

The Buckingham Houses Old Shoreham

A Pictorial History



Peter Jonathan Kefford

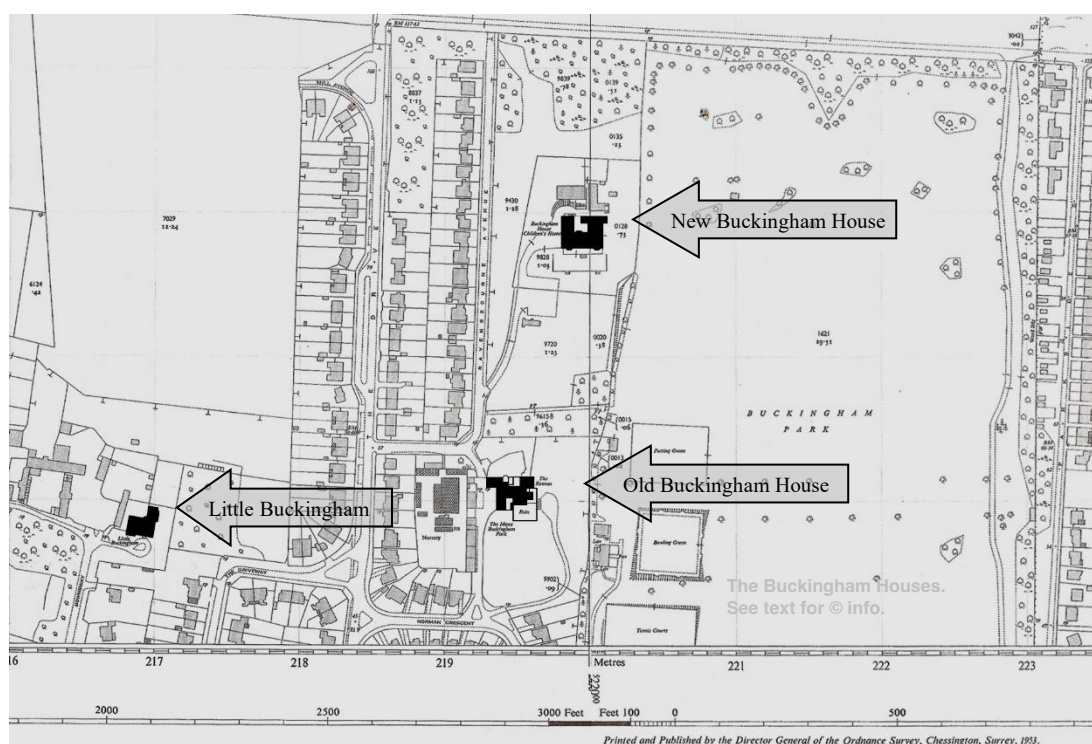
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DEDICATION

**To my late father
Frank William Kefford
whose desire to protect me
led to the writing of this book**

About this Book

For centuries the old Buckingham House was the seat of political and economic power in the town that is now known as Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex. Situated in the parish of Old Shoreham, the ruins of the old Buckingham House may still be seen in the close called Woodview, but most of its vast estate has been swallowed up by 20th century housing developments, except for Buckingham Park. The new Buckingham House that was built to replace the old one lasted for a mere fifty years before it was demolished to make way for more housing. As the memory of these two houses begins to fade, this book presents a pictorial history of them both. For those unfamiliar with Shoreham, the map below identifies their locations, as well as the location of Little Buckingham. More maps are at **Appendix 1**



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Front Cover:

Top

The Old Buckingham House - South & East Elevations

c1905

Courtesy of Marlipins Museum PP/SHORM/94.2593.10a

Bottom

The New Buckingham House - South & West Elevations

c1932

The Buckingham Houses Old Shoreham

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A particular word of thanks is due to Michael W.D. Norman, local Shoreham historian and author whose extensive knowledge of the Buckingham estate I cannot hope to match, but who has guided me and added his own unique material and insights. This book would have been so much poorer without his support.

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The Buckingham Houses

Old Shoreham

Introduction

My interest in the two Buckingham Houses goes back to my earliest years. In July 1957 when I was still less than a year old, my parents moved from Brighton to No. 12 Ravensbourne Avenue, Shoreham by Sea. Our house had just been built and next door, on the northern side, was a majestic mansion called Buckingham House. This building was the new Buckingham House, whilst the old Buckingham House was at the bottom of the road, so my earliest years were spent living between the two.

The New Buckingham House

The close proximity of the new house made it quite a dominant feature of our lives and I think my appreciation of fine buildings must have stemmed from those early years as I often looked out across to the house and admired it. The picture shows my sister and I mowing our back lawn c1961 and shows just how far the mid-1950s housing development had reached. Before my father could lay this lawn, he had to get a road broken up that ran right across our back garden. The road was the original drive to the new house – see the pictures of the house on pages 27, 29 & 30 and the various OS Maps.



Then, one day in September 1961 our world began to change. We had been to Shoreham beach for the day, and upon our return saw a notice attached to the fence next door. My father read it and told us that the house was to be pulled down. I told my parents that I did not want them to knock it down, but at that time I was not quite five years old and unable to do anything about it. I started school that autumn and immediately went down with all the usual childhood illnesses which meant I was at home a lot over the winter of 1961/62 and was able to watch much of the demolition. I kept thinking that the best parts of the house should have been saved, including the stone gable on the west elevation above the front door that had a coat of arms or crest carved into it. I do not recall the exact design.

With just the above picture as a reminder of the new house, I have often been disappointed that the various pictorial history books of Shoreham never had any pictures of the new house, although most had at least one picture of the old house. In 1998 I tried to track down any remaining pictures that might exist, but they proved elusive except for some poor-quality photocopies of some press cuttings in Shoreham Library, and a picture in *Old Shoreham Village and Farms, Volume 2* (Hill, 1996, Picture 99).

One of the press cuttings from the *Shoreham Herald* dated 18 August 1961 quoted my father's concerns about the possible future use of the house by maladjusted children and a preference for the site to be redeveloped. Two years earlier he had a letter published on the same subject in the *Shoreham Herald* dated 20 February 1959. As an accountant in the Brighton Borough Council Treasurer's Department, I can only speculate as to how influential he was in determining the fate of the house, but I have nevertheless dedicated this work to him.

My father could not have known the impression the demolition would make on me. Even after 50 years, I still feel a sense of loss over the destruction of the house and wonder if I am the only one still to mourn it. I have sometimes had dreams in which I explore what the other side of the house looked like and hear again the sound of the demolition tractor engine and the crashing of the walls and chimneys. To say that I am haunted by all this would be to put it too strongly, but if the "ghost" of the house is demanding that its story be told, then perhaps this book will help lay it to rest!

The Old Buckingham House

So far, I have mainly referred to the new Buckingham House. Whilst walking in Buckingham Park with my father one day, I asked why all the windows were blocked up in the old Buckingham House. In reply he told me that it had been gutted by fire. There were two distinct aspects to the old house, the historic classical yellow brick walls to the south and east and a Victorian western service wing that has been variously described as ugly and hideous. I recall being with my mother when she visited someone who lived in the latter part, which was demolished c1963. I did not particularly grieve the loss of this building, and I don't think anyone else did either, given the eyesore that it had become. On reflection, though, this building did have a certain rustic, even eccentric charm with its massive brick chimneys and traditional construction from brick, flint and slate compared to Woodview Court, the building that replaced it. I cannot recall exactly when I came to possess my own camera, but it was too late to photograph the new house or the demolished parts of the old. Nevertheless, some of my earliest photographs were of the surviving walls c1966.



Little Buckingham

I have little memory of this house, although do remember the associated farm buildings of Little Buckingham and their demolition. Whilst largely outside the scope of this work and not one of *the* Buckingham Houses, Little Buckingham could nevertheless be described as *a* Buckingham House in the sense that it was a significant residence on the estate and was sometime home to certain members of the Bridger family. The heart of the house was late medieval, with a frontage dating from the early 19th century. A taller west wing was added c1870.

Old Shoreham Village and Farms (Hill, 1995) has a considerable section devoted to Little Buckingham, including a picture of the front of the house (Hill, 1995, Picture 49), and there seems little point in seeking to add to this coverage. However, for completeness a picture of this house is included on page 18.

Objectives

The south and east elevations of the old house have been well documented in the various published histories of Shoreham, but as with the new house, pictures of the western service wing are hard to find. Nevertheless in 2010 I set myself the overall objective of making one last concerted effort to find whatever I could. My objectives can be broken down more specifically as follows:

On a personal level to:

- Reconnect with my childhood memories of the two Buckingham Houses
- Fulfil a desire to “explore” the new house
- Give back something to the town where I grew up

On a general and historical level to:

- Bring together into one place as many pictures of the two houses as possible
- Recall the lost buildings that, as architectural underdogs, were not considered worthy of preservation
- Correct a number of mistakes in previous works, whilst hopefully not adding too many of my own!
- Create a reference guide to all known material
- Encourage further research and assist the identification of any other relevant material found
- Mark the 100th Anniversary of the gutting of the old house and the building of the new one
- Mark the 50th Anniversaries of the demolition of the new house and much of the old one
- Fill a gap in the written histories of Shoreham

I have often hoped someone else would write a book like this but decided that the best way of making it happen would be to try and write it myself. To some extent this is a personal story, but I trust that my personal recollections will add to, rather than detract from, the general history of the two houses. I therefore now present the best of what I have found and trust it will be of interest. I would be happy to receive any further information or copies of pictures that may become available.

Peter Kefford
Redhill, Surrey
Summer 2011

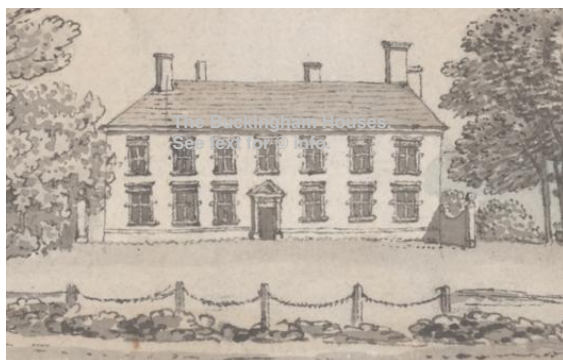
THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

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The Old Buckingham House

Early History

The early history of the holding called Buckingham is recorded in *The Story of Shoreham* (Cheal, 1921) and in *A History of the County of Sussex* (1980) and will not be repeated here except to note that the name Buckingham can be traced back to a John de Buckyngham who died in 1232. A Richard de Bockyngham was MP for New Shoreham in 1300-01 and a Thomas de Bockyngham represented the town in 1358 and in 1362. A house called Buckingham was mentioned in 1541 and was included in the estate held by Sir Edward Lewknor in 1605. In a deed dated 11 July 1657 made by the then owner, Edward Blaker to his wife Dorothy, he grants to her the manor house called Buckingham House which was then described as newly erected (c1655) presumably replacing an earlier one on the same site. In 1662 it had 13 hearths. The house passed by descent to the Monk family who, in 1734 sold it to Edward Elliston. His daughter and heir, Catherine, married Lord Edward Elliott and they sold Buckingham in 1766 to Colvill Bridger (Cheal, 1921 page 66). It has been suggested that Harry Bridger bought Buckingham on Colvill's behalf in 1764/65, but it does not appear to be named in his PCC will of 14 March 1765 – proved 1766 (PROB 11/919 f129-f131).



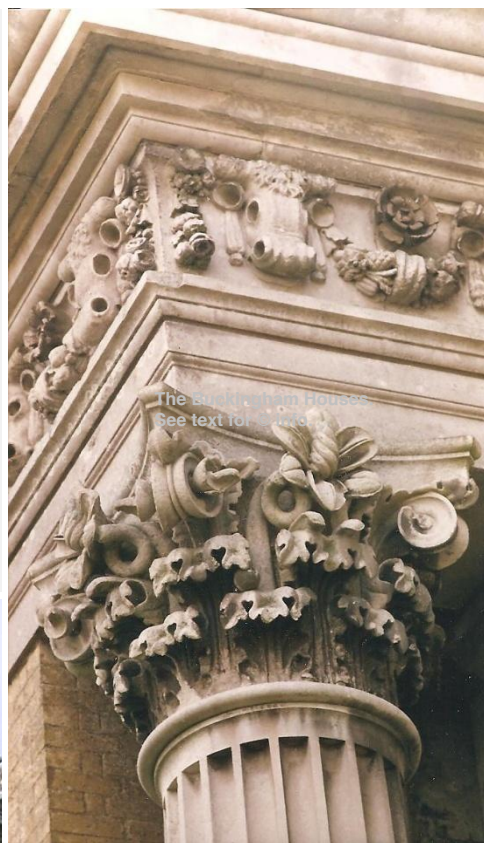
In 1782 the Swiss watercolour artist, Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, recorded the appearance of the east elevation of the house, then known as Buckingham Place. An extract featuring the house is shown here, whilst the picture can be seen in full on page 17. The British Library holds the original picture, which is one of a large number in the Burrell Collection.

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John Biagio Rebecca

Colvill Bridger died in 1797 and was succeeded by his son Harry Bridger (1768-1832). It was during his time that the south and east elevations of the house were considerably remodelled by the London and Worthing architect John Biagio Rebecca. Michael Norman (MN) describes Rebecca's work as follows:

It is difficult to over-praise both the architectural and the constructional quality of his work at Buckingham. The massive columns on the East front are of the order derived from the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, outside Rome, but with subtle and considered variations. The gauged facings of pale yellow gault bricks from Worthing are marvellous. The Venetian windows that flank the Portico have very unfortunately had their carved lunette antifixae stolen. The decorations at high level are partly of Coade stone (like the Lion and Horse on the old Suspension Bridge), and the sarcophagus high over the door incorporates the Bridger Crab in its centre. The Bulls heads in the frieze are splendid. The only other example of this order at this scale is in Soane's Bank of England building of about the same time. Rebecca's handling of it is at least as good. There is unfortunately little surviving evidence of what must have been a magnificent interior. We do however know that there was a fine top-lit columned staircase. The plans were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1820. Photo by MN





Buckingham House c1860 after the Rebecca remodelling

Image from MN

In his book *Biagio & John Biagio Rebecca - A Sketch Towards a Biography* (Norman, 2001) he looks at many other examples of Rebecca's work, exploring similarities between Buckingham and his other houses. Buckingham House is described in Part I, pages 10-11. Most books date the Buckingham remodelling at c1820 on the grounds that the plans were exhibited at the Royal Academy that year. However, the works most probably coincided with the diversion of the Brighton to Worthing road southwards, which was authorised in 1808. (Norman, 2001, Part I, page 11). As can be seen on the full version of Grimm's watercolour, the road previously ran very close to the south of the house.

The house was set in a beautiful park and with many trees. Amongst the species present were a number of evergreen *Quercus Ilex* or Holm (Holly) Oak trees. These trees are natives of the Mediterranean and were introduced to Britain in the 16th century. They were much favoured by Rebecca and were planted at Buckingham to complement the Italian style of the house and to hide the other elevations that had not been so expensively altered. The above picture shows the house as originally remodelled by Rebecca, work that required the blocking of eight of the windows shown in the painting by Grimm.

Shot Thief

Harry Bridger died in 1832 and was succeeded by his son Harry Colvill Bridger (1799-1872). It was during his time that a thief who was attempting to burgle the house was shot by one of the menservants. The shooting proved to be fatal and the body was found in the grounds of the house. As the burglar's identity was unknown, his body was placed in a glass-topped coffin at the Red Lion Inn at Old Shoreham. People travelled considerable distances to view the body, but it was eventually identified as that of John O'Hara when his dog came sat by the coffin and refused to leave. His body was buried in St Nicolas Churchyard on 8 February 1853 but it was exhumed and reburied due to road widening works c1916-1921. The story is told by Cheal (1921, pages 67-68) and the *Shoreham Herald* dated 5 September 1958, page 8.

The 1873 Modifications

After the death of Harry Colvill Bridger in 1872, the house passed to his son, Harry Bridger (1828-1910) who had been living with his first wife Eliza Ann (1827-1889) and family at Little Buckingham since at least 1861. The family moved into the house and shortly afterwards commissioned some major new building works. The single-story northern extension on the east elevation was modified into a billiard room, but apart from this, the south and east elevations were unaffected. The changes at the back of the house were considerable, with the construction of a western service wing in red brick and flint, with a slate roof and tall brick chimneys, designed by the architect Colonel Robert William Edis. See page 13.



South & east elevations c1905 by William Page

*Courtesy of Marlipins Museum
PP/SHORM/94.2593.10a*

Exit the Bridgers – Enter Henry Head

Shortly after the death of Eliza Ann in 1889, Harry Bridger and the family moved out to live in Adur Lodge where they appear on the 1891 census, together with his new wife Elizabeth (née Hockley) whom he married in the September quarter 1890 at Westminster. So, after nearly 125 years the Bridger's occupation of the house, although not their ownership, came to an end. They let the property to Henry Head; "whose connection with the town of Shoreham will long be remembered. This gentleman interested himself in every good work for the welfare of the inhabitants and was beloved and esteemed by all." (Cheal, 1921, page 67).

An Iconic View

Perhaps the most iconic view of the house in its heyday and the one most frequently published shows the south and east elevations with two young children standing by the main entrance. The picture appeared in the *Shoreham Herald* dated on 5 June 1959, page 8. The children were then identified as "Arabella and Dulcibella Bridger, sisters of a then little brother who afterwards became Colonel Colville [*sic*] Bridger" and the picture dated between 1860 and 1870. The move to Adur Lodge was given as 1870. However, this identification and the dates are incorrect. The two girls identified as Arabella and Dulcibella were actually called Florence Louisa (1856-1933) and Dulcibella Mary Bridger (1859-1934) who lived in Little Buckingham between 1861 and 1871. Harry Colvill Bridger (1850-1929) who became a colonel was their elder (not younger) brother. Quite apart from the apparent misnaming, both girls would have been much bigger by the time they moved in to the house in 1872 and the picture cannot have been taken before 1873 when the billiard room conversion took place. The Bridgers did not move to Adur Lodge until c1889.

The picture actually dates from c1905 and the children belonged to Henry Head's daughter, Hester Pinney. Some publications have identified both children as girls, but Hester's children born between her marriage in 1900 and the departure of the family in 1905 were Hester Harriott born in 1901 and Bernard born in 1903. The confusion appears to have arisen due to the custom of the time to dress young boys quite effeminately.

The picture on the right shows Henry Head, Hester Pinney and her two children c1905, next to one of the columns of the house. Hester Harriott is on Henry's lap whilst Bernard is being held in Hester's arms. Henry's use of a wheeled chair suggests that his health was declining and the picture was probably taken shortly before his death in 1905. (BB)



Courtesy of Marlipins Museum PP/SHORM/94.2593.16



South elevation c1905 by William Page

Courtesy of Marlipins Museum PP/SHORM/94.2593.10b

The “Buckingham Book” of Hester Head/Pinney

A fascinating record of the period of Henry Head’s occupation of Buckingham is the “**Buckingham Book**” of his daughter Hester, an album of family photographs, letters, and drawings. Pictures that are known or believed to have come from her book are marked (**BB**).

The Great Storm of 1897

On 3 March 1897 there was a great storm, the results of which were devastating, with some 82 trees felled. The “**Buckingham Book**” contains photographs of the fallen trees and a letter Henry Head’s son (also Henry) sent to him describing the storm and its effects. Hill has reproduced one of the pictures (Hill, 1996, Picture 97) and the letter (Hill, 1996, pages 120-121). Apart from the loss of many slates, the house survived. The loss of many ilex trees exposed views of the house that they had been planted to hide, so that the red brick back of the house could be seen from the croquet lawn.

The Southdown Hunt



The Southdown Hunt at Buckingham c1900 (**BB**)

Courtesy of Marlipins Museum PP/SHORM/94.2593.19

The house was the starting venue for the Southdown Hunt and the dogs were kept in kennels at Buckingham Park. From the house, the hunt proceeded via a hunting gate on the west side of the park into the Drove Road and then on to the Downs.

Two other views of the hunt have been published, one in *Shoreham Memories* (Bull & Oliver, 1979, page 26) and the other in *Old Shoreham Villages & Farms -Volume 2* (Hill, 1996, Picture 96).

William Godson Little

After the death of Henry Head in 1905 at Buckingham House, it stood empty without a tenant for five years and was eventually bought by William Godson Little in 1910, the same year that Harry Bridger died. By this time the condition of the old house had deteriorated so much that, with the exception of the 1873 western service wing, most of it was gutted, probably in order to deal with dry rot that had developed whilst it was empty, although a fire has been suggested as an alternative reason. Whatever the cause, the house would never be the same again and the loss of so much historic fabric has to be regretted. It is thought that the Bridgers persuaded Little to retain Rebecca’s splendid south and east elevations. The windows were blocked up and the walls became known as “The Ruins”. At the same time, Little commissioned the building of the new house to the north of the old.



An early and rather ghostly view of “The Ruins” *Courtesy of Marlipins Museum PP/SHORM/94.2593.3*

Ernest Redford Harrison

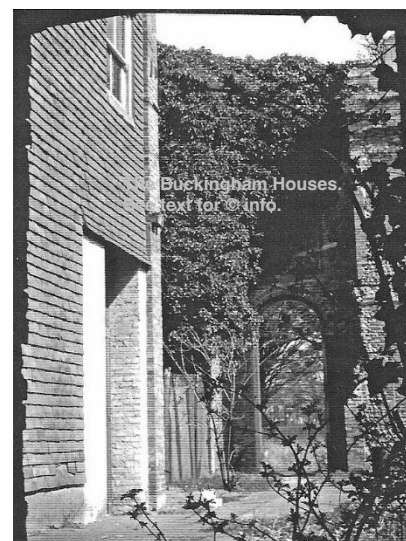
After Little died in 1922, Ernest Redford Harrison bought the old and new houses. The Harrisons hosted a number of public events in the park and these were usually declared open from the steps between the “Doric” [*sic – actually pseudo-Corinthian*] columns of the surviving east wall of the old house. (Hill, 1996, Picture 98). According to the recollections of Mr Fred Langrish, whose father was employed on the estate as a gardener in the 1920s, E.R.Harrison owned a tannery business in Chichester and lived in the new house whilst the remnants of the old house had been divided into three dwellings. “The head gardener, Barnes, and his family lived in the N.E. part, we lived in the N.W. part and the chauffeur, George Hubbard lived in the south part”. (Hill, 1996, page 117). Harrison sold both houses in 1930. It was possibly at this time that the old house was re-purchased by the Bridger Trustees on behalf of Frank Stanley Clark Bridger (1892-1984) the son of Harry Bridger and his second wife Elizabeth Hockley.

The Retreat Within the Walls

The three dwellings were located within the 1873 service wing and in the northwest quarter of the house that had been retained by Little and which became known as the “Retreat”. Within the gutted walls surrounding the Retreat, traces of the 1655 house were clearly visible, including an inglenook fireplace and a several blocked windows. Part of the Retreat can just be glimpsed through the former main east entrance in the above picture, whilst an entrance and window can be seen through two other former entrances in the views below. The following pages will focus on views within the walls and the Retreat.



South elevation of the Retreat looking in from the south and the west



Photos by MN c1955

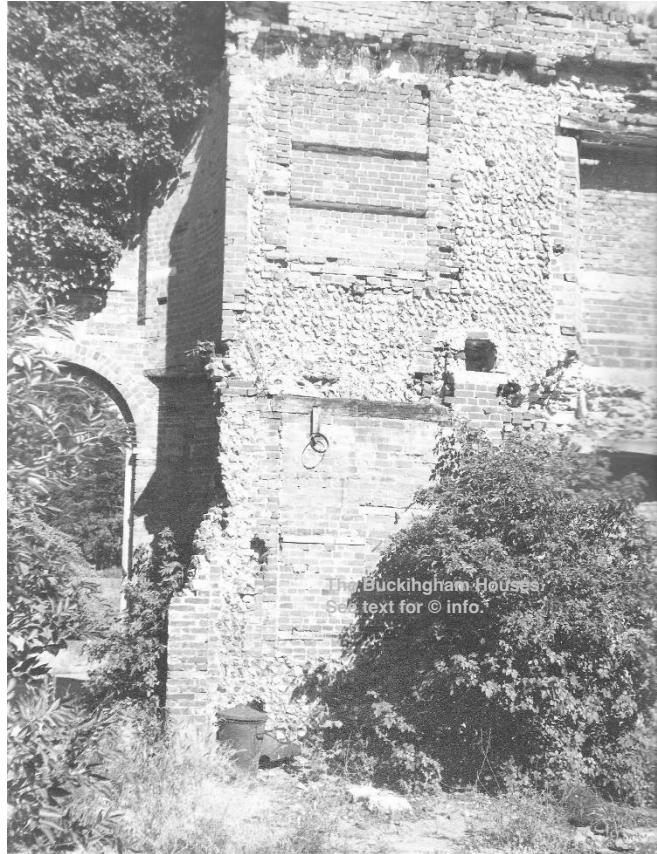
Within the Walls – Southeast Corner

The inside of the walls had some remarkably neat flint and brickwork for what was an interior surface in the 1655 house, but this is no longer visible due to the walls being rendered in the 1960s.

The eight windows on the east elevation that were blocked during the Rebecca remodelling are flush with the flint work, whilst those modified and retained by him are recessed. The latter were blocked when the house was gutted in 1910 and unblocked in the 1960s.

Unfortunately, the inside of the east entrance was very overgrown, but the view here gives some detail of the way the middle of the east front of the house was extended eastwards to create the new main entrance.

These views were taken c1955 (as were the ones on page 22) for the late Reg Leggett, a Shoreham estate agent with an interest in the history of the town.



