

The Vanguard Accident

by Mrs Ena Victoria Tulley (née Anscombe) (1897-1973)

The Vanguard, which belonged to the London Motor Omnibus Company, was on its way to Brighton from St Mary Cray and Orpington, Kent with a load of pleasure-seekers.

On Handcross Hill it got out of control, and travelling down at a terrific speed it crashed into an oak tree. Ten persons were killed and twenty-six were injured.

This was on 12th July, 1906.

The inquest was held at the Red Lion and while the proceedings were taking place, the coroner informed the jury that a Mr Bailey, one of the injured lying in the next room, had just passed away.

Local ladies helped the injured at the scene of the accident, and Mrs Boyd tore up her petticoat to form bandages, also Mrs Hermon.

The oak tree was cut down, and a cross was nailed to the butt of the tree to mark the scene of the accident.

When the dual road was made in 1935, the “up” road was made over the spot, and the tree is no longer there.