



### **The Pre-World War 2 History of Ox Lane and Boarzell**

This article shows how Ox Lane in St. Michaels was created as a working road to exploit the woodland resources of Knockwood which were then developed into farmland before residential development from the 1920s onwards.

Ox Lane first appears as a track way on the 1767 Andrews and Drury map extending only from the site of the present Fat Ox to around the entrance area of the present Boarzell. At that time only the land to the west side of the lane had been cleared for farming, the land to the east was all still woodland, that part of upper Knockwood known as “Le Heath” in early documents. On the Mudge map of 1801 there is clear evidence that, by that time, a number of fields to the east of Ox Lane had been cleared for timber and the lane itself had been extended to the current Swain Road, with the Pest House having been constructed by then on the site of the later Ingleden Cottages at the junction with Swain Road. The building of the Pest House (the location to which the people infected with contagious diseases from Tenterden were sent up until around 1870) was therefore the probable catalyst for the extending of Ox Lane around 1800 to its present length, in order to make it a shorter journey from Tenterden. The name itself probably originates from this period when teams of oxen would be used to haul the heavy felled timber out of the forest prior to the land being cleared for farming. It may well have been that the reason for the clearing of the land was the pressing need for mature trees for naval ship construction due to the Napoleonic Wars from the 1790s onwards.

The farm house now known as the private house Boarzell today, had not been constructed by the time of the 1801 survey. It is therefore likely the farm land, which was known to be part of the Hales estate until as late as 1843 had simply been cleared to obtain the timber and then later used for general farming. Neither does it appear on the Ordnance Survey Old Series Sheet 5 of 1813. However, Tenterden Mill does and this map seems to indicate an estate containing both the Mill (which was at the top of the present Mill Lane opposite Homewood House) and all the land later listed as Knock Wood Farm in the Tithe Maps of 1843.

By the time of the 1822 map, the work of John Adams Senior - Surveyor of Tenterden, the Pest House and the present Boarzell (the name appears from 1919 onwards), then called Hook Farm, are both clearly marked. The original central part of this house is Georgian and its land at that date extended from the present Wealden Avenue to the top of Ox Lane (east side only). The farmhouse is known therefore to have been built between 1813 and 1822.

In the 1841 census it would appear that Boarzell was known as “Santer’s Farm”. Henry Santer lived at Mill Farm opposite Homewood House and it is possible he was working the adjoining land on behalf of the owners, the Hales Estate (see below).

The Tithe Map of 1843 for the present Boarzell and its fields (then recorded as Knockwood Farm) lists the owners as the Trustees of Sir Edward Hales (who had died in 1829) – namely one Edward Darell. The occupier was still listed as Henry Santer who was the last active Miller at the Tenterden Mill. The Mill farmlands abutted the land of Knockwood/Hook Farm with the boundary being the present Wealden Avenue. Alfred Haffenden of Homewood House, who already owned Mill Farm, bought Knockwood/Hook Farm from Edward Darrell sometime after 1843 and prior to 1876.

In 1863 a new dairy building (the present garage of Boarzell) was built and that has on its north side a brick with the inscription ‘J. L.1863’. This almost certainly refers to Jeremiah Lindridge as he was the tenant farmer at Mill Farm (and presumably also Hook Farm) at that date. In the 1861 census Lindridge was listed as living at Windmill Farmhouse.

The Fat Ox pub at the corner of Ox Lane and the Ashford Road was in existence by about the mid 1840s as a small grocery shop being run by Mary Burden. Her son, Turner Burden, is mentioned as a Beer Retailer as early as 1847 and he is mentioned in the 1851 census at the site, now clearly named “The Fat Ox”. Ingleden Cottages at the corner of Ox Lane and Swain Road were developed by Admiral and Mrs Gordon as two adjoining staff houses for members of the staff of Ingleden House around 1875 on the site of the old Pest House.

In 1876 George Martin bought Hook Farm from John Wilson-Haffenden, who owned the Homewood Estate at that time, and re-named it "Martin's Farm". George Martin died soon afterwards in 1880 and in 1882 his son Frederick and nephew Albert, with the consent of Thomas Avery's sons Richard and George Avery (the mortgage providers), sold the property to an R. Webb whose Trustees in turn then sold it to Augustus Frederick Perkins (Director of The Anchor Brewery at Southwark), Frederick Lincoln Bevan (Director of Barclay & Co, Banker) and Thomas Fish Marson (Solicitor) in January 1883.

