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FOREWORD

by R. L. FAGG

Pembury is an ancient village standing over 400 feet above sea level and commanding extensive views over large parts of Kent and Sussex. Situated on the main A21 road from London to Hastings, five miles south-east of Tonbridge and three and a half miles north-east of Tunbridge Wells, it is well placed for those who enjoy living in the country with easy accessibility to county town facilities and to London itself.

Within easy distance by bus, car, cycle, or on foot are many places of natural and historical interest, and exploration of the surrounding countryside is well worthwhile. Our recreation ground of some seven acres set in lovely surroundings provides facilities for sport and childrens play activities, and deserves to be used with care and a sense of social responsibility to our fellow citizens, young and old.

In publishing this Official Guide the Parish Council hope it will serve a useful purpose in encouraging the community feeling that is so necessary for the preservation of village life, and in providing information of some value to all who now live in Pembury. We acknowledge our indebtedness to Mr Jack Standen for his account of lesser known facts and legends about the village, to Mr Baker for drawing the map, to Michael Wheeler for the photographs, and to the advertisers, without whose support the Guide could not have been produced in this form and presented free to every household in Pembury. We also record our appreciation to The Wood Press for co-operation and advice in production.

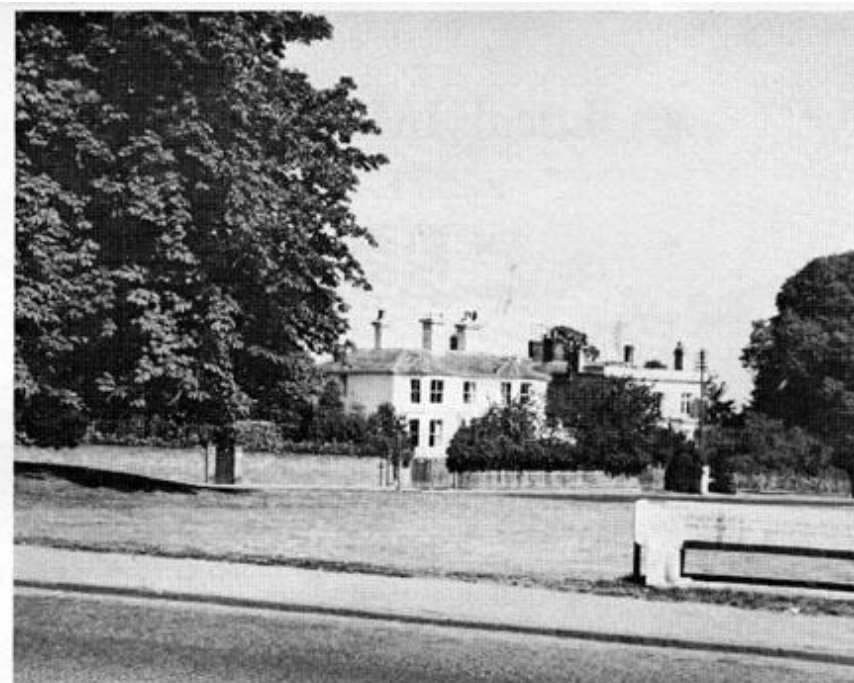
Our Parish of Pembury

The earliest origins of local administrative units known as parishes can be traced back to the seventh century, but the earliest evidence we have about our own suggests that there was a village of Pepenbury (later, Poppingbury) here in the eleventh century.

The Local Government Act of 1894 transferred the civil functions of the Church vestries and other duties of certain appointed officers such as Overseers, to the newly-formed parish councils, and the first meeting of Pembury Parish Council was held in the Pembury Board School on 1 January 1895. At that meeting the nine members of the Council laid the foundations for an effective and sound Local Government organization in the village, and when they met again ten days later Committees were set up covering Sanitation, Recreation, Allotments, Footpaths and Rights of Way, and Charities and Property.

Since that date the Council has consistently kept the village in the forefront of progress, exercising its powers and responsibilities to the full as they have increased in number and widened in scope, in the interests of the parishioners. These functions now include, in addition to those named above, the provision and maintenance of a first class general recreation ground, a burial ground, public street lighting, bus shelters, a village hall, and the small but attractive village green. It acts on your behalf generally in negotiation with the Rural District Council and the County Council, and if occasion arises, with Central Government Departments. It appoints two members to the Board of Management of Pembury County Primary School and also two to the Amhurst Trust Charity Trustees.

The Parish Council meets in the Village Hall, High Street, Pembury on the fourth Monday in each month. The meetings commence at 7.30 p.m. and are open to the public. The Annual Parish Meeting or Assembly is held during March each year and is open to all local electors and residents to hear a report on the work of the Council during the year and to discuss the affairs of the Parish generally. It is only in this tier of local government that such facilities are made available to the electorate by statute.



