

## **CHARING & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

[www.charinghistory.co.uk](http://www.charinghistory.co.uk)



### **CDLHS In Our Historic Times edition 14 February 2021 Be Optimistic, Be Patient**



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Hello,

This is actually the 15th issue of 'In Historic Times' (IHT), including the VE Day and Christmas supplements, which is considerably more than imagined when we began these IHT newsletters! Now, with the arrival of vaccines, and the prospect of better weather ahead, we can begin to look forward with more optimism. Hopefully, with prudent easing of restrictions, we will be able to be more sociable before too long.

Next month: the second parts of 'A Short History of Charing', 'The M20' and 'Census 21', as well as a new article: 'Charing Youth Hostels', and penultimate 'History Behind Road Names in Charing' (R and S). Also look out for some good CDLHS news!

Valerie

# Looking back and Talks to Look Forward To

Our Zoom talks have proved popular. For some, Zoom can be a bit of a challenge, but as we continue, more people are appreciating the opportunity to connect with fellow members and friends for an interesting talk. (Also, last week, benefitting from being able to stay in our comfortable, warm homes on a dark, bitter and snowy evening. etc.

## Stone on Stone

### The Men who Built the Cathedrals by Imogen Corrigan

It was lovely to see so many new and familiar faces, on screen, for the first of our Zoom talks.

It was fascinating to learn about the truly multi-disciplinary skills of master builders, as well as the impact of building a cathedral on townsfolk. With beautiful illustrations, including some from the Book of Hours, this was an excellent start to our 'remote' talks.

## 'The Last Days of Boxley Abbey'

by Dr Michael Carter

Our second talk did not disappoint either...

We were given an insight into monastic life, and the typical design of Cistercian monasteries. Until the dissolution, Boxley Abbey was home to the 'miraculous Rood of Grace,' and hence a popular pilgrimage destination in C14 and C15.



Rood of Grace pilgrim badge

British Museum

## The Golden Age of Piracy

by Patsy Erskine Hill



It was so good to see so many people again for our 3rd Zoom meeting, and another enlightening talk. Among many facts, Patsy explained piracy and the attractions of the dangerous, but lucrative life. She

described the small difference between privateers and pirates and how that cost William Kidd his life. She showed many slides to illustrate her talk including maps of slave routes, and explained the vulnerability of coastal settlements to kidnapping by Barbary Pirates for about 250 years, Devon and Cornwall particularly affected.



CAPT. CROKER HORROR STRUCKEN AT ALGERES, on returning the Moors of the Christian Slaves obtained by his Force drives home, after labouring for forty days with Legue. 1783

We were pleased to see some members of Heritage Lenham (HL) join us for our zoom talks, and have appreciated being invited to theirs. *See below.*

## Heritage Lenham

**Last:** 'Old Bunyard's Kent Pride, an Adventure in Kentish History' by John Bunyard.

John gave us a glimpse of his website and explained how he set it up. It's well worth a visit. <https://oldbunyardskentpride.com>

**We are invited** to join HL for their Feb Zoom talk

**Next: Mon 22 Feb: 'Pilgrimage on the Old Dover Road' by Jennifer Watson-Bore**

**7.30 p.m.** *Sylvia will email the link info*  
([Hon.sec@charinghistory.co.uk](mailto:Hon.sec@charinghistory.co.uk))

**Next CDLHS Zoom date for your diary;-  
Thursday 11th March 2021 at 7.30 p.m.**

## The Silk Road

It will be given by **Major Gordon Corrigan** (husband of Imogen) and will include the discovery of silk, the trading routes, the terrain, architecture and history.

Major Corrigan served in the Royal Gurkha Rifles, mainly in the Far East. Since his retirement he has been a writer on military history and a presenter of TV documentaries.



(*Court Ladies Preparing Newly Woven Silk, a Chinese silk painting by Emperor Huizong of Song, early 12th century*)

## Snowy weather in Charing



Alderbeds 2021 Steve Beck

Our recent snow just lasted a week. In his recollections, Harry Ward remembers the January of 1881 when it lasted six weeks. That extract is written below, with the addition of some more recent snowy photos in and around Charing.

“Winter sports were rather limited, sliding for the lower only, skating for the upper. Winters in those days were more severe. In my young days I remember the hard winter of 1881, started on January 18<sup>th</sup>, the most severest of my time. It was a perfect blizzard all day, all the roads were blocked up to several feet high, quite level with the hedges, snow ploughs were of no use, the roads had to be cut out, main roads in particular. Some of the byroads were not opened at all. This lasted for over 6 weeks, there were very sharp frosts that one could walk on top of the snow. I remember we boys cut out a room under the snow down the Pett Lane, snow lie there some places eight or more feet. We used to have a fire in it and sit in it, we made a hole for the smoke to get out. Fine fun for us, nice and warm with wood or branches blown down by the blizzard, there was plenty of that kind of fuel. This wood came in also very useful for homes as was that winter a great deal of distress, particularly of food and fuel, coal was a great difficulty to get, we used to go to the chalk hole and get chalk to mix with coal for our home fires.”



Snowploughs in 1987. 106 years later (they found it a challenge too.)

CDLHS archive

“I must mention on above date (*month?*) the Toll Gate House at corner of Pett Lane (*and The Hill*) where stands that small group of trees. My Grand father was Tollgate keeper. If you notice the ground at the back is fairly high, then there was a fairly tall hedge in addition, then it was quite snowed in, only the chimney showing, they had to dig him out three times, also had to keep the Toll Gate open. This did not matter as nothing could get about on the roads. Also the Spinners Cottage on the other side, at end of Rope Walk, where Doctor Collier's entrance gate now erected, there is you notice a high bank. Behind this was between the bank and cottage, the Spinners kept a pig and litter of young ones, had to dig them out in the evening, and put them in the scullery for several days before able to put them back in sty.”



