



RUISLIP, NORTHWOOD AND EASTCOTE

Local History Society

Journal 1996



MAD BESS COTTAGE

JOURNAL OF THE RUISLIP NORTHWOOD AND EASTCOTE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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SUMMER OUTINGS

Saturday 18th May

Coach outing to Aylesbury museum and town and to
High Wycombe chair museum.
Depart St Martin's Approach, Ruislip 1000 hrs.

Saturday June 15th

Coach outing to Berkeley Castle, near Gloucester and to
Sudeley Castle, near Cheltenham.
Depart St Martin's Approach, Ruislip 0830 hrs.

Saturday July 6th

Coach outing to Rockingham Castle, Northants and to
Peterborough Cathedral and town.
Depart St Martin's Approach, Ruislip 0900hrs.

Saturday August 17th

Coach outing to Leicester's annual festival.
Depart St Martin's Approach, Ruislip 0900 hrs.

EDITORIAL

As St Martin's Church Hall rebuilding and restoration work was not completed by September 1995, the Golf Club House in West Ruislip became our temporary venue. In January 1996 we were informed that the Church Authorities could not offer us the hall for our future Monday meetings, so we will continue to use the Golf Club House at West Ruislip for the foreseeable future.

Bob Bedford, our Outings Secretary, arranged three excellent full day coach outings and one half day trip to Richmond for the summer of 1995. The first was to Lunt Fort, Coventry, a partially reconstructed Roman fort and to Charlecote Park, Stratford. In June we visited old Sarum where pouring rain limited the enjoyment of the large open site and Mompression House, Salisbury. The final outing was to Bignor Roman Villa, where the mosaics have protective buildings which now are themselves listed buildings, and Parham House near Pulborough.

Alison Akerman, our Programme Secretary, arranged a very varied and interesting series of talks. Many of our members enjoyed Chairs and Chair making in the Thames Valley and Chilterns area, and 'Boswells London Journal', 1762-63, gave a fascinating insight into the entertainment and pleasures that London had to offer a very young man living on a reasonable, but limited income.

The Christmas Social 'A Pepysian Banquet' provided a delicious 17th century meal for all those present. There was a good response from society members willing to cook the unusual recipes. A description of these recipes is included in this journal. The evening included readings from Pepys diaries and dances performed by members of our committee.

The Research Group are still working on the 'Walks in the Ruislip Area' book. The text is now completed and has been sent to the printer. Work continues on the maps and illustrations. The book should be available during the summer.

The proposed site of the Ambulance Station in Ruislip has been opposed strongly by the members of our committee. To create a new station at the Pavillion in Kings College fields, an area when handed over to the residents of Ruislip, that was to be used for recreational purposes only. There is a more suitable site on the corner of Eastcote Road and St Martin's Approach, where the present Citizens Advice Bureau temporary building is situated and an ambulance station existed on the same site before.

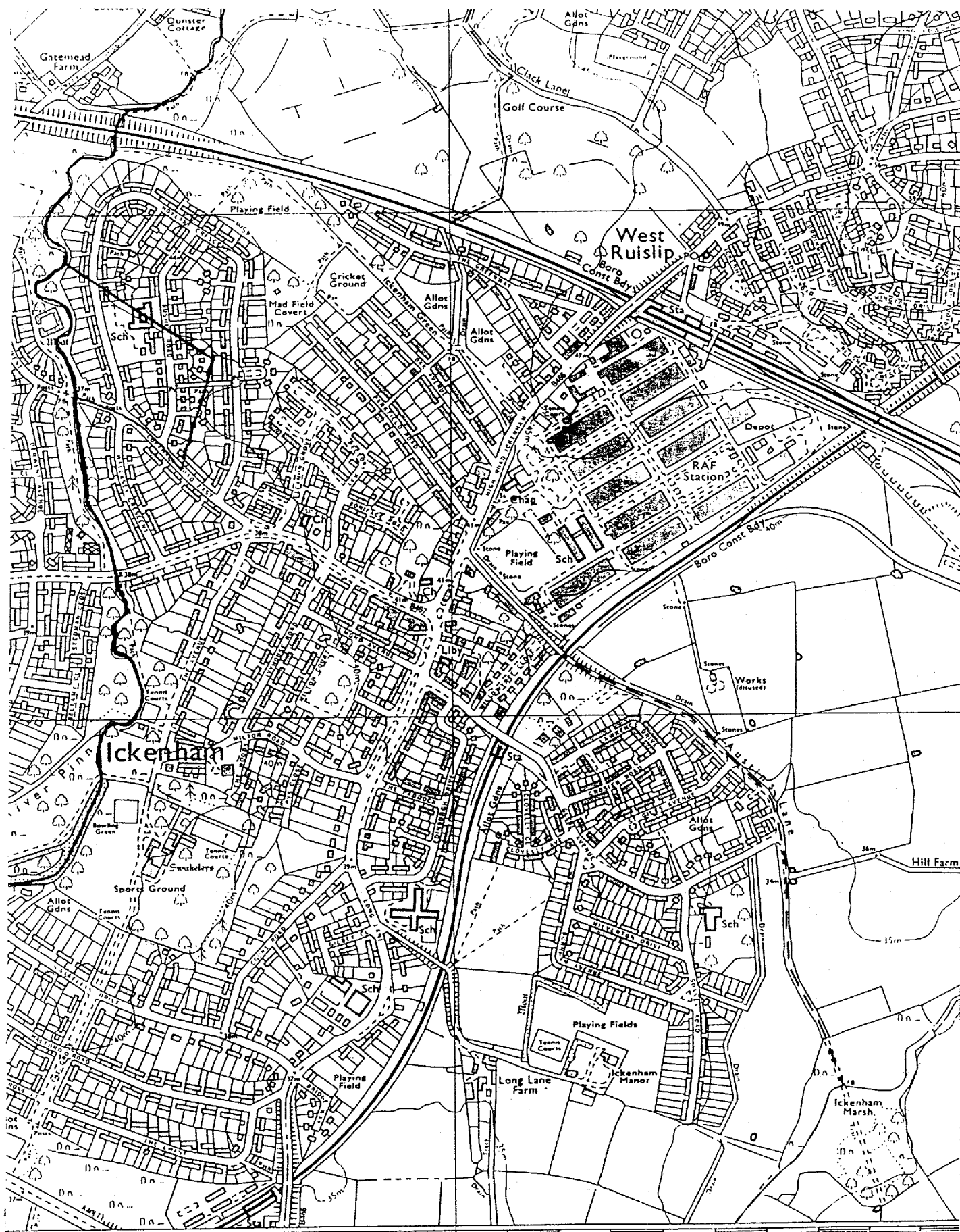


Fig 1

**ICKENHAM MANOR MOAT, ICKENHAM, MIDDLESEX
TQ 0827 8528**

**Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief during clearance and tree felling work
April- June 1995.**

Colin & Eileen Bowlt

BACKGROUND

Manor Farm, Ickenham, is situated 0.6 miles south of St. Giles Church, Ickenham, at the end of a lane leading off Long Lane at the side of Douay Martyrs School, as shown in figure 1. The moat lies along the north and west sides of what is now Douay Martyrs School playing fields, adjacent to Manor Farm, and is separated from the fields by chain link fencing. The banks were very overgrown with tall trees, some of which were falling over, and dense shrubs and foliage. Litter was scattered over the site and there had been dumping of garden refuse from nearby houses. Local residents had complained about mosquitoes arising from the swampy conditions. Originally clearance and tree felling was scheduled for July-August 1994, but work did not actually start until April 1995. Heavy rains during autumn/winter 1994-5 raised the water level and by April 1995 it was half a metre deep in places and greatly impeded the work.

EVENTUAL USE OF SITE

When the work is complete the chain link fencing is to be restored and the site will be treated as a Nature Reserve under the care of the London Wildlife Trust. A gate will give access.

BRIEF

We were briefed by English Heritage (Charmian Baker) to visit the site regularly while work was in progress and check that no damage was being done to the contours of the moat, nor to anything of possible archaeological significance. Money was allocated for ten hours work. No written plan or instructions for the work were available. Trees for felling had been decided by a Hillingdon Borough Council Officer (Mr C. Roome, Conservation Officer).

REPORT RESULTING FROM 17 VISITS TO THE SITE 19TH APRIL - 14TH JUNE 1995

AGREED WORK

We agreed with the contractor, Mr Amrit Row, at the commencement of the work that removal of the loose silt and organic matter from the moat would be enough to retain sufficient water without possible damage to any archaeological deposits. The sides to remain untouched. He intended to dig out the silt with a small excavator. He began pumping water into a separate pond within Manor Farm's garden to facilitate the use of machinery.

Clearance of the soft black silt to underlying bed-rock (clay) would produce a wide ditch with a deeper central channel (leg- breaker pattern). Whether this was the original design

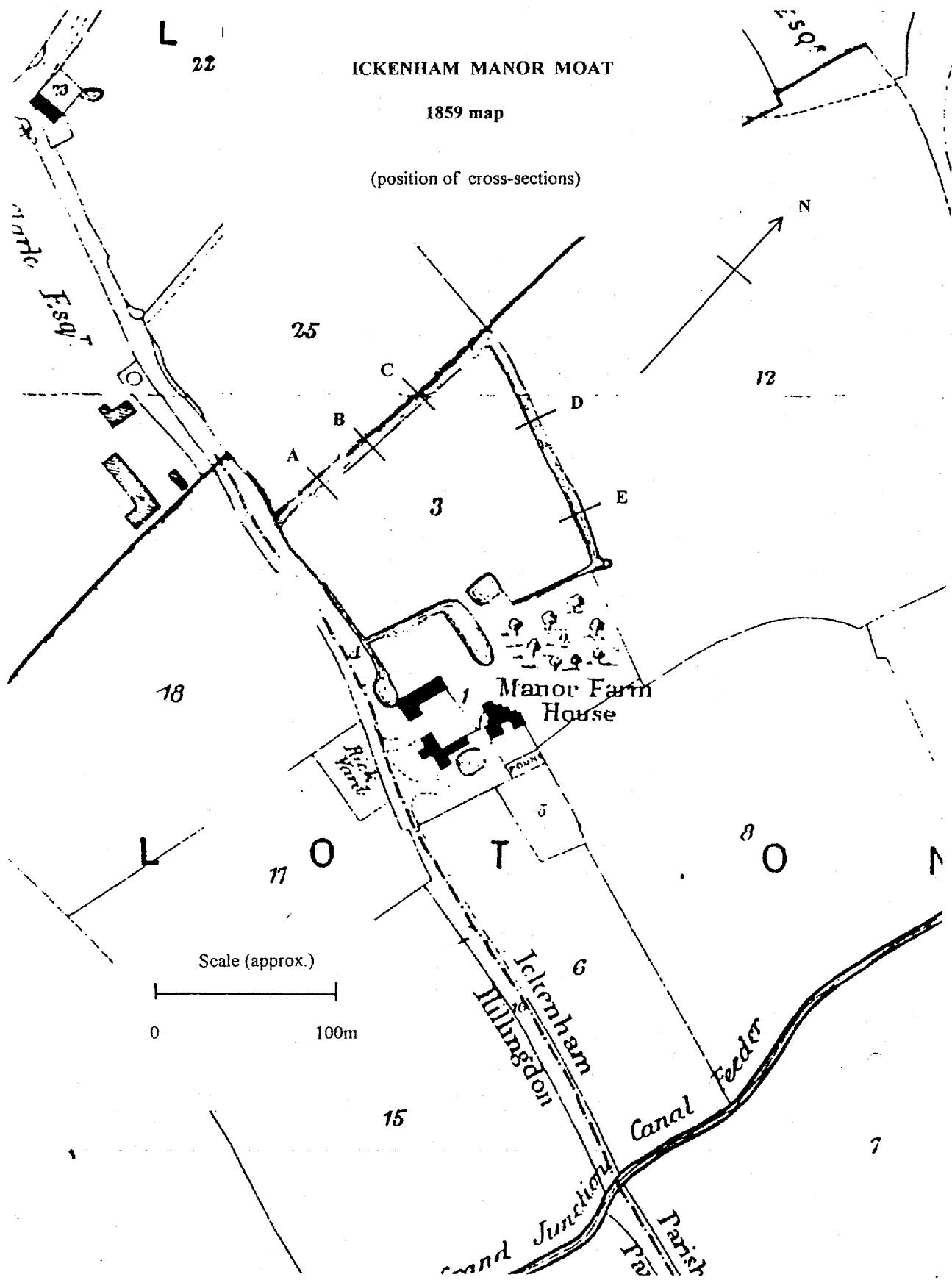


Fig 2

is unclear. Trees on the sloping sides falling over and pulling the bank away with their roots is occurring in several places. This could have been happening over a long period leading to much distortion of the original cross-section profile.

CROSS SECTION PROFILE

As can be seen from the 1859 map (figure 2), at that time the moat (or moat system) extended around the other two sides of the field to the south and east (with additions near the house). The southern arm and the northerly part of the eastern arm are now filled in, but their course can still be detected by slight depressions in the ground. The western and northern arms are both about 150 metres in length. The width varies between 7.3 and 8.8 metres. Cross-section profiles were measured at the five positions indicated in figure 2. These are given in figure 3 and show significant variation. Part of this variation must be due to erosion. Where trees have fallen this is particularly noticeable.

Some auger borings during the hot summer of 1995, when the moat was largely empty of water showed that the bottom was filled with soft silt above a yellow clay base. This is depicted in figure 3. It is assumed that such silt is present throughout and that the bottom of the silt is the original bottom of the moat, although this cannot be definitely ascertained and could be due to later clearings. The western arm has a wide, but slight, bank on its inside. Measurements at positions A, B and C showed that the volume of soil in the bank is insufficient to account for all the spoil from the moat. However, this could have been dispersed over the field during the course of time. There is no such distinguishable bank along the northern arm.

