



# TEN SULINGS OF LAND

Loc

23

BROMLEY  
LIBRARIES

AL  
LS BH

CLASS

L65a

ACC

01184 8416

BT

INVOICE DATE  
12 MAY 1992

# **BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE – Land Use 1841**

Map by Bessie Taylor

Model made by C. B. Elmes





# Contents

## Introduction

## Dedication

	Page
1. The Road Forward – to 1086	1
2. Headway – A Steady Gallop – 1087-1600	7
3. Broad Highways – The Wheels Turn – 1601-1857	13
4. Progress – The Arrival of the Railway 1858-1964	21
5. The Borough – Flying High – 1965 – Forward	29
Notes 1-9	36



*Ravenscroft – circa 1964 see page 19*



## Dedication

To the inhabitants of The London Borough of Bromley.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I submit this little volume, conscious that, where I may have deservedly incurred censure, censure will be my portion, and that, if at all, I shall have merited praise, praise will not be withheld.

AFTER – Thomas Wilson “Discription of Bromley” 1797





## Introduction

I have written this book in an attempt to convey to the reader a feeling of association with, and participation in, the history of Bromley Town and the surrounding district.

By embarking upon five imaginary journeys, each one over the same ground, but each representing a different period in history, I have been able to record the facts of local history, told as a story.

I trust that I have added to the knowledge already available, encouraged the inquisitive reader to play some part, however small, in preserving as much detail as possible of the local history which is fast disappearing from our midst and thereby to derive satisfaction from making the past, present.

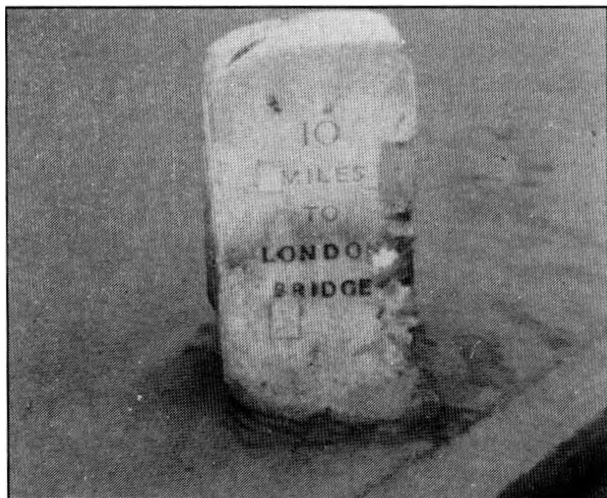
*C. B. ELMES*  
*October 1984*



---

## *The road forward from prehistoric times to the year 1086*

---



The starting point for our journey is Southend Village, which is situated on the London to Hastings Road  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Lewisham and 2 miles from the centre of Bromley. At the entrance to the Village the attention is immediately attracted to the sloping land to the right which forms the banks of the River Ravensbourne, for it is at this particular stretch of the river that the waters run strong and deep and where, whenever there is heavy rain, a wide area of land on either side becomes flooded.

The Ravensbourne rises at Caesar's Well, Keston,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles away, which is to be our destination, and the length of the river is about  $10\frac{1}{4}$  miles to its outlet into the River Thames, during its course it is joined by four tributaries, namely the Bourne Water at Hayes, an un-named stream which comes from the lakes in Holwood Park, Keston, the combined Chaffinch and Beck Rivers, nearing Catford, and the River Quaggy which rises at Darrick Wood, Orpington, and to the junction with the main river at Lewisham is 11 miles long. The Kidbrook joins the River Quaggy at Lee and from Lewisham as the Ravensbourne, proceeds North-East towards Deptford Creek where the water is finally discharged into the River Thames.

The subject of our investigations is the history of the peoples and the development of the land within an area, the circumference of which is marked by the Rivers Quaggy and Ravensbourne.

A venture on foot, such as we are now undertaking, has in recent years been made possible by the clearance of trees and heathland to make way for building houses, planting crops and the construction of roads and as a result of this work it is now considered comparatively safe to embark on such a journey.

Nevertheless, we will encounter dangers resulting from swamps and fallen trees which, from man's earliest occupation of this country, has been a major hazard to the traveller, often causing injury and sometimes death. In earlier times the chance attack from wild animals and wandering tribes often occurred, but with the development in the country of settlements, particularly in the

South-East, these risks have greatly diminished in all but the densely wooded regions. The road along which we are now walking is very stony and uneven, but it has been trodden firm by the feet of travellers over many years.

Originally, the tunnelled passages through the undergrowth made by wild animals formed the tracks which developed into the first roads in England, and when it suited them to do so, particularly in the transportation of men and materials, the Romans (who later introduced regular road systems), used the existing well-used tracks which covered the main ridges along the higher ground, to link the main roads then being built, and parts of the established track were, where applicable, strengthen and straightened to form a vital part of the new road pattern. The Pilgrims Way which runs from the Kent Coast, near Folkestone along the Southern escarpment of the North Downs towards Salisbury Plain is the ancient track which passes closest to Bromley and although Pilgrims have trodden it for as long as the Christian Church has been established at Canterbury proceeding from West to East, when new, it was used by travellers believing in a very different religion on pilgrimage to Stonehenge, travelling from East to West.

A route directly to water, or to high ground, was chosen as a regular passageway, and it is to the high ground at Bromley from the banks of the River Ravensbourne that, no doubt, first established our present path.

We now proceed from the village at Southend, past two of the eleven watermills which stand on the Ravensbourne and, rounding the long slow bend in the road, we arrive at the foot of Bromley Hill, here a brook having its rising as a spring in the land towards Plaistow on the South East side, crosses the road into a ditch, to join the River Ravensbourne.

Proceeding up the hill, flanked on either side with trees and rough ground we arrive at the summit, where we are able to rest and, looking back, survey the surrounding district from this high vantage point.

To the East stretching down to the banks of the River Quaggy and in a broad band extending towards Widmore and Bickley are the densely wooded areas of Elmstead Wood, Camden Wood, Logshill Wood and Bullers Wood. This vast expanse of tall dark trees and thick undergrowth is a haven for birds and wild animals, but for humans it has always been avoided for fear of attack from the known and the unknown.

To the North of Elmstead Wood is the highest circular viewpoint in the area, known as Pousty's Hill or Hilly Fields and from here is a panoramic view over North Kent to the River Thames and beyond to the hills of Hampstead and Highgate.

To the West immediately below us is the Ravensbourne Valley and looking away beyond it can be seen glimpses of the Roman Road linking London across the Weald South to the Downs at Brighton and Lewes.

From Watling Street this road passes through Peckham, crosses Southend Lane to Langley Court and on to Wickham Court, this stretch being comparatively close enough to Bromley to enable the local people to feel the benefit of the trade which passes along it.

On its course through Sussex the road passes near to many iron-working sites, the slag from which was used for road metal, and besides linking the corn growing areas with London, it opened up the iron districts for development and for the export of its products to London for use in Britain, and to the Coast, for shipment to Gaul and beyond.

Roman roads were strongly built, very wide and very high, to withstand the heavy traffic of the army and of the many traders who used them constantly. The extremes of weather conditions eroded the surfaces and for protection they were usually metalled with the best material that was available locally, this may have been gravel, broken stone, flint, stone slab or waste product such as iron slag or cinder from nearby workings.

Having rested we now continue on our way passing a beech tree which stands by the side of the road and beyond it we arrive at the first of the building of the Bromley settlement.

The pattern which as developed in the creation of settlements is

- (a) Houses built around a green or animal stockage. This plan is for defensive purposes and dates from Anglo-Saxon times,
- (b) not laid out to a plan but buildings added when needed,

- (c) various buildings which stretch out along a trade route and
- (d) buildings which are scattered over a comparatively wide area, mainly farms and large estates.

All but the first of these plans have been used in the development of Bromley, begun by the early pioneers, followed by the attraction of the trade route to and from London and in time, the need to develop the surrounding land introduced estates and farms which brought to the inhabitants the growing prosperity they have enjoyed over the years.

The small dingy hovels scattered on either side of the main road are the homes of the labourers who are employed in working the land.

Each dwelling is of timber construction, the floor is bare stamped earth on top of which a fire is laid. The smoke escapes in all directions and the occupants live in an atmosphere of filth and dirt.

The smell from each interior, blended with that of stagnant water lying in the road, decaying vegetables and sewage, is repugnant and the diseases which thrive in these conditions are contributory to the early death rate which exist amongst the population.

The babies and the very young are at home with their mothers who are wholly engaged in attending to the cooking and other chores connected with bringing up a family. Those children over the age of 6 years are away with the menfolk helping to work the land in Spring and Summer. With the arrival of Autumn they are employed in driving the swine into the woods to feed on the acorns scattered by the wind which are in abundance around here. Some labourers work full time for the master at the Mansion House while the more capable and enterprising men spend but a token period so employed. As payment of rent, they have been granted their own farming unit, consisting of the rearing of sheep, cattle and pigs, and the growing of corn and various root vegetables, bees are kept by most to enable them to make the national drink of mead.

Bromley consists of between 50-60 dwellings and, assuming 5 persons to each family, the estimated population is between 250-300 people.

We now continue down the main thoroughfare, having gone but a short distance, through the trees on the eastern side, we can see the Great Hall which stands  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away.

In a field north-west of the building, close to a cluster of oak trees is a well, and nearby is a mineral spring of water which flows south and as we proceed parallel to it we can see that it joins an un-named river which rises in Holwood Park and together cross the road to flow into the Ravensbourne just below and south-west of the gravel pits.

A Church of Canterbury, having been established in the year 604 AD, a second Diocese was created with the Cathedral at Rochester, the only other town of any size.

Most parts of the kingdom of Ken had very little contact with either of these Cities, but the close association with the Church at Rochester brought to Bromley recognition and early development.

In the year 862 AD King Ethelbert, who ruled over the counties of Wessex and Kent granted to Dryhtwald, one of his Ministers, a charter in which ten measures of land (known to Kentish folk as a suling representing as much land as a yoke of oxen could plough in one year) was given as a gift forming the land known as Bromleag. This name means heathland, or more especially "Heath where the broom grows."

Since the departure of the Romans, in 410 AD the County of Kent was in constant turmoil with internal feuds and frequent attack from the Danes, and naturally history is obscure, and it is not until the tenth century during the Rule of Edgar that there is positive evidence of a Charter of Land, granted to Aelfstan, Bishop of Rochester, lands at Bromley.

At the end of the charter and in order to determine the land in question, the boundaries were identified as Chislehurst, Crofton, Rugebeorg, Keston, Wickham, Beckenham, Bellingham and Mottingham. At the southern end of Bromley town the flora which extends up the hill beyond the gravel pits is studded with the tall bright yellow flower of the common broom from which the place got its name. To avoid climbing the steep hill to our left leading on to Crofton we cross to the Ravensbourne and, keeping to the eastern bank, continue in the direction of Keston.

This stretch of the river is quite straight and there being no obstacles to negotiate by virtue of the safe dry land on either side, we make rapid progress and shortly into view, away to our left we see the ruins of the Romano-British farmstead site and a 1/4 mile or so further on the wooded district of Hayes and Keston Commons are reached and it is here that we find by their remains, evidence of the earlier inhabitants.

### **NEOLITHIC AGE (NEW STONE AGE) 4,000 BC TO 1500 BC**

It was the Neolithic revolution, the name given to the migrating people from Europe, which led to the advancement of civilisation in the south east corner of Britain. They brought with them the skill of stone working and making flint implements and pottery and as the first farmers, they cultivated the land and kept herds of cattle which was a tremendous step forward, but by far their most outstanding achievement is the construction of the Megaliths, the relics of which are Kit's Coty House and Burial Chamber, Coldrums, and Addington Stones. (Long Barrow) Metalwork was later introduced by the Beaker folk (so named after the shape of the type of pot found in their graves) a skill mastered by them in trading prior to their arrival on English soil, this later developed into the technical skill to make fine bronze weapons, tools, pottery and trinkets.

At Keston and on Hayes Common the many flint implements and flakes suggest there was the site of a factory for the production of neolithic implements and many flints fashioned into scrapers, knives, arrowheads, axes and hammerstones have been found and this discovery tends to establish beyond doubt the fact that the hut circles found on Hayes Common are of neolithic age. There are several groups of hut floors and all are circular in outline, varying in size from a shallow depression a few inches deep and a about 4 feet in diameter to hollows 2 feet 6 inches deep and about 30 feet in diameter. Each hut had a circular stone wall with a large wooden post in the centre which supported the branch roof, which was covered with turf and long grasses.

In order to keep warm in the very cold winters and to remain a cool atmosphere in the summer, the floor of the hut was scooped out creating the indentations now visible which are the only remains of the village. Generally the small number of huts from this period found in Britain may be accounted for by the fact that most were built on chalk land and erosion of the past 3,000 years has lowered the level of the chalk so that any indentation in the ground where the hut once stood or where any post might have been in the upper layer of neolithic chalk have been washed away.

There is further evidence of man's early occupation of this area in the form of an iron age hill fort situation on the south eastern side of the common. This structure was built in the middle second century B.C., 200 years before Julius Caesar landed in Kent in the year 55 and 54 B.C.

The defensive ditches and the three earth ramparts are in places over 30 foot high which encloses an area of about 30 acres. This hilltop stronghold was built by the members of a large tribal unit whose territory extended up to, possibly 100 square miles. The purposes of it was to protect themselves and their herds from attacks from other tribes.

The ground chosen by the builders for these earthworks was usually a rounded hump not controlled by any higher ground from which they could see and where they could be seen. The construction of the ramparts is in itself an engineering accomplishment and their size testifies to the enormous amount of effort and the length of time which was needed to build them.

