



The
BULLETIN
of the
EAST GRINSTEAD
SOCIETY

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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 and visits. It produces a *Bulletin* of articles of local interest and a *Newsletter* thrice yearly. Its 1969 report on the High Street conservation area was well received as a basis for future policy. It is very active in monitoring all planning applications and making representations to the authorities on planning issues and has undertaken initiatives to promote citizenship education in local schools. It has held six exhibitions, planted trees, restored the churchyard railings and martyrs' memorial, and financed tree-ring dating of some buildings in the High Street. It has also produced surveys of trees, seats and playground equipment, provided a plaque by the mass grave of victims of enemy action in Mount Noddy cemetery and historical guide-maps in the High Street, and presented seats in memory of leading former members to Sackville College and the High Street. It has published a book of reminiscences, three sets of postcards reproducing old photographs and three town trails (one of them also in French) and, with the Town Council, established the now independent Town Museum.

The Society is registered as a charity (no.257870) and is a member of the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies. 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 the membership the greater the influence. The subscription is £10 p.a., renewable on 1 January every year (except by those joining on or after 1 October). By signing a Gift Aid form standard-rate income tax payers can increase its value by 28% at no cost to themselves. Persons wishing only to receive the *Bulletin* can do so at a special rate of £5 per calendar year, payable in advance to the Editor (address on cover).

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EDITORIAL

At last year's annual general meeting the President reminded us that 2008 is our fortieth anniversary and that people say life begins at forty. Considering that the 29 members present were all of pensionable age, the pessimist and the cynic may regard the implications as unrealistic. But just as those who say 'This church is full of old ladies; in ten years there will be no church' are reminded that nature constantly renews the stock of old ladies, so we know that for most people retirement from paid employment means taking up new activities, engaging in voluntary work and joining local organisations. Not all our existing members, moreover, are in their sixties or older, and attendance at meetings is not the only index of commitment and support. The summary on page 2 of our achievements to date can be read as inspiration to keep up the momentum. And, whatever else, it can never be argued that East Grinstead does not need a body of people who care for the amenities, the appearance and the future of our town and do what they can to cherish and improve it. In so far as the contents of the *Bulletin* increase their understanding of their heritage and re-inforce their resolve to protect it, they can help keep the Society's life-blood flowing with renewed vigour and perhaps attract new blood if drawn to the attention of non-members.

AS WE SAW OURSELVES (23): A detailed essay contributed by the artist and Urban District councillor Geoffrey Webb of Sackville House to the *East Grinstead Observer* of 28 November 1944 is printed below (pp.14-16) and could well serve as an inaugural sermon for our fortieth anniversary.*

AS OTHERS SAW US (33): 'Mr H[arben] advised me, if possible, to get on to Godstone [from Forest Row], an excellent house, and avoid the bad inns of Grinstead. ... Happy I was to find that my baggage was gone forward from the Crown Inn; and that I was not to sleep in any of the vile-looking inns here.' – The Hon. John Byng, Sunday 24 August 1788 (C.B. Andrews (ed.), *The Torrington Diaries containing the tours ... of the Hon. John Byng, later fifth Viscount Torrington* (1934, pp.374-76)

TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO: In *Newsletter* 20 (March 1983) the Chairman, Cedric Hartland, gave his perspective on current developments. 'The land on which the town stands is constantly becoming more valuable', he reminded us, and 'every change which requires planning approval enhances the value of land. ... General environmental amenity cannot be quantified though we all know in general terms what we mean, but rents can be, and are, quantified, and mean a great deal to a minority who cannot necessarily be aware of, or influenced by, the changes they seek. ... It is just as well then that these proposals are vetted by a third party – the planning committee.' He then passed judgement on specific permitted developments and others in prospect. On other pages the benefits to the Society of its affiliation to various county and national bodies were enumerated and members' views were sought on replacing the recently closed information service at East Court with a comparable facility in the new library due to open in 1984, including provision for tourists.

COVER PICTURE: See pp.11-12 below

***GEOFFREY WEBB:** An article on Mr Webb and his work, including local examples, appeared in our *Bulletin* 19. He died in 1954, but had he lived he would almost certainly have been one of our founder-members (although by then approaching 90), judging by his essay reprinted below and his earlier involvement with the short-lived East Grinstead Civic League and Enquiry Bureau. His widow, Joan, did live long enough to join us, and to donate £100 to help launch our Museum project.

BULLETIN 92, p.11: Mrs J. Wray is a misprint for Mrs J. Way.

KEITH BROWN, 1929-2007 M.J. Leppard

Keith Brown, who died on Christmas Eve, was wholeheartedly involved not only with all aspects of our Society but with those of numerous other local institutions and causes as well.

By profession he was a joiner, and (in another sense) by nature too, starting in boyhood with the scouts and the parish church choir.

On leaving school he gained an apprenticeship with H. & E. Waters, the high-class builders at Forest Row. During national service in the R.A.F. his prowess as a shot was such that he was offered the opportunity of shooting for the force at national level provided he agreed to sign on for a third year, perhaps the only invitation Keith ever turned down.

In all his activities he played to win, notably as a cricketer, first with the Lingfield Road club, then Forest Row. He found a new spiritual home in Moat Church, serving for many years in every capacity from handyman to Deacon. In the Operatic Society he typically combined performance and committee work. As they came into existence he was equally committed at all levels to, amongst others, the League of Friends of the Queen Victoria Hospital, the Town Twinning Association, Forest Row Lifeboat Choir and the Friends of Chequer Mead.

As a local patriot of local stock, living here all his life apart from the two years in the R.A.F., he naturally joined our Society, leading conducted walks and serving on the committee. The planning sub-committee benefitted from his local and practical knowledge, his punctilious visiting of sites of out-of-the-ordinary applications and his regular attendance at relevant Town Council meetings. Naturally our offshoot the Town Museum, and then the Museum Society formed to support it, also claimed his allegiance; whatever needed doing, he was willing.

His long acquaintance with the town and detailed memory also made him a valued member of a local history evening class and source of information and new street-names for the Town Council.

