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THE PARISH OF STOKE, HOO PENINSULA, KENT

HISTORIC AREA ASSESSMENT

Joanna Smith



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THE PARISH OF STOKE, HOO PENINSULA, MEDWAY, KENT

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SUMMARY

The parish of Stoke lies on the south side of the Hoo Peninsula. Situated below a ridge of higher ground, its landscape is a mixture of farmland and saltings fringing the river Medway. Three areas of settlement developed in the parish; a manorial and religious centre in the village of Stoke, a residential and commercial settlement at Lower Stoke and a small hamlet at Middle Stoke. Of these, only Lower Stoke experienced significant residential expansion in the 20th century. The parish is crossed by two significant transport routes, the A228 and the mineral railway and the geography of Stoke saltings have been greatly affected by the widespread extraction of clay in the late 19th and early 20th century for the cement industry. This Historic Area Assessment provides an overview of the historical development and architectural character of the parish. It forms a component of the larger Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project.

CONTRIBUTORS

The report was written by Joanna Smith. The character area maps were produced by Philip Sinton. The modern ground photographs were taken by Jonathan Clarke, Derek Kendall and Joanna Smith and the modern aerial photographs were by Damian Grady.

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*Frontispiece; Remains of a sailing barge in Stoke saltings in 1994 (bb94_05855.tif
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'To the south of Allhallows lie the three Stokes, Lower, Middle and Upper, on the lower land sweeping around beside the Medway estuary from Hoo and the south. Here are Stoke saltings, a maze of shifting and muddy channels threading their intricate way between the low-lying islets, islands in fact only at high tide!'

PREFACE

The Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project was undertaken by English Heritage between 2009 and 2012. The project aims were to inform landscape change at a strategic level by providing an enhanced evidence base and a better-informed understanding of the area's rich historic character. To ensure a truly integrated project a number of different research and recording techniques at the disposal of English Heritage were deployed. These included aerial survey, analytical earthwork and buildings survey, historic landscape, seascape and routeway characterisation, farmstead characterisation and historic area assessment. An integrated narrative report drawing on this full range of work was produced in 2013 (Carpenter *et al*, 2013).

Historic area assessment was developed by English Heritage as one of a number of approaches to understanding the historic environment at area scale. Each assessment aims to explain how the past is encapsulated in today's landscape, to describe its character and to distinguish its more significant elements. Because resources, timescales and the nature of areas can vary three levels of assessment have been defined (English Heritage, 2010). For the Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project it was decided to undertake historic area assessments of individual parishes at outline level - that is less-intensive survey and research to enable coverage of a wider area. The Hoo Peninsula, east of the ridge of high land at Higham, was assessed by parish. For each parish the key elements of its historic development were identified, its architectural interest and significance was evaluated and its landscape was subdivided into character areas.

The Hoo Peninsula outline historic area assessments were carried out within English Heritage by members of the Assessment Team South, Heritage Protection Department. Fieldwork was undertaken during a number of visits to the peninsula between 2010 and 2011. This consisted of external ground photography and site notes. A limited amount of research was undertaken in the local archives. Extensive use was made of historic maps, principally the tithe maps and various Ordnance Survey editions, along with on-line resources such as census data and historic newspapers, to produce the assessments. These were written in draft by the team members between 2011 and 2013.

INTRODUCTION

The parish of Stoke lies on the south side of the Hoo Peninsula, adjoining the Medway estuary (Fig. 1). To its east is the Isle of Grain, from which it is separated by the Yantlet Creek, while to its west is the parish of Hoo St Werburgh. Curving round a great sweep of saltings, the parish sits below the peninsula's ridge of higher ground. Settlement is focussed in the central area, surrounded by isolated farmsteads, while the eastern part is largely marshland. The mineral railway runs along the southern edge of the parish, which is also bisected by the peninsula's main road, the A228.

At least three areas of settlement have developed in the parish, differentiated in modern times by their designation as Lower, Middle and Upper Stoke. The latter, known often simply as Stoke, is situated to the south of the A228 and retains the character of a small Hoo village. To its north east is Lower Stoke, which now forms the main settlement and has the greater concentration of houses and public amenities. In between lies the small hamlet of Middle Stoke, although late-20th-century expansion has now effectively joined this to Lower Stoke. Historically the village evolved as the manorial and religious centre of the parish, while commercial activities have tended to gravitate towards Lower Stoke, which grew up along a route to the Isle of Grain.

