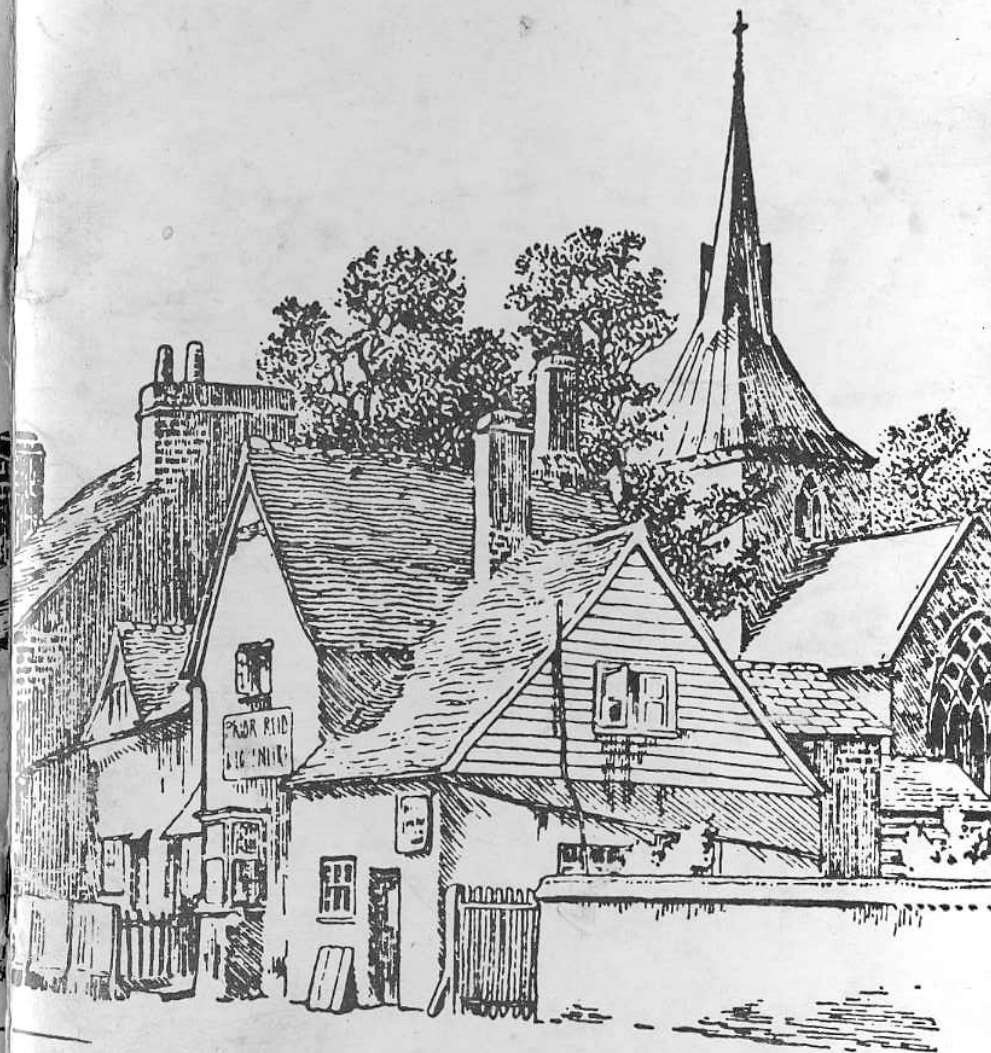


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## About Wheathampstead

# ABOUT WHEATHAMPSTEAD

Its Old Houses, the Families who built them, and  
those who lived there

1974

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## I

### THE CHURCH AND THE HIGH STREET

An excellent point at which to start an exploration of the parish is at ST. HELEN'S Church. By whichever road one approaches Wheathampstead, the slender spire may be seen standing above the trees. Here in the heart of the village is the parish church, surrounded by its large green churchyard, bright with daffodils in the spring and roses and flowering plants in the summer. Through the centuries villagers were brought to their christenings or burials, or came happily to their weddings, in St. Helen's. Some are recorded on brass plaques and stone monuments in the church and by numerous stones in the churchyard. Old photographs show the old wooden 'bedhead' memorials, but none remain. The browser will find many interesting inscriptions however: there is the stone to James Marshall who endowed Marshall's Charity which still helps young people today by financing necessary costs connected with their further education or training. There is one commemorating the deaths of five sons in one family between the ages of one and twenty-six, and others which recall personal tragedies like the death of the two Ephgrave sons at twenty-one and twenty-two. William Ephgrave lived at Heron's Farm, Gustardwood in 1840. The tombstone of the Rev. G. Pretyman is on the north side of the churchyard. He was rector until 1859 and the last pluralist, that is a holder of many livings which he did not serve, and the inscription is worth looking into; the railings have recently been removed from his tomb.

St. Helen's is a beautiful old church, but this is not the place in which to give a full architectural description of it. What we see today is largely of two periods — first the century between 1230 and 1330, when the earlier eleventh century church was rebuilt and embellished, and secondly the eighteen-sixties, when a heavy programme of very necessary repairs was undertaken. To this latter period belongs the distinctive broached lead spire and slated roof which is echoed in the contemporary disused school nearby, the buttresses and, inside the church, the chancel ceiling. To the medieval period we owe the basic shape and flint structure of the church, though the earlier Norman building also had a central tower, aisle, transepts and chancel. There is little to see of this Norman work apart from traces of a round headed doorway in the wall of the south transept; of the rebuilding which began in the thirteenth century there is, however, a great deal, though much of it, the stonework of the windows for example, has been heavily restored. Great expense and artistry was lavished on this building in the middle ages; its decorative work was second only to that in St. Albans Abbey, in the locality, and it was more sensitively restored in the nineteenth century than was the abbey. The brasses and monuments in the church transepts

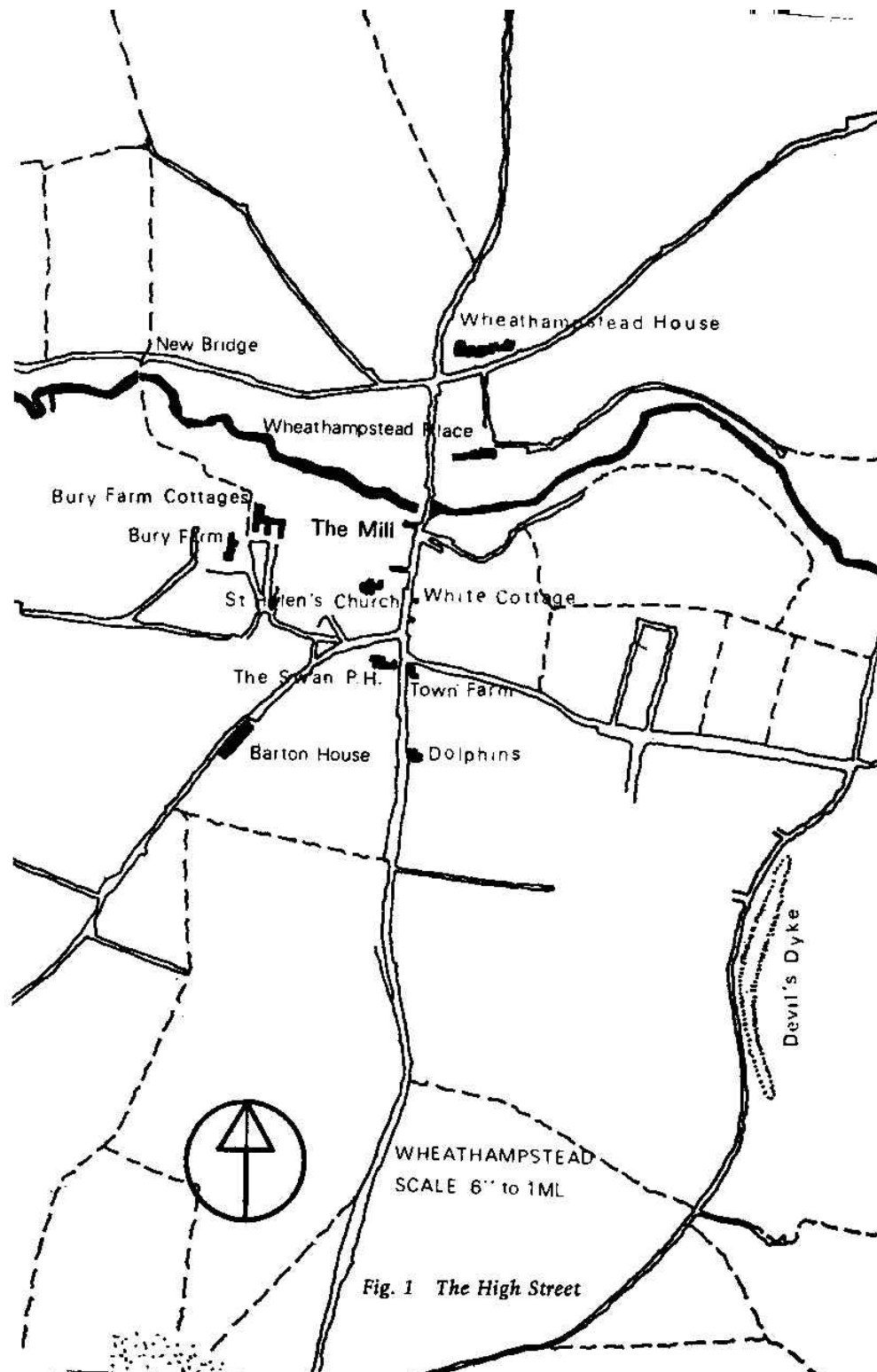


Fig. 1 The High Street

are a reflection of changes in fashion over centuries and make a good introduction to the village and to families whose names will be met again later, like the Bostocks, Garrards and Sibleys.

The **HIGH STREET**, which we reach through the lych gate\* of St. Helen's, still has its old shape although, since it was declared a Conservation Area in 1968-9, there has been disastrous destruction of old buildings and the construction of some new ones, quite out of keeping with the old; all this in spite of the Parish Council's best efforts. The Marford Road corner has seen the worst change. A little country lane, overhung by trees, used to come into the village between Town Farm (see p. 19) and the Ship; there were two policehouses near, so the corner was known as Policeman's Corner. The Swan, opposite, survives though changed; the rest have gone, as has an apple orchard full of snowdrops in springtime and a great bank of daffodils, which stood at the back of the garden of Lattimores, and the little seventeenth century house with weather boarding which adjoined Lattimores on the south side. A small part of this was included in the alterations to the bigger house.

LATTIMORES itself is much older than it appears to be. The front is of the eighteenth or early nineteenth century, in warm red brick with an old tile roof and parapet. It has three casements with Gothic glazing bars, and there are three stone steps up to the original front door. The interior is very much earlier in date, the southernmost bay having been a cross wing to an open hall house. There is a massive roof and the main ceiling beam is moulded. The rest of the house, and its chimney stack, appears to date back to a seventeenth century rebuilding. Lattimores takes its name from a wealthy family of brewers, who lived there and ran the Hope Brewery on Brewhouse Hill. We are not sure who owned and occupied it in 1753, but it may have been 'Mr. Francis Childs and His Brother John'. By 1791 Anne Lattimore was the owner-occupier and she was followed about 1825 by William Lattimore. Charles Higby Lattimore died in October 1899 and was buried with his ancestors, just to the right of the path from the lych gate to St. Helen's.

A little lower down the High Street, we come to the **BELL AND CROWN**. Like the White Cottage next to Lattimores, to which we shall return, it belonged to the Sibley family, and like Lattimores the Bell and Crown is much older than it looks from the front. Its three bays with sash windows date from a refronting early in the nineteenth century; they hide another timber framed building dating from the early sixteenth century. The single storeyed rear wing is the oldest part and was once an open hall construction. The front originally had an overhang which is visible from the inside, and the ground floor has a chamfered main ceiling beam. An inventory was made

\* This and other, possibly unfamiliar, words are explained in a Glossary on page 50.



of the Bell in 1648 and it describes the contents for us. In the hall there were two matted chairs, a pair of tongs, a slice, an iron bar, a pair of tables and a pair of bellows; in the kitchen a hair cupboard, a dresser board, a board under the dresser, two andirons and an iron bar. The best furnished room was the chamber over the parlour which held one bedstead with curtain rods and a mat, one court cupboard, one drawing table, one great joined chair, two andirons, and a window curtain and rod, together worth £4.10s.0d.

There were always public houses in plenty in the High Street. The most famous is the Bull which was built as a hostelry and was the property of the Garrards. It is as handsome now as it ever was, and considerably larger, having been extended by taking in the two riverside cottages adjoining. The original timber frame building dates at least from the early seventeenth century; it is long and curving, and has been plastered over and colour washed. One of its most famous guests is said to have been Isaak Walton.

Just opposite the Bull, another timber framed building was, earlier this century, the Two Brewers and behind it Harry Westwood, the blacksmith had his smithy. This is another L shaped house of the seventeenth century; the oldest section is now the central part of the N.S.S. (Newsagents) Ltd. shop; it had a cross wing and is older than the house at the southern end. Next door, a 'cottage' built in 1742 has served the village in many capacities. Until recently the village post office, it has also been the telephone exchange, Waters' Garage and, earlier, a tailor's shop. It would be another local tragedy if this building is pulled down. Too many houses and shops have been replaced: the little village store and the White Hart by the Supermarket, and the old workhouse and cottages by a bank and modern shop. The chemist shop at the bottom of the High Street was the old mill house; the present building dates from the mid-nineteenth century. Opposite, the Jessamine Garage has replaced the village wheelwright's. The distinction of having the first petrol pump, however, went to a house a little nearer the church; this was the home of the Collins family and was built in 1825; their name appears in the glass fanlight above the door.

Walking back to the lych gate we cross the road to the **WHITE COTTAGE** (see Plate 1a). This small white house was for centuries the home of one branch of the Sibley family. Behind it the buildings housing the old malting floors are now used as a country club; but the stables and farm buildings have disappeared. Much of Hertfordshire prosperity in the eighteenth century was founded on the two closely related industries of malting and brewing and the Lattimores and Sibleys, next door neighbours, were, respectively, brewers and maltsters. Like other 'town houses', the White Cottage has been altered and adapted over the centuries. The oldest part was a late medieval hall open to the roof, having a crown post and beam dating from about 1490. There was an entry into a passage at the end of

the hall; the carved spandrels of the Tudor door may just be seen today. Another open hall stood at the front of this building and may also have had a crown post. Traces of smoke blackening remain on some of the roof timbers, which was made when there was no chimney and smoke from the fire had to escape through a hole in the roof. Probably the two halls formed an L shaped house with a side entry and a screens passage. Upper floors had been added by 1600. The biggest change in the history of the house was made some time before 1630. The southern end of the front of the house was rebuilt with a large room on the ground floor and an equally large room above. It ran in the same direction at roof level as the kitchen behind, had fine sturdy timbering and a massive brick chimney in the centre.

The owner of the house, and of the Bell, about this time was Francis Sibley. An inventory, made on 9 May 1648, is like a guided tour round the house and farmyard. His hall contained a frame table, six stools, a great cupboard, a small glass cupboard, his 'joined' chair, 'turned' chairs, four cushions and a brazen sconce. He had a book shelf and 'some few books', andirons, tongs, pothangers and 'an iron to lie before the fire'. In the kitchen were his six brass kettles, brass pans and skillets, '3 Tin dripping pans, a Tin colander, Tin apple roaster and Tin pudding pan'. His bedroom in the new 'chamber over the hall' held a bedstead with curtains and valance, two feather beds, blankets, pillows and coverlet. There was a court cupboard, two joined stools, chests, trunks and boxes, 'a close stool, a warming pan and other small things'. The inventory takes us outside to the mill-house, and the malthouse and maltloft, with malt worth £84, past the barn and the stable with its 'old gelding'; it lists the six hives of bees, the '2 cows with their two calves', the ewes with their lambs and the three hogs, the whole worth some £269.18s.3d. Francis left his step-daughter, Elizabeth, her mother's clothes and personal possessions: her pillion and riding cloak, 'a black stuff gown, a petticoat' and two waistcoats as well as 'a gold ring, a silver spoon' and silver bodkin; there were napkins, pewter dishes, a pair of candlesticks, a pewter salt, and a bedstead and great cupboard.

A complete contrast with the seventeenth century way of life suggested by this inventory is revealed in a sale catalogue of 1898. We fancy there's an aroma of tobacco in the dining room, a 'small ebonised smoking table, with match holder, cigar holder etc. complete, and a tapestry table cover', glass cases of birds and animals, and a loo table; in the hall, a handsome carved walking stick, a breech loading gun, a revolver and cartridges, and a walking stick gun, suggest a country gentleman of reasonable means. The drawing room is much more of a lady's room. It has a circular mahogany table with pillar and claw and a tapestry cover: there are little tables of oak and walnut, and a five tier 'what not' for displaying knick-knacks, a chiffonier of rosewood and four settees. There is wax fruit in a glass

case and a crimson glass fluted lamp. There is a fine collection of china and on the walls there are framed pictures and, in rosewood frames, two engravings of 'Industry' and 'Idleness', no doubt after Hogarth. The breakfast room has Windsor chairs and a copper warming pan, and its dresser carries a willow pattern dinner service. There are brass rods on the stairs, a grandfather clock and a set of sporting prints. In the bedrooms above are four posters of mahogany with feather beds and bolsters, washstands, bedsteps and chests of drawers of maple or mahogany. There are two armchairs and a hassock in the main bedroom, dimity curtains, and white and gold washstand fittings. Mahogany has replaced oak and the rooms, large enough by modern standards, are crowded with furniture in the Victorian style.

