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# Eden Valley Heritage

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Issue Number 34

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*The Eden Valley Museum – everywhere has a story to tell*



*Newsletter of the Eden Valley Museum*

# Eden Valley Heritage - Issue Number 34

## Newsletter of the Eden Valley Museum

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Obits. Ken, Cox; Roy Coles, Pat Evemy

**Editors:** Joan Varley, Helen Jackman, Jean French

**Newsletter design:** John Balean

**Correction:** Issue no. 33, page 22, image no. P2014.2286. The building on the right was incorrectly described as the Baptist Church. This was further along the road, opposite Elm Cottages. The building in the picture is the United Methodist Free Church which in 1906 joined the Church of England, so the date of the photo is probably earlier than printed, possibly c.1906. Thanks to Gary Bradford for drawing this to our attention. Eds.

**Front cover: Guy Fawkes, 2016 Bonfire Parade.** Image: P2020.3756\_2. © Stuart McGregor

**Back cover:** Various images of museum events over the first 20 years. Images: EVMT

#### EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM TRUST

The Eden Valley Museum Trust is a Registered Charitable Trust whose objectives are for the advancement of the education of the public in the history of Edenbridge, the Eden Valley and the surrounding areas in particular, but not exclusively, by the provision and maintenance of a museum. The Trust is run by an Executive Committee and the day-to-day management of the museum is overseen by a part-time Collections Manager and a part-time House Manager.

**President:** Alan Smith

**Chairman:** Lee Ward

**Honorary Treasurer:** Diane Banks

**Honorary Secretary:** Joan Varley

**Collections Manager:** Miranda Charalambous

**House Manager:** Martin Frost

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



**Bolebroke Cup**

Image courtesy of Lennox Cato

2020 began with a successful fundraising campaign to purchase the Bolebroke Cup. This silver cup, dating from 1901, is of great local historic interest and was presented at the Edenbridge Fat Stock and Root Show for many years to tenant farmers gaining the most points in the Root, Corn and Hay classes. The cup came to our attention when loaned to the museum by Lennox Cato for our 'Object of the Month' in November 2019, and an enquiry by a member led to the offer to purchase the cup and keep it in the Valley. A generous discount and personal donation from Lennox Cato, left the museum with just £1,250 to raise in 60 days! Thanks to donations from museum members, local residents, and a substantial grant from the Warren Meadows Trust, we met our target, indeed exceeded our target. The additional funding will be used for display costs and ongoing care of the Cup, and any surplus will form the basis of an acquisition fund for future potential purchases.

## THE BIRTH OF A COMMUNITY MUSEUM

By Don Garman



**Don Garman, with local dignitaries and special guests at the opening ceremony for the Eden Valley Museum, June 2000.**

Image: P2019.3704

The development of the Eden Valley Museum stemmed from an invitation in 1994 to the Edenbridge and District Historical Society (EDHS) to attend a meeting in Doggetts Barn to develop ideas to celebrate the centenary of Edenbridge Town Council. Alan Dell and I attended on behalf of EDHS. The only outcome, despite several organisations attending, was a proposal by EDHS to mount an exhibition in the summer of 1995, which was well received by the then Chair of the Town Council, Eddie Field.

Alan and I formed a project group to research different aspects of the town's history from 1895 - 1995 and members beavered away finding information, artefacts and gathering a great collection of photographs. The primary school was booked for three days, display boards were loaned, photographs and information were mounted, other organisations were invited to have displays and speakers were booked. The event proved to be very popular with the

school building packed for three days. Several visitors suggested that with all this history we really should have a museum. Positive views were shared in the local press but there were one or two dissenters.

We decided to let a few months pass before making any future long-term plans. However, in the autumn the Edenbridge Museum Feasibility Group was convened to explore the potential for a museum. Alan and others had hoped to renovate Honour's Mill some years before and turn it into a museum, but this dream, despite lots of effort, sank in the mill pond.

Visits to neighbouring museums were made and information gathered. I had worked with the Croydon Archive and used several museums and historical sites in my capacity as Croydon's Education Adviser for Humanities and had recently acted as an education consultant during the development of the Clocktower Museum in Croydon. Sally MacDonald, The Clock Tower Curator (now Director of the Science and Industry Museum, Manchester), came and talked to the group and provided excellent advice both then and during the ongoing development.

The group were enthusiastic about a museum for the town but where to locate it? Three sites were considered; the building adjacent to the school that had held the school museum, the granary building close to the river or Church House. We were too late for the first as it

was to be used by the police; the second was going to be very expensive and the last? An initial overture to the Town Council resulted in an offer of a display cabinet!

Undaunted the group began to develop a concept. The museum area should include the surrounding parishes and thus it would be the Eden Valley Museum and would focus on the social and economic history of the area, items included would need to tell a story. Displays would change slowly but there would be temporary exhibitions and courses to encourage return visits by the local community. The museum was to be developed by the community but with professional help.



**Church House, prior to renovation, pre-2000.** Image: P2010.1746

Some early marketing began and a presentation was made to the Town Council for use of Church House, a listed grade 2\* building. This hall house dating from 1385 was clearly the most appropriate location for a museum and a building to which people should have access. By the time of the presentation the Town Council was fully aware of the costs of renovating Church House and

the hall. Agreement that a museum could be housed in Church House would make them eligible for Heritage Lottery Funding as well as a grant from English Heritage. The relationship was to be symbiotic as it also provided the museum with leverage for HLF funding.

The Museum Officer for Kent was invited to visit and having been shown the medieval building that might house a museum asked Alan and I how many artefacts were to hand. We explained that EDHS had a tannery worker's boot, a brick from the tannery chimney, maps, documents and photographs that would be transferred to the museum. He informed us we would need at least 2000 artefacts, most of which should be donated. Yet another hurdle! Well, that could be overcome. The Museum Officer confirmed that once we had agreements on the collection area, he would be pleased to transfer relevant items from Sevenoaks Museum. Appraised of the challenge Dennis Leigh offered some of his collection and later his son also contributed. Together they got the collection task off to a good start. However, an acquisitions policy was needed to manage the collecting, this was soon drafted and a group of almost 30 was convened to gather relevant items. This was the first of many groups and it met monthly in the Oak room of Church House when items would be brought along, and stories shared. The group acted as pebbles dropped into a pool with the waves spreading out and thus a much wider group of people began to be

touched by the museum project. At some point a South East Museum's contact explained that Church House, in itself, was a sufficient case for a museum and not to worry too much about the number of items! Next a cataloguing group needed to be established before we were inundated with items. Helen Jackman agreed to lead the group and then became familiar with Modes, a standard museum cataloguing system. Meanwhile the collection area was being negotiated with surrounding museums. The acquisition policy proved to be extremely valuable on a number of occasions when it could be used to say "thank you" but "no thanks" to proposed contributions. We were offered a very large 1930s fridge full of paperbacks and from another source a cast iron fuse box of a similar age – neither are part of the collection!

Alan Dell's health required him to take a step back and he had to resign as Chair and I stepped up, but clearly the Feasibility Group needed to be reformed and a trust established. Using the guidance provided by the Charity Commissioners a successful application was made and the Eden Valley Museum Trust (EVMT) came into being in 1997 with Robin Bickers as the first Chair and Lord Astor as the President. I returned to my role as Project Manager.

With the help of Sally Macdonald, we invited several museum designers to tender and chose a couple who were great to work with and clearly understood our concept. With establishment of the Trust, a clear

concept, and the help of local accountants, a business plan and budget were drawn up to enable fundraising to begin and a Heritage Lottery bid to be submitted. The Lottery showed interest and required us to obtain security advice and imposed other requirements, all of which were achieved, and which enabled a grant of £118K. Our local MP put his weight behind the application which was eventually successful. The sum included the salary of a curator for two years to establish the museum correctly and achieve accreditation. Meanwhile, Helen and I were busy contacting potential sponsors from The Great Stone Bridge Trust to the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers. Some of the contacts also yielded items for the museum collection, for example John Surtees and the Astor of Hever Trust.

Doug Griffin drew up some designs for Church House to enable disabled access to the first floor but English Heritage was not prepared to include a lift, nor were they happy to strip out Georgian and later modifications to the building but at least the 20<sup>th</sup> century bath could go! The wrangling between English Heritage and the Town Council, Sevenoaks District Council and the museum were resolved in a round table meeting one morning and the museum agreed to provide IT facilities which would provide access to the collections on the first floor that would not be accessible to a wheelchair user. Soon contracts were signed with builders to renovate Church House.

More groups were formed including the IT team, led by Ken Brown, to provide remote access to the collection on the first floor and to add information to the items on

display. This group also produced the museum guide. Ken Cooper, formerly contracts manager of Leighs, agreed to form a construction team. One of the team members was

Ken's former boss! Pauline Garman and others set about researching period costumes and materials and eventually making the costumes of the characters in the museum.

