

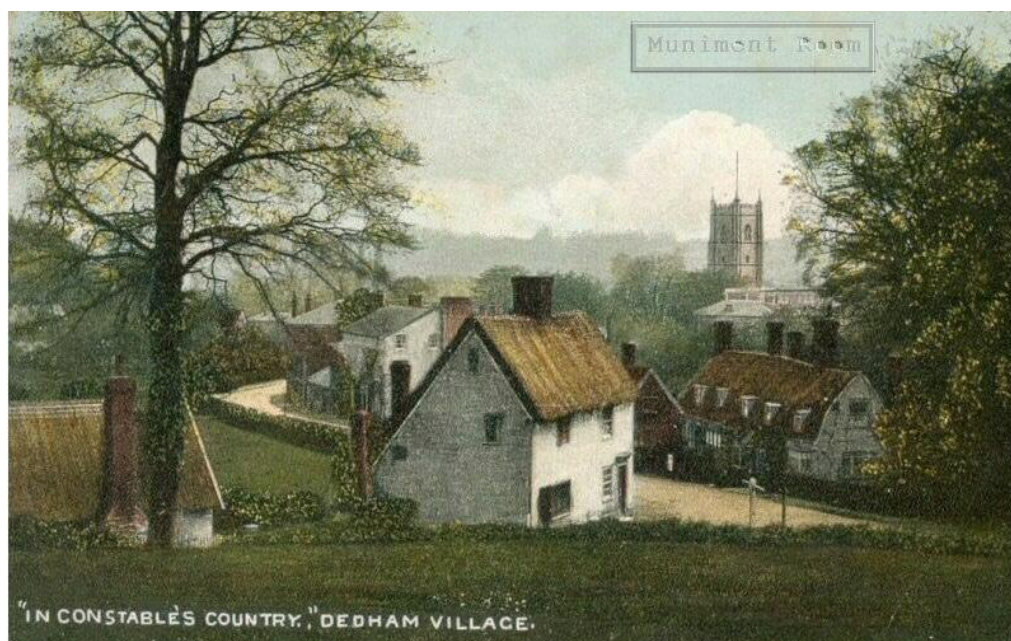
## Dedham's West End PART I

A popular subject for early postcards of Dedham was the view of the western end of the High Street with picturesque thatched cottages and a signpost set on a grassy triangle at the junction with the Stratford Road. Nowadays the hill leading out of the village towards Colchester is inaccurately named Shoebridge's but the name should be spelled Shoobridge after the family whose saddler's shop was in the cottage at the corner with a window looking down the High Street. John Shoobridge was followed by George who is recorded in the 1851 census as a harness maker living on the north side of Dedham Street. After he died the shop was taken over by another saddler Jabez Freeman (1854-1926), then passed to William Freeman who ran it as a general store and is recorded in the 1939 Register (of the population on the eve of war) as a clothing store salesman. Peggy Bullet told me that he had bicycles with carriers to take round his merchandise and used to go as far as Ipswich. He lived next door to the shop with his deaf and dumb brother Eddie who did shoe repairs and his unmarried sister who was in charge when he was out. I remember the shop when my sisters and I were children and my mother bought our Wellington boots there.

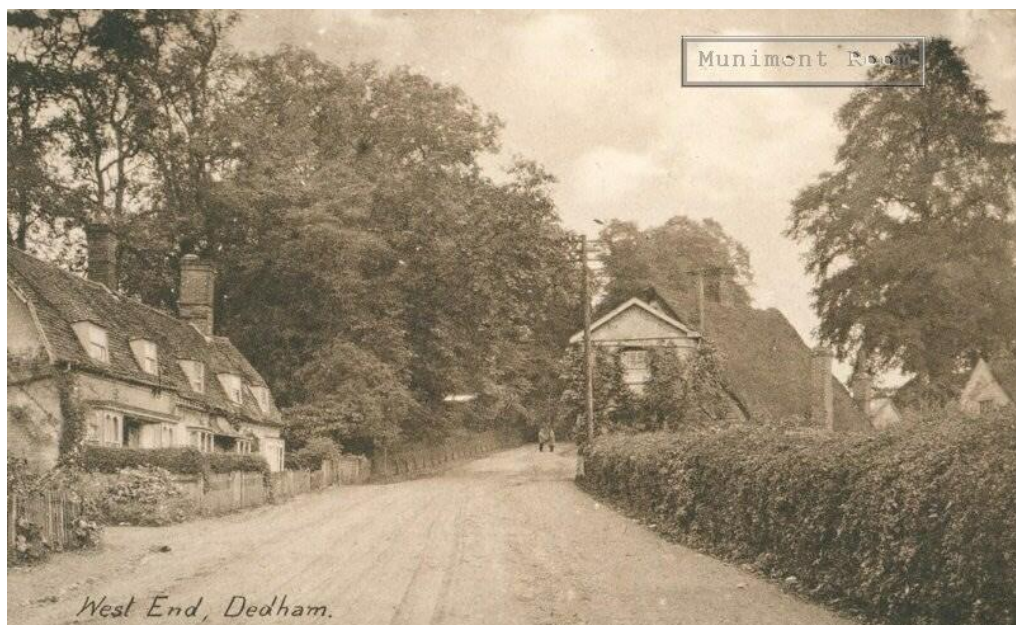
The cottage next door had housed another shop belonging to Jack Cade, a boot and shoe maker. His workshop was to one side and Ted Eley

