

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



VOL. 3

No. 7

1973

183-24

SECRETARIAL NOTES

THE FOLLOWING Lectures and Visits were arranged during 1973:—

January 12th	Lecture: "Bridges of Surrey" by D. F. Renn.
January 25th	Visit to the Muniment Rooms, Guildford, by kind permission of Miss G. M. A. Becke.
February 6th	Lecture: "Conservation" by N. Nail.
February 17th	Visit to Westminster Abbey. Leader: E. S. Barnwell.
March 9th	Lecture: "A simple History of Leatherhead" by D. F. Renn.
March 20th	Visit to Ram Brewery, Wandsworth. Leader: G. Hayward.
March 23rd	THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
April 13th	Lecture: "Renovating 'Crosslands', Effingham" by Mr. & Mrs. D. C. Gifford.
April 28th	Visit to West Horsley Church, "Hatchlands", and East Clandon Church. Leader: E. S. Barnwell.
May 12th	Leatherhead Walk and Exhibition at Leatherhead School of Music.
May 19th	Visit to Canterbury. Leader: E. S. Barnwell.
June 17th	Visit—the Wey and Arun Canal and Arundel. Leader: M. Snellgrove.
June 23rd	Walk to Broadmoor, Friday Street, and Abinger Hammer. Leader: W. H. E. Rivett.
July 15th	Visit to Godalming. Leader: E. S. Barnwell.
August 18th	Visit to Crich Tramway Museum and Cromford, Derbyshire. Leader: G. Hayward.
September 15th	Visit to Bath. Leader: G. Hayward.
September 29th	Visit to the Church, Juniper Hall and Flint Cottage, Mickleham. Leader: Miss E. F. M. Strudwick.
October 13th	Walk around Historical Ashtead. Leader: G. Hayward.
October 19th	The Dallaway Public Lecture: "Canals, Midlands & Northern England" by L. A. Edwards at St. John's School, Leatherhead.
November 9th	Lecture: "Bees and Bee-keeping" by Mrs. C. Furness.
December 7th	"Leatherhead Historical Miscellany". Contributions by various members.

Number 6 of Volume 3 of the *Proceedings* was issued during the year.

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Council Offices on 23rd March 1973

THE REPORT of the Executive Committee and the Accounts for the year 1972 were adopted and approved. Officers of the Society were elected. The Accounts for the year 1972 are printed on page iii of the cover.

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1973

Vice-President: J. G. W. LEWARNE

Chairman: D. F. RENN, F.S.A.

Hon. Secretary: D. BRUCE

(7 Fox Lane, Little Bookham. Tel: Bookham 58722)

Hon. Treasurer: F. A. STOKES

(Lloyds Bank, Leatherhead)

Hon. Editor: F. B. BENDER

(Duntisbourne, Reigate Road, Leatherhead. Tel: Leatherhead 72711)

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Committee Members: J. R. BULL, S. E. D. FORTESCUE, W. MILLAR

Co-opted: S. R. C. POULTER, M. A. SNELLGROVE

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OCCASIONAL NOTES

LEATHERHEAD'S FIRST INVENTOR?

I HAVE made a search in the archives of the National Reference Library for Science and Invention and have uncovered what appears to be Leatherhead's first inventor; one Jeremiah Johnson of Church Street, Leatherhead. He filed a Patent Application on 7th March 1854 for "A NEW STOP FOR RAILWAY AND OTHER CARRIAGES". This depended upon a system of hooks dropped suddenly on to ratchet teeth on the carriage wheels so that "every wheel can be firmly stopped in one moment, so as to cause the train to slide a short distance, like a boy on ice".

According to the 1851 Census returns, Jeremiah Johnson (aged 40) lived at No. 22 Church Street, Leatherhead, with his wife Sarah (aged 32) and was a Master Cordwainer employing two men. He was born at South Stoneham, Hants., and his wife at Botley, Hants. There were two other people in residence—Janet Sutherland (aged 19) house servant, born in Scotland; and Edward Taylor (aged 20), Cordwainer's Journeyman, born at Holmwood, Surrey. A Cordwainer was a worker in leather and not necessarily just a shoemaker. It would be interesting to know whether he purchased his leather locally or used cordovan, a superior grade of fine soft dyed leather from Cordoba in Spain.

Unfortunately Mr. Johnson failed to suggest how the passengers in trains fitted with his invention were to be prevented from being shot across the compartments like bullets. Seat belts had not yet been invented, so it is hardly surprising that no more was heard of his idea. However, it would be interesting to know what happened to the working model he referred to, which stopped the carriage "in a few feet".

Leatherhead was rather slow in producing an inventor, as Guildford had one in 1771, Cobham in 1777, Richmond in 1778, Farnham in 1786, Reigate in 1792, and Abinger in 1793. Towns nearer London such as Kingston-upon-Thames put the rest to shame, but they are no longer in Surrey. A. M. EDWARDS.

(Mr. Edwards would be interested to hear from any member who knows the names of former residents in our Society's area who might have filed early Patent applications after 1854. Patents after 1853 are very difficult to trace unless one has a surname to start with.)

LADY DIANA HOWARD'S PEACH TREES AT ASHTEAD PARK

MR. JOHN H. HARVEY, F.S.A., has pointed out that the "Mr. Landon" from whom Lady Diana purchased peach trees in March 1710/11 (see article by Capt. A. W. G. Lowther, F.S.A., on page 156 of Vol. 3, No. 5 of these *Proceedings*) was clearly George London of the Brompton Park Nursery. This nursery was founded in 1681 by Roger Looker, Moses Cook, John Field and George London. It was by no means the first nursery, for there were or had been others at Spitalfields, Hoxton, Mile End and Putney. F. B. B.

NOTE ON A SURREY MUSTER ROLL OF 1627

A CHANCE reference to *Surrey Archaeological Collections* X. 1891, turned up an article of possible interest to members of our Society. It concerns a muster roll of troops levied from Surrey for service in the Low Countries in 1627. The author, A. R. Bax, gives what is virtually a nominal roll (no ranks listed) of one hundred men of whom the following four are of special local interest:—

*Thos. Richbell, Leatherhead
Robt. Bennett, Ashstead
Lawrence Harrison, Bookehamme
John Lee, Effingham

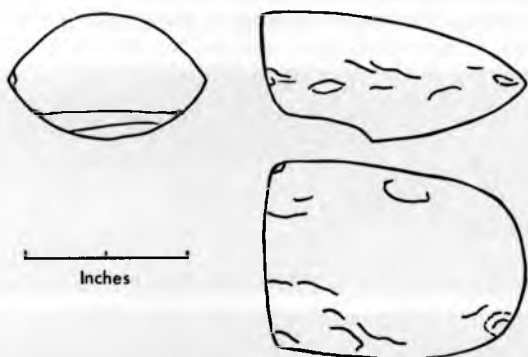
All of these men would be privates as they were virtually press-ganged.

The localities range from Richmond and Ham in the north, Dorking in the centre, and Haslemere in the south of the county. Most of the contingent was levied in Southwark, then doubtless the most densely populated part of Surrey. Until 1889, when the spreading metropolis engulfed what we think of as part of London, such areas as Bermondsey, Lambeth and Southwark were all part of Surrey.

R. A. LEVER.

*A Michael Richbell is mentioned in the Ashtead Court Roll of 14th January, 1638 as having recently held eight acres in Ashtead Common Fields, see *Proceedings* I, No. 9, p.32.

NEOLITHIC FIND



IN APRIL 1972 the writer found part of a polished flint hand axe amongst stones by the right bank of the River Mole, just north of the Young Street bridge (TQ15 16475538). The stones had earlier been dredged from the bed of the river there but, as pointed out to me by a Thames Conservancy engineer, could have been brought an indeterminate distance downstream by the action of currents.

The site is in fact some 200 metres below where L. W. Carpenter reported a number of Mesolithic flint finds in 1952.* The present find, mottled orange/buff in colour, does not resemble any of the artifacts described by him, however, and has been identified at the British Museum as part of a partially polished Neolithic axe.

S. R. C. POULTER.

*Carpenter, L. W., "A Mesolithic site near Leatherhead", *Proceedings*, 1952, Vol. 1, No. 6, pp 5-11.

FRAGMENTS OF AN EARLY CONTINENTAL BRASS IN LEATHERHEAD CHURCH

By W. J. BLAIR

WHEN the foundations of the supposed Anchorite's Cell at Leatherhead Church (built onto the north wall of the Chancel) were excavated by P. M. Johnston in 1906,¹ two small fragments of a brass fillet inscription with raised Lombardic lettering, originally running around the perimeter of a grave-slab, were found "buried in the soil, together with a thick piece of coloured glass". These strips were at first placed in a small showcase, but have now been cleaned and set into a stone tablet on the north wall of the Chancel. Apart from various passing references, the only account of them previously published is a brief description, together with an inaccurate drawing, in the original excavation report.



The smaller fragment is 13.5 cm. long, 4.7 cm. wide and 0.35 cm. thick, and bears the letters GARETE (almost certainly the end of the name *Margarete*). The larger fragment, which contains a number of air-bubbles due to imperfect casting, is 19.8 cm. long, 4.8 cm. wide and 0.25 cm. thick, and bears the letters NRE·SEIG (*nostre seigneur*; the contraction-marks, though omitted from the drawing mentioned above, are quite clear). One end of this piece is curved to fit the edge of a brass quatrefoil, probably one of a series bearing Evangelists' symbols or shields of arms and situated at the corners and at intervals around the inscription. The backs of both fragments bear ripple-marks from the casting of the plate and are coated with a dense black patina. Patches of thick red oxide (removed during cleaning) on the surfaces of some of the letters possibly indicated that the fragments had been in a fire, but no evidence could be seen of the "traces of red enamel adhering to the hatched ground of the letters" mentioned by Johnston.

The large, bold forms of the letters, with their elaborate serifs, strongly suggest that the brass was a continental import. The style is markedly different from that of all known English inscriptions, but agrees closely with the very characteristic lettering on the important Flemish series of brasses. The Leatherhead fragments are slightly unusual in that they are

clearly parts of a separate fillet laid directly into the stone; the majority of Flemish brasses have the whole composition engraved on a series of joined rectangular sheets, though a number of separate-inlays (mostly early) do exist. It is also curious that the language of the Leatherhead fragments is French, which is not used on any other known fourteenth-century brass of the Flemish school.² However, almost identical letter-forms, cut in the same relief technique against a hatched background, together with a similar use of decorative quatrefoils, occur on Flemish examples from 1319³ onwards. The language and the fillet technique may indicate that the brass was a member of the early group usually called Franco-Flemish, but so few inscriptions of this type survive that confirmation is at present impossible. The use of the Lombardic alphabet continued rather later on the Continent than in England, but on Flemish brasses it seems to have been largely superseded by black-letter after c. 1370. The Flemish letter-forms changed so little that it does not seem possible to date the Leatherhead fragments more closely than to c. 1315–75.

