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## THE BIDDENDEN AND BOUNDGATE TURNPIKE ROAD. 1766-1883

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THE Turnpike System of road maintenance was introduced into Kent in 1709 by the Act 8 Anne c. 20, whereby the control of the Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells roads passed to Trustees appointed by that Act. It was nearly half a century before this admittedly successful experiment was applied to the Weald. Naturally the three great highways into the county from the metropolis, the Dover, Hythe and Rye roads, were the first to receive attention, but even here the process of turnpiking was piecemeal and they were not completely in the hands of Trustees till well into the eighteenth century. Until these main arteries were in a state of reasonable repair there was not much to be gained by repairing the highways up from the Weald.

But from 1750 till 1775 there was an almost feverish haste to obtain Acts of Parliament which would sanction improvements in those Kentish roads which had had for a long time an evil reputation among both travellers and residents. This was particularly so in the Weald, and now from Cranbrook and its immediate neighbourhood, greatly improved communications began to appear, linking up that remote district with Maidstone, Ashford, Chatham, Faversham and Canterbury. It will be observed that the general line of advancement was northwards, to clear as soon as might be the treacherous clays of the Weald, to reach as quickly as possible the drier, firmer terrain of the southern slope of the North Downs. One of these roads was that from Biddenden through Smarden, Pluckley, Little Chart and Charing, to meet the already formed road from Ashford to Faversham, at a place called Boundgate (Fig. 1). The Act authorizing the reconstruction of this road was in the usual form. After reciting the course of the new highway and emphasizing the ruinous and "foundered" state of the existing way, a long list of Trustees followed, containing nearly a hundred names, including many of the notable families of the county, the Hales, the Knatchbulls, the Derings, Sackvilles and Filmers with a host of lesser folk, landed gentry and the clergy. Of this imposing array, it must be admitted that this was the first and only appearance of most of them in the annals of the Trust; the Act specified seven Trustees as a quorum, and this seems to have been taken as a directive, for rarely did more than that number appear at the regular meetings.

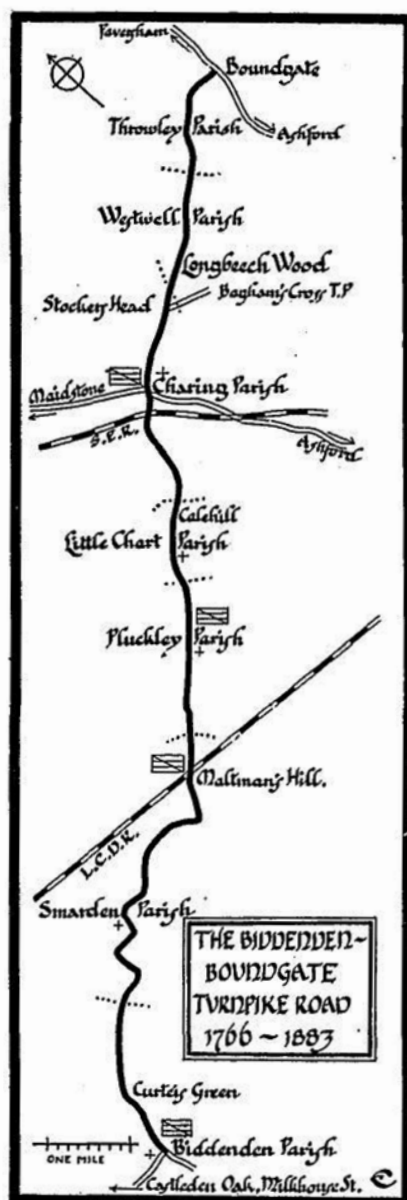


FIG. 1

The Trust was empowered to erect not more than five gates on the road, and the list of tolls (which were to be paid before passing through any gate) was followed by a long list of exemptions, giving people going to church, soldiers and their baggage-wagons, vagrants with passes travelling to their place of settlement, carts with road-repair material or farm produce and many other classes of user, free passage over the road. Specifically no tolls were to be taken in Biddenden on the roads leading to Castleden Oak or Milkhouse Street in Cranbrook, presumably because these particular roads had been turnpiked in 1761 under another Trust. The old "Statute Duty" was continued for such stretches of the road that came under the new authority, mortgages could be raised on the security of the tolls and gravel could be dug almost anywhere under certain conditions. Land could be acquired for widening and other improvements, and compositions could be entered into either for tolls or in lieu of statutory duties. The first meeting of the Trust was fixed for the sixteenth day of June, 1766, at the house of William Rayner, at the sign of the Swan in the main street of Charing, where the old iron frame of the signboard still projects from the frontage of the private house which was the inn before the newer "Swan" was built on the main road.

