

The Coaching Era Begins

- 1750 Dr Russell of Lewes publishes a 'Dissertation on the Use of Sea Water in the Affections of the Glands'.
- London-Lewes-Brighthelmstone. Coach Service started in 1756 by James Batchelar of East Grinstead, owner of The Dorset Arms in East Grinstead. He realises that there is a good opportunity to cash in on the interest in sea bathing amongst Londoners. A new coach service would bring extra business to the inn.



Text of Newspaper Advertisement

Lewes and Brighthelmstone

New machine to hold four passengers By Chailey

Sets out from The George Inn every Monday,
Wednesday and Friday, in one Day to the Star at
Lewes, and to the Old Ship at Brighthelmstone

Inside passengers to Lewes pay 13 shillings, to
Brighthelmstone 16 shillings

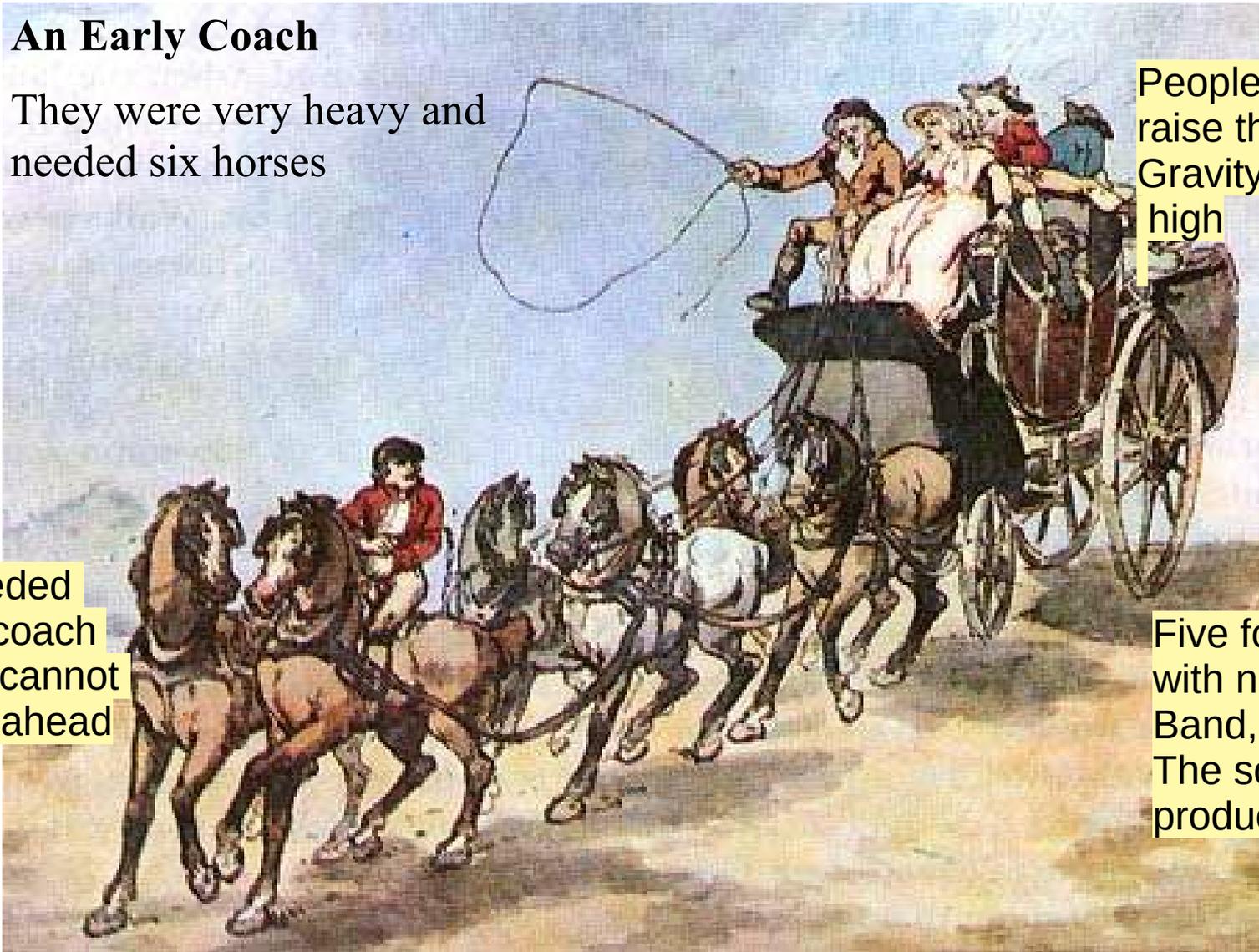
Children in lap and outside pay Half Price

