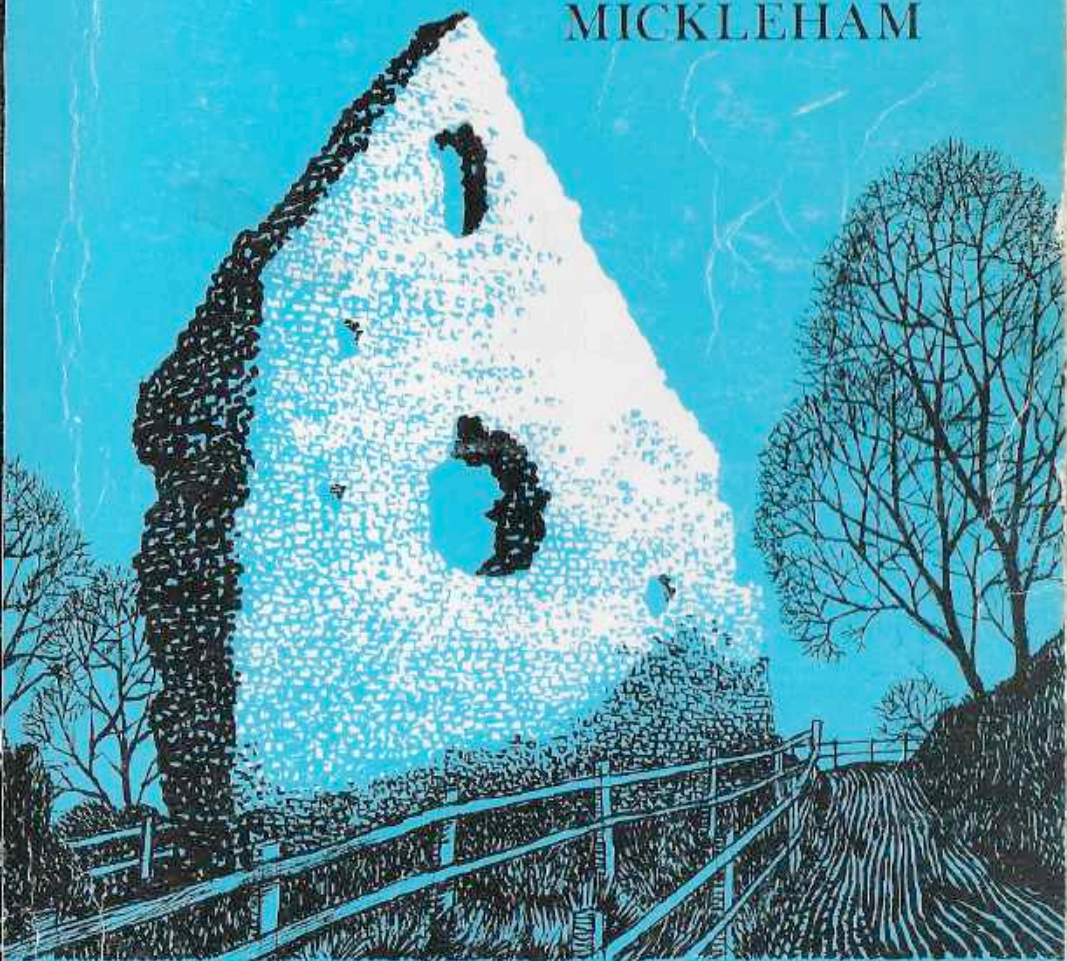


The Manor of WISTOMBLE

in the Parish of
MICKLEHAM



A local history by Ronald Shepperd

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Ronald Shepperd

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by the Westhumble Association

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*To my Wife Joy
for all her help*

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FOREWORD

by Sir Carl Aarvold

President of the Westhumble Association

It was, I think, Tolstoy who commented that History would be an excellent thing if only it was true, but in this charming sketch of the history of the Manor of Westhumble we have the excellent advantage of a history that is completely fascinating and that defies our disbelief. The long-since past and the immediate present are linked by indisputable facts and irrefutable speculation — inspired imagination is based on research and discovery.

We who have the good fortune to live in this happy and glorious part of Surrey owe a deep debt of gratitude to Ronnie Shepperd for all the labour he has so clearly put into the production of this volume and for the enjoyment he has so clearly derived from doing so. The result is not only a work of erudition, but one that streams with interest and happiness, and gives to this reader not only a sense of pleasure but the cheerful feeling of being so much better informed than he ever thought he could be.

Those of us who know the places of which the author writes are thrilled to learn how and why they became the places that we know. Those who pick up this book for easy and pleasant reading will very readily become engrossed in its story, and will find an account of social habits and change over a period stretching from the Ice Age to the present time. The author has the happy knack of displaying 'eternity in a grain of sand'.

There is much more to be revealed and written about this small patch in the tapestry of the countryside of Surrey. We must look forward to the author steadily enlarging the horizon

of his researches, to tell us more of what happened and is happening to Norbury — Polesden — Fredley — Mickleham and so on, so that we can enjoy his further dissertations, and future generations will know what we of this age were really like. At least they will know from this book that there never was such a place as West Humble. Go back if they so desire to the Manor of Wistomble, but let there be no further corruption of its name than the Westhumble we are so proud of to-day.

Carl Aarvold

Sept. 3rd 1981

INTRODUCTION

Some three years ago I was asked by a group of local residents to give a talk on 'The early days of Westhumble'. This request came, not because I had any specialised knowledge of local history, but by virtue of the fact that having lived here for forty years, one might be expected to remember what life was like in the hamlet during the late thirties when the present residential estate was being established.

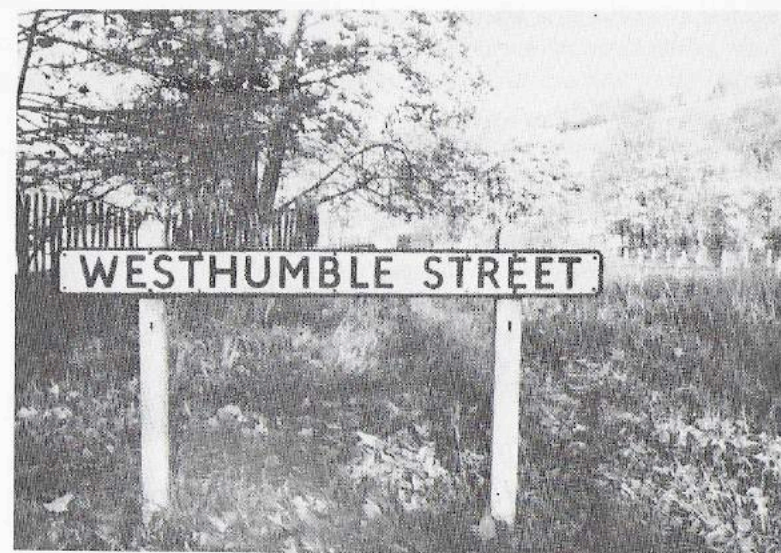
As my thoughts wandered back over those years I became aware that I knew very little about the place, and still less about its early history; certain features had always interested me — the ruins opposite Chapel Farm, reputed to have been built as a chapel for Pilgrims; the beautiful little chapel by the railway bridge we attended each Sunday, which we were told had originally been a barn, but nobody seemed quite sure; or the Infant School, looking like a Wendy House, built on to the side of an old cottage — what was their true history? And what about the house at the corner of Westhumble Street where, it was said, Daniel Defoe once lived, and the archway leading into Camilla Drive with the word 'LELADENE' on it; who built it, and what did the letters V.F. emblazoned on each side stand for?

These and many other questions suddenly became important and demanded answers, and thus began a delightful journey back into the past; and the facts which I gathered on the way have been set down in the following pages in the form of a story.

Although the whole parish of Mickleham comes into the story, its main theme is Westhumble, a small hamlet built on rising ground on the western bank of the River Mole; here it faces, across the river, its neighbour Boxhill which towers above it, not only in height but in grandeur and fame. Everybody has heard of Boxhill, one of the most renowned beauty spots in Southern England; how many have heard of Westhumble? Even the Local Authorities seem a little uncertain, if we may judge from the fact that they have not yet made up

their minds how to spell it, as may be seen by comparing the two signboards, shown opposite, which are set up within 30 yards of each other! I hope that this work will at least establish the fact that, of the two, the correct spelling must be 'Westhumble' for reasons which will be discussed in the first chapter. This does not mean to say that the word has always been so spelt; throughout its long history there have been several variations, some of which are listed in the 'English Place Names Society' volume on Surrey; even this, however, omits two which have been common in the past. One is that used by Fanny Burney who once lived here (thereby providing us with our main claim to fame); she always wrote it 'West Hamble', and the other is that used in the Manor Court Rolls of the late 18th century – 'Wistomble'. I have adopted this latter variant for the title of the book because to my ear it is the most pleasing one of all.

I must conclude this introduction with a word of thanks to those who have helped me in the research. When I began I had no idea that there was, or ever had been, a Manor of Westhumble, and it was Barry Moughton who first enlightened me, and then told me the startling fact that he was the present lord of the manor! How he acquired this delightful anachronism will be revealed in due course as the story unfolds, but he gave me much assistance at the outset by lending me all the deeds and documents relating to Camilla Lacey back to the time when Fanny Burney and her husband sold their cottage. In like manner, nearly all the owners of the older houses have allowed me to search through their deeds, thereby collecting a great deal of information about the past. During many hours spent at the County Records Office at Kingston, Dr Robinson, the County Archivist, and his staff were always at hand with help and advice, and willingness to produce the necessary documents; whilst nearer home the members of the Local History Group have given me much help and encouragement, especially Doris Mercer F.S.A, its former chairman, who is herself an archivist. She has patiently read through the whole manuscript and corrected some of my historical inaccuracies, and has, as well, suggested a few improvements in the text. The Curator and staff of the Dorking Museum allowed me to



Two road signs 30 yards apart.

use the considerable library which they have built up, and also their collection of local pictures. Some of these they have kindly given me permission to reproduce. The pictures I have used for the book come from many sources; books, prints adorning the walls of residents' houses, and old post cards; these have been reproduced time and again by various people so that it is difficult to know if and when someone's copyright is being abused, albeit in ignorance. S.E.D. Fortescue, author of 'The story of Two Villages, Great and Little Bookham', kindly gave me permission to use his picture of 'The Hermitage'. And my thanks are due to Ernest Fitter, not only for skilfully reproducing many of these pictures as photographs, but for teaching me to perform the miracle myself. I have been fortunate in obtaining the willing help of several members of our community, each one skilled in a particular aspect of publishing, and I wish to record my thanks to them: Sidney Irwin, who advised on the Typography and designed the cover which was drawn by Reg. Lander; Beryl Higgins, an architect, who has redrawn my amateurish sketch maps and turned them into things of beauty; and my wife Joy who has prepared the Index.

