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SURREY HISTORY



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Henry Edwards, M.P., and South Nutfield: An Example of Victorian Estate Development	Peter Finch

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Cover illustration: An 18th-century view of Esher Place
(courtesy of Surrey Record Office)

Editor: Anne McCormack



PHILLIMORE

THE ARCHITECTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF SHOPPING

Kenneth Gravett

Chairman, Surrey Local History Council

My interest in shops was first awakened about 1960, when I was busy trying to photograph old buildings in rapidly changing town centres. I found that houses called 'Southdown' or 'Aberdeen' House were invariably attached to a butcher's shop. Even large Victorian or Edwardian shops had house-names – Pratts of Streatham was Eldon House. In Battersea and Lydd I found quite tiny draper's shops, which rejoiced in the name of Waterloo House. Many years later I found in a book by Alison Adburgham that they were named after Waterloo House in Pall Mall east (mentioned at the very end of *Patience*).¹ Henceforth I was fascinated by the story of shopping.

The Itinerant Trader

Shopping commenced before there were shops. Most rural communities were almost self-sufficient even up to this century, but were regularly visited by the pedlar, who walked with his goods on his back, including salt in medieval times, and small luxuries. The pedlar still exists today, although they usually come in the evenings since so many housewives are out at work during the day. Today they may be emissaries of national companies, like the 'Kleen-e-zec Man' or the 'Man from the Pru', but in the past they were usually lone operators and seldom did they have any memorial. In Surrey we have two exceptions to this rule. In the church of St. Mary, Lambeth (now the Tradescant Trust) is a glass window, renewed after the last war, in memory of the pedlar who gave an acre of land, worth 2s. 6d. in 1504 and now under County Hall, for the repair of the church. In Wandsworth Parish Church is the monument of Henry Smith, Citizen and Alderman of London, who died in 1627. He founded a charity and most parishes in south-east England are recipients to an amount reputed to reflect his treatment in each parish when he was a pedlar.

Some traders acquired horses and carts. Parson Woodforde records in his diary that 'Nancy bought a new gown of Mrs. Batchelor of Reepham, who travels about with a cart'.² It must be ten years since I last saw a rag-and-bone man with a horse and cart, but perhaps into this category would fall the man with a barrel trailer on his bicycle, selling vinegar 30 years ago, and the man with an elderly Morris Minor, who delivers new-laid eggs in New Malden today.

The Market Place

Obviously it was convenient if itinerent traders met regularly at some place, thus forming a market, and this occurred in towns (and often was the reason for the development of the town) before the Conquest. In south-east England there are two markets with known dates. The abbey at Battle was founded by William I on the site of the battle of Hastings, and was not completed until 1095. At first the monks complained of the solitude and inconvenience, but by 1180 there were 115 houses around the market place in front of the abbey gateway and up the High Street.

Such markets were primarily for food and cattle. Cattle were moved on the hoof, and hence a network of markets developed at roughly five-mile intervals – as far as the animals could be expected to walk there and back without suffering in quality. Once or twice a year the market place would be used for a fair, for clothes and capital goods. The firms that sell raincoats and wellingtons at agricultural shows continue this tradition. The modern successor is perhaps the car-boot sale, now very popular.

In 1221 the Bishops of Salisbury acquired the manor of Godalming and established a market at its southern tip, in Haslemere. The 13th century was the period when most new towns and markets were founded, and bishops were prominent in this activity. Their motive was profit, as also was that of the king when he was persuaded to grant a charter.³ Haslemere market place is now just a green space, but there is a plan of 1735, published by Swanton and Woods, which shows such key features as the shambles, where the butchers operated, the town hall for the administration of justice and tolls, and the pillory.⁴ In 1678 a 'foreign' bookseller, Robert Smyth of Farnham, was fined 11s. for setting up a stall at Haslemere without the bailiff's leave. The charter of 1596 granted a market on Tuesday and a fair once a year, and the administration of these was a key element of the government of the town.

Haslemere has a town hall (rebuilt in 1814) adjacent to the market place. There are many of these small town halls in south-east England and the majority fit into a pattern, with the court room upstairs, where the town council met, and the market

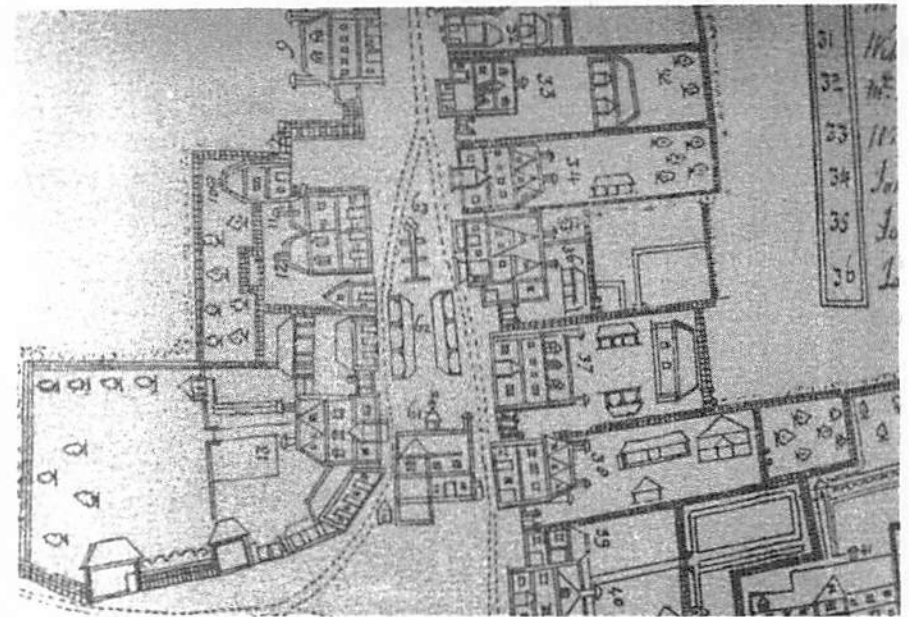


Fig. 1. Haslemere Market Place from the plan by William Morley, 1735. References: 61 town hall; 62 butchers' shambles; 63 the pillory.

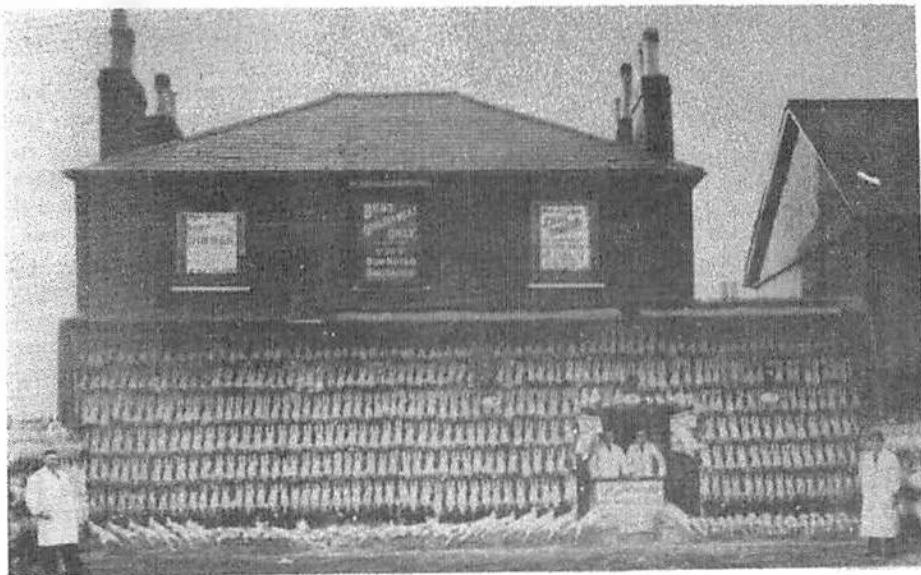


Fig. 2. Lingfield butcher's shop, c.1908 (from W. G. Davie & W. Curtis Green, *Old Cottages and Farmhouses in Surrey*, Batsford 1908).



Fig. 3. Kingston butcher's shop with Christmas display, 1937 (courtesy of Kingston Heritage Centre).

and cells underneath. Interestingly Battle has never had a market hall, the administration taking place in the building attached to the abbey gateway. Buying and selling were (and are) contentious activities. Outside the Corn Exchange at Bristol are four bronze pillars, known as 'nails', each with a dished top. They were given to the city in the time of Elizabeth and James I to reduce arguments. The buyer put his 'cash on the nail' and the seller handed over the goods.

A market still flourishes at Kingston upon Thames, although the present market hall dates only from 1840. It existed before 1242 and, with the adjacent apple market, was one of several for corn, cattle, horses and fish, almost surrounding the parish church with its chapel of the Saxon kings.

The Permanent Shop

The first permanent shops were often erected around the market place, as at Kingston, where there are two of 15th-century date, including Follet's Butchers (now Laura Ashley Ltd.). The earliest shops were often butchers, and there was a good example at Lingfield, added about 1540 to an older house. A butcher's shop of about 1500 is still in use at Charing in Kent. Such shops did not have glass windows but shutters, hinged horizontally, the lower dropping down to form a counter, and the upper rising to form an awning. Meat was still moved on the hoof as much as possible, and in the 18th century there was a flourishing trade driving cattle from Wales to London. There is a house in Stockbridge, Hampshire, with 'good beds for drovers' painted across its front in Welsh. Each butcher had his own slaughterhouse behind the shop, which would be well ventilated and provided with a deep awning. Good examples of such shops remain at Reigate and Blechingley. At Christmas the entire frontage would be covered with a display of meat and turkeys, now totally vanished in the interest of hygiene.



Fig. 4. Houses behind the Town Hall at Godalming. That on the left was the house of a prosperous clothier, who could afford ornate timberwork. That on the right, turned end-on to the street, is a typical townhouse.



Fig. 5. Mason's shop, Dorking, c.1960.

As the shopping centre became more prosperous, houses were built turned round, end-on to the road, so that more of them could have a street-frontage. To get the same accommodation on the narrower site, buildings often rose to three storeys or more. There was a side entry and behind the house would be a courtyard with warehouses beyond it. The date that this change occurred is an indication of the time of increase of trade. In Canterbury and Winchester this happened before 1200, in Lewes sometime between 1350 and 1480. The rows of Chester are famous with two storeys of shops along the main streets, the lower storey often being in cellars. This arrangement was once quite common and there are two such cellars in Guildford, one in Reigate, and many others in towns in south-east England, with over thirty in Winchelsea. They appear to be connected with the wine trade.

In most towns as the number of shops increased so the market became less important, and gradually the market place was infilled with shops. Good examples of this are the middle rows in the High Street at Blechingley and East Grinstead. Such a development at Ashford (Kent) is dated 1659 and here there is a shop only eight feet wide, possibly the width of a market stall.

With several competing establishments, the problem was to attract customers and to this end early shops had individual signs like inns today. Caxton the printer had his bookshop at the 'Red Pale' at Westminster. The most magnificent of such signs to remain is the 'Gresham Grasshopper' of the former Martin's Bank in Lombard Street in the City. Certain trades had generic signs, such as the red-and-white-striped barber's pole or the three golden balls of the pawnbroker. A modern electrically-

illuminated version exists in The Cut, Lambeth, where there is also an example of the oil jar of the ironmonger.⁵

There is an Elizabethan shop front in Burgate, Canterbury, but the glass window was inserted last century. Glass was used in houses in the 16th century, but was only available in small panes and was very opaque by modern standards. There is an early 18th-century ironmonger's shop in Battle, with sash windows and small panes, but most of the old shop fronts which remain date from the end of that century or the beginning of the 19th, when panes of good quality glass up to two feet square were made by the cylinder process. These could be curved as in Mason's shop (now Robert Dyas) at Dorking. Large sheets of glass could be individually cast and polished for mirrors, but were quite prohibitive in price. The construction of the Crystal Palace of 1851 necessitated the mass production of sheets 4 ft. 3 in. by 30 in., and henceforth shop windows could be made of a series of vertical glass panels. This gave increased emphasis to window display, and price tickets appeared. Single piece windows were available by 1890, and shop names were often displayed under plate glass with the letters covered with gold leaf. A good example of this type of front is the sports shop of Jeffery & Son in Guildford High Street. Gas and electric lighting could be used to focus attention on window displays. So important did shop fronts become that the shopkeepers petitioned against the designs of R. Norman Shaw for rebuilding Regent Street, because his arches would have reduced the window area available. Perhaps the last development came about 1930 when large sheets of curved glass were installed to eliminate reflections, although these are now being scrapped because of the space they occupy. About 1900 polished sheet marble was introduced into shopfronts to give a feeling of respectability and stability.

In the last century most shops were small. The principal feature of the interior was the counter, often beautifully finished in mahogany. In a grocer's shop this might have a front with a row of biscuit boxes under a glass lid. In a draper's there would be a bentwood chair for the customer to sit on while the assistant brought dress materials to show her, or perhaps a glass of port to 'seal the bargain'. From about 1890 various forms of cash railways (little containers carried on wires to carry the money from counter to cashier which were invented in America) were installed.⁶ The shopkeeper usually lived over the premises and many of the assistants would live in. This could be highly unpopular, but was the reason for the existence of several stores in the Weald, including one at Shamley Green. A Protestant group, The Society of Dependents (or Cokelers), were worried that young female members would have to take up domestic service and perhaps would not then be free to attend their meeting on Sunday, so they founded a series of village stores where the ladies could live in, and work in the shop. The first arcade, an idea imported from France, was Nash and Repton's Royal Opera Arcade in London, of 1816, and this may be regarded as the predecessor of all the covered shopping centres.

