

LEATHERHEAD AND DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

LEATHERHEAD  
& DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



PROCEEDINGS VOL 6 NO 7

2003

p 163-194

## SECRETARIAL NOTES

The following Lectures, Visits and Walks were arranged during 2003:

January 17th	Lecture: 'Archaeology Revealed through Aerial Photography' by John Hampton.
February 21st	Lecture: 'Reigate and Other Building Stones; by Paul Sowan.
March 21st	Lecture: 'Merton Priory' by Lionel Green.
April 25th	The 56th Annual General Meeting, followed by 'The Story behind the Story of the Old and New Atlas Works at Bookham' by Peter Tarplee.
April 26th	Visit to Southside House, Wimbledon.
May 16th	Lecture: 'The Story of Woodfield Farm, Ashted' by Gwen Hoad.
May 17th	Visit to Reigate Priory Museum, introduced by Miss Eileen Wood.
June 8th	Visit to Horsley Towers, East Horsley.
July 10th	Guided walk round Westcott village led by Terry Wooden.
August 9th	Visit by members & Friends of the Museum to Rural Life Centre, Farnham.
September 19th	Lecture: 'Sir Christopher Wren—our Great English Architect' by Dennis Ashbourne.
October 17th	The Dallaway Lecture: 'Pigs, Pastures and Pleasures at Polesden Lacey' by Heloise Collier.
November 21st	Lecture: 'Epsom Past and Present' by Ian West
December 19th	The Christmas Miscellany—talks by members.

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### FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*Held at the Lethered Institute, 25th April 2003*

The Report of the Executive Committee and the Accounts for the year 2002 were adopted. The Committee elected to serve until the next AGM and the Officers of the Society are shown below.

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### OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 2003–2004

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

for errata  
see Vol 6  
no 8 p 197

# Leatherhead and District Local History Society

## PROCEEDINGS

Vol. 6, No. 7

2003

### CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Occasional Notes	
Saxon Sword & Spearheads returned to Museum. G. EVANS . . . . .	164
Headley Village School commemorated. J.C. STUTTARD . . . . .	164
Addendum to Proceedings 2002. A. ROBERTS . . . . .	165
<i>Titanic</i> Exhibition at Leatherhead Museum. A. ROBERTS . . . . .	166
Zebedee Lovemore (1702?-82): Arthur Moore's Indian Boy. B.E. GODFREY ..	168
Slyfield and its owners (12th-18th c.). D.W. & B.J. SLYFIELD . . . . .	172
Ashtead Chapel and Church (12th & 13th century) and the origins of the Little Ashtead Manor. H.J. DAVIES . . . . .	179
Post Boxes of the Leatherhead District. D.R. RENN . . . . .	184
 <i>Illustrations</i>	 <i>Page</i>
Saxon Sword undergoing conservation . . . . .	164
Former Headley School House, off Church Lane . . . . .	165
<i>Titanic</i> Exhibition: the Collyer family . . . . .	167
Zebedee Lovemore, Letter to Lord North, 18th Sept. 1757 . . . . .	169
Slyfield Armorial Bearings . . . . .	175
Slyfield Manor (1912) . . . . .	177
Post Boxes (selected photographs) . . . . .	186-190
Henry and Elizabeth Slyfield, 1598 . . . . .	on cover iv
(Brass at Great Bookham Church)	

## OCCASIONAL NOTES

### *SAXON SWORD AND SPEARHEADS RETURNED TO MUSEUM*

Early this year the Saxon Sword and Spearheads were returned to the Leatherhead Museum from the conservators. These weapons were originally found between 1929 and 1930 at Watersmeet, close to Fetcham Millpond when glasshouses were being constructed.<sup>1</sup> A subsequent excavation by Mr. A.R. Cotton FSA also revealed other Saxon items.<sup>2</sup> They were found lying displaced and scattered in the river silt or flood deposit beneath the topsoil, and it is still uncertain whether they were grave goods from disturbed burials, or had arrived there with re-deposited soil at a later and more recent date.<sup>3</sup>

The sword and spearheads had originally been mounted for display in a wooden case and were in very bad condition, some 'conservation' had been done in the past, but if anything this had made things worse. Upon recommendation from Surrey Museums Consultative Committee (who also funded the work), Mr. George Monger of Conservation and Museum Services undertook the conservation in August 2001. He discovered what seemed to be traces of a scabbard, possibly leather, on the sword. It had also been decorated with metal studs.

The sword, spearheads and other Saxon finds from Watersmeet are on display in the Museum.

G. EVANS

1. *Procs LDLHS* Vol. 2 No. 3 pp. 69–72.
2. *Antiquaries Journal* Vol. XIII pp. 48–51.
3. *Procs LDLHS* Vol. 3 No. 2 pp. 45–48.



THE SAXON SWORD UNDERGOING CONSERVATION.  
*The circles indicate where traces of the scabbard were found.*

### *HEADLEY VILLAGE SCHOOL COMMEMORATED*

The School was founded in the 1860's supported by a Government grant and voluntary subscriptions. It was popular in the village, maintaining its success for over a century. In March 1970 however, the school closed, mainly because of staffing problems.

A reunion of those who had an interest in the School took place in mid-May this year at Headley Village Hall. About 80 people attended, many from all over the U.K. and one from Australia.

J.C. STUTTARD



FORMER HEADLEY HOUSE SCHOOL, OFF CHURCH LANE. THE OLD SCHOOL BUILDING, NEAR THE PARISH CHURCH. IS NOW THE OFFICE OF THE SURREY ASSOCIATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

### ADDENDUM TO THE *PROCEEDINGS*, 2002

My article ‘The Moore Family of Leatherhead’ said little about Emily Moore (1844–1930), the landlady of the Swan Inn. It is perhaps worth mentioning that from 1886 she rented a large amount of agricultural land in various parts of Leatherhead: by 1896 her holdings came to 267 acres, making her one of the largest farmers in the area. It is well known that she bred prize Jersey and Alderney cows, but as the herd never numbered more than 18 animals, it would seem possible that most of the land was used to grow barley for the Swan Brewery. This is suggested by the fact that the land—which consisted of the 121 acres of Thorncroft Park and Farm at the time—was rented in the name of George Moore and Co after Emily’s retirement in 1898. The Brewery gave up its land when it became a limited company in 1903. An article in the *Leatherhead Observer* in 1904 stated that the Company obtained its malt and hops exclusively from Kent and Worcester at that time. The land holdings in full were:

Location	Area	Years held	Annual rent
Hilly Fields (off Barnet Wood Lane):	16 acres	1886-1898	£59
Vale Lodge Farm:	100 acres	1887-1898	£142
Thorncroft Park:	30 acres	1890-1903	£42-57
Thorncroft Farm:	91 acres	1895-1904	£143
Common Fields near Vale Lodge:	30 acres	1896-1898	£29

I should also have pointed out that Arthur Moore rented St John’s Villa on the corner of Epsom Road and St John’s Road from 1902–1903, before moving to the family’s North Street house.

A. ROBERTS

## TITANIC EXHIBITION AT LEATHERHEAD MUSEUM

By A. Roberts

A popular exhibition on the theme of Leatherhead's connections with the *Titanic* disaster, put together by the Museum's curator Graham Evans, was on display from April to September 2003. It opened on April 12<sup>th</sup>, as close as possible to the ninety-first anniversary of the sinking (which took place on April 15<sup>th</sup> 1912). The centrepiece consisted of copies of letters written by ship's passenger Charlotte Collyer to her mother and mother-in-law in Leatherhead. Charlotte lived with her parents in Elm Road and later in Church Walk after her marriage to Harvey Collyer, who unfortunately did not survive the sinking. The couple had one daughter, Marjorie; both she and her mother were saved. While in Leatherhead and later in Bishopstoke (where they moved in 1905) Charlotte had acted as cook and housekeeper to the Revd Sidney Newman Sedgwick, the author of '*Leatherhead and its Legends*'.

The family were emigrating to America because Charlotte suffered from tuberculosis and had been advised that she would live longer in a warmer climate. Many visitors found the contrast between the optimism of the letters written before the sailing and the heartbreak of those written from New York after the disaster to be particularly moving. The letters were generously given to the Museum by Steve Raffield, a collector of *Titanic* memorabilia, who bought them at auction in 2002. They had previously belonged to Vera Jones of Fetcham, whose late first husband Neil was Harvey Collyer's nephew.

The exhibition was opened by her 19-year-old granddaughter, another Charlotte Collyer—Harvey Collyer's great grandniece. The event was well attended, both by Society members involved in its preparation and by representatives of the local press. Articles appeared in a number of papers and attracted many visitors from all over the South of England. Younger visitors were particularly interested in a scale model of the *Titanic* made by the curator. Also on display was a wide selection of press cuttings, photographs, film posters and other items relating to the ill-fated voyage. The full tragic story of the Collyer family was told on one panel (members unfamiliar with it may read it in the Society's records—LX 1332).

Many interesting facts emerged from the research undertaken by the Society in preparation for the exhibition. It was discovered, for example, that the newsboy in the well-known photograph taken the day after the sinking outside the White Star Line offices in London was one Edward Parfett, whose family came from Leatherhead. It was also found that Charlotte Collyer's daughter Marjorie was a script consultant on the 1958 film '*A Night to Remember*'. Her mother's reminiscences of the sinking, written for the American press, were the source of much of what we know of the tragedy, including the fact that one of the last tunes that the ship's band played was 'Nearer My God to Thee'. It had always been one of Harvey Collyer's favourite hymns when it was sung in Leatherhead parish church.