My most grateful thanks must be reserved for Gerald Thorpe, because without his enthusiasm the manuscript would never have been printed. As secretary of the Westhumble Association, he conceived the idea that the Association should sponsor the publication of this, its own, Local History, and with the valued technical help and co-operation of John Rawlinson, has seen it through to its final stage.

If it may be assumed that the history of a country, a town or a locality dates from the time when it first acquires a place name, thus obtaining an identity of its own, then Westhumble can claim a long and venerable history. For no less an authority than the English Place Names Society, in its book on the 'Place Names of Surrey', states that the name is derived from two Old English words 'WICE' and 'STUMBLE'. The former means 'Wych Elm' and the latter 'The stump of a tree', so that by a contraction of the word WICE to WE we have the name Westhumble — 'The Place of the Wych Elm Stump'.

This information from so learned a source must finally and irrefutably confound those Philistines who persist in writing the name as two words, West Humble, as if there were a sister village across the Mole to the East!

Now Old English was the earliest form of our language as used in these Islands when the invading Anglo-Saxons were colonising the land, so that an identity must have been established very early. An interesting piece of circumstantial evidence in support of this is provided by an account of the Elm Tree in the Encyclopaedia Britannica; this states that there are three types of elm in Britain — the Wych, the English and the Dutch. Of these three the earliest indigenous type is the Wych, the other two having been introduced later from the continent.

There may be those, less gullible perhaps than most of us, who find it difficult to believe that such a commonplace object as the stump of a tree could possibly give rise to the name of a village, and may therefore be inclined to seek further for a more likely source. However, if we may allow our imagination to take us back into those far-off days, making use of a fairly authentic piece of history, we may be able to appreciate just how such a thing might have arisen.

There is little doubt that nearby Polesden Lacey derives its name from 'Pols Dene' — the valley where Pol, an Anglo Saxon chieftain settled with his people in the days when these

invaders were streaming up from the South coast seeking places in which they could settle. And so we see Pol and his folk travelling northwards along the old Roman highway Stane St, emerging from the dense forest of the Weald somewhere south of Dorking and seeing for the first time the ridge of hills ahead which appear to block their way. Then they notice the gap through which the road runs, and as they draw near they are much taken by the beauty of the valley ahead — they are struck by the great towering mass of chalk that rises vertically on the right in marked contrast to the rounded contours of the hills on the other side. As they enter the gap they see that the road ahead crosses a river by a ford; they take notice of this river, how it flows in from the east and sweeps round the hill, caressing its foot before meandering across the valley, through deep lush meadows, until it meets the hills on the far side. They see that the road, after crossing the ford, rises beyond over the hills on the right to disappear to the north east on its way to Londinium.

The day is drawing to its close — the sun is setting behind the western hills, and Pol decides to make camp for the night at the ford where there is not only water, but firewood in plenty from the rotting branches of an old elm tree, blown down or struck by lightning, and now lying by the side of the road. Just at this spot, a trackway coming from the west joins the Roman road. It appears to come from a verdant valley half-hidden among wooded hills; it is certainly a place to be explored as a possible site for a settlement. In addition they are impressed by a feature which is taken as a benevolent omen, the stump of the dead tree standing stark and grim against the setting sun, like a sentinel guarding the track to the west. Next day they travel up this path and find amongst the hills an ideal spot for settlement, a sheltered valley for their homes and pasture for their cattle, hereafter known as 'Pols Dene'. But they always remember with affection, tinged perhaps with awe, the place where they stayed the night before they found their home; and whenever they travelled down to the river or to the Roman road over the ford, they always referred to the place as 'Wice Stumble' — the place of the wych elm stump.

No apology is offered for this flight of fancy; there are many historical facts and ancient documents which need a little imagination to bring them to life.

Little imagination is needed when we go back a few hundred years further and seek to discover what connection the Romans had with this part of the valley. There is no doubt that they built their famous Stane Street along its eastern border; we know that the road enters the Dorking area near Anstie Grange farm. It has been excavated near the bus garage where the Horsham Road meets South Street; it was found, according to the Victoria County History, under the former Stone & Turner shop in the High St, and again in St. Martin's churchyard. Some believe that at, or near, this spot stood one of the staging and military posts which were sited at regular intervals along all Roman Roads. The next definite evidence does not appear until the river has been crossed, and is seen as an embankment alongside the old London Road after it leaves the Burford Bridge Hotel, where it runs for a short distance before taking a turn to the right at the Headley Rd. junction and proceeds up over Mickleham Downs on its way to Londinium.

It is logical to suppose that the road took a straight line from the siting in St Martins churchyard to the ford over the River Mole, and this line passes near Bradley's Farm and over the old Westhumble Street. When the new bridge which carries the dual carriageway of the A24 was being constructed in 1937 excavations revealed the flint surfaced approach to a ford at low level having all the signs of Roman workmanship (reported in the TIMES of Mar. 25th 1937) thus indicating that the road did, in fact, cross the river at this point.

An interesting discovery has recently been made in a field not far from the ford; just where the Pip Brook joins the Mole, workmen laying a drain, came across bricks and tiles which are almost certainly the remains of a substantial Roman villa. The site is to be investigated at some future date and will be further evidence of a Roman presence here — if not actually in Westhumble certainly very nearby.

Before the Romans, there were of course the Britons, and there is a local legend that, here in the valley, the Druids

exercised their dark satanic rites in that part of the woods in Norbury Park which, from time immemorial, has been known as 'The Druids Grove'; and those of us who have walked through that avenue of very ancient yew trees on a sunny summer day and noted the gloom and awesomeness of the place, must have found it easy to believe that there may be truth in the old legend. Certainly those writers of guide books and histories of the Dorking area during the last century seize upon the story with some gusto. Keats, who is said to have written part of *Endymion* whilst staying at the Hare and Hounds (now known as the Burford Bridge Hotel), is supposed to have used the legend in the passage about the Druids in the poem. George Meredith too, who lived for many years in Flint Cottage at the foot of Box Hill, was always most impressed by the Grove; he used to tell his friends when they walked in Norbury Park 'remember when you walk under the mighty branches of the Druids Grove, you are beholding trees whose youth carries us back to the days when Christ walked on this earth'.

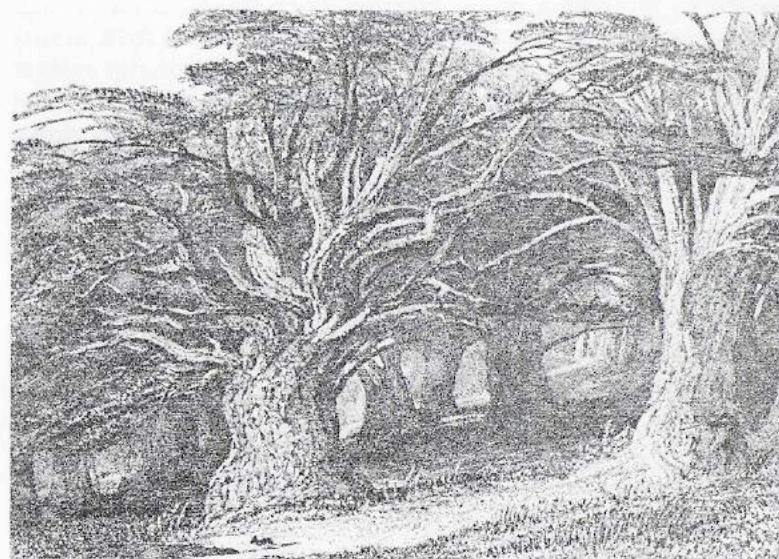
It would be interesting to know just how old those trees really are; with modern techniques such as dendrochronology it should not be difficult — although it might be disappointing for those romantics who prefer to keep their legends tinged with an aura of possibility.

If we delve even deeper into the past, long long before the first Druid ever walked in this land — perhaps some ten or twenty thousand years ago, as the last Ice Age was slowly receding, we can see a record, plain and authentic, of what conditions were like in this valley at that period. In those days when the frozen waters of the Weald were melting and pouring down northwards they tore this gap in the hills and swept on into the Thames valley. The river then extended from Boxhill to Ranmore, gouging out the valley as we knew it to-day; but as the waters swept on they deposited their rubbish.

Those of us who live in Pilgrim's Way have more than an academic interest in this fact; it is the reason why, week after week and year after year, we rake loads of flints off our gardens, and are always devising new methods for their disposal!; for that small plateau along which Pilgrim's Way

runs is designated on the Geological Map as 'Higher Terrace River Gravel', and there is some eight to twelve feet of flint and gravel lying over the chalk — all deposited during those formative years.

Down by the river, in that field much favoured by 'dog-walkers', between the railway and Crabtree Lane, alongside St. Michael's Chapel, is another piece of evidence of far-off days; the six foot drop in levels, half way to the river, marks the river bank as it was long ago, before it reached its present course.



The Druids Grove, Norbury Park.

The three or four centuries which followed the settlement of Pol and his compatriots in their new homes were turbulent ones, as tribe fought against tribe attempting to gain supremacy, Jute against Saxon and Angle against Mercian; but slowly the Christian Faith, recently introduced, began to exert its unifying influence as order grew out of chaos and the lamp of learning brought light into these dark ages; in the north especially, fostered by the monasteries with such men as Bede, there started to blossom a native culture. Then the land was struck by another destructive force as the Vikings arrived from across the sea, ravaging, burning and destroying much of the culture that had grown up. Once more war raged and chaos returned until, in time, the Vikings in their turn began to settle down and become absorbed into this amalgam of people which was growing into nationhood under a single King as the British Nation.

England began to be organised into counties, and these again into 'Hundreds'; (the exact significance of which appears to be debatable — the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states that the term covered an area in which a hundred families lived, or perhaps a hundred hides of habitable land) and then again the Church divided each Hundred into Parishes with a priest to care for the inhabitants. There followed, not only here but also on the continent, under the Feudal System, the creation of Manors. These were based on the conception of mutual dependence, the weak seeking the protection of the strong against enemies, and the strong exacting in return the services of the protected; so that a Manor was a sort of pyramid with a strong man at the apex and beneath him his weaker neighbours in stratified classes of diminishing degrees of freedom and increasing burdens of service, until, at the base, lowest of all were the serfs, completely bound and regarded as chattels.

As the central theme of this story is the Manor of Westhumble more will be said later of the Manorial System, but in this chapter we shall endeavour to find out what was happening in the Mole Valley during these formative years, and especially

how Westhumble fitted into the picture. First we shall see its position in relation to the surrounding district. The map on Page 11 shows that it lay then, as it does now, mostly in the parish of Mickleham which is in the Hundred of Copthorne, right at its extreme S.W. corner, where it meets the neighbouring Hundreds of Wotton and Effingham; it will be noticed that a small portion overlaps the boundary into the parish of Dorking, thus demonstrating the fact that manors were no respecters of parish boundaries, and the overlap has remained to the present day.