For all the 250 years between these two documents the White Cottage and the Maltings had belonged to Sibleys or their wives or husbands. Sibleys flourished in Wheathampstead and Harpenden from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, their family fortunes no doubt being made from malt. Two of the owners of the White Cottage are of special interest. Francis, who died in 1648, was a prosperous farmer with a well furnished home; he was a devout and responsible man, unusual in owning books. His great-grandson, the fourth Francis in succession, lost his mother in the year he was born and his father and step-mother were dead by the time he was seventeen. He went on to become a master of the maltings for nearly fifty years, during what was probably its most prosperous period; he was a man of importance and village constable. Of his five children his eldest son predeceased him; Francis himself and his heir, William were buried on successive days, 9 and 10 August 1765. The property passed to a seventeen year old grandson who died young and childless. His aunt, Elizabeth who lived till she was eighty-one, owned the Maltings from the 1770s until she passed it and the Bell to another nephew, Henry, who had been her tenant before he became owner. The strength of mind and strong opinions of Sibley women is brought home by the will of this Henry's unmarried sister, Mary, made in 1791. She left him 'all the rest and residue of my Personal Estates . . . not doubting but he will faithfully Perform what I have Desired', which was, among other things, to 'be buried at Three or Four O Clock in the afternoon'; 'I desire six Poor Men to Carry me Giving them half a Crown a piece for their trouble no Hatband or Gloves Given on my account'. It was customary to give these to mourners at the time. Mary was insisting that no money should be wasted on pomp or show at her funeral. One can imagine the little procession making its way to the west of the Church where all the Sibleys are buried. Mary, incidentally, was a keen needlewoman: at the end of her will she left to her cousin 'my two carpets of my own needlework'.

Henry married, a second time, when he was forty-three, twenty-three year old Ann Gladman. Charles Lamb, who was related to the Gladmans, tells of walking from Mackerye End to Wheathampstead

to call on mother and sister Gladmans: it is tempting to wonder if Anne was one of them and if he visited the house which Henry had modernised for his bride. A new front was built, with four bay windows looking towards St. Helen's and an ample front door and porch. The builders used plaster over wire netting to cover the wall and it set rock hard. The line of the roof was altered, probably also at this time, to run handsomely from north to south. Anne must have been delighted with it. When Henry died in 1835 the Bell passed to a younger son, Robert, tenant farmer of Annables in Harpenden, while the Maltings became the property of the eldest son, another Henry. This second Henry died on 14 August 1846 at the comparatively young age of forty. On his gravestone his wife, Sarah, put the following little verse — old-fashioned in tone but very human in sentiment:

'Forgive, Blest shade, the tributary tear  
That mourns thy exit from a world like this,  
Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here  
And stayed thy progress to the seats of bliss.'

Sarah married again, William Thrall, a baker, twenty-four years her junior; his brother, Norman, founded the St. Albans' bakery business. William outlived Sarah by twenty-nine years; it was at his death that the property was sold and the sale catalogue from which we have quoted was made.

Charles Lamb b. 1775

26 May 1820 (p. 1)

## II

### CHURCH STREET, BURY GREEN AND BREWHOUSE HILL

Walking back up the hill, we leave High Street by CHURCH STREET. Two of the cottages on the left are faced in red and black brick and diapered in patterns found in the village from the early eighteenth century. One of them has the date 1746 over the door; it was the property of Isaac House (see p. 16). A few doors beyond is another little house of great interest. NO. 6 sits back behind its pretty garden, presenting a typical eighteenth century front faced in brick: it has an original panelled front door with a canopy, three-light windows with original mullions and dentil brickwork under the eaves. A brick is initialled M.M., but we know nothing of the house's earlier occupants. The steeply pitched roof is noticeable and suggests that, like Town Farm, Lattimores, the White Cottage, and the Bell and Crown, No. 6 started as a small open hall house built at the end of the fifteenth or in the early sixteenth century. The layout of all these houses, grouped around the church, is interesting. The chimney stack and ceiling of No. 6 were inserted about 1600, and the house was given a smart new front in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The main room has an inglenook fireplace with a stopped and chamfered lintel beam and an eighteenth century moulded shelf above; there are the remains of a bread oven and a salt cupboard at the back of the hearth.

What is today an electric shop and the house beside it were once a small public house known as the Walnut Tree, which was kept at the turn of the century by the Odells. The Walnut Tree dates from the seventeenth century; the house has a tall chimney stack with an ovolo moulded band which is Jacobean. Gable Cottage, next door, has three symmetrical gable ends at the north side. Although it appears to be nineteenth century with segmental headed ground floor windows, there are again indications of an earlier origin. There is a stopped chamfered main ceiling beam on the ground floor, and an open fireplace with a chamfered lintel beam which rests on piers of seventeenth century two inch bricks.

A little further on the road forks, where once was Bury Green with two tiny seventeenth century or eighteenth century cottages beside it. Here stands the old CHURCH SCHOOL, which is to become an architect's office, an excellent Victorian Gothic building, built of flint and brick, with a steeply sloping roof patterned in green and grey slate. When Canon Davys had finished the urgent reroofing of St. Helen's, he turned his attention to building a church school for the village. The same architect, Mr. Browning, was employed to design it, and the school was opened on 29 December 1862. One

very old villager tells how he was allowed to leave school at the age of twelve, on the day of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, having reached the required standard. There is now a new church school and two other large village schools.

Taking the right fork, by the school, the road winds in a half circle to the right. A group of modern houses stands on the site of the previous rectory; built in 1815 it was in use until 1959 and then replaced by the present one. Beyond this point there is a very large barn with massive timbers of the sixteenth century and opposite it are BURY FARM COTTAGES. These two beautiful cottages were assumed to have been the manor house of the Westminster estate. They have a continuous jetty on both sides and were undoubtedly one building. Canon Davys recalled that 'we had some delightful visits from (the Dean and Chapter of Westminster) when they came to hold their manor courts . . . They used to lunch at their old manor house, now changed into cottages, and their tenant always endeavoured to have a dish of our famous Lea pink trout on the table, and they used afterwards to come to the Rectory, walk about the gardens, and have tea with us.' We do not believe, however, that the cottages were built as a manor house or as a house at all. This is supported by the plan of the building itself. None of the chimneys is original, but there were four outside doors, one at least with sliding doors big enough to admit a wagon. The large ground-floor room, with handsomely chamfered beams, was no doubt used for court meetings and celebrations. The end rooms, which had their own entries, and the four upstairs rooms open to the roof with its crown post, were probably let off as and when convenient. One of the original windows may be seen at the front of the right hand cottage. This construction and room arrangement are typical of a fairly common, but little studied, group of buildings known as town houses or guild halls. The date here is early sixteenth century. Two possible origins are suggested. One, borne out by Canon Davys, is that this was the building from which Westminster administered their estates. Alternatively it may have been built at the Reformation, with guild money, as a building for guild feasts, the conduct of parish affairs, and to house on a temporary basis, the poor. But the former seems the most probable. A survey made for Westminster in 1567 lays down very clearly that their steward is to provide food and drink for the representatives of the Abbey when they made their official visits, and this is just what is described by Canon Davys three hundred years later.

We think that the cottage, previously situated just behind the old church school by Bury Green, was originally occupied by the steward himself. Known as Bury House, and dating from the seventeenth century, this scheduled building was destroyed by fire in the 1960s. The little house was four bayed and rectangular in shape and had an original chimney in the centre of the house and a stopped and



chamfered main ceiling beam. There was also a chimney stack on the south gable which was probably added in the eighteenth century.

Returning to Church Street, and turning right up BREWHOUSE HILL we pass some small red brick houses on the right, built about 1920 in farm land which swept down towards the village. Opposite them is BARTON HOUSE and one of the two long malting floors in the village. Halfway up the hill is the other part of the old Hope Brewery which has given its name to the hill. Until 1781 this was known as Hamwell Hill, leading as it does to (H)amwell. In that year Westminster Abbey granted 'James Wilkins of Whethamsted . . . Brewer a piece of ground being part of the Chalk Delves containing about three Roods . . . in Length . . . and in breadth two poles and an half'. Probably James Wilkins prospered well enough with the brewery he set up there; he died about six years later and his family put up a handsome table monument surrounded with decorative railings, to his memory. It shares a plot, east of the church, with the Lattimores who followed him later at the Brewery.

The old Brewhouse premises have for the most part vanished. The plot of land extended to the end of the yard above the four cottages. The first of these, in red brick, is a pleasant small house opening on to the street. The beam in the main room is stopped; it may be older than the house and reused. Under the house, and stretching well back into the chalk, is the brick tunnel used for storage. Both must date from the early 1780s, as a messuage or tenement is mentioned at the Court Baron in 1787 after James Wilkins had died. The remainder of the property has been replaced by two little red brick cottages of the nineteenth century and the yard mentioned. Higher up the hill nineteenth century malting floors remain which were used in living memory, but have since accommodated different types of hat making machinery; they were not, however, part of the original Hope Brewery.

There is a little tailpiece to the story of Barton House which shows very clearly how public opinion has changed in less than twenty years. The Rural District Council of that day decided that the old buildings were unfit for habitation, and served a demolition order in September 1955. The first of Wheathampstead's battles over preservation had started. A local solicitor, R. de Mornay Davies, and Professor Richardson of the Royal Academy came to the defence, and the order was eventually lifted. Finally in July 1971, notice was served that Barton House 'has been included in the list of buildings of special architectural . . . interest'.

### III

#### THE SOUTH-WEST QUARTER

At the top of Brewhouse Hill we leave the village behind and begin the first of four walks, or drives, in which we hope to cover the whole parish. A map, the 2½in. Ordnance Survey Sheet TL 11, would be a great aid to following these routes. At the top of the hill the Harpenden Road swings to the right, with views over the Lea Valley to the fields below Heron's and looking backwards to the woods of Lamer. A short distance further along, on the right and facing the remnant of its green, is DOWN GREEN HOUSE, largely hidden behind its thick hedge. Down Green House was built about 1700, as a simple two room cottage with a central front door and a small entrance hall in front of a large square chimney, which served both rooms. The left hand room was the kitchen-living room, probably with a lean-to extension housing, with other tools and necessities, the well; the right hand room was the parlour. A staircase almost certainly twisted sharply up, in a cupboard behind the chimney, to the floor above. In the early eighteenth century the cottage and its farm land was owned by Emmanuel Grunwin. About 1800 Joseph Gutteridge owned Down Green, and it was occupied by Daniel Crew. Improvements and extensions were planned. To make more space, an extra living room, with a bedroom over, was added to the north-west. The old chimney was pulled down, and a new one replaced it which remains today. This still served the hearths of both rooms, but a tunnel was driven through the centre of it making a passage directly from the entrance hall to the back of the house. At the same time, the staircase was moved back to allow an entry to the new room.

By 1840 Down Green had been divided into two homes — 'William Webb and another'. The old problem of space became acute, and further building was added to provide extra room at the back. It was not until about 1900 that the cottage came under one ownership again. The new master set to work to improve it for his coming marriage, and a fine wide oak staircase was put in. But the wedding never took place; jilted, the owner sold up and moved away, but since then Down Green has been one home. About 1905 Herbert Grey was houseboy to the Noels and recalls that he earned 2s. a week, of which he gave 1s. to his mother; the rail fare to Luton at this time was 3½d. The splendid thick yew hedge dividing the garden was planted on Armistice Day 1918.

Less than a mile further on, just past Alwickbury School, is what was one of Wheathampstead's big houses; due to a boundary change it is now in Harpenden. PIGGOTTS, now called Aldwick Manor, was a medieval property divided between the Pigot or Picot and the Christian families until the seventeenth century when the Christians



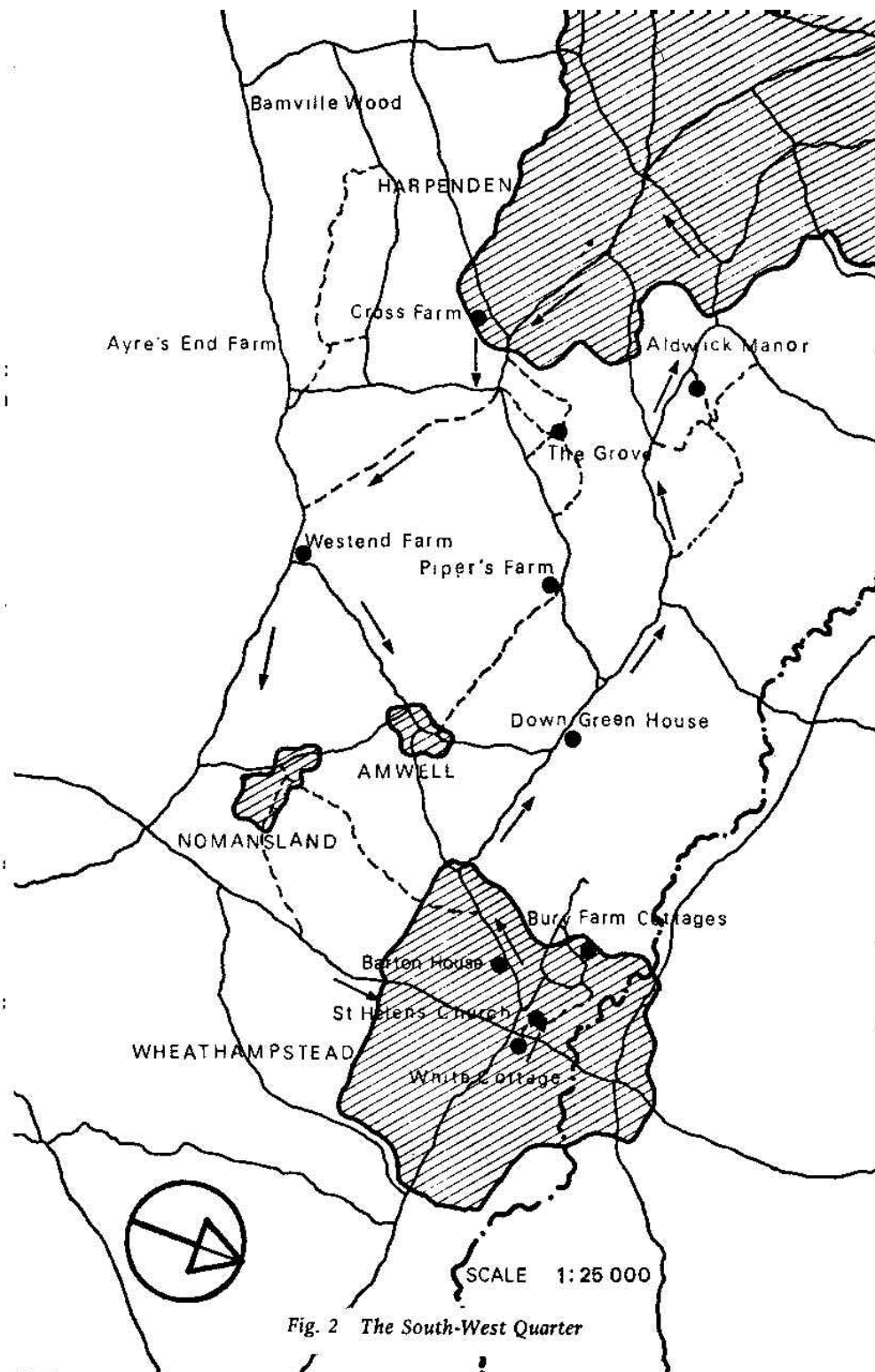


Fig. 2 The South-West Quarter

gained control of the whole. Their fortunes seem to have taken an upward turn. In 1638 John Christian left two hundred 'poundes of lawfull money of England' to one son and £100 'a peece' to each of five other children. Apart from these bequests John Christian left his estate to his son George, a citizen and silk merchant of London, who sold it to his Stubbing relatives. This was the family of the Rector and they remained in possession for sixty years, until two Stubbing daughters sold the property to Thomas Ashby in 1698.

It was probably John Christian who built the earliest part of the present house. This is its western side, a three roomed house with a lobby entrance, quite a large house for the early seventeenth century. A cellar under the present south-west corner is older than the room above it appears to be. There were probably attic rooms and a garden court, the wall of which remains. Possibly Thomas Ashby further developed the house; early in the eighteenth century the whole original timber framed building was bricked over. The floor levels were lower than the present ones and they remained at their original level through this improvement; we know this because the original windows can be seen in the brickwork, which continues to attic level at the gable end, which is unaltered. Thomas Ashby also added another room to the south-east of his house where the present hall is. It is difficult to decide the use of this room, unless it was a new parlour to take the place of the original one where the kitchen is at present. The dovecote was also built at this time.