Perform'd (if God permit) by J. Batchelar

£150
at today's
prices

An Early Coach

They were very heavy and needed six horses



People and baggage raise the centre of Gravity dangerously high

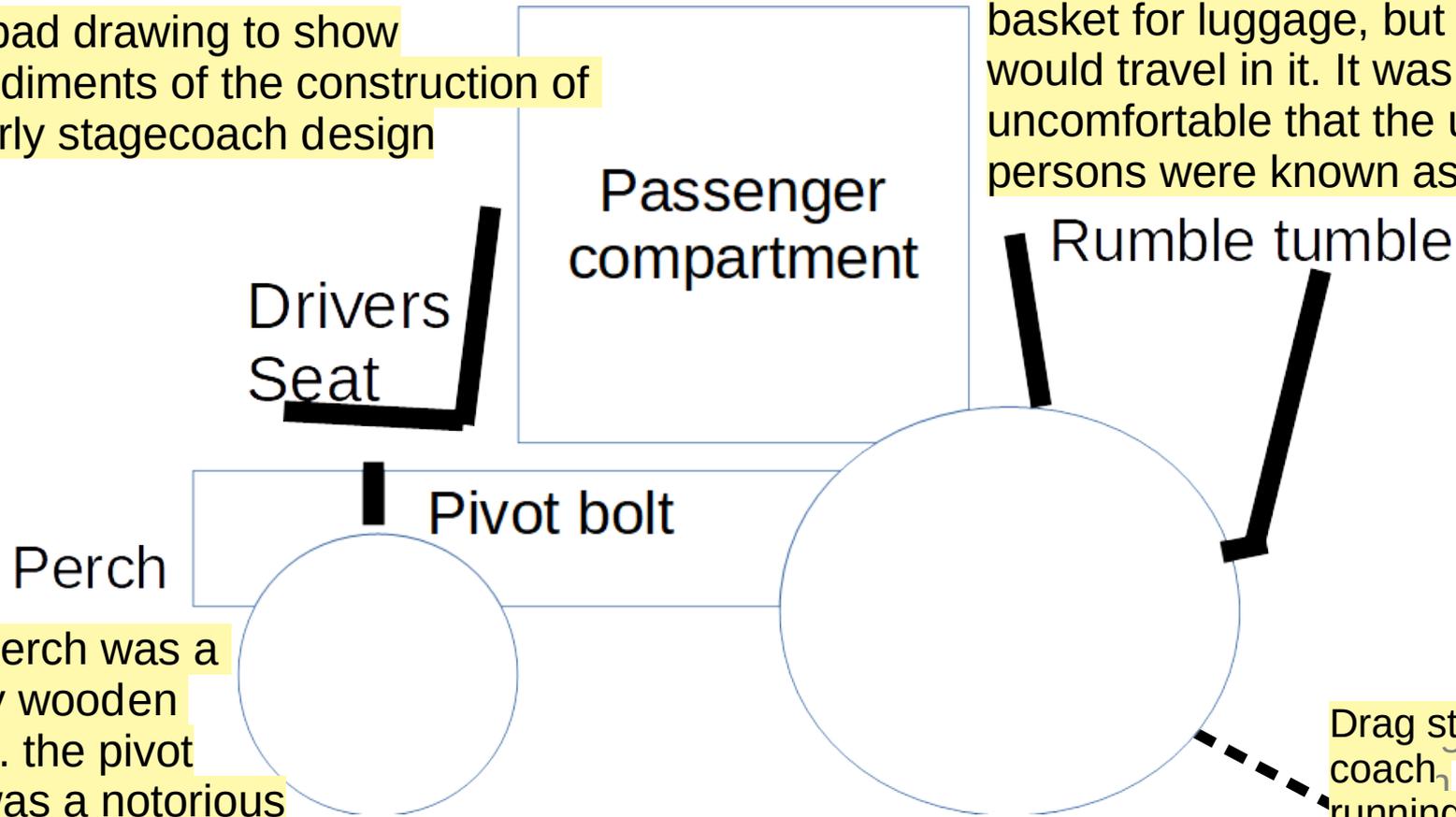
No suspension

No brakes

Postillion needed to guide the coach as the driver cannot see the road ahead

Five foot six wheels with narrow steel Band, which dig in to The soft road surface producing ruts

Very bad drawing to show the rudiments of the construction of an early stagecoach design



The Rumble Tumble was a straw basket for luggage, but often people would travel in it. It was so uncomfortable that the unfortunate persons were known as 'basket cases'.

