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SOCIETY.

DATE:

THE RUISLIP, NORTHWOOD AND EASTCOTE
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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BULLETIN

APRIL, 1975.

Spring is just around the corner and once more the yearly bulletin takes its bow, with some very interesting articles. Mr. P. Austin (a member of our Society) has kindly sent us a family letter from 'down under' which is over a hundred years old. It makes fascinating reading.

Sadly I have to report that the number of members has decreased rather badly and attendances at the meetings have been low compared with previous years. This is most disappointing and your committee hopes that this will improve.

THE NEW FINANCIAL YEAR STARTS ON APRIL 1st AND YOU ARE REMINDED THAT AT THE A.G.M. THE SUBSCRIPTION WAS RAISED TO 75p. PLEASE PAY THE TREASURER, MRS. E.W. CRANE, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS WE RELY ON SUBSCRIPTIONS TO PAY FOR SPEAKERS ETC.

Members have been informed at the meetings about the Summer Programme and any members wishing to obtain more details can ring
Mr. F.D. Veal (866-2784)

The Winter Programme is under way and Mr. R. Bedford will be completing it shortly. All PAID-UP members will be issued with the new programme when they are printed.

DOREEN L. EDWARDS
(Hon. Editor)

THE OUTING TO COMPTON WYNYATES

..... by J.R. SWEASEY

On Saturday, June 15th 1974, members and friends numbering 24 visited Compton Wynyates, the home of the Compton family since 1200, apart from a break of about 70 years when the house was unoccupied.

A picturesque drive in a coach took us past the outskirts of Oxford and Banbury, through the village of Tysoe to the gates of the park. The house was approached on foot along an avenue leading down into the hollow and over the site of the old drawbridge, which was rendered unnecessary after orders were issued by Parliament about 1650 to fill in the moat. The Earl of Northampton, a direct ancestor of the present owner had been an ardent Royalist and the house was captured by Cromwellian troops in July 1644 after a two day siege: Cromwell was determined that the house should not be used again to offer him resistance.

Of the many interesting features about the house, the entrance porch with the Royal Arms of England surmounted by a Royal Crown bearing an inscription (in Latin) "My Loed King Henry VIII" was the most imposing. Other parts to attract special attention were the screen in the Big Hall; the Priest's Room with three staircases leading to it (a very desirable precaution in the days of religious intolerance); the room where Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon slept (the same room was occupied by Queen Elizabeth, James I and Charles I during their visits to Compton Wynyates); the portraits in the dining room about each of which the knowledgeable guide had a potted history to tell; and the huge elm table for the retainers with a plank over 23 feet long, 2 feet wide and 3 inches thick. When the interior of the house had been viewed a pleasant hour was spent in the gardens, admiring and photographing the topiary and the fishponds and inspecting the church, rebuilt in 1665 after its destruction in the Civil Wars.

The coach driver varied the route on the journey home to show us more of the attractive countryside, and tea was taken at an old inn at Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire. During the drive back a vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Veal for organising the outing so successfully.

THE RUISLIP FUNERAL HATCHMENTS

.....

by J.D. LEE

The parish church of St. Martin has long contained a fine series of funeral hatchments, those dark, gloomy, diamond-shaped wood and canvas panels which still hang on the walls of older churches. The custom was for the members of gentry families to hang one of these hatchments outside the upper storey of their house when a bereavement had occurred, as a kind of warning to would-be callers. The hatchment originated in the 17th century - some early examples still exist - and is found in the Netherlands as well as in England. The centre of a hatchment always contains the family coat of arms, or both coats for a husband and wife, often surrounded with helmet, wreath, crest, mantling and motto for a man, or simply with bow and motto for the less warlike woman. Mottoes often follow a religious convention rather than the normal motto of the family concerned. The background of the hatchment was coloured according to a code: all black for bachelor or spinster (possibly also black if a married person died without a survivor. L.E.M.); black on the dexter (left as you view it) if a married man had died, black on the sinister (right) if it was a married woman's death. That a widow or widower remained was indicated by leaving the relevant half of the background white. The practice was a subtle and complete one, showing just what sort and condition of person had died. Even the unmarried could be distinguished, mainly by the lozenge shape on which the woman's arms were shown. So also could be shown the arms of second or later marriages, with indication of who had died.

Hatchments were once to be found in nearly all old churches, such a part of the current scene that old historians did not record them. In this borough they remain only at Harefield, Ruislip and (stored out of sight) Cranford, though Hayes once had a wide range. In St. Martin's some still hang, others were taken down for restoration and are stored in the belfry. Hatchments need careful but not lavish restoration to preserve the styles of the originals. The dates of those in Ruislip are probably 1705 to 1852. The custom is still very very occasionally followed in some circles.

Until the late 1950's hatchments were rarely studied, and yet, even apart from their intrinsic interest to antiquarians, they act as memorials to previous residents, for after display on house fronts, they were deposited in the local church. How long they actually were displayed on the house is one of the mysteries of the subject. It seems worthwhile to ensure that there is an accurate record of the Ruislip hatchments. Mr. Lawrence Morris contributed a short note to the Journal of the Ruislip and District Natural History Society, volume 8, 1959, and had them photographed. He kindly made available to me the results of his independent research into their "ownership", for a feature of the

hatchment was that it rarely bore the name of the deceased, simply his or her coat of arms. The Ruislip hatchments are interesting to study as they exhibit most of the convention of the custom. Before indicating these features, it might be best to describe the hatchments in chronological order as far as can be ascertained.

(1) Mary Rogers, died 1705:

Arms ROGERS Argent a chevron between 3 bucks trippant sable; impaling DACERS Argent a chevron sable between 3 torteaux each bearing an escallop argent. Mantling, urn and cherubs, no motto, winged skull in base. Size about 4 feet. Background white/black.

(2) ? Jane Rogers, died 1736:

Arms ROGERS; impaling HAWTREY Argent four lions passant sable, crowned or, in bend, double-cotised sable (usually 3 lions). Mantling in profusion, motto MORS JANUA VITAE. Size about 4 feet. Background white/black.