Soon there were over 50 volunteers involved in the museum project. A social programme was organised by Anne Bickers for the Friends, and members attended events and gave talks to promote the project. The local media were very supportive and provided regular updates on progress. Sevenoaks District Council invited the museum to join them on their stand at the Edenbridge and Oxted show. The first year was low key and one wet morning Dennis took pity on EVMT members and bought the Trust a gazebo. Next year



**Ken Cooper and Bob Orridge constructing a display cabinet in the Lower Hall, 2000.**

Image: P2018.3538

Barbara Penman and I designed a hopping display housed in the gazebo and achieved the cup for the best small trade stand.

Representatives of the different project teams met monthly at Horseshoes Cottage, Chiddingstone when time sheets were handed in which enabled the calculation of in-kind contributions. Rates varied according to the skill level of the contributors. Along with invoices these were presented to HLF who responded with a further tranche of funds. This payment system meant the Trust had to ensure there was always sufficient cash available to maintain a healthy cash flow. Contributions by sponsors, other than HLF, and the work of the treasurer, Vic Jennings, ensured we never got into difficulties. The Trust had also sensibly registered for VAT which proved helpful during the construction phase.

The Trust advertised widely for a curator and had a very good response so was able to shortlist. Elizabeth Wright was



**Curator, Elizabeth Wright dressing Miss Rickard, 2000.**

Image: P2019.3705

appointed and took up post in 1999, initially based in the Citizens Advice Bureau at 68 High St., who provided an office until the renovation work enabled Church House to be habitable.

The winter of 1999 delayed the renovation programme, but eventually the construction team were able to begin work. They started with shelving in the storeroom and then worked downwards as spaces were completed by the contractors. Display units arrived and were fitted, whilst Jane Higgs and Jean McLachlan-Clark utilised their theatre set design skills to form the settings for the objects. Robert Bayley had worked up text provided from different sources and edited it down for the display panels which were produced locally.

Elizabeth and I produced all the necessary documentation for accreditation and achieved the standard, subject to opening. This recognition was to open the way for future grants and other opportunities. Elizabeth also began to prepare for opening and the need for stewards and their training.

To achieve the targeted date for opening, 24th June, saw a flurry of activity with the construction team in during the day and an evening shift that focussed on fixtures, fittings, display panels and setting out the collection including the dressing of the several bodies. The evenings sessions were very hot, and Robin Bickers was seen one evening to be struggling with a young female hop model who at times seemed to be gaining control!

Dennis Leigh was busy obtaining furniture to dress the hall and other areas which included doing a deal in the rain for a carpet at Ardingly - the stall holder



**Don Garman and Robin Bickers posing with the Robert Seyliard model, still to be dressed, 2000.** Image: P2018.3537

was delighted to make a sale. The Friday before the opening was frenetic. Several of those employed took time off and Church House was buzzing all day. Fish and chips were brought in during the evening and the volunteers remained working until after midnight. Once labels were completed I finally left the building at 5am and was rewarded with the dawn chorus before returning at 9am to prepare for the opening ceremony which would see the fruition of a five year project, a great achievement for the community of the Eden Valley.

Don Garman was Project Manager 1995 -2000 and second Chair of EVMT 2001 - 2003. Ed.

## **EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM OPENING PARADE RECALLED**

by Jane Higgs

At 9am on Saturday 24th June 2000, while Don Garman was seeing to the final details for the Opening Ceremony in the Courtyard outside the museum; I was down in Stangrove Park car park, ready to greet all the participants in an Opening Parade I had organised.

I became a member of the museum's research group in 1996 and discovered that Edenbridge had been well known for its parades, so as the opening date approached, I suggested we should have one to help with our publicity and this was agreed.

The museum was set up to represent the history of the Eden Valley, so my brief was to reflect this and create a living montage to herald the museum's arrival. It was also set up as a community museum enabling anyone to become a volunteer, so we published an open invitation for anyone to join in. I had a wish list of the kind of tableaux I wanted to include so I did some direct recruiting as well.

We had seven schools in the area in 2000 and four of them were able to take part. I had asked them to choose any period of history they would like to represent and fortunately each school chose a different era, so this helped to overcome the problem of where to place each school group in the parade. In order not to appear to imply favouritism I went with

the date of the tableaux so that put St. Andrew's Convent at the front because they came as Romans. The other entrants were placed strategically amongst the other participants in date order. When a group of young children asked to join without enough time for them to make costumes, I suggested they bring us up to the present day by just coming in their own clothes, it worked perfectly.



**St Andrew's Convent – Romans**

Image: P2010.1695.

Photographer: M. Downing



**Hever C of E Primary School – Tudors**

Image: P2019.3692\_4

Photographer: Jane Higgs



**Edenbridge Primary School – The Victorians.**

Image: P2018.3541\_15. Photographer: Jane Higgs



**Children from Eden Valley School – World War II.** Image: P2018.3541\_8. Photographer: Jane Higgs

Edenbridge Town Band gets booked up well in advance and was not available, but I was lucky enough to secure a St John Ambulance band from East Kent which seemed appropriate because Edenbridge used to have its own St John Ambulance Hall in Lingfield Road.



**St John Ambulance band.** Image: P2018.3541\_5. Photographer: Jane Higgs

As luck would have it a circus had come to town that week so I asked them if they would like to join in. 'Yes, they would - good publicity!' I thought we were rather lucky to have a touch of Barnum and Bailey to head up the parade with clowns and jugglers.

The parade left the park at 11am headed by one lone police car.



**Unicyclist from Circus Ricardo.** Image: P2010.1695. Photographer: M. Downing

The circus led, followed by Ken Brown as the Bonfire Bishop with parade steward Jean McLaclan Clark and Stuart and Brenda Saunders dressed up as yokels with missing teeth and sackcloth tunics holding the Eden Valley Museum banner.



**Bishop of the Bonfire.** Image: P2018.3529\_1

The band followed ahead of St. Andrew's Convent's the Romans; the Mummers Drama Group in Medieval costume; the Tudors from Hever School; (my apologies to the next group as I cannot read their banner) and Edenbridge Primary School representing the Victorians.

A horse drawn vehicle, supported by farm workers and shepherds with sheep dogs followed.



**Horse drawn cart followed by farmers and shepherds.** Image: P2010.1696.  
Photographer: M. Downing

Vintage cars were represented by members of a club from the area with Red Cross nurses and a casualty with her arm in a sling walking behind.



**Red Cross Nurse and casualty.**  
Image: P2018.3529\_6

Farming, very much a part of our local history, came next with two vintage grey Fergusson 'Fergie' tractors pulling a hay tedder and a vintage cart, possibly a dung cart!



**Vintage Fergusson Tractor**  
Image: P2019.3703\_10

They were followed by a group leading donkeys, and representing local produce, bread and vegetables.

The final school tableau, Eden Valley School, chose to represent WW2 which gave me the ideal place for Lord Astor to ride in the WW2 jeep.



**Lord Astor to ride in the WW2 jeep.** Image: P2018.3529\_9

Eden Valley School's well known and popular Steel Band was next, suitably far away from the band at the front of the parade for the tunes not to clash.



**Eden Valley School Steel Band.** Image: P2018.3541\_17. Photographer: Jane Higgs

Brenda Hillman was at the courtyard gates to welcome Lord Astor when he arrived in the jeep. I stayed in the park to make sure everyone got away without incident - Brenda and I did not have mobile phones then.

I had arranged for the band to entertain the guests in the courtyard and supply a fanfare when the ribbon across the door was cut by Alan Dell. The audience were also entertained by the Edenbridge Mummers who did a very funny historical play to bring the morning to a close.



**Edenbridge Mummers.**

Image: P2018.3529\_14



**Robin Bickers, first Chair of EVMT, welcoming guests.** Image: P2018.3529\_21

### **A Reflection**

Just looking through the photographs and then seeing the film that was taken on the day reminds me of how much has changed since the museum opened. The parade started in the car park which used to run between the Scout Hut and the Leisure Centre. The arrival of the Relief Road completely altered that

corner of the park. Houses, which had large gardens that you can see on the east side in our photographs, have been pulled down and replaced with flats. The town had the major banks and building societies - now we have none. Thursday was a busy day in the High Street twenty years ago as people came into town to cash their pensions at the Post Office. Now all this is online but at least the Market remains a focal point on a Thursday.

Health & Safety requirements were not nearly as strict as they are now. One police car stopped the traffic as we left the park and peeled off at the end of the parade. There was no requirement for metal barriers along the pavement or risk assessments for the school parties and other participants. I suspect with all the costs now attached to events like this the museum would not have been able to justify the expense and there would not have been a parade at all.

Now, 20 years after we opened and braved major difficulties that affected visitor numbers such as the 2001 outbreak of Foot & Mouth Disease and the 2012 Olympics, the museum is having to cope with the fall out of the Coronavirus pandemic and is now open again having adapted for the social distancing rules. The 20th birthday celebrations had to be called off but let us hope that maybe we can celebrate its 21st next year instead.

## **ECHOES OF THE ROMANS IN THE WEALD PART II**

By Cheryl Bell

Since writing Part I in 2019, several archaeological discoveries have come to my notice. One in Newington in Kent and one at Barcombe Mills in Sussex. Whilst neither are near Edenbridge, it shows that new information is constantly confirming the presence of the Romans in S.E. England. Who knows what may come to light in the years ahead on agricultural ground, forest areas, and building sites. I am also now aware of more archaeological finds in our immediate vicinity which I will refer to in part III.