Keith's public spirit was complemented by equally generous helpfulness to friends and acquaintances in all manner of ways, without ever neglecting family cares.

Beryl, his widow, who always shared or supported his activities, and their children Catherine, Gillian and David and their families can be assured not just of our sincere sympathy but the knowledge of a life well lived for which many will join us in giving heartfelt thanks.

LOCAL REFERENCES IN *SUSSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS* (continued from *Bulletin* 83)

Vol. 105 (1967) p.xxxii article on J.M. Neale added to library

p.31 George Sawyer shopkeeper and Friendly Society 1800

106 (1968) pp.9, 27, 32 local clergy

pp.49-62 P.D. Wood, 'The topography of East Grinstead Borough'

p.155 election 1695

107 (1969) -

108 (1970) -

109 (1971) pp.24-36 M.J. Leppard, 'The chantry commission of 1547 and some unpublished chantry records for East Grinstead' [reviewed *Bulletin* 9]

MEADOWLANDS IN MEDIAEVAL EAST GRINSTEAD

M.J. Leppard

The subject of the February meeting of the Wealden Settlement Study Circle was meadows, the fields, usually alongside watercourses, devoted to growing grass that would be mown as a crop to provide fodder for livestock. My offering was such evidence as I could find for the parish of East Grinstead before 1500, some of which I now print and discuss here as a contribution to the study of local land-use, with the recognition that it would have far more significance if I had paid equal attention to arable, pasture, woodland and waste – a large task for another day. A good deal has already been done in that direction, however, in Mr P.D. Wood's discussion of the East Grinstead entries in Domesday Book in *Bulletin* 58, which necessarily draws on evidence from later records to cast light on the position in 1086.

Only two of the thirteen estates in the Hundred of East Grinstead that Domesday records are credited with having any such land at all: Brambletye with 5 acres of meadow and the un-named one, whose identification by Mr Wood with Lavertye [Ashdown House] can now be taken as securely established, with one acre. Both included a stretch of the fertile flood-plain of the Medway. Brambletye lay either side of the river west of Forest Row for about a mile and a quarter and was assessed at one hide. Lavertye ran north of the Medway east of Forest Row along a couple of miles of the river (or one mile if Pixton and Tablehurst should be excluded) and was assessed at one and three-quarter hides. Taken literally, this means only about 4¼ per cent of the Brambletye estate was meadow and only about ½ per cent of Lavertye. How these 'acres' correspond to our statute measures and how these 'hides' are quantifiable is obscure, but whatever their precise areas (if there were any precise meanings in those terms at that date) they represent a miniscule proportion of the whole Hundred. There must have been other meadows – at Sperchedene for a start, wedged between Brambletye and Lavertye and fronted by about half a mile of the river. A possible explanation is that, just as the numbers of hogs recorded in Domesday are the numbers paid in tax, one for every seven owned, so the acres listed may be the proportion of the total area of meadowland that corresponded to the amount of tax it owed. If that is so, the meadowland of Sperchedene and other holdings might have failed to reach the taxable threshold. It must also be remembered that many settlements in the Hundred are not listed under East Grinstead because they were silently included in the returns for their parent manors further south, as a result of which all calculations and mappings of our area necessarily under-represent the true picture.

An extent of 1285 quoted by Mr Wood in *Bulletin* 58 (to which readers are referred for his mappings and source-references) gives Brambletye 10 acres of meadow out of a total area of 141 acres, about 7% of the whole, and Lavertye 10 acres out of a total of 129, about 8%. Three later documents which he also cites record 20 acres of meadow there in 1327, 24 in 1336 and 23 in 1424, estimates sufficiently consistent with each other to be credible. Representing them as percentages of the total area, however – 17, 18½ and 31½ per cent respectively – is highly misleading, since the total acreage varies considerably each time, and so such calculations are best disregarded.

The monetary value of meadowland gives a different perspective on these acreages and proportions. At Lavertye in the 1285 extent it was valued at 1s.6d. per acre as against 3d. an acre for arable and 2d. for waste – six times the value of arable land and nine times that of waste. (For Brambletye no values are stated.) These figures seem to be rental value, since in 1308-09 an unidentified 4-acre meadow was sold for 40s.¹, a purchase price of 10s. an acre. In 1341 the tithes of hay in East Grinstead parish were worth 30s., meaning 300 shillingsworth was grown. The total value of tithes was £53.6s.8d., of which therefore about 3% was accounted for by hay.²

¹ Feet of fines (Sussex Record Society, vol.23, no.1265) ² Nonarum Inquisitiones (printed by the Record Commissioners in 1807)

From time to time the bleak formalities of official records permit a glimpse of the everyday world of their times. One example is the enquiry held at East Grinstead on 6 March 1424 to establish whether Thomas Seintcler, the brother and heir of John Seintcler, son and heir of Philip and Margaret Seintcler, had reached the age of 21 and could therefore enjoy his inheritance, which included the manors of Brambletye and Lavertye. In the days before parish registers, witnesses had to be called. Evidence obtained from each separately (as summarised below) established conclusively that Thomas had reached 21, having been born and baptised in the baptistery of East Grinstead church on 28 October 1401.

John Dyn, aged over 70, said he had been in East Grinstead on that day and had seen John Croxton esquire carrying a burning torch before Thomas on the way to church for the baptism. John Mason, senior, aged 60+, said he had made a wax candle weighing 2 pounds on that day to burn and hold in the church at Thomas's baptism, for which he had not yet been paid. John Modell, 63+, had been there and watched William Walyes holding a wax torch by the font during the baptism. John atte Hamme of Withyham, 60+, had also been present and watched Richard Mansey esquire carrying a silver basin and ewer with a towel from the baptistery to the altar.

William Wreghte of Hartfield, 61+, had been in East Grinstead with John his father when Thomas's mother Margaret gave birth and on 11 November when she was churched and he saw the wife of Richard Mansey give her a cock.

John Skynnere, 60+, said his godson, John the son of William Basset was born and baptised at East Grinstead church on the 11 November following Thomas Seintcler's baptism. Richard ate Dene, 50+, said his son John had been baptised there on 11 November also. William Haseldenne, 47+, said his first-born son John had been born at East Grinstead and baptised in the church there on 30 November that year.

