in Picking Street, subject to various payments by him to her brother Thomas and her other sons.<sup>13</sup> She lived in Boughton Monchelsea and was presumably the wife of the Richard Russell, butcher of Boughton Monchelsea, who had inherited £50 from John Godden the elder; and therefore the sister of Elizabeth who received the Picking Street 20 acres, But if this is so, why was she not mentioned in her father's will, and how did she acquire the 20 acres? It is possible that she was the Mary, daughter of John junior, and that Richard Russell was her second husband, but more research is necessary on this point.

In 1788, the above named William Russell left the Picking Street property to his son William.<sup>14</sup> He, in turn - possibly bankrupt - put up the freehold estate and other properties to be auctioned. The sale catalogue (dated 12 July 1821) clearly identifies *Fear Tree Cottage*, though not by name.<sup>15</sup> The map which accompanies the catalogue shows that there was some sort of outbuilding to the rear, making it an 'L'-shaped property. Eleven years later, however, when it was leased to John Jackson Bird, it is interesting to note that the map produced for this transaction shows the house no longer 'L'-shaped. What happened to the missing portion? Could it have been destroyed by fire, or did it just fall into a state of disrepair? The property at this time comprised the house, Russell's little cherry orchard, a meadow, a Filbert plantation, a shaw and part of 'Longfield' (all in Loose) plus a hop ground called Boughton Field (in Boughton Monchelsea).

William Skinner was the occupant of the farm by 1824 - we know this from a note discovered on the back of a sketch of *Fear Tree Cottage* which is in the possession of the present Billy Skinner of *Brishing Court*, himself a descendant of this William Skinner. It reads:

'William Skinner married Ann Shadgett Dec 28th 1824 and lived in this house at Loose until Olive House was built. Sketch by Mary E. Skinner.'





The sketch seems to show *Pear Tree Cottage* before it was divided into two dwellings, as it is now, though it could have been occupied by two families using doors at the rear. Unfortunately it is undated. Perhaps Mary copied her drawing from an earlier one, since, if we are thinking of the right Mary, she was born in 1864 - forty years after the marriage of William and Ann. This is known from an inscription on her tombstone in Boughton Monchelsea churchyard, and ties in with the record in the family Bible.

Until quite recently, we believed that William and Ann knew *Pear Tree Cottage* as *Olive House* or *Cottage*, transferring the name to a new house nearby when it was built - the ragstone house known today as *Slade House*, which is the name it was given when Captain and Mrs Melly purchased it in 1958. There is a theory that the name *Olive House* derives from a daughter of that name, but the first Olive to be born to the Skinners, or at least to appear on the Census returns, is Olive Susan, born in 1869, so that rather puts paid to that theory - unless there was another Olive somewhere in the family. As far as the question of *Olive House* versus *Pear Tree Cottage* is concerned, we need to ascertain exactly when the 19th century *Olive House* was built.

In 1838 an agreement was made between John Jackson Bird and William Skinner by which the latter hired the farm for a period of seven years, and promised to manage the land in the customary way: to lay on the farm 40 loads of good rotted dung or one ton of best woollen rags per acre immediately after every third crop or not less than twice during his tenancy; to keep in good repair all fences and gates, and to cut and clear from weeds all the quickset hedges, once a year at the proper time; to prune or cut all the filbert trees every year and to replace all apple and filbert trees that blew down or died; to prevent encroachment onto the public thoroughfares from Picking Street to Boughton Lane; and not to cut down or grub up any trees, underwood or plantation within seven years of last having been cut.<sup>16</sup>

Two years later, at the time of the 1840 Tithe Apportionment, *Olive House* (the present *Slade House*) appears on the scene.<sup>17</sup> It was listed as a Homestead, owned and occupied by William Skinner. Besides this, he owned and occupied land called Long Acre (hops), Great Orchard, two pieces of land called Pierces (orchard), Pierces Shaw (woodland) and some building ground. He is also shown as occupying the land previously mentioned and belonging to John Jackson Bird, namely two Fruit Plantations, woodland, pasture land known as The Meadow and, of course, *Pear Tree Cottage*, though it is referred to as just House and Garden. How did he live in two places at once? The answer appears in the Census Returns of 1841, which reveal that in fact it was the Morris family, not the Skinners, that resided in *Pear Tree Cottage* - John and his wife Sarah (both in their 30s), and their three children, Mary (4), William (2), and Sarah (1). Also living in the house, as a separate 'family' was Sheriff Springett (20). John and Sheriff were both agricultural labourers and were, presumably, both employees of William Skinner who now resided in the 'Homestead' next door. No doubt he was glad of the extra space the new house provided, since by now he and Ann had eight children.

