

Memories of Dover

A Nostalgic Personal Perambulation.

Part Seven - Recollections Off the Main Street – Castle Street

Peter Sherred

A street deserving of attention in my perambulations is Castle Street. Some people live on or work (or have worked) in Castle Street and, therefore, may have good recollection of the post-war nature of the Street. What follows is only what I can recall from a personal perspective, so any errors or omissions are entirely down to me. Where exactly does Castle Street start in conjunction with Castle Hill Road? Ashen Tree Lane is the answer and there were (and are) three impressive buildings between there and Eastbrook Place but, for the purposes of this article, Castle Street runs between Eastbrook Place and King Street (Market Square)!

Growing up in the 1950s I recall Castle Street as being a genteel place 'inhabited' only by important business and professional people – where for example accountants and solicitors were to be found. Castle Street was two-way for road traffic for many years after the war and, guessing now, I think the street's one-way system came into being in the late 70s or 80s. Castle Street has its own Society, one of the prime movers and shakers of which has been Dover Society member Adeline Reidy appointed in recent years as an Honorary Freeman of the Town and who is a member of Inner Wheel. Addy and I go back decades in service to our town having both been very active in the Chamber of Commerce and other arenas back in the 80s and 90s (so last century). I know if I record anything wrongly Addy will probably put me right!

Walking down the right-hand side of Castle

Street from the traffic lights at the junction with Eastbrook Place on the corner is a shop frontage that decades ago was the office of Ronald E Handley a surveyor and estate agent. Adjoining were the offices of Lewis and Pain (Reginald and Roger Pain if my memory serves me well) a firm of solicitors and Commissioners for Oaths and Notaries Public where Society member, John Morgan PHF, first started work in 1963. A little further down one came across Bradley, Chitty and Scorer solicitors where the likes of John Powell, Robert Riddle and Barney Lock practised. Robert Riddle is in retirement while John Powell and Barney Lock are both deceased. Also, on this side of the road was another solicitors' firm called Aldington and Davies which came to a sticky end when both solicitors were struck off by the Law Society. Oh dear! Later another firm called Hatfields appeared on the scene. Prominent on this side of Castle Street was James B Terson estate agency and names like George Norman, Jeremy Barford, Chris Burnham, Rodney Galliers and Simon Crowley (among others) spring to mind. The firm still operates alongside the imposing former residence of one of the founders.

Among the many buildings and various uses on this side of the street, both before and after the Terson buildings, there was a chiropodist and masseur called Cyril Eades. I remember Cyril very well. I think I am right in saying he was the masseur and physio for Dover Athletic Football Club. My memory is now running riot, remembering the Dover and Folkestone

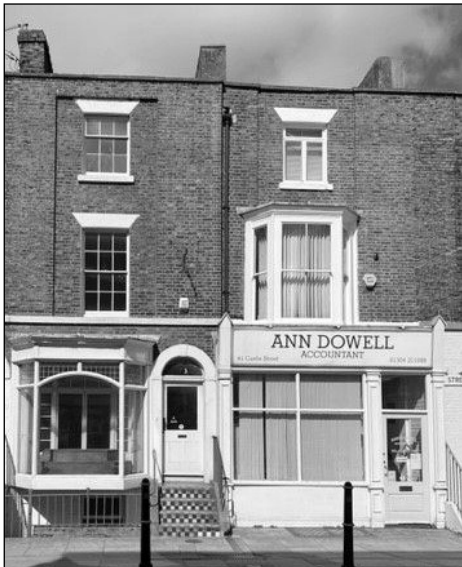
Building Society offices which started life above Tersons before moving into its own premises further down the street, a vet (named John Douch?), Adams printers, and Wrights electrical contractors whose shop front showed no concession to modernity, but Edward knew his electrics! Beside Wright's property, I am advised, by a former school colleague Elizabeth Disdale, was a shop (currently Ann Dowell accountant) run by her father in the 1950s called Castle Candies and the family lived above.

The sweet shop was immediately opposite Russell Street. Elizabeth (né Chambers) gave her name to the coffee bar that was once located in the Market Square, and from which emanated on a regular basis the aroma of roasted coffee beans.

