

The
BULLETIN
of the
EAST GRINSTEAD
SOCIETY.

No.31

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THE EAST GRINSTEAD SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1968 to protect and improve the amenities of East Grinstead and its environs. The town has a long history and a unique architectural heritage, entrusted for the time being to the hands of our generation. It should be our concern that such contributions as we in turn make are worthy of the past and a fitting bequest to the future.

The Society arranges regular talks, discussions, films and visits. It produces a bi-annual Bulletin of articles of local interest and a more frequent Newsletter. In 1969 it produced a report on the High Street Conservation Area which was well received as the basis for future policy. It is also very active in making representations to the local authorities on planning matters. With the re-organisation of local government its importance as a watchdog has increased. It has held six exhibitions, published a book of reminiscences, a town trail and three sets of postcards reproducing old photographs of the town, restored the churchyard railings, planted trees on King George's Field, presented a seat to Sackville College and established a Town Museum in conjunction with the Town Council.

The Society is registered as a charity. It is registered with the Civic Trust, a member of the Sussex Federation of Amenity Societies and Local History Societies and affiliated to the Sussex Archaeological Society. A copy of its Constitution is available on request.

The strength of such a Society lies in the extent to which it can be seen to represent public opinion; the larger its membership the greater its influence. The subscription is £2 a year (additional members in the same family 50 new pence, persons in full-time education 25 new pence) to be renewed every year on 1 January, except by those joining on or after 1 October. Subscriptions, preferably by banker's order, should be sent to the Treasurer, Barclays Bank, East Grinstead.

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EDITORIAL

History again predominates in this issue, much of it so recent as to be for many more matter of memory than of history. Yet if people do not, like Mr Nutt, record their reminiscences while they may or, like Mr Gould, produce definitive studies while those involved are still alive to help, how much poorer our knowledge will be. One hopes not only that present readers will be interested but also that posterity will approve.

COVER PICTURE

A snapshot from the album of Mr C.E.K.Nutt, chosen to illustrate his article on pp.5f., where two others will be found. Special thanks are due to Mr H.Thomas, without whom the article would not have been written as it was. Mr Nutt's early railway memories appeared in Bluebell News, vol.5, no.7 (August 1963).

RECOVERED RECORDS

The lost parish records mentioned in Newsletter 9 and Bulletin 30 as having come into the hands of the Town Council are now safely lodged with their fellows in the County Record Office, as we advised, and so it is appropriate to list them briefly here. All five are on paper and in poor condition.

- 1 5 March 1691 WARRANT Alexander Staples, J.P., to Constables and Headboroughs of Borough and Hundred of East Grinstead to present William Peine, George Underhill, John Channell, George Stacey and Henry Cheale for examination concerning their legal place of settlement.
- 2 9 May 1693 BOND Richard Cornish clockmaker to Thomas Bodle hatmaker and John Norden yeoman, churchwardens, to maintain church clock, witnesses Edward Marchall and John Cooper (all of East Grinstead, Latin and English).
- 3 25 January 1697 WARRANT Alexander Staples, J.P., to Churchwardens and Overseers of East Grinstead to provide for Edward Sharp and his wife and children lately sent from Maresfield.
- 4 29 June 1697 APPRENTICESHIP INDENTURE Susanna Morgan poor child to Anne Gander spinster in housewifery to age 21 by Nathanel Austen and William Storrar churchwardens, witnesses Thomas Chapman and John Cooper (all of East Grinstead), Alexander Staples and Thomas Newdegate, J.P.s, consent.
- 5 3 July 1697 AGREEMENT William Storer and Nathaniel Austen churchwardens and Edward Head, Edward Bennett and John Underhill overseers with Edward Evershed of Ewhurst Surrey for him to occupy a cottage and land in consideration of his caring for Thomas Ridgeway poor boy to age 21, witnesses John Bodle and Nathanael Moore (all except Everest of East Grinstead).

PUZZLE PUZZLE PUZZLE PUZZLE PUZZLE PUZZLE PUZZLE PUZZLE PUZZLE

The correct answer to the puzzle in Bulletin 30 was 'East Grinstead'. Perhaps it was harder than we thought, for no answers were received, but we try again with: 'Why does the town of East Grinstead resemble a hospital?' This 'obsolete conundrum' is found in our 1885 guidebook and in one of our earliest Bulletins, in each case with its answer. Junior Members are invited to do a little research and send in the answer; there will be a modest prize for the first correct one received.

NEXT BULLETIN Spring 1982. Contributions by 18 December.

LOCAL CLOCKMAKERS: ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

by M.J.Leppard

(Bulletins 10 (Sept.1972), pp.8f.; 11 (Jan.1973), p.14; 13 (Autumn 1973), p.4; 19 (May 1976), p.14; 30 (Spring 1981), p.7)

A summary list of 16 known East Grinstead clockmakers from 1693 to 1885, by the present writer, appeared in the Sussex Genealogist and Local Historian, vol.3, no.1 (June 1981), pp.23f. and produced some interesting additional information in reply.

Mrs Balch of London, Ontario, wrote that her ancestor Thomas Dadswell, clocksmith of Rotherfield, who had been apprenticed to his uncle Thomas of Burwash in 1735, settled in East Grinstead in c.1758. He died in 1769 and it must be his son Thomas (1749-94) who is the Thomas Dodsell listed as a clocksmith here in the Universal British Directory, 1794. Another son, Edward (1754-1802), worked as a clocksmith in Eastbourne.

