

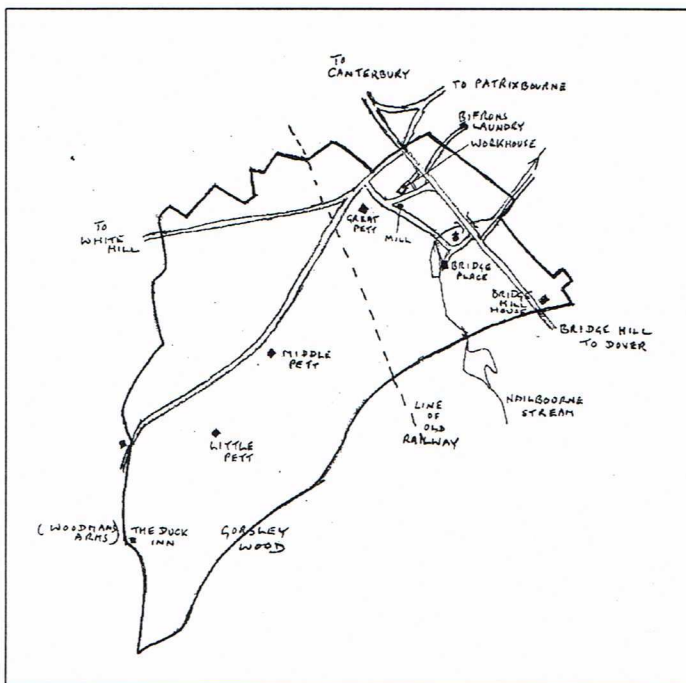
## Bridge in Kent: Some Notes on the Place and the People



The Bridge at Bridge: mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Photo ca. 1930

### The River Crossing and the Parish of Bridge

In October 2000 the rains came. The 'river' Nailbourne - a description many might until then have thought of as an unnecessarily generous term - began to run again after an interval of years, and within months had inundated its valley: the 'waters of woe' had risen to levels unseen for at least three centuries. Many properties in Bridge were flooded, though some not by any means for the first time. The stream, so quietly picturesque, became an impressive and formidable torrent. But that, of course, is precisely why Bridge is where it is, and why it bears the name, shared only, in its simple form, by one small hamlet in Cornwall.



Tithe maps of 1838 show the parish extending as far north as the Gate Inn at the junction of the two Dover Roads, and including Milestone Farm, but as may be seen from the sketch-map the parish as defined in the local government act of 1894 is rather smaller, and is largely agricultural and woodland. The village itself, and the river crossing, are tucked into the north-eastern end, while the boundary with Patribourne runs not far from the main Dover Road. It includes at its eastern extremity Bridge Hill House, but not Higham, and until the reorganisation of boundaries in the 1970's incorporated only part of Bridge Down, then ran down the edge of the wood enclosing Side Hill. It extends northwards to the crossroads of Town Hill; its southernmost point stops just short of

Bursted Manor and Broxhall Farm. It includes therefore all three Pett farms, the Duck Inn, and a large part of Gorsley Wood. By far the greatest part of the population inhabits the village, though in former days the proportion was a little less. The Nailbourne, from its source (as the East Brook)



near Etchinghill hardly more than three miles from the Channel coast at Hythe, flows predominantly northwards until it is deflected to the north-west by the sweep of the chalk downs at Barham. At Bridge it turns smartly through a right angle, and then runs (from Garrington as the Little Stour) north-eastwards to its confluence with the Great Stour at Plucks Gutter. The road from Dover to Canterbury runs of course along the dry scarp of the Downs, until it is obliged, by the turn in the river valley, to descend and cross the water. The valley itself has since before Roman times been heavily populated: the density of remains is among the highest in the country. There are several large post-Roman burial sites on the brow of the hills overlooking the river, mostly on the eastern side, but there were also three much earlier burial chambers (kistvaens) found in Gorsley Woods that were excavated by Francis Vine, vicar of Patricbourne. In 1846, during excavation of the lake in Bourne Park, Samian pottery and other articles were found at a depth of 10-13 feet, alongside some Roman burials. The Rev<sup>d</sup>. Bryan Faussett, an enthusiastic antiquary of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, mentions the existence in 1771 of more than 100 tumuli on Hanging Hill, in front of and between Bourne House, Bishopsbourne and the main road, most of which he uncovered, though these were Anglo-Saxon in date. Burials were also found on Side Hill above the road to Patricbourne, while during the realigning of the turnpike road up Bridge Hill in 1829 a number of Romano-British urns and earthen vessels were discovered, with skeletons and fragments of weapons, at a greater depth than the Saxon graves. There is no doubt more to be found, especially if one is to be guided by aerial photography.

