

NOBLE & SPLENDID

**Scandal, Honour and Duty:
the Families of Kimpton Hoo**



**By Peter Hale
For The Kimpton History Group**

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the Families of Kimpton Hoo**



Foreword

This book is intended as an overview of the fascinating families who lived at The Hoo - notably the Brands - and their worlds: social, artistic, political and economic, which are bound up with Britain's own history. It is in no way complete; there is much more to read and enjoy out there....

**Peter Hale
April 2008**

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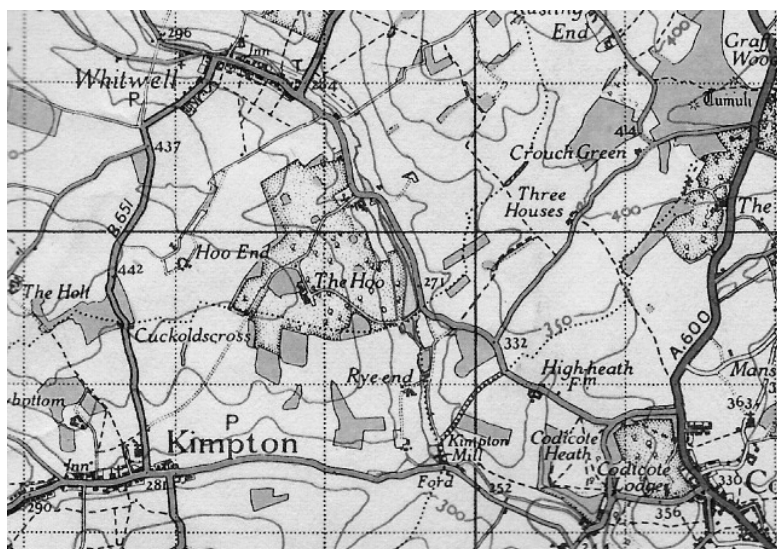
PART I

GREAT ESTATES: THE HOOS AND THE KEATES

1 The site of Kimpton Hoo

If you try to see anything of the site of the house usually called “Kimpton Hoo” from the village of Kimpton, you can’t. But the families who lived there, and there were only three since the date of the Norman Conquest, cast enormous influence over Kimpton, over large parts of neighbouring villages, over Hertfordshire, over neighbouring counties, and over the country and further afield. The third family, who lived there the longest, like many aristocratic, titled families, has had several names - Brand, Trevor, Dacre, Hampden. They were friends with Prime Ministers and with leading members of the Arts; one branch of the family was in effective control of the House of Commons, another of a major part of British banking. The wedding of a daughter in 1932 stopped the traffic in Trafalgar Square. They changed, at one time, the history of a colonial island.

You can see the hill called the Hoo from Kimpton - a large hedgeless field stretching slowly up from the corner of the village opposite the church, separated from it by a winding B road. In the distance can be seen some woods, a telecom mast, and a large, ugly barn. In fact neither the top of the Hoo nor the site of the house are in the same parish as Kimpton, nor even in mediaeval times in the same Hundred, the Saxon division of the county. Even the name is confusing; the formal name of the house was “The Hoo” while the name “Whitwell Hoo” has been given to the houses on the site.



The Hoo, situated in the triangle between Kimpton, Whitwell and Codicote

The Hoo is a spur of land; on the other side to Kimpton it runs down to the valley of the small river Mimram and the road which leads North to the village of Whitwell and South-East to Codicote. To the South the spur slopes down to the - usually dry - valley of the old River Kyme on which Kimpton stands and which joins the Mimram

at Kimpton Mill. At the North it joins a rolling range of hills running round the back of Kimpton and Northwards, to be lost in the undulating Hertfordshire countryside. While no higher than the surrounding hills, it commands a good view, so not surprisingly there is evidence of settlement for many centuries. English Heritage records the mediaeval Bulls Moat and in 1287 there is reference to a manor house there. Further along the spur, hidden away behind trees out of sight of both Kimpton and Whitwell, are the clearly old farmsteads of Hoo End Grange (once known as Leggats) and Hoo End Farm.

The Hoo is formally in the parish of St Paul's Walden; the site of the house that stood there until 1958 is about three hundred yards from the Kimpton parish boundary. Like Kimpton parish and most of the rest of the country, St Paul's Walden was parcelled out by the Normans after the Conquest into manors. Over the centuries these were subdivided, sold, transferred and broken up, but though today the boundaries of the original manors are often difficult to trace they retained their influence into the 20th Century.

St Paul's Walden was once known as Abbot's Walden after its original owner, the Abbot of St Albans, who had been granted it in 888. Its name changed in 1539 when it was confiscated by King Henry VIII and given to the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's in London. Its administration in mediaeval times was in the same "hundred" as St Albans, Cassio, unlike Kimpton and the surrounding parishes which belonged to Hitchin Hundred. It contained a manor called variously Hoo, Walden Hoo, Kimpton Hoo or Hoobury.

2 The first known Family: The de Hoos 1190-c.1650

Hoo manor was owned from at least 1190 by the family of de Hoo. The origins of this family may lie in Normandy, although some historians have claimed that they were Saxon or even Dutch. Hoo Manor may not have been very large, for to the North along the ridge Leggats and Hoo End were in another manor, while down the hill towards Whitwell the land fell into the Manor of Walden, which seems to have taken in Whitwell and the present St Paul's Waldenbury estate. Between the Hoo and Kimpton lay yet another manor, Hockenhangar.

In the twelfth century the de Hoos had had their ownership of The Hoo disputed - in 1194 one Eustace de Hoo is recorded as having had to "claim against Baldwin de Bolon" for the land. The name "Bolon" is connected with Boulogne; another way of spelling it is Boleyn, and the Boleyns and the de Hoos were to come together again in the 15th century when one Anne de Hoo married a Sir Geoffrey Boleyn. One of their descendents was Ann Boleyn, mother of Elizabeth I, and another, so amateur genealogists claim, Winston Churchill.

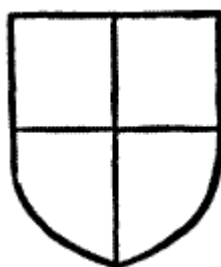
In the second or third decade of the thirteenth century William, Abbot of St. Albans, granted to Richard de Hoo a licence to have an oratory in his court "for the celebration of mass and the hours", provided the chaplain was to be obedient to the archdeacon of St. Albans, and to swear fealty to the church of St. Alban and the vicar of Walden, and no Baptisms, marriages or celebrations of the Eucharist were to be celebrated there except in cases of urgent necessity. For this licence Richard promised to give annually six candles for the high altar at St. Albans.

The de Hoos were substantial landowners. The various branches of the de Hoo family owned not only the Hoo manor, but also Luton Hoo, which gives rise to an interesting debate on the derivation of the name “Hoo”. Records also indicate that they owned “Hertford Hoo”, a place now lost (though there is a “Hoe Lane”).

For while it is true that the family was named Hoo, “hoo” is also the old English name for “high”, and both Kimpton and Luton Hoos are, indeed, high and prominent compared with their surroundings. However, yet another manor owned by the de Hoos was Hooland, in Wheathampstead and Harpenden. Part of this manor is now in Lamer Park, while another is the present Rothamsted. It is unlikely that the name was given because there were two separate “high” places, and though Lamer is on high ground, neither it nor Rothamsted are as prominent as our Hoo. So perhaps it is just coincidence that the de Hoos owned places called Hoo.

As well as places called “Hoo” the de Hoos also owned West Hyde, Offley, Stopsley and Maulden, and lands in Cambridgeshire and Sussex. In the reign of Edward I they also owned Knebworth. These lands were sometimes grants from the King, and sometimes acquired through marriage, the inheritance of a daughter passing automatically to her husband.

One Philip de Hoo extended their land by acquisitions in Walden and Kimpton in 1278–9. Ten years later one John de Hoo in 1289, having “defaulted” against Philip’s wife fought to recover possibly the same land which had been confiscated by King Edward I as a punishment. 1340 saw the purchase of a mill and land on the parish boundary – possibly Kimpton Mill or a mill at Rye End, as these formed and still form part of the Hoo Estate. The de Hoos also looked towards Kimpton for their ecclesiastical comfort, for in 1438 Edward (now bearing the Anglicised version of the surname, “atte Hoo”) left money for its parish church. Possibly the family found it more convenient to worship there than at their “proper” parish church at St Paul’s Walden (it was just down the hill, less than a mile away) although by the early 1500s they had also built a chapel at St Paul’s Walden church, possibly for their burial place. The Hoos (dropping the “atte” over time) further enlarged their landholdings in Kimpton in 1596 by purchasing the manor of Hockenhanger between the village and The Hoo.



The Hoo crest

Other relatives of our de Hoos is Sir Robertus de Hoo, a faithful knight of Edward I, who earned his title in 1306, and his son Sir Thomas de Hoo who fought for Edward III in the Battle of Crecy during the King’s attempts to (re)conquer France and is buried in St Albans Abbey along with his wife.

Disputes with trustees and marriage settlements seem to have featured in the Hoo family's life over the years, until in 1650, lacking male heirs, the 11 year old Susannah (sometimes referred to as Susan) Hoo inherited the estate. A few years later, Susannah married one Jonathan Keate, six years older than she.

3 Enter The Keates c.1650-1732

The seventeenth century was a period of economic uncertainty for farmers and thus for those who depended solely upon land for their income. However, it was also one of opportunity for merchants; it was during this time that trade became established throughout England. Trade became also a source of wealth, and when coupled with land ownership, it gave the English gentry and aristocracy the power and status that they were to enjoy for the next two hundred years.



The Keate crest

Jonathan Keate became a wealthy City wool-merchant and Alderman and set about spreading his wife's inheritance even further into Kimpton parish. In 1659 he bought the Manor of Bibb(e)sworth in the south (today's Bibbsworth Hall Farm). In 1663 he purchased the "advowson" of St Peter and St Paul's Church, which gave him the right to appoint the vicar, and two years later the adjoining Manors of Parkbury and Leggats - which covered most of the village and the land to the North.

In 1660 Charles II made Jonathan a baronet, that is a knight able to pass the title of "Sir" down through his sons. He was also MP for Hertfordshire between 1679 and 1681. (Among his duties was to serve on a committee to draw up "an humble Address [to] be presented to his Majesty, to desire his Majesty to appoint a Day for a solemn Fast and Humiliation to be kept throughout the Kingdom" following the discovery of "a Popish Plot" in Ireland in November 1680). Despite his influence over Kimpton Church, his own religious views were strongly non-conformist - in the 1680s his chaplain at The Hoo was Joseph Hussey, one of the founders of the Presbyterian movement, and another chaplain was John Peachy, again a prominent founder Presbyterian. For many years Whitwell was recorded as a stronghold of nonconformity (that is, principled rejection of the established Church of England); the vicar at St Paul's Walden (Whitwell's parish) was ejected for his beliefs in 1662.

Susannah and Jonathan had a son, Gilbert, in 1661 and a daughter, Mary, in 1665.

Susannah died in 1673 at the age of 34; Sir Jonathan married again, this time to another Susannah, Susannah Orlebar. She was the daughter of John Orlebar "an eminent citizen of London and a good family in the County of Bedford". This union

was, however childless (Susannah was four years older than him), so on Jonathan's death in 1700, the manor, and the title, passed to Gilbert. When the second Lady Keate died in 1719 at the age of 90, her executors set up the ornate monument to the family which still fills the South wall of the chancel of Kimpton church. (That is where the flowery description of her father was taken from. History records that John Orlebar was "discharged" as an Alderman of the City of London in 1663 and had to pay a "fine" of the not inconsiderable sum of £300 "and 20 marks". However, that was not as dishonourable as it sounds, what this meant in practice was that John was simply (though at great expense) buying himself out of the duties of an Alderman, presumably to avoid the time and expense that civic duties would have imposed.)

Gilbert was himself a merchant, living in Queenhithe, London, and wealthy enough to be caught by a special land tax raised there a few years earlier to finance King William III's foreign warfare. He died after only five years at the age of 46, and was succeeded by his son Sir Henry Hoo Keate, who sold the manor in 1732 to Margaret Brand, widow of one Thomas Brand.

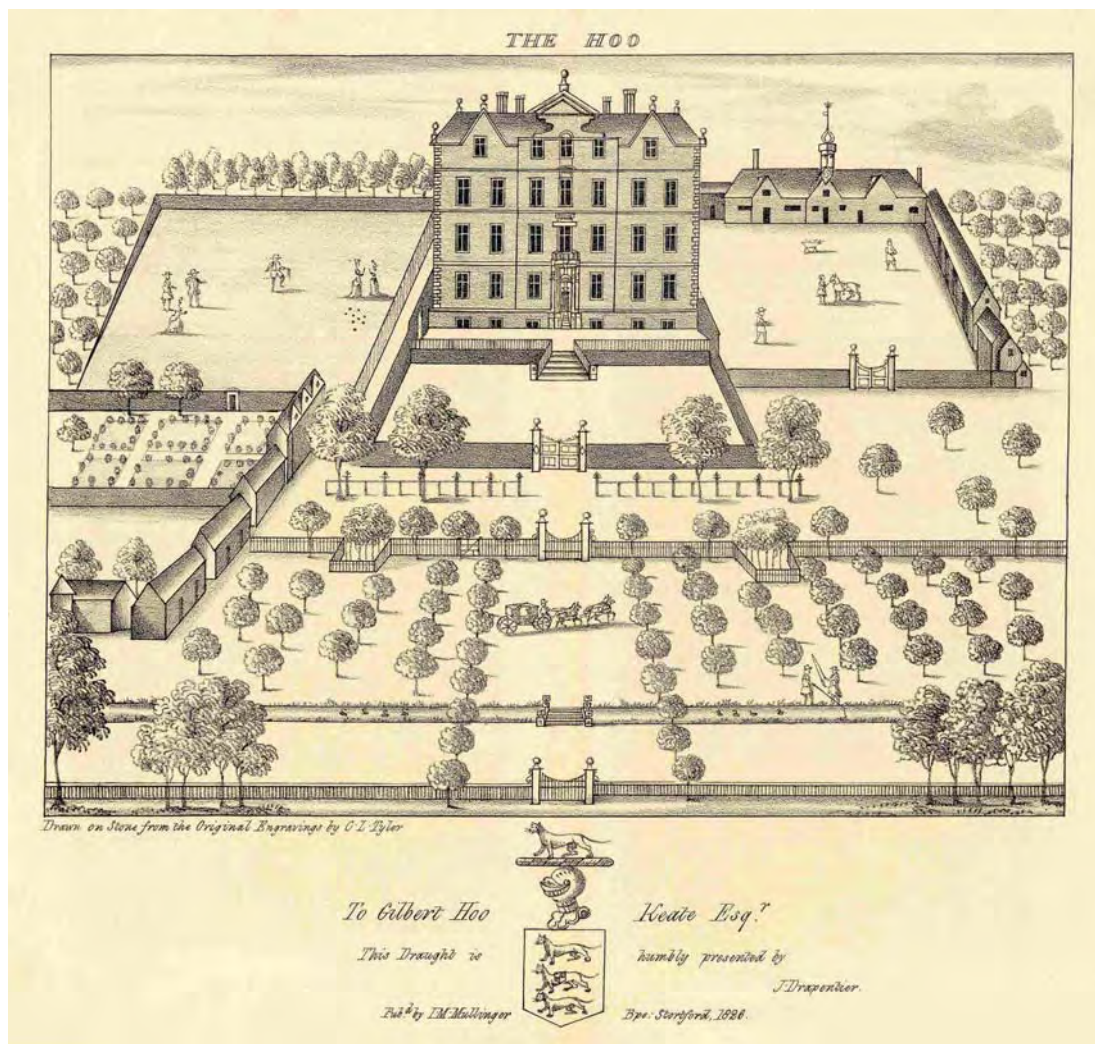
The Keates' story was nearly over: Henry died in 1744 "of a lingering illness," in Bath, unmarried. The title passed to his brother, William, who as a good second son had gone into the Church, and who also died unmarried, in 1757. The Keate baronetcy died with him.

4 Keate's House

Until 1958 there stood on the Hoo, though much altered, the house built by Jonathan in 1661 as a "fine seat of the family". It bore the letters J(Jonathan), K(eate), and S(usannah) over the porch, testimony for nearly three hundred years of the eighty year reign of the Keates. Other fine houses locally built in the same period were the original manor house at Stagenhoe, and the house at St Pauls Waldenbury (the estate of the family of the future Queen Mother).

The house that Keate built and Margaret Brand bought was, in estate agents' parlance, a stunning property - a square, rather attractive, three storey edifice, with gables in the roof, and a basement. It faced East, away from Kimpton, towards the River Mimram and the road from Whitwell to Codicote. Stables and other out buildings ran Northwards towards Whitwell, in the centre of which was a bell tower. Each side of the house had seven windows, which gives some idea of its size. Locals believed it had a hundred bedrooms. The basic shape of the house and its outbuildings remained throughout its history; what did change considerably, however, were its surroundings.

At the time Jonathan Keate built it, geometric, formal gardens were very much in fashion, and he had the wealth to follow society. Early prints of the house dated between 1700 and 1705 show the drive running straight up from the Codicote-Whitwell road, over the river, and through a series of gates directly to the front of the house. A secondary drive runs from the house diagonally away to the North, to meet the road further along, near where it crosses over the river at Hoo Farm. A range of buildings runs parallel, but at a distance, to the left (South) of the drive, while to the left of the house is a kind of recreational garden.



An engraving of the house in its original form, from the Whitwell-Codicote road. The River Mimram runs across the view just above the foot of the picture

Apart from a few trees suggesting the course of this drive nothing of this formal, seventeenth century fashion in gardens survives. Even the view up the hill is blocked by later woods. Interestingly, maps of the time show no evidence of the road down to Kimpton Church that today is the “back” entrance to the Hoo. When Keate built the house, did he turn his back on the village despite having purchased much of the parish and the advowson of the Church?

5 Public life and the ownership of a “Manor”

Did the de Hoos and Keates play much part in administration by the Crown of the County? The post of Justice of The Peace was the main agent of the Crown in dispensing the rule of law in the realm, and the post generally going - not of right, but depending upon good conduct - to the nobility and gentry; but there are no JPs called Hoo or Keate in the late 1500s or early 1600s. Was the loyalty of the de Hoos during the English Civil War, which began in 1642, to the Crown or to Parliament? Most of Hertfordshire backed Parliament in its struggle to curb the “divine right of kings” promulgated by James I (“the wisest fool in Christendom”) and his son, Charles I, and to limit the royal right to levy taxes. Was the loyalty of the Keates in the Glorious

Revolution of 1688 to the Catholic James II or to Protestant William and Mary, who gave England its Declaration of Rights and the beginnings of constitutional monarchy? As an MP and a merchant with more interest in the rule of law than in old privileges, it would have been to William and Mary. Did much of this mean anything to the men and women of Kimpton and Whitwell? Probably not. They may well not have heard of Shakespeare (1564-1616) either.

And what of Kimpton village during this time? In the centuries of ownership by the de Hoos and Keates, it had moved from a feudal society, where villagers had to give service to their lords and were required to pay part of their produce, to a society based on rents (for those who occupied land) and wages (for those who did not). Some of the buildings we still see today date from the end of the de Hoo period (early-mid 1600s) - the Hoo Estate farmhouses at Ramridge, Kimpton Hall, Bibbsworth and Tallents in broadly their current forms, for example - but the village would have had few solid buildings - only the church and some cottages whose original features may still linger behind later facades. Agriculture was improving in fits and starts, but we read that in the early 1600s Aldenham, about twenty miles away, was a place in which one in ten inhabitants needed charitable support from the parish - rising to one in four at times during the year. How much the villagers saw of the lords and ladies at the Hoo is debatable, but they would have seen the various improvements and additions being made to the Church, quite probably at the expense of the then Hoo owners.

Something to remember, however, is that ownership of a “Manor” did not necessarily mean that the land was entirely the de Hoos’, or the Keates’, or the Brands’ to exploit fully. Only the land which was tenanted would provide them with an income, for as long as any lease that they granted lasted. Some of the land, however, in the Manor was effectively owned under a title known as copyhold, so called because the title was evidenced by a copy of the Manorial deed. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, copyhold became today’s freehold title. Some quite large parts of the Manors owned by the Family at that time were subject to copyhold, including Leggats and Hoo End Farm, which were occupied for many years by the Wellingham family (the Brands bought these and other copyholds in Whitwell and Nup End at a later date). Much of Kimpton, however, was leasehold. The rights of the Lord of the Manor included the right to levy a fee in money or in kind on a transfer (“admission”) of a copyhold to a new occupier. Sometimes what was known as a “heriot”, or “best beast” was the customary payment when land changed hands, on a sale or under a legacy. The Lord of the Manor would also settle disputes - over rights to gather wood, etc - and court leets or meetings would be held. Over time, the custom died out as state and civil justice took over, but the court leet of Codicote was held at The George and Dragon until late in the 19th century and another until 1904 at Stagenhoe Manor (another Hoo name) in St Paul’s Walden.

Another important source of income for the holder of the manor were the tithes that all had to pay whether tenant or copyholder. Originally a tenth part of the output of the land, both crops and animals, they became mandatory in 900. Where a Lord of the Manor built a church the tithes were usually allocated to the clergyman (a “rector” received all the tithes, a “vicar” only the so-called “small tithes”: lambs, chicken, and minor crops). Over time cash payments were substituted, and they became so called Rent Charges, and finally by the early 20th century legislation abolished tithes through the payment of a lump sum to “redeem” them, i.e. buy them out.

PART II
THE BRANDS SETTLE IN:
MARGARET BRAND (nee Nichol)
Married Thomas Brand 1716
Purchased The Hoo 1732

THOMAS BRAND her son
Born c1718
Married Caroline Pierrepont 1749
Died 1770

1 The Brands - a well connected Family

Margaret Brand, nee Nichol, had married Thomas Brand in 1716, the eldest of four brothers from Essex whose family owned extensive lands around the Rodings, Ingatestone and Fyfield, and in the City of London. Thomas' father (also Thomas) had been a Master at Merton College, Oxford; Thomas's brother Timothy was Sheriff of Essex, and his brother John a goldsmith in the City. Other relatives were clergymen and non-conformist preachers. Margaret's family were City merchants.

