



CHARING & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.charinghistory.co.uk

CDLHS In Our Historic Times

edition 15, March 2021

Now Is Not The Time To Waver ...

Contents

Zoom talks looking back and looking forward	p 2
Youth Hostels in Charing	p 3-6
Census 2021—part 2	p 8-11
The M20 History, Operations Stack and Brock – Part 2	p 12-14
Quiz Answers to Feb Quiz	p 7
Laugh or Groan?	P 11
Quiz	p 11
Noticeboard	p 15

Hello,

Thanks to Dorothy, Sylvia and Steve for contributing to make another interesting mix for you to browse and enjoy.

This is the penultimate issue of In Historic Times.

It's hard to believe that it is a whole year since England received the first 'Stay At Home' message, and next month, it will be a whole year since the first issue of 'IHT'!

Valerie

Zoom Talks

Our last CDLHS Zoom

The Silk Road by Major Gordon Corrigan



This was a fascinating fact-filled talk. It outlined the centuries of trading between east and west, as well as the rigour of the thousands of miles trekked by caravans

on the Silk Road.

A memorable fact; in 550, monks from Syria successfully stole moths eggs. They smuggled them away in their walking sticks and took them back to Syria. They did produce silk, but it was of inferior quality.

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

Next CDLHS Zoom date for your diary;-

Thursday 8th April 2021 at 7.30 p.m.

**'Medway Meanderings:
the social history and architecture of the Medway valley.'** by Jonathan Fenner

Jonathan is a qualified architect, blue badge tour guide, and lecturer. He is also a keen walker, and his special interests include historic buildings, industrial maritime Britain and social history.



Members and friends will be emailed the meeting ID and password, as usual.

Or contact: [Honsec@ charinghistory.co.uk](mailto:Honsec@charinghistory.co.uk)

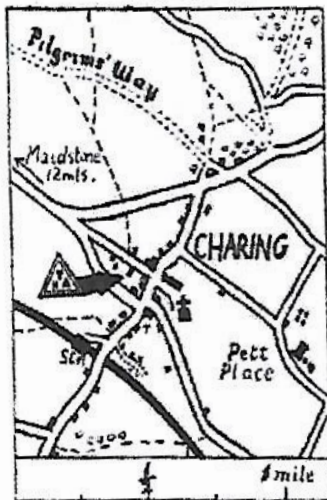
It should be good! Please join us.

(R Medway image from 'canalboat.co.uk')



This photo shows Headmaster Mr Rudge with the Gardening Group from Charing School, but where was it taken ?

Charing Youth Hostels



CHARING. *Youth Hostel, Picquets, Charing, Kent. Mrs. Curtis (acting warden and for bookings). For correspondence, H. D. Headley, Old Barn House, Charing. TEL. Charing 68.* Charing Hostel, surrounded by meadows and orchards, near the centre of the village, is simple but comfortable, and well equipped. The Pilgrims' Way is best approached in the Canterbury direction by a footpath not marked on the O.S. 1 in. map. Take the road up to the church and continuing the footpath, fork left to the north-west of Pitt Place (crossing two by-roads) and join the Pilgrims' Way near Burnt House. Charing church is interesting, as it is surrounded by the remains of an old palace, once the residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury,

where Henry VIII was entertained on his way to the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

M25, W25 : PROVISIONS, Hostel and Store *** : E.C.D. Wed. : MEALS 1/-, 1/2 : STATION S.R., Charing : BUS, Maidstone-Ashford frequent, Maidstone-Canterbury infrequent : CAMPING, limited : DISTANCES, Yalding 20m, Dover 30m, Canterbury 15m.

Hostel details from the Youth Hostels in South East England Guide, 1935 (YHA Archive).

The Youth Hostel, Charing, Kent

The Pilgrim's Way

WINCHESTER Alton Bognor Othel Radhill Westerham Sevenoaks Mirotham Maidstone Charing Ashford Canterbury

To Buston Manor, Yalding, Nr. Maidstone, 17 miles

To Ashford 6 miles.
Canterbury 14 miles.
Dover 29 miles.

This Hostel, which is one of the largest and most complete in the South-East of England, stands in a picturesque village. Close by are the ruins of an Archbishop's Palace. Has fine views of the North Downs, and of Pilgrim's Way (four minutes distant), reached by direct field path. Garden and field in front.