One particular site that shows up well on such photographs among other mysterious marks deserving further investigation is that of "Old England's Hole". This is a very nearly circular, though much disturbed and dug-over, hollow about 90 metres in diameter in the field overlooking Bourne House, half-way up Bridge Hill. It is enclosed by a low embankment, much degraded now, but suggesting that the structure is more than a mere chalkpit. The fact also that it is cut through by the Roman road suggests that it is of greater antiquity. This has led to the popular supposition that it represents a defensive position constructed by the ancient Britons to protect the river-crossing after their defeat on Barham Down in 54 AD by Caesar's seventh legion. (cf CG Harper, *The Ingoldsby Country*, 1904, pp63-66).

### **Village origins**

At this point then, where there is a natural obstruction across the road, a bridge almost certainly existed, probably in Roman times, or even before. The name itself is first recorded in 1086 in Domesday, as *brige*, a word whose etymology suggests a wooden structure. Such a name also implies of course that the river was often enough sufficiently deep to offer, on its own, inconvenience at the very least to those attempting to cross. A bridge is after all a costly thing to build and maintain. Such evidence as there is suggests that the stream would have run until relatively recently more or less permanently from the spring just above Bourne Lake: the map issued by Andrews, Drury and Herbert in 1769 marks a point nearby as 'Stour Head'. The settlement of Bridge presumably took its name from the structure, even if previously there were some kind of habitations near the crossing. It is true that William Lambarde, in his *Perambulation of Kent* of 1576, does not mention this Nailbourne bridge in his catalogue of Kent bridges, but the ones he thought worthy of note were probably all stone-built. This one was surely not.

However, what is particularly notable about Domesday is that a settlement called Bridge is not identified. Patricbourne, Bishopsbourne, Bekesbourne all are listed as distinct villages or hamlets (all perhaps part of the manor of 'Great' Bourne, as opposed to Littlebourne), yet Bridge is not. Instead, the word is used to identify the Hundred or administrative district within which these places are located: that is, it is the structure across the stream that gives its name to the whole district, the most noteworthy feature for some miles around. Any dwellings associated with it were presumably



to be included in one of the nearby villages, most probably Patricxbourne, since, as Hasted remarks, "The church of Bridge. . . was always esteemed as a chapel to the church of Patricksborne. . ." It is not clear whether references subsequent to Domesday, as Brygge (ca 1100) and somewhat later as Bregge (1235), indicate the village as opposed to the bridge on the stream, though by then the flint-built church of St Peter must have been erected, for even today, in spite of the very considerable rebuilding it underwent in 1859/61 as the gift of Mrs Mary Gregory of Bridge Hill House, Norman elements in the church are still visible, in the West door for instance. A church would not have been built without a congregation to serve. The church may indeed have been erected even nearer the stream than now appears, for the water has been evidently diverted from its original and natural course, most probably by Sir Arnold Braems when he built Bridge Place. Recent flooding patterns may support this view. An additional complication lies in the fact that for at least some of the period in the early Middle Ages the Roman road was probably not the main thoroughfare from Canterbury towards Dover. That status must be accorded to the Pilgrims' Way, which ran through the Barton Estate to Hode Lane and crossed the Nailbourne at Patricxbourne, before climbing the hill towards Barham Down. It is possible therefore that at this period there was no longer a bridge at Bridge, and how much traffic along this road there was during this period must be a matter of speculation.

The origins of the village nevertheless lie in its dependency on the road, and the passage of travellers. For most of its existence it has consisted of a single street, whose buildings were very largely devoted to supplying the needs and wants of passers-by, in terms of both food and drink, and in the appurtenances of travel - a blacksmith, saddler, shoemaker, and so on. And although in recent years these travellers passed largely without stopping any longer, but merely causing such congestion and disturbance that a by-pass was eventually built in 1974, over the centuries the Street has seen the passage of virtually anyone en route to the Continent via Dover. Merchants, aristocrats and kings have all passed through Bridge. John Harris, in his *History of Kent* of 1719, enumerates various encampments of prodigious numbers on Barham Down, all of whom will have seen Bridge. He cites, for instance, King John, in 1212, with 60,000 men in readiness to oppose a French invasion. Henry V returning from Agincourt to Calais and Dover in 1415 may well have passed through the village, as did Henry VIII on his way to encamp on Barham Down before embarking for the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. And the Downs have more recently seen no less numerous and well-attested assemblies of armies. In August 1799 for instance, at the height of an invasion scare during the Napoleonic wars, more than 10,000 infantrymen encamped on Barham Down. All had come through Bridge from Canterbury, as the *Kentish Gazette* reports:

The immense train of farmer's and artillery waggons, employed in conveying the troops and baggage, ammunition, military and other stores, and provisions, towards the camp, adding the numerous carriages filled with officers and other passengers; these together have produced a scene of populousness and traffic in this ancient city, which has not been beheld by its inhabitants since the days of St Thomas Becket.

