

HERITAGE

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Peaceful Street 1900

Better known as Sittingbourne High St., and would that it were always like this? Well maybe. The raised pavements were needed to cope with the rain and in the summer passing carts raised clouds of dust. But it was and is still recognisable today as our High St. What we have is essentially a street of buildings constructed in the late 18th and early 19th century which were later converted into shops. The future of the High St. is very much under discussion today so perhaps it is appropriate to take a look at how and when it became the Street we know.

By the 1840s Sittingbourne was at one of the major points of change in its long history. The railway age had arrived and the coaching trade, an important economic factor in the town, would soon disappear, the main route to the Channel ports then becoming the railway line through Tonbridge

and Ashford. Pigot's 1840 Directory describes Sittingbourne as situated in a delightful and highly fertile part of the country. There are 2182 inhabitants and two annual fairs held on Whit Monday and October 11th for linen, woollen goods, hardware etc. plus a great monthly market held on a Tuesday.

As yet the High St. was not the shopping centre it was to become as the 19th century progressed. The 1841 census records 117 heads of household as resident in the High St.. There were some 420 other adults resident (wives, grown up children, grannies, lodgers etc.), 300 children under 16 and 46 servants. One or two properties seem to have been common lodging houses for single men, mostly labourers and there are two schools with a total of 12 children.

SMITH'S OLD-ESTABLISHED BOOT AND SHOE WAREHOUSE, No. 5, Rose Place, Sittingbourne.

T. SMITH, having just purchased a very large STOCK of BOOTS and SHOES upon the most advantageous terms, intends SELLING OFF the same immediately, at the following low prices:—

	from	s. d.	per pair
Men's stout Bluchers	4	6	"
Ditto Wellingtons	5	6	"
Ditto half-hid Boots	3	10	"
Ditto Oxonian	2	3	"
Women's Cashmere Boots	2	3	"
Ditto, double-soled	3	6	"
Ditto cloth ditto, goloched	3	6	"
Ditto coloured ditto	3	0	"
Ditto patent leather Slippers	1	9	"
Children's Boots and Shoes	0	6	"

With every other Article in the trade equally cheap.
A quantity of soiled Boots and Shoes selling off at less than half-price!!

GUTTA PERCHA IN ANY QUANTITY.
TRAVELLING BAGS in LEATHER & CARPET.
Waterproof Garments of every description.
Agent to the Norwich Union Fire & Life Office,
And the Accidental Death Insurance Company.

Every description of TRUSSES,
ELASTIC STOCKINGS AND BANDAGES, &c., may be
obtained of

EDWARD ROOK, CHEMIST,
SITTINGBOURNE;

Of the best quality, and at prices considerably lower than those



1900

The heads of household, in some cases just one person, are recorded as having 52 different occupations (see table). A few of them may have actually had a business in the High St. We know that the bookseller, Mrs Senior, had a business almost opposite St. Michael's church and one of the grocers had a household which indicates resident staff. We can almost certainly identify as shops: 2 Grocers, a Baker, a Druggist (Chemist), a Bookseller, a Linen Draper and a Tailor. The overall impression is of residential property often housing several families along with properties occupied by the 16 persons of independent means, their children and servants. At this time properties were not numbered and with few exceptions it is not possible to determine precisely which property people lived in.

For shops as we know them today, a number of factors were required; large scale production to provide stocks at

affordable prices and transport from factory to the shop as repository. Shops needed glass fronts for display and at least illumination by gaslight. Finally, customers with the capacity to spend.

In the second half of the 19th century all these factors came to fruition in Sittingbourne. The population of London was growing dramatically. Sittingbourne's brickfields were meeting a huge demand—over 80 million bricks were produced in 1880. In 1858 the railway came to Sittingbourne offering fast transport to London for agricultural produce. In 1876 Edward Lloyd opened his papermill to provide newsprint, and at the turn of the century it was the largest producer of newsprint in the world. Economic progress means jobs and wages and by 1901 the population had increased to 8943 from the 2182 of the 1830s..

