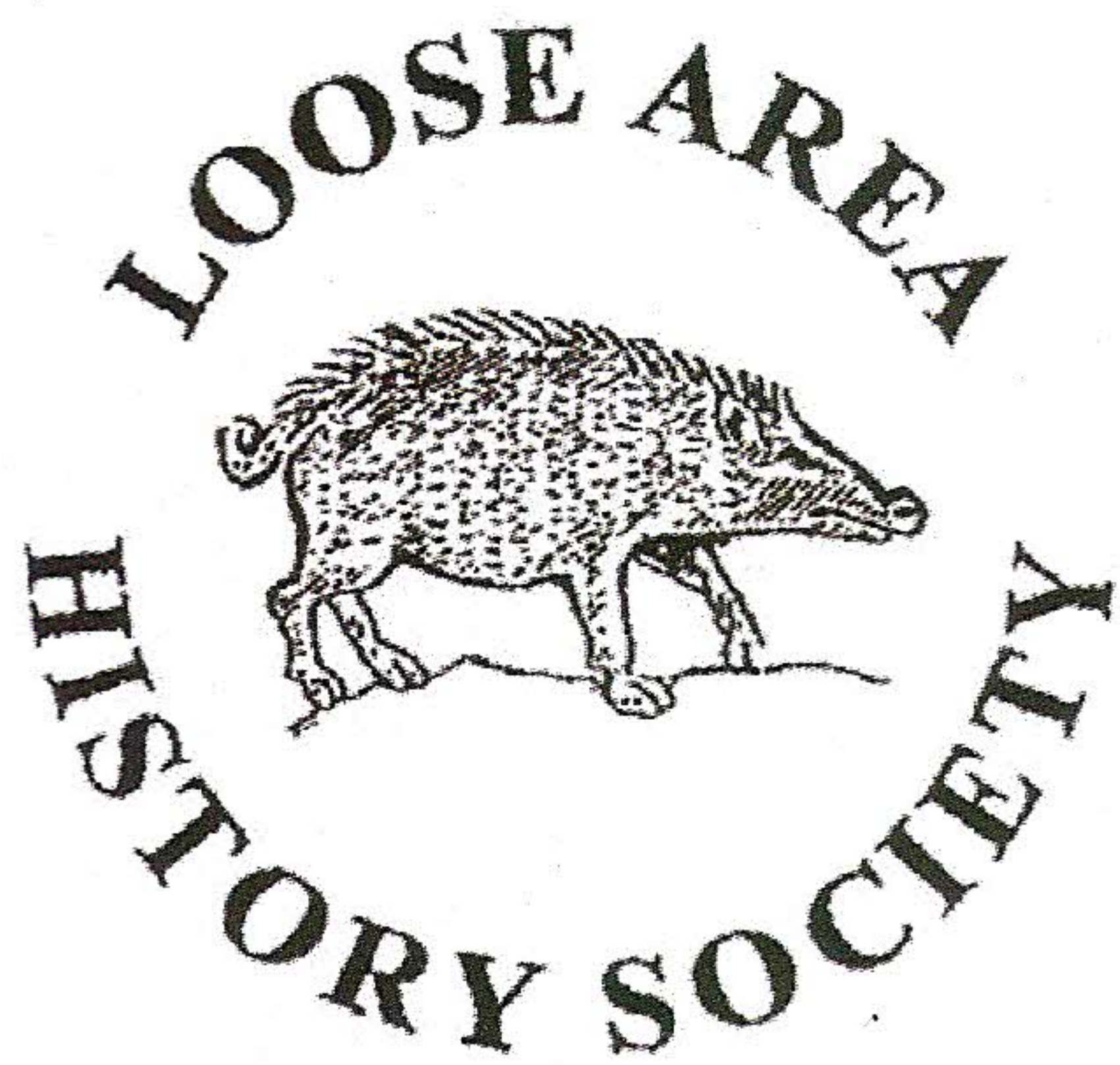


J. Chapman
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LOOSE ENDS

(Edition No.1 October 2006)

This new annual supplement is being introduced as a means to accommodate the overflow, and the more ephemeral material, submitted for inclusion in *Loose Threads* (in this case, edition 8). It will be produced annually, in October, whether or not an edition of *Loose Threads* is ready for publication. In this way, we will be able to keep more regularly in touch with LAHS members.

Thanks for the Memories

There follows a review of memories, comments, corrections and photographs received following the publication in 2004 of the first impression of *Loose and Linton – a Pictorial History* by the Loose Area History Society and the Friends of All Saints' Church, Loose. You may wish to amend and update your own copies of the book. Our thanks to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter.

The Thomsett Family

'My father was born at No.1 Rhodesia Cottages (seen in the foreground of the picture on page 7, and reproduced below), and the

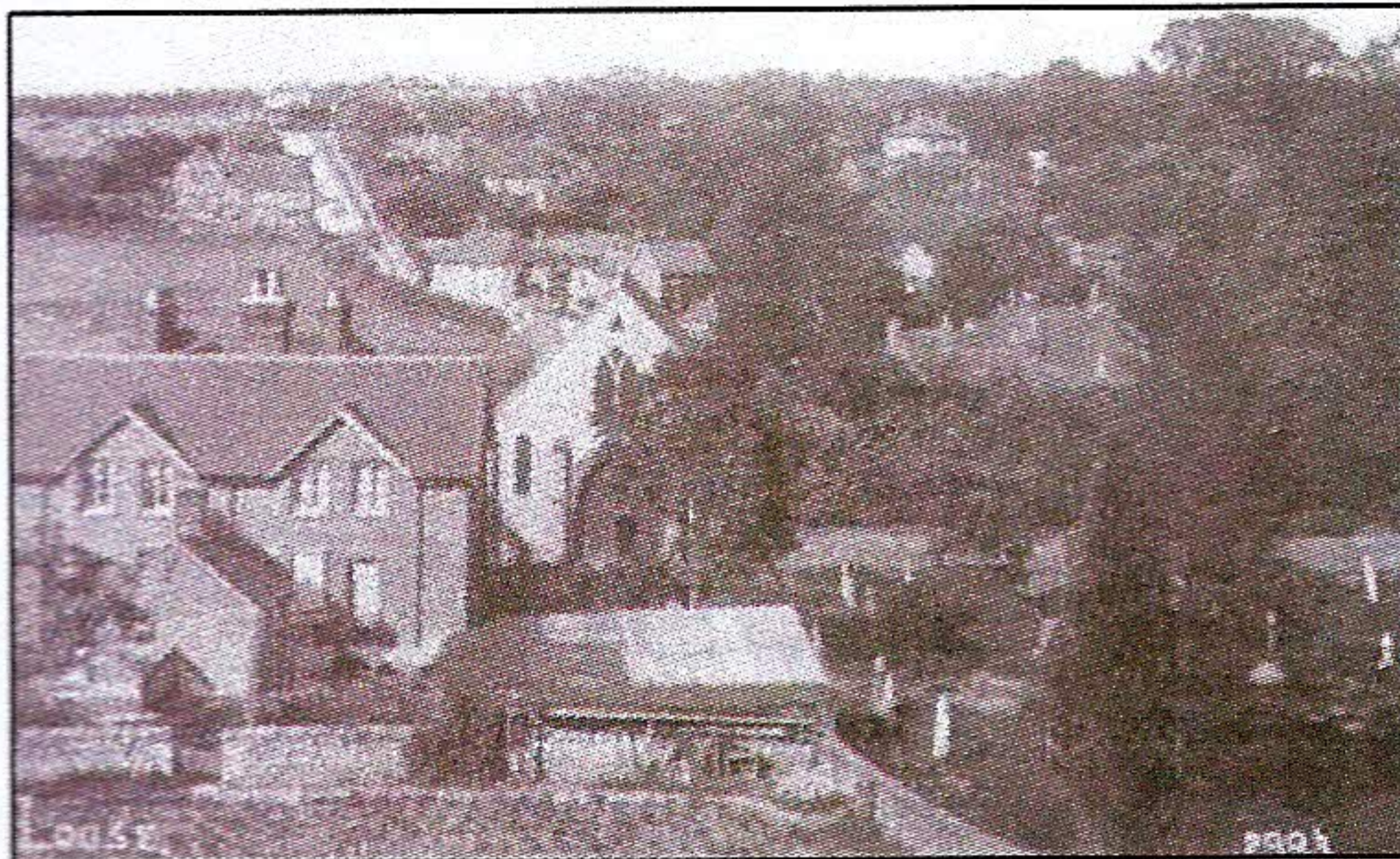


photo shows the old 'lodge' which I remember being used as a firewood store. It also shows the privy and washhouse which had a large 'copper' heated by a fire, hence the chimney.

