

THE EAST MALLING Heritage Walk



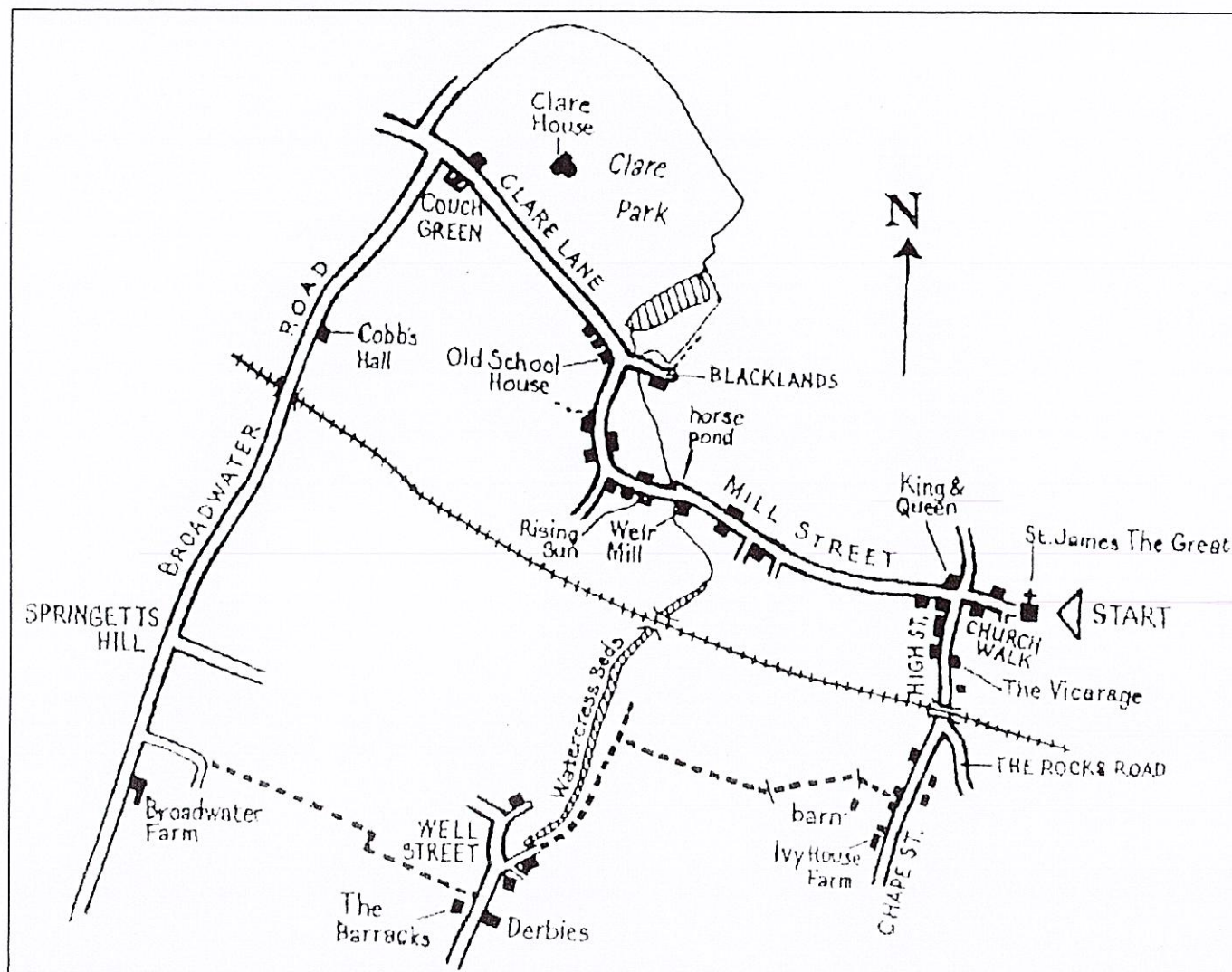
EMCG

EAST MALLING CONSERVATION GROUP

By the Community, for the Community

THE EAST MALLING HERITAGE WALK

A walk round East Malling and some of the surrounding country.
Time required – about two hours.



The name 'Malling' is possibly derived from Meallingas meaning Mealla's people. The first record of East Meallinga is to be found in the Charter of 942-946 AD.

While none of its buildings can be dated that far back, the antiquity of the village is much in evidence by some of its old buildings to be found today.