Surgery Walk 2013

“The farmers had a very busy job digging out sheep out of snowdrifts, but in those days there were not so many sheep on farms as now, in those days greater part of farmland was arable,, not a lot of pastures as now. From Pett Lane and Barn Lane was all arable land, no pasture, also on the Maidstone Road where stands the Garage Brenchleys, there was one field pasture, the others were the Gorze Banks and Summerhouse Field where the water works stand, were the only fields for pasture between the village and Hart Hill Road even under Round Wood and Coal Wood were all arable.”



1987, yet more timeless....

CDLHS Archive





Charing Hill? 1987  
CDLHS Archive



The High Street 1987  
CDLHS Archive

## Charing Winters from Oral History transcripts (1910-1960s)

### Were the Winters Bad?

Mr Hills (born 1903) Hothfield, “Yes, 1917, the ground was frozen to a depth of about twelve inches because we were folding sheep in the field, but you know the iron peeler that you should make a hole with it, if you banged that down on the ground it would fly back and hit you. It was so hard you couldn't begin to make a hole so we had to turn the hurdles upside down and every so far put one the other way on to hold them, but it was very difficult. But, although the swede turnips were frozen solid the sheep still ate them! I had chilblains, one, two, three, four on there, one on each cheek. Oh, I was covered with them, broken chilblains on my thumbs and everything, but that was the hardest winter that I can ever remember.

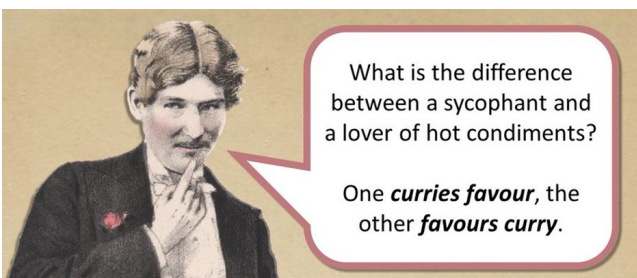


Now, Station Road, outside  
Old House  
CDLHS Archive

### Problems, Delivering with a Horse and Cart in Snow and Ice

Mr Towner (b 1904) Oh it was terrible. When I started at Cormes'es (Now the micro-pub) I used to drive round, do all the deliveries, with a horse and van. It were an open van, you had to face all the weathers, and if there were snow & ice, we'd take another 9 set of frost nails. (\* maybe screw in studs.) The nails would wear down 9 on the horses feet, you'd just put a fresh set in. We used to have two of us then, I used to drive a van round delivering, when I about 15 I was mostly in the shop, but if anyone went sick, they'd say, well, will you take the horse out and van? I used to have an old grey mare who did it for years. That old horse showed me the road when I first went out. We'd stop at different houses all round Stalisfield and Challock. They used to give the game away sometimes, and stop at the pubs.

## Laugh or Groan? Victorian style



What is the difference  
between a sycophant and  
a lover of hot condiments?

One *curries favour*, the  
other *favours curry*.

Sufferer: “Do you extract teeth  
without pain?”

Dentist: “Not always.

I sprained my wrist on one a  
couple of days ago. It hurts yet.”



*Snowy branches  
on Pilgrims Way 2013*

## Charing Winters from Oral History transcripts



*Boys snowballing on Picquets  
CDLHS Archive*

### Where were the favourite places to toboggan?

Mrs Clark (born about 1914) “We always did our tobogganing out there (Clewards) because it was an uneven field, we always had home-made sledges up and down and he couldn’t see where they could do it there now. .... But always the favourite was straight up beyond Clock House that was there lump that they came down. I can remember going up there, all of us, as the snow came down, it used to be thick and deep up there .

### How deep was the snow?

Mrs Clark (b 1914): “well of course the roads get cleared now don’t they, but as I say I had to come from Charing Heath to Charing Station and there were days when we couldn’t do the journey because there wasn’t a track through.”

Miss Machin (b 1894): “Pett Lane is frequently cut off, so is Wickens Lane, That' s happened in recent times. The worst winter I remember was about three years ago (1962—67) The very worst I ever remember.”

Mrs Ruglys (b 1895): “I've known it 6ft deep in Pett Lane. It drifts very badly along there. I remember one bad winter in the early fifties when it was completely blocked between here and Lenham. That was before they started putting snow fences up.”



Pinterest

### Skating? In Charing

Miss Machin (b 1894): “Oh, yes, there was Picquet' s Pond; just by the telephone exchange place, there’s a very rough bit of ground just on the London side, that was Picquet ´ s Pond, there were bushes round it , and it was filled in when they built the bypass. But on that pond, I learnt to skate when I was a small child. It wasn’t very large, you see, and someone could walk round the bank holding my hand!” (*when Picquets ran right down to the bypass*)

and skating on the Moat? “and in those days when the Moat was a private house, an old man named Colonel Groves lived there, and when the lake bore, he used to put a notice on the gate, and everyone used to go in and skate. And he provided ropes and ladders at the sides of the lake so if the ice broke there was a means of rescue at hand”.

Mr Clark (b 1908): “Then the Moat used to get frozen over and we used to go down there and see t hegi (*see through the hedge?*) all skating around. One of the things I remember, these fur hats that women are wearing now, (*1960s*) they all used to wear them when they were skating. So, it isn’t something at all fresh.”