HORACE GRENTED for WIRELESS

(Member of the British Broadcasting Co.)

55, HIGH STREET, SITTINGBOURNE.



BURNDIPT SERVICE AGENT.

SPECIALITY—COMPLETE INSTALLATION.
Phone 32.

1925

1841 Census High St

Occupation of Heads of Household
(figure where more than one Household)

Baker 3	Blacksmith 2
Bookseller	Bootmaker
Bricklayer	Carpenter 2
Carrier 1	Cellarman
Charwoman	Clerk
Coachmaker	Confectioner 2
Cooper	Coal Merchant 3
Draper 2	Druggist
Eating House Propr.	Fruiterer
Gardener 2	Governess
Greengrocer	Grocer 2
Gunsmith	Horsekeeper 3
Hotel Propr	Inn Propr
Independent 16	Journeyman
Labourer 21	Merchant Clerk
Ostler 2	Postboy 2
Painter 4	Parish Clerk
Pawnbroker	Printer
Postman	Publican 2
Sadler	Salesman
Schoolmaster	Sheriff's Officer
Shoemaker 4	Shoemender 2
Solicitor 2	Spirit Mcht
Stationer	Tea Dealer
Tailor 5	Van Driver
Victualler 3	Wheelwright 2



1925 Directory
High St. Shops

Art Needlework	Dentures maker
Estate Agent 3	Baker 3
Bank 4	Bookseller 2
Brewer	Butcher 3
Café	Chemist 5
Coal Merchant	Corn Seed Mcht
Cycle shop	Domestic Stores
Draper 5	Dyer/Cleaner 2
Fishmonger 2	Greengrocer
Grocer 9	House Furn. 2
Ironmonger 2	Jeweller 2
Milliner	Motor Engr.
Music shop 2	Outfitter 7
Pawnbroker	Post Office
Printer	Saddler
Shoeshop 3	Tailor 5
Tobacconist/News 6	Wines & Spirits 2
Wireless	



1900

Probably the High St. as a shopping centre was at its zenith between 1900 and 1950 and the table of shops from the 1925 Directory represents the broad outline of the make up of the High St during this period. Grocery stores, including David Greig, Maypole Dairy, Home and Colonial and Liptons along with butchers and fishmongers, provided for the inner man while Boots and Timothy Whites helped to ease his aches and pains. The number of outfitters and tailors suggests that the ladies and gents of Sittingbourne were prepared to pay to look their best. There was very little by way of hire purchase. Many people purchased Provident Clothing vouchers which could be exchanged at certain shops and the tally man called each week

to collect the 6d or so by way of repayment. As a last resort you could visit Uncle (the Pawnbroker). He was a busy man before the second world war with anything up to 4000 pledges a month at the High St. shop.

The first half of the 20th century was also the heyday of the Department Store where one could browse amongst a wealth of different goods. Sittingbourne was never likely to attract the larger type of Department Store, being sandwiched between two large centres of population in Chatham

and Canterbury. We did however have two smallish Department Stores catering mainly for the upper and the lower range of the market.

Hulburds came to the town in 1855 and offered a range of more expensive items to what were sometimes known as the carriage trade. In the early years of Victoria's reign, ladies tended not to go into shops and goods were brought out to their carriage for them to inspect. We have it on good authority that this practice was still in use by



1980

There's a War On You Know

SWALE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

British Restaurants

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on and after MONDAY, 19th JULY, 1943, the following prices will be charged for meals served in or supplied from the Council's British Restaurants at Boughton, Teynham and Newington

MEAT AND VEGETABLE	7d.
MEAT & VEGETABLES & SWEET supplied to children under eleven years	6d.
SWEET	3d.
SOUP	2d.
TEA	1½d.

The prices for pies supplied from the Restaurants will remain unchanged.

By Order of the Council,

GUY TASSELL, Clerk.

19, West Street, Faversham,
15th July, 1943.