Picture Index

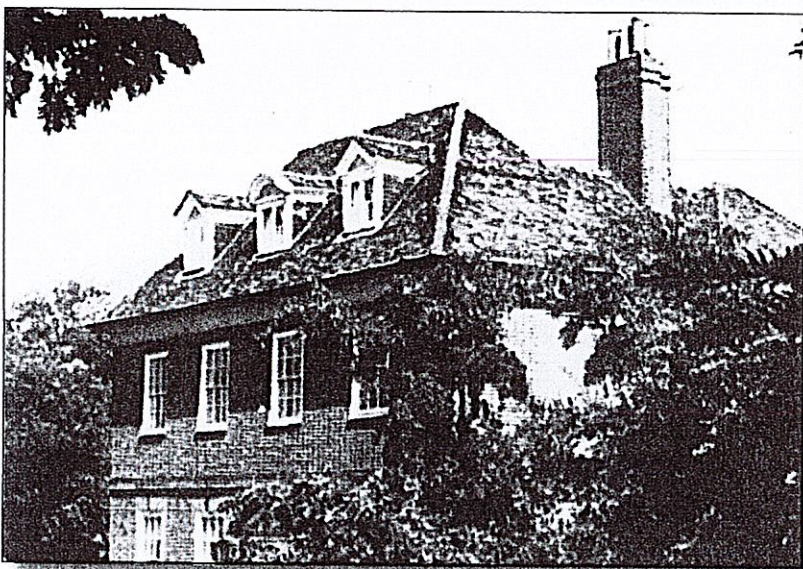
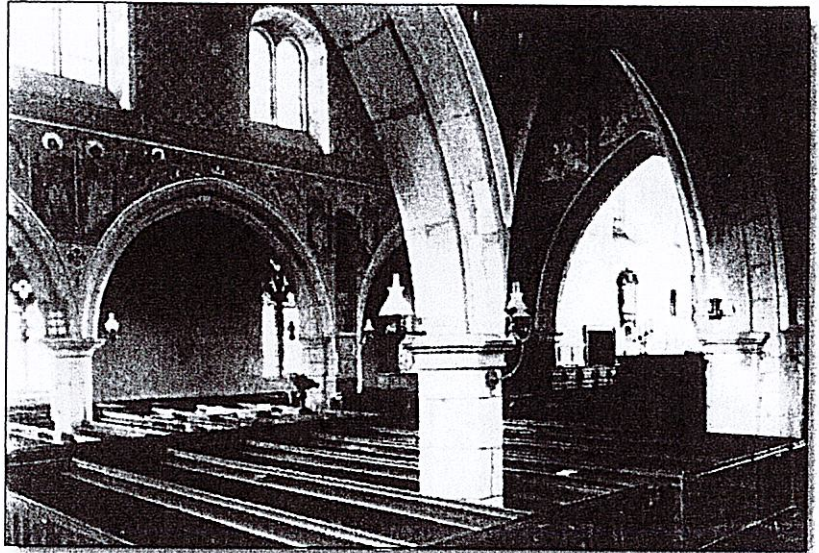
Front Cover	Village shops circa 1910	P5	Top right	Honeymoon Cottages circa 1950
P1	Top right		Centre left	Lower Mill - date unknown, suspect circa 1920
	Centre		Lower right	Clare House circa 1920
	Bottom right			
P2	Top left	P6		Clare Lane and Old School House - 1900
	Top right	P7	Top right	Cobbs Hall Farm House - 2007
	Bottom right		Centre left	The Red Rover - 1965
			Bottom left	Broadwater Oasts - date unknown
P3	Top left	P8		The Barracks - 2007
	Top right	P9	Top right	Engraving of Manningham House - date unknown
	Bottom left		Bottom	Ivy House Farm - 1965
P4	Top left	P10	Top right	The Limes circa 2010
	Top right		Bottom left	Methodist Chapel - date unknown
	Centre right	P11	Top right	The Forge circa 1910
	Bottom right		Centre left	The Second Vicarage - 1965
	Bottom		Bottom	The King and Queen - 1965

START AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREAT

There has been a church on this site for over a thousand years. Not this building, of course, which is 14th Century with 12th Century bits. If you find the building open go in and look around. Not many parish churches are as un-altered as this one. Both Oliver Cromwell and the Victorian 'restorers' largely overlooked it!

As you come out look up at Mary Baker's plaque above the door.

