Mottingham

from hamlet to urban village

W. H. Parkinson A.L.A.

MOTTINGHAM

FROM HAMLET TO URBAN VILLAGE

W.H.Parkinson. Librarian.
Mottingham Library.

Bromley Public Libraries

1977

Introduction

Nowhere more than in Mottingham is nostalgia more evident. Where so little survives as visible evidence, every new development contributes to this curiosity. This was strongly confirmed, when in 1973, well over 1000 people visited the library to see an exhibition of old photographs, prints, albums and other items. This material having largely been returned to private collections, it leaves only somewhat fragmented notes for the student of local history to consult on the library premises. The object of this outline is to provide a connected narrative under one cover, to be made available for home reading.

The assistance received from local residents and officials in compiling information for this history is much appreciated and in thanking them, I would also like to include those colleagues on the Staff of the Bromley Public Libraries who assisted in its production. Additional material was obtained from the Greenwich Local History Centre to whose Staff I am indebted. Acknowledgement is made to authors quoted in the text or mentioned in the Bibliography. The majority of the sources may be consulted at the Bromley Central Reference Library and in some cases obtained through the normal library facilities.

ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

The gift of kings

"Modingham or Mottingham is an extra-parochial Hamlet adjoining to this Parish (Eltham) and Chislehurst to both (of) which it has been supposed to belong...". A certain ambiguity in this statement provokes a smile as residents of Mottingham are today not unfamiliar with this situation described in "Notes on Kent" a document compiled in 1796. However, early history clearly places Mottingham in the Lathe of Sutton-at-Hone and in the Hundred of Blackheath. Though not mentioned in the Domesday Book, there is an earlier reference to Modingahema in 862 AD in the Charter of King Ethelbert so Mottingham's documentary antiquity pre-dates that of both Eltham and Chislehurst. A more familiar division than the Lathes or Hundreds next came into being - that of the Manor. The Lord of the Manor was responsible to the King, providing him with fighting men and later with money. Virtually all the land was the King's. King Alfred, in the 9th Century, included Modingahema in a wedding gift of lands, comprising Lewisham, Greenwich and Woolwich, to his daughter Elfrida; again, Edward the Confessor provides documentary evidence of its existence when he confirms his gift of the Manor of Lewisham to the Abbey of Ghent. Although Mottingham is not mentioned in the Domesday Book it was evidently a place in its own right having a name to conjure with about which historians disagree.

A name to conjure with

"Proud Place" from the Saxon Modig (proud) and Ham (home or dwelling) is one interpretation. Another suggests "land of the people (or tribe) of Moda" or, "swine pasture of Moda's people". This latter has a rural earthiness which accords well with one's imagined picture of the earliest centuries; virgin land covered with forest in which the wild boar roamed, gradually giving way to wooded parkland in which the deer were conserved for the King's pleasure in hunting. An early survey made in the reign of William Rufus speaks of the "thirty-nine fields and woods that comprise Modingahema". The purpose of these surveys, made from time to time, was to check the boundaries and assess the value of the tithes, which in Mottingham's case had a unique importance. Domesday Book was the first great attempt at this and Mottingham is probably included in the Lewisham entry since it was in that Manor until 1290 when it passed to the Manor of Eltham.

Mottingham Place

Although it is possible to produce a list of land-owners of Mottingham from the Abbot of Ghent onwards, more useful purpose will perhaps be served if the families having a particular influence on the place and

its development are discussed. George Stoddard built Mottingham Place in 1560 in Mottingham Lane, roughly where Colview Court now stands. This is the locality where the historic beginnings are centred as the other end of the village was non-existent until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1436, Mottingham was in the possession of Robert Cheeseman of Lewisham and East Greenwich. He married Joane Cavell, daughter of Bernard Cavell. His family possessed a good deal of land extending from Mottingham to Chislehurst, in the reign of Edward I. By his marriage, Robert Cheeseman considerably increased his fortune. The last Cheeseman to hold the estate was Alice and she brought it in marriage to Robert Stoddard. It was his son who built Mottingham Place, described as "exceedingly Flemish in character and had a tall tower rising from its roof". There exists a line drawing of this house* made in 1766. At this time certain features were observed: a date 1560 (inside the turret) 1561 on a chimney, 1653 on an outward gate and coats of arms in the glass of the windows. This house was undoubtedly the centre of activity around which the tiny hamlet evolved and was probably linked with Eltham Palace which had not yet fallen into decline.

The Stoddard family

The Stoddards seem to have been an unfortunate family, but provide material for anecdotes which make interesting reading. One incident recounts how Sir Nicholas fell foul of King James I concerning some timber he unlawfully felled in an attempt to recoup financial loss into which the King had plunged him by ordering him to extend his lands so that the Royal hunting might be improved. His son, William, inherited the massive debts and was also beset by a truly vicious sister who was dissatisfied with his settling up of the property according to the terms of their father's will. Her unreasonable demands led to a chain of events which landed William in the Fleet Prison; it was feared that his sister might become a charge upon the Parish (i.e. Eltham) so "an assessment was laid upon his land". A bitter and unjust conclusion, the reader of this story might well think and likely enough to provide an angry ghost had not the house been rebuilt altogether. Mottingham House, which rose on the same site, bore no resemblance to the original building and an account of its history will be given later, together with that of Fairy Hill (Hall) its near neighbour in the Lane.

*The Hundred of Blackheath.

Some early landowners

Of the long list of landowners already mentioned, one or two are singled out because they carry an historical note of interest:-

"At the beginning of Edward III's reign (1327-1377) a family called Leigh was possessed of certain tenements with the land and appurtenances belonging thereto in Modingham and Chesilhurst, from one of that name it passed to Thomas de Bankwell at whose decease, in the 35th year of the same reign (1362) it was found to be possessed of them, and held of the King in gavel kind as of his Manor of Eltham by the service of 14s 11d per annum rent and performing service to the King's Court at Eltham".

In the time of Thomas Coule of Howry, Kent -
"An interesting concession to men of Mottingham granted by Henry IV... In 1412, he decreed that men of Royal Manors were by ancient custom "toll free throughout the kingdom, and that the same custom should apply to men of Eltham, Modyngham and Woolwich". This law, as far as can be ascertained, has never been repealed.

There was also Sir John Peche, Sheriff of Kent, who in the reign of Henry VII, opposed Lord Audley and his Cornishmen and turned their march towards Blackheath.

Early maps

That the tiny hamlet was growing and of some importance is proved by its appearance on a map of 1596: "A new description of Kent, by the travayle of Phil Symonson" a Rochester gentleman. Again, it appears on Johan Blaeu's Atlas Novus, 1648.

The "Porcupine Inn"

An interesting map, dated 1741-5, made by Rocque... shows, among other items, "The Porcupine Inn". It is one of the earliest landmarks and was, no doubt, in a convenient place as a travelling stage for coaches. The licence was first granted in 1688.

The present inn was built in 1922 on the site of the previous building. A photograph dated 1909 shows this structure which had a tall, weather-boarded facade and a porch to which some steps ascended. A wooden horse-trough stood in front. Joined to it is a primitive ruined building, half over-grown, said to be the remnant of the original ale house. Charles Folkard gives us an account of the last hours of the second inn - "it was taken down in its entirety by putting heavy chains around it and attaching them to a couple of traction engines. At the word 'Go!' the engines pulled and like a house of

cards, down came the old inn". Here, the local hunt used to meet and this was the real thing, unlike the one which took place at the quaint old "Royal Hotel" which was a drag hunt put on by the Royal Artillery, Woolwich, and at which a bag of aniseed was dragged up to Chislehurst an hour before the hounds were brought up. (The "Royal Hotel" and "The Prince of Wales" were pulled down and rebuilt after the first World War).

The early Vestry meetings, which in 1894 became Parish Council meetings, took place at "The Porcupine Inn" and the affairs relating to the management of the voluntary rate, the highways and matters of Public concern were settled here, no doubt with the aid of a convivial glass or two! Indeed, the old inns of Eltham frankly recorded how much was spent on licquor when they decided the amount of the rate for the ensuing year. The last meeting of the Vestry at the Porcupine Inn was the 21st March, 1878. After that, meetings took place at the Board School opposite, where the new library now stands, the first one being 27th March, 1879. As the affairs of the village grew more complex meetings became more frequent but in the early days village affairs were hardly very pressing as records show instances of annual meetings only in the 'fifties and 'sixties.

In a "History of Lee" originally published in 1882, there is an interesting note: "Cribb, John Gully and Molyneux, the noted pugilists used to meet here (I.e. the old "Tiger's Head" Lee Green) before they were trained at the "Porcupine Inn".

Fairy Hill

Other interesting items marked on the Rocque map of 1741/5 are: Mr Stodder (presumably of Mottingham Place), Mr Dyer (Fairy Hill) and Crews Farm (later Court Farm) lying South West of "The Porcupine Inn". Also, Gory Lane and Water Lane make their appearance. Of these, Fairy Hill, now Eltham College, next claims our attention. This seat occupied forty acres. The earliest reference to it that I have relates to an event of August 4th, 1585, which took place "opposite Fairy Hill". Three large elm trees were swallowed up and completely submerged by water. The hole was eighty yards across and so deep that a sounding of fifty fathoms could hardly reach the bottom. Mr Robert Heath owned and occupied Fairy Hill prior to 1720. After his death, his sons sold it to Mr John Dyer (see Rocque map) and it appears to have been re-named "Fairy Hall". It was leased by this gentleman's descendants to the Rt.Hon. Henry, Lord Bathurst, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain (1771). His name appears on a map made by Andrews, Drury and Herbert, dated 1769. The family later sold Fairy Hall in 1796 to Mr John Naylor (incidentally still

a local name some thirty years ago). In 1816 it was purchased by Mr William Smith by whose trustees it was sold in 1830 to Mr Henry Rice of Jermyn Street.

The next owner, Mrs Hartley, is said to have rebuilt the house in 1856. Another account taken from the "British Congregationalist", 28th March, 1912, when reporting on the opening of Eltham College says .... "the central portion of the building (i.e. the severe facade which faces Grove Park Road) was known for many years as "Fairy Hall" and was added by the late Mrs Hartley to a pre-existing mansion formerly the seat of the Lord Chancellor Bathurst". This was not the end of the story which can be told more appropriately when the years prior to the first World War are considered.