'In the photograph of the Cornwallis family and their tenants and staff featured on the front cover and page 9, the man standing in the front row, fourth from the left, holding the riding crop, is Mr Harper, the 'whipper-in'.

'On page 35 you said that Charles Percival Thomsett died in 1911. The correct date is 1919. In the photograph at the foot of page 117, John Charles Thomsett, my grandfather, is standing second from the left in

the second row from the back, not in the back row. In the photograph of Loose Institute FC featured on page 163, (see also below) I have identified *John Charles Thomsett*, standing in the back row, third from the right, with cap and moustache'.

Michael Thomsett, Lenham



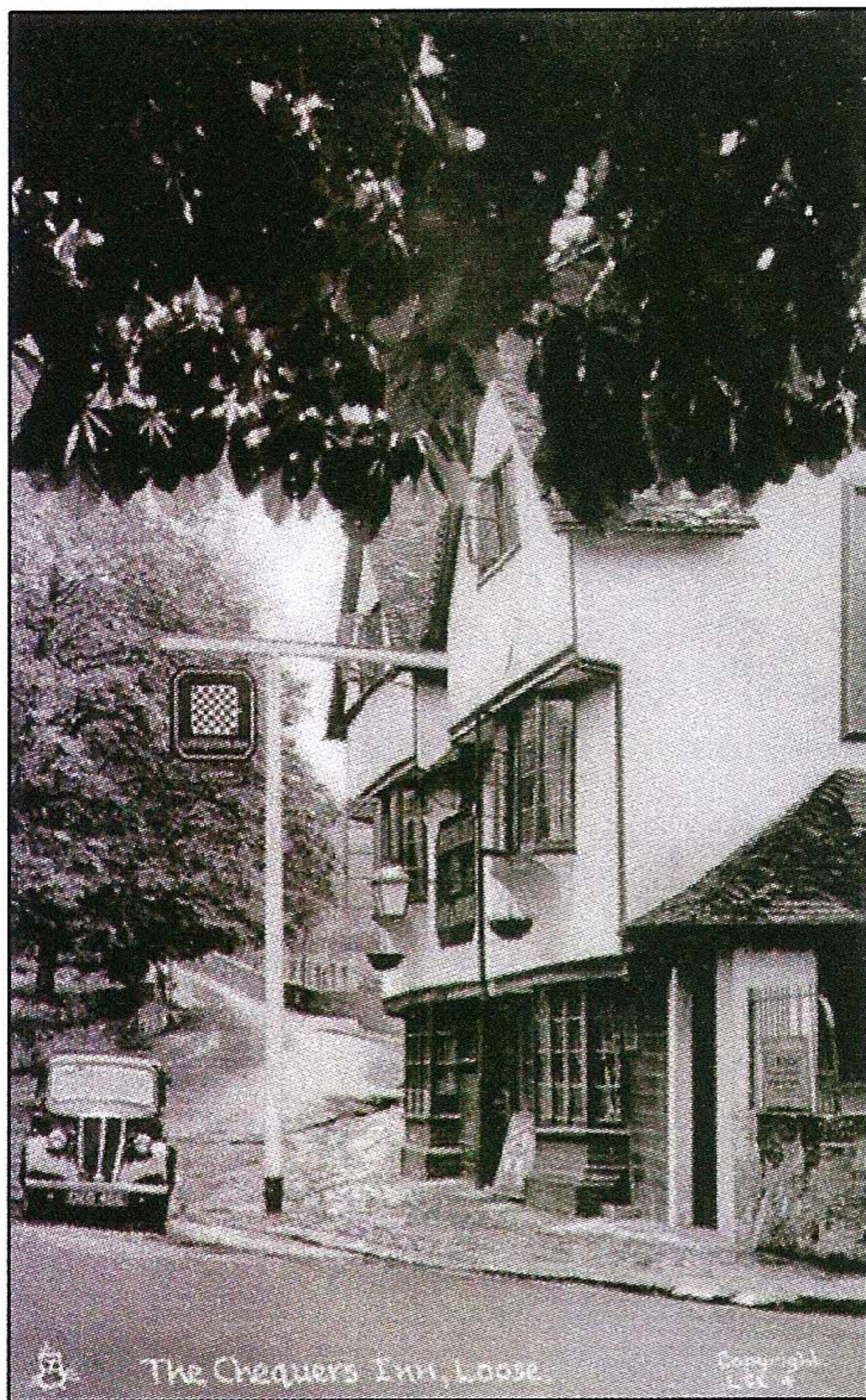
(The names of the players as printed on the original photograph are, from left to right, back row: H.W Amies, F.T. Stace, E.H.Waite, T. Mills, W.H.Jenner, F.Moon, **G.Higham**, H.Wood, T.Wells; centre row: C.Pritchard, A.Jenner, H.A.Kitchenham, A.Cheeseman, A.Spall; Front row: G.W.Larkin, E.Mercer, S.Relf, J.Leper. – Ed)

The Car at the Chequers

'Surprise, surprise! I was the owner of DKO 459 (Standard Nine) pictured on page 107 outside the Chequers, Loose, in 1936. (see also next page).

'I was born on December 29, 1913, at No.4 Seagrove Road, Folkestone, leaving there when my mother and father died in 1921. Being a boy aged seven I was looked after by guardians at No. 53 Melville Road, Maidstone, moving to No. 221 Loose Road in the 1920s

with Mr and Mrs Charles Locke. The address is still known as 'Ascot House.'



'I stayed there until I married Kathleen Funnell of Loose, at Loose Church on April 22, 1936. We were married by the Rev. Angus Berry.

'Our first home was Orchardene, The Grove, Bearstead, where we had three children - John, Anne and Sandy. We stayed there until 1953 before moving to Paddock Wood. In 1960 we moved to Southborough - initially to No. 11 Park Road for another lengthy period and then to my present abode.

'I was overseas for three years with the RAF (radar crew, 1939 - 1946). Otherwise my life with Kathleen was a very happy one. Sadly it ended in March 2001 when she died. We had been together for almost 65 years.

'One of Kathleen's two sisters (Dorothy Tyler) lived in Loose with her husband, Ken. Their daughter Pam (Kathleen's niece) was married to Tony May at Loose Church on October 25, 1958, and they have lived in Coxheath ever since.

'I was only 23 years old when 'DKO' was snapped.'

Norman Kennedy, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells

Life at Loose Court

Jean Clifton saw the pictures on page 17 of Charles Smith, Jim Walder and Frank Halls, who worked for Major Frederick Dunbar Thomas at Loose Court farm and estate, and sent us this photograph, saying:

'This shows my grandfather, Albert Edward Boon, who was Major Thomas' bailiff [from 1905-1935 - Ed.] He is sitting on the bride's left. My grandmother, Mary Jane Boon, is sitting next to the bridegroom. The picture was taken in the orchard adjoining their house at Loose Court Farm. My grandmother kept chickens and sold eggs to Herbert Larkin, who had a shop near the Walnut Tree pub in Loose Road.'

