

The Old Vicarage

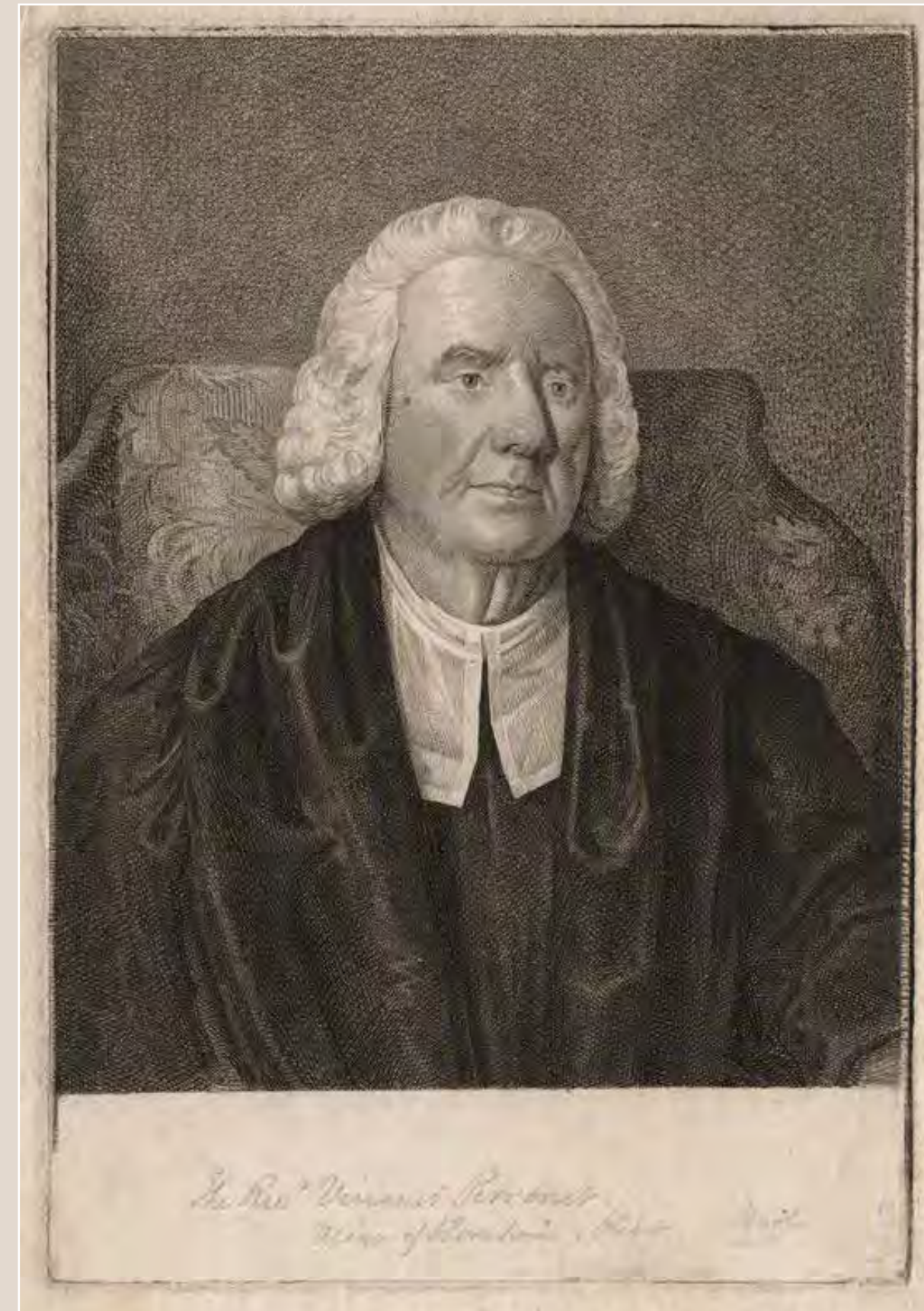
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It might be strange to think that the Anglican church next door once had a vicar who was called “the Archbishop of Methodism”. Yet this was a description of Vincent Perronet by two of the prime movers of Methodism, John and Charles Wesley.

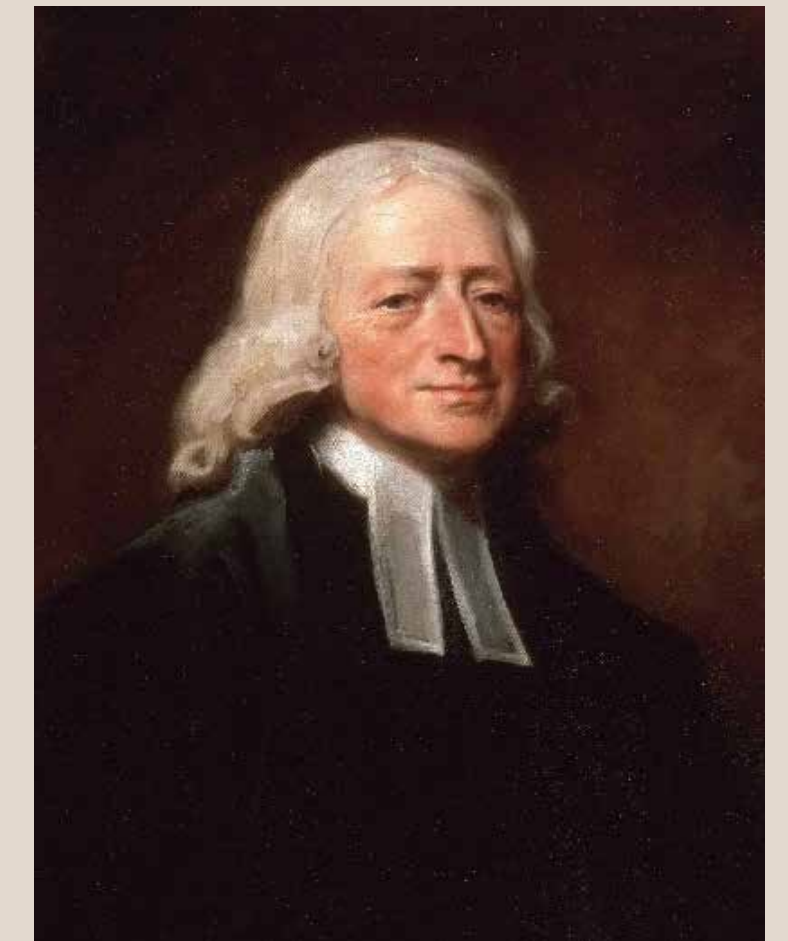
Perronet lived in this house and was vicar of Shoreham from 1728 to 1785. When he invited the Wesleys to preach in the church it didn't go down well with many parishioners. The first time Charles Wesley took to the pulpit in 1744, a riot broke out among the congregation. “The wild beasts began roaring and storming, blaspheming, ringing the bells and turning the church into a bear garden,” wrote Charles, who had to retreat to the vicarage to avoid being beaten up. By 1763 his elder brother John was preaching to more peaceful groups, and some of the key ideas of the breakaway movement were hashed out by the Wesleys in this building.

