

Schwitzer Times

"All the news worth reading"

Wednesday, 25th December 2024

Weather forecast: Sunny or Snowy

Married!

Edward & Laura tie knot
in Maidenhead Town Hall

Party in Surrey Hills



Wedding pictures & video on pages 5, 12 & 13.

What we learned in 2024

- Britain is divided, its tribes inhabit parallel universes. How else do you explain *Private Eye* and *Computer Weekly* reporting on the Horizon scandal (page 4) for decades, yet when ITV do a dramatisation it's headline shock horror from an outraged and astonished public?
- Donald Tusk famously told us not to. But our family has been cherry-picking for 150 years (story, page 20).
- Many Americans are not interested in democracy. This shocks those who believe democracy is the only successful way of managing human society - a complacency born of the longevity of the Greek and Roman republics and democracy's prevalence today in Western Europe. But a wider scan of global history offers numerous counter-examples. How did we get here? Voter well-being is key, whether caused by divisive economic policies or perceptions from social media.
- I discovered Morley's Miracle (back page). Definitely in the "weird & wonderful" category, the fallout from this Victorian-era discovery continued to recent times, with proofs by two mathematicians known to me (I was taught first year pure maths by Béla Bollobás, and attended talks by the great John Conway) making the connection personal. That most proofs work backwards, by confirming the result, makes the theorem even more strange. The difficulty to reach the result by forward

Technology for Dummies

The Telephone

Imagine a very, very long cat. So long that when you pull its tail in London, its head meows in Manchester. A telephone works in exactly the same way, except there is no cat.

deduction seems to be a consequence of the inability to orientate any part of the smaller triangle until all vertices of the original triangle are considered: a further clue as to why this remarkably simple theorem lay undiscovered for so long.

- We discovered what happened to our Phipps relatives in Australia and New Zealand, and now have a family tree with 30 direct descendants of Sarah Phipps, who emigrated to New Zealand in 1874. One of these new NZ cousins had the family tree professionally researched, revealing our Phipps ancestors back another 3 generations to the mid-1700s. Meanwhile we can see the grave on street view of Sarah's brother Harry Phipps and his wife Ann Eliza, who emigrated to Australia at the same time, but appear to have had no surviving family, their elaborate Victorian tombstone standing alone in Dogwood Cemetery, a bushland clearing 340km inland from Brisbane. Full story, page 14.



Harry Phipps's last resting place. To see this grave on street view, search "Dogwood Cemetery, Miles, Queensland" in Google Maps

Welcome to a bumper **Schwitzer Times**. We hope you like the new retro compact broadsheet format, enabling us to send electronically where necessary.

There's lots of Family History this year, all about Grandpa Harry Pettet's ancestors. Harry dreamed of becoming a pharmacist - against his parents' wishes - and studied hard to achieve his dream. In April I met Sebastian James, the outgoing CEO of Boots, at a talk about the challenges facing the company,

and, showing him Harry's certificate of fifty years service (1909-1959), I was chuffed when he asked to photograph it for his own records. Of course Harry's career choice also saved him from the misery and slaughter that was WW1. These articles are dedicated to the memory of our Grandpa.

I make no apology for including politics and social comment. Many of today's issues weigh on us all in part because they are inadequately addressed, with too much of

our media being superficial and sycophantic. Some straight talking - and derision where due - is surely welcome, and at the least cathartic.

An overriding theme is the continuous nature of history. I may reference Euclid, King Arthur, and our seventeenth century ancestors, but the history we all made in 2024 is no less important.

Enjoy! And let's all seize 2025!

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Time!

2024 was a momentous year for British politics, when we finally called time on Government by Gaslight. An unprecedented number of former ministers were voted out on 4th July (see *'Deep-Cleaned'* on back page). The relief the next day was palpable, with people smiling and greeting you in the street. The white witch was dead, 14 years of winter had ended, Narnia could breathe again.

Ejected. All (bar one) of the schemers and peddlers of Britain's unhappy isolation were now banished. Yet their legacy still afflicts us (see *'Long Brexit'* page 6). For many the turning point was Partygate (page 7), the incontrovertible evidence that those in government were not acting in the best interests of the country. On 17th July Charles III read out Starmer's "To Do" list (otherwise known as the State Opening of

Parliament). And boy, what a list, touching every area of activity in every corner of the nation. Somebody cares! Here finally were the things that need doing! And government was actually going to try and address them!! Common sense the order of the day, boring the new normal. But what a dramatic change in style after all that weaponisation of immigration and the interminable diet of wedge issues.



In June, Charlie & Yasmin visited Greece, combining work & pleasure, Yasmin doing the makeup for a friend's wedding in Athens.

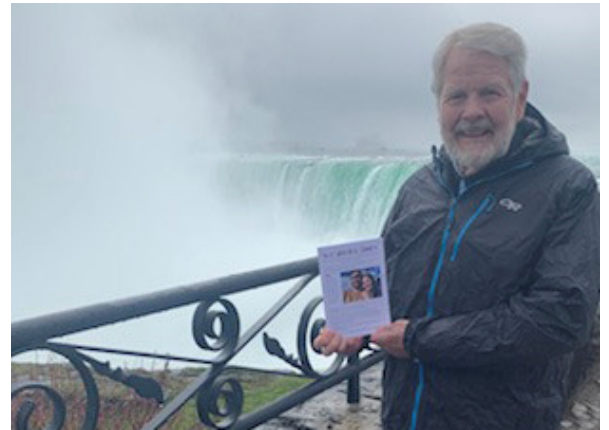
Refreshes Parts Lesser Publications Simply Cannot Reach



The **Schwitzer Times** continues to enjoy global circulation, and we welcome photos of readers wherever they may be.

Here are **Mary** and **Doug** enjoying last year's edition at the **Niagara Falls**.

Overleaf **Mike** made sure he had something interesting to read while visiting **Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming**.



Nationality News

Now I Really Am European

Having applied to the Slovak embassy in February 2023 with a pile of our father's pre-war documents and endless forms, I was delighted to be accepted this year as a Slovak citizen, under their Citizenship by Descent program.

As children we were very aware of our father's Czechoslovak background, but with so few of his close relatives surviving, and the difficulties of travel behind the iron curtain before the fall of the Berlin Wall, our contact with, and understanding of, his part of the world was never very strong. So it's wonderful to now have the connection of citizenship. And of course a Schengen passport is very handy for travel in Europe!



THE NEXT GENERATION



Birthday Boy. Neve (6) with her brother Leo on his second birthday, at their home in Farnborough.



Birthday Girl. Sofia on her fifth birthday practising for the Grand Prix.



Grannie Laura reading to Clara (almost 4) and Audrey (18 months).

Refreshes Parts Others Can't Reach *(continued)*

Scandal-Ridden Britain

Now it's the Sub-Postmasters

Like clockwork, another scandal hit the headlines in January, this time the wrongful accusation of nearly a thousand sub-postmasters for theft. Like other recent scandals - Windrush, the Grenfell Tower tragedy and ensuing cladding debacle, the Hillsborough cover-up, the infected blood scandal - it played out in slow motion, with a long history followed by a long-running enquiry; there are victims who died or lost everything; and almost no one is held to account.

Suspicious Usually Correct

Such a large number of wrongful accusations cannot happen by chance, there's a pattern that can only be explained by there being "factors at play" - and the public rightly sense that. The media saw 40% of sub-postmasters were South Asian, but couldn't quite put their finger on how racism played a part. The enquiry pored over the detail, but missed the big picture, and (surprise, surprise) became overwhelmed by the multiplicity of issues, struggling to align findings with remit. The truth is that these scandals hold a mirror to British society, and what you see is truly shocking.

The Complete Theory of Total Incompetence

All these scandals begin with basic errors that reflect incompetence and failure of effective oversight. In the case of the sub-postmasters, the mistake was to put live a Horizon system that could not have been properly tested. That reflects failure on the part of Fujitsu - in the U.K. effectively the former ICL (never feted for systems implementation excellence) following its 1990 takeover - to conduct proper

acceptance testing, and within the Post Office to conduct effective User Acceptance Testing. Someone somewhere knows a lot more about the software failures. It could be a few lines of incorrect code, combined with inadequate (or missing) reconciliation reporting.

Prejudice

All the scandals involve deep prejudice, usually not overt, whether class prejudice or racism. In the case of the Post Office, the sub-postmasters were simply not believed, despite most of them having exemplary records. In fact they were virtually despised as a group, with management more interested in developing larger kiosks within supermarkets. This despite the local post office being an absolutely key part of Royal Mail's business (and village post offices being viewed by the public as the "last stand of rural Britain"), increasingly loaded up with services the state or private sector does not want to have to offer direct, including passports, driving licences and banking. I have no doubt the ethnicity of many of the sub-postmasters *contributed* to the way they were viewed as a group by post office management.

Closing Ranks

The next element of these scandals is management failure. The responsible management are made aware of the problem, but do not take effective action. The issues here are competence, chasing "profit at any cost", failure to see the humanity of the victims, and taking the easy option. In the case of the sub-postmasters, Royal Mail was finally making a profit. With the responsible

management failing to act, precedents are set, the organisation accepts the victims are to blame, so the problems multiply and the crisis deepens.

