

LEATHERHEAD AND DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

LEATHERHEAD  
& DISTRICT  
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PROCEEDINGS VOL 6 N<sup>o</sup> 8

2004

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## SECRETARIAL NOTES

The following Lectures, Visits and Walks were arranged during 2004:

January 16th	Lecture: 'Arts and Crafts Houses of the Surrey Hills' by Nigel Barker.
February 20th	Lecture: 'Brookwood Cemetery—the Answer to a Grave Problem' by Rosemary Hunter.
March 19th	Lecture: 'The Plateau Group and its Work' by Peter Harp.
April 16th	The 57th Annual General Meeting, followed by 'The Leatherhead Census Project' by Peter Tilley.
April 17th	Visit to Brookwood Cemetery, led by Rosemary Hunter.
May 6th	Guided Walk round Polesden estate led by Heloise Collier.
May 21st	Lecture: 'Lambeth—its Palace and its People' by Joan Cottle.
June 2nd	Guided Walk round part of Epsom led by Ian West.
August 7th	Combined Visit with Friends of Museum to Haslemere and Godalming Museums arranged by John Wettern.
September 17th	Lecture: 'Old London Bridge' by Clive Chambers.
October 15th	Lecture: 'The History of Croydon Airport' by Robert Duffett.
October 14th	Visit to Lambeth Palace, arranged by Linda Heath.
October 24th	Guided Walk round Fetcham led by Alan Pooley, Goff Powell and Ed Tims.
November 19th	The Dallaway Lecture: 'Paper Making in the Tillingbourne Valley' by Alan Crocker.
December 17th	The Christmas Miscellany: 'What happened to that road?' Questions from the audience to a panel of members.

As usual, the Society led guided walks round the town for the public and over Heritage Weekend.

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## FIFTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Held at the Letherhead Institute, 16th April 2004*

The Report of the Executive Committee and the Accounts for the year 2003 were adopted. The Committee elected to serve until the next AGM and the Officers of the Society are shown below.

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## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 2004–2005

<i>President:</i>	LINDA HEATH
<i>Past Presidents:</i>	STEPHEN FORTESCUE DR. DEREK RENN, C.B.E., F.S.A.
<i>Chairman:</i>	PETER TARPLEE
<i>Secretary:</i>	JUDITH MILLS
<i>Membership Secretary:</i>	JENNY MORRIS
<i>Treasurer:</i>	NORMA ROBERTSON
<i>Editor:</i>	JACK STUTTARD
<i>Museum Curator:</i>	GRAHAM EVANS
<i>Treasurer, Museum Trust Fund:</i>	JOHN BULL
<i>Sales Secretary:</i>	Vacant
<i>Archaeology Secretary:</i>	PAULINE HULSE
<i>Programme Secretary:</i>	FRED MEYNEN
<i>Librarian:</i>	GWEN HOAD
<i>Records Secretary:</i>	BRIAN GODFREY
<i>Newsletter Editor:</i>	PETER WALL
<i>Committee Member:</i>	GOFF POWELL

# Leatherhead and District Local History Society

## PROCEEDINGS

Vol. 6, No. 8

2004

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## OCCASIONAL NOTES

### LEATHERHEAD DRAMA FESTIVAL

Over a dozen drama groups from many parts of the county attended the drama festival at the Leatherhead Theatre from the 4th to 7th May. It was the first of its kind and was well attended. The drama trophies were presented by Sir Michael Caine.

J.C. STUTTARD

### FETCHAM VILLAGE SCHOOL CELEBRATES 150 YEARS

The Village Infant School at Fetcham was founded in 1854 on land provided by the Hankey family. From its early beginnings, when there were only some 61 pupils, the school has developed well and its 150 years were celebrated in many ways this year including a May Fayre.

J.C. STUTTARD



**FETCHAM VILLAGE SCHOOL, CELEBRATES 150 YEARS**  
Pupils and Staff in Victorian Costumes

## ADDENDUM TO “ZEBEDEE LOVEMORE”: PROCEEDINGS 2003

Soon after submission of the article on Zebedee Lovemore, my attention was drawn to the existence of a collection of Moore family papers held by the Department of Special Collections, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA. The collection contains about 2000 items dated between 1681 and 1761, and includes 50 items dated between 1730 and 1761 that refer to Zebedee Lovemore and 11 more letters written by him between 1747 and 1761. Details from a draft index provided by the Assistant Special Collections Librarian, Dr K S Cook, indicate that the Kansas references support the general conclusions expressed in the article published last year, but a few provide additional information of interest.

A memorandum, probably written by William Moore in 1734, includes “bought Lovemore hat for livery”, so Zebedee might have been a footman at that time. Six letters written by Zebedee (4 from Polesden in the winter of 1748/9 and 2 from Epsom in the summer of 1750) help to clarify how long both he and Mrs. Smith, the housekeeper, remained at Polesden after Capt. Geary purchased the estate in March 1747/8. Zebedee wrote from Polesden in Dec 1748 that “Mrs Smith. has gone from Polesden”, and his last known letter from there was written in Jan 1748/9; he probably wrote only from Epsom after June 1750. Finally, Zebedee may have received some money from the will of Arthur Moore’s widow, Theophila, who died in 1739. A letter written in 1746 suggests that Mrs. Moore left the residue of her assets (which were encumbered by debts) to Zebedee’s daughter, Mary, who died in 1745; a later letter written in 1750 indicates that Zebedee had claimed his daughter’s legacy as her Administrator. Zebedee may have inherited enough money from the Moore family to enable him to quit domestic service when he left Polesden and moved to Epsom.

B.E. GODFREY

## ADDENDUM TO ‘GEORGE BOULTON’, PROCEEDINGS, 1996

Additional information has been received from Louise Wilson, an Australian resident who is a seventh generation descendant of George Boulton who lived at the Grove House in Fetcham. She has established that there were two George Boultons, father and son. The Fetcham Boulton she calls GB Jnr; who inherited the extensive properties surrounding the Golden Cross Inn at Charing Cross and who was still running the business when he died in 1814. This explains the apparent anomaly of the marriage of an elderly George Boulton to Sarah Willson, a minor, in March 1794. Sarah died in 1814; George Jnr. died in Charing Cross some four months later in the same year.

J.R. CLUBE

Errata: Proceedings 2003 p.179 bottom line: for Otways read Ottways; p.182, line 39 Ottways; p.180 line 24 for Pacheshnni read Pachesham; p.180 line 27 insert a full-stop after priest; p.180 line 37 for ‘is’ read ‘us’; p.182 line 5 for ‘13.Ad’ read ‘13.4d’; p.182 line 28 for ‘leading’ read ‘probably’; p.183 line 7 for ‘eeciastical’ read ‘ecclesiastical’; pages 163, 184 for ‘D.R. Renn’ read ‘D.F. Renn’; p.185, five lines from bottom for ‘Randyside’ read ‘Handyside’; p.186 line 6 for ‘Sony’ read ‘Sorry’; line 8 for ‘LEFERBOX’ read ‘LETTERBOX’; caption to right hand photograph should end ‘BARNETT WOOD LANE, OUTSIDE SUB-POST OFFICE’; p.187 line 1 for ‘GRI’ read ‘GR’; line 22 for ‘3,643’ read ‘3643’; p.188 line 3 for ‘227’ read ‘22 7’; Caption to left-hand photograph, for ‘EWARD’ read ‘EDWARD’; p.190, penultimate line for ‘KT 21212’ read ‘KT21 212’; p.191 line 2 for ‘198211’ read ‘1982<sup>11</sup>’; penultimate line for ‘photograph 12’ read ‘photograph <sup>12</sup>’; for ‘gabledtile’ read ‘gabled tile’; p.192 note 8 for ‘SCD’ read ‘5CD’; note 9 for ‘86u’ read ‘86ii’

## THE INDUSTRIES OF ASHTEAD

By P. A. TARPLEE

Most people think of Ashtead as a suburb which has grown from a rural agricultural village. The development really started from 1859 when the joint London and South Western Railway/London, Brighton and South Coast Railway was built from Epsom to a terminal station in Kingston Road, Leatherhead with an intermediate station at Ashtead, where the present station is. This was the start of Ashtead as a dormitory suburb. There have also been, over the years, some interesting and varied industrial activities carried out within the village.

### Brick and Tile Manufacture

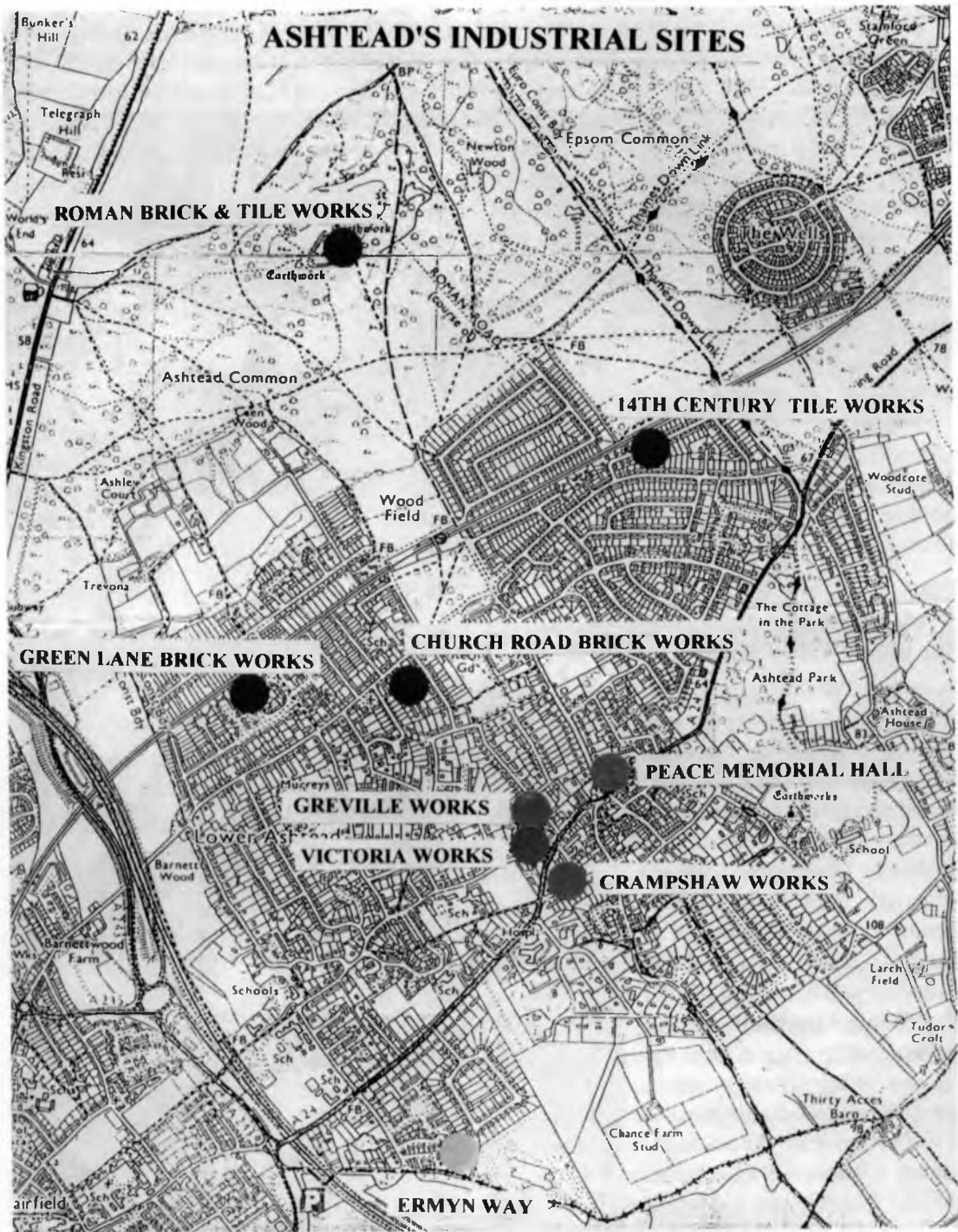
On Ashtead Common there were two important buildings, now demolished, with industrial connections. These were a Roman villa and a bath-house. The slides actually show models displayed in Leatherhead Museum, as the buildings themselves were demolished before we were able to photograph them. The remains of these were excavated by Lowther in 1926-28 and reading copies of contemporary newspapers with headlines such as *Rabbit finds Roman Villa* (Daily Express) and *Rabbit Burrow Clue to a Valuable Find* (Sutton & Epsom Mail) one can see how much more sophisticated archaeology has now become. Near these structures there was an important tile works and it has, in fact, been suggested that the house was that of the owner of the works, and the baths were for his workers. Relief-patterned flue tiles were among the products of this industrial site many of which would have been transported via a spur road to Stane Street.

During the 14th century Henry Tyler was making roof tiles in the area of what is now Newton Wood Road (near the Common), and there are also spoil heaps on the Common considered to be from a brick-making operation in the 17th century which it is said may have produced the bricks for the wall of Ashtead Park. Also there is a flooded clay pit on the Common left from a brickworks which operated in the second half of the 19th century.

