

THE HERMITAGE OF BROOKWOOD

Trevor R Howard

**A History of
THE HERMITAGE OF BROOKWOOD**

by

Trevor R Howard

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INTRODUCTION

The earliest known reference to the Hermitage is in an inquisition taken on the death of John Plantagenet, Earl of Kent, who died on the 26th of December, 1352, a 'free Chapel at Brokewood, worth forty shillings a year', is stated to have been held by the Earl. "This was probably erected while the manor was in the hands of the Crown; and being of royal foundation, was, as such, exempted from all ordinary jurisdiction."

In July 1367, John Tylman of Wynchecombe, 'chaplain of the Hermitage of Brokwode in the lordship of Wokkyng', who had been accused of killing Simon Serle of Horsell, received a royal pardon.¹

The origin and history of the Brookwood chapel and why it was called the Hermitage, are obscure. Although no corroborating evidence has been found, a royal lease of the Hermitage and some 22 acres of adjoining land to Sir Michael Stanhope in 1548² describes it as 'formerly part of the possessions of the Greyfriars of Guildford'.^{3,4}

In 1468, Lady Margaret Beaufort and her husband Henry Stafford entertained Edward IV at their 'hunting lodge in the great wood of Brookwood'.⁵ This was likely the Hermitage.

Writing in about 1690, John Aubrey says⁶:

'Part of the House, built of Stone and Timber, yet remains, viz. four or five Rooms, and some Parcels of Land belonging to it, viz. two Acres, and three Roods and an half of all Sorts.'

The later house, which survived into the twentieth century - being demolished in the 1930s, is thought to have dated from about 1700.

¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1364-67*, p.425

² C F R Palmer, *The Reliquary*, New Series, vol I (1887), *The Friars - Preachers, or Blackfriars of Guildford*

³ Given that the Friary was dissolved just ten years earlier, in 1537, it seems likely this is correct

⁴ Guildford Friary was a medieval monastic house in Guildford, Surrey. It was founded c.1275 by Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III and occupied a site of around 10 acres on the east side of the River Wey. It was dissolved in 1537.

⁵ Westminster Abbey Muniments 12186. Fol. 42

⁶ *Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey*

SIR EDWARD ZOUCHE

Sir Edward Zouch of Woking was a Courtier to King James I and King Charles I, a masque actor, and Knight Marshal of the King's Household. He should not be confused with his contemporary and cousin, the diplomat Edward la Zouche, 11th Baron Zouche. He was the son of Sir William Zouch (or Zouche); his mother's name is not known.

At court, Sir Edward amused the King by singing and telling bawdy songs and tales.⁷

Sir Edward Zouch was made steward of Woking Manor or Palace and keeper of the park on 9 May 1609. King James was a frequent visitor to Woking. On 28 August 1620, Zouch wrote to his cousin Lord Zouch of Odiham that he intended to offer King James and Prince Charles more mirth in their forthcoming visit to Woking than the Bishop of Winchester would at Farnham, with masques every night.⁸ King James stayed at Woking with Zouch at the start of September 1624. He hunted towards Busbridge, and wrote to the Duke of Buckingham that he would stay longer, "so earnest I am to kill more of Zouch's great stags."⁹

In 1620, Sir Edward Zouch was appointed keeper of Woking Palace. In November that year, Zouch was given the manors of Woking, Bagshot, and Chobham, with the proviso that he should return the service of carrying the first dish to the king's table on the Feast of St James and pay £100. He was also Forester of Woking.

The 'Hermitage of Brook-wood' is specified, in the grant of Woking to Sir Edward Zouch, as having 'a garden adjoining it together with several acres of inclosed heath-land and pasture, all charged with a fee-farm rent'. Before it was given to Sir Edward, it had been held, under letters patent dated January the 20th, sixth of James the First [1609], by Justinian Povey and Robert Morgan.

Sir Edward Zouch died on 7 June 1634. In his will, he requested that he be buried at Woking 'at night'. There is a Latin memorial inscription to Zouch placed by his wife in St Peter's Church, noting his court position as 'Marescalli Aulici', or 'Marshall of the Household'.

⁷ Sir Anthony Weldon, *Court and Character of King James*, 1650

⁸ Mary Susan Steele, *Plays and Masques at Court*, 1926

⁹ John Nicholls, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First*, vol. 4, 1828

JAMES ZOUCHE

Sir Edward Zouch was succeeded by James, his eldest son and heir, who married Beatrice Annesley, the daughter of Viscount Valentia in 1637.

On the occurrence of hostilities between Charles the First and his parliament, James raised a troop of horse for the king's service, at his own expense. But his military career was short; as he died in 1645, in the thirtieth year of his age. Leaving two sons and two daughters, his estates descended to his eldest son, Edward Zouch.

Edward came into his inheritance when he was just five years of age. His mother Beatrice, James's executrix¹⁰, would have administered the estate until he became of age. Edward, aged 17, was married to Alice Lisle in 1657. They were separated soon afterwards and Edward died, without issue, in Paris in 1658; the inheritance devolved on the younger son, James.

After James's death, Beatrice married Sir John Lloyd of Woking, while their son was still an infant, and she later married for the third time, Sir Thomas Smith of Hill Hall, Essex.

¹⁰ TNA *Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*, Series PROB 11; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 192/531

JAMES ZOUCII

James Zouch, son of James and grandson of Sir Edward, was born in 1642. He held the extensive possessions which had been granted to his ancestor for half a century. James came into his inheritance, on his brother Edward's death, when he was 16.

In 1661, James obtained a charter for the establishment of a yearly fair at Woking, held on September the 12th; and a weekly market on Tuesdays. Four years later, he built a market-house there. He was Sheriff for the county in 1670.

James married Ann Colwell on 18th December 1666, at St Mary's, Whitechapel. They were married for thirty four years but had no [surviving] issue.

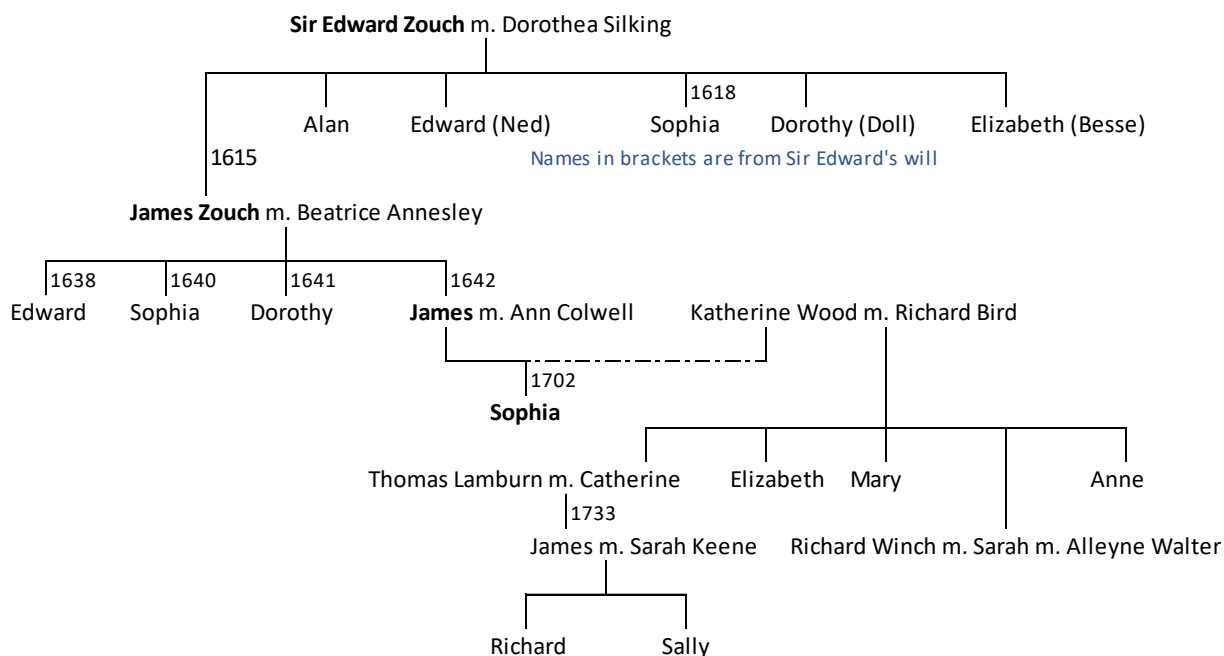


Figure 1. Zouch / Bird family tree

Following the death of his wife, Ann, James Zouch had an affair with his housekeeper, Katherine Wood. Sophia Zouch, born in about 1702, was apparently the result of this liaison¹¹.

James, in 1702, executed a settlement of his estates; The 'Hundred and Manor of Woking' (and other lands) were given in trust, for a term of 500 years, to support the freeschool in Odiham and any excess to go to the poor of Odiham. The settlement stated that the *Trustees should permit and suffer Katherine Wood of Woking Sp.r & Housekeeper of said Zouch to Hold & enjoy & dwell & live freely in the Mansion House called Howbridge & the Goods Gardens & thereto belonging And also the Messe & Farm called the Hermitage of*

¹¹ TNA C10/314/48 *Zouch v Jervoise*, 1709

*Brookwood to her & the Heirs of her Body during the Term to commence immediately after the decease of him the said James Zouch.*¹²

Immediately following James's death, Katherine married Richard Bird, with whom she had a further five daughters (three dying in infancy). One of these daughters, Catherine, married a Thomas Lamburn. When Sophia Zouch died in 1780, she left her property to the children of her late nephew, James Lamburn¹³ (Figure 1).