A further element in these scandals is the collusion of professionals, in this case the legal profession. They toe the management line of their client, take the easy option, preferring to develop what for them is an income stream over being fair and meticulous in their role in delivering justice. Fujitsu management also colluded: the problems are reportedly fixed, so someone knew exactly what they were. A simple statement from Fujitsu's lawyers that previously reported financial discrepancies were very likely to have been errors would have undermined every case and immediately ended the misery.

What Must Change?

Of all the above problems, the management failings are probably key, in that they allow the initial errors to multiply, and set a pattern. We need to re-evaluate the role of management across corporate Britain and get back to 10% upward reporting and 90% downward oversight and support.

But that's not all. In addition to issues of competence, the failures reflect deep prejudices and the divided nature of British society and it is those we must collectively address if we are to put a stop to these scandals.

Finally, public enquiries cannot have a complicated remit that "pre-deflects" findings. Once handed a topic, they must be free to follow the issues and free to lambast all the guilty parties and wrong practices, much as I have tried to do here.

Edward & Laura's Wedding (July)



Thames Path Walks

“Why nothing about London?”, I get from some of you, so here is one of our favourite walks (just scan the QR code!), the circuit between Hammersmith & Barnes Bridges, on a breezy April morning, complete with Sunday rowers, riverside pubs, spring tide flooding at Chiswick – and an elusive swan courtship!



Things They Don't Teach You Rule of Twelfths

As many natural things like tides and the length of the day vary like a sine wave, this rule is actually rather useful, and is apparently widely used. If you divide the period from low to high into six equal periods, the Rule of Twelfths says that the gains in each period are in the ratio 1 : 2 : 3 : 3 : 2 : 1. The rule works brilliantly with both tides and length of day, because there are precisely six hours between low and high tide, and six months between shortest and longest day.

So for example, if a harbour has a 12 metre tidal drop, the rule says that the sea will rise 1m in the first hour after low tide, 2m in the next hour, 3m in the next, then 3m, 2m, and 1m in successive hours up to the high tide. Or for length of day, if a certain location has 8 hours of daylight at the winter solstice and 17 hours at the summer solstice (a 9 hour difference, so the twelfth parts are each 45 minutes), then the day will lengthen by 45 minutes in the first month after the winter solstice (i.e. during January), by 90 minutes in February, by 2h15m in March, by 2h15m again in April, by 90 minutes in May, and then by 45 minutes in June up to the summer solstice.

Is the rule accurate? Cosine 30° is 0.8660, which the rule approximates by $5/6$ or 0.8333, so the rule overestimates the smallest gains in the first and last periods by 24% (in our example, the 1m sea level rise in the first and last hour should only be 80cm), however in terms of the total tidal drop that error is just 1.6%, so it's not bad. Meanwhile cosine 60° is exactly 0.5, for which the rule gives $3/6$ so is actually spot on for the middle intervals!

A more accurate refinement needs a 'Rule of Sixtieths' using ratios 4 : 11 : 15 : 15 : 11 : 4. This approximates cosine 30° by $13/15$ or 0.8667 and so would get the tide heights in our example within 1cm.

Wedding Centenary

Joan's parents, Harry Pettet & Eunice Moss, were married in Cressing, Essex, a century ago, in June 1924. Scan the QR codes for their wedding photo and the report in the Essex Chronicle.

Wedding Photo



Essex Chronicle



By pure coincidence, Edward & Laura's wedding in July was a century and a month after Edward's great-grandparents' wedding. Not only that, but Edward was born a century and a month after his great-grandfather was in 1892! How spooky is that?! And the intervening generations are all a third of a century: Harry had Joan at 33, Joan had William at 33, and William had Edward at 33, and the sum, with the odd months, adds up to a century and a month!

Boltholes Abroad Lake Orta

We managed to get to the lake several times this year, scan the QR codes to see what William got up to in January, February and June.

A Winter Walk



San Giulio Day 2024



Milan and a 4th
Century Cage Cup



Favourite Walks with
Co, Astrid & Max



Het Bloemencorso (The Flower Parade)

We spent a few days in Holland in April, scan the QR codes to see what we saw.

Den Haag & the
Flower Parade 5m44



A quick tour
of Haarlem 1m55



Health & Well-Being

Long Brexit Finally Recognised

Symptoms 'more wide-ranging and longer lasting' than previously thought

Scientists now accept that seemingly unrelated issues including weakened national finances, widespread malaise in industry, an apparently comatose media, and ineffective geopolitical engagement, are all symptoms of Long Brexit, and that the effects could persist for up to half a century if left untreated.

'Lack of Well-Being' among Citizens

Under Long Brexit, a doubling down of policies frequently occurs, typically as a reaction to any scrutiny, sometimes repeatedly. Policies also have a tendency to explode then disappear without trace, examples earlier this year being standards divergence, re-introduction of imperial measures, and the US Trade Agreement.

Politicians vulnerable to 'debilitating brain fog' causing 'zombie-like repetitive speech'

Long Brexit is known to induce hallucinations leaving some ministers convinced they could see Brexit Benefits everywhere. It is also now thought to be behind the heightened spike in inflation last year, higher interest rates, chronically weak productivity, turmoil in the immigration system caused by the sudden loss of the European workforce, and the wave of strikes that hit railways, hospitals and other services. Long Brexit is also known to cause short sightedness, including sudden cancellation of major infrastructure projects.

Damages Parts Ordinary Policies Leave Intact

Exactly how Long Brexit damages the nation is still poorly understood. In the previous government, it's believed otherwise healthy ministries quickly succumbed to OCPD (Obsessive-Compulsive Policy Disorder) that effectively paralysed civil servants from addressing genuine problems.

The search for a remedy continues.

New Partygate Picture Discovered

Writing on the Wall for Tories since Downing Street events



Rembrandt's Vision. Discovered in Rishi Sunak's attic after the election, art experts now believe this intriguing painting, at first thought to depict the biblical story of Belshazzar's Feast as recounted in Chapter 5 of the Book of Daniel, is actually Rembrandt's prescient vision of Partygate. The remarkable scene, painted around 1638, depicts drunken staff partying during lockdown with cheap booze from Waitrose, just as they are startled by an ominous warning, the so called 'writing on the wall'. The upturned drinking vessels,

general debauchery and defilement of government property stolen from a nearby temple remind you of the Old Testament story, but the presence of a ministerial red box in the shadows on the table, uncovered during recent cleaning, means this can only be Partygate.

Writing on the Wall. There has been much speculation over the inscription, which is generally assumed to be in an old Aramaic dialect, and should be read in columns from right to left. The latest translation is as follows.

MENE - Brexit was a very stupid idea, that has divided the country and wrecked the economy

MENE - Brexit was a very stupid idea, that has divided the country and wrecked the economy

TEKEL - The Tory Party has been found wanting, and its days are numbered

UPHARSIN - You will be annihilated at the next General Election

Riviera 2024: A Video Diary

In the second half of May, William and David cycled 480km from Beaulieu-sur-Mer to Lake Orta in nine cycling days, done as three lots of three days with a rest day in between. This was my third time cycling the Riviera, after trips in 1980 (Ste. Maxime to Munich) and 1989 (Turin to Ste. Maxime).



Getting there. To get to our start point we took five trains, staying overnight in Cuneo. Sunday was a glorious morning, we watched as Cuneo's large baroque central square was used to launch two hot air balloons. We got off the train at Tenda (in France) and cycled down the beautiful and dramatic Vallée de la Roya (which I had made a mental note of in 1989 to revisit!) back into Italy, to pick up the coast train from Ventimiglia to Beaulieu.



Fort de la Revère. In Beaulieu-sur-Mer we did a training ride up to this Fort at 700m - above the *Grande Corniche* - with the most fantastic view, with David's nephew Alex as guide. Bottom left, here's David on the way down, turning off the *Moyenne Corniche*.

Our cycle route took us along the coast through Monaco, with overnight stops in San Remo, Alassio and Noli. The next leg continued through Savona, staying in Arenzano, half way up the Passo dei Giovi (472m) and in Tortona. For the final leg we stayed in Pavia, and at Cuggiono right on the Naviglio.



Monaco. On our first day of the trip proper, the side barriers were already up in Monte-Carlo for the forthcoming Grand Prix. After cycling over the starting grid in front of the port we continued on the Formula 1 circuit up the hill in front of Hotel Hermitage. As I snapped a couple of pics in front of the Casino, the Monegasque law enforcement closed in telling us we weren't allowed to cycle on the marble-surfaced *Place du Casino* - and he could fine us - so acting a bit dumb we did a Grand Prix start and were soon well away. What the policeman didn't know was that it was actually a second offence: 44 years earlier a colleague had told a 21 year old Englishman to put his shirt back on as he cycled on the exact same spot.



