

Hop Picking At Moorden

c.1900, Minister visiting pickers in the hopgarden at Moorden



c.1890, Three women hop picking at 'Days'



c.1920, John Abraham Day in one of the hop gardens at Moorden



c.1900, William Hollands, carter at 'Days' William & his wife had six children & they adopted another child born to a London mother whilst hop picking



c.1940, Eric Day with bushel basket measuring hops



October 8th 1954, Kent Courier Article

They travel far to have their children christened

WHY GYPSY FAMILIES CHOOSE CHIDDINGTON CAUSEWAY CHURCH

THEY TRAVEL FAR TO HAVE THEIR CHILDREN CHRISTENED AT CHIDDINGTON CAUSEWAY CHURCH, SOUTH-EAST KENT, BECAUSE OF THE CONVENIENCE OF THE CHURCH AND THE FRIENDLY WELCOME WHICH THEY RECEIVE AT THE RECTORY.

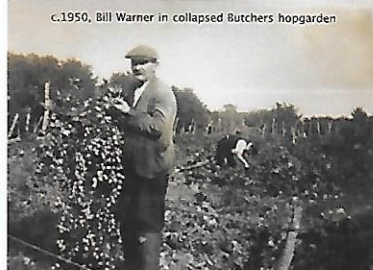
THEY ARE THE ONLY GYPSY FAMILIES IN THE DISTRICT WHO DO THIS AND THE REASON FOR IT IS THAT THE CHURCH IS ONE OF THE FEW WHICH IS OPEN TO THEM.

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Death crush on 'awkward bend', Examine this road, says inquest jury



Unknown hop picking families hand picking in the hop gardens at Moorden



c.1950, Bill Warner in collapsed Butchers hopgarden



c.1950, Betty Day booking-in & Bill Warner & Eric Day measuring hops



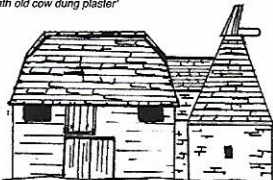
Early 1950s, John Day hop picking

The Development Of Hop Growing & The Oasthouse

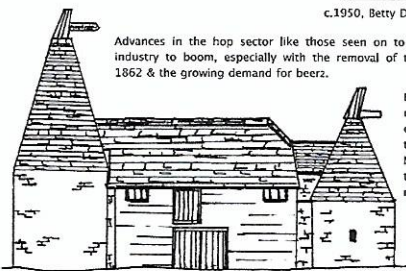
Since they were first being built in the sixteenth century innovations in the design of oasthouses were developing. In the early part of the nineteenth century buildings with 12-16ft circular kilns & conical roofs were springing up all over the county. Oasthouses played an important role in drying, pressing & storing the hops after they had been picked. The first known evidence of a building on the site where the oast at Moorden stands is on the 1841 Tithe map of Leigh. It shows a building that resembles a small barn & it is not until the 1884 Ordnance survey map that it can be seen with a single roundel flanking its east side. It is quite possible that the building of such an extension was prompted by the abolishment of a tax on bricks in 1850. It is probable that the stowage (central section of oast) is the original barn seen on the 1841 Tithe Map due to its early architectural features, described here on the statutory list of buildings with special architectural or historical value:

"Probably formerly a small barn...with half hipped tiled roof and brick foundations with remains of plaster. Roof truss of tie and collar beams with rows of straight uprights forming partitions, one still with old cow dung plaster"

Buildings assembled during the period of the brick tax were typically constructed of timber as well as brick to keep costs to a minimum.

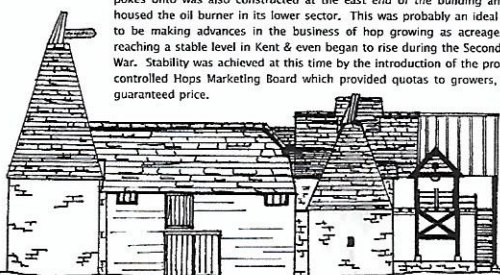


Advances in the hop sector like those seen on to oasts, had caused the industry to boom, especially with the removal of the Hop Excise Duty in 1862 & the growing demand for beer.



By 1896 a second larger roundel had been added on to the other side of the oasthouse at Moorden, as seen on the Ordnance survey map of that year.

In 1933 the oasthouse at Moorden was considerably extended. A third kiln with cooling room was added to the back of the stowage & a new cast-iron press replaced the wooden-framed original. A large gantry for loading pokes onto was also constructed at the east end of the building and later housed the oil burner in its lower sector. This was probably an ideal period to be making advances in the business of hop growing as acreages were reaching a stable level in Kent & even began to rise during the Second World War. Stability was achieved at this time by the introduction of the producer-controlled Hops Marketing Board which provided quotas to growers, with a guaranteed price.



Immediately after the war hop picking resumed it's old traditions with original Londoners coming down to work, however this type of tradition was short lived as the second half of the twentieth century saw an end to the hand picking of hops, with the introduction of the hop picking machine, first made in 1934. The launch of a hop picking machine occurred at Moorden in 1958 when they were becoming more popular than ever before. The machines had been developed to do, over twelve hours, the same amount of work that two humans could do over thirty six hours. They came at a price though, their average cost being around £5000.

In 1982 independent producer groups for the marketing of English hops were set up, but even with these and the use of modern technology for hop picking, Kent along with the rest of the country could not produce nearly as many hops as had been seen in the past. One of the threats to the hop industry at the end of the twentieth century was the growing rise in popularity of lagers & the demand for ciders and wine. Lager production required fewer hops with seedless fruit, not the traditional seeded varieties that were grown in this country. The seedless varieties were being imported by the lager manufacturers from other parts of Europe and America.

In 1997 Hop growing at Moorden became redundant. For some years the hop gardens remained in their original state, yet lacking in trained plants, but still receiving payments from the English Hops as part of a temporary resting scheme. If the market had picked up over this period hop production could have been resumed on the farm, but alas it never did, mainly due to foreign competition & the hop gardens began to be dismantled. This was the case for nearly all the original hop growing farms in the county.

The Oasthouse at Moorden was sadly destroyed by fire in 1988, which resulted in the hops from Moorden's gardens being dried in the oast at neighbouring, Larkins Farm, until hop growing ceased at Moorden. In 2004 the oast's ruins were eventually converted into the house we see today.



c.1920, Hop Pockets bound for Southwark Market being Loaded outside the Oasthouse at Moorden



1970s, Moorden Oasthouse

Penshurst
Hop-picking machine may be installed at Moorden Farm by next Autumn, if Sevenoaks Rural Council grants an application by Messrs. E. C. Day to put up the special shed to house it. In the past, hundreds of men and women have been employed at Moorden Farm to pick the hops. If the machine is installed, it will probably be the first in the village.

February 7th 1958, Kent Courier Article



1974, John Day running Moorden's hop picking machine & Sandra Day on the machine rollers sorting the plucked hop trusses