It might be interesting to digress for a moment to point out that this portion consists of that part of Westhumble lying to the west of Adlers Lane, and includes most of Burney Road and Pilgrims Close. From earliest times it had been part of the ancient parish of Dorking but, due to a reorganisation of Local Government, in 1933 it became part of a new civil parish created in the Dorking area known as Milton, although separated from it by some two miles! No doubt the creators had a good reason for doing so which is not very obvious to-day, but at least we know why the Ordnance Map designates the area as MILTON (Detached).

But to continue the description of Westhumble's position in 1066, to the west in Effingham Hundred was the parish of Great Bookham, whilst to the south in Wotton Hundred was the Manor of Dorking. Dorchinge, as it was then spelt, was already a sizeable village if not a small town with a population of three or four hundred people, four times as many as there were in Mickleham, with its inhabitants living in their small dwellings clustered about the cross-roads where to-day the High Street meets South Street and West Street.

Although Westhumble lay mid-way between Dorking and Mickleham, it has always had a greater affinity with the latter because, of course, they are in the same parish and share the same church as a focal point for their social and spiritual life.

We have to wait until 1253 before we can read of the Manor of 'Wistomble' in a surviving document, but by inference we know that it existed much earlier; for example, from the entries in the Domesday Book which tell of Mickleham and Dorking and the associated manors.

8

There are two entries relating to Mickleham, and they are given here in the modern translation as used in the recently published reprint edition by *Phillimore of CHICHESTER*:

In Copthorne Hundred.

1. Nigel holds Mickleham from the Bishop. Ansfrid held it from King Edward. Then and now it answered for 5 hides. Land for 4 ploughs. In lordship 2 ploughs; 4 villagers 4 smallholders and two slaves. A church, Meadow, 2 acres; woodland at 3 pigs. Value before 1066 £3; later 50s; now £4.
2. Oswald holds Mickleham from Richard. He also held it from King Edward. Then it answered for 5 hides, now for 2 hides. Land for 5 ploughs. In lordship 1 plough; 8 villagers and 6 smallholders with 4 ploughs, 2 slaves. Meadow, 1 acre; 1 pig from woodland pastureage. Value before 1066, 100s; now £6.

So it appears that the parish was divided into two estates, perhaps with the River Mole running between them, one owned by Odo Bishop of Bayeux, and held from him by Nigel, and the other owned by Richard of Tonbridge and held by Oswald.

How these two estates were divided up into the manors which we know were in existence not very long afterwards is a matter of conjecture, but it would appear reasonable to suppose that the manor of Mickleham, with the reputed manors of High Ashurst and Fredley, was contained in the portion belonging to the Bishop, because the church is included in the inventory, whilst the manors of Norbury and Westhumble were in the western division belonging to Richard.

Who were these two men, and also the men who 'held' from them, and what about the manors? As far as the two great land-owners are concerned, Odo was half brother to William the Conqueror being the younger son of William's mother Herleva, born to her after she had become respectably married. He was ten years younger than his brother, who had some affection for him and made him Bishop of Bayeux when he was thirteen years old. Unfortunately he grew up with none of the virtues of a saintly prelate; he was as bloodthirsty a tyrant as most of the barons around him, and far more at home in the saddle wielding a battleaxe than sitting on a bishop's throne holding a cross. After Hastings, at which he fought at William's side, he was created Earl of Kent in addition to his other titles

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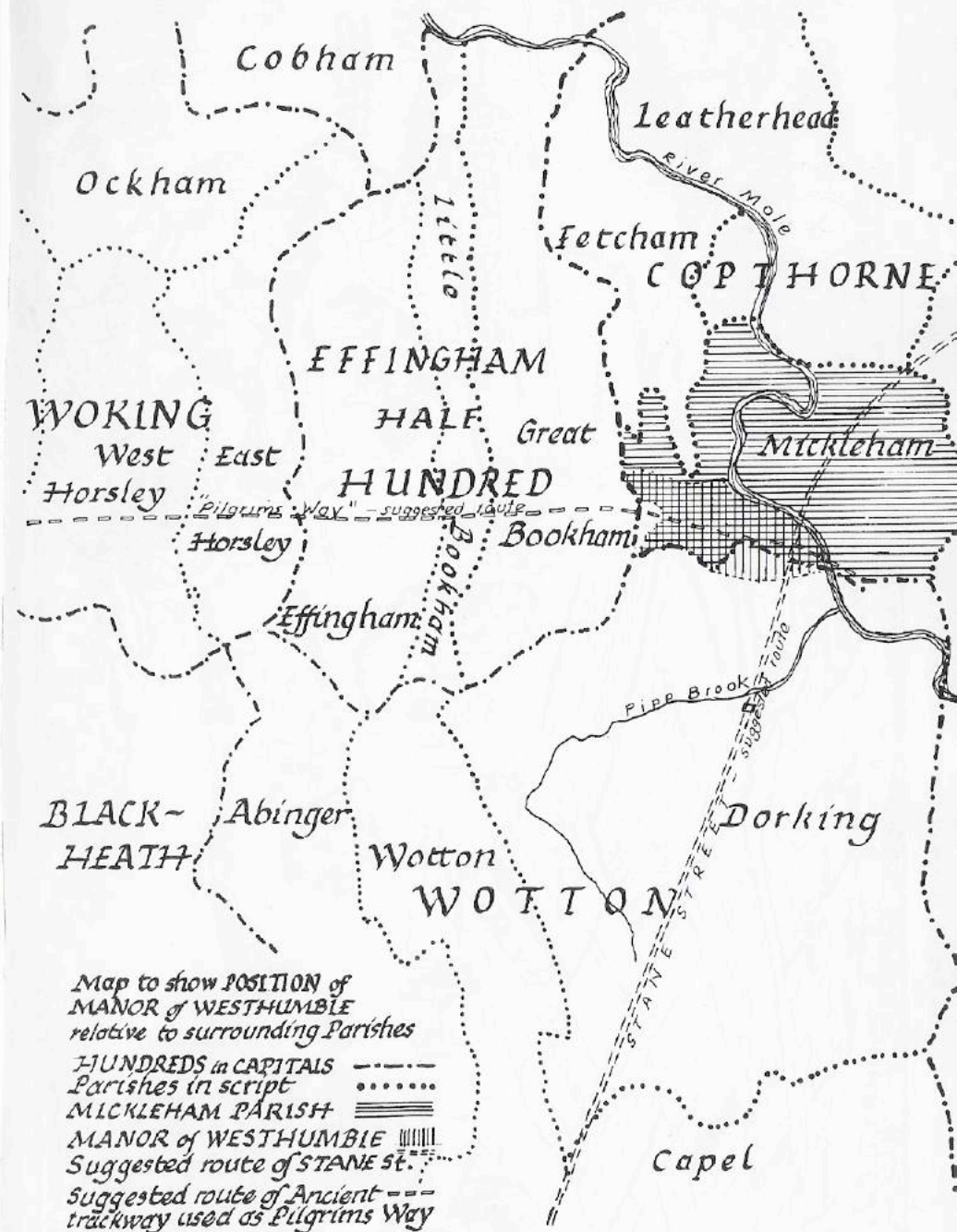
and given the task of keeping the southern part of England subdued when William was away. After the latter's death in 1087 he had his lands confiscated, and he was banished for heading a rebellion against his nephew William Rufus. Posterity owes him one debt possibly — he was a patron of the arts and is said to have been the moving spirit behind the creation of the Bayeux Tapestry, from which so much of our knowledge of the way life was lived in Norman times, is derived.

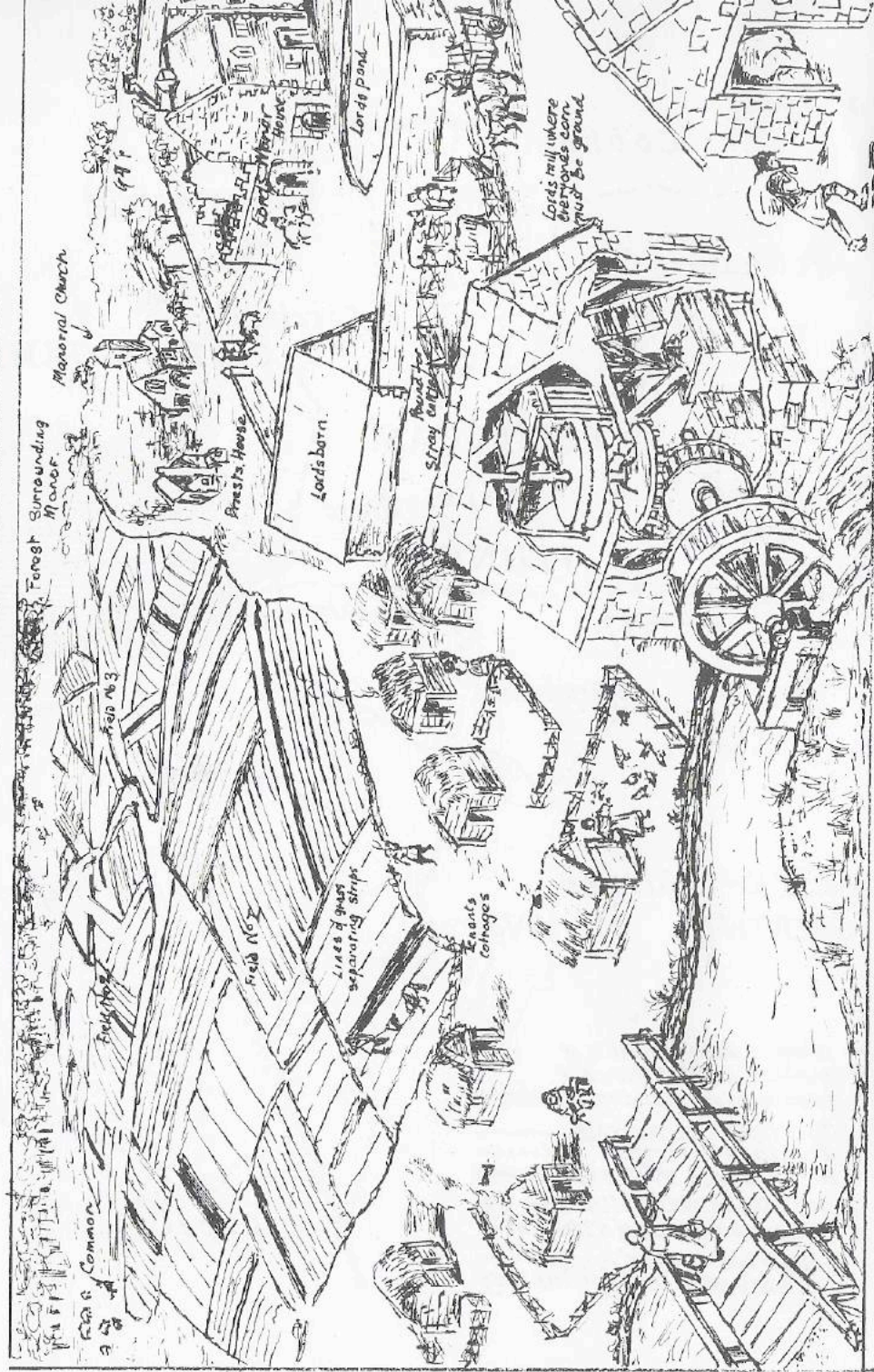
Richard of Tonbridge was another relative of the Conqueror, a cousin, and son of Count Gilbert of Brionne, and both he and Odo owned vast estates in southern England. In Surrey alone Richard had 48, whilst the Bishop had 30 besides many in other counties so that it is unlikely that either of them ever set foot in Mickleham. The men that interest us are those who actually held the land from them and owed them 'fealty', Nigel and Ansfrid and Oswald, who lived here and held sway over the peasants. What of them?

