# LEATHER HEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



PROCEEDINGS VOL 6 No 1

# SECRETARIAL NOTES

The following Lectures and Visits were arranged during 1997:

November 21st December 19th

January 18th Lecture: "Fetcham in old Picture Postcards", by Goff Powell. Lecture: "Historic Stones", by Richard Butler. February 21st Lecture: "The Burning Question", by Ron Shettle. March 21st The 50th Annual General Meeting, followed by a talk on "The Roman Villa April 18th at Fishbourne", by Ernest Crossland. Visit to the Public Record Office. Kew, organised by Howard Davies. April 29th Lecture: "The Lost Palaces of Claremont", by Stephen Webbe. May 16th May 17th A walk round Headley village, led by Peter Denyer. Visit to the Roman Villa at Fishbourne and the Weald and Downsland Museum June 21st at Singleton, organised by Pat Thursby. Visit to Whiteley Village, organised by Ernest Crossland. July 6th August 9th Visit to Farnborough Abbey and Farnborough Hill, organised by Linda Heath. Visit to Claremont House, organised by Jack Barker. September 7th Lecture: "A Look at Leatherhead's Past—How we know what we know", by September 19th Derek Renn. Dallaway Lecture: "The Brighton Pavilion", by Cynthia Campbell. October 17th

Lecture: "Excavations at a Roman Villa near Abinger", by Steve Dyer.

Number 9 of Volume 5 of the Proceedings was issued in February 1997.

"Christmas Miscellany", organised by Gordon Knowles.

# FIFTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Letherhead Institute, 18 April 1997

The Report of the Executive Committee and the Accounts for the year 1996 were adopted. The Committee elected to serve until the next AGM and the Officers of the Society are shown below.

# OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1997/8

President: DR DEREK RENN, C.B.E., F.S.A.

Past-President: STEPHEN FORTESCUE

Vice-President: LINDA HEATH
Chairman: PETER TARPLEE

Secretary/Membership Secretary: THELMA LUCAS (part year)

Treasurer: PETER STARLING
Editor: JACK STUTTARD

Museum Curator: JANET GOLDSMITH

Treasurer, Museum Trust Fund: JOHN BULL

Sales Secretary: HOWARD DAVIES

Archaeology Secretary: ERNEST CROSSLAND, I.S.O.

Lecture Secretary/Publicity: DICK WHITTINGTON

Librarian: GWEN HOAD

Records Secretary: BRIAN GODFREY
Committee Members: DR BARRY COX;

ANTHONY GORDON; GORDON KNOWLES

# Leatherhead and District Local History Society PROCEEDINGS

# Vol. 6, No. 1

# 1997

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# **OCCASIONAL NOTES**

# DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES: A LIFE TO REMEMBER

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales at the end of August saddened everyone and the strength of local feeling was expressed by prayers in the churches during the week after the tragedy and on the day of the funeral. A Book of Condolences at the Leatherhead Parish Church was signed by between 800 and 1,000 people. Many remembered that the Princess had shown a great interest and compassion for the Blind School, visiting it on more than one occasion.

J. C. STUTTARD

# **QUEEN VICTORIA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE, 1897**

A hundred years ago, on 22nd June 1897, Leatherhead and the surrounding villages marked Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee with special church services heralded by a peal of bells. In the afternoon there were processions made up of young and old from local clubs and societies accompanied by bands playing lively music. Flags and bunting added to the gaiety of the occasion. The day ended with bonfires and fireworks.

J. C. STUTTARD

# ST JOHN'S SCHOOL CELEBRATES 125 YEARS IN LEATHERHEAD

St John's School came to Leatherhead from London in 1872 having been founded at St John's Wood in 1851. Celebrations to mark the 125 years' anniversary included a 'Summer Evening of Art and Music' as well as a concert in the School Chapel given by the School Choir and the Leatherhead Parish Church Choir. There was also a reception at the school for representatives of the Leatherhead and Mole Valley civic, commercial, business and professional



MISS JESSIE ELLISTON, FOUNDER OF PARSON'S MEAD SCHOOL, 1897. Courtesy, Parson's Mead School.

communities. Another notable occasion was the cutting of an impressive anniversary cake by the Chairman of the Mole Valley Council, Kit Oliver, at the Leatherhead Swan Centre, attended by the Headmaster, Christopher Tongue, and enlivened with music played by members of the School Orchestra. A Midsummer Ball was held at the end of the summer term. Important events in the history of the school were displayed in an exhibition in the School Library.

J. C. STUTTARD

# CENTENARY OF PARSON'S MEAD SCHOOL, ASHTEAD

Parson's Mead School in Ottways Lane was founded by Miss Jessie Elliston a hundred years ago and many events were held at the school to mark this centenary. There was a Centenary Ball in March and a Founder's Day service at St Giles' Church on 23rd May. The whole school walked to the church through the streets of Ashtead. On the previous day there had been a concert to celebrate the foundation of the school.

BARBARA DAWSON



DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS, BRIDGE STREET, 1897.



ST JOHN'S SCHOOL, LEATHERHEAD, 1872.
The field and the hedge obscures the line of the Epsom Road in front of the School.

Courtesy, St John's School.

# RANDALLS PARK, LEATHERHEAD

The Society's publication, *History of Leatherhead* (1988), edited by Edwina Varley, included a drawing of Randalls Park House, described as being built by Nathaniel Bland in the early 19th century after demolishing an earlier house of the same name. The 'Archive Photograph' publication on Leatherhead by Linda Heath (1996) included two illustrations of the house, the



RANDALLS PARK, 1822, BY JOHN HASSELL. - PROJECTED DESIGN - SEE P 4



RANDALLS PARK, c. 1900. From a photograph by Huck of Leatherhead. Courtesy, Mary Rice-Oxley.

first being by John Hassell in 1822 and the second as in the *History*. The full title of this referred not only to Nathaniel Bland as its owner but also to its having been built 'from the designs and under the direction of William Railton, architect' and the drawing was said to be by T. M. Baynes. It has now become apparent that this drawing shows only a projected design which was never built.

Randalls Park House, as built, is correctly shown in a photograph acquired by the Society taken by Huck of Leatherhead at the end of the 1890s. On the reverse is written 'Randalls House'. The photograph belonged to Nathan Bridger who from 1862 to 1927 was a gardener to the Henderson family at Randalls Park, eventually becoming head gardener. The house was demolished prior to the Second World War, the crematorium being built on its site in 1961.

MARY RICE-OXLEY

## A MEDIEVAL HARNESS PENDANT FOUND NEAR LEATHERHEAD

A fine shield-shaped pendant, depicting a cockerel, was found recently in the area of Stane Street (see colophon). There were many shapes and designs of decorative horse pendants in use in the Middle Ages, being attached in rows or singly to various parts of the leather harness. Heraldic pendants are common finds, though the more figurative examples, such as this, are found less frequently.

The cockerel is filled with enamel. The bird's body is blue with white spots, the comb and feet are red and the wattle and eye are green. The remainder of the pendant would have been gilded and traces of the gold survive. There appear to be no good parallels for this design although peacocks and owls are also known. There is no reason to consider this pendant heraldic and it is equally difficult to regard it as allegorical.