Miss A.Winser of London, England, sent some information on her ancestor, Albert Arthur Winser (fl. 1865-1902) which it is hoped to write up in a later issue, together with other information about him from Miss J.W.Holman (another descendant) and Mr E.J.Tyler. It is also hoped to write up more information on the Fowles.

Further research necessitates a correction to the information on Richard and Robert Cornish given by the present writer in Bulletin 30. The 1688 entry in the Edenbridge Churchwardens' accounts is given in Archaeologia Cantiana, vol.21 (1895), p.119 (on which Somers-Cocks and Boyson drew in their book) as 'To Robt Cornish for ye Dyatt Given to ye Ringers when ye Bishopps were Acquitted 4s.' This entry therefore has no bearing on our subject, but the 1716 entries may stand (except that Mr Cooper was paid for 'getting' the dial plate rather than 'gilding' it).

Mr E.J.Tyler comments, however, that it could have been our Robert Cornish who worked on the clock at Battle, although it is about 30 miles away. 'Skilled men were difficult to get and would travel a lot in those days. They would arrange to use the forge of the local blacksmith while doing a church clock far from home.'

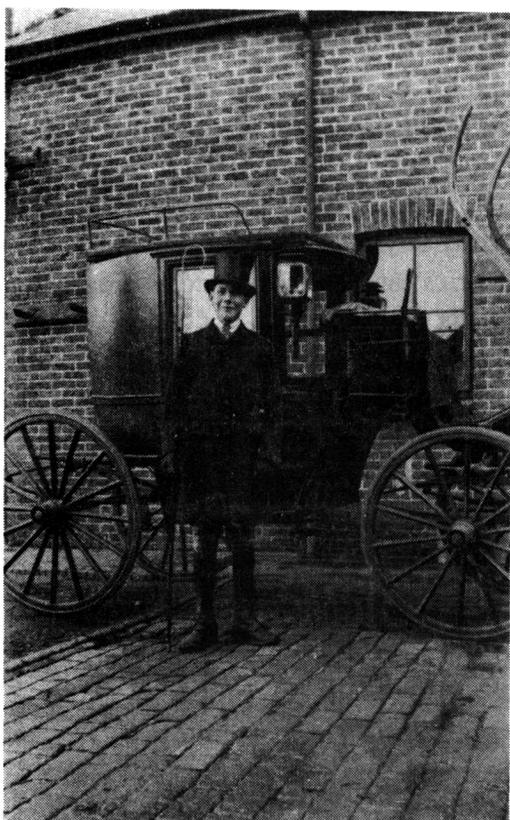
Further information from other sources is needed if we are to be certain about any involvement of our Robert Cornish with clockmaking.

TOWN GUIDE: The third edition of the official guide by Mr M.J.Leppard appeared in May (75 n.p.). The perambulations of the High Street and London Road and four short walks, omitted from the second edition, have been revised and restored and the contemporary information has been rewritten by the clerk of the Town Council. A somewhat inaccurate streep map has been included. (Detailed review of first edition, Bulletin 7 (Sept. 1971).)

W.H.DAVIES: Miss S.Hollingdrake, 51 Stockton Road, Newport, Gwent, NPT 7HJ, is researching W.H.Davies, the poet who lived in Cantelupe Road, East Grinstead, c.1923-7, and would be glad to hear from anyone with any recollections of the poet or other information that might be helpful. She would also be interested in a photograph of the house, Tor Leven, no.28, on the corner with Vicarage Walk, if anyone can lend one.

REMINISCENCES

by C.E.K.Nutt



One of my earliest recollections is the 1911 Coronation celebrations, when a pair of horses from our stables with my uncle as driver hauled the fire engine through East Grinstead in the procession.

My father, Harold Hewitt Nutt, with my uncle, Norman Henry Nutt (who left us in 1912), went into partnership with Mr G.F.Stone in 1905 and started 'Nutt's Jobmaster's Yard, Hunting Stables and Horse Cab Service' in Station Road, taking over the existing livery business there that went back to the later 1880s. Today the premises are occupied by the Brooklands Service Station.

The property belonged to Mr Stone, who retained it when he retired from the partnership. The land and stables belonged to Mr William Miles, who coupled it with originally a coal merchant's business. Mr Miles was also a director of the

East Grinstead Sanitary Laundry, now a roofless relic, derelict behind the present service station with its name barely recognisable on its shell of a wall in Wood Street. For a time after it closed the laundry was taken over as a coffin factory. Next to that and through to London Road stood Stenning's timber yard with its tall chimney, a link with the past that has vanished completely to make way for the recent East Grinstead House and Sussex House complex.

On joining the partnership my father, with my mother and me as a very young baby, moved into one of the two houses then in the yard. From my early youth I can recall father having to pay an 'ancient lights' tax because some of the buildings in the yard overlooked the windows of the laundry.

The livery stables houses landaus, broughams, victorias, brakes and a stage-coach besides a dog-cart and a pony-cart with as many as twenty horses. In addition father took out a licence in 1905 for horse-cabs to ply for hire at the nearby railway station. Finally, there was a small paddock between the yard and the high level station for schooling hunters or for riding lessons and where, when I and my young friends found the opportunity, we could play cowboys and Indians on one or two of the ponies.