Nigel was obviously a Norman — probably a knight who had joined William in his expedition in the hope of booty and land in the event of victory, and he had succeeded. Ansfrid was a Saxon thane who had been on the wrong side, loyal to Harold, maybe fought at Hastings, and so lost everything and he disappears from the scene.

Oswald is fascinating; he was a Saxon thane who had held his land from King Edward in the old days, and now twenty years later we see him still in possession. Was he a Quisling, disloyal to his own people, fawning on his new masters in order to save his property, or was he like the good Saxon thane Cedric in *Ivanhoe* accepting the inevitable with dignity and integrity so that he could ease the burdens of his people in the troubled times ahead? We learn from Domesday that beside Mickleham he held land at Fetcham in Copthorne Hundred, Pitchingworth in Effingham and Wotton in Wotton Hundred. Reference to the accompanying map shows that these estates are contiguous, giving him an area roughly 6 miles by 3 and stretching from Fetcham in the north to Wotton in the South, with the Mole and Pipbrook on its eastern borders and including such places as Norbury Park, Westhumble Polesden and Ranmore.

Where did Oswald live and on which estate did he have his manor house? There is not the slightest clue! — he and Ansfrid flit across the stage dimly like ghosts and are gone. It would be pleasant to believe, although there is not the slightest shred of evidence to support such a belief, that the grandfather or maybe the great-grandfather of one of these two Saxon thanes was responsible for the founding of the original parish church of Mickelham, St. Michael's the millennial celebration of which event took place in 1972.





Chapter Three THE MIDDLE AGES

In this chapter we shall trace the fortunes of the Manor of Westhumble through the centuries which followed the death of William the Conqueror, up to the times of the Tudors.

Much of the information given in this, and the chapters which take us up to the 18th century, has been collected from the three main and authentic histories of Surrey, namely *Manning and Bray (1804)*, *Brayley (1848)*, and the *Victoria County Histories (1910)* to which the reader is directed for further study. The mass of detailed facts which these great Works contain has been gathered from many sources preserved amongst archives throughout the country, public and private Records Offices, Estate offices and such sources as statutes, deeds, wills, tax returns and many others.

As our central theme is a manor, it might be helpful if we consider briefly what a manor is, what the term implies, and how it affected the lives of people during these years. Doris Stenton in her *'English Society in the Early Middle Ages'* (published by Pelican) describes it thus:

'The manor was an estate which was an economic unit, in which all the tenants were bound to the lord and his demesne farm, his free tenants paying him rent for their land, and helping him at busy seasons; his unfree tenants doing weekly labour service; and all of them attending his court of justice, his Hall Moot, for the settlement of their quarrels and for the regulation of communal affairs'.

So much for what the term implies; the physical arrangement of a manor may be seen from the accompanying diagram which shows a typical layout. The manor house, surrounded by a courtyard, stands in the lord's demesne — the home farm — which is cultivated by peasant labour. On the demesne land stands a mill (water or wind) to which the peasants must bring their corn to be ground into flour and pay for the privilege. The pond supplied the manor house with fish throughout the year. Somewhere near the centre of the estate stands the church and priest's house with glebe attached. The villagers have their wooden dwellings on plots of land which they hold

from the lord 'according to the custom of the manor', and for which they pay with their services. Nearby is a large area of ground reclaimed from the forest and common, and formed into three fields; two of these are cultivated whilst the third lies fallow, in annual rotation. Each field is divided into strips, and these are apportioned out amongst the families forming the community. The apportionment is changed every year as fairly as possible in order that good and bad land are shared equally. The common land provides grazing for the villager's cattle whilst the forest supplies them with wood for fuel. Game abounds in the forest but is preserved for the lord — poaching is severely punished.

Such was the physical structure of the manor — its human content, as already noted, may be thought of as a pyramid with the lord at the apex over all; next to him was the steward, his deputy who managed the estate and presided over the courts assisted by the bailiff who came after him in importance; then followed the free men who were at liberty to move about the country, sell their holdings and attach themselves to another lord if they so wished. The unfree who made up the largest part of the inhabitants were less fortunate; villeins, cottars and bordars in descending order of status, were all bound to the land, holding their plots at the will of the lord and paying dearly for them in service. None of them could leave the manor without his permission; in fact their function in life was to toil from dawn to dusk each day to provide just enough food to keep themselves alive, whilst the surplus went to swell the lord's income.

This picture of life for the common man during the Middle Ages may seem grim and little better than slavery; there was of course, much unrest which erupted from time to time in various peasant revolts; but it is easy to exaggerate the misery which was certainly no worse in England than on the continent, perhaps much less, and there was a lot to be enjoyed — the numerous Church festivals and Saints days for example. Then the villagers had certain rights which they were able to maintain in the manor courts. At these Courts, not only were petty infringements of the law dealt with, and legal transactions dealing with land ownership, but also disputes

concerning peasants rights, or 'customs of the Manor'. Another function of the manor court, important for the economic life of the community, was to decide the various questions concerning the management of the common fields, when to start ploughing or collecting the harvest — when the meadow should be mown for hay; and, very necessary, how the strips of land should be divided amongst the families. Also at the court were made the annual appointments to such offices as constable, ale-conner, shepherd and other notables.

The proceedings of the court were recorded in latin and preserved as the Court Rolls, many of which exist to-day giving us valuable information as to how life went on amongst these rural communities. No doubt the quality of life for the common man depended largely on the character of his lord; if he was a tyrant it must have been rather grim, but if, on the other hand, he was humane and had a kindly nature, one can imagine a happy and contented community. It is pleasant to imagine that such a man was in possession of our manor around the year 1200 when the chapel, whose ruins stand beside the road in Chapel Lane, was built probably at his instigation; but more of this later.

Here we shall endeavour to give some account of the actual manors involved in our story, Westhumble, Norbury, Fredley, Ashurst and, of course, Mickleham; when they first acquired their individual status, and the families who possessed them. The facts derived from the ancient records are often confused and blurred, as already mentioned, but an actual list of the various lordships, as far as possible correct, is given in an appendix at the end of the book.

In 1100, after Oswald and Nigel had left the scene, the King granted the whole Mickleham estate to a family named, appropriately enough, 'de Mickleham', who remained in possession for the next 200 years. The first mention of Westhumble is noted in a document of 1253 (*V.C.H. Vol iv p.306*) which states that "Reigate Priory held a tenement in Mickleham of Robert de Wateville, the property being known as the Manor of Westhumble" (*M & B Vol II p653*). So it seems that at this early date Westhumble had become separated from the main estate.

Somewhere around 1290, the last male descendant of the line, John de Micklem was born, his father Gilbert dying soon after his birth. John had an only daughter Margaret who married John Dewey, and, in 1327, gave the young couple the whole estate, reserving for himself only that part which had already been separated, namely the manor of Westhumble (Robert de Wateville seems to have disappeared and was probably only a tenant who had sub-let the land to the Reigate Priory). Here John lived until after 1345. Meanwhile Margaret and her husband had a son also named John who succeeded them as master of the Mickleham estate. This young man immediately divided his inheritance into two parts, selling one part as the manor of Mickleham to Roger Aperdale, and keeping for himself the manor of Fredley where he lived and was known thereafter as John de Fridlee. It appears also that at this time another portion was split off, to be known as the manor of Norbury, with William Husee as its owner; it is worth mentioning here that this man founded a line which was to remain in possession of Norbury for 500 years and whose descendants, although with different surnames due to failure of the male lines, came to own most of the land round about. The pedigree of this remarkable family is given in the Appendix.

So we have four manors, Mickleham, Norbury, Fredley and Westhumble, existing within the parish boundary in the 14th C.

Before we return to our manor let us see what happened to Mickleham after Roger de Aperdale had purchased it in 1332. His grandson John who inherited the estate got himself into some kind of trouble (*V.C.H. Vol IV p.303*); one would so much like to know what he got up to but the record only states that 'he committed a felony and became outlawed, and the estate reverted to the Crown', that is to Edward III. What happened to him one wonders? Did he live hereabouts in the woods, or did he perhaps join up with some band of outlaws like Robin Hood?

What we do know however, is that his lands were given by the King to a more worthy man, William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, founder of the famous public school, who thus became lord of the manor of Mickleham. Even the bishop

found himself in trouble; it is doubtful if he ever lived here personally as he divided up the whole estate amongst various churchmen, 'clerks in holy orders', but he omitted to obtain the King's licence for this 'alienation'; however the record tells us that he received the King's pardon.

Meanwhile Westhumble was also to fall into the hands of the church. John de Micklem, now an old man, was probably living here whilst the land was farmed and tenanted by the Reigate Priors. In 1345, feeling that his end was drawing near, he began to have concern for his eternal salvation. He must have been a rather unworldly man to have given away most of his estate to his daughter twenty years earlier. Now he decided to give the rest to the Church; and so the record tells us (*V.C.H. III p 306*) 'the property known as Westhumble was augmented by the grant of John de Micklem who gave to the prior and Convent of Reigate, a house and 1s.8d. rent with the advowson of the church in Mickleham. License for the alienation was granted by the King in 1345, at the request of Queen Phillipa'.

It is interesting to see how these grants were made. Apparently a licence had to be obtained from the King before the gift, or 'alienation' was made — and this is where the bishop had erred. It is also of interest to note that the request for a licence was made by Queen Phillipa. Now the King was Edward III, that hot tempered monarch with many virtues, not the least of which was the great love he bore to his wife through their 40 years of happy marriage together. Queen Phillipa has come down through history as a kindly compassionate soul who exercised a beneficial restraining influence upon her husband. It was she, who 'as every schoolboy knows', pleaded for the lives of the six gallant burghers of Calais when, after a very long siege, they were condemned to be hung for their stubborn resistance by the furious King Edward. She also averted punishment from the carpenters whose stands for the Cheapside Tournament in 1331 had broken down, to the injury and embarrassment of knights and ladies of the court. And now we see this notable and noble lady intimately concerned with the affairs here in Westhumble, pleading for the monks of Reigate.

