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MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON SOME KENT ROADS AND ALLIED MATTERS

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INTRODUCTORY

ALL who at any time have been engaged in research work, know only too well the dangerous temptation to stray from the straight and narrow path of the chosen study into the alluring by-roads that open on either hand as the enquiry proceeds. This is, of course, quite wrong, and indicates a lack of concentration and a wavering purpose. These essays are a totally unrepentant confession of such a failing.

In 1945 a bomb destroyed a solicitor's office at Greenwich, once Kent but now merely S.E. The contents of cellars and strong rooms were scattered, and I was, in virtue of my appointment the previous year by the British Records Association to investigate and advise on such matters, asked to visit the scene of the disaster. I found a mass of books and deeds that, I was assured, must of necessity be destroyed unless some arrangements could be made to salvage and remove them. There was urgency in this, and the Kent Archives at Maidstone sent a van, and the whole mass weighing nearly half a ton was taken away to safety.

But while awaiting the arrival of transport I took the opportunity to make a rather more detailed examination of the documents, and it was clear that most of them dealt with the establishment and later operations of the New Cross Turnpike Trust, and the associated but separate "Lower Road Trust," including an almost unbroken series of minute and account books from 1740 onwards.

Living as I did on the line of the Kent (Dover) Road I was naturally interested in these records, and after one or two more leisurely examinations in their new home, I was of the opinion that here was the longest and most complete set of Turnpike documents in existence, dealing with an important group of roads linking up the capital with the great arteries leading into Kent and to the Kent Ports. With the generous help of the Leverhulme Trustees during the years 1946-47-48 a detailed study of these documents was carried out, and a history of the New Cross Turnpike Roads, from Southwark to Dartford, Footscray, Farnborough and the County Boundary at Stroud Green near Croydon, was prepared. This awaits publication.

Now it was that "side issues" became of such absorbing interest, for much purely local matter that would have been out of place in a

major treatise, really deserved preservation (or is it interment?) in the pages of local historical publications. Such were

Road works at Shooters Hill. 1816. *Proc. Woolwich Ant. Soc.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 28-44.

The making of the New Road at Lee. 1824-28. *Trans. Greenwich and Lewisham Ant. Soc.*, Vol. IV, pp. 236-47.

The Turnpike Roads between Greenwich and Woolwich. *Proc. Woolwich Ant. Soc.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 1-52.

This last was in effect a complete history of a minor Turnpike Trust, an offshoot of the greater local Trust.

The New Cross Trust being so intimately connected with Kent, it was unavoidable that investigations should extend into the county, but this was an undertaking of much greater magnitude, and one that, owing to the deficiency of original records, could not be brought to any final shape, at least not by myself, whose activities were circumscribed by the passage of time and the urgency of other commitments. Nevertheless, here are some matters, the product of the aforementioned divagations, as well as one or two more controlled studies, that are, I venture to think, not without interest in the study of Kent Roads.

AN EARLY MILESTONE IN KEMSING PARISH, AND THE ROADS ASSOCIATED WITH IT

On the so-called "Pilgrims' Road," a quarter of a mile east of the parish boundary of Kemsing and Otford, is an inconspicuous milestone, somewhat sunken in the ground, from which it projects some fifteen inches, though generally hidden in long grass. It now has the protection of an iron cage, but its inscriptions, especially that on its upper surface, are yearly becoming more difficult to decipher. The diagram (Fig. 1) shows its shape and dimensions above ground. The inscriptions are:

Top, in two lines ..	170?	KEMSING	
North face	THE WAY TO	DART FORD	12 MILES
South face	THE WAY TO	SEVEN OAKS	3 MILES
East face	TO MALL ING	10 MILES	
West face	TO BROM LY	12 MILES	

The first matter to be decided is the date of the stone, which has been much misread as 1720 (by myself, *Pilgrims Road*, 2nd ed., p. 163) as "17 something, probably a year in the second half of the century" (by the late E. G. Box, "Some West Kent Roads," *Arch. Cant.*, XLIII, p. 97), and other writers have been equally in error. I asked Mr. F. C. Harrison of the Otford Historical Society to give me his reading and he replied, "170-, the last figure being indecipherable." Finally I went down myself and satisfied myself that Mr. Harrison's reading was

correct, and to preserve a record of what did remain, took a plaster cast of the upper surface. A careful examination of this in a bright light at home seemed to show vestiges of an "8" but this is immaterial: the date must lie somewhere between 1700 and 1709.

Now this date is important, for it makes the stone in all likelihood the earliest dated milestone (other than those of Roman origin) in the country, certainly in Kent. According to S. and B. Webb's *Kings Highway* (2nd ed., p. 156) milestones date from about 1720. Defoe mentions them in 1748, and they were made compulsory on Turnpike Roads from 1740 onwards. Parish Surveyors on non-turnpike roads

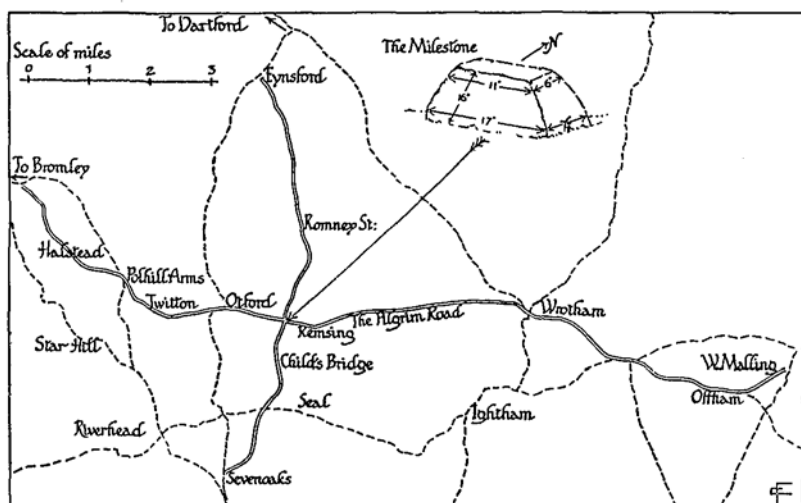


FIG. 1.

could erect them if they so desired, and it is therefore to some unknown official of Kemsing that we owe the existence of this milestone, though I believe the Surveyor's Accounts of that parish have not survived.