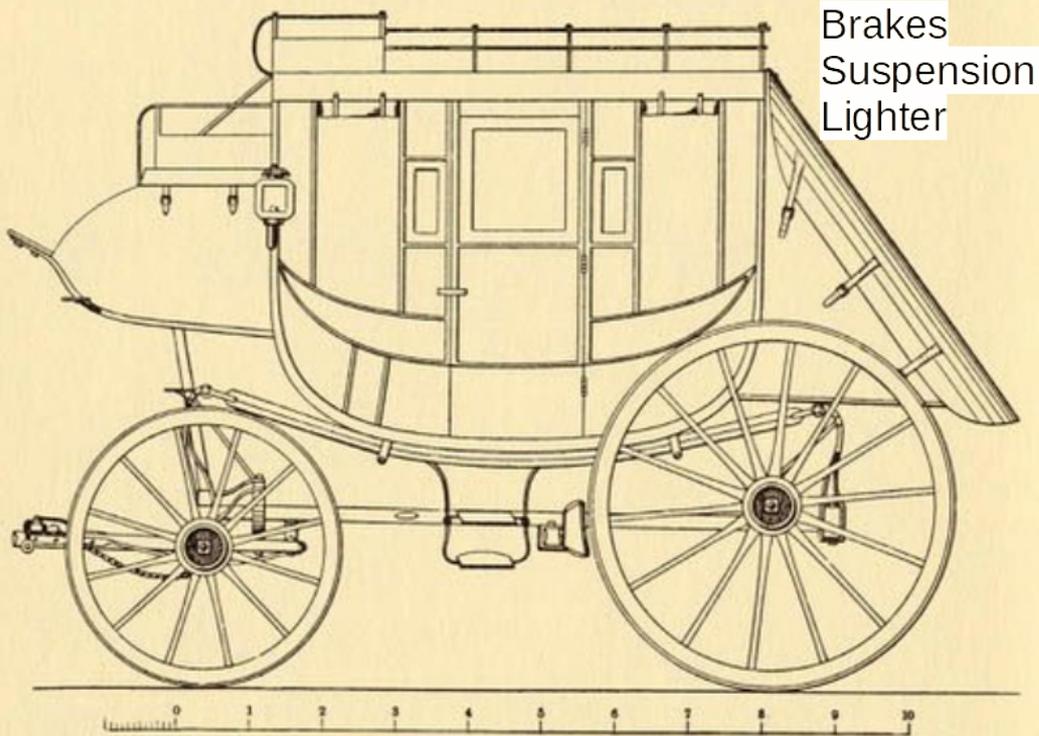
The perch was a heavy wooden beam. the pivot bolt was a notorious weakness. if it broke the front wheels would be dragged forward and the coach would probably turn over.

Downhill the guard would use a shovel-like skidpan to slow the coach by jamming a rear wheel. if he failed the horses could be forced into a dangerous full gallop.

Drag staff to stop the coach running back when climbing a hill.

Development of Coaching

- To begin with the stages were to rest the horses and give passengers a much-needed break. Average speed was about 4mph
- Improvements to coach design meant horses and fewer were needed. They could trot at 6-7mph, but the horses were all in after 10 miles



Brakes
Suspension
Lighter

The improved lighter weight design with brakes and suspension would have improved the comfort of travellers as well as reducing journey times.

The suspension was the cause of unrest to begin with for fear by some of the driver falling asleep on the journey, because the ride was now too comfortable.