Descent of Woking Manor

Four persons descended from William, Lord Zouch of Haringworth, ancestor of Sir Edward Zouch, had been named as heirs in remainder to the estates granted by James the First. However there was no heir of the male line of any of them existing at the decease of James Zouch, in 1708.

Woking would then have reverted to the crown; but, in 1672, Charles II had granted the reversion of the manor, for a term of one thousand years to trustees for the benefit of Barbara, duchess of Cleveland, (one of his mistresses) and her children.

The duchess died in October 1709 and from that time, the assignees in trust held the estate until the year 1713, when it was sold to John Walter, Esq. of Godalming.

John Walter died on the 12th of May 1736. His son and successor, Abel Walter, Esq., obtained a grant from the crown, under the sanction of an act of parliament, of the reversion and inheritance of Woking manor expectant on the determination of the before-mentioned term of one thousand years, to which the royal assent was given on March the 25th, 1748.

In 1752, Abel Walter sold the manor to Richard, Lord Onslow; on whose decease, in 1770, it descended to George, afterwards Earl of Onslow; and is now in the possession of the present Earl.



Figure 2. Barbara Palmer (née Villiers),
Duchess of Cleveland
by Sir Godfrey Kneller, c1705

¹² SHC 1499/2 Copy release (lease not present) 1) James Zouch of Woking, Esq 2) Henry Christmas of Stubb, Winstead, Hampshire, gent 3) Sir James Clarke of Molesey, Thomas Jervoise of Herryard, Hampshire, Benjamin Rydiard of Winchfield, Hampshire, and James Field of Odiham, Hampshire, gent

¹³ London Metropolitan Archives DW/PC/5/1780; Will Number: 16

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Katherine Wood and her husband Richard Bird held the Hermitage from 1707 until her death in 1757, he predeceasing her by almost twenty years. It is possible that they built the house which, with later additions and modifications, survived into the 20th century, although it may have been built by James Zouch or by Alleyne Walter (see below). They did not actually live at the Hermitage, as James Zouch's settlement of 1702¹⁴ also permitted Katherine to 'live in and look after' his mansion house at Hoebridge.

In 1730, John Walter purchased Katherine's interest in Hoe Place.¹⁵

Of Richard and Katherine's two daughters that survived, Catherine married Thomas Lamburn; Sarah married Richard Winch of Bray, Berkshire in 1743, but he died in 1744. Sarah subsequently married the Rev. Alleyne Walter L.L.D.¹⁶ (son of John Walter above), in 1754. On the death of their mother, in 1757, Catherine and Sarah inherited equal shares in the Hermitage. Alleyne Walter, having acquired half of the property through his marriage to Sarah, purchased the remaining half from Catherine. He became, probably, the first owner to actually live at the Hermitage and may have built the house which survived into the 1930s.

The premises, although freehold, were held 'of the manor of Woking' for a yearly rent of £1 6s 8d and a heriot of the 'best beast' on the death of the holder.¹⁷

The Hermitage at this time was very much a working farm. John Roque's map of Surrey, surveyed in 1787 (Figure 3), shows the Hermitage and its gardens surrounded by its acres of cultivated land. The shape and position of the field lower-right in the figure and later descriptions of about 28 acres (rather than the 22 mentioned in the original grant), suggest that this field was added at some point, or was maybe just an encroachment on the common.



Figure 3. John Roque's map of 1787

¹⁴ SHC 1499/2 Copy release (lease not present) 1) James Zouch of Woking, Esq 2) Henry Christmas of Stubb, Winstead, Hampshire, gent 3) Sir James Clarke of Molesey, Thomas Jervoise of Herryard, Hampshire, Benjamin Rydiard of Winchfield, Hampshire, and James Field of Odiham, Hampshire, gent

¹⁵ TNA Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Series PROB 11; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 677

¹⁶ Rector of Bisley and vicar of Chobham From June 1748 to 1779, subsequently rector of Crowcombe, Somerset

¹⁷ SHC G97/5/42 Court book of the manor of Woking: court baron and view of frankpledge 1752-61

Sarah Walter died in 1770. Alleyne remarried, in 1771, to a widow, Bridget Butler (née Stacey). When, in 1782, Bridget also died, later the same year he married for the third time – to Catherine Bendyshe.

Alleyne Walter was appointed to the Rectory of Crowcombe, Somerset, in 1779, but split his time between Crowcombe and Woking. In his will, dated 1790,¹⁸ he gave instructions that, should he die in Surrey, he be buried at Woking (this was changed in a later codicil). Alleyne later sold the Hermitage on; Manning and Bray¹⁹ state that he sold it to Joseph White. Figure 4 shows the Hermitage marked on a plan of the then proposed Basingstoke Canal. It was produced in the early 1790s from a survey by Joseph Parker.

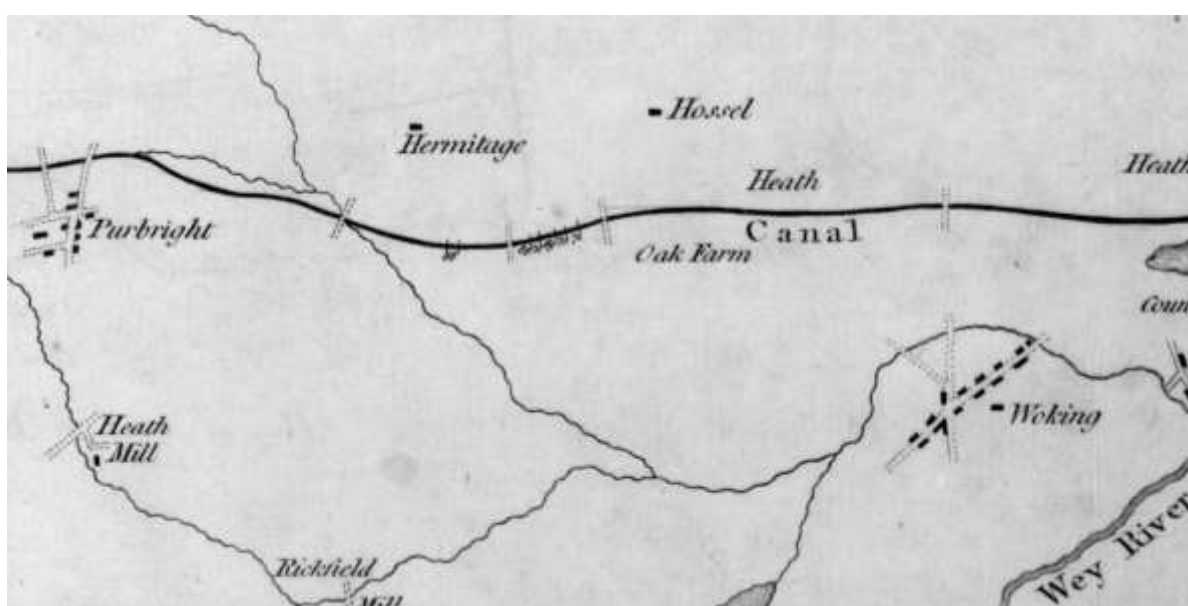


Figure 4. 1790s Basingstoke Canal plan

In 1790, there were inquisitions into compensation payable for lands compulsorily purchased for the building of the Basingstoke Canal. The Canal Company had offered the owners of the Hermitage £30 10s for the three roods and thirteen poles of land required, which was refused. The jury then sat and assessed the value of the land at £22 10s 10½d. The canal, finished in 1794, would later form part of the Hermitage's boundaries. The records refer to 'lands of ___ Harley of the Hermitage, Woking'.²⁰ This was reported in the press as 'lands of Mrs C Harley of the Hermitage'²¹. Given the lack of any other records of Mr or Mrs Harley's existence, it is probable that this was a mistake. It is likely that someone had misread 'Walter' as 'Harley' and this was perpetuated – 'Mrs C Harley' was probably Mrs Catherine Walter.

By 1796, the Hermitage had come into the hands of Joseph White.²²

¹⁸ TNA Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Series PROB 11; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 1440

¹⁹ Manning, Owen & Bray William, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey*, 1804

²⁰ SHC QS5/9/5a & 5b, *Deed Poll of the Commissioners*

²¹ *Reading Mercury* 23 August 1790

²² SHC QS3/10A/5 *Jury-Qualified Freeholders and Copyholders, 1696-1824*

LATER OCCUPANCY

Joseph White

Joseph White was born in about 1750. He trained as a solicitor and, from 1794 to 1806, was Treasury Solicitor.²³

It is likely that Joseph purchased the Hermitage from Alleyne Walter in 1796 (see above). Joseph worked and lived most of his life in London and so probably spent little time at the Hermitage. Most likely it was a weekend or occasional retreat.

At the manor court in February 1797, Joseph obtained the enfranchisement of the Hermitage from the lord of the manor, George Lord Onslow & Cranley.²⁴ There remained a quit rent²⁵ of 2d.

In 1806, Joseph wed for the second time; he married Mary Chamberlayne, the daughter of John Chamberlayne, his mentor and predecessor at the Treasury. She was some thirty years his junior.

Joseph died at 54 Lincolns-Inn-Fields on 9th January 1815. In his will²⁶, Joseph left the Hermitage to his wife, Mary. For a widow on her own, the house was probably simply too large and Mary put it up for sale.²⁷ The house was not sold and when Mary died, two years later, she left it in her will²⁸ to Joseph's brothers, George and John.

George White died before 1820 - he is mentioned as being deceased in John's will of that date²⁹. John White died in February 1822, leaving all his property to his wife, Margaret.

Margaret White put the Hermitage up for sale in June 1822 (Figure 5) and it was bought by John Gates.