In those days the fire station was in London Road next to Stenning's timber yard and two of our horses were on call for use by the fire brigade. When the alarm rocket went up our stableman rushed for the horses (sometimes having to take them from our cabs outside the railway station) to run along Station Road through St James's Road to harness them to the fire engine for the fire.

Another early recollection of mine is the workhouse, known as 'The Spike' and afterwards called St Leonard's Hospital, on the other side of the upper railway line. At that time Arthur Ward was the keeper at the porter's lodge where the tramps were lined up each evening to be admitted for the night with the men on one side of the gate and the women on the other.

Living by the railway station I found the trains a great attraction. As a youngster I knew the station staff well and was quite at home in the East Grinstead West signal box close at hand on the upper line, occasionally working the signal levers guided by the signalman. I was also friendly with drivers and the firemen, so much so that a real red letter day came my way in 1918 when I drove a train from East Grinstead to Forest Row under the driver's direction. It was this initial interest that found me in later years becoming one of the first members of the Bluebell Railway Society.

Motoring had superseded the horse-cab and coaching days when I joined the business in 1922. In fact father had already started a private car hire service in 1914 with a French 'unic' car, thus heralding the change in the title of the firm, later to be known as 'H.Nutt and Son, Private Car Hire Service and Garage'. We carried on with the hunting stables, however, up to the beginning of the second world war. During the war some of the stalls were leased to the Canadian army to house their 15-20 dispatch riders' motor-cycles, recalling a similar role enacted in the 1914-18 war when army horses occupied them. Incidentally the number of each machine in the reserved parking space still remained on the stable wall when I sold the business twenty one years later.

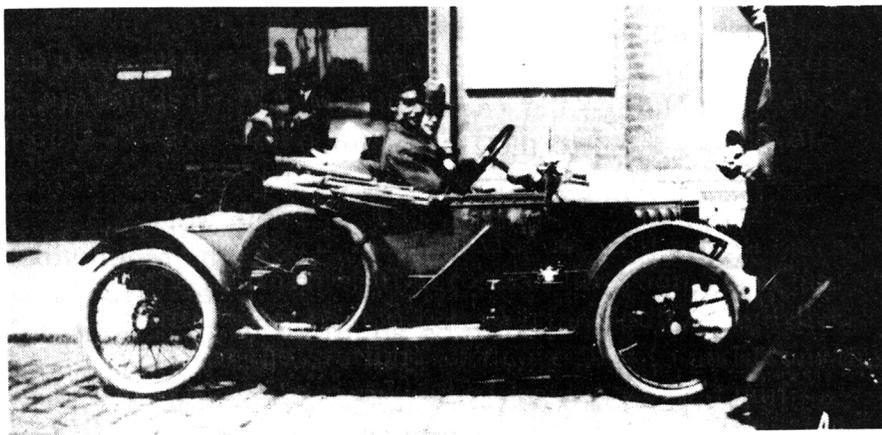
The riding school was a particular pride of my father's, with many interesting pupils passing through his hands. At one time they included the children of Lord Glamis, the brother of H.M. the Queen Mother, when he lived at Shovelstrode Manor.

All sorts of people used our livery and car hire service as well as our garage. Lord Glamis sometimes hired our cars at the station to take him home and our garage serviced his car. Once, fifteen years ago, Sir Adrian Boult, the B.B.C. Orchestra's first conductor, arrived at the station. I drove him to and from the hospital to visit a friend of his and before he returned to London we had quite a chat on musical matters, for I was a longstanding member of the Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra.

Among our early garage customers was Walter Crapps, the proud owner of a 1920 G.N. cycle car. He was the organist and choirmaster at St Swithun's. His musical talents also found expression in the three man orchestra for the silent films at the Whitehall cinema, he playing the piano with Fred Herring on the violin and Jesse Bashford doubling the clarinet and violin.

As motoring became more popular so our trade in secondhand cars developed. One of my more memorable transactions in this branch was to buy from another dealer Woolf Barnato's 4½ litre super-charged Bentley specially built for him by Rolls Royce. Several times I raced it at Silverstone or entered it in the Firle hill climbs.

The 1905 lease on the livery service, hunting stables and then the garage was renewed in 1930 and when my father died in 1948 I succeeded to the business, selling it in 1966.



Acknowledgements :
see p.3.



BREWING IN EAST GRINSTEAD

by M.J. Leppard

The above photograph of the Hope Brewery (the subject of an article in our last Bulletin), dated 31 March 1906, has been kindly loaned by Mr Piddlesden of Crawley Down. What follows is the promised sequel on brewing elsewhere in East Grinstead.

The earliest references so far noted are in the Borough Court Rolls for 1576-7 when Benjamin Duffield, William Langridge and Thomas Lullingden jun. were fined for unauthorised brewing. The first two were fined again for the same offence in 1580 and Langridge also in 1598 (1). It is probably significant that in 1564 Langridge was at the Crown site and Lullingden at that of the Chequer, 25-32 High Street (2), and that at other times these two were also fined as bakers and tipplers (unauthorised tavern keepers).

Our next names are Stephen Brabourne, surety to a marriage licence, 1636, and William Shaw, his own marriage licence, 1637 (3). In 1648 Thomas Sharpe, beerbrewer, was fined for supplying ale to unlicensed retailers (4).

