LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

PROCEEDINGS VOL 6 NO 9

2005

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SECRETARIAL NOTES

The following Lectures, Visits and Walks were arranged during 2005:

January 21st	Lecture: 'The History of Claremont' by Christine Dall
February 18th	Lecture: 'The Roman Settlement and Stane Street at Ewell' by Frank Pemberton
March 18th	Lecture: 'The South East Film and Video Archives' with Video Film by Frank Gray
April 15th	The Society's 58th Annual General Meeting followed by 'Local Inns' by Goff Powell
May 7th	Visit to the Museum of Docklands arranged by Linda Heath
May 20th	Lecture: 'George and Abraham Dixon' by James Dixon
June 5th	Visit to Claremont Landscape Gardens arranged by Linda Heath
August 6th	Visit to The Weald and Downland Museum arranged by the Friends of Leatherhead Museum
September 16th	Lecture: 'Surrey and the Motor' by Gordon Knowles
October 21st	The Dalloway Lecture: 'Surrey's Ancient Houses and their dating by Tree-Rings' by Rod Wild
November 18th	Lecture: 'Landscape Archaeology in Surrey' by Judie English
December 16th	Lecture: 'Leatherhead Then and Now' by Linda Heath and Peter Tarplee
	The Society also led walks around the town for the public and over Heritage Weekend

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Number 8 of Volume 6 of the *Proceedings* was issued in February 2005.

FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Letherhead Institute, 15th April 2005

The Report of the Executive Committee and the Accounts for the year 2004 were adopted. The Committee elected to serve until the next AGM and the Officers of the Society are as shown below.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 2005–2006

President:	LINDA HEATH
Past Presidents:	STEPHEN FORTESCUE
	DEREK RENN
Vice-President:	GORDON KNOWLES
Chairman:	PETER TARPLEE
Secretary:	JUDITH MILLS
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Librarian:	GWEN HOAD
Records Secretary:	BRIAN GODFREY
Committee Member:	GOFF POWELL

Leatherhead and District Local History Society

PROCEEDINGS

Vol. 6, No. 9

2005

CONTENTS

JACK STUTTARD
1916 - 2005

Jack Stuttard, who was the Editor of our *Proceedings*, died at his home in Leatherhead on January 23rd 2005. Apart from editing 15 issues of the *Proceedings*, and compiling the index for volume 5, Jack also edited several of the Society's books: *A History of Ashtead* (1995), *History of Fetcham* (1998) and *History of Headley* (2001).

Jack was born in Yorkshire, of a Yorkshire father and a Lancashire mother. He won a Scholarship to Hull University, where he read history and geography, and thence went to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he completed an M.Sc. thesis on *The Historical Geography of the Forest of Dean*. When the war broke out, he joined the Naval Intelligence Bureau in London. The brainchild of Mountbatten, the Bureau was a high-powered research unit composed of members of each of the armed forces, plus civilian experts. This was responsible for the production of Handbooks about countries that the Navy might have to visit, and included details of peoples, religion, history and cultures, coasts, climate, economic geography etc. They were works of great distinction, and Jack's two volumes on what is now Indonesia were accepted as one of the finest of the Handbooks.

After the war, Jack was for a while the senior of the three bachelor members of the Bureau who provided 24 hour intelligence cover for some of the Ministers. They lived in the Residents' Flat in the old Ministry of Defence, where they were looked after by a housekeeper. At the end of the working day, they had to be available there to receive telephone calls to the Cabinet, and had the responsibility of deciding whether the news merited waking up the Prime Minister or

the Foreign Secretary. While there, Jack threw wonderful parties, with excellent food, wine and conversation.

From 1952 to 1954, Jack was Head of the Joint Intelligence Bureau (JIB) Middle East branch, at first in Cairo but later in the Canal Zone. The JIB became the Defence Intelligence Staff in 1963, and in 1965 Jack was put in charge of overseeing the export of advanced strategic materials to the Soviet Bloc and China. This was highly responsible work and involved a good deal of travelling in both Europe and the Far East. Before he retired, Jack was pictured in the *Evening Standard* wearing his bowler hat, as one of the last in Whitehall to do so. He was a real gentleman of the old school, invariably courteous and helpful, a man of integrity and honour. He retired from the Ministry of Defence in 1981, after a long career in which he gave valuable service to his country.

Jack's meeting with Eleanor in 1957, through the English Speaking Union, was the beginning of both a lifelong marriage and a lifelong love affair, which brought great happiness to both of them. They lived in London for a time and in 1965 moved to Leatherhead with their growing family. Soon after he retired, Jack was invited by St John's School to become their Librarian and Archivist. He published a booklet on *A Short History of Leatherhead* in 1986 and another on *St John's School Leatherhead – A Short History* in 1998. He enjoyed collecting books, particularly on history, and loved mountaineering and music.

Much of the above will be a surprise to members of the Society, for Jack Stuttard was a very modest man, who never talked about the work that he had done or mentioned the very senior position that he had held in the Ministry of Defence.

I have compiled this obituary from contributions by Jack's brother Geoffrey, from his colleague and friend Donald Chamberlain and by Linda Heath, with their permission.

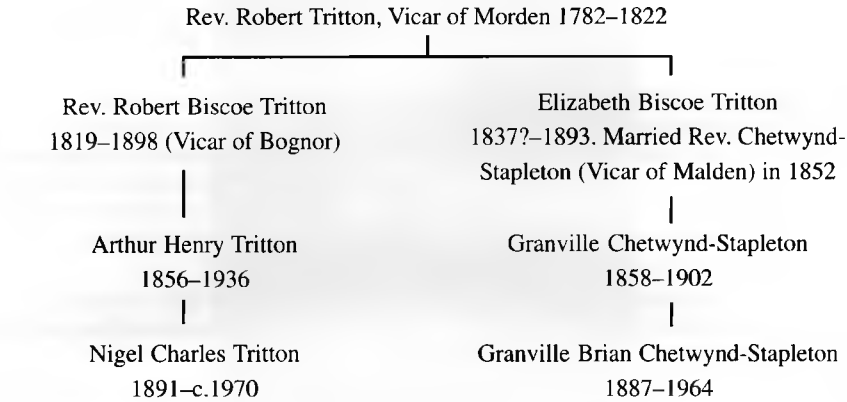
As his successor as Editor, I only wish that I had had the privilege of learning the job from Jack, for his achievements in that post will be difficult to emulate.

BARRY COX

OCCASIONAL NOTES

THE SHERIFFS OF CHURCH STREET, LEATHERHEAD

Lt. Col. Granville Brian Chetwynd-Stapleton was made High Sheriff of Surrey in 1952, and Nigel Charles Tritton was made High Sheriff in 1958. As can be seen from the family tree below, both were great-grandsons of Robert Tritton, Vicar of Morden:-



Both the Sheriffs were also connected with Church Street, Leatherhead. Arthur Henry Tritton lived at the Priory in Church Street from about 1880, and maintained a close connection with the town until 1918. His son Nigel was born in Leatherhead, and his father Robert retired to *Coonoor Lodge* in Church Street in 1893 and lived there until his death. Col. Granville Brian Chetwynd-Stapleton lived at *Stanley Villa*, Church Street from 1923 (and perhaps before that) until 1937. Another member of the family, Mrs Mary C. Chetwynd-Stapleton, wife of Granville's brother Edward, lived at that address from 1907 until her death in 1923.

Arthur Henry Tritton was a prominent citizen of Leatherhead. He was the first chairman of the Leatherhead Urban District Council and served as County Councillor for the town from 1904 until the end of the first world war. He was Master of the Surrey Union Foxhounds on two occasion, and enjoyed sailing, polo, cricket and shooting. His son Nigel was born at the Priory at educated at Eton, as were many other members of the family. Like his father before him, he served as Master of the Surrey Union Foxhounds.

Granville Brian Chetwynd-Stapleton served with the East Surrey Regiment and retired as their Colonel. He became warden of Whiteley Village near Walton-on-Thames, and is buried in Leatherhead.

(I am grateful to Alun Roberts for pointing out the presence of the Chetwynd-Stapletons in Church Street. The information in this paper was derived from clerical directories and standard reference books such as *Who's Who*).

JOHN MORRIS

THE MYSTERY OF THE VAULT IN STOKE D'ABERNON CHURCH

By GEOFFREY HAYWARD

Whilst serving on the Parochial Church Council at Stoke D'Abernon in 1992, I joined in a discussion about the removal of the font from the area at the west end of the church, under the bell tower, to a point at the junction of the north transept, north aisle and Norbury Chapel. The idea was to have the font in a position where, when in use, it could be seen easily by the congregation. The P.C.C. agreed upon the change, and a Faculty to allow the work to be done was obtained.

The next step was to drill an exploratory hole through the church paving to ensure that drainage could easily take place through the centre of the font pillar into the subsoil. The mason drilled one of the neatest three inch circular holes I have ever seen, through the York stone and a single layer of brickwork. Then came the surprise: there was a cavity beneath! The architect decided to lower a light bulb into the hole by means of its flex, and then lowered a stick to which he had tied a small mirror. This enabled him to do some sketches of what he could see. It turned out to be a burial vault with brick steps and several skeletons lying jumbled together upon the floor. Access to the vault had at one time been by means of a removable stone in the church floor. Colour photographs were later taken by the Diocesan Architect, by means of a small camera lowered through the hole and connected to a remote control. These later proved to be a great help when I was asked whether I would be interested in finding out more about the vault. As a member of the Local History Society at Leatherhead, this was a challenge that I gladly accepted. In the meantime, after some discussion about possible strengthening devices, the plan to move the font was abandoned — it was not thought wise to position a font weighing several hundredweight over a weak brick arch. (Though the church path at Great Bookham crosses the Howard vault, which has a similar brick arch near the surface, fortunately there are no heavy memorials resting upon it.)

The problem was that no-one had any idea who was buried there, which seemed strange at a famous church where so much of its history was known. For example, Stoke D'Abernon Church contains the oldest church brass in the country — a full-length grave cover of Sir John D'Abernon the elder, dating to 1277. To investigate the vault, it seemed a good idea to have a closer look at the area around it in the church for clues. Sure enough, in the floor nearby is a stone recording the burial of two children of Francis Clerke (Rector), dating to the 1660s. However, on referring to Manning & Bray's *History of Surrey*[1], I discovered that all the Clerke family memorial stones were once inside or near the chancel step, so there had been some movement of memorial stones within the church. To obtain further information, I wrote to the previous Rector, John L. Waterson. He confirmed that the church had been refloored with York stone in 1955, and that some of the memorial stones in the floor had been moved to fit in with the new paving. One of the Clerke family stones is still just inside the chancel step. The vault had been discovered at that time because, in adjusting the floor level between nave and transept, the brick arch over the vault was found to project slightly above the new level, and some slight shaving was required.

Unfortunately, although the discovery of the vault was recorded briefly in the church magazine at the time, no professional investigation was carried out, in view of the need to get the church refloored and back into use as quickly as possible. John Waterson said that only the mason entered the vault, in order to carry out repairs to the weakened roof. Black and white photographs

were taken, which showed about five adult skeletons, but no apparent sign of coffins. His account of September 1955 noted that "An old corroded iron coffin handle (now in a glass case in the transept and labelled 17th century) lay curiously on one of the steps and below lay five complete skeletons side by side, the coffins having almost completely disintegrated into a black loam . . . Careful search discovered fragments of the coffins – portions of blackened wood like leather and closely studded with nails. The metal seemed all to be iron, so corroded that it was difficult to handle, though the remains of scrolling were visible on what had clearly been the coffin plates." John Waterson's further letter of the 8th May 1993 states "There is naturally no record of the vault in the oldest burial registers, which suggests an earlier date."

