

- 2 ^{Synonym} Names - Blackmunsbury / Hasterbone Bearcove
1596 ↓ ↓
 Bridge Borne Mill
- 3 Ogilly Berboys Court (→ Court Lodge) the Grayland
1675†
- 4 Hasted 1790 No New Down Rd. ↓
 Bridge Hundred, No Domesday Bridge 6 Mills
 ∴ the Bridge perhaps the Hundred meeting Place
- 5 1898 OS Map: Village on the Street close to border
 Bridge Place / Church / Chapel / School / Reading Room /
 Crop Works / Workhouse / Roman Road / Saxon Cemetery
- 6 2000. Boundary NB. Established late, esp. i N. (Field Boundaries)
7. Bridge (Saddles) ca. 1920's
- 8 Bridge 1760's
- 9 Under Bridge (13 holes still present)
- 10 Schellinks 1662 NB Bridge Farm & White House,
- 11 View from top of town Hill: state of road (main road to Dover)
 Chapel / Bridge Place,
- 12 High St ca 1950 Water splash gone.
- 13 Field House: Crop Works,
- 14 Vine Map 1887: Roman Remains! Kingsbury Rd.
 Old Englands Hole.
- 15 Star Hill: Old Englands Hole, Hexagon, Kingsbury Road → Tisbury
- 16 Hexagon Corner
- 17 A/S Graves
- 18 Sept. Severus ca. 200 AD. also Wiltred coin ca 700 AD
- 19 ~~Gold~~ Cup
- 20 Bryan Faunsell cup (from Inventionen Sepulchrale)
- 21 Gold Pendant
- 22 Jar
- 23 Beads
- 24 Bridge church late 12th c. - 1853 drunk to P/Borne.
- 25 church today
- 26 "
- 27 Village Hall / Reading Room / Methodist church
- 28 1894 Tin Chapel. f139.17.04 cost. recently closed.
- 29 Oldest cottages.
- 30 The Slip: Pinnace Alley.
- 31 Hillside +
- 32 "

- 33 Hellside - so much
- 34 Old Farm 1952
- 35 High St & Farm
- 36 White Horse - 16th c
- 37 Bears Cott
- 38 Neo-Georgian
- 39 Bridge Hill
- 40 Remains of Mill
- 41 Mill
- 42 Millers Cottage then
- 43 Millers Cottage Now
- 44 Bridge Place now
- 45 A. Ocker: Bridge Place ca 1670
- 46 Close up
- 47 Same View Today
- 48 Ground Plan.
- 49 Custom House in Dove.
- 50 Bridge Place Garden note round feature
- 51 The Garden - 1670
- 52 B. Jones 1616 → 1680 J. Sibbalds / P/bone church
- 53 Close up
- 54 1780 Rebuild
- 55 1830 Rebuild - Richardson Conyngham.
- 56 George IV & Lady C.
- 57 All that remains
- 58 Higher
- 59 27 Litres!
- 60 Zborowsky - mother was g'daughter of W. Astor.
- 61 Higher Today
- 62 The Racecourse → 1874 - then golf course till 2nd W.W.
- 63 Bridge Hill House - Baron Montesquieu 1794 - 1820's House & Grounds.
- 64 Rowlandson
- 65 Red Lion - stabling for the races. Prevalence of the military
- 66 White Horse now.
- 67 Plough channel (woodman's arms - the Dark) Home of Fire
Eying
- 68 The Union. 1835
- 69 " Note the door
- 70 As old people's home
- 71 The school
- 72 Children Mr Robert Wye? 1890?
- 73 Inside 1920?

- 74 1930/40
- 75 Outings - Bridge a very self-aware ^{e proud.} village 1900
- 76 ca 1910
- 77 Wickers Concert for the workhouse
- 78 Outing 1930s
- 79 Outing 1960s W.I.?
- 80 Fire Brigade
- 81
- 82 Outside Bridge Place
- 83 Firemen Fearn 3 April 1910.
- 84 Local Occupations shooting - Braens had a Warren - still there?
- 85 Orchards
- 86 Hops
- 87 Off-Licence
- 88 Grocer
- 89 H Price
- 90 Such Ads!
- 91 G.A.s
- 92 Mrs Johnson
- 93 Wood, Bootmaker
- 94 Edwards Butcher
- 95 the Garage
- 96 the Post Office : telegraph poles
- 97 the Dens Road : gateway to Europe
- 98 the Chemist : Brewery Lane (clockmaker Nash/Hideman in this row,
- 99 the Bath : now closed after 200 yrs.
- 100 Floods
- 101 "
- 102 Traffic Accidents
- 103 Bypass 1976
- 104 Celebrations
- 105 1987 storm
- 106 We were cut off for a week!

1	Title	53	Bifrons Detail
2	Symonson 1596	54	Bifrons ca 1780
3	Ogilby 1675	55	Bifrons ca 1900
4	Hasted 1790	56	George III & Lady Conyngham
5	OS Map 1898	57	The Bridge at Bifrons
6	Sketch Map 2000	58	Higham
7	The Bridge	59	Zborowski 27 lit
8	The Bridge	60	Zborowski in France
9	Under the Bridge	61	Hihgam today
10	Schellinks 1664	62	Racecourse 1786
11	Schellinks Town Hill	63	Bridge Hill House
12	The Bridge today	64	Rowlandson: Canterbury Races
13	Aerial view: Field House	65	The Red Lion
14	Vine Map 1887	66	The White Horse
15	Aerial View Star Hill	67	The Plough & Harrow
16	Corner of Hexagon	68	Aerial view of Workhouse
17	Saxon (Jutish) Graves	69	Workhouse
18	Coin of Sept. Severus (ca 200)	70	The Close
19	Glass Cup	71	The School
20	Faussett Cup	72	Schoolchildren ca 1890
21	Gold Pendant	73	Schoolchildren ca 1920
22	Jar	74	Schoolchildren ca 1940
23	Beads	75	Excursion 1900
24	Church 1853	76	Excursion 1910
25	Church today	77	Wireless Concert 1920s
26	Church today	78	Excursion 1930s
27	Village Hall	79	Excursion 1950s
28	Tin Chapel 1894	80	Fire Brigade
29	Mediaeval Cottages	81	Fire Brigade
30	Primrose Alley	82	Fire Brigade
31	Hillside	84	Jobs: Shooting
32	High Street & Hillside	85	Jobs: Orchards
33	Hillside & Beechmoint	86	Jobs: Hops
34	Bridge Farm 1952	87	Off License
35	Bridge Farm	88	Price Grocer & PO
36	White Horse & Farm	89	Price Grocer
37	Beans Cotts	90	Price Grocer
38	Neo-Georgian housing 1960's	91	Gold's 1974
39	Cotts Bridge Hill	92	Mrs Johnson
40	Symonson Map rep	93	Woods Boots
41	Windmill	94	Edwards Butcher
42	Mill House then	95	Garage
43	Mill House now	96	High St & Phone Box
44	Bridge Place today	97	Parade Shops
45	A Ocker: Bridge Place ca 1670	98	Chemist
46	A Ocker detail	99	Baker
47	Bridge Place from same view	100	Floods
48	Ground Plan	101	Floods
49	Custom House Dover	102	Lewis Grocer demolished
50	Bridge Place Garden	103	Bypass 1976
51	Garden Drawing	104	Bypass Celebrated
52	J Siberechts: Bifrons ca 1680	105	Hurricane 1987
		106	The Aftermath

A Brief Historical Tour of
THE VILLAGE OF BRIDGE
And its Environs



Bridge Street in 1661: Willem Schellincks
© Courtauld Institute

This one

*also .
All contained in the Bishop's History Archive*

THE VILLAGE OF BRIDGE



The village of Bridge lies astride the Nailbourne – when, that is, the ‘bourne’, an intermittent water course of the Little Stour, is running! The river has its ultimate source at East

Brook, near Etchinghill – hardly more than 3 miles from the channel coast at Hythe, but it only runs continuously from the spring at Well Chapel, Littlebourne. It dries up, or runs underground, frequently, but once, when the Wantsum Channel was open to the sea, it was a faster and wider water course. As late as the 1920s, it is said that trout were to be caught in School Lane, Bekesbourne. Legends abound of the river in full flow portending national disaster. As recently as 2000 it caused widespread flooding. The *Kentish Travellers' Companion* of 1794 records that ‘the bridge being decayed and otherwise inconvenient for carriages, a new and more commodious one has been built by subscription’: this double-arched bridge still survives beneath the present road. Cozens’ *History of Kent* of 1798 states that Bridge ‘is now but a small village of about 20 houses, situated in a narrow valley’, but above all, the bridge allowed the easy passage of travellers, and it is because of the road itself that the village of Bridge has developed into the village it is today.

From *Domesday*, we learn that the abbot of St Augustine’s Abbey held the hundred of Bridge. A hundred was an administrative district within an English shire, with a court house, or meeting-place, usually located centrally within it, often sited at river crossings or cross roads. Within the hundred, the parish of Bridge comprised two manors: that of Bereacre, of which no trace remains in terms of a big house; and the more significant manor of Blackmansbury, in which a building, referred to by Hasted, the eighteenth century historian of Kent, as ‘the

picture + captions

court lodge', was situated, probably on the site of the present Bridge Place. The parish of Bridge, as we think of it today, was regarded throughout the middle ages and beyond as a subsidiary part of Patricksbourne. Indeed, the proximity of the church to the parish boundary indicates that the parish was originally carved out of Patrixbourne.

Archaeological evidence shows Bridge to have been the site of an Iron-Age settlement, and pottery, fragments of weapons and other artefacts have been excavated from the Romano-British period. A near-circular hollow, cut into by the road part way up Bridge Hill, and traditionally known as **'Old England's Hole'**

may well represent a defensive position, constructed by the ancient Britons to protect their river crossing after their defeat by Caesar's seventh legion in 54BC – or it may be just an old chalk quarry. Since the first century AD, when the Romans first built the road, travellers to



and from Europe have come through Bridge. Harris in his *History of Kent* of 1719, lists various encampments on Barham Down at different times, whose occupants would have had to take the road on their route between the coast and Canterbury. King John in 1212, assembled on the Down with '60,000' men, ready to repel any attempted invasion from France. It is likely that King Henry V marched down Bridge Hill on his return from Agincourt in 1415, to celebrate his victory in Canterbury Cathedral. In 1450, during Cade's Rebellion, 'John Ysake of Patrykesbourne...and William atte Wode of Brigge, smyth, and other men in Brygge hundred...gathered together against the statutes of the realm' but were 'granted general pardon at the request of the queen'. Every three years throughout the 15th century, a huge wax candle, rolled into a coil, or trindle, was carried on the road through Bridge – a gift from the people of Dover to be used at the cathedral to provide tapers for the poor and destitute to light at the shrine of St Thomas. This must have been one of the more unusual items to pass through the village of Bridge, matched only, perhaps, by the four dromedaries and two camels brought in 1466 by the lord patriarch of Antioch, as a gift for the king and queen! In 1520, King Henry VIII must have passed through Bridge with his magnificent retinue on his

way France to meet François I at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In the 1630's, during the thirty years war, Spanish silver was carried in great quantities from Dover on the road to London to be minted into coin.

In August 1799, at the height of an invasion scare during the Napoleonic wars, more than 10,000 infantrymen camped on Barham Down to prepare for invasion. The *Kentish Gazette* recorded that

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

In preparation for this influx, a Dr Wardell, physician to the forces quartered in Bridge, was looking for a 'roomy house or other sort of building...to be used for a regimental hospital'.

The hills on either side of the village were once steeper than they are now. In summer, the passage of traffic over the road surface resulted in clouds of dust; in winter in muddied ruts. On 26 December 1769, the *Kentish Gazette* noted that 'some public-spirited Gentlemen intend to petition Parliament for a Turnpike Act' for the road from Dover to Canterbury. Substantial roadworks included the lessening of the



gradient of both hills down into the village and the smoothing out of the slope – though the work was not completed until 1829. Tolls were imposed, and there was to be no parking in the street' – a controversial issue until this present time! The street was not tarred, of course, until

the mid-20th century, and the wide **water-splash** to one side of the Bridge, used for watering horses or cooling the metal rims of wheels after the steep descent into the village, also remained in place until well into the 20th century.

The origins of the village lie in its dependency on the road. For centuries, the buildings flanking its single street were principally concerned with meeting the needs of travellers and passers by – premises supplying food and drink, a blacksmith, saddler, shoemaker

and so on. Numerous daily coach services provided a connection to London. A long-term Bridge resident, Mrs Jack Friend, was able to recall in 1955 how, in her childhood, a four-in-hand coach travelled daily through the village on its journey from Folkestone to Canterbury and return, with a post horn to alert passengers of its arrival.

In the Great War, troops were once again encamped close to Bridge. One day in 1914, the roadway up Bridge Hill was thick with chalky dust as over 100 London buses passed through to be used in France as transport for the troops. The dust became so thick that the drivers complained the enemy had covered the surface with something to choke them. This story even made the London newspapers! Probably the drivers were more used to the better constructed surfaces of London roads.

In both World Wars, a canteen was established in Bridge village hall, to serve the men stationed outside the village. During the latter war, the milestones up Bridge Hill were taken up and anti-tank emplacements installed at the top of Bridge Hill to prevent the enemy progressing down the A2. Indeed, one afternoon in 1981, some of the residents of Bridge Hill were required to evacuate their houses in response to an alert concerning an unexploded device found on the Hill! By the middle of the 20th century, the A2 London-Dover road, including Bridge High Street, became increasingly congested, as heavy traffic thundered through the village. In January 1962, pensioner George Smith was knocked down and killed while out shopping. In 1963, two lorries and a bus were involved in a collision in the main street. Incidents like this became increasingly frequent and, by 1964, the



villagers had had enough. They launched a series of protests in support of the construction of a bypass. Initially, these protests consisted of people walking in the roadway, to disrupt the flow of traffic to cause the vehicles to slow down. When this action failed, the villagers resorted to sitting in

the road! Clearly the spirit of Cade's Rebellion was not dead! In 1972, a Dover-bound truck drove into **Colin Lewis's grocer's shop**, trapping

a young girl and killing the driver. After this, the sit-down protests increased in frequency until on one occasion a thousand people staged a sit-in in the High Street, closing the village to all traffic for an hour and causing a very long tail-back. Eventually, repeated lobbying and demonstrations led to victory and a bypass was opened on 29 June 1976 accompanied by **great celebration**. At last the villagers were able to enjoy their village in relative peace and comfort.



The history of Bridge is not that of a characteristic medieval village, radiating from its centre; nor yet was Bridge part of any great estate, even though in later years it has been surrounded by great houses, notably Bourne House, Bridge Place, Higham and Bifrons – all of whose owners

have played their part in developing the village, though only Bridge Place lies within the parish boundaries. For most of its existence, the inhabitants of Bridge have numbered no more than a few hundred. The late 18th century saw the building of a few cottages in Brewery lane. In the 19th century, the Workhouse (1835) was built, as were houses in Dering and Filmer Road (1860's). The later 19th century saw a gradual extension along the Street towards Canterbury. It is only since 1962 that there has been any serious expansion, with the construction of Bridge Down (1962), Western Avenue (1963) and Riverside Close (1965). In the census for 1801, the population of the entire parish was 325. By 1834 it had reached 543, and in 1841 it was 817, of whom



165 were inmates of the workhouse. In 1871 the population reached 941, declining to 699 in 1921 as agricultural employment diminished. In the 1960s, Bridge began to change irrevocably, with the demolition of the most notable building at its centre, the 14th century **Bridge Farm**, and the expansion of modern housing

development, resulting in a population in 1971 of 1225, and by the Millennium, of almost 2000. The village still boasts more than twenty houses dating to the 18th century or before, and others built in the 19th century. Some of the houses in the Street are older than they look, having received new fronts in the 18th century.

Historically, employment of the villagers of Bridge was provided by a thriving retail trade and serving the needs of travellers in the pubs and inns. Significant numbers were engaged in farm labour, much of it seasonal: hop tying, stone picking, cherrying, hay making, pea and bean harvesting, fruit picking, hop picking. The hop garden near Flint Cottages has been growing hops since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and a few hops are still grown. Local shops, the dental and doctors' surgery, the care home and the pubs and restaurant still provide more employment than many villages but most villagers, of course, now commute elsewhere to work.

public houses?

Over the

~~In the last thirty~~ years Bridge has lost a number of **shops**, but it



remains a thriving community, boasting a post office and pharmacy, general store, bakery, butcher, hairdresser, photography studio, school, church, care home, restaurant and three pubs. It is served by a regular bus service to Canterbury, Dover and Folkestone. It has an active

parish council, and hosts many local societies, including such charitable enterprises as the Fish scheme.

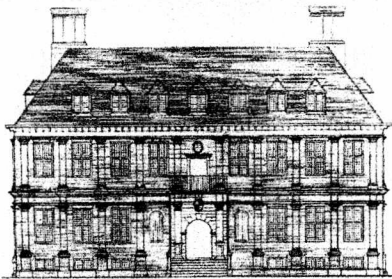
Inert. nice family but more tired

The most substantial house in the parish was **Bridge Place**, built on the site of what was probably the medieval court Lodge in the manor of Blackmansbury, alias Bridge. Here Symonson's map of Kent of 1596 shows a building lying astride the Nailbourne, a reminder of the mediaeval watermill that surely once occupied the site. Until Henry



VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, the manor of Blackmansbury was in the possession the abbey of St Peter, St Paul and St Augustine, Canterbury, and was let to tenants. With the suppression of the Abbey in 1540, the manor reverted to the Crown. Henry VIII granted the manor to John Laurence, whose family retained it until 1576, when it was sold to William Partheriche, who built a new house on the site. Traces of this house were revealed in an archaeological excavation in 1964/5. and relics of the old house survived in the basement until the 1970's. Partheriche was surveyor of the Ordnance Office under Elizabeth I, and was appointed by the queen in 1582 to undertake extensive works at Dover Harbour. He died in 1598 and was buried in his chapel in Bridge church. William's grandson, Edward, sold the property in 1638 to Arnold Braems.

Braems was born in Dover in 1602. His ancestors were of Flemish descent – immigrants who had originally settled at Sandwich in the 16th century. During the Civil War, he was a loyal supporter of Charles I. At the Restoration of Charles II, his loyalty was rewarded with a knighthood. Braems was a Dover merchant and, preferring commerce to politics, he worked to develop Dover as a successful port, acquiring land on the seafront, creating vast warehouses for goods, and making a fortune on harbour tolls and customs. This fortune he spent in the building of a fine house in Bridge, and in support of his King. He



lived in Bridge until his death in 1681. In place of the former manor house, **Bridge Place**, built with hand-made Dutch bricks, was the largest house in 17th century East Kent, excepting Chilham Castle. It had a deer park, an extensive garden, an aviary, a bowling green, woods, a rabbit warren, 'beautifully well-kept pleasure grounds' and a fine avenue of lime trees stretching to the church. Arnold Braems had a reputation as a generous host, who kept a 'princely table'. Among his guests was the artist William Schellinks who in 1661 recorded his visit in his journal and made a number of sketches, including a view of the Street from the bottom of Bridge Hill. Another guest writes of being 'merrily entertained', at Braems' 'delightful residence at Bridge, one hour's walk from Canterbury'. The

← or other picture

William
(cover picture)

company played bowls, and 'we saw a hart shot with a crossbow in the deerpark...everybody, especially the ladies, washed their hands in the warm blood, to get white hands. The hart was immediately gutted and cut up into quarters'. The following day, 'venison pie and other dishes of the hart were on the menu'.

Walter Breams inherited the house on his father's death in 1681, but by this time the estate was burdened with debt. Walter had been much involved in the Civil War and, at the Restoration, was made Comptroller of HM Customs at Sandwich, and later at Dover, not least as a reward for having been the 'youngest prisoner in England for your Majesty's Service'. In 1690, however, he was petitioning for 'six years arrears of salary', and after his death in 1692, his family could no longer afford to maintain the house. His son inherited, but by 1695 the estate was sold to John Taylor of Patrixbourne, who soon demolished the greater part of Bridge Place in order to use the bricks in the building of Bifrons, on his property in Patrixbourne.

What survives of the original Bridge Place is just one wing, but, in the view of Hasted, 'the size and stateliness...being of itself full sufficient for a gentleman's residence'. An advertisement in the Gazette in June 1791 advertises the house for let as having 'proper offices for a family: a coach-house with stabling for seven horses, and eleven acres of very fine pasture...and a cottage consisting of a brewhouse, laundry and dairy, with good lodging-rooms over them'. Since then, the house has had a succession of owners, and was purchased by Peter Malkin in 1969. In 1976, Bridge Place hosted a party to celebrate the opening of the A2 by-pass, an achievement long fought for by the villagers. Until recently it housed a night-club and country club. Little Bridge Place nearby was almost certainly built at the same time in the 17th century.

Once part of a larger estate, **Bourne House** (in Bishopsbourne)) is considered to be amongst the finest Queen Anne houses in Kent. It was built using materials from Westenhanger Castle by Dame Elizabeth Aucher, widow of Sir Henry Aucher, for her son Hewytt, between 1704 and 1707 on the site of an ancient house known as Hautbourne. (The Haute family, kinsmen of Edward IV's queen Elizabeth Woodville, was prominent in the area in the 15th century).

In 1756, Stephen Beckingham, who had married an Aucher granddaughter, inherited the estate. In 1765, Mozart was a guest in

the house, and while staying there, visited the popular Barham Downs racecourse. In 1845, Matthew Bell, a director of Equitable Life, and the owner also of 'Oswalds' in Bishopsbourne purchased the house. Bell

was responsible for the construction of the ornamental lake, and for constructing of a number of buildings in the vicinity, including estate cottages, the school in Bishopsbourne and Bridge Lodge in Bridge. Such buildings are often



distinguished by a stone plaque, showing an intertwined **MFB motif**, for Matthew and Fanny Bell, his wife. When the Elham Valley railway was built at the end of the 19th century, Matthew Bell agreed to its passing through his land only if it was hidden by a cut-and-cover tunnel where it ran behind his house. Memorials to the Auchers and the Bells can be seen in the north chapel of Bishopsbourne church.



Bell's grandson (also Matthew) died in 1927, at which time the house was purchased by Sir John Prestige, who owned it until his death in 1962. In the 1950s, Sir John proposed that Kent County Council should take over the house as a museum, but this scheme did not materialise, and by 1957 the house was empty and in a poor

state of repair. Sir John then sought to have the house demolished, but following a public enquiry, a Preservation Order was placed on the house, which was eventually Grade One listed. Extensive restoration work followed, and Sir John's next scheme was to offer the house and 300 acres estate as the site for the new University of Kent, but this too was turned down.

During the 1960s and 70s, the house changed ownership a number of times, and various proposals were made for its future. These included a religious house, a residential retirement club, a private hospital, offices and residential accommodation and a luxury hotel. The house's future became assured when it was purchased in 1983 by Lady Juliet, the only

daughter of the 8th Earl Fitzwilliam, and Mr Somerset de Chair, a conservative MP and noted collector of art and antiques. Sensitive and expert restoration work was carried out on the house and grounds. Somerset de Chair died in 1995 aged 83. Lady Juliet remarried in 1997, and the work of improving and enhancing the grounds, the house and its contents has continued.

