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April 1983

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POTTERS BAR AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am again pleased to report that, thanks to the hard work of your Hon. Secretary and the support of your committee, we have had another very interesting year.

Our lectures have been well supported and we regret that this was not foreseen when changing our venue to the rather cramped conditions at Oakmere House. This, I hope, will not occur again next season and I thank our members for their patience in putting up with these conditions.

The lectures have been most interesting and of a high standard. We are very fortunate in having a nucleus of lecturers within our membership and this year we have excelled with talks by Mrs Baker, Mrs Brittain and Dr Lynch. Last year the Society arranged a summer outing to Royston which was very well attended by members and friends. The outward journey, started in somewhat inclement weather, was broken at Therfield Heath where a large group trudged up the hill through the mud to inspect the Bronze Age barrows, both long and round. It was here that the sun came out and shone on the righteous for the remainder of the day, making the exploration of the interesting town of Royston a pleasure.

Your committee has been concerned for some while about the state of preservation of some of our records and, particularly, about some of our very fine photographs and slides. I am pleased to say that arrangements are now in hand to have photographic copies made.

Your committee are watching with interest, and some apprehension, the latest planning developments around Wyllyots Manor. We shall continue to keep abreast of the situation.

I am delighted that Ken Rutherford Davis' book 'Britons and Saxons: the Chiltern Region 400-700' was published last year. A copy has been acquired and is in the keeping of our Hon. Archivist.

Finally, I am sorry that my Vice-Chairman, Alan Harding, is resigning. I know that he is under great pressure in his career, and this, coupled with family commitments, has made him feel unable to give the time to the Society that he would wish. This I reluctantly accept as I know that Alan will continue to give us his support and return to the fold when times are easier for him.

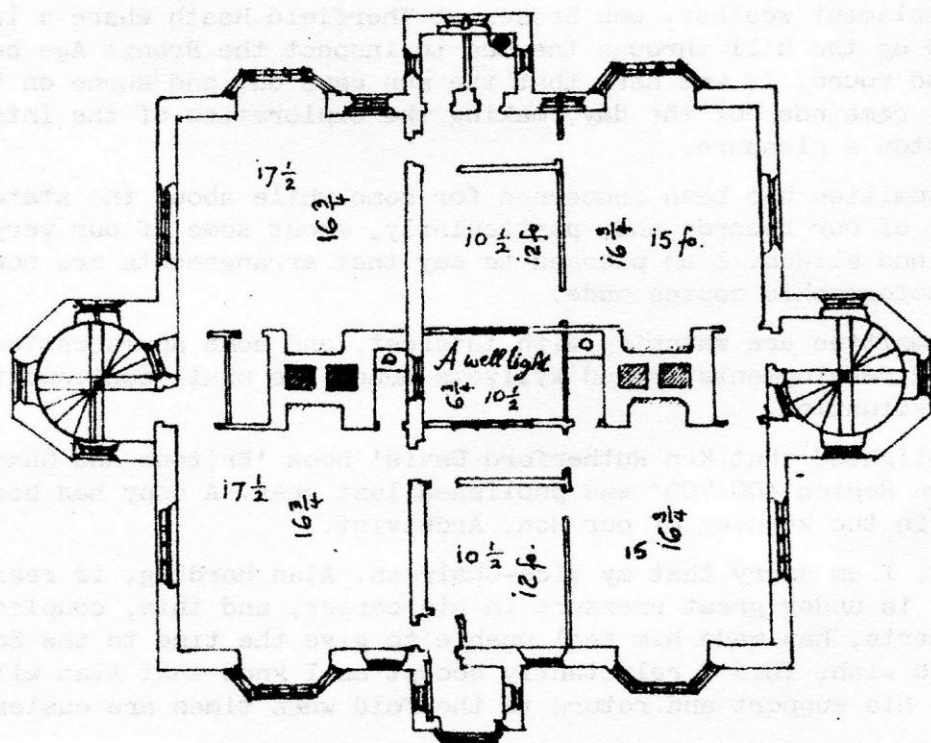
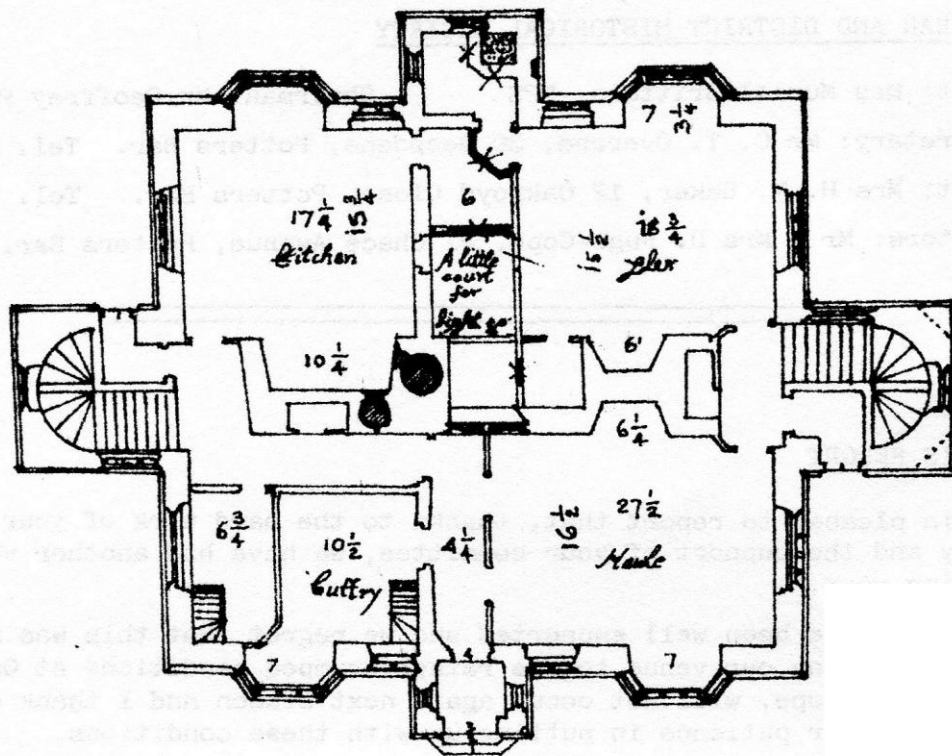
Geoffrey Pulzer

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

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The first story is 12 ft high  
 Second 10 ft 8 in above



m<sup>r</sup> Taylor at potters Bar 1896

Copy of John Thorpe's drawing of Mr Taylor's house at Potters Bar.  
 By Permission of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum.

THE FLEXMERES OF CATHALL HOUSE, POTTERS BAR

This is a continuation of the story of the Flexmere family of Potters Bar which I started in PBHS 15. First I must apologise for a mistake in the family tree which I included in the last part: Simon Flexmere's second son should be shown as George, not Thomas.

After the death in 1634 of Simon Flexmere who bought the house that Robert Taylor had built on Cathall Grove and enlarged the property with additional lands, we come to his son Francis, the future owner, who was to inherit the estate on the death of his mother Barbara. It was part of the settlement made to him on his marriage to Mary Barnard of Northaw.