In 1844 John Jackson Bird purchased the entire farm for the sum of £1800, some of it from William Skinner and some from Eliza Braddick.<sup>18</sup> There are many documents in the County Archives relating to the *Boughton Mount* estate (of which *Pear Tree Cottage* was a part), but consideration of these must be left to a later occasion.

By the time of the 1851 Census, *Fear Tree Cottage* had evidently been divided into two dwellings: one part (the present *No.1*) was still occupied by John and Sarah Morris together with five children - William, Sarah, Ann, George and John, and the other (the present *No.2*) housed John Gorman, his wife Ann, and their three children George, Elizabeth, and baby John Henry. Ann had been born in Long Sutton, Hampshire, and John in Ireland. John was also a Chelsea Pensioner, which is something new, for until now, all the occupants had been yeomen (and mostly Freemasons).

Although William Skinner's 'Homestead' by now had a name - *Olive House* was on the map! - nowhere, as yet, have we seen 'our' house mentioned by the name *Fear Tree Cottage, Farm*, or anything except a 'messenger' or 'house'. However, the details of the property have been fairly constant, so we can be reasonably sure that we have followed the right path.

The Census of 1861 records that Robert and Ann Gates, with their baby son John, had moved into *No.1 Fear Tree Cottages*, and George and Rebecca Mills occupied *No.2*; George had been born in Loose and Rebecca in Boughton Monchelsea. An additional point of interest is the apparent prosperity of William Skinner at this time; whereas in 1851 he had owned 420 acres and employed 25 labourers, by 1861, he was employing 32 labourers and 4 boys on 350 acres.

Ten years later and the Census actually provides 'our' house with a name - *Skinners Cottage*! But this is not really anything to get too excited about since, before long, dozens of Skinner's cottages will spring up all over the place. We still have George and Rebecca Mills in *No.2*, and James Bromley and his family as their new neighbours next door. Edward Skinner, William's eldest son, now occupied *Olive House*, though he is shown as only having 60 acres and 6 employees; he must have sold off some land after his father died.

The 1881 Census brings the host of Skinner's cottages. These include those by *The Walnut Tree* public house, and those in Walnut Tree Lane, once known as *Rabbit Hutch Row* and now as *Hope Cottages*. There were also others on the main road at the bottom of Pickering Street. Judging by this, prosperity must have grown enormously for the Skinners. *Fear Tree Cottage* is referred to as *Skinners Cottages*, too, and George and Rebecca were still in residence, by now aged 71 and 70 respectively. A widower, Richard Mills, lived next door. In 1871, he and his wife, Sarah, had occupied one of the *Rabbit Hutch Row* dwellings, but after she died, he moved to Pickering Street and took in a lodger by the name of Samuel Booth. Both were in their late seventies.

In the late 1890s, the farm was purchased by the Bowles family, and owned by them until the sale of the lands to Tilbury for development as a housing estate, part in the late 1960s and the remainder in 1972/3. The barns in and around, and all the beautiful cherry orchards (which we remember well) made way for the houses of Halstow, Eddington and Braddick Closes. But *Fear Tree Cottages* survived. Mr and Mrs Reed and family moved into *No.1* in the late 1920s - their daughter Betty (now Mrs Newman) still lives there; whilst Robin and Dot Froud have occupied *No.2* since 1959 - adding an extension in 1974. The occupants of both cottages were able to purchase the properties from Messrs Tilbury in 1973, but sadly had to lose part of their garden to the building plot where *Chareda* now stands.

This all reads more like a calendar of dates than a history, and there is

obviously a long way to go yet in our investigations, but perhaps in some future edition of *Loose Threads* we shall have a more interesting tale to tell - of people and events.

