



### CHENNELL PARK HOUSE (CALVERLEY)

The old Park House, formerly the property of the Short family, was purchased in 1746 by James Haffenden. A new house was built about 1760, possibly for the newly married John Burridge and Sarah Haffenden who were married in 1764. In 1768 it was sold to Cordelia Calverley, whose sister Philadelphia was married to Edward Curteis. The only known picture of the new house (on right), notably similar in appearance to Homewood and Kench Hill Houses, which were built in the same decade, is in Tenterden Museum. Calverley House, as it was soon to be known, was the scene of a burglary in 1785 when George Emmett and Joseph Taylor were convicted for breaking into the property.



They were sentenced “to be severally hanged by the neck until they be dead.” At the last public execution seen in Tenterden, they were executed at Gallows Green (in the vicinity of the Appledore Road) on Saturday 27 August before the Mayor, Thomas Weston, and seven Jurats on horseback. Mrs Weston’s notebook suggested that there were about 1000 spectators. After the execution was carried out, the two men were buried at St Mildred’s at the edge of the churchyard and only one bell was tolled.

This house passed to Ann Mary Chennell in 1797 and she later gave it to her son John. It was he who planted the ‘Waterloo Firs’ in 1815, to commemorate the great victory at Waterloo of the Duke of Wellington over the French Emperor Napoleon. This double avenue of trees was planted along the eastern and southern boundaries of the property. In 1965, 50 of these old trees were felled without replacement, thus losing the avenue effect which used to exist from the house towards Tenterden. Only outline traces of this formerly magnificent avenue can now be seen today.

On 29th April, 1822, John Chennell married Ann Morphett and during his lifetime the property was still known as Calverley House or Calverley Park. John Chennell died in 1864 and in 1874 it was passed by marriage to Edgar Howard, who renamed it Chennell Park. Edgar Howard, who was connected with the tannery at West Cross, was Mayor of Tenterden on six occasions and the Tenterden Baron at the Coronation of King George and Queen Mary in 1911. He was still living there at the date of his death in 1932, aged 87. His wife, Alice Ann Howard remained at the house until her death in February 1933 and later the house became the property of R Cathcart-Bruce.

Chennell Park was rebuilt after the Second World War following extensive damage by troops. It was occupied firstly by British, then American troops and, the grounds were used as a temporary storage area for aircraft that had come down in the vicinity. On the 8th of September 1941, seven soldiers were killed in Chennell Park by an aerial mine. One, Arthur Sutters was loading ammunition with the rest of his platoon and had moved away to have a cigarette when the explosion occurred, killing or injuring most of his mates.

The rebuilding of the property after the Second World War was carried out by Dr Taylor-Jones, a Tenterden doctor.

#### Reference

Tenterden – The First Thousand Years, Hugh Roberts, 1995

## A Forgotten Sequel to the First World War

What links Tenterden, Rye and the tiny French hamlet of Coigneux, halfway between Amiens and Arras? You are about to find out.

Imagine, if you will, a line drawn from London to Lancaster. Add two more lines parallel to that and each about twenty-five miles from the middle line. Now imagine that virtually all of England within the area outlined has been destroyed – not much left standing. One or two cities are within that zone as well as innumerable towns and villages. Mostly, it is flattened. That was the damage to France at the end of the First World War! There was an awareness in Britain that not only had France lost more men (and women) than we had, but faced an immense amount of damage out of all proportion to Britain's economic and structural damage. In the middle of the post-war problems which Britain experienced, a movement grew to help France – The League of Help for the Devastated Areas of France. Although there was a central organisation to facilitate matters, this was less an organisation in the strict sense than a movement of like-minded towns and cities throughout Britain and the Empire (not forgetting too the USA, some other non-imperial territories and other French towns further south). Considerable sums of money were given, and, in some cases, links persisted which are traceable to this day in the form of "twinning". The twinning of Hastings with Bethune dates from this circumstance, for instance, and the link between Melbourne, Australia, and Villers-Bretonneux, begun by the Anzacs who fought there, is still commemorated.

I digress for a moment to remark that the correspondence of those "driving" the campaign reveals their divisions over whether to involve the Prime Minister as a patron. It is apparent that, even then, there was a widespread public perception of Lloyd George as opportunistic and probably corrupt! They nevertheless roped him in.

In early 1920, letters were written to the Press, and the League was established. By January 1921, the League reported that 59 British communities had adopted 79 French towns and villages, though this is probably a minimum for Britain and excludes other countries. Fund-raising was not easy in the light of the post-war problems in Britain, which is why the League's records are comprehensive about just how extreme was the damage to France.

Rye was certainly involved. It is rumoured (in Rye records) that Winchelsea was too but documentation is lacking. We know that Tenterden was involved but the only written formal evidence we have uncovered is a sparse Council Minute of 21<sup>st</sup> July 1921 (traced by John Weller) of intent to help, then silence. However a trawl of Tenterden Parish magazines of the period proved more fruitful.

### *Coigneux Relief Fund.*

*"Coigneux, as our readers are aware, is a village in France "adopted" by Rye and Tenterden. It is about the size of Smallhythe, and is just outside the devastated area, but the Church and School were destroyed by the explosion of an English ammunition dump. All that remains of the Church is a bit of wall, and the School consists of a heap of stones. It is towards the rebuilding of the School that we have been asked to contribute. The Mayor of Tenterden (Major Neve) and his Committee report that in response to their appeal, £68.8.0 (at present rate of exchange 3725 francs) have been subscribed; and in addition, Mr. H. F. F. Varley, of Asheton Preparatory School has given 100 francs, and has offered three months hospitality with tuition in English to a boy between 10 and 11 years of age whom the Mayor of Coigneux may be pleased to select: this result seems satisfactory. In England we have our financial and industrial problems: but they are as nothing when compared with the difficulties which have to be surmounted by those whose homes were and must be again in the devastated areas of France." (Tenterden Parish Magazine November 1921)*

In Rye they have some poor-quality photographs of a visit to Coigneux by the Mayor of Rye, but one has to say that information on all the relationships and donations is hard to come by, except for a number of world-wide twinings. This whole altruistic episode is one of the forgotten corners of history.

### References

Sussex Archaeological Collections Vol 140 (2002) pp.125-138. "Worthing, Richebourg and the League of Help for the Devastated Areas of France". Sally White  
International Journal of Heritage Studies. Vol 7 (i) pp.59-82. "In the Shadow of Monuments: The British League for the Reconstruction of the Devastated Areas of France". Brian S Osborne.

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### Chennell Park House

On the other hand our various enquiries can now add to the piece in TDLH newsletter no. 23.

para 3: Cathcart-Bruce was still there in 1938-39.

last para: Dr Taylor-Jones sold the property to the family still living there now, ie to Major Neil Campbell TD, RA and his wife Mary - she who was 99 on 5th Feb. 2017. Major Campbell died many years ago, but she lives in the house, with a son and d-in-law. That sale took place 'about 45 years ago', maybe her memory will be better another week! I expect I can find the name of that son, to complete that little piece of information.