Rolf Hair fashion salon now springs to mind in Castle Street as does a tea shop bordering the Dour but I am sure I have forgotten others. Between the River Dour

and Stembrook the Martin Walter Motor showroom existed. Between Stembrook and Church Street was a vacant space previously occupied by large buildings which had the unenviable record I believe of being demolished by the last shell of World War Two to fall in Dover – here in Castle Street. Igglesden and Graves formed the corner property with Market Square and Church Street and now called The Market Square Kitchen.

Wandering down the left-hand side of Castle Street from Eastbrook Place/Woolcomber Street I recall a garage or car showroom on the corner - it may have been Southern Autos – where I am reliably told, by my friend Reg Hoare, Monte Carlo Rally cars used to congregate before attending the Rally (the site was developed for the current flats found at this location and prior to that a Lidl store). Walking on, Knocker, Elwin and Lambert (Solicitors) had offices here where I believe Peter Pigott practised before he went elsewhere and ended his professional career in his own firm in Victoria Crescent. Stilwell and Harby, solicitors, also had an office nearby and Dudley Marsh Son and Partners, architects, had an office then came Mowll & Mowll, more solicitors! Their offices went round the corner into Russell Street. On the opposite corner of Russell Street was a printer and stationers shop W E Giraud but probably better known latterly as Denis Weaver. Between there and Dolphin Passage there were several shops or buildings some four or five having rather nice classic multi-paned glass bay windows on the ground floor. I recall The Old Curiosity Shop, an antiques dealership run by the Gibbs family. I cannot recall what was located where my favourite fish and chip shop is currently, but is my memory playing tricks with me if I suggest a chemist existed where Blakes restaurant now operates? Things then became very



Castle Street

commercial as opposed to professional because where the large Bridal Boutique wedding dress shop is now was once something to do with the motor trade. Henleys' name springs to mind – possibly an accessories shop? I think Leney's Brewery had an outlet here too before one reached the large corner building, which was Hawkesfield, later Corralls, coal merchants. The Old Brewery Building currently fronts onto Dolphin Passage.

Crossing Dolphin Passage there was, I think, another garage and then the Granada (or ABC) Cinema. In the 1960s all the top bands played here such as Dave Berry, Herman's Hermits, Del Shannon, The Shadows and Cliff Richard, among others. Flashman's furniture shop and salesroom brought the Street into the Market Square where there was something of a 'pinch point' as Castle Street narrowed significantly.

If you have stayed with me thus far you may know many changes have affected names I have mentioned. The solicitors' firms Lewis and Pain, Bradley Chitty and Scorer and Knocker Elwin and Lambert merged in 1968 to become Knocker Bradley and Pain solicitors (and then,

subsequently, Bradleys) which operated in the offices of Bradley, Chitty & Scorer. The firm is now located in Maison Dieu Road adjoining Dieu Stone Lane. Mowll & Mowll left the Street and re-located in Whitfield nearby to the pub The Rock Rose while Stilwell & Harby relocated to Maison Dieu Road adjoining the St Mary's School playing fields (site of the former 'new' St James's Church). On the right-hand side of Castle Street, the former Martin Walter site on the Castle side of Stembrook was most recently a carpet shop and the Co-Innovation building recently vacated before demolition. The vacant site caused by the last shell was developed to provide Martin Walter with new premises for their Austin cars at ground level and flats above. The ground floor is currently a local authority unit called The Gateway.

On the left-hand side Hawkesfield Coal Merchant premises are now an estate agency, Thomas & Partners and the Leney's Brewery is no more – now forming part of the St James' development. Between Dolphin Passage and Market Square all the buildings, including the cinema and Flashmans, were demolished and the 'pinch point' removed.

The cinema site remains vacant but beyond that a new shop with flats above (Craigton House) was built and the road widened with the pavement straightened at the junction with Market Square. The shop was 'Pricerite' and currently is a beds and sofas shop plus a British Heart Foundation outlet.

Castle Street, a Conservation Area, continues to be an interesting classic Street in many ways, constantly evolving as businesses move elsewhere or move in and redevelopment has taken place. We can be sure the Castle Street Society monitors changes constantly!



Pinch Point Castle Street to Market Square