H.G. Wells. Mathilde Meyer, 1885–1958) Swiss Governess
from 1908 to Gyp & Frank.
(1901) (1903)

Spade House.

Seen from the drive, it seemed to me a quaint looking place
with its rough cast walls, its lattice windows & deep sloping roofs.

'Homelike and unpretentious atmosphere'
Schoolroom (no desks) a bright room, facing south
gay chintzes, wide windows overlooking garden & sea.
broad stone steps leading to a sunken lawn —
'Yes' we had the house built for us' said Mrs Wells ...
It was finished 8 years ago. My husband's health had
not been good. He needed plenty of fresh air which he
obtained up here.
I was told many years later that there had been a
row between Wells & Mr Voysey the architect, concerning
the door handles of Spade House, when it was nearing
completion. Apparently the door handles were too small and
had been fixed too high up.
How the devil do you expect my young children
to open doors with handles as high up as those?
Shouted an irate Mr. Wells, whereupon the architect, no
less irate, retorted 'Oh where do you expect me to
put them — on the floor!

Friendly with the Conrads at Pent Farm
George Gissing a visitor. (till d. 1903)

Voysey the architect wanted to put a large heart-shaped letter
plate on the front door — I protested at carrying my heart
so conspicuously outside and was compromised on a spade

CHRONOLOGY

1866	Born 21 September, Bromley, Kent. His mother a lady's maid, later a housekeeper; his father a gardener, later a cricketer and shopkeeper
1874–9	Morley's Commercial Academy, Bromley
1880	Apprenticed to Rodgers and Denyer, drapers, Windsor
1881	With Samuel Cowap, chemist, Midhurst, Sussex (one month); Hyde's Drapery Emporium, Southsea (two years' apprenticeship)
1883–4	Midhurst Grammar School (teaching scholar)
1884	The Normal School (later Royal College) of Science, South Kensington
1886	Matriculated, London University
1887	Taught at the Holt Academy, Wrexham, North Wales
1889	Henley House School, Kilburn, London
1890–3	University Correspondence College (tutor)
1890	B.Sc. London University (First-Class in zoology, Second in geology)
1891	Married his cousin Isabel Mary Wells. "The Rediscovery of the Unique" in *Fortnightly Review*
1893	Left his wife for Amy Catherine Robbins, one of his students. *Textbook of Biology. Honours Physiography* (with R. A. Gregory)
1895	Divorced. Married Amy Catherine Robbins. Published *Select Conversations With an Uncle*, *The Time Machine*, *The Stolen Bacillus*, *The Wonderful Visit*

NOTE: This chronology has been compiled by the publishers for the convenience of readers.

1896	"Human Evolution: An Artificial Process" (*Fortnightly Review*), *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *The Wheels of Chance*
1897	"Morals and Civilisation" (*Fortnightly Review*), *The Plattner Story*, *The Invisible Man*, *Certain Personal Matters*, *Thirty Strange Stories*, *The Star*
1898	*The War of the Worlds*
1899–1900	Spade House built at Sandgate, Kent; architect C.F.A. Voysey. *When the Sleeper Wakes*, *Tales of Space and Time*
1900	*Love and Mr. Lewisham*
1901	George Philip Wells born. *The First Men in the Moon*, *Anticipations*, *A Dream of Armageddon*
1902	*The Discovery of the Future* (Royal Institution lecture), *The Sea Lady*
1903	Frank Richard Wells born. Joined the Fabian Society. *Mankind in the Making*, *The Food of the Gods. Twelve Stories and a Dream*, "The Land Ironclads" (tank story, *Strand Magazine*)
1904	*The Food of the Gods*
1905	*Kipps: The Story of a Simple Soul*, *A Modern Utopia*
1906	First visit to America. *In the Days of the Comet*, *Faults of the Fabian*, *The Future in America*, *Socialism and the Family*
1907	*This Misery of Boots* (Fabian Society), *The So-Called Science of Sociology*
1908	Resigned from the Fabian Society. *First and Last Things*, *New Worlds for Old*, *The War in the Air*
1909	Moved to London from Sandgate. *Tono-Bungay*, *Ann Veronica: A Modern Love Story*
1910	*The History of Mr. Polly*
1911	*The New Machiavelli*, *The Country of the Blind and Other Stories*, *Floor Games* (for children)
1912	Moved to Easton Glebe, Essex, but also kept a

H. G. Wells in Love
edited by G. P. Wells. 1984

National Portrait Gallery
H.G. Wells: Artist Claud Lovat Fraser
NPG. 5071 1890-1921

CRAFTY ART

This simple Voysey house radiates star quality, says **Marcus Binney**

HOLLY MOUNT is as perfect and complete an example of a small Charles Voysey house as one can hope to find, little altered since it was built. Even the tall oak garden gate in its freestanding frame remains — in a fragile state admittedly. The slate paving stones are exactly as Voysey laid them, set three wide on the main garden path leading from the road. Over the door is the exquisitely lettered slate name plaque, carved with sprigs of ivy and the date of completion.

Voysey liked to give his houses a thick, enduring coat of harling to ensure that they remained cosy and warm in all weathers. Colour comes from the warm golden stone with which he dressed the windows. It is smooth and without blemishes or mouldings of any kind. The drip courses above the windows, preventing the stone from staining, are formed of level rows of brick tiles with a little skirt of render above to throw off the rain.

The front door is a delight — a large 16-pane porthole under its own hooped drip mould with the original tiny letter-box. A Voysey signature is the use of green-tinged Westmorland roof slates, and here they are carefully graded, becoming gradually larger as they descend the roof with a band of narrower slates just before the characteristic splay at the bottom. On the garden side — in another delightful quirk — the rainwater gutter is carried across in front of the dormer windows supported on leggy iron brackets, like a miniature canal on an aqueduct.

The house was built near Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, in 1907 for C. T. Burke and has since had only four owners. It is now on the market after 27 years at £1.5 million.

Voysey was a rebel with a cause. He loved the simple domesticity of the English cottage. He hated the rattle of sash windows and the accompanying draughts. Here virtually every window is a Voysey original — sturdily formed in lead with a long latch that can be fixed in three positions — closed, wide open and a little less than halfway. Voysey's bottle-green tiles survive on every inner sill. Equally handsome are the blue-grey slate floors: dark but with a sheen that reflects the light almost like a mirror.

All the main rooms retain Voysey fireplaces with arches of brick tiles. In the kitchen is a built-in Welsh dresser with tiny handles in the form of perfectly shaped dewdrops.

In an article in *The English Home* in 1910 Voysey set out his views: "We must shake off the fashionable convention of obedience to style." In place he set quality of "repose, cheerfulness, simplicity, breadth, warmth . . . harmony with surroundings, absence of dark passages or places, evenness of temperature". Warm houses, he said, called for solid floors, avoiding the presence of damp, cold air beneath. Fireplaces must be fed with air through small flues direct from outside to avoid draughts under doors.

Voysey rooms have no cornices and only minimal skirtings. He abhorred high ceilings: excessive height made rooms gloomy and narrower. "A predominance of horizontalism in any room is conducive to repose."

Holly Mount has a typical Voysey stair with tall, white-painted banisters creating an effect like harp strings. On the first-floor landing the corner or newel posts are continued up as columns with his typical flattened capitals at the top. Throughout, the doors have latches and long blacksmith hinges running like arrows across the door. Another feature is the distinctive black cast-iron fireplaces, tall and narrow with tiny coal grates and inbuilt shelves. In every room the ornamental ventilation grilles survive. In some rooms are reproductions of Voysey wallpapers.

The dresser has handles shaped like dewdrops

The one major alteration is that two extra bedrooms (making six in all) have been created in the attic with roof lights that sit awkwardly above Voysey's dormers. But the views over the garden to the country beyond are delightful. "We have covenants ensuring nothing can ever be built here," says the present owner. Holly Mount is set on quite a busy road, but it is shielded by high hedges and is in a residential area that has kept its tranquil and leafy sense of seclusion.

☐ *Knight Frank 01494 675368, £1.5 million*

MARTIN CHARLES

SANDGATE

WELLS

Conrad to Cora Crane

Pent Farm / Stanford / near Hythe / 4th Dec 1898

William Hyde, black & white artist made illustrations for my book on the Cinque Ports (Ford Madox Ford).

Nightfall from the Sword Ford Madox Ford. George Allen & Unwin 1938
Chapter. H.G. Wells. p. 154.

... I remember now the sunlight over Sandgate and the sea, and Mr. Wells, and I descending the steep brae that goes down from the battlements of Shorncliffe Camp to the hollow High Street, where outer row of houses was so close to the sea that in great westerly gales the Indiamen going ashore used to poke their bowsprits through the windows. I have seen them do it. For that was the landscape at once of my childhood's school and of Mr. Wells's Sea Lady. At the time of which I am thinking he had taken a furnished house on the beach whilst he waited for Voysey to build him on the chalk slopes above what Mr. James later called his lordly treasure house. And in the days of which I am talking the rest of the personages in (with) my young drama — Conrad, James, Crane, Hudson — dwelled in a hazy circle at distances of from

five to thirty-odd miles round Spade House. So it was not to be wondered at if we lived rather in each other's pockets and interested ourselves rather in each others affairs.

Walks with Wells over Chalk Downs — larks singing over Caesar's Camp

Galsworthy trotted beside dog-cart — 2 miles from Sandling to Pent

of symmetry in this block, St George's House was repeated and astylar wings added by T. S. Darbyshire.

Verity was awarded the London Architecture Medal in 1924 for his Shepherds Bush Pavilion, W12, an early 'super-cinema'. He also did the Plaza Cinema, Lower Regent Street, SW1, since remodelled by his successors. Frank Verity was joined in partnership by Samuel Beverley. They became European advisers to the Paramount Cinematograph Company, an appointment which resulted in their doing the Paramount cinema theatres in Tottenham Court Road, W1, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne and Glasgow, and in Paris.

The practice continues as Verity and Beverley, under the direction of Beverley's son-in-law, Sir Anthony Denny, Bt., and his partner D. A. Butcher.

AJ, 7.1.25, pp. 36–59: 'The work of Frank T. Verity, by A. Trystan Edwards

Daily Telegraph, 17.6.65.

RIBAJ, Feb., 1963, p. 88.

Obit. RIBAJ, 11.9.37 p. 1008, 16.10, p. 1071 *Bldr*, 20.8.37, p. 312.

365

VOYSEY, Charles Francis Annesley
1857–1941

Charles Voysey was born near Hull, the elder son in a family of eight. His father, Vicar of Healaugh, Yorkshire, was expelled from the Church of England for his radical views and founded the Theistic Church, Swallow Street, W1. When Voysey was fourteen, his family settled near Dulwich School where it was intended the boys should be educated, but he failed to settle down at school and had a private tutor. The resulting close association with his father laid the foundation of many of his later views.

In 1874 the young Voysey was articled to the church architect J. P. Seddon, worked for him for a year as assistant and in 1879 was assistant to Henry Saxon Snell. In 1880 he joined the office of George Devey, an architect who had managed to recapture some of the lost, simpler elements of country buildings in his houses, cottages and gardens. One of Voysey's early opportunities to extend his experience in this field came when Devey asked him to superintend the building of some cottages in Northamptonshire, acting as agent, engaging workmen and buying materials.