Of the activities of the Trust in its early days not much can be said, for the only minute book of which I know (in my possession) does not commence till 1836, and thus only contains the records of the latter half of its long life—the Trust was extinguished in 1883, a fairly late date—but other information can be gathered from odd memoranda, newspaper advertisements and a study of the various Acts of Parliament that extended the life of the Trust, on the usual grounds that the debts incurred and loans outstanding could not be repaid unless the term of years could be lengthened. This excuse was generally a poor one, for no trust ever paid its debts till outside pressure and a certainty of extinction was apparent. The original Act of 1766 was for a term of twenty-one years and was therefore due to expire in 1787. 25 Geo. III c. 93 (1785) gave it another twenty-one years till 1808, and 48 Geo. III c. 19 (1807) repeated this, making the year 1829 the limit, but in that year an entirely new Act was passed (10 Geo. IV c. 22) which repealed all of the previous Acts, re-enacted their principal provisions and extended the life of the Trust by another thirty-one years. Finally, an Act of 24 Vict. (1861) granted another twenty-one years, which, including an extra year granted by the Turnpike Continuation Act of 1860, made the last year of the Trust's life 1882, and it was definitely extinguished by 46/47 Vict. c. 21 in 1883.

Turning now to the "Order Book" of the Trust before mentioned, the opening page gives the length of road in each of the parishes and the composition due from each in respect of that length of road, thus :

# BIDDENDEN AND BOUNDGATE TURNPIKE ROAD, 1766-1883

## Biddenden to Boundgate.

Length of Road measured by Mr.

Thomas Thurston on 2nd March 1840.

Compositions					M	Fr.	r.
£6 pr mile	12	13	6	In Biddenden	2	0	36
£6	21	7	6	Smarden	3	2	20
£6	11	14	9	Pluckley	1	3	66
£5	5	4	8	Little Chart	1	0	15
£6	15	16	10½	Charing	2	2	45
£4	6	19	9	Westwell	1	2	79
£4	5	18	6	Throwley	1	1	74
<hr/>							
	79	15	6½		14	2	15
<hr/>							

There are later pencil amendments ; for instance Biddenden is assessed at £15 16s. 10d. and Smarden at £26 14s. 4d. while the other parishes are marked " same," but there is no clue to the date of these amendments, nor is it clear what arithmetical processes convert, for instance, the figures for Smarden, Pluckley, Charing, Westwell and Throwley into 3m. 4f. 20r., 1m. 7f. 26r., 2m. 5f. 5r., 1m. 5f. 39r. and 1m. 3f. 34r. respectively, as given on a loose sheet of paper found between the pages of a copy of the Acts of Parliament relating to the road. On the flyleaf of this same Act book is another estimate of the road and its revenue, viz. 15m. 0f. 4r. of highway assessed at a flat rate of £5 per mile producing £75 12s. This seems to be dated in pencil 1806 (?) and it also gives further information :

Total amount of money borrowed on Mortgage of the	
Tolls	£1,925
Purchase money of land taken in to the Road	38 5 0
	<hr/>
	£2,063 5 0
(again arithmetic seems odd)	
Yearly Interest at 5 per cent on the Mortgage	£96 5 0
do. of the purchase money of the Land	1 18 3
	<hr/>
	£98 3 3
	<hr/>

Two other documents in my possession might be mentioned before the Order Book is dealt with, as they form, as it were, a link between the early history for which there is little authority and the details shortly to be recorded. The first is a mortgage of the tolls to Abraham Jarvis for £200 dated 12th January, 1767 ; the second is dated 88 years later but relates to the same mortgage. Over £440 was due or had been paid in interest alone and the principal was not in any way

reduced. By 1855 the original mortgagee and many of his immediate descendants were dead, and there were six people, some the widows of grandchildren and such remote legatees, who now appeared to claim their inheritance. The problem was not easy of solution, as it was feared there were other claimants as yet unknown, but one claimant's share (including unpaid and accrued interest) £48, making the total value of the mortgage at the date of its redemption, £288. It was this type of finance that made the Turnpike Trusts almost a permanency, as generally speaking they could not be extinguished till all debts were liquidated, and it also led to all kinds of doubtful expedients when the end of the Trust was inevitable. And now to the Order Book itself.