John Woghere of East Grinstead, 45+, said that on 13 January 1402, after Thomas's baptism, he married Margery his wife here. William Telgherst, 60+, said he had espoused his late wife Nichole at Cuckfield on 8 June 1401 at Cuckfield and Thomas Seintcler had been born on the following 28 October. John Basset of Hartfield, 60+, said his kinsman Thomas Wodye had married Alice the widow of Richard Smyth of Stanstrete on 2 October 1401 and on the same day he had enfeoffed Thomas and Alice with lands and tenements in East Grinstead for the term of their lives; Thomas Seintcler, brother of John, was born on the following 28 October. Thomas Cessyngham, 48+, said Philip his father had died at Hartfield on 6 January 1402, whereby he inherited lands and tenements in that place.

The value of such information for family historians is obvious, but the customs mentioned have a wider interest, particularly baptisms on the day of birth. It seems that godparents and others must have been forewarned of the expected date, so that they could be in place and equipped for the baptism. The most human touch is John Mason's last chance to claim his expenses.

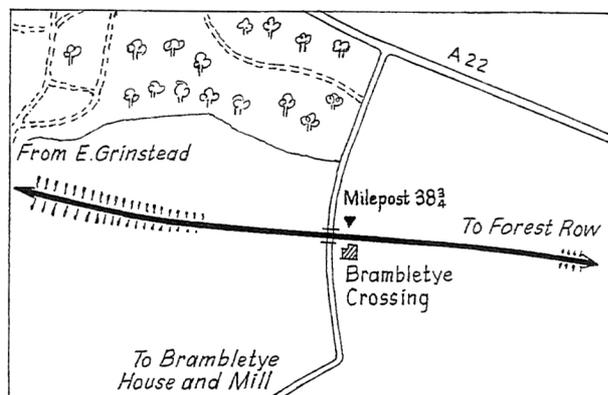
Eight of the twelve witnesses are known from other records, including property transactions and service on other juries. John Dyn, John Mason and John Woghere served at different times as Members of Parliament for East Grinstead. John Modell, a husbandman, was sued for debt in 1424. The Woghere family gave name to the building on the site of today's Lloyds Bank. Some of the other surnames derived from local place-names that are still with us.

The record is no. 359 in the printed Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, vol.8, covering 1422-85.

BRAMBLETYE CROSSING David Gould

Location map, created by Mr Gould for this article

When the East Grinstead, Groombridge and Tunbridge Wells Railway was constructed in the 1860s, one of the roads it crossed on the level was that leading to Brambletye Farm and Mills. As originally made, the crossing was without gates or any other protection.



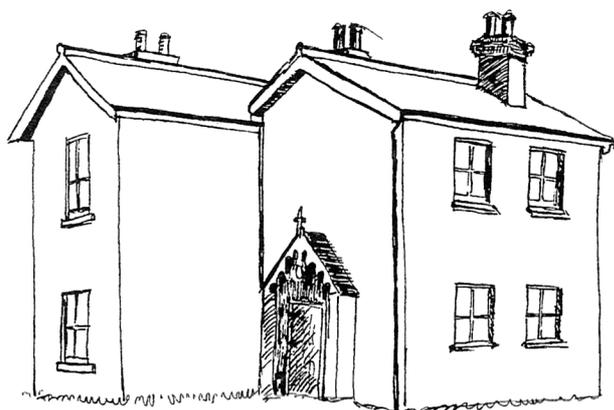
In June 1866 James Mellish, leaseholder of Brambletye Mills, was so nervous about the possibility of accident on the crossing that he wrote a letter, dated 15 June, to the Board of Trade, which was about to sanction opening of the new railway:

Understanding that the East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells Railway will be inspected in a few days, I wish to call your attention to a level crossing over the road to Brambletye Farm and Mills which I occupy on lease. The railroad from East Grinstead approaches by a sharp curve in a cutting, and at the end of the cutting is my road; so that the train is not visible more than 200 yards therefrom, and as the descent of incline is one in eighty ... I consider it so unsafe that it will be impossible to avoid accident. This road has been treated as a private road, but it is not altogether so, as it not only leads to my Farm and Mills, but all other Farms on the estate, and teams are constantly coming to the Mills, with corn, and are not at all likely to know when trains pass ...'

The Board's reply was that, as the road was not a public one, the railway could not be compelled to provide a bridge, but the Inspecting Officer would be notified.

Captain J.H. Rich, R.E., duly made his inspection of the line on 24 July 1866 and among his many recommendations was that Brambletye Crossing should be treated as a public level crossing. He accepted that there was danger to train passengers, as well as people using the road, because of the blind curves and 1 in 80 gradient. 'I recommend that public level crossing gates with a signal on one gate and distant signals at each side be erected – that a man be placed in charge of the Gates, and that a lodge be built for him to reside in.'

At a second inspection, on 22 August, Captain Rich found that Brambletye Crossing had now been provided with signals but the gates were unsatisfactory: 'Proper level crossing gates, to close across the road and railway, should be provided, so that vehicles cannot cross the line without the knowledge of the man in charge.'



The house, sketched by Mr Gould for this article

By the time of his third inspection, 13 September, the new gates had been installed and so the line was passed for opening to the public, an event that occurred on 1 October 1866. Presumably the house for the crossing-keeper had been built by then. His daily duties were not arduous, for he had to open and close the gates for only four passenger and one goods train each way until 1872, when the number was increased by one each way. But it would have been a long working day unless his gates were kept closed across the road during the hours of darkness; at such times perhaps anyone wishing to cross could ring a bell to summon the keeper.

His house, on the south side of the line exactly opposite milepost 38¾ (distance from London Bridge via Three Bridges) was 51 chains west of Forest Row station and under the control of the stationmaster there.