Our thanks must go to Robin Froud for his help in our initial work, and also to Anne Creasey with her knowledge and enthusiasm.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 This document in the Canterbury Cathedral Library seems not to have a catalogue number. A transcript appeared in the *Loose Parish Magazine* for September 1929.
- 2 This dating of *Pear Tree Cottage* was the view of local building enthusiasts Peter Lambert and Roy Hood when they inspected the building and exposed timbers during the construction of extensions in 1974; and it has been supported by Sarah Pearson who did a survey in 1989 for the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in 1989, and produced a report which describes the house as being originally 'a two-bay open-hall [house] with either a single-storey or lofted parlour end in line, and with a sizeable lower end cross-wing with chamber above'. Later alterations, especially in the 17th century, make it rather difficult to determine the exact form of the original building.
- 3 C.K.S., PRC 32/53/288
- 4 C.K.S., PRC 27/17/62
- 5 C.K.S., PRC 27/22/52
- 6 C.K.S., U47/45 T22
- 7 C.K.S., PRC 27/35/194
- 8 C.K.S., PRC 27/37/50
- 9 C.K.S., PRC 27/42/10
- 10 C.K.S., PRC 32/60/432
- 11 C.K.S., PRC 27/42/78
- 12 C.K.S., PRC 32/65/142
- 13 C.K.S., U1327 T3/57
- 14 C.K.S., U1327 T3/72
- 15 C.K.S., U23 E17
- 16 C.K.S., U1327 T3/1327
- 17 C.K.S., P233/27/1A&B
- 18 C.K.S., U1327 T3/73

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#### LOST WEIGHT?

Several years ago Dot Froud found this object in her garden at *Pear Tree Cottages*. She thought that it was probably a Hop Token and that the 'S' stood for Skinner, the farmer who formerly lived in the house.



Maidstone Museum, however, believed it to be an 18th century bronze coin weight used on pocket scales to check the weight of the Portuguese gold Half-Moidore, the value of which was 36 shillings. But how did it come to be in Loose?

## AN INTERVIEW WITH J. B. GREEN

ROGER THORNBURGH

*John Barcham Green was quite a notable figure in Loose and Tovil for much of this century, not only in the paper-making business at Hayle Mill, but also in the community. So, some years ago (actually 11 June 1975), keen to talk to him about his memories of living and working in the Loose Valley, Graham Thorn (a friend of mine who used to live in Stone Cottage, Well Street) and I went along to the house in Lancet Lane where he and his wife lived, and there recorded an interview with him. 'Jack' or just 'JB', as he was commonly known, was then 90 years old, but he had a good memory and could have gone on to tell us a lot more than I managed to record. As it was, my one tape unfortunately ran out before he started recalling the early days of scouting and the beginnings of the Loose Swiss Scouts. I now wish I had interviewed him more than just this once. The edited transcript below omits our questions, and inserts (in square brackets) additional words, phrases and comments in an attempt to clarify what was said. I am very grateful to Rémy Green, J.B. Green's son, for checking through this transcript and suggesting a number of amendments.*

*Shortly before his retirement J.B. Green published a small book called 'Paper Making by Hand in 1967', and at the beginning he wrote a few lines about the history of his family and its involvement in papermaking:*

*'The Green family has been engaged in papermaking since the end of the 17th century. Successive generations practised their craft in East Malling until, in 1810, John Green purchased Hayle Mill at Maidstone. His brother Samuel Green took over in 1839, and passed the business on to his son John Barcham Green (I) in 1852. His son Herbert Green carried on until 1940 and was succeeded by the present managing director John Barcham Green (II), who converted the firm into a Limited Company in 1940, and is .. one of the few remaining authorities on papermaking by hand.'*

[I was born at] *Bydews*. You go up Farleigh Hill, and on the right at the top you go down Burial Ground Lane, and if you don't go down there, there's a gate there with two huge brick pillars. Go down that drive and there were walnut trees each side, and down at the bottom is a very old house called *Bydews*, because 'dews' means 'a pond'. And there used to be monks lived there; they used to live on the fish, and they had a huge round house, which is still there, for a pigeonary, and that's what they lived on, I suppose - fish and pigeons! [My father] never bought [the house]; he hired it from .. I think it was Miss Post, yes. We had a terrible argument [when] we wanted to put in a bathroom, and she said, 'A bathroom!' Because in those days you had a flat round bath, and they brought hot water up from the kitchen and poured it in and you sat in the bath and sponged yourself and so on. Father built an inside lavatory just before I was born, or about then. Then he bought from Lord Romney what is now *The Godlands*, where the Fire people are - a biggish house, well, there were twelve bedrooms anyway. Father bought that land and the wood at the back, and actually eventually bought the whole property [up to the *Bockingford Arms*], and he built the house with the employees in the mill.

