

Gammer's shops

A prominent shop in the centre of Dedham in the early years of the twentieth century was H. Gammer's Stores in Royal Square, in what is now Loom House. Henry Gammer is listed in Kelly's Directory as trading from 1894. This is presumably the date when he installed his ambitious new frontage, substituting tall shop windows for the existing bay windows on either side of the front door, which was also redesigned. Like many Dedham shops at the time Gammer's sold a wide variety of merchandise, advertising Grocery, Tea and Provisions and also Drapery, Millinery, Clothing and Boots. The business did not last long here but the shop windows remained in place for nearly fifty years. They are clearly shown in a photograph taken at the dedication of the War Memorial in 1921. The present bay windows installed in the late 1940s were derived from the earlier ones seen in a photograph of Loom House (then Church House) taken in the 1880s.



The surviving shopfront of the former Gammer's Stores, seen on the occasion of the dedication of the War Memorial in 1921

In 1907 Henry Gammer moved his shop to Ivy House (then Ivy Lodge), where he lived with his wife, two sons (at least one of whom worked as grocery assistant in the shop) and two daughters. As well as his previous merchandise, he now offered Modern and Antique Furniture and besides the shop, he ran a Tea Garden behind the house. This offered Light Refreshments and Teas to cater for the increasing number of day visitors to the village at this period, who began to come out from the towns on bicycles or in horse-drawn charabancs.



Loom House (then Church House) in the 1880s, showing its original bay windows

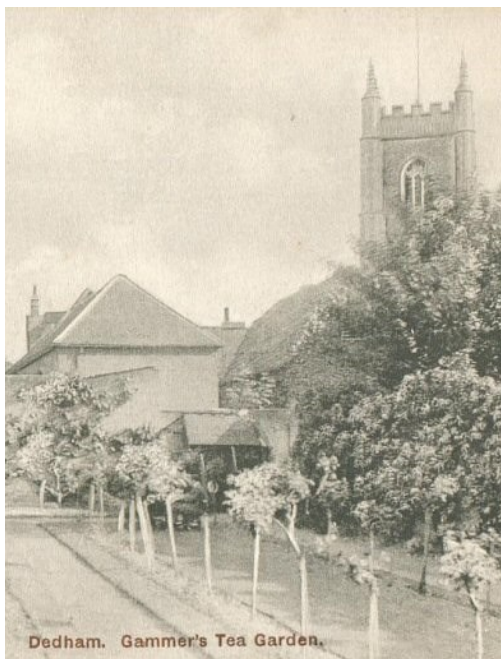
Ted Eley told me that at a time when Dedham's residents were mostly Conservative and Church, Henry Gammer was a strong Liberal and Non-Conformist. At election times he got so keen on promoting his views that he lost customers. Perhaps that was the reason why his business came to an end in 1913, when he ceased trading and sold the house to William and Mary Langton. Their daughter-in-law, the late Daphne Langton, remembered that a



Henry Gammer's new shopfront, probably dating from 1994



Henry Gammer's shop at Ivy House (then Ivy Lodge), where he traded between 1907 and 1913



Gammer's Tea Garden behind Ivy House in the early 20th century

condition of the sale was that the original sash windows which he had removed should be reinstated. One can still make out the shape of the shop window in the brickwork to the left of the front door. **@Lucy Archer**

Dedham Community Christmas Lunch



The Community Christmas lunch will be held on Saturday 4th January

The lunch is free to any residents or former residents of Dedham who are over 60. The

aim of the lunch is to bring together residents, friends and neighbours during the festive period. The Christmas Lunches have been held for over 30 years. If you would like to be added to the list of invitees for this year's lunch please contact either Miles on 07802889899 or Tracy on 01206 323921