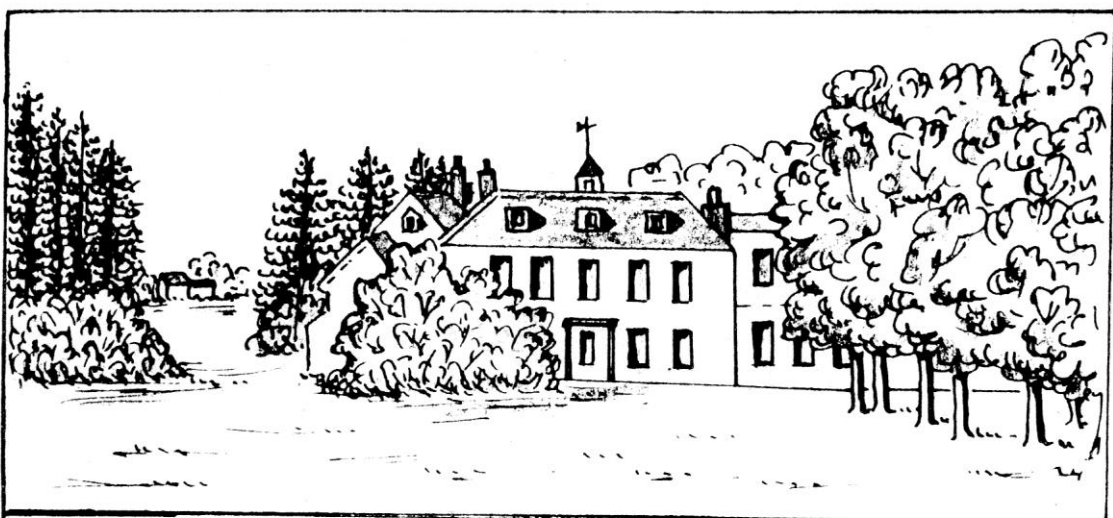


PBHS 13

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FEBRUARY 1980



Clare hall at South Mims Middlesex the seat of John Barwick Esq

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POTTERS BAR AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT: MRS. MURIEL BRITTAIN, M.P.S. CHAIRMAN : G. PULZER

HON. SECRETARY : C.T. Overend, 30 DeepDene, Potters Bar Tel.44493

Formed in 1959 to encourage the reservation of things of local interest and to study both local and general historical matters. Meetings are throughout the winter months at intervals of approximately three weeks. Details of these are exhibited on the public library notice boards or may be obtained from the secretary. Subscriptions are 75p. per annum and 40p. for those under 21 and for senior citizens.

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings whether they are members of the Society or not.

* * * * *

TWENTIEETH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

As mentioned in our last issue the Society reached its twentieth birthday on the 14 th. July 1979. We celebrated, however, on 27th. September with Peter Walne's excellent talk on the work of the Hertfordshire County Record Office. Incidentally this event was held within two days of the actual twentieth anniversary of our first public meeting (we couldn't get a closer date) and was the last public meeting of any kind to be held in the Wyllyotts Manor Council Chamber. We were both delighted and honoured to have with us on this occasion Councillor Mrs. Bullen, the Deputy Mayor of Hertsmere.

We followed up this opening event with an outing to Jesus College, Cambridge on 13th. October and an excellent talk on South Mimms castle on the 27th. This talk, which was given by Brian Warren, had an affinity with our very first lecture which was on South Mimms itself.

Our celebrations are not yet over for we have an essay competition which is not due for completion until March. Notices have been sent to all eligible schools in the district and the event has had a good write-up in the press. We hope that this competition will have done much to arouse an interest in local history in our young people and that we will have a good entry. It had been hoped to announce the result at the Social which is to be held on March 28th. but delays in getting out the publicity has meant that this has had to be deferred until the Annual Genereal Meeting on April 8th.

All opinions expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the members of the Potters Bar and District Historical Society either as as a body or as individuals.

HON. EDITOR: C.T. Overend, 30 Deepdene, Potters Bar

Published by Potters Bar and District Historical Society.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The 1980 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on Tuesday 8th. April at 8 p.m. immediately preceeding Mr. Harcourt Williams talk.

