

The Marsh Road, the Gypsies, & the Stopping-up of Barnhorn Lane

The Beginning

Sometime, round about 1920, seems to have been, roughly, the time when thoughts of building a new marsh road began to emerge. Throughout this country, the enthusiasm for motoring had grown since the early days of the horseless carriage and, by 1920 the number of cars on the road was fast increasing. The new breed of human, the "Motorist", was demanding better and safer roads as they were now paying for these in a separate tax intended purely for the construction of new, and the maintenance of old, roads.

Like all local authorities in England, responsible for the roads in East Sussex had to consider what they needed to do in the way of maintenance and new construction. Under particular scrutiny was the old marsh road, which snaked its way from Eastbourne to Hastings and was nothing more than a narrow, old cart road, virtually a single carriageway in places, with bends and sharp corners that presented so many chances of accidents to the motorist. They realised that the stretch of the old Marsh Road, that wiggled its way across country, to the south of Hooe, from Pevensey to Bexhill, required a new, straighter, and wider section and would be discussing it for over a decade before any action was taken.

There was, probably, some controversy and discussion prior to the building of the road, though I have not come across mention of any such unrest but it is unlikely that a project, crossing over privately-owned agricultural land, would have gone ahead without some farmer or landowner raising more than, just, an eyebrow.

Subsequent to the building of the road, there were some, not to be unexpected, compensation claims but the problem that developed much later and caused a larger amount of correspondence, and far greater newspaper coverage, was the invasion and occupation of what remained of the old road, near Barnhorn.

I came across the information came to me in any old order – as I came up[on it starts with a report in the Bexhill Observer dated 8th January, 1921, which read: -

GRANTS FOR MARSH ROAD

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT'S OFFER

At last apparently some definite decision has been arrived at with regard to a grant towards repairing that portion of the Hooe Road, leading from Pevensey to Bexhill that is in the Eastbourne Rural District, which is suffering from the neglect necessitated by the war.

In the report of the Highways Committee presented at the meeting of the Eastbourne Rural District Council on Friday, it was mentioned that the Chairman of the Council (Mr Rupert S. Gwynne, M. P.) had received a letter, from the Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, stating that it was not possible to increase the offer of £1,500 towards the repairing of the road, but the Ministry had agreed to lend the sum of £2,000, free of interest, to be repaid by five equal annual instalments.

On the recommendation of the Committee, it was agreed to accept the £1,500 and make application to the Ministry for the loan of £2,000.

It was decided to allocate a sum, not exceeding £6,000, for the maintenance of the highways during the coming years, such sum to include £100 for repayment of the loan from the Ministry of Transport in respect of the Hooe-road.

The Surveyor reported that the Bardon Hill quarries had undertaken to supply 300 tons of granite to Pevensey and Polegate, and it was decided to give them a running order for the Hooe-road and other work in hand on a contract basis, the Council to have the benefit of any reduction in the cost of labour or carriage.

EASTBOURNE-HASTINGS COASTAL ROAD

The Highways Committee had considered a letter from the Town Clerk of Eastbourne stating that his Highways Committee thought it desirable that the Ministry of Transport should be urged to sanction the carrying out of the scheme for a coastal road from Eastbourne to Hastings, and asking whether the Rural Council would join in an application to the Ministry.

The Council resolved to support any application, provided they were put to no expense in regard to the work.

A fortnight later, that same month, on 22nd, from an article in the “**Bexhill Observer**”, it becomes clear that a scheme for a new coastal road, as opposed to repairing the old, has been under consideration for some time.

COASTAL ROAD

A letter has been received, from the Town Clerk of Eastbourne, asking the Bexhill Corporation to join in an application to the Ministry of Transport urging the carrying out of the scheme for a coastal road from Hastings to Eastbourne, which has been under consideration for some considerable time by the local authorities interested.

The Town Clerk has been instructed to reply that the Council are quite ready to co-operate with the neighbouring authorities on the lines suggested with a view to the scheme being further advanced. The Highways Committee, however, do not at this stage propose committing the Council to any conclusion as regards the financial aspects of the proposal.

The Marsh Road – The Inevitable Compensation Claims

As these things always seem to do, the building of the new coast road, which in this case was to pass across farmland with no houses being, so it seems, involved, brought forth many claims for compensation to be heard before the Official Arbitrator.

Two such claims were reported in the “**Bexhill Observer**”, on **15th April 1933**.

Claim 01

HOOE FARM LAND

COMPENSATION CLAIM

EFFECT OF NEW MARSH ROAD

The question of depreciation of agricultural land following the construction of the new arterial road between Bexhill and Eastbourne, came before the official Arbitrator, Mr Hugh C. Webster, sitting at the Town Hall, Bexhill on Wednesday

Mr G. S. Sargent, of Sidley, claimed £2,833 compensation from the Easter Sussex County Council in respect of land known as New Lodge Farm, Hooe, and Grove Farm, Hooe

Mr Sargent was represented by Mr Percy Idle, and Mr D. C. Hayward (senior assistant solicitor to the East Sussex County Council) conducted the case for the Council.

Mr Idle said that Mr Sargent purchased the New Lodge Farm in June, 1924. That purchase related to 117 acres and the farm buildings, and Mr Sargent paid £3,000 for it. At the time he was the tenant of the farm. Two years later he acquired another 17 acres at a cost of £475. He had spent a considerable amount of money on the property and, prior to the construction of the road, the farm was considered a most desirable holding.

ALTERATIONS AND REBUILDING

Mr George Stephen Sargent, who said he now lived at Shortwood Farm, Siddeley, and was a cattle dealer and farmer, gave evidence. When he took over the Lodge Farm, the buildings were in a very dilapidated condition, and he estimated that he had spent £1,100 on alterations and rebuilding. With regard to the Grove Farm, which he bought on leaving the Lodge Farm, the same thing applied, and he stated that he had spent £2,000 on reconstructing the buildings. When he sold Grove Farm, at a time when the pegs for the new road were already in the ground, he made a stipulation in the conveyance that any compensation claim paid by the County Council in respect of the road in excess of £30 per acre should be shared equally between himself and the purchaser.

SECTION CUT OFF

Mr Bertram Frank Watson, a surveyor, auctioneer, and estate agent, of Heathfield and Wadhurst, said that he regarded the Lodge Farm as a first-class dairy farm adjacent to Bexhill and with good quality land. Owing to the construction of the road a section of the farm had been cut off, and this section for a herd of 50 or 60 cows would be quite useless. The cattle would have to be driven across the road four times a day. It would also necessitate a considerable amount of extra work in tractor or horse ploughing. In order to bring the produce of the lower land up to the farm buildings, the cows would have to cross the arterial road, on which a heavy stream of traffic passed. Lodge Farm, he said, had always been regarded locally as a valuable small partridge shoot. Owing to the construction of the new road he considered that this had been destroyed. The road would have to be fenced off from the land and a fence maintained. Two and a half acres of land close to the Lamb Inn, during the existence of the old road, had value as building land. Since the construction of the new road the value of the land had been destroyed, owing to the road bank making building impossible. He put the depreciated value of the entire land at 10s an acre. In his opinion the land taken by the acquiring authority was worth £80 an acre.

Mr Hayward - Is it your honest opinion that agricultural land even near buildings is worth £80 an acre? -- Yes

And yet the value of agricultural land has generally fallen since 1924? -- Generally yes, but not in all cases of dairy farms.

And yet your client paid £25 an acre for it in 1924? -- I am not concerned with whether it was bought cheaply or dearly; I value it as I see it.

It is your serious contention that the whole farm has depreciated at the rate of 10s and acre -- Yes, definitely.

DISTRICT VALUER'S EVIDENCE

Colonel John Vincent Gray, District Valuer, of Eastbourne, said that he had dealt with all the claims in connection with the new road he considered the rental reduction of £66 per annum agreed upon between the experts acting for the claimant and his present tenant to be an excessive one. He suggested £25 as an appropriate figure. As against the claimant's main claim of £1670, arrived at by a general depreciation on the acreage of the farm at 10s., he estimated a depreciation of £173 8s.

With a reference to driving the cattle across the road, he discounted the suggestion that extra labour would be required. There was no commercial value on the sporting rights, he said, and therefore no depreciation.