A suggestion was made that the vault could be a medieval burial chamber corresponding with the date of the north aisle (12th century), and close to the position of an early altar before the Norbury Chapel was added in the 15th century. This idea, however, did not fit in with the previous Rector's evidence of a 17th century coffin handle found in the vault, nor with the fact that the photographs showed the brickwork of the vault as being English Bond. On referring to books on brickwork, I found that English Bond was first used in the 1600s, and thus the construction of the vault must date from then onwards. The *Victoria County History of Surrey*[2] mentions that some of the brickwork of the stable buildings of Stoke D'Abernon Manor house (adjacent to the churchyard) dates to the early 1600s. I examined these buildings (now used as residences) and discovered that the oldest part of the brickwork was English Bond, as in the vault. Much of the churchyard brick walling seems to date from this period, so the Vincent family, who occupied the Manor from the early 1600s until the early 19th century, were obviously very familiar with brickwork.

Had the vault instead been medieval, the materials used to construct it would have been of local flints or stone brought from another area, as bricks were not available then, except from derelict Roman buildings. Even if a medieval vault had collapsed at some time and been rebuilt in brick, one would expect to see the remains of the earlier foundation, while brick steps would certainly not have been introduced into a vault long out of use.

Why, therefore, was there very little evidence of coffins? If the burials had taken place 300, or even 250, years ago, perhaps we would not expect to see much woodwork remaining, especially if it was soft wood – which would have been likely, for it would have been difficult to drive iron nails into a hard wood such as oak. In addition, we do not know for how long the wood would have stood up to attacks by insects or damp. The church floor nearby still has channels in which lie the old central heating pipes of 1866. In one place, the channel for the pipes had been cut slightly into the brickwork of the vault. If a leak had occurred in the past, the water would have quite easily run into the vault through the single layer of bricks and lime mortar.

Furthermore, outside the north aisle wall, at least three soakaway pipes drain the rainwater from the church roof. These, too, date from 1866, and it is possible that water had previously simply dripped from roof to ground. The subsoil being very porous, and the church floor having been dug up for centuries for burials, any spaces under the floor would have provided a convenient sump for floodwater. Such penetration at very wet periods may account for one of the coffin handles having been found on the vault steps, after the coffin had lodged there after being floated there by the rising water. Alternatively, apart from the possibility that it had been kicked there by a coffin-bearer, it might have landed there if, for instance, a trestle table had collapsed and sent the coffin woodwork in the direction of the steps. There was certainly not much spare room

in the vault, as it measured roughly six feet long by six feet wide by six feet to the apex of the arch roof. (It was possible to work these measurements out from the photographs, using the known sizes of the bricks to provide the scale.)

The presence of coffin handles, nails and coffin plates strongly suggests that at least some of the burials had been in coffins. From 1667 to 1814, burials had to be in a woollen shroud (otherwise a penalty of £5 was incurred), but this does not mean that the shrouded body could not also be placed in a coffin. For ordinary people, coffins were not used generally in the 17th and 18th centuries; a parish coffin was available for use during the burial ceremony, but this would be reused again and again. On the other hand, wealthy people or the family in the Manor house would not necessarily be buried in coffins during that time, but it would have been unusual not to be so buried.

David Vincent, who was the Rector at the time of these events, thought that a vault in the church would have been reserved for important people. In reply to my letter wondering why there appeared to be no elaborate memorial near this vault (for instance, like the canopied effigies of the early 1600s in the Chapel), John Waterson's wife Valerie, also a keen historian, suggested that, if members of the Vincent family from the Manor house were interred there, they were likely to have been very impoverished as a result of the Civil War, and might not have been able to afford even a tablet.

Although all of this suggested a likely period for the burials, none of it was strong evidence. It would have been easy to let the matter drop . . . but mysteries have a way of either disturbing one's sleep, or occupying too much of one's waking thoughts! At this point, I decided that I would go through the wearisome business of examining the church burial registers, and all the memorial tablets within the church and outside it. Fortunately, I could at least concentrate on the notable persons of the church. In the end, because of a gap in the burial registers from 1678 to 1732, I had to examine the christenings and marriages for that period to get some idea of what was going on in the local notable families. It was an interesting study, which taught me much about early burials in the chancel and Norbury Chapel. Some of this information came from the church guide, and the parish magazines also contained much useful historical material. I also spent time in the Surrey Records Office, both at Castle Arch, Guildford, which held the older church registers, and at Kingston for information on Stoke D'Abernon and on the Faculty that had allowed the 1866 alterations. I was unfortunately unable to find the time to go to London, where I would have liked to inspect any Vincent wills for the 17th and 18th centuries, to see whether any mentioned the construction of the vault or burials in it.

The earliest part of Stoke D'Abernon church is Saxon, dating to the 7th century. So, by the 17th century, it would probably have been impossible to bury any more notable people inside the chancel or chapel without coming across many earlier burials. The last Vincent burial there appears to be that of Sir Anthony Vincent, Knight and Baronet and Patron of the church, buried on the 10th December 1656. A reference to a Vincent vault outside the west wall of the church is found in a letter from the Revd Parr Phillips, dated 10th October 1871. He had had reason to enter a Vincent vault found there not only because, in extending the nave in 1866, the west wall was extended over this vault, but also because some Vincents buried in the churchyard in the 19th century were then reinterred in this vault. There is a massive Celtic cross over this vault, but the inscription around the base refers only to the Vincent family as a whole. A flat stone in the grass nearby is inscribed "Entrance to the Vincent vault". Fortunately, the Revd Parr Phillips had

made a note of the memorial tablets inside the vault, which revealed that the earliest burial there was of Elizabeth Vincent, who died on the 22nd of November 1744. (Interestingly, if the vault was constructed at about this time, it would have taken place close to the time at which the Howard vault at Great Bookham was built[3] — perhaps in response to the same problem of lack of space for burials in the church, and the consequent need to have burials outside. The Howard family and the Vincent family were closely associated, even to the extent of intermarriage, as can be seen from an updated version of the Vincent pedigree.[1])

This leaves a gap between 1656 and 1744, similar but not identical to the gap in the burial registers, and compatible with the date range suggested by the coffin handle and brickwork in the vault in the north aisle.

In examining the memorials in the church, I had noticed the fine marble tablet on the wall of the Norbury Chapel over the Tudor fireplace there, which had been erected by the 7th Baronet, Sir Francis Vincent, during his lifetime; he died in 1795. This tablet had not always been in this position for, in Manning & Bray's *History* mentioned above, it is described as lying next to the door in the north aisle. On reading this, I realized that the 1866 transept extended beyond the original position of this door. If one marks this original position on a plan of the church, the adjacent tablet would have been very close to the vault in the north aisle, in which some members of his family were probably lying. Sir Francis' reason for erecting the tablet was presumably to record the deaths of his grandparents, parents and others of his family who were not already commemorated elsewhere in the church. The names shown are:-

Dame Rebecca Vincent, died 1726, aged 80, wife of
Sir Francis Vincent, Bart., died 1735, aged 90.
*Elizabeth, first wife of the present Sir Francis Vincent, died 1744, aged 24.
*and of Francis their son, died 1742, aged five months.
Dame Elizabeth, wife of Sir Henry Vincent, Bart., died 1751, aged 66.
*Sir Henry Vincent, Bart., died 1757, aged 72.
*Dame Mary Vincent, second wife of the present Sir Francis Vincent, died 1757, by whom he had four sons (Francis, Henry Dormer, George and Thomas) and one daughter (Mary). (Both George and Thomas died young: George was buried in 1753.)

The asterisks in this list indicate the names of those who, according to the Revd Parr Phillips' letter of 1871 mentioned above, were buried in the vault outside the west wall. He may have forgotten Dame Elizabeth, wife of Sir Henry Vincent or, perhaps, she died a long way from home and was buried elsewhere, as sometimes happened. Although the first two persons listed on the tablet, Sir Francis' grandparents, died before the west wall vault was constructed, their memory would still have been fresh in his mind, and he apparently wanted to commemorate them. It is possible that, at the time that he had the tablet erected, any other Vincents who had died before his grandparents were already recorded, either on tablets in the old church floor or on coffin plates that were then still readable in the vault in the north aisle.

Turning now to the burial registers for the period after the last burial of a Vincent in the chapel (1656), there are the following deaths that may have been buried in the north aisle vault:-

1661 Mrs *(sic)* Katherin, daughter of Sir Francis Vincent and Ye Lady Katherine (child).
1670 Sir Francis Vincent, Kt and Baronett and Patron of this church, aged 49.
1673 Mr Arthur, son of Sir Francis Vincent and Ye Lady Katherine, aged 21.
1674 Sir Anthony Vincent, Baronett, aged 29.

1676 Mr Anthony, son of Sir Francis Vincent, Baronett and Lady Rebeccah (died young).
1735/36 Sir Francis Vincent, Bart, aged 90.
1737 Mrs Catherine Vincent, wife of William Vincent Esq.

If the two in this list who died young are ignored as possibly buried in the churchyard rather than involving the opening of the vault, five adults remain. However, as we do not know anything of the burial of Catherine's husband William Vincent, it is possible that he was buried elsewhere, and that she was buried with her husband. That would leave one skeleton unexplained, but fortunately we know that Rebecca Vincent died in 1726—a fact filled in by the marble memorial wall tablet, though otherwise unknown because of the gap in the burial records. If these deductions are all correct, we can account for, and identify, all the five adult skeletons in the vault.

One further mystery was that the colour photographs taken inside the vault under the north aisle revealed a circular object lying to the right of the steps. This was at first taken to be a detached skull, since it was of an appropriate size, but I noticed that there were some circular projections at regular intervals around the object, which seemed to have reflected the flash of the camera and gave the impression that the projections were gilded. However, on ceremonial occasions Baronets could wear something akin to a coronet, and sometimes these are found in burial chambers[3]. Unfortunately the hole in the roof of the vault was sealed up before further close-up photographs of this object could be taken, so we can only guess as to its identity.

REFERENCES

1. O. Manning & W. Bray, 1805 *History of Surrey*
2. *Victoria History of Surrey*
3. S.E.D. Fortescue & E.A. Crossland 1991 The Howard Vault. *Occ. Paper L.D.L.H.S.* 4.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Rector and Church Council for their suggestions and help, and also to Michael Axten, who was the Verger at the time of these events, and to my historian friend, John Lewarne. The Revd John L. Waterson was ever helpful in answering my many queries, and also in referring me to past Church magazines.

THE ENIGMA OF DUKE'S HALL, ASHTEAD

By GWEN HOAD

When writing my previous article[1], on James Weller, Farmer of Ashtead, I found that I hadn't enough space to deal with the subject of Duke's Hall—the old farm that had once occupied the land that Weller later farmed. I am therefore now adding this postscript though, in putting together the few known facts about it, I find that there are still many unanswered questions to which it would be interesting to find answers.