For accommodation and further particulars, including illustrated folder of walks, apply to Warden.

Postcard of the Picquets hostel. The local spelling is usually Pickets or Picketts (YHA Archive)

Charing Youth Hostels

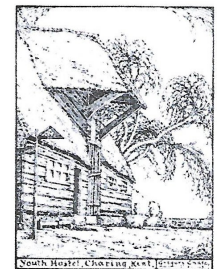
This information has been taken from a profile compiled by the YHA volunteer archivist, John Martin, with help from C&DLHS, in 2014. He kindly gave us a copy of his research.



*Charing Youth Hostel c 1930,
once Peirce Farm Barn
(CDLHS Archive)*

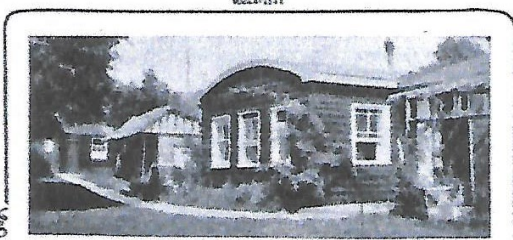
Among the pioneer youth hostels in 1931, were some laid out along the length of the Pilgrims' Way. One of these was at the Old Barn, Charing. A total of 181 overnight stays were spent there that year. It was described by the YHA as a 16th century tithing barn which had been restored and equipped by a local friend of the Association. There were beds for 12 men and 12

women and it was furnished in simple, rustic style. The barn was



*Sketch by Gregory Chase
15th Dec 1931
YHA archives
notice YH △*

behind, and slightly to the south-west, of Peirce House, standing on Picquets Meadow, with the school and its playing field beyond. Mr D.H.Headley was in charge in 1931 and was to have a strong influence on both hostels in the village right up to 1937.



*Postcard of the Picquets Hostel, the local spelling is usually Pickets, or Picketts,
YHA Archives*

The Old Barn hostel was due to be replaced for the 1932 season and a new hostel on Picquets Meadow was opened that year. It was described as a modern wooden building with beds for 25 men and 25 women, but a postcard held by the YHA suggests it was more likely a cluster of wooden buildings. It was an accommodation hostel, that is, one not run or staffed by YHA, but privately owned and operated as part of the association's network. It was located slightly south of the Old Barn. John Martin believed it possible that the huts may have come from the construction site of the by-pass which was completed by 1930, but this can't be corroborated.

In October 1932 Ronald Hay and Irene Murgitroyd were on a walking tour of Kent and stayed at the new Charing Hostel. The following is an account of the experience in a holiday log, provided by kind permission of their daughter.

"We took the road into the centre of the village of Charing. We did not like the look of the address given in the National Cyclists' Union book, but we had noticed a Youth hostel on the way in, so we went back and asked the lady if she could take us in, although we weren't members. She seemed very agreeable to do so and first showed us over the place – the Ladies' dormitory being attached to the main building, in which was the Common Room, Kitchen and the warden's quarters and the Men's dormitory in a



*The interior of Charing Youth Hostel,
date about 1930-1931
(CDLHS Archive)*

barn at the top of the garden. Being fairly satisfied we decided to stay and after a wash filled in the book while the Warden got our tea. We sat down at 4pm sharp to a huge pile of bread and butter and honey and cake, and then after a smoke the warden took us to see the old cottages in the village, and we left her to go to a farm now partly in ruins which was once a palace of the Archbishop Morton, first Archbishop of Canterbury. We knocked at the farm, but the lady who after much difficulty succeeded in opening the great doors of the barn did not seem to know much about its history, but said if we could see their cowman he would tell us all about it. Just then the cowman appeared wheeling a milkcart and he reopened the doors and explained the history of the place thoroughly even taking us into little alcoves of the ruined walls so that we might see the bricked in windows. It was while we stood in one of these corners with the evening sun streaming through the gaps which had once been windows that he said the view reminded him somewhat of Suffolk where he said he was born, and where lived the poet Bloomfield who wrote the poem the Blind Ploughman and straightway he began to recite a few lines and seeing we were appreciative carried on and completed the whole poem. It was a scene I shall not easily forget.