Simon Flexmere's two younger sons, George and William, were to share the remainder of the rents of land at Castle Bytham Park in Lincolnshire, which was held by a lease for 80 years. Its occupant was Richard Beard who in 1620 had married Simon's daughter Margaret. Francis, the elder son, had also received a share of this rent at his marriage. William, the youngest of Simon's sons, died in 1635 leaving his share of the rents to his brother George.

A pedigree of the Flexmeres of Cathall House and a coat of arms of the family appeared in the book of Middlesex Pedigrees, produced in 1914 by the Harleian Society (vol. 65 p.175). It shows the family from Thomas Flexmere, who died in 1569, to the death of Simon in 1634, with Francis the new owner and those of his family who were born by then.

In 1653 the first Francis Flexmere of Cathall House was living at Clerkenwell in Middlesex, when his son Francis II, a Merchant Taylor of St Gregories, London, was married at Hackney to Mary, the daughter of Samuel Ravenscroft, a gentleman of Hackney. These Ravenscrofts were a London branch of the family who lived at Fold Park in Galley Lane, S Mimms, and who were wellknown in the Barnet area.

From this time, the Flexmeres of Cathall House seem to have settled in London though the house at Potters Bar was still their country residence. The rest of their history comes chiefly from the wills of the family, which link the various descendents. They seem to have been unlucky in the male heirs, both Francis I's son, Francis II, and his grandson Francis III, dying before him.

Francis II died in 1672, leaving his wife Mary (née Ravenscroft) and three children: Francis III, his heir, Mary, born at Hackney in 1662, and George, also born in Hackney, in 1670. Francis was to have his father's house and lands at Potters Bar, both freehold and copyhold, for himself and his heirs for ever; his wife Mary was to have a tavern called the Red Lion in Grace Church Street, London, then in the occupation of Thomas Tatnall, vintner.

His executors were to be his wife and Sergeant Christopher Goodfellow, a friend who was probably related to his wife, whose mother's maiden name had been Goodfellow. To pay his debts and funeral expenses and such legacies as he should give in his will, the executors were to have 'All that toft of land whereupon stood, before the time of the Fire of London in September 1666, a messuage situated at or near Summers Hey, Thame Street in London, with its rights, title and interest and term of years to come'. Also to his executors he gave the annual rent charge of £20 issuing out of those lands at Castle Bytham, Lincoln, payable by his father Mr Francis Flexmere (I) for the term of his natural life, to hold them for the life of his father, and then by sale of the Toft ... to raise money to pay the debts and expenses.

Also to his executors for other payments he gave three other messuages in London described as: one in occupation of Thomas Baker, a furrier, in Walbrooke Street, known by the name of 'the Fox'; another in Thames Street, London, in occupation of John Clarke, cheesemonger; another occupied by Thomas Best, a salter, known as 'the Greyhound' in Thames Street in the parish of St Bottulph in the ward of Billingsgate; to hold them until all the debts were paid. In the meantime to pay to his two younger children, for their maintenance and education, £30

a year to Mary and £20 a year to George. After all the debts were fully paid, the two messuages occupied by Thomas Baker and John Clarke were to go to his daughter Mary and her heirs, and the other messuage occupied by Thomas Best was to go to his son George and his heirs, with a proviso that if either of them died without issue, their houses were to go to the two survivors of his children.

He desired to be buried at South Mimms and left small bequests to his parents Francis Flexmere and his wife, and to his brother-in-law and sister Mary (Rainsford). £5 was to be distributed among the poor of South Mimms and small bequests to each of his servants. His youngest brother William and Francis Rainsford were to be overseers.

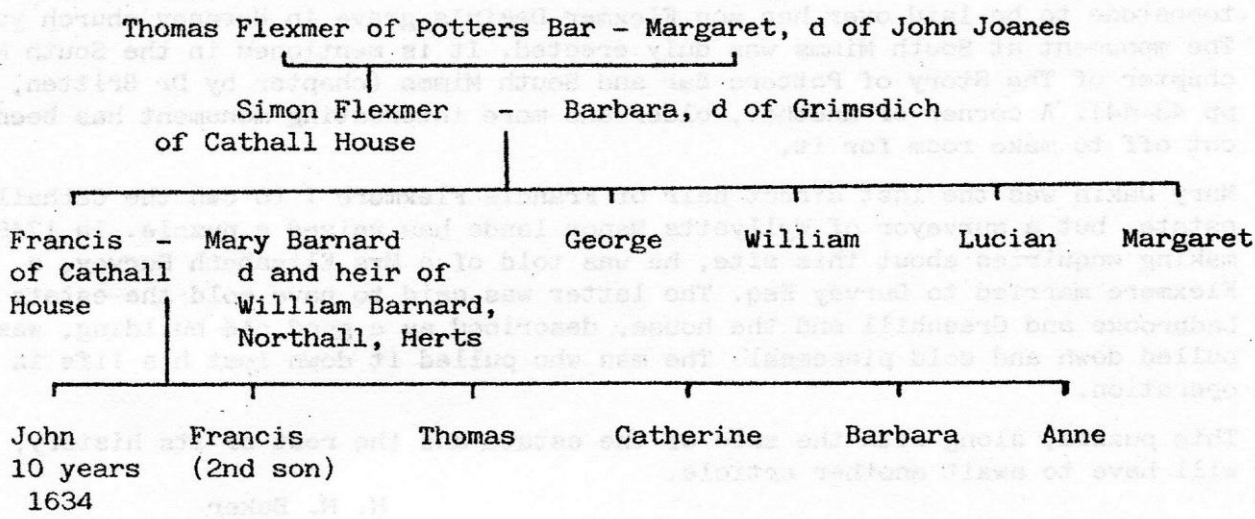
His widow Mary did not survive him for long. She died in October 1673, while living with her sister-in-law Mary Rainsford at Bedford Street, Covent Garden, having first dictated her will to her relatives gathered round her, who were mostly Ravenscrofts. Speaking at the last to her son Francis (III) who was to be her executor, she told him to pay £200 out of the rents of the Red Lion in Grafton Street to his sister Mary, at £100 a year in the first two years, then in the next two to pay the same to his brother George. After that, the Red Lion was to belong to Francis III for ever. There are no further references to George in later records.

Francis Flexmere III, the new heir to the Cathall estate, died in August 1579. His will is short; he was described as of South Mimms. Bequests of money were made to his grandmother, Anne Ravenscroft, and his two Ravenscroft uncles; small bequests to friends and servants and the rest of his goods and chattels, leases and estates to his dear sister Mary, whom he made his sole executor. One of the witnesses of the will was Thomas Silk, who in the same year married his aunt Elizabeth Flexmere, youngest daughter of his grandfather, Francis Flexmere (I).

In November of the same year, 1679, Francis Flexmere I died; he was then living in the parish of St Bartholomew the Great, London. To his daughter Elizabeth he left the leases of one house in Newgate Street, another in London Wall and a third in Queen Anne's Alley. £1000 due from a goldsmith in Lombard Street, when paid was to be distributed amongst his grandchildren. His youngest son William was his sole executor; Mary Rainsford, his eldest daughter, was one of the witnesses - she is the only other member of the family mentioned. William and Elizabeth seem to be the only unmarried members of the family still alive.

