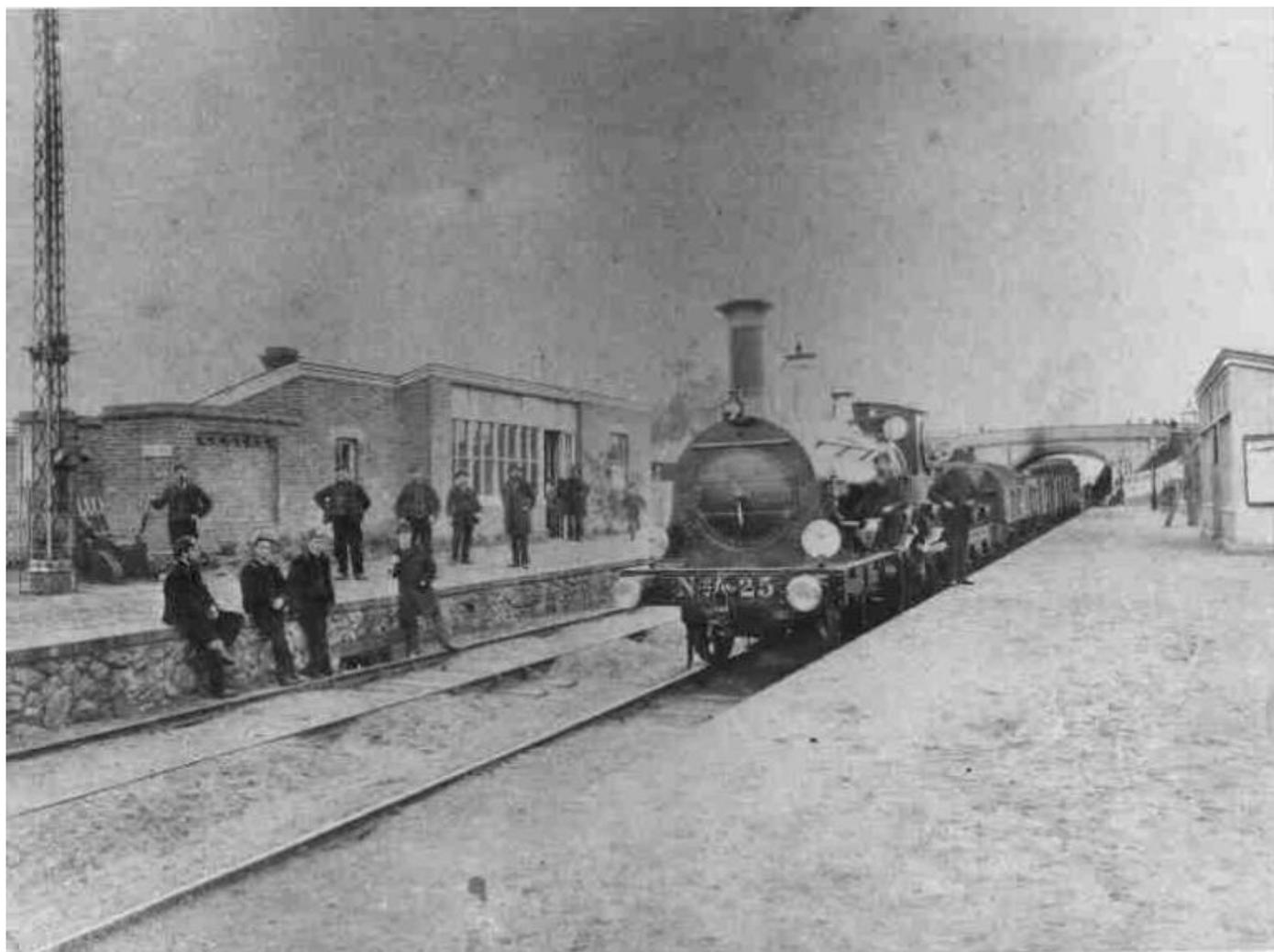


# BOROUGH GREEN PAST & PRESENT



Train at station

## CHAPTER ONE Early Life, Folks and Fauna

Borough Green is situated around the junction of what is now the A25 and A227. This was the origin of the hamlet, an ideal spot for wheelwrights, blacksmiths and inns. The Roman Military Way Westward was the forerunner of the A25. Traders and merchandise from Gravesend proceeding to Tonbridge and beyond were the source of the A227 route. It was formed as a civil parish under the Kent Review Order of 1934. Prior to this it was part Wrotham and part Ightham and it is in their records that some history can be found.

Its name has had various spellings over the years – Barrow Green, 1575, 1587, Boroë Green 1594, Burrough Green, 1697, Burrow Green, 1713. The exact source of the name is unknown. The original parish of Wrotham was divided into six boroughs, Town, Stansted, Nepicar, Winfield, Roughwaye and Hale. It is thought that Borough Green was the site for games and sports for the area, not a village green, but a “Borough Green”. Another theory is that it was Barrow Green, of which there is some evidence. A further theory is that it was Boroë Green from the Anglo Saxon for a place of refuge.

A number of Roman cinerary urns were unearthed on Barrow Field, off Staley’s Road in 1839. On a farm, belonging to a Mr. Biggs at Borough Green, some labourers came upon a cinerary deposit, about the year 1839. Several of the urns were taken home by an old man working on the spot, but as this act was followed by bad luck or ill-health, he buried them in the garden. He regarded them as uncanny things, and the actual spot of their re-interment is unknown. In the 1880s on a site north of the station there was a much bigger and

more important find. Sand was being excavated here and in 1899 a local archaeologist, Mr. Benjamin Harrison of Ightham, heard of some funeral urns. The owners had been destroying the remains as they were uncovered. Mr. Harrison persuaded them to stop and he called in Mr. George Payne, F.R.S., F.A.I. He identified them as Roman. There had been rows of them six feet apart and two feet deep. He made a list of those salvaged, some whole, some broken. The list is as follows:

1. Cinerary urn of red-brown ware containing calcined bones.

Height 12 ins, diameter 8 3/4 ins.

2. Ditto. Height 12 ins diameter 10 ins

3. Ditto. Height 12 ins, diameter 7 3/4 ins

4. Ditto. Much broken.

5. Patera of pseudo-Samian ware.

6. Ditto with leaf pattern.

7,8,9 Paterae of ditto, plain and broken.

10. Vase of Upchurch ware, ornamented with the usual dot pattern.

Height 6 1/8 ins, diameter 5 ins.

11. Ditto with square group of dots arranged diamond wise and repeated six times round the body of the vessel.

Height 4 5/8 ins, diameter of bulge 3 1/8 ins, mouth 2 ins, base 1 1/4 ins

12,13 . Vase of same ware, in fragments.

14. Cup of pseudo-Samian ware.

15,16. Goblets of red ware, in fragments.

Further deeper excavations revealed Belgic remains circa 100 BC. Certainly Borough Green had some Ancient Britons. At Stangate Quarry in July 1953 Messrs. C. Lowes and E. Maynard unearthed a Belgic cremation burial, now in Maidstone Museum.



### *The Ossiferous Fissures of the Valley of the Shode*

In 1891 a ragstone quarry was re-opened, south of the A25. Large underground fissures were found and the owner, William Pink, called in experts from the R.G.S., Over 100 species of vertebrates were identified. At the time it was the greatest discovery of such remains.

The photo was taken in 1894 on that part of the quarry at Basted called the Isles, now worked out. The exploration of the fissures was carried out by Messrs. B. Harrison, W.J. Newton Abbott, H.J. Osbourne White and E.T. Newton. Results were published in the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society Vol. 1, page 171 and 188. Fauna and the bones of hundreds of animals were identified and thirty types of mollusca and eighty-four species of vertebrate were recognised. The vertebrates included among others mammoths, woolly rhinoceros, wolves, Norwegian and Arctic lemmings, brown bears, giant polecats, spotted hyenas, Siberian voles. Many of these are extinct, some are now only found in cold climates and others remain as indigenous species. Most date from the Pleistocene era, that is within the last million years, but some fossils may date from the Pliocene period and be up to 12 million years old. Both the River Shode and the now small stream from Borough Green washed into these fissures which were much larger than the valleys themselves make plain. The landscape was also moulded by the Ice Age and its passing.

These fragments show the great variety in prehistoric life in the area. For a fuller account of this subject the reader is referred to the late F.J. Bennet's book on Ightham. The prevalence of sand, ragstone and clay gave prosperity to the village and the arrival of the railway in 1874 boosted this trade tremendously. The former site of the famous Wrotham Slipware pottery is now within the parish bounds. It flourished from 1620 – 1718. One potter named John Eaglestone had descendants still owning land here in 1877, next to what is now Tudor Cottage on the Wrotham Road. Jugs, tygs, candlesticks, breakers, dishes and posset pots can be seen in many museums across the world. The Glaisher collection at the Fitzwilliam is the largest.