A TRUE 'MISS READ' STORY

(The stories of 'Miss Read', a fictional village schoolmistress, are well known. Less well known is the story of a real Miss Read, a local village schoolmistress.....)

The danger of trusting the ages stated in the nineteenth century census returns is illustrated by the entries for Ridge school-mistress, Sarah Read. When, for the 1841 census, people were allowed to round down their ages to the nearest five years, she rounded hers down to fifty. Yet ten years later, when exact ages had to be given, she admitted to seventy-three years!

This was her true age, for it is known from her father's diary that she was born on November 28, 1777. He was in Paris at the time; there he received a letter from his servant informing him 'that mistress was safely delivered of a daughter Nov. 28 & is as well as can be expected. She is a fine little dear & has dark hair!! He soon wrote again to tell his master that 'the child was baptised on Dec. 30 and according to your desire her name is Sall.'

She was so called after her mother; but how came her surname to be Read? For Jack Read was the name of the servant; his master's name was Syles Neville. Why, then, was his daughter called Sarah Read and not Sarah Neville?

For the explanation of this one has to go back to September 1768, when he recorded in his diary that he had decided 'to engage a young woman.....to be my servant.' By name Sarah - or Sally, as he more usually called her - she was about twenty, and he some eight years older. She became his mistress, and she it was who bore him Sarah while he was in Paris. He wrote to say he was delighted, but he did not return to England to see his daughter till 1780. Her upbringing he entrusted to a friend; but his friend died in 1782, leaving him with the problem of what to do with Sarah, now a delicate five-year-old. He solved it by sending her to a school in Ridge run by Miss M. Whalley.

He himself was offered hospitality by a friend in Norwich, but that raised another problem: he would not need a housekeeper, yet he did not want to be parted from his mistress, Sally. His solution was to write to his host saying that his servant Jack Read 'had been married some time' and that Sally, his wife, would have to accompany him! November 1783 saw him witnessing - after having no doubt arranged - the marriage of Sally and Jack. The fact that the entry in his diary - 'the manservant J and the maidservant Sarah were married' - was written in Italian and in shorthand suggests that he felt some sense of shame.

That is how Sarah, his daughter, came to bear the surname of Read.

When she was six - on Sunday May 16 1784 - she received a visit from her father, though this we know only by reading between the lines of his diary. 'Dined at the Red Lion, Barnet,' he wrote, and 'drank tea three or four miles further at a very pleasant village called Ridge in Hertfordshire situate on a bank from which it probably derives its name. The lanes leading to it from the turnpike how pleasant! The hedges full of sweet may...' Of his daughter there was not a word, but surely it was to visit her at

the school that he left the road at South Mimms and climbed the hill to Ridge.

We have it on her authority, in later life, that 'for long' she was 'left entirely unnoticed till Dr. N. (her father) artfully discovered my abilities and then, young as I was, made use of them to his own purposes by sending me the most extraordinary copies of letters.' These were begging-letters which he expected her to write 'to Noblemen on his account as if they were my own feelings,' she wrote. She was required to impertune for help 'for a near relative who had met with misfortune.'

On charity Syllas neville contrived to live for the last fifty years of his life. He lost his mistress, Sarah's mother, on her death in 1825; and in 1833 Sarah returned to Ridge to be the governess of Ridge House, where she had, fifty years before, been a pupil. Not till 1840 did her father die, in his hundredth year; and when his papers were sorted out copies of some of his begging-letters were sent to his daughter in case she wanted them. She did not: 'I am truly ashamed of them,' she wrote from Ridge House on February 15, 1842. They reminded her too painfully of a father given to 'looking after the things of this world,' though she added piously: 'But he is gone to give^{up} his awful account, and it does not become me to censure.' None the less, she could 'not but lament being the offspring of such a parent...'

Later in the 1840s she retired from Ridge House, which stood by the green in front of St. Margaret's church and survived in part until the 1960s. In 1844 Trotter's almshouses - today called Orchard Mead - were built; and in one of these she was living in 1851 - only a stone's-throw from the school to which she had first come nearly seventy years previously.