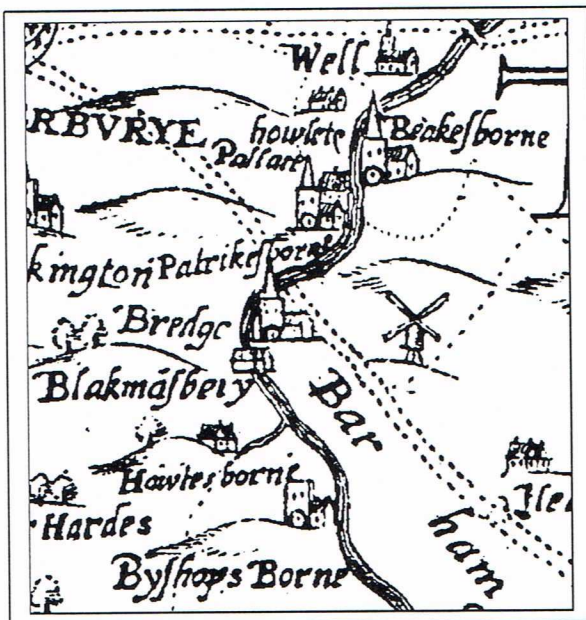
Some months earlier, in preparation for this influx, Dr Wardell, physician to the forces and quartered in Bridge, was looking for a 'roomy house or other sort of building. . .to be used for a Regimental Hospital'.

How much more so, then, were the crowds in the narrow street of Bridge on the way to the trenches of the first World War and no doubt on many other occasions too. All these have passed through Bridge. In 1914-18 the 'Reading Room', as it then was, doubled as a canteen and rest centre, and the chemist's register for the period revives the perception of Bridge as a medical centre as it records the numerous military personnel who visited the doctor, including General Haig and Lord Kitchener - who also famously sent his first telegram of the War from Bridge Post Office, though this was probably not from the building we now know. The Post Office then was at Mr Price the Grocer's - at present Skipper's Restaurant.

## **Growth and Development**



Bridge is thus not a characteristic mediaeval nuclear village, housing the tenants of smallholdings radiating from its centre, nor yet is it part of any great estate, and dependent on it, albeit in later years it has been surrounded by great houses, notably Bourne, Bridge Place, Higham and Bifrons, all of whose owners have played their part in its development, though it is only Bridge Place itself which lies in the parish. For most of its existence its inhabitants have numbered but a very few hundred: the late 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a few new cottages ('Brook Place') in Brewery Lane, 1852 the development of Union, Deering (sic, but Sir Edward Cholmeley Dering was elected MP for East Kent at this time) and Filmer Roads, the later 19<sup>th</sup> century a gradual extension along the Street towards Canterbury. But only in the last half-century has there been any serious expansion, with the development of Bridge Down (1962), Western Avenue (1963) and Riverside Close (1965). At the outset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the entire parish population (including outlying farms) by census in 1801 was 325. By 1831 it had reached 543, and by 1841 a total of 817, of whom however no fewer than 165 were inmates of the recently established (1835) workhouse, which was built to serve 25 parishes around Canterbury. The previous parish workhouse of course was obliged to cater for the poor of Bridge only. The village population reached a peak of 941 in 1871 and then fluctuated, reaching a low point of 699 in 1921 as agricultural employment diminished. Numbers rose again slowly to 761 in 1961, which is when the face of Bridge began to change irrevocably, with the demolition of the most notable building in the centre, the essentially early 14<sup>th</sup> century Bridge Farm, a year or two later. Its replacement by streets of undistinguished modern housing resulted in a population in 1971 of 1225. By the Millennium it has reached close on 2000.



Bridge village emerges from mediaeval obscurity for the first time in Philip Symonson's map of Kent of 1596. The road to Dover as the principal route from Canterbury is by now clearly established, and the right-angled bend of the river past the church very obvious, even if the presence of a bridge is somewhat uncertain (unlike the well-marked bridge at Littlebourne to the north-east). Two other features are of note. The site of Bridge Place is labelled "Blakmäsbery" (ie Blackmansbury), and there is a post-windmill placed on the edge of the hill to the south, alongside a road (Kingsbury Road) overlooking the village, north-east of the main road.

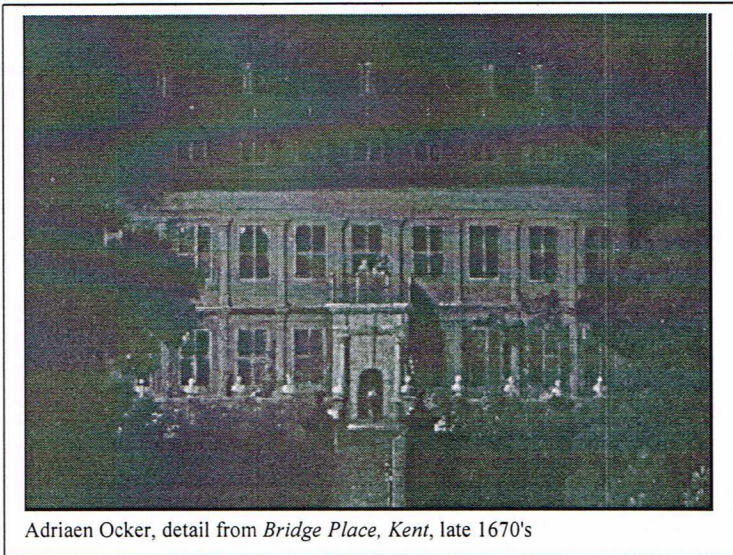
#### Manor and Village

The manor of Blackmansbury, first mentioned in 1254, and about 62 acres in extent in 1384, was once part of the possessions of St Augustine's