New Cycle Path. We found a short section of cycle path in Ventimiglia (red tarmac) and later a paved section into Arenzano. But the longest and best stretch is the new cycle path at San Remo, which runs for 30km on the old railway line, from Ospedaletti to Diano Marino, all beautifully level, with stunning sea views, an excellent surface, markings to keep pedestrians to one side, and kilometers of fragrant jasmine and oleander at the side. One tunnel even had piped music, another the names of famous winners of the Giro d'Italia hanging from the roof. This is what cycle heaven looks like!



Noli. We stayed 2 nights in this fishing village, our first rest day after 3 days cycling. Still a lovely spot, the half-board arrangement we enjoyed many years ago with Edward & Yasmin has all but disappeared, there are now very few hotels, most visitors staying like ourselves in privately rented apartments. On the rest day, I walked up the steep path to the fort with a lovely view of the village, and came down via the cliff path.



Savona. On our fourth cycling day we set off from Noli and passed through Spotorno and Vado Ligure before coming to this port. We spotted from some way off a ship's funnel poking incongruously above the buildings, and soon came in full view of the monster *Costa Pacifica*, the 3rd of the five cruise ships in the *Costa Concordia* series, its 17 decks built to carry 5000 people. Our day continued through Albisola, Celle Ligure, Varazze and Cogoleto, before we picked up a section of cycle path (again on the former railway) into Arenzano.



Tortona. After descending the long & winding road with the *Scrivia*, where every town has the suffix *Scrivia* just in case you forget which valley you're in, we reached Tortona, our second rest day, staying in a renovated *seteria* (silk factory) in the old centre. Like so many Italian towns, the pedestrianised centre is historic but generally well maintained, and after about 4pm is well frequented by local people out to shop, stroll and chat - no doubt as they have been doing for centuries.



Via Aurelia and Passo dei Giovi. We followed the coast road, known universally as the Aurelia (as far as the Italians are concerned it is *still* the Roman road), into the outskirts of Genova before turning up the valley of the *Polcevera*. At first industrial, the valley gradually got more rural. After Pontedecimo we began the climb up to the pass (472m) - less a fifth the height of the pass we did three years ago, but still hard work for a couple of cyclists with combined age of over 140!



Po, Pavia & Paddies. We reached Pavia by way of smaller roads (a few turned out to be unsurfaced) and partly on the main road (the Roman *Via Emilia*), crossing both the Po and the Ticino, both of which are huge at this point. On our penultimate day, we took a quiet road from Pavia to the start of the Naviglio, with this view over the flooded rice paddies in the wide flood plain of the Ticino. Later that morning the clear skies gave way to light rain - the only rainy day we had, despite terrible forecasts and very wet conditions in much of Europe.



Naviglio Grande. The Naviglio's superb cycle path was our route for the last two days. Our final day was Saturday, a beautiful clear morning after the rain, the cycle path was very busy, the birds twittered in the trees along the Naviglio. At Turbigo we saw the snow-covered Monte Rosa straight ahead, larger than normal like a rising Harvest Moon. Note these canals are very old: work began in 1157, and were navigable to Milan by 1272; later Leonardo da Vinci helped figure out how to make the locks work.



Panperduto is the start of the canals, where sluices control the water taken from a massive side pool of the Ticino. We stopped for coffee at the café (where I had sheltered from a violent hail storm in July 2023, the *signora* remembered it well!). After the Naviglio, we followed the road on the Lombard bank of the Ticino, not far from Malpensa. (Confusingly, this river, which drains Lake Maggiore, has the same name as that in Switzerland flowing *into* the lake!). Soon we got our first view of Sesto Calende with the Alps as backdrop - a view that reminds you of Lake Town in *Lord of the Rings*! Sesto has the historic box girder bridge (road+rail) over the Ticino, where water flows out of Lake Maggiore. That just left some 300m of climb up to Vaccigolo!

Exploring the Oxford Canal

Braunston Tunnel. In September, William & Chris spent eight days on the canals, taking *Catharina* from her marina near Daventry (Northamptonshire) south to join the Grand Union west through the Braunston tunnel. This historic tunnel opened in 1796 and is over a mile long, with an awkward S-bend in the middle owing to a measurement error 228 years ago. You'll see one of the two round brick ventilation shafts in the video (*just scan the QR code!*), which probably provided access during construction and were no doubt a godsend when canal boats were steam powered: the entire tunnel roof still has a layer of two-centuries-old soot!

Historic Heritage. For those not aware, Britain's extensive canal network was a key part of the industrial revolution, enabling coal, cotton and heavy goods to be transported around the country before the rail network had been developed. That history is part of their charm, with frequent canal side pubs (we ate in them on four evenings) proudly displaying their canal heritage. The canals were built to harness natural inflows of water from rivers and streams, with the level of each section set by run-offs (small weirs), so are theoretically self-sufficient for water, but the locks, banks and towpath require regular maintenance, and the canals need periodic dredging. With canal traffic now entirely for leisure, it's a miracle that so much of the network is still operational, but we sensed that the authority (now called the Canal & River Trust) is struggling to keep up with what needs doing.



Oxford Canal. Our route had 38 locks in each direction, all manually operated (there's good camaraderie among canal-goers, you typically share the work with others), plus a number of lift bridges (a few of which like in Banbury town centre are hydraulic). Our first overnight stop was at Napton (Warwickshire). The next morning we climbed a flight of six locks travelling south on the Oxford Canal. There's then a long section following the contours of the hills: this was done to minimise the need for cuttings, embankments and locks: the canal twists and turns crazily but is without locks. We then descended a flight of locks down to Cropredy (Oxfordshire), our next overnight stop. The next day took us through Banbury town centre with a modern development centred on the canal. We passed under the busy M40 three times (see *video*), and stayed overnight at Aynho Wharf. We also passed through the HS2 works (see *video*).

River Cherwell. The Oxford Canal then closely follows the River Cherwell, and is fed by it. In fact in two sections, the canal is the River Cherwell, which requires bigger weirs to take the flow away at the end of the "coincident" sections, creating a risk of stronger currents during heavy rain (hence the electronic warning board in the video). The river sections are particularly beautiful. Having already turned the boat around (you can only do this at certain places, so called "winding holes", canal boats are too long to turn in ordinary sections of the canal and cannot go in reverse for any distance), we moored overnight on the Cherwell, near Shipton-on-Cherwell. The picture (see *more in video*) was taken soon after dawn on Sunday 15th. Our return route was the same.

+ + + more of '24 + + + more of '24 + + +



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Edward & Laura's Wedding (August)



Schwitzers at Edward & Laura's Wedding. From left: Charlie & Yasmin with Ciccia, Steven, Gemma, Marc with Neve (standing) and Leo (in his arms), Laura (bride) & Edward (groom), Pardis & William, Roman & Susan, Mike & Laura, John, Veronika & Terry. In front, from left: Sofia, Anna, Clara, Hendrickje with Audrey. We are of course missing Junko, Rosemary, Peter & Casper, and Emma, who couldn't be there.

Foreign Invasions

Kentish Town Pub Renamed

Not since the Norman Invasion of 1066 has a Foreign Invader embedded itself so quickly and so pervasively in Britain

Infiltration 'similar to that used by Russia' in Crimea in 2014

Avid readers of the **Schwitzer Times** will recall our 2019 report of frequent sightings of parakeets on Hampstead Heath. These "little green men" were last seen on the Crimean peninsular, with no identifying marks other than a red ring around the neck, when suspicions were raised by their aggressive behaviour towards the local population.

In 2020 we brought you an update that parakeets had already taken over large swathes of the capital, and last year we reported how native songbirds were under extreme pressure from parakeets acting in collusion with members of the crow family. Now this year we bring you breaking news that parakeets have started taking over the Great British Pub.

It's clear the South-East is now all but lost. But we fear this is just a bridge-head, and the rest of the British Isles will be next.





Five of seven Schwitzer cousins, at Edward & Laura's wedding in August. *From left: Sofia, Clara, Neve, Anna and Leo.*

Social Commentary

Have You Been Cancelled Recently?

Irony Lurks just as Millennials Come of Age

That look straight through you. One word answers. The stare in the tube at your grey hair (it's real!). Flat, expressionless conversation. Look the other way and they've wandered away. Yes, you've been cancelled!

You're not irrelevant, it's just that you can't thumb-type dual-screening fast-scrolling text. They don't need your lecture, but you need their advice. In any case, they're in charge of traditions now (surely that's how they've always been?).

Discrimination is out (except when it comes to age or opinions). People are not binary, but history and politics are: there were only goodies & baddies in the past, there are only goodies & baddies today. It's all your lot's fault anyway!

Diversity is welcomed (except when it comes to age or opinions). You're not thick, it's just that you're a burden on the state. And it's definitely your lot that messed it up, they certainly didn't. How could they, when we promised them a fun-packed problem-free world?