A closer examination of the problems which confronted the builder reveals that the structure must be considered in relationship with the natural level of the land adjoining it. Such a project at first sight suggest the need for a massive movement of soil but this is in fact not necessary, for the vehicle used in moving the earth was a rough basket, and, after having dug a ditch or fosse with their crude implements, probably made from the horn of an animal, the soil was conveyed to the bank or vallum and therefore with every basket of earth dug out, not only was the ditch lowered but the bank was raised and so it can be appreciated that the task was considerably easier than it at first appears, but nevertheless, the job was a formidable task and the relics of these earthworks remain a permanent credit to those who, with strength and teamwork, helped in their making. When the three ramparts at Holwood were completed the top of the banks were palisades, and driven into the ground at the bottom of the ditches was a line of posts or sharpened stakes to add to the fortifications of the camp.

There are a number of original entrances which had wooden gates with a bridge over the passage to carry a sentry.

By reference to the map of South Eastern England one will observe a line of three hill forts (one of which is Holwood) situated approximately 10 miles south of the River Thames, which indicates that the purpose for which they were built was defence of the local communities rather than a military defence system, and in an area 20 miles farther south extending 50 miles west are 17 structures of various sizes, Bigbury being the sole site to the east.

The question is why did the builders choose this particular area to throw up defences? Much of the Weald and other bands of wooded land was not naturally suited to primitive occupation but a large part of West Kent and Sussex adjoining the Channel which is flat, has no such constructions! This would infer that the danger of attacks was from lands to the North of the Thames, and not from the continent of Europe. Again, situated as they are astride the Pilgrim's Way, was their function to guard this ancient tractway leading from Canterbury to Stonehenge?

### **ROMAN PERIOD AD 43 TO AD 410**

In the year 54 BC Caesar's Second Expeditionary Force landed near Sandwich in Kent, his written report is the first account of a battle fought on English soil. He learned of the location of the native tribe situated a night's march inland, approximately 12 miles. This was most certainly Bigbury, 2 miles west of Canterbury. the invading Roman army found their crossing of the River Stour opposed by the Britons who occupied the hill fort, and although heavy casualties were sustained on both sides the good account given of themselves by the British defenders against a new form of warfare was in the main due to the firm entrenchment behind the earthworks. The vast size of the structure and the number of the tribe it protected would surely have given to the hostile invaders a similar confrontation at the approaches of Keston. There is evidence of destruction by fire on the site, which may have occurred when the second wave of Belgae invaders came to England or was due to the speed with which the Romans encountered and overran the opposition in the drive to London and beyond? it would scarcely have given time for a very large tribe to have fled and reformed, and no doubt most would have perished in battle.

Further excavation of this site may reveal evidence of exactly how the local people were conquered.

Because of its well appointed situation, the Romans chose the area to build a permanent settlement and below the hill fort a short distance from the two ponds and the well from which the River Ravensbourne rises are the warm gentle slopes of the valley away to the west which gave excellent conditions in which to grow wheat\* and fruit. There remains on these slopes the walls of the buildings which together formed a Roman Villa, one of many which have been discovered in the South East corner of England and the finding of vast numbers of coins, pottery, excellent imported glassware, and the great amphora used to hold wine or oil is an indication of the prosperity enjoyed by the inhabitants, and at Keston the remains of this earlier community suggest that they had a comparatively comfortable life based partly on agriculture and partly on geographical position, situated as it is on the main trading route from London to Gaul and onto Rome.

The number of buildings including a large granary, the walls of which remain in this valley, support the theory that here lived a well-to-do aristocratic Briton who had rebuilt and extended his original farmstead and who having adopted Roman customs had elaborated the structure in the settlement, on the Roman plan. He might well have been an important member of the Roman administration who was required to make frequent journeys on the road which links London with Lewes and Brighton.

Along with the Roman buildings are many Iron Age dwellings huts, the occupants of which were numerous and well enough organised to have built the hill fort situated nearby, which would suggest that permanent homes have existed here since before the New Stone Age 4,000 years B.C. At Keston there has been a community constantly in occupation, the Romans cleared structures on existing sites and built in their place, but it was unusual for the Saxons to make use

*\*See Note No. 1 on Page 36*

of the many Roman buildings having preferred to leave them to deteriorate and set up a new settlement some distance away. The result of this has been for the various structures to be left in isolation and the lengthy process of ruination allowed to proceed, and this has given to the archeologist more evidence of Roman occupation than might otherwise have been found.

An Anglo Saxon hut at Lower Warbank dating back to the 6th to 8th century A.D. together with fragments of rare pottery, confirm positive archeological evidence of a Saxon settlement here. Thus, to the Iron Age peoples, followed by the Romans, who were in turn succeeded by pagan Saxons and more recently the Normans (who have built the Parish Church), Keston has been home.

It is the question of the precise size of the community which remains unanswered. The thick forest which extended over much of Southern Britain would support the theory that, once having forced a clearing, a site would be established and the occupants would remain. But the discovery of many Iron Age hill forts, dwellings and barrows contradict this theory, introducing instead a notion that no settlement was permanent.

A tribe would move from place to place as soon as the local pastures had become exhausted. With the arrival of the Bronze Age more sophisticated implements followed and by the use of a stronger plough, rapid penetration of the forest was possible\*. Our journey on foot is now ended and reflecting on the ground we have covered we see Bromley as a very small settlement situated on top of what appears to be an artificial mound.

It is surrounded by heath and woodland in which all kinds of dangers abound, and the inhabitants live their lives in as contended a style as nature will permit within the Bromley boundaries.

*\*See Note No. 2 on Page 36*



---

## *Headway – A Steady Gallop*

### *1087-1600*

---



In the year 1086 we undertook the 5½ mile journey on foot through the town of Bromley and on to Keston. During that year the great Doomsday survey was compiled, which is the name given to two volumes of statistics written in Latin, being the result of investigations carried out into the conditions relating to the Kingdom of England under William the Conqueror. In the survey there is a record of the watermills at Southend Village, and it is from here that we start our second journey, this time on horseback. Having been given water and fed, the horse is properly fitted with the saddle and harness and having mounted we set off towards Bromley along the road which has changed very little in the past 500 years. As the horse is used more and more for transportation, the old hazards of mud and water experienced by walking have been reduced. But the conditions of the roads are so bad as to cause, at best, very uncomfortable journeys for both horse and rider and, at worse injury or even death. On the road surface there exists many holes of various sizes into which rain water is collected and remains trapped for days, especially here at Southend Village in the clay ground along the banks of the River Ravensbourne.

During the occupation of Britain by the Anglo Saxons, little was done in the way of road maintenance and the Norman Conquerors who followed allowed the bridges to fall into ruins and in turn, long stretches of roadway became overgrown and in some places wholly impassable. But throughout this long period of neglect the well constructed Roman roads, with their fine metal surfaces, have survived and remain in excellent condition.

Since our last journey the surrounding land has remained unaltered but Southend Village is no longer in isolation, for together with Bromley Hill and part of lands at Plaistow now form the Manor of Shroffholt. The manor house is away to the north which is on our left hand side, and on leaving the village the horse proceeds around the long bend in the road, over the brook to start the slow climb of Bromley Hill. From here the summit of Pousty's Hill, or as sometimes referred

to "Mount Misery", is visible and is the prominent feature of the land scape. At the foot of this ancient mound is a farm in Milk Street and there in the year 1500 was an occupant by the name of Ryder, and 1589 a family by the name of King, was in residence. The whole expanse of country to the north of Bromley town and adjoining this farm is know as Plaistow meaning an open space for recreation - this name is Anglo Saxon in origin once described what is now known as the village green. The beautifully hilly country of which this area consists has in places been cleared and many persons now hold estates here.

In Bromley, up to the Domesday survey, no family above the status of villien was recorded but when the Normans established their form of rule in Britain they merely adopted the customs which were already in existence and by means of law, introduced a system which enabled central government to operate. Under this feudal system, portions of land were sub-let to various people higher rank to that of villein or borderer, in consideration for knight service, and the names of wealthy Landowners in and around Bromley begin to appear in old wills between 1500-1600. One of the largest of the estates around Bromley is that of Sundridge; the mansion house is situated on a hill, south east of Milk Street across the River Quaggy, having the vast expanse of Elmstead Woods extending along its eastern flank. The house was built between the years 1210-1212 and in 1227 was owned by Adam Le Blund, who was a descendant of a French nobleman who came from normandy with William the Conqueror. From the mansion house there is a winding lane leading to Hollow Bottom which is situated within the Plaistow area, and at a point where four lanes meet, is springhill house and farm, which has been here from ancient times; the land to the north extending to Pouty's Hill, is farmed by the occupants of this farm. Opposite the house is a substantial red brick building known as Plaistow Hall. A half a mile or so down the lane towards Wigmore Green\* on the left hand side is the old red building built in the 15th century. Down a steep hill beyond this point is Widmore Green where two cottages may be found. The first and largest is the "Old Cottage" which is built of brick and timber and at the gateway the brick has been built to form an arch on top of which is inscribed the year the year - 1599. Adjoining this property in the lane leading to Logs Hill is "Well Cottage", a long timbered structure with windows low down, a few inches from the ground. In the lane outside the cottage to the left of the doorway is the well.

During the time I have been describing the country away to the East, the horse has made slow steady progress up the hill and, having reached level ground at the top, we continue our journey at a more comfortable pace. The valley of the River Ravensbourne is below and runs parallel to the western side, and away in the distance towards West Wickham, stretches of the Roman road can be seen. We are now entering the market town of Bromley, having a population of 1400 whose protection and welfare is governed by the manorial court which have operated throughout the middle Ages.

In a field a short distance west of London Road is a windmill having recently been built, the Lord of the Manor has decreed that every inhabitant of the town should make use of it. Many dislike losing control over their role as provider for their families and prefer to continue to grind their own corn in a quern or hand mill as had been done for centuries. Inside the Mill the millstones are arranged in pairs, the lower one called a bedstone which is stationary, while the upper one, called the runner stone, rotates face down under the control of apparatus which keep it at the correct distance from the bedstone. The arrangement of groves in the stone grind the corn into flour which runs away from the stone and down to the floor below where it is continuously collected in sacks. Being one of the few forms of mechanical power, this new monopoly is treated with suspicion and the miller is often accused of cheating, but no doubt time will justify the existence of the windmill in the life of the town.

Moving on, we pass the large beech tree a prominent feature of the town on our left and a quarter of a mile further along the road we pass Grete House, which stand in grounds on the left which extends down to the Market Square; and records relating to this property date from 1532.

Entering the Market Square from the area of Widmore Green is Bromley Lane. On the right below the Church is the water mill mentioned in the Domesday survey; previously used to grind

*\*See Note No. 3 on page 37*

corn it has, from 1449, been engaged in the making of paper. No mention is made of the Church in the Domesday Survey, but only 40 years after the compiling of these statistics there appears in the records of the Church, a reference to "Chrism Rent" being a payment made to the Bishop for the consecrated oil used in the ceremony of baptism.

To the Domesday valuation of assets, were added notes, on which new and perhaps a more fair estimation could be based. These included the omission of things thought immaterial, and the insertion of everything the commissioners considered to be of substantial worth in arriving at a just and fair valuation of property. This action would explain its contents and omissions and possibly account for the fact that the existence of Bromley's Church was excluded.

The following is the entry relating to Bromley in the Domesday Survey:

"Terra episcopi Rovcestre.

"Isdem episcopus tenet Bronlei, in Bronlei Hundredo, pro vi solins se defrbdebat, tempore Regis Edwardi. Et modo pro tribus. Terra est XIII carucarum. In dominio sunt II carucae; et XXX villani cum XXvi bordariis habent XI carucas. Ibi I molendinium de IV solidis et II acrae prati. Silva c porcorum. Tempore Regis Edwardi, et post valuit XII libras et X solidos; modo XVIII libras, et tamen reddit XXI libras II solidos minus."

Translated into English, we have a series of solid facts which throw considerable light on the extent, population, and general character of the district in 1086:

"Land of the Bishop of Rochester, in the Hundred of Bromley. "The same Bishop holds of Bromley, in the Hundred of Bromley, for six sulings in the time of King Edward. And now for three. There is the arable land of thirteen plough - teams. In demesne there are two plough - teams. And thirty villeins with twenty - six borderers have eleven teams. There is one mill of 4s and two acres of meadow. Wood for one hundred hogs. In the time of King Edward and after it was worth £12.10s. Now £18 and yet it renders £21 less 2s".

A list of the various words and terms referred to in the extract is given below, with a brief definition for each one:

#### **HUNDRED**

A division of a shire - many theories, but two possibilities 1. Consisted of a hundred families or ten tithings. 2. An amount of land which could be ploughed in a year to support a family.

#### **SULING**

180 acres: estimated.

#### **ARABLE LAND**

Land fit for tillage

#### **PLOUGH TEAMS**

One plough = as much land as could be ploughed in a year.

#### **DEMESNE**

Portion of land held by tenant/worker as a home farm.

#### **VILLEINS**

A worker who occupied large areas which they cultivated by the plough in consideration for which they worked two or three days a week on the lords land.

#### **BORDERERS**

A worker who occupied small areas which they cultivated by the plough in consideration for which they worked one day a week on the lords land.

#### **MILL**

This was a water mill and many operated in the winter only, when streams had a sufficient flow of water to turn the mill wheel. (Windmills were not found in Britain until 1191).

#### **MEADOW**

Grassland on which hay can be grown, bordered by a stream and capable of being flooded.

#### **WOOD**

Valued at the number of swine it would support. For the privilege of turning out their pigs into the wood the tenants always made some recognition referred to as panage, which was a gift of a number of swine given to the Lord of the Manor. Timber used for firing, repairs to houses and to fences also added to the value.

### **T.R.E. Tempore Regis Edwardi -**

Value quoted prior to the Norman occupation and again at the time of the survey is throughout the volume consistently reduced against land belonging to an Archbishop. The most sympathetic reductions have taken place on land of Obo, Bishop of Rochester and Bayeux.