Abbey in Canterbury. The name therefore seems to pre-date that of the nearby village, though by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the latter is large and important enough to warrant a place on Symonson's map. According to Hasted, upon the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII ownership of the manor was granted in 1545 to Henry Laurence, whose son John passed it in 1576 to William Partherich. Harris offers a slightly different succession, asserting that the manor belonged to Sir Alexander de Cheyney in Edward I's reign. Both agree however that in 1638 Partherich's (or Patrick's) grandson Edward sold the estate to (Sir) Arnold Braems (1602-1681), who soon afterwards built Bridge Place on the site of the old Court Lodge. Sir Arnold's father, a Fleming by birth, was a Dover merchant in Charles I's time. At the Restoration Arnold was elected MP for Dover and knighted very shortly after. The family pursued a commercial career with such enthusiasm that they had soon bought up much of Dover waterfront, covered it with warehouses



(destroyed in a fire in 1808), and thus largely controlled the Harbour Board, its tolls and customs and movement of goods.



Adriaen Ocker, detail from *Bridge Place, Kent*, late 1670's

Sir Arnold rather ambitiously devoted his fortune to the construction of a magnificent house, rectangular in shape, nine bays by seven, with a central courtyard, second only in size in East Kent to Chilham Castle, and described by Philipot in 1659 as 'complete'. But by the time of the death of his son Walter in 1692 the fortune was dissipated, and the property obliged to be sold in 1704 to John Taylor of Bifrons in Patrixbourne. He immediately demolished a large part of it, leaving just one corner, in which state it remains today, though still the largest house in the village. A second manor, not indicated on the map, was

that of Bereacre, or Great and Little Barakers (according to Hasted), in the south-west of the parish. Its location and extent are not clear, though by the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century it had come into the hands of the Nailors of Renville.

### The Windmill

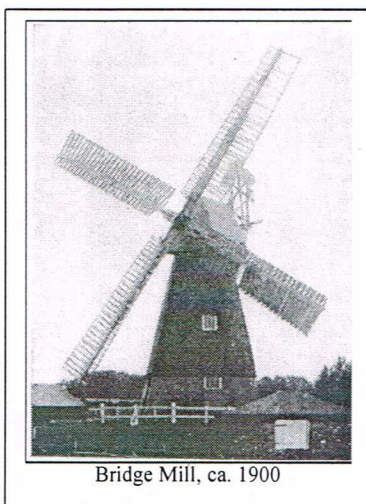
Bridge windmill, situated conveniently on the scarp of Side Hill in Symonson's map, served the village for a further 200 years. It is documented in the *Kentish Gazette* of 26-30 May 1786 when 'On Saturday last was committed to St Dunstan's gaol . . . John Kent, of this city, miller, charged on the oath of John Pilcher, of Bridge, miller and baker, with having stolen out of his mill in the Parish of Patrixbourne, a bag, containing upwards of one hundred weight of wheaten flour. . .'

and again in 1808 when

'the mill belonging to John Fagg, on Bridge Hill, was broke open'

It is still recorded in this position on a map of about 1825/6, but possibly earlier, for in July 1818 the mill was advertised for sale, but with a proviso:

'To be sold. . . a CORN WINDMILL. . . standing. . . on a piece of land at Bridge Hill. . . now in the occupation of Mr John Fagg, miller. The said corn windmill and storehouse must be taken down and removed by the purchaser, on or before the sixth April next. . .'



Bridge Mill, ca. 1900

In 1830, however, at the same time as Bifrons was sold (to the Marquis of Conyngham), an agreement was drawn up for the sale of 'Three Corner Meadow' (at the junction of Union Road and Mill Lane,) together with 'all that corn windmill and other the buildings then lately erected and built on said land by. . . James Ashenden'. Whether this was a new mill - it was certainly a smock mill, rather than a post-mill - or the old one in a new position is not certain, but there the mill stayed throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, overseen from the mill house a few yards down Union Road, until wind power was abandoned in 1907. By 1933 the site was in use as a coal yard while the mill itself steadily decayed, until it was eventually demolished in October 1954. One of Messrs Corral's oil storage tanks now rests on the mill's old brick base.