The group was photographed after the wedding at All Saints', Loose, on June 6, 1922, of Bessie Jane Boon (31) and William ('Billy') Harold Melmoth (26), confectioner of Smallheath, Birmingham. Albert and Mary's youngest son, Stanley, is standing second from the left in the back row. The tall man in the centre is Adrian Fransey (husband of Bessie's sister Ethel) who was one of the official witnesses at the wedding ceremony. The other witness was Reginald Victor Boon.



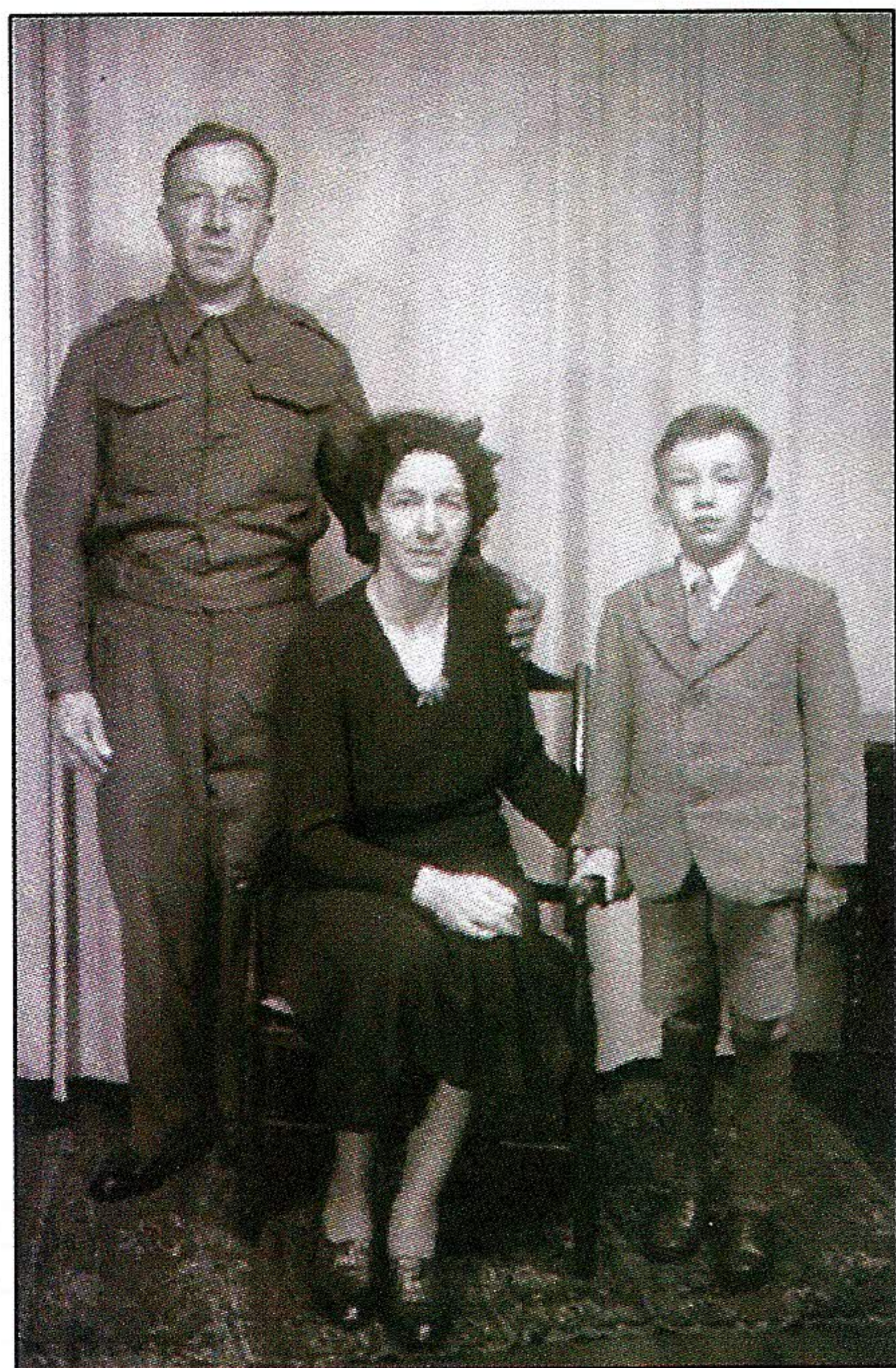
[We have gleaned more information about the Walder family and life at Loose Court from the following unsigned notes kept in the Loose Area History Society Archives: - Ed]

'When war was declared in 1939, Eileen and Jim Walder were living in the gardener's cottage of Loose Court, at the bottom of Lancet Lane - Jim was Major Thomas' head gardener. Mr Boon (then later, Mr Barnes) was the farm manager. Mr Quinnell was the stockman and Mr Giles was the Waggoner.

'War made life very difficult, especially with food rationing, but Eileen kept 50 chickens, and even though most of the eggs had to be surrendered to obtain a ration of corn for the hens, some were left to supplement their own rations.

'The worst moment came when an oil-bomb fell on the greenhouses close to their cottage, but luckily the explosion burst the water tank nearby and put the flames out. Two more bombs fell at the same time but they landed in the valley, one each side of the pond. The doodlebug, which fell at the top of Lancet Lane, blew out the front windows of their cottage.

'Jim joined the Home Guard at first but was soon called up and served four years in an 'Ack-Ack' regiment. This meant that Eileen had to work, so, with a young son to



Left: Jim and Eileen Walder and their son Jim c.1943.

look after, she decided to work on the farm, where he could accompany her, and spent the war years picking fruit, loading hay and pulling wurzels.