By the 1881 Census, Martin's Farm was listed as Little Hill Farm. Little Hill was the old name for a lane running from the Ashford Road to Ox Lane, over which the 1970s housing scheme with warden accommodation for the elderly has been recently demolished and some 40 new flats are currently being built. At some point in time after 1938 this lane (now a public footpath) connection was realigned to join Ox Lane about 50 yards further north, to allow construction of the present number 17.

From 1887 the Tenterden Thompson's Directories listed the property as Martin's Farm and the tenant then was George Jarvis, a well-known Timber Merchant from Bethersden. It is thought that the owners, Messrs Perkins, Bevan and Marson employed Jarvis and his steam saw to exploit the woodlands on their lands in Ox Lane. Around 1895 Jarvis bought his own land at the top of Ox Lane, including a number of acres of woodland on Ingleden, and operated his steam saw there for many years. Indeed the saw mill was still in use as late as the 1970s and was sited where the current house called "Knockwood" now stands, close to the pond.

In 1895, Messers Perkins, Bevan and Marson sold Martin's Farm to Albert Dixon, a well to do Gentleman of The Strand in London who had purchased the entire Haffenden estate (including Homewood House and Mill farm but excluding Martin's Farm) in 1882. He had also previously purchased another 104 acres of Knockwood at the top of Ox Lane in 1890, an area fronting onto Swain Road, as far east, past Three Vents Corner, to the boundary of the Ingleden Estate of Mrs Gordon, and along the east side of Ox Lane as far as the current "Ballintaggart".

For the next 5 years it is not clear whether anyone occupied Martin's farmhouse. Under the ownership of Albert Dixon, the first tenant who can specifically be identified is a Major Henry Glendower Bodychan Sparrow, a member of a prominent Anglesey family and descended from a High Sherriff of that place. He was living at Boarzell by March 1901. Major Sparrow had been a serving officer in the Australian Light Horse and lived in Boarzell only a few years before moving to Great Missenden in Buckinghamshire. The next resident of Boarzell, around 1903/04, was William Howard Dixon, a son of Albert. In 1906, Albert Dixon, then living at Woodside Farm (now Acacia House Nursing Home) sold Martin's Farm to Ernest Skelding (who was married to Dixon's daughter Edith Mary) for £1,000. At the time, Martin's Farm consisted of around 59 acres including all the present day east side of Ox Lane, Springfield Avenue, Barnfield and the north side of Wealden Avenue. Ernest Skelding was the last child and fourth son of Joseph, a London surgeon, and Sarah Skelding who lived at Homewood House. Joseph, Sarah, Ernest and his wife Edith Mary are all buried in the churchyard at St. Michaels.

On 1st May 1912 Dixon sold around 62 acres of this land (not including the present "Ballintaggart") and all his other extensive landholdings in the Ox Lane area to Philip Charles Napier Peddar of Ipswich, an Estate Agent, for £11,000. George Jarvis then purchased a small area of land at the top of Ox Lane from Peddar for £650 in November 1917 (probably to continue to have access to the woods). A little earlier Dixon had sold Homewood House and the grounds (the present Homewood School) to Admiral and Lady Drury.

In November 1914 he extended his mortgage to £3,100 on Martin's Farm, which then included a cottage called Roylston on Ox Lane near the "Fat Ox". When Albert Dixon died on 28 June 1915, Skelding acquired from Dixon's executors 2 further parcels of land abutting the Martin's Farm estate on the east side of Ox Lane for £150 (in a transaction also involving his wife Edith Mary) and a strip of land on the west side, opposite the present Boarzell, upon which in the late 1930s were built the present eight bungalows (see below), for a further £200. So by this date Skelding owned all the land on the east side of Ox Lane from Wealden Avenue to beyond the present "Glenelg" and the strip opposite Martin's Farm referred to previously.