The main house is timber-framed and dates from the 1530s, although the “cottage” you see in front of you - attached at right angles to the old hall house - was built in the 18th century, with later additions. In the First World War the house was the site of a community hospital for the wounded run by the vicar's daughter, Gwendoline Madge.

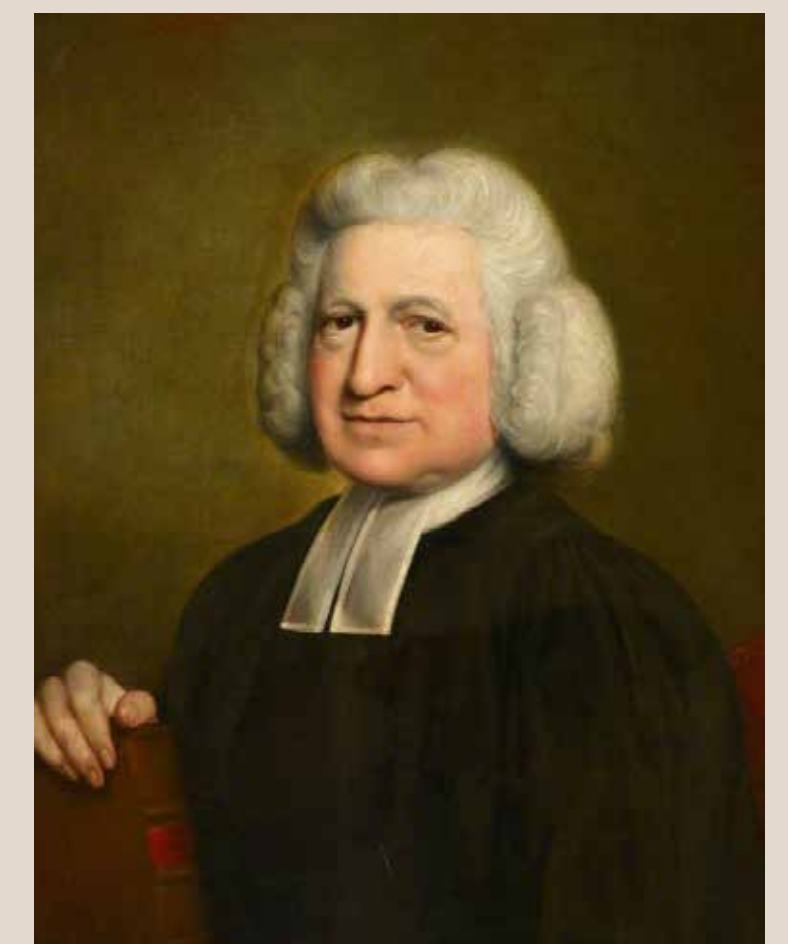
In the 1960s the property was sold by the Church of England and a new vicarage built around the corner. The first private owner was John Freeman, who became British ambassador in Washington. He was already well known for presenting the interview programme Face to Face on BBC Television.



Vincent Perronet



John Wesley



Charles Wesley

SHOREHAM 

Ye Olde George Inn

2

The George once had lanes running either side of it and sat near a village green, off to its left. This was from the time of its building - perhaps about 1500 - until the start of the 19th century. The sharp bend in the road that causes problems for traffic today was a hazard more than two hundred years ago. It was, wrote one landowner, "absolutely dangerous to the traveller on horseback or in carriages".

The building was a farmhouse for a wealthy family until 1675, when it began to double as an inn and a tavern. Generations since used it as a key place to gather - not least members of the church Vestry (formerly in charge of what passed for local government), who would find any excuse to hop across from the church for their meetings.

From the 19th century, the pub ran a Slate Club - a health insurance scheme for working men - and was home to the Rat and Sparrow Club. People killed rats in corn stacks and sparrows in cottage gardens, and brought them here to vie for an annual prize.

After a German bomber was shot down near Castle Farm during the Battle of Britain in 1940, two of the crew were taken to Sevenoaks police station by the local Home Guard. They stopped off at the George and the badly shaken airmen were given tots of brandy to help them on their way.



SHOREHAM 

Timber-framed “hall houses” like this were a sign of growing prosperity in the 15th and 16th centuries. This one was built in a rather unusual L-shape.

Ivy Cottage has been painted and photographed many times, but the most famous picture is by Samuel Palmer. His watercolour of Ivy Cottage is done in a realistic manner, unlike his pictures in the more imaginative style that eventually made his name.

Palmer rented rooms here with his brother in the middle of the 1820s. His landlord was an elderly gentleman called Mr Tooth, most likely shown in the picture leaning over the garden fence. If you look closely, you can also see Mr Tooth’s wife and daughters by the door to the street, perhaps setting off for the church.

It’s thought that Palmer’s friend, the poet and artist William Blake, may have visited here in his later years, after an arduous journey from London.

When Palmer moved elsewhere in the village, he encouraged other friends to take lodgings at Ivy Cottage. To one of them he wrote: “Mr Tooth [has] our old room beautified and I believe a new turn up bedstead 3s 6d a week” - that’s about 18 pence in weekly rent.