Chemists like most professional men worked from their houses in the 18th century, an example being Dr. Coetlogen whose house of 1762 remains at Hothfield, Kent, with an inscription along the eaves advertising that he sold medicines, ale and grocery. There is a mid-19th-century chemist's shop in Epsom, perhaps established there so early because of the spa. Chemists had a special window display of jars of coloured water, of elegant shape with ground glass stoppers. There is a good example in Dorking High Street. Boots were the first multiple-store chemists, and perhaps to prove their respectability, erected a series of buildings in ancient towns with frontages designed to reflect the history of their

surroundings. At Winchester and Canterbury they were mock timber-framed, while at Kingston the facade depicted the Saxon kings and there was stained glass by the stairs. Erected in 1909 and extended in 1929, this shop dominates the north side of the market place, although it has been outgrown by Boots and now houses Next.

Growth of the Large Stores

Most large stores grew from small draper's shops, although Harrods started in food. Alison Adburgham tells us that the first was either Bainbridges of Newcastle or Kendall Milne of Manchester, both started before 1838 and earlier than any store in London or Paris.⁷ There is evidence too to suggest that the recently closed Army & Navy Store in Kingston Market Place (earlier Hides) started life in the 18th century as Knight's, later Clarkson, Knight and Pratt's, draper's shop.⁸ The Kendall Milne philosophy was that 'Prices shall be marked on all goods from which no abatement shall be made'. They gave no credit either. Prices were lower and goods were delivered in smart vans, which were moving advertisements for the store. Surprisingly, the first purpose-built department store in England was then in Surrey – the Bon Marche at Brixton, named after the Paris store of 1860. James Smith, a printer of Tooting, won £80,000 when his horse won both the Caesarewich and the Cambridgeshire at Newmarket in 1876. He spent £70,000 building the Bon Marche and was bankrupt by 1892. The building still stands and is now the Brixton Enterprise Centre.

There are several architecturally interesting stores in the south-east of England, their new buildings usually being constructed to celebrate their success. Blakes, drapers of Maidstone, commissioned the first iron-framed store in 1885 from the local architects



Fig. 6. The Bentall's jig-saw puzzle.

Whichcord and Ashpital; it is now a bank. The headquarters of the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society in Woolwich was rebuilt in 1903 in brown terracotta, with a clock tower; under the clock was an inscription 'Each for all and all for each' and under that a larger-than-life-size statue of their secretary. Burton's devised a distinctive frontage in marble for their tailoring shops, often provided with a billiard saloon above. Interestingly they were the first group to fall foul of the new planning laws when the City of Chichester refused permission for their frontage because it did not conform with the character of its streets. The most impressive facade of all was Bentall's new store at Kingston upon Thames. The shop started in Clarence Street in 1867. By 1931 the firm had acquired a large site on the corner of Wood Street, and they employed Sir Aston Webb's son Maurice as architect. Clearly his inspiration derived from Hampton Court; his use of brick and Portland stone was superb, with keystones carved with the partners' initials. It is doubtful whether anybody in commerce will be able to build so beautifully again.

In shopping, as in everything else, the world has changed utterly since the last war. Shops have got larger. New enterprises, like betting-shops and building societies, have joined the parade. The customers now walk amongst the merchandise and counters have disappeared. Perhaps this started when Mr. Frank Winfield Woolworth opened his first store in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1888 (and in Liverpool in 1909). He decreed that 'All goods shall be displayed on a table' for customers to see and limited the value of the objects for sale to 3d. and 6d. so that no-one should be afraid to enter. Nowadays customers are not only much wealthier, but much more mobile and often go out for the day and do their shopping miles away from home. Adequate car parking space is now crucial for success.

These new features are exemplified by the new Sainsbury's at Burpham. Conveniently situated near the main A3, it has a large car park. Shopping is in one large hall, with almost everything within the customer's reach. Trolleys are provided for the customers to carry goods to the checkout (and their cars) and storage space must be found for these. The cash machines of all the banks are there, but the window is now unimportant: in fact the glass area is reduced to a minimum to lessen heat loss. Clearly the shop is very successful, with 31 checkouts, and very convenient, but to the casual observer of my generation the building looks more like a factory than a shop.

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2. 10 April, 1801. When he refers to a new gown he means what we would call a dress length of material.
3. Maurice Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages* (Lutterworth Press, 1967).
4. E. W. Swanton & P. Woods, *Bygone Haslemere*, (West, Newman, 1914), p.240.
5. John Ashdown, 'The Oil Jar as a London Shop Sign', *London Archaeologist*, vol. 2, pp.166-170.
6. After the talk at the Symposium I was told of one of these still existing at the grocer's shop in the market-place, Allfriston. There is also a display at Boughton Monchelsea Place, Kent.
7. Reference in note 1 above, p.137.
8. Account of Clarkson, Knight and Pratt for drapery items purchased by Lady Ann Conelly in 1794 (Kingston Borough Archives, KT18/8).

EARLY CYCLING ON THE SURREY ROADS With particular reference to the 'Ripley Road'

Les Bowerman

Send & Ripley History Society and the Veteran-cycle Club

1817-1860: 'Hobby Horses' and 'Velocipedes'

The construction of the railways in the 1830s spelt the end of coaches on the turnpikes. A. J. Munby, for instance, wrote in the 1860s that traffic on 'the great white Portsmouth Road' at Ripley was down to one carrier a week from London, compared with 27 coaches a day 40 years earlier.¹ By the end of the 19th century motor traffic through Ripley was becoming a problem. What of the intervening period? Apart from local horse-drawn traffic, occasional steam carriages and road locomotives were to be seen but never became numerous.² The main development was in the field of human propulsion, and Surrey saw much of this, albeit more on the social side than in manufacturing.

Cycling began in the German town of Karlsruhe with the registering in 1817 by Freiherr Karl von Drais of his 'running machine'. This was a padded wooden bar supported on a wheel fore and aft, and steered by a tiller above the front wheel. The rider sat astride and propelled the device by kicking against the ground. The *draisienne* was patented the following year in France, and in 1819 Denis Johnson, coachmaker of Covent Garden, took out a patent in this country on his 'improved velocipede or hobby horse'.

The first Surrey reference is in 1821 with the publication by Lewis Gompertz of Kennington of a paper describing his improved velocipede with a 'ratch-wheel' on the front wheel which enabled added propulsive power to be provided by hand.³ He was probably the first to add any mechanical drive and certainly the first to embody a freewheel. It is interesting to note that in Gompertz's view the velocipede would enable man to become an animal of 'great continued speed', thereby saving the horse from much suffering. It is not surprising to learn that he founded the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.⁴ Unfortunately, 'injudicious criticism' and lack of finance ensured that the 'Hobby' was a short-lived craze.

In 1830 Thomas Bramley and Robert Parker of Mousley Priory patented the first tandem tricycle. Mousley Priory was an 18th-century house in West Molesey which in 1786 had seen the start of one of the earliest balloon ascents.⁵ The patent describes a 'locomotive carriage applicable to common roads' and recites how one operator was to stand behind the single front wheel, steering and working one pair of treadles, with another behind him, 'reposing with his belly upon a soft cushion or saddle', so that he could apply the whole strength of his legs to push back on two further treadles.⁶ Doubtless the second man was hardly in a position to appreciate the view, and it is not known whether any of the machines actually trundled along

the 'common roads' of Surrey, but the action of the second man is probably the earliest record of the use of the legs as pistons in cycling, rather than in imitation of the walking action.

In 1839 or 1840 Kirkpatrick Macmillan, a Dumfriesshire blacksmith, produced a two-wheeled velocipede propelled by swinging pedals from which connecting rods took the drive to the rear axle. He was the first to realise that a two-wheeled vehicle could be balanced indefinitely without the feet touching the ground. His rear-drive, however, was before its time, and it did not catch on. Most of the experimentation at this period was with four-wheeled manumotive velocipedes. Willard Sawyer of Dover had brought the four-wheeled machine driven by treadles and cranked rear axle to a high degree of refinement by the time he showed it in the Great Exhibition of 1851. The first known photograph of a Surrey cyclist is of William Bashford of Outwood seated on what looks like a home-made version of a similar machine.⁷

1861-1869: 'Boneshakers', the first pedal-cycles

In 1861 Pierre Michaux, a Parisian coachbuilder, produced for sale a *draisienne* propelled by pedals attached to cranks on the front axle. This was the beginning of pedal-cycling. The idea was exported to America, where velocipedomania raged for a while. By 1868 velocipedes were being imported from America to Liverpool, and the following year the word 'bicycle' was used in a patent for the first time. Manufacture began in this country towards the end of 1868. As the *Surrey Comet* reported on 16 January 1869, 'This machine of solitary locomotion, now the rage in Paris, which costs less than a very bad horse and eats nothing, should be useful'. The general public regarded the idea with amazement, wondering how a rider could contrive to propel himself on wheels unsupported, and unattached to horse or carriage.

If the later recollections of Lewis Saubergue of Dorking are correct, he was one of the first in Surrey to adopt the new machine; having bought one in 1868 from the 'French Velocipede Company', he toured Germany on it in 1870.⁸ By that year J. Hooke, printer and bookseller of High Street, Guildford, was advertising the two-wheel 'Excelsior' Velocipede of Gray & Co. of London.⁹ It could be one of those machines which hangs in Guildford Museum, and another one on which Lewis Carroll photographed his brother Wilfred Dodgson outside the family home 'The Chestnuts' in Guildford. (Copies of this photograph are on sale at the Museum.)

The 'boneshaker', as it was by then known, is believed to have been so-called from the noise of the iron 'tires' on the gravel road surfaces, which put people in mind of a skeleton rattling its bones. The name is sometimes thought incorrectly to refer to its effect on the rider, but in fact the padded pigskin saddle, fitted to a long spring above the frame, is quite comfortable, and long distances were ridden.

The bicycle had arrived, therefore, but where did it fit into the transport scene? The canals took goods at about two m.p.h.; railways conveyed passengers and freight at speeds of up to 70 m.p.h. by 1840. As regards the roads, Kilvert wrote in 1871 that 'when the Queen comes over from Windsor to Claremont she drives at a great pace all the way, 12 miles an hour', and A. J. Munby was happy to walk from Weybridge to Ripley at presumably between three and four m.p.h.¹⁰ The early bicyclists found most road surfaces very bad with, for example, stretches of mud between Staines and Kingston, and loose sand and stones on Coast Hill between Wotton and Westcott.¹¹ By contrast, the turnpiked

Portsmouth Road had a magnificent surface 'of the smoothness of an eggshell', and, being largely deserted, was ideal for the development of the new form of transport.¹²

In 1870 the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War effectively brought continental development of the bicycle to an end, and the American manufacturers were in financial difficulties. It was therefore left to United Kingdom makers to pursue improvements to the design, and the most notable of these was James Starley, the 'father of the cycle industry' in Coventry. However, in the early 1870s a young man from Surrey was equally in the forefront of technological development.

1870-1885: The 'High Bicycle' – sporting and social effects

John Keen of Surbiton Hill was an apprentice carpenter and not yet 20 when in January 1870 he rode a boneshaker of his own make in a challenge match between the fourth and fifth milestones on the Fairmile at Cobham for a purse of £10.¹³ He lost to J. Johnson of Kensington, who rode a Thomas Sparrow bicycle with a front wheel two inches higher and shod with india-rubber 'tires'. The defeat spurred Keen on, and he was soon renowned as a professional rider who manufactured the highest and lightest bicycles. Using his racing experience, he was largely responsible for the way the boneshaker grew up into the 'high bicycle', later known as the 'ordinary', and subsequently and insultingly as the 'penny-farthing'. The higher wheel raised the gear and thus the speed. In April 1871, on a track behind the *Royal Oak*, Surbiton Hill, Keen rode five miles in 19½ minutes on one of his own machines with a 42-inch wheel – a speed of just over 15 m.p.h. (remember the Queen's 12 m.p.h.).¹⁴ By this time the bicycle was the fastest vehicle on the roads, and remained so for the next 25 years. As 'Professional Bicycler of the



Fig. 1. Viscount Bury, later 7th Earl of Albemarle, on a Humber Roadster Tricycle, 1884 (from the Badminton Library Volume, *Cycling*, 1887).

World' and manufacturer of the 'Surbiton' and later the 'Eclipse' cycles, 'Happy Jack' Keen combined riding and manufacturing at a level which no-one has subsequently achieved. By concentrating on manufacturing, Starley and others prospered, whereas Keen died in poverty.

Frank T. V. Honeywell improbably combined a successful professional career in music with a reputation as the father of amateur cycling. A Professor of Music, he gave select classes of instruction in the quadrille at the *Marquis of Granby* (by the present Scilly Isles roundabout), and was organist at Kingston parish church.¹⁵ He was renowned for his long-distance riding, and for winning the Four-Mile Amateur Championship of 1872 (at Lillie Bridge, West Brompton, on a Keen's 'Spider' Velocipede). In May 1870 he rode the 130 miles to Weymouth in two days, and the following year just over 100 miles in a day to Wareham, encountering the turnpike gate on the Hog's Back closed just after five a.m. He became a prominent member of the Surrey Bicycle Club, formed in 1871.