²³ Treasury Solicitor, the precursor of the modern office [head of the Government Legal Department], was established in 1696 and was assigned all the legal business undertaken in Westminster Hall

²⁴ SHC G97/5/45 *Court book of the manor of Woking: court baron and view of frankpledge 1793-1803*

²⁵ Quit rent is a tax or land tax imposed on occupants of freehold or leased land in lieu of services to a higher landowning authority. Under feudal law, the payment of quit rent freed the tenant of a holding from the obligation to perform such other services as were obligatory under feudal tenure, or freed the occupier of the land from the burden of having others use their own distinct rights that affected the land.

²⁶ TNA *Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*, Series PROB 11; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 1565

²⁷ *Morning Post* 5 June 1815

²⁸ TNA *Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*, Series PROB 11; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 1592

²⁹ TNA *Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*, Series PROB 11; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 1655

25/2/1822
H.C.

HERMITAGE ESTATE, WOKING, SURREY.

PARTICULARS OF SALE,
OF ALL THAT
VALUABLE AND DESIRABLE FREEHOLD ESTATE,
AND GENTEEL FAMILY
RESIDENCE
TOGETHER WITH
39 Acres of Land,
(TYTHE FREE),
Eligibly situate at Knaphill near Woking, Surrey,---Land Tax Redeemed;
Which will be Sold by Auction,
BY

PIGGOTT & SON

AT THE WHITE HART INN, IN GUILDFORD,
On SATURDAY, JUNE 1st, 1822, AT TWO O'CLOCK,---IN THREE LOTS,
(SUBJECT TO SUCH CONDITIONS AS WILL BE PRODUCED ON THE DAY OF SALE.)

LOT 1.--- Comprises a substantial Brick-built DWELLING HOUSE,
With a South Front, consisting in ENTRANCE HALL, spacious DINING and DRAWING ROOMS, (each 22 feet by 16), LIBRARY (10 feet by 12), BREAKFAST ROOM, opening into a CONSERVATORY, Papered and BED CHAMBERS, Two SERVANTS ROOMS,---BIBLE CLOSET and WATER CLOSET,---SERVANTS HALL, BUTLER'S PANTRY,---Large KITCHEN, BULLERY,---Cold & Warm Stoves, with copper Boilers and Beer Cistern,---Dressed by TWO KITCHENBOARDS, BEATING for Six Horses, with Larder,---Flourish Room and Cook Chamber,---LAWN YARD, with BARN, Cow-house, Cattle Stable, Pigsty, &c. EXCELLENT GARDENS, surrounded with high Brick Walls, clothed with choice Fruit Trees, in full perfection, and are fully cropped and stocked.

TOGETHER WITH 28 ACRES, OR THEREABOUTS, OF EXCELLENT ARABLE WITH PLEASURE GROUND & PASTURE LAND.

LOT 2.--- Nine Acres (more or less) of excellent Freehold Meadow LAND,
Situate at GOLDWORTH in the Parish of WOKING,---Land Tax exonerated, and Tythe-free.

LOT 3.--- TWO ACRES (more or less) of MEADOW LAND,
Situate at MILL CREAM, adjoining the Town of WOKING,---Land Tax exonerated, and Tythe-free.

THE FIXTURES TO BE TAKEN AT VALUATION.
The TIMBER, HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, CROPS of CORN and GRASS, and LIVE & DEAD FARMING STOCK, may be taken at valuation, at the option of the Purchaser.

Lot One is beautifully situate on a slope, inclining to the S. E.---the HOUSE, which is an uniform low-fronted Building, stands on a pleasant Elevation, overlooking the LAWN and GROUNDS, having a VERANDAH ALONG THE FRONT, and a CONSERVATORY at the South end.---The Views are Picturesque and Extensive, the whole is belted by a beautiful GROVE of TREES, with GALLED WALKS round the Premises. At the extremity of the Lawn is a FISH POND, well stored, and the whole well supplied with good WATER.---The ESTATE was lately in the possession of Joseph White, Esq. deceased, late Solicitor to the Treasury, and the situation is beautiful and retired.---3 Miles from WOKING, 7 from CHERTSEY, 5 from GUILDFORD, and 27 from LONDON.

May be viewed at any time preceding the Sale, by applying on the Premises---Further Particulars may be known, on application to W. H. FALLOFIELD, Esq. No. 18, Regent Chambers, Chancery Lane, LONDON, or the AUCTIONEERS, GUILDFORD.

RUSSELLS PRINTERS, &c. GUILDFORD.

Figure 5. 1822 sale notice

John Gates

In June 1822, the Hermitage was put up for sale at auction (Figure 5) and was bought by John Gates,³⁰ for the sum of £3600, the sale being finalised in January 1823. The lot was described as:

³⁰ SHC G96/15/11 Abstract of title of Mr Gates to the Brookwood Hermitage and the great tithes thereof

A substantial brick-built Dwellinghouse, with a bowed front containing an Entrance Hall, excellent Dining and Drawing rooms (each 22 feet by 16), Library (16 feet by 22), Breakfast room, exiting into a Conservatory, four best Bed Chambers, five Servants' rooms, Store, Closet and Water Closet, Servants Hall, Butler's Pantry, large Kitchen, Scullery, Coal and wood sheds, with capital Wine and Beer Cellars. Detached are two Coach-houses, Stabling for six horses, with left over: Harness room and Corn chamber, Farm yard with Barn, Corn-house, Cattle stalls, Piggery &c. Excellent Gardens surrounded with lofty brick walls, clothed with choice Fruit trees, to full perfection and are fully cropped and stocked.

Together with 28 acres, or thereabouts, of excellent arable with pleasure ground & pasture land.

Beautifully situate on a slope, inclining to the SE, the house, which is an uniform bow-fronted building, stands on a pleasant elevation, overlooking the lawn and grounds, having a veranda along the front and a conservatory at the south end. The views are picturesque and extensive, the whole is belted by a beautiful grove of trees, with gravel walks round the premises. At the extremity of the lawn is a fish pond, well stored and the whole well equipped with good water. The situation is beautiful and retired. 3 miles from Woking, 7 from Chertsey, 5 from Guildford and 27 from London.



Figure 6. Watercolour of the Hermitage by John Hassell, 1824

John Gates was born in Henfield, Sussex in 1795, the son of John & Prudence. In August 1822, he married Frances Smyth in Chiddingfold. Presumably he acquired the Hermitage as a family home. When their son, Edgar, was born the following year, he was baptised in St Peter's church, Woking.

In 1838, John Gates registered as a voter in Horsham, Sussex; he was objected to by the Liberals on the grounds that the property he quoted as entitling him to a vote was not occupied by him. For the previous three years he had been in partnership, as brewers, with a Mr John Rawlinson who also claimed a vote based on the same property, a brewery in Chapel Lane. It was stated that Mr Gates 'had an establishment at Woking at which he resides chiefly'.³¹ John Gates's name was retained on the voters list.

John Gates and his family seem to have stayed at the Hermitage until 1840. The 1841 census shows John and his son in Horsham and his wife in Steyning, Sussex. The Hermitage was unoccupied; John Darling (bailiff) and his wife, Sarah (housekeeper) were living at the Hermitage Lodge.

William Cracroft

By 1842, William Cracroft was in possession of the Hermitage.³² William's possession was short and it is unclear if he actually lived there for any length of time, although he appears in the electoral registers for 1842 and 1843.

William was born, in Westminster, in 1787 and attended Westminster School. In 1803, he enrolled at the College of Fort William, Bengal. After a career with the Honorable East India Company's Bengal Civil Service, in which he finished as a judge, he retired to London in about 1839.

William died in Naples, Italy on 3rd April 1846, aged 58; he had probably moved there for his health. In his will, dated 19th January 1846 (written in Naples), William bequeathed his servant of over nine years, William Hobbins, £150 if he remained in his service at his decease. In a codicil, dated 26th March, he reduced this sum to £100, on account of 'his misbehaviour to me during my last illness'.³³

John Earley Cook

An abstract of title produced in 1933 states that, following William Cracroft, the Hermitage was owned by John Earley Cook.³⁴ The 1851 census shows John Earley Cook, aged 27, living in Gloucester Place, London; his occupation is given as land proprietor.

It appears that John Earley Cook never occupied the Hermitage. He appears to have rented it to Henry Allen Wedgwood (see below), for about ten years, and then sold it to William Lyon (see page 13).

Henry Allen Wedgwood

Henry (known as Harry) Allen Wedgwood was the grandson of Josiah Wedgwood, the founder of the famous pottery. His father was Josiah

³¹ *The Brighton Patriot* 23 October 1838

³² SHC Surrey, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1962

³³ TNA Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Series PROB 11; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 2034

³⁴ SHC, 8198/3/1, Copy abstract of title of A F Tucker to The Hermitage Estate, Woking

Wedgwood II who, after the death of his father, had moved his family to Stoke D’Abernon near to Cobham, Surrey. His mother, Elizabeth was the daughter of Captain John Bartlett Allen of Cresselly. Henry was born in Stoke D’Abernon, on 4th April 1799.



In 1830, Henry married Jessie Wedgwood. Jessie was his double first cousin - the daughter of John Wedgwood, his father’s brother, and Louisa Jane Allen, sister to his mother.

Following the death of his father, in 1843, it seems Henry had a freedom his father previously never allowed him.³⁵ In 1845, he moved into the Hermitage.

The 1851 census describes Henry as a magistrate and barrister (not practising). There was a substantial household, including eight indoor and two outdoor staff.