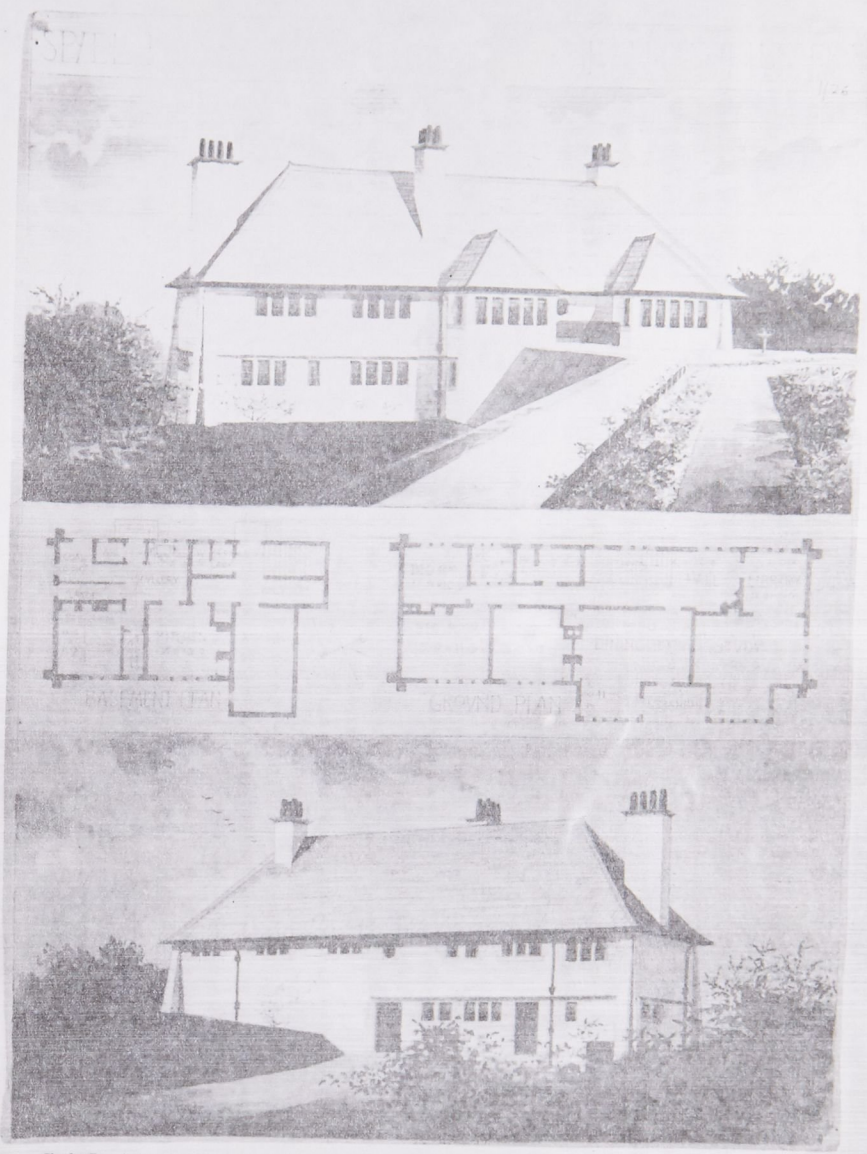
Voysey had met Ruskin and was an admirer of Pugin. From contemporaries like A. H. Mackmurdo he learned to give the closest attention to the smallest details of domestic architecture and furniture design. Although not a rugged individualist, Voysey was a meticulous one. He is quoted as saying: 'To be true to your material, true to your conditions, true to your highest instincts, is the surest and only way to true art'. Faithful to the Gothic ideal, Voysey disapproved of Shaw's defection to the Renaissance and its later continuation by Lutyens. Following the traditional use of building materials, but detaching himself from the traditional forms in which they were used, Voysey designed from first principles, and fitness for purpose was his watchword.

Voysey began practice on his own account in 1882 in Broadway Chambers, Westminster, SW1, and started with small jobs and surveys.

When Voysey married schoolteacher Mary Maria Evans in 1885 he gave up his office in Westminster and practised from his home, first at Bedford Park, W4, then at Streatham Hill, SW2, and later at 11 Melina Place and 6 Carlton Hill, St John's Wood, NW8. Although the Voyseys did not manage to build their own house for a time, the published designs were seen by Sir Michael Lakin who asked Voysey to design his house, The Cottage, at Bishops Itchington, Warwickshire. The Voyseys eventually built The Orchard, Chorley Wood, Hertfordshire, for themselves. Voysey took an office at 23 York Place, Baker Street, W1, which he occupied until 1913 when it was demolished.

Simplicity was characteristic of Voysey's houses with their long ranges of windows with square (not moulded) mullions and leaded lights, with their high-waisted, ledged-and-braced doors with Norfolk latches and cross-garnet hinges. Inside were simple fireplaces with low, log-burning andirons or coal-saving grates surrounded by glazed, oblong tiles *set vertically*. The staircase balustrades were simple slats, often reaching to the ceiling and forming a screen to the staircase. Easy to live in, his houses were a welcome antidote to the over-ornamented houses of the period which, despite their architects' search for simplicity, were usually over-furnished by their owners. This would probably have been the fate of Voysey's houses too, had he not been able to persuade his clients to furnish to his designs. Similar to that designed by George Walton, Voysey's furniture avoids the extremes of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's.

Even before his houses had become known and in demand, Voysey had found an outlet for his talent for designing from first principles. Mackmurdo had helped him to master the technique of designing wallpapers and fabrics and he did designs for Jeffrey & Co., the Essex Wallpaper Co., Arthur Sanderson & Sons, the Anaglypta Co. and Lincrusta Walton. Inspired, perhaps, by his furniture were the cabinets for the Gramophone Company whose famous 'His Master's Voice' trademark some say was suggested by Voysey. Photographs of the interiors of the offices of the Essex and Suffolk Equitable Insurance Co.'s office, 54–60 Old Broad Street, EC2 (1906, 1907 and 1910) show Voysey's planning and



Charles Francis Annesley Voysey: Spade House, Sandgate, Kent. A watercolour by the architect for a house for H. G. Wells, much altered.

£1-50

AN INTRODUCTION TO SPADE HOUSE

Standing proudly on a hill above Sandgate and the sea, Spade House has an important niche in the historical buildings of the Folkestone area. This attractive building was constructed for one of Britain's most inventive writers, H.G. Wells, who then proceeded to live happily in the house for eight-and-a-half years.

During his time at Spade House, the brilliantly vivid and imaginative mind of 'HG' produced the majority of his most impressive works, aided on his own admission by the sunny confines and health-giving sea air of quiet Sandgate. Spade House became the focus of the Edwardian literary world, and was honoured by the visits of many of the most eminent writers of the day.

After HG had moved on in 1909, Spade House slipped quietly into obscurity and suffered the indignity of a change of name. All of its past glories were seemingly forgotten until Mrs. 'Mimi' May turned it into a vegetarian restaurant and began trading on the house's past history in the mid 1960's. She even produced a nice booklet on Spade house to celebrate HG's birth, resulting in the house becoming headline news once again.

Now Spade House is a nursing home, altered somewhat internally, but nevertheless with the feel that this was, and still is, a notable house. Its association with H.G. Wells has been suitably honoured with plaques (but not honoured enough according to some), and this is how it should be, for Spade House was another brilliant invention of that ever creative and productive mind.

WELCOME TO SPADE HOUSE

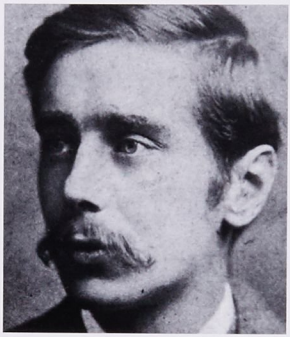
AN INTRODUCTION TO H.G. WELLS

H.G. Wells was a man of extraordinary vision who held highly controversial beliefs. Forefather of modern science fiction, he was also a militant advocate of socialism, a supporter of feminism and the suffragettes and an atheist who believed in the Darwinian theory of evolution. Detractors dubbed him a 'gloomy prophet of his age' and a 'science-worshipping optimist', but to his many supporters he was a 'great awakener of men'.

HG's highly imaginative mind pursued the potential of science and championed the peace and unity of all mankind through social change. Though greatly admired by all sections of society for his brilliance, HG could be quarrelsome and provocative in debate and in his writings, especially for the newspapers. He was severely vilified for practising what he preached on 'free love' and his books were sometimes criticised for leaving the grand ideas contained in them unresolved or insoluble.

Nevertheless, HG is rightly regarded as a great English writer, who despite an amazingly prolific output (on average at least three books per year from 1895 to his death in 1946, as well as numerous articles for pamphlets, journals and newspapers), continually produced work of a consistently high standard.

However, it is HG's early science fiction novels *The War of the Worlds, The Time Machine* and *The Invisible Man,* and, particularly, the warmth of his 'Dickensian' novels written at Spade House *Kipps, Tono-Bungay, Ann Veronica* and *The History of Mr. Polly* which will always stand out as the highlights of his work.



H.G. WELLS AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS WRITING CAREER c.1895

THE EARLY LIFE OF H.G. WELLS 1866-1898

Herbert George Wells was born at 47 High Street, Bromley on 21 September 1866, the third son of Joseph Wells, a shopkeeper who had previously played professional cricket for Kent and been Head Gardener at Penshurst Castle, and Sarah, a ladies maid.

HG's interest in two of the greatest loves of his life, books and women, blossomed when he was just seven years old during a confinement in bed after he had suffered a broken leg and hip. His father brought him stacks of books to read, including one which featured Amazonian women. HG later commented "My first stirrings of desire, were roused by these heroic divinities".

On his recovery, HG was sent to be privately schooled at Bromley Academy, but the lessons were to be abruptly ended just two years later when his father's china shop went bankrupt. Two unhappy periods were then spent as a drapers apprentice (later used as a basis for *Kipps*) and one as a chemists assistant before he became a pupil-teacher at Midhurst Grammar School, Sussex in 1883. In the following year, he won a scholarship to the Normal School of Science (now the Imperial College of Science) in South Kensington, where he became greatly influenced by Thomas Huxley, the eminent humanist and Darwinian. Consequently, HG became very interested in scientific matters and spent a number of years teaching himself all he could about the subject while he obtained a first class honours degree in zoology and a second class degree in geology.

Further periods were spent as a teacher before he founded the *Science Schools Journal* in 1886. The prolific flow of writing for which he was to become renowned was beginning to take shape now and all manner of differing articles flowed to a number of reputable magazines including the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Gentlemen's Magazine*. With an honours degree under his belt, HG obtained employment in a well paid position with the University Correspondence College.

However, HG continued to be dogged with ill-health and, faced with the prospect of permanent sedentary occupation, he began to devote all of his time to writing books and supplying articles for journals. In 1893, his first two books *Text Book of Biology*, in two volumes, and *Honours Physiography*, with R.A. Gregory, were published, and the first ideas for his scientific novels were laid down on paper.

Alas by this time, HG had already loved and lost the first of the many women who were to dominate his life. He had married his attractive and quick-witted cousin Isabel Mary on 31 October 1891, but they soon found they were incompatible and HG sought solace with Amy Catherine Robbins, a student in one of his science classes. As soon as the divorce from Isabel was finalised in early 1895, HG married Catherine, who he renamed 'Jane'.

In fact, 1895 turned out to be the pivotal year in the life of HG, for as well as embarking on a marriage to a woman who would remain a loyal supporter and confidante (despite HG's immorality) for the next 32 years, his writing took off in a big way with the publication of his first two fictional books The Time Machine and The Wonderful Visit. They were received with favourable critical acclaim which propelled them to become best sellers. Over the next four years, the prolific author wrote a further eight books which included the classics The War of the Worlds, The Island of Dr. Moreau, The Invisible Man and When the Sleeper Awakes, and obtained for himself the position as the top writer of his day. Oscar Wilde described him as a "scientific Jules Verne", and indeed, many of HG's visions of the future were prophetic.

With his glowing reputation and new found wealth obtained from the royalties from his books, life became comfortable for HG. However, both he and Jane suffered from frequent bouts of ill-health. During a cycling holiday in Kent in 1898, HG became seriously ill with a kidney infection and on the advice of Dr. Hick in New Romney, who nursed him back to health, he sought a hideaway from London which possessed lots of dry air and sunshine. The Folkestone area was chosen and while the search was on to acquire a suitable property, HG and Jane rented either Beach Cottage (now Granville Cottage) or No. 2 Beach Cottages (no one seems to know for sure), Sandgate, in September 1898, which HG described as "so close to the sea, that in rough weather waves broke over the roof". In March 1899, they moved into the larger premises of nearby Arnold House, Sandgate (now No. 20 Castle Road).

Following a fruitless search for a new property, HG leased a piece of land from the Earl of Radnor in Radnor Cliff Crescent, halfway up the hill between Sandgate and the Folkestone Leas and right beside the Sandgate Hill Lift, with the intention of erecting a new house. He engaged the fashionable architect C.F.A Voysey to design his new home, who drew up five designs in his characteristic "Cotswold Cottage" domestic style.

BEACH COTTAGE (NOW GRANVILLE COTTAGE) IN SEPTEMBER 1997

ARNOLD HOUSE, PICTURED IN SEPTEMBER 1997

THE ARCHITECT OF SPADE HOUSE
C.F.A. VOYSEY 1857-1941

Charles Voysey was born in 1857, the son of a clergyman who left the Anglican Church to found the Theistic Church, whose liberal theology Voysey himself later adhered to, though he declined to follow his father into the church and chose instead a career as an architect.

Voysey came to abhor all unnecessary commercialism and decoration and wore clothes of his own design (mainly blue - his favourite colour) which excluded lapels on coats and buttons on sleeves. His favourite form of relaxation was to smoke a clay pipe and enjoy a glass of sherry.

Although Voysey was a very kindly man, he could be autocratic with his clients and often lost work because of his manner. He certainly fell out with HG a number of times during the construction of Spade House! Voysey himself once said the only satisfactory client was the one who went abroad whilst his house was being built.

All of Voysey's houses had a distinctive 'Voysey look' to them. He designed small, comfortable houses with very broad eaves, sloping buttresses and chimney stacks. The first floor windows were usually close under the eaves, their oblong lead panes proportioned to the window itself. Voysey not only liked to design the house, but virtually everything inside it too, including the furniture, wallpapers, fabrics, door handles and locks (usually in his distinctive heart-shaped design), cutlery and toasting forks.

