LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

PROCEEDINGS VOL 6 NO 10

2006

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SECRETARIAL NOTES

The following Lectures, Visits and Walks were arranged during 2006:

January 20th	Lecture: 'The River Mole' by Charles Abdy
February 17th	Lecture: 'Management of Norbury Park Estate' by Graham Manning
March 17th	Lecture: 'Surrey Vineyards, Ancient and Modern' by Prof. Richard Selley
April 21st	The Society's 59th Annual General Meeting followed by 'Time and Tithe' by John Morris
May 19th	Lecture: 'Selbourne and Gilbert White' by Gwen Hoad
May 21st	Guided walk around Norbury Park Estate, guided by Graham Manning
June 21st	Visit to Selbourne (with the Friends of the Museum) arranged by Linda Heath
July 15th	Visit to Slyfield House arranged by John Wettern
September 15th	Lecture: 'Roman Surrey' by Dr David Bird
October 20th	The Dallaway Lecture: 'The Society's First 80 Years' by Stephen Fortescue (followed by a reception to mark the Society's Diamond Jubilee)
November 18th	Lecture: 'Surbiton through the Centuries' by David Bowell
December 15th	Christmas Miscellany — talks given by members of the Society

Members of the Society also led walks around Leatherhead and Ashtead for the public during the year and over Heritage Weekend

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Number 9 of Volume 6 of the *Proceedings* was issued in February 2006.

FIFTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Letherhead Institute, 21st April 2006

The Report of the Executive Committee and the Accounts for the year 2005 were adopted. The Committee elected to serve until the next AGM and the Officers of the Society are as shown below.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 2006–2007

President:	LINDA HEATH
Past Presidents:	STEPHEN FORTESCUE
	DEREK RENN
Vice-President:	GORDON KNOWLES
Chairman:	DAVID HARTLEY
Secretary:	VIVIEN HOLLINGSWORTH
Membership Secretary:	JENNY MORRIS
Treasurer:	NORMA ROBERTSON
Editor:	BARRY COX
Museum Curator:	GRAHAM EVANS
Treasurer, Museum Trust Fund:	JOHN MORRIS
Sales Secretary:	GOFF POWELL
Archaeology Secretary:	DAVID HARTLEY
Programme Secretary:	FRED MEYNEN
Librarian:	PETER WELLS
Records Secretary:	BRIAN GODFREY
Committee Member:	LINDSAY TRIM

for errata corrections herein see Vol 7 No 1 p 1.

Leatherhead and District Local History Society

PROCEEDINGS

Vol. 6, No. 10

2006

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ADDRESS GIVEN BY MISS AUDREY MONK

President of the Surrey Archaeological Society
at a dinner at the Bookham Grange Hotel on January 27th 2006
to mark the Diamond Anniversary of the Society

I was delighted to be invited to join you in celebrating your sixtieth anniversary. It is a great achievement, and a great pleasure to be with you. In truth it is an honour – and I thank you.

While wondering what I might say to you, I was reminded of a story – apocryphal or not – about a lecture given by John Betjemen. The agreed title was *The Joys of Reading*, which seemed fairly straightforward. He duly turned up on the appointed day (always a relief to the organisers) but then treated them to a bravura performance on the architectural splendours of Reading! I fear that I shall not be able to compete!

The second reason for my pleasure at receiving your Chairman's invitation was that it gives me the opportunity to say how much we appreciate and value the links between our two Societies, which have always been strong. How could it be otherwise, when your first Chairman was AWG Lowther, one of the most distinguished members of the Surrey Archaeological Society and formerly its Secretary? These links have of course continued over the years. Stephen Fortescue, a founder member of your Society, was for many years our legal adviser, and it was he who took us through the lengthy formalities of becoming a limited company. John Harvey, another of your distinguished members, was a member of the Council of the SAS, and Derek Renn was an Honorary Vice-President. And of course your present Chairman, Peter Tarplee, is a Vice-President of the SAS and a former Secretary of the Surrey Industrial History Group – where would we all be without his forthright observations and good-humoured, mischievous comments!

I'm sure you don't need me to tell you that your Society is very well regarded, and particularly the scholarship exemplified by your *Proceedings* and *Occasional Publications*. And you deserve to be congratulated. I well know that nothing is achieved without a lot of hard work and dedication on the part of many people, as well as the authors, which often goes unremarked.

Local Societies have a long tradition. According to Lowther, it was a letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of July 1793 which sparked the enthusiasm for their formation. It read:- "With respect to History and Antiquities particularly, it is impossible that any considerable progress can be made, unless such as are devoted to the study of either, associate themselves for mutual information and investigation." It was true then, and it is probably truer today than ever before. But we must do more, and we must work *together*. If we are to survive and be relevant in the 21st century, we must also make available to the wider community the results of our research.

As an aside, and just to demonstrate that the SAS has moved a little with the times since its inception, at our inaugural meeting in 1854, support was enlisted from the nobility, clergy and gentry, and *gentlemen* desirous of forwarding the objects of the Society were asked to communicate with one of the Secretaries. It's worth noting that *women* were clearly not "desirous", and I dread to think what they would have made of a woman President. This was something not achieved until 107 years later, in 1961, by Dame Kathleen Kenyon. Your

own Society was more enlightened, and sensibly appointed Linda Heath, first as your Chairman and then as President, some years ago.

To be serious for a moment – and I make no apology for that, as the consequences of current proposals are potentially disastrous. Some of you may be aware of the proposed stringent cuts in staffing at County Hall. It seems inexplicable that Surrey County Council's support for the heritage and museums is under severe threat at this time. If these proposals are carried through, the Heritage and Conservation team will be hit badly, and staffing levels at the Surrey History Centre will be reduced, possibly by 25%. I should say that the cuts range far wider than just the historic environment: youth centres, libraries and transport are targets, too.

As you may be aware, it was the SAS that first appointed David Bird as County Archaeologist, and also set up two rescue-excavation teams. This was a response to the huge motorway and building construction programmes of the 1970s. Though almost from the first funded by the County Council, it was our Society that managed these teams for seven years, before this was formally transferred to the County Council. Over the years, we have been heartened to see the "heritage team" grow, and with it support for the Surrey History Centre and Museums Development Officer.

Today, the South-East faces the prospect of even greater building and infrastructure development to support the "sustainable economic growth" which we are promised. To me it is quite bizarre, therefore, that the County Council should choose this moment to propose these cuts. The major impacts potentially will be the loss of support for volunteer-run museums, and the training and advice provided by Pat Reynolds and her team. Pat has also been instrumental in spearheading projects beneficial to all museums, but her post is no longer to be supported by the SCC. So far as the History Centre is concerned, there will be a reduction in services and advice to local services and the community, while for the department headed by David Bird, his and other posts have already been lost, and more may follow, so that a team of nine in 2004 will be reduced to four or five. Coupled with this is the probability that funding to support the SMR through the "Exploring Surrey's Past" will be lost. E-mails from Pat are accompanied by a sardonic quote from Terry Pratchett: "It may look a bit messy now, but just you come back in 500 years' time". Personally, in my more pessimistic moments, I doubt whether Surrey will exist in 20 year's time, let alone 50.

So, what to do? We, as a Society, are of course strenuously making our views known to the SCC, and we are encouraging local societies to urge their members to lobby their county councillors. I hope that you will do the same. In addition, in my view, working together we shall have to try to fill some of the gaps. A major one is the potential difficulty that will follow from the fact that some former County Council responsibilities have already been devolved to District and Borough Councils. By next spring, all Districts and Boroughs must have Local Development Frameworks in place. The advice which used to be available at County level will be severely limited, and I feel that it will fall to both our Societies to engage with local authorities to ensure that they are aware of the historic sites, buildings and landscapes, thus ensuring that planning decisions are made on the basis of informed data. If we don't, who will?

The rôles of local and county societies, and indeed of all those concerned to protect the environment, are entirely complementary, and we each have a rôle to play. It is Societies

such as yours, whose members undertake detailed research into their locality, that are in a position to use their knowledge and expertise to advise district and parish councils. Your interest and care for your own locality have always been of immense value – and now, I believe, it is even more so. Heritage, we are told by planners at regional and local level, is integral to the "sustainability and quality of life" – that much-vaunted contemporary phrase. Much is said about making the best use of the historic environment, given its huge contribution to education, tourism, regeneration, environmental and social inclusion objectives. Yet I don't believe that the true significance of our historic environment and its potential is understood by planners, and it remains largely unrecognised. It will be up to us to act as watchdogs and scrutinise the policies and proposals put forward in these Local Development Frameworks.

The Surrey Archaeological Society's rôle is the same, but perhaps has a wider canvas. For a start, of course, we cover the historic county. Some people used to think, because of our title, that our sphere of interest is simply digging for buried remains. But this has never been the case. It is *part* of the story, but archaeology is much broader than that; it is perhaps better defined as the study of the past through the material remains of mankind – and thus covers all our interests and disciplines. This has always been so, as early volumes of our *Collections* testify, and it was well understood by both Lowther and John Harvey. Looking through our Society's archives, as I did in preparation for its anniversary, I came across many handwritten notes between them, when they made plans to encourage every parish to write its own history. John Harvey's paper in Vol. 51 of the *Collections* remains a model of how parish histories should be tackled.

The study of the past through its cultural material remains must imply the study of everything left by humankind – whether it is to be found above or below ground, in our historic landscapes, our buildings, our industrial past or our written record. Each needs the other to give meaning, and both historians and archaeologists are beginning to appreciate how each can inform the other. I was recently at a lecture about the fall of the Roman Republic, where archaeology is beginning to throw new light on the reasons. It was thought by historians hitherto that the Republic's army was composed of poor peasants from the countryside, which fomented resentment and revolution. More recently, this view has changed. Excavation, prompted by aerial photography, is bringing about a realisation that, far from being poor, the countryside was peopled by prosperous farmers living in sophisticated farms and villas, and it may have been these which fostered revolutionaries.

But to return to Surrey. You may have seen our Society's publication *Hidden Depths – an exploration of Surrey's past*. I once gave it as a prize in a competition, and the delighted recipient wrote with enthusiasm and astonishment at the variety and extent of our history. Her view, she said, had been based on a comment by Simon Jenkins. Apparently, in his book on churches, he wrote "Poor Surrey – it must have the least exciting history of any county". He has much to answer for! Part of our job must be to dispel that image. Surrey's history is rich indeed. More than that, from the signing of the Magna Carta to the heyday of Brooklands race track, later home of Vickers, the history of our County is still visible and relevant. We also have sites of immense importance nationally. At Wanborough, for instance, where our Society excavated two Romano-British sites, rare priestly regalia was recovered, including four chain headdresses. Only eight are known in the UK, of which five are in Surrey. How

many people are aware of that, I wonder? Nearer to you, there is the Ashtead Roman villa and tile works, and I'm delighted that plans are afoot to re-evaluate the site.

So I come back to our relevance in the 21st century. We both have a rôle in influencing planning policy, to ensure that the enormous destruction and fragmentation of historic landscapes that occurred in the 1970s does not occur again. You have only to think of the M25 near here which cuts the common in two and destroys its integrity. To do this, of course we have to spread the word. Ashtead should provide an opportunity to engage with the wider community and engage their support. People have a great habit of complaining afterwards, and too late, "Why didn't YOU do something?"

I'm reminded of a tale told, I think, by Lionel Blue. A middle-aged man called Moshe was often to be found loudly bewailing his lot. As he walked along a forest track, there was a noise like a clap of thunder and a voice from God said "What's wrong, my son, that you are so unhappy?" Moshe replied "Oh, I never have any luck. I do my best, I don't sin, I work when I can, I try to keep the Sabbath, but whatever I do goes wrong. I have no home, no money, no luck, not even on the lottery." Said God, "Go on your way, and I'll see what I can do." Some months later, Moshe was still complaining, when God spoke to him again. "Moshe, please meet me half-way. Buy a lottery ticket." We shall need people to meet us half-way, but we have to do our part and try to engage the whole of our communities, not just the already-committed. Societies such as yours are the life-blood of communities, but we shall probably have to make the first move.

However, this is an occasion to celebrate all your past achievements, and to look to the future. It may be that I can make some small claim to part of your success – albeit unwittingly. It so happens that the formation of your Society was proposed on June 5th – an obviously auspicious day, for it is my birthday! Let us take it as an omen, anyway. The Leatherhead and District Local History Society has a proud and distinguished past, and I would like you to rise with me, and toast its future!

THE SOCIETY'S FIRST SIXTY YEARS

By STEPHEN FORTESCUE

An abridged version of the Dallaway Lecture, given at the Letherhead Institute on 20th October 2006, to mark the Society's Diamond Jubilee.

It was on June 30th 1946, at a meeting of the Leatherhead & District Countryside Protection Society, that Richard Dalton, who later became the Curator of the Dorchester Museum, suggested that illustrated histories should be written of the five parishes of the Leatherhead Urban District Council. As the Society could not undertake this, it was suggested that a Local History Society should be formed. A notice was inserted in the 'local rag' outlining the proposal, and 30 people including myself responded. Dalton interviewed us all and, on his recommendations, a provisional committee was formed and met on the 16th October 1946 at my firm's offices in Leatherhead. It was agreed that the project should go ahead. S. Q. Blaxland Stubbs and A.T. Ruby were the prime movers of a constitution and, at a meeting held on 5th November 1946, it was agreed that the Society should come into being forthwith. Blaxland Stubbs was appointed Editor of the *Proceedings* and I was appointed the Treasurer.

The original intention was that the Society should have a limited membership of around 25-30 persons, all of whom would be engaged in research or recording, and that their findings should be published. It was soon realised that this was not possible without additional finance, and therefore membership should be open to all, so as to produce the finance required to publish. The membership grew from the original 30 to 176 at the time of the Coronation in 1952, and later reached a peak of about 350.

The Society was fortunate in having as its first Chairman Captain A.W.G. Lowther, famed for his archaeological excavations, particularly of the Roman villa on Ashtead Common in 1926-1928. During his army service in World War I, he was responsible for the preservation of antiquities in Persia — it was there he caught polio, which was to burden him for the remainder of his life. Lowther steered the Society in the right direction, particularly in the field of archaeology. He was the first in a succession of chairmen, A. T. Ruby, Derek Renn, myself, L.A Smith, Linda Heath, and Peter Tarplee, all of whom contributed with their drive and enthusiasm to the success of the Society, and I am sure that the current chairman, David Hartley will do the same. A mere seven chairmen in 60 years is a remarkable record – an average of 8½ years each.

Perhaps one of the remarkable achievements of the Society has been the issue of the annual *Proceedings*, commencing in 1947. With 59 issues so far, they contain a wealth of historical information and are unequalled by those of any other Local History Society for the quality of their content and production, and the skill of their editors. The first, Blaxland Stubbs, was a great editor, responsible for Arthur Mees' *Thousand Heroes*, followed by C. J. Longhurst, Frank Benger, Derek Renn, Jack Stuttard, and now Barry Cox. They have made a publication to be respected throughout the world.

As the first Chairman, Captain Lowther, was a renowned archaeologist, the Society started with the excavation of *The Mounts*, an area of dense woodland adjoining Pachesham Farm about a mile north-west of Leatherhead railway station. This proved to be the site of a manor house which was in existence in 1200 but had ceased occupation by 1350. This was followed by investigation of the moated site at Greatlee Wood to the west of the road from

Effingham Village and the railway. It was identified as the manor house of Effingham, *Le Legh*, which was occupied from the late 12th century to the early 14th Century. These excavations greatly interested the public, together with smaller excavations such as those at Little Bookham Parish Church.