Part of east entrance and wall

Image from MN



Southeast corner

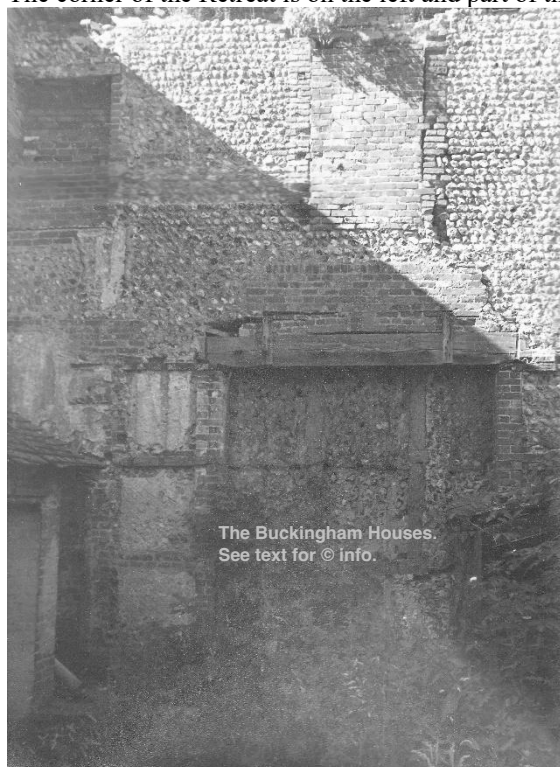
Image from MN

Within the Walls – Northeast Corner

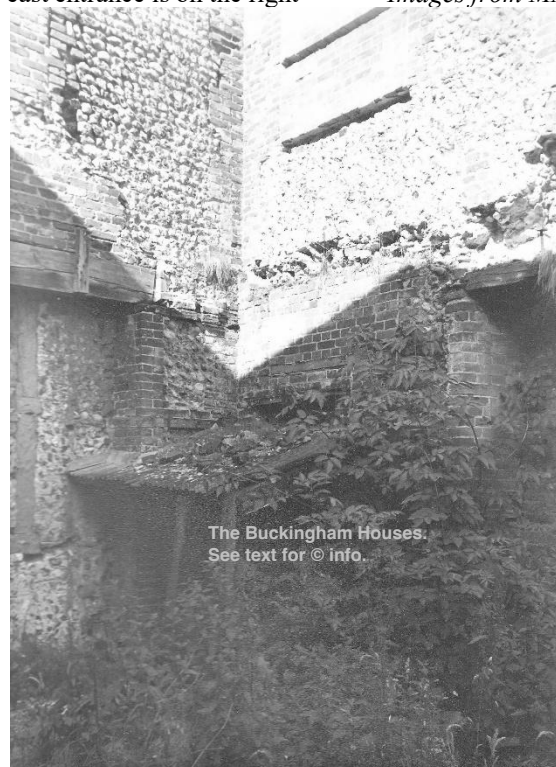


The corner of the Retreat is on the left and part of the east entrance is on the right

Images from MN



North wall with 1655 window and part of the inglenook fireplace at bottom left



Northeast corner close up with 1655 window on the left

THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

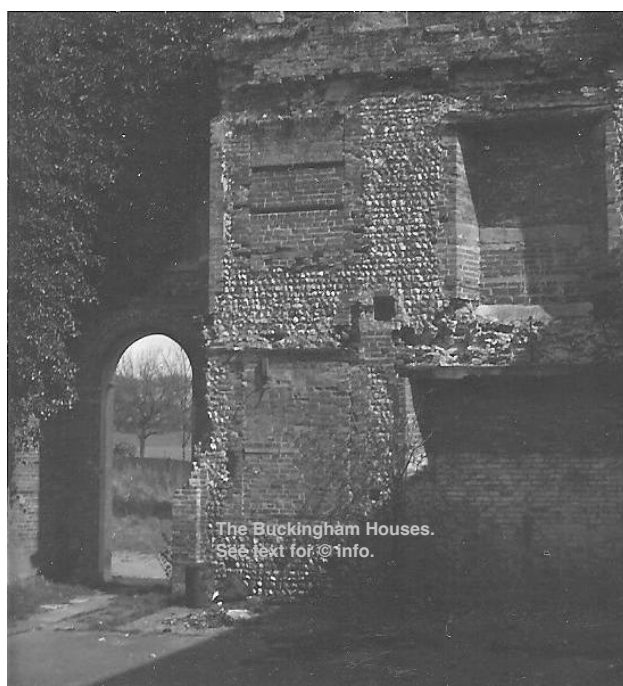
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Within the Walls – Historic Features

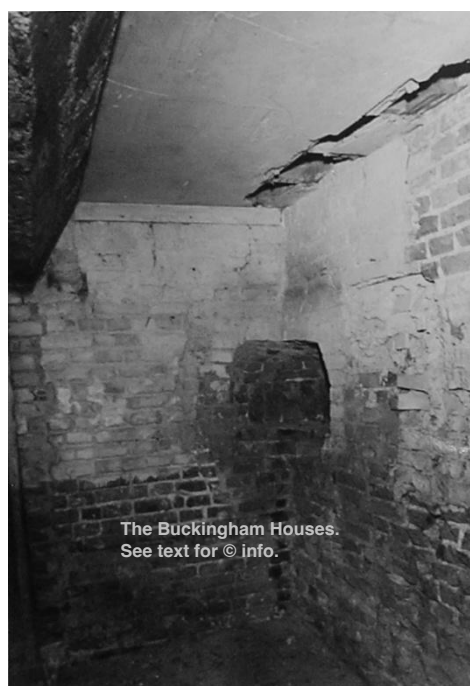
The historic features mentioned earlier are shown here. The east entrance in the first picture must have looked just as elegant from the inside as it did from the outside. In the second picture, the recessed “nook” within the inglenook fireplace can be seen just right of centre, whilst the substantial oak beam across the front can be seen at the top left.

Judging by the substantial recesses that held the staircase supports that are shown in the third picture, it must have been an impressive feature of the house. It is thought that the staircase was shipped to America when the house was gutted in 1910, but its eventual destination is unknown. Had the house been damaged by fire it seems unlikely that the staircase would have survived. Indeed, the various views within the walls show no evidence of a fire extensive enough to justify gutting three quarters of the building, which makes dry rot the more likely explanation.

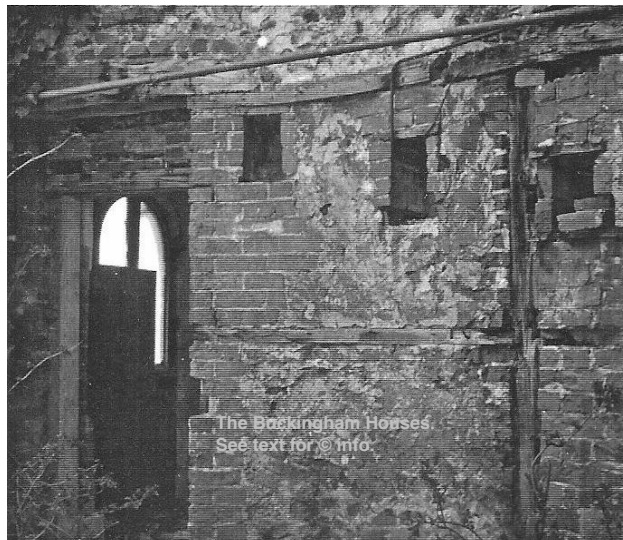
The blocked stone cruciform-style window in the fourth pictures dates from the 1655 house. The 1873 billiard room was the other side of this section of wall.



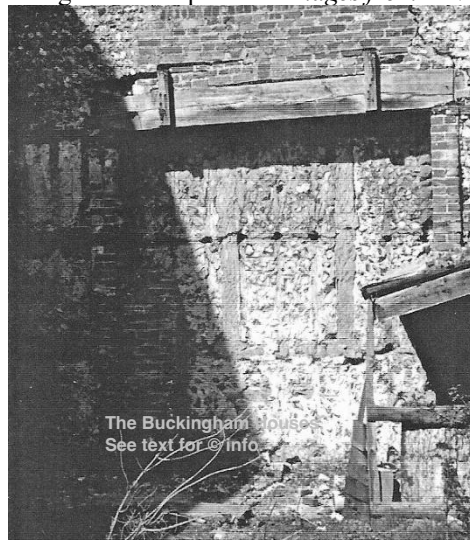
1. Another view of the east entrance



2. Inglenook fireplace *Images from MN*



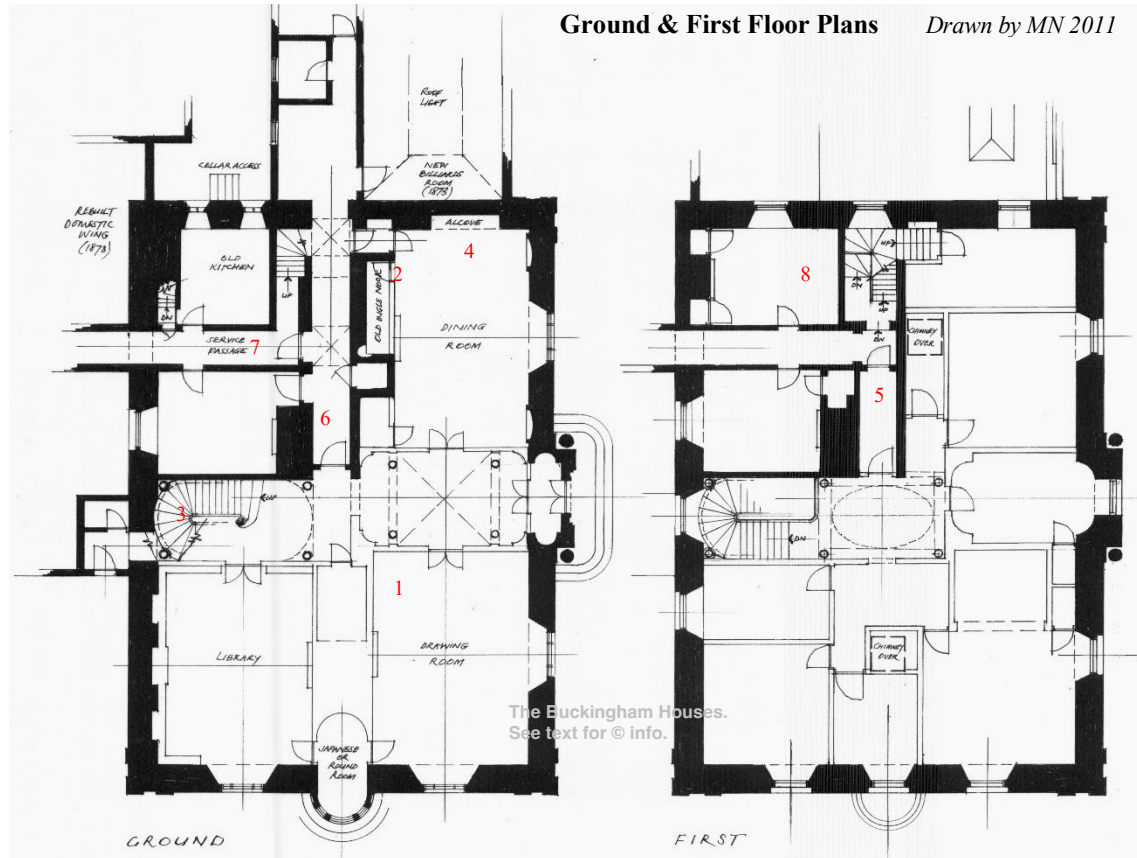
3. Under former main staircase looking southwest



4. Closer view of blocked 1655 window

The approximate locations from which these pictures were taken are shown on the ground floor plan of the Retreat on the next page.

Inside the Retreat



5. Stairs looking north



6. View north to billiard room



7. Service passage looking east

Michael Norman asked Lady Hester Pinney if she would sketch some plans from her personal memories of living in the house, but sadly she died before she could do so. He has therefore drawn the above plans to show how the layout of the house may have looked, but they include a fair amount of conjecture. The oval feature at the centre of the first floor plan is the top light over the columned landing.

The pictures show views of the interior and the approximate positions from which they were taken are marked with the corresponding numbers on the plans.

Photos by MN c1955



8. Northwest bedroom looking west

Threats of Demolition



The “Ruins” under imminent threat of demolition - 15 July 1954

Photo by MN 1954

During WW2 the remains of the old house were requisitioned by the army and returned to multiple occupation after the war. One of the residents erected a rather incongruous greenhouse in front of the walls. On 15 July 1954 Michael Norman discovered that the house was due to be demolished the very next day. He took the above picture and was able to make a last-minute appeal to the Department of the Environment, which resulted in a Preservation Order on 25 August 1954 with a Grade 2 Listing, the house having been completely missed in an earlier survey of buildings of historic interest in the area. It was at about this time that Frank Bridger’s agent offered to give the walls to Michael Norman, an offer he declined! Nevertheless, applications to demolish the house continued, including one reported in the *Shoreham Herald* dated 4 February 1955, page 6 in an article that had a picture similar to the one above.



East elevation c1954

The *Shoreham Herald* dated 16 February 1962, page 12 reported another planning application, this time for the demolition of all but the two Rebecca walls and redevelopment on the site as well on the former lawns in front of them. In spite of the preservation order and remaining evidence of the C17th house, permission was granted. Michael Norman, in consultation with the retained architects achieved the most sympathetic layout possible for the new developments by ensuring that the new building line did not obstruct the views of the walls from the south and the east, as can be seen on the overlay of pre and post-development maps on page 46. The new developments were given the names Woodview Court and Woodview respectively on account of the literary associations the house had with the author George Moore and his famous novel *Esther Waters*, in which the house is called Woodview. See pages 18 to 21.

The 1873 Western Service Wing



South elevation of western service wing and main house c1954

The following pictures were taken by Michael Norman and show the other elevations of the western service wing as well as the west and north elevations of the Rebecca-styled house that were also lost in the demolition. I can recall the service wing in various stages of demolition, but a search of the *Shoreham Herald* between 1962 and 1965 failed to locate any pictures of the event, which is somewhat surprising given the significance of the house in the history of Shoreham.



West and south elevations

Photo by MN 1954

The above picture shows a close-up view the west elevation of the Rebecca-styled house and the south and west elevations of the service wing. The carving set into the chimney carried the Bridger Crab and the year 1873. The second blocked window from the right of the picture would have lit the main staircase. The next picture shows a more distant view that sets the scene into the context of Buckingham Mews.

THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

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West and south elevations from Buckingham Mews

Photo by MN 1955

The next view shows more of the west elevation. It is thought that the massive chimneys had to be built to this height in order to overcome downdraughts caused by the nearby ilex trees. A feature of this building that is obscured by the wall and hedge on the right was a brick archway in to a porch. This was the entrance to the part of the house my mother and I visited when she called to see her friend. It is not known if any pictures exist of this particular feature. On the east side of the yard was a car wash-down area which once had a glazed canopy. The area can be seen in front of the bay-windowed cottage on the left.



West elevation and yard with car wash area

Photo by MN 1955

“The roadway opened in to a handsome yard overlooked by the house, the back premises of which had lately been rebuilt in red brick. There were gables and ornamental porches and through the large kitchen windows Esther caught sight of the servants passing to and fro. At the top of this yard a gate led into the park...” *Esther Waters*.



North elevation from Ravensbourne Avenue

Photo by MN 1955

The gate to the park can be seen in the above view, but by the mid-1950s it led not to a park but to a building site. The piles of bricks were in the process of being built into Mae House. Further development immediately north, on the eastern side of Ravensbourne Avenue, created our home at No.12 and Ravensbourne Close, which in-filled the grounds between the old Buckingham House and the new.



North elevation and ruins of billiard room

Photo by MN 1957

The Walled Garden

To the west of the house, the yard and row of cottages was a walled garden. The 1873 map on page 42 shows it as having a formal layout of four quadrangles divided by pathways. On later maps the formal layout appears to have been lost as glasshouses were added, although it retained a large mulberry tree at its centre. The area became known as the Nursery Garden, having survived the housing developments of the 1930s. On the north side there was a small shop accessed through the wall from Ravensbourne Avenue, which was run by a Mrs Lelliott, who lived in the old coachman's house in Buckingham Mews. In the 1960s it was run by a Mr & Mrs Joyce who also lived in the one of the houses in Buckingham Mews. It



Nursery garden shop from Ravensbourne Ave

Photo by MN 1957

was a regular port of call as a source of sweets and iced lollies for the local children, as well as supplying a range of groceries for the adults. The picture of the shop shows the roof of the Buckingham House service wing, which can just be seen to the left of the lamppost. The Nursery Garden and its shop were redeveloped in the late 1960s/early 1970s with a close also called Buckingham Mews. A Mr & Mrs Skelton ran a new shop on the same site, but it was converted to residential use some years ago.

After the demolition of the western service wing and redevelopment of the whole site around the two surviving Rebecca walls, a further attempt to demolish them was made in 1966 when it became clear that no one wanted to take responsibility for their upkeep. The fact that, at Michael Norman's suggestion, they had been partially incorporated into Woodview Court made demolition undesirable. Eventually the matter was resolved, with Shoreham Council taking ownership and responsibility for the walls. The relevant documents are held at West Sussex Record Office (Ref. UD/SH/21/2/5).



The remains of Buckingham House today



Woodview Court from the northwest



The Old Buckingham House in Art



Above: East Front of Buckingham – a watercolour by Samuel Hieronymus Grimm 1782
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 From the British Library Collection



Left: Buckingham House
 Miss E Bartlett c1900
 PP/SHORM/94.2402



Below Left: Buckingham House
 Brook Harrison c1904
 PP/SHORM/S3

Below: Buckingham Lodge
 Brook Harrison c1907
 PP/SHORM/S2

All Courtesy of Marlipins Museum



The Old Buckingham House in Literature – George Moore’s “Italian House”

The Irish novelist, George Augustus Moore (1852-1933) moved to London in 1868, a year after his father, George Henry Moore, was re-elected to the House of Commons as MP for Mayo. The family built and owned Moore Hall next to Lough Carra in County Mayo, but the house is now a gutted shell, having been burned by Republicans in 1923. His father died in 1870 and in 1873 Moore moved to Paris to study Art before returning to London in 1881. Whilst in England Moore spent much time with the Bridgers, but it is not the intention here to analyse in detail the extent to which Buckingham House or the Bridger family influenced or inspired him, although such a study would make an interesting subject for a separate thesis that is beyond the scope of this book. Whilst the architectural style of the house is actually Palladian, after the Venetian architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), the “Italian House” appears in at least four of Moore’s books.

Memoirs of My Dead Life (London, Heinemann, 1906)

In Chapter 10, entitled *A Remembrance*, Moore recalls that; “It was in the vastness of Westminster Hall that I saw her for the first time--saw her pointed face, her red hair, her brilliant teeth. The next time was in her own home--a farm-house that had been rebuilt and was half a villa” and which had a pigeon-cote behind it. During the day “she” attended her garden whilst “in the evening, her husband smoked his pipe in silence; the young ladies, their blonde hair hanging down their backs, played waltzes; she alone talked”. Moore states that he had just turned 18 at the time, so placing the date in early 1870.



“a farm-house that had been rebuilt and was half a villa”
Memoirs of My Dead Life – A Remembrance

Nowhere in the narrative does Moore name these people, but from the description and date, the house was Little Buckingham. The house was demolished to make way for housing in the 1970s but the dovecote still survives. The postcard picture shows the Victorian west wing extension to the older house. The postmark was dated 16 July 1905.

On the 1861 and 1871 census returns, this was the home of Harry Bridger, his wife Eliza Ann and their three children: Harry Colvill, Florence Louisa and Dulcibella Mary, although by 1871 Harry Colvill was lodging at 6 Sydney Street, Chelsea.

Moore reflects that there was no particular reason why these people should have been his friends, but somehow they seemed to suit each other to the extent that visit succeeded visit until one day, “the old squire who walked about the downs in his tall hat died”. The old squire was Harry Colvill Bridger (1799-1872) and upon his death they “moved into the family place, distant about one hundred yards – an **Italian House**, sheltered among the elms”. After the move Moore describes how; “the building of the new wing interested him”. The western service wing was added to the rear of the house in 1873, the same year that Moore moved to Paris.

After a long absence abroad, he met the Bridgers again by chance in London and his frequent visits to them resumed, sometimes lasting a week, sometimes six months. Whilst walking with one of the girls (Florence or Dulcibella) in the garden one day, he suddenly realised how much a part of his life they had become, “a sudden and enchanting awakening of love” as he described it. Yet it was not to the daughters (who remained spinsters all their lives) but their mother to whom he describes the greatest attachment. He describes her thinning red hair, immaculate teeth and pretty vixen-like face, their meeting of minds, their close companionship, the discovery of her terminal illness, her death and funeral in “the old church with red-brown roofs and square dogmatic tower” and mourns, “the appearance of death in the springtime, at the moment the world renews its life”. Eliza Ann Bridger died aged 61 on 26 February and was buried at St Nicolas Church, Old Shoreham on 4 March 1889.

Hail and Farewell - Part I "Ave" (London, William Heinemann, 1911)

In Chapter 13, Moore recalls his 30-year friendship with the Bridgers (although he only uses their first names) and how he first met them when he was a boy and then, after an absence of several years met "Colville" [*sic* - *Harry Colvill Bridger*] in Regents Street and immediately went back to stay with them for 2-3 years - perhaps more. He wrote *Confessions of a Young Man* (London, Swann Sonnershein Lowry & Company, 1886) whilst lodging by Southwick Green and enjoyed the wonderful Jubilee summer (1887) with them. *Spring Days* (London, Vizetelly & Company, 1888) was set in Southwick. During these stays during the 1880s, Moore and Colvill started a rabbit farm, initially breeding the rabbits in the various outbuildings around the house until there were so many they almost overran the house itself. Colvill was building a new house called Freshcombe Lodge on the downs at Truleigh Hill to where the rabbits were to be relocated. The venture was not a success and the pair quarrelled.

In order to escape tedious evenings with Colvill at Freshcombe, Moore walked to the house to spend time with Harry and Eliza Ann Bridger and their daughters Florence and Dulcibella; "and it was pleasant to enter that **Italian House** under the ilex trees and to find them all glad of my company. The squire liked me to stay on after dinner to play billiards with him ... I was often persuaded to stay the night". In spite of the pleasantness of his time at "the top and the foot of the downs" he felt this life to be too restrictive of his writing and left his friends for a still longer absence, possibly sometime after the death of Eliza Ann in 1889. He might never have returned except he now desired to come to Sussex to see if his friends had any sympathy with his opposition to the Boer War. The year was now 1899 or 1900. He describes how he wished to escape the opinionated atmosphere of London, where his sympathies with the Boers were at odds with the rest of the country. He boarded a train at Victoria for Sussex "rapt in the memory of some South Saxon folk that lived in an **Italian House** at the foot of the downs". They were not sympathetic, and Moore found himself hating the place he had loved for so long and yet; "the atrocious war that forbade him to love them in the present could not prevent him loving them in the past".

Celibates (London, Walter Scott, 1895)

Moore's observation of the Bridger's building works on the western service wing in 1873 resonates through the story of John Norton, one of the three characters in *Celibates*.

Lizzie Norton lives in Buckingham House, alias "Thornby Place" and her son John Norton, the celibate, is a devout Catholic with aspirations to become a priest or monk. His mother wants him to marry Kitty Hare and take his rightful place as Squire, but he desires to convert the house into a monastery and call it Thornby Priory or Abbey. John says to his mother; "I intend to alter the house here and there; you know how repugnant this mock-Italian architecture is to my feelings.The billiard room, that addition of yours, can be turned into a chapel. And the casements of the dreadful bow-window might be removed; and instead of the present flat roof a sloping tiled one might be carried up against the side of the house. The cloisters would come at the back of the chapel".

John says to Kitty, "From this view it really is not so bad, though the urns and logia are so intolerably out of keeping with the landscape". His alterations would enable the house to harmonise with the countryside, but Kitty quotes his mother's view that; "it will be impossible to alter Italian architecture in to Gothic". Mr Egerton*, the architect, thought that John's plans were somewhat wild, as they included a central tower that would be too heavy to be supported by the walls, and the proposed ambulatory from the chapel would run directly to the kitchens. Only the conversion of the billiard room to a chapel could be done easily. With such emphasis on the billiard room, the only actual alteration to the "Italian" aspects of the house was the construction of a billiard room. The picture on page 4 shows the flat-roofed, "Italian" style single-story extension at the north end of the east elevation. In post-1873 pictures this part of the house has a new window, plus a pitched roof with a skylight and chimney. **Moore's alias for Colonel Edis?*

Despite his religious inclinations towards celibacy, John enjoys his time with Kitty;

"This idyll was lived about the beautiful **Italian house**, with its urns and pilasters; through the beautiful English park, with its elms now with the splendour of summer upon them; in the pleasure-grounds with their rosery, and the fountain where the rose-leaves float, and the wood pigeons come at eventide to drink...." *Celibates*

Buckingham Pond and Fountain (**BB**)

Image from MN



Esther Waters (London, Walter Scott, 1894 - Revised 1899, 1917, 1920 & 1931)

In this, Moore's best-known work, the story begins and ends at Buckingham House, this time in the guise of "Woodview". Moore revised the book four times after it was first published and the quotations that follow are taken from the final 1931 version.

Esther arrives by train at Shoreham station and makes her journey past the triangular clump of trees and the lodge towards the house; "Evergreen oaks looped into an arch over the iron gate which opened in to the pleasure ground and the angles and urns of the **Italian House** showed between the beech trees to which rooks were returning. A high brick wall separated the pleasure ground from the stables.....The roadway opened in to a handsome yard overlooked by the house, the back premises of which had lately been rebuilt in red brick. There were gables and ornamental porches and through the large kitchen windows Esther caught sight of the servants passing to and fro. At the top of this yard a gate led into the park..." See the picture on page 14.

The roadway was Buckingham Mews and the former stables have been dwellings for many years. The separating wall still exists, although it has been reduced in height. The back part of the house that had "lately been rebuilt in red brick" was the 1873 western service wing, although flint also formed a substantial part of its construction.

Esther had come to be a kitchen maid at Woodview, owned by Mr Barfield "the Gaffer" and his wife Mrs Barfield "the Saint". Esther forms a relationship with William Latch, a footman at the house who, along with the other servants and the Gaffer, are heavily in to betting on horses at the Red Lion pub in Old Shoreham – much to the disapproval of the Saint, whose religious convictions as a member of the Plymouth Brethren are shared by Esther.

One of the Gaffer's horses, Silver Braid, races at Goodwood and the whole town seems to have placed bets on it. Rather than get involved in gambling, Esther takes a walk to the beach and; "she crossed a suspension bridge, ornamented with straight-tailed lions". The "lion" at the Lancing end was actually a horse and together they formed the arms of the Duke of Norfolk. They are now at Arundel Castle.



"a suspension bridge, ornamented with straight-tailed lions"
Esther Waters

William Tierney Clark's beautiful Norfolk Bridge was opened in 1833. His three other suspension bridges were opened at Hammersmith (1827) Marlow (1832) and Budapest (1849). The present Hammersmith Bridge was built upon Clark's original pier foundations and reopened in 1887. His bridges at Marlow and Budapest survive, although the latter was damaged in WW2 but faithfully reconstructed to reopen in 1949. It is a pity Shoreham was not equally mindful of saving the heritage of its own fine bridge when it was replaced in 1922.

Silver Braid won the race and the town of Shoreham won £2000. Moore is here alluding to the Shoreham-owned thoroughbred racehorse Blair Athol, which won the Derby and St Leger in 1864, to the profit of many in Shoreham. The horse was owned by Scott Stonehewer, a tenant of the Bridgers at Adur Lodge. A house in Southdown Road was named Blair Athol and another called Athol House between New Road and Tarmount Lane – both owned by the Gates family and probably built with winnings from the horse.

The Gaffer made £40,000 and such was the wealth of the Barfields that; "A golden prosperity shone upon the yellow **Italian house**. At every hour carriages passed under its elm-trees and swept round the evergreen oaks. Rumour had it that large alterations were going to be made..."