He did not agree that there was any immediate likelihood of the land being required for building, as the spot was definitely not a desirable one. There were very few houses in the district, which was subject to winter flooding. The total compensation due he estimated to be £637.

Cross-examined by Mr Idle, Colonel Gray agreed that as the seller he would require a larger price for a strip of land right through the middle of his farm than for land at the edge.

Mr Idle. A much higher price? - Yes

But you have based your valuation on an average over the whole farm - Over the land taken.

Will you agree with me that this is the most valuable portion of the land? - I do not agree.

The Arbitrator - suppose the arterial road went through the poor land to the south, would you then have taken an average on the whole land? - I do not think so.

Mr Idle - A prospective tenant would be strongly affected by the fact that this land lies on two sides of an arterial road - Yes

Yet in spite of this, you allow only £25 a year diminution in rent? -Yes

This, concluded the evidence, and the Arbitrator decided to hear the next case, which was of an interconnected character, before hearing the advocate's submissions.

The same newspaper article, then, continues with the second claim, as below: -

Claim 02

ANOTHER CLAIM

In this case, Messers Claxton, the present tenants of Lodge Farm, claimed compensation for damage, disturbance and extra work entailed by the road construction.

Giving evidence, Mr Charles Claxton, farmer, of Glyne Manor, Bexhill, said that when he took Lodge Farm, he considered it to be one of the best dairy farms he had ever seen. Since the construction of the road, before any traffic used it, it had seriously affected the work of the farm. He was not prepared to continue farming the land, even with a rent reduction of £60.

After a long discussion, this Hayward agreed, on the suggestion of the Arbitrator, to pay £30 as full compensation for damage done during the work and also agreed to a number of smaller items which were claimed.

Mr Albert King Burtenshaw, surveyor, of Hailsham, gave evidence as to the necessity for extra labour in driving cattle across the road.

Cross examined by Mr Hayward, he agreed that the Council had taken only 1/26th of the land, whereas the claim for compensation was based on depreciation on 1/6th of the value.

Colonel Gray, giving evidence on the question of driving the cattle, said he did not see the need for the extra men. He considered the full compensation on the claims of disturbance and extra labour which the tenants were entitled to claim to be £90.

Mr William Thomas Owen, the sectional engineer on the road for the Council, gave evidence on the same point. He had never seen more than two men with the cattle.

The Arbitrator's award will be made known in due course.

[**Note!** I've not found, as yet, what the award was – perhaps, it was never reported in the newspapers.]

A NEW BUS SERVICE

A few years before the building of the new road, there had been a bus service running from the “Red Lion”, in Hooe to Bexhill, operated by the “Maidstone and District Bus Company”, but in 1933 they and the “Southdown Bus Company” (based in Brighton, West Sussex) put together a proposal to run a new service from Hastings, via Bexhill, to Eastbourne. The new road would make the journey shorter and, because of that, the fares would be cheaper, thus encouraging more passengers to travel.

We, also, get some idea as to when the road must have been built as, in the following report in the Bexhill Observer, dated 14th October 1933, Mr A. D. MacKenzie, traffic manager of the Southdown Company, said, “*It was not proposed to put the new service, if permitted, into operation before the Thursday before Easter, 1934, so that the surface of the new road should be properly set.*”

I have no idea as to how long the surface would have needed to “set” but it sounds as though the road was completed in late 1933 or early 1934.

From the Bexhill Observer, dated 14th October 1933

BUSES ON MARSH ROAD

New Service Sanctioned

A new and direct motor bus service between Hastings, Bexhill, and Eastbourne, over the new Pevensy Marsh road, was sanctioned by the Traffic Commissioners at Hastings on Wednesday.

It was stated that it was proposed to run six single journeys in each direction daily, three to be maintained by the Maidstone and three by the Southdown company. The purpose was to create a more direct route between Hastings, Bexhill, and Eastbourne, and to provide better facilities for services between Barnhorn-lane and Pevensy, which two points were at present unserved by a service along the new road.

Mr A. D. MacKenzie, traffic manager of the Southdown Company, said complaints had been received in the past that the journey to Eastbourne was by such a roundabout route. A shilling would be saved on the return fares if the application were granted. It was not proposed to put the new service, if permitted, into operation before the Thursday before Easter, 1934, so that the surface of the new road should be properly set. A daily service all the year round was asked for and it was hoped as a result to discontinue some of the local services next year.

Mr Percy Idle, opposing the application on behalf of Messers Timpson, maintained that the proposal would interfere with excursion and tourist traffic. He asked if it would not be possible to co-ordinate some of the existing services from Hastings to Bexhill and Little Common with a new service from there to Eastbourne.

Mr MacKenzie said he did not think the new service would damage the excursion traffic, as tourists desired a different class of vehicle from the ordinary service omnibus.

The Chairman said the Commissioners considered the application a reasonable one and it would be granted on the terms asked for.

THE INEVITABLE ACCIDENTS

[**Note 1** - In 1930, Herbert Morrison, the, then, Minister of Transport, introduced his “Road Traffic Act“ in which all speed limits for cars were abolished! He did, however, introduce the following driving offences - dangerous, reckless, and careless driving - and driving under the influence of drink or drugs – now, we’re going back down the path to lower speed limits!]

[**Note 2** - According to the Department for Transport, in 1930 there were only 2.3 million motor vehicles in Great Britain, but more than 7,000 people were killed in road accidents, which is higher than today with somewhere in the region of 31 million vehicles and only 3,000 - 4,000 deaths.]

Well, accidents were bound to happen and, as indicated in the Note 2, above, this was a period when they were increasing, but this was the first report that I came across, in the “**Bexhill Observer**”, dated **21st December 1935**, involving someone from Hooe. - by this time, the road, it seems had become known as the Pevensey Marsh Road.

From the “Bexhill Observer”, dated 21st December 1935.

MARSH ROAD ACCIDENT

THREE PERSONS TAKEN TO HOSPITAL

A Bexhill motorist was involved in a serious accident on the Pevensey Marsh Road on Saturday evening, as a result of which a man and his wife and their small son were taken to the Bexhill Hospital.

The accident occurred at the crossroads between the end of Barnhorn Lane and the Lamb Inn, at about 9 PM. Mr and Mrs E. O. Shoebridge of New Lodge Farm, Hooe, accompanied by then 19 -year-old daughter Grace and a young son Edwin had just alighted from a Hastings -- Eastbourne bus and intended to cross the road.

Miss Shoebridge had already crossed when she looked round and saw her mother, father, and brother come into collision with a car, which had approached from the Eastbourne direction. This was being driven by Mr E. Graham Wood, of Merrieweather's, Cooden-drive, and his mother, Lady Graham Wood, was among the passengers.

The most serious injuries were sustained by Mrs Shoebridge who was taken to hospital by the Bexhill ambulance with fractures to her left arm and leg. Her husband who received head injuries and abrasions to the right leg, and the little boy were taken to hospital in the car. The boy escaped with shock.

Less than four months later, came another accident, again involving a Hooe villager and, again, reported in the “**Bexhill Observer**”, dated **11th April 1936**

MARSH ROAD ACCIDENT

Motor Cyclist and Cyclist in Collision

A nasty accident occurred on the Marsh road between Pevensey and Little Common on Tuesday night, as a result of which two men were taken to the Bexhill Hospital.

Mr Newton Parks, of Hooe, was cycling in the direction of Bexhill at about 11.15 p.m. and had reached Middle Bridge when he was overtaken by a motor cycle, driven by Mr Leonard Hill, of Hastings, who collided with him from behind. Both men were thrown from their machines. Hill sustained bad head and face injuries and is still in Hospital, while Parks who escaped with shock, bruises, and minor injuries to the right arm, was allowed to go home the following morning.

THE PROBLEM WITH GIPSIES

In 1936, a new problem appeared that had never been thought of – Gipsies (or Gypsies – the spelling varies in the old documentation)! The problem was that these travellers began, apparently, to camp on portions of what remained of the old road and caused damage in varying levels of seriousness to the surrounding properties and, generally, causing nuisance.

The solution, it seemed, was obvious – close the old road so that the Gipsies no longer had any access to it. When, however, in 1937, the Hooe Council tried to do just that, they must have been shaken to the core at the amount of interest and the diversity of feeling, which their proposal aroused.