The Society would like to take this opportunity to thank Steve Raffield, Edwina Vardey, Vera Jones and everybody who contributed to the exhibition and helped to make it a success.

A. ROBERTS

**Curator's note:** I would like to thank Alun Roberts for obtaining the letters and for all his work researching the history of the Collyer family for the exhibition.

G. EVANS



THE COLLYER FAMILY  
*(left to right: Julia Collyer, Vera Jones, Charlotte Collyer, Robert Collyer)*



STEVEN RAFFIELD ENTERTAINING EDWINA VARDEY, JULIA COLLYER, VERA JONES AND PATRICK COLLYER  
*(photographs by courtesy of Dan & Eileen Lloyd)*

## ZEBEDEE LOVEMORE (1702?–1782): ARTHUR MOORE'S INDIAN BOY

B E Godfrey

### Introduction

On 24 September 1720, an unusual baptism was recorded in the Fetcham parish registers, namely that of 'an Indian boy somewhat under twenty years old belonging to Arthur Moore Esq'; the register recorded also that the boy was to be known as Zebedee Lovemore <sup>1</sup>. At the time, this quite detailed but nevertheless enigmatic entry was probably considered to be an adequate record of an event which was likely to have been unique for Fetcham; but now the entry seems to pose a few questions such as :-

Who requested the baptism?;

Who named the boy?; and

What was meant by 'Indian' and 'belonging' to Arthur Moore?.

No information has been found which helps to resolve the first two questions, but conjectures can be made about the third question. The use of "belonging" suggests that Zebedee might have been a slave at the time of his baptism; however, the use of 'Indian' should not be understood to imply that he came from the Indian continent. Most slaves were taken from Central Africa and more than 11 million were shipped from West Africa across the Atlantic Ocean; more than 6 million (52% of the total) were transported in British ships during the 18th century <sup>2</sup>. Many fortunes were built on slave plantations in the West Indies and some slaves might have found their way into the service of well-to-do families in Surrey <sup>3</sup>; some gained the respect of their masters and held responsible positions in their households.

Arthur Moore was a Tory MP (1695–1714) with government connections and an earl's daughter as his mother-in-law; also he was a director of the South Sea Company (1711–1714) which was engaged actively in the slave trade. That he should have aspired to own a slave who might have come from a British colony in the West Indies seems reasonable; but how, when and from where Zebedee came to live in Fetcham, are questions which are unlikely to be resolved <sup>4</sup>.

Although much of Zebedee Lovemore's life left almost no record, as part of a study of early owners of the former Carolean house at Polesden, information has been found in the North Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, some North Papers at the University of Keele, and 18th century accounts at C Hoare & Co, London, which gives some insight into his life as a servant to William Moore at Polesden; also, his involvement with William Moore's executors—Lord Francis North and Thomas Parr. All the available evidence suggests that Zebedee was one of those 'Indian' servants who made something of his life in England.

### Zebedee at Fetcham and Polesden (1720–46)

Little is known of Zebedee Lovemore's life as a servant in Arthur Moore's household. He was able to marry Mary Fellows on 3 Feb 1725/6 in the parish of Saint Benet Paul's Wharf, London; also, when Arthur died in May 1730, he owed him money (possibly unpaid wages) <sup>5</sup>.

After Arthur Moore's death, it is likely that Zebedee remained at Fetcham Park in the service of Arthur's son, William, who had inherited his father's estate; Fetcham Park was not put up for sale by auction until 1734 and, certainly, the Fetcham parish registers record the burial of an infant, William Lovemore, on 25 April 1733. At about this time, Zebedee seemed to acquire



some responsibility for payment of William's bills. Between 1731 and 1734, Zebedee received three small cash payments from William's uncle, Thomas Moore, possibly on behalf of William; and certainly, after Thomas died in March 1735, William (as his executor) used the same account to make more frequent payments to Zebedee, one of which was specifically ear-marked 'for William Moore's bills' <sup>6</sup>.

It is not known when Zebedee moved to Polesden with William, but he seems to have achieved the status of a confidential servant there; between May 1735 and Jan 1738/9, he received 57 regular payments from William's own account, usually of £10 to £20 and probably for payment of William's bills <sup>7</sup>. Also, Lord North's papers include requests for payments from tenants, written between February 1742/3 and July 1745 by both William and Zebedee, which indicate

*My Lord*

*I had answer of Lordships Letter sooner but have been  
very ill — The Rev. Mr Ballard informs me Colonel Moore  
died in the Year 1738 March 16. — And my Uncle  
Hon: Master M<sup>r</sup> W. Moore died 21. Feb<sup>r</sup> 1746 —  
Both Buried in a Vault in Bookham Church —  
Writ by the Letter for the Interment of his Uncle  
From yr Lordships Most Dutifull Serv<sup>t</sup>*

*Zeb. Lovemore*

*18<sup>th</sup> Sept 1757*

LETTER TO LORD NORTH FROM ZEBEDEE LOVEMORE, 18TH SEPT. 1757.  
*Courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, University of Keele.*

that Zebedee acted as William's factor up to William's death in October 1746 <sup>8</sup>. William left a year's wages to all his servants in his will; also, a codicil made additional bequests of £200 to Mrs Jane Woodman (a former servant of his uncle, Thomas) and £100 each to Mrs Elizabeth Smith and Zebedee Lovemore <sup>9</sup>.

### **Zebedee at Polesden (1746–48)**

This is the period of Zebedee Lovemore's life about which most is known. After William's death in 1746, his executors needed Zebedee's knowledge and experience to run the Polesden

estate; his letters to Lord North are amongst the North papers <sup>10</sup>. In the absence of any close family, William's will had appointed two executors; one was Lord Francis North, who was a close friend and supporter of his election as a Whig MP for Banbury, and whose son, Frederick, was William's heir; the other was Thomas Parr, the husband of Arthur's sister, Mary. Lord North did not attend the funeral and Zebedee seems to have ensured that his master's wishes were carried out; after the funeral, he wrote immediately to Lord North (letter dated 2 Nov 1746) to give him details of the funeral and express the housekeeper (Mrs Smith) and his desire to carry out Lord North's orders; additional comments about William's financial position suggest that he might have had some knowledge of William's total debts <sup>11</sup>. Thomas Parr, in his letters to Lord North (5 Dec 1746 and 3, 8 and 16 Aug 1747) implies that Zebedee often went to London on their behalf; also, he dealt with most matters concerned with the disposition of the household goods. Zebedee's letters written from Polesden to Lord North between Feb 1746/7 and Jan 1748/9 cover issues such as tradesmen's bills, servants' wages and storage of family pictures, but mainly problems of collection of tenant's rents <sup>12</sup>.

Capt Geary did not finalise the purchase of the Polesden estate until March 1747/8, but when he went to live there is not known. In Aug 1747, he told Thomas Parr that he proposed to employ 'Lovemore & Mrs Smith' <sup>13</sup>, and Zebedee seemed content to remain at Polesden; however, Zebedee's letter to Lord North in Jan 1748/9 mentioned 'poor Mrs Smith' and her hope that Lord North might have some employment for her. Lord North paid £50 to Zebedee on 1 April 1748 for the servants wages from William Moore's death in Oct 1746 up to Capt Geary's purchase of Polesden in March 1747/8; Zebedee was paid at the rate of 5/3d per week and Mrs Smith, the housekeeper, at the rate of 3/9d per week <sup>14</sup>.

#### **Zebedee's duties for Lord North (1748–1757)**

After March 1748/9 there is no evidence to suggest that Zebedee was paid a wage by Lord North or Thomas Parr, or wrote any letters about specific duties such as rent collection: however, both accounts for the executors contain references to him between April 1748 and May 1754. Zebedee continued to collect rents due on properties in Surrey and Sussex which remained unsold by the executors, and he received occasional payments (probably to settle tradesmen's bills); he was paid expenses for rent collection in May 1754 <sup>15</sup>. The last property in Surrey, Headley Farm, was sold by the executors in August 1755 and Zebedee was paid 5/6d 'for receiving rents in full'.

There are two later letters which indicate that Zebedee probably lived in Epsom by 1757. Lord North wrote to Zebedee to confirm dates for memorial inscriptions and he replied on 18 September with the information which he had obtained from Rev Reeve Ballard <sup>16</sup>. On 16 Oct, Lord North wrote to enquire about the whereabouts of Capt Geary and in his reply, dated 23 Oct and written from Epsom, Zebedee says that 'I was at Polesden last Friday and Capt Geary is ..... at Shereness ..... and Mrs Geary is latley gon to him their' <sup>17</sup>. There is no evidence of any further visits to Polesden, although Zebedee may have known the house-keeper.

#### **Zebedee's later life (1757–1782)**

The Fetcham parish registers are the only source of information about Zebedee after 1757. He probably lived in Epsom for at least the next 17 years as his wife, Mary, died there and he paid the 10/- fee for her to be buried at Fetcham on 3 Oct 1774. He moved to Leatherhead where he died in 1782: the fee of one guinea was paid to enable him to be buried at Fetcham on 15 Dec alongside his wife and three of his children. So ended the life of an 'Indian' who came to Fetcham

as a boy, grew up in the service of one family for at least 25 years, and became the most responsible servant of William Moore, his master at Polesden.

