

EDEN VALLEY HERITAGE

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Issue Number 35

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The Eden Valley Museum – everywhere has a story to tell



West Lodge, South Park, Penshurst
Designed by George Devey

Eden Valley Heritage - Issue Number 35
Newsletter of the Eden Valley Museum

CONTENTS

Page

- 3. *From the Chair*
- 3. *Echoes of the Romans in the Weald Part III* by Cheryl Bell
- 8. *The Architect George Devey and his Connection with Penshurst Village*
by Claire Donithorn
- 12. *Saved From the Noose!* by Stephen Wood
- 14. *Alfred Sellers – An Appreciation* by Richard Butler and Helen Jackman
- 17. *Sir Walter Galpin Alcock* by Miranda Charalambous
- 19. *The Temperance Hotel, Edenbridge* by Allen and Joan Varley
- 22. *The Queen's Sweets*
- 23. Round up of museum activities 2021
- 24. Correspondence from members
- 25. Obituaries
- 26. *Pan Books*
- 27. *Cycle Race*

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Front cover: West Lodge, South Park, Penshurst, designed by George Devey, c.1990. Image: P2003.902

Back cover: Newly refurbished Museum Shop, 2021. © Stuart McGregor

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.

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FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the 2021 edition of *Eden Valley Heritage*. As we start to return to something that resembles normal life, we start rediscovering life in the Eden Valley and the richness that surrounds us. We all know that the Eden Valley is steeped in history, but I am always pleasantly surprised to find out more about the lives of some of our former residents.

We continue to learn about Roman activity in the area. Cheryl Bell's fascinating third essay about the Roman connection to the area helps us develop our understanding of activity in the area going back almost 2000 years. In the film, 'The Life of Brian', Reg (played by John Cleese) asked the question 'What have the Romans ever done for us?'. Whilst we all know about the Roman roads, through Cheryl's article we gain a better idea of life in Roman times, in and around the area. And to answer Reg's question, it may well be that they developed the local economy more than other groups in the area at that time.

Anyone who knows me will know that I like my music and for me the biggest surprise this edition was to learn that Sir Walter Alcock was born and lived in Edenbridge as a child. This is a prime example again of how aspects of national and maybe even international history can have its connections in the Eden Valley.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Eden Valley Heritage* as much as I have.

Lee Ward

ECHOES OF THE ROMANS IN THE WEALD PART III

By Cheryl Bell

Archaeological finds in the Edenbridge area:

Titsey Roman Villa and Temple

With the Eden Valley being an area of industrial activity for a long time, and the London - Lewes road an important route which crossed the North Downs above Titsey north of Edenbridge, the discovery of a Roman villa and Roman temple which sits on this road is no surprise. It proves that this route was well used. The Pilgrim's Way which runs east to west lies close by and was used throughout the years of Roman occupation.

The remains of a minor Roman villa in Titsey Park (source - *Historic England, Monument No.1005948*) just on the edge of Surrey, partially excavated between 1864-1893 and again in 1996-7, shows from a geophysical survey, a complex of buildings with a long boundary wall to the S.E. This wall enclosed a central courtyard or maybe a garden. Finds include castor or coarse ware pottery, glass, iron, bronze objects, and various coins. The Romano-Celtic temple stands 1.6km to the N.E. on the Roman road and was therefore accessible to travellers. This temple would have worshipped a particular god or spirit, so not a building constructed for religious activities. Individual worship and healing would have taken place in the open air in a sacred precinct close by (source - *Historic*

England Monument No.407426).

Investigations in 1879 and 1935 and written about in *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 1936 by J. Graham revealed pottery fragments dating from early 2nd to late 3rd centuries AD. It is most likely that the person who lived in the villa watched over the temple. Temples were widespread all over southern and eastern England but with only 150 sites known today, makes this temple of national importance. It also overlooks a stream which is one of the headwaters of the River Eden. The headwater of a river or stream is the farthest place in that river from its estuary or downstream confluence with another river, namely the River Medway.

Cremations

Several Roman cremations have been discovered in the Eden Valley which indicate a building, farmstead, or even a villa nearby. Cremation was the main rite during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD but changed to inhumation in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries. Even if archaeologists discovered a small settlement close to Edenbridge in future years, it was illegal in Roman law to bury the dead inside such a settlement. Burials would therefore occur along a Roman road, no nearer than two Roman miles (2960 metres) away. Cemeteries or individual interments were, therefore, located outside the sacred boundaries of a city or rural settlement. Funerals were a family concern and funeral rites took place at home and at the place of burial. By cremating a body, the Romans believed

that the soul of the deceased was purified and freed. Ashes were then placed in an urn and the urn buried. If the pyre did not burn hotly enough, some parts of the body would still be left as in the case of the calcined remains of a young female found in a field next to Spode Lane, Cowden and close to the Roman road that runs to Den Cross. Calcined remains have been exposed to strong heat. This female's remains were ploughed up and found inside a Roman urn of blue colour which also contained charcoal.

A Roman cremation now in Maidstone Museum, dating to the 2nd century was found in an olla, a ceramic jar previously used for the storage of water or dry foods. It was found in the grounds of Culver House, Penshurst.

Eight Roman urns were discovered at Skeynes Manor in Edenbridge and a further seven were found in 1892 south of Oxted but close to the boundary of the parish. Three urns in a row, although destroyed, were found only 18 inches under the earth. The other four cinerary urns were found to the south. One of the four has survived and is hand-made and contained bones, a small fibula brooch and a coin. That these cremations have been discovered in our area indicates that Romans were definitely settled here but most likely spaced out.

Miscellaneous Discoveries

Ludwells Farm, Spode Lane, Cowden is the site of the discovery of a Romano - Gaulish white pipe clay figurine of a nude boy. It is only 5cm high and sadly

broken in two, but it indicates an import from the Allier region of central France in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes. Those who modelled clay figurines like this, were producing work in the late 2nd century AD and the boy is similar to those produced in a two-piece mould by modellers from this French area. A former owner of Ludwells Farm has the figurine in his possession.



Ludwells Farm, Spode Lane, Cowden

Image: P2007.1.280

In 1892 a large intaglio Roman gold ring was deposited in the British Museum. Intaglio is a design incised or engraved into a material as opposed to a relief print of a raised surface design. This ring was set in onyx stone and appears to show a Bacchanalian mask. Onyx is thought to protect the wearer from evil and enhance their confidence level. Bacchus was the god of wine and pleasure in ancient Greece and Rome. It was found in 1810 by a labourer in a field near Beeches Farm, just outside Dry Hill Camp in Dormansland.