METHOD OF WORK

The silt was removed at first by a small excavator that fitted within the width of the moat, but this became stuck in the silt and dredging methods were used. The silt was dragged into heaps and scooped up the sides of the moat. In June, when conditions were drier an excavator with a long arm was used to complete the work. A small portion of the base clay on the Western side of the Western arm was accidentally scraped away during this operation. Otherwise the contours were preserved throughout.

During work the moat was frequently examined for signs of new archaeological evidence. None was found.

THE REMOVED SILT

The spoil heaps were examined both wet and dry. It was largely made up of decaying organic debris. The few artifacts were all of 20th century date (plaster, glass, golf balls, cement, Fletton brick etc) except for a fragment of a corroded horseshoe that might have been pre-19th century.

RECOMMENDATION

To preserve the banks, trees should not be allowed to develop on the slopes. All saplings should be removed. Mature trees should be cut down (stumps left not more than 1-2m. high) when seen to be ailing.

ICKENHAM MANOR MOAT

(cross-sections)

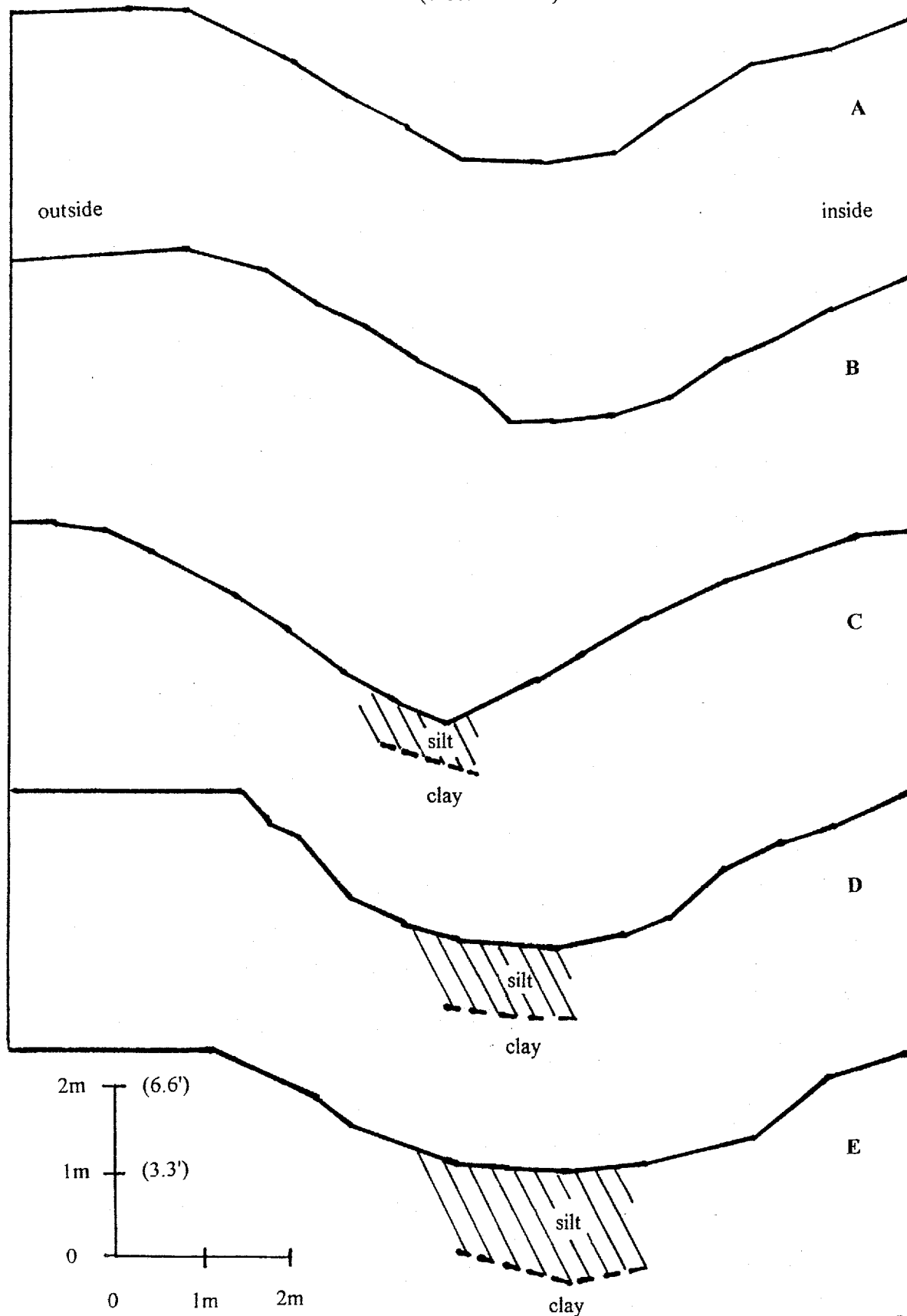


Fig 3

THE NATURAL HISTORY AT THE MOAT, MANOR FARM, ICKENHAM

A dense belt of trees of mixed species has developed along both banks. From an ecological point of view it is of interest that the presence of the moat has practically no influence on the natural history. Apart from the a Crack Willow near the lane, none of the species of trees and shrubs are particularly associated with wet places. Indeed Alders, for instance, are noticeable by their absence. There are no aquatic plants in the moat and apart from the odd Mallard Duck no animal life associated with water has been noticed. The reason for this must largely be due to the lack of light reaching the moat because of the dense leafy shade of the trees. The tree thinning and cleaning of the moat this spring (1995) may alter this situation for a while until the canopy increases again.

Trees

A surprising fifteen species of trees and shrubs plus two climbers have been found here. These are; Ash, Common Oak, Crack Willow, Sycamore, Field Maple, Elm, Cherry (sapling), Plum species, Holly (sapling), Hawthorn, Wood Thorn, Elder, Dogwood, Hazel, Bramble, Ivy, and Honeysuckle. The Elms are suckers thrown up from the roots of the trees killed by Dutch Elm Disease. Many of these suckered saplings have also succumbed to the disease. The leaves of the unaffected Elms are frequently covered with greeny-white pimples. These are galls caused by a species of Mite. The presence here of the Wood (or Two-styled) Thorn is interesting. It is usually found growing in old woodlands.

Flowers

Most of the flowering herbs grow along the outside of the tree shade. In spring the dominant species is Cow Parsley, sometimes known by the more descriptive country name of Queen Anne's Lace. Also to be found are Red Campion, the white flowered Jack-by the -Hedge which smells of garlic when crushed, Goosegrass or Cleavers with its clinging round seed pods, and the yellow flowered Herb Bennet. Under the trees the banks are covered in places with Ivy which can grow in shade as can the Male Fern. The bluebells which grow in one or two places are the vigorous Spanish Bluebells and must have been planted from gardens. They can thrive because they flower early in spring before the trees have developed leaves, as does the small, inconspicuous Moschatel. This is probably the most unusual plant growing here. A country name is Townhall Clock because it has a group of flowers facing outwards on four sides (plus a fifth pointing upwards).

Birds & Animals

The trees offer convenient perches and feeding for a number of species of birds. Both the Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers have been seen, and the Cuckoo can be heard in spring. Grey Squirrels occur, and a Fox was recently seen strolling along in broad daylight.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ICKENHAM MANOR

THE MOAT

The two arms are the remains of the outer moat of Ickenham Manor. The manor house, now called Manor Farm, but formerly known as Ickenham Hall, stands behind the hedge on the east and may once have been surrounded by an inner moat. The site is low-lying, close to the Yeading Brook and Ickenham Marsh and situated right on the edge of Ickenham, close to the boundary with Hillingdon, which runs down the south west side of Manor Farm. Common ownership of Ickenham, Hillingdon and Cowley manors from the late 11th to 14th centuries led to a mingling of lands and may account for this otherwise curious position.

Most English moats were dug during the 13th and early 14th centuries, but they are difficult to date as frequent scouring removed early artefacts. A possible 18th-century horseshoe, for example, was the earliest find from this moat during its clearance in April-June 1995.

This moat was possibly dug in the mid-14th century, when a hall house seems to have been built in the inner moat. Its main purpose might have been to enhance the importance of the family building the house, but it could also have provided a water supply and place for sewage disposal, an enclosure for farm animals, drainage (very important here) and a certain measure of security.

THE MANOR

The manor of Ickenham is first heard of in the Domesday Book of 1086, when it belonged to Earl Roger of Montgomery, the Conqueror's cousin and was composed of three land holdings dating from Saxon times. Another estate in Ickenham owned by Geoffrey de Mandeville, became part of the manor in the later medieval period. The land passed through the hands of several families, before being obtained by John Charlton, a London merchant in 1334. It descended to his daughter, Juette and her husband, Nicholas Shordiche.

THE MANOR HOUSE & THE SHOREDICHES

The earliest part of the present house, the rear wing, is believed to be part of an open hall that possibly dates from the mid-14th century. The house could have been built at the time of Juette's marriage to Nicholas Shordiche (c1348). A cross wing was added in the early 16th century, a three-storey staircase wing in the 17th century and two small parlours were built onto the front in the 18th century.

All of these alterations must have been undertaken by the Shordiches who continued in quiet possession of the property for over 450 years. Michael (born c1748) mortgaged and sold all the lands not entailed and at last his life interest in those, to compete with "noblemen and men of rank and fortune" who were his college contemporaries. He married an heiress to repair his fortune, but after much family litigation, the manor was eventually sold to George Robinson in 1818. He was a Richmond builder who was acquiring property in north-west Middlesex at the time. It was part of the Swakeleys estate from 1859 to 1922, when it was bought by the tenant, David Pool. By chance it came into the possession of a descendant of the Shordiches, P.R. Churchward, in 1950 and went from him to Sir Peter Tizard, another descendant in 1961. Humphrey Tizard is now the owner.

The surrounding fields became the playing fields of Douay Martyrs School about 1970 and the local authority filled in the other two arms of the moat at that time.

THE GAWDY PAPERS

K. J. McBean

THE HAWTREY CONNECTION

The two daughters of Sir Robert de Grey (d 1644) of Merton, Norfolk, were Barbara and Ann. Barbara married Ralph Hawtreay (1625-1724) and came to live in Eastcote; Ann married Sir John Gawdy (1639-99) of West Harling in Norfolk and lived on the family estate. Barbara corresponded with her sister, Ann, Lady Gawdy and with her nephew, Oliver le Neve; Ralph also wrote to his sister-in-law, Lady Gawdy and to Oliver. His son, Ralph (junior), also wrote to Oliver. A selection of these letters, some 18 in number, are preserved among the Gawdy Papers.

Also among the Papers are three letters to Lady Gawdy, written by Ann Hawtreay, sister to Ralph and wife of Ralph Lee, and two letters from Elizabeth (Hawtreay) Sitwell, one of Ralph's daughters.

THE GAWDY PAPERS

The Gawdy Papers comprise ten volumes of correspondence dating from 1509-1751. The volumes are lodged in the manuscript section of the British Library.¹ The last male Gawdy died in 1724 and the continuance of the collection is explained in the Egerton index viz:

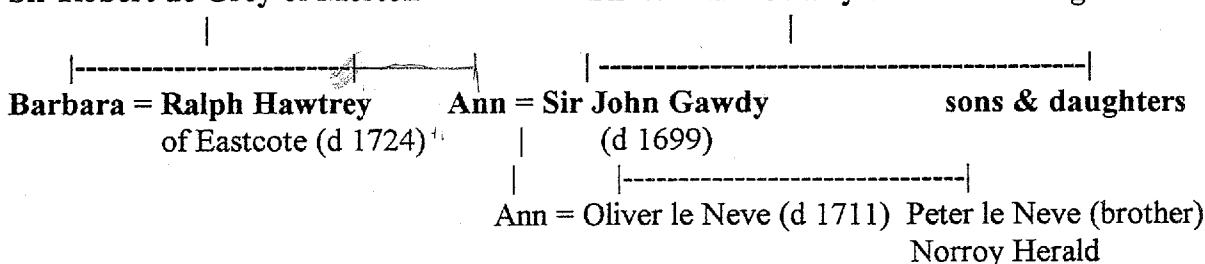
By the marriage of Ann, only daughter and eventual sole heiress of Sir John Gawdy, 2nd bt., with Oliver le Neve of Great Witchingham, Norfolk, the collection passed into the possession of and was continued by the le Neve family. On the death of Oliver in 1711, it came to his brother, Peter le Neve, Norroy Herald, and afterwards to Thomas Martin of Palgrave who married Peter's widow.

Thomas Martin sold the collection, part to the British Museum, part to the College of Arms and part to private collectors.

THE FAMILIES

Sir Robert de Grey of Merton

Sir William Gawdy of West Harling



Both the de Grey and Gawdy families were typical Knights of the Shire, their ancient foundation and long succession bound up with the history of the East Anglian counties. In 1563 Thomas de Grey was a ward of Queen Elizabeth. Sir Framlingham Grey represented Thetford in the Long Parliament of 1640.

Ann's husband, Sir John, was a deaf mute who studied painting under Peter Lely and was described as a painter "worthy of attention". John Evelyn's Diary has the following entry (September 1677):

Visited Lord Crofts at Bury St Edmunds and there dined this day. At my Lord's one Sir John Gawdy, a very handsome person, but quite dumb, yet very intelligent by signs

and a very fine painter. He was so civil and well bred as it was not possible to discern any imperfection in him.

Sir John died in 1699. Tragedy had overtaken the family in 1666 when two of his brothers and a cousin all died in London of smallpox within six days. They were eminent lawyers and are buried in Temple church together with their young sister, Mary. Her monument was displayed in the church but has now, unfortunately, gone.

The le Neve family were well known in heraldic circles. Oliver's brother, Peter, was Norroy Herald and had an important influence on the status of the College of Arms. He was the first president of the Society of Antiquaries and it is understandable that he would value and add to the Gawdy Papers.