Only four years later, in 1683, died William Flexmere the youngest son, a citizen and upholder of London, who wished to be buried in the parish church of South Mimms, near his father. He appears to have been already in possession of a farm and lands at Potters Bar which were part of the lands once attached to the Cathall estate. His will lists many of the descendents of the Flexmeres, linking up sisters and brothers-in-law and their children. His sister Mary, wife of Francis Raynesford, or Rainsford, had four children of whom Mary, her daughter was to have her uncle's farm at Potters Bar which was occupied by Thomas Batchelor. The rest of his lands at Potters Bar were to be equally divided between her three brothers William, Francis and Henry Rainsford, when they were of age. To his sister Mary Rainsford, he left rents and profits from leasehold lands in Rayneham, Essex. William obviously had his doubts about his brother-in-law, for he states that the rents are only to be paid on his sister's signature and to her hand or to one appointed by her, and that no part of it shall be had or received by the creditors of Francis Raynesford, her husband. It is to be for the better maintenance of Mary during her life, and after to his niece Mary Raynesford during my lease. There were also bequests of money or silver articles to Ann his sister and her husband John Cockett, and to two children, Francis and Ann.

FLEXMERE PEDIGREE



Pedigree set out in Harl. Soc. Vol. 65 (Midx Pedigrees p.175), pub. 1914  
 British Museum 2099 c.

To his sister Elizabeth Silke he left 'the order-plus rent that shall grow due after his death of his house in George Alley near Fleete Ditch London, during her life, and after to his nephew William Raynesford'. He also mentions the late Stafford Leventhorpe, who had been married to his sister Barbara, both of whom seem to be dead. £6 were for the poor of South Mimms and the rest of his goods were to be sold towards paying his debts. By 1691 all the property given to the Rainsford children had been sold to John Walker of Hadley.

The last heir to Cathall House and lands was Mary Flexmere who had inherited them on the death of her brother Francis Flexmere III in 1679. In 1687 she married Charles Dakin of London. One son is recorded, named Flexmer Dakin, who died at Highgate in 1734. His will was short, and he asked to be buried in Hornsey Church Yard. His mother Mary Dakin was to have his household furniture, plate and jewels both at Highgate and at his chambers in Gray's Inn. All the rest of his estate was to be divided between his mother and his cousin Mary Charnelle of Derby, who were to be his executors.

His mother Mary Dakin, the last of the Flexmeres to hold the Cathall estate, died in the parish of St Andrew's, Holborn, in 1741. She wished to be buried in the parish church of South Mimms. All her house and estates at Potters Bar were to go to Mr Francis Boycott (senior) and Mr Thomas Ravenscroft (senior) in trust, to sell for the best price they could, and the clear money arising from the sale, or until a sale could be made, the clear yearly rents thereof, to be equally divided between Henry Rainsford, Wm Leventhorpe and Mrs Mary Leventhorpe, Mrs Elizabeth Cole, Mrs Alice Shore and Mrs Frank Greenhill, share and share alike.

Three properties in London, a house in Walbrooke, one in Little Thames Street near the Old Swan, and the remainder of the lease of a house in Great Thames Street at the sign of the Unicorn, were to go to her cousin Mrs Thomas Ravenscroft (junior) and her heirs. The estate was also charged with an annuity of £10 to her aunt, Mrs Margaret Ravenscroft and to her brother Walthoe Ravenscroft for their lives. £2000 Bank Stock was to go to Thos Ravenscroft (junior) and Mrs Rosa Harris (widow) in trust for the use of a god-daughter Frances Ball, wife of Joe Ball - again doubts of the husband were expressed by making it for her use only, not for her husband 'who must not meddle', nor subject to his debts.

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The sum of £100 was to be laid out by her executors in the erection of a monument in the Church of South Mimms for her and for her family, and also a tombstone to be laid over her son Flexmer Dakin's grave in Hornsey church yard. The monument at South Mimms was duly erected. It is mentioned in the South Mimms chapter of The Story of Potters Bar and South Mimms (chapter by Dr Britten, pp 43-44). A corner of another, older and more interesting monument has been cut off to make room for it.

Mary Dakin was the last direct heir of Francis Flexmere I to own the Cathall estate, but a surveyor of Wyllyotts Manor lands has raised a puzzle. In 1745, making enquiries about this site, he was told of a Mrs Elizabeth Durvey, a Flexmere married to Durvey Esq. The latter was said to have sold the estate to Ladbrooke and Greenhill and the house, described as a good old building, was pulled down and sold piecemeal. The man who pulled it down lost his life in the operation.

This puzzle, along with the sale of the estate and the rest of its history, will have to await another article.

H. M. Baker

FLEXMERE WILLS: Commissary Court of London (at the Guildhall Library)

John Flexmere 1470/1 MS 9171/6 fo. 73  
Thomas Flexmere 1569 MS 9171 /15 fo.

Prerogative Court of Canterbury (at the Public Record Office)

Symon Flexmere 1634 PCC book Seagar 4  
William Flexmere 1635 PCC book Sadler/112  
Francis Flexmere (II) 1672 PROB/11/339  
Mary Flexmere 1674 PROB/11/344  
(widow of Francis II)  
Francis Flexmere (I) 1679 PCC book King/141  
Francis Flexmere (III) 1679 PCC book King/ 115  
William Flexmere 1684 PCC book Hare/4  
Flexmere Dakin 1734 PCC book Ockham/214  
Mary Dakin 1741 PCC book Spurway/341

Inquisition Post Mortems (Public Record Office)

Simon Flexmere 1634/5 C142/726/68

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SIR HENRY BESSEMER

Further to Dr Lynch's query in PBHS 15, we have received the following letter from Dr Peter Kingsford of North Mymms Local History Society.

Dear Editors,

the answer to Dr Lynch's problem is pages 166-178 of my Engineers, Inventors and Workers, published by Edward Arnold in 1964. He would do much better, however, to read Sir Henry Bessemer's autobiography, published in 1905, on which my own account is based.

Yours sincerely,

P. W. Kingsford

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We would like to thank the Vicar & Churchwardens of St. Mary's Potters Bar for their kind permission to use the Parish duplicator for producing PBHS 16.

THE DAY WE WENT TO ROYSTON BY WAY OF THERFIELD HEATH

Loud roared the dreadful thunder,  
The rain a deluge poured,  
The clouds were rent asunder  
By lightening's vivid powers.

What a morning we had! The rain came down in torrents, the thunder roared and the lightning flashed. It was 26 June 1982 and the day of the Summer Outing. Would they turn up? one wondered: but they did. All who had promised to come (and a few doubtful starters) were at the rendezvous on the Therfield Road at the appointed time.

It was still raining as we slipped and skidded on the wet chalk during our ascent of the Heath to see the barrows. These include a neolithic long barrow some 125 feet long and 6-12 feet high, which is surrounded by five mounds. Ten Bronze Age round barrows stand nearby.

Returning to our cars in a somewhat soggy state, we drove to the town and went to the museum where we were welcomed by Mrs Smith and Mr Tew. This small museum contains many interesting exhibits including an old printing press which at one time had been used to print the local newspaper, The Royston Crow.