Honeywell was also closely involved with the Hampton Court Meets held from 1874 to 1887 to accustom the public to the sight of bicycle and later tricycle riders *en masse*. Some 2,000 riders would assemble in a mile-long line tailing back to Kingston Bridge.¹⁶ As many as 30,000 spectators would watch them ride in pairs in order of club seniority in an eight-mile procession through Bushy Park.

Ripley: 'The Mecca of all good cyclists'

Although the centre of cycle manufacture was Coventry, the little Surrey village of Ripley, deserted by the coaches and miles from a railway station, soon became the social centre of the cycling world. The 'Mecca of all good cyclists', Lord Bury, later the seventh Earl of Albemarle, called it, when he was about to visit the village; the *Talbot*, there, was the country headquarters of the Civil Service Cycling Club of which he was President.¹⁷ Ripley's first mention as a cyclists' halt occurs in the 1876 Surrey Bicycle Club Captaincy Race when the contestants rode from the *Griffin* at Kingston to Guildford, and back to Ripley.¹⁸ At Whitsun in 1879 two northern tourists, 'fired by the seductive accounts of the splendid surfaces to be found on southern roads', visited Ripley, but as it was 'crowded with London men', they moved on towards Guildford.¹⁹

At first all the Ripley hotels were glad of the new custom after years in the doldrums: C. W. Nairn, bugler in the London Bicycle Club and London correspondent of *The Cyclist*, wrote in 1881 that the *Talbot* was the place for 'the sober-minded', the *Anchor* was where 'youths of great vitality' assembled 'to make things lively', while the *Hautboy and Fiddle* at nearby Ockham had often seen 'rare merry-making . . . as the cyclists passed round the jovial song till the small hours'.²⁰ Six hundred riders visited Ripley on Good Friday that year. Apart from the road surface, what was the great appeal? Nairn explained it as follows: at 25 miles from London it was just right for a brisk morning's ride on the graceful high 'ordinary'. There was the beautiful view from Red Hill across the scented pine woods of Ockham to the 'exquisitely pretty, miniature lake Bolder Mere, locally known as Wisley Hut Pond', and, far beyond, the vista to the Downs at Newlands Corner. After cruising 'legs over the handles' downhill into Ripley, there were the Ockham Park gates, the farmhouse, and the picturesque bridge marking the entrance to 'the Bicyclists' Haunt'. On the left of the wide village street was the *Talbot*, a 'perfect model of an old English coaching house', the low-beamed, comfortable charms of the *Anchor*, and across

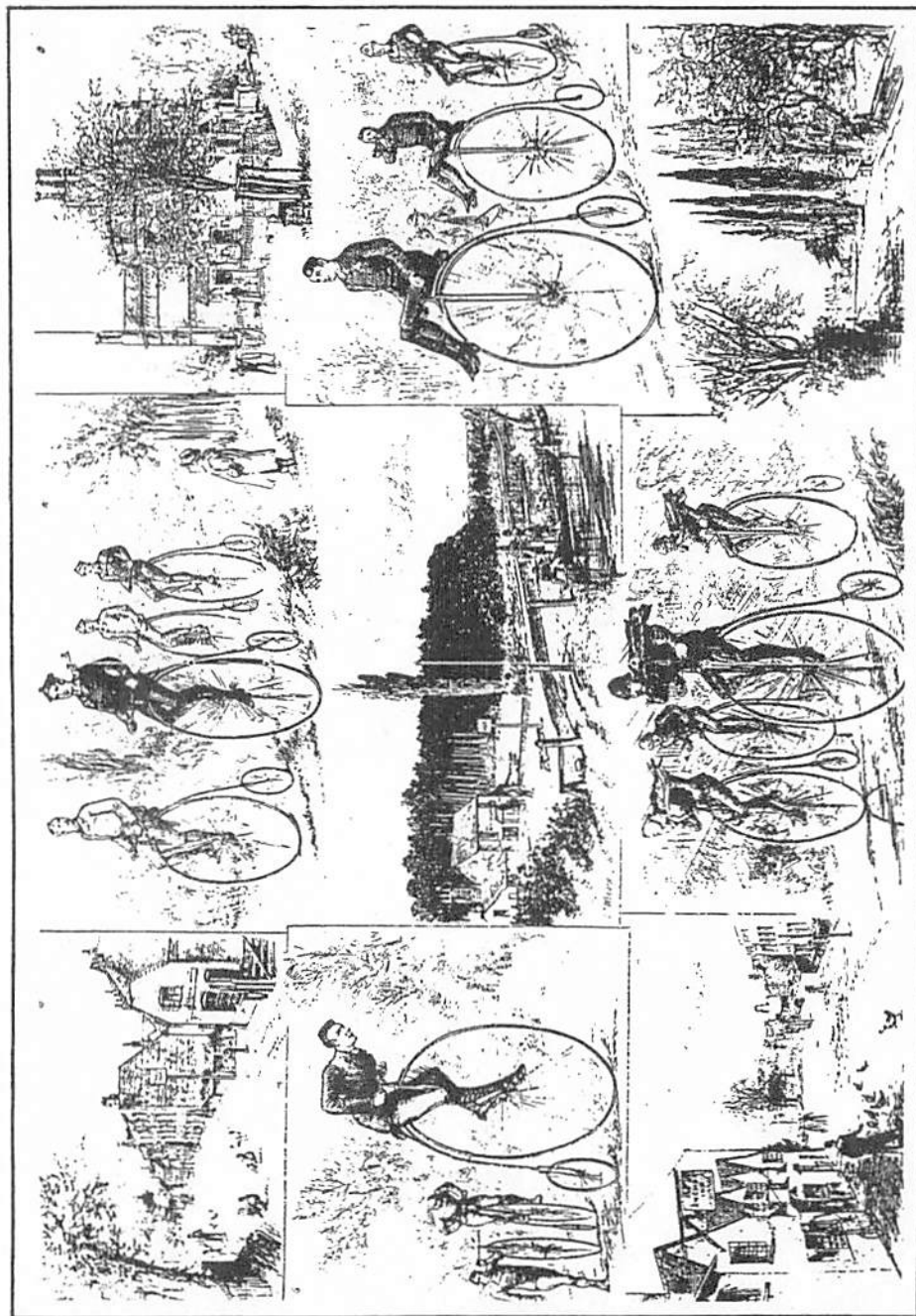


Fig. 2. A Bicyclist's Haunt - Ripley (from *The Pictorial World*, 21 May 1881).

the Green the prospect of a bath in the River Wey. The contrast between smoky, crowded, smelly, formal London, and the spacious rural delights of Ripley and the road thither is easily imagined.

The *Anchor* became so popular that cyclists came from many parts to sign the visitors' books (still there). The 1892 book has among its 4,275 entries 175 signatures for 15 April, and entries from France, America, Germany, Canada and New Zealand, as well as from all parts of the British Isles. There were competitions to be the first arrival at the *Anchor* on a new model from the Shows, and to be first to sign the new visitors' book on New Year's Day. This unique popularity was due partly to the rustic attraction of the unusual 16th-century building, the welcome given by Mrs. Harriet Dibble and her two comely daughters, and the fact that everybody else in the cycling world was likely to be met there. At Ripley Church the Revd. Henry Hooper held special cyclists' services, and there are memorial windows, paid for by their cyclist admirers, marking the death of H. L. Cortis, first to ride 20 miles in an hour, and to the sisters Annie and Harriet Dibble, who died in 1895 and 1896 respectively.

Ditton, where the *Angel* was the main stop on the way to Ripley, became known as 'The Rialto'. Cyclists had formed themselves into (mainly local) clubs from about 1870, but in October 1885 the first of a new type of club, based on a particular road and designed to appeal to hard-riders from a wide area, was formed. This was the North Road Cycling Club, which celebrated its centenary two years ago. The Ripley Road Club followed in March 1886, with headquarters variously at the *Angel*, the *Anchor*, and in town. In the first year their member Dr. E. B. Turner presented a silver trophy for the winner of the 'Between the Houses' race from the *Anchor* to the *Angel*. Won first by Alfred Bower (Lord Mayor of London in 1925), it is now the President's Shield of the Veteran-cycle Club. The Bath Road Club was formed in November 1886 at the *New Inn*, Ham Common, whence its members raced on their eponymous road, and also rode socially on the Ripley Road, superseding the Ripley Road Club within a few years.

Southern Counties Cyclists' Camps were held at Shalford Park, Guildford, in 1886 and 1887; at Busbridge Park, Godalming, in 1888-1890, and at the Poultry Farm, Dorking, in 1891-1893 and in 1896, but since these events did not involve road cycling, they are outside the scope of this article.

In April 1887 the Singer Victoria War Cycle, consisting of five tandem tricycles coupled end to end, was shown to the military 'brass' at Aldershot.²¹ A ten-man team including the inventor, S. H. Lea (later of Lea-Francis fame) took delivery from the showrooms at Holborn and proceeded down to Ripley, where they were ministered to by Annie Dibble, 'as blooming as of yore'. After the military trials next morning, they rode the 'serpent', towing 300 lbs of luggage, back up Guildford High Street, where their military appearance ensured that 'carters and other travellers got out of their way very rapidly indeed', to Ripley again, where customers of the *Anchor* remarked that 'Ripley Fair isn't in it!'

1885-1890: Safety bicycles and pneumatic tyres

In 1888 came a development which has had a more far-reaching effect on road transport than probably any other, and without which the aircraft industry would doubtless



Fig. 3. *The Anchor*, Ripley (from *Cycling World Illustrated*, 15 April 1896).

Fig. 4. *The Angel*, Ditton, where John Keen had a workshop (from *Cycling World Illustrated*, 18 March 1896).



never have got off the ground – namely John Boyd Dunlop's re-invention of the pneumatic tyre. This, together with John Kemp Starley's first 'Rover' bicycle, which appeared in 1885, and was the forerunner of the 'diamond' frame, meant that cycling as we know it had arrived. It enabled the public to take to the road in large numbers, and ladies to travel as freely as their menfolk.

Road improvements and trouble with the police

Being major road users, and very vulnerable to poor surfaces, the cyclists were concerned about the state of the roads. Their Roads Improvement Association, sponsored by the Cyclists' Touring Club and the National Cyclists' Union, was an active pressure group from 1887 until at least 1928. 'Danger' and 'Caution' boards were erected at the top of steep hills from 1880; it could mean death if the rider of an 'ordinary' were to underestimate the speed of a descent. The last boards became superfluous only when the Ministry of Transport finally took them over in about 1964. One of the last in Surrey was the 'Caution' sign in Richmond Park, erected in 1905. It disappeared in 1981, but was replaced two years later by the Cyclists' Touring Club, after representations by some members of the Southern Veteran-cycle Club (now the Veteran-cycle Club).

Some one hundred and thirty roadmenders worked on the Ripley Road between Richmond and Guildford. At the instigation of C. A. ('Bath Road') Smith, for many years landlord of the *White Lion*, Cobham, the Bath Road Club organised from 1890 until 1907 annual dinners for the menders at the *New Inn* at Ham Common, the *Bay Tree* at Merton, the *Angel* at Thames Ditton, the *White Lion* itself, and of course the *Anchor* at Ripley. Entertainment was provided by members of the Club and others, including Martin D. Rucker, Jnr., cycle maker and later managing director of Humber, and also one-time Master of the Surrey Farmers' Staghounds. Wined and dined, the menders went home with an ounce of 'baccy' and half a pound of tea for 'the Missus'.

With the success of the pneumatic-tyred safety bicycle, and the increasing use of the Surrey roads both for racing and social riding, the police, notably at Kingston, mounted anti-cyclist campaigns with the word of one policeman alleging impossible speeds against even elderly cyclists being taken by the magistracy.²² Cyclists, including respectable young ladies, would be arrested, marched to the cells, and detained for up to three hours. Doubtless the police had some reason for concern, because according to their estimate 20,000 cyclists passed through Kingston at Whitsun in 1894 on their way to Ripley. This estimate, however, is considered to be exaggerated. Among those prosecuted was the sporting Marquis of Queensberry, who successfully took up cycle racing after he was 50, and the ubiquitous 'Bath Road' Smith, who, with Sir Claude Champion de Crespigny, was fined for speeding down Painshill on a tandem. However, in 1900 the Chief Constable of Surrey ordered 17 bicycles for sergeants and inspectors (none for the ordinary 'bobby' as yet!). According to one source, 125 Singer bicycles were subsequently ordered for the Surrey police to overtake and stop cars exceeding 12 m.p.h.²³ The final twist is that the first Automobile Association patrols were mounted on bicycles to warn motorists of police speed traps!

Knickerbockers and women's liberation

Cycling, notably in Surrey, played an important part in the emancipation of women, not least from the tyranny of floor-length dresses and petticoats. In 1869 the editor of the

Surrey Comet fulminated: 'It is hoped we shall not copy the French in having women – I'll not say ladies – bestriding the new locomotive machine', and of course it was impossible to ride a boneshaker, let alone the high 'ordinary', in dress reminiscent of the crinoline. Open-fronted tricycles with a bench seat first enabled women to cycle, and a tourist riding from Horsham to Dorking in 1879 reported that he had met a young lady 'working a tricycle with exquisite grace and ease'.²⁴ Ladies' safety bicycles were available from 1886, but the prevailing attitude was still apparent in the Linley & Biggs catalogue of 1890: 'Skirts cut like riding habits do not look nice, as the movements of the limbs are too plainly visible'.

