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**LEATHERHEAD  
& DISTRICT  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**



**PROCEEDINGS VOL 7 N<sup>o</sup> 8/9**

**2015**

## SECRETARIAL NOTES

The following lectures and events were arranged during 2014.

Fri 17 Jan	Lecture:200 years of Surrey County History	Julian Pooley
Fri 21 Feb	Lecture: Leith Hill Place	Gabrielle Gale
Fri 21 Mar	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by talk, "Trivia in & around the Bookhams."	Chris Pullan
Fri 11 Apr	Designing some of Donald Campbell's Bluebirds	Donald Stevens
Fri 16 May	Behind the Scenes @ Leatherhead Museum	Lorraine Spindler
Wed 4 Jun	SOCIETY COFFEE MORNING in Library @ Institute	
Fri 17 Sep	SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by talk, "Surrey Roads from Turnpike to Motorway."	Gordon Knowles
Fri 17 Oct	Lecture; "The Roman Villa in Ashted Woods - A Century of Research."	David Bird
Fri 21 Nov	Lecture; "Researching Mary Chrystie of Bookham and her Family.	Judith Witter
Fri 5 Dec	Christmas Quiz.	Frank Haslam

The following lectures and events were arranged during 2015.

Fri 16 Jan	Lecture; "The Crystal Palace" – cancelled	Ian Bevan
Fri 20 Feb	Lecture; "Crime & Murder in Surrey's Past."	Julie Wileman
Fri 20 Mar	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed by two talks.	Lorraine Spindler/Roy Mellick
Fri 24 Mar	Outing to Christ's Hospital Museum, Horsham.	
Fri 17 April	Lecture; "History of Great Bookham through local names."	Peter Edwards
Fri 15 May	Lecture; "Leatherhead and India."	John Morris
Sat 27 Jun	SOCIETY COFFEE MORNING in Library @ Institute.	
Fri 18 Sep	Lecture; "The Crystal Palace."	Ian Bevan
Fri 20 Nov	Lecture; "Ruth Ellis – the last Woman to be hanged In England."	Monica Weller
Fri 4 Dec	Christmas Quiz.	Frank Haslam

**Leatherhead and District Local History Society**

**PROCEEDINGS**

**VOL. 7, NOs. 8/9**

**2014/15**

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## LINDA HEATH 1931-2013



Linda became involved in the Society in the 1980s and was Chairman of the Executive Committee from 1989, until 1996. She was Vice-President in 1998 and President in 2002, a post she held until 2007. In many ways, at that time, she was the Society. Apart from the many committees she was deeply involved in, such as the Programme committee and the organising Committee of Heritage Open Days, she looked after the collection of Leatherhead photographs in the Institute and was a museum steward. When she was on duty in the Institute Library she was a familiar figure either working with the Leatherhead photographs or doing research for her latest book.

She wrote a number of books published on behalf of the Society such as “Of Good Report” in 1986, “Leatherhead” in the Archive Series in 1996, “Leatherhead & District – Then and Now” in partnership with Peter Tarplee in 2005 and “Georgian Leatherhead” not very long before she died.

She took great pleasure in the production of her play “A Rich Inheritance” performed more than once in the Church. She also helped in the production of “Murder in the Cathedral” a joint venture with Epsom Methodist Church. She wrote a guide to St Mary’s Church, an account of the history of its organs and the history of All Saints Church. She was deeply involved in the restoration of the Parker organ in the Parish Church. She led walks around the town and gave talks to numerous clubs and societies especially about Fanny Burney or the historic buildings of Leatherhead. She represented the Society on the Council of The Leatherhead Community Association. She sadly died on May 21<sup>st</sup> 2013 after a period of ill health.

Even after her death her legacy lives on, literally, with her very generous gift to the Society of £41,305.



## EDITORIAL

There have been a number of changes since the previous Number of this publication was published in 2014.

1. The publication policy of the Society has been changed. Starting with this Number the Proceedings will be made available 'on-line' as standard to all Members. 'Hard' copies of the Proceedings will continue to be printed and made available, on request, for an additional charge. The Proceedings will continue to be published in their traditional format with 'grey-scale' illustrations. The 'on-line' Proceedings will, where possible, be illustrated in colour.

There may be further changes made after the publication of Number 10, which will be the final number of Volume 7 of the Proceedings.

2. After a hiatus, W. Whitman has succeeded Dr B Cox as Editor of the Proceedings. This gap is part of the reason why the present Number covers the years 2014 and 2015.

3. Tony Matthews has succeeded Martin Warwick as Editor of our sister publication, 'The Newsletter'. This publication has for some years been available in colour and on-line.

4. We are returning to the custom of printing the ISSN for the Proceedings on each Number: this registration number [ISSN 0140-7090] is a unique, international identifier for our publication.

It is becoming more difficult to find papers suited to publication in both of the Society's journals. We are keen to see more papers of a good standard being offered and we would suggest that an additional, potentially interesting field, which might be explored, is the story of the development of the Leatherhead District from 1945 to 2000. Two of the articles in this edition fall, roughly, into this category. Many facets of life changed in the period and some of these are special to this district; it would be good to record these while there are those living who have active memories of this period and access to appropriate records. We would be very willing to discuss possible projects with potential authors. We are also willing to read drafts of books or articles and to make comment if requested.

**MARTIN WARWICK**

*As we go to press we have learned of the death of Martin Warwick he will be sadly missed.*

*An obituary for Martin will appear in the August 2016 issue of the Newsletter, which he edited for several years.*



# **THE STORY OF A ROAD: BURROWS CLOSE, GREAT BOOKHAM**

[National Grid Reference TQ127552, Postcode KT23 3HB]

**By Derek Renn**

## **ABSTRACT**

A personal memoir of the life story of one 'development', tracing the various uses of the land over the past 400 years.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Bill Culley's book *Bookham in the Twentieth Century*, published by him with the help of this Society in 2000, described many of the changes in ownership and use of individual buildings in central Bookham. But what of the wider changes there and elsewhere in our district? The various editions of the larger-scale Ordnance Survey maps record the spread of new building and the in-filling of spaces between the older houses. Here is presented an example: a new road built in one garden fifty years ago, written by an original householder.

## **WHY BURROWS?**

Six months after Ann and I married in 1964, we moved into a newly-built house in Burrows Close<sup>1</sup>. Across the new road lay the garden of a 16<sup>th</sup> century house (Foxglove Cottage). The rising ground beyond is labelled 'Potters Hill' on the plan of the manor of Great Bookham, surveyed by Thomas Clay in 1614-1617<sup>2</sup>. He marked 'The North corner of the Burrowes' much further north on the other side of Little Bookham Street. In the early nineteenth century this area was Burrows (or Burroughs) Farm. The bank just mentioned might have once been a rabbit warren: today it has molehills, but no potsherds. Two cottages, each with an end-chimney, were drawn here by Clay. One, in a strip crossing the (Earborne) stream was occupied by William Arnold, and the other (to the north) by Edmund Wilkins<sup>3</sup>. To the south, two pasture fields belonging to Eastwick were tenanted by Christopher Reeve. Nearly two centuries later, Widow Willett occupied the cottage, which belonged to Fetcham Poor, although the land was owned by James Hawley. The adjoining fields belonged to Edward Waterer as part of Flushings and Lonesome (later Merrylands) farms<sup>4</sup>.

## **EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

Mrs Mary Chrystie (1838-1911) was a wealthy widow, a great benefactress of Bookham, who invested in property development and had strong views on the dangers of alcohol<sup>5</sup>. She built the Merrylands Temperance Hotel/Tea Rooms facing the new station on the London & South Western Railway line of 1885. This led to Church Road and Little Bookham Street being linked together by what was once called Station Road<sup>6</sup>. On the large-scale Ordnance Survey map updated about 1895, the area between the Lower Road, Little Bookham Street and Church Road is almost entirely fields, apart from a few farmhouses and cottages on its fringes<sup>7</sup>. The only intrusion was Merrylands Cottages at the end of a short spur road<sup>8</sup> running south from Station Road. Soon afterwards another short road was laid out by Arthur Bird (a rival developer and local benefactor), running east from Little Bookham Street, called Nelson Road (now Oakdene Road) with a terrace of three cottages<sup>9</sup>. Three of the other four building plots on the north side of the road were bought by Richard Lee, a local architect, in 1906. He designed many of the houses in Bookham, built by Andrew West, who had a yard nearby. Lee owned the house now called Gastons Meadow. The next house in Nelson Road ('Oakdene'), although almost a 'mirror image', may nevertheless have been built by Lee's partner, Percy Shoosmith, the purchaser of the fourth plot in 1907-9, since he called himself a builder in the 1911 census. He was still living there in 1940<sup>10</sup>.

Mrs Chrystie bought much of the adjoining freehold land between the two south 'prongs' of Bookham Common. Her executors sold most of it by auction in 1912, although her will gave her trustees discretion to delay a sale<sup>11</sup>. In 1917 the Merrylands Hotel was acquired for offices and the New Atlas (engineering) Works was built in its grounds<sup>12</sup>. The field beyond the houses at the end of Merrylands Road was used for outdoor sports by the employees of the Works. In the same year, the two plots just north of the houses in Nelson Road were conveyed to Mr Shoosmith by Mrs Chrystie's executors, with the usual 'Chrystie' covenants forbidding the building of a public house or the sale of intoxicating liquor<sup>13</sup>. By then the grounds of 'Oakdene' extended southward across the road<sup>14</sup>. For nearly half a century the land was a smallholding: chickens, geese and pigs were kept. Beef cattle were fattened for John Fox (a local butcher), and Percy Shoosmith's daughters used to drive their cows along Little Bookham Street to be milked at Preston Farm.