It is impossible to say whether the original memorial at Leatherhead merely consisted of the inscription and quatrefoils, or whether these surrounded a full-length figure with canopy etc. The slab would probably have been of Tournai or Antoing marble—possibly the “remains of a stone, stripp’d of its brass” noted in Aubrey’s *Surrey*⁴ as being “before the altar, near the step”. There seems no prospect of identifying the Margaret commemorated. G. H. Smith⁵ implied that she might be Margaret the wife of Sir John D’Argentein, who was still living when her husband died in 1383,⁶ but this seems too late, unless her monument was ordered many years before her death.

NOTES

1. See excavation report in *S.A.C.*, XX—223–8.
2. See H. K. Cameron, “The 14th-Century School of Flemish Brasses”, *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, XI (part 2, London, 1972)—50–81.
3. Ringsted, Denmark. King Eric Maendved and Queen Ingeborg, 1319. Brasses of this school had a wide market, and several examples still survive in England.
4. *Natural History and Antiquities of Surrey* (London, 1718), II—257. The note does not appear in Aubrey’s original manuscript (Bodleian MS. Aubrey 4), so was presumably either made by the editor, Richard Rawlinson, or copied by him from some other source.
5. *L. & D.L.H.S., Proc.*, III—33.
6. *Ibid.*, I—No. 6, p. 17.

3 CHURCH STREET, LEATHERHEAD

By W. J. BLAIR

THE alteration and extension of No. 3 Church Street (formerly Wakefield's, now Turton's) in 1972 gave me an opportunity to record the previously-hidden structural details of this timber-framed house and to examine the earth behind it during ground clearance. The information thus obtained is summarised in this article; copies of photographs and large-scale elevations have been deposited in the Society's archives and with the National Monuments Record.

The Building

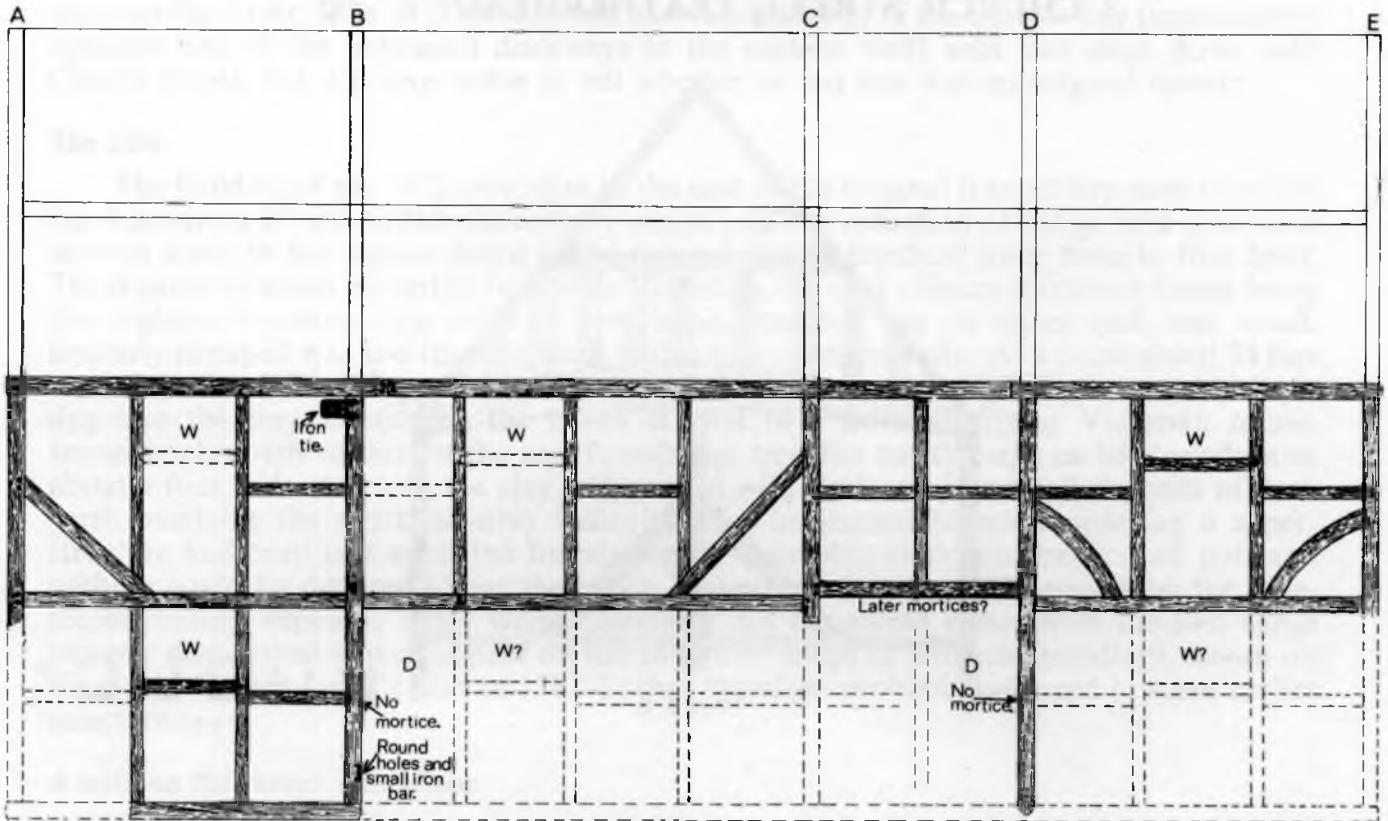
The main wing of the present structure (National Grid Reference TQ 16595642) is a single two-storey timber-framed range with later extensions to the north and east. It measures 42 feet in length by 18 feet in width, with the long dimension fronting onto the street, and is made up of four unequal bays. The second bay from the north—only six feet wide—is likely to have been a smoke bay, into which an internal chimney (shown on a Frith photograph of 1913 but since destroyed) was later inserted. This implies that the building probably dates from before c. 1620.

The ground-cills stand on a dwarf-wall of mortared flints, varying in height to compensate for the sloping ground. The three internal roof-trusses all survive in good condition, and are similar to each other in general form. The framing for one upper-floor partition remained until recently attached to truss B (see fig. 2, top), but all other partitions and internal fittings have long since disappeared. The ground-floor level has been completely altered and provides no evidence of the original internal arrangement. Each window contained four thick bars of square section, the sockets for which still remain in the original window-frames (now filled in) on the eastern face; most of the present windows are not in original positions. A few wattle-and-plaster panels still remain in the wall-framing on the upper floor, but in the surviving ground-floor timbering the spaces have been built up with brick.

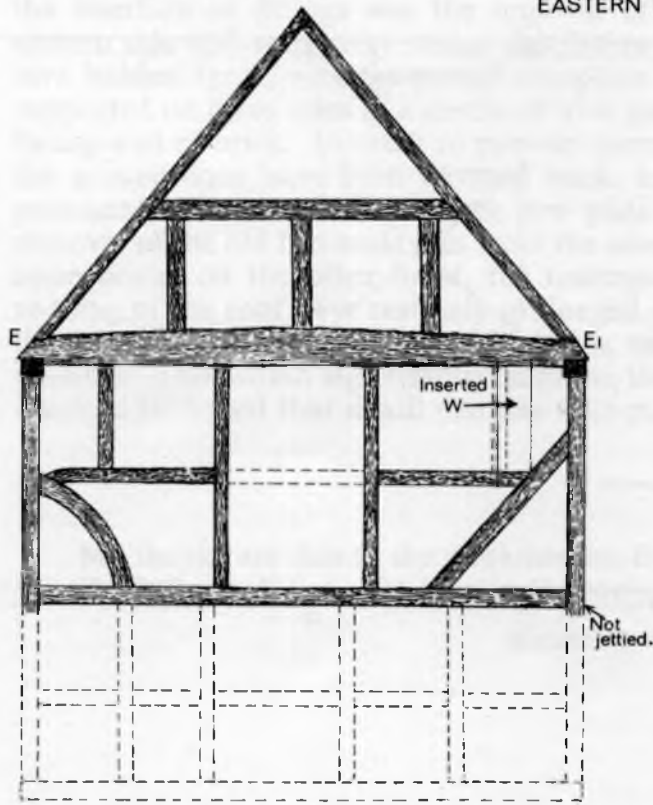
The southern elevation, facing up Church Street, is the only one which still retains its ground-floor timbering and on which some of the framing is externally visible. One of the exposed horizontal members is clearly a replacement, and the gable-end, formerly covered by a patchwork of old rectangular and fish-scale tiling, was recently re-tiled. Built onto the western part of this wall is an eighteenth-century brick chimney-stack with a large projecting base, which covers much of the framing. The eastern elevation was temporarily exposed in 1972 by the removal of external rendering and internal plaster, which enabled the almost undamaged framing on the upper floor to be recorded. Sections of the ground-floor timbering survived until recently, and may still survive in the northernmost bay hidden behind rendering; nearly all visible portions had been destroyed to make way for extensions by the time of my survey, but one remaining fragment (since removed) and the mortices in the underside of the wall-plate indicated its structural form. The positions of two doorways in the eastern wall were indicated by the absence of mortices to take horizontal members in the flanking vertical posts. The northern elevation is almost totally invisible from the outside due to the presence of an eighteenth-century extension (No. 1 Church Street), but as with the eastern elevation, the upper-floor timbering was exposed by the removal of internal plaster, and the form of the missing framing on the ground floor could be deduced from mortices. The western elevation, fronting onto Church Street and largely rebuilt in brick in the nineteenth century, retains very little framing above, and none at all below; however, the timbering was probably more or less similar to that on the eastern elevation. Portions of the main posts, internally visible during the recent alterations,