M. TOMKINS

Sources: Diary of Syllas Neville.
Ridge parish tithe award
Census returns: 1841, 1851.

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HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1980

Saturday 22nd March

at Campus West Theatre, Welwyn Garden City.

Morning Session: Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Hertfordshire.

Afternoon Session: Hearth and Home.

Admission: All day 31, half-day 75p., students 75p., children 50p.

Programme and full details may be obtained from :-

Derek W. Hills, 63 Daniells, Welwyn Garden City.
Telephone W.G. 22735

Miss Sue Agate, Welwyn Hatfield Museum, Mill Green,
Hatfield. Telephone Hat. 71362

HERTFORDSHIRE "STREETS"

The name 'Baker Street' seems inappropriate for a road which was, within living memory, merely a country lane. There are/number of other Streets in and near Hertfordshire which are villages, and again the names are surprising. The list given below, which may not be complete, shows (in the second column) some from the O.S. 1/1-inch map. It might be thought that they were originally the names of roads; so it is useful to look for them on Moll's map, published in 1700, which is (as far as I know) the first to show a fair network of roads. (This is the map included in Chauncy's book on Hertfordshire). The map includes parts of Middlesex. It shows the 'Streets' listed in the first column below. It also marks Ermin Street (so spelt); in this case alone the name is written along the line of the road, like names along the rivers, whereas all the other 'Streets' are written horizontally, like the names of villages.

Thus the names are old, and pre-date any well made 'street' as we should understand it; and in 1700 they were the names of villages, not roads. It seems reasonable to suggest that Baker Street too, was a village, not a road; it was the village gathered round Wyllyotts.

Moll's map also shows one, and only one, Lane - namely, Coopers Lane, which also seems to have been the name of a village. It still appears as a village name on modern O.S. maps. The odd name 'Coopers Lane Road' is thus accounted for: it is a road leading to the village of Coopers Lane.

<u>Names on Moll's Map</u>	<u>Names on O.S. Map</u>	<u>Grid Ref.</u>
-	Appleby Street	331 045
Bakers Street	-	249 010
Colney Street	Colney Street	I55 022
Crossbrook Street	-	? 373 028
-	Hammond Street	329 043
Hare Street	Hare Street	390 295
-	Hay Street	393 262
High Street Green	-	085 065
Lark Street	Park Street	I50 040
Markett Street	Markyate (not named as 'street')	062 I64
Newgate Street	Newgate Street	299 05I
Theobalds Street	Green Street	I95 986
Turtle Str	Turkey Street	347 992

Most of these 'Streets' are on or near a known Roman road. There are two plausible reasons why villages might be so placed: (1) to make use of the road for travel, for even after a thousand years of neglect they were still better roads than most others; (2) to build literally on the road, using it as a firm dry foundation. So it seems probable that Baker Street too was a village based around an ancient paved road, possibly but not necessarily Roman.

A.C.Lynch.

* * * * *

DON'T FORGET - Twentieth Birthday Party, Friday 28th. March,
Toc H Hall, Barnet Road, 8 p.m., Admission 50p., Members and Friends.

WALTHAM ABBEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

We have received from this Society notice of their Museum of Archaeology and Local History. This is housed in a 15th. century timber framed building situate at 41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey. The collection, which ranges from prehistoric artifacts to modern times, includes a V2 rocket motor.

Opening times are:- Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sundays and Bank Holidays (until October) 3 pm. to 5p.m. Admission free.

PUBLICATIONS

The Waltham Abbey Historical Society also publishes a range of historical and archaeological booklets and bulletins. All of these may be obtained from the museum or, by post, from Mr. R.C.Gray, 64 Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex (postage extra).

The Secretary (of PBDHS) has a full list which he will be pleased to make available on request. The following may, however, be of the greatest interest:-

'King Harold's Town' by John Camp and Dinah Dean - 25p. (post 10p.)

'A Walk Round Waltham Abbey - Monastery and Town' by K.N.Bascombe, 25p. (post 10p.).