Margaret's marriage lasted only two years, for by 1718 Thomas was dead. The Brands were clearly an educated and wealthy family, but why Margaret decided to move over to this part of Hertfordshire and to buy The Hoo is uncertain. However, it is probable that the Brands knew the Keates, since they were both merchant families of The City with an interest in landed estates. Margaret did not abandon her family estates in Essex, she continued to hold the Manorial Court at Berwick Berners in the Rodings, and her son Thomas later took that role even after he and his mother had moved to The Hoo.

Margaret's son Thomas, born around 1718, began his life in high society early by becoming friends at Eton with Horace Walpole. Horace was to become a celebrated writer and correspondent and proponent of the Gothic style in writing and design. He was the son of Sir Robert Walpole, considered to be the first real "Prime Minister" of Great Britain. Sir Robert enjoyed the confidence of both King George I and II and was believed to have successfully steered the country through the financial crisis following the South Sea Bubble in 1721 and subsequently to have saved the country from war. In 1740 Horace (then 23) and Thomas enjoyed the "Grand Tour" of the Continent, the original "gap year" during which the sons and daughters of wealthy families would spend many months travelling through France, Germany and Switzerland to Italy and Greece, admiring the sights, and acquiring "good taste" through a study of art and antiquities. A cabinet commissioned by Walpole in which to mount the souvenirs acquired on that trip is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Thomas commissioned a similar one for The Hoo. Another friend and travelling companion of Walpole's was Thomas Gray, the poet (Walpole's King Charles spaniel was snatched and eaten by a wolf on one trip with Gray).



Horace Walpole

Both Horace and Thomas became MPs. Thomas represented Shoreham, where he was elected in 1741, then Tavistock (1747), Gattton in Surrey (1754), and then Okehampton (1768) until his death in 1770.

Being an MP in those days was not, of course, the same as it is today. The King still had considerable influence, despite the “Glorious Revolution” in 1688 which had installed a more compliant William III on the throne together with his wife, Mary. The House of Lords remained the dominant house. There were no organised parties as such, more loose groupings of members with coinciding interests, mainly the Tories (landowners, supporters of the established monarchy and of the Church) and the Whigs (still gentry and aristocrats, but believers in trade and in the authority of Parliament, rather than of the monarch). MPs were wealthy individuals, and because the boundaries of parliamentary seats had long ceased to represent growing population centres, local landowners in rural areas had considerable patronage, especially as only householders could vote. By the standards of the time there is no reason to believe that Thomas’ behaviour was corrupt, but he would have “bribed” voters and entertained extensively to ensure his election. From the company Thomas and the Brands seem to have kept it is possible that the family was “Whig”; Keate we know did not support the established church, Robert Walpole had been a Whig and a businessman as well as a landowner. Later Brands were certainly Whigs. How Thomas Brand came to be chosen as candidate for the various places he represented is not always clear; although we do know that the other MP for Okehampton at the same time (there were often two for each constituency) was a nephew of Pitt the Elder, the Whig Prime Minister, and perhaps this was a reward for his support. Pitt’s descendents, the Lords Rivers, are mentioned in records as landowners in St Pauls Walden over the years; it is quite probable that the connection lasted through several generations – we find many such continuing links.

Horace on the other hand did not follow in his father’s footsteps, and was not influential in Parliament, but contented himself with a prodigious series of letters detailing the plots, intrigues and absurdities of Parliament. His attitude to the monarchy can be summed up in the famous letter he sent to Thomas in 1760 when he invited him to gape at the extravagant arrangements for the funeral of King George II

and the political shenanigans that followed: “Dear Brand: You love laughing; there is a king dead; can you help coming to town?”.

It is clear that Thomas moved in fairly exalted circles for in 1749 he married Lady Caroline (or Carolina) Pierrepont, daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, the 1st Duke of Kingston-upon-Hull. Pierrepont was not only a prominent politician, having served on the Commission for the Union with Scotland and as Lord Privy Seal (a senior member of the Cabinet), for whose services he added two titles to his inherited title of the 5th Earl of Kingston, but also a prominent figure in the fashionable society of his day. He was described as a “very fine gentleman, a lover of the ladies” but also “of good sense” and acting “entirely in the interests of his country”. He had political sympathies, like many in the Brand circle, which tended to the “liberal” or “Whig” (without, of course, resembling in any way the Liberal politics of the twentieth century.)



Caroline Pierrepont

Evelyn was descended from Robert Pierrepont, 1st Earl of Kingston, who had died in 1643, during the Civil War, in rather picturesque circumstances. Initially unwilling to choose between King and Parliament he had exclaimed, “When I take arms with the King against the Parliament, or with the Parliament against the King, let a cannon-ball divide me between them.” Eventually, however, he took the King’s side out of loyalty, and was captured in 1643 and put aboard a ship. Royalists pulled alongside and shelled the ship in an attempt to rescue him - Robert ran on deck to stop their firing, only to be hit and divided in two by a cannon ball.

Caroline was one of Evelyn’s five daughters (he had two marriages). Two of her half-sisters were the Countess of Mar and one of the great beauties of the age, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, famed also for her wit, writing and powerful tongue. Through her mother Caroline was connected to the Dukes of Devonshire, owners of substantial parts of London and whose family name was Cavendish. This link between the Brands and the Cavendishes was to continue for several generations.

Walpole described the marriage of Caroline and Thomas as “a match quite of esteem, she was rather older than he; but never were two people more completely, more reasonably happy. He is naturally all cheerfulness and laughter; she was very reserved, but quite sensible and faultless. They lived in the most perfect friendship I know.” They had a son, also called Thomas, and a two daughters who died very young, both called Caroline. Sadly, she died four years later of a rheumatic fever, and

Thomas became “as miserable a man as ever he was a cheerful one”. Thomas travelled again “to dissipate his grief”.

Despite Walpole’s description of Caroline, her half-sister Lady Mary wrote “her behaviour to me never gave me any love, nor her general conduct any esteem.” However, given that Caroline was about twenty years younger, that Mary may have shared her father’s disappointment on her birth that he still had no male heir, and given also the differences in temperament, perhaps the lack of sisterly love was no surprise.

2 Revamping The Hoo, and the Brands’ Lands Increase

On Caroline’s death Thomas inherited quite extensive estates in Nottingham and surrounding villages, although not without a legal challenge from his wife’s nephew over some of them. The Pierreponts were a colourful family: the claimant, the 2nd Duke, also named Evelyn, was “good, kind, but weak” and married a lady whose claim on his estate after his death led to her trial for bigamy. She was found guilty, even though her supposed first husband had given up his claim on her - not surprisingly, it was one of the great scandals of the period.

Thomas retained the Nottinghamshire lands until his death in 1770, but they were to provide his son with the means to live a more extravagant lifestyle.

Thomas seems to have adopted some of the fashionable views of his father-in-law. Fashions in house and garden design changed as much in those days as in ours. The formal style of The Hoo and especially its grounds as built and laid out by Keate were now, one hundred years later, very out of date. The English “landscape” garden was now in vogue - away with formal borders, geometrical lines and terraces, and in with smooth undulating sweeping lawns running all the way to the house, groups of trees, woods leading the eye to views of the countryside, and lakes, often serpentine lakes, the key to which was a deft “improvement of nature”.

The most celebrated gardener of the day was Lancelot “Capability” Brown. Influenced perhaps by his friend Horace Walpole’s description of Brown’s work at Warwick Castle: “The castle is enchanting; the view pleased me more than I can express” Thomas chose Capability Brown to transform The Hoo. All the formal features of Keate’s went. The meadows, fields, woods, and vistas that we can see today up at The Hoo are broadly Brown’s work. What we no longer see is the long sinuous lake that Brown created along the Mimram at the foot of the slope down from the house. In place of the direct access the new drive winds up the hill from a point close to where the road turns away from the river. It crossed the end of the lake by a bridge designed by equally fashionable architect Sir William Chambers. The architect of Somerset House, Chambers was the rival to the great - and more celebrated - Robert Adam in the development of an English style of neo-classicism, that is, the adoption and re-invention of the designs and balance of Greek and Roman architecture. Together they had been architects to King George III. Chambers’ sober blend of classicism made a particularly harmonious blend with Brown’s recreation of nature.



The Hoo as remodelled

As well as the ornate bridge over the lake, very recently restored, Chambers remodelled the house. He reclad it, reshaped the roof, seems to have closed in the basement, and moved the entrance to the South, strangely at right angles to the arrival point of the drive. A courtyard in the centre of the house no longer shows on maps of the time. In addition, he built a fine coach house extending the line of outbuildings to the North, which he also remodelled. Along with the bridge, this coach house is one of the few links to the present day, along with an ice-house, hidden among trees halfway down the hill to the lake, in which slabs of ice were kept underground, to be dug out for use in the kitchen. (Photographs of the bridge and coach house appear later in this book, of the ice house all that can be seen is a dank hole surrounded by old bricks and a broken concrete cover.) To facilitate access to Kimpton, a new drive was built in that direction, running not, however, along the line of the present one directly towards Kimpton Church, but more to the South West, meeting Kimpton Mill Lane (now Codicote Bottom) just East of the junction with today's Ballslough Hill.

Thomas's properties were not confined to his inherited estates, he also, in 1749, bought a house in one of the most fashionable squares in London, St James's, no. 22, near the corner of Pall Mall. The house, built in around 1672 when the square was first developed (and for some years from 1675 occupied by Charles II's mistress) is now the site of the Army and Navy Club. Among Thomas's neighbours would have been Prime Minister William Pitt the Elder, across the square at Chatham House, no.10.

In the years between 1749 and his death in 1770 the estates of the Brands expanded considerably. In 1756 Bibbsworth Hall farm was added to the Kimpton lands outright (he already owned the Manor), in 1770 the Manor of Royston, together with the rights to the market dues, fair dues and tolls, together with The Priory, and the 372 acre Flint Farm and extensive lands in neighbouring parishes, including the Abbotsbury estate at Chishill. Further East, in Carlton in Cambridgeshire, some land, the beginnings of what was to be a large estate in that area, was also purchased, together with the Manorial rights and the "advowson" of the church.

Nearer to Kimpton, Thomas became a trustee of the new “turnpike” road at Lemsford Mill. Turnpikes were an attempt to improve the appalling road network of the time - stretches of key highways were paved, and paid for by tolls. Lemsford Mill was in time to become part of the Great North Road (later diverted several times, to leave Lemsford on little more than a by-way).



St James's Square in the 18th century

3 More Political Connections

The political life of the country became more radical during the 18th century as the growing inequalities of Parliament and the dominance of established landowners began to be questioned. The aristocracy were not entirely against this movement, they saw that the mood of the country would not support their privileges for ever in the face of economic difficulties. However, many feared that all the basic underpinnings of established order might be swept away. Parliamentarians such as John Wilkes in the mid 1700s actively fought in the Commons for reform. Ideals of liberty and justice, equal votes and proportional representation were also one of the springs of the American Revolution in 1776.

Thomas had a cousin on his father's side, also called Thomas Brand, who became a significant supporter of these ideals, and our Thomas (of The Hoo) would have been well aware of his activities. One of Cousin Thomas' circle was a remarkable publisher of libertarian tracts called Thomas Hollis, a giant of a man who was an active supporter of the then new Harvard College who dedicated his life to the cause (but who was nevertheless described by Walpole as a “simple soul”). Dying unmarried in 1774, Hollis left his lands to (Cousin) Thomas, who in recognition of his influence changed his name to Thomas Brand Hollis. As well as Wilkes, Brand Hollis knew free-thinking philosophers such as Thomas Paine, whose book supporting the ideals of the French Revolution, “The Rights of Man”, he helped publish in 1791 under threat of a charge of treason. Paine is alleged to have entrusted him with the key to the Bastille, the symbol of the overthrow of the French monarchy, to give to George Washington. Brand Hollis came to know and entertain the founders of the American Revolution such as John Adams (the Second US President), Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin - one source credits him with coining the name of the new country “The United States of America”. Many of Brand Hollis' principles, such as votes for all, were to be adopted by The Chartist movement in their, unsuccessful, attempts to gain universal suffrage early the following century.

Although Brand Hollis and Thomas Brand were born around the same time, Brand Hollis lived much longer - at the time of the publication of *The Rights of Man* he was in his sixties, while one of his fellow conspirators at the time was the 35 year old political philosopher and novelist William Godwin, the husband of proto-feminist Mary Wollstonecraft. Mary was the mother of Mary Shelley, the author of "Frankenstein", said to have been inspired by a Gothic novel of Walpole's, and wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, the poet, addict and romantic. Literary connections as well as political and aristocratic ones abound in the next-but-one generation at The Hoo, too.

On Thomas's death in 1770 the Hoo and manors passed to his son, Thomas, at least the fourth generation of eldest sons to bear that name. Continuity of names was (and is) important in establishing a sense of family history. This Thomas, though he was not to see it, brought the Brand family the one thing that even his father's marriage to an Earl's daughter could not achieve, an aristocratic title.

PART III
THE BRANDS BECOME THE DACRES:
THOMAS BRAND

Born c1756

Married Gertrude Roper 1771

Died 1794

GERTRUDE TREVOR ROPER, BARONESS DACRE

Born 1750

Inherited Dacre title from her brother 1794

Died 1819

1 A Title for the Brands - The Barony of Dacre

A year after his father's death, Thomas married. His bride was Gertrude Roper. Gertrude came from a long line of wealthy and titled descendants. It was their complicated lineage, coupled with an accident of fate and a peculiarity of history, which set the Brands many steps up the ladder of rank and status. For they inherited a title, Baron Dacre.



Gertrude Roper, later Baroness Dacre

Unlike more modern titles, the barony of Dacre was created by a “writ”, by which the King - in this case Edward II - summoned the recipient to serve in Parliament. Since Parliament in those days consisted only of noblemen, the recipient was thereby created a peer. Because of this means of creation the rules of succession are similar to

those of the Royal Family and the title can descend to a female “heir of the body” - that is, legitimate child of the incumbent. Several women in the family line bore the title “Baroness Dacre” “suo jure”, that is, in their own right, rather than being a Baroness simply because they were the wife of a Baron. Later noble titles are normally created by “letters patent” which usually lay down that they descend only to male heirs.

The Dacre barony dates back to 1321. Like many baronies of that era, it is named after the place the baron lived - in this case, Dacre in Cumberland, now Cumbria - and the family name is the same. The original 14th century Dacre Castle, a crenulated border tower, is still a family home.



The Dacre crest

The Barons Dacre have had a colourful history. In 1371 one Lord Dacre was imprisoned in the Tower on suspicion of having caused his brother's death. In 1458 one Anne, having inherited the title in her own right, found it given by King Henry VI to her husband, Richard Fiennes of Hurstmonceaux in Sussex when he was summoned to (the all male) Parliament. A dispute with her younger brother over the title led to the creation of a second Dacre Barony (known as Dacre of Gillesland or of the North).

The Wars of the Roses in the 1460s saw the two Dacre Baronies on opposing sides. When in 1460 Parliament decided to support the Duke of York as claimant to Henry IV's throne, Margaret of Anjou, Henry IV's Queen, determined to uphold the claim of their son Edward Prince of Wales.

Margaret raised the Lancastrian army in the North of England and hostilities began. After the Battle of St Albans, a mighty battle at Towton in Yorkshire took place on Palm Sunday 1461. The then Baron Dacre of the North fought alongside Margaret's and Henry's Lancastrian army against the Yorkist forces of the son of the Duke of York (also called Edward, and now proclaimed King). Removing his helmet to drink, Dacre was to be shot dead by a Yorkist archer, an event commemorated in a local rhyme: “The Lord of Dacres/ Was slayne in the North Acres.” The Lancastrians lost, and the Yorkist side triumphed; casualties numbered more than 20,000. Towton is said to be one of the bloodiest battles to have been fought on English soil.

Henry spent the remainder of his life as a prisoner of the new King Edward IV. But this turn of events left Baron Dacre of the South Richard Fiennes unscathed; he became Chamberlain to the victorious Edward IV's Queen Consort.

In 1513 a more successful Baron Dacre was on the winning (English) side at the Battle of Flodden Field, during the last great incursion of the Scots. The Scottish

King, James IV, upholding their Auld Alliance with the French, sought to divert Henry VIII from his battles against the French King. Baron Dacre's light horse cavalry played a significant role and are commemorated in a monumental panel by the Victorian artist Burne-Jones in Naworth, Cumberland, a house which once belonged to the Dacres. The battle cost James IV his life.

In the 1530s a young, handsome Fiennes descendant, Thomas, was in the jury at the trial of Henry VIII's wife Ann Boleyn (remember the de Hoo connection), attended the funeral of Jane Seymour, and was an attendant to Anne of Cleves. Unfortunately, according to the historians of Hurstmonceaux where he had his estates, he was also "weak and easily led", for he fell into "wild" company. One night, he and his friends were out hunting deer by moonlight (i.e. probably poaching) on the land of a neighbour, a most upright man. They came across his neighbour's gamekeeper, who bravely protected his master's property, and in doing so, died of his injuries. Despite his royal connections, he was found guilty of murder, and hanged at Tyburn in 1541 at the age of 24, together with the rest of the gang.

Catherine Gore, a Victorian novelist whose genre portrayed the "gentility and etiquette of high society" drew on the story in her novel "Dacre of the South". Gore romantically presents him as the victim of his neighbour's revenge, though this is apparently unlikely to be true.

The title was reinstated; the "other" Dacre title was officially revoked (or "attainted") in 1569 when no male heir survived (this title having been created by letters patent), but various descendants used the title, one being declared a traitor for supporting Mary Queen of Scots.

In turn the Fiennes male line died out. Anne, the widow of the last Fiennes Dacre left money to a charitable school that has become Emanuel School, South London: "I will and devise that myne executors shall cause to be erected and builte a meete and convenient house with rooms of habitation for twentie poor folkes, and twentie other poor children..." Anne, Lady Dacre wrote that one of the main aims of the Foundation was "for the bringing up of children in virtue and good and laudable arts so that they might better live in time to come by their honest labour".

The female line married into the Lennard family, one of whom was Thomas, who was created the fourth baron after Richard. He adopted the name of Barrett Lennard after inheriting estates in Norfolk, Essex, and Ireland.

Thomas Barrett Lennard's "Claim to fame" is that he was later declared "Earl of Sussex" for having married Anne Palmer (also known as Fitzroy), one of the illegitimate daughters of Charles II (by Barbara Villiers, Countess of Cleveland) when she was 12. Her dowry of £20,000 from the King was not, apparently, paid.

Thomas and Anne's marriage was stormy; she supported her father and was a Catholic, he was a Protestant and supported William III. She and her friends, including Nell Gwyn, were immortalised in poetry as "Strangers to good but bosom friends to ill, As boundless in their lusts as in their will".

Their daughter, also Anne, became Baroness Dacre. A woman of fashion and a great gambler, she sold off the Dacre lands in Cumbria and the estate of Chevening in Kent, which she had acquired through the Lennard family. Thomas, her son by her first marriage to another heir of the Lennard family, inherited the title. His only legitimate daughter, Barbara, died at the age of 9 in 1749. His wife, Anna Maria, subsequently looked after his two illegitimate offspring as though they were her own.

The Barrett Lennard family also owned extensive estates in County Monaghan, Ireland. Many - some would say most - English landowners in Ireland were absentee, looking to maximise income and careless of the condition of their tenants. There is some evidence that the Barrett Lennards were more inclined to charge reasonable rents, which had the by-product of improving the stability and prosperity, and hence loyalty, of the tenants. On the other hand, their agent did report that he had demanded a year's rent in advance of those tenants who had not supported his lordship's preferred candidate in an election.



*Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland,
Charles II's mistress and mother of Anne,
the wife of Thomas, Baron Dacre*

Anne married a second time. This was to John Roper, Lord Teynham, whose family had been ennobled by Charles II, who had awarded them with forfeited wealth. The family had also served Henry VIII. One of Anne and John Roper's children, Charles, married a certain Gertrude Trevor. In turn they had three children, Trevor Charles, Henry, and Gertrude.

On the death of Thomas Barrett Lennard, Anne's son by her first marriage, the Dacre title passed to Charles and Gertrude's first son, Trevor Charles. Because their second

son, Henry, had died in a duel, when Trevor Charles died without any children in 1794 the Dacre title passed to his sister, Gertrude Roper.

Interestingly, Thomas was also a friend of Horace Walpole and also employed Capability Brown in modelling his estate at Belhus in Essex that he had inherited from his father. Gertrude Roper may have met her future husband Thomas Brand through Walpole or Capability Brown.

Trevor Charles may have had no offspring but he was rewarded by a dearly devoted wife, Mary Fludyer. Mary was the daughter of merchants who were developing trade with the Caribbean. Her father, Thomas, was a knighted Lord Mayor of London. She inherited the family house at Lee, South London, then a fashionable rural retreat. After Trevor's death it is recorded that a "devout" Mary made a "daily pilgrimage to her dear lord's tomb in Lee churchyard. She usually rode there from Lee Place on a favourite pony, and wore a large drab beaver hat, and a woollen habit nearly trailing on the ground. At the foot of her lord's grave she was accustomed to kneel and pour forth a fervent prayer, beseeching the Creator again to join her in blissful union with her beloved husband in the realms above. At home she cherished her affection by placing his chair at the dinner-table as during his lifetime".