Coaching Inn

- Coaching inns every 10 miles became a necessity. Instead of stopping to rest and then carrying on, the horses would be exchanged rapidly and the journey continued within minutes.
- Now passengers would only have a short break in their journey. Some innkeepers became notorious for serving very hot soup that the passengers could not consume in the short time available. When they left the soup went back in the pot for later customers.
- In 1777 Lord Sheffield builds a very grand coaching inn, hoping to cash in on a bonanza



- Coaches to Brighton had to go 20 miles between stages from East Grinstead to Lewes
- The Sheffield Arms was built halfway in between.
- The first tenant, John Fletcher had to fit out the shell as well as a new milestone and mounting block. By 1781 he was bankrupt
- The next tenant Edward Hook leaves in 1782. The venture was unsuccessful in the long term because of the switch to a new route through Cuckfield to Brighton



The postcard shows the grand Georgian building with the stables partly hidden. The Sheffield Arms sign can be seen. The grand milestone that John Fletcher built can still be seen at the crossroads



Effects of the Turnpike and Coaching on Danehill



It is interesting to speculate on what the locals would have made of the fashionable Londoners that were now passing through regularly.





Let's imagine a young lady, Mary, on a first exciting journey to the sea and attractions of Brighton and perhaps hoping to meet an eligible gentleman during the trip!

What would she have seen in Danehill parish from the carriage window?



Wych Cross

Crossing Ashdown Forest

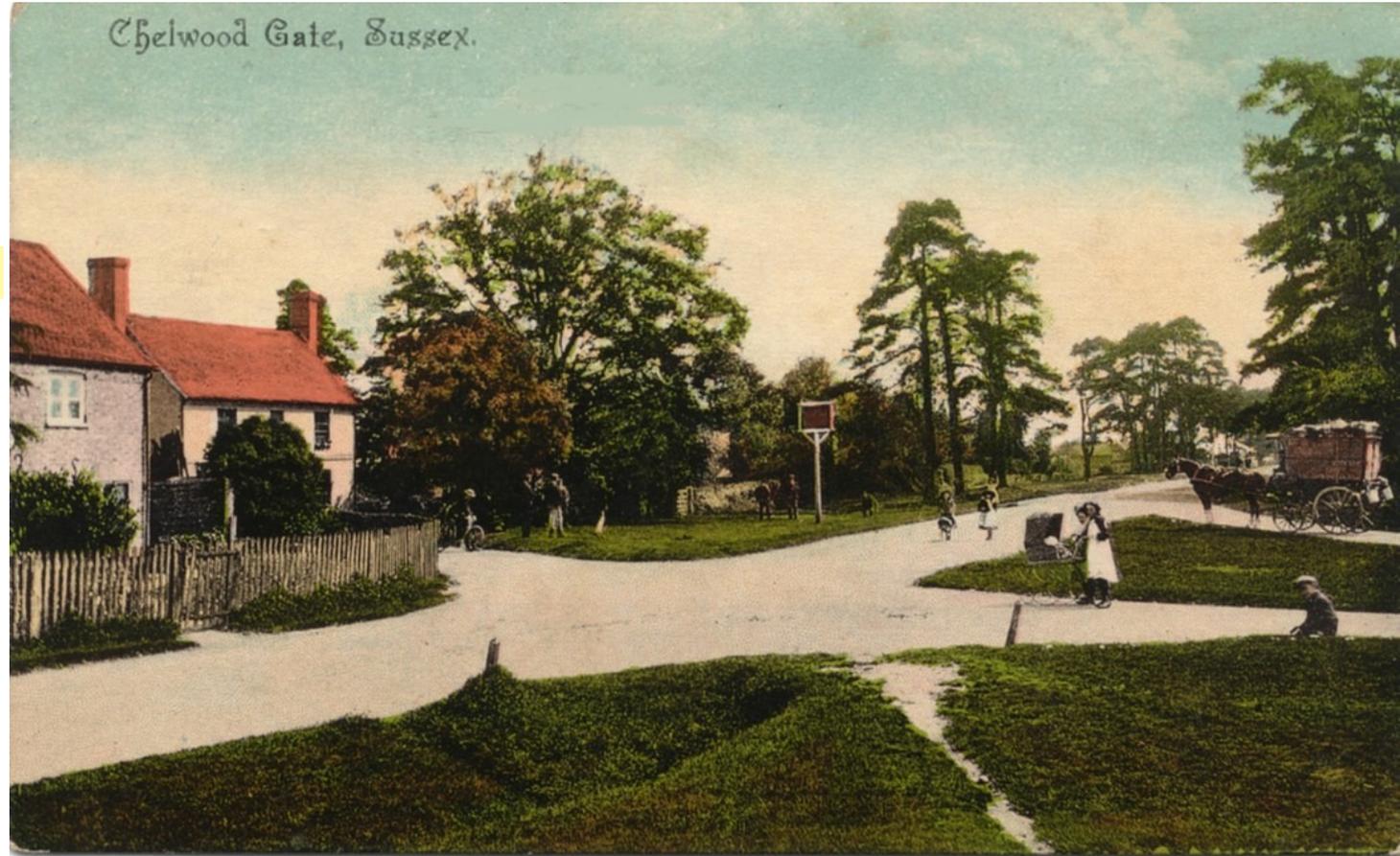
William Cobbett described the Forest in 1822:-