### **The Roman Tillery on Great Cansiron Farm, Hartfield, East Sussex**

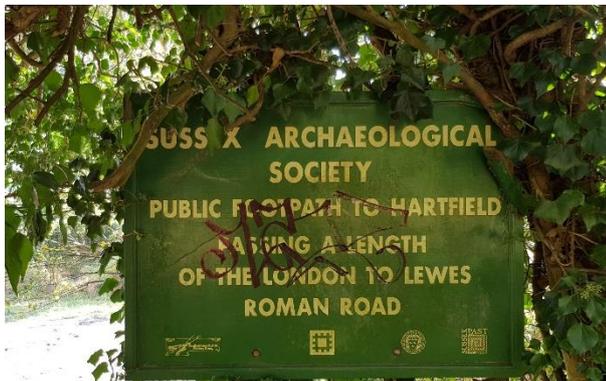
The Great Cansiron site is part of the western group of sites in the High Weald and was in operation for a long period. Possibly set up by individuals or groups, it must have brought in enough revenue to see its continued use in the 4th Century. Maybe by entrepreneurs who were not answerable to the military and who could operate an industry that was known to bring in a profit. All Roman iron-making sites that have been discovered, lie no more than 3.5 Km from a Roman road and in the Roman period Cantium was an important centre of industry.

Iron was a very useful metal to native Britons and since the ores were distributed throughout the Weald of Kent and Sussex, the Romans made

good use of the sites near Edenbridge. John Wachter believes the Classis Britannica maintained an iron-smelting works in the Weald of Kent. Carpenters, joiners and masons needed tools for their trade. Wagons and carts needed tyres, hub-rims, lynch-pins and chains to be made for local use and for further afield big 28cm long nails, spikes and smaller ones with hollow heads were needed in a wide range. Military weapons had to be repaired and door locks and hinges manufactured in large amounts.

The main Lewes to London Roman road passes close to a little known iron working site and Roman tillery. Excavations in 1982-83 by David Rudling revealed that this ironworks was the same age as the road which passed nearby, and which is probably surfaced with bloomery slag from the site. Investigations revealed a well-preserved Roman tile kiln, a building, possibly a drying shed, and a workman's hut. Workshops have yet to be found but Rudling anticipates a bath house complex as well. Five thousand fragments of tiles have been found plus sand-tempered ware; black bowls, grey jars, orange bowls and flagons. 39% of the finds are sand/grog tempered ware in the form of jars, flagons and bowls with lids. When the tile kiln was not being used for firing tiles, it would have been busy firing other household requirements. Even glass and beads have been excavated, suggesting decoration of some sort. The main iron working site is 0.5km. N.W. of Great Cansiron Farm and was in use in the late

1st /early 2nd century using kiln workers of low economic status, possibly itinerant. Another bloomery lies 100m. west of Little Cansiron and yet another at Garden Hill in the Ashdown Forest. These sites were no doubt connected by the Roman road which indicates its consistent use as a route used by Roman soldiers through Edenbridge to London. Products from the Hartfield tiliary were transported as far north as Beddington in Surrey and as far south as Beddingham. (Thanks go to Barbara Hale who alerted me to this information).



The Roman road which I have now walked at Holtje is fairly overgrown and doesn't look anything like the photo in Part I. Right at the bottom of the path is a metal fenced area which was completely cleared in 1939 and at that time was well preserved. Excavation was carried out by Mr. I.D. Margary who purchased the site and gave it to the Sussex Archaeological Society. The excavation report was published in *Sussex Archaeological Collections Vol. 81*. This is where the original metallated road surface was found which was all layered iron cinder which had been rammed down and laid around AD100. Over the centuries this metal, due to weather

conditions and age has rusted and become solid. The excavations also revealed wheel marks, evidence of Roman civilian and military traffic. If you stand at the bottom of the field close to the excavations the land slopes steeply up ahead, and the Roman road must then have passed close to the Roman tiliary on Cansiron Lane and Bassett's Manor.



## Garden Hill

Excavations at Garden Hill, near Colmans Hatch in East Sussex, revealed a small fortified Iron Age/Romano-British iron working settlement from the 1st, 2nd and early 3rd century A.D. James Money's excavations have unearthed what he thinks was an important but small settlement. Originally an Iron Age hill fort, its ramparts have been cut through on its south side by the excavations in 1972/6.

They revealed a 2nd century Romano-British bath house built of stone, attached to a rectangular villa made of timber. Two round houses of an Iron Age type have also been found and a rare piece of Roman window glass now in the British Museum. The manufacture of glass was normally carried out where it could access raw materials. Poor quality glass for windows and everyday vessels needed wood ash, crushed flint and sand. The local raw materials, which showed high traces of iron, would produce a darker shade of brown or green glass. Window glass was used all over Britain but if fine glass was wanted, especially decorated or of various colours, it had to be imported from the Middle East or the Rhineland. More buildings have been excavated, but they don't appear to be connected with industry. Could this site have been worked by a civilian who was not especially wealthy, but ran the site as a managerial centre for iron-working sites nearby? Close to Garden Hill there are two more excavated sites, one at Pippngford Park, another at Cow Park. With iron ore close by semi-finished products were manufactured to be traded in Brittania, but also across the channel. These could be shipped from small ports on the rivers Rother and Brede to the South East and London. Transported by road from the Weald, they may also have been taken to East Anglia by water, along the east coast and finally across the North Sea to Roman provinces and garrisons on the Rhine. The iron was used to make tools and implements such

as knives, chisels, scythes, hammers and ploughshares, even swords and javelins.

The removal of iron ore nodules and its working was definitely known before the Romans landed, but after they arrived the Roman Fleet and legions instigated the need for these pre-Roman Wealden sites to be re-worked. The Weald provided the charcoal, hillsides where bloomery platforms could be cut, and enough water from the many streams to wash the ore. Slag heaps can still be found in small riverbeds.

John Wacher believes the Weald of Kent and Sussex could well have been an Imperial Estate or an area that handed over one half or one third of its iron production to the Romans instead of paying a tax, which was normal. Not such a good deal considering the Romans normally only asked for a collection of one tenth or one twelfth.

Due to its initial hostility, were the inhabitants of this area forced to live at subsistence level in order to obey the provincial procurator? It was this man who organised assistants to watch over the production of iron, possibly army officers drafted into individual regions. For those who lived and worked on Imperial Estates, no rent was expected for five or more years but they had to work hard on iron production and provide their own dwelling.

### **Chiddingstone**

Jill Newton, in her publication *Chiddingstone: An Historical Exploration*, has cited several surprising connections with

the Romans. Could the Chiddingstone area have been a known trouble spot? If so, it would make sense to garrison Roman soldiers there. Whilst fairly close to the Roman road in Edenbridge, could there have been a substantial trackway which joins Edenbridge or Cowden to Chiddingstone? Jill Newton was told by Mr Bower, of Chiddingstone Castle, that he believed there had once been a Roman Villa on the site. This has yet to be verified. Jill was also told by a villager that a Roman centurion had been seen several times along the old coach road and dog walkers on several occasions had been forced to drag their animals away from the same places in the lane! A Roman centurion was in charge of a hundred men, so if there had once been a camp of Roman soldiers in Chiddingstone, which is what I suspect, it would account for reasonably heavy traffic along any of the three Roman roads coming off the Ashdown Forest. Close to Chiddingstone village are the farms of Chested and Vexour where a piece of Roman pottery was found 80 years ago.

It is thought that a cave found in woods at Chiddingstone could have been made during the Roman era. A possible subterranean chapel of Mithraic origins was surveyed in April 2012 but the survey was inconclusive. This cruciform shaped subterranean temple is considered to be a sacred place dug out of the ground. The gatehouse made of local sandstone from a rocky outcrop by the edge of a field, leads to an arched

tunnel 5 feet high which leads to the cave proper. A huge mass of rock hides the entrance to the temple but after the single 4 feet' high passage is accessed, the roof height rises to 5 feet and then to standing height. The ceiling of the temple is shaped like a gothic arch and at the end small side chambers open on each side of a possible altar. There are signs of carvings over the temple door which include a reptile, lion and a bull. The bull is a connection to the Roman military, who were particularly attracted to this religion and its Mithraic rituals. The god Mithras was born from a rock. He caught a bull, sacrificed it, and used its blood to give physical strength and moral courage to its cult followers. It was favoured by Roman soldiers who had to complete various endurance tests before they could become members. This cult was not encouraged because soldiers were expected to show devotion only to the state, but Chiddingstone is rural and Mithraism was probably allowed to keep the soldiers content. Several other Mithraic temples have been found in Britain, the biggest being at Carrawburgh on Hadrian's Wall. The London Mithraeum discovered in Walbrook during a building construction in 1954 shows the growth of this religion in London in the 2nd century AD. The temple they discovered was uprooted and moved 90 yards away to preserve it. The original site has now been purchased by Bloomburg and the temple re-housed. It is now open to the public, showing its archaeological importance and significance.

