

## Football Grounds in Kent Update



# Football Grounds in Kent

a visual history by Mike Fleete



In 1995 I published my first book covering grounds in Kent. I thought I'd been to every ground but I soon found there were grounds I knew nothing about and so research continued. I finally committed to putting the images, maps and information into a book and published Football Grounds in Kent in 2020. Of course, within weeks even more information came to hand, too late to be included! Five years on I've found that my online store allows me to share pdfs so have put all this new information together in this document. No doubt further images and discoveries will continue to be found so updates will be made so they can immediately be shared.

The main new source has been the historical layer to be found on Google Earth Pro. Each newly-found vertical aerial has been hyperlinked so when clicked you should be taken to the online resource. Where appropriate I have added annotation, with other items of interest I leave you to explore the years available and see what has happened to the grounds. Other aerials are from Britain From Above.

## Ramsgate

One aerial view that I missed when compiling the book shows the stand seen on page 105. The image is found in the Britain from Above archive, image code EAW009021, taken in 1947.



Britain From Above

A vertical aerial photo from Google Earth also shows the stand. We can now see that it had the angled ends as did other grounds in East Kent.



Looking again at maps on the National Library of Scotland website, which has Ordnance Survey maps from the whole of the UK, I now see that one corner was sold for housing. This explains the former use of the buildings at the entrance as pavilions. Luckily I took a photo of them a number of years ago.

1905



1946

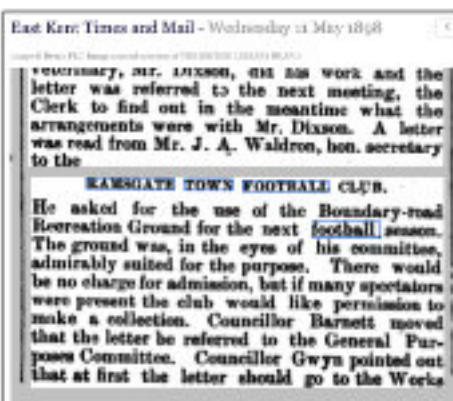




I do not intend to write a complete history of grounds in Ramsgate here but feel it is important to expand on the two meagre pages in the book now that online resources can be linked and properly credited. Previously images for print had to be paid for with some reproduction fees being £35 or more.



Ramsgate Town were noted as playing at Chatham House, a local Grammar School, from 1897 to 1899. Cuttings are from [The British Newspaper Archive](#). Even buying a month's subscription, as I did for this research, allows so much to be explored and discovered. Although not yet available, Screen Archive South East has a film of a game at Chatham House [click here](#). Ramsgate Town asked to use what is now Boundary Park. To add to later confusion the map notes it as being St. Lukes rec.



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who are privileged to attend the ground, and Mr. Wagon's kindness will be gratefully acknowledged by the members of St. George's Cricket and Football Clubs who will principally enjoy the concession.

**RANDOLPH TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB**

Members and supporters of Hinnegale Town F.C. will be glad to hear, on the authority of the hon. sec. Mr. J. Langley, that the club officials have been fortunate enough to secure a suitable ground for next season. The land is situated on East side of the Dimpleton road, forming part, we understand, of Messrs. Abbott Brothers' farm, and is the field nearest to Hinnegale belonging to that firm. Steps will be taken at the earliest opportunity to fully adapt the land to the purpose for which it is required, and the supporters of the club are especially jubilant at their success.

### HEADSTAIRS STUDENTS

Thames Advertiser - Saturday 17 October 1880

**RAMSGATE TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB**

#### OPENING OF A NEW GROUND AT DUNSTON.

The San José place of ground at Pampas recently owned by the executor of the Eusebio Yanez Escobar (Chile) was formerly owned by the Mayor Escobar, a Chilean, who had a large number of spectators. His work was accompanied by Alfonso W. P. Blackman, the Mayor of San José, and Father Aguirre, S. J., (Chilean).  
César Barrios was in the absence of the President of the Club, so he should be one of the vice-presidents, as well as the secretary of the grounds.  
It is hoped that he should like to support his best wishes for the future prosperity of the Eusebio Yanez (Chile) and in saying that words of the club.  
The future work of the club is so much that Barrios was encouraged in San José, as the presence

★ [Twitter](#) ★ [Facebook](#) ★ [LinkedIn](#)

Ramsgate Town had a new ground, know as the Dumpton Ground in on the east side of Dumpton Road. Somebody with access to field ownership may be able to precisely locate the ground, difficult as there is now no Dumpton Road.