In 1659 Edward Sherman's brewhouse is mentioned in a deed as lying south of the house on the west side of the top of our Hermitage Lane (5), no doubt the one which gave that road its name of Brewhouse Lane, recorded from 1780 to 1872 in the deeds of the Hermitage (6). (As late as 1681, however, it was still being called Hollow Lane (5), a name first known in 1564 (2). The modern name has not been traced before 1894 (7).)

After Sherman there is silence for just over a century until John Lulham, maltster, appears at the Hope Brewery site in 1762 (8). Nothing elsewhere has then been traced until 1794 when Robert Turley of the Bull (10-14 High Street) is listed as a maltster and William Harman of the Green Dragon (7-11 High Street) as a brewer on the Common (9). Harman's brewery could, however, have been on the Hope site. In 1799 Harman, Trice and Wood are listed as malt dealers (10). Wood also was probably connected with the Hope

site (8). In 1832 and 1839 John Prentice is listed as hop and malt dealer (11). He held the Three Crowns at Ashurst Wood 1800-04 and the Royal Oak at Forest Row 1825-28 (12).

Other brewers mentioned in directories are W. Jones in 1862 and E. Wise of London Road in 1866 (13). The former is probably William Jones of the Dorset Arms 1848-56 and then of the Railway Hotel (14). Presumably the Hermitage Lane brewery was still in use, for Kelly's directories for 1862 and 1867 mention two small breweries in the town. By 1872 there was only one (15) but by 1882 George Coomber had opened the East Grinstead Brewery at North End (13). It has not yet been ascertained precisely where it stood, nor when it closed, but it was still functioning in 1895 (13). In 1888 Coomber applied for an off-licence for his brewery, arguing, with an eye to the powerful local 'temperance' lobby as much as to business rivals, that it was better for people to buy from him for home consumption than to go to the Star at Felbridge and stay there, but he was successfully opposed by the united forces of the East Grinstead and other Temperance Societies and local clergy, ministers and Sunday Schools (16).

As ever, further information that readers can supply will be very welcome. I am grateful to Mr P.D. Wood for references in paragraph 1.

REFERENCES: P.R.O. = Public Record Office; S.A.T. = Muniments of Sussex Archaeological Trust; S.R.S. = Sussex Record Society; W.S.R.O. = West Sussex Record Office. (1) S.A.T. RF/19; P.R.O. DL30/126/1876. (2) P.R.O. DL42/112. (3) S.R.S. vol.1 (1902), pp.231,241. (4) S.R.S. vol.54 (1954), p.155. (5) S.A.T. FB 550,553. (6) ex inf. late R.H.Wood. (7) Dixon's Almanack. (8) Bulletin 30 (Spring 1981), p.12. (9) Universal British Directory. (10) Palmer's Poetical Directory of East Grinstead. (11) Pigot's Directories. (12) Poor rate book (Sackville College muniments, W.S.R.O.), Three Crowns deeds (Messrs Watney), Parish valuation (W.S.R.O. PAR 348/30/1). (13) D.Askey, Sussex Bottle Collectors' Guide (N.D.), p.93. (14) Bulletin 28 (Spring 1980), p.9. (15) T.Cramp, Temperance Shots (1872), p.40. (16) E.Grinstead Observer, 10 Sept.1888.

SUSSEX HISTORY, vol.1, no.10 (Autumn 1980) records the deposit in the West Sussex Record Office of the minutes of East Grinstead Savings Bank, 1822-27 (Add.MS 24,156) and in the East Sussex Record Office of business and family correspondence and probates of George Hoper of Lewes and East Grinstead (1784-1859), 1787-1864, including plans of Thornhill estate, 1812-80. vol.2, no.1 (Spring 1981) records the deposit in the East Sussex Record Office of plans submitted with planning applications for (inter alia) Forest Row, 1903-34. The same volume has an interesting article by Dr P.F.Brandon 'Philip Webb, the William Morris circle, and Sussex'. Nothing is said about Webb's work at Standen but it is noted that in 1900 he found East Grinstead 'full of nearly useless fancy shops', to his surprise.

THE VICTORIAN CHURCHES OF SUSSEX by D.R.Elleray (1981) is a lavishly illustrated, annotated catalogue of 604 buildings, of which 136, including many of the best, have closed (78 of them demolished). East Grinstead's Victorian churches and chapels all receive their due.

BRICKMAKING IN LINGFIELD: A valuable list of small brickyards in Lingfield before the First World War by A.Head appears in the Lingfield & District Amenity Society's Newsletter 31 (May 1981) together with a facsimile 'recipe' for 1,000,000 bricks.



EAST GRINSTEAD MOTOR COACHES

Cantelupe Road Garage
EAST GRINSTEAD

Telephone
E.Grinstead 180

SARGENT'S BUSES

by D.Gould

Shortly after the Great War a local man, Mr Henry James Sargent, his wife Janet and their eldest son Fred (who, a day before his 22nd birthday, had returned from fighting in France) discussed the possibility of forming a business in East Grinstead. The outcome was the starting of a motor-car hire firm in 1919, based on the Dorset Garage in the High Street. About ten years later the firm began to operate stage-carriage motor-bus services and private hire coaches, trading as 'East Grinstead Motor Coaches', and early in 1932 moved from their garage at the Dorset Arms into the former Foster's premises at 32 Cantelupe Road.

Here Fred Sargent - by the mid-1930s the mainstay of the business - looked after the vehicles and staff. His younger brother Ken was mainly responsible for the paperwork, also writing the copy for advertisements in the local newspapers. Should an extra driver be required, Ken would fill the breach.