During the height of his fame from the 1880's to the 1920's, Voysey's work was often derided for its "cheapness", though, in fact, he could be extravagant during the construction of a house and waste a lot of materials. Towards the end of his life, however, he was rightly being heralded as a pioneer of modern architecture (which he somewhat disliked!) and won an Royal Institute Gold Medal.

Though Voysey primarily designed houses, he was also engaged on convalescent homes, a cottage hospital, a factory, office buildings and war memorials. He also enjoyed a spot of writing and was the author of *Reason as a Basis of Art* (1906) and *Individuality* (1915).

A great admirer of Voysey's work was Sir John Betjeman, the 'Peoples Poet Laureate' and that fine observer of everyday life, who featured Voysey's Chorley Wood home in his excellent television documentary on residential development beside the Metropolitan Railway *Metroland*. Once Voysey had finished work on Spade House, he designed and built his Hertfordshire house in a similar style. Betjeman described it as "The parent of thousands of simple English houses - all plain and practical".

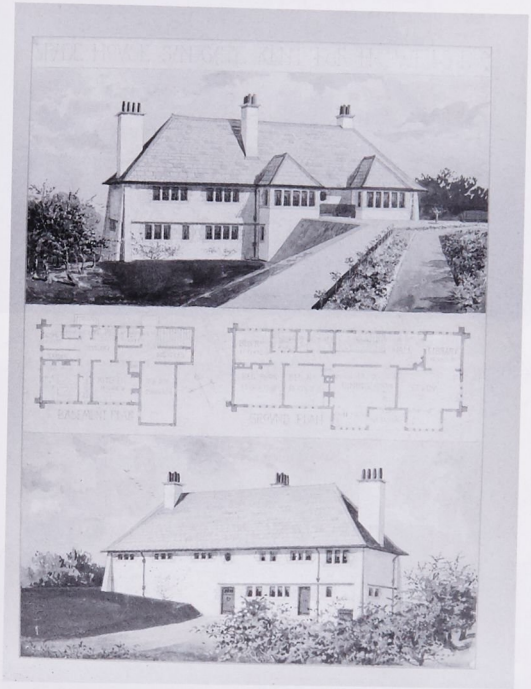
RIBA

Was awarded

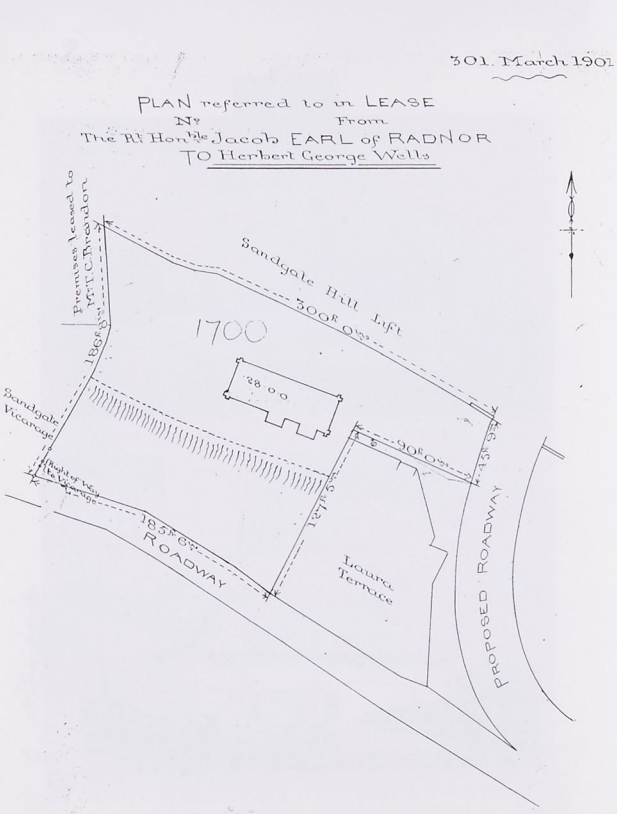
CHARLES VOYSEY - THE ARCHITECT OF SPADE HOUSE

WILLIAM DUNK - THE BUILDER OF SPADE HOUSE

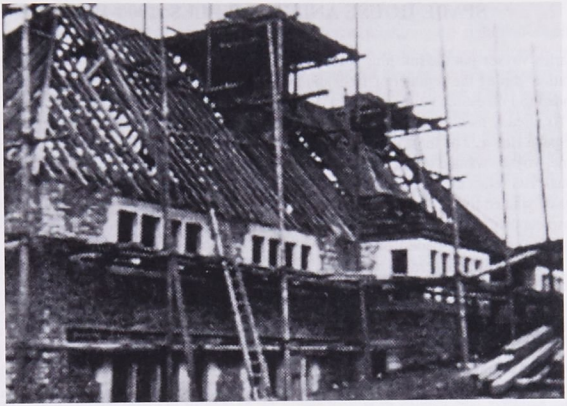
VOYSEY`S SECOND DESIGN FOR SPADE HOUSE WAS IN A "COTSWOLD COTTAGE" STYLE WHICH WAS REJECTED BY HG FOR BEING TOO DECORATIVE. INTERESTINGLY, IT INCLUDED A SEPARATE LIVING ROOM (WHICH WAS NOT BUILT) AND OMITTED A STUDY (WHICH WAS). THE ROOF WAS TOO LOW TO BE USABLE AS LIVING SPACE AND THE FAINT OUTLINE OF AN ALTERNATIVE HIGHER ROOF SECTION (WHICH WAS CONSTRUCTED) CAN JUST BE SEEN



THE APPROVED VOYSEY DESIGN FOR SPADE HOUSE, AS BUILT



THE EXTENT OF LAND LEASED BY H.G. WELLS FOR SPADE HOUSE



SPADE HOUSE UNDER CONSTRUCTION DURING 1900

THE COMPLETED SPADE HOUSE IN 1901

SPADE HOUSE AND H.G. WELLS 1900-1909

Charles Voysey put the finishing touches to the approved design of HG's 'house of recuperation' during the summer of 1899 and the task of constructing the new building was handed to Folkestone builder 'Honest' William Dunk (as HG called him).

As already mentioned, architect and author had many clashes during the construction of Spade House. The most famous row led to the house acquiring its rather unusual name. Voysey wanted to put his distinctive heart trademark all around the house, and though HG reluctantly agreed to heart-shaped door furniture, he put his foot down when Voysey wanted to install a heart-shaped letter box. HG was against "wearing my heart so conspicuously" so he and Voysey compromised on a spade design, thus leading to the house being named Spade House.

A further row, concerning the door handles, occurred as the house was nearing completion. HG thought they were too small and fixed too high, and looking to the future, shouted "How the devil do you expect my young children to open doors with handles as high up as those", whereupon the irate architect retorted "Oh! where do you expect me to put them - on the floor?". HG also insisted there were to be no picture rails or skirting boards, so easing the laborious task of dusting, all bedrooms were to have hot and cold running water, the kitchen must have plenty of light and air and an easily reached coal cellar for the comfort of the kitchen staff.

The majority of the main living rooms were put on one level because HG spent some time confined to a wheelchair recovering from his kidney infection while the house was being constructed and feared the wheelchair could become a permanent feature of his life. However, once installed in Spade House, he was to make a full recovery, no doubt aided by the house being built south-facing to form a perfect suntrap with a magnificent panoramic view of the sea.

Spade House was completed in the late autumn of 1900 at a cost of £1760, and on the 8 December 1900, HG and Jane moved into their brand new home. They found a typical Voysey house with deep sloping buttresses, first floor windows close under the eaves and all the internal effects, such as carpets, furniture and cutlery, all ready installed.

With his health restored and a spacious new house (though not spacious enough, for in 1903 after the birth of his sons, nurseries had to be built into the roof space), HG felt now was the time to start a family. Jane quickly fell pregnant and George Philip ('Gip') was born in 1901. Two years later, another son, Frank Richard, was born. Thereafter, according to HG, sexual activity between himself and Jane ceased and she gave her consent for him to engage in a series of love affairs. But HG had already indulged in a number of romances since the early days of the marriage, including two frenzied liaisons of sexual activity with 17 year old May Nesbit and author Violet Hunt during the period when Spade House being constructed. HG was therefore free to enjoy the best of both

worlds, no doubt to the envy of many a man.

And there would never be a shortage of women for HG during the eight-and-a-half years he resided at Spade House, for as well as being one of the foremost writers of his age, he was a handsome man who looked fairly young for his age. At this period of his life, he was of a medium height and slight build (he would later fill out a bit!) with a large forehead, heavy moustache, bushy eyebrows and small hands and feet. HG claimed his sexual appetite was "less obsessed by these desires and imaginations than the average man" and his affairs were "occasional love reveries, acute storms of desire, which are in the make-up of everyone." Rather cheeky comments considering the frequency of his affairs and relationships with other women while he was married to Jane. It can also be safely assumed his sexual appetite was well on par with the average man!

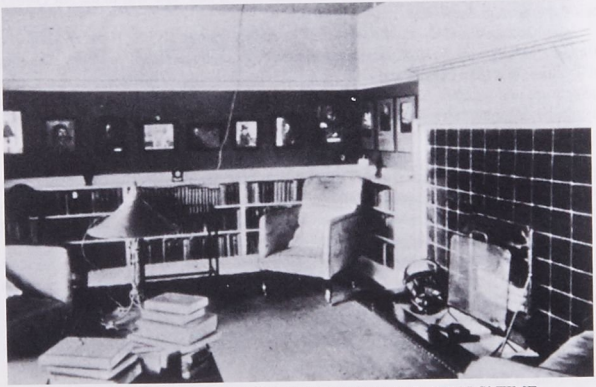
HG was a restless sleeper and with his mind crammed full of ideas for his books, he would often rise from his bed in the middle of the night and go to his study to write. His favourite spot for writing during daylight hours was his hideaway 'house' in the garden, where inspired by the magnificent view across Sandgate to the sea, and to the soothing accompaniment of birdsong and wave upon wave, the words flowed out in a torrent of artistic brilliance. Those delightful 'Dickensian' novels of comic warmth and penetrating insight into the social conditions of Edwardian England Kipps (1905), Tono-Bungay (1909) and The History of Mr. Polly (1910) were all written at Spade House, as was that highly controversial novel in support of the emancipation of women Ann Veronica (1909). HG continued to write his science fiction fantasies at Spade House too: The First Men in the Moon (1901), The Food of the Gods (1904) and The War in the Air (1908) being the most praiseworthy.

Jane had typed and checked many of HG's early manuscripts, but between 1903 and 1909, local lady Mrs. Edith Clough was sometimes employed for this purpose. She found HG "aloof, less than cordial and critical, and his handwriting so microscopic some mistakes were unavoidable, but he became rather cross and surly about them". On the other hand, she described Mrs. Wells as a "delightful and charming personality and extremely kind".

However, it was not always 'all work and no play'. HG liked nothing better than to discuss, spar and argue with many of his fellow writers who came to visit him at Spade House. George Bernard Shaw, J.M. Barrie (author of Peter Pan), Henry James and G.K. Chesterton were just few on a list (reproduced on page 19) that reads like a Who's Who of the greatest writers of the age. While at the house, HG often involved them in his famous 'floor games' with toy soldiers (he later wrote a book on the subject). During his time at Spade House, HG was also kept busy by his involvement with socialist organisations such as the Fabian Society.

Though HG and Jane had begun to grow apart at Spade House, they still enjoyed each others company and often went for walks and bicycle rides in the Kent countryside and along the beach between Sandgate and Folkestone. HG also spent some time as a magistrate of Sandgate.

FRANK, HG, JANE AND GIP WELLS AT LEISURE IN SPADE HOUSE



THE SITTING ROOM AT SPADE HOUSE IN H.G. WELLS' TIME

A fine description of Spade House in 1908 is given by the Wells' children's Swiss governess Fraulein Meyer in her book H.G. Wells and his Family "A cab, hired at the station, took me and the luggage to Spade House. Seen from the drive, it seemed to me a quaint-looking place, with its rough-cast walls, its lattice windows and deep-sloping roofs. The cab stopped before an unpretentious front door, and as I waited to be admitted, I saw a spade-shaped letter plate on the door."

"I was ushered into a very pleasant room with a mullioned window and furnished with taste. On the round oak table stood a cut-glass vase filled with autumn flowers. Below the round window was a tidy writing table, with one or two press cuttings on it, which gave me a clue to the person who worked there."

"Through the lattice window that faced south I could see a well-kept lawn, and tubs of geraniums standing at regular intervals before the house. To the right I had a glimpse of broad stone steps leading down to a sunken lawn. On the large wooden table that stood in the loggia outside the study window, a fat cat was fast asleep beside some toys, left there earlier in the day, no doubt, by the children of the house."

