

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



VOL. 1

No. 7

1953

OCCASIONAL NOTES

Old Road in Fetcham

In May, 1953, the Society's attention was drawn to an excavation in Cock Lane, Fetcham, where a drainage trench for building purposes had cut nearly halfway across the Lane and through its concrete surface. On the west wall of the cut, at a distance varying from 7 to 12 inches below the bottom of the concrete was an old turf line some $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick and which probably shows the old surface, still existing at the western end of the lane, before the concrete was laid. A short distance below this turf line, however, was a metalled roadway of medium chalk flints of a thickness from 6 to 8 inches probably even thicker in the uncovered centre. The only finds were two small red bricks or flooring tiles among the flints, of any date between the 17th and 18th centuries, and a few 19th century pottery fragments just above the turf line.

Old maps of 1777 and 1791 show Cock Lane as a road leading to Fetcham Common but a metalled road instead of a dirt track is unexpected.

Seventh Annual General Meeting

Held at the Council Offices, Leatherhead, 18th November, 1953

A CROWDED meeting again gave much pleasure to the Society's officers. The Report of the Executive Committee for 1952-53 and the Accounts to 30th September, 1953 were adopted as presented. The main points of the Report are set out in Secretarial Notes, and the Accounts are reproduced on another page. The members of the Executive Committee were re-elected *en bloc*. Mr. W. H. Taylor, Hon. Auditor, had expressed a desire to be relieved of his office and Mr. J. G. W. Lewarne was elected in his place.

After the conclusion of formal business and a short discussion of several points put by members Mr. Lewarne gave a reading from the Rev. Dallaway's "History of Leatherhead" published in 1820. This interesting innovation proved very popular as evidenced by the number of questions and the discussion that followed.

Briefly the OBJECTS of the Society are:—

To institute, promote and encourage the study of local history, architecture, archaeology, natural history, folklore and similar subjects appertaining to Leatherhead and surrounding districts; including the search for, recording, and preservation of, historical records and other material; a library for members' use; lectures, debates, exhibitions and tours; fieldwork, photography of historic features; and (as a long term objective) the compilation and publication of a history of the Leatherhead district.

A real interest in the locality is the only necessary qualification for membership; those with any specialised knowledge are, of course, doubly welcome, but this is not essential. The Society hopes to help those who have little or no special knowledge to improve or acquire it. Provision is also made for Junior Members at a nominal fee.

Persons who would like to keep in touch with local history but have no time to take an active part can join as Non-Active Members. They have all the other privileges of full membership.

The yearly membership fee for all adult Members (to include one copy of the Society's Proceedings) is seven shillings and sixpence. Apply to the Hon. Treasurer: Mr. S. E. D. FORTESCUE, Englands, High Street, Gt. Bookham.

PROCEEDINGS
of the
Leatherhead and District Local History Society
Vol. 1, No. 7
1953

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Secretarial Notes	2
<i>Group Reports: Group A</i> (Historical Records)	3
,, <i>B</i> (Architecture, Buildings, Surveying)	4
,, <i>C</i> (Photography)	4
,, <i>D</i> (Archaeology)	4
,, <i>E</i> (Natural History)	4
Further Observations on the Recolonisation of Chalk Erosion Slopes. J. C. BROWN	4
Pen Sketches of old Houses in this District: The Mansion, Leatherhead. F. B. BENGER	7
Leatherhead in Victorian Times. A. J. GINGER	12
Ashted and its History: V. The Manor of Little Ashted. A. W. G. LOWTHER	18
Accounts, 1952-53	20
Occasional Notes: Seventh Annual Meeting: Objects of the Society ...	Cover ii

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR

1953-54

Chairman: Capt. A. W. G. LOWTHER, F.S.A., A.R.I.B.A.

Hon. Secretary: A. T. RUBY, M.B.E.
(53 Nutcroft Grove, Fetcham. Tel.: Leatherhead 3127).

Hon. Asst. Secretary: P. G. SHELLEY
(Beechcroft, Hawks Hill, Fetcham. Tel.: Leatherhead 2696).

Hon. Treasurer: S. E. D. FORTESCUE
(Englands, High Street, Great Bookham. Tel.: Bookham 2606).

Hon. Programme Secretary: C. T. FISHER
("Silver Birches," Leatherhead Road, Great Bookham. Tel.: Bookham 2232).

Committee Members: F. B. BENGER
S. N. GRIMES

Hon. Auditor: J. G. W. LEWARNE

Hon. Librarian: Miss A. M. SKINNER

Hon. Editor of the "Proceedings": C. J. SONGHURST.

SECRETARIAL NOTES

I take pleasure in stating that during 1952-53 keen general interest in the Society was maintained and requests for lectures, articles for local publication and other enquiries continued to demand constant attention. An increase in local building required a number of visits to newly-opened grounds and reports of small finds were quite numerous.

Membership now stands at the increased figure of 184.

The following fixtures were arranged during the year:—

1952

November 7th (At the Annual General Meeting). A lantern lecture by Captain A. W. G. Lowther, F.S.A., on "A Survey of Roman and pre-Roman Sites in the Society's Area."

November 29th A lantern lecture by Mr. C. W. Phillips, M.A., F.S.A., on "Lost Village Sites."

1953

January 22nd A lantern lecture by Mr. F. H. Edmunds, M.A., on "The Geology of the Leatherhead District."

February 12th A lantern lecture by Mr. R. Foster Elliott, A.R.I.B.A., on "Elementary Architecture."

March 12th A talk by Mr. A. T. Ruby, M.B.E., on "The Lords of Pachenesham in the XIVth Century."

April 18th A conducted tour to Wotton House, Wotton Church and Ockley with the battle-site.

May 16th A nature study ramble conducted by Mrs. M. P. Topping, Ph.D., on Bookham Common.

June 13th A coach visit to Lewes with a talk on, and conducted tour of, Lewes Castle and the Barbican House Museum by Mr. L. F. Salzman.

July 11th A conducted tour to Clandon Park.

August 29th A conducted visit to Thorncroft and Leatherhead Church with a talk on each by Mr. F. B. Bengier.

September 19th A fungus foray on Box Hill, conducted by Mrs. M. P. Topping.

An endeavour will be made to meet any desire for a repeat of talks or visits.

The work of the Groups is recorded on other pages. Additional workers in the field and assistants in research are needed to maintain and expand the work already in hand and volunteers will be welcome.

Copies of all seven numbers of the "Proceedings" are available for purchase by members and non-members, price 3/6d. each.

The accounts of which a copy appears in this issue show that, at the date to which the last Accounts were made up, there was a balance in hand (excluding £3 7s. 6d. for subscriptions paid in advance) of £47 12s. 9d. Various receipts during the year as shown on the debit side of the account amounted to £103 11s. 0d. including the £3 7s. 6d. above mentioned. £60 5s. 3d. has been spent on the 'Proceedings' and miscellaneous expenses, as set out on the credit side, came to £29 4s. 5d., a total expenditure of £89 9s. 8d. Receipts have therefore exceeded expenses by £14 1s. 4d., the balance in hand being increased by that amount. In view of the increased cost of the 'Proceedings' this is definitely gratifying, but if any expansion of the Society's activities is to be achieved a bigger annual margin is a necessity.

Donations of any size to either the Library or General Funds will always be most welcome.

Subscriptions can be paid by Banker's Order and any member who wishes to employ this method should get into touch with the Hon. Treasurer who will gladly forward the necessary form.

There has been a number of changes among the officers. Mr. W. H. Taylor has asked to be relieved of his office as Hon. Auditor which he has held since the Society's inception and Mr. J. G. W. Lewarne has been elected, at the last Annual General Meeting, in his place. Mr. R. Foster Elliott has left the district and his services, particularly as leader of Group B will be greatly missed. Mrs. M. Butler, who for so long has done most valuable work in indexing the Society's archives has also moved elsewhere. Grateful thanks are due to all three for their past services. Mr. F. Bastian has agreed to take over Mrs. Butler's work and has already started thereon.

I am glad to announce that Miss Audrey M. Skinner, District Librarian of the County Library, has offered to act as librarian for this Society. At the time of writing arrangements to hand over the library to her custody are being made and members will be notified by circular as soon as detailed arrangements are complete. It is hoped all members will make full use of the facilities which will be available to them.