In *East Grinstead and its Environs* (1885) the author W.R. Pepper made the intriguing observation (p.80) that the crossing-keeper at Brambletye 'was the innocent cause of a dreadful accident which occurred in Clayton tunnel some years since, while fulfilling the office of signalman'. For a long time there seemed no way to check the veracity of that statement but at last I have found that it is quite correct. The Clayton signalman was named Henry Killick¹, and the 1871 and 1881 censuses both show that a man of the same name was the railway gateman at Brambletye.

The Clayton Tunnel collision, which cost the lives of 23 people, happened on Sunday 25 August 1861 and was caused partly by defective signalling and partly by poor communication by telegraph between Killick at Clayton Tunnel South box and signalman Brown in Clayton Tunnel North box. Killick admitted a Brighton to London train into the tunnel believing it to be clear but in fact an Up train was still in there. A terrible rear-end collision was the result.

This seems to have led to the demotion of Killick to light duties and he may have been transferred to Brambletye as soon as it opened, remaining there working out his time until his early 70s. In 1871 he was already a 59 year-old widower, born at Wadhurst, and enjoyed the services of a 57 year-old housekeeper named Sarah Wells, a widow who lived on the premises. It is tempting to speculate whether she still provided other 'services', since they were still living together in 1881. 'Poor old fellow', as Pepper so whimsically opines.

By 1891 the railway gateman at Brambletye was one George Elmes, 65, born in Northants, and living with his wife Sarah, 63, born Brighton, and unmarried daughter Emma, a 23 year-old dressmaker, born at Hamsey. There was now more work for the signalman, for by 1890 the number of trains each way had increased to nine, including the daily goods. Ten years later we find another elderly signalman working the crossing: Edward Kempshall, 63, born Horsham, his wife Sarah, 60, from Crawley, and an unmarried boarder, William Brown, a platelayer born at Buxted.*

In 1926 the Southern Railway (successor to the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway) decided that the signals protecting Brambletye Crossing could well be abolished and the small signal cabin (probably a ground frame) done away with, in order to save some expense. The S.R. stated that those in charge of vehicles would now have to open the gates themselves, and by December 1926 an automatic bell had been installed to give warning of the approach of trains – presumably operated by a treadle in advance of the crossing in each direction as the train passed over it. Reporting this, W.H. Hills noted that the road past Brambletye Mill had been a right of way for at least 50 years.²

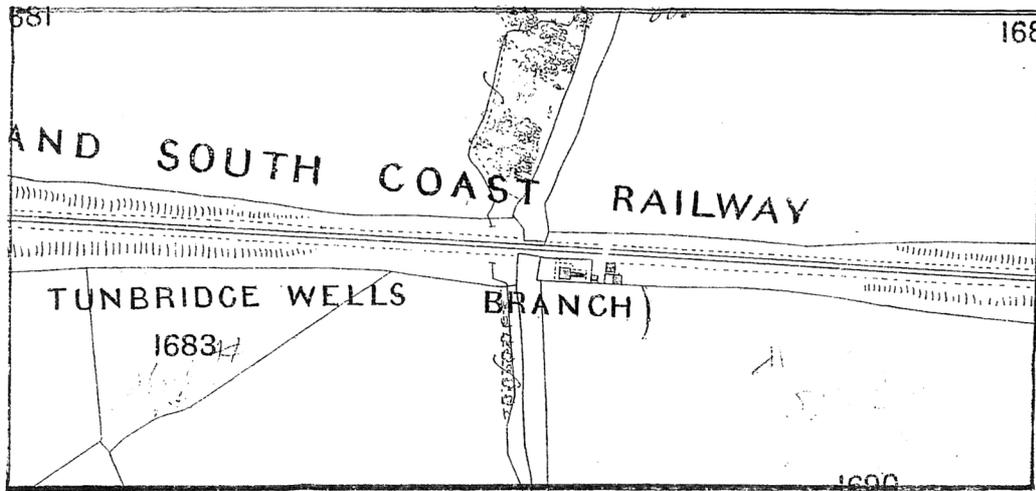
However, the house remained railway property and continued to be the residence of a 'railway servant', perhaps the track ganger.

It appears that neither the Southern nor British Railways ever installed a water supply to the cottage. Working timetables show that one train a day was booked to call at Brambletye Crossing to set down water cans: in 1953 the 2.38 p.m. Three Bridges to Tunbridge Wells, by 1961 the 8.1 a.m. London Bridge to Tunbridge Wells. By January 1964 no trains were shown performing that essential duty, so presumably running water was laid on by 1963.

Brambletye Crossing ceased to function after Sunday 1 January 1967, when the line was closed, but the cottage itself [seen from the north-west in the simplified sketch] has survived.

* R. Tomsett is listed at Brambletye Crossing in Dixon's East Grinstead directories for 1910-16 – Ed.

BRAMBLETYE CROSSING from the first edition 25" Ordnance Survey map of 1873. It is curious that, amid all the careful detail of non-railway features, the level crossing is shown in exactly the same way as the bridge over the road to Forest Row further east and there is no indication of the signals. One of the little squares may perhaps be the ground frame. Ed.



REFERENCES FOR ARTICLE

- ¹ L.T.C. Rolt, *Red for Danger* (Bodley Head, 1955), pp.41-46
² *East Grinstead Observer*, 9 Dec. 1926
 Other sources: Board of Trade papers, British Transport Historical Records ref. MT6 41/21; railway working timetables, census returns 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901

GLEBELANDS (*Bulletins* 88, 90 and 91)

M.J. Leppard

In stating (*Bulletin* 88, p.5) that in 1341 88 acres of arable and wood were assigned to the rector and an adjoining croft to the vicar I gave a misleading impression of what the Inquests of Ninths actually say. The relevant figure in the printed text is, in the original Latin numerals, *iiij-x xij acr*, literally 4 x 10 + 12 acres, i.e. 52. If 52 had been meant, I believed, the scribe would have written *xlij*, whereas *iiij-xx xij* or *iiij^{xx} xij*, 4 x 20 (read as fourscore) + 12, would have been the simplest way to indicate 92. I therefore decided that either the original scribe or the person who transcribed the text for printing had carelessly miscopied *xx* as *x*. From the total thus derived I then subtracted 4 acres for the vicar's croft, although no acreage is given for it in the text. Since the 'home farm' area that I was able to map amounted to about 27½ to 30½ acres, about double that acreage remained to be found elsewhere. The unlocated 60 acres of 1566 that I cited in *Bulletin* 90 (p.4) support my conclusion that the true figure in 1341 was 92. (The terms of the relevant documents make it impossible that they include the 'home farm' held before and after that date by Thomas Saxpes.)