"In company with Mrs. Wells, I walked across the trim lawn, and passed some little nooks and a summer-house covered with creepers that were flushed with deep crimson. We stopped at the far end of the main garden which fell away to the sea, perhaps ninety or more feet below."

"The schoolroom was not a conventional one as no desks were ever added to it. It was a large bright room, facing south, with gay chintzes and wide windows overlooking the garden and sea. At the near end of the room was a fireplace, brightly lit, and guarded by a high metal fender. Before the fireplace was a red-and-green hearthrug, but the rest of the floor was covered with plain linoleum only. In the middle of the room stood a solid table, now set for tea. It was in the schoolroom where the famous games with toy soldiers were played not only by the two sons, but by Wells and many of his eminent visitors."

Fraulein Meyer`s stay at Spade House was to be a relatively short one, for in the spring of 1909, HG rather surprisingly, perhaps, put Spade House up for sale and moved the family to Hampstead, in London. One reason given for the sudden move was HG had become tired with the frequent journeys to London in connection with his journalism and to see his publisher. HG himself said he had become bored with the unstimulating life at Spade House and wanted to move to London to see more people and vary his 'personal excitements'.

However, it was probably the Amber Reeves affair that prompted him above all else to move.

While at Spade House, one of HG's many love affairs was with Miss Reeves, the daughter of a member of the Fabian Society. HG called it "A great storm of intensely physical sexual passion and desire". This prompted him to run away with Amber to

~~Meier~~ Mathilde Meyer

× Blanco - White

France for a short time, until coming to his senses, he looked for a way to end the affair.

Unfortunately, Amber was pregnant (a daughter was eventually born), and though she was persuaded to marry someone else, her family were out to get HG and the resulting public scandal at one time threatened to be extremely ruinous to him.

HG later confirmed the Amber Reeves affair contributed to his move by saying "The move was an escape from the torments of physical jealousy in an unobtrusive promiscuity". Jane, without showing any outward signs, was hurt by this affair and the controversy it had caused, and she may have been just as keen on a move, so to escape from a house which was beginning to hold some pretty bad memories.

As spring turned into summer, HG left Spade House and Sandgate for the last time. He was never to return.

HG WITH HIS MOTHER AT SPADE HOUSE JUST BEFORE HER DEATH IN 1905

FAMOUS VISITORS TO SPADE HOUSE 1900-1909

E.M. Nesbit
Ford Maddox Hueffer
George Gissing
Sydney Webb
H.W. Newinson
G.K. Chesterton
Anthony Hope

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

JOSEPH CONRAD

Henry James
Edith Wharton
Percy Lubbock
J. M. Barrie
Arnold Bennett
Stephen Crane
W. Pett Ridge

BOOKS WRITTEN BY H.G. WELLS AT SANDGATE AND SPADE HOUSE 1898-1909

When the Sleeper Awakes (1899) Finished at Beach Cottage(s) and published while HG was living at Arnold House. A story of years to come called by HG "one of the most ambitious and least satisfactory of my books".

Tales of Space and Time (1899) A collection of five stories published while HG was at Arnold House.

Love and Mr. Lewisham (1900) Started in 1898 and completed in 1900 at Arnold House.

The First Men in the Moon (1901) The first book published while HG lived at Spade House. A science fiction fantasy anticipating the hopes of the space age.

Anticipations .... (1901) A collection of prophetic articles which made a powerful impression on the leading socialists of the day and led to HG becoming a leading member of the Fabian Society. The book predicted how the evolution of transport would result in the redistribution of the population long before the jet age arrived.

The Discovery of the Future (1902)

The Sea Lady (1902) A novel about a mermaid who comes ashore at Sandgate Riviera to seek a husband and enjoy the other benefits of terrestrial life. This work was written at Beach Cottage(s) and Arnold House. The lines "Upon the beach one day the Sea Lady appeared, very lovely in a close-fitting bathing dress and took possession of my writing desk" HG based on the affair he had with the young and nubile May Nesbit who one day on the beach at Sandgate wore a tight fitting bathing dress which roused all the innermost feelings of lust in the great writer. This description of Folkestone also appears in the book "They turned aside from the high path of the Leas to the head of some steps that led down the declivity. In a few moments it was as if those imposing fronts of stucco, those many-windowed hotels, the electric lights on the tall masts, the bandstand had never existed. It is one of Folkestone's best effects that black quietness under the very feet of the crowd."

Mankind in the Making (1903) Explored the developments science could bring.

Twelve Stories and a Dream (1903)

The Food of the Gods (1904) A science fiction fantasy about two scientists who discover a growth substance. The work is a satire on the limitations of local and national boundaries.

A Modern Utopia (1905) An account of the transference of a socialist utopia to the world of two tourists during a visit to Italy.

Kipps (1905) This is HG's most popular and widely read Spade House book and is in many ways based on his own days working in a drapery shop. Kipps was originally begun while HG was convalescing from a kidney illness at New Romney in 1898 and was originally to have been called The Wealth of Mr Waddy. From humble beginnings,

eventually returns to and marries his childhood sweetheart. Kipps is apprenticed to Mr. Shalford at the Folkestone Drapery Bazaar, and, as a consequence, Folkestone features prominently in the book. One such description reads "....the most remarkable discoveries in topography, as, for example, that the most convenient way from the establishment of Messrs. Plummer Roddis and Tyrell, two of his principal places of call is not, as generally supposed, down the Sandgate Road, but up the Sandgate Road, round by West Terrace and along the Leas to the lift. Watch the lift go up and down twice, but not longer, because that would not do, back along the Leas, watch the Harbour for a short time and so (hurrying) into Church Street and Rendezvous Street. But on some exceptionally fine days, the route lay through Radnor Park to the pond where the little boys sail ships and there are interesting swans." Kipps and his sweetheart break a sixpence in half as a lovers token and Half a Sixpence became the title of a successful stage show and film.

In the Days of the Comet (1906) A passing comet emanates a strange gas which revolutionises human attitudes. An expansion of A Modern Utopia.

The Future in America (1906) HG's impressions of this mighty country.

The Faults of the Fabian (1906) For members of the Fabian Society only.

Socialism and the Family (1906)

The So-called Science of Sociology (1907)

The Misery of Boots (1907) An indictment of the Edwardian way of life.

Will Socialism Destroy the Home? (1907)

New Worlds for Old (1908) Subtitled A Plain Account of Modern Socialism, this was an attempt to present the case for socialism in an appealing tone.

The War in the Air (1908) A science fiction fantasy prophesying air warfare.

First and Last Things (1908) A detailed account of HG's personal beliefs and philosophy of life.

Tono-Bungay (1909) A highly successful novel, sometimes hailed as his finest work, whose underlying theme is what he sees as the betrayal of the people by an empire and money grabbing society.

Ann Veronica (1909) A highly controversial novel in support of the emancipation of women. In the book a young girl rebels and becomes a suffragette before running away with an older man. HG is said to have based it on his affair with Amber Reeves, though some details were altered to protect her, notably the happy ending when Ann Veronica lives happily ever after with the man.

The History of Mr. Polly (1910) Started in Spade House, but finished by HG in London. A delightful 'Dickensian' novel which rescued HG's reputation following Ann Veronica and the Amber Reeves affair.

The New Machiavelli (1911) Partially written at Spade House. A political satire on the politics of the time, notably the suffragette movement and socialism.

'JANE' WELLS

Amy Catherine Robbins came into HG's life in 1892 when she began attending his science classes. He quickly became captivated by the "very sweet and valiant little figure indeed, with her schoolgirl satchel of books and an old-fashioned unyielding microscope someone had lent her, and I soon came to think of her as the most wonderful thing in my life."

Being already estranged from his wife after only a short period of marriage, HG set up home with Miss Robbins and in 1895 they married once his divorce from Isabel had become absolute. HG renamed the new Mrs. Wells 'Jane' because they both hated the name Amy (though Jane liked her middle name Catherine and continued to use it).

Despite embarking on a string of affairs within a few years of his second marriage (HG would never be without 'another woman' during virtually the whole period of his marriage to Jane), HG regarded Jane as indispensable. She was his sheet anchor, the solid rock, who, especially while they lived at Spade House, efficiently brought up his children, checked and typed his manuscripts and provided him with a comfortable home. He described her as "the embodiment of all the understanding and quality I desired in life."

I think it is fair to say, Jane was the guiding spirit of Spade House, the person who put the heart and soul into those newly laid bricks and mortar. She was to be admired by everyone who ever met her; from the local delivery boy and the Swiss governess to the greatest writers of her day. Arnold Bennett described her as a "great woman", a view shared by the many guests who stayed at Spade House. They regarded her as a splendid housekeeper and hostess who made sure everyone was happy with their stay at the house.

During the eight-and-a-half years spent at Spade House, Jane shared in many of HG's interests, including his left-wing views which led to her becoming an active member of the Womens Group of the Fabian Society. However, in the later years of the marriage, Jane gradually developed new friendships and created another life for herself within the marriage. She herself enjoyed writing and had a few short stories published. The other great love of her life was gardening and this led her to become a member of the Royal Horticultural Society.

The greatest love of her life, however, continued to be her errant husband, which is, perhaps, quite surprising considering his many idiosyncrasies, not to mention the affairs. They must have tugged at the deepest strings of her heart, but she never showed it, and remained deeply loyal to HG right up to her early death from cancer on 6 October 1927. Her genuinely devastated husband produced The Book of Catherine Wells in which he said "....she managed to sustain her belief that I was worth living for, while I made my way through a tangle of moods and impulses that were quite outside her instinctive sympathy.

She stuck to me so sturdily that in the end I stuck to myself. I do not know what I would have been without her. She stabilised my life. She gave it a home and dignity. She preserved its continuity. Not without incessant watchfulness and toil. I have a hundred memories of an indefatigable typist carrying on her work in spite of back ache; of a grave judicial proof-reader, in a garden shelter, determined that no slovenliness shall escape her....".

JANE WELLS

H.G. WELLS - LIFE AFTER SPADE HOUSE 1910-1946

HG and family stayed at 17 Church Row, Hampstead for two years, until, in 1911, they rented Little Easton Rectory in Essex from Lady Warwick. Jane was particularly fond of the house and its garden and the Wells' eventually bought the property and renamed it Easton Glebe. Two years after the death of Jane in 1927, HG sold the house because he felt it was empty and lifeless without the presence of his late wife, and moved into Chiltern Court, situated above Baker Street Station. There he remained until 1936, when he moved to 13 Hanover Terrace, by Regents Park, where he lived until his death.

In 1912, HG met his most famous and long-time lover, the future novelist Rebecca West, when he became intrigued after she had scathingly reviewed one of his books. The couple had a son, Anthony, in 1914, and the affair lasted just over ten years until Rebecca became tired of being a mistress and went off to pursue a full-time writing career. HG went on to have long-term relationships with the temperamental Dutch writer Odette Kahn, who drove him out of his French home Lou Pidou and tried to blackmail him when he tired of her, and Moura Budberg, a woman he had long time admired. He described her as one of only three women he had ever loved, Isabel and Jane being the other two.

HG's literary output remained prolific and during the Great War of 1914-1918 he produced an amazing ten books, including the highly acclaimed *Mr Britling Sees it Through* (1916) which portrayed the effects of the war on the ordinary working-class people. Two further books *The Elements of Reconstruction* (1916) and *In the Fourth Year* (1918) advocated and foresaw the creation of the League of Nations. HG had predicted in 1914 the terrible carnage the war would bring and said it would be "The War that will end war".

Much to the chagrin of HG, both the Treaty of Versailles and the founding of the League of Nations proved to be in very different forms to what he had hoped, and he concluded the only hope for a lasting peace lay in the superior education of the common man who would form an unbiased view of world order and history and prevent wars from happening again. To support his theory he produced three books *The Outline of History* (1920), *The Science of Life* (1930) and *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1932). They proved to be highly successful and elevated HG to International status, despite being open to detailed criticism by scholars.

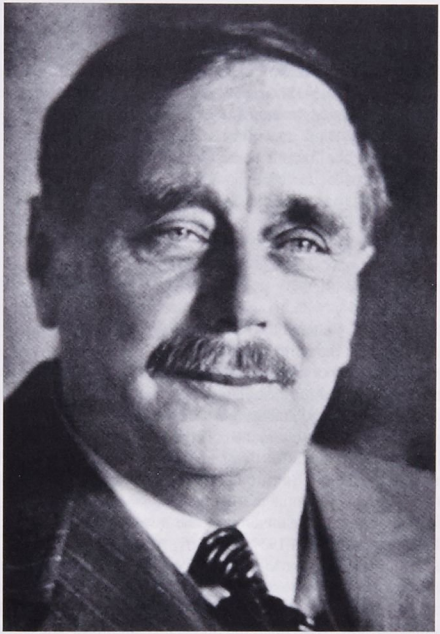
HG was also advocate of World Government and spoke to both American and Russian leaders, as well as writing a number of books, on the subject. In the 1920's he warned of the dangers of fascism and attacked it frequently.