But of greater importance than the stone are the roads it indicates, for here we have a part of a road system that precedes the introduction of the Turnpike, and included in this scheme is a section of the "Pilgrims' Road" that has hitherto not been regarded as anything but a country track or at most a by-road.

The first road to be made a turnpike in Kent was the River Hill to Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and Woodsgate road, turnpiked in 1709, to be followed by the Northfleet, Gravesend and Rochester Road in 1710, the New Cross Roads 1717, and the Chatham, Boughton and Canterbury Road in 1724. The Kemsing Series belongs, therefore, to an earlier group, and each section of it will be studied in detail.

THE SEVENOAKS ROAD

Mr. Box (*op. cit.*, p. 37) deals with this road, and his suggestion is that the route was Child's Bridge Lane and Child's Bridge, the footpath to the Seal—Riverhead Road at or near Steadle's or Stiddolph's Heath and then by way of Seal Hollow Road to Sevenoaks. There seems to be no objection to this, but it is worthy of note that in two centuries a road presumably suitable for some sort of wheeled traffic could degenerate into a mere footpath.

THE DARTFORD ROAD

There must have been some very cogent reason for selecting this road, for its gradients are steep and its surface treacherous in wet weather, especially as a short distance westward the road along the Darent valley through Shoreham and Eynsford would have served as well, if not better. The indicated road commences with a steep climb to the top of Beechy Lees Hill, a slippery chalky slope, from which three roads lead towards Dartford:

- (a) Romney Street, over the "clay with flints" to Bower Farm, Eynsford and the Darent valley.
- (b) Woodlands, Knatt's Valley, Maplescombe, Beesfield and Farningham.
- (c) East Hill, Maplescombe, and thence as (b).

All these roads today are well-trodden footpaths and lanes, reaching metalled dignity at places like Romney Street or Woodlands where wheeled traffic is possible, but in general the gradients are difficult. Of the three routes suggested above, the first (in spite of its poor soil) is probably the one used, entering Eynsford by Bower Lane. The road is marked on Andrews's map of Kent, 1779, as a practicable road. From thence to Dartford along the valley the way was fairly good, though it was not turnpiked till 1765 (6 Geo. III, c.98). Mr. Box gives other suggested routes along the valley, but it does seem probable that until the middle of the eighteenth century, if not later, the main north to south road sought the crest of the chalk hills and did not enter the valley till Bower Lane debouched into it at Eynsford.

THE MALLING ROAD

The milestone seems to give undisputable proof that the Pilgrims' Road from Otford to Wrotham was definitely in use as a highway at the end of the seventeenth century and that it was possible to travel beyond those places in both directions. From Wrotham the line of the road would be Wrotham Heath, Offham and West Malling, a course that involves no problems of a major sort. There are, of course, between Otford and Wrotham alternative ways and these intrigued Mr. Belloe

(*The Old Road*, ed. 1904, p. 131), but I think, if old maps are any reliable guide, the Pilgrims' Road was certainly the public highway, but further investigation here might be helpful. The course through Offham is practically certain, for the turnpike was not established on this section of the Maidstone Road till 1751, though beyond doubt there was some kind of a road here.

THE BROMLEY ROAD

It is this last section of this early group of roads that raises many problems. Obviously after passing through Otford village it must then cross the present Sevenoaks—Bromley Road at or near Polhill, but this magnificent road down the southern slope of the North Downs was not in existence till 1826, being sanctioned by 6/7 Will. IV, c.11, and a MS. map of the proposed road shows that it was to traverse open fields and woodland. There were not even footpaths. The old line of road to Bromley (to which this road from Otford was tributary) left the site of the proposed new road on the right and proceeded via Dunton Green, Morant's or Madam's Court Hill, Knockholt village and over Richmore Hill to Pratt's Bottom. This could be, and most likely was, reached from Otford via Twitton and then up the steep incline to the top of Polhill near the inn of the same name, which appears to be of some antiquity. From thence a road directly opposite the public house made for Halstead, Knockholt and Pratt's Bottom, whence the road to Bromley was straightforward. An alternative would have been to continue directly westwards from Otford, bearing neither to the right or left, and so reaching Star Hill, on the older road, north of Morant's Court.

THE STOCKER'S HEAD AND CHILHAM ROAD. (Fig. 2.)

The need of a more direct route to Canterbury from the Weald than that afforded by the roads via Charing and Faversham or Ashford, had long been apparent, and it is difficult to understand why the Biddenden and Boundgate Turnpike Trustees did not foresee this need and extend their road from Boundgate to Chilham in 1766 or even later when other Acts affecting this road were obtained. Had they done so, a four-mile extension would have obviated a new Trust and an eight-mile road. Consequently, it was not till 1809 that this need was satisfied. The Stocker's Head—Chilham Turnpike road was set up by the Act 49 Geo. III, c.92 which received the Royal Assent in 1809. The main problem was to make a new road from the top of Charing Hill to the crossroads at Challock Lees, at which point an existing road could be reconstructed to link up with Chilham. The chief difficulty lay in the fact that the proposed road was to cut through Longbeech Wood, and that this wood was divided in ownership between the See of Canterbury and the Dering family. There were, and are, several tracks through this wood,

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and indeed Mr. Margary (*Arch. Cant.*, LXIV, p. 21) shows the North Downs Ridgeway passing through it, but these were to be discarded for an entirely new and wide well-metalled highway. Of the construction of the road we have a considerable amount of information gathered from an "Order Book" in my possession. After the Act was passed, a number of the Trustees (there were some fifty or sixty in all) met at