There was a brickfield where Church Road is now, off Barnett Wood Lane, on the south of the road. This was operated by G. P. Sparrow from 1880 for nearly 30 years. Two houses in Barnett Wood Lane were until recently still known as Brickfield Cottages and one of the kilns was still in situ during World War II when it was used as an air raid shelter. After the brickworks closed, the site was sold, around 1905, for housing and for the erection of a cinema, Ashtead's County Cinema. By 1911 this had been turned into a roller skating rink. It is now occupied by a print company, M & S Litho.

All this brick making was due to the London Clay which is present in the north of the village and in 1896 Green Lane brickworks was started when J. L. P. Sanderson bought 30 acres of land close to the railway where he built some brick kilns. Before he had made many bricks he went bankrupt after two years and M. N. Inman bought the works and made bricks there up to 1912, finally under the name 'Ashtead Brick Works',

After the First World War the site was bought by Mr. Weller where he operated Weller's Rose Garden (roses also like clay). He landscaped the clay pit and opened it as a swimming pool. This was known as The Floral Pool and continued in use up to 1959. Eventually, the pool was closed after a number of drownings had taken place. Part of the pool survives in the garden of The Floral Bungalow in The Chase, which may be seen from the train between Leatherhead and Ashtead.



### **Photographic Works**

In the latter part of the 19th century Ashtead became a small centre for photographic manufacture. Mawson & Swans Photographic Dry Plate Works was established in the Greville Works just before 1890. This was between Greville Park Road and Northfields. In 1895 Greville Works was taken over by Cadett & Neall who proceeded to build two new factories in West Hill, at the Leatherhead end of The Street, Crampshaw Works on the south side and Victoria Works on the north. Both were completed by the beginning of the 20th century. One made photographic plates whilst the other produced photographic paper. By 1903 Cadett & Neall were bought out by Kodak who moved the operation to Harrow within five years.

Meanwhile Greville Works had been taken over by Peto and Radford for the manufacture of electrical accumulators which they had been doing in a disused laundry in Crampshaw Lane. They also occupied Victoria Works and were known as P & R Storage Battery Co. After World War I they moved to Dagenham, and Greville Works was converted for residential use and is now a block of flats in Greville Close.

When Kodak moved away from Ashtead the Victoria and Crampshaw Works were both sold. Crampshaw Works was operated by the British Film Stock Co. in 1917 and later as Brifco Ltd and then Brifex who were lacquer producers. Brifex made leathercloth for bus and car seats, bookbinding and passport covers. In 1972 the building was converted to offices for W. S. Atkins, the civil engineers. Since then the site has been used for residential purposes.

### **Stanley Steam Cars**

Victoria Works, after Cadett & Neall left in 1908, was occupied by the P & R Storage Battery Co until 1912 when it was bought by W. Galloway & Co. of Gateshead. They used it as a workshop and sales depot for the American-built Stanley steam cars and traded as Stanley Steam Car Co. Ltd. W. Galloway had been nail makers since 1884 and in 1903 W. E Galloway went to America to look at some nail-making machinery. Whilst there he met the Stanley brothers and he persuaded them to grant him the agency for Stanley steam cars in the U. K. and the dominions. W. E Galloway had the first Stanley steamer imported to Britain. These cars were being assembled in Galloway's Gateshead nail factory and they



VICTORIA WORKS, ASHTEAD



soon realised that most of their sales were in the north of England and so in 1912 they opened a showroom off Park Lane in London (with 2 salesmen/demonstrators and a lady receptionist) as well as a workshop and maintenance depot in Ashted (with 3 mechanics, a manager and a number of general staff).



'PLATE' ON 1913 STANLEY STEAM CAR

### **A Little About the Stanleys**

Francis E. and Freeling O. Stanley had a prosperous business making photographic dry plates, and they also made violins. One day around 1895 they saw a De Dion voiture a vapeur from France being demonstrated and they reckoned that they could make a better steam car. In 1896 the first Stanley steamer automobile took to the road. In contests these cars invariably beat petrol-driven vehicles. Stanleys received so many orders for their cars that they sold their photographic plate business to Eastman-Kodak and in 1899 they sold over 200 cars in the first few months after F E Stanley had driven a steam car to the top of the 6,288 ft Mount Washington.

The Stanley twins sold their car business for a quarter of a million dollars and then regretted it. So they started up again, still in Newton, Massachusetts, and rather than fight a court action with those who had bought their patents they changed the cars. Instead of having the engines under the seat driving the rear axle by chain and sprocket they moved it back and geared it direct to the axle. In 1906 a Stanley steamer achieved a world land speed record of 127.659 mph on Daytona sand, faster than any aeroplane at the time. In 1912 Stanleys wanted a depot for the sale of their cars in the south of England and that is when they occupied Victoria Works, Ashted. The dealer's and car serial plate from a 1913 10 hp Stanley car which was owned (in 2002) by Bill Hunter of Edinburgh show that this car was supplied from the Ashted depot.

An early Stanley car catalogue was sent to me some years ago and within it was the following letter:-

*The Stanley Steam Car Company  
Victoria Works  
Ashtead  
July 12th 1915*

*To Oscar E Seyd Esq*

*Dear Sir,*

*Replying to your postcard we have pleasure in handing you our latest catalogue and trust it may interest you.*

*We regret we have now no showroom in London since establishing ourselves here, but we are always glad to meet prospective purchasers at Ashtead station.*

*Our position is rather unusual as War Office requirements have made it necessary to clear away as much of our stock with all speed, so we are offering the present remainder at bargain prices equal to 20% from all regular figures.*

*At this date however we have not many cars left - indeed we can now only offer two models: the 10hp Extra Wide two seater Model 62 - £295 and 20hp two seater Model 712 - £425.*

*In the latter case we are no longer able to obtain the necessary electrical attachments specified in conjunction with the acetylene headlights and consequently substitute the usual outfit of oil side, tool and dash lamps with acetylene headlights and 40 cu ft cylinder, while we are also discontinuing the use of quick detachable rims.*

*These substitutions reduce the list price of Model 712 to £410 from which we are prepared, subject to our having one left, to allow 25%. This also applies to the 10hp models, both being offered as bargains without engagement.*

*Faithfully yours  
for the Stanley Steam Company  
HE Galloway  
Director*

It is interesting that before Stanleys went into car making in the U S A they were in the photographic business and were then bought out by Kodak as were Stanley's predecessors at Ashtead. During World War I Victoria Works was an army clothing store.

### **Ashtead Potteries**

In 1922 Sir Lawrence and Lady Kathleen Weaver formed an organisation to train disabled ex-servicemen and their dependents in the manufacture of pottery. A year later Ashtead Potters Ltd moved into Victoria Works with a staff of four but by 1926 they employed between 30 and 40 people on the site. The pottery initially had 2 coal-fired kilns but in 1932 an oil-fired kiln was installed and the original 2 were converted for oil-firing. Examples of Ashtead Pottery as well as some of the processes of manufacture are illustrated on the slides and samples on display at Leatherhead Museum and elsewhere.

By the end of the 1920s Ashtead Potteries produced nursery ware decorated with E H Shepard's

illustrations for Winnie the Pooh. The Wembley Lion modelled by Percy Metcalfe was the official souvenir of the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. Their art-deco pottery is not to everyone's taste but it has become very collectable, and, therefore, more and more expensive. By 1935, following the death of both Weavers, and with the depression in the economy the pottery closed even though it had successfully fulfilled the aims of its founders.

In 1925 the Ashtead Potters Housing Society was registered *to build 20 sound and delightful cottages around a village green- a little paradise for 20 of the workers who had no homes.* These houses remain in Purcell Close and, although the Ashtead Pottery has disappeared, their workers' housing is still lived in by disabled ex-servicemen. The houses are now operated by Douglas Haig Memorial Homes.

After the pottery closed the works were occupied by Celestion Ltd, radio engineers and makers of loudspeakers. From 1946 the McMurdo Instrument Co. took over the building and manufactured plastic equipment such as valve holders, plugs and sockets and 00 gauge railway parts, as given on their advertisement, until 1964. The building was then used as a shirt warehouse and its last use was by



A COMMEMORATIVE TABLET

Universal Car Supplies (UCS). A home for the elderly, Limetree Court, which was built on the site has a commemorative plaque in the entrance.

### **The Industrial Developments in Ermyrn Way**

From 1926 between 1 and 2 tons per day of artificial silk were being made by the Rayon Manufacturing Company in their works in Ermyrn Way. The staple raw material used was wood pulp, being one of the most convenient forms of cellulose. This was delivered to the works in sheets, similar to coarse blotting paper. These were steeped in caustic soda and the excess soda removed using large hydraulic presses. The sheets were ground up, then sprayed with carbon bisulphide before being dissolved in a caustic soda solution producing a reddish-brown viscous liquid - giving the process the name Viscose. It was filtered, spun and pumped fine jets into sulphuric acid where it precipitates into minute threads of artificial silk which were heated, bleached, washed and dried before being dispatched to fabric manufacturers. This project only lasted about 12 years due mainly to two problems: -

- (1) An inadequate water supply
- (2) A large number of complaints because of the unpleasant odours from the process.

## **Goblin Works**

In 1938 British Vacuum Cleaner Company moved into the old rayon works from Fulham to manufacture Goblin cleaners and other appliances. The company had been formed by H. Cecil Booth - the inventor of the vacuum cleaner. Booth was an engineer who had previously designed engines for battleships and also designed Ferris wheels. He had supervised the erection of Connel Ferry bridge. Until the 20th century vacuum cleaners were unknown but in 1901 Booth patented the first effective suction cleaner. He had attended a demonstration at St Pancras station where attempts had been made to blow dirt from railway carriage upholstery. On arriving home he wetted a piece of cloth, placed it on the arm of a chair and sucked through it and got a ring of dirt on the cloth. So the idea was born, and in 1902 he formed the Vacuum Cleaner Company, later to become Goblin (BVC) Ltd.

The first machines were very bulky and were carried on a horse-drawn cart which would be parked outside the house being cleaned and hoses taken into the building to suck the dirt into the van using an engine-driven vacuum pump. The first portable cleaner, made in 1904, was operated by 2 people: one to pump the bellows and one to use the cleaning tool. Electrically-driven portable cleaners were made from 1911. However, the manual cleaners were in demand for a number of years both for premises without electricity and in explosives factories where sparks were undesirable. Having got set up in Ashted, Goblin soon turned to munitions production for the period of the war. After the war about 1,000 people were employed making portable cleaners as well as large vacuumation plants for hospitals, ocean liners, power stations and major buildings including the Palace of Westminster. An example of a fixed plant is to be seen in Eltham Palace where the sockets for connecting the cleaning tubes can be seen in the major rooms.



GOBLIN WORKS

In 1939 Goblin bought the Magneta Time Company which had been formed in 1897 to make a new type of clock of which the main motive power was a large magnet. The company specialised in systems with a master clock and a number of slave clocks. They produced the clock systems for the Royal Greenwich Observatory at Herstmonceux, for all the J Lyons buildings and for most P&O and Cunard liners. They also made sound systems and security equipment.

As well as vacuum cleaners Goblin became known for the Teasmade automatic tea maker. An early gas-operated model had been patented by a man named Rowbottom in 1891. Shortly afterwards a Birmingham gunsmith called Frank Smith produced this tea maker operated from a clockwork alarm clock. This involved a container of methylated spirit being ignited by a striker plate coming into contact with a red top match, all operated by the clock. When the kettle boiled the plate inside it shook causing the kettle to tip and pour boiling water into the teapot. At the same time a plate moved across the top of the meths putting out the fire. Rather a dangerous device. In 1936 the first Goblin Teasmade was patented. This used electricity and was put on the market in 1937. It sold for £5.15.6d and included 2 cups and saucers, a cream jug and sugar basin. Over time various models of Teasmades were produced. A selection of these is in the Leatherhead Museum collection.

Goblins had plans to rebuild the Leatherhead plant in stages between 1982 and 1987 in a new modern factory. These came to nothing, the company being by now part of the BSR group and they decided to close the Goblin works and transfer their operations to Gosport in Hampshire. BVC/ BIVAC still operate in Gosport and make similar cleaning equipment, mainly for commercial use. They also install centralised vacuum cleaning systems.

The Goblin works were demolished in 1984 and in 1990 the new headquarters of Esso was opened on the site. The completion of this office building was delayed whilst archaeologists excavated a Saxon cemetery.

### **Remploy and Milner Works**

As with most of Surrey not much is actually made in Ashted now although there is a factory next to the Esso offices. This is operated by Remploy and adjacent to this is Milner House. This was a 19th century private house known as The Long House which was bought by the Ex-Services Welfare Society for the Mentally Disabled after World War I. Next to the house they built Hunter's Workshops as a sheltered workshop for the residents of the home. Later the works was taken over by Thermega Ltd who were engaged in the making of woollen goods, electric blankets and medical heating pads. They continued to employ disabled people from Milner House who made up about 25% of the workforce. In 1981 Remploy took over the factory and employ about 100 people of whom over 90% are disabled. They are a contract manufacturer carrying out the making and assembly of a wide range of products. Milner House is now a private nursing home which has no connection with the factory.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author has obtained much of the information for this article from the Society's records and museum artefacts as well as from his book *A Guide to the Industrial History of Mole Valley District*, published by the Surrey Industrial History Group.