Hoping to find clues to part of the missing area I have now seen the will made in 1549 by Edward Mercer¹, who with Saxpes and a John Payne farmed the glebe in 1535, but he leaves only monetary bequests to his family and 'heffers' to his servants and does not indicate where he lived.

If we can take literally the 1341 description of the glebe as arable and woodland, however, then I think we can rule out pasture and meadowland from the area yet to be found.

John Field's definition: 'The glebe was the holding, originally in the common fields, attached to the parish priest's benefice', which 'was often, at the enclosure, left as isolated closes in the previous locations in the former common field', is followed by examples from several counties². Although I suspect these are places where arable fields were allocated in strips, which was not the custom here, it is worth considering whether our original endowment was of half a hide of waste, to be hedged, ditched and cultivated, as seems to have been the case with the area of the Feld taken for Imberhorne³. Perhaps what the rector got was part of the Feld, or even the original *green stede*?

¹ ACL AII f.13b (East Sussex Record Office, photocopy of probate copy) ² J. Field, *English Field-Names* (1993), 188

³ See M.J. Leppard, 'The Feld' in *Bulletin* 81. Sources given in the earlier Glebe articles are not repeated here.

MOAT OR BINFIELD NURSERY

M.J. Leppard

The 1873 25" Ordnance Survey map shows in detail a nursery occupying 1.957 acres on the Moat Road/Sandy Lane corner. The first written record seems to be in Kelly's directory for 1874: Albert Henry Fernandez, florist, Moat Nursery.

By September 1875, when their gift of a large quantity of cut flowers for that month's harvest festival is reported in the October parish magazine, it was the Binfield Nursery of Messrs Roberts. Their donation for the next year's harvest festival of a large floral cross on the front of the gallery is recorded in the October 1876 magazine. For the April 1881 tea for the parents of Sunday School children 'flowers for the table were kindly supplied by Mrs. Stenning, Halsford, and Arthur Roberts, Esq., Binfield' according to the May issue.

Binfield, the house adjoining the nursery (now called Fair Field, Sandy Lane), is shown unnamed on the 1873 map and listed in early directories under Moat Road since Sandy Lane originally had no name to itself. Binfield is a village in Berkshire; I cannot account for use of the name here.

In the 1881 census Arthur Roberts, aged 41 and born at Itchenstoke, Hants, is a wholesale fruit grower employing 11 men and 2 boys living at Binfield with his wife, 36 year-old Emily from Birkenhead, and his unmarried brother Frederic, 38, of the same birthplace and occupation as Arthur. A nephew, a cousin, two visitors, a cook and a housemaid completed the household on census day. W.R. Pepper in his 1885 *Guide to East Grinstead and its environs* (p.27) describes the business as 'a very large florists' establishment, the greater portion of the produce of which is sent daily to the Flower Market, Covent Garden'. The last reference noted so far is in Kelly's directory for 1890, which had consistently retained the name Moat Nursery throughout the Roberts' era.

In the 1891 census Binfields [sic] is occupied by William F. Pierce, a retired architect aged 52, born in London. Frederick William Beck, a 39-year old horticultural market foreman born in Germany, is at a new house opposite Moat Pond and next to the nursery, presumably in charge of it. By 1895, Kelly records, he had his own business at 191 London Road.

Alfred Clark seems to have taken over in 1892, judging by the 358 prizes won in five years mentioned in his 1897 advertisement. Certainly, the parish magazines of 1893 and 94 detail the sumptuous displays he created in the church for harvest, Christmas, Easter and Whitsun. In the 1901 census he is at no.108, a married nurseryman and florist, aged 46 and born in Southend. This Essex connection may explain why the house was later called Margaretting, a village in that county. Kelly's directories list him at Moat Nursery from 1895 (when he is also secretary of the Amateur Photographic Society) to 1918, with a retail shop in London Road [now Bottoms Up] from 1903.

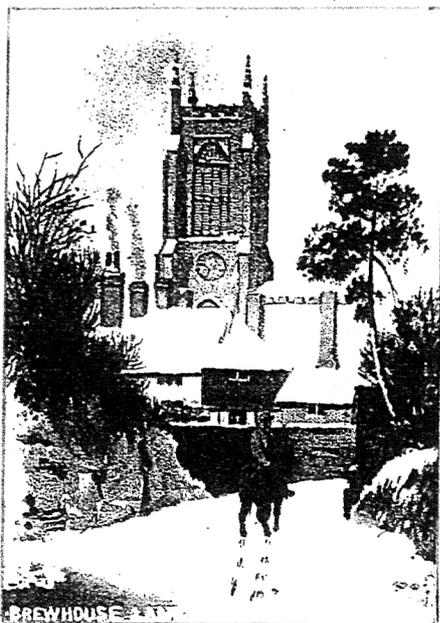
In 1916 Alfred Clark asked for his foreman fruit-grower, Arthur Thomas Harman aged 36, to be exempted from conscription because it would be impossible to carry on without him; he had 2½ acres of gardens and 34,000 foot of glass, and tons of tomatoes were grown for public consumption. Exemption was granted for six months and extended to the end of the year in September because he was 'absolutely indispensable', working 14 hours a day and on Sundays. Harman was then called up, to be killed on 6 September 1918.

According to his grand-daughter the late Mrs Stella Clapton, the conscription of all 14 of his staff caused Alfred Clark, who served as a private in the local Volunteer Training Corps, to have a stroke that left him paralysed, after which he hardly spoke and the shop went downhill. He died in 1927 aged 72.

Statements about Harman are from the *East Grinstead Observer* 18 March & 30 Sept. 1916, 21 Sept. 1918; Clark and the V.T.C. issues for Nov. 1916 & March 1917; Mrs Clapton *East Grinstead Courier* 1 April 2004.