Lewes and the London - Lewes Road

Three major roads through the Weald would have been completed as soon as possible after AD43. Whilst Watling Street was a very direct military road

taking foot traffic as quickly as possible, the London road was more likely built for pack horses and carts transporting commercial goods. The London-Lewes Way was 71km long between Watling Street at Peckham and Lewes itself. It passed through Beckenham and West Wickham, crossed the North Downs above Titsey and then continued onto higher ground on the Ashdown Forest. This road enabled communications to be kept open and reinforced, secured, stabilized and strengthened any gains that the Romans had already made. The crossing place on the River Eden and its importance for a local population after the Romans left, has meant the London-Lewes road has survived today through Edenbridge and on to Marlpit Hill.

Lewes is important for understanding our area as it was once a viable, safe and protected, important Roman port which stood on the River Ouse. It is highly likely iron goods from Cowden and the Ashdown Forest would have been transported to this port and via the Ouse to the sea at Newhaven. The course of the River Ouse runs over a flat and swampy area called the Lewes Levels, before meeting the English Channel. Alluvial deposits of vegetable mould and impure peat containing tree trunks and silt or blue clay, have exposed marine and freshwater shells. Sea water must have reached as far as these levels and formed a simple and shallow salty lake with tidal ebb and flow. Coins have also been found showing the heads of Domitian and Antoninus Pius.

Since the Levels have shown few deposits after Roman occupation in this area, we must presume this plain became cut off from the estuary at Newhaven. According to the Rev. T. W. Horsfield in his article in *'The History and Antiquities of Lewes and its Vicinity'* Vol 1, the Romans in Lewes established a permanent post encouraged by the commanding views to the Northwest and its good position for the Roman fleet to convey troops from post to post. He believes the Roman camp stretched from Westgate Lane and Keere Street on the west and extended to Fisher's Street and Saint Mary's Lane on the east. The boundary on its south is delineated by the bottom of Keere Hill, the road which runs towards its northern extremity, where All Saints Church stands. The camp's edge ran over Brack Mount to Castle Banks and finally back to the top of Westgate Lane.



Example of Antoninus Pius coin found near Delaware Farm, Edenbridge

EDEVT:1552

Image: © Claire Donithorn

The Rivers Medway and Eden

The River Medway is 70 miles long and rises in Ashdown Forest in West Sussex, flowing from west to east. It flows through Tonbridge, Maidstone, and the Medway conurbation in Kent before entering the Thames Estuary near Sheerness. In the 16th century it flowed from Sheerness as far as Penshurst.

Today it is a free-flowing river, but it was navigable as far as Maidstone until 1740, when river barges of 40 tons could reach Tonbridge and offload at wharves. If the Romans used the Medway in Tonbridge with barges called *codicaria* to send corn, fodder, stone, timber, and iron goods to Aylesford and onto Rochester, they could have been towed along a river path.

The River Eden is a tributary of the Medway and rises at the foot of the North Downs near Titsey in Surrey before turning eastwards and entering Kent. It flows through Edenbridge before meeting the Medway in Penshurst. A riverine link to prove that Romans used these rivers needs future investigation.

Moving goods by river or road

Comparison of transport options: I believe Romans in the Central Weald would have used both rivers and roads to transport iron goods to the coast, where the Roman fleet could then take it on to Southwark or across the English Channel. However, they would have found it cheaper to use river transport. According to Simon Elliott, a cargo of iron could be moved 130km by river but only 16km by land and both would have cost the same amount. So, at the height of iron production, it is possible they used both methods. Peter Salway says, *'water transport complemented roads.'* Rivers and ports began to silt by the mid-3rd century, making coastal access much harder. At the industry's busiest output between AD150 and AD250, 750 tonnes

of raw materials were being extracted and used, but this fell to only 50 tonnes between AD350 and AD400. In 2012 Russel and Staveley made a geophysical survey at Great Cansiron Farm between Hartfield and Cowden. This grade 3 iron producing site appears to be quite extensive. Several streams run through this site and join the River Medway. They believe this survey could show quays along the banks of one of the streams indicating its riverine use. But nothing has been confirmed yet and a further investigation is needed. Cleere and Crossley have established that 600 people were employed in the iron industry at its busiest in the Weald and another 600 would have been needed for administration and transportation of goods. The military would certainly have been overseeing all the Wealden sites and checking on civilian contractors, and they were answerable to the Procurator Metallorum who was the senior Roman in overall charge. Neither he nor the military would have lived on site because of the unhealthy toxic fumes. So, we must presume the military returned to local barracks, possibly in Edenbridge or Chiddingstone. If forced labour was used, they would have lived near their work in timber framed buildings, now long gone. The Procurator, not constantly needed, did not live close and no elite housing has been found in our area yet. Local farmers may have offered their help when the crop season was over.

Trade and Markets in the Weald

As soon as the Roman army felt confident of their control of the Eden Valley, they began to take advantage and utilise and profit from the metal deposits. The Wealden population needed manufactured goods. Even lowly peasants required the essentials for timber buildings and the military needed supplies to build bridges and wharves. This required an efficient system of roads and easy movement of troops, and these troops and the ox-teams which pulled bulky and heavy objects needed to be fed. Local food production was therefore essential. Government pressure was applied to own land and to grow corn, cabbages, parsnips, turnips, and carrots and keep sheep for meat and wool. Being a small-scale farmer indicated a certain respectability on the social scale. The presence of artefacts and pottery found in the Eden Valley shows that rural settlements had become assimilated into the Roman economy with single farms with stockyards surrounded by enclosures. The pastures around Edenbridge, close to roads and trackways, would have necessitated a need for open air markets rather than town shops. If there was a small garrison in the Eden Valley, it would imply that grain and crops grew successfully, and local smallholders had access to a mixed diet of meat, vegetables, and fruit.

With a lack of archaeological evidence for the existence of a small town locally we can only hope that further investigations will take place in the

Central Weald. This needs finance and an increased shared interest and knowledge of the Eden Valley. However, how the local landscape was farmed has been concealed by land use today and my theories must remain unproven.

