

SEDLSCOMBE'S BUILDINGS



Sedlescombe contains the whole palette of vernacular materials which predominate in the western half of the district.

(Sedlescombe Conservation Area Appraisal 2004.)

1908



Taken in 1908, this winter scene of Sedlescombe shows a compact village either side of the Green with cows grazing on it, smoke coming from lots of chimneys and washing hanging on lines. There is a complete lack of motor vehicles. Brede Lane is undeveloped and the houses that we can see in the Village have stood there together for centuries.

SEDLSCOMBE VILLAGE

2009



Sedlescombe Village
viewed from Chapel Hill



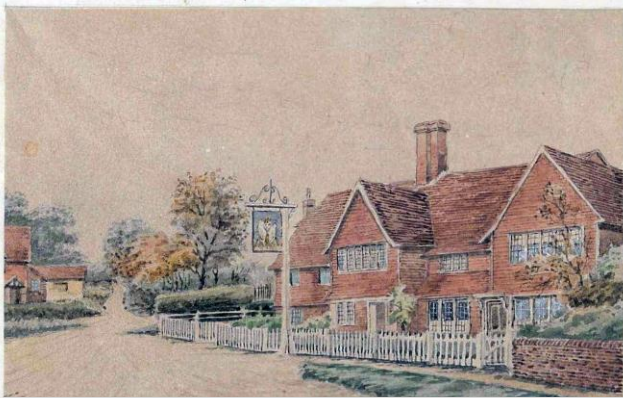
This unusual but rather wonderful summer view from and of the roofs of houses along the east side of The Green was taken by Roy Chapman when he was “up on the roof” carrying out some repairs in 2011.



Viewed from above in summer, Sedlescombe Village looks pleasantly “wooded”. Central is the elongated but narrow Village Green running from north to south, petering out at the southern end. Trees abound with plenty of grassy areas in between the old properties. Hundreds of years ago, Battle Abbey established dwelling plots on the east side of the Green and, today, Sedlescombe has one of the highest proportions of surviving medieval houses in the Rother District. There are 57 buildings in the parish of Sedlescombe included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and nearly half of them are in the historic core of the Village clustered around the Village Green.

Until the 1970s, “Sedlescombe” was the area that had grown up over centuries around the Parish Church, itself dating to the 13th century surrounded by splendid properties such as Great Sanders, Hurst House, Durhamford, Spilsteds, and Castlemans but then, the Parish Council decided that the area around the Green which had been known of and shown as on maps as “Sedlescombe Street” should in future be known as “Sedlescombe”. Ordnance Survey was asked to make the necessary changes to their maps.

Just one building is listed as a Grade 1 building – 1-5 Manor Cottages in The Street. Some parts of Manor Cottages date back to the 15th century, and it is said that it is one of the finest timber-framed buildings in Sussex. The listed remaining properties are Grade II, some listed for “Group Value”.



Queen's Head



Asselton House (Baths)



Old Thatch

All these properties have their origins in the 15th century, are timber-framed and originally had thatched roofs. They have all been radically changed over the centuries and their links to the 15th century often hidden inside.



