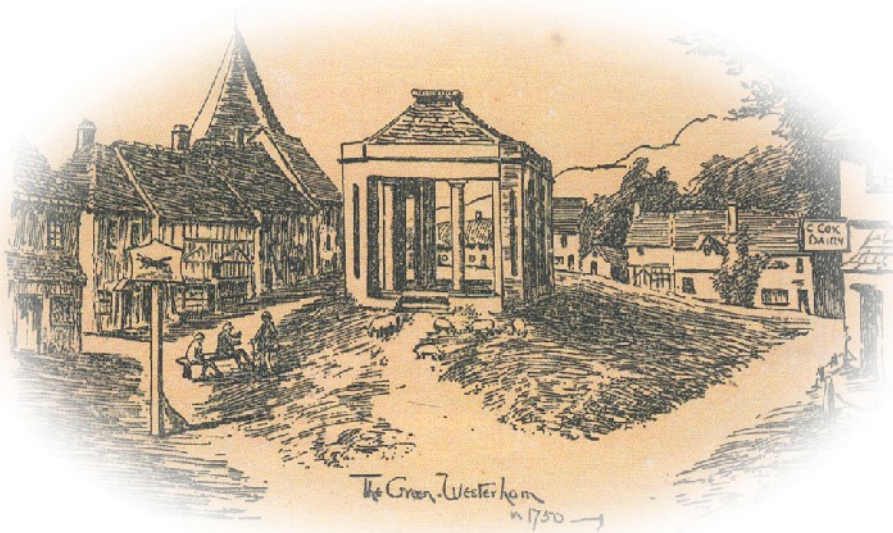


# The Buttery

## Westerham



## THE BUTTERY

Many residents of Westerham in Kent will be aware that at one time in the past there was a strange structure standing on the Green, in fact there are several prints of this building in existence and it was known variously as The Buttery, The Market House, The Summer House, The Pavilion or even The Temple of the Winds. When it was erected and who by and when it was destroyed and why, no one seems to know. The purpose of this study is to attempt to answer these questions. I also speculate that a timber framed building 70 yards away, is the original market house that was moved from the Green and re-erected.



The building known as The Buttery or The Market House, The Summer House, The Pavilion or The Temple of the Winds in 1817 (1)

Information for this study has mostly come from archives including The British Library, St Pancras, The National Archives, Kew, The Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone and The Bodleian Library, Oxford.

These sources revealed that the original Market House was built in 1621, probably replaced in the 18<sup>th</sup> c and finally pulled down in 1856

### **Westerham and the building of a market**

Westerham has always been a fairly important town, in the Domesday Survey of 1086 it had 42 tenant farmers, seven cottagers, 10 serfs, 32 teams of oxen, panage for 100 swine and a water mill worth five shillings. In 1066 it was assessed at a yearly value of £30. By contrast nearby Brasted was valued at £10, Sundridge at £12 and Oxted at £16 (2).

As Westerham stands on a busy east-west road and another from London to the coast it soon surpassed several other villages in the area in both size and stature, so much so that in 1227 King Henry III granted to Thomas de Camvill the Lord of the manor, a charter for a weekly market to be held every Wednesday. The market was probably held on The Green around which the village clustered. At that time there was also a market at Brasted that was in the possession of the Earl of Gloucester. In a court case of 1230 there was disagreement regarding the two markets. Westerham seems to have

won, as there is no record of the Brasted market ever developing to the extent that Westerham did. When Matilda, the heir of de Camvill died without issue the manor reverted to the crown and in 1292 King Edward III granted the manor to Walter the Abbot of Westminster. In 1351 a new charter was granted to the Abbot, Prior and Convent of Westminster for a market to be held on a Monday. In 1351 a further grant of a yearly fair to be held on 'The feast of Mary' (8<sup>th</sup> September) was given to the same landlord. This fair was to be held over three days on The Vigil, the Feast and the Morrow of St Mary. (3)



