

EYNSFORD GUN RANGE – UPPER AUSTIN LODGE

500 acres at Upper Austin Lodge

1888: Site leased from Lullingstone estate by Hiram Stevens Maxim as a firing range for 'Maxim Nordenfield Gun & Ammunition Company', based at Erith, and used for the development of the Maxim machine gun.

1889: Maxim patented his first aeroplane design.

1894: Put large hangar on part of gun range site.

1896: Percy Pilcher came to assist Maxim with flying machines, & developed his own.

1897: Maxim's Company in difficulties, bought out by Vickers, becoming Vickers Sons & Maxim Ltd. with lease at Upper Austin Lodge.

1911: Maxim left Company, which became Vickers Ltd.
Gun range in constant use - 1000 and 2000 yard firing positions.

EYNSFORD GUN RANGE - FIRST WORLD WAR

1915: 21-year lease at £250 per annum.

Post-1918: Gun range continued in action after 1st World War and through 2nd World War, until closed c.1960

Huge increase output of guns.
By November 1918 Erith & Crayford Works made 3000 machine guns per month.



1st portable fully automatic machine gun invented by Maxim being demonstrated

DESCRIPTION OF EYNSFORD GUN RANGE (1902)

(Vickers Sons & Maxim Ltd: their works and manufactures, by Alex Richardson)

There is a range to test the accuracy of field and other guns, up to a distance of about 2000 yards.

A special iron hut is provided near the butts of sufficient strength to keep out any fragments of shells.

It is used by the marker to enable him to judge the position of the 'bursts' when fused shells are being tested.

The hut is connected by telephone to any position from which the guns are being fired, so that constant communication can be kept up between the gun detachment and the observing party.

The range is provided with a large butt and a massive firing platform, bedded on concrete, from which guns up to 3" calibre can be fired.

There is also provided an overhead traveller for dealing with heavy guns and mountings.

EYNSFORD GUN RANGE

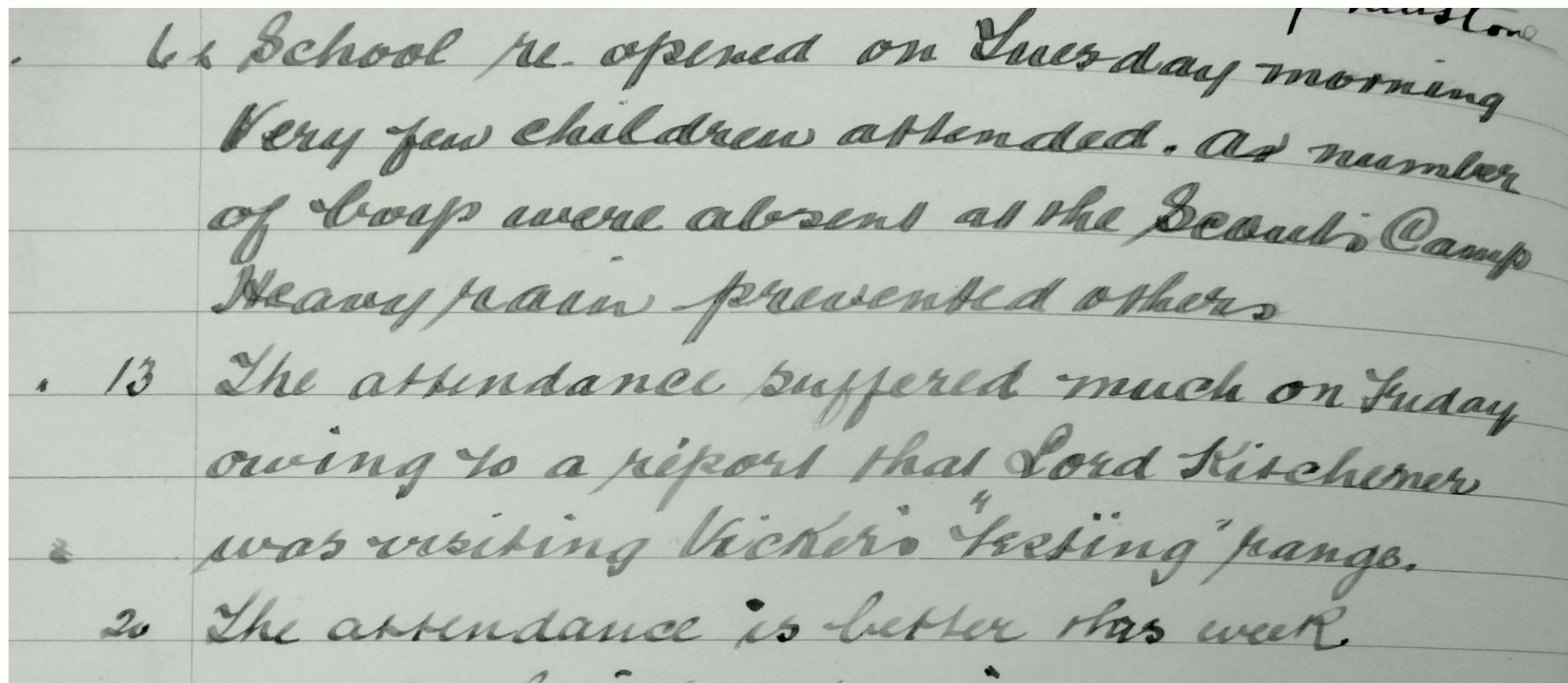


Looking north up the dry valley at the 1000 yards firing point, the 2000 yard firing point at the far end. Road to golf clubhouse on left, November 2013

