

AN EARLY HISTORY OF PEMBURY GRANGE 1869-1935

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Date; February 2,2012

OVERVIEW (insert 'Pembury Grange Sandown Park 2002 by Dr Ray Kawkins)

This article concentrates on the history of the Pembury Grange mansion in Tunbridge Wells from the time it was constructed in 1869 for Neville Ward, who was the first occupant of the residence until the end of 1935 when it was occupied by Joseph Horatio Love. This tudor style residence was designed by architect George Dewey (1820-1886) and was listed as a Grade II building of architectural importance by British Heritage on May 25, 1983. It has continued to remain in residential use up to 2012.

The building is located off Sandown Park on a small road called Pembury Grange and can be seen today with a small number of other attractive homes in a park like setting on nicely landscaped grounds.

It has been occupied throughout the period of 1869 to 1935 by the rich and famous and has been well maintained and remains, at least on the exterior, much the same as it looked when first constructed. British heritage described the residence this way. "Built for Neville Ward whose father laid out the Calverley Estate. A large asymmetrical house Tudor Style, 2 stys and attics. Front elevation has a ground floor of red brick with black diaper brick pattern. Four gables with decorative bargeboards. Upper floors are tile hung on half timbered rough cast on brick with diaper pattern, 5 altered windows. Terracotta date plaque. Wooden porch with covered cornice supported on six piers. First sty red brick diaper patterned. Kitchen wing to left with protruding half-conical bread oven. Tiled roof with clustered chimney stacks. Rear elevation included a one storey service wing masked by a red brick wall on the garden side incorporating a recessed garden seat. Interior has fittings of the period, a wooden staircase with turned balusters, later C19 wooden fireplace with half columns and tiled surrounds, some dado paneling and eight panelled doors."

Shown above is a photograph of Pembury Grange in Sandown Park by Dr Ray Hawkins, taken in 2002.

THE WARD FAMILY 1869-1882

As was the case with all of the land in this area, it formed part of the 1,000 acre Calverley Estates which John Ward intended to use for the creation of a new town at the top of Mount Pleasant hill to rival the old village centered on the Pantilles. As anyone familiar with the history of Tunbridge Wells will recall, John Ward, the land developer, and Decimus Burton (1800-1884), the architect, together did much to transform the area into what it is today.

Those who read my article about the history of Dunorlan Park and its initial occupancy by Henry Reed, circa 1872, will know that it too was situated on land originally owned by John Ward. The Sherwood estate, first occupied by John Guy, and located just up the road from Dunorlan was also constructed on land owned by the Ward family. By the time the Sherwood estate was created, circa 1867, John Ward of Holwood and Calverley Park, born about 1780, had passed away and his land holdings in the area were inherited by his two sons Arthur Wesley Ward (1813-1878) and Neville Ward (1817-1872). In 1847 Neville Ward was living in Tunbridge Wells at #13 Calverley Park. In 1861 the two brothers were living together with their wives and children at Taplow House in the parish of Taplow, county of Buckinghamshire along with 3 visitors and 20 servants. Those listed in the census of the Nevill Ward family are given as his wife Anna Louisa, born 1818 Farleigh Arke, Somerset; his son Henry Houlton, age 15; daughters Clara

Houlton, age 10 and Grace Houlton, age 7. Also present is his son Frederic, age 4. Those listed in Arthur Ward's family are his wife Catherine, age 45 and no children. Neville Ward was married twice for there is also a record of him being married to Florence Louisa Houlton (1810-1871) which is correct since the middle names given to the Neville Ward family all have 'Houlton' as their middle name. His wife Anna recorded in the 1861 census was Neville Ward's second wife and there is no record of Neville and Anna having any children together.

Many other mansions built along Pembury Road were built on former Ward family land. This too was the case with the land upon which Pembury Grange was constructed in 1869 and when Neville Ward took up residence there that year he was already 52 years of age and ready for a nice quiet life during his retirement.