The minutes open (14th February, 1836) with a matter that was already casting a dark shadow on the very existence of nearly all Turnpike Trusts, the threat of the new-fangled iron roads and railway trains which were now thrusting their tentacles in all directions and replacing the stage coach and horses by the steam engine. For some roads this was a very serious menace and brought about the early downfall of many of them. The Biddenden road did not fear any such threat, as its route was at right angles to any proposed railway and the most to be asked was the right of passage over or under the Trust's roads. Hence when the two rival lines, the South Eastern and the London, Chatham and Dover Railways, asked permission of the Trust to traverse their road, the Trust as a matter of principle refused to give any such privilege and also declared their determination "to remain neuter on both Occasions." There had evidently also been some road works carried out near Calehill Heath and Little Chart church, for Thomas Thurston, the Acting Surveyor, was paid a bill of £11 16s. 6d. for surveys, plans and sections. Thomas Thurston was one of the great road surveyors of Kent, ranking with members of the Collis and Ledger families. He was the founder of the firm of Burrows of Ashford, and his skilled and practical knowledge was utilized on nearly a dozen other Kentish roads in the Ashford area (Fig. 2).<sup>1</sup> He is buried in Ashford Church where a wall tablet records: Thomas Thurston ob. Mar. 18th 1881 aged 82, and his wife Anne Whitfield and five children.

It is not possible to identify with certainty the nature of these alterations and repairs; they were probably minor works, but of greater importance was the state of Little Chart Bridge which was a County responsibility. This necessitated a journey to Canterbury for an order from the Justices to indict the county. There were also reports of the bad state of the road, especially the Wealden section, and the whole question of the upkeep was to be considered at the next meeting.

This took place on 7th April, when Thurston reported that the

<sup>1</sup> See *Kentish Estates Journal*, No. 60, Pt. 2, 1936.

# TURNPIKE ROADS.

From Ashford to Maidstone,  
From Ashford to Tenterden,  
From Maidstone to Biddenden  
From Ashford to Hamstreet,  
From Biddenden to Bound Gate,  
From Charing to Chilham,

From Ashford to { Canterbury,  
Faversham,  
and Hythe,  
From Appledore (thro' Tenterden) to Cranbrook,  
From Castleton's Oak (thro' Biddenden) to  
Milkhouse Street.

And the Woodchurch Turnpike Roads.

The Trustees of the above Roads have resolved to enforce the following provisions of the General Turnpike Acts.

## Persons Driving without Reins

and riding on any Waggon or Cart upon any Turnpike Road, without some other Person on foot or on horseback to guide the horse or horses therein, and such horses not being more than two drawing the same; are liable to a penalty of FORTY SHILLINGS. 3 Geo. 4, cap. 126, sec. 132.

## Owner's Name of every Waggon

Wain, Cart, or other such Carriage, shall be painted in one or more straight lines upon some conspicuous part of the right or off side, or upon the off side shafts thereof; if such name or place of abode be false or fictitious, or if such Carriage be used on any Turnpike Road without such name &c, the owner is liable to a penalty of FIVE POUNDS. Sec. 15.

## Any Driver leaving Block Stones

on any Turnpike Road after having blocked or stopped any Cart, Waggon, or other Carriage in going up a hill, is liable to a penalty of FORTY SHILLINGS, over and above the damage caused thereby; and descending a hill with a wheel locked without a skidpan, to a penalty of TWENTY SHILLINGS. Sec. 121, and 124.

## Any Hawker, Higglar, Gipsy,

or other person who shall pitch any Tent or encamp on any Turnpike Road or shall LEAVE ANY WAGGON, CART, or other Carriage upon the side thereof, longer than is necessary to load or unload the same, (except in case of accident, and then no longer than may be necessary to remove the same,) or IF ANY PERSON SHALL LAY ANY TIMBER, MANURE, or other thing whatsoever upon, or on the sides thereof, he shall be liable to a penalty of FORTY SHILLINGS. Sec. 124.