Rare sketch of Charing's first youth hostel by Willis (YHA Archive)

Thanking him and saying goodbye, we left him wheeling away his milkcart and hurried back to the Hostel, as the evening was chilly. The Warden had lit a stove for us, so we sat in the Common Room reading, and by way of a change, I went into the garden with the shears and cut the grass and rolled it with a big stone lawnroller I found there. When I returned I was healthily warmed and at about 8pm the Warden got our supper – boiled eggs, ham, bread and butter and cheese and Bovril and we all had it together.

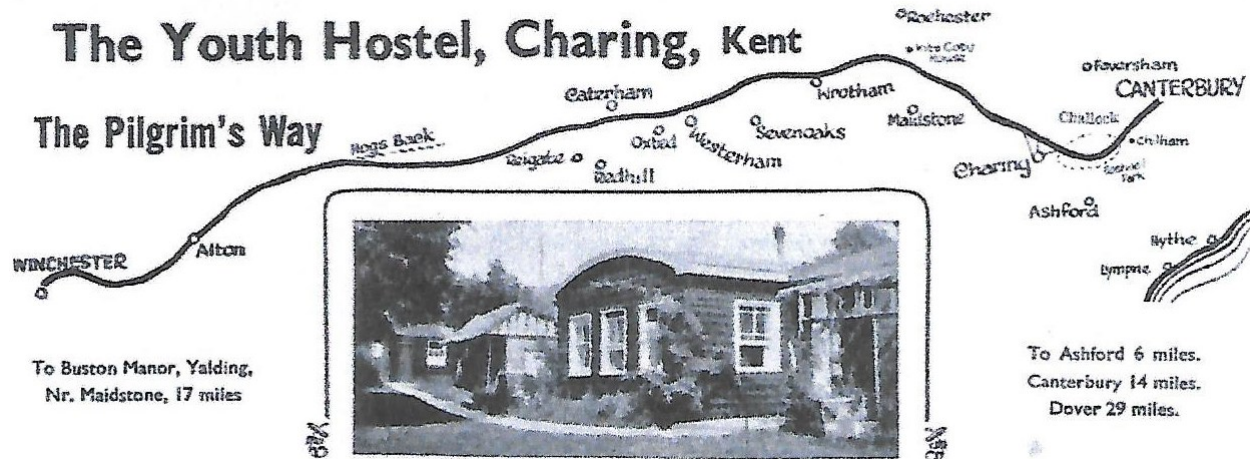
Irene went to bed and the linen sleeping bags were provided by the hostel. The Men's dormitory was a large bare room with cracks in the walls which I stuffed with paper in case of the rats. In the morning I had to run down the garden from the Men's dormitory to the house for shaving water. A good breakfast was ready at 7.30."

The above account suggests that the Old Barn (with its rats) was used in parallel with the new hostel in late 1932. At some stage about then, the old building was quite remarkably removed in its entirety and rebuilt further south on Pluckley Road, substantially remodelled, where it remains in residential use today. The ladies' dorm of the holiday log may even have been in Peirce Farm cottage. So, the story of the replacement of the Old Barn by the huts is quite complex.

In 1937 the Picquets Hostel was closed and replaced by the old rectory at Stalisfield Green, opened in 1938, and then by Cuckoo Wood Farm, Otterden in the war and finally the more permanent Doddington Hostel (1947- 1980).

Dorothy Burdick

With thanks also to the YHA Archive, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham archive.



Answers to February Quiz

- 1 Until 1814 administration for the county of Kent was split between two towns, which were they?

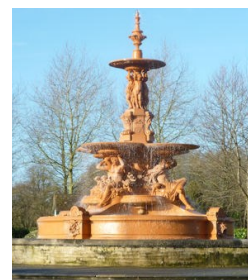
Ans. Maidstone was the key town for west Kent and Canterbury for the east of the county.

(Maidstone only officially county town in 1889, The county council was only established following a reform of local government.)

- 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?

Ans. The Hubert Fountain has been in Victoria Park, Ashford, since 1912. It was special because it was created in France, as a musical whistle playing fountain for the *Great International Exhibition*, at the Horticultural Society Gardens in Kensington, London, in 1862.



It was presented to the town in 1912, by a Mr Harper; on the condition that it was to be played every year on 23rd July; his birthday. Now, it no longer plays music, and is irreparable, but is believed instead, to be lit up annually on July 23rd.