Very little is known about the original Duke's Hall, which lay on both sides of the Rye Brook adjoining Ashtead Common, north of what later became known as Woodfield Farm. The Duke family (sometimes spelt Duck or even Duk) appear from time to time from 1381 onwards in manorial records down to medieval times, and their name remained attached to their former holding through the centuries. It was known variously as Duke's Haw, Duck's Hall, and finally as Duke's Hall in the Court Roll of 1679[2], and may have been an assart from the Common. In that same year, Lewis Howard, the Lord of the Manor, took a small parcel of land next to Duke's Hall out of the Common to build a barn and other outbuildings[3].

Duke's Hall is shown on the 1638 Lawrence Survey of the Manor of Ashtead, and the terrier shows it as tenanted by William Parker. Papers from Ashtead Manor contain two indentures relating to Duck's Hall[4]. The first, dated 1676, is between Henry, Earl of Norfolk, and Lodovic Howard, the other is dated 1680 and is between Sir Robert Howard and Lodovic Howard. Both refer to a "messuage or tenement called Duck's Hall with all singular outbuildings, barns, stables, yards, orchards and gardens in Ashtead abutting S. on Longmead, E. on Chaffers and Rummers and N. & W. on Ashtead Common, late in the occupation of Parker's widow and now in the proper occupation of Lord Lodovic Howard." The Hall is also shown on John Seller's map of 1690[5]. On 19 July 1693, William Duncomb of Duck's Hall, clerk, agreed to lease the Hall from Thomas Howard[6]. The lease refers to the payment of tithes to be made to Duncomb "so long as he shall live and continue Rector of the Rectory or parish church of Ashtead . . . all manner of tythes great and small payable to him the said William Duncomb as Rector . . . and all the tythes of wood that shall arise or grow due to him by ye fall or sale of any wood or underwood . . . and shall continue the farming of the tythes." The Hall is shown on Rocque's map of about 1760, where its name is given some prominence. Lowther[2] states that an eighteenth century residence was built on the site but, since the building disappeared in the 19th century, there can have been no structural evidence for his statement, and he does not refer to any written source. If it is true, the building must have replaced an earlier one, but we have no knowledge as to who built it or exactly when.

The Land Tax Schedules show that from 1780 to 1784 Duke's Hall was owned by the Earl of Sheffield and tenanted by William Craddock; in 1785, when Sir Michael Le Fleming was the Lord of the Manor through his wife, a member of the Howard family[8], it was empty; from 1786 to 1789 it was tenanted by Jas. Chambers; finally, from 1789 the tenant was Henry William Coffin.

In a document of 1778[9], Thomas Coffin, gentleman, is shown as the tenant of Duke's Hall, with subtenancy to the Beckford family of some 101 acres, which seem to have included the land of Duke's Hall and that of Woodfield Farm[7]. (A descendant of Thomas Coffin, Marilyn Handley, who lives in Australia, has so far found little information about him.) Duke's Hall

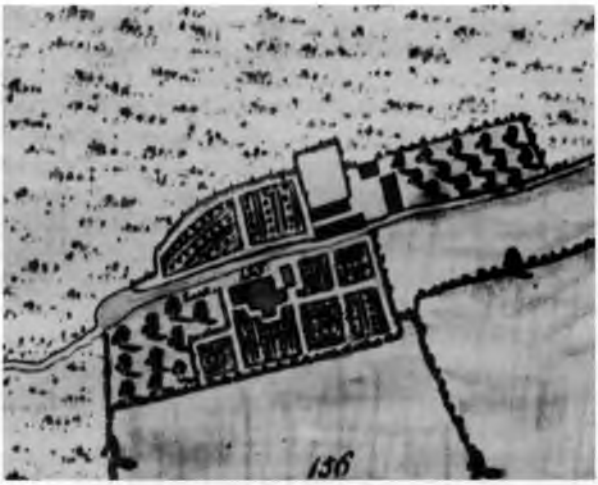


Fig. 1. Duke's Hall as shown on the Wyburd survey of 1802. The building lies just below the figure 155, which refers to the relevant entry in the terrier of the survey.

appears on the Wyburd Survey map of 1802 prepared for Richard Bagot Howard, Lord of the Manor, and it gives us the best information that we have about it. It was seventh in order of size of Ashtead's farms at the time, and the map shows a modest house with gardens, an orchard and five fields south of the Rye and further buildings or outhouses with more gardens and an orchard north of the Rye. Even though the name "Hall" would suggest a much larger house, Duke's Hall is only slightly larger than Caen Farmhouse on the same map, though its gardens and orchards (or woodlands) are considerably larger.

Henry William Coffin, a hop merchant of Counter Street, Borough, occupied Duke's Hall, presumably until his death in 1811, but he was buried at St Saviour's Church in Southwark. The relationship between Thomas and Henry William Coffin is unknown, but they may have been uncle and nephew. Also unknown is the amount of time that they spent actually residing in Ashtead. A "Mr Coffin" was buried at Ashtead in 1803; this was presumably Thomas. Caroline, the widow of Henry William, was living at Duke's Hall when she wrote her will in 1815. At the time of her death, in 1820, she was living with Maria Adams, a spinster, to whom she left all her estate and effects. Caroline was buried alongside her husband in Southwark.

This is when the house seems to have disappeared, together with the gardens and orchards south of the Rye, and the site became part of a field. Was the house in a bad state of repair after Caroline's death? Why was it pulled down so quickly? By the 1840s, Duke's Hall farm had been incorporated into Woodfield Farm, but had there been farmworkers' cottages north of the Rye before this? Certainly by 1841 there was a pair of cottages there, which took the name of Duke's Hall, along with the remains of gardens and outbuildings. They continued to be called Duke's Hall until a 1950 directory, in which they are referred to as Duke's Hall Cottages.

In 1841, George Hill, agricultural labourer, his wife and five children lived in one cottage, but the other is not included. By 1851, both were occupied: John Fraser, labourer, his wife and five children lived in one, while James Street, labourer, and his wife, both in their 60's, lived in the

other. We can assume that the men worked at Woodfield Farm, where Henry Wale was the farmer at the time. In 1879, when the Ashtead Manor Estate was sold in separate lots on the death of Lady Mary Howard, the cottages were included in Lot 5 along with Woodfield Farm. Described as two brick and tiled cottages in the occupation of Benjamin Stone, they contained two bedrooms, two living rooms, wash-house etc. and a good garden, paddock and orchard. Did this description apply to both cottages? If so, who occupied the other one?

In the 1879 sale, J.T. Smith bought the farm, which was leased to William Webb at the time. James Weller took over the lease in 1890. Smith sold the farm to H.C.Boyes in 1897; James Weller bought it in 1902. Presumably Duke's Hall went with Woodfield Farm in all these transactions. James Weller's daughter, Queenie Henderson, says that he rebuilt the cottages after he bought them. Though he may simply have repaired and modernized them, with his love of building, he may well have rebuilt them.

We know that in 1908 the occupiers were James Wellings and Jesse Gibbons, but by 1822 Frank Harris, a builder, is named as the occupier of number 2, and Harry Wellings of number 1. Both still occupied them in 1950. Mr and Mrs Harris had three sons, including twins Ed and Don. At the time of writing, Ed is still alive, and his wife Mary was the younger daughter of James Weller. When the twins were babies, their mother was ill and they were looked after by Lady Gascoigne, Bamber Gascoigne's grandmother.

We get a glimpse of what life was like living on the edge of the Common, with no mains electricity or water. The orchard was used for the occasional Scout camp. As there was no electricity, oil lamps were used, and there was a dunnekin (lavatory) at the end of the garden, there being no main drainage. The garden and orchard were full of fruit and vegetables. Mrs Harris, who walked everywhere, gathered fruit, dandelions and anything else she could find on

Fig. 2. Duke's Hall Cottages viewed from Broadhurst, then under construction in the 1930s. Ed Harris is in his car.

the Common, to make into wine. Queenie's daughter, Janice, remembers she loved visiting the Harris's, which was like going back in time. No doubt the occupiers of the other cottages near the Common lived a similar kind of life. As for the earlier occupiers of Duke's Hall itself, it seems strange that middle-class people chose to live in such a remote spot.

When James Weller began to sell off the farm to developers in the 1930s, the fields north of the railway were bought up by Bergs for their Ashtead Woods Estate, and so Broadhurst, Culverhay and Overdale began to be built. The Harris family and their neighbours were allowed to stay in their cottages, and a narrow strip of land between nos 47 and 51 Broadhurst were left for access. Before the development, a footpath ran diagonally across the field behind the railway line to the cottages. Was this also a way to reach the old Duke's Hall? There was a little footbridge across the Rye, and a kind of sluice to the west of the site. After Broadhurst was built, there was another little bridge over the Rye to give access to the cottages. They had a large area of garden and orchard to the east of them, roughly comparable to that shown on the 1802 map. The area to the west was incorporated into the gardens behind the Broadhurst houses, so that those gardens are exceptionally long, with the Rye running through them.

Mrs Harris died in the 1967, leaving Mr Harris alone in his cottage, the other cottage being unoccupied by this time. Apart from piped drinking water, he never obtained any of the mains services (gas, electricity or drainage), but he was helped by members of the family, and by neighbours and friends. Eventually blind and deaf, he died in Leatherhead Hospital in 1975, aged 91.

The cottages were finally demolished in the early 1970s, and an extra house was fitted into the gap in Broadhurst. Those houses which had not done so before now got their longer gardens. The foundations of the cottages are still traceable in dry weather in the lawns of numbers 47 and 49, together with intriguing lumps of stone lying about. If they could talk, how far back could they take us? The northern boundaries of the gardens of the first few houses in Broadhurst echo the ancient boundary of Duke's Hall. Thus the centuries-old holding of the Hall has left its footprint on modern Ashtead, but the site is now under a pre-war housing estate.

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THE METROPOLITAN DRINKING FOUNTAIN AND CATTLE TROUGH ASSOCIATION

By PETER TARPLEE

In 2002, Alun Roberts wrote an article[1] giving details of the history of the horse trough which is now in Church Street, Leatherhead. This had been offered to the Society but, when a group of us went to look at it in the garden in *Orchardleigh*, we decided that the object was too large and far too heavy for us to get it into the museum garden. We directed the owner to Mole Valley District Council, who thankfully found an ideal site for it, as well as the manpower to get it there. This episode led me to look into the background of drinking fountains and cattle troughs, many of which were around some years ago but are fast disappearing from our towns.

The Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association was set up in response to the enormous need for the provision of clean water for drinking, both for humans and animals. At that time, as well as horses drawing vehicles requiring refreshment, many other animals destined for markets or butchers were driven along the streets, and their need was equally great. The needs have changed over time, and there is not the same requirement for pure water in the streets, but the Association is still active providing drinking facilities at schools and playgrounds and also in supporting the restoration of existing fountains. To quote from a resolution in April 1859 at the first meeting of the Association:

> *Whereas the erection of free drinking fountains, yielding pure cold water, would confer a boon on all classes, and especially the poor, an Association be formed for erecting and promoting the erection of such fountains in the Metropolis, to be styled "The Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountain Association", and that such contributions be received for the purposes of the Association. That no fountain be erected or promoted by the Association which shall not be so constructed as to ensure by filters, or other suitable means, the perfect purity and coldness of the water.*

The Society was founded by Samuel Gurney, a Member of Parliament for Penrhyn and Falmouth and a nephew of Elizabeth Fry. He followed an example in Liverpool and, being aware of the dangers of contaminated wells and pumps and the consequent difficulty of getting pure drinking water, he sought the provision of drinking facilities, first for humans and later for dogs, cattle and horses. In 1867 the Association was called the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association, although it had long ceased to operate in the metropolis alone. In fact, at the beginning of the twentieth century a combined drinking fountain and trough presented to Tokyo was commended for its artistic merit. In 1866, by which time the association had erected over 100 fountains, the Medical Officer of Health of the City of London reported that wells of the public meat markets are 'charged with the peculiar filth of the localities' and that 'the wells of the city churches and their neighbourhoods are strongly tainted with saltpetre and ammonia—the final by-product of the decay of animal matter in neighbouring graveyards'.

