



# LOOSE ENDS

(No.4 October 2009)

With thanks to all who have contributed to this issue. Please send contributions for the next issue to Margaret Chapman, 13 Northleigh Close, Loose, ME15 9RP or Tel: 01622 746630 Mob: 07963 675124 Email: mchap53767@aol.com

## Society Matters

We have had a good year of talks and summer walkabouts and our 2009/10 season promises to be even more interesting. Details will be available soon – if not quite ready for the October meeting. Our committee remains as follows:

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Meeting Chairman     | Julia Page       |
| General Secretary    | Noel Gibbons     |
| Treasurer            | Phil Harrison    |
| Minutes Secretary    | Jill Smith       |
| Membership secretary | Helen Gallavin   |
| Programme Secretary  | Jenny Harrison   |
| Publicity Officer    | Paul Tritton     |
| Committee Member     | Roger Thornburgh |
| Committee Member     | Margaret Chapman |

## Our Archives:

We now have a map cabinet in place in our store and work continues to re-organise and catalogue our collection. The research team are working on transcribing Loose wills and inventories as well as following their own areas of research.

On going through our archives the following two items regarding **Mysterious Happenings in Loose** caught my eye – both contributed by Molly Proctor some years ago:-

1) The story is told of an elderly lady (who was living in 1987) who remembered her grandmother telling her how *her* grandmother, who lived in one of the cottages in Bridge Street (which has since been demolished), often heard the sound of ponies hooves at night. Her mother told her not to look out of the windows when she heard them, because it was smugglers bringing lace from Cranbrook and going on up to Penfolds. Lace was rather an unusual contraband during the C19 – but quite possible.

2) There is an old story about a ‘mad woman’ who used to live at Salts Place at the turn of the century. In the nineteen eighties, two villagers experienced acute anxiety in their dogs when walking them in the area of Springhead Pond and Salts Place. [At the turn of C18/19 there were three sisters of Denny Martin: Frances, Sibylla and Anna Susanna, whose family home was Salts Place. Soon after the turn of that century the sisters went to live at Leeds Castle, and it is recorded by an anonymous traveller, in 1809, that the Castle ... *“is at present enjoyed by General Martin and [his] maiden sisters, who mix but little with the world and, according to reports, these ladies are not without considerable singularities of disposition, among which is their positive aversion that any strangers should be admitted to see...[the Castle].* Could the ghost of one of these sisters be attributed to the ‘mad woman’ and therefore responsible for the anxieties felt by those dogs?-Ed]

