

Wouldham Community Trail



④ All Saints Church

First dating 1058, with many early Norman features but mainly Perpendicular. Bells dated 1624 still ringing to date!

In 1906 the tusk of a mammoth, along with a quantity of teeth, was found in Peters Pit. The tusk was more than 3 metres long and can now be seen in Rochester Museum. The site, at the top of Knowle Road, is sometimes referred to as Skeleton Hill.

⑧ Site of Cement Factory

The cement factory was situated on the river side where Trafalgar Close now stands. The industry brought wealth to the village and the famous Medway barges, maroon sails aglow, took goods of all types to ports throughout Kent and London.



① Ferry Steps

A ferry ran to Halling for hundreds of years until 1963. (A bike was a halfpenny extra!) Mr Stevens, the last ferryman, said he was glad to be redundant after working 18 hour days!



⑥ Starkey Castle

One of the most complete surviving stone-built medieval hall-houses in southern England. Built by Sir Humphrey Starkey in 1471 on the site of a fortified house dated from 1360.



③ WOULDHAM Court Farm House

The house is 16th century with a Georgian front which was added by a naval sea captain some 200 years later.



⑤ All Saints School

Late Victorian church school which did, and still does, educate Wouldham's young brains. Original school, first built 1867, is used for the infants.

In October 1949 there was great excitement at Rectory Wharf, Wouldham, when the body of a narwhal arrived on the shore via the Medway. It was only the second example of the species to be washed ashore in this country in 500 years. The whale's body was taken to the Natural History Museum.



This trail is part of the Valley of Visions Community Trails project, encouraging people to enjoy, explore and learn about their local area and surrounding countryside. Why not explore one of the other community trails in the Medway Gap? Visit www.valleyofvisions.org.uk for further information.

For more information about Wouldham visit
www.wouldhampc.kentparishes.gov.uk

Illustrations - Jo Savage



Wouldham village

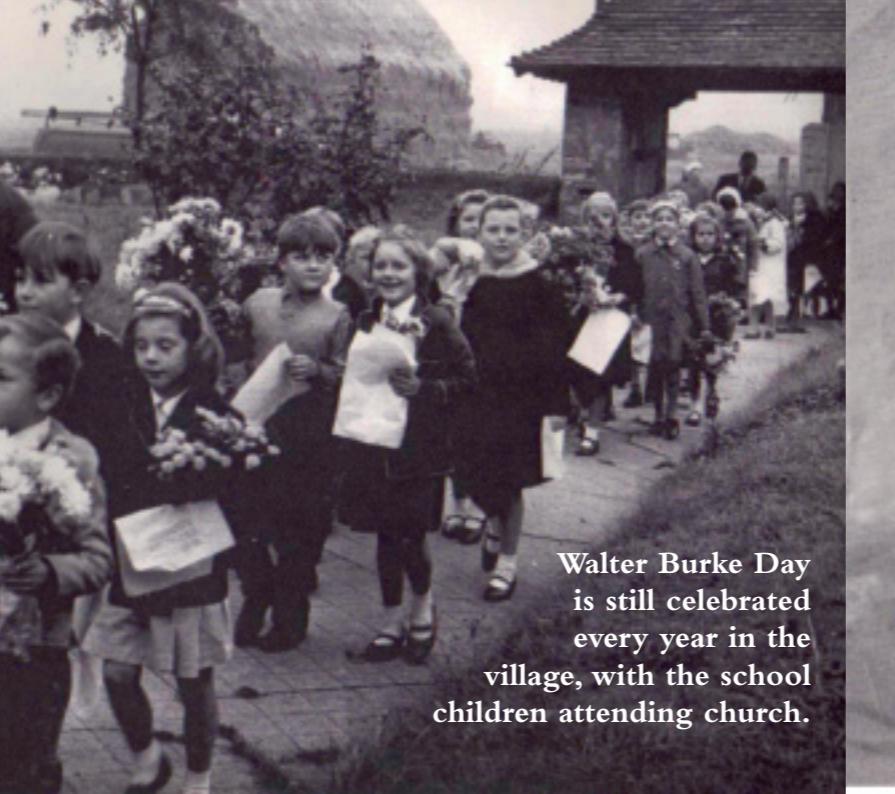
Wouldham developed from a centuries-old agricultural hamlet to a busy industrial village during the 1860s with the building of the Wouldham Cement Company. The population rose from 260 to over a thousand in the space of 20 years. Today, Wouldham is mostly a village of terraced cottages originally built for 19th-century cement workers, but the industry no longer exists here.