Figure 7. Henry Allen Wedgwood (1799-1885)

1851 Census return

			M	F		
Henry A Wedgwood	Head	Mar	57		Magistrate - Barrister not practising	Surrey, Stoke D'Abernon
Jessie do.	Wife	Mar		46		Devon, Tallerton
Sarah E do.	Sister in law	U		50	Annuitant	Gloucestershire, Westbury
Louisa T do.	Daur	U		17		Staffordshire, Stoke on T
Caroline E do.	Daur	U		14		do. , do.
Anne Jane do.	Daur			9		do. , do.
Arthur do.	Son		8			do. , do.
Rowland K do.	Son		3			Surrey, Woking
Mary Harding	Serv	Mar		44	Cook	Staffordshire, Stoke
Mary Hardwick	Serv	U		32	Lady's maid	Cheshire, Grosty
Lois Bullen	Serv	U		38	Housemaid	Surrey, Woking
Caroline Smith	Serv	U		18	Kitchen maid	Surrey, Pirbright
Anne Malpas	Serv	U		25	Nurse	Staffordshire, Betley
Charlotte Lander	Serv	U		17	Under nurse	Shropshire, Woore
Elizabeth Collyer	assistant	U		21	Kitchen maid	Surrey, Pirbright
John Craddock	Serv	U	40		Butler	Staffordshire, How
William Harding	Serv	Mar	32		Groom & Gardener	Staffordshire, Maer
John Nurser	workman	Mar	45		Workman packer	Middx, St Andrews

By 1855, Henry and his family had moved to Tenby in Wales.

³⁵ Tricia Allingham *Wedgwoods of Cosheton*

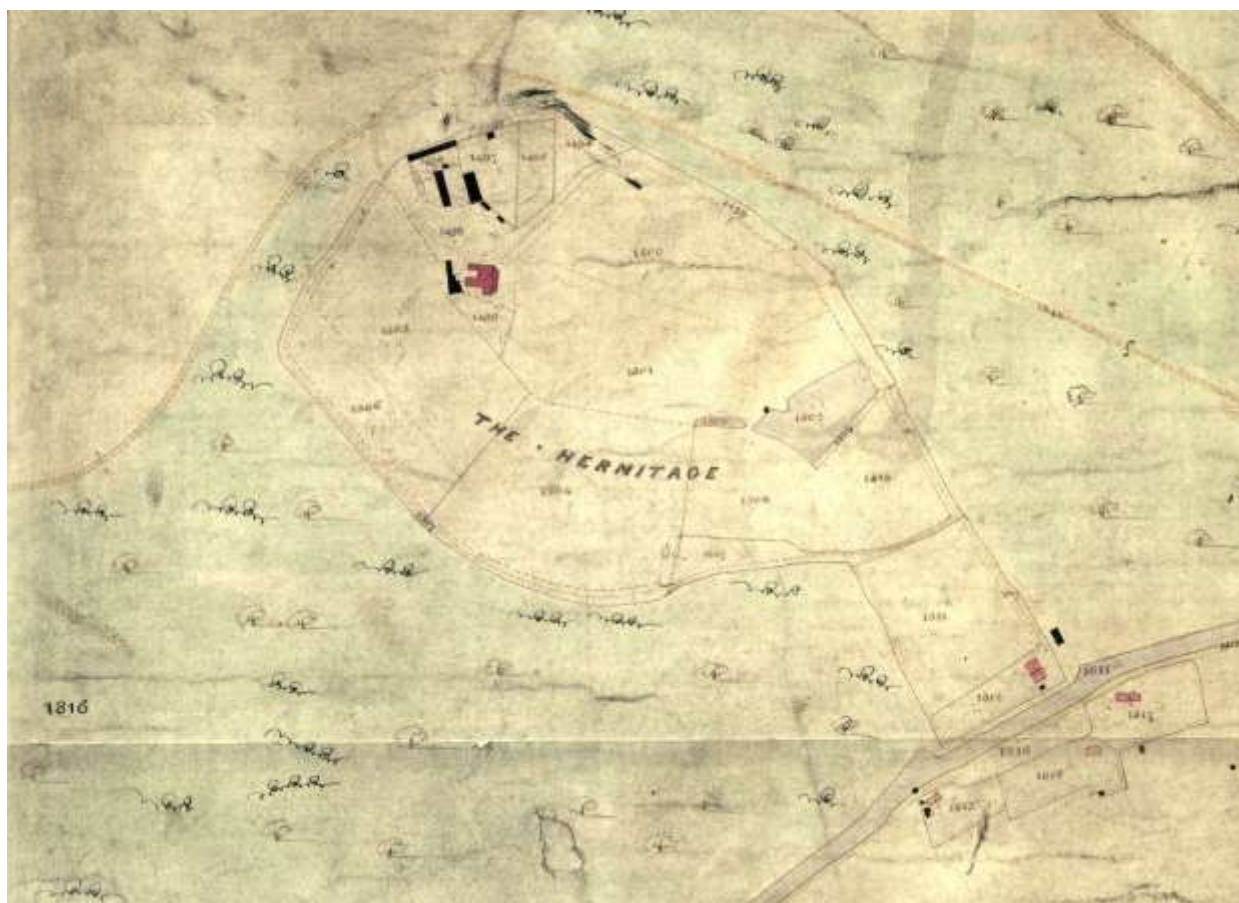


Figure 8. Woking Tithe Map, 1840
SHC 864/1/137

William Lyon

William Lyon was born on 30th September 1813, in Kennington, Surrey, the son of George Miller Lyon.

In 1827, aged 14, William sailed for Chile. After being wrecked off Montevideo, he arrived at Valparaiso, where, except for a visit to China and India (1834-7), he remained - in business with his brother, George - until 1845. He then returned to England and was in business in Liverpool, as a merchant trading with South America, until 1851.³⁶

William married Louisa Charlotte, daughter of William Norton of *Down Lodge*, Epsom, at Epsom on 29th October 1851. By 1855, they had moved into the Hermitage; their second child, George Kenneth, was baptised in Saint John the Baptist church³⁷, Woking in August that year.

1861 Census return

Hermitage	William Lyon	Head	Mar	47	Fund Holder	Kent, Sydenham
	Louisa Charlotte do.	Wife			32	Surrey, Kennington
	Ellen Carmen do.	Daur			8	Scholar Kent, Tunbridge Wells

³⁶ Andrew Ross *The Lyons of Cossins and Wester Ogil, Cadets of Glamis*

³⁷ St John the Baptist was a *Chapel of Ease* to St Peter's church, Woking until it became a parish in 1884

	George Kenneth do.	Son		5		do.	Surrey, Woking
	William Rawson do.	Son		4		do.	Surrey, Epsom
	Amy Louisa do.	Daur			3		Surrey, Woking
	Annie West do.	Daur			2		do. do.
	James Archibald do.	Son		5m			do. do.
	Walter Miller Norton	Visitor	Un	37		East India Merchant	Middx, London
	William Harris do.	do.	do.	31		Underwriter	Surrey, Kennington
	Jose Santiago Garcia	do.	do.	1?		Scholar	Chile
	John Sparrow	Serv	Mar	42		Butler	Suffolk, Newton
	Ellen Neeton	do.	Un		56	Head Nurse	Middx, London
	Sarah Jane Nichols	do.	do.		23	Under do.	Northampton, Kingscliffe
	Mary Daborn	do.	do.		16	Under do.	Surrey, Woking
	Phebe Neeton	do.	Un		49	Cook & Housekeeper	Middx, London
	Hannah Entbush	do.	do.		27	Housemaid	Kent, Gondhurst
	Eliza Miles	do.	do.		22	Kitchen Maid	Middx, Feltham
Hermitage Lodge	Henry Lines	Head	Mar	31		Coachman	Northampton, Eydon
	Mary Ann do.	Wife			35		Somerset, Wells
	William Richard do.	Son		6		Scholar	Surrey, Woking
	Henrietta Lines	Daughter			4	Scholar	do. do.
	Walter Thomas do.	Son		3			do. do.
Hermitage Cottage	James Harmsworth	Head	Mar	29		Gardener master	do. do.
	Harriet do.	Wife			28		Kent, Newnham
	William do.	Son		5		Scholar	do. , Choring
	Libbilia Jane do.	Daur			5	do.	Surrey, Woking
	Ann do.	do.			3		do. do.
	Alfred do.	Son		1			do. do.
	Elizabeth do.	Sister			20	Dressmaker	do. do.
Hermitage Cottage	Henry Spong	Head	Mar	48		Agricultural labourer	do. , Chobham
	Mary Ann do.	Wife			40		do. , Pirbright
	Esther do.	Daur			9	Scholar	do. , Woking
	Henry do.	Son		8		do.	do. do.
	James Spong	do.		7		do.	do. do.
	William do.	do.		5		do.	do. do.
	John do.	do.		2			do. do.
	James Glazier	Lodger	Un	55		Housekeeper	Hants, Headley
	James Emblen	do.	do.	22		Brick maker labourer	Sussex, Brighton
		No return - left his lodgings					
	John Olive	Lodger	Un	33		Brick maker labourer	Sussex, Willington

In 1861, the family moved to St. Helier, Jersey, in the Channel Islands. William did not sell the Hermitage, however, until about 1869. Following the sale, the household furniture was sold off at auction.³⁸

³⁸ *Surrey Advertiser* 17 July 1869

H H Lindsay

Following the move to Jersey by William Lyon and his family, the house appears to have been rented to a H H Lindsay Esq. In 1864, the *Surrey Advertiser* reported Hermitage Park to be his seat, which he had made available for the day to the Ancient Order of Foresters who walked there in procession following their meeting at the Anchor Hotel, Knaphill.³⁹

Lindsay was likely Hugh Hamilton Lindsay, a merchant trading in China. The house was obviously only a weekend and/or summer retreat as there are no records of his residence there. His main residence would probably have been in London.