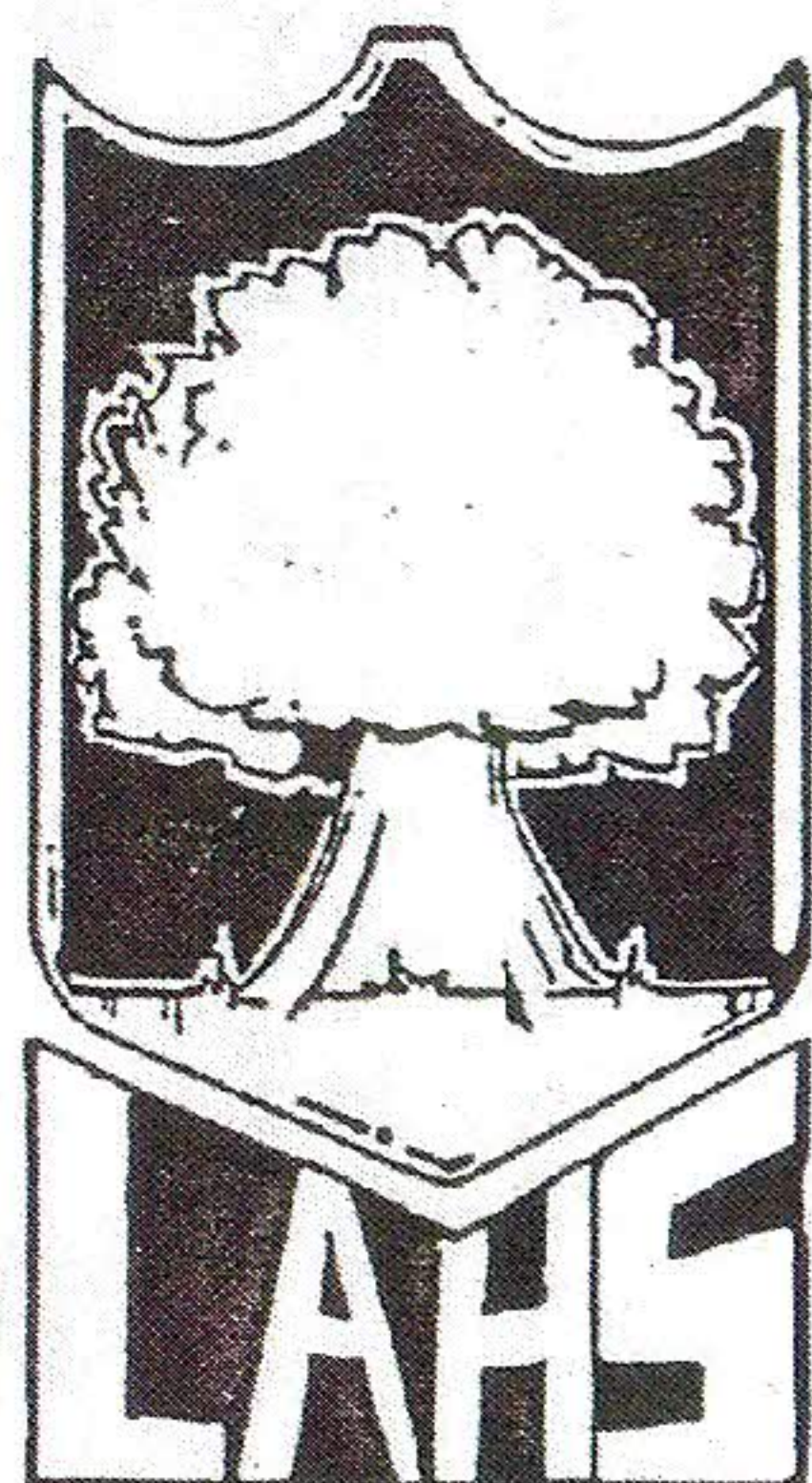
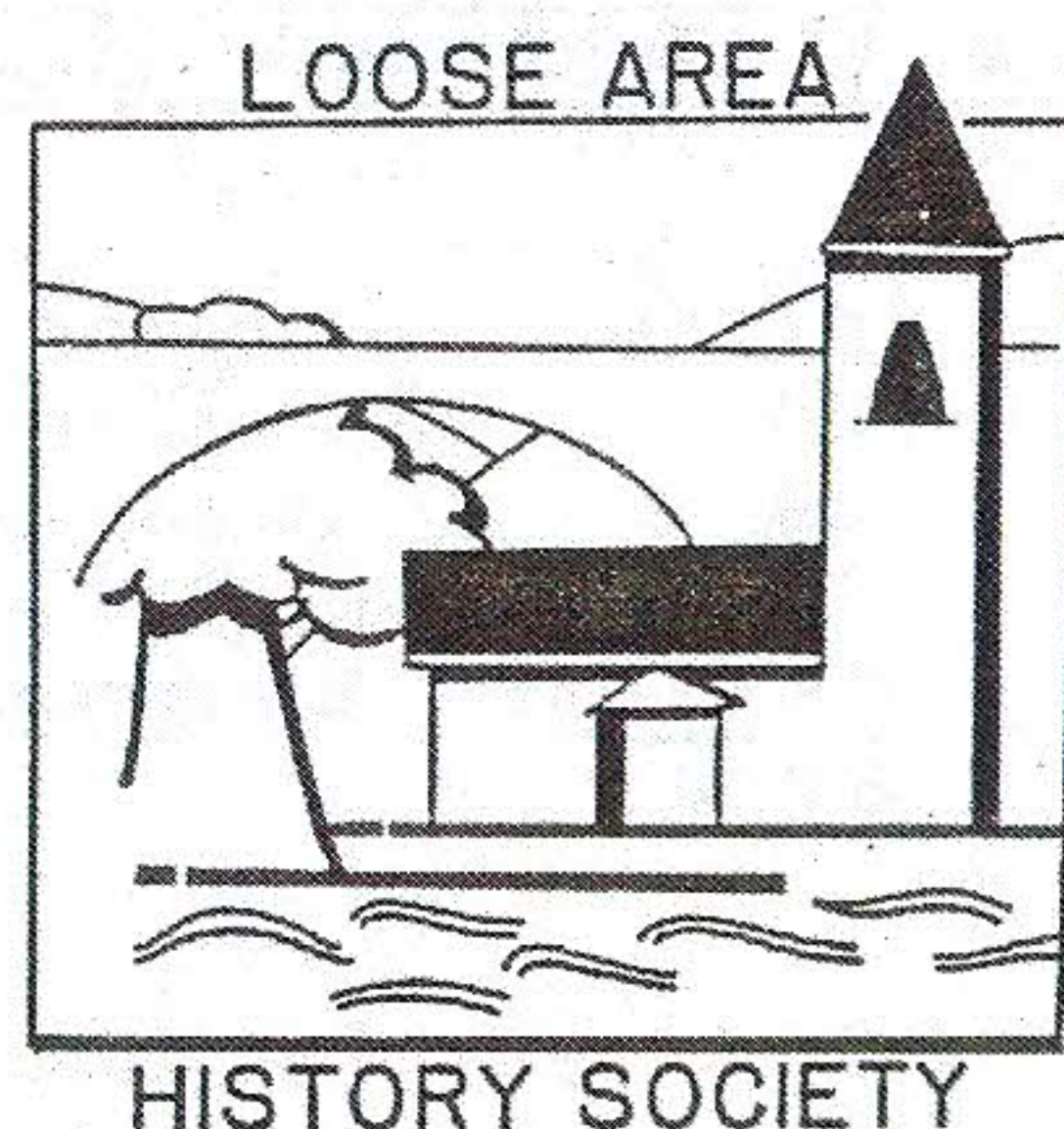
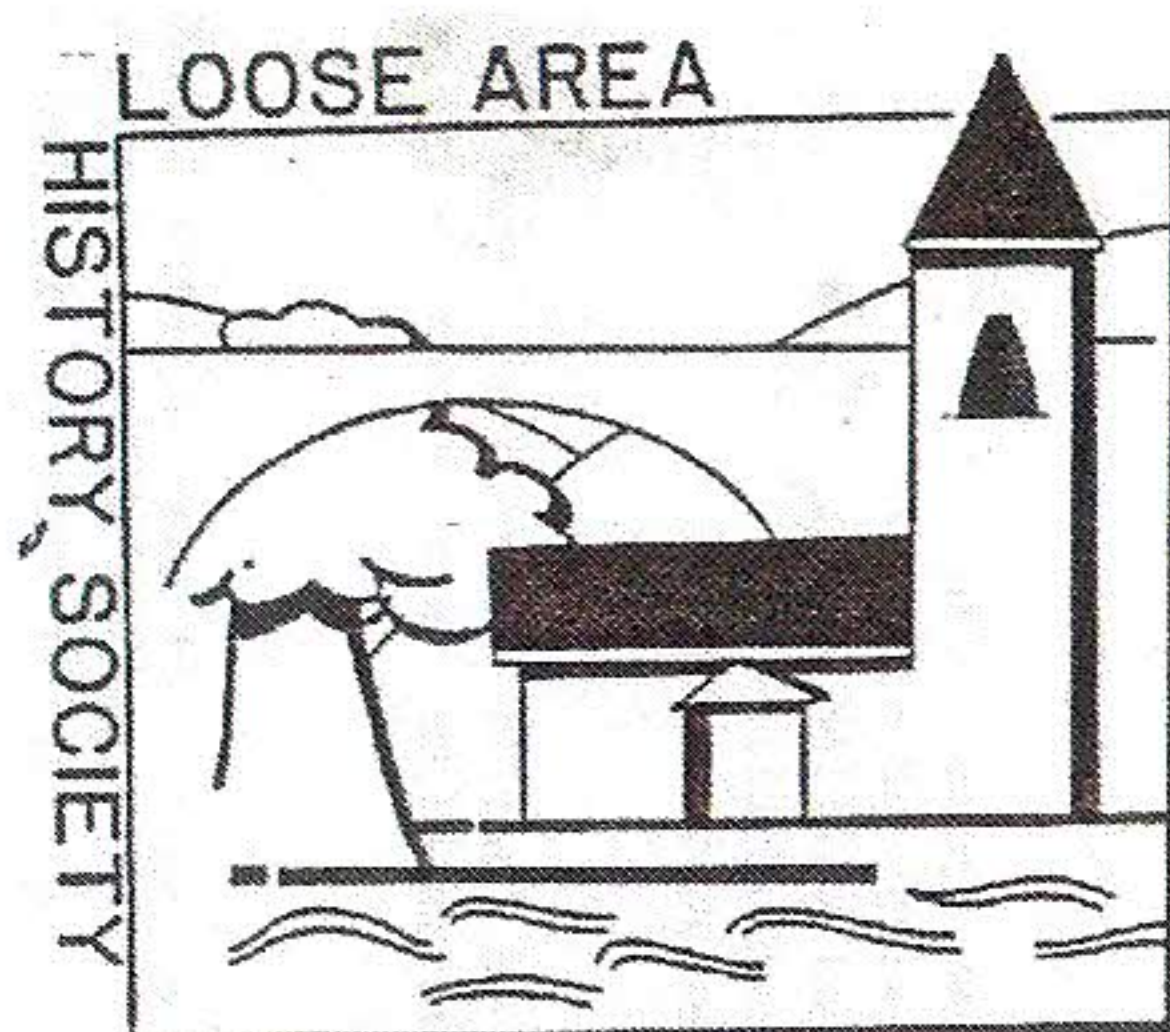