Coldharbour Farm and others

Coldharbour Farm is the next contender for antiquity, appearing on a map of 1806 made by Sir John Cary called "A New Map of Kent Divided into Lathes and Hundreds". It is confirmed further on W.Faden's "Country 25 miles round London" whose 3rd edition dated 1815 suggests that the first map must have been made round about the beginning of the century. Also on this map is a mention of a "Whitechapel Farm" and again, "Whitechapel Farm" is mentioned on C.Greenwood's Map of the County of Kent from an actual survey made in the years 1819-20. The location appears to be that of Chapel Farm. A note in "Some Records of Old Eltham" states that amongst many gifts made by Queen Mary (1553-1558) to Sir Henry Terningham was "Also the chantry within the Manor, and the mansion called the Chartry Priest's House, within the outer part of the Manor (this may possibly be Chapel Farm)." By the time we study the tithe map of Mottingham in 1843, it is apparent that the hamlet is enclosed by farmland, Mottingham Farm to the North-West, Coldharbour Farm and Chapel Farms to the North East and Court Farm to the South.

Fairy Hall Cottage

The tithe map referred to was discovered in Fairy Hall Cottage, I believe, which must be the oldest building still standing more or less as it was except for the roof which was originally of thatch. It and the farm (i.e. Court Farm) belonged to Fairy Hall which used to be connected directly by Court Lane. The original barn still stands behind the cottage. The farmhouse stood facing it until more than half-way through this century. Believed to be at least two hundred years old, the cottage is an enchanting place, half hidden, at the junction of Dorset Road with Court Farm Road, and adjacent to the recreation ground.

Mottingham Hall

A large residence called Mottingham Hall seems to have assumed some importance at this time but must not be confused with "Mottingham House". The Hall was much farther up the Lane, set in 4 acres of ground extending over to the Grove Park Hospital and bounded by the river Quaggy. There is a reference to it in Greenwood's History of Kent. I quote: "Mottingham Hall in the hamlet of Mottingham, the seat of James Moore, is a handsome house, with pleasure grounds, situated on the North of Fairy Hill, distant from London about eight miles and a half" (1838). In its latter years, Mottingham Hall was occupied by Sir Samuel Palgrave Page, probably until about 1920, but the house may not then have been the original building. His name figures prominently in Parish Council minutes as Chairman for a number of years; on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, he opened the grounds of Mottingham Hall for the children to enjoy the sports there. Mottingham Hall continues to be marked on Ordnance Survey maps but the house is no longer there.

It was connected with the Grove Park Hospital in the first World War when the latter was a big depot for A.S.C. troops. It seems never to have reverted to private ownership as it appears that the Medical Superintendent lived there in 1952 and the house was last occupied in 1957. The lodge remained until about two years ago but as far as can be ascertained, after being subjected to persistent vandalism ending in a fire, Mottingham Hall was demolished, probably in the late 'fifties or early 'sixties. (At the time of writing, Lewisham Borough is developing the site as a Regional Assessment Centre for fifty boys. There is to be a secure wing, boys' residential lodges, an administrative block, a teaching block, play area and staff houses and garages. The existing woodland is to remain.)

Rose Cottage

Rose Cottage, pulled down in 1934 when the present shopping street was built, together with the Smithy marked on the 1843 tithe map, might truly be described as half-way house. Not only was it situated half-way between the older part of the village nucleus and the newer Victorian development but it divided the period of slow, early growth from the period of accelerated development which followed the coming of the railway in 1866, and the building of the station. This, of course, was an event quite outside the quiet aspirations of Mottingham, whose population of 140 people was divided between the landed gentry owning their own means of transport and those who walked over the fields to Chislehurst and Eltham. It was Eltham Station, in fact, but this made no difference to the effect which its proximity was later

to have. Court Road, dating from 1877, had not yet been lined with houses, so that one looked from the Smithy straight across fields and, later, to "The Church in the Fields" which by 1880 had arrived.

West Chislehurst Park

West Park, or, West Chislehurst Park, as it is marked on the O/S map of 1897, dates from 1887. These houses were built for people possessing servants. The gentlemen "commuted" to the City or, "to town" and at the same time enjoyed the advantages of life in the country. A small group of shops known as: "The Pavement" grew up in 1894, perhaps as a result of the needs of these households. They can be seen today, adjacent to the library, their tall gabled architecture marking them off from their neighbours of more recent vintage. There was no bank but in 1897, the Parish Council wrote to Martin's Bank asking them to open a branch on one day a week in Mottingham when Eltham would be closed. A few years later, the "high-class" establishment of Jobbins, was located where the bank now is, its distinctive striped awning making a fitting decoration at the end of this handsome avenue.

The Board School

An event of more significance, however, was the opening of the Board School in 1877, built where the new library complex now stands opposite "The Porcupine". The original Board school was first in Devonshire Road in 1876 in what is now the garage behind Unwin's off-licence. The Education Act of 1870 obliged provision to be made. The Board School was fated to end a comparatively short life, when blast from five flying-bombs damaged it severely. The spectre of this sad event haunted the village for years in the form of its ruin, covered by a tarpaulin. The site grew into a wilderness, cleared twice before the new library building was completed and opened on the 21st September 1968.

At the time of the opening of the school in 1877, the Parish consisted of less than 700 inhabitants and the complaint that "Mottingham has to bear the separate expense of a Board School of its own" appeared in the Parish Council minutes in 1883. An account of expenditure shows that in 1886 the second largest apportionment of the rates went to its upkeep, the greatest part of the rate going to the Board of Guardians for the assistance of the poor. The sum paid to the cleaning lady who prepared for and cleared up after the Council meetings was 2/6d a time - a princely sum, if indeed all things are relative!

Colfe's Charity

In a period when the rates doubled themselves e.g. 4/9 in the £ in 1876 and 8/3d in the £ in 1883, one can understand the indignation with which the local people asserted their rights, as they do now! The administration of Colfe's Charity is an example of one such instance. The Parish Council resolved: "that Mottingham, though frequently called a hamlet of Eltham is a Parish in itself with separate Poor Rate and overseers and that in the opinion of this Vestry, Mottingham ought to be specified in the new scheme as being one of the Parishes in which the children are to be eligible as Foundation scholars - further, the Vestry is of the opinion that each Parish in the Hundred of Blackheath should have the same proportion of children eligible by competition, as indicated in the will of the Founder in 1857." The Infants' School did not appear in Dorset Road until 1894, and then probably as a result of increasing population.

The Tithes

The first rector of St Andrew's, the Rev. G.P.Viner, is a significant participator in Mottingham's history as he redeemed the tithes as an endowment for the benefice when new legislation at last made this possible. Thus, he ended an impasse which had existed ever since the 11th Century, when a connection was forged with St Andrew's Priory, Rochester. At this time, that is in the reign of William Rufus, the landowner was the King's Chamberlain, Ansgotus, who gave the tithes to the Priory, then in the charge of Bishop Gundulf, thus forging a link with the Priory which remained unbroken for generations. To tell the tale of these tithes is to trace the general trend of English history, for the possession of the tithes is a certain indication of who was "top-dog" at the time. Henry VIII was the first king to break the power of the Monasteries, creating his own Dean and Chapter in the case of Rochester, but Mottingham was still in thrall to that authority. A field not mentioned in any of the usual surveys turns up in the following account which gives a fair idea of the power Henry was out to break:

"On 7th October, 1242, the Prior of Rochester obtained a decree in the Consistory Court, prohibiting the Vicar of Eltham from withholding the profit of a tenement and tithes of a field called Folkesland at Moddingham, which the Priory had enjoyed from time immemorial and for despoiling the Convent of 28 sheaves of corn and 8 shocks of oats. The Vicar was ordered to make restitution and refrain from further molesting conventual rights".

Beating the Bounds

The more interesting thing from the local history point of view is that each change that affected the tithes caused a new survey to be made of the boundaries. There are several picturesque accounts of these, and one much quoted dates from the 11th Century mentioning by name each of thirty-nine fields e.g. Lambynescroftys and Lytlemede, thus demonstrating the derivation of these and other road names about the district today. Proof of the rural character of Mottingham at the beginning of the 18th Century is in such references as: "... and from thence from a tree marked with a cross in the highway" or, "from thence upon a field called Tomlin's Bushes to an old oak in the said field" taken from a survey dated 1701*. As late as 1896 there is a reference to a proposed beating of the bounds which the Parish Council did not seem in a hurry to effect and when one reads the full account of the one undertaken in 1701 perhaps one can understand this!

Parish of St Andrew's

At last, in 1832, the plight of poor parishes was recognized and the tithes "given to the control of the Ecclesiastical Commission for the general purposes of the Church in poor parishes". When the Rev. G.P.Viner redeemed the tithes in 1883, the inhibiting effect of the gift of Ansgotus finally came to an end, though in all fairness it must be said that with such a tiny population surviving into the mid-nineteenth century (e.g. 142 in 1861) the product of about 22 houses or less, there was very little pressure for a church. Mottingham's independence from Eltham followed a year later, in 1884, when on recovery of the tithes for the use of the "extra-parochial place or hamlet" of Mottingham "an Ecclesiastical parish (St Andrew's) was formed by an Order in Council, consisting of the Hamlet of Mottingham and so much of the Parish of St John's, Eltham as lies South of the S.E. Railway". A full account of the new Parish boundaries may be read in "Some records of Old Eltham" where it will be seen that the seeds of Mottingham's divided state were planted**... "all that part of the Parish of Eltham in the County of Kent"... presumably to match up with the "extra parochial territory of Mottingham" to which it was joined which already was in Kent.

Vestries and Parish Councils

Parish Councils were created in 1894 but hitherto the Vestries had managed the hamlet's affairs. The

*The story of Royal Eltham (Gregory) p.281

**Some Records of old Eltham pp 150/151

Overseers for the poor were elected and were responsible to Her Majesty's Justice of the Peace. They had to be competent people and substantial householders. A great deal of correspondence was conducted with the Rural District Council and there seemed then, as now, a number of authorities to whom they were responsible. The Lewisham Union, later replaced by the Bromley Union as well as the District Surveyor of the Highway Board, a Metropolitan body and later on the Local Government Board. However, when needed, the Rural District Council and Kent County Council gave their support. In 1899 they defended Mottingham when the Lee Vestry was not prepared to give Mottingham any equivalent land for that proposed to be included in the new Borough of Lewisham.

Sometimes the Mottingham Vestry had a hard time of it with the miscreants who went off without paying their allotment rents, refused to pay the voluntary rate and had to be reminded. There was even one Clerk who went off with certain vital books and left those responsible wondering how to replace the funds which went with him also! Perhaps the fact that in 1886 the Council voted against an increase in the Clerk's salary from £10 p.a. to £20 p.a. (motion lost by one vote) had a bearing on the Clerk's dilemma!