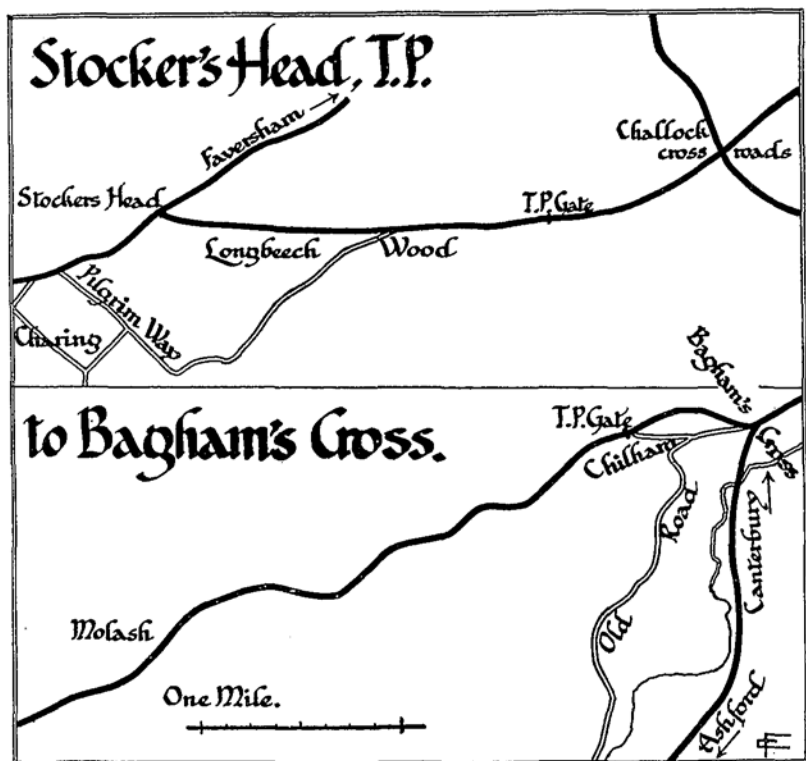


FIG. 2.

the "Half Way House at Challock Cross Roads" to decide on a course of action. They were to meet quarterly, Weller Norwood of Charing was to be the Clerk and Treasurer at £10 10s. per annum, giving a bond of £1,000 as security. Fourteen subscribers of a total sum of £2,075 were asked for 25 per cent of their promised contribution for current expenses, including £365 6s. 7d. for the cost of obtaining the Act. The Archbishop and Sir Edward Dering were informed of the course of the road, and told also that the injury to their land would be inconsiderable, and a Mr. William Collis was invited to attend the next

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meeting to give his advice and opinions on the scheme and to provide some estimate of the cost.

Collis was a member of a family, probably Kentish, many of whom were either road makers on a large scale or Surveyors to various Trusts, or, what is highly probable, often combining the two to their own considerable benefit. Several members of the family will appear under one or other of these guises in these essays. Mr. Collis was in attendance at the meeting. The permission of the two noble landlords was presumably not yet given (though this is not specifically stated), and Mr. Collis was agreed with for "making, altering, raising, widening and repairing" those parts of a road marked on a plan (now missing) for the sum of £1,091 12s., the work to be completed by the end of June, 1810. He was to be paid *pro rata* as the work proceeded. This contract did not include the Longbeech Wood portion, as owing to the delay in obtaining the necessary permission the details were not ready, but a further contract was prepared for the extra work at £839 7s. The two contracts were consolidated at £1,930 19s. While this work was proceeding, the Trustees selected sites for the proposed Toll Gates, the one at Chilham, the other at Challock. Then followed the contentious and difficult matter of settling the contributions of the parishes through which the new road would pass. These sums were in lieu of the older "Statute Duty" whereby each parish was compelled by law to provide labour, carts and material for road work, this now being commuted into a money payment. These payments were, for the years stated, as follows:

CHILHAM	..	£31— 0—7½	£15—10—3¼	£17—16— 9	£17—16— 9
MOLASH	..	25— 3—5¼	12—11—8½	11—15— 0	11—15— 0
WYE	..	9—13—1½	4—16— 6	4—10— 4	3— 4— 6
CHALLOCK	..	22— 1—1	11— 0—6½	10— 5—10	7— 7— 0
WESTWELL	..	8—15—1	8—15—1	8—15— 1	6— 8— 9
CHARING	..	—11—3	5—7½	6— 9	6— 9
TOTAL	..	£97— 4—7½	£52—19—10	£53— 9— 9	£46—18— 9
		(1809)	(1813)	(1843)	(unspecified)

Later on the rates were fixed at £7 per mile for Charing, Molash and Chilham and £5 per mile for the other parishes. The settlement of the amounts due was generally the result of agreement between the Parish Surveyors and the Trust Surveyor, though in cases of definite disagreement recourse had to be made to the Justices. It will be observed in the tables above that the assessment for 1813 was exactly half that of 1809 except in the case of Westwell, where the road was entirely a new one through Longbeech Wood. The remainder of the income of the Trust was to be derived from Tolls, paid either at the Gates or by Compositions, these latter being paid by those who had cause to use the road very frequently. In seventy months from

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July, 1810, to March, 1816, the sum of £890 12s. 11½d. was received, approximately £12 14s. 6d. per month, and from this salaries, wages, cost of materials and general maintenance, as well as interest on the initial loan, had to be provided.

From May, 1809, to July, 1816, the total income of the Trust was £3,469 6s. 2d. and the expenditure £3,335 18s., leaving a balance of £133 8s. 2d. This is a typical budget for a small Trust, but it will be observed that there is no attempt to reduce the burden of the loan. The interest was paid, but the principal remained intact. But it is not the purpose of the short accounts to dwell too much on the finance and internal organization, so a leap is taken to the year 1827, when the question of a diversion at Chilham was under consideration. At this time the road entered Chilham village by the steep lane that still is the approach to the Square from the west and then left by the Woolpack to the Ashford—Canterbury road and Bagham's Cross. The difficulties of this road are obvious—even today the motor buses cannot enter the village but have to pause and reverse at the foot of the hilly approach. A new Act was therefore applied for which became effective in May, 1830. The passage of this Bill cost the Trust £174 4s. 10d., and the construction of the bypass was entrusted to Thomas Thurston of Ashford, another of the great names in Kentish road construction. The cost of this half-mile of road was:

Land at £85 per acre	£192	16	10	(from James Beckford Wildman)
Cost of the Act ..	£174	4	10	
Making Road ..	£180	0	0	
Thurston for Survey	£5	12	0	
A new Gate	£105	0	0	
Gratuity to the Survey- or (Jenner) ..	£5	5	0	
<hr/>				
TOTAL	£662	18	8	apart from the cost of fencing