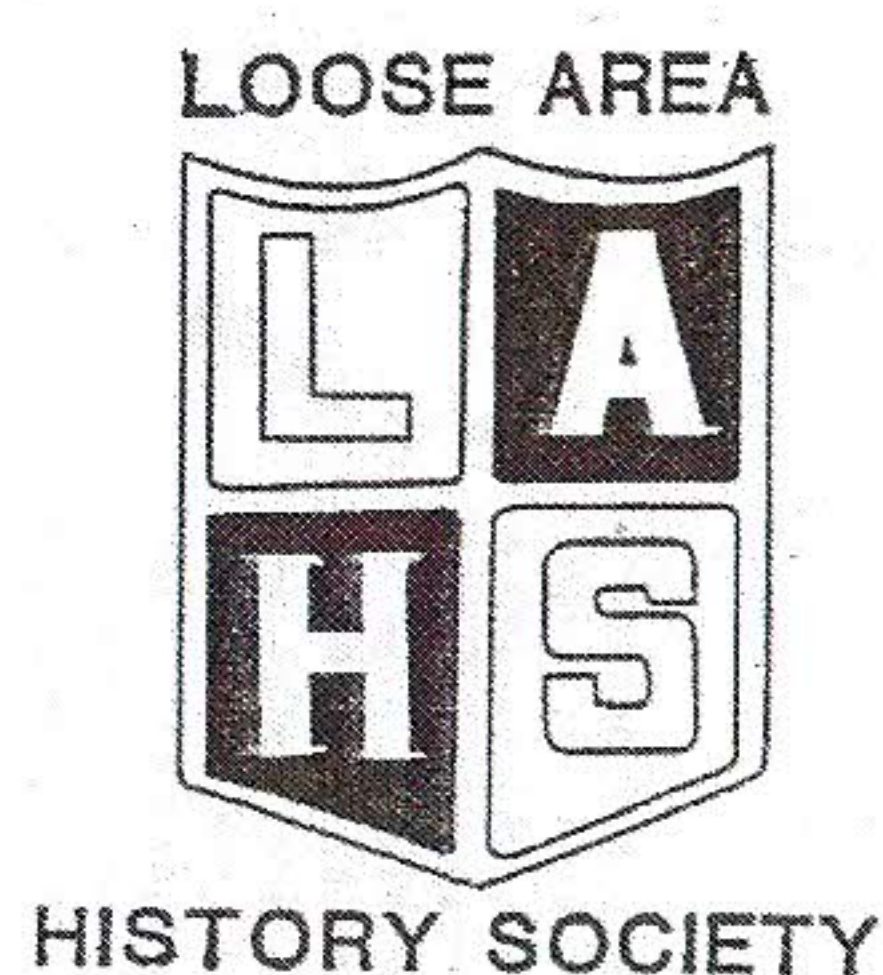
Does anyone else have mysterious tales of Loose to tell?