After fourteen years' widowhood, Mary, Lady Dacre died, in 1808, and was buried with her husband. It seems, however, that not all was well in the family, for Mary and Gertrude ended up in court in a bitter dispute over Trevor's will. It was unclear if wife or sister would inherit - Gertrude won in the early hearings, but the case appears to have been judged in Mary's favour just after her death. Mary seems to have kept the house, though it was sold after she died and the site is marked by streets named Dacre and Fludyer. One of these streets, Dacre Place, seems at one time to have become a particularly unpleasant slum. She also kept an estate in Wales which she bequeathed to a cousin of her husband. That cousin took the name Trevor-Roper and to this branch of the Trevor family belonged the controversial twentieth-century historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, who took the title Baron Dacre of Glanton when ennobled in 1979. The house, Plas Teg, near Wrexham, is reputed to be one of the most haunted houses in Britain.

Mary, lost in mourning in Lee, was forgotten - an obituary upon her death in 1808 actually names her Gertrude and calls her the wife of Thomas Brand. Clearly Gertrude (the Baroness) was the one in the public eye and not Mary (the Dowager Baroness).

2 Thomas the Commoner

Unfortunately for him, Thomas Brand died in May 1794, a few months before Gertrude inherited the Dacre title the following November. But he has gone down in history as "a very expensive and elegant Commoner, whose hospitality far exceeded his means". His death was marked by a long elegy in *The Times*, including such lines as "But Pity, pointing to one mourner's woes, Cries Spare the Source from which deepest anguish flows" and referred to his "cool contempt for fashion's tyrant sway" and noted that "the Poor thy Liberal Charities confess". However much the Poor may have benefited from his wealth, he did not spare his own lifestyle. He employed his father's architect William Chambers to improve their London house in St James's Square, but despite that, he subsequently moved to Leicester Square and finally to

Soho Square, occupying houses in areas progressively less fashionable. The Hoo underwent further work - the present drive up from opposite Kimpton Church was built, to replace the earlier lane that led up to the house from a point just East of the junction with Ballslough Hill, of which no trace can be seen today. He appears to have raised money by the sale of the Nottinghamshire lands that his father inherited through the Pierreponts. But he retained the various estates that the family had inherited throughout the years, in Essex, London and Cambridgeshire, as well as around Kimpton.

By the middle of the 18th century the Brands had also purchased a large part of the Manor of Codicote - a stretch of land across the Mimram adjoining Rustling End and running to Nup End near Old Knebworth and back Westwards to take in Codicote Bury, part of the High Street, Codicote Grange, down to the Mimram at Codicote Mill. On the Kimpton side of the river Mimram the Manor of Abbotshay up near Ayot St Peter was also theirs. They endowed Codicote Church, although the right to choose and appoint the Vicar was not theirs. They had also added to their land at Carlton in Cambridgeshire and become lords of the manor and extensive owners of land at neighbouring Bradley in Suffolk.

And Thomas kept up the tradition of travel; in 1783 he was reported to be in Switzerland, complaining about a lack of danger while climbing Mount Cenis in six or eight inches of snow, on mule back.

Thomas and Gertrude had three children, all sons. The eldest, Thomas, was born in 1774. We will refer to Thomas the son as Tim, the name he was known by in the family, to make it easier to distinguish him. A second son, born in 1775, survived only a month. Their third son, Henry Otway, was born in 1777.

Casting an eye around at the end of the 18th century, we see that Great Britain (not yet formally united with Ireland) was beginning to be the kind of parliamentary democracy that we have today. But it was one dominated by the aristocracy, with, in tow, the landed gentry, who, while they may have originally made their name in trade, had invested their wealth in land, the only stable, recognised form of wealth in those days. With land and wealth came status, and with status, power. We can see that in the blood of the Brands by now there flowed nobility and royalty as well as enterprise. They were Lords of the Manor, an increasingly ceremonial title, but more importantly, whether historical lords or not, it mattered that they were landlords over thousands of acres of England. They had remodelled The Hoo in the finest English style, like many of their neighbours. One had sat in Parliament. They were fashionable, they had a London house, they met and married into families from far afield. Because records are scarce for that era, we do not know what part they played in local affairs - though as we have seen one of the Thomases was a trustee of the Lemsford Turnpike. Looking down from The Hoo they may not have been particularly conscious of the state of the villages around them.

In the century to come, however, we see the Brands taking a real interest in the well-being of the people of Kimpton, while continuing to play a role in the affairs of the country. The century would bring scandal, artistic success, a happy family life, and yet more land.

PART IV

ART AND LIFE:

THOMAS (TIM) BRAND, 20th BARON DACRE

Born 1774

Married Barbarina Wilmot (nee Ogle) 1819

Inherited title from his mother 1819

Died 1851

1 The 19th Century. The Brands flourish

The early 1800s were a period of enormous energy around The Hoo, not least in the field of horsemanship. In 1798, over at Bocket Hall, William Lamb, later Lord Melbourne and Prime Minister, had established horse racing in his Park. Not to be outdone, the Brand brothers Tim and Henry Otway started the famous annual Hoo Races. Mentions of them keep popping up in old texts - they appear to have included carriage driving, and were obviously something of a fashionable event (unlike the more vulgar Harpenden races which were held on the Common until the First World War). Records state that they were held in “the park” in the mid 1800s, later they were held in the fields further North, around Cuckolds Cross, straddling the Road from Kimpton to Whitwell.



Thomas (Tim), 20th Baron Dacre

Tim is said to have dedicated himself to paying off his father's debts before making a name for himself. This may explain why it was not until 1807 at the age of 33 that he

became an MP at a period when it was very much the mark of a young fashionable and wealthy man to enter Parliament and to take a part in the affairs of the country. He first represented Helston, in Cornwall, then, at the election a few months later, became one of the two MPs for Hertfordshire. He was a passionate Whig, and keen to defend personal liberty. One story illustrates this well. In 1794 the Prime Minister, Pitt the Younger, had suspended the right of Habeas Corpus (a basic liberty in England safeguarding the populace against arrest without charge) because of discontent over taxes to finance the war against France. Tim heard of a rally in Cambridge in support of Pitt, and conscious of his lands in that county, rode there, made a passionate speech, and forced a vote in defiance of the move.

Tim had previously studied law at Lincolns Inn and, limiting his expenditure and benefiting his health, would walk each weekend to The Hoo to spend Sunday with his mother Gertrude. Gertrude died in 1819; on her death Tim inherited the title, became 20th Baron Dacre, and took his seat in the House of Lords.

Tim's ambition to clear his father's debts may also explain why he did not marry until that year, 1819. But he had certainly known his future wife Barbarina Wilmot earlier, while she was beginning to establish herself in literary circles. She was 51 when she married the 45 year old Tim. However, Barbarina was not free to marry until then.

Barbarina was born Barbarina Ogle in 1768. Her father was an "eccentric" admiral, 2nd Baronet Wortley, and she was a cousin of Charles Grey, who was later to become Prime Minister. The Grey family was to become entwined with the Brands for a couple of generations, as we shall see.

At the age of 19 Barbarina had married Valentine Wilmot, the son of the then Lord Chancellor. Valentine had a penchant for dangerous sports, such as harnessing unbroken thoroughbreds at the top of a hill and dashing them down at full tilt. She was rather more literary in her ways, writing plays, sculpting horses, publishing poetry, translating from the Italian. Not surprisingly, the marriage was not happy. Tim fell in love with her. Both Valentine's mother and Barbarina, after his death, were allowed to live in a "grace and favour" apartment in Hampton Court; such apartments were originally allotted only to those who had performed some great service to the Crown.

One of Tim's friends was Samuel Whitbread, a crusading MP and son of the founder of the famous brewery, who held lands in Bedfordshire. Whitbread, who was married to Charles Grey's sister and who mixed his political activities with financing the rebuilding of the Drury Lane Theatre, was persuaded to produce a play of Barbarina's set in Saxon times. It was a financial disaster.

Shortly afterwards, a bitter controversy over the future of the theatre led to Samuel's suicide in 1815. The manager of the theatre at the time was the playwright Thomas Brindley Sheridan, to whose second wife Barbarina was related.



Drury Lane Theatre, venue of Barbarina's less-than-successful first play

2 The 1806 Act - Reshuffling the estates

Land ownership in the eighteenth and nineteenth century had become very complex. English law allowed the concept of trusts, arrangements in which one person might hold an asset - usually property - but not have the full right to use it for their own purposes. They might hold it subject to a “trust” under a settlement according to which a beneficiary would be entitled to income (known as an “interest”) or the right to subsequent ownership (“the remainder”).

The ownership of land was the main source of wealth in those times, and wealth meant both status and power. Again under English law as it had developed, the eldest son was the usual beneficiary upon the death of his father (the rule of primogeniture). This had the main benefit of keeping large estates in single hands; since large estates provided economies of scale, land ownership in England was generally more productive than in much of continental Europe where the law imposed subdivision of land among all members of a family.

However, the aristocracy did not care to leave their widows or their younger sons and daughters unprovided for, and so life interests were created which obliged the older son to pay predetermined sums out of the income from pieces of their inheritance. Quite often the son's rights to bequeath the land were also constrained by a doctrine of “entailment”, stipulating to whom the land could be bequeathed upon his death. As can be imagined, these kinds of arrangements meant that sale of a particular plot could be extremely difficult to arrange, because permission of all the interested parties or their trustees needed to be obtained. Marriage settlements were also common, making provision upon a marriage for the future livelihood of a wife, given that before 1882 no married woman had the legal right to own land and before 1870 all her personal property would also fall under her husband's control.

When many estates were brought together through dowry (gifts on marriage by the bride's family) or inheritance or marriage, all of which were subject to trusts and entailment, the pattern of ownership could be extremely complex to follow and track. No wonder that there are stories of families who had their “rightful inheritance” stolen by unscrupulous relatives.

By 1806 the Brands owned land in many counties and much of it subject to claims and encumbrances to provide income for relatives and younger sons and daughters. Various notables including the Bishop of Durham, the Duke of St Albans and the Duke of Kingston (nephew of Carolina Pierrepont) had been appointed as trustees to ensure proper allocation of income not only for each of the married couples but also for their children and grandchildren, born and unborn. On the deaths of the trustees new trustees had been appointed in their place, including Lord Frederick Beauclerk, a son of the Duke of St Albans, known as “the greatest and most despised cricketer in the world”. Apparently “completely devoid of Christian charity, exceedingly bad tempered, as untrustworthy, dishonest, scheming and generally loathsome a character as cricket has known”, he was described as “terrifying”, “domineering” and “an awful man” by contemporaries, seemingly an odd choice for a trustee. On the other hand, he was Vicar of Kimpton, having been granted the living by Tim’s mother.

Possibly spurred by the marriage of his brother Henry, Thomas decided that consolidation would be beneficial; he would group together those of his scattered lands which were his unencumbered, and those which were his subject to the rights of trustees. Limitations in the various deeds meant that he had to resort to the most definitive means of achieving this that was available, the supreme legislative body, Parliament. The 1806 Act “for exchanging Part of the Fee Simple Estate of the Honourable Thomas Brand in the County of Hertford for other his settled estates in the said County of Hertford, and in the Counties of Essex, Cambridge and Surrey, and in the City of London” given the Royal Assent on the 16th July, runs to 47 pages. Essentially, Thomas gave up lands that were his without restriction “in Fee simple” which were mainly in Kimpton and Codicote, and “of greater value”, in exchange for the various “settled” or restricted pieces of land in the other counties, because they adjoined other lands that he owned. The first 15 pages of the Act recite the background, the final 25 list all the lands both settled and unsettled. The landholdings are extensive: 1,700 acres in Carlton-cum-Willingham, in the Southeast corner of Cambridgeshire, for example, and other land there, let, valued at £24,000; houses and land let but with a capital value of £1,300 in Wandsworth; £17,000 worth of land in the City of London; and £30,000 worth in Great Hornead, Hertfordshire. Lands in Codicote, Knebworth and a small part of Kimpton are mentioned - worth several thousand pounds, but as we know that much of Kimpton was owned at the time the list of valuations is by no means complete.

Some of these estate lands had been mortgaged in Thomas’s father’s “extravagant” days; a mortgagee, John Clementson, was originally the executor of another mortgagee of the now sold former Pierrepont lands in Nottinghamshire, and his name appears upon the deeds for the sum of £2,500. Another lender, George Bramwell, held land around Carlton as security for a mortgage of £15,000.

3 The World of Tim and Barbarina

Once mistress of The Hoo Barbarina quickly established it both as a place for the arts and a happy home. She knew Edward Bulwer-Lytton, of Knebworth, himself a writer and whose literary merit is as debatable as Barbarina’s. He is remembered amongst other things today for the annual prize for the most melodramatic (i.e. badly written) sentence to follow the opening words of one of his better-known works “It was a dark

and stormy night". But neither he nor Barbarina should be mocked; the novel was in its infancy, romanticism and gothic horror all the rage.

Both Barbarina and Bulwer-Lytton staged plays at their houses, with leading actors from London. Edward wrote to Barbarina praising his "stage manager, Mr Dickens". Charles Dickens, in fact, with whom Edward and Barbarina founded the Guild of Literature and Art to provide financial relief for out of work actors. A house was purchased at Stevenage, and although the venture was not a success - Stevenage being too far from London where the actors needed to be to seek work - it was the foundation for today's Artists' Benevolent Fund. There is a touching quality about their letters. While they appear quite formal on one level, when for example Edward writes to Barbarina apologising for his delay in replying to a request of hers for some criticism of a poem, and using as an excuse the fact that his "Steward whose charge it was to attend to my letters, [has] gone to town to be married! (may heaven not visit him too roughly in that affliction!)" she replies with an earnest wish that she should not be such a terror to her own husband.

The Hoo was also famed for its dramatic presentations: in 1828 The Times recorded in an item headed "Private Theatricals in High Life" that "Lord and Lady Dacre [had] resumed these entertainments at their splendid seat, The Hoo."

PRIVATE THEATRICALS IN HIGH LIFE.—Lord and Lady Dacre have resumed this year these entertainments, at their splendid seat, the Hoo. The arrangements of the present season were precisely similar to those of last year. The first performance was on Thursday evening. The piece performed, which was in four acts, was called *Pomps and Vanities*. The characters were thus cast:—

Lord Pompsbury	-	-	-	Mr. Blake.
Lord Corydon	-	-	-	Mr. Martin.
Colonel de Vane	-	-	-	Mr. Taylor.
Mr. Fitzowen	-	-	-	Mr. J. Ogle.
Lady Grandower	-	-	-	Mrs. F. Sullivan.
Mrs. Prudence	-	-	-	Mrs. R. Ellice.
Lady Isabella	-	-	-	Miss A. Scott.
Nurse Hush'em	-	-	-	Lady Dacre.

The plot turns on the adventures of several of the male characters to possess the hand of *Lady Grandower*, a handsome, rich, young widow. The characters throughout were well drawn and ably sustained. Much of the interest of the piece turned on the electioneering influence which was to be derived from the possession of the widow's hand; and when it is remembered that Lady Dacre is the author of it, it must be confessed that her Ladyship draws with a strong and vigorous pencil. The epilogue, also her Ladyship's composition, was well delivered by Mrs. Sullivan.—*Globe*.

The cast included her daughter, Mrs F Sullivan, as Lady Glendower, and it is through her daughter that we have been able to learn something of the domestic life at The Hoo. Barbarina's works are not easy to find these days - we have a translation of hers

of Petrarch, and a poem written to her beloved aunt which contains the lines: “Ev’n for the fabled ill the Muse portrays The sacred drop upon thy cheek has shone. Be thine the lay so graced, and so endeared! Thou, as the sainted author of my days, Alike from earliest years beloved, revered!”

One of Barbarina’s many acquaintances from the world of the arts was Elizabeth Barrett, to become the husband of Robert Browning, and she of course also knew many people from the stage. (Only a short time previously female actresses had been considered no better than prostitutes, and the stage a most disreputable profession.) One of her stage friends was Fanny Kemble, the celebrated actress and the niece of Sarah Siddons, herself one of the first great actresses on the English stage. Fanny, like many people of the time, kept extensive correspondence and detailed diaries, which she published.



*Fanny Kemble, actress, whose diaries have told us
a great deal of the Dacres’ family and life*

The following extracts are taken from an anthology of Fanny Kemble’s earlier writings called “Recollections of a Girlhood”, published late in life, in 1880. Not only do they give a fascinating, if possibly dewy-eyed, picture of Tim and Barbarina, but also of the life and times of the wealthy, influential and relatively small elite which ruled Britain both literally and socially in the first part of the 19th Century:

“[Lady Dacre] was strikingly handsome, with a magnificent figure and great vivacity and charm of manner and conversation. Her accomplishments were various, and all of so masterly an excellence that her performances would have borne comparison with the best works of professional artists. She drew admirably, especially animals, of which she was extremely fond... Her English version of Petrarch’s sonnets ...seem to me as nearly perfect as that species of literature can be. But the most striking demonstrations of her genius were the groups of horses which Lady Dacre modelled from nature, and which, copied and multiplied in plaster casts, have been long

familiar to the public, without many of those who know and admire them being aware who was their author. It is hardly possible to see anything more graceful and spirited, truer at once to nature and the finest art, than these compositions, faithful in the minutest details of execution, and highly poetical in their entire conception. Lady Dacre was the finest female rider and driver in England; that is saying, in the world. Had she lived in Italy in the sixteenth century her name would be among the noted names of that great artistic era; but as she was an Englishwoman of the nineteenth, in spite of her intellectual culture and accomplishments she was *only* an exceedingly clever, amiable, kind lady of fashionable London society.”

Barbarina was an accomplished rider, and could control horses “with a perfect hand” like her Greybeard, which “ran away with rougher riders”, and her hunter Slobberchops. However, comments elsewhere by her granddaughter suggest that her horses may sometimes have got the better of her.

Nor was Lord Dacre in any way unfit to be her husband, for according to Fanny Kemble:

“Of Lord Dacre it is not easy to speak with all the praise which he deserved. He inherited his title from his mother, who had married Mr. Brand of the Hoo, Hertfordshire, and at the moment of his becoming heir to that estate was on the point of leaving England with Colonel Talbot, son of Lord Talbot de Malahide, to found with him a colony in British Canada, where Arcadia was to revive again, at a distance from all the depraved and degraded social systems of Europe, under the auspices of these two enthusiastic young reformers. But his mother died, and the young emigrant withdrew his foot from the deck of the Canadian ship to take his place in the British peerage, to bear an ancient English title and become master of an old English estate, to marry a brilliant woman of English fashionable society, and be thenceforth the ideal of an English country gentleman, that most enviable of mortals, as far as outward circumstance and position can make a man so.

“His serious early German studies had elevated and enlarged his mind far beyond the usual level and scope of the English country gentleman's brain, and freed him from the peculiarly narrow class prejudices which it harbours. He was an enlightened liberal, not only in politics but in every domain of human thought; he was a great reader, with a wide range of foreign as well as English literary knowledge. He had exquisite taste, was a fine connoisseur and critic in matters of art, and was the kindest natured and mannered man alive.

“At his house in Hertfordshire, the Hoo, I used to meet Earl Grey; his son, the present earl (then Lord Howick); Lord Melbourne; the Duke of Bedford; Earl Russell (then Lord John), and Sidney [sic] and Bobus Smith—all of them distinguished men, but few of them, I think, Lord Dacre's superiors in mental power. Altogether the society that he and Lady Dacre gathered round them was as delightful as it was intellectually remarkable; it was composed of persons eminent for ability, and influential members of a great world in which extraordinary capacity was never an excuse for want of urbanity or the absence of the desire to please; their intercourse was charming as well as profoundly interesting to me.”



*Earl Grey, future Prime Minister, friend of Tim and Barbarina's,
and father of two family connections, one legitimate, and one not*

Fanny quotes from a German friend of hers who had known Thomas in his student days: “He was so noble, so simple, that each virtue seemed in him an instinct, and so stoical in his views that he considered every noble action as the victory of self-control, and never felt himself good enough.”

Incidentally, the Colonel Talbot mentioned was William, from an Irish aristocratic family, originally Catholic but nevertheless connected to the English settlement, whose seat was at Malahide, near Dublin. His mother Margaret was elevated to the peerage in 1830 but by then he had left to settle and develop lands in Canada. According to the family history, “He supervised and ruled, with an iron hand, the settlement of townships stretching along the North shore of Lake Erie. He was offered a grant of five thousand acres of land and he founded the towns of Port Talbot and Port Stanley. He even began to build the costal road known as the Talbot Road. Described by his compatriots, as gruff, disrespectful of religion, indifferent to politics, a heavy drinker and a Yankee-hater Talbot nevertheless commanded respect and was in no small way responsible for the development of the region. Thomas was quite an eccentric and ran into many financial difficulties, despite the huge demesne he controlled. He died in London, Ontario, in 1853 when he was 82 years old.” In 1828, incidentally, Barbarina's widowed sister, Arabella Bouverie, married William's brother Robert. Memorial plaques to Arabella, to her first husband Edward Bouverie, to their son, George Augustus, and to Robert Talbot can all be seen in Kimpton Church.

If what Fanny Kemble says is true about Tim's plans to join the Canadian adventure, he must have been fairly unhappy at events in England to wish to join such an alien way of life. But how well he fitted into to English society in later years, if his guests at The Hoo included two prime ministers (Grey and Melbourne), two of the most eminent peers of the realm, Bedford and Russell, and the philosopher, writer and clergyman Sydney (with a y) Smith. Smith's sermons at the Fitzroy Chapel in London attracted standing room only and whose lectures at the Royal Institute on education for women, emancipation of Catholics and the teaching of practical subjects in education (rather than the classics) were immensely popular in society. Sydney's brother Robert ("Bobus") had married into the Holland family (of Holland House, London) - this had been the circle of the great Whig politician of the late 18th Century Charles Fox, and the political connections remained.

The presence of Lord Melbourne tells us of another of Barbarina's friends, Melbourne's wife, best known to us as Lady Caroline Lamb. Melbourne lived at Broomfield Hall, conveniently close (ten miles was generally the longest distance that could be ridden comfortably on horseback at a time). His father had been created Viscount Melbourne through the influence of his wife, a mistress of the Prince Regent, who became George IV. His grandfather, having been created a baronet, had built the present Broomfield Hall in about 1751, demolishing an old Tudor mansion belonging to the Earls of Cowper (who also owned Panshanger between Hatfield and Hertford). Caroline was the niece of Georgiana Cavendish (one branch of the Cavendish family is the Dukes of Devonshire) and this family connection repeats itself frequently in the history of the Brands. Her marriage was not happy - she was "wild and eccentric", with an artistic temperament that manifested itself in her sketchbook and later, in gothic novels (perhaps it was this that attracted her to Barbarina, who was about seventeen years older).