With the Church behind you, walk along what is left of the ancient cobbles of Church Walk. The high ragstone wall in front of Court Lodge (early 18th Century) is typical of many to be found in East Malling.



Opposite Court Lodge note the emergence of a stream through the wall, but more of this later.

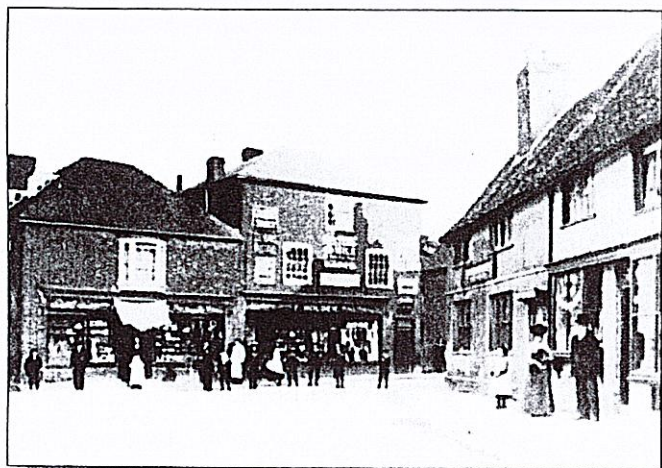
The lovely old house on your left is a 15th Century Grade 2* classic Wealden type hall-house. This has been used as an antique shop in the recent past before conversion back to a private dwelling.

Please don't linger at the crossroads 'enhancement', it's not that pretty nor very popular with the locals. Cross the road and walk along Mill Street past 'The King & Queen', a 17th Century building meriting a closer inspection, especially of the interior, at the end of your walk.

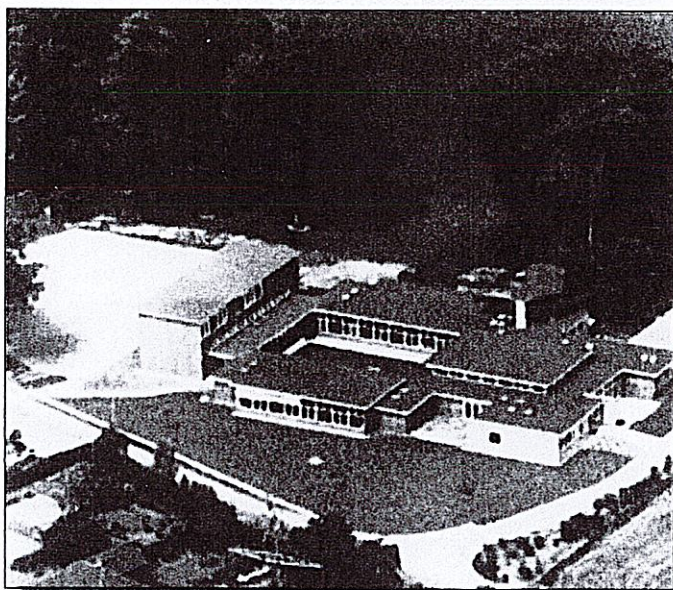


MILL STREET

In common with other villages, East Malling has lost most of its shops, a couple being No's 3 and 5 in the block of 15th-16th Century buildings opposite the pub, another being the tile-hung building ahead and on your left, which was the butcher's shop as recently as the 1970's. Note the lovely bracket lamp over the Butcher's window in the photograph, now sadly gone.



Follow the ragstone wall to its end and while passing the new housing development on your right (on the site of the former Blacklands/ Millstream School) the observant might notice a recently cleaned stone plaque in the wall with an engraved cross. This commemorates a tragic event when, in 1884, a young boy was killed by a runaway horse and cart, his name being Walter Vigor. The road into the new housing development now bears his name (an EMCG suggestion).



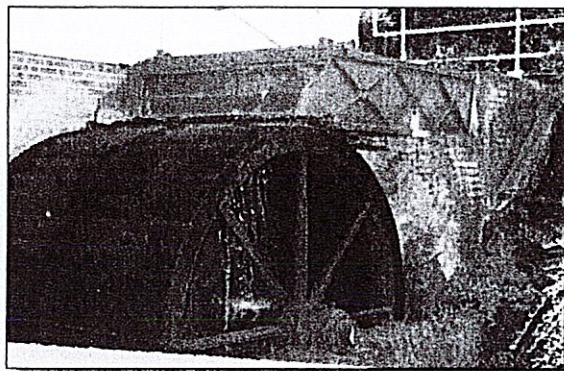
A little further on and Mill Street passes into what was once the separate hamlet of Mill Street and which is still shown as such on Ordnance Survey footpath maps.

