THE RUISLIP, NORTHWOOD AND EASTCOTE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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BULLETIN

MARCH, 1974

Once again it is time to produce another bulletin and I am sure that all members will find something of interest in this very fine issue.

Membership of the Society remains fairly stable; each year a few new members join us and a few depart to other fields of interest. Perhaps we could all help to increase our membership by bringing the Society to the notice of friends and new arrivals in the district.

We were very sad to record the death of our good friend and committee member Mr. L.E. Morris in September last. A tribute to him will be found in this edition. He was a very regular contributor to the bulletin and the Society will be very much the poorer without his help and support.

I am very pleased to welcome a new contributor, Mr. E.A. Ching, on a new aspect - namely, Postal History. His articles make fascinating reading and I hope he has some more in the pipeline.

JUST A REMINDER THAT THE NEW FINANCIAL YEAR STARTS ON 1st APRIL. PLEASE SEE THE TREASURER, MRS. E.W. CRANE, AT YOUR EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY OR SEND YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS DIRECT TO HER AT HIGHMEAD, 24 CHENEY STREET, EASTCOTE, PINNER, MIDDX. AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

All members should have received the Summer Programme, arranged by Mr. F.D. Veal, and your committee hopes that all the outings will be well supported. I think you will agree that there is something of interest for most members.

The Winter Programme is in process of being arranged by Mr. R.A. Bedford and will be sent to all members in good time for the September meeting. Remember your committee would always welcome any suggestions for talks or outings.

My thanks to all those responsible for answering my plea for articles for this latest edition.

DOREEN L. EDWARDS
(Hon. Editor)

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A TRIBUTE TO LAURENCE E. MORRIS

Laurence Morris, a founder member of the Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society died suddenly at his home in September 1973. From 1969 to 1971 he had been Chairman of the Society and was one of the Society's representatives on the Hillingdon Local History Council having also served as that Council's Chairman. For many years he was a member of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society and served as a member of their Council.

Laurence was born at Harrow Weald, was educated at John Lyon School, Harrow, and always had an absorbing interest and love for the county of his birth. One of his many pastimes was the collecting of books from a variety of sources on a variety of topics which illustrated Middlesex, past and present. In 1954 several readers of the previous "Middlesex Quarterly" formed themselves into the "Middlesex Touring Club" for the purpose of arranging a regular programme of visits and tours to places of interest within the county and Laurence was one of the members of the inaugural

committee. In the Winter 1955 edition of the "Middlesex Quarterly" can be found the script of a talk that Laurence gave on Middlesex on the BBC Overseas Service which clearly illustrates the feeling he had for Middlesex.

It was as Ruislip's contemporary local historian that he was best known to members of our Society. His book - "A History of Ruislip" published by the Ruislip Residents Association in 1956 - has been read by thousands of local residents and students of history and is still in great demand today. In addition, he gave scores of talks to local associations on aspects of Ruislip's history. Local history did not, however, completely absorb his life. Wild life and the countryside fascinated him and he had been a member and committee member of the Ruislip Natural History Society for many years. His profession of journalism gave him the skills needed in producing, with Miss Pollard, some of the earlier editions of the Journal of the Natural History Society. Those who have had the privilege of seeing him in his own garden will know of his delight in horticulture.

He was also the specialist on the history of St. Martin's Church at Ruislip and the current handbook was written by him. Many hundreds have benefitted from his knowledge through his conducted tours of the Church. Countless students will remember his sympathetic encouragement and guidance. He will be sorely missed by members of our Society. His knowledge, wisdom and judgement will not be easily replaced. He gave time, unstintingly, during the mounting of the exhibitions held firstly in 1953 by the Ruislip Natural History Society and others, secondly in 1966 at the exhibition held at the Great Barn by this Society and thirdly, in 1971 at the Borough exhibition held at the same Place. He had recently retired and intended to further his researches into our local history with a view to publishing the results. Your Committee have decided that our Society has an obligation to continue this work and a small sub-committee has been appointed to explore the best ways of achieving this.

R.G. EDWARDS

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VISIT TO KINGS COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE - 19th MAY, 1973.

Our Society is - in our minds - indissolubly linked with the Manor of Ruislip and with one of our founder members, Laurence Morris, whose knowledge of Manorial documents and practices was profound. We found it one of the kinder turns of fate that he was able to participate in the Society's first visit to our late Lords in their stronghold of King's College, Cambridge. We say 'late' Lords, but when we arrived at King's full of eager anticipation on a bright May morning to be received by John Saltmarsh, our genial host for the day, he gave us the pleasantest impression that like some latter day Manorial Dignitary he was still very much concerned in our welfare.

Without further ado after brief introductions Mr. Saltmarsh with consummate economy of word and apt turn of phrase described the collection of priceless objects from the College muniment room set out for our study. Here at last was the great Map which we have seen so often in photocopy and projected on our screen at monthly meetings. Here too the great Charter of Kings itself and the Manorial Charter in their timeless calligraphy.

And so after these wonders to lunch as guests of the Fellows in the Great Hall, in itself a bit of history which it will not be easy to surpass.

In the afternoon we had the freedom of the College Library for a brief half-an-hour and then out to the Chapel. As we looked across the green Mr. Saltmarsh pointed out where each of the builders had begun and left off as the Chapel had risen slowly through the years. Now came the climax of our visit, 21 of us sound in wind and limb followed the nimble Mr. Saltmarsh up the spiral staircase in one of the corner towers and entered the space between the inner roof formed by the famous fan valuting and the external roof, 8ft. or so above it. We walked the length of the Chapel whilst our guide explained how the engineering skill of the builders matched their artistic achievement. At the far end a few more steps took us into the open air again with unrivalled views of Cambridge and the surrounding countryside. Laurence Morris has since become part of our history and we can still see him on the crest of King's College Chapel roof smiling down at the great flowering chestnut tree in the garden below, reminding us of his affection for Natural History. It was now time to go down and as we tiptoed across the corner of the chancel and out on to the green we caught a few delicious bars of the famous Choir at rehearsal.

A day to be treasured. Our best thanks to David Veal who arranged it and to John Saltmarsh who made it possible.

L. and E. KRAUSE.

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SUMMER OUTING - JUNE 1973

A MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY

The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum is an imaginative project set up with the aim of rescuing good examples of vernacular architecture, that is, humbler buildings such as farmhouses and small town and village houses which are threatened with destruction and to re-erect them at the Museum. The site of the Museum, a country park, occupies 35 acres of beautiful meadows and woodland near Singleton village between Midhurst and Chichester in Sussex.