Between 1939 and 1945 life in the High St. was difficult. Rationing and shortages meant queues, and for the housewife, feeding the family was a continuous problem but at least we weren't obese and you could dine out at the British Restaurant—speciality, Woolton Pie of immortal memory and whale meat, occasionally. We are not sure whether there was a British Restaurant in Sittingbourne and if there was where it was situated. Can any reader enlighten us and speak of their experience? At least you have survived to tell the tale. The High St. suffered some war damage through incendiary bombs and the Wesleyan Church was totally destroyed. If you had 18 clothing coupons you could dress in style but the cost at Rego's was roughly the equivalent of a week's wages.



Rego

UTILITY SUITS
TAILORED-
TO-MEASURE

80/- 95/-

98, HIGH STREET

Hulburds into the first part of the 20th century The store is now Wetherspoons pub.

The Co-operative movement which offered dividend on purchases began in Rochdale in 1844 and was very popular in Victorian times. A group of brickfield workers founded a branch in Sittingbourne and a store was opened. It was not, however in the High St. but in East St. where the Aldi supermarket now is. One reason is probably that most of the brickworkers lived in the Murston area. The Sittingbourne Co-op was started in 1874 with social as well as economic aims. By 1900 it had some 3000 members. Some of the departments, including a Library, were in smaller shops in East St.. More modern premises were built on the site in the 1920s but it was not until around 1970 that the Co-op moved to the premises in the High St. where it has recently ceased trading. Two other stores were significant additions to the High St. Woolworths came in 1927 and occupied the old Rose Hotel and Burtons arrived in 1937 amid protests that a rather attractive old residence had been knocked down to accommodate them.

If shops make a High St. a focal point

Shop early for Christmas

SEPTEMBER 30TH

After the above date (by order of the Board of Trade) you will not be able to buy any toy costing more than **24'5**. All toys of a price higher than 24'5 remaining unsold on Sept. 30th will have to be put away until after the war,

so **BUY YOUR**

GOOD TOYS-NOW!

THERE WILL BE NONE AT XMAS

**JOIN OUR
TOY CLUB**

and make sure of your children's Xmas gifts. Small deposit secures. Payments to suit you. Ask at the shop for particulars.

Currys LTD

124, HIGH STREET,
SITTINGBOURNE

for a town then other facilities are likely to follow. Sittingbourne Library started in Crescent St. just off the High St. in 1887. Around 1900 some 6000 books were borrowed each year, roughly one per adult in the population. We must have been rather slow readers although this does prompt a rather indelicate question. We know that there were somewhat primitive male urinals near St. Michael's church but so far as we know, female toilets were not available in the High St. until the Corn Exchange built in 1859 was acquired by the Local Board in 1879 and converted as a Town Hall and entertainment centre. These were also the years when the High St. Churches were built. The Wesleyan Church, the Congregational Church, The Baptist Church and Holy Trinity. Later there came two cinemas, The Queens, and the Odeon which opened in 1937. Vallance and Paynes Bank had been in the High St. since around 1800. It became Martin's and then Barclays. The building is now the Woolwich Office. We not only had a bank, we had our own money. A Sittingbourne one pound bank note of 1824 is shown on page 6.. Whether the High St. of 1900 will be as

HOW TO PROVIDE FOR OLD AGE !

You can help yourself and, at the same time, help your Neighbour to help himself, by joining

THE SITTINGBOURNE Co - Operative Society

WHICH HAS FOR ITS OBJECTS:—

THE Mutual Protection of its Members against Poverty,
THE Prevention of Sweating, Adulteration, and Fraud, and
THE Promotion of Economic, Social, and Moral Reform.

PROFITS DIVIDED AMONG THE MEMBERS

readily identifiable in 100 years from now seems rather doubtful.. The function of the High St. has changed over the centuries. In the 16th century it was largely a street of inns catering for travellers. By the 18th century fewer inns met the needs of the stagecoaches and the Rose Hotel catered for a wealthier class of traveller and substantial private houses were a feature of the High St. Whether it can or needs to cater for the 21st. Century shopper is open to question but a town without some central area is likely to be little more than a sprawling estate lacking in character however comfortable it may otherwise be. History suggests that a High Street's function must adapt to changing times but it has always been a focal point for the community. What its 21st. Century role will be we must wait and see.