There was a white sand quarry on the site of the station and itinerant traders used to hawk the sand to publicans for floor coverage around the spittoons. The fertile loam in the area supported several farms (alas

now built on) which gave employment to many families. Hops, fruit and cereals were the main crops. In 1573 the Virgin Queen passed through here on her way from Knole to Birling.

## **Public Houses**

Further proof of Borough Green's early origins can be found in the history of the ale houses. The Red Lion, formerly the White Bear, has been traced back to the 1500s. On 19 April 1586 Richard Chowning, being a common ale house keeper at Borough Green allowed in his house the unlawful game of common dicing, and was fined 2s 0d. On 4 October 1604 Richard Chowning, for not removing a stranger, was fined 3s 4d. The Black Horse, originally named the Bull, had a landlord named William Walters. On 5 April 1592 he was fined 3s 4d for harbouring a stranger. Two years later on 17 October he assaulted Walter Stayley of Ightham and drew blood. He was fined 3s 4d. The Licensed Victuallers Registers start at 1753, 1872 and 1903 as and when new laws were issued. Many inns appear as license renewals, including beer houses from 1872. Publicans were important figures in those days and quite often held the office of Village Constable, serving on the Vestry controlling the village. Their names appear in old records, handling building repairs and providing transport. They and their descendants held the property for generations. Most sales and auctions of land etc took place at licensed houses. In later years the Wrotham Urban District Council used to meet at the Railway Hotel on the last Monday in the month on or before the full moon.

Convictions against landlords were few. One mine host not too far from Borough Green in the 1900s was convicted of being drunk on the highway. The Inspector of Registers crossed it out at the next Sessions. He had to commit it on his premises for this to be recorded against him. One other was convicted of selling whisky 60% under proof. Whisky, gin and brandy were selling at three shillings and one penny a bottle in the 1890s.

As previously mentioned the Red Lion, then the White Bear, was in existence in 1586. In 1694 Thomas Haley, landlord, was "paid one shilling for Ye Queens Burial" ( Mary II, wife of William III). In 1753, when the Register opened, William Haley was mine host. An entry in Wrotham Church records a birth, "Sarah, natural daughter of Sarah Welch, the reputed father, Thomas Hawley at the Bear Inn." The premises up until 1934 were in Ightham Parish. On 31 December 1902 Mr. Arthur Russell, landlord, had a silver medal presented to him as Primo, Royal Ancient Order of Buffaloes, the membership of which was over 150!

The Black Horse Inn was formerly called the Bull. The 1753 Register opens with William Walters as landlord, quite probably from the same stock as the Walters at the Bull in 1592. From Wrotham records we have "The Parish Constable, June ye 8 1748, William Walters for paid and Ascitance and for carting the woman to Meddistone Gaol, for eating and drinking three and sixpence." William Walters died in 1774 and his wife Elizabeth held the license until 1795, when she died of the smallpox aged 80. A Robert Evenden changed the name to the Black Horse in 1804. I have a list of all the landlords of this inn from 1753 to the present day.



*The Old Black Horse, demolished 1901*



*The Rock Tavern, 1901, landlord Mr. C. Ransley*

Under the Enclosure Act of 1814 a sale of 15 acres of waste land was held at the Bull Hotel in Wrotham in 1815. A William Williams paid £60 for 2 acres. He subsequently built the Fox and Hounds and in 1837 we

find Rebecca Williams having a six day beer house. In 1872 it was owned by a Mr. Biggs, William Eversfield being the landlord. In 1900 it was owned by Walter Morgan of Nepicar Brewery. William Eversfield was a wheelwright, his wife was Jane. They had three daughters and one son. They also had a lodger, a retired grocer from Marden. William probably worked for Henry Malyan whose premises were behind Knole Cottage. Henry is buried in the chapel cemetery.

The Rock Public House is shown on the 1841 Tythe map, described as a chapel, owners being Trustees. The actual chapel was a building with a steeple and bell tower, demolished in 1904 when Mr. A. Russell built the Laurels. Later Poor Relief records name it as a Friends Meeting House. The 1891 census calls it the Chapel House, occupied by William and Maria Mercer. In the 1872 Register it is a beer house with Mary Cheeseman in charge. Presumably she had a husband, so the premises opened between 1861-1872. Alas in 1993 the site has gone to the developer.

The Railway Hotel is much younger, built circa 1878. The first landlord shown in 1879 is James Edward Shrubsole who was also mine host of the Bull at Wrotham. Henry Simonds of Crouch House was the first owner followed by Style and Winch. One of the stables was used for some years as a mortuary by the Wrotham Urban D.C. A feature of the place was a magnificent Chile Pine which unfortunately fell victim to the hurricane of October 1987.

### **Wrotham Town Surveyors Book**

1776 – 1796

A list of the inhabitants liable for duty according to their respective dues and work done. Surveyors were appointed each year by the Vestry to collect rents which were actually rates applied to freehold property owners. At the end of the year the books were inspected by the magistrates. Many publicans are named as paying rents and finding the necessary labour.

Many names are still with us: Bennett, Crowhurst, Chalklin, Edmeads and Hubble to name but a few. Workers were :

Mick Whiffen paid £6 16s 6d for 91 days works;

Mr. Bennett paid 6s 6d for the hire of his horse and cart and three loads of stones;

Mr. Chapman paid £4 16s 9d for 64 days and his boy £1 18s 9d for 79 days.

Borough Green Road and Thong Lane were constantly being repaired. A labourer was paid 1s 6d per day, boys at the rate of 9d. In 1786 the rent was extended to every house and many amounts of 2d are listed. Each surveyor recorded their work in beautiful copper plate writing.

### **Social Conditions**

#### **Snippets from earlier years**

Poor House

The cottages on the right at the top of Quarry Hill Road were used for this purpose.

The Wrotham Overseers were rated:

1729 The Officer of the Parish for the Workhouse at Borough Green 15s 0d

1786 Paid Mr. Wells for the Wrotham Turnpike £3

1795 Paid Morgan for carrying the poor people to Wrotham Pest House 1s

Paid John Glover of the Parish of Wrotham for four people sent to the Pest House with the smallpox five weeks at 12s each per week £12

1760 People were paid for getting rid of vermin

April 7 paid at the Vestry

Thos. Everest 6 haghog (hedgehog) 2s

Dame Eagestone 1 haghog 4d

Thos Halley 1 haghog 4d.

## **CHAPTER TWO Early Growth**

The village started to grow in the 1830s. The houses and shops, with the exception of what is at present Circle C supermarket, from the Village Hall Car Park to the existing cycle shop were built in the 1830s. A firm called Spencer who owned Platt Brickyard were the builders. They also built Spencer Cottages in Station Road in the 1870s. Chapel Street from the Red Lion to the Rock Public House had many Seventeenth Century houses, some of which still exist.

### **Census returns**

In 1841 the census returns show 70 houses with 186 males and 174 females. The Basted Paper Mills were insolvent at the time so only 3 paper makers were listed. There were 41 agricultural labourers, 4 carpenters, 2 shoemakers, 2 smiths, 2 wheelwrights, 2 lawyers, 1 school mistress (private), 2 dressmakers, 1 publican (Black Horse), 1 beer retailer (Fox and Hounds), 1 tailor, and 1 baker. Butchers, doctors and dentists would probably have been in Wrotham Town. Henry Ashdown had the forge in Station Road. He sang in Platt Church Choir.

Can you imagine living in a house without mains water? In those times the only supply was from streams or wells adjacent to blocks of houses. This would explain the abundance of pubs and beer houses, drinking ale as a life giving beverage. Only one family was born out of the county and they were itinerant fishmongers.

Entries for 1861 show times are changing. The railways, not yet to the village, bring people from Scotland, Clacton, Newmarket, Isleworth and a visiting Baptist Minister from Shrewsbury. 64 houses were counted with 120 males and 121 females. The Seamark family are still running their large shop which they opened in the 1830s. This continued until 1895. 32 scholars were listed who would have attended schools at Ightham, Wrotham or Platt. Children under eight years were not allowed to work on farms. The only place names written were Long Pond, Thong Lane, Plaxtol Road, (= High Street) and Chapel House.