The Museum is still in the early stages of development, having been opened to the public in May 1971. It is intended that the site should ultimately accommodate some 40 buildings which will illustrate what can be called the humbler architecture of the Weald and Downland area from medieval times to the early 19th centure. At the time of our visit in June 1973 there were 13 buildings or exhibits some of them still in the course of erection or development.

It is difficult to pick out any one of the exhibits as the "star attraction" but one which drew a lot of appreciative comment was "Bayleaf Farmhouse", a very attractive building dating originally from the mid-fifteenth century. It is constructed of timber framing with wattle and daub infilling and its appearance is enhanced by the first floor on the front elevation projecting out beyond the ground floor - a common feature more particularly of town houses of that period. Inside the massive oak beams are very impressive and the whole building leaves one with a feeling of respect for the building craftsmen of the fifteenth century.

Another interesting medieval house rebuilt on the site is "Winkhurst House" which came from near Tonbridge as did "Bayleaf Farmhouse". They were both threatened with destruction by the construction of a new reservoir. "Winkhurst House" is of timber frame construction with wattle and daub infill and a tiled roof. Inside there are two bays divided by a screen, the hall at one end with a central hearth being the full height of the building whilst the other bay is divided into two levels with a solar or private room on the upper floor reached by a staircase behind the screen. The floor is of beaten earth and the house contains a few pieces of replica medieval furniture,

A third building which created much interest was "Beeding Toll Cottage" dating from about 1800. This tiny timber framed, weather-boarded cottage is one of the last surviving examples of its type - a reminder of the old turnpike system of roads when tolls were levied to pay for upkeep. The single storey cottage consists of two rooms only - a bedroom and a living room and originally had a central chimney. A large toll-board is fixed to the outside on which is listed the charges to be levied for different types of vehicle and for various kinds of animals passing through the toll gate. Two other examples of toll boards from different sites are fixed inside the cottage. They all make interesting and amusing reading.

A large granary dating from 1731 has been re-erected at the Museum after being removed from a farm near Littlehampton. It is timber framed with brick infill and has a thatched roof and stands on sixteen staddle stones. These stones are mushroom shaped and were commonly used to provide maximum protection against damp and rodents. Inside there is a loft with access by a ladder-stair. The ground floor is being used as an exhibition room to illustrate the history and construction of granaries in the Weald and Downland area. It is also the Museum's information centre.

In the course of re-erection whilst we were there was an interesting example of the old market hall which was a general feature of towns throughout the country. They generally took the form of an upper chamber which served as a council chamber or a guild hall over an open arcade where stalls were set up for the sale of goods. This one was from Titchfield and is said to date from about the year 1600. When rebuilding is complete it will be once more a very handsome structure, timber framed with brick infilling for the upper storey, the arcade underneath being formed by the heavy timber piers supporting the whole structure. At some stage in its life at Titchfield part of the arcade had been bricked in to serve as the town jail but the reconstruction will be as originally built - without the jail. It is intended in the long term to reconstruct a small group of town buildings simulating a market square with the market hall forming the natural centre as it did three of four hundred years ago.

Other exhibits include a woodcraft area and a charcoal burners' camp. The woodcraft area includes a saw-pit modelled on the remains of one in use nearly up to the end of last century. The technique was for the master-sawyer to stand astride the log at ground level to guide the saw whilst his assistant stood down in the pit providing most of the force to cut through the log. It was notoriously thirsty work - particularly for the man in the pit. Cleft timber was also used for a wide range of purposes and there is a reconstruction of a wood cleaver's bivouac and working floor showing the simple equipment used and examples of cleft timber as well as sawn. The charcoal burners' camp includes a kiln composed of suitable lengths of wood thatched with herbage and covered with earth. The kiln is shown in four different stages to indicate the method of construction as well as the technique of burning. It is said that charcoal gives about twice the heat of an equivalent weight of wood and this quality made it important to the

iron smelting industry right up to the last century. Because the kilns had to be watched night and day the charcoal burner had to live on the camp and the site includes two small turf huts the larger one providing the family's living room and the smaller one the bedroom. The huts are of very simple construction with turf and sacking over a frame of poles.

The Museum also has a reconstruction of a Saxon hut, partly sunk into the ground, the design of which is based on one excavated in Sussex in 1964. There is too a 13th century cottage which is in stark contrast to the other two houses already described. This is a small one-storey cottage with two feet thick walls of flint rubble. The interior comprises an open hall and a separate room containing an oven in one corner. It also has an open loft which may have been used for sleeping or storage purposes.

One other exhibit which attracts visitors is the tread wheel inside an attractive timber framed building with split hazel infill and thatched roof. This was removed from a farm in Hampshire. The wheel was built about the year 1600 and was used for raising water from a deep well. It is smaller than most of the known donkey wheels and may have been driven by a man or a boy. The wheel is of interesting construction and is mounted on a shaft hewn from a single piece of timber resting on iron trunnions. It is said to have been last in use 80 years ago but is now in working order again and is shown raising water from a shallow well.

A medieval pottery kiln can also be seen as well as a group of farm buildings including cattle sheds rebuilt in 18th century style. There is also a smithy in local stone and brick which dates from about 1850 and adjacent to this it is hoped to set up a reconstruction of a wheelwright's shop the complete tools and equipment for which are already in the Museum's possession.

This Museum clearly brings local history to life and the interest engendered by what was for most of us our first visit means that further trips must be made in the not too distant future. Apart from the new exhibits continually being developed a second look at those already seen will always bring out new features.

The thirty or so members and friends who were fortunate enough to go on this outing owe a debt of gratitude to the Outings Secretary for his excellent arrangements and for being so well able to organise the weather to perfection. We ate our picnic lunch in the country park in the sun or in the shade according to preference and after leaving the Museum we were able to take tea in Chichester and to see a little of that interesting Cathedral town. Truly a memorable day!

G.M. CRAVEN

February, 1974.

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THE BLUEBELL RAILWAY - A LIVING MUSEUM

The steam locomotive has played a tremendously important part in the industrial development of this country. The discovery of the uses of steam as a source of energy in the late 18th century may be said to have led to the rapid growth of British industry in the 19th century. Our road system, however, lagged behind, and there had to be some quick, cheap and relatively easily maintained system of transport to move goods and people

from one industrial centre to another. This was the reason for the emergence of the railway system, and what more natural than that the motive power should be steam locomotives?