The American Mrs. Amelia Bloomer had advocated the use of a divided garment as long ago as 1848, but it was not until the 1880s, when the constraints of cycling in skirts became apparent, that the Rational Dress Society was formed in this country to press for more practical clothing for lady cyclists. In 1893 16-year-old Tessie Reynolds shocked the cycling world by riding the 120 miles from Brighton to London and back in eight and a half hours, dressed in a calf-length knickerbocker suit. 'Lamentable, disgusting, masculine and scanty', was the reaction. It is unclear whether the dress, the man's bicycle, or the exertion shocked them most. Also in 1893 *Cycling* reported that 'the benickerbocked [sic] cyclist has appeared in her half-dozen before twice 200 men at the *Angel* at Ditton . . . the bi-furcated garment a-wheel', and then in 1895 the same journal noted that 'Rational dress is winning the battle between convention and comfort on the Surrey roads'.

The Mowbray House Cycling Association for women had been founded in 1892, on the radical principles of co-operative cycles and rational dress.²⁵ Lady Henry Somerset of Reigate Priory was the President. The Vice-President of the Association



Fig. 5. A photograph believed to have been taken at Guildford Lane (now Potters Lane), Send, c.1895.

was Viscountess Harberton, who was also Vice-President of the Western Rational Dress League. Some six months after Richard Cook of the *White Horse*, Dorking, had written in May 1898 to the *Daily Mail*, announcing that he would not admit women to his coffee-room in 'that disgusting dress called rationals', and that he would be pleased if anyone took him to court to decide the matter, Lady Harberton and the Cyclists' Touring Club did just that to another landlord after an incident at the *Haulboy Hotel*, Ockham. At Surrey Quarter Sessions in 1899, the innkeeper Mrs. Sprague was charged with refusing to serve victuals to a traveller. The Viscountess, 'an elderly lady in exceedingly baggy knickerbockers reaching below the knee', had been refused luncheon in the coffee-room and was taken instead through the bar which 'smelled abominable' to the bar parlour, where there were men in working-dress, some of whom were smoking.²⁶ She had construed it as a refusal of service. Mrs. Sprague, however, was acquitted on the grounds that she had 'offered service in a reasonable place'. Disappointing for the 'bloomerites', but it nevertheless confirmed that they could not be refused service altogether.

Cycling today: keeping the past alive

Since the turn of the century relatively little has changed in cycling, apart from Alex Moulton's introduction of the small-wheeled cross-frame bicycle in 1962, and the fact that since the 1920s the sight of a female knee astride a bicycle raises little more than an admiring glance. The Ripley Road Section of the Veteran-cycle Club seeks by research, and by the restoration and riding of old machines, to keep alive the memory of the pioneering days of cycling on the Surrey roads, while the Send and Ripley History Society studies all aspects of Ripley's past.

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Erratum: Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 143: Harquebus: *for* armour read firearm.

THE CREE NURSERY AT ADDLESTONE

Beryl Mackenzie
Addlestone Historical Society

Background of the Founder

Over 200 years ago, Addlestone was the home of a flourishing nursery business, founded around the year 1765 by John Cree. 'Cree' is listed in Black's *Surnames of Scotland* as 'a surname in Ayrshire and Glasgow' and it will be seen that there are aspects of his history which could suggest that, like so many famous gardeners, he came from Scotland. No record of his place and date of birth has been discovered, but it is recorded in the nonconformist church register that he died in 1816, at the age of 84 years. The parish records, however, say he was 78.¹ His date of birth can therefore be cautiously given as c.1734. He is listed in Ray Desmond's *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturalists*, as:

CREE, John (c.1738-1816) Kew Gardener. Collected plants in Carolina in 1760s. Founded nursery c.1765 at Addlestone, Chertsey, Surrey. Supplied plants to Princess Augusta at Kew.²

References authenticating these brief statements link Addlestone with the story of the great collectors who brought so many new plant introductions from the New World to the Old in the early 18th century. John Cree is mentioned in a letter from Charlestown, South Carolina, written in 1767 by Dr. Alexander Garden. Dr. Garden was born in Scotland and educated at Edinburgh, and as well as practising in Charlestown as a physician was also a distinguished amateur botanist. The gardenia is named after him, and he became Vice-President of the Royal Society. His letters from Charlestown to the eminent Linnaeus, and to Mr. John Ellis in London, are contained in *Correspondence of Linnaeus*, ed. J. E. Smith.³ John Ellis was a London merchant and amateur botanist, concerned with the problems of transporting newly-discovered plants to England. He was the author of a work giving detailed instructions for the constant care required to ensure their survival during the long sea voyages. John Cree's name occurs in the letter to Mr. Ellis dated 18 April 1767, which commences:

The business of this is to be conveyed to you by John Cree, a gardener, who was formerly bred by Mr. Aiton, and is a sober, careful and industrious fellow, with some small smattering of botany. He is modest and attentive, and has carried several things along with him . . . He is to return here again . . .

The Mr. Aiton referred to was the first Head Gardener at Kew, William Aiton, another Scot, who worked under Sir Joseph Banks as Director, and with him developed the estate during the reign of George III into a famous botanic garden.

VACCINIUM AMOENUM.

Broad-leaved Whortle-berry.

CLASS VIII. ORDER I.

OCTANDRIA MONOGYNIA. Eight Chives. One Pointal.

ESSENTIAL GENERIC CHARACTER.

CAULIS SUPERUS. Corolla monopetala.
 FRUTICOSA receptaculo infero. Bacca quadrilobulari, polyperma.

COR. superior. Imbricis one petal.
 TUBERIS fixis into the receptacle. A Berry with four cells and many seeds.
 See VAC. ACUTOSTAPHYLLOS, Pl. XXX. Vol. I.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

Vaccinium foliis utriusque acuminatis, foliorum rubris, deciduis; floribus racemosis, pediculis bracteatis, calycibus reflexis, corollis cylindricis. Stamina decem.

Whortle-berry with leaves tapering to both ends, a little sawed at the edges and falling off; flowers grow in long bunches, foot-stalks with floral leaves, cups reflexed, blossoms cylinder-shaped. Ten Chives.

REFERENCE TO THE PLATE.

1. A Flower complete.
2. The Enpalement, with the floral leaves.
3. The Chives, magnified.
4. The Shaft and its Summit, magnified.
5. A nearly ripe Berry.
6. The Stamens, cut transversely, magnified.

THIS very handsome species of Whortleberry was introduced, from North America, in the year 1765, by Mr. John Cree, Nurseryman, of Addlestone, amongst many others. It is a hardy plant, in our climate. This species inclines to a leafy, rather than a peat soil, and is propagated by cuttings, which it throws up from the root, or from layers, which may be put down, in May, and taken off the succeeding year. Its time of flowering is about June or July, in which latter month our drawing was made last year, at Messrs. Lee and Kennedy's, Hausermannish.



Figs. 1. & 2. *Vaccinium Amoenum*: illustration and description (copyright of the Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; reproduced with permission).

To have worked at Kew and to have been trained – ‘bred by’ – Mr. Aiton would have been an excellent reference.

Some of the original specimens brought back by John Cree from Carolina are preserved in the herbarium at the Natural History Museum, but unfortunately they are not accompanied by any documentary material.⁴ A detailed description of a plant introduced by him – *Vaccinium Amoenum* – is to be found in the *Botanists' Repository* (book II, 1799), accompanied by a coloured illustration. The more familiar name for this plant is the blueberry, and the family includes the native Scottish blaeberry; the American blueberry grows to a greater height than the Scottish plant. Is it fanciful to speculate that John Cree hoped for commercial benefit from the introduction of a plant with fruit similar to the blaeberry, but much more accessible for picking? If so, he must have been disappointed. A recent article in the Royal Horticultural Society's Journal, *The Garden*, reports on attempts made to establish the American highbush blueberry as a commercial crop in the Scottish Highlands.⁵ The soil requirements of a sandy acid soil could well be met in this Surrey heathland area, but although hardy the plants are very difficult to establish, and take seven years to reach crop-bearing.

Foundation and Development at Addlestone

The date of the founding of the Addlestone nursery is given by John Harvey in his book *Early Nurserymen* as about 1765 – describing the author as ‘John Cree from Kew Gardens’. Why Addlestone? Early records list him as ‘of Woburn, Gardener’, so that possibly he was first employed on the *Ferme Ornée* at the Southcote estate.⁶ The proximity of Addlestone to the Wey Navigation Canal (extended to Godalming in 1760), to Weybridge Wharf at Hamm Court, and to the Thames, may have been important in considering the area, since the transport of large orders would have been a problem for nurseries in the days of horse-drawn vehicles and before tarmacadam or trains. A Norwich nurseryman in 1833 announced in his catalogue that the opening of a new canal nearby would enable his customers:

to receive their plants as regularly and cheaply as can be desired, and that the great obstacles formerly operating against the conveyance of heavy goods, from the delay and expence [sic] attending it, will now be done away with.⁷

The records of the Wey Navigation available at Guildford Muniment Room do not itemise the loads carried, and Cree is not one of the names in the ledgers of customers which cover the years 1767-93. It is certain, however, that John Cree had occasion to visit Godalming, since his second wife came from there, and their marriage took place in Godalming in 1781.

By 1786 the nursery was supplying newly-introduced plants to the Dowager Princess of Wales, Princess Augusta, mother of George III. It was her enthusiasm for plants and gardens which began the development of her garden at Kew Palace into the Royal Botanic Gardens of today. Preserved in the royal archives at Windsor, and reproduced in Dr. Harvey's book *Early Gardening Catalogues*, is an interesting list of plants supplied from the Cree nursery in February 1768 to the Princess Augusta. Forty-three plants are listed for a total sum of £6 0s. 6d. Nearly all of

them are described as 'new', and include 'a new toothach tree' for three shillings. An infusion of the bark of the toothache tree, *Zanthoxylum americanum*, was used to ease the pain of toothache. A specimen can be found in the Savill Gardens of Windsor Park.

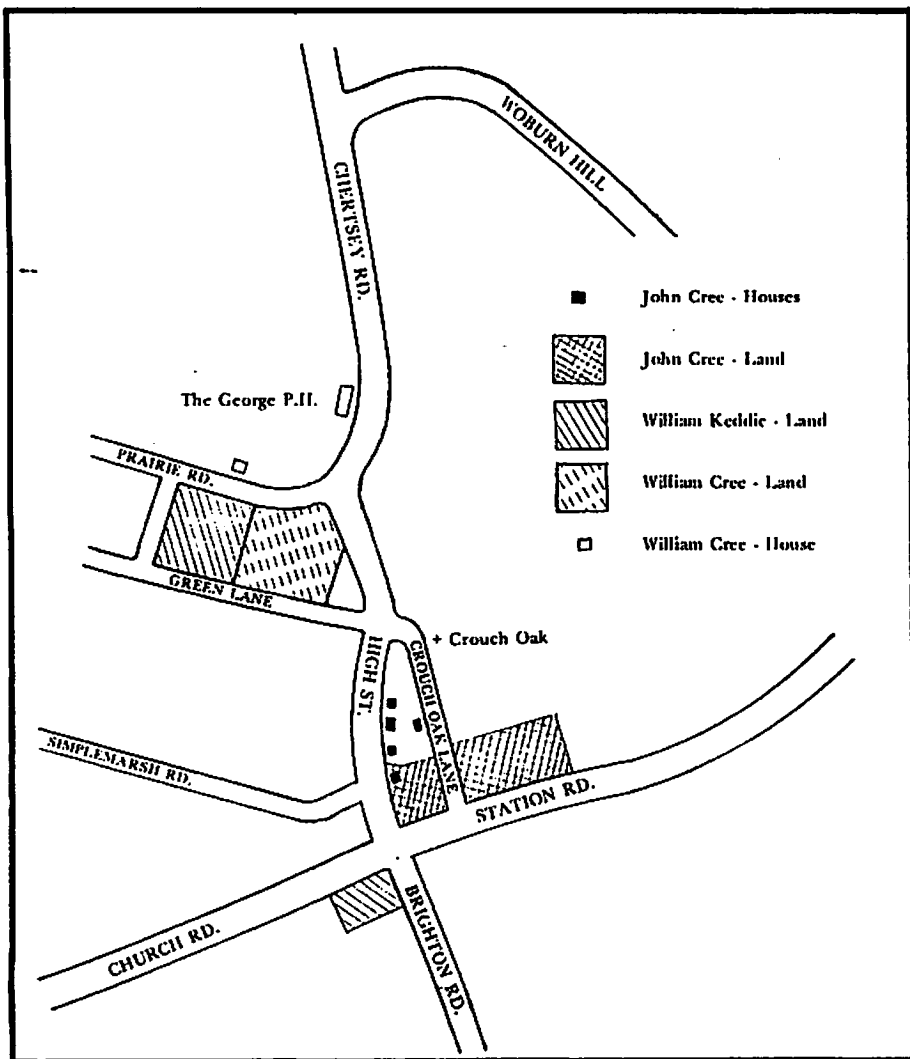


Fig. 3. Location of the nursery as shown on the 1814 enclosure map, plotted on a modern map.