A. T. RUBY, *Hon. Secretary.*

Reports of the Separate Groups

GROUPS AND LEADERS

- “ A ”: *Historical Records, MSS and Other Written Records.*
Dr. A. K. R. Kiralfy, LL.M., Ph.D., 168 Cobham Road, Fetcham.
- “ B ”: *Architecture, Buildings, Surveying, etc.*
- “ C ”: *Photography.*
Mr. A. Day, 2 The Mount, Leatherhead.
- “ D ”: *Archaeology.*
Capt. A. W. G. Lowther, F.S.A., A.R.I.B.A., The Old Quarry, The Warren, Ashtead.
- “ E ”: *Natural History.*
Mrs. M. P. Topping, Ph.D., Angroban, Fir Tree Road, Leatherhead.
- “ F ”: *Arts, Crafts, Folklore, Dialect, etc.*

REPORT OF GROUP “ A ” : MSS., Historical and Other Records

The progress of the work in hand has been fully maintained and many additional items dealt with or commenced.

For **Ashtead** much of the time, as last year, has been spent in collecting and recording miscellaneous facts from Special Collections and, from various sources, adding to the previous work on Ashtead families.

Among the miscellaneous subjects collected and recorded are:—

- (i) William Tanner's Swan Mark, 1574
- (ii) The Ashtead butchers and their families in the 17th and 18th centuries
- (iii) The Ashtead Racing Swindle of 1844
- (iv) Local Institutions and Charities
- (v) The Vicars and Rectors of Ashtead, 1282-1882
- (vi) The Curates of Ashtead, 1742-1882

Work on the family histories of eighteen Ashtead families, and for the period 1409 to 1812, has been carried out. The history of those members of the Beckford family which were connected with Ashtead is now—thanks mainly to work kindly carried out by Mr. J. G. W. Lewarne, on the Beckford wills at Somerset House—practically complete and covers the period 1657-1788. A genealogical table of the family has been compiled for the period 1592-1799.

The work in **Fetcham** mentioned in the last issue has been continued or completed. In addition, the following items have been completed or are in progress.

- (i) Search of P.R.O. records for Fetcham items
- (ii) Study of Ordnance Survey map, 1936 edition (approx. 25 in. = 1 mile) as to development of neighbourhood since the maps of the late 18th century
- (iii) Terrier of 1791 map copied
- (iv) Tithe apportionments of 1842 and 1879, with map of the later date, have been copied. The latter is in connection with the construction of the Leatherhead—Effingham Junction line (L. & S.W. Railway).
- (v) A card Index of personal names in the Fetcham Parish Records up to 1854 has been started and a similar Index of field names is projected for early commencement.

Investigation of the history of **Pachenesham Magna** has been continued. Although its story in the last seventy years of the 15th century remains obscure the position is becoming more clear as additional facts come to hand.

Work on the military history continues.

Preliminary steps towards a resumption of a study of the local government of the area have been taken.

REPORT OF GROUP " B " : Architecture, Buildings, Surveying, etc.

No call of any particular interest was made on the Group during 1953. The Group Leader and your Hon. Secretary paid a visit to the Effingham site in the spring to check up the survey and station pegs in readiness for the excavations there. Mr. Foster Elliott's impending departure from the district made it desirable that the undertaking of any fresh project should be deferred.

REPORT OF GROUP " C " : Photography

No special activity can be recorded for 1953. Copies were made of several old photographs and prints which became available and the negatives of which have been filed and will form a permanent record. Record photographs were also made of some of the objects found at the Bell Lane site. The Lee Wood excavations were also thoroughly recorded photographically by a visit to the site at the conclusion of the season's work.

REPORT OF GROUP " D " : Archaeology

It is hoped to publish a full report of the Lee Wood excavations in the next number of " Proceedings."

REPORT OF GROUP " E " : Natural History

During the past year the surveys of the vegetation on the special areas of Mickleham Down and White Hill* have been continued. The annual Fungus Foray was held in the Box Hill woods on September 19th. There were not as many large agarics as in the previous autumn but an exceptionally large number of " earth-stars ", *Geaster fimbriatus* were found in the wood below the tower, on the northern slope of the zig-zag ridge. There was also a particularly good collection of *Boletus tridentinus*, *Boletus viscidus* and *Boletus luteus* growing associated with the larch trees at the side of the path in the Happy Valley. The members ended the foray at Juniper Hall where the specimens were examined. It was pleasant to have so many young members on the foray; they were very active in searching for the fungi, and we hope they will continue to be interested.

A report by Miss Juliet C. Brown on the plant re-colonisation of a site at Effingham is appended. It affords a useful comparison with the results of the observations of area No. 2 in the 1951 Report.

Further Observations on the Recolonisation of Chalk Erosion Slopes in the Leatherhead District

By J. C. BROWN.

INTERESTING examples of the plant recolonisation of chalk erosion slopes can be seen on White Hill, Mickleham (area No. 2 in the Article quoted in the footnote) and on White Downs, Effingham (Grid Ref. 119518). The plant communities on these two South-facing slopes represent two stages in the succession to chalk grassland or chalk scrubland. It may be many years before they reach such a state of equilibrium, but they are continually changing and there is evidence that the relatively rare pioneer plants still to be found on the open ground may, in a few years, have been ousted by our more familiar chalkland species.

The two plant communities under consideration have many features in common, but they differ in origin. The slope at Effingham is on the site of an anti-tank trench, the well-known landmark on the chalk escarpment of the North Downs during the last war. In the spring of 1946 the trench was filled in with chalk rubble and levelled so that a loose shifting erosion slope with little or no soil was formed. The seed parents of possible colonists are close at hand, for chalk grassland and mixed woods of beech and yew cover the slopes above and below the site and rapid colonisation has occurred during the last eight years.

Recolonisation of the Mickleham site began over thirty years ago and on a woodland soil. The erosion slope here was formed when beech and conifer woodland was felled in 1919-20. After felling soil erosion was rapid and there was little natural regeneration of trees. Most of the felled area is now open chalk scrubland, while beech and yew cover the surrounding slopes.

* cf. areas (1) and (2) on sketch map *PROC. L.&D.L.H.S.*, Vol. 1, No. 5, p. 13.
Note; See *PROC. L. &D.H.L.S.* Vol. 1, No. 5, pp. 11-14, 1951.

The most conspicuous feature of the slope at Effingham is the abundance of the dominant plant *Inula Conyza*, Ploughman's Spikenard, with its tall flowering shoots and leaf rosettes. Most of the other plants grow close to the ground, many of them are cropped closely by rabbits, some are dwarfed—apparently as a result of the exposed position and unfavourable soil conditions—and several species



White Downs, Effingham. Erosion slope from west, September, 1951.
Chalk grassland in foreground; flowering shoots *Inula conyza* on slope.

have a creeping habit, for example: the grass, *Agrostis Stolonifera*; Wild Strawberry, *Fragario vesca*; two species of Fluellen, *Kickxia spuma* and *K. elatine*; and Creeping Cinquefoil, *Potentilla reptans*. These creeping plants which root quickly are able to spread rapidly over the bare ground, tapping a relatively wide area of soil and they must play an important part in stabilising the soil by their binding action.

Most of the species present can be divided into three groups, i.e.,

- (1) Species typical of chalk grassland:
e.g., *Festuca ovina*, Sheep's Fescue; *Helianthemum chamaecistus*, common Rock-rose; *Thymus serpyllum*, Wild Thyme.
- (2) Species usually found on bare waste ground or on cultivated soil where there is little competition:—
e.g., *Ajuga chamaepitys*, Ground pine; *Inula conyza*; *Kickxia* spp.
- (3) Scrubland species:
e.g., *Atropa belladonna*, Deadly Nightshade; *Clematis vitalba*, Traveller's Joy; *Rubus fruticosus*, Bramble.

Besides the flowering plants are small mosses characteristic of open ground, including species of *Barbula*, *Phascum*, *Tortula* and *Weisia*. A blue-green alga, *Nostoc commune*, although dried up and brown in hot weather, is abundant.

Over fifty per cent. of the species recorded on the White Downs erosion slope occur also on the Mickleham site, but here competition between plants seems to be more intense and there is a higher

proportion of species characteristic of chalk scrub and wood and borders. Patches of a relatively short ground flora including the dominants *Fragaria vesca* and *Nepeta hederacea*, Ground Ivy, occur between bushes of *Cornus sanguinea*, Dogwood and *Rubus fruticosus*. Unlike the Effingham slope, where 60% of the ground is completely bare, the site at Mickleham has an almost complete cover of vegetation and the recolonists of open ground *Ajuga chamaepitys*; *Iberis amara*, Wild Candytuft; and *Inula conyza* do not appear to be thriving and are probably on the decline. There is a notable absence of grasses.