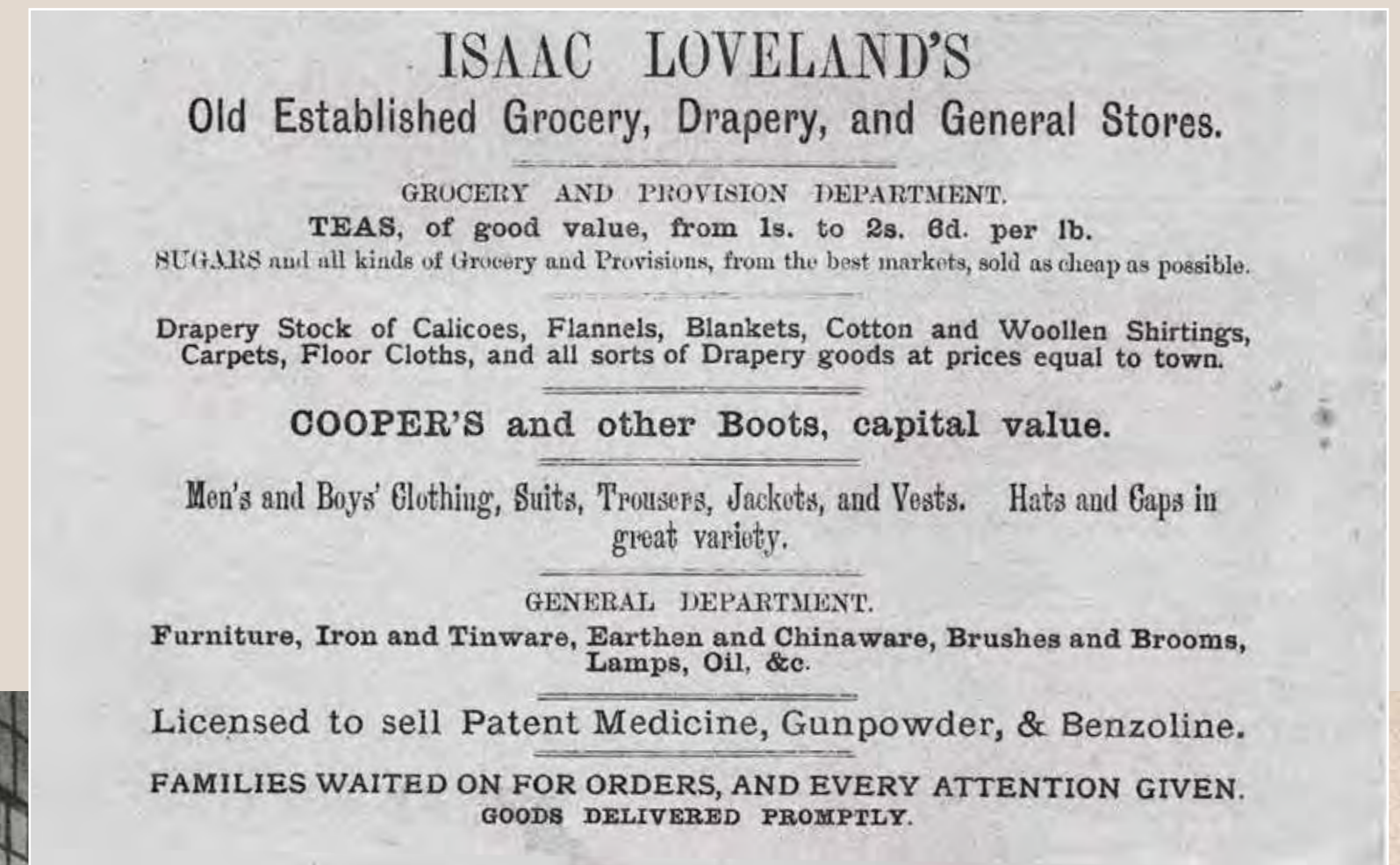


Was there ever a Shoreham shopkeeper quite like Isaac Loveland? He was, he announced in the 1870s, “in the business of a grocer, general draper, ironmonger, china and glass dealer, oil and colourman, furniture dealer, milliner outfitter, bookseller, stationer, tobacconist, boot and shoe dealer and drug and patent medicine dealer”. He also sold coal and hay from the “wharf” at Shoreham Station, and baked bread behind the Post Office.

The handsome windows you see today in this private house were put in as a shop front in the 19th century. There were two entrances to this veritable department store - one for the grocery section, one for haberdashery, with other goods held at the rear. Isaac Loveland was famous for long-distance walks, including a trek between John o’Groats and Land’s End. Alas, he ran into financial troubles - perhaps due to competition from the other general store in the High Street - and in 1908 had to give up his lease.

The building is named after the Riccord family of the early 1600s, although most of the present structure dates from 1738. See if you can spot the date on a small brick in the wall. This was when it first became a shop, selling fabrics, groceries and hardware, and was owned later in the prosperous Georgian era by Elizabeth Beardsworth, her daughter-in-law and four granddaughters.

Record carried on as a retailer until 1948, and part of it later became a teashop.