Within a few years the country was being criss-crossed with a network of lines, and plans for others which never materialized were put forward in dozens. Some of these were doomed from the start. Others survived the vicissitudes of economic crisis, shifting population and resiting of industry, until comparatively recent times. In the 1950's however, the writing was on the wall. In a positive frenzy of reorganising energy, successive governments decimated the railway network, obliterating the useful with the moribund, and began the scrapping of the steam locomotive, changing with positively indecent haste to diesel propulsion - a policy we were to regret in successive oil crises. This is not the place to discuss this policy in depth: suffice to say that in the opinion of many railway authorities, it might have been better to do as the French and the Germans - wait for electrification to be carried through.

Because British Railways could give no undertakings as to what steam locomotives would be preserved from a historical point of view, it was left to parties of enthusiasts up and down the country to step in and save what they could from the holocaust of scrapping of the '60's. With the closing of branch lines referred to, the thoughts of many turned to the preservation not only of the locomotives, but also of at least sections of the lines, so that the engines could work in their natural environment, rather than stand mute and devoid of character in some museum or disused engine shed.

One such venture, the first and to date the most successful, is the Bluebell Railway - so called because of the abundance of these flowers in the woods although only for a few weeks. There is also a "Primrose" and a "Cuckoo" line nearby (both shut!!), which is situated in the Sussex weald, to the south of East Grinstead. It was preceded by the re-opening of several of the Welsh narrow gauge railways, but these had been primarily slate transporting, whereas the Bluebell was a section of formerly passenger carrying standard gauge track, only recently withdrawn from the national railway system. The line dates from 1882, when it was opened under the auspices of a company called the Lewes and East Grinstead Railway. The construction was done by Irish "navvies" (navigators - so called from their connections with canal oonstruction) and was attended by numerous incidents, including at least one death due to a man falling through an incomplete bridge in the dark. Almost immediately after opening, it passed into the hands of the famous London Brighton and South Coast Railway, which was in fierce competition with the London and South Eastern company for access to the South coast. The line ran from East Grinstead in the north to Culver Junction, near Uckfield, on the line to Lewes, in the south. At first it prospered mainly from goods traffic as the stations are strategically placed for the collection of dairy produce and the other products of the rich Sussex countryside. However, because of its inaccessibility from the villages, its passenger traffic was never heavy. In the 1920's with the rapid development of road traffic, its fortunes even as a goods carrier declined, and by the '50's it was an obvious candidate for closure. This blow fell on 28th May 1955. Almost immediately however, it was reopened, thanks to a loophole in the law, at the instigation of several local residents, one of them a Miss Bessemer, a relative of the great pioneer of steel smelting, Sir Henry Bessemer. It was not long before the loophole was duly plugged, and the line closed again, for the last time under British Rail, on 16th March 1958, except for a few miles in the north which connected with a branch from Horsted Keynes to Haywards Heath, which had been electrified. One reason for keeping this open was to allow race specials for Lingfield to use an alternative route rather than clutter up the main Brighton line to the west.

Three young students, inspired by the welsh narrow gauge railways, determined to try to reopen the line and called a meeting at Haywards Heath on 16th March 1959, exactly one year after the closure. A committee was elected, and after negotiations with British Rail, it was finally decided to reopen the line between Horsted Keynes and Sheffield Park, a distance of some five miles. At that time the branch from the former station to Haywards Heath was still open, so there was a link with the main line, but the portion south of Sheffield Park was lifted by 1960.

The Bluebell Railway Society quickly attracted large numbers of young and some older enthusiasts. There was a mass of hard work to be done - weeds and overhanging trees to be cleared, Sheffield Park station to be renovated and cleaned up, and since British Rail would not allow sharing of Horsted Keynes with their services, at that time, a "halt" had to be built at the northern end of the territory. Incidentally Sheffield Park station was leased to the Society at 5 shillings per week! As to the rest of the line, there was a protracted wrangle with British Rail as to the terms of purchase or leasing. This resulted in the formation of a Limited Company, the Bluebell Railway Ltd., whose directors were Trustees of the Society, backed by a guarantee of £10,000 in the event of liquidation, this sum being put up by people whom one can only describe with all due reverence as "the faithful", in view of their willingness to risk their money to a group of what must have seemed a group of quasi-religious fanatics with some harebrained scheme of running a railway which had already gone broke! However, succeed the project did, and on 7th August 1960, amid a blaze of publicity, the first service passenger train left Sheffield Park for Horsted Keynes, or rather the halt which was the nearest one could get. By 1962 British Rail was allowing the company to share facilities in Horsted Keynes itself, and it was always a stimulating experience to be on duty on the Bluebell platform there, and swop good humoured insults with the resident British Rail porter-booking clerk and general factotum, a ripe Sussex character from one of the nearby villages.

On 27th October 1963, the branch from Horsted Keynes to Haywards Heath was finally shut. With the subsequent lifting of the track together with the northerly portion to East Grinstead, the five miles of Bluebell track were now isolated by rail. Such has been the appeal of steam however, that passenger journeys have gone on steadily multiplying, and Sheffield Park car park has been greatly extended.

After the initial difficulties, the Committee made a wise decision to endeavour to preserve and maintain as far as possible in their original condition, a representative sample of locomotives and coaches, mainly from the railways of the south. To date, some sixteen locomotives are in the locomotive shed, the oldest being a Brighton "Terrier", a small tank engine of a class so called because of their distinctive barking exhaust. This locomotive will be 102 years old in August next, and it is still in regular service. There are some 24 coaches, most of them in service or undergoing extensive restoration with that end in view. Of interest to our own History Society members would be the so-called "Chesham set", some 80 years old, which served on the Metropolitan branch from Chalfont to Chesham. The work being done on these by a dedicated team of craftsman is incredible in its painstaking accuracy and finish (all unpaid!!).

The two stations are in a dignified "country house" style, with at Horsted Keynes no less than five platforms - an opulent junction set in the middle of nowhere - which was to prove very useful to the Bluebell Railway in terms of handling heavy summer traffic.

A full seven day service is maintained through the summer, with two sets in operation on Sundays. One may find oneself in a corridor train of the '30's or a non-corridor "country branch" or "suburban" of the early years of the century. All operations are carried out strictly according to proper railway procedure, with a totally "interlocking" signal system, making it impossible for two trains to be admitted to the same portion of line at once. Most signal equipment is of Brighton or Southern origin.

All operating staff except a small nucleus of key maintenance personnel are volunteers, but training and testing is done as in general on the railway system.