Shortly afterwards, and despite her strict religious convictions, Esther allows William to seduce her in a moment of weakness. She rejects William's approaches to "do the right thing" and he forms a relationship with Peggy (Miss Margaret Barfield, a cousin of the owners). Esther is suspicious and makes her way towards the drawing room in order to confront them and Moore describes the staircase and landing of the house; "She pushed through the door and walked down the passage. A few steps brought her to the foot of

the polished oak staircase, lit by a large window in coloured glass, on either side of which were statues. The staircase sloped slowly to an imposing landing set out with columns and blue vases and embroidered curtains". William and Peggy are sent away and marry. Esther discovers that she is pregnant and she too is sent away and returns to London. The story tells of her struggle to raise her son over the next 8 years, including some time in the workhouse. By chance she meets William again, who divorces Peggy. He and Esther marry and run a pub where illegal horse betting has made William a wealthy man. After another 10 years he loses everything, including his health and dies, by which time their son Jack has grown up.

18 years after she left Woodview, Esther returns and becomes a servant-companion to the now-widowed Mrs Barfield who lives alone in the house. The Gaffer had also died after losing his fortune on horses, as a result of which Woodview and its grounds had fallen in to dereliction and decay - an accurate description of the eventual fate of the actual house and grounds.

Mrs Barfield's physical description is almost identical to that which Moore ascribes to Eliza Ann Bridger in *Memoirs of my Dead Life - A Remembrance*. "She kept her beautiful white teeth and her girlish smile; the pointed, vixen-like face had not altered in outline, but the reddish hair was so thin". Mrs Barfield had gone; "to live in an **Italian house** sheltered by a fringe of trees.....The plantations of Woodview touched the horizon, then the line dipped, and between the top branches of a row of elms appeared the roofs of the town. Over a long spider-legged bridge a train wriggled like a snake..."

The spider-legged bridge was the original railway bridge across the river Adur built in 1844/45 with wooden trestles that gave it the appearance described by Moore. It is pictured in *Shoreham-by-Sea Past & Present* (Colquhoun & Nethercoat-Bryant, 1997, page 24) and was replaced in 1896



"the old church with red-brown roofs and square dogmatic tower"
Memoirs of My Dead Life – A Remembrance

"Then the train passed behind the square dogmatic tower of the village church. Her husband lay beneath the chancel; her father, mother, all her relations, lay in the churchyard, and she would go there in a few years." This description seems to allude to the many Bridger memorials at St Nicolas Church, as recorded in **Appendix 3**

The Real Esther Waters?

It is not known whether Moore's character was based on an actual servant at Buckingham, but not far from Shoreham was a real Esther Waters. Born as Esther Trigg c1836 at Liss, Hampshire, she

married Charles Waters in 1860 at Southwark. In 1871 they were living in a stable room above the Star of Brunswick public house in Hove. Charles was then a coachman but by 1881 he was the publican there. By 1891 Esther was a widow, living with her daughter Emily's family at Woodcroft, near Chalton, Hampshire. The similarity between Woodcroft and Woodview is interesting, but we can only guess whether Charles Waters drove coaches to Buckingham or if Moore frequented the Star of Brunswick and met Esther during his long stays at Shoreham and Southwick. She died aged 63 at Brighton in 1899.

With "Esther Waters" in Sussex (*Sussex Daily News*, 12 December 1933, page 6)

One of at least two local press articles that have covered Moore's connection with the old house and the Bridgers this one was printed a few months after Moore's death. The focus is on Moore's beautiful descriptive language of places in Shoreham mentioned in the book. The church with its "square dogmatic tower" is identified as St Mary's New Shoreham. Quite what makes a tower "dogmatic" is not clear, but from the context of Moore's writings, St Nicolas Old Shoreham is the correct identification.

Background to a Famous Novel – Shoreham House that inspired George Moore

(R.T. Hodges-Paul, *Shoreham Herald*, 22 August 1958, page 6)

In this article, after a brief history of Buckingham and surviving remnants of the original house, the focus moves to Moore's relationship with the Bridgers as described in *Ave*, but dates its beginning to the 1880s rather than to 1870. The description of the house within the article is on the next page.

A Relic of a Past Way of Life



“Buckingham House...stands rather pathetically in the middle of a large overgrown lawn, and the surrounding trees are unkempt. The windows are filled in with cement, and the doors are empty gaps, through which one can see the interior also in ruins. The walls still bear evidence of the wartime occupation. The exterior of the house, with its pale yellow brickwork stone columns and pilasters, and carved decorative detail is fine, but unfortunately the rear has a hideous brick and flint addition dating from 1873. The story of Buckingham House, I believe, is unrecorded...Now Buckingham House stands as a relic of a past way of life. But what can be done with this forlorn shell, except wait for it to fall down?” R.T. Hodges-Paul, *Shoreham Herald*, 22 August 1958, page 6.

Happily, over 50 years later the walls have not fallen down and, thanks to Michael Norman’s interventions in the 1950s and 1960s, they were not demolished but preserved and given a new lease of life as the majestic centrepiece of the Woodview redevelopment.



Both pictures c1954

Images from MN

The Old Buckingham Lodge

No account of either Buckingham House would be complete without some mention of the matching lodges. The original lodge dated back to the c1808-1820 remodelling of the old house by J.B. Rebecca and was built in similar style by him. It was built on the north side of the newly re-aligned Brighton to Worthing road that had been diverted from its original route close to the south elevation of the house, as already seen in the painting by S.H. Grimm.



Buckingham Lodge c1905

Courtesy of Marlipins Museum PP/SHORM/94.2593.2

The above postcard contains what is perhaps the best-known view of the old lodge and one that has appeared in several Shoreham books, whilst the view below shows the gate. The picture may pre-date the Great Storm of 1897 as the trees seem much more extensive than in the 1905 picture above.



Buckingham Lodge and gate looking north (**BB**)

Courtesy of Marlipins Museum PP/SHORM/94.2593/12



Buckingham Lodge looking south (**BB**)

Image from MN

The “**Buckingham Book**” contains the above view looking south from within the gates. The timber gate was re-used at the entrance to the reduced grounds when Norman Crescent was constructed. The area where the lodge stood was known as The Lanes, an attractive area lined with trees. The area was also known as the “tree tunnels”. The postcard of the Lanes on page 28 shows the lodge at a distance in the trees on the centre right, whilst the triangle of trees at the top of Buckingham Road can be seen at centre left, although today its size is much reduced due to the widening of the road. The lodge appears more fully in this view from the east.



Buckingham Lodge looking west

*Courtesy of Neil Deville
replacing original copy from West Sussex Record Office PH18574*

At about the same time as building the new house in 1910, W.G. Little had the old Buckingham Lodge demolished and replaced by the new Buckingham Lodge on exactly the same site.

The New Buckingham Lodge



Buckingham Lodge c1911

With acknowledgement to West Sussex Record Office PH 18576

The new lodge functioned as such for about 20 years, but became an early casualty of the land sell-off in the 1930s in that it was quickly severed from the houses it was built to serve. Houses were built either side, blocking the drive, and Norman Crescent was built behind it. Nevertheless, the lodge itself survived and remains today as a private residence at No. 324 Upper Shoreham Road. The picture below shows the lodge from the same southwest angle as the c1911 view above, whilst the pictures on page 26 show the lodge from the south and southeast.





Some years ago, possibly in the 1970s, the lodge had a lucky escape when a lorry ploughed in to its front garden. The incident was recorded with a picture in a local newspaper, probably the *Shoreham Herald* or *Adur Herald* (depending on the year). The new lodge was built in the same mock-Tudor style as the new house and provides an exact reference to the materials used in the house and what it would have looked like in colour. Bearing this in mind, it is the new Buckingham House to which we will now turn.



The New Buckingham House

Nothing Like it Being Built for Miles Around

The building of a new house to the north of the old was commissioned as a gentleman's residence by William Godson Little and was designed by the Brighton architects, Clayton & Black and built by Messrs Longley of Crawley. It is thought that construction of the house began in 1910 as a press cutting from the *Shoreham Herald* dated 20 February 1958, page 8 contains the recollections of Mr A. E. Patching, aged 82. He recalled that he worked on the erection of the house in 1910 and that the building caused a lot of excitement as, "There was nothing like it being built for miles around". He further recalled that his fellow workmen secreted a bottle containing a paper on which was written all their names; "It was placed behind the cornice on the first floor at the head of the staircase. It must still be lying there today". *Kelly's Directory of Brighton, Hove and Preston for 1911 (including Shoreham)* has this entry:

1911 p399	Buckingham House, Old Shoreham, the property and residence of William Godson Little esq. is a modern residence standing in pleasant grounds, a short distance north of the town.
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If "a modern residence" refers to the new house, then it was completed by 1911. The 1911 census only refers to one Buckingham House (occupied by Mr Little), two cottages and the lodge, so it is not clear which house is being occupied, the old or the new. The General Rates book for October 1910 shows only one house, in the ownership of W.G.Little but not occupied by him, whilst the one for April 1911 shows that rates were paid on the new house and "part of" the old one by W.G. Little. Interestingly, whilst in the 1910 entry the lodge was listed against W.G.Little's name, on the 1911 entry it is set against the executors of Harry Bridger who died on 18 February 1910 aged 81, so perhaps details of the sale of the land and houses by the Bridgers to W.G. Little were still being finalised. It is also interesting to note the fall in the rateable value of the old house from £225 to £24, presumably occasioned by its partial demolition. Similarly the rise in the rateable value of the lodge suggests that the old one had been demolished and replaced with the new. Therefore, it seems safe to assume the new house and lodge were built in 1910/11.

General District Rate: 4 October 1910 <i>With acknowledgement to West Sussex Record Office PAR 130/30/180</i>						
Page	No of Assessment	Name of Occupier	Owner	Description of Property Rated	Name or Situation of the Property	Rateable Value
81	1109	-	Little	House & Garden	Buckingham House	£225
	1110	-	Little	Land	The Lawn	£123 10s 0d
	1111	-	Little	Cottage	The Lodge	£3 4s 0d

General District Rate: 4 April 1911 <i>With acknowledgement to West Sussex Record Office PAR 130/30/183</i>						
84	1241	Little W G	Little W G	House	Buckingham House	£280
	1242	Little W G	Little W G	House	Part of Old Buckingham House	£24
	1243	Little W G	Little W G	Land	Pasturage	£125 8s
	1244	Little W G	H Bridger's Xors	House	The Lodge	£12



The earliest known picture of the new house was believed to date from c1913 but see the comments on page 78 concerning the earlier 1911 postcard. By the 1930s hedges had grown up to conceal the railings along the driveway (see picture on page 30). In 2011 this was thought to be the only picture of the new house so far published in a book. (Hill, 1996, Picture 99)

With acknowledgement to West Sussex Record Office PH 18594

The First World War 1914-1918

During WW1 a large military camp “Shoreham Camp” surrounded the Buckingham houses. WSCC Record Office holds a 1:2500 scale map of a “*Hutment Camp for 15 Battalions of Infantry*” dated 14 June 1917, which was copied by E.F. Bowtilier (Reference: Add Mss 10168). The map shows that the camp extended all along the eastern and northern boundaries of what is now Buckingham Park and halfway down the western boundary formed by the Drove Road (now the Drive) as far as Little Buckingham. It covered a large area of the Downs to the west of Little Buckingham, almost as far as Adur Lodge and to the north and east of Buckingham Park. Assuming a battalion comprised about 1,000 men, there could have been up to 15,000 troops stationed there at any given time.

Such a presence must have seemed quite an “invasion” of the peaceful woodland surrounding the two houses, although interestingly, even this 1917 map does not show the new house. It is perhaps unsurprising that it is thought that W.G. Little had the walls built that still stand along the eastern and northern boundaries of Buckingham Park, with a further short section still standing between the top of Ravensbourne Avenue and The Drive. The wall continued along the western boundary down the Drove Road, but this section was eventually lost when the area was developed and became The Drive.

The *Adur Herald* dated 18 June 1982; page 5 carried an article by Jill Wells about the recollections of a Mrs Annie Bottle of Cambridge who was a nursemaid in the new house during WW1. She recalled that the house was occupied by, “an old couple called Mr and Mrs Little and their grandchildren, Betty and Pansy”. Although the rules were strict, she was well looked after by and had her own room with carpets and a four-poster bed. One such rule was being unable to go out in the evenings due to the large number of French Canadian troops surrounding the estate. In spite of this, she had the company of a number of other servants and her recollections capture the mood of an era that, due to the social upheavals caused by the war, was soon to come to an end. Annie Bottle left the house in 1917 and the article carries a picture of the new house and one of the old, taken in 1916 showing a little girl, probably Betty (proper name Annie Elizabeth Lowe) b1909 rather than Pansy (proper name Mary Ethel Lowe) b1914. Annie Bottle never returned to Shoreham but had happy memories of her time at Buckingham. She kept photographs of the house and estate, but it is not known what became of her collection.

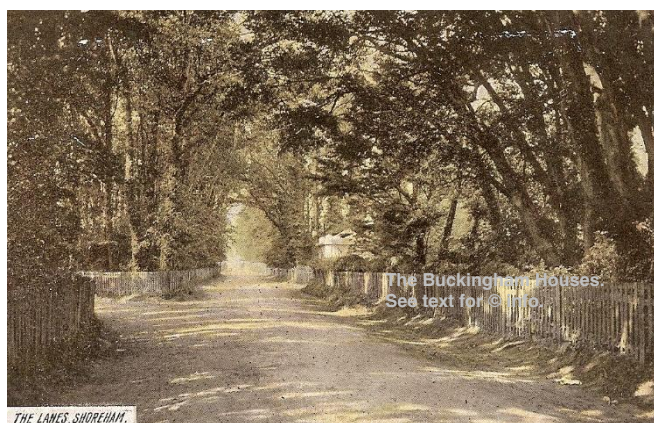
The 1920s and Ernest Redford Harrison

After W.G. Little’s death in 1922, both the Buckingham Houses were sold to Ernest Redford Harrison and so began the last 8 years of the new house as a private residence, until he sold the estate in 1930. Shoreham Council bought the area to the east of the two houses and on 28 February 1931 it was opened to the public as Buckingham Park. Other parts of the estate began to be developed as housing. For maps showing how the area around the two houses changed from 1930 to the mid-1960s, see **Appendix 1**

A Legal Precedent: Noble v. Harrison. King’s Bench Division 332 - 18 May 1926

It was during Harrison’s time that legal history was made. On 12 July 1925 a branch from an 80-year-old Beech tree on Harrison’s land that was overhanging a road adjacent to the estate suddenly broke off and damaged a motor coach. This road was probably that part of the Upper Shoreham Road known as “The Lanes” or the “tree tunnels”. The owner sought damages from Harrison for negligence and breach of duty at Brighton County Court. The judge held that Harrison was not liable for negligence as the tree had been recently inspected and considered safe but was liable for nuisance using the principle laid down in *Rylands v. Fletcher* (House of Lords 1868) where an owner must be responsible for damage caused by the escape

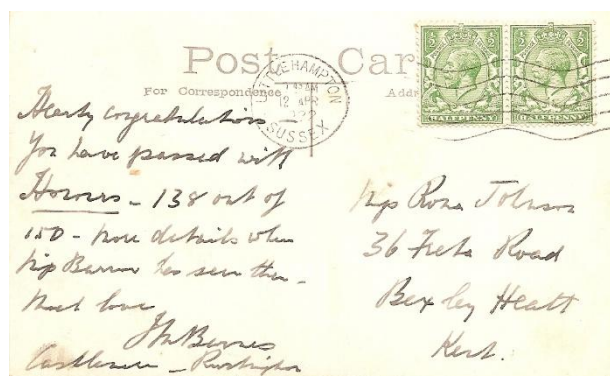
of a dangerous article from his property. (In that case, water flooding an old mine). Harrison successfully appealed as it was judged that an overhanging branch did not necessarily constitute a nuisance unless it interfered with the traffic. Although it became a nuisance after it fell, Harrison was not aware of the defect that caused the nuisance. It was also judged that the principles in the *Rylands v. Fletcher* case were not applicable here. The *Noble v. Harrison* case continues to define the law concerning liability for dangerous trees.



The Lanes c1910 showing the triangle and the old lodge

The 1930s - A School by Several Names

By 12 April 1932, the new house had become home to the Grangewood School as evidenced by the postcard shown below, which was posted on that date in Littlehampton:



The card was addressed to a Miss Rona Johnson of Bexley Heath, Kent and the message reads:

Hearty congratulations – you have passed with Honours – 138 out of 150 – full details when Miss Barnes has seen them. Much love, J M Barnes Castlemere, Rustington

Whether postcards were the usual way of notifying results then is not known!

Castlemere seems to have been an address in Rustington, but from 1933 the school took on the name. An advertisement for the school appeared on page 8 of a town guide published by the Shoreham Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Urban District Council of Shoreham entitled:

Shoreham by Sea with Bungalow Town – Sea River and Downland

The guide is held at Worthing Local Studies Library and appears to be undated. A clue to its date may be found on page 9 where the population of Shoreham in 1934 is estimated at 10,000, suggesting publication in c1935. The picture appears identical to the Grangewood School postcard.

Castlemere School

Buckingham Park,
Shoreham-by-Sea - Sussex



Boarding and Day School for Girls. (Boys under 9 yrs.)
Good Grounds, close to South Downs and Sea.
Principal : MISS BARNES. Telephone : SHOREHAM 406.

Courtesy of West Sussex County Council Library Service

Kelly's Directory for 1933 and 1934 has the following entries:

THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

Text © P. J. Kefford. Images © reserved to owners of original material

1933 p461	Castlemere Boarding & Day School for girls and little boys (Miss F.M. Barnes, Principal), phone Shoreham 406
1934 p475	Castlemere Boarding & Day School for girls and little boys (Miss F.M. Barnes, Principal), Buckingham Pk

There appears to be no listing for the school in the 1935 edition of *Kelly's Directory*, but from 1936 to 1938 it appears as under the new name of the Downs School, having been sold to Miss Woodhead and Miss Cleare in 1935:

1936 p1084	Downs School (The) (Miss G. Woodhead & Miss W. Cleare, Principals). Buckingham Pk.
1937 p1119	Downs Boarding and Day School for Girls (Miss E. Harman, Principle). Buckingham Pk.
1938 p1149	Downs Boarding and Day School (The) Miss E. Harman, Principle. Buckingham Pk. Tel. 406

By the time of the 25" OS map of 1937, some new buildings to the rear of the house had been constructed, including a gymnasium/hall capable of seating 300 people, which also had a stage.

Mrs Rosemary Witos (nee Holmwood) went to the Downs School and recalled that, "the mistresses house was in the annexe. It was a lovely school and took you up to school certificate. The head was the sister of an Oxford don. We had lovely playing grounds. It was mixed day and boarding.... We had a wonderful gym; music and Greek dancing and a very good science laboratory... Discipline was strict, you had to behave". (Tait, 1994, pages 67-68)

The Downs School Postcards

During its time as the Downs School, Buckingham House became the subject of a set of postcards. The following card has a "twin" showing exactly the same view but on which the title is printed in white instead of black. Other cards show internal views of the main rooms and some of pupils in the grounds.



Buckingham House as the Downs School c1937

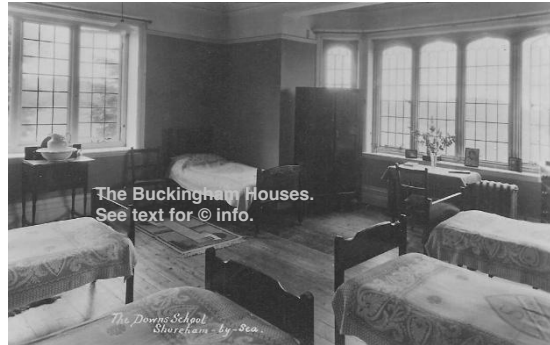
Courtesy of the late Betty L.K. Bishop (1919-2009)

The interior views that follow give an insight into parts of the house for which exterior photos have not been found, such as the north-facing bay that lit the main staircase and the east-facing windows of the dining room and the bedroom above it. A further postcard shows the interior of the hall added by the Downs School, but it is not known if any others were produced for other parts of the house.

Downs School – Internal View Postcards



Landing and top of main staircase



Bedroom on first floor of southeast corner



Main staircase from the lounge



Classroom on ground floor of southwest corner



Dining room on ground floor of southeast corner

Image from MN



Classroom – northwest wing?



Hall/Gymnasium

The postcard set appeared on an e-Bay auction c2009, but the images were of poor quality. At the time of going to print, original or higher resolution copies have only been found for some of them. Suffice it to note that they all exist somewhere.

Better picture of southwest classroom courtesy of Neil Deville and better picture of the landing, courtesy of Ian Newman



Downs School group photograph c1937

Image from MN

Michael Norman has identified some of the people in the above group. Whilst the rear rows are well defined, the front two are less so. Broadly, the second row starts with the dog on the left and ends with the girl on the extreme right, but in counting from the left of this row, the dog should be excluded!

Anthea Norman (m.Snow)	front row	2 nd from left in dark dress slightly behind others
Heather Frampton	front row	3 rd from left
Martin Crowley	front row	5 th from left
Jill Cooper	front row	8 th from left in dark dress behind girl in patterned dress
Joan Christie (m.Lewis)	2 nd row	9 th from left immediately behind Jill Cooper
Miss Tasman	3 rd row	behind and to right of Jill Cooper in chequered dress
Mary Cook	2 nd row	11 th from left, 3 rd from right
Naomi Keay	2 nd row	13 th from left, 1 st on extreme right



Postcard c1920s. The stamp has been removed, so unable to determine when it was posted.

THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

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The Second World War 1939-1945

During WW2 the troops returned to the Downs behind Shoreham, but this time both houses were requisitioned for use by the army and Canadian troops were based there. A number of huts were built on the main lawns and the house was not particularly well treated by the troops.

SHOREHAM · BY · SEA

SUSSEX

(Between Brighton and Worthing).

On Southern slope of Downs; 10 minutes' walk main line Station (Shoreham to Victoria by Southern Electric, 75 minutes), and 5 minutes of river and country walks, close bus and park, 10 minutes ride Sea and Southdown Golf Course; standing in between 5 and 6 acres of wooded grounds.



The Buckingham Houses.
See text for © info.

THIS elegant and imposing DETACHED RESIDENCE (only 40 years' old) with polished oak floors to ground floor rooms; containing magnificent oak LOUNGE HALL (about 35ft. x 22ft.) with centre wing Staircase, DRAWING ROOM (28ft. x 21ft.), LIBRARY, BILLIARDS ROOM (29ft. x 19ft.), 8 Principal and 4 Secondary BEDROOMS, 3 BATH ROOMS, Servants' Quarters; GARAGE, Outbuildings; Detached Brick-built HALL (seating 300, with stage suitable concerts, music room, gymnasium, etc.)

Possession when de-requisitioned.

Suit Residence, School, Nursing or Convalescent Home, Country Club, etc.

Price £12,000 Freehold.

Particulars from Owner's Sole Agents:

Messrs. R. A. LEGGETT, Estate Agents and Valuers,
30 EAST STREET, SHOREHAM-BY-SEA (Telephone 247).

E. D. PAINE PRINTING LTD., WORTHING.

Upon being de-requisitioned at the end of the war the house was put up for sale. Messrs R. A. Leggett was the sole estate agent and the above information sheet provides an interesting description of some of its rooms. The picture is a copy of the Downs School postcard with the white lettering. Oh, to be able to buy a place like that for £12,000 today!

Buckingham House Children's Home

Children will find ideal home at Shoreham

The *Shoreham Herald* dated 21 March 1947, page 8 carried on an article under the above headline, describing how the house had been purchased by Brighton Town Council in "February last year" ie 1946. The picture accompanying the article showed a rare head-on view of the main west entrance. The design on the gable can just be made out as being square in outline with the carving being set within the square. Unfortunately, as with all the other press cuttings, the resolution is not as good as the original picture would have been, were it still available. It is thought that the design may have been the monogram of W.G. Little's initials WGL, since a stained-glass version was set into the window lighting the main staircase. See page 40.



Buckingham House as it is to-day

Shoreham Herald 21 March 1947 page 8

The article describes Brighton Town Council's plan to relieve overcrowding at their Warren Farm children's home in Brighton and the bureaucratic delays in bringing the house in to use for this purpose. In the immediate aftermath of the war, children's homes did not necessarily have a high priority in terms of allocation of scarce materials and labour and tenders had to be vetted by the Ministry of Health. It was hoped that tenders for the conversion work would be sent out shortly with the aim of accommodating up to 60 residents, including staff and under-5 year-old children by the end of 1947. Upon reaching the age of five the aim was to return the children to the Warren Farm Cottage Homes in Brighton.

Reference to the marks of military occupation still being borne by the oak panelled rooms was made, as each room was being identified for its future use. On the ground floor the plan was to have playrooms, a changing room, office, dining room, staff dining room and a room for changing muddy shoes. On the first floor there would be night nurseries, a sick bay and bathrooms. In the grounds there would be sandpits and space for each child to have its own little garden. The aim was to make the house as homely as possible without an institutional atmosphere. The hope to have the house operational by the end of 1947 was not realised and it was not until 10 August 1948 that the contract for conversion work was finally awarded to McKellar & Westerman Ltd of Hove.

The 1948 Conversion Work

The contract is held by East Sussex County Council Record Office (Ref: R/C 33/33) and comprises 253 pages plus seven sheets of plans. The plans were produced for Mr. D.J. Howe, the Borough Engineer & Surveyor by Mr. R.A. Barber A.R.I.B.A the Chief Assistant Architect and give the most detailed architectural analysis of the house yet found, showing elevations for which no photographs appear to have survived, as well as cross-sections. The plans are reproduced at **Appendix 2**

The contractual cost of the conversion was £19,698 an amount considerably more than the asking price on the property itself two years earlier. The modifications commenced soon after the contract had been awarded and by November 1948 were well advanced. The record office also holds the minutes of two sub-committees. The *Children's Homes Sub-Committee: Nov 1948 to Dec 1962* and the *Buckingham House Sub-Committee: Mar 1949 to Feb 1951* (Ref: R/C 9/26). Although access to these minutes is restricted, the record office gave the following details:

In the *Minutes of the Children's Homes Sub-Committee* dated 12 November 1948, the Education Officer reported that, "as the work at Buckingham House is nearing completion the Sub-Committee should consider the appointment of a Matron and Deputy Matron as soon as possible". It was also minuted that the sub-committee would visit the house on the 19 November 1948 to discuss alterations suggested in reports it had received. At the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on 5 January 1949 it was noted that Mrs Elizabeth Hald-Larsen SRN had been appointed as Matron with effect from 1 February 1949. The sub-committee minutes of 4 March 1949 record that an examination of children about to be transferred from Beech Cottage at Warren Farm to Buckingham had taken place and the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 1949 confirmed that they had been moved.