In the 1871 census Neville Ward was living at #19 Gloucester Square, Paddington, London. He had been born 1817 at Tooting, Surrey and at the time of the census his occupation was "magistrate and land owner". With him in the household was his son Ellis Houlton Ward, born April 1840 in Tunbridge Wells. Neville's three daughters Flora Houlton (1841-1901), age 30; Clara Houlton, age 20 and Grace Houlton, age 17, were also in the household and assisted in their occupancy by fourteen servants. Ellis Houlton Ward at this time was a Captain in the 60th Royal Rifles. Neville Ward was married in the first quarter of 1839 at Bath. His wife was Louisa Houlton (1810-1871).

In 1872 Neville Ward passed away. Probate records give the following; "Neville Ward late of Calverley Grange, Tunbridge Wells died November 25, 1872 at Calverley Grange". He left an estate of under 14,000 pounds to his brother Arthur Wesley Ward "of Calverley, Tunbridge Wells" and Rev. Henry Ward and his son Ellis Houlton Ward of Calverley Grange, Captain 60th Rifles. The reference here to them living at 'Calverley Grange' is at that time what the Ward family called their residence and is in fact the same residence as Pembury Grange. When Neville passed away his son Ellis Houlton Ward took up residence at Pembury Grange.

The first directory record of the Ward family living at Pembury Grange is that of 1874 where Captain Ellis Houlton Ward is given as the resident. In 1851 census Ellis is found as a pupil living in a boarding school at Southfield Park, Tunbridge Wells. After school Ellis pursued a military career with the 60th (The Kings Royal Rifle Corps). With them he was made an ensign April 23, 1858 and a Lieutenant November 20, 1861. Lieutenant Colonel Ward served as Aide de Camp to Colonel Viscount Melville during the campaign in the Punjab of 1848-49, including the second siege operation before Multan and the battle of Gookerat where he was awarded a medal with 2 clasps. He served with a detachment of the 60th during operations in the Euxofzie country in December 1849, and acted as staff officer to the European portion of the force sent against the Affraedies in the Kohat Pass in February 1850. There is also a military record of Ellis having been with the 28th Foot and having exchanged positions to be Lieutenant, vice with Henry Richard Treeve on July 8, 1862.

Ellis Ward sold Pembury Grange in 1881 to Robert Bruce Ronald and left Tunbridge Wells. On December 1, 1892 Ellis Houlton Ward married Emily Marion Emma Fox-Powys at Kensington St Paul. Emily's father was Leopold William Henry Fox-Powys. In December 1919 Ellis passed away. Probate records give the following; "Ellis Houlton Ward of 17 Circus, Bath, died December 5, 1919". He left an estate valued at over 20,000 pounds to his wife Emily Marion Emma Ward and to Frederock Houlton Ward, a retired Lieutenant-colonel in the British army and to Neville Leckonby Phipps, captain C.E.. Ellis's wife soon followed his passing when she died November 1, 1923. At the time of her death she like her husband was living at 17 Circus, Bath. She left an estate of over 24,000 pounds. Her executors were given in the probate records as Frederick Arthur Percy, solicitor, and Charles Nesbitt Ward, bank manager. The beneficiary of Ellis's estate Frederick Houlton Ward passed away April 21, 1936 at the Empire Nursing Home at Vincent square, Middlesex. He had been living at 92 Mount Street, Grosvenor square, Middlesex and left an estate valued at over 18,000 pounds. The executors of his estate were Neville Lackonby Phipps, a retired civil engineer, and David Luke Vernon Hanson, solicitor. The Phipps family were closely tied to the Ward family and Nevill Phipps was a beneficiary of the estates of both Ellis Houlton Ward and his wife.