### **DOOMSDAY BOOK**

The result of an investigation initiated in 1086 into the conditions of England, conducted by groups of commissioners who received from sworn jurors in each hundred the answers to a number of specific questions.

It is presumed that the tenurial statements in the survey are true and that the hidage and valuations are a rough indication as to the size and prosperity of each estate. The reference to woodland and pigs bear some relation to economic facts of the time but one must beware of deducing anything from the silence of the survey, as already stated in the remarks relating to the Bromley Church, and we must attach to the statistical evidence a relative importance only, all facts should never be accepted as absolute. The Norman administration upon its arrival in England found certain institutions to which they gave the names of "Manor" "Hundred" and "Country" and discovered there were certain classes of men to whom they referred to as "Villein", "Borderer" "Freeman" and "Sokeman" and these terms were accepted without any consideration as to the manner in which they were involved. The statistics must be seen as a condition of a society at rest for in order to arrive at a more accurate record upon which a detailed study could be based, it would have been necessary for a similar enquiry to have been carried out say two -three hundred years earlier.

We move on to consider the living conditions of the people. It has been the hazard of fire which is the most common cause of destruction to property but in and around the town many of the one-room house escaped, and remain in appearance as they were on our last visit. From the year 1530 onwards, the new cottages which have been built are of stronger construction with a good weather-proof roof and a chimney through which the smoke from the fire can escape so that the air inside is much cleaner. Most houses are of two storeys thus the sleeping quarters are away from the living area and although the windows are very small and each room is dark and dirty, the living conditions of the occupants have much improved and they are not so prone to illness.

There are no records relating to the effects upon the population of Bromley resulting from the plague of 1348-1349 - namely the Black Death, but in other parts of this country this tragic event wiped out entire villages and those who suffered the most severely were the poorest classes, due mainly to the conditions in which they existed and as a result, this led to an acute shortage of labour to work the land.

Situated as it is astride their busy trade route in and out of London it is hard to imagine that the people of Bromley did not suffer some effect from this calamity, but whatever the consequences were, by the end of the 17th century a population of about 700 persons is recorded.

After the 14th century many small farmers started paying a monthly rent to the Lord of the Manor for the land they been employed in working, rather than giving giving part of their time and labour, and so began the system of hired labour.

Over a period of time many farmers adopted this form of employment, working more and more independently from the Lord of the Manor, and in order to protect their strip of land they marked it with a line of large stones, hazel twigs or sometimes an imaginary line was established between two strips. Many strips can be held by the same man but they are not often adjoining and if a family is burdened with many children, then for a small yearly rent, permission is given to break into cultivation an area of some few acres of virgin soil, called an "assart" which is used by the peasant as he wishes. Here he can utilise the extra members of his family - when not engaged in other manorial duties - to provide food to help fill the hungry mouths at home. From the year 1500 onwards an increasing number of small fields were surrounded by some form of rude hedge to mark the land belonging to the tenant farmer from that of his neighbour and to retain the animals and to stop the intrusion of wild animals from the large areas of heath and woodland, which in spite of further developments still covers much of Bromley and the surrounding districts.

On the farms the oxen drawn plough is steadily being replaced by the horse, who not being quite so strong repays his master by being more mobile and easily adaptable for other work. Apart from this change the same daily routine that his father and grandfather had done before him is the lot of the medieval farmer. He tends his crops and each day watches their progress and looks with acute anxiety for signs of sickness among the cattle, pigs and poultry, as failure is not the loss of capital so much as the stark reality of survival or starvation. There is little opportunity for experiment or variation and for safety the farmer continues the old process of land cultivation and animal care which he then teaches to his sons.

On 19th July 1205 Bromley received from the Crown the grant of a weekly market which was held every Tuesday in the square around the market house. Here traders would assemble from the surrounding districts to conduct their business, meet their neighbours and friend and enjoy the hospitality of the local hostelry.

It was the main centre for transmission of news which might reach the town from London or from travellers from coastal and other towns en route. In the year 1447 market day was altered from Tuesday to Thursday at the time when King Henry VI made a grant of two fairs to be held on 25th July and 3rd February.

The market house, being centrally situated, is the hub of the community's activities. Its construction is mainly of wooden boards having a roof of red tiles from the level of the first floor. A sloping roof is supported by oak posts which surround the building and provide shelter from the weather. Here is a suitable place to display notices and there is just enough room for a delivery cart to be left under cover, and the oak posts supporting the roof provide a strong fixture to which horses may be tethered. The front is on the west side which has three shuttered windows under a gable, which, on the east side a stairway to the upper floor has a shuttered window on each side. On the north side there is one small window but along the south side which faces down the High Street there are no windows at all.

The few shops which are to be found in the main street which runs through the town are very small with open fronts in which various wares are displayed for sale. At night for protection from thieves and damage from the weather they are shuttered.

As we leave the market square the ringing sound of hammer on anvil is heard coming from the forge on our right and the horse having shed a shoe is taken in to obtain a replacement. The blacksmith is a slim wiry man strong of arm and quick of action, he leads and turns the horse to the required position, although the noise and the and the sight of the fire and smell of burning cinders in the dark interior of the forge, might well have caused the animal to shy away, a reassuring smack on the rear quarters serves to sooth and convey that he will come to no harm. Having dismounted, the horse may now be attended to. The missing shoe is in the front on the left hoof and facing towards the rear legs to avoid injury from a sudden kick, the 'smithy' places his large hand firmly around the leg and running it slowly down toward the hoof, the horse lifts the leg, in immediate obedience to enable work to begin. Holding the leg firmly between his knees the old shoe is removed by cutting off the old clinched nails with a buffer and then taking a firm hold of the shoe with some pincers the 'smithy' pulls it off. He examines the hoof carefully to see if it needs to be pared, and then chooses a shoe from the pile he has made for stock and taking the shoe in his long tongs it is placed among the cinders which have been rendered red hot by blowing with some bellows. It is then carried to the anvil which has a flat rectangular top surface which extends to the left to form the tapering square-ended wedge, the right hand edge has a roughly conical tapering point known as the 'beak', and here he beats out the shoe and punches the nail holes with a pritchell. After several reheatings, hammering, filing and fittings he is satisfied that the shoe fits correctly and after a gentle tap of the hammer to point the nails outward into the hoof the 'smithy' drives them home with a few hard swift strikes. Across from the forge is the 'Rose and Crown' and for midday refreshment a visit to the bar brings the welcome sight and smell of fresh baked bread, butter, cheese and a pint tankard of matured ale, all of which are consumed ravenously in the company of a very jolly landlord and some friendly 'locals'. A journey on horseback has the desired effect of improving the appetite and our meal is soon eaten, then upon departure we cross the road again to greet the blacksmith

waiting with the horse. Having thanked him and paid for his services we mount and leave the forge and proceed at a gentle trot down the road towards Bromley South. On our left is the residence of the Bishop of Rochester. This building is now referred to as the 'Manor House' which comes from the old French name 'manoir'. Continuing on we descend towards the gravel pit and on the way we pass a large castlelike mansion on the right, first owned in 1310 by William De-Bliburgh. It is possible to trace the succession of owners to 1503 when it was disposed of to the Style family having been owned by Robert Simpson from whom the property and lands surrounding it is now named.

The structure is surrounded by a moat 25-30 feet wide on all sides and is a quadrangular building with strong brickfaced lofty walls built of flint and rubble masonry. Beyond the gravel pit at Bromley South the road turns sharp left and here the water from the stream from the mansion grounds is forded by the road and having splashed its way through the horse is encouraged to gather speed to negotiate the steep climb up the hill. There we pass a large pond on the left and moving on we soon approach the beginning of the common lands.

In the year 1285 the Statue of Winchester ordered that a space some 200 feet on each side of the main highway be cleared of all trees and bushes in order to reduce risks of attacks upon the traveller by highwaymen. However neither the passing of the law, or the severe penalties imposed upon the captured robber, reduces to any extent the frequent and sometimes savage attacks.

The road stretching away across open ground over the common down towards Farnborough and beyond is particularly dangerous for travellers leaving Bromley, and the sight of a body hanging by the neck from the branch of a tree serves to remind one of the dangers of travel.

Towards the lower ground on the right we pass Hook Farm. This farmstead has been traced right back to 1334 and has always been a large and prosperous business, with many farm buildings adjoining the house to shelter the various animals and the farm land extends southwest towards Hayes and Keston having on it the most valuable asset to the operation of a good farm, water, which is obtained in plenty from the Ravensbourne which runs through the valley. Towards the north east at Southborough is the Turpington estate, which consists of an old house and farmstead dating from around 1355 and owned by a Family Named Tubbenden. Beyond is Blackbrook which during the year 1250 - 1400 was owned by a family of that named. The road has become progressively worse since leaving Bromley and in places nothing more than a dirt track and having prodded the horse into a fast gallop we quickly cover the ground leading to Keston which consists of a wide expanse of rough ground on either side broken by thick wooded areas extending as far as the eye can see. Upon arrival at Keston we discover that the entire area is deserted; a marked contrast to the many inhabitants who had occupied this district continually since the Neolithic age. There is a church which caters for the needs of the few cottages dotted around it, valued at 100shillings, although no mention of it's existence appear in the Doomsday survey.

The Manors of West Wickham, Baston and Keston are held together by the seat of the Lord of the Manor at Wickham Court.

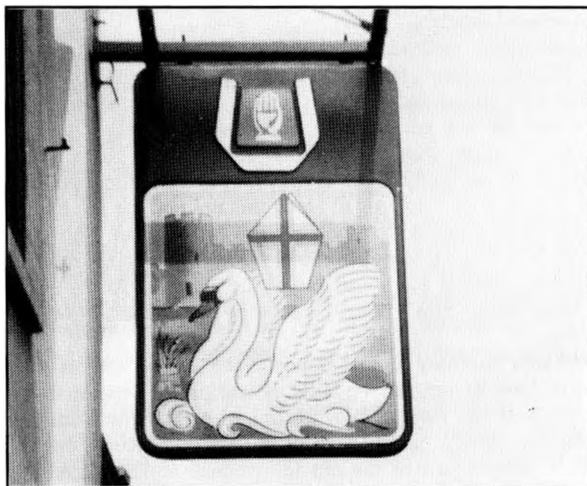
Our second journey is now completed and looking back over the area covered we see in the year 1600 Bromley as a market town, consisting of several large estate and prosperous farms, with many small cottages which house people who might work the land and serve their masters in an orderly contentment which has given a sound foundation on which to build for the future.

---

# *Broad Highways – The Wheels Turn*

## *1601-1857*

---



It is now more than 250 years ago since we travelled from South End Village to Keston and during this long period there has been little change in the appearance of the town of Bromley and the surrounding districts. The most significant factor in the slow progress that has taken place has been an increase in the population which, in 1810 is recorded as 2965 persons.

With this advance came the growth in wealth and a corresponding increase in crime, the roads and lanes in and out of the town were dangerous for travellers and the whole area was notorious for robbery by highway men and the cut purse thief, and activity of smugglers was prevalent.

In the 16th century the coach was introduced and so attracted the activities of criminals, who would, after making contact with the various passengers at a local inn, glean information regarding the amount of money, jewels and the value of any luggage carried on the coach. They would then arrange to leave prior to the coach's departure and along a dark open stretch of the highway, ambush it, relieving the travellers of their personal belongings.

The three forms of transportation now operating parallel with the coach are the single horse loaded with bundles, a train of thirty to forty pack horses used to carry many goods over a long distance and the great horse-drawn carts made of wood, the sides of which were woven like matting and used to move newly harvested crops from the fields to market, or between villages and towns. Four or five horses were needed to draw the great carts, as it was quite usual to carry a load of hay or wheat the weight of which might exceed a ton and a half. The carters wore stout linen smocks, the full width of material was gathered into folds with smocking on the chest and back. To give extra protection against severe weather, a short cape was worn on the shoulders and fustian, or corduroy, breeches completed their strong compact clothing.

Passengers were sometimes carried on these carts being the fore-runner of the public coaches which set out from inns in London to travel to a town in the country or at the coast.

These public coaches are drawn by a team of horses who, after a distance of 10 or 12 miles, become exhausted and a first stop is made at an inn, in order that the animals may be changed or

rested, the coach will then continue for a similar distance to complete the second stage of the journey. By the early 17th century, a steady increase in the number of "stagecoaches" on the road caused the surface to be torn up by endless traffic of horses hoofs and after heavy rain, deep ruts appeared created by the rim of the rolling coach wheel causing roads to become wholly impassable.

Nevertheless, this safer form of travel has become more popular, with the result that the well established trades engaged in producing boots, cloaks, hats, stockings, saddles and spurs, all connected with the horseback rider, have become greatly reduced and the craftsmen who had for so long used their skills in making these articles have been obliged to offer their labour in the building and maintaining of coaches.

It is by the most convenient method of coach travel that we start out from South End Village, at the junction with Whitefoot Lane, leading to Shroffold Farm away to our left. The building on the right is called Randalls House and is the residence of a family of How, who worked the mill close by and from whom the mill got its name. It was subsequently tenanted and turned into an inn called "Tigers Head". In the 18th century John and Ephraim How, father and son rendered the mill as a cutlery mill. Next, on the right, is the mill pond and the road leading to Beckenham Place House which is situated just within the parish of Beckenham. This property was acquired by John Cator, from Viscount Bolingbroke, in 1773 and during rebuilding, many major improvements were made both to the house and to the grounds. At the junction of Beckenham Lane and Bromley Road stands Elm Cottage, bought by Mr. Francis Flower in 1750 after whom it has now been named.

Continuing on towards Bromley almost opposite the second mill is the site of a very old house, the residence of John Knapp, but the building was pulled down many years ago.

Situated on the land of the Earl of Northbrook (Lord of the Manor of Shroffolds) is Holloway Farm, which is on the eastern side of the Bromley Road, but was formerly on the western side, when it formed part of the old farm house which joined the gatehouse at the approaches to Bromley Hill Place, for nearly 200 years this farm was held by the Valentine family.