One of the first cricket matches in Kent took place on the ground at **Bourne Park**, now sadly defunct, but which in the 18th century attracted very many people. In

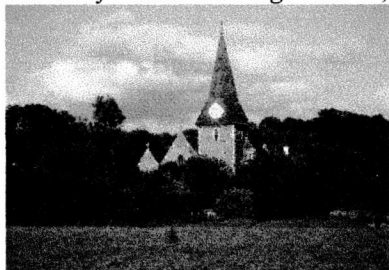
1767 booths selling food were available on the cricket ground itself, including one for gentlemen 'in a tent pitched for that purpose, separate from all the other booths'. After 1780, publicans from Bridge and Canterbury were allowed to set up booths operating outside the 'paddock'. When



Hambleton played England in August 1772 under the patronage of the then tenant Sir Horace Mann, a grandstand was built to accommodate the huge crowd. There were said to be 20,000 people present on the first day. Many of the supporters were ordinary Kentish folk, and a rhyme of 1773 suggests how far they were willing to travel:

From Marsh and Weald their hay fork left
To Bourne the rustics hied
From Romney, Cranbrook, Tenterden
And Darent's verdant side

For many centuries **Bridge church**, built in the late 12th century on the



site of a previous Anglo-Saxon chapel, served as no more than a 'chapel of ease' for the church at Patrixbourne, providing for the 'ease' of those living at some distance from the parish church. By tradition, such chapels were often built at the roadside, and often near river-crossings, for

the convenience of travellers, so Bridge church satisfied both these

requirements. As the parish of Bridge grew, however, its inhabitants became increasingly resentful of their subordinate position to Patribourne. Indeed, at the time of Archdeacon Harpsfield's visitation, in 1557, the parishioners submitted a petition requiring

That the said chapel of Bridge may be appointed to be the head church to Patribourne, because as they say, the said chapel standeth in the midst part of the inhabitants of both parishes, and that Patribourne standeth in the uttermost part of the dwellers of the two parishes, very far out of the way.

In 1844 WP Griffith surveyed **Bridge church**. His report, when compared with its present appearance shows the extent to which it was rebuilt in 1859-61 by the generosity of Mrs Mary Gregory, wife of the Vicar of Petham, who lived in Bridge Hill House, and was related to the Aucher family. She died in 1867, and left a bequest to the poor of the village, which has only recently been



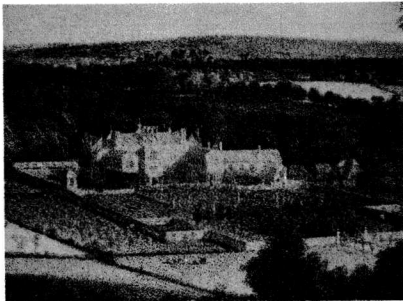
would up. The restoration of the church was achieved, according to the Pevsner guide, 'with gross insensitivity'! Some vestiges remain of the medieval architecture, including two Norman doorways and various sculpted pieces inserted in the walls, including an effigy of Malcolm Ramesey (vicar 1495-1538). There is also a portrait of a Robert Bargrave (1584-1649) by Cornelius Janssen, a frequent visitor to Bridge Place. Outside the west door and rarely noticed is the top slab of a 15th century table tomb, once containing several brasses. The churchyard contains a number of notable memorials to Bridge villagers, not least that of Zebulon Vinson, butler to Mrs Gregory.

*

space.

— picture of tombstone.

Patribourne



The first house built on the site of **Bifrons** for which there is evidence is that built, according to Hasted, by John Bargrave in the early 17th century. John Bargrave's brother, Isaac, became dean of Canterbury Cathedral. The family sold the house in 1662

and there were a number of owners before the house was purchased by John Taylor in September 1694. His grandson Edward inherited the property in c.1775, demolished the house and began reconstruction. A number of drawings survive of this '**plain building** in the classical style with little architectural embellishment'. In 1802, Edward's son, Edward, married Louisa Beckingham of Bourne Place, and Bifrons was let to tenants. It was sold in 1830 to the first Marquis Conyngham.

Henry Conyngham was created marquis by George IV while he was Prince Regent. Conyngham married a wealthy heiress, Elizabeth Denison, whose father was a merchant banker. His rise through the ranks of the peerage was due to his



services in Ireland, and the Conyngham's Irish country seat was (and still is) Castle Slane, between Belfast and Dublin. The Marquis was much at court, and held the post of Lord Steward of the Household until the king's death. Lady Conyngham was famed as the companion and confidante of George IV. A favourite at court, she was described as 'fat, handsome, kindly, shrewd and extremely fond of jewels'! The king heaped presents and money on her and, when in London, she and her family lived largely at his expense. Though they never appeared in public together, the king and the marchioness were often ridiculed by the press, but this did not seem to deter them. A popular rhyme at the time suggested that Lady Conyngham and George IV spent time

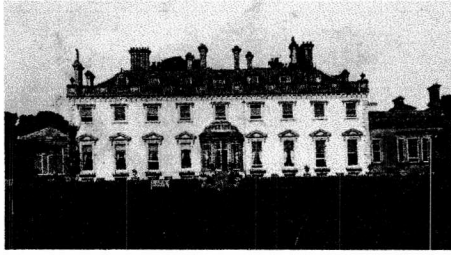
Quaffing their claret, then mingling their lips
Or fondling the fat about each others hips

The king once said to her 'thank you, my dear; you always do what is right. You cannot please me so much as by doing everything you please, everything to show that you are mistress here'. However, it seems never to have been proven that their relationship was other than platonic.

The Marquis died in 1832. The Marchioness lived to the age of 92, and died in 1861. During her lifetime, she added considerably to her Kent estates in Kent. She was active in Patricbourne and Bridge, founding the school, supporting the free schools' movement, helping form the volunteer fire brigade. She and the marquis were founder shareholders in the Bridge Gas Coke and Coal Company. Considerable alterations

? delta?

were carried out at Bifrons during the 19th century. When the fourth marquis inherited, he decided against living there; indeed the family ceased to live in **the house** after 1882, preferring to let the



property to a succession of tenants. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Bifrons was cleared of its contents and taken over for military purposes. The condition of at the end of the War was poor, and the decision was taken to demolish it. A number of the houses in Patricbourne belonging to the estate were sold, and the land rented out on long lease, together with the stable block, which was converted into houses for farmworkers. The Conyngham family continue to take an active interest in their local property and in the village of Bridge.

In 1989, Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook an excavation of the Bifrons site, funded by the Conyngham estate, and reported in *Archaeologia Cantiana* in 1989. It was hoped at that time that the house might be reconstructed, but this plan was abandoned.

Higham has been the site of a grand house (and also said to have been a convent) since mediaeval times. The present building retains a Tudor core, but its front was added only in 1921, by perhaps the most



colourful character to own the house Count Louis Zborowski, who designed and built the first aero-engine powered racing car, which later was immortalised in the film *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang*. He also presented Bridge Fire Brigade with a suitably adapted car to serve as a fire engine to accommodate ten men and a mile

of hose. With a rating of 75 horse power, and a maximum speed of 60 miles per hour, this was probably the fastest fire engine of its kind in the country at the time. For his generosity, Zborowski was made honorary captain of the brigade.

After Zborowsky's death in a racing accident the house was bought by Walter K Whigham, a director of the Bank of England and deputy chairman of the London & North Eastern Railway, and after whom one of their Pacific Class locomotives was named. He served twice as High Sheriff of Kent. He for reasons of euphony renamed the property Highland Court. During the second World War the house served as a hospital, and it continued in this role until the 1980s, when it was closed and the estate fell into a state of neglect. Since 1995 it has been subject to ongoing redevelopment, and has recovered its original name.

(Bridge) Hill House was in the 18th century popularly known as the



Horse and Groom and served as the headquarters of those involved with Canterbury Races. One of the two stands overlooking the course was sited in the woodland opposite. A painting by Thomas Rowlandson in the Beane Institute in Canterbury shows both

this house and the two stands during a lively race meeting. In about 1804. Races on Barham Down began (officially at least) in 1678. A century later the races were attracting vast crowds, including the fashionable gentry, and in 1774 a 'new stand' was built, to supplement the original. There was a racing stable in Union Road, not far from the old windmill. The official race week was in August, but there was also a meeting at Easter and at various other times. In 1773, a race was run 'over the New Round Course on Barham Downs, one four-miles heat, for one hundred Guineas, between two Gentlemen's horses...to start exactly at Twelve o'clock. Dinner will be ready at Bridge-Hill after the race is over'. Racing was not limited to horses! In June 1770, there was a 'match of running between twenty-four of the Chilham Club and Twenty-four Gentlemen of East Kent'. In July the previous year was held 'A match of Running by Maids. To Strip at Five o'clock'! It was reported that the match was run 'to the great satisfaction of a vast concourse of people'. Cock-fighting took place here, as at the *White Horse* in the village, too. In March 1773, Bridge met Deal 'to shew eleven cocks on each side and fight for Four Guineas a battle'. Once again, dinner was provided. At election times hustings would take place here and on the racecourse. ~~Early in the 19th century~~ however the house was bought by a refugee from the French Revolution, Charles

SP.

I should you mention
that it is a family house now?

|| something funny here!

○

1793

Louis Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1749-1824), grandson of the political philosopher. He lived there until his death, when it was bought by the Revd Edward Gregory, vicar of Petham, whose wife Mary ensured the restoration of Bridge church.

East Bridge House dates to the early 19th century. More recently it was turned into three flats, until restored to a single house (and ~~hotel~~) during the 1980s. To the rear of the house, where formerly the kitchens were to be found, is now a separate house with a doorway which was imported from Bifrons in Patricbourne, when it was demolished.



better picture?
guest house.
'Netherby'



Bourne Lodge (formerly Hill Cottage) was built in the later 19th century as the home of Mrs Fanny Bell, widow of Matthew Bell of Bourne Park. In 1926, Mr F Cowderoy left it to his son and daughter, the Rev C C Cowderoy (later Roman Catholic archbishop of Southwark) and Mrs C Berry.

Mrs Berry lived in the house for many years with her husband Frank, who was a well-known Canterbury estate agent.

Lynton House is first mentioned (though not of course by that name) in 1674, as the property of William Cheston, yeoman of Bridge, who was assessed in the parish rate for 12 acres of land. It subsequently came into the hands of the Crosoer family who in 1764 owned the house, barn, stable, garden, orchard and 24 acres. It later came into the hands of John Lansberry (d. 1849) and for the rest of the century became known as Lansberry Cottage. From 1930-1940, the house belonged to a coal merchant, Albert Taylor, whose proud advertisement stayed on the south wall of the house until the late 20th century. Like Bourne Lodge,



it suffered substantial damage in the storm of 1987. In recent years it has undergone considerable restoration, including the return of the front door to its original position.

- ↳ On the site of the Lodge opposite, Ogilby's map of 1675 marks, rather mysteriously, *The Grayhound*.
- ↳ Below Lynton House were formerly six small cottages, with **Church Cottage**, formerly Park House, opposite.

t.c.

The Red Lion is first mentioned in 1593 as a dwelling house. It has a central hearth core of the period, but has been much altered since. It now has a late 18th century façade. By 1632, Jacob Jarvis, 'victualler of Canterbury', was granted a licence for the sale of ale on the premises, at the sign of the *Red Lion*. It subsequently became a registered inn, with stabling facilities, serving the needs of travellers using the road from Canterbury to Dover. There were in addition three wheelwrights, two blacksmiths and two saddlers in the village, quite apart from the 'livery and bait' facilities offered here. On race days facilities were much in demand, both for horses and racegoers. By 1850, the landlord Joseph Eyre, was advertising the *Red Lion* as 'a fine lodging inn, with carriage and stabling facilities'. For a short period at the turn of the 20th century Bridge fire engine was also housed here, before being transferred to the rear of the *Plough and Harrow*. In 2000 the inn suffered serious damage from floodwater, and not long after it had undergone considerable refurbishment it was again severely damaged by fire.



The first mention of Methodism in Bridge occurs in 1823, authorising William Fordred to 'rent a house for Methodist meetings at no more than two shillings and sixpence per week'. A site was found in the High Street (for £50) and a chapel built (what is now the front portion of the village hall) but by 1851 the congregation had deserted, in part towards the vicar, and the chapel had been taken over by the Primitive methodists. Not until 1892 was a Methodist Society was re-formed with fourteen members, to raise funds for the building of a chapel and a regular schedule of house services was re-established. In 1894 the '**Iron Chapel**' was built. The choice of corrugated iron as a building

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material met with thorough disapproval from the central Chapel Committee in Manchester, who preferred the idea of a brick-built structure and were prepared to offer a loan to assist the financing of such a chapel. The Trustees for the Bridge venture were dedicated to the idea of their Iron Chapel, and a determined fund-raising effort and much hard work resulted in the erection

of the chapel, free of debt. The cost of the building, including seating, hymn books, mats and oil lamps, amounted to a grand total of £139.17s.0 ¼ d. During the Second World War, a baby clinic operated from the Chapel, and this continued until 1987.

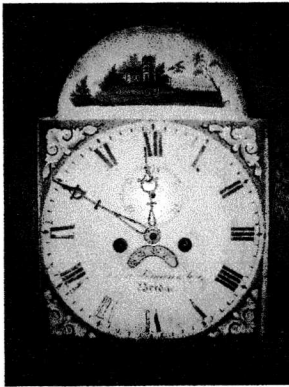
The Bridge Gas Coke and Coal Company was established in September 1858 on a site in Patricxbourne road (next to the school!) by the Marquis and Marchioness of Conyngham and Matthew Bell, of Bourne Park – chairman of the company. Lamp posts were fitted and tested on 10 December 1858. Edward Dadds, the gasman was provided with a cottage. A Memorandum of Agreement was made 7 January 1896 between Bridge Gas Coke and Coal Company and the new Bridge Parish Council, that the company was to 'keep in repair and light...the Eleven existing Lamps for the sum of Five Pounds and Ten Shillings for each Lamp per annum. The Lamps to be lighted one hour after sunset and extinguished at 10.30 pm except for three months in the summer...' A further exception was made 'for five nights of every full Moon at which time the Lamps will not be required'! From 1906, general street lighting was installed, maintained by James Wonfer until 1928. Wonfer lived in the only house in Patricxbourne Road, Brookside, and was employed making gas and installing it into houses in the village. He worked seven days a week, and was responsible for seeing that the street lights were lit in the village at dusk and extinguished after dawn. Coke was produced and sold as a by-product.. By 1929, gas was supplied by East Kent Gas Company and the Bridge company was wound up in 1932.

The Marchioness Conyngham had established a school for 30 girls at Bifrons Gate, with smart uniforms of blue serge dresses and red cloaks, but with the introduction of the National Schools she also established **Bridge School** in 1849, on the Patricxbourne side of the parish boundary. By 1861 the school, under Richard Wells, master, and Mrs



Sophie Sayer, mistress, had 99 pupils. Mr and Mrs Robert Wye were appointed as the first government teachers of the school in 1871, following the Education Act.. Mr Wye's sister Fanny was appointed mistress of the infants' school. After 44 years at the school she was presented on her retirement with a purse of gold. Government inspectors praised her skill as a teacher to the 'little ones, to whom she had been a second mother' (*Kentish Gazette*, 1 January 1916). She died in 1944, aged 94. Just four years later Miss Olive Seath (Mrs Knight) was appointed headmistress. She retired in 1971. The school house has been a private residence since the opening of the new school in Conyngham Lane in 1971: for three-quarters of the century of its existence therefore this old primary school had only two principal teachers!

The 18th century row adjoining Brewery Lane contains a baker's shop which has existed on the site for at least 150 years. At the other end of the row was the chemist's, before it was removed to the Post Office at the other end of the village. In between was one of the more notable businesses to grace Bridge again for over a century, that of the watch and clockmakers William Nash and Samuel and William Hardeman.



The **Plough and Harrow** was built in 1692, constructed originally as two dwelling houses and, in 1703, a shoemaker and a carpenter occupied the premises. The building was sold in 1785 to Thomas Williams, a Maltster,



who established a malthouse. Malting was a specialized process used in the making of ale. Following the terms of the Beer Act of 1830, Thomas Williams' son William acquired a licence to sell beer from his dwelling 1831, whereupon it was known as 'the Beer House at Bridge'. In 1858 Joseph Burch, an ale and porter brewer, bought the premises, and in 1863 it became known as the *Plough and Harrow*. In 1877, the pub was sold to Shepherd Neame as a 'beerhouse with brewhouse and outbuildings' for £410. By 1878, a new lessee was granted a licence for wine and spirits, and it became a registered tavern. Not until 1861 is 'Brewhouse Lane' identified in the census returns.

In 1873, a headquarters was set up for a **voluntary fire brigade**, and a fire engine was purchased. The Marquis of Conyngham, of Bifrons,



was an enthusiast for fire apparatus and became Captain of the local crew. By 1878, his son and heir, earl Mount Charles, had become captain. In the early days the pump was horse-drawn. For many years the engine (including **CE 1037**, that donated by Count Zborowsy) was housed in a

shed behind the *Plough and Harrow* and kept running through

donations from insurance companies. The firemen were mostly local tradesmen (two grocers, the cycle agent, a publican, the draper, two gardeners, the coal merchant and the blacksmith), who were summoned to service with a maroon flare. On 31 March 1910, the brigade



was called to a fire at Pett Bottom. The young second engineer of the fire brigade, John Fenn, had the job of preparing the flare. In lighting the match, two simultaneous explosions occurred, causing Mr Fenn terrible injuries. He died just twenty minutes after the explosion. His **funeral**, on April 3, was probably unique in Bridge, attracting a crowd



of some 5000 mourners, who thronged the street and overflowed into the surrounding fields. After WW II the brigade was absorbed into the national fire service.

Close to the bridge and probably of 17th century origin, Anne's House, or Willow Brook house served also as a shop. Damaged by fire in the early 20th century, it was partly rebuilt. It is remembered as a tea room, with a fine garden. In the early 20th century the building to the right of the premises, once served as a motor repair and spares shop and, more recently, a printer's studio.

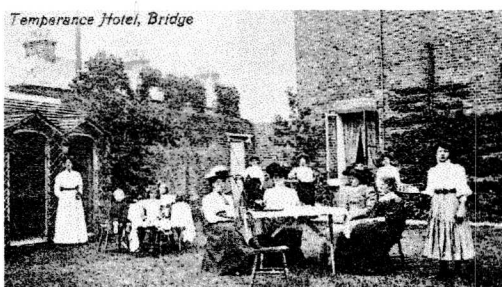


Built around 1780, **River House** was once owned by T L Collard, auctioneer and valuer, clerk to the Board of Guardians of the workhouse. In 1904, the house was put up for auction, but failed to reach the reserve price of £390! It subsequently became a temperance hotel. The **Temperance Movement** originated in England

in the 1820s. In 1831, the British and Foreign Temperance Society was formed and extended its influence over the country in a decade.

In 1853, the UK Alliance, an aggressive organization not always popular by the less militant temperance societies,

aimed to persuade politicians into a policy of prohibition, but this did not succeed. A temperance hotel would have provided a pleasing alternative to those who did not wish to stay in accommodation with licensed premises.



The sign of The *White Horse* is a thoroughly Kentish one, and this pub is probably the oldest surviving in Bridge. The building has a late medieval core, and an early 16th century inscription is to be seen on the fireplace lintel. An indenture of 1 June 1668 refers to the sale of the property by Sir Arnold Braems to Sir Anthony Aucher, and the tenant at that time seems to have been William Ford. The ownership probably



remained in the hands of the descendants of Sir Anthony and subsequent owners of Bourne Place until it was sold at the end of the 18th century. The pub was the posting house (hence also post office), though Bridge was only a half-stage between Dover and Canterbury – necessary because of the hills on either side. Mail coaches were drawn by teams of four horses in stages of 7-10 miles, according to gradients and the condition of the road. The fastest mail-coaches ran at about 10 miles per hour. It was here too that the first meeting of the workhouse guardians was held, on 22 April 1835. The census returns show that the inn often provided accommodation for lodgers, including in 1881, George Webb, aged 23, a professional cricketer. Like other public houses, the inn was used for property sales and auctions. The *White Horse* was host to meetings of gardening enthusiasts and to gardening shows. In April 1774, there was an 'Auricula Feast' held, with a prize for the first flower of fifteen shillings! Exhibitors at the show were expected to attend the dinner, 'or have no Right to shew his Flower'! Less sympathetic to today's readers' taste would be the cock fighting, advertised in June 1772 'to show Twenty-one Cocks on each side...for four guineas a battle and ten the odd battle'. Finally, in the sporting line, the census returns of 1851 show that the licensee was 'a trainer of racehorses'.

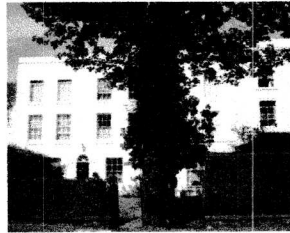
One other public house within the parish might be mentioned here for completeness: the *Woodman's Arms*, built as a farm (*Woodlands*) in 1623. licenced to sell ales, groceries and provisions in 1849 and renamed, now (since the 1960's) the *Duck* at Pett Bottom.

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Lime Cottage, built in 15th or 16th century and was formerly the **village forge** – much in demand when numerous horse drawn vehicles came regularly through the village, and the White Horse, next door, was the staging post. It was no doubt used also for the mending of farm equipment and horse-drawn vehicles. Before becoming a private house it was for a period Mrs Turner's grocer's shop.



The handsome early 19th century row of houses known as **Albany Terrace** is said to have been built by Trinity House, the lighthouse authority for the coast of England and Wales, to serve their employees engaged in work in Dover and Whitstable. It was erected in the first place as two more or less symmetrical detached buildings. An additional house was created a few years later by infilling between them. A much-loved and stalwart resident of the terrace was for many years



Charles Wills, who ran the village bakery, following his father's death in 1896. He was an enthusiastic chief officer of Bridge Fire Brigade for over 30 years, as well as serving on the parish council from its inception. He served on the old Bridge Blean Rural District Council, the Board of Guardians of the workhouse, and was

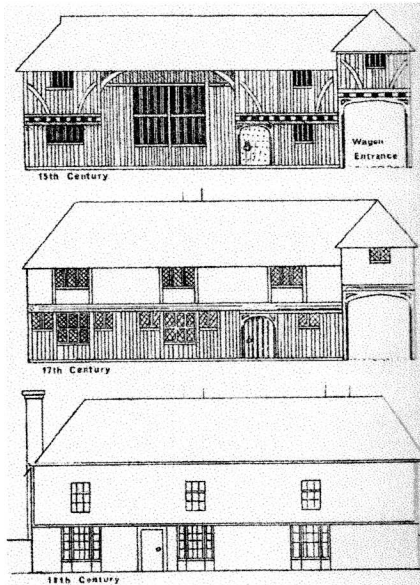
secretary to the Bridge Gas, Coal and Coke Company. During the first World War, he was nightly on duty at the canteen run in the village Reading Room (now the village hall) for the benefit of the troops stationed at Bourne Park. Mr Wills was described as 'a man of charming manners and genial disposition', who was also a keen cricketer and a long-serving member of St Peter's Church choir. He died aged 94 in 1943, and this brief look at his life illustrates how

much Bridge village has always been at the centre of the lives of many of its residents. Illustrated above is Mr Wills with his aunt (aged 100) and his two sisters. At this date the combined ages of the four was 335 years.