The 1871 census finds James Methuen from Scotland farming Whiffens Farm employing two men and two boys. He had a boarder, a gentleman's servant from Derby. Jane Robinson, widow of the Chapel pastor, had a visitor from Gorleston in Suffolk. Charity Pink aged 90 had a boarder, Rachel Wells, aged 73 from Pontypool. Basted Paper Mill, now owned by the Monktons, had more glaziers, paper makers, an engine driver, stoker and a machine assistant. There were now 9 people of independent means. Mary Saunders was the tollgate keeper. We have a very busy family, James Fitness had a grocers shop. He was also a bricklayer. Emma, his wife, ran the shop assisted by Rosa aged 15. Alice aged 17 was a dressmaker. Frederick at 13 was a bricklayer's labourer, James, 9, and Ernest, 7, were scholars. Emily was 4, Joseph, 2, and Grace, 3 months. Older residents can remember the turnpike bungalow situated on the bend in Wrotham Road just past Tolsey Mead. 51 houses were counted with 116 males and 116 females.

By 1881 the village had started to expand. People were coming from far and wide. The railway opened seven years earlier as a single track and was doubled in 1882. 79 houses were counted. Spencer's Cottages were all occupied and Jesse Callow had a watchmaker's shop in Station Road. The Church Infants School on Quarry Hill Road was built in 1875. Esther Hewson had the Baker's Shop, now Barclay's Bank. Alfred Goldsmith had a butcher's shop in the High Street, now Mrs. Penfold's tea house. Alfred Baron had a draper's shop, now the Scrub-In. Whoever thought of that name!?!

In determining figures from the 1891 census those parts of Wrotham, Ightham and Platt which now constitute the Borough Green Civil Parish were taken by the author together with Borough Green as it was then. This gives 156 houses, 4 of which were empty. Some have since been demolished, but have mostly been replaced by new houses. There were 347 males and 335 females of which 188 were scholars. By this time Western Road was established as a main road. Station Road was called Forge Lane and also Sandy Lane. Quarry Hill Road was High Street South and before that Thong Lane, a much nicer name. Basted Paper Mill employed 48 people. Seven farmers were listed employing 55 persons. Various trades included 2 builders and 25 craftsmen. The London, Chatham and Dover Railway employed 12 men. Mr. William Pink was reopening the Stone Quarry with one labourer. It will be appreciated this is the latest data available as census returns are only made public after one hundred years have elapsed.

As mentioned above the railway came to Borough Green in 1874. The first large development in the village came in 1877. This was a prime year for progress. Edison patented the phonograph, ball bearings were first used on bicycles and the Factory Act raised the minimum working age to 10 years. Anna Sewell wrote *Black Beauty* and *Swan Lake* had its premiere.

The Tomlyn family, the owners of Yew Tree Farm, sold 56 acres of land from the High Street to Fairfield boundaries, Western Road was laid out in the plan. The Beehive Shoe Company from Northampton purchased most of the property. They built Messrs. Cloke's shop, carried on a brickyard until 1911 and opened up the Wrotham Road sandpit. Two reserved lanes were kept, one from Fairfield area and one, which is still there, from Western Road for access to the station. What a blessing they would have been. The Fairfield area was laid out in 1 and 2 acre plots. Later development maps showing the centre of the village reveal how these plots were halved then quartered into ever smaller areas. The Post Office at the time was at the bottom of Western Road. From then on the village expanded quickly. By 1900 most of the Victorian-style houses had appeared.

The Wrotham Urban District Council was formed in 1894. In 1911 they planned a main drainage scheme for Wrotham, Borough Green and Platt which was eventually completed in 1932. Their minutes show that they twice endeavoured to disband the council. A cutting from the *Sevenoaks Chronicle* in 1922 states: "They had a pantomime at Seal last Saturday evening, but in comparison with the entertainment provided at the Wrotham Urban District Council meeting at the Railway Hotel on Monday, it was a milk and water affair. If they wish to assist the rates they should open their meeting to the public at a charge of 8d (2d tax)."

It was not until 1934 when Malling Rural District Council was formed that real planning commenced in the area. The Crow Hill Estate was built in 1919 – I remember my Mother saying that my Father, a carpenter, had his first sight of ready made stairs. Council houses were erected on Hill View in 1928, complete with gas lights and double burner gas ring sets. Town gas was made by the Wrotham and Borough Green Gas Co., started in 1880, taken over in 1904 and fed via high pressure mains by the Mid Kent Gas Light and Coke Co. from Snodland. Piped water came from the Mid Kent Water Co. in 1900 also at Snodland. It was not until 1930 that Kent Electric Power Co. from Rochester brought electricity to the village. Hughes the Bakers had the first supply.



*Railway station staff 1930s*

## **Railway**

The line from Otford to Maidstone was opened 1 June 1874 as a single track. It was upgraded to double track in 1882. It was run then by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway. This later became the South Eastern and Chatham Railway ( slow, easy and comfortable riding ) then in 1923 the Southern Railway. On 1 January 1948 this in turn became Southern Region, part of the nationalised British Rail. The line was electrified on 2 July 1939 when the footbridge was built. The author has a photo from the late 1930s of the full complement of the station staff, some fourteen people. Today we have but two clerks. When the author attended school in Maidstone in the 1930s the return rail fare was 1s 9d and a return to London cost 4s 6d.

The station had a goods yard, parcel offices, sidings for sand and ragstone, hops and fruit. In addition there was a wharf situated at the rear of the chestnut trees for tip-up horse-drawn carts delivering stone from the Quarry. One siding was for the delivery of cattle and sheep to local farms or the butchers. W.H. Smith and Sons had a bookstall, library and large paper delivery rounds. Taxi services have flourished through all the years. The first taxis were owned by Mr. F. Cooper who started out on the site of the bus depot. Part of this site was a large pond. The longest owner was Mr. C.E. Kennett, who also had a lockup shop in the High Street, together with a garage at the rear of the National Westminster Bank. Mr. Kennett was a founder member of the Borough Green Fire Brigade and later became sub-officer in charge.

## **Listed Buildings**

The building known as the Old Manor House was listed as a much restored sixteenth century Grade II farmhouse by Malling RDC. On the 1841 Tythe Map it is indicated as two tenements, garden, barn and orchard, 1 acre 2 roods 13 rods in area. It was still two cottages up till the late 1930s when Mr. H. Dixon of Wrotham Heath performed the excellent restoration to its present state for the musical Roy family.

Tudor Cottage and the two houses behind are listed as Grade II. Originally a farmhouse they stem from the Sixteenth Century. For many years they were four dwellings. The present owners have brought them into the Twentieth Century whilst doing well to preserve their elevations.

Hunts Farmhouse is also listed as Grade II, Eighteenth Century. Fourways House (occupied by Mr. Morrison the dentist) is Grade III, dated 1751. Whiffens Farmhouse is a restored Sixteenth Century farmhouse and is listed as Grade II, the large weather-boarded barn being Grade III.

Similarly listed is the Red Lion dating from the Nineteenth Century, with an older plastered wing at the rear. (Seventeenth Century) The adjacent cottages are listed as Grade II. The core of these cottages is probably a framed structure from the Seventeenth Century with the facade dating from the Eighteenth Century.

Five other premises in the village listed as Grade III have been demolished. This has come about through lack of maintenance. Other houses – all unlisted – demolished since 1945 include three cottages, and a stone barn opposite the Church, six in Chapel Street, five wooden bungalows on Quarry Hill Road and a nursery in Western Road. Another property, known as Rosemary, at the bottom of Crouch Lane has also gone. It was the dwelling house for the garage owners on Maidstone Road, in particular the Davey family. Repaired after severe damage by lightning in 1910, it declined in the 1970s and several houses have recently been put up on the site.

## CHAPTER THREE Streets and Shops



*High Street 1901*

Manchester House was built in the 1830s. We find James Seamark in 1836 paying the Poor Relief Tax. Together with his wife Elizabeth and eight children, they ran a grocers, drapers and hardware shop, later with beers and spirits. They sold out in 1895 to Mr. Thomas Day. He became Church Organist. Prices from extant bills were whisky at 3s 1d per bottle, ditto gin, with brandy at 4s 4d in the 1890s.

Cheese was 4 1/2 d per lb, butter 1s per lb. A pair of boots ran out to 8s 6d. A bricklayer would typically receive 7d per hour and his labourer 4d. One chimney pot was 2s 6d and six roofing slates 1s 6d. Coal was

11s 6d for 12 ton. Mr. Day sold out in 1920 to John Cloke whose family moved to their present premises in 1934. C.A. Smallbones altered the frontage and moved there in 1935. In the 1960s Cave Austin took over and now in the 1990s after several short-lived businesses we have Lloyds the chemists, open 7 days a week.