During the period July, 1950—April, 1952 a study of the two plant communities was made with the object of following in detail any successional changes which might occur from year to year. Quantitative estimates were made of the frequency of occurrence of the various species. Some of the results for the Mickleham site were recorded in the "Proceedings" for 1951, p. 14. These indicated fluctuations in the abundance of certain species; most notable was a decrease in the abundance of *Senecio jacobea*, Ragwort; *Ajuga chamaepitys* and *Iberis amara*. Similar fluctuations were recorded on White Downs.

In August, 1950 a hundred samples were taken at White Downs by putting down a quadrat frame ($\frac{1}{4}$ sq. metre) at random. The presence and absence of all species occurring in these samples was recorded and the percentage frequency of occurrence calculated. The sample areas were marked permanently and the analysis repeated in August, 1951. Some of the more interesting results are shown in the following table and values obtained for the adjacent mature chalk downland included for comparison. In group A are the pioneer colonists absent or infrequent on the chalk down and in group B are species dominant in the down flora.

Percentage Frequency of Occurrence of Species, White Downs, Effingham

	Chalk Erosion Slope		Chalk Down
	1950	1951	1951
A. <i>Inula conyza</i>	100	100	0
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	60	70	0
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	30	50	0
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	30	60	40
<i>Senecio jacobea</i>	30	50	20
<i>Linaria spuria</i>	20	20	0
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	20	40	10
<i>Ajuga Chamaepitys</i>	10	20	0
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	10	40	0
B. <i>Poterium sanguisorba</i>	40	30	100
<i>Viola sp.</i>	20	40	90
<i>Festuca ovina</i>	0	10	100
<i>Carex flacca</i>	0	0	100
<i>Thymus serpyllum</i>	0	0	90

Values in italics possibly indicate significant changes. Observations over a number of years would be required to verify whether the changes are successional or merely yearly fluctuation due to seasonal or biotic factors.

The effect of grazing by rabbits. Rabbits are a major biotic factor on both slopes. Closely cropped plants are evidence of heavy grazing by these animals. *Festuca ovina* is always severely attacked and the small tight cushions of this grass are a conspicuous feature of the flora on White Downs. Cropping of *Agrostis stolonifera* is not obvious except in winter, a fact which suggests that this species may be a pioneer colonist of bare chalk because it is less palatable than the Fescues. Absence of grasses on the White Hill area may also be correlated with the presence of rabbits.

At the end of 1950 rabbit-proof enclosures were erected on both sites. Four square metres of ground were enclosed by wire netting of 2 in. mesh, 3 ft. in height and sunk 6 in. into the ground to prevent entry of rabbits by burrowing.

By the summer of 1951 there was a marked difference between the vegetation inside and outside the White Downs enclosure. Species usually attacked by rabbits were in general taller, more luxuriant and bore more inflorescences inside the enclosure. *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Festuca ovina*, *Prunella vulgaris* and *Crepis capillaris* were striking examples of plants affected in that way. *Agrostis stolonifera* flowered prolifically within the enclosure, but not a single flower of this species was found elsewhere on the slope.

In April, 1951 and 1952 an estimate was made of the grass coverage within the enclosure and on a control area. In 1952 the grass coverage had increased by 80% in the enclosure but by only 2% (if at all) on the control area where cropping was severe. The rate of spread of grass on this slope, either by vegetative growth or by seed therefore appears to be severely curtailed by rabbits.

On White Hill where the plant community is semi-closed, the contrast between the vegetation inside and outside the enclosure was not as spectacular as that on White Downs. There was, however, a similar increase in the flowering capacity of protected plants of *Crepis capillaris* and *Prunella vulgaris*

and by April, 1952 several vigorous grass plants had appeared inside the enclosure. It is noteworthy that in the nearby beech plantation protected for a time from rabbits, grass is well established.

It is not possible during the comparatively short period of two or three years to draw any conclusions as to the fate of the two plant communities. It seems likely that chalk grassland will develop on White Downs and chalk scrubland on White Hill. Fluctuations in the rabbit population will no doubt be one of the most important factors determining the rate and course of successional changes. It is hoped that observations on these sites will be continued for several years so that a detailed ecological history of the recolonisation will be on record.

PEN SKETCHES OF OLD HOUSES IN THIS DISTRICT

By F. B. BENDER.

3.—THE MANSION, LEATHERHEAD

THE family of Apperdele was established in Leatherhead and Mickleham at least as early as the latter years of the reign of King Henry III, *circa* 1260-1270. We do not know the extent of the property which they held, but as they appear to have been rather a quarrelsome and litigious group it may be surmised that their possessions were worthy of the effort. Some fields which seem to have formed part of their property, lying between the road to Dorking and the river Mole, have retained the corrupted name Aprils until our own time.

In 1366 Roger de Apperdele had licence to grant to the Prioress and Convent of Kilburn in Middlesex a messuage and 30 acres of land, 8 acres of meadow, and 300s. 4d. rent in Leddrede; the messuage, 12 acres of land and 8 acres of meadow being held of William Apperdele by rent of 6d., the remainder held of Sir John Argentyn by 13½d. of his manor of Pachenesham (*Inquis, ad quod damn.* 39 Edward III. Nos. 24 and 34). The Convent of Kilburn was established at an early date as a cell or priory for nuns, who are known to have followed the rule of St. Augustine from at least 1376. Though no more than scattered property of no great extent, the land thus given by Roger Apperdele became known as the manor of Minchin, subsidiary to the main manor of Pachenesham. This is one of many instances where small properties were thus dignified when belonging to a religious house. The name *Minchin* without doubt arose from the possession of the property by the nuns of Kilburn, for the word *minchin* or *minchun* is the Middle-English word for nun, derived from the Anglo-Saxon *mynece* and the Teutonic root *Munecene*. The manor of Minchinhampton in Gloucestershire was the property of the nuns of l'Abbaye aux Dames at Caen in Normandy, and Stow the London chronicler tells us that Mincing Lane is so called from having at one time been the residence or property of the nuns of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate. Part of the land given by Apperdele in Leatherhead seems to have been rather poor; some of the pasture was too stony to be sown, and some lay in so dry a place that it could only be mown in a wet season. (*Chan. Inq. p.m.* 45 Edward III. 2nd Nos. No. 37). This is worthy of note, for a parcel of land forming part of the south-east of Randalls Park was known as late as 1788 as Mincing Lake, and fields bordering Patsom Green were known as Stoney Croft and Rye Close (both latter names indicating poor quality soil)—all of which appear to have followed the 'descent' of the property given originally to the Convent of Kilburn.

We do not know of course whether the messuage mentioned in the grant of 1366 stood upon the site of the present Mansion, nor whether the lands were let out or were farmed directly as a grange of Kilburn; but it is probable that the manor of Minchin remained intact until the convent of Kilburn was dissolved in 1536. In May, 1541 it was granted to Thomas Stydolph of Mickleham (*State Papers*. Henry VIII, Vol. XVI), and at his death in 1546 is shown to have been held as by 1 20 knight's fee and by 4s. payable at Michaelmas; also to have been valued at 36s. p.a. beyond outgoings. (*Inq. p.m.* 37 Henry VIII. No. 89). In January 1573 John Stidolph, grandson of Thomas, is found in possession of the manor of Minchin (Manning & Bray II.669), and Sir Francis Stidolph is described as lord of Pachenesham and Minchin in an account of an attempt by him to enclose Leatherhead Downs which must have been written after 1604 when he succeeded his father (Merton College. Calendar of Deeds, No. 738). It is most unlikely that any of the Stidolphs lived at The Mansion, for they were seated at Mickleham and had by degrees accumulated large estates in Headley, Leatherhead and Mickleham. It is more likely that they leased The Mansion, and this may explain a note in Brayley's *History of Surrey* (IV.435) that one Robert Cheseman, who married Alice Dacres, daughter of the family then living at the Church House which stood upon what is now Elm Bank Garden, and who died in 1547, held The Mansion in the reign of Henry VIII. Brayley gives no authority for this statement, which probably emanates from the account of The Priory written by James Dallaway in 1824 and posthumously published in 1836, where it is stated that The Mansion was originally built by Cheseman "one of the Yeoman Falconers to Henry VIII".

To the period *circa* 1600 belongs a diagrammatic map now in Surrey County Record Office (ref: 15, 10) which shows a house on the site of the present Mansion with the inscription *Ye Maner Howse of Minchin*; and this taken in conjunction with the continued ownership of the land known as *Mincing Lake* by later owners of The Mansion already mentioned, seems adequate proof that *The Mansion* is a corruption of *The Minchin*.