Holmes House



Barrack Cottage



Tanyard House



15th century Grade II listed Sedlescombe properties around the Village Green

**ABOUT 1890 BEFORE LINTON HOUSE WAS
BUILT ONTO FRONT OF SACKVILLE COTTAGES**

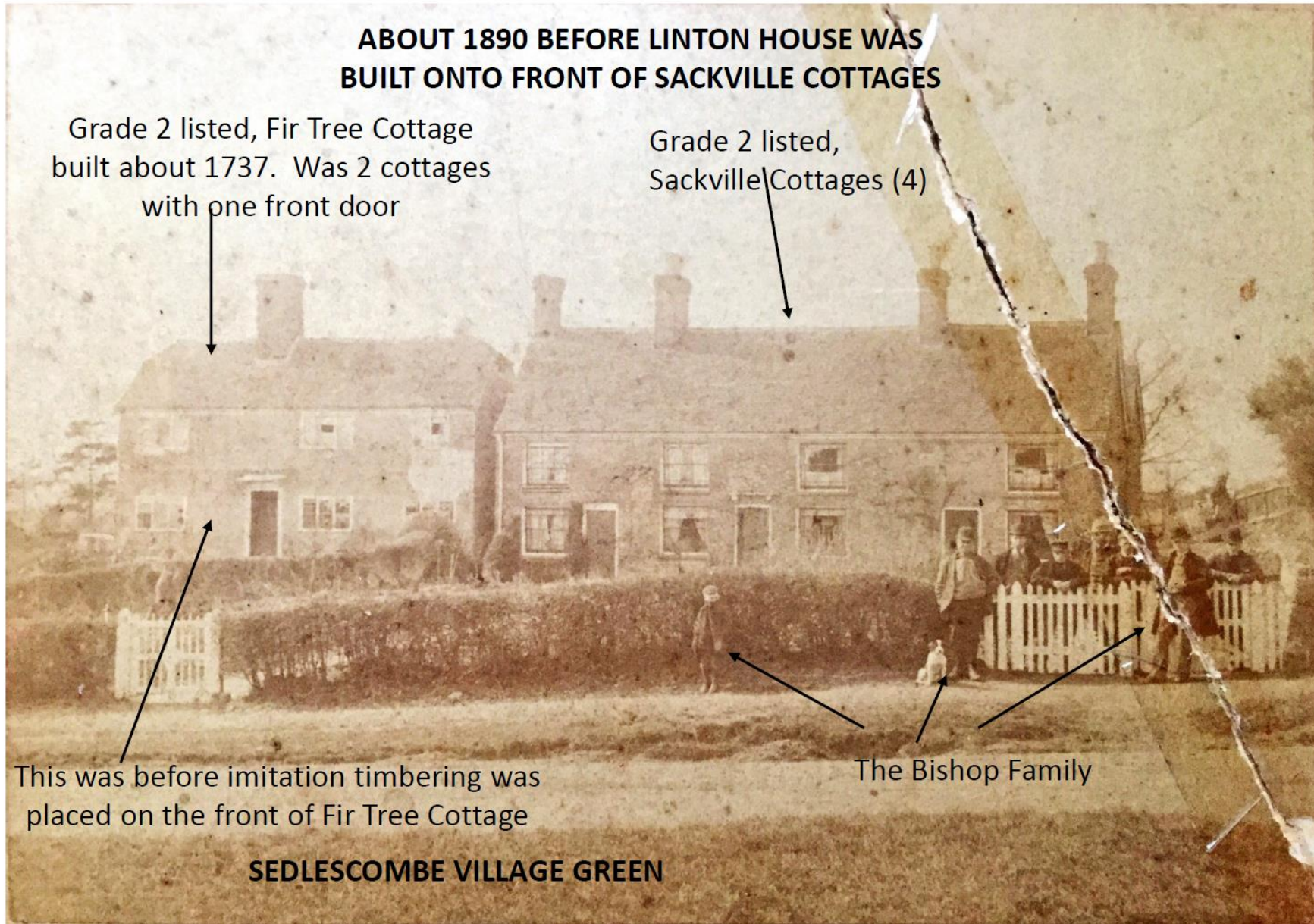
Grade 2 listed, Fir Tree Cottage
built about 1737. Was 2 cottages
with one front door

Grade 2 listed,
Sackville Cottages (4)

This was before imitation timbering was
placed on the front of Fir Tree Cottage

The Bishop Family

SEDLSCOMBE VILLAGE GREEN



Between 1500 and 1800, when iron was being produced at Brede Furnace, more houses were built around The Green, some by the Ironmasters. Those on the eastern side (E) with small areas of land in the front and long strips of land at the rear while those on the other side (W) were set further back with larger areas of land in front.