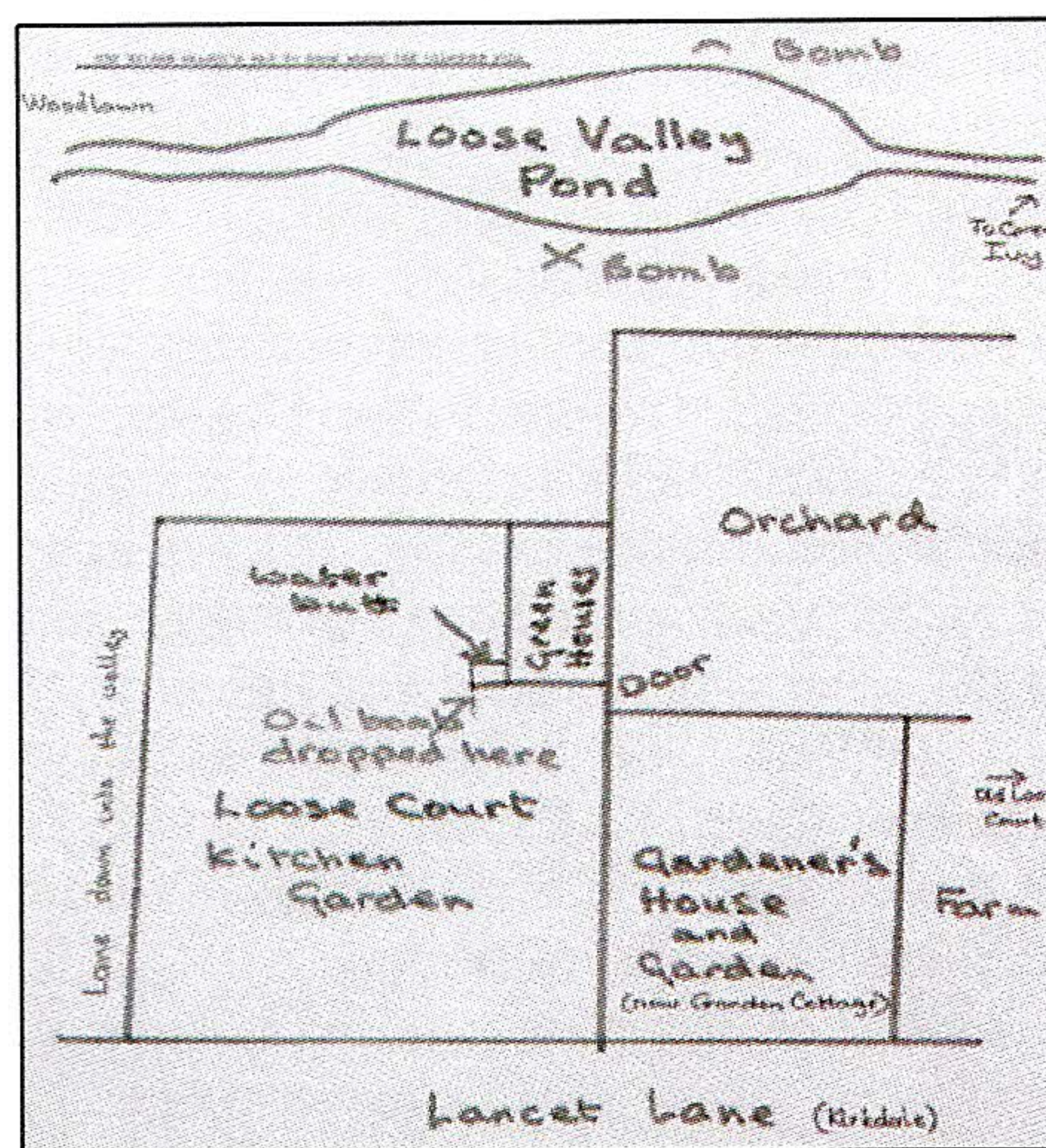
'She found she enjoyed the outdoor life and the good health it brought. Only one Land Girl worked on the farm, a girl called Phoebe. Meanwhile Jim's job of head gardener was done by a man in his 70s who came out of retirement to do it.

'Because she worked on the land, Eileen received a welcome addition of extra cheese and tea to their normal rations. Nevertheless she remembers it as a very hard, very worrying time, with doodlebugs passing

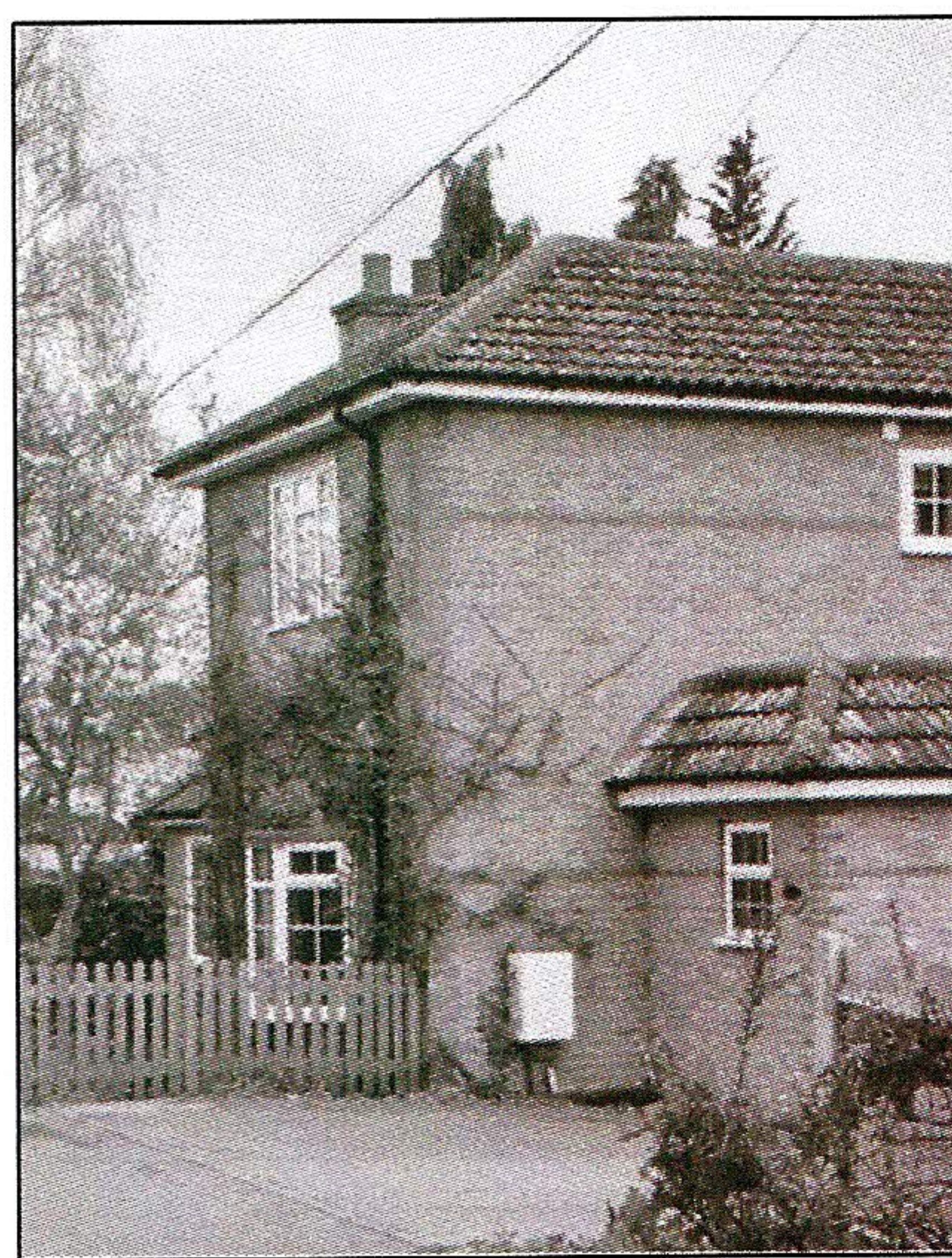
overhead as they worked in the fields, and night time air raids when, instead of sheltering in the cellar, she preferred to take deck chairs, blankets and her son in his siren suit, out under the elm trees at the bottom of the garden.

'It was hard work on the children too, with broken nights, few treats and not enough new clothes – even the siren suit was made from a coat of her own.

'When the children were to be evacuated from Loose School to Cardiff, Eileen sent Jim a telegram (telephones were rarer then) to ask his opinion. Like her, he didn't want his son to go to strangers, so they then sent him to an uncle at Frimley, on a farm. However, the raids diminished and Eileen and her son missed one another, so after six months she brought him home again'.