Richard Willis

Richard Willis was born in Bombay, Maharashtra, India on 5th August 1814. In February 1849, he married Katherine Ross Jameson, in Bombay, India. Together they had six children in India. Their second and third sons both died in infancy. In about 1860, they came to England – the 1861 census shows them living in Paddington; Richard's occupation was 'East India merchant'.



Figure 9. Painting of the Hermitage, 19th century

The surveyor Edward Ryde of Woking, wrote in the 1880s, in his diary, that the house had 'been considerably enlarged and improved between the years 1830 and 1880'

In 1869, Richard and his family moved into the Hermitage. They quickly became part of the local social scene. In November that year, Richard was

³⁹ *Surrey Advertiser* 16 July 1864

elected as Chapel Warden of St John's.⁴⁰ Over the next few years, the Willis family opened their gardens for the Horticultural and Cottage Gardeners Association meetings, hosted the local school children at Christmas and permitted St John's school cricket team matches to be played in their grounds.

The list of land ownership in Surrey compiled in 1871, gives Richard Willis's holdings as 27 acres 1 rood and 28 perches⁴¹; which presumably is the accurate figure for the '28 acres, or thereabouts' given in the 1822 auction description.

1871 Census return

Hermitage	Richard Willis	Head	Mar	56		East India Agent	India, Br Subj
	Catherine R do.	Wife	Mar		41		do. do.
	Jessie W do.	Daur	Unm		30		do. do.
	Richard A do.	Son	Unm	21		Scholar	do. do.
	Agnes J do.	Daur	Unm		18	do.	do. do.
	Catherine J do.	Daur	Unm		15	do.	do. do.
	Constance H do.	Daur	Unm		13	do.	Middlesex, London
	Julia M E do.	Daur	Unm		9	do.	do. do.
	Frank R do.	Son			7	do.	do. do.
	May J do.	Daur			6	do.	do. do.
	Arthur C Chilts	Nephew			11	do.	Kent, Blackheath
	Charles W do.	do.			6	do.	Sussex, Horsham
	John T Sergeant	Visitor	Unm	48		Clergyman of Ch of Eng	Huntingdon, Ramson
	James Breadmead	do.	Unm	21		Student	Middlesex, London
	John D Morrice	Visitor	Unm	21		Student	Cornwall, Kenwyn
	Isabella Dingwall	Serv	Unm		25	Housemaid	Scotland
	Sarah Hawkins	Serv	Unm		15	Under do.	Berkshire, Winkfield
	Elizabeth Hill	Serv	Unm		23	Cook	do. Lindlesham
	Sarah do.	Serv	Unm		21	Kitchen Maid	do. do.
	Lilla Schenk	Serv	Unm		17	Nursemaid	Middlesex, London
George Nullis	Serv	Unm	22		Footman	Berks, Ashampstead	
Hermitage Lodge	Samuel Schenk	Head	Mar	59		Domestic (Butler)	Switzerland
	Elizabeth do.	Wife	Mar		48		Ingdim, do.
	John J do.	Son			12	Scholar	Scotland
	Louis R do.	Son			9	do.	do.
Hermitage Cottage	John Nullis	Head	Mar	34		Coachman	Berks, Ashampstead
	Harriet do.	Wife	Mar		34		Hants, Kingsley
	George do.	Son			7	Scholar	Middlesex, London
	William do.	Son			5		do. do.
	Harriet do.	Daur			3		do. do.
	John R do.	Son			6m		Surrey, Woking
	Harriet J Link	Boarder			13	Nursemaid	Dorset, Portland
Gardener's	Charles Cooper	Head	Mar	42		Gardener	Berks, Swallowfield

⁴⁰ *Surrey Advertiser* 27 November 1869

⁴¹ A rood is a quarter of an acre; a perch (equal to a rod or pole) is one fortieth of a rood

Cottage	Mary Cooper	Wife	Mar	46	Dressmaker	Hants, Upton
	Emily Boozewell	Daur	Unm	21	Milliner	Surrey, Richmond
	Georgina Cooper	Daur		10	Scholar	do. Windlesham
	Letitia do.	Daur		5	do.	do. Guildford
	Sarah Abraham	Visitor		13		do. Kingston

Richard Willis died in February 1873. His family continued to live in the Hermitage for another five years.

In January 1878, Mrs Catherine Willis and one of her sons were riding in a pony trap, near the Hermitage, when the horses stumbled and threw them into the road; neither was seriously hurt, though the trap was badly damaged.⁴²

In April 1878, Catherine Willis put the Hermitage up for sale.⁴³ The reason for the sale was probably because, now widowed and with her children grown up and leaving home, the house was simply too large.



Figure 10. Katherine Willis and Julia, 1862

⁴² *Surrey Advertiser* 26 January 1878

⁴³ *Surrey Advertiser* 6 April 1878

Richard Raymond Willis VC



Richard Raymond Boozewell Willis (grandson of Richard Willis) was born at the Hermitage on 13th October 1876. He was educated at Harrow, where he was a contemporary of Winston Churchill, and Sandhurst before being commissioned and joining the 2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, in 1897. He fought at the Battle of Omdurman (1898) and then transferred to the 1st Battalion, serving in Malta, Crete, Gibraltar and Egypt. He was promoted to Captain in 1900.



On 25th April, he commanded C Company in their landing on W beach, Cape Helles, on the Gallipoli Peninsula and was one of six members of the regiment awarded the Victoria Cross for their actions on that day (the 'six VCs before breakfast'). He was subsequently wounded and evacuated from the Peninsula.



'Six VCs Before Breakfast'. An artist's impression of W Beach landing, showing Capt. Willis, centre, with his walking stick

Willis served later in the war on the Western Front, with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, the York and Lancaster Regiment, the West Ridings and as acting Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st Battalion, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. After the war he served in India with the Lancashire Fusiliers, before retiring from the army in November 1920.

After leaving the army, he served as an education officer in the RAF in Palestine, as a lecturer at a tutorial college in Earls Court and as a prep school teacher in London, Bognor Regis and Evesham, continuing to teach until his seventies. He died in Cheltenham on 9th February 1966.

Stanley Percival

Stanley Percival was born in Childwall, near Liverpool, Lancashire in 1820, the son of Stanley Orred Percival, West India merchant.

In 1843, Stanley was working in Liverpool as a copper agent. He obviously made money quickly and invested it; the 1851 census shows him living with his parents in South Mimms, Hertfordshire and his occupation is given as 'Land proprietor'.



Figure 11. Stanley Percival 1820-1902

Stanley married Charlotte Paris, in South Mimms, in 1853. For the next ten years, Stanley and Charlotte lived in nearby Shenley, having three children. The 1861 census shows Stanley as a 'farmer of 380 acres'.

At the time of the 1871 census, Stanley and his family were living with his parents who were now in Holland Park, Kensington. Stanley was a 'Landowner'.

Stanley's father died in 1877; his mother had died four years earlier. Stanley, one of the executors of the will is shown as then living near Midhurst, Sussex. The estate was valued at nearly £90,000 (equivalent to £12m today).⁴⁴ Stanley presumably inherited enough to allow him to purchase the Hermitage in November 1878, for £6,218.

1891 Census return

Stanley Percival	Head	M	70		Living on means	Lancashire, Childwall
Charlotte do.	Wife	M	71			Middx, Enfield
Margaret E do.	Daur	S	32			Herts, Shenley
Maud Parry	Visitor	S	29			India, Bengal British subject
Jane N Jetter	Housekeeper	S	57	Housekeeper		Sussex, Shing
Rosina Mertheres	Serv	S	19	Domestic servant		London, Vauxhall
Eliza Cole	Serv	S	18	do. do.		Somerset, Montacute
Edith Baines	do.	S	18	do. do.		Hants, Andover
William Tull	Head	M	64	Herdsman		Hants, Empshott
Ellen do.	Wife	M	58			do. Selborne
John Lines	Head	M	33	Coachman		Berks, Wantage
Alicia Rosa do.	Wife	M	29			Somerset, Evercreech
Henry Day	Head	M	38	Gardener		Bucks, Wraysbury
Elizabeth do.	Wife	M	38			Wilts, Chippenham