Ann Hawtrey's husband, Ralph Lee, is described as a merchant of London.

THE LETTERS

(Not all the writing in the letters is clear and there is a marked disregard for punctuation.)

The first in sequence are two letters which are relevant but are not in the Gawdy Papers at all. They are letters written by Elizabeth, Lady de Grey, mother of Barbara, to John Hawtrey, father of Ralph and they are among the Hawtrey Papers in the Greater London Record Office.² The first is dated 11th November 1650 and expresses some reservations about the details of the forthcoming marriage of Barbara and Ralph:

Sir, I am still in the same mind I was, in that Easter will be soon enough for the time of marrying. My Resolution is that my daughter shall not be married in London. I think Bury (Bury St Edmunds) a more convenient place to be privet to such a business.

The second letter expresses satisfaction at its accomplishment:

Honoured Sir, These are to present you with my thanks for your kind letters, and to joy of your new daughter...desiring that you may find much content of her as I do of my son.

The first of the Gawdy sequence of letters are six from Barbara to her sister, Ann de Grey, who became Lady Gawdy after her marriage at Bury St Edmunds in 1662. Many are undated, and are mostly concerned with domestic and family matters. There follows one letter to her nephew Oliver le Neve, expressing sympathy at the death, presumably, of his wife.

Next are three letters from Ralph's sister, Ann; the first is dated 1658 and the last some eleven years later. Since she married a London merchant, Ralph Lee, and Ann de Grey, a Norfolk esquire, it might have been expected that their paths would not cross, but the letters show they were well acquainted.

Ann Lee is positively effusive:

I should think myself very happy if I could tell how I might enjoy thy sweet company at that time (the birth of her child?) but it is not my good fortune to have it, so I must be contented and remain at this great disstant thy most reall intire and ever constant loving sister and servant tell death.

Ann Hawtrey Lee

Perhaps the correspondence of most interest is the five letters written by Ralph to Ann, Lady Gawdy. He was at the time about 43 years old. They date from 1669 to 1677 and show a considerable knowledge of the financial and management aspect of her land holdings in Norfolk. Ralph acts in the nature of a land agent at the London end of things, giving advice and help. Part at least of the Gawdy land holdings were leases of land owned by Eton College and Ralph carries out negotiations with the Provost and Fellows on her behalf. He was ready to journey to Eton and indeed Norfolk, at her request. Chapter seven of the "Goodliest Place in Middlesex" shows Ralph as a man administering a considerable land holding in Ruislip and immersed in local affairs and it is easy to understand how his experience would have been invaluable to his sister-in-law and her husband, Sir John Gawdy, particularly, perhaps, in view of the latter's disability and penchant for artistic matters. The fact that Eastcote House is conveniently close to Eton and London would have been an advantage.

There follows a series of five, mostly brief letters to Olive le Neve, some addressed "att Mr Peter Le'neves att ye Heralds Office neere Doctors Commons in London". Here again Ralph gives advice, this time on legal procedures.

A single letter written by his son, Ralph junior, to his cousin, le Neve, is in the form of a note:

*My father did not come to London as I expected so I have taken places on the
Uxbridge coach which is at ye Black Bull Inn in Holbourne where you must be att 3
quarters after ten at the fartherest where I will meet you.*

I am your humble servant

Ralph Hawtrey

Finally there are two letters written to Lady Gawdy in 1670 from Elizabeth (Hawtrey) Sitwell who seems to have missed out on her schooling:

*I cant let noe oper tynyti pase without wrighten to your laship (ladyship) my unsu
(uncle) lany told me that he would see your laship at Harlin...*

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS

Barbara Hawtrey to her sister, Ann. folio 156 August 16th 1657

*I cannot be very sorry for your loss for I have had a greater my taylor who had a very
good opinion of hath taken up in my name att our shop 5 or 6 lsworth
(shillingsworth) of silks for his own use and about 3 ls for my sister Hawtreys name
and is gon I know not whither this will I think prevent my having a new gowne to wait
on you.*

*I intend for London on tuesday with my sister Cletherow if you have any commands
lett me be your servant who am allsoe your very loving sister*

Barbara Hawtrey

folio 157 undated 1657

*I have implored all the friend I have to inquire of the gentlemens repute in London
which I have not yet heard but I shall write next thursday what I know I am hard to
believe his estate is so as reported if true tis enough for any reasonable body.*

folio 161 undated

*I think Betty is now resolved for Mr Sitwell as she tells me for I leave it her chois.
(Elizabeth Hawtrey married George Sitwell. Later they were to live at Haydon Hall.*

Ralph to his sister-in-law, Lady Gawdy

folio 311 November 1669

...your fine and rent I doe believe will come to 120 ls at least which must be provided and pd in before your lease will be sealed, if your uncle Charles will come up I will waite on him at Eaton.

...pray when you see my Aunt Grey desire her to pay the due for our land at Ellingham by this time it mounts to a considerable sum and therefore not to be further forborn, she proves as bad tennant as the worst.

My wife last week fell into a violent fitt of ye wind colleck mixed with vapors she continued ill a night and a day butt by some pills sent from Dr Rogers it pleased God to give her ease and she is reasonable well.

folio 316 March 10th 1669

Madam you seemed in your last to me somewhat troubled that your uncles demanded security from you to make good the stock of sheep as are now upon the grounds to the value as the wear prayesd as though they should casually dye which I think is unreasonable and not to be consented to.

folio 329 December 23rd 1674

Madam I confess I have been too negligent in writing and give you an account of those affayres you have instructed me with in these parts... I shall now as neare as I can give you an account of whatt moneys you have transmitted to London and have disposed of. which you shall find at the bottom as my son Sitwell delivered to me.

<i>To ye perriwigg maker</i>	<i>Janue ye 31 73</i>	<i>010 - 00 - 00</i>
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<i>To John Mills his taylor</i>	<i>April ye 4 74</i>	<i>010 - 01 - 06</i>
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<i>To my daughter Sitwell</i>		<i>010 - 00 - 00</i>
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<i>Pd to me</i>		<i>043 - 18 - 06</i>
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		<i>74 - 00 - 00</i>
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<i>I have pd and shall pay for you at Eaton</i>		<i>109 - 08 - 02</i>
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<i>Moneys I layd outt for you to counsell when</i>		
--	--	--

<i>you sent me up the wrighting about Garboldisham</i>		<i>001 - 10 - 00</i>
--	--	----------------------

<i>(a manor in Norfolk)</i>		<i>110 - - 2</i>
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<i>due to me</i>	<i>110 - 11 - 2</i>	
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<i>received</i>	<i>043 - 18 - 6</i>	
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	<i>066 - 12 - 8</i>	
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CONCLUSION

The choice of letters for inclusion in the Papers is a little odd. The various sequences of letters start and finish quite arbitrarily; they do not follow any theme or subject and they are widely spaced over a period of time from the Commonwealth to William III with gaps of some years in between. Obviously very many more letters were written than have been kept. It is as if the compiler of the archive wanted nothing more than a sample of correspondence with persons having a connection with the Gawdy family. The result is that the letters represent a brief snapshot of the Hawtreys of that time rather than a whole picture.

Nevertheless, the letters put life into names, some of which are familiar only in the printed genealogical tables. Ralph is confirmed as a person authority as many a miscreant before the

Uxbridge bench no doubt knew to his cost. The sisters happily exchange gossip. Ann Lee seems to spend time at Eastcote House and there is much cordiality and goodwill binding the family together. The letters are worthy of closer analysis, but in the meantime it is possible to enjoy the thought of the ladies Hawtrey and Clitheroe off to London on what must surely have been a shopping spree.

¹British Library: Egerton MS 2713-2722

²Greater London Record Office: Acc 249/1268

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'MAD BESS' AND A LOCAL WOOD

By Valery Cowley

The name 'Mad Bess Wood' is comparatively recent and this wood's name has changed over the years as have its owners. Because it belonged to the alien priory of St. Catherine, Rouen, it was annexed by the Crown in the Hundred Years' War and was granted to William of Wykeham in 1391 for his new foundation, Winchester College. Henry VIII added it to his hunting estates in 1544. Edward VI granted it to Thomas, 3rd Lord Paget. The overall name for three separate woods was once Westwood.

In 1769 the commons of St. Catherine's Manor were the earliest in Middlesex to be enclosed and five woods were named including Mad Bess or Censor's Wood. John Lewin bought out all the smaller commoners and became owner of all the manor's woodlands. In 1936, Mad Bess Wood, then 186 acres, was bought from Sir Howard Button by Ruislip-Northwood Urban District and Middlesex and London County Councils. See E and C Bowlt, *Ruislip Woods*, RNELHS Occasional Paper 3, July 1983.

It was while listening to a Radio Three programme, *On Air*, on Mach 16th, 1995 that I heard Henry Purcell's late 17th century song, 'Mad Bess', from *Silent Shades*, and I looked up the phrase in *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. 'Mad Bess' or 'Bess o' Bedlam' (a contraction of the Bethlehem Hospital) referred to a female lunatic vagrant, the counterpart of Tom o' Bedlam and became a popular romantic figure. 'Mad songs' were popular in the 17th century and Purcell's represents Bess as genuinely distracted by disappointed love. The song became so popular that publication was demanded.

There is also the 'Bessy', a man dressed in woman's clothes in the medieval folk custom, the sword-dance, which probably symbolised the death and resurrection of the year; this is one of the origins of the Mummers or St. George play, which is described in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, and of which the Society has performed a local variant.

Laurence Morris in *A History of Ruislip*, 1956, p. 48, says there is a local tradition that a demented old woman lived in a hovel in the wood.

Was the Ruislip wood really the haunt of a mad vagrant, a transvestite or just a beggar? We shall probably never know.

MOVING IMAGES OF THE PAST

Bygone Films of Conisborough, Doncaster have produced a 55 minute video, compiled from local ciné film sources, featuring an area from Harrow to Hounslow.

The video begins with Pinner Fair in the 1930's, continues with rare colour film from 1943 showing the Middlesex Home Guard at Pinner and Wembley, and the stand-down ceremony in the grounds of Haydon Hall.

The next film is of Harrow Hospital Carnival in the 1930's; the Kodak factory, its fire station and Defence Volunteers who trained with broomsticks after munitions losses in France in 1940; then we see the visit of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to Harrow School in 1957.

Next comes film of Ruislip High Street in the 1950's, the days of Barbara's Pantry, the cottages (now demolished) at the gates of Manor Farm, and the old Police Station. Local organisations parade with floats past Lyttons (now John Sanders) to celebrate the 1953 Coronation. Not only the surviving dovecote and stables but Eastcote House itself, prior to demolition, appears, as does Haydon Hall on the opposite bank of the River Pinn. The Lido's popularity in an age of fewer cars features, as do children maypole dancing at Manor Farm.

The video moves on to Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent presenting Uxbridge's Borough Charter in 1955; it shows the pre-1960's trolleybuses, The Bell Punch Company's works, and old-fashioned service at Suter's, now Owen Owen.

There is road safety film from West Drayton; RAF Uxbridge is granted the freedom of the Borough; and now vanished old streets and yards of Uxbridge are recalled before we view Hayes Carnival in rainy 1956 and more summery 1960; we see the G.W.R. main line and the Grand Union Canal before the advent of the M4; Heathrow Airport's Queen's Building is opened with its roof terrace views of the Viscounts and DC3s of the 1950's.

Finally the Borough of Heston and Isleworth is seen receiving its Charter from the late Duke of Gloucester in 1932; the fire brigade trains on the eve of the Second World War and goes into action during the 1940 blitz; Platts department store celebrates VE Day and children enjoy street parties; the film concludes in Hounslow with our Queen's Coronation celebrations.

This video is on sale in this area and other localities feature in Bygone Films nostalgic series.

OUR FRIENDS IN THE NORTH

In the 1995 Journal Denise Shackell described how St. Martin's church raised money for the Durham parish of South Hylton in the 1930's. As Ruislip's curate, Peter Homewood, has a friend who is in charge of a neighbouring parish, SS. Mary and Peter, Springwell, Sunderland, we have been reminded of the far-reaching effects of continuing extensive unemployment in the North. St Martin's therefore decided to renew its north country links by donating £400 from its Lenten alms, which will assist in the urgent rewiring of both churches and their hall. It is important, even in the face of St. Martin's pressing needs in the rebuilding of our own parish hall, that we do not neglect our even more needy fellows, who in Lent gave *their* offering to others. Springwell's curate, Father Philip North returned to Ruislip to preach at the Sunday Eucharist on December 31st, exactly a year after his first visit.