The chief engineer was a fellow called Potter - I think his name was Potter - and he got one or two odd men, and our own bricklayer and our own carpenter were there, and they built that house. It took the best part of two years to build it and, before they started building, father, being a real gardener, he started making the garden - two years before they started building the house. So when we moved into the house, there was the garden four years old, which was a pretty good brainwave, I thought. He used to go and take us children with him to Switzerland hunting plants and climbing to find special ones. In those days you could bring back what you wanted.



John Barcham Green (II), from a photograph taken about 1965, and here reproduced with the kind permission of his son Rémy Green.

I got married the first time in 1910. To have a home, I built what I called *Swiss Cottage*, and now it's called *Green Doors*; it's opposite the grocer's shop [*Hawthorn Stores* that was]. [Alongside the road there's] a high brick wall - it must be 10 or 12 foot high, I should think; we pulled the wall down, or the builder did, to build the house, then he built it up again. In the corner overlooking the road, we used to sit up there [in a gazebo] and have tea, and you could see the people passing in the road and so on. Of course, there were very few cars then - we didn't have a car at all, we used to walk or take the .. what was it, a bus? A tram. Trams were there, with lines - they went as far as the Post Office. [They ran to Loose first in 1907].

Then I moved to *Mount Ararat* in what was Loose, in the valley. [In fact, the Parish of Loose used to extend down the valley as far as the track up to *Mount Ararat*, but it did not include the house itself.] As you pass *Lower Crisbrook [Mill]*, if you look up at the hill in front of you, there's a house perched up there. I lived there for twenty years, I think, then came here [17 *Lancet Lane*] in 1940. Before we came here, I remember that the track - it was only a cart track coming down here - was so rough that Mrs Green couldn't wheel a pram down it very far; and half way down was a gate. And if you went down [*Kirkdale*] there was a gate at the bottom. [They were both] locked on Sundays. [The gates marked the boundary of Loose Court Estate - Major Thomas' - and the track served the house, *Old Loose Court*]. It wasn't a carriage drive or anything of that sort, you couldn't drive a carriage down - too rutty. The

main drive in and out of *Old Loose Court* was through a gate on the main road [at Rushmead Drive], and at the gate there was a lodge.

*Mount Ararat* was quarried all the way round, but they left enough rock to stand [the house and garden on]; but a sheer precipice goes down the end of the garden. And below, there [was a big house which] belonged to Col. MacKinnon - *Tovil House* - it's now a Working Men's Club. When I was a small boy, and I suppose for years before that, they used to cut the ice in the pond into blocks - say five inches thick - and they'd carry these blocks and drop them into a huge brick .. what would you call it? .. cistern, if you like, built in the same way as a cess pool, beautifully arched in the roof, and drop them in. It was all enclosed in earth, with a stone at the [top] which you lift up to drop the ice in; and at the bottom was a door, and you opened the door and pulled the ice out. How they managed it, I don't know, but I've seen it many times because as kids we used to go down there. It was the ice cave [and, though not in use], we knew all about it. It was quite obvious then, and I think you'll find that stone still there. [It lies behind what is now] *Tovil Scout Headquarters*. The other interesting thing is that on the other side of the house there's a bank leading down to the garden, and on the bank there grew vines to make wine, and, in order to avoid frost in late spring, they had a tunnel going along the bank, underneath the ground, and then little holes in it for the smoke to come out, and they'd light fires in the tunnel, and the air would come in there, get all hot and heat up the ground and prevent the frost. I know that because I saw the tunnel myself.