⁴⁴ *National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966*

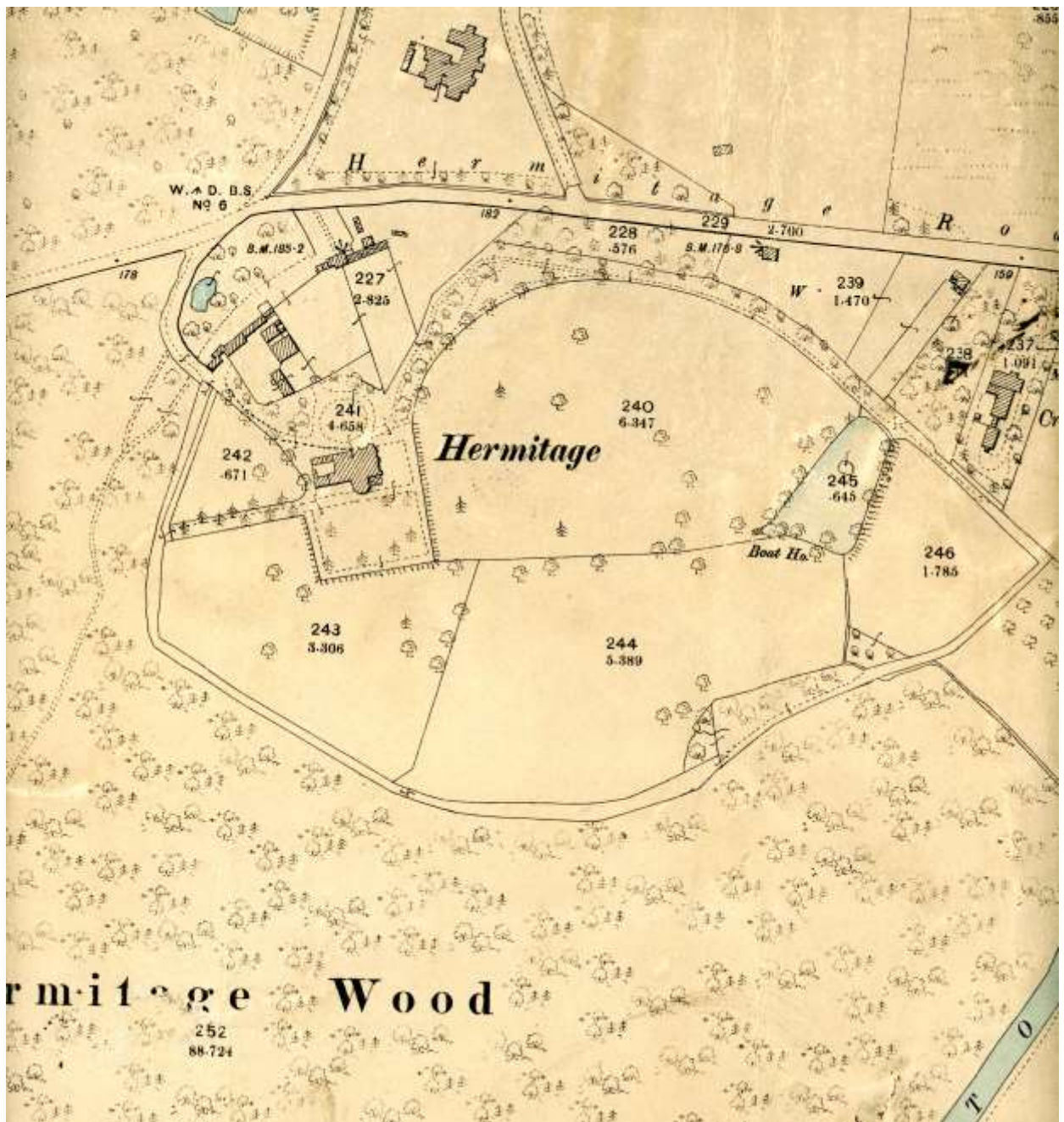


Figure 12. Ordnance Survey plan, 1895



Figure 13. South front



Figure 14. John Sims?, coachman



Figure 15. Main entrance, north side



Figure 16. Drive leading to the Lodge

The surveyor Edward Ryde of *Poundfield House*⁴⁵, Woking, after the arrival of the Percivals, attended garden parties and other functions on several occasions, noted in his diary⁴⁶. On 8th January 1887, Miss Margaret Percival telegraphed to *Poundfield House* to say that the ice was good, and a party went over to skate on the Basingstoke Canal.

Stanley Percival died in September 1902. His widow and daughter continued to live in the house.

KNAPHILL WESLEYAN CHURCH.

JUBILEE RENOVATION SCHEME.

1865—1915.

A GARDEN PARTY AND SALE OF WORK
Will be held on WEDNESDAY, JULY 25th,
At the HERMITAGE PARK, ST. JOHN'S,
By the kind permission of Mrs. Percival.
To be opened at three o'clock by Mrs.
Fountain, of Woking.

MORRIS DANCING, CYCLE GYMKHANA,
OPEN-AIR CINEMATOGRAPH.
Selections of Music by a contingent of the
ROYAL SUSSEX BAND
(By permission of Col. Montresor).
REFRESHMENTS, Etc.
Admission 6d. Children half-price.

10284

Figure 17. Garden party advertisement
Surrey Advertiser 25 July 1914

DEATH OF MR. S. PERCIVAL.

We much regret to record the death of Mr. S. Percival, which occurred at his residence, The Hermitage, early on Thursday morning, at the advanced age of 82. Mr. Percival had been ill for some time, and underwent an operation for an internal complaint, after which he went away from St. John's, and almost recovered his health. On his return, however, it was found necessary for him to undergo a second operation, and it was partly from the effects of this that he died.

Mr. Percival's death is very greatly regretted in St. John's, where he had resided for the last 17 or 18 years, and by the residents of which district he was held in high esteem. Indeed, he has been described as the most popular gentleman in the place. Mr. Percival took a keen interest in everything affecting the welfare of St. John's. A few years ago he built the Village Club, which he presented to the place, and he has always taken an active part in its conduct, being president at the time of his death. He was also in the habit of kindly lending his beautiful grounds for the holding of the Sunday School treats. For a number of years he held the post of Vicar's churchwarden, but he retired with Mr. J. Martyr (people's warden) two years ago on account of ill-health. He, however, continued to take an interest in the work of the church. Some five or six years ago he represented St. John's on the School Board, upon which body he did some useful work. The funeral will take place at St. John's.

Figure 18. Obituary notice
West Surrey Times 12 September 1902

⁴⁵ Poundfield House was in Old Woking, on the corner where the main road makes a sharp left turn by the Grange.

⁴⁶ SHC 1262/-



Figure 19. Mrs Charlotte Percival

Mrs Charlotte Percival and her daughter, Margaret, continued to be involved in the local community after the death of Stanley. In 1914, they hosted a garden party in aid of the Knaphill Wesleyan Church jubilee renovation scheme.

Charlotte died on 18th November 1919, two weeks after her 100th birthday.

Margaret continued to live in the Hermitage for another four years. In 1923/4 she sold the Hermitage to Herbert Shiell.

Margaret then moved into Brookwood Cottage, [Lower] Guildford Road for about five years before she and her brother, Stanley Edward, moved in together in a house in Hook Heath.

Margaret died in April 1950 aged 91.

Herbert Robert Shiell

Herbert Robert Shiell was born in Hammersmith in 1870. His father was a 'Manchester warehouseman'.

In 1891, Herbert was in Hampstead and working as assistant to his father, now a linen draper. Herbert married Mildred Bunting, in 1900, in Hartlepool, Durham. The 1901 census shows them in Pinner, Herbert working on his own account as a 'woollen merchant'. They had one general servant.

By the time of the 1911 census, Herbert and Mildred had moved to Northwood. Presumably more prosperous, they then had three servants: a housemaid, a nurse⁴⁷ and a cook.

In 1923, Herbert Shiell purchased the Hermitage from Margaret Percival, for the sum of £4450, the conveyance being completed on 22nd August 1924.

The Shiell family do not seem to have involved themselves in local affairs to the same extent as their predecessors. In July 1929, there was a double wedding in St John's church when Herbert's eldest two daughters, Margaret and Mary, married on the same day. The reception was afterwards held at the Hermitage, for 'between 350 and 400 guests'.⁴⁸

In 1934, Herbert sold the Hermitage to a developer and moved to Suffolk.

When he died in 1949, Herbert's estate was valued at just £5.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The censuses from 1871 to 1911 show many prosperous couples with young families having 'nurses' as servants – these would have been to look after the children, rather than medical nurses

⁴⁸ *Surrey Advertiser* 27 July 1929

⁴⁹ *National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966*

Occupants of THE HERMITAGE

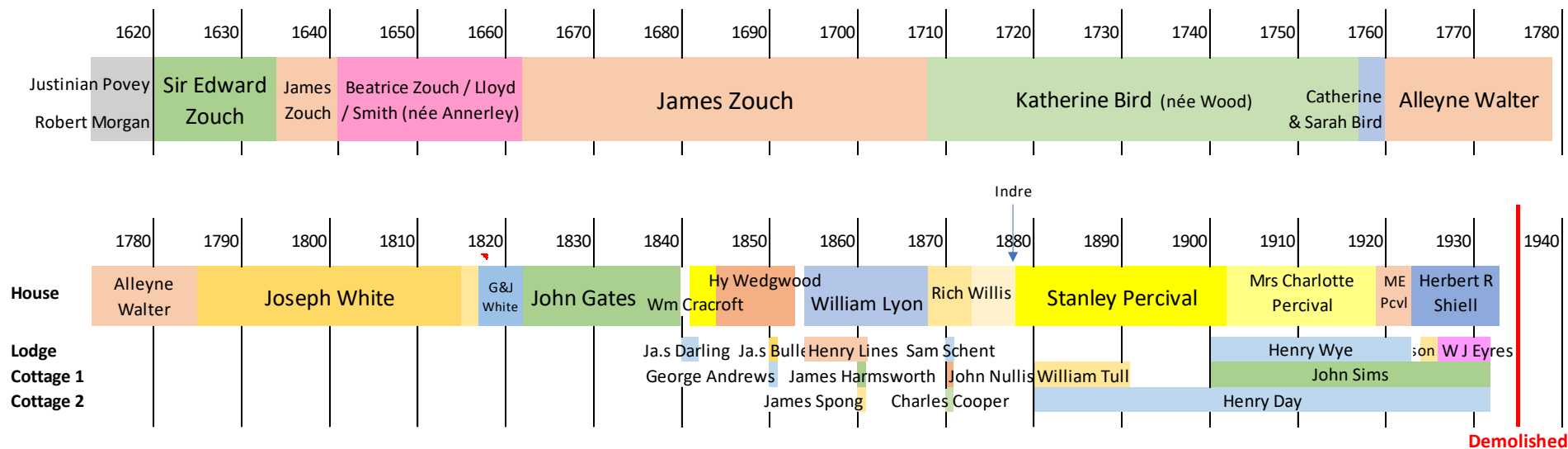


Figure 20. Occupants of the Hermitage
 The 1841-1891 censuses show how each occupant either brought their own servants with them, or engaged new ones

HERMITAGE ESTATE

The Hermitage was bought in 1934 by Alfred Frederick Tucker, a builder of Carshalton. Ownership changed hands on 16th July 1934, for the sum of £3750, with Tucker taking out a mortgage for £3225.⁵⁰

Plans were drawn up and permission given for building 183 houses and six shops on the site. On 30th October 1934, Tucker borrowed further sums of money for the purpose of building twenty-five houses on plots 2-12, 14-19 & 26-33, which he undertook to do before 30th September 1936.