Burial rights

Dilemmas there were and the major one which leads us straight back to St Andrew's church went on for years. This concerned the withdrawal by Eltham Vestry of burial rights and in June, 1891, they warned the Mottingham Vestry that except in certain circumstances "no inhabitant of Mottingham shall be permitted to be buried in the burial ground attached to Eltham Parish Church". This seems churlish on the face of it but, when one realises the plight of Eltham, quoted in "Some records of Old Eltham" it obviously was forced upon them. At a July Vestry meeting at Eltham Church in 1784, the churchyard was said to be "so filled with corpses that it was incapable of holding more with decency and propriety".

The Crown Commissioners absolutely refused to allow burials at St Andrew's Church in Court Road and the Parish Council was continually seeking land for this purpose. Appropriately enough, one begins to feel, after reading the long and macabre tale of this quest, "Jack Ass Meadows" at the end of Winn Road was one suggestion! The Treasury, through the Office of Woods and Forests, refused to sanction a grant saying that the cost could be met out of Parochial funds. Apparently £500 was not enough to compensate the owner for the land mentioned above. The Council also failed to get land at the South end of Coldharbour. In 1896, after telling Mr T. A. Schroeter's trustees that they were prepared to consider a piece of land nearer to the village than Marvels Wood,

the Council unanimously agreed that it was not desirable at present to provide a burial ground!

The Haworth Mausoleum

Perhaps the strange affair of Thomas Chester Haworth who took matters into his own hands and had a Mausoleum erected for himself and his family in Beaconsfield Road, then a country lane, was not unconnected with this. Described as a wayside tomb, this unique burial place was destroyed on the night that the bomb fell on Clarence Road. It was reassembled in its present form and is occasionally tidied up by others than the family of whom there now appears to be no trace. Thomas Chester Haworth was Waywarden of the Parish in 1879, doing a good job in this capacity and on the Bromley District Highways Board, being instrumental in getting the Highways rate down from 1/- to 9d in the £. He was a man of forceful character, obviously, and was concerned in many enterprises, one of which was the foundation of "The Eltham Journal".

Parish Church of St Andrew's

The Rev. G.P.Viner, mentioned earlier, was also a "tough" character. Much affection attaches to his memory as he had a hard pioneering passage as the first rector. By 1880 his efforts were rewarded when the church of St Andrew's was built and consecrated on the 12th March of that year. Its odd position, away from the natural centre, seems to be the result of a grudging attitude on the part of the wealthier inhabitants to give land or contribute funds. The latter had to come largely from outside the village and a plan to build the church at the junction of Mottingham Road, Mottingham Lane and Court Farm Road, failed because the owner of the land was unwilling. However, Queen Victoria granted the land on which it now stands in Court Road. Designed by Mr E.C.Clark the nave was the first part to be completed, followed by the North transept seventeen years later and finally the present chancel in 1912. The initial outlay was £2765 and the rectory was built in 1886 at a cost of £1594. There have been seven rectors since the first. The heavy responsibility of the war years was carried by the Rev. C.E.J.Chennell and the Rev. J.D.Underwood.

Some notes supplied by the present rector, include a reference to war damage. I quote: "During the 2nd World War, the Church of St Andrew's lost its East window ... parts of the original can be seen in a jigsaw puzzle of a window in the North transept together with an unusual window depicting a red 'bus ... There is a shield given in 1974 to members of the Church choir while in West Berlin by the Mayor of Reinickendorf, a part of Berlin which is the town twinned to the

Borough of Greenwich.... During the 97 years of its existence the Church has received some generous gifts, including one which was used to build the Church porch. The donor of the gift was anonymous but it is generally believed that it was made by an aunt of Dr W.G.Grace. A table used by the great cricketer as a desk is preserved in the vestry."

There was a visitation in May, 1970, made by Mervyn Stockwood, Bishop of Southwark. He assumed the offices of the Rector for a few days who accompanied him about the area. A formal visit was made to the new library and afterwards he took tea at Evelyn Court. Other social amenities and enterprises in Mottingham greatly delighted him. Although there are two other Anglican Churches apart from St Andrew's in Mottingham as well as those of other denominations, their history belongs to the 20th Century.

The Wesleyan Chapel built in 1883 stands on the site of the old tin hut where Eltham made its first mission to Mottingham but it is now known as "The New Methodist Church". It too, valiantly recovered after serious damage in World War II.

Mottingham House

At about this time, the initial Catholic mission began at Mottingham House, which rose on the site of Mottingham Place described earlier. After the last Stoddard died, in 1765, intestate and unmarried, there were many claimants to the house. After long litigation, the seat was given to the heir of the female line, William Boweman of Newport, I.O.W. He had no interest in Mottingham and when he died he bequeathed the property to a Mr Robert Dyneley, who rebuilt the seat and took up residence there. When his property was sold in parcels, after his decease in 1805, Mr Auldjo purchased the house and his family occupied it until 1837, when it was let.

In 1841 it was put up for sale and the agent had a bill printed which described it in these terms: "the hunting, shooting and fishing of this vicinity is proverbial and unapproachable elsewhere ... delightful little park with ornamental waters and plantation ... verdant lawns and pleasure grounds ... 38 acres of exceedingly rich pasture and grazing land (more or less) ... seventy or eighty dozen of peaches alone have been the produce of one season, with a large and prolific melon ground .... The walled gardens extend to about 3 acres altogether ... there is a vestige of King John's Palace, with the Banqueting Room close by .... Annual value of this delightful property is estimated at £250 guineas p.a. - the turning off is at the Seventh milestone on the Eltham Road ... it is a mile further on the Chislehurst Road."

After this Mr H.R.Baines bought it in 1851 and sold it to Mr F.A.Schroeter in 1855, whose family had it until 1886. Mr Schroeter considerably improved it. The next occupant is said to have been Father von Orsbach who acquired it as a preparatory school for Army officers. The building then passed into the hands of the Catholic Diocesan authorities as a school for boys and later still as a hospital orphanage for Catholic children. At the time of the first World War, Mottingham House is described as a derelict property in the ownership of Mr Childs of Orpington. It was not finally demolished until the mid-sixties and until that time provided adequate housing for several families, having 30 rooms in all.

Early in the present century it was partitioned to provide three houses under one roof. "Blendon" (privately owned) "Holmlands" (privately owned) and No.2 Mottingham House, which was the remainder of the building partitioned into three self-contained flats. The grounds were by then not extensive as Mr Childs sold plots to Eltham College fast developing farther down the lane. I am told that Mottingham House had vaulted cellars with similar brickwork to that found in and around Eltham Palace. Mr H.G.Cheal, who was one of the last residents, speaks also of a brick well or similar structure, 90' deep and in perfect condition when it was recently uncovered. We are indebted to him for several photographs of interesting features taken before demolition. The gate belonging to "Littleholme" also in the vicinity, was of massive oak and constructed by hand to an unusual design. The second house built by Robert Dyneley, may contain part of the original structure, possibly in its foundations. It was by no means beautiful at the end of its life, having a facade of great severity. However, I understand from Mr Cheal that the workmanship was extremely fine and unlikely to be equalled today. The brickwork is very highly thought of.

St Vincent's House

Mr W.R,Kennett, writing nearly thirty years ago, refers to "several outbuildings now used as private residences, one of which appears to have been the stables, belonging perhaps to the original house, while another is the chapel, probably built when the house was a seminary". The Southwark Catholic Rescue Society was still there in 1912 just before the house was bought by Mr Childs in a derelict condition. When the Catholic community had it the house was always referred to as "St Vincent's House" which can cause some confusion.

Royal Naval College

The history of Fairy Hall, its only neighbour in the lane to assume any lasting importance, apart from "Fairmount" the last home of W.G.Grace, can now be resumed. After Mrs Hartley's death in the late nineteenth century, the Royal Naval College occupied the Seat in 1889. This explains the presence of a foundation stone in the main building which was originally laid in their building at New Cross, in 1843, by the Prince Consort K.G. and afterwards removed to Fairy Hall, where H.R.H. Prince George of Wales, R.N. placed it on the 17th July, 1889. However, their sojourn was brief as the Naval College unaccountably closed in 1910. Before they left they were the means of bringing unexpected fame to the village as a Royal visit was made by Edward VII (when he was Prince of Wales) to the Naval College in 1900. Mottingham rose to the occasion, expending £80 on decorations which were displayed throughout the village and Mottingham Lane.

Eltham College

In 1912, the buildings were bought by the Institution for the Education of the Sons of Missionaries of the London Missionary Society and became the well-known Public School, Eltham College. Unfortunately, a large part of the extensive grounds was sold over their heads to the Y.M.C.A. SSM or, the School for the Sons of Missionaries, thus became Eltham College and was opened on 23rd March, 1912. A contemporary account of the opening refers to the grounds at that time as being "some 8 acres in extent and contain, incidentally, a large plane tree, said to be the largest in the country". Under this tree (which is still there) 300 people are supposed to be able to shelter.

"Near the front entrance to the grounds stands an elegant Byzantine chapel which was erected in 1903, the Memorial stone being laid by H.R.H. Princess Henry of Battenberg." When St Andrew's church was damaged in the war in 1944, the congregation worshipped at this Chapel. In the Winter of 1947, the Headmaster, Mr G Turberville, unveiled a Memorial tablet erected on its Southern wall. The tablet was the work of Edward Folkard, an Old Boy and son of Charles Folkard. On that occasion, J.A.Lucy, Head Boy, laid a wreath to the memory of 80 Old Boys and Staff who died in the war. The Headmaster read out their names in the Chapel at a commemorative service which took place beforehand. (It may not be inappropriate to note here that in the 1st World War, over 20 Old Boys of the College were honoured for outstanding bravery, one receiving the D.S.C. and 12 the M.C.)

In the report of the opening of Eltham College mention is also made of the high tower "over which, on a flagstaff taken from the fortress of Kars,

and visible for miles around, flies the school flag of dark blue with a golden cross". At the time of opening it was stated that "the pupils at present numbered between 70 and 80, there was room for 100" (said Mr Marnham who presided at the opening) and he suggested that "a little 'lay' blood would be a good thing". The school has recently been generously endowed by an old scholar who has given a fine new library, music and changing-rooms. This famous school has its own chroniclers and I make no attempt to tell its internal history. However, bathing in the reflected "glory of the sons" Mottingham is proudly aware of some well-known names:

Eric Liddell who died in a Japanese internment camp, was a Rugby three quarter of great note and perhaps the greatest runner the British Empire, and certainly Scotland has ever produced. He captured the Olympic 400 metres title at Paris in 1924 in a new world record time of 47.6 secs. He made history of another kind when he refused to enter for the 100 metre race because the heats were run on a Sunday. At the beginning of the century other famous sportsmen were: H.J.H.Sibree, A.L.Gracie and E.C.Fahmy. All were Rugby Internationals. Later, N.L.Evans, R.N. followed in their footsteps playing for England in the 1930's and in the 'fifties S.R.Smith was also Captain of Cambridge University and Hampshire when they won the County Championships. R.R.Dovey played cricket for Kent County getting his cap in 1946. George Band was a member of the Everest expedition (1953) and often appears in photographs leaning on his "black gamp".