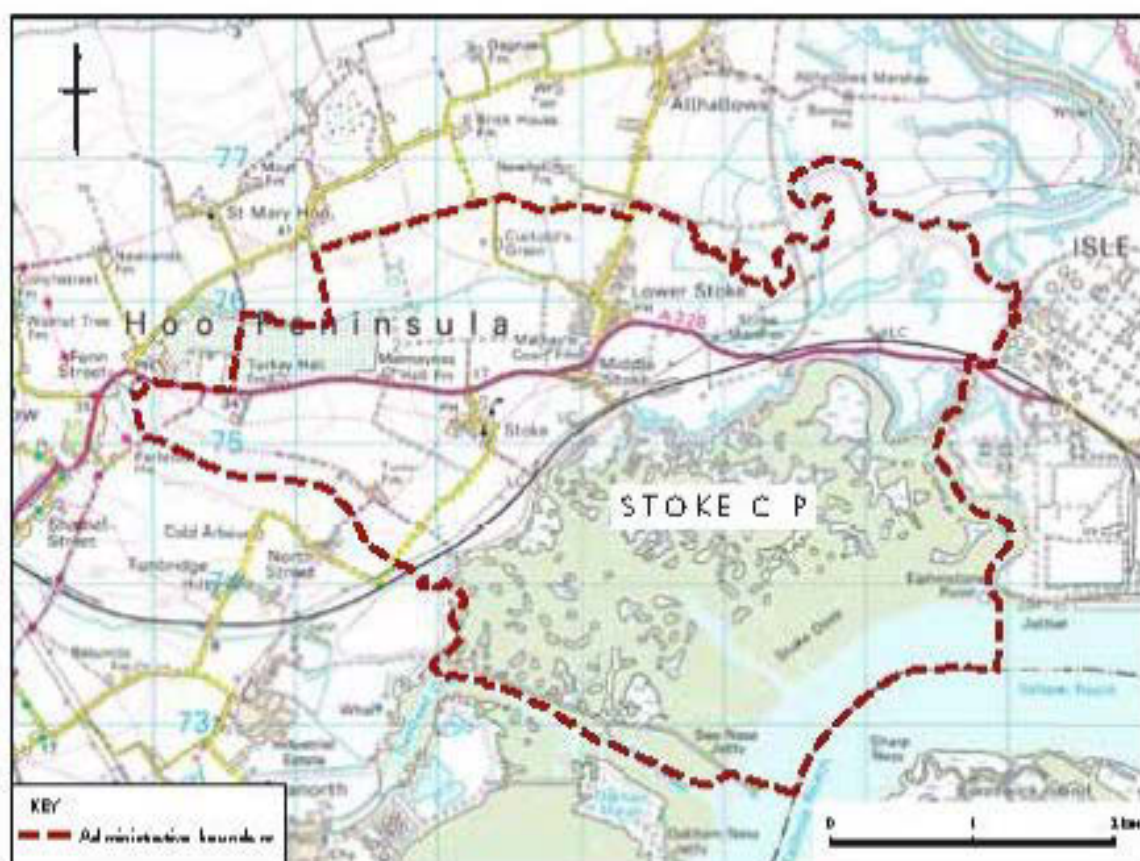


Figure 1 Location map showing Stoke parish ©Crown copyright and database right 2103. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 1000124900.

The parish, which has a soil of light loam with a subsoil of gravel and clay, retains an agricultural character. Some of its farms, traditionally used for marshland grazing and arable crops, were amongst those improved by Henry Pye in the latter part of the 19th century. For Stoke, the impact of the industrialization of the Medway during the 19th century was focussed mainly on the saltings, from which huge amounts of clay were extracted for cement production. Although the Hundred of Hoo railway line was built across the parish in 1881-2, it only acquired a halt in 1906 and a station in 1932. The scale of post-war industrial development in adjoining parishes has led to a significant residential expansion of Lower Stoke and road improvements to accommodate heavier traffic.

Stoke is one of Hoo's less well known parishes, historically overlooked in favour of its neighbours, Hoo St Werburgh and the Isle of Grain, and overshadowed today by the power stations at Grain and Kingsnorth. Sparsely developed away from its main settlement, it has been characterised as 'a sweeping, open parish with an air of breadth and freedom'.²

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Settlement

Much about the history of early settlement in Stoke remains obscure. There are references to Andsohesham in about 730AD and to Estoches or Stoches in the Domesday Book but these may refer to different locations.³ Land at Osterland was granted by Queen Eadgifu to Christ Church Canterbury around 959 AD, presumably an early reference to the subsequent hamlet that evolved into Lower Stoke.⁴ But the initial focus of settlement was probably the village of (Upper) Stoke, where the parish church of St Peter and St Paul was located (Fig. 2). However, as elsewhere on the peninsula, this remained little more than a cluster of farms well into the 20th century (Fig. 3).



Figure 2 Detail of the Stoke and the surrounding area from *A Map of the Hundreds of Hoo and Chatham and Gillingham, 1798*



Figure 3 The village of Lower Stoke: OS map published 1864 © and database right Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2013) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

The manor of Stoke seems also to have been centred in the village. Although the location of the manor house is unclear, the name of Court Lodge Farm, originally sited to the south of the parish church, may be a reference to its use as a manorial court. The manor was the subject of a dispute in the 11th century, eventually settled in favour of the Bishop of Rochester.⁵ After the Reformation Henry VIII granted the manor to Dean and Chapter of Rochester, eventually passing to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the late 19th century.⁶

The origins of Lower Stoke are even more obscure. Historically, it was known as Osterland (Fig. 4), which has been taken to refer to oysters, and it appears to have at one time formed part of the Manor of Cliffe.⁷ The date that the settlement began to develop are unclear but the reasons for its emergence are clearer, as it straddles an ancient route to the Isle of Grain. This ran from the ridgeway across Stoke marshes, via a causeway edged by drainage ditches, to a crossing over the Yantlet creek, Grain bridge.⁸ Osterland/Lower Stoke was a convenient stopping place for travellers and at least two public houses were established to provide accommodation and stabling, including the Nags Head, visited by William Hogarth and his companions on their peregrinations in 1732. Two other routes also met at Osterland, a road north to Allhallows and one to the south, to Middle Stoke and beyond. The latter had to bridge a roadside drain, sections of which remained uncovered until the late 20th century. The ridgeway route had been eclipsed by the 19th century by a southern road that passed through Middle Stoke, eventually forming part of the A228. Nonetheless, Lower Stoke was the most thriving settlement in the parish during the 19th century, possessing a windmill and, by the century's end, a number of shops. And it was here that several non-conformist chapels were established and a board school was built in 1876.