## If any Horse, Sheep, Beast,

or Cattle of any kind, be found tethered, wandering, straying, or lying about any Turnpike Road, the same will be impounded, and a penalty of TWO SHILLINGS per head will be enforced. 4, Geo. 4, c. 95, Sec. 75.

By Order of the Trustees,

**THOMAS THURSTON,**

SURVEYOR.

ASHFORD,  
August 28, 1847.

Elliott and Son, Printers, Ashford.

FIG. 2



Wealden road when first reconstructed was only covered with half the proper quantity of stones and that this, combined with the recent wet season, made it necessary to put down about two cords of stone per rod, or alternatively a lesser amount of stone with a gravel capping. The surveyor was asked to find the most suitable material. The entry to Little Chart Court was to be remade and the cost shared between the owner and the Trust, the latter's contribution amounting to £3. There was a certain amount of "give and take" between the Trust and adjoining owners to improve the road generally.

The preceding summary gives a general idea of what went on at the meetings of Trustees. Five meetings a year was the normal practice, and of these, three were purely formal with no business transacted, and certainly without a quorum. One meeting gave notice of the Annual Meeting and ordered the preparation and presentation of accounts, another gave notice when necessary of a meeting for auctioning the tolls, but for the rest, everything seems to have been left to the Surveyor and the Clerk, Weller Norwood of Charing, who was also Clerk of the Stocker's Head Trust.<sup>1</sup> In the following precis of the minutes only unusual variants of normal happenings or details that shed light on the particular problems of this road are mentioned. Annual Balances and income from the letting of the tolls are dealt with later.

Year 1836-7

9 May 1836. Nothing. 1 Aug. 1836. Nothing. 30th Oct. 1836. Nothing. 2 Jan. 1837. Annual Accounts and Estimates to be prepared. 23 March 1837. Accounts audited and ordered to be printed. Thurston appointed Surveyor at a salary of £25 per annum. That is the general picture of the administration, and it proceeds thus with little variation till the end of the Trust.

In April, 1838, some new Trustees were appointed in place of those that had died or left the district, and the following month saw the first recorded auction of the tolls. There were four tollgates on the line of the road, at Biddenden, Maltman's Hill, Pluckley and Charing. These were respectively let to John Austen, Gatekeeper of Maidstone, Alexander Bottle of Dover, John Austen and John Smith of Canterbury, and realized altogether £428. Judging from the prices obtained Biddenden and Charing were the most used gates, the others only fetching little over half of the sums paid for the busier ones. The re-measurement of the road (see p. 188) took place in 1840, but the rates per mile were put up to £10 in Smarden on the grounds that the sums arising from this charge were wholly insufficient for the purpose for which they were intended. This alteration was made by the Justices in Canterbury. There are yearly entries of interest being paid on the loan, but very rarely is the principal debt reduced. In 1843 a

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, LXX, p. 205.



curious contretemps occurred. The bidders were assembled for the auction of the tolls when the clerk announced that he had forgotten to advertise it as ordered in the Act. The sale was therefore postponed for a month, when Mr. Bottle of Dover, Grocer, took the whole series for £426 and was given a dinner for his trouble.<sup>1</sup>

In 1846 the railway question crops up again. The South Eastern, the Great Kent Atmospheric Railway and the Central Kent all submitted proposals and asked the Trustees whether they were still neutral or dissenting. This time the Trustees ordered the Clerk to inform the Solicitors to the various undertakings that their attitude was now one of dissent.<sup>2</sup>

In the same year the Trustees decided to keep the tolls in their own hands and to appoint Collectors of Tolls at 7s. per week, later on reduced to 6s. They were evidently dissatisfied with the bids made by the farmers of the toll; no figures are available for the actual amounts collected by the Trust, but quite clearly it was more advantageous to let the tolls than collect them, and the following year a return was made to the old custom, especially as there was an organized attempt at Biddenden to evade payment: the parishioners had constructed a good hard road to cut out the gate in the town. The reply of the Trustees was to transfer the gate and collector's house to a new position near the end of this by-pass. At the same meeting a Mr. Reece applied on behalf of the personal representative of the late Mr. John Holah for payment of a long arrear of interest on a loan of £200, originally granted to a Robert Spencer. This must have been many years earlier (no dates are given), for the Trustees pleaded the Statute of Limitations and declined to pay the arrears till opinion of Counsel had been obtained, together with the consent of all the other creditors. This sounds very much like sharp practice, but it does throw light on the financial problems that faced practically all turnpike authorities.

