

# EDEN VALLEY HERITAGE

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Issue Number 36

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



**Eden Valley Heritage - Issue Number 36, 2022**  
**Newsletter of the Eden Valley Museum**

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**Front cover: Queen Elizabeth II relaxing at Balmoral, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1952.**

Image: HIP/Topfoto

**Back cover:** Montage of photos of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations around the Eden Valley provided by members and volunteers.

**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 surrounding areas in particular, but not exclusively by the provision and maintenance of a museum. The Trust is led by an Executive Committee and the museum is run almost entirely by volunteers from the local community.

**President:** Alan Smith

**Chair:** Alan Smart

**Curatorial Chair:** Hilary Brand

**House Manager:** Martin Frost

## FROM THE CHAIR

I'm delighted to be writing this as Chair of EVMT from Edenbridge itself! At the time of my election, I was based in Washington DC as the British Council's 'man in the US'. It's wonderful to be back in my hometown, retired now and working with an amazing team. My sincere thanks to the previous Chair, Lee Ward, who guided us through the seemingly never-ending trials of the pandemic - we owe him a great debt.

It's important to acknowledge just how difficult a challenge the pandemic presented to the museum. Closures, loss of income, decreased visitor numbers all took their toll, but we came through, not least because enough people care passionately about their museum to volunteer their time, energy, and expertise. Grateful thanks also to staff and volunteers who have now moved on to new challenges.

We look forward to continuing to play an important role in our local community with exhibitions, events, and opportunities for young and old alike. This edition includes recent highlights with plenty more to come.

I'd like to pay tribute to the editorial team and contributors who have put this issue together and provided more fascinating insights into our past - there's always more to learn about Edenbridge and the wider Eden Valley.

I look forward to engaging and working with as many of you as possible over the coming months.

**Alan Smart**

## A LINK TO HISTORY

By Claire Donithorn



**Silver cufflink, c.1662.** EDEVT:1669

In 2020 a metal detectorist, working in Chiddingstone, found one half of a silver cufflink. This small and unassuming piece marks a significant moment in British royal and fashion history and is a remarkable discovery which we are proud to display in the Eden Valley Museum.

In 1660 Charles II returned to Britain to become king after nearly 20 years of the first Civil War and then the Cromwellian Commonwealth. During his exile he had lived in the fashionable court of Louis XIV in France. Among the various French influences that he introduced to Britain were the 'buttons for cuffs' which had become the rage in the Louis court. These consisted of two discs held together by a metal link or occasionally by a solid bar and threaded through buttonholes in the cuff. Prior to that time cuffs had been fastened by soft material ties, and for the fashionable, silk ribbon. Metal buttons quickly became the rage in Charles's court. Most surviving examples are made of copper or pewter as the valuable silver ones were subject to the vagaries of fashion and over time got melted down to make other items.

The design on the cufflink dates the piece. The arrangement of two hearts with the crown above is a recognised

commemorative design celebrating the marriage between Charles II and his bride the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza in 1662. This does not date the piece precisely but, as the design remained popular, it certainly identifies it to have been made during the early 1660's. With the restoration of the monarchy people were keen to show publicly their support for the king and forget or hide allegiances forged during the Civil War and Commonwealth years; consequently, royalist images were flaunted during the early years of his reign.

For Catholics there was an additional attraction to the motif. From mediaeval times designs bearing the symbols of a crown and heart represented the Virgin Mary. By using this design Catholics could subtly show allegiance to their faith without overtly causing offence to the Protestant authorities.

We cannot know who owned this cufflink. However, being silver and decorative it suggests the owner was a person of wealth and fashion. Perhaps it came from the household of Henry Streatfeild (1639-1719). The family had remained loyal to the Crown throughout the Civil War and Commonwealth period and were the wealthy owners of High Street House, later Chiddingstone Castle.

Whoever it was they must have been very cross indeed to have lost this expensive and fashionable cufflink!

### **References and Image**

Portable Antiquities Scheme.  
Datasheet 42

## **A LOST ROMAN TOWN AT EDENBRIDGE?**

by Dr Brian Philp, MBE. Director, Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit.

I much enjoyed the recent articles on aspects of Edenbridge in Roman times. My teams have been excavating Roman sites across Kent and S.E. London for several decades and one of our sites is of special importance for Edenbridge. As all members know the main road through the town is the exact line of the Roman arterial road from London down to near the Sussex coast (London-Lewes). Our newly published site is at West Wickham also on the line of the same Roman road. There we have abundant evidence of settlement over some 35 acres, though badly damaged by farming and treasure-hunting.

The site, at Wickham Court Farm, can now be certainly identified as the *Noviomagus* of the Second Antonine Itinerary. This site has been lost for centuries as all scholars have thought that it should lie along Watling Street on its course to Richborough. Its stated distance from London is ten miles which is exactly right for our site at West Wickham. The clinching clue was a new major Roman road we found running from our site eastwards to Springhead (*Vagniacae*) for 17 miles and exactly the distance in the Itinerary from the two sites. Part way along we had years earlier found a wide Roman road at Fordcroft (St. Mary Cray) on this exact line. Hence the compiler of the route did not start on Watling Street, but simply took the Lewes Road and turned left when

arriving at West Wickham, then to pick up with Watling Street at Springhead. All previous scholars had always supposed that the routes taken were always direct. But a quick glance at the Second Itinerary shows that it dog-legged, taking in for instance, both York and Chester.