Some idea of the extent and location of the Cree nursery is shown on the map (figure 3), information for which was obtained from the 1814 enclosure map in Chertsey Museum, correlated with a modern street map of the area. An 1808 map of Green Lane Farm shows land between Green Lane and Prairie Road in the area now covered by Douglas Road and Rickman Crescent (facing Victory Park) to have been in the possession of 'Cree and Co.'.⁸ The Cree holdings are shown to be quite extensive if areas held by William, brother of John Cree, are included. Adjoining areas held by William Kedie was also evidently part of the nursery, since by 1816 a receipt from the nursery is headed 'Cree & Kedie - Nursery & Seedsmen'.⁹ William Kedie was probably a foreman who later became a partner in the business. In 1794 in *Chertseyana*, Book I, John and William Cree are listed as nursery and seedsmen; John Cree is marked as a freeholder, but there is no mention of William Kedie.¹⁰ He is, however, a witness of John Cree's will, dated 17 October 1812, and is described in a later codicil of 1817 as William Kedie of Addlestone, nurseryman.¹¹

The house which until recently was 24-26 High Street, Addlestone, is thought to have been the Cree family house, being two of the six copyhold cottages he held at the time of his death in 1816. It might reasonably be deduced from the 1841 census return that John Cree's son and family were residing in a house opposite the *Holly Tree* public house in Addlestone Road (now the High Street), which is the situation of nos. 24-26 today.

John Cree married three times, and his third wife Ann was the mother of his only child, a son born on 9 June 1799 and baptised John at the Presbyterian church in Alwyn's Lane, Chertsey, on 16 June. One imagines that the father, certainly over 60 at this date, must have been delighted to have a son to inherit the family business.

Some interesting insights into the character of John Cree senior are given by scraps of information from local records. He attended the Alwyn's Lane nonconformist church, Chertsey - also referred to as the Scots Church - and is described in the church records as 'one of the Trustees of the said Scots Church'. The compiler of the scrapbook *Chertseyana*, a local printer Robert Wetton, was Treasurer and also one of the Trustees, and perhaps their church connection accounts for the several items concerning John Cree and his nursery selected by Robert Wetton for inclusion in his scrapbook. John Cree's name also appears as making a contribution of £1 1s 0d to the Volunteer Association of the United Parishes of Chertsey and Thorpe in 1804, at the height of the Napoleonic War. He is even listed as one of the 265 privates in the Chertsey and Thorpe Volunteers, an organisation formed in 1803 with 28 officers, and eventually disbanded in 1813.

In 1815 he is listed as one of the ten committee members of the Chertsey and Egham Branch Bible Society, re-elected in December to serve for the ensuing year. His term of office was not to be completed, for his death is recorded in the church register of funerals on 27 October 1816.

His widow was thus left with a business to run and a son of 16 years old to help her. The terms of the will dated 17 October 1812 included careful financial provision for her.¹² The two executors appointed are both nurserymen, named as 'my friends Hugh Ronalds of Brentford, Co. Middlesex, nurseryman, and Robert Donald of Woking, Co. Surrey, nurseryman', and it appears that they were given the responsibility of the property and the financial management of the business until the son



Fig. 4. Nursery receipt of 1816 (courtesy of Guildford Muniment Room, GMR 111/6/24(43)).

Fig. 5. 24-26 High Street, Addlestone, 1985, prior to development (courtesy of Mrs Brenda Holmes).



attained his majority at 21 years. (This responsibility was surrendered to John Cree junior at a Manor Court held on 13 June 1821.) A sister in Biggar, Scotland, is named as the beneficiary in the event of the decease of both John Cree junior and his mother. Another hint, perhaps, of the possible Scottish origins of John Cree senior?

There are also clues in *Chertseyana* to the character of John Cree junior. In 1818 he is listed as one of the Chertsey managers at the inaugural meeting of the Chertsey Savings Bank – somewhat puzzling this, since he was still only a minor of 18 years of age. In 1820 there is an account of the inaugural meeting of the Addlestone

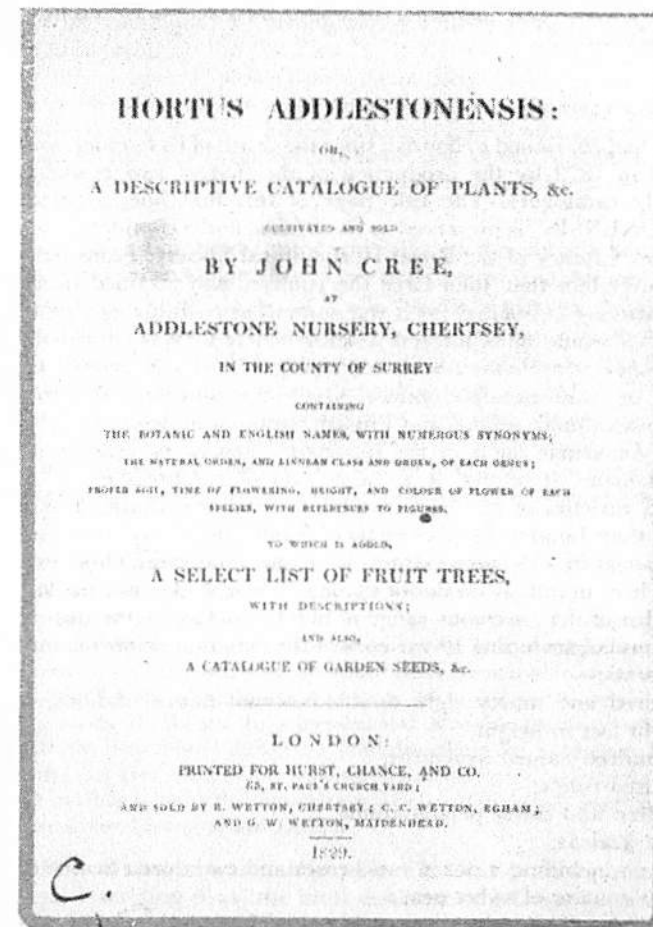


Fig. 6. *Hortus Addlestonensis*, title page of first catalogue, 1829 (courtesy of the Curator, Chertsey Museum).

Society for Reading, Hearing and Circulating the Holy Scriptures and for the Relief of the Poor, held at *The George* public house in Addlestone on 8 July; John Cree junior is listed as a committee member. By 1825 he is described as 'CREE John, Nurseryman, Freeholder' in the Return of the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor and men qualified to serve juries. He is also listed on the voters' lists of 1830, 1832 and 1835, and the Poll Book of the 1830 election records that he voted for the successful Whig challenger to the Tory seat.

His mother died suddenly (aged 57) on 17 February 1828, and was buried in the family vault at the Alwyn's Lane church. Nothing now remains of this edifice (described in *Chertseyana* in 1794 as 'a neat brick building') and the churchyard with many of its gravestones, including that of Ann Cree, was recently cleared for redevelopment.

The Nursery and Catalogue of 1829 and 1837

The nursery had continued to flourish since the death of its founder, and its progress was marked in 1829 by the production of the first of two remarkably detailed and scholarly catalogues. The title page of this first one, entitled 'HORTUS ADDLESTONENSIS', is preserved in *Chertseyana*, and a complete copy is preserved in the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society. From the introductory pages it seems plain that John Cree the younger had attained to more than his father's 'smattering of botany' (as it was somewhat patronisingly described by Dr. Garden) and it would be of interest to know where he was educated.

The catalogue is an octavo book containing 176 closely-printed pages without illustrations or, unfortunately, prices. Over five thousand different plants are named, each with their botanic and English names, and details of their growth and cultivation. An article on it in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1928 entitled 'An Old Garden Catalogue' described it as 'a marvel of compression . . . far richer in references to varieties of plants of interest to the horticulturalist as distinct from the botanist than Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Plants*'. Both this article and another in the same journal in 1950 give extracts from the catalogue. These extracts cannot be repeated here in full, as no doubt gardeners would like, but the following items give some idea of the enormous range of plants stocked by the nursery:

thirty primulas, including 10 varieties of the common primrose, nine of them double forms;
one hundred and ninety eight double-flowered named dahlias, the tallest being eight feet in height;
over a hundred named hyacinths;
two hundred tulips;
one hundred and thirty pelargoniums;
fifty-eight azaleas;
many roses, including a dozen moss-roses and two dozen Scotch roses;
only eight colours of sweet peas;
one hundred and eleven varieties of apple; 27 of plums (but no Victoria or Pershore varieties); 18 of strawberries;
fifty-seven species of aster;
sixty-seven campanulas;

fifty-seven chrysanthemums;
fifty-five saxifrages;
many familiar vegetables, including 32 different herbs (but no mint), and there are also some unfamiliar names such as nimble turnips, white turkey cucumber, Robin's Egg dwarf bean, and a Spanish morratto pea which grew ten feet tall.

As the 1950 article comments 'John Cree must have had a very large establishment if, as he states, he grew all the plants he sold'.

Some idea of the establishment is given in contemporary accounts in Loudon's *Gardeners' Magazine* which appeared in 1830 and 1831, evidently as a result of the publication of the catalogue. According to the article on 12 May 1830 (which is included in *Chertseyana*):

We were much gratified in looking over this nursery, which contains more rare herbaceous plants than any of the country nurseries, with the exception of that of Messrs. Young at Epsom, and is inferior to none in general arrangement. Mr. Cree, his seed-shop, his hot-houses, his dwelling house, and all that is about him, are just what we should expect or wish to surround the author of such an excellent catalogue as the *Hortus Addlestonensis*.

Mention is made of 'a Lombardy grape which covers the end of a house, and bears abundantly every year, and which Mrs. Cree finds a most valuable grape for making wine', and, somewhat surprisingly, of '*Cactus opuntia*, which has lived in the open air under a wall without any protection and ripened fruit every year'. A remarkably hardy prickly pear! The article concludes with the following description of the nursery, surely a most labour-intensive establishment:

A very neat green-house and propagating stove, with stone shelves, span roof etc., heated by hot water by Cottam; numerous well-constructed pits; and numerous small compartments, enclosed with hedges, for the rarer plants, are also to be found here. There is an extensive nursery for fruit and forest trees at some distance, which we had not leisure to visit.

The 1831 article reports on another visit to this nursery, and includes a brief but illuminating description of the area around Addlestone:

Walk from the inn at Chertsey to the Addlestone Nursery. The cottage gardens exceedingly well-cultivated, and the plantations, having been planted a few years ago, when the common was enclosed, contain a reasonable portion of ornamental trees . . . The effect of the flowers of the common furze on the waste, and along the margin of Lord King's woods, is brilliant. In September last, however, the dwarf whin and the purple heath was even more brilliant . . . [and describing the route from Addlestone to Goldworth (*sic*)] Fine effect of the canal traversing the heath, as showing the power of man, and recalling to mind the commerce and riches of the points where it originates and terminates, viz. Liverpool and London.

A review of the catalogue was published in *The Gardeners' Magazine* in February 1830. Although describing it as 'the most complete which has yet been published by any British Nurseryman' the review goes on to comment roundly 'The only objection that we have to it is the price, which is one half too much for a tract of 172 pages; even though printed in columns, which is much more expensive than common printing'. It was printed by a London printer, cost 5s. 6d., and was sold

locally by Wettons, the Chertsey printer. Was Wettons only capable of 'common printing', not of columns?

Decline and Eventual Closure

Records held in the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society show that John Cree was listed as a member of the Society in 1832. A rather handsome mallow was named after him – MALVA CREEANA. The description of this plant, 'Cree's Mallow', given in Maund's *Botanical Garden* states that it was raised from seed in 1835 and that 'Creeana is a name adopted by the late George Penny, Nurseryman, of Milford, out of respect to his friend Mr. Cree, of the Addlestone Nursery, who is said to be a good practical botanist as well as cultivator'.¹³ A brief reference of 1832, in connection with the Knaphill nurseries, suggests naming a variety of new azalea 'Cree's Jane'. He was evidently well-known and well-regarded by fellow nurserymen in Surrey, and the production of a second catalogue in 1837 (entitled *A Catalogue of Herbaceous Plants cultivated and sold by John Cree, Addlestone Nursery, Chertsey*, which listed amongst numerous other items an 'Addlestone Pippen apple') might seem to indicate that the nursery was thriving.

However, the evidence of his business transactions indicates that from as early as 1828 he was mortgaging and eventually selling various properties, until by 1838 he sold the last piece of copyhold nursery ground.¹⁴ This occasion is the last recorded where he is described as 'Nurseryman', and is the evidence for believing that the nursery was closed in 1838. In Piggott's *Directory* of 1839 he is listed as 'Auctioneer', and by 1845 he appears in the Post Office *Directory* for the Home Counties as 'CREE John, Auctioneer and Surveyor, Addlestone'.

Chertsey Museum holds the Minutes of the Boards of Surveyors for the Highways of the Parish of Chertsey, which show that in April 1845 'Mr. Cree' was appointed as Collector, Clerk and Assistant Surveyor at a salary of £70 p.a. Rather puzzling references in these minutes seem to indicate that he may prior to this appointment have held the office of Surveyor, and if so, had apparently run into financial difficulties in this capacity also. A letter dated 1795, in the archives held in Guildford Muniment Room, refers to Cree senior as 'a person that has several years collected the Land and Window Taxes and Poor Rates for Chertsey and keeps a Large Nursery of young trees, and the Director is a Mr. John Cree Nurseryman at Addlestone near Chertsey Surrey'. Did this tax-collecting office pass to John Cree the younger, together with the nursery business? When the latter died in office (unexpectedly it seems) at the beginning of 1858, he was succeeded by his son John, born in 1834, whose appointment was recorded 'in the place of his late Father, at the same salary' on 13 January 1858.