<sup>1</sup> This giving of a dinner or a money grant towards its cost was a common feature of most trusts. At Biddenden it continued till 1861 with sums varying from 30s. to 7s. 6d. It was then dropped but revived in 1875, but never more than 10s. was given, and in 1878 the "dinner" became "luncheon."

<sup>2</sup> These two railways were only part of the great number that were projected during the "railway mania" of the mid-forties of the nineteenth century. The Central Kent was mainly a Maidstone affair, the leading figure being a Mr. Wilson, a local solicitor. Plans were deposited every year from 1836 to 1842, but though each showed some modification of its predecessor, nothing came of the proposals, even though the South-Eastern Railway subsidized the scheme to the sum of £6,000 with a seat on the Board.

The Kentish Atmospheric Railway was more concerned with linking up Kent with the Croydon Line. It likewise never reached fruition, though its real sponsors were the directors of the Croydon Railway. The intricacies of the relations between the South-Eastern, the London, Chatham and Dover, and the Brighton Lines and their rivalries and jealousies are far too involved to be related here. There is much information about this matter in the Kent County Archives at Maidstone. (Information from Mr. Edwin Course.)

Biddenden once more appears as an unruly member. The gate was, in view of previous complaints, removed to Curteis Corner, about half a mile north of the town. To this the parish retorted by asking that the tolls at the gate should be reduced. This was declined on the grounds that the arrears of interest were very heavy, but, as already shown, there was a reluctance to pay these arrears if any opportunity offered. Charing, too, was becoming an expense. A scheme for the drainage of the town had involved the opening up of the roads and had cost the Trust some £20 in 1846. Now in the following year there were complaints of flooding due presumably to defective work. Thurston was consulted and another £45 was granted to the improvement of the sewer. Once again the Trust had to take over the collection of its tolls, as Mr. Bottle wished to be relieved of his task, and then the Trust suffered a severe loss in the death of their Clerk, Mr. Weller Norwood, who had piloted it for a long while. In fact to all intents and purposes he *was* the Trust, and in appointing his son, Mr. Edward Norwood, they were doing the wisest thing and ensured some continuity with no great change of policy. In 1850 a great figure in road administration appears on the scene in the person of James McAdam, one of the sons of the great James Loudon McAdam, whose name will always be associated with road construction and maintenance. This is not the place to dwell on the influence of this family nor the manner in which they indeed became the great "Colossi of English Roads," but this particular James was Surveyor-General of the Trust Roads and it was part of his duty to exercise some sort of control over them, as they were now beginning to attract some animosity and severe criticism. The Biddenden Trust was therefore asked what it was doing towards the extinction of its debt, according to the provisions of the 12/13 Vict. c. 87, and a request was made that the Trustees act according to that measure. The Trustees, feeling no doubt annoyed at the intrusion of an outsider, replied with some acerbity, that they were acting on the provisions of their own Act, and quoted the sections that were germane. They must, however, have been conscious of a guilty feeling, for at the same meeting it was again reported that there was an arrear of interest on a mortgage originally granted to Mr. Robert Spencer amounting to nearly a hundred pounds but it was maintained that the claimant, Mr. Holah, had not yet established his title and no such evidence had been submitted by 1852.

Routine matters, such as tollgate improvements, enforcement of the regulations against locked wheels instead of skid-pans on hills, and a further reduction of trust responsibility by vesting authority in only two Trustees, carried the Trust on till 1859 when the Biddenden controversy flared up again. The town said that all the money collected was not required and was certainly not spent on the town