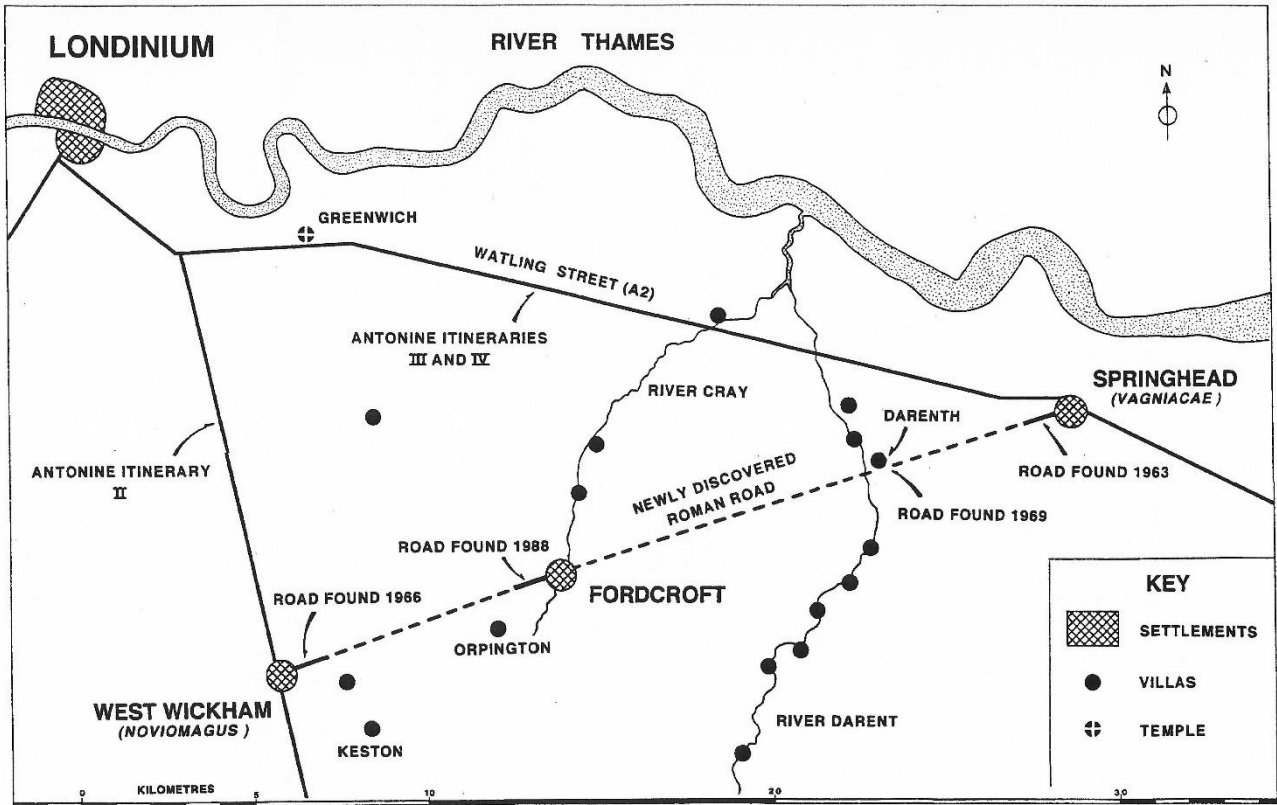
What is now very clear is that our new Noviomagus was the first staging post on the same arterial Roman road down to the Sussex coast. Several million Roman soldiers, traders, ironworkers and general travellers must have passed through the town (either way) over some 400 years. The 5,000 potsherds and well over 100 coins from our site show occupation throughout the Roman period. The latest coin is of Honorius dated to A.D. 394-5. One special find was the iron rim of a large wheel (pictured) that had been discarded complete into a pit, probably in a wheel-wrights shop.

All this is of considerable importance for Edenbridge. The same travellers must also have passed through the town being on the same road. Equally significant is the fact that Edenbridge is about 12 miles from our new site at West Wickham. As Edenbridge sits astride the River Eden, a major element in a settlement pattern, it is now virtually certain that the town was the second

staging-post from Londinium. And at a largely similar distance. The problem has always been that there has been very little Roman evidence from the town itself. My team's minor excavations there have found nothing to help, and the one likely site is the slightly raised land where the ancient church sits and of course it's very large burial ground. Each time I visit Edenbridge I check that site in the distant hope that some evidence may appear. Any such settlement, just as at West Wickham, would have had timber-framed buildings of which very little would have survived. However, as at our site there should be a generous scatter of potsherds, coins, oyster shells and animal bones and features such as pits and ditches. Once found, all we should then need is the name of Edenbridge in Roman times! Perhaps Ponteden! The remains of a certain Roman bridge have yet to be found, though some allowance must be made for the river marginally changing its course.

**Author's note:** Our new publication: *The Discovery of the Lost Roman Town of Noviomagus at West Wickham, Kent* is available for just £6, plus £2 postage from: 18 Highfield Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 6LF.





**Map showing Noviomagus, Roman roads, local settlements and villas.**  
 Figure 23 from: *The Discovery of the Lost Roman Town of Noviomagus at West Wickham, Kent.*



**Iron wheel-rim conserved, Field 71 SW.**  
 Figure 32 from: *The Discovery of the Lost Roman Town of Noviomagus at West Wickham, Kent.*



## CLOTH-MAKING IN THE EDEN VALLEY

By Hilary Brand

If you examine where the earliest ‘grandees’ of the Eden valley made their money, you will find two main sources, iron and cloth.



**Medieval workmen beating flax**  
Image: wikipedia.org. Public domain

The High Weald was ideal for cloth-making, with good farmland for grazing sheep and growing flax, wood providing fuel for heating the dyeing vats, water for soaking flax, and an abundance of ‘fuller’s earth’, a type of clay used to remove grease from wool. Local place names such as Dyehurst Gill, Coomb Field (where wool was combed), or Tainters Hill (where cloth was stretched on frames known as ‘tenterhooks’) carry lingering clues to some of these processes.



**Dyeing cloth in the Middle Ages.** Image: 5 Fritz Coler, Waidgießer, 1529. Public domain

Local memorials to those families whose fortunes derived from cloth-making are also to be found in grand buildings and ancient estates. In Chiddingstone it was the Streatfeild family, in Penshurst the Pulteneys, in Edenbridge in the manors of Delaware, Skeynes and Gabriels it was the Seyliards, and in Hever the Boleyns (Anne Boleyn’s great grandfather was a ‘hatter’).