There was a condition attached to John de Micklem's gift to the Priory which, no doubt, he hoped would ensure his eternal salvation. It was that 'a chaplain should be maintained to pray for the souls of John de Micklem and his ancestors, in the church of the said Priory daily'.

We see here also an example of one of the many ways in which the Church, playing on the credulity of the faithful, obtained some of the vast wealth which it acquired during the Middle Ages, through Indulgences, Pardons and Masses for the departed, all of which had to be paid for in worldly goods. Leaving aside questions of theology and morals however, it must be said that the acquisition by the church of landed estates, similar to this, would probably have benefited the common people, as the church might be more likely to treat them better than many laymen of those days. This can be shown by the public outcry that occurred when Henry VIII suppressed the monasteries thereby depriving the people of much practical help which they had received from the monks such as education, medical treatment and humane employment.

Westhumble was to remain in the possession of the priors of Reigate for 200 years, until their suppression in 1539, or thereabouts, but before we leave this period mention must be made of a tangible relic, which we have in our midst to-day, of those times. This is the chapel, mentioned earlier, whose ruins stand beside the road in Chapel Lane opposite the farm to which they have given their name. It was believed to have been built by monks as a resting place for pilgrims on their way along the ancient track from the west to Canterbury. How long the walls had stood there, crumbling from disuse, nobody knew or cared until, in 1937, Lord Ashcombe, upon whose land they lay, became concerned and offered the ruins to any public body who would undertake their preservation. In the first instance, the Surrey Archeological Society was asked to investigate the site, and two members, Edwin Hart FSA and Hugh Braun FSA. ARIBA. made a thorough examination, and produced a report which was published in the *Surrey Arch. Col. Vol. VIII*. Later, the site was accepted by the National Trust and is now well cared for.

In the report the authors say that in their opinion the chapel was built around the year 1200, not so much for the



The Old Chapel, Westhumble.



Chapel Farm today.

use of pilgrims, but as a chapel of ease to St Michaels Church for the convenience of parishioners living in this part of the parish. It must be remembered that even to-day, with all the engineering skill of the water authorities, the River Mole often floods during periods of heavy rain. Conditions in the Middle Ages must have been far worse, with the river impossible to cross for long periods; thus a chapel of ease would have been a great boon to those people unable to get to church. Confirmation of this theory was provided by the discovery, during the excavation, of several skeletons which from their attitudes and position relative to the chapel, were obviously ordinary interments.

Who the builder was, has never been discovered, but there are three possibilities, depending upon who owned the land on which it was built. As already mentioned, the actual boundaries of manors and estates are difficult to identify at this period, having no maps to guide us, and the matter is further complicated because it is at this spot where the manor of Polesden, in the parish of Bookham, adjoins Westhumble, which of course is part of the parish of Mickleham. Now in 1203, the former manor was held by Merton Priory, having received it from Walter de Pollesdon as a grant; whether at this time the land on which the chapel was built belonged to Polesden or Westhumble is not known, so it is possible that the builders were either the monks of Reigate or Merton. The third possibility, and perhaps the most likely in view of the fact that it might have been a chapel of ease to St Michaels, is that it was one of the de Mickleham family, lords of the whole estate at that time, thus justifying the hope expressed at the beginning of the chapter that there was a kindly lord at this period.

Another matter of interest in the report is the suggestion that during the 13th and 14th centuries, the village of Westhumble, then quite populous, centred round the chapel but was wiped out, perhaps by the Black Death, and that succeeding generations moved further to the east, nearer the river. It must be said that the authors give no archeological evidence of this. One thing is fairly certain, and that is that Chapel Farm was in existence at this time, and possibly had been so for many years. The estate which Merton Priory acquired

from Walter de Pollesden was known as Pollesden Manor, and included land upon which Chapel Farm stands. In 1395, a document (*Land MS 723 fol.80*) refers to lands possessed by a certain Edmund Lodelowe 'namely the manor of Pollesden with its pertinents in the parish of Mickleham'. This must refer to Chapel Farm which has always been in our parish. Again later in 1566 a document (*Chancery Inquis. Post Mort. P.R.O. 1PM Series II vol.110 No 148*) tells us that 'John Sackville possessed lands in the manor of Pollesden, known as Capel Lands and Bowetts, which is conveyed to Sir Richard Sackville. etc.' These Capel lands refer to the chapel and the name Bowetts we meet later as a field name within the parish of Mickleham. So with the Chapel and the Farm we have two worthy reminders of the distant past in our midst to-day.

Before concluding this chapter which deals with the Middle Ages, mention must be made of a route which runs right across the lands of our manor from west to east, and has become known as "The Pilgrim's Way". Much has been written about this Way and much disputing as to its actual route. The Ordnance Survey map previous to the present edition printed along Chapel Lane and Adlers Lane 'Probable route of Pilgrim's Way'. No doubt owing to the controversy this has now been deleted and it must be confessed that there is little documentary evidence in its support, but tradition is very strong in its favour and says that it follows a very much older track used by the first inhabitants of these islands who traded between the West Country and the Continent. It comes from the west, and from Farnham passes over the Hog's Back to Guildford, thence along the southern escarpment of the Downs to Bagden Hill, along Chapel Lane, Adler's Lane and so down to the River Mole, which it crosses at the place now known as the Stepping Stones, and from there round the foot of Box Hill and so on to the southern slopes of the Downs.

How much truth there is in the tradition, it is difficult to say; but there is certainly a strong chance that this ancient Way did in fact pass through our Hamlet, and actually crossed that other ancient and famous way, Stane Street, within our very borders; and this must surely be a claim to Fame!

Chapter Four TUDOR TIMES AND AFTER

As we leave the Middle Ages and draw closer to our own times the existing records become more abundant, and by the 17th. cent. we already have good maps to help us to distinguish estate and parish boundaries. As an example of this close at hand, there is in the Dorking Museum a map copied from the original in the archives of the Duke of Norfolk's Estates, which depicts the Manor of Dorking in the year 1649. The town, with its main streets easily recognisable to-day, has each plot clearly marked with the owners name.

We have to lament the fact that throughout this period when documentation is increasing, and many districts are able to show their manorial records of the time, Westhumble has none. This may be attributed to a certain Anthony Chapman who became lord of the manor here in 1766, and is said to have told his steward "To clear out the manor office and burn all the useless lumber cluttering up the shelves". The 'useless lumber' happened to be the stored Court Rolls of centuries, and by this piece of vandalism we are deprived of these priceless records of a former way of life. The story is well substantiated in so far as the earliest manor records existing for Westhumble date from the year Chapman sold the estate.

In the last chapter we left the manor in the possession of the Reigate Priory; they had been holding it, first as tenants and then as owners since 1253, and around the year 1533, the Prior leased it to Thomas Stidolf for 99 years. As the name of Stidolf will dominate the scene throughout, not only this manor but the surrounding ones, including Polesden, for the next 200 years, something must be said about the family. Reference to the chart shown in Appendix B shows that this family married into the Wymeldons who were descended from William Husee.

The Parish Church at Mickleham has many relics of the Stidolfs, tombs and memorials etc., and displayed in the chancel, hanging from the wall, is a brave-looking flag which bears the armorial bearings of the family, belonging to Sir

Francis Stidolf 1655. It makes a striking ornament to the church, and was even more so some ten years ago when it was surmounted by a handsome helmet. Unfortunately, one day in 1967 the helmet was stolen and has never been recovered. The story is that a man walked into the village shop opposite to the church and bought a carrier bag; he was seen to go into the church where he apparently managed to dislodge the flag and helmet, how is not known; then disregarding the former which he pushed under a pew, he placed the helmet in the bag and walked calmly away with it. The theft was not discovered until next day when the flag was retrieved, renovated and rehung. It must be confessed that to-day as it hangs in the chancel it certainly shows signs of its ill-treatment.

But to return to the Stidolfs; (the spelling of this name has many variations with y and ph) before Sir Francis arrived on the scene much had been going on. Most noteworthy of all was the dissolution of the monasteries around 1538. Henry VIII had broken with the Roman Church and our manor was affected. The long lordship of the priors was ended and the estate was given by the King to Lord William Howard. He belonged to another famous family, far more so than the Stidolfs. It was descended from the Earl de Warrenne son-in-law of the Conqueror, embracing within its enormously wide genealogical tree, Dukes of Norfolk, Earls of Arundel and Suffolk and many other famous titles. The Norfolk branch of the family were lords of the manor of Dorking from early times, and are remembered in the town by the many roads named after the various branches, Norfolk Rd, Arundel Rd, Howard Rd and others. Our Lord William was given much land in Surrey and later, was created Baron of Effingham and appointed Lord High Admiral, but like most prominent people in Tudor times, he did not find it easy always to keep on the right side of his three difficult sovereigns. Henry arrested him for shielding his kinswoman Catherine Howard over her infidelities, although he was pardoned; Mary accused him of complicity with Princess Elizabeth, although later he won her favour by opposing Sir Thomas Wyatt. He was certainly in favour with Elizabeth and found peace at last during her reign. He died at Reigate and is buried in the parish church

there. It was his son, Lord Charles Howard, also Lord High Admiral and Baron of Effingham, who led the English Fleet against the Spanish Armada.

To return to the Stidolfs, Thomas was left in peace as the tenant of Westhumble, and at some time, it is not clear when, he came to own the manor; then before long the family were in possession of all the manors in the parish and Polesden as well.

There are one or two tales concerning the family which are worth relating. The first, taken from Manning and Brays History of Surrey, tells of happenings during the dissolution of the monasteries; the Stidolfs did not acquire or retain all their properties unchallenged. The story goes that a certain John Arnold (a very common name in the parish) claimed certain lands in Mickleham to be his, the Prior having leased them to him in 1521 for 99 years. Stidolf would have none of it, and did more than dispute the claim; he sent his servants to clear John Arnold out. Poor John complained to the justices that "he was set upon by the servants to kill him; one had assaulted him with a sword and strake him on the raynes of the back, thereby cutting his coot, with the intention of cutting off his head so that they could play foteball therewith". But it was to no avail; in those days troubled as they were, might was right and the Stidolfs remained in possession undisputed until 1700 when, the male line failing with Margaret Stidolf the sole heiress, she married into a family called Tryon and her descendants carried on until 1766.

So this remarkable family in which ran the blood of William Husee, owner of Norbury in 1300, through the Wymeldons, retained control for nearly 500 years.

Another story comes from the *'Mickleham Records'* a book published in 1900 and compiled from the old Church records by Samuel Woods and containing a great deal of interesting history of the church and parish. The story is quoted as it was written in a memorandum by the Rev. Moses Wall, rector of St. Michaels in 1632; "Made the Vth day of March 1632. I, Moses Wall, parson of the Parish of Mickleham in the countie of Surrie, did upon the certificate of Laurence Wright, Fellow of the Collidge of Phisitions of London, of the unhealthie

body of the Right Worshipful, the Lady Stidolf, in the presence of Raphe Chasemore, one of the churchwardens of the said parish of Mickleham, and of the good that might redound unto the body of the said ladie, if she should continue the eating of fish the whole of Lent, and upon fish days, did by virtue of the statute giving power to Bishops, parsons, and curates, to give licence to the sick to eate flesh for the recovery of their health, did give licence to the said Ladie Stidolf to eate flesh according to the said statute, she paying what is willed to be paid and donne by the same statute with licence to remain of force for the space of eight daies, that is to the 13th day of the same month of March, in the presence of the said Raphe Chasemore, one of the churchwardens".