A great deal of correspondence was generated between the Council, and various national and local organisations and authorities, with some people strongly for the plan, and some people equally strongly against it – for diverse reasons.

The following documents, written in 1936 and 1937, all came from the East Sussex Records Office (their ref P382-14-15) and tell their own story of the problems that Hooe had with the stopping-up of Barnhorn Lane in order to bring an end to the problems that the community was having with Gypsies.

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The first report seems to refer to the incident that started it all and comes from an article in the “**Bexhill Observer**” dated **15th February 1936**.

### ***OLD MARSH ROAD***

*It is proposed to close the old Marsh Road between Barnhorn Hill and Sewers Bridge.*

*Mr G. Sargent complained to the County Council of the use made of the road by gypsies since through traffic was diverted to the new road, and suggested that it should be closed to all except marsh owners.*

*Providing Mr Sargent obtains the approval of the Hooe Parish Council and the Hailsham Rural Council, the County Council will consent to the stopping of the road.*

*The Bexhill Council is to be informed of the proposal.*

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Just seven days later the plan was put into action by the police.

*From “Bexhill Observer” dated 22nd February 1936*

### ***THE GIPSIES’ ROAD***

#### ***Police Take Action***

*At Battle Sessions on Monday, Sydney Smith, described as of no fixed abode, pleaded guilty to encamping on the highway at Hooe.*

*P.C. Daly said he went to the old marsh-road, Hooe, for the purpose of removing gypsies. Drawn up on the highway was a caravan belonging to defendant who was inside with his family having a meal. Near the caravan were cooking utensils and sets of horses' harness, but no sign of any horse. Defendant showed great reluctance in moving and was abusive but he finally moved about 200 yards.*

*Defendant told the bench he was waiting for his son to return from a blacksmith with a mare. After the constable told him to move he and his wife pulled the caravan into the Bexhill police division.*

*The Deputy Chief Constable (Superintendent A, Taylor) proved three previous convictions for offences of a similar nature against defendant, all of them having been at Bexhill. The road in question was an old road which was now more or less disused by reason of the new road through Barhorn. Gypsies had been a great nuisance along the road, and it had got to such a state that the police had to take some action.*

*A fine of 10s was imposed*

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**Letter 01** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to Messers Burstow & Hewett - Re: New Lodge Farm, Hooe. (This was a single sheet copy of a typed letter, on plain paper) Dated 28 Aug 1936.

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East Sussex County Council,  
County Hall,  
Lewes  
28 Aug 1936

F/CE

Your Ref. RHB/BP/709

Dear Sirs,

Eastbourne - Bexhill (Old) Road  
New Lodge Farm, Hooe

In reply to your letter of the 25th instant, Mr Sargent was informed in February last that, subject to his agreeing to bear all the costs and expenses in connection with the application to Quarter Sessions for the necessary order, and provided he obtains the consent of the Hooe Parish Council and the Hailsham Rural District Council to the stopping up of the road, the County Council will give their consent.

Mr Sargent was also informed that so far as the length of road within the Borough of Bexhill is concerned, he should communicate with the Bexhill Borough Council. At that time that length of road was a County Road maintainable by the Bexhill Borough Council under Section 32 of the Local Government Act, 1929.

Recently, however, that length of road has ceased to be a County Road by virtue of an Order made by the Minister of Transport and is now solely under the control of the Borough Council.

Mr Sargent subsequently made an offer of £5/- for the small parts of ordnance parcel No. 306 purchased by the County Council because of its severance from the remainder of that parcel by the construction of the new road, and he was informed that his offer had been noted but that it was considered that the sale of the land should be contingent upon the closing of the old road as the land was retained to afford visibility at the junction of the old road with the new one.

Yours faithfully,

HUGH J. C. MCILVEEN  
Clerk of the County Council

Burstow & Hewett,  
43, Station Road,  
Bexhill

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**Letter 02** From Burstow & Hewett (Chartered Surveyors) to J. J. N. (Clerk) Re: New Lodge Farm, Hooe & Eastbourne-Bexhill Road - A259. Single sheet. The letter mentions enclosures (a letter from the County Council and a plan) but there was none. Dated 30 Sep 1936.

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TELEPHONE BEXHILL 522



BURSTOW & HEWETT  
(LATE JAS. & ED. THOMAS)  
ESTAB. 1790

43, STATION ROAD,  
BEXHILL  
(AND AT BATTLE TEL. 21)

CHARTERED SURVEYORS  
AUCTIONEERS & ESTATE AGENTS

Your Ref

RALPH H. BURSTOW, P. A. S. I., F. S. I.  
RICHARD HEWETT, P. A. S. I.

Our Ref RHB/BP/929

30th September 1936

J. J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
Hooe,  
Battle

Dear Sir,

Eastbourne - Bexhill Road, A259  
New Lodge Farm, Hooe

We act for Sir Henry White-Smith who is considering a suggestion that he should take over the ownership of the old main road.

We enclose copy of letter received from the County Council and plan showing section of road referred to.

Would you kindly let us know whether your Parish Council would approve?

We are making a similar application to the District Council and perhaps you will advise them of your decision.

Yours faithfully,

Burstow & Hewett

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**Letter 03** From Hailsham Rural District Council to J. J. N. (Clerk). Re: Old Barnhorn Lane. Letter-headed, single sheet. Dated 2 Oct 1936.  
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## HAILSHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ALFRED CARR  
CLERK TO THE  
COUNCIL

Clerk's Office

*Cortlandt*  
*Hailsham*

DATE OF NEXT MEETING .....

2nd October 1936

Dear Sir,

Re Old Barnhorn Lane

I thank you for your letter of yesterday's date on the subject of the ownership of this lane. I have not as yet heard anything officially on the matter and should appreciate your further observations. Is the question in action by the county council?

Yours Faithfully

*ac*  
Clerk

J. J. Newport Esq.,  
Clerk to the Parish Council,  
HOOE,  
Battle

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**Letter 04** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk). Re: Stopping-up Portion of the Highway at Hooe. Dated 5 Oct 1936

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**LOGO**

## EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,*  
*Lewes*

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

F/EE

5th October 1936

Dear Sir,

### Suggested Stopping Up of Old Barnhorn Lane, Hooe

I thank you for your letter of the first instant.

Yours faithfully

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk of the County Council

John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council,  
Hooe,  
Battle

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The following transcription is of an (as yet) unidentified newspaper in my grandfather's scrapbook. It doesn't appear in the Bexhill Observer and may be from the "Sussex Weekly Advertiser", which I know my grandfather had at one time. From items mentioned in the article it would seem to have been published round about the end of 1936.

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### **OLD MARSH ROAD**

*Proposed closing of a section*

*The question of closing a section of the old Marsh Road between the Bexhill boundary and Sewers bridge again came before the Hailsham Rural Council on Wednesday.*

*In November the Council received a letter from Sir Henry White-Smith, inquiring whether the Council would agree to his acquiring and enclosing the old main road across the marsh between Bexhill and Pevensy from a point approximately 180 yards east of the Lamb Inn to Bexhill borough boundary at Stone Bridge, a distance of approximately 1,400 yards and extending to 2.5 acres. That portion of the road brand through his property, New Lodge Farm, Hooe, and had been superseded by the new bypass road. Sir Henry was the owner of the land on each side of the old road and was desirous of preventing the use of the road for the purpose of camping, etc.*

*The Council agreed to the principle of stopping up and that part of the old road.*

*A letter was subsequently received from the County Council agreeing to approve of the closure of the road, subject to the consents of the Rural District and Parish Councils being obtained. The Rural Council then suggested that a public bridleway should be retained along the old road.*

### ***Did not agree***

*The County Council wrote stating that they could not agree to the Council's suggestion that a bridle way should be retained.*

*The Chairman said that when the matter first came before the Rural Council they wished the section of the old road, now superseded by the arterial road, to be closed, but when it came up again, they suggested that it should be left as a bridle way.*

*They were now informed that that would not be acceptable to the applicant. Local feeling was that the road should be closed chiefly on account of its possibilities of harbouring gipsies.*

*The length of the road was about three-quarters of a mile. Captain Gardner said the necessity for a bridle path did not exist as they were wind grass margins along the new road.*