(3) Henry Emmett, died 1756:

Arms, Quarterly 1 and 4 EMMETT Per pale azure and sable, a fess engrailed ermine between 3 bull's heads caboshed or; 2 and 3 HILL Azure, 2 bars argent, a canton sable bearing a chevron argent charged with a wolf's head erased sable between two mullets gules, between 3 pheons argent; on an inescutcheon Quarterly 1 not known (? DORE/DOVE) Per pale gules and azure, 3 insects or; 2 ST GEORGE Argent a lion gules, crowned or, a chief azure, on a canton argent an inescutcheon azure bearing 3 crowns or; 3 ST. GOERGE ANCIENT Argent a cross flory sable; 4 ARGENTINE Gules, 3 covered cups argent. Esquire's helmet, crest, from a coronet or, a demi-bull sable. Mantling argent and gules, motto FIRMITAS IN CAELO. Skull in base. Size c.4 feet. Background black/white.

(4) ?? Joseph Musgrave, died 1757:

Arms, MUSGRAVE Azure, 6 annulets or. Helmet, wreath or and azure, crest 2 arms embowed argent, holding an annulet or. Motto IN COELO QUIES. A skull in base. Size c.3½ feet. Background all black.

(5) Owner unknown, probably Hingstone family which was in Ruislip.

Arms, HINGSTON Gules a naked arm in fess, embowed, holding an axe palewise, proper; impaling Quarterly (unknown) 1 and 4 Ermine a millrind palewise sable 2 and 3 Argent a saltire gules. Helmet, wreath argent and gules, crest a squirrel sejant proper. Mantling argent and gules, motto NON TIMIDE SED CAUTE. Winged skull in base. Size c.3½ feet. Background black/white.

(6) ? Elizabeth Rogers, died 1803:

Arms, on lozenge amid unusual decoration, ROGERS. Motto RESURGAM. Size c.4 feet. Background black.

(7) ?? Edward Scropes, who owned an estate in Ruislip early in the 19th century. Arms, SCROPE(S) Azure, a bend or. Helmet, wreath or azure, crest, from a coronet or, 5 ostrich feathers azure. Mantling argent and gules. Motto IN COELO QUIES. Cherub's heads at the top corners of the shield. Skull in base. Size c.4 feet. Background all black.

- (8) ?? George Woodroffe, early 19th century

Arms WOODROFFE Gules; on a chevron argent, 3 buck's heads erased sable, a chief per fess nebuly sable and argent, a crescent for difference; impaling HANNAY Argent, 3 buck's heads erased azure, collared or. Mantling or, motto PER ARDUA AD ALTA. Realistic angel above. Size c.4 feet. Background white/black.

- (9) Elizabeth Deane, died 1847:

Arms; DEANE Gules a lion rampant or, on a chief argent, 3 crescents gules; impaling GOSLING Gules, a chevron between 3 crescents or. Motto IN COELO QUIES. Bow above, golden mantling. Size c.4 feet. Background, white/black.

- (10) ?? James Rogers:

Arms ROGERS on main shield. On dexter rectangle ROGERS; with inescutcheon ?ARUNDELL Sable, 6 martlets argent; all impaling ARUNDELL. On sinister rectangle ROGERS impaling HAWTREY. Helmet, wreath argent and sable, mantling argent and gules. Motto POST FUNERA VIRTUS. Crest a buck trippant sable. Size c.4 feet. Background all black.

- (11) Ralph Deane, died 1852:

Arms DEANE impaling GOSLING. Helmet, wreath and mantling argent and gules. Crest a demilion rampant or holding a crescent gules. Motto VIRTUTI MOENIA CEDANT. Size c.4 feet. Background all black.

Features particularly worth noting are as follows:

(a) Backgrounds: Nos.4 and 7 have black backgrounds for the unmarried man; no.6 for the spinster. Nos. 1, 2, 8 and 9 show the woman dead, her widower still alive. Nos.3 and 5 show the man is dead, his widow lives, but in nos. 10-11 the men have died but their women predeceased them.

(b) Bows: The bow in no.9 is a common feature on women's hatchments.

(c) Cherubs etc.: The cherub's head on nos.1, 7 and 8 are also common, and have no other than decorative function. They are similar to those which occur on monuments of particularly the 18th century. The angel in no.8 is a much rarer feature on hatchments.

(d) Skulls: The winged skull in nos. 1 and 5, and the skulls in nos. 3, 4, 7 and 9 have caused some puzzlement. They may simply be mortality symbols, again like those on contemporary monuments, though some would have it that they indicate the last of the line. This would not seem to be true.

(e) Many arms: No.10 has so many arms to show the dead man married twice, and gives the arms of both wives, each of whom had died before him.

(f) Mottoes: Family mottoes occur on nos. 3, 5, 8 and 11, the remainder being religious, pointing to the after-life. RESURGAM (no.6), POST FUNERA VIRTUS (no.10), MORS JANUA VITAE (no.2), IN COELO QUIES (nos. 4, 7 and 9) are all very common, FIRMITAS IN COELO much less so.

(g) Styles: The styles of the hatchments differ considerably. Hatchments were often locally produced, by coach-painter or carpenter; in early days some were 'officially arranged' by the College of Arms. Later ones were often supplied by the undertaker. To me, the most interesting here in style are nos. 1 and 6.

Altogether, The Ruislip hatchments are a good representative set, showing the varied conventions employed, and involving a nice variety of styles. They are well worth study, and certainly must be preserved in good condition. (I would, incidentally, be pleased to hear of other hatchments known to readers, for inclusion in a projected series on county hatchments).

(Mr. L.E. Morris mentioned seeing a few hatchments in Langley parish church, near Slough, some years ago. He also recalled an interesting collection relating to the Lowndes family in Chesham parish church. Ed.)

N.B. This article had been submitted by Mr. Lee to the late Mr. L.E. Morris for comments. Mr. Morris's comments are appended.

THE CHURCH HOUSES, RUISLIP

.....

by EILEEN M. BOWLT

The Church Houses on the Eastcote Road side of St. Martin's churchyard are in danger of falling down unless radical and expensive repairs are carried out in the near future. (£65,000 is the latest estimate). It has been reported in the local press that the G.L.C. is prepared to make a grant of £45,000 towards restoration if they could then house old people - a most suitable use in view of their former purpose. (Mr. Hills, a Churchwarden of St. Martin's Church, calculated that a 65p contribution from each parishioner would raise the extra £20,000.)