## Our Twenty First Anniversary

The first meeting of LAHS was held on 9 January 1989 with, it seems, a membership of 43 people. Prior to this it was the LAA Local History Circle which had its first meeting on 6 October 1986. Julia Page gave a talk with slides on some aspects of Loose. Ralph Steadman’s calendar for 1989 upset a number of people, which resulted in a proposal to set up a History Society that would be independent of LAA with responsibility for its own finances. The first committee of LAHS was Julia Page, chairman; Shirley Wilson, treasurer; Roger Thornburgh,

editor; Anne Creasey, archivist, with Betty Searle, Shirley Wilson, Pat Jenner, Betty Sidebottom and Helen Gallavin – five of whom who are still active in our society.

It was decided, early on, to find a logo for the society and although four ideas were put forward the decision was taken to wait a little longer until the right design was presented.



It wasn't until 24 November 1994 that the pig logo was formally adopted by the committee to reflect the meaning of the Saxon spelling of Hlose – which means 'place of the pig' or 'pigsty'

To commemorate our 21<sup>st</sup> year, some sort of exhibition is called for and the committee is considering the idea of *Art and Artists of the Loose Valley*. This could comprise art and sketches of any aspect of Loose – including portraits of local people by any artist, whether or not they have any connection to Loose, as well as art on any subject, by artists who live – or have lived in Loose. We will need to locate all this art, and obtain permission to borrow pictures for the exhibition. The committee will consolidate ideas and generate a working plan, but meanwhile, if anyone reading this can provide or suggest locations of suitable art, we would be most grateful. We will look forward

to the possibility of an interesting display of aspects of our locality.

### Snippets from our Parish Records

Anyone looking for a line of research may find inspiration from any one of the following:-)

- 1849 The daughter of a superintendent of a paper mill in Russia was baptised – the mother was living in Loose. (P223/1/6)
- 1806 A man was thrown from a one-horse carriage. (P233/1/3)
- 1741 Reference. to a woman giving birth to a child in the church porch. (P233/5/3)
- 1828 Payment made for "airing church books" (P233/5/5)
- 1786 Resolutions to give rewards to people informing against any person selling spirituous liquor in the parish of Loose without a licence (P233/8/3)
- 1783 A spinning wheel to be bought for a poor woman (P233/8/3)
- 1781 Fines for members of the vestry who quarrelled at meetings (P233/8/3)
- 1835 Payments for sparrows to be discontinued (P233/8/60)
- 1850 Legal action to be taken against a man who threw stones at a village policeman (P233/8/7)
- 1731/2 References in paupers' lists to a dwarf (P233/12/5/2)
- 1746 Ref. to a journey to London to search a register in The Fleet to prove the marriage of Henry Randal (P233/12/5/2)
- 1875 Payment of 6d. to Sweetlove for pair of spectacles (P233/12/7)
- 1819 Relieved an Italian on the road – 6d (P233/12/9)