Opposite the White Horse, on the site of the present neo-Georgian houses was a row of four tiny board cottages attached to Albert Terrace, known as Bean or Bean's Cottages, and adjacent to Bridge Farm. This, (known latterly, after the last owner, as 'Daddy Fagge's Farm'), was the home farm of Blackmansbury, and before the Dissolution of the Monasteries part of the land holdings of St Augustine's Abbey. Until its regrettable demolition in 1962, the farmhouse that stood here was a typical 15th century timber-framed Wealden hall house, originally with a central hall open to the roof, with rooms on two levels on either side, and a jettied overhang. In the early 17th century, a great fireplace was added, and an upper floor inserted.

Another timber-framed house had stood at the right-hand end of the building, but was demolished in the 18th century when the wagon entrance was blocked and the entrance to the yard was moved to the right. The house itself must have presented a very attractive appearance, and was a prestigious building with the style of vertical timbers known as close studding. It had a fine stairway of eight solid oak block of medieval date. At the rear was a medieval barn and cowsheds, probably also dating to the 15th century. In the mid 20th century, Captain Maslin, of Bridge's riding school, kept some of his horses at the farm. The fields behind, now the Western Avenue estate, were the usual venue for summer fêtes and similar village functions.

Correspondence survives between Lady Conyngham's solicitor and her agent, prompted by a villagers' petition, concerning the purchase, from



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the Canterbury Wesleyan Trustees, of a house, garden and **methodist chapel** at Bridge for £270. The sale involved difficult negotiations regarding the tenants' rights. A group of Primitive Methodists (or 'Ranters') rented the chapel at £4 per annum. These may be defined as a 'people of a joyous and evangelical disposition', rather than rowdy, but they apparently 'disturbed the whole neighbourhood', as they were accustomed to sing through the streets on their way home from services. The vicar, the Reverend Stevenson, had drawn the Wesleyan methodists back into the Anglican fold. When agreement was finally reached on the sale the agent stated that he had been informed that the 'Wesleyans possess a million's worth of property in this country...so they are quite indifferent about the matter'! Lady Conyngham agreed to a more sober



use of the erstwhile chapel as 'a lecture room or a village literary institution, for the improvements of the rising generation'. This is now the **village hall**. The Primitive Methodists retired to a private house until they were able to erect their **own chapel** in Dering Road in 1868, which they used until the first decade of the 20th century. It then became a private house, and was demolished in 1951.

The original reading room and library was enlarged in 1878 for the benefit of the villagers, to twice its size (and including the additional comfort of a fireplace), to celebrate the coming of age of his heir,

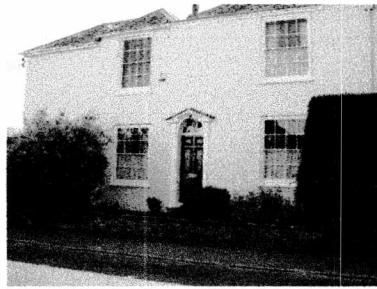
Lord Mount Charles. In the 1st World War, when troops were camped at the top of Bridge Hill the hall was used as a military canteen. In 1952, the hall was given to the villagers by the Conyngham estate on a 50-year lease at a peppercorn rent of 6d per year.



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Who is this? I know but...

The left-hand house of the early 19th century pair adjacent to Union Road may justifiably *called the **'doctor's house'** Originally symmetrical with the other, this house has been extended twice, to accommodate the requirements of the village doctors, five of whom lived here in turn for a period of over 130 years. The earliest record we have of a doctor in Bridge is of Amelius Sicard, born in Blackheath 12 June 1809, the son of refugee from revolutionary France, and of the dynasty of Lautrec, who was 'major-domo' in the household of Princess Caroline of Brunswick. Amelius took on the practice in Bridge in 1832, aged 23, and was the village doctor for 48 years. Sicard's tombstone claims him to have been a beloved physician to rich and poor, and his friends paid for a wall tablet and the glazing of the west window in the church. Charles Schön followed Sicard, a British subject born in the Grand Duchy of Baden. He died in 1899, to be succeeded by Robert Moorhead, from London, and then in 1906 by Arthur Wilson, born in Dublin, and described as 'a small man with a big heart, an Irishman's sense of humour and a characteristic laugh'. He was also said, perhaps more unfortunately, to have been unable to restrain a nervous giggle, even in the gravest circumstances.



Dr Roger Hunter was also a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, and came to the village with his wife in 1937. They bought the house and practice, together with the carriage house and stables. Private patients entered by the front door and waited in the dining room. 'Panel' patients entered at the rear via the garden door which until the 1990's bore the legend 'surgery'. Until recently too the old butler's pantry survived, as did the wine and apple store. In the 1970s, restoration work took place and the pediment was removed. The house is hung with mathematical tiles, which were renovated in 1999. The upper tiles hung in the traditional manner on timber laths, whereas the lower ones are fixed in plaster. Dr Hunter's generosity allowed for the building of an extension to the village hall. He died in 1988, and his widow remained in the house until her death.

Dr William Russell, who succeeded Dr Hunter, set up his practice in Green Court, and on his sudden death in 1988 the practice was

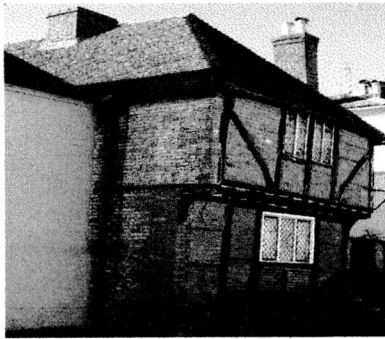
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assumed by Dr Mark Jones, who was instrumental in establishing the new Health Centre in Patribourne Road. It is remarkable that the village has had no more than six doctors in over 170 years.

The late 18th century pair of cottages now used as the Post Office are known from earlier documents as occupying 'Chapel Yard'. This name appears to be derived from the fact that the building backs on to the site of the Primitive Methodist chapel, and from the fact that here was the yard belonging to Frederick Colegate (1790-1877), a prominent local builder, who in all probability erected Alexandra House (next to Rogers Garage) for his retirement. Here his daughter Jane and granddaughter Elizabeth Williams ran a private school until the early 20th century.



Next to Alexandra House stands one of the oldest buildings remaining in Bridge: a late 15th or early 16th century structure, timber-framed and jettied, according to one theory an old hall house and inn known as the 'ship', but in fact at least since 1841 a row of four labourers' cottages known (a) 'Primrose Alley', a pretty name belying the

lowly character of its early inhabitants, and proclaimed until the 1990's by a board affixed to the side of the house. The building attached to the side is a double oast. The brick infill between the timbers of the house ('nogging') is probably a later replacement of the wattle and daub of the original. It may be noted that the house beside the Ford in Mill Lane, erected as a row of three cottages in the early 19th century, was collectively known as 'Bricknoggin'.

capital S?

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The 18th century cottage now known as 'Sunnyside' once stood level with the road. As a result of the turnpike roadworks, it found itself overlooked by a new embankment. Consequently the descent into Dering Road, once no more than a footpath, became steep. The cottage was once perhaps 'Aunt Betsy's' tearooms though the fact that No. 2



Rose Cottages immediately opposite was for long a 'beer house', popular among the soldiery during WWI as 'Prickett's off-licence' suggests the presence of a euphemism. The Prickett family subsequently took over the village shop, an early 19th century infill structure next to the village hall, later converted to equestrian supplies.

The fact that the **gateway** opposite Dering Road stands level with the main road suggests that it postdates the grading works of the 1820's. It bears a striking stylistic similarity to the entry to Patricbourne Old Vicarage. This is a relic of a large 19th century house, known as 'Hillside'. Further evidence of its existence may be glimpsed in the garden behind the door, where the tiled floor of a glazed passageway to the house proper still survives. 'Hillside' replaced a much earlier building, the now vanished 'Oliver's Court'. The present house, beyond the gateway, was once no more than the gardener's cottage and outbuildings of 'Hillside'.



Dering Road and Filmer Road (named after two prominent Kentish families) form the bulk of an early estate development in Bridge from 1853 onwards, when

the field forming the gap between the Union Workhouse and the High Street was sold off by the Marchioness Conyngham as individual plots. Not all were built on at the time: some were incorporated into the gardens of pre-existing properties (notably, for instance, the 'doctor's'. Dering Road in particular probably commemorates Colonel Cholmoley Dering, younger brother of Sir Edward Dering, 7th baronet of Surrenden Dering, Pluckley. Dering raised and commanded the Duke of York's Own New Romney Fencible Cavalry, in 1794. He served with the regiment in Ireland for three years, winning the thanks of the Lord Lieutenant of the county, and both houses of parliament for services in the rebellion of 1798. The regiment disbanded in 1800 on return from Ireland. Cholmoley Dering bought Howletts from the builder (Isaac Baugh) in 1799, and lived in the house. On becoming the guardian of his nephew, the infant son of his elder brother, he moved to Pluckley, selling Howletts in c.1816 to George Gipps, son and heir to one of the founders of the Canterbury Bank.



The Poor Law **Union workhouse** in Bridge was erected in 1835, at a cost of £4,376 by Thomas Finch Cozens, one of the original trustees of the Methodist chapel, following the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834. This Act abolished outdoor relief

to the able-bodied poor who, on applying for aid, were to be offered maintenance in a workhouse. To deter people from seeking relief, life was to be made as unpleasant as possible. Married couples were separated and children taken from their parents. The only contact allowed was in the chapel or refectory, and then infrequently. Responsibility for the poor law passed into the hands of three Poor Law Commissioners. The country was divided into Poor Law Unions, each with a Board of Guardians, and composed of several parishes. Bridge Poor Law Union had 22 parishes under the authority of 22 guardians, four ex-officio guardians, surgeons, a relieving officer and a clerk. The parishes included were Adisham, Barham, Bekesbourne Bishopsbourne, Bridge, Chartham, Fordwich, Harbledown, Upper Hardres, Lower Hardres, Ickham, Kingston, Littlebourne, Nackington, Patribourne, Petham, Stodmarsh, Thanington, Waltham, Westgate-

Without, Wickhambreaux and Womenswold. The first meeting of the Bridge Union Board of Guardians was held on 22 April 1835 at the White Horse Inn. The master was known as the Governor and his wife the Governess. They were paid a joint salary of £80. The average weekly cost of indoor paupers by 1847 was .3s.4d (17p).. Tramps were accommodated in a separate building next to the main workhouse (now demolished) where the sleeping accommodation was basic: a line stretched across the room, over which the tramps were invited to hang .. There was also a mortuary. In 1840, one family was given £4 to assist them to emigrate. Unmarried women 'lying in' were admitted, but punished if it was to be their second child. Clothing grants were issued and medical aid given. Children received education, and boys were often apprenticed as sweeps, brick-layers, hop growers, etc. A survey of census returns for Bridge shows that the workhouse population was about 15-20% of the total. And consisted predominantly of the aged and infirm, and young women with children. The Union building was well-constructed, on the quadrangle pattern of most contemporary workhouses, with an entrance gate and offices, a chapel in the centre, a porter's lodge, cook's house and exercise yard, together with three acres of garden. The red bricks of the Union building were described as giving 'an appearance of cheerfulness, while the garden plots on either side of the entrance are generally a blaze of flowers.' (*A Saunter Through Kent*). The evidence indicates that the Guardians of the Bridge Union, while careful over financial matters, were conscientious in executing their duties and not unduly harsh. The buildings later became a home for the elderly and nursing home (The Close), before being converted into housing in the nineteen eighties, when the New Close was built in Conyngham Lane in the grounds of the new school..

The Domesday survey of 1086 refers to a total of six mills within the parish of Patricbourne (which in effect included Bridge). These were almost certainly water-mills, one of which was probably sited where Bridge Place now stands: the present artificial course of the Nailbourne indicates this. At a much later date (first recorded on Symondson's map of 1596) a post-mill was erected on the brow of Bridgedown within Patricbourne parish. Milling was a high value but also high risk business: many were the mills that burned down, due to the easily combustible nature of flour dust. The *Kentish Gazette* in 1808 records a different risk:

"MILL ROBBED. . . in the night of the 30th November, the Mill belonging to John Fagg, on Bridge Hill, was broke open by forcing the hinges of the door. . . and a Quantity of flour with TWO SACKS marked 'J.Fagg, Bridge Mill' were stolen thereout and traced for about half a mile across the fields. . ."

This mill was dismantled in about 1818 and soon after another was erected in 'Three Corner Meadow' at the junction of what were to become Mill Lane and Union Road on a spot now occupied by a large oil tank. This was by now probably a **smock mill**, built by James Ashenden, to process corn for local farmers. For security purposes, no doubt

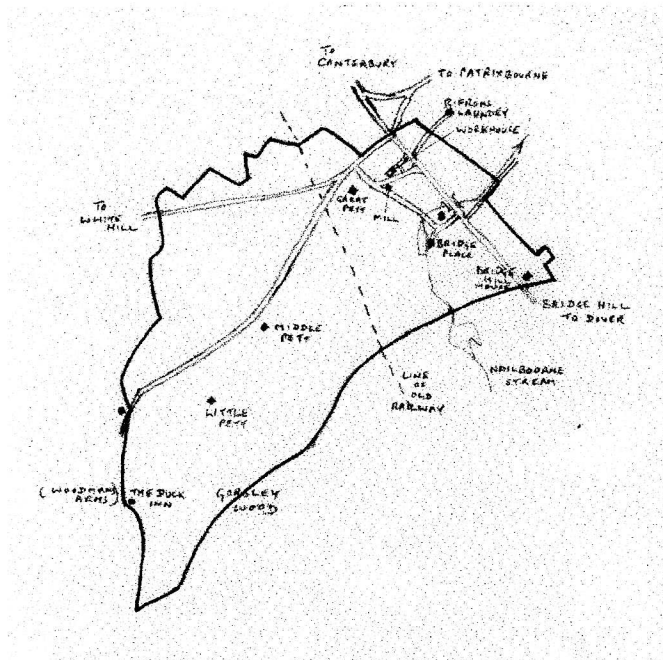


not only to watch for robbers but also to keep an eye on the working of the mill, the miller's house stood at right angles to the road a few yards down the hill (now 41 Union Road). Thomas Johnson was the miller from 1832 until his death in 1856, and 'the figure of the dusty miller was a familiar sight in the village, for his practice was to deliver flour for his customers personally, his method of transport being the back of a donkey' (*Folkestone Herald*, March 1933). The Johnsons later went on to run Barton Mill in Canterbury. The miller from 1859 to 1879 was Goerge Fryer, who was succeeded by William White. By the 1890's industrial milling was fast overtaking the traditional method. Mr White installed a steam engine, and his successor William Mainwaring an oil engine, but the inevitable could not be put off. Wind power was abandoned in 1907, and the sweeps were removed. Flour production by whatever means was given up during the first world war, and the body of the mill began slowly to decay. By 1933 the site was being used as a coal yard, which then was taken over as a liquid fuel depot. The remains of the mill (still containing most of the gear) were finally demolished on Friday 15th October 1954. If it had survived perhaps another 15 years it might have benefited from the revival of the heritage industry. But an age which had allowed the destruction of Bridge Farm had no time for an old windmill.

sp

sp

sp



THE VILLAGE OF BRIDGE



The village of Bridge straddles the Nailbourne – when, that is, the ‘bourne’, or intermittent [chalk-bedded] water course of the Little Stour, is running! The river has its source at East Brook, near

Etchinghill – hardly more than 3 miles from the channel coast at Hythe(?) It dries up, or runs underground, frequently, but once, when the Wantsum Channel was open to the sea, it was a faster and wider water course. As late as the 1920s, it is said that trout were to be caught in School Lane, Bekesbourne. Legends abound of the river in full flow portending national disaster. The *Kentish Travellers’ Companion* of 1794 records that ‘the bridge being decayed and otherwise inconvenient for carriages, a new and more commodious one has been built by subscription’. Cozens’ *History of Kent* of 1798 states that Bridge ‘is now but a small village of about 20 houses, situated in a narrow valley’. Above all, the bridge allowed the passage of travellers, and it is because of the road itself that the village of Bridge has developed into the village it is today.

As recent as 2000 it caused widespread flooding
 this is the bridge
 - the still survives beneath the present road.

From *Domesday*, we learn that the abbot of St Augustine’s Abbey held the hundred of Bridge. A hundred was an administrative district within an English shire, with a court house, or meeting-place, usually located centrally within it, often sited at river crossings or cross roads. Within the hundred, the parish of Bridge comprised two manors: that of Bereacre, of which no trace remains in terms of a big house; and the more significant manor of Blackmansbury, in which a building, referred to by Hasted, the eighteenth century historian of Kent, as ‘the court lodge’, was situated, probably on the site of the present Bridge Place. The parish of Bridge, as we think of it today, was regarded

Cover: Bridge 1062.

Pages:

1	(Contents: Acknowledgements, etc) B & W
2	map (colour)
3	colour
4	4 B&W
5	5 B&W
6	Colour
7	Colour
8	B&W
9	B&W
10	Colour
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24	B&W
25	B&W
26	Colour
27	Colour
28	B&W
29	B&W
30	Colour
31	Colour
32	B&W

windmill

subsequently

throughout the middle ages and beyond as a subsidiary part of Patricksbourne.

Indeed, the proximity of the church to the parish boundary indicates as much.

Archaeological evidence shows Bridge to have been the site of an Iron-Age settlement and pottery, fragments of weapons and other artefacts have been excavated from the Romano-British period. A near-circular hollow, close to the road, part way up Bridge Hill, may well represent a defensive position, constructed by the ancient Britons to protect their river crossing after their defeat by Ceasar's seventh legion in 54AD. Harris in his *History of Kent* of 1719, lists various encampments on Barham Down at different times, whose occupants would have had to take the road through Bridge on their route between the coast and Canterbury. King John in 1212, assembled on the Down with '60,000' men, ready to repel any attempted invasion from France. It is likely that King Henry V marched down Bridge Hill on his return from Agincourt in 1415, to celebrate his victory in Canterbury Cathedral. In 1450, during Cade's Rebellion, 'John Ysake of Patrykesbourne...and William atte Wode of Brigge, smyth, and other men in Brygge hundred...gathered together against the statutes of the realm' but were 'granted general pardon at the request of the queen'. Every three years throughout the 15th century, a huge wax candle, rolled into a coil, or trindle, was trundled on the road through Bridge - a gift from the people of Dover to be used at the cathedral to provide tapers for the poor and destitute to light at the shrine of St Thomas. This must have been one of the more unusual items to pass through the village of Bridge, matched only, perhaps, by the four dromedaries and two camels brought in 1466 by the lord patriarch of Antioch, as a gift for the king and queen! In 1520, King Henry VIII must have passed through Bridge with his magnificent retinue on his way France to meet François I at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. And in May 1660, King Charles II must have returned this way in some splendour from his exile in France to regain the throne.

"Old English Hole"

the Roman road was established from the royal port of Dover by the 2nd century



(or just a quarry)

aerial pic?

The lane past Flint Cottage in the river valley ("Kingsbury Road") leads directly to the iron-age part of

In the 1630's, Spanish gold was carried in great quantities from Dover to London to be turned into coin.

In August 1799, at the height of an invasion scare during the Napoleonic wars, more than 10,000 infantrymen camped on Barham Down to prepare for invasion. The *Kentish Gazette* recorded that

The immense train of farmers and artillery wagons employed in conveying the troops and baggage, ammunition, military and other stores and provisions towards the camp, adding to

the numerous carriages filled with officers and other passengers; these together have produced a scene of populousness and traffic in this ancient city [of Canterbury], which has not been beheld by its inhabitants since the days of St Thomas Becket.

In preparation for this influx, a Dr Wardell, physician to the forces quartered in Bridge, was looking for a 'roomy house or other sort of building...to be used for a regimental hospital'.

The hills on either side of the village were once steeper than they are now. In summer, the passage of traffic over the road surface resulted in clouds of dust; in winter in muddied ruts. On 26 December 1769, the Kentish Gazette noted that 'some public-spirited Gentlemen intend to petition Parliament for a Turnpike Act' for the road from Dover to Canterbury. Substantial roadworks included the lessening of the incline



of both hills down into the village and the smoothing out of the slope. Tolls were imposed, and there was to be no parking in the street' – a controversial issue until this present time! The street was not tarred, of course, until the mid-20th century, and the wide water-splash to one side of

though the work was not completed until 1829

the Bridge, used for watering horses or cooling the metal rims of wheels after the steep descent into the village, also remained in place until the 20th century. *water - was yellow.*

The origins of the village lie in its dependency on the road. For centuries, the buildings flanking its single street were principally concerned with meeting the needs of travellers and passers by – premises supplying food and drink, a blacksmith, saddler, shoemaker and so on. A daily coach service provided a connection to London, and a



long-term Bridge resident, Mrs Jack Friend, was able to recall in 1955 how, in her childhood, a four-in-hand coach travelled daily through the village on its journey from Folkestone to Canterbury and return, with a

post horn to alert passengers of its arrival. The coach was driven by a Mr Scott, who eventually died in a tragic accident, when his coach overturned as it went through Barham.

In the Great War, troops were once again encamped close to Bridge. One day in 1914, the roadway up Bridge Hill was thick with chalky dust as over 100 London buses passed through to be used in France as transport for the troops. The dust became so thick that the drivers complained the enemy had covered the surface with something to choke them. This story even made the London newspapers! Probably the drivers were more used to the better constructed surfaces of London roads.

