

THE HISTORY OF MANOR PARK, WHYTELEAFE

By Gwyneth Fookes

(Reprinted from Local History Records XXVI (1987))

COCK RIDDONS, Finches Croft, Holborn Hill, Wm. Clayton and Burntwood Field are intriguing names of fields shown on the Manor of Portley Estate Map of 1720, which were later to form Manor Park as we know it. This is the first precise record of the area to be found (see *LHR VIII*, 1969) and the boundaries of these fields are still to be seen on the ground as embankments crossing the park.

This downland dip slope with its dry valley seems to have been almost unchanged since 1720, but there has been intermittent activity on the railway side of the park. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries available maps show varying areas of woodland and estate roads. One road circuiting the northern boundary of the park, which shows on the Greenwood one-inch map of 1823, is also still quite clear on the ground. The first Ordnance Survey map shows the track through the Cloisters to the old flint quarry as being similar to Burntwood Lane. Its junction with the main Eastbourne Road was cut off with the coming of the railway.

The main remnant at the valley side of the park is an old flint wall which would seem to predate the first big house. In the north-east corner of the wall there is still to be seen the front wall of a cottage. The outside elevation is hidden under ivy and faces towards the present tennis courts, but what can clearly be seen is the inner wall of what was probably a simple two-up two-down cottage with central door entrance. At a later date, when it was incorporated in the extensive out-buildings attached to the second big house, it is described as a gardener's cottage and wash-house. The flint wall was heightened and formed a walled kitchen garden.

The first big house was called Manor Cottage and was built by Thomas Clark Junior in 1818 at a cost of £5,500. It was built in the Italian style with its entrance set in a large verandah facing west, overlooking the park. The handsome bow drawing room was neatly ornamented and finished with gilt mouldings and statuary marble chimney piece. It had three French windows opening under the verandah looking to the lawns, which were then richly ornamented with clumps of trees.

The other reception rooms were of similar description. On the first floor there were five bedrooms, two dressing rooms, two secondary bedrooms and water closet (no bathroom!) The lofty kitchen had an engine pump to supply the whole of the premises with water. The stone paved verandah with its coppered roof and iron trellis entirely covered the west and south of the house and formed a

delightful approach to a large vinery and adjoining conservatory. There were farm buildings too, which in relation to the first house were in the south-east corner.

This information is in a list of particulars printed when the house was put up for sale by auction in 1834 after Mr Clark's death. There were no bidders at the sale. In the particulars it is stated that the house was built in the best hunting land in Surrey and accompanying handwritten notes state:

The Estate stands upon as fine a turnpike road as any in the County and in a situation above all others calculated for a sporting man as the most favourable meets of the foxhounds lie in the vicinity. The Estate was passed daily by the:

East Grinstead and Bletchingley coaches morning and evening.

The Lewes coach, twice a day.

Brighton coaches, twice a day.

East Bourn (*sic*) each other day.

The spot celebrated amidst the Downland of Surrey for the purity of the air, perfectly dry at all seasons, and supplied with beautiful spring water from a well dug at great expense.

There is a good pew appropriated for the family at the church (Caterham).

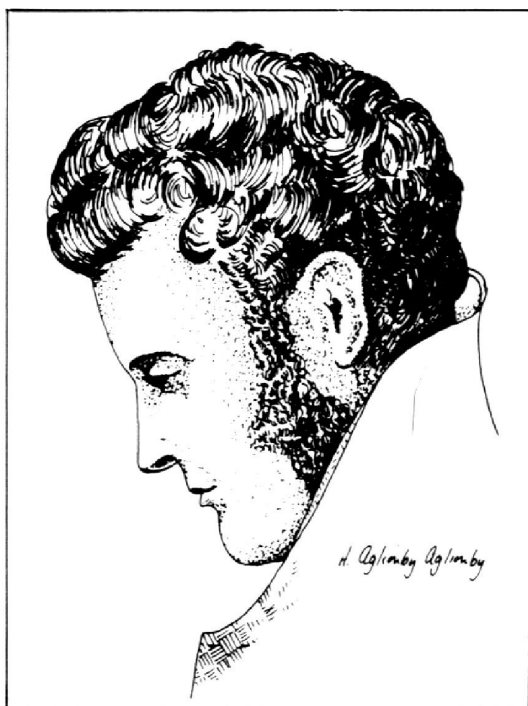
Rates and taxes moderate as under:

Poor rate p. a. about	£15. 0. 0.
Church etc.	£1. 5. 0.
Highway etc.	£3. 12. 0.
Tithe paid say	£6. 0. 0.
33 windows	£10.13. 3.
TOTAL	£36.10. 3.