## **Are the following references possible connections with the Eden Valley?**

### **Place Names**

The word Stret 1351 and Strete 1400, as in La Broke Stret and later Brokstrete in Edenbridge, did not appear to become Street as we know it until 1814, according to *Place Names of Edenbridge* by John Irwin. This place-name generally indicates being on or near a Roman or Saxon road. Brook Street from old English 'broc' meaning a stream, had its derivations in late Latin - a stone bedded way or path. This would fit neatly with a Roman trackway.

### **The Catholic Church of St. Lawrence the Martyr**

The church we see today was established in 1931 and was the second Catholic Church on this site. The date of the first church, dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul is unknown. However, it is thought it was constructed over a Roman altar, which is not unlikely on a Roman road where Roman soldiers passed by.

### **Troy Town and Turf Cut Mazes**

Many turf cut mazes in England were named Troy Town or variations on that theme. The word Troy has been associated with labyrinths from ancient times. The Roman equestrian event called 'Troy game' or 'mismaze' involved riding in maze-like patterns with swinging movements. There are only eight surviving historical turf mazes left in England, but their construction date is unknown. Many examples of mazes have

long gone but the place name still survives.

The site of Troy Town near Edenbridge has never been confirmed, according to John Willsmer, *Aspects of Edenbridge 2*, but it is thought the Romans made mazes for children and that the path through the maze was only wide enough for one person. Willsmer believes these mazes could therefore have been created for ritual ceremonies.

To conclude, I believe the Classis Britannica - the British Fleet, was very much involved in supervising the Wealden iron smelting works as it played a critical role in providing the supplies needed for the Roman army and for export. Whilst this was its main role, the army demanded large supplies of timber for ships and the Weald had plenty to make use of. Peter Salway believes the mineral deposits found in our area brought great financial rewards for the Romans. He calls it 'the price of victory'. Henry Cleere feels that the iron supplies worked by the army were more than adequate for a populace of about two million as the century drew to a close. Around 250,000 buildings would have been needed and 10% would have to be renewed every year, therefore 200 tonnes of iron were essential to fill this need.

The majority of coins found around Edenbridge date to the mid-2nd century when Antoninus Pius was not only a Roman Emperor but commander of the Classis Britannica and provincial procurator of Britain. If the Weald of

Kent and Sussex was made an Imperial Estate because of its resistance, the Emperor would have made sure this area was under strong control and this needed Roman soldiers, who could have dropped or buried these coins. We know the Romans militarised even isolated areas. Cleere says *'this shows the extent of Roman control in the south and helps us to understand the physical and political shaping of the country.'*

There are differences of opinion as to the transporting of heavy iron goods. But I think they could have been easily distributed a long way by road, providing they were carefully maintained, and carts and wagons were built with strength. Certainly, the London to Lewes road was of importance but I will write more about this and Lewes itself in Part III. The value of rivers was secondary to roads, but many in Roman times were navigable e.g. the Ouse, the Medway and the Rother and ports in southern Britain like Lewes, Newington and Barcombe were extremely active to link the south with London. Excavations of huge Roman timber wharves have shown how important the Thames was as a port in London, especially to boats entering from the Mediterranean. Waterways were therefore essential. The bridging point over the River Eden on the London to Lewes road was a convenient access route to the iron furnaces of West Kent and East Sussex and it is possible both road and water was used to transport iron goods. We can conclude from this that the Edenbridge area was definitely

active during the Roman occupation and many Roman finds which I have been told about support this. Since my primary aim was to investigate this theory, I now feel I am getting closer.

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## THE CHURCH and its TIMES

By The Revd Dr Stephen A. J. Mitchell  
SSC, Vicar of Edenbridge



### Edenbridge Parish Church

*From an original water colour drawing.*  
Artist unknown. Image: P2018.3499

This extract is taken from a presentation given at Edenbridge Parish Church on March 14, 2020, the basis of which was to show how our forebears in this place have taken whatever earlier generations had left them on this spot, and adapted it to the demands made upon them by the shifting sands of history. Changes that have taken place over 900 years have created an impressive history witnessing the wider story of church and people in this land.

First mention of this church was in the Textus Roffensis 1120, but it is likely there was a Saxon church here beforehand, built of wood, of which nothing remains. If the Saxons did have a church here, then Christian worship has been going on for more like 1000 years. So let's say you turned up at a church on this spot for mass in 1020, 46 years before the Norman Conquest, what

might you have seen? Everything would have been in Latin, and only those who knew Latin would have joined in. There would have been a choir of sorts, candles were everywhere because light from the small glassless windows was poor and there was no seating. The priest wore vestments but there was no organ or instrumentation. The altar would have been made of stone, universal until the Reformation because an altar should be made of stone if it is to be a fitting place of sacrifice. Communion would have been given in both kinds, wafers and wine, and given to everybody. Because most could not read the Bible, as it was in Latin, people got their education from wall paintings which the priest would have used in his teaching.

Come 1120, the original stone building would have been much smaller than our church today. There may have been a tower, since the present one is built on Norman foundations, but apart from that there were just the basic two rooms, nave and chancel. The doorway would have been at the west end which would have opened up into a nave area, still utterly devoid of any seating except for a low bench around the wall to which the weakest repaired when the standing got too difficult. The nave would have formed the greater part of the church but with no side aisles or smaller chapels. The chancel at the east end probably had a rounded apse, reminiscent of the old churches of Rome. There were no windows, just draught-admitting holes, and the walls were covered in paintings

depicting bible stories and various legends from the lives of saints.



**The Font, 2009.**  
© Stuart McGregor.  
Image: P2020.3743\_4

The font dates from this period but evidently went walkabout at some much later stage and was discovered hiding in an old square pew. The font cover is 15th century.

In the 13th century much of the church was rebuilt and the south aisle, and what became the Martyn Chapel, were added. The present south wall main doorway dates from the 14th century, as does the tower, although the original bells seem to date from 1608 and the more recent ones from 1896 recast in 1911. A new square-type chancel replaced the old Norman one. We have a small but important relic here from the 14th century. Low down on the pillar by



**Graffito, 2020.**  
© Stuart McGregor.  
Image: P20203749\_14

the pulpit there has been discovered a significant graffito of a hart with a crown around its neck, the badge of Richard II (1367-1400). He was deposed and replaced by Henry IV, but

he clearly had supporters here in Edenbridge.

During the 15th century the church was again re-built and some of the larger windows installed. Our only surviving medieval glass is the squint behind the central altar, most of our stained glass being Victorian except for that added in the recent past. The church in this era reflects the increasing size of our town so was larger. The wall paintings remain, and over the chancel entrance we find the 14th century doom – a representation of the Last Judgement with saints and sinners moving either up to heaven or down to hellfire. Below this is a wooden screen firmly dividing the holy of holies from the nave. The staircase next to the Jacobean pulpit, gave access to the rood (old English for cross) screen.



**The Martyn Chapel, c.1900-1930.**  
Image: P2013.2071

The present Martyn Chapel was divided in two, a chapel for our Lady and the second under the patronage of John the Baptist. At the end of the 15th century a Mr Martyn converted both these chapels into one and the grey slab

in the middle of the floor marks the site of his tomb. The high altar would have been against the east wall and the priest said mass with his back to the people. As in Saxon times few could follow the

Latin, and now they could not hear clearly what was being said either. The mass had become something other than it was in the earlier history of the church when it was an act of the whole community gathered around the altar.

Just before the Reformation the emphasis was on the richness of hangings and decorations in general. Coloured frontals were changed with the seasons' high days and holy days. This remains in many Anglican churches today.

As part of our restoration and development programme we are hoping to expose some of the medieval wall paintings in this building. Just beyond the south doorway, we believe a few blobs of paint are medieval representations of flowers. In the wall to the side of the chancel altar is a carved medieval aumbry. In the 1960s this was converted for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. Next to the aumbry is the statue of Our Lady – a relic from the days of the Convent of St Andrew's in Stick Hill, which serves as a reminder of the Sisters' contribution to our community over many years.

The medieval mass was not about receiving communion, it was rather a representation of the Christ's sacrifice to the Father. This idea was corrupted into that of a repeating of Christ's sacrifice in un-bloody form. Come the Reformation this idea was key to the objections of Protestants and Reformers, a development which saw great changes in

the content and layout of parish churches like ours. In 1521 the Pope awarded Henry VIII the title Fidei Defensor but by 1534 Henry needed a way out of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and decided to go it alone ecclesiastically, and the rest is history.