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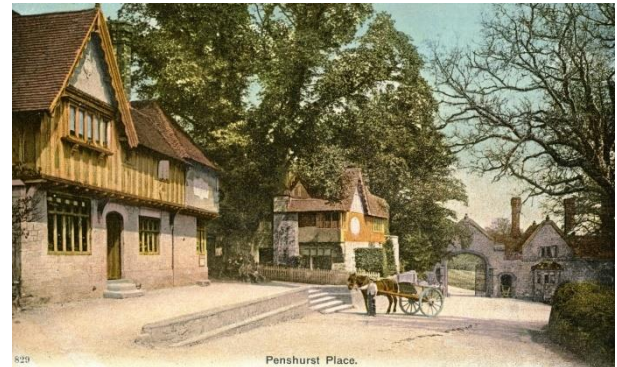
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THE ARCHITECT GEORGE DEVEY and his CONNECTION WITH PENSHURST VILLAGE

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.

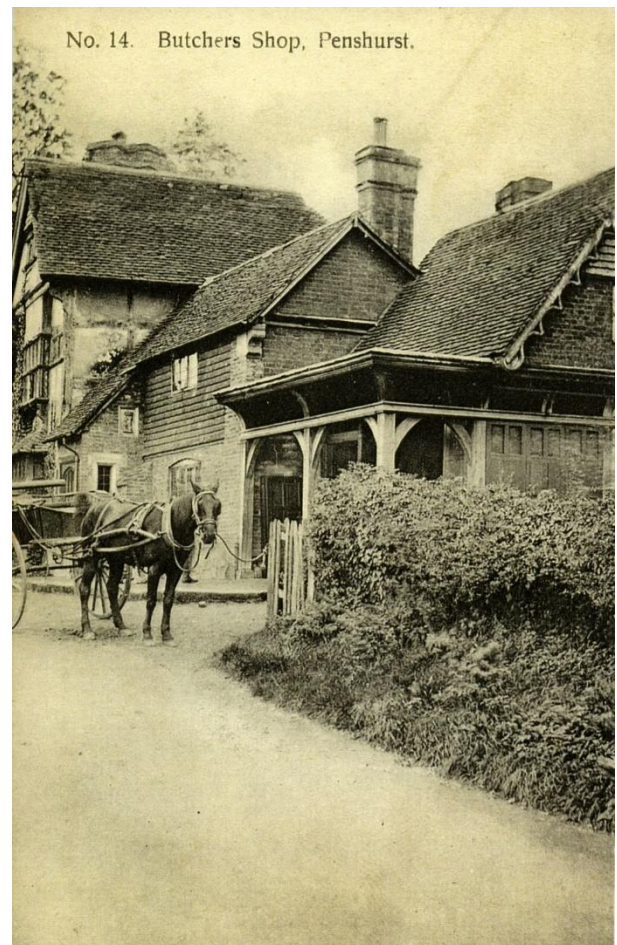
George Devey's career spanned from 1846 to his death in 1886. His buildings were quite exceptional for the time. Classical building with columns and pediments dominated the architectural style for public buildings and the new Gothic Revival dominated church and domestic architecture.

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.



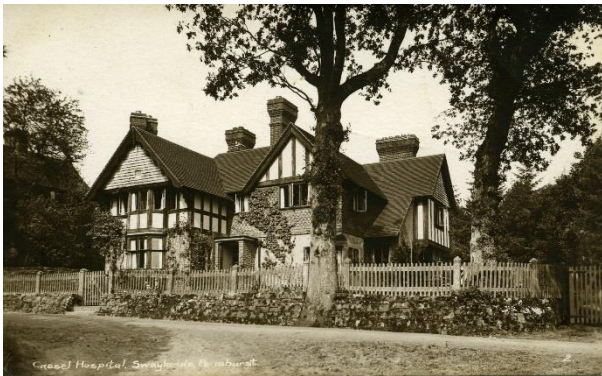
The old butcher's shop, Penshurst, c.1910.
Image: P2003.900

For Sir Henry Hardinge he produced designs for the new barn at Holm Farm with characteristic 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 in 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 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 stonework, ornamental oak work, stone mullion windows and tall chimneys; a celebration of English vernacular building so typical of his work.

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



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

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

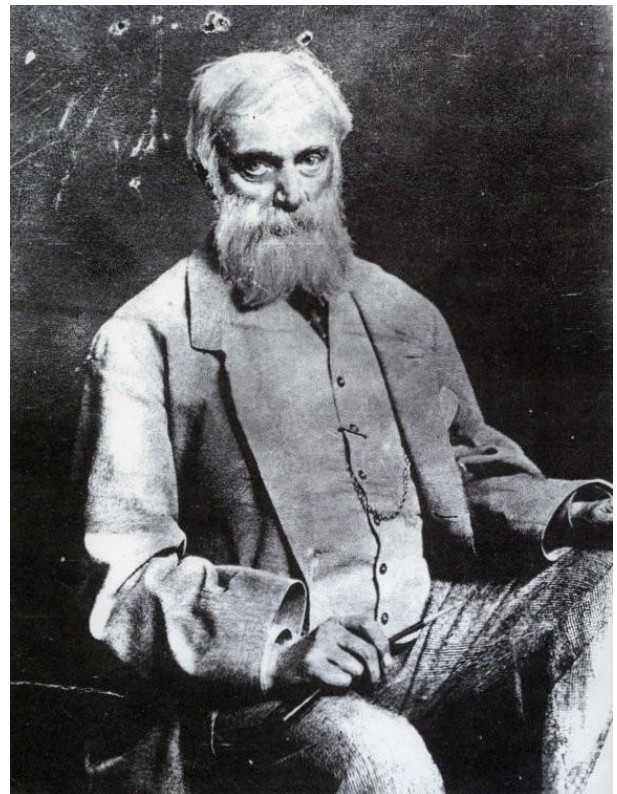
acquired a broader public recognition of his architectural style.

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

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SAVED FROM THE NOOSE!

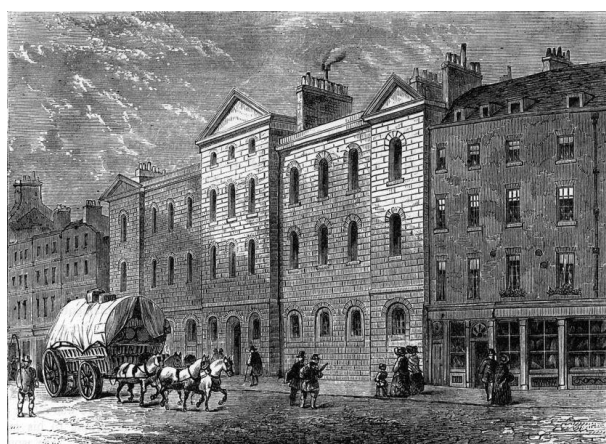
By Stephen Wood

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 Durnell, 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.