## NOTES

1. Lewame J G W; Fetcham Parish Registers; Proc L&DLHS; Vol 1; No 8; p6–10 (1954)
2. Clarke D; Slaves & Slavery; p190 (1998)
3. The National Trust guidebook for Clandon Park (2002) states that Thomas Onslow, the 2nd Lord Onslow, married an heiress in 1708 whose fortune included slaves (both in the Jamaican plantations and ‘on the high seas in transit’); however, two busts of blackamoors in the Marble Hall are insufficient evidence to substantiate the presence of any slaves at Clandon
4. A more detailed biographical history of Arthur Moore can be found in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons: Vol IV (1690–1715)* pp 905–915 (2002)
5. C Hoare & Co Archives; Ledger 31/420 (1730–32)—two weeks after Arthur Moore’s death, Thomas Moore (Arthur’s executor) paid a total sum of £8.10 to Zebedee Lovemore and Ann Clark
6. C Hoare & Co Archives; Ledgers K/293 (1730–33) and M/56 (1733–35)
7. C Hoare & Co Archives; Ledgers N/10 (1735–36), N/284 (1736–37) and O/119 (1737–38)—the last ledger continued on to ‘Little Ledger/28’ which was not found
8. MS North e6 folios 32, 35, 36 and 40; Bodleian Library
9. K35/1/17; Surrey History Centre
10. Zebedee’s name is written occasionally with a double ‘b’ ie Zebbedee, and Lovemore with a double ‘o’ ie Lovemoore. He invariably signed his letters ‘Zebb Lovemoore’
11. Letter to Lord North (MS North d5 f135)—Zebedee estimated that there might be £5000 left after all debts were paid. When all debts were paid in 1762, Lord North (then the Earl of Guilford) had £2600 invested for his son, Frederick (then Lord North), who was William’s heir.
12. MS North d2 folios 29 and 35; d5 folios 148, 183 and 195; Bodleian Library and N9/1; University of Keele
13. Letter to Lord North from Thomas Parr, 3 Aug 1747; MS North d5 f158; Bodleian Library
14. MS North b18 f46—Zebedee received his overdue wages (£19.04.00) on 10 April 1748; an advance of £12 was paid on 23 Dec 1747 (see MS North e6 f44)  
MS North b18 f44—Mrs Elizabeth Smith received her overdue wages (£13.15.00) on 9 April 1748; she had an advance of £12 on 30 Jan 1747/8 (see MS North e6 f42)
15. Executor’s Account Book; N 7/2 folio 11; University of Keele—‘1754 May 1 paid Mr Lovemore for receiveing rents and other expenses \_\_\_\_\_ £5.16.3d’
16. N5/3; University of Keele
17. N9/6; University of Keele

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to Sophie Chessum, now a curator in the Conservation Department, National Trust South East Region, for her support, interest and comments: also, Helen Burton, the Librarian, Special Collections and Archives, University of Keele and Barbra Sands, the Archivist, C Hoare & Co, London for access to their archives.

## **SLYFIELD AND ITS OWNERS (12TH-18TH CENTURY)**

By D.W. and B. J. Slyfield

The Slyfield estate and house, part of Bookham North End, was associated with the Slyfield family for many centuries, though the present house and lands, off the Fetcham-Cobham road, near the Yehudi Menuhin School, has long been in other hands. At one time, Slyfield occupied a marshy area close to the River Mole and its name derives from the old English 'Slyf', 'Sliff' or 'Sleeve', probably used in a topographical sense as 'slippery place'.

The Slyfields were essentially a Surrey family, living and working as pastors, farmers, yeomen and landowners in the villages of Send, West Clandon, Byfleet, Pyrford and Ripley, besides their main location in Great Bookham. Several members of the family obtained government positions outside Surrey, in Staffordshire, Ipswich and Calais. In the reign of Edward IV, William Slyfield was King's Secretary and later Treasurer of Calais until the change of monarchy. He had also been Customs Officer at Ipswich in 1468.

The story is not without its quarrels and feuds, as will be shown from documentary evidence. In 1614, because of debts and maladministration, all properties held by the family and brought into their possession by marriage, had to be sold, and the great house at Bookham, later, was partially demolished.

### **Early Records (13th–15th century)**

The earliest recorded members of the family were probably Geoffrey and Richard de Slyfeude about 1280. But in 1201, Ralph, son of Walter de Cunton, had conveyed to William le Faucier a virgate of land in 'Slyfeld' and in 1217, William, son of Roger Testard proved a claim to half a hide in 'Slifeld'. William de Slyfeld followed Geoffrey and Richard, and this William was probably the father of John de Slyfeld who died in 1329. John is shown as a witness to a deed (c. 1321). Enrolled in the Chertsey Abbey Chartulary (PRO, EC/64/25 1317–18).

In 1368, Nicolas atte Howke and Howisa and Walter Rykhous and Alice conveyed to Nicolas de Slyfeld and his heirs a messuage of 50 acres of land in Bokeham, and that Nicolas held this land as the manor of Slyfeld. This extended to the River Mole or Emlyn Stream. The river marked the boundary between the manor and Stoke D'Abernon, and it had been held by the Slyfield family from 'time immemorial'. From then on it remained in the family until 1614. The Domesday Survey showed a mill in Great Bookham, and it became attached to Slyfield manor. In 1375 Nicolas granted a reversion of some of his land to William Croyser. It was on condition that Nicolas and his heirs should not be disturbed in their possession of a wharf on the adjacent bank of the River Mole, and later two cornmills and a fulling mill were attached.

Nicolas became an active member of the community in Surrey. He was appointed one of the Collectors of Taxes for the county (Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1358–61, p.345). He was also one of the two knights of the Shire for Surrey in 1377 and he sat on Commissions for the Peace in 1389, 1390 and 1394 (Cal Patent Rolls, 1388–92, pp. 137–8, 341 and 1391–96, p.435). The taxes he collected were for the defence of the realm and for the expenses of wars. A knight was paid 2s per day, an esquire 12d and a mounted archer 6d. When the money had been collected it was deposited for safe keeping at Chertsey Abbey (Cal Patent Rolls, 1358–61). Nicolas was Sheriff for the county in 1380 and 1393 under Richard II and he was Patron of Fetcham Church when the parson was William Mayow. During this period, Nicolas was witness and/or party to many land transactions in the Dorking and Mickleham areas.

In May 1391, a document refers to Nicolas granting 'John Penros and his heirs all his lands in Bradle and in Dorkynge and afterwards it passed to the Sondes of 'Sondes Place'; in April that year he was one of the witnesses to a land transaction affecting a wood, Wildwood. Two years later, in 1393, Nicolas was one of the feoffers trustees holding estates at Bookham owned by William Croyser, aforementioned. Probably because of this, and that Croyser had married Edith, cousin of Bishop Wykeham, Nicolas dined with Bishop Wykeham during 1393 (Wykeham's Household Account Roll for 1393, now at Winchester College).

Also in 1393, Nicolas was witness to two charters relating to the transfer of a third part of the manor of Ockley (Calendar of Close Rolls, 1392–96, pp.286–87).

Thomas Slyfield was the next prominent member of the family. He was M.P. for Surrey in 1450 and he died in 1470. During Thomas's life, properties at Papworth, Send, West Clandon, Knowle, Cranleigh and Polesden were brought into the Slyfield family. Although Thomas was a Knight of the Shire in 1451, he was not actually knighted. In 1468, he conveyed to Sir Thomas Cook (as trustee) and later to Robert Haley all the Manor of Knowle in Cranleigh with its tenements. Two years later, the year of his death, he disposed of Polesden Manor to Thomas Norbury. Thomas Slyfield's brass in St. Nicolas Church, Great Bookham, shows him dressed in full plate armour; his wife, Elizabeth's brass shows her as a figure of a lady in a cushion head-dress, high-waisted dress and loose sleeves.

Of Thomas Slyfield's two sons, William lived an active life but little is known about his brother Henry. William seldom lived at Slyfield, becoming in 1468 the Customs Officer at the port of Ipswich; in the following year he was responsible for the port of Poole and adjacent places. In 1472, William became an Under-Secretary to Edward IV; he is mentioned in several Paston Letters (nos. 706 and 712) which refer to Slyfield's letters to and from the King on the occasion of the Duchess of Norfolk's pregnancy. William Slyfield's signature appeared regularly on letters written under the Royal Signat between 1472 and 1481. He was sent on an embassy to Brittany in 1474 when he was described as 'one of our secretaries'. In 1482, William was Treasurer of Calais, and on 24 April that year 'he was granted for one year, by letters patent, to Arnold de Coyte of London, sugar finer, staying on the King's service with the company of William Slifeld, Treasurer of the town and Castle of Calais, and the marches, thereof, victualling, defence and safe custody of the same, because he delays in London, as Richard Chauvery and Robert Tait, Sheriffs, have certified' (Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1476–85, p. 210, membrane 10).

That William Slyfield was well thought of is shown by a document of June 1483:

'Grant during good behaviour, William Slefeld of the Office and Treasurer of the town of Calais, receiving the fees from the issue of the same, and also his expenses in passing across the sea and staying in England and his expenses on the King's works with the town and marches as the Mayor and society of the staple late Treasurer's had and grant to him during office of the custody of the King's lodging or house in the town with all appurtements ...' (Calendar of Patent Rolls – membrane 2 p.351. PRO E364/116)

In the same year, William lost his position as Treasurer of Calais, probably because of the change of monarch; Sir Thomas Thwaytes replaced him.