During the war the firm had a contract with Kent Agricultural Executive to convey prisoners of war to various farms from camps at Ashford, Limpsfield Chart and Tilburstow. In 1943 the present North End premises were acquired, where most of the private-hire coaches were garaged, and an engineering business was maintained.

After H.J.Sargent's death in 1940 the business passed to his widow, trading as 'J.Sargent', but it was managed for her by her son Ken. About 1945 the trading name was changed to its present title, 'Sargent's of East Grinstead', and in 1951 the decision was made to concentrate upon the engineering activities and to cease operation of buses and coaches. The business is now directed by Miss J. Marjorie Sargent (joint managing director) and Mrs Eleanor Leppard, daughters of the founders, John Sargent, Ken's son (joint managing director), and Mrs Jean Lipscombe, daughter of Mrs Isabelle Bright, another of the founders' daughters.

The routes

The earliest routes were from East Grinstead to Sharpthorne, to Cowden and to Brighton. There are memories of an embryo service to Ashurst Wood along Lewes Road but it fell foul of East Surrey Traction Co. which adopted its usual method of dealing with small competitors, which was to put a bus just in front of and one right behind the rival, thus effectively 'running it off the road'. The Road Traffic Act of 1930 was supposed to put an end to unrestrained competition and anyone wishing to start a bus service now had to prove to the Traffic Commissioners that it was needed.

About 1931 the continuation of a service of stage carriages between Sharpthorne and Cowden via East Grinstead was authorised by the South Eastern Traffic Area, the only permitted stopping places in East Grinstead being outside the National Provincial Bank on journeys from Cowden and between the War Memorial and the telephone kiosk on journeys from Sharpthorne. The Sharpthorne service ran via Dunnings, Saint Hill, Kingscote, Selsfield and West Hoathly and buses left the Crown at 9.15, 11.30, 2.30, 5.00 and 8.30, returning from Sharpthorne at 9.55, 12.10, 3.10, 5.40 and 9.10, each journey taking 35 minutes. The Cowden service, via Larches, Keeper's Corner, Hammerwood and the White Horse, had departures from East Grinstead Crown at 10.30, 12.45, 4.00, 6.15 and 9.45, returning from Cowden at 11.00, 2.00, 4.30, 6.45 and 10.12, journey time each way being 27 minutes. The two services interworked, so that only one vehicle was required for all journeys. Fares from East Grinstead to either Cowden or Sharpthorne were 8d (1s 2d return) and to West Hoathly 7d (1s return). 1d would take you as far as the Cemetery in Blackwell Road or to Dunnings.

In October 1932 West Hoathly Parish Council wrote to the Company stating that about 220 residents in the Tyes Cross and Plawhatch areas would benefit if the Sharpthorne bus service were extended and in 1933 H.J. Sargent obtained a licence to run an extended service to Ashdown Forest The Goat via Tyes Cross and Plawhatch. By now the journey time from East Grinstead to Sharpthorne was only 30 minutes but the extension added a further eight. Six journeys each day on weekdays were provided and three on Sunday afternoons; the through fare to the Goat was 10d (1s 3d return). When applying to run this service East Grinstead Motor Coaches had to deal with both the Metropolitan Traffic Area (for the portion between East Grinstead and Kingscote Station) and the South Eastern (for the remainder).

A later petition to extend the service to Wych Cross was not acceded to and the whole service was given up in about 1937. In replacement Southdown Motor Services ran an East Grinstead - Sharpthorne service numbered 87.

East Grinstead Coaches operated a limited stop scheduled coach service to Brighton from about 1929 until 1933. This served Forest Row, Chelwood Gate, Danehill, Sheffield Park, Chailey, Cooksbridge and Lewes and by December 1930 had been arranged to start and finish at Felbridge. There were two journeys each way on weekdays only, leaving Felbridge at 9.00 and 3.00 (East Grinstead Crown six minutes later), arriving at Brighton (York & Albion Garage, 5A St James's Street) 1½ hours after leaving East Grinstead. Fares from Felbridge, East Grinstead or Forest Row to Lewes were 1s 8d single, 2s 6d return, and to Brighton 2s single, 3s return. Tickets were sold on the coach or by two booking agents in East Grinstead High Street: Miss Miller at no. 11 and Mr Mockford at the Welcome Cafe. The service was later modified when H.J. Sargent obtained a licence in November 1931 to provide a service of express carriages. On journeys to Brighton passengers could board only at East Grinstead, Ashurst

Wood and Forest Row and be set down only at Lewes and Brighton; in the reverse direction passengers were taken up at Brighton and Lewes and set down at Forest Row, Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead. Journey times were the same, with departures from East Grinstead on weekdays at 9.05 and 3.05 and from Brighton at 12.10 and 8.40. There was also one return trip on Sundays.

After cessation of the Brighton service the next development was the extension of the Cowden route to Cowden Pound, Stick Hill and Edenbridge Star in May 1935. In early 1937 there were four return trips to Edenbridge plus two as far as Cowden. From 1 August 1937 there were six return journeys from East Grinstead to Cowden on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and seven on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, three of these being extended to and from Edenbridge. On Sunday afternoons all three return journeys ran between East Grinstead and Edenbridge. Single fare was 1s 2d but no returns were quoted. (The return to Cowden was still 1s 2d.) By September 1947 the Cowden and Edenbridge service was numbered 3 and there were nine return journeys on weekdays, four of which ran to and from Edenbridge Star, also an afternoon school journey from East Grinstead to Larches and back.