remembered him mending shoes in it. That must have been in the early years of the 20th century because by the 1920s Doug Howe had a bicycle and motor repair business there with a red corrugated iron shed next to the shop. He then moved to larger premises in Mill Lane; by the time I knew the cottage it had ceased to be a shop and Mrs Lock lived there. Ted told me that the thatched cottage beyond it just round the corner (now Little Thatch) was the home of Mr Hitchcock who rang the Market Bell before 8 o'clock on Tuesday mornings. It was stopped during WW2 but I still remember hearing it every week into the 1960s. Just along the Stratford Road was Rose Cottage, where the policeman PC Hatt lived and later the Edwards family who moved there from a cottage in Mill Lane. In 1911 it belonged to the Cottees (see Part 2). In the 1950s this little house, which showed alarming signs of sliding down the hill, was bought by Richard Dupont (1920-77), a painter of horses inspired by Sir Alfred Munnings. Dedham architect Raymond Erith restored it for him, buttressing the whole building with a studio addition right across the back.

Looking east from Freeman's Corner towards the centre of the village there were no other houses on the northern side of the High Street until 1935 when the present row of bungalows was built on an open field. In the early 1950s the Telephone Exchange moved from the back room of Mrs Hitchcock's shop in the village centre into the small single-storey building it still occupies.



*Freeman's Corner in the early 20th century.*



*The West End looking towards Shoobridge's Hill in the 1930s. Cage Piece House is on the left and William Freeman's shop can be seen behind the telegraph pole.*

Mabel Cottee who lived next door at Inverawe used its garden as an allotment until the extension was built in 1972.

A continuous line of old cottages and houses on the south side of the street included both homes and businesses. Old photographs show the cottages nearest the hill with large front windows dating from when they were shops. By 1950 they had become so derelict that the local authority condemned them for human habitation and they narrowly escaped demolition. They were saved by Kanty Cooper (1904-1993), daughter of John Paul Cooper, an Arts and Crafts designer and maker of metalwork and jewellery. She became a pupil of Henry Moore but abandoned a promising career as a sculptor to devote her life to working with refugees in many countries including Spain, Greece and Jordan. On her retirement she was looking for somewhere to live not far from her sister at Tolleshunt D'Arcy and bought these cottages to restore them. One end became Ramplins, her own small house and the remainder Penny Pot Cottage (named after the footpath along the back) which she let to a succession of tenants. The whole row had formerly been known as Cage Piece House and she built her garage on what had been the site of the village Cage, a vanished lock-up for vagrants, malefactors or drunks. She paid the Parish Council a shilling a year in rent for the use of the land and Ted and Connie Eley said that in the 1980s the Secretary Betty King used to go and collect it. Ted still remembered the Cage when it was used by Joe Osborne, the coach builder who

lived in the house next door (now Wheelwrights), to stack timber for seasoning. He had his workshop in the barn in front of Swanston Cottage, which was later restored by the eccentric builder Harry Humm and used by antique dealer Harry Griffiths as storage for his shop in the centre of the village. Their initials HH and HG can be seen built into the brickwork on either side of the wide door at the front.

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*Glass roundel showing Ramplins  
in use as a shop, c.1900*



*Kanty Cooper who lived at Ramplins  
in the 1960s -1980s.*





*J. Cade Boot and Shoe Maker in the early 20th century. The cottage to its right was Freeman's shop. Note the grass triangle in the road.*



*Doug Howe's shop and the red corrugated iron shed where he carried out bicycle and motor repairs in the 1920s.*