

Meriel Conna
McMurree Raraty 16th September
90 Bridges District History Society 2007.
Bridge, nr Canterbury A Brief Historical Tour of
Dear Both, Kent The Village of Bridge & its Environs

You do not know me, but I once lived in Bridge as a child, from the age of 2 years to 7 years.

I have just bought your pamphlet tour book of Bridge and found it fascinating. It brought back many memories, some of which you will find in the following paragraphs - I trust they will be interesting and helpful.

I am now 65 years old and can still remember where my parents and I lived -

1, Weston Villas;

my parents were Frank & Phyllis Davey and our next door neighbours were the Lewis family, the eldest son, as far as I know, still lives in Bridge and his name is Brian and his brother is Nigel. (Brian, incidentally, was a key figure in the petitioning for the Bus-Pass scheme, which is now a functioning way round the village). Our family doctor was a Dr. Milne who lived further up the hill (towards Canterbury I believe). I also remember the Village Butcher but not the surname; he had a daughter

Whose name, I believe, is Dorothy. She was one of the Sunday School teachers at the Village Church, and taught me.

Photo
7950s 60s I enclose a copy (enlarged) of a photo, she sent me years ago, with her and her son Jack?

When I was about 4 or 5 years old, all the village children congregated in the Village hall for food parcels sent from the United States. It was rationing time then. I can still remember handing over the ration book to be stamped, even at that young age, for my mother in the shops!

Photos
1946
19478 I also enclose an enlarged photo of me on Black Beauty, the pony, and Captain Mashin holding the reins, I was 5 yrs old! Capt. Mashin used to take me down the high street and back, with me on Black Beauty, although I had no knowledge of even the basics of horse riding or control! Capt. Mashin did that and I certainly was not dressed for the occasion as you can see!!

I have enjoyed reminiscing those early years and the parts of the Village I remember.

Another memory is of the vicarage, I used to stay the night when my parents went to functions in London and would be back late, going back to

Capt. Maslin, as you mentioned in the book, his fields were behind "Sefton Villas" and "Weston Villas" - our back garden wall was between our garden and the fields he used to keep his horses in; we used to throw over windfall apples to the horses, and I was often lifted up by my father to stroke the horses!

My father used to take me on walks in those fields and look for wildlife including Slow-worms, grass Snakes, wild flowers etc. One day we saw a grass Snake in the stream under the village Bridge - swimming!

Another memory comes to mind now - that of an elderly lady who kept a large number of Bantam Hens and we used to visit her, my mother and I, and collect the eggs and pay her with my mother's Cakes, and ^{used to} also feed the hens!

"Bridge Farm"

The Farm - just down the road from her, on the right hand side of the high street, is one memory that stays with me; I used to feed the cattle at the farm gate when it was time with mangle wortels!

Some 40 odd years ago, my husband and I paid a visit to Bridge. We were sad to see that the farm's farmhouse had gone to be replaced by an estate of

copy of
postcard
1905
BRIDGE
HIGH ST
FROM THE
BRIDGE

houses!

there were walks to Bekesbourne and Patrixbourne via the lanes from the top of the Canterbury hill on the left.

Once, with my mother, I was chased by the farmer's Bull that had escaped from the field, and it nearly trampled my nice tricycle!!

As to notable people of the Village I remember being school friends with Tony Gardiner, her father ran "the Red Lion" Public House; we used to come home from Primary School on the bus together. Tony's father was the Aide to King Hussein of Jordan's father - later Tony married King Hussein and her eldest son is now King Abdullah.

I cannot recall any more news-worthy things but to say I had a very happy childhood, albeit short in Bridge with friends in Ashford also.

I trust this short account helps you with any more research into the life of the village