The Ashbys remained at the manor until 1792 when Thomas Wyndham acquired it, perhaps as an investment because it was leased to Joseph Gutteridge in 1793. Gutteridge had bought Down Green before 1800 and at some time he bought Piggotts. He improved them both: at Piggotts he rebuilt the front range adding the present south-eastern sitting room and converting the middle section into an entrance hall and adding the present staircase. This was done round about 1815. At the same time the first floor was raised and the windows altered throughout. It may have been at this stage that the seventeenth century doors were moved up to the attic level, some being cut, to cover access points to the roof space. Perhaps Gutteridge installed the nineteenth century well wheel and its gear, made by Davis and Bailey of Hemel Hempstead. It was used to draw water for the farm.

Joseph Gutteridge still owned the property in 1840, but Thomas Kidman lived at 'Piggotts Hill Farmhouse' and farmed land which was largely the same as is farmed today as Aldwick Manor. Gutteridge died in May 1844 at Holland Park. The house and land passed through several hands and were bought in 1867 by Alfred Loder, as High Firs. It was Mr. Loder who built the large house, now Aldwickbury School, about 1870. He was a timber importer and it was probably he who planted the trees round the house. It must also have been Mr. Loder who, early in the twentieth century, carried

out the refenestration which gives Piggotts its Edwardian air. Mr. E. E. Maylor Hetts bought the estate in 1911 and sold it to the present owner.

Dropping down from Aldwick Manor to the edge of Harpenden at Southdown, one turns south-east again and comes very shortly to the meeting of three lanes. A few yards to the right in Cross Lane is one of the most interesting and attractive working farms in Wheat-hampstead and Harpenden, **CROSS FARM** (see Plate 1b). Here you may meet riding parties trotting out on a winter's afternoon or find farm vehicles clattering into the spacious yard. An ancient man-trap is close by the front door. The Dickenson family has been here now for a hundred and fifty years, and the farm is looked after with pride and care. At the end of the thirteenth century Robert Attecrouch (at the cross) took his name from the standing cross which must have stood here. Such crosses were common at junctions and boundaries in outlying parts of a parish. In 1485 Thomas Cowper left instructions that his executors should rebuild this cross. It has long vanished.

The house is unexpectedly large and spacious for a late medieval farmhouse. At the turn of the century a tiled floor was discovered which Canon Davys, who saw it, believed was a chapel floor — perhaps the chapel was a successor to the cross — and the Canon thought that the house may have been associated with one of the abbots of St. Albans. From the outside one has the impression of a typical late Elizabethan house with a brick façade, projecting central porch of two storeys, and gables at each end. But inside the plan of a late medieval house is clearly revealed in the central hall with its main fireplace at the upper end between the hall and parlour. To the right of the front entrance into the hall is the service area, now used as a kitchen. The internal timberwork indicates that the two gables were built as cross wings, though this is not apparent from the outside. There are also indications in the brickwork that the house originally had a screens passage. In the upper rooms much fine timberwork is visible and there is early seventeenth century panelling in the parlour. Cross Farm has an almost complete set of early seventeenth century window and door fastenings and door hinges. All this suggests several phases of rebuilding and improving of the original medieval house. A newel staircase at the south-west end of the farmhouse is built against a chimney stack. What may be a priest's hide-out, or merely a safety area to prevent the chimney overheating, is built into the roof against the chimney breast over the kitchen. An adjoining wall contains early eighteenth century graffiti. The priest's hole is surprising in an area for which there is no evidence of surviving Catholic sympathies.

The seventeenth century improvements may well have been carried out by George Neale of Hammondsend's third son John, who was well endowed on his father's death in 1611 and who is recorded

at living at the Cross in 1625 and 1640. By the eighteenth century the property belonged to the Kentish family; Thomas Kentish left an annual rent charge of 10s. a year, on his estate called Cross Farm, to be distributed at Christmas in money and bread to poor families. More recently Cross Farm became part of the Childwickbury estate. The Dickensons were tenants long before they bought the farm.

Returning to Grove Road and turning right, one reaches the bottom of Pipers Lane and sees a green meadow on the left, sloping uphill to another fine red brick house. There is a tree lined drive making straight up towards the wing of the house, but the visitor should take the shady footpath up beside the field, which carries him right round to the front. The **GROVE** (see Plate 2a) is a large Queen Anne house in the local style of brickwork. It belongs to Hooker, Craigmyle and Co. Ltd., fund raising consultants. There is nothing to see of building before 1712, but we know that the site was in use. The name Grove suggests Anglo-Saxon resettlement of an abandoned Romano-British site. A Richard ate Grove may have lived here in 1272, but the first person of whom we know more than just the name is Richard Smith 'of the Grove', who was paid '£4.16s.3d. for 3 load and 4 foote of timber' on 6 June 1653 by Sir John Wittewronge of Rothamsted. He was Wittewronge's tenant in the 1650s. Richard paid hearth tax in 1663 and 1673 on four hearths. These were probably on either side of a central chimney stack at ground and first floor levels. The stack was between two of the three groundfloor rooms in a house on the site of the present reception hall. The 1712 building has no thick outer wall where it abuts on to this hall, at the head of the cellar stairs, which suggests that when it was put up there was an older building here. The last reference we have to Richard Smith is from the Quarter Sessions of 1690: as 'a rich man', he was ordered to pay 3s. a week towards the support of two children in Aldenham poor house, whose 'maternal grandfather' he was.

By 1712 the property belonged to Thomas Seare. He complained to Quarter Sessions in that year because, as heir to his brother William, he was owed £360 which his brother had spent as chief constable of Dacorum Hundred. In 1715 a rate was levied to meet this debt. Perhaps the house was built when Thomas inherited his brother's wealth. The 1712 addition to the old house is plain to see in the four windows to the south-east of the main range on the ground floor. T/1712/S can be seen in the brickwork between the five upper windows — T.S. for Thomas Seare. These cornice and dormer windows seem to have been rebuilt, but the frames on the first floor are probably largely original, as is the roof. The front door was between the two pairs of lower windows. The building is one room deep with a passage from the front door to an arched opening at the back. The cellars date from 1712 but incorporate some reused timbers from a sixteenth or seventeenth century house.

Thomas was a wealthy man; when he died in 1742 he left a life interest in the Grove to his wife Sarah and on her death, in 1744, it went to John House and later to John's brother, Isaac. Isaac was left Cross Farm, in which Thomas Seare had an interest. It was Isaac who built a house in Church Street in 1746 and put his initials with the date over the door. Exactly what was the relationship between Thomas Seare and the Houses is not clear. The Houses continued in possession of the Grove until 1870, though it may sometimes have been let. John Isaac House was the farmer at the Grove at the time of the 1840 Tithe Commutation Award and held extensive lands in the south-western corner of the parish. It was he who, early in the nineteenth century, built what is now the conference room and refaced the south-western corner of the house. The conference room must have been a two storeyed building at first: the double row of early nineteenth century cast iron windows seem original and contemporary with the low pitched roof. A building of this size would have been needed by a farm such as the Grove was, for a dairy, and the upper room could have been a school room for the five House children. A second John Isaac House took over the Grove on his father's death in 1849; he and his brother owned a malting and brewing business in Harpenden High Street where Woolworth's now stands. The business was sold in 1870 when the second John Isaac died. His widow, who was a Sibley, lived at the Grove until her death in 1907 when it was inherited by her nephew Charles Francis Sibley. He lived there from at least 1912 until 1928 and it is he who caused the north-west wing to be so skilfully rebuilt to echo the character of the 1712 front. Charles' initials can be seen in the brickwork at first floor window level. The fireplace in the office in the north-eastern corner of this wing was much restored but is surmounted by a 1712 panel. Some of the panelling in this room is of that date too but it seems to have been reused and, to judge from its height, it cannot have been taken from any of the existing rooms in the Grove.

While Charles Sibley was at the Grove and Maylor Hetts at Aldwick Manor, there was a local protest against Sibley's closing of a right of way between the two properties over land farmed by a Mr. Wilson. Apparently the pathway was barred by iron railings and much local feeling was roused. So much so, that a large crowd gathered at the High Firs (Aldwick Manor) end of the path led by Mr. Pickering of the Granary, Top Street. In view of policemen, the crowd dug up the railings 'with implements which they had brought', and walked the path. The railings were replaced, coated with tar. But after more disputation, including pelting the Grove's 'private' notice with mud, it was agreed that the public could use the footpath.

On leaving the Grove, there is a choice of two routes back to the village. The driver will go on up Pipers Lane, steep banked and tree fringed, passing on the way two low labourers' cottages and then Piper's. This is an eighteenth century house, much modernised

in recent years, with a seventeenth century outbuilding. In 1790 Francis Childs and in 1791 Robert Childs lived at and owned Piper's, but from 1793 it belonged to Isaac House and was occupied by Thomas Blain. By 1829, when James Blain farmed the Grove, John House was living at Piper's although he still owned both properties. Charles Sibley died at Piper's in living memory. A wooden chute was made to get his large coffin down from the first floor; a plank was more usual where stairs were narrow and winding, but Charles Sibley we are told was a very large man, weighing twenty-four stone. A little further on Pipers Lane rejoins the Harpenden Road, just west of Down Green, and the road runs back to the village.

The walker, however, can return to the foot of Pipers Lane and take the bridle path leading along the valley for half a mile towards Nomansland, coming into Ayre's End Lane, just before Westend Farm. This farm was previously known as Bull Farm: it is probably eighteenth century with earlier parts. It may be the farm called Little Cross in the Land Tax lists; there is no other which appears to fit so well. Little Cross is associated with the Grove and 'Barnswell Wood', and was occupied by Isaac House along with the Grove in 1790 and by his executors after 1808. It is on the line of a Roman road leading to Verulamium from the Hitchin neighbourhood. From here it is a pleasant walk back over Nomansland and glorious in May when the gorse in flower is at its best. Look out for the old pudding-stone which marks the boundary between Wheathampstead and Sandridge: this common was long and bitterly disputed between the abbots of St. Albans and Westminster, and a gallows was cut down. Opposite the Wicked Lady, once the Park Hotel and, earlier still, the King William public house, is the green field of the Wheathampstead Cricket Club. The first game was played here in 1824 and it is as popular now as ever it was.

The little hamlet at Amwell is worth a visit, though all of the present houses, except the Elephant and Castle, probably date from the nineteenth century. It lies around the crossing of the Nomansland — Down Green House and Westend Farm — Brewhouse Hill roads. There was already a hamlet here in the eighteenth century. Sarah Dearmer inhabited a 'house and orchard at Amwell' in 1765 and George East bought a property there in 1801 which had been described fifty years earlier as a 'cottage in Hamwell'; there are still Easts in Wheathampstead. It has been suggested that some of the houses were weavers' cottages: John Mardall of Wheathampstead was described as a weaver in 1695; Daniel of Leasybridge Farm, probably his great-nephew, left an option on a farm at Amwell to his son in 1838. The House family, too, owned 'one messuage in Hamwell'. The earliest document which mentions the Castle, as it then was, is of 1812, and two bricks dated 1764 may well represent the date of most of that building.



## IV THE SOUTH-EAST QUARTER

The second route, over a wide area of the south-east of the parish, may be easily and comfortably covered by car. However, if one has time, it is best of all taken on foot as it covers some beautiful countryside. The houses to be seen are widely separated, but a quick look at the map will show that the route may easily be broken into shorter walks.

Leaving St. Helen's behind, one crosses Marford Road and starts off up the hill. THE SWAN is another old building, probably of the sixteenth century: a fire on 1 December 1910 burnt down a part which was probably older than any of the present building. The Swan belonged to Thomas Seare who owned the Grove and it passed with the Grove to John House. At this time the Swan had some eleven acres of land attached to it, a house, and 'a malthouse, barn, stables and maltlofts'. In 1756 the property became Sarah House's and the house was then described as 'now a malt house', which suggests that the House family were developing their malting business. The landlord of the inn in 1756 was James Messer; and the inn had two beds for travellers and stabling for horses. For many years a blacksmith's shop was attached to the Swan. John Messer, perhaps a brother or son of the landlord, was described as a blacksmith in the Militia Lists between 1759 and 1781 and a James Messer blacksmith appears between 1781 and 1786. This second James was deaf, no handicap perhaps for a blacksmith but it saved him from being called up for militia service. John House sold the Swan in 1791 to James Wilkins, brewer. It passed through various hands in the nineteenth century, at one time being known as the Swan Commercial Hotel.

Until May 1971 TOWN FARM stood on the corner opposite the Swan. Its demolition, after a preservation order had been placed on it, sparked off a national protest and led to changes in the law. For well over 100 years Town Farm was the property of the Garrards and the home of the Chennels family. It must have been one of the oldest surviving houses in the village. The roof dated from the late fifteenth century. A chimney stack had been put in early in the seventeenth century and the cross wing rebuilt or very much altered, just as in so many other local houses. There was a great timber barn which was also demolished. Amelia Chennels lived here in 1840 and ran the farm with her sons Jesse, George, Adam, William, Thomas and John, helped by John Mumford, their butcher.

The next house above Town Farm was once used as a dame school. A short distance up on the left is an attractive timbered cottage known as Dolphins, after Dolphin Smith of Mackerye End

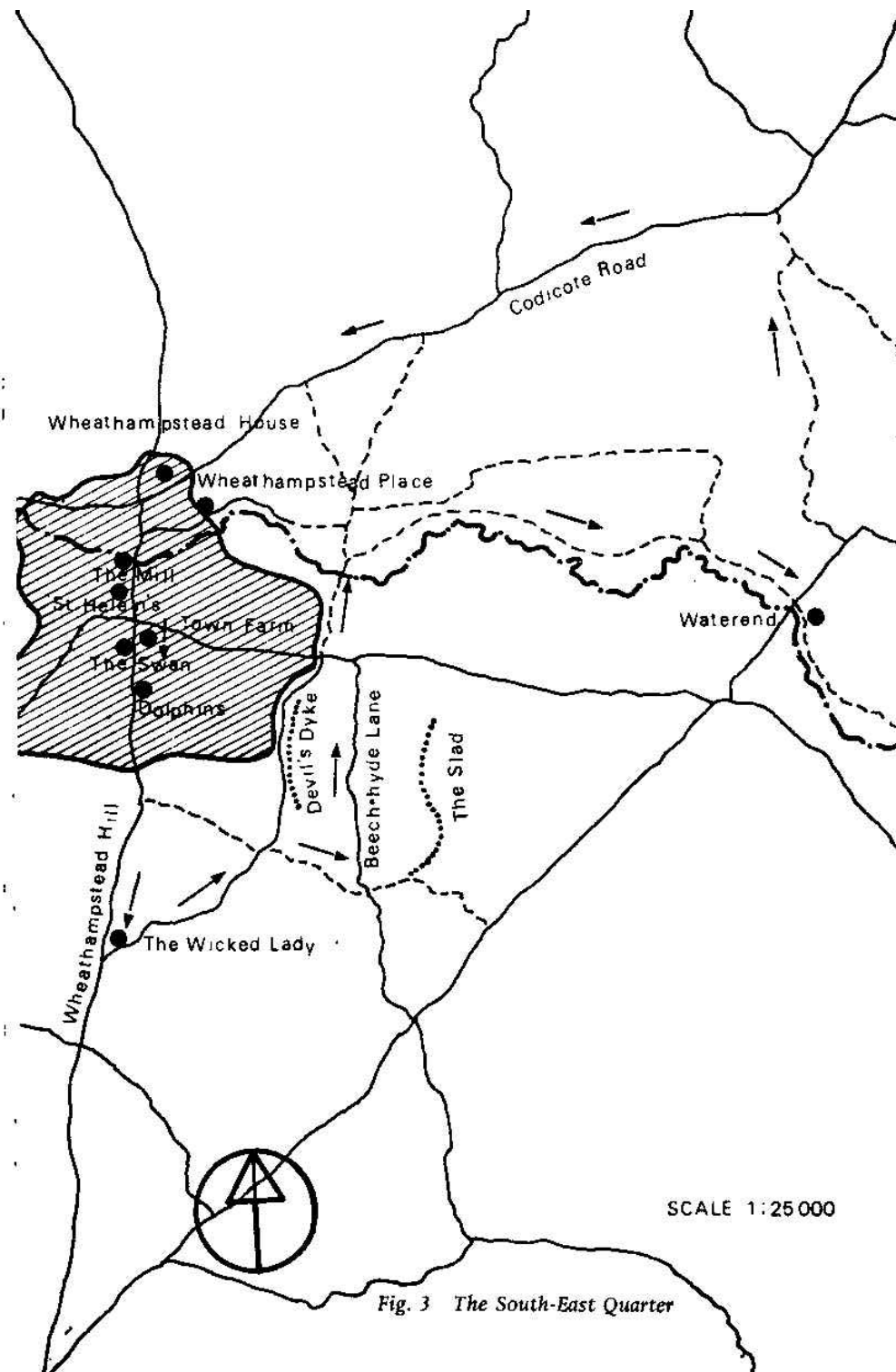


Fig. 3 The South-East Quarter



Farm who bought it from Robert Sibley in 1890. The house has at different times been one and two cottages: the first record of it, on 18 May 1676, is when John Richardson and Mary his wife were admitted to two cottages on Wheathampstead Hill, formerly one in the occupation of Solomon Grunwin. The property came into the hands of the Sibleys; in 1826 it belonged to Robert Sibley. At that time it is recorded as 'two cottages or tenements formerly one Cottage or tenement formerly in the occupation of William Read and Benjamin Welch, but then of Alfred Matthews with the gardens, woodbarn and well of water thereto belonging'. The well may still be seen in the garden.