### **The Tudor Years (15th–16th century)**

William Slyfield was followed by another Thomas, who died in 1522. He had five sons of whom the most prominent were Lawrence and John. Lawrence, who lived at Send, was said to

be clean-shaven, with long hair, wearing over his doublet the usual long-sleeved gown, with deep full sleeves and roundtoe shoes. His brother, John, married Jane and he died in 1530. It is from John and Lawrence that the mainstream of present-day Slyfields descend.

Lawrence's grandsons, John and Edmund Slyfield, both had important positions in social life which must have kept them away from their Surrey home for long periods. John became Master of Queen Elizabeth's Stud at Castlehay and Hanbury in Staffordshire. He had to superintend the breeding of horse colts for the royal stables at Charing Cross, Greenwich and Oatlands under an indenture drawn up between Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Master of the Queen's Horse, and John. The horses were used for Her Majesty's progresses and otherwise. King Henry VIII had been the prime mover in introducing horses from the Continent, particularly Italy, to improve the strain of our native breeds. The two main Royal Studs were at Malmsbury and Tutbury, and Jervaulx Abbey also became a stud after the dissolution of the monasteries. These were closed down for breeding during the Commonwealth period. The grass at these locations was particularly beneficial for horses (PRO 101/107/31 and E101/07/32). The colts were produced in groups of eight for the stables. This was two years after the Queen's acquisition of her first coach in 1565 (Shire Horse Society, 26.9.89).

John Slyfield's brother, Edmund, became Sheriff of Surrey and Sussex. It was one of his duties as Sheriff to attend the markets at Kingstone and Dorkyng 'to see that the markets were furnished with corn offered for sale at equitable rates' with other Justices of the Peace; Losely papers Cor. gives a list of the Justices who carried out those duties (LMCor. P.644). On 2nd May 1568, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to Sir William More and Edmund Slyfield, as Justices of the Peace, desirous of settling some disputes between parties (LM Cor. Vol.8) On 24 May 1586, a feud developed between Edmund and his pastor, John Reve MA of St Nicolas Church. On this date, the Archbishop again wrote to Sir William More and Sir Thomas Browne, concerning the witnesses to some charges that had been reported against Edmund Slyfield, calling for Mr Thomas Cornwallis and Mr John Parker Esqs., for the examination of these witnesses (LM Cor Vol. 8). Edmund was called before Her Majesty's High Commissioners for Causes Ecclesiastical to answer these charges. The charges appear to have stemmed from an accusation that Edmund 'came not once to his parish church these two yeares laste paste and refuseth to communicate according to the Queenes instructions, and if happelie he recieveth the communion once a yeare about Easter, secretlie in his house, yet he sendeth for some strange minister ageable to his fantasie (as sundrie papists do) which is verie offensive and repugnant to her majesties moste godlie precedinge'. Edmund also called his pastor 'vile varlett', and that in front of the Bishop was so much more offensive. He also said that he would not be taught by 'any pulpit man in England what he had to doo'. And that because of his private religion 'he keepeth his family from frequenting the church, hearing sermons and receiving the communion publickly as is demanded by authoritie'. It was also said against Edmund that he had 'laid violent hands on Mr Reeve, and dragged him through the mire to his mill pitt, pretending in his furious chollar, either to drown him, or to do some desperate violence'. But with much struggling Mr Reeve escaped (Guildford Muniment Room LM/85/2/1). Slyfield also would not pay towards the repair of his parish church or towards the casting of the new bell. The outcome of this continual strife does not seem clear.

Edmund Slyfield died in 1590 and was buried in St. Nicolas Church, Great Bookham. In his will, he wished to be buried 'in the aisle or chancel that my predecessors did make and op the south side of the same aisle in such decent and comlie order for the manner of my funeral'.

Elizabeth, Edmund's wife, was 77 at the time of her death in 1597. She was buried in the same church as her husband. Her brass at its foot reads as follows:

'Elyzabeth Slyfeld the wife of Edmund Slyfeld Esqujer and daughter of Walter Lambert of Carshaiton in the countye of Surrey Esqujer whose mother was Margaret Gaynesford the daughter of Robert Gaynsford of Allington Castle in the countye of Kent Esquier the mother of which Robt Gaynsford was Margaret Sydney who was of the pryvye chamber to queenes and great aunt unto Sir Henry Sydney Knight of the Garter Lord P'sident of Wales and of the pryvy counsell unto QE and the wyf of ye said Robt Ga was daughter unto Sir Walter Moyle of Eastwell in the countye of Kent Knight whose mother was the daughter of Sir Thomas Arundell Knight.

Henry was Edmund's eldest son and heir. He was born in 1542 and died in 1598. On the death of his father in 1590 he seems, according to his mother, to have behaved badly towards her, so much so that she found it necessary to complain to the Rt. Hon. Lord Pickering, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, for protection. She asked for Henry to be called before him to be reprimanded for his 'malicious meaning against me' and for 'a long tyme she could not abide the sight of hym—and often tymes calling his mother 'monster'. He also told her 'that there was no truth or honestie in her more than in a dogge - to her greate greife and contynall unquietness'. All this in spite of his obtaining the Lordships of West Clandon and Clandon Regis from her (Guildford Muniment Room LM 1321/3).

Henry had two younger sons, Thomas, who died in 1608, and John, a member of Gray's Inn, who was convicted of murder. He managed to escape the extreme penalty of the law, but his lands were forfeit to the Crown. West Clandon was not his, and was not affected, and William and Edmund conveyed their properties after their mother's death to George Duncombe of Shalford.

As his father and mother had been, Henry and his wife were buried in the Church of St Nicolas, Great Bookham. Their brass reads:

'Here lieth buried Henry Slyfield Esq. and Elizabeth his wife who was the daughter of Richard Buckford citizen of London: The sayd Henry was of ye age of 56 years and deceased Ao DNI 1598 and had issue by his wife 6 sons and 4 daughters.'

The shields of arms show:

1. Slyfield quartering Weston of West Clandon. Sable a chevron or between three lions' heads argent.
2. The quartered coat of Slyfield impaling Buckford. Party chevron wise argent and sable, three bucks' heads counter coloured with their horns.

Henry seems to have forecast the future of the Slyfield estates. 'That my will is ... to the use of my eldest son Edmund and to the heires male ... until such tyme as the saide Edmund or anie such seed male shall attempte to discontinue ye saide estate or levie a ffyne or to suffer a recoverie thereof or shall attempte to speke or doe anie such unlawful act or



The Armorial Bearings of Slyfield (quartering with Weston) as entered in College of Arms Roll Volume 120 (1. Feb. 1611), the latter Shield being on a Monumental Brass at West Bookham in Surrey to Henry Slyfield, created in 1598

College of Arms  
London

A. C. C. C.  
Garter King of Arms

SLYFIELD ARMORIAL BEARINGS

thinge or consent thereunto whereby the said landes etc maie be forfeited to the Queene's majestie, her heirs and successors . . . or shall do or suffer anie other acts, things or device whereby the said estate maie be forfeited, cutt off, extinguished or destroyed...'

### **Slyfield in the 17th and 18th centuries**

In March 1614, Henry Breton bought Slyfield House from the Slyfield family ending their long direct association with the property. Late in the same year, Slyfield passed into the hands of George Shiers and on obtaining possession appears to have commenced rebuilding the mansion. He died in 1642 and his will states that his wife, Mary Shiers, should receive the house after his death. One of her grandsons, another George, succeeded to the inheritance on reaching his majority; later in this son's life he was created a baron, but in 1685, a year after he was so honoured, he died, unmarried. After the death of Sir George Shiers the Slyfield property became vested in his mother, Elizabeth, who lived at Slyfield until she died in 1700.

Elizabeth Shiers devised the estate to Dr Hugh Shortridge, Rector of Fetcham and Vicar of Great Bookham who, after Elizabeth died, moved into Slyfield and lived there until his death in 1720. In 1705 he had formed a Trust to carry out the wishes of the late Elizabeth Shiers whereby, as was the custom of the day, adjoining landowners were appointed to be trustees; he also ensured that Exeter College, Oxford (where Elizabeth's son, Sir George Shiers was educated) benefited from the Trust. Some of the rents were to be divided between the parishes of Great Bookham, Leatherhead, Effingham and Shalford, subject to them performing certain offices. The trustees were given the authority to alter or even pull down the property. In 1744 some twenty years after the Trust was first set up, the house was reduced in size, to be maintainable as a farmhouse with barns. It was not long, however, before it was again a prominent building in the district.

### **SLYFIELD MILLS**

The Domesday Book of 1086 refers to a mill on the River Mole, presumably that on the river close to Slyfield. There were at one time two corn mills, and a fulling mill associated with the fabrication of cloth. A 1375 document mentions Nicolas Slyfield's ownership of a wharf extending from the north of the water running 'to these mills and wood called "The Park"'. In the early 16th century Sir Edmund Bray was accused by John Slyfield of having wilfully turned the water of the River Mole (or Emlyn Stream) away from his mills. This is a good indication of the high esteem the Slyfield family felt for their mills. Their importance continued after the family sold out to others in 1614. They were still well known, at least until the 19th century, when they were poetically referred to in Mary Drinkwater-Bethune's 1839 poem:

The River Mole or the Emlyn Stream  
Past the Old Mill, where the stream finds a voice  
And Stoke D'Abernon, in its waveless course  
The Mole glides on, through quiet meadows, rich  
In yellow cowslips and the tall foxglove  
With its deep purple bells dew-laden

In 1846, only seven years after the poem was published, the trustees who then administered the Slyfield estate obtained an Order in Chancery that the mills could be demolished and that they need not be rebuilt. Over a century later, in 1969, when the land around the site of the mills





SLYFIELD MANOR (OR PLACE) 1912. AN EARLY 20TH CENTURY PAINTING.  
*Courtesy of D.W. and B.J. Slyfield*

was levelled and landscaped, some massive timbers buried three or four feet below ground came to light. These timbers were shaped to form the inner rim of a mill wheel, having diameter of 14ft and there was also what appears to have been an axle shaft. It may be assumed that these are the relics of a medieval mill wheel. In 1978 its outer rim was discovered and is now retained in the Great Barn at Slyfield.