Riverside House

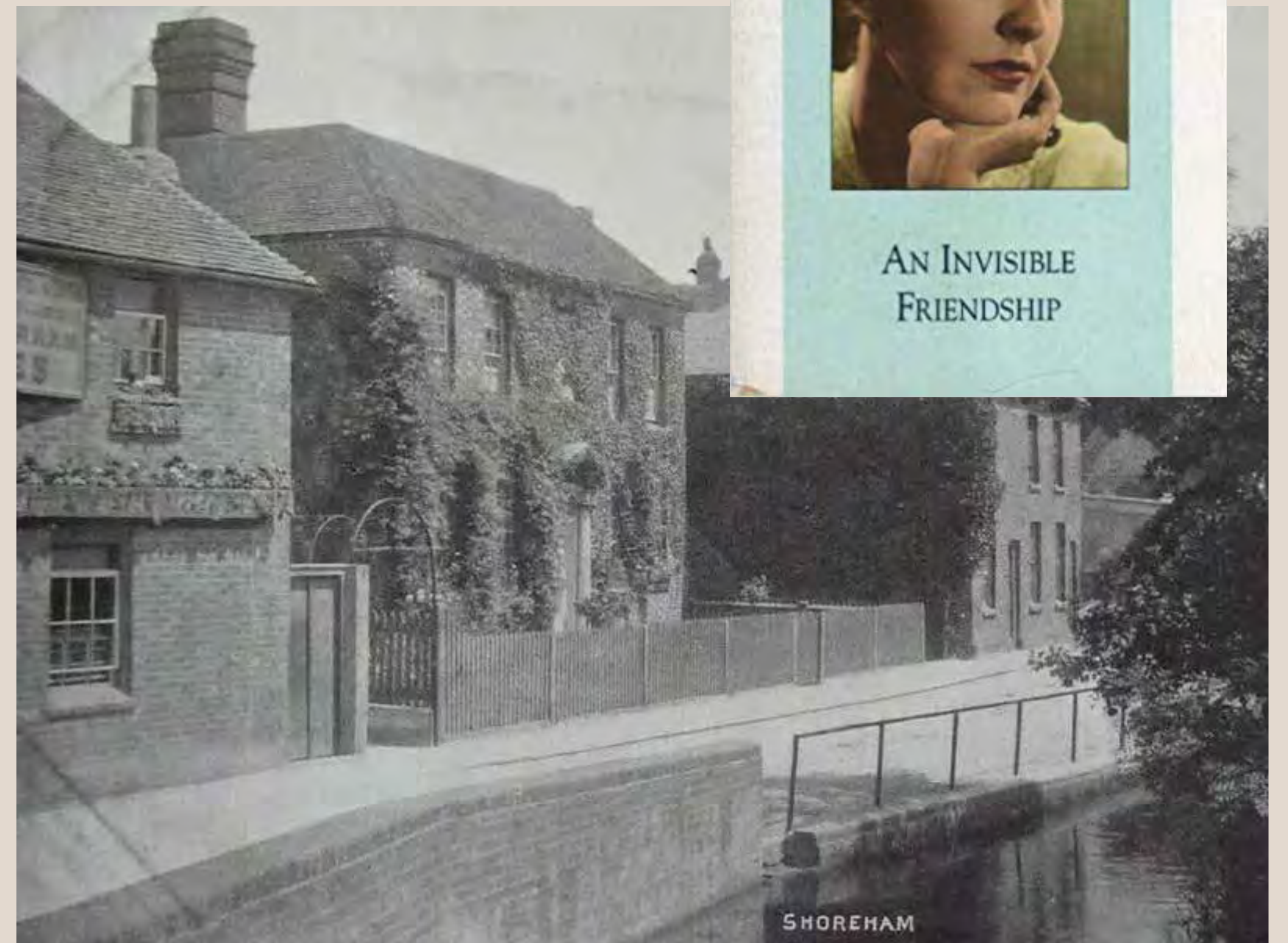
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This elegant Georgian house was built in 1774 for Robert Streatfield, a saddler and harness-maker. Trades like this were not beneath the dignity of a gentleman in those days, and there are signs that Robert led a comfortable life: curlers for 18th-century men's wigs have been found inside. His workshop was on the right, his living quarters on the left and on the upper floor. Handily, there was a blacksmith over the road, so newly shod horses could be led across for their collars and harnesses.

Above the doorway you can see a Sun Insurance mark. If the house caught fire, the company's fire brigade would come to put it out - and douse flames spreading to the house next door if they were feeling generous.

In the early 20th century the house was a holiday home for poor children from London, who would be taken on boat trips along the river. Later it was occupied by the writer and teacher Katharine Moore. She wrote many books about the place of women in society, and was famous for a long correspondence with the comedian and storyteller Joyce Grenfell. To keep the ideas they shared as frank as possible, the two agreed never to meet.

Katharine Moore wrote her first, prize-winning novel at the age of 85 and lived to be 103. She said: "I never had much time for old people so, perhaps, this long life is God teaching me a lesson."



SHOREHAM 

The Memorial Stone and the Cross on the Hill 6

Of the 215 men who marched to war in 1914-18, thirty-three did not come back. The village came up with a highly original idea to remember them - a giant chalk cross cut into the hill on the other side of the river. The cross is 100 feet long and 55 feet wide, and cost nothing to make: dozens of villagers, young and old, dug it after each day's work was done in the summer of 1920.

A year later, the memorial stone you see here was put in place, linked to the chalk cross by its inscription. A villager, Samuel Cheeseman, led the effort to plan and dig the cross, along with the vicar, David Madge. Samuel lost two of his sons on the Western Front, just days apart in 1917, and Revd. Madge lost a brother a year earlier.

When it was done, the local author and landowner Lord Dunsany said that Shoreham's Cross on the Hill should endure "for at least a thousand years". The Church Times wrote: "The great cross lies on the hillside like a benediction over the beautiful village which brought it into being."

The memorial stone here also bears the names of twelve service personnel and eight civilians lost in the Second World War. Of the civilians, five were members of the Puxty family, killed by a bomb in their cottage near Halstead, and three were members of the McCaughan family who died when Preston Hill Farm was destroyed, high on the downs on this side of the river.