3 CHURCH STREET, LEATHERHEAD

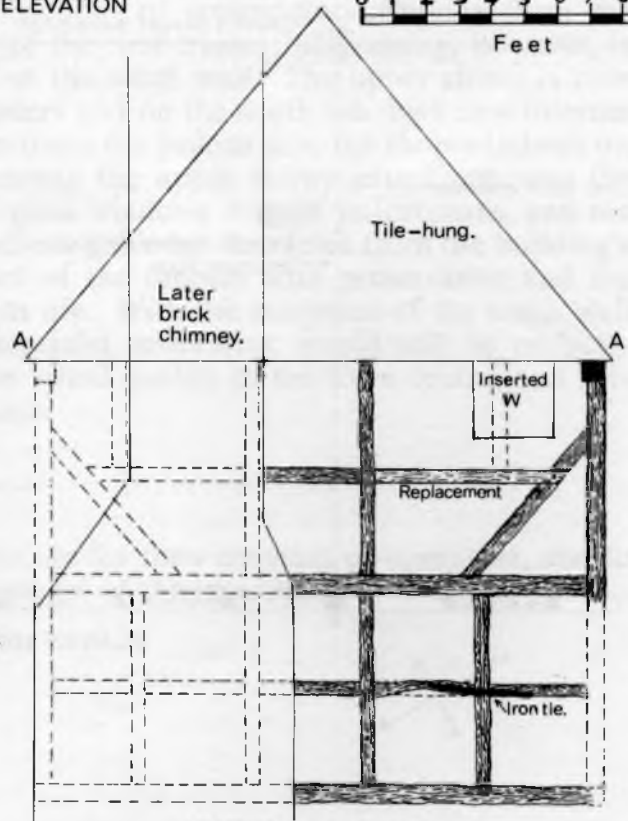
Fig. 1



EASTERN ELEVATION



NORTHERN ELEVATION

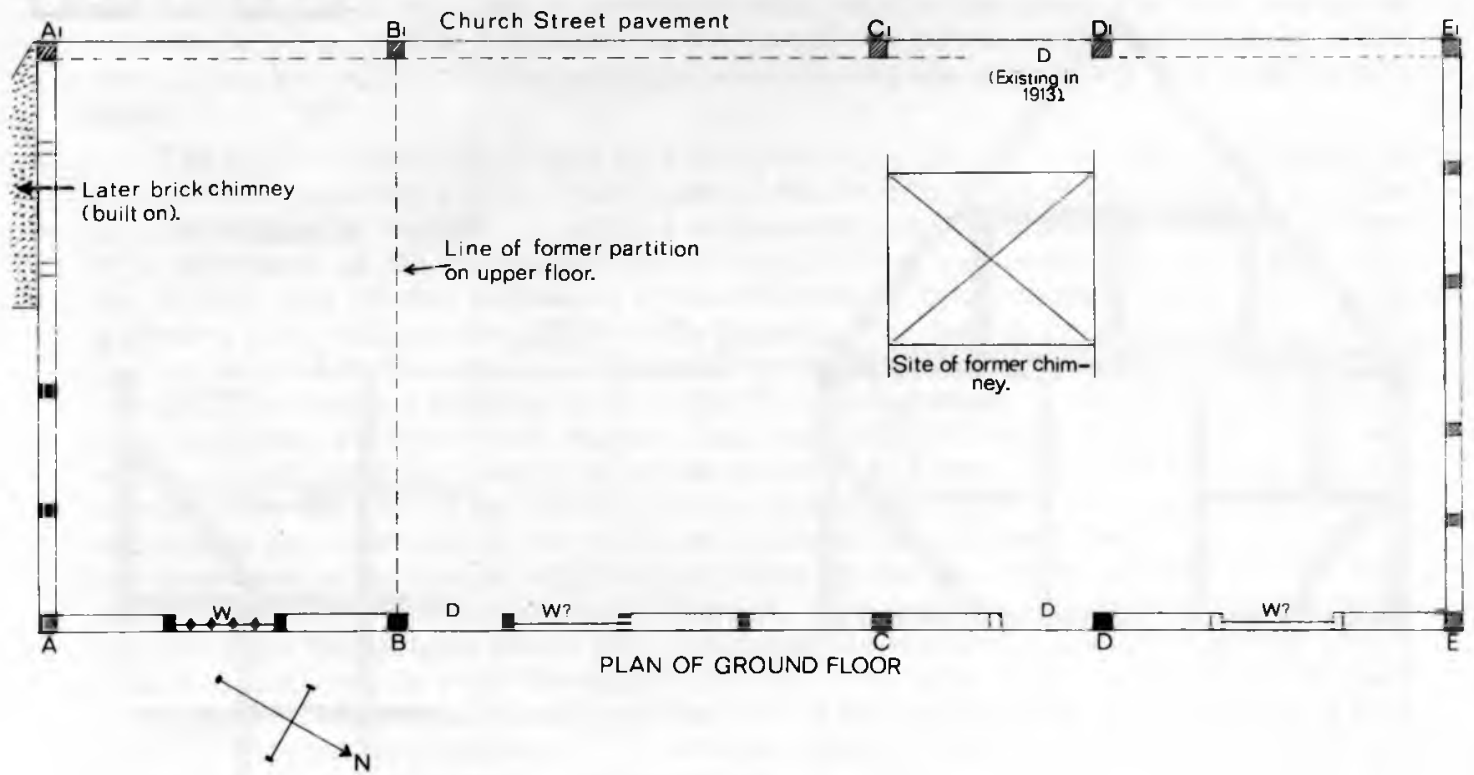
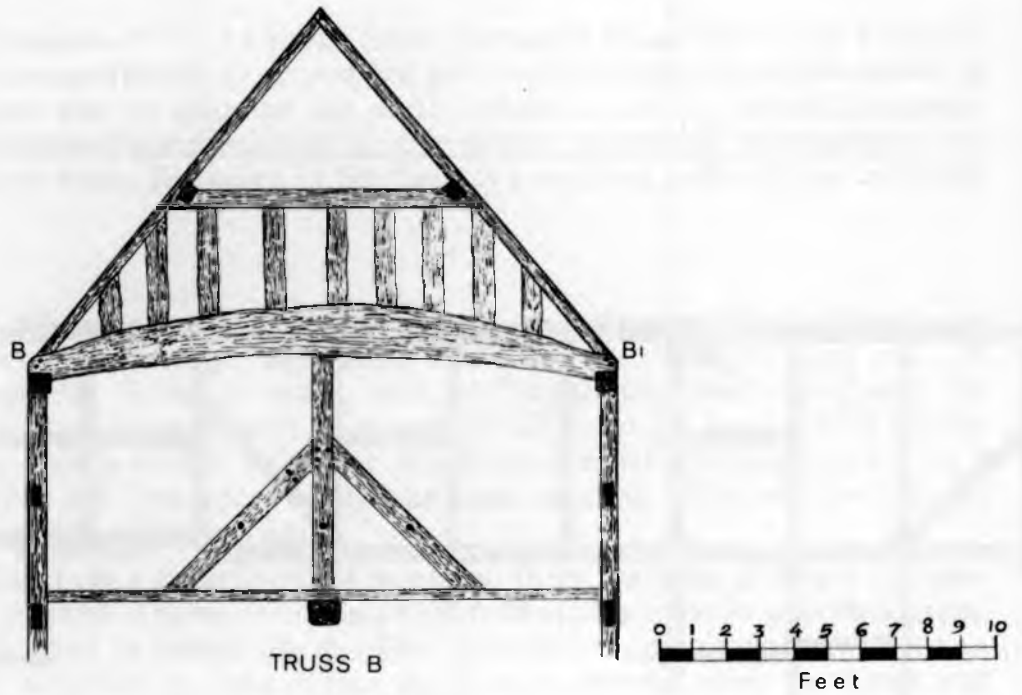


SOUTHERN ELEVATION

W.B.

3 CHURCH STREET, LEATHERHEAD

Fig. 2



continue down below first-floor level and thus prove that the upper storey was never jettied out over the street. The 1913 photograph shows a doorway in the narrow bay (immediately opposite one of the presumed doorways in the eastern wall) with two steps down into Church Street, but it is impossible to tell whether or not this was an original feature.

The Site

The building of the 1972 extension to the east of the original framed structure involved the demolition of two nineteenth-century wings, and the reduction of the ground level over an area some 28 feet square down to the natural clay (a depth of some three to four feet). The deposit removed proved to be mainly Victorian, the only objects of interest found being five eighteenth-century wig-curlers (three large, stamped WB on either end, one small, similarly stamped WA, and the fifth small with a hole in either end). At a point about 34 feet east of the framed building, at the north-east corner of the new extension, was a rubbish-pit dug into the clay, containing the bones of part of a horse overlying Victorian refuse. Immediately south of this pit the new foundation-trenches cut through earlier foundations about a foot wide, dug into the clay and packed with chalk rubble; small deposits of dark earth overlying the chalk possibly indicated that horizontal beams supporting a super-structure had been laid upon the foundations. Their plan could not be worked out, and nothing could be deduced about their date beyond the fact that they pre-dated the nineteenth-century deposits. They were apparently not connected either with the two wings recently demolished (which appear on the 1841 tithe-map) or with the buildings shown on the site in George Gwilt's plan of 1782-3; they therefore probably belonged to some earlier structure.

A note on the recent alterations

The only damage done to the original fabric by the building of the new extension and the insertion of fittings was the removal of sections of ground-floor framing from the eastern side and some very minor mutilation of the roof-trusses; all framing, however, is now hidden again, with the partial exception of the south wall. The upper storey is now supported on three sides in a cradle of iron girders and on the south side by a new internal facing-wall of brick. In order to provide more room for pedestrians, the shop-windows on the ground-floor have been recessed back, leaving the upper storey jettied out over the pavement. The visual effect of the new plate-glass windows is most unfortunate, and the removal of the old fish-scale tiles from the southern gable has detracted from the building's appearance; on the other hand, the treatment of the timbers with preservative and the re-tiling of the roof have certainly prolonged its life. With the exception of the south wall its appearance is now unattractive, but a successful restoration would still be perfectly possible. This would significantly improve the visual quality of the town centre, and it is much to be hoped that it will one day take place.

My thanks are due to the workmen on the site for their constant co-operation, and to Mr. D. F. Renn, F.S.A., for help in the early stages of the investigation.

THE SHERSON FAMILY OF FETCHAM

By DR. A. D. COX

DR. ROBERT SHERSON OF FETCHAM



Tablet Memorial to Dr. Robert Sherson and Mrs. Sherson, Fetcham Church

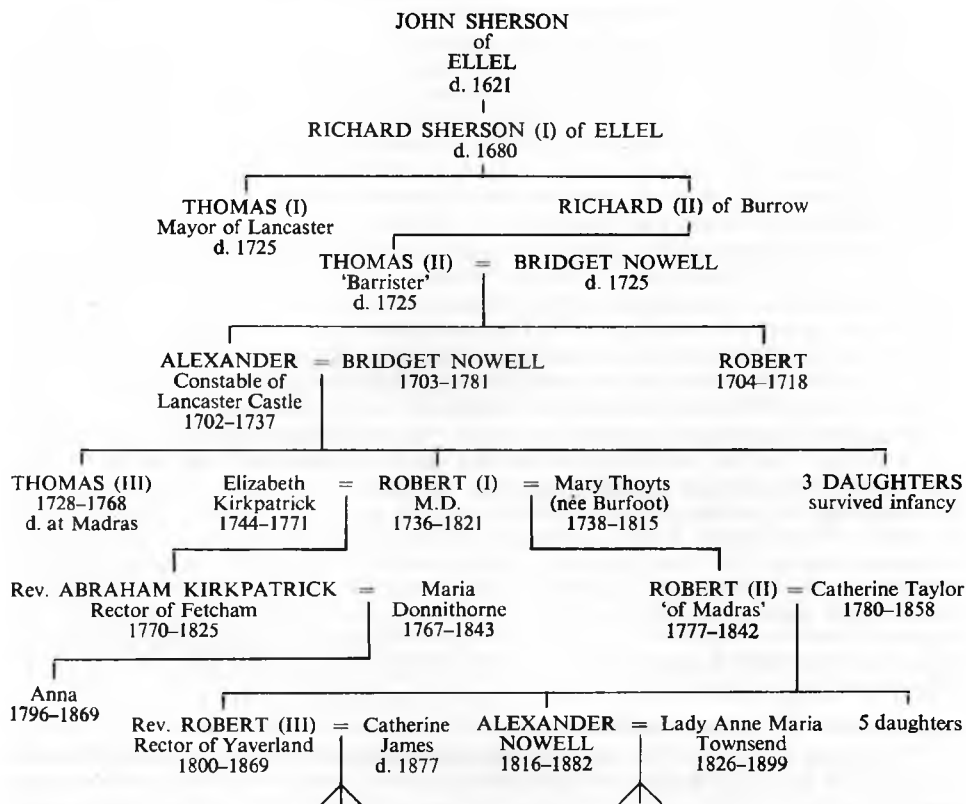
IN his history of Surrey, Brayley records that in Fetcham Parish Church "Against the north wall of the chancel is a handsome white-marble tablet, surmounted by two urns recording the memory of Robert Sherson, M.D., F.A.S., who died January 6th, 1821, aged eighty-four; and Mary Sherson, his wife, who died May 11th, 1815, aged seventy-seven. Their remains are deposited in a vault beneath the altar". A footnote says that "Dr. Sherson had five wives; four of whom he buried but the fifth survived him".¹ The monument is now on the north wall of the North transept of Fetcham Church. Who was Dr. Robert Sherson and what was his connection with Fetcham?