Two of the exhibits were not quite what they appeared to be. One was a poster advertising stage-coach services: it was dated 1879, which is long after the ordinary stage-coaches had ceased to run. It is in fact from the 'Revival of Coaching' in the 1870s, when replicas of the stage-coaches were run on selected routes during the summer months. This poster showed that some routes were operated three times a week. The 'Revival of Coaching' is remarkably like the 'Revival of Steam' in our own days.

A brass badge and chain of office, inscribed 'Chief Gargler; AOFB Royston Vat', previously unexplained, was identified as having been made in about 1930. The AOFB was the Ancient Order of Froth Blowers, invented by the brewers to increase the sales of beer; the Vats were the local branches of the order and the Chief Gargler was the equivalent of a Chairman. Other titles were Whirlwind and Grand Typhoon.

Emerging from the museum we found the day brighter and later, as our guide, Mr Tew, conducted us around the town, the sun actually shone. We entered Melbourn Street and came eventually to the Cave, perhaps the most famous feature of Royston. This lies under the pavement on the north side of the street. It is a curious bell-shaped chamber which has been cut out of the chalk and has carvings of religious subjects round the lower wall. Its origins are unknown but there is some reason to believe it may have belonged to the Knights Templar. Another theory is that it may have been the hermitage that is known to have existed nearby.

We came next to the Royse Stone which is all that is left of Roysia's Cross and which, so it is said, gave the town its name. Crossing the road, our guide led us up King Street where much of the property is in a sorry state of decay with trees and weeds growing out of roofs and walls. This is a pity because this street of 17th century buildings, with 18th and 19th century additions, could be a show piece to rival almost anything which Rye or Chester has to offer. At the southern end lies Sun Hill and the London Road where stands Whitehill, once the home of Lord Mounteagle, who brought the news of the Gunpowder Plot to James I.

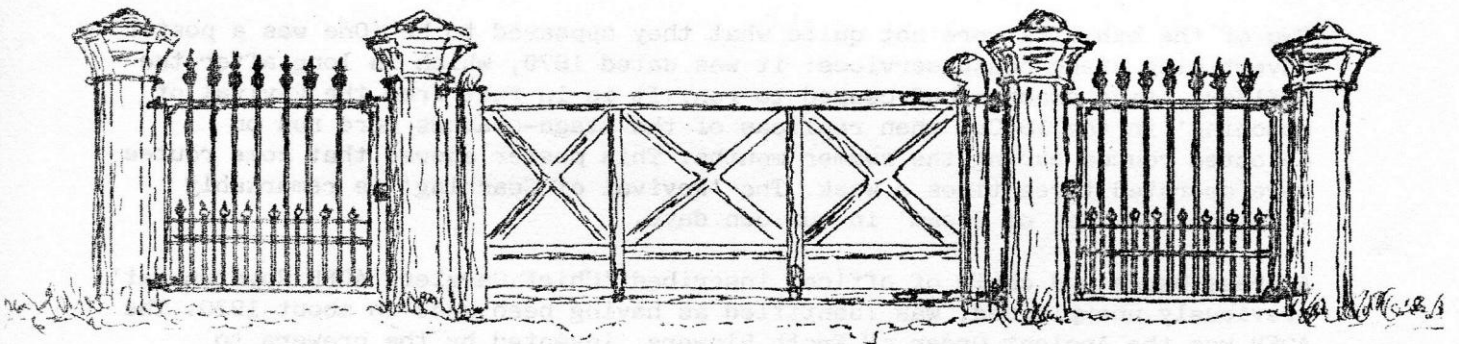


The High Street parallels King Street but is much better preserved. It contains many buildings of mediaeval origin and is most attractive. From the end of it we passed through to Market Hill, the site of the Wednesday market whose charter was granted by Richard I in 1189. At the bottom of the hill stands the Old Court House, a pleasing brick and stone building dating from 1849, while at the top of the hill is the market place (the Saturday market being in full swing, many members lost their way among the antique and book stalls). On the eastern side of the market stands the Corn Exchange, built in 1879 of Hitch's patent interlocking bricks.

From the market we went by way of Fish Hill and the Priory Gardens to the Priory Church of St John the Baptist, where we said goodbye to our guide. This attractive flint building, with its squat tower, has a 12th century foundation and an almost complete 15th century roof. It was the week-end of the Flower Festival which, while adding to our delight, diverted our attention from much of the church itself.

It was a rewarding and enjoyable outing, socially a great success. Our thanks are due to the Royston Historical Society which made the arrangements, to Mrs Smith who showed us the exhibits in the museum, and to Mr Tew who so kindly gave up his time to show us round the town.

C.T.Overend  
A.C.Lynch



#### THE TURNPIKE ROAD TO HATFIELD (1)

The road from Potters Bar to Hatfield was put into the care of a Turnpike Trust in 1730. The Act of Parliament<sup>1</sup> (like all other Turnpike Acts) states the two ends of the road but not the route between them. The local Trust controlled the road between Galley Corner (Garwick Corner to us) and Lemsford, the little village between Hatfield and Welwyn which has been by-passed since 1833.

Between the northern end of Potters Bar and Little Heath, the road was altered in about 1802; the present Hatfield Road takes a diagonal short cut where the original road continued northward to what is now a right-angled turn in The Causeway, but which used to be T junction with Quakers Lane. The old road used about 400 yards of Quakers Lane, then turned northward again, through a road now vanished, to the top of the hill at Little Heath. The turnpike gate was there, but after the new road had been made, the gate was moved to the junction of the High Street and the new Hatfield Road. At the same time, another turnpike gate, which stood across Coopers Lane, was moved to the southern end of The Causeway, side by side with the other gate.

The road down the hill from Little Heath is cut into the side of the hill, an improvement probably made by the Turnpike Trust, but we do not know when. In 1978 Mrs H. M. Baker found a tithe map of 1720 on which it is marked as London Lane, and the names of the fields at the sides of it show that it ran on substantially the same line as now.

Beyond the foot of the hill there was a pair of right-angled corners which has nowadays been rounded to an S bend. The origin of these corners is a puzzle. The road crosses a bridge and then turns left into what was originally a minor road (it is now a footpath) running west from Northaw - but to where? It turns right again within 100 yards, with no sign that any road ever went straight on, and then comes to the junction with Swanley Bar Lane. Perhaps it is significant that this junction is really a cross-roads; the entrance to Leggatts Park is a continuation of Swanley Bar Lane. In the days when roads commonly ran through private parks (as the North Road ran through Wrotham Park, Brookmans Park and Hatfield Park), the road may have crossed a corner of Leggatts Park and in later years have been diverted out of it into the S bend. But this is guesswork.