From the start, the Society arranged a series of lectures and visits, mostly on local subjects but with one outside visit by coach each year. These outside visits were well supported until the aftermath of World War II was over, when most families had a car. Around 1975 the Society commenced publications of the local histories, and has done so ever since. One of the main features of the District is the River Mole; I found that there had been 17 mills at different times on the River within our boundary. Ruby did some very detailed work on the River Mole, which updated the research of the Principal of The Field Studies Council at Juniper Hall.

Stephen Fortescue giving the Dallaway Lecture

One of the landmarks in the history of the Society was the creation of a museum. It had for some time been felt that the Society should have a headquarters as a local centre for its activities. I had my eyes on *Hampton Cottage,* a timber framed house which was clad with the sides of orange boxes, and had a ground floor window projecting over the footpath, which was the favourite sleeping place of a ginger coloured cat! The house was occupied by an old lady, Mrs Hollis, a dressmaker who traded under the name of 'Madame Barnard Court Dressmaker'. She was Hilda Barnard, the daughter of a Swan Hotel coachman. When she died in 1976 the property came onto the market. I was Chairman of the Society at the time and, without authority, made an offer for the house which was accepted. I reported my actions to the committee at our next meeting and, by good fortune and to my relief, they agreed to what I had done!

I was concerned that a Trust should be formed so that if the "Leatherhead Museum and Heritage Trust" should fall upon hard times, it would not affect the Society, and vice versa. I undertook to raise the funds for the purchase and restoration of the building and by chance, an old friend of mine offered to make a loan to the Society of the purchase price of £7,000, interest free and repayable in 20 years. At that time the interest on Government Stock was 15½%. I arranged for £1,000 to be invested in this stock which, with the accumulated interest, would amount to a little over £7,000 at the end of 20 years. I set about raising about £7,000 for the restoration work by asking wealthy residents in the area to donate £50 each; money flowed in and work commenced. The builder employed proved somewhat erratic so, when the ground work had been done, we dispensed with his services. He left the front gable unsupported, and it remained so for several weeks! Fortunately, being a timber-framed building, it held and a band of volunteers then took over and completed the work.

A little known offshoot of the Society was the Fortescue Gang, later known as the Ice-house gang (the name was perhaps in imitation of the Ferguson Gang who restored the mill at Shalford). The Gang consisted of members of our society and of the Surrey Archaeological Society. The latter was most important, as insurance cover was effected under their umbrella. The gang was formed to carry out investigations which were too small for either Society, or were not strictly within their ambit.

The first investigation was a mysterious hole which appeared in the village graveyard adjoining Effingham Parish Church. It was found to be a concrete cylinder about 12 feet deep and five feet across, perhaps a water tank near some stables, though there was a suggestion that Effingham had suffered from a water shortage, and similar tanks had been constructed in the drier parts of Effingham. This was followed by a metal and brick tank, the investigation of which was delegated to me — it was a cesspit! The Gang was asked then to investigate a well, one of two in the garden of the Old Vicarage at Effingham. Scaffolding was erected over it, to which safety harnesses were attached, and it was cleared to a depth of about 20 feet. The working base became unstable, so this was abandoned for reasons of safety, and left for more experienced workers.

I was then asked to trace the gardens laid out in at the Vicarage in the 19th century by the then Vicar. By means of dowsing, I was able to trace another well which supplied an elaborate water system leading to a vegetable garden for the flushing of an early septic tank, and to some greenhouses where the water tanks were half in and half out of the greenhouses. I also traced the original walls of the garden and of enclosures attached to stabling and a cow house. This was followed by disinterring an ice-house at Abinger Hammer, from which we all learned much of ice house construction, their location and the draining of melt water and methods of management. We then investigated another ice-house, at Juniper Hall in Mickleham, which was made suitable for instructing students attending courses at The Field Studies Council. There followed preliminary investigations of ice-houses at Effingham Golf Club and also at Polesden Lacey. Ice-houses ceased to be used in the 1930s, following the invention of refrigeration.

I referred earlier on to dowsing. It is a skill, if one is searching for something, one will find it if it is there. Most people have the ability to do it, and it is not confined to the search for water, but almost anything. Rosamund Hanworth showed me how to do it and I have used the ability on several occasions with success. It does however niggle the archaeologist, who would prefer to dig the subject up to prove it, thereby usually destroying it. To my mind, the geophysical experts revered by Tony Robinson are doing the same thing as dowsing in a more visibly scientific way. So I consider dowsing is now respectable — at least I shall believe it is, until proved otherwise!

The SyAS were undertaking further excavation of a Roman villa at Crossways Farm in Abinger, where a small excavation had been carried out in 1977. I took my dowsing rods and traced three walls. The site was opened up and my three walls of the villa were revealed! It was thought that there might be Saxon foundations under the parish church of Great Bookham. In the course of dowsing there, I found three steps underneath part of the church. My efforts were scorned by the archaeologists, who considered it would have been better to wait until the floor of the church was lifted. I doubted this would have helped, as the foundations were probably made of wood which would have disintegrated over the course

of 1200 years. I referred my findings to Dr A J Clark, then Vice President of the SyAS, who informed me that the Japanese had made an instrument called Ground Penetrating Radar which had not yet reached the UK. This was the forerunner of geophysical surveying. When Dr Clark died in June 1997, his archaeological papers, including my correspondence with him, were passed to the British Museum and came into the hands of Dr Mc Cann. He told me that there was now a Ground Penetrating Radar apparatus at the British Museum and offered to do a survey in Great Bookham Church at the cost of £900. This sum was raised by the SyAS, this Society, and Mr and Mrs Rice Oxley, members of our Society. Dr Mc Cann's findings were almost identical to mine, so I felt that this also justified dowsing and, until a better identification is made, I hold to my view that the Saxon foundations have been traced.

One thing which has completely vanished from the local scene is the Rope Walk. Rope was a vital commodity, as it was required in quantities in the farming industry – builders' twine or chains were too expensive. The Rope Walk in Leatherhead ran along the south side of Bridge Street — if you trespass up the side alleys, you will find a high wall running north-south, which was one of the walls of the Rope Walk. Although some of it has vanished, its position is clear.

Looking to the future of the Society, some may assume that it has already fulfilled its purpose, which was the researching and publishing of histories of the five parishes of the old Leatherhead U.D.C. Histories have also been published of the fringe parishes of Headley, Westhumble and Effingham, and more specialist booklets have been written by Mary Rice Oxley, Goff Powell and others. However, newly researched material is continually coming to light and being published in the *Proceedings* and *Occasional Papers*, so the Society is still performing a very useful function. Research must be continued and published, and so must the collection or reconstruction of artefacts for the benefit of future generations. Otherwise the Society will become merely a social club with a monthly dose of local history.

Perhaps I should mention a few persons who have contributed to the locality. *Merry Hall* in Ashtead was the home of the writer Beverly Nicholls, who wrote a book about the house and especially the garden. Another person was Dr Munro, who lived at Fetcham Cottage, Bell Lane Fetcham until 1793, when he moved to 8 Adelphi Terrace in London. He was a keen art collector and also established classes in watercolour painting. He invited his pupils to Fetcham Cottage in the summertime, among them Thomas Girton, J.W.M Turner, John Cotman and Peter de Wint. A third person was Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, who was Chairman of the School Council of St John's School from 1950 to 1966. I recall meeting him at a function at the school, when I reminded him of the many contributions he had made to the school. He informed me that he had supplied initiative and the enthusiasm, but that he had urged his friends to supply the money, particularly for the new chapel.

One final thought is that, when the Society puts on a special exhibition, or has an excavation or a new collection of artefacts, this always results in new members, thus providing more income to finance its projects and publications. May I suggest one target should be the gathering of funds for the acquisition of additional working and storage space for administration and for the museum. We have a successful Society. Let us keep it that way.

(I think that it is quite remarkable that it we could have a talk on the first sixty years of our Society, given by a founder-member who played so significant a role in those events! Editor)

ABRAHAM DIXON'S INVOLVEMENT WITH LEATHERHEAD – AN UPDATE

By James Dixon

'One day out here adds ten years to your life', observed Abraham Dixon to his niece one day as they took a cab up from Leatherhead station to Cherkley Court.[1]

Introduction

In three earlier contributions[2,3,4] Geoffrey Hayward and his Research Group have already shed considerable light on the background to Abraham Dixon's arrival in Leatherhead in 1871, and to his benefaction of the Letherhead Institute some twenty years later. ("Letherhead" was the spelling used for the name of the town in Victorian days.) The biggest subsequent contribution to the fund of knowledge is without doubt the publication in the late 1980s of Katie Rathbone's collected and edited manuscripts under the title of *The Dales – Growing Up in a Victorian Family*[1], which compensates to some extent for the loss suffered when a German bomb during a raid on Birmingham in 1941 destroyed all the papers of Abraham's younger brother George.

More than a third of a century has elapsed since Geoffrey Hayward's research was carried out, and it is now possible to expand on a number of issues which had earlier been difficult to explore in depth. In particular:

- How did Abraham come to be able to afford to construct a very substantial house at Cherkley Court, standing in an estate of some 500 acres, when his father did not come from the ranks of the landed aristocracy?
- Why did he choose to move to Leatherhead, when so many of his contemporary Birmingham businessmen preferred instead to stay in the outer suburbs of the Black Country?
- Why did he move to Leatherhead when he did?
- What factors influenced him in the gift of the Institute?
- What provision did he make for his four daughters, some of whom were active in local affairs for many years, but only one of whom married?

What has emerged very clearly since the 1970s is that Abraham's life cannot be considered in isolation from that of his brother George, the Birmingham Radical M.P. and educational reformer, about whom much more is also now known – the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, published in 2004, for example, devotes about 1,000 words to him, almost ten times as much as an earlier volume.

The Source of Abraham's Wealth

As Geoffrey Hayward's earlier research has shown, Abraham's father, also called Abraham, was not an especially wealthy man, but of sufficient substance as to be able to send George, the younger son, to Leeds Grammar School, for example[5]. George's daughter, Katie Rathbone, spoke of her father and her uncle as having been brought up in 'straitened circumstances'[1]. It was through romance that the younger Abraham found employment as a Birmingham merchant, a career that brought with it enormous wealth as the English economy thrived in early Victorian days, ahead of the rest of Europe. Two men had sought the hand of Laetitia Taylor (his mother) in marriage, but it was the elder Abraham, in the early nineteenth

century, who was successful; the loser was a successful Birmingham merchant by the name of Rabone, and whilst he married another lady, she was unable to bear him children, so he tried to keep in touch with Laetitia by offering employment to her second son, Abraham[1]. Later, employment was also offered to the fourth son, George. These two brothers had a very close working relationship; they had shared accommodation in the Birmingham area before they got married, and Katie Rathbone[1] recorded that, even after Abraham got married, 'they managed to remain inseparable in heart and mind if not in person, and when they were away from each other, interchanged letters every day'. Indeed, '.....the same thought often occurred to them at the same moment. When one spoke, the other would say "I was just thinking of that" '.

They were eventually to become partners in the business – which had commenced trading in the middle of the previous century as a partnership between the brothers Rabone, initially importing wines from Spain and Portugal, but soon focusing on exporting the varied metal products of Birmingham and its surrounds[6]. The mainstay of Birmingham's output, taking the town as a whole, in mid-Victorian times comprised items such as guns, nails, locks, wood screws, railway bolts and spikes, buttons, pins, needles, saddlery, electroplate, pens and papier mache, ammunition, percussion caps and cartridges, and anchors and chain cables[7].

It was a fairly common Victorian trait amongst successful family businesses to provide 'management in depth' by following the old royal principle of 'heirs and spares'[8], and, if the younger Abraham could not be defined with total accuracy as an 'heir' through line of blood, George was certainly a 'spare'. It was Abraham whom the family considered grew the business[1], but the brothers fed upon each others' respective strengths, and it is quite clear

Fig. 1. Left, George Dixon. Right, Katie Rathbone in the Tropical House at Cherkley Court.

that the business would have benefited directly from the many representations that George made, both locally and nationally, in the world of the Chambers of Commerce. For example, George clamoured for the mail steamer heading to the West Indies [one of the firm's main markets] to call additionally at Falmouth to pick up correspondence conveyed there by fast train[9]. At a national level, George also made a name for himself, for his services were offered to assist the Board of Trade in negotiating the German Customs Tariff, as part of a more general campaign for Free Trade[10].

The firm of Rabone Bros. tended to focus on the markets in Central and South America in particular, along with the West Indies, areas geographically which felt the threat of competition from European rivals, most especially Germany, somewhat later than other parts of the world. The business expanded enormously as time progressed and, as George's youngest daughter Dora Walker observed about the period when Abraham and George were partners, '...the money came rolling in'[1]. Some of the contracts were substantial: on one occasion – possibly the late 1850s – the firm was responsible for the supply of rolling stock, bridges and track for the construction of a Cuban railway line, which in one year alone called for the chartering of 47 ships to carry these and other materials[6].

We have no account of Abraham's travels to these markets, although we know indirectly that he did visit Jamaica at least once. As Geoffrey Hayward has already mentioned, in Abraham's later years, at Cherkley Court, he amassed a considerable quantity of exotic plants in his Tropical House, and corresponded extensively with the Director of the Botanic Gardens at Kew, Sir Joseph Hooker; on 4 July, 1884, he wrote, apologising for a delay in writing '...had I not been confined to my room for the last five days by a severe chill, resulting from a too careless enjoyment of my Tropical House. I often forget that I was never anything but gloriously well in Jamaica because I did not constantly return again to our chilly atmosphere'. To trade with many of these countries, a knowledge of Spanish would have been essential. How Abraham acquired that knowledge is not clear, nor how proficient he might have been. We know for certain that George was taught the language during a period of illness by his elder sister Mary, who was born in 1811, four years before Abraham[1], but how she came to acquire a skill in this then comparatively little-known language is unknown.

Fig. 2. Views of Cherkley Court today. Left, from the south. Right, from the east.

One of the firm's main trades was the gun trade. This was extremely profitable from the Crimean War onwards, doing especially well during the American Civil War (1861-5), which was said to have produced a market for 750,000 barrels, and continued to be prosperous until after the end of the Franco-Prussian War. It was then kept alive for some years by the fact that many governments re-equipped their armies with the new breech-loading rifles[12].

Rabone Bros. were especially well-placed to capitalise on the situation, and advertised that fact for much of the autumn of 1860 in *The Times*:

'Wilson's breech loading rifle. Mr. Thomas Wilson begs to call the attention of Volunteers and the public to his new BREECH LOADING RIFLE, and to state that he has committed the management of the patent to Messrs. Rabone, Brothers, and Co., of 47, Broad Street, Birmingham, to whom all inquiries or other communications may be addressed. This rifle is well adapted for all branches of Her Majesty's service, and is pronounced by the highest authority to be the most simple, safe, and soldierlike form of breech-loader ever introduced. The guns can be obtained through any gunmaker in the kingdom, and patterns may be seen and every information obtained at....' a variety of addresses, including that of Rabone's[13].

The town's prosperity from the arms trade caused a problem for brother George as Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce, for on one occasion one of the town's two M.P.'s, the Radical pacifist John Bright (best known as a disciple of Free Trade, and one of the leaders of the ultimately successful campaign for the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846) was invited to a dinner, at which George introduced him in rather frosty tones[14].