Family History

Escaping The Long Depression: New Lives Down Under

Our Phipps and Pettet ancestors came from the village of Borden in Kent, just outside Sittingbourne. Henry Phipps, one of twins boys born in Ramsgate in 1812 to a 20 year old single mum, dug wells for a living according to our grandfather - not a great occupation - though he described himself as agricultural labourer for the 1851 and 1871 censuses, and as brickfield labourer for the 1861 census. Whatever he did, he and his wife Sarah produced 12 children: 3 boys and 9 girls. They were a poor family: two of the sons, Edwin (#1) and Frederick (#10) identified as labourer at the time of marriage, Harry (#4) as brickmaker. The girls were sent away to work as servants in the suburbs of London as soon as they could, so that by the time of the 1871 census only the four youngest children (that were not yet over 16) were at home. Some were illiterate, for example Matilda (#5) struggled to sign her name (she signed "Miltida Phipps" in the marriage register), though full marks for effort, as Edwin (#1)'s bride could only manage an X on her wedding day, the curate certifying "The mark of Emily Johnson".

A World in Recession

Now the 1870s, when Henry turned 60 and was probably finding it even harder to make ends meet, was the start of the "Long Depression", the first worldwide recession. The dot-com bubble of the day - investment in new railways - had just burst, but there were other factors too. How exactly this affected the poor in different occupations is hard to fathom, but it did, and with this as background, amazingly three of the twelve Phipps siblings chose to emigrate: Harry (#4) to Australia, Sarah (#8) to New Zealand, and Eliza (#11) to Canada. Until now we knew nothing of what became of the two "down under": our grandfather only knew that his Aunt Sarah in New Zealand "brought up quite a large family", and of his Uncle Harry he knew only that after landing in Brisbane he had disappeared into the interior of Australia without further trace.

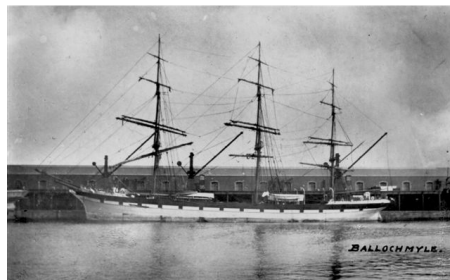
It's all Online

Today there's a great deal available online - the great records digitalisation has finally begun (though some countries are doing better than others!) - and so this year, in collaboration with my niece Rosemary, and assistance from my friend (Nick Smith) in New Zealand, we managed to piece

together a fair bit of their stories, finding names on passenger lists of settler ships, in registers of births, marriages & deaths, and in electoral registrations and censuses. It turns out that Sarah and Harry, both recently married, had boarded different ships that spring of 1874, and both appear to have thrived, one in New Zealand and the other in Australia - but leading very different lives. This then is their story as we know it so far.

Free Passage!

1874 was a big year for migration to New Zealand, with 31 ships arriving - more than any previous year. To encourage settlers, the NZ government was offering free passage to skilled workers and their families. Just the previous October, at Skelton (Yorkshire), Sarah had married Robert Coom, a blacksmith from Portslade (Brighton), and together, aged 20 and 27, they sailed in February 1874 on the maiden voyage of the *Ballochmyle*, an iron 3 masted clipper, purpose built to carry settlers on the long voyage. Robert was one of 5 blacksmiths on the ship, and so their £29 fare was charged to the NZ government (they probably wouldn't have been able to afford it themselves). Had they already planned to emigrate when they married, or did the offer of free passage win over the newly married couple? Was it just a bad time in Britain to be a blacksmith? We will never know!



The Long Voyage

There were 502 people aboard the 245 foot boat, and the passage down the west coast of Africa and across the southern ocean took 84 days, with 5 deaths and 3 births during the voyage. Sarah and Robert Coom travelled with another couple, Emma (29) and Austin Coom (33), one of 9 carpenters aboard, with their 9 year old daughter (also Emma). Austin & Emma had been witnesses to Robert's wedding; the marriage registers show the father of both grooms as James Coom, so we can assume they were brothers. This was a

tough voyage in cramped conditions, for Sarah not helped by falling pregnant in the first month of marriage (blacksmiths!), so she was almost 8 months by the time the ship docked.

According to Captain Lunden's report, the emigrants came aboard at Plymouth on 4th March 1874, and the ship dropped off the pilot and "took her final departure" from Start Point (Devon). It's hard to imagine the emotions of the passengers as the Devon coast receded: they were on a one-way free ticket and would never see or hear their family again. But there was no turning back now! The Cape (South Africa) was rounded on March 18th, and the ship raced across the southern ocean on strong easterly winds, passed Tasmania where they "encountered strong winds and heavy squalls with high seas", rounded the Snares (islands to the south of New Zealand) on May 27th before landing at Christchurch on 1st June 1874.

Now the Suez Canal had opened in 1869, so you may be wondering why the *Ballochmyle* didn't take that route. First, the difference in distance to NZ was not that great (greater benefit was possible on the route to India and South East Asia). More importantly the *Ballochmyle* was a sailing clipper built for speed by taking advantage of the strong winds in the open ocean, and neither the Mediterranean nor the Red Sea have such strong or reliable winds. Furthermore without any other means of power than wind, passage through the canal itself was problematic. (In fact, the opening of the Suez Canal provided an impetus for the development of steam powered ships, which initially had sails too, reliance on the new-fangled steam power coming somewhat gradually at first.)

Life Down Under

Sarah and Robert had five children in New Zealand and stayed on South Island: the first Henry is named after her father; the second Austin after his brother; and the other three girls after her sisters, the third child Henrietta after Sarah's baby sister (12 years difference in age) who was our great grandmother. The records show four married, with at least 12 in the next generation living to adulthood - then there's three generations after that! The census returns show Robert as a Blacksmith in Sydenham (suburb of Christchurch) in 1882, in Christchurch in

1893, in Cobden (suburb of Greymouth) in 1896, in Greymouth in 1911 and in Cobden again in 1925. They both died in 1928: Robert at 81, Sarah at 74 – good ages for the times.

What Became of Harry?

Meanwhile Harry Phipps (29) had travelled out on the *Nourmahal*, with his wife Ann (27) and daughter Annie (age 2), bound for Brisbane.

They had been married just under four years when they departed. In the marriage register he's described as brickmaker (as mentioned above), she the daughter of William Hawkins, a basketmaker. They sailed from London on 7th February 1874, arriving at Brisbane on 28th May. This was an older, smaller and slower sailing ship (the journey took 110 days), referred to as a Barque, that had been in service since at least 1858 (when it had taken settlers to New Zealand). It was only 841 tonnes (compared with the *Ballochmyle's* 1438 tons). There were "only" 337 passengers aboard, of which 319 were free immigrants.

Once in Australia, Harry appears to have become a stockman (Australian term for a cowboy). He lived at Miles, about 340km inland from Brisbane. At one point the electoral register lists him as storekeeper. There is a record of his own animal brand at Drillham, just outside Miles, so presumably he kept significant numbers of grazing animals. This is flat, open and dry countryside – today it's the location of the giant Dulacca Wind Farm.

I can find no trace of their daughter Annie in the Queensland records, and no record of any further children. Ann died in 1899 aged 52, and Harry died in 1909 aged 64. Shorter lives, perhaps reflecting the harsh life in the outback.

Our Great Grandmother

Meanwhile back in the old country, Henry Phipps's last daughter, our great-grandmother Henrietta (#12), born when Henry was 53 and Sarah was 48, was still at home, probably to care for her parents. According to our grandfather, after Henry died (1881) aged 68 (when Henrietta was

only 15), Henrietta and her mother had almost nothing to live on "other than 5 shillings a week village assistance". Our great-grandfather Charles Pettet, middle son (of three) of wheelwright (and later fruit farmer) John Pettet, lived in the same village, and was a year older. So probably they knew each other from a young age. In the 1881 census, Charles aged 16 is a carpenter's apprentice – a station above labourer. We have some carvings from his apprenticeship, and his carpentry chisels. Later he would run his own building firm, build his own house at Bearsted, serve in Maidstone as a Special Constable during WW1, and join the Masons.

Curiously, Henrietta and Charles had been the witnesses for Henrietta's brother Frederick (#10)'s wedding four years before theirs. Was Charles the Best Man? May be this wedding was when they got to know each other better!? In any event, they married in 1890, and their only child, our grandfather Harry Pettet, was born two years later.



The first wedding of Sarah & Robert Coom's five children, the marriage in 1900 of Sarah & Robert Coom's second son Austin – named after Robert's older brother who had accompanied them on the long voyage out to New Zealand. The bride is Rosina Nelson, her parents Rebecca and James are presumably those at the right. Sarah (standing) and Robert (sitting) are at the left. They look contented: their life plan had worked!

Sources. Errors quickly creep into public records, and many census returns have wildly incorrect ages (the 1841 census generally rounded down ages above 15 to the nearest 5 years!), as does even Harry & Ann's gravestone!! So the genealogist's job can be a nightmare, but we do have some reliable sources, including a page from Henry Phipps's bible on which he wrote the names and dates of birth of his 12 children. That plus original parish records and census returns, with a family tree of Sarah Phipp's descendants in New Zealand, are in the archive for Joan's family at schw.it/ppmb Hear our grandfather (Harry Pettet) talk about what he knew of his Auntie Sarah's and Uncle Harry's emigration at schw.it/ppmb/hcp.m4a (3m39s, recorded in 1977 when he was 85). We are very fortunate to have these unique family resources to be able to cross-check the public records.