In 1917 Skelding sold all his above holdings, including Mill Farm and Martin's Farm to Thomas Charles Chapman, a farmer from Minster on Thanet. He paid £4,650 for an area of roughly 49 acres. Chapman quickly built a much larger house called "The Martins" further up Ox Lane, completed by 1907 and it was this which later necessitated the change of name of the old "Martin's Farm" to Boarzell in about 1919 when Chapman appointed a farm manager and rented him the old farmhouse. Boarzell (as it then became) was then occupied by W A Dives from 1920 until his death in 1930.

In 1929 Chapman sold the remaining lands (about 47 acres) of Martin's Farm to Claude W B Tubbs of Ingleden, who ran the Ingleden Dairy at the time and 10 months later, in October 1930, Tubbs sold this land to Mrs Clara Mary White of Marlborough Mansions, Froggnal Lane, Finchley. He then rented it back from her

at one months' notice, presumably for grazing his herd of dairy cows. It was around this time that Tubbs was moving his Ingleden Dairy operations to the more central Tanyard site at the junction of the Rolvenden and Cranbrook Roads. Also in 1929 Chapman sold "The Martins" and gardens to Mrs White and he then moved to his newly built property called "Port" (later "Hogs Platt" and then split into "Oakridge" and "Field Fares") further up Ox Lane. By 1930 Chapman had also built "Vincent" (later "High Weald") which belonged to Mrs Florence Mary Whiting, Chapman's daughter. She lived there until November 1947 when, as a widow, she sold it to Dr Arthur Robert Newing Whitlow, a Tenterden General Practitioner.

In April 1930, Chapman bought a strip of land marked K23733 with a frontage of 123 feet on Ox Lane) from George Jarvis for £55 and this land later became the bungalow "Ballintaggart".

In 1931, Mrs White sold "The Martins", by auction, to Albert John Wright for £2,250. At that time "The Martins" estate was 6 acres, including a small plot across Ox Lane which later became the present "Cherryden". A J Wright remained at Martin's until his death at the end of December 1962. He was a retired tea planter from Ceylon who became a Director of H Boorman & Co at West Cross, Tenterden. He was also Mayor of Tenterden in 1944, 1951 and 1952.

After the death of W A Dives in 1930, G Watts was listed as the tenant at Boarzell and then in 1933 the property appears to have been sold to Walter McLemon Thomson of the Tenterden printing family who lived there for three years, with his wife Kathleen and new daughter Patricia.

By about 1933 Harry Beale had built "Fair Dinkum" at the top of the Lane and then, by 1938, "Croylands" fronting onto Swain Road. By 1934 Mr Jarvis had built 1 and 2 Battern Mount. Also by 1938, "Cedarwood" (the present St. Cyres) had been built for Norman and Beatrice Berry. "Bignor" (later "High Croft") further up Ox Lane had also been built by then and Fannie and Ada Phillips were living there in 1939.

Boris Alfred Bohtlingk owned Boarzell from 1936 until 1950 with a Philip J Sandercock being the tenant in residence there in 1938. Bohtlingk built the row of eight bungalows referred to earlier (the present Numbers 3 -15 and number 19) on land he had acquired from Clara Mary White in 1938 and 1939. The present bungalow with the green roof tiles, next to the footpath to Wayside, was built for his sister and mother and was called "Rosario" in 1939. All of the bungalows originally had these same green roof tiles thought to be Belgian in origin, and were occupied by 1939. After the Second World War, Bohtlingk also completed the development of Springfield Avenue, which he had begun around 1939. He had purchased this particular area of land in December 1938 from John Ernest Russell and his wife Frances Emma Gladys Russell, who lived at "The Anchorage" on Ox Lane (now number 9).