On 2 September 1942 a new service, for employees of the Crawley Tool Co. and Gatwick Airworks Ltd, began operating between East Grinstead and Tushmore Lane, Crawley, via Felbridge, Crawley Down, Copthorne, Shipley Bridge and Gatwick. Two vehicles were required for this, both leaving East Grinstead at 7.15, one for Gatwick, the other for Tushmore Lane, returning home immediately; the evening return trips were arranged to suit the varying closing times of the factories on different days of the week. By September 1947 service 4 (as it had become) was operating only from Mondays to Fridays: 7.15 from East Grinstead High Street to Lowfield Heath, returning at 7.55, and 7.15 from East Grinstead to Tushmore Lane, returning at 7.55; and two buses at 5.00 from East Grinstead to Tushmore Lane, returning at 5.27 and 5.30, the latter also serving Lowfield Heath. Weekly tickets were available with the expiry date stamped on both sides and on Friday evenings these tickets were collected by the conductor.

Two new routes were introduced early in 1948: East Grinstead to Ashurst Wood Memorial via Holtye Road and Homestall (3A) and Edenbridge Stangrove Road to Crowborough Cross. The East Grinstead to Edenbridge service now terminated at Cowden Cross Roads, where instant connections were made with a bus either to Edenbridge or to Crowborough. The bus required to work the Edenbridge - Crowborough service ran through from East Grinstead to Crowborough at 7.02 and at the end of the day's work returned home from Edenbridge at 10.00. The East Grinstead - Cowden and East Grinstead - Ashurst Wood services were interworked, only one vehicle being used for most of the day; each service ran every 1½ hours, journey time to Ashurst Wood being 16 minutes and to Cowden Cross Roads 27. There were ten return journeys on weekdays on each service. By 1950 the Crowborough route was extended to Friars Gate Half Moon; this quite lengthy route had four through return trips on weekdays, each taking an hour. On Sundays no service on any route operated during the morning but afternoon services were generally similar to those on weekdays. On Sunday afternoons an additional bus ran from East Grinstead to Queen Victoria Hospital, giving visitors about half an hour there before its return.

Although fixed bus stops were erected along the routes, complete with timetables (printed, incidentally, by Sargent's neighbours in Cantelupe Road, Cullens) buses would stop wherever signalled or requested, such was the de-

sire to satisfy customers.

Sargent's private hire service is perhaps even better remembered than its bus services as so many pleasure outings were run. Some passengers even wrote letters of appreciation, of which this, signed by Mrs E.S. Aitken in September 1950, is typical: 'I must say what a great deal of happiness one gets when going on any outing in your coaches. We have had the greatest kindness and courtesy shown by your drivers, and we always have had the greatest confidence in their driving.'

The company also ran many excursions and tours, for which a licence had to be obtained in the same manner as for a bus route. Excursions were made to race meetings, such as Epsom, Kempton Park, Fontwell, Wye, and to the seaside (Margate, Ramsgate, Eastbourne, Littlehampton). There were circular and mystery tours. A coach ran every week to Brighton conveying supporters of the Brighton Tigers ice hockey team.

The Vehicles

A duty chart dated 5 June 1934 shows that East Grinstead Motor Coaches owned at that time a Star coach, a Chevrolet and two Gilfords (a 28-seater and a 30-seater). A correspondent recalls that in 1936 the company owned seven vehicles: two Star 20-seat buses, a Daimler 30-seat coach with sleeve-valve engine, believed purchased from Blue Bell Coaches Ltd, and four Gilford 30-seat coaches. The Daimler and the Star were painted dark blue but the Gilfords were a lighter blue. About 1937 the Daimler coach was sold to a scrapyard and a Gilford 20-seater was acquired secondhand from Gatehouse Coaches, North London.

Vehicle maintenance was undertaken by Fred Sargent and a mechanic named Len Drury; since many of the coaches were secondhand considerable maintenance was necessary. Fred also hand-painted the coaches but signwriting was contracted out to George Ovenden. About 1940 the livery was changed to green with red and white lining-out.

The following buses and coaches have been recalled by former driver H.R. Medhurst, though it is difficult to establish at what periods they were in use: 20-seat Dennis, 20-seat Chevrolet, purchased new, 20-seat Lancia, a Maudslay, two Seddons, purchased new, 28-seat Gilford, 14-seat Bedford, Star Motor Co. 'Flier' coaches, wartime utility Bedford vehicles with 20 wooden seats, purchased new, a Vulcan, two 32-seat Bedford buses and four Bedford coaches, purchased new. All were single-deck and some were used as buses or coaches as required.

In May 1943 three Bedfords - nos 1 (CNJ 347), 3 (CNJ 887) and 4 (CPM 121) - with their drivers, Austin, Adams and Back, were hired to London Transport to alleviate that undertaking's vehicle and staff shortage. They operated during morning and evening peak periods on L.T.'s route 133 between Liverpool Street and South Croydon and were garaged behind Croydon Town Hall, their drivers lodging in Croydon. On Friday evenings drivers and vehicles, immediately their duties finished, returned to East Grinstead where the vehicles were serviced during Friday nights. Drivers were expected to carry out any minor adjustments during the week but East Grinstead had to be notified if major repairs were needed or a breakdown on service occurred.