roads. This was the everlasting dispute arising from contributions in lieu of statute duty, which duty had been abolished in favour of money payments in 1835, and Biddenden now said that no more payments would be made without an order from the Justices of the Peace. In the following year this unruly townlet was still persisting in its intransigence. But other matters were looming up. The old Treasurer, Thomas Rachell, was dead, and Baker Ashwell reigned in his stead, and one of his first actions was to establish a sinking fund for the liquidation of outstanding debts. There may have been wisdom in this, as the existing Act was due to expire in 1861, and true to type the Trustees were to apply for a new one, and it would materially assist that application if it could be shown that efforts were being made to extinguish its burden of debt. At the same time there was a discussion about an amalgamation with the Stocker's Head Trust, whose finances were in a very bad way. Unfortunately there is little or no information as to the condition of this Trust. The account of this road in *Arch. Cant.* LXX stopped short in 1849 when the available records cease, but its revenue was never very high and its upkeep expensive. For some time there had been close contacts with the Biddenden Road with officials and many Trustees in common, and the prospect of a new Act for the latter road seemed to offer a solution of the difficulties. Matters appeared to be progressing favourably in this direction. The creditors of both Trusts agreed to an amalgamation and for a continuance of a local Act rather than a permissive existence under a Continuing Act. The Draft Bill was read over and approved, the chief provision being that the tolls of both roads should be pooled and distributed or spent, three parts to Biddenden and one part to Stocker's Head. What actually happened is now impossible to say. The new Act was reported passed in August, 1861, but therein is not the slightest indication of amalgamation, and Stocker's Head Trust continued its solitary way to its end. Meanwhile the Biddenden road pursued its own way, with the new Treasurer acting as a new broom. He simplified the accounts, though, owing to the complete absence of any balance sheets of any date, no details of this reform can be given, but perhaps the withdrawal of any grant for the refreshment of those bidding for the tolls was one of his minor reforms. Complaints about the damage done to the roads by the appearance of steam engines on the highways may have warned the Trustees of a dark cloud of steam and smoke already threatening them, but a more domestic matter now demanded their attention. The roads of the Maidstone and Ashford Trust crossed the Biddenden roads in Charing village and for some short distance travelled along them. This Trust had now made a diversion, and all that was needed was a plain road crossing. In these circumstances a payment of £10 by Maidstone for this slight accommodation was to be withheld. Bidden-

den protested and sent a deputation, pointing out that the new road still crossed their highway. Maidstone persisted in its refusal to make any payment. It appeared, however, that there was some doubt as to the number of Maidstone Trustees present at the meeting that decided to withdraw the payment, and Biddenden seized on this and other slight infractions of the law and further asked that while these points were being fought out the payment for the current year be made, the question of arrears and future contributions to await the general decision. This was declined, and nothing was done till it was settled that Maidstone's action was contrary to law. Unless, therefore, the payment was made, a gate would be erected in Charing across the road and all Maidstone and Ashford traffic would have to pay a toll. This master stroke settled matters; Maidstone capitulated and agreed to pay and continue the £10 in dispute. Meanwhile the railway question was again before the Trustees, and in January, 1864, the proposed Maidstone to Ashford Railway was allowed to cross the road by a bridge, provided the parapets of this bridge were at least five feet high.

The Trust's activities once again pursued a quiet course, only ruffled now and then by the determination of Mr. Horton to run his traction engine on the road in spite of the warnings of the Trust and the Secretary of State. The Police and the Surveyor were warned to be on the road and take the appropriate steps for every infraction of the regulations. Or sometimes there was a serio-comic interlude, as when Mr. Thomas Street, bidding for the tolls on behalf of an absent principal, found himself without cash for the necessary deposit. Instead, he produced a heavy gold ring which the clerk accepted in lieu. The principal being still absent, he decided to relinquish the tolls, asked that they be put up again and requested the return of his ring. As the second auction produced a final bid £4 less than his own, the Clerk refused to do this, whereupon Mr. Street snatched his ring from the table where it was lying and refused to return it. The Clerk was asked to consider whether there had been an infraction of the law, and, if so, to take proceedings. Then the Maidstone affair revived again (1870). By this time the Maidstone Turnpike had been taken over by the Highways Board and this authority now offered but £5 for the privilege of crossing the Trust roads at Charing. Once again the old procedure was followed. £10 was demanded or a gate would be erected, and the Highway Board capitulated. Ashford next joined with Biddenden in declining to pay the increased compositions. Highway Boards had by this time come into operation, taking the place of the old parish Surveyor, and they were generally showing increased hostility to the entrenched position of the Turnpike Trusts everywhere, and Ashford was not behindhand in making its claims. The matter was taken to court, but no result seems to be recorded.