### **SLYFIELD HOUSE**

It is not known when the present house was constructed but it is generally agreed that it was either in the late 16th century or the first quarter of the 17th century, so it is not known whether it is Edmund Slyfield's house or one of his successors. On Thomas Clay's map of Bookham in 1615, the house is shown as a three-sided building with gables and what seems to be a steep pitched roof with a wall and entrance gate enclosing a courtyard. The map appears to include some of the buildings which are left today. It was customary in Clay's time to build in the shape of an 'E' in honour of Queen Elizabeth; a rough sketch prepared by J H Harvey in 1953 shows that to have been the probable layout in the 17th century.

Slyfield House today has richly panelled rooms, with fine plaster ceilings, and these with its red-bricked barns and granaries make it one of the most admired houses in the county. The Great Barn has for many years been associated with the nearby Menuhin School and concerts are frequently held here. Outside, Slyfield House is a mellow brick building with a great sweep of tiled roof; with rich mouldings and ornamental detail. It is now only a fragment of the one-time Slyfield House.

The most interesting feature of the main part of the house is the splendid original dog gates at the foot of the stairs, to prevent hounds from passing up to the first floor rooms.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES**

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1. Dr Meryl R Foster and the Public Record Office. Crown Copyright material in the PRO is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. PRO document references nos: E/64/25; C/81/1374; B/364/116; E/101/107/31; E101/107/32; Also memorandum P5690 (WO 25/196 Return of Officers Service 60th Regt 1129)
2. Major J H Wyllie, Curator of Dorset Military Museum
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## ASHTEAD CHAPEL & CHURCH IN THE 12TH & 13TH CENTURIES AND THE ORIGINS OF THE LITTLE ASHTEAD MANOR

By H. J. Davies

A document in the Public Record Office at Kew contains details of the execution of the will of Henry de Mara in 1261<sup>1</sup>. He was one of the most eminent sons of Ashtead, a King's Bench lawyer who worked with Bracton, a father of English law in the 13th century. In accordance with his will, his executors made an agreement with the Prior of Newark Abbey to provide three chaplains to say masses for the souls of Henry and his ancestors at Ashtead in the Chapel of St Mary. One of the executors was named as Reginald de Murteng, Rector of the Church of Ashtead. This is an earlier Rector of Ashtead than previously known. A chapel could not have a Rector in the 13th century or since, so this raises the interesting question of the relationship of the early 12th century Chapel to the Church of Ashtead of which he was Rector!

Was the chantry chapel in the Parish Church?

The first possibility is that the Chapel in Henry de Mara's will was within the Rector's Church in 1261. Where were the three chaplains to say masses? A chantry chapel required a separate altar and generally a separate space. H.E Malden suggested that the chapel stood on the north side of the church where the north aisle was built, a suggestion followed by the Revd E.J. Austin in 1933. This could not be the main part of that aisle which was not built before the 1840s. A painting of the interior of St Giles Church in 1827 by E. Hassel, before the major rebuilding of 1830/31, shows a nondescript round arch on the north side of the nave. This was replaced by the present 'perpendicular style' arch in that rebuilding, matching that of the tower of a much earlier date. There is a fraction of an east wall of the area visible through the old north arch in Hassel's painting with a diagonal rib. A drawing of the exterior north wall by Porden of an early date shows a north door leading from this area which is known to have been an entrance from the Manor house for many years. Another painting of the northern exterior by G. Yates of 1826 shows not a doorway but a small addition of a stone or brick building with a tiny north window (the artist seems to have added this structure as an afterthought!) A pre-existing small vestry is also mentioned in the same spot in the rebuilding papers of 1830/1. This may have been used as a very small side chantry after 1260, smaller than previously suggested. No provision for an extension in the church was made in the will.

The Hassel painting also shows a feature in the nave otherwise unknown; E. Hassel is a very reliable source unlike J. Hassel, his relative. This is a timber structure where the present lectern stands which must have been the seat of the lord of the Manor in 1827. There is a possibility that this stands on the site of a former chantry altar. No trace of a chantry was found by Edward the Sixth's Commissioners in 1548 but a sepulchre light was found by them, financed by a property in Otways Lane.

Otways

In the 15th century the descendants of Henry de Mara complained that no masses were being said for their ancestors but there were few if any chaplains left after the Black Death for such duties.

The alternative is to look for the chantry elsewhere than in the Parish Church.

Did Ashtead have a chapel and a church? A critique of the evidence.

No church at all was mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 although this was not unusual; churches were normally included only if they had glebe land which was taxable. There were two churches in Epsom in Domesday with a fraction of the population ascribed to Ashtead; one of these churches is claimed by Ewell which is not credited with any except the church of Leatherhead, which was part of Ewell! It is in the Roxburgh Club publication of documents in the possession of Earl Cowper in 1897 that the information about the establishment of a chapel in Ashtead first appeared. The relevant pieces were published in Latin with English translation in the Proceedings of The Leatherhead & District History Society, but without any commentary <sup>2</sup>. These documents, which were once in the cartulary of Colchester Abbey concerning Leatherhead & Ashtead, have since led to considerable debate. Doubts have been raised about their authenticity. They are said to have been found in a cupboard in the Abbey in mid 13th century and passed down eventually to Earl Cowper. The present writer will argue below for the authenticity of at least one, having examined evidence at the British Library and Public Record Office.

The information from the Roxburgh documents was first used by Dr John Blair in 'Ashtead a village transformed' in 1977 & 'History of Leatherhead 1988'. In one document it is stated that the Bishop of Winchester, William Gyffard, forbade any priest to say mass in the chapel of Ashtead without the licence of the priest of Leatherhead to which that chapel belongs <sup>3</sup>. Blair has contended that the church of St Mary, Leatherhead, had taken over the functions of the former minster church of ~~Pachenesham~~ <sup>Pachen-esham</sup> in the north of Leatherhead. Blair's view on the place of minsters in late Anglo Saxon England has won general assent though not by all scholars. The priest of Leatherhead was in Blair's view given overall responsibility for the chapel of Ashtead including approval of the appointment of its priest. This is the first evidence for the existence of a chapel in Ashtead and is usually assumed to be the future St Giles Church. Two other documents in the Roxburgh Collection state that both Leatherhead Church and the Chapel of Ashtead were given to the Abbey of Colchester. Both documents purport to have come from two Popes, from Alexander III on two occasions, one between 1160 & 1181 and one in 1179, and another from Innocent III in 1201. There is no reason to doubt their authenticity in so far as they represent the papal view <sup>4</sup>.

A change begins to come about in the 1190s. The word 'church', 'ecclesia', begins to be used in the documents relating to Ashtead instead of 'chapel'. In 1197 Godfrey, Bishop of Winchester, announces <sup>5</sup> that by his pontifical authority he has agreed to pay the Abbot of Colchester a 'pension' of 20 shillings and 12 pence *from the church of Ashtead by the hands of he who at their presentation by us and our successors [i.e. the Bishops] shall be instituted perpetual vicar in the same church* annually. The first use of the word pension in Medieval Latin was in about 1185 <sup>6</sup>. It is generally agreed that a perpetual vicar could not be appointed to a chapel, nor could he be removed from the Living that was his for life. This was an important change, but was the church the former chapel?

The dispute over the advowson.

In 1214 there began a long dispute over the advowson, the right to appoint to the Living of the church, arising upon the recent death of the parson, Robert, between the Abbot of Colchester

and William de Mara, the son of Lecia & the first William de Mara. The first document is found in the Curia Regis Roll 15–16 John. The Abbot of Colchester was summoned to prove why he had prevented William de Mara from presenting a suitable parson to the chapel of Ashtead which was vacant. The Abbot came and said that he had acted rightly, because he and his monks were receiving from the parson of that chapel 20 shillings annually. The Abbot then went on to produce the original charter of Bishop William Gyffard dedicating the chapel a century earlier but omitted after 'Leatherhead' the words 'to which that chapel belongs along with a virgate of land which Laurence gave to it for its dedication and with all the tithes of the demesne and of the villeins'. The original manuscript of 1214 has been examined by the present writer in the Public Record Office <sup>7</sup>. The document is slightly damaged at the bottom but it can be confirmed that nothing of importance is omitted as might be indicated from the Calendar entry, only a few legal words where the bottom left edge has been damaged. There was no room there for the claim that the presentation was by the Abbot and monks of Colchester. The authenticity of the document is absolutely certain. The Abbot stated that he had appointed Robert who had recently died. This was the source of the dispute which was not settled until 1220.

Later in 1214 the case came before a "possessory assize" in the King's Bench, a legal process first introduced in England in 1196 but the hearing was postponed because of the lack of a jury. King John had died before the case was heard <sup>8</sup>.

In 1219 both the Abbot and William de Mara nominated representatives to hear the judgement given on this case. Subsequently a date was given for the hearing.