* * * * *

JESUS COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

When we were looking for ideas to celebrate our twentieth birthday our President, Mrs. M. Brittain, very kindly invited the Society's members and their friends to a tour of Jesus College and to have tea there in her rooms. The event took place on 13th. October when about twenty people went, in small parties, by private car. This proved an excellent arrangement since it enabled those who so wished 'to make a day of it'. The autumn weather was at its sunniest and all parties had an enjoyable drive through the beautiful Hertfordshire. One can only feel sorry for those who were unable to attend and so missed so much that was rich and beautiful both en route and at the college.

We were met by Mrs. Brittain in the College car park and conducted through the grounds to the Hall where we were introduced to Mrs. Freda Jones, the lady who was to be our guide. The gardens we passed through may have been past their best but the green, gold and russet of the autumn leaves formed an idyllic setting for the fine old buildings. These are of several ages, the oldest being of the 12th. century, when they formed part of a nunnery. Originally the convent consisted of twelve nuns but these eventually dwindled to two and it was then that John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, closed the convent and founded the present college in the buildings

The rebus on his name is a cockerel and these birds are visible every where being particularly noticeable on the doorway label terminations. In the old library they occur in many of the windows in stained glass. It is evident that originally every window had its coloured cockerel and latin tag but many have been replaced by plain clear glass, only the outline remaining. But of the many fine cockerels to be seen the pride of place must be given to the collection of the late Dr. Frederick Brittain. Here are rare birds

of many forms from stylised creatures painted on tumblers to those carved in wood and moulded in pottery.

The beauty of these old buildings beggars description and their contents delight both the mind and the eye. The ancient volumes of the Old Library must be the envy of every bibliophile who sees them and that includes many members of our own party. However, lack of space forbids a full description of all that is to be seen. Reluctantly, therefore, I must confine myself to those items which impressed me most of all.

There were two these. One was the well lit, oak panelled hall with its portraits and its three brass chandeliers, not forgetting, of course, its stout brass cockerel brought (I believe) from West Africa. The other was the chapel. Who can possibly forget his first sight of that glorious east window? A blaze of rosy light! This is by Pugin, made of Chartres glass, and this same French artist is also responsible for the chancel ceiling. The ceiling in the nave is by William Morris, unmistakably so, while the windows are by Burne-Jones and display the rich depth of colour so typical of this artists work.

C.T.OVEREND

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LONDON & MIDDLESEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

LAMAS is organising the following tours during 1980 :-

1. Tour BB. 15/16 day coach tour of the castles, monasteries etc. of Bavaria (including an opportunity to see the Passion Play at Oberammergau) and Burgundy. Departs Tues. 29 July 1980. Cost £279 plus cost of insurance and seat at the Passion Play (optional).
2. Tour AG. 15/16 day air/coach tour of Greece. Visiting Athens, Corinth, Mycenae, Tyrins, Argos, Epidaurus, Sparta etc. with all their wonderful art and archaeological treasures. Good hotels, air conditioned coach. Departs 26 August. Cost £348.
3. Tour RO. 10/11 day air/coach tour to Rome, Monte Casino and Subiaco. This delightful and interesting tour of Rome includes (if required) a Papal Audience departs Wed. 16 Sept. 1980. Cost £256.

Full details from Lawrence S. Snell, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., Newman College, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 3NT. Bookings should be made through Travelscene Ltd., Birmingham Shopping Centre, New Street, Birmingham B2 4XJ.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The 17th. Annual Conference of London Archaeologists is to be held on Saturday 26th. April, 1980, from 11 a.m. in the Museum of London Lecture Theatre. Chairman: Harvey Sheldon. Admissinon is by ticket onlt and costs £1.50 for LAMAS members, £2.50 for non-members.

NORTH MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

This Society is actively researching family history in the London boroughs of Camden, Barnet, Enfield, Harringey, Islington and the City of London. Monthly meetings are held at the Drill Hall, Old Park Avenue, Enfield Town on the first Monday in the month at 8 o'clock. Beginners and experienced researchers are welcome. Lectures, workshop meetings (for help and advice) and outings are arranged. From time to time special research projects are undertaken and all members are welcome to participate.

A quarterly journal is published which is distributed free to members and to societies which are affiliated to the Federation of Family History Societies. For members living outside London a courier service to St. Catherine's House for birth, death and marriage certificates has been organised to reduce the high cost.