*Mrs M. H. Owen pleaded for the road to be left open as it kept a large number of cars off the new road whilst the occupants were picnicking and cyclists and pedestrians used the old road.*

*Mr A. E. Dann said the part of the road under discussion was used by gipsies. The other parts of the old road over the marsh were open.*

### ***The Gipsy problem***

*The Rev E. B. Davis thought the Council should be influenced by the wishes of Hooe residents. Gipsies did go there.*

*Mr W. Winchester urged that the road should be closed, for gipsies went there and their dogs were a nuisance to landowners' cattle.*

*Mr W. Keith Martin said that it would be a mistake to close the road, as it was still used by motorists and pedestrians. The police had supervision over the road if gipsies camped there. He thought it was a desirable place for gipsies to camp as it kept them from inhabited areas.*

*Mr D. H. de Pass moved, and Mr W. Keith Martin seconded, that the road should be kept open as at present, and that the Council's previous resolution be rescinded.*

*Mr H. W. Stone proposed that the road be retained as a bridle way, pointing out that that would stop cars and other vehicles using it.*

*Lieut-Colonel R. H. Johnson seconded.*

*The amendment in favour of a bridle way was carried by the casting vote of the chairman.*

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The following is from an article in the “**Bexhill Observer**” dated **15th February 1936**.

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### **THE GIPSIES’ ROAD**

#### **Police Take Action**

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*The Deputy Chief Constable (Superintendent A, Taylor) proved three previous convictions for offences of a similar nature against defendant, all of them having been at Bexhill. The road in question was an old road which was now more or less disused by reason of the new road through Barhorn. Gypsies had been a great nuisance along the road, and it had got to such a state that the police had to take some action.*

*A fine of 10s was imposed*

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**Letter 05** From Hailsham Rural District Council (A. Carr) to J. J. N. (Clerk). Re: Old Barnhorn Lane. Letter-headed, single sheet. Dated 5 Oct 1936

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HAILSHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ALFRED CARR  
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

*Clerk's Office*

*Cortlandt  
Hailsham*

DATE OF NEXT MEETING .....

5th October 1936

Dear Sir,

Re Old Barnhorn Lane, Hooe

I thank you for your letter of the 3rd instant and now return the two letters which you kindly forwarded for my perusal.

Yours faithfully

Clerk

J. J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Parish Council,  
HOOE  
Battle

[JWN's Note. No name, no signature; just the word 'Clerk' but I assume it came from Alfred Carr]

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**Letter 06** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk). Re: Stopping-up Portion of the Highway at Hooe. Single sheet, letter-headed paper. (On the back there is an ink draft written- see Letter 39.). Dated 15 Dec1936  
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HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,  
Lewes*

F/EE

15th December 1936

Dear Sir,

Proposed Stopping Up of Part of Former  
Bexhill - Eastbourne Road

Further to your letter of the 1st October, I have now received from Messers Stanley & Co. on behalf of Sir Henry White-Smith, an application for the stopping up of the portion of the old Bexhill -- Eastbourne Road from a point approximately 180 yds east of the Lamb Inn, Hooe, to the Bexhill Borough Boundary.

It appears that Sir Henry White-Smith also desires to stop up the length of Lane leading to Hooe from its junction with the new Bexhill - Eastbourne Road to its junction with the old Bexhill - Eastbourne Road. I should be glad to know whether this aspect of the matter has been considered by your Council.

As the appropriate Committee of the County Council are meeting on the 18th instant, I should be obliged if you would let me have a reply by that date

Yours faithfully

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk of the County Council

John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council,  
Hooe,  
Battle

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**Letter 07** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk). Re: Stopping-up Portion of the Highway at Hooe. Single sheet. Dated 17 Dec 1936.

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**LOGO**

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

**EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

*County Hall,  
Lewes*

F/EE

17th December 1936

Dear Sir,

Suggested Stopping Up of Roads in the Parish of Hooe

I thank you for your letter of the 16th instant.

Yours faithfully

Hugh J. T. McIlveen (*Note! Original Signature*)  
Clerk of the County Council

John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council,  
Hooe,  
Battle

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**Letter 08** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk). Re: Stopping-up Portion of the Highway at Hooe. Two sheets. Dated 21 May 1937.

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**LOGO**

**EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

*County Hall,  
Lewes*

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

NW/KE

21st May 1937

Dear Sir,

Highway Act 1835  
Stopping up of portion of highways in the Parish of Hooe - Sir H. White-Smith

With reference to previous correspondence on this matter, I enclose the formal application of Sir H. White-Smith, which is addressed to your Council.

The County Council have considered a similar application and have agreed to give their consent subject to the consents of the District and Parish Councils being obtained.

I enclose draft of the 1st Resolution which, if your Council consent, it will be necessary to pass, and as you will see the enclosed plan should be signed by you and the Chairman at the Meeting. In accordance with section 31 (1) of the Local Government Act, 1894, public notice of this Resolution should be given in manner prescribed by Section 28T of the Local Government Act, 1933.

Section 13 (1) supra also enacts that the 1st Resolution shall not operate unless it is confirmed by the Parish Council at a meeting held not less than two months after the public notice is given, and I therefore enclose a draft of the confirming Resolution.

It will also be necessary for you to make a Statutory Declaration relating to these Steps and in order that I may prepare such Declaration I should be obliged if you would let me know your Christian names and your occupation.

(John J. Newport, Esq.)

If you desire the attendance of the surveyor at your meeting to answer any questions which may be raised, I shall be pleased to arrange accordingly, and if you require any further information or assistance I should be pleased to give you the same on hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk of the County Council

John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council  
Hooe,  
Battle, Sussex.

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**Letter 09** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk) Re: Stopping-up Portion of the Highway at Hooe (Sir Henry White-Smith). Letter-headed, single sheet. Dated 25 May 1937

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LOGO

# EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,*

*Lewes*

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

NW/KE

25th May 1937

Dear Sir,

Highway Act 1835  
Stopping up of portion of highways in the Parish of Hooe

Thank you for the particulars forwarded with your letter of the 22nd instant. I should be obliged if you would, in due course, let me know the date on which the two meetings are held and also the date of the publication of notice in order that I may complete the Statutory Declaration.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk of the County Council

J. J. Newport, Esq.,  
Hooe,  
BATTLE.

---

**Poster 40** On **29th May, 1937**, my Grandfather, as Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council, produced the following poster advising the Villagers of the decision of a Council meeting regarding the stopping-up of the old Barnhorn Lane.

This is a very large poster, roughly, as far as I could estimate, 420 mm wide by 1 metre long (16" x 40"). The words were hand-written, in very thick lettering, using black ink.

The forward 'oblique', in the text, is meant to indicate where the word or sentence, on the right hand side of the original poster, was broken or split, in order to get it to fit onto the paper.

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## **POSTER 40**

**RE**

**STOPPING UP**

**OF**

**OLD BARNHORN LANE**

---

**RESOLUTION**



UNANIMOUSLY PASSED BY THE

HOOE PARISH COUNCIL, 28<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1937

**RESOLVED:** That it is expected / that the public highways in the / Parish of Hooe in the County of / Sussex, which are shown on the plan / marked 'PC' now produced to the / Council and signed by the Chair / man and Clerk to the Council / should be in part stopped up / in manner following, that is / to say, by stopping up those / portions of the said public / highways which are shown / coloured pink on the said plan.

And that the Council do / consent to such stopping up / of the said portions of the / said public highways accor / dingly

And that the Clerk of the / Council shall be, and he is, / hereby instructed to give / public notice of the Resolution / in manner prescribed / by Section 237 of the Local / Government Act, 1933.

John J Newport  
Clerk  
Hooe Parish Council  
29<sup>th</sup> May 1937

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**Letter 10** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk) Re: Stopping-up Portion of the Highway at Hooe (Sir Henry White-Smith). Letter-headed, single sheet. Dated 4 Jun 1937

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LOGO

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,*

*Lewes*

NW/KE

4th June 1937

Dear Sir,

Stopping up portion of the highways at Hooe  
Sir Henry White-Smith

I am in receipt of your letter of the first instant, which is receiving attention.

Yours faithfully

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk of the County Council

John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council,  
HOOE,  
Battle.