Mervyn Peake

On the strength of his three novels: Titus Groan, Gormenghast and Titus Alone, the reputation of Mervyn Peake as a writer of power and imagination rests secure. His own collection of droll verses: "Rhymes without reason" shows his lighter, humorous vein so well demonstrated in his illustrations to "The Hunting of the Snark". His talent as a poet, painter and even dramatist was already established when a protracted illness deprived him gradually of the ability to work, the cruellest blow to strike any creative artist. Even then, work was accomplished but after ten years of courageous battling, he died still with so much left to give. These are but few of the many who have brought credit to the school.

People and Places

Before leaving the area of Mottingham Lane which seems to have been the favoured place to live until the end of the nineteenth century, perhaps mention might be made of Cedar Mount, the home of George Edwards, who was a well-known figure, serving on the Council and acting very much as the village squire. Blocks of flats now occupy the site with a good view of the A 20! The

Grange (now part of Eltham College) was the home of Lady Woodham. In the grounds she kept Jersey cows and gave their milk to the ailing children of the village.

W.G.Grace

"Fairmount" became the home of Dr W.G.Grace in 1909 and he lived there until his death in 1915. According to A.A.Thomson he had by then made his grand exit at the Oval in 1906 at the age of fifty-eight when he scored a perfect half-century and then went on to get 74. His first dramatic century was in 1866, when as a boy of eighteen, he scored 224 not out at the Oval, England v. Surrey.

When he came to live at Mottingham he played for a local club on the Chapel Farm ground at Eltham. "In the last game that he played for Eltham against Grove Park, in July 1914, he made 69 on an undertaker's pitch and he remained undefeated to the end" says A.A.Thomson. In 1914 W.G.Grace brought a team to Eltham College and the story goes that he was bowled by A.L.Gracie! Anecdotes abound, of course, and another one that relates to the Mottingham period is about a request to borrow the Sports ground at Lee for five hundred poor children to have a day out. With typical generosity, W.G. said: "You can borrow the lot, ground, gear, waitresses and all. But mind you" he added, with his old schoolboy grin "all the crockery you smash you'll have to pay for!"

The garden at "Fairmount" received a lot of his attention as he was naturally green-fingered. Here he had a sudden stroke, followed very shortly after by another which confined him to his bed. He died soon after, in October 1915. Even in the drear days of the '14-'18 war, his passing awed a Nation quite as much as if he had been royal. He is buried at Elmer's End cemetery. The commemorative plaque now to be seen on "Fairmount" was unveiled in 1966 by Mr Stuart Chieseman, Chairman of the Kent County Cricket Club and father-in-law to Colin Cowdrey.

Farmer Brown

Mottingham Farm, situated roughly opposite "The Grange" in the lane, was owned by Farmer Brown. All that remains of Mottingham Farm or Norman's Farm as it afterwards was, are the riding stables. Farmer Brown seems to have been a whisky, ale, steak and cigar man; he lived to be one hundred years old. Some of his years were spent in London, so although he wore a smock and tall hat he was no country bumpkin, as was proved when practical jokers "treated" him in "The Porcupine" and tried to befuddle him. He turned the tables on them apparently, as he remained sober and they were overcome.*

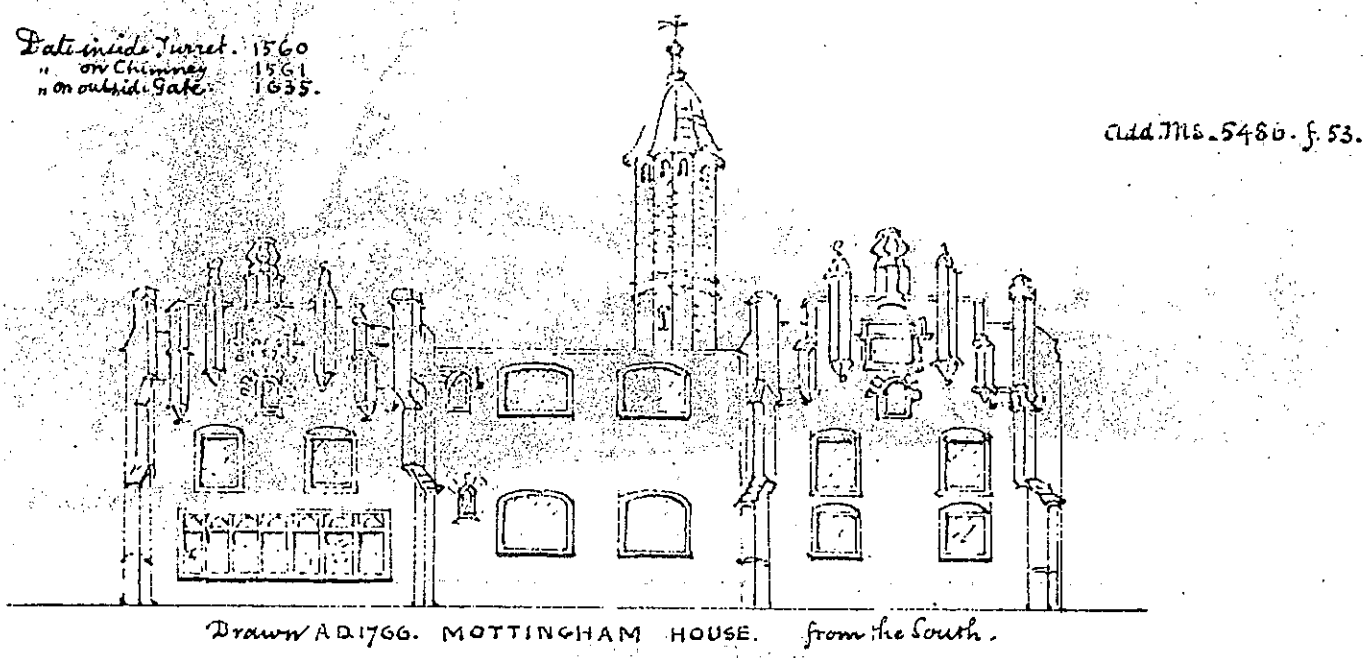
*Merry Mottingham (C.Folkard)

EXTRACT FROM THE CHARTER OF ETHELBERT, DATED 862 A.D.

Boundaries of Ethelbert's grant, dated 862 A.D. (relating to Mottingham)

These are the boundaries surrounding this land:-

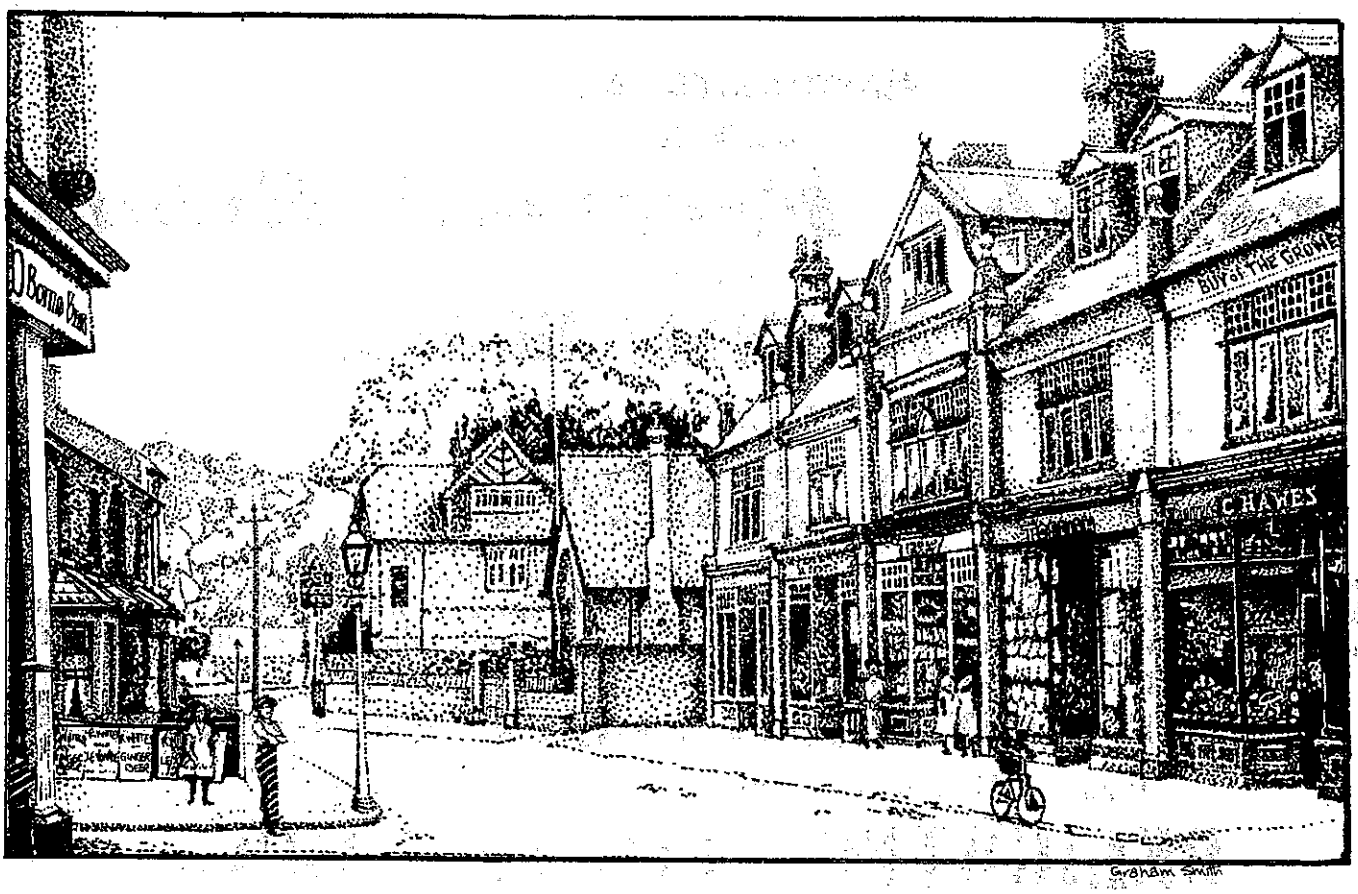
To the North from ceddan leage to langan leage, the boundary of the people of Bromley and Lewisham, then from langan leage to the crooked tree-stump, then from the crooked tree-stump by the boundary of the people of Mottingham to cinta stile by the boundary of the people of Mottingham to Earn's tree...et seq



Mottingham Place

The Porcupine Inn, 1909

Eltham College



The Pavement, Mottingham c. 1907

MOTTINGHAM HOUSE.