It would be satisfying to end with some explanation of the failure of the nursery so soon after the publication of such excellent catalogues. Was the author better on theory than practice – an academic by temperament, rather than a practical man of business? Was he unfortunate with his customers, perhaps defeated by unpaid bills? Did the competition from other nurseries become too fierce? As regards this last point, the 1845 Post Office *Directory* lists two nursery and seedsmen in Chertsey Lane End (now Ottershaw), and by the time of the 1851 Census one of these, James Fuller, was resident in Addlestone and was described as a nurseryman occupying 137 acres and employing 18 men.

There is a rather pleasing final touch to the Cree family story. An office block is now being built on the site of their family home. To commemorate the founder of the Addlestone Nursery, and its importance in the history of Addlestone, this new building is to be named 'John Cree House'.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NEW MATERIAL FOR SURREY HISTORIANS Accessions of Records in Surrey Record Office, 1986

D. B. Robinson
County Archivist

Whatever your town or village, whatever the period of history you are interested in, and (almost) whatever aspect of history appeals to you most, the resources of Surrey Record Office will contain material which is relevant and unique. Each year, several hundred feet of new material are added to our strongroom shelves, ready to be studied in our search rooms. Much of this material is deposited with us on indefinite loan by churches, businesses, institutions and organisations, local authorities and public bodies, and many private individuals. Some of it is presented to us as an outright gift. Occasionally we go out and purchase.

Esher Place

For example, we were successful in purchasing at auction at Phillips' 18th- and 19th-century deeds and other records of the Esher Place Estate. The estate was owned by the Rt. Hon. Henry Pelham between 1729 and 1748 and thereafter by his daughter Frances. In 1805 the house and park were purchased by John Spicer. The records include an attractive plan of the estate drawn by Thomas Richardson in 1774, when it comprised the Place with its pleasure gardens, park, lawn and adjoining meadows, lying between the River Mole on the west and what is now Moor Lane on the east, together with Weylands Farm west of the Mole and Sandown Farm and other fields east of it. The plan shows the individual fields, including a continuation of strip farming in the Clays north of Sandown Farm.

The records also include accounts for building and decorating Esher Place in 1806-1808, shortly after Spicer acquired it. The work was superintended by Edward Lapidge (who was also County Surveyor and designed Kingston Bridge). The accounts for wallpapering include details of preparatory work: acquiring and hanging the lining paper and pumicing it smooth. They also describe the paper. In the circular bedroom nine pieces of 'yellow sattin paper' cost £5 8s.; 'six dozen of handsome flock border', £2 2s.; 'six dozen of handsome flock border on yellow', £2 2s.; and 'six dozen of narrow flock border on yellow', 15s., together with the 'mans time hanging Paper and Border', £2 0s. 6d. The boudoir had 'roman drab pipe drapery' with rich blue drapings, fringes and lace bottoms; the paperhanger's time, which included 'hanging paper to a line', 'cutting out and adjusting the different Borders, colouring ceiling blue and fixing door ornaments', came to £3 3s. The total cost of the wallpapering came to £115 10s. 5d. There is also an inventory of the fixtures taken at valuation, including an alarm bell, the tapestry in the tapestry room and damask hangings in the octagon room, the kitchen range, coppers and fixtures in the dairy, laundry, washhouse and drying-yard. Lapidge's

estimate for rebuilding the house was £12,800, of which £450 was assigned to the Doric portico. Between 1805 and 1821, £22,924 17s. 9d. was spent on the buildings, including £854 for a new vinery and garden walls, £1,506 on new stables and £3,037 on additions to the front of the house.

The sale particulars of 1805 list the attractions of Esher Place Estate, including its relative proximity to the metropolis and, even closer, to Hampton Court, Oatlands and Painshill. There is an interesting catalogue of the building materials of the pavilion in the park and gothic materials from the mansion house which were sold in 1807. There are in addition many deeds, mortgages, counterpart leases and enfranchisements of the property making up the Estate. The Spicers were partners in Combe's Brewery (later merged with Watneys) and two deeds of partnership, of 1856 and 1866, are in the deposit. Harvey Combe of Cobham Park was another partner in the Brewery. We purchased these records at auction for £680 with the aid of a 50 per cent grant from the Government Purchase Grant Fund.

St. Martin's, Dorking

We have also purchased five sheets of architectural drawings for the rebuilding of the chancel of St. Martin's, Dorking, by Henry Woodyer in 1866-1868. The nave had been rebuilt in the 1830s and in 1866 William Henry Foreman and his wife, of Pippbrook House, offered to rebuild the chancel in memory of Mrs. Foreman's sister. The plans were included in a recent auction sale of papers of the Foreman family of Callaly Castle, Northumberland. They are attractively drawn and coloured. Although unsigned, they are probably by Woodyer himself. Other records of the 19th-century rebuildings of St. Martin's are among the parish records deposited in Guildford Muniment Room and the drawings complement them. The drawings cost £691, half of which was reimbursed by the Government Purchase Grant Fund.

Farnham Borough Records

Many of the older records of the borough of Farnham have been deposited in Guildford Muniment Room by Waverley Borough Council. The earliest document is a charter of the mid-13th century by which William de Ralegh, bishop of Winchester, confirmed various legal rights to his burgesses of Farnham including the right to appoint their bailiffs, to weigh and try bread and taste ale, and to receive all tolls. He also granted them the right to account directly to him for the fee farm rent of the borough, which was in the middle ages one of the main signs of independent borough status.

Most of the records, however, relate to 18th- and 19th-century parish administration, and, in particular, to poor relief. In 1766 the garret of the parish workhouse was set up as a children's workroom by inserting three new skylights. Sixteen spinning wheels and blocks were purchased for spinning silk; 'these windows and working tools are in all likelihood to become a great benefit to the parish as the children are kept in employ'. By 1781 the number of wheels had doubled. In 1794 the parish adopted the provisions of 'Gilbert's Act' and appointed their own paid officials to organise poor relief. They decided to build a new workhouse and to sell the old one, in Middle Church Lane facing the church, for possible use as a barracks. The decision to sell the old workhouse was later rescinded.

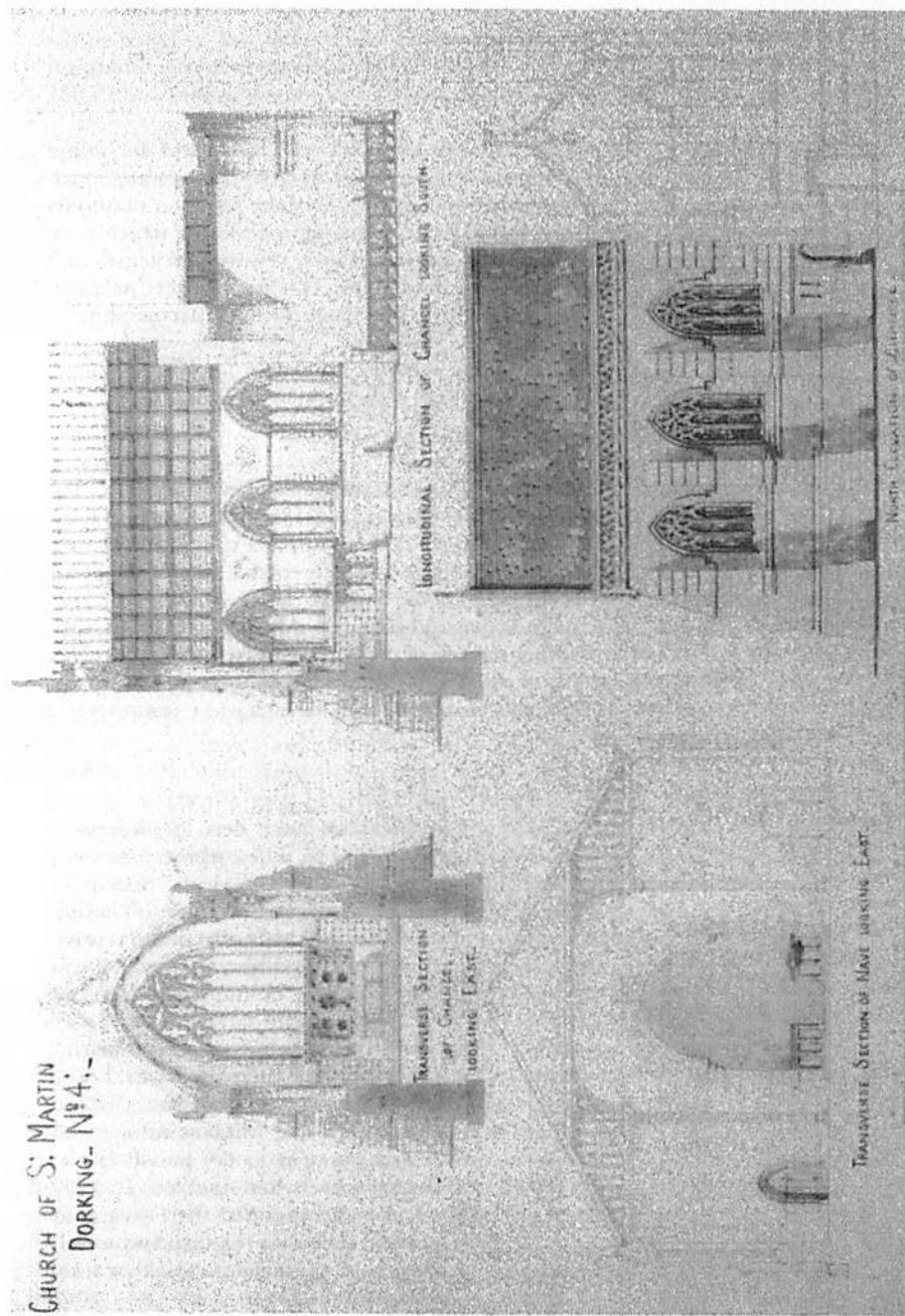


Fig. 1. Henry Woodyer's drawings for St Martin's, Dorking (GMR 1507).

'because upwards of £4,000 has been expended in building the new workhouse out of the town, principally with a view of preventing the fatal consequences likely to arise to the inhabitants of the said town by the introduction of pestilential disorders through the confined situation of the old workhouse and which is much more likely to happen if the same is converted into a barracks for soldiers'.

Electoral Reform and Women's Suffrage

We have acquired two letters of 1832 from the Honorary Secretary of Surrey Political Union to Joseph Hume, radical M.P. for Middlesex, inviting him to take the chair at a dinner 'to celebrate that important event, the passing of the Reform Bill'. The dinner was at the *Horns Tavern*, Kennington, and the toasts were to 'The Sovereignty of the People', 'The King', 'The Union', 'Civil and Religious Liberty all over the World', 'The Memory of Jeremy Bentham Esq.', 'The Liberty of the Press', and 'The Abolition of all Tythes throughout the United Kingdom'. It is an interesting reflection of contemporary social habits that dinner was to be on the table at 4 o'clock.

A cuttings album, 1908-1913, compiled by Mrs. Helena Auersbach of 'Hethersett', Reigate, has been received. Mrs. Auersbach was president of the Redhill, Reigate and District Women's Suffrage Society in the period covered by the book and was also president of the North West (Reigate) Branch of the Women's Unionist Association until she resigned from the Association to concentrate on the cause of Women's Suffrage. The cuttings refer mostly to local meetings in Reigate and Redhill, many of them chaired by Mrs. Auersbach, and there are also cuttings from South African newspapers reporting speeches made by her on a visit there, and cuttings from French and German newspapers.

Reigate Co-operative Society

We have also acquired the first minute book of Reigate Industrial and Provident (Co-operative) Society Ltd., 1863-1867. The Society was formed following a meeting in the *Grapes Inn*, Reigate, on 2 February 1863. A shop was opened in August 1863 and a new one built in Lesbourne Lane in 1866. The society included members from at least as far as Buckland and Kingswood. The committee decided what goods to purchase and in what quantities, and we can see the expansion of the stock to cover a wide range, mainly of groceries. They took their duties seriously: on 16 November 1864 there was a 'long debate upon the quality of different samples of sugar' although in the end the choice was left to the 'salesman', (i.e. the manager/shopkeeper). In 1866 it was agreed that no bonus (i.e. dividend) was to be given to members on sugar, and the trade was to be met on quality. In July 1864 the members agreed to the shop closing at 4 p.m. on Thursdays, which was a kind of precursor of half-day closing at a time when shops stayed open into the late evening.

Inns, Industry and Houses, mostly in Guildford

We can learn a great deal about the development of towns, villages and the countryside from the deeds of title to property. I have mentioned in previous years the great interest of records from solicitors' offices. From Barlows' of Guildford we have received, among other records, four small 18th-century canvas bags with

parchment labels sewn on them, containing deeds showing the building up of property by Francis Skurray, founder of the first large brewery in Guildford in the 18th century. The deeds show Skurray acquiring a brewhouse in Friary Lane, the *Angel Inn* in the High Street and the *White Horse* in Stoke. He owned industrial sites on the river by Guildford Bridge and some of the deeds take back the history of the buildings to the 17th and, in one case, the 16th centuries. This deposit includes an inventory of the brewhouse, malt-house and mill of Thomas Tuesley on the south side of High Street in 1637, including coolers, pumps, mash tuns, 'a great leaden cesterne for cold liquor with a great pipe from it to the copper and three great washers in it', and a 'querne for malt in the mill loft having one french and one cullen stone to it'. These documents are of great interest for the industrial and commercial history of Guildford. Other brewery-related records received in the half year include older title deeds of Courage public houses, including the *Horse and Groom*, Guildford, from 1690, the *King's Arms*, Yorktown (Camberley), from 1812, and the *Duke of York*, Camberley, from 1816.