Turning to the more essentially historical aspects - now that the Society owns the entire line and adjoining lands - purchase having been completed in 1972 - long term plans are being put into effect. It is intended to build a proper museum building at Horsted Keynes, as the number of small exhibits is still growing. The station itself will be designated a preservation area, and all buildings and equipment in the area will have to conform to Southern Railway specification. The overall scene will then be of a country junction of the 20's. Sheffield Park will continue to retain a distinctly "Brighton Railway" atmosphere, and the same restrictions on building will be applied as at the other terminus. A fully operational Brighton signal box will be erected on its former site south of the station, to replace the present signal cabin on the platform.

In addition, a locomotive repair works and carriage repair works will replace the existing structures. Plans are well ahead for this, thanks to the tremendous support not only from members and enthusiasts, but also from the public, well over a million of whom have been carried. As time goes on, steam engine repairs will become more difficult, not only because of the age of the locomotives, but also the increasing scarcity of facilities. Coaches too will need more attention, but with the aid of improved facilities and the skill of members, this problem can be solved. The heavy locomotive repair shed will assist greatly on the locomotive side, and fortunately there are one or two large engineering firms able to provide major repair facilities (boilers) etc.

So much for the line - now a few words about its surroundings. The Sussex Weald (Anglo-Saxon "wald") although now a place of great beauty, calm and pastoral forest in character, was in former days a centre of iron smelting. The proximity of iron ore, and plentiful timber for fuel, together with abundant streams to provide water power, made this a natural area for this industry. Queen Elizabeth I however, stopped much of this, being concerned at the deforestation which meant less timber for her ships, albeit more iron for the cannon, and the industry moved to other areas. However, the old traditions survive in place names like "Furners Lane" (Furnace), and in places the old "hammer ponds" are still existent.

The whole area is steeped in history, and its churches and medieval manor houses are a delight.

Sheffield Park itself is the former home of the Earl of Sheffield, and now belongs to the National Trust. In its magnificent grounds first-class cricket used to be played, and amongst others, the visiting Australian test teams always played their first match of the tour (a "friendly") here. During the summer months, the mounted gentry in the Yeomanry (forerunner of the Territorials) were wont to hold manoeuvres in the area, and in these the railway played its part in transporting the lowly infantry volunteers from Brighton, as well as the more aristocratic cavalry.

The History Society will be hoping to arrange a visit to the railway and to Sheffield Park during the summer.

H. FEW.

RUISLIP WOODS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MAD BESS

by Eileen M. Bowlt

The first mention of Ruislip Woods is in the Domesday Survey of 1086: "There is a park for wild beasts of the forest there and pannage for 1500 pigs, rendering 20d."

Pannage was the right of the manorial tenant to pasture his pigs on the acorn fall in the Lord's woods. A 1248 customal of Ruislip gives the fee for pannage as 1d. per annum for each pig over one year old, ½d. for those under one year and nothing for sucking pigs. As late as 1910 Eastcote residents gathered acorns from the woods and sold them to local farmers for their pigs.

The Lord of the Manor and his tenants derived great benefits from the woods. The deer and other wild animals provided hunting and food for the upper classes and the sale of wood and pannage brought in about 25% of the Manor's revenue.

1289	Entire revenue:	£121. 8s. 2¼d.
	Sale of wood:	£ 30. 5s. 5d.
	Pannage:	£ 4. 7s. 2½d.

The tenants found employment, fuel, building and fencing material and fodder, which must have formed almost as great a proportion of their income.

RUISLIP TIMBER IN ANCIENT BUILDINGS (1)

Intermittent wars with France throughout the 14th Century led to the Crown's seizure of all lands belonging to Alien Priories in 1339. The fine oaks in Ruislip Woods proved a great temptation to royal builders and many depradations were made upon them.

20th February, 1339: A letter from King Edward III ordered delivery of 24 oaks in the wood of Ruislip for works in the Tower of London, to Nicholas de la Beche, Constable of the Tower.

1st April, 1339: The Prior of Ogborne (Proctor-General of the Abbey of Bec's English lands) was commanded to sell to the Mayor and citizens of London as many oaks in his wood of Ruislip "as they require for making springalds and other engines".

1344: The King appointed Brother John Walerand to take "such land and water carriage as shall be necessary to bring the timber purveyed for the works in the Castle of Windsor from Ruislip and other places to the castle."

1346: Similar orders were sent to Brother John Walerand, this time for wood needed for the King's Palace at Westminster.

1346: The Black Prince requested 30 oaks in the Park and Wood of Ruislip "For timber towards building a great hall at the Prince's Manor of Kennington and other houses".

1347: More wood was demanded for Westminster Palace.

1352: The Black Prince appointed Adam Kentish to cut and fell 36 oaks "which the Prior to Ogbourne has given to the Prince in his wood of Ruislip towards the repair of the Manor of Kennington and to take carts for the carriage of the oaks from the said wood to some place on the water of Thames nearer the said Manor and to take men for cutting the oaks and other work men needed for the above works."

Is it surprising that the income from pannage which stood at £4.7s.2½d. in 1289 should have fallen to 16s.1½d. by 1436?

BIRD AND AMERY'S REQUISITIONS - 1538 (2)

Ruislip passed into the hands of King's College, Cambridge in 1451. A letter from the Provost of Kings to William Paget, Secretary to Jane Seymour, complains of the requisitioning of excessive amounts of timber from Ruislip Woods by two royal purveyors, Bird and Amery.

Bird had felled 300 oaks for the "New park beside Westminster", (presumably St. James's). Amery was a local man who probably looked upon the woods as his own preserve and was annoyed at Bird's encroachment and determined to take more timber from Ruislip on his own account.

Paget rode over from his "cottage at Drayton" and brought the two "miserable fellows" face to face. Bird admitted that he had felled the trees as a malicious act against Amery; which was poor comfort for the Provost of King's who at a period of high inflation saw a valuable source of income being destroyed.

In his reply to the Provost, dated July 1538, Paget enclosed a warrant which he advised him to have copied on parchment and to give to the King. "If ye can get it signed by the King it will make all and if ye declare to his highness the loss of your college, the undoing of your tenants and lordship (the same standing all by making of bricks, tiles and lime) which shall fortune by the waste of your woods, and that there is store enough elsewhere, I think his grace will not stick at it."

Since Paget ends his letter by consoling the Provost with the idea that he has "yet 500 timber trees", we can assume that our woods were in a very healthy state in the middle of the 16th Century.