## Loose Connections



Jessie Ellis standing by one of his steam wagons at Invicta Works, St Peter's Street in 1903. Jessie Ellis, originally a traction-engine operator, started his business in Maidstone c.1870, when he was a road haulage and maintenance contractor. In 1895 he carried out the contract for remaking the Thames Embankment roadway. He later developed his own steam lorries and in 1902 personally introduced the steam wagon into Egypt. In 1904 Jesse Ellis exhibited his steam wagons at the Royal Agricultural Show and in the same year ran a steam bus from Maidstone to Loose. I haven't been able to establish where he lived in 1903, but can safely say that he had a Loose connection!

## Loose County Primary School 1937



The staff in 1937 : Standing – L to R  
Miss N Woodward, Mrs Baxter, Mr E Startup,  
Mr K Knight, Mr R Goldsborough, Miss J  
Pitfield, Miss W Beach.. Seated – L to R  
Miss Reeves, Mrs E Parker, Mr R L Waldron  
(headmaster), Mrs Bartlett, Mrs D Jarrett

## Tovil Treacle Mines

(Have you heard this one? – it gets sillier and sillier!)

The origins of the treacle bearing strata in the Tovil area is of some geological interest, in as far as a freakish twist of nature happened in the primeval forests that covered the district.

A giant variety of sugar beet or wurtzel, was found; developed from a spore of the common wurtzel, under the temperature and humidity of the forest glade.

Over a period of many hundreds of years a strata of the residue from these wurtzels was formed, which was eventually covered by the silt from the Loose stream. From this – under pressure from the snow during the great Ice Age - a rock that was slightly porous was formed. This rock absorbed the juices from the wurtzel strata and preserved it to this day, in the form of Treacle Ore.

Although the history of The Tovil Treacle Mines is somewhat shrouded in the mists of antiquity, it is confidently believed that they are of very great age, and that the Phoenicians, who traded around these shores some few hundred years B.C., were responsible for carrying the treacle to the state of Gilead – as mentioned in the Bishop's Bible of 1568 (Jer.V111 v.22). However, be that as it may, it is fairly certain that the Tovil Treacle Mines figured very early in the export drive; for, not many years ago, a treacle tin bearing the letters T-T..... was unearthed near Kits Coty House, showing that either the Phoenicians or early Romans evidently used this place as a halfway house on their journey to the port of Rochester.

It was indeed, the fame of Tovil Treacle on the Continent, that persuaded Hengist and Horsa to settle in Kent about the year 450 A.D. The home market, meanwhile, had been steadily building up, and although "By Royal Appointment" had not, as yet, been officially recognised, we find that King Alfred was very partial to treacle tarts made with Tovil treacle; for it was whilst he was so engrossed in savouring their wonderful flavour that he unfortunately allowed the others to burn.

Still, the fame of Tovil Treacle continued throughout the known world and we suffered another invasion by Canute the Dane, for the purpose of controlling the mines, and later on in 1066, William of Normandy landed at Hastings, this being the most direct route from Normandy to Tovil. After being proclaimed King, William set about re-organising the home market and for this purpose compiled his famous Domesday Book or census of the whole country in an effort to ensure that there would be fair shares all round of Tovil Treacle. However, as time went on, it became more and more apparent that succeeding kings were retaining the bulk of the output of the mines for their own personal use until, on the fifteenth of June 1215, the Barons forced King John to sign that great charter of English Liberty, which among other things, declared that Tovil Treacle should always be available to the common man and not be kept for the exclusive use of kings.

From that day onwards, we find Tovil Treacle entering more and more into the lives of the people and indeed into the shaping of English history.

Later on, in 1588, the Spanish also tried to invade England and assembled their "Invincible Armada", but they also came to a sticky end for it is reported that the English ships got amongst them and sprayed treacle on their decks and rigging, so that the Spanish sailors were unable to manoeuvre their galleons and became sitting targets for the English.

The next outstanding and somewhat unusual mention of Tovil Treacle in English history occurred some seventeen years later, when a rumour went round the House of Lords that some 36 barrels, clearly marked "Tovil Treacle Mines" were stored in the vaults of the Houses of Parliament. A search was naturally immediately instituted, but the Noble Lords were very disappointed to find that the barrels contained not Treacle, but Gunpowder! Thus the infamous Gunpowder Plot was exposed.

Meanwhile, home sales had continued steadily to rise all through the succeeding years, until probably the peak of production was reached in the early nineteenth century when all scholastic establishments throughout the kingdom placed firm orders for regular supplies as treacle had become, together with brimstone, a very

important factor in the education of the youth of the country.