*This is a transcript of a talk given at the Annual Symposium of the Archaeological Committee of the Surrey Archaeological Society on 21st February 2004 at the Ashted Peace Memorial Hall.*

## ALL SAINTS CHURCH, LEATHERHEAD

By LINDA HEATH

### The beginning

Where did it all begin? Not where the present All Saints Church is, but in a disused engine shed on the Common where the engine railway was. The railway came to Leatherhead in 1859 and the first station was on the north side of the railway bridge at the edge of the Common behind what is now the North Leatherhead Community Centre. In 1867 the railway line was extended to Dorking, so the original station closed and the engine shed was no longer needed. In 1874 the Vicar of Leatherhead, Thomas Griffith, arranged to rent the disused engine shed from the London and South-Western Railway and he set it up originally as a Mission Church for the navvies working on the railway. Once the railway was established, the population of Leatherhead began to expand dramatically, and it was soon felt that a regular place of worship was needed for the people now beginning to live in houses being built along the Kingston Road, so the engine shed was then used as a church on Sundays for the people living in this part of Leatherhead.

This building (later occupied by Ryebrook Motors) served as a church and Sunday School until All Saints was consecrated in 1889. Not only was it used as a church, but it was also the first premises for the future All Saints School. In 1876 the new Vicar, Frank Utterton, wrote to the Surrey Education Department saying he was 'desirous of setting up a second Infants School in an outlying hamlet'. This hamlet was none other than Leatherhead Common. It is hard to imagine this being regarded as an outlying hamlet nowadays! By the following year the school opened under Miss Emily Upton with seven children on the first day and by the end of the week there were fourteen pupils. So from the very start the church and the school were closely bound together. The school remained in the engine shed until the first All Saints School was built in



THE OLD ENGINE SHED USED FOR WORSHIP BEFORE ALL SAINTS

1900. The school log-books exist from the very first day and provide a real insight into conditions at that time, as there was much poverty and ill-health in working-class families.

### **Preparing for a new church**

By 1887 it was apparent that a more permanent church was needed for the people in this area and an appeal was launched for the building and furnishing of a daughter church to the Parish Church. The first thing was to acquire some land on which to build, and here the church was fortunate in being given a piece of land by Captain and Mrs. Richardson of Kingston House. The architect, Arthur Blomfield, drew up plans for a neat and plain church to accommodate 280 people at an estimated cost of £1,900. One has to admire these Victorians who were prepared to raise funds for the building of a new church having just had the considerable cost of renovating the parish church. The parish magazines are full of lists of subscriptions for raising money and the various fund-raising events which took place. Donations of money and gifts poured in, the most lavish of which was a splendid two-manual pipe organ built by Messrs. Nicholson & Co. given by Sir William and Lady Vincent and Francis Vincent.

On 13th March 1888, Captain Richardson turned the first sod on the site, and a few weeks later, on 29th May, the Duchess of Albany came over from Claremont to lay the foundation stone and a service was conducted by the Bishop of Winchester, which was the diocese for Leatherhead at this time. The ceremony took place in a marquee at the east end of what was to become All Saints Church where the Duchess was presented with a bouquet of Marechal Neil roses and a copy of the service bound in cream colour morocco edged with gold. Under the foundation stone was placed a bottle with an inscription, the advertisement page of The Times for the day, and the silver coins of the year with two halfpennies.



ALL SAINTS CHURCH, c. 1905



ALL SAINTS CHURCH, INTERIOR, 1909

### **Consecration of the church and early years**

All Saints Church was consecrated on 23rd February 1889 by the Bishop of Winchester to ‘serve as a chapel of ease to the Parish Church. The service included consecration prayers, hymns, litany and celebration of Holy Communion and was attended by over 300 people, including 28 robed clergy—80 chairs having to be added to accommodate all the congregation. Afterwards a special luncheon party was held for invited guests at The Swan Hotel.

For many years the Curate was virtually in charge of All Saints—attendances were high, with Sunday Schools and choir, and an excellent choirmaster and organist in Mr. H. A. White. In 1910 a choir vestry was added—this was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Howell of Hill Field, and the following year Mr. White donated a large oak chest for the choir music.

Children played an important part in church life—both in the Sunday schools and in the choir, and also in their social activities, which included prize-giving ceremonies, parties and outings. As has been mentioned already, church and school were closely linked from the start, and ten years after the church was consecrated an appeal was launched to build All Saints Infants School. This is the building on the Kingston Road now used as the North Leatherhead Community Centre, but which served as the Infants’ School until 1978 when the present All Saints School was built. So the school which started in the engine shed by the railway line has been on three different sites on the Common.

### **Church Halls**

Most of the social activities, both for children and adults, took place in the church hall. Surprisingly, there have been four church halls within 100 years of the church’s life. The first one was in the engine shed, which served as church, school and hall; the second one was over the railway bridge in the building later occupied by the Gardeners’ Royal Benevolent Society. This was very severely damaged



by fire in 1960, so a new hall was built adjoining the church. Then finally, the wheel came full circle and the hall was incorporated into the church itself in 1980.

The various halls have always been well used and have played a very important part in the life of the community in the area. Activities have included Magic Lantern lectures in the early days; meetings of the Church of England Temperance Society, Mothers' Union meetings, Church Lads' Brigade, Scouts, Cubs, Girl Guides, Brownies, Play Groups, Barn Dances and numerous other organisations.

### **Conversion into combined Church and Hall**

By the 1970's the deterioration of the buildings and consequent expense were causing much concern, and by 1979 matters had reached a crisis when something had to be done. Massive repairs were needed, particularly to the roof and the central heating system. By this time, the pattern of churchgoing was very different from nearly 100 years before, and various suggestions were put forward, including the closure of the church. Eventually, after much deliberation, it was decided to re-tile the roof and to alter the building incorporating a much smaller church at the east end and converting the rest of the church into a hall. To help pay for the scheme it was decided to demolish the adjoining hall and choir vestry and to sell the land to build a row of bungalows. As can be imagined, such a radical alteration was a very painful process for members of the congregation who loved the church and had worshipped there for many years.

Work started in the summer of 1981 and for seven months Sunday services and Sunday school were held in the new All Saints School. The builders who carried out the work followed the tradition of their medieval predecessors by leaving as their 'mark' a face above the inner doorway looking out through the window over the new door to the town outside—a symbol of what All Saints aimed to achieve. The project was completed in 1982 and the newly converted building opened with a special service conducted by the Bishop of Dorking and attended by the congregations of All Saints and the Parish Church. The most noticeably different feature from the outside was the disappearance of the bell turret on the roof which was in a dangerous condition and had to be removed. Inside, the church was almost unrecognisable, but although the transformation must have been very traumatic for all those who had known and loved the old church for so long, it had been extremely well carried out and both the church part and the hall part of the building presented a very light and pleasing appearance. As happened at the opening of the original building, many people contributed gifts, including a lovely altar frontal, many of the chairs, re-covered hassocks, and a portable font made by Therfield School pupils Kenneth Ford and Robert Jackson from the wood of the former altar, making a nice link with the past.

### **The Future**

Where is All Saints going from here? Church attendance has declined, as elsewhere, with an ageing congregation which is now very small. Services on Sundays have gradually been reduced, and at the present time, in 2004, there is only one Sunday service a month and one weekday service a week. Work is now under way to convert the main part of the building into a Youth Project Café with computers and other facilities for young people to meet two or three evenings a week. The chapel part of the church will also undergo extensive alterations, including the removal of the original Nicholson pipe organ and various re-deployments of the existing space. This again is very painful for the people who have worshipped here for many years and have already seen the church undergo one massive transformation. It is to be hoped that it can continue to be used as a church; that the Youth Project Café will be successful; and that whatever purpose the main part of the building is used for in the future, it will be of real benefit to the community so that All Saints will continue to be held in respect and affection.

## **'ONE MAN'S DREAM': THE NEIL & SPENCER STORY**

By G. POWELL

The Neil & Spencer Company was formed in 1937. However, its early beginning can be traced back even further than that—to 1932 when unit, or exhibition cleaning make its first appearance in Britain. The introduction of non-inflammable solvents for dry-cleaning, (rather than the petroleum based white spirit), led to the opening of unit cleaning shops in the High Streets of Great Britain and Philip Spencer was among those cleaners in the field with such a business. During the 1930's Philip Spencer met a Mr L. Neil who operated a company for the servicing of the early unit cleaning machines. Together they decided to establish a company of their own for the maintenance and repair of unit machines. So it was that, in 1937, the firm of Neil & Spencer Ltd., was founded in modest premises at Clapham, South London.

Being of a creative turn of mind, Philip Spencer soon found the repairing and servicing of machines rather limiting, so it was not long before he and his partner were designing a dry-cleaning machine of their own creation. Six of the original machines of their own design were built before World War II brought production to a halt. In 1939, Mr Neil left the Company, which by then were producing parts for war contracts. The building in Clapham suffered bomb damage and the business re-located to premises in Guildford Road, Effingham by the crossroads. Philip Spencer used one of the rooms in the "White House" now called "Crosslands" for his office. The Company continued to make amongst other things aircraft components and gas producing units for vehicles as part of the war effort.

In 1943 Philip Spencer made a move of particular significance for the Company. This was the purchase of an acre of ground in Leatherhead, where he dreamt that one day, when the war was over, his Company would build a factory and begin making dry-cleaning machines again.

From modest premises erected on the acre of ground in Station Road, Leatherhead, production of a new design of semi-open dry-cleaning machine began in 1947. This equipment, however, was merely a stopgap to provide machines quickly for a demanding industry. In what spare time he had, Philip Spencer was designing a machine that was to revolutionise international dry-cleaning. This was the totally enclosed dry-cleaning machine, known as the Spencer Junior, which had many features quite new to British Dry Cleaners. It was to form a solid foundation for the Spencer Company, whose reputation for quality machines was to become recognised worldwide.

The 1950s saw the dream become a reality. In 1956 the Company became a wholly owned subsidiary of Norcross Ltd., and by the beginning of the 1960s it had almost turned into a nightmare, for the factory by then was "bursting at the seams," so fast had been the expansion. By this time there were two hundred and fifty employees, The original factory was too small. Therefore a second factory was opened in Leatherhead "Argosy Works" on the Kingston Road.

During this period Philip Spencer was awarded an OBE, and in 1967 the Company received the Queen's Award to Industry for outstanding achievement. At least 60% of sales were to customers abroad. About this time Philip Spencer purchased Norbury Park, the former home of Marie Stopes after she died in October 1958.

The range and quantity of the Company's products continued to grow and by 1963 the Station Road and Argosy sites were no longer capable of meeting the ever increasing requirements. A third factory was opened at Horsham in Sussex.

In the late sixties Neil & Spencer separated from the Norcross Group and went into partnership with Gomaco Equipment Sales Ltd., the holding company being known as Spencer Gomaco Ltd.

Philip Spencer became Managing Director of Neil and Spencer Ltd. and Chairman of Spencer Gomaco Ltd., when the company became "Public". In 1969 a fourth factory was set up at Raynes Park, for the sole purpose of design and manufacture of specialised Laundry Washing Machinery known in the trade as "Washer Extractors". The company employed over 500 workers at their four factories.

Neil and Spencer overseas subsidiary companies, like Pinnacle Products Corporation in the USA, Peter-Spencer International in Germany and Spencer France, helped develop the export business in this rapidly expanding market. In addition to these and many other countries from Arctic to the Antarctic, machines were shipped from England. Spencer units were also being manufactured under license in many parts of the world including Spain, Italy, New Zealand and Japan.

During the 1970s Philip Spencer retired from the Company, moved from the Mole Valley District, and established yet another business, designing and manufacturing the 'Spencer' Wood Burning Stove.



JOHN SPENCER

#### **Would the dream continue?**

By the early 1980s and the rapid growth of technology of materials needing only to be washed at home in a domestic washing machine, together with the closing of many Launderettes and Dry Cleaning Shops, the call for Spencers products was on the decline. The factories at Raynes Park and Kingston Road ceased operation. Much of the manufacturing side went to Horsham, leaving mainly the Welding and Fabrication Sections along with the Sales and Servicing Department at Station Road, Leatherhead. Later a much depleted Sales and Service Department moved to Horsham. The responsibility for them passed on to the Yorkshire firm of Thomas Broadbent and Sons. At the same time the remaining Section underwent a reduction in staff. By 1987, the remaining employees had either gone to Horsham or were made redundant. In May of that year all the Fabrication and Welding Machinery together with the ancillary tools went up for auction. The Station Road Factory was sold and later demolished. Philip Spencer's dreams had now ended.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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NEIL & SPENCER FACTORY, STATION ROAD, LEATHERHEAD

# THE MOORE FAMILY'S OWNERSHIP OF POLESDEN, GREAT BOOKHAM (1723 – 1748)

By B. E. GODFREY

## Introduction

Arthur Moore, the first member of his family to own Polesden, was born of obscure parentage in about 1666 in Monaghan, Ireland: he was said to be either 'born at ..... the taphouse at the prison gate' or 'the gaoler's son'<sup>1</sup>. His younger brother, Thomas, purchased Polesden from Arthur, but died unmarried and Polesden was inherited by his nephew (Arthur's eldest son), William. He survived his two younger brothers, so when he died unmarried in 1745, at the age of 47 years, Arthur's family became extinct. As William had no close relatives to inherit his estates, his will appointed his friend, Lord Francis North (7<sup>th</sup> Baron North and 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Guilford) and his aunt's husband, Thomas Parr, as his executors and established a trust on behalf of Lord North's son, Frederick, who was a minor at the time. William died with large debts and his executors had to go to the House of Lords for a Private Act to enable them to sell his estates and raise enough money to pay his creditors: thus the manor of Polesden was sold to Capt. Geary, who was then in command of His Majesty's ship 'Culloden'.