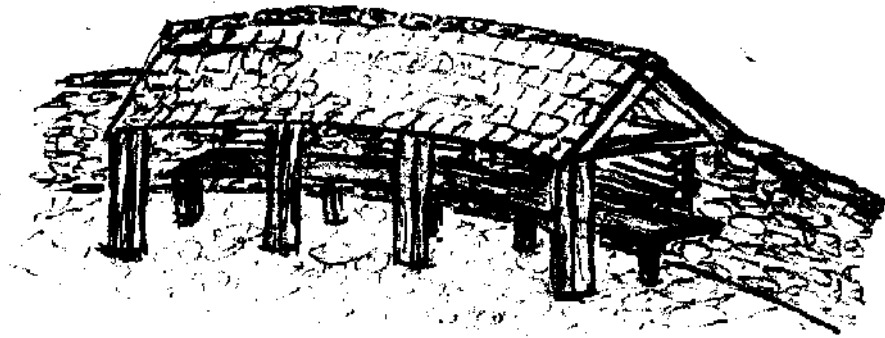
The Fair on the Green 1907

By the early seventeenth century the market had fallen away to very low ebb, probably due to the increasing importance of the town and market at Sevenoaks.

Richard Dawling owned two houses in the town and was a 'mercier dealing in cloth and other grocery wares'. In about 1619 he canvassed several of his business acquaintances with a view to financing a new Market Charter from the King. They proposed to build a series of stalls or shambles in the centre of the town which they would let out to traders and which they hoped would not only revive the market but in doing so enhance the value and rents of their properties. The revised market would consist of the stalls or shambles located in the area now known as the Market Square. There was also to be a Market House on the Green.

### **Shambles**

The English word 'shambles' derives from the Latin diminutive *scamillum* which means a low stool. In Middle English this became *shamel* and was the block on four short legs that a butcher used to cut meat up on and eventually this word came to mean a butchers shop or slaughter house and finally to mean any semi permanent shop or stall. By the 17<sup>th</sup> c it was usually 'a structure that has a roof and walls and stands more or less permanently in one place.'



19<sup>th</sup> c shambles Castle Cary

## The evidence from old documents

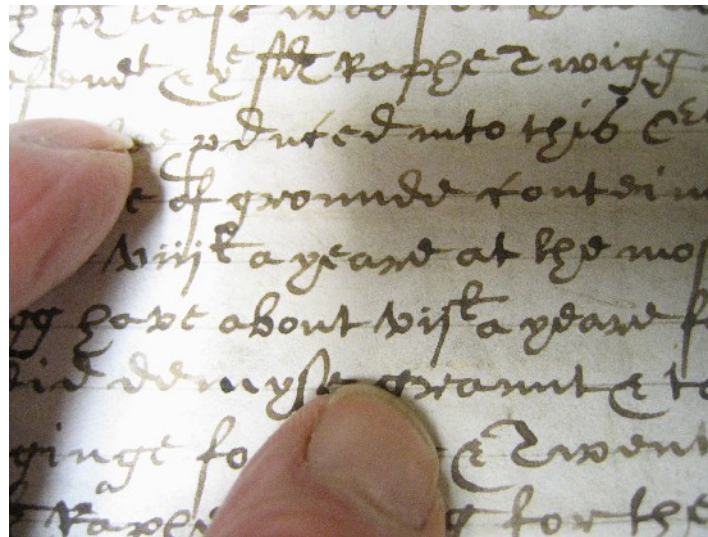
We are fortunate that much is known about this development of the market as George Fuller one of the people involved, believed that Dawling was collecting more money from his acquaintances than he was spending on the project and was pocketing the difference. In the National Records Office, two large parchments one dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 1623, sets out Fuller's charges and the other dated December 1626 sets out Dawling's response to those charges. (4)



George Fuller's complaynte

These documents are not the easiest for the layman to read, for a start the script is a type known as Secretary hand, an archaic style that was still used by lawyers. The language is also a strange mixture of old English and legalese. The parchments are

somewhat creased and torn, but by taking each line at a time I was able to decipher most of what was written. These documents give us the names of all the people involved, how much money was spent both on getting the grant from the King and also how much was spent on the buildings. It describes, where the stalls were and some details of the Buttery, although they never refer to it by that name, always calling it The Market House.