A mile of road made by Collis a few years earlier had cost £839 7s., but in that case there was nothing to pay for land purchase. The figures are interesting, as they indicate the difficulties the Trustees experienced in carrying out their duties, but moreover they show how little margin there was for speculation and other alleged abuses of the Turnpike system. Tolls on this road were £142 in 1830, £185 in 1833, £127 in 1838, £139 in 1841, £137 in 1844, £100 in 1847 and £97 in 1848. It is obvious from this that unless loans were forthcoming on the mortgage of the tolls, the upkeep and repair of the road could never have been achieved. Of the working of this Trust there is not very much to say. The meetings of Trustees, about six per annum, were very poorly attended, the average being about four or five. Most of the

administration was left in the hands of the Surveyor (from 1841 this office was filled by Thomas Thurston) and the Clerk. Efforts were made now and then to auction the Tolls, but the returns were so small that only local people could be persuaded to bid for them, and often they were not let at all. Unfortunately the Order Book from which these details are derived ends with the year 1849. Thus it is that only the first half of the activities of the Trust can be mentioned. The Trust was extinguished by 38/39 Vict. c.194 in 1875, so there are still some twenty-five years of its history not yet recorded. From the figures quoted above the revenue appears to be gradually decreasing, but which of the many factors that might have adversely affected the road and its revenue little can be said, but it is not likely in this instance to have been the railway.

CHARLES SLOANE, 1690-1764. ARCHITECT, SURVEYOR, CARTOGRAPHER AND CARPENTER

The New Cross Turnpike Trust, established in 1718 for a period of twenty-one years, was, in 1738, drawing to the close of its allotted span, but, reluctant to relinquish control of the road under their care, was in negotiation for a Parliamentary Bill to give it a further lease of life. At a meeting of the Trustees on 11th September, 1738, they passed the following recommendation:

“Your Committee are farther of Opinion that a Plan of all the Roads directed to be repaired by the Act of Parliament relating to this Trust should be made by some Skilful Person, and the Breadth as well as the Length and Distance from place to place together with the true Levell in each particular Distance for making proper Currents for Effectually Conveying the water off from the said Roads, and of all Ditches and other Places thereto adjoining & Contiguous, necessary and Convenient for Receiving the Water from time to time so to be drained off from the Same, be as fully described and Delineated therein as may be.”

Though it is nowhere stated in the minutes, an advertisement had been put out for some “Skilful Person,” for on 23rd October of the same year

“Mr. Charles Sloane of Gravesend appeared and proposed to Draw a Plan of the Roads to be Repaired by this Trust on the Terms hereafter mentioned, viz., to measure all the Distances from the Places menconed in the Head of his proposalls with the Chain (which is the most accurate way) and all the Angles with the Hypothenusall, and Base Lines of the Hills with the best instruments now in use, viz., by Sisson’s new Improved Theodolites, protractor and Scale of equall parts as approved by the

Royall Society, a Description of the Soile and all the Remarkables on each side and the Bounds of the Parishes and the Counties Expressed, provided a proper person be allowed to Assist who is acquainted therewith, and to make a Map with a Section of the Land whereby all the Hills with their Ascent and Descent will be observed and the True Horizontal Measure of the Base Gained, which the Trustees now present approved of and being well Satisfyed of the Skill and Judgmt. of the said Charles Sloane to perform the said Plan according to his undertaking, It is now Resolved and Ordered that the said Charles Sloane be Employed to perform the same according to his proposal and be allowed the sum of twelve Guineas for his Expenses pains and trouble for perfecting the same according to his Terms aforesaid and in case the said Plan be on Vellum in a Book (the Charge of which Vellum and Binding is to be paid by the Trust) and Delivered to this Trust Compleate and perfect at or before Lady day next."

The work took much less time than was anticipated, for on 15th January, 1738/9, it was stated:

"Whereas Mr. Sloane the P'son employed by this Trust to Draw a plan of the Roads appointed to be amended by the late Act of Parliament appeared with the said Plan, which is approved by this Trust. It is therefore Ordered that the Sum of twelve Guineas be paid him pursuant to his Contract on the 23rd of October last and the Sum of two pounds twelve Shillings and Sixpence for Vellum and Binding the Book which was agreed by the said Contract to be paid at the Charge of this Trust and also One Guinea for his making a General Map of the said Road Extra of his Contract, in all amounting to the Sum of Sixteen pounds five shillings and Sixpence, and that a warrant be made for the Same was accordingly done."

At the next meeting (5th March, 1738) another minute relating to the "Table" is recorded:

"Ordered that a Suffict. number of the Distances on this Road, measured by Charles Sloane be printed for the use of this Trust and delivered to the Trustees, distinguishing the Distance of Road in Each parish."

Such were the matters that brought Charles Sloane to notice and which opened up an interesting line of investigation. He evidently created a favourable impression upon the Trustees though, to a hardened interviewer of candidates for positions, it might appear that an effort was being made to overawe the Trustees by a display of official learning, if not indeed jargon. A Hypothenusall is not, as might be inferred, any special kind of surveying instrument, but our old schoolboy

Euclidian bogey, the Hypothenuse of a right-angled triangle, and all Sloane was saying was that he proposed to measure the perpendicular height of all hills (with the theodolite) and the slope length with Gunter's Chain, from which all other dimensions and angles could be calculated. The map he produced is missing but a copy of his table of Distances does survive, and because it contains some interesting local topographical details, it is here reproduced (Fig. 3), though its study must not be allowed to divert attention from a diversion. Charles Sloane was born either in Gravesend or Milton in 1690 but very little can be gleaned of his ancestry, though the fact that he named his second son Hans might suggest an association with the family of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753). But Sir Hans died without issue or collateral heirs, and the baronetcy died with him, and it seems more likely that the name was bestowed as a tribute to the great man, with perhaps a hope that the two families might be associated in the public mind, if nothing more.