Further details may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary: Miss G.C. Watson, 33 Churston Gardens, London N11 2NL. Telephone 01-363 2255.

The Society's journal, "The North Middlesex", is available to non-members, price 50p. per copy from the Hon. Treasurer Mrs. E.D. Morris, 5 Chase Side, Enfield, Middlesex En2 6QA.

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GREATER LONDON RECORD OFFICE

This now incorporates the former London and Middlesex sections. The search rooms are situated in Room B2I D, The County Hall, London and they re-opened on Wednesday 2nd. January 1980.

OPENING TIMES : Monday to Friday - 9.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m.

LATE EVENING OPENING : Tuesday - 4.45 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. (by appointment only)

FOR ENQUIRIES AND APPOINTMENTS : Please 'phone 01-633 6851.

Many records are now stored in an out repository; on enquiry readers will be informed if particular records are so held. To consult such records an appointment must be made at least three working days in advance. To consult other records an appointment is always advisable. Specific orders can be made by letter or telephone.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

A.G.M., Tuesday 8th. April, 8 p.m. followed by "The Marquis of Salisbury's Library at Hatfield House" - a talk by Mr. R.H. Harcourt Williams, M.A.

Wednesday 14th. May - "North Mymms Parish in the 19th. Century", by Dr. Kingsford.

TWENTIETH BIRTHDAY SOCIAL : Friday 28th. March, 8 p.m., Toc H Hall, Admission 50p. Please bring a few savouries, cakes etc. and a pencil. Liquid refreshment provided.

BARNET AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wednesday 16th. April - "Trams in and Around Barnet" - by Mr. C.S. Smeeton.

Wednesday 15th. October - Folklore and Local Interest of Hertfordshire" Mrs. Doris Jones-Baker.

THE HISTORY OF THE CLARE HALL ESTATE AT SOUTH MIMMS

With plans appearing in the local press of new owners and a change of use for Clare Hall house and the site of the hospital buildings, it seems a good time to set out for members some of the past history of the house and its lands.

The house, first named Clay Hall, was built about 1745 by Thomas Roberts a linen draper of St. Albans who between 1730 and 1742 bought a number of small properties, some freehold and some copyhold, of the manor of South Mimms.

An abstract of the title of these small properties allows us to trace the previous owners. The first listed was a four acre close of land named 'Marriotts', which Thomas Roberts had purchased from Richard Ireland in 1742. It was a corner sitw bounded on the north by the lane from South Mimms to Ridge Church and by the lane from South Mimms to Blanches on the east and was listed as one of Blanches farm lands in 1613, owned by the Butlers who sold it to Christopher Bowman in 1620, from him it passed through several hands until Richard Ireland bought it in 1738. With it in earlier sales in the title was a house called the 'Princes Arms' which did not belong to Blanches, it was in South Mimms village near the original turnpike gate and was until recently used as the post office. It was sold seperately in 1724 to William Devonshire and did not belong to the Clare Hall estate.

The earliest purchase by Thomas Roberts ~~by Thomas Roberts~~ was a freehold house with a pightle of land belonging containing one acre called 'Reeves' which he bought in 1730 from Elizabeth wife of William Ivory and Mary wife of Richard Roberts, both Elizabeth and Mary being grand-daughters of William Battle by his daughter Elizabeth Bickley. Manor records show that there had benn a house owned by Thomas Alden in 1606; it was described as lying on the south of Marriotts in 1613.

Behind this house and its acre called 'Reeves' were about 30 acres of copyhold land called Upper Reeves, Pond Reeves and Rushy Reeves sold to Thomas Roberts in 1731 by the same grand children of William ~~Bickley~~ Battle, who had inherited them through his stepson John Saring.

Another house with a yard, garden and orchard and a two acre close of meadow land abutting on to the garden and orchard was bought by Thomas Roberts in 1738 from James Field a great-grandson of Joseph Robins who had bought it from Richard Tims in 1672. These pieces with a small piece of waste land granted to Thomas Roberts in 1736 comprised the lands of the original Clare Hall property.