Lady Caroline Lamb, friend and neighbour of the Dacres'

Caroline has gone down in history as the mistress of Lord Byron, who was attracted to her wit and vivaciousness, and possibly her egalitarian streak, despite her moneyed and aristocratic background. It is said that in 1824 she fell from her horse in a state of nervous shock, from which she never recovered, at the sight of his funeral passing Bocket Hall - until that day, as by then he had long since tired of her, Caroline had had no word of his death. She famously described Byron as “mad, bad and dangerous to know”; he described her as having “a total want of common conduct” (after Byron she had a brief liaison with The Duke of Wellington, after his great victory at Waterloo). Lady Dacre, she contrasted in later life, was “true, frank and good”.

It is also said that Melbourne himself was not totally without his faults, being politically ambitious and sexually demanding. For instance, he apparently had an affair with the wife of Lord Branden (who was himself the brother of Pyne Crosbie, the wife of Tim’s brother, Henry Otway). Branden “got possession of a correspondence between his lady and Mr. Secretary Lamb [Lord Melbourne] which left no doubt to him or anyone else, as to the nature of the connection between these young people; so he writes a letter to the lady announcing his discovery, but he adds if she will exert her interest with Mr. Lamb to procure him a Bishopric, he will overlook her offence, and restore her the letters; to which my lady replies, she shall neither degrade herself nor Mr. Lamb by making any such application, but that she is very grateful to my lord for the letter he has written her, which she shall put immediately into Mr. Lamb's possession.”

After Caroline’s death in 1828 Melbourne went on to become Prime Minister twice, first succeeding Earl Grey, another of Thomas Brand’s guests at The Hoo. (Melbourne in Australia is named after him by the way.) When he died in 1848 Melbourne left no children and the estate at Bocket passed first to his brother and then to his sister Emily. Emily’s second husband was the famous politician Lord Palmerston, who came to live at Bocket and whose path was later to cross the Dacres’ in a somewhat disreputable manner.

4 At Home with the Dacres

There is a more intimate side to life at The Hoo which we can find records of today. Barbarina’s daughter by her first husband, Arabella, who played the handsome love interest in her mother’s play, had married Frederick Sullivan, originally of Suffolk. Frederick was appointed by Lord Dacre as Vicar of Kimpton, and he and Arabella lived at the Parsonage, now Kimpton Grange, a property that Tim had bought in 1805.

Fanny Kemble also wrote of Arabella, commenting that “She was an excellent and most agreeable person, who inherited her mother's literary and artistic genius in a remarkable degree, though her different position and less leisurely circumstances as wife of a country clergyman and mother of a large family, devoted to the important duties of both callings, probably prevented the full development and manifestation of her fine intellectual gifts. She was a singularly modest and diffident person, and this as well as her more serious avocations may have stood in the way of her doing justice to her uncommon abilities, of which, however, there is abundant evidence in her drawings and groups of modelled figures, and in the five volumes of charming stories called “Tales of a Chaperon,” and “Tales of the Peerage and the Peasantry”, which were not published with her name but simply as edited by Lady Dacre, to whom their

authorship was, I think, generally attributed. The mental gifts of Lady Dacre appear to be heirlooms, for they have been inherited for three generations, and in each case by her female descendants.”

Arabella certainly seems to have been encouraged by her mother in the publication of her stories. Reviewers indeed believed they were by Barbarina, and from what we can read she had her mother’s literary style: “ ‘And dearer to my ears’ said Lady Nithsdale ‘the simple ballad of a Scottish maiden, than even these sounds as they are wafted to us over the waters!’ They stopped to listen to the song as it died away; and, as they listened, another and more awful sound struck upon their ears. The bell of one of the small chapels often constructed on the shores of Catholic countries, was tolled for the soul of a departed mariner. As it happened, the tone was not unlike one of which they both retained only too vivid and painful a recollection. The Countess felt her husband’s frame quiver beneath the stroke. There was no need of words. With a mutual pressure of the arm they returned upon their steps and sought their home. Unconsciously their pace quickened. They seemed to fly before the stroke of that bell! Such suffering as they had both experienced leaves traces in the soul which time itself can never wholly efface.”

Arabella and Frederick’s daughter, also Barbarina, married Frederick Grey, the third of the ten sons of Earl Grey. In 1908 Barbarina Grey’s niece, Gertrude Lyster, published letters written by her aunt which record a delightful picture of domestic tranquillity as well as a fascinating insight into the world of the aristocracy in the 19th Century. They tell us that the village and road between Kimpton Grange and The Hoo became known in the family as “Happy Valley”. We can imagine the route they took between the two houses and it is one we can travel today. If we follow the path at the bend on Luton Road (then Starving Lane) from opposite the corner of the Grange’s gardens across Claggy Road to Park Lane, and the path along the edge of the cricket field and tennis courts through to Hitchin Road, then we meet the Hoo drive. We are on Lord Dacre’s land all the way, and also conveniently pass the back of the Church.

The ideals of Sydney Smith prompted Arabella to rent a field in Kimpton from her step-father as allotments for the villagers as a means to improve the diet of those villagers whose cottages lacked gardens. These allotments, probably the old Garden Fields, were among the first in the country - many years before the government was to encourage them.

Arabella sadly died in 1839 at the age of 43. Barbarina was greatly affected by her death, and withdrew from public life, though she continued to enjoy gatherings of her close family.

Her daughter Barbarina Sullivan’s husband Sir Frederick Grey was a naval man, who in 1861 was to become First Sea Lord and then Secretary of State for War. He was a supporter of Livingstone’s earlier expeditions to Africa, and Livingstone recorded his thanks for his helping making his expedition to the Zambesi in 1861 so “efficient”. (Livingstone’s famous expedition and his rescue by Stanley came later, in 1871.) Despite being posted in various parts of the world his wife maintained the family friendship with Fanny Kemble, who adds in her diaries in 1877: “Oh! I forgot to say that I had hardly taken off my bonnet on coming in, when Sir Frederick and Lady Gray came in from the country to see me. She was Barbarina Sullivan, granddaughter

of my friend, Lady Dacre, and had written to me very affectionately to welcome me back and to beg me to go down and stay with them near Windsor.” Barbarina Sullivan’s younger brother Francis was also a senior naval officer, actively watching over Britain’s interests in the American Civil War and active too in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1878. He rose to be Rear-Admiral, died in 1906 and is buried in Kimpton Churchyard. His son, also Frederick, took up his grandfather’s occupation and spent some time at the turn of the century as a curate in Kimpton parish. The other Sullivan children were sadly shorter-lived, one son, Bertram, dying aged four, and two at twenty: son Brand, of a fever in Egypt, and daughter Gertrude.

5 That Sporting Life

Life at The Hoo was not just artistic, for The Hoo Races were becoming very grand indeed. The meeting of 1828 “attracted the most numerous assemblage of fashionables and others...most of the nobility and gentry who had attended the Newmarket races, all the principal families of the county and a great number of people of rank from the metropolis...besides an unusual proportion of the middling classes”. It was a very seemly affair, for “the course was not disgraced by..exhibitions of low gambling”. The huntsman of Lord Salisbury’s Hunt kept order. Stakes and prizes were generous given the value of money at the time: £25, 100 guineas (£105) and a gold cup worth £100.

Hunting was for centuries a major occupation at The Hoo. The Dacres frequently held the position of Master of the Foxhounds, the head of The Hertfordshire Hunt, a position at one time considered to take second place in the county hierarchy. Hunts were significant social events, gatherings of the notables from the area, and had the right at that time to ride anywhere in pursuit of a fox without hindrance and without the obligation to pay compensation for any damage to hedges, fences or crops. They could be marathon events - one famous poem records a hunt which ran from Hatfield to Luton. The sense of excitement and sheer power can be heard in this extract from a poem in a collection called “Lays of the Hertfordshire Hunt”, in which, although “it rained cats and dogs and the wind whistled keen” such worthies as Tim’s nephew Thomas Brand and William Cavendish, later 2nd Lord Chesham (both of whom we will meet again), the Governor of the Bank of England, Mr Drake Garrard of Lamer Park, Charles Beauclerk, who we have met before, and Lord Grimston (who restored St Albans Abbey) first gather and then off: “Forard on to the gorse! And a hundred bold fellows Who take their oaths to ride hard and feel jealous”. Thomas is in the lead: “ ‘Now get away and never look for weak places’ Screams Brand, as the first twenty minutes he races And sails as his custom in number one flight.” But they lose the scent: “Here Brand’s anxious face Tells his hope fast declining, increasing his fear. But hark! A view holla not distant we hear”. Finally the fox is seen, caught, and they “sang ‘who-whoop’ ” and end the long rhyme.

The lake on the Mimram even turns up in the 1833 edition of *The Complete Angler*, where an “extraordinary” fact was reported, the catching of a rud by an unnamed Earl (Earl Grey, perhaps) using a minnow as bait (the rud’s teeth, apparently, are situated in the back of his throat, and do not “bespeak him to be a fish of prey”). It was so remarkable as to be reported again in 1870 in “Book of the Roach”.

From a surviving diary of daily events “and occurrences of interest” written in Codicote between 1820 and 1839 we have a delightful picture of life in those days and also of the activities of Lord and Lady Dacre. There must have been a worrying time at The Hoo in 1831 when the 63 year old Barbarina fell from her horse on her way through the village.



Barbarina, Lady Dacre

We also have this wonderful poetical evocation of the crowds on their way through Codicote to The Hoo Races in early April 1834 “From parts far and near I will just remark, the folks that are hast’ning to L..d D...e’s park. Some in carriages with fine Bonnets and Caps Crowded so that they’re sitting in each others laps; Sweetly TALKING & Smiling along they go, perhaps a fine set of teeth they may show With their Parasols up & the horsemen as well Some on STATELY HORSES and cutting a SWELL”. Later we read that “some of the GEMMEN of lower rank ride On HACKNEYS or PONIES & trot by their side In best Hats, Coats & Waistcoats All Booted and Spurr’d Bright as silver with Breeches as white as a Curd” There are “hundreds of Footmen”, “the Rich and the Poor” “Men Boys and Maidens of every Sort” and finally “The poor Wretch proceeds by the side of his Betters and the Creditors too by the side of his Debtors.”

Whatever his affection for The Hoo, Tim did not spend all his time there - we know that in 1823 he was staying at his estate at Alveley in Essex because of a light-hearted piece in The Times of that year. Lord Camden, an eminent judge, was staying with him, and went for a walk with “a gentleman, a very absent man” to see the village stocks. Desiring to see for himself how the punishment would feel “he asked his companion to open them and put him in, which being done his friend took a book from his pocket, sauntered on and so forgot the judge and his situation that he returned to Lord Dacre’s”. A passing villager refused to release the good Lord Camden for “you was not set there for nothing” and it took a servant of Lord Dacre’s to come to his rescue. It is perhaps deliberately unclear in the article whether it was Lord Dacre who was in fact the forgetful one.

6 Tim and the Commoners

Tim did not neglect the well being of his tenants and their workers. He took his responsibilities seriously. In Codicote he set up a charity to provide subsidised coal for the poor, building three cottages at the end of the village and later adding an extra storey. Life was harsh for many people: in each of 1823 and 1824, for example, there were three deaths of children under 10 in Codicote parish, and deaths under 30 were equally common. Much of a family's income would go on flour and a quartern, or four pound loaf, would be consumed a day. Meat was expensive - another of Arabella's daughters, Gertrude, recorded that in Kimpton "there being but one butcher's shop, all meat is dear for want of competition", an interesting socio-economic observation for the time and her upbringing. Gertrude went on: "Mrs Adams said they spent 6s 6d [32.5p] on flour, which gave them a quartern loaf a day, certainly not over much for themselves and six children."

Those that survived could live until their 90s, however. And it was not all bad news. The villagers enjoyed their games of cricket and Codicote often won. They took delight in quite simple things, for example some of the events that the Codicote diarist recorded seem odd to our eyes: "1835 Dec 23 A new Privy was taken to Dellfield in the Parish of Kimpton by J Welch etc". Dellfield, still on the map, was a farmstead on the Peters Green road. Perhaps Mr Welch was a privy maker.

The Lord of the Manor was able to regulate the tenancies of the public houses which he owned and it seems that Tim was a fair man. The diarist lived at The Bull in Codicote, and tells how "my father was refused a licence to his house on account of some reputed irregularity of conduct represented by Lord Dacre. It was afterwards found to be without foundation & by..the influence of Lord Dacre it was regained."

In most of the various parishes in which Tim owned land there can be found records of his generosity. In 1820 in Kimpton he endowed the first school, in the Church, together with Frederick Sullivan, the vicar and his son-in-law. In Royston, a town probably to Tim's taste, as it was "a centre of culture and intelligence and of enterprise, quite uncommon in similar towns in the country" he built the market house (1830) and a school (1840). With local businessman William Wilshire, he helped found the British School in Hitchin (which we can visit today and observe the education of the time), which pioneered the use of monitors, pupils who had already received instruction, to pass their learning on to younger ones. The present Wilshire-Dacre School in Hitchin is the direct successor.

The first mention of a school in Kimpton is in 1795, where the Parish Church register states that pews were built for the new charity school, supported by "annual contribution, Lord Dacre, £10". A sizeable sum of money, and also slightly confusing, since in 1795 the title was held by Tim's mother, the Baroness. Perhaps it refers to a later annuity by Tim. In 1820 Tim built a new school, seemingly partitioned off from the church, and a separate girls' school, supported by Barbarina, was set up in its own area. More pews were paid for by Tim for the schoolchildren at a cost of £18.15.0 (£18.75p). The school was closely connected with the Church, and Tim's son-in-law, the vicar Frederick Sullivan. We have a fascinating picture of that early school from the diary of Barbarina: "Took a long breath and entered the school - ye Powers! The

closeness and the smell! - pretended to hear the reading, and gave a few directions concerning commas and other stops on account (pretence) of my ears. Examined work with spectacles on nose and a critical air thrown over my whole person; then writing in every copybook, and every line of every copy... Their work is super excellent, their writing ditto, their summing more than ditto - and their reading about as good as any clergyman's! Hurried, monotonous, without emphasis and wholly inaudible to ears like mine. Being worked up to good deeds I repaired to Mrs Chauncey's [the wife of the curate, with an excruciating voice]"

Not surprisingly Tim became Trustee of one of the local charities, Dr Barford's, set up by a former vicar in 1792 endowed with enough money to give to "our Kimpton poor" an annual donation of £1. The charity distributed this sum, split between as many as eight recipients, well into the twentieth century, though the cost of transferring the trusteeship each time a Trustee died took a large part of the dividend.

Something that would have helped both Tim's tenants and himself would have been the construction of windmills: additional outlets for local farmers' crops, higher rents and milling dues for the estate. A windmill apparently already stood at that time on the hillside above Whitwell village (along the ridge from The Hoo), and Tim supervised the erection of windmills on his land, on the road to Peters Green at the back of Kimpton Grange, and in Heath Lane, Codicote. There were long-established water mills down on the Mimram for all parishes, including Kimpton's and Codicote's in Dacre ownership, but there were extremes of weather even then - 1826 and 1827 were very dry summers and 1828 and 1829 had dry springs. While the winter of 1829 was the "most severe we have had for some time" and that of 1837 "continued severe" until mid April (delaying Hoo Races by two weeks), there was no snow at all in 1832. Because the windmill countered the effect of variable water flow, the Codicote diarist wrote a poem on the subject of his village's mill, in praise of "the worthy occupier of The Hoo".

Unfortunately, the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 removed the tariffs that protected the British crop, and gave foreign wheat, much of it more suitable for bread, greater access to English markets. Tim's own views on this appear to have been mixed, as a Liberal (Whig) he would have tended towards free trade, but his nephew is known to have attended a rally in St Albans against repeal of the bill, and many farmers in the county and neighbours such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton were staunchly against anything that might lower the prices of their produce. Arguably, by making food cheaper for all - urban and rural - the repeal was the first act that started to break the dominance over British politics that agriculture had had until then. When agricultural incomes began to fall in the 1870s Parliament was not prepared to support the landed estates that controlled British farming, and coupled with measures to give tenant farmers security of tenure this set in motion the decline of the landed aristocracy's wealth and ultimately status and power. In the end, then, the windmills did not last - Codicote's was said to have burnt down between 1855 and 1885, and was not rebuilt, Whitwell's was not shown on the tithe map of 1844, and Kimpton's disappeared also. Steam was to be the means that ensured continuity of milling, and it was installed at both Kimpton and Codicote watermills some years later.

7 Law and Order

Becoming his status as one of the leading members of the aristocracy in the county, Tim was also Chairman of the Hertfordshire Quarter Sessions. Quarter Sessions were courts, sitting around each quarter-day, which tried cases that were too serious to be dealt with by magistrates and also sent the most serious crimes on for trial by judges at the regular Assizes. Quarter Sessions were not held by judges but by laymen, almost all appointed by the Chairman (as were the county's magistrates). The courts sat, however, with a jury. Control of the court system was one of the ways in which the land-owning aristocracy maintained their "rightful" governance of the country during the 19th Century. This was even more the case as until the creation of County Councils in 1888 Quarter Sessions also controlled functions such as roads and bridges, the police, and lunatic asylums.

The Times recounts one such Quarter Session in 1833 and the cases give a fascinating insight into the life of more ordinary people than the Dacres and their ilk. Magistrates had sent for trial 43 people (an "extraordinary number"), of which 15 were under 20. There was a Female prisoner alleged to have stolen barley worth 1d who had already "lain in the county gaol one month", and another remanded for stealing hay to the value of 4d. It was commented that the cost of these cases to the county was £20, "near 500 times the value of the property lost".

Though there were no cases arising out of the Game Laws before the court that day, it should be remembered that at this time - indeed until 1880 - all wild living creatures were the property of the landowner, including not just pheasants and partridge, but also rabbits.

COUNTY OF HERTFORD MICHAELMAS QUARTER SESSIONS.

These sessions, which commenced on Monday last, before Lord Dacre, the chairman, the Marquis of Salisbury, N. Calvert, Esq., M. P., H. G. Ward, Esq., M. P., Rowland Alston, Esq., and a full bench of magistrates, have just terminated.

The calendar presented the extraordinary number of 43 prisoners for trial, mostly agricultural labourers, but not one for an offence against the game laws. 15 were under 20 years of age; one, a female prisoner, was for stealing barley, valued at 1d., and for which, prior to the day of trial, she had lain in the county gaol one month; another for stealing hay of the value of 4d.; and a third, for stealing to the value of 6d. The expense of prosecuting for these trifling thefts, in law and witnesses, will probably cost the county not less than 20£, near 500 times the value of the property lost. Each of the committals were by clerical magistrates.

One particularly vicious case turned on the rights of the poor to “glean” without the consent of the landowner. To glean is to forage for uncollected corncocks after harvest, which boiled in water added welcome variety to the usual diet (not to mention nourishment). A Mr Williams of Bishops Stortford had allowed five women to glean on a field which they had cut for him after a row with his usual reapers. Local villagers led by a Mrs Theer had maintained they too were entitled to glean; during attempts to drive them from his land Williams had ridden his horse at Theer’s mother “a very aged Woman” and had held Theer so that his man, Langham, could strike her “a most tremendous blow with his two clenched fists, of which her face bore every evident marks”. Williams, though advised that he had the right to give the privilege of gleaning to whoever he chose, was not “justifiable in the means stated to have taken to remedy it”. He should have gone to law - he was fined £50, and Langham £1. The court was full, the case lasted seven hours.

In a previous judgment the Sessions had sent up for trial at the Assizes the case of a Mr Devonshire, a publican from Hertford, whose pub had been ransacked and partly burnt (and his canary and cat killed) by a mob during the last Hertford Parliamentary election. A “gypsy” bully “in the Tory interest” had “been a party to a dreadful outrage in the street” and taken refuge in Devonshire’s pub, which was besieged by other Tory bullies. During the siege poor Mr Devonshire had fired a shotgun over the mob’s heads to restrain them - unfortunately some small pieces of shot found the face of one of the mob, though he was not much hurt. The county was much put out by the cost of the action, for while Devonshire was tried for attempted murder or bodily harm he was immediately acquitted for want of any evidence of malice, but the cost of the case was near £80 to the county and the cost to Devonshire “to repair the injury done him” near £200. The Tory party in Hertford was known as “the bribing and bullying party” - the incident, says the Times, was only one of “the many scenes of outrage and lawless proceedings” and a House of Commons enquiry had taken place. Such scenes were not uncommon in elections in those days and it was not until later in the century that stricter laws about expenditure and the extension of the suffrage removed the more blatant opportunities for buying and influencing votes.

Tim’s son-in-law The Revd Frederick Sullivan was also involved in the law as a magistrate and his judgments were recorded by the Codicote diarist. One case he had to deal with concerned “The Wife of H. Jackson & one of his daughters” who “was put in the Cage [the small local holding jail], for alleged misconduct at their homes called ‘The Barracks’ and violently assaulted Mrs S Rolph who was pregnant.” Sullivan dismissed them “with a reprimand”. He also dealt with “A young man” who was “taken before Mr Sullivan for cutting wood unlawfully on the ground of Mr Titmuss of this Parish”. His sentence was not recorded, but it is interesting to note that under the laws of the time even removing dead wood was an offence. The diarist notes with disgust that on December 23rd 1834 “William Rolph and Francis North were committed to Hartford [sic] Gaol by the majistrates [sic] of Hitchin for one Month or 60 shillings [£3] the former for taking away an old Rotten tree from a field of Mr Wymans & the latters for taking and cutting a bundle of green wood the property of the said Mr John Wyman. At this time W Rolph a single man was receiving 3s [15p] per week & F North a married man 4s [20p] a week. Does Mr W think he can afford to buy firing?”. Things are even more unfair: “Mr W was OVERSEER at the time!” - that is, in charge of the Poor Rate, the allowance paid by each Parish to its own poor. Rolph was a tenant of Lord Dacre in one of his cottages.