Above Dolphins are the 'house and premises', now the Four Limes, which was owned in 1840 by James Mardall, son of Daniel Mardall of Leasybridge, and occupied by the Rev. Luke Young. Later Daniel's widow, Harriet, occupied it until her death in 1879. Its more humble neighbour, in the local patterned brick, was also occupied by a clergyman, Rev. Thomas Gilbert, and owned by Mr. Sutton. Both these homes stood back on the high bank away from the modern road. The old road, in fact, was on this bank; the present road was made as a cutting in the nineteenth century, to reduce the gradient. WHEATHAMPSTEAD HILL, known as Snow Hill, was the main route from St. Albans to the village. It was so steep that at one time it was found more convenient to route the coaches by Dyke Lane to the east.

In 1840 the National School was the only other building on the east side of the hill; it has since been demolished. Above it there were only fields, except for two little cottages near to the Wicked Lady, which have since vanished. A small group of buildings is shown, on the Tithe Map, further along on the west side of the hill. These were two little cottages and gardens; the Wesleyan Chapel, still to be seen though it is now used as a workshop, but then owned and occupied by Jacob Harrison; and finally the Red Cow beer shop, occupied by William Peacock 'and others'. This is now Centaurs; it stands close to the road, and still has the bracket for a hanging sign over the door. Above and beyond lay farm land.

At the very top of Wheathampstead Hill further development is taking place today. Here the walker takes a footpath due east, but the driver continues downhill to the Wicked Lady on Nomansland Common and turns sharply back along Dyke Lane to the left. This narrow country lane leads north-east towards the Marford Road, and shortly is overhung by the tall thin trees and undergrowth of DEVIL'S DYKE. This great ditch and bank is well worth exploring, as it formed part of the fortification of a Belgic settlement, and even after 1900 years of erosion and filling in, it is still impressive. The Belgae were our first settlers and may have made this area the 'capital' of their tribal territory. The Saxons called such earthworks

Devils' Dykes because they could not imagine that anyone but the devil or a pagan god had made them. The footpath skirts the southern side of the fortification and crosses the lane, passing on through Lower Beech-hyde Farm to Beech-hyde Lane. This area now included inside the parish boundary was previously in Sandridge. Here one turns north through fine arable land up the narrow lane which was once the route of the Roman road direct to Marford and earlier still the very heart of the Belgic settlement. To the west are the trees growing above Devil's Dyke and about equidistant to the east the Slad, which may have been the other bank of a Belgic fortification.

Turning left for a short way along Marford Road we cross over by the Lord Nelson, once the Lord Melbourne. Between the Lord Nelson and Town Farm there were no houses in Marford Road at the end of the eighteenth century, but by 1840 there was a pair of thatched cottages opposite the shop at the corner of Necton Road. They were pulled down in the 1930s. Necton Road gets its name from Necton in Norfolk, the birth place of John Ransom, who farmed the Bury Farm and built numbers 18-28 as a speculation. We turn down Sheepcote Lane to the river and the present crossing which is a few hundred yards west of the old ford. In 1840 the parish boundary ran along this lane and over the river northwards along its continuation. There were houses on the corner and in the lane in the eighteenth century. In 1840 there were six cottages, occupied by the older and younger Samuel Gray, George Gray, George and William Floyd and someone called Parrott. At the bottom of Sheepcote Lane, the Lea is crossed by a little footbridge and ford. The footpath to the east runs along a green valley where the river winds quietly through water meadows. In summer, children fish and splash in the shallow water, in autumn the trees change colour gorgeously along the hedges. Presently one comes out on a rough farm road, and ahead, among a group of trees, one sees the pinnacled gables and splendid clusters of octagonal brick chimneys belonging to Waterend House.

For those who like walking there is another, cross-country route from Nomansland to Waterend, via Upper Beech-hyde Farm and across the footpath to Coleman Green, the scene of horse racing in the early nineteenth century. These two are still in Sandridge parish, but Bunyan's Chimney is now in Wheathampstead parish. The tablet on a chimney close to the John Bunyan pub near Coleman Green records that Bunyan is reputed to have preached here. From Coleman Green it is possible to walk to Waterend either along the Roman road past Samuels Farm and Chalkdell Farm or along the old track which the parish boundary follows. This was the Sandridge/Hatfield boundary and today divides Wheathampstead from Hatfield. Waterend is easily reached by road by turning right from Dyke Lane towards

Welwyn and shortly left at the lane posted to Waterend. After crossing the ford, the driver continues on to Ayot St. Peter and so back towards Wheathampstead.

**WATEREND** Manor was part of Sandridge for centuries; only since 1931 has it become part of Wheathampstead. Like so much of the property in the parish, Waterend belonged to the Brockets and passed to the Garrards. Waterend House itself is said to have been built about the year 1610 by Sir John Jennings; little Sarah Jennings was taken from here to Holywell House in St. Albans to grow up before being sent to court at the age of ten or eleven. She married John Churchill, who became Duke of Marlborough, and adored him all her long life. Built of warm red brick, the house is formed in the shape of the letter L with stone mullioned windows and three fine groups of chimneys with moulded brick caps and bases. The front, to the west, has three steep straight gables decorated with little stone finials, of which some have been lost. Below the centre of each gable is a wide, slightly projecting, bay window on the first and ground floors. It was from Waterend that the beautiful mow barn, now Thrale's 'barn' in St. Albans, was taken in the 1930s. On the opposite side of the ford is Waterend's humble neighbour, the White Cottage, a two storeyed timber framed house, covered with white washed plaster and dating from the seventeenth century. It has an old tiled roof with sprocket eaves and a mostly modern shafted red brick chimney stack.

Leaving Waterend, the lane climbs steeply on up the hill to a solid red brick farm house built in 1906. From here a posted bridle path takes the walker through bluebell woods, over the old railway, and along the edge of sweeping fields back to the Wheathampstead road in a westerly direction. If you choose the right hand of the two footpaths, you will be following for much of the way back to the road a double hedgerow which may mark an old boundary, perhaps that of the Saxon estate of Bride Hall. This double hedgerow can be followed along much of the northern boundary of Wheathampstead parish, which it marks. Along the Wheathampstead road one comes on the left to a large rubbish dump hidden behind hedgerows. Here gravel was dug for building purposes and the pits filled in with train loads of rubbish sent out from London, both operations providing employment in the village at the end of the last century and until recently. The layers of rubbish were removed by vast earth moving machines and the gravel strata worked again during the building of M1. The rubbish was then returned and the pits levelled. Ahead are some fine woods which belonged to Lamer, and to the right a road posted to Bride Hall.

The road drops down towards the village with the route of the old railway to the left, and on the right the high walls and

magnificent gateway of **WHEATHAMPSTEAD HOUSE**, home of the Earl and Countess of Cavan early this century. In 1840 a house and garden here were owned by John Dorrington and occupied by the Rev. J. Doughton. We have not seen Wheathampstead House, but it seems probable that the building is built over the house shown on the 1840 map, and dates from the late nineteenth century. However, if that is so, it is not readily apparent. The red brick addition to the service quarters, stables and garages dates from early this century. The deeds of the present house date from a will of 1872 when it belonged to the Rev. John Olive of Wheathampstead House, who was grandfather to the tenth Earl of Cavan. Of all the old houses in the parish, it was probably the most lavishly appointed and saw a dazzling social life; now after less than fifty years, it is the quietest and most forgotten, hidden behind a screen of fine trees.

The County Record Office has plans of the house when it was sold by the Earl of Cavan in 1924. It is modestly described as 'A delightful Small Mansion substantially built of brick with Battlemented parapet and slated and tiled roof, approached by a Carriage Drive to a covered Portico'. In fact, it is a large Victorian house of grey brick, built in a period of fashionable revivals, hence the battlements, which were removed when they became unsafe after the 1939-45 war. The vestibule opened into a large double lounge hall (44ft. by 27ft. 9in.) partly panelled and fitted with two fireplaces and two radiators. The dining room was 22ft. by 32ft. 6in. and faced south, while the drawing room (43ft. by 25ft. 6in.) had a large bay window overlooking the lawn. Both are shown in photographs furnished with splendid antique furniture, carpets and portraits. Among the paintings was an original portrait of John Bunyan, connected with the parish through Bunyan's Chimney, and a rare oil painting of Venice by Samuel Prout. Also on the ground floor were a morning room, billiard room and smoking room. On the first floor there were thirteen bedrooms and four bathrooms, the principal one being fitted with a 'Mahogany encased Bath (hot and cold and shower) . . . and marble mounted Wash Basin'. There were a boudoir and winter garden, and a conservatory with steps leading down to the lawns. The service quarter was 'most conveniently shut off' and very spacious. There were kitchen, scullery 'with hot, cold and soft supplies of water', pantry, housekeeper's room, servants' hall, two servants' bedrooms and W.C. There were four maids' bedrooms on the second floor approached by a back stair.

The sale catalogue description turns to the gardens. The 'Charming Grounds are beautifully laid out with Lawns, Rose Walks, Rosery, Rock Gardens, Four Tennis and Croquet Courts and Plantations of Specimen Trees'. There were also heated glass houses: a plant house, peach house and vinery, and a cucumber house. Beside the green houses, there was stabling for ten horses, a garage for four

cars, and a groom or chauffeur's cottage, with parlour, kitchen and three bedrooms; and there was a plant to provide the house with its own supply of acetylene gas for lighting. From the house and garden a private footbridge led over the road to the kitchen garden which was 'well stocked with Excellent Fruit Trees of all descriptions'. Below the kitchen garden were four brick roughcast and tiled cottages for staff, still to be seen standing back in their pleasant sunny position above Lower Luton Road; a brick and slated laundry and a house carpenter's shop. Close by was a model farm of 21,855 acres. The little building on Lamer Road was the dairy of Wheathampstead House, known as Cavan's Dairy. What a picture of affluence in the first quarter of this century is revealed by the estate agent's descriptions!

On the corner opposite Wheathampstead House, the railway station and indeed the bridge have recently been demolished, but for over 100 years, until 1967, the railway provided a cheap and easy link with the more distant world beyond. London by rail in 1898 took only three quarters of an hour; the same journey now by public transport takes almost one and a half hours. It was easier and cheaper to shop in Luton by railway than to go to St. Albans. If you blew your horn or rang your bell as you raced up late to the station, the chances were that the driver would wait for you, particularly if you were George Bernard Shaw from Ayot or Mr. Cherry Garrard from Lamer. Turning back into the village one comes at once to the Abbot John, a thriving pub today but earlier in the century equally busy as the Railway Tavern, and beside it what may have been railway cottages. A little lower down, the new red brick building is the extension to the Wheathampstead Club, with a busy social life and membership of about 400. The Club started as a Working Men's Club and Reading Room in the large cellar of one of the cottages, now Stuarts, backing on the churchyard. Lady Cavan provided £100 for books and the first premises were given by Lord Cavan and his sister and by Canon Davys in 1902.

Only yards further down from the new Club house are the old brick walls and Tudor doorway behind which stands **WHEATHAMPSTEAD PLACE** (see Plate 2b), a timber framed house built in the form of an H and dating from the later part of the fifteenth century. Much grander than its neighbours up the High Street, it shares a similar date and some of the details of construction, perhaps even the same craftsmen worked on it. The central part was a large hall open to the crown post roof, which dates from 1470-80. The service end, on the north, is missing: we presume there was a screens passage originally. The roof of the south wing was four feet lower than now; the interior shows very clearly how the roof was raised about a hundred years later, by either Sir John or Edward Brocket, when new fireplaces were put on both floors. We know this was the parlour end, from some elaborate carving on the beam of one of

the ground floor rooms. Early in the seventeenth century, the entrance was moved to the south end of the hall and a new south-east block, of brick, was built to house the staircase and new kitchens. The floor was probably put into the hall at about the same time, and grooves in the beams show us that there was once an oriel window in the central part. Later in the seventeenth century, the outside of the house was covered with plaster to imitate ashlar; when some of this was blown off by a land mine which dropped locally in the 1939-45 war, the original timbering was revealed. The two tall octagonal chimneys became unsafe in 1964 and were removed.

Wheathampstead Place is in origin a substantial late medieval house which one would associate with a manorial estate. It follows the same fashion as other houses of the period in Hertfordshire with its two wings and walled garden or courtyard, with a central gate and a vast barn behind it; Bride Hall, and Turners Hall in Harpenden, are like this and Annables in Harpenden used to be. We believe that Wheathampstead Place must have been the manor house of Heron's, and possibly the Rectory manor house before that. Heron's was a substantial manor, but there is no evidence that an early manor house existed in the neighbourhood of Heron's Farm at Gustard wood nor of large barns there, prior to the eighteenth century. While the Brockets acquired the manor of Heron's in 1448, Wheathampstead Place is not mentioned in any early records; but the Brockets undoubtedly lived there in the sixteenth century and probably long before. Heron's manor, and if we are right the site of Wheathampstead Place, was sold to the Brockets by the Cressys of Rothamsted; they had inherited it in 1428 from William Warde who not only owned Heron's manor but was also rector of Wheathampstead. He left to his sister Emma 'all the household utensils within the Manor of Herons in the town of Whethamsted . . . in the hall chamber, kitchen, and elsewhere within the same manor' (our italics). The wording suggests that the manor house may have been in the built up area of the parish ('the town'). But much more suggestive is the fact that Wheathampstead Place, almost alone in the village, paid no tithes to the rector in 1840. This would make sense if it had once been part of the Rectory manor. Could it, possibly, have been the original site of the Rectory manor house? After Warde acquired Heron's he may have built a new and more conveniently sited rectory manor house, nearer to the church, in Old Rectory Gardens. Certainly there was a rectory here which was burnt down in the eighteenth century and replaced in 1815 by a large building behind St. Helen's. This rectory was too big and too damp for the second half of the twentieth century; it was not used after 1959. The present rectory was built even nearer St. Helen's. If we are right in our guess, then when Heron's land was disposed of after Warde's death the original rectory site (Wheathampstead Place) went with it. Thomas Brocket, who died in 1477, or his

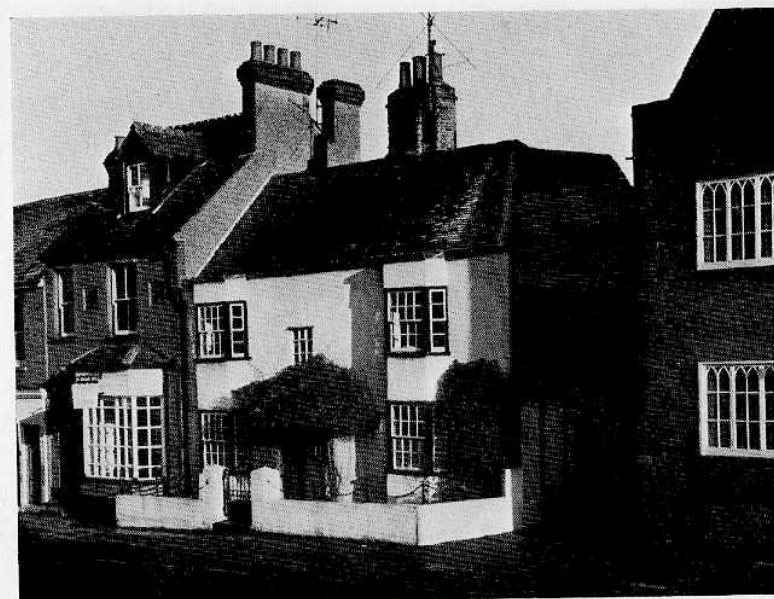


brother and heir Edward probably built a new house, the present Wheathampstead Place, on the site.

This is not the place in which to discuss historical changes in the standard of living of our incumbents, but when William Warde died in 1428 he was able to leave his relatives some fine possessions: to 'my sister Emma . . . one gown of scarlet with the best fur, and another gown of scarlet with fur to Isabel, daughter of my said sister' but Emma 'may have none of the ornaments of the chapel, to wit, the missal, the little cup, of silver and gold, vestments for the priest celebrating and also for the altar belonging to the chapel'. To his brother-in-law he gave 'a gown furred with fitch. To my sister one pair of blankets, one pair of sheets, one feather bed and one bolster . . . To John Kympton of Kympton, senior, one whole bed of great boards of red worsted embroidered with eagles, the whole concealed with three curtains and one pear (piru?) of silver gilt', and to William Whyte priest of Friday Street, London 'one vestment for a priest at divine celebration . . . of red cloth embroidered with beasts of gold'.