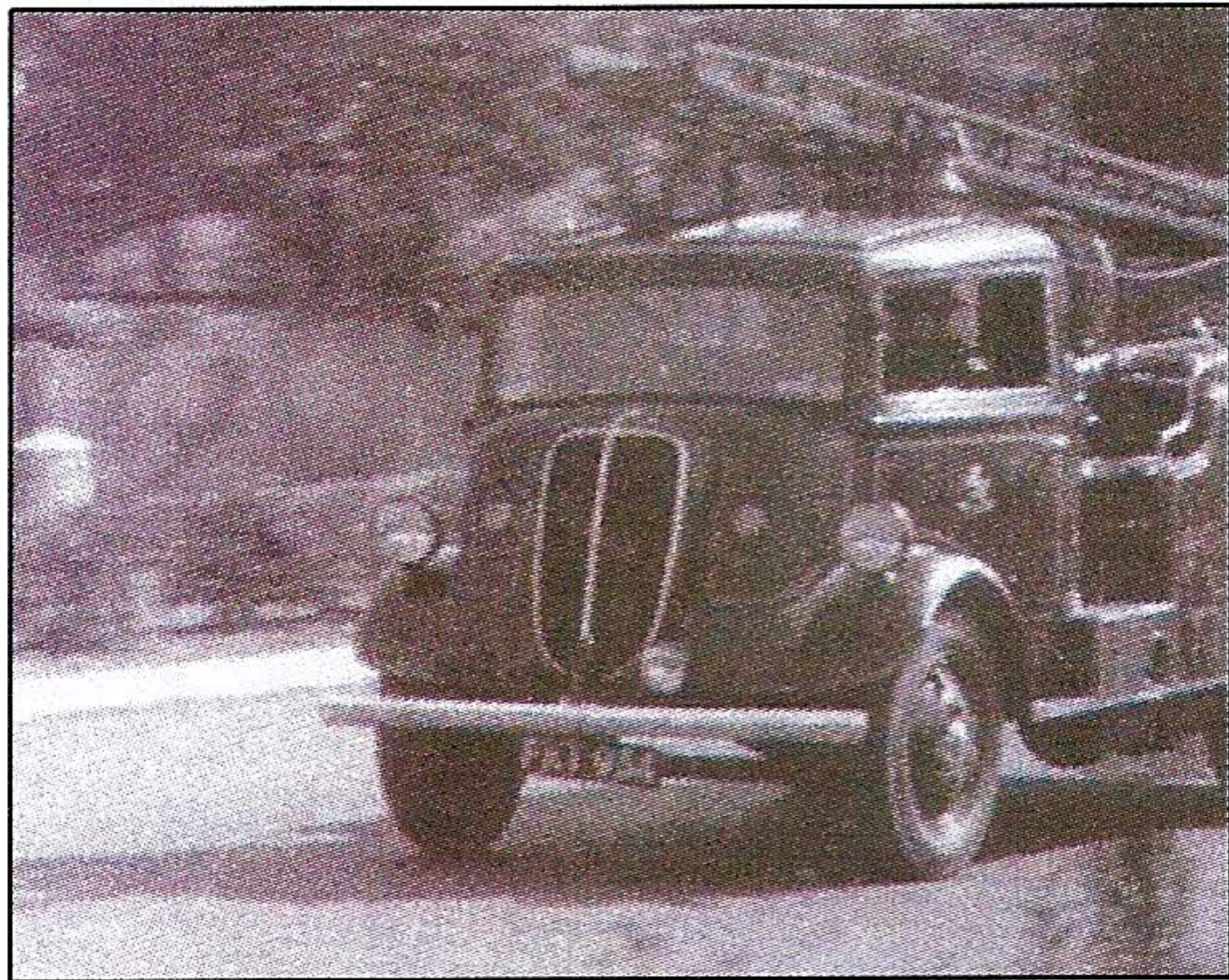
A map drawn by Eileen Walder, showing where the oil-bomb fell.



Garden Cottage in April 2005, the former home of the Walder family.

Fire Engines and Carriers

'The 'water tender' (featured here, and on page 97 of the pictorial History) is actually



Loose Fire Brigade's fire engine, which towed a powerful pump capable of pushing out 500 gallons of water a minute. The photograph was more likely taken in the 1940s, not the 1950s.

'Loose Fire Brigade was not part of the Auxiliary Fire Service but was formed by my grandfather, George Bertie Hanson, who was appointed Chief Fire Officer by Maidstone Rural District Council in 1938. The fire station was on Mr Hanson's property in Linton Road and the crew was recruited and trained by its Chief Officer. My father was a founder member of the crew. The Brigade attended its first fire on July 1, 1939. It was absorbed into the Auxiliary Fire Service during the Second World War. A full history of the brigade was published in *Bygone Kent*, volume 15, nos. 7 to 10, in 1994.

'Mr Hanson had previously been Maidstone Borough Fire Brigade's Engineering Officer, its only full-time paid officer. He was appointed in 1907 and resigned in 1920 – his wages at the time being £3.15s a week. B.G.Thomas, in his history of the Maidstone Brigade, omitted to note Mr Hanson's considerable contribution to the efficiency and development of the Brigade, particularly during the First World War

'After leaving the Brigade, Mr Hanson set up in business in Staplehurst, as a builder and as an agent for one of the then rapidly expanding petrol companies, resulting in the construction of 'Linton Garage', which opened in 1925. It was one of the first petrol stations in the Maidstone area, where the attendant dispensed petrol directly to cars and lorries by way of hand-cranked pumps from underground tanks. Previously, fuel had been delivered to the homes of private car owners, in two-gallon cans.

'I am pleased to know that Mr Hanson is commemorated in the name of the road on the new estate on Linton Road, built

on the site of his petrol station, known as 'Linton Service Station' after the war. He was born in 1833 and died in 1961. I hope the developers removed the five or six 1,000 gallon underground tanks before the new homes were built over them! It was impossible to pump out all the fuel; 30-50 gallons were always left behind.

'During the Second World War, several strings of bombs fell on the parish. One narrowly missed the petrol station, which remained open during hostilities for the sale of rationed petrol. There would have been quite a bang if there had been a direct hit, not to mention the destruction of the fire station. My father was on duty on the night of this incident.

'The Carrier's wagon passing the Chequers in the photograph on page 104 [of the Pictorial History] is more likely to be a brewers dray. Carriers provided a valuable service to villagers for many decades up to about 1950. There was little public transport in those days, particularly to Coxheath and Linton. The main village Carrier was William Horton Miller, who set up his rounds with a horse and wagon in 1884. He lived and worked from the last house in Loose parish, along Heath Road, Coxheath. The service was subsequently run by his grandson, William Reeves, with lorries from 1926, until the business was nationalised in 1947.