On the left where the road narrows, is a shaded square of 18th Century cottages, one still sporting a large bay shop window. Turn left here and take a short detour along Upper Mill, to where the lane splits, the partially restored remains of the mill race which once served Upper Mill will be found. The fast flowing stream that once powered this mill and five others rises at Well Street (to the south) and joins the Medway at Mill Hall in Aylesford. The force of the water cascading over the race is something to behold. Notice also the restored building across the road, which was once the 'ragstore' of the mill, where rags were stored and sorted prior to processing into paper at 'Upper Mill'.

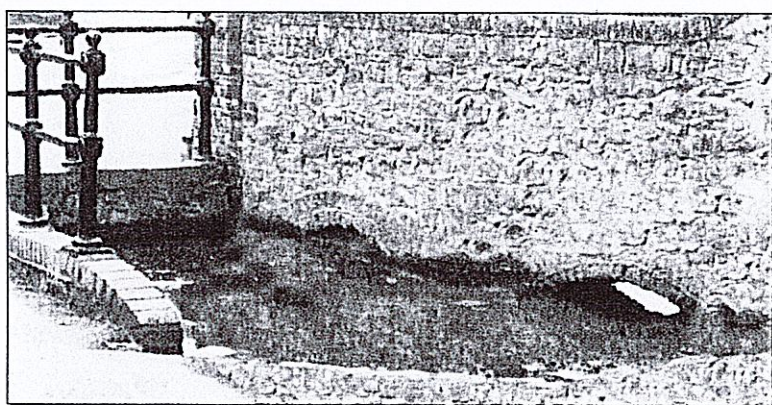
Now retrace your steps to Mill Street and turn left past the terrace of new houses and find on your left, an attractive cottage pair (No's 93 and 95), which were once a farmhouse. Opposite the cottages, behind the high ragstone wall, hides No 90, once the dower-house of Clare House, part 16th Century and part 19th Century.



The tall, dominating Victorian building ahead of you is Weir Mill, the only survivor of the mills that gave Mill Street its name. Attached to the rear of the building is an 18th Century mill with an overshot wheel, now sadly hidden from the public behind locked gates.



'The Stream', which has no official name, passes under the road here and flows through the horse-pond, a Grade 2 listed monument. Trout and children can still sometimes be seen in it. Both should be thrown back if caught – fishing is not allowed! Though 'prettied up' by the developer of the housing estate beyond, it retains much of its original appearance apart from the tarmacing over of the cobbled slope and the addition of extra railings, an act not fully appreciated by local people.



Bone Alley. It seems that, at some time in the distant past, a large quantity of bones was unearthed here. They were not human so we cannot regale you with a macabre story.

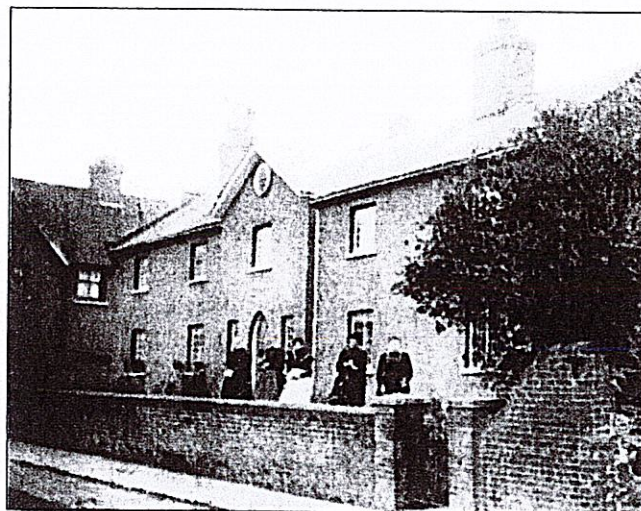
The housing estate to the right, just past the horse pond was built on the site of 'Middle Mill', another of the mills of East Malling. In latter years, it was also the home of Goldwells cider factory. It was also Goldwells who built the office block on the corner.

Continuing along Mill Street, the 'cottage row' on the right opposite The Rising Sun is mid-17th Century. They are timber framed but display varied cladding. The Rising Sun recently much modified is one of only two public houses left in the village.