Ancestry

Robert Sherson was born 29th July 1736 at Lancaster. He was the eighth child of Alexander Sherson and Bridget Nowell. Alexander was an Attorney-at-Law who held the offices of Coroner and Town Clerk of Lancaster, where he was also Constable of the Castle.²

During the early part of the seventeenth century there were many Shersons living in the parish of Cockerham just south of Lancaster.³ Amongst them was one John Sherson of Ellel, a yeoman, who acquired property in the parish at Ellel and Garstang. Before his death, which occurred about 1621, he transferred this property to his son Richard (I), who

THE SHERSON FAMILY



in his turn extended his territorial possessions locally.² Richard (I) lived to a great age, and when he died in 1680 he styled himself gentleman. His will specifically mentions 15 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.⁴

Thomas (I) the eldest son of Richard (I), became Lord Mayor of Lancaster, and though he married left no issue.² The second son Richard (II) sent his eldest son Thomas (II), nephew of the Mayor, to Grays Inn.⁵ Although Thomas (II) practised the law, and some sources call him Barrister,^{6,7} he does not appear to have been called to the bar.⁸ His grandfather Richard (I) made him his principal heir,⁴ but he himself also added to the family's property. In his will which he made in 1718 he mentions not only several properties in Cockerham Parish but also land, houses, a shop and a cellar in Lancaster. One of these houses was his own residence.⁹

The improvement in the family's social position is demonstrated by the marriage of this lawyer Thomas (II) to Bridget daughter of Alexander Nowell of Morton, eldest surviving son of Roger Nowell of Read Hall.² The Nowells had held Read since the 14th century and were allied by marriage with many of the leading landed families of Lancashire. Alexander Nowell, a younger son of the house became celebrated as a puritan Dean of

St. Pauls at the time of Elizabeth the first. Roger, just mentioned, defended Lathom House for Charles I during the Civil War. Not long before his death in May 1695 his granddaughter Bridget married Thomas Sherson (II).¹⁰

The eldest child of Thomas (II) and Bridget who survived infancy was Alexander;^{2 11} no doubt named after his celebrated ancestor Dean Alexander Nowell. As we have seen he followed his father in the practise of the law and like him married a Bridget Nowell, his first cousin and daughter of Roger Nowell of Read Hall who had also married a first cousin, Rebecca Heber.^{2 10} Alexander's younger brother Robert died at London in 1718,² and so he became the sole male heir of both his father Thomas Sherson (II) the lawyer, and of his great-uncle Thomas (I) the Mayor. His mother died in March 1725; his father a month later and his great-uncle the following November.¹¹

When Alexander Sherson's wife Bridget gave birth to a son in July 1736 three of their children had already been buried. A son Thomas (III) and three daughters, Rebecca, Bridget and Dorothy were still alive. The newborn son was baptised Robert on 1st September 1736 in Lancaster Parish Church.^{2 11} This was Robert Sherson who became Dr. Sherson of Fetcham. Tragically, Alexander Sherson himself died in November the following year aged 35, leaving his widow pregnant with twins.^{2 11} Although a lawyer, Alexander left no will, and it may be that his death was unexpected.¹²

Since she already had five children to nurture, it was perhaps fortunate for Alexander's widow Bridget that the twins she was carrying died not long after their birth.^{2 11} It is uncertain to whom Bridget turned for support. Of earlier generations of the Nowells and Shersons only her mother, Rebecca Nowell was still alive, and she only lived a further six years.¹⁰ Bridget's elder brother Alexander had inherited Read Hall but it seems doubtful that he was able to offer much assistance. His will dated 21st May 1745 mentions an Act of Parliament of 31st December 1735 which vested the estates of the Nowells in trustees to be sold for "the payment of Debts and other purposes". It is not surprising therefore that Alexander makes no mention of his sister Bridget in this will.¹³ The subsequent story of Bridget and her children suggests that she was a woman of strong character who was proud to have been born a Nowell.

Apprenticeship and the move to London

The events of the next few years are somewhat confused. Although Bridget Sherson, her two sons and three daughters were probably all in London by 1758, how this came about is not clear. Her eldest son Thomas (III) came of age in 1749, and in the next seven or eight years he and his mother were involved in a number of transactions about the family property.² In December 1751 Robert (I), the second surviving son was apprenticed for seven years to James Dickenson, an apothecary in Lancaster for £42.¹⁴ About this time Thomas (III) sold the property in Ellel to a certain Edmond Dickenson and leased other property to his mother Bridget. These proceedings reveal that Rebecca his eldest sister was in London by April 1752.² Since Thomas (III) was involved in releasing control of his property in Lancashire he probably left for London soon after his sister. Perhaps he intended to practise the law like his father and grandfather, but there is no evidence to support this idea. It is not known whether Bridget and her other two daughters stayed in Lancaster with Robert (I) while he pursued his training.

The whole family had in all likelihood settled in London in the parish of St. Giles in the Fields when Thomas (III) witnessed his sister Rebecca's marriage there in April 1758.¹⁵ Her husband was a certain John Ellison, a chemist. John and Rebecca subsequently lived in Whitechapel.²

First Marriage and Establishment as an Apothecary

Robert's (I) presence in London is confirmed by his first marriage five weeks later at the same church of St. Giles in the Fields.¹⁵ His 17-year-old bride was Margaret Morris,

daughter of an apothecary, Dr. Charles Morris, who practised in Lime Street in the City.^{2 18} Since Robert (I) was subsequently attested to have served a seven-year apprenticeship in Lancaster¹⁶ there can have been little time for courtship, and one must assume that the match had been arranged. Doctor Morris was one of that small number of apothecaries who was also a Doctor of Medicine.^{2 17} Margaret was a child of his second marriage with Margaret Harris Turner, daughter of Nicholas Turner of Bignor Park, Sussex.² By his first wife Doctor Morris had a daughter Jane who had married Thomas Benison "of Co. Lanc."² Since a Thomas Benison recurs in the story of Robert Sherson (I) it may be that he linked the Shersons and Morrises.

Robert (I) and Margaret Morris had seven children; two sons and five daughters. None of them reached five years of age.^{2 15 19} Although infant mortality was high at this time, the repeated deaths of his children must have formed a grim backcloth to Robert (I) Sherson's existence as he attempted to establish himself as an apothecary in London.

At first Margaret came to live with Robert (I) in the parish of St. Giles in the Fields.¹⁵ But in the Summer of 1762 they moved to Lime Street with their two daughters Bridget and Charlotte.^{15 19 21} On 6th July Robert (I) became a Liveryman of the Society of Apothecaries, having paid the Fine of £11 14s. and 40 pence to the Chelsea Garden of the Society.¹⁶ It may be that Dr. Morris had helped Robert (I) to obtain his admission to the Company so that he could join and then take over his practice. Robert (I) became a Freeman of the City of London soon afterwards in October of the same year.²⁰

The first child to be born to Robert (I) and Margaret after they came to the parish of St. Dionis Blackchurch was baptised Arabella Harris on 4th June 1763. As if in celebration of his improved status the baptismal entry styles Robert (I) as "apothecary".¹⁹ But his medical skills proved no benefit to his own family. The deaths of his children continued. In November 1767 Margaret's last child was born. He was christened Robert. Perhaps as a consequence of this pregnancy Margaret died the following January. The child Robert was buried a month after his mother.^{2 19}

Two more deaths occurred in the Sherson family before the year was out. The first was that of Robert's (I) elder and only brother Thomas (III) who was buried at Madras in India 22nd March 1768.^{2 22} Thomas' (III) place of death is the only clue to his career which was presumably with the East India Company.²³ It is unlikely that the news of his brother's death reached Robert (I) before September that year, and quite possibly he did not hear until 1769. Administration of Thomas' (III) goods and chattels was granted to him as "the natural and lawful brother" in March 1769—"Catherine Sherson widow the relict and Bridget Sherson widow the natural and lawful mother and next of kin"—"in no wise appearing".²⁴

The other death was that of Mary Ann the only surviving child of Robert's (I) first marriage. Since she died at Dr. Morris' house at Richmond it may be that her grandfather had now retired from Lime Street.^{2 19}

Friends and Neighbours

In the Summer of 1768 a Spanish Merchant, Robert Kirkpatrick, was living and carrying on his trade at No. 5 Lime Street Square.²⁵ Robert Sherson (I) became intimately associated with the family of his neighbour. The Kirkpatricks originated from the same stock as the Baronets of Closeburn.^{26 27 39} Robert Kirkpatrick's father James was born at Dumfries but settled and married in Devon, where his wife bore him six sons and two daughters. At least four of his sons were involved in the Spanish trade based on Malaga, where they acquired property. Three of the brothers probably lived in Malaga at some time, and one of Robert Kirkpatrick's nieces married Francis Aiskell, the English Consul there.^{28 29 39} By 1768 Francis Aiskell had returned to London to conduct his wine merchant's business from 1 Mincing Lane not far from Lime Street. Robert Kirkpatrick, the youngest of his

father's children, and a prosperous 55-year-old bachelor was sharing his house with his unmarried sister Anne.^{31 32 33 39} The only other surviving member of this generation of Kirkpatricks was Abraham an elder brother of Robert and Anne, who was living at Bethnal Green. Abraham, also a Spanish Merchant, had married some 20 years earlier at Malaga, and he and his wife Mary Townsend had an only daughter Elizabeth now aged 23.^{34 39} The immediate family circle of the Kirkpatricks was completed by John Kirkpatrick Escott, a nephew, who had joined Robert in his business and was probably living in Malaga in 1768.^{31 32 35 39} Abraham and Robert Kirkpatrick's other sister Elizabeth had married William Escott, a sergemaker in Devon, who was still alive. John Kirkpatrick Escott was his younger son; the elder son William Escott was captain of a West Indiaman based on Bristol.³⁹

Another neighbour of Robert Sherson (I) was a Thomas Benison, a Hardwreman at 51 Fenchurch Street who was perhaps the same who married his first wife's half-sister Jane.^{2 30 36 37 38}

Second Marriage

On 4th August 1768 Robert Sherson (I) married Abraham Kirkpatrick's daughter Elizabeth at St. Mary's Islington. The witnesses were Francis Aiskell, the ex-consul and James Kirkpatrick "junior".^{2 34 39} The latter who had been admitted to Lincoln's Inn that January was probably a second cousin of Elizabeth.⁴⁰ He was later called the to bar⁴¹ and became Town Clerk of Bristol and Recorder of Bridport.^{42 43} The marriage ceremony was performed by the Rev. Richard Smith, the vicar of Islington,^{2 34} whose father Richard was patron of the Living and a Director of the East India Company.^{44 45} The vicar's brother Benjamin had three years earlier married Charlotte Turner, niece of Margaret Morris, née Turner, the mother of Robert Sherson's (I) first wife. Charlotte Smith, as she now was became a celebrated poetess and novelist. Her sister Caroline, Mrs. Dorset, also achieved fame as a writer of poetry.^{2 45 46 47} This tangled web gives some idea of Robert Sherson's (I) growing family connections and acquaintance.