The first public drinking fountain erected by the Association was on the boundary of St Sepulchre's Church, Snow Hill, Holborn and was paid for entirely by Samuel Gurney. This fountain, inscribed 'The First Public Drinking Fountain' still remains in place and even retains its original bronze cups and chains. Within a short time this fountain was being used by over 7,000 people a day. After a few years, and with the added support of the RSPCA, troughs were added for dogs, horses and cattle and, as we have seen, the name of the association changed

accordingly. Not all local authorities were helpful, however. For example, St Olave's District Board of Works resolved to decline the offer of a drinking trough 'inasmuch as such erections in the public streets would lead to frequent obstruction to traffic'. Many fountains had money boxes attached in the hope that grateful drinkers or animal owners would make a voluntary offering. Some troughs were outside public houses and carried inscriptions such as:-

All that water their horses here must pay a penny or have some beer

Nevertheless it was soon found that the donations were insufficient to make it worth collecting the money.

As many pumps and wells were contaminated, the fountains always obtained their water from the mains. Often favourable rates were negotiated, for example: the Chelsea Company charged a reduced rate of 3d per 1,000 gallons; the New River Company and West Middlesex Company gave a free supply provided spring taps were used, if not they would charge 6d per 1,000 gallons; the Grand Junction Company gave a free supply subject to 'proper regulation of the apparatus', and the East London Company charged 6d per 1,000 gallons.

By the turn of the century there were 500 troughs being used by 'parched and wearied' animals in the London area alone, 50,000 times a day. By now the scepticism of local authorities had disappeared and the installation of troughs was positively encouraged by the London County and other Councils. Sometimes the Association made a contribution towards the cost and sometimes it bore the whole cost. These horse troughs were the filling stations of their day, in fact, cabbies carried maps marked to show the location of troughs throughout the capital. The application spread from London to other parts of the United Kingdom and then to France, Italy, Morocco, Algeria, India, West Indies, Australia and South Africa. After one hundred years the number of fountains for humans was over 2,300 and for animals well over 4,000. The cups attached by chains were insanitary (and I suspect they often went missing), and for a number of years now drinking fountains have used jets.

Fig. 1. The elaborate drinking fountain on Colley Hill, north-west of Reigate.

As well as the provision of drinking water, the Association had two aims: temperance and evangelism. At the time that the association began, temperance societies were very active but they offered no realistic alternative to alcoholic drink. Remember that at that time tea and coffee were expensive luxuries beyond the reach of the working masses. In 1935

the British Women's Total Abstinence Union erected a drinking fountain in Manor Park, Sutton and it remained there until quite recently.

An interesting drinking fountain stands on Colley Hill, near Reigate (fig. 1). This is a large hexagonal classical pavilion erected as a memorial to Captain George Simpson. It has a shallow saucer-shaped dome embellished with a mosaic showing the exact position of the planets on 1st December 1909. Around the pavilion are the following words:-

> *Presented to the Corporation of the Borough of Reigate for the benefit of the public by Lieutenant-Colonel Robert William Inglis in 1909*

Quoting from a contemporary copy of the local paper:-

> *It is hoped that the young men and maidens of Reigate can refresh themselves after their toil in climbing up from the town, preparatory to exchanging their sweet confidences, as in old classical times.*

As stated above, the first drinking fountain given by Samuel Gurney still remains in place in the railings of St Sepulchre's Church, Snow Hill and, although the capital has lost a lot of these features, there still remain many to be seen. I will note the High Victorian Gothic monument presented by Charles Buxton MP as a memorial to his father, Sir Thomas Buxton and others who were instrumental in achieving the emancipation of slaves in the British Empire. This was erected in Great George Street in 1865 but was moved to its present site in Victoria Tower Gardens in 1957. The spire of the monument is decorated with brightly-coloured enamelled iron plates.

In Broad Walk, Regent's Park stands the extremely large Readymoney Fountain which contains 10 tons of Sicilian marble and 4 tons of red Aberdeen granite. It was named after the donor, Cowasjee Jehangheer Readymoney, a Bombay philanthropist, as a token of his gratitude to the people of England for the protection enjoyed by him and his fellow Parsees under British rule in India. Close by in Gloucester Gate there is an attractive fountain with a bronze statue of a milkmaid and her pail with the following inscription:-

> *St Pancras, Middlesex. This fountain and the works connected therewith were presented to the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association on the 3rd day of August 1878 by Matilda, wife of Richard Kent Esq. Junior, Churchwarden 1878.*

The figure cast in bronze was designed by Joseph Durham ARA.

Fig. 2. The Burdett-Coutts drinking fountain in Victoria Park, Hackney.

Not far from Gloucester Gate, in Albany Street, there is a double horse trough opposite the

barracks, but unfortunately it does not serve the army horse as it is now filled with plants. One double horse trough which does still provide a service for mounted soldiers is that by Rotten Row in Hyde Park. It carries a plaque inscribed:-

> *This trough was donated to the City of London in 1892. In 1985 it was removed from Victoria Embankment, near Temple Precincts, and presented to the Household Cavalry Regiment in memory of the horses killed and injured in the terrorist bombing at Hyde Park.*

In Victoria Park in Hackney there is one of the grandest drinking fountains in the country (fig. 2), presented through the Association by Angela Burdett-Coutts, which bears the inscription: *For the Love of God and Country, the Victoria Fountain given anno domini 1862.* This was the centrepiece at the opening of the 200-acre park, which was attended by over 10,000 people.

There are more examples both in London and around the country, although many have disappeared, but I believe that local authorities protect these items of street furniture more now than they would have done a few years ago. I list a few in our locality.

A very good example of a trough with facilities for humans, cattle and horses and dogs is by the waterworks in WEST HORSLEY (fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Drinking trough in Epsom Road, West Horsley.

Other water fountains, many of which, like the one at Reigate, are to commemorate someone or an event:-

EAST MOLESEY At the junction of Bridge and Wolsey Roads, this drinking fountain incorporates an electric light fitting and a water trough. It is inscribed:*1837 VR 1887* and *East Molesey Jubilee Memorial 1887.*

RICHMOND A very elaborate trough on Richmond Hill commemorates the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals who were the first to recognise the value of the work of the Association.

THAMES DITTON On the roundabout at the junction of High Street and St Leonards Road are a drinking fountain and two troughs inscribed: *The Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association.* The fountain supports an electric light fitting and is inscribed:-

Presented to the Parish of Thames Ditton by Hannibal Speer Esq Lord of the Manor AD 1879 'Freely given Gratefully accepted'

WEYBRIDGE On the south side of Weybridge Green, a fountain inscribed: *Erected by the Parishioners in memory of HENRY YOOL of Field Place Weybridge 1896.*

WEYBRIDGE A cattle trough by the *Hand and Spear* public house is inscribed: *In Memory of Margaret Trevor Battye.*

LONG DITTON Outside *The Angel* public house, a granite fountain inscribed: *Erected by voluntary contributions to commemorate the Coronation of KING GEORGE V 22 June 1911.*

Fig. 4. Drinking fountain in Esher.

ESHER A cast-iron pump over a public well which is inscribed: *This pump has been erected by HRH the Compte de Paris on his marriage with HRH the Infanta Marie Isabella of Spain 30 May 1864. Traveller drink and be grateful.* Nearby (fig. 4) is a drinking fountain inscribed: *Presented to the Parish of Esher by Her Majesty Queen Victoria 1877.* Also: *This Fountain occupies the site of a pump given to this village by the munificence of HRH the Compte de Paris on his marriage with the Infanta of Spain, AD 1864.* In the year 1876 the water supplied by the pump was declared unfit for use, and the pump was subsequently removed.

CLAYGATE At the junction of Church Road and St Leonards Road stand a drinking fountain and a trough. The fountain bears the following inscription:- *Opened on the 6th July1893, the day of the marriage of HRH The Duke of York and Princess Victoria Mary of Teck. Presented to the village by Lord Foley ad 1893* The trough: *Erected to commemorate the Coronation of King George V June 1911. Metropolitan Cattle Trough Association.*

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The various guides to the industrial history of the Boroughs and Districts of Surrey produced by the Surrey Industrial History Group.

THE HISTORY OF THE FORGE IN RECTORY LANE, ASHTEAD

By BARRY COX

In 1994 I bought *Forge Cottage* in Rectory Lane, Ashtead. Together with the adjacent *Wistaria Cottage*, this arose from the subdivision of a house that, according to the Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey) (report no. 3801), was built in about 1580 and is therefore probably the oldest house in Ashtead. I soon became interested in the history of the house and of George Wyatt's blacksmith's establishment, which had been there from 1847 to 1950, and this led me into the research that is presented in this paper.

The other forges of Ashtead

As a preliminary to describing the history of the Rectory Lane forge, it is worth briefly describing the other blacksmiths known to have existed in the parish. The 17th century Ashtead Manor Court Rolls mention a "wheeler" (wheelwright) called Robert Rogers[1], and a series of documents show that there was also a blacksmith called Thomas Dendy[2]. In 1664, Agnes Cooke of Coulsdon left a house called *The Beeches* to her son James, who in 1667 sued to recover the use of "a messuage and smith's forge with barn, orchard and yard of one acre called *The Beaches*". In 1701 George Cooke leased the property to Thomas Dendy for 21 years. The accounts of Ashtead Manor at this time show payments to Thomas Dendy for his services as blacksmith[1]. Six years later, the forge, still occupied by Thomas Dendy, was left in George Cookes' will to Elizabeth France of East Grinstead. In 1723 she leased the property to John Watkins of Ashtead, victualler, and this was presumably the end of the use of this property as a forge. These documents also show that the land in question lay just to the east of where *Ashtead House* lies today in Farm Lane.

Much more is known about the blacksmiths which lay in what is now known as The Street. The site of the Street forge had earlier been occupied by a public house, the *Three Horseshoes*, which is mentioned in the 1650s, when the property was held copyhold by George White. It was later owned successively by the Rythe, Hill and Parsons families until in 1684 the business was sold, with its "barns, shops, stables, garden and orchard", to the blacksmith Thomas Rushing and his wife Maria. (So, rather than obtaining business from callers at the *Three Horseshoes* as Gollin[3] has suggested, the smithy in The Street replaced the public house. It would instead have received business from callers at the other public houses of Ashtead, especially the *Leg of Mutton & Cauliflower*.)