In 1938, Alfred Tucker was offering 'superior built houses, fitted with gas cookers and fires and electric light', from £450 freehold - £25 deposit and 11/- a week thereafter. The larger 'A' Type houses on the site (with a large garden and mains drainage) fetched £575.

The estate was built in stages, starting at the northern edge (Hermitage Road and Amis Road and working through Batten Avenue, Oakway, Sutton Avenue and Lakeside.

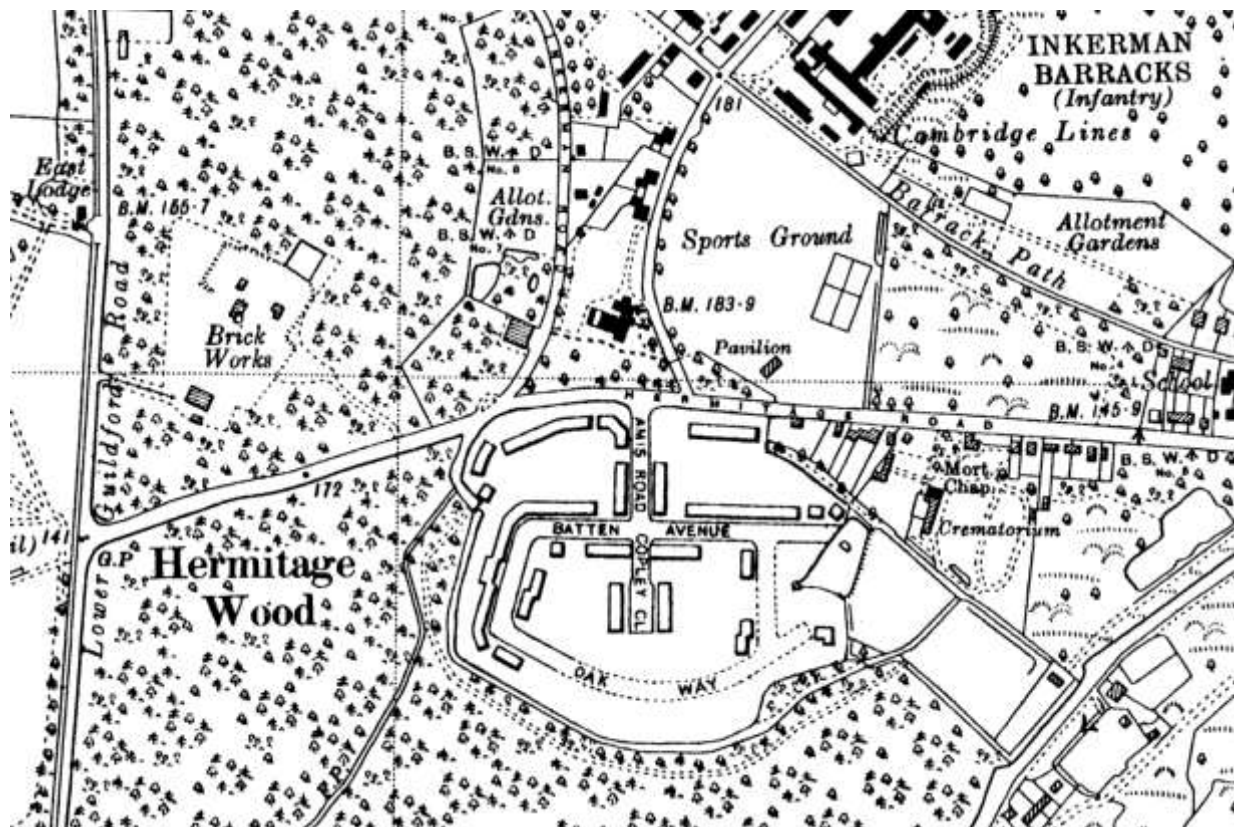


Figure 21. 1937 OS Plan showing the Hermitage Estate partially built

The Hermitage lodge, cottages and ancillary buildings, were demolished in 1935 to make way for the first phase. The Hermitage itself was demolished the following year to allow work to start on the houses of Oakway: 'A large number of Irish navvies arrived to demolish the mansion and level the site, ready for the road

⁵⁰ SHC 8198/3/1 Copy abstract of title of A F Tucker to The Hermitage Estate

layers and builders to continue into Oak Way and build the rest of the estate. They set to and started demolishing the mansion with pickaxes, crowbars and shovels. It took them weeks and weeks.⁵¹

Originally, Oakway was planned to continue round to meet Lakeside, including what later became Sutton Avenue; it is shown as such on the 1937 OS Plan (Figure 21).

The 1937 Plan also shows one of the more interesting houses to be built. Situated at the projected end of Oakway (where Lakeside Close now is) was *Joodha House*. This was the residence of a Minister of the Nepalese Legation, Krishna Mohan.⁵²

Open-air Hindu Cremation of Nepalese Princess

In 1934, the United Kingdom became the first country in the world to establish a permanent diplomatic presence by the Kingdom of Nepal. Commanding-General Bahadur Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, Crown Prince and eldest son of the Maharajah, had arrived in May to establish the mission.

The Prince's wife, Princess Shumshere Jung, had fallen ill and two Harley Street specialists had flown to Nepal to treat her. She was brought to England, on a stretcher, in May 1934.

On July 12th, the Princess was brought from London to a house in Woking; she died in the morning of Wednesday 18th July. Her husband, who had travelled to Italy to confer decorations on Mussolini, was unable to return in time.

In accordance with Hindu tradition, the funeral took place within 24 hours, the body being burned on an outside pyre. A special permit was granted by the Home Office.

The Princess's body, wrapped in a silk robe of pink and gold inscribed with the name of the god Rama, was laid on a bier and carried, by four bare-foot Hindus of the highest caste. Copper and silver coins were scattered in her path (this was a symbol that the Princess had no use for earthly goods).

The funeral pyre, five feet high, was built in an area of the grounds of Woking Cematorium, hidden by cloth screens. It was composed of 400lb of sandal wood, other fragrant woods, 20lb of camphor, two tins of butter and various scented oils. It was lit by a Brahmin priest with a sandalwood torch dipped in butter. More than a thousand people watched the flames from outside the enclosure.

After four hours, the ashes were collected to be taken to India and cast into the River Ganges. The Princess who was 39, had been married at 12 and was a grandmother.

On 22nd November 1940, German bombs were dropped on the Hermitage Estate, killing one man and destroying four houses.⁵³

In the 1950s, Hermitage Wood also was developed to produce the current Hermitage Woods Estate.

⁵¹ Recollections of Jim Wayte whose family moved into No. 130 Batten Avenue in 1936