London House was built in the 1880s, the first family, comprising Alfred Barron, his wife Anne and two daughters, ran a drapers and grocers. The premises were owned by Mr. Thomas Seemark, a builder who lived at Fernlea in Western Road. He built and owned a lot of property in the village. He died intestate in 1888 and his estate was sold in 1907. Mr. W. J. Coleman from Wrotham bought London House for £820. Subsequently it was let to the Hubbard family followed by Mr. and Mrs. H.K. Bell. During the Second World War it was the Fire Station. In 1943 it was hit by an AA shell, which blew a billiard table into the cellar, and short circuited the air raid alarm which went on and on. In 1946 Mr. Coleman sold it to the Mid Kent Gas Light and Coke Company for £1200. It remained a Gas Showroom with Mrs. R. White as Manageress till 28 October 1970. Thereafter came the Launderette, initially under lease to Shaws Laundry and now in the 90s to Mr. and Mrs. C.J. Smith.

The current site of the National Westminster Bank was built as a bakers in the 1880s, run by Mr. W.H. Brown. The baker's oven was made by W. Smith of London. In 1899 we find Mrs. Emily Brown, baker, renting it at £30 p.a. No doubt she was the baker's widow. By 1902 Mr. F. Perkins was using it as a printers and did so till 1914 when he moved into his purpose built premises at Caxton House at the bottom of Station Road. In 1904 part became a bank opening only on Fridays. A Mr. Antram was the first manager followed by Mr. F. Sloman. It progressed throughout the years as an agency from Maidstone and became a full bank in 1957. Mr. C. C. Newman recalled in 1947 arriving 30 minutes late, spending hours moving snow from the frontage with only one customer, an errand boy wanting £1 of copper.



*The Bank – Open on Fridays*

The present travel agents, 34 High Street, was occupied by Philip Neale, a jeweller and watch maker, for 20 years. He was followed by Mr. Edward Weeks, a retired policeman. He had previously opened up a small wooden shed where Circle C now trades, as a fishmonger. Mr. Weeks was born in Pluckley, so the premises became known as Pluckley House. Mr. Weeks advertised in the 1902 Rural Deanery Church magazine as “Fishmonger, supplying families daily, pony and chaise for hire, furnished apartments to let with cooking and attendance”. His widow carried on as a confectioner. She used to sell 2d canes with a curved handle and many mums had one hanging on the back of their chairs!

The Tea House at number 19 owned by Mrs. Penfold, was the Homestead, a farmhouse for Yew Tree Farm, and was long occupied by the Lewen Family. In 1877 it was purchased and sold by the Tomlyns. Alfred Goldsmith and his wife opened it as a butchers, aided by live-in George and Sarah Hodder. Henry Hoppe

followed, who also had butchers shops in Wrotham, Ightham and Wrotham Heath. Mr. Stephen Kitney came next as removal and coal merchants. At one stage they had twenty-two horses! Removals to Cambridge took five days, Southampton six days and Bournemouth eight. He built the Western Hall in the late 1920s. Stephen, his son, married Irene and carried on the coal business. Irene will be remembered for her social work in the village over many years.

The ten tall shops were built by a Mr. Gregory in three stages between 1904-1908. The last to be built, number 21, opened as a Funeral Parlour, an undertaking to which it has now returned. I remember the late Mr. Tom Bennett saying that their builder's horse and cart would have the sand or soil swept out, and a black cloth draped over it to create an instant hearse.

Mr. A. Ashton DCM took over the premises in 1912 as a cycle maker and motor engineer. His wife and their son, Arthur, carried this on till 1980, developing into the fields of radio, electrical and television.

There have been too many changes in this parade to record them all. Number 23 was the Primrose Dairy with Mr. Coakes in charge. Mr. S.A. Bramley had the Labour Exchange there for some years. Before this he ran it from a shed in his garden at number 3 before this and ended up at Caxton House. This service in Borough Green was wound up in 1958.

Number 25, now an optician, opened in 1908 as a car showroom! The Borough Green Working Mens' Club followed with Mr. A. Bouts as steward. Mr. Starkie used it for photography. Mr. Cotgreave leased it as a dentist, Lidstones had it as a flower shop. Mr. Coleman, a butcher, had it after World War II, though he never obtained a license and the shop remained unused for forty years.

Number 27 has always been a newsagents, Sashwell, then Goldspink in the early years, followed by Clarkes, who was a K.C.C. surveyor. Mr. and Mrs J. Bates had it for thirty years from 1953-1983. Daltons followed them and the obliging Sneha Patel family are the present occupants.

The Bailey family at number 29 had a shoe shop from 1907 till 1968. They also had a repair factory at the rear. Mr. Charles Bailey was a keen football supporter and organiser of many whist drives. The arrival of Rhona's saw the usage change to drapers and it has remained as such, with Vivienne's as the occupier for the past eighteen years.

Number 31 was called the Union Jack House. It housed Belgian refugees in World War One. It was a Maidstone and District Booking Office for many years when Mr. and Mrs. Game ran it as a confectioners. After leaving the Bakery Mr. and Mrs. Pocock opened it as a ladies fashion shop. Mrs. Cooper followed in the same line and later sold it to the Chowdhury family who run it as an Indian restaurant.

Number 33 started as Cutbush, a butchers. In the 1920s under Mr. Gribble it opened as a chemists. It remained so until 1993, being run for many years by Mr. Baldock with Mr. Ives, a very helpful and obliging chemist. Between the wars it was called Welfare House. District Nurses were based there as was the School Dentist.

Number 35 was a corn chandlers run by the Bulled family. This family built what is now Lillico's and the site occupied by Magnet Southern in Ightham. This shop later became a grocers with the Clark family, followed by the Wadsworths and the enterprising Manklow family, who are currently running three of the ten shops.

Number 37-39. The first two shops next to the Bank were built as one called the Arcade. A glimpse at the buildings prove this. George Edwin Hill had this up until 1912. In 1924 the first one became a showroom for the Mid Kent Gas Light and Coke Company. This lasted until 1946. Before this Mr. R.S. Willard leased it as a parcel agency and carrier for Southern Railway between Maidstone and Borough Green. He obtained orders one day from around the villages and collected from Maidstone the following day by horse and cart. Number 37 has been a confectioners for many years – Kings, Lawrences, Curtis, Rons, Kings and now Mrs. L. Pierce.

The site of the Cycle Shop, number 62, and numbers 58 and 60, was a Dame Private School in the 1830s and was known as Rock Villa when built. The shop was added on to number 60 in 1888/89. Mr. Jesse Callow, who in 1876 had a watch maker and jewellers shop at Stanley Cottages in Station Road, moved in to the newly built premises with his wife Elizabeth and their family. He bought the premises outright in 1907 for the sum of £610, having rented it for £40 p.a. He was sub-postmaster and carried on his trades along with stationery goods, sheet music, cameras and necessary requisites. He also had charge of the first telephone exchange for the area, which the family ran till 1927, when the first purpose built telephone exchange opened in Western Road. He retired in 1922 when his son, Frank, took over adding newsagent to the business. The sorting office was at the rear and four postmen were employed. Just fancy, 2 old pence for delivering a telegram to Stansted or Mereworth Woods by cycle on Christmas Day! He gave up the Post Office in 1936 when Cloke Brothers took it over. His wife and daughter carried on the shop, with Miss Edie Callow finally retiring in 1989. Treksport now have a cycle shop, a thriving seven days a week concern, a definite asset to the village, the go-ahead proprietors being Messrs. John Bishop and Howard Chambers.



*High Street North*

Bridge House (Clokes) was built circa 1887/1889 by Joseph Walls, whose firm bought most of Yew Tree Farm. John Francis followed him, then Tully, Thornes, McMasters and then Messrs. R. L. and R. Cloke. The village owes a lot to the Cloke Brothers, most importantly the existence of our Fire Brigade. Robert served on the Parish Council for forty years and worked hard behind the scenes for many village improvements.

There are far too many shops and businesses in the village for it to be possible to record all their histories. The stone quarry under various names provided much employment, as did Basted Paper Mill, now Butterworths. Mr. F. Weller, the saddler and harness maker, started his business in 1903. In 1897 there must have been a rabies scare, for we find Mr. Weller then working in Ightham making many dog muzzles. He was followed by his two sons who also did shoe repairs. The two sons moved in 1954 to the premises near the Red Lion, retiring in 1978.