‘At about three miles from Grinstead you come to a pretty village, called Forest-Row, and then you cross Ashurst Forest, which is a heath, with here and there a few birch scrubs upon it, verily the most villainously ugly spot I saw in England.’

At this time heathland would have been regarded as unproductive with little livestock and no agriculture and Mary may well have felt the same.



The Red Lion would have been there in 1760 . The house on the far left had not been built when Mary passed by. The rest of the scene was probably much like this with children playing on the road and perhaps a gypsy caravan





The next houses would have been Botches (left) and Woodgate Farm. Botches was a large 100 acre farm and was a hall house ~1450-1500, which later gained a chimney.

Woodgate Farm a little further south was 60 acres and dates from 1597. there were no other known buildings until the centre of Danehill

CENTRE OF DANEHILL VILLAGE

Houses Present in 1760

The Forge

Farm

Knells Farm

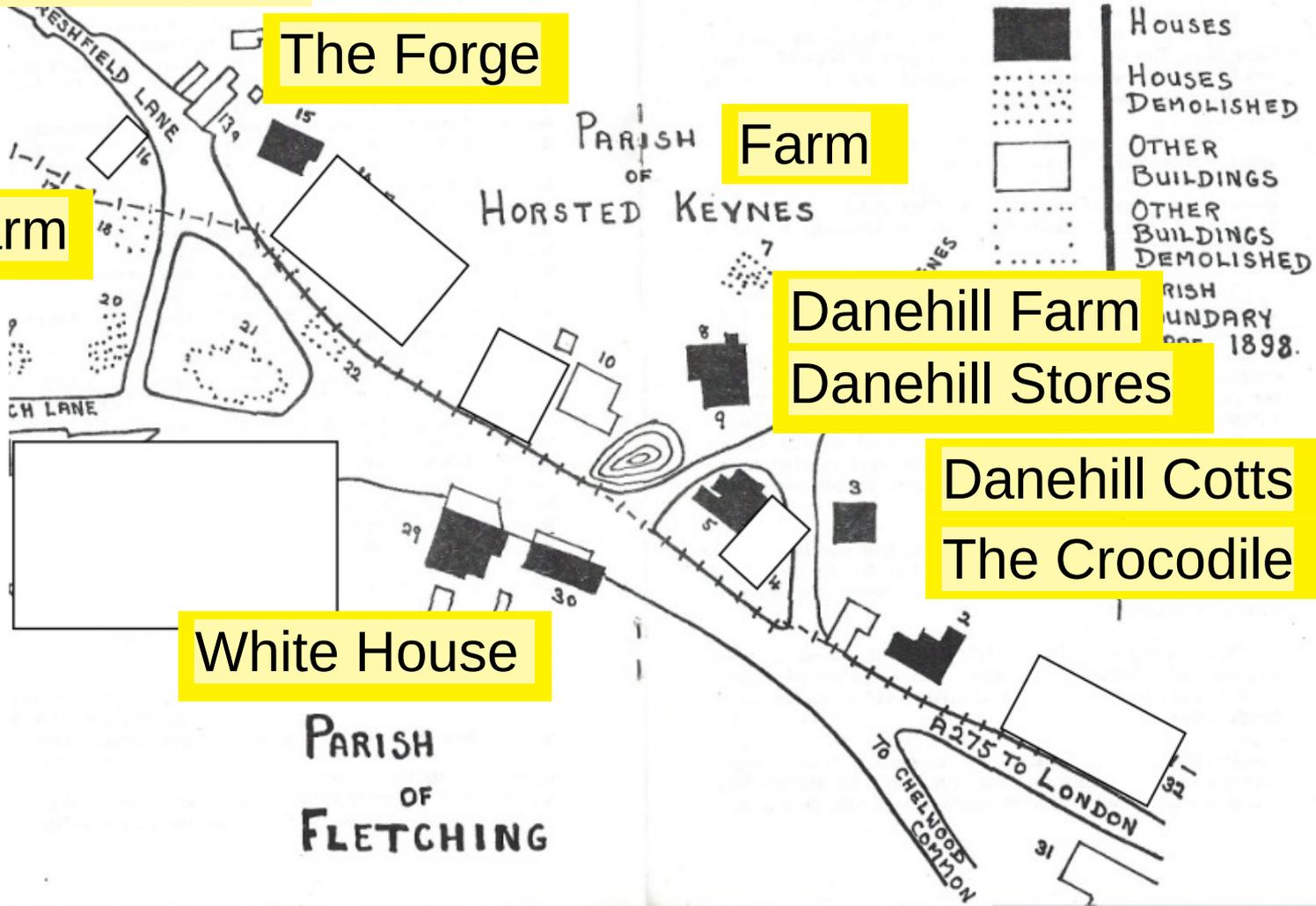
Cottage /shop

Danehill Farm
Danehill Stores

Danehill Cotts
The Crocodile

White House

James Rawlings





The Crocodile, above, was rebuilt in 1910. The earlier house, right, dates back to 1701, But it was not a pub in 1760.



Danehill Farm on the left has gained a Georgian front since 1760. The shop was also present, but was originally built as a forge. It was built in the triangle formed by the roads. This was to reduce the fire risk to other buildings

Dare Hill showing Post Office.

This old farm was behind Danehill Farm and dates back to 1550. It was abandoned in the nineteenth century and eventually demolished in 1979.



The White House has a fine Georgian frontage, but behind there lurks a much older medieval building from around 1450. At one time it was the Red Lion inn. Giles Moore, rector of Horsted Keynes, writes in his diary about picking up parcels from London that had been delivered by packhorse. Later the inn became a tea room.



Danehill Forge also dates from 1450. This photo shows the ironmongers shop on the left. The front has been given a brick facelift. And the sign on the chimney surprisingly says:

‘Socialism is the hope of the workers’.



This more recent photo with the bricks removed shows the house as it probably was in 1760.

Note the superb 20th century gates made by the blacksmith, George Etherton. These gates were exhibited at Earls Court.