DAVID WILLIAMS

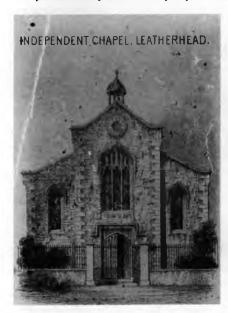
# JOYCE FULLER: AN APPRECIATION

The death of Joyce Fuller on 5th January 1997 was a great loss to the Society. She had been Secretary for about 17 years, combining this with being an ultra-efficient Editor of the Newsletter, Membership Secretary and general advisor on all matters relating to the Society. She also gave invaluable support to the activities of the Leatherhead Museum. Joyce will be sadly missed by all members.

# THE 'BRITISH SCHOOLS' AT LEATHERHEAD AND OXSHOTT

By E. A. CROSSLAND

THE story of the 'British Schools' at Leatherhead and Oxshott and their connection with the British & Foreign School Society (B&FSS) is a somewhat tangled web which has not been entirely resolved. Whereas the early history of the Oxshott school is well documented the origins of the Leatherhead one are not. It is reported by the B & FSS to have been in existence from 1812 to 1820, and from 1816 it was probably held in a barn which was used for Sunday services (see below). When the Congregational Church was built in 1844 (known as 'the Independent Chapel' in its early days) the school was then housed in a large room at the back of



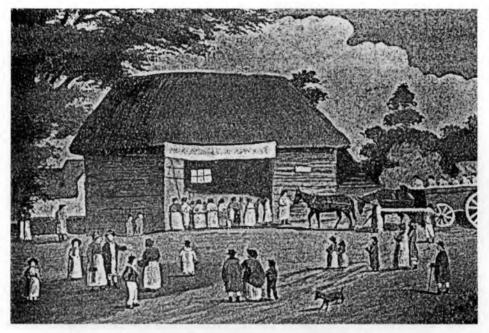
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, NORTH STREET, MID-19TH CENTURY (KNOWN AS THE 'INDEPENDENT CHAPEL' IN ITS EARLY DAYS. A hall at the rear was used for Sunday School and also for the 'British School'.

the church. This, like the one at Oxshott, is likely to have started as a Sunday School, fostered by the B & FSS, which developed into a Day School conducted according to the rules of that Society. These required that it should be run on strictly undenominational lines. Certainly there was a Sunday School at Leatherhead in 1818 as a party of children from it attended the opening of the Oxshott Sunday School in that year.

The British & Foreign School Society took its title in 1804, having previously been known as the Royal Lancasterian Society, which had been formed by friends of Joseph Lancaster to promote his system of education in which the older children taught the younger ones the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic (the 3 "Rs"). Remarkably, since it was advocating the education of the lower classes (strongly opposed by employers) and supported by Non-conformists, the King (George IV) was its patron and three of his sons (the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Sussex) were vice-patrons. When George IV became patron his son-in-law, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, became a vice-patron. He played an important part in the local story.4

Much of the information about the origins of the Leatherhead and Oxshott schools comes from letters written to the Rev. Thomas Lewis, the

minister at the Union Chapel, Islington, reported in the *Evangelical Magazine* of the time. He was an ardent supporter of the B & FSS, collecting money for it as he went around the country preaching to local congregations. His son was a pupil at a boarding school in Witney, owned by John Burrell. When, in 1816, Burrell contemplated moving the school nearer to London, Lewis persuaded him to choose Leatheread. Not long after Burrell came here the two friends rented a barn for church services in the centre of the town. Lewis, the Rev. Dr Waugh (a protégé of the Duke of Kent) and the Rev. G. Clayton preached at its opening on 10th September 1816. In his



BARN AT OXSHOTT, USED AS A SCHOOL, 1818. The villagers are probably assembling for the opening of the School in June 1818.

diary Lewis wrote of the occasion: 'Delivered an introductory discourse . . . The congregation large and respectable, the collection £30 . . . The fitting up of the barn cost about £300 and (it) will contain between 400 and 500 people'. 6 As already mentioned, the barn is likely to have housed the Leatherhead 'British School'.

In 1819 a letter was written to Lewis from Leatherhead by someone who signed it with only the initials "A.J.". It gave an account of efforts being made to set up a Sunday School in Oxshott where 'The moral condition of the poor inhabitants has long presented a pitiable and melancholy contrast to the local scenery. Without any means of instruction, they live in a state of deplorable ignorance and depravity, having within themselves neither church nor chapel, nor school of any description. The parish church (Stoke) is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles distant and in winter is seldom accessible.'

"A.J." describes how a barn at Birds Hill Farm lent by William Wheston, a tenant of Prince Leopold, had been fitted up and opened with 52 pupils in June 1818 and had quickly increased to over 100. With help from a Swiss student living in Leatherhead an infants day school, an adult school and an evening one had been started. By the first anniversary in June 1819 a committee had been formed with John Burrell as secretary and the Lord of the Manor, Hugh Smith, as President. Burrell wrote to the Rev. Thomas Lewis reporting the celebration of the opening and saying that Hugh Smith had granted a lease for 199 years at 6d. a year to Robert Bateman Wilkins of Jessop's Well and Alexander Jardine of Leatherhead a piece of land opposite Birds Hill Farm for a schoolroom to be built for an estimated £400.8 This Alexander Jardine must surely be the "A.J." of the letter to Lewis.



THE ROYAL KENT SCHOOL, OXSHOTT, 1820, WITH LATER EXTENSIONS.

"A.J." wrote another letter to Lewis in June 1820° with an account of the colourful celebration of the Barn School's second anniversary, when a band led a procession from Birds Hill Farm to the site for the new school where Thomas Page, the Lord of the Manor of Downside, Cobham, acting as proxy for Prince Leopold, laid the foundation stone. A banner proclaimed that the school would be known as "The Royal Kent School". When in October of that year the building was opened by Prince Leopold, he explained that the name was to commemorate the interest which his brother-in-law, the Duke of Kent (who had died in the previous January), had taken in the work of the British & Foreign School Society and especially in the Oxshott project. (In recent years there have been many incorrect statements that the school was named after Leopold's sister, the Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria's mother. She was a patron of the school and was present at the opening.)

Among the many resolutions moved during the ceremony by various ministers (mostly Congregationalists) was one providing that the school should be affiliated to the British & Foreign School Society and that the pupils should pay either 1d. a week or 6d. a month. Burrell read a long account of the events leading up to the building of the school (which had cost more than twice the estimate) and later reported to the Society that there were 80 boys and 60 girls on the books. He was later involved in the establishment of the Leatherhead Congregational Church, Burrell becoming a deacon of this church for a short time before moving to Hull.

Although the Leatherhead 'British School' continued at the back of the Congregational Church in North Street for many years the Oxshott one did not last very long despite the illustrious sponsorship at its beginning. By the 1830s it was derelict with broken windows and was being used by the farmer as a store. After the Rev. Frederick Parr Phillips became Lord of the Manor and later Rector of Stoke d'Abernon he re-opened the school at his own expense and built a house for the master, but it was no longer a 'British School'. In 1958 as a Church of England



STAFF AND PUPILS OF THE ROYAL KENT SCHOOL, OXSHOTT, 1897.

