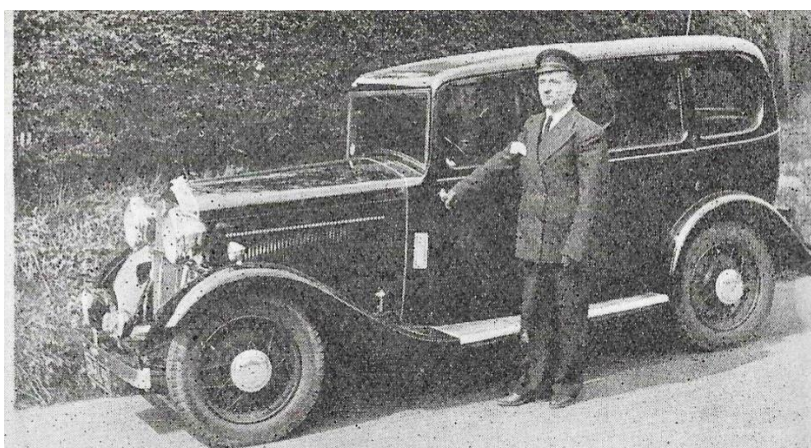


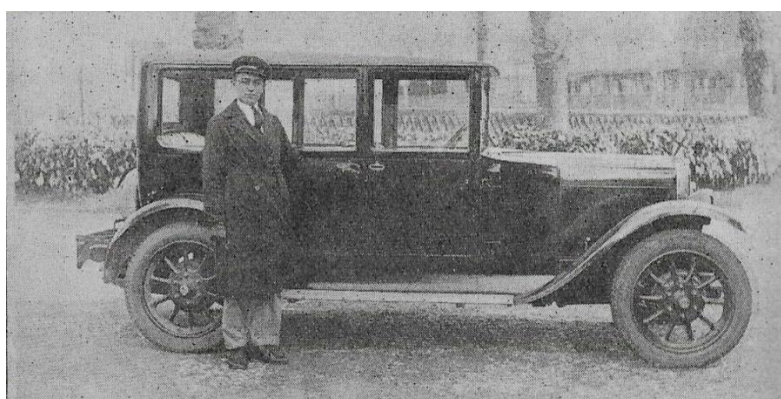
VILLAGE ECHOES

TAXI?

It is not always easy to get a taxi in Goudhurst or Kilndown but it hasn't always been like that. On page 295 of the Goudhurst Coronation Book published in 1937, when very few people had their own car, there are three 'car hire' choices.

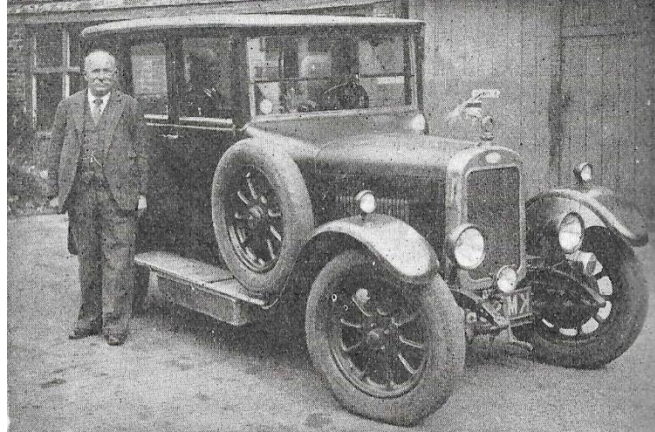


The first one shows Mr L J Prickett of Church Road standing beside his car and wearing a very smart uniform. The Pricketts were a well-known local family who had a shop in Church Road. Leonard had been born in 1897 in Goudhurst, the nephew of Sidney Prickett who was the son of Horatio - clock smith, watchmaker and jeweller who started his business in 1870. The premises were eventually taken over by Leonard who operated a cycle and wireless concern from there. In 1939 both Sidney and Leonard were living above the shop, both single. Sidney was described as a retired postman and Leonard, an engineer. Leonard was very involved in village life, always ready to help people with their electrical problems. He drove an ambulance during the Second World War and was connected to the Scouts for 45 years so that their new hut extension was dedicated to him. He died in 1959. The car hire business was obviously a sideline to the shop, which probably operated with just the one car.



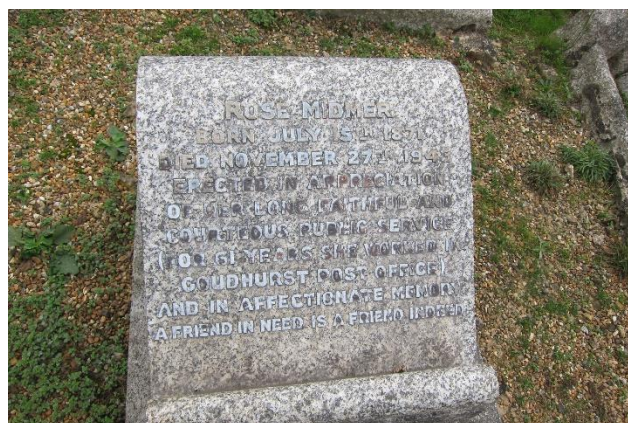
The title of the second car states A E Owen with the driver Cecil G Sales (shown above). Owen ran the Railway (or Station) Hotel adjacent to Goudhurst Station. To provide transport from such a strategic position was a big advantage where the only alternative to reach either Village would

probably have been by horse and cart or on foot. By the 1939 register Owen was dead and his widow, Alice, was running the business by herself. This means that Owen had died between 1937 and 1939. However, the Goudhurst burial records * show that the only Owen buried at this time (28.5.1937) was *James William* Owen of Station Hotel, age 70. A rare mistake by the author Alfred Tiffin. This record also showed that the newly married Cecil Gordon Sales, in residence with his wife Dorothy (née Grover) a 'domestic', was a gardener, farm hand and chauffeur.



The last car for hire featured A C Neeves at The Post Office. This was Albert Charles Neeves, born in 1878 in Southborough. He was apparently married but there is no trace of his wife Ellen and four children in the near vicinity at this time. His life seems to have been on a downward spiral from being a Life Assurance agent in 1901 to a Night Operator in 1911 and in 1939 a garage and garden hand at the Goudhurst Post Office.

His employer was Rosa Midmer a single lady and entrepreneur, born in Yalding, who had bought the Post Office in its original position in North Road. She had started her career in this Post Office at the age of eleven and gradually worked her way up to be the owner. She moved the Post Office to the High Street in 1911 whilst the North Road shop sold stationary and fancy goods. By relocating to the High Street, she had a more central visibility for her business and no doubt the car hire was another income producing enterprise. She died in 1943, at the age of seventy-three and is buried in Goudhurst, having been a well-loved member of the Goudhurst community. In her will she left all her money, £2595.7.11d, to Albert Charles Neeves, engineer.



* see - www.goudhurstlocalhistorysociety.org – Next talk 7th May 'The Hop Bine'