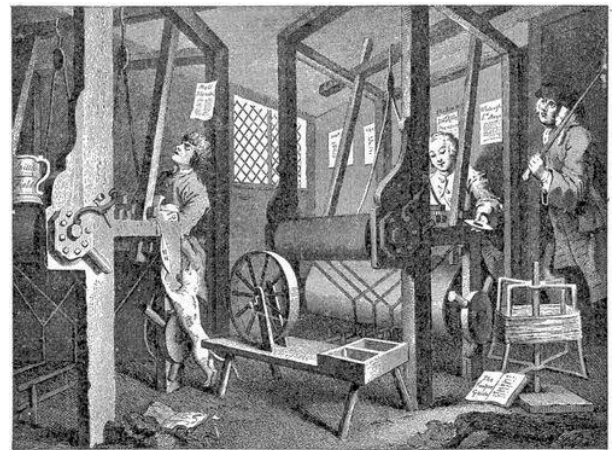
**Memorial to William Seyliard, Edenbridge Parish Church.** Image: © Stuart McGregor

These Mercers (or cloth-traders) were not directly involved in production. Below them in the chain was a vast number of poorer people who from medieval times to the 18th century were dependent on the cloth-making. The industry worked on a ‘putting out’ system, whereby middle-men called Clothiers would distribute the raw materials to spinners, dyers, fullers, and weavers who carried out the work in their homes.



**Spinning in Middle Ages.** Image: *Smithfield Decretals* [Decretals of Gregory IX]. 1300-1340. Public domain.

Spinning was the first step in the process, taking woollen fleece and fibres from flax or hemp and turning them into yarn. It was generally carried out in the home by women and children (hence the term ‘spinster’), work that in the 17th century, and probably long before, provided 30% of the income of poor families. Local records show it being used as a solution for poor relief: in Edenbridge the bridge wardens used surplus cash from rents they received to buy hemp for the poor to spin, it was the standard task for women in the Bough Beech workhouse.



**18th century handloom weaving.**

Image: *Industry and Idleness, I.* (Engraving) William Hogarth (1697-1764). Public domain

Weaving was generally undertaken by men and required an apprenticeship of seven years. Most villages would have a small weavers’ workshop with just a couple of apprentices, while towns would have more. Records show several weavers’ workshops in Edenbridge, including one in the High Street in the property now occupied by Coral’s Bookmakers.

The main fabric produced in this area was Kentish broadcloth, produced for the export market. Linen, made from flax was used for undergarments (silk and wool were never washed), and canvas made from hemp or flax was used for shirts or aprons. ‘Lindsay Wolsey’ (mentioned in Cowden parish account books) was a cheaper fabric made with a woollen weft and linen warp and used for women’s gowns.

The last stage in the process was, of course, the sale of the cloth. From the early 17th century onwards, drapers’ shops are recorded in Cowden, Chiddingstone and Edenbridge and



eventually these became the last local vestige of the cloth trade to remain.

Indeed, the woollen industry had been in decline from as far back as the late 16th century. Attempts were made to revive it including a law passed during the reign of Charles II requiring corpses to be buried in woollen shrouds, with families who buried their loved ones in linen required to pay a fine. (The Sidney family of Penshurst was fined several times, including in 1683 for the burial of Algernon Sidney who had been beheaded for his alleged involvement in a plot to murder the king.)

But there was no reversing the trend. By the 18th century imported cotton had eclipsed both wool and linen and the industrial revolution had taken cloth-making from a cottage industry to massive factories in rapidly growing northern mill towns.

Nevertheless, it's clear that for at least six centuries cloth-making, along with iron, farming, and the leather trade, provided a living for very many of the people, rich and poor, skilled and unskilled, who came before us in the Eden Valley.

The Cloth-making exhibition will be in the museum until Easter 2023.

### **Acknowledgement**

This article is based upon original material researched by Miranda Charalambous.

## **THE FORMER STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE, COWDEN**

By Richard Johnston



**Former Stationmaster's House on left.**

Image: Stuart McGregor, 2022.

Most of my career was spent in international banking around the world, but having retired from that at age 53yrs I decided to fulfil an ambition to work in the railway industry and I was fortunate enough to become the Lead Performance Analyst at South West Trains. (In case you're wondering, my role at SWT was to identify why trains don't always run bang on time and then to find solutions so that they do). I'd had an interest in trains since childhood when I lived in a Station Road in South Wales and from the age of 8yrs had travelled 15 miles to school across Cardiff by steam trains.

With our many children grown up and left the nest, in 2010 my wife and I sold our family home in Kew. She bought a nearby flat while I preferred a quieter location in the country so that we could enjoy the best of both worlds.

By chance I heard that the freehold of Station House, Cowden was up for sealed bid auction. I viewed it, decided its

value to me and happily, as it turned out, put in the winning bid. The next several months were spent in improving the house which was a massive undertaking to sympathetically modernise it whilst retaining the original character and features. The house had been badly neglected by the investment company which had previously owned it since the early 1990's.



**South aspect of the Station House showing exposed valley roof and the new window (bottom right) added to afford a view of the garden.** Image: © Joan Varley, 2022

By December 2010 most of the work on the house had been completed so my wife and those of our family still living in the UK were able to join me for our first Christmas here.

The original layout when the house was built, c.1868 comprised three bedrooms upstairs,

downstairs a kitchen (now the dining room) overlooking the Down Platform (now platform 1), a living room, W.C. with basin, coat room, coal room, boiler room, and larder. The coal room was turned into a bathroom sometime before 1923.

The Station House has very attractive brickwork features, quite ornate for a rural country station including crenellated brickwork below the roofline; similar can still be seen at Hever Station, the former

goods shed at Edenbridge Town, and at Tunbridge Wells steam locomotive shed.

The overall design of the house is very similar to that at Hever although mine is quirky in that upstairs the floors were built too low so that in some rooms downstairs the tops of the ornate windows are partially obscured by the lower ceilings. At Hever the upstairs flooring was laid higher throughout. Also, Hever does not have a valley roof like mine. Ashurst Station was the same design as Cowden but sadly was demolished some years ago.

So, having moved in, what was it like commuting from here? A few steps on to the platform and an hour later I was in my office at Waterloo Station having changed trains at London Bridge. I commuted for many years before retiring at age 69yrs and in that time got to know many local fellow-travellers some of whom have become real friends.