Figure 4 Detail of Osterland from *A Map of the Hundreds of Hoo and Chatham and Gillingham, 1798* from *A Map of the Hundreds of Hoo and Chatham and Gillingham, 1798*

Middle Stoke appears to have evolved from a group of farmsteads close to the marshes and saltings (Fig. 5). In the late-19th century it experienced a modest residential expansion partly to accommodate industrial workers on the saltings. But the opening of

Stoke Halt on the railway line in 1906 nearby does not seem to have been a spur to significant development.



Figure 5 The hamlet of Middle Stoke: OS map published in 1908 © and database right Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2013) Licence numbers D00394 and TP0024

The parish contains a scatter of isolated farmsteads, including two former manorial sites. One of these is Malmaynes (or Malmains) Hall, to the north-west of Upper Stoke. This was in existence by the 11th century and occupied in 1300 by Sir Nicholas Malmaynes. By the 18th century the property was being leased by the Duppa family, whose principal seat was Hollingbourne, Kent.⁹ The house, rebuilt in brick in the 18th century, was replaced in late 20th century.¹⁰ The other, Tudor Farm, is to the south-west of the Upper Stoke. This was formerly the manor of Tudors, anciently held by the Bishop of Rochester. It too has lost its farmhouse, apparently also a red-brick Georgian building.¹¹ Mackays Court Farm is situated between Middle and Upper Stoke and is still agricultural use; Turkey Hall Farm and New Barn Farm, on the west of the parish, are not. A cluster of cottages and a farm at Cuckolds Green, to the west of Lower Stoke, has apparently been replaced by a small group of houses.

Agriculture, commerce and industry

Salt making on Stoke saltings was apparently taking place during the Roman period.¹² An 8th century charter refers to fisheries and salt pans at Stoke and these activities continued through the medieval period.¹³ The existence of an oyster fishery is suggested by the name Osterland; evidence of an oyster bed has reputedly been found in the saltings but this may relate to an oyster fishery that was in existence around 1900.¹⁴ On the reclaimed marshes and higher ground, farming followed the regional pattern of marshland grazing and corn growing. Reeds were also harvested and turnips grown in the early 19th century.¹⁵ The proximity of the farms to the Medway, via the creeks that crossed the saltings, gave farmers 'the ready convenience of water carriage from Grain-bridge to the London and Rochester markets'.¹⁶

In the latter part of the 19th century several farms in the parish were leased by Henry Pye, including Parsonage Farm (now Court Lodge Farm) and Turkey Hall Farm. Pye has been credited with modernising agriculture on the peninsula and leased several farms in the parish of St Mary Hoo, where he lived. He introduced hops at Turkey Hall Farm and is likely to have promoted seed growing in the parish, which he helped establish as a large-scale industry across the peninsula.¹⁷ Fruit and market gardening also increased in Stoke from the late-19th century, presumably boosted by the opening of the railway line in the 1880s. In the late-20th century animal grazing has declined but vegetables and potatoes continue to be grown.

By the 19th century corn milling was taking place at Lower Stoke. Of the five mills present on the Hoo Peninsula in the early 19th century, two seem to have been located in Lower Stoke.¹⁸ One was a polygonal timber windmill on a brick base, located on the east side of the Allhallows Road (Fig. 6), owned by a Mr Cooper in 1878.¹⁹ Although disused by the early 20th century the building remained standing until the 1920s (and is perhaps commemorated in the name of a local authority estate built around this time on Allhallows Road). The mill house, on the west side of the road, survives. A forge or smithy stood on Grain Road until the late-20th century, when the workshop and nearby house were redeveloped. By the late-19th century Lower Stoke had developed a degree of commercial importance, serving not only the parish but possibly the wider area. The miller operated a carrier service taking goods to and from Rochester and by 1881 the

settlement possessed two grocers shops, a post office and two general stores; only Hoo St Werburgh and perhaps Cliffe were as well supplied.²⁰ By 1920 this had increased to at least 9 shops.²¹

In the 19th century industrial activity in Stoke was generally on a modest scale, such as the small group of gravel pits in Lower Stoke, marked as 'old' on an 1864 OS map. But there was one notable exception - the intensive exploitation of the mud in Stoke saltings. Between the mid-19th century and the early 20th century millions of tons of clay were removed from the stretch of saltings between the Isle of Grain and Hoo St Werburgh, principally for the Portland cement manufacturers at Frindsbury, for whom it was a vital ingredient (Figs 7 & 8). The mud was hand dug by labourers known as 'muddies' until mechanical grab cranes were introduced in the early 20th century. Some of the day diggers lived close to the clay holes in converted lighters or barges, but by the end of the 19th century they also occupied newly built housing in the parish. Their presence presumably accounts for a spike