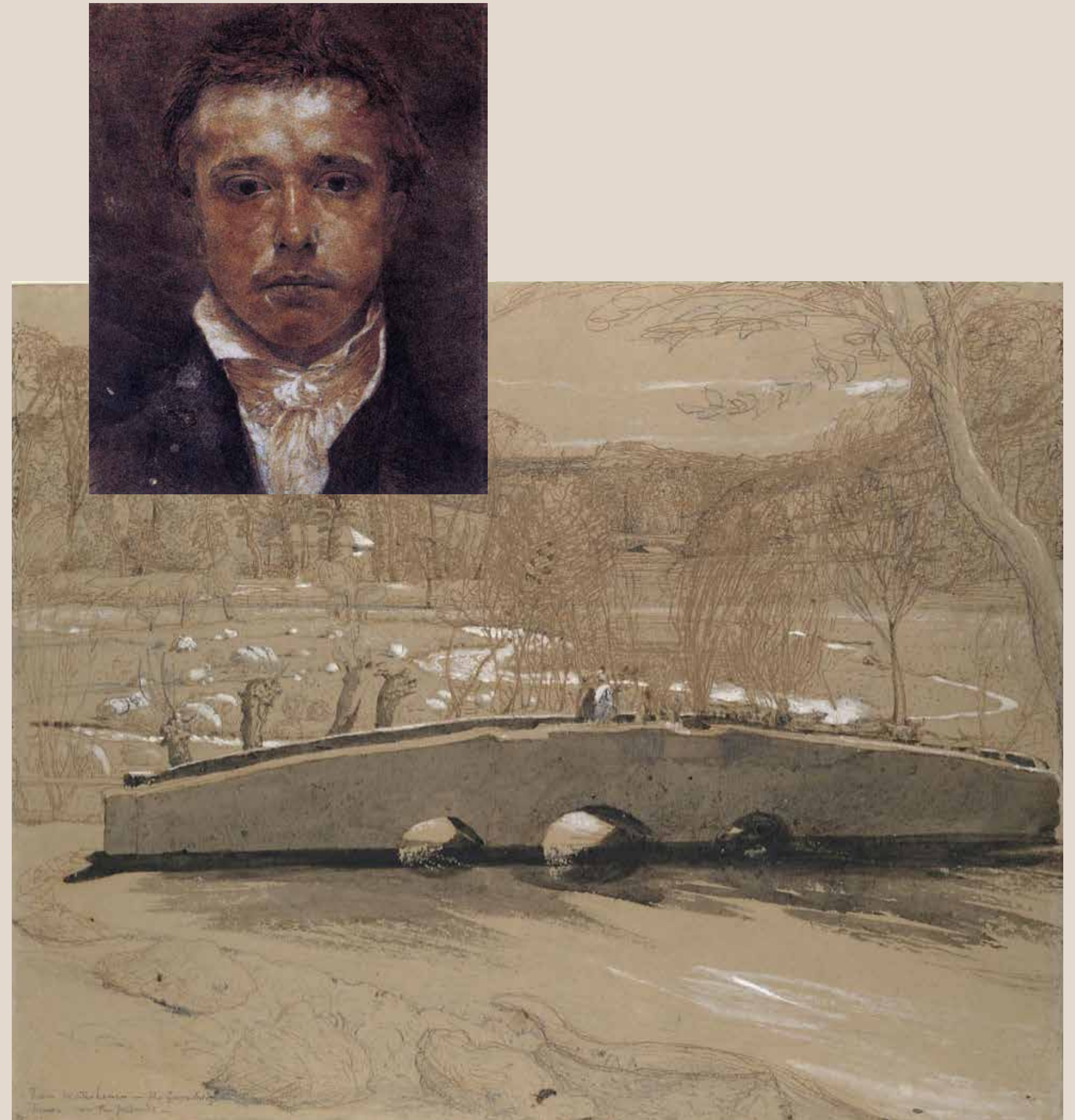
SHOREHAM 

The house was originally built in the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714). There is a brick by the back door which is inscribed with the letters W H and the date 1704. It looked much humbler in those days and was without the imposing Georgian façade, with only single windows and none on the west and east walls.

In the late 1720s it is recorded that the house had stables, outhouses, gardens and a nine to ten-acre field, with no high walls in those days. A century later the artist Samuel Palmer lived in part of it with his father and brother. Palmer's self-portrait from this time is shown here. He was in his early twenties then, and producing many of his most famous pictures of Shoreham and the Darent Valley - his "Valley of Vision" - sometimes in the company of bohemian friends from London. It's thought Palmer's sketch of the bridge in the middle of the village was done from one of the windows in Water House.

The living quarters of the Palmer family were perhaps not all that grand. "Going across the kitchen in a hurry part of the floor broke under me with a great crack," he wrote in a letter from Water House, "and in a moment down went one of my drumsticks [legs] a good way into the cellar."

It was after Palmer left Shoreham that the house became more gentrified. In 1839 the late Georgian front you see now was added and it was extended forward by five feet.



The founding of the school goes back to 1833 when the government offered a grant to assist in the setting up of schools for the poor. This process was to be undertaken by the churches: those founded by the Church of England were to be known as National Schools. Government money, however, was only to be given as a supplement to funds raised locally. Shoreham's leading landowner, Humphrey Mildmay, took charge of raising money and contributed a sum himself.

He also found the first schoolmaster and mistress. The master appointed was Robert Barton, a baker from Cambridge. His wife Sarah was the daughter of the tenant of Preston Farm. This was one of 24 such schools in Kent. A school house and classroom were provided and the latter still forms the larger part of the present school. The Bartons were successful but emigrated to Australia in 1856 where Robert built a house north of Melbourne and called it Shoreham.

Later in the 19th century the school noted outbreaks of typhus and diphtheria among the children. Standards rose and fell. In 1868 a school inspector wrote that "the discipline is bad... spelling moderate... arithmetic - a total failure". But 30 years later the teaching was found to be "intelligent and thorough" and there was "an excellent tone to this school".

The military-minded Vincent Steane became headmaster in 1895 and put rifle-shooting on the curriculum. This was stamped on by the Board of Education who insisted that "Rifle Shooting is not a subject which can be advantageously taught" in public elementary schools.

SCHOOL CHILDREN'S CONCERT.— One of the largest gatherings of people ever known in Shoreham collected at the Village Hall on Friday to witness a delightful concert given by the children of the Shoreham Schools. The project of the concert was the purchase of a piano for use in the School. Not quite enough was raised for this purpose, and as a result of numerous requests, both from people who were present on Friday and from others who were unable to gain admittance, the concert is to be given again on the 29th of this month. The audience particularly appreciated the opening item—a song by the infants—and two farces, "The Washing Day" and "Laying the Ghost" literally brought the house down. Individuals taking part in the evening's programme, which was consistently good, were:—Joan Bell, Bessie Simmons, Joe Baker, Robin Santer, Gwen. Open, Victor Geering, James Cheeseman, Mary Bell, William Reader, Hilda Emery, Violet Cheeseman, Ray Cornwell, William Warner, Leslie Bradley, John Drew, Stuart McLening, John Ewing, Leonard Bridger, Harry Saker, Gertrude Ewing, William Peacock, Bertha Simmons, Eric Lawson. Other items were given by the Lower Division, the Infants, the Junior Division and the Upper Division. One interesting and pleasing feature of the concert was that the programmes and the dresses were all the result of the children's own work. The Headmaster and his staff were responsible for the production, and, judging by its success, must have worked very hard to bring their pupils to the standard attained.