For Sale by Auction, by **Mr GEO: ROBINS**, *at the Auction Mart, London on Thursday May 13. 1841*

courtesy of Greenwich Local History Archives

Particulars, &c.

LOT 1.

A valuable Freehold Estate,

CALLED

MOTTINGHAM HOUSE,

NEAR ELTHAM AND CHISELHURST,

IN KENT,

One that it should seem especially claims the early attention of a Gentleman devoted to Field Sports, or a Banker and first-rate Merchant; the Hunting, Shooting, and Fishing of this vicinity is proverbial, and unapproachable elsewhere. MOTTINGHAM HOUSE is the leading feature of the Village, screened from the public gaze by a Shrubbery, it has an imposing front, the rear opens upon the

VERDANT LAWN AND PLEASURE GROUNDS,

High in public estimation, with a beautiful Conservatory, and a

DELIGHTFUL LITTLE PARK,

WITH ORNAMENTAL WATERS AND PLANTATION,

The latter forms an agreeable belt; the whole extends to about

38 *Acres of exceedingly rich Pasture and Grazing Land*

(MORE OR LESS),

ALL FREEHOLD.

The Lawn is resplendant in rare Shrubs. The Walled Gardens are prolific beyond measure; Seventy or Eighty Dozen of Peaches alone have been the produce of only one season, with a LARGE AND PROLIFIC MELON GROUND. The Villa has been improved and enlarged; and it now possesses all and every accommodation a respectable Family can reasonably expect, with very appropriate Offices throughout, and in the Court Yard is ample proof that a Gentleman inclined to hunt will find abundant room for his Stud.

The Residence is a very substantial building, with a most imposing front, seated on a Lawn, with Portico Entrée, &c.; at the rear is the Conservatory.

The Abode contains the following Accommodation, viz:—

Four Attics, Seven Bed Rooms, and Three Dressing Rooms, Drawing Room, with handsome Statuary Marble Chimney Piece, about 24 feet by 20; Dining Parlour, about 24 feet by 18; a Library, looking out on the beautiful Conservatory; Housekeeper's Room, Butler's Pantry, Wash-house, excellent Dairy, Larder, Scullery, and lots of Cellaring.

IN THE COURT YARD—Three Stables with Eight Stalls and Boxes, Double Coach-house, Harness Room, and Laundry, Rick Yard, with Cart Sheds and range of Piggeries.

The Walled GARDENS extend to about Three Acres altogether.

The RAILWAY, Three Miles off, renders the distance from Town most convenient. The Views from this enviable spot are quite beautiful. There is a VESTIGE OF KING JOHN'S PALACE, with the Banqueting Room close by, and Shooter's Hill and Eltham Spire continue to vary the interest of the scene. The Annual Value of this delightful Property is estimated at

250 GUINEAS PER ANNUM.

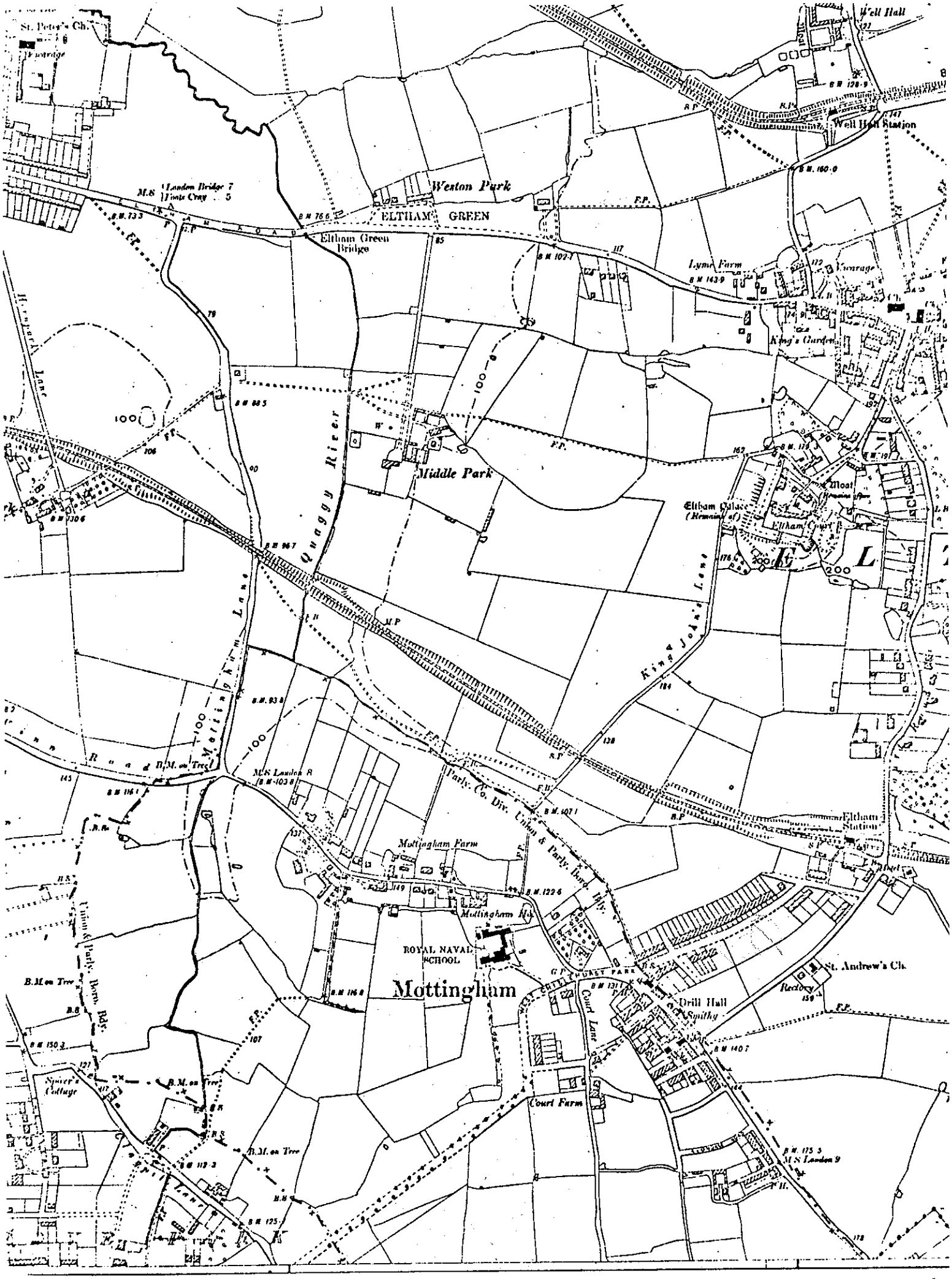
Immediate Possession may be had, and the Fixtures are to be taken at a fair Valuation.

THE LAND TAX IS REDEEMED.

**** The turning off is at the Seventh Mile-stone on the Eltham Road, it is a Mile further on the Chiselhurst Road*

Mr. Robins Auction Notice for 1841

Reserve map 1743 – 1745


St. Peter's Ch.
Vicarage
Well Hall
Well Hall Station
Weston Park
ELTHAM GREEN
Eltham Green Bridge
Lynn Farm
Vicarage
King's Garden
Middle Park
Quaggy River
Eltham Palace (Remains of)
Moat
Eltham Court
Mottingham Lane
King Joan's Lane
Mottingham Farm
Mottingham Rd.
ROYAL NAVAL SCHOOL
Mottingham
Eltham Station
St. Andrew's Ch.
Rectory
Drill Hall
Smithy
Court Lane
Court Farm
Spicer's Cottage
Parly. Co. Div. Eltham & Parly. Bord. Bdy.
Eltham & Parly. Bord. Bdy.
Eltham & Parly. Bord. Bdy.
Road
Lane
B.M. on Tree
M.S. London 8
M.S. London 9
M.6 London Bridge 7 Finis Cray 5

The Victorian village

We have seen how the rural fastness of Mottingham was penetrated by those we would call "commuters" today. This in itself wrought little change and only for the better in that they built a handsome, tree-lined avenue and employed in domestic service women who would otherwise have "roughed" it in the fields. However, the railway itself brought construction workers to the districts around; they increased the population and needed accomodation. One sometimes gets the impression that Devonshire, Portland and Albert Roads were part of the later development around the eighteen-nineties, but in fact, they were already in existence in 1870 before West Chislehurst Park. We have the Rev. G.P.Viner's testimony that when he first knew Mottingham in the 'seventies "the parish consisted of twelve houses in Mottingham Lane. Of these, only ten were inhabited and only seven of them helped our cause in any way. Next, there were the houses from the old inn to the top of the terrace, with the forge and cottage on the opposite side of the road, and the poor terrace, etc. at the top of the village, with the Devonshire, Portland and Albert Roads, then four houses and hotel at the Railway Station".

At about this time the Vestry minutes make depressing reading "... occupiers are driven out of the Parish by the high rates they are called upon to pay and their places left unfilled from the same cause". We have the picture of good houses falling into disrepair. Also the hard-pressed few complain that... "the amount paid includes provision for watering roads and lighting them, whilst in the Parish of Mottingham neither water-carts nor Public lamps are to be found!" A note occurs in the minutes, dated 22nd March 1888, in which Mr Miller (farmer) is warmly thanked for procuring the transfer of this Parish from the Lewisham Union to the Bromley Union by which the ratepayers will be greatly benefited.

Lewisham and Bromley Unions

Note:

As early as 1873 we find the Vestry requesting the Local Government Board to allow Mottingham to leave the Lewisham Union, but without success. It seems that Bromley Union had no objection to receiving Mottingham. It is interesting to note an analysis of expenditure in those times:-

For the Half-Year (1886)

Largest sum to Board of Guardians	£274	0	0
Rural Sanitary Authority	64	0	0
Highways	116	0	0
Mottingham School Board	150	0	0
Police	59	0	0
Sundries	8	0	0
Assistant Overseer's Salary	5	0	0

The reason for wishing to leave the Lewisham Union appears to lie in the statement "As one of the parishes in the Lewisham Union, Mottingham has to contribute towards the Metropolitan Common Fund and consequently has to assist other parishes whose rates are lighter".