EYNSFORD GUN RANGE

Eynsford National (Church of England) School Log

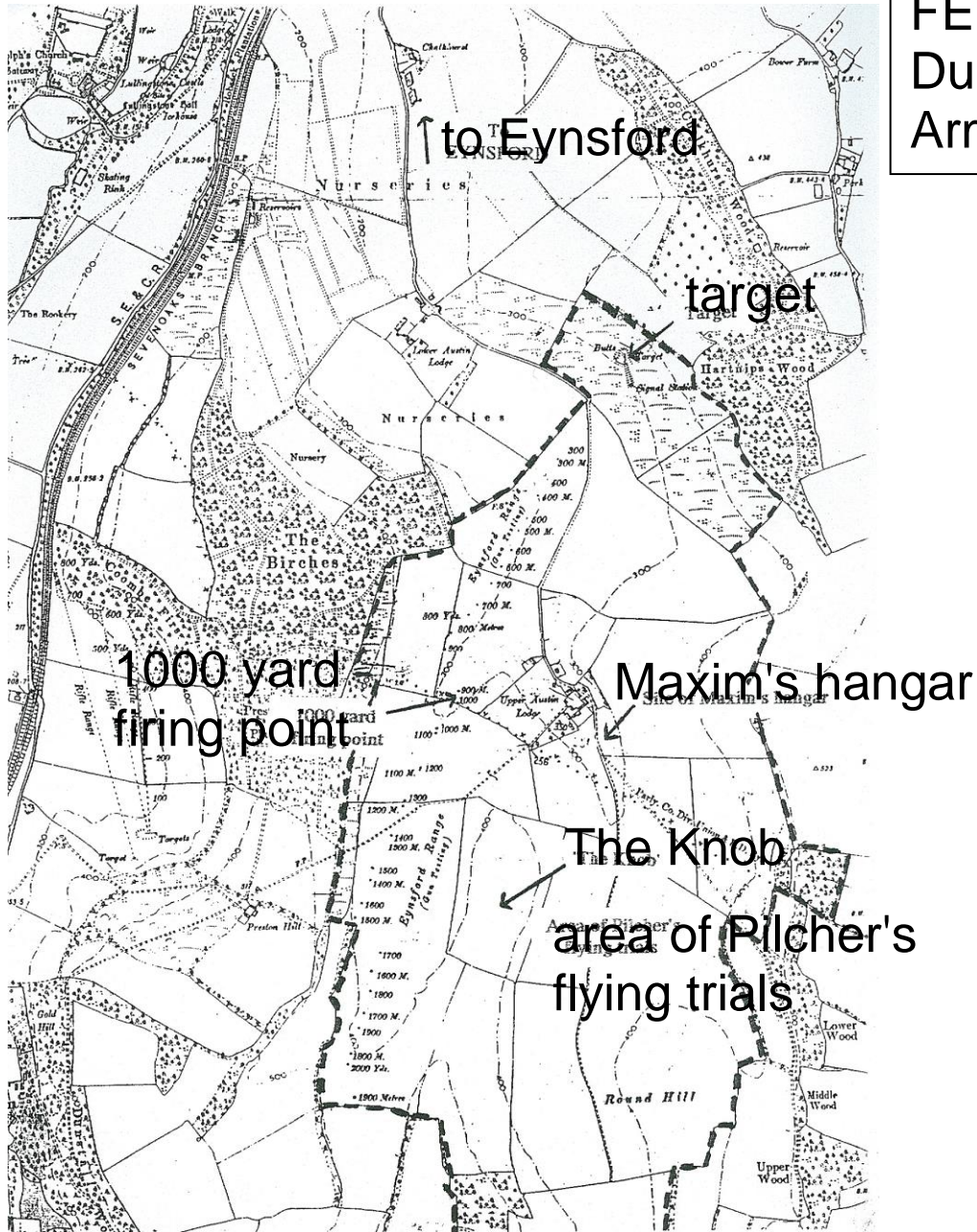
13 August 1915 The attendance suffered much on Friday owing to a report that Lord Kitchener was visiting Vicker's 'testing' range.



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FELHS no.25, Miscellany no. 3, W. G. Duncombe 'The Eynsford Gun Range: Armaments & Aircraft'



Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim 1840-1916, inventor of the 1st portable fully automatic machine gun