## Sir Arnold Braems

Sir Arnold Braems maintained extensive contacts in London, where Pepys met him for meals at least three times in 1660 and 1661, and with the Continent. His wealth and position enabled him to entertain numerous visitors, amongst them the artist William Schellinks, who toured England from 1661 to 1663, drawing the sights as he went. Schellinks' journal records a deal of drinking, but also a game of bowls 'on the bowling green on the hill near Sir Arnold Braems' place', and he refers in enthusiastic detail to the deerpark, woods, rabbit warren, fruit trees, vineyard and the stream 'in which a certain kind of fish called trout is bred' (Harris too mentions trout at Bifrons). Schellinks



Willem Schellinks: Bridge Street, 1661. © Courtauld Institute

incidentally also notes on 6 October 1661 'a general muster of seven or eight companies of the militia . . . on the hill above Bishopsbourne. . . each company 200 men strong.'

Among scenes that caught his interest here are sketches of the gardens of Bridge Place, and two wider perspectives: a view of Bridge from the top of Town Hill across the valley, and a view of the

Street from a point at the bottom of Bridge Hill. This latter is particularly interesting, for the White Horse Inn is clearly identifiable, with its sign hanging out over the street, and a horseman waiting outside, as well as Bridge Farmhouse, and in the foreground the Bridge itself at last: two low brick arches under the dirt road and marked by two big wooden posts. To the side, for those wishing to water their horses or to cool the metal rims of their cart or carriage wheels after the steep descent of either of the hills on each side, there is a wide water-splash. The bridge itself was rebuilt and widened in the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, though retaining the two neat arches, and these may still be seen by anyone prepared to venture into the river-bed when it is dry. The water-splash too remained until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before the road was widened again to accommodate the demands of modern traffic densities.

## The Roads

The street was of course not tarred until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, probably when the water-splash was covered, though Harris describes the Roman Military Way from Canterbury to Dover 'about three-quarters of a mile before you come to Bridge-Street' as appearing 'entire and high, and continues so almost to the Town's End; as it doth beyond it again on Barham Down'. Even in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century however the passage of traffic inevitably resulted in clouds of dust in a dry summer, and muddied ruts in winter. Such conditions must surely have often made life intolerable when large numbers of soldiers, for instance, were passing through on their way to Barham. A graphic illustration of winter conditions is provided by Charles Dickens in Ch 2 of *A Tale of Two Cities*. He refers to Shooter's Hill, and the year is 1775, but it might as well be Bridge Hill in the same period, where the Roman Road was not so much in evidence:

It was the Dover Road. . . He walked uphill in the mire by the side of the mail, as the rest of the passengers did; not because they had the least relish for walking exercise, under the circumstances, but because the hill, and the harness, and the mud, and the mail, were all so heavy, that the horses had three times already come to a stop, besides once drawing the coach across the road. . .



With drooping heads and tremulous tails, they mashed their way through the thick mud, floundering and stumbling between whiles, as if they were falling to pieces at the larger joints. . .

Both hills, on either side of the village, were perhaps not quite so muddy, but they were steeper than they are now. Significant is perhaps the name 'Stickfast Hill' attached to the slope down towards Bridge from the Gate Inn into Gutteridge Bottom.

On December 23 1769 the *Kentish Gazette* noted that

'some public-spirited Gentlemen intend to petition Parliament for a Turnpike Act for the road from Dover-lane in Canterbury to the Half-way House leading to Dover over Barham-downs, and that the gate will be erected opposite the mile-stone near St. Lawrance.'

The following week it records that the proposal met with universal approval, since 'how it has remained in its present neglected condition is something very strange'. It was another 21 years however before the Act was passed, the *Gazette* meanwhile from time to time recording incidents of road accidents and highway robbery. In 1791 however Parliament was presented with

An Act for making a new Road from St George's gate in the City of Canterbury, to a Place called Gutteridge Bottom, and for repairing and widening the present Road from thence to the Dover Turnpike Road in the Parish of Barham. . .

Whereas the Road. . . is in a ruinous condition and in several parts narrow and inconvenient for passengers and carriages. . .

In the same year, on June 6<sup>th</sup>, notice was given

That the Turnpike Gate, now standing in Bridge street will be removed, on Monday next, the 13<sup>th</sup> instant, to the end of the New Road next Bridge, and that HENRY BEAR is appointed by the Trustees to receive the Tolls at the said gate on and after that day. And the next meeting of the Trustees will be holden at the sign of the Star, without St. George's Gate, Canterbury, on Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> instant, to take into consideration the improvement of the road up Bridge-hill.