East Kent Times and Mail - Wednesday 27 September 1966

**Journal of Management Inquiry 22(1) 3-14**

**OPENING OF  
Ramsgate Town New Football Ground,  
DUMPTON ROAD.**

[illegible]

**GRAND FOOTBALL MATCH.**

**MANFIELD BOOKS** (London, Bristol, holders of the Patents) Tel. 01-462 1111.

**RANSATE TOWN**

OFF A longer Wash will also be placed between

1. [Download the software](#)

By 1902 Ramsgate Town had yet another new ground! This is likely to be the ground on the 1907 OS maps. Later part of the greyhound stadium car park, newspaper reports referring to the Dumpton ground.

Thames Advertiser - Saturday 20 September 1902

© 2004 Blackwell Publishing Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 255: 105–112

At Dartmouth, this afternoon, an excellent game should be seen, the Town's opponents being Guelph hockey, whose visits to Kamsquats proved very popular last season. The Town's team will be as follows:—Hough (goal), Jockel and O'Reilly (backs), Solly, March, and Buzze (forwards), Ingram, W. Hanson, Oster, Clark, and Mouldie (goalwards).

The new grounds acquired by the Town P.C., which lies on the Harrow road near the old pitch, was formally opened by the members of the Trust on Saturday afternoon. A crowd of about twelve hundred spectators assembled, and the ceremony took place at the start of the grand stand. Among those present, in addition to Mr. Loewer, were Lord H. Weygall, Col. A. B. Baskin, Alkerman, W. P. Blackburn, J. P., the Rev. A. T. Bosile, Messrs. A. B. Barnard, C. A. Bucker, J. H. Hope, J. W. Woodall, J. B. Woodman, E. H. Hunter, S. G. Whitcut, J. W. Weygall, H. F. Gasteriehe, H. S. Page, Dr. O. B. M. Threlkeld, Dr. C. W. Scott, etc.

The proceedings opened with a short speech by



















East Kent Times and Mail - Wednesday 25 January 1939

Image of South P.O. design printed courtesy of T. D. M. (1939) (1939) (1939)

MEMBERS OF THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION and the Kent Football Association met at the Kent Football Association on Tuesday night to discuss the important question of the E.F.A. and the members of the Kent Football Association who were chosen to be the representatives of the Kent Football Association in the E.F.A. The Kent Football Association is the only one of its kind in the country and the Kent Football Association is the only one of its kind in the country.

### Sidelights on Sayings Doings & Personalities

#### IMPROVEMENTS AT THE WARRE.

I am given to understand that certain football enthusiasts are very hopeful of improvements being effected at the Warre Recreation Ground, this year the home of the Grenville F.C.

The suggestion has been made that a disused ground situated in another part of the town should be transferred to St. Lawrence with the object of giving the Grenville club's playing field a more professional appearance—to say nothing of additional comfort for spectators.

Of course, whether this proposal will be put into effect is entirely in the laps of the gods—or whoever else it is who decides these things.



Warre Rec has hosted football since it opened around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Maps show a pavilion, a term which was often used to note a stand. The aerial photo shows an actual pavilion to have been in use.

It's interesting to read of how the ground could have been developed had Grenville not been able to move into the old Press Wanderers ground.





It's interesting to see the images of the Garrison Ground, above in 1940 and above right in 1960. The story I was told about the stand being removed was clearly true. Pages 96/7.

A distant view of the Garrison Ground. Pages 96/7.

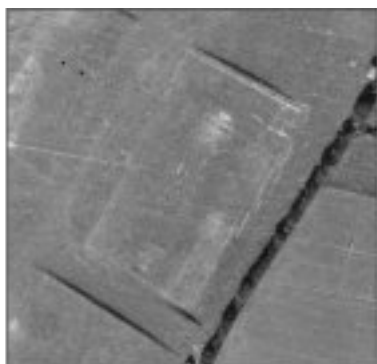




The Royal Navy Barracks. Page 98.



Britain From Above



The stand marked on a map in 1939 at Borstal is not there in the photo. Page 95.



Britain From Above

Shorts Sports. Page 94.  
Above 1939, below 1940.







Rochester and Borstal briefly used Rochester Greyhound Stadium.  
Page 95.