Deposits from Smallpiece and Merriman include a box of deeds of properties of William Newland, surgeon, and his descendants in Guildford, including houses in Quarry Street with gardens running down to the River Wey. They also include certificates for shares in the Wey and Arun Canal Company. There is in addition

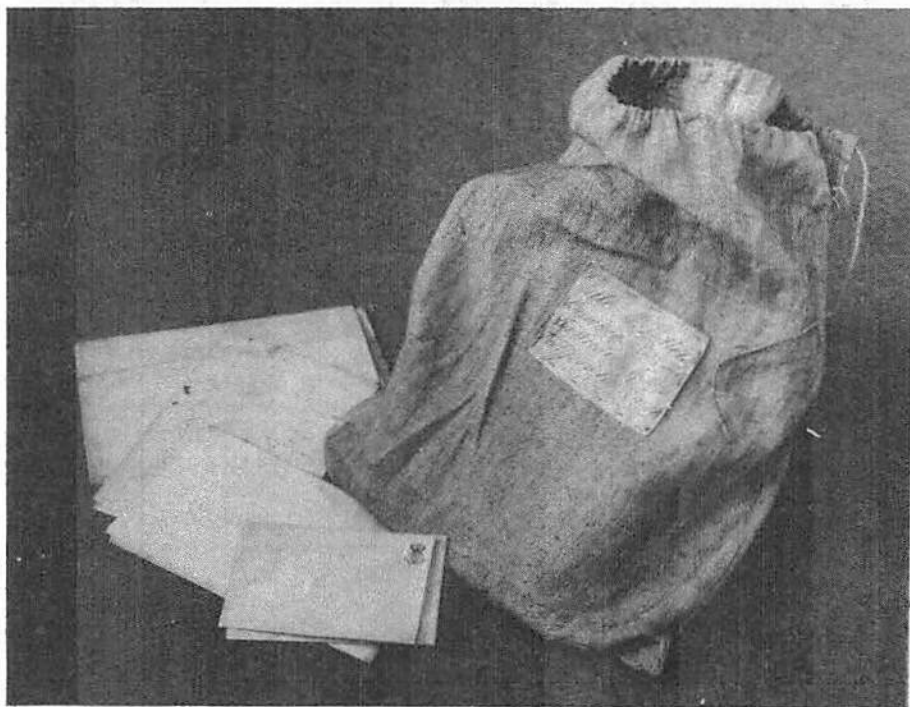


Fig. 2. An 18th-century deed bag (GMR 1483/1/22).

a box of deeds of properties of Caleb Woodyer, surgeon, and his architect son Henry Woodyer, including deeds of Leapale House and Allen House and of an estate at Grafham where Henry built his mansion Grafham Grange, together with a map of Smithwood Common, Winterfold Hill and Farley Heath, 1832, showing enclosures made since 1641. The deposit also includes 19th-century political material, including a parody of *Excelsior* published by 'A Tory' following the first contest in the new Guildford division of Surrey in 1885.

Other title deeds of properties in various parts of the county include Shalford (Lower Trunley Heath Farm and cottages on Shalford Common), Bramley (four cottages in Bramley Street), Guildford (119 High Street and almost the whole of the east side of Friary Street). Cobham (a house in Portsmouth Road, which was built in 1898 by Edwin Hogg of Weybridge, carpenter, and Charles Neal of Hersham, bricklayer, and sold by them for £335), and Reigate (a house in Deerings Road built by Charles Parsons of Reigate, builder, in 1903, and sold in 1904 for £850).

Log books from Lingfield Board School not only record school routine and teaching methods, but also local life. In the 19th century, many children missed school in June for haymaking and in September for hop-picking; in October there were 'a good number still absent gathering acorns' and on Christmas Eve, 1875, 'The monitor did not make his appearance on Friday. I afterwards learnt his father required his services, he being busy Christmas time'. Other causes of absence include epidemics – in 1899 the Medical Officer of Health closed the school during a measles epidemic – and horse-racing (2nd May 1898 'The attendance was reduced by 43 [about one-quarter] this afternoon owing to the United Hunts meeting on the Racecourse'). In 1899 the head teacher described the main room as 'very crowded so that difficulty is experienced in seating the children to work comfortably' but nevertheless the inspectors usually praised the school: in 1901 it was 'a very thoroughly taught and well disciplined School'.

Dorking Charities

The Trustees of the Dorking Charities have deposited a large quantity of their records. These include accounts from 1815 and minute books from 1846, and papers relating to the almshouses at Cotmandene (Dorking). There is a good series of apprenticeship registers from 1831, showing the range of trades and traders to which local boys and girls were apprenticed: several boys went to Thomas Sherlock of Brockam, wheelwright, and others to a chemist (in 1836), to grocers, millers, butchers, a watchmaker (in 1860), a printer and newsagent (in 1867), carpenters, drapers, stonemasons, and a 'gas fitter and tinman' (in 1870). Girls were apprenticed to milliners and dressmakers. There are also records relating to the administration of the charity's properties including Cotmandene, and also to Bottesford (Leics.) and Chislet (Kent), including a series of letters from the trustees in 1702 to their agent at Bottesford regarding repairs to a house, sale of the mill and similar matters. At one point they expressed dissatisfaction that their agent, Mr Slater, had been 'so sparing of Pen Ink and Paper' in keeping them informed, and also expressing concern at his statement that £200 was needed for repairs when £150 would build a new house 'good enough for a better tenant than any we have had yet since old Sills died'.

Waterers' Nurseries

Waterers (Landscape) Ltd. of Sunningdale have deposited records of John Waterer, Sons and Crisp, nurserymen, of Bagshot and Charles Noble of Sunningdale (later called Sunningdale Nurseries). Many of these records are title deeds, from 1667

ANNUAL SALE.—WITHOUT RESERVE.

SUNNINGDALE.

Three Days' Absolute Clearance Sale
of several Acres of beautifully-grown and thriving young NURSERY STOCK, by Order of Mr. C. NOBLE.

Important to Noblemen, Gentlemen, Builders, Nurserymen and others.

A CATALOGUE OF SEVERAL ACRES OF BEAUTIFULLY-GROWN NURSERY STOCK

Carefully prepared for removal, and including a list of
STANDARD AND BUSH RHODODENDRONS

Of the best kinds, many of them extra fine specimens; GOOD BURNY
PONTICUM RHODODENDRONS

1 to 2½ ft.; Flowering Shrubs, in great variety, Roses, and many others;
MANY THOUSANDS OF CONIFERS

Consisting of Cupressus Lawsoniana, Thuja Lobbii, Thuja borealis, and Thuja Americana, from 3 to 8 ft., these being specially adapted for Evergreen Hedges, Border Planting, &c.; likewise a splendid assortment of

SPECIMEN TREES & SHRUBS
For effective planting, embracing Golden Retinosperas, Variegated Hollies, Abies Douglasii glauca, Golden Thuja borealis, Prunus pissardii, and many others;

A large quantity of Mahonia aquifolia, Hardy Hesths, Hyacinthum, Iris, and Periwinkles, suitable for covering bare places; together with a FINE COLLECTION of

STANDARD APPLES

and other Stock too numerous to specify;

Which will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs.

PROTHEROE & MORRIS

ON THE PREMISES

THE NURSERIES, SUNNINGDALE, BERKS,

Close to the Sunningdale Railway Station,

On MONDAY, OCT. 25th, 1897, and TWO following days,

At TWELVE o'clock precisely each day (WITHOUT RESERVE).

LUNCHEON will be provided for intending Purchasers, and arrangements can be made with Mr. Noble to lift and forward any lots to any parts of the Kingdom at the cost of labour incurred and material used.

A Pair-Horse Van will meet the train from London reaching Sunningdale at 12.18 p.m. each day, and Gentlemen arriving at other times should ASK for HOTEL FLIES, which Carriages will be provided at a NOMINAL CHARGE.

The Stock may be Viewed any day (Sundays excepted) prior to Sale. Catalogues may be had on the Premises; and of the Auctioneers, Land and Estate Agents and Valuers,

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Fig. 3. Catalogue of Noble's end-of-year sale of plants (SRO 3255/1/1, courtesy of Waterers (Landscape) Ltd.).

onwards, which document the development of the area between the 17th and 19th centuries. The earliest document, of 1667, records a grant of 13 acres in Windlesham to John Wheatley of Woodham (Chertsey) for his 'great charges and disbursements' in procuring 'liberties, freedoms and privileges' from the forest law for the inhabitants of Windlesham and other parishes. This may relate to a petition of 1665 that deer were damaging crops, farmers having to watch their corn all night from March to September, or pay a man 6d. a night to watch it for them.

There are also documents relating to the history of the nurserymen's firms. These include the catalogues of annual auction sales of Noble's end-of-year stock in the 1890s, covering a wide range of trees, bushes and flowers, including many rhododendrons and azaleas. They also include letter books of H. White and Co. which show them selling pines, cedars and rhododendrons as far afield as Wicklow in Ireland in 1918.

From all corners of the county

This is only a selection of our most obviously interesting new acquisitions. We receive about 250 accessions a year (an accession can be anything from a single piece of paper to a vanload) and all parts of Surrey are represented. We, and all the Surrey historians who use our records, are, as always, most grateful to the owners and custodians who place their records in our care.

HENRY EDWARDS, M.P., AND SOUTH NUTFIELD An Example of Victorian Estate Development

Peter Finch
Nutfield Local History Group

Most parts of Surrey contain towns or villages which were either created or dramatically expanded by the advent of the railway. On the Brighton line, for example, Croydon, Purley, Redhill and Horley could all fairly be called in some sense railway towns. On a minor scale the community of South Nutfield owes its existence to the railway, but it was not founded until some forty years after the South Eastern Railway opened its line to Dover via Redhill in 1842-3.

It has always been known that the founding father of South Nutfield was Henry Edwards M.P. (from 1885 Sir Henry). What has never been clear is the degree of collaboration, if any, between Edwards and the railway company. This article will attempt to explore that relationship.

Edwards is a somewhat enigmatic figure. Almost all we know about his local activities comes from two collections of documents deposited with the Surrey Record Office.¹ Based in London, and described in directories as a merchant, he nevertheless does not appear as a director of any significant company. He had good connections in the City (the Lord Mayor travelled to Weymouth to attend the unveiling of a statue to Sir Henry in 1886) yet he was not a member of a livery company.

By 1882 Edwards was a public figure of sufficient status to be made the subject of a cartoon by Spy in *Vanity Fair*, an honour reserved for leading lawyers, politicians, sportsmen and other notabilities of the day.² The letterpress by 'Jehu Junior' which accompanied the cartoon was written in a somewhat quirky style, so that one is uncertain how far it is to be taken at its face value. It says of Edwards that 'At 23 he had already so far felt his way that he started for himself as a broker in Linseed – the one article of consumption with which alone he has had commercial dealings. He soon made a handsome fortune . . .'

Having secured his fortune, Edwards entered politics, and was elected as Liberal member for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis in 1867. He served an unbroken term until the towns lost their separate representation under the Franchise Act of 1884. 'Jehu Junior', writing in 1882, when Edwards had already been an M.P. for 15 years, noted that Edwards 'is reputed to have made a speech in the House of Commons'. The inference seems to be, that whilst Edwards may have been diligent in his attention to constituency affairs, he did not meddle unduly in the great affairs of the state.

Edwards' first involvement with Nutfield coincided with his first election to Parliament in 1867. Whether the two events were in any way connected is not apparent; it was probably mere coincidence.

On Black Friday, 10 May 1866, Overend Gurney & Co., London's biggest discount bank, collapsed. H. E. Gurney, one of the principal shareholders, was

obliged to dispose of his personal estates. Eleven months later Henry Edwards acquired from Gurney a compact block of farmland. The block included Hamme Farm, in Nutfield, and a detached portion of Blechingley; Staplehurst Farm in Horley; and Kingsmill House with a few acres of land in Nutfield. The latter property lay within 200 yards of the metals of the South Eastern Railway.

Edwards made his first appearance in the Nutfield Electoral Register for 1869. His address was given as 41 Berkeley Square, London, and his voting qualification was ownership of freehold land at Hamme Farm. There is no evidence that he lived in the parish, or took any part in its affairs. The first reference to his residence in the parish occurs in a directory for 1882, which records homes both at King's Mill House, Nutfield, and at Berkeley Square, W.1.

It may well be that Edwards first made himself a home in Nutfield at about that time. In September of that same year he began a whirlwind series of land purchases. Within a year and a week he had completed deals with nine separate vendors covering some 400 acres. About half of this land lay immediately north and south



Figs. 1. & 2. Sir Henry Edwards, 'founding father' of South Nutfield, subject of a cartoon by Spy in *Vanity Fair*.

of the railway line in the vicinity of Mid Street, where Nutfield Station was subsequently built. The extent of this newly-formed estate is shown in Fig. 3. Edwards had in a very short period of time secured virtually all the key development sites.