Renewals for a further eight days are twice repeated, 'upon just occasion for another eight days, and no more under requirement'. In 1633 a like dispensation was granted her, including Sir ffrancis and their eldest son Mr Thomas Stidolfe. Another in 1635 included Sir ffrancis, Her right Worll, Ladie, and their daughter, Miss Jane Stydolphe, and this was renewed twice, for twenty-four days in all.

This account throws an interesting light, not only on the Stydolph family, but on the fact that the rigid observance of fast days was still in force in 1632. According to W.E. Tate in *'The Parish Chest'* (p.155) "the old obligation to abstain from flesh during Lent was re-imposed after the Reformation from economic rather than religious motives". Licences could be obtained on payment of fees, and parish priests could grant them to persons whose health made the concessions needful. Although the incumbent was expected to note these dispensations, apparently such accounts are not common in parish records and we in Mickleham are fortunate to possess such an excellent example.

It is interesting to speculate whether this was a genuine case of ill-health involving, it would seem, the whole family or whether a subservient priest was tactfully allowing concessions to wealthy and powerful patrons.

The Stidolf family remained in possession of their estates until 1700. The last male of the line was Sir Richard Stidolf who died in 1676 leaving two daughters. He had been created

a baronet in 1660, the year that Charles II regained his throne so obviously he had chosen the right side during the Civil War. His two daughters were Frances and Margaret, and in their veins, of course, ran the blood of old William Husee. Frances, married to Jacob, Lord Astley, inherited the estate but was childless; Margaret, married to Thomas Tryon of Bulwick in Northampton, had one son James.

When Frances died in 1692, she left her Mickleham Estates to her nephew James, but quite happy in Northamptonshire he passed them on to his two sons Charles and James, to share between them. Charles chose Mickleham whilst James had Norbury and Westhumble. James lived here in the old manor house at Norbury known as the Priory. He commissioned a map of the estate to be made in 1731, which map is now kept at the Surrey Records Office and entitled 'A survey of the Manor and Park, and other Parcels of Ground, belonging to James Tryon Esq., lying in the parish of Mickleham'.

It is perhaps worthwhile, at this stage, to consider the old Norbury Manor House. To-day it is known as the Priory and is commonly believed to have been a religious house in the Middle Ages, when the Reigate Priors owned the land, especially as there is within it, a large room called the 'Refectory' with a barrel vaulted ceiling in which monks are supposed to have taken their meals. However, it is almost certain that there is no truth in the idea. An excellent article on the Priory was written some years ago by Sir Raymond Jennings Q.C., who lived in nearby Mickleham Cottage until recently. It is a report on his researches into the history of the old manor house, and with great clarity he puts both cases, for and against it having been a priory, and the evidence is fairly conclusive against. The map referred to above certainly makes no mention of a priory.

The Tryon brothers sold their estates in 1766, and so the line started by William Husee at last came to an end.

Chapter Five THE LATE 18th CENTURY

The new owner was Anthony Chapman of London, who purchased Mickleham, Norbury and Westhumble. It is perhaps unfair to judge an almost unknown man after 200 years on the scanty evidence we have about his stay here in the district; but Chapman does appear on this stage at least, to be the villain of the piece. We have already referred to his unpardonable act of vandalism in burning the centuries old collection of Court Rolls of the manor of Westhumble as useless rubbish; his second act of destruction concerned the trees in Norbury Park. This had long been famed for its Walnut trees; when John Evelyn visited Sir Francis Stidolf at the beginning of the century (he had walked over from Wotton) he was much impressed by the vegetation and especially praised the "innumerable walnut trees which, he was told, brought in a considerable revenue in the sale of Walnuts, fetching in some seasons, as much as £300".

Chapman bought the estate with his eye on these trees; not for the walnuts they produced but for the timber; he realised that here was money — there were upwards of 40,000 trees which he proceeded to cut down and sell to the timber market. The effect on the neighbourhood can well be imagined — like the modern rape of our fields for gravel, or the construction of a motorway — the ceaseless passage of heavy wagons along the woodland drives, turning them into quagmires — the traffic on local roads unused to such visitations — and the devastation left behind in the Park. Such a man did not deserve to possess so beautiful an estate.

One interesting thread in the woven tapestry of history can be seen here — a link between Westhumble and Norbury on the one hand, and the founding of the United States of America on the other; for one of the main purchasers of Chapman's walnut trees was the British Government, who used the wood to make rifle stocks with which to equip the Army being sent overseas, to fight the colonists who had rebelled in North America — and so the wood from our valley found its way, maybe, to the battlefield of Bunkers Hill.

28

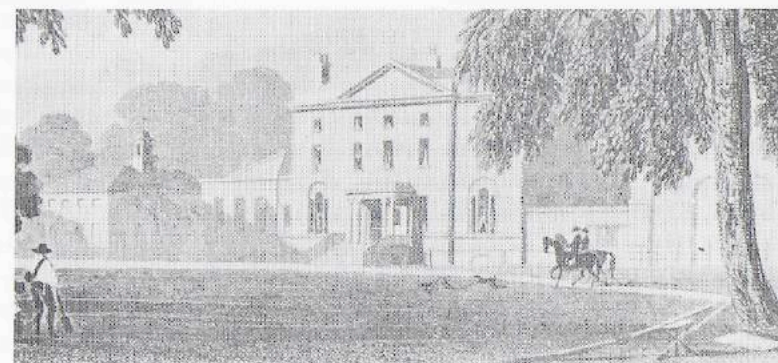
Eight years after he had commenced his depredations, and when he had reaped his quick profits, Anthony Chapman sold all the property which he had bought in Mickleham and left the district. It would be interesting to know where he went and what he did next, but on this matter the records are silent.

The manor of Westhumble was bought by Benjamin Bond Hopkins, whom we shall meet in a later chapter when we come to examine the Court Rolls, the surviving ones which date from the year in which he took possession — strong evidence to support the story that the previous ones had been destroyed. Norbury was purchased at the same time, 1774, by William Lock, and an account of this remarkable man will serve as a fitting introduction to the next chapter which is concerned with Fanny Burney and her association with the district.

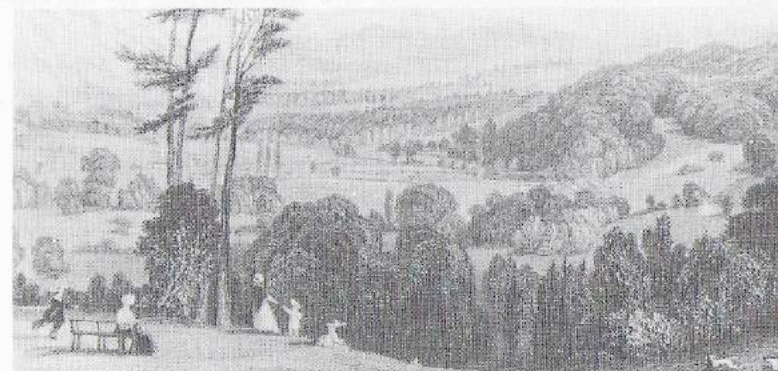
It must be admitted that the two main sources from which we may derive some knowledge of William Lock are perhaps biased in his favour. The fullest portrait comes from 'The Locks of Norbury Park' by the Duchess of Sermonetta who, in spite of her Italian title is a direct descendant of the family. The other source is Fanny Burney's Diaries.

Both accounts show him as the almost ideal English Gentleman of the late 18th century, with all the virtues and few, if any, of the vices of his type. Wealthy and generous, but no spendthrift; unlike so many of his contemporaries he was no gambler; he had excellent taste and was a great patron of the Arts, but discriminating in his patronage; a devoted husband and father with a happy family — in a word, a man of integrity and excellent judgement. If all this seems too good to be true and Fanny Burney, at least, might have been inclined to over-stress his virtues because of his kindness to her — the picture is certainly confirmed by members of the French community who became his temporary neighbours at nearby Juniper Hall; such people as Talleyrand and Mme. De Stael would hardly be guilty of erring on the side of virtue, yet they eulogised him just as much as did Fanny.

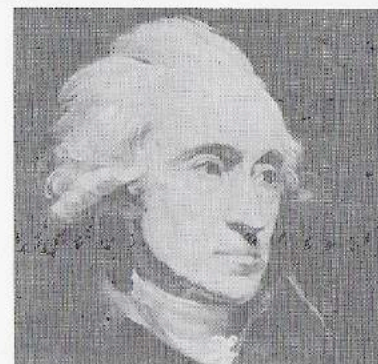
It was this man who became the leading figure on the scene from 1774 until his death in 1810. When he bought Norbury Park the immediate prospect must have been disappointing with the devastated woodlands and a manor house so shame-



Norbury House (circa 1800) from an old print.



Norbury Park (circa 1800). View to the south from an old print.



William Lock.

fully neglected by the late owner, that it was little better than a ruin. But William Lock had the discerning eye of an artist and he saw its immense possibilities; he decided, right away, to build a new house on top of the eminence which dominated the valley. The view from the mansion to-day, after so much change, is still wonderful; in the days when it looked down upon a skilfully contrived landscape, it must have been magnificent. He turned the old manor house into a farm, and whilst the new one was being built, he took his bride to Italy for two years. Her name was Frederica but to him she was always his 'beloved little Freddie'. In 1776 he began his residence as lord of the manor of Norbury, although this did not include the manor of Westhumble, in spite of the fact that he did own land in this manor, as will be seen later.

By the time Fanny Burney arrived on the scene the Locks had been in residence for 15 years with a growing family and a happy household.



Fanny Burney.

It was suggested in the Introduction that Westhumble's chief claim to fame lay in the fact that Fanny Burney once lived here, and this indeed is no small claim because she was, and certainly still is, a person who excites considerable interest, not only as a novelist and diarist but as an individual. From the day that her first novel, *Evelina* was published in 1778, when she completely captivated the contemporary reading public, the charisma of her personality has never ceased to win her admirers and friends. In her own day these formed a very wide circle from the Royal Family down, and included men and women eminent in all walks of life; to mention only a few of her intimate friends Dr Johnson, David Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, all leaders in their several professions.

This attraction has never ceased — today it seems as strong as ever if the publication of new editions of her diaries and new biographies of her life and friends is any guide. The most comprehensive edition of the former has just completed publication in 10 volumes by the *Clarendon Press* edited by *Joyce Hemlow*, and yet another *Life*, this time by *Sarah Kilpatrick*, just published by *David & Charles* reveals her as a very real person with all her problems as well as her successes.