My grandfather John Barcham No.1 owned *Hayle Mill*, two *Crisbrook Mills*, *Ivy Mill* and *Little Ivy*; and *Allnutt's [Lower Tovil Mill]* he had as well. And he had another mill near Bourne End [in Bucks]. I may be making mistakes but I think this is about right. John Barcham gave *Allnutt's* to his son Laurence Green; he gave the mill at Bourne End to Roland Green; and my father inherited the two *Crisbrooks*, *Hayle Mill* and *Ivy* and I don't know whether he had *Little Ivy* or not, but *Ivy Mill* made cardboard in the latter part of the time and *Little Ivy* used to grind up rags to make paper of. It's quite a long way - 300-400 yards - from *Great Ivy*, and they had a donkey or a pair of donkeys and pannier baskets on both sides, and they used to go up with rags from *Ivy Mill* to *Little Ivy* where they ground the rags up into pulp and then they put the pulp in the empty baskets on the donkey's back and then [took] it back to *Hayle Mill*, and they put that in the beater and [ground] it up and made paper of it. And there is proof that they had donkeys - it's not just a wild suggestion of mine - because there's food for donkeys in the accounts and new harness for the donkey. Somebody said that I was dreaming all about the donkeys but we turned it all up later, and there it was; it did actually happen.

I was born in '85, and so the date on [*Hayle Mill*] chimney [1891] will give you how old I was when I was hoisted up on the outside in a basket. I don't know how old I was and, of course, I don't really remember it. I've a vague idea of going up but I've talked about it so often .. The chimney was finished, you see, and they put a fir tree up the top, and me. It was a festive occasion; we had barrels of beer and everybody enjoyed themselves for that day. Before that we had a square chimney on the other side of the mill.

*Hayle Mill* had five vats. It was built as a two-vat mill, and then eventually when I came into the business it had five vats, and now there is only one running and the second one is just started up now and then when we've

got some special colours to make ... Before the last war was it, when everything was going really well, we had a hundred-odd people [at *Hayle Mill*, and now, I should think about thirty. There must have been three men at each *Crisbrook Mill* - I don't know if they had women or not. And *Ivy*, from my recollection - I was there as a boy and I used to go all over it - I should think there were twenty people. *Little Ivy*, heaven knows..

I think John Green built [*Hayle Mill Cottages*] before the mill, and then the people who helped build the mill lived in the cottages. Of course, now we've sold the lot because it doesn't pay to own cottages today; the repairs and the interference of bureaucracy - it's just beyond words. *Hayle Mill* was built about 1795 or something, by a fellow called Pine who was a maltster, and he made a lot of money. Well, today when you make a lot of money and want to gamble you buy a racing stable; in those days you had a gamble and you built a paper mill, and that's what he did and how it came to be built. He dammed the stream at *Hayle Mill*, built the dam and built the mill on it. The rather amusing thing is, so it is said, and I think it is true, that the first thing he did was to take the water from the pond (which he'd made by damming it) through a big flume and then have a water wheel built there. Some people say that they built the water wheel and brought it and put it there, but I rather doubt that - jolly awkward thing to handle, 14 foot by 8 or 9 feet. People lived in *Crisbrook Cottages* [too], and there was another [cottage] there - one was thatched and then father pulled it down and rebuilt it; that was 1885, I think.

[*Hayle Mill* gave up using water power many years ago]. With a water wheel you're driving something. You want to drive at different speeds, you want to drive it and make it do more work or less work, the machine has different loads, therefore you've got to have somebody to nip up there and put a little more water on or close the gate a little bit. He's got to know what he's doing because if you aren't careful, if he puts too much water the thing runs away with itself, and all the machinery grinds to pieces. So the man couldn't do it, because [he was] attending to the machine being driven by it - the same man could, I suppose, but he didn't. So they had a man, an odd man, who used to be there and manipulated the gate of the water for the water wheel. And then various things happened, and we found - we worked it out - it was cheaper to buy electricity finally. And it was more convenient, because you'd got a certain power and it didn't fluctuate - electricity always pulls the same. And so we don't use [the water wheel]; it goes round occasionally just to keep it in running order.