ROBERT BRUCE RONALD 1881-1907

Robert Bruce Arnold's claim to fame and fortune came from his involment and invenstment in the sheep industry of Australia. He and his brother Byron Ronald as well as James MacBain were graziers of sheep in the Riverina in New South Wales. Operating as the company Gibbs, Ronald & Co. they had properties in the Riverina and their company was a stock and station agency based in Geelong, whose main activity was the consignment of wool to London for sale on a commission basis. In 1865 the partners sold their company to the Australian Mortgage Land and Finance Co. Ltd. On April 19, 1870 Richard Gibbs, Robert Bruce Ronald, Byron Lord Ronald, James McBain and William Thomas Young Burnette, under the name of Gibbs, Ronald and Burnett dissolved their partnership by mutual consent and William thomas Young Burnett was dropped from the partnership. The company at that time was carrying on business at Yalton and Peak Downs stations in Queensland. Included with this artilcle are two photographs of Roberts sheep grazing operation at the Peak Downs station. One photo shows the station itself and the other a flock of sheep at the station. In 1960 a book entitled "The Riverina People and Properties" was published with the author being a decendent of Robert's namely Robert Bruce Ronald.

Robert Bruce Ronald was born August 2, 1831 at Liverpool, Lancashire. His father was Robert Wilson Ronald, born December 15, 1800 at Tarbolton, Ayrshire, Scotland and his mother Isabel Grace Gardener, born 1810 in Scotland. Robert Bruce Ronald married Fanny Fowler (born July 7, 1836 at St. Botolph without Aldersgate, London, Middlesex) August 29, 1854 at Melbourne, Australia. She was the daughter of Edwin Fowler and an unknown mother. He and his wife had several children namely Robert Wilson, born October 30, 1855 at Geelong, Victoria; Fanny Bruce, born 1859 at Geelong; Isabel Amy, born 1858 at Geelong; Margaret Miller, born May 2, 1861 at Geelong; Arthur Edwin, born march 24, 1863 at Geelong; Angus Cameron, born May 6, 1865 at Victoria; Janet Gardner, born 1867 at Toorck, Victoria; Mary Louise, born 1869 at Toorck, Victoria; William Hamilton, born 1871 at Melbourne; Byron Gordon, born June 7, 1872 at Toorck, Victoria; Douglas, born May 11, 1874 at Toorck, Victoria; James McBain, Capt., born April 27, 1876 at Sutton-at-Home, Kent and Allan Bruce, born May 19, 1878 at Sutton-at-Home. From this long list of family, one can see that Robert was just as successful at raising children as he was sheep and with a family this size he certainly needed to make alot of money at it. Robert himself came from a large family being one of five children. His father Robert Wilson Ronald was a wool broker and was born December 15, 1800 at Tarbarton, Ayrshire, Scotland and he passed away December 1, 1887 at Lancashire. Robert Wilson Ronald had married Isabel Grace Gardiner (born 1810 Scotland) on November 24, 1827 at Liverpool, Lancaster. Grace died sometime after 1900 at Lancashire.

Directory and census records record the residency of the Ronald family at Pembury Grange throughout the period of 1881 to 1907. The 1881 census taken at "The Grange, Tunbridge Wells" records Robert, age 49 as a sheep farmer in New South Wales living with his wife Fanny and 7 of their children. Also in the household was one visitor and seven servants. The 1881 census taken at "Pembury Grange, Tunbridge Wells" records the presence of Robert, "living on own means", his wife and seven children plus 2 visitors and 10 servants. At Pembury Gardeners Cottage is living a gardener and his family. At Pembury Grange Stables was a cochman and his family. At Pembury Grange Lodge was living a another gardener and his family. In the 1901 census taken at "Sandown park Pembury Grange" Robert is a retired sheep farmetr living on his own means and residing at the home with his wife and children Isabella, age 42; Mary L, age 31 and Allen B, age 22. Also in the household was 7 servants. Their son Allen was a theological student.

