



Cranbrook School – Historical timeline

1518	John Blubery bequeathes house and lands to found grammar school
1574	Elizabeth I grants Charter to the Free and Perpetual Grammar School
1640	Puritan Master John Elmeston calls for the abolition of bishops
1660s	Scholarly Master Samuel Hoadley writes 'The War of Grammar'
1727- 29	Demolition of old, and building of present, School House
1740	Earliest definite evidence of boarders
1812	Townsmen petition for reform of school of 'an USELESS FORM'
1840s	Under five local boys attending
1851-66	First reforming Master/Headmaster, John Allan
1866-88	Great expansion under Headmaster Charles Crowden
1877	W.W.Neve's School Lodge built
1885	T.G.Jackson's 'Big School' built
1888 -1914	Shrunken school of well under 100 boys
1895	First Kent County Council funds, and three KCC governors, accepted
1897	Old Cranbrookians' Association founded
1900	Corps founded during Boer War
1914-18	Eighteen per cent of 300 OC combatants killed
1921	War Memorial Field presented by OCs
1919	House system (Allan and Crowden boarders, Horsley day) established
1929 - 60	Headmastership of C.R.Scott; numbers rise from 156 to 262
1931	Cornwallis House opened
1939	Rammell House (founded 1928) moves to present site
1939 -1945	Under London flight path, nearest boarding school to Hitler's Europe
1939 - 40	Accommodation of Dulwich College Prep School
1944	Butler's Education Act, ending all tuition fees
1947	Barham House bought
1951	Voluntary Aided status: retained until 1988
1960	War Memorial gymnasium opened
1961	Scott House, for youngest boys, bought
1961 - 70	John Kendall-Carpenter Headmaster
1966	Squash courts and swimming pool built
1966	Decision for coeducation and 13+ entry
1968	Opening of present Crowden House
1969	Opening of Rootes Block and Lecture Theatre
1969	Construction of Dining Hall and Kitchen
1970 - 81	Peter Rowe Headmaster
1971 - 72	First few girls
1972	First Cornwallis all-weather pitch constructed
1972 - 74	Buildings including Biology and Sixth Form blocks
1973	First co-ed 13+ entry, day pupils by Guided Parental Choice
1973	Scott House converted to girls' use



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1974	Blubery House opened
1974	Present structure of boarding and day houses established
1976	First Senior Mistress appointed (later, Deputy Head)
1976	Queens' Hall built on site of former Cranbrook Police Station
1981 - 88	Martin Pavey Headmaster
1984	First Cranbrook party to Tanzania
1985	First Teacher and Parent Governors elected
1988	'West Wing' overbuilding completed
1988 - 99	Peter Close Headmaster
1988	'Baker' Education Act: Cranbrook became Grant Maintained (by 1991)
1992	Requirement of 13+ entry by examination only
1992	New Articles of Government: governors' and trustees' roles clarified
1998 - 99	GM status abolished: school reverts to Voluntary Aided
1999 - 2012	Angela Daly Head Teacher
2003 - 04	Medical Centre, Music/Drama Centre, Sixth Form Centre constructed
2005	Observatory opened
2005	Winners of <i>The Times</i> national schools Economics competition
2011	Change from Voluntary Aided school to Academy
2011	'Outstanding' Ofsted inspection
2012	John Weeds Head Teacher



Cranbrook and the Monarchy

The medieval Weald of Kent was sparsely populated, and the roads were very bad. Population and prosperity increased in the 13th century, however, and in 1289 Cranbrook became one of a number of growing Kent townships to be granted by king **Edward I** the licence to hold a regular market and two annual fairs – on St Dunstan's day and at the feast of St Giles. They were of real importance in stimulating trade and prosperity in the emerging township

Edward I himself, still a formidable and impressive figure late in life, visited Cranbrook at least twice. In June 1299 a royal progress took him from Wye to Charing, Cranbrook and on into Sussex; he spent one night as the guest of the de Berham family at the manor of Saxenhurst in 'Milkus', or Milk House, as the modern Sissinghurst was named. Surviving documents show that the king's party, as they travelled, spent some time on hunting and fishing, but were also checking local administration and imposing fines for the use of defective weights and measures. Six years later, in the summer of 1305, the old king, plagued by his troublesome son, the future Edward II who was staying in Tenterden, returned to Milkus, where he settled some local church and other affairs.