The *Sussex Daily News* dated 9 February 1949 carried the following picture on the front page and the caption under the picture stated that the works were due to be completed by the end of the month and referred readers to a full article on page 4. This article stated that the conversion had achieved its objective of avoiding an institutional atmosphere and the new residential nursery promised to be the most perfectly equipped and up to date in the country. The traditional oak panelling had been retained and leaded windows damaged during the military occupation restored. Other aspects were modified such as the kitchen equipment and fireplaces and additional accommodation built on for the nurses. On the first floor the bedrooms had been converted to five night nurseries with interconnecting doors and the former billiard room (in the northwest wing) that had previously been mainly lit by a skylight had been converted in to a sixth night nursery with the addition of new dormer windows on each side of the roof to improve the lighting. The hall/gymnasium was converted to a large playroom. The provisional opening date was given as the end of March, yet it was to be another seven months before the formal opening.

The classroom in the southwest corner of the house (pictured on page 31) was divided to form a room for 10 babies with an adjoining bathroom. The latter was lit by the mainly west-facing bay window. I recall that the stained-glass upper pane of the south-facing bathroom window appeared to depict a sailing ship.



Future Shoreham Home of 50 Children

Sussex Daily News 9 February 1949 Front Page

Opened by the Mayor of Brighton

The Buckingham House Children's Home was finally opened by the Mayor of Brighton on Thursday 13 October 1949 – an event celebrated with donkey rides for the children, as reported on the front page of the *Shoreham Herald* dated 14 October 1949. The event was also reported on the front pages of the *Brighton & Hove Herald* and *Brighton & Hove Gazette* on 15 October, but with no pictures of the house.

The *Brighton & Hove Herald* ran the article under the heading **Country House Becomes Children's Home** with a picture of the Mayoress of Brighton (Mrs Dorothy Foulger) talking to some of the children. The home was dedicated with a prayer by the Rev F.N. Robathan OBE, the Vicar of Brighton, "May love, joy and peace enter this house". The Mayoress was handed a key by three-year-old Sandra Berry, one of the children, and five-year-old Rosemary Hald-



Shoreham Herald 14 October 1949 front page

Larsen, the daughter of the Matron. The Mayor, Alderman Ernest Marsh pointed out that the home was for children up to the age of five and said, "Brighton now has a children's home of which all can be justly proud". The report ends with the following words, "After the opening ceremony, the visitors saw the children at play with the nurses and noted the excellent stock of toys. They toured the fine oak-panelled country house which, to these young people, has become in a real sense, home".

The house was listed in *Kelly's Directory* from 1949 as follows:

1949 p1102	Buckingham House Children's Home (Mrs C.E. Hald-Larsen, Matron), Ravensbourne Av
1951 p1150	Buckingham House Children's Home (Mrs C.E. Hald-Larsen, Matron), Ravensbourne Ave
1954 p1187	Buckingham House Children's Home (Mrs C.E. Hald-Larsen, S.R.N. Matron), Ravensbourne Ave
1956 p1218	Buckingham House Children's Home (Miss L.J. Bulmer, Matron), Ravensbourne Ave
1958 p1254	Buckingham House Children's Home (Brighton Corporation) (Miss E.W. Young, Matron), Ravensbourne Ave
1960 p1140	Buckingham House Children's Home (Brighton Corporation) (Miss D. Fitz, Matron), Ravensbourne Ave

In the *Shoreham Herald* dated 14 February 1958, page 6 one of the best pictures of the new house was published and, strangely enough, it was by mistake! It appeared with a letter that was sent to the editor by a Mr H Darkin Williams in which he covered a number of issues regarding the state of the town, its future development, and the things he felt the Shoreham Preservation Society should focus on. Referring to the ruins of the old Buckingham House he described them as a pseudo-classic eyesore that should be pulled down.

The following week's edition of the *Shoreham Herald* dated 21 February 1958, page 3 corrected the mistake and carried a picture of the old house. The view of the new house mistakenly published gives the most complete view of the west elevation and at this point it is worth comparing the northwest wing of the house (to the left of the main entrance) with the Grangewood School postcard on page 29 and noting the dormer window that was added to the roof as part of the 1948/49 conversion works.



Buckingham House...pseudo-classic...an eyesore?

Shoreham Herald 14 February 1958 page 6

With all the investment in converting the house to its new use, its future on that happy October day in 1949 must have seemed assured for many years to come. Although the various press reports suggest that the homely character of the house had been preserved, the works were extensive enough to add a significant level of “institutionalisation”. Ironically, it was this process that may have sealed its fate when, a mere 9 years later its future came into question. By 1958 Brighton Council’s need for the house was drawing to a close as the young children reached the age of five years or were adopted.

Looking for Another Real Home for Old Folk

One suggested future use for the house was as an old people’s home, and the *Evening Argus* dated 14 November 1958, page 6 carried an article under the above headline discussing a possible additional home in Shoreham and where it might be located. Buckingham House was a favoured option and although the house was not yet up for sale, reference was made to an announcement that the children’s home would be moved by Brighton Corporation in the reasonably near future. The article included another picture of the south elevation of the house, but this is not reproduced here due to space constraints.

London County Council Home for Maladjusted Boys?

The possible purchase of the house by London County Council (LCC) for use as a home for 35 maladjusted boys aged between 11 and 15 years was a much more controversial proposition. The *Shoreham Herald* dated 6 February 1959 on its front page (article continued on page 5) carried the headline **Buckingham House – a compromise** and reported a lengthy and spirited debate by Shoreham Council over the future use of the house. The Town Planning and Building Committee had recommended that the Planning Authority, West Sussex County Council, be informed that Shoreham Council was not in favour of LCC’s application to use the house for this purpose.

Those opposed to LCC feared that the boys might run wild to the detriment of the local neighbourhood, whilst those in favour felt that the term “maladjusted” did not necessarily mean “delinquent” and that the boys should be offered a helping hand by taking them from the crowded streets and slums of London and that it would be un-Christian to turn a cold shoulder to them. It was noted that similar schools had been set up elsewhere with no difficulties. The compromise reached was that the LCC application be considered sympathetically alongside any other applications that might be received. For example, the charitable West Sussex Housing Society had been in discussions with Brighton Corporation over the suitability of the house as an old people’s home.

However, the compromise did not calm the disquiet felt by the residents of Ravensbourne Avenue and the front page of the *Shoreham Herald* dated 20 February 1959 reported a resident’s petition under the headline; **Don’t use it for maladjusted boys!** The petition was organised by Mrs Nora Hinton of No.3 Ravensbourne Avenue and signed by 43 residents. All those interviewed expressed concern over the nature and ages of the boys and the close proximity of the house to the homes of the many young families living in the road. The consensus was that the house was “quite unsuitable” for the use proposed, but that a school for younger more easily controlled children or an old people’s home would be acceptable.

Area not right for maladjusted children

On page 7 of the same 20 February 1959 edition, the *Shoreham Herald* printed a letter from my father, which appeared under the above heading.

WHILE I sympathise with the Christian ethics expressed in your leading article on the use of Buckingham House for maladjusted children and youths, I wonder whether the following factors have been fully taken into account:

1—Within the past two or three years many new dwellings have been erected to the North, South and West of Buckingham House, some in close proximity and with their gardens adjoining it. The local authority gave planning permission for this residential development of land, some of which previously formed part of Buckingham House grounds, which are thereby substantially reduced in extent.

2—Ministry of Education regulations define maladjusted children as those who are emotionally unstable or psychologically disturbed. Although such children are quite normal physically and intellectually, their behaviour can range from excessive timidity to pilfering, fire-raising and abnormal sexual activities. It is, of course, understood that they would be supervised and given psychiatric treatment.

3—In most dwellings close to Buckingham House, young families are being reared. Young children tend to imitate older ones and the activities at this house could not fail to be observed by them, with what confusion to their young minds, is a matter that gives

food for thought.

4—If the position in the vicinity became untenable and parents decided that, for the sake of their families, they ought to sell up and acquire a house elsewhere, their financial position relative to the Building Society and to securing a similar property in another district would be in jeopardy, because the value of their existing home would inevitably be depressed and the resultant capital loss might be such as to prevent them from leaving the neighbourhood.

After due inquiry and careful thought, I, for one, am satisfied that such a use of this building would be prejudicial to the needs and contrary to the wishes of the inhabitants of the area, however sympathetic they may feel towards these unfortunate children. F. W. Kefford, 12 Ravensbourne Avenue, Shoreham.



Rather than try to summarise my father's concerns, I have let his letter speak for itself. He often subsequently spoke of how concerned he was to protect my mother and I, as well as the child she was then carrying, who was to be born that June as my sister Gail. My father's fourth point might nowadays betray him as something of a "nimby" (not in my back yard) but he had worked hard to obtain that home for us and money was tight, so the concern was understandable. Living at No.12 Ravensbourne Avenue, we were one of the closest families to the house, whilst the Pink family lived at No.10, the Heath family at No.8, the Powell family at No.6 and the Rogers family at No.1 Ravensbourne Close, whose back garden also adjoined the grounds of the house. All these families had young children more or less contemporary with me and there were several others nearby.

The matter seems to have gone quiet for a couple of years, but it was in 1961 that the future of the house again began to cause concern amongst its neighbours in Ravensbourne Avenue.

Buckingham House to be sold soon – Families fear for future of large home

The *Shoreham Herald* dated 18 August 1961 carried the above headline and the picture below on its front page, which gives a rare glimpse of the first-floor bay on the east elevation of the house. The article reported that the house had been empty since the beginning of the year apart from a resident caretaker and that it was due to be sold by auction on 6 September 1961 at the Ship Hotel, Brighton.



The Buckingham Houses.
See text for @ info.

Shoreham Herald 18 August 1961 front page

were put there, it would be very bad for my children and all the children living round here, and there are a lot. So, on balance, I think I would rather it was redeveloped".

Redevelopment was a third and new possibility. Whilst some agreed that demolition of the house to make way for housing within a new close would be acceptable, others were shocked. Mrs N. Hinton of No.3 (who organised the 1959 petition) said, "It would be a crying shame to pull it down". Her neighbour Mrs L.J. Petrie of No.5 said, "It would be terrible to pull it down, it would make a lovely old people's home". Mr C.L. Talbot of No.21 said, "There is a need for a home for old people...it would be a great mistake to pull it down".

The prospect of the house being used as a school for maladjusted children once again caused alarm amongst the local residents, as it had done two years previously. The *Shoreham Herald* reporter interviewed several local residents in Ravensbourne Avenue and whilst most favoured the possibility of an old people's home, all were strongly opposed to maladjusted children. My father's comments were reported as follows:

Mr F.W. Kefford of No.12, next to the house, told a reporter, "I would not mind old people having the house, but if maladjusted children

Buckingham House Sold for £15,500

The front page of the *Shoreham Herald* dated 8 September 1961 reported that the house had been sold to Brighton Councillor Lewis Cohen (also of the Alliance Building Society) for £15,500 on behalf of a developer and so its fate was sealed.

A Crying Shame

As already described in the introduction, the demolition commenced over the autumn/winter of 1961/62. I think the work began to the rear of the house, taking down the additional buildings built by the Downs School and the 1948 conversion. I have little memory of these as they were behind the house and my view from No.12 was from the southwest. Work then commenced on the northwestern wing and my father took me to have a look. The wing was in ruins, although not completely cleared. I then asked if we could go into the main entrance and explore as the door was open, but he wisely cautioned that it might not be safe.

The tiles on the main roof were removed, the timbers taken down and the large water tanks removed. Work then progressed on pulling down the west elevation, revealing the stained-glass sailing ship mentioned on page 35, then around to the stone southwest bay at the front of the house. It was at this point that a photographer from the *Shoreham Herald* knocked on our door in order to take some photographs from our garden and bathroom window. The next day, the front page of the paper had a picture of the semi-demolished house minus its roof, taken just as one of the huge 40-foot chimneys came crashing dramatically down – see below.

The demolition contractors literally pulled the house down using a tractor and a length of rope. I recall one afternoon that the tractor's engine overheated and one of the workmen called over our garden fence to my mother to ask for some water for the radiator. She duly obliged and so enabled the destruction to continue. I always resented the giving of that bottle of water! The contractors advertised in the local press, and the site became something of a quarry for salvaged materials. Michael Norman salvaged some oak doors for the Marlipins Museum. My father bought some roof timbers for use in the garden and some green wooden shelving for my bedroom. Over the coming weeks the house gradually disappeared until only the corner of the northeast wing was standing, and then it was gone. It was a crying shame.



Shoreham Herald 12 January 1962 front page

BUCKINGHAM HOUSE

Ravensbourne Ave.:— Shoreham

Now Being Demolished

BY

J. PENFOLD & SONS

22 St. Michaels Road, Portslade

Hove: 47297

ALL MATERIALS FOR SALE, WHICH

INCLUDE:- Oak Panelling

6"x1" Timber

5"x2" "

11"x2" " etc.

Sanitary Ware, Tiles, R.S.J.'s, Portland

Stone, Paving Slabs, and a large

amount of Hardcore.

PERSONS INTERESTED SHOULD EITHER

CONTACT HOVE 47297 OR

CALL ON SITE.

Shoreham Herald 19 January 1962 p24

Soon afterwards the builders arrived, and work started on the construction of Cypress Close and the building of the new houses and bungalows that now occupy the site. As the works neared completion, it became apparent that the site of the house had not been built on at all and that the entire footprint of the house and associated buildings had become open spaces, comprising the road and grassed area. As the overlay of pre and post-demolition maps on page 46 shows, the house only occupied about a quarter of the total site, which has often made me wonder why, with a little imagination, it could not have been saved and divided into smaller residential units whilst the remainder of the site could have been sympathetically developed. Perhaps the fact that the house was only just over 50 years old meant that it was not of sufficient architectural or historic interest to save. Having only been a proper home for its first 20 years and occupied by schools, the army and a children's home for the latter 30 years, with this level of institutionalisation it was presumably deemed simpler to simply clear it away than convert it again. Sadly, the sixties were singularly lacking in imagination or any desire for conservation.

All that Remains

Today, there is no visible trace of the new house. The site of the gentleman's residence so splendidly set amongst grassed lawns and trees is itself now covered by a grassed area with trees. Whether the basement of the northwest wing and the basement boiler room that was beneath the main staircase still survive underground in Cypress Close is not known. If they do, then they could give an exact reference to the position of the house as well as containing rubble from it.

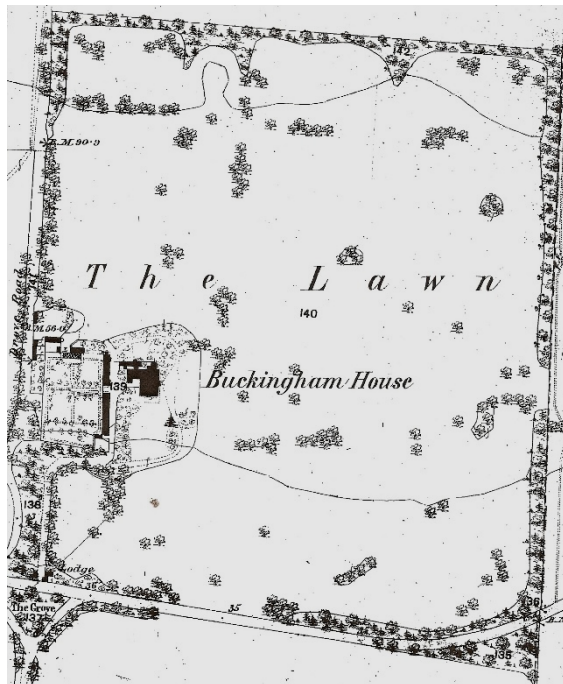


Amongst the various materials sold off during the demolition, one particularly interesting item was salvaged and given to the Marlipins Museum. This item was the stained-glass monogram of W.G. Little's initials that may have been set into the window lighting the main staircase. It seems likely that this monogram was also the design carved on the stone gable above the main west entrance of the house.



25" 1:2500 Sheets LXV/VI

The following extracts show the changes to the Buckingham Park area and the two houses from 1873 to 1933. The maps have been reduced in size to fit on one page so as to enable a better comparison.

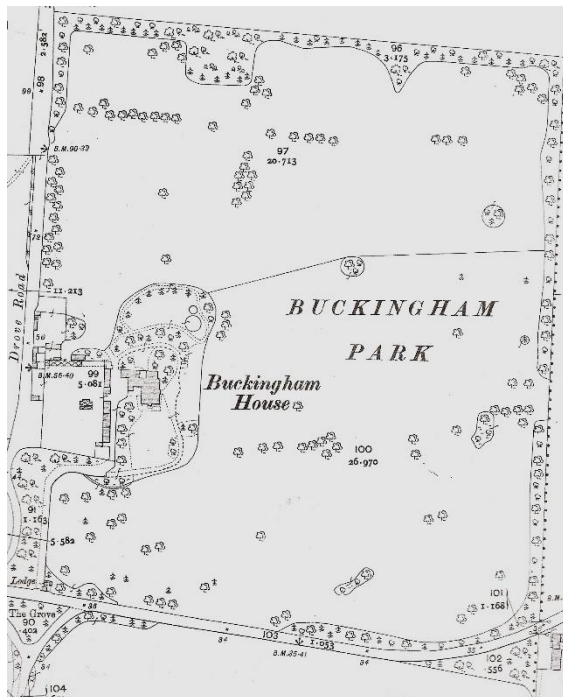


25" 1:2500 1st Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1873

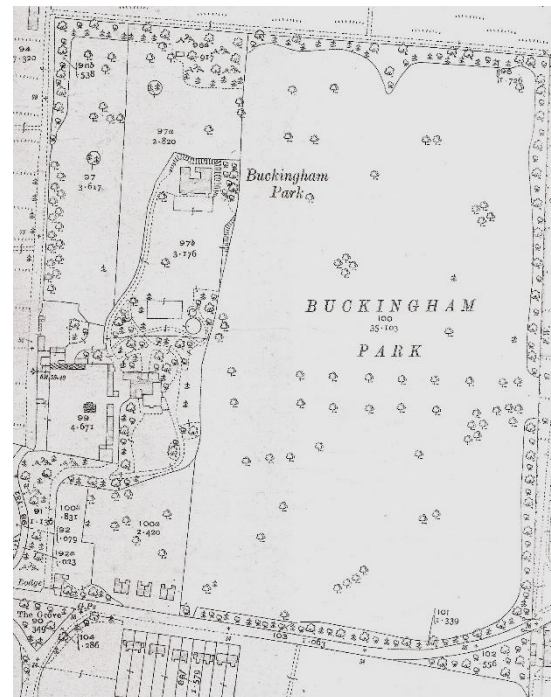


25" 1:2500 2nd Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1898

Reproduced from the 1873, 1898, 1912, 1933 Ordnance Survey maps with the kind permission of Ordnance Survey



25" 1:2500 3rd Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1912



25" 1:2500 4th Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1933

25" 1:2500 1st Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1873

The 1873 map shows the old house and main area of parkland, called "The Lawn". The footprint of the house does not appear in its final form, indicating that the 1873 rebuild of the western service wing had not taken place when the map was revised, although the footprint of the main part appears the same.

25" 1:2500 2nd Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1898

The 1898 map shows the new footprint of the western service wing and a northwards extension to the landscaped garden area with a small circular feature, possibly the pond or else a small circular garden hut.

THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

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25" 1:2500 3rd Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1912

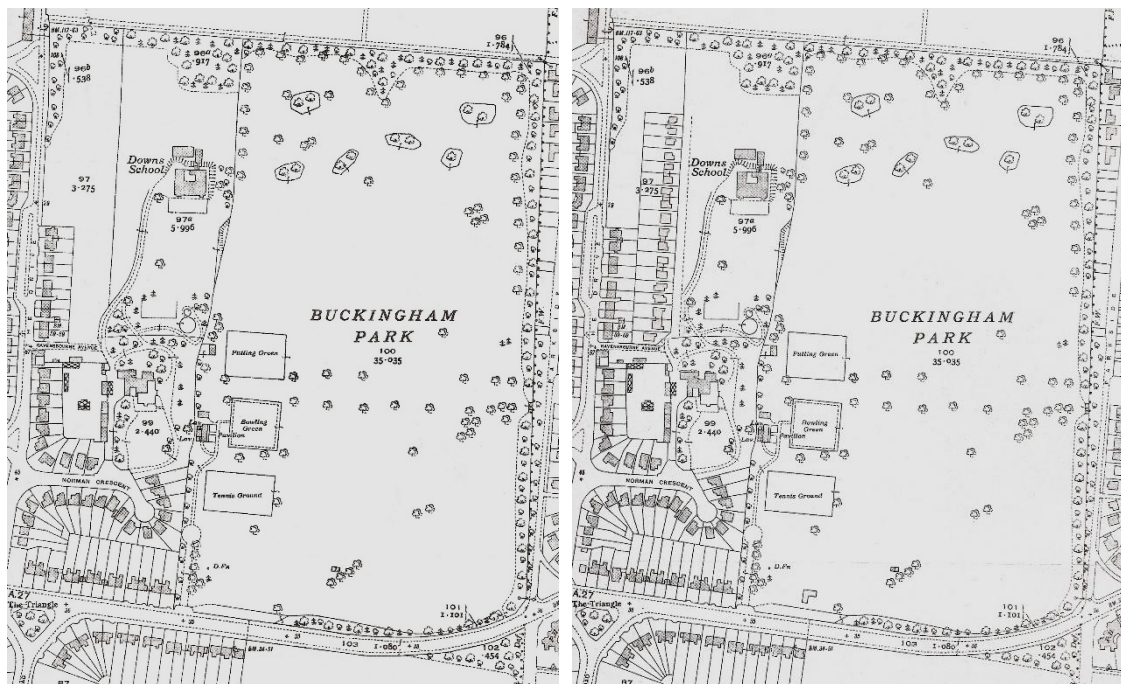
The 1912 map shows little change and does not show the new house. An additional circular feature appears in the northeast corner of the gardens, possibly the pond if the smaller earlier feature was the hut. The Marlipins Museum holds a picture of the hut c1904 (*PP/SHORM/94.2532.9*). This picture probably came from the "**Buckingham Book**", which also has a colour painting of the pond by Lady Hester Pinney.

25" 1:2500 4th Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1933

The map of 1933 shows the new house and Buckingham Park is now divided from both houses, having been sold and opened to the public in 1931. Similarly, the line of what was to become Ravensbourne Avenue has been added. The houses next to the lodge are the only residential development and the lodge itself is still connected to the houses by its driveway. A ha-ha has been constructed on the boundary between the park and the lawns of the new house. An avenue of trees running east-west across the park towards the old house has been added.

25" 1:2500 4th Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1937 (Early and Late)

By 1937 the pace of change had accelerated rapidly, so much so that two editions were produced. On the earlier edition, the new house had become the Downs School and the new hall/gymnasium and other buildings had been added to the north of it. On the left, the Drove had become the Drive with significant housing development, whilst at the bottom, the lodge had been completely severed from the houses it was built to serve by Norman Crescent and surrounded by the new housing. Ravensbourne Avenue had only just been started and had not affected the road and paths to the new house. Recreational facilities had been installed along the western edge of the park. The later edition of the map shows the extension of Ravensbourne Avenue northwards with new housing along the western side. The pattern of pathways and roads between the two houses had been disrupted, but not fully modified, suggesting that building work was ongoing at this point.



25" 1:2500 4th Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1937 25" 1:2500 4th Edition, Sheet LXV/VI 1937 (Late)

Reproduced from 1937 Ordnance Survey maps with the kind permission of Ordnance Survey

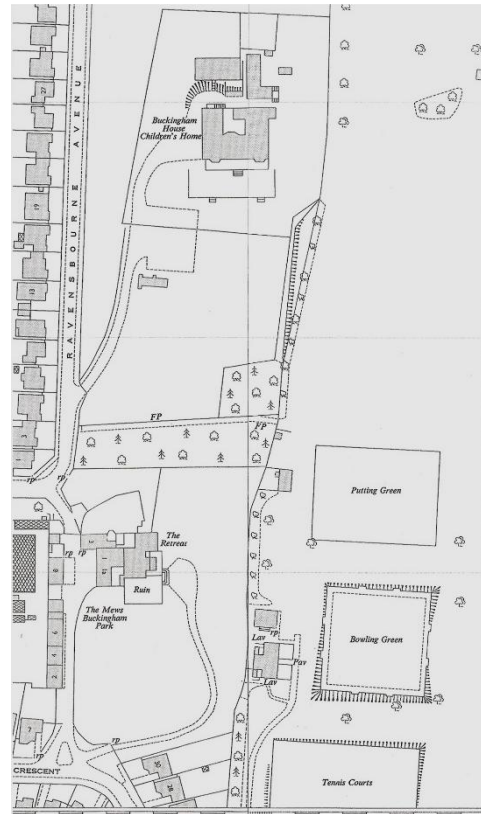
50" 1:1250 2nd Edition, Sheets TQ2106SE & TQ2206SW

The Second World War was soon to intervene, and the next available large-scale maps were the 50" 1:1250 maps of 1951 and 25" 1:2500 maps of 1953 which show further development on the western side of Ravensbourne Avenue, almost to the top of the road. The old house has been divided into three dwellings and named "The Retreat" with the gutted part of the building labelled as a ruin. The road to the new house had been extended across the lawn to form a square feature on which army huts had been constructed. These are evident from a 1946 aerial photo taken by the RAF. Unfortunately, the border between sheets TQ2106SE and TQ2206SW cuts right through the new house, so these sheets have been joined. The map editions on the next page show how the immediate area around the houses changed from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s.