As we proceed up the Hollow Way we pass Bromley Hill Place which is the seat of Baron Farnborough formerly The Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Long G.C.B. created a baron in 1826.

At the top of Bromley Hill, Pousty's Hill is clearly visible from the window of the coach, Sundridge Hall is situated on the opposite hill, and this property which was owned in 1679 by Thomas Washer and known as Washers in the Wood. In 1796 the property was sold to Mr. Claud Scott, who owned property at Lychet Minster in Dorset. Between Sundridge Estate and Bromley Hill Plaistow Lodge stands in 126 acres of land, and was, until 1797, owned by Peter Issac Thellusson.

In 1810 it passed by an underlease to Thomas Maltby, to be sold in 1812 to the Hon. Hugh Lindsay. Walter Boyd acquired it in 1822, the Estate passed to his son Robert in 1837. From 1873 to 1896 held by Lord Kinnaird then the estate was broken up for residential development, the house was occupied as a boys school known as "Quernmore".

Since early times a house and farm have occupied the site at Springhill.

It remained in the possession of the King family for most of the 17th century. When purchased by Major Clement Satterthwaite in 1857 (who lived there for 30 years) it was said to be 150 years old, the earlier structure having been demolished.

Springhall Farm is responsible for crops grown in the area and, in 1730, the introduction of drilling resulted in neat straight rows of crops in the fields instead of the unevenly distributed carpet it had been when the seed was sown by scattering. In 1708 the mansion house at Freeland was built. The residence of Thomas Whalley, a merchant, who later sold it to Thomas Raikes – Deputy Governor of the Bank of England. In 1810 Charles Browne lived there and five years later Mrs. Moore, widow of the Archbishop of Canterbury, was in residence. Further down the hill is \*Widmore, a hamlet situated 1 mile east of Bromley town consisting of a considerable manor house with property attached, built in 1630 it was destroyed by fire this year – 1857.

*\*See Note No. 3 on Page 37*



The coach has made rapid progress and we are now approaching the town of Bromley, which consists of a single street with well paved footpaths. There are 50 shops which are mostly an extension of the home and some premises, built recently, have bow fronted glass panelled windows, on each side of a central door with steps up or down. For a time, with the aid of public subscription the town was partially lighted at night, but this was abandoned with no plan to continue this important service until 1837.

Between the shops are old picturesque but insanitary cottages with larger brick built houses intervening. Improvement in housing conditions started from the year 1540. This consisted of the addition of an upper floor, more interior room divisions on both floors and the separation of working, living and sleeping quarters. Animals were removed from the proximity of the household into detached buildings alongside the house or across a yard. The hearth, formerly situated in the centre of the ground floor has been replaced by a brick fireplace and chimney set in the wall thereby reducing the risk of fire, and the amount of smoke circulating in the living area, thus hygiene and comfort are very much improved.

The Great Fire of London in 1666 prompted an increase in the use of bricks which have now virtually ousted all other materials used in building. In 1625 the size of a brick was dictated by law to  $9 \times 4\frac{1}{2} \times 3$  inches ( $22.9 \times 11.4 \times 7.6$  cm) and to meet the new demand the brickworks in Brick Kiln Lane were opened. The lower storeys of some of the existing wooden houses were rebuilt of brick and with the introduction in 1697 of the window tax – a levy of £5 a year on houses which had more than six windows – some property owners were financially hard hit and to avoid the expense windows were bricked up. The Act was repealed in 1851. A chimney tax of 2 shillings per chimney appeared on the statute book in 1661 but soon after house owners were relieved of this burden.

After everyone had been frightened by the Great Fire of London, fire office or insurance companies sprang up and each company had its own fire brigade. Property owners who subscribed had a fire mark fixed to the wall of their building. These marks were made of lead, copper or iron and sometimes were punched with the number of the “policy” (written agreement between the owner of the house who paid a premium) and the fire office. This guarantee not only afforded protection but recompense if the house and its contents were destroyed.



*Hand in Hand Fire Office – formerly Amicable Contributorsip 1696-1905 – Hollow Bottom Cottage Nichol Lane, Bromley*

Built on a gravel pit on the right hand side of the road into Bromley is a row of sunken cottages known as Tranquil Place, next is the "Laurel Inn" followed by a row of hovels called Salubrious Range, a white gabled house and "Lauriston" which is opposite the College field.

Gas was introduced to the town in 1837 and a gas factory was built about a quarter of a mile north of the Market Square in Farwig Lane, on the right hand side opposite the forge. In 1854 these works were taken over by the Bromley Gas Consumer's Company. Farwig is a hamlet being part of Plaistow Lodge, consisting of meadows, and cornfields with trees and hedges. In 1825 Johann Farwig built a row of small houses with forecourts flanked with battlement towers and were completed in 1832. Later there followed the building of the cottages in Farwig Lane to accommodate the workers employed at the gas works. On the right hand side of London Road, opposite Farwig has been built a Workhouse for the relief of the poor of Bromley. The land, a quarter of an acre, was rented from the Bishop of Rochester for an annual sum of £20, and the estimated cost of the building which was completed in 1731 was £400. The workhouse is 100 feet long and 25 feet 8 inches wide with a mortuary at the south end and a two-roomed mad house at the north end. There are only two wards which can house up to 80 persons but at any time the number of inmates has not risen above 28. There is no provision for children being lodged separately from their parents and other adults, although there is a schoolroom in the workhouse. The workhouse is administrated by a Master and Matron who are paid £45 per annum and also receive board and lodging. Although the workhouse in Bromley was not fully utilised, many areas of the country had severe problems with the poor in their parishes and this resulted in the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, in which the State relieved the parish of the function of maintaining the poor and the system of out door relief, which kept many out of the workhouse, was abolished. With the control of the State came the idea of large union workhouses to house the destitute from a wide area; for Bromley this area covered Bromley, Beckenham, Chelsfield, Chislehurst, Fooks Cray, North Cray St. Mary Cray, St. Pauls Cray, Cudham, Downe, Farnborough, Hayes, Keston, Knockholt, Orpington and West Wickham. The Board of Guardians whose Chairman was Mr. George Warde Norman decided to build a new Union workhouse at Locks Bottom, Farnborough. The Bromley workhouse was one of two parish workhouses kept open by the Union and was used to house the aged. All paupers were moved to the new workhouse in 1845.

Shortly after the year 1600 Edmund Style erected a windmill in a position close to the west side of the road, a quarter of a mile north of the College. Sometime during the middle of the eighteenth century it was dragged, as a whole, some 400 yards into a field, where it remained until its destruction during the period 1835-1840. This type of windmill was a postmill, so called because it could be turned to face the direction of the wind.

In his will Dr. John Warner, Bishop of Rochester, instructed to provide out of his personal estate "a hospital or almshouse for twentie poore widows of orthodox and loyal clergiman" to be seated as near as possible to the Cathedral at Rochester. But owing to the inability of finding a site suitable for such a large structure, and Bromley being so firmly connected with Rochester, it was decided to erect the building at the end of the London Road where it joins the upper High Street.

In the year 1840 Mrs. Sheppard in her will left a sum of money to build an institution to provide accommodation for the daughters of widows who, upon the death of the mothers, were cast into the world without a chance to earn a living for themselves. This building is situated to the left and set back from the College.

Almost opposite the gate house of the College, is the Swan and Mitre Inn, and from here, the mail coach from Sevenoaks to London collects the mail bag. From 1685 until 1784 letters were delivered by whichever method was practicable, i.e. by hand, horse, coach or carrier cart destined to travel to the place to which the letter was addressed.

In 1784 Prime Minister William Pitt gave permission to John Palmer, to run an experimental mail coach service. This developed into a quicker, and safer service, which afterwards became adopted by many towns, there followed regular deliveries to shopkeepers, who were appointed Postmasters.

Entrusted with this important duty for the town of Bromley was John Acton, who was followed by his son, and the volume of letters received, and delivered is forever increasing.

Situated on the left, as we enter the Market Square is the Bell Inn which is a fine large coaching inn, the coach now swings around the square and over in the north east corner on the left hand side of Widmore Road adjoining the Engine House erected in 1823, is the Cage. This is a small square brick building, with a cell either side of a centre door, one side is for males and the other for females. Each cell has an iron grating in front of it and serves to secure any person who has committed a breach of the peace, until it is possible to hold trial in front of a Justice of the Peace.

Trouble most frequently occurs on market day, and when the Fairs were held, these occasions attract visitors to the town who indulge in heavy drinking, resulting in brawles with towns people, stealing from others and damage to property.

To cope with this problem there was created Bellman, later known as 'Charlies' – in honour of the monarch – and a sentry box was placed opposite Grinsted shop in the market square. The duty of this person consisted of walking around the town, armed with a stick and lantern and rattle, calling the time and stating the weather conditions, every hour from sunset to sunrise. When in the 1840's the modern police force was set up the use of the cage ceased.

Apart from fairs the only entertainment available to the people of Bromley is a subscription concert, and a circulating library. On 29th May 1830 the Royal assent was given to an Act of Parliament to "improve the road through the town of Bromley in Kent". The trustees were given five years to complete the alterations and to build a new road from Alexander's corner near the Bell Inn at one end to near the White Hart Inn at the other. The road became known as "the cut" or "back ally". The land which falls away down to the Church remained undeveloped.

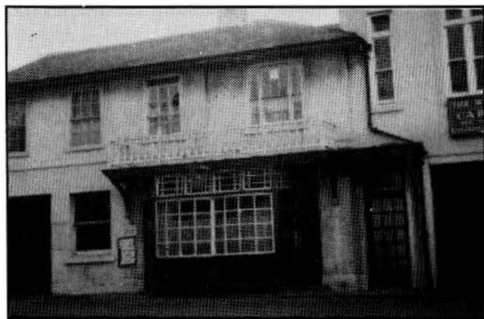
The tower of the parish church dates back to the 14th century having survived a rebuilding of the church in 1792.

Down on the River Ravensbourne the function of the watermill changed in the year 1795, to the polishing and grinding of glass. In 1832 it ceased to be a mill and was used as private residence.

During the years 1841-1851, referred to as the "Hungry Forties", the entire country reached it's lowest ebb, and people were drawn to the point of starvation. In 1845 is recorded a decline in the population of Bromley, the only one in the long history of the town, but this decade of decline heralded the start of expansion, and the rapid growth which is still evident. Much of the credit for this is due to the hard work of the people who attended the vestry or parish meetings and who have, since the year 1703, been responsible for the operation of local affairs in the town.

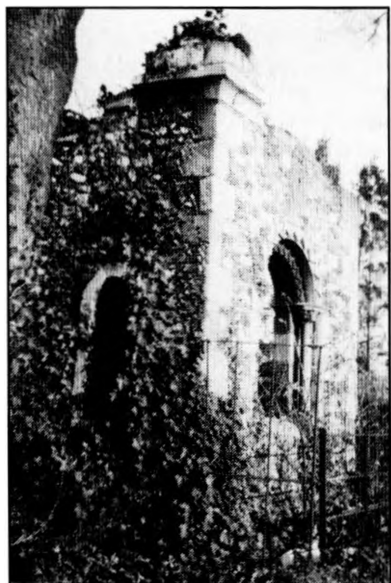
\*In 1775, the Manor was rebuilt, and in the present year part of the land at the rear of the White Hart has been levelled and enclosed, and is used for the purpose of playing cricket, a very popular sport with the residents of Bromley. The Ecclesiastical Commissioner's decided to sell the Manor to Mr. Coles Child, who is a much respected figure in the town, and who has made many vast improvements to the place.

*\*See Note No. 4 on Page 37*



*White Hart Inn  
demolished in 1964*

*Photo by Author*



*Ruins of Medieval Manor House with restored Norman Arch with zigzag moulding situated south west of Bishops Palace.*

*Photo by Author taken in 1984*

The White Hart Inn, first recorded in 1509 – although it must have been there long before, has undergone extensive alterations. The whole of the front was taken down and the present one now stands some 28 feet back from the road. The sign over the entrance is a White Hart with a gold crown round its neck like a collar.

As the time is just past mid-day it is a good opportunity to stop in order to sample the hospitality for which the place has become famous, the horses are urged to make a sharp left turn into the narrow low entrance to the yard at the rear and are pulled up to a halt in the courtyard at the back of the building. Many long distance stage coaches use this Inn as a first stop out of, and the last when returning to, London, and a variety of coaches can be seen in this yard. There are many sizes and colours, and various additions to the bodywork, to improve the performance of the coach, and to give extra comfort to the traveller, have in recent years been introduced. The most important of which was in the 16th century, when the body of the coach was hung from steel springs which provided a smoother ride.

Each coach has a guard, who blows his horn to warn other users of the road to get out of the way. It calls the Toll-Keeper to the gate to receive the toll money, it warns the Inn-keepers to have food served to the table, and alerts passengers to the imminent departure of the coach.

The interior of the White Hart is extremely well furnished and the bedcloths and the table linen are spotlessly clean.

A servant girl is instructed to find our seating at a common table in the dining room, and the menu for today is as follows:

Bread	3d	Lamb chop	3 shillings
Cheese	2d	Boiled chicken parsley & butter	5 shillings 6d
Port	5 shillings		

The cost of a bed for the night is listed as 2 shillings. During our stay, the grooms have attended to the horses. They were taken from the shafts of the coach, the harness removed and the animals have been walked around until cooled down, they are given a stiff rub down with a brush, given food and water and are now ready to leave.

Having finished our luncheon we make our way to the coach and having climbed aboard we take our leave after thanking the Landlord, and congratulating him on his superior house.

Continuing down the High Street past the old forge on the right is the mile-stone on which is recorded 10 miles to London Bridge. Although well known to the Romans, milestones were ignored by travellers until the Dover Road was given 'Mile Marks' in the year 1663. An Act of Parliament of 1773 ordered all turnpikes trusts to provide guide-posts and mile-stones on their roads and the development of informative road signs followed.