Just past The Rising Sun is the red brick Elizabeth Smith Almshouses built in 1827 for elderly and single women of the parish. Note the clock above the door and can you find the date stone?

The Victorian post box in the wall is the oldest in the village and until recent modernisations, was at the other end of the wall. A pair of ragstone cottages brings you to the Stickens Lane junction and the oldest lamp-post in the village. Cross over, and after the semi-detached houses, there stands a little red brick 18th Century cottage, previously the office of Darcy Products, a world renowned manufacturer of pollution control products who had been resident in East Malling since 1949.



Across the road, the jettied lobby entrance hall-house is not all of one age, as it may appear. No's 148 and 150 were built in 1610 and No 152 was built about 1490. No 148 has a dragon-beam, and during restoration work at No 150 seven baker's ovens were discovered. The shutters on No 152 date from the 18th Century.



Across the road is Westbrook House, a 15th Century hall-house with a 19th Century front. The very large chimney breast on the right (as you face the front) has, high up on the footpath facing side, a very unusual red brick Maltese Cross.

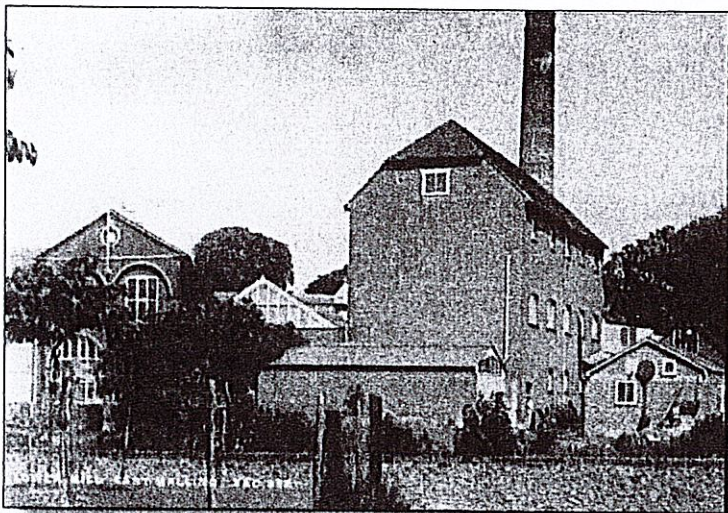
Continue along Mill Street. Where the bungalows now stand, hops and apples once grew (see *background of photograph*).

BLACKLANDS

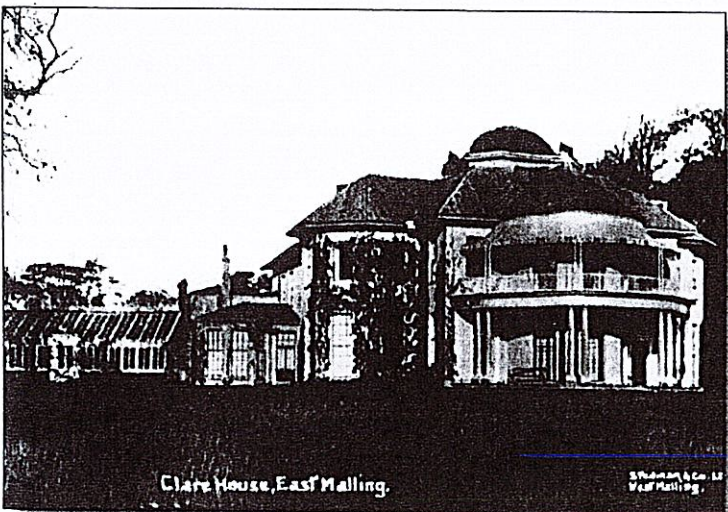
Mill Street now ends and Clare Lane begins at the junction with Blacklands (what an odd name). Look up Blacklands and a ragstone terrace can be seen. These houses were originally known as 'Honeymoon Cottages' – East Malling's first 'starter homes'.

In the background of this photograph can be seen Middle Mill, which stood on the site of the development behind these cottages and the entrance to which you have passed in Mill Street opposite Westbrook House.

In the trees by Blacklands nameplate you may, if you are lucky, see a tree creeper busying its way down the trunks.



'The Stream' makes another appearance here as it speeds its way under Blacklands to flow into Clare Park Lake, once the pond for another of the water mills, Lower Mill, long since demolished. If you take the time to walk down Blacklands to the bottom end of the lake, the remains of the mill race can be seen. Watch out for Kingfishers by the stream looking for their lunch. Don't forget to feed the ducks whilst you are there.