Maps from the period 1750-1800 all show the road from Potters Bar northward either with its right-angled bends or at least some diversion from the direct line. Some of them, but not all, show the road from Northaw to Swanley Bar Lane. There are three useful earlier maps: by Moll<sup>2</sup>, 1700; by Morden, 1704; and by Bowen<sup>3</sup>, 1720. Moll shows three roads between Potters Bar and Bell Bar; Morden shows two, which look like two of Moll's, and may of course have been copied from Moll's map. Most of Moll's map is remarkably accurate and the roads can be easily identified. In two areas only, Potters Bar and Luton, something is wrong (and as his map was of Hertfordshire, perhaps he ought not to be criticised for errors in two areas which were outside the county). The most likely interpretation of his map is that his middle route was something like the modern road, except between Potters Bar and Little Heath, and that the others are (1) along Darkes Lane and through Gobions Park and (2) along Coopers Lane and across the not-yet-enclosed common land of North Mimms to where the BBC transmitter now stands.

Bowen's is a set of strip-maps showing the main road and its junctions with minor roads. He shows a double corner at Potters Bar, left and then right, at 15½ miles from London, and a left bend at 16 miles. These distances are from Cornhill, not from Hick's Hall (as is more usual), and so the bends are those at Quakers Lane and near Leggatts Park.

From Swanley Bar the old road ran in a straightline for 2½ miles, through Bell Bar to Woodside. Kentish Lane, instead of curving into it, ran straight to a junction well south of Shepherds Way; its old course can still be seen, marked by lines of trees. Shepherds Way dates only from 1777, when the common land of North Mimms was enclosed. Its junction with Kentish Lane and the main road was at ground level, not on an embankment as it is now. The changes in the road between this point and Hatfield, most of which date from 1851, must await another article.

But if the turnpike road took the route described here, why is there a Turnpike Oak by the side of Coopers Lane, and why was the turnpike road said<sup>4</sup> to run through The Causeway, Coopers Lane, and the track to the foot of Little Heath hill? The key to this puzzle is in the Act of Parliament which set up the Turnpike Trust in 1730. It confers the usual powers to set up toll-gates across the turnpike road, but it also includes a very unusual, if not unique, provision:

'And to the end the Tolls hereby granted may be effectively collected, ... it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Trustees ... to erect ... a Gate or Turnpike, in, upon, or cross the Lane called Cooper's Lane, and also a Gate or Gates, Turnpike or Turnpikes, in or cross any Passages or Ways leading into a place called the Hooke, in the Parish of North Haw; and also on the Sides of the said road intended to be repaired ... and there likewise to receive and take the aforesaid Tolls or Duties, so the same do not extend to a double Charge, in passing through any other of the Turnpikes to be erected in pursuance of this Act.'

In another clause, inhabitants of North Haw were exempted from paying tolls in Coopers Lane or the Hooke. The provision that payment at any one gate covers the use of the other gates too is quite usual.

One obvious conclusion is that 'the road intended to be repaired' is not the same as Coopers Lane.

The clause seems to be an attempt to solve the problem of where to place the turnpike gates so as to catch the long-distance travellers but not the local traffic. A gate south of Little Heath could be evaded by using Kitts End Lane, Baker Street and Darkes Lane; a gate anywhere between Little Heath and Bell Bar could be evaded by using Coopers Lane and the unenclosed commons. The extra gate in Coopers Lane does not imply that much traffic went that way, but only that it might be expected to do so if there were no gate there. There could perhaps have been one good reason for using the Coopers Lane route in wet weather; it remained on high, and therefore drier, ground all the way to Bell Bar. But nobody using the route for that reason would have returned to the present road at Swanley Bar.

There is no record that the Trust ever placed a gate across Hook Lane. Presumably, if a detour were long enough and the state of the road were bad enough, nobody would use it.

When the gates were moved to Potters Bar, the status of the subsidiary gate changed. It was no longer the specially-authorized gate across Coopers Lane; it became a normal side-gate, such as a Trust could place across any side-road entering the main road. (Side-gates were not in fact very common; the local Trust had only one other, so far as the records show.) The inhabitants of Northaw, who had been exempt from paying at the special gate, now had to pay if they used the road into Potters Bar.

The theory that the turnpike road itself ran through Coopers Lane was due to H. J. Butcher<sup>5</sup>, a keen local historian active about thirty years ago, who left his papers to the Potters Bar Historical Society. He was expert in tracing the ownership and occupation of plots of land, but there is nothing in his papers to suggest that he had ever seen the Turnpike Act of 1730. He was perfectly right in thinking that there was a turnpike gate near the Turnpike Oak, but his deduction that it was across a turnpike road was - for the very strange reason given above - wrong. This paragraph is written with no intention of disparaging Butcher's work, but in the hope that his surprising account of the turnpike road may be replaced by the more prosaic view that the turnpike road always used much the same route as the modern road.

This article has mentioned Potters Bar, Swanley Bar and Bell Bar. None of them is named after a turnpike gate (an otherwise commendable book<sup>6</sup> is wrong here). Bell Bar was the entrance to Hatfield Chase; Potters Bar may have been the entrance to Enfield Chace (though this view is being challenged); Swanley Bar may have been the entrance to either Gobions Park or Leggatts Park. All the names are older than the turnpike system; and there is no evidence that there was ever a turnpike gate - that is, a toll-gate installed by a Turnpike Trust - anywhere between Little Heath and Hatfield.

A.C.Lynch

#### References

- 1 3 Geo II, c. 10
- 2 Included in Chauncy's 'Hertfordshire', 1700; facsimile reprint
- 3 E. Bowen, 'Brittania depicta', 1720 (This is a revision of Ogilby's book of 1670).
- 4 'The Story of Potters Bar and South Mimms', 1966, p.86
- 5 H.J.Butcher, 'Deviations of the Great North Road', Barnet & District Record Society, Bulletin no 8 (1954)
- 6 N.W. Webster, 'The Great North Road', 1974 pp 35-36