'Mr Bright, perhaps, did not represent Birmingham in the peculiar manner in which their other member did yet he possessed the different merit of representing very large classes of his countrymen in various parts of the kingdom. Although espousing views which on several occasions had been highly unpopular, the hon. Gentleman had never shrunk from maintaining his conscientious convictions. While, therefore, freely acknowledging his true honesty and full determination of purpose, those of them who most widely dissented from him would be extremely glad to hear his sentiments.' However, the frostiness was not to endure for ever, and George was to become Bright's close colleague as Birmingham's second Liberal M.P. upon the sudden death of the incumbent M.P., William Scholefield, in the summer of 1867. In later years, Bright stayed at George's house on many occasions when he visited the constituency, having retained his house in Rochdale; his diary also records that he once called on Abraham at Cherkley Court when out walking:

'Walk to the top of Box Hill, the country and the view of unsurpassable beauty. Called on Mr. Dixon. His house large and almost palatial, his conservatory very fine; Victoria Regia and Loe there. His brother is my friend Geo. Dixon of Birmingham'[15].

Some measure of Abraham's growing wealth was demonstrated in 1863 when he, together with George, subscribed a large sum of money in the incident which became known as that of 'The Female Blondin'. Blondin was a tightrope artiste who unfortunately fell to her death whilst performing at Aston Park, which had been opened to the public some years previously by Queen Victoria and her Consort, Prince Albert. Victoria learned of the episode and was distinctly not amused. The Dixon brothers headed a public subscription list which led to the Park being acquired by the Corporation of Birmingham[16] – and being better managed.

However, Abraham was not in the best of health, and one of the more intriguing questions that remains unanswered about George's extensive involvement in the world of the Chambers of Commerce was what drove him to campaign so extensively for comprehensive changes in the legislation affecting the liability of those involved in trading in partnerships – trading through limited liability companies was then in its infancy, and was particularly unsuited to Birmingham commerce and industry, with its multiplicity of relatively small-sized enterprises. In some respects, George was successful: with the help of Scholefield, the Partnership Law Amendment Act 1865 passed on to the Statute Book, George having proposed a motion in 1863 calling for the insertion of a clause in the legislation 'enabling clerks, managers, etc., to receive a share of profits without thereby acquiring any of the rights and responsibilities of partners'[14]. This had a direct bearing on the position of Rabone Bros., for there was a potential succession issue: Abraham had four daughters and no sons, whilst George's eldest son, Arthur, had only been born in 1856, and was still an infant. The problem therefore was how to ensure the motivation and on-going loyalty of senior members of staff.

George was however less successful in arguing for another change in the partnership legislation, whereby Abraham's liability for debts would have been limited to the amount of capital he had subscribed. As a result, he was left exposed to all the risks of the firm even after he had moved down to Leatherhead and was no longer involved in its day-to-day management. Since he still had his capital invested, he remained technically a partner in Rabone Bros. for many years at Cherkley Court – albeit a 'sleeping partner', a term which 'much intrigued' his niece Katie Rathbone[1]. It was only on 31 December, 1885 that Abraham finally retired[17].

The move to Leatherhead

By comparison with the dirt and grime of Birmingham, Leatherhead must have seemed little short of a health spa. George was to become a frequent visitor to the South, as he had to come up to London for the Parliamentary session every year whilst an M.P. – he was one of the Birmingham M.P.s from 1867 to 1876, and M.P. for the newly-created Edgbaston constituency from 1885 through to his death in 1898. But his election upon the sudden death of Scholefield in 1867 was a year after Abraham had acquired Cherkley Court, so it could not be said that Abraham was anticipating his younger brother's entry into national politics.

The precise nature of Abraham's infirmity is unclear, although it is evident that it was a long-term problem. Perhaps it was an illness contracted whilst travelling on business, for on the occasion of the firm's 200th. Anniversary, a commemorative article recorded that *'Records show that four of Rabone's men died on trips to South America and others returned home to succumb, eventually, to illnesses contracted abroad'*[6].

Writing home from New Zealand in 1888, brother George wrote to his daughter in England: *'I am uneasy about Uncle Ab. and can't help fearing that he won't have got back to his old position by the time I get back, what a deal he has suffered in his life time'*[18] Abraham was however quite clear of the benefits of moving south, as he observed to his niece whilst taking a cab up from Leatherhead station to the site of his new house: *'One day out here adds ten years to your life'*. But fortunately for him, his arithmetic was in error for, whilst he had been born five years before George, he was to outlive him by nine years, not passing away until 1907.

Research shows that Abraham was very much in the minority in moving so far from Birmingham, for 'after 1860 many (Birmingham businessmen) sought rural retreats close enough to the city to be able to continue to play an active part in business but distant as possible from the encroaching lower-middle and middle-class suburbanites'[19].

Abraham purchased the Cherkley Estate in 1866, a time of considerable prosperity in the Birmingham area. As the Chairman of the half-yearly meeting of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce reported in that year: *'...there never had been a year in the history of Birmingham in which they had had so large an amount of prosperity as during the year which had just passed. In Birmingham they were very fortunately in a different position from those towns which were dependent upon one manufacture. They had a very large number of diverse manufactures, and those, by God's blessing, had enabled the commercial community to tide over a great many difficulties which had grievously affected other towns, for which they were all devoutly thankful.'*[20]

The Cherkley Estate was owned by Overend, Gurney & Co., who were at that time having financial difficulties, and eventually collapsed. The problems resulting from this were dealt with by Ashursts, a leading firm of City lawyers. The Ashurst family included Sir James Stansfeld, whose sister was married to George Dixon. So Abraham, more than anyone else, is likely to have known what was happening, and may have taken the opportunity to buy one of Overend, Gurney's assets. This, then, may have been the reason why Abraham decided to retire to Leatherhead rather than to any other part of England. (Ref Judy Slinn 1997 *Ashurst Morris Crisp – a Radical Firm.* Granta Editions, Cambridge. Pp 54-5.)

Just a few months later and George was to be plunged into the turmoil of the banking crisis, and a special Bank Charter Act Committee of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce was formed, in which he played a very active part: the July 1866 half-yearly report of the Chamber recorded that it was proposed to meet weekly.[13] This was all at a time when George was also actively involved in the incorporation of Lloyds Banking Company Limited, not only as one of the first directors, but also one of its largest shareholders[21]. Not only that, but George was also Mayor of Birmingham, and was in the following year to found the Birmingham Education Aid Society, the forerunner of the National Education League, and to enter Parliament. These were truly hectic years for the brothers Dixon.

Education, and the background to the Letherhead Institute

No published material about Abraham has to date identified any significant interest in educational matters prior to the foundation of the Letherhead Institute in the 1890s. However, it is now possible to show not only how much Abraham owed to George for inspiration in his later years, but also how, much earlier in their lives, George might have been inspired by Abraham.

We already know that Abraham had entered the political arena at the age of 23 in 1838[22], in the year that Birmingham received its Charter of Incorporation as a Borough, the 48 Councillors all being Liberals 'of the Radical persuasion'[23]. Eleven years later, a Free Industrial School was founded in Gem Street. The first stone of this institution was laid on 12 April, 1849, and one of the documents contained in the inevitable bottle which was deposited in a cavity in the stone, contained the following account of the foundation of the school: *'LAUS DEO. BIRMINGHAM FREE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL. This School was erected in the year of Our Lord 1849, the following persons being the promoters thereof:- .... Abraham Dixon,*

Esq., ... This School was instituted for the training and education of 100 boys and 100 girls, children of destitute parents, of all denominations, free of charge, in general accordance with the system of the Elementary Schools belonging to King Edward the Sixth's foundation in this town, the Governors of which charity have granted the land on which the building stands. The system of education provides that the children be taught trades and industrial occupations, besides reading, writing, arithmetic, and Christian knowledge. The said religious instruction being under the direction and superintendence of the Rector of St.Martin's, St.Philip's, St. George's, St. Thomas's, and All Saints', the Head Master of King Edward's School, and the Incumbent of Bishop Ryder's district, for the time being; and that the children of dissenting parents shall not of necessity be compelled to learn the church catechism.....'[24].

This was a significant document, for it embraced education and training, which gives a clue as to one of the driving attitudes behind George's later campaign for compulsory and free elementary education, which led to Forster's Education Act of 1870. This Act provided for children of poor parents, provided for Christian education without denominational bias, and made specific allowance for dissenters, an issue which was to cause so much controversy in 1870 and the years thereafter.

Abraham himself was born and died an Anglican, but lived in an environment of religious tolerance – his wife Margaret was of the Liverpool Rathbone family of Quaker merchants. Intriguingly, there was surplus space at the Birmingham Bridge Street premises where Rabone Bros. were based, and this was leased out from 1847 to 1879 to Cadbury Bros. during a critical period in that firm's development as a leading manufacturer of chocolates.[25] This family were also Quakers, and the enigmatic George Cadbury who presided over the firm together with his brother Richard Cadbury from 1861 onwards, spent all his life in the Adult School movement, working on an entirely non-sectarian basis. Sadly, there is no surviving documentation to show what influence Abraham's tenants had on him and his brother.

The story of George's involvement in the development of England's and Birmingham's educational system is for another place, but perhaps a clue as to why Abraham should have decided to fund the construction of the Letherhead Institute in 1891 is to be found in George's foundation of the Bridge Street Technical School, Birmingham, in 1884. Serving as a central seventh standard school, and accommodating 400 boys, manual instruction formed a large part of the syllabus, which also included solid geometry, chemistry, and freehand drawing. 'I would invite the manufacturers of the town and neighbourhood', Dixon said, 'to inspect this school, and having done so to consider whether it will not be to their interest to reserve their best places for those who have passed successfully through it. All are now agreed that if this country is to retain its commercial supremacy it is essential that our artisans should have that training and education which will best fit them for the workshop.[26]

Seven years later, and Abraham was to be found writing to the Parish Magazine about his plans for the future Institute: *'It's [sic] object will mainly be to provide means and opportunities for educational, social and recreative occupation, for the working men, and for all classes in the Town and its immediate neighbourhood, available to subscribers only, combined with a Coffee Bar and Refreshment Room open to the public at large.*

'In providing this building I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not desire to disturb or to interfere in an unwelcome manner with any of the existing Institutions of the Town, and therefore religion and politics will be expressly excluded from its scope'[4].

Just a year later, Technical Education had begun[27].

Abraham, the Financier

Whilst it was widely known in Birmingham circles that George had travelled twice to Australasia[28], there is no evidence that people in Leatherhead were aware that Abraham had extensive financial interests there too, over and above the trading activities of Rabone Bros. These took the form of a money-lending business, which was incorporated in 1885 under the name of the Dixon Investment Company, whose annual returns and other statutory information for all years (until eventual liquidation after the Second World War) are available for inspection at National Archives at Kew[29].

It was certainly not unusual for successful merchants in this era to 'merge at their fringes' with other business communities, most especially finance and industry[19]. The decision to focus on Australasia, more especially New Zealand, does however seem to have been driven by George rather than Abraham, since George was away from England for at least two years during the period 1855 to 1858, and he was to return again in 1888/9, on a trip that was part pleasure, part business, and part pursuing his interests in educational matters. Indeed, George's daughter Katie recounted that 'My father liked New Zealand so much, he suggested that we should all go out and live there'[1], whilst another member of the family, Marion Rathbone, recounted that 'His estimate of possibilities in these countries' (viz. Australia and New Zealand) 'resulted in the foundation of the Dixon Investment Co.'[1].

It is arguable that this Company, in George's eyes, was an extension of his philanthropic activities to assist the English agricultural workers suffering from the downturn in the countryside. This was a result of the slump in corn prices that had followed the opening up of the prairies through the construction of railroads, and from the marked reduction in shipping costs resulting from the introduction of steam propulsion. George was actively involved with Joseph Arch, the leader of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union[30], and there is a revealing passage in a letter home from New Zealand in 1888 in which he expands on how he sees the Company performing a useful role in society:

'A working man, if he chooses, can save £40 per annum and after 10 years with £400 can buy a property, especially if he takes a mortgage (from the Dixon Inv. Co.) and may thus work their' [sic] *'way up into independence and even wealth.'*[31]

Though Abraham's family later thought that these activities were to make financial provision for his daughters, this may have been a fortunate result rather than having been in his mind from the beginning.[32] There were also taxation advantages in investing abroad rather than at home, although these are probably seen more clearly in retrospect than they were at the time; certainly there was no contemporaneous reference to this topic. Until 1914, unremitted interest income was not liable to UK income tax, whilst land abroad (and mortgages for this purpose constituted 'land') escaped death duties until 1962[33].

The first object of the company was 'To acquire certain of the lands, property, business and investments of George Dixon, of Birmingham, Esquire, and Abraham Dixon, of Cherkley Court, near Leatherhead, in the County of Surrey, Esquire, in the several Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and New Zealand'[34]. Two points are worth making about this. Firstly, despite being the younger brother, it is George, not Abraham, who was the first-mentioned. Secondly, the business that was being incorporated had been in existence

before 1885, but nothing at all is known about the scale of its activities, nor the date when they started.

A further objects clause permitted the Company to invest or advance money in the Dominion of Canada, as well as Australasia, and indeed there were some Canadian investments in the portfolio towards the end of the Company's life, but none in 1885. There were seven initial subscribers for the initial share capital of £100,000, six being members of the Dixon family, and one, Mr. Allured, a partner in Rabone Bros.. The statutory papers give a precise breakdown of the initial balance sheet, with some 85% of the investments being in New Zealand, and the remaining 15% in the Australian colonies – the Commonwealth of Australia was not formed until the twentieth century. The business is described in the 1885 statutory returns as one of 'capitalists and investors'.

The largest investment was in Manawa Farm, Whariama, worth more than £21,500, which became the Company's property in slightly unusual circumstances, as the Masterton correspondent of the *Birmingham Daily Post* recorded: 'Some years ago the Manawa station belonged to a Wellington merchant, who was one day discovered to be insolvent....and a Birmingham merchant found himself *nolens volens* [i.e. willy-nilly] a colonial sheep-farmer'[35]. The third largest investment (£4,000) was in *The Press* Newspaper Company of Christchurch although, even though this company is still trading under this name today, no trace can be found in its records of any loan or advance from the Dixon Investment Company in 1885. Investigations have also been made in the records of two other 1885 borrowers, the Christchurch public school, Christ's College, and the former New Zealand Prime Minister, Sir John Hall (who, as a backbencher in 1893, was responsible for legislation which gave votes to women[36]), and no trace can be found there either. Given that some of the seven initial subscribers were partners in Rabone Bros., it is conceivable that the business being incorporated was some kind of debt factoring activity, acting on behalf of Rabone Bros.. Whether that be right, documents bearing the name of 'Valuator's Report' retained by the Nelson Provincial Museum to this day reveal that the company was acting as a *bona fide* financial business in the property sector in the first decade of the twentieth century, along the lines of an English building society.

The first directors were George, Abraham and George's son Arthur, but by 1901 George had died, and the Annual Return showed that Abraham was no longer a director either. However, prospects still looked good, for the following year, by a Special Resolution, the capital was increased from £100,000 to £220,000.

If the main reason for Abraham's involvement in the Dixon Investment Company was indeed to make provision for his four daughters, three of whom never married, it was a very successful enterprise indeed, and their ability to participate in various activities in the Leatherhead area over the years is easy to understand – Letitia and Winifred in particular becoming involved in the running of Home Arts, Cooking and Laundry Classes at the Institute.