Here I desire to introduce a note of legitimate speculation into an otherwise factual record. I have set out my reasons for believing that Edmund Tylney, Master of the Revels to Elizabeth I, lived at The Mansion and entertained the Queen there in 1591 in my article on Tylney in the *Proceedings* of this Society (Vol. I, No. 5, p. 19) and I may add that, unless Tylney was living in some house here which has utterly disappeared and of which there is no record, there virtually can be no other house than The Mansion where he could have lived, for not only do we know the occupation of all the other large houses in the parish at that time but since he explicitly states in his Will of 1610 that his house here is to be sold the possibility that he was a tenant at that time of, for instance, the then capital messuage of Pachenesham Magna may be ruled out. As so many records of the properties once owned by the Stidolphs have disappeared, we may never be able to clear up satisfactorily at what date they parted with the manor of Minchin; but my own view is that Tylney, who is shown in the 1594 Lay Subsidy as holding (not necessarily owning) more land than anyone else in the parish, was probably the tenant of The Mansion and Minchin manor until some date after 1604, when he purchased the property from the Stidolph family. If these conclusions are correct then for one brief dazzling day The Mansion enjoyed its place in English history.

A Survey of the Manor of Thorncroft made in 1629 has attached to it a map with a bird's eye view of The Mansion marked *Earle of Nottingham* (Merton College. Estate Muniments). This was Charles Howard, 2nd Earl of Nottingham and 3rd Baron Howard of Effingham, son of the great Lord High Admiral who fought the Spanish Armada. Charles Howard was Edmund Tylney's cousin and it may well be that he purchased The Mansion after Tylney's death in 1610, but our first note of him at Leatherhead is in November 1625, when, as Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, he called together a review of the military forces of the county on Fetcham Downs (Hist. MSS. Comm. 7th Report, p. 676a). Howard's period of occupation of The Mansion was that during which the unrest culminating in the Civil War was rising to a head; and though his upbringing and royal service may have inclined him to the side of the king, Surrey was so unmistakably puritan in its political complexion and Howard's interests so inextricably bound up with those of the county that he found himself in line with the Parliamentary party when on August 12, 1642, shortly before Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham, Howard summoned a meeting at The Mansion "to settle the country (i.e., shire) in a posture of arms" which was certainly not for the king's service, for not long before the only small royalist troop raised in the county had been rounded up and disbanded by Howard's men. Surrey remained solid behind the Parliament during the ensuing troubles. If he might later have regretted these actions, Howard did not live to see their consequences, for he died at The Mansion on October 3rd, 1642 and was buried at Reigate. His Will, being couched in general terms, does not specifically mention his Leatherhead property; but it is unlikely that so eminent a man would have lived in any other than his own house. His widow, Mary, continued to live at The Mansion until her death in 1651, and it is recorded that in September 1643 a small royalist troop broke into the house (Hist. MSS Comm. 7th Report, p. 686a).

Sir Thomas Bludworth, Lord Mayor of London in the year of the Great Fire of 1666, was lessee of the manor of Thorncroft from 1660 and mentions it in his Will of 1682 (P.C.C.82 Cottle). There is no evidence that he ever held The Mansion, though Dallaway confuses him with his son Charles, who is also mentioned in Thomas's Will. We have no direct evidence, though some indirect, that Charles Bludworth lived in the house; but Thomas's brother, Bartholomew Bludworth, is mentioned in a Rental Roll of Pachenesham Manor of 1693 when Alexander Akehurst (of whom more hereafter) paid 12s. for his "freehold house (in Leatherhead) and copyhold land at Patsensham late Bartholomew Bludworths" and 6d. for his freehold land in the field late Bludworths. It seems therefore possible that Bartholomew Bludworth was the owner of The Mansion at some time during the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and his nephew Charles may have lived with him, for his signature occurs as a vestryman to a vestry minute of October 1701 (Copy by Dallaway now in possession of H. K. Reeves, Esq.). The strong local tradition that George, Lord Jeffreys the former Lord Chancellor, who was the husband of Sir Thomas Bludworth's daughter Anne, came to The Mansion whilst in hourly fear of arrest in 1688 to see his daughter, then lying at the point of death, is supported by the entry of her burial in the Parish Register under date December 2nd of that year. It is said that Jeffreys was concealed in an underground chamber of the house. He was arrested at Wapping ten days later, disguised as a sailor, and died shortly after in the Tower.

If we regard the freehold house mentioned in the Pachenesham Rental Roll of 1693 as The Mansion then Alexander Akehurst must have become possessed of it by that time. He was certainly in possession in October 1701 when the vestry minute already quoted states that the repair of the north transept of Leatherhead Church (which was attached to the ownership of The Mansion) "for the future Mr. Alexander Akehurst does undertake". We do not know much about Akehurst, except that he is generally referred to as Dr. Akehurst, that he came from London, and that he married in 1705 Catherine Ballard, whose brother George Ballard was in occupation of the land known as Mincing Lake in November 1737

when Akehurst mortgaged that and other property to Sarah Stebbing. Manning & Bray (II.664) state that Akehurst rebuilt The Mansion about 1710. This may be so, for Akehurst is later found in financial difficulties which might have been caused, like those of Arthur Moore of Fetcham Park, by profligate expenditure upon his residence; but the appearance of the present house seems to date it from a period



Portrait by Gainsborough of William Wade.

(Reproduced by permission of Baroness Burton.)

some thirty years later and an entry in the Court Book of Pachenesham manor under date 15th October 1739 appears to confirm this where it is stated that Humphrey Gore had held freehold by rent of 6s. " All that New erected Capital Messuage situate and being upon part of the Ground lately belonging to

Alexander Akehurst ” and that Humphry Gore then being dead it had descended under his Will to Henry Gore. At any rate, by 1737 Dr. Akehurst was in financial difficulties, and as already mentioned he mortgaged considerable Leatherhead properties. About that time he also sold The Mansion to Lieutenant General Humphrey Gore, who, according to Dallaway’s account of The Priory in 1824 (note by William Cotton to the 1836 edition) had been Governor of Kinsale in Ireland and Colonel of the King’s Own Regiment of Dragoons. Humphrey Gore did not long enjoy residence at The Mansion, for he died in 1739 leaving his Leatherhead properties to his nephew Henry Gore. In 1744 Henry Gore bought from Akehurst the other Minchin properties which had been mortgaged, and secured this purchase by buying out the mortgage with its term of 500 years. There is not much to tell of Henry Gore. No doubt his uncle had educated him and designed his future as that of a country gentleman in the best style of the eighteenth century, and the monument which was erected in Leatherhead Church to his memory on his death in 1777 seems to indicate that he fulfilled the design:—

“ If virtue, honour, zeal, religion can
Form a true Christian and adorn a man,
If universal goodness claims a tear,
Reader attend, and pay that tribute here.”

Henry Gore left his freehold estate to his surviving child Catherine and her husband William Wade. William Wade and his wife Catherine had two sons (one of whom died in infancy) and three daughters. Mrs. Wade died in 1786 and William Wade became sole owner of The Mansion.

Whatever we may think about some of his actions, it cannot be denied that William Wade was a colourful character and very much of a piece with the interesting times and events in which he lived and amongst which he moved. He was one of two illegitimate sons of Field-Marshal George Wade (1673-1748) who is best remembered as the builder of the military roads in Scotland which were so neatly commemorated by an Irish private soldier who wrote:—

“ Had you seen these roads before they were made
You would lift up your hands and bless General Wade.”

(inserted on an obelisk which formerly stood on the road between Inverness and Inverary).