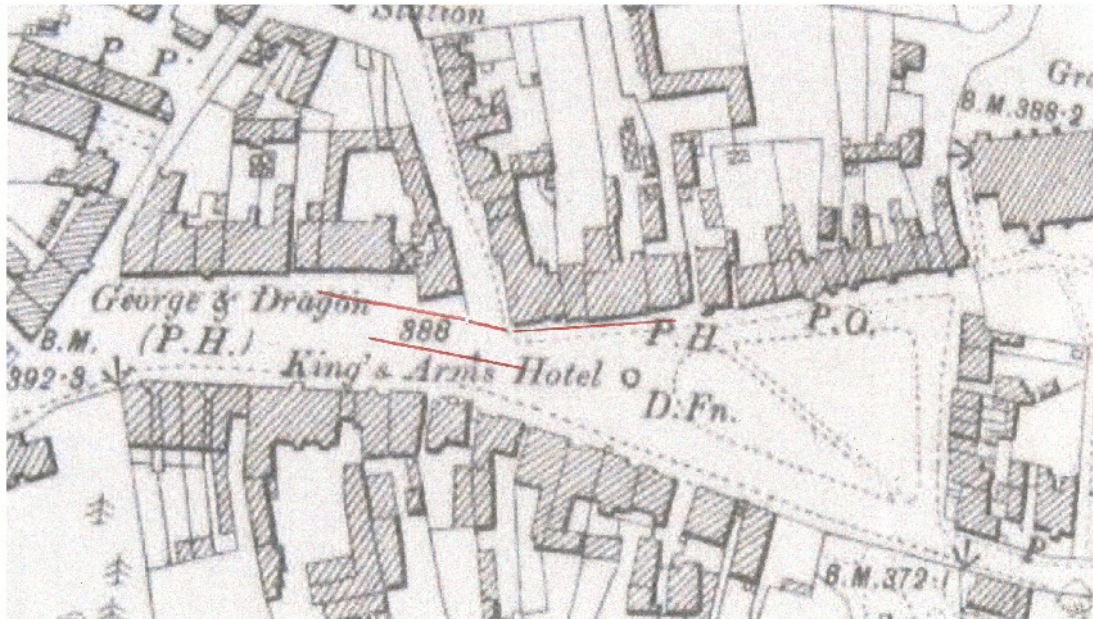


Not the easiest documents to read

By 1621 Dawling and his associate Raphe Twigg had got a lease for 21 years from Sir Thomas Gresham the then Lord of the Manor to build thirteen shops or shambles in the market place. The area is described thus, 'All that part or parcel of wast ground belonging to his sayd manor of Westerham lyinge in the the towne of Westerham between this defendants (Richard Dawling) house on the Easte, and the house called and knowne by the name of the George on the West and abutted on the high waye leading from Limpsfield to Brasted on the South, and the London Way on the Northe continuinge by admesurment on the Easte side CXX (120 feet) foote of Assise, on the West CXIJ (112) foote, on the South side CXIIJ (113 feet) foote, and on the Northe XXXty (30 feet) foote with power and libtye to build and erect out by more building or buildings for Shoppes or Shambles for Burcherye or other uses for One and Twenty yeares from michalmas last past.'

It is not at all clear what area was defined by these dimensions. It seems most likely that the market stalls or shambles would extend across the top of the London Road (10 feet) eastwards towards the Grasshopper public house (120 feet) and westwards to the George and Dragon hotel (112 Feet) This later area is still known as The Market Square. The building work cost Richard Dawling and Raph Twigg 'upwards of £80'.





The probable site of the lease for the market

Later in the same document it says ‘And this defendant (Richard Dawling) saithe that according to that Covenant hee this defendant and the sayd Raph Twigg have erected a market house with a lanthorne and a market bell which stood them in at neere Sixty fore pounds. This is certainly the building that stood in the centre of the Green

In 1750, when John Warde bought the Manor of Westerham he acquired ‘all the Court House and Market house and all the Butchers shops and Shambles Erected and built situate lying and being in the town of Westerham.’(5) So clearly the market venture started by Richard Dawling and Raph Twigg had succeeded and was still operating over one hundred years later.

### **Evidence from maps**

There is only one map that may show the Market House, It is what is known as an Ordnance Survey Drawing and was probably made in 1798. It shows a rectangular structure on the Green that is certainly in the correct position to be the Market House.