One of HG's few failures in life was the unsuccessful bids in 1922 and 1923 to be elected as a Labour Member of Parliament.

One of HG's few failures in life was the unsuccessful bids in 1922 and 1923 to be elected as a Labour Member of Parliament.

Though relegated to the back burner somewhat, HG continued to write novels throughout the 1920's and 1930's, including the highly acclaimed The Shapes of Things to Come (1933). His autobiography Experiment in Autobiography (1934) mentions the happy times he spent at Spade House.

HG continued to write throughout the Second World War, but he was a sick man by its end and passed away on 13 August 1946, a few weeks short of his 80th birthday.



H.G. WELLS IN LATER LIFE

INTO ANONYMITY - SPADE HOUSE 1910-1951

In the spring of 1909, Spade House stood forlornly empty, forsaken by the brilliant mind which had helped to create it. The rooms which had once echoed to the sound of great men debating and children playing were now lifeless and stripped bare, and were to remain this way for nearly a year. The house had been quickly sold during the spring, to Mr. Francis E. Burke (J.P.), late of Radnor Cliff, but he wanted it enlarged and extended before he moved in. William Dunk was engaged to build a matching extension to the house at its western end comprising of a servants bedroom, larder, pantry, wine store and motor shed on the ground floor and an additional bedroom on both the first and second floors. The work was completed by the early spring of 1910 and Mr. Burke and his wife Mary moved into their new home on 4 April 1910. As if to further alter the identity of the newly enlarged house, and perhaps to confuse any curious sightseers, the Burke's renamed it Bay House.

The fine extension by Dunk made the house even more attractive and for twelve years it provided a very comfortable home for the Burke's. They particularly enjoyed the blooming maturity of the secluded garden, but in 1922 the house changed hands once again. The freehold was acquired from the Earl of Radnor on 16 June 1922 by Mr. S.W. Graystone for £700. Mrs Fryer became the new leaseholder and changed the name of the house back to Spade House.

However, just four years later, she had moved on and George Draper was in residence. His stay was even briefer, just one year, before in 1927 the Hon. Gerald Samuel Montagu moved in with his wife Firenza and daughter Ina. Mirroring the actions of Mr. Burke, they altered the name once again to Bay House and extended the property, this time on the north side, by adding a garage, yard, boys room and bathroom on the ground floor and two bath-dressing rooms on the first floor.

Montague It has often been claimed Lord Napier, of Napier Motors fame, lived in Spade (Bay) House during this period and designed there his Sealion aero-engine which powered the Supermarine S-5 to win the coveted Schneider Trophy for seaplanes in 1927. The S-5's successor, the S-6B (winner of the trophy in 1929 and 1931), eventually evolved into the famous Spitfire fighter plane. Unfortunately, despite extensive research, no evidence has yet come to light that Napier owned the house, and it has to be surmised that if he did live there for a time it was as a tenant. Nonsense

What is known for sure, is in 1937, Mrs Effie J. Hancock became the new owner of Bay House and lived there together with a John Bradley for a year until he moved out in 1938. She rented the house out to Elizabeth McNaught and Catherine Georgiades in 1945, but returned to live with Miss McNaught in 1949 when Miss Georgiades departed. Two years later, the house was put up for sale and was purchased by Mr. and Mrs Arthur Dixon-May, who were to awake it from its slumbers, re-activate the ghost of HG and put the house on the map once more.

Firenze (or Florence) d. 1956
3rd son 1st Baron Swaythling b. 1880 - d. 1956

THE 'MIMI' MAY YEARS 1951-1979

When the Dixon-May's acquired Spade House in December 1951, it appears their original intention was to convert the building into five flats. Plans were drawn up, but it seems the scheme was not proceeded with. Instead, the house eventually became a vegetarian hotel/restaurant of some renown, which would not have amused HG in the slightest! He had once said to a vegetarian lunching with him at Spade House "I suppose, on your diet, you think you are superior to me?". An early decision by the Dixon-May's was to rename the house Spade House once more.

Following the death of Mr. Dixon-May in the mid-1960's, the running of the business was left entirely to his wife Edith 'Mimi' May (she seems not to have used the Dixon part of her name), who in 1966, the centenary year of the birth of H.G. Wells, made strenuous efforts to put the house and its associations with HG (not to mention the hotel and restaurant) firmly on the map. She produced a fine booklet about the house which contained some interesting photographs, and opened her home for the public to view, who were able to see HG's study and writing desk and the secluded garden house and wooden seat. Frank Wells, the younger son of HG, visited the house in September 1966 to plant a maple tree in nearby Castle Road, and a plaque was unveiled at the house itself by Alderman John Moncrieff of Folkestone Corporation, which showed four small spades and a larger one upside-down with the inscription "Built by H.G. Wells Author Lived here 1900 to 1909" (see illustration on page 32). A Sandgate shop joined in the celebrations by selling spade-shaped chocolate shortcakes for 9d and 2s 6d, and a talk on HG proceeded the showing of a number of films inspired by his books including The Shapes of Things to Come. Many national and local newspapers and magazines featured the celebrations.

By the end of 1966, Spade House had slipped back into relative obscurity once more, though it remained a popular rendezvous for vegetarians of all kinds. Famous guests included Yehudi Menuhin, Judith Durham (of the pop group The Seekers) and many other artists and musicians who were attracted by the high quality of the food and the quiet ambience of the house. On the other hand, members of the humbler East Kent Branch of the Vegetarian Society held meetings there.

Mrs May's other main interest was spiritualism, and she claimed the atmosphere of Spade House was receptive to healing; her own chronic asthma itself had been cured. The 'Spade House Fellowship' was formed and the house became a centre for healing for many faiths including Buddhists, Sikhs, Seven Day Adventists and Plymouth Brethren, as well as spiritualists, who claimed to have seen and spoken with HG.

The colourful Mrs. May (who is particularly remembered in Sandgate for dashing about in her white sports car) died in 1975 and her former employee John Holland continued to run the hotel, though only on a bed and breakfast basis, while a dispute

about Mrs May's will was sorted out. By 1979, the hotel was on average only taking in six guests per week, and on the settlement of the will, was put up for auction in the October of that year.

MRS EDITH 'MIMI' MAY, PICTURED AT THE HOUSE IN 1966

A POSTCARD ADVERTISING THE VEGETARIAN HOTEL IN 1966

SPADE HOUSE

FOLKESTONE

THE HOME OF H. G. WELLS

This year is the H. G. Wells Centenary 1866—1966

Spade House was built by H. G. Wells, the famous author, to serve as his home. It is the most unique and beautiful literary memorial in Folkestone, or possibly in all of Kent. It was Wells' home during one of his most creative and productive periods, in which he wrote his four most successful and widely read novels. These were "Love and Mr. Lewisham" (1900), "Kipps" (1905), "Tono Bungay" (1909), and "The History of Mr. Polly" (1910).

There is no doubt that at Spade House, Wells first conceived the idea of predicting and trying to improve the future of mankind, which led eventually to the writing of perhaps his most famous book, "The Shape of Things to Come."

Visitors can see his study, the secluded garden house and the wooden seat in the open air where he wrote much of the work which in the end made him a great and world famous figure. It was at Spade House that he laid the foundations of his life work, which made him without question Kent's most illustrious literary personage, and indeed one of Britain's great literary giants. Unceasingly from Spade House a torrent of spell-binding words flowed to the capital, where they where multiplied in their millions and sent out to every part of the world.

It was at Spade House that Wells wrote:

Mankind in the Making	The War in the Air	Kipps
A Modern Utopia	Tono Bungay	The History of Mr. Polly
In the Days of the Comet	Anticipations	New Worlds for Old
The New Machiavelli	The Food of the Gods	First and Last Things
	Ann Veronica	

Daily Viewing including Sundays and Bank Holidays, 10.30—12.30 and 2.30—5.30, during the H. G. Wells Centenary 1866—1966.

EVOLUTION INTO A NURSING HOME 1979-

Joseph Barber became the new owner of Spade House in November 1979 and submitted plans to Shepway District Council to convert the property into a 56 seater Italian restaurant with an upstairs flat. Approval was granted in January 1980, and the restaurant was opened, but just two years later it folded and the house was put up for sale with a £200,000 price tag.

Despite its attractiveness and fine sea views, not to mention the historical associations, there were no takers for the house, though in October 1983, Nola and Mike Yarney expressed an interest in buying if their plans to convert Spade House into a nursing home were approved by Shepway District Council. They were, but the Yarney's decided not to purchase the house and it was left to Joseph Barber, in partnership with Nina Morgan, to bring to fruition the plans for a nursing home. Planned alterations to the building concerned the Sandgate Society, but they were carried out, and in March 1984, Spade House Nursing Home was opened to provide very high quality accommodation (now for up to 28 patients) and nursing care for the elderly, physically handicapped and the terminally ill.

In September 1985, Professor George Wells, the elder son of HG, saw the house for the first time since 1909. He was delighted to find his birthplace in such fine fettle, but tragically died just four days after his visit. HG's grandson, Dr. Martin Wells, visited the house on 13 August 1996 to unveil a plaque commemorating HG's association with the cinema (four of his novels were made into films) as part of the centenary celebrations of moving pictures. On the same day, the Sandgate Society organised a walk called "Wells and Sandgate" and a talk on HG was held at Folkestone Library.

A further extension to the house, which involves erecting a 14 room two-storey building in the garden and linking it to the house by a glass corridor, was approved by Shepway District Council in October 1991, but is currently on hold. Opponents of the scheme have voiced fears it will spoil the character of the Grade II listed building, despite assurances the extension would be constructed in the same Voysey style as the house.

Spade House has grown old with veritable grace and charm, and when we toured the house on a pleasant early autumn day in the late September of 1997, it looked resplendent in the bright sunshine.

The entrance to the house is right by the abutments of the bridge which once carried the Sandgate Hill Lift across Radnor Cliff Crescent on its way between Sandgate Hill and the western end of the Folkestone Leas. Sadly, this very interesting form of Victorian engineering and transport, which fascinated HG and his two sons during their time at Spade House, was closed in 1918, though happily its compatriot at the eastern end of the Leas is still going strong after 112 years of service.

The car park of the house now extends right across the former trackbed of the Sandgate Lift, though the lift is immortalised in an memorial plaque on the front of the house which shows a tramcar crossing the former bridge.

THE SANDGATE HILL LIFT (1893-1918), WITH SPADE HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE DISTANCE

HG'S GRANDSON, DR. MARTIN WELLS, VISITS SPADE HOUSE ON 13 AUGUST 1996

In its role as a nursing home, Spade House provides a bright, airy, spacious and comfortable environment for both its residents and staff. The interior of the house, despite the alterations over the years, remains charming with its low ceilings, rounded doors and frames and original Voysey leaded windows. The latter are particularly pleasing and they still contain the miniature windows of one pane of glass which opened to let in just a tiny breath of refreshing sea air. These were another celebrated Voysey feature and it's delightful they still survive.

HG's spacious original dining room (which later became a lounge when the dining room was moved downstairs to where the pleasant residents lounge is now) and study have now been split into smaller rooms, but the splendid stone fireplace in the former dining room remains, as does an original wash basin in the staff toilet.

William Dunk's fine matching extensions make them difficult to spot both internally and externally from the original house of 1900. One give-away sign internally is on the first floor where the rounded ceilings of the original house change to the flat ceilings of the extension. The ample roof-space (largely opened up in 1903) comfortably houses six residents rooms (three single and three double), toilets, cupboards, and some say, the ghosts of HG and his two children! Staff have claimed to have smelt HG's pipe tobacco and heard the children playing in their former nurseries.

The white-washed walls and stonework around the windows are in pristine condition and I think it's fair to say Spade House appears to be more attractive now than it was in HG's day.

Like the house, the main part of the garden is well kept and wonderfully situated to the south to catch the sun and the invigorating sea air, and is understandably popular for relaxation with both the residents and staff (during break times of course!). As in HG's time, it is on two levels, with the upper level housing a small expanse of lawn, a bird bath and the the 1966 plaque, and the lower level consisting mainly of a larger area of lawn. The sea can still be glimpsed through the dense foliage of flowers, bushes and trees, though of course the garden has matured and thickened out considerably since the Edwardian period.

There is another, forgotten, part of the garden, which slopes down towards the sea. Here a somewhat precarious overgrown path winds south through the trees to lead to an old ivy covered gate, long since abandoned, fronting onto Vicarage Road. A patch of grass near the top of the path may well have been the site of a bench used by HG to collect his thoughts and knock them into shape.

On the western side of the garden, the present garden shed was not HG's writing shed, but the sad, derelict remains of that famous building survive in the garden of the adjoining property. This, coupled with abandoned footpaths leading into the same property, indicate that at one time, part of the original garden of Spade House was sold and incorporated into the next door garden.