Endangered Species

The Suburban Tram

The history of the tram is incredible because of its ubiquity in the early years of the 20th century when there was limited private car ownership, and because of the starkly opposing choices made post-WW2 once car ownership became widespread. Since their introduction at the end of the 19th century, more than 3200 cities^[1] around the world have had trams.

But while some continental cities never abandoned them, with lines running for over a century (see below), British trams disappeared^[A] for four decades. The last London tram^[B] ran in 1952 until their reintroduction in 2000 as Tramlink^[2] on the Wimbledon-Croydon-Beckenham line. New trams have appeared around Britain in just a handful of our more progressive cities: Manchester (1992), Sheffield (1994), Birmingham (1999), Nottingham (2004), and Edinburgh (2014). Cardiff is this year trying to deliver a tram network.

But any attempt to paint a general picture is fraught with difficulty, because of the large number of tram systems around the world and the complexity of their history, so I will limit myself to a very personal survey of places I know, which hopefully still illustrates their story and arouses some interest. As you'll see, I believe the suburban tram is of particular significance because of the way it connects a city's heart to its hinterland.

To round off this intro, my final perhaps most important thought is that more well-planned tram systems running on green energy will be needed if we are to achieve net zero, by reducing not just car journeys, but car ownership.

Mind the Gap^[C]

Sitting between trains and buses, trams have advantages over both (though some will see them as not one or the other).

Trams' advantages over buses are:

- Faster, with fewer stops and usually with priority over other road traffic at junctions or for specific sections
- Operationally more regular and reliable

Trams' advantages over trains are:

- More stops with better coverage of city hinterland, and more frequent
- Cheaper to build, dedicated space not generally required, less disruptive to introduce by using existing roads with little or no need for additional bridges

and no need for tunnelling under established cities

- Ability to reach directly a city centre (and cover larger city centres by offering a choice of stops)
- Generally cheaper for passengers

This awkward position between buses and trains partly explains the different choices made by post-WW2 transport planners, though at the time^[A] trams were simply seen by some as old-fashioned. Today, as we will see, a two-tier transport system (trains & buses only) leaves a gap.

Accessibility

There are major differences in accessibility, down to the individual services, but it seems trams are easiest to make fully accessible. The Dutch R-Net trams have extensive low level floor areas making them perfect for wheelchairs, baby buggies, older people, and bikes/luggage. They take multiple wheelchairs/bikes, whereas most buses cannot take more than one or two. Viennese trams take this a step lower, their Ultra-Low Floor (ULF) design^[3] has the entire tram floor just 20cm above road level, by a complete redesign of traction and suspension in vertical side columns and overhead.

The London Underground, in contrast, still has no wheelchair access at the majority of stations (their layout being largely unchanged for the best part of a century), relies on long escalators that are forbidden/impossible/dangerous for buggies/luggage/bikes and is riddled with steps for access to platform level (something I only really noticed this year when I started using the underground more after a gap of nearly 20 years). In fact when you sit on a London tube train you realise it is largely the preserve of the able-bodied working age population and tourists.

Bratislava – Vienna^[D]

Our father Mat remembered with great affection this tram that allowed him to travel the 70km to Vienna for shopping, theatre and social visits.

Introduced in 1914 when the line was entirely within one country (Austro-Hungary) so without the need for border formalities en route, there was some sort of passport check in Mat's day. I read that the engine needed to be changed for the interurban section, as according to one

account^[E] the three sections used three different voltages, though it's unclear to me whether that was throughout the life of the service. For the last couple of years (from about 1936), as ugly politics took hold, the border had to be crossed on foot^[E].

Our father never mentioned these issues so I can only assume that they did not affect his journeys most of the time, or were a minor inconvenience against the benefits of the service. Very much part of its popularity, as I understood, was that it connected the heart of the two cities. It ran throughout his youth, to 1938. Later of course, once the iron curtain came down, this connection became inconceivable.

Scheveningen - Den Haag - Delft

One of Holland's oldest lines^[4], line 1 opened in 1866 as a horse tram, then around 1879 steam engines were introduced, before electrification from 1904. The steam tram is visible in the 1880 Panorama Mesdag^[F]. Excepting periods when the Germans built their Atlantic Wall through the city and other operational disruption, line 1 has more-or-less run continuously ever since, and still runs today. The 20.5 km route connects the seaside resort of Scheveningen at one end and the historic town of Delft at the other with The Hague.

Trams in Highgate

Tram 19 followed closely the current 134 bus route and Northern Line tube, running from Euston via Camden Town and Kentish Town up Archway Road to High Barnet^[G]. Tram 9 followed part of the current 43 bus route, from Moorgate via the Angel, Holloway Road and Archway road, but then ran straight to North Finchley^[G].

However Highgate's special connection with trams is that from 1884 the first cable tramway^[5] in Europe ran on Highgate Hill with a gradient of 9% (pictures page 18). Unfortunately after a runaway fatal accident in 1892 it remained closed for 5 years^[H]. From 1910 it became a standard tram service line 11 (with beefed up brakes) running from Moorgate, which from 1939 was replaced by the 611 trolleybus service (also with special brakes), which ran until 1960^[H] (pictures page 18). After that the 271 bus service ran until last year, when the rerouted 263 bus took its place.

Meanwhile London's longest tram route was a 16 mile single-decker weekend-only service that ran from Archway via the Kingsway tramway tunnel to Brockley and Downham^[6].

Trams in our corner of Italy

Omegna-Intra. This service^[7] ran from 1910 to 1946. I was very surprised when I discovered there was a tram service running across the flat Toce valley and along the coast of Lake Maggiore, as there is no train service there now.

Turin. The number of tram lines^[8] that ran out into the Turin hinterland way beyond the current transport system is staggering. Turin-Rivoli ran from 1871-1955 and is only now being replaced by a new metro line. Torino-Volpiano ran from 1884-1929, Torino-Orbassano-Giaveno 1881-1958, Torino-Venaria 1888-1951, Torino-Settimo 1884-1954, Torino-Saluzzo/Carmagnola 1881-1950, Ivrea-Santhia 1882-1933, Saluzzo-Cuneo 1880-1948, Biella-Vercelli 1890-1933.

Vercelli-Biandrate-Fara and Novara-Biandrate. These lines ran from 1883 to 1934, connecting several smaller towns in the countryside to the provincial capitals^[8].

Palafrugell – Palamós^[9]

We became aware of this tram/train route on the Costa Brava because part of it is now a popular greenway for walking and cycling, the *Ruta del Tren Petit*^{[10][11]}. The service ran from 1887 to 1956 connecting the port and resort of Palamós with the

small cork-making town of Palafrugell and the provincial capital Girona.

Better Connection, Better Cohesion

I want to come back to the point about trams providing a better connection to the hinterland, as my personal observation is that today's tram connections seem to have a significant effect on the standing of the places and people that are connected.

Budapest's transport system is superb (the long years of communism aided its survival). It reaches the countryside, e.g. tram 56 to Hűvösvölgy takes you 9km from the centre of Budapest. The system works well, is cheap to use, and is used by all. A free app (BudapestGO) covers the entire 3-tier transport system: tickets, real-time timetable, passes.

The London underground network never reached many of the furthest tram destinations^[A], the only choice then being the bus which is too slow for these distances. In Britain we have a deep divide between city and country, a dichotomy that heightened the polarisation of debates like Brexit. The divide is in fact so great in Britain that you have to wonder how it got like that.

Whilst the trams that used to run^[C] to Waltham Cross (79), Wembley (62), Enfield (29), Purley (16 & 18), Dartford (96), Wimbledon (2 & 4), Hampton Court (67), Uxbridge (7), are no more, today's car commute from our suburbs and satellite cities is generally horrendous, and yet the

underground stops short of the places many commuters can afford to live. Newer rail services like Thameslink and Crossrail go some way to address the problem, but are expensive, slow and highly disruptive to build, so fall far short of what is needed. Our satellite towns suffer as a result.

In contrast, both Scheveningen and Delft (for example) feel cosmopolitan, with a standing on a par with The Hague. Of course, you can argue over cause and effect, with Scheveningen having a great beach, the magnificent Kurhaus, theatre and smartish beach bars, and Delft being the burial place of Dutch royalty and having a renowned university. Perhaps these things just go hand-in-hand? Or does the connectivity offered by the suburban tram play a part? I consider within Europe that Holland and Switzerland have the best integrated transport systems. Is it just coincidence that the countries with better public transport seem to have a more cohesive society?

Hopefully this short survey shows that wherever you look around Europe you find places where trams used to run. Where they still run, three-tier transport systems seem to provide better connectivity than two-tier systems, with better coverage of the hinterland, faster, more regular and more reliable services, and generally at lower cost.