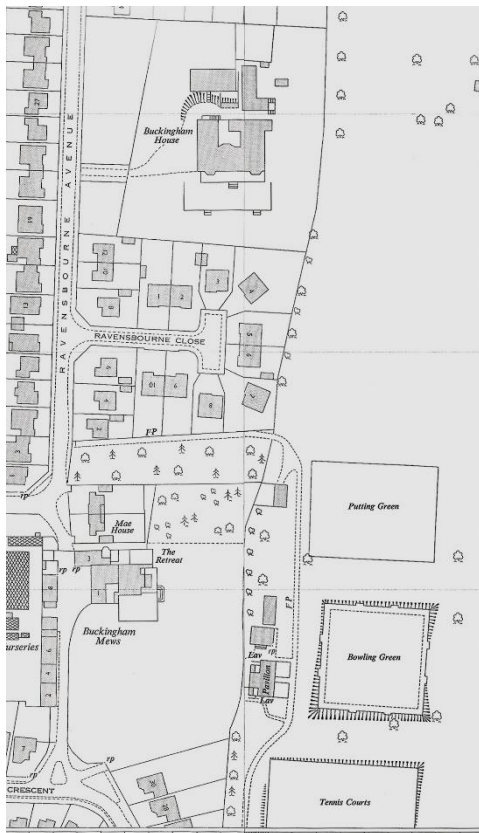
50" 1:1250 2nd Edition, Sheets TQ2106SE & TQ2206SW



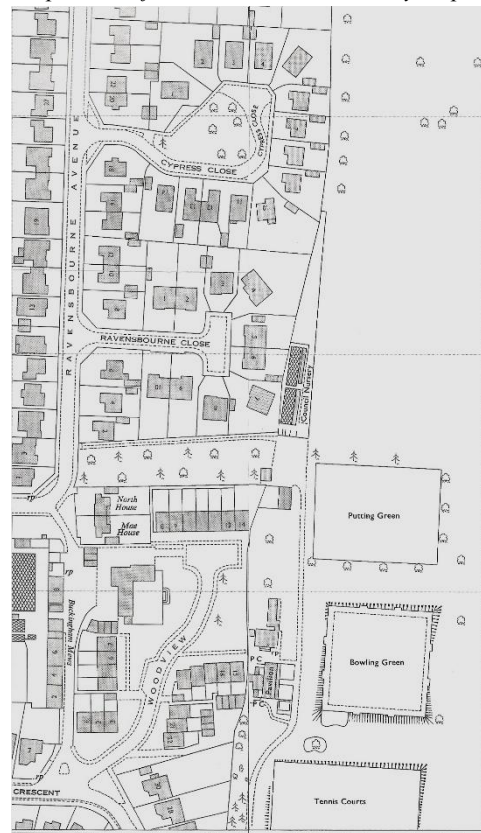
17-5071 3G/TUD/UK/157 Part I 19 Apr 1946 F/12/138 Sqdn
Courtesy of University of Sussex Map Library



TQ2106SE July 1951 & TQ2206SW May 1951
Reproduced from 1951 Ordnance Survey maps



TQ2106SE May 1961 & TQ2206SW Jan 1958
Reproduced from 1958 & 1961 Ordnance Survey maps
with the kind permission of Ordnance Survey



TQ2106SE Dec 1965 & TQ2206SW Mar 1972
Reproduced from 1965 & 1972 Ordnance Survey maps
with the kind permission of Ordnance Survey

Aerial View of Both Houses – 16 June 1959

A number of aerial photographs of Shoreham were taken in the 1940s and 1950s, mostly from a high altitude. The picture below was taken at a much lower height at a scale of 1:2000 and gives a good view of both houses, although the ancillary buildings to the rear of the new house are only partially covered. The road and housing separating the two houses is Ravensbourne Close built in the mid-1950s. The original drive to the new house can be seen just to the north of the close before disappearing under the garden of No.12 Ravensbourne Avenue.



MAL/59383 Frame 70800 16 June 1959

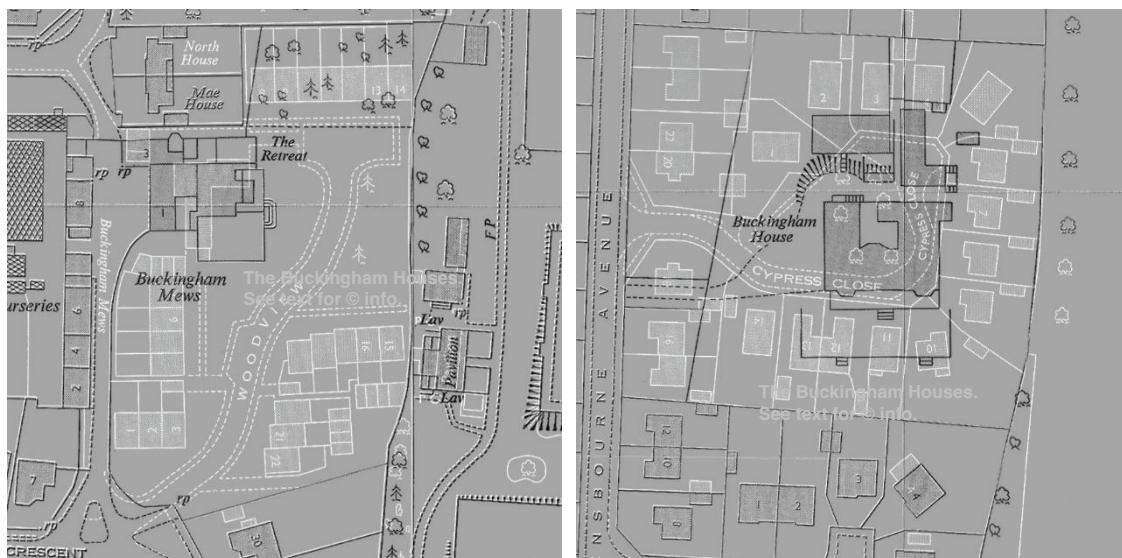
© Historic England Archive (previously English Heritage NMR)

The Old Buckingham House from the Air



MAL/59383 Frame 70800 16 June 1959

© Historic England Archive (previously English Heritage NMR)



TQ2106SE 1961 and TQ2206SW 1958 overlaid with 1965 with 1972 editions in negative at 65% transparency
Reproduced from 1958, 1961, 1965 and 1972 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 (50") maps with the kind permission of Ordnance Survey.

THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

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The New Buckingham House from the Air



MAL/59383 Frame 70800 16 June 1959

© Historic England Archive (previously English Heritage NMR)

The enlarged aerial views of the two houses show that whilst the old house was looking increasingly derelict, the new house was still a busy place, judging by what appear to be prams and toys on the veranda and lawn. Both pictures may be compared with the overlaid versions of the OS maps, which show the sites before and after redevelopment. Woodview Court has a much more compact footprint than the parts of the old house that it replaced. The new house was replaced by roadway and open space.

The picture of the new house gives an excellent reference to the layout of the roof and the positions of the dormer windows and chimneys, as the plans at **Appendix 2** are inadequate in this respect. Of the ten chimneys, nine appear to have been original, whilst the tenth, almost at the centre of the house, was added during the 1948 modifications to provide a new boiler flue. Unfortunately, the view does not show any walls of the house that are not documented elsewhere, except for the south elevations of the east and west extensions to the northeast wing that were added in 1948. The original ground floor part of the wall above which the west extension was built contains a window, whilst the second-floor part of this wall built in 1948 was plain – as can just be seen behind the new chimney. See also the drawing on page 52.

The picture also helps explain why no pictures of the north and courtyard elevations have been found. Quite apart from their not being the most photogenic views, the 1937 and 1948 ancillary buildings to the north were so close that they probably obstructed the taking of a meaningful photograph. The courtyard elevations were very close together and this might have limited the scope for decent photographs, quite apart from the fact that they must have been in shadow much of the time, as they were when this picture was taken. Fortunately, the 1948 conversion plans in **Appendix 2** fill most of the photographic gaps.

THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

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Appendix 2

The 1948 Conversion Plans for the New Buckingham House

As can be seen from this view from Buckingham Park, a row of trees concealed most of the east elevation apart from the roof, dormer windows and chimneys and explains the absence of pictures. The gap in the trees at the right of the pictures coincides with the east extension built in 1948, which explains why I can recall that part of the building but little else. In order to rediscover what the north and east elevations looked like, a search for building plans was undertaken.



Buckingham House from the Park

Photo by MN 1957

West Sussex County Council Record Office holds original plans deposited under the Shoreham Urban District Council byelaws for the period c1883 to 1933 numbered 1 to 3185. A search of these plans from 1905 to 1912 revealed nothing for Buckingham House. If such plans ever existed, they must fall within the known gap between plans 1266 and 2504 within the period 1903 to 1928.

A request to Adur/Worthing District Council Building Control also failed to locate any plans that might have been submitted by the Downs School for its building work behind the house in the mid-1930s or by Brighton Borough Council for the conversion work in 1948/49. Fortunately, as previously noted, East Sussex County Council Record Office hold the contract for the conversion work (Ref R/C 33/33) and this includes a set of seven architect's drawings, that appear to have been based on the original working drawings, as they show the house footings that can only have come from the originals.

A/1362/9	Floor Plans showing Basement, Ground, First and Second (Attic) Floors
A/1362/10	East and West Elevations, Roof Plan and Section AA (West-East through Main House)
A/1362/11	South and North Elevations, Section CC (East-West through NE and NW Wings) and Section EE (South - North through Main House)
A/1362/15	Plan and elevations for Laundry, cycle and pram store - dated March 1947
A/1362/16	Plan of whole site showing house and ancillary buildings.
A/1362/17	Plan and Elevations for Temporary Nurse's Recreation Hut - dated April 1947
A/1362/23	Plan of Playroom (former school hall/gymnasium) – dated June 1947

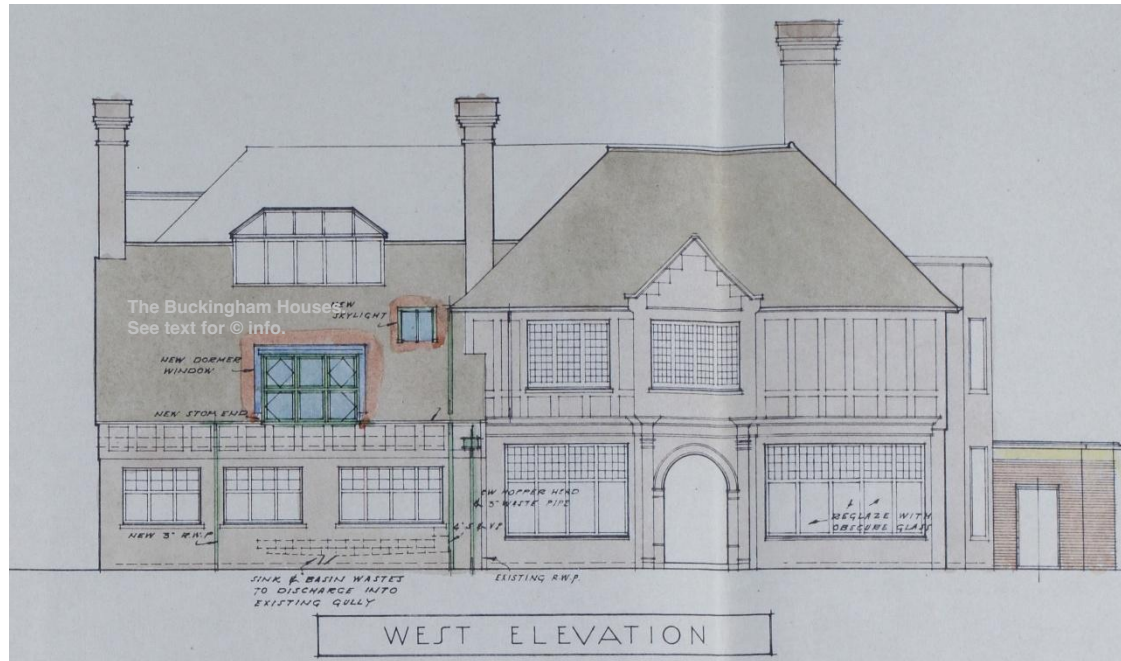
Not all the drawings are dated, but those that are date from early 1947, over a year before the contract was actually awarded. Some appear to be somewhat inaccurate, especially in the case of some dormer windows that are either missing or slightly misplaced. The other point to be aware of is that at least one of the modifications shown on the drawings did not take place, namely the construction of a veranda lounge along the south elevation of the house. Unfortunately, there appear to be two missing drawings from the set, namely the west elevation of the northeast wing and the south elevations of the east and west extensions to this wing at the north end. It can only be assumed that these drawings, if they ever existed, have been lost. It is possible that these were section drawings and may have been labelled as Sections BB and DD, as these designations are missing from the sequence.

This Appendix will only include the drawings of the house, as the outbuildings were of little visual appeal. The various drawings are reproduced next, starting with the west elevation and working anti-clockwise around the house. It should be noted that all have been reduced in order to fit the page, so will not be to scale. Creases and fold marks in the original documents have distorted the reproduction of the drawings slightly.

The following drawings are reproduced with the permission of the County Archivist of East Sussex, copyright reserved. (Ref R/C 33/33). Now East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office at The Keep

The Main West Elevation (From Drawing A/1362/10)

The main west elevation of the house was left unchanged except for the roof of the northwest wing, which gained a dormer window in the roof of what was believed to be the former billiard room. An additional skylight is also shown. The roof of the northeast wing was higher than that of the northwest wing and is shown in outline behind it. The western end of a proposed veranda lounge that was to be constructed on to the main south elevation of the house is also shown.



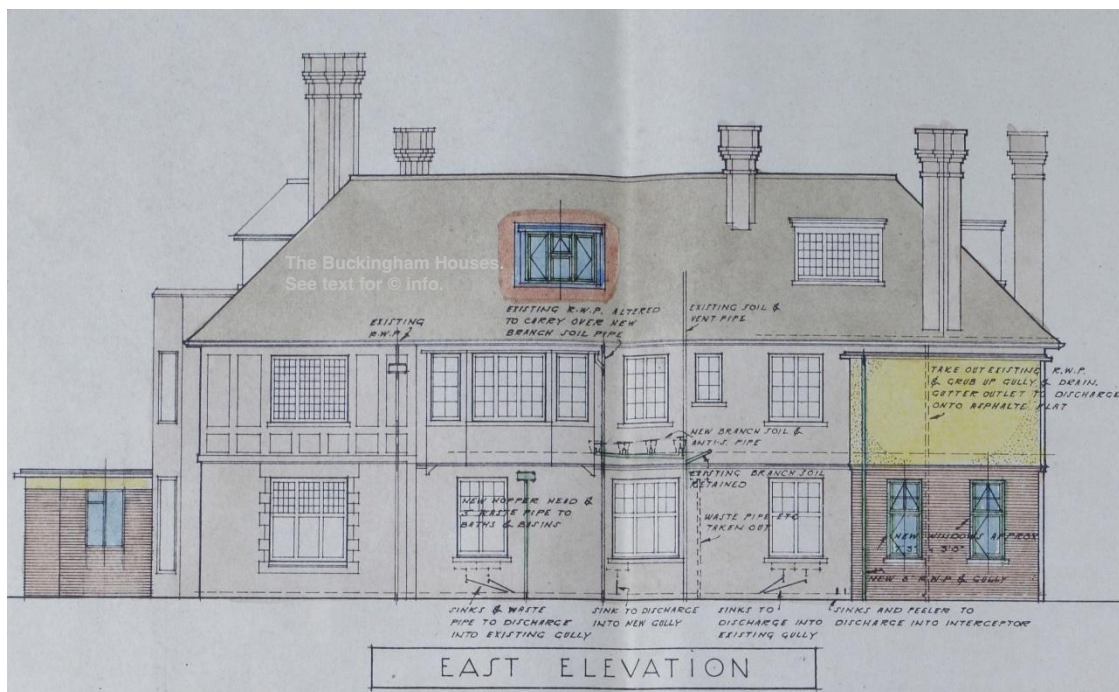
The Main South Elevation (From Drawing A/1362/11)

The main south elevation was unchanged in spite of the drawing showing a proposed veranda lounge, but happily this rather ugly structure was never built, so preserving the visual appeal of this main view of the house. The dormer windows in the drawing have been placed too far up the roof and should be lower. The same mistake occurs on the next drawing where the dormer window above the southeast bay is shown in profile on the left of the drawing.



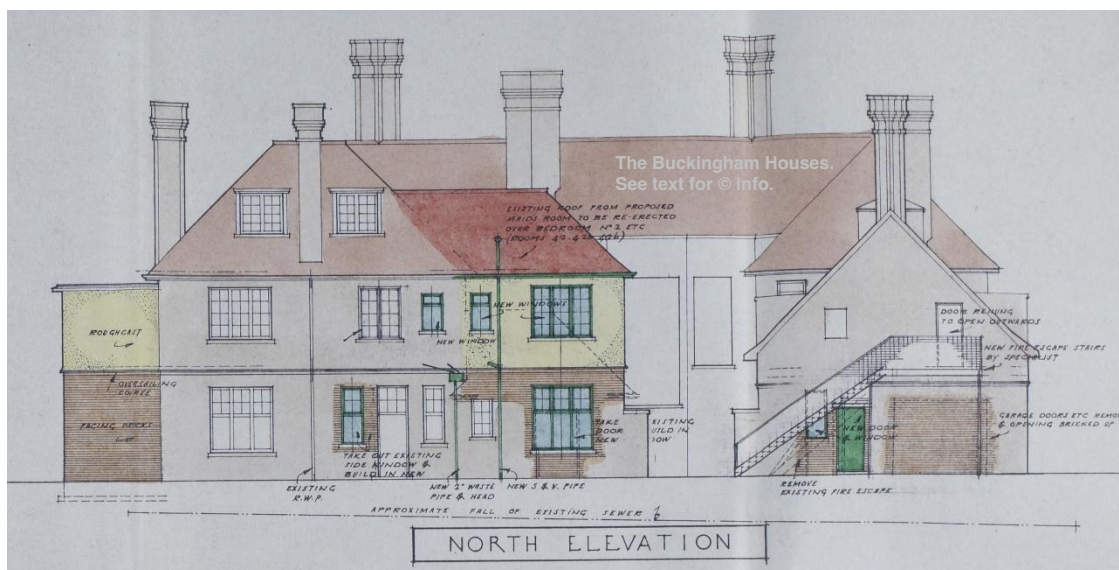
The Main East Elevation (From Drawing A/1362/10)

The main east elevation was the one that looked over Buckingham Park and the main modifications were a new dormer window that was to be added to the roof to provide light for a sewing room and a rather unappealing flat-roofed two-storey extension that was built to accommodate an extension to a nurse's room on the ground floor and a nurse's bedroom on the first floor. It is this structure that was the final part of the house to be demolished, having stood for just 13 years. The eastern end of the never-built veranda lounge is also shown.



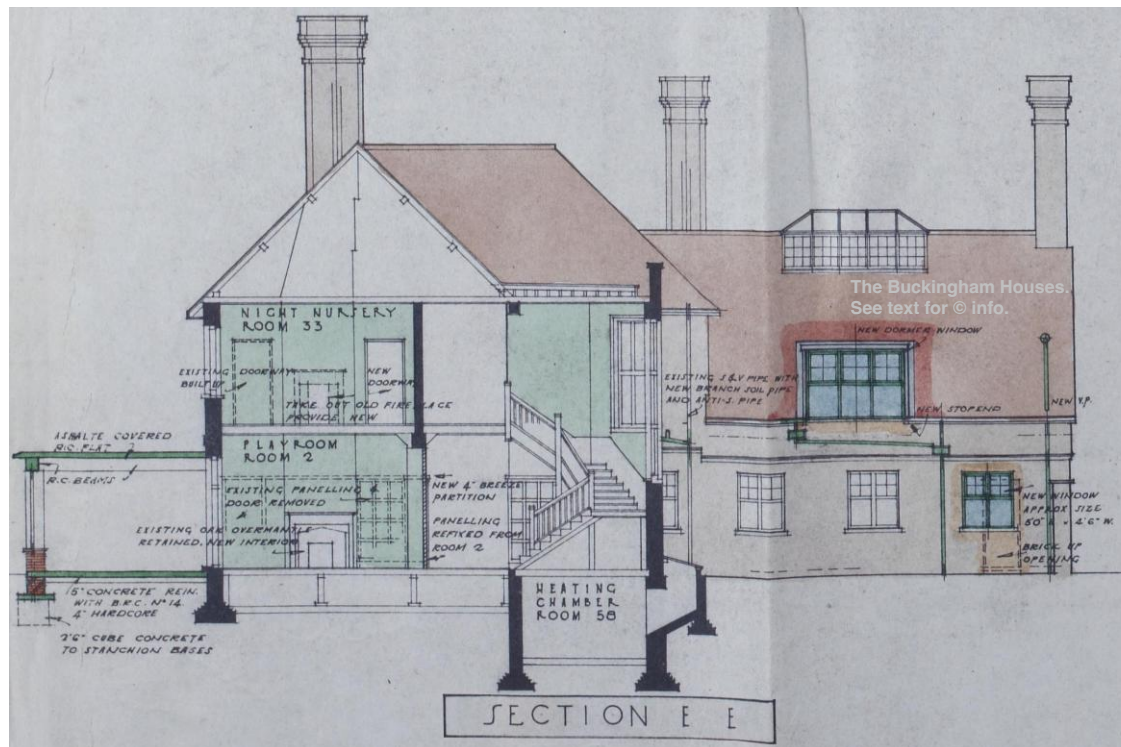
The Main North Elevation (From Drawing A/1362/11)

The main north elevation comprised of three distinct elements, namely the north walls of the northeast and northwest wings with a small entrance between them flanked by two low walls that gave access to a courtyard. The modifications to this side of the house were perhaps the most extensive. Apart from the flat-roofed east extension from the northeast wing, the pre-existing single-storey west extension had its roof removed to enable it to be built upwards to provide another bedroom on the first floor. The roof tiles were to be carefully removed and re-used in order to incorporate the roof in to the main roof of the northeast wing. The changes to the northwest wing were less extensive, with the bricking up of some former garage doors and the provision of a new door and fire escape from the first floor.



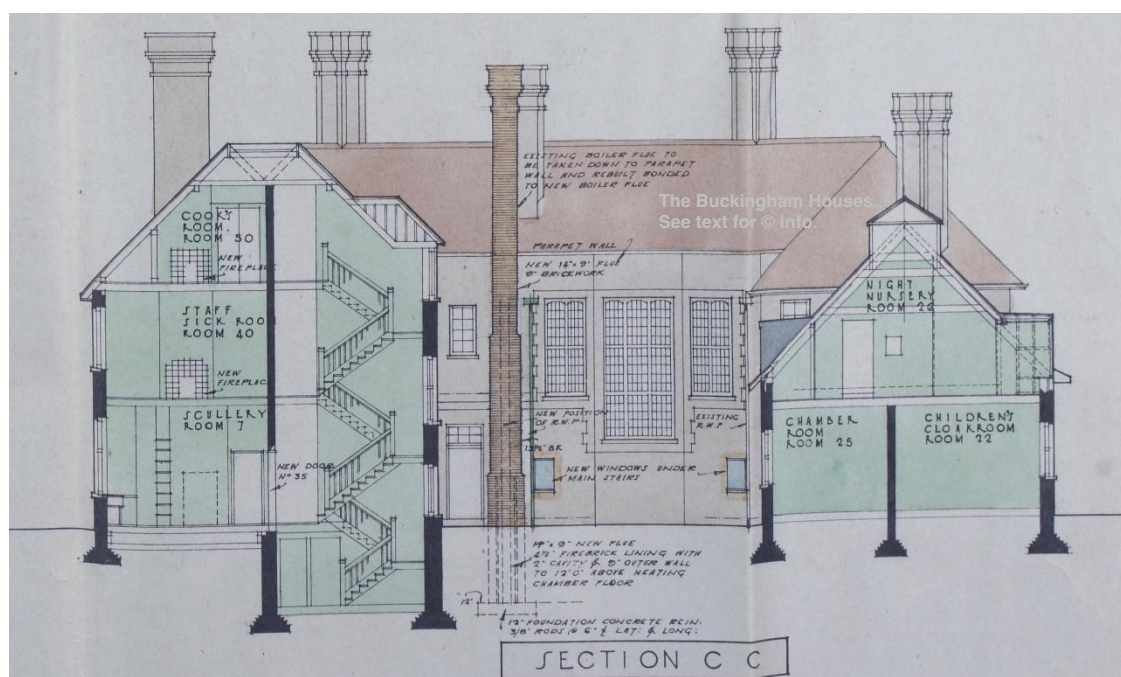
The East Courtyard Elevation (From Drawing A/1362/11)

The east elevation of the courtyard formed by the northwest wing almost completely appears on the drawing described as Section EE. This elevation was similar to the other side of the wing. The modifications added a mirror-image dormer window to the roof and replaced a door with a window. This view gives a south to north cross-section through the main part of the house and shows the main staircase.



The North Courtyard Elevation (From Drawing A/1362/11)

The north elevation of the courtyard formed by the main part of the house is revealed on the drawing described as Section CC. The windows lighting the main staircase are shown, plus the proposed addition of two smaller windows beneath them. It was also proposed to remove the existing boiler room chimney and to build a new one on the external wall. The new chimney was built whilst the old one was left standing. The east to west section through the northeast wing gives a good view of the rear staircase that ran from the basement to the attic.



The West Courtyard Elevation

A drawing of the west courtyard elevation formed by the northeast wing is missing. The image below was created by flipping and editing the East Elevation and Section EE drawings to produce a *basic* image of what this elevation *might* have looked like, based on the various floor plans that show positions of windows etc. The west extension on the left is not sectioned, whilst the main part of the house on the right is sectioned in line with the main west courtyard elevation. An interesting feature of this elevation was the series of windows that lit the back staircase from the basement to the attic and the pitched roof over these stairs that was similar to the roofs over the dormer windows at the front of the house. Another interesting feature is the channel at the centre of the roof, which drained its flat top central area. The main modifications were the addition of a dormer window to mirror that added on the other side for the sewing room, windows for new toilets and the raising of the single-story west extension at the northern end.



The South Courtyard Elevation

A drawing for the south courtyard elevation is also missing, as well as one showing the south elevation of the east extension to the northeast wing that was built to provide the nurse's room and bedroom. The image below was created in similar manner to that described above, but using the North Elevation drawing and part of the Section CC drawing. Again, with much editing this image gives a *basic* indication of what these elevations *might* have looked like, although a comparison with the aerial photograph on page 47 suggests that the drawing here is fairly accurate.



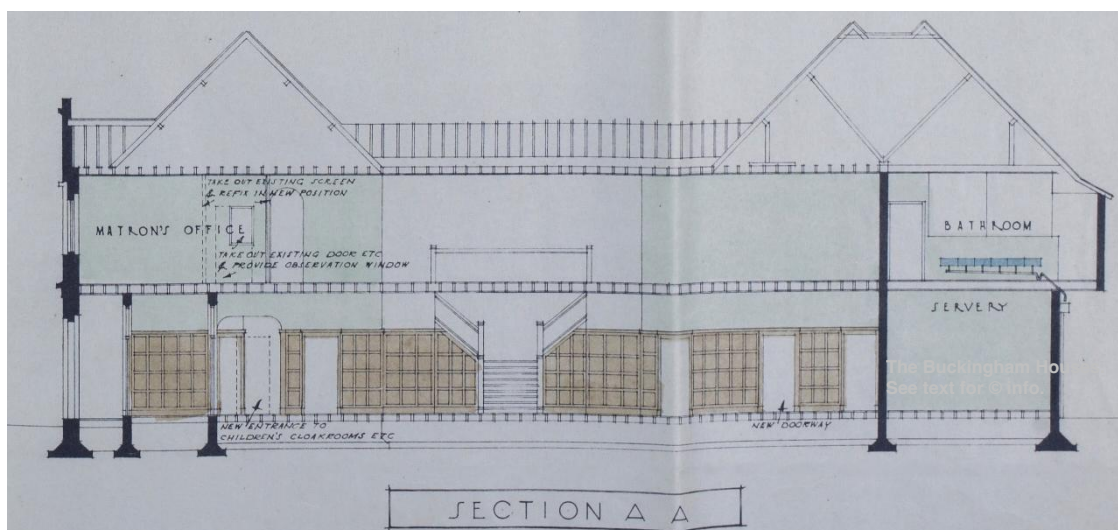
The internal views of both images on this page are even less detailed approximations.

The upstairs blank wall on the left of this picture proved to be rather resistant, as several attempts to pull it down failed. McKellar & Westerman must have built it well!

In the end, the section of wall containing the windows that lit the staircase (seen in profile here) was pulled down instead and I clearly recall how this revealed the back staircase. The obstinate section of wall having been thus weakened then came down at the next attempt.