*Queen Victoria on  
frozen Eastwell Lake  
Kent Online*

# **A Short History of Charing & its Growth**

## **Part 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Charing is situated at the foot of the North Downs in an area which has always been a major transport route. An Iron Age track at the top of the Downs was duplicated by another at the foot, which became incorporated into the North Downs Way, now known as the Pilgrim's Way.

The village lies at the point where the porous chalk of the North Downs meets the clay at the base of the escarpment, causing springs to emerge, and it now has major extensions up the hill to Stocker's Head (on top of the Downs), and southwards to Coppins Corner.

The archaeological history of settlement goes back to the Bronze Age, followed by the Iron Age, and there is extensive evidence of Roman activity, including a road from Charing to Pluckley and the remains of a cemetery on the edge of the present village. This was uncovered in 2019 ahead of building work on a development site beside the A20. Remains of crematoria urns as well as the headless skeleton of a horse were unearthed!

Other settlements in the parish include Charing Heath, a rural settlement about 1/2 mile to the south-west on the Lower Greensand, and the hamlet of Westwell Leacon, about a mile to the south-east (although Westwell Leacon only became part of Charing parish in the 20<sup>th</sup> century).

The written history of the area starts in the Anglo-Saxon period. Charing's name was once thought to derive from that of a local Jutish chief 'Ceorra' who was thought to be head of a small settlement in the area. However, modern scholars have other theories, so the derivation of the name remains uncertain.

### **LOCATION**

Two important routes cross one another in Charing village: the A20 Maidstone - Ashford road and the A252 road to Canterbury.

The most famous and earliest east-west route is the prehistoric track way now known as the Pilgrim's Way. Other routes followed in the valley below, including Roman roads, the medieval road to Lenham and Ashford, the turnpike from Maidstone to Ashford and, more recently, the railway, A20, M20 and what is now known as HS1.

These roads were crossed by north-south routes which in medieval times were used to drive swine from manors in north Kent to their outlying lands in the Weald where the pigs foraged for acorns during the autumn. One of these is the road from Charing to Pluckley and the Low Weald; fragments of others can be identified crossing the A20 on both sides of the village.

## A Short History of Charing & its Growth

### Part 1 continued

#### LINK WITH CANTERBURY

Charing was given to the Church of Canterbury by Egbert II (King of Kent between 765 - 780). The archbishops established a manor house here - a day's journey from Canterbury. A market grew up outside the manor gates and the present settlement was largely in place by the fifteenth century.

As one of the archbishop's 17 estates in Kent, the produce of the manor, which included a large part of the present parish, supported the archbishop's household here and in Canterbury, while the residence itself was used by the archbishops as a staging post between London and Canterbury or the Continent.

The manor house was reputedly one of Thomas Becket's favourite residences, but the present buildings date from the early fourteenth century. It remained the property of the archbishops until 1545, when it passed first to the Crown and then into private hands.

*Keith Oram*

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CDLHS: *A History of Charing and Charing Village Trail*; Celia Jennings: *The Field of Cloth of Gold - The Charing Connection*; Charing Parish Council.

My thanks also to Sarah Pearson for her help in compiling this short history.

Part 2 next month

The Link with the English Monarchy, and the Development of the village

## QUIZ

- 1 Until 1814 administration for the county of Kent was split between two towns, which were they?
- 2 This ornamental cast iron fountain was cast in a French foundry c1862.
  - a) In which Kent town is it now?
  - b) Why was it once particularly special?

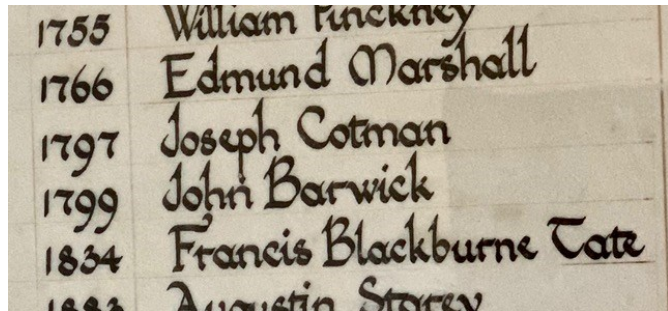




## The Enigma of Edmund Marshall - Vicar of Charing

**The Reverend Edmund Marshall (1730-1797)** was a colourful character in Charing society. He was a Whig supporter of civil and religious liberties, a writer, a poet and a prolific pamphleteer. As a clergyman, he held not just one, but three benefices namely Rector of Fawkham, Vicar of Charing and Perpetual Curate of Egerton.

After graduating from St John's Cambridge, Edmund was ordained by the Bishop of Hereford and became chaplain to the Earl Morton for a while. He received special dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury to hold all three benefices until his death.



1755	William Fucckney
1766	Edmund Marshall
1797	Joseph Cotman
1799	John Barwick
1834	Francis Blackburne Tate
1834	Augustin Storey



His parents Joshua and Catherine Marshall (née Barrell) are interred in Charing graveyard. Their epitaph included an enigmatic warning to their son:

*"O Vicar...reflect, and profit by the reflection how small the distance and perhaps quick the transition from yon house thou inhabitest to the caverns of the dead."*

These words were inscribed on an oval plaque that was nailed to the yew tree above the family vault. It was pictured in sketches by Horace Barwick in the 1830s hanging there for 160 years until quite recently it vanished.

The house he *inhabited* was The Parsonage also known as the Moat House which came with a generous living from the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's.