Moving into Church Lane, where there was no church in 1760, Mary would have come to North Northlands Farm (1550) and Christopher Fields, ~1450 below. Christopher Fields had a butchers shop.





Noddy Cottage and Black Dog Cottage were the next buildings in Church Lane. The Black Dog, unusally for Danehill, has a cellar and at one stage was a beer house

Penfolds is a fine Regency style house and may well have been in the process of being built when Mary passed by.





Finally moving on to Furners Green, Mary would have passed Newmans, now Heaven Farm. The farmhouse was further back from the road than the present house (left) and dates to 1750. Sterresherne, bottom left, is much older (1497) and has grown a Victorian front and a cafe.

Portmansford has a deed of 1504 and is a much as it would have been



Effects of Road Improvement

- Up to 1752 wheeled transport was difficult and impossible in winter.
- The Turnpike improved the road markedly allowing long distance coach travel and improved trading
- Also allowed the well-off much greater access to the area and the ability to travel fairly easily to London

Incomers

A direct effect of the better transport communications was to attract very rich people who could now live in the country and still have access to London.

1769 Yorkshire born John William Holroyd buys Sheffield Park for £30 000 (£3 500 000 today) from Earl De la Warr and rebuilds Sheffield Park. John William becomes first Lord of Sheffield. The family has a large effect on the area both political and Financial, such as the investment in the Sheffield Arms.





1826 Warburton Davies buys Woodgate from Mr Hutchinson who around 1800 built the building now called Cumnor House (left).

c1826 Francis Davies buys Newmans (Heaven Farm), Hammings and Huggets and builds Danehurst (St Raphaels Nursing Home today)

Effect of Incomers

- In-service work opportunities
- Stimulate the local economy with their spending power
- Serve as magistrates
- Commission public buildings (churches Memorial Hall)

Summing up

- The Lewes Road is transformed by the Turnpike
- A better road allowed development of the stagecoach route to Brighton and better trading conditions.
- The improved connection to London brings in very rich people, who will have a big impact on the community,
- But that is a whole new story.