

The Parish Pump

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Opposite the church I would see an avenue of trees leading to Chantry Place. Mr W.S. Hill Reid lived there, a banker who had his own style of reading the lesson in church. Some years later his daughter had a red carpet across the road as she made her way to church for her wedding – I was paid to sing in the choir. Crossing the road to the church I would find Hill Tea room followed by Shepherd House, the chapel and an orchard with geese who poked their heads through, hissing at me as I walked. Crossing the road again to the south side to Rookery path I would walk past The Cottage, a wall with shrubs in front where the library now stands, and Bridge House. The shop, which some of us still call Crowhurst and Thompssets, was a grocers, drapers and haberdashers. Miss Tippen had the post office and a shop where Cyril Wells took bikes upstairs to repair. The seed shop owned by Mr Sutton was next then Alf Dovey's sweet shop and tobacconist. Mr Dovey was very deaf and would amuse himself and the children by pretending to give them something with an empty hand. John Reed's father, Percy, had the barber's shop and Mrs Reed had a ladies hairdressing salon in the rear. Mr Cox had a shoe shop for repairs and new shoes. Bourne's forge was derelict with a small horse chestnut tree in front. The triangle where cars now park was unkempt grass with criss-cross paths. Three terraced cottages with front gardens were next and Sutton's yard with hop stringing shed and farm chemicals, fertilisers and hardware.

In Albion road I would see Taylor's stores for grocery and drapery, then Stanley's garage, builders and undertakers. Opposite was Evenden's bakery at Monkton house. The bell rang if you stood on the door mat, which was fun! Going back to what is now the Old Market, this was a transport depot from where Mr Tippen's lorries took fruit to London Markets. At about this time they were being taken over by British Road Services which was not popular locally. The Unicorn had three bars – private, public and bottle and jug. On the corner of Maidstone Road, Ma Standen had a sweet shop and tobacconist, and would also provide a bench and a cup of tea for those who had walked a long way to the village. On the north side of the street was Wade the butcher, formerly owned by my grandfather. My Uncle Harry Wade sold it to Harry Boorman in late 1947. May Hayes grocer's shop came next and then Sutton's the ironmongers and Crowhurst and Thompssett the hardware shop. In there you would find the manager Ernie Price. He was a jovial man with a good tenor voice and sang in the church choir with Roy Maynard, Tom Haffenden, George Burr, Horace Swaffer and Arthur and Percy Judd. In Howland Road came Twyman's depot, managed by Charlie Barnes (hence Barnes Walk) with a stringing shed and farm supplies which duplicated Suttons, such was the demand by farmers. This leaves the Cross house where Harry Fairway had his greengrocers shop. All these shops and businesses in one small village! *Robin Judd*

Many thanks to Robin Judd for his second article on the Marden he remembers as a child. There is more information on Marden shops and businesses in the 1930s in "Marden 1930 – 39" by Bill Peen and George Flisher, published by the History Group. Also the next MHG Exhibition will be on "Marden Shops" from 2nd April.

There will be a Memorial Service for our PRESIDENT PEGGY SKELTON, who died on 24th January, in Church at 2 p.m. on 17th May.

NEXT MEETINGS: PLEASE NOTE: ALL MEETINGS ARE NOW HELD AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE VESTRY HALL.

April 27th JIM DAVIES will tell the story of "Coal Mining in Kent". Coal played a major part in the economy of East Kent, but the mines as we know were closed because imports were cheaper and ways of producing energy were changing.

May 25th AMY DIMMOCK will speak on "The Huguenots". Amy works for the Huguenot Museum in Rochester and has a wide knowledge of their fearsome reputation, were they invaders, conquerors or settlers?

FEBRUARY TALK – FALLEN WOMEN

Tony Farnham, the speaker on the subject of "Finding a Family" rang at 9.00am on the morning of our meeting to cancel because he was ill. No time to find another speaker so I gave a talk instead on "Fallen Women". It was in fact while I was giving this talk that I met Tony, whose mother had been a fallen woman, obliged to have her baby adopted. The subject covered the 'guilt' of Eve in leading Adam astray, to more recently when women who became pregnant outside marriage were vilified and often forced to give their babies away. The fault is always the woman's!

Many 18th and 19th century wealthy women made a very successful living out of their attractive faces and bodies, but some, like Emma Hamilton (after having mixed with royalty and powerful people), ended their days in exile and poverty. The laws of inheritance, property, and rights within marriage were very harsh towards women, but some wealthy women managed to have racy pasts and still retain with their wealth and position intact.

The reality for the mass of poor women was menial employment in domestic service, as a governess, or poorly paid work in factories after the Industrial Revolution. At times

prostitution must have seemed a way out to many, but the poor girl who got pregnant had no safety net or help available. Abortion was illegal and life threatening. Charles Dickens acknowledged the useful part prostitution played in society, but was nevertheless against girls taking that path due to poverty and necessity. As women's work was menial and underpaid, it could be the only route to keeping a family's head above water.