Robert (I) and Elizabeth Sherson had only one child. He was born on 11th April 1770 and baptised on the 30th, Abraham Kirkpatrick Sherson after his maternal grandfather.^{2 19} Abraham was the first of Robert Sherson's (I) children to survive infancy, and he later became Rector of Fetcham. His mother died on the 18th January the following year.² The Sherson's house in Lime Street was in the parish of St. Dionis Backchurch where their son Abraham had been baptised, but Elizabeth was buried in Pepys' church at St. Olave Hart Street where she had been born and where her father's mother had been buried sixteen years earlier.^{2 39}

Apart from his grandmother Bridget the infant Abraham Sherson had two maiden aunts, Dorothy and Bridget Sherson to care for him. His maternal grandmother had died the year before he was born but Abraham Kirkpatrick was still alive and would live another six years.^{2 39}

Character

Because Robert Sherson (I) married five times it might be reasonably concluded that he was an emotionally robust outgoing man. These qualities can alienate others but Robert (I) appears to have gained and kept the respect of many people. His second wife Elizabeth died in 1771, her father Abraham in 1777, her uncle Robert Kirkpatrick in 1781 and her aunt Anne Kirkpatrick in 1787.^{2 39 39} Robert Sherson (I) was married for the fourth time by the time Abraham Kirkpatrick died yet he and his brother and sister left substantial legacies to Robert's (I) son Abraham Kirkpatrick Sherson and personal gifts to Robert (I) himself. Furthermore Robert (I) was a trustee in the wills of both Abraham and Anne Kirkpatrick.^{31 32 49} A more striking example of the respect in which Robert Sherson (I) was held occurs in the will of Margaret Harris Morris, mother of Robert's (I) first wife, who died in 1792.⁵⁰ Margaret Morris had only three living grandchildren when she made

her will in 1791. They were the offspring of her daughter Sarah's marriage with Captain William Sowle in October 1771. Captain Sowle died abroad and his children were orphaned by the death of Sarah in 1778.^{2 51} Margaret Morris' will reveals that Robert Sherson (I) lent £200 to apprentice her grandson Charles Sowle. That she, his first mother-in-law appointed him joint trustee and executor of her will is some measure of his capacity to keep the trust and affection of others.

The Marine Society

In his professional life also, Robert Sherson's reputation was growing. In July 1772 he was appointed Apothecary to the Marine Society.⁵² The Society had been founded originally in 1756 to save boys from a life of vagrancy and crime on the streets of London by kitting them out and sending them to sea. Two of the founders were Sir John Fielding, and the philanthropist Jonas Hanway.⁴⁵ The Society received a fresh impetus when it was refunded in 1769 and £2000 was collected as the result of an appeal from Sir John Fielding.⁵³ In 1772 the Society was incorporated and Robert Sherson (I) became the first apothecary.^{52 54}

Jonas Hanway was in the chair on the day he was appointed, and amongst those present was Mr. Angerstein whose collection of pictures formed the basis of the National Gallery.⁴⁵ In subsequent years Robert Sherson's (I) name occurs frequently as present at Meetings at the Marine Society's Office.⁵² Two actions of the Society deserve particular mention. One was the investigation of the condition of climbing boys in London in 1773. Nineteen boys were collected, washed, clothed and encouraged to talk. They disclosed many interesting details about their way of life. In 1786 the Society decided on a training ship, and one was subsequently acquired and moored at Greenwich.⁵³

The Medical Society of London

The year 1773 saw the start of the Medical Society of London which celebrated its bicentenary last year. The founder was that fascinating physician Dr. John Coakley Lettsom.⁵⁵ The first meeting was on 19th May. On 13th July, Robert Sherson (I) was amongst 28 new members elected.⁵⁶ This election brought the membership to just over 50, and it included names later famous in the history of medicine. Amongst those who joined with Robert (I) was William Blizard, later Sir William Blizard, founder of the London Hospital Medical School.^{45 55 56} On 10th August the Society passed a resolution limiting its membership to 30 Physicians, 30 Surgeons, and 30 Apothecaries resident in the City of London or within 7 miles.⁵⁶ Thus Robert Sherson (I) was amongst the first apothecaries elected to the Society. Despite this honour he appears to have attended meetings very rarely, if at all.⁵⁶ However, various other members acted as his sponsors in other situations on later occasions, and in 1777 he presented a paper to the Society on "The Acute Rheumatism" which was read in his absence on 18th November and 2nd December.⁵⁶ The full title of the paper was "Case of Rheumatism Cured by Electricity", and it was printed in the first volume of the *Memoirs of the Medical Society of London* published in 1787.⁵⁷ The paper gives a description of what would now possibly be diagnosed as "frozen shoulder", a condition which spontaneously recovers over 6 to 12 months. Even if Robert Sherson (I) was wrong in his belief that electricity given "in gentle shocks" had effected the cure, his account is lucid and sympathetic. He was concerned with the whole person and speaks of "the tranquillity of mind" of the patient, a 50-year-old "mother of many children", after the first week of therapy. It is interesting to see that as an apothecary he did not confine himself to the administration of drugs.

Third Marriage

Meanwhile there had been considerable changes in Robert Sherson's (I) domestic circumstances. The Rev. Richard Smith who had conducted his marriage with Elizabeth Kirkpatrick died in February 1772.^{34 59} In October, Robert's (I) sister Dorothy married

Richard Bandy, the captain of the "Bute" an East Indiaman.^{2 58 61 62} Following this, Robert (I) moved to Mincing Lane and on 17th August 1773 he married the Rev. Smith's 28-year-old widow Elizabeth at St. Marylebone. The marriage was witnessed by Elizabeth's father-in-law, Richard Smith.⁶⁰

Robert's (I) new wife was the daughter and sole heir of Samuel Mapp, formerly a Member of the House of Assembly of Barbados. This was to prove a very brief marriage.² Elizabeth was buried at Islington two days before Christmas the same year.³⁴ Under the terms of her first marriage settlement she had power to make a will.² In it she left her estates in Barbados to her two children by the Rev. Smith. If her children failed to reach the age of 21 then her husband Robert Sherson (I) was to inherit.⁶³ The two children, Richard Smith and Mary Gibbs Smith, were taken into the care of their grandparents, Richard and Lucy Smith at Islington.⁶⁴ They both subsequently married.⁴⁴

Fourth Marriage

The same year that Robert (I) was married and widowed for the third time a certain John Thoys became a Governor of the Marine Society.⁵² John Thoys was a rich copper-smith living in Whitechapel with a house at Merton in Surrey, and an estate at Sulhamstead in Berkshire. He suffered poor health and died in the spring of 1775 at the comparatively young age of 32.^{65 66} Robert Sherson (I) may have become acquainted with John Thoys because he attended him in his illness, or because of their joint interest in the Marine Society. In any event it was John Thoys' widow Mary who became Robert's (I) fourth wife on 23rd December 1775 at the Church of St. George the Martyr, Queen Square.⁶⁷ Robert (I) was now 39. None of his first three wives had reached the age of 30. He still had only one living child, Abraham Kirkpatrick Sherson, now aged 5. Nevertheless Robert (I) chose a wife aged 37.⁶⁸ Perhaps he did not hope for further children, or perhaps he wished for a more mature companion. A cynical observer might have looked at the provisions of John Thoys' will. His widow Mary was to receive £2000 within six months of his death and £900 yearly for life free of tax and expenses. She was also to have the household goods from his house at Merton "coaches, chariots, chaises and harness", horse, clothes and jewellery. Some idea of John Thoys' wealth can be gained from his bequest of £12,000 apiece to his two younger sons. All these sums of money would need to be multiplied many times to gain an idea of modern equivalent values. The main beneficiary under his will was William the eldest son, now eight years old. His younger brothers aged six and four could be expected to play with young Abraham Sherson. The generous personal provision that Mary Thoys received in the will of her late husband probably reflected not only his riches and affection for her, but also her marriage settlement. She was daughter of Thomas Burfoot, a packer with premises at No. 3 Barge Yard, Bucklersbury, near St. Stephen Walbrook.^{2 18 27 37 69 70 71} Thomas Burfoot had been Master of the Clothworkers Company in 1767⁷² and was Treasurer of Christ's Hospital from 1770 to 1785.^{2 70 73} He was therefore presumably a man of some substance.

Despite their age, Robert (I) and Mary Sherson were blessed with the birth of another son on 22nd June 1777.² He was baptised Robert (II) on the 1st of August at their parish church of St. Dunstan's in the East⁷⁴. Robert (II) was to have a more adventurous and distinguished career than his half-brother Abraham but he must at times have been a source of anxiety to his parents.

Grant of Arms

Some time before Christmas 1779 the family moved to 18 New Bridge Street, Blackfriars, in Bridewell Precinct.^{2 75} After the struggles of the earlier years in London these must have been easier and perhaps happier times for Robert Sherson's (I) ageing mother Bridget. Before her death she petitioned for a Grant of Arms for her son. It was unusual for a mother to petition for her son and the terms of her petition are interesting.⁷⁶ She

describes herself as the widow of Alexander Sherson, Constable of Lancaster, and the eldest daughter of Roger Nowell of Read Hall. She recites her descent through her mother Rebecca Heber from Sir Robert Markham of Sedgebrook, Baronet. Then she goes on to express her desire that out of respect to her own family of Nowell "established for several centuries and enjoying considerable possessions in the County Palatine of Lancaster", the issue of her late husband should bear "in the Armorial Ensigns of Sherson, those of Nowell", especially as there "is no male issue descended from her said father now remaining". The arms assigned to Robert Sherson (I) with the arms of Nowell on a canton can be seen on his monument in Fetcham church where they impale those of his fourth wife Mary Burfoot.^{69 77}

In preparation for the grant Robert (I) deposited various deeds at the College of Arms and in December 1799 Isaac Heard, Garter King at Arms made extracts of the deeds and constructed a Manuscript pedigree of the Sherson's.² The grant was confirmed on 17th April 1780. A year later Bridget died at the advanced age of 88, and was buried on 11th May at Christchurch, Southwark, just across the bridge from Blackfriars.^{2 78}

The end of the Kirkpatricks

The preceding four years had seen the deaths of Robert's (I) first two father's-in-law and of Robert Kirkpatrick.^{2 33 39} Dr. Morris appears to have left no will. As we have seen, the bulk of Abraham Kirkpatrick's estate passed to his grandson Abraham Sherson, but he also made provision for the children of Francis Aiskell.⁴⁹ Robert Kirkpatrick shared most of his estate between his sister Anne and his nephew John Kirkpatrick Escott. He also remembered the Aiskell children and bequeathed £2500 for Abraham Sherson when he reached 21.³¹ However it was Anne, the last of this line of Kirkpatrick's who probably left the most to her great nephew Abraham Kirkpatrick Sherson when she died at Eltham on 22nd May 1787.^{32 39} Like Abraham and Robert Kirkpatrick she was buried at St. Olave Hart Street.³⁹

Anne was the last of the Kirkpatricks not only in name but also because much of the accumulated wealth of two generations of Kirkpatricks had descended to her. For instance a bachelor uncle William Kirkpatrick had been a merchant at Cork, and had left property in Ireland to Anne's elder brother John, another bachelor and a merchant at Malaga, who had in turn made Anne his "universal and residuary" legatee. The Irish property Anne bequeathed to her great nephew Francis Aiskell (II) son of the ex-consul Francis Aiskell (I).^{32 39} Francis Aiskell (II) was to become a Major-General in the Service of the East India Company.^{39 79} Abraham Kirkpatrick Sherson was Anne Kirkpatrick's residuary legatee and also received a Manor in Somerset, property in Taunton and all the rest of her lands in Great Britain. He was to inherit at 21. During his minority and if and when he was at College at Oxford or Cambridge there was to be £50 annually for his maintenance and education.