George Stoton, on the left, was Headmaster for 28 years to 1909; next to him is a pupil teacher and on the far right is his wife, a sewing mistress, and daughter, a monitoress. In the centre is the Rev. H. N. Waldegrave, Rector of Stoke D'Abernon and the Rev. E. C. Peake, Diocesan Inspector and formerly Rector of St Giles, Ashtead, who took the Sunday evening services at the school.

First & Middle School it was transferred to a new site in Oakshade Road. Despite its auspicious beginnings the Surrey County Council failed to list the old building as one of historic interest so it was demolished and the site was sold to become the Q8 Service Station. Fortunately, a stone slab from over the doorway, recording the name and the date of erection, was salvaged from the builder's skip by a sharp-eyed resident and is now, together with the school bell (which had cost £3 6s. 6d. in 1820), 10 at the entrance to the present school.

# NOTES

- 1. Linda Heath, "Of Good Report": the story of Leatherhead Schools (1986), p. 62.
- 2. British & Foreign School Society (B&FSS) Annual Report, 1820, p. 169.\*
- 3. Evangelical Magazine, June 1819, p. 229.
- 4. B&FSS Annual Report, 1820.\*
- 5. John Burrell, Memoirs of Rev. T. Lewis (1853), pp. 181-2.
- 6. Ibid.
- 7. Evangelical Magazine, June 1819, p. 230.\*
- 8. Evangelical Magazine, August 1819, pp. 333-5.\*
- 9. Evangelical Magazine, August 1820, pp. 337-8.\*
- 10. Surrey Comet, 12 August 1922.

<sup>\*</sup> These documents are in the archives of B&FSS held at Brunel University College, Isleworth. The archivist here, Dr Gillian Collins, was particularly helpful in giving access to them.

# THE BOULTON FAMILY OF THORNCROFT MANOR, 1763-1828

By J. R. CLUBE

FOR many years from the middle of the 18th century the Boulton name was well known in Leatherhead, family members owning the manor house of Thorncroft from 1763 and from 1781 the Lordship of the Manor as well. The Boultons succeeded Sir Richard Dalton who had moved away in 1761. The new owner was Henry Crabb Boulton who was followed briefly by his brother Richard, and then by Richard's son, Henry Boulton. In fact, these three were born with the surname Crabb and adopted the name Boulton only as a result of inheritance. This change of name has led to confusion so clarification may be useful.

# Henry Crabb Boulton, 1709-73

Henry Crabb Boulton, who came to Thorncroft in 1763, was baptised in Stepney, London on 12 September 1709 as Henry Crabb, the son of Thomas and Hester Crabb. He joined the East India Company in 1729 as a clerk in the pay office, and was clerk to the committee of shipping from 1737 to 1752. His brother Richard Crabb joined the Company about 1730, resigned in 1750, and became a managing owner of Indiamen, the vessels which dominated the monopoly shipping with the East. In 1752 Henry also resigned from Company employment and went into business with his brother. In 1753, however, he was elected a Director of the Company; Deputy Chairman in 1764, and Chairman in 1765/6, 1768/9 and 1772. He became MP for Worcester in 1754 and remained an MP until his death on 8 October 1773. Henry Crabb's patron was his cousin, Richard Boulton, who had himself served for some 40 years in the East India Company being a Director in 1731 and 1737. A wealthy man, he had retired to Worcestershire where he died in 1745. He bequeathed his manors, messuages and lands to Henry Crabb who thereupon added the surname of Boulton to his own.

Henry Crabb Boulton's position in the Court of Directors of the East India Company, combined with being an MP, placed him in an important if delicate situation in the strained relations between the government and the Company which developed in the 1760s. When the Company's profitability started to falter and there were reports of corruption and exploitation in India the relationship between the government and the Company began to break down. At the same time British political policy towards India had to be reassessed because the Company, from being simply a trading concern, was becoming a significant military power in India. This was mainly due to the military successes of Robert, later Lord, Clive.

# Boulton's association with Clive of India

Clive arrived in India in 1743 at the age of 17, and by 1760 had led the East India Company from a position of vulnerability to complete dominance over its European rivals on the subcontinent. When he returned home in 1760 he intended to remain in England.<sup>3</sup> He secured a seat in Parliament and tried unsuccessfully to oust the Company Chairman, Laurence Sulivan. A "Clive Group" emerged with which, after 1763, Boulton associated himself. But when reports of mismanagement and oppression by the Company in India continued to reach the Directors they turned to Clive as the only man capable of retrieving the situation. He was appointed Governor of Bengal and Commander-in-Chief despite Sulivan's objections. Voting in the Court of Directors in April 1764 was 12 to 12, the Deputy Chairman's casting vote favouring Clive. This result was largely due to actions by Boulton and after it he was chosen as Deputy Chairman. Clive is reported to have described Boulton as "a great rogue" although he thought he could

count on his support. Prior to Boulton's election as Chairman a year later another Director observed that although some regarded Boulton as too high-handed "not one of them has the necessary talents to supplant him".4

Clive duly returned to India and by 1766 had re-established political and military control. The bad feeling between the government and the Company persisted, however, and in 1766 a motion was tabled in Parliament for an inquiry into Company affairs. Boulton voted for it although he spoke out against it. He admitted that the Company could not govern its own servants and Clive could not go on without government involvement. In Parliament, Boulton continued to support Clive's interests. At this point illness obliged Clive to return home but attacks on him persisted. Attempts to censure him in Parliament in 1772 eventually failed because of his great services to the country, but as a consequence the government assumed a measure of control over the Company. Boulton was Chairman at this time and had indeed been in a position of authority in the Court of Directors during the period when Clive was at odds with them.

Boulton continued to play a considerable though not leading part in the affairs of the Company. he engaged in speculative dealings in Company stock in 1771 which received adverse comment in the press in 1773. Despite his tendency to oppose the Administration of the day in the House, he was often in sympathy with those in the Company who supported the government. When he was elected Chairman in 1772 it was with government support, as the most experienced Director remaining to control Company affairs. A year after Boulton's death in 1773, Clive also died.

# Thorncroft Manor: Reconstruction and Ownership

After occupying Thorncroft Manor in 1763 Henry Crabb Boulton commissioned Sir Robert Taylor to build a new house on the site of the old. Records in the British Architectural Library, and others, including the Victoria County History (1911), and Manning and Bray (1809), give the date of its construction as 1772. The year 1776 has also been mentioned but as this is three years after Boulton's death, 1772 is the more likely. Nicholas Pevsner gives this date with enlargements about 1800. The house remains essentially the same today, modern additions apart.<sup>5</sup>

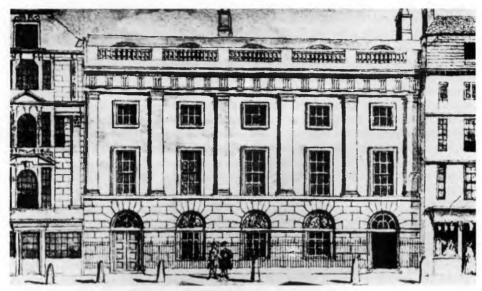
At this time Henry Crabb Boulton, who was unmarried, was approaching the end of his life. Shortly before he died in October 1773 he drew up a will leaving his estate to his brother Richard Crabb, whom he appointed executor; and an annuity to Richard's son Henry. Richard Crabb duly inherited and he too then added the Boulton name to his own, calling himself 'Richard Boulton formerly Crabb Esq'.