Although the Moore family had owned Polesden for barely half William's lifetime, significant changes had been made in those 22½ years. Arthur, William's father, appears not to have lived there at any time; but Thomas, William's uncle, had some work done on the property whilst he lived there; and William carried out substantial renovations and additions to the house which must have seriously affected its use as his principal residence. As part of a study of early owners of Polesden, evidence has been found in the North Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and in some North Papers at the University of Keele and the University of Kansas which helps to expand on the main publications that refer to the ownership of Polesden by the Moore family<sup>2</sup>.

## Arthur Moore

When Arthur Moore leased Fetcham Park in 1700 he had started to make a name for himself in the commercial world both as a businessman in the City of London and as a Member of Parliament. He purchased Fetcham Park in 1705 and made it his principal residence: later, he acquired other property nearby in Bookham, Headley and Leatherhead. After Queen Anne died in 1714, Arthur's political career and his opportunities to make money did not thrive to the same extent under George I; but he still looked to acquire property. In August 1720, he sought an agreement with Thomas Harris and his mother, Elizabeth Symes, to purchase the manor of Polesden, the moiety of the parsonage and tithes of Great Bookham, the advowson to the vicarage and a meadow in Leatherhead called Hale Mead for £7000, and made three part payments (in total—£510) between 15 Aug 1720 and 23 March 1720/1<sup>3</sup>. The purchase was not finalised until March 1722/3 with the aid of a mortgage.

Arthur lost his parliamentary seat in 1722 and his business connections with it. His house at Fetcham had consumed most of his wealth and no evidence has been found to suggest that he either lived at any time at Polesden or spent any money on the property.

## Thomas Moore

Colonel Thomas Moore, Arthur's younger brother, had risen to command one of Queen Anne's foot regiments and then become paymaster to some of her land forces abroad. He purchased the

manor of Ockley in 1718 but does not seem to have spent much time there <sup>4</sup>. Family correspondence suggests that he may have spent more time at Fetcham, so when Arthur was in financial difficulties towards the end of his life, Thomas may have been pleased to acquire Polesden, which he purchased in Dec 1729 with the proceeds of the sale of £5000 worth of South Sea stock.

Soon after Thomas purchased Polesden, he started to improve the house: he employed Thomas Page, a glazier and painter, who was paid £5.12.6d for work done at Polesden House before Dec 1730 <sup>5</sup>, Thomas Carter, the London stonemason, also worked at Polesden between Sept 1731 and May 1732: he was paid £6.14.10d for moving a Marble chimney piece to Polesden and setting it up together with another Marble chimney piece, two firestone hearths, and a Portland step at the Hall door <sup>6</sup>. Later, Charles Clarke, a carpenter, was paid £2.2s for work done at Polesden House in April 1733 <sup>7</sup>. A number of other less specific bills and receipts for the period 1730 to 1733 have been found which may relate to improvements made at Polesden: these include the delivery of 5150 bricks, 2000 slabs, 100 pantils, rafters and other timber and further payments for carpentry.

Many letters have been found which are addressed to Thomas at Polesden between Sept 1732 and May 1735, and it seems likely that Thomas lived at Polesden for much of his ownership. Although he does not seem to have been wealthy, his will was not encumbered with debts when he died and was buried in Bookham in Oct 1735.

### **William Moore**

William wrote to his uncle about the sale of Fetcham Park in March 1734/5 and possibly he knew then that he would inherit Polesden when his uncle died less than a year later. Within six months of his acquisition of the house he had commissioned James Stedman to make major alterations, which commenced in April 1736 <sup>8</sup>. Stedman's account book <sup>9</sup> lists the work done in two separate accounts—a day labourer's bill and a carpenters and joiners bill. The first bill gives details of about 120 specific jobs with costs for labour (at 3s per man per day) and costs for materials. Most of the jobs involved preparation work for other trades (bricklayers, masons and plasterers) on floors, walls and ceilings of rooms, galleries and passages; the staircases; and doorways and window apertures: a few were simple utilitarian tasks, such as 'About fixing up a hanging shelve in the housekeeper's clossett', 'About making and fixing up a gun rack in the kitchen' and 'About making a jelly stand'. The second bill gives details of carpentry and joinery work and materials used in ten main rooms, the Great Staircase, kitchen, pantry, galleries and passages. Much of the work included provision of new flooring, doors, windows and shutters, and wainscots: new walnut framed and glazed bookcases were installed in the library. The complete schedule of work was not finished until Dec 1739, although much of it was done within a year: the cost of this work was :-

Day labourers bill	£127.13. 9¼
Carpenters and Joiners bill	£404.15. ½
James Stedman's fee (at £5 per cent)	<u>£ 37. 4</u>
	£569.12. 9¼

William paid an advance of £100 in 1735 and a further sum of £28 later, but the balance of the account (£440) was not paid until June 1750 by William's executors after his death.

In addition to the major renovation of the existing house, new rooms were added, one of which was octagonal in shape. Stedman's accounts give the cost (£9.6.6d) and details of wood used by Charles Clark, the carpenter, for construction of the Octagon Room, and Clark submitted a separate bill for £27.17.4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d for work done on the new rooms and staircase (measured by James Stedman in March 1736/7<sup>10</sup>; also, a less specific bill and receipt for 11,700 bricks delivered between August 1737 and May 1738 probably relates to the new rooms. A new architect, Peter Chassereau, was commissioned to supervise the painter's work done on the interior and exterior of the house between March and May 1740 at a cost of £49.19.3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d<sup>11</sup>.

Only a few letters have been found which are addressed to William at Polesden. It seems unlikely that he would have lived at Polesden whilst the restoration of his house was in progress: however, he probably lived there after the house had been painted in May 1740. He died and was buried in Bookham in Oct 1745.

### **William Moore's executors**

After William's death in 1745 his executors, Lord North and Thomas Parr, needed to pay off his creditors quickly as there was insufficient income from his estates to pay the interest on his debts: the Private Act of Parliament which enabled the executors to sell William's estates was given royal assent on 17 June 1746. First refusal of Polesden was given to James Gordon, who wrote to Lord North on 11 Dec 1746 with an offer of £6000 for "the house and land belonging to it, the Advowson and other appurtenances", with the comment that "in the opinion of most of the Gentlemen in that neighbourhood and in my own judgment it's more than it's worth"<sup>12</sup>. No other letters written by Mr Gordon have been found, but his interest in the property continued for more than eight months for Thomas Parr wrote to Lord North on 16 August 1747—"I met him in his coach with some ladyes twice in the lane leading from the arbour to the house—he drove by the house, so had no opportunity for a conference". Other letters written by Thomas to Lord North at that time imply that Mr. Gordon used rumours to discourage other possible purchasers and gain concessions for himself: on 3 August 1747, he had written—"I wou'd sooner make concessions to any other purchaser than gratefye so sordid a disposition"

Thomas Parr first wrote to Lord North that he had met with Capt. Geary as a possible purchaser of Polesden on 3 Aug 1747<sup>13</sup>: Capt. Geary had been on half pay since Dec 1745 when he had been discharged from His Majesty's ship 'Namure'. He wrote to Thomas on 26 August 1747 to confirm his proposal to purchase Polesden, and his friend, Mr. Edmond Mason, acting on his behalf, wrote to Thomas the next day to clarify Capt. Geary's offer of £5500<sup>14</sup>. On the 7 Sept 1747, Capt. Geary took command of His Majesty's ship 'Culloden': he had intended to visit Polesden with Thomas Parr, Mr & Mrs Mason and their lawyer on 15 Sept, but was called back to his ship at Deptford. Thomas wrote to Lord North next day about all the objections made by Mr Mason and the lawyer: he was particularly incensed by a claim for 3 busts (of Pope, Lock & Newton) over the chimney in the Great Room—"as they are not fixed . . . I conceive they may as well claim every cup or glass standing on the other chimneys". Between 17 Sept and 6 Oct several letters were exchanged between the various people concerned in order to circumvent the difficulties raised by the lawyer: nevertheless, it would seem that the obstructions were not entirely removed until Dec<sup>15</sup>. Capt. Geary was at sea from 5 Jan to 5 March 1747/8, which probably explains why his purchase of Polesden was not finalised until mid March 1747/8.

The ownership of Polesden by the Moore family reflects to some extent the rise and fall of the family over that same period of 25 years. The house as they knew it had disappeared 70 years later. As for the family, two monuments remain as a reminder of Thomas' and William's appearance, but the whereabouts of the family portraits, which were inherited by Frederick, the 8<sup>th</sup> Baron North, is not known <sup>16</sup>.

#### NOTES

1. Cruickshanks, E, et al, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons: Vol IV; 1690-1715*, p.90
2. *The National Trust Guidebook: Polesden Lacey*, p 49 – 50 (1999), and Benger F B, *Proc. LD&LHS Vol 1 No9* p.26 (1955)
3. N1/4-5, University of Keele
4. SAC Vol 39 p89 (1952)
5. MS North b17 f289, Bodleian Library, Oxford
6. MS North b17 f152, Bodleian Library, Oxford
7. MS North b17 f155, Bodleian Library, Oxford
8. Colvin, H, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects; 1600 –1840; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, p920 (1995) – although James Stedman is listed in this publication, he seems to have been employed essentially as a surveyor at Polesden.
9. MS North c62, Bodleian Library, Oxford – these accounts do not include work done by some trades, for instance, bricklayers, masons and plasterers: James Stedman's fee is based on a total cost for the work of £744.
10. MS North c21 f42, Bodleian Library, Oxford
11. MS North b14 f55, Bodleian Library, Oxford
12. MS North d5 f144/5, Bodleian Library, Oxford
13. MS North d5 f158/9, Bodleian Library, Oxford
14. MS North c11 f135, Bodleian Library, Oxford
15. Personal communication, Dr K S Cook, University of Kansas, USA
16. N 12/5-6, University of Keele – N 12/5 is a list of 17 pictures inherited by Lord Frederick North in Feb 1758 which includes a portrait of William Moore. N 12/6 is a nota bene (dated 8 June 1767) which states that 5 half length portraits were still in the house of Francis, Earl of Guilford (the former Lord North) in Curzon Street.

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## **JAMES WELLER—FARMER OF ASHTEAD (CELEBRATING HIS DAUGHTER, QUEENIE'S, 100TH BIRTHDAY ON 17TH NOVEMBER 2004)**

By GWEN HOAD

James Weller was born at Stoke d'Abernon in 1852 from where his father, Peter Weller, worked as a gardener at Claremont. James came to Ashtead as a very young man, to work at Felton's Bakery, Woodfield House, Windy Corner, facing the Common just north of the railway.

Eliza Felton's husband and 10 year-old son had both died of typhoid fever in 1870 only 10 years after their marriage and the setting up of the bakery business. Eliza had been managing the bakery with the help of an elderly relative, but after James arrived he soon took on some of the responsibility for running the business, and later he was managing it.

Originally Felton's Bakery had some garden in front of it but in 1882 Eliza Felton swapped some of that land with William Goodwin who owned land on the planned Links Road estate, so that he could gain access to it. He gave her in return a larger piece of land behind the bakery. This enabled future owners of the bakery to expand behind it for more huts and entertainments on the site.

James married Eliza in 1884 though she was 20 years his senior. In 1885 he bought some land facing the Common and south of the Rye Brook, which had two old cottages on it and which he demolished one at a time and replaced them with a row of new ones. He continued building the row over a period of several years and 18 were completed by about 1910. A third old cottage was not bought by him and it survived into the 1950s.

The track which ran from Felton's and in front of the new cottages and so across the Common to Rushett Farm, Chessington, was used by him and his horse and cart, to bring flour back for use in the bakery. The track became known as Baker's Row Ride. The flour was stored in the loft of the old buildings next to the bakery which had a hoist to lift the sacks up to the loft. The horses were stabled below. This building is still in existence as a private residence called Links Corner Cottage. The bakery building was demolished in the 1960s.

After the coming of the railway, trains brought parties of Sunday-school children and other excursionists to Ashtead station for a day on Ashtead Common. The tenants of the new cottages cashed in on this offering refreshments and wash-and-brush-up facilities to the visitors. One vicar of a London church asked James if he would provide teas for his Sunday-school children. James had been recommended by Thomas Syms, the station-master, who was a friend of his. Thus began a thriving business for him and he built a long wooden building to accommodate the parties of children and adults who enjoyed the teas provided. More huts were built in succeeding years after James had left the bakery.