## **FIFTY YEARS ON**

In 1962 Miss Constance Shoosmith sold most of Oakdene House's grounds north of the road to Weyside Builders (Guildford) Ltd<sup>15</sup> with an additional covenant

that the only occupation allowed to be carried out there was as a dentist, doctor of medicine or solicitor<sup>6</sup>. The developer faced a number of problems. The site had only a narrow entrance beside Oakdene House, and the east boundary was already developed (Barn Meadow Lane)<sup>17</sup>. Some of the land was still encumbered with concrete pigsties and the first new householder found that a shed full of glass jars had simply been bulldozed flat. The site tapered toward the north, where a long-established woodyard<sup>18</sup> (latterly used by a carpenter and jobbing builder) prevented a through road. The west boundary was the stream, part of the National Trust estate of Bookham Commons, but with Foxglove Cottage (see above) and its garden intruding from the west.

The road had to weave its way between these obstacles, and end in a turning circle. The 15 houses, eventually numbered clockwise<sup>19</sup>, had to be staggered rather than follow straight building lines. They were built on a shoestring, the sale of one financing the building of the next. Most were aligned gable-end-to-street, unlike No.16, the first to be built (on a very shallow plot) which had only two bedrooms. The pair of semi-detached houses each had three bedrooms, the others, four. The development took about two years, from late 1963 until early 1965. No. 3 was built later, after the owners of Foxglove Cottage sold a strip of their garden. There is no No. 4, since they refused to part with more, and the space has been often used since for street celebrations: barbecues and firework displays. A footbridge across the stream here gives access to Bookham Common. A row of trees beside the stream were victims of the Dutch Elm Disease epidemic, cut down and burnt in January 1975 by the National Trust. Immediately opposite is a small copse, once the supply pond for an hydraulic ram which pumped water into Foxglove Cottage.

The houses were built of common sand-faced Fletton red brick externally; a brick shortage prevented an intended mixture with white and grey houses. The design requirement to 'Tanalize' all timber against rot was lifted, and a small panel of 'Shiplap' pine boards between the pair of semi-detached houses removed to lessen the fire risk. The upper storeys were mainly tile-hung, with cavity walls (brick/ 'Celcon' blocks) under a 'Marley Modern' linked clay-tile roof. The houses were approached by concrete slab driveways (now often replaced by patterned bricks). The front gardens were separated by a foot-high post-and-plank fence. Cooking was on an electric stove; electric points were few. Heating was from solid fuel (stored in an outside concrete bunker): a coal fire in the living room, coke-fired boiler in the kitchen for hot water (only 4 radiators). All rubbish went into one bin: some parts were separated out at the Randalls Road dump at Leatherhead, ground up, mixed with sewage sludge and sold back as 'Leatherhead

Compost'. The process was condemned for health and safety reasons about 1974. The original inhabitants clubbed together to buy some trees for the grass verges between the tarmac footpath and the road (two have survived for 50 years). We shared a telephone line, and had no television set for several years. Cable television was later installed under the footpath, and several houses were extended to the rear. Two houses have installed solar panels on their roofs.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Rodney Rapley of Foxglove Cottage and Peter Tilley of Gaston's Meadow for information about the Shoosmiths and land ownership in the early twentieth century.

### NOTES

1. One of the nameplates at the end of the road still has the old warning term *cul-de-sac*: the other has an ideogram.
2. J.H.Harvey, 1966 'A cartographical survey of the area: XI. Thomas Clay's plan of the manor of Great Bookham, 1614 -1617' *Proc. L & D LHS* **2.10**, 261-3.
3. The eastern part of the strip is marked by trees on later maps. The cottages seem to be drawn the wrong way round: the more northerly with a north-south ridge, like Foxglove Cottage today. The other cottage (on the strip like Foxglove Cottage's grounds) had an east-west ridge.
4. J.H.Harvey, 1969 'A cartographical survey of the area -XIV. The map of Great Bookham in 1797-1798' *Proc. L& D LHS* 3.3, 79-83.
5. Judith Witter, 2013 *Mary Chrystie and her family*.
6. Surrey History Centre SP/5/1, reproduced in Chrystie, 46.
7. Linda Heath, 1999 *Images of England: Bookham and Fetcham* (Tempus Publishing), 6-7, also Chrystie, front cover and pp. iv-v.
8. Perhaps Merrylands Cottages were built for Arthur Bird's employees, since they are oddly sited if intended for hotel or railway staff, and the land did not belong to Mrs Chrystie at her death, unlike nearly all the surrounding land (Chrystie, 46). The Cottages were occupied by the time of the 1891 census: P.Tilley 2014, *Bookham in Edwardian Times* (Leatherhead & District Local History Society), 56.
9. As note 7. Most of the next three sentences is derived from the extensive records compiled by Mr Peter Tilley.
10. *The Dorking Advertiser*, quoted by Peter Clarke and Martin Warwick (eds), 2012 *The Bookhams in World War II* (Leatherhead & District Local History Society), 80.
11. Chrystie, 47, 44.

12. P.A.Tarplee, 2002 'The Atlas Works, Bookham and Blackburne Engines' *Proc. L&DLHS* 6.6, 130-131.
13. Land Registry Certificate Sy 327069 (in the writer's possession).
14. Ordnance Survey map of 1915. A metal stop for the former entrance gates to the south-west of Oakdene House remained in the middle of the road for many years, and was still marked by changes in the road surface in April 2016. As a previously 'unadopted' road, it has no street lighting and has speed bumps to prevent it from becoming a 'rat-run'.
15. A company set up by employees of a local solicitor, estate agent and bank manager (registered address in High Street, Cobham). Their architect was David Cole of Heath Road, Weybridge and their builder (according to one drain cover) J Baker of Surbiton.
16. As note 13.
17. The creation of Barn Meadow Lane made Merrylands Road (some of whose pre-1891 houses survive) into a through route.
18. A photograph of the woodyard, about 1920, appears in S.E.D Fortescue, 1978 *People & Places: Great & Little Bookham* (published by the author), 12 and in Heath 1999 (note 7), 45. Four houses now occupy its site (Little Acre). A previous planning application was for 22 homes. A promised tree screen did not materialise, and trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders were destroyed.
19. The building *plots* were first numbered in the sequence 2-15 (*anti-clockwise*) which caused some confusion.

# ABINGER AND THE ROYAL GREENWICH OBSERVATORY By PETER TARPLEE

## INTRODUCTION

Important sections of the Royal Greenwich Observatory used to be situated within Mole Valley. The site of these is in Sheephouse Lane with an area of about 8 acres and it was occupied by the observatory from 1924 to 1957. Between Leith Hill and Abinger Bottom there is a house now called “The Old Observatory”,



and at the corners of the land surrounding the

property there are boundary stones inscribed with an anchor to indicate Admiralty ownership. In fact, it was my curiosity upon seeing these stones that first aroused my interest in the property which was then called "Surrey Cottage". Map ref TQ 128 440.

*Fig.1 Boundary Stone*

## **THE MAGNETIC OBSERVATORY**

The Royal Observatory at Greenwich started making observations of the earth’s magnetic field in 1838 and the need for continuous monitoring was emphasised in 1841 when there was a great magnetic storm. At Greenwich they constructed a building for the magnetic department, just outside the main observatory, and continuous monitoring was commenced in 1847.

The building was made of wood using copper nails, and all metal objects like fire irons were of non-magnetic material. Bricks were not permitted as the clay from which they were made could have had an iron content. Later a new site was found for this department, further from the main building but still within Greenwich Park.

Greenwich Observatory had always been wary of having railways close to them due to the effects of vibration on their delicate instruments. Trains did run to Greenwich Station early on, in 1836, but it was 1878 before they continued further, and that was through a tunnel under Greenwich Park. Much of this delay was due to objections from the Observatory.