Ruislip has already lost architecturally finer buildings (Eastcote House, demolished 1964, Hayden Hall, demolished late 1960s) which were said at the time to be too decayed to repair. Are we going to allow the Church Houses in the very heart of the "village" of Ruislip to be demolished in similar circumstances because we as a Society care so little for the aesthetic aspects of our community or are too sluggish to raise contributions in time?

Many voices will be raised saying that £65,000 could build better or more extensive accommodation for the elderly. If previous attempts are any guide (see Sharp's Lane) the result will not add character to the centre of Ruislip, which could so easily become indistinguishable from any other London suburb. There are always cogent economic reasons for building new instead of repairing old property, but those of us who feel strongly about the conservation of this area should speak our forcefully now.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH HOUSES

Architectural experts have suggested that the buildings date from about 1590. The lower brickwork is of a later date than that of the upper storey which suggests that the property originally consisted of a single upper room supported upon timbers above an open area or market hall. Mr. L.E. Morris suggested that it may have been used for Church Ales and Vestry meetings, since so far as is known markets were never held in Ruislip. (Journal of the Ruislip and District Natural History Society, No.5 p.7). In fact it was probably the prototype of a parish hall.

Overseers of the Poors' Accounts for 1617 mention repairs to the Church House. Bricks, lime, timber, sand, hair, tilepins, laths, nails and ironwork were all purchased. Together with labour they cost £12.13s.-d. The Overseers were probably using the money received from the Poor Rate to convert the Church House into a Poor House for people needing indoor relief, as they were empowered to do by the 1601 Poor Law.

Eight dwellings consisting of a general purpose room downstairs and one upstairs bedroom were formed, each apartment having its own spiral staircase. 4 faced the churchyard and 4 Eastcote Road. At present one of the curates of St. Martin's lives there occupying the space which at one time sufficed for four paupers!

The Overseers of the Poors' Accounts and the Ruislip Vestry minutes have frequent references to the Church Houses:

- "1659 - Paid to John Ewer for his work done to the church house, 8s.1d."
- "1679 - Given to a beggerman (whose wife was brought to bed in the church howse) at severall times, 8d."

The Vestry on Wednesday 18th April 1787 "Agreed to repair and whitewash the church houses and that John Page, bricklayer do the same." Two years later the Workhouse was built in Ducks Hill.

During this century the buildings have been used by St. Martin's to house various parish officials, Parish Clerks, Vergers and Curates and one end has been used by the Scouts and Guides. A Curate still lives in a charming dwelling in the central portion of the building and it is up to us to see that the whole property is restored and remains to delight the eyes of future generations.

WORKHOUSES AND THE POOR LAW ... by Eileen M. Bowlt

During 1974 an application was made by the executors of the late D.S. Woodbridge to demolish The Old Workhouse, Ducks Hill, Ruislip, a Grade II listed building. Hullingdon Borough Council refused permission and it remains, one of several old workhouses in North West Middlesex dating from the end of the 18th Century.

To understand why these came to be built and how they were run we must look at the Poor Laws.

THE POOR LAWS

Gregory King, the 17th Century demographer calculated the population of England for the year 1688 as 5½ millions. He divided the people into 26 classes, of which the top 21 (from Temporal Lords, through Eminent Merchants and Traders by Sea; Freeholders of the better sort; Freeholders of the lesser sort; Shopkeepers and Tradesmen, down to Military Officers) contributed to the nation's wealth. Of the remaining five classes, Cottagers and Paupers, Common soldiers and Vagrants lived beneath the subsistence level. There were 1½ million of them. What would a present day government do if nearly ¼ of the population was unemployed for most of the time? (Peter Laslett - "The World we have lost - Chap.2")

This vast amount of poverty was the result of poor agricultural methods, lack of industry, religious upheaval and later civil war. The Dissolution of the Monasteries in the mid 16th Century was not a cause of poverty, but removed one source of relief.

During the unrest of the Reformation and Counter - Reformation period, the able-bodied poor were treated harshly, often being branded and whipped from parish to parish. More humane methods of dealing with the problem evolved during the settled days of Elizabeth and culminated in the 1601 Poor Law, whereby J.P.s were to appoint from 2 to 4 Overseers of the Poor in each parish, with power to levy a Poor Rate on all property owners, each assessed on his rent. Money collected was to be used to buy materials, wool, flax etc. to provide work for the able-bodied poor. Children were to be bound as apprentices to respectable trades. Churchwardens and Overseers could also use funds to set up Poor Houses for the impotent poor.

Overseers paid out regular weekly sums to "Pensioners" who were either too old to work or who were temporarily ill. Foster parents of parish children received 2s.6d. a week for their care in the 1780s in Great Stanmore. Throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries Ruislip poor received relief in kind. Shirts, shoes, petticoats, blankets, bread and tallwood feature in Vestry Minutes and Overseer's' Accounts.

In 1662 an amendment to the Poor Law forbade strangers to take up residence in a parish unless they were clearly people of substance, unlikely to become a burden on the rates. Moving parish in the 17th Century and getting a visa to take up residence in the U.S.A. in the 20th Century are governed by the same principles! The poor must stay in their parish of "settlement" - the place they were born, had been apprenticed in, paid the parish rate, served as a parish officer or had lived for 40 days after notifying the Churchwarden.

A further act of 1696 allowed the poor (people living on a tenement of less than £10 annual value) to enter a new parish provided they carried with them a certificate from their parish of settlement, guaranteeing to accept them back, should they ever become chargeable on the Poor Rate. A Ruislip settlement case was the subject of a court order in 1693: Ann Taylor and one child were receiving poor relief from Ruislip, but upon proof being supplied that her husband Joseph Taylor had last been legally settled as a hired servant to William Martin of Harmondsworth, the magistrates ordered that the mother and child should be sent off to that parish.

Gilbert's Act of 1782 allowed parishes to acquire land for Work-houses and to form into unions to erect them. This act presumably led to the building of several local workhouses in the late 1780s.

