

BOYS

HALL

1632 — PRESENT

BOYS HALL – PREVIOUSLY ‘THE MOAT’

The story of Boys Hall begins a quarter of a mile away at The Moat in Sevington, once owned by the Convent of St. Augustine. This land was likely gifted to the Abbey in Saxon times by King Alfred. A local figure, John de Sevington, born during Edward the Confessor’s reign, gave his name to the area. The estate was seized by Hugo II de Montford after the Norman Conquest in 1066.

The Moat and nearby Church of St. Mary are listed in the Domesday Book. In the 14th century, Sir John de Sevington took ownership, and through his daughter Maud, the estate passed to Sir John de Barrie—a descendant of a Norman knight who came over with Richard I. Sir John served as Knight, Sheriff, and Conservator of the Peace in Kent.

The Moat remained with the Barries until 1588. Elaborate formal gardens, now barely visible, date from this period. The estate then passed into the Boys family through marriage. Their son, Edward Boys, sold the manor to John Alcock, the Barries’ steward. Alcock’s daughter later married Thomas Boys, returning the property to the Boys lineage.

After severe flooding, Thomas demolished the old house and built Boys Hall on higher ground in 1632. It was extended in 1833. While much has changed, oak panelling and Jacobean doors are thought to survive from The Moat.

Once U-shaped, the house was filled in during the Georgian era. Its lineage is marked in coats of arms above the reception fireplace—Invictas, Barries, Knatchbulls, Boys, Masters, Bonningtons, and Owens.

THE BOYS FAMILY

The Boys family (originally De Bois) arrived with the Norman Conquest, settling in Kent, Essex, and Sussex. They held powerful roles; keepers of Dover Castle, stewards to Archbishops of Canterbury, and prominent landowners—with a family vault in Canterbury Cathedral. The estate later passed to the Mersham branch and then the Knatchbulls.

Legend tells of a secret tunnel from Boys Hall to Sevington Church, possibly linked to Civil War tensions or smuggling—wool out, alcohol in. Two tunnels and a hidden hatch remain in the cellar.

John Boys (1626–1693), a Loyalist Cavalier, inherited the Hall and is said to have sheltered King Charles I. His descendants held the estate until 1760, when it was sold to Sir Wyndham Knatchbull—though not before a dramatic elopement and the Hall’s brief detour through other hands.

BOYS HALL CUSTODIANS

In 1762, Wyndham Knatchbull of Mersham le Hatch allowed his employee, Lawrence Banks, to tenant Boys Hall—its cellars likely used to smuggle wool out and alcohol in, especially during the height of the Napoleonic Wars.

By 1841, the house was home to William Scott and family. They remained until at least 1871, though his wife Elizabeth had passed by then. Later residents included Major Ernest Bengough Ricketts, believed to have bought the house for Catherine Hoskins-Master of Sussex.

In 1888, the furniture was sold on 29th May, and the property auctioned on 25th September. It was bought by widow Mrs Ellen Marigold, who died there in 1908. Her son declined the option to purchase, and Boys Hall was sold to Reverend Ernest Owen, a former headmaster. Advised by an ex-pupil in Malaya, he invested in rubber and gained great wealth, living at Boys Hall until his death in 1926. He’s buried at Sevington Church.

Since then, Boys Hall has been home to many families who have cherished its character and charm. Since 2019, it enters a new chapter as a restaurant and rooms, lovingly run by Brad and Kristie Lomas.



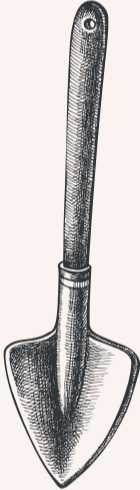
The New Boys Hall, Photo Taken Circa 1840



THE  
GOLD  
HOARD



SECRET  
TUNNEL



BOYS HALL TO  
SEVINGTON CHURCH



A RARE DISCOVERY

On 23 October 1970, Mr. R. F. Farrance discovered seventeen gold coins hidden in a broken earthenware flowerpot while repairing Boys Hall. The hoard lay beneath the floorboards at the foot of the main king post, buried in loose earth.

Declared treasure trove at an inquest in Ashford on 6 April 1971, three coins were acquired by the British Museum. The hoard was unusual: fourteen hammered coins spanning Henry VIII to Charles I and three milled coins of George I (1715–1720). Remarkably, apart from three James I unites—each with different initial marks—no denomination repeated within a reign.

Some coins showed abnormal wear; Henry VIII’s angel and sovereign were bent but largely unworn. The hoard’s burial likely dates to 1725–30, though its precise deposition remains uncertain.

EXTRACTS FROM HISTORY

Lilian Boys Behrens, in *Under Thirty-Seven Kings*, recalls a snowy March morning in 1925 at Boys Hall. A spade by the entrance hinted at gardening, but true warmth came from the house itself. The oak-framed hall, Jacobean doors, carved birds, and Kentish prancing horse in the fireplace still remain. The house is little altered—though a billiard room, servants’ hall and bedroom were added, and 150-year-old windows have since been returned to their original style.

Low rooms lead to the great well staircase and ticking old clock, up to nurseries and the dome-ceilinged principal bedroom, lined with oak panelling from the Moat House. Off it lies the powder cupboard and a dressing room with panelling said to date from 1480. One room, once used by monks, holds a niche for holy elements. Outside, the 1749 pump still stands, and in the garden grows a vast mulberry tree, said to be the finest in southern England.

An *Argosy* (1880) account recalls New Year’s Eve, 1779: guests in wigs and hoops dined on game and pudding, danced in the withdrawing-room, and servants joined the final Sir Roger de Coverley.

Boys Hall remains a house of memory.  
Original books available on request.