Ordnance Survey Drawing 1798. (6)

According to the Ordnance Survey the drawing was made in 1798 or possibly slightly earlier. If the building shown is the original Market House then this must mean that the old Market House was not removed until after 1798 or that the survey was carried out some time before 1798. There is some evidence that the survey may have been done in the 1780's but it is slight. (7) If we accept the earliest possible date it means that the classical Buttery lasted little more than seventy years. None of the other maps found are to a large enough scale to show detail of any structures in the open area where the Green and the Market Square now are.

Although the evidence available to us regarding the Market House that Dawling constructed is very limited it may be possible to make a reasonable guess at what it may have been like. Dawling tells us that his market house cost 'neere sixty fore pounds'. By the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century skilled workmen such as carpenters and masons were earning around eight pence per day and were working six days a week. Richard Harris Director of the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum considers that the building cost could be roughly equally divided between labour and materials. This means that £32 would have paid for 960 days of labour, if ten men were employed they could work for 16 weeks which seems enough time to construct a fairly simple timber framed structure with a tiled roof. Dawling also tells us that his building had a 'lanthorne and market bell'. Lanthorne is the ancient form of lantern, which may in this context mean 'An ornamental structure surmounting a dome (or roof) to give light (inside the dome or roof) and to crown the fabric.' From the Ordnance Survey Drawing of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century we know that the market house was almost certainly rectangular in plan and according to Malcomb Air's book *The Buildings of Britain*, most market buildings of the 17<sup>th</sup> century 'invariably had an open arcaded ground floor which provided shelter for some stalls on market day. Above this was a large chamber which acted as a meeting room for the regulation of the market'. There is nothing in Dawlings account that suggests that his market house was so constructed but there is a timber framed building a mere 70 yards away,



behind Barclays Bank that may just be the original market house. It is well known that timber framed buildings that had outlived their original purpose were frequently dismantled and re-erected on a different site for a different purpose. Unfortunately the present tenants, Café Bambino and the owners Market Square Ltd have not yet made the building available for any research, but it is the right size roughly 18 feet by 30 feet, it has an upper floor that may be the chamber for the regulation of the market and the style of construction could well be early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The walls of the lower floor are built of brick and stone that could replace the open arcaded area beneath the upper floor.



Café Bambino. Is this the original market house?



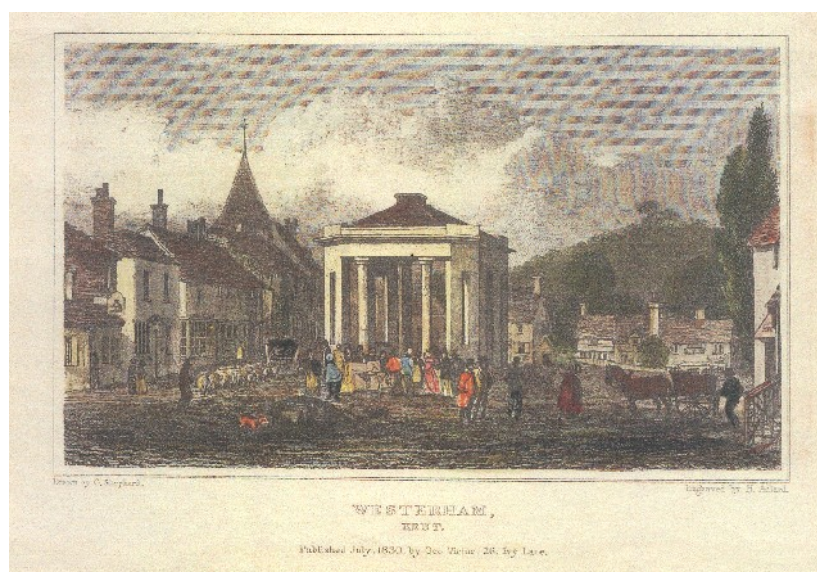
Inside the Café Bambino

There is one other point that may be significant. Market houses of the 17<sup>th</sup> c frequently had a small lock up incorporated in them in which to confine law-breakers while awaiting trial. We do not know if the original market house was so equipped but if it were the small lock-up close to the Buttery may have been built when that facility was lost