LOCAL WORKHOUSES

The history of Ruislip Workhouse is particularly well documented. Notice was given on Sunday, 5th July 1789 that a Vestry Meeting (forerunner of Local Council) would be held the following Wednesday to discuss means for the erection of "a Poor House or Work House" for the use of the parish of Ruislip.

The Churchwardens, James Ewer and William Weatherley and the Overseers of the Poor, John Birch and Benjamin Branch were empowered to borrow £400 at 5% from Daniel Wilshin a farmer of Pinner. The principal parishioners stood security for the loans. They were James Ewer, Benjamin Branch, Richard Glover (Minister), John Gregory, Jason Wilshin, Richard Living, Samuel Nailor, Philip Cook, William Scarsbrook, Daniel Pritchard, James Barrenger, John Page and George Wiggins. (Vestry Minutes - M.C.R.O. DRO 19/C1/1).

King's College, Cambridge, granted a piece of land from the waste at White Hill on Ruislip Common. The survey made in 1789 still exists. (F. 29/55 c.48 K.C.) Another rough sketch map of the site can be seen at the Greater London Record Office, Dartmouth Street (Acc.538/2nd dep.3659). Perhaps it was drawn specially for Daniel Wilshin to show him where his money was going to be used; for "Mr. Wilshin" is written in pencil on the back.

18th Century builders worked very quickly, for the Vestry met on 7th October 1789 and agreed to let the Workhouse to John Burbridge for one year for £353.5s.-d. to commence on 26th October 1789. The Overseers were to pay the said John Burbridge monthly (M.C.R.O. DRO/19/C1/1).

The building must have been completed within the space of three months. A workhouse at Gt. Stanmore had been built almost as quickly two years earlier. There a Vestry held on 19th September 1787 considered the matters. On 10th October 1787 a plan and estimate from Messrs. Grove and Fitch were approved and it was agreed that the workhouse should be erected for not more than 500 guineas and should be completed by the last day of January 1788. (M.C.R.O. DRO/14/C1/2).

Pinner Vestry also built a Workhouse in 1790. A meeting at the Crown on 25th November 1789 discussed the accommodation necessary: a kitchen, working room, apartment for the Governor, brewhouse, wash-house, bakehouse, pantry, drink house, wood and coal house. Strangely there was no mention of a dormitory. The Vestry of 10th March 1790 decided to borrow £200 at 5% from "Mr. Jno. Smart and Mr. Jno. Wilshin" and "paid Mr. Trevethen for building the Workhouse £165.10s.0d." extra work and furnishing £63.17s.0d; the workmen at furnishing 15s; mops and brooms 1s; expenses, buying goods and carriage 5s." (Edwin M. Ware "Pinner in the Vale" part 4). Why was Pinner Workhouse so much cheaper to build than those of Gt. Stanmore and Ruislip?

Pinner Workhouse was bought by the Metropolitan Railway Company in 1886 and demolished when the railway came to Pinner. Stanmore Workhouse which stood on Stanmore Hill was demolished about ten years ago. Ruislip Workhouse is now (March 1975) up for sale and another local workhouse survives at Harefield. It was built in 1782 and stands in Breakspear Road, a little North of the "Spotted Dog".

RUNNING OF WORKHOUSES

Once a Workhouse was built it was common practice for a Vestry to advertise for a contractor to administer it, usually on a yearly basis. Ruislip Vestry, 3rd October 1795, decided to stick up handbills in the neighbouring villages and market towns to give notice that the maintenance of Ruislip poor was to let. Would-be governors sent in tenders and Ralph Weatherly's low estimate of £286 p.a. was accepted. The Vestry members probably thought that they had struck a bargain as the first Governor, John Burbridge had been paid £353.5s.0d. p.a. from 1789 until his death in 1795.

From his salary, Ralph Weatherly had to feed and clothe the poor, maintain the furnishings of the house and provide materials for the inmates to work. It was up to him to make what profit he could from the sale of that work and from the sale of agricultural produce grown by the poor. The system was clearly open to abuse. In bad years the Governors of many Workhouses must have been tempted to economise on the quality and quantity of food which they provided for the inmates. Vestries were

aware of the dangers and Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor tried to safeguard the paupers' interests in the articles of agreement set out in their contracts with the Governors.

A typical contract was that made at Gt. Stanmore with Thomas Bray Wiggins, on 3rd July 1816 (M.C.R.O. DRO 14/F3/1) Inmates were "Only to work and labour with moderation". They were to have "Good and wholesome small beer and at least three meals a day sufficient in quantity and wholesome in quality". On Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays there should be hot meals and vegetables for dinner. Breakfasts and suppers should consist of bread, cheese and beer, hot broth, soup or milk.

Each pauper was to have a Sunday dress and a weekday dress which should be "Warm, wholesome and neat." Clean linen and stockings were to be provided every Sunday and clean sheets once a month. A good fire was to be kept in cold weather. Children were to be sent to Sunday School and the adults to church.

The Churchwardens and Overseers reserved the right to inspect the Workhouse "at all seasonable times", to taste the bread, meat and drink and examine the clothes of the poor.

If all these provisions were carried out, life inside the Workhouse must have been easier than outside for many people. Unfortunately food was often adulterated and inadequate and the labour extremely hard. Families were separated and it was difficult to leave a Workhouse as no payment was given for the work. Even if inmates were sent outside to work for neighbouring farmers they were allowed to keep only one sixth of their wages, the rest being handed over to the Governor.

Ruislip Workhouse was granted an allotment of 10 acres from the Common in 1506 by the Enclosure Commissioners, which was to be ploughed and cropped. It is interesting to note that Edward Charles governed Ruislip Workhouse in 1800 for £343 p.a., but in 1804 he found £440 insufficient and was granted £550 guineas by the Vestry. The long wars with France (1793-1815) were causing inflation.

RUISLIP WORKHOUSE IN PRIVATE HANDS

The building in Ducks Hill functioned as a Workhouse for only 50 years. The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 discarded independent parish poor relief and introduced central supervision by a Board of Commissioners. 600 new administrative areas were marked out called Poor Law Unions, governed by Boards of Guardians. Ruislip became part of the Uxbridge Union along with Harefield, Ickenham and Northolt.