A couple of weeks later the diarist is on his high horse again, since the said Mr Wyman “went to London to speak in behalf of Miss Emma Cousins at her Trial for a robbery...she was Acquitted”. Mr W goes down in history as the man who “At the very same time could imprison the Poor/ and use his endeavours to get out a W...e” [it rhymes with poor].

In fact, petty crime seems to have been an everyday occasion in Codicote and probably in Kimpton as well. Burglary, thefts of pigs, ducks and chickens, and even turnips (by the poor), poaching, and fights and assaults regularly appear in the diary. Each village had a “cage”, a small jail; the Christmas custom of the youths of Kimpton was, apparently, to overturn their village’s. Hoo races also attracted petty thieves, there is a report of a North Mymms man, George Deards, who got away, however, with the relatively light penalty of fourteen days jail when he was convicted of “embezzling £1 10s. from the hay carter ... and spending the proceeds at Hoo races”. Indeed Hoo Races itself was not immune, in 1837 “a Gentleman’s carriage was robbed of 11 Sovereigns & a bunch of keys”.

At times, criminal behaviour took on a more dangerous aspect. In late 1830 the Codicote diarist records “At this time the country is in an alarming state. Farm houses, barns, stacks and outhouses are secretly set on fire...this has been going on in the County of Kent & its adjoining Counties for some time past...and now this detestable practice is going on in parts nearer to us.” The reaction in Hertfordshire was that “the Land Holders of eminence have desired their tenants to advance the wages of the labourer & to make Special Constables of as many as they can & this they do in every parish around us” i.e. on Lord Dacre’s lands as well: “And on Dec 9 many of the inhabitants of Codicote were sworn & the day before most of the inhabitants of Kimpton were sworn.” These were the so-called “Swing” riots, named after their mythical leader, and which were but one of a series of uprisings and protests that occurred in rural England throughout the 19th century. Fourteen years later in 1844 Getrude Sullivan records in her journal six barn fires, none of which was accidental. They all took place at “the farmers’ who gave low wages.”

Transportation (to the Australian colonies, where a later Baron Dacre would be found in an official capacity) was a punishment still imposed. The diary reports that James Smith, whose mother lived at Kimpton, and Philip Morgan were tried for robbing a young man by the name of Graves between Kimpton and Whitwell. They were sentenced to be transported for 10 years.

8 More on Tim’s Causes: in Parliament, on Railways, and against the King

Tim’s ability to become involved with, and influential in, all aspects of the Victorian life is impressive. He followed the Dacre motto “Pour bien desirer”: “to wish for good”.

Tim used Parliament to seek betterment for his fellows. He was greatly involved, alongside Earl Grey, in the campaign for electoral reform in 1830. This campaign was driven by many in the Whig party perhaps less by genuine concern about democracy, which many aristocrats feared or derided, but by the awareness that the current system could not stand up to scrutiny. They were not unaware that, over on the continent, too many established orders of government were being overthrown, a trend that might

reach these shores. He “petitioned” for reform in Hertfordshire, that is, campaigned for its popular acceptance. Arabella wrote to Barbarina that at one meeting “then stood Tim in his cloak, which was half on, its red lining half seen and one bit slung over his arm in a most coquettish manner. Positively coquettish!”. Feelings about reform ran high. Robert Peel, the future prime minister, was so enraged by the comments of a candidate that he sent a friend to challenge him to satisfaction - which normally, by the rules of the time, would have led to a duel. The candidate sent for Tim and asked him to be his “friend”. Unwilling to be a second in a duel Tim was able diplomatically to “satisfy” both parties without the need to take up arms, and thereby possibly changed the course of English history. After the successful passage of the Reform Act in 1832 Grey was to offer him a seat in the Cabinet. Tim felt that his health - he was by now 58 - would not permit it, and he retired from politics.

Tim’s health had not been good. In 1835, at 61, Barbarina and his family were most concerned about his being the “subject of anxiety, giddiness” which he claimed to be “apoplectic”. Depressed and ill, he nevertheless insisted upon riding off round his estate, visiting his tenants, without a groom, although he did permit his granddaughter, Barbarina Sullivan, to accompany him.

In 1844, when he was 70, Tim wrote to Edward Bulwer Lytton that he was now “too old”, he had “destroyed” himself “by the omeopathic courses”. In the same letter he acknowledges that he is on the Board of one of the new railway companies, seeking to build a line from London to York, but that he is “very inactive”. Not so inactive as to apparently influence the company to run the line not along the Mimram valley from Welwyn, and thus beside his lake, but instead over the expensive and impressive Digswell viaduct (and incidentally, down the hill from the Bulwer-Lytton’s Knebworth Park). It is true that in a later letter the engineer to the London and York Railway tells Lord Bulwer-Lytton that it is the most direct route, and that it will not go within a mile of his house. (Tim’s reaction to the earlier railway scheme for a line from Dunstable to Hatfield via Kimpton, which would have run North of the Church and to the back of Bury Farm along the edge of his lands, is not recorded. The line was not built, the route was expensive, heavily graded and therefore expensive; the towns were later linked by the Lea Valley line through Wheathampstead, since closed.) Another indication of the company in which Tim moved and his interest in the new is the fact that in 1830 he and Barbarina were members of the government’s party at the opening of Britain’s first main railway line, the Liverpool and Manchester, an event memorable for the first recorded death of a prominent person in a train accident. The Foreign Secretary, Huskisson, crossed the tracks and, unfamiliar with the danger, was struck by the engine, not far from where the Brands were standing.

Although a seat in the House of Lords did not always bring great excitement (a typical committee posting for a Lord was the one Tim had in 1831 on the demolition and rebuilding of Great Marlow Church) Tim enjoyed moments of high drama in 1820 at the trial of Queen Caroline, the wife of George IV. The king, before he came to the throne, had been “obliged” to marry Princess Caroline of Brunswick under pressure from his mistress who was well aware that once married his allowance would be greatly increased, because his father required him to produce a legitimate heir to the throne. Unfortunately, George detested Caroline, and she detested him. They were both promiscuous and immature, rebelling against strict upbringings. She left London

and travelled abroad. When their only child died in 1817 George was determined to terminate the marriage.



*King George IV's wife, Queen Caroline, whose trial
Linked both the legitimate and illegitimate branches
of the Dacres*

As soon as he became King three years later, and using possibly trumped up evidence of her adultery with an Italian, George requested the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, to pass an Act of Parliament divorcing her, based on evidence seen by a secret committee of the House of Lords. Tim's objection to this procedure was based not so much on his views or otherwise of Caroline's conduct, but on the manifest injustice of the procedure and the assumption, by the King, that Parliament should do his will by allowing him to divorce her. It was a close vote, barely in favour, but upon Tim's continued oratory in Caroline's defence the bill was withdrawn.

King George's reaction to Caroline's return to England to popular acclaim (due, mainly, it must be said, to his own unpopularity) was to arrange for a sumptuous Coronation. Caroline was not permitted to attend but she attempted to make her way through a private door belonging to a Canon of Westminster. It so happens that a friend of the Canon's was Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard, the illegitimate son of Thomas, an earlier Baron Dacre. As the family's (perhaps embroidered) history states: "The Queen, throwing back her veil, exclaimed, 'Sir Thomas Lennard, I have seen you at Southend; know me now as the Queen of England. As your Queen, then, I command you to afford me ingress to the church by that private door.' 'May it please your Majesty', replied Sir Thomas, bowing at the same time very low, 'though it is well known that I sympathize with your cause, the word of honour of an English gentleman ... must not be broken, and all the royalty of Europe could not make me do so. In everything else, I am your Majesty's most faithful servant.' " Caroline fell ill that night and died three weeks later at the age of 53.



*Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard, illegitimate son
of an earlier Baron Dacre*

Caroline had been bought off with an annuity of £50,000 a year, an enormous sum in those days when agricultural labourers earned £25 p.a. At the Coronation there were fears of riots - keeping watch over the populace were the Coldstream Guards. They were under the command of Tim's brother, Colonel Henry Otway Brand.

PART V

MORE GOOD FORTUNE:

GENERAL HENRY OTWAY BRAND, 21st BARON DACRE

Born 1777

Married Pyne Crosbie 1806

Inherited title from his brother 1851

Died 1853

1 Henry Otway and The Trevor Family

Henry Otway Brand was born three years after Thomas and, as was common in aristocratic families for those deprived of first son status and inheritance, took the occupation of soldier and purchased an officer's commission in the Coldstream Guards. In 1806, Henry married Pyne Crosbie, another member of that Cavendish family that is so intertwined with the Brands. They were to have two sons and four daughters, and in the meantime he served with honour with their "light horse" in the Peninsular War of 1808-1814 - the war in which Wellington fought and won several important victories in Spain and Portugal to defeat Napoleon's attempt to usurp the Spanish throne. He was awarded the CB - Companion of the Order of the Bath, the fourth most illustrious order given by the monarch - and after the war purchased the lease on a house Rochester Row, London in which he founded a hospital for returning soldiers of the Guards.



General Henry Otway Brand, soldier and heir to the Trevor estates

In 1824 Henry Otway, made up to Major General after his crowd control at George IV's Coronation, was the recipient of a legacy; it was another of those events which changed the direction of the Brand-Dacre dynasty. In that year, John Trevor, the third Viscount Hampden, a diplomat and Ambassador to Munich and Turin, died childless, having only three weeks earlier inherited the Viscountcy from his brother, Thomas,

who was also childless. With the title came an Elizabethan house, Glynde Place, near Lewes in Sussex, and 8,000 acres of land around the county and further afield.

The Trevors were another of those aristocratic families with a complex past, at various times controversial and honourable. A forebear, John Hampden, had been one of the leaders of the Parliamentary cause in the English Civil War and had died in battle; known as The Patriot his statue stands in the Central Lobby of the Houses of Parliament. Thomas, however, was an unpopular MP, criticised for quitting and splitting the Whig party and for marrying a woman who was “languid and insipid, and addicted to musical parties and card-playing”. He was reported in *The Times* of 1787 as having the most elegant of fashionable carriages (“yellow with silver spots”) but also as the host of a “concerto spirituale” at Glynde for “the Ladies and Gentleman of the neighbourhood”, conducted by his chaplain. It “gave much satisfaction”.

The connection between the Brands and John and Thomas Trevor was the latter’s distant relative Sir John Trevor, who had been grandfather to the Gertrude Trevor who back in 1771 had married Thomas Brand and in her own right had brought the Dacre title to the Brands. Henry Otway was left the estate in his position as the second son of the Brands. In due course it became the rule that the second son of the family should inherit and live at Glynde while the eldest should inherit The Hoo. Henry Otway did not inherit the title of Viscount Hampden, which died with John.



Glynde Place, which eventually became the final home of the Brands

Other lands belonging to the Trevors included estates in Buckinghamshire, which did not pass to Henry Otway. The large Plas Teg estate, which had previously been bequeathed to her cousin by Mary Trevor (nee Fludyer), the sister-in-law and legal adversary of Gertrude, was also originally a Trevor property.

In recognition of his inheritance, Henry Otway took the name of Trevor in place of Brand, and moved to Glynde, where his second son Henry Bouverie William Brand was to become probably the most illustrious parliamentarian to carry the Dacre title. For Tim and Barbarina were childless, perhaps not surprising in view of their ages at marriage, and when Tim died in 1851 Henry Otway also inherited the title of Baron Dacre and the lands at Kimpton and elsewhere. It is possible that he and Tim were not the closest of brothers. Henry Otway’s daughter-in-law, Eliza, who we shall meet

shortly, records how, upon the death of his wife Pyne, while she and her husband were comforting Henry (who she called “The General”): “..[it] is dreadful.- instead of helping us cheer the poor Genl. [Tim] groans and groans not about this great misery his poor brother is enduring but about his eternal stomach till I feel so angry with him.”

Henry Otway and Pyne’s eldest son Thomas Crosbie moved back to Kimpton on the death of his uncle Tim, and he too took the surname Trevor. When Henry Otway died only two years later, Thomas Crosbie became 22nd Baron Dacre. The Dacre title had also moved back to The Hoo.

PART VI

SERVICE TO KIMPTON:

THOMAS CROSBIE TREVOR (BRAND), 22nd BARON DACRE

Born 1808

Married Susan Sophia Cavendish 1837

Inherited title from his father 1853

Died 1890

1 Royal circles

Thomas Crosbie was born in 1808. His wife was also a Cavendish, Susan Sophia, the granddaughter of the 4th Duke of Devonshire and distantly related to his mother, Pyne Crosbie. When they married in 1837 she was 20, and he was 29.

Susan's aunt was Georgiana, the wife of the 5th Duke of Devonshire, a lady of a different character and also the aunt of Lady Caroline Lamb, the friend of Barbarina's. Georgiana was a celebrated beauty, in whose circle gathered distinguished members of the worlds of politics and the arts. Her marriage to the Duke was brilliant but their personalities were so mismatched that she arranged for her best friend to become his mistress. She herself had an affair with Earl Grey, the very Prime Minister who had been such a frequent visitor to the Hoo and who was the (legitimate) father of Frederick Grey, the husband of Tim's step-granddaughter, Barbarina Sullivan. Georgina and Earl Grey had a daughter, Eliza, who was given the surname Courtney. Hers is another family we will meet again, though in more salubrious circumstances. Georgiana was famous not only for her marital arrangements, her beauty and sense of style, and her political campaigning, but also for her love of gambling. She was reported to have died deeply in debt, despite the wealth of her own family the Spencers and her husband's family the Cavendishes.



Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, a celebrated beauty, not unconnected with scandal, and related to several members of the Brand family

In the year of her marriage Susan Sophia was selected by the new monarch, Queen Victoria, to be one of her Ladies-in-Waiting, and more particularly a Woman of the Bedchamber, in which role she attended Victoria's Coronation. The eight Women of the Bedchamber (and the eight more senior Ladies of the Bedchamber) were the personal choice of the monarch, they were all married, and Susan held the post until 1853. They were paid posts and their duties were to help dress the Queen and attend at banquets, where their role was to pass items from less senior members of the staff to more senior ones. They were not supposed to be political appointments; Victoria took pains to avoid any suggestion that she favoured Whig families over Tories, but the fact that they were at the centre of the Court at a time when the sovereign still had an active part in politics meant that there was always discreet and subtle pressure and intrigue.



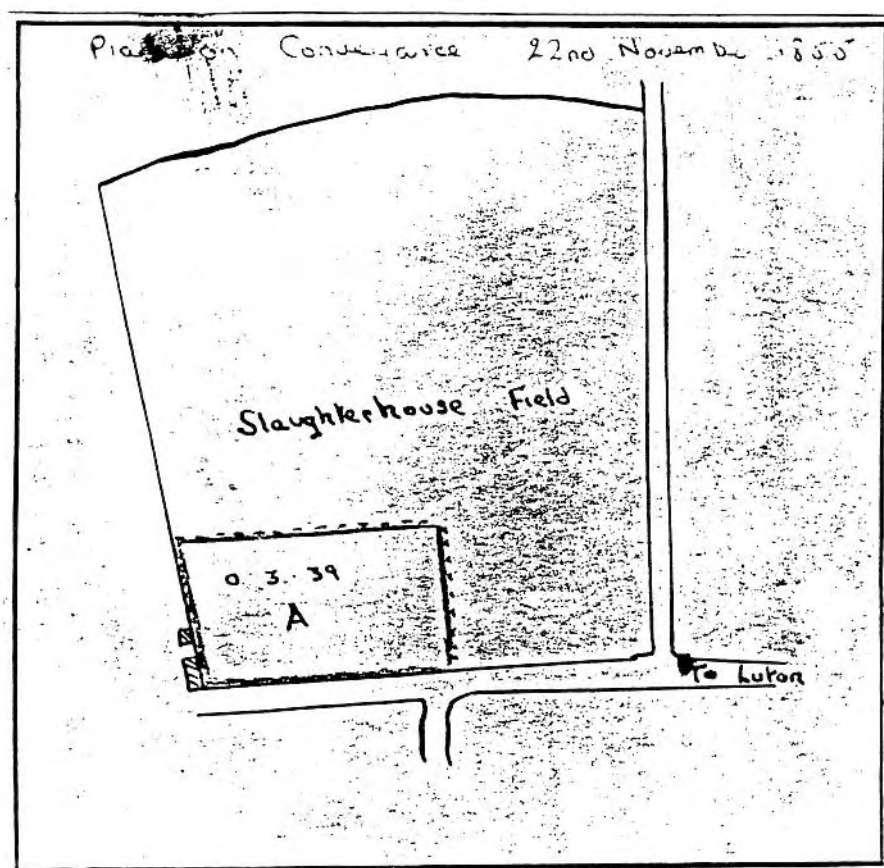
*Viscount Palmerston, later to become Prime Minister,
whose interest in Susan Brand was not exactly welcome*

Susan was evidently an attractive woman and a lady of virtue. One night in her bedroom at Windsor Castle she received an unwelcome visitor, the high born Foreign Secretary and her father-in-law's neighbour, Lord Palmerston. She rebuffed his advances.

Queen Victoria came to hear of this impropriety in her house; while Palmerston grew in Parliamentary stature Victoria was never to forgive him this indiscretion. She only reluctantly accepted him as Prime Minister. It marks the beginning, perhaps, of the legendary Victorian morality, for whereas affairs and mistresses, liaisons and infidelities were public knowledge and almost accepted, and certainly no bar to public life (as the careers of Grey, Melbourne and Palmerston show), henceforth Victoria required that, in public at least, marriage, fidelity and family life were to be the accepted norm.

2 Continuing Tim's Good Works

In 1855, shortly after he moved to Kimpton, Thomas Crosbie, the 22nd Baron, was instrumental in setting up the first permanent school buildings in Kimpton, to house the school originally set up by his grandmother. As the owner of much of the land in the village it was natural that the most favourable sites should belong to him, of course. It was to remain a Church school, the vicar was (still) Fredrick Sullivan. (It was not until 1870 that the Education Act placed schools under central government control - where there was no school, a school Board was set up, but in villages such as Kimpton, where schools already existed, the then arrangements were allowed to continue. In fact, Kimpton remained a Church of England School until 1955.) Thomas Crosbie transferred the site of the present school to the Church and the original school buildings, still standing, were built, together with a house for the schoolmaster. The house was demolished in 1967 when the extension was built. In 1890, by which time schooling up to the age of 13 had become compulsory, he also bought an adjoining cottage (a Mr Adkin's), for the use of the school, which stood on the edge of the High Street, where the War Memorial now stands. This was just before his death - the land was in fact used mainly for widening the High Street at the request of his successor, of whom we shall hear more later.



The map from the deed conveying part of Thomas Crosbie's "Slaughterhouse Field" as the site for the present school, November 1855. The High Street runs left-right, Hall Lane bottom to top

Of the schoolchildren's wellbeing Susan, his wife, took an interest, and the parish magazine and other records tell of her annual treats for the pupils, some of which took place at The Hoo. They seem to have consisted of tea and games, and the opportunity to run around freely on land not normally permitted to them, without care or work, seems to have been greatly appreciated by children some of whom would have had to work before or after school, and whose presence was often resented by their parents when they could have been helping them or better still, earning money. The cost of an education, 1d a week, did put a strain on some pupils' families, in a time of low or fluctuating wages, large families, and little entertainment for the men other than beer.

No. 45.]

PRICE ONE PENNY.

KIMPTON PARISH MAGAZINE.

CHURCH NOTICES FOR SEPTEMBER. 1886

5	S.	11th after Trinity.—Lessons: MORNING, 1 Kings 18; 1 Cor. 14, v. 20. EVENING, 1 Kings 19; Mark 7 to v. 24.
12	S.	12th after Trinity.—Lessons: MORNING, 1 Kings 22 to v. 41; 2 Cor. 4. EVENING, 2 Kings 2 to v. 16; Mark 11 to v. 27.
19	S.	13th after Trinity.—Lessons: MORNING, 2 Kings 5; 2 Cor. 11 to v. 30. EVENING, 2 Kings 6 to v. 24; Mark 14 to v. 53.
21	Tu.	St. Matthew.—Service, 11-15 a.m. Lessons: 1 Kings 19, v. 15; 2 Cor. 12, v. 14 and chap. 13.
26	S.	14th after Trinity.—MORNING, 2 Kings 9; Gal. 4, v. 21 to 5, v. 13. EVENING, 2 Kings 10 to v. 32; Luke 2, v. 21.
29	W.	St. Michael and All Angels.—Service, 11-15 a.m. Lessons: Gen. 32; Acts 12, v. 5 to 18.

BURIALS.—August 7th, E. Matthews, aged 17 years.

On Tuesday, July 27th, Lady Dacre gave her annual treat to the School children. The treat was not held this year at the Hoo. Tea was served in the School-rooms, and after tea an adjournment was made up to Mrs. Brand's Meadow, which she had kindly placed at the disposal of the children. The weather was threatening but no rain fell. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly, and it was past eight before an adjournment was made.

Treats for the schoolchildren - clearly Lady Dacre's annual event was much enjoyed.

Elsewhere on the large Dacre estates, Thomas Crosbie endowed a school at Carlton, in Cambridgeshire in 1877, at £5 per year. Like Kimpton's School and Tim's school in Royston it was a National School, connected with the Church of England. Another local charity topped up the income by 3 guineas (£3.15p) a year.