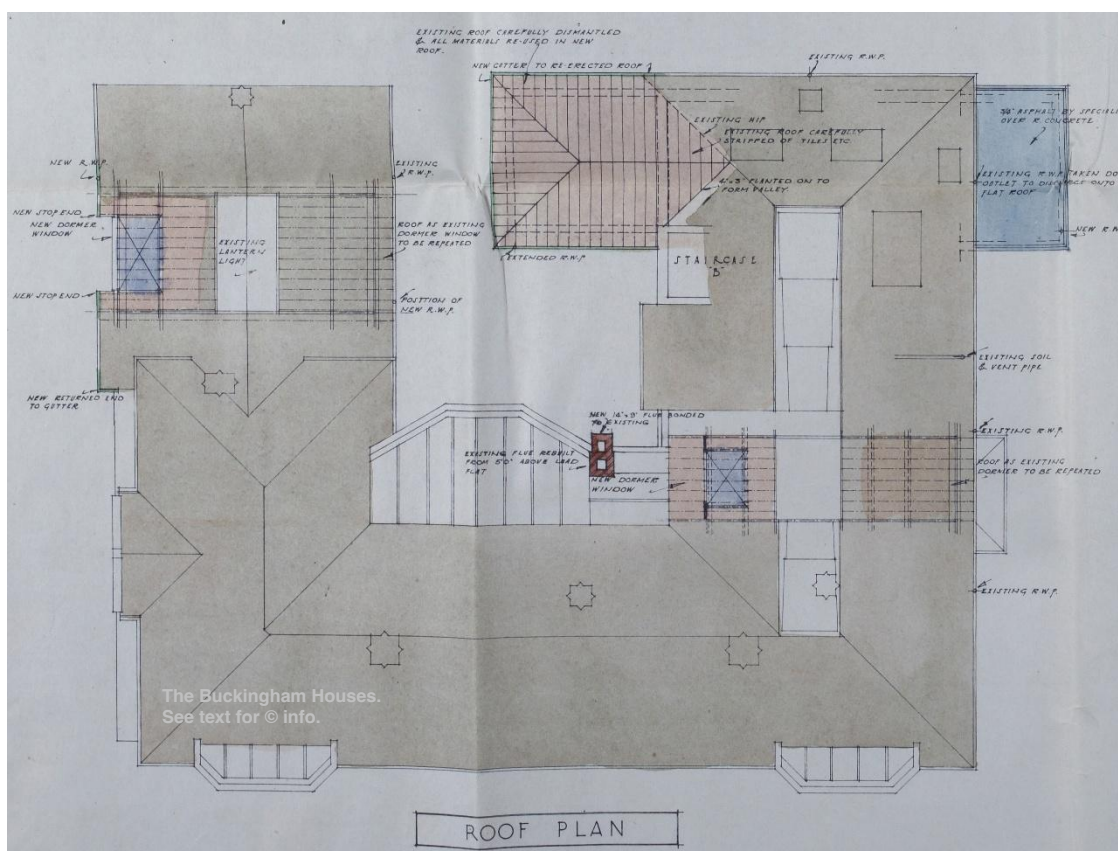
Main House Section (from Drawing A/1362/10)

Section AA shows the main part of the house from the front gable on the west elevation to the bay window on the east elevation and shows the main staircase.



The Roof Plan (from Drawing A/1362/10)

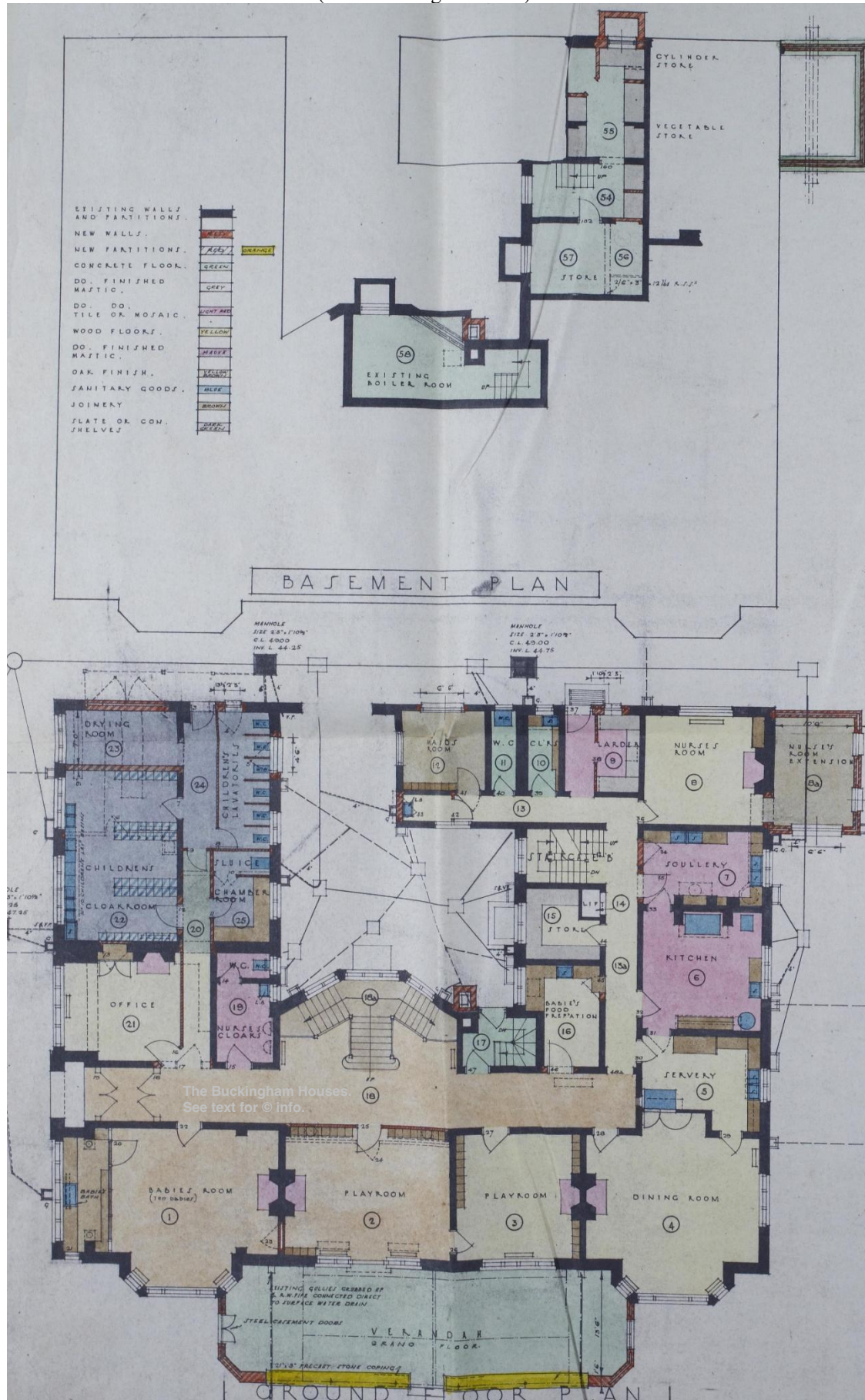
The roof plan shows the two additional sets of mirrored dormer windows on the northwest and northeast wings and the raised and flat roofs of the east and west extensions to the northeast wing. For some reason the dormer windows on the south elevation roof are not shown, and a chimney that should be adjacent to the east facing dormer window on the northeast wing is missing.



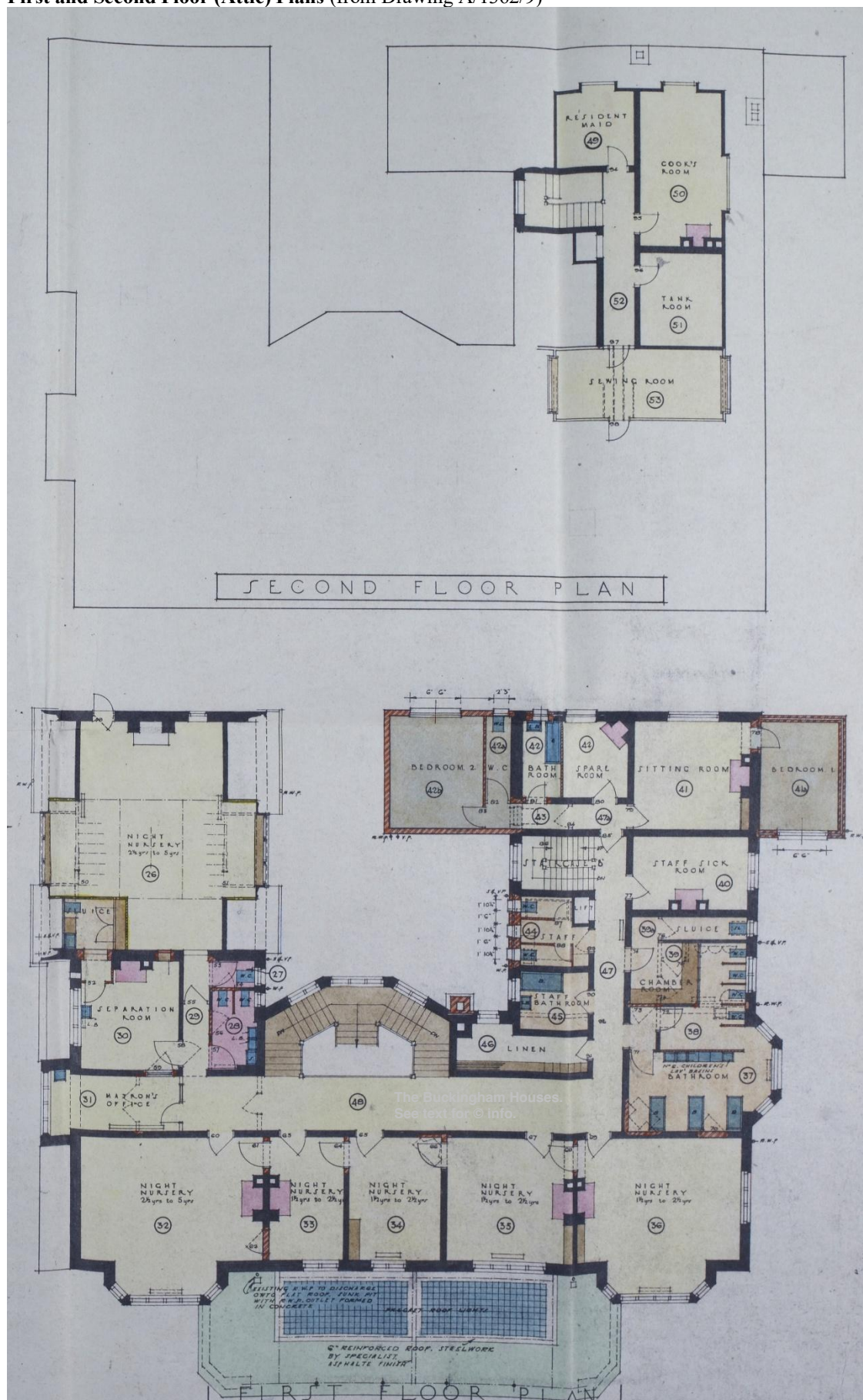
Floor Plans

Plans of the four floors of the house follow on the next two pages. Interestingly, the attic does not appear to extend to the two dormer windows on the south elevation roof, although presumably it must have done so. Such south-facing attic rooms would have afforded splendid views across the town towards the sea.

Basement and Ground Floor Plans (from Drawing A/1362/9)



First and Second Floor (Attic) Plans (from Drawing A/1362/9)



Appendix 3

Buckingham Memorials and Inscriptions at St Nicolas Church

With so little of the two houses remaining, this Appendix takes looks at the various Buckingham-related memorials to the former owners of the old house that are to be found within St Nicolas Church and in the churchyard. As a boy I was a member of the church choir and attended St Nicolas School, which in those days was across the road from the church, opposite the lych gate.

During those years in the 1960s and early 1970s I passed the Bridger mausoleum in the churchyard many times and whilst in church recall reading the various memorials in the nave as a useful diversion for when the Vicar's sermons became particularly long or boring! Due to the poor acoustics of the church, caused by the sound of the choir getting lost somewhere under the central tower, the choir stalls and organ had been relocated to the back of the nave. In those days the Blaker memorial was almost completely obscured by the organ, but replacement of the latter has now enabled the memorial to be seen again.

The monuments are recorded in pictures and, where necessary, by accompanying transcriptions. In the case of the Blaker and Monk memorials and the numerous ones to members of the Bridger family, basic family trees are also given to enable the relationships of the various individuals to each other to be seen more clearly.

Henry Cheal records more information on the owners of Buckingham from the 13th to 20th centuries in chapter VI of *The Story of Shoreham* and it is not the intention to repeat it all here, although reference will be made to it to the extent necessary to make sense of the relationships described on the Blaker and Monk memorials.

The Blaker Memorial

The Blaker memorial is located at the west end of the nave. According to Cheal, Edward Blaker (senior) died in October 1653 and the memorial on the right-hand panel is to his wife, Susannah (nee Scrase) who died on 20 June 1678. He is not to be confused with his son, Edward Blaker (junior) who died shortly after his mother on 13 September 1678 and is commemorated on the left-hand panel, which was put there by his widow Dorothy.

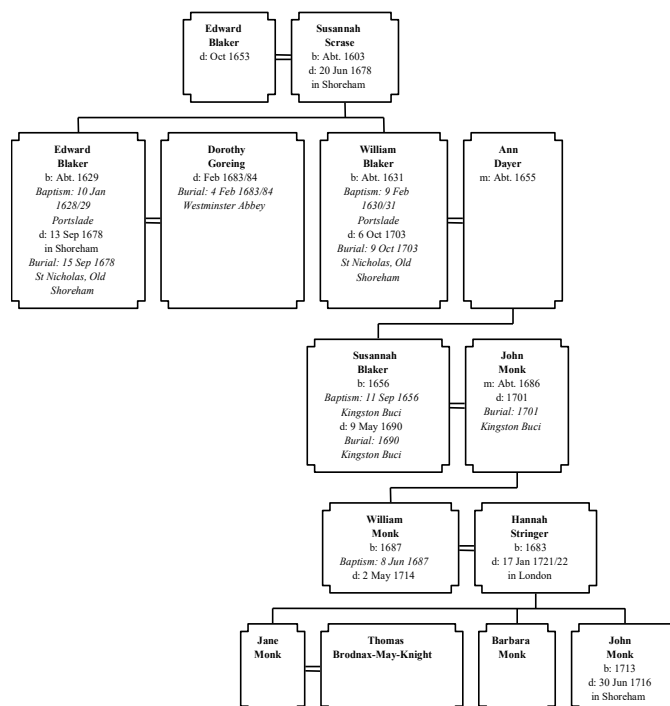
William Blaker was the younger son of Edward and Susannah Blaker and brother to Edward (junior) and married Ann Dayer. Their only daughter Susannah Blaker married John Monk.

William Blaker died on 6 October 1703 and is commemorated on the centre panel by his grandson William Monk, the son of John and Susannah Monk.

The Monk Memorial

The Monk memorial is on the south wall of the nave and commemorates the same William Monk, his wife Susannah Stringer and their son John. It also mentions their daughters Jane and Barbara.

Cheal states that in 1734, Barbara Monk sold Buckingham to Edward Elliston of South Weald, Essex. His daughter Catherine married Edward, 1st Lord Elliott in 1756 and in 1766 he sold Buckingham to Colvill Bridger. (Cheal, 1921, page 66).



Blaker Memorial – Nave – West End



Left Panel

To the Pious Memorye
of
Edward Blaker of Buckingham in this Parish esqr
Justice of the Pece & Burges in Parliament for New Shoreham
Whose Piety, Loyalty, Charity, Humility & Sweetness of Disposition
Engaged the love and admiration of all that knew him
In this life and noe less their lamentation
At his death

Hee exchanged this life for a Better
13 September 1678 in ye 49 year of his age
Whose sorrowful relict (Dorothy ye daughter of Henry Goreing)
Of Heydowne in this County of Sussex Esqr
As a testimony of her never dyeing
Affection hath paid her last duty
in this monument

Heydowne = Highden near Washington

Edward Blaker was Sheriff of Sussex in 1657 and MP for New Shoreham 1658-1678

Centre Panel

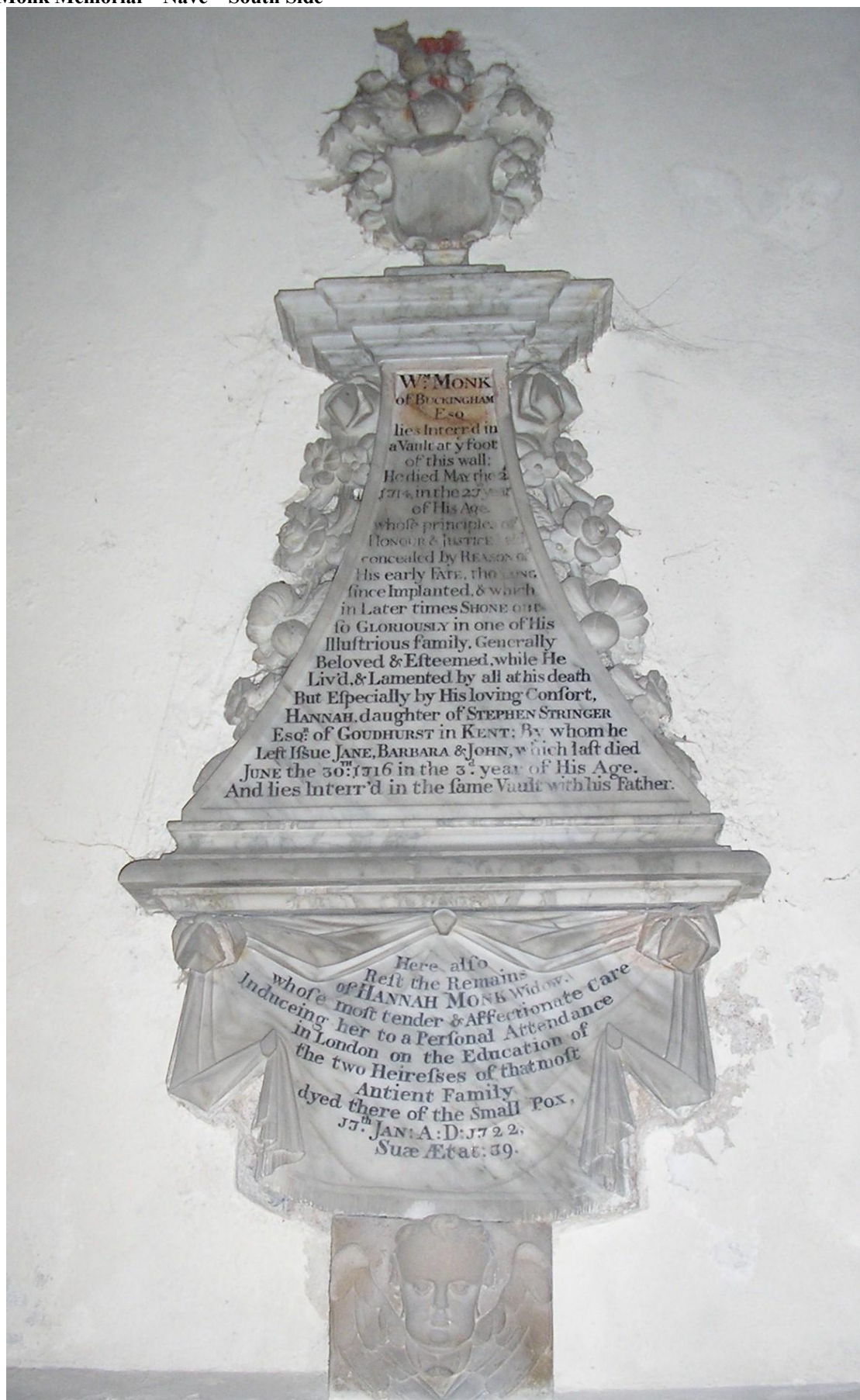
To the Memory of
William Blaker of Buckingham Esqr
Who departed this life the 6th day of
October in the year of our Lord: MDCCIII
Aged 72 years
This monument was erected by
William Monke of Buckingham Esqr
his Grandson by Susanna the only
daughter of the said William Blaker

MDCCIII = 1703

Right Panel

Here
lieth the Body of Susannah
the widow of Mr Edward Blaker
of Buckingham
She dyed in the 75th year
Of her age June the 20th
1678

Monk Memorial – Nave – South Side



The Bridger Memorials

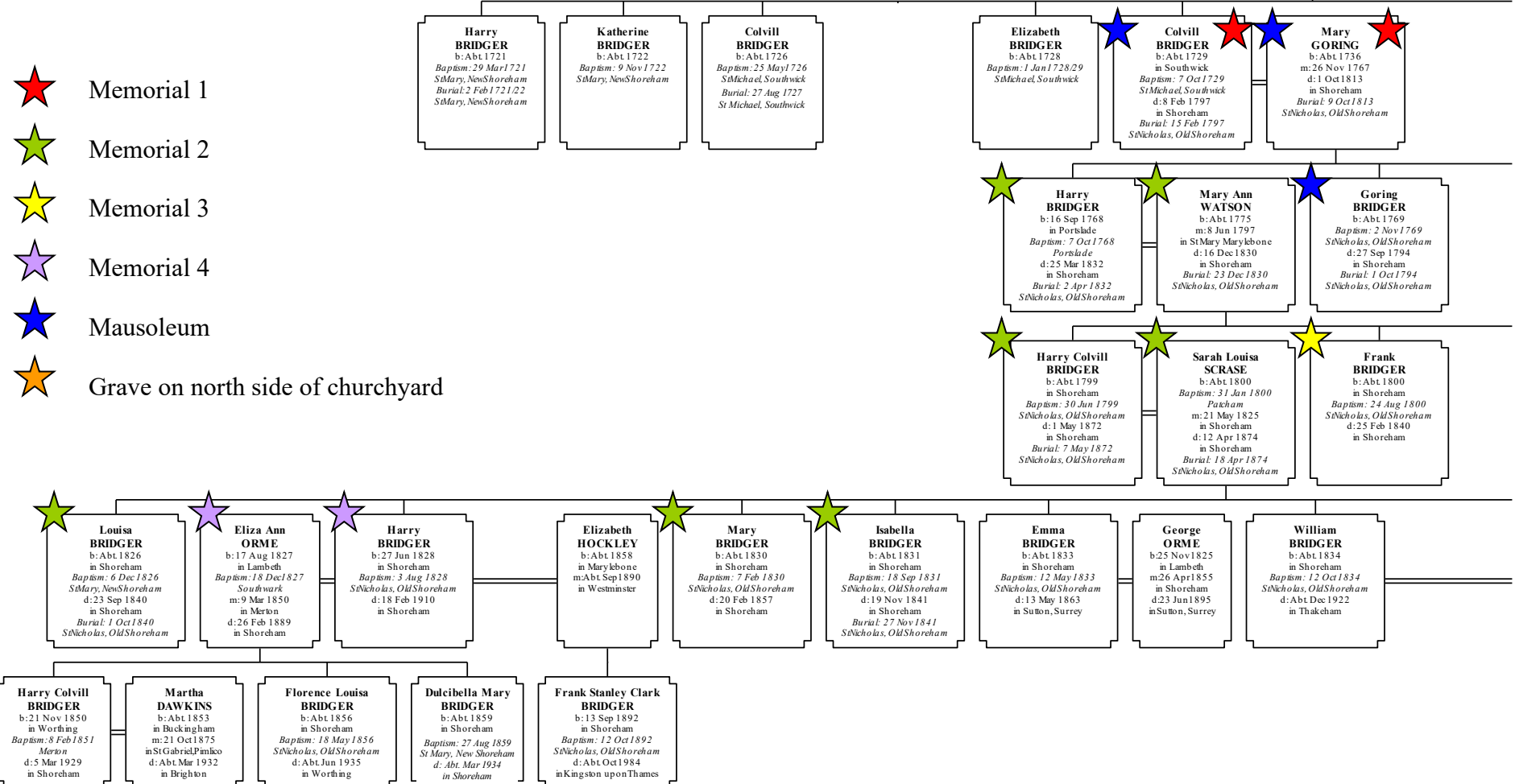
The next pages contain the various Bridger memorials, which for the most part, speak for themselves. The earliest memorial within the church commemorates Colvill Bridger and his wife Mary Goring.

Bridger Memorial 1 – Nave – North Wall



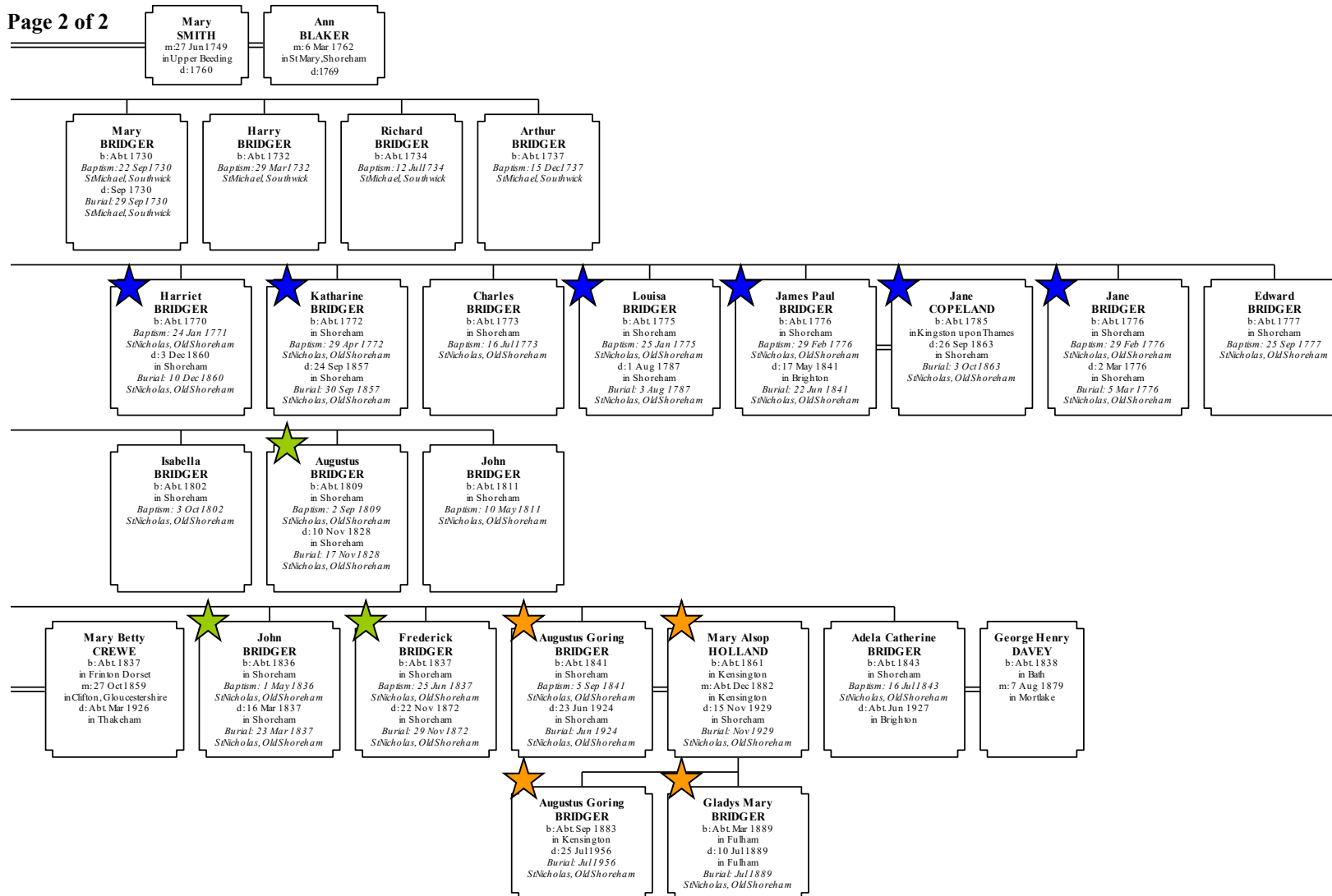
Descendants of Harry and Katherine Bridger

Page 1 of 2



Descendants of Harry and Katherine Bridger

Page 2 of 2



The Bridger Mausoleum – Churchyard – South Side



As can be seen from this early postcard of St Nicolas Church, Colvill Bridger's mausoleum dominated the south side of the churchyard. With the growth of new trees around it and the growth of algae on the stone surfaces, its impact has lessened somewhat, but nevertheless it remains the most substantial monument in the churchyard. Michael Norman describes it as an uncompromising statement of Bridger's standing and a "modern" and sophisticated design for its time.