In the second World War, a canteen was established in Bridge village hall, to serve the men stationed on Town Hill[?]. During the war, the milestones up Bridge Hill were taken up and anti-tank emplacements installed at the top of Bridge Hill to prevent the enemy progressing down the A2. Indeed, one afternoon in 1981, some of the residents of Bridge Hill were required to evacuate their houses in response to an alert concerning an unexploded device found on Bridge Hill! By the middle of the 20th century, the A2 London-Dover road, including Bridge High Street, became increasingly congested, as heavy traffic thundered through the village. In January 1962, pensioner George Smith was knocked down and killed while out shopping. In 1963, two lorries and a bus were involved in a collision in the main street. Incidents like this became increasingly frequent and, by 1964, the villagers had had enough. They launched a series of protests in support of the construction of a bypass. Initially, these protests consisted of people walking in the roadway, to disrupt the flow of traffic to cause the vehicles to slow down. When this action failed, the villagers resorted to sitting in the road! Clearly the spirit of Cade's Rebellion was not dead! In 1972, a truck drove into a shop, trapping a young girl and killing the driver. After this, the sit-down protests increased in frequency until on one occasion a thousand people staged a sit-in in the High Street, closing the village to all traffic for an hour and causing a very long tail-back. Eventually, repeated lobbying and demonstrations led to victory and a bypass was opened on 29 June 1976 accompanied by great celebration. At last the villagers were able to enjoy their village in relative peace and comfort.

see

the

Dover-bowl

Colin Lewis's
groceries

The history of Bridge is not that of a characteristic medieval village, radiating from its centre; nor yet was Bridge part of any great estate, even though in later years it has been surrounded by great houses, notably Bourne House, Bridge Place, Higham and Bifrons – all of whose owners have played their part in developing the village, though only Bridge Place lies within the parish boundaries. For most of its existence, the inhabitants of Bridge have numbered no more than a few hundred. The late 18th century saw the building of a few cottages in Brewery lane. In the 19th century, the Union was built, as were houses in Dering and Filmer Road. The later 19th century saw a gradual extension along the Street towards Canterbury. It is only since 1962 that there has been any serious expansion, with the construction of Bridge Down (1962), Western Avenue (1963) and Riverside Close (1965). In the census for 1801, the population of the entire parish was

325. By 1834, it reached 543, and in 1841 it was 817, of whom 165 were inmates of the workhouse. In 1871, the population reached 941, declining to 699 in 1921 as agricultural employment diminished. In the 1960s, Bridge began to change irrevocably, with the demolition of the most notable building at its centre, the 14th century Bridge Farm, and the expansion of modern housing development, resulting in a population in 1971 of 1225, and by the Millennium of almost 2000. The village still boasts more than twenty houses dating to the 18th century or before, and others built in the 19th century. Sadly this small publication is not able to feature them all.



photo of Forge?

Workhouse (1834)
(1860's)

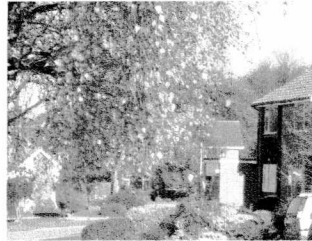


photo of farm.

Historically, employment of the villagers of Bridge was provided by a thriving retail trade and serving the needs of travellers in the pubs and inns. Significant numbers were engaged in farm labour, much of it seasonal: hop tying, stone picking, cherrying, hay making, pea and bean harvesting, fruit picking, hop picking. The hop garden near Flint Cottages has been growing hops since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and a few hops are still grown. Local shops, the dental and doctors' surgery, the care home and the pubs and restaurant still provide more

employment than many villages but most villagers, of course, now leave the village to work.

Today Bridge is a thriving community, boasting a post office and pharmacy, a general store, a bakery, a butcher, a hairdresser, a photography studio, a school, a church, a care home, a restaurant and three pubs. It is served by a regular bus service to Canterbury, Dover and Folkestone. It has an active parish council, a Fish Scheme (providing a coffee drop-in club for the elderly and others, and a driving service for those in need of such), a horticultural society, a history society, a Women's Institute, and a number of other community groups. For the young, there is a youth club, scouts, guides, cubs, brownies and beavers (???)

Bridge and its environs provide a wonderful place to live!

Bridge Place

Bridge Place is built on the site of what was probably the medieval court Lodge in the manor of Blackmansbury, alias Bridge. Here Symonson's map of Kent of 1596 shows a building lying astride the Nailbourne. Until Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries, the manor of Blackmansbury was in the possession the abbey of St Peter, St Paul and St Augustine, Canterbury, and was let to tenants. With the suppression of the Abbey in 1540, the manor reverted to the Crown. Henry VIII granted the manor to John Laurence, whose family retained it until 1576, when it was sold to William Partheriche, who built a new house on the site. Traces of this house were revealed in an archaeological excavation which took place in 1964/5.



Partheriche was surveyor of the Ordnance Office under Elizabeth I, and was appointed by the queen in 1582 to undertake extensive works at Dover Harbour. He died in 1598 and was buried in his chapel in Bridge church. William's grandson, Edward, sold the property in 1638 to Arnold Braems.

a reminder of the watermill which probably once occupied the site.

Relics of the old house survived until the 1970's.

Braems was born in Dover in 1602. His ancestors were of Flemish descent – immigrants who had originally settled at Sandwich in the early 17th century. During the Civil War, he was a loyal supporter of Charles I. At the Restoration of Charles II, Braems' loyalty was rewarded with a knighthood. Braems was a Dover merchant and, preferring commerce to politics, he worked to develop Dover as a successful port, acquiring land on the seafront, creating vast warehouses for goods, and making a fortune on harbour tolls and customs. This fortune he overspent in the building of a fine house in Bridge, and here he lived until his death in 1681. In place of the former manor house, Braems had constructed a magnificent mansion which he called Bridge Place. It was made of hand-made Dutch bricks, and was the largest house in 17th century East Kent, excepting Chilham Castle. It had a deer park, an extensive garden, an aviary, a bowling green, woods, a rabbit warren, 'beautifully well-kept pleasure grounds' and a fine avenue of lime trees stretching to the church. Arnold Braems had a reputation as a wonderful host, who kept a 'princely table'. One of his



view of
Bridge
Place
by

guests was the artist William Schellinks in the 1661. Sellink recorded his visit in his journal and made a number of sketches, including a view of the Street from the bottom of Bridge Hill. Another guest in 1661 writes of being 'merrily entertained', at Braems' 'delightful residence at Bridge, one hour's walk from

Schellinks
(see cover)

Canterbury'. The company played bowls, and 'we saw a hart shot with a crossbow in the deerpark...everybody, especially the ladies, washed their hands in the warm blood, to get white hands. The hart was immediately gutted and cut up into quarters'. The following day, 'venison pie and other dishes of the hart were on the menu'.

Walter Breams inherited the house on his father's death in 1681, but by this time the estate was burdened with debt. Walter had been much involved in the Civil War and, at the Restoration, was made Comptroller of HM Customs at Sandwich, and later at Dover, not least as a reward for having been the 'youngest prisoner in England for your Majesty's Service'. In 1690, however, he was petitioning for 'six years

arrears of salary', and after his death in 1692, his family could no longer afford to maintain the house. His son inherited, but by 1695 the estate was sold to John Taylor of Patrixbourne, who soon demolished the greater part of Bridge Place in order to use the bricks in the building of Bifrons, on his property in Patrixbourne.

re-

What survives of the original Bridge Place is just one wing, but, in the view of Hasted, 'the size and stateliness...being of itself full sufficient for a gentleman's residence'. An advertisement in the Gazette in June 1791 advertises the house for let as having 'proper offices for a family: a coach-house with stabling for seven horses, and eleven acres of very fine pasture...and a cottage consisting of a brewhouse, laundry and dairy, with good lodging-rooms over them'. Since then, the house has had a succession of owners, and was purchased by Peter Malkin in 1969. In 1976, Bridge Plce hosted a party to celebrate the opening of the A2 by-pass, an achievement long fought for by the villagers. Most recently, it has housed a night-club and country club and, for one week only, a restaurant! It was sold in 2005?? To whom???

was it?

Bourne Park

Once part of the larger estate, Bourne House is considered to be amongst the finest Queen Anne houses in Kent. It was built by Dame Elizabeth (Hewytt) Aucher, widow of Sir Henry Aucher, between 1704 and 1707 on the site of an ancient house known as Hautbourne. (The Haute family, kinsmen of Edward IV's queen Elizabeth Woodville, was prominent in the area in the 15th century). More can be discovered about the Auchers in *The Aucher Family of the Bourne Estate, Bishopsbourne, Kent* (Ian D Taylor) in the Archives of Canterbury Cathedral.

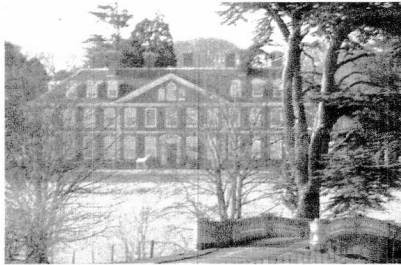
for her son Hewytt



Modern view of Bourne

In 1756, Stephen Beckingham, who had married an Aucher daughter, inherited the estate. In 1765, Mozart was a guest in the house, and while staying there, visited the popular Barham Downs racecourse. In 1845, Matthew Bell purchased the house, the owner also of 'Oswards' in Bishopsbourne.

Bell was responsible for the construction of the ornamental lake, and for constructing of a number of buildings in the vicinity, including the school in Bishopsbourne and Bridge Lodge in Bridge. Such buildings are often distinguished by a stone plaque, showing an intertwined MFB motif, for Matthew and Fanny Bell, his wife. When the Elham Valley railway was built at the end of the 19th century, Matthew Bell agreed to its passing through his land only if it was hidden by a cut-and-cover tunnel where it ran behind his house. Memorials to the Auchers and the Bells can be seen in the north chapel of Bishopsbourne church.



↳ the estate colleges

↳ example of MFB motif.

The last Bell owner died in 1927, at which time the house was purchased by Sir John Prestige, who owned it until his death in 1962. In the 1950s, Sir John proposed that Kent County Council should take over the house as a museum, but this scheme did not materialise, and by 1957 the house was empty and in a poor state of repair. Sir John then sought to have the house demolished, but following a public enquiry, a Preservation Order was placed on the house, which was eventually Grade One listed. Extensive restoration work followed, and Sir John's next scheme was to offer the house and 300 acres estate as the site for the new University of Kent, but this too was turned down.

During the 1960s and 70s, the house changed ownership a number of times, and various proposals were made for its future. These included a religious house, a residential retirement club, a private hospital, offices and residential accommodation and a luxury hotel. The house's future became assured when it was purchased in 1983 by Lady Juliet, the only daughter of the 8th Earl Fitzwilliam, and Mr Somerset de Chair, a conservative MP and noted collector of art and antiques. Sensitive and expert restoration work was carried out on the house and grounds. Somerset de Chair died in 1995 aged 83. Lady Juliet remarried in 1997, and the work of improving and enhancing the grounds, the house and its contents has continued to this day.

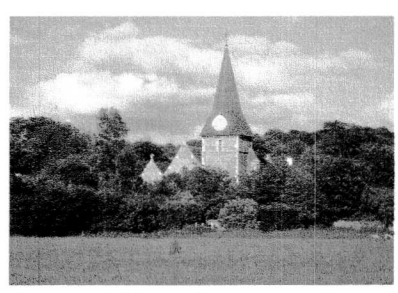
One of the first cricket matches in Kent took place on the ground at Bourne Park, which in the 18th century, attracted numerous people.

Initially, spectators would go to the Horse and Groom on Bridge Hill, but by 1767, booths selling food were available on the cricket ground itself, including one for gentlemen 'in a tent pitched for that purpose, separate from all the other booths'. After 1780, publicans from Bridge and Canterbury were allowed to set up booths operating outside the 'paddock'. When Hambledon played England in August 1772, a grandstand was built to accommodate the huge crowd. There were said to be 20,000 people present on the first day. Many of the supporters were ordinary Kentish folk, and a rhyme of 1773 suggests how far they were willing to travel:

(Bridge Hill House) the assembly room for visitors to the races.

From Marsh and Weald their hay fork left
To Bourne the rustics hied
From Romney, Cranbrook, Tenterden
And Durent's verdant side

St Peter's Church, Bridge



Until the 19th century(?), Bridge church served as no more than a chapel of ease for the church at Patricbourne. A chapel of ease provided for the 'ease' of those living at some distance from a parish church, and was subordinate to it. By tradition, such chapels were often built at the roadside, often near river-crossings, for the convenience of travellers, so Bridge church satisfied both these requirements.

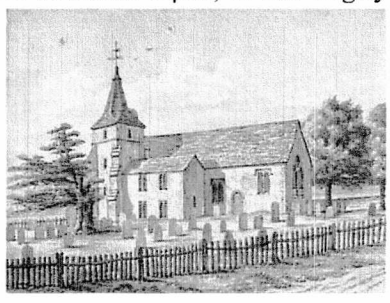
For many centuries to begin with,

As the parish of Bridge grew, its inhabitants became increasingly resentful of their subordinate position to Patricbourne. Indeed, at the time of Archdeacon Harpsfield's visitation, in 1557, the parishioners submitted a petition requiring

That the said chapel of Bridge may be appointed to be the head church to Patricbourne, because as they say, the said chapel standeth in the midst part of the inhabitants of both parishes, and that Patricbourne standeth in the uttermost part of the dwellers of the two parishes, very far out of the way.

Glyme 1877

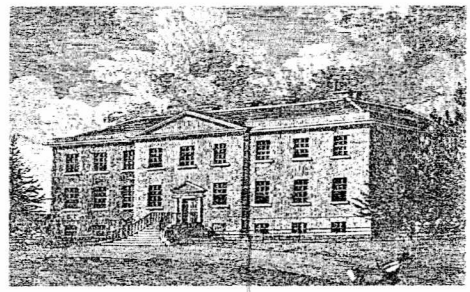
In 1846, S R Flynn described Bridge church in his *Churches of Kent*. However, being seen as in need of extensive repair, it was largely rebuilt in 1859-61, owing to the generosity of Mrs Mary Gregory, who lived in Bridge Hill House, and was related to the Aucher family. She died in 1867, and left a bequest to the poor of the village which is still in existence. The restoration of the church was achieved, according to the Pevsner guide, 'with gross insensitivity'! Some vestiges remain of the medieval architecture, including a relief of the Three Persons of the Trinity, surrounded by the symbols of the Evangelists. There is also a 17th century portrait by Cornelius Johnson, who was a frequent visitor to Bridge Place.



survey?
 wife of the vicar of Petham
 which has only recently been worked up
 (The Norman door socket - a recent map of an early vicar, Nicholas Jansen Ransay of J. Bourne (-1649))

Bifrons and the Conyngams

The first house built on the site of Bifrons for which there is evidence is that built, according to Hasted, by John Bargrave in the early 17th century. John Bargrave's brother, Isaac, became dean of Canterbury Cathedral. The family sold the house in 1662 and there were a number of owners before the house was purchased by John Taylor in September 1694. In 1695 Taylor also bought Bridge Place, demolishing the greater part of the house to use the bricks in the rebuilding of his Patrixbourne house. His grandson Edward inherited the property in c.1775, demolished the house and began reconstruction (again??). A number of drawings survive of this 'plain building in the classical style with little architectural embellishment'. In 1802, Edward's son, Edward, married Louisa Beckingham of Bourne Place, and Bifrons was let to tenants. It was sold in 1830 to the first Marquis Conyngham.



In 1802, Edward's son, Edward, married Louisa Beckingham of Bourne Place, and Bifrons was let to tenants. It was sold in 1830 to the first Marquis Conyngham.

house

Now on 13

Henry Conyngham was created marquis by George IV while he was Prince Regent. Conyngham married a wealthy heiress, Elizabeth Denison, whose father was a merchant banker. His rise through the ranks of the peerage was due to his services in Ireland, and the Conyngham's Irish country seat was (and still is) Castle Slane, between Belfast and Dublin. The Marquis was much at court, and held the post of Lord Steward of the Household until the king's death. Lady Conyngham was famed as the companion and confidante of George IV. A favourite at court, she was described as 'fat, handsome, kindly, shrewd and extremely fond of jewels'! The king heaped presents and money on her and, when in London, she and her family lived largely at his expense. Though they never appeared in public together, the king and the marchioness were often ridiculed by the press, but this did not seem to deter them. A popular rhyme at the time suggested that Lady Conyngham and George IV spent time

Quaffing their claret, then mingling their lips
Or fondling the fat about each others hips

The king once said to her 'thank you, my dear; you always do what is right. You cannot please me so much as by doing everything you please, everything to show that you are mistress here'. However, it seems never to have been proven that their relationship was other than platonic.

The Marquis died in 1832. The Marchioness lived to the age of 92, and died in 1861. During her lifetime, she added considerably to her Kent estates in Kent. She was active in Patricbourne and Bridge, founding the school, supporting the free schools' movement, helping form the volunteer fire brigade. She and the marquis were founder shareholders in the Bridge Gas Coke and Coal Company (see p. ?) Considerable alterations were carried out at Bifrons during the 19th century. When the fourth marquis inherited, he decided against living there; indeed the family ceased to live in the house after 1882, preferring to let the property to a succession of tenants. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Bifrons was cleared of its contents and taken over for military purposes. The condition of at the end of the War was poor, and the decision was taken to demolish it. A number of the houses in Patricbourne belonging to the estate were sold, and the land rented out on long lease, together with the stable block, which was converted into houses for farmworkers. In 1945, the Conyngham estate engaged Sir Edwin Savill as land and estate agent to manage their properties in Kent, and Savills still act as the estate's agents. The Conyngham

When until recently the silver
cannon used to lay the foundation
stone of the extension to the
Village Hall (187-) could be seen,

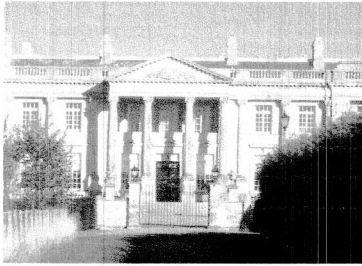
established the Village Hall

family continue to take an active interest in their local property and in the village of Bridge.

In 1989, Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook an excavation of the Bifrons site, funded by the Conyngham estate, and reported in *Archaeologia Cantiana* in 1989. It was hoped at that time that the house might be reconstructed, but this plan was abandoned.

Higham

Higham has been the site of a grand house since ^{before} 1320, when it was ceded to the de Hegham family by Edward II. The present building dates from 1768, with a later front addition built in about 1805.



Perhaps the most colourful character to own the house was Count Louis Vorrow Zborowski, who designed and built the first aero-engine powered racing car, which later was immortalised in the film *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang*. In 1920, Bridge Fire Brigade was concerned at the inadequacy of its horse-drawn fire appliance, which

was unable to reach fires in outlying districts in time to be effective. The Count, hearing of this, presented them with a car to serve as a fire engine, adapted the body of the vehicle and made it of a suitable size to accommodate ten men and a mile of hose. With a rating of 75 horse power, and a maximum speed of 60 miles per hour, this was probably the fastest fire engine of its kind in the country at the time. For his generosity, Zborowski was made honorary captain of the brigade!

- PWB ?

Short piece about Wighams? Dates in the notes - was period the house was owned by Walter Whiglam,

During the second World War the house served as a hospital, and it continued in this role in various guises until the 1980s, when it was closed and the estate fell into a state of neglect. In 1995, it was purchased by Patricia Gibb and Amanda Harris-Deans, who devoted themselves to restoring the house and gardens to their former glory, and opened the gardens to the public. In 2005 (?) the estate was sold once more, and continues now as a private residence.

who was Lord Lieutenant of Kent in 193-

Bridge Hill House

The Horse and Groom (Bridge Hill House)

Bridge Hill House, alias



The Horse and Groom was the licensed premises for the local sporting fraternity in the 18th and early 19th century, particularly for the devotees of horse racing. Races on Barham Down began (officially at least) in 1678. A century later the races were attracting vast

venue

when the entries were registered

crowds, including the fashionable gentry, and in 1774 a 'new stand' was built, to supplement the original. There was a racing stable in Union Road, not far from the old windmill. The official race week was in August, but there was also a meeting at Easter and at various other times. In 1773, a race was run 'over the New Round Course on Barham Downs, one four-miles heat, for one hundred Guineas, between two Gentlemen's horses...to start exactly at Twelve o'clock. Dinner will be ready at Bridge-Hill after the race is over'. Racing was not limited to horses! In June 1770, there was a 'match of running between twenty-four of the Chilham Club and Twenty-four Gentlemen of East Kent'. In July the previous year was held 'A match of Running by Maids. To Strip at Five o'clock'!! It was reported that the match was played 'to the great satisfaction of a vast concourse of people', but presumably streaking was not a part of it! Cock fighting took place at the Horse and Groom too. In March 1773, Bridge met Deal 'to shew eleven cocks on each side and fight for Four Guineas a battle'. Once again, dinner was provided at the hostellery. Before 1767 especially, cicket enthusiasts also patronised the Horse and Groom during the cricket season at Bishopsbourne Paddock. The Horse and Groom was also, like the other village licensed premises, a venue for auctions.

as it did also at the Red Lion White Horse

East Bridge House

This building dates to the early 19th century. More recently it was turned into three flats, until restored to a single house during the 1980s. To the rear of the house, where formerly the kitchens were to be found, is now a separate house with a doorway which was imported from Bifrons in Patricbourne, when it was demolished.



Bourne Lodge



Bourne Lodge was built in the later 19th century, possibly on the site of an earlier dwelling known as Hill House. In 1898 It became the home of Mrs Fanny Bell, widow of Matthew Bell of Bourne Park. In the 20th century, the house was for many years owned by a single family. In 1926, Mr F Cowderoy

left it to his son and daughter, the Rev C C Cowderoy (later Roman Catholic archbishop of Southwark) and Mrs C Berry. Mrs Berry lived in the house for many years with her husband Frank, who was a well-known Canterbury estate agent. His son John and his wife owned the house from 1967, until it was sold in 1981 and again in 2003.

Lynton House

At the core of Linton House is a 17th century house, once owned by William Cheston, yeoman, and given to his son on his marriage. In 1743, a Bridge clock-maker of considerable repute, John Nash, rented the house from Richard Barham (father of the author of the Ingoldsby Legends ??), who was administrator to the will of William Ford. Ford was a member of the 'Congregation of Baptists' in 1706, and left in his will ten pounds for the poor of that congregation in his will. In 1822, the house belonged to James Delmare, linen weaver. From 1930-1940, the house belonged to a coal merchant, Albert Taylor, whose advertisement once appeared on the wall of the house. (??) In recent years it has undergone considerable restoration, including the return of the front door to its original position.



survived until the 1970's.

SE

? Church Cottage

The Red Lion [black and white page]

First mention of this establishment occurs in 1593. Considerable reconstruction took place in the later 18th century, and again in the Victorian period. The original building was a dwelling house with stables and outbuildings, situated in a significant tract of land. By 1632, Jacob Jarvis, 'victualler of Canterbury', was granted a licence for the sale of ale on the premises. By 1640, the Red Lion had become a registered inn, with stabling facilities. After Jacob's death, his widow continued to run the inn until 1672, when she sold the licensed premises to Martyn Bradstowe, former landlord of the Black Griffin in St Peter's Street, Canterbury. Bradstowe's wife conducted her trade as a harness maker from the premises – a suitable occupation for a resident of Bridge, serving the needs of travellers using the road from Canterbury to Dover. There were in addition three wheelwrights, two blacksmiths and two saddlers in the village, quite apart from the 'livery and bait' facilities offered by the Red Lion. The licence subsequently passed to the Knight family, and in 1768 to Thomas Fagge, a member of a prominent Bridge family in the 18th century, which provided the village with a baker, a miller, a blacksmith and a carpenter.