Pembury elects two members of the Tonbridge Rural District Council, and forms part of the Tonbridge Rural East Constituency of the Kent County Council. In Parliament Pembury forms part of the Tonbridge Constituency, but if the proposals of the Parliamentary Boundaries Commission are approved, in 1969 Pembury will become part of the new constituency of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

The population of Pembury has doubled during the last 20 years and we expect it to exceed 5,000 within the next two years. The very rapid increase in the last decade has been such as to overload the village sewage disposal system and plans have been approved by the Tonbridge Rural District Council for extensions costing £176,000. The Parish Council has no statutory powers in development planning matters, but is now kept informed on them by the Rural District Council, to whom certain powers are delegated by the Kent County Council which is the Local Planning Authority for Kent.

R.L.F.

Local Information

Pembury Parish Council

Chairman

Mr. R. L. FAGG, M.B.E.

Vice-Chairman

Mr. A. G. PENN

Mr. A. J. AUSTEN	Mr. G. J. MILES	Mr. G. S. STURGEON
Mr. A. R. H. BAKER	Mr. R. G. MILES	Mr. G. E. THEOBALD
Mr. G. E. CORBETT	Mrs. M. M. PARKS	Mr. W. E. WILLIAMSON

Clerk to the Council: Mr. R. H. CHEDZEY, 34 Woodhill Park, Pembury

Village Hall Caretaker: Mrs. P. P. CHEDZEY, 34 Woodhill Park, Pembury

Telephone for urgent Council business only and Hall bookings:
Pembury 2540

Groundsmen: Mr. F. J. BEECH, Mr. G. MORPHETT, Mr. T. PETTIT

Tonbridge Rural District Council

Pembury Councillors: Mr. R. L. FAGG, M.B.E. and Mr. G. S. STURGEON

Clerk of the Council:

Mr. C. N. V. KIRBY, Council Offices, 48 Pembury Road, Tonbridge, Kent

Kent County Council

County Councillor: Mr. J. WISH, Pine Cottage, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent

Member of Parliament

Mr. R. HORNBY, M.P.

House of Commons, and 84 London Road, Tunbridge Wells

State Schools:

Pembury County Primary — Headmaster: Mr. I. S. M. Beynon, B.A.
Sandown Court Secondary Modern — Headmaster: Mr. W. J. Littlefair, B.Sc.

Divisional Education Office:

39 Grove Hill Road, Tunbridge Wells.

Churches:

Upper Church of St. Peter, Hastings Road; the Parish Church of St. Peter, Church Road, and the Church of the Good Shepherd, Lower Green Road. Vicar — Rev. C. Hodgson, The Vicarage, Hastings Road, Pembury.

Free Church: Baptist, Lower Green Road. Minister — Rev. D. J. Moon, 58 Lower Green Road, Pembury.

Methodist: Hastings Road. Minister — Rev. D. V. P. White, 2 Bounds Oak Way, Southborough.

Roman Catholic: Lower Green Road. Priest — Father N. Larn, 9 Lower Green Road, Pembury.

Postal Sub-Offices:

47 Hastings Road, and 72 Lower Green Road, Pembury.

County Public Library Service:

The Institute, Lower Green Road, Pembury.

County Police:

9 Amberleaze Drive, Pembury.

Water Service:

Mid-Kent Water Co. Supt., Tel.: Paddock Wood 465.
Tunbridge Wells Corp. Depot, Tel.: Tunbridge Wells 23454.

Registrar of Births' Deaths and Marriages:

39 Grove Hill Road, Tunbridge Wells, and Pembury Hospital.

Sports Clubs:

Bowls Secretary: Mr. G. Miles, 70 Henwood Green Road, Pembury.
Cricket Secretary: Mr. P. Chandler, 149 Sherwood Road, Tun. Wells.
Football Secretary: Mr. H. Coppard, 25 Sandhurst Ave., Pembury.
Tennis Secretary: Miss M. Jenner, 59 Henwood Green Rd., Pembury.

Voluntary Organizations:

There are over a score of these in the village and the Secretaries' names and addresses can be obtained from the Clerk to the Parish Council.

The foregoing information is supplied by the Parish Council in good faith for the benefit of Pembury parishioners, but no responsibility as to correctness at any time can be accepted by the Council.

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Est. 1862

Excerpts from Pembury's History

by JACK STANDEN

Pembury has been a place on the map under various names for at least 800 years. It is not mentioned in Doomsday. The first known record is of the Manors of Pepenbury Magna (Hawkwell) and Pepenbury Parva (Bayhall). The Old Parish Church of St. Peter stood within the greater Manor (Hawkwell) and there is no doubt that the earliest settlement was in that district where it remained until the beginning of the last century when the advent of the stage coach from London to Hastings opened up trade around the Upper Green. About the same time a Major Lempriere opened up a brickworks on Stonecourt Farm in Lower Green and by so doing provided, not only employment which attracted people to the village, but houses in which they could live. Some of these houses still remain in what was known as Slate Row, now a part of Henwood Green Road, but others in what was known as Red Row nearby, collapsed and were cleared away about 20 years ago.