In 1730 the Street forge was owned by Edward Gootch, gentleman, of Kingston-upon-Thames, but still tenanted by Rushin; in 1756 William Pinnion was the resident blacksmith, and Gootch sold the business to the carpenter Constable. In 1770 Constable's widow Ann sold the property to the wine merchant Symes, who in 1807 sold it to the blacksmith William Pinion and his wife Sarah; William died in 1811. The records of the Ashtead Manor Court Baron for 30th November 1829 records the death of William's son Thomas, notes that he had inherited the business in 1808, and that he subsequently divided the house into two tenements and transformed two of the outbuildings into cottages. In 1829 these buildings were occupied by Thomas' widow Susannah, her eight years old son Henry, Thomas Lemon, James Clench spurrier, John Skilton and Frederick Mellersh. (As we shall see, the last-named belonged to the family that ran the Rectory Lane forge.) These transformations to the buildings suggests that the blacksmithing activity on the Street site was ending. However, it was not until 1848 that the Pinnion family finally sold the

Street smithy and cottages. (One of these cottages seems to have been rented by the Mellersh family, for it was tenanted by Frederick Mellersh in 1829, by Francis Mellersh in 1848 and by William Mellersh in 1853.) The property was bought by Maria Richardson, the widow of the village carpenter, and Henry Wale, who used it as a carpenter's and builder's yard.

The Mellersh family and the forge

George Wyatt established his wheelwright's and blacksmith's business in the Rectory Lane in 1847. However, the history of such activity on this site is taken back some hundred years by the discovery of the inventory of the will of Ann Mellersh, who died in 1787. She was the widow of the wheelwright Francis Mellersh, who had died six years earlier. The inventory of Ann's will[4] shows that she left £350 of stock in 3% Consolidated Annuities of the Bank of England (c.£17,500 in today's money), and £20 (today's £1000) worth of oak, elm, ash and wheelwright's timber. Francis Mellersh is known to have been a wheelwright in 1766, and there can be little doubt that he must have been carrying on his wheelwright business for some decades before his death, so that the business must have been started early in the 18th century. The earliest indication of a connection of the Mellersh family to blacksmithing is that William "Milles" in 1723 married Sarah Rushing, who came from the family running the blacksmith's in The Street. The connection is confirmed by an entry in the Court Roll of Ashtead Manor in 1731, which shows that "Edward Shove (the name is elsewhere spelled "Stove") of Ashtead, wheelwright, surrenders . . . All his holdings with barnes (etc) Garden & five acres of land . . . in his occupation . . . to William Milles". William Milles (also spelled Mellish, Millist, Millis and Millersh) also appeared in various records of the Ashtead Manor Court Baron from 1732 to 1741, and died in 1762, leaving everything to his only child Mary Mellersh.

In 1748, Mary had married Robert Waterer, whose family had inherited the extensive Northlands estate in Ashtead[5]. It was inviting to believe that Mary was the sister of Francis Mellersh the wheelwright, but the Court Baron for January 18th 1762 states that she was the only child of William Milles, who had died on September 18th 1729. This leaves us with the frustrating situation that it is Mary's father who obtained the wheelwright's business from Edward Shove, while it is Francis who carries on that business! Perhaps William had a brother to whom he gave the business, and who passed it on to the Francis Mellersh who we know to have been a wheelwright.

The fact that Francis Mellersh was quite a wealthy man when he died in 1781 is proved by other records. The Land Tax records (which begin in 1780), together with information from the Wyburd survey map of 1802 and its associated terrier, show us where the family lived and what they owned. By 1780 they were living in a cottage in Parkers Lane (*Howard Cottage*, still in existence), but also owned another adjacent cottage in Crampshaw Lane, which Francis Mellersh rented to James Bloss. (The Ashtead parish church records show that Bloss had married Sarah Mellersh, but he died in 1787, leaving her a widow with six children — so Francis was renting his cottage to a widowed relative and her family.)

In her 1787 will[4], Ann Mellersh left her estate to her then 19-year old son Francis, who is following in his father's footsteps, for he is listed as a wheelwright in the trade directory for 1791. The Land Tax records show that he soon proceeds to re-invest his inheritance. In 1792 he moves out of *Howard Cottage* and, together with Young and George Dore (elsewhere also spelled "Dove"), rents the nearby Rectory Lane site of what is now *Forge Cottage* and *Wistaria Cottage* from Finch for £3 p.a. The Wyburd map shows this site to have quite extensive outbuildings,

while the terrier indicates that it was a house and "shop" and the tax record of 1803 describes it as a "blacksmith's". So there can be little doubt that this is the location of the business in which Francis, and his father before him, worked while living around the corner in *Howard Cottage*. But the younger Francis continues to make changes. In 1795 he is responsible for only £2 p.a. of the rent, the remaining £1 p.a.being paid by George Dore; this suggests that the dwelling on the site of the forge had already been divided into two separate units. In 1797 Francis Mellersh sells his relative Sarah's home to Baker (from whom she continues to rent it). In 1802, presumably using the money he has gained from the sale of this house, he buys the forge from Finch. George Dore continues to pay £1 p.a. for his accommodation there, and in 1806 he buys Sarah's cottage while continuing to live at the forge. It is tempting to conclude that Dore is a blacksmith, but the church records show that it would be incorrect to conclude further that he was related to the Mellersh family, for he was married to "Miriah of Kilmorden in Somerset" and they had four children. In 1809 the lord of the manor, Sir Richard Howard, bought the forge business from Mellersh as part of his long programme of buying-up as much local property as possible. Francis Mellersh died in 1824, but the tax records show that his wife continued to live there until these records end in 1832, and the business must have been inherited by his son, another Francis, born in 1805, who appears in Robson's Trade Directory for 1838/39 as a wheelwright, and jointly with Edward Sayers in the 1839 tithe.

There is now a puzzling interlude, for the 1841 census shows that the wheelwright is now young William Clapshew, only 20 years old, aided by 15 year old Henry Pinnion as wheelwright's apprentice and 15 year old William Fleet as blacksmith's apprentice. Though in this, the first, census, ages are given only to the nearest five years, this is obviously a young and inexperienced workforce. There is no sign in this list of the Mellersh family, although Francis was probably living in one of the cottages on the site of the Street blacksmiths which, as we have seen, was at about this same time (1848) coming to the end of its activity.

The fact that both the Ashtead forges seem to have been experiencing problems at this time may be merely a coincidence, but one does not have to look far to find a likely cause. The aftermath of the French revolution and the enormous social changes of the industrial revolution had left country life of England in disarray. There were riots as farm workers fought for higher wages, landowners and parsons were threatened, haystacks torched, barns gutted and threshing-machines smashed. We have no evidence of such events in the Ashtead area itself, but it would be surprising if all this national unrest had not affected its local economy, and this might well have led to problems for any enterprises that depended upon this.

The Rectory Lane forge changes hands

So, by 1841, the Street blacksmiths is coming to the end of its business career, and that in Rectory Lane has fallen into inexperienced hands, so there was an opportunity for someone more experienced to take over running the large Rectory Lane establishment. This opportunity was grasped by George Robert Wyatt, whose entry in the Trades Directory for 1899 states that his Rectory Lane business was established in 1847.

However, an entry in the records of the Court Baron of Ashtead Manor, dated 20th September 1865, reveals that the transition from the Mellersh family to the Wyatt family was somewhat complicated. The entry not only shows that the "former estate of Francis Mellersh, consisting of a copyhold with orchard", was then sold by Maria and John Wells of Pontypool to William Buckland, blacksmith, but also that it had previously passed to John Ede and then to George

Dore and Maria Dore, the latter being the mother of Maria Wells. This is given extra significance by the fact that the name of the mother of the wheelwright George Wyatt's was Joyce Dore! She is buried in grave no. 43 in the churchyard of the Leatherhead parish church (St. Mary & St. Nicholas), close to the entry to the church; she died on October 8th 1867 aged 80 (so, was born in 1787). Alongside her lies her husband, who died on 6th May 1826. This shows that the Wyatt family connection with the Ashtead business began when George's father (also George) married the daughter of George and Maria Dore, to whom the business was currently let. So, when our wheelwright George Wyattt states in the Trades Directory for 1899 that his business was established in 1847, this is presumably the date at which he took over the rental of the business. Unfortunately, we don't know where he received his apprentice training as a blacksmith. Though he was born in Leatherhead, there is no indication from the 1841 census that he was then working there, although there were then three(!) wheelwrights working there (George Hubble and William Streeter, both in Bridge Street, and James Karn in the Fairfield).

George Wyatt was only able to purchase the freehold of the business after the great sale of the Howard Estate, which took place on the death of Major-General E.R. Bagot, who had inherited the Estate after the death of the Hon. Mrs Mary Howard in 1877. At the time of the sale, the property was currently let to George Wyatt for £30 p.a., and he was responsible for all rates and taxes except land tax (11s 10½d p.a.) and landlord's property tax. In the 1879 sale, the property was bought by Mr. Butcher of Epsom for £660. Mr Butcher must have died soon afterwards, for it was on 6th February 1880 that the beautifully hand-written mortgage indenture of the property shows that it was sold by the widow Elizabeth Butcher to George Wyatt. To do this, George took out a loan of £300, mortgaging the property for that sum to Elizabeth Butcher (now of *The Hollies*, Worthing), Edward Butcher (surveyor) (her brother-in-law?) of Epsom, and Robert Henderson (miller) of Ewell. However, the map of the property in the mortgage document shows that George had only bought the eastern part of the land, and not the orchard that lay to the west. This explains the difference between the price that he paid and that paid by Butcher the previous year.

The 1879 Sale Catalogue describes the Rectory Lane establishment as consisting of two tenements, the description of which conforms to the 1977 plans of *Forge Cottage* and *Wistaria Cottage*. The internal structure of the building shows that it was originally constructed as a single dwelling in about 1580; in the 1638 John Lawrence survey of Ashtead it belonged to Richard King senior, and it is likely that this fairly well-to-do family had built it. It is unknown when it was subdivided, but a photograph that appears to have been taken in about 1873 shows the building with separate entrances to the two tenements (see Fig. 4 in the following paper on life in the forge). The Catalogue also lists outbuildings, consisting of a blacksmith's shop, carpenter's shop, paint shop, sheds etc. with a "productive kitchen garden and capital orchard."

A lot of information about the family of George Wyatt and about others employed in his forge is provided in the 1851-1891 censuses. George Wyatt was born in 1816; his wife Jane was born in Mitcham in 1817. They had the following family: Joyce, born in 1848; George, born in 1850; James, born in 1853, and John, born in 1855. Jane Wyatt died on 19th January 1879, aged 62, and George on 30th August 1892, aged 76; their grave lies a little way east of the lych-gate into the graveyard of St. Giles Church, Ashtead. In the 1895 directory James and John lived in what are now known as *Forge Cottage* and *Wistaria Cottage* respectively. An advertisement in the 1899 directory refers to the firm as "Shoeing and general smiths, wheelwrights, cart, van and wagon builders. Works; Rectory Lane". After their father's death, the brothers paid off £100 of

the mortgage on 27th January 1896 and the remainder on 5th April, 1898. They are buried in the same churchyard as their parents.

Though, as can be seen from Victor Shafer's account in the following paper, the business continued to thrive into the 1920's, demand for its products then declined. John Wyatt sold the two tenements in 1931, after which they were used as offices. After the Second World War, the forge became used only for the shoeing of horses and the sharpening of agricultural implements, and was last used in 1950. In 1977 flats were built on most of the site, and nearly all of the old forge workshops and storerooms were pulled down, leaving only a few stretches of the walls of the forge as a sad, small relic of the bustling, often noisy activity that had enlivened Rectory Lane for well over 200 years.