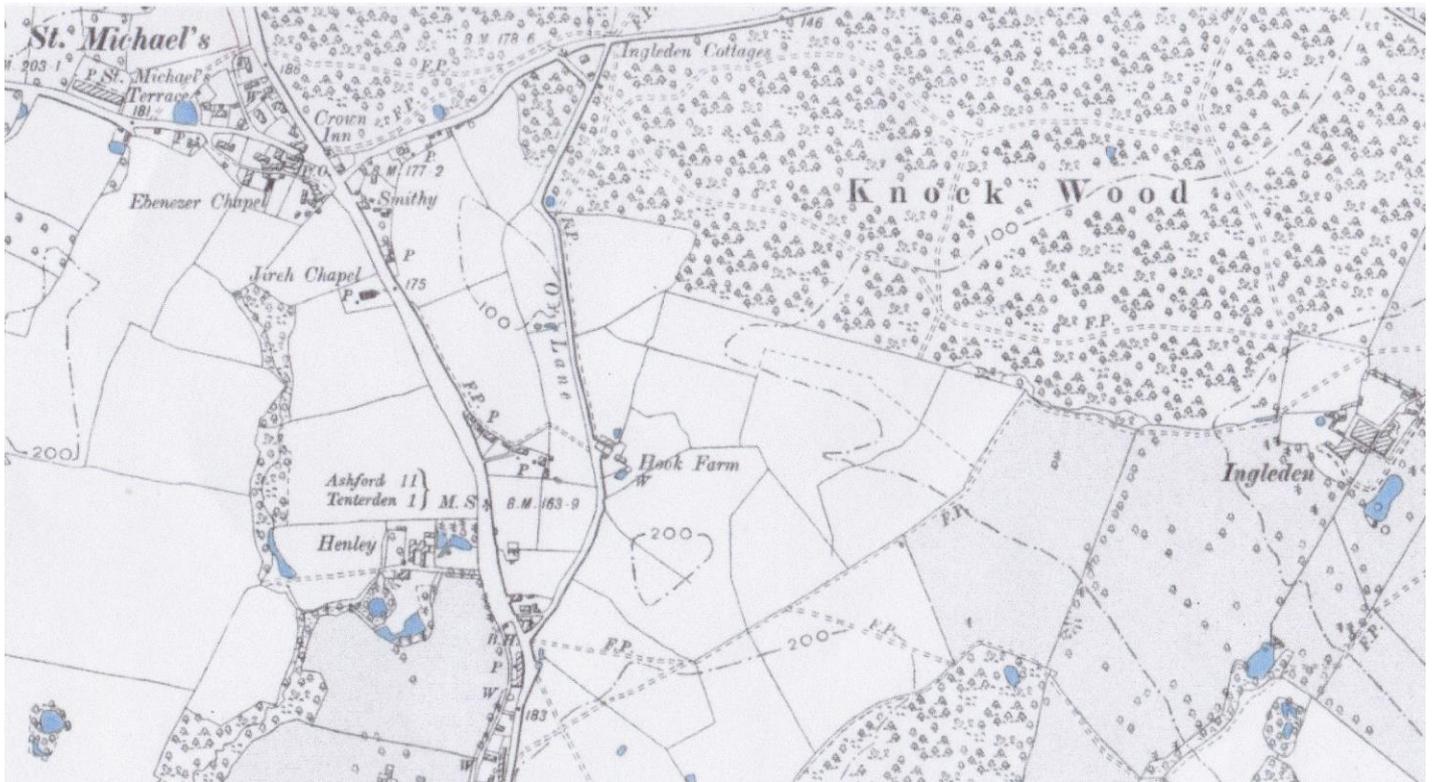
Boris Alfred Bohtlingk was a director of a building firm trading as Trenas Ltd which had its registered office at Boarzell, then later at Swain Road and 149 High Street (Woodbury), Tenterden. Boris came from a Russian family of bankers in St. Petersburg where he was born in 1891, arrived in England with his mother and siblings in 1920 during the hiatus following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and died at Woodbury, Tenterden on 13 May 1952. Boris could certainly be referred to as one of the original property developers of St. Michaels.

The original owners of the eight Bohtlingk built properties, recorded in the 1939 register were:-