To the left, across Clare Park, where all three of Britain's woodpeckers may be seen, and partially hidden by trees is Clare House, a Grade 1 Georgian House in the Palladian style built in 1793 for John Larkin, the then owner of Middle Mill. This house once stood in a park which extended as far as the London Road (A20) to the north and to

New Road in the east. Look at the park now and imagine how it looked on the morning of 16 October 1987, after the hurricane. All over the park great oaks, horse chestnuts, limes and London planes lay prostrate among a carpet of limbs, accounting for some of the odd shaped trees surviving today.

CLARE LANE

At the start of Clare Lane we find the 'Old School House', dated 1781. There are two plaques on the front wall; the upper, well weathered plaque bears inscriptions in Latin and Greek. The lower is inscribed 'This house and school and that of Leybourne were both erected and endowed at the sole expense of the Reverend Edward Holme, Vicar of Birling'.



See how wide the lane is now compared to the photograph believed to be circa 1910. Note too the stone wall on the right of the lane, then the boundary of the Clare Park estate.

Walk up Clare Lane, past 'The Old School House Cottage' c.1994, and Lyme Cottage, mid-18th Century.

The pretty blue flower to be seen in profusion along Clare Lane (and elsewhere around East Malling) is Green Alkanet. It flowers from Spring to late Autumn and even in winter. Another plant to be encountered frequently is the white flowered Jack-by-the-hedge.

Walk past the entrance to Clare House, now restored and occupied, to the four house hamlet of Couch Green. The one on the right is Clare Cottage, late 17th Century with an 18th Century 'cat-slide outshut'. There is no need to define a cat-slide roof. You will get the idea as soon as you see it! To the rear of this house, it is believed stood a cottage, now demolished, that was occupied during WWII by the Night Fighter ace John 'Cats Eyes' Cunningham.

BROADWATER ROAD

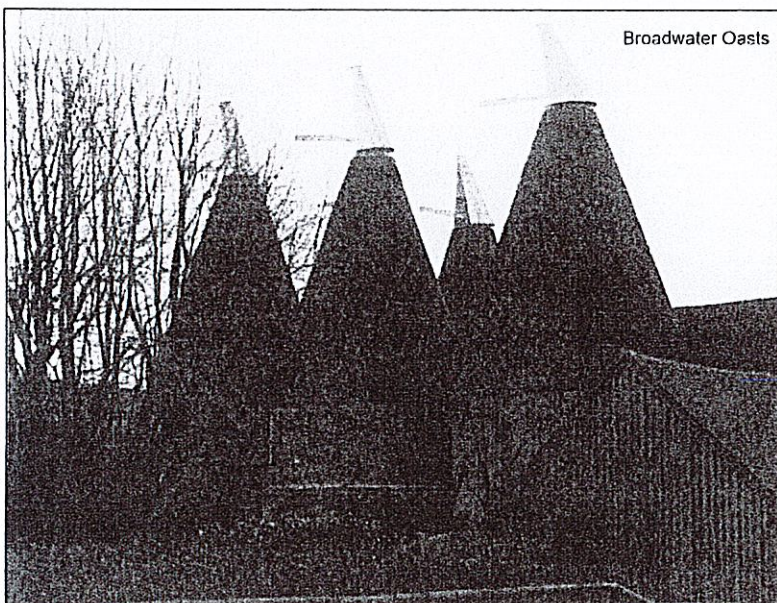
At the staggered crossroads turn left into Broadwater Road and walk along this pleasant lane. You will pass Cobb's Hall, early 17th Century, another ex-farmhouse.

Carry on, over the ragstone railway bridge, raised to accommodate Eurofreight and Eurostar trains, into the flat, open countryside beyond.

The hamlet you now come to is Springett's Hill, which has a pretty cluster of stone buildings some of which were once barns. See if you can recognise what was 'The Red Rover' public house.



Walk straight on, with the houses behind you, and you will see a group of oast-houses. This is Broadwater Farm, once the biggest hop farm in England. Hops were grown on this farm until the late 1980's, the last hops to be grown in this once predominantly hop-growing area. Take the farm road on the left, immediately before the oasts. Where the road turns right, carry on straight ahead on the footpath alongside the hedge, crossing the fields where the hops once grew. Given a clear day, the Downs can be seen very well from here.