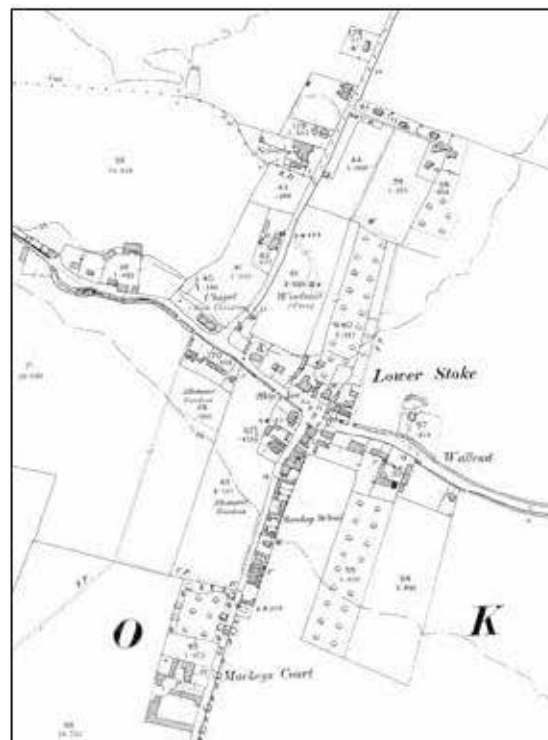
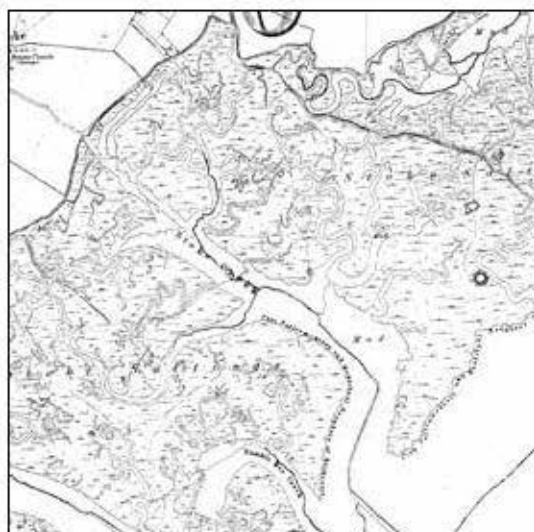


Figure 6 The settlement at Lower Stoke: OS map published in 1896 © and database right Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2013) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024



Figures 7–8 The impact of clay extraction on Stoke saltings: OS map published 1876 (left) and 1896 (right) © and database right Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2013) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

in its population figures around 1901.²² Such was the extent of extraction that concerns were raised about the impact on navigation in the Medway in the late 19th century.²³ Its legacy, the mudholes and spoilt heaps created by the industry, have significantly altered the geography of the saltings.

Post-war change

Apart from clay extraction, industrialisation in the region had less of an impact on Stoke than some other Hoo parishes; nor were any major military installations sited here. But since the mid-20th century the pace of change has accelerated, as the focus of industrial development has shifted to the eastern end of the peninsula. The construction of an oil refinery and two power stations in adjoining parishes led to demands for housing for the growing workforce. Initially the required accommodation was supplied by Strood Rural District Council, who, after a relatively modest start, built a large estate at Lower Stoke in the 1970s (Fig. 9). The increased industrial activity also necessitated the upgrading of the A228 and a realignment to bypass Lower Stoke was begun in the 1950s. A continuing increase in road traffic, exacerbated by the opening of a container port on the Isle of Grain in 1990, led, after much local campaigning, to a bypass for Middle Stoke in the late 1990s.²⁴ Latterly, changing agricultural practice and an increasing population, many working away from the parish, has resulted in the conversion of farm buildings and infill housing developments.

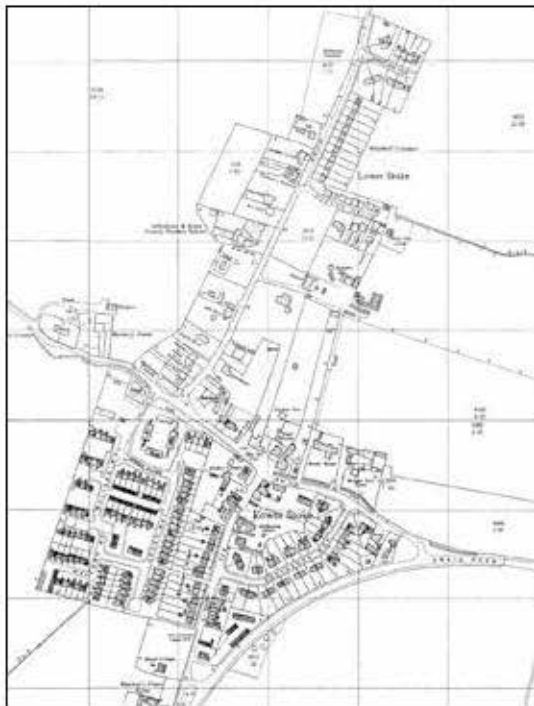


Figure 9 Lower Stoke: OS map 1968-9 © and database right Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2013) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

CHARACTER AREAS

Stoke parish can be divided into two areas of differing character: the open farmland to the west and marshes and saltings to the east and south; and the central area with its settlements.