The Reverend Edmund had two children with his wife Mary Pearce Nash. His son, George Granville Marshall married Cassandra, the eldest of the three Hutchinson sisters out in society. His daughter, Frances Ann Marshall married Rev. John Barwick who ultimately succeeded her father as Vicar of Charing in 1799.



## The Enigma of Edmund Marshall - Vicar of Charing *continued*

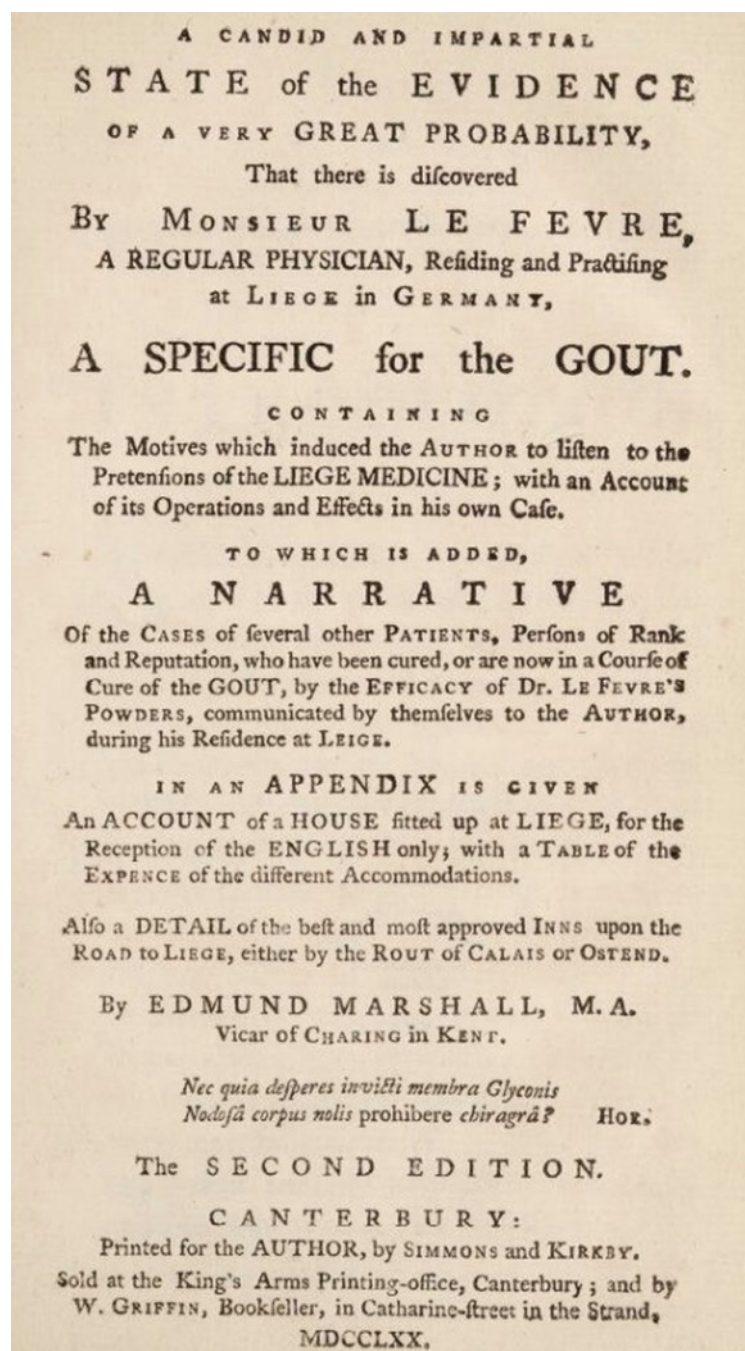
Living 'freely as a juvenile' as he confessed in the pamphlet, combined with travelling the 30 miles between his parishes at Fawkham and Charing, took its toll on his health. Consequently at the young age of 29 he first suffered an excruciating attack of gout, that was in part perhaps hereditary. These debilitating bouts ultimately became so severe that he was 'totally deprived of the use of his limbs.'

The search for a cure took him to the continent where Monsieur Le Fèvre, a physician practising at Liege, claimed to have a supposed *specific* for that disease. The 'gouty vicar' as he was known by his descendants, was wholly taken with the cure and wrote persuasively to encourage other gout sufferers to travel to Liege, follow the regime and take the powders. In a pamphlet of over 90 pages, he described his experiences in detail, adding in the appendix a list of the best Inns for overnight stays on the road to Liege.

This travel section thoughtfully included the relative costs of good Claret, Burgundy or Champagne the latter at 5 **eschalins** a bottle!

After staying at Le Fèvre's own Auberge, (Le Fèvre was a wine merchant as well as a physician), at the cost of a guinea and a half per month, the expulsion of the 'gouty germ' - within the proscribed 15-20 month period - failed to occur.

When finally home in Kent, it became obvious to all that the Revd. Marshall 'exhibited living proof of the fallacy of the evidence he had published' so hopefully in 1770.