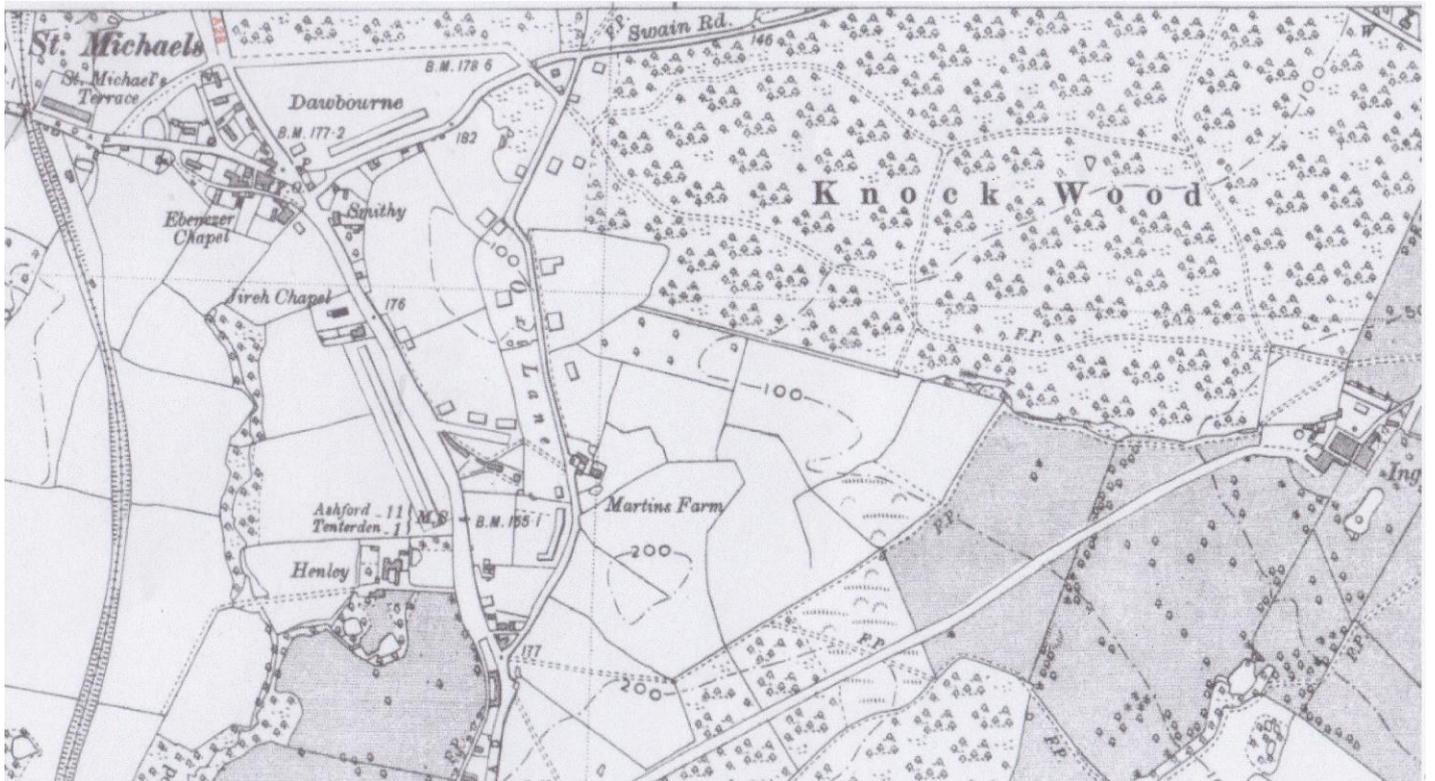
House Name 1939	2016 Name	2016 Number	Occupants	Occupation
Rosario	Oxleas	19	Nina Olga Bohtlingk Mary P Bohtlingk	Doctor Not Practising No occupation
Daleco		15	Harry Clark Lillian M Clark Louisa Day	Bookseller Retired Domestic Duties No Occupation
Holling Dor	Ashlea	13	James Gladwish Margherita Gladwish	Retired Grocer Domestic Duties
Springfield		11	Alice M Finn Annie Finn	Domestic Duties Domestic Duties
Anchorage		9	Joseph E Russell Gladys Russell	Jobbing Gardener Domestic Duties
Ellington		7	Fred Bligh Bessie Bligh	Manager of Ironmongers (believed to be Apps) Domestic Duties
Per Terram*	Briarleys	5	Annie McLachlan	Registered College Trained
Pensure	Number 3	3	Alfred Igglesden Ethel A Igglesden George H Summers	Cinema Commissionaire Domestic Duties At School

\*Per Terram is part of the motto of the Royal Marines Light Infantry "Per Mare Per Terram" (by sea by land) and Annie McLachlan's father was an Honorary Captain and former Quartermaster of this unit.

Following the Second World War there was significant additional residential development to this quiet country lane but that is another story.



1899 map based on the OS Map of St Michaels



1938 map based on the OS Map of St Michaels