Conclusion

Research into the life of Abraham's younger brother George – which is on-going – shows very clearly that the lives of the two cannot be considered in isolation, and much has been learned since Geoffrey Hayward wrote his first three articles in the 1970s. As already mentioned, the biggest other contribution to our knowledge is the publication of Katie Rathbone's collected manuscripts. However, research across the board has been greatly

facilitated in recent years by the advance of computerisation and the development of the internet, and it is to be hoped that this will not be the final update on the life of Abraham Dixon of Cherkley Court, Leatherhead.

NOTES

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28. See, for example, chapter on George Dixon by G.H. Kenrick, p.59 in *Nine Famous Birmingham Men.* ed. J.H. Muirhead 1909 Cornish Bros., Birmingham.
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31. Nelson Provincial Museum, New Zealand. Dixon Papers, p.33, letter dated 16 November 1888.
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THE DATES OF THE EARLY BRASSES IN STOKE D'ABERNON CHURCH

By CLAUDE BLAIR

Geoffrey Howard's otherwise admirable article, "The Mystery of the Vault in Stoke d'Abernon Church", contains a statement that is surprising to find in the recent issue of our *Proceedings* (6/9, p. 243): "... Stoke D'Abernon Church contains the oldest church brass in the country - a full-length grave cover of Sir John D'Abernon the Elder, dating to 1277." This "traditional" dating of this brass (Fig. 1, extreme left) was first questioned as long ago as 1947, and thereafter so were the dates given to several comparable brasses, including, in a key article published in 1965, that of Sir Robert de Bures at Acton, Suffolk (Fig. 1, second from left). The latter had hitherto been dated to 1302, but the author of the article, Jennifer C. Ward, was able to establish that Sir Robert did not acquire the manor of Acton until 1310, and actually died in 1331. This, and evidence establishing that other early figure brasses had been dated too early, was eventually brought together by Dr. Paul Binski in a study published in 1987: "The Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses."[1] In this, Dr. Binski dated the brass referred to by Mr. Howard to 1327, for reasons that will become clear later, and grouped it with a stylistically-similar series of brasses, not all military, dating between *c.* 1310 and *c.* 1332. He entitled the group "The Camoys Style" after one of the earliest surviving brasses in it, to Margaret de Camoys (*c.* 1310), at Trotton, Sussex.

The redating of the John d'Abernon "the Elder" figure had a knock-on effect on the dating of the second early figure-brass at Stoke d'Abernon, which Mr. Howard does not mention (Fig. 1, second from right). Commemorating another Sir John d'Abernon, and hitherto dated to 1327, Dr. Binski now ascribed it to the period 1339-50, and placed it in another group of stylistically similar figures, again not all military, which he dated to between *c.*1333 and 1350. He entitled this group "The Seymour Style", after the second-earliest recorded brass in it, to the ecclesiastic Lawrence Seymour (*d.* 1337) at Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire.[1]

The redating of all the earliest military brasses to within the fourteenth century has now been accepted unreservedly by all serious students of medieval church monuments and medieval arms and armour. This is not only because it is supported by overwhelming documentary and stylistic evidence, but also because, where arms and armour are concerned, it removes a number of apparent anomalies between the rates of development of improved forms of military equipment in England and on the Continent. The old datings appeared to show that England was ahead of Europe, whereas all the other evidence points to the complete reverse being the case. For example, Jean le Bel, the Liège-born chronicler of the early years of the 100 Years War, who took part personally in Edward III's Scottish campaign of 1327, comments in his *Vrays Chroniques* of *c.*1356 that the English wore very old-fashioned armour in those days.[2] There was also what one might have thought was the much more obvious anomaly of English stone effigies shown wearing similar equipment to the brasses, but dated much later on the basis of firm evidence. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the second brass, as is demonstrated by comparing it with the effigies of Prince John of Eltham (d. 1334) in Westminster Abbey (Fig. 1, right) - the earliest to show similar armour - and of John, 1st Lord Willoughby (d. 1348), at Spilsby, Lincolnshire.

Fig. 1. Brasses of (left to right): Sir John d'Abernon II, died 1327, Stoke d'Abernon; Sir Robert de Bures, died 1331. Acton, Suffolk; Sir John d'Abernon III, died between 1339 and 1350, Stoke d'Abernon. (All taken from J.G. & L.A.G. Waller, A Series of Monumental Brasses from the 13th to the 16th Century, London, 1864. Extreme right, effigy of Prince John of Eltham, 2nd son of King Edward II, died 1334, Westminster Abbey. N.B. The armour shown on the effigy is almost identical in form to that of Sir John d'Abernon III, but the surface details were applied in either gesso or polychrome that has partly disappeared, so that the mail covering the neck, parts of the arms and legs, and the bottom of the mail shirt above the knees, and also the rosette-shaped rivet-heads on the coat-of-plates above that, are no longer represented. (Taken from C.A. Stothard, Monumental Effigies of Great Britain, London, 1817.)

The explanation for the misdating of the Stoke d'Abernon brasses is a very simple one. There were three successive knightly members of the d'Abernon family named John: grandfather, son and grandson, who died respectively in 1277, 1327, and at an unknown date between 1339 and 1350. Whoever it was that first ascribed dates to the brasses, in or before the beginning of the 19th century,[3] quite arbitrarily identified them with the grandfather and son, instead of the son and grandson. Virtually nothing was then known about the dating of either medieval monuments or medieval arms and armour, so he is not to be blamed for his error. That it remained unchallenged for so long, and has still not been

entirely given up in the parish of Stoke d'Abernon, is an example of the extraordinary durability of the printed words of the nineteenth-century antiquaries.

It will be obvious from what I have written here that the earlier of the two brasses can no longer be regarded as "the oldest church brass in the country". That honour belongs to a small figure of St. Ethelbert that is all that remains of the brass formerly on the tomb/shrine of St. Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford (d. 1382), and is now kept in the Cathedral Treasury. The oldest surviving full figure-brasses are to two ladies, Margaret de Camoys at Trotton, previously mentioned, and Joan de Cobham at Cobham, Kent, both of which are dated to *c.*1310. These are followed by three ecclesiastical and two further female figures before we come to the first military brasses, Sir William de Setvans (*d.* 1322), Chartham, Kent, Sir Roger II de Trumpington (d. 1326), and, finally, Sir John d'Abernon II (d. 1327).[4]

In conclusion, I should like to place on record that I gave all the information contained in this article, and a photocopy of Dr. Binski's article, to the late Rev. John H.L. Waterson while he was still Rector of Stoke d'Abernon. His refusal to believe any of it can only be described as an act of negative faith!

NOTES

1. Published in The Earliest English Brasses. Patronage, Style and Workshops, edited by John Coales (Monumental Brass Society, 1987), pp. 69-131. Unless otherwise stated, the sources of all the information given in the present article are to be found there. On the general subject of the misdating of the early brasses see also Malcolm Norris's introduction to that book, pp. 5-6.
2. An earlier Seymour Style brass to Lewis de Beaumont, Bishop of Durham (d. 1333), is known only from the indented slab in which it was formerly set, which still survives in Durham Cathedral.
3. Jules Viard & Eugène Déprez (eds.) Chronique de Jean le Bel, 2 vols., Paris, 1904-5, I, pp. 155-6
4. The earliest reference to them known to me is in the first edition of C.A. Stothard's Monumental Effigies of Great Britain, London, 1817, p. 53. This, in fact, only illustrates the later brass - probably because the other was not accessible - for which he gives the date 1327.
5. This list excludes the many surviving slabs retaining the indents of pre-1337 brasses, and various fragments that have survived in the form of palimpsests, that is, brasses that have been turned over and engraved on the reverse side. These are all discussed by Binski.

THE COTTAGE, CHURCH WALK, LEATHERHEAD

By VERA MARY JONES (COLLYER)

Introduction, by Alun Roberts

This article was written by Vera Jones (née Easdown), who was born in Leatherhead in Pretoria Cottages, Kingston Road (No 216) and now lives in Fetcham with her present husband Ken Jones. She has lived and worked in Leatherhead all her life and was married until his death in 1968 to Neil Collyer, the nephew of Harvey Collyer, who had the misfortune of being one of those who died when the Titanic sank[1,2]. After working as a nanny for a family in Tyrrells Wood for some time, she was introduced to Neil in 1945 (he had been a prisoner of the Germans throughout the War, having been one of the many Allied servicemen captured at Dunkirk) and began lodging with his family at their house in Church Walk (No 31). They wanted to marry but could not until they were able to find somewhere of their own to live. This is the story of their first house in Vera's own words. I have added a few explanatory comments, shown in italics.

Fig. 1. Nos. 21-27, Church Walk, Leatherhead

The Cottage

"Neil and I had been looking for somewhere to live for such a long time. We had been engaged for two years and it seemed as though we would never get married. Neil's mother Minnie lived in Church Walk, as her family had for many years. I was lodging with them at the time, but we could not be married until we had found a place of our own. I think that this

was because Minnie did not want to give up her son; she had brought him up almost on her own, and like many mothers did not want to lose him. However this does not mean that we did not have a good relationship with family after our marriage. We often used to get together to play cards.

Church Walk is just what it sounds like, a walk-way that leads from the Crescent to Highlands Road, where stands the lovely old Norman Church where most of us local people were baptised, confirmed, married and buried. There lie my Father, my Grandparents and probably my Great Grandparents, but I digress.

In Church Walk there were four clapboard cottages called China Row, quite old and one of them (No 21) was already boarded up and condemned. *(They were built in 1815 by Benjamin Simmons, a local carpenter and builder whose works were at the junction of Church Walk and Church Road; China Row is almost certainly a corruption of its original name Cheyne Row – there is no connection with any local china industry.)* One was empty as the old gentleman Mr William Botting who lived there had been hospitalised. The end one (No 27) was occupied by a widow and her two teenage children. That left No 23 which was soon to become vacant as the two old people there were going to live with one of their children. The widow Mrs. Lamming told Neil about the house and he wrote to the landlord, the grocer Mr Jenden (who he knew) to see if we could rent it. We were so excited when he wrote back to say we could have it, the rent to be 6 shillings and 6 pence a week (32½ pence). The year I should say was 1948.

Our New House

After the old couple moved out we got the keys and went to have a look at what was to be our very own home. It was very small, just four rooms, two up and two down with a staircase going up through the middle of the house with a door at the bottom of the stairs *(i.e. closing off the upper storey).* All the doors had latches on them *(typically Georgian)* and some of the windows were made of greenish bottle glass. There was an open range fire with an oven in the living room and a small fireplace in the kitchen which we were advised by Mrs. Lamming not to use as the chimney was also the chimney of the boarded up house next door *(this would have been a small chimney serving both the kitchen fire and the copper).*

We had to have the chimney sweep before we could light a fire in the living room as we had no idea how bad it might be. He made an awful mess with soot everywhere so the chimney must have been pretty bad, and could have been dangerous. Those were the days when children would be sent into the garden to look up and see the sweep's brush pop out of the chimney. I must admit I did it then.

There was a built-in copper in the corner of the kitchen, which I had no intention of using as I had seen my mother using one of these old coppers when I was a child. You had to light a fire under it to heat the water to boil the white washing. *(All sheets etc. were made of white cotton in those days).* My dear mother slaved over that wretched copper as indeed many women had to do at that time.

There was a cold water tap and an old gas cooker black with grease, a larder, a cupboard under the stairs and a built in dresser. There was no electricity, just two gas lights downstairs and nothing upstairs, so it was up to bed by candlelight. There was a gas meter in the living

room which we had to feed with pennies: when the pennies ran out so did the lights. The gas lights had mantles which were very fragile and disintegrated easily. They had pretty fluted glass shades. To turn the gas on we pulled a chain with a ring on and lit the mantle with a match; to turn the light off we pulled a chain on the opposite side. We were lucky to be given a gas copper which was very much appreciated for the washing and bathing (in a tin bath).

Fig. 2. Wedding day of Vera and Neil Roberts

Mother gave me two flat irons which I would need for ironing (no electricity) and Mrs. Lamming said I could use her large mangle. The very first time I used it the big wooden rollers broke all the buttons on Neil's shirt, so I had to sit and sew all new buttons on. I never put shirts through the mangle again!

As there was no electricity we had to buy a wireless that ran on accumulators. We had to take them to a shop in the Crescent to be charged when needed.

We Marry and Move In

We were so happy with our little house; we made our plans for the wedding on June 19th 1948, and we spent our time scrubbing and decorating. We hadn't much money so our furniture was second hand, we had just the very basics, no easy chairs or carpets, and Neil had his Grandfather's old wooden armchair. We bought a second hand sofa with a broken spring which was fine after Neil had mended it. It cost 2 shillings and 6 pence (12½ pence). We had a coconut mat in front of the fire, lino on the floor downstairs, and bare boards upstairs which Neil varnished. Even the curtains were given to us by friends and relations.

Most young couples started their married life in two rooms at that time so soon after the end of the war, as there were so few houses to rent. Buying a house never entered our heads; only well off people bought houses and we were quite poor. Neil worked as a gardener at the Blind School and earned £4.10 shillings a week. Before the war Neil had worked at Mould's, a large general store in the High Street: he was promised his job would be there for him when he returned from the Army, but they did not keep their promise. Many men were treated in the same way after the war.

One of the first things we did was to go to the Gas Showrooms which were at the top of Bull Hill to buy a gas cooker. It cost £26 and we paid for it at 2 shillings a week. It took ages before it was really ours, but I didn't want to use the greasy old black stove that was there in the cottage.

We came back from our honeymoon in Scotland to start our married life in our little home. We soon found that we were not alone in the house; we had lodgers, little furry ones, MICE! They proceeded to eat our meagre rations, and they even ate some cold sausages I had left in the larder. I remember particularly the very first jam tart I made. I put it in the larder for the next day's pudding, and when I looked in the morning the mice had eaten all round the edges of the pastry and left little foot-prints in the jam, After that I never left any food about unless it was covered. The mice still came visiting. They used to come out from behind the copper and watch us eating our meal in the kitchen, and they would sit up and wash their faces quite unafraid. They obviously lived in the empty house next door and had done for a long time. There was only one thing to do, get a cat, which we did, a lovely black kitten; as soon as we brought it home it disappeared up the chimney in the kitchen. Neil had to reach up and get the kitten down from the ledge it had perched on; they were both covered in soot so of course there was only one name for our new cat: Sooty. After that Neil boarded the fireplace up. We never saw Sooty catch a mouse, but they vanished all the same.

Another problem we had was woodworm, the house was riddled with it, and they proceeded to eat into our second hand furniture.

Summer

The summer of that year was very good. The cottage was very warm because the ceilings were so very low and bowed, as was the floor. I had a piano then and it wouldn't play properly unless we put wedges under the two front ends to make it stand upright. Everything in the house tended to lean forward drunkenly because the floor sloped so much. Even the mantelpiece sloped to the right so that our clock needed a matchstick underneath it to make it go; it was a striking clock that once belonged to my Aunt Emma and it never recovered from this ungainly position. To this day it will miss an hour and then add it on to the next one; we have a very confused clock. All this reminds me of the nursery rhyme:

'There was a crooked man, who walked a crooked mile

He found a crooked sixpence upon a crooked style

He had a crooked cat that caught a crooked mouse

And they all lived together in a little crooked house.'

Summer time was lovely in our little crooked house. We had quite a long front garden which was a real cottage garden with old fashioned flowers in it; we had the most beautiful chrysanthemums I have ever seen, they were a dark red shaggy type, and I have never seen any like them since. We also had hollyhocks, lupins, delphiniums, marigolds, and the most beautiful scented red roses. They were much admired by passers-by and on one occasion a lady asked me if she could buy a bunch of chrysanthemums to take to the Churchyard. I felt guilty at asking sixpence (2½p) for them, but at that time every little helped.