The magnetic station was protected from stray electric traction currents by insisting that that an insulated return path be provided rather than an earth return. When LCC trams first came to Greenwich they used the conduit system and so they fulfilled this requirement. But when trams were installed on the Woolwich-Eltham route using overhead connections the Admiralty insisted on both positive and negative wires using twin booms rather like those used by the later trolleybuses. Were the observatory to be situated where it could be affected by stray traction currents it would not be possible to know whether a kink in the

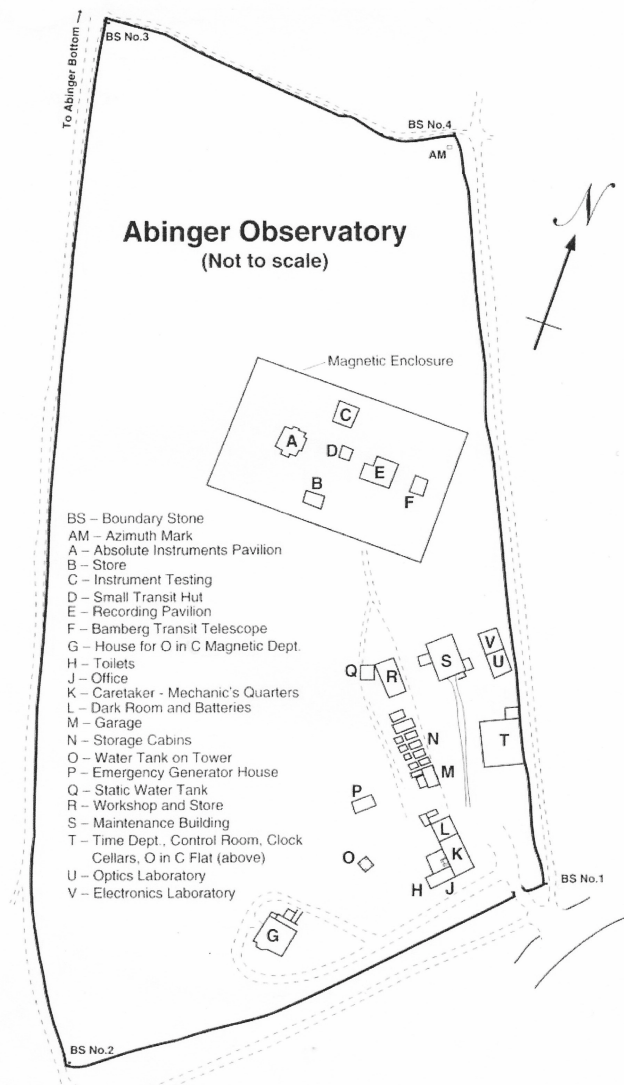


Fig 2

record was due to activity on the sun 93 million miles away or the passage of a tram just down the road.

However, when the South Eastern and Chatham Railway wanted to electrify their lines through Greenwich the Admiralty objected and started to look for a magnetically “quiet” site in the southern part of the country (“southern” because there were already existing observatories in Eskdalemuir and Lerwick). In 1923 the Southern Railway, into whom the SECR had been grouped, agreed to pay the costs of moving the instruments and staff to a new observatory in a suitable location.

The Admiralty first looked at five sites in Holmbury St Mary with the intention of compulsorily purchasing one of them. But after lots of objections from local landowners as well as from the Commons and

Footpaths Preservation Society and the Society of Antiquaries all five sites were abandoned and they acquired 8 acres of the Wotton Estate which was leased to Lady Lugard of Little Parkhurst, Abinger Common.

(I find it interesting to note that so many people were objecting to a new building which would house 3 or 4 staff and a few scientific instruments.)

Buildings, similar to those at Greenwich, were constructed in 1924 on the Abinger site with the first measurements taken there later in the year and all the magnetic work of the Royal Observatory took place there from 1925.

Before long there was correspondence from Lady Lugard regarding the noise from the motor-alternators but, after it was shown that at the times about which she was complaining the machines were not running, this was not proceeded with. The Officer-in-charge of the Magnetic Department moved from Greenwich in 1939 occupying the house to the west of the site.

The Abinger site soon proved to be far from ideal. When the Guildford-Portsmouth railway line was electrified in 1937 and then the Dorking-Horsham line a year later a further move was proposed, this time to Hartland Point in North Devon, well away from any railway lines. Because of the war the move did not take place until 1957, at which time recording at Abinger ceased.

The original buildings here were an exact replica of those at Greenwich with the use of non-magnetic materials for example, brass keys, bronze fuse boxes and copper nails and the buildings were some distance apart from each other and from the road. There was also a caretaker's house, a garage, battery rooms and dark rooms as well as the house for the Officer-in-Charge.

*Fig. 3 RGO ball and Shepherd clock*



**TIME DEPARTMENT**  
The Royal Observatory at Greenwich had been opened in 1675 at a site well away from the smoke of London and in a Royal Park easily accessible by road and river. Their work had always relied on accurate  
clocks,  
particularly for use by ships for navigation. In 1818 the observatory came under the control of



the Admiralty and it was soon made responsible for all the chronometers used by H M Navy.

Accurate clocks were becoming available on ships and these needed to be checked and so various signals from shore to ships were devised so that ships in harbour and off-shore could set their timepieces. These signals could be by dipping a flag, firing a gun, eclipsing a light or firing a rocket. On 28th October 1833 the Admiralty gave notice that a ball would henceforth be dropped every day from the top of a pole on the eastern turret of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich at 1.00pm. This enabled ships on London's river and docks and people ashore to have an accurate time check. This was the world's first public time signal.

Up till now different towns had used their own times but with the advent of the railways, telegraph systems and the post office there became a need for a standard time. In 1845 it was agreed that Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) should be used throughout the railway system but it was not until 1880 that GMT was given the Royal Assent as British Standard Time. The adoption of GMT in Ireland was not until 1916.

After the London and Greenwich Railway opened in 1836 one of the observatory staff would travel to London every week taking with him a pocket chronometer set at Greenwich time and calling on principal chronometer makers. After his



death this duty was carried on by his widow, Maria, and later his daughter until the 1930s. Upon her death in 1943 Ruth Belville (known as "the Greenwich Time Lady") bequeathed the watch to the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers.

From its inception in 1848 the Irish Mail train from London to Holyhead ran to London time. Each morning an Admiralty messenger handed a watch bearing correct London time to the guard at Euston; on arrival at Holyhead the watch was passed to officials on the Kingstown (now known as Dun Laoghaire) boat who took it on to Dublin. The watch was carried on the return journey and handed back to the Admiralty messenger who met the train at Euston. This continued until 1939.

*Fig. 4 Ruth Belville, the Greenwich Time Lady*

From 1849 the Observatory undertook to provide accurate time signals throughout the land. The plan was for electrical signals to be sent from Greenwich via the railway telegraph lines to London Bridge and so to other stations on the South Eastern Railway, as well as to the Central Telegraph Station of the Electric Telegraph Company in Lothbury for distribution around the country to post offices, railways and public clocks and via submarine cables to the continent.

These electrical impulses could be used to ring a bell, fire a gun, cause a galvanometer to kick, operate a relay, light a lamp or put another clock right. A time ball was installed on the semaphore tower at Deal in 1855 and later a time gun was fired from Dover Castle. In fact there was a Standard Time Company which synchronised the master clocks of a number of private subscribers which operated until 1964.

Domestic reception of time by radio started with the broadcast of Big Ben to usher in 1924 and at 9.30 pm on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1924 the six-pip time signal broadcast by the BBC was inaugurated. Sir Frank Dyson, the Astronomer-Royal at the time, introduced this service:-

*“The signal you will hear comes directly from the Greenwich clock, without any human intervention. Six short signals will be given at consecutive seconds. The first will come five seconds before the half-hour and the last and loudest of the six will be exactly on the half-hour. Great care is always taken to set the clock accurately by the latest astronomical observations, and the signal will give Greenwich Time as accurately as it is determined from day to day”.*

Over the years the observatory employed more and more accurate chronometers and in 1939 they installed their first quartz clock which had an accuracy of about 2 ms per day. At the outbreak of the war, the Time Department was transferred from Greenwich to Abinger, with a reserve time service being established in



Fig. 5 Cornerways

Edinburgh. These clocks were checked by regular astronomical observations at Abinger and Edinburgh.

It had been decided about 18 months before the outbreak of war to establish the time system at the magnetic station and a blast-proof installation was put in there with large aerials on Leith Hill to receive radio time signals.

Extra buildings were required at Abinger to accommodate the time department; from 1924 there had been two RGO scientific staff in the magnetic department but when the Time Department came that added about another twenty.

The Astronomer-Royal and the administrative staff also came here during the war and they set up offices in ‘Cornerways’ in Sutton Abinger. Around 1948 the Admiralty acquired ‘Feldmore’, a large house in Pasture Wood Road towards Holmbury St Mary and they vacated ‘Cornerways’. ‘Feldmore’, originally built in the 19th century for Edwin Waterhouse (a partner in the accountancy practice Price Waterhouse) had been requisitioned by the army during the war and the Admiralty used it as accommodation for both married and single staff. Staff had to walk up to the observatory from there in the night-time if it was clear enough for observations.

By the late 1950s atomic clocks had been developed and those introduced in 1967 had an accuracy 8 million times that of the clocks used by John Flamsteed, the first Astronomer Royal, in the 1760s. In 1957 the time service left Abinger and moved to Hurstmonceux together with the rest of the Greenwich observatory except for the magnetic department.

It is interesting to note that although the Greenwich Observatory has now left Hurstmonceux the boundary stones installed in 1948, similar to those that originally aroused my interest at Abinger, remain in place.

At the same time as the observatory went to Hurstmonceux the magnetic department moved to Hartland Point, as had been planned before the war. The Admiralty relinquished control and that went, from the Admiralty to the National Research Council, and then to the National Environment Research Council. It is now run by the British Geological Survey and is still constantly producing data.

## REMAINS OF R.G.O. AT ABINGER

*Fig. 6 Azimuth Obelisk*



“Feldmore” is still used by Belmont School who moved there from Westcott when the Admiralty moved out. The house of the Officer-in-Charge in Sheephouse Lane is now known as “Forest Lodge” and is in private ownership. The remainder of the Admiralty property was bought by Surrey County Council in 1971. The caretaker’s house and outbuildings were occupied by one of their countryside rangers who, of course, became employed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust [Post code RH5 6LP]. Subsequently the

property has been sold and is now in private occupation. At least three of the boundary stones remain, as does the pillar which used to hold the azimuth mark, which was used as a reference when determining the Magnetic Variation.