THE NAVE WEST WINDOW

By Valery Cowley

In his tenth article on the church in the parish magazine 'Ruislip Outlook', March 1926, the architect F H Mansford wrote: *The window in the West end of the nave was the gift of our former Vicar, Rev. T M Everett, whose arms are displayed near the top on the left. The small shields to the right display the arms of Mr (i.e. Ralph Hawtrey) Deane, of Eastcote House, the lay-rector, while the larger shields below are the arms of the Chapter of St. George, Windsor (patrons of the living) and King's College, Cambridge (Lords of the Manor of Ruislip). The figures are of the four major prophets.*

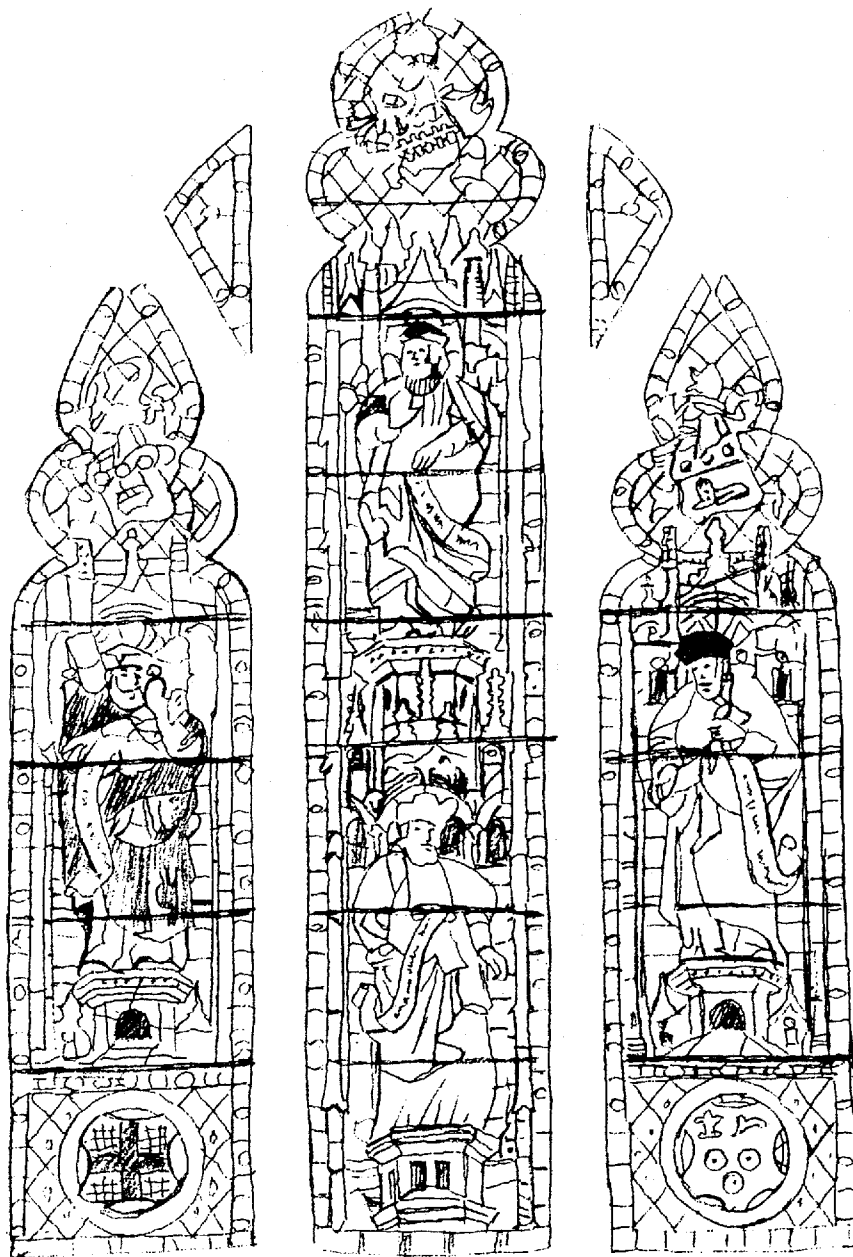
However, the window commemorates the restoration of the church about 1872 and Christopher Packe was then the incumbent: as K Holmes pointed out to me and observed in the Middlesex Heraldry Society leaflet, the top centre shield bears Packe's arms; the left top shield bears Lawrence James Baker's of Hayden Hall. Everett's arms do not appear and he did not become Vicar until 1878, on Packe's death. Eileen Bowlt outlines Packe's career in 'The Goodliest Place in Middlesex', pp. 19-21 especially.

The Middlesex Heraldry Society leaflet and the R.N.E.L.H.S. Journals for 1980 and 1981 give details of these arms, as well as of those of the donors to the cost of restoration, Lawrence Ingham Baker, J.P. and his mother, Ellen Catherine Thompson. Lawrence Baker, with Mrs T M Everett, also restored the East chancel window. The West window dates from the 1870 restoration of St. Martin's under George Gilbert Scott, R.A. The specification stipulated that all ancient fragments of stained or painted glass were to be carefully preserved and the three-light window at the West end of the nave was to be reinstated; the mason was instructed that the brickwork blocking the lower part was to be removed (this dated from the time of the West gallery?); the stonework was to be cleaned of cement and renewed where necessary; the dimensions of sill and jambs, mullions, tracery and arch were stated and new label terminations were to be carved. From the smith were ordered new saddle bars of cast iron, $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ ", with sockets and stanchions of wrought iron, $3\frac{1}{4}$ " x $3\frac{1}{4}$ ", with ornamental heads. The glazier was to relead the lights and renew the glass, 21 oz clear in small diamonds and quarries of ca. 5" x 4" to be glazed in strong cored marrow lead, cemented and made waterproof and fixed with cement putty into grooves in the stonework and tied with strong copper wire to the saddle bars and stanchions. When glazed, the lights were to be steeped in linseed oil for a few days before fixing; they were to have a leaden trough at the bottom to take off the water from the interior.

The stained glass is framed by Y tracery with cusps. Each prophet, in coloured hat, whose design indicates his Hebrew provenance, carries a scroll to identify him and they form a parallel to the Four Evangelists in the Lady Chapel East window. They stand under medieval-style canopies.

The top centre figure, who wears dark blue and white robes, bears a scroll quoting Jeremiah 30:9, *Salutabo David germen iustum* [I shall pay reverence to the well-founded offspring David]. David prefigured Christ and Jeremiah was seen as an O.T. type of St. Peter; Jeremiah's vision of the rod of an almond tree (Jer. 1:11) was understood to allude to the church of the new age.

The right (facing) prophet in dark green and red robes over a white and gold tunic, holds a scroll with a text from Ezekiel 11:20, *Ero eis Deus et populus erunt mihi* [I will be to them God and they shall be my people]. The vision of the four creatures in Ezekiel 1:10 influenced the Tetramorphs (four forms) which were understood to symbolise the Four Evangelists, as depicted in Ruislip's Lady Chapel East window.



The left-hand prophet, in sky blue and brown, bears a scroll with the words which usually identify Isaiah (7:15), *Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium* [Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son]; this is interpreted as prophesying Christ's incarnation.

In red and grey over white and gold, the bottom figure proclaims (Daniel 4:3), *Potestas eius potestas aeterna* [His power is eternal or, as Handel's Messiah quotes : *And He shall reign for ever and ever*]. Daniel, the personification of Justice, was considered an O.T. type of Christ.

Peter Cormack, Deputy Keeper of Lloyd Park, Walthamstow, who has commented expertly on reproductions of our windows, is 90% certain that this window is by Lavers (1828-1911) and Barraud (1824-1900), as the firm was known originally. I am told they were the makers of the four South aisle windows described in June's 'Outlook' and, Peter Cormack thinks, probably of the chancel East window. The firm is documented in Martin Harrison's 'Victorian Stained Glass' and there are examples of their windows at Bovington, Herts., St. Mary's, Ealing, St. Paul's, Knightsbridge and St. Simon Zelotes, Chelsea. Birkin Haward's 'Nineteenth Century Suffolk Stained Glass' has a photograph of their award-winning work at Lavenham, Suffolk, whose fourteenth century costumes are reminiscent of our South aisle designs; the background fruit trees, in particular, recall those in our 'Feeding of the Five Thousand'.

Lavers and Barraud worked in Southampton Street and Covent Garden and they had been involved in the firm of James Powell and Son since 1849. F P Barraud designed one of Powells' exhibits at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The accomplished Alfred Bell (who later joined Clayton to form the firm which produced our South chancel window and our North aisle Three Apostles window) was engaged by Lavers as a designer. N H J Westlake (1833-1921) joined in 1860, became a partner and he later headed the firm. Westlake was attracted to medieval and Pre-Raphaelite art and became sole designer after 1868. He wrote an important four-volume 'History of design in painted glass' spanning the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries. His work of the mid-1860's at Eaton Royal, Wilts. and of the 1870's at Great Bealings, Suffolk offers interesting parallels with our South aisle 'Crucifixion' windows.

Lavers, Barraud and Westlake's 'Sermon on the Mount' of around 1863, at Woodton, Norfolk finely and boldly fills the light with colour, as does Ruislip's East chancel window attributed to the firm. At Witton, Norfolk in 1885, they created, across lights under canopies, two effective scenes depicting 'Christ at the Marriage Feast in Cana', which is one of our South aisle subjects (B Haward, 'Nineteenth Century Norfolk Stained Glass'). As with Clayton and Bell, nearly all Lavers, Barraud and Westlake's windows must be identified by style, as they left few trademarks.

A SALLETT

Robert May *The Accomplisht Cook* 1660

'The youngest and smallest leaves of
spinage, the smallest also of sorrel,
well washed currants, and red beets
round the centre being finely carved,
oyl and vinegar and the dish
garnished with lemons and beets.'

SCOUT CAMP IN RUISLIP IN 1915

by Kay Holmes

During the Great War, S. Mellitus (3rd Hanwell) Troop of Boy Scouts spent a fortnight camping in Ruislip, at Warren Farm in Breakspear Road. An account of this, their first camp, was privately published under the title of *The Cottage Perilous*. It was dedicated to three Assistant Scoutmasters, then serving in the King's Forces, and to an Honorary Assistant Scoutmaster serving with the Belgian Forces. The frontespiece is a photograph of the Scoutmaster and author, Father Spiller, and his Assistants. There were several other photographs of the Troop and of their activities, in the Scout uniform of 81 years ago.

One of the Scouts, James Turner, later came to live in Ruislip as the first owner of 22 St. Margarets Road, on his marriage in 1938. He and his wife, Marjorie, were active in Scouting for many years, and retained their interest even after they left Ruislip in 1983 for Devon where they ended their days. Mr. Turner lent the book and allowed a summary to be made, which appeared in the Harefield Parish magazine in 1981.

On the morning of their departure from Hanwell, Holy Eucharist at 7.15 a.m. was attended by the camping party and some of their parents. They dispersed for breakfast and packing, meeting at 10 a.m. to load the trek-carts, one of which was borrowed from a neighbouring troop. On the way they also borrowed some groundsheets from an Ealing troop. On foot or by bicycle they travelled through West End Hayes and Ruislip, having minor mishaps with the trek-carts which entailed some repacking and cost them two jars of jam.

Arriving at Warren Farm, they renamed it *The Cottage Perilous*, as the upstairs ceilings were in danger of falling. However, the ground floor was safe, and was used as HQ, larder, and - most important of all - Chapel.. Here was set up the altar which had been used the previous year by the Bishop of Kensington at the Middlesex County Camp at Breakspears. It was draped with the Union Flag, and had for the reredos, a popular painting of the time - *The Pathfinder* by Carlos. Communion services were held every day except one, and there were nightly preparation services. The first Scout Law, and the fact that they were a church troop, were emphasised to an extent which would be difficult to attempt or to accept in the 1990s.

Great effort was put into cleaning up the cottage and the open-sided waggon-shed which was to be the dormitory - war-time regulations forbade camping under canvas. Their host, Mr. Harris from Bourne Farm, had welcomed them and provided straw for bedding, on which each boy slept with his groundsheet and two blankets.

The author recorded the names of all the campers, and kept a diary of events and activities. One of the Scouts undertook most of the cooking, with assistance from the others. Water had to be brought from Bourne Farm in a milk churn. Supplies were bought in Harefield, where the damaged trek-cart was taken for repair by the smith. In the village too, the Scouts met some of the Australian soldiers from the Dardanelles who were convalescing at Harefield Park.

Dress in camp was informal, as also apparently was the programme; there was sufficient novelty in being in the open air in the countryside. (Was Hanwell such already an urban area?)

Unable to find a bathing site, the Scouts took part in water fights. They built and used a camp kitchen; they helped Mr. Harris, and they picked fruit and vegetables from the cottage garden. Some of the incident were recorded in the photographs, including the inevitable fall into a pond - by the Scout who was still the proud possessor of the book, James Turner.

The middle weekend enabled more Scouts to join the camp after school or work, and the number of visitors increased. Not only were the guests provided with refreshment and entertainment, but also, in some cases, with transport to and from Ruislip Station by trek-cart.

Sunday Communion, a sung Mass, began in the open air as numbers were too many for the 'Chapel', but rain forced a retreat to the barn, where the Celebration took place. In the afternoon the camp was visited by Captain Tarleton from Breakspears, the County Scout Commissioner, on leave from the Royal Navy.

On one evening a sing-song was held. The weather turned cooler and Mr. Harris hung a rick cover over part of the open side of the barn. The Scoutmaster and two lads visited Harefield Church but found it locked, so they peered in through the windows. They called on the Vicar's 'locum' to explain why they had not attended church, having their own Priest in the person of the Scoutmaster - the 'locum' had not known that they were in camp. An expedition to Rickmansworth involved some of the scouts helping a traction-engine driver in trouble on soft ground. Earlier help had been given when a meat lorry got stuck in a ditch. On the last full day their only Scout 'Wide' game was organised, involving spies, couriers and the passing and interception of secret documents.

The final Saturday began with a Eucharist, with five hymns and the Te Deum. After packing, the Scouts gave the traditional thanks to Mr Harris and his family. They left at 4 in the afternoon, had their tea by Ruislip Flying Station to the sound of aircraft, and were home in Hanwell by 8 p.m.

The book concluded with tributes to all the campers, singling out the Servers at Mass, the Senior Patrol leader who acted as Assistant Scoutmaster for much of the camp, and the cooks and their helpers. Thanks were also recorded to Mr. Harris and others who had given help in various ways.

The final section was, perhaps inevitably in 1915, a sad one. Before the book reached print, one of the three Assistant Scoutmasters had died from illness contracted during active service. Many of the scouts attended his funeral to show their respect and affection. One cannot help wondering whether there were other casualties - the costly 'war to end all wars' still had three years to run.

[*The Cottage Perilous* was destroyed by enemy action in the Second World War and replaced by the present building. The open-sided barn or shed visible from the road must surely be the one used by the boys as a dormitory. The locking of Harefield Church has had to be resumed.]

MANY-QUARTERED COATS OF ARMS

by Kay Holmes, illustrations by Margaret Young

The Marshalling of Arms

We are all familiar with the colourful coats-of-arms to be found, in our churches and elsewhere. It seems a natural assumption that a coat-of-arms containing many divisions or "quarterings" signifies a family with a particularly illustrious pedigree, but this may not necessarily be the case.