The improvements of the London to Dover highway in the 1760s meant an increased flow of traffic. The Red Lion provided a resting



other pictures

place for private coaches, for the hire of horses and for transfer to local transport. Joseph Moss, the landlord in 1804, was an equine dealer in addition. By 1850, the landlord Joseph Eyre was advertising the Red Lion as 'a fine lodging inn, with carriage and stabling facilities'. By

1886, the premises were owned by the Frederick Flint Brewery of St Dunstan's, Canterbury, and later to the Beer and Rigden Brewery. In the 1940s Whitbread's bought the pub, and then Bass Charington. All these brewerys run the establishment through tenant landlords.

In recent years the Red Lion has continued to serve the community until a fire inflicted serious damage to the building in February[?] 2006.

seriously damaged in the floods of 2000

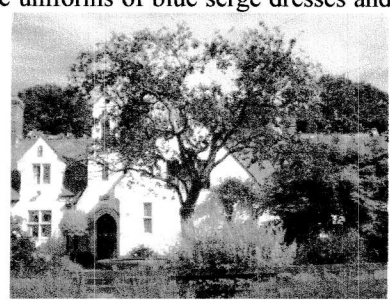
when about to be reopened after refurbishment.

to be lighted one hour after sunset and extinguished at 10.30 pm except for three months in the summer...' A further exception was made 'for five nights of every full Moon at which time the Lamps will not be required'! From 1906, general street lighting was installed, maintained by James Wonfer until 1928. Wonfer lived in the only house in Patricbourne Road, Brookside, and was employed making gas and installing it into houses in the village. He worked seven days a week, and was responsible for seeing that the street lights were lit in the village at dusk and extinguished after dawn. Coke was produced and sold as a by-product.. The coal store was behind (house on Patricbn rd) By 1929, gas was supplied by East Kent Gas Company and the Bridge company was wound up in 1932.

was, somewhat inconveniently,
on the far side of the school
playground.

Bridge School

The school was founded by Lady Elizabeth, Marchioness of Conyngham in 1849. At that time, the school stood within the Patricbourne parish boundary. Thirty girls were educated at the expense of the Marquis. They wore uniforms of blue serge dresses and red cloaks, and wore sailor hats with blue ribbons. This uniform was worn by the girls until 1885. The education the girls received gave them a basic knowledge of reading and writing, and provided them with the skills that they would need. Many of them would expect to be employed in domestic service.



Not same Wyes

Mr and Mrs Robert Wye were appointed as the first government teachers of the school in 1871, following the Education Act. They lived in Weston Villas, now 1 High Street. Mr Wye's sister was appointed headmistress of the infants' school in 1871. After forty years at the school she was presented with a purse of gold. Government inspectors, praised her skill as a teacher to the 'little ones, to whom she had been a second mother' (*Kentish Gazette*, 1 January 1916). The school house has been a private residence since the opening of Bridge Church of England Primary School in ???. The new school in Conyngham Lane was opened in ??? and now has approximately 360 pupils. Bridge primary school is popular and highly regarded .

Fanny

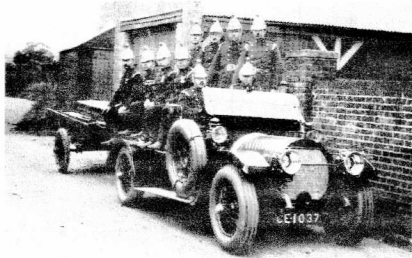
The new school in
1971

The Plough and Harrow

The Plough and Harrow was built in 1692, constructed originally as two dwelling houses and, in 1703, a shoemaker and a carpenter occupied the premises. The building was sold in 1785 to Thomas Williams, a Maltster, who established a malthouse. Malting was a specialized process used in the making of ale. In 1830, Thomas Williams acquired a licence to sell beer from his dwelling 1831. It was known as 'the Beer House at Bridge'. In 1858 Joseph Burch, an ale and porter brewer, bought the premises, and in 1863 it became known as the Plough and Harrow. In 1877, the pub was sold to Shepherd Neame as a 'beerhouse with brewhouse and outbuildings' for £410. By 1878, a new lessee, was granted a licence for wine and spirits, and it became a registered tavern. A tavern was licensed to sell wine as well as ale and beer.



his son William



In 1873, a headquarters was set up by the residents of Bridge for the voluntary fire brigade, and a fire engine was purchased, and kept at the Plough and Harrow (?). The Marquis of Conyngham, of Bifrons, was an enthusiast for

*first at the Red Lion and
subsequently at the P & H.*

fire apparatus and became Captain of the local crew. By 1878, his son and heir, earl Mount Charles, had become captain. In the early days the pump was horse-drawn. In 1929, the brigade acquired its own motor pump, and a Rolls Royce chassis was converted into a fire-engine. In 1938, a new fire-engine was supplied by Count Zbrovsky of Higham House (see Higham). The firemen were mostly local tradesmen, who were summoned to service with a maroon flare. On 31 March 1910, the brigade was called to a fire at Pett Bottom. The young second engineer of the fire brigade, John Fenn, had the job of preparing the flare. In lighting the match, two simultaneous explosions occurred, causing Mr Fenn terrible injuries. He died just twenty minutes after the explosion. His funeral, on April 3, was probably unique in Bridge, attracting a

crowd of some 5000 mourners, who thronged the street and overflowed into the surrounding fields (see p.).

Recent publicans of the Red Lion, James Crowhurst and, for the past ten ~~[?]~~ years, Chris Maclean, have run a popular and lively village pub, much appreciated by local patrons, and the present landlords ~~[?]~~ continue in this tradition.

more recently

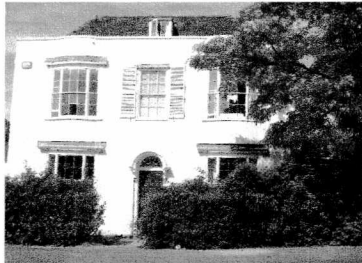
? Church House

Anne's House/Willow Brook

This 19th century photograph shows this cottage, on the right, close to the bridge. Probably of 17th century origine, the house served also as a shop. Damaged by fire in the early 20th century, it was partly rebuilt. It is remembered as a tea room, with a fine garden. In the early 20th century the building to the right of the premises, once served as a motor repair and spares shop and, more recently, a printer's studio.

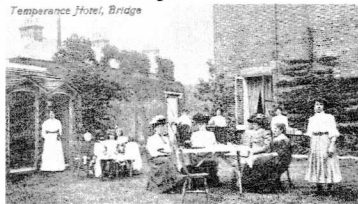


River House



Built around 1780, River House was once owned by T L Collard, auctioneer and valuer, clerk to the Board of Guardians of the workhouse. In 1904, the house was put up for auction, but failed to reach the reserve price of £390! It subsequently became a temperance hotel. The Temperance Movement

originated in England in the 1820s. In 1831, the British and Foreign Temperance Society was formed and extended its influence over the country in a decade. In 1853, the UK Alliance, an aggressive



well

organization not always popular by the less militant temperance societies, aimed to persuade politicians into a policy of prohibition, but this did not succeed. A temperance hotel would have provided a pleasing alternative to those who did not wish to stay in accommodation with licensed premises.

The White Horse

The sign of *The White Horse* is a thoroughly Kentish one, and this pub is probably the oldest in Bridge. The building has a late medieval core,

and an early 16th century inscription is to be seen on the fireplace lintel. An indenture of 1 June 1668 refers to the sale of the property by Sir Arnold Braems to Sir Anthony Aucher, and the tenant at that time seems to have been William Ford. The ownership probably remained in the hands of



the descendants of Sir Anthony and subsequent owners of Bourne Place until it was sold at the end of the 18th century. The pub was once a posting house, though Bridge was only a half-stage between Dover and Canterbury – necessary because of the hills. Mail coaches were drawn by teams of four horses in stages of 7-10 miles, according to gradients and the condition of the road. The fastest mail-coaches ran at about 10 miles per hour. The White Horse served also as the village post office, with the publican serving as post-master. It was here too that the first meeting of the workhouse guardians was held, on 22 April 1835. The census returns show that the inn often provided accommodation for lodgers, including in 1881, George Webb, aged 23, a professional cricketer. Like other public houses, the inn, was used for property sales and auctions. The Stables for the White Horse were once to be found as a single-storey building opposite (Sebastopol - Terrace), later a laundry and cottages (true?). The White Horse was host to meetings of gardening enthusiasts and to gardening shows. In April 1774, there was an 'Auricula Feast' held, with a prize for the first flower of fifteen shillings! Exhibitors at the show were expected to attend the dinner, 'or have no Right to shew his Flower'! Less

for cockfighting and for the once popular 'Auricula Feast'

7

sympathetic to today's readers' taste would be the cock fighting, advertised in June 1772 'to show Twenty-one Cocks on each side...for four guineas a battle and ten the odd battle'. Finally, in the sporting line, the census returns of 1851 show that the licensee was 'a trainer of racehorses'.

Old Cottage

The Old Forge



Lime Cottage, built in 15th or 16th century and was formerly the village forge – much in demand when numerous horse drawn vehicles came regularly through the village, and the White Horse, next door, was the staging post. It was no doubt used also for the mending of farm equipment and horse-drawn vehicles.

It's final incarnation before being turned into a private house was as the Turner's grocery shop

Albany Terrace

This handsome early 19th century row of houses was built by Trinity House, the lighthouse authority for the coast of England and Wales, to serve their employees engaged in work on the toll road between Dover and London?? A much-loved later resident of the terrace was Charles Wills, who ran the village bakery, following his father's death in 1896. He was an enthusiastic chief officer of Bridge Fire Brigade for over 30 years, as well as serving on the parish council from its inception. He served on the old Bridge Blean Rural District Council, the Board of Guardians of the workhouse, and was secretary to the Bridge Gas, Coal and Coke Company. During the first World War, he was nightly on duty at the canteen run in the village Reading Room (now the village hall) for the benefit of the troops stationed at Bourne Park. Mr Wills was described as 'a man of charming manners and genial disposition', who was also a keen cricketer and a long-serving member of St Peter's Church choir. He died aged 94 in 1943, and a brief look at his life illustrates how much Bridge village has always been at the centre of the lives of many of its residents.



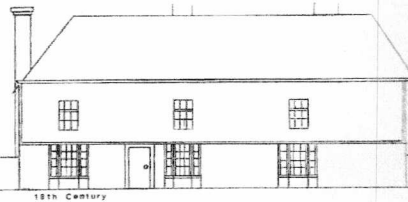
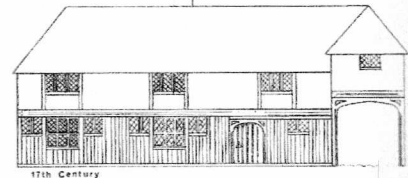
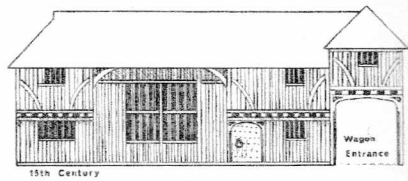
is said to have been a whitewash

Bridge Farm (known as 'Daddy Fagge's Farm')



At the centre of Bridge village was the home farm of Blackmansbury, before the Dissolution of the Monasteries, part of the land holdings of St Augustine's Abbey. Until its demolition in 1962, the farmhouse that stood here was a typical 15th century timber-framed

Wealden hall house, originally with a central hall open to the roof, with rooms on two levels on either side, and a jettied overhang. In the early 17th century, a great fireplace was added, and an upper floor inserted. Another timber-framed house had stood at the right-hand end of the building, but was demolished in the 18th century when the wagon entrance was blocked and the entrance to the yard was moved to the right. The house itself must have presented a very attractive appearance, and was a prestigious building with the style of vertical timbers known as close studding. It had a fine stairway of eight solid oak block of medieval

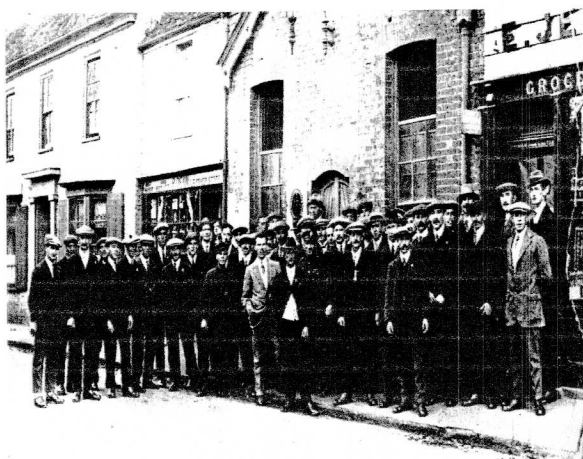


date. At the rear was a medieval barn and cowsheds, probably also dating to the 15th century. In the mid 20th century, Captain Maslin, of Bridge's riding school, kept some of his horses at the farm. Diana Cairns, Dr Hunter's daughter, can remember well riding with the Captain, and the family kept their ponies in the fields where the Western Avenue estate now is.

the loss of the farm ^{house} to the village is perhaps the worst example of the public disregard for ancient buildings typical of the 1960's.

The Village Hall

Correspondence survives between Lady Conyngham's solicitor and her agent concerning the purchase, from the Canterbury Wesleyan Trustees, of a house, garden and methodist chapel at Bridge for £270. The sale involved difficult negotiations regarding the tenants' rights. A sect called the Ranters rented the chapel at £4 per annum. Ranters were defined as a 'people of a joyous and evangelical disposition', rather than rowdy, but they apparently 'disturbed the whole neighbourhood', as they were accustomed to sing through the streets! The vicar, the Reverend Stevenson, had drawn the Wesleyan methodists back into the Anglican fold, and agreement was finally reached on the sale. The agent stated that he had been informed that the 'Wesleyans possess a million's worth of property in this country...so they are quite indifferent about the matter!' Lady Conynghama wanted to 'turn the chapel into a lecture room or a village literary institution, for the improvements of the rising generation'.



The original reading room and library were enlarged in 1878, when the marquis of Conyngham presented the hall to the village on the coming of age of his heir, Lord Mount Charles. In the 1st World War,

when troops were camped at the top of Bridge's Town Hill[?], the hall was used as a military canteen. In 1894, the Local Government Act established parish councils, and it was then that Bridge acquired its parish council. The parish council meets monthly in the Village Hall. In 1952, the hall was given to the villagers by the Conyngham estate on a 50-year lease at 6d per year (and now??) The hall is used for numerous village activities.

?

in the fields at the top of Bridge Hill

?

The 'Doctors' House' (24 High Street)

The earliest record of a doctor in Bridge is of Amelius Sicard, born in Blackheath 12 June 1809, the son of refugee from revolutionary France, who would seem to have held an important position in the household of Princess Caroline of Brunswick. Amelius took on the practice in Bridge in 1832, aged 23, and was the village doctor for 48 years. Sicard's tombstone claims him to have been a beloved physician to rich and poor, and his friends paid for a wall tablet and the glazing of the west window in the church. Charles Schön followed Sicard, a British subject born in the Grand Duchy of Baden. He died in 1899, to be succeeded by Robert Moorhead, from London, and then in 1906 by Arthur Wilson, born in Dublin, and described as 'a small man with a big heart, an Irishman's sense of humour and a characteristic laugh'. Wilson resided in Bridge Place, using the house in the High Street as his surgery.



as 'major-domo'

Dr Roger Hunter graduated at Trinity College Dublin, and came to the village with his wife in 1937. They bought the house and practice, together with the carriage house and stables. Private patients entered by the front door and waited in the dining room. 'Panel' patients entered at the rear. Until recently, the old butler's pantry survived, as did the wine and apple store. In the 1970s, restoration work took place and the pediment was removed. The house is hung with mathematical tiles, which were renovated in 1999. The upper tiles were hung in the traditional manner on timber lathes, whereas the lower ones were fixed in plaster. Dr Hunter's generosity allowed for the building of an extension to the village hall. He died in 1988, and his widow remained in the house until her death, when the house was sold to the current occupants. It served as a doctor's house for 130 years, and one of the current owners was, until recently, in the medical profession.

until recently
was the label
"surgery"
by the door at the garden.

Dr William Russell, who succeeded Dr Hunter, set up his practice in Green Court in c.1970. Today the modern, purpose-built surgery serves the area from Patrixbourne Road.

health centre
upon his sudden death in 1988 the practice was assumed by his
assistant Dr Pat Jones who was instrumental in establishing
the new health centre in P. Road.

'Sunnyside'



This 18th century cottage once stood level with the road. As a result of the turnpike roadworks, *Sunnyside* found itself overlooked by a new embankment as a result of the descent into Dering Road, once no more than a footpath, had to be made steep. The cottage once served as Aunt Betsey's tearooms.

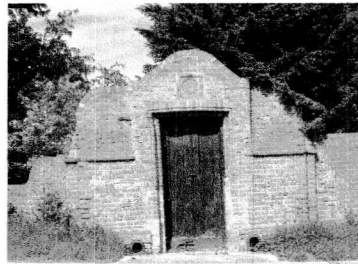
of the early 19th c.

is said to have

Olivers' Court

The gateway once served as the entry to a house, now demolished, once known as Olivers' Court. The house belonged to the Cobb family. The present house, beyond the gateway, was once the gardener's cottage, and outbuildings, with a saddle room at the back. The original house is said to have resembled the old vicarage at Patrixbourne.

or latterly, 'Hillside'



Ann Day's house

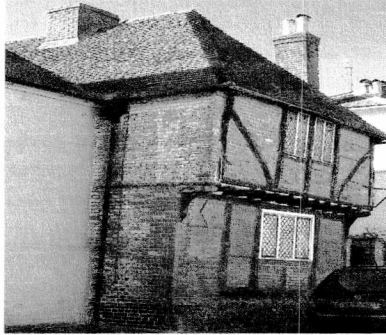


And/or post office

X. photo of Hillside

The 'Old Ship' (...High Street)

This timber-framed house dates to the 15th century. Between the timbers is an infill of patterned brickwork, known as 'nogging' which, in the late 17th or 18th century, replaced the original lath and plaster or wattle and daub of an earlier date. Despite its popular name, there seems to be no evidence that the building was ever an inn. By 1918 the house had been divided into 4 labourers cottages, one of which was the home of the Sole family, who moved in as lodgers to what was to be the first of three



houses they occupied in Bridge following the 1st World War. The cottage was accessed from Primrose Alley, and the door opened

Dering Road (Aunt Betsy's Hill)

This short road is named after the Dering family – in particular Colonel Cholmoley Dering, younger brother of Sir Edward Dering, 7th baronet of Surrenden Dering, Pluckley. Dering raised and commanded the Duke of York's Own New Romney Fencible Cavalry, in 1794. He served with the regiment in Ireland for three years, winning the thanks of the Lord Lieutenant of the county, and both houses of parliament for services in the rebellion of 1798. The regiment disbanded in 1800 on return from Ireland. Cholmoley Dering bought Howletts from the builder (Isaac Baugh) in 1799, and lived in the house. On becoming the guardian of his nephew, the infant son of his elder brother, he moved to Pluckley, selling Howletts in c.1816 to George Gipps, son and heir to one of the founders of the Canterbury Bank. Howletts remained in the Gipps family until the 1950s or 60s.

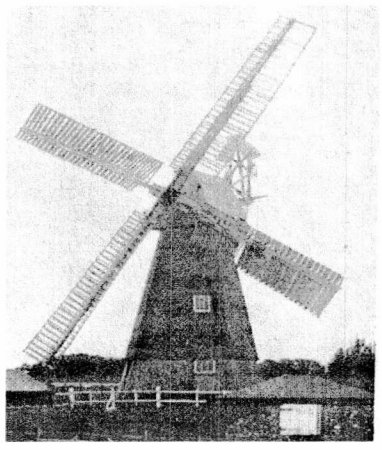


building were described as giving 'an appearance of cheerfulness, while the garden plots on either side of the entrance are generally a blaze of flowers.' (*A Saunter Through Kent*). The evidence indicates that the Guardians of the Bridge Union, while careful over financial matters, were conscientious in executing their duties and not unduly harsh. The buildings later became a home for the elderly and nursing home (The Close), before being converted into housing in the nineteen eighties, when the New Close was built in Conyngham Lane. **p.31**

(Igglesden)

Bridge Windmill, Union Road

The name Mill Lane indicates the area where once stood a smock mill, used for grinding corn for local farmers to make flour for bread. The miller in the early nineteenth century, Thomas Johnson, offered a personal service to his customers by delivering sacks of flour carried on the back of a donkey. The mill is shown on an Ordnance Survey map dated 1819, but had probably existed for some years. This mill must have been preceded by an earlier one, as a county map of 1719 is shown at the same spot. A map of 1596 shows that there was once an old post mill also, to the east of Bridge Church. The smock mill was last operated by wind power in 1907 and by the 1930s, it was in poor condition. By 1933, the site was in use as a coal merchant's yard, but the mill survived the war years, before being finally demolished in October 1954. One of the oil storage tanks in Corral's yard now rests on the old brick base of the mill.



is ~~not~~ built on the site

Close to the mill stands the Old Mill House (41 Union Road), built c.1730, and for many years one of few houses in the street. This was once the miller's house, and is set at right angles to the road so that the miller could keep an eye of his mill

on

A Brief Historical Tour of
THE VILLAGE OF BRIDGE
And its Environs



Bridge Street in 1661: Willem Schellincks
© Courtauld Institute

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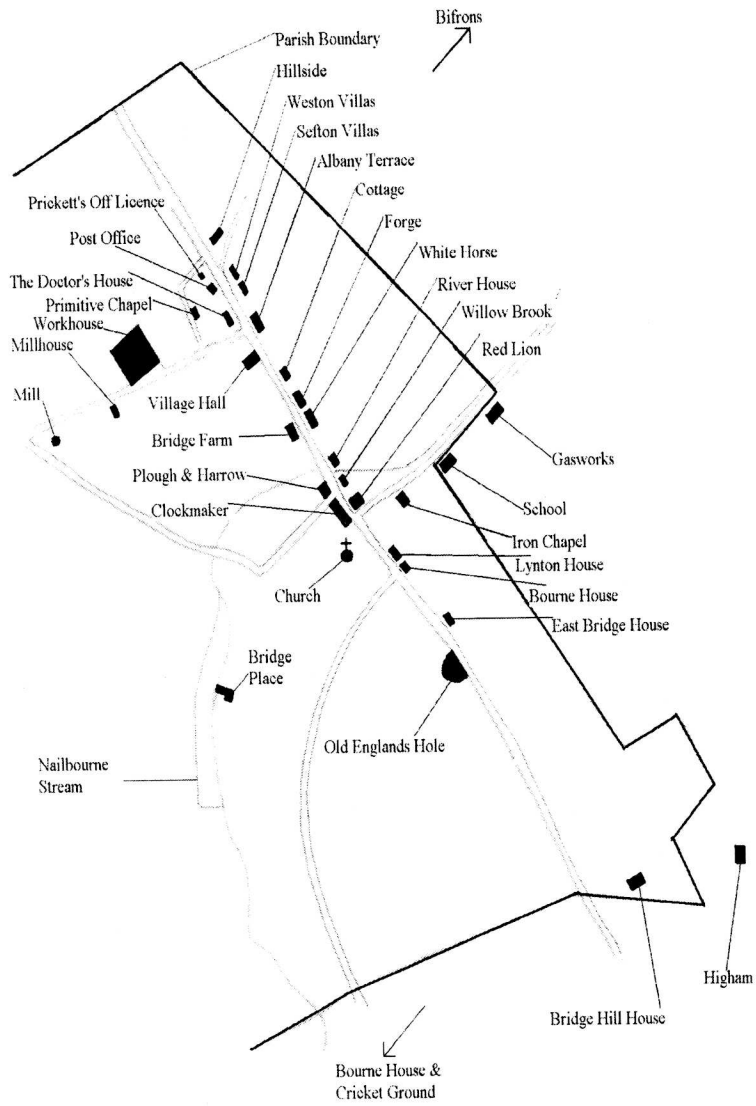