I only missed the train once when I noticed the Down train was running late so made more tea and toast only to hear it return before I expected it to as it had turned round short at Crowborough to regain time. Working on the Railway my maxim was never run for a train (life's too short and it's not safe), so I finished my breakfast and waited for the next Up train.

What incidents have I seen since moving here? A few like the herd of cows that ambled up the line from Hever.

The goats who broke out of a nearby field and ended up on the platform (probably wanting to travel to Goathland!). Trees on the line needing a call to have the train running stopped. Handing out water to passengers in hot weather when trains cancelled (fortunately not too often and Southern Railway replaced the water bottles).

Since moving in, I've been interested to know who might have lived here before me. I have a framed extract from the 1911 census showing that Mr Albert Snelling (Stationmaster) and his family were here then.

A knock on my door one day was from Trevor Pocock who introduced himself to me and said he was interested to see the house again as in 1960 his parents had rented rooms from Joe Moss (a signalman on the line) who lived here with his wife Elsie. Mr Moss had been a porter and signalman here as far back as 1939. A full account of Trevor's recollections follows this article

Robin Rouse a nearby neighbour up the hill in Markbeech recalls keeping two beehives on the embankment alongside those of Joe Moss in the 1980's, indicating that the Moss's were here a long time.

Every year on 15th October on the anniversary of the terrible Cowden rail crash of 1994, representatives of the railway depot from which the train crews involved in the accident came, relatives of the deceased passengers, and current railway management return to pay

respects to the deceased and lay flowers by the memorial plaque on the platform. I have met the signalman who was in Oxted signal box on that fateful day and who,



Image: Stuart McGregor, 2022

though unable in those days to warn the drivers of the inevitable collision on the single line, had the foresight to alert the emergency services before the crash occurred. I see it as my role in providing tea and biscuits to those attending the anniversary.

Let me finish off by talking about three mysteries connected with the railway here. The first is perhaps more of an anomaly really. The station is actually situated in the Parish of Markbeech not that of Cowden. So why did the London Brighton and South Coast Railway who eventually completed the railway line not call it Markbeech Station? My guess is because one is a mere hamlet whilst the other a village with a larger population more numerous to frequent the line. Incidentally I possess an article published in 1981 in *The Railway Modeller* written by a 14 year-old nearby resident called Andrew Mortlock who had built an accurate model building for his railway layout and named it Markbeech Station.

The second really is a mystery. During Covid lockdown and two years shielding I was fortunate to be able to explore the surrounding countryside in isolation. On one ramble I noticed that 20 yards behind the Southern portal of Markbeech



tunnel, just up from the station, there is an identical portal covered in undergrowth. It means that the tunnel entrance was originally dug in the wrong place and the tunnel itself had to be extended.

A good friend of mine, the late Mark Yonge, investigated and devotes a whole chapter in his book *'Unfinished Lines'* to the background and likely reason.

The third mystery is why the Station House was built over 20 years before the railway line opened and the first train ran to it. The line opened in October 1888 but although the exact date of the house is a mystery it is known to have been built by 1870 and more likely in 1866 the year of the Markbeech Riots when construction of the line ceased for over 20 years. The Station House is known to have been rented from 1870 to 1888.

In conclusion may I say how happy I am to live in this friendly neighbourhood in such an interesting house in such a lovely peaceful part of the County.

### Acknowledgements

Pat my wife, family, and friends for their encouragement. Trevor Pocock. Robin Rouse. Lyn Layland for census research. Joan Varley for advice on content.

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## MY TIME IN COWDEN STATION HOUSE IN 1960

By Trevor Pocock



**Cowden Station featuring footbridge and steam train approaching, c.1920.**

Image: P2003.874

I had the good fortune as a nine-year old boy to be living in the station house at Cowden in the days of steam trains. My dad had been a gardener in a tied cottage but had to give up the job because of his health; he had found another job in Tunbridge Wells but until he could find a suitable house to rent in the town, we were temporarily homeless. Mr Joe & Mrs Elsie Moss were living in Cowden Station House at the time (he was a signaller up the line somewhere) and I think the link was that my mother was a long-term friend of the Moss's daughter. We moved in on 8th April 1960 and stayed for eight months.

I suppose we were unofficial lodgers or 'guests' and had the use of the main living room overlooking the station forecourt and two bedrooms; my older brother had the bedroom overlooking the platform canopy and I shared a bedroom with my parents overlooking the garden. Mr & Mrs Moss had the main

bedroom and seemed content to use the downstairs room looking on to the platform which always seemed a dark room to me –I had to go through that room to go upstairs to bed.

Somehow, we all got on sharing the kitchen and toilet, mum doing the housework, dad travelling to Tunbridge Wells each day on an old moped, my brother off to Skinners' School by train and me going to Hever school. A Warrens coach would pick me up having come from Edenbridge via Cowden Pound to Cowden village and then back past the station before heading for Markbeece and Hever.

Life around the station was always exciting. The rail traffic was mostly two-carriage push-pull trains between Oxted and Tunbridge Wells West with the occasional longer train, presumably from Victoria and heading further south via Eridge. During the day it was just two trains per hour; an up train at two minutes to the hour and a down train at two minutes (or was it four minutes?) past the hour. The chap who manned the station most of the time I was there was Reg; no idea where he lived. He was the ticket clerk, signalman, porter, and general dog's body. He let me into the booking office if no one was around. I remember the sound of the bells and push buttons of the block instruments as he received and passed on trains along the line and then pulling on and off the signals from the small lever frame behind railings on the platform by the booking office.

I would linger on the platform and get to know the engine crew but, sadly, don't recall ever being allowed on to the footplate. I tried to curry favour one day by agreeing to scrump some apples from an orchard in Moat Lane ready for their return journey; the apples were un-ripe and sour, so it didn't work out for me.

I would very occasionally wander into the empty abandoned goods yard and climb into the deserted goods shed, always aware that I shouldn't be there, and I never dared venture into Markbeece tunnel for more than a few yards. I often lounged on the bank along the edge of the station forecourt next to the field and remember one sunny day watching clouds of Common Blue butterflies feeding on the nectar-rich plants.