Sittingbourne High St.

An ongoing project initiated and researched by the Museum History Group. The Group meets monthly. Why not join them and help explore our history. Details from The Secretary (see back page)

Telephone: 53.

Cars driven at Owners' risk. No responsibility accepted against Fire or theft.

S. HOLDSTOCK,
Automobile Engineer.

The Canterbury Road Garage, Sittingbourne. JOIN HERE.



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All kinds of Motor Insurance effected.



East St. Co-op around 1900

The History Man

Probably more books on history have been written than on any other subject but it was not always so. Accounts of events such as the Anglo Saxon Chronicles were written long after the events and relied very much on tradition and hearsay evidence. It was not until the 16th century that historians began to gather first hand evidence, verbal and written by visiting places and interviewing people. One of the earliest such books is William Lambarde's *Perambulation of Kent* published in 1570. He visits and comments on many of the towns in Kent but unfortunately has nothing to say about Sittingbourne.

Another 200 years were to pass before one of the first modern history men started his History of Kent.. Edward Hasted, 1732—1812 was almost the prototype 18th century gentleman. He inherited substantial property from his father who died in 1741 and who is buried in the family vault in Newington church. The family properties included Dane gardens at Cellar Hill Lynsted and land called Hays near Barrow Green in Teynham. Young Hasted was educated at King's School Rochester and Eton.

He purchased property at Sutton at Hone near Dartford where he married Anne Dorman in 1755. Between 1760

and 1770 they had seven children. The income from his estates meant that he did not have to earn his living but the management of the estates took up much time. As an Esquire in the county he served on a number of public bodies..

From an early age he seems to have been interested in antiquities and became a member of the Society of Antiquaries and later of the Royal Society. His great project, A History of Kent, was conceived around 1760 and increasingly occupied his time and income. His method was to write to his many contacts in the county including the parish clergy to ask them for details of property ownership and local history. Where possible he borrowed and inspected documentary evidence. He travelled widely in the county and over the next decade acquired a vast archive of information.

The work was planned as folio volumes and included many detailed maps, an unusual feature at this time and Hasted went to great pains to try and get them as accurate as possible. It is a measure of the complexity of the work that the four volumes were published over a period of 22 years between 1778 and 1800.

While his History of Kent is his great achievement, it contributed to problems in his personal life. His estates were not well managed on his behalf and he found himself seriously in debt. His relationship with his

wife broke down and he fled to the continent with his mistress. With the coming of the French Revolution he was forced to return to England in 1793. He was soon arrested and spent 7 years in a debtor's prison. Eventually discharged he became the Warden of an almshouse in Wiltshire where he died and was buried in 1812.

What follows is a direct extract from the original edition. Retaining the original spelling and at times outdated way of saying things does, we hope, add something to the facts presented.

Something of the History of Sittingbourne being an account published in 1798 by Edward Hasted Esq. and containing details relating to the town and the manors therein.

Sittingbourne, antiently written Sedingborne, in Saxon, Saedingburna, i.e. the hamlet by the bourne or small stream.

The parish and town of Sittingbourne is situated about forty miles from London, the high road from thence to Dover leading through it. The parish, though rather above the level of the marshes, which bound the northern side of it, from which the ground rises to the town, is still a damp situation, and both from the air and water is not accounted a healthy one, although much more so than several of the neighbouring parishes equally northward, than which it has a more cheerful and populous aspect; from the town the ground still keeps rising southward till it joins Tunfoll in the road to which about a quarter of a mile from the town is a good modern house called Glovers which lately belonged to Thomas Bannister esq. Who resided in it and died in 1791, and his widow, Mrs. Bannister now owns it; eastward from which, at about the same distance are the estates of Chilton and Fulton and Hyfted fortall, with Golden wood at the boundary of the parish, part of which is within it, adjoining to Bapchild and Rodmerham. The parish, which is but small, contains little more than eight hundred acres of land, consisting of arable, pasture, orchards, hop ground and woods. In the upper and western