Kimpton's eight pubs were also a concern for the Dacres. It has to be admitted that rural life in the 19th century was hard, dreary and dull, even if you were a skilled craftsman and took pride in your work. Cramped conditions made home less than a perfect place to spend your time; hard manual labour required refreshment, and it was also essential to keep track of village news and of one's fellow workers, for at times such as harvest workers were hired in gangs rather than as individuals. Even in a relatively prosperous agricultural area such as Hertfordshire, recollections of the time tell of a favourite lunch for male workers "bread and cheese, raw onion and a pint of

beer” and its being described as “a meal fit fer a king ter ev”. Lard, scraps of pork and bacon, occasionally treacle, and cold tea were staples; those villagers lucky enough to have a garden or one of the new allotments could grow fruit and root vegetables, others had to buy their food, which was often adulterated. Small wonder then that the alehouse was a favourite place to go, and it also seems that the labourers and the farmers often kept their haunts separate.

With the twin aims of providing an alcohol-free environment for socialising, and an orderly place for men to become aware that education and learning could improve their lives, Susan built “The Working Men’s Institute” in 1879 with two rooms, one for the use of the parish as a whole (there being no village hall or church hall in those days). They are now known as The Dacre Rooms. The Institute became a self-governing club. Since at that time it had no porch or clock, the foundation stone we can today see on the porch may have been originally on the wall behind, or be a later memorial. Either way the inscription “Erected for the Men of Kimpton by Susan Lady Dacre April 15th 1879” also refers to “Psalms 127,1” which is the very fitting and very Victorian text “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain”.

In an interview shortly before his death villager Jimmy Williamson, whose grandmother kept the old Goat Inn, described what he had heard about those times: “You see the families in Kimpton, there was three generations in the house, right. Time they’d done their washing and all the kids to bed and all the rest of it. The old man came home from work, it weren’t very nice to sit in with the screaming kids all the washing hanging, Grandma shouting her head off – so down the Pub he went didn’t he? ... then a load of his money was, went on Beer didn’t it.. So Lady Dacre built the Reading Rooms as they were called then, in other words they could learn to read a bit down there. And different things – when I was a kid there was a Billiard Table as well down there. I don’t know whether she put that down there.”

Just to help us picture those times, research shows that the typical Hertfordshire farm labourer of the mid-19th Century was notable for his “wide-awake”, or wide-rimmed hat, able to be turned down or up depending on the weather. The traditional smock was being replaced by a canvas jacket, and short overcoats and corduroy trousers were worn, but the labourer’s most important item was a pair of sturdy boots, very carefully maintained, regularly resoled (at home), waxed with candle grease and accompanied by white linen wrappings instead of socks. His attire would be completed by a neckerchief.

3 The Battle of the Fair

In 1884 the village was divided by another of Lord and Lady Dacre’s attempts to tame the wilder excesses of Kimpton life.

The so called “Statutory Fair”, known locally as the “Statty Fair”, had been held in Kimpton on the third Wednesday of September “since time immemorial”. It had its origins in the “hiring fair” tradition, where agricultural labourers, shepherds, cowmen, etc, would gather on one particular day each year to be scrutinised by farmers with a view to engaging them for the following twelve months. There is a description of one such in Thomas Hardy’s novel “Far from the Madding Crowd”. Such fairs took place

all over the country, local fairs being held in rota at Harpenden, Codicote, Wheathampstead and Stevenage. They had always been attended by hawkers, gypsies, vendors and sideshows; by the second half of the 19th century their role as hiring fairs had diminished with changing farming techniques and the agricultural depression of that time. They had become days of entertainment and enjoyment. But despite their apparent “statutory nature” and the fact the Lord of the Manor had the right to receive fees when they were staged, they were completely unregulated. In large towns such fairs often lasted several days - the “labouring poor took over the streets” - and drunkenness, cruelty and bloodthirsty sports increasingly offended the sensibilities of the growing Victorian middle classes. There was also the fear that such ungoverned revelry might turn into something considerably more dangerous to the public good. As a result, in 1871 Gladstone’s government passed the Fairs Act. This and similar legislation authorized the Home Secretary to abolish any fair where such action “would be for the convenience and advantage of the public.” “Many fairs in England and Wales”, the preamble to the Act declared, “are unnecessary, are the cause of grievous immorality, and are very injurious to the inhabitants of the towns in which such fairs are held.”

Certainly the fair at Codicote, which took place each Whit Monday, was notorious as ending in a brawl on the green, with the lads of “cunning Kimpton” among the usual suspects. But the fair at St Albans was on a much grander scale, famous for the appearance of travelling players, and we know that labourers from Harpenden would regularly walk there. Perhaps they did from Kimpton and Codicote too.

Was the fair in Kimpton of such a scale as to cause a threat to the moral and physical wellbeing of the inhabitants? Yes, according to Thomas Crosbie, Lord Dacre, who organised a petition to the then Home Secretary, Sir William Vernon Harcourt. This petition, presented to the Home Office on 1st May 1884, was just one of many throughout the country as fairs lost the support of Victorian England. It stated, using the prescribed wording, that “it would be for the convenience and advantage of the public that the said Fair should be abolished” and the grounds were that “it is unnecessary, is the cause of immorality, is injurious to the inhabitants of the Parish”. It was signed by “a large majority of the inhabitants and ratepayers”. Lord Dacre presented the petition in his position as “Owner for the time being of the Tolls or dues payable in respect of all Fairs held in the parish of Kimpton” (one wonders how much he received from the Fair, or if he was ever paid, or if he could enforce this right).

Whatever the monetary advantage to him of the Fair, it had to go. The petition has 130 names, headed by Lord Dacre, followed by the Churchwardens and then by Charles Chalkley, the “overseer”. There follow the signatures of farmers, schoolmistresses, a teacher, the sexton, a clerk in holy orders, the licensee of the Cross Keys at Gustard Wood (then in the parish), the police constable. Then come the blacksmith, labourers, a coachman, a wheelwright, a groom, a coachbuilder, a bookmaker, another licensee. It is notable that the first signatures are mainly of men and women of education and position; they also include that of Gertrude Baxendale, widow of Richard Baxendale from the “big house at Blackmore End”, son of the Pickfords haulage tycoon.

As witness our hands.

<p><i>1. Leon</i> <i>Simon Streus - Vicar -</i> <i>He</i></p> <p><i>Ann Parker</i> } <i>Churchwarden</i> <i>George Oakley.</i></p> <p><i>Charles Chalkley</i> } <i>Overseers.</i></p> <p><i>Henry George</i> } <i>Guardians.</i></p> <p><i>Francis Lines</i> <i>Farmer</i> <i>Arthur Armstrong</i> <i>Grocer</i> <i>Geo. Ann Strong</i> <i>Officer</i> <i>William Wells</i> <i>Sereton</i></p>	<p><i>William Smith Farmer</i> <i>Richard Avery</i></p> <p><i>E. East</i> <i>John Guss</i> <i>Henry Co</i> <i>Margaret O. Birch - Dent</i> <i>Sarah Ann Jones Schoolmistress</i> <i>David Desborough Farmer</i> <i>William Desborough Dealer</i> <i>John Ivory Farmer</i> <i>Edward Fortescue - Clerk in the</i> <i>to</i> <i>Annie Ellis Teacher</i> <i>Joseph West Malt Shopman</i> <i>George Russell</i> <i>Public House</i> <i>Thomas Lines</i> <i>See Men</i></p>
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The first page of signatories to the petition for the abolition of Kimpton's annual "statty" fair

No, it was not a nuisance, in fact "it was many years since there was a single case of drunkenness in connection with it" wrote one of the village Overseers and Guardians (which, he proudly states, he had been so for 22 years) when official process sought responses in the months following the presentation of the petition. The Fair, he maintained, "is looked forward to with great expectation by the young people and children of the village and is a source of harmless amusement to great numbers". However, the writer (whose signature is unfortunately illegible to modern eyes) acknowledges that while "there are still a number of ratepayers who would now support a counter petition ... Sir you can understand the difficulty of going against 'The Lord of the Manor' in this little village". In fact, the letter begins with the seeming accusation that "there is hardly a single name attached as a 'free agent' but under a kind of compulsion". Although he goes on to say that "his Lordship has twice said he would take no further part in promoting the petition" this does not entirely match his earlier statement about the possibility of opposition. The petition was, apparently, "signed twelve months ago by Lord Dacre and the late Vicar to obtain signatures from his tenants and other Church people, was then handed over to the Wesleyan [Methodist Church] leader and a house to house visit was made." Interestingly, the petition has indeed a space for another "Overseer" and "Guardian" to sign but the space is blank.

More intriguing is the second letter of opposition, signed by the only Overseer whose name does appear on the original petition. In it, Charles Chalkley says "I and many more signed the Petition believing it to be the wish of the whole Parish but since find that it is not so, nearly all the signatures being Lord Dacres [sic] tenants some living

two or three miles out of the village it can certainly be no object to them". Chalkley was withdrawing his signature. For him the Fair "is for a few hours only, it does no harm, the children and people of the lower classes looking forward to it as the only time of any recreation and amusement for the whole year".

It did the two writers no good in their cause. Both were substantially discredited by Lt-Col Henry [illegible] Chief Constable of Herts., who had been written to by the Home Office in accordance with the laid-down procedure. According to the Lieutenant-Colonel: "the writers of the two letters in favor [sic] of the Fair are, one of them is a brewer who supplies most of the licensed houses in the village, the other is a grower and general dealer does some extra business on the day of the Fair". And for good measure, he goes on "Lord Dacre, who presides at Kimpton and takes a great interest in the welfare of the Parish, is decidedly in favor [sic] of the abolition of the Fair", "it is principally a pleasure Fair. It is attended by none but the lower class and rough element of the village and neighbourhood, travelling showmen, whose horses stray into neighbouring fields, do considerable damage and are a recurrent source of complaint on the part of the farmers". He concludes that "the abolition of the Fair would not interfere with any legitimate trade or debar any class of people from reasonable entertainment".

What is interesting is that the Guardian and Overseer posts relate to the administration of the then dreaded Poor Law, so their concern for the wellbeing of the poor hints at a more complex character. The 1834 Poor Law had created the workhouse system and forbade what was known as "outdoor relief". Each parish was responsible for the its inhabitants and those designated as indigent were usually made to return to their home parish so as not to become a burden on the ratepayers in any other village or town. To obtain relief they then had to go to the workhouse - for Kimpton this was at Hitchin - where men and women were strictly separated and set to work to pay towards their keep. (There had been many disturbances over the new Poor Law in 1834, including ones at Royston and Codicote, where the vicar had dared speak out in its favour. But although the regime was made deliberately harsh to encourage those who could work to get work, the proscribed diet, provided it was properly administered and the workhouse masters not too corrupt, is said to have better than that of many workers.) The Poor Law Guardians and Overseers were elected by the ratepayers of each Parish, who also would have been potentially influenced by Lord Dacre. The motives of the two objectors remain unproven either way.

There are many family names on the petition that are still known in the village, including Cole, Coleman, Desborough and Goldhawk. One name that also appears is that of Matthew Wren ("coachbuilder"), who was one of the leading members of the Wesleyan (now Methodist) Chapel. A history of the Kimpton Methodists tells how they and the vicar jointly campaigned against the Statty Fair, at a time when Kimpton was "a very wicked drunken Sabbath-breaking place".

The Chapel was built in 1845 on the Methodists' own land in the Green, held "freehold", that is, not even subject to the rights of the Lord of the Manor. There seemed, however, to have been a good working relationship between the Church of England (vicar appointed by Lord Dacre) and the Methodists. Perhaps the Dacres' forebears' interest in non-conformism influenced their attitude to their "dissenting" religion.

How much power would Lord Dacre have actually exercised over the village in those days? Apart from an inherited awareness of his “natural” status as the Lord of the Manor, which would have been recognised by most people as owing to him and by himself as his due, and which arose from centuries of service to the Crown and trustee of the land, legislation worked in his favour. The tenants of his cottages had no rights, even if they paid the rent, the tenants of his farms, otherwise prosperous and entrepreneurial, had no statutory right to remain on the land they farmed nor until 1883 to receive any benefit for any improvements they may have made, and until 1880 they had no right to even the rabbits or hares that roamed on their land. No tenant farmer would feel comfortable employing a man who had come before a magistrate for poaching. There were no elected bodies such as parish or county councils until 1888; rural tenants received the right to vote in Parliamentary elections only in 1885. Lord Dacre was or his fellow landowners were Chairman of the Quarter Sessions who chose the magistrates, many of whom, like Frederick Sullivan, were vicars of parishes who owed what was literally their “livings” to landowners; the school in Kimpton was run by the parish church. And so on. And however enlightened the Brands may have been, they owned virtually all the farms around Kimpton. Even though they did not own all the cottages around the Green, and many local women were able to earn money independently of their husbands by straw-plaiting for the Luton hat trade, the Dacres’ influence and their wealth far outshone anybody else’s locally. It would be unfair not to point out, however, that at this time many landowners did not use this power and status for selfish personal gain, but in a genuine belief that the established order of “squire, parson and tenants” was “the best society yet devised by man”.

How did the villagers generally react to the “interest” which their Lord and Lady paid in their wellbeing? Working Men’s Institutes were a popular way for local landowners throughout England to raise the standards of their tenantry, and although in some places they were resented, Kimpton’s seems to have been accepted, having an established committee which featured in the trade directories of the time. Indeed, we find that Mr Chalkley, the “dissenting” overseer from the Statute Fair debate, puts aside his uncomfortable feelings about the domination of the Dacres and turns up as secretary by 1914. He is still an Poor Law overseer, but has added collection and assessment of taxes in Kimpton and neighbouring parishes to his duties, and is the clerk to the newly-created Parish Council.

Jimmy Williamson recalls being told by his uncle tales of when the fields off Claggy Lane, though Lord Dacre’s, were still considered “common ground”. “One of the things he always told me was... There’s one or two people used a bit of ground, along Claggy...which was Commons Lane now. And one of the ones – they were always told to clear off you see because his Lordship was going to enclose them. And one of the ones who refused to move was Mr Crew... Now he wasn’t ledgerable [sic] to his Lord of the Manor because he was the Post Person for Kimpton.... To get him off Lordy gave him a piece of ground next to Holly Cottage. So Dacre gave him a bit of ground to clear off – So he had enough rope to have one back on the Lordship. The ordinary person hadn’t.”

4 More changes at The Hoo

Money and time was also spent on The Hoo during the 19th Century. We noted that the present drive leading directly to the Church in Kimpton was in place in 1822. Later, the main drive from the house to the Whitwell Road was modified to sweep through a new wood to directly opposite the East end of the house (the route it runs today) where it ended in a large “landing square of gravel”. The area around was given walls and balustrades. Around the roof of the house a parapet was added (though this must have been removed later as it does not show in any existing pictures) and the walled kitchen garden, alongside Hoo Farm on the Whitwell Road, was built, then enlarged. A dell for ferns was created, borders and lawns laid out. Some of the land towards Rye End Farm had been made into parkland by 1822, in Tim’s time; later, by 1884 in Thomas’ time it was to be turned back into productive fields. Sweet chestnuts dating from the original Keate park still stood, and can be seen even today. At some stage the main entrance to the house was moved again from the south to the corner of the north side and the outbuildings, where it can be seen in early 20th century postcards.

A Mr Fish, reporting in “The Cottage Gardener and Country Gentleman” and apparently a neighbour, wrote at length in 1858 of the grounds around the “massive residence” of Lord Dacre. While keen on the kitchen garden and the glasshouses, and the convenient layout for the transporting of manure, he found fault with the area around the house: “although the groundwork has been admirably managed, there is a want of satisfaction about the whole...too much, or too little, has been done by way of walls and balustrade”. He generally praised Mr Cox, the gardener, for his arrangements of flowers and the tending of the lawns, which “gives the ideas of ease and roominess”. He did note that the path running up to the house from the kitchen garden (now completely disappeared, although in use until the hall was demolished), was not given a trim outline (as was the fashion) but rather “now grown over with the grass of the park”. Apparently this was at Tim’s wish - Mr Fish found it admirable. He also spotted an a fine old oak, “containing in it many a pound of lead from having been used as a target for rifle practice”.

5 Kimpton was not the only Place

Although Kimpton Hoo was always their “seat”, both Tim and Thomas Crosbie his nephew spent much time at Royston, where the Priory was to become the final home for both Barbarina and Susan. Tim built the market hall and school, “the kindest-hearted and most perfect gentleman..a man of talent and energy..called a ‘fire-Brand’ when unsuccessfully contesting Cambridge, advocating Parliamentary reform and religious liberty”; while Thomas was a major “mover and shaker” in the life of the Royston Institute, instigating lectures and its own version of the Great Exhibition, in 1855. Barbarina is extolled in a 1906 history of Royston as “more than common talent and powers of mind....known Fox, Sheridan, Grey, Windham, Canning, Sydney Smith, Lord Melbourne, Macaulay, Kemble and Mrs Siddons.. Her ladyship’s figure was remarkably fine and when young must have been handsome..”. Thomas’ wife Susan showed a “generous interest in all the helpful movements for the succour of the sick and those in need”, with a “kind homely spirit”, she is “held in grateful remembrance”. Her husband is remembered by a window in Royston Church.

6 On the Races, Memorials, Brotherly Love, and Servants

Thomas did not neglect the more enjoyable side of life: Hoo Races were still going strong - in 1861 we read of the success of his horse The Don, a four year old, which challenged the leader at the half way point and made "a fine race", winning by a neck. The horse fetched 51 guineas (£52.50) after the race (asking price, £50). The close second was Mountebank, owned by Mr Baxendale, whose widow signed the petition against the Statty Fair. He was not an aristocrat, but the son of a self-made man in the haulage trade. One wonders how Lord Dacre felt.

The races feature in a guide to the area written by the Great Northern Railway in 1861 as the only thing to be said about The Hoo, (while there are lengthy descriptions of Knebworth, Digswell, The Node and their inhabitants). Of Lord Dacre himself, the only thing of note was that he was "MFH", that is, the Master of the Foxhounds, an abbreviation, and status, that needed no explanation in that era.

The SELLING STAKES, of 5 sovs. each, with 25 added.
Optional selling weights and allowances. Half-a-mile.
Lord Dacre na. The Don, 4 yrs (50l.), 9st. 9lb. (Mr. W. Bevil) ... 1
Mr. Baxendale na. ch. g. Mountebank, 3 yrs (70l.) Sst. 11lb. (Mr. Hobson, jun.) ... 2
Mr. C. E. Prime na. Phoebe Mayflower, 4 yrs (50l.) 9st. 7lb. (Mr. Boynton) ... 3
Mr. Bartholomew na. Dapple, 4 yrs (70l.) 10st. 3lb. (Mr. Batson) ... 4
Betting.—13 to 8 on The Don, and 5 to 2 against Mountebank.
Mountebank led to the half distance, where the Don challenged, and a fine race ended in his favour by a neck, Phoebe Mayflower being a bad third.
The winner was sold to Captain Hawkesley for 51 guineas.

Susan added to Kimpton's store of physical monuments – not only the Institute but also the Church bear witness to her and her family. Among the monuments to the various Dacres is a stained glass window erected by her in 1882 in memory of her brother, the 2nd Baron Chesham, he who took part in the hunt immortalised in poetry. He himself had a large house at Latimer, in Buckinghamshire, and there must have been a fair amount of brotherly love between him and Susan. His life was Eton, Army (10th Hussars) and Parliament, his children went on to marry into the higher echelons of the aristocracy including the Grosvenors, the family of the Dukes of Westminster, owners, still, of large parts of Central London.

None of the delights of life at The Hoo would have been possible without the servant and the maid. People like William Mitchell, from Bedfordshire, came to work as a groom around the 1850s and married Louisa Gregory, a cook there in 1866. They had three children while working with the Dacres and living at one of his cottages down in

Rye End, then moved to Walsall, where they had four more. What is interesting is the distances they travelled for work - clearly, good grooms and cooks were worth hunting down. Similarly valets such as Henry Edward Tuppen, of Chelsea, who had served Queen Victoria and in her service had met Mary Draper, of Penshurst in Kent (whose father's occupation is given as "cricket-ball maker"). By 1871 the 28 year old Henry and 21 year old Mary were both working for the Dacres - he as a valet, she as a maid - in a total staff of 21. Possibly they became known to Susan Lady Dacre as she had undoubtedly kept up her Royal connections after her period as a Lady-in-Waiting. Their duties also took them to the house in Grosvenor Street, and they were married in the elevated surroundings of St George's Hanover Square in 1876, albeit only by the curate. In 1890, when Thomas died, Henry and Mary were taken up by Lord Antrim, and they moved to Glenarm Castle in Co. Antrim, where Henry was Chief Butler for over thirty years. While at The Hoo, and slightly oddly for a valet, Henry did not live at the house, but in a cottage at Garden Fields, where he and Mary had six children.

It seems that some of the tenants were men of some standing; for example, Edwin Brand, who does not appear to have been a relation, was tenant of Park Farm in the 1880s and ran the sizeable area of 352 acres, employing 11 men and five boys, and two servants of his own. He warranted a plaque recording his life in Kimpton Church. Edwin was born on or near one of the other Dacre estates, at Chrishall, and his wife Sarah is probably the "Mrs Brand" mentioned as providing her meadow to the children at Lady Dacre's school treat in 1886.

Despite his active life around Kimpton and Royston, and his status, Thomas Crosbie seems to have played only a small part in parliamentary life, being MP for Hertfordshire for only five years, between 1847 and 1852, and only a short time in formal public life. He was Lord Lieutenant of Essex from 1865 to 1869, as he still owned considerable lands in that county, but the position, even then, before the creation of elected county councils some 18 years later, was largely symbolic.

Thomas Crosbie lived at Kimpton until his death in 1890, when the title of Baron Dacre, and the lands, passed to his brother at Glynde, Henry Bouverie William Brand, seven years younger. It was Henry who became celebrated in Parliamentary circles, and thereby earned a title in his own right. Henry Bouverie had also inherited the Glynde estate when his brother acceded to the Dacre title in 1851. Since it had been bequeathed into the Brand family to a second son, it passed to him because of the provision that the holder of the Barony of Dacre should always give up the estate in favour of the junior line.