- 16C Harriet House (E)
- 16C Durud (W)
- 17C Brickwall
- 17C Tithe Barn (E)
- 18C Pump House Cottages – at first one building (E)
- 18C Forge House (E)
- 18C Bulmer House –
previously Sellens & Cramp/Farthing Cottage etc. (E)
- 18C Riverbridge Cottages –
at first one building used as a “poorhouse” (E)
- 18C Homestall (W)
- 18C Fir Tree Cottage (W)
- 18C Sackville Cottages (W)
- 18C The Cottage (W)
- 18C Sherrald (W)



All listed buildings are protected from any alterations both inside and outside which affect their character. Protection extends to any wall or fence within the curtilage. The area around The Green is also a designated **CONSERVATION AREA**.

CHANGES TO THE OLD HOUSES. As is not surprising after more than 600 years, there have been many changes to houses built over the centuries. Sometimes it is worth looking around the back of the property to discover some of the old features.



This photo was taken in 1986 at the rear of 15th century Asselton House, one of the oldest properties still standing in Sedlescombe or its surrounds. It shows the old “catslide roof” that cannot be seen from the front of the property.

Chatting in the back garden are two local historians. Beryl Lucey who owned the house and wrote local history books and Frank Johnson who was at the time making a huge collection of photographic slides of all the old properties in Sedlescombe. Many of Frank’s photos were used in the 2020 Virtual Exhibition.



Decorative
mock
timbering on
Victorian
extensions to
15C Asselton

FASHIONABLE VICTORIAN GABLE ENDS

Probably the work of local
builder John CATT



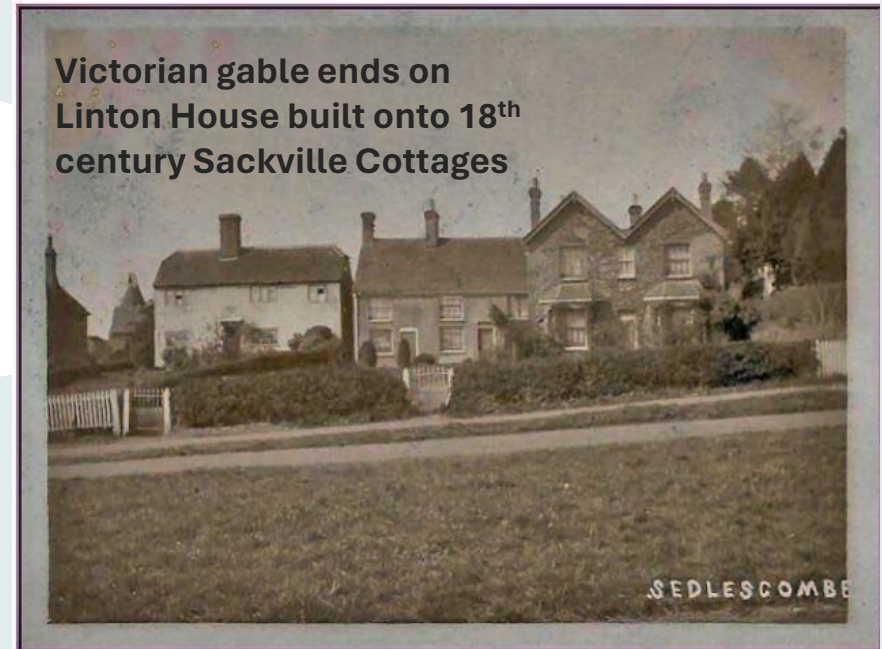
Stone on bridge
over River Brede
at south of
Sedlescombe
Village



Decorative
bargeboards on
Victorian shop built
onto 16C Durud



Victorian gable ends on
Claytons built in 1900



Victorian gable ends on
Linton House built onto 18th
century Sackville Cottages

**IN THE COUNTRYSIDE IN THE RURAL PARTS
OF SEDLESCOMBE OLD PROPERTIES STILL
HAVE LINKS TO THE 14TH/15TH CENTURIES**



The core of Jacobs Farmhouse in Powdermill Lane contains remains of a mid C14 timber framed open hall, although the building has been much altered through the centuries



Spilstead Farm in Stream Lane is late 15th century, although it has been much altered through the centuries



15th century Queen's Head

Although originally a village of timber framed buildings with daub infill panels and thatch covered roofs, the advent of handmade bricks and tiles allowed many alterations to the old properties. In the early 1600s, chimneys were installed in the houses where none had been before and, when brickworks sprung up at either end of the Village (in New England Lane and in Hurst Lane), ground floor red brick with first floor walls covered with clay tiles were often added. These changes can be clearly seen in Sedlescombe's properties around the Green, such as The Queen's Head and also Footland Farm in the Swailes Green area of the parish and Spilstead Farm cottages in Stream Lane which were known as "Gunns" and the building was "a poorhouse".



