



MEOPHAM

Parish Guide

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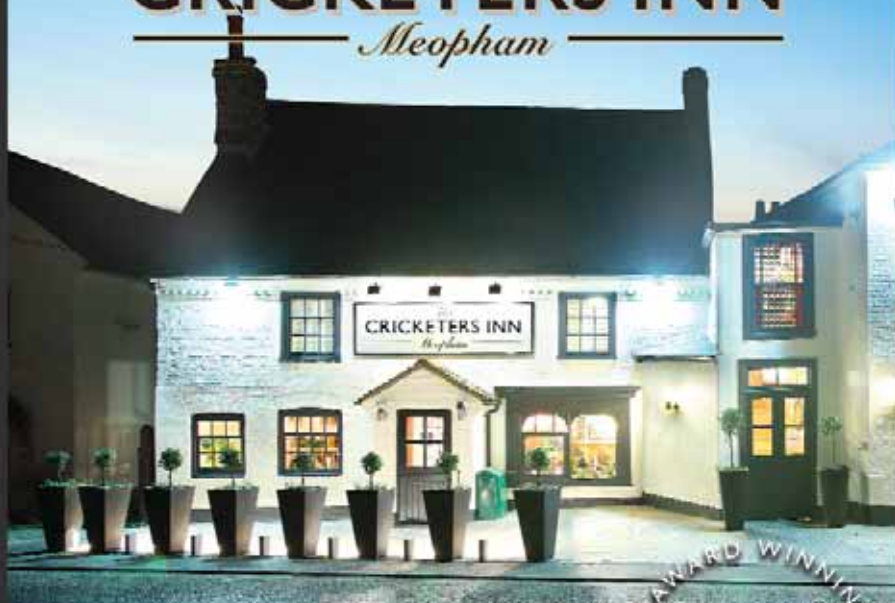
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Meopham as it is Today

Meopham is a large rural parish, with a population of approximately 9,000. The village extends nearly 5¼ miles from north to south and is said to be the longest in England. Until the 1950s it was largely an agricultural community, but with the development of a number of small estates, a commuting population arrived, working either locally or in London.

Nestling on the North Downs and surrounded by areas of outstanding natural beauty, the parish is five miles south of Gravesend and the River Thames. It is essentially made up of five populated areas: Hook Green and Nurstead, Meopham Green, the Camer Area, Culverstone and Harvel. There is a wealth of historic buildings, many of them listed. As well as the three large village greens, there are several smaller ones. The parish boasts a country park at Camer and there is also an extensive network of well maintained rights of way and footpaths, looked after by the Meopham & District Footpaths Group.



St Mildred's Church, Nurstead

Linking the A2/M2 to the north, with the M26/M20/A20 to the south is the Wrotham Road (A227), which runs the entire length of the parish. This allows drivers easy access to Gatwick Airport in 45 minutes, Stansted Airport via the Dartford Crossing, and Heathrow via the M25. A regular bus service links Meopham to Bluewater via Gravesend and Sevenoaks via Borough Green. There is also a community bus which runs twice weekly to Gravesend. The fastest train takes 34 minutes to London Victoria, and also serves Rochester, the Medway Towns and the Kent coast.



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Ebbsfleet International Station, which is seven miles away, is served by Eurostar trains to Lille, Paris and Brussels and can whisk you to London St Pancras in just 17 minutes.

When entering the parish from the north, travellers come first to the small hamlet of Nurstead. It features a Manor House built in the 14th century which was the venue for an annual Horse Show, well attended by national and local riders. Alongside is the church of St Mildred in its very rural setting. Across the main road is an extensive allotment site which is run by the Meopham & District Allotment Association, offering over 100 plots to both residents of Meopham and those living in the surrounding district.



Meopham Green

A little further along the A227 is the railway station and a small parade of shops and a public house, which border the first conservation area, Hook Green. Travelling further, we come to a large restaurant and opposite this is the entrance to Judson's Recreation Ground which was gifted to the parish in 1950. It is home a local youth football team and has a play area for young children, a pavilion and an adjacent hut where Cubs and Scouts meet. From Hook Green, more modern housing continues up to Camer Parade, the main shopping centre for Meopham.

