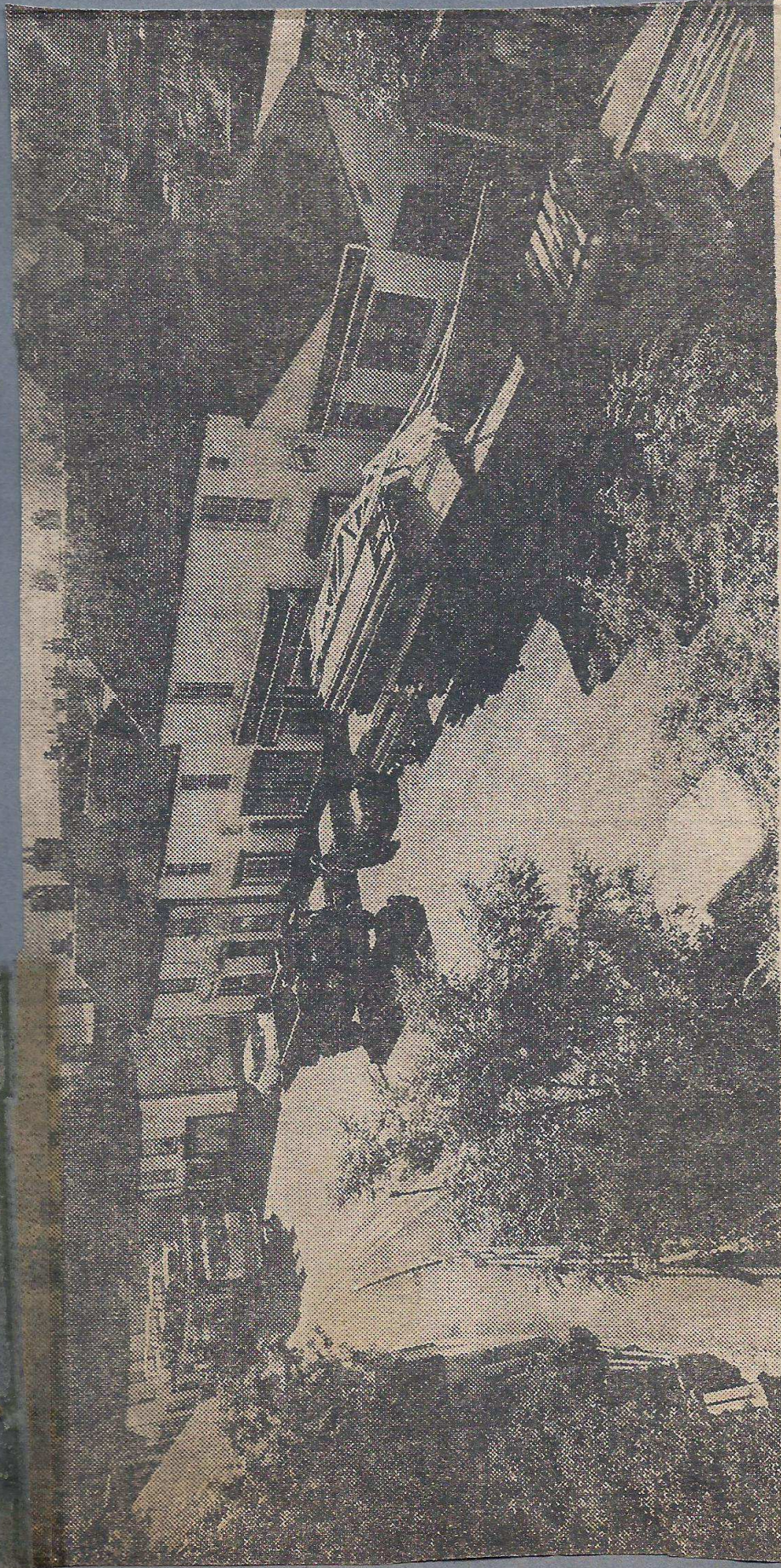


THE BUTCHER'S SHOP in Bridge vanished last May. The driver of the Continent-bound lorry which hit it died. Now its green shuttering displays a skull-and-crossbones and a cry for mercy.



Heavy lorries rumble through Bridge—something must be done if the village is really to be “conserved”.

Troubled waters over Bridge

THE village of Bridge in Kent has just been named as Britain's 2,000th conservation area. Like the other 1,999 listed in the last five years, its buildings are now protected against destruction and development.

But villagers consider the new honour a laughable one for, whatever theoretical protection may be given by the listing, Bridge is slowly being destroyed by the heavy lorries which thunder through in their thousands, writes Tony Dawe.

A classic Elizabethan cottage, with overhanging upper storey, has been hit at one corner. At Dover Cottage, a few doors down the High Street, ornaments have to be glued down inside their cabinets because of vibrations set up by lorries.

At the end of the High Street, Church Cottage, 300 years old, has lost its guttering three times and its whitewashed walls are blackened by fumes from passing lorries. But the late eighteenth-century terrace which houses Lewis, the grocers, suffered the worst

fate: half of its front wall was completely demolished this year by a vast foreign lorry.

Arthur Percival, the Civic Trust's transport expert, says: “It is entirely appropriate that Bridge should be the 2,000th conservation area because it epitomises the plight of so many areas which are impossible to conserve until something is done about traffic through them.”

Bridge's plight is worse than most, for it lies on Britain's main route to Europe, the A2 London-Dover road. Since the M2 motorway was built traffic has increased enormously but the motorway stops 22 miles short of Dover and the lorries struggle on along roads designed for the horse and cart.