I have extremely happy memories of that summer in 1960 at the station. I would spend hours wandering the footpaths and fields on my own, playing in the stream next to the station and road bridge, building dams and watching for sticklebacks. I recall one afternoon going to the stream after a morning's downpour and saw the alarming sight of a raging torrent overtopping its banks as it battled to force its way through the culvert under the road.

Boys will be boys and you don't appreciate the dangers and foolishness of pranks when young. I found a box of 6-inch nails in Mr Moss's garden shed: laying one of them on the rails out of sight at the far end of the down platform and waiting for a fast train to come

thundering by resulted in a paper-thin, gleaming sheet of metal still warm to the touch!

In those days fireworks were readily available and we always had fun with penny bangers, and especially the tuppenny (2d) bangers. One evening around fireworks night, my older brother weighted a tuppenny banger with clay, lit it and dropped it into the water butt behind the garden shed. White smoke bubbled to the surface and BOOM, what a noise! But wait ... trickle, trickle, trickle. The shock wave must have dislodged some metal from the rusty Butt and it was slowly emptying. We did our best to block the hole with more clay ... Mr Moss never mentioned it so maybe he never knew.

Within a few weeks of that episode, we were moving on to a house my parents had found in Tunbridge Wells so goodbye Station House ... but it has always remained a special place for me.

It's a small world as when researching my family history, I found a family connection with the area around Cowden Station. Next to the stream and road at the bottom of the valley before the LBSCR came through, there was a homestead called Brook House (demolished when the railway was built) and in 1861 my great-great grandfather John Turner was there with his wife Elizabeth and five-year old daughter Sarah. I probably played in the very same stream in the same place as Sarah did 100 years earlier.

## A SUMMER SOJOURN AT HEVER CASTLE

By Joan Varley

In the summer of 1866, the artist Philip Hermogenes Calderon rented Hever Castle and he was joined there by other members of the St John's Wood Clique. At that time Hever was owned by Edmund Waldo Esq. and leased to Mr Heard, a tenant farmer.

### St John's Wood Clique

In the second half of the 19th century the St John's Wood area of London became a popular location for artists, giving rise to the 'St John's Wood Clique'.

The group were particularly interested in historical subjects and specialised in paintings on medieval and Renaissance subjects. They met once a week to devise compositions and discuss their work. The 'grilling' each artist received over their latest piece of work led to their nickname 'The Gridirons' reflected in their motto.



**The Clique – Woodcut**  
by Marks, H.S. (1894)  
Pen and Pencil Sketches.  
vol. 1. London.

The connection that Hever Castle has with what some consider to be the most romantic era of English history, the Tudors and Stuarts, no doubt led to its



choice as a summer retreat for this group of artists. The leader of the group was Philip Calderon, and other members included George Storey, William Yeames and David Wynfield.

### **Philip Hermogenes Calderon (1833-1898)**



**Philip Hermogenes Calderon [in historical fancy dress] by David Wilkie Wynfield, albumen print, 1863.** Image: NPG. Used under the Creative Commons Licence.

Calderon, a descendant of Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca, the great Spanish poet, was born on 3rd May 1833 at Poitiers, France, the son of a French mother and Spanish father who settled in London in 1845. He trained at Leigh's Art School in London and at the Atelier Picot in Paris. According to his biography in DNB, Calderon was very tall, with long limbs and a beaky nose; he was said to look like '*a Spanish gentleman translated into English*'.

His debut exhibition at the Royal Academy was in 1853, and this was followed by a long and prosperous career as an artist producing historical and narrative scenes. From 1862 he was a leading member of the St John's Wood Clique. His 1867 painting, *Home after Victory*, is a semi-historical subject the background of which is the courtyard of Hever Castle. According to Storey, Calderon's *Whither?* (1867) set on a drawbridge was also painted during the summer at Hever.



**Home after Victory (1867) by Philip Hermogenes Calderon (1833-1898).** Image: Wikimedia Commons.

### **William Frederick Yeames (1835-1918)**

Yeames was born in Taganrog, Russia in 1835, the son of a British Consul. After the death of his father in 1842, Yeames was sent to school in Dresden where he began studying painting. After a move to London in 1848, he studied anatomy and composition and took more art lessons. In 1852 he journeyed to Italy and continued his studies, developing his skills in Florence and Rome. Returning to London in 1859, he set up a studio in Park Place and joined Calderon and others as part of the St John's Wood

Clique. He was one of several artists who joined Calderon at Hever Castle during the summer of 1866. Yeames is best known for his painting "*And When Did You Last See Your Father?*" (1878), which depicts the son of a Royalist being questioned by Parliamentarians during the English Civil War. He was married to the sister of the artist and photographer David Wilkie Wynfield. Yeames died in Teignmouth, Devon in 1918.

### **David Wilkie Wynfield (1837-1887)**

Wynfield was a British painter and photographer. He was distantly related to the Scottish artist David Wilkie, his great uncle and godfather, after whom he was named. Born in India, he was originally intended by his family for the priesthood, but instead chose art as a profession. He returned to England as a child and entered art school in 1856. In the 1860s he became part of the St John's Wood Clique. He latterly became better known for his photographs, in particular a series of photographs he made of contemporary artists in historical fancy dress, including Calderon, Yeames and Storey, to publicise his contemporaries. He developed a technique of shallow-focus portrait photography. As with many of the subjects of his photographs, Wynfield served in 'The Artists' Rifles. He reached the rank of Captain and was commanding 'H' Company in 1880. He died of tuberculosis in 1887.

### **George Adolphus Storey (1834-1919)**

Storey was born in London. Privately educated at Morden Hall School in Surrey, he continued his education in Paris and on returning to London he studied at the Leigh Academy, also receiving encouragement from the sculptor William Behnes (1795-1864). He exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1852 and studied at the Royal Academy schools from 1854. He was initially strongly influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites but later established a reputation as a genre and portrait painter, as well as an illustrator. He drew elegant pictures of middle-class people for love stories and the like. He died in 1919 and is interred at the Hampstead Cemetery.