Further along the road, on the same side as the mile-stone down by the Ravensbourne is Simpsons Place which, in 1768, was owned by Lord Gwydir and in 1833, Lt. Col. George Tweedy, late of the East India Company, was in residence there. It has for many years been in a ruinous condition.

On arrival at the gravel pits at Bromley South a complete transformation of the town is taking place. This is the work of laying the track which will extend the railway line from London, and many gangs of navigators (Navy – a labourer digging railways) are employed on the site and everywhere there are huge mounds of earth, long sawn balks of timber and yards of sand, shingle and cement. This work has been in operation for many months but it is now confidently expected that, by next year, the railway will have come to Bromley. Beyond this area on the level ground at the foot of Masons Hill the Bromley Charity School was built in 1712 adjoining is the pound which is beside the watercress beds of the large pond here. The pound is used to retain strayed animals until collection by the owner after the payment of a moderate fee. The site of a pound must be near to water in order that the animals may be able to drink, and be washed down when needed to remove the risk of infection and rid the air of obnoxious smells.

The team of horses negotiate the very steep Masons Hill without difficulty, and about half way up the hill on the right is a big house with triple gables and, on a plaque near to the apex of the centre gable, is the date 1660 which is probably the year the house was built. This house is called Ravenscroft and is a brick structure, painted white, and there are many features of this building which shows signs of Dutch architectural influence.

We quickly pass on to the top of the hill and on the same side as Ravenscroft is the 'Tigers Head' and next Sparkes Cottage formerly known as Stuberfield's Farm (1673).

On the opposite side of the road is a very large pond and from here looking ahead, the Toll House is visible. This is a wooden one storey building and beside it is a gate which extends across the main road to stop traffic until the appropriate toll has been paid.

As a feudal duty, the Lord of the Manor maintains bridges, but the upkeep of roads was left to the landowners in the parish through whose land the road ran, but because the roads were used by so many unknown travellers, maintenance ceased, and so many became fence-less, without a metalled surface and were merely a right of way over open land.

To avoid mud, and water, and to escape the constant attacks from robbers and outlaws, the traveller was compelled to seek the safest possible way, although at times it would mean riding across cultivated fields, the result of this action often explains the windings of an English lane.

The Turnpike Trust created in 1663 levied upon travellers a toll, this income to be used in road maintenance. These trusts employed men like Thomas Telford and John MacAdam who became famous for their scientific methods of road construction.

In 1822 as a result of the Enclosure Act the lands at Bromley Common, which extends far beyond the tollgate, were enclosed as common land\*. At the junction a short distance from the tollgate is Brick Kiln Lane, which is on the left and extends down to the Brickfield, to the right in Hayes Lane is Hayesford House, beside the river, and proceeding along the main road we soon pass Hook Farm. Below the road on the right, opposite is the church of Holy Trinity built in 1839.

Further on we pass the Old Crown, an ancient hostelry which was formerly known as Pye House. Adjoining these premises is Elmfield House which was, along with Rookery House in 1727, owned by Anthony Ball.

A title deed dated 1660 is the earliest reference relating to Oakley House, the next house on the western side of the road. In 1825 it was owned by George Norman, father of George Warde Norman and grandfather of Philip Norman.

*\*See Note No. 5 on Page 37*

At Trinity Church, which is a quarter of a mile before the Plough Inn built in 1733, the coach turns sharp right into Gravel Road. After a gentle climb for about a quarter of a mile we pass the junction at the Keston Mark Inn. In front of this building on the road which leads to Croydon, is a sign-post which is significant, for the origin of the name indicates a boundary, or mark of virgin forest to indicate land belonging to a tribe.

Straight ahead are the large ponds on the right and a short distance away on the southern side of the lower pond is a wooden windmill built in 1716.

In the 17th century a small house was built on Holwood Hill by the Lennard family. Robert Barrow resided there from 1767 and in 1785 the house was bought by Prime Minister William Pitt who occupied it for 18 years, during which time many alterations were made, one of which was to divert the main road away from the house to its present position just above the ponds, thus a driveway had to be constructed and in the course of these improvements parts of an Iron Age hillfort were destroyed.

John Ward, magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Kent, had the old house pulled down in the year 1823 and erected the present mansion which was completed in 1827.

The area around Keston including the Romano-British settlement remains deserted and mostly forgotten by the many people who pass through this beautiful countryside out into the heart of rural Kent and Sussex, but in the years 1798-1800 much interest was aroused, in the antiquity of the place by a series of archaeological explorations, during which a stone coffin, several coins, and much pottery was discovered.

Again in 1828 further explorations revealed a circular foundation of a building and in 1855 more buildings of various sizes were found.

---

## *Progress – the arrival of the Railway*

### *1858-1964*

---



For the next journey from Southend Village to Keston in the year 1964 we have chosen the motor car as the mode of transportation, there are of course other vehicles which we could use, namely the bicycle, motor bicycle, public omnibus or indeed a diesel train, all of which would have been, by comparison with earlier forms of travel, speedy, clean and comfortable.

The occupants of a motor car are, however, able to travel in the dry and warm, and it is possible to proceed from the traditional starting point, to the end at Keston, directly through the town of Bromley and thus we will be able to observe the many changes which have taken place since the coming of the railway. The ease of our journey has been made possible by the scientific method of road making initiated by Metcalf and McAdam in the later part of the 18th century. The roads are in the main, wide, smooth and clear of litter, constructed of concrete or tar blocks, a curb stone is on either side at the edge of a paved walk for pedestrians. At intervals along the gutters are drains which absorb all the surface water and thereby keep the thoroughfare open except for ice and snow during the winter months. A blanket of fog will not entirely stop the movement of modern road users because with the introduction of various forms of warning lights, painted lines, cats-eyes embedded in the road surface, make progress, although slow, at least possible.

Various devices and arrangements have been introduced to ease the traffic problem. The foremost of these are the 30 miles per hour speed restrictions, pedestrian crossings, Belisha Beacons, 'Lollypop' crossing patrols, parking meters, yellow lines, car parks, pelican and zebra crossings.

The start of our journey is at the road junction which has a new building on the right hand side known as the 'New Tiger Head' this replaced the former premises which were completely destroyed during an air raid by German bombers. Behind the building extending away towards Beckenham, North towards Catford, and east towards Grove Park are vast housing estates built by private developers and councils since the advent of the railways.

Proceeding towards Bromley, the pond on the right is now used for boating, and a childrens' amusement arcade has been erected beside it.

Along the road leading to Beckenham, the property previously owned by the Cator family was purchased by the London County Council in 1928 and on part of the land a golf course was laid out, this facility was opened to the public in 1934. The whole area is known as Beckenham Place Park and ornamental gardens, a nature trail and country walks have been developed around the house which is used as a Club house for the golf club. Further along the Bromley Road on the left is a large petrol station, built on the site of the old Splendid Cinema, there follows a series of shops on both sides of the road and at the junction where Downham Way (previously Gipsy Lane) joins Bromley Road, there was an operational point for the tram service.

From here to Grove Park there was an electric overhead power line to which a metal arm on top of the tram which pressed a small wheel to it, was fitted and it derived its driving power by this means. On the return trip the overhead arm was swung around to the back of the tram and again connected to the overhead wire.

For the journey from Downham Way to Victoria the overhead connection was lashed to the back of the tram, the arm having been lowered and secured in a hook on the roof, power was now obtained from a small motor inserted (by a fork like tool with only two prongs) to the underneath of the tram, it was accommodated in the centre rail between two outer ones used to guide the wheels.

The London County Council was set up in 1888 and between the years 1924-30 the vast Downham Estate named after Lord Downham member of the L.C.C. was built, consisting of houses, schools and libraries, recreation grounds and a swimming baths, situated high on a hill besides the reservoir constructed on Poustys Hill from which water is supplied to the pumping stations at Shortlands. The 17,000th dwelling was opened by the Queen on the occasion of a visit by their Majesties the King and Queen on 19th February 1927. Ord. Ref. TQ 39497156.

The residents of the Downham Estate were mainly from the slum areas of Deptford and Bermondsey and many provide dock labour for the great London Docks which are within easy reach by road or by rail.

Private estates have been built on land from just below Grove Park and extending to the edge of the golf course at Sundridge. The mansion there, was for a time opened as a hotel in 1956, it was used as a Management Centre equipped to house and tutor employees engaged in the business side of company activities.

At the foot of Pousty's Hill was a farm called Sundridge Hall Farm, after the farmhouse was pulled down, the outer buildings were at one time used to house the horses and delivery carts belonging to Grooms Bakery. Later, the place was occupied by J.W. Bolloms & Company Limited who stored paint and wallpaper there.

\*Opposite in Milk Street the farm which was adjoining King's Meadow and was situated beside the railway bridge which carries the line to Bromley North, was owned by a family named Thacker. The farmhouse was pulled down prior to the building of the Bromley council estate.

In 1990 the house at Springhill at the top of Burnt Ash Lane was owned by the Kent Education Council and was used as a college of domestic science. The great housing developments have increased from the turn of the century, the boom period having occurred during the 1930's.

St. Mary's Church at Plaistow was consecrated in 1863 and in the same year St. George's, Bickley was built. In 1888 saw the completion of St. Joseph's convent. The population of Bromley in the year 1861 is recorded as 5,500 in 1921 it had risen to 35,000 and perhaps the primary cause of this growth was the coming of the railway system, in 1858, when the Mid Kent Railway Company opened their line through Beckenham and Bromley South to link up with St. Mary Cray. In the year 1868 the line from Grove Park to Sevenoaks opened and in 1878 the loopline from Grove Park to Bromley North was operational. Before suburban railways, the limit of daily travel had been set by horse transport, especially the horse drawn bus. The limit of the old London Suburbs did not extend much further than Clapham and Brixton.

*\*See Note No. 9 on Page 38*



On 20th June 1912, Thomas Tiling Motor Bus Service, from Shoreditch to Bromley under the number 47, was extended through Bromley to Farnborough. In 1913, the 94 route was developed from a variety of services from London to Grove Park.

The tram service from London was extended from Southend Village to Valeswood Road on 28th September 1926. This was further extended to Southover on 28th July 1927, and on to Grove Park (named Grove Farm) on 15th November 1928. The route number which served this area were:

No. 52 City (Southwark) to Grove Park

No. 54 Victoria to Grove Park

No. 74 Blackfriars-Downham-(Bromley Road)

This last service extended to Grove Park on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings.

Our progress on the London Road to Bromley has been rapid, and just ahead, on the left we pass the new public house the 'Beech Tree'.

This is a fine modern building, the old 'pub' was destroyed during an air raid during the war.

Along on the right are the premises of James Young Limited, established in 1863, this company was a coachbuilder for Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor cars. The first, and perhaps the only motor car manufacturers in the town was A.F. Shakespear, whose premises were in Scotts Road. The College land the area opposite the Swan and Mitre Inn remain virtually unaltered, but on the right hand side from Swann Hill to the Market Square there are a number of new buildings. The Odeon Cinema is a modern structure, but the parade down to the premises of George Weeks & Son replaced the previous buildings pulled down in 1901/2. It is of a stately appearance, with a regal facade towards the tops of the buildings above the shops below.

On the left the Star and Garter remains, and most of the small buildings are still intact and are as they appeared during the last journey in 1857. On arrival at the market square the old Market House has gone, it was replaced in 1863 by the Town Hall, this in turn was demolished and the present were built.

Over in the North East corner of the square in the year 1883 saw the start of widening of the corner leading to Widmore Road.

Thirty years later further improvements were done to the approaches to West and East Streets by the demolition of old buildings.

In 1871/72 East Street together with the Drill Hall were built, in 1878 North Street and the surrounding roads appeared and from 1881 to 1891 Tweedy Road was established.

In the year 1897 to mark the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, Mr. Coles presented to the town part of his estate, formerly the cricket ground behind the White Hart. Part of this ground is set out as an ornamental garden known as Queen's Gardens, on the other portion in 1900, was built the Phillips Memorial Hospital. This was pulled down in 1959 and is now a corporation car park. In 1964 The White Hart was pulled down and replaced by Littlewoods with a small public house adjoining, known as The White Hart.

In the year 1868 the new horse drawn fire engine was housed at the White Hart, in 1897 an engine known as the 'Steamer' was purchased and a station was established in West Street. In the same year the Post Office premises in East Street were built.

In the year the railway came to Bromley - 1858, the first edition of the Bromley Record and Monthly Advertiser appeared and bound copies of each monthly issue to the year 1913 are available for reference in the Central Library. In 1865 the St. James fair was suppressed by Mr. Coles Child acting in the best interest of all the local towns-folk to whom the occasion had become an annual dread.

By an Act of Parliament in 1663 the vestry became responsible for roads, maintaining the poor, and general local matters and in Bromley was not replaced until May 1867 when a Local Board was set up under the Local Government Act 1858. By a similar Act of 1894 Bromley became an Urban District Council. On 25th August 1903 a charter was granted to the town and local affairs were administered by the Town Council under a Mayor and Corporation.

Farming has always been of primary importance to the citizens of Bromley and since 1858 farm ploughs have been steadily improving, the more complicated iron plough replacing the old

simple wooden one and as late as 1860 ploughing matches are recorded as having been held on farms north of the town, on large expanses of farmland and open country which stretch towards the River Thames. Cultivators used to prepare the land for sowing, iron rollers, mechanical reaping, threshing and mowing machines, together with many other mechanical devices have been added to improve the farmer's production.

Animal manure had always been used to enrich the soil, but by the great advance in agricultural chemistry, artificial fertilisers grew more popular with the farmers, as the yield per acre vastly increased output.

As a result of rapid developments on growing technique abroad, foreign and colonial corn began to flood into Britain, and the dry, hard wheat from Canada provided better for bread making than the English variety. In consequence corn growing in this country has never recovered. None the less wheat, oats and barley are still very important products of the land.

