

Car Park

Gives us an opportunity to point to the most significant and influential site in all of Bridge - Bifrons.

Bifrons was built by John Bargar or Bargrave (an old Kentish family, with enterprises in Virginia) in 1634. (Dean Robert Bargrave of Canterbury Cathedral, and John Bargrave, traveller and collector of Curiosities). Family tombstones in Patixbourne Church. Grandson John Bargrave (?the collector) sold Bifrons in 1662 to Sir Arthur Slingsby, and his son Sir Charles Slingsby in 1677 alienated it to Thomas Baker, a London merchant, on whose death it came to William Whitton of London, and he in 1680 passed it to Thomas Adrian. He alienated it in 1694 to John Taylor (1665-1729 son of Nathaniel Taylor, Barrister-at-law), and his wife Olivia (d.1716) (portrait with his family, 1696, in NPG) who had four sons and four daughters (**Olive** b 1681??. married John Bowtell DD, vicar of Patixbourne (and Bridge)), **Margaret** (1683-1738, unmarried), **Brook**, DD (1685-1731) - a celebrated mathematician, the inventor of Taylor's Theorem, worked with Kepler on the laws of planetary motion, FRS; worked with D'Alembert in Paris on the theory of refraction, **Mary** (1690-1771 - died aged 91? At Bridge Place), **Upton** (b 1696) (is this **Herbert**, second son, who succeeded to all the estates by his father's will, and died 1763?), **Nathaniel** (b 1687), **Charles** (merchant in Moscow), **John** (b 1687), **Hannah, Bridges** (1698-1754). (Something wrong, here. That makes eleven.)

Herbert (d 1763) had two sons, Herbert (d 1767 unmarried) and Edward (1763-1798) who succeeded him and who about 1770 demolished the old house and rebuilt it using some materials from Bridge Place (which had been partly demolished in 1704). In 1796 Jane Austen visited Bifrons. Edward had four sons: Edward (an Army Captain), Herbert (ditto), Brook (Private Secretary to Foreign Minister), Bridges (Naval lieutenant). Edward Taylor sold Bifrons in 1820 to the Marquess of Conyngham (d. 1832) who extended the house. Elizabeth (Marchioness, b ca 1770) continued to reside there until her death in 1861. She was responsible for opening a school for girls at the lower Lodge Gate (uniform like Little Red Riding-Hood), and supported the free schools of Patixbourne and Bridge. She helped towards the formation of a Volunteer Fire Brigade and the establishment of a small gasworks (1859) to supply the mansion and the villages. She was a favourite (but not necessarily mistress) of George IV, notorious for her elegant enbonpoint and large posterior: 'fat, handsome, kindly, shrewd and extremely fond of jewels.' A rhyme suggested that they spent their time

'Quaffing their claret, then mingling their lips,

Or tickling the fat about each other's hips'

Bifrons remained in the Conyngham Estate (1874 - Earl & Countess Mountcharles) and then let to tenants: 1893-97: John A Miller, Esq.; 1903-4, Frank Penn, Esq.; 1907-13, Robert Henry Bullock Marsham; 1915-18 Frank Penn & Mrs Penn; 1924-30 Col. Hon. Milo George Talbot (incl 230 acres of finely timbered park); 1934 Hon. Mrs Milo Talbot. 1940 Empty. Later used as a billet for Canadian servicemen and a home for displaced persons. Finally demolished in 1949(51).

Subsequent excavations have laid bare the cellars once more.