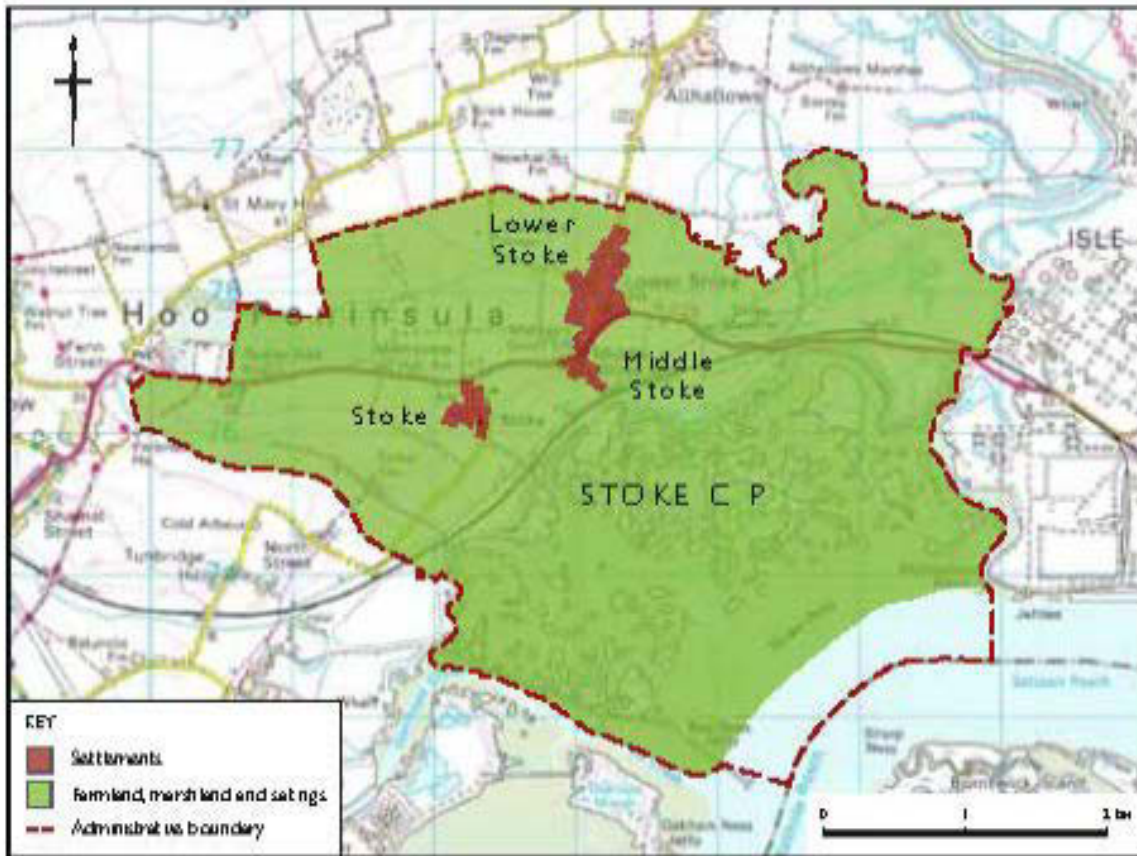


Figure 10 Character areas of Stoke parish. Background mapping ©Crown copyright and database right 2103. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 1000124900

Farmland, marshland and saltings

Although farming remains a significant activity in the parish many of the outlying farmsteads have passed out of agricultural use.

Two important transport routes cross the parish: the mineral railway and the A228. The railway, built in 1881-2, skirts the northern edge of the saltings. Although the line remains in use for freight traffic almost no trace remains of either Middle Stoke Halt, opened in 1906, or Stoke Junction Halt, which included a platform shelter and booking office, which served a branch line to Allhallows on Sea between 1932 and 1961.²⁵

The A228 is a busy and noisy road, widened and realigned to bypass the settlements of the parish. If little trace of its earlier origins remain, other historic trackways onto the marshes and saltings used for agricultural and industrial purposes, have survived. One

such track leads eastwards from Upper Stoke and still gives access to a creekside wharf, in existence since the 19th century if not earlier. Other ancient trackways that have fallen out of use may also have left their trace on the landscape, such as the route from Lower Stoke to the ridge shown on a map of c.1798.²⁶



Figure 11 World War I German U-Boat hulk dumped in Stoke saltings. (Detail of 27196/025 19-Aug-2011)

As a consequence of the decline in marshland grazing Stoke marshes and saltings are now used mainly for leisure activities, including bird watching and wildfowling. Since the 1970s the Kent Wildfowling and Conservation Association have acquired land on the saltings, part of which is used as a nature reserve.²⁷ One legacy of the intensive mud extraction in the saltings is its use as a dumping ground; during the 20th century a U-boat was scrapped in one of the day holes (Fig. 11) and the area was used for jettisoning household rubbish from London.²⁸

The settlements

The settlement at Upper Stoke retains the character of an 'unexpanded' Hoo village, comparable to St Mary Hoo (Fig. 12). Bypassed by the A228, its buildings are ranged along a single meandering street that skirts the parish churchyard. Predominately residential, the majority of its buildings date from the 20th century, although some older structures survive. The most important of these is the parish church of St Peter and Paul (grade I), which mainly dates from the late 12th and early 13th centuries (Fig. 13). Always towerless, the church suffered bomb damage in 1944 and, in 2009, was in need of further repairs.²⁹ The two other important surviving elements of the historic village are a farmstead, Court Lodge Farm (called Parsonage Farm until the late-20th century), and a former public house, The White Horse. Although no longer in agricultural use, Court Lodge Farm retains a handsome red-brick farmhouse (Fig. 14), dating from the late 18th century (grade II) and several outbuildings, including an 18th century granary (grade II). The former public house, rebuilt in the mid-to-late 19th century, retains its signage and late 19th century outbuildings.