In August 1836 the Uxbridge Union Board of Guardians resolved that all paupers in the area needing indoor relief should be lodged at Ruislip Workhouse until the new Union Workhouse at Hillingdon should be ready to receive them. It opened in March 1838, W.H.T. Newman, an auctioneer was authorised to sell Ruislip Workhouse by a decision taken by Uxbridge Board of Guardians on 3rd August 1838 (BG/U/1) The proceeds were to go to Uxbridge Union.

The present writer has not yet been able to find any record of the sale, but assumes that the building and land were purchased by Ralph Deane of Eastcote House. He certainly paid £299 to the Treasurer of the Uxbridge Union (to be placed to the Ruislip Parish property account) for 1 acre, 12 perches of freehold land adjoining the south of the Workhouse courtyard and 4 acres 2 rods, 11 perches to the North West, in 1838 (MLR Bk.4 423).

In 1922 "Themessuage and buildings formerly known as "the Old Workhouse", but more recently occupied as six tenements were mortgaged by a Ralph Guy of Claverley Vicarage, Wolverhampton (MLR Bk. 4 723). Just when it was divided into tenements is uncertain, but it must have been before 1898, in which year the electoral register shows that Joseph Bowden, Daniel Gregory, Walter Lavender and Eli Poulter were occupying cottages at the Old Workhouse. The late D.S. Woodbridge bought the property in 1939, by which time it had been reconverted into a single dwelling.

TRANSCRIPT OF A LETTER FROM WILLIAM AUSTIN TO HIS BROTHER THOMAS AUSTIN

Copy of envelope:

per "Chusan"

paid

Mr. Tho^s K. Austin
7 St. Andrews Street,
Dublin,
Ireland.

Transcript of letter:

Caledonian Store,
Snake Valley,
Ovens Diggings.

November 21st 1853.

Dear Thomas,

I had hoped that before this you would be in receipt of two letters from me since my landing but have greatly grieved and disappointed today by having both of my letters returned to me the man to whom I gave them to post he only two months ago forgot them till they got so soiled and torn in his pocket that he could not read the address so he told me of it today I hope at all events you have heard through Mr. Docknell of my being well and I suppose Harry Brookes mentioned to them in his letters home. I posted an account to George the day before I landed to go per The Marco Polo which I suppose you have received some time ago I hope Mama Aunt Jane and all at home are still well I was very glad to hear Mama was so well and hope that I may find her so when I return. I was greatly shocked to hear of Tom Prices death it was a dreadful blow to his family. Remember me kindly to them all. I am writing this in a dreadful hurry as I am 9 miles from any Post Office and I have few opportunities of posting letters but cannot now wait to write it as I am anxious this go by "The Chusan" which has just arrived I hear - but hope to give you a detailed account per the Great Brittain which sails on 3rd December however I will give you some account lest you should imagine I was not doing anything - the day I landed in Melbourne several of my shipmates and myself pitched our Tents on the beach at a place called Landridge which is about 1½ miles from the City Cook was of the number. Barshaw and he did not agree very well together and had given up the idea of going to the diggings together. I stopped in my tent till I left Melbourne but Cook got tired very soon of the life in the Bush and

took lodgings in Melbourne at 40/- a week for board and lodgings in a house and street far worse in regard to dirt and filth than Longford St. in Dublin with four in one room not longer than Chevallion's workshop - I had made up my mind long before leaving the ship not to go to the diggings with Cook as I saw he was of a very lazy disposition. I was for a long time in Melbourne without getting anything to do but always managed to keep up my spirits till about six weeks after landing I got into an Ironmongers shop at 90/- p week but that only lasted for a week as the business got slack again. I was then about three weeks idle again and I was very nearly run out of cash when I got the offer of a situation to manage a branch store at the diggings which I accepted and where I still remain at 70/- a week free of all expenses it is a very monotonous life as the diggings here just now are but very poor. Very few are doing any way well at all while the majority are not making more than a living and many cannot do that same unless some new diggings are shortly discovered great numbers will be obliged to turn their hands to other pursuits - but I think it is not at all possible that all the best gold fields have been discovered. there are thousands I suppose out not now over all The Colony prospecting. the palmy days of Store Keeping on the digging are gone by as the opposition between the very numerous stores is reducing the profit on all goods very considerably there are many things I can get on the diggings fully as cheap as in London although the distance up here is upwards of 200 miles which I know to my cost as I had to tramp it up the whole distance there being no conveyance of any sort carrying passengers when I left. I walked about 25 miles per day on the third day I lost my way along with some others travelling to the same place whom I had met on the road and at night we did not know where we were but kept still going till we at last came to a Station (as all the Squatters land is called) and there we got shelter of an old empty bank hut and provisions. Next night we were still in the same plight but again succeeded in making a Station - but the next day we again got off the road and at night found ourselves alone in the Bush without the sign of any sort of habitation and being determined to make the most of a bad bargain we set about cutting down firewood and made a most enormous fire. fortunately we had brought the remains of our breakfast with us which we ate for supper after having formed a shelter round us of branches of trees we piled on wood enough to keep the fire up all night. we lay down on the grass and slept till morning about midday we again on the main road and made an Inn where we dined and again set out arriving at our destination on the 13th day without any further mishap. the owner of the store has offered me a partnership in the branch store which I am managing which I will accept I am to pay him 10p cent on the cost of the goods and have half profits - should the diggings turn out well in the immediate neighbourhood I could make from £10 to £20 p week but in any case I will be sure of more than my present salary - besides which I am about taking out a licence to sell Ginger Beer and putting up a tent besides the store so that I can attend to both - which I expect will pay very well at all events I cannot lose anything by it .. The weather is excessively warm but I am told it is nothing at present to what it will be at Christmas. the life up here is very rough nothing like comfort is ever dreamt of except at the main diggings where a township has been formed and substantial stores erected some of which are very comfortable for the diggings there are also 4 or five Hotels erected on the township of course all of wood and all doing well sly grog selling had been carried on to a dreadful extent but it is to be expected that the licence houses will do away with that evil in a great measure - No idea could be formed of this Colony by those at home - unless near town there is nothing to be seen but one eternal forest the country is very hilly but so far as I have been I saw nothing which could be called a mountain but I believe there are some mountains I had heard while at home a great deal about the salubrity of the Australian climate but from what I can judge during