Fig. 3. Life in no. 23 Church Walk: Vera (left) at the front door; Neil (centre) and Vera (right) in the back garden.

Autumn

The back garden was not so long, which was just as well as the flush toilet (the only one) was in the red tiled barn at the bottom of the garden. This was all right when the weather was fine but, Oh dear, when it rained it was quite a different matter altogether. The way to the barn was just a dirt path and when it rained heavily the back garden would flood and the path turned to mud. We needed Wellington boots and a brolly to get to the loo and at night a torch. I never saw a mouse in the barn but there were spiders. Oh how I hated spiders and still do.

The roof of the cottage also had heavy red tiles, and the rain always found its way in; we used to lie in bed listening to the musical sounds of rain drops falling into various bowls and buckets. Sitting up in a bed covered in raincoats was not funny at the time, but looking back I can now see the funny side of it. How we dreaded heavy rain. The living room chimney went straight up and the rain came straight down, splattering everything with soot, including my washing which was drying on a clotheshorse in front of the fire.

In Church Walk there were cottages on either side and almost opposite our cottage were the Alms Houses run by a local charity *(now Leatherhead United Charities).* While we were living in the cottage I used to work for the charity cleaning the communal areas in the Alms Houses for the four old ladies who lived there. Three of the old ladies were real dears, but one was a tartar. She had been in service and treated me like her personal servant. It was "Do this, do that". I had to remind her that I was there to help all the ladies and not just her! I did not get much money for this work, (£1.4s a week) but as it was just across the way it was very convenient. I used to collect my wages from an office in Leatherhead every week.

Church Walk was so close to the town and shops, and only five minutes walk from the Crescent Cinema. We used to go there twice a week. The films changed on Thursdays and

an old film was shown on Sundays. Seats were ninepence and one shilling and ninepence. The best seats were in the circle and cost two shillings and three pence. We used to pay ninepence!

The walk home was quite scary for me because of the bats that flew around Church Walk; I used to cover my head with my hands as I remembered my Mother telling me they would get in my hair. I know that this is an old wives tale, but I never forgot the rhyme she used to say when I was a child:

'Bat, Bat, fly in my hat and I will give you some bread and fat.'

The bats probably lived in the church belfry which was very close by. I was always glad to get indoors.

We always dreaded Tuesday nights as this was practice night for the bell ringers which seemed to go on for hours. Being so close it was very noisy *(this was before the existing baffles were installed).*

Leatherhead was a lovely little town in those days. There were lots of small shops, no supermarkets, and no one way traffic or charity shops. I loved Leatherhead at that time. One of the biggest shops was Wakefield's; they sold almost everything from ribbons to raincoats. I remember the shop assistant put your payment in a canister that hung from wires from the ceiling. She then pulled a cord and the canister went whizzing round the shop to the cashier who unscrewed it, took out your payment and put in your change. Then she sent it back to the assistant in the same way. This fascinated me; I can't remember when they changed to more modern methods.

One more thing about this shop. My mother was for a time cook/housekeeper to Mr. and Mrs. Wakefield. Mother was a very level headed woman, but she told me that the upstairs rooms above the shop were haunted. A woman in white used to pass her in a narrow passage. Mother swore it must have been a ghost. Years later, my neighbour's daughter who worked at the Abbey National Building Society (which used to be Wakefield's shop), told me that the staff heard peculiar noises coming from the empty rooms above. Of course it has all been altered now and the white lady has most probably gone — I wonder?

One day we saw an advertisement for singers, as the Leatherhead Opera and Dramatic Society were starting up again. Rehearsals would be held at the Poplar Road Girl's School *(before the War they had been held at the Constitutional Club in Linden Road).* The show they were going to put on was Merry England by Edward German. We both loved singing (Neil was a very talented musician who composed songs as well as playing the flute) so we decided to go; the school was just up the road a few minutes walk away. I cannot remember how many rehearsals we went to, but I still remember some of the songs we learnt. Then came the big disappointment: they asked for 30 shillings each (£1.50) to be members of the Society. This was a blow to us as we could not afford so much; £3 was an awful lot of money. As I said before, Neil only earned £4.10s a week so we had to leave. The show was eventually put on at the Crescent Cinema and it was lovely. We wished we had been in it instead of watching it.

One day it was pouring with rain and there was a knock on the door. Neil opened it and there stood the Vicar *(Rev Frank Page).* He hurried inside looking very wet and bedraggled; he chatted for a while but kept looking out of the window. We soon realised why when he suddenly said " Oh good its stopped raining must go good-bye" and left. Neil and I laughed.

He had obviously only called to get out of the rain. I think it was a case of any port in a storm!

Winter

The last winter we were living in the cottage there was a very heavy fall of snow and the barn of the boarded up house next door collapsed under the weight of it. We were very frightened that our little house would collapse too. We longed for the snow to melt; well it did melt, inside the house and we were running with water. After this happened housing officers came to inspect the cottage and condemned it. We were then served with a notice to quit by the Council and told that we would be re-housed but they couldn't say when, we just had to wait. We packed the things we could do without ready for the move and were very unsettled. To make matters worse that February was very wet. I have been reading an old diary that I kept from February to April 1951 and I had written 'I went upstairs to make the bed and found that the rain had come through again and the bed was all wet, I had to change the sheets and put a hot water bottle on the bed to dry the mattress. I am so depressed, if only it would stop raining. Mrs. Lamming has a lake from her back door to her barn it's dreadful. I haven't the heart to do much housework as it's all mud round the back and front and it gets trodden indoors.' As it turned out we had to wait until April 1951 for our new house in Fetcham. It was still two up and two down but was newly built and oh the joy of electricity, hot water and a bathroom, so different from a tin bath in front of the fire, it was sheer luxury. I and my husband Ken are still living there today.

These old cottages look very picturesque, but living in one was quite an experience; one which I wouldn't have missed however. It makes one appreciate things in life that are taken for granted these days.

My old cottage was demolished along with the other three about 1951/2."

NOTES

1. Roberts, A. 2003 *Titanic* exhibition at Leatherhead Museum. *Proc.L.&D.L.H.Soc.* **6**, 7, 166.
2. Roberts, A. 2003 The story of the Collyer family, Leatherhead's *Titanic* connection. Leatherhead & District Local History Society.

ASHTEAD'S BRICKFIELDS FROM THE 1840s TO CIRCA 1909

by B. E. Bouchard

Newton Wood Brickfield

The 1868 Ordnance Survey plots a brickfield on Ashtead Common within Newton Wood and, when the Howard estate was broken up, in 1879, the sale catalogue referred to a brick kiln and drying shed with two adjacent three-roomed cottages — let to an agricultural labourer and a gamekeeper each of whom lived in one, under cramped conditions, with his wife and children (a similar situation can be traced back to 1841). One does not know whether the production of bricks on that site continued up to, or indeed beyond, Sir Thomas Lucas' acquisition of manorial rights, including the Common, from the Bagot Trustees during 1885. It seems, however, unlikely that a parochial undertaking in an isolated location north of the railway line would have survived competition with a new business established off Barnett Wood Lane during 1880. Ashtead Common Pond, on Bridleway 38, is believed to be a relic of the former enterprise.

Sparrow Brothers

Both George Peter Sparrow and his older sibling, Isaac, had been born in Suffolk but migrated to the Epsom area before their marriages were registered in that District for 1866 and 1868 respectively. Each of the forenamed was a brick-maker, in 1871 living, together with his wife, at 14 Prospect Place, off East Street, Epsom. Since this address was immediately opposite to Stones' large brickworks, it seems reasonable to infer they had been drawn to that industrial site (developed about 1859) in search of employment.

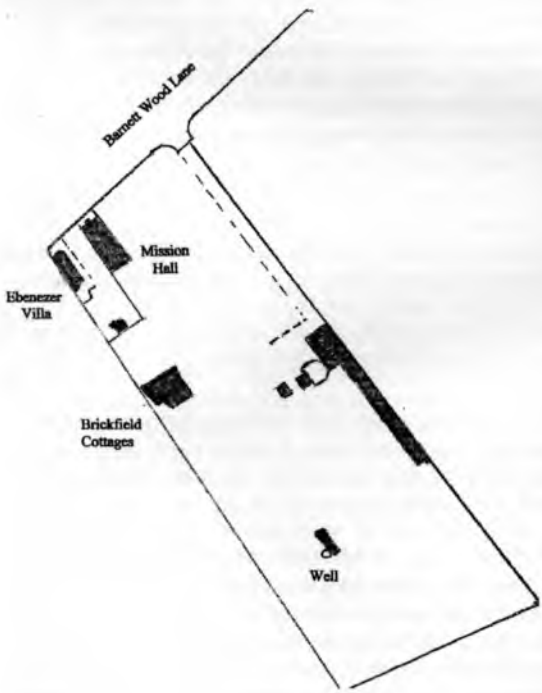

Fig. 1. Sketch Plan of Sparrow's Brick Field in 1874

By 1880, they had moved to cottages in the hamlet of Woodfield, close to *Oakfield Lodge*, Ashtead, George having acquired a field called "Little Glibes" (formerly part of New Purchase Farm land), for the brothers to set up a brick business on their own account[1]. The process of production was simple and required little more capital expenditure.

There were other brickworks in Ashtead at that time. *A History of Ashtead* refers only to "Sparrows brickworks" and associates an old

clay pit which became the "Floral Pool" with their business but, as indicated by Peter Tarplee[2], there were actually rival brick-making ventures from 1896 to about 1906. The clay pit west of Green Lane, Ashtead, in fact belonged to Ashtead Brick Works. What follows is an attempt to clarify the position further.

Sparrows, Brick-makers

Lot 6, New Purchase and Caen Farms, failed to find a buyer at the Howard Estate auction but on 30 September 1879 the Bagot Trustees conveyed an aggregate of 263 acres by private treaty to William Gilford, land owner, of Ridgeway Road, Redhill, who subsequently parcelled up the land and resold parts for development.

G.P. Sparrow purchased field No.70, "Little Glibes", during May 1880, for use as brickworks. No structures were shown on this site when the revised Tithe Apportionment map was drawn up in 1887, suggesting that the bricks were then being burnt in clamps, although, before the 1895 Ordnance Survey, he had proceeded to erect two cottages and a kiln, with other buildings which would have included a drying-shed and possibly a pugmill for blending the raw materials. The rectangular kiln is likely to have been of the simplest "up-draught" type with an open top and no chimney, hot gases from the fire hole finding a way out through the bricks.

In 1891, George and Isaac were occupying the *Brickfield Cottages* (now 216 & 218 Barnett Wood Lane, Ashtead) but, by 1894, G.P. Sparrow appears to have moved to *Ebenezer Villa* (208A) on the Barnett Wood Lane frontage, which became the business address, whilst Isaac remained in *Orchard Cottage*. (Curiously, however, Andrews' 1899 Directory records their individual residences as *Orchard Cottage* for George and *Little Glibes* for Isaac). There may not have been a formal partnership between them because, whilst each brother described himself as "Brick-maker" in the 1901 Census, the younger George was an "Employer" whilst Isaac, then aged 64, was simply noted as on "Own Account, At home".

Complaints are recorded by Epsom RDC as having arisen, during 1896, about the unloading of London manure and ash at Ashtead railway station and, for 1898, over "nuisances" at Mr Sparrow's brickfield apparently related to the receipt of house refuse. In 1901 the Council served abatement notices on George Sparrow, in connection with an accumulation of offensive waste as well as the keeping of travelling gipsy vans in the brickyard, resulting in a fine of £3 with 8/6 costs. Although the proprietor was also alleged to have contravened S70 Highways Act 1835 because the brick-clamp had not been hidden, by November 1901 brick making was finished for that year's season.

Generally, producing hand-made bricks was only carried out between April and September because clay could not be moulded under frosty conditions[3]. A day's work would last for about 15 hours: in that time, an experienced moulder assisted by his team, consisting of a "feeder", "clot-moulder" and "taking-off boy" with someone to set the output to dry, might be expected to produce between 2000 and 3500 bricks. It was common trade-practice to buy in household rubbish collected from dustbins. This "rough stuff" was left in heaps until the vegetable matter had rotted down and it was then sifted to extract fine ash and cinders since it had long been established that bricks became largely self-firing if one mixed coal-ash and chalk with the clay. "Green" bricks of such composition would be stacked in a "hack" to season, protected from rain and frost. After two or three weeks they would be re-laid in a herringbone pattern ("scintled") to expose them to air until completely dry. The raw bricks could then be set for burning in a clamp (otherwise clump) with faggots and larger pieces of

cinder laid between and below the courses. When the fire had been started, carbon residues in the ash ignited to help bake the bricks and produce "London stocks". Raw material was available in abundance, being sold by urban local authorities for one farthing a ton, but sifting out cinders for the purpose was dirty work, often left to women or children employed for a pittance.

Ebenezer Villa is itself constructed preponderantly from "yellow stocks" with red bricks used for external corners to the building, window and door architraves, and string-courses. Some examples of "London stocks" and "reds" recently recovered, following extension of *Oak Villas* on Woodfield, houses with comparable detailing to *Ebenezer Villa*, which carry a date-stone showing 1907, are conjectured to have been produced at Sparrow's Brick Field: they are relatively coarse, with substantial lumps of charcoal remaining in the mix, and are impressed with an oval frog. These buildings were covered with roof slates. A letterhead for Sparrow Bros., Brickmakers, listed the products stocked by the firm as "Red Facing Bricks, Red Closhers, Squints, Splays & Plinths, Rubbers, Draining Pipes, Stocks, Flints, Gravel, &c, &c."

By the beginning of 1904, G. Sparrow had sold half an acre of his land to J.J.De'ath and, in October of that year, Sparrow submitted plans for two houses and shops to be erected in Barnett Wood Lane (possibly those currently numbered 224 & 226) which were sold early in 1906, presumably to realise capital. It had been assumed that another shop, on the eastern corner of the approach to the brick-works, had been built earlier, being similar in style to *Ebenezer Villa*, to become J.L. Bench's news agency (with sub-post office, now 230) extending back down what was to become Church Road but other applications by Sparrow were considered by Epsom RDC on 7 November 1905 and 31 October 1906.

Change in use of the brickyard

John James De'ath, a builder and undertaker, responsible for the construction of many houses along Barnett Wood Lane and in Meadow Road, established depots in various places, at different dates, around Ashtead. He may be found with his family enumerated for the 1901 census between *Brickfield Cottages* and Glebe Road; he had been living in *Rose Cottage* and the record probably relates to that property (now 26 Glebe Road). The half an acre of land mentioned above as acquired from G.P. Sparrow in 1904 may be inferred to have been the old brickyard beside the Gospel Mission Hall (built around 1894). De'ath's business is shown there in a 1911 Directory whilst he was given permission to convert a timber store and joiners machine shop into a motor-works but required to pull down a temporary building erected "near the Chapel"- by 1914/1915 the site had become Bert Hagemann's premises as motor proprietor and cycle agent. Two lock up shops at the entry (208/210) had been attached to *Ebenezer Villa* following planning consent obtained by De'ath in 1913. *Brickfield Cottages* appear to have been owned by J. De'ath as late as 1926.