A number of cottages and houses date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including a terrace of six brick houses, Elm Tree Cottages, with a date stone of 1893 and a late-19th-century row of three rendered houses, Church Terrace, set well back from the street. A detached house, Clematis Cottage, has a date stone of 1900. Two late-19th century cottages remain from the former farmstead of Court Lodge Farm, which stood to the south of the churchyard, both enlarged and reworked in the late 20th century. A 20th-century inter-war pair of farm workers houses, Parsonage Cottages, probably replaced older agricultural accommodation (Fig. 15).



Figure 12 (top left) Stoke village: OS map 1969 © and database right Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2013) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024; Figure 13 (top right) Church of St Peter and St Paul, Stoke © Mr M K Lofthouse. Source English Heritage; Figure 14 (middle right) Court Lodge Farmhouse, Stoke in 2009 (P57330032) & Figure 15 (bottom left) Parsonage Cottages, Stoke in 2009 (P57330033)

Otherwise the housing largely dates from the second half of the 20th century. There is one block of local authority houses, Coronation Cottages, presumably built in the 1950s. On the west side of the village, a small development of private houses dating from the 1960s and 1970s occupies the site of a demolished Vicarage, although some of the trees from its garden appear to have been retained. The site of Court Lodge Farm was mostly redeveloped in the late-20th century as Dickensian Close, a cul-de-sac of large, detached 'vernacular' style houses (Figs 16 & 17). The quality of these and other late-20th century housing in the village suggest that Upper Stoke is seen as a desirable residential location. But like other Hoo villages, new developments and the refurbishment of existing properties in Upper Stoke during this period has led to a gradual erosion of its historic fabric.

Middle Stoke is essentially a modest residential satellite of Lower Stoke in which a mid-to-late 20th century suburban character predominates, although some older buildings survive.



Figures 16 (top left) - 17 (top right) Revamped farmworkers' cottages and modern neo-vernacular houses in Dickensian Close, Stoke in 2009 (P57330034, P57330035); Figure 18 (bottom left) Coningsby Villa, Middle Stoke in 2009 (P57330036) & Figure 19 (bottom right) Tuff's Cottages, Middle Stoke in 2009 (P57330037)

The grandest of these is Coningsby Villa, a detached house that dates from c.1880 (Fig. 18).²¹ A number of cottages and terraces were built in the hamlet in the late-19th century. Of these, one row of five houses, Tuff's Cottages (Fig. 19), and a pair, Jubilee Cottages, remain (Fig. 31). Their similarity, both are of yellow stock brick with red-brick bands, suggest the same builder. Evidence of the hamlet's agricultural past exists in the form of a wooden workshop and other possible remnants of a 19th century wheelwrights premises adjoining an inter-war house, Silver Hope. A complex of agricultural buildings stands immediately to the north, mainly dating from the mid-to-late 20th century but with one 19th century brick range. A block of mid 20th century council houses, Medway View, stand on the site of a row of modest farm cottages while a small estate of 1970s houses, Anchorage Close, replace a late 19th century terrace, Pleasant Row. The presence of the Medway Airports Club, a facility for microlight aircrafts, reflects the growing role of a leisure-based economy in the peninsula.

Lower Stoke also has a predominantly 20th century character due in part to its post-war residential expansion. Few of the pre-19th century buildings that originally clustered around the road junctions have escaped redevelopment. The oldest domestic survival would appear to be South View (grade II), a weatherboarded timber-framed cottage that

has been dated to either the 16th or 18th century (Fig. 20).³¹ The Mill House, Allhallows Road, is an 18th century building, presumably of brick but now rendered, with 19th and 20th century alterations (Fig. 21). Walnut Tree Farm, Grain Road may retain some parts of an 18th century brick farmhouse, albeit enlarged and extensively reworked.

A number of 19th century houses remain, evidence of an expansion that began in the mid century and led to ribbon development along the High Street. Surviving mid-19th-century properties range from a pair of cottages on Allhallows Road, now a single property known as Sycamore House, to a villa, Melbourne House, High Street. Universal Stores, Grain Road also seems to have originated as a cottage or cottages of this date. Later 19th-century residential developments include a pair of detached villas off Allhallows Road (Myrtle Villa and Moomba) and a terrace of seven brick houses, Avondale Place, which has a datestone of 1892 (Fig. 22). More unusually, Palmers Terrace, Allhallows Road, which dates from c.1900, is built of concrete blocks (Fig. 23).



Figure 20 (top left) South View, Lower Stoke in 2009 (P57330038); Figure 21 (top right) The Mill House, Allhallows Road, Lower Stoke in 2009 (P57330039); Figure 22 (bottom left) Avondale Place, High Street, Lower Stoke in 2009 (P57330040) & Figure 23 (bottom right) Palmers Terrace, Allhallows Road in 2009 (P57330041)

A significant amount of the housing in Lower Stoke was built by the local authority between the 1920s and the 1970s. Initially this took the form of small stretches of semi-detached houses on Allhallows Road and the High Street, of the standard type introduced by the 1918 Tudor Waters Report. The name of one group, Kitchener

Cottages, suggests an early 1920s date. This type continued to be built until 1961, laid out as a cul-de-sac (Marshland View) and a new street (Shepherds Way).²² Thereafter more modern types of council housing were adopted for a large estate built from 1965 onwards to the south of Grain Road.²³ These included two-storey terraces, some with Radburn-style planning (i.e. the separation of the garages and front access from grassed areas), and three-storey blocks of flats; its streets were named after local birds. The privately built 20th-century properties are a typical mixture of bungalows, detached houses and infill developments.