## References in other documents

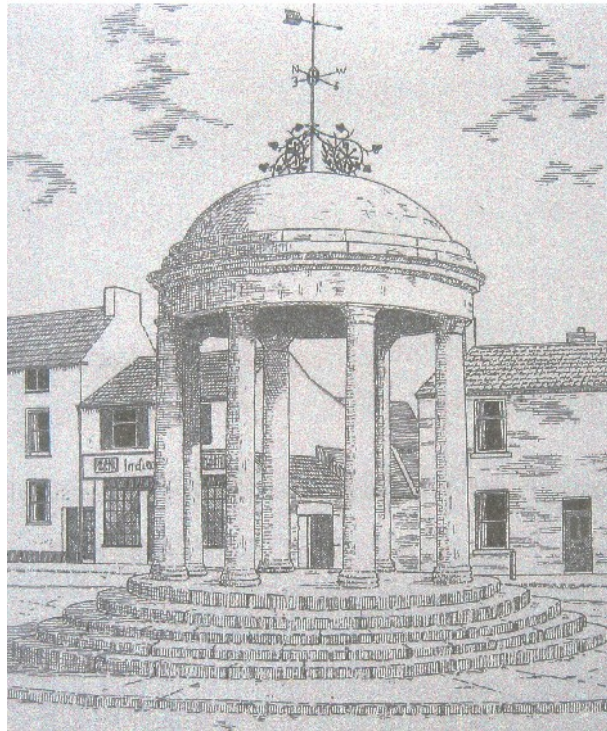
There are several mentions of the Market House in a variety of documents, the earliest being the court case of 1623 the next is the deed of purchase of the manor of Westerham by John Warde in 1750. In 1780 another deed refers to the transfer of land 'Situate and being near the market house in the High Street of Westerham.' (8) In June 1810 there was an advertisement in the Maidstone Journal for the sale by Mrs M Musgrave of her shop and its contents that was 'Adjacent to the Market House.' (9) When the National Census was carried out in 1841 the preamble contains the words 'All that part of Westerham Town and Parish lying to the North of the Godstone Road and West of the London Road from the Market House.' (10) A Topographical Dictionary of England by Samuel Lewis published in 1848 says of Westerham, 'The town stands on the Northern declivity of the same formation (sand hills) and is of neat and clean appearance; near the centre is the market house. (11) When Daniel Defoe (The author of Robinson Crusoe) made his 'Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain' between 1724 and 1727, he approached Westerham from the west and found that it was 'the first market town in Kent on that side: This is a neat and handsome well built market town, and is full of gentry, and consequently good company.' Unfortunately he says nothing about a Market House. (12) Finally an article in the Westerham Herald of February 1929 referring to 1860 when a business was in the hands of Mr E Dye says 'That was in the good old days when the Market House, a stone building stood near the site of the present Wolfe statue.' (13)



The building known as the Buttery and other names in 1830, the tiny building with the pointed roof just to the right is the old lock up

There is one more reference to the Market House that confirms that there have been two different market houses. In 'Westerham With its Surroundings' printed in 1911 it states '---the old Market House in front of the second shop past the Breaches which was there in Wolfe's day (General Wolfe 1729-1759) later on this was replaced by an octagonal pavilion known as the Summer House which was in turn pulled down.' (14) There is no doubt that the Buttery in the images that we have looks more like a building of the middle to late 18<sup>th</sup> century rather than early 17<sup>th</sup>. (15) Perhaps John