### **The Move to Farming**

After a few years in the bakery business, James developed chest problems through inhaling the flour, so, on his doctor's advice, he took up farming to give him a healthier life in the open air. In 1888 he took over the lease of Woodfield Farm owned by J.T. Smith but leased at the time by William Webb. When he took the lease over, the farmland consisted of all the land north of



the railway and east of the Woodfield finishing at Duke's Hall Cottages on the Rye Brook, i.e. all the land which later became the Berg estate. In addition it included land on both sides of Craddocks Lane which at the time petered out at the Newton Wood railway crossing. The farmhouse and farm buildings were at the junction of Craddocks Lane and Woodfield Lane. The terrace of six former farm cottages in Woodfield Lane were not included in the sale when James bought it. They were owned by David Taylor and James Chitty, and largely occupied by the Chitty family. James Chitty was a car-man and coal merchant who lived in a house near the barn which he used as a coal-store and cart-shed. This barn was later demolished in 1977. None of the Chittys worked on the farm in James Weller's time.



JAMES WELLER, FARMER OF ASHTEAD

After taking over the farm in 1888 James started a dairy business and used a cart bearing the name "Woodfield Farm Dairy" for his milk deliveries. The former workhouse (or

"Spike"), later the Infirmary and now Epsom General Hospital, was his biggest customer. He had a milk round which also included the Edwards in Epsom who had a farm where Rosebery School is now, and the Kelseys in Ashtead Street who probably bought eggs and a few chickens from him. Although Kelsey kept a few cows in a field opposite his shop they would not have produced enough milk for all his customers on their own. Local people would bring their jugs to the farm for milk and could buy other dairy products and eggs direct from the farm. James' brother-in-law, Will, helped him with his milk rounds and later his son, Henry, did.

Sadly, James' first wife, Eliza, died in 1900 after a stroke. He married again in 1902. This time his wife, Lilian Weller, was 20 years younger than him. She was not related to him though they shared the same surname before marriage. Her family lived in Ermyn Lodge, halfway along Shepherd's Walk, to the south of Ashtead. Her father, William Weller, was shepherd to Pantia Ralli, last Lord of the Manor to live at Ashtead Park. The grassy slopes of the North Downs had always been used for grazing sheep, hence the name Shepherd's Walk. William's wife, Emily, and the family lived in the front half of Ermyn Lodge which was in fact two cottages. Besides Lilian there were her sister, Polly, and brothers George, Will, and Ted. George and Will later emigrated to Canada. Before George emigrated he had worked in the Kodak works in Ashtead. During the First World War he joined up but was killed. His name is on the war memorial outside St George's Church. He left a wife and daughter in Canada: Emily and William are buried in St Giles' churchyard.

## **Purchase of Woodfield Farm**

After his second marriage in 1902, James bought the Woodfield Farm with the aid of a mortgage arranged through Waterfields. He had already built a brick cowshed to house his pedigree milking herd, but he added another brick cowshed and a pair of cottages overlooking the farmyard to house his cowman, Fred Steadman. The other cottage was occupied by Oliver Breeden who did not work on the farm. One which still survives is occupied by a small engineering firm: the other has been incorporated into the garage buildings which now occupy the site of the farm. The pair of cottages also survived and are tucked away behind the old farm cottages in Woodfield Lane.

Soon after the purchase of the farm, their children started to arrive. James (or Jim) was born in 1903 then Edith (or Queenie) followed in 1904. She was always known as "Queenie" after Queen Victoria. After her came Tom (or Archibald) in 1908. He was called Tom after Queenie's pet pony and Archibald after Lord Rosebery. George followed in 1910, Peter in 1914 and the twins, Henry and Mary, in 1915. With so many children, Nurse Tooth was a frequent visitor to the farm but she was also a family friend. However, the children thought she was a bit of a tartar. As a young child Queenie went to a little nursery school run by Mrs Amy Charlotte Ottaway in what was then the last of the new cottages on the Common, near the Rye Brook. Later she went to Mrs Weston's school in Epsom, whereas the boys went to Mrs Hillman's school also in Epsom. Both schools were private and the children left at about 14 or 15 years old. How did they get there? By train from Ashted of course.

The family at Woodfield Farm were very close to their mother's family at Ermyn Lodge. They often walked up there through Birdcage Walk (the upper end of Gray's Lane) or up Rectory Lane, Cramshaw Lane and Stane Street.

One of James' building projects was to build a pair of shops next to the farmhouse in Woodfield Lane. They were built in about 1900 at the request of Thomas Syms, the station-master, for his retirement. Syms was a friend of his and his wife was frequently at the farm. Unfortunately Sims became ill with cancer of the mouth and died. His wife went into an almshouse. Lilian Weller's brother Edward (or Ted) and his wife Lizzie took the shop over and sold sweets, tobacco, newspapers etc. which it still does to this day. The other shop was the estate agents Corbett and Edwards.

James was a bit of a character, well known to everybody and an asset to the community. He was affectionately known as Cheesy Weller as he always had a piece of cheese in his pocket. He was a shrewd business man who was always on the look-out for ways to make money. He had a finger in every pie. He could turn his hand to anything and was always there to supervise anything that was going on. He was often asked to mow people's fields for them as he had the manpower and equipment to do it. His cows grazed on the Woodfield and drank from the pond, but he kept the pond dredged, the road free of mud and manure and he mowed the Woodfield. Pantia Ralli had put the railings round the pond and the Woodfield. He also planted the avenue of chestnut trees along Station Road; it was said to impress his visitors arriving at the station or to commemorate a national event.

Apart from his dairy herd which was his pride and joy, James grew all kinds of cereals, also cabbage, kale, turnips and mangolds, so he needed more land after his initial purchase. He bought three fields behind the row of cottages on the Common. The boundaries of the garden

adjoining the cottages were, and still are, irregular, as the cottages were allowed to take what they wanted into their own gardens.

Quite early on James leased the area known as "Little Common" which was near the Kingston Road at Ashted Gap. The cows would be taken up there to graze under the care of the cowman. In 1908 he leased some fields from J Soames who had bought the fields for development on the future Links Road estate in 1887. The fields James leased were at the west end of the estate when the roads were called South, West, North and East Roads on a lease in Queenie's possession and before the area was developed. It had been marked out by 1894 but development was very slow.

### **Life at the Farm**

Queenie remembers the farmyard as a lovely playground for children. The brick-built cowshed with a pitched roof was for the pedigree herd who were fed on mangles kept in a heap nearby. Hay was stored in the roof and Queenie remembers lots of bats in there. The smaller brick-built cowshed was the milking parlour. There was a large old 2-bay wooden barn where the children used to play among the bales of hay kept to feed the milking cows in winter. Chickens and pigs ran around the farmyard. A bull was kept in the dark on its own in a shed alongside Craddocks Lane and there was a cart-house next to Woodfield Lane.

With all the land and the animals to care for James needed to employ a number of local men. His sons helped when they were old enough, but there were Astridges, Haynes and Baileys among others, in his employ. The Astridge family were very prominent in the Woodfield hamlet. Jack (or John) Astridge worked for James and he was remembered for refusing to observe British Summer Time. His sons George (b.1880) and James (b.1878) set up rival haulage firms. George had the green lorries firm while James had the orange. Jim, another member of the Astridge family, was known as Scratcher Jack in his early days and worked on the farm at one time. He was called "Scratcher" because he was always scratching around for anything he could sell. James employed him to collect household waste around Ashted, as he had been contracted by the local council to do so. "Scratcher" was allowed to sort through it and to sell anything he could and keep the proceeds. The sorting was done on the farm. George Astridge worked as a carrier at the station before setting up his haulage firm. At one time he kept his horse and cart at the farm.

Queenie remembers they had land-girls working on the farm during the First World War. They were called Daisy, Lily, Eva (a parson's daughter) and Honour. One of them stayed on after the war as she lived in Epsom. Eva wanted to come back but her father said "no" as it would not be fair to returning soldiers who needed jobs. There was a small wash-house with a toilet in the farmyard which they could use, and a mirror which had been put in there for them. It was also a store for beer. They taught Queenie how to crochet. Peter knew them all but he was only a little boy then.

With so many children there was open house at the farm for their friends and neighbours. One such visitor was Stan Paul who was a great friend of Queenie's brother George. His parents ran Paul's Bakery which was opposite the farm in a villa called "Myrtleville" where the National Westminster Bank was later. The smell of fresh bread was lovely. Stan's great-grandfather was William Webb, the farmer at the farm before James. His daughter, Ann, married Job Curwood, the builder who built the villas at the bottom end of Woodfield Lane including Eden Villa where



EDITH (QUEENIE) HENDERSON  
OUTSIDE WOODFIELD FARM HOUSE



GEORGE WELLER, QUEENIES BROTHER

William Webb's widow, Harriet, lived. He also built the cottages behind the pond, four of which James bought and which were sold in 1936. Curwood built many other houses in Ashted and had a builder's yard behind Paul's Bakery and facing the pond. Behind that was an orchard. He had a tip for builder's rubble, bricks, sand etc., near the entrance to the recreation ground which was a magnet for children.

Between the two shops and the row of old farm cottages there used to be a drying ground where there is now a modern shop. Stan Paul remembers having tea at the farm sitting outside under the shade of the big old hollow tree which stood in front of the farmhouse. Cakes were made by James who, of course, had learnt his skill in Felton's Bakery.

Buses would bring parties of children for outings on the Common to the stop by the pond. Stan heard that one day a boy ran across the grass and straight into the pond thinking the green pondweed was grass. He also remembers that there were little streams everywhere in Ashted where the springs come up at the edge of the chalk. One stream started near the Peace Memorial Hall and ran down the side of Woodfield Lane to the pond. They were kept immaculate with clear running water. Now most of them are underground. He and Queenie remember cowslips growing in the fields on the north side of Craddocks Lane.

George, Queenie's brother, was a lovable little rascal, always ready for a joke. His pride and joy was a white pony which he used to round up the cattle on the fields where the Berg estate was later built. When she was bought she was in foal so he ended up with 2 for the price of one. Another frequent visitor to the farm was Queenie's future husband, Percy Henderson. Christmas was a lovely time at the farm when their cousins Audrey and Phyllis, and Percy and his sisters all came.

Sadly, Lilian died in 1929 at the age of 49 when the twins were only 14 and Queenie was 25. From then on Queenie had to take her mother's place, looking after the younger ones, running the home and caring for her father as he got older. The older boys worked on the farm but Jim, the eldest, had left home in 1927 to take up farming on his own. George also left in 1928.

## Later Years

When James Weller grew older he gradually lost his sight and became infirm. Mary, Peter and Queenie looked after him between them. Because of his blindness Queenie tied a piece of clothes line from the back door to the cowshed so that he could feel his way there then sit on the edge of the manger and talk to his men. He started to sell off the farmland from about 1934 to speculative builders who were only too eager to buy. One of these was Berg who developed their Ashtead Woods Estate to the north of the railway. It was to consist of a better type of house than those being built to the south of it. In the end all the farm was sold but James managed to arrange for his family to stay in the farmhouse for up to 6 months after his death which took place in 1935.

Craddocks Lane became Craddocks Avenue and was extended and widened. The lovely old 2-bay wooden barn was taken apart and packed up for transport by Arthur Astridge for shipment to the USA. Apart from the two brick cowsheds and the pair of farm cottages, everything else went. Less than 6 months after their father's death Tom, Peter, Henry, Mary and Queenie moved out and the farmhouse was demolished. The farm buildings were replaced by Craddocks Parade on the south side of the new Craddocks Avenue in 1938, and a garage built on the site of the farmhouse which is now called Volkspeed (in 2004). When they left the farmhouse at the end of 1935 the family moved to Midhurst where they rented a farm for about 3 years. However, Mary and Queenie both found their way back to Ashtead eventually, and stayed in the area till the present day. Mary married Ed Harris from Duke's Hall Cottages in 1940.

What happened to the boys? George married an Ashtead girl, Addie Potter. They farmed at Send near Guildford but after moving to Ripley, George worked for the Tyrrell brothers, Bert and Ken, who ran a timber company in Green Dene, Effingham Forest. Ken went on to create the world famous Tyrrell Formula 1 motor racing team which was originally based in the wood yard. Drivers including Jackie Stewart were well known to George. In his spare time George was a keen gardener and served on both local and national committees of the Geranium Society. Both he and Henry were mad keen on geraniums and pelargoniums but Henry did not like farming. Both took a very active part in the British and European Geranium Society. Henry was not just keen on geraniums but was a fanatic. There was nothing he did not know about geraniums and pelargoniums. His talents were well recognised throughout the geranium world. As well as exhibiting for many years at the Chelsea Flower Show along with his wife Gladys, he received the ultimate accolade of having a geranium named after him—"Henry Weller". He was known to all the geranium world as "Mr Geranium". His hobby was history especially family history.