Edward Hasted

parts it is much inclined to chalk and thin land, but the rest of it is in general a fertile loam, especially about the town, which was formerly surrounded by orchards of apples and cherries, but many of them have been destroyed to make room for plantations of hops, which, however, are not so numerous as formerly and several of those which remain are kept up only as nurseries for young plantations of fruit trees to which they must soon in their turn give place. Northward from the town the grounds are entirely pasture and orchards, lying on a descent to the town of Milton and the creek, both about half a mile distant from it; on the latter is a key called Crown key, of great use to this part of the country for the exporting of corn and wood and re-landing the several commodities from London and elsewhere. At a small distance north west from the town is Bayford court.

The town of Sittingbourne is built on each side of the high road at the fortieth milestone from London and stands on a descent towards the east. It is a wide long street unpaved, the houses of which are mostly modern, being well built of brick and faced, the whole having a cheerful aspect. The principal support has always been from the inns and houses of reception in it for travellers, of which there are several.

(To be continued)

Final reminder.

The competition is open to any young person in the age groups and the winning articles will appear in the Journal

Sittingbourne Heritage Museum
Competition For ages 11-14 & 15-18

How Sittingbourne has changed

Prizes in each of the two categories.
1st £50, 2nd £30, 3rd £20

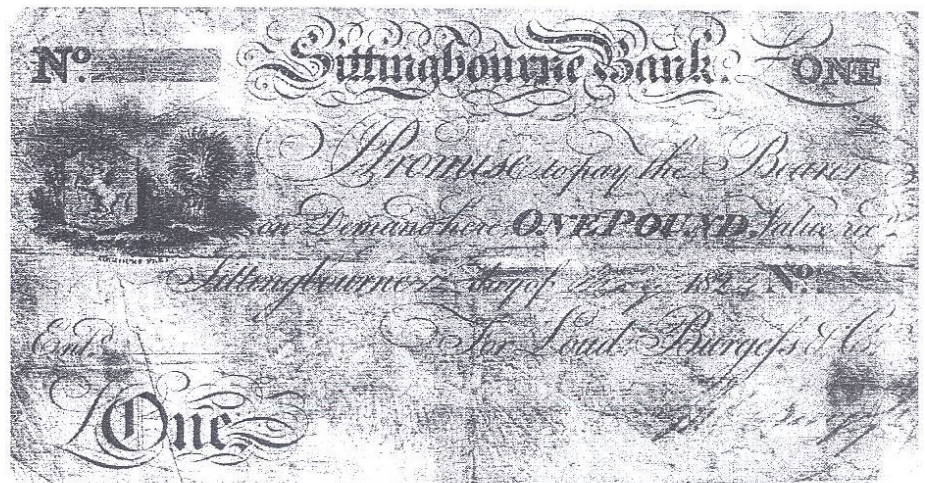
- Write an article about how Sittingbourne has changed over the last 100 years - maximum 2000 words
- Winning articles will be printed in the museum journal and the East Kent Gazette
- Illustrations may be added but judging will be on written content.
- Every entrant will receive a pen from the museum.
- Written on computer or handwritten
- Entries e-mailed to www.sittingbourne-museum.co.uk or handed in at Sittingbourne library clearly labelled with name, age and address.

Themes could be chosen from

- How people lived and worked in the town.
- Paper making or brick making in the town
- The effect of the Creek on the town
- How transport developments have changed the town
- How the town has grown in size and why
- Find helpful information and ideas on the museum website
- Visit the museum in East Street, open every Saturday 10-4
- Help can also be found at Sittingbourne library which has a treasure trove of local history information

Closing date Friday June 15th
Results will be announced in the East Kent Gazette on
Wednesday July 4th

Judges: Christine Rayner, Peter Morgan, Helen Allinson



Secretary: c/o Peter Morgan. 65 Park Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1DY
Keep in touch via our website www.sittingbourne-museum.co.uk Tel. 01795 423215