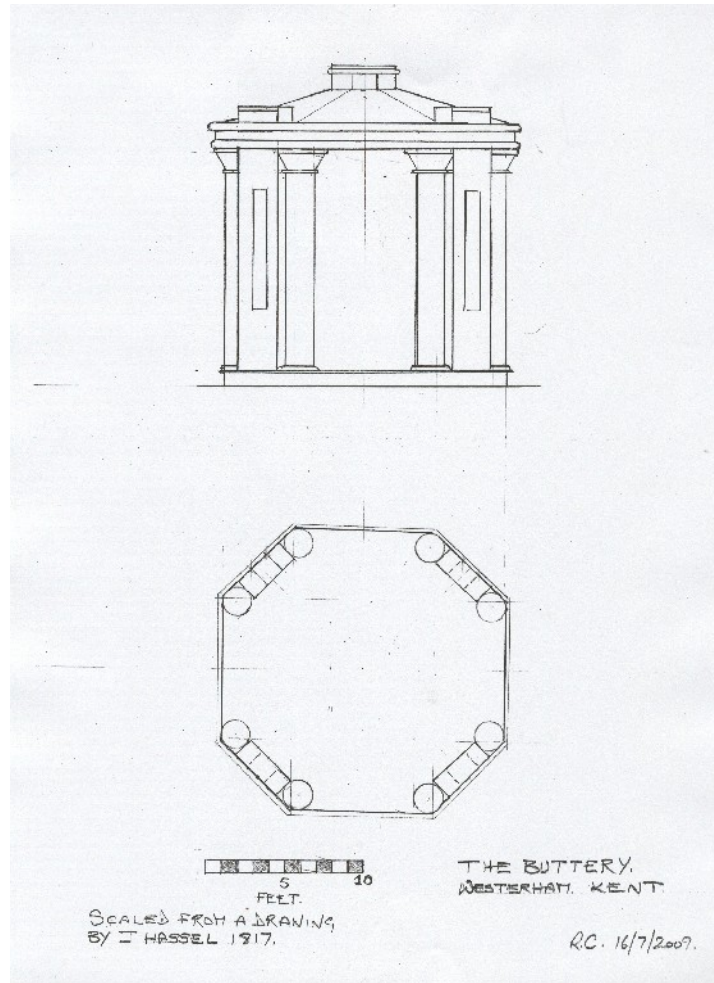
Warde having bought the manor of Westerham in 1750 was putting his stamp on the town by replacing the old market house with a really outstanding building quite similar to the one built a little later at Tickhill, South Yorks.



Tickhill South Yorks c1793.

There is also the matter of the material from which the Buttery was made, in none of the images that we have is there any sign of masonry joints, it looks very much as if is made of brick or rubble stone (Kentish rag?) with a stucco rendering, the very low pitch of the roof can only be lead or slates. Both stucco and slate was not used in England before the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, slates were certainly used in Squerryes Mill that was also built about 1750. Then there is also the cost that Richard Dawling quoted as the price of the market house 'neere Sixty for pounds', could he really have built such an imposing structure for such a small sum even at that early date?

Mr Yates of Westerham has a copy of one of the well-known pictures of the Buttery. Beneath it is a note dated 1933 by FG Benson a local photographer and amateur historian who operated at the Keswick Studios. Much of what Benson says about the Buttery we now know to be incorrect but he does finish with a story of a strange little ceremony that used to take place at the Buttery. 'Once a year the school children used to meet on the Green, and every child offering to stand on the steps of the Market House received a smack on their bottoms with a pair of bellows and was given a hot cake.' Quite what this little ritual recalls is now impossible to say.



Plan and elevation made from a drawing by J Hassel 1817

### The decline of the market

The story of the Buttery now gets mixed up with the story of the Westerham Volunteer Fire Brigade. The Brigade was formed in 1844 and was financed and supported entirely by public subscription. The first fire engine was a hand drawn, hand powered pump with forty feet of hose, twenty four buckets, two hooks and two axes. The firemen had only armbands, no uniforms or helmets and their chief was Mr E Dye. It seems that at this time, as the Buttery was no longer in regular use it was decided to brick up the open sides and use it as the fire engine house. Major J Board writing to Mr M Delacombe a local solicitor complained that 'the Market House, nearly opposite the Grasshopper, was spoilt by being bricked up and turned into a fire engine house.'(16) It is clear that this conversion did not please everyone.

It may be wondered why the market that had existed for so long should have fallen away to such an extent that this lovely old building should end its days as a fire engine house. Up to the beginning of the eighteenth century most goods outside London were produced, purchased and consumed locally and were traded at the nearest market or yearly fair. There were few shops and people were mostly self sufficient in their everyday needs. As enclosure, colonisation and the industrial



revolution began to take effect roads improved, banks and newspapers began to appear and many working class folk left the land or smallholdings to work in paid employment. As a result of this change of lifestyle many people needed to buy what they had previously made or produced for themselves. As they were paid weekly, they had to buy in small quantities so shops began to appear to supply this need. By the early nineteenth century most villages and all towns had shops that could supply all the necessities of life and the weekly market began to loose its importance for most people except perhaps farmers. In Pigot's Directory of Kent published in 1824 he says 'In the centre (of Westerham) is a stone market house which is little used'



Market square late 19th c with cattle stalls outside the George and Dragon

In 1856 or 57 the fire brigade moved to a purpose built engine house.