After some years, however, the association of brimstone with treacle naturally caused some antipathy towards our product and sales diminished towards the end of the century. But after that, in more recent years, the general public once again realised the enormous value of dug treacle to their general well-being.

Residents of Tovil have collected together some of the tools, equipment, historical documents and relics of the mining complex through the ages – but where these are housed I couldn't say!



*Mr William Wickham, chairman of the mines.*



*Pit Ponies, brought up from the workings for a few days, in a snow-covered field near Tovil.*

## **Harry Thomas Golding** (1923-1944)

Does anyone remember this man?



Harry Golding lived in Loose all his life, first at the Old Orchard and later, after the death of his mother, at 636 Loose Road, with his adoptive parents Mr and Mrs Thornington. He went to the local schools and church and was a member of the Loose Odd-Fellows Society which met at the Papermakers Arms.

Harry was a driver with the Royal Army Service Corps, and was killed on active service during World War Two. He is buried in the Florence War Cemetery.

He was married to Berenice Upton and had two children: Bernard, now a professor of organic chemistry and Barry (1943-1948).

Berenice later re-married and now lives in Littlebourne.

## **Commander Aubrey Edward Duncombe Moore, RN**

When a new Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone was erected in Loose Cemetery four years ago on the grave of Commander Aubrey Edward Duncombe Moore, three of our members – Margaret Chapman, Pat and Paul Tritton, decided to research his career and family history, with some surprising results.

Although Aubrey's forefathers were priests, one of them being the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1783 until 1805, he did not follow them into the church. but instead he joined the Royal Navy.



*The officers of HMCS Rainbow.  
Aubrey is in the front row, second from left.  
(Courtesy of Maritime Command,  
Halifax, Nova Scotia)*

His early family history embodies several distinguished ancestors, including members of royal and aristocratic families, notably Mary Tudor (sister of Henry V111).

The full story will appear in the next edition of Loose Threads

## **Kirkdale Cottages** – Hilary Hunt



**Kirkdale Cottages c1905  
(viewed from Brooks Field)**

I've lived in Kirkdale Cottages for just over a year and am becoming more and more fascinated about delving into the history of the cottages – the people who lived there; their lives at home and in the village; the buildings; their surroundings; and Kirkdale itself. These rather random notes are a small beginning, based on some initial reading and conversations. I would welcome hearing from anyone who is willing to share memories, knowledge, books, deeds, old documents, maps etc which might include snippets about Kirkdale Cottages.

### Before the cottages were built in 1868

Kirkdale has an ancient history. Local historians believe that, almost certainly, ragstone for Roman London was carted along this lane, as it would have been the route for wagons carrying ragstone from the Loose and Boughton Monchelsea quarries to wharves on the River Medway. They also believe that, many centuries ago, Kirkdale was the route for pack-ponies carrying wool and other goods from the Weald of Kent to Maidstone.

Articles dating from C15 to C21 were found in Brooks Field in 2002 by members of the Maidstone Area Archaeological Group conducting a metal detector survey.

A 1760s' map drawn by John Bowra shows a "Garden" bounded by walls which is remarkably similar to the area of land occupied by Kirkdale Cottages today.

Kirkdale and Kirkdale Cottages are closely bound to the history of Loose Court Estate, which itself goes back to medieval times. I'm starting the story in 1734 when the lease was granted to Mr Thomas Crispe (aka Cripps). In 1792 the estate came into the ownership of Mr John Penfold, as husband of Elizabeth Crispe, after the deaths of her father and then brother. The Penfolds improved Kirkdale to enable them to ride by carriage from Old Loose Court to church. In 1860, James Hackett Hodsoll, who lived at Old Loose Court, bought the adjoining 150-acre Loose Court estate and farm, which was known for its fine hops. Was the "Garden" of the 1760s' Bowra map a hop garden perhaps?

