from Crab & Winkle - April

At the rear of West Street an old estate wall. The buildings impinge upon each other, a stairwell into the neighbour room, a cellar under a different space. What’s now the garage used to be a bakery (the house was a fishmongery).

§

From the Ham Marshes you can navigate by the church spire: Faversham’s open frame, visible from Hollowshore, the Shipwright pub.

§

In the stationers I view maps on the first floor, viewed myself by the security camera. The shop’s proprietor comes upstairs and pretends to do odd tasks but is really just making extra sure I don’t steal anything.

Sometimes it seems this whole small world belongs to the National Trust and you will be able to buy preserves and tea-towels at the kiosk afterwards.

§

back lanes to the Chart Gunpowder Mill

following the creek through Davington

then uphill to the cricket ground

overlooking the Almshouses.

Davington Pond, the allotments,

the back of a supermarket

clear nettles and dead leaves from the path

(these leftovers from last year)

detach of their own accord when opened)

§

at Knole, the weight of history,

the rotting canopy of a four-poster

those fearsome kings and clerics

– enough to bury [Vita Sackville-West](/20c/20c-sackville-west-biography)

were she given the chance

(how could Knole

be regretted?

adjourn

for lunch, Shoreham,

a fold in the North Downs,

the Darent

– no trace

of Samuel Palmer, *the most excellent*

*Mr B.*

a footpath, signed

*under ten feet of water*

further up the road,

Lullingstone,

its mosaics and hot baths out of place

in this landscape

then, nowhere,

the approach to Dartford,

chapels lost with infill

it’s Easter

day of the exploding coffee-pot

§

At Winchelsea, the site of a windmill destroyed in the storms of 1987, as the fallen trees of Knole, only a grindstone and some foundation slabs next to a trig point up above the marshes.

[Ford Madox Ford’s](/20c/20c-fordmadoxford-biography) house,

in a back street (the town

strangely without shops; a pub

that pretends to have lunch reservations)

Rye, choked with traffic,

a haze across the marsh

Bank Holiday: a motorcyclists’ convention

from Rye Harbour, Camber Sands

dotted with bathers, the nuclear plant

at Dungeness

§

cuttings, dead leaves

from two seasons back

bagged

tulips

now open, yellow,

streaked with red

a fragment of glass

under the end ridge tile

take the sun, before

it disappears behind

a neighbour chimney

signs of life: clematis

honeysuckle

the chimney shade angles

across the terrace, light

full on the wall

with the hanging rose

heavy scent of malt

from Shepherd Neame

*a fine evening*

*and a very quiet night ahead*

§

A duck on the garage roof, and one below in the yard (yesterday morning a group of mallards asleep in the middle of Thomas Rd).

The last light

in the upstairs bedroom

smeared windows

equilibrium

§

in the Anchor, end of Abbey St

reading maps of Brighton/Hove

and Gravesend/Rochester

positioning roads and villages

observed from the train,

the way their relationship alters

between view and diagram

black ink appears grey

on yellow paper

(smudge)

the darkness is absorbed

leaving a penumbra on the page

a long gallery between bars

appears as a mirror image

but the space is actual (the chairs

are different, a lampshade

not reflected elsewhere.

one clear window amid the frosted

views the street towards the town centre,

past the house of Arden

[(*Arden of Faversham*)](/16c/16c-arden-faversham)

§

Walk through the dull backblocks of Faversham parallel to the Whitstable Road. Cross the railway and through fields, rape, hops and corn, to the church at Goodnestone. The path loses itself on a modern farm. Ford a small stream, then up a hill alongside cherry trees and across the motorway to Fostal and Hernhill, its village square. Through the Mount Ephraim Gardens to Boughton and a bad pub (The Queens’s Head).

No matter how accurate the map there’s always a point where you get lost.

§

Upstairs at 8.15 am, the Kent earthquake. 4.5 on the Richter scale, epicentre: Folkestone. Then a walk from Selling station up through orchards to Perry Wood. Along a ridge, views out to Lees Court (W) and (S) over Shottenden, the rape fields.

birch, holly, rowan

Down a steep slope then up another to view an earthwork, then down into Selling itself, through Gushmere, and across the railway to Boughton Church. Then through a golf course to the village.

§

how diffuse the light, a bright blue day

with cold northerly gusts

move to the south side of the house

from which to watch, but not feel the briskness

the sway of a fruit tree two doors up

a small dog, nails

slipping on floorboards

the light hangs around

as I check maps, locations for tomorrow’s walk

the minimum of drear infill

§

Our house was once one half of next door which is now half of the door after, if that makes sense. The original wide doors no longer open, due to subsidence. This is the origin of ‘flying freehold’ (their cupboard opens onto the wall of our stairs; the internal entry to the cellar is theirs, the external ours – a new internal built subsequently). The old beams mostly salvaged from ships, hence the curved shapes and the slots for cross timbers. The ships predating the building a century or more (deforestation already a problem?).