This chapter will only relate her associations with Mickleham and Westhumble. She first visited Norbury in 1783, after her second novel *Cecilia* had been launched, so that she was already a celebrity. She accompanied her father Dr. Charles Burney and Sir Joshua Reynolds on a visit to the Locks, and so began a friendship that was to endure for many years and play so important a part in her life. Until 1792 she saw little of the Locks — occasional visits to their London house when her duties at the Royal Court as Keeper of the Robes permitted, and the odd journey down to Norbury. The friendship was strengthened in 1784 when her favourite sister Susan married and came to live in Mickleham. Susan's husband was Capt. Molesworth Phillips, a friend of James Burney her elder brother,

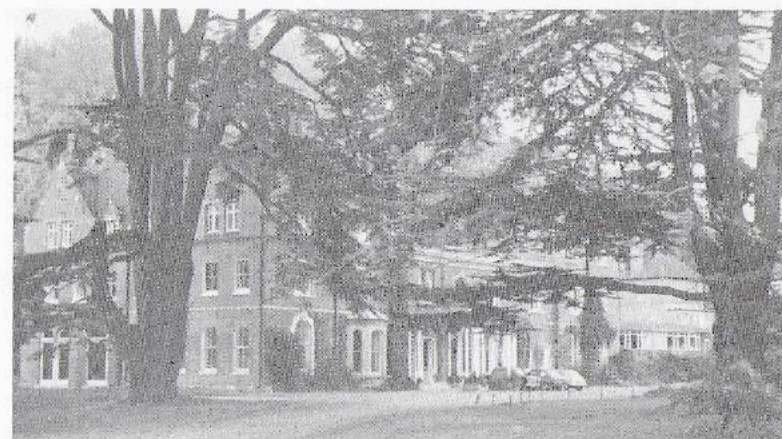
who had gone to sea as a midshipman when he was ten years old, and as a young lieutenant had been one of Capt. Cook's officers on the Resolution. It so happened that Phillips was lieutenant of marines on the ship and they both accompanied the explorer on his last voyage to the Pacific. Phillips was in charge of one of the boats that landed on the fatal beach when Capt. Cook was killed by the natives; unable to save his captain, he showed great courage in rescuing a wounded marine from the sea although wounded himself. Unfortunately his early charm seems to have evaporated later in life and poor Susan suffered much in the years ahead from ill health and what must have been worse, ill treatment by her husband.

But that lay in the future and on their arrival at Mickleham Cottage the Phillips became great friends of the Locks. The cottage may still be seen at the corner where the old London Road turns left off the A.24 to run through the village. The house has been greatly altered and enlarged but certain features still remain to remind us of the old days.

In September 1792 Fanny received a letter from Susan in which, amongst other things was the following "We shall shortly, I believe, have a little colony of unfortunate (or fortunate since they are safe) French Noblesse in our neighbourhood. Sunday evening, Ravelly informed Mr Lock that two or three families had joined together to take Jenkinson's house, Juniper Hall and that another family had taken another house at Westhumble".

This was the time, of course, when Robespierre's 'Reign of Terror' was commencing in Paris. In the early stages of the Revolution there had been a number of liberally minded members of the French Nobility who, recognising the need for radical changes, had supported the movement, hoping that it would produce a constitutional Monarchy on the British model. Now, extremists were turning on these Liberals who were forced to flee to England to escape the guillotine.

The Westhumble party was led by Mme. De Broglie, daughter in law of the famous Marshal who had commanded the Royalist troops; the cottage which they rented still stands, enlarged and altered, in Westhumble Street and known today as Burford Corner. The Mickleham party which took over



Juniper Hall today.



M. Talleyrand.



Susan Phillips.



Juniper Hall in 1790.

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Juniper Hall, consisted of the most famous of these so-called 'Constitutionalists' — Narbonne, lately Minister of War, Montmorency, the young duke who carried away by a passion for reform, had proposed the motion, passed by the National Assembly, that all titles of nobility should henceforth be suppressed. Later the Mickleham party was joined by Talleyrand ci-devant Bishop of Autun, and Mme. De Stael, wife of the Swedish Ambassador and daughter of M. Necker the Swiss financier whose efforts to straighten out the appalling chaos of the French finances, had so miserably failed.

These last two members of the party, at least, must have caused a stir among the staid Mickleham residents; Talleyrand's behaviour as a bishop had been scandalous, but he was a man of great charm and brilliant intellect, whilst Mme. De Stael was no whit his inferior — her charm equalled his, and her reputation was almost as notorious! She became the natural leader of this coterie of emigres.

Although Fanny learnt of their arrival in September 1792, she did not actually meet them until the following January. This was partly due to family commitments in Norfolk, but also partly, one cannot help thinking, because she rather mistrusted these Constitutionalists; she was an out and out Royalist — a true servant of the Queen, and she frowned on people who had once lent their support to the movement which had led to this dreadful Revolution. However, in January, she came down to Mickleham on a visit to her sister, and at Norbury Park, met them for the first time. She was completely captivated by their charm, especially that of a newcomer to the group, General d'Arblay, recently arrived in England after serving as adjutant general to the famous General Lafayette. Susan had mentioned this tall handsome soldier in her last letter to Fanny; she had been much impressed by his amiable manners and especially by the way he took to her children, and they had taken to him.

When he and Fanny met it was almost a matter of love at first sight; before long she was writing to her father about him, "he has a sincerity, a frankness, an ingenuous openness of nature that I had been unjust enough to think could not belong to a Frenchman. He is one of the most singularly



Gen. Alexandre d'Arblay.

interesting characters that can ever have been formed". Within two months he had proposed marriage, and then poor Fanny went through an agonising period whilst she had to weigh the pros and cons of accepting the hand of this handsome, gallant but penniless foreigner. It shows something of her character in that she decided to leave Mickleham for a few weeks and go to Chessington, to the house of her dearly loved "Daddy Crisp" who, during his lifetime had been a guide and benefactor to her, and there, alone, wrestle with her problem.

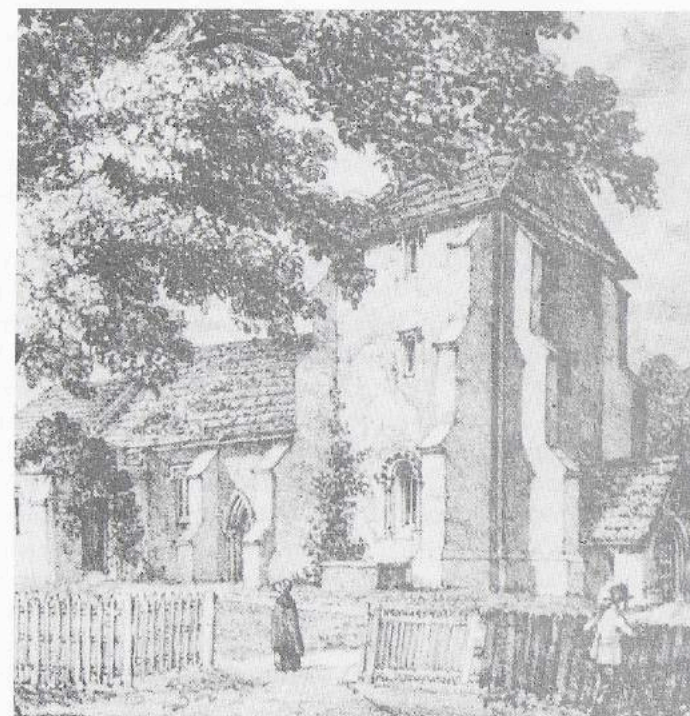
In these days of the welfare state and easy marriage, it may seem incredible that a woman of forty who receives an offer of marriage from a personable man of a similar age with whom

she is very much in love, should think twice about accepting him. To understand the problem facing Fanny however, one has only to read the letter from her father in May, begging her to refuse, not because he disliked d'Arblay, but because he was penniless, with no hope of employment in England and, because of the war, very little hope of ever recovering the fortune which he had left across the channel. Their only source of income would be Fanny's pension of £100 per annum from the Queen; and there was always the risk that this might be withdrawn if the King disapproved of her marrying a French Catholic, and a constitutionalist at that! But in this conflict between head and heart, the heart won. She received assurances from her good friend Mr Lock that it was quite possible for a couple to live on £100 p.a., as indeed many curates did, so long as they had simple tastes, and he promised to give them, as a wedding present, a piece of land on his estate, upon which they could build a small cottage.

So the wedding took place at Mickleham Parish Church on July 31st 1793 in the presence of Mr and Mrs Lock. Capt. Phillips and Mrs Phillips, M. Narbonne and Capt. Burney, brother of the Bride, who gave her away. It will be noticed that her father Dr. Burney was not present at the ceremony — he felt that he could have no part in such a mad venture; the rift however between Father and daughter did not go very deep and was soon healed.

It could be said that all marriages are something of a gamble — this one certainly paid off, if not in material things very much so in happiness. William Lock's courageous backing of it showed his innate common sense and good judgement, and as it turned out, was a wonderful success. In later years, Mme. d'Arblay added a note in her Diary dated 7th May 1825, in which she records the facts of her wedding and finishes with the words; "and never was union more blessed, and felicitous; though after eight years of unmingled happiness it was assaulted by many calamities, chiefly of separation and illness, yet still mentally unbroken".

The honeymoon was spent at Phoenix Farm at the top of Bagden Hill. The original farm house in which they stayed was replaced by a new one during the last century. In passing it is



Mickleham Parish Church c.1800.

Banns of Marriage

N^o 4. *Mr. Gab. Richard D'Arblay* of the Parish of *St. Luke in the Vintria Middlesex* and *Frances Burney* of the Parish of *St. Luke in the Vintria Middlesex*

1793 Married in this Church by *Deacon* this 28th Day of *July* in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and 93 by me *Thos. Fowell Hillier*

This Marriage was solemnized between Us *Amidst Gabriel Richard D'Arblay* *Frances Burney*

In the Presence of *Wm Lock* *James Burney*

Fanny Burney's Marriage Cert.

of interest to note that the name has nothing to do with Phoenix; according to the *English Place Names Soc. book on Surrey*, it is a corruption of Vinis; and it is suggested that there was once a vineyard there.

Whilst the couple are on their honeymoon we might consider further the piece of land that Mr Lock promised to them as a wedding present. This has often been assumed to be the ground on which the present Camilla Lacey stands to-day in Westhumble, lying on the north side of Chapel Lane. If the Diary is read carefully however, it will be noted that in a letter written to Mrs Waddington, in Oct 1793, Fanny describes her proposed cottage thus; "It will be a very small cottage, merely an habitation for three people; but in a situation truly beautiful, and within five minutes of either Mr Lock or my sister Phillips; it is to be placed just between those two loved houses". Now this certainly does not refer to Westhumble; if the map of Norbury Park is studied, the position given must lie somewhere near the old manor house, known to-day as the Priory, and of course right within the confines of Norbury Park. The reason why the site was changed will be revealed later in the story.