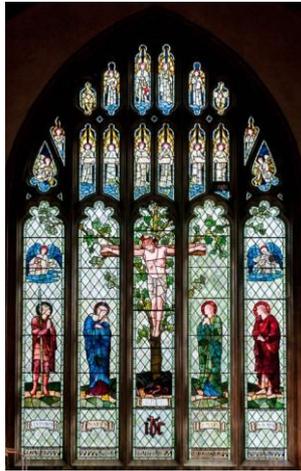
The appearance of the church didn't change much under Henry except possibly the introduction of the Royal Coat of Arms over the door to remind everybody that the King and not the Pope was in charge. Our own coat of arms is a bit of a mystery. Following its restoration in 2019 it transpires that although it purports to be from the time of George I some of the colours are incorrect, and the motto may derive from Queen Anne, Queen Elizabeth or even Ann Boleyn. Indeed, a passing visitor pointed out that *semper eadem* (I am always the same) is in fact the feminine form referring presumably to a Queen rather than a King.



**Royal Coat of Arms, 2020.** © Stuart McGregor. Image: P2020.3749\_11

The English Reformation didn't really get underway until the reign of Edward VI. The first Anglican Service Book was produced in 1549 and a second in 1552. This retained many features of the old medieval rites but simplified things and was in English. Churches like ours lost

their medieval wall paintings under lime wash, the medieval vestments disappeared along with the rituals employed by their wearers, and the stone altars were replaced with wooden tables. The staple act of worship is now Morning Prayer and the first part of the new Communion Service, what had been the mass is now called Holy Communion, and attendance was obligatory on pain of a fine!



**East Window, 2009.**  
© Stuart McGregor.  
Image: P2020.3743\_6

During the reign of Charles I, Archbishop Laud attempted to steer the church in a more Catholic direction. The communion table became the focus rather than the pulpit and this was fenced in by communion rails. Following the Puritan victory at the end of the Civil Wars, the Church of England returned to its status as a Puritan body minus bishops and any sign of Catholicism. When Charles II was in charge much from Laud's time was restored and a new prayer book introduced in 1662. Communion is once again received but kneeling at a communion rail before an altar.

The chief feature of the 18th century is the arrival of box pews. The staple act of worship is Mattins and the priest would

have been dressed in a full length surplice, scarf and hood over a black cassock. In 1859 the first clergy vestry was added to the north side of the chancel. A new vestry with kitchen and other facilities was added in 1982. In 1904 a new ringing chamber was created, one floor up in the tower, to make room for the choir vestry.

In 1905 the south walls and the Martyn Chapel roof had to be shored up. At the same time the original tracery in the east window of the chancel was restored, the previous pattern having much offended Sir Gilbert Scott who had seen the original window and was appalled at its late 19th century replacement. On the north-east face of the easternmost pillar, Scott made a sketch of the old window which is still there. There is some debate about the larger of the east windows, but few today still argue that it is an original by Burne-Jones. It was donated in memory of John Stephen-Storr of Crockham Hill. Originally 3 lights, it was destined for Crockham Hill, but was rejected because the deceased was in trade. His widow gave it to Edenbridge.

The present porch was built in 1907-08. Within it may be seen some specimens of early English stone-carving discovered during major restoration works in the previous century. In 1990 the old organ was moved to the old Victorian vestry adjacent to the old chancel. Its former home, just above the choir vestry, is now occupied by a second-hand instrument acquired from Trowbridge Parish

Church. Both organs are played from a single console.

The large west window was our Millennium project, jointly funded by the church and wider community as represented by the Town Council. The four figures represent about half a Millennium of Kentish Christianity. Paulinus was bishop of Rochester and York; Gundulf was the architect of both Rochester Cathedral and the White Tower in London; John Fisher was the last Roman Catholic Bishop of Rochester; and Bernard Mizeki was a catechist in Rhodesia martyred by the Shona. Our diocese is linked with the Diocese of Harare in what was Rhodesia.

We are celebrating our 900th anniversary but much of what surrounds us is nothing like that old Norman church, but maybe that doesn't matter. In the end the building, for all its beauty and the love, care and money lavished upon it exists only for the benefit of the people and not for itself. It is the oldest building in this town, and a witness firstly of course to God, but also to the, sometimes, alarming movements of history.



**South side of Edenbridge Parish Church showing the porch, 2020.**

© Stuart McGregor. Image: P2020.3749\_1

## **THE ARCHITECT GEORGE DEVEY and his CONNECTION WITH PENS HurST VILLAGE**

By Claire Donithorn



**Houses at entrance to Leicester Square and the Gatehouse to Penshurst Place c.1910.**

Image: P2001.1.201

Anyone passing through the picturesque village of Penshurst will have seen the work of George Devey. The houses that mark the entrance to Leicester Square, the gatehouse entrance to Penshurst Place and the numerous stone and oak beamed cottages with tall 'Elizabethan' chimneys that are scattered through the country lanes are all examples of his work. Anyone wishing to study the work of this architect should start at Penshurst, for it was here that the connections that shaped his career were formed.

George Devey's career spanned from 1846 to his death in 1886. His buildings were quite exceptional for the time. Classical building with columns and pediments dominated the architectural style for public buildings and the new Gothic Revival dominated church and domestic architecture.

Devey had originally wanted to be an artist and studied under John Cotman who encouraged his students to draw ancient and vernacular buildings, and James Duffield Harding who taught watercolour painting. Throughout his life Devey filled sketchbooks with drawings of cottages, particularly those found in the Weald, as it was these buildings which fired his imagination. This interest in vernacular buildings, particularly the lowly cottages, was far ahead of its time, not taken up again until the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 1880's.

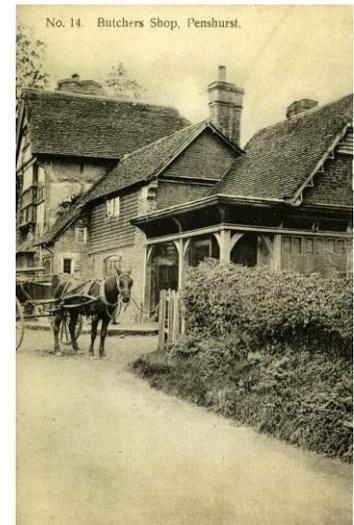
His connection with Penshurst dates right from the start of his career. His father, Frederick, was a successful London Solicitor. He had a client, the Rev. George Richard Boissier, who was curate at Chiddingstone and then Penshurst Churches. This association had lasted many years and Rev. Boissier and Mr Devey had become friends. When George Devey started his architectural practice in 1846 the Rev. Boissier introduced him to Lord De L'Isle, the owner of Penshurst Place and estate, and also General Sir Henry Hardinge the owner of the estate of South Park and patron of the village of Fordcombe. These two clients remained important connections throughout his career. He produced work for Penshurst Place until the 1870's and benefited from introductions both families made on his behalf throughout his career.

The first project he worked on was the two houses at the entrance to Leicester Square. His use of various vernacular

styles and the characteristic tall chimneys are apparent even at this early stage of his career. He designed a pair of cottages on Rogues Hill, and the Gateway to Penshurst Place. He also created various cottages, made improvements to the butcher's shop, and later made significant additions to Penshurst Place itself.

For Sir Henry Hardinge he produced designs for the new barn at Holm Farm with deep eaves, and then the lodge cottage to South Park. He later made additions to the house at South Park, designed the Chafford Arms pub at Fordcombe, and the Lych Gate to St Peter's Church Fordcombe.

He acquired other clients in the district, notably George Field who owned Ashurst Park, for whom he designed two lodge



**The old butcher's shop, Penshurst c.1910**  
Image: P2003.900



**West Lodge, South Park, Penshurst, c.1990.** Image: P2003.902

cottages and also the consecutive owners of Swaylands, Edward Cropper and George Drummond, where he made large additions.



**Cassel Hospital, Swaylands, Penshurst, c.1920.** Image: P2012.1965



**Dr Ross's house in the grounds of Cassel Hospital, Swaylands, Penshurst, c.1922.** Image: P2012.1968

In 1848 he worked for James Nasmyth, the inventor of the steam hammer, who had recently moved in to Penshurst. He transformed the relatively modest Redleaf House into a substantial property, renamed Hammerfield. The lodge to the property was Culver Hill now known as Culver Lodge. Hammerfield has all the characteristics of Devey's work. Deep pitched roofs, decorative brick and stone work, ornamental oak work, stone mullion windows and tall chimneys; a celebration

of English vernacular building so typical of his work.



**Culver Lodge, Penshurst, c.1857**  
Image: P2002.506

In 1856 Devey was introduced by General Hardinge to Sir Walter James, later 1st Baron Northbourne, who was Hardinge's stepson. James had recently bought a modern property, Betteshanger House near Deal, and he commissioned Devey to substantially redesign the property to give it the air of an older property. Sir James was a Liberal MP and close friend of Gladstone and many of the influential and wealthy members of the Liberal party of the day. This connection had a profound influence on Devey's career as from that time he was to work for a succession of wealthy Liberals. He was commissioned by Lord Grenville, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, the banker B.W. Currie and the Duke of Sutherland for whom he produced work in Scotland. In 1864, through his Liberal connections, he was introduced to the Rothschild family for whom he worked throughout the 1870's on a variety of projects.