These Highway Boards continued to be a thorn in the side of the Trust. The Board's traction engine at Biddenden is reported to do more damage to the road than normal traffic, and the Tenterden Highway Board offered to take over the roads in the parish of Biddenden for a payment by the Trust of £16 2s. This offer was acceptable only if the Board would buy for £69 6s. 8d. road repair material recently put on and by the roadside, otherwise the Trust would press for the payment of £38 0s. 7d., the assessed composition for this part of the road.

Meanwhile the death of the Surveyor was reported, and a very efficient servant was lost to the Trust; his son Charles Thurston, who had been associated with his father since 1868, was appointed (1880) in his place, but in 1882 it was reported that "Mr. Thurston had neglected his duty, had not attended the meetings and had not produced vouchers for payment" so he was immediately discharged. A new Treasurer was also appointed, and amid all this upset it was announced that the Trust would come to an end on 1st November, 1883. In the midst of all the preparations for the dissolution of the Trust and the disposal of the toll houses Ashford announced its readiness to pay the disputed composition, and in gratitude the Trust gave it the snow-plough "being much out of repair." Then on 26th November, 1883, the last meeting of the Trust was held. The Clerk was instructed to make up the final accounts and dispose of the property. Two Trustees were deputed to sign all official documents on their behalf and provision was made for the repayment of all mortgages, claimants being given to the end of the year to submit their proofs. And so the Biddenden and Boundgate Trust came to its end after a life of one hundred and eighteen years of dull undistinguished activity.

The minutes are in the main bald and unilluminating, and it is clear that most of the work was carried out by the Clerk, the Surveyor and one or two Trustees. The Trust was efficient in an unimaginative way, and financially it managed to keep its head always above ruin, though it was only towards its end that it made any attempt to pay off its creditors, and this it did in a fashion common enough among trusts, by inviting tenders from its creditors for the sum they would accept for immediate repayment, which in some cases was almost as low as 50 per cent. It is the financial side of any trust that is the most important and valuable, as it shows up all the strength and weaknesses of the system. It must be remembered that most Trustees were deficient in any sort of business qualifications, and the wonder is that they survived as well and as long as they did. To give an adequate picture of the finance of this Trust is not easy. There are no complete accounts, and each yearly meeting was evidently satisfied with a statement of Balance in Hand. These are shown, to the nearest £25, on the accompanying chart (Fig. 3) and they make it clear that with the exception of 1861

these balances ranged between about £150 and £525. The drop referred to was probably caused by the bill of costs incurred in obtaining the new Act. The revenue from the tolls is not so easy to illustrate. There were some years when the tolls were in hand and not returned as separate items, and there are other times when some only of the gates

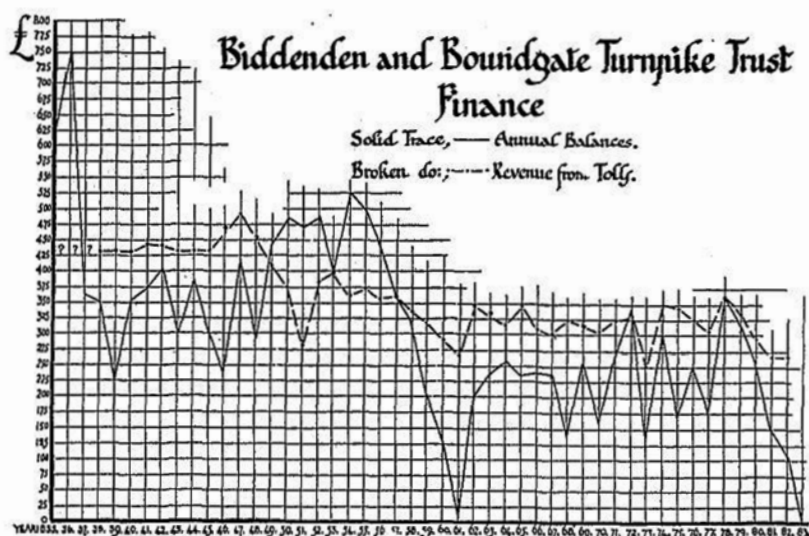


FIG. 3

were let and others retained, but as a general guide the second graph (in broken lines) indicates that a revenue of between £275 and £475 per annum was usual, though with a gradual decline as the Trust neared the time for extinction.