Whilst the inscriptions are still quite clearly legible, they did not photograph well enough to make their inclusion here worthwhile, so the following transcriptions are given instead.

South Face

This Mausoleum
Contains the bodys of
Colvill Bridger Esq^r
Late of Buckingham Place
Who at the age of 67 years
Died on the 8th day of Feb^y 1797
AND
Mrs Mary Bridger
Wife of Colvill Bridger Esq^r
Who at the age of 77 years
Died on the first day of Oct^r 1813

East Face

The bodys of
Louisa
Third daughter of
Colvill Bridger Esq^r
Who at the age of 12 years
Died on the 1st day of Augst 1787
AND
The Revd Goring M.A.
Late Rector of Albourn and Twineham
The second son of
Colville Bridger Esq^r
And Mrs Mary his wife
Who at the age of 24 years
Died on the 27th day of Sept^r 1794

North Face

The body of
Jane
Youngest daughter of
Colville Bridger Esq^r
And Mrs Mary his wife
Who at the age of two months
Died on the 2nd day of Mar 1776
AND
Catharine
Second daughter of
Colville Bridger Esq^r
And Mrs Mary his wife
Who at the age of 85 years
Died on the 24th day of September 1857



West Face

Also
Harriet eldest daughter of
Colvill Bridger Esq^r
And Mrs Mary his wife
Who at the age of 90 years
Died on the 3rd day of December 1860

Here lie the remains of
Lieut. Col. James Paul Bridger
Late of the 12th Light Infantry Dragoons C.B.
Who died on the 17th day of May 1841
Also of Jane his wife
Fourth daughter of John Copeland Esq^r
She died on the 26th day of September 1863

Ages for James Paul Bridger and his wife Jane are not given, but the St Nicolas burial register entries for them on 17 May 1841 and 3 October 1863 give the ages of 65 and 80 respectively.

Bridger Memorial 2 – Chancel – South Wall



This memorial contains ten names, comprising a mixture of Colvill and Mary Bridger's descendants including their son Harry Bridger and his wife Mary Ann Watson; their grandsons Harry Colvill and Augustus Bridger plus Harry Colvill's wife Sarah Louisa Scrase; and five great-grandchildren: Louisa, Mary, Isabella, John and Frederick. They are buried in a Bridger vault to the north of the chancel.

Bridger Vault – Churchyard – North Side



The vault on the north side of the church has no inscriptions except for a Coade-stone embellishment with the Latin word *Fuerunt* (“they were”) on it. It is assumed that the Bridgers commemorated on the inscriptions within the chancel of the church were buried there. There is a date at the base that looks like 1828, the year that Augustus Bridger died and the earliest death recorded on the main chancel memorial. As can be seen from the piscina and blocked arch in the north wall of the chancel, the vault was partially constructed over the foundations of a ruined chapel. It therefore obstructed the 1840-43 restoration of the church by preventing the construction of the vestry to the full eastward extent of the original foundations. In recent years, the area enclosed within the railings has been much reduced in order to facilitate restoration work to the base of the chancel and vestry walls.

Bridger Memorials 3 & 4 – Chancel – North Wall



Sacred
To the memory of
Frank Bridger Esq.^{re}
Who died February 25th 1840.
Aged 39 years.



To the glory of God and in memory
of Eliza Ann the beloved wife of
Harry Bridger of Buckingham House Esquire
who died February 26th 1889 aged 61 years
Also of the above Harry Bridger
who died February 18th 1910 aged 81 years

Frank Bridger was the second son of Harry Bridger and Mary Ann Watson.

Harry Bridger was the eldest great-grandson of Colvill Bridger and Mary Goring. His wife was Eliza Ann Orme.

The Head Memorial

Henry Head and his family moved to the old house c1890. In total the memorial carries six names, which include Henry, his wife Hester, and four of his eight sons. Henry and Hester also had two daughters. The memorial is of particular interest as it also records the sinking of the Titanic and the Battle of Gallipoli.

Head Memorial – Chancel – South Side



In memory of Hugh Stanley Head
Third son of Henry Head of London died at
Buckingham House Nov 4 1890 aged 26 years
Lux Perpetua Luceat Eis

In memory of Henry Head
Who died at Buckingham House July 1 1905
Aged 70 Years
The path of the just is as the shining light that
Shineth more and more unto the perfect day

In memory of Hester Head
Wife of Henry head who died at
66 Cadogan Place London
December 6 1907 aged 72 years
For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding
Holy, loving what is good, keen, unhindered

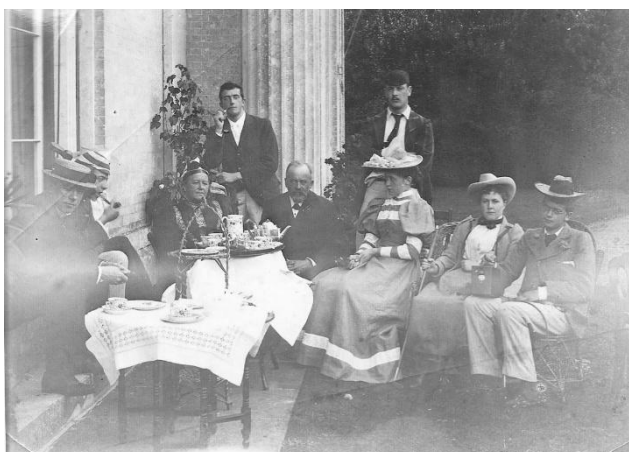
In memory of Francis Head
Fourth son of Henry Head who died at
Buckingham House Feb 11 1905 aged 36 years
And so he bringeth them
Unto the haven where they would be

In memory of Christopher Head
Fifth son of Henry Head
Born on Christmas Day 1869
Lost in the wreck of the Titanic 15th April 1912
"One dieth in his full strength
Being wholly at ease and quiet"

In memory of Bernard Head
Eighth son of Henry Head
Died in action Gallipoli Aug 13 1915
Aged 39 years
He never turned his back but marched breast forward

Henry Head and family enjoying afternoon tea on the steps of Buckingham House. Hester and Henry are seated at the table with their daughter Hester on Henry's left in the big hat. Of the five males, at least three are their sons: one behind with the pipe, one to Mrs. Head's right with the cricket cap and pipe, and the one with silly hat and glasses. The latter is Bernard on the right of the picture. The woman between him and his sister Hester is unknown.

(BB) Courtesy of Marlipins Museum
PP/SHORM/94.2593.16

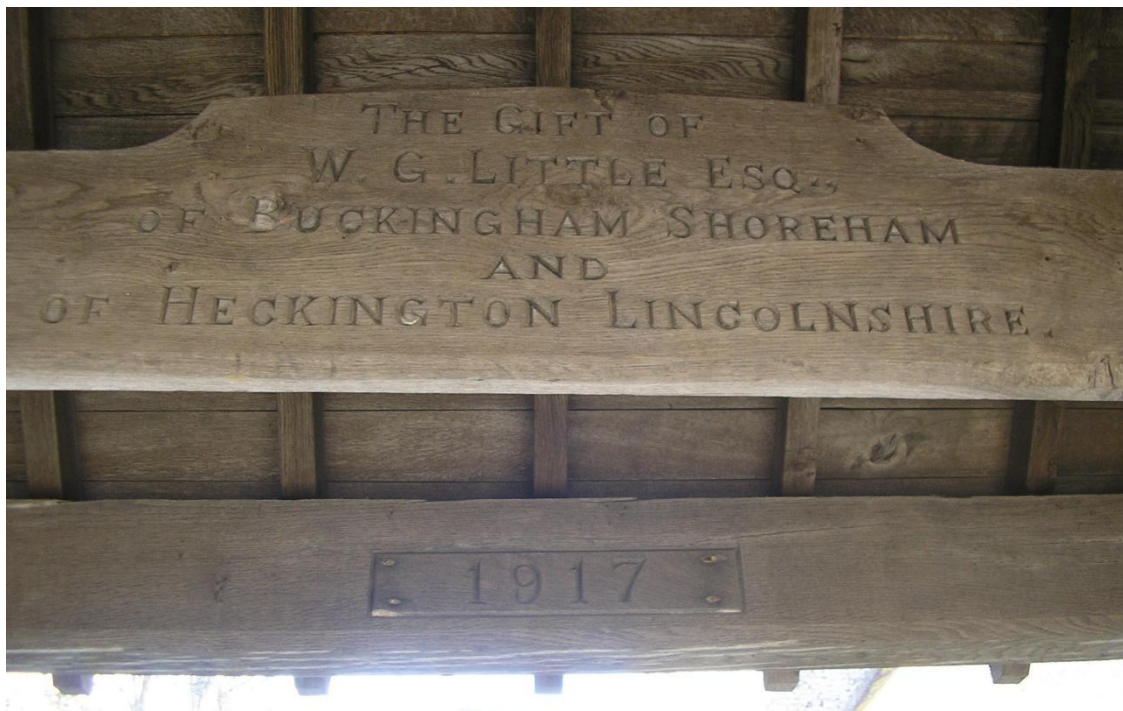


The Lych Gate

In addition to the new lodge, William Godson Little's other surviving structure in Shoreham is the lych gate at the entrance to St Nicolas Churchyard, Old Shoreham, which was his gift to the church in 1917.



THE GIFT OF
W.G. LITTLE ESQ
OF BUCKINGHAM SHOREHAM
AND
OF HECKINGTON LINCOLNSHIRE
1917



Appendix 4

Some Buckingham Families

This Appendix is not intended to give detailed family histories, but a snapshot of each family. Much more could be written, particularly about the Bridgers and the Heads, but this would require another book. There were too many Bridgers to cover in this book, but as they already feature prominently in other sections, this section will confine itself to aspects of just two of them.

Colvill Bridger and the Family Wealth

Michael Norman has given a detailed background to the family in the introductions to his books *Colvill Bridger in Aleppo* (Norman, 1998) and *Colvill Bridger's Early Trading* (Norman, 2003). Without wishing to duplicate his work, the following is a brief summary.

Colvill Bridger was baptised on 1 January 1728/29 at St Michael's Church, Southwick, the **fifth** child and eldest surviving son of Harry and Katherine Bridger. He was **the second** child to bear the name Colvill, the previous **one** having died in infancy. His parents married at Hove on 6 May 1719, when Harry Bridger married a cousin, Catherine Bridger of Horsham. It is not known whether Colvill was previously a surname within the family, but it was to recur as a Christian name over the next 120 years.

Harry Bridger (1698-1766) was a prominent local merchant and corn factor. His first wife Katherine died **in 1744** between the birth of her son Arthur, who was baptised at Southwick on 1 December 1737, and 27 June 1749 when Harry married his second wife, Mary Smith, at Upper Beeding. Mary was the widow of Richard Smith, another local merchant who owned Chantry House (now No.25 Church Street) Shoreham. Harry married his third wife, Ann Blaker on 6 March 1762 at St Mary's, Shoreham and he died in 1766. It is possible that Ann was related to the previous Blaker owners of Buckingham. The St Mary's burial register records Harry's burial on 9 May 1766 but states that it actually took place at Southwick.

Upon reaching the age of 21 in 1750, Colvill became a trader in his own right, dealing with such places as Brittany, the Channel Islands and Cadiz. He moved from Lisbon to the Levant (Middle East) in 1754, so missing the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. Aleppo in Syria was a key city on the overland Silk Route from the Far East and Colvill's time there was spent as a factor (mercantile agent) for the Radcliffes of Hitchin Priory, Hertfordshire. His letters provide a unique record for their time, and some may be read in Michael Norman's two books in which they are translated, transcribed and annotated. Another work covering Colvill Bridger's time in Aleppo is Elena Frankagis-Syrett's *Trade practices in Aleppo in the middle of the 18th century: the case of a British merchant* (Frankagis-Syrett, 1991, *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, No.62, 1991, pp.123-132)

Whilst Colvill's fortunes seem to have fluctuated between success and heavy losses, he nevertheless made a big enough fortune to be able to return to Shoreham and in 1766 inherit his father's considerable estates, that included much of Old Shoreham, Erringham, Beeding and Ashurst. On 26 November 1767, Colvill married Mary Goring, the daughter of Sir Charles Matthew Goring, 5th Baronet of Highden, near Washington, Sussex. It is understood that she was a cousin, so the marriage doubtless had the added benefit of keeping their wealth within the family. Michael Norman makes the following comment concerning the Bridger wealth:

The family were of minor Gentry standing, and Harry certainly made some money - enough to buy the Kingston Buci estate for Colvill's sister. He also bought the Erringham Estate for Colvill, although subsequently reimbursed by Colvill. Certainly, Colvill had his father's money to add to the roll he brought back from Aleppo, and some from his Wife (a Goring), which must have made him rather more comfortable.

Harry Colvill Bridger's Mystery Marriage 1875

Harry Colvill Bridger was born at Worthing on 21 Nov 1850 was baptised at Merton on 8 February 1851, the son of Harry Bridger and Eliza Ann Orme who married at Merton on 9 March 1850. They also had two daughters: Florence Louisa Bridger 1856-1935 and Dulcibella Mary Bridger 1859-1934, neither of whom married. On the 1871 census Harry Colvill Bridger was living at 6 Sydney Street, Chelsea aged 20, unmarried and a Lieutenant in the Sussex Royal Militia. (RG10/81 f42 p19)

Harry Colvill Bridger (batchelor) married Martha Dawkins (spinster) at St Gabriel's Church, Pimlico on 21 October 1875. His age is recorded as 24, his address as 97 Warwick Street and his occupation is stated as "Gentleman" as is that of his father, Harry Bridger.

1874. Marriage solemnized at St. George's Church in the Parish of St. George's Hanover Square in the County of Middlesex

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
198	Oct 21 st	Harry Colvill Bridger	24	Bachelor	Gentleman	97 Warwick St	Harry Bridger	Gentleman
	1874	Martha Dawkins	22	Spinster		13 Clanston St	Thomas Dawkins	Publican

Married in the St. George's Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by License or after by us,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Harry Colvill Bridger In the Presence of us, Alfred George Harrison Weyfield William King
Martha Dawkins James Maria C. Houlton

Marriage Entry: December Quarter 1875 St George Hanover Square Volume 1a Page 645

Martha's age is recorded as 22 and her address as 13 Clanston Street. She was the daughter of Thomas Dawkins, a publican.

On the 1871 census, Martha Dawkins was a domestic servant at 479 Oxford Street, Bloomsbury in a public house called The Groom. She was aged 19, unmarried and born in Buckinghamshire c1852. (RG10/341 f71 p18). Her birth appears to have been registered in the September quarter 1851 at the *town* of Buckingham.

Given his unusual middle name and the confirmation of his father's name and occupation, there seems no doubt that this marriage was for Harry Colvill Bridger of Buckingham, Shoreham. However, there is a bit of a mystery over this marriage, as whenever he has been positively identified on subsequent census returns, Harry Colvill Bridger claims to be single!

On the 1881 census Harry Colvill Bridger appears in Tower Street, Chichester, aged 30, unmarried and a Captain in the R.S.L.I. Militia. (RG11/1128 f63 p16). However, living not very far away from Chichester at No. 5 Waterloo Square, South Bersted was Martha Bridger, an annuitant, aged 28, born in Buckingham c1853 together with her daughter Minnie Bridger aged 8, also born in Buckingham c1873. (RG11/1124 f10 p14). On the 1891 census Harry has not been found, but a Henry C Bridger aged 40 (born "Scotland") was living at 78 Cambridge Street, St George Hanover Square together with his wife Martha, aged 38 and born at Northampton* together with Minnie Bridger aged 18, born Chelmsford*, Essex. (RG12/74 f148 p40) * *Both locations appear to be mistakes as they come right in 1901.*

Similarly, on the 1901 census a Henry Bridger aged 50 (born "Scotland") was living at Park House, Hammersmith with his wife Martha aged 48 and born at Buckingham c1853 and Minnie Bridger aged 28 and born at Gawcott, Buckinghamshire c1873. (RG13/49 f138 p42). On the 1911 census Harry Colvill Bridger was at Adur Lodge, Shoreham with his spinster sisters and claiming to be single. (RG14 PN5214). Meanwhile, a married Martha Bridger aged 58 and born Buckingham c1853 and Minnie G Dawkins aged 38 and born Gawcott c1873 were living at 63 Westwich Gardens, West Kensington Park, Fulham, but Henry Bridger was not present with them. (RG14 PN258)

So, was Harry Colvill Bridger leading a double life? Does Henry born in "Scotland" explain his apparent absence in 1891 and 1901? Conversely, is the absence of Henry at Fulham in 1911 explained by the presence of Harry with his sisters at Adur Lodge? Why be so secretive about his marriage? The answer perhaps lies in the fact the Martha was a servant and Harry did not want anyone to know he had married "beneath himself". Added to which, Minnie Georgie Dawkins who was baptised at Gawcott on 7 July 1872, Buckinghamshire appears to have been the illegitimate daughter of Martha before her marriage, since the baptismal record makes no reference to her father. Unless Minnie was his illegitimate daughter, Harry Colvill Bridger had no issue by Martha Dawkins, as in 1929 when he died, he was succeeded by his half-brother, Frank Stanley Clark Bridger 1892-1984. Martha Bridger appears to have died aged 79 at Brighton (not far from Shoreham) in the March quarter 1932. Minnie Georgie Dawkins of 57 Upper Abbey Road, Brighton died aged 57 at Brighton on 18 July 1941, although her age on the death index is 12 years understated for someone born in 1872.

Echoes of Esther Waters

As George Moore and Harry Colvill were close friends, it is possible that Moore knew about the secret marriage. If so, this may well have inspired him to reverse the scenario in *Esther Waters* in the characters of Miss Peggy Barfield of Woodview and the servant William Latch, whose secret liaison resulted in them being sent away to marry.

The Family of Henry Head

Henry Head was born at Ipswich and baptised there on 20 July 1834, the third son of Jeremiah and Mary Head née Howard who married at Ipswich on 12 May 1831. He married Hester Beck in 1860 at the City of London and in 1861 they were living in Stoke Newington. Their 11 children were all baptised at St Mary's, Stoke Newington between 1862 and 1876:

Name	Born		Baptised		Died		Age	Place/District
Henry	4 Aug	1861	4 Aug	1862	8 Oct	1940	79	Wokingham
Charles Howard	28 Dec	1862	15 Feb	1863	6 Dec	1877	15	Guildford
Hugh Stanley	9 Jun	1864	10 Jul	1864	4 Nov	1890	26	Buckingham House
Rachel Mary	26 Aug	1865	8 Oct	1865	19 Jan	1870	4	Hackney
Katharine	17 Sep	1866	21 Oct	1866	2 Aug	1869	2	Hackney
Francis	13 Feb	1868	26 Apr	1868	11 Feb	1905	36	Buckingham House
Christopher	25 Dec	1869	16 Jan	1870	15 Apr	1912	42	"Titanic"
Geoffrey	13 Mar	1872	14 Apr	1872	22 Nov	1955	83	Westminster
John Alban	7 Dec	1873	28 Dec	1873	8 Jun	1931	57	Ruthin Castle
Hester	29 Jan	1875	28 Feb	1875		1958	83	Bridport
Bernard	12 Jan	1876	13 Feb	1876	13 Aug	1915	39	Gallipoli

The family were still at Stoke Newington in 1871. In 1881 Henry and Hester were at 41 Wimpole Street, London and by 1891 they were at Buckingham House. Their only surviving daughter, Hester, married Reginald John Pinney on 28 August 1900 and they had at least five children:

Name	Born	Birthplace	Died	Notes
Hester Harriott	1901	Poona, India	1982	Married Sir Basil Futvoye Marsden-Smedley 1927
Bernard	1903	Aldershot	1941	Killed in WW2. Named on Alamein Memorial Egypt
Mary Frances	1905	Dublin, Ireland	1984	
Robert	1907	Broadwindsor	1989	
Rachel	1909	Dublin, Ireland	1995	

Henry Head died at Buckingham House on 1 July 1905 and his widow Hester at 66 Cadogan Place, London on 6 December 1907. Michael Norman takes up the story of the Head and Pinney families:

It has been understood that Henry Head (1834-1905) leased Buckingham from Squire Bridger in 1889, when the latter moved with his new wife to Adur Lodge. However, the Heads may have arrived in Shoreham earlier; had they perhaps previously leased another property from the Bridgers such as Little Buckingham? In an early photo, his daughter Hester (1875-1958), is with the Vicar and folk of Old Shoreham outside the Church door, and she looks to be about ten or twelve - and is clearly very much part of the party - and three of the Head boys, Francis, Christopher and John, attended Lancing College from 1882 to 1889.

Hester was a remarkable personality and was remembered locally long after she had married a young army officer at Old Shoreham in 1900 and moved away. Major Reginald John Pinney (1863-1943) came from a distinguished family, and he rose to become Major General Sir Reginald Pinney KCB, promoted on the battlefield in the First World War and having also been knighted. Five of his children composed a memoir of him. The eldest of these, Hester (1901-1982) and Bernard (1903-1941) are shown in a photo as toddlers in front of the ilexes just to the North of the front door of Buckingham House, about 1905, and also in a photo with their grandfather by then in a wheeled chair. Later that year Henry Head died, and the family quit Buckingham. His wife, also Hester, died two years later.

While they were in Shoreham they rather filled the role of local gentry in a most imaginative and generous way, organising events and throwing open the Park for local functions. One gets the impression that daughter Hester took a leading part, coaxing her family and servants into all manner of activities. We see her at the helm of her father's new sloop just collected from Stow's Yard, and in 1898 as captain of her ladies' hockey team on Southwick Green. We are fortunate that Lady Pinney (Hester) in her last year tried to make sure that the "**Buckingham Book**" - a photographic family record of the happy times at Buckingham - found its way back to Shoreham. It is most interesting picture of days that are now sadly almost forgotten.

Henry Head J.P. was in Insurance with his own company at Lloyds. In the "**Buckingham Book**" is a

press cutting with fullsome tribute to him after 50 years in business. The family also owned the London department store D.H. Evans, and there are many photos of the Evans girls and staff on trips to Buckingham. In July 1897 Henry Head organised the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, culminating in varied entertainments in the Park and probably one of the very earliest film shows. Other photos show RTYC "Bulldog" the Head's small steamer, one of it entering the Canal at Southwick in 1899, and a new car being unshipped at Kingston Wharf, and later at Buckingham, probably the first car in the Town in 1904.

Hester eventually went to live at Racedown, outside Bridport in Dorset, and led a most active and useful life, counting Thomas Hardy amongst her friends. She continued to visit Shoreham, keeping in touch with local friends including the Guide Movement. There is a photo of her inspecting the guides outside the old Post-office in St. Nicolas Lane in 1939. Of her children, her eldest, also Hester (1901-82) became Lady Marsden-Smedley, married to the one-time Mayor of Chelsea (Sir Basil) and much involved with the Chelsea Flower Show. Rachel, a Doctor (1909-95) was rather different and an energetic supporter of manifold causes, Medicinal and Political, for which she became widely known.

Hester Pinney's eight brothers figure often in the **"Buckingham Book"** and indeed one or other of them must have taken some of the photos. The eldest son Henry (1861-1940) became a very famous neurologist, knighted and FRS. Hugh died in 1890 aged 26. Francis died shortly before his father, both at Buckingham, and there were suggestions that defective drainage* might have been to blame. Christopher, the fifth of the brothers older than Hester, was lost on the Titanic in 1912; Bernard, the baby of the family, was killed at Gallipoli in 1915, aged 39. Alban was an academic who lived at Lodge Hill, Watersfield, near Pulborough and was credited with discovering the Roman Villa nearby at Wiggonholt.

**Cause of death now known to be a brain tumour.*

Christopher Head was Mayor of Chelsea (1909-1911) and in addition to the memorial in St Nicolas Church, is commemorated in a painting at the Central Library, Hornton Street, Kensington and on a sundial in Cadogan Place Gardens, Sloane Street, London. In spite of Lady Hester Pinney's wish that her **"Buckingham Book"** should return to Shoreham, her daughter Lady Hester Marsden-Smedley, was reluctant to lose such a personal family record. Her solution was to tear it in half, giving the front portion to Michael Norman (for the Marlipins Museum) whilst keeping the back half. For some reason, it would appear that the front half was subsequently dismembered by the museum. Much later, Michael Norman eventually came to own the back half.

The Family of William Godson Little

William Godson Little was born at St Pancras (Regents Park) London in 1852, the son of William & Elizabeth Little née Godson. William Little was born at Eye, Northamptonshire c1817 and Elizabeth at Heckington, Lincolnshire c1825. They married in 1849 in the Sleaford district that includes Heckington. William Godson Little appears to have been their only child. He married Ada Warde Phillips on 15 March 1883 at St Jude's Church, South Kensington and they had one daughter Dorothy Elizabeth Little who was born at Conisbrough near Doncaster in 1884. She married Francis Stanley Lowe on 17 November 1908, also at St Jude's. Francis and Dorothy had two daughters, Annie Elizabeth (Betty) born on 16 December 1909 at Hove and Mary Ethel (Pansy) Lowe born on 14 April 1914 in the Steyning district. On the 1911 census Annie Elizabeth appears at Buckingham House with her grandparents aged 15 months whilst her parents were enumerated at their home: The Orchard, Lower Shiplake, Henley. Little's occupation is given as a director of a chemical works company. According to the recollections of Mr A.E. Patching recorded in the *Shoreham Herald* on 20 February 1958, page 8, the company manufactured sheep-dip. In the 1890s Little and his first cousin, Charles William Godson Little, (born 1866) jointly patented engine indicators, devices designed to measure the efficiency of steam engines. William Godson Little of Buckingham House, Shoreham, died at Shiplake on Thames, Henley on 11 July 1922 aged 70. His estate for Probate was valued at £167,710 12s 1d. His widow, Ada Warde Little of 26 The Drive, Hove died on 11 March 1935 aged 78 in the Steyning district. They were buried in the churchyard of St Andrew's, Heckington, Lincolnshire.