# Richard Boulton, formerly Crabb, d. 1777

Richard Crabb married Frances Heames in 1738 and the couple had two sons—Richard born 1746 and Henry born 26 August 1752. In 1764 Richard drew a will leaving money to his wife and the remainder to his sons, or if they died, to his brother Henry Crabb Boulton. By the time Richard died in 1777, his youngest son Henry Crabb was the principal surviving legatee. The estate encompassed Thorncroft which Richard had owned for barely four years. Henry in his turn took the Boulton surname.

# Henry Boulton (formerly Crabb) 1752-1828

When Henry Boulton inherited Thorncroft in July 1777 he was 25 years old. On 3 November 1774 he had married Juliana Raymond at St Helen's, Bishopsgate and the family were to make



EAST INDIA HOUSE, LEADENHALL STREET, LONDON c. 1760. Courtesy, British Library, Oriental & India Office Collections.

Leatherhead their home. There were three sons and four daughters of the marriage, and Thorncroft remained in family ownership until it was sold in 1859 by Henry's grandson John. The family detail is explained in S. E. D. Fortescue's article in the *Proceedings*, 4 (7), 1983, p. 1898 which shows that in 1781 Henry Boulton bought the Manor of Pachenesham and thus became Lord of the Manor. He soon built a new house at Gibbons Farm which was named Givons Grove, and he also bought an estate at Headley. The insurance policy for Thorncroft in 1780, for £10,000, referred to the house, two stables, mews and coach houses; one stable, harness room, chamber, and bakehouse; one carthorse stable, a large barn and lean-to. A policy dated 1786 covered Walton Farm House in Headley; a stable cart-house and cow-house under one roof; Hadley (*sic.*) Court Farm, many buildings including pigeon loft and thatched roof; Barnet Wood Farmhouse in Leatherhead with many outhouses. In 1809 Henry Boulton was insuring three farms—Thorncroft, Givons Grove and Bocketts. London Directories show that he occupied town houses at least from 1792, at 5 Tavistock Square; 1796 at 12 Upper Gower Street; and 1802–1804 at 9 Abingdon Street.

Henry Boulton was clearly a prosperous business man. He was particularly involved in insurance and was a member of the Sun Fire Company, certainly as early as 1784, his signatures on policies from the 1780s onward showing that he was a Manager. He was Treasurer in 1808–10. In addition, he was also Governor of the "Corporation for Working of Mines, Minerals and Metals in Scotland" whose office was in the Sun Fire office in Cornhill. The Minute book from 1819 shows that as Governor he chaired all meetings until his retirement in 1825 when his son Charles succeeded him. In the 1800s he was listed in the London Directory as being with the Sun Fire office in Craigs Court. His son Charles worked there also, remaining after Henry's death. Insurance policies show Henry's shipping interests also. One example is the insuring in

1809 of the vessel *Worcester* lying in the East India docks. This raises the question whether he continued with the shipping interests of his father and uncle. In any event it is unlikely that this account represents the full extent of his business interests, important as they obviously were. Further research into his commercial activities would complement the details of family life in Leatherhead in the *Proceedings* article of 1983.

#### NOTES

- 1. History of Parliament, 1754-90, p. 267.
- 2. P. Lawson, The East India Company: A History (1993), pp. 78, 103.
  - 3. J. Watney, Clive of India (1974), pp. 167, 173.
- 4. India Office Library.
- 5. A. Colvin, Biographic Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840 (1995), p. 965; N. Pevsner, Buildings of England: Surrey (1971), p. 341; M. Binney, Sir R. Taylor: from Rococo to Neo-Classicism (1984), p. 32.
- ~ 6. PROB, 11, 991.
  - 7. Ibid., 745.
- 8. See *Procs* LDLHS 4 (7) (1983), pp. 188-90, article by S. E. D. Fortescue.
  - 9. Sun Fire policies, 453923; 524218; 836518; 839267.
  - 10. P. G. M. Dickson, The Sun Insurance Office, 1710-1960 (1960), p. 306.
  - 11. Guildhall Library: Ms 12030.
  - 12. Kent's London Directory, 1814: p. 376.

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# Acknowledgements

The writer acknowledges the assistance of the British Library's Oriental & Indian Collections; British Architectural Library, RIBA; Guildhall Library; House of Lords Records Office; Sun Insurance Archives; Mr D. Hill; and Mr John Clark.

# STREET FARM, ASHTEAD, IN THE 19TH CENTURY: RECENT RESEARCH ON ITS FIELDS AND THEIR LOCATION

By H. J. DAVIES

It has long been known that the farmhouse of Street Farm and its yard stood for many years on the north side of The Street, now the A24, which passes through the middle of Ashtead. Recent research has revealed the full extent of the farm, sometimes known as Village or Ashtead Farm.

The impression was given in the 1977 History of Ashtead that the fields of Street Farm were all situated on the north side of The Street, apparently basing this on evidence from the particulars in the catalogue of the sale of the Ashtead Estate in 1879. Lot 3 in the sale offered the farmhouse and yard, the fields bordering Woodfield Lane to the north and the great meadow, 64 acres, with a long frontage to the main Dorking Road, a total of 108 acres. The entry for the farm in some copies of the Census of 1861 was barely legible and was interpreted to read '167 acres' with a staff of 30. In 1871 the same farm was noted as 364 acres with a staff of 11, farmed by John Smith. These variations in the acreage and staff of Street Farm needed further investigation to establish what might be the truth.

Research on the local railways rather surprisingly threw some light on this Street Farm problem. In 1856 a House of Commons Select Committee considered a proposed Bill for the building of a railway between Epsom and Leatherhead by the newly formed Epsom and Leatherhead Railway Company. One of the shareholders and a future director who was cross examined was a certain Daniel Maydwell. He stated that he wanted the railway so that he could bring manure from the City of London to enrich his farm in Ashtead. In the census return of 1861 Maydwell is recorded as the tenant farmer of Street Farm. He said that he had farmed 2,000 acres but had recently reduced his farms to 800 acres, 400 being in Ashtead and 400 in Newdigate in the south of the county. In the light of this the obscure 1861 census figure was reexamined and found to be 767 acres, not 167. In answer to the question, 'How many acres do you farm?' Maydwell had added together the acreage of his farms in Ashtead and Newdigate. Examination of the Newdigate Tithe Award of 1843 confirmed that he was then the tenant farmer of the Duke of Norfolk's Ewood estate in the north-west of that parish, a farm of 388 acres.' This discovery also explained the discrepancies in numbers of staff in the census returns. In 1871 for example John Smith did not include the Newdigate farm in his answer.

A further source of information about Street Farm has become available with the deposit in the Surrey Record Office of the map and terrier of the Survey of Ashtead undertaken by James Wyburd in 1802 for the lord of the manor, Richard Howard.<sup>6</sup> From this it has been possible to work out the boundaries of the farms in that year. Street Farm was then a farm of 350 acres with fields stretching in a swath from the lower part of Woodfield Lane on the north side across The Street to the Headley border in the far south-east of Ashtead parish. The great meadow was not then part of the farm. The 1839 Ashtead Tithe Award map shows that there had been some adjustment of the fields included in the farm but little change in the overall acreage: Maydwell was the farmer.<sup>7</sup> In the 1851 census Louisa Maydwell, Daniel's wife, was then the recorded resident but no acreage was stated.