Nearby Camer Country Park, off Green Lane, offers a large open space, with a children's play area, snack bar and toilet facilities. It is very popular with villagers and visitors alike. Just past Camer Parade are Meopham Academy (Primary School) and the Helen Allison Special Educational Needs School run by the National Autistic Society.

The continuation of our journey along the A227 changes character again, as the parish church, St John the Baptist, is approached, and the second conservation area begins. There are more details of this part of the village in the section on Conservation Areas. Here again the old blends with the new as sedate dwellings give way to newer housing estates, and the secondary school campus which encompasses a fitness centre, a medical centre, a library and a nursery which serves the whole Parish, as well as surrounding villages such as Cobham, Luddesdown and Longfield. The secondary school was built in 1975 and holds Sports Foundation status. This achievement has given it recognition not only for its academic achievements but also for its sporting prowess. On the first Sunday of each month, there is a farmers' market on this site and this has proved a very popular attraction, as well as regular boot sales.

Moving on from this area of the Parish, it reverts back to its original village appearance with the third conservation area less than half a mile away, Meopham Green. Before reaching Meopham Green, there is Meopham Village Hall which offers a wide range of activities including dance groups, flower arranging, the Women's Institute, retirement associations, a gardening club and an accordion club. The popular "Meopham Players", an amateur theatre company, are also based at the Village Hall. Located to the rear of the Village Hall is the Country Club (with facilities for Snooker and Darts and a separate Table Tennis Club) and Meopham Lawn Tennis Club.

At the northern end of the largest village green, Meopham Green, is the War Memorial and an historic drinking fountain commemorating the Coronation of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in 1902. Meopham Green is home to the Meopham Cricket Club, founded in 1776. Cricket has been played every summer since that time. Dominating the scene over the Green is the Windmill, built in the early 19th Century and now one of the few restored mills in Kent and open to the public on Sunday afternoons between May and September. Close by are "The Cricketers" and "The Kings Arms", which have histories dating back to the 17th Century. Both are well patronised by residents and visitors.

Continuing south from Meopham Green, the A227 road passes some ribbon development and open countryside, including Hope Hill Scout Camp, before reaching Culverstone Green. The oldest property there is Owls Castle, a 15th century timber framed house. This is the centre of the largest growing community in the Parish, where the undulating topography has given rise in the growth of homes from converted chalets to modern housing set in the Culverstone Valley. Culverstone has its own primary school, community centre, a small supermarket and a service station providing the only fuel in the parish and also a small general store.

To the east of Culverstone, is the most rural part of the Parish, the village of Harvel, which is an attractive and secluded settlement. It features its own village hall, village green, a duck pond, a public house and a cricket ground, which is home to another leading local cricket team. There is a farm shop, providing local meat and related produce. With its own conservation area, there are a number of older properties which add to its rural charm. The route back to Meopham, along picturesque country lanes, passes through glorious countryside from Priestwood or along the high road with Dean Lane overlooking Dene Manor and the two valleys on either side, arriving back eventually at Camer Country Park. Here stood the original 13th century settlement and the site is now enhanced by Camer House built in 1716.

Meopham today has much to offer to both residents and visitors alike, who come to enjoy the beautiful countryside, eat at one of the local hosteleries or just enjoy the tranquillity of the open spaces.



Meopham or Meppam?

The present spelling "Meopham" and pronunciation "Meppam" have survived but both have had many variations in the past:

AD 774)	Old document	MEAPAHAM	AD1236)	Papal	MAPEHAM
AD 939)	British Museum	MEAPHAM	AD1344)		MEYPHAM
AD945)		MEAPAHAM	AD1345)		MEPHAM
			AD1348)		MEEPHAM
AD1086)	Domesday	MEPEHAM			
AD1125)	Henry 1	MAPPEHAME	AD1367	Canterbury	MEFFAM
			AD1535	Registers	MEPHAM





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The History of Meopham

The present parish of Meopham comprises the original parish with its small neighbour Nurstead since 1963 but Vigo Village which had been part of the Parish gained its own parish status in 2000.

The written history of Meopham covers a period of nearly 1,200 years so only some of the events can be mentioned here.

Meopham was anciently known as Meapaham because it was the home of Meapa, who had arrived from Jutland. When King Alfred divided the country into "Counties", "Laths", "Hundreds" and "Parishes" Meopham was one of six parishes forming the "Hundreds of Tollingstrew" having to enlist 100 men for battle.