Anne Kirkpatrick's will is a massive document in which she leaves personal legacies to over 60 individuals—many of them distant relatives. Amongst those mentioned is her friend Dr. Richard Brocklesby who also occurs in the will of Robert Kirkpatrick, her brother. Dr. Brocklesby was a celebrated physician who is remembered amongst other things for suggesting music as a therapy for mentally disturbed patients.⁴⁵ Robert Sherson (I), his wife, his sisters Bridget Sherson and Dorothy Bendy and his son Robert (II) all received gifts. Three of the executors and trustees were Isaac Heard, the Garter King at Arms, Robert Sherson (I) and Thomas Benison, now of Greenwich.^{32 80} Isaac later Sir Isaac Heard, formed a valuable collection of MSS. pedigrees during his long tenure of the Office of Garter. These included those of the Shersons and Kirkpatricks. Robert Sherson (I) left him a mourning ring in his will and one must conclude that they remained friends for the next 25 years.⁸¹

First connections with Fetcham

When Abraham Sherson died in 1825, the *Gentleman's Magazine* recorded that he had formerly been the Rector of Fetcham to which he had been presented by Dr. Sherson

according to the will of Mrs. Anne Kirkpatrick, by whom the advowson had been purchased in 1788.⁸² This fiction is perpetuated and extended in Brayley's *History of Surrey*, where it says that Sir George Warren sold the advowson to Mrs. Anne Kirkpatrick in 1788; under whose will it passed to the Rev. Abraham Kirkpatrick Sherson.¹ The Victoria County History of Surrey repeats Brayley almost word for word.⁸³ Anne Kirkpatrick who was of course Miss Anne Kirkpatrick makes no mention of Fetcham in her will and she died before 1788. Mr. Lewarne has drawn attention to the error in the Victoria County History in his comments on the 1791 Tithing Map of Fetcham.⁸⁴ In fact Anne Kirkpatrick's trustees used £3650 from the residue of her will to buy the advowson and Glebe lands in Fetcham from Sir George Warren in 1791.^{87 88 89}

About two years previously Robert Sherson (I) had purchased the Parsonage House and the house later called Fetcham Grove, but which he called Bridge House.^{81 85 86} A traveller leaving Leatherhead for Fetcham would have come to Bridge House on the left of the road after crossing the bridge over the Mole. The changing name of Bridge House



Part of the Sherson residence at Fetcham (now known as West Wing, Fetcham Grove)

presents a problem which will be returned to later. Part of the house still stands and is called "West Wing". Robert Sherson's (I) purchase of the Parsonage House was probably in his capacity as trustee under Anne Kirkpatrick's will, but Bridge House he brought for himself. His profession as an apothecary may have been flourishing but Robert (I) had also inherited from his mother and brother Thomas (III), and there was his wife's substantial annuity.

The Metal Patent

However, before his mother's death, Robert had been involved in another venture. In June 1780 Nicholas Donnithorne, Merchant, Robert Sherson, Gentleman and Edward Smith, Smelter and Dealer in Metals were granted a patent to use their invention of "A new White Composition called Marine Metal which will be found particularly useful for sheathing ships and other valuable purposes."⁹⁰ Whether this was a successful enterprise is unknown but nine years later Robert (I) obtained authorisation to charge the wings of his crest with the sign of Jupiter in commemoration of the patent.^{76 91} Nicholas Donnithorne was a descendant of a family with its seat at St. Agnes in Cornwall in the heart of one of the main tin-mining areas. He subsequently became warden of the Stannaries to the Prince of Wales and in 1784 inherited the family estate at St. Agnes.²⁶⁶ But in 1780 he was living in the parish of St. Mary Aldermanbury.²¹⁸ Despite his Cornish responsibilities Nicholas Donnithorne kept a house at Croydon² and retained his friendship with Robert Sherson (I). In 1794 his daughter Maria married Robert's (I) son, Abraham Kirkpatrick Sherson.²

Professional Reputation

When Anne Kirkpatrick died in 1787 Robert Sherson (I) was 51 and we begin to see more evidence that he had an established reputation as an apothecary. About this time he probably took on an assistant in his practice called Bill, because in February 1789 the Marine Society appointed Edward Bill joint apothecary with Mr. Sherson,⁵² and during the 1790's Mr. Bill is recorded as Robert's partner at 18 Bridge Street, Blackfriars.⁹²

In December 1789 Robert (I) was appointed one of the Managers of the Society of Apothecaries' Navy Stock.¹⁶ The Monopoly of the supply of drugs to the Navy was a long-established and lucrative source of revenue for the apothecaries who were allowed to buy shares in the Navy Stock.⁹³ Robert Sherson (I) held this position for nearly 20 years.¹⁶

The following March the University of St. Andrews conferred on Robert (I) the degree of Doctor of Medicine.²⁹⁴ This was apparently "very definitely not an honorary degree but a recognition of a well-qualified and experienced physician."⁹⁴ The application for the degree included testimonials recording that Robert Sherson (I) had practised for 30 years in London and had had a liberal education and proper professional training. These testimonials were signed by Hugh Smith M.D., and David Orme M.D. Dr. Smith had been one of the first members of the Medical Society of London and a Physician to the Middlesex Hospital. He had lived in Bridge Street, Blackfriars, since 1770.^{45 55 96 95} Dr. Orme was an obstetrician at the City of London Lying-In Hospital.⁵⁵

Biography of Dean Nowell

In August of this year 1790 Anne Ellison, Robert's (I) niece, married Edward Robson, the curate of St. Mary's Whitechapel and Robert (I) was there to witness the ceremony.⁹⁶ Edward Robson in later years corresponded with Dr. Sherson on behalf of Ralph Churton, author, of a *Life of the Elizabethan, Dean Alexander Nowell*.⁷ The Nowell's Read estate was sold after the death of Bridget Sherson's great-nephew Alexander Nowell in 1772.¹⁰ Somehow Robert Sherson (I) acquired a picture of Dean Nowell which had been at Read, and he lent this so that an engraving could be made for the frontispiece of Churton's book.⁶ The biography contains a pedigree of the Nowells and not long before its publication in 1809 Rev. Robson got in touch with Dr. Sherson (I) through his son Abraham in order to clarify genealogical details about the Shersons and their connection with the Nowells.⁷

As well as his curacy at Whitechapel, the Rev. Robson was vicar of Orston in Nottinghamshire.^{6 97} In his letter of January 1809 to the Rev. Abraham Sherson at Fetcham he tells how he has had to relinquish the curacy at Whitechapel but has been fortunate in being elected Chaplain to Trinity House, although this means he suffers "by the change in point of income". It appears that he had been able to be non-resident at Orston because

of his Curacy and it is amusing to see he was able to extend his license for non-residence after he lost the curacy on account of the "unfitness of the parsonage house for his residence therein".⁹⁷

The Education of his Sons

Meanwhile Dr. Sherson (I) was concerned with the education of his sons. Abraham Kirkpatrick matriculated at Merton College Oxford in May 1789.⁹⁸ One of his contemporaries at Oxford was John Thoys his step-brother who was at Balliol. John never married but became a Lt.-Colonel in the Royal Horse Guards and had the distinction of being taken prisoner at Waterloo, when he was interviewed by Napoleon.^{98 99} Another of Abraham's contemporaries at Oxford was Isaac Donnithorne son of his father's friend Nicholas Donnithorne and brother of his future wife Maria.⁹⁸

In 1790 Dr. Sherson (I) entered his other son Robert (II) on the Long Rolls at Winchester College.¹⁰⁰ Two years later he had the pleasure of seeing him elected a scholar.¹⁰¹ Lionel, the son of Charlotte Smith the novelist, was a little younger than Robert (II) but he had been a scholar since 1788.¹⁰¹ The young Robert (II) did not long enjoy the education offered by the College. At Easter the next year the "Great Rebellion" of 1793 broke out at Winchester.¹⁰² Misunderstandings, and mistakes by staff led to a situation in which the boys barricaded themselves in the Middle Gate Tower with guns, swords and provisions.¹⁰³ A mob of two thousand gathered to witness the confrontation. When an amnesty was achieved the Warden violated it by writing to parents urging them to compel their sons to apologise or resign their scholarship. Dr. Budd a London physician approached his son who resigned, at which all the young Budd's school fellows followed suit. Contrary to the boys' expectations the Warden accepted the resignations and 35 were compelled to leave.¹⁰² Amongst them were Lionel Smith and Robert Sherson (II). Perhaps partly as a consequence of their expulsion a number of the scholars chose careers outside the church. There were certainly able men among them. Lionel Smith became a General and a Baronet. John Colborne achieved distinction in the Peninsula war and was created a Peer. Thomas Silver became a Professor at Oxford and Richard Mant a distinguished Bishop. Leach in his History of Winchester College wrote that "The expulsion of the Juniors, G. F. Lockley and Robert Sherson, admitted only the year before, looks like a grievous wrong."^{45 101 102 104}

Robert's (II) expulsion must have been a blow to Dr. Sherson (I) who may have hoped that he would enter the church. Steps were now taken for Robert (II) to join the service of the East India Company, and in January the following year he was appointed a writer on the Fort St. George Establishment at Madras. Joseph Allen, a writing master at Christ's Hospital certified that Robert (II) was conversant with Book Keeping and Merchants' Accounts. Perhaps the influence of his grandfather Thomas Burfoot, late Treasurer of Christ's Hospital, had secured Joseph Allen as a private tutor for Robert (II).⁷⁴

Abraham Sherson, Rector of Fetcham

A few weeks after Robert's appointment his half-brother Abraham received his B.A. at Oxford.¹⁰⁵ We have seen that Dr. Sherson had been active in acquiring property for himself at Fetcham, and also in preparing for Abraham to become Rector there. It seems probable that Robert (I) did not live much at Fetcham until 1796 because he let Bridge House to a Mr. James the previous two years.⁸⁵ Thereafter he probably used the house increasingly as a country residence until he moved out of London entirely in 1809.^{86 106 107 108} At first the Parsonage House was let to "— Crooke esq"⁸⁵ but on 27th June 1794 Abraham Sherson was instituted as Rector of Fetcham on the presentation of his father.¹⁰⁹ On 29th September a settlement was signed in preparation for the marriage of Abraham with Nicholas Donnithorne's eldest daughter Maria.¹¹⁰ One of the trustees of the settlement was John Kirkpatrick Escott, first cousin of Abraham's mother, now retired from Malaga and living in a house at Ongar Hill near Chertsey.¹ Another trustee was William Curtis



REV. ABRAHAM SHERSON, Rector of Fetcham
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who was to be Lord Mayor of London the next year.^{45 111} The settlement was executed on 3rd October and the following day the young couple were married at St. Botolph Aldgate.²

Soon after Sir Isaac Heard, Dr. Sherson and Henry Evans as the surviving trustees under Anne Kirkpatrick's will reconveyed the advowson to the Rev. Abraham Kirkpatrick Sherson.⁸⁹

The Society of Antiquaries and The Linnaean Society

In the course of the next ten or twelve years Dr. Sherson received a number of honours in the guise of elections to certain offices and societies. It is remarkable that he appears to have taken little active part in any of the societies; neither does he appear to have been active in any of the offices. One must conclude that he had by this time achieved such a reputation and was so liked and respected that the honours were conferred for these reasons alone. When writing his signature, which occurs on several documents at the time, Dr. Sherson wrote "Robert Sherson" in full with a large, bold cursive hand.^{96 112} One could speculate that it betrays a strong extroverted personality.