The Staff

Over the years the company employed a fairly large number of men and the following are recalled: 'Jock' Adams, Len Ansley, David Austin, William Back, James Buckland, Walter Budgen, Edward Cooper, Jack Creasey, Len Drury, Harry Ellis, W.Firmager, Nelson Howis, 'Jimmy' James, Richard Medhurst, Jack Pearce, Leslie Potter, Percy Tingley, brothers M. and Tim Worth and Jim their father. Messrs Adams, Cooper, James, Medhurst and Tingley were drivers in the mid-30s; drivers in 1950 included W.Back, W.Firmager, B.Townsend and J.Ward. Messrs Austin, Buckland, Budgen, Ellis, W.Handley and N. Howie were conductors in 1950. Certain services were one-man operated but at busy times and on Saturdays fares were collected by conductors.

The company's drivers were highly regarded by both their employers and the public, many of whom sent appreciative letters. One employee, Richard Medhurst, started in September 1931 as a conductor on the Brighton route, later becoming a driver and finally inspector. By then his work included devising duty charts, special traffic arrangements such as the working of relief coaches to Edenbridge for bonfire night, 4 November 1950, and driving along proposed new routes to ascertain the journey times. In 1951 he continued as a busman with Southdown Motor Services.

The End of Sargent's Buses

In 1951 the decision was made, very reluctantly, to cease all omnibus and coach work and concentrate on the motor engineering business at North End. Miss J.M.Sargent tells me that, as a result of nationalisation under the Transport Act 1947, London Transport could do exactly as it pleased and, if it chose, could run coach operators off the road. L.T. was not responsible to any local authority but other operators had to comply with conditions imposed by the licensing authority. Should Sargent's have wished to inaugurate a new stage carriage service in L.T.'s territory, that concern was perfectly capable of refusing both consent to such a service and to run it itself.

The directors issued a final communication to all employees: 'In making the transfer of this Company's Omnibus and Coach business to the Southdown Motor Services Ltd, as from Sunday the 25th March 1951, the Directors and Shareholders of Sargents of East Grinstead Ltd. would like to express their appreciation of the loyal and efficient service you have given during the time you have been in their employment. They sincerely trust you will be happy with the Southdown Co., and that you will have the best of good fortune in the future.'

Southdown took over the Cantelupe Road garage and operated the former Sargent's routes from March to September 1951; after that the services were operated by Maidstone & District Motor Services to the 1950 timetable until November 1954, the East Grinstead - Cowden - Edenbridge route becoming no.135, the Ashurst Wood 136 and the Edenbridge - Crowborough 137. Subsequent integration with M. & D.'s own routes and 'rationalisation' has left only the East Grinstead - Edenbridge service in its original form (now 235). Incidentally Southdown's garage in Chequer Road had always backed onto Sargent's so, when they took over, it was a logical step to knock down the dividing wall and allow through running; this was achieved in 1954.

A former editor of the East Grinstead Observer, Mr Ron Hollingdale, used to travel occasionally on the Edenbridge route and says he thought it an efficient

service. But perhaps the best appreciation of what 'Sargent's of East Grinstead' really meant came from Mr Ken Sargent, speaking at a dinner at the Felbridge Hotel in January 1970 to celebrate the firm's golden jubilee, when he recalled how his parents had started the business in 1919: 'In those days you either worked or you starved, and to have started a business in that year must have taken a lot of courage. The founders of this business had that courage.'

SOURCES: Timetables, papers authorising running of stage carriage services and letters in the collection of Miss J.M.Sargent; E.G.Observer 15 Jan.1970; 'Bell Street', East Surrey (1974).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Very many thanks are due to Miss J.M.Sargent, Mrs E.V.Leppard, Mr H.R.Medhurst and Mr M.J.Leppard for supplying information so freely.

FURTHER INFORMATION: The photograph on p.9, by Harold Connold, shows a Star, a 20-seat Gilford and a 32-seat Gilford standing outside the Cantelupe Road Garage. Some of Mr Medhurst's memories of his career on local buses appeared in the East Grinstead Courier for 9 July 1981, with a photograph.

APPEAL: Mr Gould will be glad to hear from anyone who can help him with research on two short-lived local bus companies: Cooper's 'Pioneer' and Rogers of Crawley Down. His address is 20 Dormans Park Road.

NEW MID SUSSEX GUIDE: A new format and author (anonymous, presumably one of its staff) have been chosen by M.S.D.C. for its guide. The great gain is in readability, continuous prose replacing the staccato notes of the original (reviewed Bulletin 18, Jan.1976). The number of settlements or features in the gazetteer has been reduced from 53 to 34 (Ashurst Wood and Felbridge are among those to go) and the amount of space for each cut (East Grinstead 11½" instead of 24"). Pronunciations and etymologies of place-names, populations, national grid references and public transport details are almost entirely omitted and the number of buildings noticed is drastically reduced (East Grinstead from 43 to 3) though many places gain details of public houses and there are full details of municipal leisure provision. Under East Grinstead our Society and Museum are given gratifying mention but there is also the extraordinary assertion: 'in 1769 the main road to Crawley and Cuckfield no longer passed through East Grinstead' showing misunderstanding of a sentence on pp.41-3 of the previous edition. A whole paragraph of Twineham has been transferred to Sharpthorne, where a Tudor church will be sought in vain (p.35) and the cover picture is not identified. (50 n.p.)