King Athelstan, grandson of King Alfred, in a charter dated AD939 conceded land in Meapaham to "my faithful servant Eadulph". At a time when only the best was given to "Holy Church", Athelstan's widow Queen Ediva – mother of Kings Edmund and Edred in AD961 – gave Meapaham to Christ Church (Canterbury Cathedral) "for the health of my soul".

Soon after, Birtrick a rich and powerful Saxon Lord of this and other parishes, who lived in Meopham Court, further increased the possessions of the church. His will, made jointly with his wife Elfwithes, is the oldest of its kind in the British Museum, and from this we learn of a Saxon church here, and also the name of the priest – Wina.

Through the ages the men of Meopham have distinguished themselves in various ways. Alen De Twytham of Dene Manor was present with Richard I on the crusades, when he no doubt "sallied forth" with a retinue of locals. The Huntingfields of Dodmore Manor were great warriors – two of the family being knighted in battle. Sir Peter de Huntingfield became Sheriff of the County in the reign of Edward I.

Meopham Court remained in the occupation of Monks from Canterbury until the time of the Dissolution by Henry VIII, and it was here that Simon de Mepham, a local boy, received his early education. Born in 1272 he matriculated at Merton College, Oxford in 1290 and was ordained in 1297. He received very rapid preferment in the Church and was elected Archbishop of Canterbury in 1328, proving himself a man of sturdy character and independence. In 1325 he built the parish church on the site of the earlier Saxon edifice.

The "Black Death" took a big toll from this parish in 1348 – 49, when more than half the population were victims. All the male members of the knightly Huntingfield family died. Meopham suffered a further calamity on 21 May 1382, when all the dwellings were destroyed and the church very badly damaged by an earthquake. Dodmore Manor was so badly damaged that it was never restored. Portions of one of the walls were still standing until early in the last century, however, on the current site of the Meopham garage, opposite The George Inn.



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During the English Civil War, Roundhead troops under the command of General Monk were quartered in the "George" Inn, Meopham's oldest hostelry. Some may also have stayed at the "Kings Arms". They were on route from a skirmish at Northfleet to engage in battle with the Royalist army at Aylesford. The story goes that they stabled their horses in the Parish Church.

The British Army in the Napoleonic Wars followed Colonel Mudge's map, which passed through Meopham along Steele's Lane. A ghost of a French woman has been seen who was seeking the soldier who fathered her child in more modern times. Meopham is reputed to be the most haunted village in Kent, as many other sightings were reported of other apparitions which were investigated prior to the Second World War.

The recorded history of Nurstead goes back to 1024 and Nurstead Court, our oldest continuously inhabited house, dates from 1320. The Edmeades family have owned the Nurstead Court estate since 1767.

Agriculture and its associated activities were the main occupation for several centuries. The first official census of England and Wales in March 1801 recorded the population of Meopham as 748. Change occurred in 1825 with the arrival of a turnpike on the main road, and in 1861 Meopham Railway Station was built, which led to a building programme, which included large houses, such as the White House on Hook Green, then some cottage type properties, and later modern housing estates. Now a large proportion of residents work outside the Parish.

The Governance of the Parishes was for centuries in the hands of the Lords of the Manor, whose powers and duties were gradually eroded and replaced by the Vestry. This body, controlled by incumbents, became responsible for such matters as highways, poor relief, and the work house as well as ecclesiastical matters. This continued until 1894, when the civil business was transferred to the newly formed Parish Council.

The Church ownership of Meopham prevented the creation of any vast estates, and it was not until the policy of letting the land came into force that estates began to emerge. The largest was Camer, where there had been a farmstead since the 13th Century, reaching its peak in the 18th and 19th centuries under the Smith-Masters.

Meopham Court was also important with about 630 acres in the 17th Century and which by the 19th century had grown to about 1400 acres. The number of land owners is now too difficult to determine.

In 1949 the Parish Council purchased the manorial rights and freehold of the village greens from the Church Commissioners, thus breaking the last remaining link with Queen Ediva's gift, and becoming Lord of the Manor of Meopham.

Among the splendours of Canterbury Cathedral can be seen a very simple plaque "In Memory of Queen Ediva – She Loved our Village". We hope you will too.