Edward III, who reigned from 1327 to 1377, like every other medieval monarch apart from his grandfather, never visited Cranbrook, but his contribution to the town's prosperity was particularly important. Astutely, he wished to change England's main export, from which the crown obtained customs revenue, from wool to the far more profitable finished (or semi-finished) cloth. Wealthy Flanders was the principal market, and would remain so for centuries. Edward in 1339 prohibited the export of wool, and in the years that followed he gave strong encouragement to the immigration of skilled Flemish cloth workers, including fullers, who were familiar with the damming of streams and the hammer mills which were essential in the production of the broadcloths for which Cranbrook was to become famous. In the century and a half which followed, while plague reduced England's population by a third, the cloth trade brought prosperity and fast, if intermittent, growth to Cranbrook. By the late Tudor period, the size and majesty of St Dunstan's church reflected the fact that no Kent town other than Canterbury was larger than Cranbrook.

Elizabeth I herself famously came to Cranbrook in 1573 in the course of a royal progress. With her massive train including leading political figures and courtiers, and hundreds of baggage carts, she, like Edward I, stayed at Milk House, where the hospitality costs must have strained the resources even of the enormously wealthy Sir Richard Baker, owner of the magnificent, almost palatial, Sissinghurst which he had inherited and reconstructed. The queen visited Cranbrook town, where she was appropriately greeted at the recently rebuilt George Inn and was taken to Coursehorn to see the cloth hall of the wealthy Hendley family of clothiers. The



townsmen did not waste their opportunity to obtain from her a precious Charter – still to be seen in Cranbrook School – establishing ‘the Free and Perpetual Queen Elizabeth’s Grammar School’. It names the first fifteen governors, headed by Sir Richard Baker and Glassenbury’s Sir Walter Roberts and otherwise almost entirely composed of wealthy Cranbrook clothiers, together with, in perpetuity, the vicar.

There were very few personal links between Cranbrook and individual monarchs between 1573 and the twentieth century. Indeed, as the bitter seventeenth century civil war approached, Cranbrook, with its strong puritanism, was more hostile to the policies of **Charles I** and his archbishop Laud than any other Kent town. Like the rest of the country, however, Cranbrookians were generally glad enough to see the monarchy restored in 1660, though the town’s many nonconformists were much less happy about the accompanying restoration of the Church of England’s authority.

A curious Cranbrook connection with monarchy existed in the early nineteenth century, when the extraordinarily versatile artist, architect and author **Thomas Dearn** (1777-1853) was the town’s most distinguished inhabitant, whose precious bequests to us include a considerable number of fine buildings and many invaluable prints of local churches and other properties. It seems that not until Dearn was himself an adult did he learn that he was the legitimate son, not of Thomas Dearn, the pottery maker who had brought him up, but of Henry, Duke of Cumberland, brother of George III. Cranbrook knew nothing of this, until Paul Donovan’s researches enabled him to reveal it in a biography of Dearn in 2005.

There is ample evidence of Cranbrook’s patriotism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as evinced in the successive wars as well as in the enthusiastic beer drinking at coronations, and the ceremonial planting of the turkey oak at the top of Jockey Lane to commemorate the wedding of the future **Edward VII**, at the time Prince of Wales, in 1862. There was wildly enthusiastic reception for Victoria’s daughter, **Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein** when, in July 1906, she came to unveil the great modern east window of St Dunstan’s Church, a memorial to the reign of her mother, who had died five years earlier.

In more recent times, George VI’s widow, the **Queen Mother Elizabeth**, paid a particularly gracious visit to Cranbrook School in 1956, as did the **Duchess of Kent** in 1974, the four hundredth anniversary of Elizabeth I’s charter to the school. **Anne, the Princess Royal**, was at school in nearby Benenden in the 1960s, and has visited Cranbrook subsequently on a number of occasions, the most important being in December 2005, when she opened the Weald Information Centre.