Thomas Roberts, besides this estate, had bought other property in the district and by 1745 had run short of funds and had mortgaged the Clare Hall lands and other pieces. The property is described as all that freehold new erected brick Messuage called Clay Hall with one pightle of one acre purchased from the Ivory and Roberts sisters, showing that the house was built on the site of the old house bought from William Battle's heirs. Also a freehold close of two acres upon ehich a messuage formerly stood and two barns lately built thereon. Also that freehold close f land called Marriotts containing 4 acres and the copyhold lands as before.

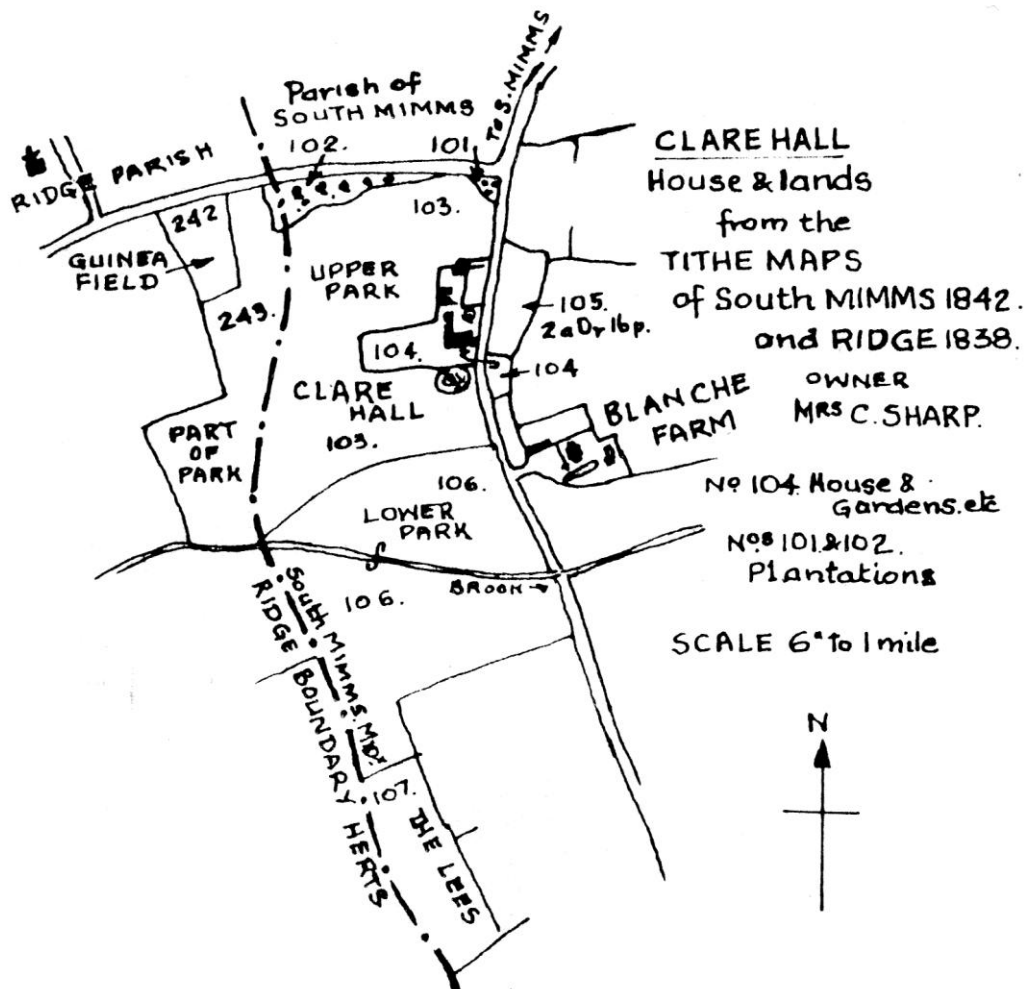
By 1747 Thomas Roberts, a bankrupt, ^{was dead} and Anne Roberts his widow and relict had claimed her right to a dower of a third of his estates now granted by the Commissioners of Bankruptcy to four creditors. Two years later in 1750 Clay Hall, now renamed Clare Hall, with all its lands and buildings was sold to Temple West, Esq., an admiral, who was to be second in command to Admiral Byng at the battle of Minorca. The failure of this battle in 1757 led to Admiral Byng's court martial and execution in March of that year. Temple West is said to have given evidence at Byng's court martial, not altogether in Byng's favour; but after the execution of Admiral Byng he refused to continue to serve on terms that subjected an officer to the treatment as shown to Byng and resigned his command. In July he was however persuaded to resume his command, but only for a few weeks as he died on August 9th. 1757.