Still recalling the economic life of the village we can record that other firms were attracted by the seam of clay worked by Major Lempriere, one being the Stonecourt Brick and Tile Co. whose lease expired in 1939 and the second World War put an end to completely. Another was the Pottery Works set up by Philip Peters. At that time he was the landlord of the Royal Oak public house and he worked the pottery in the field behind his house. Later he opened a thriving business in Tunbridge Wells dealing in china and glassware.

The cause of the pottery industry coming to an end was most interesting. When Cobbett rode through this part of Kent on his Rural Rides he expressed the wish that the Kentish Farmer could find for supporting his hops a pole that would last as a pole, as many years as it took to grow as a tree, which the ash did not. Shortly after that typical piece of Cobbett advice to farmers some Spanish Chestnuts were planted and grown to a sufficient height. When cut and treated they were found to last, as poles, the 11 to 12 years that they took to grow as a tree. Philip Peters used the twigs from the trees to burn his famous pottery wares.



When years later the farmers started to use string for supporting their hopvines, however, his source of wood fuel dried up. He tried a coal-burning kiln but it just would not give the same results with the Pembury Clay. We still have the chestnuts with us, now used mostly for fencing, but the pottery has gone.

In the early days of the Old Church it was attached to Bayham Abbey and served by the Abbey monks. The Abbey lay some four miles to the south and part of the Coach Road connecting the two places can still be walked as a pleasant footpath. Not much is known about the Nave of the Old Church, but the tower and the chancel were the gifts of John Colepepper of Bayhall as a thank offering for his restoration to royal favour in 1327. The Old Church has seen many changes as shown in the registers, which are complete from 1550 until the present day, except for one book covering eleven years.

As the parishioners moved with the shift of the economic and social life of the Village towards the Hastings Road,

the Chapel of Ease of St. Peter was built near the Upper Green in 1847 for the sum of £2,465, in modern terms less than the price of a modest bungalow. It was built of stone dug at Bayhall and stands 444 feet above sea level.

For those with a liking for legend the Free Church had an interesting origin, starting, we are told, with the hop poles. The land on which the Scouts' Hut now stands in Chalket Lane was cut out for the tarring and stacking of the poles ready for the big annual sale. One Daniel Dickinson of Stone Court was a regular customer at the sale, and after several calls at the Camden Arms could always be prevailed upon to sing a good song. A severe illness caused him to change his way of life and when pressed to sing at the next sale to everyone's surprise he sang a hymn. This change lost him many friends but found him others who got together and built the first Union Church, a wooden structure, on the site of the present brick building which was erected 50 years later in 1885 at a cost of £1,500. In 1954 the Old Manse was demolished and the present modern house built for the resident pastor.

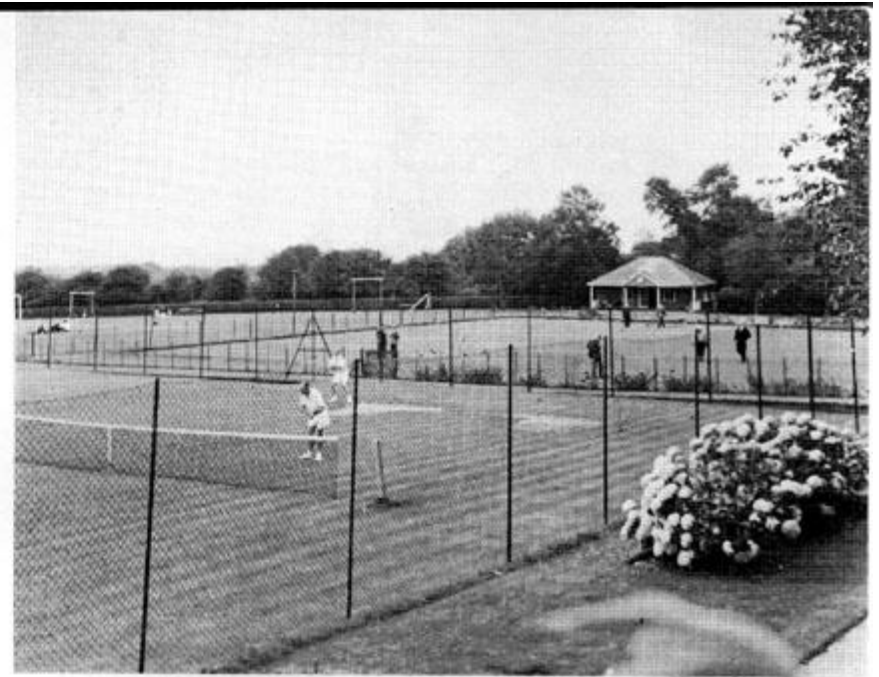
For 50 years Methodist services were held in a cottage in the village before the Wesleyan Church was built on the Hastings Road in 1884.