## FURTHER READING

Derek Howse	Greenwich Time and the Discovery of Longitude	1980
E Walker Maunder	The Royal Observatory, Greenwich. A Glance at its History and Work	1925
William Hunter McCrea	The Royal Greenwich Observatory. An Historical Review issued on the Occasion of its Tercentenary	1975
J A McIlroy	The History of the Greenwich Time Signal from 1924 to the Present Day. IEE Engineering and Science Journal. Dec 1993	1993
A J Meadows	Greenwich Observatory, Vol. 2	1975
Colin A Ronan [Ed]	Greenwich Observatory, 300 years of Astronomy	1975
Charles Jennings	Greenwich	1999
David Rooney	Ruth Belville, The Greenwich Time Lady	2008
Peter Tarplee	Abinger and the Royal Greenwich Observatory, the Recording of Magnetism and Time	1996

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great deal of help was received from previous workers at the Abinger Observatory as well as from local residents; full details are given in the booklet listed above which was published by the Surrey Industrial History Group in 1996. The web article '*The Royal Observatory Greenwich, where east meets west*', by Graham Dolan brings the story of the observatory more up to date.

# ASHTEAD'S MANOR HOUSES, CHAPELS, CHURCHES & CHANTRY

A REVIEW  
BY BRIAN BOUCHARD

## SUMMARY

Following the Norman Conquest, Ashtead's Saxon 'stede' or homestead was used as the domain's first manor-house. A domestic chapel, to serve it, was built, nearby, between 1101 and 1129. Around 1239 a new manorial complex became established, to be named Magna Ashtead, in what is now Ashtead Park with a Parish Church dedicated to St Giles. The old manor-house passed to the Prior of Merton being known, subsequently, as Little Ashtead or Prior's Farm and later 'Old Court'. Between 1239 and 1256 the De Mara Chantry was erected in the Churchyard of St Giles and consecrated to St Mary. This fell into decay.

## INTRODUCTION

In his *Ashtead and its history*,<sup>1</sup> the late A W G Lowther remarked on the remains of an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement discovered by excavations in the grounds of *Inward Shaw*, Park Lane, Ashtead, with evidence that human occupation in the area continued into late Roman times.

In close proximity, beside the Parish Church, is an enclosure styled 'Roman Camp (Remains of)' on the first edition Ordnance Survey map. Excavations were also conducted there by Mr Lowther during 1933/4<sup>2</sup> with the consent of the Rector, Rev. E. J. Austin, M.A., before the graveyard was extended. He concluded: -

“There appears to have been a certain amount of pre-Roman occupation on this site, followed in the Roman period, by the digging of a V-section boundary or enclosure ditch, probably enclosing a polygonal area of unknown extent and having a low bank on its inner side. The few finds suggest a II C. date for this ditch though it may be later. A Roman flint and tile built structure was there, possibly of late III C. date and built of materials taken from the buildings on Ashtead Common about 1 1/2 miles to the north-west (occupation there did not extend beyond ad. 250).”

His findings did not, however, take into account a report by Francis Edward Paget in the unpublished<sup>3</sup> *Some records of the Ashtead Estate, and of its Howard*

*possessors*, printed in 1873: -

“About half a mile from that portion of the Roman road which runs outside of, and close to, the western side of Ashtead Park, there was an entrenchment, which is thought, to have been occupied by a Roman villa, or such-like building, and which, at a much later period, became the site of Ashtead Church and churchyard. In shape, a parallelogram, it was surrounded by a ditch or fosse, which is still visible on two sides; and persons yet (1872) living can remember a third well-marked portion of the inclosure. Some years ago, and again recently, in digging a grave in the south-eastern corner of the burial-ground, those employed in the work came upon a mass of concrete on another of charcoal; and also to a passage dug in the solid chalk, leading to the back of the Roman fosse, and, apparently, the entrance to a hypocaust. Roman tiles and bricks are found intermingled with flint in all parts of the Church walls...”

Evidently there was a Roman house in the enclosure near to what became a chalk marling-pit, now known as *The Dell*. The ditched area is sited on a crossing of tracks, leading from Leatherhead to Woodcote/Epsom/Ewell in one direction and towards Headley northwards, and could have been used to control movement along two routes.

Paget also tells us: -

“...before the Norman Invasion, [Ashtead] was among the vast possessions of Earl Harold, of whom it was held by the Saxon Turgis. At that period, so the Domesday record states, it was assessed at nine hides, (a measure of land, varying largely at different periods and places, but usually reckoned as being as much as would maintain a family, - some rating it at sixty, some at eighty, some at one hundred acres): an unspecified amount of arable land: in demesne (i.e., woodland) two carucates, - probably some fifteen hundred or two thousand acres. Three and thirty villans, and eleven bordars held fourteen hundred acres. Of meadow land there were four acres. It further appears that, in the Reign of the Conqueror, it was worth (according to modern estimate), some seven hundred pounds of yearly value.

It is to be presumed that Ashtead shared the fate of all the other possessions of the unfortunate son of Earl Godwin, and, indeed, of all the other great Saxon land-owners. The rules of William's Government were oppression, exaction, confiscation, by the bondage or the death, of the noblest in the land.

When Harold fell, his many manors and lordships were retained by the Crown, or divided among the followers of the Conqueror. As Croydon was allotted to Lanfranc, so Ashtead fell to the share of the man who gained for himself a deadlier measure of hatred from the English nation than even the stern, relentless, William himself, his cruel half-brother, Odo ....

The Domesday Book records that Ashtead was held by the Canons of Bayeux of Bishop Odo, ...

Upon the disgrace and dispossession of Odo, the Crown granted the Manor of Ashtead to William De Warenne, Earl of Guine or Warrenne, in Normandy, the husband of Gundrada or Gundrada, ...the Conqueror's daughter. This Norman noble was created Earl of Surrey by William Rufus; and died A. D. 1088, possessed of more than 200 lordships in different Counties.”

Ashtead became part of the honour of Reigate, being held of the Earls of Surrey in socage [occupied in exchange for a clearly defined, fixed payment to be made at specified intervals to the feudal lord] by the service of 1 mark.

### **THE SAXON ‘STEDE’ AND FIRST MANOR HOUSE**

Laurence de Rouen (also known as Laurence de Saint Sepulchre), of Rouen in Normandy, and Ashtead (or Ashstead) and Ravensbury (in Mitcham), Surrey, also held lands in Essex and London. He had received Ashtead from William of Tancarville before 1129 and died after 1130.

The main Saxon settlement in Ashtead was close to the border with Leatherhead and the associated cemetery has identified by archaeological excavation off Ermyn Way in the grounds of what were once Goblin's Works.<sup>4</sup> A series of reports may be found in Surrey Archaeological Collections. Recent research suggests the 'Stede' (homestead) was sited on elevated ground beside the present Skinners Lane, between Virginia Close and Highfields. Capt. A.W.G.Lowther suggested that, at the date of the Norman conquest, there was “A manor house consisting of a timber-built Hall with thatched roof and rather less imposing than a present-day barn.”<sup>5</sup>

A second manor house\* was erected about the time of the Lord of Ashtead Manor, William de la Mare's, death in 1239. Subsequently the original one passed into possession of the Prior and canons of Merton – rents owing from, amongst other holdings, Estede appear in the earliest extant schedule of the Priory's holdings dated to c 1240. The property then became known as Little Ashtead or Prior's

Farm. The terms on which the Priory acquired this manor house are not known but the associated land embraced the virgate (mentioned below) with which the seignorial chapel had been endowed. A consideration might have been the supply of priests from Merton.

### **THE DOMESTIC CHAPEL – A FIRST CHURCH IS ESTABLISHED**

Laurence wasted no time in adding a chapel to the Hall as evidenced by a charter of William Gifford, bishop of Winchester 1107 – 1129:-

“Know that I have by the grace of God dedicated a church of Ashtead (Estede) as a chapel subject, with all the customs belonging to it, to the church of Leatherhead; and I forbid any priest to presume to celebrate mass in it except by permission of the priest of Leatherhead to which the chapel belongs, along with a virgate of land which Laurence [of Rouen] gave to him for its dedication, and with all the tithes of the demesne and the peasants.”

Private seignorial chapels proliferated following the Norman conquest but a canon in Burchard of Worms's *Decretorum Libri Viginti* (c. 1026), required that churches should only be built upon private estates with episcopal consent and that bishops should ensure that 'ancient' churches be consulted and their rights protected. These were private places of devotion for powerful men and their households, served by chaplains.

H J Davies' suggestion that a household chapel had been built a short distance away from the manor-house, at the junction of Skinners Lane and Otways Lane, near where The Haven now stands, appears well-founded. Details of the reasoning may be found in *Ashtead Chapel & Church in the 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Century...*<sup>66</sup>, but it was not de Mara's later Chapel of St Mary as will be explained later. This manorial chapel is likely to have been relatively small with (as described for a manor elsewhere) 'a chamber suited for clergymen and a necessary chamber' .