Ahead lies Well Street, a hamlet with a number of fine old houses. Here 'The Stream' arises, emerging as a spring on Springhead Farm.

WELL STREET

The footpath joins Well Street alongside one of the village's most impressive houses, 'The Barracks', c.1380-1400 with a solar wing of c.1450.



This Grade 2* house has two crown posts and mullioned windows. Look for the 16th Century barge-boards, cusped with a pair of owls. The current appearance of 'The Barracks' is the result of many years of very hard work, as the building was in a state of extreme dilapidation. Many years ago it housed the local militia, hence the name.

On the other side of the road stands 'Derbies' which has very strong claims to being the oldest house in the village. It is a Grade 2* listed building with an upper floor hall dating from about 1350. It has 14th, 15th and 19th Century additions.

Now walk back along the road, past the stile that you have just crossed, until you come to a bend with a high ragstone wall bearing a red post box. Your route is now down the footpath to the right, but before taking it look around you. There are wild hops growing in the hedgerow to remind us of times past. The white house enjoying a prime position ahead of you dates from the 15th Century and is probably a former hall-house. Likewise Spring Hill Lodge, the house behind the high hedge to your right.

THE WATERCRESS BEDS

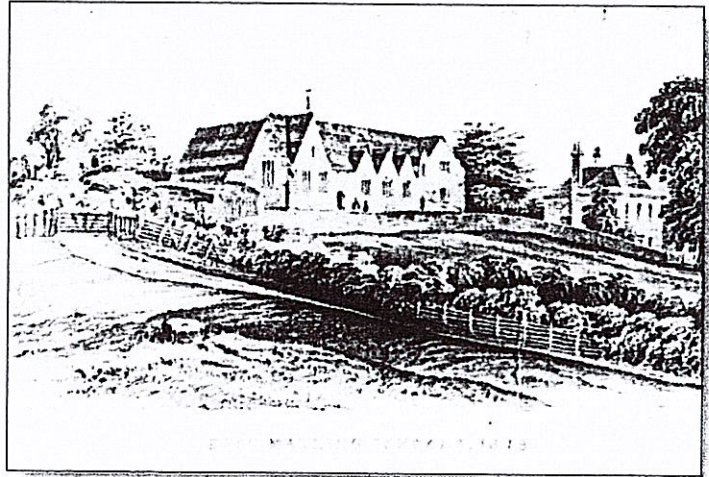
The footpath will take you past a 17th Century house overlooking a stream which is now home to ducks and geese. This is 'The Stream', the same one that powered the six watermills. Here watercress was 'farmed' from the beds that can still be seen.

The track narrows to a footpath climbing up through the trees, a good place for discovering a variety of fungi in the autumn. When you come to a derelict and overgrown orchard take the footpath to your right. The orchard will be on your left and meadows behind a fence to your right. You will come to a stile with an open meadow beyond, which leads you to.....

THE SCHOOL FIELD

Looking diagonally across the meadow you can see the splendid 17th Century barn belonging to Ivy House Farm. It has a queen post roof and five wagon-bays.

On reaching the corner of the field, pass through the kissing-gate, the path continues alongside Manningham House, once the village school and now divided into flats for senior citizens.



CHAPEL STREET

Having gained the safety of the footway on the other side of the road, before heading back to the village, it is worth taking a few paces to the right, because on the far side of Manningham House you will find Ivy House Farm.