The four upper-figures of children represent the four quarters of the world, with the words 'Asie,' 'Europe,' 'Afrique,' and 'Amerique' inscribed into the pedestals beneath.

See <https://www.loveashford.com/blog/fountain-park> for more info.

As we said last month there has been a census every 10 years since 1801 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.

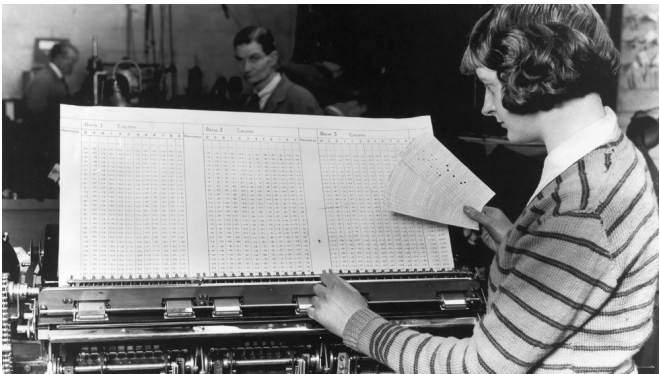

By now we will have filled in the 2021 Census which took a snapshot of life on Sunday 21st March 2021.

I still feel that the publication of the 1911 Census was very exciting. It meant we could we get an insight into our relatives' lives, many of whom we would have known and to see their handwriting.


The 1921 Census was the first to be conducted following the introduction of the Census Act of 1920 and will be published in early 2022. Taken on 19 June 1921, it consists of more than 28,000 bound volumes of original household returns containing detailed information on close to 38 million individuals, providing greater detail than any previously published census.

I am sure that those of us who enjoy researching family history eagerly await its release.

<p>2nd April 1911</p> <p>Titanic launched</p>	<p>The 1911 Census is the first census where the original forms were kept and the handwriting on the original image is that of our ancestor. Generally the form was filled in by the head of the household, but often forms written by children where their parents aren't sufficiently literate to fill the forms in themselves.</p> <p>Technology made census taking simpler, with punch cards and mechanical sorting and counting machines being introduced.</p> <p>Suffragette Emily Wilding Davison hid in a broom cupboard at the House of Commons. The 1911 Census records confirm she was indeed enumerated as a resident there.</p> <p>The UK has always been known as a nation of animal lovers and one man described an occupant of his house as 'Peter Tabby' and lists his occupation as 'mouser'. His nationality is 'Persian'.</p> <p>Whilst a family, from Dulwich in London, listed among their household Roger the watchdog, whose occupation was listed as looking after the house.</p>
<p>Emily Davison was killed at the Epsom Derby in 1913.</p> <p>image copyright AFP/ Museum of London</p>	
<p>19th June 1921</p> <p><u>Car tax discs</u> introduced</p>	<p>The 1921 Census should have been taken on 24 April, but was postponed by almost two months in the wake of the Black Friday strike by coal miners, railway men and transport workers. This is the only time that the census date has had to be changed.</p> <p>People were now questioned about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'place of work' and 'employer's name' to help measure commuter flows as a result of a growing trend for people to move out of the cities to live in suburbs and take the bus or train into work. - the ages and numbers of children under 16 in order to assess dependency and orphanhood. - full- or part-time education, following the development of secondary education at the start of the century.

<p>The 1931 census being compiled - before all the records were lost in a fire</p> <p>image copyrightGetty</p>	
<p>26th April 1931 – <u>Whipsnade Zoo</u> opens in <u>Bedfordshire</u>.¹</p>	<p>The 1931 Census covered England, Wales and Scotland. The Northern Ireland had a census in April 1926 so was not included. 1931 was the first census to make public broadcasts on radio. The BBC arranged six weekly talks on 'Numbering the people', ending with the Registrar General giving advice on census night about how to fill in the census form.</p>
<p>Women at the Pensions Office in Acton compiling information from the 1931 census</p> <p>image copyright Getty</p>	
<p>29th September 1939</p> <p>1939 REGISTER</p>	<p>The 1939 Register was initially taken due to the onset of war with the purpose of producing National Identity Cards. The register later came to be multi-functional, first as an aid in the use of ration books and later helping officials record the movement of the civilian population over the following decades and from 1948, as the basis for the National Health Service Register.</p>
<p>1941</p> <p><u>Noël Coward's</u> comedy <u>Blithe Spirit</u> is premiered</p>	<p>No census was carried out in 1941 due to the ongoing conflict of WW2.</p>
<p>Saturday 19th December 1942</p>	<p>On the night of Saturday 19 December 1942, there was a fire at a store in Hayes, Middlesex. The store, the responsibility of the Office of Works, contained a large amount of furniture but in addition it contained the whole of the schedules, enumeration books and plans. That is the entire census records for England & Wales for 1931. They were all completely destroyed.</p> <p>The fire was not caused by enemy action and the civil servant from the General Register Office who visited the site a few days later was bemused as to how a fire "achieved such dimensions in a store in which special hydrants had been fitted and was said to have been in charge of a fire guard of 6 paid firewatchers" and that it is "a mystery which will need investigation".</p>