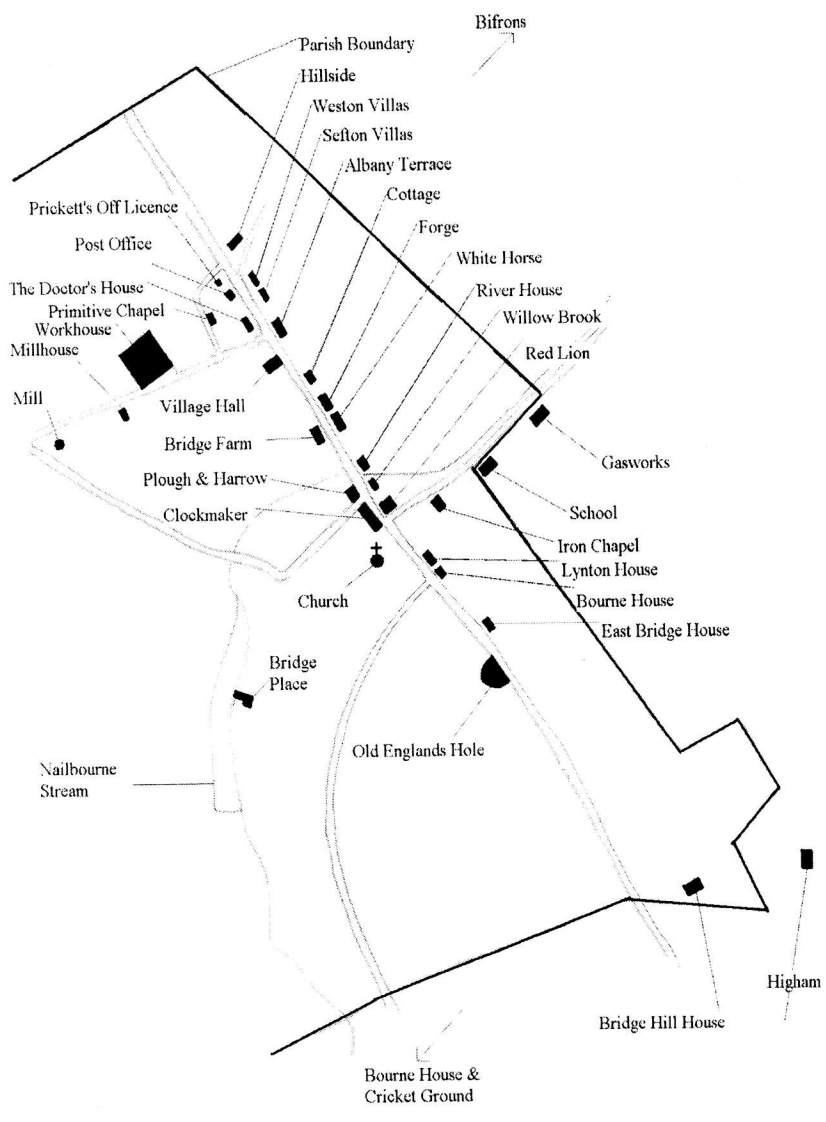
Bridge Street in 1661: Willem Schellincks
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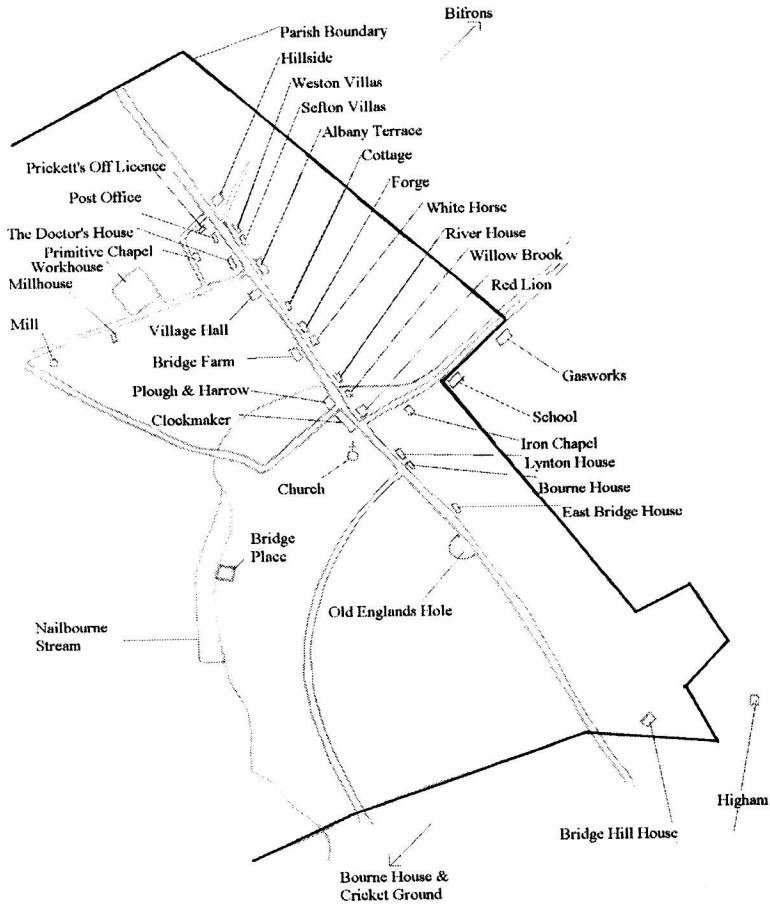
A Brief Historical Tour of
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Bridge Street in 1661: Willem Schellincks
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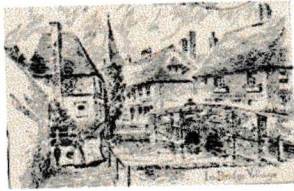








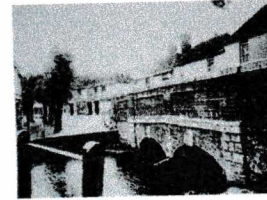
(1) Willem Schellincks, Bridge Street in 1661



(2) Bridge Village ca 1912



(3) Old Englands Hole



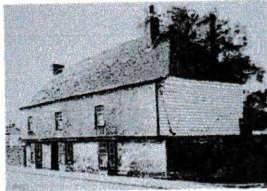
(4) The Bridge in about 1900



(5) Colin Lewis' grocer's shop



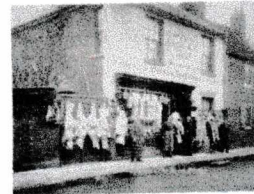
(6) Bypass celebration



(7) Bridge Farm



(8) HG Price, Grocer



(9) Francis Edwards butcher



(10) Garage and tobacconist



(11) Bridge Place



(12) Adriaen Ocker, Old Bridge Place



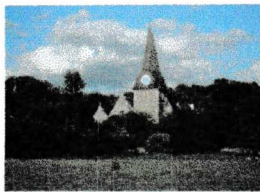
(13) Bourne House



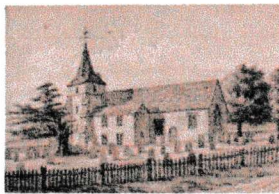
(14) MFB Motif



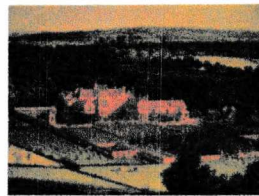
(15) Bourne Park Cricket Ground



(16) Bridge Church



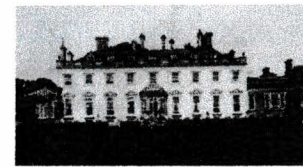
(17) WF Saunders, Bridge Church, 1853



(18) Jan Siberechts, Old Bifrons



(19) Bifrons, 'a plain building'



(20) Bifrons, ca 1900



(21) Higham



(22) Bridge Hill House



(23) East Bridge House



(24) Bourne Lodge



(25) Lynton House



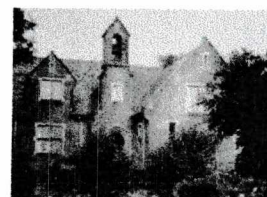
(26) Red Lion



(27) The Iron Chapel



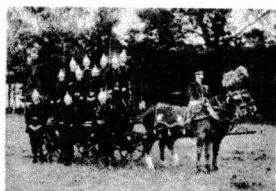
(28) Hardeman clock



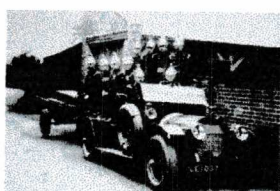
(29) Village School (1849)



(30) The Plough and Harrow



(31) Fire Brigade



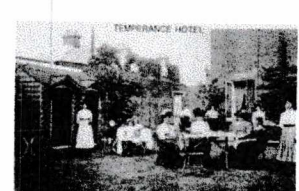
(32) CE 1037



(33) Funeral of Fireman Fenn, 1910



(34) River House



(35) Temperance Ladies

Walker 34 Brook

35

36



(36) The White Horse
27



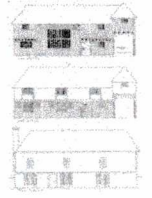
(37) The Old Forge
28



(38) Albany Terrace
39



(39) Wills family
40



41 (40) Conjectured development of Bridge Farm



(41) Primitive Methodist Chapel
44



(42) Village Hall



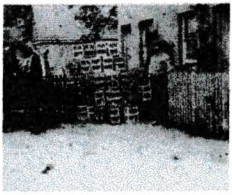
(43) 'The Doctor's House'
45



(44) Post Office ('Chapel Yard')
46



(45) Primrose Alley
42



(46) Prickett's Off Licence
53



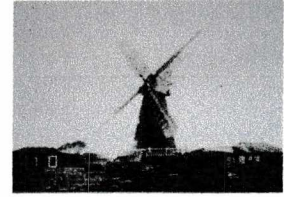
(47) Doorway to 'Hillside'
57



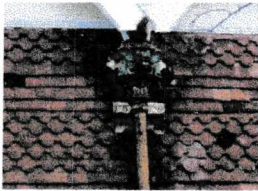
(48) 'Hillside'
52



(49) The Old Close, formerly the Union Workhouse
54



(50) Windmill
55



(51) Sefton Villas, 1879
49



(52) Captain Maslin
50



cottages, 15th or early 16th century
47



Mill House
56



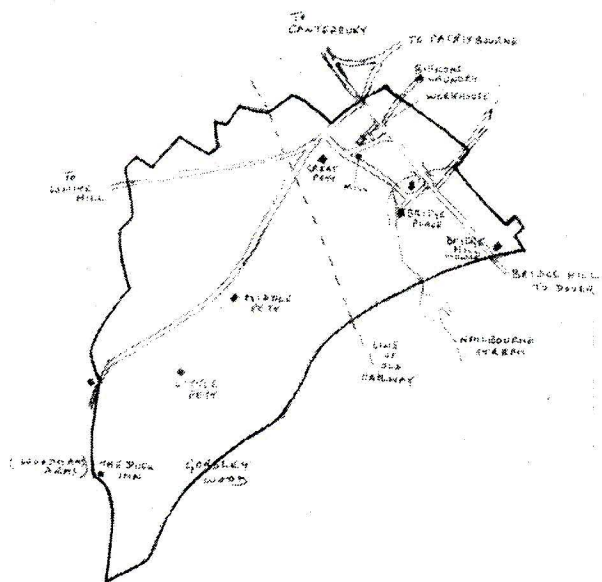
Sunnyside



Two cottages, 1693



Weston Villas
48



The shape of Bridge Parish 1894-1898

MILL ROBBED. . . in the night of the 30th November, the Mill belonging to John Fagg, on Bridge Hill, was broke open by forcing the hinges of the door. . . and a Quantity of flour with TWO SACKS marked 'J.Fagg, Bridge Mill' were stolen thereout and traced for about half a mile across the fields. . .

This mill was dismantled in about 1818 and soon after another was erected in 'Three Corner Meadow' at the junction of what were to become Mill Lane and Union Road on a spot now occupied by a large oil tank. This was by now probably a **smock mill**, built by James Ashenden, to process corn for local farmers. For security purposes, no doubt not only to watch for robbers but also to keep an eye on the working of the mill, the miller's house stood at right angles to the road a few yards down the hill (now 41 Union Road). Thomas Johnson was the miller from 1832 until his death in 1856, and the *Folkestone Herald* of March 1933 describes 'the figure of the dusty miller was a familiar sight in the village, for his practice was to deliver flour for his customers personally, his method of transport being the back of a donkey'. The Johnsons later went on to run Barton Mill in Canterbury. The miller from 1859 to 1879 was George Fryer, who was succeeded by William White. By the 1890's industrial milling was fast overtaking the traditional method. Mr White installed a steam engine, and his successor William Mainwaring an oil engine, but the inevitable could not be put off. Wind power was abandoned in 1907, and the sweeps were removed. Flour production by whatever means was given up during the first world war, and the body of the mill began slowly to decay. By 1933 the site was being used as a coal yard, which then was taken over as an oil depot. The remains of the mill (still containing most of the gear) were finally demolished on Friday 15th October 1954. If it had survived perhaps another 15 years it might have benefited from the revival of the heritage industry. But an age which had allowed the destruction of Bridge Farm had no time for an old windmill.

Wickhambreaux and Womenswold. The first meeting of the Bridge Union Board of Guardians was held on 22 April 1835 at the White Horse Inn. The master was known as the Governor and his wife the Governess. They were paid a joint salary of £80. The average weekly cost of indoor paupers by 1847 was 3s.4d (17p). Tramps were accommodated in a separate building next to the main workhouse (now demolished) where the sleeping accommodation was basic. There was also a mortuary. In 1840, one family was given £4 to assist them to emigrate, a practice not uncommon at the time. Unmarried women 'lying in' were admitted, but punished if it was to be their second child. Clothing grants were issued and medical aid given. Children received education, and boys were often apprenticed as sweeps, brick-layers, hop growers, etc. A survey of census returns for Bridge shows that the workhouse population was about 15-20% of the total, and consisted predominantly of the aged and infirm, and young women with children. The Union building was well-constructed, on the quadrangle pattern of most contemporary workhouses, with an entrance gate and offices, a chapel in the centre, a porter's lodge, cook's house and exercise yard, together with three acres of garden. The red bricks of the Union building were described in *A Saunter Through Kent* as giving 'an appearance of cheerfulness, while the garden plots on either side of the entrance are generally a blaze of flowers. The evidence indicates that the Guardians of the Bridge Union, while careful over financial matters, were conscientious in executing their duties and not unduly harsh. The buildings later became a home for the elderly and nursing home (The Close), before being converted into housing in the nineteen eighties, when the New Close was built in Conyngham Lane in the grounds of the new school.

Six mills are mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 within the parish of Patricbourne (which in effect included Bridge). These were almost certainly water-mills, one of which was probably sited where Bridge Place now stands: the present artificial course of the Nailbourne indicates this. At a much later date (first recorded on Symondson's map of 1596) a post-mill was erected on the brow of Bridgedown within Patricbourne parish. Milling was a high value but also high risk business: many were the mills that burned down, due to the easily combustible nature of flour dust. The *Kentish Gazette* in 1808 records a different risk:

Hill', was for long a 'beer house', popular among the soldiery during the first World War as '**Prickett's off-licence**'. The Prickett family subsequently took over the village shop, an early 19th century infill structure next to the village hall, later converted to equestrian supplies.

Dering Road and Filmer Road (named after two prominent Kentish families) form the bulk of an early estate development in Bridge from 1853 onwards, when the field forming the gap between the Union Workhouse and the High Street was sold off by the Marchioness Conyngham as individual plots. Not all were built on at the time: some were incorporated into the gardens of pre-existing properties (notably, for instance, the 'doctor's'). Dering Road in particular probably commemorates Colonel Cholmley Dering, younger brother of Sir Edward Dering, 7th baronet of Surrenden Dering, Pluckley. Dering raised and commanded the Duke of York's Own New Romney Fencible Cavalry in 1794, and served with the regiment in Ireland, winning the thanks of the Lord Lieutenant of the county and both houses of parliament. Cholmley Dering bought Howletts from the builder (Isaac Baugh) in 1799, but on the death of his brother Edward, became the guardian of his brother's infant son and moved to Pluckley. He sold Howletts in c.1816 to George Gipps, son and heir to one of the founders of the Canterbury Bank.

The Poor Law **Union workhouse** in Bridge was erected in 1835, at a cost of £4,376 by Thomas Finch Cozens, one of the original trustees of the Methodist chapel, following the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834. This Act abolished outdoor relief to the able-bodied poor who, on applying for aid, were to be offered maintenance in a workhouse. To deter people from seeking relief, life was to be made as unpleasant as possible. Married couples were separated and children taken from their parents. The only contact allowed was in the chapel or refectory, and then infrequently. Responsibility for the poor law passed into the hands of three Poor Law Commissioners. The country was divided into Poor Law Unions, each with a Board of Guardians, and composed of several parishes. Bridge Poor Law Union had 22 parishes under the authority of 22 guardians, four ex-officio guardians, surgeons, a relieving officer and a clerk. The parishes included were Adisham, Barham, Bekesbourne, Bishopsbourne, Bridge, Chartham, Fordwich, Harbledown, Upper Hardres, Lower Hardres, Ickham, Kingston, Littlebourne, Nackington, Patribourne, Petham, Stodmarsh, Thanington, Waltham, Westgate-Without,

new Health Centre in Patricbourne Road. It is remarkable that the village has had no more than six doctors in over 170 years.

The late 18th century pair of cottages now used as the **Post Office** are known from earlier documents as occupying 'Chapel Yard'. This name appears to be derived from the fact that the building backs on to the site of the Primitive Methodist chapel, and from the fact that here was the yard belonging to Frederick Colegate (1790-1877), a prominent local builder, who in all probability erected Alexandra House (next to Rogers Garage) for his retirement. Here his daughter Jane and granddaughter Elizabeth Williams ran a private school until the early 20th century.

The semi-detached Victorian houses opposite the post office were built on land bought in 1879 by Thomas Sergeant, a builder of Bridge. The houses erected were called respectively **Weston and Sefton Villas**. The Maslin family lived at 7 High Street (Sefton villas) for many years in the 20th century. The engaging **Captain Maslin** is remembered by many, and it is said that he 'could charm the birds from the trees'. He ran the local stables, and taught numerous children in the area to ride. There was a paddock behind Sefton Villas, where some of his horses were grazed. During World War II, 1 High Street (Weston Villas) was requisitioned by the army, and after the war was used for some time as offices by Bridge and Blean Rural District Council.

The fact that the **gateway** opposite Dering Road stands level with the main road suggests that it postdates the grading works of the 1820's. It bears a striking stylistic similarity to the entry to Patricbourne Old Vicarage. This is a relic of a large 19th century house, known as '**Hillside**'. Further evidence of its existence may be glimpsed in the garden behind the door, where the tiled floor of a glazed passageway to the house proper still survives. 'Hillside' replaced a much earlier building, the now vanished 'Oliver's Court'. The present house, beyond the gateway (Beechmount), was once no more than the gardener's cottage and outbuildings of 'Hillside'.

The 18th century cottage now known as 'Sunnyside', once stood level with the road, and was for a while a teashop. As a result of the turnpike roadworks, the cottage found itself overlooked by a new embankment. Consequently the descent into Dering Road, once no more than a footpath, became steep. No. 2 Rose Cottages, down 'Aunt Betsey's

The left-hand house of the early 19th century pair adjacent to Union Road may justifiably be called the **'doctor's house'**. Originally symmetrical with the other, this house has been extended twice, to accommodate the requirements of the village doctors, five of whom lived here in turn for a period of over 130 years. The earliest record we have of a doctor in Bridge is of Amelius Sicard, born in Blackheath 12 June 1809, the son of refugee from revolutionary France, and of the dynasty of Lautrec, who was 'major-domo' in the household of Princess Caroline of Brunswick. Amelius took on the practice in Bridge in 1832, aged 23, and was the village doctor for 48 years. Sicard's tombstone in St Peter's churchyard claims him to have been a 'beloved physician to rich and poor', and his friends paid for a wall tablet and the glazing of the west window in the church. Charles Schön followed Sicard, a British subject born in the Grand Duchy of Baden. He died in 1899, to be succeeded by Robert Moorhead, from London, and then in 1906 by Arthur Wilson, born in Dublin, and described as 'a small man with a big heart, an Irishman's sense of humour and a characteristic laugh'. He was also said, perhaps more unfortunately, to have been unable to restrain a nervous giggle, even in the gravest circumstances.

Dr Roger Hunter was also a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, and came to the village with his wife in 1937. They bought the house and practice, together with the carriage house and stables. Private patients entered by the front door and waited in the dining room. 'Panel' patients entered at the rear via the garden door which until the 1990's bore the legend 'surgery'. Until recently, the old butler's pantry survived, as did the wine and apple store. In the 1970s, restoration work took place and the pediment was removed. The house is hung with mathematical tiles, which were renovated in 1999. The upper tiles hung in the traditional manner on timber laths, whereas the lower ones are fixed in plaster. Dr Hunter's generosity allowed for the building of an extension to the village hall. He died in 1988, and his widow remained in the house until her death.

Dr William Russell, who succeeded Dr Hunter, set up his practice in Green Court, and on his sudden death in 1988 the practice was assumed by Dr Mark Jones, who was instrumental in establishing the

'Primrose Alley', a pretty name belying the lowly character of its early inhabitants, and proclaimed until the 1990's by a board affixed to the side of the house. The building attached to the side is a double oast. The brick infill between the timbers of the house ('nogging') is probably a later replacement of the wattle and daub of the original. It may be noted that the house beside the Ford in Mill Lane, Bridgeford House, erected as a row of three cottages in the early 19th century, was collectively known as 'Bricknoggin'.

Correspondence survives between Lady Conyngham's solicitor and her agent, prompted by a villagers' petition, concerning the purchase, from the Canterbury Wesleyan Trustees, of a house, garden and **Methodist chapel** at Bridge for £270. The sale involved difficult negotiations regarding the tenants' rights. A group of Primitive Methodists (or 'Ranters') rented the chapel at £4 per annum. These may be defined as a 'people of a joyous and evangelical disposition', rather than rowdy, but they apparently 'disturbed the whole neighbourhood', as they were accustomed to sing through the streets on their way home from services. The vicar, the Rev. Stevenson, had drawn the Wesleyan Methodists back into the Anglican fold. When agreement was finally reached on the sale, the agent stated that he had been informed that the 'Wesleyans possess a million's worth of property in this country...so they are quite indifferent about the matter!' Lady Conyngham agreed to a more sober use of the erstwhile chapel as 'a lecture room or a village literary institution, for the improvements of the rising generation'. This is now the **village hall**. The Primitive Methodists retired to a private house until they were able to erect their **own chapel** in Dering Road in 1868, which they used until the first decade of the 20th century. It then became a private house, and was demolished in 1951.