In 1870 the farmers began to feel the effects of the repeal of the Corn Laws and within thirty years, the gain made by the farming community, due to the increase in population, had been lost. Grass fields appeared where for generations the land had been ploughed and this situation remained unaltered until urgent necessity of the 20th century wars spurred the farmers and allotment holders to once again "drive the plough".

During the years of the First Great World War 1914-1918 many fathers and sons of Bromley were taken for Military Service in the theatres of combat, but the people who remained in Bromley suffered little inconvenience. They were able to receive news of the fighting through the National and Local Newspapers, but the thing which brought home the reality of modern warfare was the work of the V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachments).

The earliest formed in Bromley was the Kent 52 - Bromley Unit the members were actively engaged since 1910, upon the outbreak of War in August 1914 preparations had been thought out by the Commandant for equipping a hospital. When the order to mobilise and prepare a hospital was received the Masonic Hall became the centre of the detachment's activities.

On Wednesday, 14th October, twenty-seven beds were occupied by wounded Belgian soldiers showing the signs of sad and cruel results of modern combat. In addition, several important annexes were made available by Bromley residents, T.C. Dewey in addition to providing the ward in the Cottage Hospital which bears his name arranged the Pavilion in his garden as two wards capable of taking twelve patients.

Mr. Coles Child gave up part of his residence and Mrs. Coles Child and her daughters undertook the nursing of eight patients during the rush of the earlier days.

Along with many others in this country the women of Bromley were required to fill the jobs vacated by their menfolk and the following statistics illustrate the change from the established form of employment for women during the War period.

	1914	1918
COMMERCE	505,200	934,500
BANKING	1,500	37,600
INSURANCE	7,000	32,300
DOMESTIC SERVICES	1,658,000	1,250,000

In 1962 the land occupied by Whitaker's farm was developed as a housing estate. The only remaining farm now in the area is in Hayes Lane and is still operational, proudly continuing the old farming tradition.

The land previously used for farming was used to build houses upon by the Council and private developers, one of which was Frederick Pearce - 1843-1903, born at Norton St. Philip, Somerset, he came to Bromley in 1863 and was one of the first building firms to be established in the town. He built much of the early property in the centre of Bromley (High Street East Street, South Street) and later some of the fine property on the Aldermary Park Estate. A large proportion of building was, and still is, done by small firms in which there is a definite apprenticeship to one of the main building trades: carpentry, brick-laying, plumbing, painting and decorating.

The master knows all his workers personally, he can put them to jobs they can be relied upon to do well and the high standard of craftsmanship ensures great skill and care to repair and restore fine old buildings.

The big building projects which established the council and private estates around the town call for the co-ordination of skills of people working in offices, in factories, in Local Government departments and on the building site itself, to provide houses in accordance with the architect's plans, and Local Authorities' By-Laws as dictated by an Act of Parliament in 1875.

In 1930's semi-detached houses were built on estates with wide tree-lined roads, Gas and Electric and Water Services were connected to the main supplies. Council homes were erected in vast numbers on suitable land bought by the council and rented to the tenants. The architects designed as many small houses he could fit comfortably into the given area. They consisted two rooms, downstairs, a kitchen and living room and upstairs three bedrooms and a bathroom and toilet combined. Council labour then built the houses assisted by a financial grant from the Central Government.

Council houses are valuable for families living in old fashioned accommodation which have been condemned in slum areas, which must be pulled down and to Bromley and the surrounding districts came people from the overspill towns of South East London.

To replace buildings destroyed by bombing, prefabricated houses (Prefabs) were designed and introduced during 1942-1947. These were made in sections at the factory and assembled on site.

During the 1939-1945 war years, 223 people died in the Borough of Bromley, seventy of these were killed on 16th April, 1941 in what is regarded as the most destructive concentrated bombing raid of the 'Blitz'. Seven Bromley churches were hit but by far the worst damage was sustained by the Parish Church, which except for the shell of the bell tower was raised to the ground.

Bromley town emerged from the war scared by air-raids, shabby and dilapidated. Iron railing had been taken as scrap to make munitions, no sign posts remained to assist the expected invader and most street lighting was without bulbs. Shop windows wire-meshed and paper taped, were bare except for dummy packets of cigarettes and tinned food, and most displayed posters advertising food, clothes and fuel rationing, other posters warned of the dangers of "Careless talk - costs lives" or urging citizens to increase their effort by "Make do and Mend" and "Dig for Victory".

When peace came in 1945 there was much to do after six years of total neglect. House building had ceased, only essential repairs were permitted, and German bombs had reduced many houses and public buildings to rubble. But even before the War ended, the Ministry of Town and County Planning was set up to organise the process of rebuilding and repair to property, while giving protection to the countryside, by introducing the 'Green Belt' area upon which building was forbidden.

The immense problem which faced the administration were met and overcome, by the process of careful planning and by co-ordination of the scarce materials, and training of labour, rapid and massive results were achieved. Many areas of the town which were ruined, gave to the builders the opportunity to make a new start for re-building based upon plans designed to combine convenience with beauty.

We continue our journey down towards Bromley South on the right is the most striking building 'Churchill Theatre and Central Library' which for the period 1906 to 1969 was the site of the old Public Library.

A few yards further on is Ravensfell 'Old House' the upper part of the house can still be seen above W.H. Smith, William Emmett, the architect who prepared the plans for the Bromley workhouse lived in the next house on this side called 'Redwood House'. This was built in 1720 and demolished in 1905, Bromley House once part of the Simpson Estate was used as an Inland Revenue Office was demolished in 1931.

Bromley Lodge which is on the left hand side, prior to 1792 nothing recorded. From 1884 it was occupied by the Bromley Conservative Association. During the years 1868-1869, Simpsons Place the old moated building was cleared to make way for road construction.

The shops and offices which go to make up the sites on both sides of the road from the Market Square to Bromley South are occupied by various well known companies and old family names of Bromley, too many to mention and some of which change hands regularly and therefore for local history purposes are of minor interest.

Individually owned shops in the town have been threatened by the giant grocery chain stores, Lipton, Maypole Dairy and Tea Co. and International Stores, Home and Colonial Stores. Their advantages are from selling a wider range of pre-packed products and thus creating a larger profit. Multi stores also spread to other trades namely W.H. Smith & Co., Boots (Chemists) Ltd., Singers Sewing Machines Ltd., likewise departmental stores such as F. Medhursts & Co. Ltd., Marks and Spencer Limited, F.W. Woolworths & Co. Ltd.

The growth of these outlets was assisted by the extension of advertising through hoardings and posters most of which set out to impress on the mind of the consumer the brand name of goods from Bovril to Bisto, Pears to Players and Heinz to Hovis. A branch of most of the clearing banks have been established here, the oldest of which is the Westminster Bank Limited, who over the years have extended finance to the Entrepreneur of the business concerns which, in turn, have shaped Bromley into a busy, flourishing town. In 1894, Sir Samuel Scott, Bart & Co. amalgamated with Parrs Banking Company – the London County Westminster and Parrs Bank Ltd. in 1918, changed in 1923 to Westminster Bank Ltd.

\*In 1910 Mr. Alfred Wright, Manager of London County Bank was also Treasurer of the British Red Cross, Bromley Division. During the past 100 years, in common with other employees throughout the Country, the workers of Bromley have experience a sustained improvement of their conditions which in turn has given more time for leisure activities.

According to the results of a census report of 1891, one third of the country girls between the age of 15 and 20 years were in domestic service. The average earnings were: Women £50 per annum, Girls £28 per annum.

The following are two advertisements which appeared in the Bromley Record:

1 February 1865. Wanted. A good general servant where there are only two in a family. Wages £10 to £12 per annum.

1 June 1865. Wanted. A good plain cook in a Gentleman's family in the neighbourhood of Bromley. Must understand the management of a Dairy and baking, and have a good character of not less than 12 months from last place. Wages £18 a year. Pay and conditions have greatly improved since those days, hours of work have been reduced from 54 to 48 to 44 to 40 and in some cases to 35 hours per week and to cater for the extra leisure hours, cinemas were opened to enable the tired worker to escape from his familiar surroundings and in the company of the great Actors and Actresses embark on ventures in far off lands. The picture goer was welcomed by thick carpeted silence and perfumed darkness and treated to four hours of a variety of films.

With the advent of television most of the cinemas have been forced to close. In Bromley the Odeon is the only survivor. The Astor or Pullman is now used as a Bingo Hall and at Bromley South, Debenhams Departmental Store has replaced the Gaumont.

Freedom from afternoon work on Saturday without loss of pay marked an ever increasing membership of Football, Rugby, Lawn Tennis, Cricket and Bowls Clubs.

People travelled by cycle, motor cycle and motor coach to enjoy Sunday picnics in the country or to the coast. This exodus from the urban areas was helping to empty many Churches, and yet despite the lack of religious observance, behaviour in the towns improved. There was a marked reduction in the drinking of alcohol, foul language and ugly behaviour, and as a consequence insolvency.

Before the Second World War and up until as late as 1953, local families travelled by train, coach or as in most cases by removal van to the hop gardens in Kent, to pick by hand the coned shaped fruit which since the 15th century have been used for flavouring and clarifying beer, combining the opportunity to earn some money in order to repay an outstanding debt, use as current expenditure or set aside as savings from the only holiday they could afford.

\*See note No. 6 on page 37

The rate of pay offered by most farmers was one shilling for every 5 bushels of hops picked.

The row of cottages on the left of Cromwell Avenue, together with the large house 'Ravenscroft' was pulled down in 1968 to make room for the new casualty and short stay wards of the hospital, now administered by the Bromley Area Health Authority was opened on 1st April 1974.

At the top of the hill the 'Tigers Head' remains unaltered, but the old Sparkes Cottage was pulled down in 1877. Opposite in 1897 the Pond was filled in and this large corner site is now occupied by Bristol Street Motors.

The wooden hut which was the toll house closed on 1 November 1865 it was transported to Bromley Common, where it was used as a builder's shed until finally being destroyed without any permanent record being obtained regarding its important existence.

Homesdale Road named after Lord Homesdale, Conservative Candidate in 1860 and formerly Brick Kiln Lane consists mainly of private houses a few small shops and beyond the railway bridge on the left the Gasometers, a cluster of red brick cottages on the right in Waldow Road is all that remains of the brick industry which once thrived in this part of Bromley. The records fail to give much detail of its history other than a reference to a Brickfield in Widmore – Widmore Brick and Tile Works – 1845, and from 1853 to 1884 it was owned by J. Pascall. It ceased operation in 1930 when modern methods of production and transportation enabled bricks to be supplied in quantity to meet the demand of the Builders engaged in developing the many estates in the area and at a comparatively low cost.

The method of producing bricks at the local site was, two handfuls of sloppy clay are pressed into a wet wooden mould the top smoothed off with a tool which resembles a draw knife. The filled mould is then taken to a heated floor to set. When firm enough to handle the bricks are built into a honeycomb pile on ventilated shelves to dry. Later they are taken to the yard where they are built up in long low walls protected by tiles, until it is time to transfer them into the kiln.

It was the aim of the brick maker to produce a brick with as smooth a finish as possible. A very pleasing colour and texture was obtained by sand being sprinkled in the moulds similar to flour used on a pastry board. The sand besides acting as a lubricant prevents the clay from sticking produces a rough velvety surface, useful for the face of a wall, being full of air holes it is, unlike a smooth surface, resistant to damp and will dry quickly in a breeze. To continue our journey, adjoining the road on the right, namely Hayes Lane is Hayesford Park a residential area of moderate size, and one of the latest additions to the many houses built between Bromley and Hayes since the 1930's.

St. Luke's Church on the Common was built in 1886. The old Crown Inn was pulled down in 1866 and the New Inn has been built on the opposite side of the road.

Philip Norman LL.D. F.S.A. resides at 'Elmfield'. He was an eminent antiquarian and he made a valuable contribution to E.L.S. Horsburgh 'Bromley from the Earliest Times to the Present' with a chapter on the 'Manor and the Palace'. In 1862 'Elmfield' was bought by George Warde Norman who for 40 years was Vice Chairman of Bromley Union set up to implement the legislation enacted by the Poor Law Amendments Bill 1834.

The new Workhouse at Farnborough was often referred to as "George Norman House".

The Rookery Mansion is the next property adjoining "Elmfield". In 1858 George Warde Norman, Grandson of the first purchaser had the house enlarged and his son made further alterations, which had the effect of completely altering the appearance of the place. In 1945 the entire building was destroyed by fire.

The site is now occupied by the Bromley College of Technology. Oakley House sold to George Norman in 1825 and thereby becoming joined to the "Rookery", is now empty, the shutters closed and the whole structure deteriorating into a very sad state.

At Trinity Church on the left beyond Oakley House, we take the right hand turn into Gravel Road, along this road and from Keston Mark to the approaches to Holwood, many houses have been built, during the past thirty years. In 1882 Earl Darby was in residence at Holwood and in 1953 it was purchased by Seismograph Services Limited for their headquarters. This

organisation are geophysical consultants and carry out geophysical surveys for most of the major oil companies in all parts of the world. These surveys investigate the structure of land and sea, which have the possibility of containing oil or gas.

On the opposite side of the road to Holwood, beyond the Ponds, with the formation in 1960 of the West Kent Border Archaeological Group, permission of the local landowners was sought and obtained and a large area has been thoroughly and systematically excavated. The Archaeologists whom having dug into the mounds, have likewise dug into the minds of the men of the past, and a great deal of knowledge, which previously was lost due to sites being plundered, is now carefully recorded. This is mainly due to a more advanced method of excavation and has led to a greater understanding of the past, similar sites in the heart of London and in many parts of the country are yielding much of what life was like 1900 years ago. but all too often bulldozers must move in to seal up the past again. During the years of economic recession a temporary lull in building has given Archaeologists only limited time to keep up their investigations, but when building resumes, it will be a race against time, and soon they will be unable to take up the many opportunities to discover and record the past and precious links in the long chain of local history will be lost forever.