Dickens helped a girl accused of murdering her illegitimate baby, as the baby had been discovered dead inside her employer's kitchen cupboard. The poor illiterate girl had delivered her baby herself while opening the front door to someone. Dickens' efforts resulted in the charge of hiding a dead body instead of murder, so Eliza (who is believed to be G B Shaw's inspiration for Eliza Doolittle) escaped the hangman's noose. He also helped a young woman accused of murdering her baby. She had tried to drown herself and her baby rather than return to the workhouse with her illegitimate baby. She received a lenient sentence instead of being hanged, largely thanks to his efforts

William Stead, the first investigative journalist, bought a child for £5 and the sensational aftermath resulted in 3 months imprisonment for him. He wore the arrows prisoners' suit in London on the anniversary of his incarceration every year. But he exposed the magnitude of selling women and children in England, and the huge trade in women and children to France and Belgium. Stead was last seen clinging to a life raft having given his lifejacket to another, as the Titanic sank. But as a committed Spiritualist, he appeared as far away as Toronto to say he had been happy to sacrifice his life for others.

During the early 20th century Australia had an almost insatiable need for healthy young British children to go and work in the fields and outback, some of whom had their names and backgrounds changed so they could never be identified again. This was a quick and convenient way to pack off the results of unwanted pregnancies, so often the result of illicit love affairs. Overall fallen women received a very rough deal, but we all know how rife abuse of vulnerable people still is, so nothing ever changes. Arguably society is kinder towards all types of people of different persuasions today. *Mo Clayton*

FOOTPATHS NEWS: Local residents lost a valuable link in the village's footpaths network last year. Marden walkers had for centuries been accustomed to walking the full length of Roughlands Lane which formed a key link in the network between several well-used public rights of way in the area. However, part of the lane had never been formally designated as a public right of way, nor adopted as a public road. In 2005, our Footpaths Group applied to KCC for an order to establish a new footpath (KM340) to form this "missing link". In 2010 KCC decided against this, but the Group appealed and in 2011 the Inspector allowed the appeal and directed KCC to add this new path to the "Definitive Map". KCC made an Order to do this in 2014, but received one objection, leading to a Public Enquiry, held in March

2015. Sadly, this time the Inspector found against the Group, stating that the evidence was insufficient so the Order should **not** be confirmed. A "no public right of way" sign now discourages walkers from using the route. Walkers may note however that the route through the garden of the property at the end of Roughlands Lane is still a public right of way readily accessed from footpaths (KM250, KM257) at the rear of the property. Indeed, using it from time to time will help to remove any doubt about its continued existence.

Now some better news, in August KCC wrote to the Parish Council proposing to "extinguish" (an interesting word) footpath **KM275** which runs from the **junction of Copper Lane and Howland Road to Park Road**. This path has been unusable for many years as it is blocked at the Park Road end by high fences and dangerous dogs. Objections to this proposal were made by the Parish Council, Marden Footpaths and Walking Groups and the Ramblers. As a result KCC agreed to retain the path, and proposed a diversion, which had been discussed some years ago but got no further. This follows field boundaries south of the existing path away from houses, and has been accepted by all parties. **The route is NOT open to walkers at present**, as KCC are about to publish a formal Order which must be displayed and commented on. If accepted, this will allow an almost completely off-road route from the village to Marden Meadow. KCC have also proposed to extinguish another short footpath, **KM 259 at Great Cheveney** farm. As this cul-de-sac path only leads to the farmhouse and no further, there was no objection to this proposal. *Steve McArragher and Graham Minter*

ROBIN JUDD'S WALK BACK FROM SCHOOL THROUGH THE VILLAGE

As a ten year old lad, if I walked from school past Mr Bedford the headmaster's house, I would come to Bridgeland's saw mill, a huge corrugated iron shed with a static traction engine driving a large circular saw by a long belt. The saw screamed when cutting and the engine chuffed under load. I can still hear the noises now. Crossing the road and returning to the village on the south side I would come to "Chemmie" Verrall, the chemist. He was a large man with white overall and a nicotine stained moustache. He produced nasty granular medicine using a pestle and mortar. As far as I was concerned he was monosyllabic.

Opposite the school at Manor House, Harry Dobell the builder had his yard. Further on Harry Rose had his shop which was a shed originally on wheels and now the site of West End Stores. Dr Adam had his formidable surgery at West End House. He was a brusque Scot who had, I believe, missed the bedside manner lecture. Next came the chapel and then a dingy cafe into which I was not allowed. After that was Cranham the butcher, presided over by Bill Manktelow, which is now the dental surgery. Mr Tippen had his yard and workshop next. The medieval barn was Miskin's food store with yard and weighbridge in front, then there was a field where often a horse overlooked the fence. I would now come to the hop picker's hospital (now the Medical Centre) which in 1947 was housing displaced families.