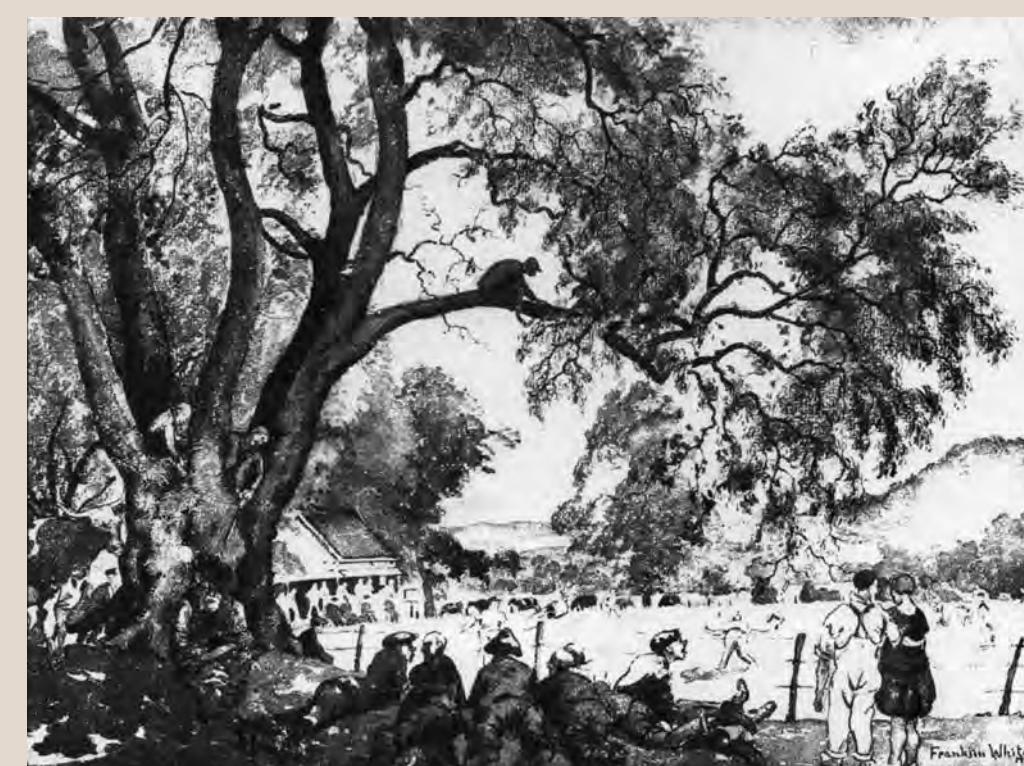


The class of 1937. Above left a report of a school concert in April 1927.

This timber-framed “hall house” is one of the oldest in the village, perhaps built before 1500 by an ambitious yeoman farmer with a modest amount of land - a man, it's thought, called John Balsote. Just behind on the right-hand side you can see a smaller timber-framed building attached to the main house (pictured). In late-medieval times it wouldn't have been joined on, and is thought to have been a detached kitchen. A roaring open cooking fire in the main house was a hazard in a home made largely of wood, so meals were prepared at a safe distance.

Later, the wealthy Petley family - major Shoreham landowners - took over the property. They owned farms including Filston as well as the house that became the George Inn. Around 1830 the artist Samuel Palmer took out a long lease on the house here and let it out. It was one of several cottages in the village he bought thanks to a legacy from his grandfather. Palmer lived off the combined rental income of five to six shillings a week (about 30p).

Another artist owned the house for much of the 20th century - the Australian-born Franklin White, who gave it the name “Reedbeds” after the place near Adelaide where he grew up. He opened the Samuel Palmer School of Fine Art on the premises, and his own pictures were bought by Noel Coward and the Queen Mother. In the 1920s and 1930s he enjoyed sketching villagers relaxing in the local pubs. He'd usually buy them a pint first to put them at their ease.



Pictures of Shoreham and its villagers by Franklin White

These Almshouses date back to the 15th century when John Roos became Lord of the Manor at Filston. In his will of 1473 he left money and instructions for the erection of three houses for three poor men and women, with alms of 7d a week (about three pence today).

They were one-storey cottages with ridge tile roofs, eaves and gutters, three lattice windows in oak frames and three vertically panelled oak doors in wide frames. The whole building was reconstructed in the late 16th century with Elizabethan brickwork.

The cottages have now been made into two modernised dwellings in memory of a young airman, Dudley Greenwood (pictured). Dudley was the son of the local Home Guard commander and was reported missing in action in 1943. On the outside they still look as they did four hundred years ago and are one of the architectural gems of the village. They are close to the site of the former “Cage” on the corner, where village prisoners were kept in a small stone building with an iron gate.

The Almshouses are looked after today by a small charity run by local people. They aim to make sure that the residents stay safe and secure, and that the ancient building will survive long into the future.



Number One, High Street

11

Alice Bell was a busy woman. A nurse and midwife, she raised five children of her own and helped out during World War II at the First Aid Post in Myrtle Cottage, just down the hill from here. Yet all through the conflict she also ran a shop on the right-hand side of this building, the Central Mart, after her husband George died in 1939. It was a key meeting place in the wartime village, with a phone everyone could use.

Shops in Shoreham have often been home to larger-than-life characters. George Bell took on the business here after running the Village Stores along the High Street and claimed to sell everything “from a pin to an elephant”. One day a pheasant poached on the hill was hung outside for sale and George put a sign up insisting it was “Killed by Lightning”. The boy who worked at the shop, Dick, became known by everyone as Dick Lightning.

This handsome building, now two houses, was recently dated to the 1700s. Thomas Waring, the son of a London lawyer and the vicar’s daughter, lived in it as a gentleman farmer and probably built it. Inside are timbers most likely from an earlier building. This used to be the site of the Oxbourne farmstead, which moved in the 19th century to the other end of the High Street. The attractive bow windows in the right-hand property were added in the 20th century.