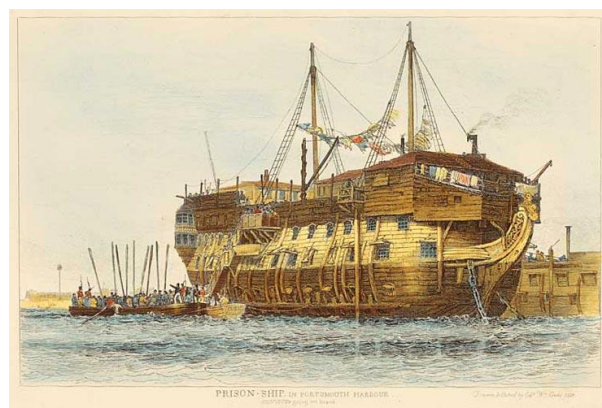
Giltspur Street, Smithfield, 1840 – one of the locations where they tried to sell the horse.

Image: Thornbury, Walter. 1878. *Old and New London*. Volume 2. Originally published by Cassell, Petter & Galpin, London. Freely available at: www.british-history.ac.uk

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 responsible for 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 convict, 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

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

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Note:

William and Elizabeth Wood, and several of their children, are buried in St. Peter's Churchyard, Hever.



**In memory of William Wood late of this parish
who departed this life 8 October 1820 aged
62 years**

**In memory of Elizabeth Wood wife of William
who departed this life 12 October 1842
aged 76 years**

ALFRED SELLERS – AN APPRECIATION

By Richard Butler and Helen Jackman



Edenbridge Leisure Centre, 2021.

Image © Stuart McGregor

‘Something exceptional in the Valley is the number of sporting clubs and societies and of course the magnificent Leisure Centre ... a direct result of the munificent benefaction of Mr Sellers whose bicycle and fishing shop in the Square was the Mecca for many who grew up here.’ These were the words written by Alan Smith, in the Chairman’s message - 2005 edition of Eden Valley Heritage. In the 2006 edition we appealed for material to create a profile of this generous donor, but with no response. He remained an enigma - until January 2021!

Nearly forty years after his death the museum posted a photograph of Sellers shop on Facebook, and the response was overwhelming. The following are a few of over forty posts.

‘I remember it well, my Mum used to take me in to spend my pocket money, later on I used to go in to buy my maggots for fishing. Also, any bike spares. An absolute delight of a shop. Alf was a great guy, and Edenbridge would

not be what it is now without people like him.’ Tony.

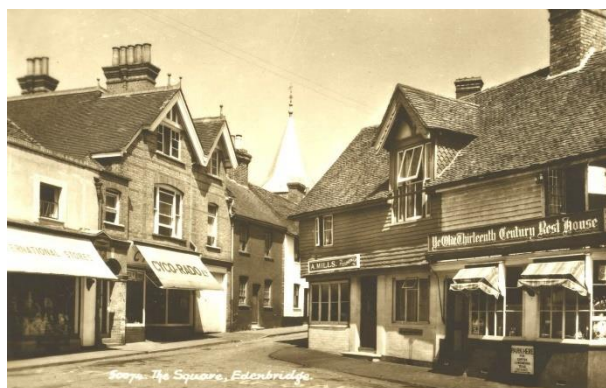
‘Yes!! Cyco Rado!! Mr Sellers was a very friendly gentleman, sold nearly every toy you could think of - balsa wood for hobbies, plastic kits which had a motor and adding batteries would make the toy jeep go along. Airfix kits, bikes would be mended in his back yard and in November fireworks would be for sale under the counter. The Hornby 00 train (in the window) was operated by a one penny slot in the left-hand side of the door jamb.’ Mark.

‘I remember the train very well and put quite a few pennies in the slot to watch the train come along the window edge, round the front, then in the tunnel out of sight and then reappear along the edge. I think it used to go around three or four times.’ John.

‘Mr Sellers often had to come out with a pair of pliers if someone had tried to poke a bent penny down the slot and got it stuck. Even if you only wanted a new valve rubber or dust cap for a bicycle it wasn’t any trouble for him to search through those chests of small drawers.’ James.

Unconfirmed research indicates Alf Sellers was born in Lancashire in 1906, and prior to the start of WW2 was living in Sevenoaks. He first appears in Edenbridge in the late 1950’s when he took over the management of No.1 The Square. According to museum records this building was occupied by Cyco-Rado Ltd from 1939 to 1952; Berkleys 1953 – 1958; Sellers 1958 – 1982; Clarks 1987 –

1993 and Lennox Cato from 1993 to the present.



Cyco-Rado Ltd., The Square, Edenbridge, c.1950. Image P2001.1.30

One of the Facebook respondents was Den Bray who provides a more detailed picture. In December 1957 he was about to reach his fifteenth birthday when Mr Heal, 'Bouncer Bill from Marlpit Hill' and the headmaster at Croft Lane School, told him to go home for Christmas and if you don't get a job over the holiday period come back and leave at Easter. Passing Cyco Rado he spotted a sign in the window, 'Boy wanted'. He applied and spent five happy years with Alf working five and a half days a week at a wage of £2.10s. 'I had bacon butties and coffee from the Thirteenth Century Rest House every morning at ten o'clock ... along with tea and three Jaffa cakes in the afternoon, bought for me by Alf – he had his lunch there every day. What a great boss. That blind outside I had to pull down every day. (Cyco Rado when down, but when up it showed the shop name as Berkleys or Sellers).'

Alf lived over the shop in the small room above the garage door. He rented out the rest of the upstairs to Joe, a Scot who had his family with him and was the manager of the gent's outfitters, Allens,

across the Square. He moved out when he managed to get a house with a garden, better suited for the family, in Church Street. With the rooms vacant Alf turned them into a cycle showroom – the shop lacked space downstairs.'



A. Sellers, The Square, Edenbridge, c.1980. Image: P2003.923

Alf had a partner in Southborough, by the name of Stoneman, with whom he exchanged stock and on Wednesdays he went off to buy more. Representatives called frequently offering Ever Ready batteries, needed for radios, or paraffin for heating. In addition to the electric train in the window he also erected a Meccano model of the Eiffel Tower, 4-5ft high, with a working lift going up and down.

Den recalls Alf's hobby was small bore rifle shooting and he often spoke of competitions he had won at Bisley. 'He was also a clever fella with his hands. He made a switch from scratch out of a pair of cycle clips and a copper rod for the shop door to alert me via a bell when I was out back in the workshop.' He was also a smoker, his brand being Craven "A" black cat.