<p>8th April 1951</p> <p><u>Dennis the Menace</u> first appears in <u>The Beano comic</u>.¹</p>	<p>With no census in 1941 and only limited population information from the 1939 National Register, the 1951 census was highly significant in tracking changes in society over 20 years.</p> <p>It revealed that the population of Britain had exceeded 50 million.</p> <p>It was the first census to ask about household amenities (outside toilets) as Britain began to clear slums and rebuild housing after World War II.</p> <p>The Registrar General for England and Wales, asked women to be more honest about their age.</p> <p>Many women of the time felt that questions relating to age were of a too personal nature. Information from previous censuses suggested that women had adjusted their age upwards if they married young and down if they married later. Problem pages in newspapers and magazines were flooded with queries from distraught women, fearful that their true age would become public knowledge.</p>
<p>23rd April 1961</p> <p>The <u>farthing coin</u>, used since the thirteenth century, ceases to be <u>legal tender</u> in the <u>United Kingdom</u></p>	<p>A computer was used for the first time to process the census results.</p> <p>It took 5.5 years to produce a full set of statistics.</p> <p>The census was promoted on TV with short, light-hearted fillers (interludes). A census enumerator appeared on What's My Line, the Sunday night programme which asked a panel of celebrities to guess each guest's occupation based on a mime. Afterwards the Registrar General Michael Firth observed: "The effect of her appearance on the previous evening was to ease the enumerators' job of distributing schedules on the Monday. No longer were there blank apprehensive and enquiring householders; instead there was ready co-operation when the enumerator called."</p>
<p>25th April 1971</p> <p>Switch to Decimal Currency</p>	<p>A question on income tested in 1968 and 1969 wasn't included on the questionnaire. The tests showed it was unpopular and could undermine response rates, and there were strong grounds to question the accuracy of the answers. There is still no income question on the census questionnaire.</p> <p>For the first time, enumerators used Ordnance Survey maps so that they could reference locations according to the National Grid system.</p> <p>The 1971 Census was the first to make data available for areas as small as 1km square.</p>
<p>5th April 1981</p> <p>The <u>wedding of Charles, Prince of Wales, and Lady</u></p>	<p>1981 was also the first year that a follow-up coverage survey was carried out to improve accuracy by estimating the number and type of households that were not included in the original count. This was the forerunner of today's Census Coverage Survey (CCS) - an independent survey carried out after the census to match sample households and people counted in the CCS with those recorded in the census in order to estimate the number and the characteristics of people who were not included on a census questionnaire.</p>
<p>21st April 1991</p> <p>British scientist <u>Tim Berners-Lee</u> introduces <u>WorldWideWeb</u>, the first <u>web browser</u>.</p>	<p>The 1991 Census for Great Britain revealed that 90% of the population lived in urban areas compared with just 16% in 1831.</p> <p>The average size of households had fallen by half in 100 years from 4.6 persons in 1901 to approximately 2.4 persons.</p> <p>References to "housewife" were seen in the 1971 and 1981 census, <u>but by the 1991 it was replaced</u> with the gender-neutral option "looking after the home or family".</p> <p>There was much discussion in 1991 about the impact of the Poll Tax on the census return. In the end an estimated 98% of the population in England and Wales completed and returned their forms.</p>