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LIFE IN THE RECTORY LANE FORGE, ASHTEAD

By VICTOR SCHAFER

Introduction, by the Editor

Forge Cottage and *Wistaria Cottage* in Rectory Lane, Ashtead, were once the home of George Wyatt, the wheelwright and blacksmith who owned and ran the business on that site, where it had flourished for nearly two hundred years. The business declined after the Second World War; the forge became used only for the shoeing of horses and the sharpening of agricultural implements, and was last used in 1950. In 1977 most of the remains of the derelict workshops were pulled down, leaving only a few stretches of the walls of the forge, and flats were built on the rest of the site.

The material that forms the bulk of this article was written by Victor Schafer, who obviously became fascinated by the work in the forge. From comments in his typescript, it is clear that it was written during the Second World War, perhaps for one or two radio broadcasts. The typescript was given to me by Jack Willis, the Ashtead archivist of the LDLHS, because I live in *Forge Cottage* and, becoming interested in the history of the forge, had contacted the Society for help and information. Howard Davies of that Society gave me the name of John Bishop, the great-grandson of George Wyatt, who was kind enough to lend me 19th century photographs of the Wyatt family and workforce, and others of the blacksmith's yard, some of which illustrate things that Victor Shafer mentions in his text. All the photographs shown in figs 1, 2 and 4 seem to have been taken at about the same time, as they all bear the name *Huck of Leatherhead* on the back, and his negative number. I have also added a few comments or additional information, in italics, to the text where I think it is helpful. The typescript was given to the LDLHS by Victor Schafer's mother, Mrs J.M. Schafer, who lived in Paddocks Barn, Paddocks Way, Ashtead, and the following handwritten note had been added to the first page:-

> *Victor Schafer was born in Ashtead in 1909, and lived there until about 1925. His mother was very active in local politics, and was in fact the first woman on the Parish Council. When the suggestion of a village hall was mooted, after the 1914–18 war, as a war memorial, she insisted (very quietly, very often) that it should celebrate a peace rather than remember a war. Hence its name, the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall.*
>
> *Victor went to Emmanuel School (Clapham) but loathed it and much preferred Ashtead Forge. Although he never learned anything formally from the Wyatt brothers, he must have absorbed still through his pores, for he was just coming to the top as a designer (and maker) of lovely things in hand forged ironwork when the war of 1939 stopped it all and after that his health was ruined.*

As Victor Schafer explains, a specialty of the Wyatt's business was a type of miller's wagon that was sold all over south-east England, as far away as Portsmouth. A wheelwright had to possess a remarkable variety of skills, for the raw materials from which he constructed wagons were, quite simply, bars of iron and felled tree-trunks lying in the forest. These skills are well described in George Sturt's book *The Wheelwright's Shop* (Cambridge University Press, 1923); further background and photographs are given in Jocelyn Bailey's *Country Wheelwright* (Batsford, 1978). Sturt's grandfather had bought the business in 1810. It lay on East Street, Farnham (Piggott's Trade Directory for 1832–34 gives its address as Dogflood Street, which is rather

charming!), and was very similar to the Ashtead establishment, for it, too, was founded in the 18th century, lasted into the 20th, and employed about eight skilled men. Sturt describes how the wheelwright had to go into the forest and choose from the tree-trunks that had been felled during the winter. He had to have enough local knowledge to know, for example, that in certain valleys the oaks were fast-grown and too full of 'shakes' (splits) to be usable. He had to choose trunks and timber appropriate for the different elements of the wagon—oak for the spokes of the wheels and for the framework of the wagon; elm for the floor-planks of the wagon and for the stocks (wheel-hubs); oak, elm, ash or beech for the wagon shafts and for the felloes of the wheels (the 6–7 parts of the wooden rim of the wheel, which Schafer calls "fellies"). He had to arrange for the tree-trunks to be carted to his yard in the summer, when the forest tracks became passable; there they had to be seasoned before use. He then had to arrange for the trunks to be sawn, in his sawpit, into appropriate planks or sections, which then had to be stacked to dry out. He had to supervise his skilled workmen in the transformation of this wood into the many elements of the final wagon and its wheels and their painting. A quite different skill was demanded in the manufacture of the iron wheel rim and its placing, red-hot, onto the wooden wheel. All of this is described by Sturt who, like Schafer, was describing a world that had almost disappeared by the time that he wrote. Sturt writes of this world and these workmen with understanding and also with a touch of poetic description: "He knew, not by theory, but more delicately, in his eyes and fingers . . . The grain of the wood told secrets to him". Schafer refers to Sturt's book, and he may owe some of his poetry of expression, and even some of his descriptions, to him.

BARRY COX

Fig. 1. The Wyatt family and workers. Third from the left is George Wyatt, who brought the business to Ashtead in 1847. On the right of George in the photo are James (born 1853) and John (born 1855), who appear to be about 20 and 18 years old respectively, which dates the photograph at c.1873, when George would have been 57. (Huck negative 7760)

Schafer's text, part I

Ashtead Forge as I knew it must have been one of the last examples of a type of business which served its purpose really well in its day. The brothers Wyatt and all their men were a great company. They were the last link in a continuous chain spanning the whole era of horses and carts. Their fathers made the carts which were used to build the railway, and their neighbours in Leatherhead made four-in-hand coaches for export to America within living memory. The great

Fig. 2. A miller's wagon similar to that described by Schafer, in Wyatt's yard. The name painted on it is F.Bowyer. (Huck negative 7761, so taken at the same date as photo 1.)

Fig. 3. This photo shows the old wagon on which is painted "J.&R.Marsh, Millers, Kingston on Thames" propped up under the chestnut tree and, on the extreme right, the wheelwright's thatched shop, all exactly as Shafer describes them. The two men third and seventh from the left, both similarly moustached, may be James and John Wyatt, who would have been in their late forties in 1920. Notice also that the trees in the yard are very much bigger than in the 1873 photos. The photo was taken during the rebuilding of the northern part of the forge building; old bricks have been stacked on the left and in the centre of the photo, having been removed from old foundations along the road by the workman with a pick. (Photo courtesy of Mr Meredith Worsfold)

days of waggoneering were recent history to them, and in spirit they reached back to the earliest days of passable roads. No doubt their predecessors shod pack horses and made pack saddles, but they were not conscious of that age, and indeed I find it hard to visualise myself, except in terms of tapestry.

I am always fascinated by the pitch which the waggoneering business reached at it height. I think the most interesting period was the last before the railways struck it with poverty. There were improving roads and cut-throat competition, but there was no lack of money. Waggoneers with a very real knowledge of construction went on long journeys and were ready to go in for informed criticism of each other's gear at every Inn and forge. Lorry drivers are to this day paid less than factory workers of the same skill, simply because there is always a surplus of bold spirits who will go out on the road if they can possibly manage it. The bold spirits of the waggoneering days had the advantage over the lorry drivers that they had considerable control over the design of their vehicles. The whole game was full of life, rattling along to the ring of shoe iron and the cracking of whips, glorious in spite of the brutality of it all. And it carried some great craftsmen along with it.

James used to say that it didn't matter how you lined up waggons in these days of tarred roads: nobody could see how they tracked. In the days of dusty roads no one would take a new waggon away as far as the pub if it was a much as half an inch out of line. (*The rear wheels had to follow exactly in the tracks of the front wheels. It is also worth noting here that, as Sturt describes, the width between the wheels had to be 5' 10.5' – 5' 11.5", so that the wheels would fit into the paired ruts in the roads. He quotes from an 18th century author who states that this distance varied from area to area, e.g. 4' 10" in Kent, 5'6" in Wiltshire, and comments, "It shows how little intercourse there can have been in those days between different districts of England")*

The premises at Ashtead consisted of a yard complete with chestnut tree, and a waggon propped up on chocks underneath it. James said that the tree had been planted and the waggon built by his father, about the time that he himself was born. It was a bow-fronted miller's waggon with sides made of rounded ash staves and lined with thin boards. John sometimes pointed out to me how beautifully the irons which held up the sides were forged, the bosses where the bolts went through being merged into the round bar without a sign of how it was done. James was proud of the headboard, which was bowed both upward and outward and had a bead on it which had to be worked with a router as it was impossible to do it with a moulding plane. These miller's waggons were a speciality of the place in its heyday, and been sent all over south-east England, even as far as Portsmouth.

On one side of the yard was the forge with three hearths and the shoeing room. The wheelwright's shop, which was thatched, was on the other side. Beyond this was a little shed which housed the grindstones; one with a seat over the top, was large enough for hollow-grinding garden shears, and one was narrow enough for spoke-shave irons. There was also a drilling machine and a treadle lathe, which was used mostly for turning the stocks of barrow wheels. Next there was a large covered timber store and a shed which contained an antique Crossley gas engine with slide ignition. This drove a big lathe for wheelstocks, a bandsaw for fellies (*Sturt's 'felloes'*), a circular saw and a machine for grinding mower knives, and also, on occasion, the drill.

Outside in the yard was the tyring furnace and plate and the tyre bending machine, the inevitable heaps of scrap iron and timber, and right at the end, the paint shop. They kept a keg of white

lead, with water on the top to keep it from drying, and reckoned to mix their own paint from this and dry colours which were kept in a cupboard fitted with boxes. People had been wiping their brushes on the door of this cupboard for generations, with the result that it had become incrusted with paint to a depth of about four inches in the middle, and when you opened it you could tell that it weighed pounds and pounds. The paint was of many colours and had not built up smoothly but with a delightful knobbly surface, amazingly regular in pattern. On the post between the windows there was another lump as large as a swarm of bees, and yet another on the inside of the door.

When I first went there, there were, besides John and James, four other men regularly employed and often a painter at work. There were two farriers, Dave and Harry. I don't know that there was much to choose between them at their job, but they looked like "Before" and "After" in an advertisement for something for producing the perfect blacksmith. Harry was a great deep-chested, broad-shouldered fellow, brawny arms and all, while Dave was a little narrow-built slender man who never looked really well, but this was pure deception for he was extremely wiry and strong. Harry's chief interests were beer and horseracing, but Dave was a great theologian; always ready to probe into the whys and wherefores of life.

They worked from six till six, with intervals for breakfast, lunch at eleven, and dinner, with a wash in hot water from their tue irons before going home. *(The tue was a tube through which air was blown into the forge, and included a reservoir of hot water.)* In the smith's shop there was also a cousin of the partners, George. He did tinkering and went out a lot putting washers on taps. His jokes were almost all about women and inclined to be elementary. Ill-health overtook him and he dropped out. One day when Dave cut the end off a shoe, by driving it down on to a curved chisel set up in a hole in the anvil, the end flew off and went into the pocket of a man standing near. Dave kept quite calm, and, telling the man to keep still, caught hold of him and leaned him over towards that side so that the iron burnt its way out through his trousers and fell on the floor. Red hot iron sticks to flesh, the man's fingers might have been badly damaged if Dave had let him put his hand in his pocket to try and pull it out, as he would have done if left to himself. I once broadcast this story as an example of coolness to fire-bomb fighters.

They told a story of a parson who came into the forge and foolishly picked up a chisel which was just short of red hot. Being a parson he was put in a distinctly awkward position, but the smith couldn't honestly give him very much sympathy. "You know, sir, you really ought to be prepared for things being hot in a forge; why, my little boy even, wouldn't do that," The parson said "Wouldn't he?" The smith said "No, I'll prove it to you." They heated up the chisel afresh and called the child. After a moment's conversation the parson asked him for the chisel, ready to stop him if he tried to touch it. There was no need. The blacksmith's son bent down and spat on it, and then took a pair of tongs.