'EAST GRINSTEAD IN WINTER' BY A. BOWERS

M.J. Leppard



Harding postcard version (reduced) corner.

Considerable interest was aroused by the sale last year in the Bookshop in the High Street of a Christmas card reproducing a charming and cheerfully-coloured painting entitled 'East Grinstead in Winter, 1890' and attributed to Alfred Bowers (fl.1890-93). It was instantly recognisable as the original of one of Arthur Harding's postcard reproductions of old pictures, not too successful in converting colour to black-and-white in one version and sepia in another. In both he cut off the edges of the picture to suit the card's portrait format. In the sepia version (reproduced here as well as its rather muddy reproduction and the technology available to us permit) Harding has added some hoof-prints, no doubt to pre-empt literal-minded criticism but not much more convincing. With equal confidence he has appropriated the image without attribution, arbitrarily titling it in his standard form: BREWHOUSE LANE, E^T GRINSTEAD. 1864. Something seems to have been scratched out in the bottom left-hand

Brewhouse Lane was an older name, dating from at least 1780¹, for what we know today as Hermitage Lane. Walking up the lane, or comparing the picture with photographs, one can see that the church tower and rocks are accurately depicted but the backs of the buildings are simplified versions of those one would have seen from what was shortly to be the site of Portland Road. Bowers has shielded them from us with an invented wall and converted the steep slope of the lane to almost horizontal.

Enquiry was made of the Christmas card's publisher, Mr Philip Mansbergh of St Albans, concerning the artist and the whereabouts of the original painting. 'I am afraid I have no further information on Alfred Bowers beyond the dates given on the back of the card' he replied. 'The original from which the card was published I own myself. It was printed as a Christmas postcard and there is a hymn printed on the reverse by Cecilia Havergal.'²

The version on the cover of this *Bulletin* is as reproduced, in necessarily pale tones to compensate for the heaviness of the sky in the original colouring, on the front of the East Grinstead parish magazine for December 1992/January 1993, where it is attributed to Albert Bowers, whose signature, 'Alb^t Bowers' can be faintly read in the bottom right-hand corner (though possibly not legible in our re-reproduction), and acknowledged as published by Victorian Ephemera, Kirkpatrick Cards, London.

Clearly that company also worked from one of the original Christmas postcards, so the whereabouts of the original painting, if it survives, was still unknown. The correct first name of the artist also needed to be established. Neither an Alfred nor an Albert Bowers appears in any East Grinstead directory or census of the period, and no Alfred Bowers has been found in any likely source investigated so far.

However, Mr David Gould found in Christopher Wood's *Dictionary of Victorian painters*: 'BOWERS, Albert Edward, fl. 1875-93: exhibited 1875-93 at Royal Academy, Royal Society of British Artists (Suffolk Street), New Watercolour Society and elsewhere. Subjects mainly Sussex landscapes. Lived at Kew and Richmond, Surrey.' In the 1881 census for those places Mr Gould

then found Albert Bowers, aged 48, artist and landscape painter, born at Crawley in Sussex and married to May Eldridge Bowers, 53, born at Brighton. Their children, Mary Edith, 16, and Albert Edward, 14, were both born at Clayton in Sussex and recorded as art students. An unmarried cousin, Mary Fowler, 34, born at Shermanbury in this county acted as housekeeper. It can hardly be doubted that this Albert Bowers, or possibly Albert Edward his son, is our artist.

The published 1851 census for Crawley I did not find so obliging. There is, indeed, an Albert Bowers, but he is a 12-year old shoemaker's son born at Twineham in Sussex and recorded as a scholar, not readily reconcilable with the other information so far discovered.

Mr M.A. Hollins meanwhile located, via the internet, in the catalogue of Brighton and Hove museums a watercolour, 16.3 x 25.9 cm. of a cottage at Hurstpierpoint signed Albert E. Bowers and presented at an unrecorded date by J. Bingham. The catalogue gives 'fl. 1875-1893' for the artist's dates, either knowing for certain or assuming that it is the father's work.

The field remains open, therefore, for further investigation into the artist, his other work and the whereabouts of the original of the East Grinstead view.

Cecilia Havergal, incidentally, must almost certainly have been related to the hymn-writer Frances Ridley Havergal, whose grandfather was the innkeeper of the *Crown* in East Grinstead.³

THE ARTISTIC VICAR

M.J. Leppard

Another Christmas card sent or received by many local people last year showed two clergymen in choir habit administering holy communion in the 1870s and was one of an unpublicised set of ten produced in aid of the parish church restoration trust, all unattributed but each in some way representing the artistic endeavours of past or present members of the congregation. It was, in fact, a further example of the work of the Rev. Douglas Yeoman Blakiston, vicar of East Grinstead 1871-1908, whose artistic training and output were briefly dealt with in *Bulletin* 89 in a discussion of the portraits of parishioners that he painted on organ pipes in the church. The original large oil painting, of which only a portion was reproduced, hangs in the clergy vestry with a companion piece illustrating holy baptism. They were bequeathed to the church by the artist's only surviving son, the Rev. Herbert Edward Douglas Blakiston, D.D. (1866-1942), President of Trinity College, Oxford, 1907-38 and Vice-Chancellor of the university 1917-20.⁴ In recent years they have been re-hung in the wrong order from the point of view of both composition and subject-matter.

Mr Gould reports that Wood's *Dictionary of Victorian painters*, mentioned in the article on Bowers, records Douglas Yeoman Blakiston as a gold medallist of the Royal Academy schools, which he entered in 1850, who painted chiefly in London and Hastings until 1865 [when he went up to Cambridge] and exhibited 30 works at the Academy and elsewhere between 1853 and 1865. His portrait of the Rev. Hugh Hutton is in Birmingham Art Gallery. Mr Blakiston's entry in the *Alumni Cantabrigienses* states that he made the sketch of its subject reproduced in H.F. Jones's *Memoir of Samuel Butler*.