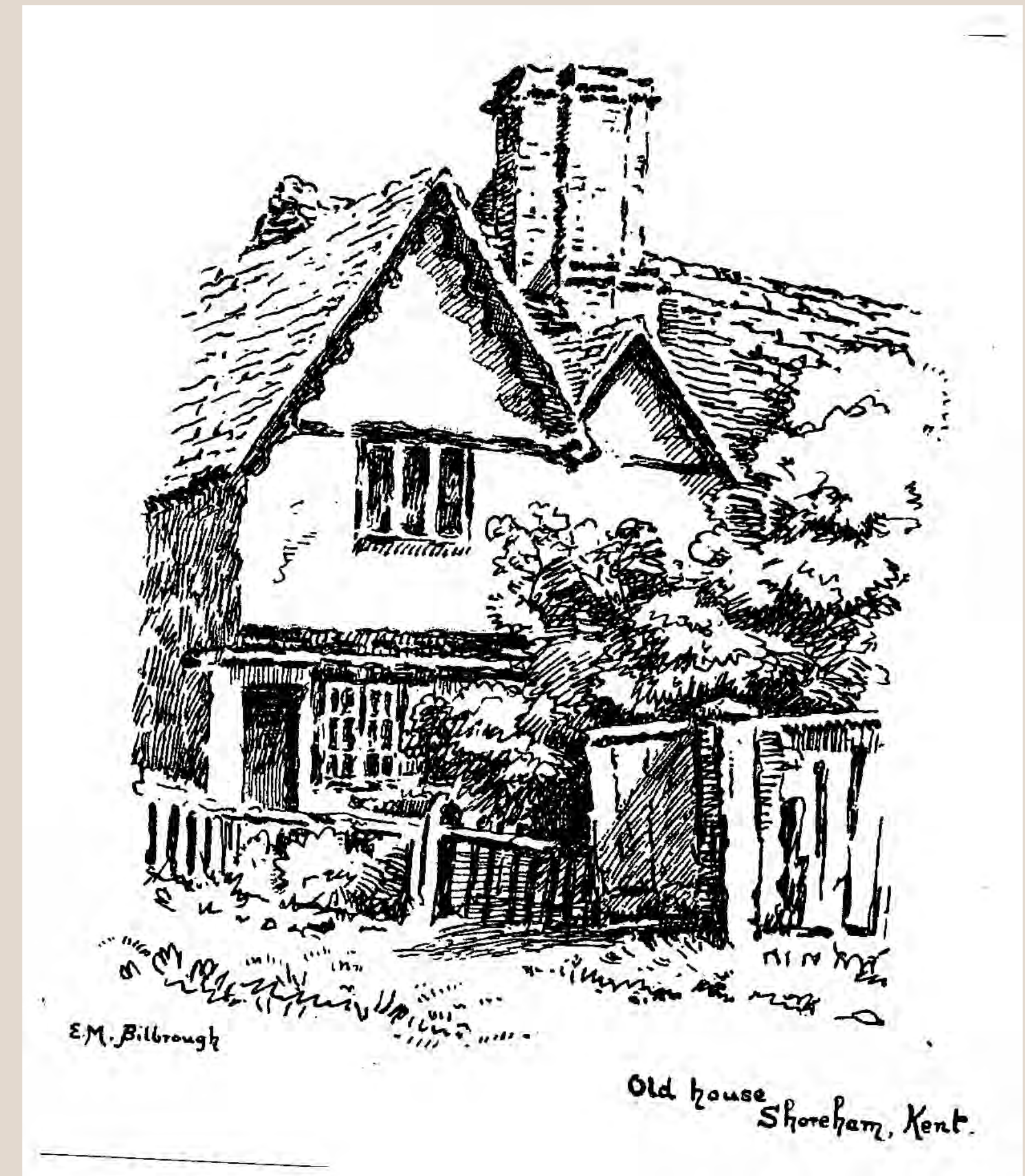


SHOREHAM 

This is one of the finest surviving village yeoman houses from the 15th century. Known as a hall house, the oldest part is to your left with its gable end facing the street and was built in 1475. It was a single, two-storey cross wing structure with three rooms on the ground floor. To the right would have been the main hall which was demolished in about 1600 and replaced with the present building.

The Round family - Shoreham farmers of long-standing - were associated with the house in the 18th and 19th centuries. William Round was an Overseer of the Poor for about 50 years from 1785, a role established by the church Vestry. One of his jobs was to inspect the village workhouse on the corner of today's High Street and Church Street. Another was to supervise the handout of clothing to poor women – shoes, linsey-woolsey fabric for gowns and flannel for petticoats.

In the late 19th century Holly Place was the site of a butcher's shop, and for much of the 20th century was owned by Frederick Boakes, a cow-keeper who became a prominent Shoreham property-owner and gave his name to Boakes Meadow. At some point the building was encased in concrete, but the present owners got rid of that and have restored the house to its former glory.



In the late 19th century, children got a day off school at the end of May in honour of a festival and feast organised by the Shoreham Amicable Benefit Society, based in these buildings. Societies like this provided sickness insurance for working people, and typically paid out pensions and funeral expenses. Members might have subscribed a shilling or two a month (five or ten pence).

Walnut Tree Cottages and their outbuildings have also housed a butcher's shop, a farm, a cobbler's and - until 1940 - the village fire station. The left-hand side of the main building may date back to the 1500s. The right-hand side dates from a couple of centuries later, after which the whole building was encased in brick.

Mary Mills and her sons ran the butcher's in the 1830s, and the shop (in one of the outbuildings on the left) was still going in the 1920s. This was when the great and the good of the village - including Lord Mildmay, Lord Dunsany, Lady Cohen, Harold Copping, John Dinnis and Sir Roger Gregory - clubbed together to buy the entire site for £675 "to preserve it for the benefit of the village". A new social club, the Walnut Tree Club, was opened and contained "a really beautiful set of rooms", with space for billiards, a library and of course a good supply of beer.

Today, a village trust manages the Cottages under rules laid down by the Charity Commission.



A picture by Franklin White when there was still a butcher's shop on the left-hand side of the building

Forge Cottage

14

Dorothy Brown - always known as Miss Brown - was born and lived here for 90 years until shortly before her death in 1988. She taught piano, played the organ in the Baptist Chapel in Crown Road and mended clothes for the mill-owning Wilmot family, who lived at The Mount. Her father, Isaac Brown the blacksmith, is shown in the photos, busy shoeing horses and mending ploughs.

Isaac was a music lover too - always ready to pull out a fiddle and play “Rock of Ages” or something similarly uplifting - and a keen chess player. A chess board was sometimes out on his anvil at the front and the vicar would drop by for a game. If he wasn't busy, Isaac would always mend children's metal ringed hoops for free.

This smithy was one of several along the High Street and the Brown family were in charge from the 1860s, after Reuben Brown moved from his earlier forge in Meadow Cottage by the river. His widow, Phoebe, ran things for a time until her sons Solomon and Isaac took over. Sadly, Solomon Brown was killed in the village by a “motor van” in the summer of 1920, at the age of 71.

The building is thought to date back to at least 1500, to judge by carpenters' marks in the timbers of the roof. It's been slowly enlarged since, up to 1890. It was a working forge until after the Second World War and much of the old furnace equipment survives.



SHOREHAM 

There were around 20 shops in Shoreham at the end of the 19th century, but perhaps the most upmarket one was here. In the early 1890s, P.J. Stanger's "Grocery, Drapery, and Furnishing Warehouse" made much of its stylish clothing - from "Coloured and Black Cashmeres" to "a pretty selection of French Hats" - and its furniture showroom ("A Full Stock of Feather and Flock Beds").

The large windows on the first floor of the Victorian building were put in to help display these wares to their best effect, and items included the village's first ready-to-wear suits and dresses. All food items were individually weighed and wrapped. Early in the 20th century the business became known as The Stores, and was run by George and Fred Bell, before George moved to No. 1 High Street to open the Central Mart.