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**Letter 11** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk) Re: Stopping-up Portion of the Highway at Hooe (Sir Henry White-Smith). Letter-headed, single sheet. Dated 21 Jun 1937

LOGO

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,*

*Lewes*

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

NW/KE

21st June 1937

Your Ref: A/33

Dear Sir,

Stopping up portion of the highways at Hooe  
Sir Henry White-Smith

Thank you for your letter of the 15th instant. I assume that your Council are now satisfied with the proposals.

Yours faithfully

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk of the County Council

John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council,  
Hooe Common,  
Battle.

**Letter 12** From J. J. N. (Clerk) to East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen). Re: Old Barnhorn Lane. Draft, single sheet, pencil. Dated 7 Aug 1937

7th August 1937

The Clerk,  
East Sussex County Council,  
Lewes.

Dear Sir,

Re Old Barnhorn Lane

Herewith I enclose copies of the Resolutions passed by the Hooe Parish Council on 28th May and 6th August 1937 relative to the stopping up of portions of Old Barnhorn Lane.

Yours faithfully

John J. Newport  
Clerk

Hugh J. T. McIlveen, Esq.

**Letter 13** From East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. Esq. Re: Highway Diversion. Letter-headed, typed, single sheet. Dated 9 Aug 1937.

LOGO

# EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,*

*Lewes*

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

NW/BR

9th August 1937

Dear Sir,

Highway Diversion  
Sir H. White-Smith to the County Council

Thank you for your letter of the 7th instant.

The proposals have been slightly altered and I understand that the applicant is making a fresh application for the diversion and is reserving a right of way for pedestrians over a portion of the old road. It may be necessary for fresh resolutions to be passed by the Parish Council but I will communicate with you hereon as soon as I receive the amended application.

Yours faithfully

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk to the County Council

John J. Newport, Esq.  
Hooe Common,  
Battle

~~~~~  
Letter 14 From J. J. N. to East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) re: Hooe Parish Council's protest against Hailsham Rural District Council's decision regarding Old Barnhorn Lane. Draft, single sheet. Dated 2 Sep 1937.
~~~~~

2nd September 1937

The Clerk,  
East Sussex County Council,  
County Hall, Lewes.

Dear Sir,

On the instruction of the Hooe Parish Council, I'm forwarding a cutting from last week's "Sussex Express" of a Report of a meeting of the Hailsham Rural District Council re the old marsh road.

The Hooe Parish Council are sending a letter of emphatic protest against the Council's decision.

Had the District Council acted in accordance with the wishes of the Rev E. B. Davis and Mr W. Winchester all would have been well.

In the opinion of the Hooe Parish Council, Sir Henry White-Smith's application should be fully granted and the old lane (so far as the part in Hooe) should be wiped off the map.

Yours faithfully,

John J. Newport,

Clerk

Hugh J. T. McIlveen, Esq.

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**Letter 15** From J. J. N. (Clerk) to The Superintendent, County Police, Battle. Re: Old Barnhorn Lane. Draft, single sheet. Dated 2 Sep 1937

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2nd September 1937

The Superintendent,  
County Police,  
Battle.

Dear Sir,

The Hooe Parish Council are protesting against the Old Barnhorn Lane being kept open as a "Bridle" road.

As you have had so much trouble with gipsies dodging constables from Battle and Bexhill on the Hooe boundary, can you please write to the District Council of Hailsham, the County Council, or to me in support of the Hooe Parish Council's opinion the old lane should be wiped off the map?

John J. Newport, Clerk

---

**Letter 16** From J. J. N. (Clerk) to E. G. Stead - Re: Old Marsh Road. Draft, written on back of old calendar. Dated 3 September 1937

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3rd September 1937

E. G. Stead, Esq., F. L. A. S.  
31, King Street West, Manchester 3

Dear Sir,

I believe it is a matter which concerns Mrs Wilson that the Hailsham Rural District Council advises the leaving open of the old marsh road as the bridleway, instead of stopping it up.

The Hooe Parish Council press for the abolition of the old lane as the best means of ridding it of the gypsies which frequent it - the gypsies who take the farmer's wood for their fires and pegs and graze their horses at the farmer's expense.

Can you, please, write to the Hailsham R. D. Council and protest against retaining the lane.

Yours faithfully

John J. Newport  
Clerk

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**Letter 17** J. J. N. to "Torr (?) & Co.", 38 & 39, Bedford Row, WC1. Re: Purchase of Dawkes Field by Hooe Parish Council. Draft, handwritten, one sheet

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Torr & Co.,  
38 & 39, Bedford Row, WC1

3rd September 1937

WT/LHA

Re Dawkes Field

Dear Sirs,

At a Special Meeting of the Hooe Parish Council held on the 1st inst. the Chairman read your letter to him.

The Council gave full consideration to the matter and resolved to offer for the field the sum of eighty pounds (£80).

On behalf of the Council I shall be glad to receive any observation you would like to make upon this their offer.

Yours faithfully

John J. Newport  
Clerk

---

**Letter 18** East Sussex Constabulary” to J. J. Newport, Esq., Hooe Common, Battle, Sussex. Letter-headed, single sheet.

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## **EAST SUSSEX CONSTABULARY**

TELEPHONE No. Battle 20

POLICE STATION  
BATTLE

4th September 1937

Dear Sir,

**Re:- Old Barnhorn Lane, Hooe**

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 2nd inst., with reference to the above, and in reply to inform you that it is not within my province to assist you on the lines indicated.

I have no doubt but that if the County Council are desirous of obtaining the views of the Police on this matter an application for the same will be made to the Chief Constable in due course.

Yours faithfully,  
A Taylor (?)

Superintendent & DCC

John J Newport, Esq.,  
Hooe Common,  
BATTLE, Sussex.

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**Letter 19** Hailsham Rural District Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk). Re: Old marsh Road. Letter-headed, single sheet.

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## **HAILSHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

ALFRED CARR  
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

*Clerk's Office*

*Cortlandt  
Hailsham*

DATE OF NEXT MEETING .....

5th October 1936

Dear Sir,

Re Old Barnhorn Lane, Hooe

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, to hand this morning, which I will produce to the appropriate Committee at its next meeting.

Yours faithfully

*ac*

Clerk

John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Parish Council,  
Hooe Common,  
Battle,  
Sussex

---

**Letter 20** J. J. N. (Clerk) to The Chairman of Hooe Parish Council (Mr Hayward). Handwritten, in pencil, on a single sheet of letter-headed paper - this may well have been a draft copy but there's no way of telling.

---

## HOOE PARISH COUNCIL

*Clerk*  
John J. Newport

HOOE COMMON  
BATTLE, SUSSEX

Your Ref. No.  
Our Ref. No.

9<sup>th</sup> September 1937

The Chairman  
Hooe Parish Council

Dear Mr Hayward,

Herewith a budget of correspondence!

I trust you can approve of my letters.

With regard to Sir Henry's agents, I called at Burstow and Hewett's and discussed the situation with one of their clerks, instead of writing to them.

Yours faithfully,

John J. Newport

---

**Letter 21** Hailsham Rural District Council (A. Carr) to J. J. N. (Clerk) - Re: Old Marsh Road (Application of Sir Henry White-Smith). Carbon copy, one sheet

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TELEPHONE No. 206  
207

## HAILSHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ALFRED CARR  
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

*Clerk's Office*

*Cortlandt  
Hailsham*

DATE OF NEXT MEETING .....

22nd September 1937

Dear Sir,

re Old Marsh Road  
Application of Sir H. White-Smith

With further reference to your letter of the 3rd instant on this subject which was read to the Council at its meeting today.

Following full discussion, the Council decided to adhere to their previous resolution to the effect that a bridal way should be retained over the existing highways.

Yours faithfully

*ac*

Clerk

J. J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to Hooe Parish Council,  
Hooe.

---

**Letter 22** East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to Hailsham Rural District Council (A. Carr) re: New Lodge Farm, Hooe and "Proposed Highway Diversion". Letter-headed, single sheet.

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**LOGO**

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

## EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,  
Lewes*

NW/KE

23rd September 1937

Dear Sir,

New Lodge Farm, Hooe  
Proposed Highway Diversion  
Sir Henry White-Smith

I informed Messers Stanley & Co. of London, the Solicitors acting for Sir Henry White-Smith, of the contents of your letter of the 28th ultimo.