The report of Thomas Crosbie's will is fascinating to us in the way it shows the conventions of the time. The value of his personal estate was £59,000 - perhaps £3.5m in today's money. When he married Susan in 1837 the marriage settlement under which her own property was passed allowed Thomas to dispose of half of her "fortune" of £20,000 (£1.2m), which he duly did by giving her back £2,000 and his butler and valet £100 each (£6,000, perhaps, or more tellingly, four times the average annual wage of a farm labourer). The rest was to be used to settle the outstanding mortgages still on the land dating back to the 18th century; anything left over, together with his own estates, went to Henry. He did leave Susan some furniture and the right to live in his property at Royston Priory, where Barbarina had also finished her days.

PART VII

SERVICE TO PARLIAMENT:

**HENRY BOUVERIE WILLIAM BRAND, 1st VISCOUNT
HAMPDEN AND 23rd BARON DACRE**

Born 1814

Married Eliza Ellice 1838

Created 1st Viscount Hampden 1884

Inherited Dacre title from his brother 1890

Died 1892

1 Henry, Mr Speaker Brand

Henry had joined his father the General's regiment, the Coldstream Guards in 1832, and served as ADC to General Robert Ellice, who was in charge of the regiment at Devonport. The Ellices were friends of the Brands; Robert Ellice's wife was Eliza Courtney, the illegitimate daughter of Susan Sophia's aunt Georgiana and Earl Grey. Eliza's name appears in The Times' review of Barbarina's play we saw earlier.

Henry fell in love with their daughter, also Eliza, and married her. They were to have nine children, and it was their line which held the Dacre title when it afterwards returned to The Hoo.

In a further indication of the continuation of family links, Thomas and Henry's sister Julia married the son of Samuel Whitbread, the theatre promoter of Barbarina's plays who had committed suicide in 1815.

Henry turned to politics in his thirties, joining the party of his forebears, and serving with Palmerston and Gladstone, as the loose groupings of the Whigs and Tories began to settle into the closer party structure we know today, the Whigs becoming the Liberal Party and the Tories the Conservatives. Henry was obviously well thought of, and being well-connected, rose through the party to become Chief Whip. In this role he was described as "a gentlemanly little man of rather urbane appearance and decidedly cool and collected manner. Dressed in the very nicety of neatness, with an air of precision." This role required Henry to muster votes in favour of the government's proposals, which required "tact, discretion, prudence, ability, knowledge of men's actions as well as men's characters..." though "unobtrusive" he had "an iron will and unconquerable energy". He nevertheless wrote to Eliza upon his first appointment describing how his "heart sinks into his shoes". His many qualities served him well when he became Speaker of the House and in 1881 enabled him to create one of the most important precedents in the House of Commons.

Gladstone was in power but finding Ireland and Irish politicians difficult to handle. A series of so-called "Coercion Bills" enforcing the law of the United Kingdom were proposed, but each time Irish members under Parnell continued to debate for many hours, hoping, usually successfully, to so weary the members of the Liberal Party that no vote would be taken. In those days there was no timetable for legislation, so this device was entirely legitimate. But one day, in a show of authority breathtaking in its audacity, Henry simply announced, after one session of 24 hours of debate, that the motion was now "closed" and that he would "put the question" - that is, call for a

vote. “On whose authority?” asked a Radical (English) Member. “On my own responsibility and from a sense of duty to this House,” replied Henry, to “loud and protracted cheering, none cheering louder than Gladstone” as he later noted. Parnell was not in the House, having left for bed, and the Irish members lost the vote.



*Henry Brand, Speaker of the House of Commons,
Created 1st Viscount Hampden in his own right*

For his services to Parliament and to the Liberal Party Henry was created Viscount Hampden in 1884. He took the title Hampden in recollection of his distant ancestors the earlier Viscounts Hampden, who in turn had drawn upon the name of John Hampden, the great Civil War Parliamentarian. A Viscounty, incidentally, is the fourth of the five ranks of the Peerage (and thus one up from a Barony, and so has precedence). However, sons of Viscounts and Barons (unlike those of the top two of the five ranks), are not referred to as “Lords”, but “The Honourable”.

We can read of Henry’s life in press reports - in his role as President of the Cabdrivers’ Benevolent Association, for example, supporting higher fares and more shelters for cabmen, or actively supporting practical education in the county, and also of his work at Glynde, where he found time to hold harvest suppers with the men of his estate (whose right to the vote, granted in 1884, he wholeheartedly supported) and to experiment with improved dairy husbandry. He also tried, drawing on the political influences of his forefathers, to implement a scheme under which his tenants and labourers would receive a portion of the profits of his farms in return for an investment. The scheme was not a success due to the “prejudices” of the labourers and their fears of the loss of poor relief. Local farmers also disliked the fact that Dacre would be revealing his profits to his men.

Henry inherited his brother’s title in 1890 and became the 23rd Baron Dacre as well as 1st Viscount Hampden, but it was for only two years. When he died in 1892 both

the titles and the Kimpton lands went to his eldest son, Henry Robert, known in the family as Harry.

Of Henry Bouverie's funeral, the local newspaper noted that it was "of the simplest possible description... The most notable circumstance was the large number of persons of the working class who attended it, these far outnumbering the rich."



The Hampden arms

PART VIII

SERVICE IN THE COLONIES:

**HENRY ROBERT BRAND, 2nd VISCOUNT HAMPDEN
AND 24th BARON DACRE**

Born 1841

Married Victoria Van de Weyer 1864

Married Susan Henrietta Cavendish 1868

Inherited titles from his father 1892

Died 1906

1 Back at The Hoo

Harry too was an Army man, in the Coldstream Guards like his father and grandfather, and he spent some time in Canada as ADC to the Governor-General, Viscount Monck. To acquire an officer rank in the Army required payment (known as “purchase” - a practice not abolished until 1870) and a substantial private income for uniforms and horses, since the pay was not sufficient to maintain the standard of living expected of, and by, an officer.

Harry was also a first-class cricketer; at least, he played for Sussex in his twenties. Between 1860 and 1867 he played in two matches, scored a combined total of 16 and bowled in both without success.

He too moved in high circles - he married in 1864 at the relatively early age of 23 Victoria Alexandrina Leopoldina Van de Weyer, the daughter of the Belgian Ambassador and the granddaughter of Joshua Bates. Bates was an American who, through trade (some believe including the opium trade with China), had become a partner with Baring Bros, one of the great British merchant banks (which survived until its downfall through fraud in 1995). A year later, on a journey to the house in Windsor Park which Bates had provided for his daughter on their marriage, the horse drawing the carriage of Harry and Victoria bolted. He was thrown out and badly bruised, she was in shock, pregnant at the time, never recovered, and died two days later.

Three years afterwards in 1868 Harry made another connection between the Brands and the Cavendishes by marrying Susan Henrietta Cavendish. She and the earlier Susan had a distant common relative, the 4th Duke of Devonshire. They were to have five sons and three daughters. On his marriage, Harry left the army and sought to follow his father’s footsteps into public life. That year he became Liberal MP for Hertfordshire, only to be voted out six years later.

2 In Parliament

The liberals of the day were not entirely like the Liberal Party we now know. Theirs was primarily an aristocratic and middle class party, whose original difference from the Tories had been that the latter - equally aristocratic - believed wholeheartedly in the established order, the monarchy and the Church of England. Whig Peers, on the other hand, had absorbed the more democratic ideas which had evolved during the 18th century (as we have seen with the two early Thomas Brands) but their solution

for the ills of the world was greater individual freedom, backed by the vote, rather than direct state intervention or the restructuring of society and redistribution of wealth. These “socialist” ideals had yet to make their mark, but it was not long before political thought was to move on.



A political caricature of the youthful Harry

In 1874 Harry tried to become an MP again, this time for a seat, Stroud in Gloucestershire, much tainted with bribery and undue influence between the local landowner and Liberal woollen mill-owners. The secret vote had been introduced in 1872, but the Corrupt Practices Act regulating election expenditure was not to come into effect until 1883. Seats at that time had two members - at the preceding General Election two Liberals had defeated the defending Conservatives but the result was challenged on the grounds of bribery - and since the Liberal agent had disappeared, with the cash, just before the election no defence could be offered. Another election was held, and Harry Brand was selected together with a nephew of one of the successful Liberals, who won, together with one of the opposing Conservatives. Both sides challenged the result, both sides seems to have played a little fast and loose, the Conservative candidate was unseated and Harry Brand stood again. This time the Conservatives fielded a relation of the successful Liberal candidate, whose family,

somewhat displeased, rallied behind Harry. Harry duly won by a thin margin of 82 votes. But it was not over; Harry's agents had not been entirely honest either, fudging some expenses, and finally his father, as Speaker, has the unhappy duty of announcing to the House that Mr Brand was no longer the honourable member for Stroud.

Harry had to wait until 1880 to try again for Stroud - that year the Liberals were swept back to power (temporarily as it happened), but his place in Parliament was short-lived because the seat was abolished in 1885. By then, the Liberals were a divided party - Harry and many other "Liberal Unionists" were not prepared to see the Irish get home rule. Their reasons were a mixture of concern over the lawlessness of the Irish and their defiance of the Union, a feeling that this rebelliousness close to home was out of keeping with the natural superiority of the British Empire, and a fear of the loss of landed estates and the authority that came with them (since one solution for the Irish problem was the subsidised sale of Irish estates to their tenants). Harry then stood unsuccessfully for Cardiff in 1886, and never sat in Parliament again. (The Unionists were later to join the Conservative Party while the Liberals gained strength on the more radical wing, a movement that was later to start the inexorable undermining of the old landed aristocracy.)

Harry had his father's gravity, to the point of having a "serious introspective air", which in the eyes of his colleagues would have been emphasized by his domed forehead and drooping moustache. He was noted for his "profound research and quick insight".

3 In Australia

In 1895, no doubt in recognition of Harry's persistence and his impeccable political connections, he was appointed Governor General of New South Wales. The post of Governor was, like Lord Lieutenant, one of less importance than the title would suggest despite its visibility as the representative of Her Majesty in the Empire. Colonies such as New South Wales had long been effectively self-governing, with elected parliaments and governments, so the position was in many ways just ceremonial. Not only that, but, as the Australian archives state "the Australian colonial capitals were generally considered not grand enough to attract senior members of the aristocracy". Neither was Harry the first choice for the post - but the government feared the loss of the parliamentary seat of their preferred man, so it was given to Harry instead - a decision, said *The Times*, that was "unexceptional" (for which read: "nothing for or against"). Later, however, the newspaper also remarked that "his hereditary training should be valuable..in its familiarity with the best traditions of Parliamentary government". Like his Whig ancestors, he supported the local movement for Free Trade.

Despite his seriousness of manner Harry, like all his forebears and most of his landed aristocrat fellows, was a passionate huntsman and sportsman. Such a pity, therefore, that he found that New South Wales lacked "good sporting country", though he admired the Australians' love of horse racing and commented that they were superior to England in the cricket field (even then, it seems). There is a cricket cup for the "best cricketer" in South Australia called the Viscount Hampden Cup; he is also remembered by the Hampden Bridge over the Kangaroo River, built in 1898 of castellated stone by convict labour. The river under the bridge is popular today for its

swimming and canoeing - “barbecue and toilet facilities are provided”. And a ferry called “Lady Hampden” once plied the shoreline around Sydney.

New South Wales was not then part of a Federal Australia, and Harry was fortunate that the state was generally well governed. According to his obituary in *The Times*, Harry “exercised no little tact” in some intra-governmental tensions over taxation, and took an active part in the colony’s “artistic, educational, scientific, and charitable” movements. He also gave “hospitality on an unusual scale” to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897. However, a move by the NSW government to annexe the then British colony of Norfolk Island makes him today appear a mere servant of greater powers.



*An official portrait of Harry, as
Governor General of New South Wales*

Norfolk Island lies in the South Pacific 1,000 miles off the East coast of Australia and to the Northwest of New Zealand. Twice it had been a penal colony, with a fearsome reputation for cruelty. Then in 1856, when the island was again uninhabited, it was given to the descendants of the families of the mutinous crew of “The Bounty” (Fletcher Christian and his men) who had previously settled on Pitcairn Island 4,250 miles away. The 194 settlers had outgrown Pitcairn and were granted Norfolk Island as their replacement home. Queen Victoria promised them distinct and separate powers of local self government. Nevertheless, in 1896 the British colonial administrators and the New South Wales government seem to have decided that the islanders “were incapable of governing themselves” and that administration should be transferred to New South Wales, without any consultation. Harry was the man who had to announce, and organise, the move. (This move, and later further “encroachments” by Australia into the government of the Island, rankle heavily with the islanders even today and the website giving the Islanders’ story is called “Bloodless Genocide”. The latest manifestation of the Islanders’ preference for independence is a petition seeking freedom to retain the link with the British Crown should Australia declare itself a republic. The present inhabitants of Norfolk Island appear to be law-abiding souls - the island had its first murder case for 148 years in 2002.)

4 Connections back in England

In 1899 Harry decided to relinquish his position - his eldest son, Thomas Walter, was about to be married, in Westminster Abbey. He and those members of his family he had taken to New South Wales returned to England, but sadly he learnt just before they left that his youngest son Geoffrey had died of pneumonia back in England at the age of 14. A previous son, Richard, had died at 9 in 1880.

His eldest son Thomas Walter's bride was Katherine Mary Montagu-Douglas-Scott, the eldest daughter of the 6th Duke of Buccleuch (also 8th Duke of Queensbury), who has been estimated as being the largest landowner in the United Kingdom. Her family owned 460,000 acres in England and Scotland and were the aristocrats with the second highest annual income, some £232,000, or around £13m per annum at today's prices.

Among family members with government connections, active in the colonies, was the son of Harry's sister Mabel Brand, Freeman Freeman-Thomas, Marquess of Willingdon. Born in 1866, Freeman rose steadily through the ranks of colonial posts becoming Governor-General of Canada (1926-1931) and Viceroy of India (1931-1936). Originally made Baron Willingdon in 1910, Freeman also made a rapid ascent through the ranks of the nobility from the lowest to the second highest rank, which he achieved in 1936. This rise has been cited as an example of the devaluation of aristocratic titles that occurred in the first half of the 20th century, after "cash for honours" appeared openly for the first time during Lloyd George's Prime Ministership.

Perhaps of even more interest today is the fact that one of Harry's daughters, Margaret, married a Brigadier-General Algernon F. Ferguson. Their great-granddaughter is Sarah Ferguson, the former Duchess of York. Sarah Ferguson is also the great-granddaughter of Katherine Mary's brother, Herbert. Herbert's daughter married Margaret and Algernon Ferguson's son Andrew, Sarah's grandfather. Closely connected, indeed, the Brands. Just to show how closely connected these families are, the Montagu-Scott-Douglas line can also trace their ancestry back to Charles II, the father of Thomas Lennard, Baron Dacre's, wife Anne, the one who earned him the title of Earl of Sussex.

5 People power

When Harry returned to England and took up residence at The Hoo, he found the world a little different from the days when his uncle, Thomas Henry, had been able to petition for the repeal of the Statute of the Staple and assume that his wish would be carried out without dissent from the village. In 1888 Parliament had created elected County Councils, which took over the administrative powers in counties from the old Quarter Sessions, on which the Lords Dacre had almost automatically sat. In 1894 Parliament had created Parish Councils. Although in country districts they administered the same areas as the Church parishes they were purely lay bodies, democratically elected. The curate, now Frederick Sullivan, the grandson of the Frederick Sullivan that had been Tim's son-in-law, even withdrew his candidature when the first council was elected. This was a council made up of villagers, albeit the educated and the skilled. And one

of their first acts was to ask Lord Hampden to reduce the rent on the Garden Fields allotments. A few years later they were asking Lord Hampden for his terms for land for a further set of allotments on the West of the village. In 1904, the council was wrestling with various complicated schemes for the disposal of the village's sewage. With an eye to the cost, they were prepared to accept a scheme on The Paddock, on Kimpton Mill Lane (now Codicote Bottom), adjacent to where the sewage from The Hoo fell. The days when all this was done at the will of, and at the grace of, the Dacres were long gone. The council even took over trusteeship of the village's two charities. (Other matters that concerned that first parish council were litter, dangerous traffic in the High Street, damaged footpaths, and noise.)

6 Land and Wealth

Despite the fall in the value of agricultural land in the latter part of the 19th century, Thomas and Harry had continued to add to the estates, finally purchasing the copyhold title to Leggats or Hoo End Farm along the ridge towards Whitwell on the death of Mr Wellingham in 1897, though borrowing the money by mortgaging the property back to the executors. Harry also continued to develop The Hoo, building the lodge that stands at the top of the drive from Kimpton Church in 1902.

This might be an appropriate time to look back over the previous century at the source of the Brand family income. How were the staff, the houses, the charitable endowments, paid for? Apart from the Park around The Hoo, most of the land was rented out on long or short leases, and there were still manorial fees that the family could charge and tithes that could be collected - £1,000 a year from that source in Kimpton alone.

The management of the estates included a formal "Rent Audit dinner", with all the Hampdens' tenants sitting in their Sunday best below the Steward and the gentlemen farmers at the high table. A special brew of beer, "audit ale" and porter were drunk. Dinners like this were held for the tenants round Codicote at the George and Dragon, where at one time a former Hampden gamekeeper was the landlord.

During the nineteenth century the income from rents, fees, and timber was enough to enable several additional pieces of land to be bought, such as Rustling End, over the Mimram from the Hoo, in 1807, the Parsonage (now Kimpton Grange) in 1805, Ramridge Farm in Kimpton in 1811, plus a further estate, in Barley, near Royston, purchased in 1870. In 1873 the purchase of Carlton Grange brought the total acreage in Carlton and Bradley to 2,600.

The wealth of the Dacres is difficult to put into modern monetary terms, but it was extraordinary compared with that of the workers on their land, of course, and even with the schoolteachers in their schools, who earned £18 a year plus board. In 1873 a figure for income for Lord Dacre was given at £9,527 for 7,100 acres, but this was not the whole of the lands the Dacre family owned. In 1876 the government commissioned a report on land ownership. It is clear that the Dacres were not in the very top elite, the top 30 who earned upwards of £76,000 from their estates in 1880, but the Dacres' income from their lands was shown by a published survey in 1883 as £24,753 p.a. To put this in another context, at that time it was felt that a middle-class person should be able to live comfortably on £300 a year.

In those days, and still in some agricultural tenancies today, ownership of timber remained with the landowner, and there are records throughout the nineteenth century of sales of oak and fir every few years from the Dacre plantations and woods. The price fetched by these lots seems to have varied considerably year by year - fir poles ranged from £19 to £59, oaks from £105 to £223. To put these amounts in perspective, multiplying by 60 or 70 will give a rough estimate of value today.

The Prudential Assurance Company, for reasons we shall come on to, assessed some of the Brands' lands in 1893. According to the Pru, the part near Kimpton was about 4,700 acres or 7.3 square miles, roughly in an oval starting at Ansell's End, running round to Bibb'sworth Hall, over to Codicote, almost up to Whitwell, and back round via The Holt. Around Royston, they owned 6,200 acres. Together with the Carlton lands (1,600 acres) and Bradley land (about 1,000 acres), their total land covered about 21 square miles. The Prudential did not assess all their land, there were also some of the old Brand holdings in Essex, odd pieces of land at, for example, Great Hormead, Manor Park in Ilford, and in Aslacton, Nottinghamshire. And their London town house, which by then was in Grosvenor Street Mayfair, back in a fashionable area. There was also the Glynde estate, some 8,846 acres, or nearly 14 square miles.

Excluding the Glynde estate, the income from the remainder of the land inherited by Henry from his father was £11,000 per annum. In 1883, the income from those lands had been £16,600. It was a time of agricultural depression, caused initially by poor summers in the 1870s which had brought in increased imports of foreign wheat. That wheat was then found to be superior to English wheat for bread-making (it was hard wheat, from Canada and the continent) and easier to mill. Cheap food was a popular political slogan, and there was no political will to raise the price of food. It is recorded that during the last quarter of the 19th century rents and the value of land fell by 25% percent. There are indications that the rents on some of the Brands' farms, including Kimpton Hall, had had to be reduced.

In today's terms an income of £11,000 is perhaps about £660,000, but although that would have paid for a fair number of servants it may not have been quite enough to meet all the obligations of the family. The reason that the Prudential became involved was that in 1893 Harry Brand took out a mortgage of £60,000 (say £3.6m). A number of simultaneous events may have been the cause. Death duties had been levied for many years, but they had begun to bear more heavily in the 1880s and 1890s and upon the death of Thomas in 1890 and Henry in 1892 would have been chargeable. Also, it was of course the custom to make settlements upon children, that is provide in wills for payments to be made to children or grandchildren, normally upon attaining the age of 21 or getting married. Harry had nine children, of whom seven survived, all of whom came of age about that time. There were also changes in the way land was owned - tithes were still payable to the church or to the lord of the manor, but it was now possible to redeem them with a lump sum. Whatever the causes, virtually all the lands were mortgaged.

Other Brands had mortgaged lands before, as we know, but not the whole estate. This was a major step, and over the following years lands that had been built up over generations were sold off to reduce the mortgage. Sometimes these were small fields - some around Kimpton, along the High Street between Claggy Road and Coopers Hill,

Some of the Hampdens' other properties:



The George and Dragon, Codicote (around 1900)



Carlton Grange, Cambridgeshire (now demolished)



Great Bradley Hall, Suffolk

for example (the stretch was then known as Kimpton Bottom) went for individual building plots for an increasingly wealthy middle class, but also some 1,100 acres near Royston. The Prudential allowed some of the money to be kept, requested some in repayment, and insisted that other amounts went to improve the condition of some of the farms. Interest on this mortgage would have taken about £3,000 out of the £11,000. The Prudential did allow payments of £1,000 or so to be made to Eliza, the widow of Henry Bouverie, and to Susan, the widow of Thomas Crosbie, and a lump sum was permitted to be paid of £1,800 to Thomas Walter on his marriage and £1,500 to his wife if she survived him. Later, £20,000 was permitted to be passed to the younger children of Thomas Bouverie and £10,000 to other children, but the Prudential had certain prior rights. But the old concern for the life of the parishioners was not swamped by capitalism; in amongst the complex documentation there can be found permission for an annual payment out of the rent received on a farm in Great Chishall, Essex, of £5 to the local vicar. (Great Chishall has since been formally renamed Great Chishill and is now in Cambridgeshire).