The most basic combination of coats-of-arms is the impalement, placing two coats-of-arms side by side, for husband and wife. The man's arms are on the dexter, the right hand of a man carrying the shield, but the left side as viewed from the front. The lady's arms are on the sinister, and therefore the right as viewed. (Fig. 1 - Newdegate impaling Pole, Harefield glass)

A lady becomes an heraldic heiress if she has no brothers to carry on her paternal arms. In such case, her husband may place her arms "in pretence" on a small escutcheon in the centre of his own arms. Because he is not 'of the blood', he may not bear his wife's arms as his own, but holds them, as it were in trust, for their children. Examples of the wife's arms may be shown both impaled and in pretence; at Harefield a ledger stone shows Ashby with Turner in pretence (as shown in Fig. 2) and also impaled.

The children of such a marriage may quarter the arms of both parents, the father's arms in first and fourth and the mother's in second and third. (Fig. 3 - Parker quartering Newdegate, Harefield glass))

This seems fairly straightforward. However, later generations may also marry heraldic heiresses, whose arms may also be quartered. The subsequent heiress's arms would appear in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth quarters and so on; they are still called "quarters". An odd total may be made up to an even number by repeating the first, paternal coat, for the sake of artistic balance. In theory the number of quarters may be increased *ad infinitum*, and there have been examples running into hundreds, but the effect of many tiny divisions is diminished.

There is yet another factor. Any or all of the wives may 'bring in', not only their paternal arms, but also any quarterings which their ancestors have inherited by the steps mentioned above. The children of the marriage may quarter their father's arms, perhaps of several quarters, and some or all of their mother's quarterings. Those underlined are the arms of heraldic heiresses who were the wives of Hawtreys; those in *italics* were 'brought in'. (Fig. 4, Ruislip monument)

It has become the custom to make a selection of quarterings, usually six or, by today's practice, four. There are rules governing such selection. The Duke of Norfolk, Premier Duke and Earl Marshal, shows only four from the more than 700 to which he is entitled; they are: Howard, Thomas of Brotherton, Warren and Mowbray. (Fig. 5)

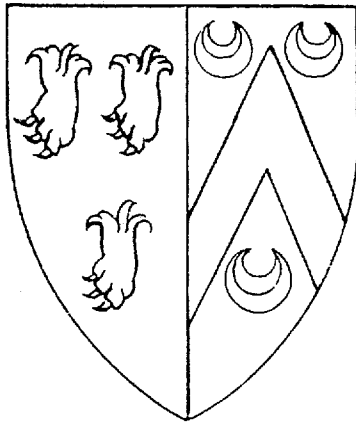


Fig. 1
Newdigate impaling Pole

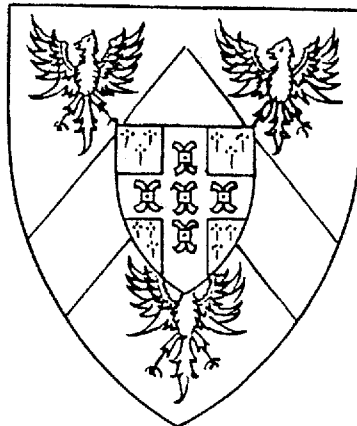


Fig. 2
Ashby with Turner *in pretence*

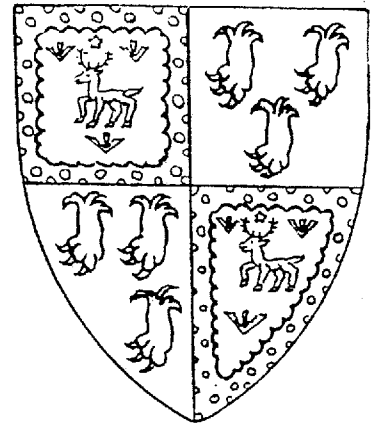


Fig. 3
Parker quartering Newdigate

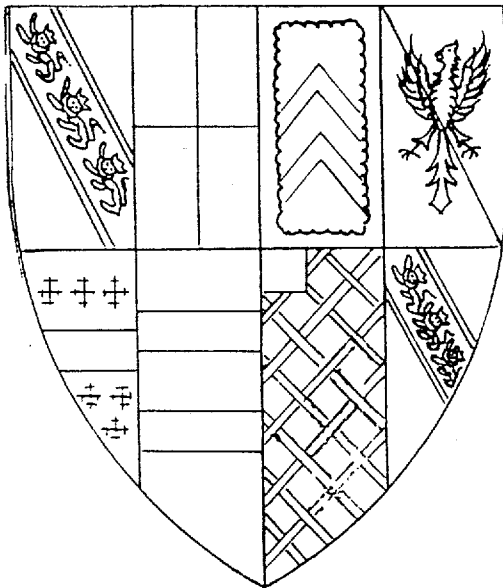


Fig. 4
1 & 8. Hawtrey, 2. Checker
3. Paynell, 4. Blackenall
5. Pipe, 6. Harcourt
7. Noel

PEDIGREES OF HAWTREY AND BLACKENALL

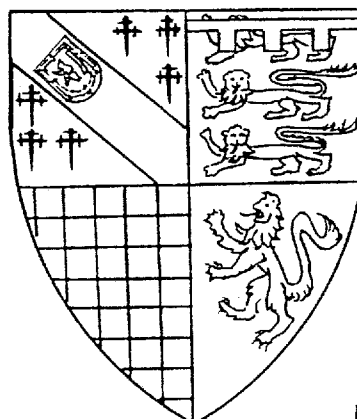
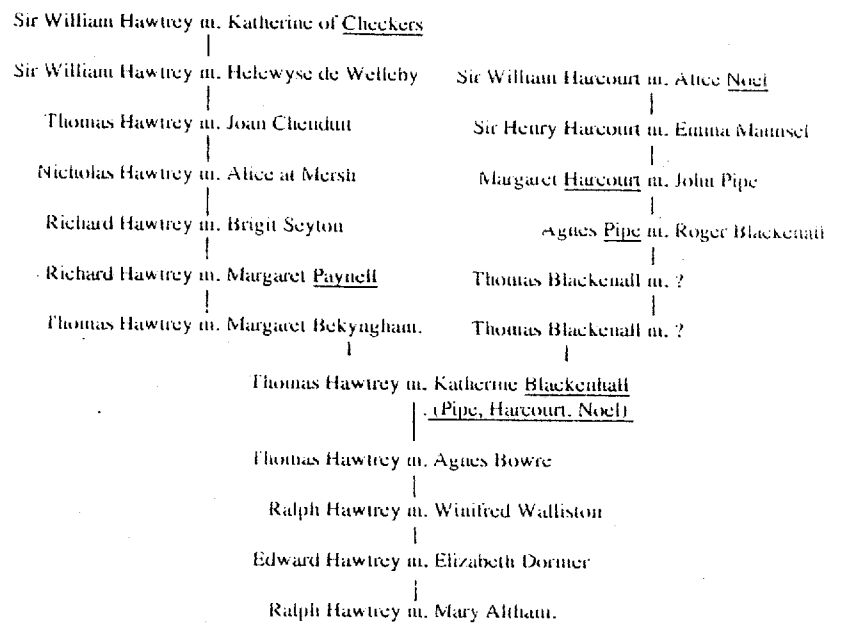


Fig. 5
1. Howard, 2. Brotherton
3. Warren, 4. Mowbray

SCOUT CHAPEL IN MAD BESS WOOD, RUISLIP

by Kay Holmes

The Chapel is a memorial to the youth of Ruislip, and especially for the 20 members of the 1st Ruislip Scout Troop, founded in 1923 by Dr. Max Wilson.

The site was dug and planted by members of the Troop just after the last war, under the leadership of their Founder-Scoutmaster. Ray North is one of those Scouts who took part, and well remembers the labour involved, and the pride in a job well done. The surrounding hedge consists of 240 beech trees, one for each of the men commemorated. The paving in the shape of a cross symbolises the great sacrifice; it also indicates the shape of a place of worship with its aisles and positions for those taking part in services.

On Remembrance Sunday each year a Service is held, attended mainly by Scouts and former Scouts. The Chapel is also used when the nearby camp-site is occupied, for Scouts' Owns - the special form of service used by Scouts and Cub Scouts. One of the most recent occasions was during a week-end camp for disabled children, when local Scout Leaders arranged adventurous activities so that the children could take part in and enjoy some of the joys of Scouting usually available only to their more fortunate brothers.

The 1st Ruislip Scout Troop lives on in the present 1st/3rd Ruislip Troop. Ray North is still active in the Scout Movement, as a Cub Scout Leader with his old Troop. He tells me that the 'Old Scouts' have an annual re-union, and that they will be glad to hear from any other former members of the Troop.

A TART OF GREEN PEASE

Hannah Wolley *The Accomplisht Lady's Delight* 1675

'Boyl your pease tender, and pour
them out into a Cullender, season
them with Saffron, Salt, sweet butter
and Sugar, then close it and let it
bake almost an hour, then draw it
forth and Ice it, put in a little
verjuice and shake it well, then
scrape on sugar and so serve it.'

THE AMERICAN BASE, SOUTH RUISLIP, 1949 - 1972

The last remnants of the American Base at South Ruislip were demolished in the summer of 1995. It seems appropriate, therefore, to record something of the Base's 23 year history in the pages of this journal. The information below was given to me during two interviews, by Mr Pledger of Dean House, Church Avenue, Ruislip, who had responded to a letter placed in the Gazette by the Research Group, asking for anyone who knew anything about the Base to contact me.

MR PLEDGER

Mr Pledger, an accountant, worked for the Ministry of Supply during the war, first at Woolwich Arsenal, then at Burton Wood, Warrington, which was a big American Base. After the war the American 3rd Air Force, European Forces was to have a base in Ruislip and Mr Pledger was asked to come down and open up the Commissary (a supermarket for the families of the married men).

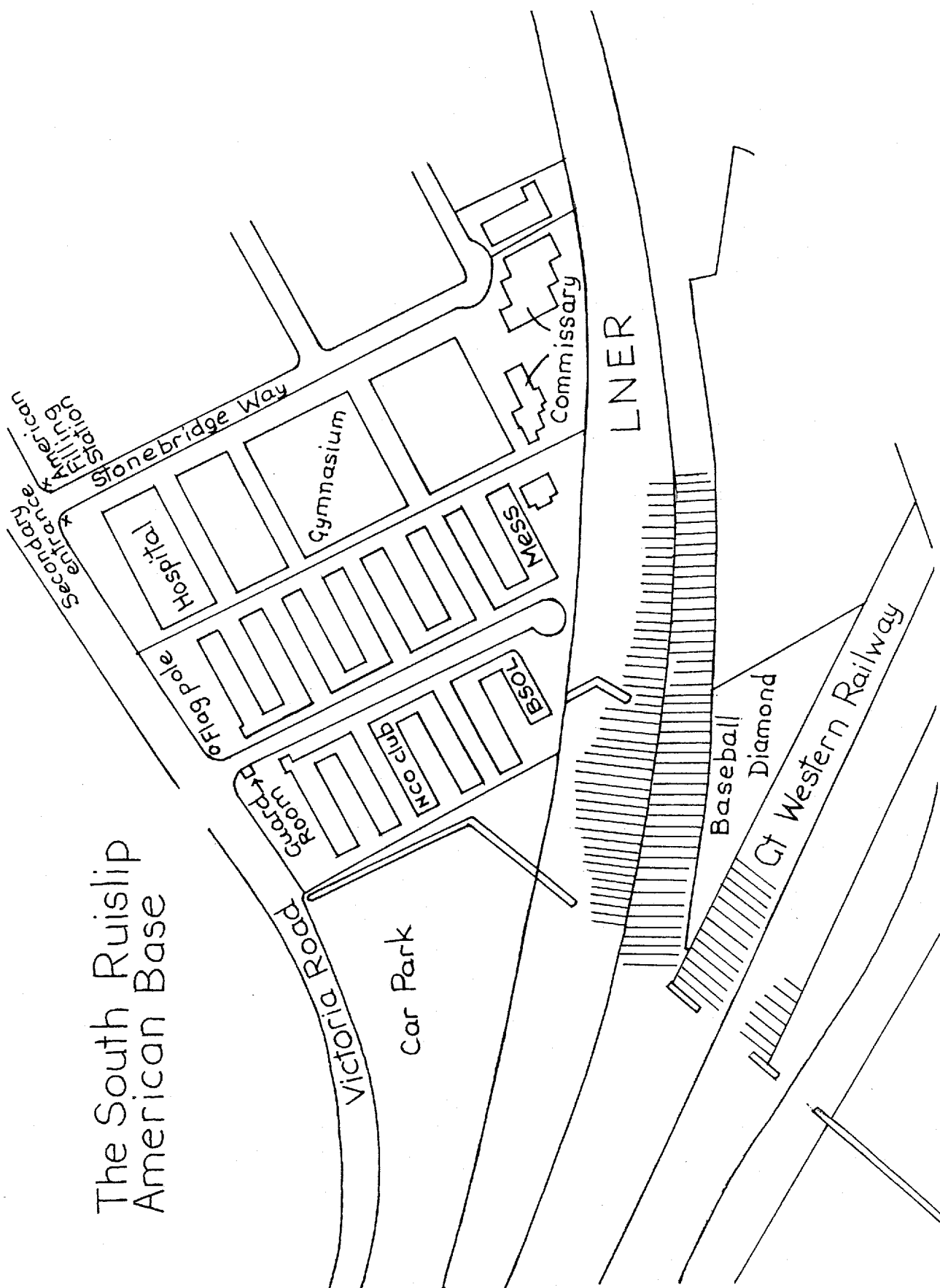
EASTER 1949

At Easter 1949 Americans moved from Bushey Park, Twickenham into South Ruislip, where Percy Bilton had already erected a number of warehouses and industrial buildings. The Americans leased these from the British Government. Lorries brought equipment; canned beer (unheard of in England at the time), a machine for making doughnuts and a soda fountain, from America and Mr Pledger opened a snack bar for the first comers. A little later there was a kitchen where hot dogs and ham burghers were provided.