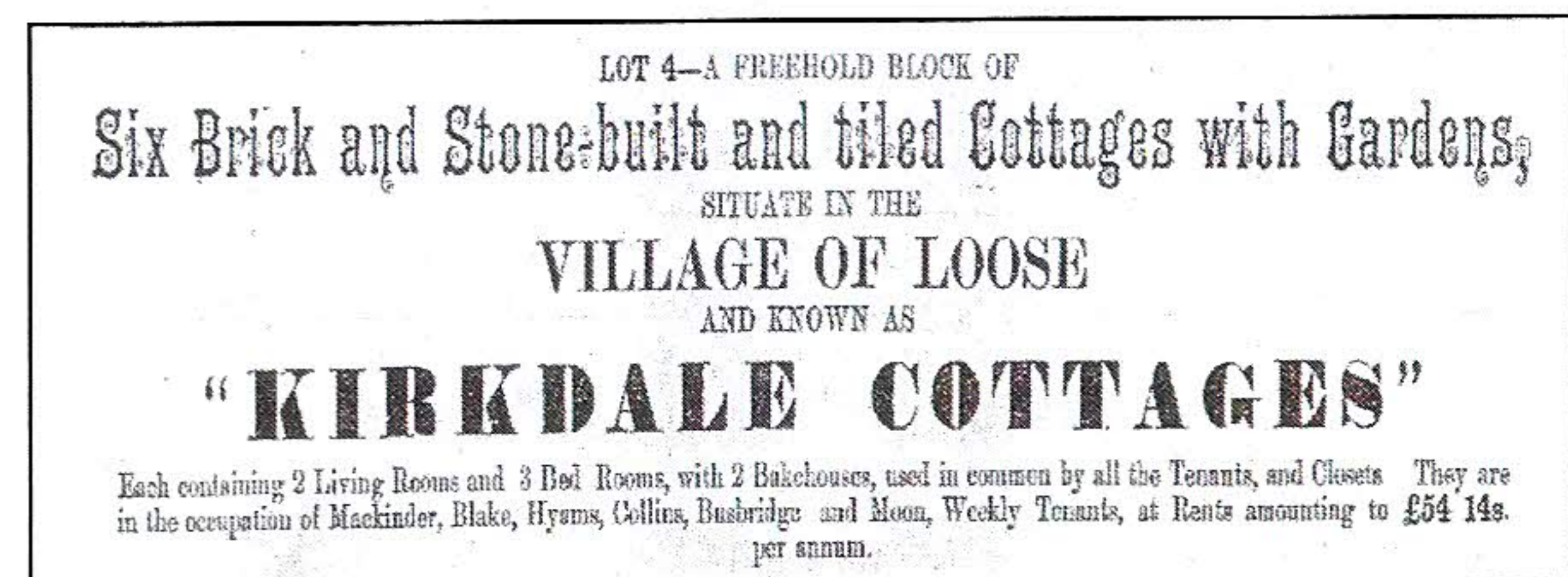
There were two threats to the valley in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which could have so changed it that the cottages might never have been built. In 1820, various schemes for the A229 included routing it through the valley and cutting across Kirkdale and through the Dairy House. In 1856, a light railway was proposed to run from Boughton to Tovil along the valley, right along what was to become the bottom of the gardens of the cottages.

### 1868 onwards

In 1868, Kirkdale Cottages, a terrace of six cottages, were built for the Loose Court Estate workers. Each family had an allotment on the adjacent field; these were cultivated until the right to an allotment died with the tenant as the

cottages gradually passed into private ownership in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In April 1888, Messrs Day & Sons of Maidstone were instructed to sell by auction "That very valuable and attractive FREEHOLD MANORIAL RESIDENTIAL ESTATE known as LOOSE COURT" on "Tuesday June 26<sup>th</sup> 1888 at 2 o'clock to the minute, in six lots". My surveyor in 2008 remarked that it was unusual for farm worker cottages to be brick built, and surmised that the owner wanted to publicly demonstrate his wealth. (The front of the terrace is brick; the back is ragstone!).



*Extract from the 1888 sale catalogue*

### Who has lived in Kirkdale Cottages?

I have yet to wade through the census records and directories. The few names which have surfaced so far include the weekly tenants living there in 1888: **Mackinder, Blake, Hyams, Collins, Busbridge and Moon; Ernest Mercer**, who lived at No.2 for many years as a child from the 1890s; relatives of the Larkins (who had the general store next to the Walnut Tree pub) at the same time as the Mercers; **William "Bill" Golden**, who lived at No.5 from 1932 to 1947; **John Henley**, who was living at No.3 at the time of the 1901 census; Mr and Mrs **Taylor** who lived at No.2 in the 1970s; Mr and Mrs **Baseden**, the last tenants in Kirkdale Cottages, who lived at No.1 until the late 1980s/early 1990s; Miss **Connors**, who lived at No.6, and Miss **Phillips**, who lived at No.4 both from the 1950s/60s.

In 2003, Estate agents describe No.2 as a "Country cottage in [an] idyllic location".

A fuller version of this article will appear in the next edition of *Loose Threads*. Meanwhile, Hilary will look forward to hearing from you if you think you can help her research. She can be contacted on 07944 056225

## **Buffkin Family Proclamation**

Our own Pat Jenner, who has been part of the Loose Area History Society from its very beginnings, and who is still our KFH representative, needs no introduction. She has given the society many presentations on her researches and has written in *Loose Threads* of her research into the Buffkin family (who at one were resident in *Salts Place*). The root of her research into this family stems from the day, many years ago, when Craig Buffkin appeared on her doorstep asking for a copy of *Loose Threads*. In connection with her researches into the Brenchley family of Maidstone – with the help of members of the Buffkin family, Pat has travelled widely in the United States, over several years, and met many members of that widespread Buffkin family. As a consequence of all her diligent research the family have taken Pat to their hearts, and in December 2008 she received a communication from Mr Jesse F Buffkin of San Jose, California. The content of which speaks for itself:

### *Proclamation to the World*

We the Buffkin Family solemnly proclaim that PAT JENNER has been joyously Adopted into our family with all the rights, privileges and benefits therein. Whereby Pat Jenner has been a kindly instrument to the Buffkin family in helping us uncover our long forgotten beginnings. She has been generous with her time and talents for our benefit. We therefore desire her to be an honored member of our family and so attest to this fact by the attached listed names:



Accompanying the above proclamation were three sheets of signatures from the various branches of the Buffkin family.