Footnotes, Sources, and Further Listening, Reading, & Viewing

1. www.tundria.com/trams
2. [wikipedia "Tramlink"](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Tramlink)
3. [wikipedia "Ultra Low Floor"](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Ultra_Low_Floor)
4. [nl.wikipedia.org "Tramlijn 1 \(Haaglanden\)"](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tramlijn_1_(Haaglanden))
5. [wikipedia "Highgate Hill Cable Tramway"](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Highgate_Hill_Cable_Tramway)
6. [wikipedia "Kingsway tramway subway"](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingsway_tramway_subway)
7. [it.wikipedia.org "Tramvia Intra-Omegna"](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tramvia_Intra-Omegna)
8. [it.wikipedia.org "Linee tranviarie italiane"](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linee_tranviarie_italiane)
9. [wikipedia "Palamós-Girona-Banyoles railway"](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Palamós-Girona-Banyoles_railway)
10. www.viesverdes.cat then click on "Tren Petit"
11. [es.wikipedia.org "Via verde del Tren Petit"](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_verde_del_Tren_Petit)

A. History of London Trams (YouTube 6m47)



C. Mind the Gap past & present (11s)



B. Last London Tram 1952 (more original footage, YouTube 10m56)



D. Pressburger Bahn (in German). See also Geschichte (Story) click "Legend since 1914" and "My Pressburg Teil 2"



E. Pressburger Bahn (in German, 3 different voltages, border crossing on foot)



F. Tram 1 Now & Then (Panorama Mesdag) 43s



G. List of London Trams Routes in 1934



H. Highgate Hill Cable Tramway (picture, history)

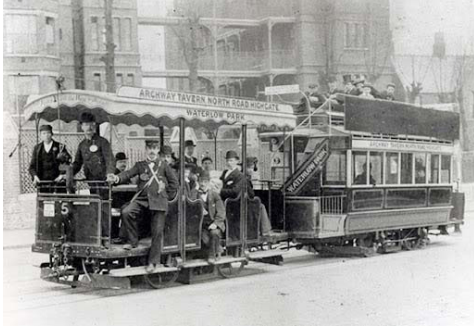


Climate Change for Dummies

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them"

— Albert Einstein

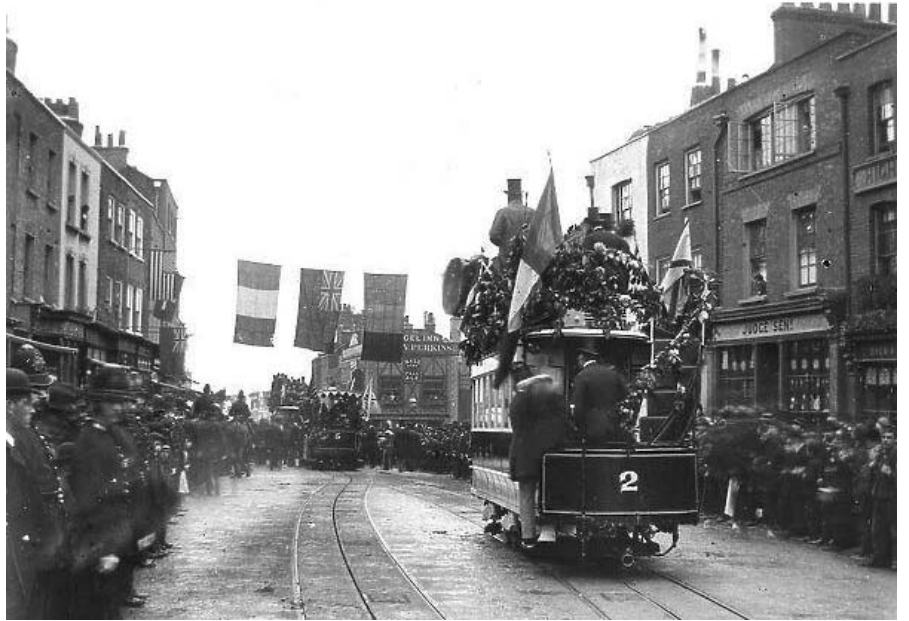
Omnibus Onward: 140 Years of Public Transport in Highgate



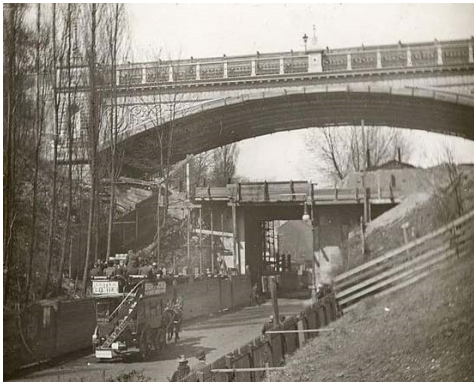
1880s. The cable tramway with extra carriage at the foot of Highgate Hill. Waterlow Park an advertised destination.



1880s. Cable tramway descending past the first houses - recognisable today - after Hornsey Lane.



1884. The cable tramway opens with great celebration in Highgate High Street on 29th May. A cable ran underneath, accessed by the central slot between the rails. There appear to be Irish and Merchant Navy flags across the High Street. The Angel in centre, buildings left and right today largely unchanged.



1899. Horse omnibus passing under the new Archway Bridge, before the old bridge had been removed.



1913. Standard tram, that replaced the cable tramway, standing on what's now the mini roundabout, Gatehouse in distance. Ghostly figures show it was long exposure, so tram must have been stationary.



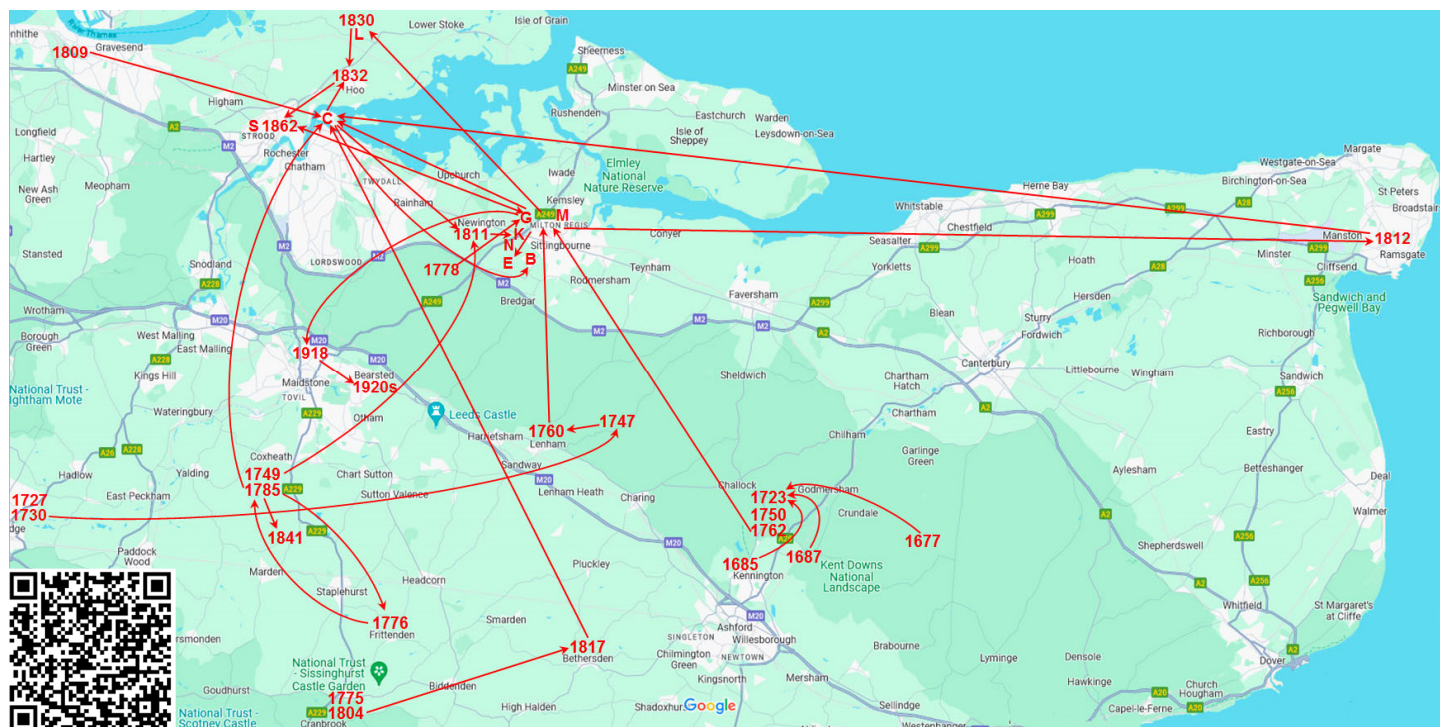
1920s or 1930s. Looking up Archway Road, mixed horse and motor transport. Tram and St Augustine's in distance.



1940s. 611 trolleybus at bottom of Highgate Hill, opposite MacDonald Road, passing tram going up, and stationary 210 bus. Note tram tracks with central electrical conduit.

1950s. 611's standing on South Grove, exactly where their replacement 271's would later stand. Note curved overhead wires allowing them to turn from Highgate High Street. Buildings at back today largely unchanged.