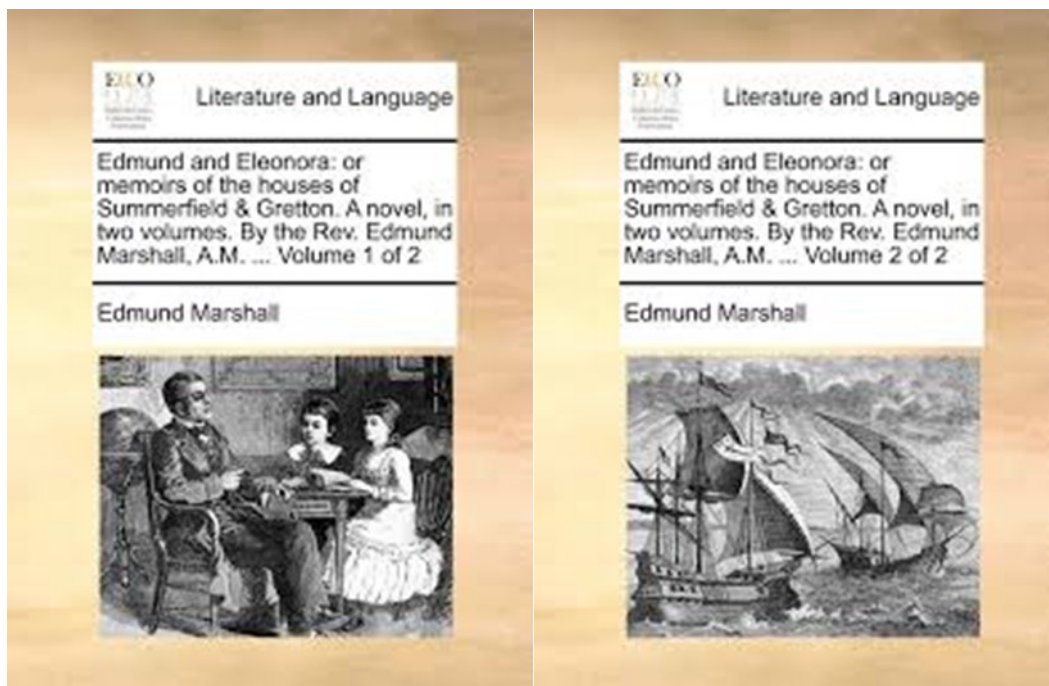


## The Enigma of Edmund Marshall - Vicar of Charing *continued*

For many years Rev. Marshall wrote for the Gentleman's Magazine under the name Cantianus. He also contributed occasional articles on political subjects to the Kentish Gazette. Then in his mid 60s Edmund Marshall, wracked with gout and immobile, embarked on the ultimate writing challenge; a novel, in order he wrote, 'to beguile the horrors of pain and confinement.'

(At the same time a short distance away, Jane Austen whilst staying with her brother in Kent, started drafting her novel that became *Pride and Prejudice*.)

**Edmund and Eleonora: or Memoirs of the Houses of Summerfield and Gretton**, was first published in 1797. Remarkably it is still printable today having its own ISBN number. Amazon declares that, "This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilisation as we know it".



A posthumous review of his novel in the Monthly Review that year, stated that it was "*the production of an amiable and benevolent clergyman, unacquainted with the artifices of a practised novel-writer.*" Descriptions of festive entertainments, rural diversions, morality and political integrity abound in 2 volumes.

(What a fascinating, lively and inspirational place Charing must have been?)

A present day reader is likely to be surprised that in a sentimental story, one character, elegant Alicia Seddon is of mixed race parentage (just like the Duke of Hastings in *Bridgerton*) who voices the opinions of an abolitionist. Despite unscrupulous encounters, Alicia, eventually marries a dance teacher and blends into the pastoral idyll - unlike most historical accounts of the time.

(For those readers in the know, I suspect Lady Whistledown would have relished the potential scandal).

## The Enigma of Edmund Marshall - Vicar of Charing *continued*

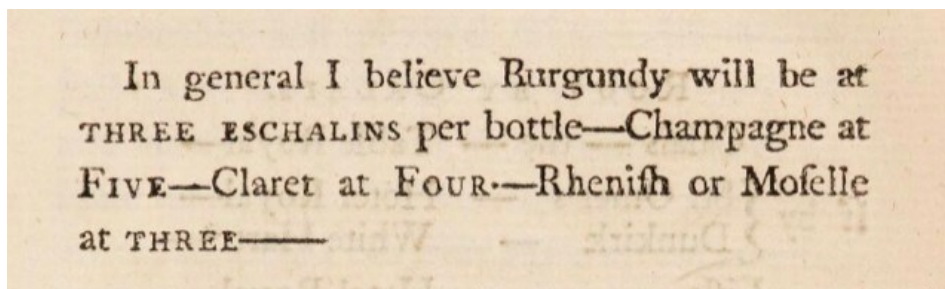
The novel was translated into French with the title *Edmond et Eleanora, Traduit de l'anglais, par un homme qui aime les moeurs simples*. (Translated from the English by a man who loves simple moral (stories))

Regrettably Rev. Edmund Marshall did not live to see the success of his novel nor the birth of his grandson Horace Barwick. According to one obituary his later 'life of suffering gave the most ample proofs of a mind impressed with the doctrine and truths of the Christian religion, by bearing his affliction with firmness and submitting with resignation to the dispensations of an all-righteous and all-wise God.'

He died on 8th May 1797 aged 67, and finally inhabits *the caverns of the dead* in the family vault alongside his parents and aunt.

H.E.W.