The original reading room and library was enlarged in 1878 for the benefit of the villagers, to twice its size (and including the additional comfort of a fireplace), to celebrate the coming of age of Marquis Conyngham's heir, Lord Mount Charles. In the 1st World War, when troops were camped at the top of Bridge Hill, the hall was used as a military canteen. In 1952, the hall was given to the villagers by the Conyngham estate on a 50-year lease at a peppercorn rent of 6d per year.

Brigade for over 30 years, as well as serving on the parish council from its inception. He served on the old Bridge Blean Rural District Council, the Board of Guardians of the workhouse, and was secretary to the Bridge Gas, Coal and Coke Company. During the first World War, he was nightly on duty at the canteen run in the village Reading Room (now the village hall) for the benefit of the troops stationed at Bourne Park. Mr Wills was described as 'a man of charming manners and genial disposition', who was also a keen cricketer and a long-serving member of St Peter's Church choir. He died aged 94 in 1943, and this brief look at his life illustrates how much Bridge village has always been at the centre of the lives of many of its residents. Illustrated above is **Mr Wills** with his aunt (aged 100) and his two sisters. At this date the combined ages of the four was 335 years.

Opposite the White Horse, on the site of the present neo-Georgian houses was a row of four tiny board cottages attached to Albert Terrace, known as Bean or Bean's Cottages, and adjacent to **Bridge Farm**. This, (known latterly, after the last owner, as 'Daddy Fagge's Farm') was the home farm of Blackmansbury and, before the Dissolution of the Monasteries, part of the land holdings of St Augustine's Abbey. Until its regrettable demolition in 1962, the farmhouse that stood here was a typical 15th century timber-framed Wealden hall house, originally with a central hall open to the roof, rooms on two levels on either side and a jettied overhang. In the early 17th century, a great fireplace was added, and an upper floor inserted. Another timber-framed house had stood at the right-hand end of the building, but was demolished in the 18th century when the wagon entrance was blocked and the entrance to the yard was moved to the right. The house itself must have presented a very attractive appearance, and was a prestigious building with the style of vertical timbers known as close studding. It had a fine stairway of eight solid oak blocks of medieval date. At the rear was a medieval barn and cowsheds, probably also dating to the 15th century. In the mid 20th century, Captain Maslin, of Bridge's riding school, kept some of his horses at the farm. The fields behind, now the Western Avenue estate, were the usual venue for summer fêtes and similar village functions.

One of the oldest buildings remaining in Bridge: a late 15th or early 16th century hall house, timber-framed and jettied, which according to one theory was an inn known as the 'Ship'. By 1841, the house had been converted into a row of four labourers' cottages known as

and the condition of the road. The fastest mail-coaches ran at about 10 miles per hour. It was here too that the first meeting of the workhouse guardians was held, on 22 April 1835. The census returns show that the inn often provided accommodation for lodgers including, in 1881, George Webb, aged 23, a professional cricketer. Like other public houses, the inn was used for property sales and auctions. The *White Horse* was host to meetings of gardening enthusiasts and to gardening shows. In April 1774, there was an 'Auricula Feast' held, with a prize for the first flower of fifteen shillings! Exhibitors at the show were expected to attend the dinner, 'or have no Right to shew his Flower!' Less sympathetic to today's readers' taste would be the cock fighting, advertised in June 1772 'to show Twenty-one Cocks on each side...for four guineas a battle and ten the odd battle'. Finally, in the sporting line, the census returns of 1851 show that the licensee was 'a trainer of racehorses'.

One other public house within the parish might be mentioned here for completeness: the *Woodman's Arms*, built as a farm (*Woodlands*) in 1623, licenced to sell ales, groceries and provisions in 1849 and renamed, now (since the 1960's) the *Duck* at Pett Bottom.

Lime Cottage, built in 15th or 16th century was formerly the **village forge** – much in demand when numerous horse drawn vehicles came regularly through the village, and the White Horse, next door, was the staging post. It was no doubt used also for the mending of farm equipment and horse-drawn vehicles. Before becoming a private house it was for a period in the 1970's Norman and Elsie Turner's shop, which had its own market garden and small-holding behind, extending over some of the land currently occupied by the buildings of Riverside Close. From here customers could obtain freshly harvested produce, as well as new-laid free-range eggs, poultry and pork.

The handsome early 19th century row of houses known as **Albany Terrace** is said to have been built by Trinity House, the lighthouse authority for the coast of England and Wales, to serve their pilots engaged in work in Dover and Whitstable. It was erected in the first place as two more or less symmetrical detached buildings. An additional house was created a few years later by infilling between them. A much-loved and stalwart resident of the terrace was for many years Charles Wills, who ran the village bakery, following his father's death in 1896. He was an enthusiastic chief officer of Bridge Fire

During the 1940s, the firemen's uniforms were supplied by the captain, and were passed on from one volunteer to another, regardless of size. A villager recalls how Harold De Cent, a small man known for his funny sayings, had considerable difficulty managing his over-large coat as he scrambled up the ladder! Another character, 'Hatcher Downs', the owner of the cycle shop, had a tendency to enter buildings by breaking down the door with his hatchet! After WW II the brigade was absorbed into the national fire service.

Close to the bridge and probably of 17th century origin, Anne's House, or **Willowbrook** house served also as a shop. Damaged by fire in the early 20th century, it was partly rebuilt. It is remembered as a tea room, with a fine garden. In the early 20th century the building to the right of the premises, once served as a motor repair and spares shop and, more recently, a printer's studio.

Built around 1780, **River House** was once owned by T L Collard, auctioneer and valuer, and clerk to the Board of Guardians of the workhouse. In 1904, the house was put up for auction, but failed to reach the reserve price of £390! It subsequently became a temperance hotel. The **Temperance Movement** originated in England in the 1820s. In 1831, the British and Foreign Temperance Society was formed and extended its influence over the country in a decade. In 1853, the UK Alliance, a militant organization not always popular with the less forthright temperance societies, aimed to persuade politicians into a policy of prohibition, but this did not succeed. A temperance hotel would have provided a pleasing alternative to those who did not wish to stay in accommodation with licensed premises.

The sign of The **White Horse** is a thoroughly Kentish one, and this pub is probably the oldest surviving in Bridge. The building has a late mediaeval core, and an early 16th century inscription is to be seen on the fireplace lintel. An indenture of 1 June 1668 refers to the sale of the property by Sir Arnold Braems to Sir Anthony Aucher, and the tenant at that time seems to have been William Ford. The ownership probably remained in the hands of the descendants of Sir Anthony and subsequent owners of Bourne Place until it was sold at the end of the 18th century. The pub was the posting house (hence also post office), though Bridge was only a half-stage between Dover and Canterbury – necessary because of the hills on either side. Mail coaches were drawn by teams of four horses in stages of 7-10 miles, according to gradients

The 18th century row adjoining Brewery Lane contains a baker's shop which has existed on the site for at least 150 years. At the other end of the row was the chemist's, before it was removed to the Post Office at the other end of the village. In between was one of the more notable businesses to grace Bridge again for over a century, that of the watch and clockmakers William Nash and Samuel and William Hardeman.

The Plough and Harrow was built in 1692, constructed originally as two dwelling houses and, in 1703, a shoemaker and a carpenter occupied the premises. The building was sold in 1785 to Thomas Williams, a Maltster, who established a malthouse. Malting was a specialized process used in the making of ale. Following the terms of the Beer Act of 1830, Thomas Williams' son William acquired a licence to sell beer from his dwelling in 1831, whereupon it was known as 'the Beer House at Bridge'. In 1858 Joseph Burch, an ale and porter brewer, bought the premises, and in 1863 it became known as the *Plough and Harrow*. In 1877, the pub was sold to Shepherd Neame as a 'beerhouse with brewhouse and outbuildings' for £410. By 1878, a new lessee was granted a licence for wine and spirits, and it became a registered tavern. Not until 1861 is 'Brewhouse Lane' identified in the census returns. In 1873, a headquarters was set up for a **voluntary fire brigade**, and a fire engine was purchased. The Marquis of Conyngham, of Bifrons, was an enthusiast for fire apparatus and became Captain of the local crew. By 1878, his son and heir, Earl Mount Charles, had become captain. In the early days the pump was horse-drawn. For many years the engine (including **CE 1037**, that donated by Count Zborowski) was housed in a shed behind the *Plough and Harrow* and kept running through donations from insurance companies. The firemen were mostly local tradesmen (at the time of the photo, two grocers, the cycle agent, a publican, the draper, two gardeners, the coal merchant and the blacksmith) who were summoned to service with a maroon flare. On 31 March 1910, the brigade was called to a fire at Pett Bottom. The young second engineer of the fire brigade, John Fenn, had the job of preparing the flare. In lighting the match, two simultaneous explosions occurred, causing Mr Fenn terrible injuries. He died just twenty minutes after the explosion. His **funeral**, on April 3, was probably unique in Bridge, attracting a crowd of some 5000 mourners, who thronged the street and overflowed into the surrounding fields.

and light...the Eleven existing Lamps for the sum of Five Pounds and Ten Shillings for each Lamp per annum. The Lamps to be lighted one hour after sunset and extinguished at 10.30 pm except for three months in the summer...' A further exception was made 'for five nights of every full Moon at which time the Lamps will not be required'! From 1906, general street lighting was installed, maintained by James Wonfer until 1928. Wonfer lived in the only house in Patribourne Road, Brookside, and was employed making gas and installing it into houses in the village. He worked seven days a week, and was responsible for seeing that the street lights were lit in the village at dusk and extinguished after dawn. Coke was produced and sold as a by-product. By 1929, gas was supplied by East Kent Gas Company and the Bridge company was wound up in 1932.

During the 19th century, a number of schools existed in Bridge. The Marchioness Conyngham established a school for 30 girls at Bifrons Gate. It is said that the pupils wore smart uniforms of blue serge dresses and red cloaks. It was quite common for philanthropic ladies to found such schools, not least to provide girls with an education suitable for their probable future career in domestic service. They were taught basic numeracy and literacy, but also sewing and other domestic arts. There remains some confusion as to whether this school, founded by Lady Conyngham, was the same school as that on Patribourne Road, the **Bridge School** of the photograph. By 1861 Bridge School, under Richard Wells, master, and Mrs Sophie Sayer, mistress, had 99 pupils. Mr and Mrs Robert Wye were appointed as the first government teachers of the school in 1871, following the Education Act of 1870. Mr Wye's sister Fanny was appointed mistress of the infants' school. After 44 years at the school she was presented on her retirement with a purse of gold. Government inspectors praised her skill as a teacher to the 'little ones, to whom she had been a second mother'. She died in 1944, aged 94. Just four years later Miss Olive Seath (Mrs Knight) was appointed headmistress. She retired in 1971. The school house has been a private residence since the opening of the new school in Conyngham Lane in 1971: for three-quarters of the century of its existence therefore this old primary school had only two principal teachers! There were other Dame schools in the village, one of which was held in Alexander House. Dame schools, were small, private elementary schools run by women, the usual fee being 3d or 4d per week. These largely disappeared after the 1870 Education Act.

with stabling facilities, serving the needs of travellers using the road from Canterbury to Dover. There were in addition three wheelwrights, two blacksmiths and two saddlers in the village, quite apart from the 'livery and bait' facilities offered here. On race days facilities were much in demand, both for horses and racegoers. By 1850 the landlord, Joseph Eyre, was advertising the *Red Lion* as 'a fine lodging inn, with carriage and stabling facilities'. For a short period at the turn of the 20th century Bridge fire engine was also housed here, before being transferred to the rear of the *Plough and Harrow*. In 2000 the inn suffered serious damage from floodwater, and not long after it had undergone considerable refurbishment it was again severely damaged by fire in 2006.

The first mention of Methodism in Bridge occurs in 1823, authorising William Fordred to 'rent a house for Methodist meetings at no more than two shillings and sixpence per week'. A site was found in the High Street (for £50) and a chapel built (what is now the front portion of the village hall) but by 1851 the congregation had deserted, in part towards the vicar, and the chapel had been taken over by the Primitive Methodists. Not until 1892 was a Methodist Society re-formed, with fourteen members, to raise funds for the building of a chapel and a regular schedule of services was re-established. In 1894 the '**Iron Chapel**' was built. The choice of corrugated iron as a building material met with thorough disapproval from the central Chapel Committee in Manchester, who preferred the idea of a brick-built structure and were prepared to offer a loan to assist the financing of such a chapel. The Trustees for the Bridge venture were dedicated to the idea of their Iron Chapel, and a determined fund-raising effort and much hard work resulted in the erection of the chapel, free of debt. The cost of the building, including seating, hymn books, mats and oil lamps, amounted to a grand total of £139.17s.0 ¼ d. During the Second World War, a baby clinic operated from the Chapel, and this continued until 1987.

The Bridge Gas Coke and Coal Company was established in September 1858 on a site in Patricbourne road (next to the school!) by the Marquis and Marchioness of Conyngham and Matthew Bell, of Bourne Park – chairman of the company. Lamp posts were fitted and tested on 10 December 1858. Edward Dadds, the gasman, was provided with a cottage. A Memorandum of Agreement was made 7 January 1896 between Bridge Gas Coke and Coal Company and the new Bridge Parish Council, that the company was to 'keep in repair

East Bridge House dates to the early 19th century. More recently it was turned into three flats, until restored to a single house (and guesthouse) during the 1980s. To the rear of the house, where formerly the kitchens were to be found, is now a separate house with a doorway which was imported from Bifrons in Patricbourne, when it was demolished.

Bourne Lodge (formerly Hill Cottage) was built in the later 19th century and was the home of Mrs Fanny Bell, widow of Matthew Bell of Bourne Park. In 1926, Mr F Cowderoy left it to his son and daughter, the Rev C C Cowderoy (later Roman Catholic archbishop of Southwark) and Mrs C Berry. Mrs Berry lived in the house for many years with her husband Frank, who was a well-known Canterbury estate agent. Their son, John Berry, subsequently lived there, with his family, until 1981.

Lynton House is first mentioned (though not of course by that name) in 1674, as the property of William Cheston, yeoman of Bridge, who was assessed in the parish rate for 12 acres of land. It subsequently came into the hands of the Crosoer family who in 1764 owned the house, barn, stable, garden, orchard and 24 acres. It later came into the hands of John Lansberry (d.1849) and for the rest of the century became known as Lansberry Cottage. From 1930-1940, the house belonged to a coal merchant, Albert Taylor, whose proud advertisement stayed on the south wall of the house until the late 20th century. Like Bourne Lodge, it suffered substantial damage in the storm of 1987. In recent years it has undergone considerable restoration, including the return of the front door to its original position.

On the site of the lodge house opposite, Ogilby's map of 1675 marks, rather mysteriously, *The Grayhound*. Below Lynton House were formerly six small cottages, with **Church Cottage**, formerly Park House, opposite.

The Red Lion is first mentioned in 1593 as a dwelling house. It has a central hearth core of the period, but has been much altered since. It now has a late 18th century façade. By 1632, Jacob Jarvis, 'victualler of Canterbury', was granted a licence for the sale of ale on the premises, 'at the sign of the *Red Lion*'. It subsequently became a registered inn,

After Zborowski's death in a racing accident the house was bought by Walter K Whigham, a director of the Bank of England and deputy chairman of the London & North Eastern Railway, after whom one of their Pacific Class locomotives was named. He served twice as High Sheriff of Kent. Whigham, for reasons of euphony, renamed the property Highland Court. During the second World War the house served as a hospital, and it continued in this role until the 1980s, when it was closed and the estate fell into a state of neglect. Since 1995, restoration and redevelopment has continued, and Higham has recovered its original name.

(Bridge) Hill House was in the 18th century popularly known as the *Horse and Groom* and served as the headquarters of those involved with Canterbury Races. One of the two stands overlooking the course was sited in the woodland opposite. A painting by Thomas Rowlandson, in the Beane Institute in Canterbury, shows both this house and the two stands during a lively race meeting, in about 1804. Races on Barham Down began (officially at least) in 1678. A century later the races were attracting vast crowds, including the fashionable gentry, and in 1774 a 'new stand' was built, to supplement the original. There was a racing stable in Union Road, not far from the old windmill. The official race week was in August, but there was also a meeting at Easter and at various other times. In 1773, a race was run 'over the New Round Course on Barham Downs, one four-miles heat, for one hundred Guineas, between two Gentlemen's horses...to start exactly at Twelve o'clock. Dinner will be ready at Bridge-Hill after the race is over'. Racing was not limited to horses! In June 1770, there was a 'match of running between twenty-four of the Chilham Club and Twenty-four Gentlemen of East Kent'. In July the previous year was held 'A match of Running by Maids. To Strip at Five o'clock'! It was reported that the match was run 'to the great satisfaction of a vast concourse of people'. Cock fighting took place here, as at the *White Horse* in the village, too. In March 1773, Bridge met Deal 'to shew eleven cocks on each side and fight for Four Guineas a battle'. Once again, dinner was provided. At election times hustings would take place here and on the racecourse. Early in the 19th century, however, the house was bought by a refugee from the French Revolution, Charles Louis Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1749-1824), grandson of the political philosopher. He lived there until his death, when it was bought by the Revd Edward Gregory, vicar of Petham, whose wife Mary ensured the restoration of Bridge church.

The king once said to her 'thank you, my dear; you always do what is right. You cannot please me so much as by doing everything you please, everything to show that you are mistress here'. However, it seems never to have been proven that their relationship was other than platonic.

The Marquis died in 1832. The Marchioness lived to the age of 92, and died in 1861. During her lifetime, she added considerably to her estates in Kent. She was active in Patricbourne and Bridge, founding the school, supporting the free schools' movement, helping form the volunteer fire brigade. She and the marquis were founder shareholders in the Bridge Gas Coke and Coal Company. Considerable alterations were carried out at Bifrons during the 19th century. When the fourth marquis inherited, he decided against living there; indeed the family ceased to live in **the house** after 1882, preferring to let the property to a succession of tenants. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Bifrons was cleared of its contents and taken over for military purposes. The condition of the house at the end of the War was poor, and the decision was taken to demolish it. A number of the houses in Patricbourne belonging to the estate were sold, and the land rented out on long lease, together with the stable block, which was converted into houses for farmworkers. The Conyngham family continue to take an active interest in their local property and in the village of Bridge. In 1989, Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook an excavation of the Bifrons site, funded by the Conyngham estate, and reported in *Archaeologia Cantiana* in 1989. It was hoped at that time that the house might be reconstructed, but this plan was abandoned.

Higham has been the site of a grand house (also said to have been a convent) since mediaeval times. The present building retains a Tudor core, but its front was added only in 1921 by perhaps the most colourful character to own the house, Count Louis Zborowski, who designed and built the first aero-engine powered racing car, which later was immortalised in the film *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang*. He also presented Bridge Fire Brigade with a suitably adapted car to serve as a fire engine to accommodate ten men and a mile of hose. With a rating of 75 horse power, and a maximum speed of 60 miles per hour, this was probably the fastest fire engine of its kind in the country at the time. For his generosity, Zborowski was made honorary captain of the brigade.

notable memorials to Bridge villagers, not least that of Zebulon Vinson, butler to Mrs Gregory.

Patricbourne derives its name from the illustrious Patrick family, who came to Kent from Normandy at the Conquest. In 1174, the manor was inherited by Ingelram Patrick, whose daughter Maud married Ralph Tesson, sensechal of Normandy. His estates in England, including Patricbourne, were awarded to Geoffrey de Say. In the fifteenth century, a number of manors in the area were held by the Isaac family. By the early 17th century, according to Hasted, John Bargrave built a house in Patricbourne, **Bifrons**, presumably on the site of the old manor house. John Bargrave's brother, Isaac, became dean of Canterbury Cathedral. The family sold the house in 1662 and there were a number of owners before the house was purchased by John Taylor in September 1694. His grandson Edward inherited the property in c.1775, demolished the house and began reconstruction. A number of drawings survive of this '**plain building**' in the classical style with little architectural embellishment'. In 1802, Edward's son, Edward, married Louisa Beckingham of Bourne Place, and Bifrons was let to tenants. It was sold in 1830 to the first Marquis Conyngham.

Henry Conyngham was created marquis by George IV while he was Prince Regent. Conyngham married a wealthy heiress, Elizabeth Denison, whose father was a merchant banker. His rise through the ranks of the peerage was due to his services in Ireland, and the Conyngham's Irish country seat was (and still is) Castle Slane, between Belfast and Dublin. The Marquis was much at court, and held the post of Lord Steward of the Household until the king's death. Lady Conyngham was famed as the companion and confidante of George IV. A favourite at court, she was described as 'fat, handsome, kindly, shrewd and extremely fond of jewels'! The king heaped presents and money on her and, when in London, she and her family lived largely at his expense. Though they never appeared in public together, the king and the marchioness were often ridiculed by the press, but this did not seem to deter them. A popular rhyme at the time suggested that Lady Conyngham and George IV spent time

Quaffing their claret, then mingling their lips
Or fondling the fat about each others hips

Horace Mann, a grandstand was built to accommodate the huge crowd. There were said to be 20,000 people present on the first day. Many of the supporters were ordinary Kentish folk, and a rhyme of 1773 suggests how far they were willing to travel:

From Marsh and Weald their hay fork left
To Bourne the rustics hied
From Romney, Cranbrook, Tenterden
And Darent's verdant side

For many centuries **Bridge church**, built in the late 12th century on the site of a previous Anglo-Saxon chapel, served as no more than a 'chapel of ease' for the church at Patrixbourne, providing for the 'ease' of those living at some distance from the parish church. By tradition, such chapels were often built at the roadside, and often near river-crossings, for the convenience of travellers, so Bridge church satisfied both these requirements. As the parish of Bridge grew, however, its inhabitants became increasingly resentful of their subordinate position to Patrixbourne. Indeed, at the time of Archdeacon Harpsfield's visitation, in 1557, the parishioners submitted a petition requiring

That the said chapel of Bridge may be appointed to be the head church to Patrixbourne, because as they say, the said chapel standeth in the midst part of the inhabitants of both parishes, and that Patrixbourne standeth in the uttermost part of the dwellers of the two parishes, very far out of the way.