Throughout the period from 1802 until at least 1871 Street Farm was thus composed of about 350 acres, with a series of fields across the parish from north to south. Eight years later

the farm was for sale, reduced to 108 acres. A close examination of the Estate Sale catalogue revealed that the farm had been chopped in two for the sale. A note on a private copy of the sale catalogue confirmed this conclusion: 'Lot 3 was the lower part of Mr Righton's former farm'.' 8 [Nothing more is known about Righton; he must have succeeded Smith after 1871.] The farmhouse and land north of The Street, with the addition of the great meadow of 64 acres, was sold as Lot 3. The remainder of the farm, the major part, south of The Street, was for sale with Ashtead Park and the Mansion in Lot 1. The farm was described as the Homestead with its centre at Thirty Acre Barn on the former Roman Road, the farmhouse there being occupied by labourers in the 1881 Census. It is not to be confused with the Home farm which was based on Park Farm House in Farm Lane. Lot 1 did not reach the reserve price and was withdrawn but it was later bought complete by Thomas, later Sir Thomas, Lucas. The fields which can still be seen on the road from Ashtead to Headley are part of the former Street Farm.

# A Postscript

From the record of the Select Committee mentioned above, we learn that Maydwell said that he was an agricultural salesman. He sold 5,000 beasts per year at the Smithfield Market on commission by request. The cattle came from all over the British Isles including Ireland which indicates that Maydwell was at the receiving end of the cattle droving business. His 2,000 acres were doubtless used to fatten cattle for market to obtain a good price. The Newdigate farm had several fields described as ox meadows. To what extent Street Farm was used for this purpose is not certain; much of the land in the south of the parish was on chalk though within living memory cattle were grazed in that area. It is worth noting that official statistics did not have to include cattle 'in transit'. Maydwell made much in his evidence of the need for manure because of the discontinuance of the coaching business. He said he 'had made his own manure in the past adding oil cake brought by water to Kingston'. Had the need to fatten cattle in the Home Counties near the market declined by 1856 with the advent of the railways? He had already given up 1,200 acres of farmland by that date; there was less manure about! In 1861 he was 79 years of age and keeping a good house on The Street. Crops were getting a good price and the harvest were good. The agricultural world had changed much since he had come to Street Farm probably in the late 1820s or early 1830s and would change again with the advent of cheap American wheat. Nevertheless the beast sales business continued; John Hoyland, Maydwell's nephew, who had formerly lived with him as a young man as "an agricultural pupil", was described in the later census returns as a 'beast' and later 'stock' salesman, living at 'The Cottage' at the end of Rectory Lane next door to the *Leg of Mutton* public house.

#### NOTES

- Alan A. Jackson (ed.): Ashtead: A Village Transformed (1977), p. 143ff. The present writer researched this subject and used it in Chapters 8 and 9 of A History of Ashtead, J. C. Stuttard (ed.), (1995).
- 2. B.L.: M14/AST/5.
- 3. Alan A. Jackson, (1977) op. cit., p. 154.
- PRO RAIL 1066:15 and House of Lords Records Library, Group E4: evidence to House of Commons Committee, E&LR 1856.
- 5. From information provided to the writer by Joyce Banks, SyAS.
- SRO 2703/4; LDLHS, AM8.
- 7. PRO IR29/34/6.
- 8. Copy loaned by T. Devitt Esq.

# SOME 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY HOUSES IN LEATHERHEAD

By W. J. BLAIR

### INTRODUCTION

This article represents the much-delayed publication of work which I carried out in the early 1970s, as a schoolboy at St John's and then as an undergraduate. The original aim, a complete survey of all old buildings in Leatherhead, will clearly not be realised by me. The surveys nonetheless have a permanent value which make them worth publishing. Of these seven buildings (Fig. 1), two (25/7 Bridge Street and 2 Upper Fairfield Road) were recorded before demolition, two others (41 High Street and 8 Bridge Street) before drastic rebuilding which destroyed much of the old fabric, and one (66 Church Street) during temporary removal of rendering which exposed details of the framing normally hidden. The long-destroyed house at 24 High Street is reconstructed from old photographs not previously published; the survey of 39/41 Bridge Street, which has not been seriously altered since, is included both for the intrinsic interest of the building and as record of vulnerable fittings.

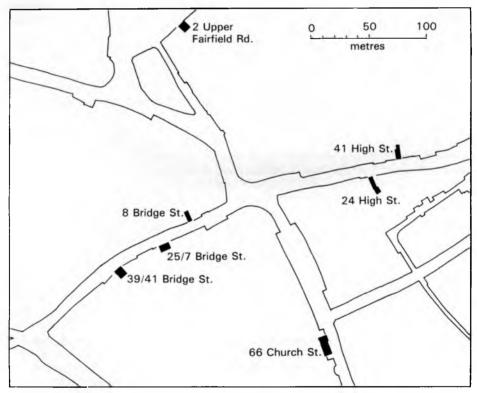


FIG. 1. OUTLINE PLAN OF LEATHERHEAD TOWN CENTRE, TO LOCATE THE BUILDINGS DESCRIBED IN THIS ARTICLE.

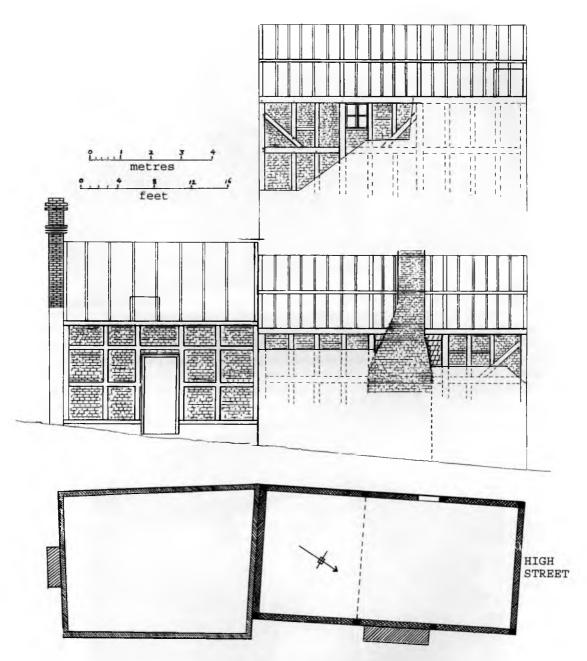


FIG. 2. ATTEMPTED RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BUILDING ON THE SITE OF 24 HIGH STREET.



PLS. 1–2. BUILDING ON THE SITE OF 24 HIGH STREET: TWO EARLY 20TH-CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHS, SHOWING IT FROM THE NORTH-EAST (Above) AND THE NORTH-WEST (Below).

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments; originals in Municipal Library, Bath.