William Wade’s portrait as a young man was painted by Gainsborough and is now upon loan to the National Gallery from Lady Burton. In 1769 he was elected Master of Ceremonies at Brighton (then in its infancy as a fashionable watering place) and in the same year he also succeeded Mr. Derrick in a similar capacity at Bath. Since Bath emptied by the beginning of May, and Brighton’s summer season was short, he was able to officiate in turn at each town; but his reign at Bath came to an untimely end when he exhibited for general derision the love letters which a lady had addressed to him, and he was forced by public opinion to leave Bath in 1777 and henceforward was seen only at Brighton, where he seems to have been no less unpopular, being constantly accused of neglecting his duties for the gaming table. At first he was known at Brighton as Capt. Wade, but he later dropped the title. (Sitwell & Barton. *Brighton*. 1935) Mrs. Thrale records that in his official capacity he quietened the celebrated contest of poker and tongs with which Dr. Samuel Johnson and Mr. Mitchell, vicar of St. Nicholas, Brighton, were reinforcing their arguments in the Assembly Rooms. In 1787 he is said to have received a guinea apiece from two thousand Brighton visitors who entered their names in his subscription book, and in 1795 he arranged a magnificent ball of 600 dancers in honour of the Stadtholder, then a refugee in Brighton. About the same time he set himself up in opposition to Beau Brummell’s new fashions in men’s attire (Sitwell & Barton. *Op. cit.*). A caricature of him by Dighton made towards the closing years of the eighteenth century is reproduced in Lewis Melville’s book on Brighton, published in 1909. Wade was absent at the opening of the Brighton season of 1808 and he was succeeded in that year by W. S. Forth as Master of Ceremonies. It is probable that Wade found Leatherhead a convenient place in which to live, as a great deal of the Brighton road traffic (especially curricles and flies) came through here to go via Horsham and Shoreham (Edwards. *Companion from London to Brighthelmston*. 1801). If Wade shared the sprightliness and good humour of his much maligned master, the Prince Regent, then without doubt life for him had few dull moments.

The Will of Henry Gore, who died in 1777, mentions a grandson and the pedigree of the Gore family given by Manning & Bray (II.264) shows William Wade’s four children to have been by his wife Catherine Gore; but a Limited Administration of William Wade’s estate made in 1820 speaks of his surviving son, Col. Gore Wade, as son of a second marriage of William Wade. Wade died at his house at Brighton early in 1810 and Col. Gore Wade may have inherited The Mansion as entail of the Will of Henry Gore (died 1777) but we have nothing to prove it. William Cotton, in the account of The Priory printed in 1836, tells us that Gore Wade together with his wife, his son Lieut. Wade, and three infant children, was lost at sea in the *John Palmer*, East Indiaman, some time in 1813-14, a statement repeated by Brayley in 1850; and Manning & Bray in the pedigree already mentioned show that Gore Wade married a Miss Whitelock and had then (1809) two sons. But the Limited Administration of 1820 says that Gore Wade died a bachelor intestate. William Wade’s matrimonial properties were divided in 1815-16 between his three daughters—Emilia, wife of Philip Champion Crespieny; Eliza Wade; and Catherine, wife of James Shearman.

According to Brayley's *History of Surrey* The Mansion was assigned to Emilia Champion Crespigny and was afterwards occupied by a family named Mundell. It was purchased before 1834 by Colonel W. H. Spicer who died there in 1841. In 1844 it was sold by auction to Nathaniel Bland of Randalls Park, and in 1850 was tenanted as a private Grammar School by Dr. Joseph Payne. Dr. Payne was a celebrated educationalist who had introduced Jacotot's system into England in 1830. The Census Return of 1851 shows his Mansion establishment to have been upon quite a prosperous footing, with four assistant teachers and upwards of fifty pupils, amongst the latter Symmonds Attlee of Dorking who was possibly a forbear of Rt. Hon. Clement Attlee. Dr. Payne's son Joseph Frank Payne became a very celebrated physician and bibliophile who wrote several standard books on medical history. By 1866 the Grammar School at The Mansion had been taken over by Robert Ibbs who had been an assistant master to Dr. Payne, though the latter survived until 1876. Of the later owners of The Mansion I have notes of Mr. Miller who lived there in 1885 (and effected considerable interior alterations which were not in keeping with the house); Mr. Petty who lived there from 1916 onwards; and lastly Mr. Herbert K. Reeves who bought the property in 1923 and whose great care of it and interest in its history and associations deserves tribute. Mr. Reeves left the house just before the 1939-1945 war, and it was occupied during the war by units of the Canadian Army, an interregnum which did much to deteriorate its character and condition; but in 1950 it was purchased from Mr. Herbert Reeves by the Surrey County Council to house



The Mansion, West View.

various local services administered by the County Council, including the Leatherhead branch of the County Library. The house has been thoroughly overhauled and repaired, and may look forward to a long life of continued usefulness, though as yet the future upkeep of the gardens (originally designed in the mid-eighteenth century by Hamilton of Pain's Hill) has not been settled.

To obtain a good impression of the house built *circa* 1739 the visitor should obtain permission to enter the garden at the rear *via* the County Library. Built in Flemish bond of warm red brick, well proportioned and evenly fenestrated, the house stands boldly upon the crest of the sharp declivity running down to the river Mole. The facade to Church Street gives the impression of having been remodelled in the late 18th or early 19th centuries; perhaps by William Wade. In Vicarage Lane to the

south one sees traces of earlier flint walling which may well have been part of that earlier Mansion inhabited by Charles Howard and may even have stood around the rooms in which Edmund Tylney received Queen Elizabeth in 1591.

I must not end this article without expressing the obligation which I owe to Mr. John H. Harvey, F.S.A., who has spent many laborious hours in unearthing the documentary history from the muniments at the County Record Office and elsewhere.

LEATHERHEAD IN VICTORIAN TIMES

By A. J. GINGER.

(Those who have read Mr. Ginger's article "Fetcham in Victorian Times" in Vol. 1, Nos. 2-3 of these "Proceedings" will welcome this account of Leatherhead town at that epoch in our history. A few small changes have taken place since Mr. Ginger prepared this article notably the disappearance of the Clock Tower and the removal of Bishop's Repository to the Green Domino.—ED.)

THIS ancient place called Leatherhead, now spreading extensively as an off-shoot of London's suburbs, was rather different when I first came to live here in the 1880's. It then had the appearance of a neat, clean little town quite isolated in the wide countryside. Its four narrow streets have been knocked about a bit in recent years by demolition and rebuilding work and, unhappily, some of its more ancient and important buildings such as the Manor House in Church Street, the Swan Hotel, Kingston House on Bull Hill, and the ancient half-timbered shop in Bridge Street have disappeared, but substantially they are the same. An old guide-book writer refers to Leatherhead in these words: "There is little of interest to detain the visitor here except the Church". If that were true any destruction of notable ancient buildings must therefore be regarded as unforgivable vandalism.

Not long ago an uncomplimentary stranger described Leatherhead as "nothing but a dirty little village". Perhaps he was one of those speeding motorists who never did take kindly to the bottleneck streets of the town. A more tolerant traveller, who once motored through the town by night gave his impression in a newspaper in these words: "When seen by night Leatherhead is one of the most attractive places in the country". When seen by night mark you!

Fifty or sixty years ago there was no question about Leatherhead's appearance either by day or by night. It was neat and clean, it was picturesque, it was lovely. Old photographs show better than words what charm and beauty could be found in Leatherhead in the days of my youth. I have in mind one old photograph of the water mill taken from the bridge which appears in a recently published book on Surrey. In that photograph there are seen no overgrown trees and no rubbishy vegetation to cover up and mar (as now) the beauty of what was once a perfect picture; one of the country's best. But notwithstanding alterations and neglect here and there Leatherhead is still a charming place. Where, within equal distance of London can be seen a countryside of greater beauty?

In Victorian days Leatherhead was not so dull a place as you might think. People who had been up to London once or twice would tell you that Leatherhead was a "dead and alive hole", but to me, a small boy untravelling so far afield, there seemed always plenty doing. On Saturday nights the shops were open till a late hour and the streets were packed with people. The town band frequently played on these Saturdays either outside the Duke's Head or by the Town Clock. We had no picture palace then but the Victoria Hall (now the Repertory Theatre) had regular visits from touring companies playing "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "East Lynn" and such like entralling melodramas.

There were of course amateur theatricals, concerts, lectures, "Penny readings", and the Magic Lantern. Circuses and noisy fairs on the Commons were not infrequent. At the Town Clock (which was also the Fire Station) occasional itinerant showmen would make their pitch. Performing bears and a small travelling aquarium have earned cash for their owners where the people now queue for buses. We even had occasional spouters standing on sugar boxes by the Town Clock talking Anarchism and Atheism just as they do in Hyde Park.

There was also a plentiful supply of street music; the little old German bands; the hurdy gurdy man with his monkey; and the Italian organ grinders, male and female, arrayed in their genuine native costume with gay kerchiefs, dark curls, earrings, voluminous skirts, coloured shawls and all. Handsome young Antonio and Marco, who both played the accordion, were great favourites. Their wild looks, sparse English and gallant farewell bows charmed all our girls.