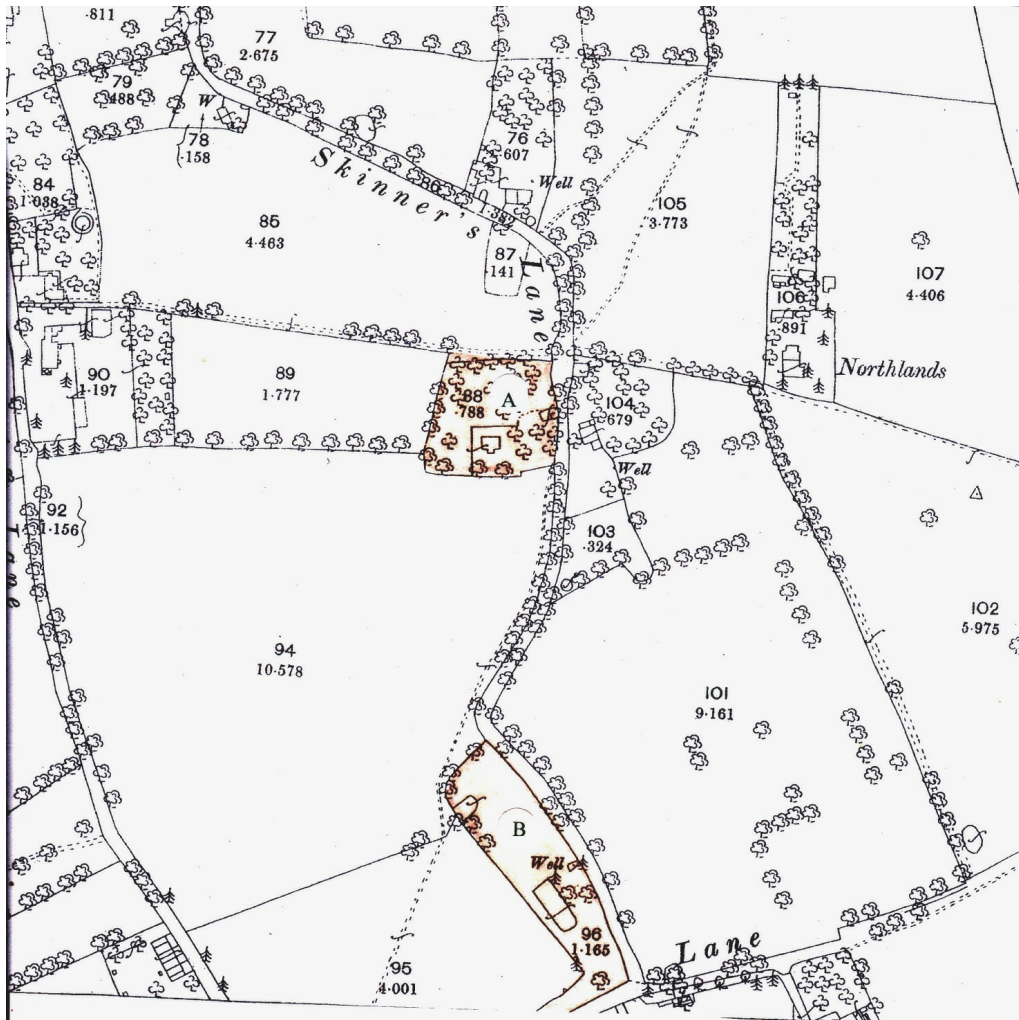
During Henry II's reign, a deed from about 1180 was witnessed by 'William the clerk of Ashted' thought to have been one of the early priests. Following the death of another called Robert, in 1214, there was a dispute over the advowson which lasted until 1220 when the right of the Lord of the Manor (Sir William de la Mare, the younger) to appoint the parsons was confirmed. In 1287, Henry the chaplain was granted a field in Ashtead called la Simonie by his mother, daughter of Anfrid le White. He was a grandson of another chaplain called John and John son of John the clerk appears as a witness to the deed.<sup>77</sup> A list of perpetual vicars from 1301 to 1482 appears in Appendix II of *Ashtead, a village transformed*<sup>8</sup>:



evidently the advowson had passed from the Lord of the Manor to the incumbent Rector of the parish identified as patron in each case. The first-named is found identified as 'Henry vicar of Asstede, son of John the chaplain' in a deed from 1320.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1638 Lawrence survey a single structure, *The Parsonage*, appears on plot 118, but could have incorporated the second 'church' implied by the description of Sir Robert Howard's purchase in 1680 discussed later.

Fig. 7 1638 Lawrence survey



## DESCENT OF THE MANOR THROUGH TO THE DE LA MARES, OTHERWISE DE MARAS

Laurence of Rouen's daughter Mary Fitz Laurence (Marie d'Estede) married, c 1153, Ralph Fitz Robert of Ravensbury, Mitcham: she is reported to have been heiress, sometime after 1175, of her brother, Robert Fitz Lawrence. A daughter Lecia (Lieca) Fitz Ralph became the wife of William de la Mare about 1174, bringing Ashtead and other estates with her, and he died in 1200.

By a deed drawn up about the time of the first William de la Mare's demise, Ralph son of William the chamberlain of Tancarville for £10 confirmed lands at Ashtead, Mitcham, Harlaxton and Londonthorpe to Sir William de la Mare, the younger. In 1200 the latter conveyed real property at Bedfont in return for a gilt spurs rent payable at his manor house of Ashtead<sup>10</sup> (the earliest reference to Ashtead manor house identified by the writer) His main residence appears, however, to have been at Ravensbury in Mitcham. About 1204, he wed Basilia, and he died before October 1239.

The site of the Saxon 'Stede' which became the original manor house appears in the northern corner of Plot 115 (Old Court) on John Lawrence's map of Ashtead, as re-drawn for *Ashtead, a village transformed*, page 33. The Parsonage believed to have been where the manorial chapel/first church was established is plot 118. Some of the clergy are, however, found to have occupied *Penders*, a copyhold estate more conveniently situated about half a mile away from St Giles, close to where Ashtead Lodge now stands on Parker's Hill.

Positions are marked respectively A and B on an extract from the first edition Ordnance Survey Map. By that date Old Court had been replaced by a 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage which became known as Little Orchard. The Parsonage had continued in use being mentioned in James Edwards' *Companion from London to Brighthelmston*, 1801: -

*'A little further along the road is a large chalk pit, called Marling Pit. About half a mile north is Ashtead Parsonage, a white house, in the possession of the present incumbent, the Rev. Mr Carter [Rector 1782 -1821]'.*

In 1821 the Rector, William Carter, died. For some time the old parsonage house had become ruinous and there is evidence that Carter had been forced to move to the old Northfield house nearby. The new Rector, David Cockerton, who held the post from 1822 to 1826 was not resident in Ashtead, his duties being performed by the curate Rev. William John Broderick.

A letter complaining about the dilapidation of the Ashtead parsonage house had been written by Rev. David Cockerton, on 11 February 1824.<sup>11</sup> When the Rev. William Legge took over in 1826 he was provided with a new Rectory on the east side of what is now Rectory Lane, a building bought for the purpose by Mrs Mary Greville Howard and enlarged at her expense. The old Parsonage was subsequently demolished. Col Gleig is credited with providing some of the parsonage land as a site for erection of The Haven alms-houses prior to 1881 – now numbered 32 -38 Otways Lane. The rest was used to erect 50 -68 Skinners Lane around 1905.

### **A SECOND MANOR-HOUSE – MAGNA ASHTEAD\***

The son of William (2), Sir Henry de la Mare married Joan de Neville, c 1249.

Since the family's Ravensbury estate had passed to John de Mara, Henry de Mara, Knt., of Ashtead, Surrey, and Hinton (in Hurst), Diddenham (in Shinfield), Farley Hill, and Sheepbridge (in Swallowfield), Berkshire, seneschal (or bailiff) of William Longespee II, Earl of Salisbury, [a coram rege judge, 1247-49 & 1253-6], may have felt a need to improve accommodation on Ashtead manor which came into his own possession after the death of his father in 1239.

The choice of location for a new, larger, manor-house - Great Ashtead – could have been influenced by the availability of a 'brownfield' site considered in the introduction to this article. Remains of structures from Roman times would have provided a readily accessible supply of stone and tile. The Roman ditch on the north-west was converted into a sunken metalled track-way leading round what became the graveyard – a feature which may still be identified. It entered a farm-yard containing a dove-house and other domestic buildings north of the manor. The manor-house was timber framed with outer walls of flint construction and a tiled roof (Early roof tiles, dated by comparison to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and probably produced locally have been found in the area). The pigeon-house is recorded to have been repaired in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the old manor, used as a dairy, survived into the 19<sup>th</sup>. Part of the house wall remains incorporated in the churchyard boundary.<sup>12</sup>

An entry in the Calendar of Patent Rolls, 12 June 1256, shows power granted to Giles, [bishop] elect of Salisbury, Richard, abbot of Westminster, and Henry de Mara, whom the king is sending as envoys to the court of Rome, to contract a loan of 5000 marks in the king's name. During that embassy Henry de la Mare died – being found in a Calendar of Patent Rolls, 26 June 1257, described as 'the

sometime Henry de Mara, knight'.

Certainly the latter had appointed Reginald de Murteng [Merton?], Rector of Ashtead, one of his Executors in a Will written before Henry's demise 1256/7. Reginald (or Reynold)'s immediate successor, and beneficiary on his death, may have been John de Mursenk (Merton again?).<sup>13</sup>

Matthew/Matthias de la Mare, of Bradwell, Essex, not Ashtead, Surrey, was another of the executors of the will of his first cousin, Sir Henry de la Mare. In 45 Hen. III, 1261, it was Matthew de Mara, as Executor who held the Manor of Ashtead in socage of the Earl of Surrey and Warenne, and founded a chantry where three chaplains were to say masses in perpetuity for the soul of his cousin Henry de Mara, the latter's ancestors, and his heirs.