The question arises of when the South Eastern Railway took the decision to open a station at Nutfield, and whether Edwards was privy to information that was not available to the public at large. We shall make further speculations on that point later in this article, but for the moment let us examine the way Edwards developed his estate.

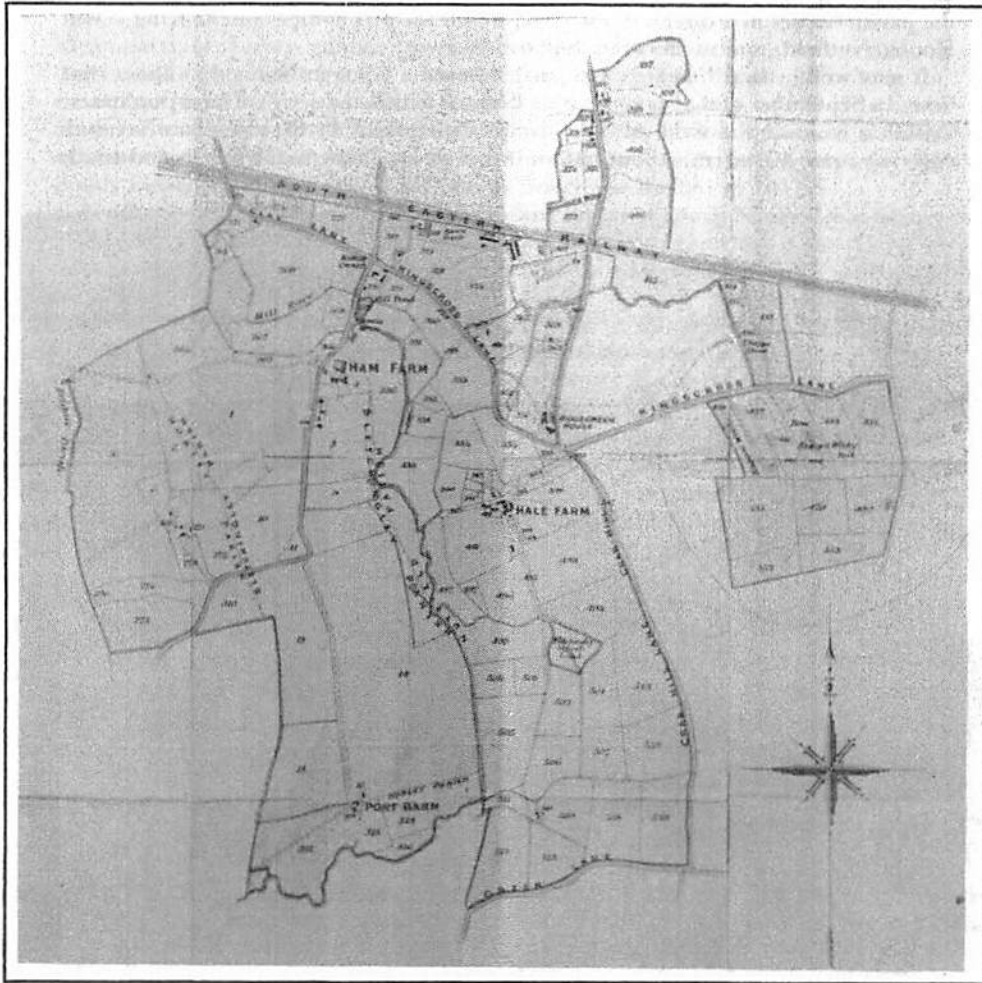


Fig. 3. Plan of Sir Henry Edwards' South Nutfield estate, undated (courtesy of Surrey Record Office, 2333/6/9).



Fig. 4. South Nutfield Station (photograph believed to have been taken about 1920).



Fig. 5. The Avenue and Christ Church, 1936.

Development of the King's Mill Estate

The last of Edwards' nine purchases was made on 29 September 1883. The new station must have been well into construction by this date, for a poster at the Railway Museum, York, testifies that a service of trains from Nutfield was scheduled to begin on 1 January 1884. The poster also advertises building sites for sale. The estate agent concerned was Alexander R. Stenning. The poster does not specify that Stenning was acting for Edwards, but it seems likely that the sites on offer were those on the King's Mill Estate, as Edwards now styled his property. It may be noted that 'A. R. Stenning' had prepared the plan annexed to the conveyance of Ridge Green House, one of Edwards' nine purchases.

The estate papers include a draft deed of covenant between Edwards and intending purchasers of plots of land. The deed is dated 29 April 1884. It implies that within only 19 months of making his first purchase of land near the site of the station, Edwards was already at an advanced stage of negotiation on several sales.

One of Edwards' nine purchases was a brick and tile works alongside the line of the new railway. The covenant with purchasers of building plots required that purchasers should as far as possible use materials from what now became the estate brickyard in constructing their homes.

The estate was zoned to appeal to various levels of prosperity. Trindles Road was laid out north of the station, and built with terraced and semi-detached workmen's cottages. Most of the estate was reserved, however, for detached villas with gardens of up to one acre. In the south-east corner of the estate, about a mile distant from the station, larger plots of three or more acres were available. This area was given the grand title of Nutfield Park, and the plots there were clearly intended for the better sort of purchaser. Two were sold to Edwards' fellow M.P., Sir Edward William Watkin, although they were not developed, and were subsequently repurchased by Edwards. However, between 1888 and 1905 four very large houses were built in the Park and were inhabited up to 1939 by wealthy businessmen.

Whilst the principal method of developing the estate was the sale of sites, it is possible that other methods were used. A newspaper report of 1888 stated that 'Sir Henry Edwards, who owns the picturesque King's Mill Estate, has, within the last year or two, spent a large sum of money upon works of improvement; and a considerable number of houses, for the most part inhabited, occupy conspicuous positions on the estate'.³ Those houses which were not inhabited may have been in course of erection, but there is a suggestion that they had been built speculatively by the estate and were awaiting purchasers.

There were no services in South Nutfield when Edwards acquired his land there. One of his first moves in September 1883 was to enter into an agreement with the Caterham Springs Water Company to provide a water supply to the estate. At that time the Company had a main running along the Blechingley to Reigate road through Nutfield High Street (the present A25). To service the estate the Company had to construct a further mile of piping along Mid Street, with branches along Trindles Road and Avenue Road, both newly constructed by the estate. Clearly this was a somewhat speculative venture for the water company: Edwards was obliged to contribute £700 towards the costs, with a proviso that the company would repay him £525 as soon as the water rates from individual owners amounted to £75 p.a.



Figs. 6. & 7. Two types of houses on the estate: Crab Hill House, originally Tandridge Hall; and workmen's cottages in Trindles Road.



Edwards also installed two sewage disposal systems; one for the main part of the estate, and another for Nutfield Park. Both caused problems, and both were ultimately taken over by the Reigate Rural District Council. The disposal works for the main system gave rise to noisome smells, and the Council moved it further south, away from the residential area.

Covenants were imposed on purchasers of plots, preventing them from using their houses as retail shops or licensed premises. The main purpose of these restrictions was to preserve the character of the estate, but they were probably also intended to give security of trade to those establishments set up with the estate's blessing. These comprised two purpose-built shops and an inn. The security could not, however, be absolute, since Edwards did not enjoy a total monopoly of the land near the station.

The inn was clearly seen as a priority. On 4 June 1884 Edwards conveyed a site adjacent to the station to the brewers, Mellersh and Neale of Reigate. This happened just five months after the opening of the station, but the site was sold 'with the message or hotel then recently erected thereon . . . and then intended to be called THE NUTFIELD STATION INN'. Thus it seems likely that building began before the station opened. Edwards was paid £237 10s for the plot of one acre and 30 perches, and covenanted not to erect, or allow to be erected on his land, any other hotel or public house within a radius of a quarter of a mile from the *Station Inn*. Towards the edge of this radius stood a beer shop and general store called the *Queen's Head*, which Edwards had purchased in 1882, and which was then already leased to Mellersh and Neale. It appears, therefore, that the brewers transferred their business to the new *Station Inn*, but that Mrs. Charwood, licensee of the *Queen's Head*, was permitted to retain the general store and to sell beer under a grocer's licence. Later this business was moved across the road to one of Edwards' two purpose-built shops.

Another amenity, which may have been a lesser priority for Edwards, was a church. Nutfield's medieval parish church was a good mile distant, and the mile included a stiff climb. It was alleged that these obstacles prevented many a good churchman from attending. The impetus for a new church came from Mrs. Clarissa Woolloton, a wealthy Evangelical widow. She persuaded Edwards not only to donate the one-and-a-half-acre site for the new church and vicarage, but also to pay 50 per cent of the construction costs of £3,424. Mrs. Woolloton herself contributed £1,150.

The east window is dedicated to the Woollotons, but the church contains no acknowledgement of any kind to Edwards. This is unlikely to have been due to shyness on Edwards' part, since he allowed a statue of himself to be erected by public subscription on the esplanade at Weymouth. It may be that Edwards was lukewarm about the Established Church. When he founded the Edwards' Homes at Weymouth, he stipulated that 'In making appointments of inmates, the trustees shall have no regard to the religious or political opinions of the persons appointed, but such persons shall be of good character and moral worth'.

Whatever Edwards' opinions may have been, he certainly donated a prime site for the new Christ Church. The Avenue, some 300 yards long and straight as an

arrow, was the centrepiece of the King's Mill Estate. One emerged from the south side of the new station into The Avenue, and there at the far end, terminating the vista, was the slender-spired Christ Church. Henry Edwards did things with a certain style.

Suspicious of 'insider dealing'

One of the nine purchases made by Edwards was Ridge Green House. It was subsequently occupied by Myles Fenton, who had been appointed General Manager of the South Eastern Railway in 1880. The Electoral Registers show Fenton acquired the freehold, but no conveyance from Edwards to Fenton has yet been found. This situation raised a suspicion among historians that Edwards and Fenton co-operated for their mutual benefit: Fenton arranging to open a new station and advising Edwards of the fact before it became public knowledge, and Edwards in return providing Fenton with a residence on favourable terms. The true story is probably both more complex and less sinister. The Board Minutes of the South Eastern Railway show that on 24 April 1883 the Directors ordered plans to be prepared for 'a small Station at Mid Street, between Redhill and Godstone, and the Chairman was empowered to arrange for the erection of the same'.⁴



Fig. 8. Sir Myles Fenton, General Manager of the S.E. Railway, who lived at Ridge Green House.

Fenton normally sat in on Board Meetings in his capacity as General Manager, but he was

not present at this particular meeting. Edwards had already completed six of his nine purchases before the date of this meeting. Clearly he was acting on sound information, perhaps received privately, but it is possible that the plan for a new station had been openly discussed for some time before the Board minuted its formal decision. Edwards was certainly no stranger to the Directors of the South Eastern. The minutes of their meeting of 22 July 1880 acknowledged receipt of 'a letter from Henry Edwards M.P. thanking the Directors for the free pass issued to him over the Line'. The minute book shows that such passes were very rarely issued. The Board must have had good reason to confer this privilege on Edwards.

The Transatlantic Connection

While neither the Guildhall Library nor the Surrey Record Office offer much information about Edwards' commercial interests, there are a few clues in Weymouth Public Library. Edwards was a considerable benefactor of the town. His obituary in *The Illustrated London News* noted that 'the enlargement of the harbour and the construction of the outer pier, the formation of the Working Men's Club,

the presentation of new church bells, and many other acts of generosity made him a general favourite, and will long preserve his memory'.⁵

Among these other acts of generosity was the founding of the Edwards' Homes for the Aged Industrial Poor. Weymouth Library has a copy of the rules and regulations for the homes.⁶ It includes a list of endowments: six of the nine listed securities were from North American companies, and four of them were railway securities. They included £3,000 of six per cent stock and £2,000 of four per cent bonds of the St Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway.

Also at Weymouth is a 64-page booklet written by Henry Edwards and presumably intended for private circulation. It is entitled *A Two Months' Tour in Canada and the United States*.⁷ Edwards made the tour in the autumn of 1889. On his journey he stayed with Sir Donald Smith in Montreal, and met and dined with Sir Donald's cousin, Sir George Stephen. Both men were key figures in the development of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1873-4 Smith, Stephen and others had bought up the depreciated bonds of the St Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway. The *Encyclopaedia Canadiana* states that this railway 'made its owners wealthy'.⁸ The evidence of the endowments of the Edwards' Homes suggests that Edwards was probably a partner in this coup. From his pride in the new Canadian Pacific Railway, which shines through in Edwards' booklet, and from the strength of his connections with Smith and Stephen, we may speculate that Edwards was in some way involved with them in its construction.

How does all this relate to Edwards' development of South Nutfield? Sir Edward William Watkin, Knight, was President in London of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, the principal rival of the Canadian Pacific. This commanding figure was also Chairman of the South Eastern Railway, and until Myles Fenton was appointed as General Manager in 1880, acted virtually as Chief Executive as well as Chairman. Both Watkin and Edwards were Members of Parliament. It was Watkin who issued Edwards with a free pass over the South Eastern lines in 1880, and who paid Edwards £2,000 for two three-acre plots in Nutfield Park.

The full story of the origins of South Nutfield may never be known, but the probability must be that Edwards and Watkin, two old railway hands, worked out a scheme together in the smoking rooms of the Palace of Westminster. If they could look back today, they might well feel satisfied with the outcome of their initiative.

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