George Baker takes over the land

George Baker operated a corner-store in Caen Wood Road up to 1905 but he moved during that year to one of Sparrow's newly erected shops on Barnett Wood Lane (226), first as a grocer later as wine and spirit merchant. The *Ashtead Parish Magazine*[4] contains his advertisement for Baker's Household Stores: "High Class Grocer and Confectioner: The Cheapest House in the District for Glass, China and General Ironmongery: A Trial Respectfully Solicited".

By 1907, G.P. Baker was seeking planning consents for further shop development down Barnett Wood Lane and the insertion of a shop-front into an existing house there- from physical evidence of such work, this would have been in respect of *Ebenezer Villa* (208A). He applied for permission to build 52 houses in Church Road on 18 March 1908. Having previously created a storeroom on the site of the redundant kiln, he adapted those premises, in 1909, for use as a skating rink- subsequently to become the "County Cinema". (During 2005 the buildings were cleared for redevelopment as a pair of semi-detached houses.) Thus, available evidence tends to support 1906 for the year in which Sparrows brickworks finally closed down, as generally accepted previously.

Oakfield Lodge and Captain William FitzHenry's Oakfield Estate[5]

William FitzHenry, a retired Quartermaster from the 60th Foot (King's Royal Rifle Corps), was elevated to the honorary rank of Captain on 7 August 1880. About that time he had acquired two cottages, gardens and orchards on the corner of Woodfield, Ashtead, before arranging for the erection of *Oakfield Lodge* (opposite what has become St George's Christian Centre), plus other land (Long Shaw field, Little Shaw & Little Shaw field and Barnett Wood Field) which had formed part of New Purchase Farm running west from Green Lane, between Barnett Wood Lane and the railway line, to the old boundary with Leatherhead, all, presumably, from the William Gilford mentioned earlier. By 1885, he had died at *The Shaw* (demolished to provide a site for 135-139 Barnett Wood Lane) and mortgagees took possession but his 40 acres, or so, of land intended for new housing proved difficult to sell, partly because of the distance of most of it from Ashtead Village and the railway station.

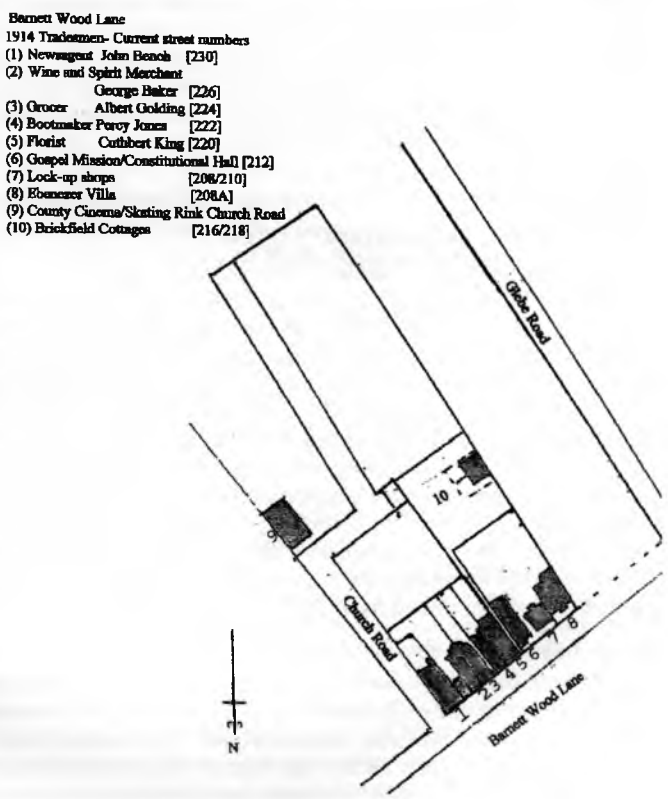

Fig. 2. Sparrow's Brick Field: the area in 1914

Ashtead Brick Works founded by J. L. P. Sanderson

James Lyon Playfair Sanderson, born in Madras, India, on 29 January 1852[6] to the wife of a Surgeon in the Honourable East India Company's Service, had been engaged in the tea trade (in Fu-chau (Fuzhou), China, between 1874 & 1887, and, subsequently, to 1894, at St George's House, Eastcheap, London), but his business ventures failed leaving him heavily in debt. From March 1895 to August 1906 he was employed as manager of the Invicta Brick Company Ltd., Southall. In October 1896, whilst still "hopelessly insolvent", he purchased the remainder of the undeveloped and previously unsold land formerly owned by FitzHenry (extending over rather less than 30 acres but including three houses) for £9,000 on mortgage. He immediately proceeded to construct a brick works, spending around £5,000 on kilns together with plant and machinery also using borrowed money, and, in 1897, went on to acquire a site on the north side of Barnett Wood Lane with a return frontage down the west of Green Lane which originally had been scheduled for an Hotel or a Tavern. (A brick stamped with the manufacturer's initials, "J L P S", and "Ashtead" in the frog, after moulding, has been lodged with the L & D LHS Museum in Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street, Leatherhead. A roofing tile is also reported to have been discovered, impressed "Rainproof-Ashtead", which seems likely to have been manufactured on the site under its first owner.). Unsurprisingly, given his precarious financial position, the mortgagees had foreclosed by 1899 forcing Sanderson to file for bankruptcy[7].

N.M. Inman takes over the brickfield

Following an offer for sale of the works with 10 acres of brick earth in March 1900, Marshall Nisbet Inman, an architect and landowner[8], appears to have taken over the brickfield, including a strip alongside the southern end of Green Lane, but not the rest of what was once FitzHenry land, before appointing James Sanderson as his Manager. (The latter is so described in the 1901 Census where he may be found living in *Oaklea* [*Oaklands*]- 123 Barnett Wood Lane- with his family and a servant.) The business took off as the "Ashtead Brick Works" and by 1905 this firm was advertising the availability of "Stocks, Wire Cuts and Face Bricks, Tiles and Quarries". The reference to "wire cuts" is to a mechanical process in which clay is extruded, by piston or screw, in a strip from which bricks can be cut by knives – thought by Victorian architects as unacceptable for facings unless re-pressed when partly dried. Renovation of 205 Barnett Wood Lane, Ashtead, one of the houses built by Henry Skilton[9] in 1905/6, has revealed unnamed bricks believed to have been sourced both from Sparrow's yard across the road and, machine-produced by extrusion in wire-cut and re-pressed (with a shallow square frog) forms, from the Ashtead Brick Works. The former are hand-moulded and identical to those from *Oak Villas* mentioned earlier whilst the latter are made from solid red clay without obvious addition of other material.

A 1912 revision of the Ordnance Survey map shows three Kilns of the disused Brick Works in the northeast corner between Green Lane and the railway line. Three circular structures represented at the rear are suggested to be smokestacks associated with tunnels reported to have been unearthed in the gardens of modern houses erected on the site. They are likely to have been flues from rectangular downdraught kilns worked intermittently with the heat carefully controlled to produce bricks of consistent quality (as distinct from the more fuel-efficient continuous type invented by Friedrich Hoffmann in 1859).

Problems had been experienced including Barnett Wood Lane being "stopped up" during 1901, preventing supplies of coal from being conveyed to the kiln, and, in the following

year, over a complaint about damage caused to the road and footpath, at the junction of Skinners Lane and Barnett Wood Lane, by the passage of traction engines with wagons carting bricks. A statutory notice was served on Sanderson, in 1903, which required the abatement of smoke nuisance, and during 1906 he was accused of allowing the footpath down Green Lane to be damaged by the continual passing of the traction engine. It has been said that the clay pit "hit a spring" causing the workings to become flooded by rising ground water. Since the adjacent land had passed to different owners, Ashtead Brick Works was then forced to look for material further afield, on Piggott's Farm, over the Leatherhead border. Access to the new quarry (on a site presently covered by the M25 embankment) could be gained along what became Oakhill Road before passing through a gap next to *May Villas* in the line of houses put up along Caen Wood Road. In its turn this later excavation became flooded, possibly hastening the cessation of brick production that finished completely around 1909. In any event, from 1881, increasing use had been made of oil-bearing Oxford clay discovered at the village of Fletton, near Peterborough, which allowed the production of self-firing bricks without the addition of coal-ash. During the early twentieth century, machine-made "flettons" became widely available across the home-counties and contributed to the closure of numerous traditional brick works.

Fig. 3. The area of the Ashtead Brick Works in 1912, after their premises had fallen into disuse.

Subsequent history

The original flooded quarry, "long disused", became "a favourite bathing place for the lads of the neighbourhood". In July 1911, Arthur Buck and John Cates got into difficulties in the deep water but, dramatically, both were rescued by Frederick Hampton who was awarded medals for his bravery. Tragically, however, on the following 2 August, George Lisney drowned whilst swimming there.

During the autumn of 1912, Ashtead Parish Council asked Epsom Rural District Council to negotiate with the vendors of the Oakfield Estate with a view to acquiring land for the purposes of building a dust-destructor and "affording other facilities for the destruction of refuse in the Parish". Having inspected land adjoining Oakhill Road as well as "Messrs. Inman's brickfield", a sub-committee reported that no complaints had been received over the deposit of house refuse and members could not recommend incurring the relatively high costs involved in establishing and running a "two-cell destructor".

Described as the "Carp Pond" during the "twenties", the second flooded pit was turned into a fishing hole, reputed to have been 90 feet deep: later, regarded as hazardous, it was used as a tip to become completely filled in by the start of WW11.

At the end of the Great War when the old brickfield site had been taken over by Henry Weller, a nurseryman, for use as a Rose Garden, the original pool was landscaped to be equipped with steps and a diving board. One of the three redundant brick-kilns on this site was, during the Second World War, adapted as a bomb-shelter provided with bunk beds. Weller's former "Floral Pool" on The Chase is now the only obvious relic of brick working in the locality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to Peter Tarplee and David Atkinson for access to some of their early research notes on the brickworks around Ashtead and to Jack Willis who produced additional material from the Society's archives[10]. Mrs Rachel M. Hart, Archivist at the University of St. Andrews, kindly provided information about the Playfair family.

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PARK FARM, FETCHAM

An historical sketch of 250 years

By EDRED TIMS

In his article on Fetcham Park, Benger[1] researched the three Domesday Manors of Fetcham, progressing to 1655 before the presence of the manor house, in the ownership of Anthony Vincent, became the point when first mention is made of the composition of the estate. Anthony's son, Thomas Vincent, apparently started to rebuild the house prior to his early death in 1700, and mention is made of 'Cannon Farm, Church Farm and The Mill' in Fetcham. It can be confidently assumed that 'Church Farm' was renamed 'Park Farm' by Arthur Moore or by the Hankey family, subsequent purchasers of the estate

The canals and fountains that formed features of the estate were supplied by water drawn from Leatherhead (?from the millpond, although it is recorded that these features and the house were supplied from 'deep springs drawn up by engine'). Following the ownership by Thomas Revell, who purchased the estate in 1737, his daughter Jane married Sir George Warren who commissioned a survey of his Fetcham estate in 1777[2,3].

Thomas Hankey, a Fenchurch Street banker, purchased the estate in 1788, and it remained in the Hankey family until the death of his great grandson, John Bernard Hankey, on 24th May 1914. In the sale catalogue of May 1788 the features of the estate include :-

"The House, seated on a beautiful lawn, refreshed by a canal and surrounded by a verdant paddock in part paled: also an elegant Cottage Farm House, Stabling, Farm and Stack yard, Piggery, Poultry house, and every convenience suitably calculated for the conducting of a farm".

It is the mention of the farm and the waterworks needed to supply the house and fountains that provides the focal point for this history of Park Farm. The maps (fig. 1) illustrate the area that formed the major part of the farming enterprise, but the first consideration is how the water supply was provided, both for the house and for the farm, when it is realised that the subsoil is chalk to a considerable depth. Geoffrey Hayward[4] describes the dimensions of the subterranean tank, still existing beneath a property in the present day Rookery Close. This would have supplied the water to Fetcham Park House and the numerous fountains and water features in the garden. Linked to this reservoir was a smaller tank in Park Farm, situated beneath the farm buildings, between the slaughter house and the piggeries. The Park Farm tank was revealed during excavations in 1996, undertaken during the building of the new '*Quickset*' house for Mr Ray Penfold. The dimensions of the tank can only be estimated from the courses of brickwork remaining; it was approximately 5 feet in depth with an estimated capacity of 500 cubic feet. The piping was 2 inches in diameter, with walls 3/8" thick. The collar jointing was sealed with molten lead, providing a very effective pressure seal.

Of the two possible methods of pumping water to these tanks, the watermill is the more likely as the windmill, sited at the top of the present day The Mount, would require a constant energy supply to operate a pumping system, and the presence of a favourable wind could not be guaranteed. The windmill is more likely to have been used for grain milling and the miller probably lived in the nearby cottage that is listed in the early insurance schedules for 1793-1800. The windmill is shown on the 1777 schedule of property by Sir

George Warren and listed as "Mill Three Storeys; Millers House; Stable and room behind". By 1804 it no longer appeared in the Hankey records and had been taken out of use. Likewise, the miller's cottage does not appear as an asset on the estate records, but it still exists as a private residence off the Guildford Road.

The insurance documents list the properties and buildings with their individual values:-

Fire Mark 94011 (1793-1800). Premium 7/6 to 1799 then 10/- 1800 but renewed £300 timber £200 thatch Ditto £75 Brick £225 timber £200. Thatch on certain buildings valued as per margin situate in the Park at Fetcham aforesaid consisting of the Gardeners Cottage, house, Cottage, Barns etc

	Dimensions		*value*	*Cost sq/ft in plan*
Cottage 2 storey	23x12	276	100	0.362
Lean to	23x15	345	20	
Stables	82x22	1804	100	0.055
Granary	24x22	528	20	0.038
Open Sheds	114x17	1938	60	
Stables	43x17	731	50	
Gardeners House 2 storey	24x14	336	150	0.446

(The Gardeners cottage is taken to be the later Post Office, earlier known as 'Pitts')

Fire Mark 94011 (1800-1807) Premium 10/- Ditto £300 timber £200 Thatch on the Bailiffs house etc values as per margin situate near one corner of the Park in Fetcham in the County of Surrey late in the possession of John Joy and the Gardeners Cottage near the gate. *('Quickset' & Post Office*)

Bailiffs House	30x25	750	145	0.193
(Cow) House	24x17	408	30	
(Barns etc)	108x20	2160	150	
(details obscure)	154.15	2310	75	
Gardeners Cottage	24x14	336	100	0.298

Eli Lemon lived in the cottage (*'Quickset'*) and for 39 years was Head Carter to Hankey. Mrs Lemon organised teas for the Fetcham Park Polo Club that was formed in 1892 on transfer of the Ashtead Polo Club (founded 1883) when their ground ceased to be available. Polo was played every Saturday (see fig. 1) and the players' changing rooms were part of the farm buildings. Before 1914, two brothers of Princess Alice, the Duke of Teck and the Earl of Athlone, played there. There is also record of the Baron King (Earl of Lovelace) joining them from Horsley Towers.