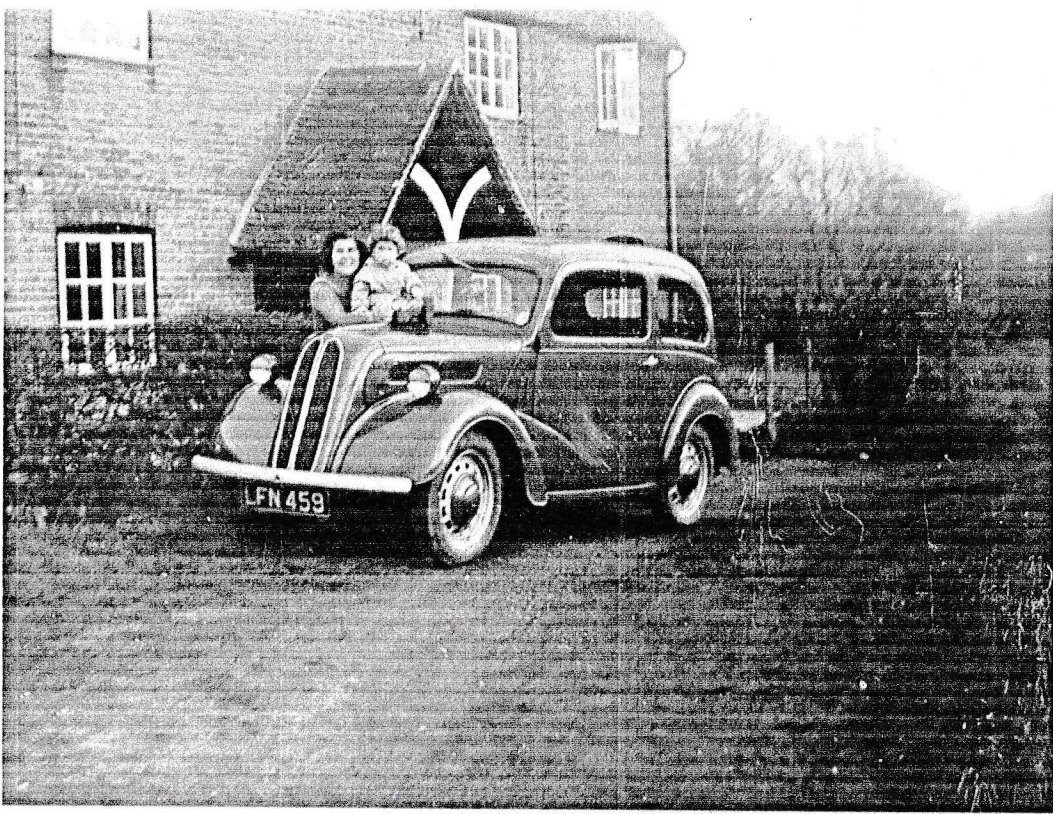
I am

Yours Sincerely
Mrs. Susan Woodgate
(Nell Dawey)

Copy of
Post
card

Bridge High Street
October 1905









Chairman: Dr MM Raraty.
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21st January 2008

Dear Mrs Woodgate,

Thank you for your further letter of January 5th, with its enclosures. The photographs are very fine, and I am most grateful for the effort you have made in having them done. They will be incorporated into our archive as part of the history of Bridge.

At the end of February our History Society meeting will be a 'Members' Evening' at which we shall be showing a DVD compiled by another old resident of Bridge (though he too no longer lives here), Bob Williams, who was a keen photographer, and who ran the 'Bridge Cinema' from a shed in his back garden in Patricbourne Road. I will see if any of the members present remember your name from their time at school here!

Thank you again for the interest you have shown in trawling through your memories.

Yours sincerely,

Dear Dr. Raraty,

Thank you for your kind letter, dated 29th September, which I received on the 4th October. Further to my telephone conversation with you on that day, I now furnish you with one other memory and one that is still clear in my mind.

Please find below my recollection:

When I was six or seven years old, (1948/49) we as a family, were still living in Bridge; I was woken up very late in the evening and was wrapped in a blanket and taken outside to the Post Office across the road from Weston Villa's (where we lived), and held in my father's arms.

We stood waiting but I had no idea who or what we were waiting for. Lots of other villagers had also gathered expectantly. Suddenly a noise was heard which became louder as it drew nearer. I then witnessed what I now know was a pilgrimage travelling through from the continent. It was a man carrying a large wooden cross over his shoulder with a large supporting retinue. He was representing the Lord Jesus Christ. It must have been at Easter time.

It made a huge impression on me at the time; a week later I took a newspaper article, about the event, to my teacher, who was a teaching sister (Sister Ethelberta) at St. Anne's Roman Catholic Convent School in Sturry- I was the only pupil to do so!

I take the opportunity to send you further copies of the photographs I sent before. These have been computer enhanced and consequently are of a much better quality.