### **Summers at Hever Castle**

In 1866, Calderon, Yeames, Wynfield and Storey along with their families, spent the summer at Hever Castle, forming a sort of large happy family. Calderon's wife was Storey's sister. Yeames wife was Wynfield's sister, and Wynfield (a bachelor) was accompanied by his mother. They also invited and entertained other friends throughout the season. Other artists who visited included Henry Stacy Marks (1829-1898) who'd spent time in Paris with Calderon; and John Evan Hodgson (1831-1895).

Hever served to inspire many works by the artists who stayed there. Wynfield spent most of his time trying to photograph Anne Boleyn's ghost but eventually determined that the conditions were not conducive to an appearance.

Storey felt his experiences that summer at Hever Castle brought about a turning point in his career leading to his painting 'After you' being exhibited in the Royal Academy the following year (1867).

Yeames specialised in Tudor and Stuart subjects, but also seemed to be rather accident prone, on one occasion accidentally walking into the moat.

Calderon was viewed as the leader of the group and was also probably the most prolific. Spender lists paintings he produced during the summer using various rooms and other areas in Hever Castle as backdrops, concluding that 1866 and the time spent at Hever led to it being a very good year for Calderon's career.

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The Kent Firefighting Museum is located at the Woodlands Garden Centre, just off the A20 between Wrotham and the Brands Hatch Racetrack. The reason for including information about this small specialist museum is because within their collection they hold objects related to the history of Edenbridge.

The first is the Edenbridge Fire Bell which for many years hung above the shop in the Square that is currently a florist but better known locally as Farringtons. The bell hung there until it was moved to the newly built (old) Fire Station during the 1870's. In addition to the bell, they also hold the gantry it hung from. (The current station was built in 1971).

The second item is a wooden (probably oak) water main which was unearthed from the Edenbridge Tannery site in the 1970's. Wooden pipes were used during the 16th and 17th centuries. The pipes were hollowed-out logs which were tapered at the end with a small hole in which the water would pass through. Multiple pipes were sealed together with hot animal fat. Wooden piping has been found in use as recent as the 1890's.

Ref: [www.kentfirefightingmuseum.org.uk/](http://www.kentfirefightingmuseum.org.uk/)



# WHO'S WHO IN THIS VICTORIAN FAMILY WEDDING PHOTOGRAPH

By Stephen Wood



**The Wedding of George Alfred Wood and Bertha Caroline Holmden, 17th July 1889.**

Image no. P2019.3657

Richard Holmden was born in Doggetts Farmhouse, now Church House and home of the Eden Valley Museum. Along with his brother Robert, he'd inherited the Farmhouse from his father Thomas who in turn, along with his brother George, had been left the Farmhouse by Thomas Wells.

This article explores the lives of some of Richard's descendants and was inspired by the discovery of this delightful wedding photograph, a copy of which was donated to the museum.

The photograph belonged to my second cousin, Jessica Maud Holmden Wood and whilst there was nothing on the reverse to identify anybody, I believe it is the wedding of her parents, George Alfred Wood to his cousin Bertha Caroline Holmden. Their wedding certificate provided the date and location, which was 17th July 1889 at Coudens Farm, Guildables Lane, Limpsfield.

The gentleman standing behind the bride is her father, Richard Holmden.

Richard fathered 19 children, 14 by his first wife, Ann Elizabeth Wood and another five by his second 'wife' Frances Wood. At the time he was farming 100 acres at Couldens and he died the year after this wedding. Richard is buried in Crockham Hill churchyard.

The lady behind the groom is Frances Wood. She was born at Hilders, Marlpit Hill, Edenbridge and her parents were William (a farmer) and Mary Doubell. Whilst known as the 'wife' of Richard Holmden, they could not marry because she was the sister of his first wife.

The doctrine that such marriages were illicit was reflected in the Table of Kindred and Affinity in the Anglican (Church of England) Book of Common Prayer. The Marriage Act 1835 hardened the law into an absolute prohibition, although there was nothing to stop them marrying in another country. This prohibition was set aside in the Deceased Wife's Sister's Marriage Act 1907, henceforth allowing a man to marry his dead wife's sister.

Following the death of Richard Holmden, Frances moved to Rushetts, Crockham Hill with her children.

The bride: Bertha is the daughter of Richard and his second 'wife' Frances. She was born at Couldens and just three months after the wedding gave birth to a son, Gilbert George. The bridegroom: George was a joiner by trade and lived at The Limes, Lingfield Road, Edenbridge; his parents were Henry Wood (deceased) and Marion Wood née Wells.

The Best Man, William John Wood is my link with the family. He is my grandfather and the brother of the Bridegroom. An oilman (mixer of paints) and ironmonger by trade. He went on to marry Mary Jane Elizabeth Boneham Gilbert from Rugby and finally settle in East Grinstead. Mary's 2x great grandfather James was also the grandfather of William Gilbert the famous rugby ball maker.

The maid of honour is Bertha's half sister Emma Frances Judson. If things had turned out differently for Emma and her husband Edgar, she may never have been at the wedding. It appears that they had been keen for a different type of life and in November 1877, along with their firstborn son, they embarked upon a journey to New Zealand for a new life in Albertland. There they had three more children, but life there proved too harsh and after five years they returned to England. However the following year, in August 1883 they headed for a new life in Florida, where they had two more children before returning to England in 1887 following a failed land deal and Edgar's deteriorating mental health. It appears that they separated, as going forward Emma and the children lived at the farm whilst Edgar lived in Nutfield. Emma died in 1930 and is buried in Crockham Hill churchyard.

The following relatives of the bride and groom are thought to be in the photograph, based upon relative ages and other family photographs:

Frances Louisa, age 6yrs daughter of the maid of honour and standing next to her. The three children seated, L-R: Ellen Holmden, age 3yrs, Thomas Carter Judson, age 3yrs, and Richard Holmden, age 2yrs. The girl with the basket on the right is thought to be Katherine Holmden, age 6yrs - all grandchildren of Richard Holmden, formerly of Doggetts Farmhouse (Church House).