Leatherhead also was prone to dress itself up at the slightest provocation in those days, especially at such auspicious occasions as the Queen's Jubilees of 1887 and 1897 and the wild celebrations at every victory early in the Boer War. Flags and bunting galore and gas light and fairy lamp illuminations would

decorate the streets. Processions, music and sports in Randall's Park would, of course, take place on these occasions. So gay was the appearance of Leatherhead at the Jubilee celebrations of 1897 that the ecstatic correspondent of the local newspaper likened it to Venice at carnival time!



Side of the old leather shop in Bridge Street.

(By Mr. A. J. Ginger).

But these, of course, were all mere plebian pleasures for the common crowd. For those fortunate members of the wealthier classes Leatherhead and district had also plenty of attractions and distractions. House parties and balls, for example, hunting over fields and Downs, polo, point to point racing and plenty of shooting. The great houses in and around Leatherhead were in full occupation by their proper owners and had not yet been transformed into colleges, hospitals, golf club headquarters or razed to the ground. These wealthy mansion-dwellers, of whom more will be heard, brought a considerable amount of good business into the town and much liveliness into the neighbourhood as well.

There was, as now, plenty of other kinds of sport for the people such as cricket, football and athletics. The town football team was perhaps not quite so redoubtable as it is today but St. John's School (or the College as we call it) possessed a great soccer team which attracted many of the townfolk each Saturday. The young 1st eleven college boys, who opposed and beat such teams as the Casuals, played grand football in their little coloured skull caps with tassels flying behind. Leatherhead's Easter Monday Athletic sports meeting, at which men once raced, quite seriously, on "penny farthing" bicycles, was first held on the College Sports field. Later, this annual event, which became very well known and important, was held on the cricket field for many years. Golf was first played at Leatherhead, I believe, on the Downs by Cherkley Court; just where Lord Beaverbrook used to breed his chickens. Sunday sport was generally frowned upon in those good times and so, in order not to offend any right-minded citizens, ardent Sabbath-breaking golfers could be seen walking along with their golf clubs half hidden under overcoats.

But do not imagine that our late Victorian Leatherhead was all fun and games. It was indeed, like most country towns of the period, a self contained and busy little community. Agriculture, being the main local industry, brought subsidiary industries in its train such as the blacksmith and farrier, the

wheelwright, the waggon and carriage builder, the saddler, the slaughterer, the leather currier, and so on. All these trades could be found operating in Leatherhead town.

Mr. Karn had a large waggon and cart works, with blacksmith's shops, in the Kingston Road and also a carriage works in the Fairfield. Mr. Ventham had his carriage works and blacksmith's shop in Bridge Street. The sound of the hammer ringing on the anvil, a sound which used to be music to the poets, could be heard all over Leatherhead town every day. Mr. Lloyd had his centuries-old saddler and leather business in the ancient and picturesque shop (now demolished) at the top of Bridge Street. Real fine work on saddles, harness and all the trappings of the horse was done there and only the finest of leather was used. Opposite, behind the old-looking modern bank building was a slaughter house. We boys could obtain there, for nothing, pigs' bladders with which to blow out our footballs. Mr. Neate, the grocer and provision merchant in High Street, used to slaughter squealing pigs behind his shop. He killed and cured his own bacon in the good old-fashioned way.

Most prominent of all the town's industries, both for size and smell, was the Swan Brewery. Some small remains of this brewery can still be seen converted into use as Bishop's Furniture Depository. I have mentioned the sound of hammer and anvil ringing during the day but the delicious scent of malt and hops pervaded the air all the time in the centre of the town. Apart from the busy brewers there was another craft practised here—that of the cooper. Big stacks of beer casks were always piled up under the brewery sheds ready to receive the cooper's attention. Most of the Victorian beer, very potent stuff, came straight out of ripe casks, as all good beer should. Swan Brewery stout was no mean beverage for it gained an award at a brewery exhibition.

Then there was the brick making and sawyer's industry in the Kingston Road on the site where the cable works now stands. The clay was dug out of pits on the spot, moulded in the age-old way, stacked in the open air and burned slowly. The stench of burning clay which prevailed in that part of Kingston Road, was less enjoyable than the smell of hops and malt around the Swan Corner. In the adjacent wood-yard great trees lay seasoning for months and even years before they were passed through the singing saw mills. Victorian craftsmen, following traditional and proper practice, had no use for other than weather seasoned wood.

The shops in the town indicated well-being for their owners. It was easily possible to start from scratch and build up a thriving trade. Some of the present well known businesses in the town started in that manner in my time. The Gas Works and Water Works were owned and run by local companies. Leatherhead's two railway stations were then busier and of more importance (or so it seemed) than is the single one in use today. Just a few years before my time Leatherhead was a terminus of the South Western Railway. One section of old Waterloo Station was for years called "The Leatherhead Line". The engine sheds, the turntable for steam engines and the busy shunting yards were in use day and night. The station resembled a miniature Nine Elms in those days of steam. One of my boy pals was the son of an engine driver and sometimes we were given the treat of riding on the footplate of an engine at shunting periods; a delightful experience to be envied by all boys.

It can be seen from this brief account of industrial Leatherhead in the eighties and nineties of last century that the little town, like many another, enjoyed that same self-contained status which our legislators are planning to give to their proposed new towns. Old ideas are about to become new again.

My knowledge of the gentry living at Leatherhead and Fetcham in those days of opulence was gained at second-hand, mostly from a long distance, though once or twice I saw the interiors of sumptuously furnished mansions. Sir William Vincent, who was, I believe, a brother of Sir Edgar who became Lord d'Abernon, lived at D'Abernon Chase House, Leatherhead Common, near Telegraph Hill. He and his lady were patrons of the new All Saints' Church which I saw erected and where I attended in the early days as a probationer choir boy. At Christmas time we choirboys were entertained to tea and games in D'Abernon Chase House by the good Knight and his family. Mr. Abraham Dixon who occupied Cherkley Court was a splendid benefactor to the town. The Institute was his gift and Miss Letitia Dixon, his daughter, ran an Art Class there. Her pupils (of whom I was one) were occasionally invited to tea at that lovely house where we could admire fine furniture and pictures, objets d'art and many books in the library. Abraham Dixon and several other rich inhabitants such as the Noakes' of Red House and the Henry Tate's of Downside and the Tutton's of the Priory often opened their grounds and gardens to the public for all fresco dances and flower shows in summer and autumn. Mr. Dixon and Mr. Tate had magnificent gardens and glasshouses. Cherkley Court was always open to visitors when the chrysanthemums were at their best. Then Mr. Dixon could be seen chatting happily with humble women from the Fairfield and showing them his prize blooms, his exotic plants, bananas and citrus fruit growing in the great conservatory and orangery.

Many of my readers knew the old Swan Hotel but few, if any, can imagine what its status and atmosphere were like in the days of that great personality, Miss Emily Moore. My knowledge of the

old house, its stables, yards, coach houses and garden was intimate because my father had been part of the furniture of the place for close on 50 years. Mr. George Moore, Miss Moore's father, owned the hotel as far back as the 1840's. He, his widow, and finally his daughter, had carried on a tradition of the highest class in hostelry. There was dignity, quiet, comfort, good food and drink, and a unique, old-world appearance inside and outside, with flowers abounding everywhere. This distinguished atmosphere which existed all through the Moore's control and direction brought to the house many noted and exalted people either to board there or to visit. Among the visitors were the young Princes of Teck, relatives of Queen Mary; as personal friends and visitors to Miss Moore were the famed actress Helen Terry and her sister Mary.

My father told me that Mr. George Moore used the "Swan pit" as a garden before the shops and the hall were built on that side of High Street. Mr. Moore also founded the splendid old Swan garden in the Fairfield. Several aged fruit trees, or their living stumps still standing on the site, must be at least 100 years old. My father dug up in the Swan garden many an ancient coin dropped there, perhaps on fair days by revellers during the 18th Century and earlier.

I can remember, when a child, a little old cabby who used to sit and yarn in the harness room. He was then over 80 years old. In his youth he had ridden postillion on chaise horses to and from London when no railways existed. His usual dress was still the same as that of Sam Weller—made famous in the drawings by Phiz. The Swan Yard had the veritable atmosphere of Dickens' books with its horsey, gaitered men, its ancient wooden stables, the smell of horses and harness and tallow candles, and the broughams, landaus and coaches, still favoured as conveyances, which packed the yard and coachhouses. The Swan was one of the stages for the four-in-hand coaches then running regularly in summer time, from Northumberland Avenue. The "Old Berkeley" and the "Rocket" coaches sometimes put up in the yard. Relay teams of coach horses were always stabled there.