THE BASE

Sections were set up gradually. The first were Personnel and Weather. The Transport Section and Telephone Exchange came later. General Johnson was the first General Commissioner of the 3rd US Air Force which was part of NATO. He flew off all over Europe. Planes and a maintenance crew were kept at RAF Northolt, which was used by his staff to keep up their flying hours. Trucks were maintained at 4MU at West Ruislip, where American personnel worked alongside a small RAF contingent and a group of civilians. The trucks were very large and later Denham Studios were leased for maintenance as well because 4MU was too small.

The main gate to the Base at South Ruislip, with its flag pole and guards, was opposite Queensmead. A secondary entrance was in Stonefield Way. The buildings were simple warehouse structures divided and done up inside. There was an NCO Club and an Officers' Club, both night clubs where stars like Bob Hope entertained and a theatre. Visitors could be booked in and there are many women living in Ruislip today who remember happy evenings at the base. Everyone who went said that it was like a palace inside, with wonderful draperies and carpets of a quality unobtainable in post-war England. In fact "it was just like going to America!" Furniture and fittings were replaced out of the profits of one-arm bandits. A gymnasium with Ten-Pin bowling on Stonefield Way also provided recreation and a tunnel under the railway led to a Baseball Diamond. There was a big car park outside the Base, where the Cash and Carry and Sainsbury's car park are today.



COMMISSARY

Mr Pledger worked in the Commissary throughout the period of the Base's existence. Eventually he was in charge of it. As part of BSOL (British Staff of London) he was controlled by the Civil Service. The only part of his job which seemed difficult at first was having to become accustomed to an American system of accounting.

All the food was shipped from America to St Catherine's Dock and distributed to commissaries at Fairford, Brize Norton, Lakenheath and Greenham Common. Eventually British goods were purchased after families had sampled them in local shops, but only after being stringently tested and having had their methods of preparation checked. The Americans were very worried about hygiene! Peak Frean's biscuits, Cadbury's chocolates (at first St Valentine's Day chocolates in heart-shaped boxes), Lyons' bread and Sunblest were the first non-American goods to be allowed on the shelves. Soon there were requests for cottage cheese and samples were given to St Ivel. Eventually Express Dairies provided it. An ice cream mix was sent over from America, which Mr Pledger showed to Mr Bunce, the local shop owner. He made some up which was accepted and supplied the Base for a year. Later El Dorado had the order.

PX STORES

American goods and also British goods like cars, jewellery. Wedgewood pottery, cigarettes and spirits, which could be ordered free of purchase tax, were sold at the PX Stores. At first there was an American Officer in charge and then an English manager came from somewhere like Selfridge's.

HOUSING OFFICER

At first airmen lived in huts on the Base, but these were needed for the new sections as they opened. A Housing Officer was appointed who kept a list of suitable properties for families to rent and of billets for single men and after a short time no one lived in. Officers liked living in Northwood, Chorleywood and Beaconsfield.

CLOSURE OCTOBER 1972

The Americans moved to Mildenhall in October 1972 and the British Government took over the buildings to use for the storage of archives and as the Motor Tax Office. For a short time after the closure the gymnasium was used by the public as a leisure centre. The luxurious hospital complete with all its equipment was offered to the Borough of Hillingdon, but was refused, for reasons which have never been understood in the locality. The disused hospital was pulled down only in 1994.

A NOTE ON THE BASE HOSPITAL FROM MRS OLIVE SIMPSON of Windmill Way

She went to the Base in the late 1950s as part of a group from the Red Cross, which had been invited on a goodwill visit. The hospital was like "a dream come true". She had never seen so much equipment and there was every kind of surgical instrument. It was the first time any of the group had seen tea-bags and the whole thing was "quite an experience".

Eileen M. Bowlt

THE OERLIKON GUN FACTORY, RUISLIP GARDENS

Eileen M. Bowlt

Mr David Hope who now lives in Australia, sent me some very interesting letters during 1995. In one of them he described his time at "The Sheds" at Ruislip Gardens, from 1941-45, working on the Oerlikon gun. Extracts from that letter were published in the Gazette's Memory Lane on 15th March 1995 and as a result three other local people who worked there during the Second World War, contacted me. Below I have written a brief account of the Sheds, the information coming from two sources: THE OTHER BATTLE by Donovan M. Ward, a history of the Birmingham Small Arms Company, published in 1946; and THE SECRET WAR 1939-45 by Gerald Pawle, published in 1956. I should like to thank Peter Goode for lending me photocopies of the relevant chapters. The memoirs of Mr Hope, Mr Beckwith, Mr Geoff Cannings and Mrs Byford follow.

THE OERLIKON GUN

Oerlikon, an engineering firm had been founded in Zurich in 1876. By the mid-1920s the business was in the doldrums and an armaments factory in neighbouring Seebach was taken over, to extend manufacturing activities and improve trade. The design of a 2 centimetre gun called Seemag, was refined, and the Oerlikon 2 cm gun, the most modern anti-aircraft weapon available anywhere, was ready for production by 1932. It was light and quick firing, having a rate of 450 rounds a minute and especially intended for use against dive-bombers. It obviously had potential for use at sea. Three types of anti-aircraft guns were already being developed for Royal Naval warships; the Chicago Piano, a Vickers gun with four barrels and a 4-inch twin-mounted gun. The first two had a limited range and the Chicago Piano and the twin-mounted gun were heavy and not suitable for all classes of warships.

Lord Louis Mountbatten was keen to obtain the new gun for British ships as soon as he saw a film demonstrating its capabilities in 1937, but it took two years to persuade the Admiralty to adopt it, long after Germany and Japan had already placed orders. 1500 Oerlikons were ordered from Switzerland in the spring of 1939. The Zurich factory was very busy, making guns for the Luftwaffe as well, but the British contract went ahead, even after the outbreak of war and even though the steel for barrels and recoil springs was being manufactured in Germany. Only 109, however, had been delivered before the fall of France in June 1940 and it was obvious that no further supplies could be got out of Switzerland. Plans to manufacture the guns under licence in England, under discussion since before the outbreak of war, had to be put into action immediately.

RUISLIP "SHEDS"

Manufacture was to be undertaken by the Birmingham Small Arms Company (BSA) of Small Heath, Birmingham. A factory site on farm land near Brighton was thought to be too vulnerable to enemy attack and another at Bangor was being considered, when an official noticed the new running sheds near Ruislip Gardens Station, while passing on a train. He thought that they would make an ideal ready-built gun factory and having persuaded the authorities that the danger of heavy bombing in the London area was

outweighed by the benefit of not having to wait for new buildings to be erected, obtained permission to requisition them in August 1940. To maintain secrecy, official documents always referred to the Oerlikon factory at Ruislip as "The Sheds".

Some adaptation work had to be undertaken. After the railway lines that ran the length of the works had been removed and the inspection pits bridged, baffle walls were erected to divide the sheds into sections to contain damage in case of a direct hit during an air raid. Production began in October 1940 and the first gun was ready in April 1941, a month later than had been hoped. Figures soon improved and 1000 guns had been completed by November that year. 1000 a month were being turned out in autumn 1942 and by 1945 when work stopped at Ruislip 33,000 guns and spares had been manufactured there. This was in spite of labour troubles on the shop floor.

LABOUR TROUBLES

Between 3000 and 4000 people were employed at the Sheds and in the early days there were many short stoppages and unofficial strikes started by shop stewards, some of them Communists, who are thought to have been trying to sabotage the war effort. At the time Russia was allied with Germany. The walkouts were usually over welfare matters, like provision of enough water taps, soap and decent food in the canteen. A talk by a serving Able Seaman who had used the gun at the battle of Narvik, convinced the workforce of its importance to the navy, but encouraged the shop stewards to ask for higher wages in view of the valuable work being done at the Sheds! Some of the agitators were sacked and a strike, called in their support, fizzled out after only two days. Once Russia joined the war, Communists among the workforce could not do enough to increase productivity and the labour troubles melted away.

SHADOW FACTORIES

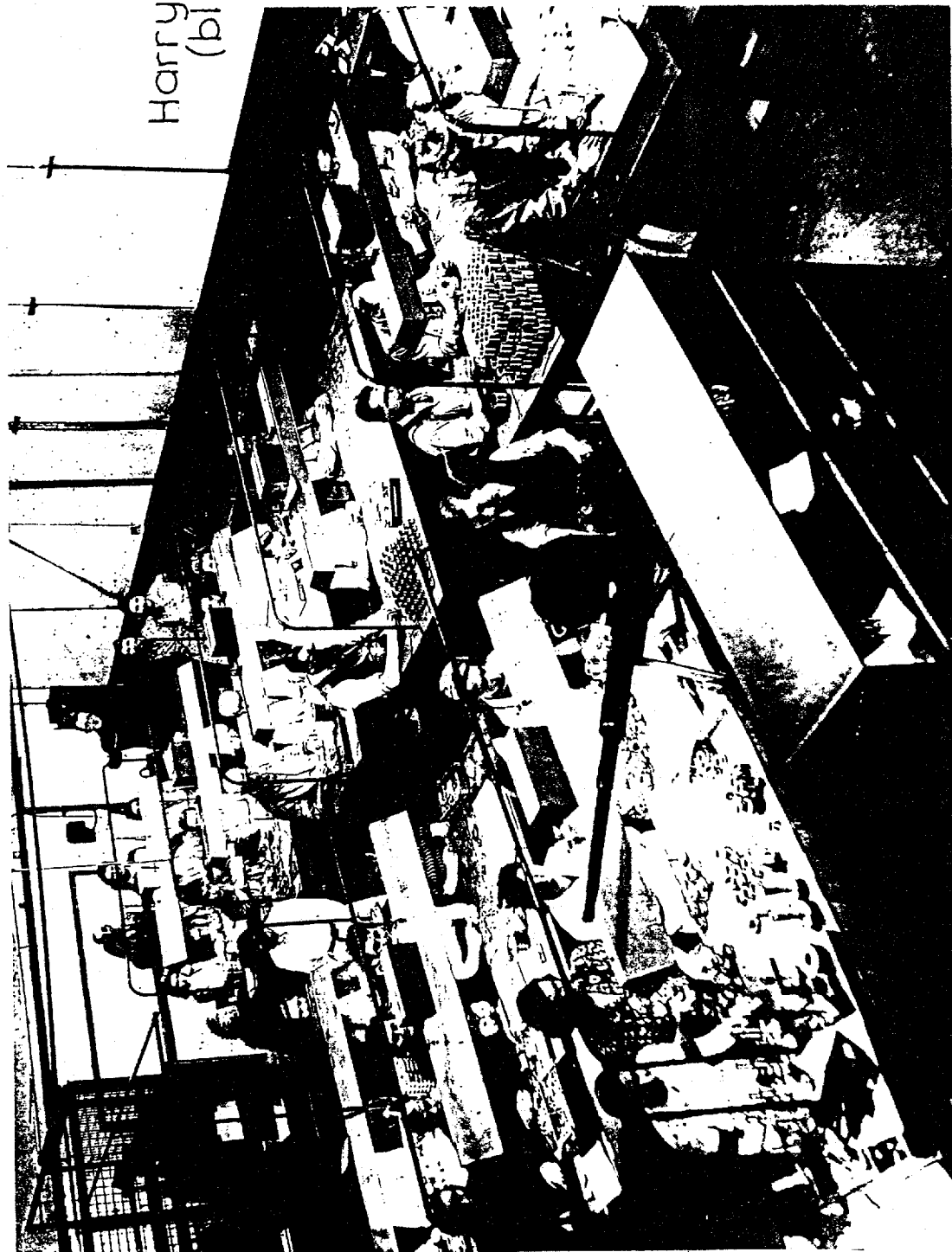
The sensitive position of the Sheds, so close to Northolt Aerodrome, was always of concern to the authorities, who feared bombing. Shadow factories were established in the West of England and at Providence, Rhode Island, in the United States in 1941.

MEMORIES OF LOCAL PEOPLE WHO WORKED AT THE SHEDS

EXTRACT from Mr David Hope's letter

"As regards the war factory "The Sheds (BSA)" it started production in 1940 and it must have finished late 1945. I was made redundant in February 1945 and was given a job to go to, in Acton, I believe, but as I was 18 on Feb 16th got my calling up papers to join the Army so that solved that problem. There were quite a few Communists there especially among the Union Shop Stewards but there were no big stoppages. We had a few walkouts which probably lasted about an hour, but they were mainly about working conditions and a few pay disputes, nothing really drastic. You have to remember a lot of the workers came through the great depression and this was the first real job that they had for years. The industrialists were going to get rich through the war so they wanted a bit of it as well. You can't be patriotic on bread and dripping. I remember when Russia came into the war the Communists couldn't do enough to increase production. There was a big production drive on at one stage. We pledged to increase production in an "Aid to

Inspection Shed - The Sheds, Ruislip Garden c1942-3



Harry, and Bill
(blind)

(blind)

Gladys
Cooling
(W. Ruislip)

Dorothy
Taylor
(Byford)
(Wealdstone)

Vera
Sibley
(Uxbridge)

Russia" month and we won the prize which was a big banner with a Russian worker and a British worker pouring out a big bag full of munitions with the Hammer and Sickle in one corner and the Union Jack in the other. It was put on the gantry crane and driven all down the factory. The Young Communist League organised a lot of social functions, one of which was a weekly dance for the boys and girls from the factory and also the locality. It was held at Lady Bankes School and the band playing there was led by Ron Goodwin who had a little jazz/dance band. I think they were called the Dark Town Strutters. Ron went on to become a famous composer and arranger over the next few years. He did a lot of film themes and led several orchestras. He used to live in Dartmouth Road, Ruislip Manor. It was quite a pleasure to go to work there because we had lots of entertainments during our lunch break. I even remember Geraldo and his orchestra coming, also several famous entertainers like Cyril Fletcher, Ethel Revnell and Gracie West and several more. Also famous politicians would come along and give us rousing speeches. We even had films made there."