### **The Crossroads**

In the early 1900s the Crossroads was known as Council Square. In 1900 Mr. Banfield built the butchers shop on the site where Mr. Palmer now has his offices. Mr. Sharp had the fish shop and poulterers opposite. Mr. E. Atkins had the large shop, now Mr. and Mrs. Knight's Fourways Furnishing. After Atkins took over their purpose built shop in Western Road the large shop became the Red Tea Caddy. Mrs. Wilcocks ran the cafe and her husband was a builder. He built the last houses on the right along Sevenoaks Road. In 1935 the prices were £475 for the houses and £375 for the bungalows, £25 deposit and £1 per week. He was also responsible for houses along Wrotham and Platt roads. Mrs. Wood followed and then in 1948 Mr. Harold

King took over what became the Four Ways Cafe. This closed in 1966, after which the Knights took over, some 27 years ago.

F.P. Caine the builders started up in 1903 with Mr. L. Curtis as the founder. Mr. F. Weller Snr. had part of the building as the saddlers shop. Mr. F. Caine, foreman carpenter during the construction of St. Edith's Hall at Kemsing, joined this firm in 1912. It then became Curtis and Caine. In 1948 it became a limited company trading as F.P. Caine Ltd. Mr. F. Davies and Mr. D. Squires took over the business in 1981.



### *The Cross Roads*

The Wrotham Urban District Council had the site now occupied by the Co-op, which gave the name Council Square. Both the fever and cesspool emptying carts were based here. Mr. Isaac Woodhams was employed as a cesspool emptier – at first a bucket was used to pour into a tank on a cart. A hand pump followed later and the waste was emptied onto various farms. They grew marvellous cabbages! Later a proper tanker was deployed – the driver of this vehicle used to claim the material they carried was his bread and butter! He drove the tanker during the 1926 General Strike. Lorries then carried the notice “Food Supplies”. His tanker was marked accordingly! Mr. C. Naylor, a farmer lived here for many years with his family, some of whom are still with us. When the Naylor's left Mr. L. Cooper built the existing premises as a cycle shop. The frontage was an underground WWII air-raid shelter. The Co-op took over the premises in 1948.

### **Thong Lane, High Street South, Quarry Hill Road**

Mrs. Hollands' premises, Junes the hairdressers, was a grocers before and after World War I. The grocer's name was Bunyan. Hearndens followed and Mrs. Hoadley carried on the shop from 1933 till 1971. She also had a shop at Platt. Borough Green House was the Homestead for Borough Green Farm. John Stevens had the farm in 1800. He had a daughter, who was to become the supernatural writer Catherine Crowe. It is said that her books were superior to those of Mary Shelley, creator of “Frankenstein”. Mr. E. Biggs, a retired engineer, was the owner in 1826. He quarried a hard sandstone at Oldbury Hill. It was carried by local farmers to Larkfield, then to barges on the Medway and transported to London for road making. He found the transport charges excessive. In 1844 he built a steam traction engine to pull the carts. The threat was effective and prices were lowered. In the event the engine was not allowed on the roads and was eventually towed away by a firm from East Peckham. A Mr. Tompkins followed him, the house was seriously damaged by fire and rebuilt. The Nisbett family came in 1910.



*Chapel Street*

### **The Coronation Oak**

This title relates to the tree at the junction of Rock Road and Quarry Hill. The first tree was planted here on 2 June 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. This tree did not survive however and the Wrotham UDC, with their customary promptness, planted a second on 22 June 1911 to celebrate the coronation of King George V, the reign of King Edward VII having slipped by unmarked. In the 1950s Messrs. Chirnsides saved the tree from an "ingrowing" metal guard and quite recently Kent County Council rebuilt the retaining wall. The village owes a debt of gratitude to members of the community in that area who plant bulbs and flowers around the tree.

### **Western Road**

Western Road was planned in 1877 on the sale of Yew Tree Farm. Yew Tree House and Yew Tree Cottage were the first houses to be built after this, numbers 24 and 26 respectively. Wrotham Urban District Council minutes state that Western Road was levelled and metalled in 1897.

The premises owned by Mr. and Mrs. Moye in 43 Western Road have a fascinating history. Originally built by the Bible Christians as a place of worship, they changed in 1901 to the Alexandra Hall and became the small village hall. The Church held their socials there and a pantomime was staged in 1909. In World War I the site formed the HQ for the Borough Green Home Defence Force, part of the Royal West Kent Regiment. It was also to house the Borough Green Working Mens' Club. From 1925-1936 a Miss Webster from Seal ran a private school from there.

In the late 1930s the Bailey family moved their shoe repair factory there from its High Street site. Mr. Frank Bailey took charge. Alexandra House was built by Mr. and Mrs. Bailey Senior. The factory proved very successful carrying out a lot of outside and army contracts. Mr. E. Moye, pursuing the same line of work at the Old Forge at the Crossroads, and who had previously worked for the Baileys, took over the business in 1963. He converted the metal building into a bungalow with a shoe shop in front. Later he added an upper storey. His son Roger has followed him helped by his wife, Sue. They both have entered into village life with strong interests in scouts and tennis and the Christmas street illuminations.

The building now used by GA Property Services at 51 was built by Durlings for Mr. E. Atkins when he moved from the Crossroads. The window frames and doors are all of good English oak, now sadly covered over with paint. Mr. Maynard opened up a nursery where the parade of shops now stands. It was he who supplied the Coronation Oak tree. Redgrove and Patrick continued the business. Mr. F. Haines followed with a fish shop. Previously he was a chimney sweep.

Opposite Mr. and Mrs. Pierce ran a grocers shop for many years. Number 28 was a greengrocers for many years. The Cooper family ran it followed by J Beech and then Mr. A.E. Humphrey. Mr. and Mrs. Charlaye took over in the 1970s as a motor cycle shop, the site now being a machine repair depot.

In the early 1930s a Mr. H. Williams converted part of Manchester House in the High Street into a hairdressing salon. He ran it till 1959 when Mr. Bligh took over and named it "Raymond's". He ran it there successfully for 22 years, then moved to his existing premises in Western Road, where he has been for 12 years. Previously it had been Webbs the butchers for many years.

The Davey family had a blacksmiths where Plaxtol Bakery now stands and were later to open the first garage on the Maidstone Road. The first milkman in Borough Green was a man named Hillier. He lived at South View Cottages and stabled his horses at the rear of the National Westminster Bank. Next door was Mr. Lee, the village barber, numbers 36 and 38. Mr. W. Furrnnger ("Sweeny") followed as a barber based at number 39 for many years. Haircuts were 4d, a shave 6d. His son Percy followed in his footsteps.

On the corner of Western Road with Sevenoaks Road stood Mr. A. Russell's greengrocers shop, now demolished – the building was hit by at least two lorries. A go-ahead man, Mr. Russell was landlord of the Red Lion and The Rock simultaneously. He used the old chapel as a bothy for horse drivers at the Stone Quarry. Employing Durlings as the builder he built the house next to the Rock, first used as a laundry, then Toogoods Dairy, now Tangles, a hairdressers salon.

### **Station Road was Sandy Lane – Forge Lane**

The street of football, Fivestones and "Fagcards" interrupted only by the odd horse and cart! Fagcards? You flipped cigarette cards against the base of the wall. If you covered one with your throw, the cards on the ground were yours.

Mr. G. Hewson built the Bakery, where Barclay's Bank now stands, and the four houses below. His widow succeeded him and then came Mr. H.C. Hughes, there from 1923 till 1944. Dunfords followed, then Walklyns and it was in 1967 that Barclay's Bank converted the premises. Mr. H. Bennett was a high class shoe maker at number 13, later a vets and now Levicks, the Accountants. The rear of London House was the Gas Board's workshop and garage from 1946 to 1970, when Mr. C.J. Smith took over as car repairer. Number 59 was a grocers for many years, Waterman (Fuller) then Paynes.



*Station Road*

At number 79 Harmsworth's was a hardware shop. The 1891 census shows William Harmsworth as a port signalman. His wife Sarah ran the shop – they had four sons and three daughters. The Old Forge where Henry Ashdown plied his trade has had many changes. Fred Cooper – cycle shop; Mr. Pierce – builder; Mr. Cox – builder; Mrs. Powell – cake shop; Mr. Rogers – cycle repairer; Mr. Truephit – furniture repairer; and now Brit Sales dealing in computers.

Caxton House at the bottom right as mentioned elsewhere was built as a printers, with Mr. F. Perkins being the owner in 1914. During World War II the Air Raid Precautions HQ was based here. After World War II Mr. S.A. Bramley ran the Labour Exchange there, then Mr. L.S. Daniels an accountant took over, followed by Levicks accountants.

Spencer Cottages were built by the enterprising J. Spencer of Platt Brickworks (later Pascalls) in the 1870s. Legend has them as being built for workers building the railway, but the census returns give evidence which refutes this idea.