The first of the honours was Dr. Sherson's election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries on 19th March 1795.¹¹³ The testimonial stated that he was a "diligent inquirer into the History and Antiquities of the Nation". The only evidence of this diligent inquiry is his association with Isaac Heard and his attempts to elucidate his own family's genealogy. In fact in November of this year he attested his official pedigree at the College of Arms.¹¹⁴ There were five subscribers to his testimonial at the Society of Antiquaries. They included Sir John Call Bt., a military engineer, retired from India who was becoming blind,⁴⁵ John Henniker-Major, an antiquary, later Lord Henniker,⁴⁵ and Robert Willan and William Blizard, both Members of the Medical Society of London.^{56 57} William Blizard we have

already mentioned. Although he may not have encountered Dr. Sherson at the Medical Society Meetings he had probably worked with him in his capacity as Surgeon to the Marine Society.^{54 115} Robert Willan was a celebrated dermatologist.⁴⁵ It was not till a year after his election that Robert Sherson (I) attended the Society so that he could be formally admitted as Fellow.¹¹³

The address lists of the Society of Antiquaries state that in 1805 Dr. Sherson became a Fellow of the Royal Society but there is no confirmation of this.¹¹⁶ He was however elected to the Linnaean Society on 16th April 1799.¹¹² This Society had been founded in 1788. In this case the testimonial said that he was "a Gentleman of considerable knowledge in Mineralogy and other branches of Natural History, perhaps a reference to the metal patent. His proposers were Frederick Kanmacher who was Beadle of the Society of Apothecaries for 45 years,¹¹⁷ and John Fairbairn, who was curator of the Apothecaries Garden at Chelsea and a noted botanist.¹¹⁸

Master of The Society of Apothecaries

Meanwhile the Society of Apothecaries elected Dr. Sherson to the Court of Assistants in June 1797.¹⁶ This was followed in 1804, 1805 and 1806 by his successive election to the offices of Renter Warden, Upper Warden and finally Master of the Company.^{16 117} Despite his continued elevation Robert Sherson (I) was frequently absent from the Court of Assistants. After his election to the office of Renter Warden in August 1804 he failed to appear the following month to be sworn in to the office at a Court held at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand. The Court accepted his apology contained in a letter which said that he was prevented from attending "on account of his presence being required on some particular business elsewhere." On his election to Upper Warden the following year he was again not there on the Confirmation Day. Although he managed to be present to be sworn in as Master he attended only one Court during his year of office.^{16 117} He was by then 70. In 1800 he had moved from Blackfriars, to 53 Great Ormond Street.⁸⁶ His new house was where the Homoeopathic Hospital now stands,¹¹⁹ and would have been close to open country.¹²⁰ Nevertheless he was probably spending much of his time at Fetcham.

NOTES

1. History of Surrey, E. W. Brayley, 1850.
2. College of Arms MS. J.P. 7.51-62.
3. Cockerham Parish Register. Lancs. P.R.S.
4. Will: Richard Sherson of Ellet: proved 27th Oct. 1680. Lancs. Record Office.
5. Admissions Register Gray's Inn 1521-1887.
6. Life of Alexander Nowell. Ralph Churton 1809.
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A SURVEY OF CHURCHYARD MONUMENTS IN THE LEATHERHEAD AREA

By W. J. BLAIR

PART II

GREAT BOOKHAM

THE churchyard contains many ordinary, rather featureless stones of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but few monuments of particular merit. The older graves are mainly scattered around the southern and eastern sides of the church. Several stones dating from the period c. 1795–1825, all in characteristic pink sandstone and with exceptionally fine lettering, are probably all products of the same hand. Some of the mid-nineteenth century headstones have arched and cusped tops containing simple bas-relief fan-motifs, and near the tower are two mid nineteenth century coped vault-covers of Portland.

Monuments up to 1750

1. (Against E. wall of Chancel.) Plain slab of grey stone. *Length* 74 ins.; *breadth* 36 ins. *Inscription*: Here lyes y^e Body of / M^r. JOHN OCKSHETT / *Gent*: who died July / y^e. 19th. 1711¹ in the 83.^d / Year of his Age.

2. (Against E. wall of Chancel.) Slab of grey stone with simple edge moulding. *Length* 65½ ins.; *breadth* 33 ins. *Inscription*: Here ly. Body of / NICHOLAS RD / who (The rest is illegible, but the burial of Nicholas Shepperd on 5 March 1714 is the only entry in the register which can refer to this stone.)

3. (Twenty-two paces E. of E. wall of S. Chapel.) Portland headstone, the top decorated with two simple incised scrolls which also form its outline. *Height* 48 ins.; *breadth* 24 ins.; *thickness* 2½ ins. *Inscription*: Here Lyeth / Interred y^e Body / of M^r PETER FAIRBONE / who Died Aug.st y^e 8.th 1726 / in y^e 27.th year of His Age.

4. (Six paces SE. of the S. porch.) Chest-tomb, consisting of a grey slab with chamfered under-edges surmounting a low chest of plain brick. *Length* 78½ ins.; *breadth* 38¼ ins.; *height* 16 ins. *Inscription*: Here lyeth the Body of / Thomas Wood the elder / Late of Bagden in this Parish / Yeoman who departed this / life the 16 day of September / 1736 Aged 75 Years.

5. (Three paces NE. of No. 3.) Portland headstone, the scrolled top containing a bas-relief composition of a bat-winged hourglass (see Plate Ia). *Height* 30 ins.; *breadth* 23 ins.; *thickness* 3 ins. *Inscription*: Here lyeth the Body / of Thomas Lawson / who departed this / life the 31.st day of / May 1737 Aged / 60 Years.

6. (Immediately under W. window of N. aisle.) Portland headstone, the scrolled top containing a bas-relief composition of an obelisk (?) on a square plinth, flanked on either side by a scroll and against a background of flowers. Rather badly weathered (see Plate Ib). *Height* 38 ins.; *breadth* 23¼ ins.; *thickness* 3 ins. *Inscription*: Here lyeth the Body / of SUSAN Wife of M^r / ABRAHAM LAYBAR / who departed this life / November y^e 20(?)th 1745 / Aged 52 Years. / Here also lyeth the Body / of the abovesaid M^r ABRAHAM / LAYBAR who departed this / life May y^e 26 1747 Aged 52 / Years.

Monuments of special interest later than 1750

7. (Ten paces SW. of S. porch.) Chest-tomb, consisting of a grey slab with chamfered under-edges surmounting a low chest of plain brick. *Inscription* illegible; probably early eighteenth century.

8. (Twelve paces E. of E. wall of Chancel.) Portland head- and footstone. The headstone has a scrolled top containing a bas-relief composition of a small skull, flanked

by two bones and surmounted by a winged cherub between a pair of trumpets, the whole being flanked on either side by a foliate scroll (see Plate Ic). The footstone, with scrolled top, merely bears initials and date. To Mr. John Smith, surgeon, late of Mount Street, London, died 4 February 1767 aged 31.

9. (Eight paces SW. of S. porch.) Portland head- and footstone, originally linked by a brick body-stone but now back-to-back. The top of the headstone, the outline of which consists of two semicircular lobes, contains a bas-relief composition of two winged cherubs flanked on either side by a flattened scroll. The footstone has an arched top flattening out towards the edges, and merely bears initials and date. To Jane wife of Joseph Water of St. George's Hanover Square, London, died 12(?) August 1763 aged 60(?). The stone is much weathered.

10. (Immediately N. of No. 8.) Portland head- and footstone. The scrolled top of the headstone contains a bas-relief composition of two winged cherubs against a background of clouds, flanked on either side by a foliate scroll. Obviously by the same hand as Little Bookham No. 2 (see Plate Id). The footstone, with scrolled top, merely bears initials and dates. To Mrs. Elizabeth, wife of Mr. Thomas Street of London, died 13 May 1768 aged 47, and Ann their daughter, died 7 June 1760 aged 11 years and 6 months.

11. (Immediately N. of No. 10.) Portland head- and footstone. The scrolled top of the headstone contains a bas-relief composition of two winged cherubs flanked by rays of light shining down from clouds, the whole being flanked on either side by a foliate scroll (see Plate IIa). The footstone, with scrolled top, merely bears initials and dates. To Mr. William² Street of Hyde Park Corner, London, died 28 January 1770 aged 80; Mrs. Elizabeth his wife, died 22 January 1774 aged 84; Mrs. Ann Smith, sister of Mrs. Street, died 10 March 1777 aged 64.

12. (Five paces E. of E. wall of Chancel.) Handsome chest-tomb, consisting of a grey slab with roll-moulded edges surmounting a Portland chest with plain panelled sides and a squat pilaster of baluster form at each corner. To Mrs. Elizabeth, wife of George Otway, gent., died 13 May 1771 aged 67; Mr. Jacob their son, died 21 November 1776 aged 40; the said Mr. George, died 17 January 1777, aged 70. On each of the two side-panels are four lines of verse. The inscription is now fragmentary, but is abstracted here from the transcript given by Manning and Bray (II—699), who also state that the tomb was "within iron rails".

13. (In angle between N. wall of Chancel and E. wall of Vestry.) Handsome chest-tomb, very similar to No. 12. To Mr. Percy Shelley³ of this place gent., youngest son of John Shelley Esq. of Fen Place, Sussex, died 26 December 1771 aged 64, and Mrs. Mary his wife, died 7 July 1779 aged 66. The inscription is now fragmentary, but is abstracted here from the incomplete transcript given by Manning and Bray, the year of death being provided by the register.

14. (Seventeen paces S. of Tower.) Chest-tomb, consisting of a grey slab with roll-moulded edges surmounting a plain brick chest with recessed side-panels. To Thomas Wood, yeoman, "of Yewtrees of this Parish", died 9 April 1783, aged 77(?), and Ann his wife, died .. March aged 6. . .