The Act enabled the construction of the New Dover Road, which was however only completed by about 1800, and enabled the Trustees to buy up land adjoining the road from there to Barham for widening, including

'certain Gardens, Orchards, and Yards, situate in Bridge Street, the Property of the Reverend Edward Taylor *Clerk*, Stephen Beckingham Esquire, Henry Crosoer, Henry Farley, Thomas Abree Pickering, - - -Nash, and Thomas Neal respectively, in the respective Occupations of Richard Jarvis, John Cooper, Robert Kingsland, Robert Osborn, Samuel Relvey, James Aylward, the said Henry Crosoer, Joseph Dixon, George Fortune, Joseph Best, Mary Peake, and - - - Lawrence'

This list thus neatly enumerates most of the owners and occupiers of property in the Street. Some of these names are still familiar in the first census (1841) to identify individuals - Jarvis the butcher, Crosoer the farmer, while William Nash the watchmaker was there already in 1769 and Edward Taylor was the owner of Bifrons and several properties on both sides of the Street.

The Act also specifies the dues and tolls to be collected: coaches with 4 or more horses one shilling, a single horse 3d; horses laden or unladen 1d; cattle 10d per score, sheep and pigs 5d per score.

Carriages and wagons with broad wheels to pay only half tolls - which reflects their relative lack of damage to the road. Exemptions were available for election days, road repairers, dung or manure carriers, hay, undried hops, farm implements, mails, soldiers, farmers or servants residing in Patixbourne, Bridge, Bishopsbourne, Kingston and Barham. There was to be no parking on the road, nor any structure erected within 6 yards of the centre line. All this seems perhaps very familiar. Familiar too was the fact that due to objections of various sorts, the toll road up Bridge Hill was not completed until 1829/30, a full 60 years after it was first suggested!

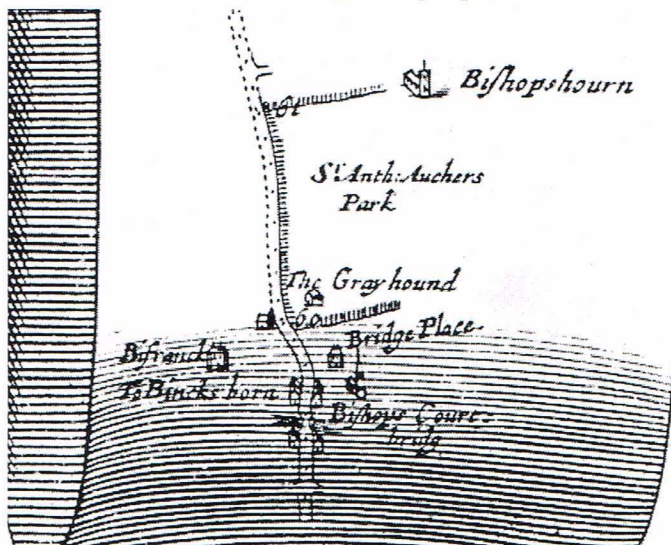
As a result of the turnpike roadworks both hills into Bridge were regraded to lessen the incline down into the village and smooth out the slope. Consequently the descent into Dering Road (which was originally no more than a footpath) had to be made steep, and *Sunnyside* found itself overlooked by a new embankment. Recent excavations outside the Post Office suggest that a layer of chalk rubble up to two feet thick was also laid down along the Street. At the other end of the village not only was the gradient evened and lessened, but the road itself was shifted a few feet to the north-east: the line of the old road can be gauged by extending the line of the churchyard wall up the hill. The result is that the road runs on an embankment until it cuts into Old England's Hole (rather less than before), then it drops into a cutting until it reaches the brow of the hill, where



levelling takes it on to a fairly high embankment into Bishopsbourne Parish. In the course of digging the cutting, again some Roman skulls were said to have been found five feet below the surface.

Other changes have taken place in the road layout as Bridge has expanded. Probably in conjunction with the rebuilding of Bridge Hill in 1830 the ancient Kingsbury Road past the old mill, represented on Symonson's map and apparently 9 feet wide (and part of which still exists as the path behind the wood above Side Hill from the top of Keepers Hill in Patrixbourne to the south-westwards), was stopped, more or less where the by-pass now cuts through. It would once have gone on across Bridge Hill and down the field to join the very old hollow way past Flint Cottages. Maybe the new owners of Bridge Hill House felt it to be an intrusion on their property. Some years earlier, in 1816, similar considerations had no doubt prompted Edward Taylor of Bifrons to close the principal road to Patrixbourne (Laundry Lane, *alias* Conyngham Lane), which ran past his front door, and to replace it with a new road round the outside of his estate, from his lodge in Patrixbourne and the junction with Hode Lane, north and west to the present crossroads at the top of Town Hill - Bekesbourne Road. Laundry Lane as a public right of way thus became a *cul-de-sac*, with Bifrons laundry at the end. Union Road led at first merely to the mill, but came into its own with the construction of the Workhouse in 1835 and the development of housing adjacent to it, from 1853 onwards, in Filmer Road, Dering Road and Union Square. The extension of the road beyond the Workhouse to the mill was designated Union Lane. Western Avenue and its Closes of course came into existence only after the demolition of Bridge Farm in 1962. Further south, Brewery (or Brewhouse or Brandy, or originally Malthouse) Lane is rather older. It formed the original access to Arnold Braems' mansion, flanked by 'a noble avenue of limes'; and received its modern name more mundanely following the establishment of the malthouse that was the origin of the Plough and Harrow public house. Its continuation across the ford to Pett Farm as Mill Lane is recorded on the Ordnance Survey map of 1801. Bourne Park Road was until after 1945 a private road to Bourne House, gated at both ends. At least one of the gateposts survived into the 1970's. The remaining track of significance in the parish to the south of the Dover Road is the rather prosaically named Pett Bottom Road, which links the three Pett farms to the village. It has remained largely unchanged over the centuries.