Lennox Cato of Cato Antiques has been the occupant of No.1, The Square for

twenty-eight years. 'Now and again, we have people coming in who remember the train in the window and have very fond memories of Mr Sellers and the shop. I have to say, the building has a wonderful feel to it, a sort of warm atmosphere. So many people say the same, so maybe his spirit is still here!'

Alf was helped in the shop by Joyce Cloke, who originally worked at the adjoining International Store. They eventually married but Joyce predeceased him, dying in 1981. Alf died in Crouch House Road on the 13th June 1982 and his estate passed to Edenbridge Round Table for the use of the community.

Richard Butler continues the story of how this bequest was used to benefit the people of Edenbridge.

My memories of Alf Sellers are of a kind and gentle man. A generous man who possessed a great interest in our town of Edenbridge. Although I was aware of the respect he truly deserved from all age groups of our town, my direct connection was as a member of Edenbridge Round Table. Our Aims and Objectives included raising funds for International, National and Local Charities. This was achieved by a variety of functions, social occasions and probably the best known locally, the Edenbridge Round Table Pram Race!

Our various fundraising events would incorporate a raffle or a prize draw and the Edenbridge traders and businesses always provided wonderful support, particularly Alf Sellers whose enthusiasm and generosity was unflinching. It was a joy to visit Alf at his cycle and fishing tackle

shop in The Square. In amongst the vast array of stock Alf would be standing at the end of the shop with a big grin, he would ask, "is it another raffle prize?" He always showed a great interest in our activities. When I was Table Chairman my wife Frances and I invited Alf and his wife Joyce to our Annual Ladies' Night, as our guests. We didn't know they were very proficient dancing partners. I have great memories of them very happily dancing the night away!

Sadly, Alf became very ill and I visited him regularly at the Edenbridge Cottage Hospital. On one occasion



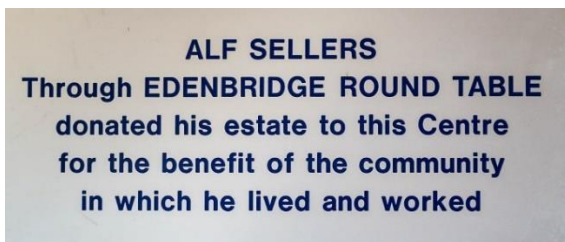
Alf Sellers peeping out from behind the bride, Janice Bray. Image: © Denis Bray

Nigel Young joined me and Alf had great delight in informing us he had bequeathed his total estate to Edenbridge Round Table! I explained it was a very unusual situation. He thoroughly enjoyed our stunned and confused demeanour and declared his solicitors had completed all the legal formalities.

Very sadly Alf passed away. After much discussion, the members of Edenbridge Round Table decided that his bequest should be applied to a worthy and significant local cause.

This was around the time the Sevenoaks District Council had announced the construction of the new Edenbridge Leisure Centre.

A meeting was arranged, and our proposal to offer Alf's considerable bequest to the Council was discussed. In recognition of Alf's significant standing, in the Community, we requested his name should be associated with the Centre. The Council were not prepared to name the Leisure Centre after him but agreed the main hall would be called 'The Alf Sellers Hall'.



Plaque in Edenbridge Leisure Centre, 2021.
Image © Stuart McGregor

To this day, this recognition serves as a tangible reminder of his friendly support and devotion to our community. A kind and gentle man indeed!

Alf would no doubt have been amazed that four decades after his death social media would finally provide the legacy he deserved.

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Editors' note

The 'magnificent' Leisure Centre, to which Alf Sellers made a major financial contribution at the end of the 20th century, is now under the management of Sencio, and has recently slumped into a sad state of disrepair.

SIR WALTER GALPIN ALCOCK

By Miranda Charalambous



Sir Walter Alcock, 1861-1947.

Reproduced with permission of Salisbury Cathedral: from the archive of Salisbury Cathedral School.

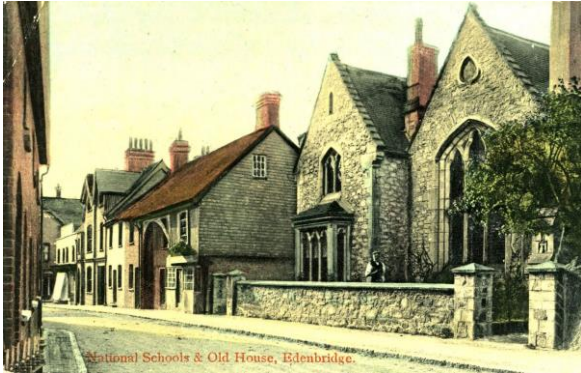
Walter Alcock was an English organist and composer of church music who was born in Edenbridge on the 29th December 1861. His greatest ambition, and one which he achieved, was to be the organist at Salisbury Cathedral, a post which he held from 1916 until his death in 1947. He was knighted in 1933.

He performed at the coronations of three English monarchs, King Edward VII (1902), King George V (1911) and George VI (1937), the latter of which he was one of five modern composers, including Edward Elgar. Of all the great composers that Walter studied, it was Elgar that he most admired. One of his most treasured possessions was a signed copy of the *Dream of Gerontious*.

Early Life

Walter lived in Edenbridge with his parents, Walter and Mary and his five

siblings, Frederick, William, Gilbert, Stanley and Florence until he was seven years old. His father, Walter William Alcock was the second Headmaster of the Edenbridge Church School, which his son attended.



National School, Church Street, Edenbridge, 1906. Image: P2001.1.36

Very little is known about Walter's childhood in Edenbridge, other than that he once saw Charles Dickens drive by! The Alcocks moved to Islington in 1868 when his father found work at the Middle Class School there. The family relocated to Twickenham in 1871 when Walter's father was appointed the Master and Superintendent of the Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage at Fortescue House.

Walter came from a very musical family. His father played the cello and sang with a wonderful baritone voice. Each of his siblings played an instrument apart from his sister Florence who also sang. As a little boy, Walter was so keen to learn the organ that he was known to pull out the drawers of a writing desk as if they were stops while his brother blew on it!

At Twickenham, Walter became a chorister at Holy Trinity Church on the Green. He received lessons from the organist, E.H. Sugg at St Mary's Church in exchange for playing the organ at Evensong. He won a scholarship to the national Training School at the age of fifteen where he studied under Sir Arthur Sullivan and John Stainer. During the 1880s, Walter became organist at the Quebec Chapel in St Marylebone and afterwards, assistant organist at Westminster Abbey. In 1902, he was appointed organ professor at the Royal College of Music and organist of the Chapel Royal at St James' Palace and also taught Princess Mary.