In 1907 Robert Bruce Ronald passed away in Tunbridge Wells. Probate records give the following; "Robert Bruce Ronald of Pembury Grange near Tunbridge Wells died September 27, 1907". He left an estate valued at over 99,000 pounds. The executers of the estate were Clememt Usill Kingston and Henry Richard Brodie Lilley, gentlemen and George Slade, solicitor. Roberts wife Fanny had died in Tunbridge Wells in 1904. Probate records for her record the following; "Fanny Ronald of Pembury Grange, Tunbridge Wells (wife of Robert Bruce Ronald) died March 19, 1904". She left an estate of only 146 pounds, all of which went to her husband.

When Robert Bruce Ronald passed away in 1907 his executors sold Pembury Grange to Joseph Horatio Love.

JOSEPH HORATIO LOVE 1907-1935

Joseph Horatio Love came from a long line of colliery owners in Durham including his grandfather Joseph Love, born 1797 at North Tynemouth and his father Isaac Pearson Love, born 1828 at Lumley, Durham and it was from their efforts and his own as a colliery owner that the family fortune was built.

Joseph Horatio Love was born 1854 at St Leonards-on-sea, Sussex to Isaac Pearson Love and Sarah Stephenson. His mother was born 1823 at Sunderland, Durham. Sarah Stephenson's parents were William, born 1798 and Sarah, born 1799. Joseph's parents were married December 1850 at Durham. In the 1851 census his parents were living at Willington House in Willington, Durham with his grandparents Joseph and Sarah Love plus two servants. Joseph Horatio Love was born 1854 in Sussex and was the only child born to the couple for in December 1854 his father Isaac passed away at Durham.

In April 1857 Joseph's mother remarried, this time to Robinson Ferens (1818-1892) at Durham. In the 1861 census the family consisting of Robinson Ferens, a "coal owner", born 1821 at West Rainton, Durham, his mother Sarah and Sarah's mother Sarah Stephenson, age 62 and himself were residing at Willington, Durham. Living with them was a governess, a visitor and two other servants.

In the 1871 census taken at Willington Hall, Durham Joseph, who at this time is age 17 and an undergraduate student at the Edinburgh University, is living with his mother and stepfather.

On January 9, 1877 Joseph married Katherine Ashley (1859-1936) at St George Hanover square in London. Katherine had been born in London, Middlesex. At the time of the marriage Joseph was living at his estate called 'Hawkhills' in Easingwold, Yorkshire. Katherine Ashley was the youngest daughter of Henry Ashley, Esq, of Pimlico, London.

In the 1881 census Joseph and his wife are living at their 'High Hawkhills' estate in Easingwold, Yorkshire. They have no children at this time and Joseph's profession is given as "coal owner". While living in Easingwold both Joseph and Katherine made quite a name for themselves in the community as they took an active part in the local affairs and were very generous with both their time and money supporting various causes. Katherine for example had a great deal to do with the success of the Boy Scouts there. The Scouts were formed in Easingwold on April 21, 1921 and Katherine Love of Hawkhills was the chairman of the scouts association at that time.

In 1890 Joseph was a Justice of the Peace and is described in the history of Easingwold in 1890 as the largest landowner there "having bought up several estates here in recent years". In the same year Joseph was a magistrate for Easingwold and a director of the Easingwold Railway Company and was also an Ex-officio member of the Easingwold Union Assessment Committee.

The family's Hawkhills estate was an impressive one and today it is a national Emergency Planning College. In 1874 Captain JWM Walker, then owner of the estate, sold the land and buildings to Joseph Love (Joseph Horatio Love's grandfather and Durham coal mine owner) and to 20 year old Joseph Horatio Love. In January 1875 Joseph (senior) contracted gastric fever and shortly before he died he transferred his share of the estate solely to his grandson.

Joseph and Katherine had three children namely Ethel Horatio (1878-1944); Norah Evelyn (1881-1963) and Gladys May, born 1884. In 1890 the family was still residing at the Hawkhills estate and during that year they carried out extensive Victorian additions and improvements to the property, including electrification as well as landscaping. At this time Joseph bought areas of land and property building up a land holding of 2,283 acres, making him one of the principal landowners in the area.