Walter Burke

Walter Burke, resident of Wouldham, was the oldest man to serve in the British fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805. Then aged 59, he was the Purser of Nelson's flagship, HMS Victory. He is buried in Wouldham churchyard, where the inscription on his gravestone states "... in his arms the immortal Nelson died."

On leaving the navy, Walter Burke came home to Wouldham where he owned both Purser Place and Burke House. Both these houses were removed to Maresfield in East Sussex in 1937 but materials from each were used to build a new house named Purser Place.



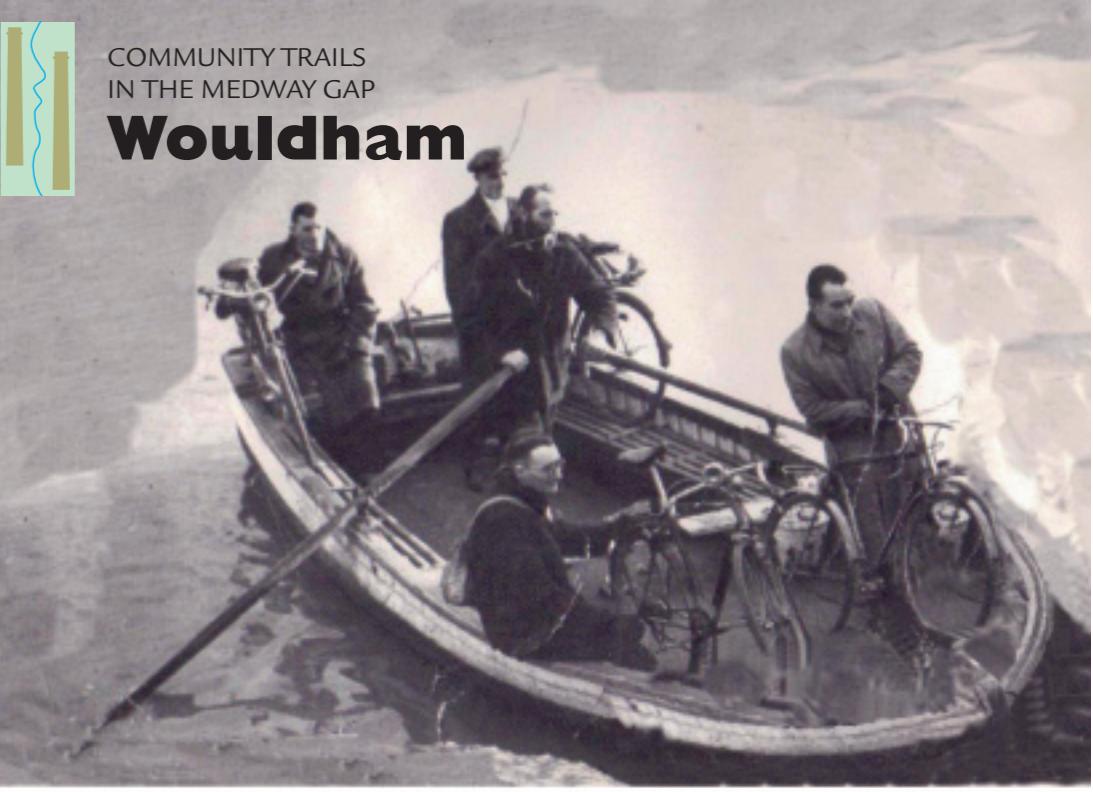
Walter Burke Day is still celebrated every year in the village, with the school children attending church.



COMMUNITY TRAILS

IN THE MEDWAY GAP

Wouldham



Cement works

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the cement factory was WOULDHAM'S main place of employment. This was to change: the cement factory closed in 1904 and in the 1920s the industry moved completely to the other side of the Medway to take advantage of the railway for transportation.

Previously, the Medway barges carrying cement away from the factory were a frequent sight. The factory was on the river bank where Trafalgar Close is now situated. Similar barges carried agricultural products from a wharf behind the church.

Peters Pit (named after the owner) can still be seen behind Ravens Knowle, though is soon to become a housing estate. A tramway ran from here to the cement works, and its route is still known by this name in the village.

During this period it is said every front room in the High Street sold ale to supplement their income!



Wouldham FC –

winners of the
Maidstone and
District League

1907-08



Wouldham had a successful football team for a number of years. It was set up by Henry Peters, owner of the cement works, in the late 19th century.