Past times

Walter had several hobbies and interests which he pursued with as much enthusiasm as his music. As a young man his most favourite activity was cycling. One of the first bicycles he rode was a 52" high bicycle, more commonly known as a penny farthing and which he could mount in one hop! Walter, being a product of his time was fascinated by photography. He used a stereoscopic camera and learnt to develop and print his own photographs. He also made slides from the images for his magic lantern.



Alcock and Choristers with the large gauge model railway in his garden, c.1945.

Reproduced with permission of Salisbury Cathedral: from the archive of Salisbury Cathedral School.

Another passion involved the making of model steam engines, including a 1” scale model of the Midland Express. Having no access to drawings, he took the dimensions with his walking stick when the train stopped at St Pancras Station. Most of his knowledge came from engine drivers whom he met in the sheds at Twickenham. He was, of course an expert at maintaining organs and took a huge interest in the restoration of the organ at Salisbury.

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‘Sir Walter Alcock’, *The Twickenham Museum*, 2001 <www.twickenham-museum.org.uk> [Accessed 29.07.2021]

‘Sir Walter Alcock’, *The Times* (London, England) (50864) 12th September 1947, p7.

THE TEMPERANCE HOTEL, EDENBRIDGE

by Allen Varley and Joan Varley

The Temperance Society was a social movement opposed to the consumption of alcohol. Abstinence had gained popularity in the Victorian era and remained prevalent until WW2.



Temperance Hotel, 29 High Street, Edenbridge, c.1900. Image: P2003.970

The Temperance Hotel in Edenbridge was located at 29 High Street. Prior to 1900 the building appears to have been residential. The 1901 census lists a Catherine Dumayne as running a Coffee Palace at this address, and her 20-year old son Ithel [sic] was also living there. It appears that prior to opening the Coffee Palace in Edenbridge, Catherine and her husband Henry lived in Knightsbridge. On the 1891 census Henry is listed as a Coachman / Domestic Servant and he and Catherine and their three children were all living at 98 Eaton Mews South, Knightsbridge. From 1902 to 1910 Henry Dumayne is listed in trade directories as running the Coffee Rooms in Edenbridge, but by 1911 he had become a farmer and they were both living at Lingfield Lodge with a 15-year-

old domestic servant called Nelly Champion. Also living at Lingfield Lodge at that time were Thomas and Mary Mitchell, Thomas being a farm labourer.



George V coronation procession about to pass the Temperance Hotel, on right, 1911.

Image: P2009.1609

During the time the Dumaynes were running the hotel, one of their gentleman residents got into a bit of trouble, ending up in court. Edward Bradbury, a gentleman staying at the hotel in 1903 was caught trespassing on land to the south of Edenbridge by William Chandler, a gamekeeper. In his defence at Tonbridge Petty Sessions, Edward said he was unaware that he had trespassed saying, “*he had permission from Mr Charles Day to shoot in the adjoining meadow, and having shot a rabbit it ran into the wood, and he was compelled to follow it to put it out of its misery.*” This defence carried no weight, and he was fined 2s. 6d. with 17s. 2d. costs for trespassing in search of game on land owned by Mr James Kent.

From 1911 it was William Henry Maynard running the Temperance Hotel.

1914-1918

During WWI, the government deemed sobriety to be an important factor in the drive for production, especially in large munitions factories. Taxes were raised on alcohol to increase revenue for the war effort, opening hours were curtailed and limitations were imposed on the drinks trade between Britain and her allies. By 1915, even treating a person to a drink was banned. However, the government did not prohibit drink altogether.

Troops serving with British

Expeditionary Force were given 2.5 fluid ounces (71mls) of rum daily during the severe winter of 1914. Spirits were also given to those suffering from shell shock. Some doctors believed that drink hindered a soldier’s proficiency and was detrimental to health. Others regarded drink to be a morale booster. As debates continued in the press, there was a general consensus amongst the British public that abstinence should be a shared issue and even George V and Lord Kitchener banned it in their homes. Many towns had temperance hotels, where alcohol was strictly prohibited.

Historically, heavy drinking had been common in the British Army and especially in India, where troops had little recreation or entertainment. Some regiments set up their own temperance societies to tackle the issue. Eventually, the British Army established the Soldiers Total Abstinence Association which

became the Army Temperance Association in 1888. Members of the organisation signed a pledge to remain teetotal for a fixed period such as between six and twenty years. If they could keep the pledge, they were awarded a medal. Temperance medals evoked a strong sense of pride with their wearer but could not be worn alongside military medals.

Captain Lionel Gardner Locket

Captain Locket was President of the Royal West Kent Army Temperance Association, but interestingly he came from a brewing family. He lived at Ashcombe Cottage in Edenbridge and served in India with the 1st Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment. Whilst in India, Lionel married Moira Evangeline Maloney at Mussoorie in Bengal and it was at that time that he became President of the Royal West Kent Army Temperance Association. Lionel survived the Great War and was awarded the Territorial Force War Medal. Lionel's older brother, Lt. George Eimer Locket, who served with the 3rd Btn, Suffolk Regiment was killed in France on the 28 June 1915. George's memorial stands in front of Edenbridge Parish Church, and he is commemorated on the Edenbridge War Memorial. Lionel's parents, who lived at Whitelands in Edenbridge, came from a long line of brewers and coal merchants. His father, George Cooper Locket inherited the family breweries at Mitcham and also founded the Locket's

Merthyr Steam Coal Company which sunk the Mardi Pits in the Rhondda Pace Valley.

Post-WWI

Returning to the High Street. After WWI Mrs Maynard ran a café at no.29 until 1935. From 1936, and on into the 1970's, Ronald Quilter ran a Radio, TV and Record shop. In a previous article in EVH Peter Winchester shared his memories of Quilters' ...*Dad bought a TV from Quilters, it cost 54 Guineas and only had programmes 5 to 6pm and again from 8 to 10pm, the gaps were gradually filled! The biggest boost must have been the Queen's coronation in 1953*'. During the 1990's the shop sold baby clothes and following on it was a hairdressers' variously called: Design A Head, Talking Heads, and Debon Hair. Since 2010 Alex Jones, Undertaker.

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THE QUEEN'S SWEETS?

