

The Beauty of Bridge

As the boundary between rural and urban life becomes increasingly blurred, the search for the unspoiled Kentish village becomes more difficult.

Prior to 1976, Bridge was under constant stress from the heavy traffic that plagued the lives of residents. But that year saw a by-pass open that freed the village from the worst aspects of modernity, enabling Bridge to rediscover its rural heritage.

Nestled in the picturesque Nailbourne Valley, the village has been a site of habitation since the Roman era, and has retained a strong identity and independence ever since.

Its name stems from 'Bregge', Old English for a bridge, which crossed the Little Stour.

As a resident of the village for more than 40 years, and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, John Hill is acutely aware that Bridge's autonomy has retained its character and charm.

"It's how the quintessential English village used to be," said John. "It's an attractive place with a great community spirit and thriving shops."

John Hill, Vice Chairman of Bridge Parish Council is happy to live in "a quintessential English village"



Flowing freely: the River Nailbourne passes through Bridge

John added: "People come from all over east Kent to visit the village butcher's shop, and to the pubs and restaurants to eat excellent food. And despite our proximity to Canterbury, we can be quite self-sufficient here."

This self-sufficiency is quite evident in the streets of Bridge on warm summer afternoons, as some of the village's 3,000 souls go about their business. The hive of activity presents a community spirit that ties the people together.

And dominating the skyline of Bridge is the village church, faced with Kentish flint. Restored in the 19th century, its imposing steeple contrasts with Tudor and Victorian buildings that blend together to give the village its distinct architectural charm.

John said: "Bridge is an attractive village, but I think it's the people that make it what it is. We have more than 30 active organisations that cater for all interests and ages, from scout groups to tennis and cricket clubs."

In Bridge, human activity and the rural environment contrast and complement each other. A weary traveller in search of an unspoiled village would not be disappointed. "I can't imagine leaving," said John. "Bridge is a lovely place in which to live and an equally lovely place to visit."