Original buildings at Chatham Town. Pages 92/3.  
Chatham Town in 1936 from Facebook, Kent Non-League Football.





The stand at Milton Barracks would appear to have had a pitched roof. Page 71.



Change dates to locate the old APCM ground within the Ebbsfleet development. Page 71.

Gravesend United, Central Avenue. Pages 64/5.





Thameside Amateurs had been mentioned in earlier books but not the most recent due to lack of either a map or photo. At last the location and pitch alignment can be seen. I was told that the turnstile at Crockenhill came from this ground and had previously been at Gravesend United and likely to originally have been at Rosherville Gardens.



Imperial Paper Mills was a ground I didn't visit but should have as the pavilion is said to still be part of the rugby club facilities. Page 71.

Harmsworth Athletic had a stand shown in the map extract on page 71 but this is the only known photo.





Cray Wanderers had more grounds featured in the book than any other club and again there is more of interest and new discoveries to be shared.

The Topham archive have many interesting photos [click here...](#)



The precise location of the Footscray Amateurs / Cray Wanderers ground was always a topic myself and the late Ian Fordyce could not agree on. My photographic evidence, as seen in the book, did not convince him as he had passed the ground so many times on the bus. The vertical photo proves where the pitch was beyond doubt, also that there was no stand and the players most likely changed in the club opposite. Page 184.

Cray Wanderers - St Mary Cray  
Rec. The changing room block  
pre-dates WW2. Page 184.



Cray Wanderers had a short-lived ground beside the River Cray at Tothills. By the time of the photo in 1960 a church had been built over part of the ground but it is interesting to see what looks like the foundations of the small stand. This can be seen in the photo taken from the Cray 150 book. Page 185.



Cray Wanderers played at Grassmeade, seen top left, for a number of years but the ground was well-established by the time it became their regular home ground. Pages 186-189.





Perhaps the most important evidence provided by these images is that the precise location of Cray Wanderers' one-year Northfield ground has only now been proven. Previously it had been thought that the ground was to the west of Grassmeade but the image above shows the houses already built. The actual location was at the Trotting track on the east side of the ground. The track is clear to see so it is now assumed the pitch was inside the track.

Pages 186/7. A Pathé film shows the track.







Cray Wanderers had to quickly find a ground when they lost the use of Grassmeade. This photo shows that a pitch had been long-established at their new Oxford Road home but that there were no other facilities. Pages 190/191.

Finally, the location of Cray Wanderers new ground at Flamingo Park and Sangley Sports playing Kent Police at Flamingo Park.





The aerial view confirms that the current Crabble football ground was built and in use with a stand in the 1930s. The post-war aerial from Britain from above is also of great interest. Pages 49-54



Britain From Above

During my research I unexpectedly came across a ground to the north of The Crabble in Dover. Research showed it to be the the works ground of a company called Stanlee's. A stand was shown on the map but this is the only photo I know of showing the stand.

Page 48.





Hythe Town's ground before being used for Senior football was completely undeveloped. Pages 72/73

The stand at Shornecliffe Barracks seems to have a barrel roof in the aerial from the book but does the photo above show a pitched roof? Page 61.

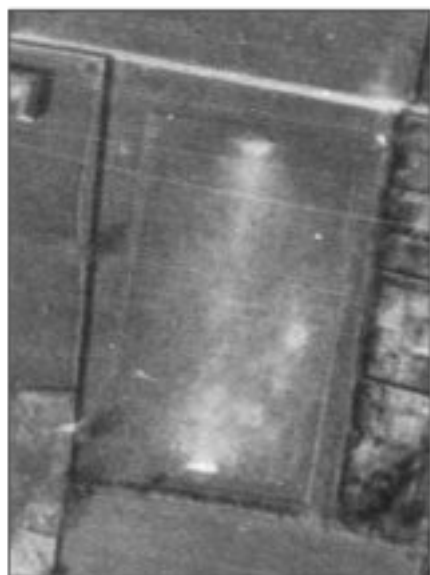






Tunbridge Wells Rangers' pre-war ground is one of Kent's most elusive lost venues. Quite why such a well-developed ground was lost remains a mystery, as it still seemed to have goalmouths worn in 1960 (right).  
Pages 133/6.