Family History North Kent Connections



With the benefit of the family tree researched by one of our new NZ cousins, it was relatively easy to find parish records of grandfather Henry Pettet's ancestors back to the 1700s, and a few into the 1600s. Here long S's and dates like "January Ye 1st" abound. But while the parchment of these ancient registers may be as dry as the bones of the long-dead ancestors they record, you can read into them tales of childhood sweethearts and more.

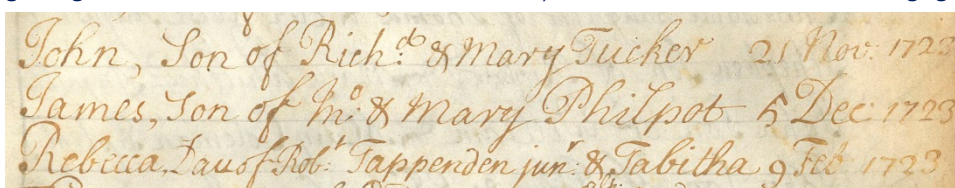
Like great-great-great-great-great-grandparents John Tucker (baptised 21 November 1723) and Rebecca Tappenden (9 February 1724), 11 weeks between their christenings on the same page of the Boughton Aluph parish register, married 26 years later in the same church (July 1750).

And intriguing love affairs, like John Pettet who in 1862 at just 21 married Eliza Goodger nearly 30 and nearly 8 months pregnant, but who declared herself to be only 27 (the question arises: how old did John believe she was?!); he died in 1900 at just 59 only 3 months after her; they were buried together in Borden (**B** on the map).

As you can see, these ancestors came from a wide area and moved about, but amazingly, every single individual identified is from Kent. I can't help noticing that only one surname (Pettet itself) is typically Huguenot - so Huguenot

DNA must have somehow already spread far and wide in Kent for as much as 12.8% of me to be Huguenot (see page 21).

People moved where there was work. Many of our ancestors were labourers, coming to villages around industrial Sittingbourne, including the Lost Village of Key Street (there's lots on YouTube about that, marked **K** on the map) an entire village totally obliterated by the A249 / A2 roundabout (there's also a sign on the roundabout itself about Key Street).



Brickmaking using locally dug clay employed many people at Sittingbourne, including Henry Phipps in 1861, and son Harry Phipps in 1870 before emigrating to Australia, and barge-making went on at Milton Creek, the barges used to transport bricks and local produce to London. Great-great-great-grandfather John Pettet identified himself as Barge Owner in 1862 on his son's marriage register.

You'll see on the map our Chatham connections - marked **C** - offering employment in Shipbuilding. Great-great-great-grandfather John Clark is recorded as Shipwright for the September 1818 baptism of baby Sarah (the future mother of 12 Phipps children), having presumably

just moved to Chatham, as her birth place (August 1817) is later recorded in three censuses as Bethersden some 30 miles away.

Ramsgate has just the 1812 birth of twins Henry & James Phipps. It looks like 20 year old unmarried Catherine Phipps - our great-great-great-grandmother, her own 1792 baptism entered in the Milton-next-Sittingbourne register as "Kitty Phepps" - went there just to have her baby twins, out of reach of village gossip. Getting her twins

baptised at St Lawrence, Ramsgate, their surname has become "Pipps" (you can imagine

the conversation: knowing the form "Fipps" was in use, she said "Phipps with a P", so the vicar - doh! - writes "Pipps"!). Later she lived in the relatively isolated community at Cliffe (marked **L** on the map) and raised another baby, George William Phipps - probably her sister's son - who later became a soldier. Her considerable movement around North Kent stands out - you can sense the social ostracism she must have experienced. In any event, her son Henry Phipps came good and her genes live on in us.

Scan the QR code for a timeline of our North Kent ancestors, from where you can click through to all the parish records mentioned, and many more.

Family History

Cherry-Picking at Eyhorn Hatch



As far as we can tell, great-great-great-grandfather John Pettet took up fruit farming in mid-life, describing himself as Fruiterer on the 1851 census when he was 40. At some point he started renting Eyhorn Hatch Farm (E on the map on previous page) just outside Borden, as he put up all the stock, produce and equipment for auction in August 1871, as per notice in the East Kent Gazette. So he must have had the farm for a minimum of two decades before his death in 1891, possibly a lot longer, with his son (also John Pettet) running the farm for another 9 years, until his death in 1900. Thus our grandfather, Henry Pettet, born 1892, growing up in Borden very close by, had memories of his grandfather's fruit farm as a small boy.



**IRON LATCH FARM,
BORDEN, NEAR SITTINGBOURNE.
GROWING CROPS OF CORN,
POTATOES, HARD FRUIT,
LIVE AND DEAD FARMING STOCK,
And other Effects.**

Messrs. Jackson & Bassett

WILL SELL by AUCTION, on the Premises above-named, on **FRIDAY, 11th AUGUST, 1871,** at One for Two o'clock in the Afternoon.
About ten acres of red wheat, 12 acres of barley (8½ acres of which are in Banks Field, Danaway, Newington), four acres of oats, three acres of grey peas (in stack), 5½ acres of regent and other potatoes, half-an-acre of podding peas, half-an-acre of stone turnips, 1½ acre of wurzel, stack of excellent mixed hay (tare and grass), the hard fruit growing in three orchards, &c. &c.; two very superior draught horses, two capital milch cows (in calf), black sow in pig, about 70 head of poultry, two light spring vans, light spring cart, two dung carts, light tug, turn-rise plough, furrow ditto, corn cleaning machine, quailer and other harnesses, 18 fruit ladders, oaken cow crib, 50 sheep gates, sundry bundles of binders, firewood, &c. &c., which will be particularized in Catalogues, to be had of the AUCTIONEERS, 117, High-street, Sittingbourne, and at the Place of Sale.
The growing crops may be viewed on application to **Mr. JOHN PETTIT, Iron Latch Farm, Borden.**

Notice on page 4 of the East Kent Gazette of 5th August 1871. Spellings varied a lot: today two farms are marked on the OS map, Eyhorn Farm and Hatch Farm. Note milk spelled with 'ch' - like in German!

It took me ages to realise that "Eyhorn Hatch" and "Iron Latch" were one and the same! To see how that's even possible, try saying both slowly in a broad country accent: pronounce "Iron" as two long syllables, eat the L of Latch after the N of Iron, and drop the H's. See?!

The picture shows cherry-picking at Eyhorn Hatch Farm in the mid-1890s, with our grandfather Harry Pettet as a small boy, standing in a white dress of some sort and broad rimmed hat, next to his mother Henrietta Pettet (née Phipps) seated. I think the lady standing behind them in black with a white bonnet is his grandmother Eliza Pettet (née Goodger).

The crop is on display, and the whole company seems very smartly dressed - surely that wasn't their normal work attire?! But the village women and long ladders are exactly as Harry remembered them - scan the QR code to hear his memories first-hand (recorded 1977).

Family History

John Pettet's Secret & How To Be A Smuggler

I was in my thirties when my mother mentioned that her great-great-grandfather John Pettet might have been a smuggler. Her other fact about him being that it was his failure to dot his i's that led to our branch of the family being known as Pettet (with an e), whereas before we had generally been known as Pettit (with an i). These were our Huguenot ancestors from Kent, a heritage confirmed by my DNA test showing 12.8% of my DNA identifies with people in Baden-Württemberg in Germany (which was the destination of a big wave of Huguenot refugees from southern and western France).

I was naturally intrigued by my mother's assertion that one of my ancestors was a smuggler, but it was one of those 'lone facts' without corroborating evidence, so there was little more to say or discuss, and that knowledge was simply parked in my mind ever since. Until now. When by a series of chance findings the story starts to look highly likely.

To be a smuggler you need to live not too far from a secluded inlet hidden from, but just off, a main shipping route for high value goods. What better place than the Bobbing district of Borden, where John Pettet lived, a suburb of Sittingbourne, close to Milton Creek, a small but navigable inlet, just off the Swale, the channel separating the Isle of Sheppey from mainland Kent? It's certainly well hidden - the boats ploughing the Thames Estuary wouldn't even know Milton Creek existed - with few settlements along the Swale (especially the eastern part, much of the

area today is nature reserves). Far quieter than anywhere on the Medway with its busy ports of Chatham and Rochester. But still with easy access to the main shipping route along the Thames Estuary bringing expensive French wines & spirits into London. And on the land side, Bobbing is more-or-less on the main London Road (once Watling Street, now the A2) for onward delivery. Perfect!

You also need some loyal men you can trust with your life (the penalties for smuggling were harsh). Well, Fruit Farmer is exactly what John Pettet's day job was! He grew cherries (see opposite), plums, raspberries, and gooseberries for the London market. And no doubt there were quiet periods in the fruit farmer's calendar when there was not much else for John and his workers to do except smuggling.