17th century or earlier Footland Farmhouse



15th century Spilsted Farm Cottages

ONLY 1 THATCHED PROPERTY LEFT



Auction details of village property in 1924, state that this pair of plaster and thatch cottages were let on weekly tenancies of 3 shillings and 2 shillings and 6 pence a week.



The firemen were forced to pull off the thatched roof in order to save the rest of the building.

The owner and her daughter had arrived back from a shopping trip one evening only to see flames licking around the chimney. Her husband was in the house but as the fire had been in the roof, no smoke alarms had gone off. The fire could have been burning for ages.

Only one building, 15C Old Thatch gives a hint of what the street must have looked like before the “modernisation” of the 17th and 18th centuries took place. Tragically this building suffered serious fire damage in 2003 losing all of its roof. But the top of the building including its roof has been rebuilt using dated green oak and has been rethatched so that its contribution to the character of the village can continue.





A good example of the brick and tile style – **bricks at the bottom and tile hung above - known as the “Sussex Vernacular”**, Holmes House, here when it was a restaurant in 1999. This timber frame building was originally built in the 1400s as an adjunct to the hall house Asselton next door but had turned to a residential property by 1600.

From at least the early 1800s this was a butcher’s shop and slaughter yard. When Frank and Margaret Fleischer bought the property in the 1970s, it became a popular and well-known restaurant. Inside, the heavy timbers can still be clearly seen in this photo taken at the time.





There is nothing of the Sussex Vernacular at the Parish Church of St John the Baptist on the top of Church Hill, but there are still links to the 14th century in the north aisle. The tower is early 15th century. The remainder of the Church was restored in 1867 and is now listed as a Grade II* building.



Eric Fellows, Captain of the Tower, 1990

Two 17th century Sedlescombe barns are listed. Both have been sympathetically converted to residential use.



Luffs Farm Barn, first in 1989 before conversion,
and then in 2023 when advertised for sale



Barnyard, near to The Manor,
Sedlescombe during conversion
to residential in 1988



A few Sedlescombe properties have retained some of their external timbering



None more so than early 16th century Durhamford, Stream Lane, here known as Stream House, dated 1913