Another unresolved matter is that of Sloane's early training. He was an undoubtedly skilful map draughtsman and it may be asked whether he was not a pupil of Robert Felgate who calls himself "philomath" on a MS. map of Aldham in Essex in the Essex County Archives at Chelmsford. This map is dated 1675 and, as Felgate was a native of Gravesend, the possibility of the two men having some association cannot be ignored.

Little of Sloane's professional life is known before 1732, when, at the age of 42 he was selected to rebuild the Church of St. George, Gravesend. There are full accounts of this rebuilding in the well-known histories of Pocock and Cruden and recently some fresh matter has been printed by the late librarian of Gravesend, A. J. Philip. From these sources it can be presumed that Sloane had been in practice before this date and that he was not unknown to the more prominent men of the town. In the agreement to build the church (printed in full in Philip, pp. 132-7), Sloane is described as a carpenter, but this need not be taken literally. The term "architect" seems to have been reserved for the greater lights of the profession; those of lesser stature were "craftsmen." Such another was Matthew Spray of Deptford, who built (and presumably designed) the new parish church of Woolwich about the same time; he was described as a "bricklayer."

Sloane's next engagement was that already mentioned, the survey for the New Cross Trust, and another survey, with three well-drawn maps in the K.A.S. collections at Maidstone, shows him at work for Jarvis Maplesden of Shorne, planning and recording his estate there, in 1743. From 1744 to 1764 Sloane appears to have been engaged in erecting the new Gaol at Maidstone. In J. M. Russell's *History of Maidstone*, 1881, p. 285, it is stated:

A TABLE of the *Kentish* Roads near *London*, actually measured by Order of the Trustees for amending the said Roads.

Miles.	Furlongs.	Links.	Names of Places or Stations.	Miles.	Furlongs.	Links.	Differences.	Miles.	Furlongs.	Links.	Names of Places or Stations.	Miles.	Furlongs.	Links.	Differences.		
0	0	000	_____	14	2	873	1	6	2	338	The End of <i>Bexley</i> Parish on the Left Hand, joining to <i>Eltham</i> .	8	0	531	_____		
0	1	197	_____	14	1	676	1	6	4	371	_____	8	0	118	_____		
0	2	394	_____	13	6	879	2	7	283	6	7	913	_____	7	1	900	_____
1	2	283	_____	13	0	190	6	7	0	183	_____	7	1	900	_____		
1	3	166	_____	12	7	797	0	7	1	43	_____	7	1	900	_____		
1	5	714	_____	12	5	159	2	7	1	208	_____	7	0	661	_____		
1	7	105	_____	12	3	768	1	8	5	745	_____	5	5	118	_____		
1	7	086	_____	12	1	787	1	8	6	705	_____	5	4	168	_____		
2	4	250	_____	11	6	633	3	9	0	502	_____	5	1	171	_____		
2	9	136	_____	11	5	537	0	9	3	403	_____	4	7	471	_____		
3	7	613	_____	11	3	261	2	9	7	602	_____	4	3	371	_____		
3	0	941	_____	11	1	121	1	9	7	924	_____	4	2	949	_____		
3	0	597	_____	10	7	276	2	10	1	444	_____	4	2	429	_____		
3	0	968	_____	10	3	905	3	10	2	581	_____	4	0	191	_____		
4	1	565	_____	10	0	308	3	11	7	918	_____	3	9	555	_____		
4	3	266	_____	9	7	605	0	11	4	787	_____	3	6	086	_____		
4	3	996	_____	9	6	877	0	12	0	184	_____	3	2	569	_____		
4	6	624	_____	9	4	249	2	12	3	708	_____	3	1	765	_____		
4	7	296	_____	9	3	577	0	12	6	835	_____	3	0	035	_____		
5	0	021	_____	9	2	872	0	13	0	619	_____	3	2	214	_____		
5	6	335	_____	8	4	538	6	13	1	739	_____	3	1	134	_____		
6	2	068	_____	8	0	805	3	13	6	061	_____	3	0	412	_____		
6	2	338	_____	8	0	135	0	14	2	873	_____	3	0	000	_____		
The Distance between <i>Dartford</i> Church and _____				The Distance of which from the Stones-End in <i>Kent-Street</i> is _____				The Distance between <i>Dartford</i> Church and _____				The Distance of which from the Stones-End in <i>Kent-Street</i> is _____					
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Part of the Road leading to Tunbridge.

From New-Cross Turnpike to the top of	0	6	972
Loam-Pit-Hill, in <i>Levyham</i> Parish,	0	3	338
Thence to <i>Levyham</i> Bridge,	0	5	687
Thence to <i>Levyham</i> Church-Yard,	0	4	282
Thence to <i>Rutley-Green</i> ,	0	4	106
Thence to Five-Field-Lane,	0	6	101
Thence to the first Mill-pond at <i>South-End</i>	3	7	684

N. B. *Almost* 8 Inches, (or just 7 1/2 Inches) make 1 Link; 100 Links make 1 Chain; 10 Chains make 1 Furlong; (or 1000 Links make 1 Furlong) and 8 Furlongs make 1 Statute Mile.

The Use of the TABLE.

When any intermediate Place is given, you may thus find its Distance from either of the extrem Places. As if you would know, for example, how far *Wellend* is either from *Dartford* Church, or from the Stones-End at *Kent-Street*: you may thus read it in the Table. 4 Miles, 7 Furlongs, 296 Links, is the Distance between *Dartford* Church and the Middle of *Wellend*. The Distance of which from the Stones-End in *Kent-Street* is 9 Miles, 3 Furlongs, 577 Links. And the like in all other Cases.

Also by the Column of Differences you may know the Distance of any two intermediate Places. Thus, from the Entrance upon *Bexley* Heath, to the Bounds of *Crayford* Parish joining to *Bexley*, is 1 Furlong, 330 Links: Thence to the Tree on *Bexley* Heath is 2 Furlongs, 655 Links Thence to the Golden-Lion Ale-House, (or the End of *Bexley* Heath) is 3 Furlongs, 371 Links. Therefore adding these three Differences together, the whole Extent of *Bexley* Heath will be found 7 Furlongs, 356 Links.

The Cross-Road to Deptford.

From the South-End of the River Foot-way at <i>Levyham</i> to <i>Greenwich</i> Parish on the Left Hand,	0	3	711
Thence to the same Parish on the Right,	0	0	917
Thence to the Three Crowns Ale-house,	0	0	770

From the Turn-pike to Bermondsey.

