

GOLDEN TRIANGLE

THE HINTERLAND to the N. W.
of CASTLE STREET*A.F. (Budge) Adams*

This area, well known to me in the 1920's, on the N. and N.W. side of Castle Street beyond the river Dour but also including the east side Church Street, was one that was not destroyed during the war but where, to facilitate re-development, all buildings were razed to the ground in the years 1948 to 1950.

The hub or focal point of the area that, as the Roman harbour silted up became the flood plain of the river, was at the minor crossroads behind St Mary's Church from which radiated clockwise from the NE, Caroline Place, Stembrook, Church Street and Church Place. Caroline Place, until its demolition was an L-shaped cul-de-sac, its short leg leading out from the cross roads and the longer turning right, towards the river. It is very probable that Stembrook also was originally a cul-de-sac with the river at its blank end. The present upward slope at its eastern end, steeper before 1948/50, was formed, probably in 1835/6, to give access, at the level of the bridge, to Castle Street, the new thoroughfare then under construction. Stembrook Cottage, almost exactly where now is the front entrance to the derelict store, was built on the new slope.

Taking Stembrook first, on the left from Castle Street, where now are the gates into the car park for Martin Walter and Stembrook Court stood the "Ancient Druids" public house, the licence of which was transferred to the "Roman Quay". There were nine little houses on the SW side and a tunnel-like entrance leading to a row of houses in the rear, on

the site of the car park just mentioned. On the same side, in 1936/8, were two small general shops, one owned by Mr George Le Grys and the other, much better stocked, and very efficiently run, by the Walker family. Between them lived a Mr Walter Lyus and as a boy I often wondered—and still do so—why two men with such interesting names lived in adjoining houses and, indeed, where they came from. Wilson's shop was tucked in behind the last house in Church Street which, curving round from the bottom of Castle Street, finished half a metre into the road width of Stembrook. This appeared to be a rum piece of planning, though little planning, in the modern sense, was done in the early 18th century.

On the N.E. side, on the slope down from Castle Street, Stembrook Cottage, with a tiny garden in front, was next to the entrance to Brace's Mill and to Mr Bacon's tanyard. The mill had by the early 1930's already been demolished and then the tanyard closed down, the pits were filled in and the buildings were used by the Castle Concrete Co. for the production of concrete and breeze blocks. On the other side of the entrance, at right-angles to the road, was a row of four tiny cottages.

At the corner of Stembrook and the L-shaped Caroline Place, named after George II's Queen, was a workshop and stores for the Corporation Waterworks' distribution network. Next to the workshop was a yard used as a builder's store and beyond it, at the turn of the century, was "The Old Fountain" public house, in my time occupied as a private dwelling. Then were two or three small store-places before Caroline Place, with 21 houses on its longer leg, turned to the right.

At the angle in Caroline Place and facing the eastern end of St. Mary's Church

28 were, in my youth, two buildings used as a store, and "garage" for its barrows, by Partington's Kent Bill-posting Company, and I clearly recall seeing the men folding, on huge tables, 8-sheet Double Crown posters ready to be posted on the numerous sites in many East Kent towns.