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2012 – A Year of Celebrations

The year 2012 will be remembered for the celebrations to mark the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, as well as the London Olympics.

Diamond Jubilee – 1952-2012

Meopham Parish Councillors Aitken, Wade, Hasler and Powell worked with fifty residents to deliver an extensive programme of events over the Jubilee Holiday weekend, 2nd – 5th June, 2012, which resulted in a memorable weekend of variety and fun. The programme catered for all age groups and included disco dances for the young, a Rock 'n Roll dance for those who remembered the 50's and 60's, a Barn dance in the Church and a Tea Dance for senior residents.

Other events included parties in the Parish wards, an historical exhibition of Meopham, an historical walk through the Parish, and a Festival of Sport linking the celebrations to the London Olympics that took place in the summer.

As a permanent reminder of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, a Human Sundial is located at Culverstone Recreation Ground. The Human Sun Clock was designed by Mike Groom and Jo Latimer and built by the pupils of Culverstone Green Primary School.

Seven varieties of native trees have been planted in memory of Meopham residents, six of them at Judson's Recreation Ground, with the seventh on Hook Green in memory of Jim Carley, the local historian who lived opposite.

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2012 Olympics

During the London Olympics Meopham Cricket Club hosted the "Big Screen on the Green" that showed live events from the Olympic Games. The Club also organised the "Village Olympics" with fun races for the children, all day barbeque and refreshments, and a hog roast in the evening, which all helped to make this a truly memorable day in the year.

All the children who took part in any of the events were presented with a Jubilee Medal which had been provided by the Parish Council as a memento of the occasion.



The Village Sign

The village sign designed by local artist Mr Eric Bugg stands proudly on Hook Green. It was erected in 1998 to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Meopham Historical Society and was presented to the Parish Council. It features a bishop's mitre (representing Simon de Mepham), the Windmill, cricket stumps, bat and ball (symbolising the cricket played on the green since 1776), church and the "Tradescantia" plant.

Meopham Village Sign



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A Brief History of the Meopham Windmill


Although water mills were common in Kent in Anglo Saxon times – no fewer than 351 being recorded in the Domesday survey of the country – it was not until AD1191 that there is reliable evidence of the existence of a windmill anywhere in England – this was a monastery at Bury St Edmunds. Most of the early mills were monastic property and were of the tripod post type. The first mill in Meopham was probably built in the late 13th or early 14th century and is mentioned in the Canterbury records; this was situated in a field near Shipley Hills Road, still known as Millfield.

One can only imagine the pleasure of the Meopham inhabitants in 1801, when three brothers named Killick, all millers and mill wrights, all octogenarians, built the present mill with local labour at Meopham Green. All the timbers used came from an old wooden battleship being broken up at Chatham Dockyard. No longer did locals have to make tedious journeys to other mills for their supplies of flour and to get their corn ground. The last flour was milled in 1914.


The mill remained in the possession of the Killick family for two generations, when it was bought by Mr John Norton and remained in the possession of the family until the Deed of Gift to Kent County Council, believed to be in the early 1960s.



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For many years before the electricity company brought their supplies to Meopham, the mill was generating its own supply in 1923. It was used as an observation post during two world wars. The Windmill was restored in 1962 by Messrs E. Hole and Son of Burgess Hill, Sussex at a cost of £4,375. The Windmill Trust bought the lease of the mill and freehold on the surrounding land in 1966 for £3,500 from Kent County Council and it opened to the public in 1971. In 1979, following replacement of stocks, sails and other necessary parts, the sails on Meopham windmill turned under their own power for the first time in 50 years.

The famous architect, the late Sir Herbert Baker, acquired millstones from Meopham Windmill to construct the forecourt of the Bank of England.

In the distant past the sails were repositioned at the five minutes to 12 position to indicate mourning and sadness when a miller died instead of the usual St Andrew's cross. They would then be seen by the miller on the next hilltop who would put his own sails in the same position and the message was passed on from one mill to the next around the countryside conveying the message of a miller's death. The sails were repositioned in 2010 to mark the passing of Mr Jim Carley, a local historian.