the time I have been here I consider it not one whit better than the climate of Ireland the days are excessively warm and some of the nights and evenings are not cool but cold and sometimes the change is sudden. I have yet to experience the great hot winds of December - but from what I am told I believe they are much more oppressive in Melbourne and Sidney than up here - I sent some newspapers to Jane p the Madagascar under cover to Mr Evans to be sent to Harphams. I also sent you a paper p the "Chusan" which I hope you have received. I have not as yet heard of anything of the box you sent to Rigbys care. You did not mention the name of the man to whom it was consigned. You have not mentioned anything about the Evans or whether they had been to Dublin to see the Exhibition I mean to write to Mr E soon according to promise when you see them again say I desired to be kindly remembered to them all I expect more letters from home on Thursday next as the "Chusan" has arrived and Brooke's will forward them to me. I forgot to say that I had met Robinson the second day after I landed and stopped with him while I was at the Ironmongers in Melbourne. I also met McComas who had been at Alex. Hall's or rather he ran out of his shop after me I would not have known him. he is in partnership with young Henry. Mr. Tibthorpes nephew I think wine and general merchants and are doing very well indeed his letters of recommendation were of great service to me I did wrong not to bring as many letters as possible with me with regard to trade of Melbourne I think from what little I can judge that it is very uncertain as should there be better and more extensive diggings found out in the Colony of N S Wales Sydney will then be the port for immigrants to sail for and carriage of merchandize will be much cheaper from there than from Melbourne you will doubtless be asked what I think of the Colony and whether I would advise others to come out you may say that if I heard of anyone thinking of coming out for whom I had the slightest regard I would try all means in my power to prevent their coming. I have seen the sad effects of disappointed hopes even among my own ship mates some of them have given themselves up to drinking and others are starving I consider myself most fortunate Cook is about going home he has written to me for money I don't think there are so many drunkards collected together in any other part of the world as in this country it is quite a community of drunkards I must now come to a close but hope to write to Jane and Aunt per Great Brittain remember me to all friends I hope Charles is well I sent him a newspaper per the "Chusan" some time ago remember me to all in St. Delgany too I hope to hear by your next letter that some final arrangement has been come to with regard to the business I must now close up I would be glad if you would send me some Dublin Papers I met two nephews of Mr Evans in Melbourne whom I had met at Clapham. hoping that this may find you and all in good health and happiness and with love to Mama Aunt Anne Jane and all at home and all other friends not forgetting Rebecca

Believe me to remain

Ever yours Sincerely

William Austin

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Items of interest concerning the foregoing letter

A Thomas Kingston Austin wrote in June 1893 of William Austin:

"It was a great misfortune he went abroad as he was sure to get on anywhere but he was living in London at the time of the Gold fever and

some friends of his were going to the mines and altho' I guaranteed him to supply all funds for 6 months if he would reconsider the matter he would not change but sent abroad with the others."

"He died Dec 9th 1853 interred in Burial Ground attached to Gov. Camp."

B Letter from William Austin to Thomas Austin:

London

Feb 18, 1853

Dear Thomas

I have just received your letter I will at once give up the idea of going in the Madagascar but it has not in the least altered my intention of going to Australia there will be another vessel belonging to the same owner leave on the first of April which I would like to go by as to my remaining to see whether affairs at home will be settled I see no use whatever in that I will never go back and to wait in the hopes of getting into business myself here is worse than useless. I go out with the intention of returning as soon as I have saved £1000 which it is not all unreasonable to expect can be done in 18 months or two years which I could not do by stopping here for several years. Mr. Greenwell has just been speaking to me about and advises me to wait a few months longer. I hope to be able to go out on the 1st April.

Yours E

W. Austin

C Notes:

William died 9 Dec and was buried the following day. He had been suffering for some time with a slight attack of Diarrhoea of which he took little or no notice but about the 6th December it turned to Dysentery. The burial service was said by a Mr. Whitby.

P.H.A. thinks "Ovens diggings" is also known as "Beechworth-Ovens" and "Camp Beechworth".

P.H.A. knows somebody who has been to "Ovens diggings" recently and he understands it still has the appearance of a 'wild-west' township.

P.H.A. records that William Austin was married. P.H.A. can find no evidence. No mention of a Widow is made in W.A.'s Father's Will.

It is significant that W.A. makes no reference to his Father in his letter. One must conclude that there was trouble between them. This could have been a motive for W.A. going to Australia.

The Mother of W.A. was called Jane. Thus the "Aunt Jane" referred to in the letter was probably his father's sister but may have been a great aunt.

T.E.A. married a Miss Octavia Evans who was probably a daughter of the Mr. Evans mentioned in the letter. (Note: C.H.A. wrote to his Father from Clapham in 1867; in his letter he mentioned a visit made by three aunts).

Recently we were gratified to receive a copy of Memories of Ruislip from Mr. C.A. Mills who was resident from 1919 to 1969. His memories are of great interest as they form a topographical survey of Ruislip during the 1920's. It is not possible to produce his survey in full and we are therefore printing an extract relating to Ruislip Park and Swan Alley (now The Oaks), which should be of particular interest as they formed a distinctive feature of past Ruislip. A plan of the original Ruislip Park estate can be seen at Uxbridge Reference Library.

R.G. Edwards (Hon. Sec.)

RUISLIP - Some random thoughts on the changing scene - by C.A. MILLS

The centre of the community was the close cluster of cottages, small shops and public-houses nestling about the Church at the northern end of the High Street; and which was known simply as the Village. Apart from the Vicarage in Bury Street, built in 1881, and the much older Manor Farmhouse there was only one other house of any distinction in the village. This was a large private residence called Ruislip Park House standing on the west side of the High Street. It is still standing today and its northern facade can be seen on the left side of the passage between the shops of E.T. Citchett, the hairdresser, and Denis Brooke & Co., Estate Agent.