A statute of 1544 prevented any further stripping of woodlands and was aimed at preserving sufficient large oaks for ship-building. By law twelve storrier trees or standells were to be left upon each acre.

MAD BESS WOOD

St. Catherine's Manor stretched from just north of Mad Bess Wood to the Pinn. The embankment covered with ancient coppiced hornbeam about 25 yards west of Ducks Hill Road marks it eastern boundary. It was not a manor in its own right, but formed part of the Manor of Harmondsworth and had belonged to St. Catherine's Monastery in Rouen for several centuries, hence its name.

The strip between the embankment and Ducks Hill Road covering approximately 4½ acres, technically "waste" of the Manor, was let out in allotments after 1865. The most northerly used for gravel digging now has a find crop of alders, as the wet patch on the new clay floor provided a suitable habitat. (3)

1587 - SURVEY OF ST. CATHERINE'S MANOR

The wood which we now call Mad Bess suffered many changes of name and ownership. During the Hundred Year's War it was annexed by the Crown because it belonged to an alien priory and was granted to William Wykeham in 1391 for his new foundation, Winchester College.

Henry VIII, building up great hunting estates based on Hampton Court forced the College to exchange it for other lands in 1544.

Edward VI granted all the Harmondsworth lands "including the woods called Westwood and Lowyshill in Ruislip Parish", to Sir William Paget's younger son Thomas, 3rd Lord Paget was a Roman Catholic and sympathetic to Mary, Queen of Scot's cause. He was attainted after the discovery of the Babington Plot in 1586 and his lands surveyed.(4) The interesting survey of St. Catherine's Manor made in 1587 is extant.

"There is within this hamlet called St. Catherine's End lying in the parish of Ruislip a common ground called Westwood Common wherein the lord hath wood and soil and the tenants have free liberty of common herbage with their cattle and pannage for their swine, containing, by estimation 160 acres."

Actually the survey mentions not one but three separate woods:

1. 10 acres "lately enclosed coppice".
2. 26 acres of coppice enclosed from the common in 1586. The underwood in this coppice was estimated as worth £6 an acre, and there were 360 "good oaks" worth 6s.3d. a tree.
3. 124 acres of wood and waste ground "parcel of the said common", lying open.

The overall name was Westwood.

The clearing with a fairly modern house on it by the Scout's camp was probably made in or about 1585, for the survey says: "The Lady Paget did grant about two years since to Thomas Gold her bailiff and woodward of this hamlet 2 acres of ground out of Westwood common to build a house upon. Upon which grant he felled so much wood as amounted to 8 loads of tallwood worth 3s.4d. the load and 3 old scubbed oaks worth by estimation 10s. and built thereupon a tenement for which he payeth yearly 4d."

THE 1769 ENCLOSURE (5)

Not until 1769 is any mention to be found of the name Mad Bess. The commons of St. Catherine's Manor were enclosed in that year, the earliest enclosure in Middlesex. Five pieces of woodland were named:

1. North Riding - the western section.
2. Sanson's Hill Wood.
3. Mad Bess or Censor's Wood.
4. Standale Wood.
5. Westcoat Wood Close.

Since the early days of the 19th Century the eastern section by Youngwood Farm has been known as Young Wood, but the 1806 Ordnance Survey Map calls that stretch of woodland Clayton's Wood. A Mark Clayton was tenent of Ducks Hill Farm at the time and was one of the Churchwardens at St. Martin's. He probably rented the woodlands.

LATER OWNERSHIP

Sir Christopher Hatton obtained a lease on the woods from Queen Elizabeth I after the Paget Attainder, but they were returned to the Paget family before the end of the 16th Century, and sold again in 1603 to Henry and Catherine Clarke. In 1719, John Child purchased the whole of St. Catherine's Manor and the small freehold estate called Southcote Manor just north of Ladygate Lane, originally belonging to the hereditary forester of the Manor of Harmondsworth. He left St. Catherine's to his four nieces, one of whom, Sarah Mico married John Lewin who bought up the other threeparts if 1768. At the enclosure in the following year he bought out all the smaller commoners and thus became owner of all the woodlands.(6)

In 1800 the estate was divided between Sarah Lewin (whether John Lewin's widow or daughter is not clear) and William Shepherd, a son-in-law.

The Cox family were the last private owners, Frederick Cox died in 1914. Mad Bess Wood was bought by the Ruislip-Northwood Urban District Council in conjunction with the Middlesex and London County Councils in 1936.

VARIATIONS IN SIZE

1587	-	160 acres:	Paget Survey.
1803	-	122 acres:	advertisement for a sale by auction which in the event, did not take place.
1806	-	121 acres:	Enclosure Map of the Manor of Ruislip.
1865	-	135 acres:	the Ordnance Survey Map. A 12-acre field near the Six Bells had either been planted or reverted to woodland. Spruce found there today are obviously not native trees.
1914	-	146 acres:	Valuation of Frederick Cox's estates.
1936	-	186 acres:	purchased for public use.

The many tracks and pathways in Mad Bess Wood have names which are in danger of being forgotten. These include Main Drive, Centre Drive, Firs Ride, Warren Ride, Serpentine Walk and Youngwood Drive and Walk. Some of the boundary banks like the one bordering Ducks Hill Road are ancient Manorial boundaries. Others may have been thrown up in the mid 1580s when the Pagets were enclosing parcels of woodland.

MURDER OF JOHN BRILL - 1837

"Bell's Weekly Messenger" January 1837, gives an account of an inquest held at the Six Bells Public House on a 15 year-old boy called John Brill who's body had been found in Youngwood, "adjoining a wood called Mad Bess" in the occupation of a farmer called Churchill. The Foreman of the Jury was the Rev. Christopher Packe, Vicar of St. Martin's. The body had been found by James Lavender on Sunday, the boy having been missing since the previous Thursday. He had been battered to death.

Some months earlier the victim had given evidence against James Bray and Thomas Lavender, sons of James, for poaching on Ralph Deane's estates. At the time these two and Charles Lamb who had also been involved in the poaching had been heard to threaten the boy's life, and consequently were brought before the jury at the inquest.

Mr. Churchill, John Brill's employer, gave evidence that he had last seen the boy alive when he had sent him into the wood to mend fences.

The three suspects were allowed to go free because of insufficient evidence, but only after being taken in to view the body because of a widely held superstition that blood will burst from a body when its murderer approaches.

John Brill was buried at St. Martin's, the word "murdered" being written in the margin of the parish register after his name.