Lighter moments 1921-1923

Number 10 Station Road

The author's Father Mr. R.G. Bangay founded the local British legion Band.

The Sevenoaks Chronicle, 1922, reports:

“Strange noises have been heard in Station Road recently. Presumably the big drummer is practising, will he please note the slates on a nearby stable roof are in a shaky condition.”

The band practised in the front room which gave onto the street. Local lads thought to give greater effect during a practise of the 1812 Overture by putting a firework through the letterbox!

Sevenoaks Chronicle, 1923

“Now will Borough Green have a Fire Brigade?”

Why were the lengths of hose and hydrant not traced till the morning after the fire? Fate plays strange tricks, the occupant is an ex-fireman and also agent for a well-known Insurance Company. And is it really true that an Inspector called the next day to ask how many buckets of water had been used? The “Gossips” who are entertaining at the Palace this week proved willing workers at the fire.”

And again

“How many people were at the Church on Sunday last when the bellringer rang for the 8.00 a.m. service? Hadn’t he heard about the clocks being put back?”

### Village Life in the 1930s

In the 1930s Borough Green was a thriving, growing community. The facts below, although rather dry, bear out this statement, which posterity should note:

1 cafe	2 chemists	2 hairdressers
1 bank	3 plumbers	1 Fire Brigade
2 farms	1 jeweller	1 sand quarry
5 pubs	3 butchers	1 stone quarry
1 cinema	1 solicitor	1 gas showroom
2 bakers	1 fish shop	1 chimney sweep
1 church	1 shoe shop	4 confectioners
1 chapel	1 registrar	3 coal merchants
3 garages	1 blacksmith	5 shoe repairers
1 dentist	1 nurseryman	2 hardware shops
1 saddler	1 brickworks	1 mens outfitters
1 printer	3 cycle shops	1 labour exchange
3 dairies	1 corn stores	2 electrical shops
1 drapers	1 basket maker	3 haulage contractors
10 grocers	1 taxi service	3 newsagents/stationer
3 builders	2 fence makers	
3 carriers	1 ladder maker	
3 bus services 2 of which used Rock Road, parking by the Church (Auto Car and Red Car)		One of the newsagents was W.H. Smiths bookstall and library at the Station. Mr. Tom Cresswell was the manager.

### Post War Building

Tollgate Estate was built in 1947-1948 and Fairfield Estate started in 1952.

Wye Road and Annetts Hall rose in 1958-1959, Roman Court some 30 years later in 1989.

Valley View 1960

Woodlands 1960 – 1961

Lingfield Road + Ascot Close 1958

Sandy Ridge 1959

Hunts Farm 1985

Eaglestone Close and Tolsey Mead 1985

All were built on good agricultural land, the majority view of the Parish Council being that building be restricted to the village confines. Street lighting on parts of Valley View was not authorised by Ightham Parish Council. Under the conditions of a boundary review this is now all under Borough Green.

## **CHAPTER FOUR Religion – Sectarian and Practical Services**

The village as stated above was divided into three church parishes: Ightham, Wrotham and after 1843 Platt. The part belonging to Ightham stopped at the junction of Rock Road and the A25 and included everything on the west side of Rock Road. The Black Horse Inn formed the boundary with Platt parish. All the rest of the village was in Wrotham parish. It was not until 1976 that Borough Green became a separate ecclesiastical parish.

In 1809 eleven Baptist believers in Borough Green decided to provide a chapel for their meetings. At the Bull Hotel on 27 July 1815 there was a sale of Waste Lands in the parish of Wrotham under the Enclosure Acts of the time. Later on 18 August 1816 Mr. Clapson purchased a plot of land from the sale for the sum of 22 10s by private contract for the Baptist interests. The Chapel was built in 1817, enlarged twice, a school room added in 1890, giving us the pleasant edifice that we see today. A benchmark indicates that it is 301 feet above sea-level.

Prior to the purchase of what is now known as St. Joseph's Church the Roman Catholic congregation used to meet in private houses and, for a few years, in one of the old ATC huts in the Quarry. The Western Hall was bought at a public auction in 1957 and, despite repeated endeavours, the exterior does not do full justice to the establishment which it serves.



*Shepherd 1911*

*Church of the Good*

**The Church of the Good Shepherd**

Prior to 1875 Church of England members walked either to Wrotham, Ightham, Platt or Plaxtol to worship. After the Church of England Infants School was built, now the Parish Hall, members used to meet in the schoolroom. By 1900 there were over two hundred houses in Borough Green. On Wednesday 18 June 1904 a well attended meeting chaired by the Reverend W.H.T. Ashton Gwatkin, Rector of Wrotham, was held in the Alexandra Hall, now Moye's shoe shop in Western Road. The meeting unanimously decided to go ahead and build a Mission Church at a total cost of 1680 excluding chairs. Men, women and even children helped to clear the site and to dig the foundations. Emmiline St. Tour, Vicountess Torrington laid the foundation stone on 9 January 1906. The Church was consecrated on 5 July 1906 by the then Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Harmer. It was built by Messrs. Allcorn of Shipbourne. The first curate in charge was the Reverend A. H. Lilley who resided at Mount Pleasant, Sevenoaks Road. No doubt it was he who gave the house its name. The architects were Messrs. H. P. Monkton and Gillespie.

In the Church Magazine for April 1908 it was reported that there was still a debt of 480. By this time the Reverend A.P. Pascoe was curate at Borough Green and he was also editor of the Shoreham Rural Deanery Magazine. He moved on in 1914 and the reverend R. Coussmaker was appointed in January 1915.

The Rural Deanery magazine reports in 1913 that the pulpit had been fumed and stained to match the screen and reduced in size, giving it a correct proportion. Several windows were being altered to remove the stuffiness of the Church, hoping by this means to drive a current of pure air through the Church between the services. This should stop people fainting, apparently a frequent occurrence over the previous seven years. If inadequate, the report states that some larger method would be taken in hand!

The interior has seen many alterations of varying standards over the years. The recent additions, the annexe and the Remembrance Garden (1991), are surely among the most excellent. The lych gate sets the seal upon a fine job. One must not forget the improvement of fitting the splendid stained glass windows designed by Patrick Reyntiens on the East end! Thank you Reverend Tony Powell and the P.C.C.

## **CHAPTER FIVE Services**

### **The Library Service**

The centre opened in 1922 at the council school with just 45 books, Mr. Plowright, the librarian, wrote that he had 54 readers of whom one third were children.

1925 – The first exhibition van arrived for books to be chosen. Up until 1943 teachers at the school held the post of librarian. In that year the librarian Mrs. Clark, of the Old Manor House, put in a request for more books as there were a hundred landgirls in the area.

1944 – The library moved to the Western Hall, opening on Fridays from 2 to 3 p.m.

1945 – Miss J. Nisbett was appointed librarian.

1957 – The Parish Council asked for extra hours to be granted.

1958 – On her marriage Miss Nisbett left her post

1960 – Mrs. Kitson appointed and the library moved to the Church Hall

1962 – Hours extended to include Tuesday 6.30 – 8.30 p.m., Thursday and Friday 2.00 – 5.30 p.m.

1966 – Library moved to Village Hall

1967 – Open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

The library moved to its purpose built building in July 1977 with greatly extended hours and has been a great boon to the district. Surprising as it may now seem, some opposition was mounted to this move at the time. Serving a large catchment it has proved to be one of the greatest blessings to the community. Well done the Kent Education Committee!

Date Books

1922 45

1969 3 800

1977 13 000

1993 16 000 660 Musicassettes

### **Kent County Constabulary**

The following material was provided by the Chief Constable, and it is to be regretted that only information on Sergeants was available.

Officers in charge at Borough Green

1895 – 1897 Instructing constable J. Trill

1897 – 1898 Instructing constable J. Sidders

1898 – 1902 Corporal W. Mepstead \*

1902 – 1906 Sergeant C. Castle

1906 – 1908 Sergeant J. Kennett

1908 – 1913 Sergeant J. Emptage

1913 – 1918 Sergeant W. Cutting

1918 – 1921 Sergeant E. Webb

1921 – 1922 Sergeant H. Lampkin

1922 – 1931 Sergeant A. Murkett

1931 – 1933 Sergeant T. Goodall

1933 – 1939 Sergeant D. Gramson

1939 – 1944 Sergeant P. Cooper

1944 – 1956 Sergeant T. Pettit

1956 – 1959 Sergeant T. Corke

1959 – 1970 Sergeant J. Kitson

1970 – 1987 Sergeant P. Griffin

1987 – Sergeant A. Loader

Perhaps it is a sign of the times, that when composing this book, I spoke to ten people in September 1993 of whom only two knew or could name the present police sergeant. This may well be because, as is the case with other people who serve the local community, they do not now reside in it.