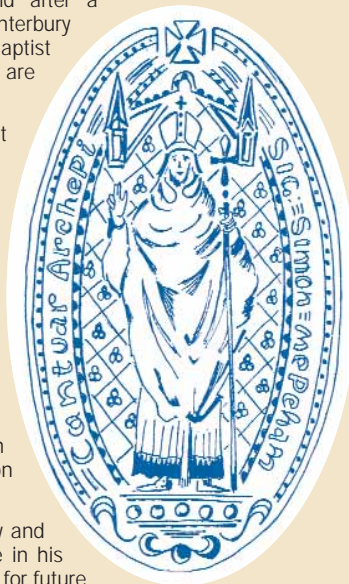
Meopham Residents of some Renown

SIMON DE MEPHAM was born in the Parish in 1272 and after a distinguished ecclesiastical career he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1327. During this time, the Parish Church of St John The Baptist was built. He died in Mayfield, Sussex in 1332, but his parents are buried here in Meopham.

JOHN TRADESCANT THE ELDER, horticulturalist, was born in about 1570, probably in Suffolk, although his family was of Dutch origin. In 1607 he married Elizabeth Day, the daughter of a local farmer in Meopham and his son John was born there in 1608. At the time the family occupied a cottage which stood on the site of Pitfield House, Meopham Green. He reputedly planted four Mulberry trees in Meopham, the longest surviving being in the garden of the Limes, part of the grounds of Pitfield House. He travelled widely, and is attributed with introducing various plant varieties to Britain. By 1630 Tradescant was working directly for Charles I as "Keeper of his Majesty's Gardens, Vines and Silkworms" at Oatlands Palace, Surrey. He died in 1638 and his son, also John, continued with his father's work. He was also the creator of the Ark in south Lambeth, the first known museum of artefacts, which later became the founding collection of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

JIM CARLEY was the founder of the Meopham Historical Society and wrote over 120 booklets about Meopham. He was passionate in his research into its history and his books will be a valuable resource for future generations. The history of the Meopham Cricket Club and the Cricketers Inn has also been well documented by William Gunyon, novelist, local historian and publisher.

NURSE (JEAN) COLLIE came to Meopham in about 1950 as temporary stand-in as District Nurse. A larger than life personality, with a broad Scottish accent, she supervised the births of a large number of Meopham babies over the next decade.



REVEREND VERNON NICHOLLS was vicar of Meopham from 1946-1956, and was another of the large parish personalities, often refereeing local football or umpiring local cricket matches. In 1956 he moved to Walsall as Rural Dean, and later moved to the Isle of Man as Bishop of Sodor and Man.

HUGHIE GREEN, the TV personality and game show host, lived for several years at the Orchard in Melliker Lane.

EUSTACE SHORT who lived in Leylands, was one of three brothers who founded the first aircraft manufacturers in the world, initially on Sheppey, and later at Rochester. Their Short Sunderland flying boat did distinguished service in WW2 as an anti-submarine bomber.

ALEX RAE & KEVIN O'CALLAGHAN both lived in Meopham whilst playing football for Millwall FC, and another Meopham resident DAVID YOUNG, played in the Sunderland team that won the FA Cup in 1973. David was also involved in the founding of the Meopham Sports and Leisure Club.

GRAHAM DILLEY, the Kent and England fast bowler, was brought up in Meopham, and as a teenager, played cricket on Meopham Green, later joining Kent and being selected for England. He famously played his part in an heroic stand with Ian Botham in 1981 at Headingley, saving the Ashes. Another notable cricketer was wicket keeper/batsman DAVID NICHOLLS, who famously scored 211 for Kent in a county match at Folkestone in 1963, whilst still only 19.

SIR ROGER DE GREY was a prominent landscape artist, President of the Royal Academy from 1984-1993, and lived in Camer Street. His wife FLAVIA IRWIN, was also an artist, and a member of the Royal Academy.



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Meopham Pubs – Past and Present

Starting at the north end of the village we have the "Railway Tavern" which, under proprietor Bill Friend was famous for its range of whiskies, at one time offering more than 150 brands. It was a staging post for the Mail Service between Gravesend and Maidstone and pre-dates the building of the railway station in 1861.

Journeying further along the Wrotham Road a pub that once stood on or very near to Hook Green was "The Neville Arms". The next public house was "The Fox and Hounds", first mentioned in 1836, with the present building built in 1924, now called "Bartellas", and is a licensed restaurant.