[As a small child, I used to be taken down] to the mill, and I used to go in and watch the vatman and so on. And then [when I was] about fourteen, the foreman, John Wood, said to my father, 'It's about time young man learned to do something useful', you see .. really to start learning, because it's a craft and it would take you all your life to learn. Each kind of paper you make has got a different stroke; you're making banknotes one [day] and thick drawing paper another - it's quite a different stroke, and you've got to learn, to find the stroke suitable for the paper you're making. So he got [Charlie] Jigger, who was a vatman, an elderly boy, and I used to go in there, they found a little mould for me, and they put a soapbox at the vat so I could stand and dip the mould in there and make paper, and eventually I got the knack, and once you'd got the knack it's like riding a bicycle, you don't have to learn it again, it's with you all your life. Then, one day I went there and John Wood said, 'Sorry Mr Jack,

but 'fraid you won't be doing any papermaking this morning, 'cos Charlie Jigger is not here this morning' - Monday morning. It appeared that Charlie had made merry during the weekend and wasn't fit to make paper; you see, they won't allow a man to make paper if he's been drunk the day before, because he loses his shake if he isn't careful. And that's a tragedy, it's not imagination - you can lose it for various reasons. Charlie knew he wouldn't be allowed to work, so he didn't turn up.

Until 1810 was it, or 1820 [papermakers] were a secret society, and so they were abroad, too, the same thing, and nobody could say anything to them. The employers got so bullied by their employees, that they had a conference in Rochester, because it was a great papermaking area - I think it was 1810, and Balstons had a copy of the Minutes of the meeting - and the masters met together ..is it *The Bull* at Rochester? .. [J.B. Green's book *Paper Making by Hand* 1967 records that this meeting of Masters actually took place in 1803, and was at the *Bull Hotel* at Rochester]. The Masters decided to approach the government to have this secret society disbanded, because they said it was paralysing papermaking and it was putting up the price of paper absolutely nonsensically. Which apparently was true. Nobody could see them working, that's why in the old papermills the windows were all about seven foot above the ground, so you couldn't see in the vathouse. It was a secret society, and nobody allowed there or anywhere near it, except, of course, the foreman of the mill, and he was a member of the society. The government stepped in - in some way, I don't know how it was done - but the society had to break up, and so they weren't allowed to dictate to the Masters; how they prevented it I don't know. But anyway, the society was broken up, and they reformed and they called it The Original Society [of Papermakers], which was a bit of a nerve, because they weren't, you see. They were the second society. And after that things were much better, and I remember when I was young they used to start work [about] half past five, something like that. And there are a crew of three men and a boy, and if one of them's away the others can't work. So they got to be all good pals and work together in every way. [The boy is] an apprentice; he's pretty vital - he's got to fetch things and do certain [odd jobs]. He *is* an apprentice - he *used* to be - course now it's no good having apprentices, they don't care, they break their agreement, break the bond .. If there was a cricket match, they'd come at three o'clock in the morning and do about six hours of work - that would give them to nine o'clock in the morning - all pack up, go home and then go and watch cricket. And didn't always consult the foreman. John Wood didn't like that, he was very strict, he was a disciplinarian. Of course, things are quite different now, [but] you couldn't notice any change, it was all so gradual.

[For transport of materials and goods] we had a horse, it weighed over a ton and .. where did we keep it? You see, my uncle and my father - they were brothers, Laurence had *Allnutt's Mill* at Tovil, underneath the railway arch - these two brothers worked together and they had repair staff between us and we also had a horse and cart between us, and the driver. And the horse and cart used to bring coal up to the mill and take paper to Tovil siding and in some cases, I think it was in the winter, they had two horses, one leading - that was the 'chain horse' - [but] normally one horse could manage it. But Cave Hill was pretty steep and so was that little chute at Upper Crisbrook, they're pretty steep things for a slow-moving horse, because you've got no momentum.

They were going to build a railway from Tovil siding, down into the valley and along the bottom of the valley, which of course was nonsense really - it



would ruin the whole thing, but still they were going to do that - and past *Hayle Mill*, and then up further on. When my father heard about it, of course he didn't want it because he was .. well, artistically minded and we'd been in Maidstone heaven knows how long, and he thought it was a terrible thing, and it wouldn't help him because there wouldn't be a siding for the mill or anything. And so he backed up the opposition and spent a tremendous amount of money helping to prevent it, which we did [do] in the end.