As remembered by Brenda Hillman



In May 1960 HRH Duchess of Gloucester visited Edenbridge to officially open the latest improvement at the Edenbridge and District War Memorial Hospital.

Image: P2019.3649_1

Brenda Hillman received a phone call at Marsh Green School from Eileen Wickenden asking if the children would like to come to the event. She said that she would arrange transport using the community mini-bus and Brenda thought that it would be good for the children to be involved in a local event. The children made paper flags and they all set off on a lovely sunny morning and collected in Blossoms Park near the gateway to the hospital grounds.



Image: P2019.3649_9

In due course the Royal Flight helicopter landed in the far corner of the park and the Duchess was guided towards the gathered children and chatted to them and the teachers before going through the gate for her visit to in the hospital. The pilot then came over and chatted to the children and teachers. He took the children over for a closer look at the helicopter and told them about what he did. He then passed round a bag of sweets which he solemnly told the children were the Queens! They were very impressed to have a sweet from the Queen! They all then returned to school.



Image: P2019.3649_10

The purpose of the visit was to officially open a new x-ray department at the hospital, funded by the League of Friends.



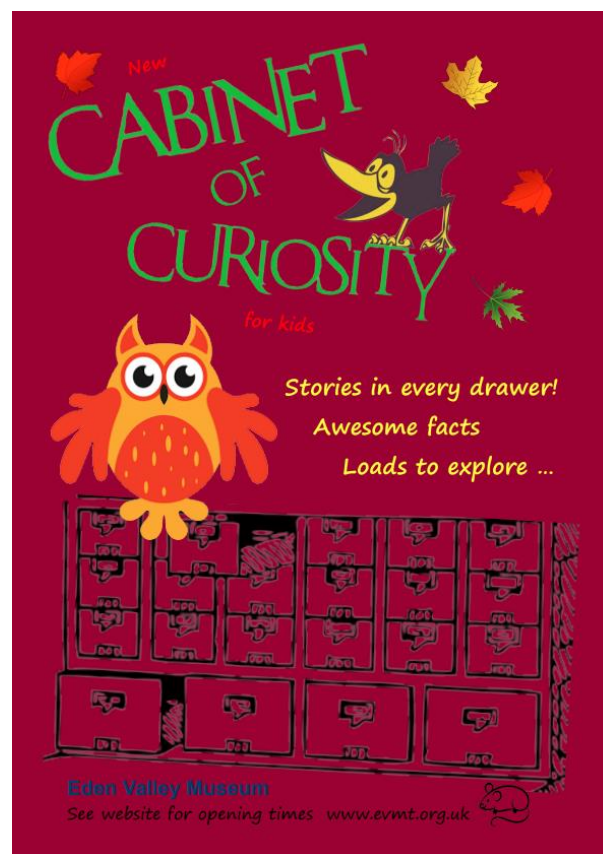
Image: P2019.3649_2

ROUND UP OF MUSEUM ACTIVITIES

2020 marked the 20th Anniversary of the Museum's opening. Sadly, the Covid-19 pandemic thwarted plans to celebrate, however staff and volunteers busied themselves increasing our online presence via our website and various social media campaigns, bringing exhibitions to life in the virtual environment and leading to lively discussions whilst raising the online profile of the museum.

We re-opened in June 2021. Major exhibitions throughout 2021 were 'On the Roman Road', '900th Anniversary of the Parish Church' (postponed from 2020), and our 20th Birthday Exhibition (carried over from 2020). New objects on display included two 17th century Edenbridge trade tokens, ten Roman artefacts found in the Eden Valley by a local metal detectorist, an original 1930's telephone through which visitors can hear the memories of local residents in their own words and voices. The memories include a projectionist in the Negresco cinema, a Land Girl in Chiddingstone, and a policeman in Edenbridge between 1965 and 1990.

A new hands-on discovery zone has been designed to entertain and educate children and their families when they visit the museum. As part of our Wheels of Time involvement, the Collections Manager created online projects to enable children to collect digital badges.



A digital tour of the upstairs galleries and timeline is currently being prepared for use on an iPad for less able visitors.

Our Box Room gallery has also undergone some changes with a new farming display featuring the Bolebroke Cup.

From late 2020 and on into 2021 the museum hosted a number of online and hybrid talks on 'Pub Signs', 'Baking in WWI and WW2', and 'The Romans are Coming'.

A major project to refurbish the shop and move the WWI and WW2 displays to the first floor was undertaken by our House Manager and volunteers during our closed periods and completed shortly before re-opening in June. We'd love to hear members views on the changes which have primarily been aimed at

making the shop more accessible and spacious, as well as visible from the High



Museum Shop, 2021. © Stuart McGregor

Street (when we're open).

Our volunteers are the backbone of the museum. Our ongoing thanks goes to all our loyal volunteers whilst we continue to explore ways to build the team and encourage new volunteers from all demographics.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM MEMBERS

From Don Garman

I had been meaning to contact you about the magazine having made a contribution, but it arrived today. Lots of interesting content.

Pauline and I were interested in the article about the MacKinnons as Pauline's father was an underwriter at Lloyds and began work in the MacKinnons box as the boy, he had a break during the war when he joined the Royal Navy and returned to MacKinnons in 1946. He knew Sir Percy and Graham very well and kept in contact with the latter for several years after he left the

syndicate. Pauline remembers visiting the Mackinnons at Crockham Hill as a child.

I remember the arrival of what seemed to be a rather flea-bitten monkey!! A good example of an object with a story.

From Pauline Broussard née Cross

... in your last newsletter, I read an interesting article by Den Bray who lived in Mead Road. Well, although the houses up that road are quite old, the road was not made up by the council for many years. In the 1950's it was decided upon and each person had to pay for his frontage. However, the top house of Eden Villas had frontage on the main road and sideage on Mead Road. This house belonged to my grandfather. Naturally he thought he shouldn't pay because he would never use it, also it was very long, so expensive, meaning he had even more to pay than each other resident in Mead Road.

My grandfather went to court over this and lost. He was not in good health and was very upset and had to pay. Not so long later, he died. It's not a fond memory for me of course, but it is a true story of Edenbridge.

Thank you to all our readers who sent us such nice comments on the last issue of Eden Valley Heritage. We are always pleased to receive feedback and we hope you enjoy this issue just as much. Eds.