Coach leaving the Swan Hotel—1905.

(Photo. : Mr. Frank E. Webb).

Miss Moore was also a breeder of prize Jersey and Alderney cows. These were housed in the Cow Yard by the garden. Each lovely creature had its name sign-written above its stall. Every day a slow procession of the beautiful fawn animals would amble into the High Street and along Church Street to their grazing fields at Thorncroft and Downside. Back again they would come in the evening to be snugly housed in comfortable quarters.

As a caterer Miss Moore was famed far and wide. What grand spreads of viands she provided in a great Marquee when Mr. Pantia Ralli, Squire of Ashted Park, gave his annual feast to his employees; or at the memorable yearly sales of Queen Victoria's horses in the paddocks of Hampton Court. Edward, Prince of Wales, always came to talk with Miss Moore in the huge luncheon marquee there. It would be too provoking perhaps, if I were to enumerate all I can recall of the stacks of varied eatables and drinkables which were heaped upon the tables provisioned by Miss Moore. Many were the gay balls which

she arranged for the Hunts or for private parties, held sometimes in the Swan Ball-room or at the Victoria Hall. At these functions such noted London bands as the Blue or the Red Hungarians, in gay hussar uniforms, would provide the music.

An incident which happened to me a few years ago will illustrate how strong is the affection held for Leatherhead by people who have known it. One day I was approached in Bridge Street by a well dressed lady who was accompanied by two beautiful girls. She asked me some questions and then explained that she had just come over from New York where she had been living for twenty years. Formerly she had lived in Leatherhead. She had motored down from London that day with her two daughters specially to show them the dear old town about which she had so often spoken. Particularly she had remembered the old Swan with its flower-covered portico and window boxes filled with gay geraniums. It was sad, she remarked, to find the Swan Hotel no longer there.

A few of the ancient customs of the countryside were still observed in the Leatherhead district in the 80's and 90's. Guy Fawkes night, of course, was celebrated as it always will be while there are boys who like noise. But the boys themselves dressed up as guys, looking comical in father's old clothes and wearing grotesque face masks. As there is no suitable village green in Leatherhead and Fetcham we saw no "Dancing on the green" on Mayday. Instead the children gathered cowslips and buttercups and other wild flowers which could be found in abundance down along the water meadow and the fields of Fetcham. With posies of these tied on broom handles they paraded the town begging monetary rewards for their display from passers by.



Bradmere Horse Pond at the foot of Bull Hill—1900.

(Photo. lent by Mr. Titley).

One yearly happening grew almost into an old custom and was peculiar to this area. Epsom Summer Race Meeting seemed then to be more of an event and a period of riotous fun than it is today. Some of the elementary schools were closed for the week, not, of course, to give children an opportunity to acquire the gambling habit, but rather as a safety measure for there was so great a volume of dangerous traffic on the roads and rogues and vagabonds were swarming everywhere. Each race day the people would line the streets and roads to watch the endless procession of vehicles and their jolly occupants going to and from Epsom. *Al fresco* entertainers, or buskers, came from London to do their stuff on Epsom Downs. With Epsom town full of overcrowding some of them lodged for the week in neighbouring towns such as Sutton, Leatherhead and Dorking. We had in Leatherhead the same party of race-week buskers each year. There was the baritone, the soprano, the soubrette, the red-nosed comedian, and, of course, the harmonium player. In the evenings, when the bulk of race traffic had subsided our buskers would pitch up in the middle of the street before the Swan Hotel. A large crowd would form a ring there to enjoy the nightly performance and to join in the choruses of popular songs like "Take a little bit off the top for me" and "Ally Sloper walks like this: pit pat, pit pat, pit-o-pat pat", given by the red-nosed comedian suitably arrayed and doing the action to fit the song. We loved that party of wandering actors.

Swan Hotel corner was sometimes the scene of another kind of meeting which would be impossible today when mechanical traffic and official restrictions are so heavy. The Mid Surrey Fox Hunt, or Stag Hunt, with noisy pack of hounds, would sometimes meet at the Swan. It was the same gay and stirring sight which we see in the old illustrations by Cecil Aldin and other sporting artists. All the ladies were obliged to wear long habits and skirts for riding side saddle and all the gentlemen appeared in scarlet or blue frockcoats with white breeches, top boots, top hats or peaked velvet caps. Cecil Aldin himself, when he was a lad in his early teens, stayed all one summer with his mother at the Swan Hotel. He spent his days drawing and painting Miss Moore's pet dogs and horses; he was a precocious artist.

During the 1890's we had the excitement of our first Urban District Council election when the town was promoted in municipal status. A very important question—the Main Drainage Scheme—agitated Leatherhead folk in the earliest days of the Urban District Council. What an epoch-making piece of engineering was achieved when the roads of Ashted and Leatherhead were trenched up and pipes laid down to put an end to the primitive cart and clearing system which had been in use for so long.



North Street, where the Co-operative shop now stands.

In our district, as in most country places, there was always to be found one village idiot if not several. The best known "character" of my boyhood days was a wild but cheery creature known as "Happy Jack". Horses and "Happy" were inseparables. He could run very fast and often accompanied the hounds all the way on foot. At Epsom races he would be seen shouting merrily and singing as he groomed (for the very pleasure of it), all the tethered carriage horses. Happy Jack might be seen trotting along the roads shouting out his mad thoughts as he ran—for he never walked if he could help it—accompanied by amused children. It must have been an alarming ordeal for the barber when Happy Jack decided to have his dirty beard shaved. I have seen Happy rush out of Mr. Batten's barber's shop in Church Street with one side of his face clean shaven and the other side covered with soapy lather.

Church and chapel had a great influence upon country life in Victorian days and Sunday church-going was a general habit. Even on weekdays Church activities claimed a measure of our leisure time. My father happened to be an energetic member of the Parish Church Men's Guild. He preferred to worship in the old parish Church rather than in the new and nearby All Saints. My father liked the old far better than the new; he was a staunch Conservative and believer in the rightness of Royalty and the old aristocracy. My remembrance or knowledge of the Guildsmen's duties is vague but one of them I

do not forget. On winter nights curates and guildsmen would tramp out along the dark and dirty road to Patchesham (pronounced by us "Patsom") or to "Rushett Malden", (the district by the Star Public House) in order to hold evening service. I liked to accompany my father on these trips. The service at Patsom was held always in the spacious and old-fashioned living room of one of the ancient cottages. These country cottage services were very interesting. The honest, simple folk gathered together sitting round the walls of a clean, humbly furnished room; the large inglenook fireplace with its high mantelpiece; the peculiar but pleasant smell of the place; the friendly chats before the service began; the reverent attention and hearty joining in of hymns and prayers; the final handshakes. These simple things are most happy and attractive memories. Especially, I liked the vigorous walk, there and back, listening to the enlightened and lively talk of the curates.

Our Vicar of those days was the dignified, white-bearded, patriarchal-looking Canon Utterton. Like his father before him he became Archdeacon of Surrey. How grand the old man looked in his breeches and gaiters. Canon (or Archdeacon) Utterton gathered around him some excellent and talented young curates, the most outstanding of these being, perhaps, the Rev. S. N. Sedgwick. It was said that he and his handsome wife had been on the stage in London and while at Leatherhead Mr. Sedgwick wrote and composed several musical comedies for local amateurs and was the author of a series of local stories entitled "Legends of Leatherhead". He continued his literary work and musical comedy writing when he became vicar of Eastleigh in Hampshire, and his novels can be found in some public libraries today. He was a forceful preacher and packed the Parish Church when it was his turn to deliver the sermon.

There was another excellent young curate at Leatherhead in the nineties who was by no means a good preacher. Mr. Jourdain was his name. He must have overcome his early diffidence for he eventually attained the dignity of Canon. The poor, shy young Mr. Jourdain had been known to mount the pulpit, read his text, stutter a few words, lose the trend of his thoughts, pause and then, apologising to the congregation, resume his seat in the stalls. Such embarrassing moments in the pulpit had happened to Mr. Jourdain more than once. But, away from that staring audience in church, there was not a more determined, unafraid Christian in the parish. His visits to the poor were not mere routine affairs; real help and sympathy he gave to all. One day Mr. Jourdain called upon a Fairfield housewife who was not renowned for piety or churchgoing. To Mr. Jourdain's question "Why don't you come to Church?" the woman replied "Because I haven't a bonnet fit to wear". Straightaway went Mr. Jourdain to the nearest hat shop and bought a bonnet for the lady. The true metier of this devoted man was, however, in the slums rather than the pulpit. He soon left Leatherhead to take up missionary work among the poor of London and in foreign parts. In the pages of Thackeray's "The Newcomes" there is the story of Charles Honeyman, curate of Leatherhead who left the parish, not to devote his life to the poor and heathen, like Mr. Jourdain, but to the idle rich of Vanity Fair in the West End as a fashionable preacher. When fictitious Charles Honeyman departed from this little town he carried away, so we read, "A rich silk Master of Arts gown, presented to him, along with a teapot full of sovereigns, by his affectionate congregation at Leatherhead". When the *real* and true Christian curate Jourdain left Leatherhead I cannot recall if he received even a "thank you" from *his* congregation.