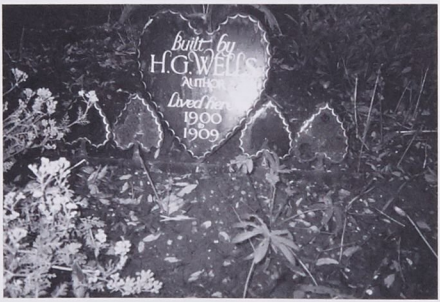
On the north side of the garden, the overgrown trackbed of the Sandgate Hill Lift can just be seen leading to its former lower station on Sandgate Hill which, though vulgarised out of all recognition, still survives as Croft House.

There are plans afoot to open a small H.G. Wells Museum at Spade House, which, as well as serving as a fitting tribute to a great author's association with the only new house he had built, may finally help to give this fine house the historical recognition in Folkestone it richly deserves.

THE SURVIVING VOYSEY STONEWORK FIREPLACE IN JULY 1997

THE COMFORTABLE RESIDENTS LOUNGE, PICTURED IN JULY 1997

SPADE HOUSE SEEN FROM THE UPPER LEVEL OF THE GARDEN IN JULY 1997



THE 1966 PLAQUE, NOW IN THE UPPER GARDEN

The Authors sincerely wish to thank: The Literary Executors of the Estate of H.G. Wells, The owners of Spade House - Nina Morgan and Stephen Barber, and members of staff especially Madge Zielinski and Richard Carlile, The staff of the Heritage Room at Folkestone Library, Alan Taylor, Paul Harris, The Radnor Estate, The Sandgate Society and June and Ken Stace-Paine and David Fundrey for proof reading.

H.G. Wells 1905

H.G. WELLS at SANDGATE

Reginald Turnill

Folkestone Local History
Leaflet No.5

CHARTER MARK
Awarded for excellence

Kent County Council
ARTS & LIBRARIES

One hundred years ago H.G. Wells, recuperating at Sandgate from a painful illness, was looking ahead to the year 1900 and speculating about what would happen in the twentieth century. His scientific prophecies about space travel and moonlandings are well remembered, but the first book he completed at Spade House is almost forgotten. Called *Anticipations,* it began by discussing how the evolution of transport would result in the redistribution of population; "and everybody in 1900 was shirking the necessity for great political reconstructions everywhere." His foresight can be measured by the fact that the century was half over before the jet age arrived, with hundreds of thousands of people being airborne every day. And of course the need for "political reconstruction" is Europe's most pressing preoccupation as the 21st century approaches.

Fifty years after Wells died, we can look back with awe to the turn of the century 100 years ago when his presence resulted in Sandgate becoming the creative centre of one of the world's richest literary periods. He built Spade House with the royalties earned by his early "sci-fi" novels like *First Men in the Moon* and *The War of the Worlds;* but when he arrived in the area he was at first confused with another, more notorious Wells immortalised in the song "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo". H.G. describes in his *Experiment in Autobiography*, published in 1934, how he went about Sandgate and Folkestone like a Wagnerian hero with a motif of his own whenever there was a whistling errand boy within earshot. The name of his new house, built half-way down from The Leas, contributed to the illusion. One of the many rows he had with his architect, C.F.A. Voysey, was over the name; for Voysey wanted to put a large heart-shaped letter plate on the front door. Wells did not like the idea of wearing his heart so conspicuously and compromised on a spade; and the local legend grew that it was on the "ace of spades" that this Wells had broken the Monte Carlo Bank.

He actually came to Sandgate via New Romney, where he went to consult Henry Hick, the Medical Officer of Health, at a time when he was almost reconciled to life in a wheelchair as a result of his declining

health. Dr Hick summoned a surgeon from London to remove Wells' left kidney, but by the time the surgeon got there the offending kidney "had practically taken itself off, and there was nothing left to remove." While recuperating from what surgeons now assume to be an attack of kidney stones, Wells became godfather to Hick's newborn daughter and amused himself by writing and illustrating for her a little booklet called "The Adventures of Tommy". When she grew up and needed money for medical training, the girl got Wells' permission to sell the booklet in facsimile form, and for many years it was sold as a Christmas present. There is a copy available in the Folkestone and Bromley reference libraries.

Sandgate's period as a centre of literature and culture began soon after his recovery at New Romney. He records how his second wife Jane (her name was actually Amy Catherine, but Wells did not like that, so he renamed her) put him in a comfortable carriage and drove him to Sandgate. "We installed ourselves in a little furnished house called Beach Cottage - so close to the sea that in rough weather the waves broke over the roof." One of Wells' spidery drawings, which he called "picshuas" shows Beach Cottage under the sort of assault we all knew so well until recently, when the beach replenishment programme was successful in doing what King Canute failed to do. Beach Cottage still exists but has been renamed Granville Cottage, and can be found a few yards east of the Folkestone Rowing Club.

The Wells liked Sandgate so much that they brought their furniture down from Worcester Park, in southwest London, and took a lease on Arnold House while they set about designing and building what became Spade House. Arnold House, wrote Wells, was a semi-detached villa, with a long narrow strip of grass ending in a hedge of tamarisk along the sea wall. Now it is plain No. 20 Castle Road, but it was at Arnold House that he gave Sandgate a mermaid to rival Cyprus's Aphrodite. "Upon the beach one day the Sea Lady appeared, very lovely in a close-fitting bathing dress, and took posession of my writing desk." According to his story, the Bunting family lived next door, and they were bathing from the end of their garden when the mermaid came ashore complaining

that she was suffering from cramp. A rising young politician was staying with the Buntings, and the magic of the mermaid's beauty when she was carried to their house drove him into what was to be a fatal "madness of desire".

When he wanted a rest from his Sea Lady, Wells cycled around Kent with the Popham family, who really did live next door; and they moored a raft 20 to 30 yards offshore, and taught him to swim out to it. Sea bathing was then rather new and daring, and the raft itself attracted some of Wells' guests. Arnold Bennett often came, and his swimming and diving from the raft aroused much envy. Bennett, the author of the Five Towns novels, had first written to Wells to ask him how he came to know the Potteries after reading references to them in *The Time Machine*, and a lifelong friendship developed as the two writers rose together in fame and fortune.

Sandgate was certainly good for Wells. His health improved so much that his mind and body ran riot. *The Sea Lady* and *Anticipations* - the full title of which was *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* - was followed by *A Modern Utopia*. Scandal accompanied its publication. He wrote of "Samurai of both sexes - a hardy bare-limbed race, free lovers among themselves - and mutually obliging." Looking back in 1934 he wrote: "The book was popular among the young of our universities. It launched many of them into cheerful adventures that speedily brought them up against the facts of fixation, jealousy and resentment. It played a considerable part in the general movement of release from the rigid technical chastity of women during the Victorian period."

Then the warm sunshine and heady heights of Spade House resulted in *Ann Veronica* - so scandalous that his publishers, Macmillans, would not risk issuing it under their own name; that vicars fulminated against it from their pulpits; and that "Society" tried to send Wells to Coventry. The result of course was that Wells became really rich. Everyone bought his earlier science fiction books, and were disappointed to find that they were not sexy at all! (And talking of *First Men in the Moon*, few

people remember that Wells, who knew all about being weightless in orbit 50 years before astronauts actually experienced it, launched his moonrocket with two men and a dog aboard from Lympne Ridge, where, with its panoramic views of Hythe Bay and Kent, he imagined himself halfway to the moon already.)

It was in what is now a toolshed for the rest home which Spade House has become that Wells wrote his three most important novels - often starting at 4am, to escape from his two young sons. They were *Kipps*, about a young man who started work at what must have been Plummer Roddis's emporium in Folkestone; and *The History of Mr Polly* and *Tono Bungay*, good stories which paint a vivid picture for posterity of living and working conditions at the turn of the last century - especially in what was seedy old Kent.

But if Sandgate was good for Wells, so was he good for Sandgate. His famous visitors came and went: Sir James Barrie, creator of Peter Pan; G.K. Chesterton, a wonderful rhyming poet, and Henry James, master of the short story. James lived and worked at Rye for many years - partly because he could come to Spade House and argue with Wells. ? He found Wells' free-love ideas distressing - but admitted that in his own writings he lived "almost cannibal-like" on Wells' ideas. Stephen Crane, who wrote *The Red Badge of Courage,* lived at Brede and was another Spade House regular. So was Joseph Conrad, who owned a farm at Postling, above Hythe. It is still a farm, called The Pent, and before Conrad had been occupied by the poet Christina Rossetti and the artist Walter Crane.

Conrad, whose real name was Yosef Konrad Korzeniowski - but, wrote Wells, had wisely dropped the surname - "spoke English strangely ... having learned to read English long before he spoke it." With Mrs Conrad and his small blond-haired bright-eyed boy, he would come over to Sandgate, cracking a whip along the road, driving a little black carriage as through it was a droskky, and encouraging a puzzled little Kent pony with loud cries and endearments in Polish, to the dismay of all beholders.

? Miranda Seymour, biographer of Henry James says James never came to Sandgate ....

"We never really got on together. 'My dear Wells, what is this *Love and Mr Lewisham* about?' he would ask. And then, wringing his hands and wrinkling his forehead: 'What IS all this about Jane Austen? What is there IN her? What is it all ABOUT?' Conrad was even more baffled by Wells' obsession with social and political issues, and by the discussions on the beach and in the Spade House garden involving the earnest little Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Graham Wallas, and of course the volatile Bernard Shaw. Shaw used to tease Conrad unmercifully, telling him: "My dear fellow, your books won't DO!" A white-faced Conrad demanded of Wells: "Does that man WANT to insult me?" Wells had to take Conrad aside in the garden to explain that it was Shaw's idea of humour - "one of our damned English tricks Conrad never learnt to tackle." Later, when Wells himself was rude to another famous visitor, Ford Madox Ford, having told Ford that he had written a book about Hall Caine as if he were a discharged valet - Conrad tried to persuade Ford to challenge Wells to a duel. "If Conrad had had his way," said Wells, "either Ford's blood or mine would have reddened Dymchurch Sands!"

Some may find it reassuring that Wells probably had his one brief period of respectability before leaving Sandgate. He became a Borough Magistrate, and attended "boring lunches" at Sir Edward Sassoon's house "close at hand at Sandgate". That was at the top of the steep, curving Undercliff, in Shorncliffe Lodge, and among politicians who bored Wells up there was young Winston Churchill, "trying out his perorations over dinner".

So, in those 20 years between 1890 and 1910, H.G. Wells made Sandgate the hub of the literary world. His ideas, which were to reshape society during the 20th century, were spawned there.

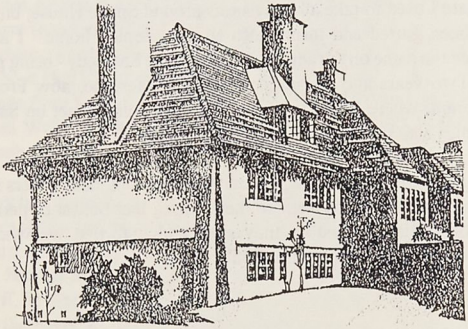
One would think that we would encourage visitors from all over the world to visit and enjoy this breeding ground of the imagination. But where is the landscaped viewpoint and plaque on Lympne Ridge? How are they to find Joseph Conrad's farmhouse at Postling? Shorncliffe House does survive - just. But its colourful past is uncommemorated.

The visitors who travel by coach and car in their thousands to visit Kipling's house in Sussex would enjoy coming to Folkestone and Sandgate too if it were made worth their while. But the old water lift linking The Leas and Sandgate, which descended behind Spade House and fascinated Wells, and which would be another invaluable tourist attraction, has long since gone. Perhaps our visitors might like to buy an attractively bound copy of *The Sea Lady*, described in the Cambridge History of English Literature as "a beautifully written fantasy" at the Old Fire Station headquarters of the Sandgate Society? Maybe they would buy replicas of her, unique in her red bathing costume - expensive ones in delicate china jugs, cheap ones in plastic? When I first came to Sandgate I used to take all my visitors around Spade House, but it has since been gutted and turned into an old people's home. I actually watched the name on the adjoining house - The Sea Lady - being painted out. Two years ago the coffee shop in Folkestone, now Frogmore Restaurant, where Wells and Shaw and many others met on Saturday mornings, also painted out the great man's name.

If the ghosts of Wells, Shaw, Conrad, Bennett and many others should revisit the scenes which inspired them during that richest of periods in the world's literary history they must conclude that we who have followed them are a dull lot indeed!

The author is a writer and broadcaster, and active member of the Sandgate Society. He was for many years BBC Aerospace Correspondent and while living in Sandgate, has written many books on space and aviation.

This booklet has been written and published as part of 'The Sensation of the Age' - a celebration of 100 years of cinema - and to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of H.G. Wells in August 1946.



SPADE HOUSE, HOME OF H. G. WELLS.
DRAWING BY SIMON BOLTON

Newspaper cuttings, photographs and street Directories are all available for consultation in the Heritage Room at Folkestone Library.