Finally, what about Queenie? After her marriage she lived in Ashtead for the rest of her life and ended up living in one of the new houses in Rutland Close until recently, which were built on the former site of the farmyard. Life for her had come full circle.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With grateful thanks to Queenie Henderson, her daughter Janice and husband Les Hammond, Stan Paul and Mary and Ed Harris who have all contributed their memories to this story and made material available to me.

# HENRY SKILTON (1847—1909) BUILDER AND PROPERTY DEVELOPER

By J.L. DERRY

## Introduction

This article is based on an archive given to the Leatherhead Museum in May 2003 and described on the museum's receipt as "tin box containing old business records". The contents appeared not to have been disturbed for almost a century, and proved on examination to concern the business career of Henry Skilton. There was no content dealing with personal and family matters.

Henry Skilton was born in 1847 and died in 1909 after some years of poor health. Not much has been previously written about him. He features briefly in A. Roberts' article on the Moore family in the 2002 Proceedings<sup>1</sup> and unpublished research which describe him as having come to Leatherhead in 1883 and being primarily a jobbing builder (although he did build a number of houses). After Henry's death his wife, Julia, tried to continue the business but soon fell far behind with the rent. The landlord, Henry Moore, forced her to auction the stock in trade to pay what was owed to him. The builder, W. H. Impson took over the site.

Apart from Henry Skilton's activities as a builder and property developer, he was a member of the Leatherhead Fire Brigade<sup>2</sup>. A Chief Officer Skilton is referred to in March 1894 and this is probably Henry. It is unlikely to refer to a brother John who had been elected a member in February 1891 but was still a fireman in December 1896. However in December that year there is a reference to Captain H. Skilton, and in September 1898 it was decided to give H. Skilton a suitable present on his retirement after 14 years service. This was quickly put into effect, the presentation of a "massive walnut writing-desk given absolutely" to Chief Officer Skilton being made at the Running Horse Inn. The Society's popular postcard showing Leatherhead Fire Brigade and the Clock Tower, North Street c 1905 is after H. Skilton's time as a member and the Society has no photograph or portrait of him.

## Henry Skilton's Place of Business

The earliest papers we have on Henry Skilton date from 1885 when he had not long been in Leatherhead and was endeavouring to establish himself, and help, for a suitable reward, a nearby neighbour Dr. Arthur H. Wyborn who had rented Braehead, a large detached villa in The Crescent. The papers concern the sale by auction of Wyborn's nearly new furniture and effects on his departure from Leatherhead. This minor affair with Dr. Wyborn could only have been a small

time occupation for a man establishing himself in the town.

Henry Skilton's place of business was at 5 London Street (now known as The Crescent) from his arrival in Leatherhead until June 1887 when he moved to premises near Bridge Street. His landlord there initially cannot



be determined, but in about late 1901 Mrs. Julia Skilton took a ten-year lease from Henry Moore at a rent of £50 per annum. There were other properties in Bridge Street rented by H. Skilton referred to in Leatherhead UDC General District rate book for 9th April 1907, as “old cottage and sheds” and “house and premises”, whose owner was stated as “Lipscombe Executors”, and also a “stable” in Bridge Street and “land” in Belmont Road, both owned by Alfred Slater. Thus Henry Skilton had an extensive business in the Bridge Street area, and a careful examination of the photograph from the Frith Collection of circa 1895 shows the large roof signs of “H. Skilton, Builder”, and “Skilton’s Joinery Works”.

The extent of Skilton’s business premises is partly visible from photographs, but other clues as to the actual business size are to be found, for example, in the only wage book, which covers January 1907 to March 1908, indicating an average of about 24 employees per week, although the numbers vary considerably, and the number declines over the period. A full week of 56½ hours earned a man £2.2s.4½d. at the rate of 9d per hour; on the other hand a man might work only one 9½ hours a day in a week at 6d earning 4s.7d.

While there is much evidence of jobbing work and decorating, a small notebook covering 1905 to 1906 records the receipt of interim payments on larger jobs. This reveals that Skilton had a contract for Mr. Morris at Bookham for about £900, for Dr. W.J. Proctor’s house at Bookham for about £1,500, for Wyatt Brothers at Ashted a contract for four houses for a



LEATHERHEAD BRIDGE, 1895  
Henry Skilton’s works can be seen close to the Bridge.  
Frith Collection

total of £1,195, a contract called Woodvill No.2 for £500, and for Mr. Douglas of Bookham a contract for about £850, and for Mr. Hartshorn an alteration contract for £260, and for E. Cruthwell Esq. of 21 Delahaty Street, Westminster, a contract of £1,478.

As to where Henry Skilton and his large family lived after leaving The Crescent, letters addressed to him refer first to Bridge Street, Leatherhead or to Mole House, until he moved in about 1906 to Hill Top in Fairfield, (now Upper Fairfield Road) and the house is now part of the Leatherhead and District Social Club. Mole House was described in the estate of landlord Henry Moore as having 4 bedrooms, 2 sitting rooms, kitchen and scullery, so the move to larger accommodation for the growing Skilton family is readily understandable.

### **Property Developer**

So far descriptions of Henry Skilton's firm and work have concentrated on what he did as a builder, but he also carried out house building development and ownership in his wife's name, Julia Skilton. Perhaps building houses in her name from which she derived the rents was a means of providing her with an income.

Whatever the reason, by 1907 Mrs. Skilton owned twenty properties, three in Fairfield Hill, Leatherhead, five in Skinners Lane in Ashted and twelve in Barnett Wood Lane also in Ashted. We know this because Skilton prepared and submitted an income tax return in that year for his wife, retaining a copy. The three in Fairfield were Hill Top occupied by Henry Skilton himself and two further houses in Hillcrest occupied by Samuel Pizzezy and F. Mayall (The Leatherhead U.D.C. General District Rate Book of 9<sup>th</sup> April 1907 actually gives Henry Skilton as owner). The three were bought from Charles Wood (a local insurance agent of Holmesdale, Kingston Road, Leatherhead) for £1600, of which £1200 remained on mortgage to him.

Mrs. Skilton's ownership of land and houses in Skinners Lane, Ashted lasted from about 1901 to 1908. By a complicated series of transactions involving three vendors and an exchange of land, she acquired a land holding and built and let five houses which the first tenants named Wren's Nest, Chilgrove, St. Winnow, Abrudah, and Minfford (whose spelling varies, in its most exuberant form appearing as Minfforrrdd). She also appears to have then built two pairs of cottages, possibly known as 1 to 4 The Yews, which were later sold off, one pair in 1904 and the other in 1906, both to a Mr. Newell of Maidenhead, a baker and confectioner. The remaining five houses were sold in 1908.

Despite there being no maps showing what land was included in the complicated purchase from three vendors, or plans of the houses to be built, it is possible to identify the Skinner's Lane properties today as Nos. 54 to 68 (even). No. 62 is called The Yews.

Henry Skilton's venture in Barnett Wood Lane was his largest house building project, which ended with fifteen houses being built on the North side opposite the row of shops at the Ashted end<sup>3</sup>. All still stand today, their front elevations little altered, and are now Nos. 181 to 209 (odd). Only one still bears its original name Longwood.

### **Relations with Payne Jennings**

Skilton leased the Barnett Wood Lane site from Payne Jennings who had acquired land some time after the extensive New Purchase Farm sale of 1879. Payne Jennings (1843 –



1926) was a photographer and publisher and a long time resident of Ashtead for many years living at Gayton House, now demolished. His land holdings included the West side of Woodfield Lane and the Greville Park estate, but here we are concerned with the strip of land along the North side of Barnett Wood Lane, divided into three separate parcels as land was reserved for two roads for development at the rear toward the railway. These roads eventually became the Read Road and Taylor Road Council Developments.

The intermediary acting for Payne Jennings was his solicitor, J. Woodhouse. It is possible that Skilton already knew Payne Jennings and even done some building work for him, but throughout the long relationship with Payne Jennings it is Woodhouse who acted on his behalf, writing over the years 1902 to 1909 many letters mostly in his own hand.

Negotiations started in 1903 by Woodhouse encouraging Skilton to take sites, two plots in Woodfield Lane and three in Oakfield Road being suggested as well as sixteen plots fronting Barnett Wood Lane. It was the latter that were taken up, possibly because the houses would be of a more modest size. The plots were offered at a ground rent of £5 each, £80 in total, with an option to acquire the freehold at 25 years purchase. Finance for building the houses was also offered at 5% interest, to be provided by instalments on each house. Despite misgivings by Skilton at taking on speculative work, the tenor of the correspondence at this point was of Woodhouse positively encouraging Skilton to lease the land and borrow the building finance from his client Payne Jennings.

Discussions followed as to what sort of houses should be built, £40 rent being mentioned, and how the plots should be divided up. Eventually the originally sixteen plots became fifteen. For the first five houses, £500 was advanced on each house by £100 instalments according to construction progress. The building cost of each house was to be not less than £650 presumably requiring that Skilton (or Mrs. Skilton for we must not overlook that she was legally the developer) would invest some of his (or her) own money. A house did not take long to build as the five instalments were paid out in as few as five months. The sums lent, and the size of, subsequent houses varied.

The rents payable varied; in 1907 the rents were between £55 and £32 per annum, mostly payable quarterly, the remainder monthly. Three or four houses were unlet, possibly because they were the last to be built or it may be that the letting market was difficult. One house called St. George's Cottage was occupied at this time by the Revd. T.E.R. Phillips, the curate at the nearby St. George's Church which had been recently built and consecrated at Easter 1906<sup>4</sup>. The letting of houses rather than selling was the general rule, and three year tenancies were common.

During 1907 Skilton and Payne Jennings fell out over the cost of alterations. Skilton had also carried out work for Payne Jennings at his Ashtead home, Gayton House. Eventually after about two months this matter was settled. In the same year Skilton and Payne Jennings were frequently in touch with each other over Skilton's financial difficulties. The prolonged correspondence in these matters petered out in 1908 without the financial position being resolved.

### Relations with W.H. Impson

We know from Alun Roberts' article on the Moore family (Proceedings 2002) that on the sale of Henry Skilton's stock-in-trade in January 1909 W.H. Impson took over his premises. The

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archive reveals that Impson had been involved with Skilton's business for some time before, although from when and in what capacity is difficult to determine. At one stage he helped Skilton prepare estimates, at another there are notes suggesting Skilton and Impson were in partnership or even hinting that Impson had taken over the firm; in yet another approach he presented Skilton with an account for £890 for an unspecified job in Lynwood Avenue (presumably in Epsom). Finally in August 1908 we find the solicitors Hart Scales and Hodges in Dorking, with whom Skilton had various dealings, writing to him on behalf of Impson who claimed to have agreed to purchase the business.

### **The end of Henry Skilton's business**

This account of what brought about the peremptory sale in January 1909 of Skilton's stock-in-trade brings to an end what the archive tells us. The archive's interest, apart from being local, is that business archives are not readily come by, on the other hand it tells us virtually nothing about his personal life and numerous offspring. Even Mrs. Skilton appears only as a figurehead. Any personal items have been removed, and any original legal documents removed by executors.

Henry Skilton died on 5th August 1909, his funeral being at Leatherhead Parish Church. The mourners included his widow, Julia, four sons and eight daughters; a ninth daughter was absent. There were also several members of the local Fire Brigade, commemorating Skilton's long membership (see p.222). Julia survived her husband by sixteen years, dying at the age of 77.

### **NOTES**

1. Alun Roberts has pointed out that there is a manhole cover at the 'Jug House' in Church Walk with H. Skilton's marking.
2. Notes from Fire Brigade records (LX1346).
3. "History of Ashted" (ed. J.C. Stuttard) 1995 p.74—reference to villas on Barnett Wood Lane; also p.206 on Payne Jennings.
4. Confirmation from Howard Davies that the Rev. T.E.R. Phillips was curate at St. George's Church, Ashted.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

For general observations about house building and economic conditions in the period covered by the archive I have relied on:-

- "A Social History of Housing, 1815–1985" by John Burnett (1986)
- "The English Terrace House" by Stefan Muthesius (1982)
- "Semi-Detached London" by Alan A. Jackson (1991)

## FETCHAM PARK HOUSE

By A. POOLEY

Probably the only comprehensive written history of Fetcham Park House is that by the late Frank Bengier and published in Volume 2 [1957] of the Society's Proceedings in the series "Pen Sketches of Old Houses in this District". Actually far more than a "pen sketch", it covers not only the House but gives a significant amount of information regarding the principal families associated with it, the Vincent, Moore, Revell, Warren and the Hankey dynasties most notably. This article seeks not only to supplement this earlier one, bringing the record up to date, but also to add the results of further research and take the opportunity to correct a few errors that have been perpetuated over the years and which have been copied in other accounts.