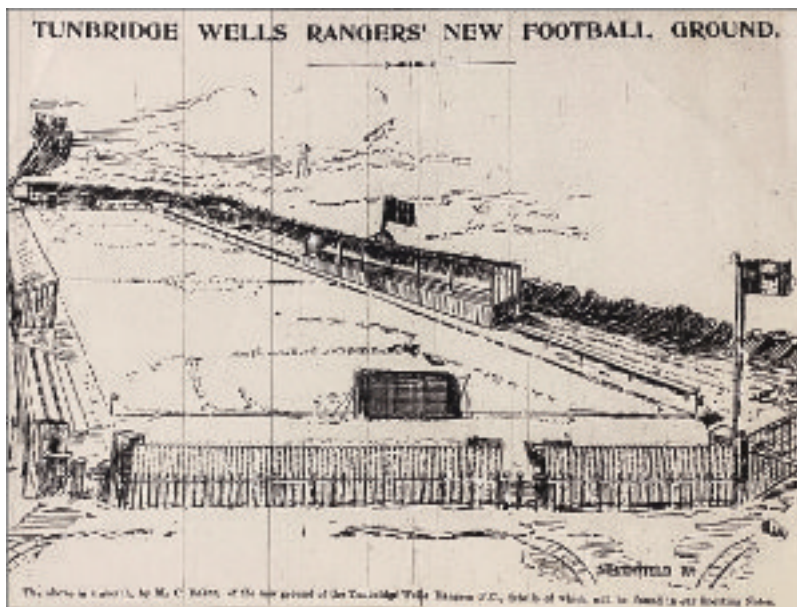
Tunbridge Wells' then-Chairman Peter Wager took me round the various grounds in town in the mid 1990s and had been to matches at the pitch diagonally south east of the pre-war pitch. Facilities were clearly limited so maybe the old changing rooms were used? Pages 133/6.





Tunbridge Wells' Eridge Road ground also seemed to have few photos showing facilities until I came across a film on the Screen Archive South East website ([click to link here...](#)), showing an Agricultural Show. This top aerial confirms the position of the pitch and the two stands both used for spectators. Tunbridge Wells historian Roger Bassett provided the photo above and says players changed in the smaller stand and made their way to the pitch between the two stands. Pages 133/7.





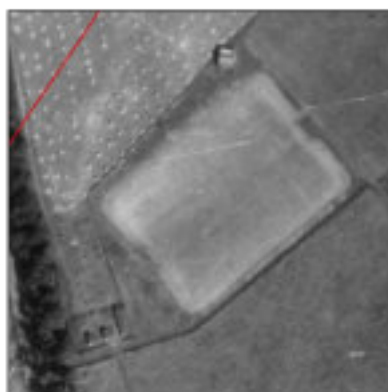
Another image from Roger Bassett showing the Tunbridge Wells Rangers ground from 1906-09 known as Combley Park. The girls grammar school was built on the ground. Page 133.

Down Farm, again from the Facebook group Kent Non-League Football.





The pavilion at Chislet CW which was only recently demolished was always the main facility. Page 47.



A small pavilion but no stand or cover were in place at Tilmanstone CW. Page 47.

Betteshanger Welfare's stand is clearly seen but it was not known that one end was sharply angle in. Pages 39-41







The cover at Deal RM had been assumed to be from the 1930s but it would seem that an earlier pitched roof stand was in use before WW2. Page 36.

Deal Town's Mill Road ground could have become an excellent venue with that bank! Page 36.



Britain From Above



The Sheerness Steel / current Sheppey Utd ground on the left and the earlier reformed Sheppey United ground on the right. Page 110.

Callender's Athletic, of interest to locate within modern redevelopment. Page 200.





The alignment of the pitch at Holmesdale FC is now confirmed.  
Page 161.



London Paper Mills Pages 31-33

The expansion of the cemetery at Swanscombe is interesting to follow in the timeline. The entrance block on 158 is clearly seen.  
Pages 157/8





Thames Poly's stand dates back to before WW2. Page 204.



Greenwich Borough. Page 206

Lewisham Borough did not feature in the recent book and was a basic athletic track in the past.







By the end of WW2 the ground at Bostall Heath 1945 was unused and without the old stand and changing rooms. Page 172.



Bexleyheath Town also had a cover on the far side pre-WW2. Pages 166-170.

In an update to the update the ground John Heath tells me the ground was used by Phoenix Sports and junior club Upton Athletic between the end of the war and the establishment of Bexleyheath & Welling in 1951. I'm then reminded that I recall reading that as well as Welling United applying to lease the ground in the late 1970s three other clubs were also interested.