We now have a longer journey before we reach "The George Inn". This was the original heart of the village where the church wardens met, where the first village school was established and the site of the village stocks and pillory (what a deterrent this would be to vandals and others guilty of anti-social behaviour!). The earliest mention of The George is 1598 and originally called "The Market Crouch" (i.e. Cross). The present sign is that of an 18th Century Hanoverian King. Rumour has it there was a secret tunnel from The George to the Church or even Meopham Court behind the Church.



Wrotham Road and the "George" Inn

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The next pub on our journey would have been "The Swan" (originally called "The Leather Bottle" and later "The Cricketers") dating back to the 17th century but now a private residence.

The next public house, the "Cricketers Inn", at one time included amongst its activities feeding and watering of the inmates of the Village Lock Up situated on the Green. For a short time recently it was called "The Long Hop", but has now reverted to its original name when it moved to its present location in 1790.

Across the corner of the Green is "The Kings Arms", now a licensed restaurant but once known as "The Smiths Arms" which changed its name in the 1660s as a token of loyalty to the Crown following the restoration of King Charles II after the Civic War and Commonwealth.

Beyond Meopham Green was "The Prince of Wales", now a private residence, presumably named after Queen Victoria's first child, later King Edward VII. This was built in front of an earlier public house, "The Coffin". Two more former public houses follow along the road: "The Two Brewers", presumably closed due to lack of trade in its relatively isolated position and "The Plough", burnt down at the end of the 19th century.

Entering Harvel we come to the "Amazon and Tiger" the original building now a private residence. The current building dates from 1914 and is distinctive in that it was built like a private house rather than a pub in deference to the wishes of the congregation of the Chapel held in the hall opposite – now the village hall. This is the last existing public house on our journey through the parish – a little further down the Harvel Road you come to a private residence which was previously "The White Horse". Its heyday was in the early 1940s when it was the nearest pub to the large military training camp based in what is now Vigo Village. Trade dwindled and it closed in 1952. Another Harvel pub long gone is "The Rose", exact location unknown.

I hope you enjoyed our pub crawl around the parish.



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Shopping and Business in Meopham

For those choosing to make their home in Meopham, it has many exceptional facilities to offer. The modern Meopham has a wealth and variety of business activities, to the benefit of residents and visitors alike. The main concentration of shops and businesses is at Camer Parade and Hook Green with some others at Meopham Green and Culverstone. The Parade has a ladies fashion shop, a florist, a beauty salon and ladies hairdressers, a general store with a family butcher, an off-licence, a travel agency, an extensively stocked DIY supplier, an auto repair shop, two estate agents, an insurance broker and restaurants and food take-away outlets.



The Parade, Meopham

At Hook Green, to the north of Camer Parade, is a smaller group of shops and businesses ranging from the bakery providing fresh baked produce daily, a newsagents with a post office and groceries, a gift shop and a pharmacy. Nearby are the Railway Tavern public house, hairdressers, pizza take-away and two estate agents, and located at the station is an Indian restaurant.

Meopham Green has a number of businesses including the Meopham Valley Vineyard which produces its own award-winning wine. The Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris grapes were planted some 20 years ago and the sparkling wine made from them is in popular demand. Also around the Green are a cattery, fencing works and dental practice. Other premises nearby include a veterinary clinic and "pick your own" fruit farm.

Culverstone has a supermarket with a post office while on the opposite side of Wrotham Road is the service and petrol station with a vehicle hire office. A short distance away is a fencing and wood yard. Some smaller but thriving businesses occupy several sites from the Railway Sidings to Lomer Farm and at Camer Park Road.



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The more rural Harvel boasts riding stables, the Amazon & Tiger Public House and a farm shop which is open on Fridays and Saturdays and offers a range of locally reared meat, game, cheese, eggs and home made pies, etc.



Meopham Historical Society

The Jubilee Exhibition was a success last May/June, but many residents were unable to attend during the short library hours, so we will be repeating the exhibition in St John's Church in the late Spring/early Summer of 2013, over a period of several days, in the hope that those residents who were unable to view it last time will be able to do so then.