### Notes



12 Sols in 1 **Eschalin**, 20 **Eschalins** are 1 Livre in French currency ...

*Basically a shilling probably silver coin? Liege at that time was busy swopping national identity from Austrian Dutch to German then French then Dutch before becoming Belgian. When Edmund went in 1770 it was briefly German, though quite French in style.*

For further reading:

The Wellcome Collection London holds the Gout Pamphlet

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/q4yawc36/items?canvas=1&langCode=eng&sierraId=b3054788x>

\* *Edmund and Eleonora, or, Memoirs of the houses of Summerfield & Gretton, a novel by The Rev Edmund Marshall*

[https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009471277?type\[\]=all&lookfor\[\]=Edmund Marshall&ft=](https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009471277?type[]=all&lookfor[]=Edmund Marshall&ft=)

Edmund's books are a source of much contemporary information. This is the google link to read the whole book for free:

[https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/A\\_Candid\\_and\\_Impartial\\_State\\_of\\_the\\_Evid/RbxEAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Eschalins&pg=PA74&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/A_Candid_and_Impartial_State_of_the_Evid/RbxEAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Eschalins&pg=PA74&printsec=frontcover)



## **The M20 History, Operations Stack and Brock – Part 1**

### **A Potted History of Construction**

The M20 – well all know what it is, where it is and probably used frequently – or at least used to before the current lockdowns. Everyone has heard of Operations Stack and Brock – but who knows exactly what they mean and who knows the convoluted history of the motorway ?

Well its 51 miles long, starting at a junction with the A20 at Swanley and runs on to Folkestone where it joins the A20 again to Dover. Although never advertised as such, it is actually part of the European Route E15. Like many other motorways, it was built in lots of small stages over a very considerable period of time. In fact the first stretch was started before World War 2 – but not many people know that.

The very first part was, in fact, the A20 Ashford Bypass (roughly the section from Jct 9 to 10) with construction starting before the war, but not actually opened until July 1957. The next section was the Maidstone Bypass (now Jct 5 Aylesford to Jct 7 Maidstone) opening in 1960, and extended to Jct 8 Leeds Castle a year later. This was numbered as the A20(M) and became the first motorway south of London and predates the M2 by two years.

Further sections followed, with Jct 3 Wrotham Heath to Jct 5 opening in 1971, Jct 1 Swanley to Jct 2 Wrotham in 1977, although the section between was not completed until 1980 due to construction difficulties in descending the North Downs. At the coastal end, the old Ashford Bypass was upgraded and the road extended from what is Jct 9 right through to Jct 13 at Folkestone in 1981 where it joined the A20.

All this left was the long 14-mile section in the middle from Jct 8 Leeds Castle to Jct 9 Ashford, the part nearest to us, often referred to as the “missing link”, which resulted in all traffic to and from the coast and ports using the A20 through the village. At the time, it was not considered necessary to complete the motorway as the A20 was judged adequate to carry all the traffic. Remember at this time there was no Channel Tunnel and most Dover traffic used the A2 and M2. It was not until the Channel Tunnel was nearing completion, with the expected increase in traffic, was the “missing link” finally built, opening in 1991. The photos show some of the work being carried out and also the open day for local residents just before its official opening.

The section around Maidstone was extensively widened in 1995, Jct 10 at Ashford rebuilt in 2007, and again remodelled with a new Jct 10A, eventually completed in early 2020. So, all in all, what was started in the late 1930s was not finally completed until 2020.

Within the Society’s photographic collection, we have a vast collection of digitised photographs of the construction of the “missing link” and of the opening ceremony and some of these are included here.



***A20 /M20 Bridge under construction at Westwell***



***Pluckley Road Bridge under construction***



## The M20 and Continental Bound Freight Traffic



*Section around Charing still under construction*



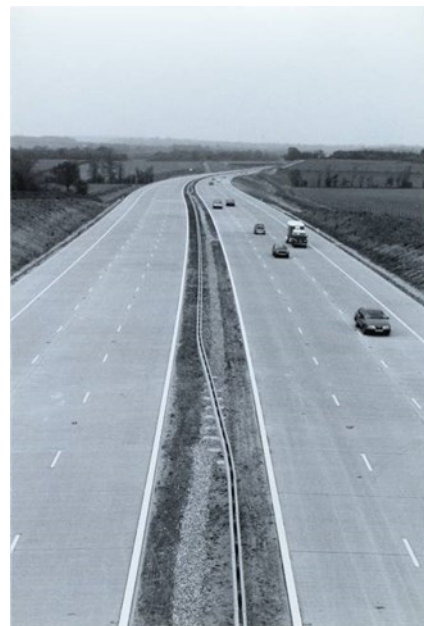
*The Completed Motorway before opening*



*Opening ceremony of the M20 to the public*

Up until the Channel Tunnel opened, all of the European bound Heavy Goods Vehicles (or HGVs) crossed via Dover and generally used the A2 and M2. Once the tunnel opened, the M20 “missing link” opened and the new A20 dual carriageway from Folkestone to Dover was completed, then most Continental bound freight started using the newly completed M20 in preference. Traffic volumes increased considerably, but the route managed.

To give some idea of the volume of HGVs crossing the channel, in 2017 in both directions, a total of some 1.6M lorries used the Channel Tunnel and 2.6M crossed via Dover. This equates to a daily equivalent each way of nearly 2,200 (via the Tunnel) and 3,550 (via Dover) or around 5,750 per day. Of the two routes to the channel crossings, very approximately about 80% use the M20 and 20% use the M2. To put this another way, there about 4,600 trucks a day pass by along the M20 in each direction. This is 192 per hour or equivalent to one HGV lorry every 18 seconds each way – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



*The M20 just after opening*

What soon emerged was that if the channel crossings were disrupted for any reason, and there were many such as French port blockades and industrial action, closure of the Channel Tunnel, bad weather in the Channel as just a few examples, HGV congestion built up very rapidly, gridlocking both Dover and the Eurotunnel site.

The temporary solution adopted by Highways England and controlled by the Kent Police with assistance from Kent County Council was the institution of “Operation Stack”, - more to follow in the next newsletter.