At last in 1220 in the Hilary term, the verdict was given <sup>9</sup>. The Abbot of Colchester Abbey was declared to be 'in misericordia' i.e. in the wrong. He had not appointed the last parson. Malden and others who believed the Abbot had won the case and that he and the monks may have gone on to build the chancel have missed this final verdict. They did not! The omission may have occurred because Ashtead was wrongly named Oxsted in the final document 'the Feet of Fine' <sup>10</sup>.

The King's Court by this decision appeared to overthrow the validity of Pope Innocent the Third's confirmation of 1201 that the chapel of Ashtead lawfully belonged to the Abbot and Monks of Colchester. The Abbot had not understood the meaning of the pension. It also confirmed that William de Mara was the patron of the church and able to appoint the parson, at that time a perpetual vicar if not yet quite a Rector. By 1260 Ashtead church had a Rector.

The decision of the Court may also have been given because the last parson may have been appointed during the period of the interdict placed by the Pope on King John following a controversy over the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1205. Many churches were closed for several years. However the Bishops of Winchester and Norwich ignored the Interdict and presumably went on making appointments in their dioceses and keeping their churches open. Ashtead was in Winchester diocese and the Bishop and William de Mara could have appointed a parson! Colchester Abbey would have observed the Interdict. It never regained its former right.

Was the chapel in Little Ashtead?

It is possible that after 1196 Ashtead had a chapel and a church and that the chapel was situated in a different part of Ashtead from the church to which the perpetual vicar was appointed.

13.4 d

An area named in later documents as Little Ashtead or Prior's Farm had belonged to Merton Abbey before taken by Henry VIII in 1538 with the main Manor at the dissolution of the monasteries. It was given separately to lay holders in 1578<sup>11</sup>. An earlier reference to this was also made, when it was described as nothing more than some land which was rated in Pope Nicholas's Taxation of 1291 at 13. Ad a year [for comparison Ashtead Rectory was valued then at £13.6.8]. At a later date Little Ashtead was described at various times as consisting of a larger area. The area held by Merton Abbey was a portion of a larger area later known historically as Little Ashtead, or Lower Ashtead, [a term in recent times confusingly transferred to the area near the railway on the north side of Ashtead on road signs and elsewhere]. The Chamberlains of Tankerville in the early 12th century are said to have given Ashtead to Laurence of Rouen. This has been difficult to understand as the Earls of Warenne had been given the Manor of Ashtead by King William II. It is most likely that Laurence was given part of Ashtead initially and not the whole. The clue lies in Lincolnshire where only parts of Harlaxton and Londresthorpe near Grantham were given to Laurence's family by the Chamberlains although the phraseology used in the documents seemed to include the whole of each. Likewise, Laurence may have been given part of Ashtead not all. This would provide a solution in part to the problem discussed in the present writer's articles in the Society's Proceedings Vol.6.2 & 6.3. One of the Chamberlains was also a signatory of the charter establishing Merton Abbey in 1117. He or his successors, may have given a portion of West Ashtead to the Abbey later known as Prior's Farm but the grant to Laurence may have been made at an earlier date and covered a wider area. Merton certainly held the farm by 1242.

probably

The chapel to which Laurence gave a virgate of land at its consecration may have been situated in another part of Ashtead, not on the site of the later Ashtead Church [St Giles]. Laurence was named De Sancto Sepulchro, of the Holy Sepulchre. It is very likely that he was a member of the select few belonging to that Order who had the honour of guarding what was thought to be the site of Christ's tomb and on which the great Christian church in Jerusalem was built during the Crusades. The Chamberlains of Tankerville who had their headquarters in Rouen were deeply involved in recruiting Crusaders and leading the Knights of this Order. It is noteworthy that the Church of St Sepulchre in London, without the wall at Ludgate Hill, was established in 1117. [It was later rebuilt and is in 2003 the Musicians' church]. Another example is found in Cambridge, the commonly known 'Round Church', formerly St Sepulchre. The chapel in Ashtead may have been built by the same Order at the behest of the Chamberlain of Tankerville and the dates coincide. English Bishops were jealous for their control of their own dioceses and this could have occasioned the command that no one should say mass in the chapel at Ashtead without the permission of the priest of Leatherhead. The documents do not say that Laurence built the chapel, only that he gave a virgate of land.

Outways Lane

Where might the site of a former separate chapel have been if not the future parish church? The most likely place is the area at the junction of Skinners Lane and the lane later called Outways Lane. This was the site of the vicarage and even used as a Rectory over many centuries as late as 1820. It measures a virgate! In the post medieval period there is clear evidence of church land in this area including Church Acre. Part of the virgate is still occupied by the Haven, an Ashtead Charity property; footings have been found of the former Rectory or Vicarage nearby. Parson's Mead School stands on former church land from which it gets its name. Iron age bones have recently been discovered in the area nearby. It was not uncommon in Surrey to have a chapel next to the parsonage before the establishment of a parish church<sup>12</sup>. Laurence may have

lived further west in the future Prior's Farm area. The glebe land was also further north and east of Skinners Lane, in the Glebe Rd area and beyond.

The argument is not conclusive but would be a solution to the terms of Henry de Mara's will that mass was to be said in the Chapel of St Mary by three chaplains with the agreement of the Rector of the Church of Ashtead, Reginald de Murteng, who was one of his executors. Henry provided them with land formerly belonging to Amfrid and it is also known that John the Chaplain dwelt in Ashtead towards the end of the 13th century. In accordance with the ecclesiastical laws of the land John as a chaplain was able to be married and had a son, John! He was probably a chantry priest from Newark Abbey and the old chapel by then part of a priest's house could have been used for the memorial to Henry de Mara.

From chapel in Little Ashtead to church in "The Park".

If this argument is followed, there must have been a point when Laurence or more probably his descendants moved from the area of the chapel to the site of the future Ashtead Park and St Giles Church. It is unlikely that this area had been occupied in person by a Lord of the Manor such as the Earl of Warenne. His serfs probably lived in hovels in the later Rectory Lane and worked on his fields, supervised by a bailiff. Neither the Street area nor the Park formed the centre of Ashtead. The character of Ashtead was that of a number of different settlements divided by open fields, woods and waste. One was probably situated at the source of the Rye Brook, straddling the border with Epsom and the site of a future farm. The partially remaining site of Abbot's pit belonged to the Abbot of Chertsey and was probably related to it. This explains the reference to Chertsey Abbey land at the time of the Dissolution. Then there was 'Little Ashtead' on particularly fertile soil near the spring line of the North Downs & on the Leatherhead border. Yet another settlement was probably to be found in the north in the area of the Caen, not too far from the site of the former Roman villa with favourable soil above the flood plain. It is significant that Ashtead's population was larger than Epsom or Leatherhead including Pachenesham in the Domesday survey.

Mary, daughter of Laurence, had a fine seal and may have been the first to settle in the future Park area. It is certainly likely that Lecia her daughter was living in the Park area with her husband William de Mara I; he is the most likely person to have built St Giles Church towards the end of his life in the 1190s, having given up the advowson of one of Rouen's most important churches, St Sauveur [St Saviour], near the smaller St Sepulchre in the market place where the Chamberlains had their town house. He was a distinguished man of wealth. Such an explanation would fit in with the appointment of a perpetual vicar in 1197 and the ruling made by the Curia Regis in 1220. By 1260 at the latest Ashtead Church was a Rectory.

We are left then with the two possible explanations for the site of Henry de Mara's chantry: a side altar or small area on the north side in the future St Giles Church then called the Chapel of St Mary, or a memorial in a former Chapel of St Mary at the south end of Skinners Lane. The latter Chapel so situated would have fallen into disuse after the Black Death and become the source of complaint by later descendants in the 15th century. There would never have been burials on this site; they would have been in Leatherhead & later at the Parish Church. The site was occupied by clergy until the 1820s and no building on the site until the late 19th century, thus excluding any source of superstition. The origin of a separate Manor of Little Ashtead containing Prior's Farm held by Merton Abbey until the Reformation in the west of Ashtead,

sharing the same Manorial Court, originally held by Laurence and his descendants from the Chamberlains of Tankerville, is also explained.

## NOTES

1. KB26/169m6
2. Proc LDLHS 3.2 1968 Ross Mss
3. *ibid* Rox p78
4. *ibid* Rox pp71, 62, & 67
5. *ibid* Rox p79
6. Revised Medieval Latin Word List, R.E.Latham; it is not found in classical Latin and had not therefore been used.
7. PRO KB26 58
8. 16 John Michaelmas KB29 rot 4
9. KB26. 72 & 73 [duplicates]
10. KB72 & 73 rots 30, 34 Surr'
11. Manning & Bray 'History of Surrey' 1804–1814 pp 628 & 630
12. See for example 'Weybridge, Chobham & Horsell: Thorpe by Jill Williams for the Surrey Archaeological Society's Village Project 2002

## POST BOXES OF THE LEATHERHEAD DISTRICT

By D. R. RENN  
F

Letters in Britain had to be taken to a Receiving Office for transmission until the Continental system of letter collection from lockable cast-iron hollow pillars was introduced to Jersey in 1852 and extended to Guernsey and England in the following year. In October 2002, English Heritage and Royal Mail announced an initiative to retain and conserve all traditional red letter post boxes, in acknowledgement of the sesquicentenary<sup>1</sup>. Following John D. Smith's pioneering survey of the postboxes of Walton and Weybridge<sup>2</sup>, I asked our members to send in details of their local boxes. Nearly an hundred post boxes were reported: a few in Leatherhead itself may have been missed.