We are then brought back to consideration of the chantry chapel dedicated to St Mary which had been endowed with a lump sum of 250 marks of silver. A dispute arose and in Michaelmas Term, 38 Edw. III (1364), Peter de Montfort sued the Prior of Newark, asking that an agreement with the Prior of Newark Abbey should be carried out, because there were no chaplains and no masses were being sung. A full report of those proceedings have recently been discovered in Reports of Cases by John Caryll, 1485 -1499, Seddon Society, 1999.#

In the reign of Edward I, Ashtead belonged to the De Montforts, and John de Montfort, who died 24 June 1296, was found, on an inquisition taken at Lambeth, to have held this manor of the Earl of Warren in socage. At that time there pertained to it: a capital messuage, garden, dove-house, and closes, value 6s. 8d.; 120 acres of arable land at 4d. an acre; 200 acres of inferior arable at 2d.; 60 of pasture at 1d.; 18 of meadow at 12d.; a wood, the pannage of which was worth 10s.; rents of free and customary tenants, £13; thirty hens at 1 1/2.; two capons at 4d.; three ploughshares at 5d.; a pair of spurs, 6d.; tallage of customary tenants, 60s.; pleas and perquisites of courts, 10s.; in all, £22 18s. 10d.

In 1680, Sir Robert Howard bought the “the manor of Ashtead, alias Great Ashtead, various messuages, meadows and pastures, the advowson and churches (sic) of Ashtead”. The manor-house had fallen into disrepair but was retained as a farm building used as a dairy: it and the Dove House can be identified on a map from an Estate Survey of about 1706 and images are included in a paper on The Mediaeval Manor House of Ashtead.<sup>14</sup>

Over four years following his acquisition of the estate, Sir Robert Howard

oversaw the construction of a prestigious new house, completed by the Spring of 1684, on a rise 200 yards to the south-east of the old manor-house.

### **THE PARISH CHURCH, DEDICATED TO ST. GILES**

Evidence to corroborate suggestions that the parish church had been established on its present site during the 12<sup>th</sup> century has not been identified in the course of this investigation but a date of c 1239 for the original 'small and simple structure' seems probable – contemporary with the building of Magna Ashtead manor-house beside it.<sup>15</sup> It was built with a mixture of flint, pieces of dressed stone and Roman tile.

Interestingly, as noted earlier, when Sir Robert Howard purchased the manor of Ashtead, alias Great Ashtead, in 1680, reference was made to the advowson and churches [plural].<sup>16</sup>

### **THE DE MARA CHANTRY, DEDICATED TO ST MARY - ENDOWED FOR THE SINGING OR SAYING OF INTERCESSORY MASSES FOR THE SOULS OF THE FOUNDER AND OTHER PERSONS NAMED BY HIM**

# For this chantry established in 1261, the Prior of Newark undertook to maintain three chaplains in the 'chapel of Estede,' to pray for the soul of Henry de Mara, his ancestors and heirs.<sup>17</sup> The keeping up of the chantry was the occasion for continual litigation, which went on from 1364 until 1494, between the heirs of De Mara and successive Priors of Newark. The dispute began on account of the original endowment of a sum of 250 marks, which presumably the Prior of Newark spent, so that the endowment for chaplains was not forthcoming. Howard Davies has reported that in accordance with the Will of Henry de Mara the three chaplains had been provided with land formerly belonging to Amfrid.<sup>18</sup>

As noted earlier, in a deed of 1287, Margaret (daughter of Anfrid le White of Astede) formerly wife of John, son of John the chaplain of Astede, granted land in the parish to her son Henry the chaplain. All these 'chaplains' may have served in the de Mara chantry rather than the original chapel to which perpetual vicars were eventually appointed. The chantry priests were called 'cantarists' (from Latin cantare to sing). Three identified chantry priests were William de Donmawe & Robert Hughet de Sele, both installed 10 June 1346, and John Pycard, 22 September 1347, and another had been appointed in May 1347.<sup>19</sup>

Evidently there had been continual irregularity in providing chantry priests, since Bishop Edington had to ordain two in 1346 and two in 1347, which suggests that

his predecessor had neglected to fill up vacancies. By 1349 the Black Death had arrived to reduce the population of England by a third and diminished the supply of priests from Newark Priory.

During 1364 Peter de Montfort won a case against The Prior of Newark over his failure to supply any priests, but the agreement remained unfulfilled and the family returned to Court in 1370 to renew their claim.<sup>20</sup> At that stage the chantry is assumed still to have been standing.

Fortuitously, a full report of follow-up proceedings from 1493 have recently been discovered in Reports of Cases by John Caryll, 1485 -1499, Seddon Society, 1999. Listed as Ferrers v Prior of Newark, C. P. 1494, there was an opening statement by Sir Robert Rede, serjeant at law: -

“You should not have execution, for we say that at the time of the fine the aforesaid Henry was seised of the aforesaid manor of [Ashtead] and of the advowson of the church of [Ashtead] as appendant to the manor, and that the said chapel was situated within the churchyard of [Ashtead] aforesaid, and that the chapel was built by the said Henry; and then Henry died, and after his death the manor descended to the said Peter de Mara as Henry's heir, and he sued execution as above; and the said chapel was wasted and utterly destroyed in between the said execution and the date when this writ was sued, and still is, so that the chaplains may not perform divine service in accordance with the fine.”

So it may be seen that the de Mara chantry was not in nor appended to St Giles church, then a simple box design, but free-standing in the churchyard, on the south side of the church, and having no connection with the earlier chapel associated with Little Ashtead. It was probably only a timber structure (erected between 1239 and 1256) carried on earth - fast posts or sill-beams which would decay and require regular maintenance, although roofed with clay tiles.

It was argued that because the chapel had fallen down, and mass might not be celebrated in an open field, the covenant could not be enforced. To obtain judgement, the plaintiffs would need first to rebuild the chapel. Since the site in the graveyard had been used for over 100 years for interments, proceedings subsequently lapsed – no chapel, no priests!

A transcript of the case has been placed in the Society's archive.

Evidence of depopulation of the Manor is provided by a presentation in the late 1480's that 18 houses stood derelict, some through the lord's and some through the tenants' neglect<sup>21</sup>.

### **References**

- <sup>1</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **1**, 4, pp 23-24
- <sup>2</sup> SAC 42, 1934, pp 77-84
- <sup>3</sup> Copy in Society's Library
- <sup>4</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **2**, 3, pp 69-72
- <sup>5</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **1**, 5, p 24
- <sup>6</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **6**, 7, p179
- <sup>7</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **4**, 6, p153, item 184
- <sup>8</sup> 'Ashtead, a Village transformed', Ed. Alan A Jackson, 1977, p 213
- <sup>9</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **4**, 10, p 268, item 340
- <sup>10</sup> Pipe Roll 2, John, 219
- <sup>11</sup> Surrey History Centre, ref: 203/33/61
- <sup>12</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **2**, 4, pp 123-126
- <sup>13</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **4**, 6, p 153, item 186
- <sup>14</sup> 'Bygone Ashtead', Gollin G. J., 1987, pp 22-27
- <sup>15</sup> 'Ashtead, a Village transformed', Ed. Alan A Jackson, 1977, pp 116-118
- <sup>16</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **4**, 4, p106
- <sup>17</sup> Feet of F Surr, **45**, Hen III, no.158
- <sup>18</sup> Proc L & D L H Soc **6**, 7, p183
- <sup>19</sup> 'Ashtead, a Village transformed', Ed. Alan A Jackson, 1977, p 126 and Reg Edyngton, II, Ord. A, F and G
- <sup>20</sup> Surrey Arch. **19**, 1906, p 31
- <sup>21</sup> 'Ashtead, a Village transformed', Ed. Alan A Jackson, 1977, p40





# WHOSE BABY ?

## THE BIRTH OF GREAT BOOKHAM

By Derek Renn

### ABSTRACT

Domesday Book recorded Chertsey abbey's holding at Great Bookham, but also mentioned an individual holding. This may mean that another settlement existed here in 1086. Where might it have been?

### INTRODUCTION

I have previously argued that Great Bookham was split off from Little Bookham, rather than the other way round<sup>1</sup>. **Chertsey abbey's ownership of the manor by 1086 was confirmed in Domesday Book**, where **[Great] Bookham** is described as a community of 36 heads of households [32 villans [sic], 4 bordars] plus 3 slaves on enough land for 19 ploughs<sup>2</sup>. The abbey's lands did not extend to Little Bookham and may not have included the whole of Great Bookham, as I will try to demonstrate.