As for the nostalgia for yester-year there must have been a bit of it about then. In March 1859, it was recorded that "in the opinion of this Vestry owing to the decrease of traffic on the roads of this hamlet, it is considered that one rate of ten pence in the £ will be sufficient to cover the expense of the ensuing year."

The Geffery's Homes

Before the first World War, a number of houses had come on the scene, so by 1910 there was a pleasant mixture of late Victorian and early 20th century style, culminating in a large Neo-Gothic structure which intrigues strangers, standing as it does behind impressive iron gates on the outskirts of the village towards Chislehurst. Designed by Mottingham's local architect, Mr George Hubbard, the Sir Robert Geffery's Homes were built on 14 acres of pasture land. The foundation stone was laid on the 24th January, 1912 by the Duke of Norfolk. The original almshouses were founded in Kingsland Road, Shoreditch and now constitute the Geffery Museum. They were for the domestic servants of the members of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers. Sir Robert Geffery was a former Lord Mayor of London, and Master of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers in 1667 and 1685. His will provided for the land, the building and its upkeep as well as a sum per annum for each poor person "and 15/- yearly for a gown".

During World War II, the West Wing was damaged by enemy action and had to be extensively restored. When the Greater London Council purchased this property in 1971 for conversion, their scheme for its development was as follows: 29 flatlets in the existing building; on the surrounding land, 56 dwellings for elderly people. 14 two-person dwellings, 90 four-person dwellings, 61 five-person dwellings and 13 six-person dwellings. A considerable part of this programme has now been fulfilled.

The original building was described by the Dept. of the Environment in these terms when they took it over: "The building consists of two storeys (on) three sides of a square. The centre projects with (a) pediment containing festoons and the motto "God our Strength". Before conversion the rear elevation had a statue of Sir Robert Geffery and a clock incorporated in the centre of the masonry ... there is a five-arched colonnade on the ground floor with balcony and balustrades over. There is a pair of very fine wrought iron gates with the motto "God Our Strength"." I understand that the statue was a reproduction. It has now taken the place of the original by John Nost (1723) which was in the Geffery Museum but which is now at the Company's new Homes at Hook, Hampshire. For many years, ladies of restricted means e.g. retired governesses, had their individual rooms here, but enjoyed the services of a Matron, nurse and caretaker, etc. The Company made official visits and its dignitaries were to be seen in full regalia making their way to the chapel. Of the 40 apartments only a few finally remained occupied and in 1972 the last occupants left.

First World War

The outbreak of the first world war brought completely to an end an era when a pantomime performed in the village hall at Christmas was probably the "big event". An account written by Charles Folkard, a well-known resident of Mottingham, illustrator of children's books and creator of "Teddy-Tail" in the Daily Mail, tells us that "the show was billed for six nights and a matinee, and the curtain went up on the first night of Cinderella to a hall packed to suffocation and so it was at all performances".

By 1915, Mottingham was much involved in the War. The A.S.C. took over the Grove Park Hospital and thousands of men were under canvas in the surrounding fields. However, severe weather conditions led to "serious rumours" about which the Chairman of the Parish Council wrote to General Heath of the War Office. Staff officers came down and sent 2000 men home on leave and took over empty houses for others in order to improve conditions. There was a constant stream of traffic through Mottingham as the A.S.C. was fitting out ambulances and 'buses for the front.

The arrival of munition workers in the Woolwich Arsenal somewhat altered the character of the place and by 1917, we find the Local Government Board is making enquiries of the Council as to the housing of the working-classes which it appears was expected to increase by 50% in Mottingham. The Council said that 50/100 houses would now be required to meet the present demand and that "permanency" would depend on the after-war use

of the Munitions factories in the Thames valley between London Bridge and Gravesend. "Mottingham is now in direct communication with the industrial belt of the Thames by Motor, Tram and Rail". As the population of the 640 odd acres comprising Mottingham is given in 1916 as 1500 and by 1930 it is quoted as just under 2000 it seems that there was no alarming acceleration.

Life continued much as before except for the sadness of the war losses recorded on the War Memorial. This occupies a conspicuous place in the village at the junction of Mottingham Road with West Park; here, originally, a three-branched lamp standard shed its light before the days of heavy traffic. The Memorial was designed by Mr George Hubbard and since January, 1973, its central position has been incorporated into a roundabout scheme to control the increased traffic which, until then, was having a "free for all" at this junction. Until recently, an Armistice service was held round the Memorial for the 41 fallen of the first World War and later those of the 2nd World War. This service is now held on the forecourt of "The Porcupine".

Mr George Hubbard, a local architect who lived in West Park, together with his brother experimented on an idea to combat drought abroad; they built a 100' square dew-pond where "The Chinbrook" public house now stands and lined it with bitumen and mica. However, the dew it collected at night evaporated too quickly in the day for the project to be successful. One cannot help but admire their enterprise and also envy the times, I suppose, which allowed it.

Early Conservationists

That the Council tried to preserve the rural beauty of Mottingham is obvious. They were great conservationists. Plans had to be submitted by a farmer for even a new stalled horse-stable. In 1905, trees were replaced in Grove Park Road before the asphalt was put down. There was a great deal of concern about painting the guards round these trees and footpaths were assiduously looked after. When the wall of St Vincent's House, as it was then known, had to be set back for road widening in the lane, there was concern that the wall should be faced with the original bricks when it should be rebuilt. The Council noted the disgusting condition in which the Electric Light Company had left the trench leading up to the Post Office.

The strongest objection of all came when the Parish Council resisted the conversion of their "one choice residential road into a tram route!" Court Road is described in 1923 as the best residential road in the Woolwich Borough and Mottingham was proud of it. The Council pointed out that "Mottingham is served already

with an omnibus route to Eltham" and again ... "the Court Road section is already served by a Chislehurst 'bus service. The remainder of the route cannot yet support a 'bus".

'Bus Transport

However, 'bus transport relentlessly developed and for those who are interested in this aspect of history I include a full account:

No.	Commenced	Route	Curtailed
109	10.8.1916	Penge to Woolwich (for Munition workers)	24.2.1919
109	16.6.1926	Route again began to include Mottingham on the way to Eltham	30.9.1934
209	3.9.1930	Forest Hill to Eltham including Mottingham and Blackfen en route	3.5.1938
161	4.5.1938	Chislehurst to Eltham (including Mottingham)	
124	4.5.1938	Forest Hill to Eltham (the old 209 renumbered)	
	3.5.1950	124 diverted to include Mottingham Estate	
126	1940	Eltham, Mottingham, Bromley and beyond.	

N.B. There was an early route the 1c which ran for a few months in 1926 from Willesden to Mottingham. On weekdays and from 1.6.'30 to 14.4.'33 the No.1 ran from Willesden to Lewisham and on Sundays was extended to Chislehurst.

Rail Transport

Of the local station on the Dartford Loop Line, built by the South Eastern Railway Co., one might well say "What's in a name?" Christened Eltham station on the 1st September, 1866 it became Eltham for Mottingham on the 1st January 1892. In April 1916, it became Eltham and Mottingham and then reverted to Eltham for Mottingham again in October, 1922. It finally settled down as plain "Mottingham" in 1927.

Queen Victoria assented to the use of Crown Land for the railway on the 30th June, 1862, and so a race-horse breeder at Middle Park Farm had his objection

overruled; one account says ... "the parklands of Eltham Lodge and Lamorbey Park were both neatly avoided and demolition was minimal, maybe 2 or 3 cottages". From the same source we learn that most of the navvying was done in the Summer of 1864. Neighbouring stations were Lee, Eltham, Sidcup, Bexley and Crayford, and trains terminated in London at Cannon Street.

The station was opened in pouring wet weather and the beginnings of a National commercial crisis on Saturday 1st September, 1866. The original station buildings still exist on the Down side. The first Station Master, Mr John Rastin, had the honour of taking the first train through Mottingham, probably wearing his top-hat with the gold cockade in the side - and tails! There were steam trains every two hours or so and a few extra for business men. By 1900, the Council was receiving complaints from the Public as to the "inadequate and unpunctual trains". At first, merchandise came into all the goods yards and this was helpful to the more successful farmers as a means of obtaining agricultural supplies. However, this traffic largely declined. The reception siding fell into disuse in about 1960, steam trains having been withdrawn in 1959. The line became chiefly passenger-carrying and in 1975 the daily figure of passengers using Mottingham station was 4,700. What a difference from the early days when a handful of people travelled by train! To these days belongs the picture of cattle crossing the line by a bridge which has disappeared making their way from pasture on Middle Park to Mottingham Lane.

In 1967, the Greenwich Borough was informed that the bridge over Mottingham Railway in Court Road was sub-standard. During improvement, the road at that point was widened and work was eventually completed in 1972. Traffic was diverted when Court Road was closed via West Park, "The Yorkshire Grey" and Eltham Hill.

Between the Wars

These years between the wars had more in common with the old Mottingham than those following the last holocaust. In a period of unashamed sentimentality children from the village school renewed the flowers on the War Memorial. Apart from local domestic building and the cutting through of a new arterial road, the rural peace was undisturbed, except perhaps, by the political meetings in Devonshire Road when a determined resident used to take his chair out on to the pavement and heckle the speakers, or, when the "one-man fire engine" consisting of a hand-truck plus hose and hatchet kept at Hyde's Motor Works went into action. News of Mr Sidney Dobson's death and a picture of him with this fire appliance appeared recently in the Eltham Times (10th Feb. '77). Hyde's Motor Works was the biggest place of local employment, having been established in 1850 as the West Kent Cycle Works.

At the beginning of the 'thirties, Beaconsfield Road, then a country lane, was built on but the new residents looked out upon cows and cottages still. Model Farm and Court Farm created this picture and the present village High Street was part of the same rural scene with Rose Cottage and the Smithy looking across fields to St Andrew's church. However, by the time that war came, these had been demolished to make way for the present shops. Prior to the war there was development on both sides of Court Road and another pleasant vista disappeared, where poplar trees were once seen on the brow of the hill towards Chislehurst. I am told that there was a house there, bearing the amusing sign: "Horse, cow and mixed manure". A field on the corner of Court Road, entered by a stile from which a footpath lead to Chapel Farm, remained until after the war.