1996

3. Spade House Radnor Cliff

4. Arnold Cottage Castle Road

5. Beach Cottage Granville Parade

Herbert George Wells was born on 21 September 1866 in Bromley, Kent County, England, son of Sarah Neal, maid to the upper classes, and Joseph Wells, shopkeeper and professional cricket player..

At an early age Herbert was an avid reader but it would be some years before his talents as a writer were realised. He attended Thomas Morley's Academy for a few years before financial hardship forced him to leave and seek practical employment. Herbert became an apprentice to a draper at the age of fourteen. The experience provided much fodder for his future works including *Kipps* (1905) wherein orphan and draper's apprentice Artie Kipps gains a large inheritance and quick education on the ways of upper-class society and *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll* (1896);

in 1883 he won a scholarship to the Normal School of Science in London where he realised another area of interest that would serve him well in his writing; he began studies in biology and Darwinism His cousin Isabel Mary also livedwith them and they were soon married, in 1891. It lasted only four years; Wells left her for one of his students, Amy Catherine Robbins (Jane) whom he married in 1895 and had two sons with: George Philip (1901-1985) and Frank Richard (b.1903). Wells had liaisons with a number of other women,

H. G. Wells died on 13 August 1946 at his home in Regent's Park, London.

SPADE HOUSE

FOLKESTONE

THE HOME OF H. G. WELLS

This year is the H. G. Wells Centenary 1866—1966

Spade House was built by H. G. Wells, the famous author, to serve as his home. It is the most unique and beautiful literary memorial in Folkestone, or possibly in all of Kent. It was Wells' home during one of his most creative and productive periods, in which he wrote his four most successful and widely read novels. These were "Love and Mr. Lewisham" (1900), "Kipps" (1905), "Tono Bungay" (1909), and "The History of Mr. Polly" (1910).

There is no doubt that at Spade House, Wells first conceived the idea of predicting and trying to improve the future of mankind, which led eventually to the writing of perhaps his most famous book, "The Shape of Things to Come."

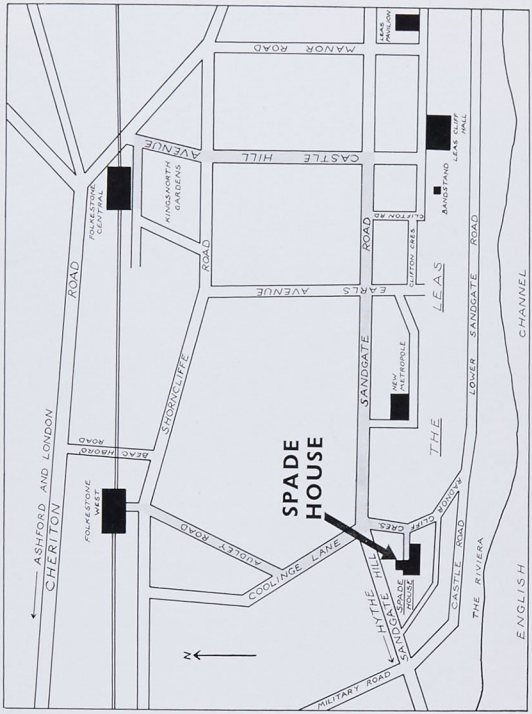
Visitors can see his study, the secluded garden house and the wooden seat in the open air where he wrote much of the work which in the end made him a great and world famous figure. It was at Spade House that he laid the foundations of his life work, which made him without question Kent's most illustrious literary personage, and indeed one of Britain's great literary giants. Unceasingly from Spade House a torrent of spell-binding words flowed to the capital, where they where multiplied in their millions and sent out to every part of the world.

It was at Spade House that Wells wrote:

Mankind in the Making	The War in the Air	Kipps
A Modern Utopia	Tono Bungay	The History of Mr. Polly
In the Days of the Comet	Anticipations	New Worlds for Old
The New Machiavelli	The Food of the Gods	First and Last Things
	Ann Veronica	

Daily Viewing including Sundays and Bank Holidays, 10.30—12.30 and 2.30—5.30, during the H. G. Wells Centenary 1866—1966.

HOW TO FIND SPADE HOUSE



Location: On Radnor Cliff Crescent, Folkestone
Charges: Entrance 2s. 6d. Child 1s. 0d.

Visits by Parties: Write—Mrs. E. M. May, Spade House, Radnor Cliff Crescent, Folkestone, Kent. Telephone: Folkestone 38311.

Printed by Lowe & Brydone (Printers) Ltd., London N.W.10

Women beware Wells

D.T. 10·2·01

Allan Massie admires this account of an episode many scholars have ignored

The Spinster & the Prophet: a Tale of H G Wells, Plagiarism and the History of the World
by A B McKillop
477pp, Aurum, £18.99
☎ £16.99 (free p&p) 0870 1557222

The "prophet" was H G Wells, the "spinster" a middle-aged Canadian, Florence Deeks. Throughout the First World War, Deeks, a teacher and occasional journalist, worked in a Toronto library writing a history of the world from a feminist viewpoint. It was her ambition to correct history's neglect of half the human race — or at least historians' neglect.

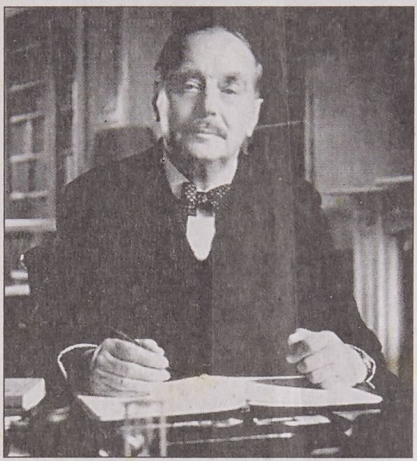
She called her work, drawn from secondary sources, as all such ambitious works are, *The Web* because she thought that women were the warp of history and men the weft, both being caught in the web that humanity wove. So, for instance, she would emphasise, says A B McKillop, the beneficial influence of women, whether through the wife of Pontius Pilate (of whom nothing is known) or Mary the mother of Jesus: "Mary was keenly alive to the terrible wrongs under which her nation had so long suffered," wrote Deeks. Well, she may have been; or again, not.

In July 1918, when she had finished the book, Florence Deeks took the manuscript to Macmillan in Canada. She chose them partly because they were the publishers of J R Green's *A Short History of the English People*, which she had used extensively as a source book, and she wished to be reassured that she had not breached copyright in her borrowings. She waited, but for many months had no reply. Then at last she was told that the book, as it stood, was unpublishable. She set to work to revise it.

Meanwhile in England H G Wells was proposing to his publishers that he write an outline of the history of the world. If true peace was to be established after the terrible war, then "humanity would first need to heed the lessons of the past". There were other reasons. Wells's imaginative powers, which had made him so successful a novelist, were on the wane and he needed money.

He set to and produced an enormous book at remarkable speed. He acknowledged assistance from several well-known authorities, Gilbert Murray among them. Nevertheless, Arnold Bennett, himself capable of writing a couple of hundred thousand words a year, could not "get over" the speed of production. "It's a life's work." It was to prove very successful, a bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic.

Florence Deeks, in Toronto, read a review. It made Wells's book sound like hers. She read the book. Except that Wells had almost completely excised any mention of women, much of it seemed like hers too. She marked correspondences. She observed that errors in *The Web* (which she had discovered in her revision) appeared also in *The Outline of History*. There were passages which she had drawn from certain authorities, which appeared in very similar form in Wells — although Wells did not cite these authorities among his sources.



Wells: a bounder and cad of genius

Then she remembered that her manuscript, when eventually returned, had had a much-used look, with certain passages marked, the corners of some pages turned down. She was convinced that Wells had somehow gained access to it, and had pillaged it. It was, to her indignant mind, a clear case of plagiarism. She went to law. The case dragged on for years, right up to the judicial committee of the Privy Council. How it concluded it would be wrong to reveal. Professor McKillop has structured his narrative as a detective story.

It is fair to say that he is on Florence Deeks's side, although not for patriotic reasons (he is himself a Canadian). He disapproves of Wells, principally on account of his treatment of women — not in the *History* but in his own life. Wells cheated on his wife and used his mistresses selfishly, discarding them when their demands became burdensome. He was not a man to be trusted. This is a North American view of things, although not exclusively: if a man cheats on his wife, he will cheat in other areas of life.

Yet the story, told with much detail and some invention, is compelling. Where it fails is in balance. McKillop makes every effort to understand Florence Deeks, and displays, as schoolchildren are now expected to do in history lessons, empathy. But Wells is seen only from without: a bounder and cad of genius.

Nevertheless, given that Wells's generally admiring biographers have largely ignored this story, McKillop very properly, and interestingly, redresses the balance. There is a lot of good stuff about the publishing business, too. Authors today will look with envy on the scale of royalties Wells demanded — and received.

ps in February 1942

wind. Mostly taken from regimental histories, the narrative consists of first-hand testimonies by Japanese soldiers who invaded Burma and took part in the rapid advance to the borders of India. Almost all of them had been transferred from China, where they had laid waste to the country in the most brutal way.

Once in Burma, their conduct miraculously improves, if we believe the speakers. No Burmese civilians are maltreated, no hostages are taken. Corporal Kawamata is the only soldier to remember the past. "We had to be very careful not to repeat the foolish mistakes made in China which had alienated almost all the local residents." Only in defeat that these eyewitness accounts come alive, as if a kind of unconscious remorse has begun to emerge disguised as self-pity. But there is no denying the discipline and determination the Japanese brought to war, qualities that would serve them far more successfully during peace.

How we thought and fought

W. F. Deedes judges the fullest account yet of an inglorious war

Archives of Zululand: the Anglo-Zulu War 1879
ed by John Laband & Ian Knight
Six volumes, Archival Publications, £960
✆ £900 (free p&p) 0870 1557222

With the original documents before us, sumptuously bound in six volumes, we are invited to sit in judgement on the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. It was not among our most glorious military ventures, and almost all of us have forgotten about it, but the Zulu have not. As Mangosuthu Buthelezi, now South Africa's Minister of Home Affairs, says in his Foreword, it was an event that "resulted in the destruction of our Kingdom".

South Africa has an interest, too, for this war was one of its birth pangs. For us, the value of these documents lies in the light they throw on how, in those imperial days, we thought and fought and governed.

If the BBC were presenting it, we would see the Zulu as innocent victims of a rabid imperialism, but the facts do not altogether fit. An unimportant tribe until the end of the 18th century, the Zulu rose to power by new military methods — the stabbing assegai and larger shield. Shaka, the ruler of Ama-Zulu, either permitted tribes he encountered to join the Zulu or exterminated them.

King Cetshwayo, installed in 1873, was of that mould. His rule was tyrannous, bedevilling the shaky Transvaal and Natal borders. Sir Bartle Frere, our High Commissioner, determined to curtail his powers. His ultimatum, at the end of 1878, was ignored.

In January 1879, a British force under General Thesiger (Lord Chelmsford), comprising 5,000 Europeans and 8,200 natives, invaded Zululand. Thesiger attacked with four separate columns, making Ulundi, the royal kraal, his objective. On Jan 22 the column of 1,600 Europeans and 2,500 natives under Col Durnford, while encamped near Isandlwana, was surprised by 10,000 Zulu and massacred. Almost every man was killed and all transport lost.

Underrating the Zulu, so his critics said, Chelmsford had ignored Kruger's warning that laagers should be formed and his forces had fought in too open formation. There followed the redeeming battle of Rorke's Drift, where a garrison of only 80 men under Lieutenants Chad and Bromhead fought a heroic and successful defence against 4,000 Zulu.

When news of Isandlwana reached England 20 days later, 10,000 men were ordered to South Africa. Slowly, the tide turned. Chelmsford was replaced by Sir Garnet Wolseley. In July near Ulundi, the British force formed a hollow square and finally beat off a Zulu army of 12,000 to 15,000. Cetshwayo became a fugitive. Chelmsford received the GCB, the GCVO and was made Lieutenant of the Tower of London.

Was it a just war? The Aborigines' Protection Society, which features strongly among these papers, persistently asserted that it was not. Was Chelmsford as incompetent as some supposed? To form our judgement, here are military dispatches, the official record of the campaign, proceedings in the Commons, and several independent military assessments written at the time.

We are given every detail of what happened at Isandlwana, including a stout-hearted defence of Col Durnford's performance by his loyal brother. We see the casualty lists, sadly long, and are shown the accounts in full. This particular war cost £5 million — a relatively small share of what South Africa cost us late in the 19th century and early in the 20th.

It is impossible, for several reasons, to relate what we read here to our own day. There is the time factor; imagine news of a military disaster in South Africa taking 20 days to reach the War Office. There is the transport — most of it by bullock wagon. There is the nature of the British troops involved: a whole section of volume six is devoted to their alleged misconduct in South Africa. Above all, this was a war, as Buthelezi points out, in which the British Army set out to destroy the Zulu tribe; something outside the range of our thinking today.