I have today received a letter from Messers Stanley & Co. stating that they have received their Client's further instruction regarding this matter. Their Client states that his tenant has often complained of the depredations of the gypsies who used the old road to camp on, and it is very difficult to clear them even when the police are called in. The gypsies damage the hedges and especially the fences, necessitating constant repair. From this point of view and the public policy, it is therefore most desirable that the roads should be completely closed.

Messers Stanley & Co.'s Client expresses the hope that your Council will reconsider this matter and agree to the roads being completely closed, otherwise he will have to let the matter drop and look for the authorities to continue to make up the roads with the necessary brushing of the hedges and ditches which are rapidly getting out of repair and, as such, are not a credit to the neighbourhood.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh J. T. McIlveen,  
Clerk of the County Council

Alfred Carr, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hailsham Rural District Council,  
Cortlandt,  
HAILSHAM

---

**Letter 23** 'Story & Stead', 31, King Street West, Manchester 3, to J. J. N. (Clerk) Re: Old marsh Road and 'Kissing Gate'. Letter-headed, single sheet.

---

## Hooe

STORY & STEAD  
ERNEST G. STEAD, F. L. A. S.  
HOWARD ACTON  
TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAMS:  
BLACKFRIARS 4474 and 4475

31, King Street West  
Manchester 3

23rd September 1937

Dear Mr Newport,

We duly received your letter of the third instant and are looking into the question of the Old Marsh Road, as to which you write about and are much obliged to you for drawing attention to the proposals of the Rural District Council.

With regard to the Kissing Gate and Ditch, I think, I had better look at these when I am on the Estate during next month.

Yours Very Truly,

Mr J. J. Newport,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council,  
Hooe Common,  
Battle,  
Sussex.

---

**Letter 24** East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. (Clerk) - Re: New Lodge Farm, proposed Highway Diversion. (Sir Henry White-Smith). Letter-headed, Single sheet.

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LOGO

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,  
Lewes*

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

NW/KE

23<sup>rd</sup> September 1937

Dear Sir,

New Lodge Farm, Hooe  
Proposed Highway Diversion

Sir Henry White-Smith

With reference to your letter of the 2nd instant, I enclose a copy of a letter, which I, today, addressed to the Clerk to the Hailsham Rural District Council. I note that you have sent a letter of emphatic protest against the Rural District Council's decision.

I will again communicate with you when I receive a further decision of the Rural District Council.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk of the County Council

John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council,  
Hooe Common,  
BATTLE

---

**Letter 25** J. J. N. (Clerk) to East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) - Re: Old Marsh Road - Hand-written, draft, in pencil, 1 sheet.

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NW/KE

24th September 1937

The Clerk,  
East Sussex County Council,  
Lewes

Dear Sir,

Re Old Marsh Road

I thank you for yours of the 23rd inst.

On the 22nd inst. the Hooe Parish Council received the decision of the Hailsham Rural District Council. I herewith enclose a copy of a reply to it, which is being forwarded this morning.

Yours faithfully,

John J. Newport  
Clerk

---

**Letter 26** Draft letter or draft memo. - no date. From J. J. N. (Clerk) to A. R. Hayward, Chairman of the Parish Council, regarding a special meeting to be held on September 1st and it lists three (3)

points of business to be discussed at that meeting. This was written on the back of Letter 14 so was most probably my grandfather putting down his ideas on paper

---

## HOOE PARISH COUNCIL

*Clerk*

John J. Newport

HOOE COMMON  
BATTLE

Ref. No.

Councillor A. R. Hayward, Chairman

Special Meetings of the Council are convened for Wednesday next, 1st Sept. in the Hall, commencing at 8 pm.

Business No 1 To Receive the Chairman's Report re "Ducks" field, and to Resolve thereon.

Business No. 2 To consider a Press Report re the stopping up of Old Barnhorn Lane and to resolve thereon.

Business No. 3 To Consider Horace Taylor's price for Re-decorating the Hall and to resolve thereon.

John J. Newport  
Clerk  
(For the Chairman)

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**Letter 27** J. J. N. (Clerk) writing to Hailsham Rural District Council (A. Carr) . Re: Old Marsh Road. This is a hand-written, single sheet of plain paper, probably a draft copy.

---

24th September 1937

The Clerk,  
Hailsham Rural District Council

Dear Sir,

Re Old Marsh Road

I acknowledge receipt of yours of the 22nd inst.

Your Council's decision is received by the Hooe Parish Council with astonishment and indignation because it is unreasonable. The interests of ratepayers are to be sacrificed to marauders!

Recently a constable was busy for three and a half hours clearing six or seven parties of gypsies from their depreddating.

Yours faithfully,

John J. Newport  
Clerk

---

**Letter 28** Hailsham Rural District Council (A. Carr) to J. J. N. Esq. Re: Old marsh Road. Letter-headed, single sheet.

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# HAILSHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ALFRED CARR  
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

*Clerk's Office*

*Cortlandt  
Hailsham*

DATE OF NEXT MEETING .....

25th September 1937

Dear Sir,

re Old Marsh Road

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th instant, which I will produce to the appropriate committee at its next meeting.

Yours faithfully,

*ac*

Clerk

J. J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
HOOE

~~~~~  
Letter 29 J. J. N. to Rev. E. B. Davis in reply to his letter concerning the closing of Barnhorn Lane. Hand-written, pencil, draft, 2 sheets.
~~~~~

Rev E. B. Davis  
Wartling Vicarage, Hailsham

4th Oct 1937

Rev & Dear Sir,

Re Old Marsh Road, Hooe

May I take the liberty of thanking you for your reputed acceptable sensible support of Hooe residents who unanimously demand the stopping up of the old Barnhorn Lane in the south of the Parish?

I learn the Bexhill Borough Council are stopping up their part of the lane.

The gypsies have proved a nuisance to them and to end the depredations they have resolved so to act. The stopping up of the continuation of the lane through Hooe should follow.

Last Saturday afternoon I had an interview with Sir Henry White-Smith at Court Lodge. He told me he was resolute that the old lane must be either stopped up or maintained by the Council. Road surface repair, the trimming of the hedges, the making out of the ditches, and the work of the police will have to be met out of the rates. As Sir Henry has already spent thousands of pounds on improvements in that part of the Parish, co-operating with the County Council in making our countryside beautiful, residents in Bexhill and Hooe regard the attitude of Hailsham Rural District Council as quite unreasonable.

The question is asked, "What difference will it make to them whether the lane is closed door open?"; "As to a "bridleway"; who uses the present bridle path along the Waterlot stream?"; "How will the change from its present state to a "bridleway" be affected and who will carry it out?"

I suggest, Sir, it would be wise of the Council to resolve that no objection be made to the Stopping-up of the Hooe portion of the Old Barnhorn Lane.

Yours faithfully,

John J. Newport

---

**Letter 30** Rev. E. B. Davis to "Mr Newport" re: Closing of Barnhorn Lane. Letter-headed, single sheet, small handwriting.

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Tel. Herstmonceux 157

REV E. B. DAVIS

WARTLING VICARAGE,  
PEVENSEY  
SUSSEX

Oct 8th 1937

Mr Newport,

In reply to yours re Barnhorn Road, I have supported the closing of this road on each occasion the question has come before the R. D. Council. As I am away on holiday and the question may be discussed again next week, I wrote to the Clerk of R. D. C. before I came away, putting my arguments forward in favour of closing it.

Yours faithfully

E. B. Davis

---

**Letter 31** "The Society of United Motorists" to J. J. N. ("The Clerk of the Council", Hooe parish Council.). Re: "Pevensey Marsh Highway" - closure of the old Bexhill - Pevensey - Eastbourne Road. Letter-headed, single sheet

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**THE SOCIETY OF**

**UNITED**  **MOTORISTS**

Bankers - BARCLAYS  
COLMORE ROAD, BIRMINGHAM

BRANCHES AND ENROLMENT CENTRES  
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

Our Ref **CR/EW**

Your Ref

Reply to

6, Regent Road,  
HANDSWORTH,  
BIRMINGHAM

The Clerk of the Council,  
Hooe Parish Council,  
HOOE,  
Sussex

19th October 1937

Sir,

re Pevensey Marsh Highway

This Society notes with concern a proposal to enclose part of the old Bexhill -- Pevensey -- Eastbourne Road with the consequent closure of the road either to all traffic or to motor traffic alone.