These were Alma Swanley, Penhill Standard (both reasonably locally-based) but also Corinthian Casuals. How would they have fitted in at Welling? *Play Up lads?!!*

Danson (Bexley Boro) must have become a football ground when the adjacent Youth Club opened. Pages 204/5.





VCD Athletic featured in Football Grounds Frenzy Kent and do not appear to have had anything other than the pavilion which lasted until early Kent League days.



Phoenix Sports was also a cricket ground until the early 2000s. Again, in Football Grounds Frenzy Kent.

Another local club were Bakers' Sports, a works team from Crayford. Now home to Crayford Arrows, this is how the ground looked when Crocks played there.





Slade Green's ground had been  
in use pre-WW2. Page 197.



RASRA feature in my South East  
London book.

Darent Training Colony.  
Page 30.





Britain From Above

Woolwich Garrison Stadium Top 1940, above 1947.  
Page 202

Not included in the recent book, Bexley FC appear to have had some form of cover pre-WW2.





In my time with Crockenhill I found they had often played a team called Brentstonians, previously Brent School Old Boys, from Dartford. I'd be told they played near an old hospital and this pitch is nearby so could have been their ground.



Crockenhill United had played at Wested Meadow before WW2 with the goalmouths of the pitch, smaller than currently used, just visible.  
Pages 144-150.

Swanley Athletic / Town / Alma Swanley all used Swanley Recreation ground for their home matches. I knew of a pre-war pavilion in the sotuthern corner but until seeing this photo the actual pitch used was not know. When the new facilities were built the clubs used the pitch nearer the road to the north east. Pages 154/155,





The rarely-seen cover opposite the main stand at Sittingbourne, from Kent Non-League Football onFacebook. Page 113.



Britain From Above

Sittingbourne has numerous aerial photos taken over the years, these being too good not to share. Page 113.



Britain From Above

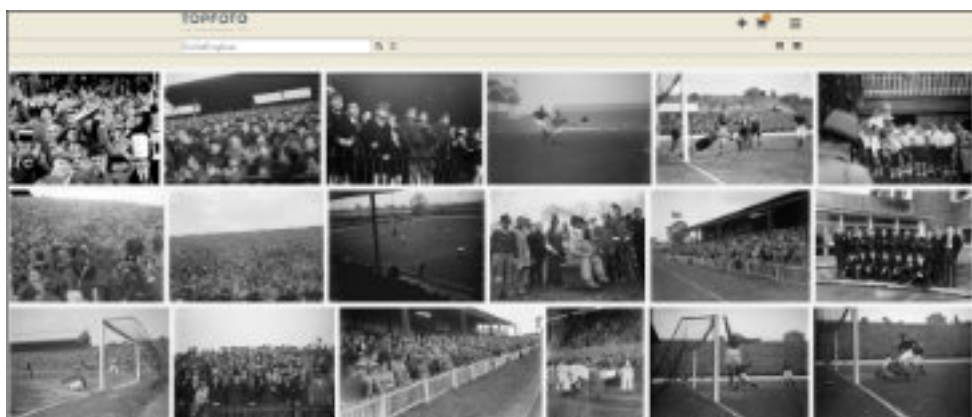
The alignment of the pitch at New Town Rangers, Ashford is confirmed by this image. Page 9.



The location of the stand at Canterbury Waverley is confirmed in this image.  
Page 15.

Brett's Sports / Canterbury City - just a nice view of a great lost ground! Pages 16/17.



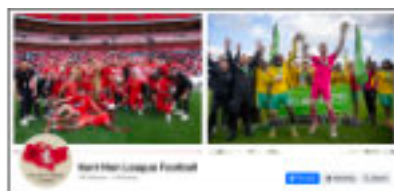


In the 1930s a keen photographer took action photos in the Sidcup and Dartford area, also at Millwall and Charlton Athletic. His company have an amazing archive, the image above links to a search of his football photos. Hours can be spent browsing! I included a number in the book, not cheap to use but amazing.

Photos listed in the Topfoto archive as being taken in Sidcup show a Cossack display in front of a stand. The actual location has never been established despite the efforts best brains of Kentish football history but I'd suggest that it is at Sidcup RFC.