You will of course need a boat. See exhibit below, the main piece of evidence for this story, the registration record of Secret, showing it was 73.2 feet long, 15.4 feet wide, and with a hold 4.7 feet deep. Built at Sittingbourne on 5th September 1867 (that's presumably when it was finished) and registered at Rochester on 19th October 1867 in the name of John Pettet of Borden, the 36 ton Secret was a single-masted, single-decked sailing boat with spritsail rigging (single square sail with diagonal "sprit" mast holding up the highest corner of the sail); its hull was carvel build (planks laid edge to edge on a heavy wooden frame). That sounds like just the right sort of boat for fast

manoeuvres, pulling alongside a bigger ship in the Estuary, stashing a decent size load below deck, then navigating as fast and as far and as you could up Milton Creek on a high tide, to unload somewhere quiet without a recognisable quay.

John was about 55 when he bought Secret. One has to wonder what made him choose the name. Was it a brazen jibe for those in the know?! It matters, because to my mind it shows intent!!

Finally of course you don't want to own the boat for too long, for fear someone might start asking questions about why a fruit farmer needs a sailing boat. You bring in several lucrative loads of contraband without getting caught. But you know the risk, and sense the danger of getting greedy or overconfident. May be he feared that sooner or later someone would talk. One way or another he probably wasn't sleeping too well with his smuggling habit. And the record shows John Pettet sold Secret on 21st September 1869, after less than two years.

Two years after that (August 1871) John put the stock of Eyhorn Hatch up for auction, with a notice in the East Kent Gazette (see opposite). But it was not actually sold: he was still farming there in 1881 age 69, living with his son's family (also John).

Were John Pettet's smuggling days over? Who knows, times were really hard for farmers in the 1870s, and they say old habits die hard. So may be even well into his sixties John still went out on a long winter's night on someone else's boat and helped with an odd job - or two.

Handwritten: 1923

OFFICIAL NUMBER OF SHIP 58451

Port Number... 44, n. 1867 Port of Registry... Rochester British or Foreign built... British

Number of Decks... One Build... Carvel
Number of Masts... One Gallery... S.P.
Rigging... Sprit Mast Head... S.P.
Stern... Square Framework... Wood

Tonnage. No. of Tons... 36
Tonnage under Tonnage Deck...
Closed-in Spaces above the Tonnage Deck, if any, viz...
Splees or Spaces between Decks...
Peev...
Household...
Other enclosed Spaces (if any), naming them... Cabin Deck

Gross Tonnage, being Register Tonnage, if a Sailing Ship... 36 ⁴⁶/₁₀₀
If a Steamer, deduct Allowance for propelling Power, as per other Side...
Register Tonnage, if a Steamer...

Name, Residence, and Description of the Owner, and Number of Sixty-four Stems held by each Owner... John Pettet of Borden near Sittingbourne in the County of Kent. Farmer

Date... 1867 October 19th

Col. 1.	Col. 2.	Col. 3.	Col. 4.	Col. 5.	Col. 6.	Col. 7.
Number of Transfers.	Letter denoting Mortgage, and Certificate of Mortgage.	Name of Person from whom Title is derived.	Number of Shares allotted.	Date of Registry.	Name and Date of Transaction.	Name, Residence, and Occupation of Transferee, Mortgagee, or other Person acquiring Title or Power.
1	A	John Pettet	34	19 th Sept 1867 at Borden	Mortgage under Robert Taylor to secure the sum of £500 and later at the rate of 5% p/ann.	Stephen Taylor of Borden near Sittingbourne. Farmer.

Handwritten: New repair

NAME OF SHIP Secret

Whether a Sailing or Steam Ship (if Steam, how propelled)... Sailing Where built... Sittingbourne in the County of Kent When built... 5th September 1867

Measurements Length from the Forepost of the Stern under the Foremast to the Aft Side of the Head of the Stern... 73.2 Feet
Main Breadth to Outside of Plank... 15.4 Feet
Depth in Hold from Tonnage Deck to Ceiling at Middle... 4.7 Feet

Additional Particulars for Steamers.
Deduction for Space required for propelling Power (as measured) ... Feet ... Tons.
Length of Engine Room (if measured) ... Feet ... Tons.
Number of Engines ...
Combined Power (estimated Horse Power) ...

Handwritten: 44, n. 1867

(Signed) *Handwritten: W. W. Woodward* Register.

Col. 8.	Col. 9.	Col. 10.	Col. 11.	Col. 12.	Col. 13.	Col. 14.
Number and Amount of subsequent Transfers, showing how Interest disposed of.	Number of Transfers under which Title acquired.	Name of Owner.	Mortgages and Certificates of Mortgage.	Name of Mortgagee or Assignee under Certificate of Mortgage.	Number of Shares.	REMARKS.
	1	John Pettet	Mortgage of for £500 + Int. @ 5% p/ann. 19 th Sept 1867	Stephen Taylor	34	

Handwritten: W. W. Woodward

Britain Renamed ‘Coneland’

Following the latest ONS data release indicating there are more traffic cones in Britain than people, the Minister for Common Sense is pressing ahead with plans to rename Britain ‘to reflect the reality of the majority of inhabitants’.

The announcement, not covered by other media outlets, follows a government white paper proposing to employ more locally made cones. This is necessary so that road works, currently constrained by the number of available cones, can proceed at an even more glacial pace.

When we telephoned the DfT for comment, a lone traffic cone replied saying the department was unable to comment because ‘all colleagues were deployed across the motorway network’.

Christmas Crossword

The BIG puzzle of SMALL words

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	

Every answer has two letters!
Say it and abbreviate liberally!

Across

- Musical sun drop
- Controls media
- American capital
- James JASON is a DJ on FM and ?
- Falsify in America
- Half extinct
- Wigwam
- Invisible priest
- Criminal footprint
- False espionage
- Scotsman’s repeated consent
- Poet’s paternal advice

Down

- Shone on worshippers
- Square space
- Repeated takes
- Two’s ?
- Email must have
- Sits in House
- Say privately
- Middle of foot
- Short gratitude
- Greek bake?
- Bosses’ toolkit
- Follows the possessed!

From our Family Archive Young Couple Tour Tuscany

Seventy-three years ago Joan & Mat spent three weeks touring Tuscany by bicycle making memories which lasted a lifetime, and inspiring the next generation. They visited all the main sights in Florence, Siena, Perugia, and Assisi and took the train to Rome and Viareggio. Luckily for us they took a camera! Scan the QR code to see their trip!



Merlin’s Mystery

Just How Many Knights Were There?

Age-old Question has Dogged Historians through the Ages

Now You Can Solve It Yourself!

We don’t know how big a yard was in Arthur’s reign, except that it was about the space needed for a knight in full armour. But we do know Merlin made King Arthur’s Round Table so that the area of the table top (in square yards) was exactly the same as its circumference (in yards). So how many knights (including Arthur) could sit at the table? If a dog only needs half the space of a knight, could Arthur’s faithful spaniel sit at the table too?

Nut News

Parliament Deep-Cleaned

In July, in an historic purge, Britain removed large quantities of nuts from great swathes of the country. But meanwhile a small number of new nuts managed to get in in a few coastal areas. As the country is highly allergic to nuts, citizens are advised to be vigilant at all times, as even traces of nuts can cause a strong reaction, a nasty rash of nonsensical policies, heated and pointless debate, and immense damage to our institutions, ultimately leading to severe anti-democratic shock.

Puzzles you can take anywhere. Last year’s puzzle graded countries 1 to 10 and asked how the UK did. The clue was in the title: each result being the mobile phone prefix for the country. So the answer was **7** for the U.K. As far as I know, no one got the answer!

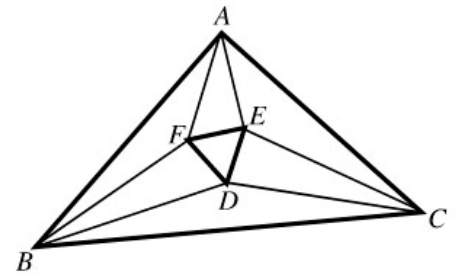
Mathematics for the Million

The One The Greeks Missed

Scalene Triangles Can Still Surprise

Theorem ‘Missing’ from Geometry Books for Two Millennia

In 1899, Frank Morley (born Suffolk 1860, studied King’s College, Cambridge, moved to U.S.A. to teach Maths in Pennsylvania, died Baltimore 1937) was playing around with triangles (as one does) and discovered that, when he trisected the angles, a smaller triangle appears inside that always has equal sides! Not only was this a complete surprise, but no trace of the result could be found in Euclid’s *Elements*, generally considered the comprehensive work on plane geometry since 300 BC.



Trisecting angles A, B and C, the intersections D, E and F form an equilateral triangle. You can find proofs searching for **Morley’s Theorem** or **Morley’s Miracle**. How the Greeks missed it we’ll never know, but they weren’t big on angle trisection as it is one of the problems (like squaring the circle) that is not possible with straightedge and compass.

Christmas Stories

‘Contradictory Reports’ from Lapland

Father Christmas Blamed

Unfortunately Father Christmas and his entourage have got in one almighty muddle with all the stories they tell, incredible as they are, about each other, where they set out from, how they deliver presents, and which children get presents. Rudolf says Father Christmas makes everything up. Father Christmas says the Christmas Elves make everything up. The Christmas Elves say both Rudolf and Father Christmas make it all up. Is anyone telling the truth?