COLLIERS LANE REVISITED I

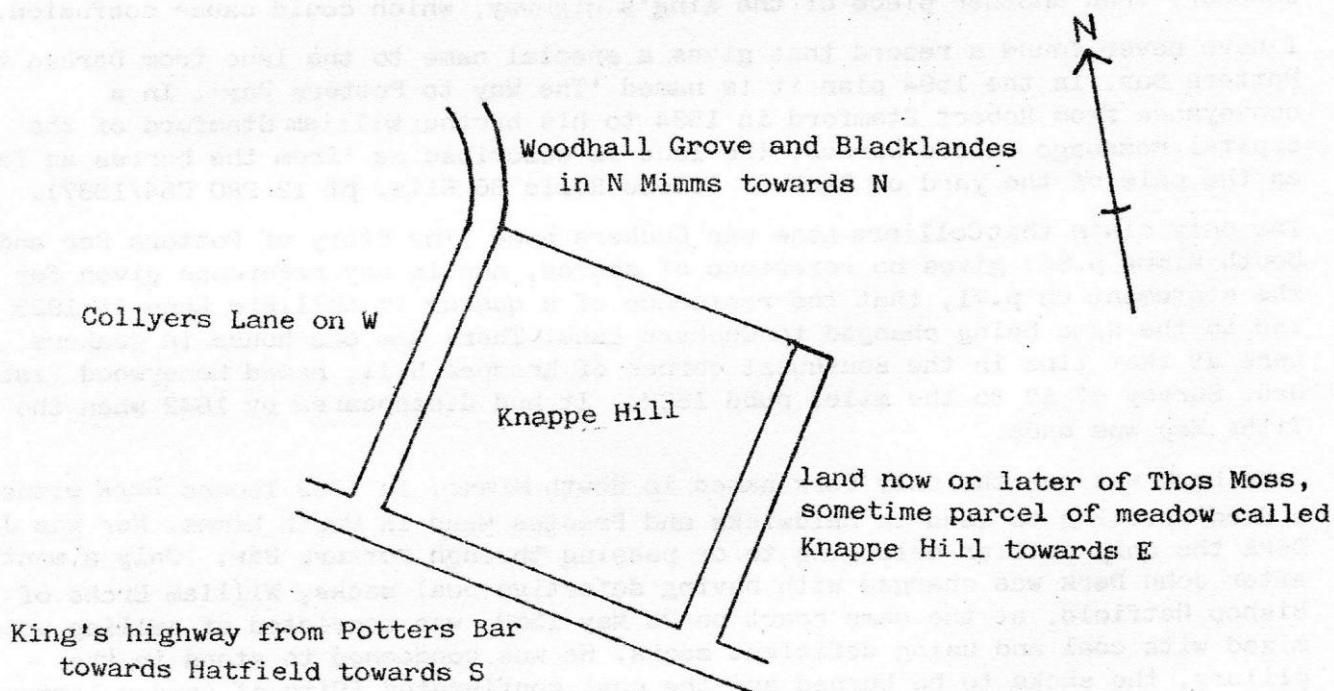
The Editors have received three further interpretations of the position of Colliers Lane, following Mr K.R.Davis' article in PBHS 15.

Whilst agreeing with Mr Rutherford Davis that the interpretation of the buttings and boundings from deeds can be difficult, I write in support of Mrs Baker's theory. I first transcribed the deed many years ago (MCRO Acc 805/1).

If one examines Ralph Treswell's map of 1594 one is able to obtain the location of Knaps Hill, Blaklands and Woodhall Grove. The size and shape of Knaps Hill, which is mentioned in the deed as containing by estimation ten acres, can be ascertained from the appropriate 6" OS map, dated 1868-77.

The plan of the 'alternative theory' given in PBHS 15 shows Blaklands and Knaps Hill in an incorrect position according to the above evidence.

Therefore I would suggest that the evidence supports the following interpretation of the wording of the deed.



I would not agree that evidence exists to support the contention that Darkes was named after John Derk, though such an assumption is likely. Similarly, it does not follow that Colliers Lane is a direct reference to John Derk's occupation of collier; I know of no evidence to support such a conclusion.

In a report on the state of the fences of Enfield Chase, in 1605, mention is made of hooke gate with the stile called Colliers Stile, but I would not infer from this that Coopers Lane Road and The Causeway might have been an eastern extension of Colliers Lane. In fact, I am sure they are not; but there is much evidence to support the making of charcoal in the neighbourhood of Enfield Chase and as an active policy of Lord Salisbury, on his estates.

B. Warren

COLLIERS LANE II

In answer to Mr K. R. Davis's challenge to my interpretation of the boundaries of Knappes Hill given in the indenture of 15 May 1615 (Middx CRO Acc. 805/1), I can assure him that I was aware that my plan was askew. It is often easier to trace a small piece of a map at an angle to fit the width of a page and take less room. As long as the compass points are included it should not matter.

To make it clear why I consider that Colliers Lane was the short lane to the N Mymms boundary, I have made an enlarged plan of Knappes Hill with the compass points radiating from the centre of Knappes Hill to the boundaries, which shows the lane I have called Colliers Lane as the boundary towards the west. It also sets the eastern and northern boundaries as they are shown on the plan of 1594.

There is also another record of Colliers Lane in the records of the Manor of S Mimms of 1452 (Hatfield House, Court Rolls 14/27/5 recto) which states 'that the tenants of the land and tenement called Knappeslonde in South Mimms should keep clean two pieces of the ditch lying along the King's Highway between Colyerslane and Potters Bar ... at present a nuisance'. This makes it clear that Colliers Lane was not Quakers Lane.

If Colliers Lane was the ancient name of this lane, in regular use by colliers passing through Potters Bar, it would more likely be used to describe a field boundary than another piece of the King's Highway, which could cause confusion.

I have never found a record that gives a special name to the lane from Darkes to Potters Bar. In the 1594 plan it is named 'The Way to Potters Bar'. In a conveyance from Robert Stamford in 1594 to his brother William Stamford of the capital messuage called Darkes, the lane is described as 'from the barres as far as the pale of the yard of Darkes' (Close Rolls 36 Eliz. pt 12 PRO C54/1387).

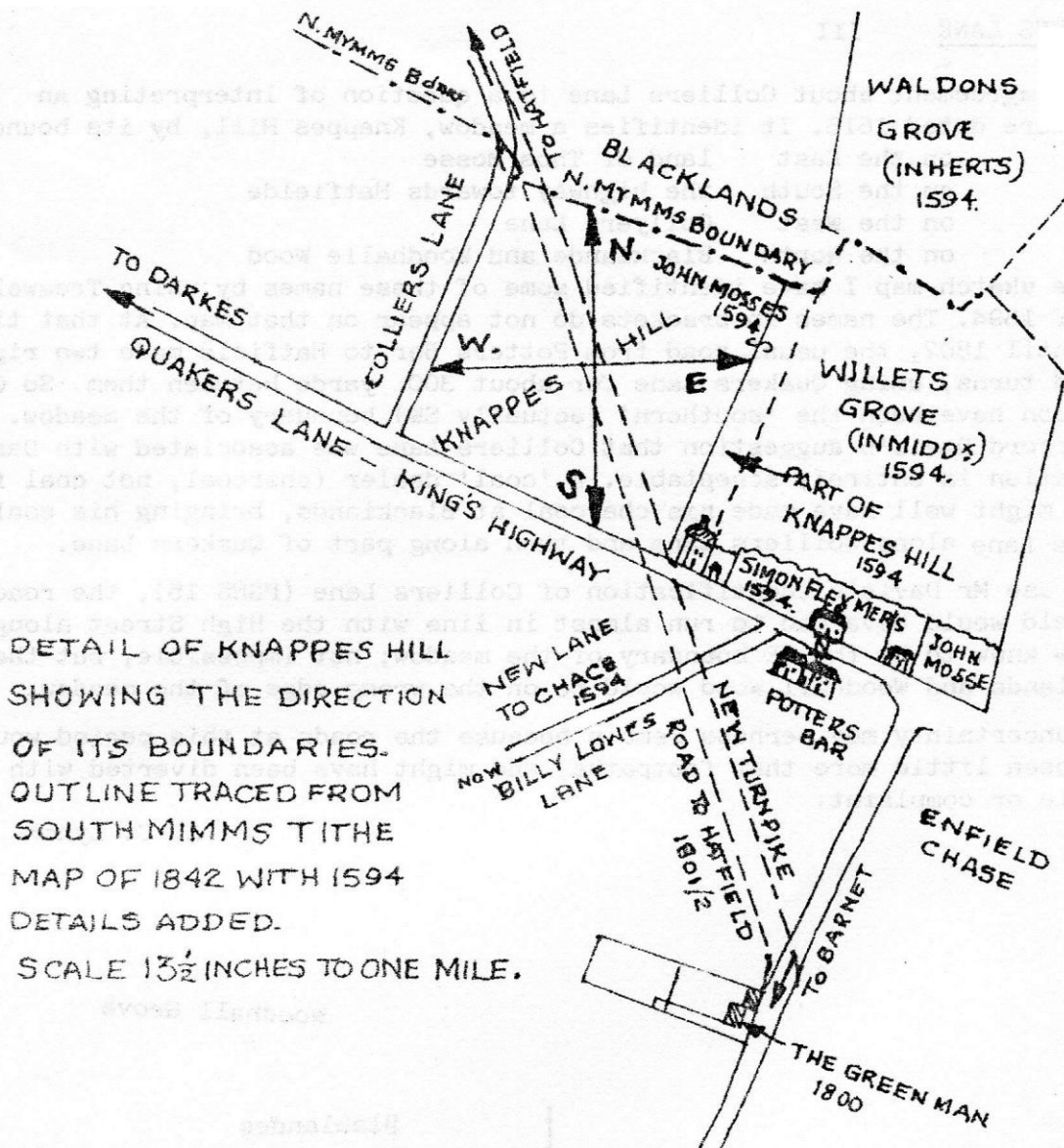
The only claim that Colliers Lane was Quakers Lane (The Story of Potters Bar and South Mimms p.56) gives no reference of source, nor is any reference given for the statement on p.71, that the residence of a quaker in Colliers Lane in 1825 led to the name being changed to Quakers Lane. There was one house in Quakers Lane at that time in the southwest corner of Knappes Hill, named Honeywood (1st Ord. Survey of 1" to the mile, pubd 1822). It had disappeared by 1842 when the Tithe Map was made.