\*

Corporal Mepstead retired as Superintendent of the old Bearsted division.

His son went to Wrotham School and became Commercial Superintendent at Waterloo, then Station Master at Charing Cross.

## **Entertainment**

### **Cinema**

The first silent pictures were shown in a marquee in Rock Road after two old cottages were demolished and before the long row of houses was built. It was called Poole's Panorama and this happened between 1904-1905. The same people were at a hall in Chatham in 1909.

The cinema was built in 1912 by Mr. H. Gilbert. It had a gas engine driving a generator. The early years had more live shows than films. It was a stop for theatrical groups between Bromley and Maidstone. It was called the Electric Palace.

Sevenoaks Chronicle 1922

“No one should fail to pay a visit to the Palace next week to see one or more of the popular plays which the management are presenting. Lovers of the good old-fashioned melodrama are in for a good time.”

Christmas Fare at The Palace.

“With their usual enterprise the management have arranged a splendid entertainment for their patrons. In the shape of a bright and mirthful revue entitled “Roundabouts”. This bears the hallmark of excellence which is always connected with the name of Mr. Tom Taylor of “Hello Charlie” fame.

A matinee on Boxing Day at 2.30 p.m. Two shows in the evening, the three remaining days at 7.30 p.m. The “Gossips” are entertaining all this week.”

Later it became the Rex and patrons used to walk from as far afield as Plaxtol and Stansted. Most people had their regular seats. Talkies came in 1929. Mr. Gilbert later opened a cycle and wireless shop, now Fairdale Stores. We had to carry the wet accumulator batteries there for charging to use with our radios.

The cinema was taken over by Mr. Sawdy in 1927. Schoolchildren were given a free show once a year. The Davies family followed and it closed in 1964.

## **Health**

Dr. A. A. Lipscomb and the Walker family from Ightham are the first recorded practitioners. In 1899 Dr. Lipscomb is listed as MRCS Surgeon, Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for the Malling Union. He lived at the Crossroads. Also in that year Miles Sanders of the Dene, Western road was Relieving and Vaccination Officer, Registrar of births and deaths for Wrotham sub-district Malling Union.

The Ingleside property was sold 18 November 1926, presumably purchased by the Walkers and Dr. Ralph Green was the first resident doctor. Over the years many much loved and respected doctors have practised here, such that to single out any individual would be inappropriate. Newly opened in 1993 the village has the splendid Medical Centre at Quarry Hill. Well designed in Swedish style, it is an imposing building and represents a tremendous asset for our present doctors.

### **The Borough Green Fire Brigade ( 1934 – )**

In 1934 the Borough Green Chamber of Trade expressed concern about the fire cover for the area. At the suggestion of Mr. Robert Cloke a Fire Brigade Committee was formed to raise funds by way of collections, dances and whist drives. Mr. Bob Bates from Seal Fire Brigade was involved in the training for the men. In the event of a fire a maroon was fired in Mr. Cloke's yard and equipment was loaded into one of his grocers vans. A 1921 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost was later seen advertised under a box number in a national daily. Mr. Cloke rang the editor and was able to obtain the address of the Lord Kemsley who had placed the advert. Robert and Richard Cloke, Bill Kennett and Harry Carter set off for Slough. £26 was the price reached after some bargaining with Lord Kemsley – the group had only £25. A dig in their pockets for half-crowns and shillings made up the price. There was just enough petrol in the tank for the journey home!

Weighing two tons 17 cwt it had brakes on the rear two wheels only! Mr. Bonallack, a local coach builder, did the conversion work and the engine went into service on 5 November 1938. The crew sat sideways along the vehicle hanging on to straps with feet braced against the side. The appliance did valiant work throughout World War II, especially countering the effects of bombs dropped on West Malling Airfield and aiding stricken planes during the Battle of Britain.

From 1946 to 1964 the Fire Station was behind the houses opposite the Fox and Hounds, located between the KCC depot and the local mortuary. The station in Western Road was formally opened in January 1964. In 1945 the Silver Ghost was withdrawn from service. Although officially taken over by the National Fire Service, the men still tended to think of it as theirs. It was hidden for some time in a barn behind the Spring Tavern. It was brought out, cleaned and polished as a bridal car for Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Dryland at Wrotham Church. On the formation of the Kent Fire Brigade in 1948 the authority insisted that the engine be produced for disposal. It was taken away and simply vanished. Many efforts were made to trace it but in vain. Lesney Bros Ltd, the model car manufacturers, heard of the story and produced a scaled replica with the aid of drawings and photos. Although the original may have disappeared this miniature may be seen in many locations across the globe.

### **Education**

The author has written a comprehensive book on Borough Green's schools. Entitled "A Friendly Glimpse" copies are still available. Events from World War II and other aspects of school and village life are there for the reading.

The Village Hall, built 1964-1965, is worth a story in itself – perhaps somebody will take on this task.

## **CHAPTER SIX Sports**

Both Borough Green Football and Cricket Clubs have played on the Recreation Ground since 1901. A tennis club also used the ground with grass courts. People enjoyed swimming and water polo at the school pool between 1912 and 1942. Borough Green Parish Council, formed in 1934, purchased the ground in 1935. The Borough Green Working Mens' Club was running a marathon race in 1912. In 1950 whilst the recreation ground was being levelled, football was played on the field by the A227 next to Tolsey Mead. Eight volunteers cut the entire pitch with hand lawnmowers! Before the war a team known as the Albions played there. It was once a hop garden and had a great many ridges.

In 1956 a total of sixty-two people gave voluntary labour to build the War Memorial Sports Pavillion on the Recreation Ground. Special mention should be made of names to represent all the volunteers: Harold

Woodhams, Alfred Large, Dilla Higgins, Bill Broadmore and Frank Griggs. It is regrettable that neither the Churches nor the Parish Council have fully recognised the status of this building and have largely ignored the spirit in which it was engendered. It represents the thanks of those who returned safely and serves to remind us of those who gave their lives in two world wars. The bulk of the money was provided by the Borough Green Women's Institute. In 1957 some of the same people slaved on to build the Bowling Green. As a working secretary for both schemes, the author knows well the sacrifices involved and the satisfaction of seeing these large scale do-it-yourself tasks reach completion.



*Marathon race*

The Cricket Club held a fete on 2 August 1926, with surprisingly high prize money for the winners of 8s, 5s and 9s. For the mile race prizes were 10s, 6s and 4s. For the marathon race they were 10s, 1s and 10s. This was open to a radius of five miles from Platt Memorial Hall and the associated trophy was called the Platt Cup. There were also four horse races round a large arena, open to contestants within a three mile radius of Borough Green itself. The likely damage sustained by the cricket outfield does not bear thinking about! The Children's Fancy Dress had an entrance fee of 3d. The author who was seven years of age at that time never had 3d in his pocket.

### **The Brothers – a cricketing ballad 1915**

All the boys of Borough Green

Were playing at the ball

And Dan the captain of the team

Was smartest of them all.

The bowler sent the ball right up

At a tremendous pace

The ball flew and hit poor Dan

A fine smack in the face.

And while he bowed unto the ground

And hopped about in woe  
Which time the team looked on to see  
The blood began to flow.  
And while they all did ask of him  
If he were better yet,  
His brother George did turn about  
And light a cigarette.  
But like a valiant captain bold  
Dan clean forgave his brother  
Long may they live in Borough Green  
Long may they love each other.

This poem was written by Miss Oxley. The Crowhurst family, the subjects of the poem, lived at Whiffens Farm and were stalwarts of the Cricket Club from the 1900s to the 1960s.

**Borough Green F.C.**



Back row: W. Lidstone, A. Higgins, F. Iggulden, C. Day, W. Ladd (Capt.), G. Fancett (Treas.), W. Mist, W. Pink (Hon. Sec.)

Middle Row: F. Garland, F. Stedman, J. Higgins, A. Broad, H. Burren

Front row: R. Lowes, T. Ladd, C. Woodhams.

Outfits supplied by E. Atkins of Borough Green.

Early extracts from the Sevenoaks Chronicle

26 October 1901

G Company Volunteers (Westerham) vs Borough Green Blues

Imagine the journey to Westerham in those times by horse and cart!