To <i>Bermondsey</i> Parish,	0	0	365
To the Stones-End,	0	6	444
	0	6	809

Measured in the Year 1738,

By CHARLES SLOANE, of *Graveyard*.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON SOME KENT ROADS

1744. The site of the new prison, on the south side of East Lane (now King Street). Plan prepared by Mr. C. Sloane, for felons and debtors. Completed 1764.

and there is a drawing facing p. 286 by William Shipley, of this building as it was at the time of its erection.

During this period Sloane was chosen by his fellow citizens to be Mayor of Gravesend (1746-7). Evidently his work at Maidstone gave him plenty of time for other activities, and he still carried out land surveys, as a map in the Kent County Archives (U 86 P 9) of the "Arable and Woodland in the parish of Hernehill," the property of Joseph Brook of Rochester, clearly shows. This map is somewhat damaged and does not show Sloane at his generally high standard of draughtsmanship.

In 1742 Sloane had been engaged on some minor work at Rochester Cathedral, chiefly in the quire, but in 1749 he had designed and was erecting a new steeple. For this, according to Thorpe's *Antiquities*, p. 183, he made a wooden model, which was then still preserved in St. William's Chapel. Unfortunately it cannot now be found, which is rather a pity, for in all likelihood (Sloane, it must be recalled, was a "carpenter") it may have been by his own hands. *Arch. Cant.*, XXIII, p. 284, shows an illustration of one of the great buttresses "built in pursuance of the advice of the late Mr. Sloane," but there must be an error here, for Sloane did not die till 1764. The remainder of his work at Rochester is detailed in *Arch. Cant.*, XXXIII, p. 302.

In 1753 Sloane was once more employed by the New Cross Trust, this time to survey and report on the condition of Crayford Bridge, and in 1759 he was preparing a book of plans of the Cobham Estates which were, in 1900, in the Cobham Hall Estate Office (*Arch. Cant.*, XXIV, p. 89). In the list of the Masters of the Gravesend Free School, a Charles Sloane appears from 1754 to 1757. This is doubtfully our Charles Sloane, who would then be in his late sixties. Judging from his will (see *post*) he does not appear ever to have been in such circumstances that would have warranted him accepting such a poorly remunerated post, and this kind of work does not seem to be his *métier*. More probably, this is Sloane's eldest son, who would at this time be in his thirties.

There is little that can be said about his private and domestic life that cannot be gathered from his will, but that document is silent concerning one matter. It seems to be certain that Sloane in his lifetime suffered from some kind of persecution, jealousy or even slander. The inscription on his tombstone, "Here no envy swells" (but for this see later), and one or two vague remarks in the will itself together with even vaguer traditions, all point in this direction, but up

to the present nothing tangible has emerged to elucidate what is indeed a peculiar phrase on a tombstone.

But Sloane was an ageing and maybe a sick man when he undertook his last work, the building of Gravesend Town Hall in 1764. This still remains, though a new frontage has been added to the original work. The rear portion is definitely Sloane's, and a straight joint on the south side wall clearly indicates the addition. Shortly after in the same year, he died.

The will of "Charles Sloane of the parish of Milton next Gravesend" is dated 4th August, 1760. He left to his wife and daughter jointly all his Shop(!) goods, Household effects, Linen, Plate, Ready Money and Book Debts, the Interest on £200 Consolidated 5 per cent Annuities and £100 Stock in 3 per cent Annuities, these two last items to remain till his wife's death or remarriage when they were to be sold and the proceeds divided among his surviving children. We have little information about Sloane's wife; the date of the marriage, her maiden and christian name have not come to light though it is likely that it was Mary, for the daughter is so called and the family grave gives "M."

Charles Sloane junior, the eldest son, took up his father's profession. His name is found on a map of Great Bardfield (D/DC 10/3) among the Essex archives—"Charles Sloane Junior of Wardour Street" which is dated 1761, which may give a date for his leaving the Free School to set up for himself. His father's will left him all his books on architecture and mathematics, and instruments, the rents and profits of a garden in West Street, Gravesend, "where once stood the house of William Appleby." Hans, the younger son, was to have his father's Chambers's Dictionary, Philosophical Transactions and a choice from the remainder of his library, also the rents and profits from a house in Prettywick Lane in Chalk. All his other property was vested in his two sons with the rents reserved to his wife so long as she was unmarried but in that event £20 per annum, which sum was to be continued after the mother's death or remarriage, to the daughter Mary. The will next gives directions for his funeral and monument to be erected. He was to be buried in a lead-lined coffin, carried by six strong men through the White Hart yard to St. George's churchyard, as privately as possible, and interred at the west end of the Church steeple, "for he knows the walls are good and will not suffer from the erection of any monument." "So much for Vanity," he goes on, and then gives instructions that all his private papers are to be kept for a year and then burnt "lest any bad use be made of them." He ends with a tribute to his wife for the care bestowed on him when he was ill, regrets that she would not assist him in making any dispositions of his property and trusts he has made a fair and just distribution and hopes there will be no differences among his children. He concludes with a sketch and details of the monument

he wishes to have erected, with the simple and brief wording it still bears (the monument is on the west wall of the church adjacent to the tower), but adds a characteristic comment: "Do not let the mason add any of his own nonsense to this; here is vanity enough." One matter is, however, solved. The monument itself and naturally all transcripts, give the strange inscription "Here no Envy Swells" which to me has always appeared nonsense, and the obvious amendment "Dwells" would have been accepted, but for these unimpeachable authorities. But the will makes it clear that Sloane did write "Dwells" and the stone did, after all, suffer from the "mason's nonsense." The riddle still remains—what was this envy, malice and all uncharitableness that Sloane imagined pursued him through life, what malice and jealousy did he suffer from his fellow townsmen? We may never know, but from all this Sloane emerges as one of the "little masters" of Georgian architecture. This, in spite of Mr. Seymour of Canterbury, who left it on record that the church of St. George was "not calculated to inspire that reverential Awe of the Deity, like our ancient Gothic Structure."