Our Lady Help of Christians

This decade also saw the arrival of the new Catholic Church "Our Lady Help of Christians". After the initial period in St Vincent's House, Mass was celebrated in the Scouts' hut which stood on the Porcupine forecourt next to Holliday's shop of the present day. This was in 1927 when the parish of "Our Lady Help of Christians" was actually founded. The story that the building of the new church was financed almost entirely by the winnings of the local fishmonger, Alfred Jeffreys, in an Irish sweepstake who backed the horse "April 5th" is true. The first priest was Abbot White from Eltham Priory. Father Henry Porter was the incumbent when the church was consecrated in 1952. St Vincent's, Harting Road, is the parish primary school which opened in 1953. Maryfield Hall, Leysdown Road, is the parish centre.

The Library

The library, too, was in one of its transitional stages, having progressed from being a box of books opened once a week to a Mobile Library stop on the forecourt of "The Porcupine". At this time, Kent County Library was the authority responsible for the service. Although Chislehurst and Sidcup Urban District Council came into being in 1900, it did not assume full responsibility for the library service until 1958. The old shop library, which many people remember, was not rented at No.65 Main Road, Mottingham, until the outbreak of the 2nd World War, and then, only as a part-time Branch.

The L.C.C.Mottingham Estate

The biggest enterprise that Mottingham had so far seen was started by an outside agent, the London County Council. Faced with the problem of providing homes for people then living in Poplar and Bermondsey, the L.C.C. bought 244 acres of land, Court Farm, in fact bordering

Marvels Lane and Elmstead Woods to the South and extending from the top of the village halfway to Chislehurst West. 2050 houses and 287 flats built in "cottage estate" style were envisaged.

The determination with which a new parish was created with aspirations for a proper church, which did not come until 1957, was stimulated by the urgent needs of a fast-growing population. In 1930, the population of Mottingham was just under 2000. In 1936, when the Tlabot Memorial Church Hall (as it was then styled) was dedicated by Dr Parsons, it was already 4000 and a figure of 12,000 was projected on this development alone!

The first house was occupied in 1935. A vicarage, St Edward's House, was completed in 1938. Although estimated to cost £15,000, by the time that the Talbot Memorial Buildings were completed they had cost £32,000 and the church required voluntary contributions to furnish it. Part of the expense was met by transferring funds from a church at Brockley. So flourishing was it, however, in its temporary home in St Edward's Hall, that it founded its own magazine in January 1951: "The Parish Magazine of St Edward the Confessor Mottingham". By this time the parish of St Edward comprised 13,000 people and a statement: "Our district goes as far as Marvels Lane in the Grove Park direction and Oakdene Avenue in the Chislehurst direction" gives some idea of its size.

Church of Edward the Confessor

The site for the Church was given by Mr Stanley Powell and his wife, friends of Edward Stuart Talbot, who was successively Bishop of Rochester, Southwark and Winchester. The dedication was intended as a tribute to him and to his illustrious predecessor "Edward the Confessor" who once gave Mottingham in a gift of lands to the Abbot of Ghent. The architect was Mr Hubert Worthington, the most remarkable feature of his construction being the tower, 60' high, which appears higher as the church stands on elevated ground. The preliminary work undertaken by the Rev. C.E.J.Chennell of St Andrew's, who settled the first inhabitants and raised voluntary contributions, will always be coupled with that of the Rev.K.G.Hoare, the first priest, who came back in 1957 to lay the cornerstone. The following year, the Bishop of Woolwich, the Rt. Rev.R.W.Stannard was present for the dedication together with the Rev.A.J.Buckley, the Vicar of St Edward's at that time. Because of the outbreak of war so early in its life, the Mottingham estate developed a strong sense of community in which the Church played a vital part.

Mottingham School for Girls

Mottingham School for Girls opened on the 11th September, 1939 as Ravensworth Road Central Girls' School

and owing to the National emergency at first had only Miss M.Bowmer, the Headmistress and twelve Staff in attendance; the first girls arrived on the 19th September and were organized on a three session basis until things settled down in the November of that year. It became Mottingham County Secondary Modern School on the 1st April 1945. There was a boys' school as well but they transferred to Chislehurst at the beginning of 1948, the girls from the Chislehurat school joining those at Mottingham. It was re-named Mottingham School for Girls in September 1968. There have been three Headmistresses: Miss M. Bowmer was the first, followed by Miss E.Neave. Miss I.Woodhams at present holds the post.

Castlecombe Road Infants' School

Castlecombe Road Infants' School opened on the 21st September, 1937 as Elmstead Lane Infants' School, but a year later assumed the name of Castlecombe Road Infants' School. In 1956 it became a Junior and Infants' School. It had only 80 children when it opened under the Headship of Mrs Chapman. By the following July there were 421 and by July 1939 there were 596. In 1939, only 60 children were allowed in the school to study because of air-raid precautions and the rest were visited at their homes by the teachers and given work to do. Each day a different 60 children went to the school. The playing field had several bombs on it and the windows had bullet holes in them. By January 1940 air-raid shelters had been built and normal school activities were resumed - except for constant exits to the shelters which were at that time unlit! Mr J.A.I.Purkiss is the present Headmaster.

Second World War

The '39-'45 War was distinguished by its vicious attack upon civilians. The first bomb in Mottingham fell on the playing fields behind No 43, Grove Park Road. On the 16th April, 1941, a land-mine fell behind No 51 Beaconsfield Road, demolishing 8 houses. There was a severe 'incident' in Jevington Way when 6 houses were practically destroyed. On the 18th June, 1944, five flying-bombs caused great damage; two fell on Hyde's Motor Works, damaging it beyond repair. It was never re-established.

Village School

The nearby school was wrecked and the scholars dispersed to other local buildings. The Headmaster, Mr A.H.White, was given the option of going to Sidcup but he preferred to stay with his boys and go to the Ravensworth Road Central Boys' School. The junior boys and girls went to Ravensworth Road also and Standard I to Dorset Road Infants' School. Mr A.H.White was the

last of several Head teachers whose work began in 1876 (Devonshire Road building) with Miss M.J.Cave until 1882, followed by Miss Emma L.Clark who left two years later to be replaced by Mr Daniel Waters who stayed until 1909. Mr Arthur Boughton Neal was Head teacher from then until 1924.

As well as the loss of the school, there was severe damage to the nearby shops, known since 1894 as "The Pavement" and happily, still here; "The Porcupine" and houses in West Park and Mottingham Road also suffered severely. Both ends of the village were united in tragedy for a month later, on the 11th July, 1944, the first of two flying-bombs fell on Clarence Road and another fell there two weeks later. This, together with a land-mine on Brisley's Provisions and Post Office shop on the corner of Portland Road devastated an entire area with tragic loss of life. Survivors were housed in Nissen huts which remained until after the war. With the addition of considerable church damage, these were the major areas of destruction, bringing about numerous personal tragedies which it is outside my brief to evaluate in terms of human grief. In common with others, Mottingham was in the direct line of attack known as "Buzz-bomb alley".

The Royal Artillery from Woolwich brought up mobile guns and there was a gun enplacement on the City of London School playing fields, Grove Park Road, which was maintained by the Home Guard. Eltham College had its own Home Guard platoon. There was also a radar mat on the Y.M.C.A. ground next-door to the College, the men who maintained it being billeted at No 52, Grove Park Road. There are those who think that the presence of guns and the Radar mat perhaps had something to do with the amount of damage that Mottingham suffered.

Coldharbour Housing Estate

The immediate post-war period was characterized by re-building of which the development of Cold Harbour Farm as a housing estate was by far the major operation. There is a photograph taken by John Topham in 1940 of a team of three shire horses ploughing part of the 155 acres so soon to be swallowed up. Although Mottingham has its fair share of open ground (a gift from the past when, in the middle centuries, Sir Nicholas Stoddard and Sir Percival Hart owned between them almost all the land) it was sad to see the last farmland left in London disappear. However, this view has to be set against a post-war waiting list for housing of 6000 with which the Woolwich Borough Council was faced.

On the 12th July, 1947 Aneurin Bevan opened the first of 1715 houses to be completed: No 2 Wynford Way. The official opening of the estate came later, on the 9th May, 1957 when the Queen Mother came to "The Mound"

William Barefoot gardens. All of Mottingham's history reflects a continuing link with the Church and although Coldharbour is entirely in the Greenwich Borough it is part of the parish of St Andrew's and its hard-won church, St Alban's is a daughter church of St Andrew's.

St Alban's Church

Much of the life of the Coldharbour community has evolved round its church which began at the house of Mr & Mrs Rooth, 27 Littlemede and continued in temporary quarters consisting of a workmen's discarded Nissen hut at the corner of Kingsley Wood Drive and Mottingham Road. This was in 1949. Coronation year saw the successful completion of this post-war effort. When, on the 17th January, 1953, the foundation stone was laid by the Bishop of Woolwich, the Rt. Rev. R.W.Stannard, Mr W.R.Kennett (author of: "Some Notes On The History of Mottingham" written over twenty years ago) led the procession and carried the cross to the site of the new church. This was completed within eight months and on the 5th September, 1953 it was dedicated by the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt.Rev. Bernard Simpson. The Rev.S.G. Crookshank of St Andrew's together with the Rev. H.K.R. Twinn, his curate assisted. Present also was the architect, Mr R.G.Covell. A Community Centre came afterwards on the 7th March, 1961. It may be of interest to note that the total cost of the new church which included a hall and parsonage, £20,000, was met out of the war-damage payment for "All Saints" Rotherhithe, which was not rebuilt, many parishioners having moved from that area into the district. The estate has two schools: Greenacres was officially opened by Henry Williamson (the author who grew up in Lewisham) on the 12th November, 1953 but it was functioning before then. Ruxley Manor school started on the 7th November, 1952.

Post-War Reconstruction

During this post-war period also, minor repairs were effected in the village. The library had a new glass shop-front put in so that one no longer peered through a "blacked-out" door with a peep-hole in it. A reader complained, with truth, that she had to search the shelves with the aid of a torch and Kent County Council responded by providing half-a-dozen great porcelain globes which, on a dark night, lit up the village street.

'Bombed-out' Brisley's store was now the hub of the street, where Gough's Off-Licence now is. The post-box was there until Brisley's left in the late 'sixties, after which it was set up outside "Harrold's" shop but on the death of the postmaster was up-rooted again and taken around the corner to stand outside the wool shop in Court Road which now houses the post-office. A sign of the economic change which has taken place is the

difference in the amount of business then conducted, when it was only pence to post a parcel, and now. Christmas in those days was something to remember. People in the queue for the Post Office enjoyed the lovely smell of bacon, biscuits, coffee and other produce, whilst appraising the delights of confectionery and similar delectable goods with a view to possible purchase. The amount of work, both mental and physical, achieved by two efficient women was remarkable.