In this same letter, written three months after the wedding, Fanny tells her friend, "we are now removed to a very small house in the suburbs of a very small village called Bookham. We found it rather inconvenient to reside in another person's dwelling". This house in Bookham which the d'Arblays rented, known as "The Hermitage", still stands today in Lower Rd on the corner with East Street, and it is little altered since those days.

On September 29th 1793, in a letter written to her father, she says that they "had deferred the building of their maisonette till Spring — Heaven grant it may be deferred no longer". But alas! it was indeed deferred. On March 22nd 1794 she writes again to her father "M. d'Arblay, to my infinite satisfaction, gives up all thoughts of building in the present awful state of public affairs". One reason was that the General had offered his services to the British Government to join the Royalist Expedition to relieve Toulon, then being besieged by the Republicans. Fortunately, his offer was rejected (probably because he was a constitutionalist) as the whole affair proved



The Hermitage, Bookham (1800)

by kind permission of S.E.D. Fortescue.



The Hermitage today.

to be an expensive fiasco. But another reason, undoubtedly, was that with the war, the cost of living was rising fast — prices were soaring and they were feeling the pinch on their fixed income; so it would have been madness to start building, and they remained at Bookham throughout 1794 and even longer, the General trying to augment their slender finances by his enthusiastic efforts at gardening to produce vegetables. Fanny is at her most humorous when she describes her husband's horticultural antics — cutting the hedge with his sword, and digging up a well established bed of asparagus in the belief that it was all weeds!

In the summer she took up her pen again in the hope of increasing their income; she started work on a new novel on the lines of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*. At the same time she wrote a play and finished this before the novel; it was a tragedy called '*Edwy and Elgiva*', something she should never have attempted, as her forte was essentially comedy. However, so high was her reputation, when Sheridan saw it, he backed it without hesitation and put it on at Drury Lane on March 21st 1795 with Mrs Siddons and Kemble playing the leading roles. It was a disastrous failure and was withdrawn after one performance.

Undeterred, Fanny proceeded with her novel; although commenced in 1794 it was not completed until the end of 1795 with the title of *Camilla*. On the advice of her many friends, instead of selling the manuscript to a publisher, she announced that it would be published by subscription, and six months later it finally reached the public in July 1796. It was a tremendous success, at least financially, bringing to its author nearly £3,000; from a literary point of view it was not so successful — it appears, in fact, that Fanny's genius as a novelist was spent and it was to be her last major attempt, although fortunately for posterity her skill as a letter writer and diarist remained to the end.

So now the d'Arblays had sufficient money to build their dream cottage, but they had second thoughts about its site. In December 1794 Fanny had given birth to a son, christened 'Alexander' after his father. This fact explains the delay in the completion of her novel — it may also account for the failure of her play produced shortly after her confinement, which was

not without worry and was followed by a puerperal illness.

The arrival of a son was the cause of their reconsidering Mr Lock's offer of a piece of land in Norbury Park, which we have seen, was part of the estate and so entailed with it. They wanted a piece of freehold land that could be passed on to their son and heir. Mr Lock was sympathetic — he had just the thing for them, a field in Westhumble which he owned as a copyholder from the lord of the manor. There is no record among the surviving Court Rolls of his becoming the owner of this piece of land — maybe the particular record has been lost, or perhaps, when he bought Norbury from Anthony Chapman, the field was included in the purchase; but certainly he made over to the d'Arblays that field lying to the north of Chapel Lane, bounded on the east by Crabtree Lane and on the west by Chapel Farm. Fanny describes it in a letter to her father dated Oct. 1796 thus, "We shall be able to leave Alexander a little property, besides what will be in the funds, and a property likely to rise in value, as the situation of this field is remarkably beautiful. It is in the valley between Mr Lock's Park and Dorking, where land is so scarce that there is not another possessor within miles who would part, upon any terms, with half an acre".

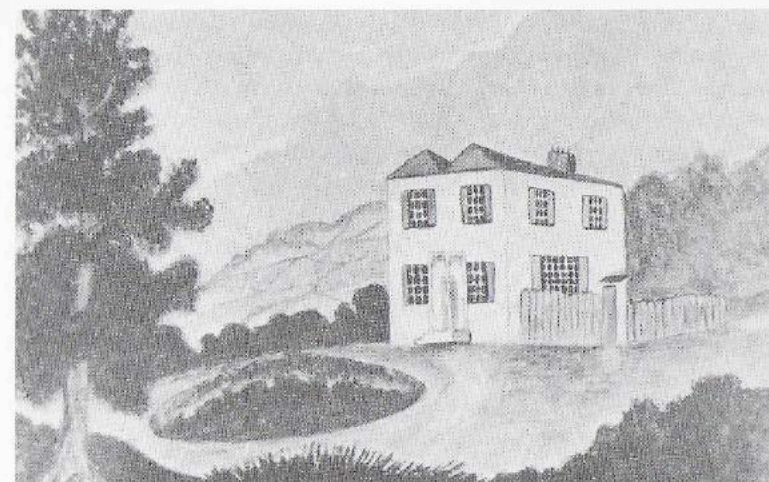
By November the building of the cottage was under way; the architect was the General himself and Fanny describes in another letter to her father how her husband "works all day long at his new garden and orchard, and only comes home to a cold spoiled dinner at tea time. The well for water seems impervious; I grow uneasy about it — it is now near 90 ft. in depth". Later that month on Nov. 25th, she says "our new home is stopped short in actual building from the shortness of days etc., but the master surveyor has still much to settle there, and three workman to aid preparing the ground for agricultural purposes. The foundation is laid and on the 1st of March, the little dwelling will begin to be run up. The well is just finished, the water is one hundred odd feet deep, and it costs near £22, which, this very morning, thank heaven, has been paid. The water is said to be excellent, but M. D'Arblay has had it stopped to prevent accident from hazardous boys who, when the field is empty of owners will be amusing them-

selves there". In June 1797 she writes in another letter "We have begun at last the little hermitage we have so long proposed rearing for our residence; and M. d'Arblay who is his own architect and surveyor, is constantly with the workmen". Again in July 1797 to her father "our cottage is now in the act of being roughcast".

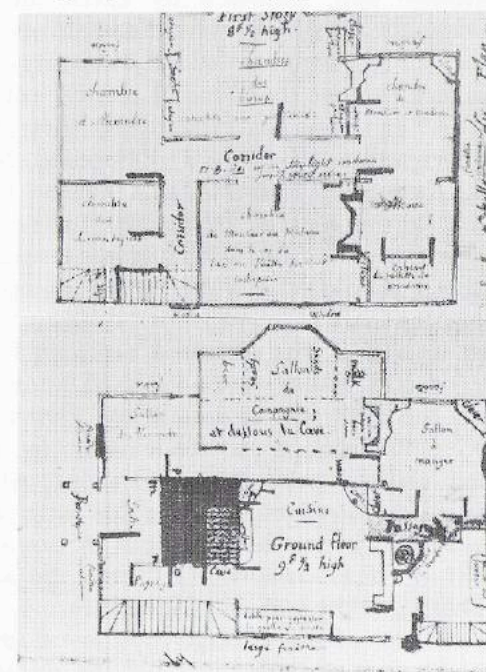
The actual date of their removal from Bookham to their new home cannot be discovered, but the move is described in a letter to Susan dated Dec. 1797; it probably took place in October and the letter is well worth reading. As a remarkable commentary on the hard times the country was undergoing in the course of the war with France, there is a passage in the letter which refers to the recently imposed Window Tax — "the new threefold assessment of taxes has terrified us rather seriously; though the necessity and therefore justice of them, we mutually feel. We have this very morning, decided upon parting with four of our new windows".

The family lived in the cottage, appropriately named by Dr. Burney, 'Camilla Cottage' for four years, and it is a great pity that Fanny tells us so little during that period, of what sort of place Westhumble was, and about the people who lived around her. If only she had written this part of her diary in the same way that her contemporary diarist, Parson Woodforde, was writing his in the parish of Weston Longville Norfolk! One has only to read four consecutive years from Woodforde to feel one knows all the people in his village, rich and poor alike, as old acquaintances — and for many of them what they had for their meals!

Fanny Burney was rather a snob. She fills the pages of her diaries with descriptions of the well connected, the upper classes and Royalty — but there is little mention of the ordinary folk with whom she must have come into daily contact; which is very frustrating for the local historian who is anxious to find out as much as possible about the village in the late 18th century, who lived here, what they were doing and what sort of place it was. She dismisses the population of Westhumble with one paragraph in a letter she wrote to Susan in June 1798 — "the only house in West Hamble village which is not occupied by farmers or poor people is now inhabited by a



Camilla Cottage by Gen. D'Arblay (permission Clarendon Press).



Plan of Camilla Cottage by Gen. D'Arblay (Permission Berg Col. N.Y.)

large family from the city, of the name of Dickenson. They called here immediately upon our establishing ourselves in our cottage. You have been at their house, my dear Susan, when you visited Mme. De Broglie". She mentions very few other local residents as visiting Camilla; amongst them are Sir Lucas Pepys and his wife Lady Rothes of Juniper Hill. Sir Lucas was a famous doctor who treated the King (among many others) during his first illness, and got the credit for his recovery. His wife was a countess in her own right from Shrub Hill, Dorking.

These years, however, were blissfully happy ones for the d'Arblays — perhaps that is why Fanny writes so little about them, but there are several entries relating to her husbands adventures in the garden, and these must surely be of interest to those who live in Westhumble. On one occasion they returned to the cottage after a visit to London to find that, during their absence, horses from Chapel Farm had broken through the hedge and, followed by cattle and pigs, had devastated their garden with all its hard won crops of potatoes and vegetables, so important to their economy. In another place she tells of a project the General carried out in building a large mound of earth, so high that when they stood on its summit they were able to catch a glimpse of the house at Norbury Park through the trees. This mound can still be identified today in the grounds of Camilla Lacey. During the last century it had a cavity dug within it and a small ice house inserted, lined with bricks, the whole being planted with trees to shade it from the sun's rays.

In 1801 an armistice was arranged between England and France which led to the short lived Peace of Amiens. Immediately following the cessation of hostilities, General d'Arblay crossed over to France in an endeavour to recoup his possessions and also to procure employment; within a few weeks he had made arrangements for his wife and son to follow, and with this event they pass out of our story. Their subsequent history is fascinating, but must be sought elsewhere in the Diaries or the various biographies.

And so they left the little cottage they loved so dearly and found themselves trapped in France for the duration of the war which was resumed almost immediately. When they at last

returned they found that William Lock had died and his son William had decided to sell the whole estate; they also found that in spite of their carefully laid plans that little Alexander would have a valuable property to inherit, it turned out that by some legal mishap they were obliged to sell the cottage, and at a loss. And so Westhumble saw them no more.