\*A remedy would be to have incorporated into all building contracts a clause restraining development on a demolition site which has produced vital evidence of earlier occupation of historic interest, but the high cost of implementation would in most cases decide the issue.

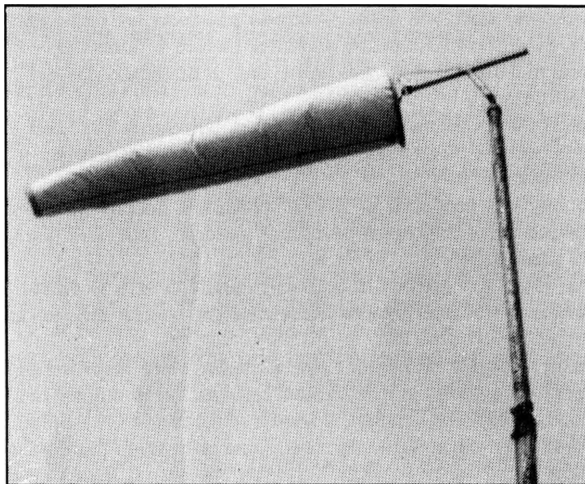
*\*See Note No. 7 on page 38*

---

# *The Borough – Flying High*

## *1965 Forward*

---



For our last journey, to cover the ground from Southend Village to Keston directly through the Town of Bromley, we have chosen to fly, and we begin from the Airfield at Biggin Hill, on a fine clear Spring morning in 1984. Arrangements have been made for the departure of the chartered helicopter at 10 o'clock. The course is set for Southend Village, and as the aircraft rises to a height of 1500 feet and moves forward we can see the intense activity on the ground.

Some aircraft are preparing to leave with freight aboard, others are on a training or private mission, many craft are at the entrance to the various hangers scattered around the perimeter of the airfield in the various stages of repair, all are constantly engaged in providing what has become a very important service to modern travellers.

The Royal Air Force Personnel in residence on the Airfield are mainly employed at the Aircrew Selection Centre, but during the Second World War, Biggin Hill was the operational centre engaged in the despatch, recovery, maintenance and repair of a Squadron of Hurricane and Spitfire Fighter Planes which formed part of the Front Line in air combat with the German Air Force. Our pilot will maintain the present height but the speed will alter to suit the conditions for observation. At a mile a minute in just less than five minutes we are hovering over Southend Village at the junction where Whitefoot Land and Southend Lane join the main Bromley Road on the right is the new Tiger's Head, renamed 'The Squire' in 1974, on the other corner is a part of the outbuildings to the Lower Mill which is now used as a second hand furniture warehouse. The Mill Pond survives as Peter Pan's Pool, but this is no longer used as a childrens' boating pond, and the amusement arcade, with its entrance in Beckenham Lane, has been discontinued. Planning permission to turn the entire area into a Sainsbury "Do It Yourself" store – non food retail has been sanctioned by the Council and work commenced in 1983.

In Beckenham Lane over the railway bridge on the left is the drive to Beckenham Place Park, which is still used as a Public Golf Course and the function of the Old Manor House is now to provide a Club House for the Golfers.

The Green Man, rebuilt in 1924 is a dominant feature. Most of the land on both sides of the main Bromley Road is occupied by private and council housing estates.

Between the wars vast acres of land were used on which to build these estates in and around Bromley and in common with the houses in the old slum areas of London, the dwellings on the estates are becoming unfit for modern living requirements.

The cost of land has steadily escalated since the mid 1960's and an attempt to overcome the many difficulties created by this increase is to build large blocks of flats.

New materials have made possible a new kind of building, steel girders form a strong framework of a block, and walls and floors, windows and doors are built onto this frame.

Open plan dwellings with central heating and large picture windows have been introduced and the use of more glass in office, factory and home, and in the latter, this has been used to attract heat from the rays of the sun.

To secure a more comfortable mode of living, extra borrowing has been obtained by way of mortgages which has become an inflation-proof endowment on retirement to the 55 per cent of home owners in this country.

This affluent society has produced a suburb which has become a nation within a nation, rejected by Conservatism for continually seeking material gain, and dismissed by Labour's urban and industrial interests.

This has brought about the growth of self-sufficiency. There is no longer the need for a shopping day trip to London. Luxury goods, delicacies and special services are readily available in the town of Bromley.

The ever increasing mortgage has meant that what was once regarded as a temporary home has become permanent occupation until retirement releases the commuter to a country property.

Since the latter part of the 1960's there has been a reduction in the number of commuters into Central London of between one and two per cent. Gradually, there has developed a community, providing self sustaining jobs and services linked to prosperous towns away from London of which Bromley is one.

This revolution has demolished the attitudes previously held with regard to a social class structure.

The upper middle class has been smashed. Members of the middle class have become proletariates. The working class has returned to the state of the early Victorian Society of being poorly educated, without skills, jobless, insolvent without morals or religion and inevitably criminals.

The Landed Gentry have been the only section of the class structure to protect themselves and not only maintain but actively improve their culture.

This constant pressure on the fabric of society along with modern technology which creates solitary working conditions have for many people, silently driving a motor car, or watching television been conducive to loneliness, they have rejected the tribe and the family, and have accepted the situation of self fulfillment and the loneliness of being an individual. To escape from this trap, a return to the customs of the primitive societies is advocated, to seek to establish friendships, offers of personal services, gifts and physical connection.

We now continue the journey, flying parallel with the Bromley Road, passing the large petrol station on the left and the parade of shops at the junction with Downham Way.

The vast Downham Estate stretches away to our left and the swimming baths on the summit of the Durham Hill is a clear landmark, so too is Pousty Hill, and the Reservoir. A new private estate has been built on the Westminster Playing Fields, close beside it and lower down an extension of Thornton Road has produced the latest development in the area.

Below this almost opposite Milk Street is the Teasle Public House built in 1964, the name is derived from the plant, shaped like a thistle used in the production of woolen yarn. In the forecourt is a sign depicting a teasle. Adjoining the public house is a tower block 12 storeys high known as Davidson House. From the height we are flying the network of roads are very distinct and although for the most part they are clear and permit easy movement for traffic the surface is in constant need of repair. The ancient tracts, improved by the Romans now form part of the modern motorways.



During recent years, new roads have been built and existing roads improved on a scale comparable to the building of the railways in the middle of the last century or the construction of the road system by the Romans 1800 years ago. The numbers and size of the various vehicles which use the roads cause rapid deterioration and new motorways are constantly being repaired to maintain easy travel. From north of the Thames at West Thurrock to Dartford on the south side, a tunnel under the River Thames linking Essex and Kent was constructed in 1960's and on 16th May 1980 a second tunnel was opened.

Away to the left of Milk Street is Sundridge Park, Elmstead Wood, Logshill Wood, Bullers Wood.

On 4th September 1982 the following alterations were introduced to the bus service. Route No. 94 Brockley to Orpington – withdrawn from service. New Route No. 208 – Surrey Docks-Lewisham-Petts Wood-Orpington – with an extension to Brockley Rise during Saturday shopping hours – it will replace the sections of route no longer covered by the 47, 94 and 229.

The helicopter is now proceeding towards Bromley and from the right hand side a long stretch of the river Ravensbourne appear towards Bromley Town, having being hidden in culvert under the various roads and housing estates at Southend and Downham.

The un-named brook which rises in playing fields at the end of Brook Lane joins the main river just beyond the road junction of Downham Way and Bromley Hill.

The railway line passing through Bromley South on to London is prominent on the landscape and beyond to the west can be seen the densely populated areas of Beckenham, Shortlands and West Wickham. As far as Farwig Lane, the land on the east side remains much the same as it was on our last journey with the addition of a few houses and blocks of flats erected on land previously occupied by larger properties. The Old Cottage and the Mill Cottage at Widmore still remain as a very pleasant reminder of our past, and the Convent School at Freelands presents another landmark of scenic beauty.

On 11th December 1967 work began on the demolition of Springhill College. This ground is now an ornamental space forming the centre of a roundabout, at the top of Burnt Ash Hill.

The Prince Fredrick Public House in Nichol Lane remains as a legacy of the distant past.

By an Act of Parliament of 1965 a final step was taken to join together Beckenham, Bromley, Chislehurst, Orpington and Penge to form the London Borough of Bromley, with the former Bromley as its Administrative Centre of Control for the majority of local legislation, but with certain aspects of Local Government passing to the Greater London Council.

Since the formation of the new authority it has become necessary to acquire large private houses in the town to accommodate various departments of the Council. Sherman House was built in 1968, and on 15th March 1982, the old Mansion House ceased to be the residence for Stockwell Teacher Training College and now includes the Chief Executive Borough Treasurer, Director of Recreation and Social Services Departments. In 1983, the seven storey office block with penthouse flats above known as Northside House, was built beside the railway terminus at Bromley North and farther along Tweedy Road on a site adjoining the old Art College (now used to house Council Departments) is a four storey office block called Royal Court.

At the junction where East Street and West Street meet beside the old Fire Station is a four storey block known as Justin House, on the opposite corner is the Post Office building which has the date 1896 at the top of the building to the right of the main entrance. This concern which was made a Public Corporation in 1969 has, along with many other spheres of commerce, been subjected to mechanisation and to assist in the delivery of the 35 million or so letters every day a system of postal coding and automatic sorting was introduced. A code BR1 3UH is identified as BR1 = the postal delivery district in Bromley. 3UH (Bromley Civic Centre – Rochester Avenue) denotes the part of the street where the letter is to be delivered. The code is translated into two lines of near invisible dots across the envelope. A further enhancement of the postal service has been the launching of "Interpost", this is a same day public electronic facsimile transmission service.

The Drill Hall in East Street and the three storey building on the corner of Rodway and Tweedy Roads are used as sorting offices by the Post Office. Many financial transactions are

undertaken by the modern Postal Offices including a Giro system similar to that operated by the large clearing banks, known as "National Girobank" money in payment for goods may be transmitted throughout the United Kingdom or abroad.

At the junction of Tweedy Road and College Road is the Bromley Country Court which was built in 1936.

At the corner of College Road and Farwig Lane is the Depot for the Express Dairy, milk and dairy products delivery service. On the south side of Farwig Lane are the premises of Russell & Bromley, Chapman House and at the corner site, Lygon House built on the site previously occupied by Central Methodist Hall (1973).

On the northern side of Farwig Lane next to the "Farwig Public House" are premises belonging to Egerton Hospital Equipment, followed by Beeline House, Electron House, and the Beech Tree, rebuilt after being destroyed by a flying bomb in 1944. Amongst these modern buildings there remains the porticoed entrance to office once used by the old Bromley Gas Company and in College Road, the row of small houses flanked by battle-mented towers built between 1825 and 1832 are still occupied. A prominent feature on the ground immediately below the aircraft is Bromley College which continues to be occupied by residents, but the adjoining Sheppards College now stands empty and in decay.

The Swan and Mitre remains, and covering a large area behind this building is a multi-storey car park which can hold 700 vehicles. On the main road down to Bromley South on either side the buildings remain as they were during our last journey but many changes have taken place to the business carried out on the premises. F.W. Medhurst has been replaced by Allders of Bromley, Dunns Shop is now owned by Heals later Brentford, and the Old Court House at the entrance to "Jordan's Passage" was pulled down in 1978 replaced by a three storey structure built for the Chelsea Building Society and called 'Chelsea House'.

To obtain a greater share of the consumer market many of the supermarket and self service retail outlets for a short period introduced the issue of trading stamps. These were token stamps given in a set ratio of the total purchases which were stuck in a book issued free to the customer, when a certain number of these stamps were collected they could be exchanged for a variety of household and personal articles, lavishly displayed in a catalogue. Due to the high cost of servicing this scheme it was soon abandoned for the more traditional forms of sales promotions.

In and around the town many restaurants serving other than the established English foods have been set up amongst the more favoured are Chinese, Indian and Italian. The desire of the diners to create a demand for this service had been partly due to the fact that many people spend their annual holidays abroad. The affluent population of the town is confirmed by the opening of a branch of most of the country's building societies.

At a time of such prosperity, there are two sections of the community for whom the advancement of the economy, by way of high technology and the ageing population, have been rejected, these are the well educated children leaving schools and colleges who, although in possession of high attainments in knowledge and are fit and keen to succeed in life are not given the opportunity to earn a living. Likewise early retirement has swelled the ranks of the retired sector and it is necessary in both cases for the State to make provision by way of monetary benefit, meals on wheels and reduced payment for travel and entertainment. Youth training schemes for work experience have been established, and "Darby & Joan" Clubs help the aged to enjoy the advancing years of old age.

The Bromley local Historian who published his book "Description of Bromley" in August 1797, Thomas Wilson, wrote "the want of some manufactory to employ the younger branches of the poor is much to be lamented, as from charitable motives I am willing to think want of employment is the principal cause of so many of them being brought up in idleness, consequently the whole of their support falls either on the Parish or the parent", this is indeed a case of history repeating itself.

The Parish Church, once the spiritual centre of the town's community life is now empty and cold except for a few hours each week, and although comparatively isolated from human kind, St. Peter & St. Paul's Church is a magnificent structure which only time and circumstances

encouraged by genuine concern on behalf of the Church authorities will restore it to its former importance with regard to family teaching and welfare.

Beside the Church Wall leading downhill is Tetty Way, – named after Elizabeth (Tetty) Johnson, wife of Samuel Johnson, who was buried inside Bromley Church\*. This land has been widened and is used by the various larger stores as an access road.

The most notable changes in the Lower High Street has been the closure of the White Hart, the memory of which is noted by a round plaque on the wall, almost opposite is a similar blue plaque on the wall of Allders dedicated to one of the town's most famous sons, H.G. Wells, author of many outstanding literary works.

