



The Committee has agreed to the issue of a newsletter on behalf of the Society, probably on the basis of two issues per season during the period of the winter meetings. The first one is based on an article prepared by our librarian, Jack Gillett, about Tenterden 50 years ago. I feel sure that you will find the content of great interest, but we would appreciate your views about the future of such a newsletter that will contain articles on subjects relevant to Tenterden and District.

Alec Laurence  
Chairman

### REMEMBERING TENTERDEN IN 1952

I was nine in 1952 and was living with my parents and brother at a house, amongst a row of bungalows, called Everton [now Birchdown] in the Appledore Road. The house was called Everton when we moved there and on numerous occasions we were asked if it was named after the now Premier Division Football Club of that name. Opposite were two playing fields belonging to the Kent Education Committee. These two fields had been earmarked, since before the Second World War, as land for the new Secondary School which Tenterden had been trying to get built. However, in the late 1940s Homewood School was built on property that had belonged to Lady Drury but the School was using these two fields in Appledore Road for cricket, football and athletics. Today one of the fields is used for football [not by the school] while the other is neglected. Behind our home were fields on which the second phase of Shrubcote, a large Local Authority housing estate, was being built. Along the road towards Leigh Green, where William Judge Close is today, British Road Services had a depot employing a considerable work force. This was the transport business of Mr William E Judge that was nationalized by the 1945-50 Labour Government. From here fruit and vegetables grown by local farmers and individuals were sent overnight to be sold the next morning in the Borough Market, London. The business had mushroomed in the late forties but was beginning to wane with the Conservative Government coming to power in 1951.

There was still little traffic around on the roads. One could drive through Tenterden and park wherever one wished. There were no car parks in the town, except that the Embassy Cinema (now the Co-op Grocery) had a car park at the rear for its customers. However, on a fine summer Sunday there would be a stream of traffic making for the coast along the Appledore Road. Cars did not travel as fast as they do today – I think 50 miles per hour would have been regarded as quite a dangerous speed. On returning at night there would be a special constable on point duty at the junction of the Ashford and Beacon Oak Roads to stop traffic queues back to the crossroads on the Woodchurch road. The crossroads have always been a black spot for accidents, although I can never remember anybody being killed.

People say that Tenterden has not changed much – but they are thinking of the Greens and the wide main street. Inevitably the shops have changed – there were fewer antique and curio shops, more grocery and food stores. I can remember Bells Lane and the north side of the street at the west end of the town being fairly run down. Butchers shops that come to mind include Rogers' [now *Valentine's* at 106 High Street], Offen's [now *Wards Estate Agents* at 42 High Street – *the meat hooks are still outside*], Clarke's [at 13 Ashford Road] and Dewhurst's [still at 39 High Street]. Grocers included International [now *Bateman's* at 72 High Street], Vyes' [now *the Nationwide Building Society*], Stanger's [now *Webb's* at 45 High Street], Mitchell's [now *the Cycle Shop* at 7 Ashford Road], Co-op [now *Wine Rack* at 77 High Street], Willsher's [now *Boots the Chemist*], Boorman's [west end of the town], Burch's [at *Golden Square*], Field's [119 High Street] whilst Mercer's [now *Collectables* at 74 High Street], Charlie Hyland [now *part of Viyella* at 20 High Street] and Frank Clarke [run by his son-in-law, Mr Reg Velvick, at 4 and 6 Ashford Road] were greengrocers. Boorman and Co was a departmental store with branches in several of the neighbouring villages. Willsher's [run by Mr Harry Willsher] with Auctioneer and Agricultural Valuer Harry Judge [run by Mr Ernest Page] formed the front of the bottom floor of what was Eastwell House [which was demolished in 1964]. Mr Hugh Willsher, younger brother of Harry, ran a garden nursery business behind the shop with access between the shop and Fuggle's Garage [run by Mr Ray Smith and now *Holmes the Jeweller and Greyhound Framing*]. The garage showroom and petrol pumps are now Holmes' shop whilst the garage workshop is now Greyhound Framing. There were also petrol pumps at Bourne's Garage [run by Mr Robert Cruttenden and now *Laura Ashleys*] and at Milsted's, the Agricultural Engineers at the bottom of the town opposite the William Caxton Public House. Humberts and the Indian Restaurant are now part of Milsted's buildings although there were extensive workshops behind. The Maidstone & District Bus Company had a Depot on the present Waitrose site with access down Sayers' Lane and by East [*the new ladies' shop*]. Bookshelves, which closed recently, was the Bus Office with a waiting room – the buses would act as carriers of small parcels between the villages. Manor Row was the site of the Old Manor House, the home of Miss Emmie Thomson. Her brother, Wally, had a printing business in a little building at the side of the house. He, and his father before him, produced Thomson's Almanac between 1889 and 1940 [copies of which may be studied in the Local History Society