Bengier notes it was evident that Arthur Moore was living at Fetcham Park by October 1700 and it is probably correct that Moore took up residence a little earlier. However it is difficult to determine what was the actual extent of the enclosed land forming the Park when Moore arrived. The road from the Downs then ran practically due north to pass between the Church and the Mansion and probably formed the western boundary whilst Pear Tree furlong with the land between the Guildford Road and Park Farm, part of which was glebe land, is likely to have been farmed still. Evidence of the progressive extension is the example that Bengier gives of Moore's "admission at the manor court to a messuage and smith's shop in the village". The 1787 Copyhold Survey tells us that John Nettlefold and John Blundell with their respective wives, both named Elizabeth, did on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1699 surrender the following: "Messuage, Barn, Smiths Shop, Gate Rooms (All which are now taken down) and Orchard (now in the Park) of just over half an acre. Whilst the exact location of this is unclear, it is close to the then garden wall of the Mansion. There are other surrenders and admissions on the Court Rolls that record the inclusion of land into the Park.



Later that century, recorded with the 1777 Survey of Warren's estate are purchases and exchanges that took place "to carry the new Road up straight" and "for the Road to get into the Bookham Road". This relates to the construction of the track that now is the Ridgeway, the date of which is uncertain but may have been about 1770.

Moore, Revell and Warren also sought to extend their land and property holdings generally in the Parish. Thomas Vincent's Will of 1696 suggests the extent of the estate in Fetcham was "Cannon Farm, Church Farm, The Mill, my mansion or dwelling house with gardens and orchards and millpond and other lands being the jointure of my wife" It is possible to determine that there were once in the parish over two dozen separate "farms" and/or field groups ranging from about 10 to 45 acres apart from the larger unit of Cannon Farm. Nearly all had majority of their holdings spread in the East and/or West Field with some enclosed land as well but the Court Barons record how most of these were progressively acquired. From the first definitive survey of Sir George Warren's estate in Fetcham, undertaken by John Richardson and dated 1777, it is

clear that Warren owned about two thirds of the parish. However even then, about 200 acres were owned and farmed from Bookham [Slyfield/Sheepbell] and only Nettlefold's Pound Farm of 38 acres, Highmore's Royden Farm [later the Kennels] of 25 acres, Elmer Farm of 29 acres plus a few other land owners of average say 4 to 6 acres remained outside. It is clear that between 1777 and the sale of the estate in 1788, Warren undertook some quite extensive rationalisation and rearrangement of the allocation to the principal farms that had now emerged.



EAST ELEVATION OF THE MANSION IN 1822

The artist has omitted the central pediment, confused perspective and enlarged the porch. The wings are hidden by the trees. Reproduced courtesy of Surrey Archaeological Society.

Benger notes that Warren was already considering selling in 1785 to Maurice Lloyd who apparently was acting on behalf of a Thomas Hankey but that came to naught and thus the whole estate was Auctioned by Mr Christie on May 29<sup>th</sup> 1788:

Sold in 28 lots, lot 1 was the Mansion and the Park, which now covered 113 acres.

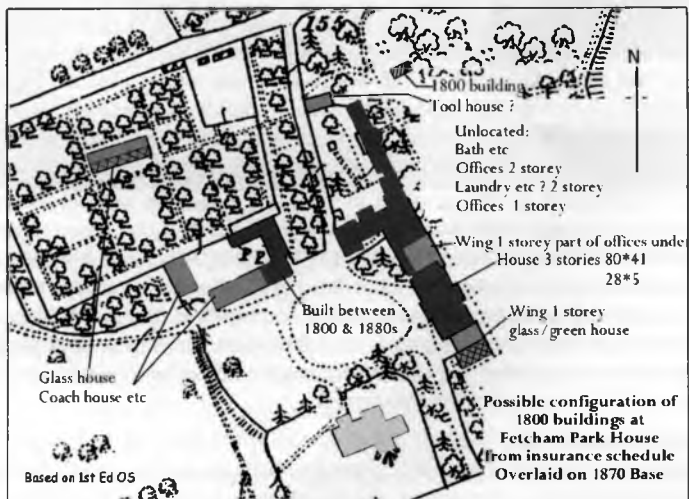
CONSISTS of a Roomy elegant convenient Mansion, with every suitable Office of Domestic Purposes, excellent Stabling for Sixteen Horses, Triple Coach House, suitable Outhouses, etc. Good Kitchen Garden walled and planted within and without with a most choice

Collection of Fruit Trees, well trained and in full Bearing, Pinery, Succession House, tool House. etc. Pleasure Ground, disposed with Taste, large Green House, Ice House suitably placed.

The House seated on a beautiful Lawn, refreshed by a Canal and surrounded by a verdant Paddock in part paved: also an elegant Cottage Farm House, Barns, Stabling, Farm and Stack Yard, Piggery, Poultry house, and every Convenience suitably calculated for the conducting a Farm. In the Paddock a well constructed Cheshire Mill forms a beautiful Object to the House as well as that of Profit.

The Land contains as follows, viz.	Acres
Site of the House, Office, Gardens, Pleasure Ground and Park-,Freehold	98
Copyhold of Inheritance, held of the Manor of Fetcham	13
Glebe Land, held clear of Outgoings during the Life of the Rector	2¼
total	113¼

Thomas Hankey, who was eventually the actual buyer of this, came from an illustrious banking family whose roots are traceable back to the early 13<sup>th</sup> century in Chester. On his cousin Joseph Chaplain Hankey's suicide in 1773, Thomas became head partner of the bank then trading as Sir Joseph Hankey and Company, which he remained as until his death. He had a country house at Southborough Bromley Kent but when his grandfather Sir John Barnard died in 1784, he inherited most of the very considerable estate said to be over 200,000 pounds. He immediately bought himself a substantial town house, 18 Bedford Square, which remained in the family until the death of his wife Elizabeth in 1829. He married Elizabeth in 1781, apparently at her instigation and thereby, legitimising three daughters! The next child named John Barnard Hankey and born in 1784 was to become his heir. However Thomas also had one son from an earlier liaison named William Alers who in later years was very much part of the family and was granted a licence to use the name "Alers Hankey". ["All subsequent children from John had a middle name of "Barnard""]



In addition to the Mansion and the Park, Thomas bought another twenty lots, which gave him nearly all of Warren's estate with the notable exception of the Water Mill and the associated farm although he did have rights of access for maintenance and repair of the "engine" i.e. the pump at the mill which fed the cisterns up by the Mansion. Neither did he purchase the Advowson, the Parsonage and the associated lands. As with many estates, actual ownership was very complicated and eventually the estate was surrendered to trustees Sir John Fleming and Hugh Griffith for the transfer in 1792 to Thomas who had by then spent £4400. He certainly commenced this work of improvement in 1788 but when the family moved is unclear but it was probably shortly afterwards. Maurice Lloyd leased some of the lands and property in 1792 including the newly built [for Hankey] Fetcham Cottage and the brickworks off River Lane. It is fortunate that we have the very detailed Tithe survey of 1791 to compliment the 1777 survey and thus not only confirm the exact extent of the Estate now owned by the family but see how Thomas in turn, undertook more re-allocation of farm land.

Regarding the Mansion House, the contractors, Hanscomb and Fothergill's work appears to have been more likely to be renovation rather than rebuilding and comparison of the 1777 and 1791 surveys suggests that no extra buildings were added. Celia Fiennes writing about 1710 clearly refers to the two wings, the south with a "summer house" and the other with offices and another entrance. This is corroborated by later pictures of both elevations that confirm that Hassell in his 1823 painting appears to have shown, the wings erroneously curved. These wings are ornately finished on the east or park side matching the main house. A single storey south wing contained an Anti-room, privies and a "Green House", possibly the summer house mentioned above whilst the north wing was far more extensive containing the domestic facilities of the kitchen, laundry and sculleries etc., plus the servants halls and accommodation adjacent to the main house; the wing was single storey to join two storey sections.

The actual extent of this property can be accurately gauged from the insurance policy renewed from 1800 to 1807 which shows that the original house 80 ft by 41 ft gross had a 40 ft by 36 ft single storey added wing at the south end incorporating the green house. At the north end, it is assumed that a 28 ft by 5 ft three storey section listed with the main house ran centrally across from east to west, probably containing a secondary stairway. Then came the north wing commencing with a 40 ft by 31 ft single storey block with basement. These total in plan area to 6,100 square feet. However there is listed another 6,335 square feet of buildings nearly half of which were of two storey construction that excludes the coach house and stables and other ancillary buildings. The whole establishment appears significantly larger than perhaps has sometimes been appreciated.

On Thomas's early death at the age of 53 in 1793, his eldest son was only 9 and Elizabeth appears to have taken charge of an estate that now totalled nearly 1,000 acres. Elizabeth bought Nettlefold's interests in Stones or Pound Farm in 1794 of about 38 acres and included the cottage and the 1801 Enclosure act the award of which is dated 1813, allocated more land to the family and in the rather complicated exchanges and sales which accompanied the awards, they also gained. The 1842 Tithe terrier shows their holding to be 1,090 acres. Subsequently as property and or smallholdings came on the market they invariably acquired them as for example in 1874 when Monks Green and Orchard cottages were auctioned.

### **The rebuilding of the House**

Whilst it is likely that the first John Barnard Hankey made other improvements to the house over the next few decades, there is little of significance determinable up to the succession of the

second John Barnard Hankey on the death of his father George in January 1875. The family were perhaps approaching their zenith and John appointed the architect Edward L'anson to undertake a major overhaul of the house which one may suspect could well have been rather primitive in some respects. However, this work also took in creating a totally different appearance.

Regarding the central main block of the building, the old roof and the second floor walls down to window cill level were removed and replaced with a mansard roof finishing over a heavy projecting cornice. The stucco was removed and the external walls faced with a new brick skin and stone embellishments. All this had the effect of lowering the apparent height and initial dominance. The old south wing including the greenhouse was demolished and replaced by a two-storey block matching the new appearance of the main house and finished with a pitched slated roof. This contained a ballroom or drawing room, which had two alcoves; one set facing south and another west whilst the large first floor room bedroom above opened out onto a balcony over the south-alcove.



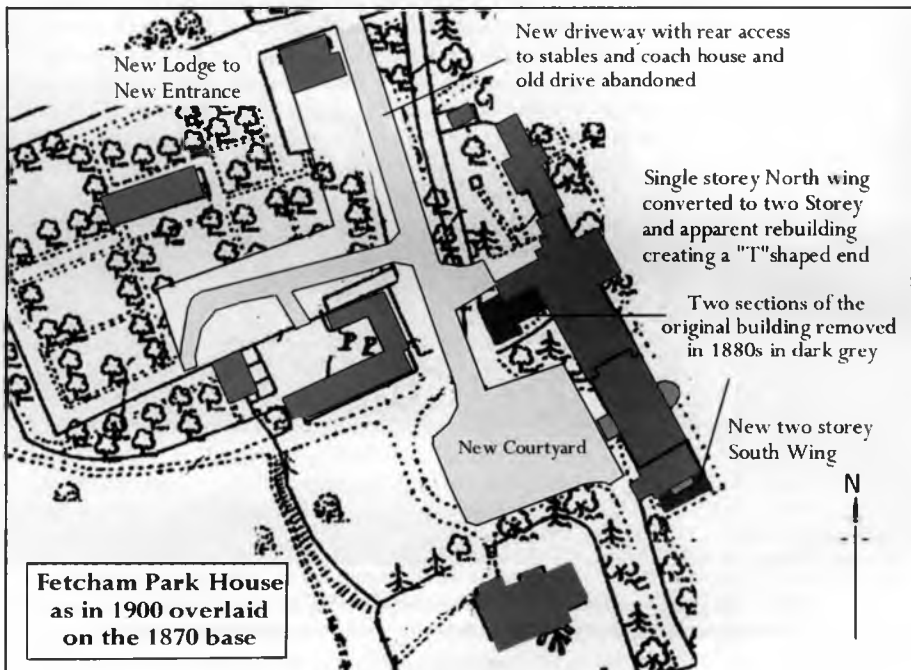
THE WEST ELEVATION IN 1907

The appearance of the rebuilt front is not enhanced by the north wing to the left

The insignificant original entrance porch was replaced by a Flemish style turreted entrance block incorporating rooms on the first and second floors. This principal façade was then and still is asymmetric, with about a five-foot mismatch in length as compared with the one facing the Park.

On the north end of the main block i.e. the North Wing, in the absence of knowledge as to exactly what was there in 1876 the extent of work is subject to speculation and is partly based upon the assumption that in later years no significant alteration to the exterior was made. It

appears that the second floor to the main block was extended to the north over a width of about 30 ft, about 5 ft from the end of the west main façade [10 ft from the east] , finished in the mansard style with pitched roof above. It is not clear how this received support but it almost certainly incorporated the secondary staircase from the ground. As to the remainder of the old North Wing, the single storey section was refaced also and provided with a first floor within a mansard roof which extended up to the earlier two storey section marked by the substantial chimney. Comparison between plans shows that there was extensive alteration to the north of the above at the far end with both demolition and new work. The 1800 policy suggests that a sizeable section of this, probably on the east side, was already two storey, but in general this received similar treatment however the room heights differed and the roofing is more elevated. Alongside all the above the west side of the north wing, was after rebuilding, also a two storey block, again finished in matching brickwork and mansard roofing containing the first floor part of which is visible in the picture of the front or west elevation.



The "T" referred to above contained the secondary entrance at the servants end, now set further back from the approach road, which itself was also re-aligned bodily to the west with a new entrance off Lower Road and with a substantial Lodge House built alongside.