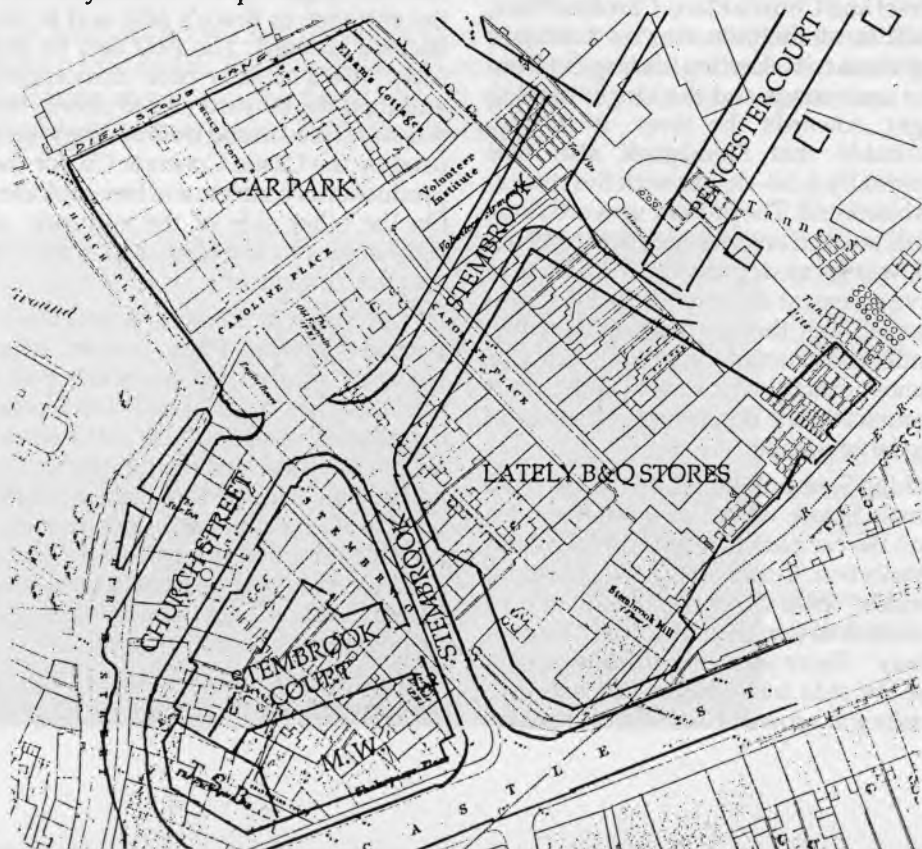
In the 80s or 90s of the last century the buildings housed the Gordon Boys Orphanage, conceived by Mr T. Blackman and later, still under his direction, moved to its more well-known place in St. James's Street at the northern corner of today's Moat House Hotel.

When, in 1900 and earlier, my father was a member of the Royal Cinque Ports Volunteers, - Queen Victoria's version of a territorial army, - Partington's two build-ings were respectively the Volunteer Institute and the Volunteer Armoury. When the premises were no

longer needed by the R.C.P. Vols., Mr E. Morgan, later the manager of Partington's, formed the Boy Messenger Brigade whose members would deliver notes and parcels anywhere in the town..My last memory of the places before the war whisked me away, was that Hedgecock Warner & Co. used them as furniture showrooms.

On the NW side of the short leg were two dwelling houses, several indifferent small store places, and a tall bill-boarding, possibly three storeys high, on the blank wall of a store and it was a source of perpetual amazement to me that the bill-posters could, with a bucket of paste, a long-handled brush and a huge shoulder bag in which the folded sheets of the 8-sheet posters were stowed in correct order, climb a tall ladder and do their tricky job at a height of eight or nine metres.

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This row of eight tall, unpretentious but pleasant houses faced St. Mary's Church and each had a forecourt with steps leading down to a semi-basement. At the end of Church Place, on the other side of Dieu Stone Lane and lying parallel with it, was Flashman's cabinet makers' and upholsterers' workshop and on the ground floor their undertaking department. Further to the N.E. along Dieu Stone Lane were Church Court and Elsam's Cottages, two more culs-de-sac, but regrettably there is not space to describe them.

Church Street was much narrower than it is now, but the buildings on the Cannon Street side are substantially the same as they were 80 years ago. From Castle Street to Stembrook on the other side of the street the Strict Baptists met where now is the corner of the T.S.B. and then there was a hairdresser, the Burlington

Inn, a private house, two shops, one dealing with wireless components and battery charging and the other a fish and chip shop. Then followed two more private houses and Farley-Woodhams's Central Dairy, the biggest private dairy in the town. A house or two came next and then the Star Inn, whose proprietor was, early in this century, the enormous Mr-Longley who weighed, I believe I am correct, 302 kilos!, 48 stone. It is said that to help him get into bed he had a derrick installed, with double-sheaved blocks and a leather sling. His wife could then easily hoist him up and, presumably, drop him in the appointed spot!. I have mislaid my photograph of Mr Longley but many others in this town have a copy.

(cont)

Correction; In the 1990 column of the occupation list in the previous issue at No. 40 please read "Vegetarian Restaurant." (Mr Hatley was the occupier in 1920.)

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