No. 148/50 was Boots the Chemists, at No. 146 Henikeys Wine Bar – formerly the Rising Sun – and Nos. 140/142 was occupied by F.W. Woolworth & Co. The Churchill Theatre is well established for many popular productions, and the appearance of well known performers. The many departments of the Library cater to the artistic needs of the Public. After many years of neglect the Mile Stone has been cleaned and restored but future preservation will depend on its removal to the more protective forecourt of the Theatre compound. Bromley Methodist Church next to Aberdeen Building (which bears the date 1887) was demolished in 1965 and the new church was built in Elmfield Road. Further along this road on the right is an entrance to "The Mall" shopping precinct which has a tower block of apartments beside J. Sainsbury Supermarkets, another entrance to this area is opposite The Army and Navy Stores (Bromley) Ltd., formerly the site of Harrison & Gibson. At the opposite corner of Ethelbert Road is John Collier, formerly The Fifty Shilling Tailors. Waring & Gillows store remains at the corner of Ringers Road the next road and on the same side is Debenhams Store. Across the railway is Westmoreland Precinct, the principal occupants being Safeway Supermarket and Habitat.

To return to the left hand side, the Mall shopping complex is built on part of the ground of Bromley Lodge a beautiful building, home of the Conservative Club since 1884 and whose garden once extended to the High Street. In 1969 the Club moved to its present home at the corner of Elmfield Road and Palace Road – this building has been called Bromley Lodge, to perpetuate the name previously given to the premises bordering the High Street.

Several new buildings have been built in Elmfield Road, Argos is opposite "The Mall" complex and opposite the Conservative Club is The Bank of America building. From the junction of Westmoreland Road and Masons Hill is the St. Mark's Church of England Junior Infants School. Opposite and beyond in which George Coulter Ltd. had a Builders Business (beside an open channel which once contained water from the Bishop's Estate on higher ground to the North) is a row of old houses set in an area which retains a pleasant reminder of the peace and tranquility which in modern Bromley is so hard to preserve.

Work on Viking House on the site of the former Masonic Hall in Cromwell Avenue was completed in 1979. The old building on the right of Masons Hill, Ravenscroft, was demolished in 1968 to make way for the new casualty and short stay wards administered by the Bromley Area Health Authority, and opened on 1st April 1974.

Opposite the Hospital on Masons Hill, there is still the old house, with steps up from the road, this building has been on this site since 1822 – Sinclair Villa.

The "Tigers Head" is still functional on the south side and along from this building, the Bromley Maternity Unit was demolished in 1980.

On to the junction at Homesdale Road we can see Cosmos House, which includes a department of the Inland Revenue. Along Homesdale Road, the road on the right just before the Railway Bridge, Waldo Road has been almost completely cleared of the old cottages which were once the homes of families whose survival depended on the prosperity of the old brick field. The dome of the Gas Works is prominent on the left of Homesdale Road and from our hovering position at the corner of Hayes Lane we can see glimpses of the River Ravensbourne, on the south east side beyond is the ground of the Bromley Football Club. To the left is Norman Park a vast recreational area which has many functions including the annual visit of the Circus, which is a welcome event for young and old alike.

*\*See Note 8 on Page 38*

One of few remaining working farms in the Bromley area is situated beyond the Football Ground and Norman Park. This is the home of several horses and the farm produce sold at the Farm Shop is a refreshing reminder of the days before pre-packed foods, and offers fresh wholesome fruit and vegetables.

The landscape on both sides from Homesdale Road to the boundary sign (on Hastings Road) just beyond the Bromley Bus Garage remains unaltered since our last visit. The "Plough" and the "Sawyers Arms" continue their function of being a social meeting place for the locals.

The old "Crown" at Bromley Common is now a Restaurant. Elmfield the house almost opposite, although empty from the external appearance retains its ancient charm.

Bromley College of Technology occupy the site of the Rookery whilst Oakley House was bought by the West Kent Masonic Hall Company in 1979.

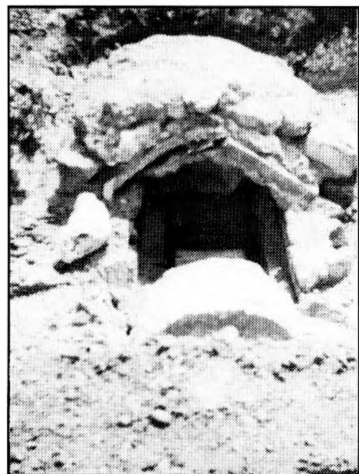
Facing Oakley Road is Trinity Church, a striking building of knaped flint stone, from here to the 'Mark' at keston is Pattulla Higgs a Garden Centre. Ravenswood Boys Secondary School, the next large structure on the right, (formerly the Beckenham Technical College) was built in 1957, and together with Ravensbourne School continue to produce first class results in all the scholastic studies, sporting activities and branches of the Arts. The land beyond the School to the Croydon Road is occupied by Cramphorn Garden Centre selling all products for the domestic garden.

We now fly on towards the Ponds and the source of the Ravensbourne. This area has been landscaped to attract people to fish, picnic and enjoy the lovely wooded area which has from early history been home to many. From here the old windmill at Keston is visible, this old wooden structure has survived the passage of time, and much effort has been spent in preserving a truly ancient monument. In recent years the attempt to harness windpower has increased, and power generated "Windmills" have been built in the United States of America, Holland, and Great Britain.

Tidal power and energy from the sun's rays have offered a source which provides energy without the devastating results of using coal, oil or nuclear products which has caused contamination of land, sea and air affecting humans, animals, fish and plant life in unacceptable proportions.

The result of a concentrated systematical "Dig" in the Keston area on a slope below the road to Biggin Hill, uncovered a Roman Mausoleum. This is a large circular structure the entrance of which faces North. To the right of the entrance was a deep pit in which a brick chamber had been built, 2ft x 1ft in size and still sealed. Inside this chamber was a lead casket containing burial ashes with traces of their protective wrapping.

*See Kentish Times dated 29.9.1967 Page 12.*



*Brick Chamber – 2ft x 1ft with lead casket containing burial ashes at Keston Roman Mausoleum*

Other archeological investigations revealed new evidence of the Roman Bath House a short distance from Baston Manor, first recorded by Mr. G.R. Corner in 1854, an Anglo Saxon hut at Lower Warbank discovered in June 1970 gives conclusive proof of constant occupation of the area since Neolithic times. From the Bronze Age site at Hayes Common were found 200 sherds of prehistoric pottery, 1907 in number, of flint items consisting of nodules, scrapers, knives, arrow heads, axes, hammerstones and over 1,000 flint flakes.

On the final descent to the airfield at Biggin Hill we pass over Keston Church. A relic of the Norman period and still serving the spiritual needs of the surrounding population and looking back the dominant feature in the foreground is the hillfort at Holwood beyond which through the haze of a beautiful sunny day the high rise blocks in and around the town are visible, indicating the modern progress of Bromley, and peering back through the haze of local history we can but feel pride and admiration for a town which grew from early civilisation, established Saxon origins, and has become a great London Borough. The former Borough Arms bore the motto "Dum Cresco Spero" (while I grow, I hope). The London Borough of Bromley has the motto "Servire Populo" (To serve the People). Throughout its local history Bromley has with hope served its citizens and grown in stature.

### *Note No. 1*

The first wheat grown in Britain was Einkorn, later two varieties, Emmer and Spelt were quite common. Emmer wheat was the traditional wheat used to feed the Roman Army, because of its high value of protein.

The Ancient Farm Research Project at Butser Hill in Hampshire has been engaged in research work following findings by archaeologists, of occupation of the site in the Iron Age period, the investigations range from the building of the Iron Age Round House, the raising of livestock and experiments involving the production of crops.

The knowledge of prehistoric plants is obtained from the discovery of carbonisation, a process in which parts of plants and seeds are turned into charcoal from a fire which, in part, must have burned without oxygen. From results so far it has been estimated that the yield from Emmer and spelt wheats to be 1½ to 2 tonnes per hectare. By the end of the Iron Age approximately 4 million tonnes would have been produced in this country, sufficient to feed the population, including the Roman invaders with enough to export to Gaul and Rome. England might well have been considered to be the "Bread Basket of Europe". The expansion of the Roman Empire and the discovery of various minerals gave to the invaders the initial spur to subdue the population, but by far the most important reason for the long occupation of a country which was, by their own standards, cold, wet, under-developed and hostile, was the abundance of wheat crops.

### *Note No. 2*

Former Notional Knowledge  
of Early History

Latter Proof as a Result of  
Archaeological Discovery

Prehistoric Peoples

No. 1

Population few in number  
lived in caves.

Live everywhere in Britain in  
considerable numbers, aerial  
photographs confirm river valleys  
crowded by Farmsteads from Bronze  
Age (1800 BC)

No. 2

Valleys filled with water  
and vast marshlands

from approximately 2000 BC Iron  
Age settlements surrounded by  
field structure and linked by trackways

No. 3

People governed by natural  
elements, were superstitious  
and painted their bodies blue

by the end of Iron Age (200 BC to 43 AD)  
land units and estates – land tenure ownership  
by Chieftains and Kings

No. 4

Dense forest regions

Forest cleared by axe and fire approximately  
2-3 million people by late prehistoric times

No. 5

Primitive in knowledge and outlook

from as early as 10,000 BC massive earth  
works – Holwood Fort, Keston. Technical  
skill i.e. Knapped Flint – copper, iron  
and bronze work traces of pollen in the soil  
cereals grown as main crop by farmers  
from 3000 BC, which were stored in  
underground pits.

## The Roman Conquest

No. 1

The suppression of a wild society,  
the building of houses and roads

Britain was an old established country.  
The Romans by their vast well trained  
Army put an end to conflict, introduced  
new tools, extended trade links resulting  
in a population of 5/6 million, the political  
policy was to integrate society into the empire.

## Saxon Invasion (Fifth Century)

No. 1

The land was empty, they were  
believed to have planned and  
named villages, reclaimed  
waste land cut down forests  
and developed roads

Alteration to the country restricted to  
minor modifications. They found many  
established farmsteads, hamlets and villages.  
Britain had been occupied and exploited by  
millions of people for over 5000 years, and  
the forests had been cut down and regenerated  
on a number of occasions. Today's countryside  
was produced by the Medieval Period.

### *Note No. 3 – Widmore*

This area, which is about a mile from Bromley was a hamlet containing some thirty houses known as "Wigmore" until comparatively recent times.

### *Note No. 4*

From the engraving of the Bishops Palace Bromley as it was prior to 1756 contained in Halsted's Book "History of Kent", it is apparent that the building is of ancient construction. Various foundations of chalk and flint have been found during its occupation by Mr. Coles Child.

### *Note No. 5*

Common Lands – The Land extending from the top of Masons Hill to Keston Mark was referred to as "Bromley Common" common land has mistakenly been interpreted as "land held by the community in common" but under the Enclosure Act of 1764 followed by the Act of 1822 the legal definition is "The soil belongs to one person" (The Lord of the Manor) while certain profits may be taken by certain persons such as the right to cut wood, turf, bush, gorse or heather and digging gravel, sand and loam, to secure such rights a Person or Commoner must have been either a Freeholder or Copyholder of the Manor.

Later legislation enacted that landowners with frontages abutting on the Common were permitted to purchase the land, and in this way the Norman family who owned almost all their property obtained possession of the old "Common Lands".

### *Note No. 6*

With the merging of the District National Provincial and Westminster Banks the National Westminster Bank was registered on 18th March 1968. The National Westminster Bank Act 1969 was approved by Parliament and the new bank was fully operational from 1st January 1970.

*Note No. 7*

Since this statement was written, to the Statute Book has been added "The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979" which is to make provision for the investigation, preservation and recording of matters of Archaeological or Historical interest. The act does not provide for funding.

*Note No. 8*

Elizabeth – Betty, Tetty – Johnson – 1690-1752 wife of Dr. Samuel Johnson for the last 17 years of her life.

The near total destruction of the Parish Church during an air raid in 1941 there remains the tower which was reduced to a shell. After complete rebuilding there was preserved fragments of building and in the south side leaning beside a wall is the inscribed stone of Elizabeth Johnson. A truly miraculous example of the survival of local history.

*Note No. 9*

On a map drawn by John Holmes in 1723, there is in a position now occupied by Milk Street a "Mill Street leading to Mill Street Lane and Brook Lane" and nearby there is an area tinted blue which is thought to indicate water.

Included in his book "Watermills and Windmills", William Coles Finch has a picture dated 1785 of two post mills in Bromley. In the foreground is a small boat and the windmill is flanked by buildings referred to as "Metcalfes Mill" with a second windmill shown in the background.

It has been suggested that this was located on the water recorded by John Holmes on his map of 1723, but as the size of the blue coloured area is thought to be sixteen and a half feet in diameter it would be too small, and is more likely to have been on the lake which is shown on the six inch ordinance map 1862 to 1868, a short distance west of Burnt Ash Lane beyond where Lake Avenue now is, and there appears to have been an island on the lake, the whole area measuring approximately 140yds x 46yds, and the second windmill would have been situated on Bromley Hill built in 1600 by Edmund Style and destroyed between 1835 and 1840.

This mill was recorded by John Rocques map dated 1746, but on this document there is no evidence of a mill or of water in the area of Lake Avenue. This water may in fact have existed, although not recorded, and the mill could have been there sometime between 1746 until the site was developed for residential properties around 1900. It is possible it was a purpose built lake used in connection with the ice house which was near to Brook Lane I can find no record. It is usual for map makers to indicate contours by a shaded area, and to record trees and hedges in a similar manner, and if the name was written close to the lines of shading it would account for the discrepancy in the interpretation of these maps i.e. mill – milk and in a similar manner on the Rocques map an estate recorded as Burmdish may have later become Burnt Ash.