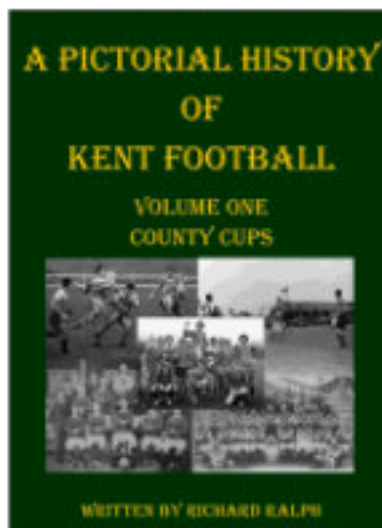






The Facebook page Kent non-League Football includes some excellent archive images, such as this showing a pre-war stand at Chatham Town included earlier. The old photos are to be found in a separate History folder, ([click here](#))

Richard Ralph has a great interest in results and League tables. He has published this massive volume which includes a large number of archive photos and is highly recommended for anyone interested in football in Kent





Two films from the Pathé archive show Charlton Athletic's Valley ground both with a crowd and also the undeveloped bank which clearly shows the old quarry sides.

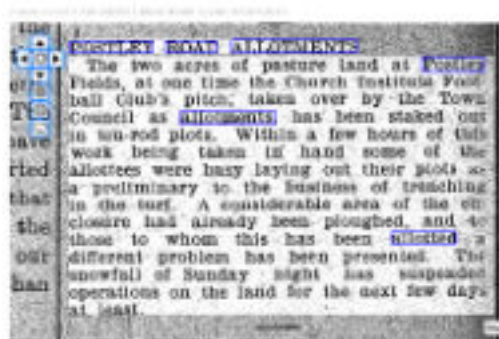
Charlton Athletic briefly played in Catford. The pitch was levelled with the banks and position of the pitch possibly visible here. It's not clear where the small stand had been though.



I'm pleased to say that another photo of the stand on page 6 appeared on Facebook confirming my identification was correct. The Unofficial Maidstone United History page on Facebook found the image below, right and confirmed my suggestion that my card showed the stand at Postley Fields, home of Maidstone Church Institute FC.







In 1918 the Church Institute ground was turned over to allotments. Although the vertical aerals show allotments further south I suggest that the playing fields of South Borough school are the old ground and that the allotments only lasted until the school was built. Maybe some on Maidstone could check this out?

# Maidstone Telegraph - Friday 04 May 1945

Image © HM Geog. Image created using the BSB751138405 843405



The 1940 vertical aerals actually confuse matters due to incorrect alignment, an anti-tank ditch being aligned with a road. The image below has been amended to show the area correctly.

The cutting suggests this area was used for the Church Institute rugby and cricket teams, no football being played by the club after WW1.





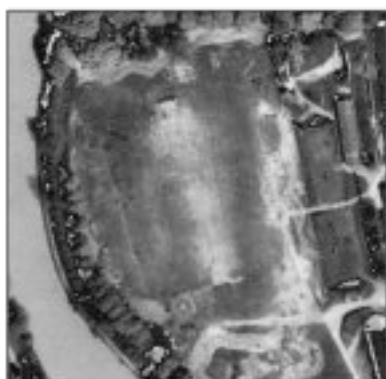


Maidstone Utd's London Road ground was previously shared with cricket. The pitch used by the reformed club had been the north east corner of the ground. Page 74.



Maidstone Utd's London Road ground is again seen, this time in a film in which it was not identified on the Screen Archive South East website ([click to link here...](#)). Mixed with films from Canterbury the vertical aerial below shows the tree behind the cover. I've also not seen this cover with a roof gable before. Page 74.





Maidstone Utd's current ground  
had always been a pitch as part of  
the barracks but without facilities.  
Page 79.

While around the Maidstone area it's interesting to look in at the  
Kent Police ground.



Although I didn't include any photos or mention of Metrogas FC in the recent book it did feature in the earlier Football Grounds of South East London and also in Football Grounds Frenzy Kent, with a map of the ground by the Blackwall Tunnel and the then-current ground in New Eltham. I knew that the club had also played at a ground off the Old Kent Road but was only prompted to look by a post on Twitter by Kent Non League Attendances, whose screenshot of a report from 1921/2 mentions a crowd of 5,000 attending a game. The aerial photo below is from Britain from Above, which was not online when I published the SE London book. What a ground!



The earlier ground is now part of the car park for the O2, and by 1945 had been covered over as part of the gasworks site which heavily polluted the area prior to the work undertaken to create the Dome.