In the 1870's Devey was commissioned by the Liberal MP John Poyntz Spencer,

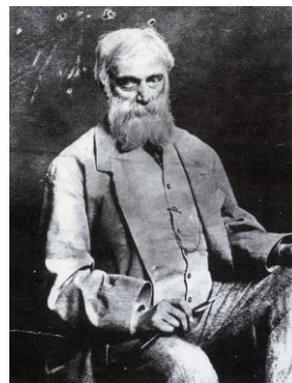
the 5th Earl Spencer, to design a variety of houses for the proposed Spencer Estate just outside Northampton. The plan was to provide a mix of properties offering homes spanning a wide economic mix, from terraced housing to substantial detached homes. In the end the project did not proceed as planned and the designs were shelved. Had this project proceeded Devey might have acquired a broader public recognition of his architectural style.

Right to the end of his career his connections to Penshurst remained important. In 1883-5 he designed two London town houses for Lord De L'Isle's sister, Mrs Hunloke in Lennox Gardens which led to further commissions in Grosvenor and Cadogan Squares.

On a personal level there is a further connection with the district for George Devey. In 1856 his interest in Wealden architecture took him to Chiddingstone to draw the buildings of the High Street. Through his association with Rev. George Boissier he was introduced to the Rev. W.E. Hoskins, vicar of St Mary the Virgin, Chiddingstone, and met and fell in love with his daughter Flora. Although they became engaged this did not last, and in 1857 Flora married Newton William Streatfeild. Sadly, the marriage was not a long one as Newton Streatfeild died in 1866. George Devey again proposed, only to be rejected a second time. His love of Flora appears never to have waned, he never married and in his will, written in 1882, he left Flora the

considerable sum of £5000, but added alternative plans for the money in case Flora, 'should object (on account of the engagement so cruelly broken off between us) or decline to accept'.

George Devey never became a household name. He was never commissioned to produce major public buildings and as most of his clients were wealthy estate owners many of his buildings remained hidden from public view. However, his ideas influenced many later architects. Charles Voysey worked for two years in Devey's studio and his influence can clearly be seen in Voysey's work with his stone work, lintels, half timbered gables and octagonal rooms. It is in the architectural style of the Arts and Crafts architects, Norman Shaw, Lutyens and others that you can see the value in the study of past vernacular styles pioneered by George Devey. We in the Eden Valley can feel privileged to be able to see such delightful buildings in Penshurst and the surrounding area.



**George Devey in later life.**

Image: P2016.3287

**Reference:** Allibone, Jill, 1991, *George Devey, Architect 1820-1886*, Lutterworth Press, Cambridge.

## THE MONKEY FROM MACKS

By Miranda Charalambous



**Algie, a Tru-to-Life Chimp**

EDEVT:827

There used to be a traditional greengrocer in Edenbridge called Macks. Duncan and Carol MacKinnon, who owned the business, moved to Edenbridge in 1962 and had two daughters, Justine and Sandy. Initially, Duncan worked for his father as an underwriter for Lloyds but decided to open a greengrocery business after making a career change. Duncan's father, Graeme and his grandfather were chairmen of Lloyds and firm friends of Winston Churchill. Duncan's first wife, Carol, had studied floristry at the Constance Spry Flower School in Mayfair and arranged the flowers for the shop. She was also the personal assistant of motorcycle world champion, John Surtees and taught at Lingfield Hospital School, Dormansland. Hector, the family's dog slept under the arch beside the shop and had a naughty habit of scoffing children's ice creams!

Duncan MacKinnon took great care over the displays in Macks. Every other day he went up to London to buy produce from Covent Garden Market. Sometimes, he brought back more unusual fruit for his customers to try such as lychees or ugli fruit. On Sundays he arranged the produce for the coming week in the double-fronted shop



**Macks greengrocer and butcher's shop**

Image © Justine MacKinnon

window and, with the shop closed, took time to chat to potential customers whilst he polished apples or tucked tissue paper under the satsumas. Cabbages and spring greens were chilled in a tank of cold water in the back garden and beetroot was home-grown and cooked on the premises. The bananas came from Geest and had to be brushed and checked for spiders as inspections were not carried out at source. The staff disliked unpacking the Geest boxes in case fat hairy stowaways were lurking inside. The bananas were displayed on a tall 'palm tree' with a furry toy monkey

which swung from the top. His name was Algie and as a treat, Justine and Sandy were allowed to clean him occasionally. He was very much part of the family and local people remember him well.



**Macks interior.** Image © Justine MacKinnon

When Mr and Mrs Moore took over the greengrocers in 1983, they decided to take the monkey down. However, he was quickly reinstated because the children missed him so much. In 2002, the monkey was gifted to the Museum by a local hairdresser whose friend had looked after him when Moore's closed.

Mr MacKinnon's Christmas boxes were always in great demand. Everything had to be packed by Christmas Eve and stored in the house behind the shop. When the girls were growing up, they thought it was a great game to move items around from one box to another, but it wasn't fun for their father!

Years after the greengrocery business was established, Mr MacKinnon opened a butcher's shop next door after completing a twelve-week practical course in butchery. When it was opened for business, he occasionally displayed a

pig's head in the window wearing a top hat with a cigar in its mouth. He also initiated Edenbridge British Week, an annual food festival for promoting local trades and services which was held at the end of the summer. A whole host of activities were laid on which included bread making, farm and factory visits, competitions for the best produce, British food demonstrations and even a trip to the local colour processing laboratory. The first prize for the 'Name the Meat Dish' competition was a chest freezer packed with £100 worth of British meat, which seems generous even by today's standards.



**Macks greengrocers and butcher's shop**

Image © Justine MacKinnon

### **More about the MacKinnon Family**

Justine MacKinnon became the first female airfield manager of Heathrow and consults globally on numerous subjects. A few years ago, she was awarded the Presidential Gold Medal from Barack Obama for her work in the humanitarian field. Her sister, Sandy, manages an independent living complex in Somerset. Sadly, Duncan MacKinnon passed away nearly two years ago, but his daughters believe that *'he would have had so much pleasure knowing 'his old friend' for many years [Algie the monkey] was safe in good hands'*.

### **Algie, a Tru-to-Life Chimp**

The monkey from Macks was manufactured by Deans Rag Book Company Ltd., a London based firm which was founded in 1903 by Henry Samuel Dean who owned Dean and Sons, a children's book publisher. Deans made its name designing cloth books for babies which were washable and very popular with mothers. Deans also produced rag doll kits, cut-out books and beautifully crafted teddy bears, and were the first company to make cloth toys based on Walt Disney cartoon characters. Deans employed many talented designers, many of whom were women.



**Sylvia Willgoss with her Tru-to-Life-Chimps.** Image © Rye's Own Magazine, 2003

During the 1950s, Sylvia Willgoss became the Chief Designer for Deans when the company moved to Rye in East Sussex. At the time Deans were working on a range of soft toys called Tru-to-Life. Sylvia designed her first Tru-to-Life Chimp in 1955, having studied a baby chimpanzee in Regent's Park Zoo. Sylvia's first chimps wore a chain, similar to those worn by chimpanzees at chimps' tea parties which were a regular form of

public entertainment at the zoo in the 1950s.

Deans' factory relocated to Wales in 1982 but Sylvia remained in Rye and became a town councillor. She was a very community minded person and designed floats for the local bonfire celebrations. The monkey from Macks is one of Sylvia's Tru-to-Life chimps and was purchased by the MacKinnons in the early 1960s from Harrods. Sylvia's earlier designs had mohair bodies but Algie's fur is made from acrylic plush. His face and hands are moulded rubber and so were his feet, which he would like replaced!

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Justine Mackinnon. Personal interview, 29 April 2020

Programme for Edenbridge British Week, 1980. EDEVT:751

**Editor's Note:** Macks was located at no. 63 High Street, opposite Church House/Eden Valley Museum

## 'ROBBERY AND INHUMAN OUTRAGE AT FOUR ELMS'

By Stephen Wood

My late aunt told me a story about our ancestors living in Hever Castle which I thought had probably become embellished over time and doubtful. It wasn't until I started researching my family history about five years ago, when so much information became easily available via the internet, that I found our connection with Edenbridge, Hever and Four Elms, and '*A dastardly deed concerning a patron of the George & Dragon at Westerham*'.

### The Wood family

In about 1785 the Wood family moved from Godstone to Edenbridge where they rented Lockhurst Farm in Prettymans Lane. Around 1800 they moved to How Green Farm, Hever as tenants of Henry Woodgate. My great grandfather, William Wood, married Mary Doubell of Lingfield in 1819, and it was her uncle, John Humphrey (my 4x great uncle) who was the victim of the '*dastardly deed*'.

John was born in Hever in 1772, the son of Richard Humphrey and Ann Taylor. He married Mary Dives of Lingfield in 1794 and they had six children. John's father Richard and Richard's brother, John (senior) were yeoman farmers and leased their farms and the Castle from Sir Timothy Waldo of Clapham, Surrey. The Waldos originated from Lyon, France and were one of the first families to

publicly oppose the doctrine of the Church of Rome and because of this fled to England during the reign of Elizabeth I to escape religious persecution.