To return to Wheathampstead Place, after this diversion; it remained in the hands of the Brockets at least until 1670. We lose sight of its history for some seventy years but we know that Matthew Lamb, grandfather of Lord Melbourne, Queen Victoria's first prime minister, bought Bocket Hall soon after 1746. Probably he bought Wheathampstead Place at the same time because he paid land tax of £2.15s. in 1753 for property in Wheathampstead occupied by Edward Glenester. In the tax list of 1780 it belonged to Lord Melbourne as it still did in 1829. It was occupied from 1780-1784 by Francis Dean and for the next twenty years by John Gray and then by Daniel Mardall, all well-known village names. In 1848 ownership of the property passed to Viscountess Palmerston, sister of the prime minister, and she continued the lease then held by Charles Higby Lattimore who occupied it at least until 1886. The Palmerston heirs finally sold Wheathampstead Place to Sir William Beach Thomas in 1923. Sir William, author of many books on the countryside, opened his charming study of *Hertfordshire*, published in 1950, with walks in Wheathampstead. In 1932 he sold Wheathampstead Place to the firm that became Murphy Chemical Co. Ltd.

Almost opposite Wheathampstead Place is Mr. Hall's baker's shop, low and white fronted with three steep gables and a tiled roof (see Plate 3a). The rear part of the shop is the oldest; it is very small in size and has a steeply pitched roof. Probably it was originally a little late medieval hall house, open to the roof. A cross wing was added in the sixteenth century to give more living room, and the three gabled front sections at some time in the seventeenth century. Basket work pargetting can be seen in the plaster work. The *Victoria County History* describes 'the older cottages and houses (with) two forms of ornamentation, the zig-zag



WHITE COTTAGE  
Plate 1a



CROSS FARM  
Plate 1b





THE GROVE  
*Plate 2a*



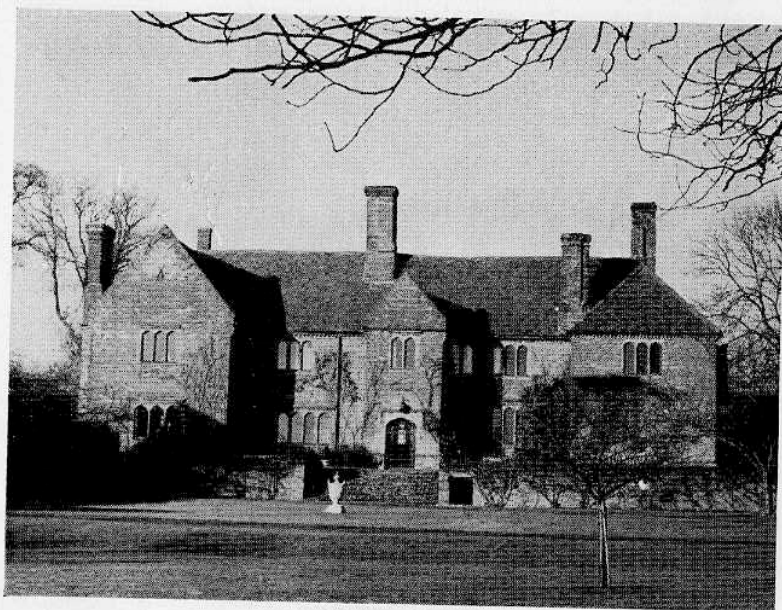
THE BAKER'S SHOP  
*Plate 3a*



WHEATHAMPSTEAD PLACE  
*Plate 2b*



MACKERYE END  
*Plate 3b*



BRIDE HALL  
Plate 4a



LAMER  
Plate 4b

and basketwork patterns' (Vol. 2, p. 295). This was in or before 1908 and little pargetting is now left. The modern shops here have replaced the Red Lion and some old cottages which stood in front of it. A cluster of the older houses in the village were grouped near the mill as was another cluster round the church (see p. 8).

Ahead in the middle of the road is WHEATHAMPSTEAD MILL which is still in use but no longer using the power of the Lea as it flows below; a glimpse through the open doors or windows reveals the massive timbers of which it is built. Almost certainly this was the site of one of the Wheathampstead mills mentioned in Domesday Book in 1086, but the oldest part of the present mill, in the centre of the building, dates from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. It has straight braces and there are a number of massive old timbers which have been reused. There were three bays to the building in 1600; the wheel was towards the southern end. The cover to the last, an iron one, remains. The earliest widening was four feet towards the east; later it was widened again to the west, where the old weather-boarding remains in place. Additional length was added, and the whole was eventually bricked in this century. The Mill was Westminster Abbey property and there are many references to it in their surveys, and to the amounts of sweet wheat to be sent by the miller four times a year to Westminster Abbey. Although Wheathampstead no longer has a water-operated mill, it still has the swans traditionally associated with it. They may often be seen on the stream behind it, sometimes accompanied by a family of little grey cygnets, to the delight of the children of the village.

One of the most difficult constructions to trace the records of is the bridge beside the Mill which has replaced two fords: one ford was outside the Mill, the other in the Bull yard. About 1729 there is an account of the bridges in the parish, from which it is clear that this was called Tanners Gutter Bridge. Tanners Gutter was the old name for a supplementary mill-race which left the Lea just by the railway line, carrying surplus water through a slaughter house to the butcher's yard and down to the river again by the footbridge. There is an early sketch showing this bridge clearly. The *Parish Record* for 28 March 1867 states that: 'Some few years since the Bridge over the high road in front of the Mill was entirely rebuilt at the expense of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. The Lessees (of the Mill) did contribute one half of the expense of the arches across the road carrying off the waste water'. The arches were, probably, those under the road carrying the water to the other side. A former mill tenant, Mr. Bruton, had built and kept in repair the bridge and wall at the back of the Mill. The main bridge was damaged by a flood on 2 August 1879 and this led to a dispute, reported in the *Hertfordshire Advertiser*, between the Parish Vestry,

the local Highways Board, and the miller as to who was responsible for repairs. In the end the Vestry accepted liability. In July 1895 the Vestry's successor, the new Parish Council proposed that the 'Mill Bridge be widened' and asked for tenders. W. J. Owen, carpenter and undertaker, of Owen's Corner, Gustardwood won the contract. He quoted £135 plus £24.16s. 6d. for 'extra work' and £24 for 'Stones used on the Road improvement'. The County authority was approached for help, but the amount of their contribution was to be tactfully left to their 'kind and generous consideration'. This produced £50 and in July permission was passed for a new highway rate of 9d in the £ to be levied. In due course the County was also persuaded to take over the maintenance of the footbridge at the back of the Mill, which is still much used. Crossing the bridge takes us back to the High Street where we began.

## V

### THE NORTH-WEST QUARTER

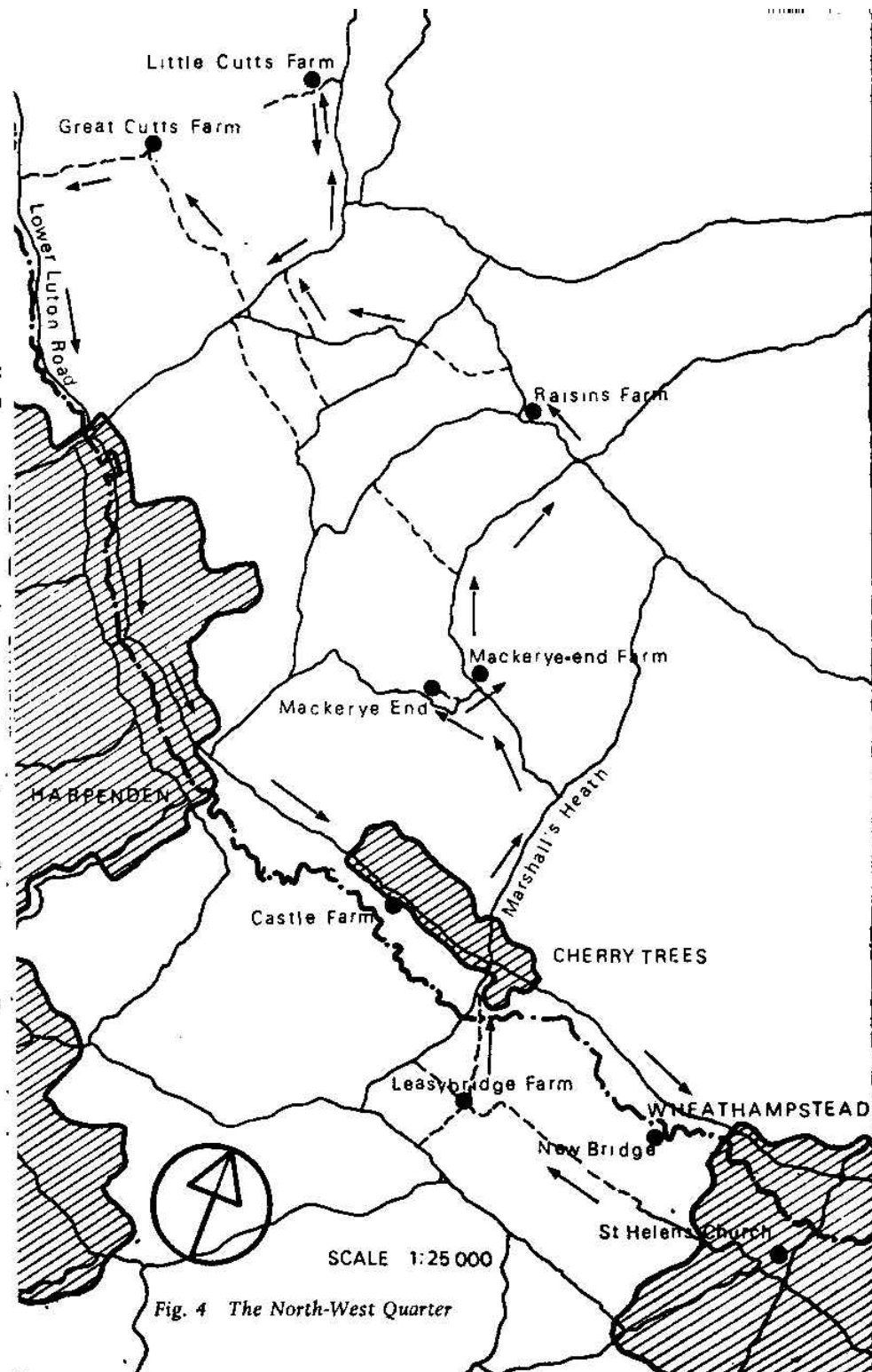
To reach Mackerye End by car drive along the Lower Luton Road as far as the Cherry Trees and turn right. But a more interesting route on foot begins with a path behind the old church school. Strike up the slope of the hill, along the edge of fine fields abounding in corn and larksong. After a good half mile, the footpath runs through the yard of LEASYBRIDGE FARM. Do not be misled by the nineteenth century brickwork; the ancient four stack chimney of narrow brick astride the centre of the building gives a better clue to its age. The farm is basically a timber-framed house dating from the early seventeenth century. It is of the familiar axial-stack type, the chimney stack rising from an original octagonal plinth. The house became L-shaped when a wing was added later in the seventeenth century; it was further extended in the nineteenth century.

In 1840 the farm belonged to James Mardall, but one of the most interesting characters connected with it was his father Daniel Mardall. Daniel was born in Wheathampstead in 1756 and he appears to have been working as a wheelwright in 1777; between 1799 and 1805 he was registered, as the law required, as gamekeeper to Charles Drake Garrard and to the rector; this meant he was in charge of the game on these estates. He must have been a man of both energy and ability, not content to stay at home in the village: although he owned Leasybridge Farm he left it to the care of his son James, and worked as Steward to the Cecils from 1791-1838. There is a small painting of him at Hatfield House; the inscription on the back reads 'Mr. Danl. Mardall. Many years Steward to the Marquis of Salisbury, died June 1838 aged more than 80 years'.

Coming out a few yards further on, one is in Leasybridge Lane with trees meeting overhead and wild flowers climbing the banks. This is a very old route: as early as 1677 Quarter Sessions ordered the inhabitants of Wheathampstead to repair Leasybridge. The hamlet at the Cherry Trees, called 'Travellers Rest' on some maps, dates in part from the last century. There was, already in 1840, a Cherry Tree Field and Cherry Tree Mead on either side of the road and cottages and gardens in the north-west angle of the cross-roads. Beyond the cross-roads the quiet green strip of common land known as Marshall's Heath climbs gently uphill; this is a nature reserve. A road on the left is posted to Mackerye End and one continues along it beside Marshall's Heath Wood. Presently the wood drops behind and the white walls and tiled roof of Mackerye End Farm can be seen, ahead to the right, behind a perfect holly hedge.

MACKERYE END FARM sits squarely facing south-east over its lawn and garden, with vast farm buildings on the west and north sides of the house. But this part of the house, which one first sees,





was built in the late nineteenth century and hides the old timber framed house which faces, in fact, north-west with its gable end-on to the lane. The old Mackerye End Farm, beloved of Charles and Mary Lamb, dates from the seventeenth century. The plan is traditional in style, though large, with three ground floor rooms: service end, hall and parlour. The entrance, giving access to the hall and parlour, was through a small lobby immediately in front of a large axial chimney which served fireplaces in the hall, parlour and two of the bedrooms. The newel stairs were originally on the opposite side of the main chimney but have since been moved. The timbers are large and fine but surprisingly of a soft imported wood, showing that the house was built at a much later date than might have been expected. A kitchen was added soon after the main house was built, at the service end; and this had its own entry and a chimney on the end wall. The house has casement windows and is of two storeys throughout, with rooms in the hipped roof which are lit by dormer windows of later date. There are still two fireplaces and a door on the first floor, dating from about 1700. The whole of the outside of this older part was later brick faced and then covered in patterned plaster; a ground floor bay window was added to the hall. Finally the new block was added in the nineteenth century, with an entrance hall and two main rooms; this has in effect turned the house round.

The farm was conveyed to Samuel Garrard at the same time as Mackerye End in 1681; they both remained part of the Lamer estate right up to 1919 when they were bought by a Mr. Darnton. Later the farm was sold to Dolphin Smith and eventually to Queen's College, Oxford. Charles and Mary Lamb first visited Mackerye End Farm about 1779-80: 'the house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman. His name was Gladman', as Charles tells us. Charles and Mary Lamb indulged in 'fused identities and freakish mystifications' when bringing their relatives into their writings; so we can only take their statements as clues. In 1747 Thomas Garrard let Mackerye End Farm to James Gladman for twenty-one years; it was then 'known by the name of Popes House otherwise Grange Farm'; why we do not know. Gladman was made responsible for repairing fences, hedges, ditches, the farmhouse and outhouses, 'Casualties by accidental Fire or Wind unless to Tying and Thatch only excepted'. In return, Garrard allowed Gladman rough timber, lime and tile, for repairs. The rights over the timber Garrard kept for himself 'except the Fruit Trees for the fruit only and Pollard Trees for their Lopps and Topps'. Gladman was to have 'the use of the Farmyard belonging (to Mackerye End house) to lay and spend Straw and Stover and keep his Poultry and Cattle therein in the same manner as Edward Glenister now enjoys . . . with free passage (to and) from same'. Edward Glenister was the previous tenant and we believe moved to Wheathampstead Place. Thomas Garrard kept for himself the right 'to lay Dung and such like matters and things and to have the



Running of two Horses and four Hogs and such Poultry as (he) shall think fitt and also use of the Pond', as well as the right of access for himself and his employees 'to view and see the reparation'.

In the year that James Gladman took over the lease of the farm he married Ann Bruton in King's Walden church. Her sister, Mary, had married Edward Field, gardener, in Hitchin in 1736. Edward and Mary were the Lambs' grandparents. By the time Charles and Mary came to Mackerye End Farm James Gladman may have been dead and his son, Edward, at the farm. James paid the rent in 1767-8 and Edward in 1783; we do not know when the change over took place. Mary Lamb describes the farm, as she remembered it in 1779-80, in *Mrs. Leicester's School*: 'Grandmamma was very glad to see me'; 'Grandmamma' was her great-aunt, Ann Gladman who may well have been a widow since she was in fact housekeeper to Thomas Hawkins of Mackerye End house at this time. 'My sister Sarah shewed me all the beautiful places about grandmamma's house. She first took me into the farmyard, and I peeped into the barn: there I saw a man threshing, and as he beat the corn with his flail he made such a dreadful noise that I was frightened and ran away: my sister persuaded me to return; she said Will Tasker was very good natured . . . I could not reconcile myself to the sound of the flail, or the sight of his black beard'. In one of the Militia Lists William, tasker or piecemaker to Mr. Gladman, is recorded. Mary Lamb continues: 'When the currants and gooseberries were quite ripe, grandmamma had a sheep-shearing . . . I can assure you there was no want at all of either beef or plum-pudding at the sheep shearing. My sister and I were permitted to sit up till it was almost dark, to see the company at supper. They sate at a long oak table, which was finely carved, and as bright as a looking glass . . . We sate up late; but at last grandmamma sent us to bed: yet though we went to bed we heard many charming songs sung: to be sure we could not distinguish the words which was a pity, but the sound of their voices was very loud and very fine indeed.'