Agricultural activity today is represented by a mid-to-late 20th-century complex of agricultural buildings to the east of Allhallows Road. Only one farmstead has escaped wholesale change, perhaps because it stood apart from Lower Stoke until the mid 20th century. Mackays Court Farm has a 17th century farmhouse, refronted in brick in the 18th century and refurbished in the 1970s (grade II) (Fig. 24), and outbuildings from the mid-to-late 20th century, some still in agricultural use. Other agricultural survivals include a pair of inter-war farm workers houses, Burney Farm Cottages, Cuckolds Green Road.



Figure 24 (top left) Mackays Court farmhouse, Lower Stoke in 2009 (P57330042); Figure 25 (top right) Stoke Community School, Allhallows Road, Lower Stoke in 2009 (P57330043); Figure 26 (bottom left) United Methodist Church, Lower Stoke in 2009 (P57330044) & Figure 27 (bottom right) Nags Head public house, and its stable block, in 2009 (P57330045)

Lower Stoke's rise to social and commercial importance in the 19th century is also represented in its building stock. The earliest part of Stoke Community School, Allhallows Road, dates from 1876, as commemorated by a stone plaque (Fig. 25). It was one of

two schools built by the local education board in the wake of the 1870 Education Act.³⁴ The simply detailed brick ranges, intended to serve the children of Stoke and Allhallows, was extended in the 1960s. It remains the only Victorian school building still in use on the peninsula. The United Methodist Church, a modest brick chapel with minimal stone decoration, was built in 1889 as the Bible Christian Chapel (Fig. 26). It bears testimony to a tradition of non-conformity in the settlement, which included two earlier chapels on the High Street, both now gone. Post-war social facilities include a plain brick village hall.

There are also a number of shops and other businesses in the centre of the settlement. These include a public house, the Nags Heads, an early-to-mid 19th century building with a detached stable block (Fig. 27). The Ship Inn, which stood on the north side of Grain Road, was a mid-20th century building that was demolished in 2010. Both of these buildings replaced earlier pubs, probably in existence by the 17th century if not earlier. The settlement has a garage, an increasingly rare survival on the peninsula, established in the mid-20th century. Of the 9 shops in existence by 1920, few remain. Redevelopment at the north end of the High Street in the late-20th century has even removed the former shop buildings, a picturesque ensemble of mainly adapted houses that included 1-2 High Street, whose front was adorned by a two-storey verandah.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST AND SIGNIFICANCE

The loss of historic buildings in Stoke parish has been considerable. The manorial sites have all been redeveloped and seemingly only one example of a weatherboarded, timber-framed house has survived (South View). Of the dozen or so farmsteads in use at the turn of the 20th century, only two retain any significant amount of historic fabric: Court Lodge Farm (Figs 14 & 28) and Mackays Court Farm. The former is an example of an apparent campaign of farmhouse building in the late-18th century on the Hoo peninsula (other possible examples in the parish such as Malmaynes Hall and Tudor Farm have been rebuilt). Mackays Court farmhouse is earlier, albeit with an 18th century front, and therefore a significant survival. The number of surviving pre-20th ancillary farm buildings is also small.



Figure 28 Court Lodge Farm barn in 2009 (P57330046)