An article in our last issue, 'The Tragic Vicar', outlined Mr Blakiston's domestic and familial misfortunes. A general account of him appeared in the *East Grinstead Courier* on 25 Oct. 2007.

¹ Lease of the Hermitage (Mr R.H. Wood's notes) ² personal communication, 17 Nov. 2007 ³ G. Golding-Bird, *East Grinstead and its parish church* (4th ed., 1938, p.21) ⁴ *ibid* (5th ed., 1946, pp.26 & 16) and Dr Blakiston's memorial in the church

BARCLAYS BANK IN ITS SETTING

M.J. Leppard



Barclays Bank, 19-23 High Street, is unashamedly of its time, the early 1930s, confident, clean-cut, brick with stone dressings, high ceilings to both floors, and, like all banks, of a quality and formality requisite to inspire confidence in its operations yet with no suggestion of living in the past. The last sort of architecture, one might think, to elbow itself between two older buildings in a mediaeval street consisting largely of historic timber-framed structures.

But, as made clear in the outline drawing based on Frith's postcard 85523 of 1933 kindly prepared by Mr David Gould for this article, the bank and its architect took great pains to make it harmonise with its neighbours without pretending to be anything but a contemporary instance of what it was. The heights of the storeys, the pitch of the set-back roof, the little parapet and the size of the first-floor windows all match, but without copying, the same features of its western neighbour, the Capital and Counties Bank of 1892. On the other side, the 18th-century nos 25-31 have almost as high a ground floor as the bank while the combined height of their comparatively cramped second and third floors only marginally exceeds the height of the bank's upper storey.

Well done, the architect, whoever he was. (But what a pity no-one seems to have kept any plans or photographs of its predecessor and its demolition.)

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

(References to earlier *Bulletins*: first two digits *Bulletin* number, second two page number)

WORSTED: Mrs Beth Chase Grey reports that the field-name she read as Hayes Mead [9105] is actually Pages Mead, which means it is a further reference to the Pagesse Meade mentioned in 1586 in the will of Robert Freer [9007].

CELLARS AND WELLS IN EAST GRINSTEAD HIGH STREET (*Bulletins* 52, 64, 70): People looking round the vacant former bank at the western end of Middle Row unexpectedly found that its cellar is damp and liable to flood. I had supposed that it was necessary to go deep through the rock on which our High Street sits when digging wells, but now it appears that the water-table is very high under at least that part of it and it has become obvious why the town well sunk in 1813 [6405] was immediately outside the building then on the bank site. M.J.L.

HOSKINS FARM (*Bulletins* 91, 92): Perhaps W.R. Grayling was Charles Smeed's lodger at Hoskins Farm in 1908, for A.S. Bridgland in no.14 of the 'Memories of a Native' he contributed to the *East Grinstead Observer* in 1941-42 tells us he married an Eva Smeed. A neighbour reports that in October last year the house was let out by the new owner for £2000 a month.

CLOCKMAKERS [8614 for earlier references]: Mr J.W. Scott reports that a clock by our Nicholas Bodle can be seen at Ightham Mote in Kent.

Additions and corrections to items in the *Bulletin* are always welcome.

An article contributed to the *East Grinstead Observer* of 28 November 1942

There is much to be said for looking forward in war-time, when civic growth and enterprise are at a standstill, to the years when the normal activities of peace can be renewed. The very fact that national energies are concentrated on the use of force and resistance, and that public attention is consequently withdrawn from the details of normal town and country life, makes it all the more possible to view this provincial life as a whole. It gives us a chance to stop and take breath. It allows us to make guesses about the future – guesses, not prophecies; but guesses lead to suggestions, and suggestion is the grain from which springs the crop of any development worth having.

There used to be a theory that worldly progress was something inevitable, a law of nature, but it has few supporters to-day. The more acceptable theory attributes both progress and decadence in history to the action of Free Will used either in accordance with true and permanent values, or else with false and shifting ones. That is why the future of East Grinstead seems to me to hang upon the will of its community, on the true or false aims of us, its inhabitants. Possibly one man, who has not only wealth but the knowledge and goodwill to use it for the public welfare, may do much to benefit his own town, as when over three centuries ago the Earl of Dorset gave us Sackville College; anyhow there has since been no other benefaction to equal it, though we hope some day there will be; surplus wealth re-appears, even after world upheavals; and to bequeath it for the benefit of one's home-town has great advantages over certain other methods for its disposal. But one man will never make a town. It has to be a community product. It reflects the character of its people. It is a measure by which to gauge their scale of values. If its community values good housing conditions for all classes – values it, that is, with something of a passion which refuses to be denied – good houses it will get.

If the community places beauty among the major values of life, it will create beauty both in town and country. A recent writer has argued that the beauty of the country cannot be merely *preserved*; it must be made. It follows, he says, on the cultivation and farming of the countryside. It is the same with the town. Its dignity and the pleasure derived from its appearance are created by the will of its inhabitants. If they really want a fine church, decent and attractive inns, open spaces, wide thoroughfares with well designed shops and houses, they will get them. They cannot get them at once, of course. Sudden changes, even if they were possible, would only change again as suddenly. A community inherits not only the building and planning of its predecessor but its scale of values as well. If a community begins to enlarge its scale of values, if it at once starts to prize certain realities which exceed merely material gain and commercial profit, this change of view will soon begin slowly to be reflected in the outward appearance of its town.

Before we go further, there is one objection to this last statement which has to be met: so let me meet it at once. 'My good man', it runs, 'that is all very fine. But East Grinstead is already spoilt. It is too late now to do anything about it.' If this objection has any excuse, it can come from one assumption, and one only. So let us be clear. The objection is true, and must be admitted, if the objector assumes that no change is worth aiming at which does not produce material gain in his own lifetime. You cannot argue with an objector of that frame of mind. All you can say is that the adventure is not for him. The aim is beyond his range; he had better not make the attempt. To which he has the legitimate answer that he never had any intention of making it at all. So there it is; what follows can be of interest only to those who value a future they themselves will not see. It will enlist the sympathies only of those who are prepared to go unthanked for results which only their successors may enjoy. And this is a very real difficulty. It is no good pretending to feel superior about it. It lies at the root of most agricultural policy; farmers cannot

afford to put back into the land more than, or even as much as, they take out of it. That is why California threatens to turn into patches of desert, and why so much of the soil of this island is less productive than it was. That is why no Government can face the criticism of putting down public money for growing timber on waste land which will give no return in the lifetime of those who pay the taxes.