So is this expensive publishing undertaking worthwhile? It has been made possible only by some generous patronage, including that of the late John Aspinall, an admirer of the Zulu. The answer, strangely but emphatically, is yes.

It gives us a wonderful insight into the eternal interplay between politicians and their generals, which changes little over the years. Disraeli's Tories took one view of this war, Gladstone's Liberals another. It is a portrait in rich colours of exactly how the Victorians went about their business, in this instance the business of war.

INTO ANONYMITY - SPADE HOUSE 1910-1951

In the spring of 1909, Spade House stood forlornly empty, forsaken by the brilliant mind which had helped to create it. The rooms which had once echoed to the sound of great men debating and children playing were now lifeless and stripped bare, and were to remain this way for nearly a year. The house had been quickly sold during the spring, to Mr. Francis E. Burke (J.P.), late of Radnor Cliff, but he wanted it enlarged and extended before he moved in. William Dunk was engaged to build a matching extension to the house at its western end comprising of a servants bedroom, larder, pantry, wine store and motor shed on the ground floor and an additional bedroom on both the first and second floors. The work was completed by the early spring of 1910 and Mr. Burke and his wife Mary moved into their new home on 4 April 1910. As if to further alter the identity of the newly enlarged house, and perhaps to confuse any curious sightseers, the Burke's renamed it Bay House.

The fine extension by Dunk made the house even more attractive and for twelve years it provided a very comfortable home for the Burke's. They particularly enjoyed the blooming maturity of the secluded garden, but in 1922 the house changed hands once again. The freehold was acquired from the Earl of Radnor on 16 June 1922 by Mr. S.W. Graystone for £700. Mrs Fryer became the new leaseholder and changed the name of the house back to Spade House.

However, just four years later, she had moved on and George Draper was in residence. His stay was even briefer, just one year, before in 1927 the Hon. Gerald Samuel Montagu moved in with his wife Firenza and daughter Ina. Mirroring the actions of Mr. Burke, they altered the name once again to Bay House and extended the property, this time on the north side, by adding a garage, yard, boys room and bathroom on the ground floor and two bath-dressing rooms on the first floor.

Montague Doubtful

It has often been claimed Lord Napier, of Napier Motors fame, lived in Spade (Bay) House during this period and designed there his Sealion aero-engine which powered the Supermarine S-5 to win the coveted Schneider Trophy for seaplanes in 1927. The S-5's successor, the S-6B (winner of the trophy in 1929 and 1931), eventually evolved into the famous Spitfire fighter plane. Unfortunately, despite extensive research, no evidence has yet come to light that Napier owned the house, and it has to be surmised that if he did live there for a time it was as a tenant.

What is known for sure, is in 1937, Mrs Effie J. Hancock became the new owner of Bay House and lived there together with a John Bradley for a year until he moved out in 1938. She rented the house out to Elizabeth McNaught and Catherine Georgiades in 1945, but returned to live with Miss McNaught in 1949 when Miss Georgiades departed. Two years later, the house was put up for sale and was purchased by Mr. and Mrs Arthur Dixon-May, who were to awake it from its slumbers, re-activate the ghost of HG and put the house on the map once more.

Firenze (or Florence) d. 1956
3rd son 1st Baron Swaythling b. 1880 . d. 1956

THE 'MIMI' MAY YEARS 1951-1979

When the Dixon-May's acquired Spade House in December 1951, it appears their original intention was to convert the building into five flats. Plans were drawn up, but it seems the scheme was not proceeded with. Instead, the house eventually became a vegetarian hotel/restaurant of some renown, which would not have amused HG in the slightest! He had once said to a vegetarian lunching with him at Spade House "I suppose, on your diet, you think you are superior to me?". An early decision by the Dixon-May's was to rename the house Spade House once more.

Following the death of Mr. Dixon-May in the mid-1960's, the running of the business was left entirely to his wife Edith 'Mimi' May (she seems not to have used the Dixon part of her name), who in 1966, the centenary year of the birth of H.G. Wells, made strenuous efforts to put the house and its associations with HG (not to mention the hotel and restaurant) firmly on the map. She produced a fine booklet about the house which contained some interesting photographs, and opened her home for the public to view, who were able to see HG's study and writing desk and the secluded garden house and wooden seat. Frank Wells, the younger son of HG, visited the house in September 1966 to plant a maple tree in nearby Castle Road, and a plaque was unveiled at the house itself by Alderman John Moncrieff of Folkestone Corporation, which showed four small spades and a larger one upside-down with the inscription "Built by H.G. Wells Author Lived here 1900 to 1909" (see illustration on page 32). A Sandgate shop joined in the celebrations by selling spade-shaped chocolate shortcakes for 9d and 2s 6d, and a talk on HG proceeded the showing of a number of films inspired by his books including The Shapes of Things to Come. Many national and local newspapers and magazines featured the celebrations.

By the end of 1966, Spade House had slipped back into relative obscurity once more, though it remained a popular rendezvous for vegetarians of all kinds. Famous guests included Yehudi Menuhin, Judith Durham (of the pop group The Seekers) and many other artists and musicians who were attracted by the high quality of the food and the quiet ambience of the house. On the other hand, members of the humbler East Kent Branch of the Vegetarian Society held meetings there.

Mrs May's other main interest was spiritualism, and she claimed the atmosphere of Spade House was receptive to healing; her own chronic asthma itself had been cured. The 'Spade House Fellowship' was formed and the house became a centre for healing for many faiths including Buddhists, Sikhs, Seven Day Adventists and Plymouth Brethren, as well as spiritualists, who claimed to have seen and spoken with HG.

The colourful Mrs. May (who is particularly remembered in Sandgate for dashing about in her white sports car) died in 1975 and her former employee John Holland continued to run the hotel, though only on a bed and breakfast basis, while a dispute

H.G. WELLS

in West Sussex

"I know no country to compare with West Sussex except the Cotswolds. It had its own colour, a pleasant colour of sunlit sandstone and ironstone and a warm flavour of open country because of the parks and commons and pine woods about it."

INTRODUCTION

The novelist and science fiction writer H.G. Wells (1866-1946) had important links with West Sussex.

His grandfather on his mother's side came from Midhurst and worked in Chichester.

As a young man Wells spent a good deal of time at Uppark, the country house near South Harting, where his mother was housekeeper.

He was at Midhurst Grammar School, both as a pupil and a teacher. First he was a boarder and then during the latter spell he lodged above a sweetshop in the town.

He also worked for a short time at a chemist's shop at Church Hill in Midhurst.

A number of his books are set in the county and make use of his West Sussex experiences.

In his autobiography, Wells places great importance on the Uppark and Midhurst years and expresses great fondness for West Sussex.

This booklet is published to mark the 50th anniversary of H.G. Wells' death and the 130th anniversary of his birth.

H.G. Wells

West Sussex County Council in assn with Midhurst Town C
1996.
ISBN 0-86260-350-1
H G Wells in W Sussex

SPADE HOUSE, Sandgate C.F.A.Voysey for H.G.Wells

Casting our minds back to the turn-of-the-century, we climb the hill to Spade House on Radnor Crescent. For nine years this was the family home of H.G.Wells, one of Sandgate's most distinguished residents. He had chanced on Sandgate as a sick man, late in 1898, and rented Beach Cottage on the corner of Granville Parade for a few months. The waves broke over the roof and the shrimps, so he said, landed 'thwack' on the table. Sandgate, it seemed, gave him renewed health and inspiration and he decided to build a house and stay.

H.G.Wells was always a man ahead of the times -- indeed the times have hardly caught up with him. He turned his back, totally, on the 19th century and all it stood for. To design his house, he chose Charles Annesley Voysey a pioneer of the modern movement. Wells called him 'that pioneer of the escape from the small snobbish villa residence to the bright and comfortable pseudo cottage'. Wells then pitched himself on one of the finest sites in Sandgate, from where said a Punch journalist, Wells might keep an eye on France, espeeially M Jules Verne; and where he might be cognisant of the approach of mermaids, which are common objects of the local shore. (See Wells' novella, 'The Sea Lady'.)

Meanwhile, in March 1899. Wells took a 3-year lease on Arnold House, next door to the Pophams, and a little more sheltered from the Sea. This was No 20 Castle Road, and from there he could keep an eye on Voysey and his progress.

Voysey, it has been said, loomed large on the architectural, tunr-of-the century movement. Not that he designed any major public or private buildings, but because he was able to create buildings and designs that summed up essentially middle class ideals -- fondness for the rural countryside or leafy suburbia, a simplicity of line that was in direct contrast to Victorian fussiness. Simplicity was the keynote. No meaningless decoration, no columns supporting nothing. His almost childlike idiom came to typify later suburban architecture.

In his youth, Voysey had met Ruskin and was an admirer of Pugin and William Morris, thoug he did not approve of the latter's socialist theories. As a person, Voysey was dour and totally uncompromising. His approach to form was austere, almost puritanical. No excess or meaningless decoration. 'To be true to your material, true to your conditions, true to your highest instincts' he is quoted 'is the surest and only way to true art'.

In 1874, Voysey was articled to a church architect and in 1882 began practice on his own. By 1926, he had done about 120 moderate-size country houses. Here you can see his favourite form -- a single rectangular two-storey volume, covered by a high pitched roof of slate. Walls and buttresses

usually white, of rogh cast stucco; horizontal groupings of windows with squared stone mullions and leaded lights.

Mathilde Meyer, the Swiss governess, who was engaged to look after Wells' two sons, Gyp and Frank, echos this description. 'Seen from the drive' she wrote 'it seemed to me a quaint looking place with its rough cast walls, its lattice windows and deep sloping roofs'. But it had a homelike and unpretentiou atmosphere.

William Dunk, a grandfather of Rev.Alan Gibson (late Vicar, St Pauls Sandgate) was the builder and, in February 1900, he was contracted to build the house for £ 1,760. But, as Wells later confessed, he was always haunted by a craving for the impossible perfect home. Inevitably there were changes of mind and heart along the way. By the time Voysey had extended the house in 1903, the building cost over £ 3000 before it was complete. By then, Wells' novels were enjoying a huge success, and it was all affordable.

Spade House, in those days, summed up the ideas of two progressive men, one writer and the other architect. As you would expect, fitness for purpose was the guiding principle. The living rooms were on a level with the bedrooms in case Wells might, as he originally feared, have to live ~~with~~ in a wheel-chair The living quarters flowed into each other: A Library adjoined Wells study and the study shared a verandah with the dining room, all enjoying sweeping views across the Channel. Broad stone steps led down to a sunken lawn. The basement actually main garden level, was the nerve centre of the household -- spacious kitchen with dumb waiter -- scullery - ample coal store -- and of course plenty of space for bicycles. Bicycling was always a favourite family activity, and Wells loved to pedal with Conrad and other literary friends about the rolling countryside. Before the house was finished, night and day nurseries with dormer windows were built into the roof. Mathilde Meyer describes the school-room which was her domain. A bright room facing south, gay chintzes, wide windows overlooking garden and sea.

In the course of building, both architect and client had their irate moments. Not uncommon. One row concerned the door handles, so we hear. Wells thought them too small and set too high. 'How the deuce to you expect my young children to open doors with handles as high as those' Wells shouted. Whereupon Voysey no less irate, retorted 'Oh where <u>do</u> you expect me to put them -- on the floor?'.

Voysey was also a considerable figure in the Arts and Crafts movement which had learned to harness the machine to good design. He acquired the skills of giving the closest attention to every detail of domestic architecture and furniture design. He turned his hand to a wide range of decorative arts, from wall paper, fabric and rug designs, to table ware, hinges, locks, keys, to furniture and even prefabricated fireplaces. As in his architecture, he shunned ornamentation, except for the occasional cut-out heart motif. But

Wells admits he was not inclined to wear his heart so conspicuously, and opted for a Spade instead. Rather late in the day, Voysey was awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture in 1940 and died in 1941.

Wells was somewhat amused by the Sandgate hydraulic lift, which started at the foot of Sandgate Hill and which passed Spade House by viaduct across Radnor Crescent on its ascent to the Leas. He called it his 'moving staircase' and recommended it to the interviewer from Punch magazine, not without his blessing. 'We stepped on it with a light heart' wrote the journalist 'and some hours afterwards came to ourselves in the surgery of a Sandgate practitioner. The moral of the story or the Punch line was LEAVE WELLS ALONE!

Time, however, marches on. Spade House where Wells' family and literary friends played floor games, shadow shows and charades, has been converted into a nursing home. W.H.Smith in Folkestone no longer find it profitable to stock Wells' books. And it is a sad reflection on Shepway Council which constantly maintains the need for tourist attractions -- that Spade House unlike Henry James' residence in Rye, or Kipling's house in Burwash Sussex, could not be preserved and maintained for all to visit.

Linda René Martin.