'The common supper that we had every night was very cheerful. Just before the men came out of the field, a large faggot was flung on the fire; . . . old Spot, the shepherd . . . used to take his place in the chimney corner. It was a seat within the fire-place, quite under the chimney, and over his head the bacon hung. When old Spot was seated, the milk was hung in a skillet over the fire, and then the men used to come and sit down at the long white table'. There is much more of this wonderful, homely picture of the farm and its life in the eighteenth century which you can read in R. L. Hine's *Charles Lamb and his Hertfordshire*, since Mary Lamb's book is almost unobtainable. 'Spot', we cannot find in the Militia Lists.

A few yards further along the lane takes one to MACKERYE END itself (see Plate 3b). A yew trimmed walk leads up to this fine old red brick house set among trees. The earliest record we have

of the property comes in 1307, when William Makary held the Manor of Mackerys or Makeriesend in Wheathampstead, and a year later Sibyl Makary owed suit at the Abbot of Westminster's Court. Whether the Makarys gave their name to their home or the estate gave its name to them we do not know. The derivation of Mackerye has not yet been satisfactorily explained. The last male Makary owner died in the fifteenth century and his sister and her husband, Hugh Bostock inherited Mackerye End. They were the parents of John Bostock or John of Wheathampstead, one of the most illustrious of St. Albans' abbots, as a beautiful little brass on the floor of the north transept of St. Helen's reminds us:

'Here lie the father, the mother and the sister here also the brother of the shepherd of the flocks of the first martyr of the English (i.e. St. Alban).

'The name of the father was Hugo Bostock and of the mother Margaret Macry.

'The son drew the same name from the father.

'I ask you who pass by, whether you be woman, man or child, let them lie together and pray that they may rest in peace.'

A John Makary of Wheathampstead, perhaps John Bostock's maternal uncle, was Prior of Tynemouth, a daughter house of St. Albans Abbey. John Bostock's sister married a Heyworth and William Heyworth, who preceded John as Abbot of St. Albans, may have been a relative. When this William became Bishop of Lichfield in 1420, John became Abbot. He continued in office until 1440 and returned, after a retirement, in 1452 until his death in 1465. Fuller describes him as 'famous for his learning and pleasant disposition and goodly life'.

As a Benedictine monk John could not hold Mackerye End, and so on his mother's death in 1435 it remained in the hands of trustees until he died. It then passed to his nephew, John Heyworth and in turn to his son John and his wife Joan. As their memorial in the church tells us John and Joan 'had 3 children buried in their Infancie where fore they booth did adopte Margaret Hoo their Soule heire: Her first husband Ierram Reynolde by whom she had no issue: Her second husband was Nicholas Brockett Esq.'. Shortly before his death on Christmas Day 1558, John Heyworth settled his lands on Margaret. No doubt her marriage to Nicholas Brocket was a good arrangement for both: Margaret was already a widow and heiress, he was the third son of one of the most prosperous families in Wheathampstead, and it brought Mackerye End into the Brocket family. John, Margaret's son by Nicholas, and his son John Brocket inherited the manor after them. Margaret must have been a lady of energy and enthusiasm too. She married a third time after Nicholas died, this time to Edmund Bardolph of Rothamsted.

John Brocket conveyed the house to Thomas Levett in 1628, and there were several owners in quick succession. Sometime about

1640 Jonas Bailey brought his young wife Alice to Mackerye End. A daughter Mary was baptised at St. Helen's in 1640; then Alice died, probably in childbirth. Her husband's tribute to her may be read, carved on her stone in the church. In 1656 Thomas Heath held Mackerye End and from about 1662 Thomas Hunsdon and his family. The family appears to have come from near Hitchin; Thomas apparently moved to Mackerye End together with his parents because his father, John Hunsdon, was buried from there in 1676. There are glimpses of them in the county records. Both father and son were at one time or another 'Treasurer for maimed soldiers'. In 1668 Thomas was appointed chief constable for Dacorum Hundred, an honour or a burden which seems to have come pretty frequently to Wheathampstead's better off inhabitants. When Thomas made his will in 1693 he had left Mackerye End and was living at Preston near Hitchin; but his love for Wheathampstead is shown in his desire to be buried there, and his gift of 'five pounds to be disposed of among the poor'. Mackerye End had come into the possession of Richard Emerton who sold it to his brother-in-law, Samuel Garrard, in 1681.

The earliest part of Mackerye End as it stands today was probably built about 1600 by John Brocket, though a number of older timbers appear to have been reused in this building. The house was timber framed with a tiled roof, and at that date faced south-west with the service end to the west. Since then most traces of timber have been concealed by brickwork, and they are more easily seen at the rear of the present house. The local pattern is evident in the arrangement of barns and stables on either side of the farmyard in front of the house, and in this case a duck pond as well.

It was Thomas Hunsdon who changed this into the most beautiful and best loved house in Wheathampstead, perhaps indeed in Hertfordshire, with the date 1665 on one of its curved front gables. Earlier authorities believed that the 1665 building was constructed over an earlier Elizabethan one, but we did not find evidence to support this. The fine timber, the brickwork and the plans are consistent with the date 1665; and it is not unusual to find the older decorative style of chimney which Mackerye End contains still being used at this time. The house is built in dark two inch red brick and has an old tile roof with two hipped dormers and two Dutch gables: these have been repaired at some time with a brick of a slightly different colour. The body of the house runs nearly north and south, with a wing projecting at each end towards the east. There is a central open porch with a rusticated archway and Roman Doric pilasters and a pediment, and a white cupola sits astride the centre of the roof ridge. The back of the house has a simple catslide roof.

One wonders whether it was the Hunsdons who, having built for themselves a beautiful new mansion, decided to build Mackerye

End Farm a little further away. This would have freed the old part of their own house for more spacious kitchens. When we look at the interior we find just such an arrangement. A very full inventory made in 1734 lists two kitchens, a butler's room, a hall, a best parlour and a common parlour. We assume that the kitchens and service quarters were at the west end in the older building. The hall adjoining them was to the left of the entrance hall in the centre; and the best parlour to the right, with the common parlour at the eastern end.

The new Hunsdon mansion must certainly have aroused comment among the cheerful, bustling Garrard family at Lamer nearby. One of them was Rachel, who was eight at the time, and one of Sir John Garrard's twenty-three children. She was later to become the mistress at Mackerye End. Rachel was born in November 1657. She probably married Richard Emerton around 1680, and their only child Jane was born in 1683. It is more than likely that the fine staircase was put in as a present to Rachel. Although he sold the house Richard and Rachel lived there until Rachel's death in 1713. In 1734 Sir Samuel Garrard decided to let the house for a while, and this has left us a complete inventory which gives us a perfect picture of the house at that time. The inventory takes us through the whole house and every dimity curtain, brass pot or tea kettle, candlestick or snuffer is listed; as well as less familiar objects like a 'lye leash and form', a 'jet and stale', and 'Turkey moor' chairs. It is fascinating, but we can only quote the description of one room:

'Best Parlour: the Room wainscotted all over: three pairs of crimson damask window curtains, valances and three rods, ten walnut tree chairs seated with the same as the curtains; two mahogany card tables, one mahogany other table, a large sconce glass with a gilt frame and two arms to it, three pairs of window shutters and bars, a brass lock and key, a little tea table, a marble chimney piece and slab, a new fire hearth, an iron back, a grate for burning wood with two dogs, fire shovel and tongs, three flower pots, a wooden lock and key with bar and bolt going into the garden, and a latch to the little door, a pair of bellows, a hand fire screen'.

Two items not listed, because not removable, are the two fine ceilings to the parlours which had been made about 1720: one with the pelican in her piety, the other with masks of old men in the Greek manner.

Somewhere about 1756 two new tenants arrived. Thomas Garrard was a younger brother of Sir Samuel: for many years he had been recorder of St. Albans, and a magistrate 'for discharging the duties of which several Employments scarce anyone was better qualified. None could act more uprightly. He had a most benevolent Mind and was so obliging, humane and charitable as justly to meet Esteem and Respect.' His wife enjoyed an 'Uncommon degree of

Modesty and an humble opinion of herself' which 'added Lustre to her other Virtues'. So read their memorials in St. Helen's, of 1758 and 1765. Richard and Rachel Emerton's grandson, Thomas Hawkins, was at Mackerye End when Lamb first visited the Farm. One of the most beautifully simple of the memorials in St. Helen's reads 'In memory of Thomas Hawkins of Mackerye End in this Parish Gent. who died January 26th 1804. Aged 83 years'.

If old age is any sign of contentment, then the three ladies who took over Mackerye End soon after Thomas' death, must have been very happy indeed: and certainly there is a great deal of serenity about the house and garden. 'Mrs. Jane Sibley Many years a worthy and respected inhabitant of Mackerye End . . . died December 21st A.D. 1826 in the 88th year of her age'. Sophia, her sister died in 1844 aged ninety-five years, and over six years later their youngest sister, Martha, also aged ninety-five. The memorial to them is close by that of Thomas Hawkins. Although the house and farm remained part of the Lamer estate, a succession of occupiers passed through over the next fifty years: the Merediths in 1855 and the Howard family in the 1880s. Mrs. Howard held Sunday School there each Sunday, and any child who did not miss one attendance in a month might stay to tea and was presented with printed texts. Following the Galpins and Mattheys were the Dymoke Greens, who planted the yew hedges which run at right angles to the drive. Finally, Mr. Darnton bought it from the Garrards in 1919 ending its 238 years as part of the Lamer estate. In 1945 Sir Arthur Cory-Wright, Bart. bought the house which had been much neglected before the Second World War, and from 1951 Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Cory-Wright have owned it. They have restored the gardens and repaired the house with love and care. Among other things they have replaced the missing one of the two tulip trees which were planted at either side of the front of the house in the seventeenth century. One was struck by lightning about 1700; the other has grown to be one of the most magnificent specimens in the country.

The area around Mackerye End is the hub of a maze of footpaths leading to all parts of the parish and commanding fine views in all directions. Hollybush Cottages, another sixteenth to seventeenth century building, is up a lane running north-east past the farm. But we take the road to the north-west. It is overhung by magnificent trees and fringed in spring with cow-parsley and bluebells. Watch out for a footpath, signed to the right, and a copse of trees. Hidden behind them is Turnershall Farm. This is a flint covered, four roomed eighteenth century house of two storeys. It has, however, been extended at some time. In the eighteenth century the Downs family probably lived here and, between 1851 and the late 1880s, the Blains. Thomas Blain farmed 186 acres and employed eight labourers in 1851. By 1926 the farmers were W. and T. Burton. Shortly after leaving Turnershall one reaches a country crossroad by a white

cottage; turn left here, up a winding lane past a lofty oak, to find the tiled roof and timbered walls of Raisins.

RAISINS is a small sixteenth century hall house to which later additions have been made. The timbers in the earliest part are not very sturdy and they suggest that it was the home of a poor family, put up a long way out of the village, perhaps on waste land. The timber frame was raised into position by props, and it is still possible to see the notches in the woodwork in the front into which the props were fitted. The service end and open hall survive; the service rooms are to the left of the front door. They were roughly constructed and open to the roof. The hall occupied the space now taken up by the centre room, and had a large chimney stack built either at the same time or shortly after. Some time after 1600, the parlour was added and upper floors were put in. The timber used here is of better quality and suggests that the family had now increased in prosperity.

The earliest record we have of Raisins is of 1601, when a Thomas Neale of Raisins died. In 1607 Raisins is associated with an Edward Reason who married his wife Alice at Minsden Chapel, near Hitchin, where their son was baptised. The name may go back to very early times. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Raisins was occupied by the Lawrence family. Mr. Valentine Lawrence paid tax on five hearths in 1663 and ten years later the same amount was paid by Mr. William Lawrence; in 1685 'Mr. William Lorange of Reasons' died. Jonathan Lawrence was owner occupier in 1753 and paid £1 Land Tax. Valentine Lawrence, incidentally, had been Chief Constable both of Broadwater and of Dacorum Hundreds, at different times William Bruton, who appears in the Militia Lists between 1759 and 1772 described as a farmer, was in 1765 described, more specifically, as of Raisins. In 1762 Quarter Sessions made out a maintenance order against William Bruton, yeoman, and Martha Edwards, single woman, in respect of their illegitimate son, David. Ten years later the Militia List credits William with seven children. Bruton was a tenant of the Garrards and paid £32 p.a. rent in 1767-8. Two other Brutons leased Tallents Farm in Kimpton, three-quarters of a mile north of Raisins, at the same time. Ann Gladman and Mary Field, the Lambs' grandmother, were Brutons and about 1819 Charles wrote of Farmer Bruton's wife as 'a glorious woman', the 'image of welcome'. So perhaps Charles came to Raisins too, visiting William's son or grandson.

Three fine elms were planted to provide roosting cover for pheasants and at some date the house was divided into two cottages, each having a well outside the back door and a large inglenook fireplace. It was not until it was separated from Lamer, that the property became one house again. Between about 1890 and 1912 Mrs. Harriet Davis, a farmer, held Raisins, and thereafter it changed hands several times before reaching the present owner, Mrs. Howard,



in 1948. At Raisins one may well be struck by the size of the parish; the farm is four miles or more from Wheathampstead village.

Even further off, the outlying farms of Bower Heath, the Dane and Great and Little Cutts must have been almost completely isolated from the daily life of the village. We realised this when we talked to the family living at Little Cutts today, with all the advantages of modern transport. 'We don't really know Wheathampstead', they said, 'though of course we have been through it'. Probably a century or more ago the families there rarely troubled to make the journey. LITTLE CUTTS and GREAT CUTTS are on the western edge of the parish in real countryside. To find them you must ask your way from Sauncey Wood Lane, or take a good map. In the eighteenth century both farms belonged to the Cook family. Little Cutts was unique among the houses we visited in having retained its original plan from the seventeenth century. A little timber framed house of two storeys, it has an axial chimney stack with a small lobby in front of it. This opens on the left to a living room, with a heavily stopped beam, and on the right to a kitchen, with a wide inglenook fireplace. The kitchen has a little lean-to extension; the living room a second unheated room beyond it. The staircase remains in its original position, climbing up behind the very wide chimney from the living room to the bedrooms above. The road from Peters Green to Harpenden passed just outside the farm only ten years or so ago; and the farm was used as a beerhouse within living memory. Now, however, the road has been moved away, and the farm stands more quiet than ever.

From this point one can take the footpath or lane back to the Lower Luton Road at Coldharbour and then turn right for Mayfield Cottages, or one can continue up the edge of the field along the footpath that follows the route of the old road. Once over the brow of the hill, Great Cutts Farm is reached; by road it can be reached from Mayfield Cottages or from Bower Heath. The present farmhouse of Great Cutts is a modern house sheltered behind a group of trees. The old farmhouse is just past the barns and outbuildings, and now used as pigsties. This is a long building, originally similar in plan to Little Cutts, though larger. It has twice been extended in a northerly direction, and again at the back of the house where the roof has been brought down to cover it. In the course of time four new chimneys were added. The whole was bricked in during the nineteenth century, and this, probably, concealed original timbering and obscured any changes that have been made, such as in the position of the door. The lane beyond the farm runs straight down to Hyde Mill, which is still used as a working watermill by the grandson of the first Mr. Cole to own it. Turn south-east at the mill, along the Lower Luton Road, for Wheathampstead. Just after Batford Mill there is a thatched cottage at right angles to the road and facing this mill. The cottage once formed three dwellings, each housing a large family. It was officially listed as a building of architectural importance, but within

the last twenty-five years it has been completely demolished and rebuilt to a new plan, using the original timbers and bricks. It is curious that it is still officially listed!

Over a short rise one sees the farm buildings and doll's house shape of CASTLE FARM. Castle Farm was probably built about 1620, and is a substantial example of a two room house with a central chimney, of the early seventeenth century. It is, however, not typical of its period as Little Cutts is. The features that make it unusual are its central chimney stack—usually the stack is off centre—; its depth from front to back—22 feet—; and its third storey, which is made possible by the depth and its high gables. These features, together with its substantial timber construction, suggest that it was the house of a wealthy farmer. The two room house plan, with a kitchen heated from one side of the central stack and a parlour on the other, was at this time restricted to the better off. The present kitchen and laundry on the south side are later additions; the windows have been altered to give a symmetrical façade, and the timbers visible on the outside are sham. We know that John Brocket went to live at Castle Farm after he had sold Mackerye End in 1628; if he had had it built for himself this would explain the unusual quality of the house. Inside, on the mantel piece in one of the bedrooms, is scratched what looks like J. Becket. Possibly this was the work of Jeremy Becket who was buried from the farm about 1690. Two Bartholomew Humphreys, in succession, farmed here between 1753 and 1783. The name, Castle Farm, is a modern corruption of the medieval name Creswell, a spring that fed water cress beds; and some old cress beds can be seen between the farm and a mound to the west. These cress beds were in use at least until the 1939-45 war. The Cherry-Garrards, incidentally, used to have cray fishing parties in the river by the farm.