While the survey was in progress (October 2002–June 2003), changes took place to the information displayed. The box number was extended to include the district postcode [KT21 Ashted, KT22 Fetcham and Leatherhead, KT23 the Bookhams, KT24 Effingham], but the numbered 'next collection' tags were removed and only the last collection time was shown.

### Post Offices

Counters for postal business have now regressed to local shops. The combined postal sorting office and telephone exchange built on West Hill, Ashted in 1934 had a Crown post office in front between 1950 and 1973, when it moved into the shop next door (No.11) until 1993<sup>3</sup>. The post office in little Bookham Street opened at no.107 in 1902 with a shop next door. A later house was built beyond the front path and combined both businesses in an annexe. The original enamelled iron wall sign LITTLE BOOKHAM POST OFFICE was there until shortly before closure on 18 March 2003 after a century in ownership by the Weale family<sup>4</sup>. The c.1900 purpose-built

See Vol 6  
No 8 p 197  
for enviro  
notes here

See also  
Vol 6 p  
p 325  
for  
postbox



Crown post office in North Street, Leatherhead closed about 1990, when its carved title and external and internal posting box slits were boarded over. The parallel blocks of the telephone exchange and postal sorting office in Station Road nearby are almost unaltered since their erection in 1938<sup>5</sup>, and the sorting office's (un-numbered) public posting slot was still in use in 2003. Here there is an example of the pre-decimal twin slot machines which sold (old) penny and halfpenny postage stamps from rolls, but now showing the mechanical 'not in use' sign. There is another in the wall of the former Bookham Grove stables at the corner of Lower Shott and Dorking Road, painted red with POSTAGE STAMPS embossed above the machines, each still having the frame for its glass canopy and one the brass LIFT flap.

### The Survey

The postboxes are listed in approximately chronological order of manufacture, as shown by the royal cipher and sometimes by other details, such as the manufacturer's contract dates<sup>6</sup>. Boxes may have changed position (for example, that in Green Lane, Ashted, is said to have come from Oakfield Road<sup>7</sup>). The KT number is that stated on the information plate. As well as many gaps in the sequence, five duplicates were noted: Nos 38, 63, 68, 79 and 80. The position is given as the road in which is the posting slot, followed by the next intersecting road, then either A for Ashted, B for Bookham, E for Effingham, F for Fetcham or L for Leatherhead and finally the National Grid Reference<sup>8</sup>.

Unless otherwise stated, the postbox is a freestanding cast-iron cylinder, the overhanging convex cap having a 'milled' edge. No distinction was made between Type A and the slimmer Type B, which are otherwise identical. Some boxes (particularly those outside a post office), once had an oval plate held up by a bracket on top, painted cream with the legend POST/ <— <<</OFFICE on each side in red or black. These plates have all gone, but parts of the bracket remain at Nos. 31, 35, 39, 58, 71, 76, 84 and 186, reduced to mere studs at Nos. 1, 3, 9, 12, 20, 42, 47, 70, 100, 156 and 178. Some years ago I photographed the plate on No. 13 [of which there is now no trace whatsoever] and another on the Edward VIII box formerly on the south side of Craddocks Parade, Ashted. Slot machines selling books of postage stamps attached to Nos. 13, 35, 57, 69, 76 and 179 were all sealed with paper 'not in use' labels early in 2003.

Smaller capacity was provided either by a wall box [with a cast-iron plate front built into brickwork] or by a lampbox [fastened to a lamp post or telegraph pole; recent ones ('Bantam') stand on top of a steel pole].

Ashted has postboxes of every reign from Victoria to Elizabeth II and the only local 'pouch boxes', that is, a large lockable cubical box fixed to one side of the postbox [Nos. 61 and 178] as a temporary store for letters being collected or delivered when the foot postman's 'round' became too heavy to carry all at once. The holes in the left hand side of No. 156 may indicate a former 'pouch box': stamp machines were normally fixed to the right hand side.

### Victoria (1837–1901)[marked VR]

Three cylindrical postboxes cast by A Randyside and Company, Derby and London [Britannia Foundry, Derby], of the second National Standard type with the embossed POST OFFICE and intertwined VR cipher, made between 1887 and 1901.

KT22 13 Kingston Road/Kingslea, outside the sub-post office L 6569

KI'21 61 Green Lane/Oakhill Road A 7584

KT23 115 Cobham Road/M25, entrance to Yehudi Menuhin School B 3379  
 Two wallboxes made by W.T.Allen and Co. of London [foundry at Mansfield, Notts.]  
 between 1881 and 1901:

KT22 16 Downs Lane/Leatherhead Bypass, garden wall of Downside House<sup>9</sup>. L 7053  
 23(sic) Chessington Road/Epsom Gap, opposite The Star public house. L 6799 Posting  
 slit covered with painted plate ~~son~~<sup>Sorry</sup>— THIS POST BOX IS CLOSED.

A photograph of 1885 or soon after shows the then Ashtead post office with its wallbox  
 bearing an enamel plate VR/POST OFFICE/LEFERBOX<sup>10</sup> LETTERBOX



VICTORIAN PILLAR BOX (WITH ATTACHED  
 'POUCH BOX') IN GREEN LANE. ASHTEAD.  
*Courtesy of Claude Blair*



EDWARD VII POST BOX, BARNETT WOOD  
 LANE, CHURCH ROAD OUTSIDE POST OFFICE  
 SUB-POST

### Edward VII (1901–10) [marked EVIIR]

Two cast by MacDowall Steven & Co. of Glasgow and London [foundry at Falkirk] whose  
 contract began in 1904, so these boxes date between 1904 and 1910. This is confirmed by the  
 posting slot being in the door: before 1904 the slot was above the door, and letters might get  
 trapped in the fixed top of the box.

KT21 68 Skinners Lane/Oakfield Road, by Northfields path A 8081

KT21 80 Barnett Wood Lane/Church Road, outside sub-post office A 7886

It may be difficult to read the ironfounder's name on a box because of vegetation or thick  
 anti-fouling paint near the base, while recent boxes, particularly 'Bantams', often lack a  
 maker's name. The Carron Iron Company of Carron, near Falkirk, Stirlingshire is the most  
 common name identifiable, and boxes marked\* below can definitely be attributed to them.



GEORGE V WALL BOX IN THE MOUNT,  
FETCHAM. *Courtesy of John Wettern*

98

**George V(1910–36) [marked GRI]**

Some cylindrical boxes in Ashted have the rim of the embossed crown level with the doorpull, and so date between 1922, when Carron's contract commenced, and 1927 when the pattern changed:

KT21 39 Barnett Wood Lane/The Murreys. A 7583\*

KT21 63 The Warren/Epsom Road, outside Ashted Hospital A 8475\*

KT21 114 Links Road/Preston Grove A 7386\*

KT21 132 Dene Road/Park Lane A 9081\*

Elsewhere the crown is rather lower (dating between 1927 and 1936):

KT21 1 Ottways Lane/Agates Lane, by path to Maple Road A 7977\*

KT22 17 Kennel Lane/Lower Road F 4453

KT22 19 Raymead Way/Cobham Road F 5562\*

KT22 20 Epsom Road/Garlands Road L 7167\*

KT22 24 The Street/Lodge Road F 4862

KT21 25 Forest Crescent/Epsom Road A 9392\*

KT23 31 Lower Shott/Dorking Road, at entrance to car park B 3643\*

KT21 38 Stag Leys/Epsom Road A 8172\*,

KT22 47 St John's Avenue/Kingston Avenue L 6768\*

KT22 53 Leatherhead Road/Ermyrn Way A 7870\*

KT22 63 Guildford Road/Red Leaf, at Bocketts Farm roundabout F 5150\*

KT23 68 Groveside/Manor Place B 3340

KT23 76 Leatherhead Road/Downsway ,outside sub-post office B 4245

KT22 79 Cannon Grove/Cobham Road F 5162\*

KT23 84 Guildford Road/Hawkwood Rise B 3342\*

KT22 88 Lower Road/Ferngrove Close F 5359

Cast by the Lion Foundry Company Kirkintilloch, Glasgow, whose contract ran from 1936 to 1947, so presumably this dates from very early in 1936.

KT21 152 Greville Park Road/Park Road A 8381\*

KT21 202 Chaffers Mead/Cray Avenue A 8590\*

Wallboxes [all cast by W.J. Allen]

KT22 2 In wall of up platform, Leatherhead railway station L 6368

There may have been an earlier box, since this wall is an original part of the station of 1867 and the present box is clearly reset.

22 7

KT ~~227~~ Church Street/Church Road L 6762

KT22 54 The Mount/Fetcham Park Drive F 5457

KT24 74 The Street/Yew Tree Walk, outside Effingham post office E 1835

KT22 80 St Mary's Road/Elm Close L 6958

Each of the last three is in a purpose-built freestanding brick pillar with a gabled tiled top. Lampbox

KT24 77 Orestan Lane/ Calvert Road, outside Orestan Farm Barn E 0936 Now on a T-section steel pole, but embossed LETTERS ONLY with a half-round top and holes for the rods to strap it to a telegraph or lamp post.