<p>29th April 2001</p> <p><u>Eden Project</u> opens to the public near <u>St Austell</u>, Cornwall.</p>	<p>A voluntary religion question was included in the 2001 Census for the first time, with the option either to tick the appropriate box, or write in any religion that was not listed. Nevertheless, some 7.7% of people left the question blank.</p> <p>Beforehand, an email campaign tried to try to persuade people to record their religion as Jedi and 390,000 people adopted the Star Wars religion.</p> <p>Ten years later, the number of Jedi believers had fallen somewhat - but at 176,632, it was the UK's seventh most popular "religion".</p> <p>The population of England and Wales increased almost six times, from just under 9 million in 1801 to just over 52 million in 2001, growing at about the same rate as the global population.</p> <p>The English and Welsh questionnaires from the 2001 Census occupied over 40 miles of linear shelving. Images of the forms were stored securely on 15,000 reels of microfilm and, for the first time since 1841, the paper records were destroyed and the paper recycled. These microfilm records will not be released to the public until 2101.</p>
<p>Sir Alec Guinness played the Jedi knight Obi-Wan Kenobi</p> <p>image copyrightAlamy</p>	
<p>27th March 2011</p> <p>The <u>Royal Navy</u> appointed its first female warship commander. Lieutenant Commander <u>Sarah West</u></p>	<p>For the first time in 2011, people had the option to respond online: 16% of census returns were completed online.</p> <p>The 2011 census has been digitally archived and kept in a secure location</p> <p>First results were published in July 2012, just 16 months after census day.</p> <p>In 2011, new topics covered included second addresses, intention to stay, national identity, main language, English language proficiency, civil partnerships and passports held.</p> <p>The 2011 census also saw a 6% rise in those who rent from a private landlord or letting agency</p> <p>A question about income was again tested and dropped.</p> <p>The population of England and Wales passed 56 million.</p>
<p>21st March 2021</p>	<p>The Census2021 will take place throughout the United Kingdom, with the exception of Scotland where the enumeration has been delayed until 2022 due to the current pandemic.</p> <p>Census 2021 will be the first British census to collect most data online. Checkout information on census.gov.uk</p> <p>Under the '100 year rule' it is UK Government policy that the 1921 Census will remain unavailable to the public until 2022.</p>

Don't forget to look up the research carried out on the 1901 and 1911 Census

Check out our website to find out more information.

Sylvia Beck

Acknowledgements - ONS website; National archives; Find my past ;Ancestry .co; UK census on line; family history. UK; BBC News; Census21

Quiz

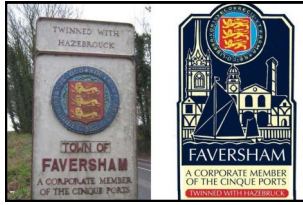


Image from KentOnline, 2016
(when a new town sign was debated).



1 What is the meaning of the name Faversham?

2. Who did Julius Caesar refer to as the most civilised of the British tribes?



3 What are they doing?

Where was this first thought to have been played?

4 Where, and in which century, did hail described as 'the size of oysters' fall ?

Laugh or Groan

Q How did the Chinese invent gunpowder?

A It just came to them in a flash

Q What kind of lights did Noah use on the ark?

A Flood lights

Q How did Vikings send secret messages?

A By Norse code!

Q What do you call a Roman emperor with a cold?

A Julius Sneezer

The M20 History, Operations Stack and Brock (Part 2)

In Part 1, we covered the history of the M20 and left the story mentioning arrangements for whenever there was cross channel disruption. In this part we look at “Operation Stack”, “Operation Brock” and how the new moveable barrier works.

Operation Stack

What does “Stack” mean ? – well it not an acronym, it simply means “stacking the trucks”, and although the principle of it dates back as far as 1988 so as to “stack” trucks in the Dover / Folkestone area, before even the M20 was finally completed, it was not until 2005 that the present system was adopted.

With some 5,000 plus HGVs crossing the channel every day, even partial closure of the route causes a rapid backlog of freight vehicles stacking up. Now to put some figures to this, a typical 44T articulated HGV is around 18.5 metres (62ft) long, and if they are parked 3m (10ft) apart, 5,000 trucks will form a continuous queue for 107 km or 67 miles !