I used to go abroad two or three times a year and tackle a new country every time. Father used to go occasionally on business but not very much. Then when I came in, I started with France, and then Holland, and then Finland - that was the most difficult, but I found far the best people to deal with are Finns - honest, straightforward, pleasant, sense of humour, everything there should be. I was there fairly recently .. well, when the last war started, I only just got back - on the last plane to leave Helsinki. It took them all day and a bit to get home. I used to go out and eventually go and see a shop, and when we'd been dealing with them for a couple of years and knew them, I'd say, 'Look, I'd like to have an agent for Denmark'. 'Well', he'd say, 'there's so-and-so. You could see him, I'll ring him up.' So the shop-owner would ring up his friend who might have been an agent for something similar, pencils or paint or something, and we'd arrange to have an agent out there, and that simplified things a bit. But it also complicated things a bit, because, you see, in some countries like the Argentine, if you've got an agent, they're not very reliable people the Argentinians, and the Argentinian agent often used to send his account and then quite a big sum - £30 - 'customs'. And so I got in touch with him and said, 'What's all these 'customs' things? 'Well', he said, 'you see, we have to bribe the customs officers otherwise we can't take delivery of the paper'. And I never to this day knew whether the customs officer got it or whether he got it. [To get customers] you'd got to go yourself - the boss has got to go. I went to people who had never heard of [our] name. They knew the German 'Schleicher & Schüll'; they knew them, and they knew the French people 'Courvoisier' and so on, but they'd never heard of 'Barcham Green' in [any] of the countries I went, unless they bought it through say 'Winsor and Newton' in London (who bought it from us) and sent a traveller out there to sell paint brushes. They might have heard it in that way.

[Were other local mills producing paper?] *Ivy Mill* nobody knows, but they were certainly producing boards when I was a boy, because I used to go up there and watch them. [*Gurneys Mill*] - there's not much left of it now, is there? Even no trout in their pond - there used to be some beauties there; I'll tell you stories about that .. There were thirteen mills on the Loose stream - but [they] were all kinds of mills. The bottom one was an oil mill, two flour mills, *Hayle Mill*, so on and so on, and then the one in Loose .. in Mill Street, where the water rushes over, that was running, I remember that. It was a flour mill. [This was *Antrum's Mill*]. You see, it's very complicated because either it paid to make flour - to grind corn - or it paid better to make paper, or grind rags up, or grind fullers earth, and at *Crisbrook* they certainly ground fullers earth, quite a lot; and before that *Lower Crisbrook* was used for washing wool, and *Lower Crisbrook House* - the white matchboard house - that has got in the top storey one long room - that was for carding wool, like the *Wool House* here. And so it varied - whatever paid best they [did]. Had to change over the apparatus a bit, but you can grind rags in a machine, a 'Kollergang', which is very similar to grinding corn. [Different direction but] the same idea - you've got the drive there.

A lot of [the] people in the mill, say ten years ago when I knew everybody, I knew quite a lot of their grandfathers, certainly a lot of their fathers. There was Alf Spain, chief engineer for a long time, and before that I think his father was blacksmith for *Allnutts* and also for us, so there were three generations of the Spains.

There was no state aid [in my youth] and my mother was very interested in the people in the mill and their relations in Tovil, and she used to go and visit them and find out if they were ill and if so, she would send for a doctor, because in those days you had to be pretty bad before you sent for the doctor. And then we had a typhoid epidemic [1897] she was always nursing and that sort of thing, and also she used to have a little sort of soup kitchen in one of the houses in the middle of Tovil where people could come and get fresh soup and they would come with their cans and get it. Every body knew each other much more intimately than they do now, much more intimately - there weren't so many people and of course Farleigh Hill, all up on the left was houses all the way. A few people came from Loose but mostly from Tovil, it's closer; and Tovil, of course, had been a paper-making centre - they used to make hand-made at *Straw Mill*. In those days the village [of] Tovil was all paper. They'd got *Hayle Mill* and *Allnutts*, and *Reeds Mill* - they were all papermills. And they had one at *Bridge*, didn't they .. yes, *Bridge* was an oil mill and was burnt - I was about six or seven, about 1900. Then Reeds bought it - the original Albert Reed bought it and started up. He started with *Straw Mill* because it was in a bad state, nearly bankrupt, and the bank put Reed in, I think, to pull it all together, which he did. Then he bought it at a very low price and made quite good paper with it too - newsprint, and before that it was a hand-made mill. originally.