We are putting together a volume of up to 100 pictures of old Meopham to which will be added the equivalent Meopham photograph as it is now, taken from the same perspective. It will be part of a series of English village photograph collections called "Changing Places" and should be available for sale in the Spring.

As a record of Meopham traders in this the Jubilee year, we are making a collection of about 60 photographs of traders, outside their premises, and this should be published shortly.

We are making voice recordings of interviews of Meopham's elderly residents who have many stories to tell of the village as it was during their childhood and working lives. Summaries of the interviews will be found on our website www.meophamhistorical.org.uk as will most of the activities of the Society.

We have just finished a third reprint of Golding-Birds "History of Meopham", this time with included index and we are selling copies at the discounted price of £12.00.



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Conservation Areas within the Parish

The Parish is fortunate enough to have four designated conservation areas. Moving from north to south along the A227, these provide a welcome visual break from modernity. Beginning at Hook Green, through to The Street, on to Meopham Green and, at the south eastern extremity, the village of Harvel together provide the settings for the oldest parts of the Parish. Originally, each of these was a separate hamlet, but through ribbon development (with the exception of Harvel) were joined into one village. They have, however, kept their own identities through the conservation area scheme.

Apart from The Street, the others are based around a village green, and with their numerous mature trees and open green spaces, they contribute to the rural nature of the parish. Altogether they contain many listed buildings, while many of the older buildings are of note and architectural merit, linking the villages to their agricultural past.

All these listed buildings and older dwellings in the conservation areas display the range of materials and styles typical of south-east England. These include oak and elm timber framing, timber cladding (weather board) and the use of flint for walls, particularly seen at The Street. Clay peg tiles usually made locally, feature on many roofs but later were usurped by Welsh slate. Peg tiles are also seen often as wall hangings, while brown stock bricks feature in many 19th Century buildings with a softer red brick seen slightly later. Most of the older houses have large gardens.



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Today, Hook Green hosts the Village Sign, and is mostly surrounded by modern developments. The main road, however, affords excellent views of seven listed buildings, of which the Old Forge, which contains part of a 14th Century timber frame building, is the oldest there.

The Street conservation area encompasses a wide stretch of land on either side of Wrotham Road, (A227) which includes the Parish Church of St John The Baptist, dating from the 14th Century. Adjacent to it but unseen from the road is the former Manor House of Meopham Court. This area is believed to be the oldest part of the Parish, thought to have been settled in the 8th century by a Jute named Meapa. Iron Age and Roman remains have also been found nearby. This conservation area contains seven more listed buildings including the George Public House and the former Post Office and Village shop, both now closed. They would have formed a focal point of this original hamlet, where there was once an Open Market. In modern times, the Farmers' Market can be found regularly in the nearby School campus – a link with the past brought up to date. The Street remains architecturally very interesting, despite the heavy traffic along this very narrow stretch of the A227 main road.

Meopham Green lies about three-quarters of a mile further to the south and is the third conservation area astride Wrotham Road (A227) and the approach faces the Village War memorial. On the far side of the Green stands the fine listed smock Windmill which was built in 1801. There are several buildings of historical note that appear on the local list of importance, including the two restaurants The Cricketers and The Kings Arms, Mill House, Wellington House, Basque Cottage, Oast Farm and Pitfield Lodge, but only Barnside at the northern end is currently listed.

Finally, Harvel conservation area, while relatively small, provides a haven of tranquillity away from the A227 and its constant flow of traffic. Alongside Harvel Green is an attractive duck pond; within the conservation area are three 16th century timber frame hall houses, these are Forge Cottage, Crickfield Farm and Old Pond Farm and there is a traditional Kent Oast house nearby. The Tithe Map of 1840 shows the area surrounding Harvel Green much as it is today.

In addition, a large area to the east of Meopham is included in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



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Harvel Archive Group

In 2009, a group of local people realised that a lot of the history of Harvel was being lost as residents died and families moved out of the area. We started meeting and publicising our aim to provide a safe haven for any documents, photos and artefacts people might be disposing of or would allow us to copy. During the next year, this grew and we received a National Heritage Lottery Grant to link this project with the Centenary of Harvel Village Hall and agreed to move forward in three ways.