Park Farm buildings (figs. 1, 2)

The existing buildings of the former Park Farm were all erected within a period of a few years,, and the likely dates centre around 1750. The buildings show features similar to those still to be seen on Roaring House Farm and the restored granary located in the grounds of Manor House School, Bookham. Park Farm house has been replaced by a modern house

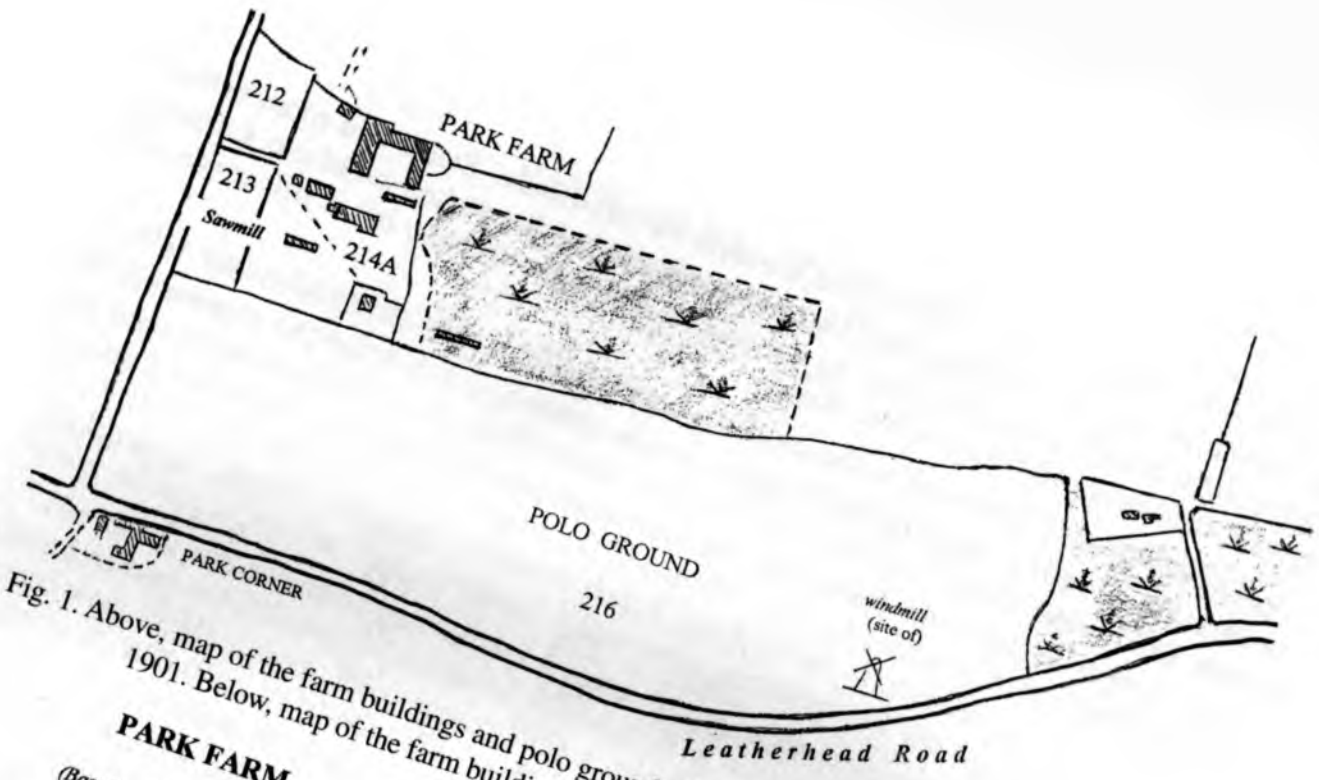
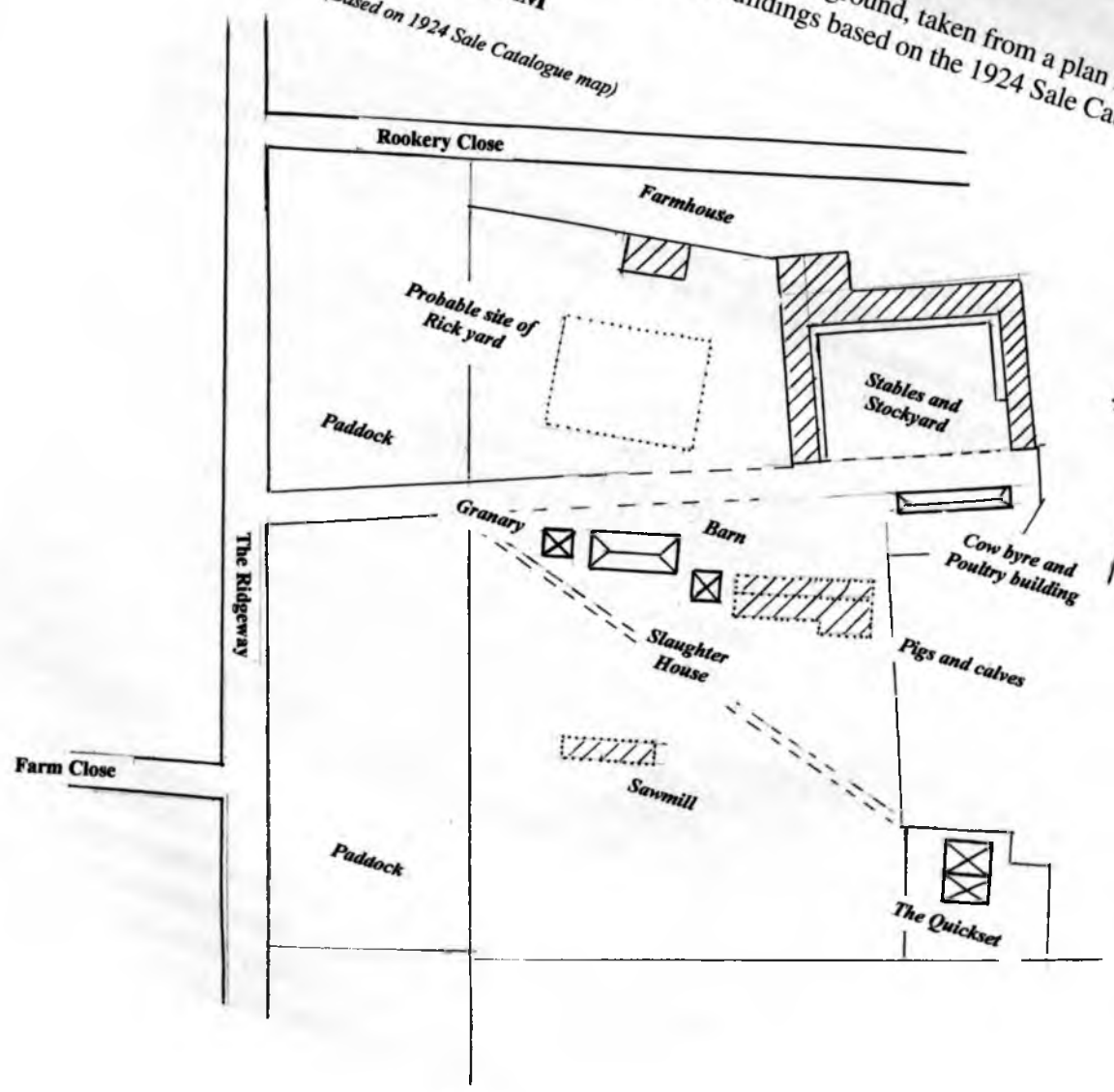


Fig. 1. Above, map of the farm buildings and polo ground, taken from a plan in the deed of 8th January 1901. Below, map of the farm buildings based on the 1924 Sale Catalogue map.



fronting on Rookery Close, and the former stackyards and stabling are traceable only in outline in the gardens of adjacent properties. The latter were destroyed by fire sometime around 1927, when the whole property was in the ownership of Hilary Blackmore, although there is no documentation or newspaper reports of this happening.

The farming practice was mixed, as there were fields set aside for growing grain and cuts for hay. The buildings housed the working horses, a small herd of cattle for milk and meat plus a number of pigs. It is likely that polo ponies were also kept on the farm and would require fodder from the fields and grazing.

Fig. 2. Photograph of some of the buildings of Park Farm, Fetcham from the west. Taken from the Sale Catalogue of 1924.

The Barn (fig. 3)

The four-bay, open fronted barn housed the machinery which, in later years, would accommodate the steam threshing machine and associated equipment. The barn was constructed with 9 inch square oak columns on brick foundations, supporting a roof of clay tiling. The open slatted sides provided circulation for any feeding stuffs that may have needed temporary cover, although most grain was kept in stacks until threshing. The four bays, each nine feet in width, gave a 36 foot frontage and a depth of 28 feet. In 1954 this was tastefully converted into a two bedroomed cottage by Richard McFall, to provide accommodation for his mother. John Lawrence, the current owner, has added improvements including a guest room in the roof and a unique staircase access.

Fig. 3. The barn prior to conversion (left), and the granary on its staddle stones (right).

The Granary (fig. 3)

Adjacent to the barn is the granary, mounted on 30" staddles and isolated from ground vermin by a retractable set of steps that could be drawn into the building through the doorway. It is constructed from local grown timber cut as weatherboarding and liberally dressed with a tar mixture for waterproofing. It is tiled with clay tiles and still exhibits the crossbeam construction with a centre king post supporting the apex of the roof and providing diagonal struts for the tile-bearing beams. Fourteen vertical panels with 11 inch spacing plus 2 ½" square struts form each of the 20 foot walls, creating an area available for the storage of several hundred bushels of grain in large wooden bins.

The Slaughterhouse

The smaller building to the east of the barn was the slaughterhouse. Apart from the garage door now used to prvide access for a car, the construction is unchanged. The floor is rough tiled, with a drainage channel to disperse the fluids from slaughter. The roof beams are substantial and feature a cross beam of at least 9 inches square, supporting a 'roller' and hooks that were used to lift and hang the unfortunate beast after killing. The building is 14 feet square (internal dimension) and constructed of local timber weatherboarding, treated in the same manner as the barn.

The Cow byre and Poultry house (fig. 4)

The cow byre and poultry house fronted the now defunct stockyard. The building still contains evidence of a milking parlour, as the eastern end has a graded floor and exits for drainage to an external channel. Metal rings in the floor identify the ties where the cows were secured when milked, and one wall still bears the limewash that gave the hygienic appearance of a cow stall. The western end of the building housed poultry and, presumably,

Fig. 4. The cow byre (left) and poultry unit (right).

farm implements. In one section there remains evidence of the 'changing room' for polo players, as the clothing pegs and washstands for bowls are still fitments.

The remaining surviving building, *The Rookery* (formerly '*The Quickset*'), was originally a four-roomed cottage for farm staff and, in later years, home for the farm bailiff. It is a substantial building, with a deep cellar under the living room that is accessed by a trap door and has a standing height of six feet. Hewn out of the living chalk, it is unlined but did not exhibit any problems of damp. In 1927, and more recently, the cottage has changed into a larger attractive residence approached from *The Beeches*. The former owner, Mr.Ray Penfold, has built his new residence within the former grounds of Park Farm. It is from documents provided by him that much of the history of Park Farm has been assembled. His property, '*The Quickset*' is named after a condition in a former sale document requiring that the boundaries of the farm be delineated by (quickset) hedging

The plan of the farm buildings (fig. 1) is taken from the sale of the Fetcham Park Estate in 1924 and shows the outline of the buildings at the time of purchase by Hilary Blackmore. A report from the Leatherhead Advertiser reports the fire at the farm on 14th August 1911 and serves to identify these buildings and the threat posed to them by the blaze.

Farm Fire at Fetcham Park

Two brigades engaged

"A fire which broke out on Monday morning in the stackyard of Fetcham Park Farm, owned by Mr. J. Barnard Hankey JP did a considerable amount of damage, and, but for the promptness with which it was dealt with by the estate employees and the Leatherhead Fire Brigade would probably have destroyed the whole of the farm buildings. The outbreak was discovered about 9 o'clock by an employee named Tickner; the fire at that time being

confined to a new hay rick standing near an extensive range of stables and granaries, and in the middle of a number of stacks of hay, wheat and oats some of which had only been built during the previous week

Another estate employee named Reader at once cycled to Leatherhead and, to the alarm given on the Waterworks steam whistle, the Leatherhead brigade made a very prompt response. The manual engine, fully manned, being on its way to the scene of the outbreak in less than five minutes after the receipt of the call.

In the meantime, the estate workmen had taken prompt measures to prevent the spread of the flames to the farm buildings which, from their close proximity to the blazing stack, and the inflammable condition of the sun-dried and tarred wood of which they were constructed, were in great danger of igniting. In the buildings were several horses and foals, as well as a number of pigs and calves and these were all safely got out and turned into adjoining fields.

Near the farm yard is a large covered brick reservoir, supplied both from the Fetcham Millpond and the Leatherhead mains and, from this plentiful supply of water was obtained, buckets being used to convey it to the scene of the fire. It was realized that it was hopeless to attempt to save the rest of the stacks and one elevator shed but excellent service was done by the men in cooling the sides of the buildings nearest to the blaze.

On their arrival, the Leatherhead brigade found seven stacks fully alight, there being only one not involved. A junction hose was connected to a hydrant in the Guildford-Leatherhead road but, on account of its elevated position, the pressure was found to be insufficient and a further supply was obtained through the manual engine from the reservoir in the farmyard. A strong breeze fortunately carried the flames away from the stables and a range of piggeries and cart sheds on the other side of the roadway and, by occasionally damping those buildings, the firemen were able to confine the flames to the stackyard. Had the cart sheds caught, the fire would have assumed much larger dimensions for, immediately at the back of them is a sawpit and timber yard containing steam machinery. It was considered advisable, when the fire was at its height, to remove the contents of the granary, which included forty quarters of old wheat and a quantity of meal, it being thought that the breaking up of the stacks, which were chiefly built on frames, might ignite the eighth stack. Fortunately they settled down without falling over and, by means of damped sail cloths this stack was saved.

In the work of removing the contents of the grain store, the maids of Fetcham Park House lent valuable aid and they were also of considerable assistance in relieving and assisting the men at the pumps. Soon after mid-day the Cobham brigade arrived with their steamer and this proved very effective in pumping from the reservoir into the feeder mains of which the Waterworks Company had turned extra pressure. By three o'clock much of the damaged wheat from two of the stacks nearest the buildings had been forked out and removed to a field nearby and all danger of the fire spreading had been averted but both brigades, with a large number of estate hands worked hard until darkness set, cutting out the burning portions of the ricks and subduing the flames. It was necessary to remain by the fire all night and salvage operations were continued throughout Tuesday.

Chief Officer van Bergen was in charge of the Leatherhead brigade, the Cobham firemen in charge of Supt. James. Fireman Lewer, of the Bookham brigade, also attended and brought with him a supply of hose. Whilst the fire was at it's height, one of the firemen

noticed smoke rising in a field near the main road and a number of men who went to investigate found a length of hedge blazing furiously. Prompt measures were taken to prevent the fire spreading to a fir plantation and a number of ricks.

The cause of the farmyard fire was spontaneous ignition of a large hay rick which the farm bailiff had made arrangements to cut open on Monday morning after having noticed that it was heating The damage is covered by insurance".

ooooOOOOoooo

All the surviving properties are privately owned, and I am grateful for the assistance provided by Ray Penfold Esq and John Lawrence Esq in allowing me free access to their properties and records. I also acknowledge the support of my colleague Alan Pooley in providing background notes and insurance details.

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'KING'S WAYS' IN BOOKHAM

By DEREK RENN

At the Society's meeting in December 2004 on "What happened to that road?", Mr Keith Stanley started a debate on what was a King's way, and whether any such had existed in our area. I resolved to investigate these questions further, and uncovered a surprising situation in medieval Bookham.