*Steve Beck*

Since 1801 there has been a census every ten years except in 1941, during the Second World War. The basic principles of census taking remain the same, though new questions have been added and others have been omitted.

It is a count of all people and households in the UK, and is the only exercise that provides a detailed snapshot of the whole population and is unique because everyone in the country answers the same questions about the same day. The findings mean central and local government can use resources effectively for things like housing, education, health and transport.

Until 1911 the Government needed to introduce a new Census Act for every census held. This was changed by the 1920 Census Act which made it possible for the Government to hold a census at any time, once Parliament has approved the necessary 'secondary' legislation which lays out the details of a particular census, but no sooner than five years after the last census.

Filling in the census forms is compulsory and repeated failure to complete it could result in a fine of up to £1,000.

How exciting it was when the 1911 census was released after 100 years. The census forms were written by the householder, rather than by the enumerator. It meant we could see an insight into our relatives' lives and see a form filled in by our ancestors.

I am sure with the use of modern technology that many of us have whiled away a few minutes- no hours,- over lockdown looking at census information. It has enabled so many of us to research our family history and discover a wealth of information from the past.

Here are just a few census facts:

4000BC	Babylonians used a census as a guide to determine how much food they needed for each member of the population
2500BC	The Egyptians used censuses to work out the scale of the workforce required to build their pyramids and how to share out the land after the annual flooding of the Nile.
6th Century BC	King <u>Servius Tullius</u> was thought to have conducted an early census. The Romans conducted censuses every five years, which required every man in the Roman Empire to return to his birthplace and be counted in order to keep track of the population and determine taxes .  Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem to take part in the Census ordered by Caesar Augustus.
1086 Domesday Book	The Domesday Book was the first thorough survey of all England, it included a small part of what is now Wales and some of Cumbria, and painted a very detailed picture of life in Norman England. It was an inventory of land and property, establishing the ownership of assets, so that owners could be taxed on these possessions. It was not an accurate count of the people living in England then.
1279 The Hundred Rolls	King Edward I commissioned a great inquiry into landholding in England. The surviving returns were arranged by hundred, so the name 'The Hundred Rolls' was a more detailed picture of rural society, but nothing was done with the results at the time.
1485 – 1714	During Tudor and Stuart times bishops were made responsible for counting the number of families in their dioceses, but Britain was very reluctant to adopt the idea of a regular official census. Some believed that any type of people count was sacrilegious whilst others said that a population count would reveal the nation's strengths and weaknesses to foreign enemies.
1798	The widespread opposition to an official census finally ended after demographer Thomas Malthus, published his essay which suggested that the population growth would soon outstrip supplies of food and other resources. Unable to support itself, Britain would be hit by famine, disease and other disasters. Concerned at this alarmist view of the future, people began to see the need for a census. Parliament passed the Census Act in 1800.

<p>10 March 1801.</p> <p><u>Richard Trevithick</u> and <u>Andrew Vivian</u> demonstrate "Puffing Devil", their steam-powered road locomotive.</p>	<p>The first official census of UK. took place in 1801, but there are still differing views on why it happened.</p> <p>Some reports suggest it was conducted to learn how many able-bodied men were in the country who were able to fight in the Napoleonic wars.</p> <p>Others say it was simply done to record the population, so the government could ensure there was enough to eat.</p> <p>Information was collected from every household by the Overseers of the Poor, aided by constables, tithingmen, headboroughs and other officers of the peace. In Scotland, the responsibility for taking the count was placed on schoolmasters.</p> <p>By modern standards, the whole census operation was completed in a remarkably short time. In England and Wales, census day was 10 March 1801 and the first abstracts were printed and</p>
<p>Monday 27th May 1811</p> <p>Bell Rock Lighthouse begins operation off the coast of Scotland</p>	<p>The returns of the second census of Great Britain (that is England, Scotland and Wales) gave a population of 12.6 million people, an increase of 1.6 million over 1801.</p> <p>No details of individuals and their names were recorded only the number of uninhabited houses, inhabited houses and occupants, number of houses being built, how many persons, how many male/ female, how many households are chiefly employed in agriculture; how many in trade, manufactures, or handicraft; and how many in neither were recorded for each parish, township, or place.</p>
<p>Monday 28 May 1821</p> <p><u>John Constable</u> completes his painting</p>	<p>Information about every person in the land was processed by an army of clerks using nothing but pens and paper.</p> <p>The census was the first to measure the age of the population (in five-year and ten-year age groups). It was designed to find out how many men able to bear arms lived in the country and to improve the tables on which life assurance schemes were based.</p> <p>It revealed that almost half of the population was under 20 years old.</p> <p>The first modern census in Ireland was in 1821.</p>
<p>Monday 30 May 1831.</p> <p><u>Victor Hugo's The Hunchback of Notre-Dame</u>, is published</p>	<p>The first census to include the industrial classifications of: agriculture, manufacturing or making machinery, retail trade or handicraft, merchants, bankers, miners, fishermen and so on.</p> <p>The question about age was removed.</p> <p>There were 2.85 million inhabited buildings, occupied by 3.41 million families.</p>
<p>Night of Sunday 6 June 1841.</p> <p><u>Great Western Railway</u> completed throughout between <u>London</u> and <u>Bristol</u></p>	<p>Generally recognised as being the first truly modern census, when the first Registrar General of England and Wales, John Lister, was made responsible for organising the count. Census field teams took the census, instead of overseers of the poor and other leading members of the parish. Some 35,000 enumerators (all men) armed with pencils delivered a separate form to each household, recording almost 14 million people in England and Wales. From now onwards all future census were taken on a Sunday evening as this is when it was believed most people would be at home.</p> <p>For the first time, the head of each household was given a form to fill in on behalf of everyone in the household on a certain day , a real challenge for some since at this time many people could not read or write.</p> <p>The most popular occupation was domestic servant. Almost a quarter of a million people worked in cotton manufacture, and there were 571 fork-makers, 74 leech bleeders and five ice dealers.</p> <p>Artist JMW Turner rowed a boat into the Thames so he could not be counted as being present at any property and avoid being part of the census.</p>