Sadly the marriage between Joseph and Katherine eventually failed and in 1907 Joseph took up residence on his own in Tunbridge Wells and moved into Pembury Grange that year. His estate at

Hawkhills was kept in the family until the death of Katherine in 1936 at the age of 36 and the Hawkhill estate was sold at auction. Following Katherine's death her daughters Norah and Gladys transferred ownership of the old wooden hut to Easingwold Scouts. Katherine had donated the huts to the scouts after WW 1.

The website of the Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery gives the following account of a fountain donated to St John's Recreational Ground in Tunbridge Wells but they have incorrectly credited the donor as being "John H. Love" when it should be Joseph Horatio Love. Here is the museum's account of the fountain. "The Fountain-the park's most distinctive feature today provides a centrepiece in the lawn by the main entrance. This was given by local resident John H. Love, of Pembury Grange in Sandown Park. It was formally accepted by the Mayor in August 1919 and installed in the spring of 1920. Having lately ceased to function, this fine object narrowly escaped disposal in 1971 but was eventually restored structurally and to working order by the Borough Council in 1994".

In 1935 Joseph Horatio Love passed away. Probate records provide the following; "Joseph Horatio Love of Pembury Grange near Tunbridge Wells and of The Hawkhills, Easingwold, Yorkshire died May 24, 1935 at Pembury Grange". Probate was to Alfred Harold Goslett, architect and Henry Cecil Ferens, solicitor. Joseph left an estate valued at over 490,000 pounds.

RECENT HISTORY 1936-2012

Although it was not my intention to report on the history of Pembury Grange I have included here just a few notes that may prompt others to continue with further research the history of this building.

It is quite likely that when Joseph Horatio Love passed away in 1935 that Pembury Grange came into the ownership of Annie Funnell as a listing for her there can be found for at least the year of 1948 where a death notice and probate record is found for that year. The probate record gives the following; "Annie Funnell of Pembury Grange, Tunbridge Wells, spinster, died July 2, 1948 at the County Hospital, Pembury, Kent". Probate was to Albert Funnell, solicitors managing clerk. She left however an estate only valued at just over 137 pounds so I question her connection to Pembury Grange in Sandown Park and it is more likely the reference to Pembury Grange in the probate pertains to Pembury Grange in Pembury and not Sandown Park. There was and may still be an old people's home in Pembury called Pembury Grange in the 1960's and 1970's.

Three other directory listings related to Pembury Grange in Sandown Park are as follows; (1) 1981-I.G. Hammond, 2 Staff house (2) 1982-A.M. Bullion 1 Pembury Grange Cottage (3) 1982-W.E. Wisheart Pembury Grange, Sandown Park.

A review of Planning Authority applications from 1974 to 2011 turned up several references to Pembury Grange in Sandown Park but it is not always clear which building on what I will call Pembury Grange (road) the applications apply to. Sometime over the history of the Pembury Grange estate, a road was constructed into the grounds and bears the name of Pembury Grange. Upon this road can be found today several residences. One of which is the original "mansion". Some others are no doubt the lodges and cottage of the original estate that have been converted into single family homes and there is at least one building in this little residential community that contains three or four flats. In 1880 there was an application approved to change the use of a building to "residential and 7 detached dwellings in the grounds". In the same year there was an application to "change of use to private educational purposes", to which there were no objections. In 1880 there was an application to "change of use to a hotel", for which there were no objections. In 1882 an application was approved for "access road and services to existing and proposed new dwelling. This application was made by Sannon Properties Ltd of Uckfield. In 1982 an application was approved for "five detached houses on plots 1,3,4,5,6". Lastly in 1984 an application was approved for "listed building consent-double garage". This application, since it applies to a listed building was definitely for the Pembury Grange "mansion" built for Nevill Ward.

[SEE ARTICLE " ARCHITECT GEORGE DEVEY]