Introduction

Saxon charters indicate roads which only served local purposes, others (in increasing order of importance or width) leading to the next town or market, suitable for local troops or for the national *fyrd*. The laws of Edward the Confessor extended the king's peace over four great highways (Watling Street, Ermine Street, Fosse Way and the Icknield Way)[1]. The Roman road network must have remained passable: on 1 October 1066, King Harold at York heard of Duke William's landing at Pevensey (some 270 miles away by road) only three days earlier[2]. But royal messengers in the thirteenth and fourteenth century normally averaged only thirty miles or so a day (whether on foot or horseback) on circuits of up to eight days[3].

Until the Act of 1522, placing responsibility on the parish, road maintenance was largely a matter of self-interest. Disputes usually arose over actual obstruction or flooding from blocked ditches. They would usually be settled by the manor or shire court but, where the dispute involved more than one manor or lord, the Crown might become involved. A letter would be sent to the itinerant royal justices or county sheriff, directing them to establish whether the road was a *viaregia*, a road of importance to the king (and if so, who was answerable for it) or a *via communa* or lesser road[4]. Domesday Book (1086) contains both *via publica* and *via regis*; the comparable 'street' term *stratapublica* first appears in the 9th century, and *strataregia* about 1160[5]. In 1281 there was a plea in the king's court revolving around the right of way along a 'royal road' through the Welsh Marches of Gower[6].

In 1215–16, the forces of King John and the rebels successively swept westward across Surrey to Guildford, probably along the North Downs. Medieval kings and other travellers avoided the Weald if possible[7] but there is at least one early exception. After King John's death on October 1216, London was still in the hands of the rebels, and the regents for the infant King Henry III kept him in the West Country until early 1217, when a short tour to probe the strength of the opposition in south-east England was made. Royal letters were dated from Chertsey (25 February), Dorking (27–28 February) and Lewes (2 March)[8]. As the crow flies, Chertsey to Dorking is about 15 miles, Dorking to Lewes is 30 miles. So a route, passable even in winter, must have existed through the Weald here by 1217. The Gough map of *c.* 1360 marks a road from London by way of Kingston, Cobham, Guildford and Farnham to Winchester, Salisbury and Exeter; another road, this time through the Weald, is suggested by the marking of Croydon, Dorking, Horsham and Shoreham[9].

Bookham and Chertsey Abbey

Twenty *mansae* [measures of land] in *Bocham cum Effingeham* were said to have been given to Chertsy abbey in AD727. Although the extant documents are forgeries, they probably record an actual event[10]. Certainly in 1086, Chertsey still owned Great Bookham and a string of manors between it and the abbey [Cobham, Byfleet, Esher, parts of Effingham and

Weybridge], together with Epsom and West Clandon and others further away in Surrey. The other major landowner in pre-Norman central Surrey was the Crown [Ashtead, Little Bookham, Dorking, Fetcham, Leatherhead and the rest of Effingham][11]. A look at a map shows how Bookham was a focal point for collecting goods for the abbey, and suggests the need for a way leading north across the claylands to supplement the east-west route along the springline. As well as Chertsey Abbey, the very rich royal manor of Dorking needed rapid access to the main road between London and Guildford: the shortest distance was *via* Cobham[12].

The Chertsey Abbey Cartularies

The mid-fifteenth century register calendars just over 1,300 documents, including a few later additions[13]. The deeds are mainly property transactions, of which an hundred specify a road as one of the boundaries. Of this hundred, over sixty describe it as a King's road, street, or way (hereafter KW for short). The KW vary enormously in length, from the road from Salisbury to London down to Bread Street in the City. Of the 45 deeds relating to Great Bookham, 24 mention a road boundary, 21 of them being a KW. So, although Bookham accounts for under 4% of the total documents, it contains over 30% of the KW in the cartularies. Of the rest of the Bookham deeds, nine name only neighbouring lands and/or their holders, and twelve give no boundaries.

The earliest *roads* mentioned anywhere in the register are the 'way which leads [from Polesden] towards Dunley' (1197/1206) and 'the way which leads [from Bookham] towards Dorking' (1210/23)[14]. KW make their first appearance in the register about thirty years later, almost simultaneously when a King's street is mentioned in Stanwell *c.* 1239/43, and in a 1243/44 grant of a six-foot-broad ditch 'in the vill of Bookham next *Bocwode*... ...as much as is contained within the two King's ways which extend towards Dorking'[15]. These may be the KW from Cobham towards Dorking of 1342 and that from Cobham towards Polesden of 1406/7, one of which ran through Slyfield[16]. So at least one north-south KW ran through Bookham, not just from it. Grants of 1340–42 mention KW from Bookham to Polesden, south from Bookham or from Dorking to Bookham[17].

It is tempting to identify these KW as today's Bagden/Chapel Lane and Connicut Lane: the early medieval chapel on the former was probably for travellers rather than settlers. Christopher Currie has argued that one KW was a trackway (now the National Trust 'Valley Walk') running east from Polesden Farm to Bagden[18]. This is a possibility, although the grant mentions both *Bocwode* and *Southwode*, and the land may have been elsewhere: Polesden was a large estate extending from Effingham to Mickleham. Did this road run westward, ending in the curious landscape features around Yewtrees Farm[19], or turn northward? The Clay map of 1614–17 marks Chalkpit Lane as part of a continuous boundary lane from Ranmore via Preston to Downside[20]. Other possibilities exist: Crabtree Lane runs past Bookham Wood to this day and, further west still, a series of lanes and footpaths run from London Cross (East Horsley) northwards by way of Old London Lane in Greatlee Wood (Effingham) at least as far as Bolder Mere (via Old Lane) or Downside[21].

Land on the east side of the King's street in the vill of Bookham is mentioned in 1333 and 1340[22]. The grant of 1436/7 of a cottage 'between the KW which is towards the cemetery of the church of *Magnabokam* on the northern part. . . and the KW which leads from Polesden towards the *Northwod of bokham*'[23] might seem to refer to these two north-south roads, but

the word 'northern' show the first to be an east-west road. This is confirmed by a grant of land in 1340 'between the KW leading from the church of Bookham towards Preston [*author's note: ie. westward*] on the northern part. . . and the eastern head upon the KW leading from the church of Bookham towards the south'[24].

The King's street from Bookham towards Guildford is mentioned in 1279 and in 1317, the King's way from Bookham towards Leatherhead (at Eastwick) in 1331, and the King's way from Leatherhead to Guildford in 1344/5[25]. Clay's map marks two east-west highways running through the parish. In 1983 David Bird suggested that a Roman or prehistoric track followed more or less the line of the A246[26]. Today, one can follow a fairly straight line SW from Fetcham millpond, by way of Lower Road and continuing paths at least to East Horsley. In the opposite direction, Barnett Wood Lane picks up the same line, passing through a possible Roman field system to intersect at right angles with the track leading from Ashtead tileworks to Stane Street[27]. The king's way from Leatherhead at Ashtead is mentioned in a local deed of 1307[28]. The 'common way which leads from Bookham towards Eastwick' in 1337 may have been so-called to distinguish it from a KW, although a Cobham grant of 1467 mentions 'the common King's way'[29].

Conclusion

Comparison of the mentions of KW compared with other roads (65 against 35 in total in the register, 21 against 3 in Bookham alone) reflect both the apparent frequency of KW—three, possibly four—in Chertsey's manor of Great Bookham and also the high proportion of roads which the compiler of the register, or his sources, regarded as KW. He (or they) seem to have used the term KW to describe a long-distance route passing through a manor (probably those continuing to Chertsey abbey) without any other connotation, although a road to and from Dorking (a royal, not an abbey, estate) must have had different users. Other writers—particularly those of the royal court—used the term KW differently.

Acknowledgements

As well as to Keith Stanley and John Wallis, I must thank John Wettern for the inspiration and organisation of the meeting.

NOTES

1. F.M. Stenton, 'The Road System of Medieval England', *Economic History Review* **VII** (1936), 1ff, [reprinted in D.M.Stenton, *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England, being the Collected papers of Frank Merry Stenton* (Oxford, 1970), 234ff] citing F.Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903–16), **1**, 510, 547–611 (laws of Henry I), 637–8; **2**, 673–5.
2. D.C.Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1964), 169 and Appendix D, points out that Harold might have already been coming south when the message reached him. He was in London on 8 October.
3. M.C.Hill, *The King's Messengers 1199–1377* (Stroud, 1994), introduction. The journey between York and London took 5–6 days in 1375 (National Archives, Exchequer Misc.591/21, cited by Stenton (note 1).
4. C.T.Flower, *Public Works in Medieval Law, II* (Selden Society **40**, 1923) xv–xviii, citing Hawkins, *Pleas of the Crown* ii, 152.

5. R.E.Latham, *A Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (British Academy, 1965), 454, 510.
6. Placita Coram Rege 9–10 Edward 1, m.35, printed in G.L.Clark, *Cartae et Alia Munimenta quae ad Dominium de Glamorgancia pertinent* (Cardiff) 1910), **III**, no.DCCXLI, 810–11.
7. B.P.Hindle, *Medieval Roads and Tracks* (Princes Risborough, 2002) for maps of itineraries of John, Edward I and Edward II (Figs. 9–13) and routes on medieval maps (Fig.17).
8. T.Craib, 'The Itinerary of King Henry III 1216–1272', 1923 typescript in the Public Records Office (now National Archives), copied, edited and annotated by S.Bridle and S. Priestly (English Heritage, privately circulated 2002). At Dorking the regents received a report from the royalists holding Rye: Patent Roll 1 Henry III m.13d, printed in *Patent Rolls of Henry III 1216–1225* (London, 1901), 108–9.
9. E.G.S.Parsons, *The Map of Great Britian c.A.D.1360. known as the Gough Map. With facsimile* (Oxford, Bodleian Library 1958). Certain details suggest that it was based upon a campaign planning map of the previous century.
10. W.J.Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey: Landholding, Church and Settlement before 1300* (Stroud and Guildford, Surrey Archaeological Society 1991), 31–33.
11. Great Domesday Book, f.32d for Great Bookham, F.35d for Little Bookham. The separate entries for Chertsey's holding in Effingham and the (former) royal one there (Great Domesday Book ff. 32d, 35d) have features in common. This may indicate an overlap but, coupled with the separation of Great and Little Bookham, the original grant to the abbey does not seem to have been of the whole estate.
12. Great Domesday Book, f.30c.
13. British Library, Lansdowne MS 435 and Clifford MS, printed by the Surrey Record Society in parts and assembled as Vol. **XII** (**1**, ed M.S.Guiseppi 1928–23; **2**, ed.P.M.Barnes, 1953–63). Citation is hereafter C, followed by the number of the document in the printed edition. Much of the contents came from the Chertsey Abbey court rolls, copied in Lansdowne MS 434 and abstracted by E.Toms, (Surrey Record Society **XXII**, 1937, 1954) hereafter cited as R, followed by document number, if this provides more information than C. Spelling has (usually) been modernized.
14. C 998, C 999.
15. C 1225, C 100 (*Southwode* in later rubric).
16. C 989, C 973, C 1002.
17. C 980, R 1245, C 981: R 1360.
18. C.K.Currie, 'Polesden Lacey and Ranmore Common estates near Dorking, Surrey: an archaeological and historical survey', *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 87 (2000), 49–84 at page 65.
19. Is this the lost Domesday Manor of *Pechingeorde* in Effingham, *Piccingauude* of 1062, (J.E.B.Gover, A.Mawer and F.M.Stenton, *The Place-Names of Surrey* (English Place-Name Society **11**, 1934) 100, citing Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus*), surviving as Picketts Hole and Pigden of the Effingham/Wotton boundary?
20. J.H.Harvey, 'Thomas Clay's Great Bookham Plan of the Manor of Great Bookham 1614–1617', these *Proceedings* **2.10** (1966), 281–282.

21. I have to thank Mr John Wallis for telling me of Old London Lane. See also A.T.Ruby and A.W.G.Lowther, 'Report on an excavation of the moated site in GREATLEE WOOD *[sic]* Effingham...', these *Proceedings*, **1.9** (1955), 4–17.
22. R 634, R 1052, R 1151.
23. C 1003.
24. C 981, C 982, R 1152 simply calls it a 'way from the church towards Preston' and does not mention the other road.
25. C 997, C 972, C 967; C 970, C 971.
26. Joanna and D.G.Bird, eds. *The Archaeology of Surrey to 1540* (Guildford 1987), 168 and 193, n.16.
27. W.J.Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey* (note 10 above), 29–30.
28. D.F.Renn, 'The Pinchun deed', these *Proceedings* **3.6** (1972), 163–5.
29. C 975, C 1235 (at p.329; King's way on p.330); 'Stretecoueham' is mentioned C958. Other nearby KW: King's way from Kingston to Walton-on-the-Hill (C 1233), King's way from Epsom to Kingston (C1017, C 1018), King's street between Epsom to Ashtead (C 1010) and King's way from Epsom to Ewell (C1232, at p.330).

POSTBOXES: A POSTSCRIPT

By D.F. RENN

Since my previous article[1], Royal Mail has repainted all the postal collection boxes in the district with Pillar Box Red (Registered Trade Mark) in 2005 after removing any attached slot machine selling books of stamps. The last to go was that in Hazel Way, Fetcham (KT22 57), which sold 50p books from a Perspex pull-out tray. Engraved steel 'tags' giving the day of the next collection replaced (2005) the enamelled iron ones which gave the number of the next collection, whose time was shown on the text plate.

I failed to notice that the 1938 Leatherhead sorting office posting box had a number [KT22 600 at L 6267], and I now recall that the wallbox formaerly at Post Cottage, Little Bookham Street, was re-sited for a time [until late 1964?] in the roadside bank opposite our late member John Harvey's house at Preston Cross, possibly for that reason: John was a great correspondent! It was later replaced by a pillar box [KT23 3] even closer, but John had moved away by then. In October 2003 an exchange took place between two Elizabeth II boxes: the single slip one from Great Bookham post office with the double-slip one from Woodbridge Avenue, Leatherhead, the numbers staying with the sites [KT23 35, KT22 65].

Additions to the previous list:

Victoria

Wallboxes

The closed one on the Chessington Road was replaced in September 2003 by a Royal Mail 'Bantam' outside *'The Star'* public house opposite with the full number KT22 23

Geoff Hayward recalled another in Randalls Road near the footpath to the Common Meadow, probably the predecessor of the George V pillarbox (KT22 90) recorded below.

Edward VII (1901–10)

En route for a pillarbox mentioned by Steve Poulter, I recorded this wallbox, resited in a pier of 'Beechwood Park'. It is very similar to the Victorian one in the Chessington Road (above):

KT22 25 Highlands Road/ Lavender Close L 7261

George V

Later series, 1927–1936:

KT22 8 Reigate Road/Clinton Road L 7460*

KT22 30 Linden Gardens/St John's Close L 7269

KT22 41 Poplar Road/St John's Road L 7265*

KT22 73 Highlands Road/St Nicholas Hill L 6962*

KT22 83 Poplar Avenue/Poplar Road L 7064*

KT22 90 Randalls Road/ footpath by cemetery entrance/Cleeve Road L 5970

Elizabeth II

Rectangular, with roller shutter for pre-franked mail, 1995 or later:

KT22 349 Mole Business Park unit 4/Ronson Way L 6067

KT22 369 Randalls Way/Randalls Road I 6169

Rectanglar steel box on plinth, curved top. Hinged flat door with advertising panel. Posting slit above with EIIR/Royal Mail transfer.

KT23 353 Guildford Road/Rolls Farm Track, in petrol filling station forecourt B 2735

NOTE

1. *Proceedings* Vol 6 pp.184–92, corrections on p.197

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