As the fate of these buildings illustrates, the attrition of Leatherhead's architectural heritage continued even after the worst excesses of the 1960s. The early 1970s marked a rather sudden turning-point in attitudes to conservation and the built environment, the importance of which is becoming clearer as it recedes into history. I 'It must be a very loyal citizen who believes that Leatherhead has a town centre with a lot to commend it', the Leatherhead Advertiser remarked in 1971. 'The complaints about Bridge Street are unassailable. It is a travesty of a main street for this day and age'. The same year one local resident remarked of conservationists: 'One wonders whether these people are really interested in Leatherhead as being a shopping-centre at all. It would seem that all they want is a fourth-rate museum-piece . . . . Apart from the Church Street development the centre is largely made up of a rag-bag collections of shops, some even with tin roofs and some perched on the edge of what is virtually a rubbish-dump'. This was the climate of opinion in which 23-29 Bridge Street were demolished, and replaced by a monolithic, strongly horizontal development that would surely not be accepted today. Yet within a few years such attitudes were seeming old-fashioned, and gradually a wider public came to realise that potentially attractive buildings still lurked behind drab facades and ugly shop-fronts.

The main interest of these surveys is to illustrate the generations of Leatherhead buildings between the late medieval hall-houses (the *Running Horse*, 33/5 High Street and 55 Church Street) published in previous issues of the *Proceedings*,<sup>4</sup> and the triumph of 'polite' over 'vernacular' styles during the 18th century. Most notable is the prevalence in the early 17th century of small two-bay ranges abutting end-on to the street: 24 High Street, 41 High Street and 8 Bridge Street (to which can be added the lost shop of the Ragge family on the site of 9–11 Bridge Street).<sup>5</sup> It seems highly likely that 25/7 and 39/41 Bridge Street were products of rebuilding along the south side of the street after a fire in 1659. No. 3 Upper Fairfield Road was a sad loss of a small 18th-century weather-boarded cottage of a type now rare in the district.

After a lapse of more than 20 years it seemed best to publish my descriptions and drawings essentially as I made them at the time, with all their obvious deficiencies. Each description is preceded by the grid reference, the parcel number on George Gwilt's map of 1782/3 (*Proceedings* 2 (7), 1963, opposite p. 207), and the owner's name from the accompanying terrier (transcript W.8 in the Society's archives).

### 24 HIGH STREET

(Grid ref.: TQ 1667 5655. 1782/3: parcel 549, owner Aaron Wookham). Fig. 2 and Pls. 1-2.

This house, unlike all the others described here, was demolished early in the 20th century. Its appearance can be recovered from a photograph of 1926 looking down the High Street, which shows one corner and thus enables it to be located, and from a pair of slightly earlier photographs of the building itself. In so far as can be judged from this evidence it was a late 16th- or early 17th-century storied range, end-on to the street, with a later 17th century back wing. Fig. 2 is an attempt to reconstruct the approximate form and scale of the building from the photographs, combined with the outline block-plan on the 1782/3 map.

# **41 HIGH STREET**

(Grid ref.: TQ 1668 5647. 1782/3: parcel 138, John Lucas.) Fig. 3.

This house forms the east end of a block of three properties, the other two (Nos. 37–9) comprising a late 18th century brick house; the whole block, with its uniform roughcast street frontage, gives a misleading impression of homogeneity.

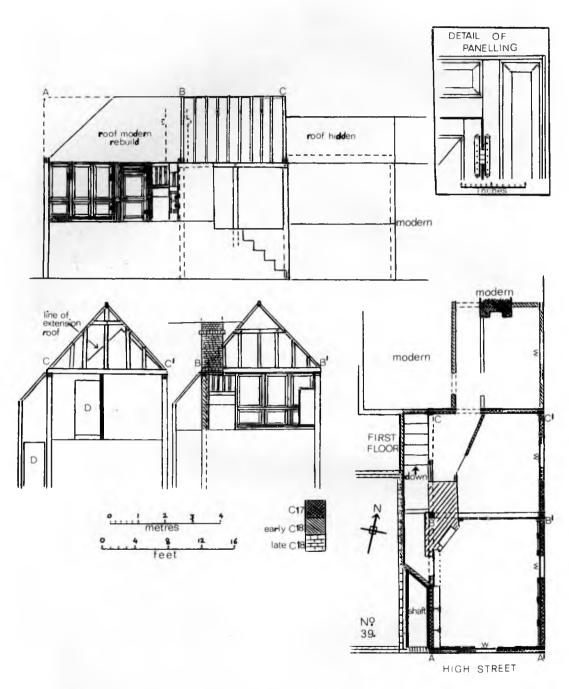


FIG. 3. 41 HIGH STREET: SURVEY MADE IN 1974.

No. 41 was surveyed in 1974; it has since been rebuilt so drastically that the present structure, with a pseudo-Georgian east wall in yellow brick, is little more than a pastiche. At the time of the survey it was basically a small timber-framed house probably dating from the early to mid 17th century, 9.15 by 4.25 m. (30 by 14 ft.) and of two unequal bays, running at right-angles to the street with the larger bay in front. The roof over this bay was almost completely destroyed in the late 19th century, when the frontage block was given a uniform roof on the street axis; that over the back bay, consisting of coupled rafters with a ridge-pole, possibly side-purlins (hidden) and multiple queen-struts on the trusses, survived at the time of the survey. The east wall (the only remaining external frontage) had old weather-boarding, using wide boards with beaded lower edges. This may well have been an original feature, both because a small exposed section of the framing showed it to be relatively light and without slots for wattles, and because the boarding on the adjoining wall of the early 18th century rear extension was lighter and clearly later. There is no evidence for the original positions of the chimney and stairs.

In the early 18th century a small rear extension, weather-boarded on a light timber frame, was added. At about the same time the brick chimney-stack was built inside the original range against the west wall, cutting through the central tiebeam. Perhaps contemporary with these improvements was the building of a lean-to outshot along the west side, under a 'cat-slide' continuation of the main roof. The purpose of this was evidently to accommodate a staircase leading upstairs directly from outdoors, with a corridor above communicating with the first-floor front room. This room was embellished with good-quality fielded panelling incorporating two built-in cupboards, all of which survives in good condition though the fireplace is a modern replacement.

The late 18th century brick range was built abutting the wall of the outshot, but since this stopped 3m. short of the street frontage a useless gap was left, which was bricked across and opened out into the ground-floor front room. The panelling made this impossible on the first

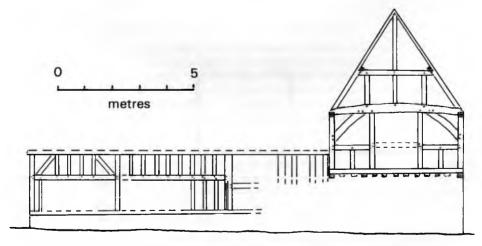


FIG. 4. 66 CHURCH STREET: SKETCH ELEVATION OF EXPOSED FRAMING MADE IN 1979 (GABLE-END NOT TO SCALE).

floor, so the dead space was left as an empty shaft. Extensive additions to the rear in yellow brick were made in the late 19th century.

The building is an interesting example of an originally humble house extended and modified for split use. The effect of the 18th century enlargements was to turn the first floor into a self-contained 'flat' of three rooms, including a fine panelled sitting-room overlooking the street, with a private staircase leading down into the back yard. Did some enterprising 18th century owner fit it up in this way as a lodging for gentlemen on short visits?

# **66 CHURCH STREET**

(Grid ref.: TQ 1662 5632. 1782/3: part of parcel 538, William Wade Esq.) Fig. 4.

This substantial 16th or early 17th century house survives without drastic recent changes. The framing, normally concealed by rendering, was briefly exposed in December 1979, when the present sketch elevation was drawn. The main discovery was the under-built jetty of the crosswing at the north end. The interior of the main range was not accessible for investigation; its proportions suggest that it may have begun as an open hall.