There is also a good view of the north and west sides of the house from a point in The Oaks by the car-park at the rear of The Swan. It shows the imposing size of the house when compared with the small buildings in the village which were once its nearest neighbours.

As its name suggests, Park House once stood in Ruislip Park. This was an area of ground of about forty acres bounded by the High Street and Ickenham Road on the east and south, and Sharps Lane on the north and west. In its heyday the Park presented a pleasing prospect that was in contrast to the hedged fields and farmlands outside its limits. There were long groves of trees bordering the Ickenham Road and Sharps Lane boundaries and it contained some small copses of variegated trees. A slight trace of one of the groves remains today in the stand of trees at the corner of Manor Road and Sharps Lane opposite the entrance to Cottage Close.

The front of Park House had a south aspect and a tree-lined drive about three hundred yards long ran parallel with the High Street to the corner of Ickenham Road. Beside the entrance-gates here was a small Lodge, still standing in the middle twenties and long after the Park had begun to be developed for building purposes. The Lodge-house was a square single-storey building of stone with a slate roof, set in a small cultivated garden in the shelter of tall trees. A building of similar style can be seen today on the righthand side of the entrance to Manor Farm in the High Street.

From the south-western corner of Ruislip Park (beside the present-day Orchard Hotel's car-park) a railed footpath ran diagonally across the grounds towards the Village. This was known as Church-path and was used as a short cut from Kingsend to the village, subsequently becoming the Church Avenue of today. Church-path led to the entrance of a narrow passage which entered the High Street by the side of The Swan public-house. This passage was known variously as Swan's Alley, Swan Alley and Swann Alley at differing times during its existence.

At the Park end a five-barred gate closed the passage to unauthorised traffic and there was a kissing-gate for the use of pedestrians. These gates were standing in the early twenties and were finally removed with the increase of traffic when the Park was built-over. Swan Alley was a typical rural village feature which, lacking any architectural or historical interest, could never survive the march of progress. It was a favoured vantage point of artists because of the pleasing view it gave of the old cottages across the High Street, with the Church tower rising above their roofs. Looking in the other direction there was the vista of Ruislip Park with its fine trees and, beside the five-barred gate three or four picturesque open-fronted barns. Some of these are standing today, being the premises of J.H. Wallis & Sons Ltd., at the rear of number Two Manor Road, a house called aptly The Barnes.

On this same side (the present site of numbers seven to eleven The Oaks) was about an acre of orchard extending halfway along the length of the alley. It lay behind a spiked railing fence and in the springtime the bright mass of fruit blossom lightened the shade made by the tall trees ranged along the opposite side and overhanging the passage. Next to the orchard were a pair of cottages with a small outside privy. (Today numbers One and Two Park Cottages, renovated and considerably altered in appearance). In earlier days they possessed a shoddy, picturesque charm which no doubt, made them look attractive to all except those who lived in them. Those artists who included these cottages in their paintings usually enhanced the scene with bowers of roses growing around the doors, though it is doubtful if they ever had any existence in fact. One of the drawbacks of living there in days gone by would have been the physical presence of the high brick wall which faced them across the passage. This was the outside face of the large, walled kitchen-garden in the grounds of Park House, a massive structure about one hundred feet long and twenty feet high.

As Swan Alley was a scant ten or twelve feet in width and the wall was higher than the upper windows of the cottages it is not hard to imagine the perpetual twilight that must have reigned in the tiny ground-floor rooms. But whether the siting of this kitchen-garden was deliberate, or merely by chance, this high wall effectively screened the cottages from the northern windows of Park House standing some fifty yards away. From the western end of the wall a further screen in the form of a high fence ran along the alley as far as the gate leading into the Park. At one time it then continued southward across the Park towards the Ickenham Road boundary, probably as a spiked railing beside a line of trees, screening the house from the users of Church-path.

A very fine stand of trees grew along the inner side of the fence in Swan Alley, their branches overhanging the passage to form a high-roofed tunnel of foliage. There were elm, oak, Scotch-fir and horse-chestnut, a few of which have been left standing in the front garden of the police-flats in The Oaks. In the grounds beside these trees was an ornamental lake, roughly rectangular in shape about fifty feet wide and a hundred feet long. This placid sheet of water fringed with trees, and with smooth lawns sloping down about its edges, was an attractive landscaped feature in the grounds of Park House. Concealed from the view of passers-by behind the high fence its existence was unsuspected by the new residents of developing Ruislip between the wars. The lake was drained with the widening of Swan Alley to form The Oaks, though a slight depression remained in the ground until the site was built upon, today the police-station and police-flats.

The High Street entrance to Swan Alley lay between two old buildings, one of which, The Swan public-house is still in existence and has recently been modernised. On the other corner stood a small two-storeyed house: it was constructed partly of brick and oak beams with a lath and plaster filling, possibly dating from the late seventeenth-century. In the early twenties one of the ground-floor front rooms was in use as a sweetshop, complete with a tinkling bell on a slightly modernised shopdoor.

When the old house was pulled down at the end of the twenties a few coins were found beneath its floorboards, some dating back to the reign of the Stuarts. Though there are photographs extant of this old building just prior to its demolition it is unfortunate that many interesting rural features vanished without record of their passing. The village pound for instance, that universal feature of almost every rural community of a hundred years ago. Its site is still clearly visible to anyone passing along Bury Street today, though lacking any indication of its former use.

"THE RUISLIP WHERE IS IT?" - 1939

...

by COLIN BOLT

A once popular song, called as far as I can recollect "What a day it's going to be tomorrow" had the line "Yesterday is history". This, I think, was put in to rhyme with "mystery" but the sentiment expressed is nevertheless, true enough in its way. 1939 must seem like yesterday to many members, but being one World War, a nuclear bomb or two and several journeys into space away, it is certainly history. Some things have gone, some things have changed and, happily for the more conservative, some things are the same.

I recently came across a mint copy of a booklet entitled, believe it or not, "The Ruislip Where is it?" for 1939. It was printed and published by Rawlinsons of Northwood (still there) with the blessing of the Ruislip Chamber of Commerce who contributed the foreward in which they note that during the past year further new estates had been developed in the area and shopping facilities had multiplied. The booklet, apparently the third annual issue, was a guide to the area and contained information on shops and services and a potted history by Henry C. Law. It was clearly a forerunner of the present day Kemp's Directory, though lacking the street section.