On the other side of the street the only property in Bridge parish on the Patrixbourne Road ('School Lane') was the appropriately named Brookside. The school (built in 1849) and the gasworks (1859) were actually in Patrixbourne. Finally, in 1866 a scheme was proposed to cut a road between the White Horse Inn and the butcher's along the line of a public footpath. But only the first few yards were built, to give better access to the slaughterhouse behind the butcher. It was not until a hundred years later that housing was built on that land, now called Riverside Close. On the brow of the hill above the village to the south Bridge Down was built on part of the estate belonging to Bridge Hill House, some of which, fronting on to the Hill had already been sold off in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the northern end of the village the properties on Bekesbourne Road lie outside the old boundary.



In 1675 John Ogilby published a map or itinerary of the road from London to Dover. Bridge unfortunately happens to lie on the end of a section of the continuous ribbon which characterises Ogilby's method, but there are still several points of interest and indeed mystery here. Braems' Bridge Place is clearly indicated, as is St Peter's church. The fenced expanse of Sir Anthony Aucher's (ie



Bourne) Park is also shown. But the village appears to be called Bishops Court - or is that the name of the bridg(e)? There is also a strange property, within the bounds of the park, called The Grayhound, apparently on the site of the lodge erected by Matthew Bell of Bourne, at the junction of Bourne Park Road.

### A Parish Register of Accounts

A surviving register of parish accounts for the years 1673-1740 lists the landowners and tenants paying the parish rate in May 1675, as also those outdwellers, ie outside the parish, who were nevertheless liable for land they owned within it. Arnold Braems and Anthony Aucher are thus listed, as is Thomas Baker (who owned Bridge Farm), as major landowners. Other names, such as Hopkins, May, Eldredge, Ovenden, Castle and Pilcher are well attested in the census returns of 1841-91, some even in the present day. Robert Bargrave's family built the original Bifrons and numbered among its members a notable Dean of the cathedral, and the collector of the 'cabinet of curiosities' from his travels on the Continent of Europe, John Bargrave, who is buried in

Patricxbourne St Mary's church. Some of these names indeed (Ovenden, Eldredge, Philpot) are recorded in the early years of Bridge parish registers of baptisms and marriages, which begin in 1579.

An Assesment made y<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, Anno 1675. By Symon Marsh C: Warden of Bredge; in y<sup>e</sup> Diocess of Canterbury, for, & towards y<sup>e</sup> reparations of Chappel, Steeple, & fences &c. at y<sup>e</sup> rate of Sixpence p<sup>r</sup> Acre. VI2.

Owners	Occupiers	Acres	£	s	d
S <sup>r</sup> Arnold Braems K <sup>t</sup>	X	080	2	00	0
William Ford Yeoman	X	018	0	09	0
William Cheston Yeoman	X	012	0	06	0
William Philpott Yeoman	X	004	0	02	0
Anthony Cheston Yeoman	X	080	2	00	0
	Michael Hopkins	X	005	0	01
S <sup>r</sup> Arnold Braems	William Ford	X	012	0	06
	John Swaine	X	035	0	17
	John Philpot	X	020	0	10
Thomas Baker Gen <sup>t</sup>	Robert Bargrave Gen <sup>t</sup>	X	006	0	03
	Thomas May	X	002	0	01
S <sup>r</sup> Ant <sup>o</sup> Aucher	George Butterris	X	030	0	15
	John Doolie	X	006	0	03
	Michael Hopkins	X	040	1	00
	John Eldredge	X	004	0	02
Out Dwellers, viz.		Acres	£	s	d
The Count <sup>y</sup> of Leicester, & S <sup>r</sup> Anth <sup>o</sup> Aucher		008	0	04	0
S <sup>r</sup> Anthony Aucher K <sup>t</sup> & Barro <sup>t</sup>		052	1	06	0
	For y <sup>e</sup> farme in Bredge Street	012	0	06	0
Thomas Baker Gen <sup>t</sup>	For Ovendens farme	048	1	04	0
	For y <sup>e</sup> farme Castle us'd	060	1	10	0
	For woodland	009	0	04	6
M <sup>r</sup> Thomas Baker	Richard Smith	X	004	0	02
Maddan Aucher	Theophilus Patteson	X	030	0	15
M <sup>r</sup> Decastes	Addan Hamon	X	010	0	05
M <sup>r</sup> Decastes	for wood Land	004	0	02	0
	John Pilcher	X	010	0	05
(signed) Symon Marsh. C. War.	The Some of y <sup>e</sup> Acres	603			
Thomas Callis his mark	Total Some is	015 <sup>4</sup>	s <sup>1</sup>	d <sup>6</sup>	
George Butterris his mark.	John Mackallar Vicar.				
Thomas May.	Robert Bargrave.				
Michael Hopkins					
his mark M					