### *GUNFRIÐ*

The Domesday Book entry for [Great] Bookham ends (in translation) 'Gunfrið holds one hide of this land and has one plough there'. Who was he (or she)<sup>3</sup> ? The name Gunfrið appears nowhere else in the Surrey folios of Domesday Book: indeed all but one of the other named local landholders -Saxon or Norman- had at least two holdings in the county. Why was Gunfrið singled out? Domesday Bookham had both a church and a mill, but it would be most unusual for a priest or miller and his holding to be named there. What was meant by 'holds.. of this land'[*De hac tra'*] may be explained by an entry on the same folio, at Egham, where Gozelin 'holds 3 hides of this land which were in the abbey's lordship T.R.E.' [ie before 1066]. The omission of the latter phrase from the Bookham entry might mean that Gunfrið had a separate holding, not one sub-infeudated by Chertsey abbey: a marginal dot in the manuscript here may indicate a tenurial dispute over freehold<sup>4</sup>. Gunfrið was perhaps a witness who, reporting via the hundred court to the Domesday commissioners, seized the opportunity to assert his rights and to get them on record. His holding might have been geographically

distinct from those of the other heads of households. Does Thomas Clay's plan of the manor, surveyed over five hundred years later<sup>5</sup>, support this hypothesis? The early Norman features in St Nicolas' church, which may stand on the site of an earlier structure<sup>6</sup>, are visible signs that a settlement existed there almost a thousand years ago. Clay's plan shows (centre of Fig.8) a compact regular group of about twenty houses (including a terrace of three) facing each other across today's High Street, running uphill from the church, with two back lanes (today's East Street and Townshott Close) - a textbook medieval two-row village like Egham<sup>7</sup>. However, even if there were a few more plots in Church Road, the 36 households of 1086 could not have been accommodated within this area. Some must have lived elsewhere: for example, the miller would have lived in or beside his water-mill on the river Mole, two miles from the church. To judge from the expansion of the church, Great Bookham's population increased throughout the Middle Ages. When was the 'nucleated' village created? Dennis Turner, the most recent authority on Surrey village origins, wrote that 'dates in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> centuries would seem more likely for the Chertsey reorganization than dates in the 14<sup>th</sup>'<sup>8</sup>. The abbot may have brought together some loose settlements, perhaps in 1243 when the abbey was granted the right to hold a weekly market and annual fair here<sup>9</sup>. The abbey's local economic importance was at risk: Dorking already had a market by 1241, and Leatherhead had a market and fair granted only a few years later than Bookham<sup>10</sup>.

We know nothing of Gunfrið's family history: they might have held a freehold in Bookham long before the creation of the two-row village, and lived close to the church. While Bookham High Street had the largest concentration of houses, Thomas Clay drew over eighty houses elsewhere on his plan.

None are marked on Lower Road except at separate cross-roads settlements. Most drawings are of the simplest ('garden shed') form, sometimes with a central chimney, but occasionally they show a double-pile house with two parallel roof-ridges (as at 'Bookham Courte' near the church) or with a cross-wing at right angles (as at Eastwick). At the top of the housing pyramid, Slyfield House and 'Sir Francis Vincent's at Stoke [d'Abernon]' were houses with four ranges round a courtyard. Away from the High Street, at least six settlements can be identified, four with place-names going back to the early 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>11</sup>: two at other cross-roads [Eastwick, Preston], two dispersed in woodland [Slyfield, Polesden] and two on the edges of common wastes ['The Isle of Wight' to the north, Ranmore to the south]. Taking each settlement in turn:

Fig. 8 Lower Road ('Leith pitt' [Kennel Lane] to Preston) from the 1614-17 plan<sup>5</sup> (east to top)



***Slyfield*** [first named 1201 AD]

Clay's plan shows two areas of common waste, now Bookham and Ranmore Commons. Further north, ten small houses are marked, dispersed well away from Slyfield House, on lanes in the oak woods leading to fords of the river Mole. One side of the last remnant of one house – Stammells - looked very medieval when I saw it in 1965, but was dated to the eighteenth or early 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>12</sup>. In 1368, it was claimed that the manor of Slyfeld [*sic*] had been held by that family 'from time immemorial' (*i.e.* since 1189 at least)<sup>13</sup>. If true, this makes it a candidate for Gunfrið's hide, but there was another manor very close by: 'East Bikney' is marked by Clay a little to the north-west and, just over the Fetcham border, Bigney Lane led to another river crossing past Great Bickney field <sup>14</sup> commemorating *Bicga*, the pre-1066 holder of one of the Fetcham manors<sup>15</sup> with 'fractional'mills<sup>16</sup>. By 1797-98 the houses of the North End had shrunk to two groups, each of three, close-set farms: one group next to Slyfield House and its mill, the other on another lane leading to a second ford, beyond which lay the early Saxon church and Roman villa site adjoining Stoke d'Abernon manor house<sup>17</sup>. Until the rise of the Slyfield family, the settlement must have had its main economic links across the river. By the time of Clay's survey, Slyfield House matched Stoke d'Abernon Manor in appearance, despite much of the land on the south bank of the river then belonging to Sir Francis Vincent of Stoke d'Abernon.

***Eastwick*** [1225 AD]

The name implies some other settlement to the west, but not necessarily near the church <sup>18</sup>.The d'Abernon family held eighty acres at Eastwick from Chertsey Abbey in 1327 (and perhaps 1273)<sup>19</sup>. It changed hands frequently after 1359, and it is not clear when it became a separate 'reputed' manor. After the Dissolution of the monasteries, the Howards were granted the manor of Great Bookham in 1550, but only bought the Eastwick estate in 1627<sup>20</sup>. Clay's plan of 1614-17 nevertheless includes Eastwick, showing a cross-wing house at the 'The Anchor' crossroads. Eastwick manor court records for 1626, 1629, 1631, and 1634 survive<sup>21</sup>. Although then only separated from the church by 'The Bartons' <sup>22</sup> and 'The Courte peece or Faire place', Eastwick was a separate entity, with a different settlement pattern of long narrow strips, with some roadside cottages on Eastwick Road, its continuation northward being diverted at 'Peakes' Corner' to join today's Eastwick Drive.

Only one of the strips on the west side is labelled 'Ea[stwick]' unlike many on the east side. At 'Peakes' Corner', another substantial house is shown (approximately where the later Eastwick Park House stood and today's Eastwick School), blocking the lane's earlier route which ran straight on past 'The round

close' in which an homestead, moated site still exists in Eastwick Park Avenue. The moat was oval in plan, and markedly wider towards the north-west, probably the show-front of the house which once stood on the 'island'<sup>23</sup>.

### ***Preston [1225 AD]***

The place -name may refer to the *tun* of the priest of Little Bookham, whose church is much nearer to Preston than that of Great Bookham. The houses here are placed centrally in plots nearly all shorter but wider than those at Eastwick. Some of the plots have clearly been subdivided and rearranged. Only two houses (and no plots) are marked on the west side of Little Bookham Street, but others may have been omitted as belonging to the manor of Little Bookham. Half Moon Cottage at the crossroads is shown as one of a pair of small houses in an oddly-shaped plot, not as the large multi-bayed 15/16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed hall-house which stands there now. One double-pile house is marked on the opposite corner of the junction of Lower Road and Rectory Lane. Part of a similar hall-house survives in Old Pound Cottage further north, where a break in the roadside verges probably indicates the site of a manorial pound like that at Hundred Pound Bridge on the Cobham boundary<sup>24</sup>. I have suggested that the scatter of old houses surviving along Little Bookham Street here is the result of Little Bookham village migrating from the vicinity of the Norman church and manor-house<sup>25</sup>.

### ***'The Isle of Wight' [1556 AD]***

This jocular name is of a late settlement: the lease of small plots on the western edge of the Lower (North) Common began in 1556<sup>26</sup>. 'A fish-pond' is marked on Clay's map: four ponds were leased to a brick-maker in 1719 - but he had to maintain the stock of carp<sup>27</sup>.

### **A MANOR OF TWO HALVES?**

Well over half the area of Great Bookham manor lay south of the Upper [Leatherhead-Guildford] Road, but occupation there was very sparse in 1614-17. Five small houses faced down the High Street, but the only other buildings stood much further away. Unlike the successive enclosure 'spearheads' invading Bookham Common<sup>28</sup>, the Common Field ended to the south in a roughly straight line east-west separating the holdings of the Earl of Effingham from those of Richard Brinsley Sheridan in 1797-98<sup>29</sup>. The unenclosed fields of the latter were remarkably curvilinear, and the Upper (Ranmore) Common (waste) lay beyond the woodland from which lands were enclosed. Four lanes wandered through the woods to open onto Ranmore, as well as another lane with flights of lynchets<sup>30</sup>

passing Bagden (a 4-bay<sup>31</sup> double -pile house, 1279 place-name) and a 12<sup>th</sup> century chapel (whose ruins survive) at West Humble<sup>32</sup>.

### RANMORE AND POLESDEN

Of seven houses scattered around the edges of Ranmore Common, Ewtrees (*sic*) and Hogden house were double-pile. Many fields are described as 'in Polesden', the dry valley running down from Effingham to Mickleham, named in 1202<sup>33</sup> Polesden house (rebuilt in 1631)<sup>34</sup> is labelled 'Little Coppenden' by Clay<sup>35</sup>. It was a cross-wing house adjoined by 'Halle Grove', 'The Saffron Garden', 'The Dogge grove' and 'The Connyberry' [*ie* rabbit warren; there are also two 'Conny Crofts' and a 'Conny grove' nearby] together with three parcels called 'The Hither/ Middle/ Nether Hamlett' (centre of Fig. 2).



Fig. 9 Polesden area from the 1614-17 plan<sup>5</sup> (east to top)

Not even a continuous path led toward Bookham: the lane from Little Coppenden to Ranmore Common passed 'Oldhouse feild' (*sic*), with no house drawn in it. The ovoid area around Ewtrees house (listed Grade II)<sup>36</sup> had a separate lane to Ranmore, and the surrounding fields belonged to Little Bookham, not Polesden. All this looks like relics of an ancient decayed estate. Is this why the Common waste lay further away from Bookham on this side, and there was so little settlement? Ranmore is first named on Emmanuel Bowen's map of 1749, and only became a separate parish in 1860, with a new great house [Denbies] and church. Polesden and Ranmore looked toward Dorking, away from Bookham, just as Slyfield looked toward Cobham.