INFORMATION from Mr Beckwith

Mr Beckwith went to the Sheds at Ruislip Gardens, which had been intended for the Central Line stock (eventually used as such in 1948) in 1941 and stayed for about 15 months before moving to 4MU in 1942.

The BSA sent all the managers, technicians and boffins from Birmingham. Among the boffins were at least two Czech refugees who had fled to England in 1938. One was called Mr Koczak. They were billeted locally, many houses being available because the area around Northolt Aerodrome was considered a danger zone and many people had moved out.

Machines came from the United States on Lease-lend. The 20mm Oerlikon gun was made at the factory.

April 1941: the first gun produced was fitted into the firm's private car, a Daimler and driven down to Plymouth. The chauffeur had to wait outside the town because an air raid was in progress when he arrived. About this time Lord Louis Mountbatten visited the Sheds to explain the importance of the guns to our ships and to encourage the workers to increase their production. Mr Beckwith thinks that an Oerlikon was mounted on HMS Kelly, Mountbatten's ship which was lost in May 1941.

Lt Reid of the Directorate of Naval Ordnance and Mr Reid of the Civil Service (Inspectorate of Naval Ordnance) liaised between the Navy and the factory. Mr Thomas was the manager. "Gunboat" Smith was the works manager.

The guns were tested in a semi-underground proof firing range which ran alongside the Sheds. It was sound proofed, but dull thuds could be heard from outside. Further tests (perhaps batch testing) were carried out at **Pendine Sands**.

The factory worked seven days a week, day and night and employed a very large workforce (estimated at 4000). The Foremen who took charge of the bays into which the sheds were divided were from Birmingham, but a lot of local people worked there too. Many were young boys and teenage girls, but there were older women and the skilled workers were men. Toolmaking was a reserved occupation.

Pay was good and there was a half a crown bonus for good time keeping. Although Mr Beckwith only earned 6d an hour as a boy, skilled men got 1s 9d or 1s 10 d an hour and had paypackets of £8 and £9 a week because of the long hours (12 hour shifts) and piece work. Time and a half was paid for Saturdays and double time on Sundays. An ex-miner, a sweeper up showed Mr Beckwith his paypacket of £7 and said that he had never earned so much in his life. There was little to spend money on at the time and many people were able to save. Mr Beckwith's brother started there at the age of 14 and three of his aunts were there too.

It was a good place to work. There were very good lunch hour shows in the canteen and a football ground and a swimming pool made out of a 25 yard x 8 yard static water tank. The factory's own fire brigade practised pumping water in and out.

A plane spotter was permanently on site because of the proximity to Northolt Aerodrome. All factories had a spotting system at the time and used coded buzzers to show whether an air raid was imminent .

A Gas Decontamination Area and Medical Centre was established and eventually there was a Barbers' Shop.

There were some trouble-makers among the workforce who believed that the war effort was a strike against Russia because of the German-Russian Pact in the early years of the war. They tried to slow down production. When a "brother" tried to lead a "walkout" at the time of the Battle of Crete, only two or three joined him. After Germany invaded Russia the troublemakers did all they could to step up production, especially during "Aid Russia Week".

Many valuable prizes were given for raffles. Mr Wilson, a catering manager gave a car on one occasion, a 1936 Wolsey 12/6 Saloon. Provided that he got £110 for it any surplus went to the Aid for Russia fund.

The plant closed in 1945, but people were there long after the war had ended, crating up machinery to be returned to the US.

Mr Beckwith recommends two books: "Action Stations"
"The Giant of Small Heath"

INFORMATION from Mr Geoff Cannings

Mr Cannings worked at the Munitions Factory in the sheds at Ruislip Gardens 1941-3, before joining the navy, which he tried to do at the age of 17 and a half. He was born in January 1925. Ronnie Reid who still lives in Ruislip also worked there.

There was a big canteen and one day when it was his turn to fetch the puddings, rice, chocolate duff etc, he slipped on the greasy factory floor and fell with the food flying everywhere, causing much hilarity and some embarrassment to himself. There was a Workers' Playtime there every day, with conjurors and other entertainments, sometimes with famous names and other times with workers stepping up on stage and singing themselves.

He worked in the steel stores at first, cutting breach bars. There were a lot of suds on the floor and heavy boots with studs were necessary. A lot of women worked on the lathes and assembly and it was a "fun time" in his life.

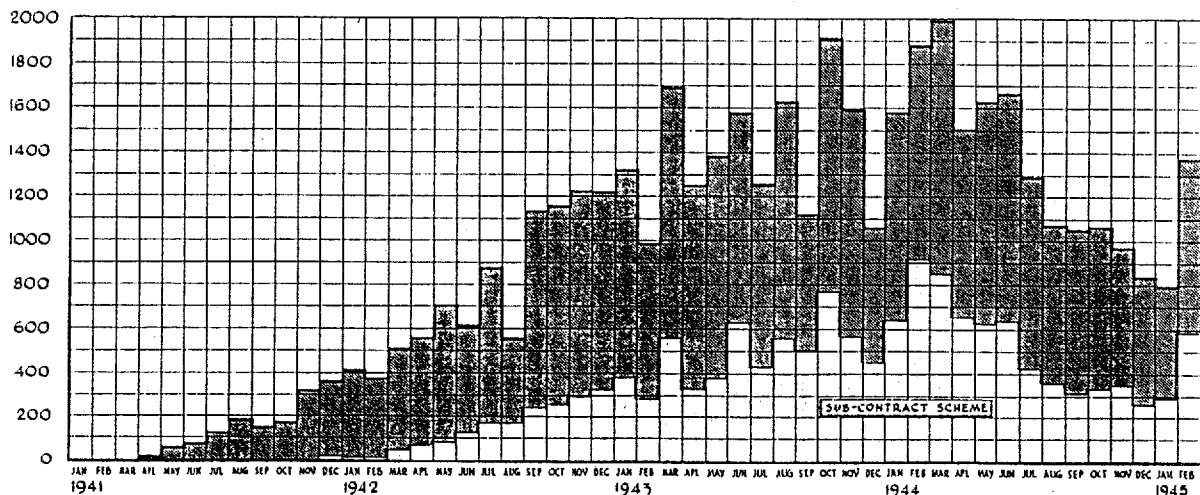
He remembers the large crane which used to move up and down the sheds, with banners exhorting the workers to greater productive efforts.

INFORMATION from Mrs Byford.

Mrs Byford (then Dorothy Taylor) lived at Wealdstone and was drafted to work at the Sheds. She was there for "three or four years", but cannot remember the dates. Before the war ended she was sent to an aircraft factory at Stonebridge Park, Wembley (formerly the Lightfoot Refrigeration Factory). Then she worked for the HMSO in Wealdstone.

She cycled to Ruislip from Wealdstone, starting work at 7.00am and finishing at 5.30pm. She worked a six day week, having Saturdays off. She worked in the Inspection Shed and has a photograph showing herself and her workmates with an Oerlikon gun on the bench in front of her. Three of the men shown were blind. She remembers a Shop Steward who was always going off to meetings whom the girls did not like.

**OERLIKON 20 mm. CANNON
MONTHLY OUTPUT**



FOUR MAINTENANCE UNIT & RAF RECORDS

Number 4 Maintenance Unit was opened near West Ruislip Station in 1917 on fields that were only a mile or so from Northolt Aerodrome. Mr Saich of Home Farm was contracted to provide horses and carts during the construction. The ground straddled the boundary between Ruislip and Ickenham and included Fairlight House, erected by Ernest A. Sims of Ickenham in 1914. The house still stands with Mr Sims' initials and the date on a plaque, and now houses the Commander of US Naval Activities, United Kingdom. The fields of Primrose Hill Farm adjoined the site on the east.

By 1922, barracks, married quarters and RAF Records lay on the north side of the railway line and the maintenance sheds on the south. Sea-cadets now occupy part of the former barracks. The Warrant Officers married quarters were in Barnwood Close and those of Other Ranks in Cordingley Road. The Records took up a relatively small space, and an education office, canteen, sick bay and men's tennis courts, were all north of the railway line. The officers' tennis courts were beside Fairlight House, which was then used as married officers' accommodation. An accommodation bridge gave access to a sewage farm in Austins Lane. The pipes went under the line.

When built in 1917, the sheds were meant to be temporary and were only one brick thick with reinforcing columns. They were not pulled down as planned because of the Abyssinian crisis in the 1930s. From the start a series of rail tracks, branching off the Great Western Railway line, served the 13 very large sheds. Later another shed was added. Two small diesel locomotives brought rolling stock in to be unloaded by the overhead crane situated in Number 4 shed. Damaged propellers, ancillary engines and radar equipment were all repaired there during the Second World War. Trucks from the American 3rd Air Force European Forces Base at South Ruislip (opened Easter 1949) were also maintained there and Number 5 shed became their PX store.

In 1956 the Maintenance Unit was turned over wholly to US use, with British employees. In 1975 the United States Navy leased the depot from the RAF and still maintains services for US personnel within the base. There is a chapel, a child care centre and school, sports and fitness facilities, family housing units and a medical and dental Centre on Blenheim Crescent. The baseball diamond on the corner of Austins Lane and High Road is most obvious to passers by.

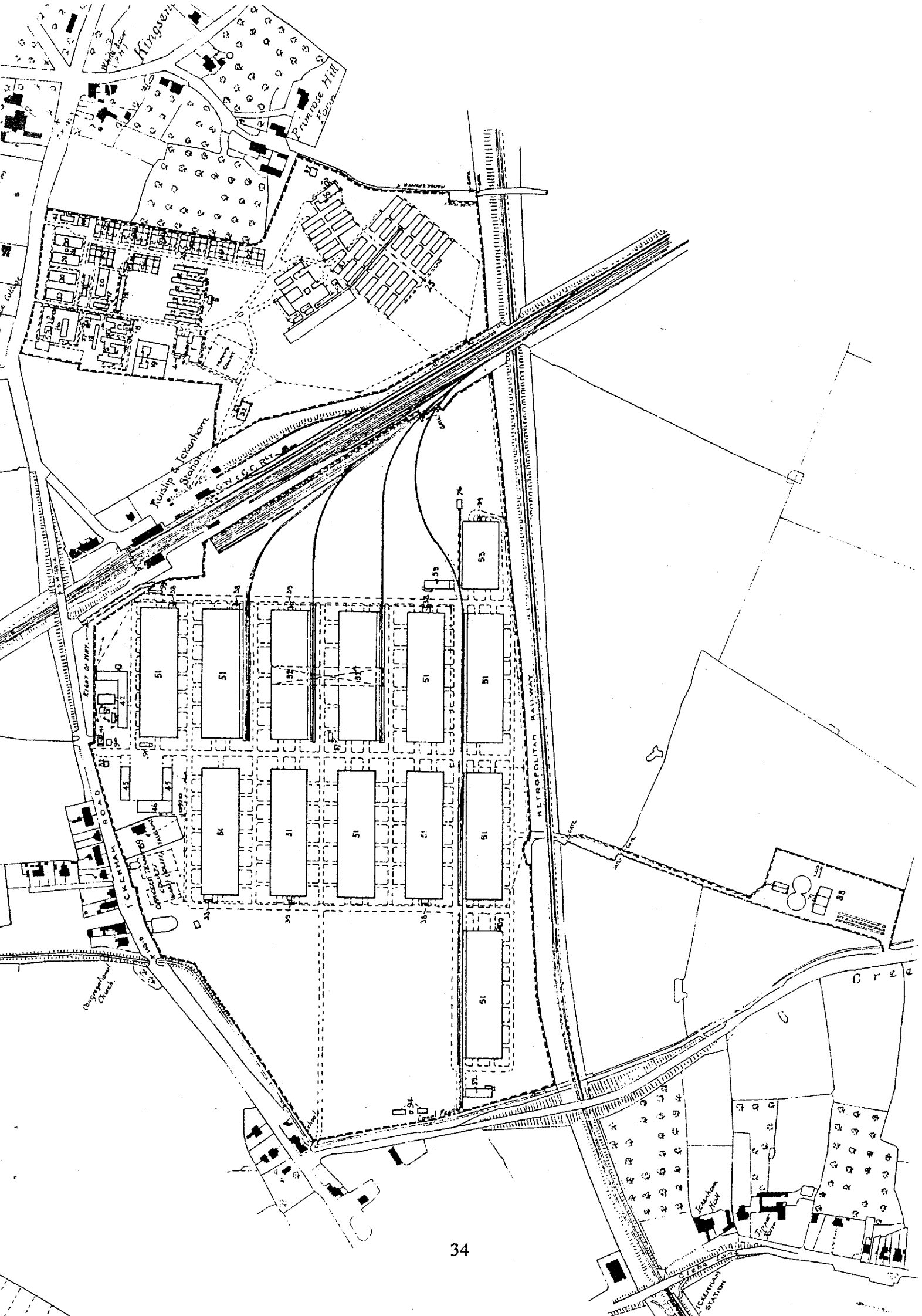
The oddly named Brackenbury Village (two miles from Brackenbury and not even remotely resembling a village) was built on part of the site in the 1980s.

CAMP HOUSE and ASHBOURNE

Camp House surely takes its name from its position directly opposite the camp. It is now an Old People's Home called Fairways. In 1994 a 95-year-old resident remembered going to dances there just after the First World War. It is shown as Officers' Married Quarters on a map of 1945.

Ashbourne, 47 Ickenham Road, belonged to the Air Ministry and is believed to have been used to accommodate WAAFS during the Second World War. The house lay empty from 1948 to 1950, when Mr and Mrs McKee bought it from a Squadron Leader Archer.