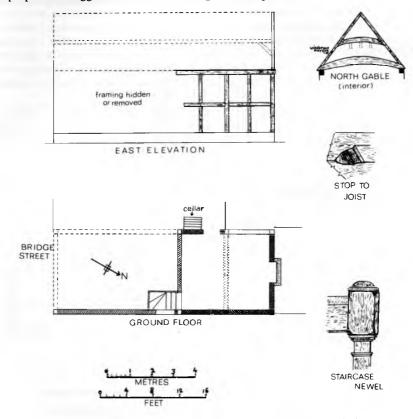


FIG. 5. 8 BRIDGE STREET: SURVEY MADE IN 1975.

### 8 BRIDGE STREET

(Grid ref.: TQ 1651 5642. 1782/3: parcel 122 (southern building), Thomas Cooper.) Fig. 5.

At first sight No. 8/10 Bridge Street is a one-phase early 19th century block. However, No. 8 incorporated (until destroyed during refurbishment in 1975) the heavily disguised remains of a small one-and-a-half storey timber-framed range at right-angles to the street. On the east elevation the framing of the two northernmost bays (infilled with modern stock-bricks) was exposed. The only surviving part of the original roof was the north gable truss, with mortices for windbraces and notches in the collar to take the ends of clasped purlins. The internal face of this truss was infilled with wattle and plaster panels, showing that the upstairs room was originally open to ridge level. On the ground floor, on the line of the northernmost internal wall-bay division (though apparently not roof-bay division, for the wallplate at this point had no slot for a tie) was a chamfered and stopped transverse main joist. Below the range, but not extending fully to the street frontage, was a cellar, possibly contemporary, 1.83m. (6 ft.) high and with flint rubble walls; its ceiling-joists were roughly chamfered and were jointed and pegged into two chamfered and stopped bridging-joists, similar to that on the floor above and set at the bay divisions.

This timber-framed range dated from the late 16th or possibly early 17th century. It may have been a complete house, but since the 1782/3 map shows the building already L-shaped, it is also possible that it was the side or back wing of a larger house fronting the street; if so, the main range has been concealed or completely rebuilt.

Probably in the 18th century the eavesline was raised by about 0.6 m., a new roof built, and stud partitions (whose tops were visible in the roofspace) inserted. The attractive handrails on the staircase and the steps down to the cellar, with turned newel posts, were probably of the same date. In the early 19th century the street-front range was transformed or replaced; it now has a very low-pitched roof, and the walls are apparently of brick.

# 25/7 BRIDGE STREET

(Grid ref.: TQ 1648 5640. 1782/3: parcel 533, Widow Eades.) Fig. 6.

In 1971 Nos. 22–33 Bridge Street, which presented a miscellaneous set of 19th-century facades towards the street, were the subject of a comprehensive demolition and redevelopment proposal. After an appeal against refusal of listed building consent, the planning inspector concluded that redevelopment of 23 and 29 was 'commercially desirable, or structurally necessary, or both', and that 'it would be unreasonable to leave 25/27 standing as a separator between 23 and 29 unless it were of unblemished architectural quality'. Consent to demolish 31/3 was refused.

Nos. 23–9 were accordingly demolished during 1972, and I recorded 25–7 as it was coming down; 23 and 29 proved to be entirely 19th century and undistinguished, and were merely photographed. No. 31/3 is an attractive Regency house with iron window-frames in a 'churchwarden Gothic' style, its walls of rendered studding; thankfully it still remains, though the rear façade (which until then had retained windows resembling those towards the street) was destroyed in the ensuing redevelopment.

No. 25/7 was a three-bay timber-framed house of two-and-a-half stories, probably of the mid to late 17th century. The wall-framing, comprising sawn timbers, was late, rather poor and clearly always intended to be covered over. The roof comprised 21 pairs of collared rafters with

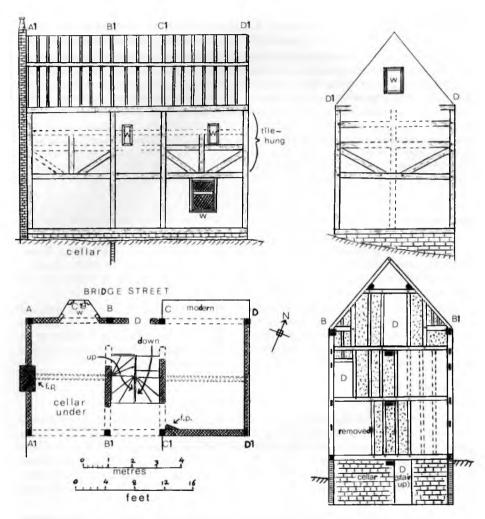


FIG. 6. 25/7 BRIDGE STREET: SURVEY MADE IN 1972.

side-purlins. The attic storey was an original structural feature, the floor, 0.53 m. below wallplate level, being integral with the frame; the rafters below collar level and the undersides of the collars were boarded. Stud partitions ran the full height of the house at the two bay-divisions, dividing each of the three storeys into two large rooms on either side of the staircase and landing, which occupied the narrow central bay. The main joists were chamfered, with wave stops. The building stood on brick footings, and under the west bay was a brick cellar (partly above ground level due to the sloping ground).

At the west end was a brick chimney, either added or extensively rebuilt, and all fireplaces were 19th-century. The south (rear) face was hung with coarse rectangular tiles on the first floor; the east end and north (street) frontage were cement-rendered. The first-floor windows to the street were probably early 19th century; the ground floor had a late 19th century baywindow in the north bay, and a modern projecting shop-front.

The plots behind Nos. 23–33 were comprehensively redeveloped. On the westernmost limit of the site, some 6 m. to the rear of 31-3 (TQ 1648 5638), was noticed a layer some 10 cm. thick containing many fragments of charcoal and groups of large mortared flints, overlying a floor of crushed chalk resting directly on the natural clay; the charcoal layer also contained many fragments of coarse roof-tile (in two cases burnt black), calcined flints and lumps of burnt daub. Traces of charcoal could be followed southwards in the side of the contractors' excavation for at least 36 m.; in the extreme south-west corner of the site (TQ 1650 5635), an early 17th-century Nuremberg jetton was picked out of the burnt layer. It is tempting to connect this find with the 'sadd and lamentable fire in the Towne of Leatherhead' in 1659 which 'suddenly consumed and burnt to the ground seuerall dwelling houses... and alsoe diverse barnes, stables, buyldinges and shoppes'; No. 25/7 could well have been a rebuilding of the 1660s.

Photographs of the buildings, and fuller notes on the archaeological observations, are deposited in the Society's archives.

# 39/41 BRIDGE STREET

(Grid ref.: TQ 1645 5641. 1782/3: parcel 529, William Jones.) Fig. 7.

The fabric of this house is largely obscured by late additions and internal fittings, and the ground floor is completely modernised. The original structure seems to be a 17th-century timber-framed range, with a small jetty fronting the street. The footings, of flint capped by a single brick course, raise the front of the building high above street level. There was possibly a contemporary back wing, suggested by a southwards continuation of the east wall at full thickness and by a patch of stout framing visible internally at this point.