THE BRANDBRIDGES TURNPIKE. (Fig. 4)

Brandbridges is the name of a district in the parish of East Peckham about two miles north of Paddock Wood station, and today of quite insignificant importance. It was otherwise in the early part of the eighteenth century, for here the river Medway becomes navigable for barges capable of carrying heavy loads, and as the road comes quite close to the river, a wharf was established to deal with this traffic. In the early part of the century much of this was concerned with the iron industry of the Weald, and not a small part of it consisted of guns cast at the Heathfield furnace of John Fuller and destined for the Ordnance stores at the Tower of London or the proving grounds at Woolwich Warren. Such traffic played havoc with the ill-made highways and cast upon the parish surveyor a task of maintenance that he could not perform. Therefore it is not surprising that some of the local gentry and other interested parties took advantage of the fashion of the time, and applied for an Act of Parliament that would authorize the provision of a Turnpike Road, thereby relieving the adjacent parishes of some of their liabilities. This was done by the Act 7 Geo. III, c.91 (1766-67) entitled: An Act for repairing the Road from the Brick Kilns on East Malling Heath to the Turnpike Road on Pembury Green and from Brandbridges to the Four Wents near Matfield Green. Subsequent Acts, 29 Geo. III, c.100 (1788-89), 51 Geo. III, c. 206 (1810-11) and 10 Geo. IV, c.56 (1829-30), enlarged the scope of the original enactment, that of 1810 authorizing the construction of a new road between Hale Street in East Peckham and the Mereworth—

Hadlow road at Mereworth Cross. The sketch map (Fig. 4) shows the course of these roads, and it is clear that a considerable area was

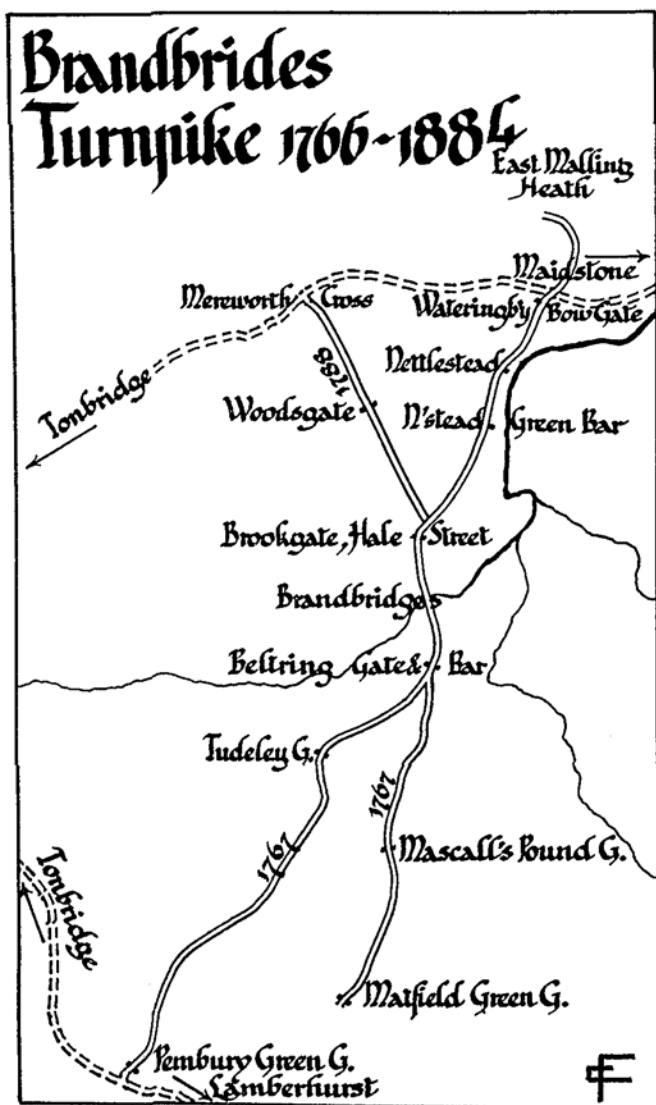


FIG. 4.

opened up and the wharf at Brandbridges was available to carry much more traffic.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON SOME KENT ROADS

Of the history of this road in its early life there is not much to record, as the minute book for this period is missing. This is a great loss, as it might conceivably give much information concerning the working of the Trust. On the other hand, judging from the one minute book that has survived in the Kent County Archives at Maidstone, the entries are not very informative. This book records the latter half of the Trust's existence, from the passing of the last of the Acts given above (1829) to the extinction of the Trust in 1884. Probably during this half-century the character of the road use changed—and certainly the carriage of heavy ordnance ceased as the Wealden iron industry languished.

The financial side of any Trust is its most interesting aspect, for from the very beginning every Turnpike Trust started life with a load of debt, which was very reluctantly reduced. The Trust was content to pay the interest on the various loans and mortgages, but beyond this little was done to liquidate the burden of debt which, in most cases, remained unpaid till the Trust itself was wound up. The Brand-bridges minute book does give the yearly balance, and these are put in graphical form in Fig. 5. The most remarkable thing here is the

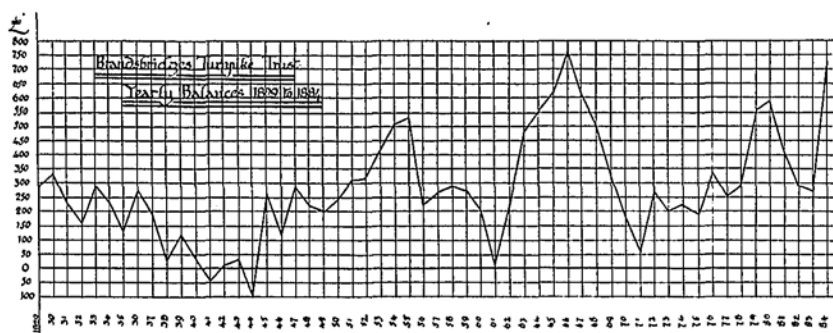


FIG. 5.