***M20 Coastbound – Operation Stack, December 2020
– looking towards Maidstone***



Operation Stack – December 2020 – looking towards

Eurotunnel trucks stacked to the left (hard shoulder)

Dover bound ones stacked to the right (lane 3)

London Bound carriageway Closed

The “temporary” solution (that lasted far longer than intended), was to use the M20 as a temporary storage area, and was divided up into four phases, although only phases 1 and 2 seems used now. This is utilising the following parts of the M20 to act as an HGV holding area:

Phase 1 uses the coastbound section from Jct 11 Hythe to Jct 12 Cheriton,

Phase 2 uses the coastbound section from Jct 8 Leeds Castle to Jct 9 Ashford

There are further stages, such as additionally using the London bound sections and Manston Airport if needed.

The big problem with Stack is that it is not quick to set up, and takes at least 24 hours work and an awful lot of Highways England manpower to establish and a lot of Kent Police staff to control.

It has been instituted many times, such as the chaos in 2015 when the channel crossings were disrupted by French Industrial action, and during late December 2020 when the French border was closed at 4 hours’ notice to all traffic due to Covid. The photos here show it in operation at that time in 2020 at the height of the Covid disruption.

However it was never meant to be a permanent solution to the holding of delayed trucks crossing to Europe. Several attempts at buying land to build storage area lorry parks came to nothing, but the catalyst for something more permanent and easier and quicker to establish came as a result of the longer-term disruption expected as a result customs delays resulting from Brexit.

Both pictures on the left were taken from the Pluckley Road bridge in December 2020.

Operation Brock and the Moveable Barrier

The major problem with “Stack” was that it required a lot of manpower and time to institute and also took out the coastbound M20 carriageway from Maidstone to Ashford for the duration, diverting all eastbound traffic (except European bound HGVs) via the A20 and the villages. This causes severe local congestion, much to annoyance of all the locals, Parish Councils, Kent County Council and even our local MPs.

The solution that Highways England and the Department of Transport came up with was “Brock”. So what does “Brock” mean? - well its nothing to do with Badgers and officially it’s not an acronym (according to Highways England) although unofficially it is said to stand for **BR**exit **O**perations **a**Cross **K**ent, but this seems to be conjecture.



Operation Brock – January 2021 – looking towards Ashford

From Left to Right –

Left hard shoulder – reserved for stacking Tunnel Bound Trucks

Middle two lanes left free for emergency access,

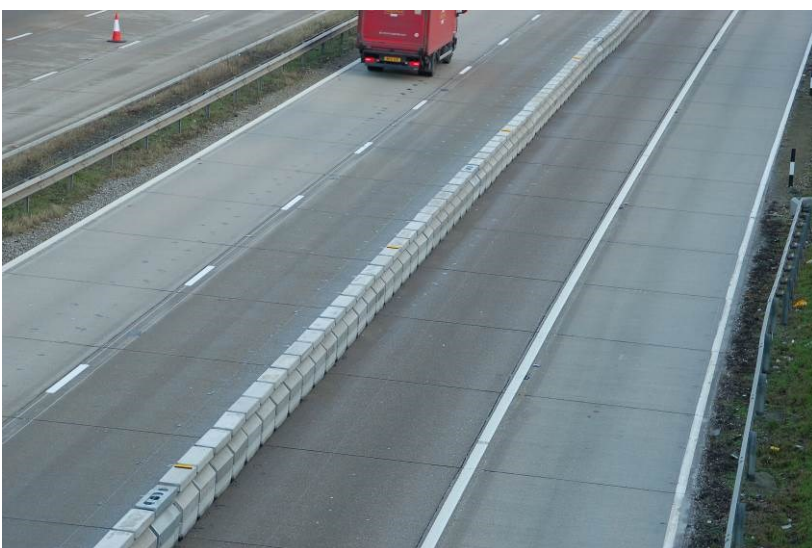
Right (lane 3) reserved for stacking Dover bound Trucks

London Bound carriageway divided into two,

Lanes 3 & 2 Coastbound traffic (not HGVs),

Lane 1 & Hard Shoulder London bound traffic

So what is it? - It is a quickly installed temporary moveable barrier that splits the 14-mile Westbound (London bound) carriageway between Jct 9 Ashford to Jct 8 Leeds Castle into two-way running, using the hard shoulder and lane 1 for London bound traffic and lanes 2 and 3 for traffic travelling coastbound (with the exception of European bound HGVs). All Continental freight bound for both Dover and Eurotunnel is then routed on to the coastbound carriageway with all Eurotunnel bound trucks using a coned off hard shoulder and Dover bound traffic using a coned off lane 3. Lanes 1 and 2 are reserved for emergency and service vehicles. In this way there is capacity for about 1000 trucks in each lane, or a total of around 2000.