### Edward VIII (1936) [marked EVIIR]

KT21 186 Overdale/Broadhurst, near railway station A 8191\*



EDWARDS

EDWARD VIII. A RARE EXAMPLE OF A POST BOX FROM THIS KING'S SHORT REIGN. NEAR ASHTEAD STATION



GEORGE VI POST BOX, CRADDOCKS AVENUE/BAGOT CLOSE

### George VI (1936-52) [marked GVIR]

KT23 3 Lower Road/Little Bookham Street B 2643

KT23 9 Church Road/footpath to Edenside Road, opposite railway station B 2856

KT21 21 Culverhay/Overdale A 8595\*

KT21 37 Woodfield Lane/The Marld A 8584

KT23 58 Woodlands Road/Guildford Road B 2435\*  
KT21 62 Crampshaw Lane/Druids Close A 8776  
KT23 70 The Glade/Bushy Road B 3863\*  
KT23 71 Little Bookham Street/Heatherside Close, outside sub-post office B 2651\*  
KT24 85 Beech Avenue/Starrs Wood Lane E 1823\*  
KT22 89 Keswick Road/Orchard End F 4553  
KT22 93 Kingston Road/Fairs Road, outside sub-post office L 6478\*  
KT23 99 Middlemead Road/Sole Farm Avenue B 3047  
KT21 121 Harriotts Lane/The Priors A 7674\*  
KT21 163 Links Road/Ashtead Common A 7889\*  
KT21 176 Craddocks Avenue/Bagot Close A 8992\*  
KT21 177 Craddocks Avenue/The Renmans A 8692  
KT21 178 West Farm Avenue/West Farm Close A 7677  
KT21 183 Grove Road/Hatfield Road A 8780\*  
KT21 187 Bramley Way/Darcy Road A 8789\*  
Numbers 37,62,89, 177 and 178 were cast at the Lion Foundry, Kirkintilloch, so between 1936 and 1947 (see above)  
Wallbox [cast by W.T. Allen]  
KT21 169 Farm Lane/Rookery Hill A 9683

#### **Elizabeth 11(1952-- [marked EIIR]**

No Type **K** boxes (with a plain slightly rounded top, low grooved 'waist ') and recessed posting slot/ information plate) were recorded, so the following cylinders should all be earlier than 1980.

Plain posting slot:

KT22 6 High Street/Leret Way, outside Letherhead Institute L 6865  
Cast by Machan Engineering Scotland and embossed **ROYAL MAIL** rather than **POST OFFICE**, which would date it to after 1990, like No.34 below  
KT23 12 Lower Road/Eastwick Road B 3949\*  
KT22 42 Guildford Road/Cobham Road, outside Clark's Cafe F 6061\*  
KT23 60 Eastwick Drive/Spring Grove B 3455  
KT23 100 Church Road/Sole Farm Road B 3250  
KT22 140 Cock Lane/Meadow Lane F 4466  
Heavy frame round ten-inch posting slot, boxes of 1957 onward:  
KT22 34 Cobham Road/Orchard Close, outside sub-post office F 4865  
KT23 35 Church Road/Post House Lane, outside Great Bookham post office B 3647\*  
KT24 36 Browns Lane/Guildford Road E 2034\*  
KT22 57 Hazel Way/Penrose Road, outside sub-post office F 4264



ELIZABETH II POST BOX CLOSE TO  
ASHTEAD STATION



ELIZABETH II POST BOX OUTSIDE  
LEATHERHEAD INSTITUTE

KT24 69 Forest Road/Lovelace Close, outside sub-post office E 0259\*

KT21 156 Craddocks Avenue north side shopping parade service road A 8288\*

KT21 179 The Street/Woodfield Lane, outside sub-post office A 8782\*

Moulded glass fibre and plastic cylinder, 1994 or later:

KT22 92 Oxshott Road/Kingston Road, inside Tesco supermarket entrance L 6284

Large cavity boxes, with double slits, formerly labelled First and Second Class, now 'blind', although the revolving 'next collection number' discs now show 1 and 2 through small holes.

Both ROYAL MAIL, so after 1990 and cast by Machan Engineering Scotland.

KT22 65 Woodbridge Avenue/Kingston Road L 6283

KT22 75 North Street/High Street L 6565

Rectangular pressed steel with 'flat cap' and roller shutter for pre-franked mail: 1995 or later  
EHR cipher and ROYAL MAIL not embossed, paint faded

KT22 379 North Street/High Street, next to No.75 L 6565

KT23 389 Church Road/Bookham Court, at entrance to industrial park B 2856

Wallbox

KT22 26 Lower Road/St Mary's Close F 4957 Cast by W.T. Allen before 1966

~~KT 21212~~ Rectory Lane/Parkers Lane A 8778

Bantams, small rectangular lampboxes, top curving down towards back.

KT 21 212

Wired to telegraph pole:

KT23 50 The Park/ Park Way B 3452 cast by Carronade Engineering after <sup>1952</sup> ~~1982~~

KT23 64 Dawnay Road/Crabtree Lane B 4342

KT24 95 Guildford Road/Salmons Road E 0726

KT21 206 Chalk Lane/Ralliwood Road A 9778

Last two embossed ROYAL MAIL, so after 1990

Wired to lamp post:

KT21 79 Ashted Woods Road, bend outside Wood Cottage A 7593

KT21 214 Farm Lane/Woodlands Way A 9589

Freestanding pole:

\* Carron's contract began 1960.

KT22 15 Grange Road/Grange Close A 7673\*

KT24 22 Effingham Common Road/Lower Farm Road E 0854\*

KT22 51 Cobham Road/Langaller Lane F 3968\*

KT22 67 Guildford Road/The Mount F 5456 cast by Abbott Engineering like No.216 below

KT24 145 Norwood Road/Norwood Close E 2234

KT23 153 Elmswood/Edenside Road B 2953\*

KT23 155 Candy Croft/Procter Gardens B 3945\*

KT21 216 Hillside Road/ Berry Meade A 8885

KT24 225 Effingham Common Road/Howard Road, layby at railway station E 0358

KT21 226 Woodfield Lane/ Woodfield Road, at railway level crossing A 8190

Latter two cast by Machan Engineering, Scotland. Since Farrugia mentions neither Abbott nor

Machan, Nos.67, 216, 225 and 226 date after 1969.

Embossed ROYAL MAIL rather than POST OFFICE (ie 1990 or later):

KT22 38 Oaklawn Road/Oxshott Road at roundabout L 5792

KT23 78 Beales Road/Dorking Road B 3743

KT22 151 River Lane/Friars Orchard F 4667

### Former postboxes

Old photographs and maps show boxes which have later been moved and changed: often a wallbox has been replaced by a freestanding cylinder of greater capacity and moved across the road for users' safety. To take Bookham examples, changes in the brickwork near the stamp machines mentioned above suggest a former wallbox, replaced by No.31. The Eastwick Road garden wall of The Anchor public house still has the brick blocking and 'carcase' of the wallbox seen in a 1908 photograph <sup>12</sup>, replaced by No.12. The ~~gable~~ <sup>gable</sup> tile top of that formerly outside Post Cottage in Little Bookham Street survives on the garden wall, replaced by No.3. A similar

one formerly outside No 107 in that road<sup>13</sup> was replaced by box No.71 while a GVIR wallbox is re-used as a delivery letterbox at Acre House in Lower Road nearby. There must be others.

## NOTES

1. EH press release 778/10/02
2. *Walton and Weybridge Local History Society Monograph 48* (1990)
3. Anon, 'Ashtead's Post Offices and Officials' (written between 1990 and 1996, copies in Society and Royal Mail archives); Geoffrey Gollin, 'Ashtead Post Offices'. *Bygone Ashtead* (1987), pp.126-9, reprinted in *Procs L&DLHS 5(1)*, pp.34-7; J.C. Stuttard (ed), *A History of Ashtead* (1995), passim..
4. Linda Heath (compiler), *Bookham and Fetcham: images of England* (1999), p.67. For Great Bookham, *ibid.p.64* and Bill Culley, *Bookham in the Twentieth Century* (2000), pp.21, 24-5. Also M.M. O'Connor, *The History Of Effingham* (1973), pp.46, 96, 113; J.C. Stuttard (ed), *A History of Fetcham* (1998), pp.55,60; Edwina Vardey, *A History of Leatherhead* (1988), pp.176, 200-01.
5. Cartouche and royal cipher above.
6. See generally, J.Y. Farrugia, *The Letter Box* (Centaur Press, 1969).
7. J.C. Stuttard, *op.cit.* (1995), p.158 5 C D
8. All boxes lie in the 10 km. square TQ15. Thus [ABCD] is more fully TQ IAB ~~SCD~~ to the nearest 100m. 96 ii
9. Letter Box Study Group type ~~WB 864~~: Martin Robinson, *A Guide to Rare British Letter Boxes*, (second edition, 1988). For other local Victorian and Edwardian boxes, see Peter Tarplee, *A Guide to the Industrial History of the Mote Valley District* (1995), pp.69-70.
10. Gollin, *op.cit.*,p.126, p.34.
11. Smith, *op.cit.* p.9.
12. Heath, *op.cit.* p.17.
13. Heath, *op.cit.* p.67.

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HERE LIETH BY HIS WIFE HENRY SLYFIELD ESQ. & ELIZABETH HIS  
 WIFE WHO WAS THE DAUGHTER OF RICHARD BUCKFOLD CITIZEN  
 OF LOND: THE SAID H. WAS OF YEARES OF AGE OF 50 YEARES & DECEASED A  
 DNI 1598. & HAD ISSUE BY HIS WIFE 6 SONS & 4 DAUGHTERS



HENRY SLYFIELD, Esq., 1598, and Wife ELIZABETH  
 GREAT BOOKHAM CHURCH.  
 (About one-eighth full size)