The two houses on the corner of Dorset Road were then complete with gardens as Scott's Garage had not yet taken over. The War Damage Commission was working its way through claims for a stupendous programme of repair work and gradually things returned to normal.

Mottingham Redevelopment Scheme

By the time that the early 'fifties arrived one end of the village was looking very different. On the 16th December, 1953 Mr Ernest Marples opened the new blocks of flats named in honour of the Everest climbers. Present were, Mr W.G.Fuller, Chairman of the Chislehurst and Sidcup Council, Mr T.W.Fagg, Clerk to the Council (later first Town Clerk of the London Borough of Bromley) and Miss Pat Hornsby-Smith (now Baroness Hornsby-Smith D.B.E.). Mr A.H.Ley, the architect was also there. The Mottingham Re-Development Scheme which this enterprise was called was finally complete, when after two extensions had been granted, the tenants finally occupied the flats in the Spring of 1954. A new parade of shops with flats above was built opposite, replacing a very quaint row of shops, known as "The terrace" which was demolished in the bombing. They had been situated between Clarence and Portland Roads and had served the needs of the people ever since the first World War, at least. The new shops disposed of the big field on the corner of Court Road and there was more domestic building in this vicinity.

Coronation Celebrations

Coronation Year was optimistic with talk of a new Elizabethan Age and Mottingham did its best to recognise this. Mottingham Coronation Committee converted the war-time "Holidays At Home Fund" and added to it to provide open-air benches in the village for elderly people and visitors. Other expenditure went to improve entertainment facilities in Room F of Mottingham Community Centre, afterwards to be called: "The Coronation Room". There was also a Coronation United Service in which all denominations took part. Mottingham Secondary School had a new playing field and a Coronation tree, a pink Chestnut, which was planted by the Kent Education Officer, Mr E. Woodhead. Mr T.Ramsbottom and Miss E.A.Neave, the Head-mistress were present.

The last two decades

The Greater London Borough of Bromley absorbed the Mottingham portion of Chislehurst and Sidcup Urban District Council in 1965.

New Library/Flats

This library was designed by the Borough Architects' Dept. of Bromley. It was opened by the Mayor of Bromley on the 21st September, 1968. There are 8 Council flats above, reserved for elderly people.

Sculpture at the library entrance

This was the work of Miss Carol Morgan at the Ravensbourne College of Art and Design. I understand that the inspiration for its design arose from her interest in solid geometry shapes, particularly at the time in ten-sided polygons. Some resemblance to an M or an E is believed to be accidental. It consists of solid concrete and by reason of its weight was no easy task to cast. Unfortunately, possible damage by vandals had to be considered so it was especially designed for an unprotected site such as this.

Evelyn Court

Another building in Highcombe Close, adjacent to Mottingham Service Station is of interest. This is Evelyn Court, opened on the 4th April, 1970, by Colin Cowdrey. It was the inspiration of the Chislehurst and Mottingham Housing Association which was formed in 1967. By their efforts they have provided private homes, each furnished by the tenants. These maintain their independence in that they have their own door keys and do their own jobs. Ages range between 75 and 90 years. The tenants pay rent and have the services of a resident warden as well as benefiting from the efforts made by "Friends of Evelyn Court". These homes are named after Evelyn Rogers, a tireless social worker, but the individual labours of local residents in raising funds as well as giving their professional services free, should not go unrecorded.

Mottingham Community Centre

A £20,000 project, this enterprise was agreed upon in September, 1972 and begun in the New Year. It was opened on October 26th, 1974, having been completed the previous February. It replaced the old pre-fabricated buildings at the corner of Kimmeridge Road and Beaconsfield Road.

Christopher Mumbray Youth Hall

Opened in 1975, this is a memorial to Christopher, tragically killed in a climbing accident. Sally Webb and Mark Chadwick are also commemorated here.

Mottingham Residents' Association

This association was formed over 40 years ago. Mr T.Ramsbottom, affectionately known as "Mr Mottingham" and *Major Stanley Holland together with a present life member Mr H.Lynn founded it. In 1963, it was in danger of disintegrating, but has survived to become a vital champion of Mottingham's interests, which in such a large borough are in danger of being overlooked. Its publication "Mottingham News" discusses all matters of Public concern. The Association donated the seat outside the library and the tree in the centre of the rose-bed there.

Mottingham Week

The Rev. C.M.Byers, present rector of St Andrew's (since 1966) was the first Chairman and inspiration of "Mottingham Week" initiated by him in 1973. It is an attempt to improve the cultural potential of Mottingham and to unite its several communities in so doing. To quote his own words: "There are plans to unite Mottingham in one Parish again. The re-establishment in 1974 of the Association of Mottingham Churches will ensure the increasing unity and sense of purpose amongst all Christian people in the area".

Song of a Suburb

Written by Iain Kendall and Steuart Allin, this work which has local and contemporary allusions was first performed by St Andrew's Church choir in St Andrew's Church in Mottingham Week, 1973. In 1974, the choir took it to Reinickendorf, Germany, where it was well received.

* For Maj. S. Holland and Mr H. Lynn, substitute Mr W. G. Fuller and Mr R. W. Pike

SOURCES

Greenwood, C.	Kent. 1838.
Gregory, R.C.C.	The story of Royal Eltham. 1909.
Hart, F.H.	History of Lee. 1882. rev.ed. 1971.
Hasted, Edward	History and topographical survey of the County of Kent: Vol.I.
	History of Kent. Pt.I: The Hundred of Blackheath; edited by Dr Henry Drake. Folio vol.
Kennett, W.R.	Some Notes on the History of Mottingham. Thesis c.1947 (a copy each in Central and Mottingham Libraries)
Ireland, W.H.	History of the County of Kent. Vol.4
Murdock, Ian G.	Mottingham: A brief history in 3 parts. (Mottingham News 1972/3)
Rivers, Rev. Elphinstone (Vicar of Eltham)	Some records of Old Eltham. c.1895.
Thorne, James	Handbook to the environs of London. 1876.
Varney, Richard	Chislehurst and Mottingham: a story of two villages within an urban area. (3 copies - Mottingham, Chislehurst and Central Libraries)
Thomson, A.A.	The great cricketer: a biography of W.G.Grace. 1957. 1968.
Gilmore, Maeve	A world away: a memoir of Mervyn Peake. 1970.

ARCHIVES Bromley Local History. Central Library.

Notes on Kent. 1796 Document

Kent County Office Guide: 1958. First suppl.1957-68. 1971.

Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest. 1970. L78/4 - Dept. of Environment.

The Past history of Eltham College and its present position (an address). L25/7

VESTRY MINUTES and	4th Nov.1858 -	29th March 1894
	1894 -	1899
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES	Dec.1899 -	March 1905
	April 1905 -	August 1911
	Oct.1911 ?	Oct.1922
	Nov.1922 -	

CHISLEHURST & SIDCUP COUNCIL. Housing Committee Minutes 1953/4

KENT ARCHIVES: Log Books of Board School

PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANDREWS

Byers, Rev.Christopher. Notes.
Festival Booklet: 1800-1955 which includes brief history by Charles Folkard: "Merry Mottingham"

Commemorative Booklet: Mottingham Week 1973 June 16th - 24th

PARISH CHURCH OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, Mottingham

Scrapbook, kindly lent by the Rev.E.D.Allison

Parish magazine of St Edward the Confessor. May 1973: (Origin of road names, by Ian G.Murdock)

Catholic Church "Our Lady Help of Christians" - Scene 9 Spring '77

PARISH CHURCH OF ST ALBAN'S, COLDHARBOUR, Mottingham

Scrapbook kindly lent by the Rev. David Wilcox

Also Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich - Commemorative booklets on opening of the first house, Coldharbour Estate and opening of the Estate by Queen Mother - Local History Archives, Greenwich

ELTHAM COLLEGE

Scrapbook kindly lent by the Librarian, Eltham College Library, to which it was donated by the Senior Master (retired) Mr F.W.Scott.

The Glory of the sons. History of Eltham College - School for the sons of missionaries; edited by Clifford Witting. 1952

British Congregationalist. 28 March, 1912 (New School for the sons of Missionaries) see also Bromley Archives.

NEWSPAPERS

Kentish Times	December, 1953	Opening of new flats (Everest Court, etc.)
Eltham Times	April 2nd 1971	New plans for Homes site
	Sept. 8th 1972	Mottingham Community Centre
	June 1973	Song of a suburb

South East London Mercury	June 14th 1973	Mottingham House (H.G.Cheal)
Kentish Independent	June 28th 1973	A look at the past of Mottingham (Ian G.Murdock)
Mottingham News	June 1973	Geffery's Homes.
	" "	G.L.C. conversion
		Traffic Roundabout

ELTHAM SOCIETY

Looking at Eltham 1970 (Contains brief history of Mottinghom)

News Letter No. 41 Autumn '73. (Geffery's Homes)

RAILWAY

The Dartford Loop (B.S.Nunns) off-print. Originated from "History of Local Transport" exhibition at Hall Place Bexley - Bexley Library Museum Service: Local Studies

BUSES By courtesy of London Transport Executive. P.R.O.

MAPS

1596 A new description of Kent by the travayls of Phil Symonson, A Rochester gentleman.

1648 Johan Blaeu. Atlas Novus.

1741/5 Rocque Map

1778 The Hundred of Blackheath

1806 Sir John Cary. A new map of Kent divided into Lathes and Hundreds.

1815 3rd ed. of W.Faden's "Country 25 miles round London"

1820 Hasted's Map of Kent. (rather discredited)

1819/1820 Greenwood,C. Map of the County of Kent from an actual survey...

Ordnance Survey First O/S map of 1870
1897 2nd ed. and subsequent O/S editions to date.

1843 Tithe Map

INDEX

It might be of interest to know that the Mr. Fuller referred to in the item "Mottingham Redevelopment Scheme" and the amendment under "Mottingham Residents Association" is the same person. He lived at No. 10 Beaconsfield Road and was a force to be reckoned with, particularly if he caught anyone letting their dog foul the grass verge outside his house or if it was not cut correctly!!

I understood from Mrs. Parkinson that the correction in the original "Mottingham" was caused by a change in the Executive Committee just after it went to print.

When I joined the Executive Committee in 1982 Mr. Graham Jenkins was Chairman. He and his wife Rosemary lived in Court Farm Road and she was Secretary of the Mott. Horticultural Society. Rosemary's father was the Mr. H. Lynn referred to under the MRA item as a founder member and it is his gavel (though not awarded to him by MRA) which has now been passed to Liz Keable with Rosemary's wish it be handed on to any MRA Chairman.