<p>30<sup>th</sup> March 1851</p> <p>Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace</p>	<p>This census asked for people's exact age, marital status, their relationship to the head of household and birthplace. They were also asked to declare any infirmities and second occupations.</p> <p>Special enumeration books were completed for institutions such as workhouses, barracks and hospitals in every census year from 1851. Special schedules for vessels were introduced in 1851, although none are known to survive from that year, so in practice 1861 was the first year to include returns from the Royal Navy and merchant shipping, at sea and in ports at home and abroad. Due to the difficulties of collecting enumeration books from ships in distant ports, shipping returns are likely to be incomplete.</p>
<p>7<sup>th</sup> April 1861</p> <p>About 350 convicts held on St Mary's Island at <u>Chatham Dockyard</u> take over their prison in a riot.</p>	<p>Between 1861 and 1901, there was little change in either the content of the census or the way in which it was carried out.</p> <p>This census was the first to attempt a population figure for the whole of the British Empire! 145,068,020- it's accuracy is questionable!</p>
<p>2<sup>nd</sup> April 1871</p> <p>The first <u>Rugby Union</u> International results in a 1–0 win, by Scotland over England.</p>	<p>Householders were asked to give more precise details of the places of birth of each resident, to state their relationships to him or her, marital status and the nature of any disabilities from which they may have suffered</p> <p>The categories of 'lunatic' and 'imbecile' were added to the list of infirmities</p> <p>Enumerators were paid one guinea (£1 and one shilling) to count 400 people. They got more if they walked more than five miles or counted an extra 100 people.</p>
<p>3<sup>rd</sup> April 1881</p> <p>Alexander Fleming born</p>	<p>In 1881, the Registrar General commented on the question which asked whether any 'lunatics', 'imbeciles' or 'idiots' lived in the household, saying: "It is against human nature to expect a mother to admit her young child to be an idiot, however much she may fear this to be true. To acknowledge the fact is to abandon all hope."</p> <p>In this census, one woman gave her title as Maid of Allwork, her occupation as slave and a</p>
<p>5<sup>th</sup> April 1891</p> <p><u>Arthur Conan Doyle's</u> detective <u>Sherlock Holmes</u> appears in <u>The Strand Magazine</u> for the first time.<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>A question was introduced about the number of rooms in each household in response to fears of overcrowding in industrial cities.</p> <p>For the first time, women census takers were employed.</p> <p>The requirements for a good census taker have not changed much in over 150 years: "...he must not be infirm; he must be temperate, orderly and respectable, and such a person has to conduct himself with strict propriety..."</p> <p>This was the first census to ask a question about the Welsh language in Wales. Many babies less than a year old were recorded as being able to speak Welsh!</p>
<p>31<sup>st</sup> March 1901</p> <p>Queen Victoria dies</p>	<p>This census recorded a good measure of the population in work. Around eight in 10 of the total male population and almost one third of the total female population regarded themselves as being 'occupied'.</p> <p>In this census the authorities decided to replace the term 'coal miner' with 'coal hewer' to more accurately describe the occupation of a man who worked underground, and at the coalface. Respecting the political correctness of the day, the term 'idiot' was replaced with 'feeble minded'.</p> <p>The total population of England and Wales had by then reached 32,526,075.</p>

More census facts to come in our next newsletter when we journey from 1911 to the present day.

However, a group of CDLHS members have researched the 1901 and 1911 Census to find data related to Charing.

So if you want to find out more local information in the meantime, check out our website at [www.charinghistory.co.uk](http://www.charinghistory.co.uk)



## Noticeboard

### Figures

Our 'Boxley Abbey' Zoom talk in January had an audience of 49, of whom 30 were members and 19 were non-members.

Emails are currently being sent to 122 people.

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Harold Trill's 'HAT Invicta Productions' YouTube channel (link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfJyJ8LDhy2FN0oWKMq4G5Q/videos>)

now has more videos, including two of 'The Charing Examiner.' If you have any information on the 'Examiner', please contact me as I would really like to find out more about its history.

Another thing I've heard about are races down The Hill and High Street, with the road specially closed.. Again I'd like to find out more about those, so if you were involved in any way, please let me know.

These are just two unusual things that happened in Charing in the last 50 years, or our more recent past– are there any more? Please let me know, Thanks, Valerie

[@newsletter@charinghistory.co.uk](mailto:@newsletter@charinghistory.co.uk)

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## Reminder



We recently learned more about pilgrimages as part of our Boxley Talk, now Heritage Lenham have invited us to join them for 'PILGRIMAGE ON THE OLD DOVER ROAD,' a talk via Zoom, by Jennifer Watson-Bore on **Monday 22 February**. (Jennifer is a blue badge guide for Canterbury and London.)

Also, Melvyn Bragg's topic for 'In Our Time' on radio 4 this week was 'Medieval Pilgrimages.' It's available on BBC Sounds <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000s9qp> , or as a podcast, if you're interested in listening.



We hold contact information of members, and interested people, to send them society news and information on local history. We do not share the information with third parties.

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