John Derk was not the only Derk named in South Mimms. In 1382 Thomas Derk witnessed a deed relating to land in Haldwicks and Prestes Mead in South Mimms. Nor was John Derk the only collier belonging to or passing through Potters Bar. Only a month after John Derk was charged with having defective coal sacks, William Erche of Bishop Hatfield, at the same court on 25 May 1382, was convicted of selling wood mixed with coal and using deficient sacks. He was condemned to stand in the pillory, the sacks to be burned and the coal confiscated (City of London Letter Book H(1375-99) p.184). It seems probable that he would have used the route through Potters Bar to London.

In May 1534 William Hore of South Mimms, collier, with several others broke into a close of land and wood adjoining Sir John More's house at North Mimms on two occasions and chased and hunted deer, making off with several ... and set a buck's head upon a pole with a stick in its mouth towards the mansion of More (PRO Star Chamber 2/28/68).

The Victoria County History, Middx vol. V p.292 states that F. Page, who leased the demesne woods of South Mimms in the early 17th century, was a charcoal-burner (Hatfield House C16th Deed 280/10) and that several other colliers are recorded in the 17th century (Middx RO MJSP 1617/1).

Under Edmonton (VCH vol.V p.170) there is some interesting information on charcoal burning, which was encouraged by the Cecils. (Willm and Robt Cecil as land-owners in Edmonton and Southgate 1561-1600; Edmonton Hundred Historical Soc. Occasional Papers, new series no 22. This has many more details).



The suggestion that the western end of Quakers Lane was called Saunders Hill puzzles me as I have never heard this theory before, or seen any records that suggest it. Saunders Hill was an estate on the north side of Quakers Lane. Part was a copyhold of Wyllyots and is shown on the plan of 1594. The rest was freehold. I have always thought the hill referred to was the rise of the land in Heath Road and Osborn Road, which were built on this estate. A manor court roll of South Mimms in 1590 (Hatfield House, S Mimms General 32/8 & 9) states that 'Jo Elwyn (the tenant) doe scour his ditch against Saunders Hill betwixt Newlandgrove and Darkes Gate'. Newland Grove belonged to John Mosse of Knappes Hill in 1583 and appears to have been to the west of the lane I call Collier Lane. It was later sold to the owner of Saunders Hill.

I have to thank Mr Harcourt Williams, Archivist at Hatfield House, for translating the extract from the Court Roll of 1452, and the Marquess of Salisbury for permission to use the South Mimms records.

Helen M. Baker

COLLIERS LANE

## III

The disagreement about Colliers Lane is a question of interpreting an indenture dated 1615. It identifies a meadow, Knappes Hill, by its boundaries:

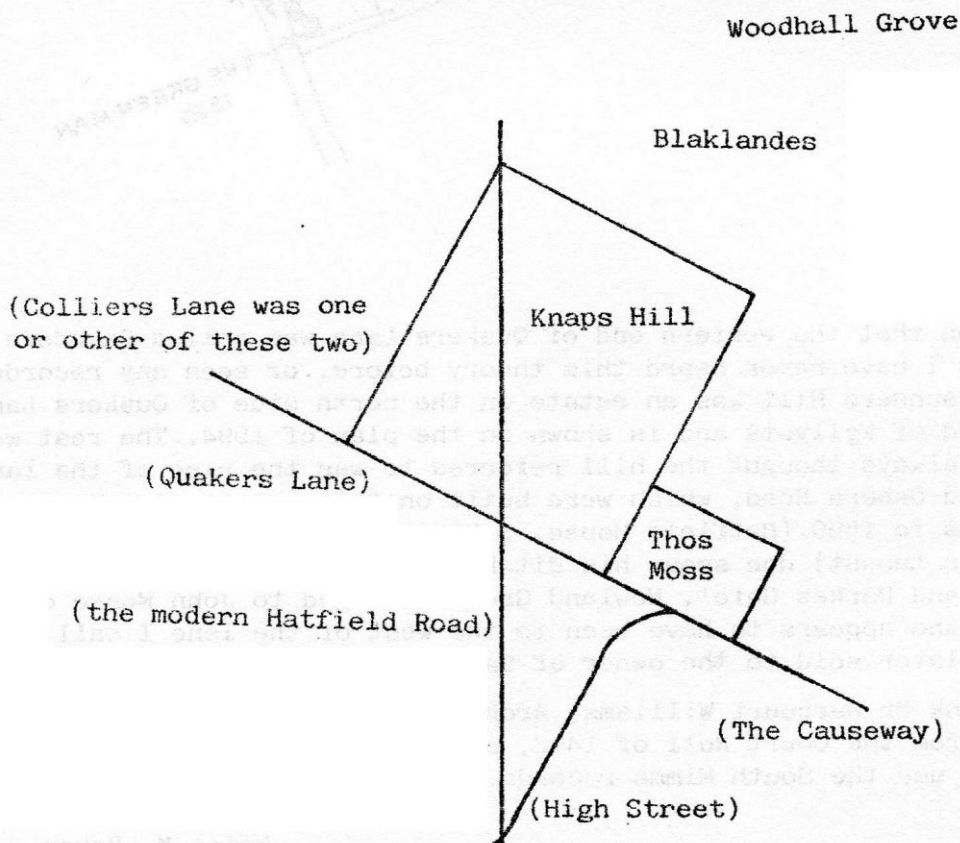
on the East land of Thos Mosse  
 on the South the highway towards Hatfielde  
 on the West Collyers Lane  
 on the North Blacklande and Woodhalle Wood

In the sketch map I have identified some of these names by using Treswell's map of 1594. The names in brackets do not appear on that map. At that time, and until 1802, the usual road from Potters Bar to Hatfield made two right-angled turns, using Quakers Lane for about 300 yards between them. So Quakers Lane can have been the 'southern' (actually SW) boundary of the meadow. Mr Rutherford Davis's suggestion that Colliers Lane was associated with Dark's occupation is entirely acceptable. A 'coal' dealer (charcoal, not coal from a mine) might well have made his charcoal at Blacklands, bringing his coal to Darkes Lane along Colliers Lane and then along part of Quakers Lane.