SUBURBAN THREAT

The opening of the Metropolitan Railway to Uxbridge on 1st January 1905, brought the threat of suburbia to the rural atmosphere then pervading the environs of Ruislip.

King's College had already begun to sell parcels of pasture land for building purposes. The houses built in the former Wythy Crofts pastures (Kings End) in 1903 were an example. The development of the northern part of Copse Wood was considered as early as 1899. By 1909, the College had decided to sell land in blocks to a company called Ruislip Manor Ltd. which would provide roads, drains, water and power facilities and re-sell the land to private individuals or builders for the construction of houses.

A Town - planning competition was held.(7) The winners, Messrs. A. & J. Soutar of Wandsworth, produced a plan for developing the whole of Copse and Park Woods. Housing density was to increase from three to the acre in Copse Wood to ten to the acre south of Ruislip Manor Station. A major shopping and service area was planned overlooking the reservoir and the Pinn was to have been made into a series of ornamental lakes. The Housing, Town Planning etc. Act of the same year encouraged the council to undertake its own plan. In 1914, Ruislip - Northwood U.D.C. had the distinction of becoming the first small authority to produce a major plan. It differed slightly from the Soutar plan, but the woods were still to be built over. Ironically, the stated aim of the plan was to preserve the amenities of the district.

The intervention of the 1914 war prevented large scale building for some years and people who moved into the area during those years came to resent the increasing urbanisition of their "village" during the 1920s.

The Residents' Association(8) became increasingly anxious to preserve several old buildings and to have Park Wood as a public open space. Mr. Hooper invited Mr. Menzies of the Royal Society of Arts to visit Ruislip in January 1930 to decide which buildings should be preserved. Manor Farm, the Old Post Office (Haleys) the Old Bell (Occasional Furniture), the Priest's House (Offices adjoining the Priory Restaurant) and the two barns were named as the most important. Mr. Hooper's next step was to approach King's College.

In August 1930 he visited King's College and stated the Residents' Associations' complaints about the state of the woods: namely, the woods had been ruthlessly cut, no tree remaining larger than eight inches in diameter; no replanting had taken place and the butt - ends and roots had not been cleared. The authorities excused their management on the grounds that the woods were due to be built over.

The College was amenable to the idea of Park Wood becoming an open space; and would have liked to end its 500 year association with Ruislip with a "gracious act", by giving Park Wood, Manor Farm and the Old Post Office to the U.D.C. However, the College was governed by the Universities and Colleges Act and considered as a trustee of its lands. Therefore the sale had

to be negotiated. Eventually Park Wood was sold to Ruislip-Northwood U.D.C. for £28,000 and Manor Farm and the Old Post Office were included as a gift. Middlesex County Council was persuaded to contribute 75% of the cost, on the grounds that the woods were used by many outsiders and Railway Day Trippers. (Visit Ruislip Woods in Bluebell Time' exhorted the Metropolitan Railway adverts), It was agreed that the U.D.C. should maintain Park Wood as an open space under a lease of one guinea a year. No building was to be put up without permission of the Councy Council and no trees were to be cut down without similar permission.

J. Maynard Keynes, the famous economist was bursar of King's College and conducted that side of the negotiations. These were not always entirely amicable. Exception was taken to a sarcastic reference to the College in Mr. Horder's preface to Cattle's "Short History of Ruislip", in which he had wondered "What prayers would be needed to prevent irresponsible building from destroying the last vestiges of the Manor of Ruislip". Mr. Keynes considered this "impertinent and somewhat offensive to the College".

However, all was peace and friendship when the handing over ceremony took place on Saturday, 23rd July, 1932. The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, declared the woods open from a platform on the ridge overlooking the Lido.
Mr. Maynard-Keynes was on the platform and later at a tea in the Great Barn, he was presented with a commemorative parchment. Five trees were planted to mark the occasion, one by 94 year-old Mrs. Tobutt, the oldest inhabitant. Unfortunately, none of them remain today.

The "Advertiser and Gazette" waxed lyrical. "The woodland scene was a fitting prelude when the great chief of the ardent band that seeks to preserve our Ruritania was there to declare that this ancient fairyland is to be retained by the people forever."

"Rustic games and harmony on the lawns of the Manor House" followed, and a massed camp fire and community singing ended the evening.

The remaining 155 acres of Copse Wood and 186 acres of Mad Bess Wood were acquired by the U.D.C. in connunction with Middlesex County Council and the L.C.C. for £23,250 in 1936.

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ROYAL FINANCE

Let me introduce myself. I am a collector. I am not a historian; only a student in a very humble way. Lack of spare cash and storage space limit my collecting, and these two factors channelled my interest in the direction of postal history. My relatively small collection of letters and postmarks illustrate postal history rather than reveal it, there are many gaps. I accumulate notes in books and on pieces of paper, and like the squirrel, which I am said to emulate, I cannot always find them when wanted in a hurry.

Surely the old and the personal are always muse-worthy, and part of the fascination of postal history lies in the glimpses one gets of subjects non-postal. Even if facts are well known, I find the discovery of additional first-hand evidence exciting.

The first item (because of its antiquity) in my collection is a letter from the Archbishop of York in 1666. I cannot do better than quote it in full:

To my very loving friend Mr. Richard Sikes, Rector of Spoffort, these:

Sir,

I send you herewith to see, a copy of His Matys Letter directed to me; being informed that you are a man able to do His Ma'ty the service therein desired: which is not to give but to lend & that upon ye full usual interest; for it will not be accepted upon other terms. The security is ye best that England can give, namely an act of parliament, together with His Matys Royall word that all things shall be punctually and exactly performed according to it. You are desired speedily to certify what you are willing to lend, & in what time you can pay it into ye Excheq'r, whereupon you shall have then a Tally, and an Order for ye repayment of ye principall in your coarse, & for ye interest in ye mean time at ye end of every six months. So not doubting of your readiness in a thing so much concerning His Matys Service and satisfaction who hath been & is so gracious a princely fflaker* of the Church, I bid you heartily ffarewell.

Yours very loving friend

RICH, EBOR.

Bishopsthorp
Jun 12 1666

* The ff is I believe a form of capital F and can be substituted if you think desirable the K must surely have been intended for th.

One wonders whether "loving friend" had the same meaning to R. Sykes after receiving this letter that it had before.

The Archbishop of York was Richard Sterne, who had been translated from Carlisle in 1664, and died in 1682. Samuel Pepys wrote in his diary for the 8th April 1666: "to the Chapel, bet could not get in to hear well. But I had the pleasure, once in my life, to see an Archbishop (this was of York) in a pulpit."