The first was to record the memories of local people and store them safely, which we are in the process of doing, thanks to the support of Gravesham Library. The second part was to write a book about the history of Harvel over the last one hundred years, using photos, memories and cuttings. This was completed in November 2012 and a free copy given to each household in the village. A day of celebration was held in the village hall, at which two Rowan trees were planted and a carved commemorative seat was dedicated by the Mayor of Gravesham, Cllr Lyn Milner. An exhibition of the work carried out by the group was displayed in the village hall.

Other ways we are planning to use the information displayed will be completed in 2013 and available to local historians, residents and family history seekers in the hope that our work might encourage other groups to also record their immediate area in some way before too many of the older residents and their memories disappear altogether. Cllr Mandy Jones, past Chairman of Luddesdowne Parish Council, said "We are indebted to Meopham Parish Council and the Meopham Historical Society for their support and encouragement in this venture."



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Meopham Website

(www.meopham.org)

Meopham has had its own website for a number of years, thanks to its development as a millennium project by Claude Buttle, a local resident. It was updated in 2005 by Bryony Bramer.

The website now provides regularly updated information on over 100 organisations, societies and clubs, ranging from local sports and social clubs to schools, churches, medical services and places to eat out. The Local Information section gives details of local events, both regular and one-off and is free of charge to the users.

The main Meopham section records information on village history, local landmarks and famous past residents. The website is managed by the Parish Council, and gives information regarding the details of Parish Councillors, dates of Council meetings along with their agendas and approved minutes. There is also a full listing of the progress of planning applications, which are in the region of 150 a year, on which the Parish Council is consulted by Gravesham Borough Council. Please do visit the website at www.meopham.org for more in depth details.



Listed Buildings in the Parish

CAMER ESTATE:

Camer House
Buildings west of Camer House:
Bailiffs House 5 & 6
Somers (No7), Camer Green
Cottage (No8) 9 & 10

DAVID STREET:

Merryweather, Parkers Cottage
Rabbits Corner

DEAN LANE:

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NURSTEAD LANE:
Nurstead Court
Church Of St Mildred
Nurstead Hall
Nurstead Lodge

SHIPLEY HILLS ROAD:
West Down Farmhouse

THE STREET:
Well House
Dorrington Cottage
Elizabeth House

WROTHAM ROAD:
St John The Baptist Church
Ivy House
The Old Forge and Old Forge Cottage
Evendon Farmhouse
The George Inn
Church Cottages
Barnside
Meopham Windmill
Leylands Orchard
Leylands Barn
Leylands Farm Cottage
Owls Castle
Owls Castle Barn

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PCSO Jo Hartley	07980 770598
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Community Safety Unit	337400
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Meopham North, Sole Street & Cobham – Jacqueline Fuller	07813 713036
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Neighbourhood Watch	813929

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Hospitals with 24 hour Accident & Emergency:

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Meopham Medical Centre– Emergencies	814068
– Appointments	814811
– Enquiries	814288
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (www.kent.gov.uk)

Kent County Council	08458 247 247
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RSPCA	01634 681187
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National Childbirth Trust	0700 5801407

CONSUMER ASSOCIATIONS

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Citizen's Advice Bureau	361239

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Meopham Welfare Committee	813451
Meopham Community Bus Service (Tuesdays and Fridays)	813451

AMENITIES AND SERVICES

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Mobile Library (Thursdays Harvel Village Hall 12.15-12.30 pm; Chinnery Court 1.50pm-2.05pm and Bartellas 2.10-2.25 pm)	01622 752344
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Culverstone Community Centre	01732 823232/824737
Harvel Village Hall	812299
Meopham Scout Hut	814955

TODDLER GROUPS

1st Steps (Pram Service) at St Johns Church	07985 433909
Jo-Jingles at St John's Church	322123
NCT Toddler Group at St John's Church	814323/07739 529507
Songtime at South Street Baptist Church	01634 308260

PRE-SCHOOLS

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Culverstone Pre School,	
Culverstone Primary School	01732 822883
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SCHOOLS

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Meopham & District Young Farmers (age 18+)	814646

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South Street Baptist Church	01732 813379
St John the Baptist Church C of E	813106
St Mildred's Church C of E	812090
St Paul's Roman Catholic Church	814627
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Meopham Evening Women's Institute	812900
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Marquetry	814217
Meopham Historical Society	814025
Meopham Windmill Trust	812794

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