In 1844 WP Griffith surveyed **Bridge church**. His report, when compared with its present appearance shows the extent to which it was rebuilt in 1859-61 by the generosity of Mrs Mary Gregory, wife of the Vicar of Petham, who lived in Bridge Hill House, and was related to the Aucher family. She died in 1867, and left a bequest to the poor of the village, which has only recently been wound up. The restoration of the church was achieved, according to the Pevsner guide, 'with gross insensitivity'! Some vestiges remain of the medieval architecture, including two Norman doorways and various sculpted pieces inserted in the walls, including an effigy of Malcolm Ramesey (vicar 1495-1538). There is also a portrait of Robert Bargrave (1584-1649) by Cornelius Janssen, a frequent visitor to Bridge Place. Outside the west door and rarely noticed is the top slab of a 15th century table tomb, once containing several brasses. The churchyard contains a number of

cottages, the school in Bishopsbourne and Bridge Lodge in Bridge. Such buildings are often distinguished by a stone plaque, showing an intertwined **MFB motif**, for Matthew and Fanny Bell, his wife. When the Elham Valley railway was built at the end of the 19th century, Matthew Bell agreed to its passing through his land only if it was hidden by a cut-and-cover tunnel where it ran behind his house. Memorials to the Auchers and the Bells can be seen in the north chapel of Bishopsbourne church.

Bell's grandson (also Matthew) died in 1927, at which time the house was purchased by Sir John Prestige, who owned it until his death in 1962. In the 1950s, Sir John proposed that Kent County Council should take over the house as a museum, but this scheme did not materialise, and by 1957 the house was empty and in a poor state of repair. Sir John then sought to have the house demolished, but following a public enquiry, a Preservation Order was placed on the house, which was eventually Grade One listed. Extensive restoration work followed, and Sir John's next scheme was to offer the house and 300 acre estate as the site for the new University of Kent, but this too was turned down.

During the 1960s and 70s, the house changed ownership a number of times, and various proposals were made for its future. These included a religious house, a residential retirement club, a private hospital, offices and residential accommodation and a luxury hotel. The house's future became assured when it was purchased in 1983 by Lady Juliet, the only daughter of the 8th Earl Fitzwilliam, and Mr Somerset de Chair, a conservative MP and noted collector of art and antiques. Sensitive and expert restoration work was carried out on the house and grounds. Somerset de Chair died in 1995 aged 83. Lady Juliet remarried in 1997, and the work of improving and enhancing the grounds, the house and its contents has continued.

One of the first cricket matches in Kent took place on the ground at **Bourne Park**, now sadly defunct, but which in the 18th century attracted very many people. In 1767 booths selling food were available on the cricket ground itself, including one for gentlemen 'in a tent pitched for that purpose, separate from all the other booths'. After 1780, publicans from Bridge and Canterbury were allowed to set up booths operating outside the 'paddock'. When Hambledon played England in August 1772 under the patronage of the then tenant Sir

Walter Breams inherited the house on his father's death in 1681, but by this time the estate was burdened with debt. Walter had been much involved in the Civil War and, at the Restoration, was made Comptroller of HM Customs at Sandwich, and later at Dover, not least as a reward for having been the 'youngest prisoner in England for your Majesty's Service'. In 1690, however, he was petitioning for 'six years arrears of salary', and after his death in 1692, his family could no longer afford to maintain the house. His son inherited, but by 1695 the estate was sold to John Taylor of Patrixbourne, who soon demolished the greater part of Bridge Place in order to use the bricks in the building of Bifrons, on his property in Patrixbourne.

What survives of the original Bridge Place is just one wing but, in the view of Hasted, 'the size and stateliness...being of itself full sufficient for a gentleman's residence'. An advertisement in the *Gazette* in June 1791 advertises the house for let as having 'proper offices for a family: a coach-house with stabling for seven horses, and eleven acres of very fine pasture...and a cottage consisting of a brewhouse, laundry and dairy, with good lodging-rooms over them'. Since then, the house has had a succession of owners, and was purchased by Peter Malkin in 1969. In 1976, Bridge Place hosted a party to celebrate the opening of the A2 by-pass, an achievement long fought for by the villagers. Until recently it housed a night-club and country club. Little Bridge Place nearby was almost certainly built at the same time in the 17th century.

Once part of a larger estate, **Bourne House** (in Bishopsbourne) is considered to be amongst the finest Queen Anne houses in Kent. It was built using materials from Westenhanger Castle by Dame Elizabeth Aucher, widow of Sir Henry Aucher, for her son Hewytt, between 1704 and 1707 on the site of an ancient house known as Hautbourne. (The Haute family, kinsmen of Edward IV's queen Elizabeth Woodville, was prominent in the area in the 15th century).

In 1756, Stephen Beckingham, who had married an Aucher granddaughter, inherited the estate. In 1765, Mozart was a guest in the house, and while staying there, visited the popular Barham Downs racecourse. In 1845, Matthew Bell, a director of Equitable Life and the owner also of 'Oswalds' in Bishopsbourne, purchased the house. Bell was responsible for the construction of the ornamental lake, and for constructing a number of buildings in the vicinity, including estate

medieval watermill that surely once occupied the site. Until Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, the manor of Blackmansbury was in the possession of the abbey of St Peter, St Paul and St Augustine, Canterbury, and was let to tenants. With the suppression of the Abbey in 1540, the manor reverted to the Crown. Henry VIII granted the manor to John Laurence, whose family retained it until 1576, when it was sold to William Partheriche, who built a new house on the site. Traces of this house were revealed in an archaeological excavation in 1964/5. and relics of the old house survived in the basement until the 1970's. Partheriche was surveyor of the Ordnance Office under Elizabeth I, and was appointed by the queen in 1582 to undertake extensive works at Dover Harbour. He died in 1598 and was buried in his chapel in Bridge church. William's grandson, Edward, sold the property in 1638 to Arnold Braems.

Braems was born in Dover in 1602. His ancestors were of Flemish descent – immigrants who had originally settled at Sandwich in the 16th century. During the Civil War, he was a loyal supporter of Charles I. At the Restoration of Charles II, his loyalty was rewarded with a knighthood. Braems was a Dover merchant and, preferring commerce to politics, he worked to develop Dover as a successful port, acquiring land on the seafront, creating vast warehouses for goods, and making a fortune on harbour tolls and customs. This fortune he spent in the building of a fine house in Bridge, and in support of his King. He lived in Bridge until his death in 1681. In place of the former manor house, **Bridge Place**, built with hand-made Dutch bricks, was the largest house in 17th century East Kent, excepting Chilham Castle. It had a deer park, an extensive garden, an aviary, a bowling green, woods, a rabbit warren, 'beautifully well-kept pleasure grounds' and a fine avenue of lime trees stretching to the church. Arnold Braems had a reputation as a generous host, who kept a 'princely table'. Among his guests was the artist William Schellinks who in 1661 recorded his visit in his journal and made a number of sketches, including a view of the Street from the bottom of Bridge Hill. Another guest writes of being 'merrily entertained' at Braems' 'delightful residence at Bridge, one hour's walk from Canterbury'. The company played bowls, and 'we saw a hart shot with a crossbow in the deerpark...everybody, especially the ladies, washed their hands in the warm blood, to get white hands. The hart was immediately gutted and cut up into quarters'. The following day, 'venison pie and other dishes of the hart were on the menu'.

Brewery Lane. In the 19th century, the Workhouse (1835) was built, as were houses in Dering and Filmer Roads (1860's). The later 19th century saw a gradual extension along the Street towards Canterbury. It is only since 1962 that there has been any serious expansion, with the construction of Bridge Down (1962), Western Avenue (1963) and Riverside Close (1965). In the census for 1801, the population of the entire parish was 325. By 1834 it had reached 543, and in 1841 it was 817, of whom 165 were inmates of the workhouse. In 1871 the population reached 941, declining to 699 in 1921 as agricultural employment diminished. In the 1960s, Bridge began to change irrevocably, with the demolition of the most notable building at its centre, the 14th century **Bridge Farm**, and the development of housing, resulting in a population in 1971 of 1225, and by the Millennium, of almost 2000. The village still boasts more than twenty houses dating to the 18th century or before, and others built in the 19th century. Some of the houses in the Street are older than they look, having received new fronts in the 18th century.

Historically, employment of the villagers of Bridge was provided by a thriving retail trade and serving the needs of travellers in the public houses and inns. Significant numbers were engaged in farm labour, much of it seasonal: hop tying, stone picking, cherrying, hay making, pea and bean harvesting, fruit picking, hop picking. The hop garden near Flint Cottages has been growing hops since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and a few hops are still grown. Local shops, the dental and doctors' surgery, the care home and the pubs and restaurant still provide more employment than many villages but most villagers, of course, now commute elsewhere to work.

In the last thirty years Bridge has lost a number of **shops**, but it remains a thriving community, boasting a post office and pharmacy, general store, bakery, butcher, hairdresser, photography studio, school, church, care home, restaurant and three pubs. It is served by a regular bus service to Canterbury, Dover and Folkestone. It has an active parish council, and hosts many local societies, including such charitable enterprises as the Fish scheme.

The most substantial house in the parish was **Bridge Place**, built on the site of what was probably the medieval court Lodge in the manor of Blackmansbury, alias Bridge. Here Symonson's map of Kent of 1596 shows a building lying astride the Nailbourne, a reminder of the

complained the enemy had covered the surface with something to choke them. This story even made the London newspapers! Probably the drivers were more used to the better constructed surfaces of London roads.

In both World Wars, a canteen was established in Bridge village hall, to serve the men stationed outside the village. During the later war, the milestones up Bridge Hill were taken up and anti-tank emplacements installed at the top of Bridge Hill to prevent the enemy progressing down the A2. Indeed, one afternoon in 1981, some of the residents of Bridge Hill were required to evacuate their houses in response to an alert concerning an unexploded device found on the Hill! By the middle of the 20th century, the A2 London-Dover road, including Bridge High Street, became increasingly congested, as heavy traffic thundered through the village. In January 1962, pensioner George Smith was knocked down and killed while out shopping. In 1963, two lorries and a bus were involved in a collision in the main street. Incidents like this became increasingly frequent and, by 1964, the villagers had had enough. They launched a series of protests in support of the construction of a bypass. Initially, these protests consisted of people walking in the roadway, to disrupt the flow of traffic to cause the vehicles to slow down. When this action failed, the villagers resorted to sitting in the road! Clearly the spirit of Cade's Rebellion was not dead! In 1972, a Dover-bound truck drove into **Colin Lewis's grocer's shop**, trapping a young girl and killing the driver. After this, the sit-down protests increased in frequency until on one occasion a thousand people staged a sit-in in the High Street, closing the village to all traffic for an hour and causing a very long tail-back. Eventually, repeated lobbying and demonstrations led to victory and a bypass was opened on 29 June 1976 accompanied by **great celebration**. At last the villagers were able to enjoy their village in relative peace and comfort.

The history of Bridge is not that of a characteristic medieval village, radiating from its centre; nor yet was Bridge part of any great estate, even though in later years it has been surrounded by great houses, notably Bourne House, Bridge Place, Higham and Bifrons – all of whose owners have played their part in developing the village, though only Bridge Place lies within the parish boundaries. For most of its existence, the inhabitants of Bridge have numbered no more than a few hundred. The late 18th century saw the building of a few cottages in

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

In preparation for this influx, a Dr Wardell, physician to the forces quartered in Bridge, was looking for a 'roomy house or other sort of building...to be used for a regimental hospital'.

The hills on either side of the village were once steeper than they are now. In summer, the passage of traffic over the road surface resulted in clouds of dust; in winter in muddied ruts. On 26 December 1769, the *Kentish Gazette* noted that 'some public-spirited Gentlemen intend to petition Parliament for a Turnpike Act' for the road from Dover to Canterbury. Substantial roadworks included the lessening of the gradient of both hills down into the village and the smoothing out of the slope – though the work was not completed until 1829. Tolls were imposed, and there was to be no parking in the street' – a controversial issue even today! The street was not tarred, of course, until the mid-20th century, and the wide **water-splash** to one side of the Bridge, used for watering horses or cooling the metal rims of wheels after the steep descent into the village, also remained in place until well into the 20th century.

The origins of the village lie in its dependency on the road. For centuries, the buildings flanking its single street were principally concerned with meeting the needs of travellers and passers by – premises supplying food and drink, a blacksmith, saddler, shoemaker and so on. Numerous daily coach services provided a connection to London. A long-term Bridge resident, Mrs Jack Friend, was able to recall in 1955 how, in her childhood, a four-in-hand coach travelled daily through the village on its journey from Folkestone to Canterbury and return, with a post horn to alert passengers of its arrival.

In the Great War, troops were once again encamped close to Bridge. One day in 1914, the roadway up Bridge Hill was thick with chalky dust as over 100 London buses passed through to be used in France as transport for the troops. The dust became so thick that the drivers

have been excavated from the Romano-British period. A near-circular hollow, cut into by the road part way up Bridge Hill, and traditionally known as '**Old England's Hole**', may well represent a defensive position, constructed by the ancient Britons to protect their river crossing after their defeat by Caesar's seventh legion in 54BC – or it may be just an old chalk quarry. Since the first century AD, when the Romans first built the road, travellers to and from Europe have come through Bridge. Harris in his *History of Kent* of 1719, lists various encampments on Barham Down at different times, whose occupants would have had to take the road from Dover to London on their journey between the coast and Canterbury. King John, in 1212, assembled on the Down with '60,000' men, ready to repel any attempted invasion from France. It is likely that King Henry V marched down Bridge Hill on his return from Agincourt in 1415, to celebrate his victory in Canterbury Cathedral. In 1450, during Cade's Rebellion, 'John Ysake of Patrykesbourne...and William atte Wode of Brigge, smyth, and other men in Brygge hundred...gathered together against the statutes of the realm' but were 'granted general pardon at the request of the queen'. Every three years throughout the 15th century, a huge wax candle, rolled into a coil, or trindle, was carried on the road through Bridge – a gift from the people of Dover to be used at the cathedral to provide tapers for the poor and destitute to light at the shrine of St Thomas. This must have been one of the more unusual items to pass through the village of Bridge, matched only, perhaps, by the four dromedaries and two camels brought in 1466 by the lord patriarch of Antioch, as a gift for the king and queen! In 1520, King Henry VIII must have passed through Bridge with his magnificent retinue on his way to meet Francis I of France in June 1520, to celebrate peace in great splendour at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In the 1630's, during the thirty years war, Spanish silver was carried in great quantities from Dover on the road to London to be minted into coin. And at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Charles II returned amidst great rejoicing to regain his throne, making his way from the coast to break his journey in Canterbury, where he was presented with a copy of William Somner's *Antiquities of Canterbury*.

In August 1799, at the height of an invasion scare during the Napoleonic wars, more than 10,000 infantrymen camped on Barham Down to prepare for invasion. The *Kentish Gazette* recorded that

THE VILLAGE OF BRIDGE

The village of Bridge lies astride the Nailbourne – when, that is, the ‘bourne’, an intermittent water course of the Little Stour, is flowing! The river has its ultimate source at East Brook, near Etchinghill – hardly more than 3 miles from the channel coast at Hythe, but it only flows continuously from the spring at Well Chapel, Littlebourne. It dries up, or runs underground, frequently. When the Wantsum Channel was open to the sea, the Nailbourne, which flowed into it, was a faster and wider water course. As late as the 1920s, it is said that trout were to be caught from the river at School Lane, Bekesbourne. Legends abound of the river in full flow portending national disaster. As recently as 2000 there was widespread flooding. The *Kentish Travellers’ Companion* of 1794 records that ‘the bridge being decayed and otherwise inconvenient for carriages, a new and more commodious one has been built by subscription’: this double-arched bridge still survives beneath the present road. Cozens’ *History of Kent* of 1798 states that Bridge ‘is now but a small village of about 20 houses, situated in a narrow valley’, but the bridge allowed the easy passage of travellers, and it is because of the road itself that the Bridge has developed into the village it is today.

From *Domesday*, we learn that the abbot of St Augustine’s Abbey held the hundred of Bridge. A hundred was an administrative district within an English shire, with a court house, or meeting-place, usually located centrally within it, often sited at river crossings or cross roads. Within the hundred, the parish of Bridge comprised two manors: that of Bereacre, of which no trace remains in terms of a big house; and the more significant manor of Blackmansbury, in which a building, referred to by Hasted, the eighteenth century historian of Kent, as ‘the court lodge’, was situated, probably on the site of the present Bridge Place. The parish of Bridge, as we think of it today, was regarded throughout the Middle Ages and beyond as a subsidiary part of Patricbourne. Indeed, the proximity of the church to the parish boundary may be taken as evidence that the parish of Bridge was originally formed by detachment from Patricbourne, as the latter was from Bekesbourne.

Archaeological evidence shows Bridge to have been the site of an Iron-Age settlement, and pottery, fragments of weapons and other artefacts

This brief tour guide to Bridge is based upon a small part of the considerable amount of archive material that the History Society now possesses. If in particular it succeeds in stimulating readers to offer corrections or further information concerning the events and people mentioned, or on any other topic, or pictures of any of the buildings described, we shall be most grateful to receive them. In preparing this booklet, we have endeavoured to be as accurate as possible in what we have selected to record, but we apologise for any inaccuracies which may have occurred. Sometimes people's recollections of the past vary. Inevitably, what we have been able to include has been circumscribed by the space available.

Many of the images we have reproduced come from the Bridge History Society archive collection. We would like to thank the Courtauld Institute for permission to reproduce the view of Bridge in 1661; Kent Archaeological Trust, for the picture of Bridge Church before 1860 and the structural drawing of Bridge Farm; the National Monuments Record, Swindon, for the picture of Bridge Windmill. We are grateful to all those who have made material available for our use – written, verbal or photographic.

We would like to thank Messrs xxxx, and in particular to Cllr Martin Vye and the generosity of Kent County Council for financial support for this publication.

Meriel Connor

Maurice Raraty

A Brief Historical Tour of
THE VILLAGE OF BRIDGE
And its Environs



Bridge Street in 1661: Willem Schellincks
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mmraraty

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 41 Bridge Down
 Bridge
 Canterbury
 CT4 5BA

Date: 27/11/2006
 Account No. CLI3587
 Client Email: mmraraty@btinternet.com

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USAGE: To illustrate a booklet on the history of Bridge, Kent to be published by the Kent History Federation for their conference in 2007. Print run of up to 1000 copies.

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D.1952.RW.4207 **Schellinks, Willem (1627-1678):** View of bridges, Kent
 28.9 cm x 17.8 cm, graphite & pen and ink (brown) on paper

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mmraraty

From: "galleryimages" <galleryimages@courtauld.ac.uk>
To: "mmraraty" <mmraraty@btinternet.com>
Sent: 23 November 2006 16:48
Subject: RE: Schellincks

Dear Maurice,

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Best wishes,
Emma

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galleryimages@courtauld.ac.uk
www.artandarchitecture.org.uk

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Maurice Raraty

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Emma Hayes

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Thank you

Maurice M Raraty
Bridge

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mmraraty

From: "Hayes, Emma" <emma.hayes@courtauld.ac.uk>
To: "mmraraty" <mmraraty@btinternet.com>
Sent: 27 November 2006 11:39
Attach: CIA Terms print.doc
Subject: RFP20906

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Dr Maurice M Raraty
 41 Bridge Down
 Bridge
 Canterbury
 CT4 5BA

Date: 27/11/2006
 Account No. CLI3587
 Client Email: mmraraty@btinternet.com

Request for Immediate Payment No. RFP20906

USAGE: To illustrate a booklet on the history of Bridge, Kent to be published by the Kent History Federation for their conference in 2007. Print run of up to 1000 copies.

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D.1952.RW.4207 **Schellinks, Willem (1627-1678):** View of bridges, Kent
 28.9 cm x 17.8 cm, graphite & pen and ink (brown) on paper

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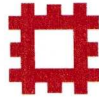
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Direct Fax: 01793 414606
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8 February, 2007

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Author / Organiser: M Raraty and M Connor
**Publisher/Organising Body/
Broadcast/Exhibition:** Bridge and District Local History Society
**Date of Publication/
Broadcast/Exhibition:** 2007 **Edition:** First (Pbk)
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Maurice

Here's the next draft then!

I have tried to include the school entries. Have I interpreted your intentions correctly?!

I have had a very speedy reply from Laurence Boyle with his amendments, which I have implemented. He is probably to be regarded as the authority on the Conynghams and Bifrons, I think. I am intrigued about the Bridge Gas Coke and Coal Company. I am sure I read a copy of a document which gave me this information – I know I can't have dreamt it. I've looked for it everywhere here, so I suppose it must have been amongst the papers which you lent me? If you can turn it up, then well and good. If not, we'll omit this sentence to be on the safe side.

You are going to see Mr Sole. Then are we nearly there? We do want to do the best we can, but the sooner we get it off to the printer, the sooner it is off our desks!

Meriel

Patricxbourne, its 'mansion', and the Conynghams

Patricxbourne derives its name from the illustrious Patrick family, who came to Kent from Normandy at the Conquest. In 1174, the manor was inherited by Ingelram Patrick, whose daughter Maud married Ralph Tesson, **sensechal seneschal** of Normandy. His estates in England, including Patricxbourne, were awarded to Geoffrey de Say. In the fifteenth century, a number of manors in the area were held by the Isaac family.

I cannot comment on the above — I expect Mary Berg knows most about that period.

No she doesn't

By the early **Early in the** 17th century, according to Hasted, John Bargrave built a house in Patricxbourne, **Bifrons**, presumably on the site of the old manor house. John Bargrave's brother, Isaac, became dean of Canterbury Cathedral. The family sold the house in 1661 or 1662 and there were a number of owners before the house was purchased by John Taylor in September 1694. His grandson, the **Rev. Edward Taylor**, inherited the property in c.1775 1767. In 1775 he demolished the house and began reconstruction. A number of drawings survive of this 'plain building' in the a classical style with 'little architectural embellishment' survives. In 1802, Edward's son, Edward, married Louisa Beckingham of Bourne Place, and **Bifrons was let to tenants**.

This is probably incorrect. The Taylors had let Bifrons to tenants earlier and later but in 1802 itself (and probably before) until perhaps 1807 the Taylors were probably in residence.

It was sold in 1830 to the first Marquis Conyngham.

You may wish to use the current spelling, "Marquess". The Conynghams were among the first to standardise on it.

Henry Conyngham was created marquis by George IV while he was Prince Regent. Conyngham married a wealthy heiress, Elizabeth Denison, whose father was a merchant banker. His rise through the ranks of the peerage was due to his services in Ireland, and the Conyngham's Irish country seat was (and still is) **Castle Slane castle**, between Belfast and Dublin. The Marquis was much at court, and held the post of Lord Steward of the Household until the king's death. Lady Conyngham was famed as the companion and confidante of George IV. A favourite at court, she was described as 'fat, handsome, kindly, shrewd and extremely fond of jewels'! The king heaped presents and money on her and, when in London, she and her family lived largely at his expense. Though they never appeared in public together, the king and the marchioness were often ridiculed by the press, but this did not seem to deter them. A popular rhyme at the time suggested that Lady Conyngham and George IV spent time

Quaffing their claret, then mingling their lips
Or fondling the fat about each other's hips

The king once said to her 'thank you, my dear; you always do what is right. You cannot please me so much as by doing everything you please, everything to show that you are mistress here'. However, it seems never to have been proven that their relationship was other than platonic.