Family attending from The Limes in Lingfield Road are: James Edward Wood, at the back with his arms folded, and his

wife Elizabeth in the big hat; and Marion Wood, the bridegrooms mother, far left.

I am still trying to discover who the other guests are, if anyone can help or correct anything, please contact me via the museum.

### Sources

censuses  
birth, marriage and death certificates  
Parish Registers  
ancestry.co.uk  
theweald.org.uk  
New Zealand descendants of Emma Frances Judson



**George Alfred Wood (50) and Bertha Caroline (45) with their children Ethel Frances (24), Jessica Maud Holmden (22), and Gilbert George (27) in the uniform of the Royal Engineers. 1916. Image: Stephen Wood**



## THE ALBION HOTEL, MARLPIT HILL – SOME HISTORY

By Joan Varley

The Albion Hotel was built in the mid-1800's on the western side of Main Road, Marlpit Hill close to Edenbridge Railway Station. Historic England describe it as "typical of the commercial Palladian style usually associated with early railway development."



**Albion Hotel, pre-1900.**

Image courtesy of Dover-Kent Archives

It first appears on the Rate Returns in 1849. William James Cripps was the publican from 1855-1859. At this time the Albion is listed as a 'Commercial Hotel and Posting House'.

In 1860 the hotel was the venue for an inquest following the sad death of Harriet Wood of Troy Town. Harriet had taken her own life by hanging. The jury concluded that Harriet had 'hung herself while in an unsound state of mind' due to the distress of her husband having been charged with theft and committed for trial a few weeks earlier. Mr Wood was on bail at the time and along with a neighbour, Mr Newnham, had

discovered Harriet hanging by a rope from an aperture through the ceiling. Medical assistance had been sought, but Mr Geare, the surgeon attended and declared life extinct.

Edmund Curtis is listed as the Victualler from 1861-1865. The 1861 census lists his wife Ann, son William (19yrs) and niece Jane Calbrias, aged 23 who was engaged as a barmaid. They had two female servants Ratumun King (16yrs) and Ann Nicholson (14yrs).

From 1871 the Licensed Victualler is listed as John Brickwood, aged 33 and from Millin [Milton] Abbott, Devon. He lived at the Albion with his wife Louisa aged 34 who hailed from Bedford, and their daughter Alice, aged 10 who had been born in St Pancras, Middlesex. They are listed as having two servants, Mary Pottendon, aged 21 from Westerham and fly driver, Charles Pocknell. On the day of the 1871 census their guests were an Auctioneer and Surveyor, Robert Shepherd of Horsham, and two visiting Farmer & Grazier's, Thomas Fin from Lydd, Kent, and William Woodhams from Pinhurst, Surrey.

Caleb Withall appears to have been in residence at the Albion with his wife Susan and their four sons as early as 1873 when the *Kent and Sussex Courier* reported on a game of cricket played between 'Eleven of the "Albion" and Eleven of Crockham Hill' on the ground adjoining the hotel. It seems that after an amusing game, resulting in the former winning

with three wickets to spare, the players enjoyed an excellent supper, provided by their host, Caleb Withall.

The 1881 census lists Caleb Withall, as innkeeper and fly proprietor. Along with his family and on the day of the census they had two servants and two female boarders. A fly proprietor employed fly drivers for hire and usually owned the flies. A "fly" was a one horse two wheeled light carriage.

By 1891 the Hotel Keeper was Mary Barnes, along with her four sons and four daughters. She had two servants and, on the day of the census, one male boarder. On Friday 4 January 1895 the ale house licence for the Albion was transferred to Stephen Bernard Walker.



**Albion Hotel, early 1900's.**

Image courtesy of Dover-Kent Archives

In 1906 the Licensee, Charles James Brown was in danger of not having his Licence to sell alcohol renewed having been previously found guilty of selling unadulterated rum in March 1905. At that time, he'd given evidence that some bottles of rum had been 'broken down' by the previous tenants; he produced

references as to his character, and letters and witnesses from locals as to the necessity of the house to Edenbridge. The Licence was renewed.

From 1911-1918+ the Licensee was Harold Charles Watson, a widower. He was living at the Albion with his widowed sister-in-law Kate Davis and his two daughters, Ruth Ida and Hilda Florence. On the day of the census there



**The Misses Watson, c.1911.** Image: P2003.773

was one servant, Louise Muggeridge and two visitors, a printer's clerk and dealer.

Julie Johnson remembers "*my grandmother Lucy Watson worked at the Albion in the 1920's and early 1930's for a family called Baldock. The Baldocks moved to Eastbourne and mum could remember meeting up with the mother and daughter when they went on the annual Sunday School trip from Edenbridge and the surrounding villages on a chartered train to Eastbourne - pre-WW2.*

Subsequent Licensees were Alfred Dean (from 1922). Richard Alfred Moore (from 1930). Herbert S. Rowe (from 1938). Herbert lived at the Albion with his wife Violet and daughter Gertrude, along with a Vera Violet Leefe who

carried out unpaid domestic duties. Rowe died in Tonbridge in 1959.

The Albion was a popular pub with the farming community and in January 1937 the Edenbridge Young Farmers' Club held their inaugural meeting there. The meeting was chaired by Col. H.I. Robinson and a Mr Voisey gave an interesting address illustrated by lantern slides. The meeting went on to elect a Mr B.S. Bush, who'd worked very hard to obtain sufficient members to start the club, as their first Chairman.

The following image from the museum collection, undated, shows the Albion Garage next to the hotel.



**The Albion Hotel, Albion Garage and Marlpit Hill Service Station, after 1950.**  
Image: P2014.2295

Richard Johnson remembers *“dad, Harold Johnson, who was working at Ajax Magnethermic and another local businessman and close neighbour, Ted Millard, along with his uncle Ted Hyatt, whenever he and my aunt came to visit us at our home in the Ridgeway, would visit the Albion "for a quick pint!" At the time, early to mid-1960's, the landlord was Harry Hunt ... later, when I was working for Scientific and Research Instruments in Fircroft way, my then boss, George Walker, was another*

*frequent visitor to the Albion and because of that he arranged for several of our companies' Christmas parties to be held in the "upstairs room!" Certainly, very happy days! This would have been around the early to mid-1980's, I believe Harry Hunt was still the landlord.*



**A later view of the hotel showing the roadside pub sign and adjacent garden seating, c.1980.** Image: P2015.2638

The Albion Hotel became a Grade II listed building in January 1975 and in 1994 was converted into flats.