The only wheelwright besides James Wyatt was Arthur, quiet and competent. How many men there had been there at the most I do not know, but I do know that at the time of the relief of Mafeking they had enough ringers on the place to go and ring the bells without outside assistance. Almost all of them were keen bell-ringers. When the Ashtead bells were re-cast John took part in the opening peal, and he took part in the Jubilee peal fifty years later, not long before his doctor forbade him to do any more of it. When they had been ringing a peal the various pundits of the parish would collect in the forge next morning and hold an inquest on it at lunch time. I am sorry to say I do not know enough about ringing to reproduce their jargon. The most unlikely

people are completely at home in this complicated mathematical technique; it is as surprising as to see hoary illiterates taking double seventeen from two hundred and one at darts in the twinkling of an eye. That I never learnt ringing from them is one of my few lasting regrets.

Once John spoke to me of bewitchment. Negatively, of course. He didn't believe in it. He said "I don't believe that anvil will jump off that block unless somebody throws it off", but he went on to tell me how there was a story about some people on a farm behind the *Pig & Whistle* who had a horse bewitched so that it got stuck on top of a fence it was trying to jump, and they couldn't get it down. "They do say", he went on, "that if anyone's bewitching you, and you get the heart of a small bird, a sparrow or a starling will do, stick it full of pins and throw it on the fire, the person who is doing the bewitching will have to come and tap on the window."

He told me solemnly that they had had to break an old custom about forty years before. It had always been the custom to christen a new anvil with beer. They had a new anvil and they got the beer, but when they came to the time they couldn't bring themselves to do it. They drank the beer. They showed me a trick by which you can often win a drink. Bet that you will lift an anvil with one hand. The method is; take off your belt and buckle it, slip it over the bick of the anvil, put your arm through and get hold of the hanging end with your fingers (the bick is the "bow", the hanging end the "stern" of an anvil". You will then have no trouble with the grip, and since no ordinary anvil weighs more than two hundredweight an ordinary man can lift it clear of the block. This was a new one on the Italian prisoners who came to my forge to get drinking water. They went off delighted with it, although we hadn't a single word between us.

The Wyatts kept all their accounts on boards which were planed afresh when they were entered up. John kept his on one board and entered them each week, but James, whose shop was naturally cleaner, was able to have a board for each customer and send out bills from them at the end of the year.

There is seldom any doubt from the word go whether a wheeler is making a shaft or the stock of a wheel but much of a blacksmith's work is begun in so completely different a form from what it is to be finally that the stranger will often enquire what you are making. At Ashtead he was usually told "Wimwoms". No such thing existed as far as we knew, but I never knew of anyone sufficiently ready to admit ignorance as to ask what they were. Another answer was "A bridle iron for a goose". I thought that this was a purely local joke but one day I told the Wimwom part of it to the conductor of a London bus and he immediately said something about a "Goose's bridle". At that moment we got to the end of my journey and, like a fool, I got off. I have been cursing ever since that I was too slow witted to book to the terminus and find out the rest of what he knew about it. Can anyone enlighten me? *(This comment implies that the text was designed for publication or broadcasting.)*

The great taunt of the blacksmith's shop is "You couldn't make the ironwork for a mop". Don't be tempted to take it on. The ironwork for a mop consists of a nail, a washer and a ferrule. The first two are not difficult but to weld the ferrule, which is thin enough to lose heat quickly yet a small enough ring to be relatively stiff, needs skill and experience.

The wheelwright's shop, and previously, they told me, the sawpit, was a favourite place for hedgehogs — "hedgepigs" they called them, to spend the winter. They rolled themselves in shavings in preference to leaves, an unexpected tribute to civilisation from nature. A great deal of wheelwright's work is done with a side axe and a shave, as they call it, in contra distinction to a spoke shave. This is the thing which figures in the tool catalogues as a "draw knife". James

complained bitterly that the only shaves you could get today were hollow ground on the face, whereas they should be humped up about an eighth of an inch. One day I succeeded in buying one of these, in perfect condition, from a house carpenter who did not want it. James wanted me to give him a new one and a price for this, but I refused. Now that James is dead, and I am grown up and a blacksmith anyway, I never see it without being sorry I did not let him have it. (I used it recently making plough paddles for the War Agricultural Committee.)

In the wheelwright's shop they still had the driving wheel, made of all sorts of oddments, which the apprentice used to turn to supply the power for turning wheelstocks. The log, roughly hewed out, was set up between centres and the belt ran directly on it. The wheelstock, or hub, as laymen call it, after it is turned, has two iron rings (called bonds) shrunk on, and it is then mortised to take the spokes. This is done by boring holes with an auger and working them out with a "buzz", a long "V" shaped chisel, socketed instead of being tanged, and sharpened from the inside outwards. Clumsy working will easily get this jammed in the mortice and it was the recognised thing that if anyone got it stuck and you could get to the pub and bring back a gallon of beer before he could get it free, the man who had jammed his buzz must pay for the beer, but if he got it out before you got back, you had to pay. It was great skill to estimate whether the thing was sufficiently well stuck to warrant the attempt. I never saw it tried.

James was very proud of the fact that he had made the first perambulator in Ashtead, and by that means his children had never missed a day's school even when he had to wheel them through the floods. (This was typical of James.) He had built the wooden wheels himself and tyred them with 3/8" round iron tyres. Their standard of technical soundness admitted of no compromise whatever, and their standard of finish was high; although they said that in their father's time, with farming better off, it had been higher. However, then as in their own day anyone doing finicky work was likely to find "F.B" pencilled on it when he got back from lunch. This stood for "Flies Beware", the suggestion being that the job was so highly polished that even flies fell straight off it and hurt themselves.

John always insisted that no blacksmith need go in fear of Hell. The first one went there, he said, naturally. Hell, of course, is not all equally hot and he didn't particularly mind the heat in the shadier parts. When he had had a few days rest he found some iron, and sticking it into a particularly hot hole to make it red hot he did a bit of fancy work, to amuse himself. A rich man came along (there were plenty of them there) and admired it and paid the smith five guineas for it, so he went into the nearest pub and had a grand time. This sort of thing went on and on and after a time got properly on the Devil's nerves; it didn't suit him to have anybody happy in hell. In the end he could not stand it any longer. He called up some theatrical people (there was no shortage of them) and got them to put him up a property pub, just across the road from the door of Hell. The Devil himself dressed up as a publican, and, standing in the doorway of his sham pub he had some lesser Devils open the main door. Just as the blacksmith happened to be passing, the Devil called out, "Good Beer, tuppence a gallon". The smith leapt across the road but the Devil nipped past him, back into Hell and had the door slammed after him, leaving the smith outside. And from that day to this he has never had another one in there.

I once heard James say that there was more art in sharpening a saw than in the whole of the bricklaying business, and did not believe him at the time. I have since got experience of both these jobs, and I am not so sure. It is true that some bricklaying in arches and chimneys is expert

and tricky, but the management of circular saws can be very tricky indeed. James also used to complain bitterly that he could never get hold of an old saw for rough jobs. "Every now and again someone picks one up, but as soon as I get a spare minute I put it in order; then we've not no old saw again."

There was one rather pathetic piece of history recorded on the wall of the wheelwright's shop. This was a letter from the carrier saying that although he had been carrying from London to the Coast for goodness knows how many years, his sons had all gone to the war, and he would have to give it up. The men at the forge regarded it as the natural way to get anything from London, to explain to the carrier what you wanted and let him go and choose it for you. If it wasn't right you explained to him what was wrong and he took it back and got another. This gave them a connection with London, independent of either the railway or the post. There was a plane about the place waiting for the man himself—or one of his sons—to take back and exchange after the war; God knows what happened to it in the end.

It was the rural craftsmen's fatal mistake that they failed to appreciate the internal combustion engine. When cars first came out there were plenty of smiths and wheelers intelligent enough to understand them—but they didn't try. First they jeered and then they cursed, but by then it was too late—the garage business was in other hands. Now, in the second world war, when tractors dominate farming, there is a crisis for lack of skilled countrymen to look after them and their equipment.

Not all failed. One man (whose father built four-in-hand coaches in his prime, and applied production methods to wheelbarrows in his old age), took cars in his stride, and soon acquired a reputation for bringing in all sorts of lurid breakdowns. On one occasion he went out to a car with a broken stub axle and one front wheel right off. Of course, in those days, breakdown vans were unheard of; he went on a bicycle, prepared to hire horses if necessary on the spot. He had taken ropes with him, so when he saw what was wrong he went to the nearest cottage and borrowed a bill hook. With this he cut a hazel, about ten feet long and as thick as his arm, from the nearest copse. He lashed this to the spring and chassis, in place of the missing wheel, like a wooden leg, sloping well back underneath the car, and stayed it with a long rope from then far end, which was high up and far out in front, going right over the back seat and down to the back of the chassis. In one of the lower gears, the engine was quite capable of skidding the car forwards on this, and with the one good front wheel he managed to steer it. Every few miles, as the pole wore down and that corner of the car began to sink, he stopped, jacked up the axle and moved the pole down about six inches, lashing it tight again. Two or three stops to do this got him home with plenty of pole to spare.

On another occasion he found himself faced with a single cylinder car with its exhaust valve spring gone. This was child's play to him. All men who could avoid the workhouse must carry a knife, a piece of string and a shilling, but he did not need the shilling to get the better of this job. He cut an ash stick this time, about the size of a walking stick. He cleft the end and pushed it over the valve stem, resting on the cotter. He then tied the far end up to some fitting on the front wing, and bending it like a bow, tied the middle down to the chassis. The springiness of the stick pulled the valve down quite fast enough for the engine of that day and the car came home just as well as it had gone out, but with the bonnet propped up to clear the waggling stick.

Schafer's text, part II

(The remainder at one time had the sub-heading "Tyring", but this was crossed out. It is possible that this was a separate, second, radio talk.)

To me, the greatest game at Ashtead forge was tyring wheels. Years ago, wheels were "shod" with short lengths of iron called "strakes" nailed across the joints in the fellies. But for a long time now, in Surrey at any rate, they have been tyred with a single band of iron, welded into a ring a little smaller than the wheel. This is made hot to expand it, persuaded over the wheel and cooled to shrink it on tight. A new wheel, its timber yet to be squeezed, its joints yet to be finally closed up, may call for a draught of (blank). A brittle old one, merely being tyred, may only be able to stand (blank). *(Schafer gives no figures here, but Sturt states that the unheated iron tyre had to have a circumference 1 5/8" smaller than the circumference of the wooden wheel that it had to fit. This difference may be the "draught" that Schafer describes. The front wheels of a wagon were 4'2" in diameter, the rear wheels 5'2")*

It all sounds very simple—this is how it is done. First the wheel itself is run along the bar to get its length. After this the correct allowance is made to include the amount extra required for the welding less the amount which is to provide the draught and the bar is cut off cold. This is done with an outside cold chisel held in a twisted withy, called a "cold set", under the ringing blows of a sledge hammer. The rest of the work being done hot, the anvil will not ring so clearly again until the next tyre is cut off. Each stock is marked in chalk, and the corresponding tyre with chisel strokes, *(here the MS has a handwritten large square, triangle, X and hash-mark like the framework for noughts and crosses)* or something of the sort. George Sturt traces this to some primitive source, but to me it is just common sense, and I do it today in preference to numbers, and having no sequence they do not immediately suggest to your mind the one which comes next.