By 1841 Charles Day owned the estate and James Sadd, a mercer, and his wife Mary were in residence, along with Mr H. Aglionby Aglionby, barrister and Member of Parliament for Cockermonth. They had a household of five adults and five servants.

The census returns of 1851 show that James Sadd had died, and shortly afterwards Mr Aglionby married his widow. The Sadds had had no children but had adopted Eliza Lance from Surinam as their daughter. In 1851 the household was much the same size as in 1841, with two adult visitors, little Eliza and six servants.

About this time Manor Cottage was enlarged considerably and was then referred to as Caterham Manor. Mr Aglionby, who came from Nunnery in Cumberland and had extensive estates in the north, used Caterham Manor as his London home and travelled up to town by train from the then Godstone Road station (Purley). He complained bitterly when he was deprived of the service when the station was closed due to lack of traffic in 1847 and he had to use Stoats Nest station.

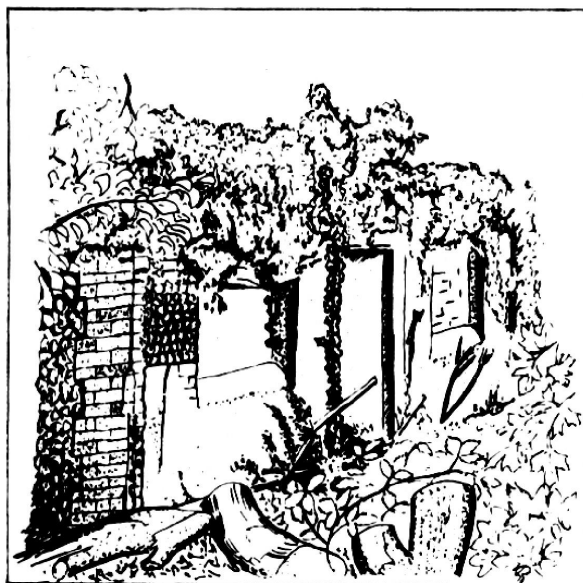


The Hon. H. Aglionby Aglionby, MP for Cockermouth, used Manor Cottage as his London home in the 1840s. About this time it was enlarged considerably and was referred to as Caterham Manor.

It seems he complained even more bitterly when the railway line to Caterham was planned and it would pass very close to his new home. He negotiated compensation from the railway company. They agreed to pay him £1,600 for his leasehold interest, to provide a high wall between the railway and his estate and to build him a new carriageway and a new lodge. The strain must have been too great as he died on 31st July 1854. His wife soon followed, dying in the following month. The property was sold and the purchaser, Mr George Parbury, was content to accept a new drive and in fact, in return for the positioning of Warlingham station (now Whyteleafe South) near Caterham Manor, he gave 150 acres for building (Ref: *The Caterham Railway* by Jeffry Spence).

Ironically a dinner to celebrate the cutting of the first sod of the Caterham Railway was held at the Manor on 5th March 1855. The ceremony was performed by the Hon, Sidney Roper Curzon and the

Directors and their friends then dined at Caterham Manor. The celebration for the 'third class' members of the community took place at the *Half Moon Inn*. Toasts to the success of the railway were drunk by all.



The only sign of a building to be found in Manor Park – an inside wall of a cottage, which may well have been the first building on the site.

The enlargement of the house had been considerable. The accommodation was doubled and now faced south-east. On the ground floor there was now a picture gallery, a conservatory with aviary, a library and a billiard room as well as the usual offices. On the first floor there were fourteen bedrooms (but still no bathroom as such!) The outbuildings were extensive, but were now on the northern side of the building and incorporated the old flint wall. Among farm buildings and stabling, accommodation listed included the long cucumber house, the little cucumber house, the violet house and the vinery, not to mention green-houses. There were three ancillary cottages, the South Lodge, the North Lodge and the Gardener's Cottage. The North Lodge was built in the same style as the enlarged house. An avenue of lime trees was planted at about the same time along the Cloister.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the house appears to have been leased a number of times. In 1879 a rent of £613 *per annum* was charged and it was insured for £7,500. By this time too, limited central heating had been installed. Eventually in 1896 the estate was split into lots and sold off. Portley Wood Road was built then, and some of the houses. Not all the lots were separated from the main estate and by 1898 Warlingham Golf Club was founded. Most of the tees and greens are still to be clearly seen in the park. The Cedar of Lebanon was already a fine tree in 1904 when members of the club sipped tea under its shade.