M.J.L.

For all ...

COACH TRAVEL

Sargent's

(OF)

EAST GRINSTEAD

THE MOTOR COACH
PEOPLE

Omnibus and Coach Proprietors

CANTELUPE ROAD GARAGE

Telephone 180

A note by the present writer in the latest Sussex Archaeological Collections (vol. 118, 1981, pp. 388f.) adduces what may be learnt of arrangements for Quarter Sessions in Elizabethan Sussex from cases sent from them to the Assizes, as recorded in J.S. Cockburn (ed.), Calendar of Assize Records, Sussex Indictments, Elizabeth I (1975). Few Sessions Rolls for Elizabethan or Jacobean Sussex survive, the earliest for 1594, so any new Cockburn's companion volume for the reign of James I (1977) contains hardly any references to Quarter Sessions at all.

The first conclusion to emerge is that joint Midsummer Sessions for the whole county (as opposed to separate ones for East and West Sussex at the other three times of the year) were the regular custom in Elizabethan Sussex (except in 1572), the second that they were held in the Assize town a day or two before the Assizes, undoubtedly for obvious reasons of convenience. This latter custom seems, from the limited evidence, not to have lasted long beyond the reign of Elizabeth, though joint Midsummer Sessions continued to be held. There is also one known reference to joint Midsummer Sessions two years before Elizabeth (1), held at East Grinstead.

Since East Grinstead was the setting for the great majority of the Assizes for which records survive in those two reigns (97 out of 123, as opposed to 12 at Horsham, 2 at Lewes and 2 unspecified) and for most of the joint Midsummer Sessions of which anything is known (20 out of 32, as against 7 at Horsham, 2 at Lewes and 3, all temp. James I, unspecified), the importance of these events in the life of the town is obvious. Judges, Justices, officials, lawyers, parties to cases, witnesses and jurors would all need food and usually lodging too, some might bring wives and/or servants, there would be various hangers on and probably some people who came to share the society of their fellow gentry and perhaps transact other kinds of business at the same time. Twice a year (for there were Lent Assizes as well as Summer ones) in a good year innkeepers, shopkeepers and market traders must have been able to expect very good business, with extra work too for many craftsmen and professional men. We must remember, however, that East Grinstead is likely to have been chosen so often, especially for the Lent Assizes, less for its intrinsic merits than for its nearness to London in days of bad roads.

A table of all the dates and meeting places of Quarter Sessions and Assizes in Elizabethan Sussex, with an appendix on Jacobean Quarter Sessions, has been compiled and copies placed in the East and West Sussex Record Offices and the library of the Sussex Archaeological Society, with references to sources. The East Grinstead sittings are listed overleaf to substantiate the remarks above. The code for the table is:

- (1) Sussex Record Society, vol. 54 (1954), p. xx.
- N No information on Midsummer Sessions available but the probability is that they were held at East Grinstead.
- X Definitely no Midsummer Sessions at East Grinstead.
- * Sessions Roll survives in the East Sussex Record Office.
- (?) Place of meeting not recorded.

For the other meeting places and their dates the reader is referred to the complete table. No doubt in many of the years for which no records survive East Grinstead was also the setting. Any further information which may come to light will be very valuable in completing the picture.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sessions</u>	<u>Assizes</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Sessions</u>	<u>Assizes</u>
1557	(1)		1595		24 Feb.
				17 July	18 July
1561	12 July	14 July	1596		23 Feb.
1562	22 July	23 July		8 July	9 July
1564	12 July	13-15 July	1597		21 Feb.
1566	15 July	17 July		N	24 June
1567	N	14 July	1598		17 Feb.
				19 July	21 July
1568		5 March	1599		30 March
1569		25 Feb.		18 July	19 July
1570		24 Feb.	1600		29 Feb.
	N	7 July		N	23 June
1571		16 March	1601		6 March
1572		25 Feb.		11 July	13 July
	X	5 Sept.	1602		20 Feb.
1573		23 Feb.	1603		25 Feb.
1574		15 March			3 Oct.
	N	12 July	1604		13 July
1575		25 Feb.	1605		8 March
1576		12 March			8 July
1577		25 Feb.	1607		13 July
1578		21 Feb.	1608		22 Feb.
	5 July	7 July			27 June
1579		23 March	1609		17 July
1580		7 March	1610		23 March
1581		2 March	1611		24 June
	6 July	7 July	1612		24 Feb.
1582		19 March			13 July
1583		8 March	1613		8 March
	17 July	19 July			5 July
1584		24 Feb	1614		28 Feb.
		17 July		*(?)	25 July
1585		1 March	1615		27 Feb.
	8 July	9 July		*(?)	17 July
1586		25 Feb.	1616		26 Feb.
	N	1 July			8 July
1587		6 March	1617		3 March
	13 July	14 July		*(?)	21 July
1588		26 Feb.	1618		23 Feb.
	4 July	5 July	1620		28 Feb.
1589		3 March			17 July
	26 June	27 June	1621		5 March
1590		27 Feb.	1622		4 March
	N	20 July			22 July
1591	3 July	5 July	1623		3 March
1592		25 Feb.			14 July
	29 June	30 June	1624		8 March
1593		26 Feb.			5 July
	14 July	16 July	1625		7 March
1594		8 March			
	27 July*	29 July			