If we use Mr Davis's identification of Colliers Lane (PBHS 15), the road to Hatfield would have had to run almost in line with the High Street along what we now know to be the SE boundary of the meadow; not impossible, but then Blacklands and Woodhall Wood would be on the wrong edge of the meadow.

Some uncertainty may perhaps remain because the roads at this period would have been little more than footpaths, and might have been diverted with little trouble or complaint.

A. C. Lynch



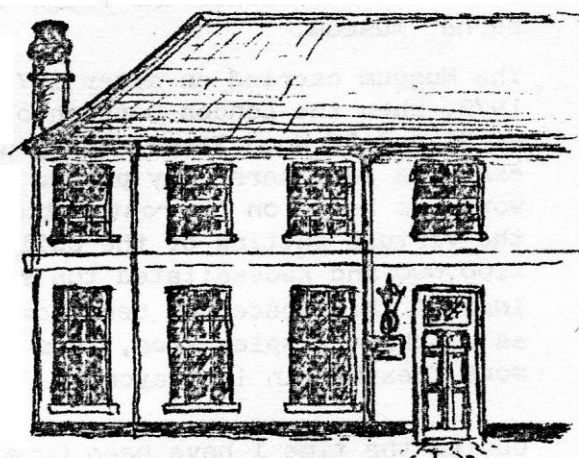
### EAST HERTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The PBHS has membership of the EHAS which is the county society catering primarily for the eastern half of Herts that includes the Potters Bar district. It was founded in 1898 and the President is Sir John Hanbury, CBE. Some of our PBHS members might like to consider joining EHAS as individual members, which has advantages. About every eighteen months members receive Hertfordshire Archaeology (published jointly with the St Albans Archaeological and Architectural Society), each number of which contains interesting articles on local history, antiquities and excavations. There is usually a lecture programme in the winter, held at Hertford. There one can meet people with similar interests.

For many people the chief draw is the four or so excursions each year to places not only in the Herts area and adjoining counties (sometimes houses not open to the public) but also sites as far afield as Cirencester, Lincoln, and Fishbourne Roman Palace; this summer I led an outing to Dorchester-on-Thames, Ewelme and Stonor Park in S Oxfordshire.

The annual subscription from 1 January 1983 is £4 (which many people today are willing to spend on a bottle of wine!) but I think EHAS members get good value in return. Why not think about it? The Hon. Secretary is Mr Colin L. Lee, 107 Queens Road, Hertford, tel. Hertford 56256.

KRD  
(Chairman EHAS)



### THE BARNET MUSEUM

In 1936 the Barnet & District Record Society decided to hire one room for a Museum in Ravenscroft House. Then, in 1938 we left there, and a couple of rooms were taken in the present building at 31 Wood Street.

Mr W. McB. Marcham was the first Curator. He was one of the top researchers of documents in London and he, with the Chairman of the Barnet & District Record Society, Mr Leftwich, built up the reputation of the Museum after the official opening in 1938. At that time there were no other historical or archaeological interests that I know of in the district. The nearest museum was in St Albans on the Hatfield Road, or perhaps Broomfield Park Museum at Palmers Green.

During the Second World War, as is well known to Barnet people, a bomb was dropped in Wood Street almost opposite the Museum. This caused some flooding at 31 and the most valuable exhibits were moved to the safe. Some exhibits and documents were destroyed.

Following the ending of the War, the Museum was again open to the public after much work had been undertaken in restoring order. This would have been about 1947, by which time the Museum had spread to about three rooms and the ground floor of 33 Wood Street had also been taken over.



With some of the war damage money allocated to the Barnet & District Record Society a passage was built connecting 31 and 33, but the upper rooms of 33 were never taken over for Museum purposes although repeated applications had been made for their use. The rooms were small and not very satisfactory for a Museum. A lot of the restoration which needed to be done after the damage to the two houses in Wood Street was achieved through the Town Clerk, Mr Alfred S. Mays, who was a member of the Society and who, later on in the 1950s and 1960s, became Chairman.

Around 1960 Mr Marcham gave up the Curatorship of the Museum and Mr Bath, who lived opposite the Museum, took over. Although Mr Marcham had researched so much archaeological history of the Barnet area, no part of this work came to the Museum, mainly because his research work had been stored in a garage attached to a house in Barnet, and was burnt when the new occupants of the house moved in. Some research work of his was sent to the Library in Barnet and to the County Record Office.

In 1965 Mr Bath was taken ill and I took over the job as Curator, purely on a temporary basis. As things turned out, nobody else was willing to take on the job of Curator, and I am still there. Soon after the above date, further rooms in 31 were taken over for Museum purposes and these rooms were officially opened by the then Mayor of Barnet.

A number of special exhibitions have been undertaken. The last official one was for the quincentenary celebrations of the Battle of Barnet in 1971. This was on show for fourteen days or so. In preparation for this exhibition it was decided to have flags with the arms of the chief contestants on either side. These were worked by various Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds to the designs of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute. After the exhibition, the Societies who worked the flags agreed that the best place for them was the Barnet Museum.

The Museum carried on after 1971 and expanded where possible until November 1979, when the London Borough of Barnet informed us that owing to the premises at 31 and 33 Wood Street being unsafe, the Museum would have to close. All the exhibits were carefully packed and stored in a local school and in April 1981 work was begun on the restoration of the building. This major project, involving the virtual gutting of the building and rebuilding of the flank wall, cost over £100,000 and necessitated the selling of 33 Wood Street to raise funds. The loss of this space has been compensated for by the opening up of another floor as a public display area, thus providing six such areas and making the interior more flexible in its layout.

During the time I have been Curator, there has been a constant increase in exhibits. We have had on loan from the Society's Chairman, Mr Bayman, some one hundred bags and purses, and a very good selection of chairs of varying dates. Through the valuable help of Mr Stephen Castle of the British Museum we were able to exhibit four display cases of pottery, stone and flint implements, and a case of clay pipes, all of which have been examined by the appropriate authorities of the British Museum. We also had a number of coats of arms, and a large number of framed pictures relative to the Barnet area has been added to our collection.

A vast amount of literature dealing with Barnet area has been collected for use by the public for reference purposes, and special exhibitions have been undertaken through the courtesy of friends of the Museum.

The Museum, which is run by Barnet and District History Society, is open to the public from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm on Saturdays.

W. S. Taylor