(And the return journey after a few beers ... and more on the way)

8 April 1905 Swanley United 2 – 1 Borough Green in the final of the Bradley Cup at Kingsdown.

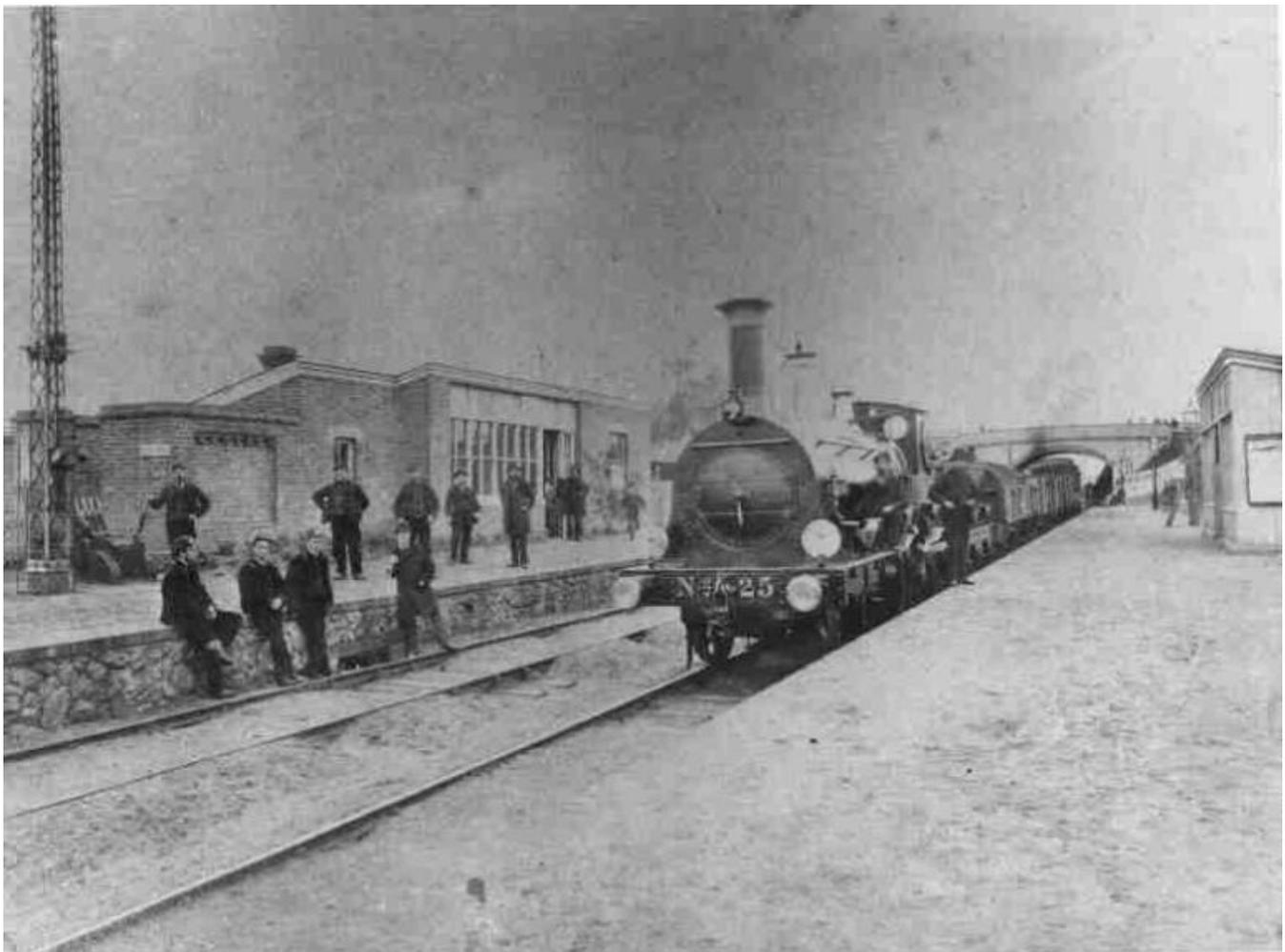
Weds 29 September 1909

C. Day (goalkeeper), J. Higgins and T. Ladd played for Sevenoaks Representative League team against Arsenal Reserves: lost 8 – 0!

1 April 1929

Borough Green F.C. beat Otford United 4 – 2 in Sevenoaks Charity Cup Final. In the team were H. Woodhams, A. Bowen, A. Higgins, T. Seamark, E. Cooper, F. Higgins, J. Higgins, W. Higgins, J. Sharp, G. Hubble and G. Fuller.

## Syren – Crampton – 1882



Train at station

The photo of the train in the station was taken in 1882. It will be seen that there was then no living accommodation and the signals are on the platform.

There was a staff of ten and there are a few onlookers on the bridge.

The engine shown in the photo, No. 25, was originally built in 1861-1862 by Hawthorn and Co. The designer was Crampton. It was then called the Syren. It was the first bogie train in the country built for express work. It ran badly however and damaged the permanent way.

The series resembles the Sondes class of tank having outside cylinders about midway along the engine, driving the trailing pair of coupled wheels.

As early as 1864 Martely (Loco superintendent) began altering them to 2-4-0 engines with inside cylinders. Rebuilt again in the 1880s – names were removed and numbers changed. Fireboxes were Cudworth type, wheels 5' 6" and cylinders 16 x 22

Superficially it looks like the engine you might find at Power house Museum.

Follow this up the name Crampton on Wiki and you will see a series of locos attributed to Crampton.

. See <http://www.hambledon.co.uk/> for a review by Jonathan Clancey.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

Borough Green has many things in its favour, among them a primary school, nursery schools, School Parents Associations, Sunday School, Fellowship of Youth, Guides, Rangers, Venture Scouts, Cub Scouts, Brownies, Football, Cricket and Tennis clubs, British Red Cross, Young Wives Societies, Lepra, library, Women's Institutes, Keep Fit, British Legion, Parish Council, Woodvale Dancing, Borograds, Age Concern, Lunch Clubs, WRVS, Toc H, and lastly, Ballet, Bowls and Badminton. Missing from the list? ... A BYPASS!

F.G.B. 1984

# OLD AND NEW IS THEME OF WEEKEND SHOW

**B**OROUGH GREEN Past and Present is the theme of a two-day exhibition to be staged at the village hall during the weekend.

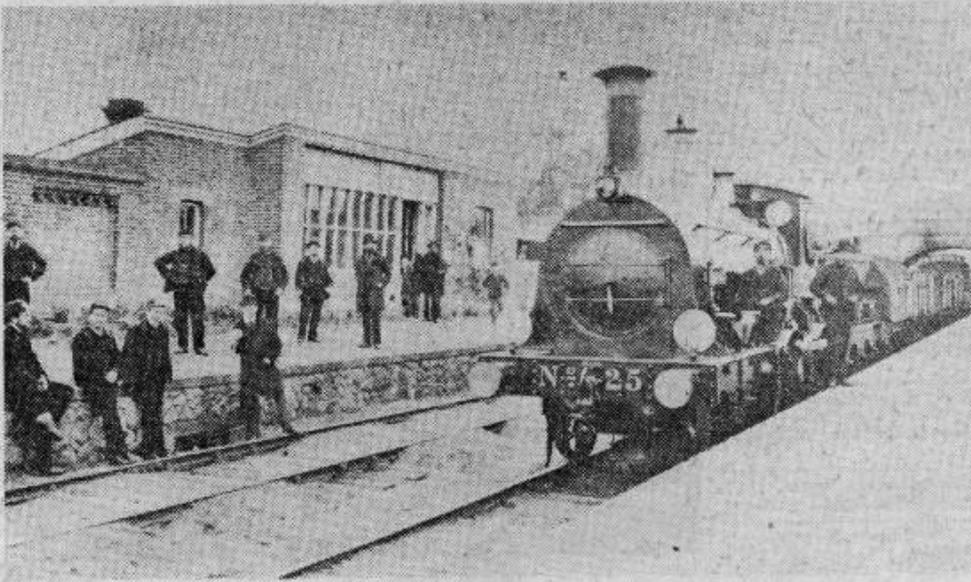
The exhibition has been arranged by the village hall sub-committee and it has taken six months to collect old photographs, pictures, maps and other items of interest which will be displayed.

Mr. Frank Bangay, a member of the parish council, who has been organising the exhibition, said: "Some very interesting photographs have been loaned to us and some fascinating information has come to light.

"We discovered that The Rock public house used to be a chapel many years ago before it was turned into a beer house and then into a public house."

Organisations such as the G.P.O. and the water company have been helpful in providing a fund of information illustrated with maps and diagrams to show how life has changed since 1874.

Villagers will be able to visit the exhibition from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. on Sunday. All proceeds will go to the village hall fund.



**BOROUGH GREEN** railway station in 1880 looks very different to the bustling commuter terminal that it has now become. Villagers will be able to see this picture and many more of Borough Green at the Past and Present exhibition to be held during the weekend