The effect of this was to marginally provide more privacy to the house from churchgoers and others. Another significant alteration was to create a new access off this road to serve the coach house and stables from the north rather than as before from the south thereby separating further



Church and Park traffic. The result in the 1880s is unlikely to be much different from the following description prepared in 1924, apart from the reference to a chauffeur and a garage.

Contains 28 Bed and Dressing rooms, 3 Bath rooms and 7 Reception Rooms, including noble Drawing Room of Louis XIV character, stately Reception Hall...

Excellent Offices, Stabling, Garages, Cottages and Entrance Lodge

Delightfully simple walled-in Kitchen Garden and Pleasure Grounds, Lawns and Glasshouses. ....

**On the Ground Floor** approached through the Entrance Vestibule, a stately ENTRANCE HALL of character, with circled pillars, large open Fireplace and exquisite Dog-Grate, Marble and Parquet flooring.

DINING ROOM with semi-circular Bay window ...

DRAWING ROOM [37' 9" by 20'], with charming Windows and Panelled Ceiling. This room opens to a flagged Terrace into the Garden

LIBRARY [27' by 19' 7"]

A full sized BILLIARD ROOM and MORNING ROOM. Flower Room, Gun Room, Cloak Room, Lavatories etc,

**In the Wing** a range of Domestic Offices quite shut off, which include HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM, BUTLER'S ROOM, SERVANT'S HALL (2), PANTRIES, STRONG-ROOM, LARDERS, very excellent KITCHEN, SCULLERIES, LAUNDRIES, and AIRING-ROOMS, Lavatories, GAME ROOM and perfectly tiled DAIRY, etc and other Store accommodation.

**On the First Floor** 20 BED and DRESSING ROOMS ranging from 24' 7" by 27' 3" to 16' 3" by 10' 11"

**On the Second Floor** 8 BEDROOMS, the largest of which is 24' 8" by 20', and the smallest 11' 6" by 13' 5".

**The Stabling** .....Grouped around an enclosed Square, and comprises a large GARAGE with CHAUFFEUR'S WORKSHOP and COTTAGE. COACH-HOUSES, HARNESS-ROOMS, room for 20 horses with Men's quarters above

**Range of Glasshouses.** Separate Garden lies just behind Kitchen Garden, suitable for orchard, Gardener's Cottage, Bothie and range of glasshouses in perfect order, heated throughout. Fruit and other buildings

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hankey family were in possession of practically the whole of Fetcham but change was on the horizon and probably commenced when John Barnard Hankey died on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1914 shortly before the outbreak of the "Great War"

John Barnard Hankey had six children from his first wife Fanny who died in 1886 and another three from his second wife Ellen and by 1920 there was only one, Thomas, who was unmarried. George the eldest, who was a career Major in the army, had his own property at Castle Priory Wallingford and only one child thus the house at Fetcham must have been rather sparsely occupied for quite considerable periods. In his 1909 budget, Lloyd George had introduced death duties, and with the post war economic problems affecting land owners plus a developer already negotiating for Eastwick lands adjacent it is not surprising that George should consider selling.



EAST ELEVATION C.1924, AS SHOWN IN THE DEVELOPER PERCY HARVEY'S BROCHURE

The majority of the estate excluding the House and the Park was sold off by auction at the Swan Hotel in Leatherhead in 1920 or privately as with Cannon Farm. C. S. Gordon Clarke who lived in Fetcham lodge bought some lots then, acquired others later and managed them through a bailiff living in Chain Cottage in the Street. As far as the Mansion and Park were concerned, it appears from correspondence that initially Sir Edward Mountain was considering buying it, but in October 1924, both of these were sold to Percy Portway Harvey, the developer already at work in Bookham. The Hankey presence in Fetcham was now reduced to just John's widow living in the Dower House in the Street, which she bought from George in 1930 and sold in 1932 when she moved out of the district. George died at his own house in 1949.

### **Badingham College takes over the House**

Percy Harvey isolated the House and a total of 30 acres of the Park from the rest of the grounds, which were split by a new road, The Mount and set out building plots averaging about one and a half acres each although a later layout increased the number of smaller plots below an acre each. Somehow, the presence on the market of Fetcham Park House came to the attention of the Rev. J. G. Wilkie and a new chapter started to unfold. Wilkie initially was a master at St Paul's School but after taking Holy Orders became Rector of Badingham in Suffolk and started a College in the grounds of the rectory in 1922 that outgrew the available space.

A Badingham College brochure records that the move from Badingham to Fetcham took place in July 1927 but there must have been work undertaken prior to this to adapt the buildings etc. to form and equip the school and dormitories but the actual conveyance from Percy Harvey Estates was not until the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1928. Apart from the house and 30 acres of land he also bought plots 68 & 69 that formed the adjacent corner of the Ridgeway and Lower Road, all for £8000.

The access to the College, although altered in the 1870s, was also the vehicular access to the Church from Lower Road. Wilkie closed the footpath from the corner by the Ridgeway across plots 68 and 69 and imposed vehicular restrictions on the joint access and although a new access from the Ridgeway was included in the Harvey Estate plans, the Vestry had no rights over this. However closing a "Churchway" which included the access through the opening in the wall up the steps even if an alternative is offered is not a simple matter and it required a Justice Order and a Faculty, arrived at after an enormous amount of effort and some not inconsiderable dissent, before the Ecclesiastical Commissioners finally gave consent in December 1931. Thus the School gained exclusive access for the College and the Vestry new access from the Ridgeway and Lower Road [currently the vehicular exit road] plus the bothy. The now isolated plots 68 and 69 were eventually sold to A. C. Winter (Builders) Ltd., in 1935.



THE HALL IN THE EARLY YEARS OF BADINGHAM COLLEGE

There is no evidence to suggest that Wilkie did any more than convert the existing accommodation to suit his needs. At some stage the coach house was converted to dormitories above with a physics laboratory below and called the "New Block" but this may have been done in the early 1940s

Prior to 1939, it appears that the College was recognised as a coaching establishment for the first M. B. and thus almost certainly known to the Medical Science faculty of University College London who having had their buildings requisitioned initially by the War Office in 1939, then got them back only to have them severely damaged by bombing in 1940. They took a lease on Badingham College and the Departments of Anatomy and Physiology and the associated departments moved to Fetcham in October 1940. Meanwhile, Wilkie moved his College to Hullavington near Chippenham but about 1941 put the School into suspension and taught at Eton School before becoming vicar of Highmore in Oxfordshire where he also continued to take pupils.

The Dean resided in the Lodge but there was only sufficient accommodation for about half of the staff and students, the remainder being boarded out. It is recorded that a substantial agricultural programme was undertaken in the grounds. An old chalk pit behind the church was concreted to form a static water tank that apparently doubled as a swimming pool of sorts. Although there was an Ice House already in the grounds, tunnels that extended under the drive between the house and the Church are thought to be connected also with Ice storage. Ed Tims in his article noted that some crude lighting electric had been seen but dismissed the idea that they were built as air raid shelters. It is also recorded that in 1942, Badingham became a decontamination unit.

The College remained at Fetcham to the end of the 1944/45 sessions, probably about mid July or a little later and in 1946, Middlesex County Council sought compulsory purchase of the property for use of the "educationally sub-normal". However this apparently failed and later that year, Rev. Wilkie restarted Badingham College and by about 1950 had a staff of 10 or 11 for 70 boys at 80 guineas [£84] per term. A legacy of University College's occupation was the "well equipped laboratories [that] have now been added". By about 1957, the school had 14 masters, a matron and assistant, a catering manageress and an entirely Spanish domestic staff for a compliment of 100 boys at 120 guineas [£126] a term. Rev. Wilkie junior succeeded Wilkie senior and about 1962 there appears to be thoughts of selling.

#### **Further Applications for the House**

1964 was a busy year for planning applications regarding the house resulting in a public inquiry, Ministerial refusal and further applications for the conversion of the College into flats and a maximum of 100 dwellings to be built on the land. The County Architect as advisor to the County Records, Historic Buildings and Antiquities Committee suggested that the only internal features of merit were the staircase, murals and the two adjacent rooms, "externally nothing of merit had survived the tasteless 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations". Presumably the Trustees of the college intended to capitalise on the property and land value and in 1965 the College was moved from Fetcham to Ketteringham Hall, Wymondham near Norwich and Fetcham Park House became empty. This act proved to be a mistake and the school closed permanently in 1968.

All of the grounds and the property were bought by the Ideal Building & Land Development Co who reduced the area attached to the house to about 4 ½ acres and on the remainder, laid out the Badingham Estate to the east with access from Lower Road and the Mount and built the 100 properties referred to earlier. However with the house lying empty the thieves soon moved in to remove the lead from the roof and although some temporary repairs were made, with no heating or ventilation deterioration principally wet and dry rot set in and after a fire in 1970, the whole of the north wing buildings were demolished.

Late in 1971, the house and remaining grounds were sold to Vincent Development Co Ltd of Chiswick who according to the Leatherhead Advertiser dated 21/10/1971 proposed to spend £50 to £60k on restoration and conversion into prestige offices landscaping and creation of the car park and access road from Badingham Drive, all screened by trees. The result of their work was a new two storey north wing incorporating a basement, all broadly matching the south wing in red brick and stone quoin work etc. This too had a low-pitched roof but without some of the embellishments. It was probably them who installed false ceilings and panelling to hide the painted ceilings and walls. Then in 1975 it was bought by C.R. Roberts & Co Ltd who used it as offices.

Four years later it was again “derelict” and in July 1979 was bought reputedly for £775,000 by the United Trading Group to be used as the UK headquarters of one of their companies, Murray Clayton Ltd. Having reverted to being “Fetcham Park House” in 1965 it now was renamed “UTG House”



The original dining room now beautifully restored.

The plasterwork surrounding the Laguerre ceiling painting and added in the 1880s is the key to its name as the “Shell Room”.

Reproduced courtesy of Parallel Business Centres

The restoration work, costing over £4m and overseen by the Company Architect John Lachlan, was both to the fabric and the internal decorations. The external appearance was slightly altered by the extension of the mansard type roof over the two wings incorporating dormer windows matching the existing ones, thereby creating more space on the second floor. The basements, some still with earth flooring, were dug out, waterproofed and converted to form a kitchen and dining room along with service equipment. Panelling and false ceilings were removed to reveal that the original Laguerre murals etc., were in very poor condition but before the work of restoration could start, extensive remedial work in stabilising and strengthening the plaster was undertaken. In the old ballroom, now the Louis Salon, which was added in the 1880s, a completely new ceiling painting was commissioned. Two ground floor rooms were panelled, one in oak and the other in mahogany and in the entrance hall after the massive fireplace surround was relocated, a completely new timber floor laid. Externally, a decorative pool area with statues was formed by the south end, paved in travertine marble and a formal garden laid out to the east with a circular pond and fountain. This plus all the other work of repair, replacement of rotten timber etc, was undertaken to very high standards and completed in 20 months by November 1981.

But suddenly all was to change again and in 1986 the property was sold to Property Security Investment Trust plc and renamed Fetcham Park House but PSIT were taken over and Prestbury Group became the owners but never actually occupied it. So the house remained empty until in 1999 the Wilky Group Ltd bought the property and launched on the 28<sup>th</sup> May Fetcham Park House as part of the Parallel Serviced Offices portfolio.

Benger wrote his article at a time when the School was still in occupation and the interior decorations, although perhaps a little the worse for wear, could be inspected. However after 1965, it was not until the new owners opened up Fetcham Park House under the Heritage Open Day arrangements in September 1999 that the magnificence of the restoration work and the care given subsequently could be fully appreciated. It is pleasant to record that this grade II\* listed building with its remnants of earlier construction, is still serving a useful purpose.

To finish on a personal note, the author does not agree with earlier opinion that the 1880s rebuilding was a disaster but considers that the present appearance exudes much more character and warmth than the cold unembellished façade of the earlier building which had been completed by about 1710 to the designs of the famous architect William Talman.



EAST ELEVATION OF FETCHAM PARK HOUSE IN 1999  
Reproduced courtesy of Parallel Business Centres

### NOTES

Other relevant articles in the Proceedings:

Pen Sketches of Old Houses in this District: Fetcham Park House ,Vol 2 No 1 1957

Old Water Supplies of Fetcham Park, Vol 5 No 8 1995

The Ice House at Fetcham Park, Vol 6 No 5 2001

Zebedee Lovemore (1702?–1782) Arthur Moore’s Indian boy, Vol 6 No 7 2003

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following documents have been used in the preparation of this article, copies of which are held in the Society’s archives:

The surveys and/or terriers of 1777, 1787, 1791 and 1842; Hand in Hand insurance policies c1800; The Fetcham Enclosure Award 1813; Mansion sale brochure 1924; Deed of conveyance 1928 to Rev Wilkie.; Annual reports from University College London Library services; Badingham School Brochures; Report by Lachlan on UTG House and other letters and notes.

Illustrations are from the Society’s collection unless otherwise noted.



SPENCER 'JUNIOR' CLEANING PLANT

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