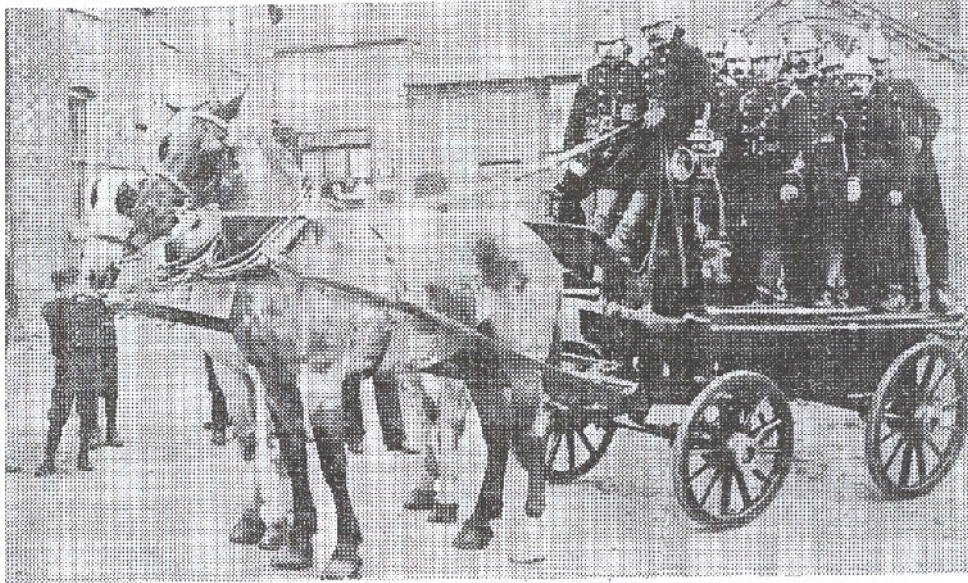


The old fire engine house London Road c1948

In 1856 the old Buttery was pulled down. Today we would not countenance such an act of outright vandalism but I guess in those days people were more concerned with making a living than worrying about old, derelict buildings.

In the letter quoted above Major Board says that the flagstones from the floor of the Buttery were used to pave part of the path along the north side of the Green from The Grasshopper towards the church and slates from the roof and bricks and other material from the Buttery was used in the building of the new engine house.

In 1892 the fire brigade bought a brand new engine, it was made by Merryweather and was their Greenwich model. It was horse drawn, but still hand pumped and it cost £132-10-00, but they did get a trade in allowance of £10 on the old pump.



The Merryweather Greenwich

When this engine house was in turn pulled down just after WW2 some of the stone went in to repairing the Moreton's Almshouses and some was used to build the gateposts of the George V playing field. It is a fact that the engine house was entirely constructed from Kentish Rag rubble with a brick arch over the door and a dentil course of bricks on the gable end. It also had a slate roof. The only stone that can be seen in the gateposts of the George V playing field is Kentish Rag and of course the almshouses are all Kentish rag. It would seem that if, as Major Board says, the engine house was built from material from the Buttery, the Buttery can only have been built of Kentish rag or brick. As will be seen from the picture below the blocks of stone used in the gatepost are all very regular, there is no evidence that this is how the stone was when it was used in the fire engine house.





Gatepost George V playing field gatepost



The Jubilee Fountain

In 1887 in the place where the Buttery had stood, a Fountain and horse trough to commemorate the jubilee of Queen Victoria was installed. This was moved into the Market Square in 1911 to make way for the statue of General Wolfe which I'm glad



to say is still there. The fountain (without water) is still in the Market Square and the horse trough is at Verral's Corner on the Western approach to the town.



General Wolfe's Statue

## Conclusion

So there you are, Richard Dawling and Raph Twigg built a 'Market House' in 1621 at a cost of £64, rebuilt in a neo classical style in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and called The Buttery, The Summerhouse, The Pavilion or The Temple of the Winds, converted in 1844 to a fire engine house and finally pulled down in 1856, but bits of it may still be found in Moretons Almshouse or the gate posts of the George V playing field.

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R Combley 2010.