Clare Hall passed to his son, also named Temple West. In 1771 he bought a two acre field called Pond Pightle from the owners of the Bull in South Mimms to add to the estate. Perhaps this was the two acre field across the road opposite the house. By 1779 he had died and his son sold the whole property to John Barwick who is described as already in occupation of the house. Much of the farm land of the estate had been farmed by members of the Bockett family since 1714.

John Barwick enlarged the estate with a 16½ acre field called Westmead, purchased from the Rev. William Browne and John Wright. It had once belonged to the Butlers of Blanches but had passed by a marriage settlement to the Blounts of Tittenhanger in 1695 and had descended to Phillip Yorke by 1779, when its name had the alternatives of Bockett Pastures or Mimms Mead. It was probably a strip adjoining the Ridge boundary; as a map of Ridge about that time shows that the Yorkes held land between two pieces of Barwick's on the South Mimms side of the boundary. It is possible that the park was created during John Barwick's ownership, as a small painting of Clare Hall, among the Guildhall Library prints shows parkland around what appears to be a back view of the house, described as the seat of John Barwick, Esq. (see front cover).

John Barwick died in 1791 and his wife Elizabeth did not long survive him. By her will of 1793 she gave her estate to her sister Mrs. Catherine Sharp widow of James Sharp with remainders to her daughter Catherine Sharp. A Catherine Sharp was still owner in 1842 when the tithe map for South Mimms made, probably the daughter, for although she had married in 1817 her husband had agreed to take the name of Sharp.

By 1872 it was in the possession of Edward Wright and in 1886 Teresa Southwell and other ladies founded St. Monica's Priory there. The Priory lasted until 1896 when Clare Hall became a private smallpox hospital. Later it became a sanatoria and in 1929 was taken over by the County Council. The hospital was closed in 1974 and many suggestions have been made about its future use. The latest report is that the house itself has been sold separately to a development consortium, it is a listed building so cannot be demolished or altered without permission. The land and site of the old hospital buildings is to be shared between the Imperial Cancer Research and the National Institute for Biological Research as laboratories.



A sale catalogue, at Barnet Museum, describes Clare Hall in 1851 as a substantial brick building with a slated roof; on the upper storey: 6 bedchambers, dressing room, lobby, W.C., and back staircase on which is a manservants bedroom. The ground floor has a spacious hall with fireplace, side entrance to garden and W.C., a dining room 25ft. X 18ft., a drawing room 22ft. X 17ft. and a library all overlooking and open to the garden. A housekeepers room, numerous closets, a kitchen, side entrance for trades people, a larder, butler's pantry and scullery open to a covered way to the dairy and communication with the garden. Annexed a separate building with a servants hall, 3 bedrooms and a brewhouse, a capital well with covered house and machinery and game larder, stables etc. The estate covers 73 acres including two fields in Ridge.

References of sources and abbreviations.

- Greater London Record Office (GLRO) Acc 861/21, Acc 172/3, Clare Hall.
- GLRO. Middx. Deeds Register (MDR) 1779/1/338, sale to John Barwick.
- GLRO. MDR. 1787/3/242, 1788/1/363: Westmead.
- GLRO. MDR. 18/7/530, marriage Cath. Sharp.
- Herts County Record Office (HCRO) MS.23785: Westmead.
- Manor of South Mimms Records at Hatfield House (Cecil/SM) by permission of the Marquis of Salisbury; court book 3 (1774-1802) p309.
- Dictionary of National Biography: Temple West.
- 'South Mimms' Dr. F. Brittain 1931 p145.
- The Victoria County History of Middlesex, Vol.5 p289.