A hook and chain is unhooked from the roof to support one end of the bar so that the other can be conveniently lifted from the hearth to the anvil. A moderate heat is taken on it and the end "upset" by laying it across the anvil and striking it horizontally with the sledge. This sideways notion has something of axe-play about it and provides a fascinating change on the usual downward stroke. After another heat the end is placed on the anvil and the "scarf" or overlapping lip of the weld worked on it with a fuller. This is similar to a chisel but with a rounded end. This has a metal handle, the heat would burn a withy, and is also used under the sledge. With a little more heat the last nine inches of the bar is hammered round to the radius of the wheel, to give the bending machine a start. The other end is served the same way except that the scarf is made on the other side.

I have never been asked to tyre a wheel myself and if I were asked now I should acetylene weld it, but the rings for the round lanterns which are popular in churches round here are a perfect miniature of the fire welded cart tyre, and I have sometimes come into the forge in the morning and seen a batch of them lying on the hearth for all the world as though the little folk had been there tyring their carts overnight but had not got the job done by cockcrow. The next process is the bending. The bars are carried out into the yard to a little machine like a small mangle, but with three rollers, one of which can be raised or lowered by screws. This is adjusted roughly to the size of the tyre, two men get on to the handles and the bar is fed in. Two or three passes are usually enough to get it right, but if it is a trace too small the tyre is chained up to the gatepost, close to one side of the gap and an old cart shaft chained, or fixed with an old bond, to

Fig. 4. Work in the yard. This appears to show the tyre-bending machine that Schafer describes. Note also the wheels lined up along the fence behind them, ready to be tyred. The clock on the wall of the cottage is still there, and was presumably used to define and regulate the hours of work. (This photo is Huck negative 6547, and was therefore taken before those shown in figs 1 and 2.)

the other. Bearing on the end of the shaft will then uncurl it a little. The same bending machine and gatepost are used for another purpose on occasion—stretching new bell ropes.

The next step is to measure round the outside of the wheel in a way which can also be applied to the inside of the tyre. This is done with a little iron measuring wheel, about eight inches across, fitted with a handle like a pastry wheel only relatively shorter. The cartwheel is lifted on its side on to a barrel and a chalk mark made in its edge. A mark is also made on the measuring wheel, and, starting with the two marks level, the smith walks round the cartwheel keeping the little one in contact with it. The little wheel will make, say, six revolutions and so much over. This amount is indicated by another chalk mark and the "mark" of that particular wheel at the top of it. The measurer is then set aside within easy reach of the anvil.

Next comes preparing the fire. More dust than usual is scooped out and the wet coal put all around, particularly on either side of the tue iron, where it is rammed down with a hammer. A bracket to support the tyre at the right angle is fished out from under the bench and clipped on to the edge of the water trough, and all is ready for the welding to begin.

So far it has been a matter of song and dialogue, which could be held up at any moment for extra gags or encores, but now we are coming to the finale of the first act and must get in so many beats between now and the end, or fail in the attempt. It is almost literally so many beats of the bellows lever to accompany the recitative of the roaring fire and the trio for two bass hammers and a treble one, with a hoop dance for the man who is to do the measuring, thrown in. It begins quietly. A shovel of live fire from another hearth is thrown in front of the tue nose, a sprinkle of dry coal, or some half burnt coke from the back of the hearth, is put on top and the bellows worked gently. Volumes of thick yellow smoke are followed by a sudden burst of clear yellow flame. Wet coal is piled on and the blast increased and after a few minutes the fire is ready. Having adjusted to a nicety the force with which the ends of the tyre are pressing together,

two men lift it on to the hearth and wriggle the joint into the fire, the bracket on the water trough supporting the thing at a comfortable slant.

Now for several minutes nothing happens at all but the steady rise and fall of the bellows lever and nothing is heard but the fire and the "clop, clop" of the bellow clacks. These things pass for silence in a smithy. The character of the flame changes slowly, becoming more ethereal as the volatile part of the coal burns away, but with a burst of luminous yellow always ready when the fire is stirred. Now the smith judges that the joint is getting from red to yellow heat, so the blast is eased while he wriggles it to get it free in the fire and then lifts it out for a moment to throw silver sand on to it. The sand melts and runs glass-like over the hot metal to protect it from the flame as the heat rises higher still.

The tyre is settled back in the fire, coal is drawn up and beaten down round it, and the final heat begins. So far it has been enough to keep the reservoir of the bellows full, but now more heat is required and the upper part of the bellows is stretched fully each stroke and the lever lifted as quickly as possible to shorten the periods of mere "ordinary" blast between the extra hard puffs. These are drawn out as long as possible by working the lever over its extreme range.

The next stage comes more quickly. As the fire gets going more and more red sparks, cinders burnt right out, come up with the vapoury flame, but now white, bursting sparks come in ones and twos. This is the thin edges and any odd flakes of iron beginning to burn. These increase rapidly and burst out of the fire in several places like bunches of fiery flowering grasses; very pretty. The smith doesn't admire them for very long, as this shows that the whole surface of the iron is beginning to burn and by the same token it is ready to weld. This is the point where most judgment is required: a little too soon and the stuff won't weld at all, a little too late and the whole joint will fall away in a spongy mass.

Just at the right moment, with no apparent signal whatever, the smith and one striker take the tyre and stand it up, with the joint, white and sparkling, on the anvil. The smith supports it with his left hand and while the striker reaches for his sledge; he gives the job a few taps with his hand hammer to close up the joint and drive out the molten sand. Then, again with no apparent sign, the two strikers proceed to work down the weld on the side that has been at the bottom in the fire, and is therefore hottest. They hold their hammers right up close to the heads and work them up and down with a short stroke, for speed is more vital than force on this job. The smith keeps time with his hammer on the corner of the anvil and when he thinks they have done enough, instead of continuing the series of staccato taps, he lets the hammer fall and bounce twice, "Brrrr Brrrr" and they lay off. Then, to see how things are going, the strikers take the tyre while the smith reaches for the measuring wheel and then lets the tyre down quickly, to rest between the anvil and the hearth, with the smith in the middle. He loses no time in making a chalk mark, setting the "start" mark on his wheel to it, and starting on his way round: one, two, three, four, five, six and a bit over. The tyre is almost a couple of inches short *(to the circumference of the wooden wheel),* which is quite all right at present. Still wasting no time the strikers lift the tyre again and the smith takes his side to lift it back into the fire, the other way up. He may decide to fish out the clinker now, but given reasonably good coal he will not. As soon as the coal is drawn round the weld again the blast is continued as hard as ever. Everybody is beginning to sweat now and nerves are strung taut. A lot of work had been put into the job and it would be bad business as well as bad art to make a mistake. Things are not made better by the fact that the fire is already past its best, and has to be encouraged by forcing coal from the sides into the

middle, and putting on more wet coal to keep it in place, but the heat rises again; more slowly this time. Again the bright sparks appear and the performance is repeated, but this time with several pauses for measuring as the tyre nears the exact size, and turning it down on to the flat to work in the swelling edges. As the iron sinks into more redness the flatter is brought out and held between the hammer and the job to smooth up the dents made by hasty blows. A final measurement shows the size perfect and the even cooling of the weld proves it to be sound. The smith sends for some beer. Putting the tyres on to the wheels is not done until the next day if it can be avoided.

At Ashtead the Wyatts had a brick-built furnace for heating the tyres, although it can be done in a fire in the open. In plan it was a "D" shaped affair. It stood out in the yard. *(Mr Bishop's photographs include one of this furnace, but unfortunately it is too poor to reproduce here.)* There was an iron and fire-brick door, wide and low, lifted by a weighted lever, across the front, the straight side; a chimney at each corner, and one at the back. The space inside was large enough to take a six foot tyre easily, and about a foot high. A fire channel, large enough for a man to lie in, went from front to back at the bottom. The shopkeepers in the village used to poke all their waste packing in there; if there was no tyring to do someone at the forge burnt it up for them, a fair return for the convenience of having it there when it was wanted. In front and slightly to one side of the furnace was the tyring plate, a six foot circle of wrought iron with a one foot hole in the middle, fixed horizontally just above ground level. To the other side was the cooling hole, a trough in the ground with a couple of upright irons behind it, with a pair of holes in them every couple of inches up. The various tyres are packed in so that they can be got at in the best order, scrap timber is put in to the middle on top of the rubbish, some live coal thrown in to light it and the door shut. Meanwhile we arrange the wheels in order along the fence, clear plenty of space, turn on the tap and fill the water butt, find all the watercans we can and stand them round it, and fill the cooling hole. Then we collect the dog for getting the tyres out of the fire, two pairs of tongs to lift them when they are out, a spare pair in case one of these breaks under the strain, two special dogs for persuading the tyre over the wheel and all the available sledge hammers.

There is no critical judgment in this job. So far as nervous tension is concerned it is a holiday after yesterday. It is purely a matter of team work against time, with certain limited opportunities for making mistakes. The quicker the tyre is on the less the fellies will be burnt and the tyre will be tighter within the permissible draught, so the men all pull together for the soundness of their work and the good reputation of the shop, but they don't face actual failure and having to start again. The men may have lunch or tidy up the yard a bit to pass the time and yet be on the spot while the tyres warm up, but as soon as the first is judged to be ready they put the first wheel on the plate and collect around the furnace.

(Though Schafer's typescript does not include a description of how the tyring plate is used, this detail can be filled in from Sturt's book. A vertical iron bar projects through the central hole in the plate, and the wheel is threaded onto the bar, its hub fitting into the central hole in the plate. A screw arrangement on the bar enabled the wheel to be tightened down onto the plate, so that it lay there firmly while the tyre was being fitted onto it.)

The man in charge nods. Down comes the lever and up goes the door. There are the tyres inside glowing comfortably red. Screening his face with his arm, a man gets a dog on the topmost one and pulls it half out. It only glows dully if at all in the bright sunlight but if it were carried

indoors it would be red alright. Two men seize it with tongs and carry it to the wheel while someone closes the door. A certain amount of care is needed to get it over, particularly if it is an old tyre being put on again, and the two "C" shaped dogs may be brought into play, but it goes on quickly or not at all.

The wooden fellies all round the wheel take fire at once. Three men take sledge hammers and follow each other round knocking out any kinks there may be in the tyre. Then they fling down their hammers and grasp watercans, and follow each other round with water to stop the burning. Hissing follows hammering and steam follows smoke as the three bent men circle round the wheel with that unhurried quickness of craftsmen. As soon as the tyre will grip, two men, carefully avoiding the still uncomfortably hot iron, lift the wheel up on edge for the man in charge to knock the fellies into perfect alignment, using a sledge hammer in one hand and a hand hammer in the other. By this time the water has dried off and the fellies are showing signs of smoke again; so, still without losing an unnecessary moment, the wheel is *(removed from the tyring plate)* trundled into the cooling hole, a crowbar is thrust through the middle and between the uprights behind, a pin is thrust through the pair of holes below and the wheel levered up and spun round *(so that the whole circumference of the still-hot iron tyre can be cooled as it spins vertically round through the water in the trough-like cooling hole).*

The contracting tyre wrings awful groans and terrific cracks from the wooden wheel while the water rumbles and boils. If the wheel is a new one it may be given a swinging sledge blow over each spoke, just to make sure they are tight, before it is rolled out of the water and stood up against the shop. If the painter is about he will be sure to appear in a minute with a rag, to wipe the soot and water off the fellies before it dries, but no one else will. A single wheel tyred does not warrant a pause for a rest and a drink so, filling up the water cans, the next one is tackled at once.

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