cupboards in the Library Local Studies Section]. Fifty years ago the house was becoming rather dilapidated and was soon to be pulled down. Visitors to the town were probably unaware of the house but remember the wonderful hedge of rambler roses in bloom during the summer. Since those days, Tenterden has lost two of its Public Houses – The New Inn, later the Ancient Borough [*now the Chinese Restaurant*], and the Cellars [*now Tull's Sports Shop and Tenterden in Print*]. The Cellars was well known and a never failing source of interest because of the many cards, letters, messages and mementoes which were pinned to the ceiling and walls. Thresher's was the living accommodation for the Cellars and had a hedged garden in front as did other properties in the town [e.g. *Chain House Dental Surgery and Potters, which were then both private houses*]. There were two state primary schools in Tenterden, the National School [*Church of England*] in Church Road and the British School in Ashford Road [*now semi-detached bungalows called the Old School House*]. The British School also used what is now Trinity Baptist Church and their playing field which was in between was built on to become Bennett's Court. Private education could be obtained at Westcliff School [*now Jenner's Electrical shop*] and Penderel School [*next door to the Unitarian Church and Manse*].

From an early age I was interested in football and cricket. The highlight of the football season was always the final of the Weald of Kent Charity Cup [*in fact the trophy is a shield presented in 1909 by Sir Thomas R Dewar, a member of a firm of Whisky Distillers*] held on the Recreation Ground on Good Friday afternoon. At this period of time the final was attracting around 3,000 spectators and the match was a tremendous spectacle. In 1952 Lydd, who always had a large following, won 4-2 against North Moderns from Ashford. In those days there was nothing on the Recreation Ground except for the football pitch, two grass lawn tennis courts and a pair of swings and a roundabout for children. Recreation Ground Road was half its present width and on the right hand side there were some old buildings used by Tenterden Borough Council for their equipment. These buildings were not very secure but in those days property was safer and if it did disappear the police probably knew where to look for it! In fact, there were quite a lot of policemen stationed in the town with an inspector in charge. They operated from the Police Station [*now Jailhouse Rock*] at the entrance to Church Road. May and September Fairs were still being held on the Recreation and Glebe Fields. People use to complain about the mess that the sheep and cattle made. However a good wet day usually helped to wash the mess away and Tenterden were soon playing football on the ground again. However, the washing of the kit must have been a bit smelly for some unfortunate souls!

Tenterden Football Club had a good season in 1951-52 with the first eleven being runners-up in the Ashford and District League Premier Division whilst the Second Eleven played in the Weald of Kent League. The First Eleven also reached three finals, winning two and losing one. Many people thought Lamberhurst would beat Tenterden in the final of the Hawkhurst Charity Cup played at The Oak and Ivy, Hawkhurst, but the underdogs won 4-0 with John Townshend [*a master at Homewood School and brother of Peter, who later had Winter's Mens Shop*], Toni Zanolia [*an Italian who was butler at Westwell*], Denis Boorman and Len Carey getting the goals. This was the first time that Tenterden had won the cup since before the war. After Mrs C.E. Gunther had presented the trophy and medals, Townshend, Tenterden's captain, was carried in triumph from the field. The final of the Ashford League Cup final against Charing at Essella Park, the then home of Ashford Football Club, was a marathon. Despite extra-time, the first match ended 1-1 with both sides scoring from penalties in extra-time. The replay took place the next night at Victoria Park, Ashford, where Tenterden fielding the same side won 4-0. A few days later a tired Tenterden were beaten 4-3 in the Rye Charity Cup in what was considered to be one of the best games seen at Rye in a final. Lydd opened the scoring within two minutes but Tenterden attacked strongly and Ken Weeks [*a local builder*] scored a beautiful goal to equalize. Soon afterwards he put Tenterden in the lead. After Lydd had drawn level Zanolia gave Tenterden a 3-2 lead at the interval. The second half was a ding-dong struggle with Lydd scrambling two goals in the last 12 minutes. The following 12 players [*there were no substitutes in those days*] represented Tenterden in these three cup finals:- Jim Gilham, Jim French, Denis Boorman, Len Carey, Ron Knight, Stan (Uncle) Head, Arthur Bourne, John Townshend, Toni Zanolia, Frank Bourne, Ken Weeks and Vic Ashcroft.

Tenterden were playing cricket on the same ground as they do today and had done so since 1887. The ground then belonged to Morghew Farm and the then owner Mr Michael Cox was President of the Club. John Townshend also captained Tenterden Cricket Club Saturday 1st XI and in 1952 he had a tremendous season topping the batting averages with 1047 runs at an average of 43.62. He was also awarded the "Tenterden Ball" for his performance against Ashford on 30 August when he took 8-48 and scored 50 not out. His 153 against the President's XI on August Bank Holiday Monday was the only century scored by a Tenterden player that season. Wickets did not favour the batsman as much as they do today and a score of over 50 by an individual was regarded as quite an achievement in local cricket. Sadly this was Townshend's last season at Tenterden as he moved away from the area.

Some of you will have travelled on the Kent and East Sussex Preservation Railway from Tenterden to Bodiam. In 1952, one could still travel by British Rail from Robertsbridge [Hastings-London line] to Headcorn [Ashford-London line] via Tenterden. In those days the top of Station Road was half its width of today as one-half was the Fire Station. The Fire Engine was really a large 'van', with the firemen sitting in the back, and a water tender hooked on behind. The siren to call the firemen out was situated in Danemore – in fact, it was the old air raid siren.