As village retailing dwindled after the Second World War, Dan Ashby and his family took charge of the shop until the 1980s, seeing off competition from the South Suburban Co-op a few doors north of here. The Village Stores themselves nearly closed in 2007, only to be rescued by a partnership of villagers who still control the freehold today.



This is one of the true taverns in the village, perhaps slightly older than the George Inn and dating from the late 1400s. The original building was a hall house, built at right angles to the road with an open hall at the centre. The walls were built in the traditional medieval method with wattle and daub; the roof was thatched and had a “crown post” helping to hold it up. Smoke-blackened rafters - which would have been above an open hall - and part of a medieval window were found. You can get a really clear impression of the original building from Crown Road.

In the 17th century the thatch, wattle and daub were removed and replaced with tiles and bricks. A large chimney was built in the rear wall and a two-storey extension added.

The Crown was said to be a favourite hangout of smugglers in the 18th and 19th centuries. The story goes that one of their number, a Spaniard, was wounded and brought here to recuperate. He married the innkeeper's daughter - but not long afterwards was press-ganged into a life at sea. When he finally returned to Shoreham he found that his wife had died in childbirth... and it is said that the ghost of the distraught Spaniard haunts the Crown to this day.



This is an almost complete, small, timber-framed late-medieval house with an aisle, or lean-to, at the back, which is a rare feature to survive from that time. The house was probably built by a yeoman farmer around 1500. The roof would have been thatched and later upgraded to clay tiles. The house would have comprised three bays - one for the open hall, a two-storey one for the owner's parlour and chamber, and another two-storey bay for the service rooms.

The original front door is still here and has a beautifully carved surround. The Shoreham artist Harold Copping (1863-1932), famous for religious illustrations, used villagers as models and village settings in some of his pictures - like the one shown here. It appears to use April Cottage as a background, and features the villagers Emily and Sarah Cassam in the roles of Mercy and Timorous from *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The front door opens to a passage leading to the back, just as in the cottage's early days. In the late 17th century the west end of the house, to your right, was extended and it was divided into two dwellings as we see it today.

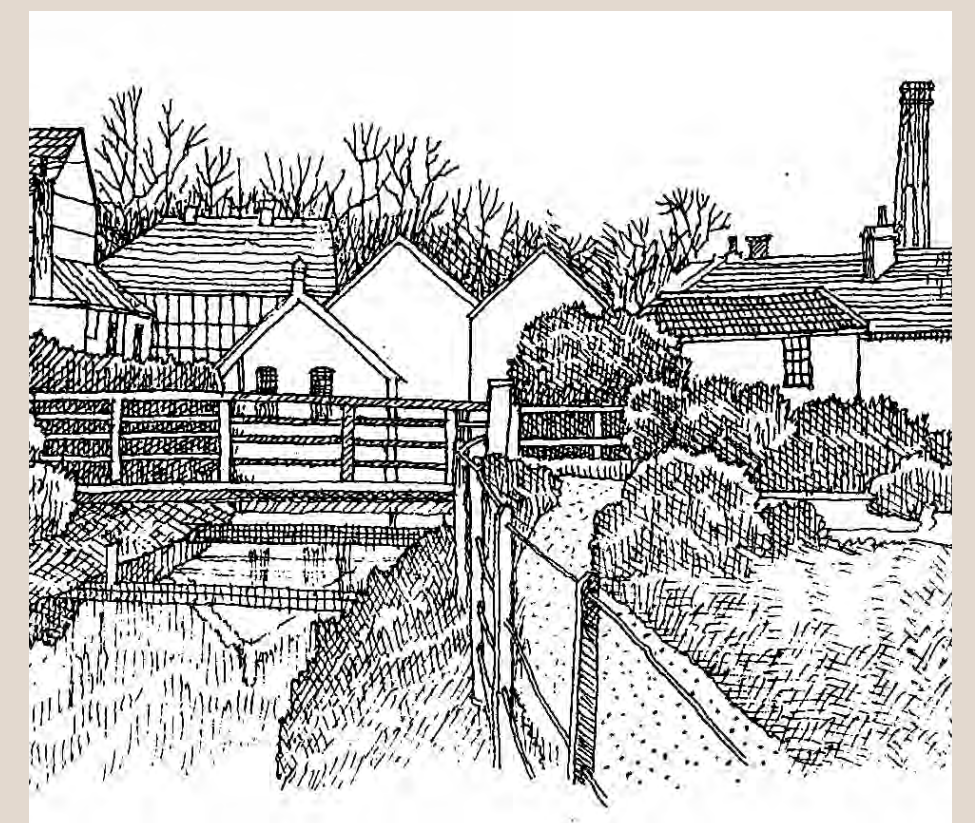


There has been a mill on this site since the 11th century: it is mentioned in the Domesday Book. It was converted from a corn mill, making flour, to a paper mill in the 1690s. The house you see now, dating from that time, was the home of the proprietors of the mill, which was once surrounded by a complex of buildings where the various processes for making paper were carried out.

In the 19th century the arrival of trains meant that supplies could go in and out more easily, and an enhanced trackway - known as the "black path" - was made to the station. Crown Road was built to house the growing number of workers. George Wilmot ran the enterprise for many years and built for himself The Mount, a large Victorian house to the south-east, to get away from the clatter of machinery.

Alice Gibson was a mill worker here as a teenager and has left us some memories from a hundred years ago. Her day lasted from eight to five, and she had to tear the rags that made the paper into strips by dragging them across razor-sharp knives. Because there was no artificial lighting, she had to work near the windows and it was often very cold, but she said it was better than her former job - working in the fields. She was paid sixpence for every hundredweight of strips she finished.

The mill closed in 1926 and the buildings were demolished ten years later, leaving only the main house. There was possibly a Roman villa nearby; what may have been a Roman bath block was excavated in the 1980s.



*Drawings of the old mill buildings
by Ken Wilson.*

Shoreham Village

1. The Old Vicarage
2. Ye Olde George Inn
3. Ivy Cottage
4. Record
5. Riverside House
6. War Memorial
7. Water House
8. The Village School
9. Reedbeds
- 10 The Almshouses
11. No.1 High Street
12. Holly Place
13. Walnut Tree Cottages
14. Forge Cottage
15. Village Stores
16. The Crown Inn
17. Apil Cottage
18. Mill House



SHOREHAM 