## **North Carolina**

Larry & Debbie Mitchell Buffkin, Jr.  
Billy Brian Buffkin  
Thomas Croscoe Buffkin  
James Craig & Heather Buffkin  
Eric Mitchell Buffkin  
Adam Lorell Buffkin  
Jayson Bryan Buffkin  
Bobby Dale Buffkin  
Thomas Allen & Barbara Buffkin  
Mildred Buffkin Hinson  
Innez Buffkin McKee  
Virginia G Buffkin  
Dave Carol Buffkin  
Sheila Buffkin  
Douglas C & Gail Buffkin  
James Waldo & Bobbie Buffkin  
Kenneth Wayne & Joyce Buffkin  
Kenneth Wayne Buffkin, Jr.  
Delthia Buffkin White  
David allen & Graylin Buffkin  
Margaret Buffkin & Pat Dunn  
Bickett Claudius Buffkin, Jr.  
Lester & Queta Vae Buffkin  
Lavender Buffkin  
Berek Dana Buffkin  
Betty Buffkin Meggs  
Ralph Edwin Buffkin  
Chadwick & Cindy Buffkin  
Ricky Gayle Buffkin  
Clarence C & Rita Buffkin

## **Virginia**

Joyce Buffkin Chilton  
Aaron Buffkin Chilton  
Harold Berkeley Chilton

## **Arizona**

Jay Albert Gaston & Leslie Buffkin  
Jayson & Julia Buffkin  
Holly Buffkin  
Josie Buffkin warren  
Heidi Buffkin Warren  
Jacob and Joshua Deitz

## **California**

Jo Anne Buffkin  
Jesse F & Louise G Buffkin  
Andrea & James Michael Buffkin

*p.s. and we all LOVE you!!!*

## Dr Paul Newton Taylor (1964-2009)



Paul Stephen Newton Taylor was well known in the Loose area for his involvement with the Church (he was a committed Christian and worshipped at All Saints' and Loose Baptist Church), Loose Swiss Scouts, and particularly with the Loose Area History Society.

Indeed the success of our society owes much to Paul, who came into the society in the very early days. He was, for many years, our treasurer. He also acted as vice chairman and wrote several articles for Loose Threads: *Just Passing Through* (Loose Threads 4), about his ancestor, Thomas Foster; *Crime & Punishment in 17<sup>th</sup> century Loose* (Loose Threads 6), and in Loose Threads 7 he wrote about *Prospect Row*. He also gave illustrated talks to the society, including one on his ancestor, Cranbrook clockmaker Thomas Ollive.

As well as teaching family history in adult education, and writing articles for various publications, Paul had many other interests, including acting. He performed with the Heath Players, including shows at the Hazlitt Theatre. He also remained closely involved in Scouting.

Paul attended the local primary school – being a good friend of my own (now deceased) son Paul [Ed.] After leaving Maidstone Grammar School he gained a degree in computer science at Reading. He gained a PhD (History) at Essex University, studying demographics and investigating Kent parishes, and worked as a chartered accountant for Price Waterhouse Coopers.

Tributes describe him as a man of “intelligence, good character and inspiration.”

Paul leaves a widow, Emma (who also served on the LAHS committee) and two young sons.

## Norma Eileen Jones (1948-2009)



Norma, as well as being a very special friend of mine [Ed.] was a long-time resident of Loose. She and her husband Meurig lived at *Kanam House* in Walnut Tree Lane until, after the death of Graham Hughes, they moved into *Bluetops*.

Norma was well known in musical circles. She played violin in Maidstone Symphony Orchestra and in the Maidstone Choral Union as well as in *Sinfonia da Chiesa*, a West Sussex based chamber orchestra of which we were both founder members. Together, with the latter group, we both toured Florence, Venice, Rome Bruges and the Seychelles, playing in the most amazing churches and cathedrals and, in the Seychelles, on the pristine white sandy beaches.

Norma was a dedicated teacher, renowned for her ability to help and encourage youngsters. She taught at Platt's Heath Primary School for 22 years. She was also, like Paul Newton Taylor, very much involved with Loose Swiss Scouts

At her Service of Remembrance at Holy Trinity Church, Coxheath, a group of us from Maidstone Symphony Orchestra played for her, and the service ended with an Irish Blessing:

*“May the road rise to meet you  
May the wind be always at your back  
May the sun shine warm upon your face  
May the rain fall soft upon your fields  
And until we meet again  
And until we meet again  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.”*