(2v blank)

### Drinking Opportunities

Within the parish there have been over the years seven, perhaps eight establishments deserving of this name. The first in line comes to attention from Ogilby's map, where, clearly marked, is *The Grayhound*, situated apparently on the site of the lodge at the entrance to Bourne Park Road. This is the only reference known so far to a building whose name strongly suggests a wayside inn. Equally mysterious is perhaps the 16<sup>th</sup> century property in the centre of the Street, known now as *The Ship*. This too was by repute once an inn, though its more recent recorded history designates it as Primrose Alley (recorded by a weathered board nailed to the side wall until about 1998), in latter years a row of four very down-at-heel labourers' cottages, whose urchin children were avoided on parental order by the more 'respectable' youngsters of the village. Perhaps as the successor to *The Grayhound* we may see *The Red Lion*, on the corner of Patricxbourne Road and on the Dover side of

the stream. The building (much altered since) is first recorded in 1593 and may well be older, though it was not until 1632 that Jacob Jarvis obtained a licence to sell ale there and gave the house its present name. In the following century, and into the 19<sup>th</sup>, it developed substantial stabling and livery facilities, and offering carriages and other vehicles for private hire, as well as providing stabling for horses entered for the Canterbury Race meetings. It was also the first location for Bridge fire engine, though this soon moved across the road to the *Plough and Harrow*. This house was first built about a century after the Red Lion, in 1692, as a pair of cottages, but it was not until 1785 when Thomas Williams 'maltster of Bridge' took them over that they were converted into a malthouse with a dwelling attached. It is presumably some time after this date that the first part of the way to Bridge Place acquired the name of first Malthouse, then Brewhouse Lane. Only in 1832 however did Williams' son acquire a beerhouse licence under the terms of the 1830 Beer Act, and thus began a business which by the 1860's recognised the house by the name it bears today.



Liquors, in the Race Week [August], but what shall subscribe Ten Shillings and Sixpence. . . The great Main of Cocks will be fought every Day, during the Races, as usual. (*Gazette*, 1768).

The *Kentish Gazette* in 1773 offered other attractions: horse racing was not confined to the official race-week in August. For many years there was a meeting also at Easter, but in addition

On Monday next, being the first of February, Will be run a Match over the New Round Course on Barham Downs, one four-miles heat, for one hundred Guineas, between two Gentlemens horses - one is the Grey horse, that run twenty miles in an hour some time since on Barham Downs; the other a capital Hunter. To start exactly at Twelve o'clock Dinner will be ready at Bridge-Hill after the race is over.

A subsequent report notes the result - evidently a surprise for the bookmakers:

Such was the infatuated notions of the knowing ones in favour of grey and his rider, against dun and his rider, that soon after starting from two to one and so on as high as ten to one, was laid; but behold, grey was turned up, to the great disappointment of the learned, and the interest of those who knew nothing before hand. And on Thursday next we hear the grey horse is to run eighteen miles within the hour. . . a dinner will be provided at Bridge Hill house, as much company is expected on the occasion.

And other sports were catered for: cock-fighting, as mentioned above -

At Bridge-Hill on Tuesday next the 16<sup>th</sup> instant [March 1773] Bridge against Deal, to shew eleven cocks on each side, and fight for Four Guineas a battle, and Six Guineas the Main. There will be a Battle before Dinner. Dinner will be ready at One o'clock.

Nor was racing limited to horses. On June 26 1770 there was

At Bridge Hill a match of running, between Twenty-four Gentlemen of the Chilham Club, and Twenty-four Gentlemen of East Kent; to meet at four o'clock, and strip exactly at five o'clock.

While on Monday July 24 the previous year there was more intriguingly

At Bridge-Hill a match of Running by Maids. To Strip at Five o'clock. They are desired to meet at Bridge-Hill on Saturday evening, at Six o'clock, to give in their names, and to run that night, that the Goals may be made equal on Monday.

It is reported that the match was played 'to the great satisfaction of a vast concourse of people'.

Such 'smock races' (so called because the prize was usually a new smock or shift) were not uncommon in the south of England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The more mundane fact that the House was also a venue (as were most public houses) for auctions of property and real estate makes clear that the *Horse and Groom* was no misnomer. Its popularity as a resort for sporting types survived even its conversion into a private house when it was bought by the Baron De Montesquieu in 1793 (for £1500).