Leaving Castle Farm, one is on the main road back to Wheathampstead. Until recent years, it was a small lane above the river. On the left hand side a handsome red brick house with white pillars dates from 1870 and is called Lea House. It was built on the site of cottages, the foundations of which can still be traced in the front lawn. Close by, Crown Cottage and Rose Cottage were until recently the Rose and Crown pub, from the same century. Probably it cared for the needs of the Irish railway workers who lived in the tiny cottages of Folly Fields. In a workshop, behind what was recently the general store, was Osborne's hat factory; the hats were wheeled to the station twice daily and sent by train to Luton. In spite of the carriage and horses at Lea House, the railway age was beginning to leave its mark on the village.

Standing apart, and of the previous century, is the little timber framed cottage known as the Royal Oak, with a long catslide roof reaching almost to the ground behind. Like other cottages in the village, it started as one dwelling; in harder times it was divided into

two homes. Like so many others, it served as one of the thirty or so public houses which existed in the village in the last century and so remained until about 1954. It was then turned back into one house. Just before New Bridge The Fisheries stands back in the trees. The house was let for the fishing to many famous people; Sarah Bernhardt visited it and Lord Northcliffe rented it.

Carry on a little further east, until a footpath cuts off on the right. This crosses the river almost at once, at New Bridge, one of the oldest bridges we have records of in the village! In 1842 'Mr. Lattamore', the Stone Warden, paid 17s.6d. to G. Arnold for 'Putting up railing An post at New Bridg' and in 1856 G. Brown was paid 4s.6d. for a day and a half's work on the bridge. From here the path passes the Bury Farm Cottages, crosses the Rectory meadow and arrives back at St. Helen's. By the swing gate near the present rectory, there used to be a path which ran down to the 'old Rectory' gardens, known as the fernery because so many unusual ferns were grown there.

## VI THE NORTH-EAST QUARTER

The motorist, starting from the Mill, reaches **BRIDE HALL** by turning right along the Codicote Road until a lane signposted to Ayot St. Lawrence is reached. Turning left up this lane, the low red roof and chimneys of Bride Hall (see Plate 4a) are soon seen. The walker can follow the practice of medieval parishioners, who at Rogationtide walked in an easterly direction to the parish boundary to begin the beating of the bounds. Follow the river through the fields to Marford, either along the north bank through Murphy's or along the south bank from East Lane. The meadows through which one passes were thrown open for common grazing at Lammastide, until early in this century. At Marford the old parish boundary is followed along the lane to the north; medieval parishioners would have turned the other way, in a clockwise direction. A footpath fork to the left leads to the Codicote Road and one crosses the road onto another footpath signed to Lamer Home Farm. Just beyond the farm a path runs to the right through quiet woods and along the edge of a field, all the property for centuries of the Garrard family. The path comes out on the lane to Bride Hall.

Bride Hall was in Sandridge parish until the twentieth century. A pious Saxon matron gave 'Bridela' to St. Albans Abbey; there is a tiny portrait of her in a British Museum manuscript looking appropriately solemn. The orchard of Bridela was also mentioned, and there is still an orchard immediately north of the house. John and Richard Lawdy acquired Bride Hall and Lamer Manor in 1499. John Lawdy died in September 1507 and was buried in the chapel of St. Nicholas in St. Helen's. We are not sure which that was but it was probably in the north transept. In his will John Lawdy left his manor and lands to his wife Elizabeth for life, together with six silver spoons, forty sheep, two cows and all his household utensils. He left a violet cloak to his chaplain, and sums of money to his servants. The use of one cottage, occupied by Thomas Ivory, was left for life to Thomas Grunwin. We find mention of the Grunwins over centuries in the village records, and we still have members of the Ivory family in the parish.

Bride Hall had the same owners as Lamer until 1928 when Apsley Cherry-Garrard sold it to Mr. G. Lenanton. Lady Lenanton, his widow and a doyen of Hertfordshire historians, still lives there. In a survey of his possessions made for Sir John Garrard in June 1617 by 'Aaron Rathborness', Bride Hall 'mansion house' is described as having 'divers courts and yards, a garden and an orchard', together covering three and a quarter acres. Presumably the mansion house was new, and probably built by Sir John Garrard for its previous owners had been very much in debt.

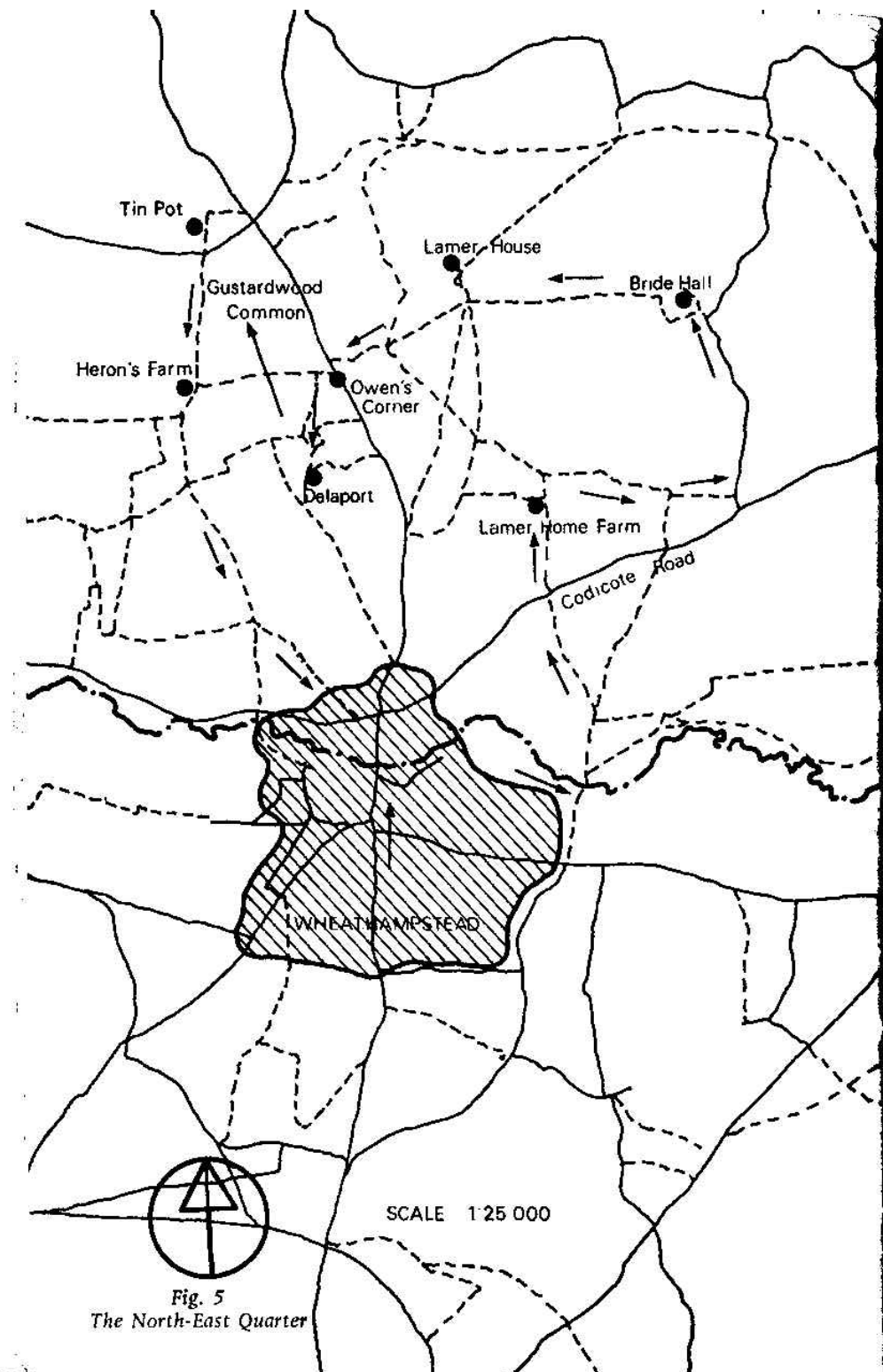


Fig. 5  
The North-East Quarter

The architect had a fine eye for siting, as you will see if you stand on the footpath below the Hall and look back over the great sweep of countryside to the south. Looking at Bride Hall today one sees a fine H shaped house in old red brick of a similar date to the earlier part of Mackerye End. The whole building has been reroofed later when a cornice was added, and tumbled brickwork may be seen on the gables. There are a number of original windows, all of them at different levels. There is one window on the staircase which has original diamond panes, and a few of the panes are of original glass. There is a modern outer door to the two storeyed central porch, but the splendid inner one with its fittings is old, as are two of the chimney stacks. At the front and on either side of the house there are large barns, also of the seventeenth century: that on the west has a five bay frame, having been extended by two bays to the north, and a second porch added to the east. The interior house plan is conventional. The hall has a large open fireplace with a moulded wooden lintel, and it backs on to the entrance passage; the ceiling is supported by a massive moulded beam. The two rooms beyond were at some later date converted to one large room. At each end of the house, a staircase leads to the upper floor, winding round a plain circular newel post with turned elm balusters at the top. The rooms, as was usual at that period, opened into each other and the windows have most beautiful views over fields and woods to the hills beyond.

We have tantalisingly little evidence of the people who lived at Bride Hall after the Lawdys. It would appear that at one period the house was divided. The Garrards lived at Lamer, but the dowager Lady Jane lived at Bride Hall about 1650. In 1753 Michael Coleman and, from 1786 to 1793, Francis Guildford, were occupants. Samuel Bassil was here in 1794 and John Bassil farmed the property until 1822. There is a stone urn in the centre of the lawn, inscribed 'To the Memory of John Taylor Who departed this life Dec. 6 1821 Aged 71 years'. During the Second World War the house was used for training officers and the barns for preparing parcels of weapons to drop to partisan forces in occupied Europe.

Leave Bride Hall by the footpath beside the wall at the end of the garden, the best possible place from which to view it, and strike out across the fields and through the woods for Lamer itself. Here time might easily have stood still so quiet is it, except for fat partridges whirring up out of the grass. The car driver must go back to the village and turn up Lamer Lane to Owen's Corner, Gustardwood, where a right fork past Lamer Hillgate leads to the modern house.

LAMER stands in the beautiful position first chosen for a house, looking south over sunny fields. A Tudor mansion house was replaced about 1760 by a Georgian style house (see Plate 4b) of which drawings and photographs survive. The eighteenth century stable block with its cupola still stands but the house was demolished in



1949; mounds in the grounds may be the foundations. A footpath from Ayot St. Lawrence runs along a fine avenue of mature trees; this may have been the original approach, but it led to the side of the eighteenth century house.

Although their homes have been destroyed we do know a great deal about the occupants. Lamer may have got its name from the family of John de la Mare who was a Westminster tenant from 1307 to 1310. The manor was formed out of Westminster's large estate in the thirteenth century. It passed to John and Alice Lodewyk, and through their daughter Isabel to the Carew family. From the Carews Lamer passed, with Bride Hall, to John and Richard Lawdy and was settled on Brian Roche and his wife Elizabeth in 1502. Perhaps Elizabeth was John Lawdy's daughter and Lamer settled on her when she married in 1502; she inherited Bride Hall later. Brian Roche died young, in 1514. He left a gold chain and cross of eleven ounces to his six year old son, Nicholas; a russet riding habit to John Pastall, a black riding coat to his servant Christopher, a russet gown furred with black bogy to Richard Plomer and to one Sir Thomas, four yards of dyed tawny for a gown. Two great silver pots were left to his brother William who became Lord Mayor of London in 1540, and a gilt standing cup to Richard Gadd. The residue from these legacies was to go to furnishing and making up the house, garden and orchard at Lamer, and £1 was left to St. Helen's church.

Lamer and Bride Hall passed to Elizabeth's daughter, Griselda and to Griselda's son, Philip Boteler. The property passed from the Botelers to the Peryents who sold it, in 1608, to trustees for Sir John Garrard. About this time the medieval house may have been rebuilt; it seems that the Garrards began their stay by building both at Bride Hall and Lamer. Sir John took over the estate when he came of age and married in 1611. In 1617 he obtained rights of free warren, that is game rights, and a year later incorporated Waterend into his property, on the death of Sir John Bocket. Much of the estate was held by copyhold until the end of the nineteenth century.

The Garrards came from the City of London and maintained their connections. Sir John's grandfather, two uncles, and his two fathers-in-law were all Lord Mayors! His first wife Elizabeth bore him fourteen children before she died in 1632; she was under forty. Her memorial is in St. Helen's, and tells us that she was 'towards God a most faithful child, towards her husband a loyal spouse, towards her children a most loving mother, towards the poor a most charitable neighbour, in helth praising God, in sickness bearing patiently'. With twelve surviving children to be cared for, Sir John soon married again. He had bought a baronetcy in 1622 so his son, who inherited Lamer in 1637, automatically became Sir John. This Sir John married Jane, his step-mother's daughter by a previous marriage. They lived at Lamer for fifty years, raising a family of twenty-three children. Sir John commanded Hertfordshire forces for Parliament

during the Civil War and Dame Jane had to make a public declaration of loyalty on Charles II's restoration in 1660. But in spite of their sympathies local tradition had it that Charles I, in flight, was sheltered at Lamer on 27 April 1646. What is true is that Michael Hudson, one of the King's two attendants, recalled that 'His Majestie lodged at Whisthamstede, but he was commanded by his Majestie not to reveal the place where his Majestie lodged' and that 'the King lay in a grande chamber'.

It is not surprising that one of the many Garrard children did not stick to the strictest conventions in the laxer atmosphere of the Restoration. The parish register records the birth of a daughter, Elizabeth, on 19 April 1639. She married Sir Nicholas Gould, but he died in December 1663 and left her a young widow. Samuel Pepys takes up the tale in his Diary:

*January 1st, 1664* — 'I went to the Coffee-house and there staid talking, among other things about a very rich widow, young and handsome, of one Sir Nicholas Gould, a merchant lately fallen, and of great courtiers that already looked after her; her husband not dead a week yet. She is reckoned worth £80,000.'

*June 20th, 1664* — 'Thence to my Lord's lodgings; . . . Here I heard how the rich widow, my Lady Gould, is married to one Neale after he had received a box on the eare by her brother (who was there a sentinel, in behalf of some courtier) at the door; but made him draw, and wounded him. She called Neale up to her, and sent for a priest, married presently, and went to bed. The brother sent to the Court, and had a serjeant sent for Neale; but Neale sent for him up to be seen in bed, and she owned him for her husband: and so all is past.' The records confirm that she married Thomas Neale, a groom, in June 1664.

Sir John died in 1686 and Dame Jane in 1692. Jane left to Rachel, who had married Richard Emerton and lived at Mackerye End, 'my ebony cabinet and all that is in the till of physic. I give her the black ebony looking glass . . . and my Limbeck and cupboard to dry sweetmeats in, and my Cyprus box'. And also 'my coach and best pair of coach harness'. Rachel's daughter Jane, who was nearly ten, was no doubt the favourite granddaughter. She was left 'my nett bedd, all curtains, vallents, counterpaine, tester back, nett curtains and the cane chayres and the bedstead to the curtains and the picture over the Chimney and all the toyes upon the marble tree in my Chamber, and one of the great down chayres with elbowes'. Dame Jane left £5 'to the poore of Wheatemstead' and desired William Write to make her coffin; he lived at Owen's Corner. 'Mrs. Larance', of Raisins no doubt, was left 'a mourning ring of ten shillings', and her maid 'some Cloathes which I have set downe with my owne hand in a paper which I don't question you will doe it'.

The heir, another Sir John, died in 1700; the title and estate passed to a brother, Samuel, who kept up the family tradition by

becoming Lord Mayor in 1709. The last Sir John's only child, Jane, married into the Drake family and her great-grandson, Charles, eventually inherited Lamer. Until 1767, however, it remained with Sir Samuel's family. A son, another Samuel, inherited in 1724. He was a soldier, serving under the Duke of Marlborough in his Grace's own regiment of guards, and was promoted to lieutenant-colonel. He had to resign for health reasons, however, as his memorial tells us '... an ill state of health, which never ruffled the evenness of his temper, obliged him to retire from all public business to his seat at Lamer; where he spent the remainder of his days in acts of hospitality and benevolence among his neighbours, and of charity to the poor'. It was he who pulled down the Tudor mansion and built the Georgian house, which was completed just before his death on 1 December 1761. He was succeeded by his brother, Sir Benet who died unmarried in 1767. So the male line of the Garrard family ended and Charles Drake inherited the estate at the age of twelve; he assumed the name of Garrard.