In 1939, Ruislip was controlled by an Urban District Council with offices at Oaklands Gate, Northwood. This continued until 1965 when it became part of the London Borough of Hillingdon. The Council Chairman was L.F.A. Fogarty, J.P. and the rates were 11s.6d. in the pound. In 1972, before the rateable values were reassessed the rates were 73p in the pound: in 1973, after reassessment, 29.4p in the pound. The Fire Station was in Eastcote Road (at present Ambulance Station). Water was supplied then, as now, by the Colne Valley Water Co. but electricity was provided by the Northwood Electric Light and Power Co. and gas by the Gas, Light and Coke Co. at a flat rate of 10s.1d. a therm. The present price on the two part tariff is 13.4p per therm. The Police Station was in the High Street but was stated to be moving shortly. This did not in fact happen for many years. From here was also run the X-Division of the Special Constabulary; a voluntary body auxiliary to the regular Police Force.

Political parties appear to have been surprisingly active, with three branches of Conservative, two Labour Wards and a Liberal Association in the area. There is a long list of societies, clubs and institutes ranging from the several branches of the British Legion, the Operatic Society and Bowls Club, through to the Ruislip and District Horticultural Society, the Girls' Leisure Club, Children's Play-hour and a Thrift Club. The Ruislip Golf Club, King's End stated that it would be continuing until the Council took over. Ruislip historians might be interested to note that an Uxbridge and District Archeological Society is listed whose Secretary, a Miss Ashton, lived in Ruislip.

There were 15 doctors in the area. Some had two surgeries and others shared. Only the Surgery at 38 Park Way is still under the same name, but I believe that the present Dr. McCarthy is the son of the 1939 occupant. Dr. Christine MacDougall whose surgery was then in Croft Gardens is still in practice in Sharps Lane. Of the ten dentists listed only Mr. K. Bronne is still operating, though in Midcroft, rather than the High Street. 34 King's End is still a dentist's premises but no longer belongs to Messrs. Evans. Curiously, many premises have the same telephone numbers, except for the prefix 3, which was added a few years ago, but others have been changed even though the occupants are the same. Historical research workers be warned.

Of the schools listed in 1939; the Manor Senior, Bishop Winnington-Ingram, Bourne (Junior and Infant), Lady Bankes and the Sacred Heart School survive still. Private schools which have disappeared are Kelvin House School, King Edward's Road; St. Bernards, Poplar Close; Damien, Pembroke Road; Chaseley, Windmill Road (sic); Hawtrey House, Hawtrey Drive (now Atholl Junior School. Ed.). The Glebe Riding School, West End Road, Ruislip Common Riding School, Duck's Hill Road and the B. Bear Bernar Riding School, Bury Street have been replaced by the Crow's Nest Riding School, Breakspear Road. You could be taught to drive by the Anglo School of Motoring (above Lloyd's Bank, but later upstairs on the ~~diagonally~~ opposite corner) with courses from £1.2s. Chimney sweeps have suddenly become a thing of the past and will soon be remembered only in children's books. Two were listed in 1939 but others probably existed. Sounding now even more archaic are the two listed Servants' Registries.

The enormous estate of Manor Homes Ltd., Ruislip Manor were offering houses from £495 to £795 freehold or from 12s.10d. weekly. The "super modern" bungalows in Herlwyn Avenue were being offered at £695. This was a time when postal charges were 1½d for a 2 oz. letter, 1s for a 15 lb. parcel and telegrams cost 6d for nine words, when it cost only 1½d for a 1 oz. letter to the U.S.A. or the British possessions and (even bigger bargain) 2d for 2 lb. to Canada. Letters were delivered four times a day (7 a.m., 9.30 a.m., 4 p.m., and 7 p.m.) and parcels three times (9.30 a.m., 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.).

1939 of course was the end of an era. The war came and put a stop to the rapid development that had been taking place since the beginning of the 1930s. As things were in 1939 so they remained (more or less) for 20 years or so. Prospective building sites were left with their "For Sale" notices to fall down. So one does not have to be too old to remember many of the shops and merchants listed in 1939 - W. Ive, Coal Merchant of Bury Farm (still there) and Met. Station Approach (the old bus station and now underneath Times House), Terry's Chocolate Shop, Wiltshires, the Ironmongers, Joseph Duffy, the tailor over Howard Roberts, the corner shop (on the site of new Inwards complex) with suits from 75s to 8 guineas, Hudson Banks the Chemists (now E. Moss, Chemists), Wright and Parsons in the middle of the High Street, with the island show case in the entrance for children to run around full

of pillow cases and table cloths (they would measure and cut your curtains free of charge). There was that half shop squeezed in beside Woolworths which always smelt so good with its cooked meats and pies - F. Harris est. 1925. There was Battens, the Builders and Baxters for fountain pens, fancy goods, wools and "all the latest songs in stock", C.W. Coles The Sports' House where the laundrette now functions and the Keen Car Hire Service in Pembroke Road (just now pulled down). Happily, 36 years and large rent increases on, a surprising number of shops and businesses still survive. Barclays, Lloyds, National Provincial and Westminster Banks were already here and apparently in their present positions. Lyttons "Ruislip's leading Ladies' Outfitters", funny little Arnolds, the Newsagents, Bedfords, the Jewellers, Fred Fryer in Ruislip Manor, J.R. Inwards, car distributors with a second shop for bicycles, Lambert Bros. for so long "Hosiery to gentlemen" but now reduced to selling clothes of less restrained taste, funerals survive, as done by H.C. Grimstead, Bowleys the Shoe Repair and leather shop, the only barber now left in Ruislip at 9 Ickenham Road, and the Barbican pet bureau.

In 1939, Ruislip had two cinemas, the Astoria and the Rivoli and (according to this booklet) plans for a third. The Astoria still exists disguised as the Embassy, but the Rivoli gave way to Sainsbury's Supermarket. Reduced prices of 6d Stalls 1s Circle were available until 3 p.m. but after that up to 2s.6d for the circle at the Astoria.