Eileen M. Bowlt



GRIFFINHURST

by Mary Pache

If the name Griffinhurst can be interpreted as the woodland of an heraldic beast, the name of the buildings on the same site today- The Forresters- is suitable, if more mundane.

One map of the last century shows a field edged with trees at the junction of Field End Road and Bridle Road; another shows only a pond on the corner. It seems that when George Mertens laid the foundations of his house in 1915, it was the first building to go up on this spot. The continuance of the First World War interrupted the work, and it was not until 1920 that the house was completed, and the owner was able to enjoy in reality the house of his dreams.

It may appear odd to Eastcote residents in 1996 that someone with the resources to build such a mansion - described as "a superb example of the Architect's skill and the Builder's craft" in a later sale catalogue -(Harrods 1944) - should have chosen this corner at the focus of incessant traffic. A glimpse into local history books shows that Eastcote 1915 was a quiet, rustic haven with a rail halt nearby for the essential business of getting to London to earn a living, and getting away from it at the end of the day.

And who, with an appropriate bank balance, could resist the lure of the countryside between Harrow and Uxbridge which, according to the purple pen of the reporter on the first train of the line, was "scented with new mown hay", "where herds of sleek cattle grazed lazily", and "a pheasant with glorious plumage like burnished gold" was seen?

Eastcote House, Haydon Hall, Eastcote Place, and Highgrove House were still occupied by the gentry, and Griffinhurst was grand enough to compete with its neighbours on this social plane. A maids' bedroom and domestic offices which were "completely shut off" underline the expectations of the times.

Mullioned windows and a profusion of oak in Tudor beams, panelling, flooring, and studded doors gave it "old world" charm to complement its modern amenities, which were 1920 style, as in the "telephone cupboard". Also there was some genuine antiquity in the dining room as the fireplace, overmantle, brackets, pilasters, ceiling beams, and the architrave round the door had been brought from a 17th century building in Holland.

Best of all was the Gothic touch of the hidden door in the panelling of the dining room which led to a circular tower room. Here there was a studded oak door with a difference -it was curved to follow the shape of the wall. The room held another secret, a convivial one to be found in the "concealed wine cellarette below".

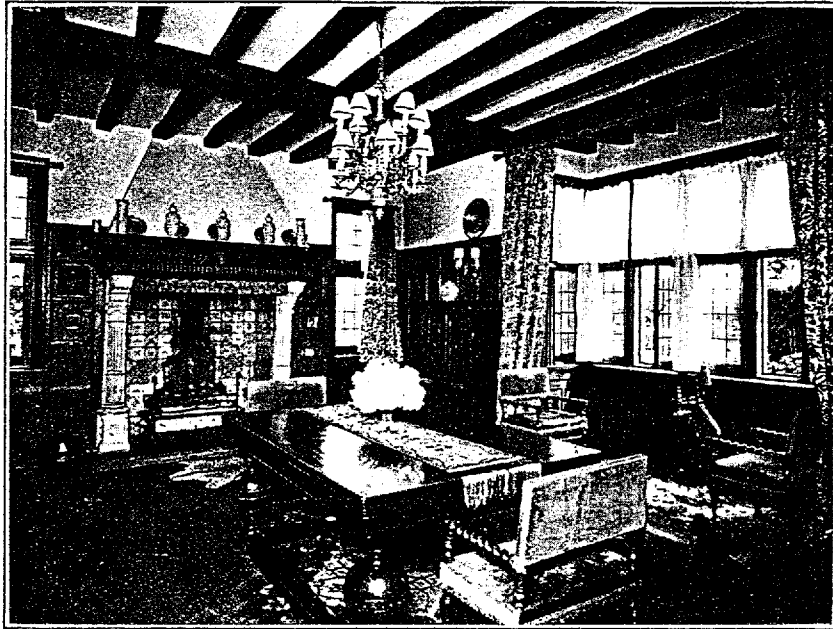
In the grounds of 2 acres there was a tennis lawn, and "beautiful old forged iron gates" led to an Arcadian garden watered from a well with a lead pump, and beautified with a bird bath, sun dial, yew hedges, and dry stone walls.



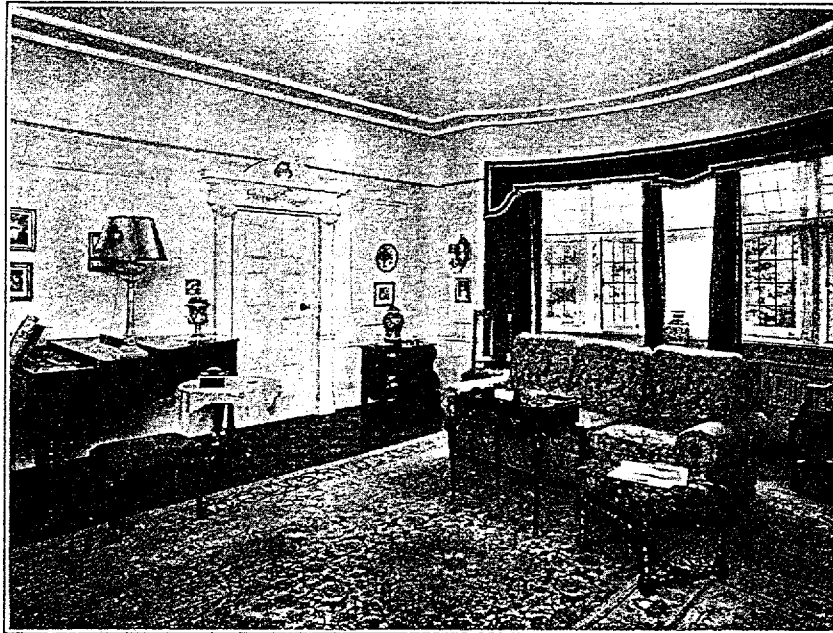
FRONT VIEW



BACK VIEW



DINING ROOM



MUSIC ROOM

All this and much more was offered for sale for £15,000, in 1944, £12,000 if you were willing to leave out the paddock, the grass walk, the sunken garden, and the fruit enclosure. It seems that no one was tempted, 1944 was hardly a good time for house purchase, and relatives of George Mertens stayed there until 1967.

Between the wars, the land between Griffinhurst and the new Deane Croft Road, was aquired by the builder, T.F.Nash, and he built three big houses that were in keeping with, if on a smaller scale than Griffinhurst. The one nearest Deane Croft Road was a doctor's home and surgery, T.F.Nash's mother lived in the next, and the builder himself in the third. A local resident who came to live in the partly-built Orchard Parade during the war has a childhood memory of one of them as a "fairytale house" painted pink with a white pillared portico. Kelly's Directory of 1939 lists a fourth house, and Kemp's of 1956 record five houses in addition to Griffinhurst.

A stray high explosive bomb made a direct hit on the Nash house in 1940 with fatal results for the people who were in it at the time. It was rebuilt only to be demolished with Griffinhurst and the others in 1968. Subsequently, blocks of flats were built on the empty site by Hillingdon Borough, but were taken down in the early eighties because of flaws in the construction.

The Borough development was landscaped more thoughtfully than one would expect, and the present buildings by a private company follow a similar layout. The mature trees and boundary wall that skirts Field End Road help to maintain the rural aspect of this part of Field End Road.

A stroll round the Forresters, with a strong dose of imagination to fortify the sale catalogue photographs, helped me to picture the five homes which stood where there are now three hundred, and to envisage the grandeur that was Griffinhurst.

REFERENCES

Ron Edwards: Eastcote: From Village to Suburb.
Harrods Sale Catalogue, 1944.
Street Directories: Uxbridge Library.

1669 March 15th

'Up and by water with W. Hewer to the Temple; and thence to the Chapel of Rolles . . . and so spent the whole morning with W. Hewer, he taking little notes in short-hand, while I hired a clerk there to read to me about twelve or more several rolls which I did call for. . . At noon they shut up, and W. Hewer and I did walk to the Cocke at the end of Suffolke-street, where I never was, a great ordinary, mightily cried up, and there bespoke a pullet; which while dressing, he and I walked into St. James' park, and thence back and dined very handsome, with a good Soup and a pullet for 4s-6d the whole.'

TO MAKE GRAVY SOOP

The Receipt Book of Mrs. Ann Blencowe 1694

'Have a good strong broth made of a Legg of beef and seson'd with time and Cloves and mace, and when 'tis well boyld that you think it will jelly when 'tis cold, strain it off ye broth from ye meat. Then put your broth into a pot that you designed to make your soop in and have in readiness these soop herbs viz; some Sallery and judiss and spinidge. Clean them and chop them small and stew them well in a stew pan over a clear fire. Then put them into your broth and let them boyl gently and some Oxes pallets and let them be boyl'd very tender and cut them in very small slices. Then put them into your soop, and season it with peper and salt and Nutmeg to your pallet, and dish it up with a Roasted duck or fowl in ye middle and dry some french bread and break it into your soop. So serve it'

1660 December 25th Christmas Day

'In the morning to church; where Mr. Mills made a very good sermon. After that home to dinner, where my wife and I and my brother Tom . . . to a good shoulder of Mutton and a Chicken. After dinner to church again, my wife and I, where we have a dull sermon of a stranger which made me sleep. . . .'

TO BOIL A CAPON OR CHICKEN WITH COLLIFLOWERS

Robert May *The Accomplisht Cook* 1660

'Cut off the buds of your flowers and boil them in milk with a little mace till they be very tender; then take the yolks of 2 eggs and strain them with $\frac{1}{4}$ pint of sack; then take as much thick butter being drawn with a little vinegar and a slict lemon, brew them together; then take the flowers out of the milk, put them to the butter and sack, dish up your capon being tender boiled upon sippets finely carved and pour on the sauce, serve it to the table with a little salt.'

1660 December 2nd

'... Mr. Mills made a good sermon; so home to dinner. My wife and I all alone to a leg of mutton, the sawce of which being made sweet, I was angry at it and eat none, but only dined upon the Marrow-bone that we had beside.'

LEG OF MUTTON AFTER THE LEGATS WAY

François de la Varenne *The French Cook* 1653

'After you have chosen it well, beat it well, take off the skin and flesh of the knuckle, whereof you shall cut off the end, lard it with mean lard, flowre it, and pass it in the pan with lard or fresh seam. When you see it very brown, put it in the pot with one spoonful of broth well seasoned with Salt, Pepper, Clove, and a bundle of herbs; you may put in Capers, Mushrooms, Truffles, cover it with a lid closed up with flowre, neither too soft, nor too hard, allayed in water, and seeth it on a few coles the space of three hours. When it is sodden uncover it; and garnish it with what you have to put it, as Kidneys, Bottoms of Artichokes, sweetbreads, and a short sauce. and about the dish lay out Lemon, or Pomegranate, Barberries and grapes.'

1669 April 25th

'Abroad with my wife in the afternoon to the park – where very much company, and the weather very pleasant. I carried my wife to the Lodge, the first time this year, and there in our coach eat a cheese-cake and drank a tankard of milk. I showed her this day also first the Prince of Tuscany, who was in the park – and many very fine ladies. And so home, and after supper to bed.'

TO MAKE CHEESECAKES THE BEST WAY

The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth commonly called Joan Cromwell
1664

'Take two gallons of new milk and put into it 2 spoonfuls and a half of runnet, heat the milk a little less than blood warm, cover it close with a cloth until you see the cheese be gathered, then with a scumming dish gently take out the whey, so when you have drained the curd as clean as you can, put the curd in a sieve and let it drain very well there; then to two quarts of curd take 1 quart of thick cream, 1 pound of butter, 12 eggs, 1½ pounds of currants, and with cloves, nutmeg and mace beaten, ½ pound of good sugar, ¼ pint of rosewater, so mingle it well together and put it in puff paste.'

1665 July 13th

'...and so I by water, at night late, to Sir G Carterets. But there being no oares to carry me, I was fain to call a Sculler that had a gentleman already in it; and he proved a man of love to Musique and he and I sung together the way down – with great pleasure, and an accident extraordinary to be met with. There came to Dinner, they having dined, but my Lady caused something to be brought for me and I dined well, and might merry, especially my Lady Slany and I about eating of Creame and brown bread – which she loves as much as I.'

TO MAKE CREAM TOASTS

Patrick Lamb *Royal Cookery* 1710

'Take two French rolls or more according to the bigness of your dish, and cut them in thick slices, as thick as your finger, crumb and crust, lay them on a silver or brass dish put to them a pint of cream, ½ pint of milk, strew over them beaten cinnamon and sugar, turn them frequently till they are tender soaked, so as you can turn them without breaking; so take them with a slice or skimmer for your cream; break 4 or 5 raw eggs, turn your slices of bread in the eggs and fry them in clarified butter; make them of a good brown colour, not black; take care of burning them in frying; scrape a little sugar round them, have a care you make them not too sweet. You may well serve them hot for a 2nd course, being well drained from your butter in which you fried them; but they are most proper for a plate of a little dish for supper.'

1669 February 28th Lords day

'... after dinner ... abroad by coach with my cousins to their father's, where we are kindly received. ... After staying here a little, and eat and drank, and she gave me some ginger-bread made in cakes like chocolate, very good, made by a friend.'

GINGERBREAD

The Receipt Book of Mrs. Ann Blencowe 1694

'Take 3 quarters of a pound of sugar, an ounce and half of Ginger, half an ounce of Cinamon in fine powder. Mingle all these with your flower, and make it up with 3 pound of Treacle, just so stiff as will keep it from running about ye board; then put in 3 quarters of a pound of Melted butter, and stirring it well together; then strow in some more flower by degrees, enough to make it so stif as will make it up in cakes. The oven must be no hotter than for manchets, lett it stand in ye Oven 3 quarters of an hour; wash out the treacle with 2 or 3 spoonfuls of Milk, bake it on buttered papers; mince in also 2 ounces of Oringe pill, and preserved sittern 2 ounces, and 2 great nuttmegs grated.'