I don't know that there were any crafts that the [millworkers] did. I have an idea that the papermakers, living near water used to collect the wands from willow trees and make baskets - because it was sort of handy. They used to go from this part of the world - Loose and Tovil - go down to [a place] on the way to Collier Street - it's just one big old flour mill; there they grew a special willow which had red bark and it still grows there, near this old flour mill. The man opposite in a big house used to have a private asylum for lunatics.

We used to have quite fun in the mill .. at Christmas we used to have dancing in the 'salle' - what the band was, I don't know. ['Salle' comes from] the French word meaning 'room' - 'la salle'. A lot of papermaking terms do come from the French, any amount of them; [the 'salle' was] where they do the finishing - it's a big square room, generally, with a lot of light, and the women sit under the windows, to get the light to look through the paper. And they used to clear the 'salle' and dance there. We had local concerts - pay a penny to go in, in Tovil schools.

John Barcham [Green (I)] had quite a lot of land and he farmed it, and it was the custom just before 1900 [that] a papermill had a farm, the owner had both - Snodland and up there. And in the autumn, when you were picking fruit or gathering in the corn, you'd take a lot of people from the mill and double your personnel on the farm; and then in some other time, say in the middle of the winter, you'd take people from the farm - men and women - put them in the papermill and let them get on with it, and in that way you had a much larger personnel, quantity of people, both on the farm and in the mill.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

From: Peter Redman, 46 Sunningdale Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2NH.

Some thoughts on *Loose Threads* No.2.

Page 13: 'worked for the Borough Surveyor, Mr Busbridge ..  
I think Busbridge Road was named after him, but he was in fact the R.D.C. surveyor. Was he related to the Busbridge who worked for the Royal Insurance in the High Street? He lived in Pickering Street [*Grove Cottage* - Ed.]. I believe Bernard Birch built his house in part of the original garden.

Page 17: The Coxheath carrier in the 1920/30 period was named Miller. He used to deliver large parcels of samples to my father at 406 Loose Road. The carriers had a depot at Fairmeadow, Maidstone (by the old bridge), where they would deliver and collect parcels for their particular round. Mention is made of Bucks Garage. This was situated in Week Street, near the [erstwhile - Ed.] Kent Messenger office. They also ran a petrol station in the London Road. The son of the family, Billy Buck, was last heard of living at Hollingbourne or was it Harrietsham, at the top of the hill, and well involved in the antiques world. [Now in Fine Arts and living in Stockbury - JP].

Page 29: Linton Road. *Tettenhall* was owned, in the 20s and 30s, by Charles William Rowlatt Hodges, who taught Geography at the Maidstone Grammar School. He was a member of the Magic Circle, and put on many splendid shows at the school Christmas Concerts each year. He served in the RAF in World War 2 as a Meteorological Officer.

Page 32: Two more shops not mentioned. *Baker's Stores* was in 'the railings' about opposite the path which ran approximately from *Ivy Mill* to Loose Road. Mrs Baker ran it as a grocery and sweet shop, and it collected many a penny or halfpenny from the school population which lived in 'the railings' (eg. Leslie and Wilfred Gilmour, Joyce Walker, Vera Perrin, to mention but a few). And there was also Mrs Harris. She had a tiny shop in the lane opposite Loose School, in her front parlour. You went past the side wall of *Hill House* (Alan Birch's), and immediately was a row of four cottages [*Hope Cottages*, or *Rabbit Hutch Row* as they were commonly called - Ed.] Mrs Harris was in the end one, where the lane turned right by the entrance of the King George V playing field. This shop was a penny or halfpenny shop, and the best offer was one ounce of banana or raspberry split for a halfpenny. She also sold sherbert dabs and fountains, among many other comestibles, but these are the ones I best remember.

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## LOOSE AREA HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society was formed in 1989 with the aim of investigating the history of Loose and its neighbourhood. General meetings are held monthly, usually in the Church Hall. The Research Group meets less frequently to discuss members' work, exhibitions, publications etc. Details of membership and activities may be obtained from Julia Page or Roger Thornburgh (see page 2).

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