Timothy Waldo bought the Hever Estate, of some 1300 acres, in 1749 and when he died in 1786 his widow, Lady Catherine, succeeded him. In 1805 the Estate passed to their only daughter Jane, the widow of George Medley of Buxted and M.P. for East Grinstead. In 1799 John Humphrey took over the tenancy of Hever Castle from his uncle, John senior.



**The Pond, Four Elms, c.1910.**

Image: P2001.1.148

On Wednesday 18th May 1808, at about 9 o'clock in the evening, John was returning from Westerham on horseback accompanied by his two neighbours, George Holmden, a farmer and gentleman, and Richard Keeys. As they approached Four Elms, his two friends left for their own homes and John continued into Four Elms. Before he had proceeded very far, Richard Keeys heard a shot and ran to the scene where he found John Humphrey lying on his back, almost in the pond, and bleeding profusely. He had been shot and robbed. He was taken to the Inn at Four Elms

and stayed there until the following Sunday morning when he was returned to Hever. His condition deteriorated and he died on the Tuesday.

Mr Humphrey had managed to describe his attacker as *'thick set, not very tall, and wearing a black mask over his face'*. He'd said: *'Your life or your money immediately'*. The mask was found at the scene of John's attack. This dastardly deed was widely reported in the local press and John Humphrey was buried in St. Peter's churchyard, Hever on 30th May.

### The Holmdens

George Holmden, the friend of John Humphrey, inherited Doggetts Farm (*now Church House which houses the Eden Valley Museum*) in Edenbridge, along with his brother Thomas, in 1786 from Thomas Wells. Thomas Holmden occupied Doggetts whilst George lived at Broxham. By 1814 Thomas was the sole owner of Doggetts, but both he and George were living there.



**Thought to be Richard Holmden, c.1870.**

Image: P2019.3653

In 1829 Thomas Holmden died and left Doggetts to his sons, Robert and Richard who sold it in 1835, but continued to live there as tenants until

1849. Robert Holmden then moved to How Green Farm, Hever where the Wood family had lived in the early 1800s. Richard went on to marry Ann Elizabeth Wood, my 2x great aunt and daughter of William and Mary Doubell, mentioned earlier.

### Life goes on...

Following the death of John Humphrey, his widow Mary married Henry Rowed in 1809 and they continued living at Hever Castle until 1818. In 1823, Richard, the son of John and Mary Humphrey, took on the tenancy until his death in 1844. The following year his widow Sarah (Fletcher) married Thomas Doubell aged 31, her second cousin. She was 40. Sarah had 13 children from her first marriage, and another two by her second marriage. They continued to live at Hever until 1852 when they moved in with Thomas' parents at Whistlers, How Green, Hever.

### Sources:

1841, 1851 & 1861 census

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The Kentish Gazette

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[www.britishhistory.ac.uk](http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk)

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## SAVED FROM THE NOOSE!

By Stephen Wood

I think most family history researchers will probably find one or two 'skeletons in the cupboard' and this is the story of mine!

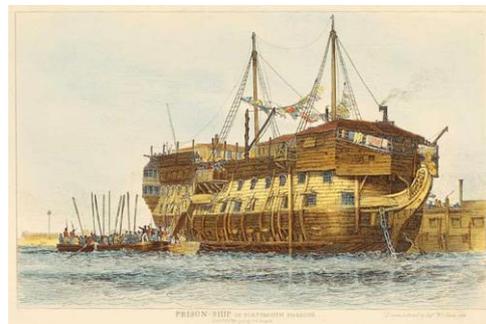
Charles Wood was born in Edenbridge in 1789, the son of William Wood and Elizabeth Durtnell, my 3x great grandparents. I am descended from Charles' brother William. Charles went on to marry Elizabeth Ashby from Frant in 1812. He was a collarmaker for horses, oxen and the like in Edenbridge, presumably obtaining the leather from the local tannery.

On 5th December 1817, Charles Wood and John Vale were arrested and indicted for stealing a horse at St. Sepulchres', Smithfield, belonging to Joseph Pennington of Godstone.

Their trial took place at the Old Bailey on 14th January 1818 and witnesses described how Wood and Vale stabled the horse at the Green Dragon, Smithfield for the night and tried to sell it on the following day. The horse was recognised by one of Joseph Pennington's servants who had previously been in charge of the horse, and he reported it to the authorities.

In Wood's defence, James Jones, the Edenbridge Constable, said he had known the defendants since childhood and that Wood had a very good character. This statement by the PC may have carried some weight with the judges

as whilst the pair were found guilty and sentenced to death – mercy was recommended. Their sentences were commuted to 'Transportation for Life'.



**Prison ship [hulk] in Portsmouth Harbour, Edward William Cooke, 1828.** © National Library of Australia

Charles was moved from Newgate Prison to a prison hulk in Portsmouth Harbour prior to being transported on the 19th July 1818, on the 'General Stewart' with 249 other prisoners, arriving at Port Jackson, Sydney, New South Wales on 31st December. He left behind a wife and two children to manage as best they could.

By 1829, Charles was living in Narellan, NSW and is described on his 'Ticket of Leave' as 5 feet 8½ inches, with black hair, a dark and sallow complexion, and dark hazel eyes; his trade - harness maker. That same year he applied to marry Sarah Bowyer, a 39 year-old onvict, but this was disallowed as his wife was still alive in England.

Again in 1834, now aged 45, he applied to marry Julia Hogan, aged 19, an orphan from the Cork House of Industry and Foundling Hospital, Ireland. She had arrived with another 202 girls and young women sent to provide potential wives

for the colony and to escape an impoverished Ireland. Yet again, marriage was disallowed, but they went on to have a child, Eliza, two years later.

In 1848, now aged 59, Charles was living in Parramatta, NSW where he was indicted for stealing a pig and found guilty. The sentence was 'to be worked in an iron gang for a period of twelve months'. 18 months later he died in Parramatta Lunatic Asylum.



**Men's ward in Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, June 1861.** Image: Parramatta City Council Research and Collection Services.  
[www.arc.parracity.nsw.gov.au](http://www.arc.parracity.nsw.gov.au)

Back in England, it seems his wife had returned to Frant where she had given birth to three more children, between 1822 and 1830, fathered by James Powell, the Miller of Frant. She later married James Powell and had two more children.

**Sources:**

Sydney Morning Herald, 1848

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[www.theweald.org](http://www.theweald.org)

## UNCOVERING THE HISTORY OF OUR HOUSE

By Ray Taylor



**Ben Seal and his son, John with his horse and cart used for delivering fish and greengrocery. At the rear of Addnett Cottage, Crouch House Road, Edenbridge, c.1940.** Image: P2002.79

It was more than forty years ago when I received a telephone call at my London office from my wife to reveal that after two years searching, she had found the 'perfect property'.

Just one small snag - it had only one bedroom (our current house had four!) and the kitchen was, shall we say, 'interesting'. On the plus side, there was planning consent for a further two bedrooms and an additional bathroom, and whilst the work was being done, we could all, including our large Labrador, stay in our small motorhome in the garden - wonderful.

With these thoughts I visited the cottage and immediately shared the excitement of the rest of the family, with the result that we were in our new home without much delay.

The property had a barn to the rear which proved a treasure trove for our seven year old daughter. She found a large ammonite and a wonderful engraving on a slate of a horse by Adrian Lewis-Williams. There was also a large amount of dressed stone blocks and paving slabs stored in the barn, ideal for a seven year old to climb. On investigation we found the stone was from the moated folly at Starborough and was possibly part of the original castle destroyed in the civil war, the owner of the folly having used the barn in the past to store materials used in its renovation. The stones and slabs now form an attractive path and patio. Several horseshoes were also found suggesting its use as a stable, but more of that later.

In the garden to the rear of the cottage was a substantial stone slab fixed into the ground and my seven year old, ever curious, wanted to know what treasure lay beneath. After much use of crowbars, I raised the block to discover a round hole giving access to a well. I must confess I was more than a little concerned at what might have been exposed. The well, now made safe, has never run dry even in periods of severe drought and I wonder if this was the source of water for former inhabitants.

Part of the cottage would seem to date from the mid-19th century, and its original footprint is easily determined by the thick walls and their covering of lathe and plaster.

My wife and I became volunteers at the museum and one of the great joys of this establishment is looking at the photographs of places and people from bygone times. One photograph shows a Mr Ben Seal, who ran a fish and grocery business, complete with horse and cart, taken in our back garden. The barn was used by Mr Seal so perhaps the horseshoes belonged to his horse if not to an earlier time.

We were told by the vendors that they believed the original cottage was the dwelling of a groom whose name was Addnett, hence the unusual name, and the barn was used for stabling. It is curious that in the deeds of the property it is called 'Addnetts', the word cottage being added later. The Victorian brick wall which establishes the boundary between our property and the later construction next door suggests a formal enclosure to a much larger area.

Our daughter now lives in London, but our two granddaughters now experience the excitement of our somewhat unusual cottage and who knows, perhaps there are more secrets for them to discover.

## HALF MOON BEER HOUSE

By Allen Varley and Joan Varley

The Half Moon Beer House was located at no.65 High Street, Edenbridge, opposite the museum, and where Domino's Pizza now resides. The building itself is a restored 16th century open hall house.