Every road is at present used for two purposes; the carrying of goods or passengers from place to place and for the enjoyment, of all classes, of the countryside. While the new road may serve the former service well, the old road undoubtedly continues to fulfill the second adequately and we can see no reason why it should be closed to any sort of traffic.

The Ministry of Transport has frequently appealed, on the score of road safety, for co-operation instead of antagonism between different classes of road users. Any proposal to exclude the motoring public from the use of this road can only have the effect of increasing this antagonism, especially as motorists contribute to the construction and maintenance of roads in a double capacity -- namely, as contributors to the Road Fund and as ratepayers.

We, therefore, urge that no proposal be entertained which excludes motor traffic from this road, and that this property which the public and particularly the motorists have hitherto maintained, should on no account be sold to a private individual for his holy or partially exclusive use.

Yours faithfully

R. C. Youatt  
Gen. Secretary

---

**Letter 32** J. J. N. (Clerk) to Hailsham Rural District Council (A. Carr). Re: Old Barnhorn Lane. Draft, hand-written, pencil, single sheet.

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20th October 1937

A Carr, Esq.,  
Clerk

Hailsham Rural District Council  
"Cortlandt", Hailsham

Dear Sir,

Re Old Barnhorn Lane

On behalf of, and for, the Hooe Parish Council, I am to enquire,

"What is proposed to be done to make the Hooe portion of the lane a bridleway; who is to do the work; who is to pay for the work to be done; who is clip the hedges, keep the ditches clear and the road surface maintained?"

"As a bridleway, would the lane be restricted to ridden horses or, as it appears may be the case, lawfully would it be open to horse-drawn farmer's carts?"

Yours faithfully,

John J. Newport,  
Clerk

---

**Letter 33** J. J. N. (Clerk) to Randall C. Youatt, Esq., 6, Regent Road, Handsworth, Birmingham. Re: Old Barnhorn Lane. Hand-written, draft copy, pencil, 3 sheets.

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CR/EW

21st October 1937

Randall C. Youatt, Esq.,  
6, Regent Rd., Handsworth, Birmingham.

Dear Sir

re Old Barnhorn Lane

I acknowledge receipt of yours dated the 19th inst., this morning.

Your Society may be assured the Hooe Parish Council would be very pleased for the Old Barnhorn Lane to be used by motorists who wish to travel without great speed in order to enjoy the country scenery and the open air. But motorists avoid the lane in their rush across the marsh. The said Council have no objection to general traffic along the lane. What the Council do oppose is the use of the lane almost solely by gypsies who obstruct the lane, graze their horses in the adjoining fields, use the "spiles" of the fences for firewood, hang refuse on hedges, litter the verge with refuse and filth, so that people with self-respect cannot walk or ride along the lane.

The purpose of Sir Henry White-Smith, CBE, in applying for the stopping up of the Hooe portion of the lane, which he has recently acquired, is not to grab from the public what has been there is for many centuries, but to use what appears to be the best course to remove the nuisance.

Our Constable resides about four miles from the lane. It is no light task for him to cycle to the scene when he is phoned for and to spend hours in moving the depredators off

Recently, I met him about 12.45. He had been from 1.30 shifting six or seven parties.

On one occasion one of my neighbours counted sixteen caravans in the lane. What passage was there for motorists with such obstruction?

The District Council, by their Chairman's casting vote, have decided it shall be a "bridleway". On the instruction of my Council, I am asking the District Council to state how this change is to be effected, by whom, and at whose expense. If by a "bridleway" the Council means it is to be used only for horse-riding with strong gates to bar other traffic, it may be little used at all.

There may be a solution to the Gypsy problem by providing, for the van dwellers, a free-parking place, suitably in closed, and superintended. Will the public consent to a such solution at their expense?

Yours faithfully,

John J. Newport  
Clerk

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Letter 34 Hailsham Rural District Council (A. Carr) to J. J. N. Letter-headed, single sheet.
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TELEPHONE No. 206  
207

## HAILSHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ALFRED CARR  
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

*Clerk's Office*

*Cortlandt  
Hailsham*

DATE OF NEXT MEETING .....

21st October 1937

Dear Sir

Old Barnhorn Lane

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th instant and in reply thereto to say that the effect of the decision of the Council is that they are not prepared to agree to the complete stopping-up of the Lane. This decision was again confirmed by the Council at its meeting yesterday.

You will remember that in one of your letters you have stated that Sir Henry White-Smith is not prepared to proceed with his application unless the complete closure of the Lane is agreed to.

In the circumstances, I presume that the application will not be proceeded with and the Lane will, therefore, remain as at present.

Yours faithfully,

*ac*

Clerk

John J Newport,  
Clerk to the Parish Council,  
HOOE

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**The following comes from the Bexhill Observer dated 23rd October 1937**

***INDIGNATION AT HOOE***

***GIPSIES ON OLD MARSH ROAD***

*Further letters with regard to the alleged gipsy nuisance at Hooe were read at the monthly meeting of the Hailsham Rural Council on Wednesday at "Cortlandt", but the Council were not persuaded to alter their decision regarding the future of the old marsh road.*

*Owing to the nuisance caused by gipsies, their horses and dogs, Sir Henry White-Smith had inquired whether the Rural Council were agreed to him acquiring and enclosing the old main road across the marsh between Bexhill and Pevensey, which ran through his land, from a point 180 yards east of the Lamb Inn to the Bexhill borough boundary of Stone Bridge, a distance of 1,400 yards. That portion of the road had been superseded by the new by-pass road and was being used for camping by gipsies.*

*The matter had been discussed by the Council on several previous occasions.*

*They first agreed to the principle of stopping up the road, but subsequently suggested that a bridle way should be retained and this decision was confirmed at two subsequent meetings, on each occasion by a majority of one vote.*

*On Wednesday, a further letter was read from the Hooe Parish Council stating that the Rural Council's decision had been received by the Parish Council with astonishment and indignation. The interests of ratepayers were to be sacrificed to marauders. Recently, a constable was busy for several hours clearing them off after their depredations.*

*The County Council wrote stating that the land owners solicitors had pointed out the gipsies damage the hedges and fences, which necessitated constant repair. They hoped the Council would reconsider the matter so that the road could be completely closed, otherwise their client would have to let the matter drop. The highway authority would then have to keep the road in repair and brush the hedges.*

*A letter was also received from the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society to the effect that they trusted the Council would insist upon the retention of the road as a bridle way.*

The Council decided to take no further action in the matter, they still being of the opinion that there should be a bridle way.

Also, in the same edition of the Bexhill Observer, dated 23rd October 1937, the following article appeared.

The Gipsy nuisance

Marsh Road Problem

Mr J. J. Newport, clerk to the Hooe Parish Council, has received communication from the Society of United Motorists, protesting against the proposed close another section of the old Marsh Road, which has been the subject of much discussion. In his reply, Mr Newport says: --

"Your society may be assured that the Hooe Parish Council would be very pleased for the old Barhorn-lane to be used by motorists who wish to travel without great speed in order to enjoy the country scenery and the open air. But motorists avoid the lane in their rush across the Marsh. The said Council have no objection to general traffic along the lane. What the Council do oppose is the use of the lane almost solely by gipsies, who obstruct the thoroughfare, graze their horses in the adjoining fields, use the spiles of the fences for firewood, hang refuse on the hedges, litter the verge with waste and filth, so that people with self-respect cannot walk or ride along the lane."

**Letter 35** From the East Sussex County Council (Hugh McIlveen) to J. J. N. This is on a single sheet of letter-headed.



EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

*County Hall,*

*Lewes*

HUGH J. T. MCILVEEN  
CLERK THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TELEPHONE LEWES 800

NW/KE

26<sup>th</sup> October 1937

Dear Sir,

Highway Act, 1835  
New Lodge Farm, Hooe  
Sir Henry White-Smith

With reference to my letter of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ultimo, I have now been informed that the Hailsham District Council have at their last meeting decided that they were not prepared to agree to the road being completely closed.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh J. T. McIlveen  
Clerk of the County Council



John J. Newport, Esq.,  
Clerk to the Hooe Parish Council,  
Hooe Common,  
BATTLE  
Sussex

~~~~~  
Letter 36 Around this time, at the end of October, an article appeared in the "Times" newspaper giving a correspondent's view of the old marsh road problem in such a way that it characterised Hooe Parish Council as the villain of the piece. The Council, naturally, took exception to this with the result that the Parish Councils of Hooe and Ninfield joined together to write a letter to the Editor of the "Times" in order to put forward their side of the story.

This letter, 'Letter 36', is hand-written on four, feint-lined, foolscap sheets of paper in pencil but has inked modifications in various places. At the Record Office, the letter came inside, what was most probably the original, stamped, brown envelope with a postmark that gives the time and date as "12.45 AM 3 Nov 1937". The envelope is addressed as follows: -

PRIVATE

Alfred Hayward, Esq.,
Quiddeswell Mount,
Hooe,
Near Battle,
Sussex

From the inked modifications, and the addressee on the envelope, it would seem that this is the draft of a letter intended for the Editor of the 'Times', originally written by A. Hayward, Chairman of Hooe Parish Council and sent to J. Berthon Sparkes, Chairman of Ninfield Parish Council, for his consideration and thoughts.

~~~~~  
To the Editor

The Times

Sir,

Pevensey Marsh Road

We should not have ventured to raise in your columns the question of the proposed closing of a section of the Old Barnhorne Lane which joins the Battle-Eastbourne Road at the Lamb Inn were it not that by your admirable photograph of the Hooe marshes and uplands, and by articles from an unknown correspondent, some attempt appears to us to have been made to exalt an entirely local matter into a question of almost national importance.

The contiguous and associated parishes of Ninfield and Hooe, with one representative on the Hailsham R. D. C., guard with jealousy the ancient bridleways and footpaths existing in their parishes. This fact should be known to your correspondent and is evidenced by the maps deposited by the Parish Councils with the District Council. While, however, the policy of these Parish Councils is rightly directed towards the preservation of their rights of way, the practical results arising from the policy are disappointing. Although the bridges and stiles are kept in repair and, in some instances, the tracks are marked, the number of persons using them diminishes, and, except in a few instances, is now confined to a mere handful of strangers and residents. It is noticeable that their use by visitors, whose rights your correspondent seeks to guard, is largely non-existent. This condition of affairs does not arise from lack of opportunity, and for both parishes, and particularly Hooe, are crossed with rights of way in all directions.

The new road across the marshes presents an alternative method of progress far in advance of the old marsh road; and a fact which requires only the evidence of the eyes to appreciate.

In these circumstances, we are of opinion that the expense which must be incurred in keeping this section of the old Barnhorne Lane opening, could only be justified, if the prevailing defects were strong enough to support that course.

The alleged facts relied on by your correspondent appears to be that the old Lane is of use to pedestrians and, in particular to ramblers, picnic parties, and horseriders.

The answer to these allegations are, that, as regards pedestrians proceeding from one point to another, the new road is more direct and therefore preferable; as regards ramblers and picnic parties, there are in existence numerous alternatives probably more suitable and certainly little used; and, as regards horse riders, these would not make use of a metallised road, lacking the suitable grass verge, when other ways more fitted for their purpose are available.

On the data relied on by your correspondent the case advanced for the retention of the portion of the old Lane referred to appears to us a poor one. The matter, however, does not rest there, for the contrary case has not yet been considered. In the main this is based admittedly on the nuisance and damage caused by gypsies proceeding along and camping on the old road in such a manner that they block the road itself.

The gypsy nuisance is a long-standing one, and, unfortunately, is on the increase; it is very prevalent in the neighbourhood of the South Coast towns, and is of such a nature as to require more attention than it receives.

Your correspondent passes over this point, lightly, and, in doing so, quite underestimates the measure of the nuisance. He suggests that more coordination between the police of two districts might produce a remedy, but in practice this is not so easy as it sounds, where, as here, the area affected is comparatively lonely, and exists on the boundaries of two parishes.

The whole matter may be summed up by saying that no real need or demand for the retention of the old Lane exists and that its existence is prejudicial to the interests of landowners and tenants.

We are aware that the Hailsham R. D. C. have by a casting vote decided in favour of the maintenance of the old Lane as a bridleway but such a majority victory seems to us almost Pyrrhic, and it is noticeable that the representatives of Ninfield and Hooe and the adjoining village of Wartling were in favour of the closure.

We are aware also that one body concerned with the preservation of footpaths has used its influence to keep the road open. Such a body serves a useful purpose but local conditions should be carefully studied before representation is made relating to a particular case. Generalisations are dangerous in this as in other cases.

We are, sirs,  
Your obedient servants.

Alfred Hayward  
Chairman, Hooe Parish Council

J. Berthon Sparke  
Chairman, Ninfield Parish Council

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**Letter 37** Sir Henry White-Smith to J. J. Newport. Legal document, pro stopping-up of lane. "Take Notice". Single sheet

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To: John J. Newport Esq.,  
Clerk of the Hooe Parish Council  
Hooe,  
Battle, Sussex

TAKE NOTICE that I, Sir Henry White-Smith, CBE of Court Lodge, Hooe in the County of Sussex am desirous that the public highways in the Parish of Hooe in the said County of Sussex which are shown on the plan annexed hereto should be in part stop up in manner following, that is to say, by stopping up those portions of the public highways which are shown coloured pink on the said plan.

AND I hereby undertake to pay all the reasonable charges, costs and disbursements in connection with the application to the Justices and to Quarter Sessions for an order in the above matter.

AND I require the Parish Council for the Parish of Hooe to hold a meeting for the purpose of considering the above proposal.

DATED this 5th day of May 1937

(signed by 'Henry White-Smith')

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**Letter 38** J. J. N. to Hailsham Rural District Council (A. Carr) re: Old marsh Road. This is hand-written, in pencil, on the back of 3 pieces of a large wall calendar, torn up for the purpose. It was obviously a draft copy though he has signed it

---

A. Carr, Esq.,

3<sup>rd</sup> September 1937  
Hailsham Rural District Council

Dear Sir,

Re: Old Marsh Road

At a Special Meeting of the Hooe Parish Council held on the 1st inst. the previous week's report of the Hailsham Rural District Council's discussion on and decision regarding the Stopping up of the Hooe Section of the old Barnhorn-Pevensey Road was considered, and an emphatic protest against the decision was resolved upon.

Farmers and the police have been anticipating relief from the Gypsy nuisance by the closing of the Road.

It appears, however, that, by a very small majority your Council have decided that farmers and the police must continue to suffer loss and annoyance in order that pic-nickers, cyclists and pedestrians may have free use of it. Those who have seen the condition of the lane as left by gypsies, fail to see where self-respecting persons may enjoy pic-nicking their.

Captain Gardner said rightly, "the necessity for a bridle path did not exist"; the Rev E. B. Davis wisely "thought the Council should be influenced by the wishes of the Hooe residents"; Mr W. Winchester, faithfully representing the Parish, "urged that the road should be closed".

Gypsies' dogs are a nuisance to landowners cattle; their horses feed and fatten freely on farmers grazing land; and they commandeer fences for firewood and make their clothes-pegs at farmers' expense.

The Hooe section of the lane is convenient to gypsies because it is near the Bexhill boundary, so that when stirred out of Hooe by the Battle police they are soon in the Bexhill district. As the Bexhill police bid them move on, they promptly return into the lane.

In the opinion of the Hooe Parish Council, the solution to the gypsy problem in Hooe is to fully grant Sir Henry White-Smith's application and remove the Hooe section of Old Barnhorn Lane from the map.

Yours faithfully,

John J. Newport  
Clerk

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**Letter 39** No date, hand-written in ink, draft, written on the back of Letter 06. No addressee but the "Ref" gives a clue that it is almost certainly an intended (perhaps, sent) reply to Letter 06 as it has the same reference, "F/EE". There is no signature but the writing, I guarantee, is that of my grandfather, John James Newport

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**F/EE**

On behalf of the H.P.C., I assert that it is their wish that the whole of the old Bexhill-Eastbourne Road with the parish of Hooe shall be closed to the public and shall pass to Sir Henry White-Smith including the section referred to in yours of yesterday's date.

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