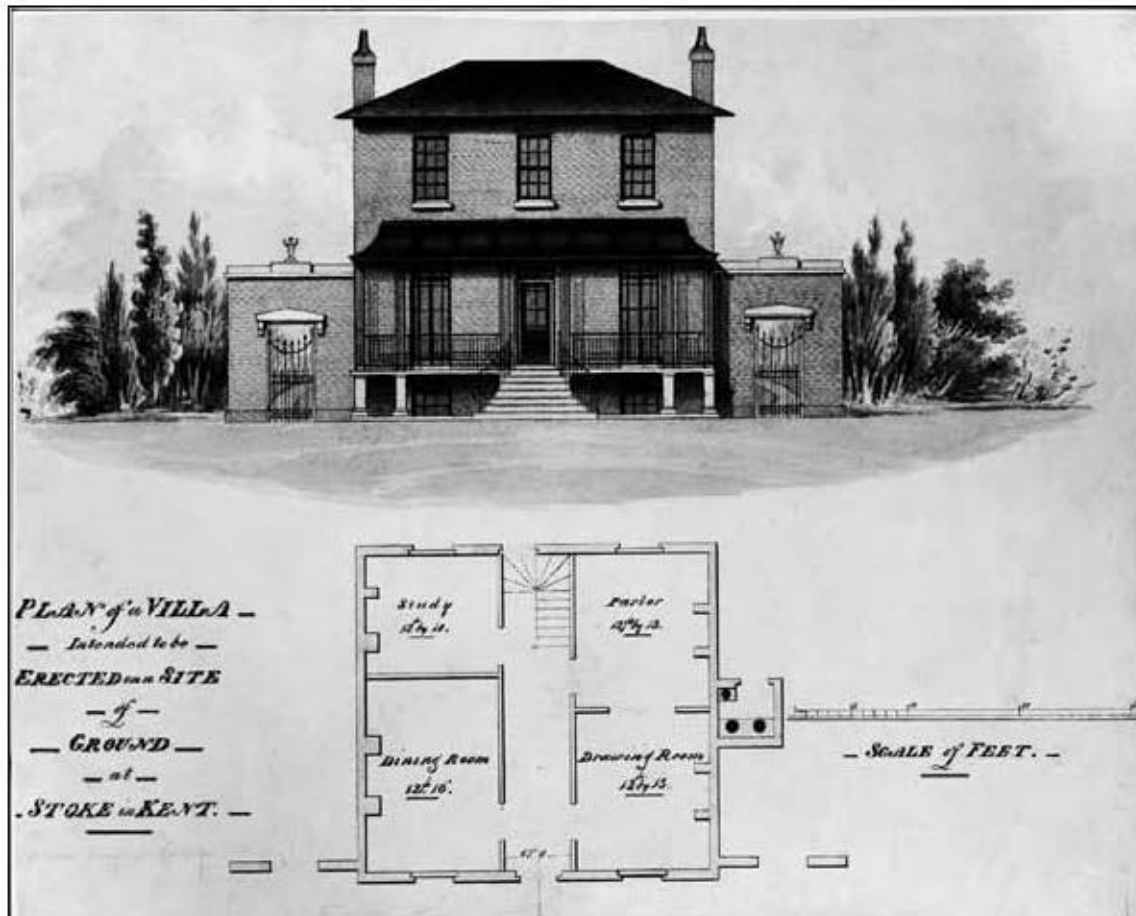


Figure 29 Plan of a villa intended to be erected on a site of ground at Stoke in Kent. (B88/4147 reproduced by permission of English Heritage/Credit: William Drummond)

Additions to the settlements in the 19th century include at least two housing types of interest. The first is the middle-class detached villa, of which two examples survive in Middle and Lower Stoke, as well as drawings for another, no longer extant if ever built (Fig. 29).²⁵ Their construction suggests a diversifying community in the parish in this period, with a growing professional class that included clay merchants and shopkeepers.²⁶

The second type is the working-class terrace, of which examples survive in all of the settlements of the parish although often considerably altered. Such modest brick terraces were being built from at least the 1880s until the 1900s (Fig. 30). Census records indicate that in 1901 the majority of the occupants were clay diggers and their families, the second largest group being agricultural workers and thereafter a mixture of trades including railway workers and oyster fishermen. Before their construction the agricultural labourers would have lived in extremely modest accommodation, of which no examples have survived. But it was the rapid industrialisation of the Medway, and most particularly the demands of the cement industry, that is more likely to have encouraged construction of the terraces.



Figure 30 Jubilee Cottages, Middle Stoke in 2009
(P57330047)

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NOTES

- ¹ Matthews, 5.
- ² Matthews, 148.
- ³ MacDougall 20.
- ⁴ Charters of Christ Church Canterbury S1211 indexed at <http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/> accessed on 13/09/2010.
- ⁵ Hasted 1798, 34-45.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Glover, Judith 1976 *The Placenames of Kent* BT Batsford.
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- ⁹ Arnold, 134.
- ¹⁰ MacDougall, 200.
- ¹¹ Matthews, 150.
- ¹² MacDougall, 15.
- ¹³ Matthews, 149.
- ¹⁴ Medway Archives, Stoke ephemera file, newspaper cutting, 'The muddies dig in – for just 8d a ton', 11th September 1980.
- ¹⁵ Advert *The Times* 30th March 1815, 2.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Arnold, 137.
- ¹⁸ Finch, William Coles 1933 *Watermills & Windmills: a historical survey of their rise, decline and fall as portrayed by those of Kent* Sheerness: Arthur Cassell. 285.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ 1881 Census accessed at <http://www.findmypast.co.uk> 29/09/2010; Finch, 285.
- ²¹ MacDougall, 134.
- ²² It was around 500 in the mid 19th century, around 700 in 1900 and again 500 in the mid 20th century. MacDougall, appendix 1.
- ²³ Hann, 160.
- ²⁴ Medway Archives, Stoke ephemera files, cutting from the *Medway News* 17th May 1996.
- ²⁵ http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/s/stoke_junction_halt/index.shtml accessed on 15/9/2010.
- ²⁶ 'A Map of the Hundreds of Hoo and of Chatham and Gillingham' in Hasted, 1798.
- ²⁷ Gatacre, Kate 'Wildfowling on the Medway in Kent' *Shooting Times* 6th October 2007.
- ²⁸ Medway Archives, Stoke ephemera files, letter from Gavin Pearson, The Hoverclub of Great Britain Ltd, South Eastern Branch, dated 5th January 1997; MacDougall, 166.
- ²⁹ Matthews, 232.
- ³⁰ The building isn't present on the 1864 OS map.
- ³¹ The earlier date is given in MacDougall 200-2, the later in the listing description.
- ³² Medway Archives online catalogue, index for Strood Rural District Council housing contracts accessed at <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk/> on the 15/9/2010.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ MacDougall, 169.
- ³⁵ A photograph of the undated elevation and plan exists in the National Monuments Record.
- ³⁶ In the 1901 census Myrtle Villa in Lower Stoke was occupied by a clay merchant, Melbourne House was a shop and dwelling and Coningsby Villa was boarding house.



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