Records show that from 1851 - c.1862 it was the residence of William Nicholson, a master shoemaker. His son William followed the same occupation, and his two daughters, Mary and Lucy were dressmakers. His grandson, Egbert followed his grandfather's profession.

By the late 19th century the building was functioning as a beer house with a garden, the Half Moon. From the 1871 census we learn that George Vincent, age 35 and originally from Wingfield in Suffolk, was the Beer House Keeper. His housekeeper was Jane Coomber, age 22 of Edenbridge and there were two other Coomers lodging there, Albert age 2 and William, an agricultural labourer age 70 from Lingfield. Sadly, by 1881 Jane Coomber and her two children, Albert and Edith were residing in the 'Sevenoaks Union Workhouse' at Sundridge where she is listed as an inmate and domestic servant.

By 1873 George Ashdown, age 58, is listed as the Beer Retailer at the property. On 29th July that year, one Richard Linney, a labourer from Bishop Waltham, was charged with stealing two

sovereigns from George Ashdown and he appeared at Tonbridge Petty Sessions on 1st August 1873.

A number of people came forward to give evidence against Linney, including George Ridley, a labourer from Edenbridge who was lodging at the Half Moon when the incident occurred; Harriet Crowhurst, wife of a beer-shop keeper in Leigh who reported that



**Edenbridge High Street, c.1900-1905.**

Image: P2002.67

*"Linney had purchased a pint of beer from her and paid with a piece of gold"; and William Anderson, a grocer's assistant in Leigh who reported that "Linney had purchased a pair of trousers, a linen jacket, and several other articles of wearing apparel, to the value of 18s. 10d."*

PC Irwin had later found Linney in a beer house at Leigh and arrested him. Despite initially declaring his innocence, on the way to the Police Station he admitted his guilt. At the hearing Linney pleaded guilty and was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment with hard labour, which at that time could have been a labouring task such as road building or repairs.

Returning to the Half Moon, George Ashdown is listed again in the 1881 census, along with his wife Ann age 61. The census also lists William Creasey age 37 from Edenbridge, recorded as George Ashdown's son, and his wife Esther, age 33 and originally from Kensington. There were three lodgers, Arthur Grant age 11 from London, and two labourers, William Coomber, age 31, a widower from Lingfield, perhaps a relative of the Coomers who were living there in 1871; and John Houghton, age 65, a widower from Kingston upon Thames. George Ashdown died in 1886 and is buried in Edenbridge churchyard.

In 1891 the publican is recorded as George Millen, age 53. There was a George Millen listed as living at Gabriel's and working as a Policeman in 1881. His wife Elizabeth and six children are recorded as living there with him. Perhaps the George Millen running the Half Moon in 1891 was this former Policeman? In addition to his wife Elizabeth, five children were living with them at the Half Moon in 1891, their son George age 16, a Railway Clerk; daughter Emily 14, Percy 12, Herbert 10, and Maud 3, all born in Edenbridge and the latter four all still at school.

In addition to this family of seven, there was still room for nine lodgers: George and Charles Peacock, John Knight, John Woodgate, John Wood, Alexandra (sic) McGregor, and another John Knight, all general labourers; also John Burton a

gardener; and James Johnson, a cloth rich maker (sic).



**Edenbridge High Street, c.1905-1915.**

Image: P2013.2061

The Half Moon ceased business in 1901. The postcard above, from the early part of the 20th century shows a sign on the building with the words Half Moon in white, but it is difficult to make out the words above and below, the latter may be a name, possibly G. Millen, the last publican.

Another photograph in the museum's collection, dated c.1905-1915 shows a sign on the building for 'Boot Repairs' indicating a return to the profession of the earliest recorded occupants. The 1911 census shows there was a Charles Foster, Bootmaker, and his wife Mary and their three children, Violet age 14, Arthur age 6 and George age 3, living at this address.

For the next 46 years the building housed a Confectioners under various owners: 1916/17 - 1931 Mrs Winifred Greenslade; 1931-1953 Confectioner, Tobacconist & Library under the ownership of Frank Seymour, then Mrs C. Seymour; 1960/1-1962 D Batt,

Confectioner & Tobacconist. From 1963 the building housed a Bank, the Midland, then HSBC.

### References

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## DEN BRAY MEMORIES

*A posting on Facebook earlier this year about the museum becoming a Town Station Partner jogged the memory of former resident Den Bray and prompted him to contribute some photos and memories.*

I was a paper boy for W.H. Smiths. The papers for about eight paperboy rounds were sorted in the room to the left of the [station] door. My round went from the bottom of the approach road where W.H. Smiths' kiosk was, up to Marlpit Hill on a red W.H. Smiths bike with two panniers full up; on Saturdays collecting the paper money, all for ten bob [50p]. The bikes were kept in one of the garages on the left of the station, I assume they



are long gone. I left Croft Lane School, which was then the Secondary Modern, in January 1958, this

picture is of my last Saturday morning, money pouch on shoulder, taken outside my home at 9 Mead Road.



This next picture was taken at the end of Mead Road at the farm

gate. The two girls are my aunt, Dad's younger sister Beatrice (Bubbles) Bray with her friend Beryl Holmes who lived in no. 1 Foresters Cottages, Mead Road.

Tom Tester had the farm. The buildings on the right are Foresters Cottages, the sheds inside the gate, tractor sheds, the brick building was the farm milking parlour, now residential.

I started working on the Monday at Cyco Radio / Sellers in the Square - bike & pram shop, toy shop, fishing tackle, cycle repairs, charging accumulators, and selling paraffin.

This last photo is of Mum just setting off back home from her job at the



Vicarage when it was next to the Star Pub. The shop was a grocer's Keytes ... the houses Katharine Villas - c. early/mid 1930s.

### Editor's note

Den Bray is the son of Frederick Bray, after whom Bray Road in Edenbridge is named. You can read his story in: 'Operation Freshman and Bray Road' by Stuart McGregor, *Eden Valley Heritage*, no.31, 2017, pp.17-18.

N.B. Den recently sent us his memories of growing up in Mead Road, which have been added to our archives.

### CYCLE RACE

The museum has three photographs on file of a cycle race heading south through Edenbridge High Street, c.1990s. After posting one on Facebook, Simon Rodgers suggested it was the Prudential Tour of 1998.



Image: P2007.1.344, Photographer: Alan Dell

The 1998 Prudential Tour started in Edinburgh on 23 May 1998, with each stage heading further south. The 8th Stage was an 80 km route around Greater London and was won by Australian Jay Sweet. A participant perhaps better known in this country is Chris Boardman, now a cycling commentator, who won the Prologue and Stages 1 & 2. Another British cyclist, Robert Hayles

won Stage 7. I can't trace the route of the 8th Stage, but Simon thinks it finished in Rochester. The race winner was Australian Stuart O'Grady who was just 46 seconds ahead of Chris Boardman.

Ref. [www.cyclingarchives.com](http://www.cyclingarchives.com)

### OBITUARIES 2019/2020

We are sad to record the deaths of three much valued supporters of our museum.

**KEN COX** helped create the museum by joining the Research Group in 1997 and acquiring the objects donated or loaned by the Parish Church and Baptist Church in the town. As a gifted artist he designed a number of greetings cards and notelets featuring familiar buildings in the Eden Valley, and this artwork he generously donated to the museum to reproduce for sale in our shop.

**ROY COLES** died peacefully in his care home. Roy was the former Head Warden at Bough Beech Visitor centre, and a few years ago his wife donated his collection of c.300 hop-picking images to the museum, which led to our very successful 2019 hop-picking exhibition and display.

**PAT EVELMY** supported the museum from the early days, giving willingly of her time as a regular twice monthly steward, helping out with group visits, and providing wonderful cakes whenever needed.

## **EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM**

*A Dynamic Social History Museum in a 14th Century Farmhouse*

### **MUSEUM OPENING TIMES**

#### **February to December 2021**

Wednesday and Friday 2 to 4.30pm  
Thursday and Saturday 10am to 4.30pm  
Sundays (June, July and August) 2 to 4.30pm

**LAST ENTRY 4pm**

### **FREE GUIDED WALKS**

Evening walks: Saturdays June 13th, July 11th, August 8th, meet at the museum at 6.15pm for a 6.30pm start. Visit the museum before and after the walk.

Afternoon walk: September 12th,  
meet at the museum at 2pm.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Annual individual membership	£12
Annual family membership	£24
Annual corporate membership	£90

### **DONATIONS**

Cheques should be made payable to:

**Eden Valley Museum Trust**

*Send to:* The Treasurer, Eden Valley Museum, Church House,  
72 High Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5AR

**You can also donate online via the Charities Aid Foundation:**

go to: [www.cafonline.org](http://www.cafonline.org) and search using our charity number:

**Leaving a legacy in your Will to the Eden Valley Museum is a gift to future generations - helping to safeguard the future of our past.**

If you would like to discuss leaving a legacy, please contact the Treasurer, Eden Valley Museum, The Church House, 72 High Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5AR

### **EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM**

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