Operation Brock – January 2021

Close-up of the new Moveable Barrier

The picture to the left is a close up of the new Operation Brock moveable barrier in place between lanes 1 and 2 on the coastbound carriageway in January 2021.

This was instituted after Brexit and the French requirement for Truck Driver Covid testing.

The individual interlocking sections can be clearly seen.

Both pictures on the left were taken from the Pluckley Road bridge in January 2021.



Two Barrier Transfer Machines in action, each moving the barrier one lane's width



The Barrier Transfer Machine in action

The idea of a moveable barrier on the M20 was mooted several years ago, but the principle is not new as it has been used both in the US and New Zealand for many years, albeit in much shorter lengths on bridges where traffic flows can be altered either at short notice or for peak hour traffic management.

Its correct name is the QuickChange Moveable Barrier (QMB) and is a unique barrier system providing opportunities to contractors involved in major highway reconstruction, 'Smart Motorway' and road widening schemes, and in the case of the M20, to allow for cross channel disruption.

The system comprises a linked "chain" of concrete barrier sections, which can be raised slightly from the road surface and moved across the carriageway by a self-propelled Transfer Vehicle. This is known as a **Barrier Transfer Machine**, also known as **Zipper Machine** or **Road Zipper**.

On the M20, when not use, the barrier is kept to the left side of the West or London bound hard shoulder, and this allows the normal full width of the road to be available for use.

When it is needed to be deployed, two Barrier Transfer Machines have to be used, the first transfers the barrier across the width of the hard shoulder and the second machine, a few yards behind, transfers it one further lane's width so that it finally sits between lanes 1 and 2. In this way the West or London bound carriageway is divided into two equal sections divided by the new barrier, with the hard shoulder and lane 1 for Westbound traffic and lanes 2 and 3 for East or Coastbound traffic. Because of the limited separation between the East and West bound traffic afforded by the barrier, a 50-mph speed limit has to be imposed.

The top photo shows the two machines in action, each moving the barrier one lane's width and the bottom one is a close up of it in action.

Using these machines, the complete 14-mile moveable barrier, starting at Jct 9 Ashford and ending at Jct 8 Leeds, can be moved into position in about 3 to 4 hours, with the machines moving at around walking pace.

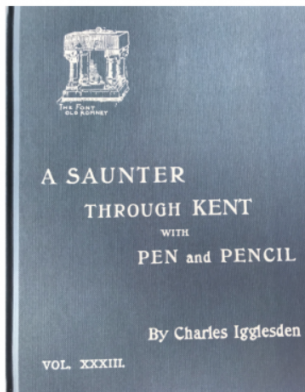
Before the scheme could be brought in, a lot of works were needed on this section including strengthening both hard shoulders so that they can be used as running lanes and altering the central barriers at both ends to allow traffic to move across from one side to the other and for the separation of the Trucks at the Maidstone end.

So, next time you drive up the M20 and curse the barrier and speed limit, at least you may understand a bit more about its reason and operation.

Steve Beck,

Noticeboard

Oakweald Press has published a special limited edition of Volume 33 in the Saunters Through Kent series by Charles Igglesden; 'Romney Marsh Churches.'



Most copies were destroyed by a German bomber, in 1942, shortly after they'd been printed.

This edition is limited to 100 copies and is signed by Charles Igglesden's grandson, and is offered at the special price of £20 to CDLHS members.

To order, please email: Oakweald at info@cw.c.uk.net or contact Malcolm Horton directly: 01233 712112

Zoom talks enable speakers from much further afield. Many of us joined Heritage Lenham again, this time for their interesting Zoom talk; '**Beer, Bets and Bull Baiting**' .

Following on: – an interesting website with historic photos of The Dog and Bear Lenham

See <http://www.dover-kent.com/2014-project/Dog-and-Bear-Lenham.html>

Help!

A final plea

**Contributions for April issue would really, really be appreciated!
(It would be soooo nice to end with a good mixture.)**

Please contact me at

newsletter@charinghistory.co.uk

Thanks,
Valerie



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.

If you would rather not receive emails from us in future, please email

Hon.Secretary@charinghistory.co.uk