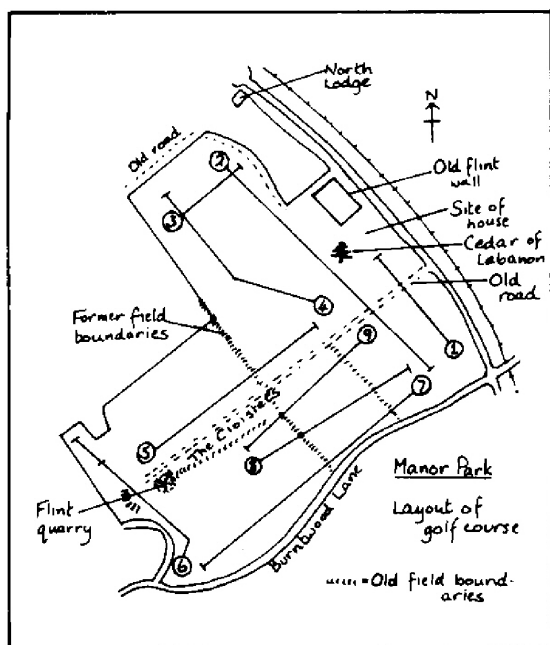


Warlingham Golf Club about 1930 as seen from the first green, which is now near the present car park.

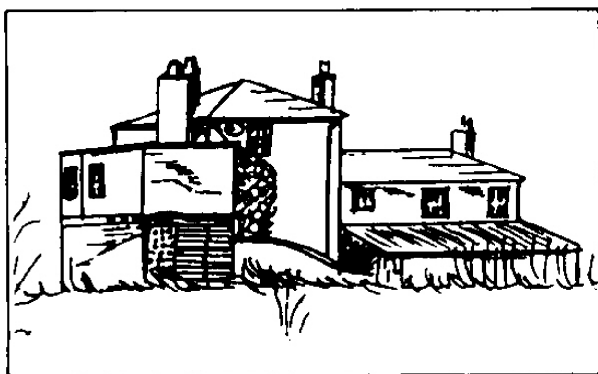


An Edwardian tea party at the golf club, from a photograph taken in 1904.

The course was very sporting and par, playing twice round, was 72. It certainly was not of championship standard. In fact two of the holes were blind and one was more a matter of mountaineering than of golf. The fourth hole was the first blind. If you drove the ball straight it would hopefully bounce down the hill and finish up near the green. The sixth hole was nicknamed The Himalayas. First the ball had to be driven far enough to clear a steep chalk cliff and then to the top of a slope when one could see the green. Should, however, the top not be reached it was a question of playing over a rough road and quite often the ball landed on the road or, worse still, in the nearby garden. It paid to know the owner of the garden! The seventh hole was completely blind and if there was a wind blowing from north to south the ball would finish up well to the right of Bumtwood Lane, again probably in a garden.



Manor Park: The layout of the golf course.



All that remained of the rear of the house in 1952 in a very derelict state.

During the 1930s the club was run by the very pleasant and friendly Scots couple, Mr and Mrs McWatt. The professional was Cecil French. The annual subscription was £5 and the caddies earned 9d. or 10d. (4p) per round, plus a glass of fizzy

lemonade. The greens were mowed using horses with leather shoes to minimise damage to the sward.

Photographs of the hillside at this time show wide open downland grazed by sheep with barely a tree in sight. Already all the extensive greenhouses and conservatories were unused and neglected and the kitchen garden had been turned into tennis courts.

Caterham Manor's existence came to a sudden end soon after the outbreak of hostilities in the Second World War. On 18th August 1940 a string of bombs ran along the bottom of the park, destroying the house almost completely. The golf club did not survive the war, and the whole area soon became derelict. Troops were stationed in the park and there are odd dugouts and trenches which may well be a relic of their residence there. The more level areas were ploughed up for crops.

After the war the then Caterham and Warlingham Urban District Council purchased the entire property and it became a public open space. A small section of the house remained at that time and it was used as a store. In the early 1950s that too was demolished. The South Lodge survived until road widening in Burntwood Lane necessitated its removal. The North Lodge is now a well cared for private house.



South Lodge: It was removed to make way for widening of Burntwood Lane.

Apart from the flint wall surrounding the tennis courts, in the undergrowth there are oddments of foundations to be seen and sections of park fencing deeply embedded in trees. The Cedar of Lebanon stands proud and healthy and other plants that once grew in the well-ordered gardens have persisted and still thrive.

Of the hillside, where the story started, that has survived to become one of the finest areas of unimproved grassland in the district, with a range of flowers in the summer time that is an annual delight. It remains a public park. Moves to build a leisure centre near the site of the old house were recently defeated.