In the late 18th or early 19th century a back extension with walls of light framing, probably originally weatherboarded, was added. It is covered by twin roofs on the north-south axis, the eastern being a modern rebuild. The footings, visible on the west side, are similar to those of the original range. It is likely that the roof of the main range (which, like that of the western half of the extension, is half-hipped and has a rather shallow pitch) was rebuilt at about this time.

By the early 19th century the building had been divided into two halves. The roof-spaces over the main range and the western half of the extension were converted into attic rooms, being reached from the first floor by a simple wooden staircase in each half of the building. Under the south stair, serving the western half, is a cupboard with a three-plank door (see sketch of hinge on Fig. 7). Opening into the upper front room of the east half are two cupboards (one on the right of the chimney, the other on the left, going down the stairs) with doors of rather better quality; each has two panels, with simple moulded edges, and a brass handle (see sketch). Both staircases from ground- to first-floor are modern. All fireplaces are concealed.

In the late 19th century various extensions (not drawn) were added, and two first-floor bay windows inserted in the front. Except for the weatherboarded east wall of the back extension, all exposed external walls are cement-rendered.

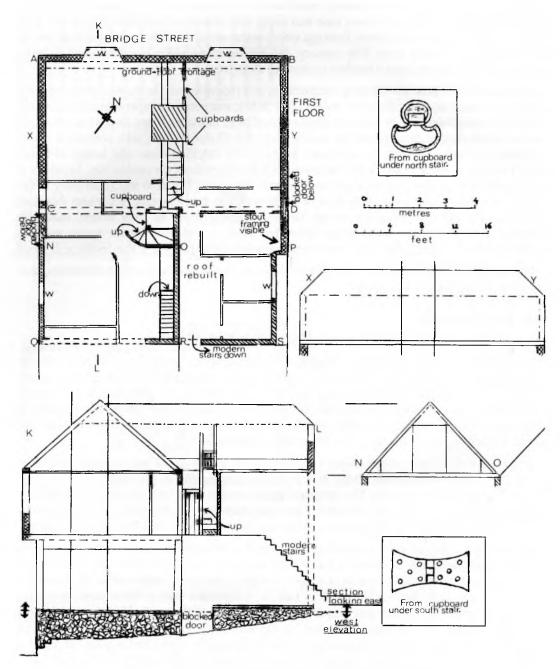


FIG. 7. 39/41 BRIDGE STREET: SURVEY MADE IN 1975.

# 2 UPPER FAIRFIELD ROAD

(Grid ref.: TQ 1650 5658. 1782/3: parcel 129, (northern building), Widow Kimpster). Fig. 8.

A two-storey weatherboarded range with hipped roof, running at right-angles to the street, originally a four-roomed cottage with a symmetrical east front but later extended southwards. The original building, which existed by 1782/3, was probably of around the mid 18th century. It was recorded in 1974, in a derelict state and shortly before demolition.

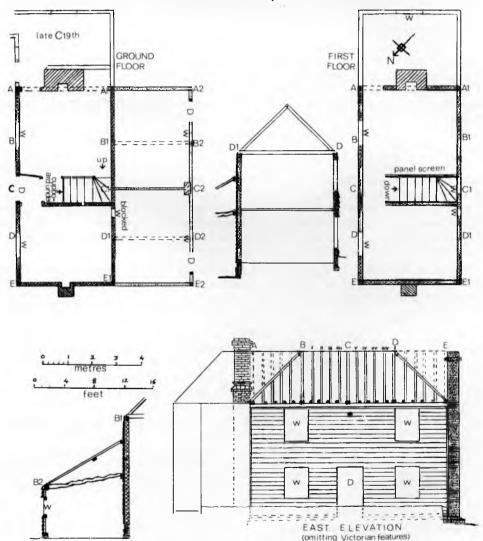


FIG. 8. 2 UPPER FAIRFIELD ROAD: SURVEY MADE IN 1974.

The walls had normal thin stud framing, on brick footings with a chamfered plinth resting on chalk rubble; the weatherboards were of deal, 15 cm. (6 in.) wide. The small chimney at the north end was original, for its base was built into the footings and the chamfer continuous around it; the larger chimney at the south end, heating the living-room and best bedroom, was also probably original. The upper parts of both chimneys were rebuilt from above the eavesline. The roof, of four bays, was originally straight-gabled, consisting of twenty pairs of plain coupled rafters pegged at the apex, without collars or purlins; the roof-bays apparently bore no relation to the wall-framing. The couples of the two central bays were numbered on both rafters with retroscript Roman numerals (see east elevation).

In the late 18th or early 19th century the roof was converted to a hipped form by sawing diagonally across the rafters and attaching new hipped ends, which were shown to be secondary by the fact that the common rafters were nailed, not pegged, to the hip-rafters. On the south side of the staircase on the upper floor, dividing it from the bedroom, was a rather rough partition wall of panelling, possibly original; one of the panels bore the graffito 'T.B JAN 1806'. On the central section of this partition, on the bedroom side, was a floral wallpaper backed with sheets from *The Weekly Dispatch* for 1834–5, the whole being mounted on a canvas underlay and tacked to the wall.

Against the west wall, running the full length of the original house, was a framed and weatherboarded lean-to outshot with brick footings, containing a small chimney and divided into two compartments by a wall of very thin framing with brick infill; the two halves were entered by doors at the rear (each flanked by a small original barred window), and there was no access from the house. This outshot was built against the original weatherboarding of the rear wall, which contained a small window, and is apparently not shown on the 1782/3 map; however, it can hardly have been later than the early 19th century.

The south extension was added in the late 19th century, when the whole house was given new window-frames and door-cases. Near the eaves in the centre of the east front was a 'Sun' firemark of embossed tin, with no number.

## NOTES

- 1. This change in British attitudes has already found its own historian: R. Samuel, Theatres of Memory (1994).
- 2. Leatherhead Advertiser, 22 January 1971, leader.
- 3. Ibid., 22 October 1971, letter from G. B. Scull.
- W. J. Blair, "'Cradlers', Leatherhead", Procs LDLHS 3 (9), 1975, pp. 298-312; ibid., "'The Running Horse', Leatherhead", Procs LDLHS 3 (10), 1976, pp. 347-50.
- 5. F. B. Benger, 'The Ragge, Lloyd and Walker Families', *Procs* LDLHS, 2 (5), 1961, pp. 144-54. Old photographs in the Society's archives show this small timber-framed house.
- 6. Among the Frith photographs in the Society's collection; it shows a notice attached to the building stating that the business will shortly be moving to the Swan Brewery opposite. The Holmsdale Directory of Dorking and Leatherhead for 1911 lists the occupants as the 'London Meat Supply (C. Keal, manager), butchers'; an end-on photograph of about that date (in the possession of M. T. Holland of Leatherhead in the early 1970s) shows a shop window with hanging carcasses and a sign above reading 'London Meat Supply'.
- 7 Leatherhead Advertiser, 7 October 1971; cf. Ibid., 22 January 1971, 30 September 1971.
- Surrey Quarter Sessions Records 1659-1661, ed. H. Jenkinson and D. L. Powell (Surrey Rec. Soc. xxxv, 1934), p. 7.



MEDIEVAL HARNESS PENDANT, FOUND NEAR LEATHERHEAD. Scale 1.5: 1