All that is true enough. And yet at various stages in history the other view has been not only held, but practised. The best architectural achievements of our country, our cathedrals and greater parish churches for instance, have resulted from it. Few of them were finished, as we now see them, in the lifetime of those who began them. Paris was rebuilt from plans made in 1790 during the French Revolution, but the rebuilding was not done until 80 years later when the designers were all dead.

So it all comes back to the question whether we in East Grinstead think the town's future character is worth the effort of our thought. There are many who think it is; and they are not urged only by commercial profit, though that should naturally have its proper place in contemplating the future. They are urged, it seems to me, by a conviction that of all settings for human life a country town provides more advantages than any other. Community life has possibilities which are impossible to great cities or to the scattered agricultural population. The country and the shopping centres are both equally near, and a small provincial town *can* be (unfortunately in the last two centuries it seldom has been) maintained and developed in an enduring tradition of beauty and order. Chipping Camden in Gloucestershire proves that.

Had that tradition been established here early in the 19th century, what a town we should now be enjoying! It is worth considering for a moment what the material to hand consisted of in, say, the year 1800. There was an exceptionally fine High-street with an unbroken line of houses on its south side many of them dating from about 1330. The finest college in the country for the aged. Open common behind the Swan, starting where Zion Chapel now stands. And incidentally that chapel, dated 1810, marks the last flicker of traditional English renaissance architecture here before its final extinction. There was an avenue of trees to the London-road down to where the open common began near Moat-road. The 19th century gave us West-street, too narrow even for footpaths, a poor London-road, too miserly to leave room for the avenue; Queen's-road, Railway-approach and the rest. Standen remains its one achievement.

The 20th century was disastrous only in parts. It flung out tentacles, like an octopus, of small houses that destroy the countryside which they might have adorned; but at the same time it gave us Halsford Croft, the stone water-tower on the Playfield, opposite the schools, the housing estate along Brooklands-way, the restoration of Clarendon House, Cromwell House and others in the High-street and several fine country houses like Herontye, Barton St. Mary, Orchards and others. It gave us Barclays Bank, the Glandfield [sic] Hotel and the Rose and Crown; and in the case of the last two it added considerable space to the town's main thoroughfare without a penny contribution from the ratepayers, because of a suggestion put to the owners by the town's surveyor. It gave us too, some fine shops and a wide open pavement on the Placeland. Of all these, it is Halsford Croft which to me gives the greatest encouragement, as showing what a fine result can be achieved by forethought and a wise architect. The failure of Queen's-road and Railway-approach we believe cannot now be repeated so long as the new agreement of 1939 to employ the free panel of architects for overseeing the future of buildings remains in force.

This is not the place to attempt any prophecy of the town's future; nor to go into details of its housing, which will follow by another writer. But it is always possible to express the hopes, however impracticable, which one would like to see grow and flourish. There is nothing

extravagant in envying the large open spaces in the centres of some towns, which really are open, and look open and not shut in by fencing, petrol stores and deserted property; where people meet, to play games by day and to dance in the summer evenings, with a well designed shelter for a town band to lead them. It is not extravagant to hope for an open setting for Sackville College, especially since the College-lane corner has already been cleared, although even that is still ruined by a brick wall covered with advertising posters. Nor is it unreasonable to hope for the whole of the town's main thoroughfare to be relieved of unsightly posters applied to business premises. A railway station and yard without advertisement hoardings[,] worthy of the visitor's attention and giving him a less despondent first impression[,] would be welcomed here, as it has already been welcomed in a few fortunate towns. Public buildings, when the need arises, of a cheerful dignity, neither crankily futuristic nor stodgily old-fashioned. New Council Offices are an obvious example of such a need. New housing in the outskirts, designed like Halsford Croft, to increase rather than destroy the charm of the countryside. A new public hall large enough and free for dramatic plays or concerts any or every day of the week. Cemeteries, perhaps, which look like what they are, gardens of rest, with headstones laid in mown grass among tall trees and flower beds, and seats for visitors. A central park for cars, and a bus centre with shelter for travellers, like Hatfield, or nearer home, Uckfield. At least one restaurant where drinks, and even meals, may be had under the trees in summer, and shops with a covered colonnade for rainy days.

And lastly, a centre where the health of the community can be encouraged and developed before disease impairs it, and where prevention, rather than cure, is the chief aim. But that, also, is a subject for another author.

Most of these are modest hopes enough; but they are nothing to what readers of this paper can probably suggest, when once they begin to give their imagination free play.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

EAST GRINSTEAD MUSEUM COMPASS 25 (Spring 2008) includes discussion and partial reproduction of Rowlandson's water-colour 'The market place at East Grinstead', an article on possible place-name clues to Roman remains, the first instalment of collected information on games played historically by local children without adult supervision, addenda and corrigenda on local photographers, some opinions of Ashdown Forest over the last 220 years, place-name miscellanea and a tribute to the publication itself and the Friends of East Grinstead Museum who publish it.

THE SUSSEX INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTER 137 (Jan. 2008) has an article on the building materials used at Standen, based on a report of a visit in the British Brick Society's newsletter.

THE REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX COUNTY ARCHIVIST for April 2006 to March 2007 records, as accession 9638, copy documents relating to the Hammerwood estate, 1641-1995, including a map of John Knight's estate in Cowden, East Grinstead and Hartfield by John Pattenden, 1641. An extract from the map printed on p.10 of the report shows Basing Farm in virtually pictorial three-colour detail.

Illustrated features on East Grinstead appeared last year in ***SUSSEX LIFE, THE INDEX MAGAZINE*** and ***HOME LIFESTYLE***.

See p.2 for details of how to receive this publication as it comes out and how to obtain back-numbers.