## Acknowledgements

This article is based upon original research by Allen Varley.

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**Children engaged in a leather making activity at the museum.** Image: EVMT

## ROUND UP OF MUSEUM ACTIVITIES

With the retirement of some sorely missed long-term volunteers, plus the loss of our Collections Manager in January, it's been a year of rebuilding a curatorial team including, we're delighted to say, with some keen new volunteers.

Along with new displays in the entrance hall, our main new exhibition was on Cloth-making in the Eden Valley (see article on p.7) and it was fascinating to discover how much this trade underpinned the economy of our area for centuries.

There have been several successful events, beginning with a dramatic reading of Dicken's 'A Christmas Carol' in December. In June a two-day Jubilee event featured a nostalgic afternoon tea, a display of previous Royal celebrations and memorabilia, as well as a video montage of the Queen's coronation and reign. A key part of this event were the children's activities held in gazebos in the courtyard. Crowns were cut out from gold card, decorated with stick-on jewels, and proudly worn.

Indeed, the resumption of children's activities has been a success story of the year, with a series of summer holiday activities: Each Tuesday morning in August a two-hour activity based around exhibitions in the museum took place in the Buttery & Pantry gallery. The activity always started by talking about the theme and looking at the relevant display in the museum.



A series of workshops on cloth making, leather, mosaics and the Mr Men kept everyone busy for a very enjoyable 2hrs. The children were very industrious and by the end of each session had something they could take home. A finished piece of weaving, keyrings with leather animals, leather bracelets or laminated mosaics were displayed and carefully transported home.'



**Children showing the mosaics they made during an activity session at the museum.** Image: EVMT

More activity sessions are being planned for the October half term and closer to Christmas.



**Museum Chair, Alan Smart receiving a grant cheque from Trustees of National Heritage at the August Craft Fair, with Museum President, Alan Smith seated centre.** Image: EVMT

The courtyard and Rickards Hall were buzzing again at the end of August at our Traditional Craft Fair, with basket-making and beekeeping alongside live folk music and many other craft stalls. The sun shone kindly on this and our other activities, though it did prove rather too much for one of our resumed town trails, which had to be cancelled due to scorching heat!



**Visitors enjoying a guided walk around historic Edenbridge.** Image: EVMT

We've had some curious new acquisitions this year, including a letter from Clementine Churchill to the vicar of Crockham Hill and a massive 18th century bell made from melted down Anglo-Saxon and Roman coins. Next year's displays will include one on Town Twinning, plus a Timeline of Community and Conflict. Another major project next year, made possible by a recent grant from National Heritage (MAM), will be the creation of a Touch Screen archive.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

If you'd like to join our happy band of volunteers why not call into the museum when it's open or email: [curator@evmt.org.uk](mailto:curator@evmt.org.uk)

## CORRESPONDENCE FROM MEMBERS

### From Peter Winchester

*You featured Pan Books in the last edition of the Newsletter, saying it was geared up to distribute up to 2 million books each month, but you did not say how. Perhaps I can help. Many of them were sent out on the passenger trains from Edenbridge Station, I was told they had sent out 15 tons of books in one week, though I don't know how one man got the barrow down the slope of the platform and up again, I guess that little Bedford van in your picture was very busy taking books to the Top Station. They did also send out books by having a van in the goods yard and filling it, though I guess most went out by passenger trains. It was something of a joke how long the trains stopped in Edenbridge, loading parcels and mail. The 8pm up always had several vans in its formation and there was a van train up later, although that didn't stop. This later [one] became the Mail Train where you could post a letter on the train, as long as [you] put an extra ½ d stamp on it, I did so one evening at Tonbridge, this was I think the Dover – Bristol mail train, but I may be wrong. Perhaps Dover – Glasgow?*

### From Lyn Layland

This is a follow up to an article on Fairfield, Hever Road which I co-wrote with Kay Wilson. *Museum News*, 25, 2011.

I was contacted by a lady with the maiden name of Susan Troughton who came to live with her parents at no.39 Hever Road, Edenbridge in 1952. She was just six years old at the time. Her father, Dennis Troughton, applied for the position of gardener at Fairfield.

Isobel Soutter invited him to an interview, and he was offered the job starting at £6 a week.

Susan was able to tell me that Isobel was a very private and frugal person and lived in just one room. She did not have any other help in the house and just one gardener, Dennis. She did not have visitors as a rule and made no repairs to the house. Susan remembers the long driveway which was lined with blue hydrangeas and the apple orchard at the back of the house where she and a friend used to go 'scrumping'.

The Troughton family moved away from Edenbridge in 1961 but Susan did come back to see her old home about six years ago which brought back many memories.



*The ruins of Fairfield, Hever Road, Edenbridge.*

Image: P2013.2098

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*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.*

## OBITUARY

### Sheila Summers Asquez (1943 - 2022)

We are sad to record the death of founder member Sheila Summers Asquez. Sheila became an active volunteer after she retired from the internationally renowned Pyser Optics in Edenbridge (formerly Francis Barker). She was meticulous in her attention to detail and gained a valuable knowledge of the collection working as the Movement Monitor, responsible for transferring objects between the permanent collection and the store. If an object dared to go missing Sheila could invariably track it down.

In 2010 she contributed to the Digital Object Project spending many hours organising the boxes in the store so the contents could be photographed and worked through the 2018 inventory when the entire collection was checked. Sheila was also a much-valued member of the cataloguing team where her knowledge of the history of Four Elms was particularly appreciated. Always a pleasure to work alongside the museum is indebted to Sheila for her many years of support and commitment.

## EDEN VALLEY MUSEUM

### OPENING TIMES

#### February to December

Wednesday and Friday 2 to 4.30pm  
Thursday and Saturday 10am 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.cafonline.org) and search using our charity number: 1065466

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**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





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