⁵² *Woking & District Street Directory* 1937, 1948, 1957

⁵³ SHC Z/400/1 *War Diary compiled by Derrick Clewley of Horsell*

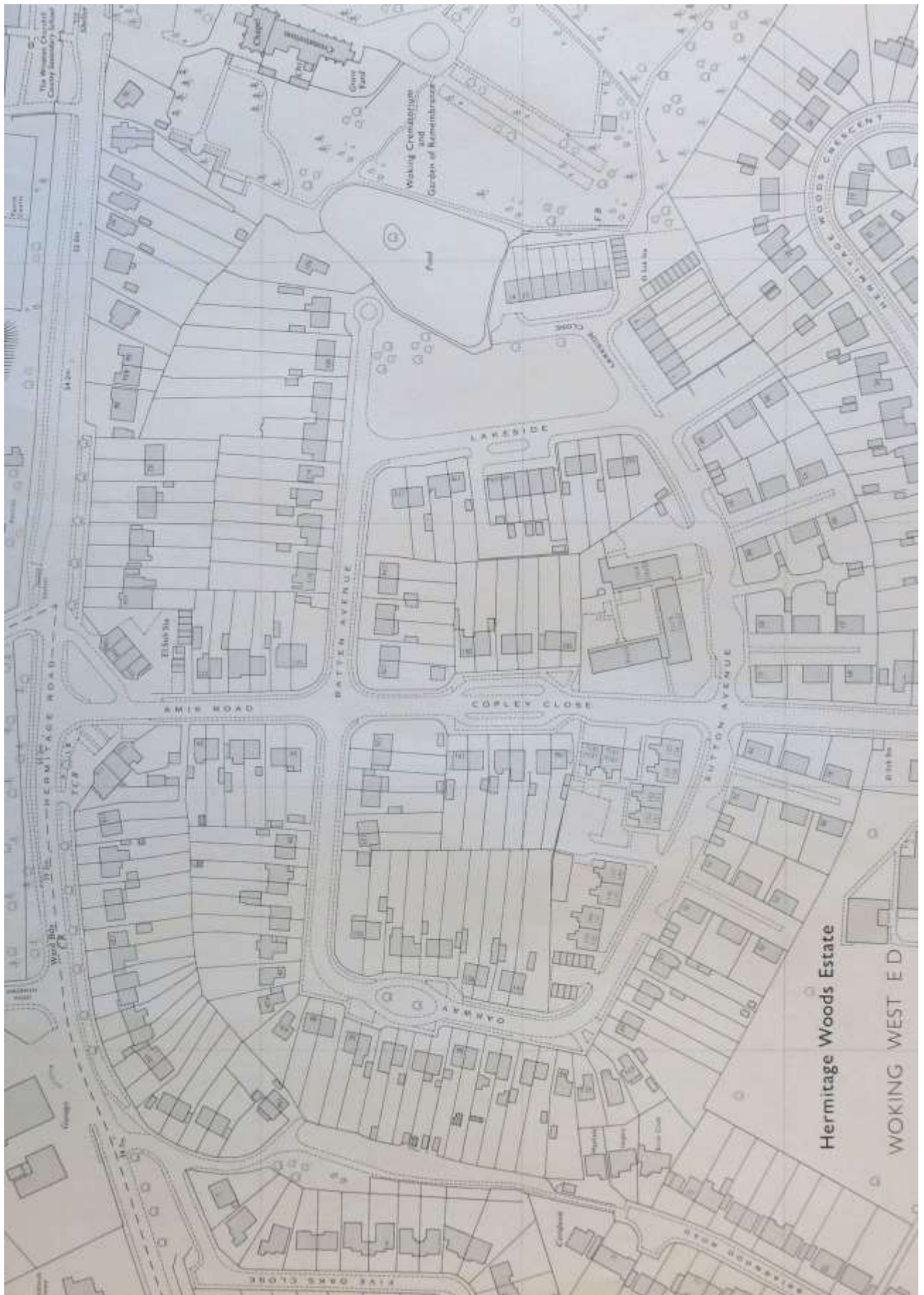


Figure 22. 1975 OS Plan

THE TUNNELS

The tunnels at the Hermitage were first discovered in the mid-1930's, when the Hermitage was demolished and replaced by the houses of Oakway. It is said that, at that time, workmen discovered an entrance under a stone slab in the fireplace.

The entrance was then covered up and forgotten about, until 1964 when a large hole appeared in one of the gardens in Oakway. Members of the Chelsea Spelæological Society were called in to investigate. They discovered three brick-lined branches of what they identified as a 'probable reservoir or level well'. They were probably built when the Hermitage was constructed in the late 17th or early 18th century.

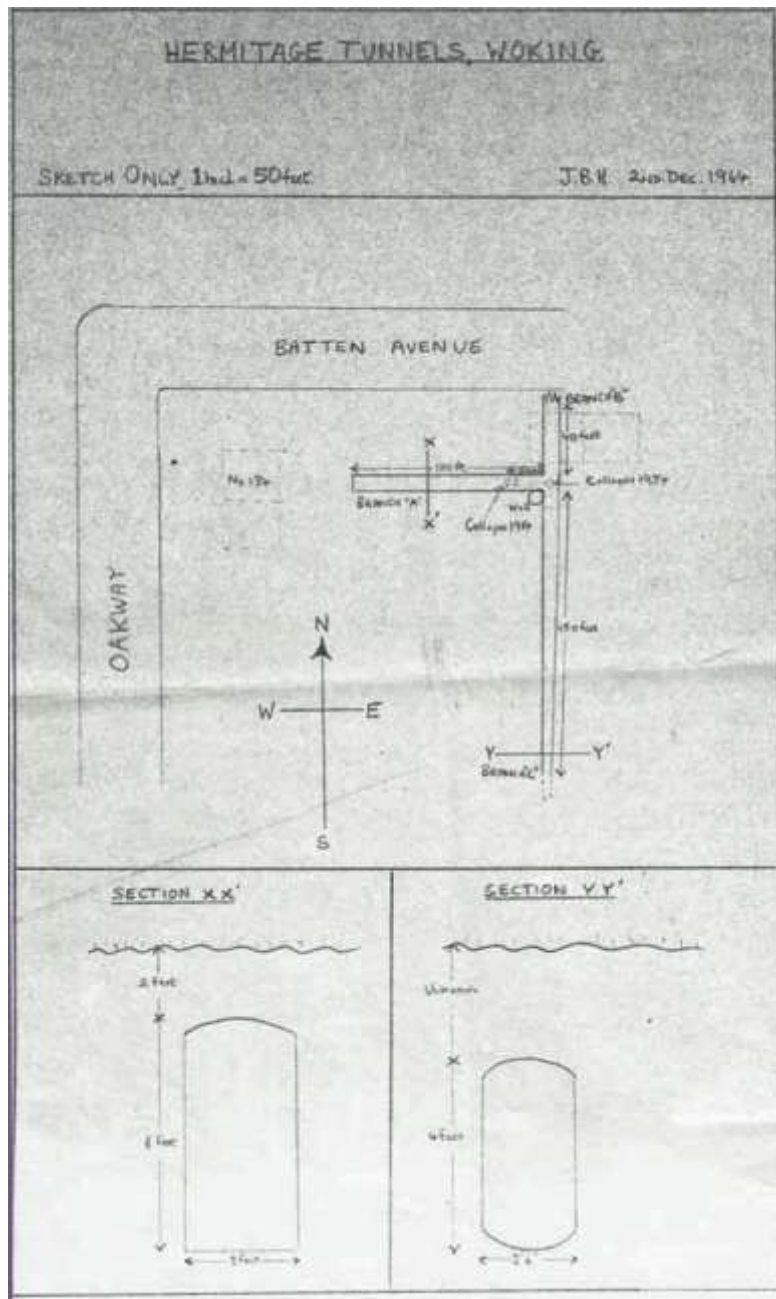


Figure 23. 1964 plan of tunnel investigation

One branch (A) appears to have connected the well with the cellar of the house, whilst branch B (a feeder tunnel) headed north towards Inkerman Barracks; branch C went in the direction of the Basingstoke Canal. The branch B tunnel gradually diminished in height and became impassable, but some claim the 'C' branch could be followed for a hundred yards or more before it was blocked by the digging of a sewer.

According to the cavers, branch 'A' was about six feet high, three feet wide with a vaulted roof, the top of which was just a couple of feet below ground level. Branch C was similar, but branch B became 'egg-shaped' and only about four foot by two foot six inches near the end. At the junction of the tunnels was the well, with the water-table at that time just below the tunnel floor.

In 1992, a camera was taken into the tunnels and a short amateur video film was made; stills from this appear below.



Figure 24. Entrance to tunnels



Figure 25. Branch 'C'



Figure 26. The well

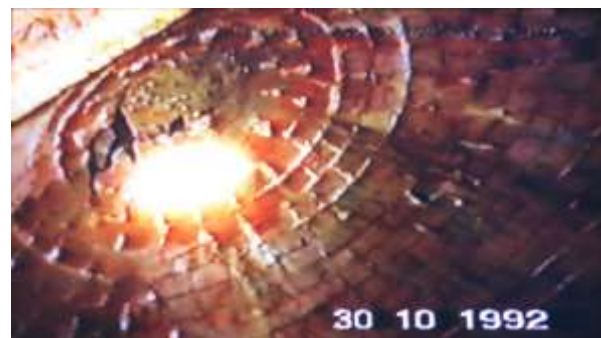


Figure 27. Domed roof

Various fanciful stories have been proposed for the tunnels. It has been suggested that they connected to either St Catherine's Priory or the Greyfriars Monastery, both near Guildford, or to Newark Priory near Ripley; that they were escape tunnels from nearby Woking prison or were used by Dick Turpin. None of these are at all likely.

THE PIG-FACED LADY

One of the more bizarre stories loosely associated with the Hermitage is that of the pig-faced lady of Manchester Square.

Stories featuring pig-faced women originated in the late 1630s, roughly simultaneously, in Holland, England and France. The stories tell of a wealthy woman whose body is of normal human appearance, but whose face is that of a pig.

In the earliest forms of the story, the woman's appearance is the result of witchcraft. Following her wedding day, the pig-faced woman's new husband is granted the choice of having her appear beautiful to him but pig-like to others, or pig-like to him and beautiful to others. When her husband tells her that the choice is hers, the enchantment is broken and her pig-like appearance vanishes. These stories became particularly popular in England, and later in Ireland.

The magical elements gradually vanished from the story, and the existence of pig-faced women began to be treated as fact. In late 1814 and early 1815, rumour swept London that a pig-faced woman was living in Marylebone. Her existence was widely reported as fact, and numerous alleged portraits of her were published.

With belief in pig-faced women commonplace, unscrupulous showmen exhibited living 'pig-faced women' at fairs. These were nothing more than shaven bears dressed in women's clothing.

Edward Ryde, a surveyor who lived in Woking in the second half of the nineteenth century, wrote a diary, drawing on which, his grandson, Humphrey Ryde, wrote his *History of Woking*. It describes 'The Pig-faced lady of Manchester Square - Drawn and published by her late attendant while at dinner', which was enclosed with a letter sent by a Mrs Kidman of Westwick, to a Mr Martyr of St Johns, in 1911. It was thought to possibly date from about 1830.⁵⁴ A pencil note in the margin, written by Humphrey Ryde, says 'she was said to have lived at the Hermitage'.



Figure 28. Painting by George Moreland

⁵⁴ SHC 1262/50



Figure 29. Copy of the enclosure in Ryde's History of Woking

When the workmen demolished the Hermitage in 1936, as well as the entrance to the tunnels, it is said they also found a portrait of a pig-faced woman.

No doubt, several stories had been passed by word of mouth and have become confused. If a woman (pig-faced or not) was living at the Hermitage, she is unlikely to be described as 'of Manchester Square'.

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