OBITUARIES 2020/2021

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

JEAN CUST 1950 - 2021

Jean and her husband Cad were staunch friends and volunteers of the Eden Valley Museum dating from the initiative in 1997. When I started as Hon. Curator in 2003, I was very lucky to have Jean to work with. She was our first Publicity Officer. All publicity was still very paper based and posters, leaflets and advance publicity had to be sent by post or delivered by hand. All I had to do was feed her the dates and information and she produced all the artwork on Publisher. She also made sure we had an up-to-date list of all the local groups, schools, pubs, hotels, libraries, shops, and any other venues kind enough to help us with our marketing. There seemed to be a constant flow of projects to publicise like half-term activities for children, talks, exhibitions and services that the museum was promoting. I remember she would arrive with each batch ready for distribution, marked up for our team of runners to take around the district.

Jean also volunteered as a steward, carried out research for the WW1 exhibition in 2014 and as secretary of the Edenbridge and District Twinning Association curated an exhibition on their behalf which introduced our many French visitors to the history of the area.

Jane Higgs

ROBERT GREENLAND, 1933 - 2021

Bob served the museum as the second Hon. Secretary from 2010 to 2012, following two years with no one in the role. With a background of volunteering with other organisations he used his skills to support the Executive and collaborated with Edenbridge Rotary to arrange a financially successful charity golf match, a valuable contribution to the sustainability and success of the museum.

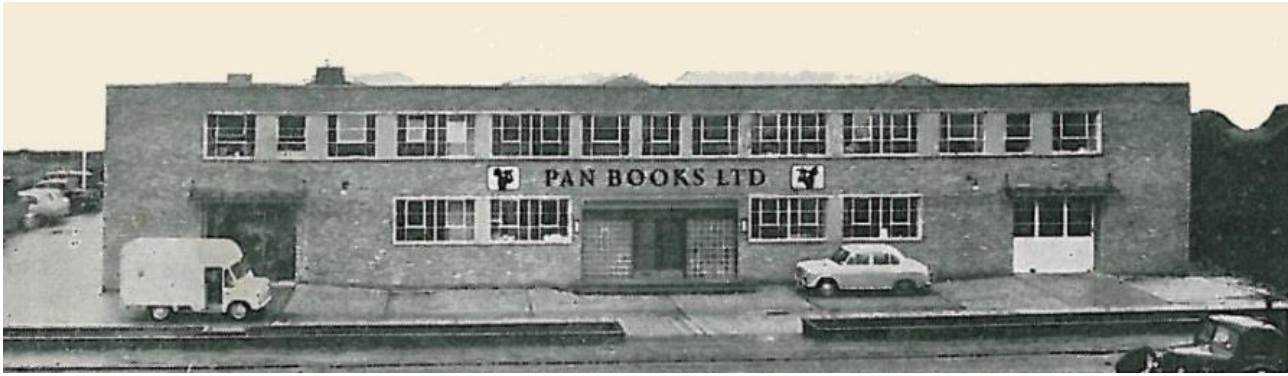
JOHN SCHOLEY, 1942 - 2021

John served as Sevenoaks District Council Representative to the Museum's Executive Committee from 2007 to 2014. A valued friend of the Eden Valley Museum we benefited greatly from his extensive experience of working in local government and the voluntary sector.

Mr ALI

It was with great sadness that we heard of the passing of Mr Ali, the former proprietor of Quality Tandoori, Edenbridge, in July this year. His support for the museum was very much appreciated and he was a pleasure to work with when organising a fundraising event for the museum in May 2015.

He and his staff worked hard to provide us with delicious food and a very enjoyable evening. We presented a framed Thank You for his kindness which he hung on the wall. He was a true gentleman and very supportive of charitable organisations in Edenbridge and further afield. He will be greatly missed by many. *Cheryl Bell, EVMT.*



Edenbridge PAN Despatch Centre 1961 to 1964 © A Brief History of PAN Books Ltd. www.tikit.net

PAN BOOKS

Pan Books was established in 1944 by Alan Bott (1893-1952), a former WW1 flying ace. It was jointly owned by Bott and The Book Society, which he had founded in 1929. The Pan Books logo, showing the ancient Greek god Pan playing pan pipes, was designed by Mervyn Peake (1911-1968), an English writer, artist, poet, and illustrator. Pan specialised in publishing paperback fiction and many popular authors saw their works published in this format, including Ian Fleming, Leslie Charteris, Agatha Christie, Georgette Heyer and John Steinbeck. Also, paperback editions of classic works by authors such as Jane Austen and Charles Dickens.

Between 1956 and 1964 PAN set up two despatch centres, at West Molesey in

Surrey and in Edenbridge. The new despatch centre in Edenbridge was planned to be “one of the most up-to-date and best equipped book warehouses in Britain, geared to distribute up to 2 million books each month to bookshops, newsagents and bookstalls throughout the world.” In 1956 *The Dam Busters* became the first volume to sell 1 million copies.

A few years after it was founded, Pan Books was bought out by a consortium of several publishing houses, including Macmillan, Collins, Heinemann, and, briefly, Hodder & Stoughton. It became wholly owned by Macmillan in 1987.

The building, opposite Fircroft Way in Edenbridge was taken over by Eaton Williams and later by Kewell Convertors.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF VOLUNTEERING AT THE EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM?

Our museum is centred on serving the community through the support of dedicated volunteers. We are always looking to welcome new members to our friendly team of volunteers. To find out more call 01732 868102 or email: curator@evmt.org.uk



A WARM WELCOME AWAITS YOU



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.



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 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.



8th

Images: P2007.1.344. Photographer: Alan Dell

Ref. www.cyclingarchives.com

EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM

OPENING TIMES

February to December

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

GUIDED WALKS

Free guided walks around the historic centre of Edenbridge take place during June, July, August and September – visit www.evmt.org.uk to find out more.

BECOME A MEMBER

Annual individual membership £14
Annual household membership £24
Annual corporate membership £90

DONATIONS

You can support the museum by making a donation via our website: www.evmt.org.uk or by sending a cheque to:

The Treasurer, Eden Valley Museum, Church House, 72 High Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5AR. Cheques to be made payable to:
Eden Valley Museum Trust

You can also donate online via the Charities Aid Foundation: go to: www.cafonline.org and search using our charity number: 1065466

You can also support the museum by selecting Eden Valley Museum Trust as the charity you wish to support when using www.easyfundraising.org.uk.

FIND US ONLINE

Website: www.evmt.org.uk
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Facebook: www.facebook.com
Instagram: [#evmtrust](https://www.instagram.com/evmtrust)
Kent Photo Archive: www.kentphotoarchive.org.uk

Leaving a legacy in your Will to the Eden Valley Museum is a gift to future generations.

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



The newly refurbished museum shop