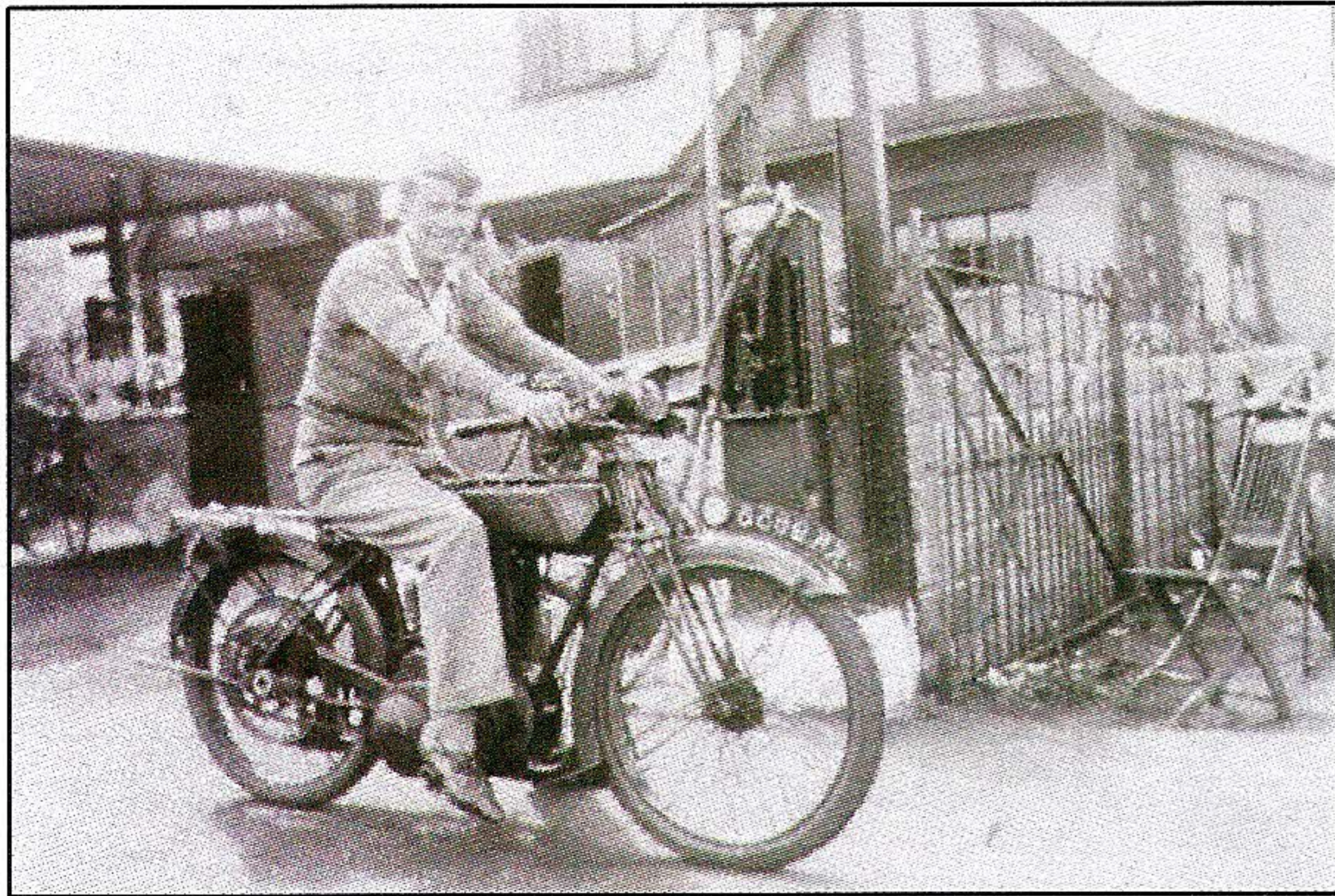
'Some accounts of the family firm, with photographs, were published in *Kent Scene* in 1989 and 1990. W.Reeves

The Hanson Family

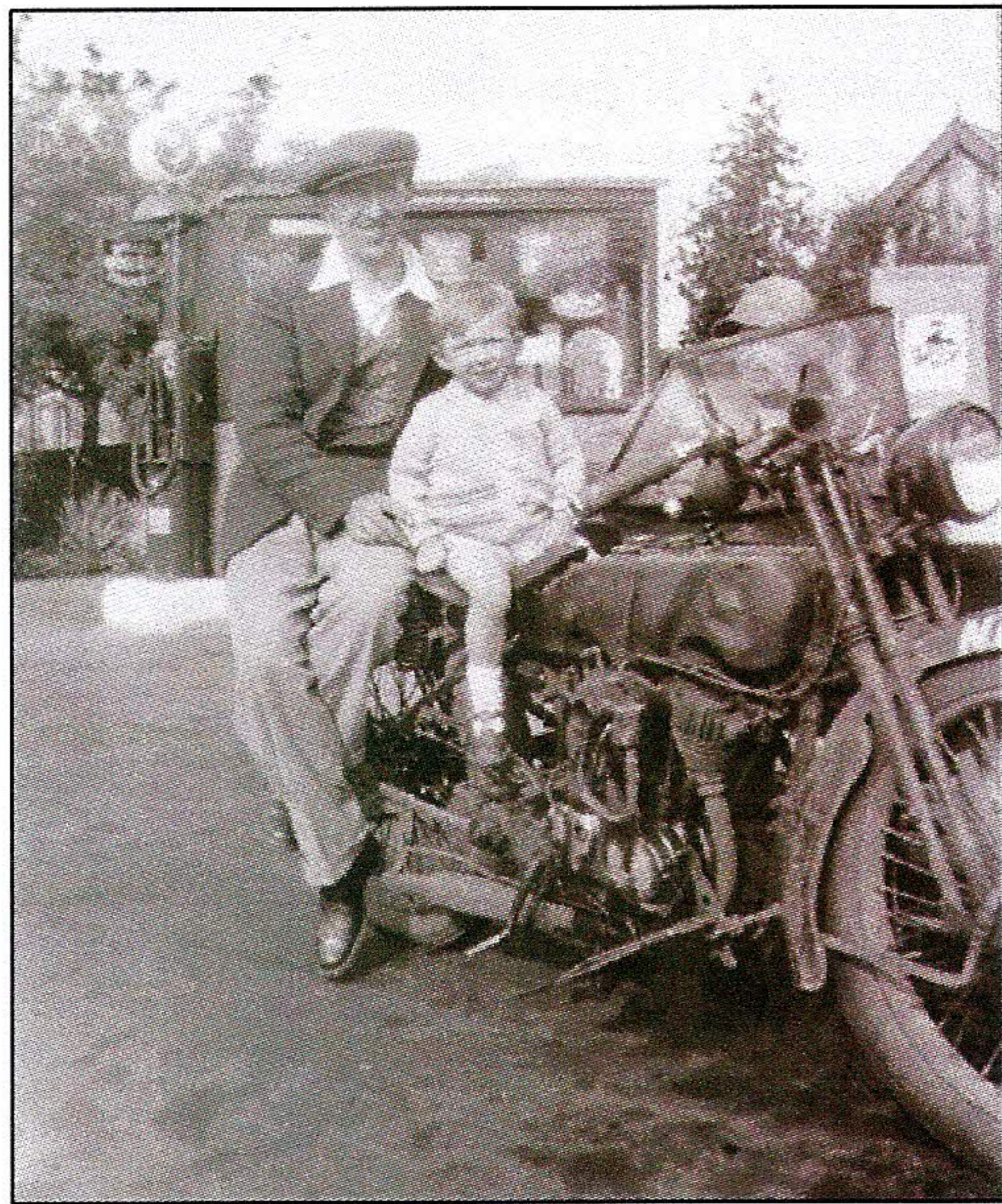


This photograph, and the following four Hanson family photographs, were sent to us by George Bertie Hanson's granddaughter, **Sheila Farrant**, of Linton. The photo, *above*, was taken for G.B.Hanson's passport, which tells us he was born in London on June 29, 1883, and that he was 5ft 8¾ inches tall. He had blue eyes and fair hair – and a 'tattoo snake' on his

wrist. At the time the passport was issued he was a manufacturer's agent. The following photographs were all taken at Linton Garage (also known as Linton Road Service Station and Linton Petrol Station).