The Family of Ernest Redford Harrison

Ernest Redford Harrison was born in Bletchingley, Surrey in 1870, the son of Edward and Jane Harrison née Redford. Edward was born c1844 at Chipstead, Surrey and Jane c1844 at Ifield, Sussex. They married in 1864 in the Horsham district that then included Ifield. Ernest Redford Harrison appears to have been the fourth of eight children and on the 1871 census he appears aged 9 months with his family at Pendell Farm, Bletchingley. He married Elsie Mary Mabel Bertie-Clay on 11 June 1892 at St George's, Church, Bloomsbury. The marriage did not last and he remarried to Agnes Hill Buchanan on 19 June 1909 at St Dionis' Church, Parsons Green. He had children by both marriages. After selling Buckingham in 1930, Ernest Redford Harrison moved to Swindon Manor, Cheltenham and died on 6 March 1934 aged 63. Probate was granted to his widow Agnes Hill Harrison and his estate valued at £46,300 10s 5d.

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Leslie, Kim	2008	<i>Sussex -Tales of the Unexpected</i>	West Sussex County Council Chichester
Moore, George A.		Various dates, titles and publishers - as recorded in the main text	
Norman, Michael W.D.	1984 1989	<i>Walkabout Guide to Shoreham 1st & 2nd Editions</i>	Marlipins Museum Shoreham by Sea
Norman, Michael W.D.	1998	<i>Colvill Bridger in Aleppo: His Personal Letters Home to His Family in Shoreham, and in Sussex, and to Business Friends in London, During His Stay in Syria, 1754-1766</i>	<u>Not Published – Limited Copies to Various Archives</u> Shoreham by Sea
Norman, Michael W.D.	2001	<i>Biagio & John Biagio Rebecca A Sketch Towards a Biography</i>	<u>Not Published – Limited Copies to Various Archives</u> Shoreham by Sea
Norman, Michael W.D.	2003	<i>Colvill Bridger's Early Trading: His Letters Mainly from New Shoreham, Sussex, to Business Friends in Brittany, Guernsey, Paris and Cadiz, 1750-1751</i>	<u>Not Published – Limited Copies to Various Archives</u> Shoreham by Sea
Tait, David (Editor)	1994	<i>Memories of Shoreham</i>	The Shoreham Society Shoreham by Sea
Newspapers		Various dates, titles and publishers - as recorded in main text	

Titles highlighted in shaded boxes contain photographs of the old house and/or the old lodge.

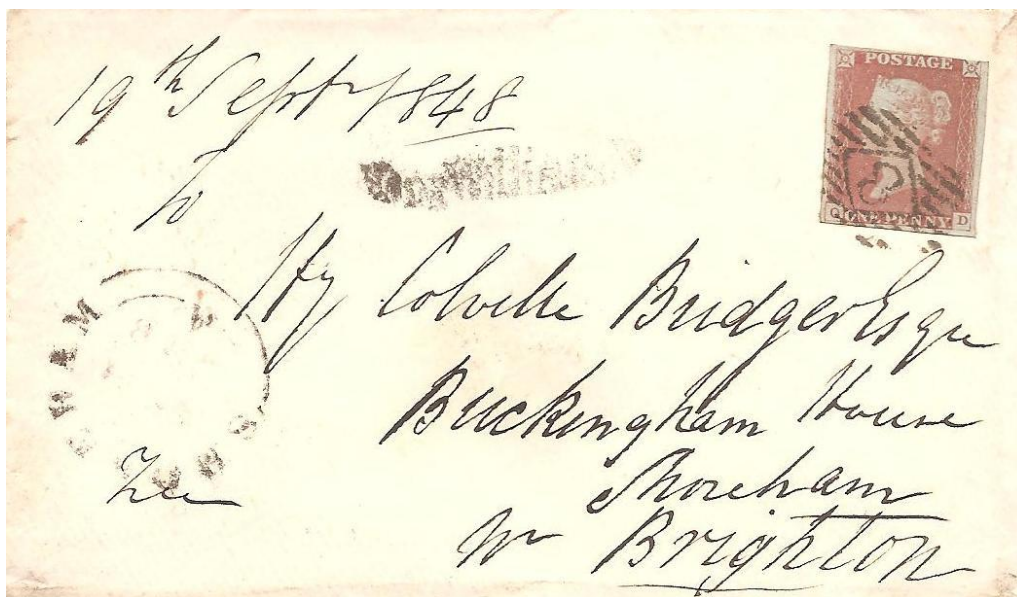
Titles marked with a # also have pictures of the new house and/or the new lodge.

Distribution – Summer 2011

Brighton History Centre, Brighton	1	<i>Fifteen copies printed</i>
British Library, London	2	
English Heritage – National Monument Archive, Swindon	1	
East Sussex County Council Record Office, Lewes	1	
Marlipins Museum, Shoreham by Sea	1	
Sussex Archaeological Society, Lewes	1	
West Sussex County Council Record Office, Chichester	1	
West Sussex County Council Library Service, Shoreham & Worthing	4	
Total	12	

Back Cover:

Envelope sent to Harry Colvill Bridger at Buckingham House, the most prestigious address in Shoreham.



The Buckingham Houses Old Shoreham

A Pictorial History Part 2



The Old Buckingham House from the southwest (**BB**). *Image originally from MN. Now courtesy of Neil Deville*



Postcard of the new Buckingham House posted on 24 June 1926.
The message reads, "Here's a good picture of the mansion".

The Buckingham Houses

Old Shoreham

Part 2

DEDICATION

**To the late Michael William David Norman
Shoreham author and local historian who died in 2013
and who wrote of the original 2011 edition of this book:**

"Peter, thank you indeed for a copy of the final version of your "Buckingham Houses" which has just arrived. You made a very much better job of it than I would have done, and it is a pleasure to read all the detail you so carefully garnered. Henry Cheal would have loved it." Michael - 3 September 2011.

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Harry Colvill Bridger and Martha & Minne Georgie Dawkins in 1921	Page 75
Little Buckingham	Page 76
The Old Buckingham House	Page 76
The New Buckingham House	Page 77

Introduction to Part 2

Following the production of my original book in 2011, now in effect Part 1, I have kept a lookout for new material and in June 2013 Michael Norman and I were discussing how to make the **"Buckingham Book"** of Lady Hester Pinney more available by combining the back half in his possession with what remained of the front half held at the Marlipins Museum, but apparently split up in to individual pictures. Michael believed that he could identify most of the material held at the Marlipins, but sadly, he died that August, and his will made no provision for his extensive collection of Shoreham-related material. Whilst some items found their way into the "Michael Norman Collection" now held at the West Sussex Record Office, it seems that most of his Buckingham material went to auction at Lewes in 2016, including the back half of the **"Buckingham Book"**. Happily, the book has now resurfaced and is being posted on the Shorehambysea.com website. So now seems an opportune time to make my book available there too and to add this Part 2 with some old material not used in 2011 and with the new material found.

Whether he would have approved or not, I have dedicated Part 2 to Michael as a thank you for his kind remarks recorded above. The thought that renowned Shoreham historian Henry Cheal would have loved my book seems the highest of accolades.

Rather than update and extend Part 1 which would require a huge amount of work to re-order and re-paginate everything, adding a Part 2 preserves the original intact. However, minor changes have been made to correct mostly typographical errors and to substitute better pictures where these have been obtained. Most of the monochrome pictures have also been changed to a standard sepia or grayscale as colour scans have produced some unusual tints! A summary of main changes follows all of which have been incorporated into the foregoing pages.

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Peter Kefford
Redhill, Surrey
Summer 2025

THE BUCKINGHAM HOUSES

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Updates & Corrections to the 2011 Printed Version		
Page	Published Text	Change or Correction
ii	Permissions	Some renewed for 2025
3	Sentence about purchase date of Buckingham by the Bridgers revised to 1766	
5	(Cheal, 1921, page 6)	Page 6 should be page 67
5 & 69	Hester Harriet	Harriet should be Harriott
27	Text to left of new house picture	Revised concerning 1913 dating
43	"opened to the public in 1932"	The year should be 1931
All	All references to St Nicholas church	Should read St Nicolas church
67-68	The Bridger Family	See corrections & new information below
69	Defective drainage*	*Cause of death now known to be a brain tumour.
70	Additional sentence concerning death of Ernest Redford Harrison	
Substitute Pictures		
Page	Description	Reason
12	Old Buckingham House 1954	Better copy
24	Old Lodge postcard	Better copy
31	Downs School internal view postcards	Two better copies: Landing/stairs and classroom
32	Buckingham House postcard	Original copy with text obtained. Date now 1920s

The Bridger Family - Colvill Bridger and the Family Wealth

Page 67 contains a brief biography of Colvill Bridger 1729-1797 which has been corrected there as follows: Colvill was the fifth, not sixth, child of Harry & Katherine Bridger and the second, not the third, to bear the name. The first was born in 1726 at Southwick and died in infancy in 1727. Katherine died in 1744. These changes have also been made to the Descendant Tree on pages 60-61.

Harry's second wife, Mary Smith died in 1760 and was buried at St Mary's, Shoreham and his third wife Ann Blaker died in 1769 and was buried at Kingston Buci. Harry died in 1766 and was buried with his first wife Katherine at Southwick. The origin of the name Colvill has also now been found.

Bridger Family Origins

The 17th century Bridgers originated in Godalming, Surrey. A George Bridger married a Dorothy Smalpece at Guildford in 1602 and one of their many children was a John Bridger baptised at Godalming in 1620. He and his wife Anne had several children at Godalming, including Richard c1648, Ann c1650 & George baptised there in 1658. No baptisms have been found for Richard and Anne, but the absence of these baptisms is overcome by the "London" wills of their father John in 1666 (DW/PR/5/1666/015) and their mother Anne in 1682 (DW/PC/5/1682/5) who both died at Godalming. The wills confirm that Anne, George & Richard (plus Dulcibella baptised in 1651 & Margaret baptised in 1653 at Godalming) were siblings.

George and his wife Elizabeth's son Harry Bridger was baptised at Horsham on 7 April 1698. Richard and his wife Katherine's daughter Katherine Bridger was born on 28 June 1697 at Godalming and baptised there on 4 July 1697. As Richard and George were brothers, this confirms that Harry and Katherine were first cousins. As recorded on page 67, Harry & Katherine married at Hove on 6 May 1719.

The Name Colvill

Returning to George and Richard Bridger, their sister Anne Bridger married Joshua Toft on 30 May 1669 at Godalming, and her daughter Elizabeth Toft was baptised there in 1670. As Elizabeth Tort [*sic*], on 14 April 1713 she married a John Colvill at Horsham, where he died in 1725. Elizabeth Colvill died in 1744 at Guildford and her PCC will (PROB11/733 f158) has references to her late uncle George Bridger and her cousins Richard (another son of George) & Harry. Also, Harry's wife Katherine (from whom she bought land) and their children Katherine & Colvill. She had properties in Godalming & Horsham, and bequeathed land "*in Southwick Green in or near the parish of Shoreham*" to her cousin Harry Bridger.

As Harry & Katherine Bridger named two sons Colvill so soon after John Colvill's death in 1725, it seems almost certain they named both boys in honour of their late uncle and so began a line of Colvills down to the death of Harry Colvill Bridger in 1929. The Colvill name survives in Colvill Avenue, Shoreham.

Harry Colvill Bridger and Martha & Minne Georgie Dawkins in 1921 (corrected from Georgia)

Page 68 records Harry Colvill's secret marriage and presumed daughter. The 1921 Census shows Harry at Adur Lodge, still claiming to be single, with his single sisters Florence & Dulcibella and half-brother Frank Bridger. He died in 1929. Martha Bridger and Minnie G Dawkins were at 57 Upper Abbey Road, Brighton, in 1921 with Martha shown as married and her daughter Minnie as single. As registered by Minnie, Martha Bridger, "Widow of Harry Bridger of Independent Means" died on 24 January 1932, aged 79. Mother and daughter were buried in the Brighton & Preston Cemetery in 1932 and 1941 respectively.

Little Buckingham

Although Little Buckingham only features in passing within this book, nevertheless this postcard gives a fuller view of the frontage than the one on page 18. It is unused without a message, stamp or postmark but is thought to have been taken in the 1920s. The Victorian extension is on the left and the original farmhouse on the right.



The Old Buckingham House

Quite possibly the earliest picture of the old house after it had been gutted and the windows blocked up; this picture is dated 20 September 1911 and confirms that these works had taken place by then. The church bazaar event would have been permitted by W.G. Little and may well have been hosted by him, although it is uncertain if he appears in the picture. He could be the tall gentleman in the centre with his wife Ada Warde Little beside him or else this could be a clergyman and his wife.



Event at the old Buckingham House 1911

Courtesy of Ian Newman



The "Ruins" under imminent threat of demolition - 15 July 1954

Photo by MN 1954

A picture taken by Michael Norman the same day as the one on page 12 when the house was threatened with demolition. There was not enough space to permit its inclusion before, so it is included now.

The New Buckingham House

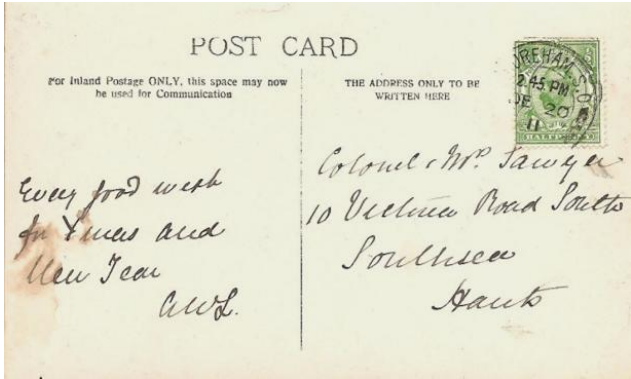
The most significant discovery since producing Part 1 in 2011 was the postcard below, which was posted at Shoreham on 20 December 1911.



The picture is of particular interest for three reasons: Firstly, it is the earliest known image of the house and shows that it was completed by the end of 1911. Secondly, it shows that the single-story stone bay on the southwest corner was a later addition, replacing the curved top window to the right of the main west

entrance. This may also call in to question the 1913 dating of the picture on page 27. In his penultimate e-mail to me dated 3 June 2013, Michael Norman said of this picture:

"It was clearly taken quite soon after completion of the house. The markers are, I think, for plantings. The debris on the terrace looks like paving ready to be laid. The alteration to the west front, by the duplicating of the stone bay feature, already on the north side of the entrance may not of course have been done by Little, but by Harrison. It is an expensive 'correction' to a new building".



Thirdly, the message on the back appears to have been written by Ada Warde Little (AWL), wife of William Godson Little who bought Buckingham and commissioned the building of the new house and lodge. The message reads:

"Every good wish for Xmas and New Year. AWL"

Perhaps all their 1911 Christmas cards showed off their newly built home in this way!

A History of the County of Sussex (1980, page 153) refers to "W.G. Little, who between 1909 and 1921 built a new house further north". We know that the house was completed by the end of 1911, so the 12-year timescale is a puzzle unless 1921 should read 1911. Alternatively, perhaps the change to the front of the house was delayed by WW1 and completed after it.

An article in the *Worthing Herald* dated 27 January 1923 pages 3 & 4 records the purchase of the house by Mr C.R. Harrison [*sic* – should be E.R. Harrison] and has a picture of the house with the additional stone bay on the southwest corner of the house, showing that the work must have been done in W.G. Little's time. The picture is too poor to reproduce but the article read as follows:

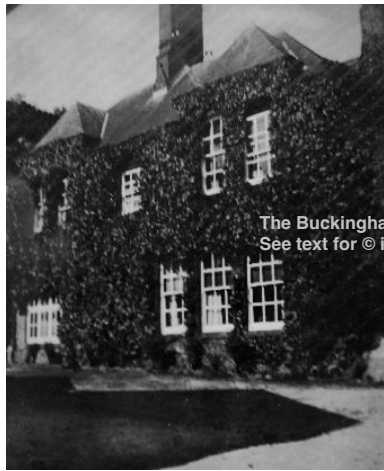
BUCKINGHAM HOUSE: SHOREHAM	Caption under the picture:
The mansion known as Buckingham House with its large and beautifully wooded park, has been acquired by Mr. C.R. Harrison of Hove, who has now taken up residence. The picturesque ruins of the old house form an artistic asset to this valuable and interesting property.	Buckingham House, Shoreham, a beautiful mansion built by the late Mr. W.G. Little has been bought by Mr C.R. Harrison of Hove
	C.R should be E.R.

George Hubbard – Chauffeur to Ernest Redford Harrison

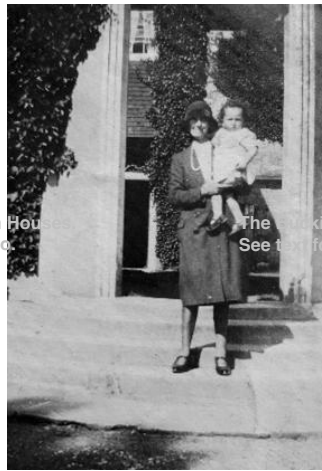
Much has been said about the owners of the houses, so here is one of the many people who worked for them. On page 7 there is a reference to George Hubbard, Ernest Redford Harrison's chauffeur who lived in the remains of the old house, known as The Retreat and whose family knew both houses. His son Lawrence William Hubbard married Christabel Kathleen Rome who appears in some of the following pictures with their daughter Bertha Patricia Hubbard (Pat) who was born in the old Buckingham House in 1927. The pictures, which include views of the old and new Buckingham Houses, were kindly supplied by George's great-granddaughters Jacqui Hubbard and Lynne Allard. Pat was Lynne's mother and Jacqui's aunt.



The south-facing rooms of the new house were obviously sun-traps necessitating the use of blinds. Looking out across the lawns the windows had splendid views of Shoreham and the sea. c1927



Left: The western service wing covered in ivy



Right: Christabel & Bertha Patricia Hubbard on the steps of the old house with the Retreat in the background c1929



Bertha Patricia Hubbard with dogs, Pip and Jessie on the steps of the old house. 20 March 1931



Left: Christabel & Bertha Patricia Hubbard c1932 by the service wing. Right: Under a canopy, in front of a garage where George may have kept and washed the car. The location is uncertain, but the building may have become the twin gabled cottage in the bottom left-hand corner of the picture on page 46 which had a rectangular area of blue/grey “stable block” brick paving in front of it, suitable for drainage.



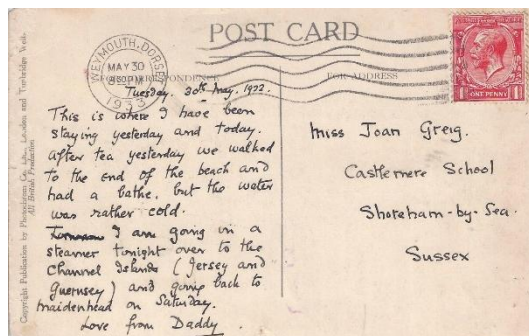
George Hubbard in his car outside the front entrance to the new house. 4th March 1927.



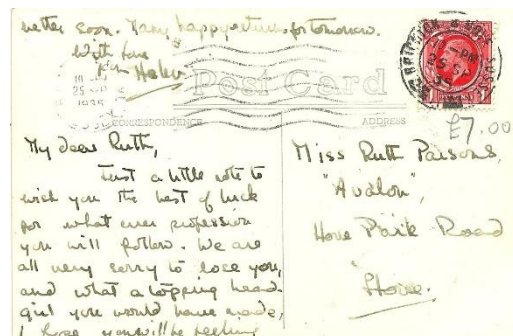
George holding his granddaughter, Bertha Patricia Hubbard on the gardener's lawnmower c1929. The man on the right is believed to be Ernest Redford Harrison. The gardener on the left could be Douglas Reginald Paris who also lived in the old house and is known from the 1921 census to be a gardener. Quite a contrast to the lawn being mown by the author c1961 at 12 Ravensbourne Avenue on page 1!

After the departure of E.R. Harrison in 1930 the new house was a school until 1939, changing its name from Grangewood to Castlemere and then to the Downs School. The postcard on the left below was sent to a pupil at Castlemere School. The front appears to be of Weymouth so is not reproduced here.

In another example of a postcard of the new house being sent from it, the one on the right below was sent to Miss Ruth Parsons, a former pupil who might have become a “topping head girl”! The front of the card has the landing and stairs of the Downs School reproduced at a larger size than on page 31 to show the detail better. Other pictures from page 31 also reproduced in a larger size for the same reason.



Postcard to Castlemere School – 30 May 1933

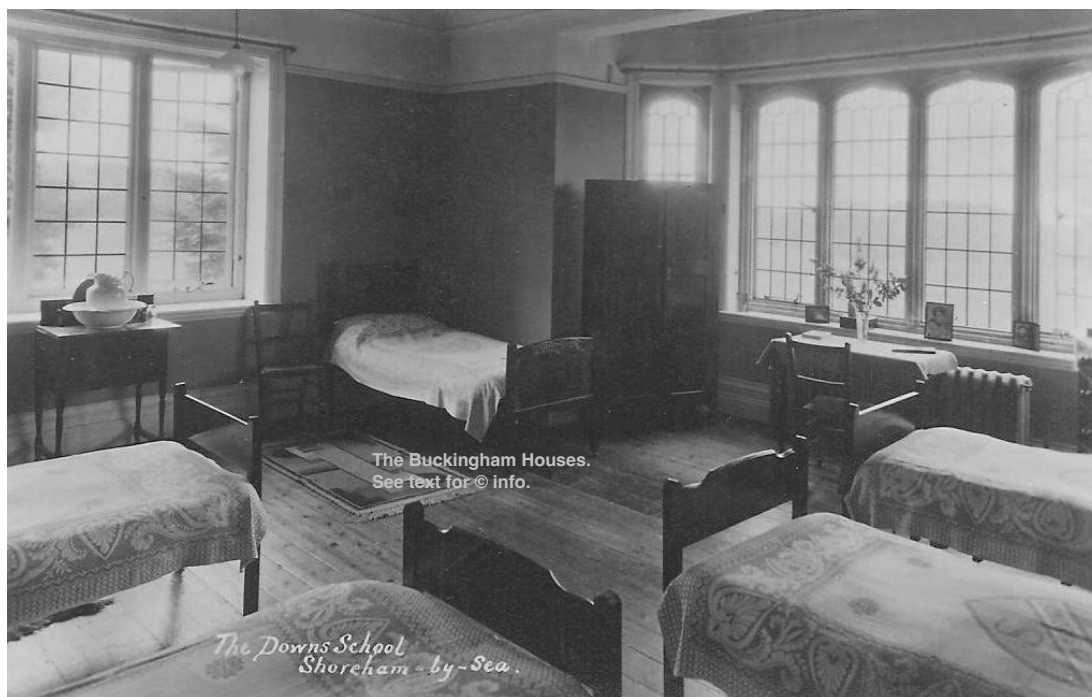


Postcard from Downs School – 25 September 1935



Landing and top of main staircase

Picture and message side courtesy of Ian Newman



Bedroom on first floor of southeast corner



Classroom on ground floor of southwest corner

Courtesy of Neil Deville

During the 1948/49 conversion, the bay window area at the end containing the piano was partitioned off to form a bathroom for the babies and the rest became a Babies Room. See Room 1 of the ground floor plan on page 54 and the picture on page 82.



Main staircase from the lounge

It is hoped that a better copy of the downstairs lounge and staircase can replace the small image on page 31 and the larger version here, but this blurry image will have to suffice until such a copy may be found. It is also hoped that any other postcards from the Downs School set can be obtained and included in due course.

By the time of the 1939 Register compiled in the September soon after the outbreak of WW2 the name had reverted to Buckingham House and was the HQ of the 113th Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery. An article in the *Sussex Express & County Herald* dated 6 October 1944 reported that the regiment had been formed at Buckingham House in January 1939, presumably displacing the school several months before the start of the war.

A River Runs Through our Town – Film by Paul Plumb

The late Paul Plumb was contacted in 2010 in the hope that one of his films might have included one or both Buckingham Houses. He replied that neither had featured although there were some views of the park. It has since been found that the views of the park in the film “*A River Runs Through our Town*” have two brief glimpses of the eastern side of the new house. Prior to this, Michael Norman’s photo on page 48 was the only known view of the east elevation. The film is available via the Screen Archive South East of the University of Brighton. A link to the film is here: <https://screenarchive.brighton.ac.uk/detail/3410/>

The first glimpse is between 24:19 to 24:24 and shows the house in the background to a winter football match. There were no leaves on the trees to obscure the eastern elevation but unfortunately, the footage is rather blurry, and it is not possible to get a good clear still frame. The second is at 25:17 to 25:20 in the background to a summer sheep dog trial. The trees are in full leaf so obscuring the eastern elevation except for the roof and chimneys and slight glimpses of walls and windows. Although the Archive dates the film to 1962, these clips must be earlier from (say) 1961 as the house had gone by 1962.

The Last Years as a Children’s Home

Emma Bolland kindly supplied these pictures, copied from originals belonging to the late Brenda Craddock, one of the children’s nurses who worked at the new house in its final years as a Children’s Home.



Babies Room – former classroom



Dining room or playroom?

As previously mentioned the plan on page 54 shows Room 1 as a Babies Room and the picture on the left is almost certainly the same space as the classroom in the picture on pages 31 and 81. The room on the right may be a view of the dining room as the children are eating (Room 4 on the plan on page 54) but it seems a bit too small, so could be the smaller playroom (Room 3 on the plan).



A fine view of the west and south elevations of the house c1960 *Pictures courtesy of Emma Bolland*

Sadly, not long after this picture was taken the house demolished. Any further photos of the new house and the lost service wing of the old house (including demolition) would be gratefully received.

With all the pictures of the old house when it was intact and of the new house before its demolition being in grayscale or sepia, Part 2 concludes with a colouration of each to give an approximation of what they looked like in colour during their heyday. The best colour references are of course the remaining walls of the old house and the new house lodge in Upper Shoreham Road.



The Old Buckingham House - South & East Elevations c1905

Courtesy of Marlipins Museum PP/SHORM/94.2593.10a

Colouration courtesy of Paul Osborne



The new Buckingham House c1913, although could be nearer c1920 (Hill, 1996, Picture 99)

With acknowledgement to West Sussex Record Office PH 18594

Colouration courtesy of Paul Osborne