On the question of loans to the King, Pepys is again very helpful. There are several references to grants and loans made to King Charles II; but three extracts from August 1667 are of special interest as they refer to his personal experiences. "Sir W. Coventry did single Sir W. Penn and me, and desired us to lend the King some money ...... He did not much press it and we made but a merry answer thereto; but I perceive he did ask it seriously, and did tell us that there never was so much need of it in the world as now." Three days later he met Sir G. Downing "He tells me how he will make all the Exchequer officers ...... to lend the King money upon the Act; and that the least Clerk shall lend money and he believes the least will £100; but this I do not believe. He made me almost ashamed that we of the Navy had not in all this time lent any; so that I find it necessary I should, and so will speedily do it before any of my fellows begin and lead me to a bigger sum." On the 30th of the month he meets Sir G. Downing again who tells him that Sir William Penn had offered to lend £500; "and I tell him of my £300 which he would have me to lend upon the credit of the latter part of the Act; saying that by that means my 10 per cent will continue to run the longer. But I understand better, and will do it upon the £380,000* which will come to be paid the sooner; there being no delight in lending money now, to be paid by the King two years hence." (What a canny little man he was!)

In spite of the institution of the Civil List in 1697, King George II still had recourse to borrowing on the security of a Tally and an Act. From part of a document, saved probably for the sake of the autograph: "...... by a Land Tax to be raised in Great Britain, for the Service of the Year 1746. That you deliver and pay of such His Majesty's Treasure as remains in your charge, arising by Virtue of the said Act, unto the Right Honourable George Dodington Esq.; or his Assigns, the sum of Four Hundred Pounds in Repayment of the like sum by him lent upon Credit of the said Act, and paid into the Receipt of His Majesty's Exchequer the said Twenty-fourth Day of April 1746, as by a Tally bearing Date the same Day appears: ......" In 1748 Geo. Dodington signed a receipt (on the back of the fragment) for £436.19s.10d., representing compound interest of 4½%.

G. Dodington was M.P. for Bridgewater from 1722 to 1754, a Lord of the Treasury in 1724 and Treasurer of the Navy in 1744 and 1735.

You may well be wondering what all this has to do with postal history? Very little; but the Archbishop's letter carries no postal marking as it would have done if carried by the General Post, thus adding to the evidence that the Church maintained its own carrier service, breaking the monopoly which the State claimed.

* I cannot find any other reference to the £380,000, or the repayment of the loan.

E.A. CHING.

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FOR DELIVERY ON CHRISTMAS DAY

In my collection there is an envelope on which a ½d. stamp is cancelled by an oval mark having the words - POSTED IN ADVANCE: FOR DELIVERY ON XMAS DAY - around the edge and MR 1905 in the middle, MR being the code for Manchester.

This has reference to a plan proposed by the Post Office, to ease the very heavy peak load at the larger offices, created by items posted on Christmas Eve to ensure their delivery on Christmas Day. Around the turn of the century people expected to, and often did, receive in the morning, packets posted before 6 o'clock on the previous afternoon. It was not unusual for a letter posted in the morning to be delivered the same afternoon (see note 1).

The introduction of the nation-wide penny post in 1840 had increased tremendously the size of the post; while the "invention" of the Christmas greetings card in 1843 (see note 2), and the reduction of the charge for cards to ½d. in 1870, resulted in very heavy posting in the afternoon before Christmas Day. By offering to deliver on Christmas Day if desired, items posted during the previous week, they could be postmarked and sorted at leisure.

A trial was held in Rochdale in 1902. Letters, cards, etc. had to be handed in at a post office with a request for the special delivery. It saved the customer a last minute rush, and proved popular enough to be extended to other offices in Lancashire and Cheshire the following year, and eventually to about 40 offices throughout Great Britain. Alas, it ceased rather abruptly in 1909, after some mail bags were mislaid and turned up several months later with the tell-tale marks on their contents.

Cancelling machines and sorting techniques had improved so much in the meantime, that it was not worth running the risk of another such failure.

Note 1: A friend has a collection of picture postcards saved by his mother. Among them are some sent to her by his father in 1906. One was posted on each working day throughout that year telling her to expect him home at 7 o'clock. He posted them in the City to catch the 2.30 p.m. collection and they were delivered to his home in Hammersmith before he reached it.

Note 2: Paper "Valentines" were produced in the 16th Century, and during the 18th and 19th Centuries, calendars and printed advertising material were sent to their customers by merchants, so it is rather surprising that it took them years after the introduction of cheap postage for the first printed Christmas greetings card to appear. It was designed by J.C. Horsley R.A. (1817-1903) for his friend Sir Henry Cole (1808-1882) in 1843 as mentioned. The card, of which only 1000 were printed and put on sale at Felix Summerby's "Home Treasury" office at No.12 Old Bond St., is rare, but facsimilies exist. It was lithographed in dark sepia on a stiff card, 5-1/8th in. x 3¼in., and hand coloured in shades of pink, blue, green and yellow. Above a banner carrying the words "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you", is shown a family gathering of father, mother, children and grandchildren about to drink a toast. The whole is in a rustic frame with side panels showing groups in acts of charity.

The next reference I have found, is to an etched card of similar design, by a painter of miniatures, W.M. Egley (1798-1870), produced in 1848. I find it difficult to believe that the demand grew so slowly.

E. A. CHING.

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SIR ROBERT VYNER (ob. 1688)

You may wonder what Sir Robert, Goldsmith, Banker, Sheriff of the City of London and once Lord Mayor, has to do with the Post Office. But for the great fire of 1666 probably nothing; as it is:

Sir Robert was one of many who lost their London homes as a result of the fire. It has been estimated that about 13,200 houses in over 400 streets and courts were burnt. Sir Robert had been knighted in 1665 and was made a baronet in 1666, and was so much in favour with the King, that he was granted permission to store his money, jewels and plate in the strong-room at Windsor Castle. It is not surprising that he was able to rebuild himself a substantial mansion in Lombard Street (on the site of No.10).

Since 1635, the chief "post-house" (until 1637 the only one) had been in Bishopsgate. As a result of the fire the London Gazette for 3rd September 1666 announced that "the General Post-Office was for the present held at the Two Black Pillars in Brydges Street, over against the "Fleece Tavern", Covent Garden, till a more convenient place can be found in London." That invaluable recorder of contemporary events, Samuel Pepys, explains the move on the 4th September, he wrote to his father "but the post-house being burned, the letter could not go". The Office was for a time in Broad Street ("London's Burning" by John Bedford) before returning to Bishopsgate.