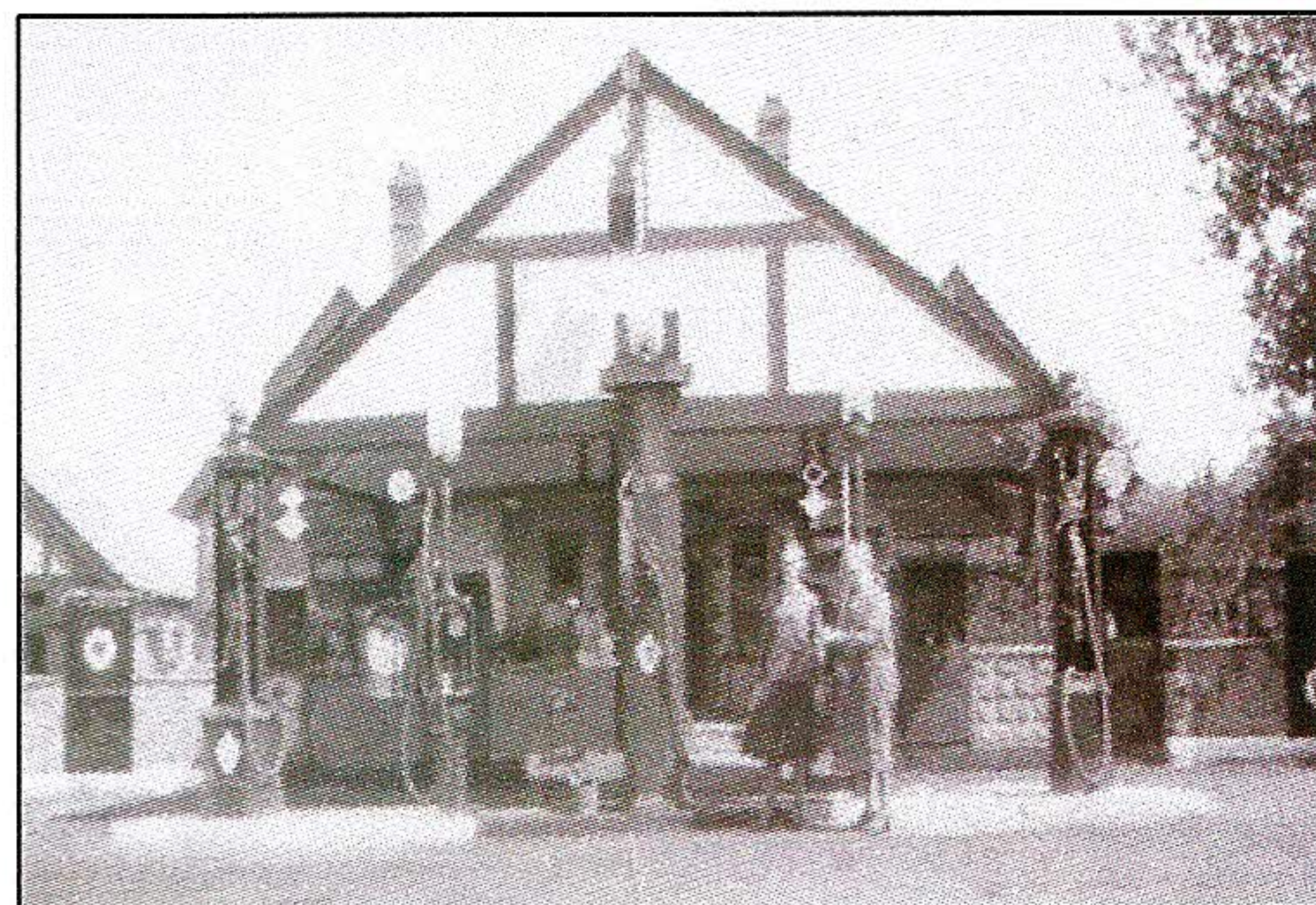
Richard Hanson on his motorcycle, c.1930



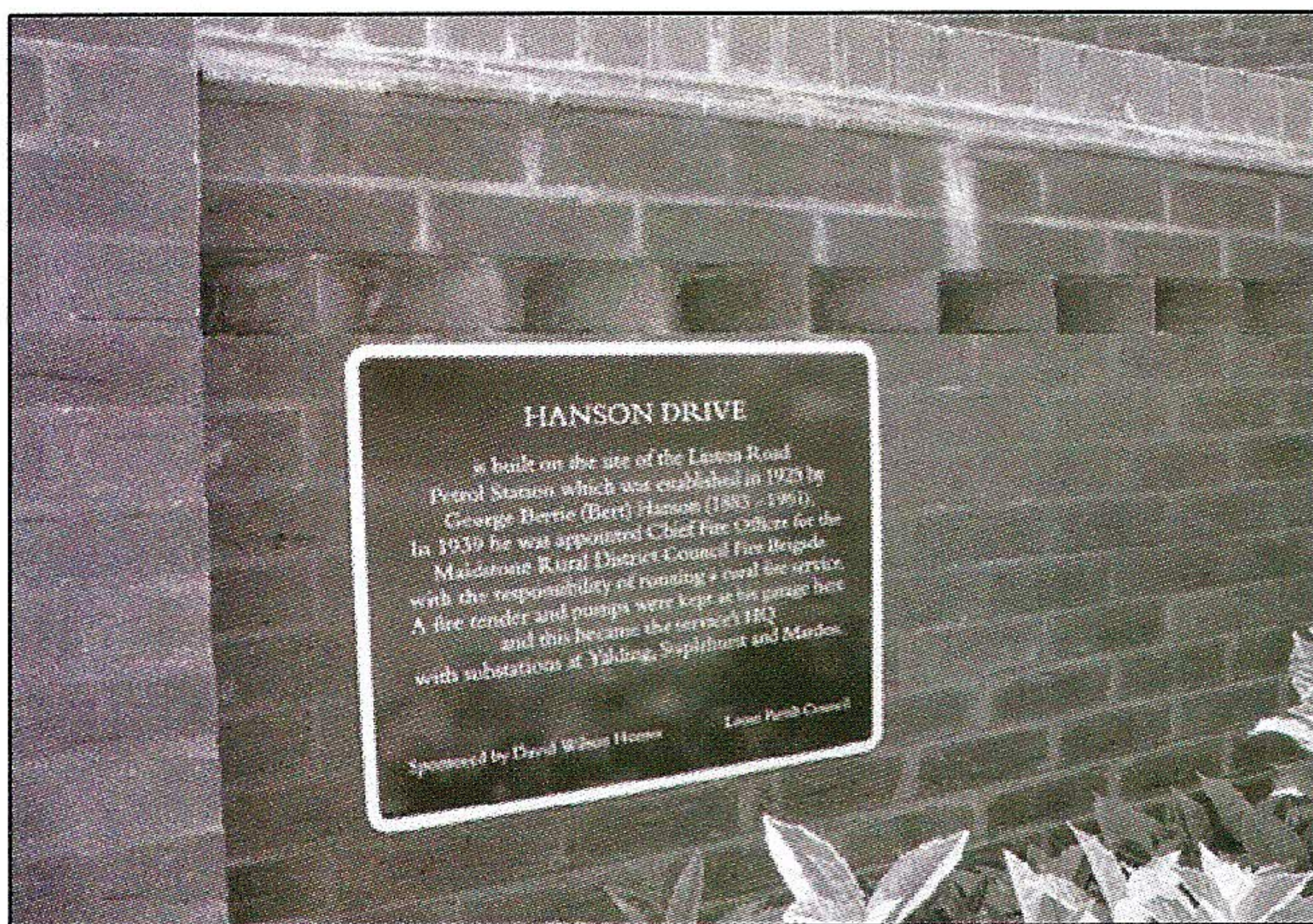
Arthur Hanson (son of G.B. & Lily) on his motorcycle with his wife, Phyllis and their son Peter. c. 1935



Loose Firemen in front of their engine shed. Back row from left: Bill Chisholm, Don Chisholm, Jack Lawrence. Front row: Albert Farrow, Arthur Hanson, Les Edwards.



Freda Hanson (wife of Bertie's elder son, Richard), and Lily Hanson beside the petrol pumps.



The commemorative plaque erected in Hanson Drive in 2006

Loose Cottage Gardeners

The Vegetable Show in the Vicar's Hall, Loose, in 1955.



From the right are: (1) an unidentified woman; (2) Ernest Clifford (wearing hat) – a bricklayer of 515 Loose Road; (3) George Saxby Snr. (Brian's grandfather) – a carter of 523 Loose Road; (4) Mr Spicer, father of Rosemary Spicer; (5) (face partly hidden), believed to be Mr Barker; (6) George Saxby Jnr, - a firefighter (Brian's father); (7) believed to be Mr Musgrave; (8) (the man in dark suit, standing at table) – believed to be Mr Stannett; (9) believed to be Mrs Mills; (10 & 11) are unidentified; (12) Ella Saxby née Batt (woman in light coat and hat) – wife of George Saxby Jnr; The man at the far end of the group, standing against the wall, is Sid Batt – Ella Saxby's brother, who lived at Coxheath and was a sewer cleaner.