### ARCHAEOLOGY

Can excavation help us further? The foundations of a substantial Roman building and 7<sup>th</sup> century and later cemeteries have been excavated in Fetcham<sup>37</sup>. A Roman coin-hoard, found at Bagden Farm 300 years ago, and Roman pottery from test pits dug in the Eastwick area in 2012<sup>38</sup> were on the very eastern edge of Great Bookham parish. The discovery of parts of two dismembered skeletons in the grounds of Bookham Grove in 1953, even if their dating (deduced from the shape of the skulls)<sup>39</sup> is correct, it is not sufficient evidence for an Anglo-Saxon settlement.

### CONCLUSION

Domesday Book's mention of Gunfrid's hide may indicate that Great Bookham was once polyfocal, with at least one nucleus other than that next to the church. 'The Isle of Wight' was a 16<sup>th</sup> century development, and Ranmore a waste-edge dispersal from the vanished Coppenden, but can we place the other settlements on Clay's plan in order of likelihood as another primary nucleus?. Eastwick, Slyfield and Polesden evolved as separate entities by the creation of lay estates, each with a 'Great House'. Preston and Ranmore never coalesced in the same way: Arthur Bird at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century built a house at Preston but not an estate, unlike Thomas Cubitt at Denbies near Ranmore. Centuries earlier, with powerful neighbours (the King at Dorking and the de Clares elsewhere), the abbot of Chertsey may have chosen the present High Street site as the central – and safest – nucleus from which to develop the abbey's holding. The other settlements in the manor presented no economic or political threat, and were tolerated rather than suppressed. Gunfrid's hide may have been either at Eastwick (with its moated site) or at Polesden (with its odd topography and field names), both of which probably became abbey dependencies for a time - Eastwick as a farm, Polesden as a collecting point for the southern half of the manor.

## NOTES

1. Renn, D.F., 2009 'Little Bookham – the heart of Surrey?', *Proc L&DLHS* 7.3, 2-12.
2. Great Domesday Book f.32v.
3. Among Nordic personal names today, Gunfrid is female, Gunfrith male. Female landholders occur elsewhere in Domesday Surrey, eg Salie's wife at Dirtham in Effingham.
4. Thorn, C, in Erskine, R.W.H. & Williams, A. (eds), 2003 *The Story of Domesday Book* (Chichester: Phillimore), 198. The mark may have been added much later, eg after the Peasants' Revolt.
5. Harvey, J.H., 1966 'A cartographical survey of the area XI. Thomas Clay's plan of the manor of Great Bookham, 1614-17' *Proc L&DLHS* 2.10, 281-83. The map and survey-book are held at the Surrey History Centre, Woking: ref K34/3. The central area of the map is reproduced (both original and H.L.Meed's redrawing of Harvey's copy) in Spencer, L., 2016 *Great Bookham: The Development of a Surrey Village in Maps* (Leatherhead & District Local History Society) (hereafter *Spencer*), 58-59.
6. McCann, W.A. & Fortescue, S., 2001 'A Saxon Church Revealed? Surveys inside St Nicolas Parish Church, Great Bookham', *Surrey Archaeological Society Bulletin* 351, 1-4. In the next Bulletin [352, 4], I suggested an alternative explanation.
7. Harvey, J.H., 1950 'An experiment in local history' *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 51, 104; Harvey, J.H., 1954 'A short history of Bookham [Part I]', *Proc L&DLHS* 1.8, 10-14; Blair, J. 1991 *Early Medieval Surrey: Landholding, Church and Settlement before 1300* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, and Guildford: Surrey Archaeological Society), 58-59. Lyn Spencer points out that maps of 1614, 1804 and 1823 (*Spencer* 42, 58-9, 68, 77) show East Street as blocked near its north end. Of course, it might have been a through lane for centuries earlier, as well as soon after 1823 (Tithe Apportionment map of 1826 (*ibid.*, 74). By contrast, the maps of 1614 and 1804 are the only ones to show what is now Townshott Close as continuing southward to form a through lane.
8. Turner, D.J., 2001 'The Origins and Development of Surrey Villages', *Surrey Archaeological Society Bulletin* 347, 12-13.
9. *Calendar of Patent Rolls* 1232-47, 350.
10. *Calendar of Curia Regis Rolls* 16, 322; *Calendar of Close Rolls* 1247-51, 40.
11. Gover, J.E.B., Mawer, A., Stenton, F.M., & Bonner, A., 1934 *The Place-Names of Surrey* English Place-Name Society XI, 99-101.
12. Fortescue, S.E.D., 2006 *Great & Little Bookham – the North End* (Honiton: C.R. Wright), 25, 27.



13. Slyfield, D.W. & B.J., 2003 'Slyfield and its owners (12th-18<sup>th</sup> century)' *Proc L&DLHS* **6.7**, 172.
14. Lewarne, J.G.W., 1965 'A cartographical survey of the area X. Fetcham parish tithe map of 1791' *Proc L&DLHS* **2.9**, 257-9
15. Great Domesday Book, f.31v, 32r. *Spencer* (33, Figure 10) draws attention to the curved parish boundary between the Mole and Lane End on Eastwick Drive. The direction of the 'bulge' suggests that it was that of a Fetcham, rather a Bookham, estate. Fetcham consisted of three manors in 1086.
16. Renn, D.F., 2013 'Domesday mills on the river Mole – a review', *Proc L&DLHS*, **7.7**, 5-8. The fractions of  $\frac{1}{3}$  and  $\frac{1}{6}$  suggest a reorganisation of old estates.
17. Harvey, J.H., 1969 'A cartographical survey of the area XIV. The map of Great Bookham in 1797-98' *Proc L&DLHS* **3.3**, 79-83. The map and survey-book are held at the Surrey History Centre, Woking: ref 177 a/b. The central area of the map is reproduced in *Spencer* 68, there dated to 1804.
18. The termination *-wic* comes from the Latin *vicus* 'settlement', often a secondary one eg. *Lundenwic*, the Anglo-Saxon successor west of the derelict Roman *Londinium*.
19. Malden, H.E. (ed), 1911 *The Victoria History of the County of Surrey* (London: Constable) **III**, 326 citing *Inq.p.m.* 1 Edward III, n.53 and BL *Add Ch.* 5569.
20. Harvey, J.H., 1960 'A short history of Bookham, Surrey - Pt VII', *Proc L&DLHS* **2.4**, 115.
21. Harvey, J.H., 1950 'An experiment in local history' *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 51, 109.
22. It may be significant that Sir Francis Vincent (of Stoke d'Abernon) appears to have held this (or only Barn Place?) at this time, according to the redrawn and annotated version of the Clay plan (note 5).
23. Surrey Sites & Monuments Record 97. 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map of 1895. *Spencer* 44-45. A test-pit in a nearby garden found Roman pottery *above* late medieval pottery: *L&DLHS Newsletter*, February 2015, 16 (site N).
24. Department of the Environment, 1990 *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of Mole Valley, Surrey (parishes of Ashted, Fetcham, Great Bookham, Leatherhead, Little Bookham)*, 121-122.
25. As note 1.
26. Harvey, J.H., 1943 'Bookham Common: A Short History' *The London Naturalist*, 35-36.

27. Fortescue, S.E.D., 1978 *People and Places- Great & Little Bookham* (Bookham:Author),73.
28. As note 26, but p.33 Fig 4.
29. As note 17.
30. English, J. & Dyer, S., 1993 '*Surrey Historic Landscapes project: the Polesden estate*', *Society For landscape Studies, Autumn Newsletter*, 4-5.
31. Higgins, M., 1988 'Polesden Lacey estate vernacular buildings survey [for the Southern Region of the National Trust]' unpublished.
32. Hart, E. & Braun, H., 1941 'West Humble Chapel' *Surrey Archaeological Collections* **47**, 1- 11
33. Currie, C.K., 2000 'Polesden Lacey and Ranmore Common estates, near Dorking, Surrey: an archaeological and historical survey,' *Surrey Archaeological Collections* **87**, 49-84
34. Benger, F.B., 1955 'Pen sketches of old houses in this district: 6 -Polesden, Great Bookham', *Proc L&DLHS* **1.9**, 25-29.
35. 'Cottendon' might be a mishearing of Castleton, the name of the family who held the Polesden estate from 1492 to 1630.
36. Currie, C.K., 1996 'Polesden Lacey and Ranmore Common estates near Dorking, Surrey; an archaeological survey'[for the Southern Region of the National Trust] **2**, archaeological inventory, 4; unpublished (see note 33).
37. Munnery, T., 2014 *Late Upper Palaeolithic/Early Mesolithic, Roman and Saxon discoveries at Fetcham near Leatherhead*. SpoilHeap Occasional Paper 4 (Woking: SpoilHeap Publications), 8-11, 83-84.
38. Salmon, N., 1736 *Antiquities of Surrey* (London: author) 89; *L&DLHS Newsletter* February 2015, 18-19.
39. Lowther, A.W.G., 1959 'A cartographical survey of the area V. The Saxon period (c. 410-1066 A.D.)' *Proc L&DLHS* **2.3**, 71 (no.5).

## SECRETARIAL NOTES

Continued.

67<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held @ Letherhead Institute on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014

68<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held @ Letherhead Institute on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015

69<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held @ Letherhead Institute on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

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