However post-office business was on the increase and larger premises were required, so on Ladyday 1678, "Ye Post Ofiice in Bishopsgate Street" removed to the mansion of Sir Robert Vyner in Lombard Street. The Post-master General's house stood on the western side of the main building and was occupied until 1765, after which it was usual for the P.M.G. to live in the West-End, or the suburbs, while retaining the perquisite of residence. From 1691, there had been two joint-P.M.Gs; how they divided the perques between themselves I do not know.

As business increased further adjoining buildings were occupied until the office complex extended southward to Sherborne Lane and Abchurch Lane. It was not until 1829 that a move to a purpose-built headquarters was made. This was a building on the east side of St. Martin's-le-Grand, opposite one of the mail-coach inns "The Bull and Mouth", which was demolished in 1869 to make room for new Headquarter buildings, G.P.O. North and G.P.O. West; the older building, now known as G.P.O. East, was demolished in 1912.

Because of his association with Swakeleys, I thought it worth while finding out a bit more about Sir Robert. He was born in 1631, apprenticed to his uncle, Thomas Viner, a London Goldsmith and Banker, and eventually became his partner. As already noted, he was knighted in 1665. He was elected an Alderman and Sheriff of the City of London in 1666. Samuel Pepys makes several references to him as a man of eminence and as a banker, but the most interesting is an account of a visit to Swakeleys in September 1665: "To Swakely to Sir R. Viners. A very pleasant place, bought by him of Sir James Harrington's lady (earlier in 1665). He took us up and down with great respect and showed us all his house and grounds; and it is a place not very moderne in the garden nor the house, but the most uniform in all that ever I saw; and some things to excess." Pepys describes the screen in the hall and notices that all the window cases, door cases and fireplaces in all the house are of marble. He goes on "He showed me a black boy that he had, that died of consumption, and

being dead, he caused him to be dried in an oven, and lies there entire in a box." Black boys, like private coaches, were a status symbol at that time; for a time Samuel Pepys had a black boy named Jack on his domestic staff. It is probable that most of them died young. Regarding Sir Robert's gruesome exhibit; it was generally supposed to have been put into a cupboard half way up the servants stairs. The door had been sealed and no one bothered, or dared, to open it. The legend was handed down from one generation of servants to the next, but when in 1923 the house was sold, some contractor's men opened the cupboard and it was found to be empty.

Pepys with his ready eye for the women found Lady Vyner "yet handsome, but hath been a very handsome woman: now is old".

She had brought Sir Robert a dowry of "near 100,000 l. and now lives no man in England in greater plenty, and commands both King and Council with his credit he gives them".

This alas was his undoing. On January 2nd 1671 * , the Council decided to suspend principal payments from the Exchequer and to resume possession of the incoming revenues, which were by now almost entirely mortgaged to the bankers., Sir Robert lost £416,000 in Exchequer bonds and was declared bankrupt (the bankruptcy was eventually settled by an act of parliament in 1699, 10 years after his death). This could well have been the reason for his willingness to let his town house to the Post Office. It did not however prevent his election to Lord Mayor in 1674, an honour generally reserved for prosperous men, nor was he forced to sell, or let, Swakeleys.

The Concise Dictionary of National Biography states that in May 1672, Sir Robert caused to be erected in the Stocks Market, London, an equestrian statue of King Charles II. Lord Gleichen in his book "London's Open-Air Statuary" gives the year as 1677. W.G. Bell in his book "Unknown London" favours the earlier date: but none gives a reference. Bell shows a picture of the statue and quotes some contemporary verses, none of them complimentary, from which we learn:

"So Sir Robert advanced the King's statue in token
"Of a Broker defeated and Lombard Street broken."

"By all it appears, from first to the last
"To be a revenge, and a malice forecast,
"Upon the King's Birthday to set up a thing
"That shows him a Monkey more like than a King."

Which may support the earlier date, but the statue was removed in 1738 to make room for the Mansion House.

"What affront to crowned heads could you offer more bare,
"Than to pull down a King to make room for a Mayor."

The same anonymous rhymster wrote:

"Full sixty-one years have I stood in this place."

Which supports the later date; also it seems to me more likely that Sir Robert would do such a thing after his term as Lord Mayor, rather than in the middle of a financial crisis.

*Julian Calendar

The story of the statue is worth retelling, and it throws some light on Sir Robert's character. Being an ardent royalist, if for no other reason, he was anxious to raise a statue of his master and place it in the Stocks (or Woolchurch) Market. Hearing from his agent at Leghorn, that the Polish Ambassador to England had commissioned a marble statue of his master, John Sobieski, who was represented in the act of trampling a Turk underfoot, and that the statue having been finished, the unfortunate ambassador found that he could not pay for it. Sir Robert seized the opportunity to buy the statue. He arranged for the sculptor, Latham, to alter John's features into those of Charles, or to substitute a new head. In due course the statue was erected on a high pedestal in the market. It now represented Charles trampling on a fallen Cromwell, but a Cromwell wearing a Turk's headdress and clothes. This does not seem to have worried anyone, though two lines of another verse run:

"Said the old whiskered Turk had Oliver's face
"Though you know, to be conquered, he ne'er felt the disgrace."

Some years after it was taken down the Common Council presented it to the Vyner family, and it is now in the then family seat, Newby Hall, Ripon.

Swakeleys remained in the possession of the family until 1741, after which it passed through various hands until in 1955 it was purchased, with what remained of the grounds, by the London Postal-Region Sports Club.

E. A. CHING.

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POSTCRIPT

For members of our Society who may happen to visit Yorkshire this year, and particularly Fountains Abbey and Fountains Hall which was partly built out of the Abbey stones, it may interest them to know that Sir Robert Vyner's descendants are occupants of the Hall. The portrait of Sir Robert Vyner and his family is on display and also a large framed document of an acknowledgement by King Charles II to Sir Robert Vyner for his services in providing new regalia for the King's Coronation in 1661. The present occupant is Commander Clare Vyner, whose daughter Elizabeth and eldest son Charles were killed on duty during the second world war leaving one remaining son, Henry. There is a most beautiful memorial to Elizabeth and Charles in the Hall which was unveiled in 1953 by the Queen Mother who was Elizabeth's godmother.

DOREEN L. EDWARDS.