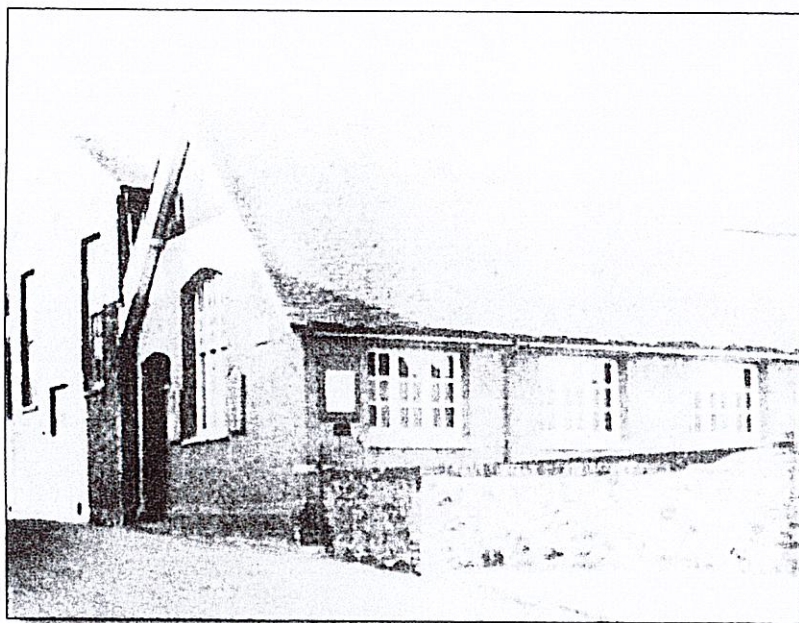


The farmhouse itself, a Grade 2* listed building, is one of East Malling's most picturesque buildings, early 15th Century with 16th Century additions. It has its original moulded barge-boards but, alas, the cat-slide is 20th Century. The farmyard has some fine 19th Century oast houses as well as the barn that you saw the rear of whilst crossing the meadow.

Returning now to the last leg of the walk, go back past Manningham House and down Chapel Street, passing on your way a tall early-to-mid-18th Century stone and brick wall, some fifty yards long. The wall fronts 'The Limes', a large early 18th Century house with 19th Century elevations. The wall ends at some early 17th Century cottages. Across the road, set attractively below road level are two cottages. No 25 Tamarisk Cottage is 16th and 18th Century and No 21 is 18th Century. These cottages were not actually built as a terrace, No 14 being built first, followed by No 10. No 12 was an 'infill', a practice still regrettably carried on in the village now.



The Limes

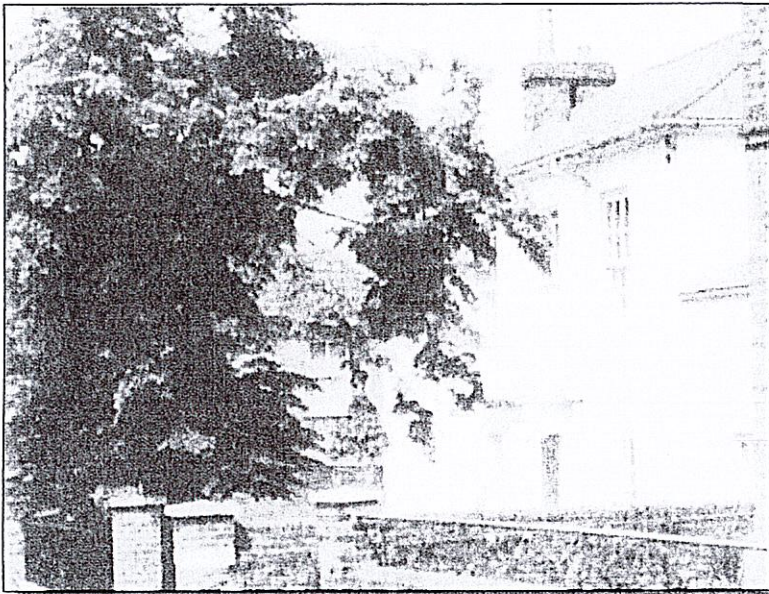


Before passing under the railway bridge into the High Street, stop and notice the modern house next to a bungalow. It stands on the site of the chapel, which gave Chapel Street its name. On the opposite side of the street on the corner of The Rocks Road, note the old shop, now a house where many small children purchased a penny-worth of sweets on their way to school at Manningham House.

Now take a look up The Rocks Road. On the right, emerging from a hole in the wall can be seen East Malling's other stream making one of its all too rare public appearances before diving below the road to emerge on the other side of the station, to continue its course through the gardens of the houses on the east side of the High Street and on down to Church Walk.

THE HIGH STREET

On now, under the railway line, and note the fire insurance plaque below the eaves of No 45, a much altered 17th Century timber-framed cottage. If the gates are open look up beside Forge House (formally 'The Magpie' public house) and see the original forge.



Across the road from what was until recently the old Vicarage (built 1820), Nos 24 and 26 hide their 16th Century origins behind Victorian alterations, as do the cottages in the terraced row that completes the west side of the High Street. They are actually timber-framed and 16th Century.

You are now back at the 'The King & Queen'. A 17th Century building, which in the past was both a dwelling and a public house known as 'The Three Cups' many, many years before it was known as the 'King and Queen'. Its interior may seem even more worthy of investigation, don't you think?



NOTES

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