If Canon Utterton, Mr. Abraham Dixon and many other worthy persons who lived in and loved the place in Victorian times were alive today, they would surely approve of the aims and endeavours of the History Society and the Countryside Preservation Society of Leatherhead and District.

Save for the vigilance of these rich and influential residents in late Victorian times, who constantly strove to maintain the rural aspect, Leatherhead might now be very different; big, sprawling and "important" perhaps, but like many another ugly "mushroom" town in the Home Counties, a place totally without character or charm.

ASHTEAD AND ITS HISTORY—V.

The Manor of "Little Ashtead"

By A. W. G. LOWTHER, F.S.A., A.R.I.B.A.

NO mention has yet been made in these articles of a small subsidiary manor which existed at Ashtead known as "Little Ashtead" or "Prior's Farm". This consisted of some two hundred acres of farmland which was granted to the Priory of Merton by the Lord of the Manor—apparently around the year 1200 or earlier, although this has still to be established. It was so held down to the dissolution of this monastery in 1538. The manor is first mentioned in 1291 when, for purposes of

papal taxation, it was rated at 13s. 4d. At the dissolution, the farm was valued at £6 per annum, and it passed to the Crown. This, and its subsequent history is described in the *Victoria County History* (Surrey, Vol. IV, page 250).

What we are particularly concerned with here is the fact that it passed to the Cole family in 1604, and in 1638—when one John Lawrence surveyed the Manor of Ashtead and drew the well-known map which is in existence to this day—a “ Mr. Cole ” still held this property although either he, or those before him, had disposed of certain portions of it. At the time the map was drawn these portions were held by William and Edward Otway, John Hatcher, James Styles, James Westwood and Thomas Knightley. The last named was probably an ancestor of Robert Knightley, later Sir Robert Knightley who bought the Little Ashtead property in 1671. His grandson, John Knightley owned it in 1713, and disposed of it a few years later.

The Cole property, and hence the original Merton farm, is shown by the map to have lain between Skinner’s Lane to the east and Harriott’s Lane (then known as “ Barnard Lane ”) to the west, on the Ashtead-Leatherhead boundary. To the north it was bounded by Barnett Wood Lane (“ Marsh Lane, alias Club Lane ” in 1638). The site of Ottway’s Lane, at that date not yet in existence, formed its southern limits. Thus, it was roughly a square-shaped piece of land with sides measuring two-and-a-half furlongs, but with some addition to the east of Skinner’s Lane and at the south-west corner.

A further piece of land, of about thirty-six acres, lying at the southern end of the main manor (to the south and south-west of the present “ Thirty-acre Barn ”—not then in existence) was also held by Mr. Cole and was, therefore, probably originally a part of the Little Ashtead property—though it may have been the piece of land once held by the Prior of Reigate. This priory originally had some property at Ashtead, most likely a gift by one of the thirteenth century Earls of Surrey. “ Prioris de Reygate ” occurs in all the surviving early Ashtead court rolls down to the dissolution, usually entered as “ a defaulter ” for the sum of “ fourpence ”.

It is interesting to note that the early Rectory, also the Glebe-lands, were situated on land which clearly once formed a part of the Little Ashtead property and not of the main manor. The rectory with its garden—a narrow strip of roughly three-quarters of an acre, was then on a site (now completely built over) lying between Maple Road and the southern end of Skinner’s Lane where it enters Ottway’s Lane. The glebe land consisted of two meadows, the northernmost of which is now covered by Glebe Road and Church Road and their houses and gardens, and amounted in all to just over nine acres.

It seems likely that this arrangement came into being at some date when Merton Priory owned the Little Ashtead property. The Rector may have found it advantageous not to be a tenant of the Lord of the Manor, but it appears that the Vicar was not so fortunately placed. (From earliest times until 1482, Ashtead had both a rector and a vicar.) In 1409, the vicar, one Geoffrey Gylot, was taken to task by the manorial court for allowing his sheep to enter and graze in the “ Northfield ” (*i.e.*, as Lawrence’s map shows, adjoining the glebe on the west and where the Recreation Ground is now situated) as the roll states “ against the ordinance and statute of the Lord of the Manor and the whole community in full court assembled ”. It is ordered that the vicar shall pay a forfeit of 6s. 8d. which, it says “ was ordered by this court as the penalty for a similar offence in 1405 ”. It was clearly the court’s opinion that the vicar had deliberately caused the sheep to be put into the “ Northfield ” and that they had not merely broken through a hedge!

At the same court, it is claimed that the vicar had not yet repaired his house “ which is in a ruinous state ” despite the order of the previous court under the threat of a forfeit of ten shillings.” It was ordered that “ this forfeit is now to be enforced and the beadle is ordered to collect it: furthermore it is ordered that there shall be a further forfeit of twenty shillings if he shall not have carried out the repairs by the date of the next court.” It was clearly not one of the vicar’s lucky days!

Before their dissolution, Merton Priory owned the manor of Ewell. It was one of their main possessions in this part of Surrey and we know from surviving records that the business of their lesser holdings, such as “ Pachesham Parva ” or Little Pachesham Manor, was transacted at the manorial courts held at regular intervals at Ewell. It is therefore likely that all business concerning the running of Prior’s Farm was similarly transacted at these courts at Ewell. There are many contemporary manuscripts still in existence for other properties owned by the Merton Priory and there is a decided possibility that some may concern Little Ashtead. Further research may bring them to light. If this be the case, and if some of the actual farm accounts have survived, as they have for some other Merton properties, these should show us the exact nature of the farming, what was produced in both crops and cattle, and should afford much other information of interest concerning this particular corner of Ashtead.

Reprinted from the “ Ashtead Resident ”.

LEATHERHEAD AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Account for the Year ended 30th September, 1953

<i>Dr.</i>	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance at 30.9.52—										
General	28	12	7							
Library Fund	19	0	2							
				47	12	9				
„ Subscriptions—										
169 at 7s. 6d. (including £3 7s. 6d. received in 1952)	63	7	6							
13 at 1s. 0d. (Junior members)	13	0	0							
				64	0	6				
„ Subscription in arrear for 1952					7	6				
„ Subscriptions in advance for 1954 (5 at 7s. 6d.)					1	17	6			
„ Surrey County Council—Grant					15	0	0			
„ Visits—Receipts	51	15	1							
Payments	50	2	5							
					1	12	8			
„ Sale of Society's Proceedings					10	6	6			
„ Sale of Christmas Cards for 1952	8	14	2							
Cost of Printing	5	10	0							
					3	4	2			
„ Donations					5	19	6			
„ Interest on Bank Account					1	2	8			
				£151	3	9				

<i>Cr.</i>	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.			
By Printing and Duplicating				18	4	10			
„ Printing "Proceedings" for 1952				60	5	3			
„ Postages, Stationery and Sundry disbursements					6	9	1		
„ Hire of Lecture Room					18	0			
„ Subscriptions and Affiliation Fees:									
Surrey Record Society	1	0	0						
South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies		12	6						
Council for the Promotion of Field Studies	1	1	0						
					2	13	6		
„ Purchases—Library Fund							19	0	
„ Balance at Banks:									
Library Fund	18	1	2						
General	43	12	11						
							61	14	1
							£151	3	9

Library Fund

<i>Dr.</i>	£	s.	d.
To Balance brought forward	19	0	2
N.B.—The accounts do not include amounts for unsold Proceedings, Library, Equipment and Archives.			
	£19	0	2

<i>Cr.</i>	£	s.	d.
By Purchases...			19
„ Balance carried forward	18	1	2
	£19	0	2

S. E. D. FORTESCUE, *Hon. Treasurer.*

14th October, 1953.

Audited and found correct.

W. H. TAYLOR, *Hon. Auditor.*



Helix pomatia