An inventory made on Sir Benet's death gives a superb picture of the furnishings of an eighteenth century mansion. The bedroom section will give the flavour. From the maids' garret with 'two half teaster bedsteads and blew stuff furniture . . . 2 wainscot tables with a draw in each . . . a wainscot night stool, a pewter pan', we are led down through the butler's bed chamber with 'a 4 post bedstead . . . a large wainscot box, with a lock, a Bath Chair', to the 'Blew damask bed Chamber' with 'a 4 post bedstead, corneshes and compass rod and blew silk Damask furniture', a 'toy light table with a cover and stripe muslin peticoat' and on to 'Sir Benet's bed Chamber'. Looking around the room, we see it as in Sir Benet's time: a four poster bed furnished with hangings in red and white dimity, a coloured quilt and 'decker work' counterpane and pillows; two 'Willton' bedside carpets and a scarlet check window curtain 'to draw up'. There is a handsome ebony cabinet with a tortoiseshell front and brass trimmings; a walnut desk and bookcase with a mirror front; a chest of drawers on a frame in the same wood; an easy chair and six walnut chairs with cane seats, a two-leaf screen and toilet table with its 'stripe muslin peticoat', two tapestry cushions and 'a walnuttree night stool and pewter pan'.

One of the two breakfast parlours is very splendid with a turkey carpet and green blinds to draw up: a dining table with eight ordinary and two armchairs, all of mahogany, and a marble topped table on a mahogany base. All round the room, the Garrard ancestors look down: Sir Samuel 'Lord Mayor in Queen Anns reign in Gilt frame over the chimney', Sir William, 'Lord Mayor in Queen Marys Reign' to the left of it, and Sir John 'Lord Mayor in Queen Elizabeth's reign' to the right: 'Thom' Garrard Esq<sup>re</sup> in a gilt frame at the bottom of the room' and 'Sir John Garrard first Bar<sup>t</sup> in King James the first reign over the glass'. For anyone who cares to peruse it the inventory is full of delight.

The Drake Garrards presided over Victorian Wheathampstead. Charles Drake's son, Charles Benet, died in 1884 and his wife, Honora, in 1892. They had lived a long and full life at Lamer, since about 1835, and played an important part in village life. They had no children so the estate passed in 1892 to Apsley Cherry, son of Charles' sister. He added the name Garrard by royal licence in 1892, leaving the family home in Berkshire and moving to Lamer. He had served in the army in India during the mutiny and in the Kaffir and Zulu wars. His only son was named after his illustrious ancestors, Apsley his major-general father, George his grandfather who was assassinated in 1789 in India, and Benet the last of the Garrard baronets. So Apsley George Benet Cherry-Garrard, born in 1886, grew up at Lamer and lived up to the reputation of his forebears when he was selected to join Captain Scott's Antarctic expedition of 1910 to 1913. The outcome of that journey is legendary and is graphically described in Apsley's book *The Worst Journey in the World*. Subsequently, he joined an expedition to China in 1914 led by Dr. Robert Leiper. It is interesting to note that in later years Professor Leiper came to live at Leasybridge Farm. When he returned to Lamer Apsley became a great friend of George Bernard Shaw, his near neighbour at Ayot. He married Angela Turner in 1939 but died without issue in 1959, ten years after the old house at Lamer was pulled down. In the Lamer Chapel in St. Helen's there is an attractive, small statue of Apsley Cherry-Garrard.

The road leads down from Lamer to Lamer Hillgate: the low red house set beside the path was originally several small brick cottages built to house the staff at Lamer. The little green handkerchief of grass and the group of timbered houses nearby is locally known as OWEN'S CORNER; it acquired the name at the end of the nineteenth century from the occupant of the end house on the corner. J. F. Owen was not only village carpenter and builder, but also the undertaker; the high door for the hearse may still be seen in the wall of his workshop. For more than two hundred and fifty years, one family or another of carpenters lived at Owen's Corner. The earliest record we have is among the deeds of Hillside Cottage, a small house whose trim outside effectively conceals a much older interior with stopped chamfered beams and an inglenook fireplace. On 21 August 1635 Valentine Laurence of Heron's leased three cottages to William Wright, husbandman. This William was, probably, the father of the 'William Write' whom Dame Jane Garrard asked to make her coffin in 1692. From 1692, when the deeds mention 'William Wright the Elder . . . Carpenter', until 1813 when the property was sold to Charles Lattimore for £161, the occupant appears to have been a carpenter; and even in 1813 security of tenure was given to Richard Kilby, one of the family with a house, carpenter's shop and yard across the road. Two other cottages, most probably the Dell and Timber Cottage, were sold to Mr. Kilby for £200. In 1835, Hillside Cottage was converted to a beer-house and, self-importantly, renamed The Royal Exchange.

If you turn up the narrow alley, just above Hillside, you will find yourself outside one more tiny cottage with a story of its own. This was built about 1736 by John Wright, carpenter. Even within living memory this little house was known as Shoulder Hall because all the timbers used in it were carried on the builder's shoulder! It lacked only one important thing, a well. On 14 January 1737 William Wright 'did consent and agree that the said John', his wife Mary and his heirs 'should forever thereafter have liberty and ingress . . . to and from the well . . . to take water'. This well, belonging to Hillside, provided beautiful clear water, and was only filled in about five years ago..

A little lower down the main road from Hillside a farm road, on the opposite side, leads to Delaport Farm. This was built somewhere between 1550 and 1650 and is an early example of the type of house which succeeded the open hall plan; it has a timber frame and wattle and daub in-filling. It was repaired extensively in the eighteenth century, and in the early nineteenth century the present staircase was incorporated, together with a large dayroom. There are very considerable farm buildings and, although the roof of the barn is older in style, it probably dates from the eighteenth century. There is, too, a delightful little granary on iron mushrooms; this was an early do-it-yourself package being delivered by rail to the customer in the late nineteenth century. In 1753 the farm delighted in the name Dillopots.

From Delaport our route is on foot: turn north and strike up diagonally across the golf course, which is common land. It is beautiful at any time of year, with a great sweep of sky above, and it was the juniper and gorse growing here which gave its name to Gustard-wood. On the far side of the Common is a hamlet, with terraces of little two roomed labourers' cottages which date from the early nineteenth century, one small eighteenth century farmhouse and a pretty little white house with two sturdy pillars which dates from early in the nineteenth century. The hamlet can be reached by road, driving north from Owen's Corner and turning left at the crossroads. In this little hamlet one finds the Tin Pot which, with its substantial timber beams, is typical of a small roadside inn no later than the seventeenth century. The Tin Pot won a good name for itself on 2 January 1665, when it welcomed and took in one Nicholas Brookes, a fishmonger of Southwark. Brookes arrived in the village at dusk and sought lodging, but he was turned away by Thomas Wethered and his wife and by Roger Austin, host of the Bull. Alarmed by the approach of the winter's night, he gave a quarter of a pound of tobacco and two flagons of beer to John Skale who guided him to Robert Parker at the 'Tinn Pott'. He must have been cheered to see the lights from its windows and smell the wood smoke as he drew near. The story ended happily: it is recorded that Brookes had both lodging and good entertainment for himself and his horses and was well used, but he was sufficiently incensed to take action against Wethered and Austin so that his story is recorded in the Quarter Sessions Rolls.

The way to HERON'S FARM is on foot or by a farm road, south from the Tin Pot; you are on the route of an old road to the village centre. Originally the road ran directly past the house, which is a very substantial two-storeyed, timber-framed building, built about 1600, next to a large timber-framed and weather-boarded barn dating from the eighteenth century. The present house was added to a less substantial one which lay to the west and of which only indications remain. The newer part was solidly built, with much fine timber; there were one large and one small room to each floor and they appear to have been added as a parlour end to the early house. In the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century this house was enlarged to the north of the parlour range, and the whole was cased in brick in the early nineteenth century. A still later addition was made to the northern section about 1925 and the house now includes a deep well which originally lay to the west. Good in quality as Heron's Farm certainly is, we do not think the earliest building was a manor house. The *Victoria County History* says that Heron's takes its name from a family of Heron who were freeholders. Perhaps it was elevated in importance when Alice Perrers, Edward III's notorious mistress, held it between 1382 and 1392. We have seen that it came into the possession of the Rector, William Warde, and the Brockets, who ran the manor from Wheathampstead Place. The lane runs down from Heron's Farm site, along Rose Lane to come out very close indeed to Wheathampstead Place. Heron's was sold in 1565 to Thomas North, yeoman, and from this time the farm site seems to have become the centre of the property and to have been built upon. The North family held the manor for nearly sixty-five years, before selling it, in 1631, to Valentine Lawrence. In 1669 Lawrence sold it to Joshua Lomax; the Lawrences moved to Raisins; Heron's changed hands a number of times before being eventually bought by Lord Grimston.

The footpath which links Heron's and Wheathampstead Place is the last lap of our tour: it runs in a straight line down through the fields towards the village along the line of the old road. The hedgerow on the left has almost vanished, although the line along which it ran is clearly visible, and one or two trees remain. Presently it opens up into Rose Lane with hedgerows and more mature trees and within minutes one is back in the village close to the Abbot John, the mill, and St. Helen's.



# GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS, HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND OTHER WORDS

**ANDIRON.** Firedog supporting spits.

**AXIAL STACK.** A chimney stack built within a house and not against an outside wall.

**BALUSTER.** Small pillar supporting the hand-rail of a staircase.

**BASKET WORK** pargetting. External plasterwork decorated to imitate wattling.

**BAY.** In a timber building the section between each pair of principal uprights; in a stone or brick building the verticle unit of an elevation, usually marked by windows on each floor.

**CHAMFER.** The surface produced by cutting off the square angle of a beam; it may be moulded or end in a carving (see **STOP**).

**CLOSE STOOL.** Commode.

**CORNICE.** The decorative moulding at the junction of an outer wall and the roof or an inner wall and the ceiling.

**COURT cupboard.** A two tiered sideboard which could be open or with doors to lower tier and recessed cupboards in top tier.

**CROSS WING.** A subsidiary range lapping and roofed at right angles to the main range of a building.

**CROWN POST.** A vertical post standing on the centre of a tie beam (see below) and supporting a collar or collar purlin (see below).

**DAMASK.** Linen material in which woven designs show only by the reflection of light.

**DAME SCHOOL.** Private school for young children taken by a woman, often quite unqualified and sometimes little more than a 'minder'.

**DENTIL brickwork.** A decoration made of bricks set on edge with their ends projecting from the face of a wall.

**DIAPER.** A pattern of diamond, lozenge or square shapes.

**DIMITY.** Stout cotton material with raised stripes or fancy figures.

**DORMER.** Small window in roof.

**DRAWING TABLE.** A table which can be extended by drawing out slides or leaves.

**FINIAL.** An upright ornamental projection as from the gable of a roof or newel of a staircase.

**FITCH.** A polecat, and so the fur of the polecat.

**FRAME(D).** Furniture (e.g. tables and chairs) made of parts fitted or jointed together, which replaced furniture made of planks resting on supports (e.g. trestles).

**GLAZING BARS.** The thin intermediate supports holding the glass within the main frame of a window.

**HAIR cupboard.** A cupboard covered with a cloth woven from horse-hair.

**HALL HOUSE.** A type of house, usually medieval, with a central room which extends from the floor to the roof.



KEY: s - service room; h - open hall; p - parlour; k - kitchen; l - living room.

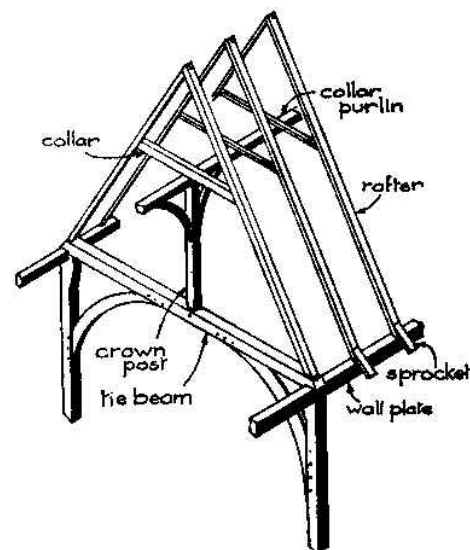
1—Late medieval hall house with a passage entry.

2—Early 17th century house with an internal chimney stack and a lobby entry.

3—Symmetrically planned house of the 18th or early 19th century.

4—Early 19th century cottage of the type usually found in short terraces.

FOUR TYPICAL HOUSE PLANS



A LATE  
MEDIEVAL  
CROWN POST ROOF

**INVENTORY.** The movables belonging to a dead person were valued by neighbours and listed in an inventory, when the will was proved.

**JET AND STALE.** A huge ladle (jet) fixed to a long pole (stale).

**JOINED** chair or table. With frames morticed and tenoned and the joints secured with wooden pegs, made by a 'joiner', as contrasted with earlier furniture, made by a carpenter, of logs or planks on trestles.

**LIMBECK.** Apparatus formerly used in distilling, a still.  
**LOO table.** Loo was a card game.  
**LYCHGATE.** Roofed gate of a churchyard where the coffin awaits the clergyman's arrival.  
**LYE, LEASH AND FORM.** Apparatus for making lye (an alkaline solution used instead of soap for washing) from wood ash.  
**MORTICE.** Hole in a piece of timber, made to receive a tenon (see below).  
**NEWEL.** Central post around which a circular staircase turns.  
**OVOLO.** Convex moulding, roughly a quarter-circle.  
**PEDIMENT.** A low pitched gable on classical buildings.  
**PILASTER.** Flat or segmented half-column attached to a wall.  
**POTHANGER.** Hook and chain attached to a bar in the chimney, used to suspend a pot over the fire.  
**PURLIN.** In a roof, a longitudinal timber supporting the middle of the rafters or the collars.  
**SCONCE.** Candle holder, either the flat kind with a handle for carrying or a wall bracket fitted with a candle holder.  
**SCREENS PASSAGE.** In a medieval house, an entrance passage partitioned off from one end of the hall which it also separates from the service rooms.  
**SKILLET.** The ancestor of a saucepan, fitted with a long handle and short legs to stand in the ashes.  
**SPROCKET eaves.** Timber wedges attached to the rafters above the eaves in order to flatten the pitch of the lower part of the roof.  
**STOP.** Where the moulded and unmoulded parts of a beam or any other feature join, usually marked by a carving (see chamfer).  
**STOVER.** Winter fodder or litter made up of second mowing of clover, or marsh grass.  
**TAWNY.** Brown with yellow or orange preponderance, and so cloth of this colour.  
**TENON.** End of a piece of wood shaped to fit into a hole in another piece to form a joint (see mortice).  
**TIE BEAM.** Heavy beam resting on opposite walls and forming the base of a roof truss.  
**TILL.** A box or drawer for valuables contained within a large box or chest of drawers.  
**TUMBLED brickwork.** Bricks in gables or end walls laid at right angles to the slope of the roof, so producing triangular patterns.  
**TURKEY MOOR chairs.** Chairs covered in a woollen material worked on a loom in imitation of a Turkish carpet (cf. Blackamoor).  
**TURNED.** Furniture shaped or rounded on a lathe.  
**VALANCE.** Short curtain round the frame or canopy of a bedstead.  
**WALL PLATE.** Horizontal timber resting on top of a wall, to carry the ends of rafters.  
**WARMING PAN.** Flat, closed, long handled vessel, holding charcoal, used to warm beds.

Our thanks are, above all, due to the owners of so many local properties who gave us access to their homes. In courtesy to them we must emphasize that these are all private houses and they are NOT open to the public. Kathleen Foreman had the idea of presenting Wheathampstead history to local people by way of these 'walks' and the writing of this booklet is her work. Without the help of many members of two local history classes taken by Lionel M. Munby, under the joint auspices of the University of Cambridge Board of Extramural Studies and the Workers' Educational Association, this production would have been impossible. The text has been critically edited and incorporates the ideas and knowledge of many people. The cover has been designed by Paul Usher, using a drawing in the *Victoria County History*. The photographs are by Peter Clarke, the picture of Lamer is from a drawing in the County Record Office, the maps have been drawn by Roger Shrimplin, and the diagrams in the glossary by Tony Baggs. The architectural study of Wheathampstead houses has been undertaken with the help and guidance of Tony Baggs; Graham Bailey has, most generously, made his knowledge available to class members. Our thanks are due to them all.

Readers who wish to discover more about the historical background or the sources used in preparing a history like this should buy the continuing series of booklets, published by the W.E.A., on the history of *Wheathampstead and Harpenden*. As these appear they will contain information which will explain many things left unexplained in this booklet. There will, for example, be family histories and family trees, full histories of the church and chapels and of the schools, information about the parish boundaries, the Devil's Dyke and Nomansland, and fuller architectural and social histories of buildings like the mills, as well as of houses. We have sometimes, but not always, quoted documents in the original spelling for the enjoyment, we hope, of our readers. Many of these original sources will, we expect, be made more widely available by the Harpenden and District Local History Society.

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