fluctuating nature of these balances, once or twice descending below the zero line and once or twice soaring into the £700 level, but always erratic and uneven. Here the minute book fails in giving any explanation of these changes, whether of increased or unusual expenditure, increased tolls or further loans, even as the entries of income and expenditure are likewise lacking. The only exception is in the matter of income derived from the auction of tolls. There were, considering the comparatively short length of the roads, an unusual number of gates and bars, at Wateringbury, Hale Street, Pembury, Woodgate, Tudeley, Beltring, Hatch Wood, Matfield and Nettlestead. The first auction recorded in the minute book is June, 1838, when the gates at

Beltring, Watlingbury, Hatch Wood, Matfield and Pembury were let to Mr. Joshua Hands of Paddington for £790. The following year three of these were let for £486 and in 1840 £222 is recorded, but this was for some only, as the lessee—a Mr. Smith of Canterbury—was offered Beltring and Matfield for £300 extra. In 1842 the whole series of gates was offered to Smith for £610 but he would only tender £600. The following year sees the arrival of the great farmer of Turnpike Tolls, Lewis Levy, who in conjunction with Smith offers the huge sum of £1,250, which probably explains the big jump in balances for 1844. Smith was alone in 1844 and would only offer £1,040. In 1845, £900, and 1846, £912, were offered, but from 1847 to 1871 the tolls were in hand, and collected by the Trust. This appears to be the most prosperous period, with generally good balances, but once more in 1871 the tolls were let for £888. For the remainder of the life of the Trust the gates realized: 1872, £760; 1873, £737; 1874, £750; 1875, £760; 1876, £775 p.a. for three years, and from 1879 till the expiration of the Trust in 1883, £775 p.a.

The administration of the business of the Trust was in the main left in the hands of the Clerk and the Surveyor, the Trustees rarely meeting more than once a year. The first meeting of the new body of Trustees on 3rd June, 1829, only produced nine members, including Viscount Torrington and Sir William Twysden, Bt. They were presented with a bill for the expenses of the Act £194 4s. 11d. and the Surveyor asked for £78 8s. 1d. for road upkeep. The Trustees demurred somewhat at this latter sum, and evidently reprimanded the Surveyor, William Lawrence. They paid it, however, but the Surveyor asked to be relieved of his office. Other minor matters were dealt with, but the great topic, always a serious matter, was the rivalry of the railway. In 1836 the South Eastern Railway was extending its lines and wished to pass over the roads controlled by the Trust at Watlingbury. This was strenuously opposed, but the powers of the new locomotion were too strong, and the Turnpikes were fighting a losing battle. In 1845 the Watlingbury Toll Gate was moved to the deviation made by the Railway Company on the north side of the turning to Bow Bridge, with bars across both the bridge and the entrance to the railway station itself, so that intending rail passengers had to pay road toll if they came on horseback or in their carriages. Further, a short cut across Alderman Lucas's ground was not to be used by the public, only by certain specified tenants.

"Statute Labour," that thorn in the flesh of Trustees and parishioners alike, caused here, as elsewhere, continual trouble. The actual labour had been commuted into an apportioned assessment, but this was reluctantly paid, and in 1848, Brenchley, Yalding and Nettlestead parishes were told that no repairs would be done in their districts until

the arrears of compositions were paid. Similarly at Pembury, the road was in a very bad state and the parish was informed that they must supply and cart the stones if the Trust was to carry out the repairs. This was clearly illegal, as statute labour had been abolished in 1835; though it is possible, though no record is existing, that the farmers and other ratepayers had exercised the right, given in the Act, of still performing statute labour instead of paying the hated rate. Here, however, they did nothing, and the Home Office in 1868 felt compelled to complain and call a conference of "way wardens" of Pembury, Tudeley and Capel, who ultimately agreed to put the roads in repair for the sum of £100 p.a. paid by the Trustees, who saw in this an easy way out of their difficulties. As a Trust it must be admitted that the Brandbridges gentlemen fell much below the standard set by their fellows in other parts of the county, but even in 1850 this was still a remote district. It was the railway that opened up the countryside (Paddock Wood did not come into being till the railway came), but it was also the railway that brought about first animosity, then indifference, and finally extinction of the Turnpike Trusts. In 1874 these Trustees were demanding £1 (? per truck) for permission to shunt railway rolling stock across the road from factory to siding. The winding up of the Trust is not without interest. By 1883 only some fifty or sixty Trusts remained functioning in England, and this at Brandbridges was among them, when the order came that the Trust would terminate on 1st November, 1883. The Trustees lost no time. They immediately discharged their surveyor, the gates were thrown open, and with the toll houses offered for sale. Woods Gate was sold for £55, Hatch Gate for £75, Beltring for the same, Brook for £60, Pembury for £105 with £3 15s. extra for the lodge, Mascall's for £20, Wateringbury for £120, Nettlestead Bar for £1 5s. which was also the amount realized for stone in stock. The chief bone of contention was the South Eastern Railway, who simply sat tight and refused to assist in any way, would not purchase the gates or bars that had in the past limited access to their premises, and mildly had their revenge for slights received when the Trust was in power. So long did this wrangle continue that the Trustees were compelled to ask for an extension of time to complete the winding up of their affairs. At last, on 29th May, 1884, the final meeting of the Trust was held. The total in hand after all small accounts had been paid was £728 13s. 6d., but against this was a claim for £1,120 1s. 10d., balance of a loan by a deceased Treasurer, Mr. Boorman, and now claimed by his Executor, always referred to as "Parson Wild." The Trustees wished to make some small recompense for loss of office to their late surveyor, who had served them well for over twenty years, and proposed the enormous sum of £10, but to do this they had to obtain the sanction of the mortgagee. Parson Wild

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON SOME KENT ROADS

stoutly refused to give any such concession, claimed and got the whole of the balance of the funds as satisfaction for his mortgage, and departed. So did those Trustees that were present at the Star Hotel in Maidstone, and the story of this Trust is told. It was not a very good example of such a body, though it had no definite vices. It was well served by its officers, the Treasurer, the Clerk and the Surveyor, even though one of the Surveyors was summarily dismissed in 1862 as "guilty of peculation." Nothing is recorded of this offence, but it was the year when the balance in hand was nearly zero, £2 7s. 1½d. to be exact. This may probably account for the sharp decline in assets for 1861.