15. (Immediately N. of No. 11.) Chest-tomb, consisting of a Portland slab with moulded edges surmounting a plain brick chest with recessed side-panels. The inscription appears to have been re-cut. To Edward Maurice, of Park St., Grosvenor Square, London, late Captain in his Majesty's horse guards, died 8 July 1784 aged 70.

"FOR CHRIST HIS SAKE
IN WHOSE NAME I CRAVE
MOVE NOT THIS STONE
NOR YET DISTURB THIS GRAVE."

PLATE I



a. Great Bookham No. 5



b. Great Bookham No. 6



c. Great Bookham No. 8



d. Great Bookham No. 10

PLATE II



a. Great Bookham No. 11



b. Great Bookham No. 20



c. Little Bookham No. 2



d. Little Bookham No. 4
(now in Winchester)

16. (Immediately N. of No. 12.) Portland chest-tomb, with simple moulded base, plain sides, corner pilasters carved in imitation of rough ashlar, and top slab with edge moulding. To William⁴ Phillips, late of Lyndhurst, gent., died 2 August 1787 aged 60 (with four lines of text).

17. (Ten paces S. of S. porch.) Portland headstone, the serpentine top containing a bas-relief composition of an urn with a narrow swag on either side. To Mrs. Mary, wife of Mr. John Ford of the parish of Reigate, died 16 September 1787 aged 40 (with two lines of verse).

18. (Five paces N. of No. 14.) Chest-tomb, similar to No. 14 except that the top slab is of Portland. To Mr. Thomas Wood, died .. July (c. 1790?). Overgrown with ivy.

19. (Seven paces N. of No. 16.) Plain Portland coped-stone, surrounded by handsome iron railings. The rails are spear-headed and of rectangular section, with a thicker rail (round in section, of baluster form and topped by a large urn finial) at each corner and in the middle of each long side. To Thomas Seawell esq. of this parish, died 25 May 1832 aged 71; Mary his wife, died 5 November 1800 aged 36; Mary Jane Seawell their daughter, died 7 February 1825 aged 33. Overgrown with ivy.

20. (Eight paces N. of N. wall of Chancel.) Large and imposing chest-tomb of Portland, the sides decorated with Perpendicular blind arcading surmounted by a frieze of winged cherubs' heads in high relief. The top slab is slightly coped, with moulded edges, and the tomb stands on a high moulded base (see Plate IIb). To Joseph Bonsor Esq., late of Polesden in this parish, died 13 November 1835 aged 67, and Jane his wife, died 17 September 1843 aged 78.

21. (The first stone on the left-hand side of the path approaching the Church from the western entrance gate.) Headstone of pink sandstone, the arched top cusped on either side but otherwise undecorated. To Mary Ann Morgan, "an Orphan from her earliest years / who served with much fidelity an / earthly Master in pious obedience / to the Sacred precepts she had / received from her Master in Heaven / Born July 15 1821 Died July 13 1843 / *When my Father and my Mother forsake me / the Lord taketh me up.*"

22. (Leaning against headstone near SE. entrance gate.) Cast-iron grave-marker in the form of a cross, with the lettering cast in relief. To Joanna Harding, died 13 January 1878 aged 16.

23. (Seven paces S. of S. porch.) Large neo-Gothic memorial cross in shelly white limestone, with the figure of a bishop on the head and an achievement of arms on the shaft. To Guy Cuthbert Dawnay, killed by a buffalo while on a hunting expedition in Masailand, E. Africa, 28 February 1889.

24. (Formerly near S. boundary wall.) Wooden leaping-board of usual form, consisting of a board measuring 63 ins. by 22½ ins. with thick moulded edges, supported at each end by a post of square section 41 ins. high topped by a pointed finial. The inscriptions are painted in white letters against a black background. (N. face) To Catherine Lynch, died 28 October 1892 aged 81. (S. face) To Richard Lynch, died 15 September 1903 aged 87. The board is palimpsest, the lettering on the N. face being painted over an earlier inscription ("In Loving Memory of" can still be read, but the rest is now missing.) This very late example is interesting in that it illustrates the long continuity of the traditional form. The monument is now fragmentary; one post remains *in situ* and the upper half of the board is stored in the churchyard shed, but the rest appears to have been lost. The inscription is abstracted here from a transcript made some years ago by Mr. M. Snellgrove of Bookham.

LITTLE BOOKHAM

The small churchyard is still attractive, but contains few stones earlier than the present century, and only four of anything other than genealogical interest. Three of these are

immediately E. of the Chancel, but No. 3 is situated in the extreme NE. corner of the churchyard—a most unusual position for a monument of this date.

Monuments up to 1750

1. (By SE. corner of Chancel.) Chest-tomb, consisting of a grey slab with roll-moulded edges surmounting a low chest of plain brick. *Length* 77½ ins.; *breadth* 37¼ ins.; *height* 21 ins. *Inscription:* Here Lyeth the Body / of M:^r EDWARD BUSSEY / of this Parish. Gent: who dyed / Sep:^r the 18:th 1738. Aged 81 Years. / In Memory of whom GRACE / His Widow. and sole Executrix / of His Will caused this Tombe / to be Erected. / Here also lyeth the said / M^{rs} GRACE BUSSEY / Who died June 17 1751 / Aged 62.

Monuments of special interest later than 1750

2. (By NE. corner of Chancel.) Portland head- and footstone, both with wavy tops. The top of the headstone contains a bas-relief composition of two winged cherubs against a background of clouds and incised cross-hatching, flanked on either side by a foliate scroll. Obviously by the same hand as Great Bookham No. 10 (see Plate IIc). The footstone merely bears initials and date. To Ann wife of Abraham Adams of this parish, died 18 May 1767 aged 45.

3. (In NE. corner of churchyard.) Chest-tomb, consisting of a Portland slab with roll-moulded edges surmounting a plain brick chest. To Mrs. Elizabeth, first wife of John Worsfold of this parish gent., died 16 May 1780 aged 42(?); Ann his second wife, died 12 February 1786 aged 36; the said John Worsfold gent., “Late of Horton Place / And many Years Resident of this Parish”, died 8 June 1790 aged 61. “From a Dutiful Regard to the Memory / of her Parents this Tomb was Erected / by their Daughter ELIZABETH COE”.

4. (Between Nos. 1 and 2.) Large, much-restored chest-tomb of Portland, in its present state undecorated. The inscription on the S. side reads: IN THIS VAULT ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF / MAJOR GENERAL COOTE MANNINGHAM, EQUERRY TO THE KING, / AND COLONEL OF THE 95th. OR RIFLE REGIMENT OF FOOT; / THIS CORPS HE ORIGINALLY RAISED AND FORMED, AND BY HIS / UNWEARIED ZEAL AND EXERTION, AS WELL AS EXCELLENT DISCIPLINE / AND GOOD EXAMPLE, BROUGHT TO THE HIGHEST STATE OF / MILITARY REPUTATION AND DISTINCTION. / HE DIED AT MAIDSTONE, ON THE 26th. DAY OF AUGUST 1809, / IN THE 44th. YEAR OF HIS AGE, / AN EARLY VICTIM TO THE FATIGUES OF THE CAMPAIGN IN SPAIN / OPERATING ON A CONSTITUTION ALREADY ENFEEBLED / BY LONG SERVICE IN THE WEST INDIES / AND HONOURABLE WOUNDS RECEIVED IN THAT CLIMATE.” On the west end is an inscription to Charles his eldest son, died at Little Bookham 15 August 1810 aged 6, and on the east end an inscription to Anna Maria, widow of Major-General Cooté Manningham and daughter and co-heiress of the late Revd. George Pollen, rector of this parish, born 13 January 1783, died 4 June 1822. The north side bears an inscription recording the restoration of the tomb in 1933.

The remarkable superstructure of the tomb was removed in 1933 and taken to the Royal Green Jackets' Regimental Museum, Winchester, where it still remains (Plate IId). It is made of cream-coloured terracotta, and comprises a large urn of flattened globular shape, encircled by a snake and standing on a thick moulded plinth measuring 72 ins. by 42 ins. On one side of this plinth is a shield bearing the arms of Manningham (*[sable] a fesse ermine in chief three griffins' heads erased [or], crest out of a ducal coronet [or], a talbot's head [gules]*) impaling those of Pollen (*[azure] on a bend cotised [or], between six lozenges [argent] each charged with an escallop [sable] six escallops [vert]*). The shield is surrounded by a trophy of equipment containing the following items: Baker rifle,⁵ sword-bayonet, bugle-horn, officer's sword, sash, ball-bag, mess-tin, ammunition-pouch, mallet, powder-horn and head-dress.

My thanks are due to the Curator of the Royal Green Jackets' Museum for permission to illustrate the Coote Manningham monument, to Mr. M. Snellgrove for information relating to No. 24, and to the Rev. J. G. Edwards for kindly allowing me to inspect the parish registers and the portion of No. 24 stored in the churchyard shed.

NOTES

1. The year 1711 is quite clear, but the date of burial is given in the register as 22 July 1710.
2. "William" is quite clear, but the register says "Elizabeth Street".
3. In view of the name, and the nearness of Fen Place to Warnham, Sussex, where Percy Bysshe Shelley was born, some connection with the poet seems probable; I have not, however, investigated this.
4. "William" is quite clear, but the register says "Thomas Phillips".
5. The Rifle Corps, founded by Coote Manningham in 1800, were the first soldiers to use the Baker rifle. See H. L. Blackmore, *British Military Firearms* (London, 1966), pp. 112-3, 115, 130.

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

	<i>Previous Year 1971 £</i>	<i>Year under report 1972 £</i>
INCOME		
Subscriptions	146.38	219.50
Donations from members	21.60	45.80
Grant from Surrey County Council	25.00	25.00
Grant from Leatherhead U.D.C.	50.00	50.00
Lecture Fees donated by members	5.60	8.50
Sale of <i>Proceedings</i> , Index, and Surplus books	21.74	57.60
Profit on sale of Maps	—	6.75
Profit on visits and functions	39.46	—
Interest on Trustee Savings Bank	4.45	5.22
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£314.23	£418.37
	<hr/>	<hr/>
EXPENDITURE		
Printing of <i>Proceedings</i>	168.00	251.00
Printing of Index to Volume 2	—	134.00
Expenses of Administration of Society	48.83	63.12
Subscriptions:		
Surrey Record Society	—	4.00
British Council for Archaeology	—	4.50
Field Studies Council	1.00	1.00
Loss on visits and functions	—	8.15
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£217.83	£465.77
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Excess of Income over Expenditure	96.40	Nil
Excess of Expenditure over Income	—	47.40
Bank Balance at beginning of year	361.00	457.40
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Bank balance at end of year	£457.40	£410.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Made up as follows:		
Bank Account	345.14	292.52
Trustee Savings Bank	112.26	117.48
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£457.40	£410.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>

I certify that the above Statement is in accordance with the Books and Records produced to me and is, in my opinion, correct.

A. H. KIRKBY,
Honorary Auditor.

F. A. STOKES,
Honorary Treasurer.

12th February 1973.



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