Brian Saxby, Allington Park.

Second Impression of Loose and Linton Pictorial History

Production of this is now in question. If there is any news of its progress the information will be advertised widely.

Miscellaneous Corrections And Queries

(Re. Loose Pictorial History)

- At the foot of page 36, for 'Daisy Smith' (Lucy Weedon's daughter) read 'Daisy Smith' (Lucy Weedon's sister).
- At the foot of page 153, for 'Old Little Ivy' read 'Little Ivy Mill'.
- At the top of page 166, for 'Woolford' read 'Wolford', and for 'Les Woolford' read 'Bill Wolford'.
- At the foot of page 166, for 'Loose and Bearsted Colts CC' read 'Loose Colts CC'.
- At the top of page 180, for 'Kathleen Kennard' read 'Kathleen Kennard'.

You may wish to amend your own copies of the Pictorial History.

Terry Wicket of Cripple Street, who has a collection of old maps of our area, wishes to obtain a photograph of Shernold Pond, Loose Road. If you can help, please contact the editor.

'Help me find My Knights of Old'



I am trying to find any records giving the names of people who were employed at the Wool House, Loose; such as the name of the owner of the property in 1841 and any other records of the occupations of people living in the Well Street area. Some of my paternal ancestors, named Knight, lived in Well Street in 1841 – according to the census of that year, and may have worked at the Wool House. Other censuses show later generations working or living at Westerhill Farm, Reason Hill Farm, East Farleigh and Linton.

In 1841 James and Mary Knight, who were 70 and 60 years old respectively, were recorded as having possibly been born outside Kent, but I found a baptism registration for a James Knight at All Saints', Loose, in 1770 – which would be about right for the above James. His parents were Abraham and Sarah (née Piper) Knight. Abraham married twice more before he died in 1802.

I believe that James and Mary had at least three children – Mary, Ann and Henry. These children claim, on the censuses, that they were born in East Farleigh but I have failed to find any baptisms in any of the local churches. Abraham's will states that he was a farmer from Staplehurst and mentions his son James, but gives no clue as to where James was living. Land Tax records first show James Knight living in Well Street in 1823.

By the 1851 census Mary had died and there was no trace of James, either at Well Street or living with any of his children. All James Knight deaths on the GRO records from 1841 onwards do not appear to be a match, either.

James' son Henry is my 2 x great grandfather, who married Elizabeth Bigg of Maidstone and then, Harriet Page of Leeds. Their son, Edward Robert was my great grandfather, who married Naomi Barden from Brenchley. Their son, Albert, was my grandfather.

I hope that records from the places mentioned above, exist and will show where James came from, if he did not originate from Kent, or if he is Abraham's son James. I also hope that someone may help me find when and where he married and also, where Abraham came from.

Some of the children through the generations married into the Cheeseman, Cove/Coves, Cox, Hyland, Pearson, Ransome, Relf and Rhodes families.

I would be pleased to hear from any readers who may be able to help me.

**Yvonne Moore, 36 Kent Road, Littlehampton,
West Sussex, BN17 6LH (tel: 01903 722715)**

Brenda Dorothy Cording

(1935 – 2006)

Brenda (or B Dee Cording as we know her in the pages of *Loose Threads*) was born in Loose and was one of five children born to Stanley and Hilda Weeks. Her father served in the Royal Navy.

The Weeks family moved from Loose to Kingsley Road in Maidstone, and sadly, when Brenda was only 18 years old she lost her mother to cancer. After completion of her formal education Brenda joined the workforce and went to work for the local health authority as a Medical Records clerk. She forged close friendships with many of her work colleagues, whose steadfast friendship – which stood the passage of time - she valued enormously.

Brenda met her husband, John, through mutual friends and they were married at the Baptist Church, Maidstone, in 1964.

In 1966 they moved to the new development of houses in Northleigh Close, and the Cording family expanded with the arrival of two daughters, Julie in 1967 and Louise in 1969. Like most women of that time Brenda gave up work to look after her children and the family enjoyed many years of family life. Some years later she returned to the workplace on a part-time basis as a Dinner Lady at Oldborough Manor School. This job was augmented by spells of fruit picking during the summer months when Brenda would go with friends and take her daughters with her to help pick fruit in season on nearby farms.

Brenda always ensured that the family had an annual holiday, be it camping in Brixham, trips to Paris, Germany or the Channel Islands.

When the Weeks family lost contact with her elder brother Stan, Brenda set about tracking him down, and after much investigative work on her part and with the assistance of the New Zealand High Commission, she finally located her brother in Auckland. An emotional and memorable reunion followed after Brenda organised a five week family holiday there in 1986.

After her family, Brenda's commitment and passion was to community work and life; she was popular and cared passionately about local issues, forging close links with the local community and other organisations during her spare time.

Brenda was a dedicated member of the British Red Cross since 1976 when she first trained as a first-aider. She was also a front-line volunteer working in the Medical Loans department of the Maidstone Branch, helping to lend items of medical equipment such as wheelchairs, bed rests and commodes to people on a short term basis. Occasionally, her husband John would be pressed into action helping to repair various articles of medical equipment and even helping to erect a flagpole! She was engaged in regular fund raising, collecting activities and events for the society during Red Cross week. Here Brenda had the opportunity to meet new friends, learn new skills and enjoyed being part of a team that made such a difference to peoples' lives.

Brenda was a founder member of the Loose Footpaths Group and was most active in protecting and improving access to footpaths around the local villages and would regularly attend and lead walks for Loose or other walking groups around the county.

As a member of the Loose Area History Society she was actively involved in making valuable contributions towards enriching and extending our understanding of the past by becoming a researcher. Several of her articles can be read in various editions of *Loose Threads*. Her involvement as a Friend of Maidstone Museum enabled her to cultivate further, her own interest in local history.

Brenda kept an allotment until recently and was a keen producer of vegetables and plants. She grew up in an age of austerity when growing your own produce meant the difference between a meal on the table at the end of the day, or not.

As a keen member of the Coxheath and Loose Active Retirement Association Brenda was a most assiduous member and enjoyed a variety of activities ranging from theatre trips, keep fit, monthly meetings, walking and pub lunches.

Throughout her life Brenda was a passionate participant of the Adult Education system, and during her lifetime she joined many courses to broaden her interests and to meet new people. She was naturally artistic and enjoyed learning and tackled diverse subjects such as making stained glass, painting, learning to play the guitar, German language, and latterly becoming a 'silver surfer' on the internet. Watercolour painting gave Brenda a great deal of personal pleasure and her home bears testimony to this pastime. Brenda was also something of a Bridge addict.



Brenda at the 2002 "Echoes from the Past" exhibition in All Saints' Church

These are just *some* of the activities which kept her active, busy and involved. Right up until the end, she possessed an admirable sense of self-dignity and endurance in the face of her cruel illness. The family are extremely indebted and grateful to the medical staff of King's College Hospital, the local Community Support Team and District Nurses for their loving care and support over her last months, as well as to the friends who exhibited their love, concern and support with cards, calls, gifts and flowers.

Brenda will be deeply missed by family and friends alike.

Please help us to expand our knowledge of Loose and its inhabitants by sending your news, views, comments, ephemera etc. (either electronically or by post) to Margaret Chapman, 13 Northleigh Close, Loose ME15 9RP – MChap53767@aol.com

Any documents or photographs will be handled with care and returned to you after scanning