This year Roman Catholics built their own Hall in which Church services are held in Lower Green Road, but for several years previously they held weekly services in the Church Institute.

The site of the Roman Catholic Hall was previously the grounds of The Lodge, at one time years ago — 'Mr. Ditmer's School for the sons of Gentlemen.'

Originally, the Church Institute was built by the National Society in 1837 as a Church School, and later the Free Church members used the Lecture Hall as The British School. These two bodies carried out educational work until 1872 when the Public Elementary Board School was built further down Lower Green Road. Additions from time to time brought about the present Pembury County Primary School.

The outbreak of the second World War in 1939 caused a Methodist Foundation school in Folkestone to move to Hawkwell Place in Pembury. Several new buildings were added and as Kent College for Girls it is a school of con-



siderable importance, drawing pupils from many parts of the world as well as this country.

Among places suitable for meetings and public gatherings the Church Institute is the oldest established. After serving as a school the size of the main hall was doubled in 1897 and five years later a kitchen, a billiard room, and committee rooms were added, housing various clubs. From 1914 to 1919 it served as a V.A.D. hospital and the wooden structure in the yard is a constant reminder of that period. At the battle of the Somme in 1916 there were 60,000 casualties in one day, and so many wounded men were brought to Pembury that many had to lay outside in the yard, covered by tarpaulins, until a wooden cover could be built over them. The present wooden porch is what remains.

On the land adjoining the Institute, before 1924, stood the Lower Green Forge, the Smith's house, and a Wheelwright's Shop.

During many of its earlier years the Free Church Lecture



Hall housed the Working Men's Club and is still used for public functions. The present Pembury Village Hall in the High Street was originally in 1934 built for the British Legion as a hall and club. Dwindling membership and support brought about a decline in its fortunes and it deteriorated so much that in 1963 the Parish Council were asked to take it over.

The drinking trough on the village green was erected to the memory of Marjory Polley, the first local woman to be burnt at the stake at Tonbridge in June 1555 during the Maryan persecution. A book written by a Mrs. Betts in 1888 records that smuggled goods could be bought at a cottage near the lower end of the Green. This house has recently been modernised and under its lawn, which was once the site of the old Manor Pound, were found a number of old stone gin bottles that gives some evidence for the truth of the story.

The original Lower Green was the triangle of land on which stands the Institute, the Verger's house, and

Pembury Close. Henwood Green was the name given to a small piece of land now covered by four houses, 59 to 65 Henwood Green Road, but according to an old document held in the Country Archives, it was originally called Henard's Green.

Running from South to North East across the village are two valleys each holding a stream on which 150 years ago were worked water mills. One, Keyes Mill, was located at Stone Court Farm and disappeared long ago, and the other, Spring Grove, was in Redwings Lane. The Mill house of this is still there.

Many years ago there must have been a separate hamlet or community at Romford, centred on a Priory of which little is known except that the Abbot lived where Stanton House now stands. The area was used as the Parish Farm to provide relief for the aged and poor of the Parish. The premises at Stanton House until about 1834 were used as a home or workhouse for aged men, and that probably gave the name Workhouse Lane to what was once shown on ordinance maps as Romford Road, but is now Woodside Road.



History shows that the plight of the inmates of these institutions was so bad that the government closed those run by the separate parish authorities and opened the Unions which served several parishes and were run by Boards of Guardians. Locally we thus had the Tonbridge Union on the Tonbridge Road, which changed its function in 1937 and became the Pembury County Hospital.

Paradoxically it may be, but the increased population of Pembury has been accompanied by a decrease in the number of Public Houses. The Five Bells near the Old Church, where the Parish Clerk made up his accounts, The Woodsgate, where the teams of coach horses were changed, The Waterloo, in Hastings Road where Highfield now stands, The Forresters Arms in Romford where The Forresters is now a private residence, have all disappeared. We are now left with four, at the Camden Hotel, The Black Horse, The King William IV, and The Royal Oak.

Before 1920 almost the entire village belonged to half a dozen big land owners, and was more or less made up of five hamlets — Upper Green, Lower Green, Bo-Peep, Romford and Hawkwell. Since that date there has been an almost unbroken process of breaking up of estates and their ultimate filling in by individual modern houses and properties. In these, many residents now only eat, sleep and relax, travelling elsewhere for their employment. For all that, Pembury is still a place worth looking after, so please help to keep it that way.

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Further information and details from:—

The Honorary Secretary,
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Map of Pembury Parish

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