Lee Bank, Poppinghole Lane, partly 16th century, photographed in 1989



17th century or earlier Chestnut Tree Cottage in The Street photographed in 1985



17th century or earlier Jacob's Cottage, Powdermill Lane, photographed in 1985



18th century Swailes Green Farmhouse, 2009



And then one more picture taken around 1920 of the 15th century Manor Cottages

**KNOWN AS THE TITHE BARN FOR MANY YEARS, THIS 17TH CENTURY BUILDING IS NOW KNOWN AS
“KESTER HOUSE”**



1951

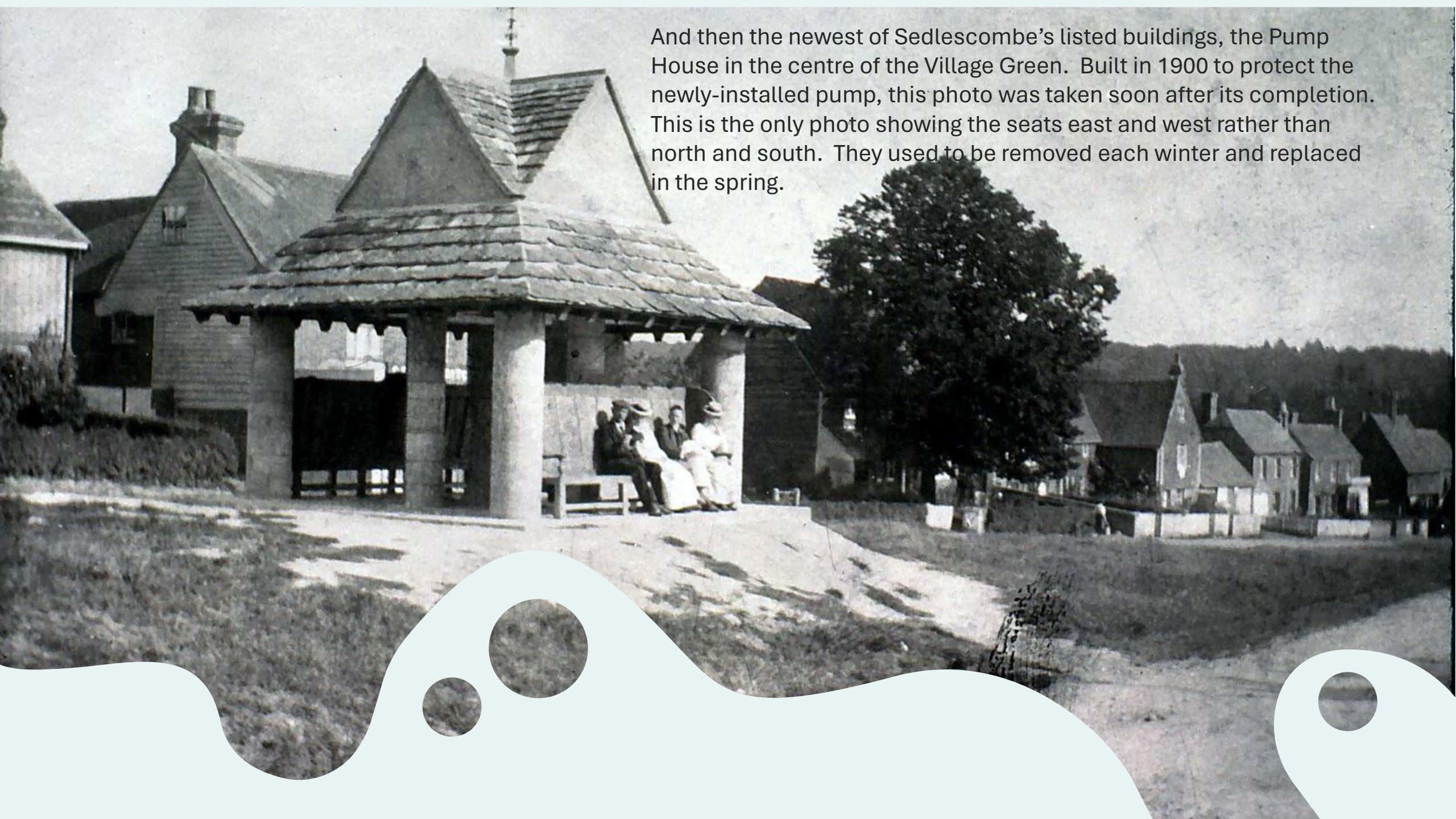


1985

It is thought that the main part of the current building was reconstructed in 1673, as inscribed on the substantial beam across the entrance to the sitting room from the front door. In 1906, the Barn became a memorial art gallery displaying the works of local artist Hercules Brabazon Brabazon.

From just before World War II to the 1960s, a tea shop was operated that later turned into a well-respected local restaurant until the late 1980s when it became an antique shop and then an award-winning Bed and Breakfast location after from 2011. It has now returned to a residential home.

And then the newest of Sedlescombe's listed buildings, the Pump House in the centre of the Village Green. Built in 1900 to protect the newly-installed pump, this photo was taken soon after its completion. This is the only photo showing the seats east and west rather than north and south. They used to be removed each winter and replaced in the spring.





This April unexpectedly snowy 2008 photograph shows the Village's pleasant setting

THE END

Photographs from Sedlescombe Archives
and by Frank Johnson, Roy Chapman and
Colin Raymond.

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