As an indication of the size of Harry's outgoings, consider that the 1901 census shows that living in the Hoo "Mansion" as the census enumerator calls it, were no fewer than twenty servants. A further five were living in the outbuildings. It is possible that some came with their masters and mistresses for there was a family gathering that day, but given that each servant would have been paid something like £20 p.a. if a maid and £40 p.a. if a coachman, this retinue represents an outgoing of some £500 p.a. While in general purchasing power that represents some £30,000 today, the minimum wage today is getting on for £10,000 per year.

7 Man of Business and Public Affairs

Harry did, however, have other sources of income. Following the fall in the value of land and a change in political favour away from land as a source of power and influence, the aristocracy began to lend such skill as they had to the world of business. We find Harry as a director of a couple of banks. One, the National Mortgage and Agency Company of New Zealand, reported that in 1896 he had resigned in favour of his brother, Arthur, which caused some dissent amongst shareholders, especially as Arthur had no colonial experience and business was not going so well. However, the Chairman, Lord Ebury, stated that "for reasons he could not go into...[it was] a good thing". In 1907 the same board expressed their great regret at Harry's Hampden's death, so he clearly kept close contact with the bank. Harry was also on the board of The Land and Mortgage Company of Egypt, a country then very much under British influence. In 1904 he attended the inaugural dinner of The Institute of Directors, at which the address, to cheers from the attendees, praised "the high traditions of English commerce..the good name of Englishmen honoured and respected all over the world and a general feeling that an Englishman's word was as good as his bond".

A rather peculiar business connection of Harry's was the Odams Chemical Manure Company. Reference to this company crops up when it takes a mortgage over a couple of pieces of his land in Kimpton in 1892. The company was set up in East Ham to make artificial fertilizer; another of its products included a much-praised disinfectant, originally used in "farmsteads and stables" and in veterinary practice, but which by 1895 was being promoted for use by nurses.

Harry was as involved with public affairs as his predecessors. He was a Governor of St George's Hospital, at Hyde Park Corner, looking in 1904 at its future on that site and the acquisition of adjoining land. It was agreed that it should stay at the existing site and to draw up plans for expansion. Although the hospital drew its patients from Chelsea and Fulham "with present means of locomotion a mile or two made very little difference". (The hospital closed some years ago and is now the Lanesborough Hotel.) He also sat on a Royal Commission into accidents on railways, in which it was found that nearly one in 18 of all railway employees had been injured in one year (1898) and one in 15 shunters. There had been 212 fatalities. Their recommendations were to improve braking and to request railway companies to investigate the introduction of automatic coupling devices between wagons, such as was compulsory in the USA. They fell short of making it obligatory.

He and Lady Hampden also enjoyed taking part in London Society. Their son-in-law, Col. A. Ferguson paraded them in his four-in-hand carriage at meets in Hyde Park, alongside many noble personages. Passengers in other carriages included Count Benckendorff, the Tsarist Russian ambassador.

Despite the expenses and the fall in value of land, and therefore possibly due to his activities in business, Harry's estate was valued at £160,000 on his death in 1906, of a kidney disease linked with malaria. Both he and Susan, who died in 1909, are buried in Kimpton Churchyard.



The Hoo around the beginning of the 20th century

PART IX

LAST DAYS AT THE HOO:

THOMAS WALTER BRAND, 3rd VISCOUNT HAMPDEN AND 25th BARON DACRE

Born 1869

Married Lady Katherine Mary Montagu-Douglas-Scott 1899

Inherited titles from his father 1906

Sold The Hoo 1938

Died 1958

1 War, Business, and Money

On Harry's death, Thomas Walter became the 25th Baron Dacre and 3rd Viscount Hampden. He was the last Brand to live at Kimpton Hoo.

Thomas Walter began his army career in the 10th Royal Hussars, known as The Prince of Wales's Own. After he joined, the first war in which they played an active part was that against the Boers, between 1899 and 1902. Thomas Walter "served with distinction" in the war and this would explain his absence from the 1901 census and the family gathering which included his wife, Katherine, and their first born, son Thomas Henry, then only 1 year old.

It may have been Thomas Walter's career in the Army, during which he rose to become the regiment's Colonel, which explains why he may appear to be less attached to The Hoo than his predecessors. Two years after inheriting it in 1906 he was to organise a sale of many of its contents. The sale included the chest that Tim had designed to match Horace Walpole's all those years ago on the Grand Tour. The house itself was let to a Mr Walter, and though it appears to have been occupied again by the family by 1914, it was later let to the buyer of the chest, a Mr Harper, who was interviewed by a collector's magazine on the history of the chest in 1932, shortly after he vacated it.

Another explanation might have been financial. Rising death duties and income taxes were beginning to make large country estates less attractive as investments and sources of income. The agricultural depression in the last decades of the nineteenth century saw land values collapse. In addition, improvements in the rights of tenants diminished the authority of the landlords. Many of the landed aristocracy had already begun selling their land and investing in businesses, or just living off the proceeds.

These were years when the privileges and status of the landed aristocracy were under threat from a number of quarters, including the government of Lloyd George, who took away the House of Lords' absolute veto on legislation in 1911, and the phenomenon of the moneyed businessman for whom large estates were a pleasure and an additional symbol of wealth, rather than a family burden (like, for example, Sir Julius Wernher, the diamond magnate, who bought Luton Hoo, originally the home of the Earls of Bute, in 1900).

Henry Bouverie had nine surviving children, his son Henry Robert (Harry) had nine. By 1920 Thomas Walter had had eight. Each would have had a claim on the estate in some form, and settlements on marriage were common and often built in to the provisions of wills a generation or two before the beneficiary. A change in the law in 1892 had allowed the sale of land that had previously been reserved for future generations, and this too triggered disposals

of estates of land and a general shift in sentiment. Nevertheless there was investment in the estate and modernisation in the shape of a traction engine, built to draw heavy guns during the Russian revolution as part of Britain's assistance to the Tsar's troops, but acquired by Thomas Walter when it was completed too late to be sent – the revolution had succeeded. (Still going in 2002 it spent its much of its working life on the estate, and was later converted in 1955 for fairground use.)

Reflecting the trend of the period, Thomas Walter continued his father's connection with the New Zealand Mortgage and Agency Company, and in later years was also on the boards of The National Bank of New Zealand, and of various insurance companies including the Eagle, Star and County, as well as the South London Dwellings Company. At this time banking was one of the few "trades" considered acceptable for a member of the aristocracy. Great names of British banking such as Van der Weyer, Bevan, and Leigh Pemberton are recorded as either marrying into the Brand family (on more than one occasion) or sitting alongside them as board members. One of Harry's sons, Robert H Brand, made a very respectable career as banker amongst other achievements and merits a section in the book later.

On the outbreak of the First World War many sons of the landed gentry went off to fight. For them and for their fathers it was the correct course of action - many titled families owed their position to military action, albeit many generations beforehand. Sadly, their sense of duty was to be profoundly disturbed, one by the considerable losses of life, and two by an ungrateful nation which continued with the steady removal of their historic position in British society.

The Brands were relatively fortunate. The only close relative that Thomas Walter lost was his nephew Victor John Ferguson, the son of his sister, Margaret, who was killed near Amiens in August 1918. Thomas Walter also fought, commanding a brigade for three and a half years, at the age of 46, initially with the Herts Regiment and then the Third Army in France, and by the end of the war had earned the rank of Brigadier-General. He was mentioned in despatches



*Thomas Walter unveiling the War Memorial in Kimpton
The school extension now stands behind the site*

eight times. After the war he became a colonel in the Reserves and in 1920 an Aide-de-Camp to King George V. This role, akin to equerry, is a high honour, but it is mainly ceremonial.

The Parish Council minutes record that in 1917 it had received “a letter from Brigadier General Viscount Hampden to consider the calling of a public meeting to pass the following resolution on Aug. 4th 1917 ‘That at this the third anniversary of the declaration of a righteous war, this meeting of the parishioners of Kimpton records its inflexible determination to continue to a victorious end the struggle in maintenance of those ideals of Liberty and Justice which are the common and sacred cause of the Allies’.” The council unanimously voted to hold the meeting.

The armed forces have played a large part in the life of the Brand family. The Army was a career in his early days for Henry Otway and his father, while the Navy was represented, not just by Tim’s step granddaughter’s husband Sir Frederick Grey and her brother Francis, but also by Thomas Seymour Brand, Henry Bouverie’s younger brother who became a Rear Admiral, and Thomas Walter’s own brother Hubert Thomas Brand, who became an Admiral and was also personally honoured by King George V. Several of the younger sons and daughters of the family also had army or naval careers or married into military families.

Thomas Walter also recognised the valour of the men of Kimpton by extending Susan Lady Dacre’s Working Men’s Institute, adding two rooms.

Three years after the end of the war that Thomas Walter brought about the major change in this new and relatively hostile world. He put 4,000 acres of the Brands’ estates up for auction. If he had found buyers, only the immediate area around The Hoo, and the Glynde estate, would have survived. As it was, much of the Kimpton “outlying estate”, basically the farms around Kimpton, failed to sell, or at least reach their reserve prices. The houses between Kimpton Church and the High Street sold, and away went the lands in and around Royston and elsewhere. The land on which Dacre Crescent and Hampden were to be built was sold, as was the land where the Commons Lane and Lawn Avenue houses now stand. Where Parkfield Crescent now stands was not up for sale - part if not all was leased for the allotments at Garden Fields, Arabella Sullivan’s legacy to the village.

Although Thomas Walter had, in 1917, bought a farm at Kimpton Bottom which was being sold by his neighbour, Aspley Cherry Garrard of Lamer Park (the somewhat disillusioned former polar explorer, who went with Scott on his last expedition), that appears to have been done to consolidate his own adjoining holdings. He also successfully sold off the estates at Carlton and Bradley, and the lands at Codicote save that down by the river.

2 Domestic and Public

Thomas Walter’s desire or requirement to reduce the family’s landholdings did not stop him playing an active part in local affairs, though by now greater security of tenure and greater diversity of incomes in the villages had reduced the status of an aristocrat to more of a symbol than a power. He was appointed as Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire in 1915, a post he was to hold until 1952. The position, which was then honorary, is that of the monarch’s personal representative, and was often given to a retired local notable, senior military officer, member of the aristocracy, or businessman (or woman). In 1924 he was appointed a Lord-in-Waiting to King George V.

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5 miles from Knebworth and Welwyn; 7 miles from Hitchin; 4 miles from Harpenden; 5 miles from Luton; and 7 miles from St. Albans.

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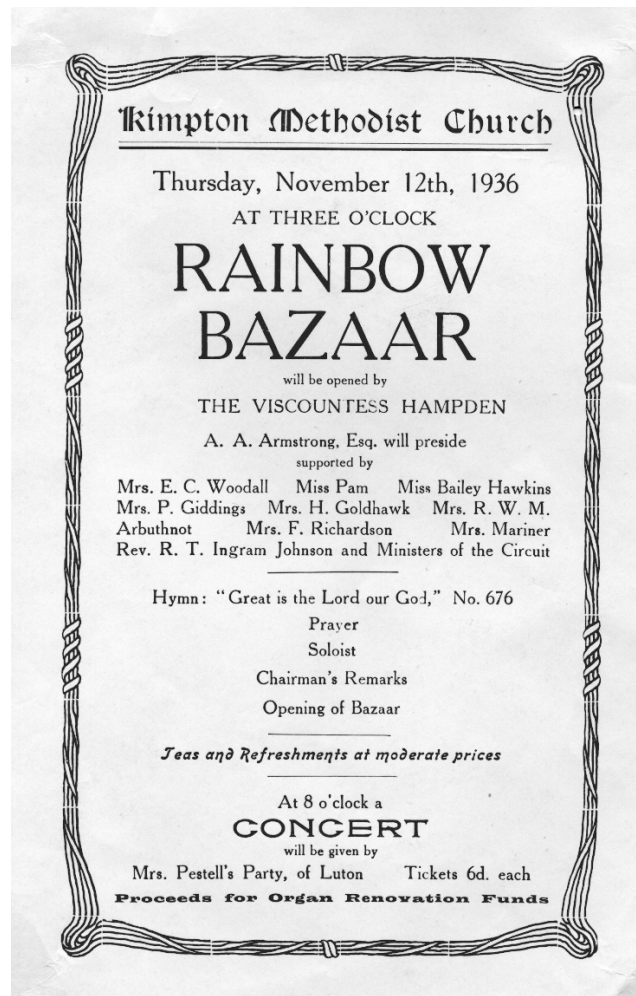
LAND AGENT:—ROBERT GRAY, Esq., The Estate Office, The Hoo, Welwyn, Hertfordshire.

AUCTIONEERS:—Messrs. KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY, 20, Hanover Square, London, W.1 (Telephone : Mayfair 3006. Telegrams: "Galleries, Wesdo, London"); 41, Bank Street, Ashford, Kent : 90, Princes Street, Edinburgh : 78, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow.

*The cover of the sale catalogue of 1921, the beginning of the end for
the Brands' connections with Kimpton*

In his role we see him welcoming the King and Queen to the new Shenley Hospital in 1934, the 2,300-bedded institution built to house the mentally handicapped of Middlesex in the pleasant rural air of Hertfordshire. Meanwhile back in Kimpton Katherine was busy opening such events as the Methodist Church's "Rainbow Bazaar" in 1936, in aid of the organ fund, together with the eminent ladies of the parish such as Miss Bailey Hawkins of the Red House,

and Miss Pam. The old collaboration between the Church of England and the Methodists continued. Thomas Walter was very keen that his workers should attend church each Sunday, asking his estate manager to keep notes on who did not attend. Gossip now has it that for a small payment to the manager absences could be overlooked, but there is no evidence for this.



Whatever his feeling towards The Hoo, his love of the Hertfordshire countryside and his wish to share it can be judged from an impassioned letter to The Times in 1931 appealing for funds to save the trees in Ashridge Forest, then owned by The National Trust and by the Bonar Law College. "It is no exaggeration," he wrote, "if we cannot buy them the trees will be cut down and one of the most beautiful pieces of country accessible to the public..will be irretrievably ruined." The amount requested was £1,500, perhaps £50,000 today. Among the co-signatories, below his, were Lords Salisbury of Hatfield and G M Trevelyan, the historian and great-nephew of the poet and Whig politician Thomas Babington Macaulay. The great tradition of hunting was not neglected and he rode out with the Hertfordshire Hunt, duly recorded, as all hunt meetings were in those days, in The Times, and horsey pursuits were continued in the form of a gymkhana in the Hoo's Park in 1932. This time the beneficiaries were the parish church, and the event also featured "swing boats and cocoanut shies" and the band of Thomas Walter's Hertfordshire Regiment.

We have some family photographs of his family at The Hoo, where his teenage children look typical teenagers and he looks typically military.



Thomas Walter (left), children Charlie and Barbara, wife Katherine with daughter Monica in foreground. Mid 1920s



Thomas Walter on a hunter - The Hoo 1919

Thomas Walter's army and war experience made him highly suited to the role of President of the British Legion in the Home Counties. At one conference, in 1935, he felt it necessary to defend the reputation of Earl Haig. Haig was beginning to be viewed in the way many critics

see him now, as somebody who sacrificed men's lives without proper consideration, even, it was being said, "to cover up any mistakes he had made". Thomas Walter was "confident," he told the members, to applause, that Haig "would be thoroughly vindicated". His only motive had been "to do the best for his country and his men". Thomas Walter had known Haig since 1894, when they were both in their 30s. (Haig's daughter, Alexandra, a famous socialite in the 1920s, was to marry a distant relative of the Hampdens through the Roper line, the eminent historian Hugh Trevor Roper, Baron Dacre of Glanton, in 1954). The conference also heard that £400 (say £20,000) had been raised by the Hertfordshire branch and sent to "the distressed areas" in Northumberland and Durham. Thomas Walter also paid tribute to the "very great value of the work of the women's sections" of the Legion.

In 1924 Thomas Walter drew on his war experience at a prize giving for the boys of the Westminster City School. He told the story of how the men under his command had been digging a trench in July 1918 but had put down their rifles, with the result that 14 were "disgracefully" captured by a surprise raid by the Germans. One of the remaining lieutenants was determined to avenge their honour and daily crawled over to a German sentry post, giving the sentry an "after lunch bomb". Then one day, this time with six men, he did the same and captured 16 Germans in broad daylight. Thomas Walter "did not know what made men do such heroic deeds, unless it was the stamp of their school upon them." "The best thing of all," he told his schoolboy audience, "is to play for your side, not for yourself."

Another angle of his war work led Thomas Walter to an involvement, together with Lord Astor, the celebrated businessman turned politician, in the Central Council for Physical Recreative Training, designed to promote physical fitness in the young. It had the support of the King and Queen, but had to operate "without very much money". As part of this movement in the 1920s to promote physical recreation, schools in Hertfordshire were actively encouraged to put team games and physical training on the curriculum. "Recreation brings health, and health keeps the brain bright and clear, making easier the task of both teacher and scholar" it was asserted by Harold Richardson, the County Council's PT organiser. Thomas Walter did his part in setting up the county branch of the National Playing Fields Association with Richardson.

In 1922 Thomas Walter found himself in court, but unlike his predecessor, not on the bench (nor as defendant) but as a witness to a fatal road accident on the main road just north of Welwyn. A Mrs. Bond was being committed to trial for manslaughter; the driver of "a powerful car" she had attempted to overtake "at no more than fifteen miles an hour" a cyclist and a man pushing a cart, but had swung back in as Thomas Walter's car approached from the other direction. Sadly, she crushed both the cyclist and the man beneath the wheels of her car despite, in Thomas Walter's words, "there was nothing in the circumstances to show carelessness". According to the prosecution it was Mrs. Bond's duty to stop her car, and she was committed for trial in a "prima facie" case of manslaughter.

On a lighter note Thomas Walter was keeping up the family's interest in cricket by being on the MCC governing body and inter alia welcoming the Australians on their 1934 tour, during which England beat the Australians at Lord's for the first time since 1896 (so far - 2008 - they have not yet succeeded in repeating that feat). Thomas Walter's father's comment on Australian cricketers must have seemed only too true as England won only that one match in the test series.

(As an aside, The Times of the 1920s and 1930s is full of reports of social, artistic and business affairs, and of matters of state, but alongside such news items are interesting comments on, inter alia, the growing availability of guns in schools and the increasing popularity of cocaine among all classes of society.)

Geoffrey Harding, whose father took over the tenancy of Bury Farm in the 1920s remembers him as a friendly but remote figure, one who may have lacked a business sense since his father sacked many of the men who “Lordy’s” farm manager had kept on the payroll.



Thomas Walter at Bury Farm (second right)

Perhaps Thomas Walter was not such a good businessman. Jimmy Williamson recalled a conversation with Davy Ross, the gamekeeper in the 1920s (although as Jimmy was born in 1924 this may have been ‘about Davy Ross’): “And Davy always said to me, ‘If you was the, Butler, The House-Keeper, The Estate Farm Manager, or the Head Game-Keeper if you couldn’t make double your wages out of his Lordship there was something wrong with you.’ Because Davy reckoned he had two-pence.... he was given two-pence a head to feed the Beaters at lunch time, right. Well he fed them for a penny, because his Wife made their own bread cos they lived down Rye End. He went out [sic] loads of Rabbits. So they had Rabbit Stew and a lump of Bread. And then, when the Birds went in to the Butchers in Codicote. [He] was a Game Dealer, and he bought the birds of the Hoo Estate. Well you can bet a pound to a penny there was a few more birds than what was in the book. And that was a penny you see so he made hundred percent profit. Davy made enough money to buy a little Farm in Scotland. He left in nineteen twenty something.”

Geoffrey Harding's family, and some of his men, had come up from Wiltshire to take on the farm. It is noticeable that there was considerable movement of tenants and staff around the country, as we have already seen. The Hoo did have some locally-born servants, however, such as Alfred Wells, born at Whitwell, who entered service as a stable boy in 1915 at the age of 11, where he met his future wife Millicent who was working as a maid and had come down from her native Norfolk, where she had worked at Breccles Hall for the Montagus, a family of financial and political standing. They married in 1932, still at The Hoo. Their son,

Robin, still has the teddy bear that Thomas Walter gave him on his first birthday. One story passed down to Robin was that his father was bemused some mornings to find Thomas Walter's horse in its stable-box unusually hot and sweaty, as though it had been ridden. Intrigued, he hid away one night in the stables. In the darkness there entered a silent Thomas Walter, who saddled up his horse and rode off, to return a while later, unsaddle the horse and leave. Sleep-riding?



Arthur Wells (left) in uniform, 1927; and (right) with Millicent (his wife, a maid) and friend in the grounds of The Hoo

3 A Society Wedding

Whatever the economic pressures on the aristocracy there is no doubt that the more attractive members, particularly youthful, handsome and pretty members, were the era's celebrities. For evidence of that, we can see the record kept by Monica, Thomas Walter's youngest daughter, of her marriage in 1933. She was 19, he 25. Monica's late godmother was Lady Mount Stephen, wife of a Scottish Canadian entrepreneur, the first Canadian to be awarded a British title. She lived at Brocket Hall, and had left Monica £3,000 upon her wedding. The bridegroom was d'Arcy Lambton, a descendant of the 1st Earl of Durham and distantly related to Monica through his mother. The then Earl was a cousin, and an uncle, George, had turned his natural love of horses into a career as a racehorse trainer, successfully winning that year's Derby. In the photos, the moustached d'Arcy looks every inch an aristocrat. The wedding was at St Martin's-in-the Fields, there were traffic jams in Trafalgar Square.

Among Monica's four bridesmaids was a German princess, Marie Louise Reuss, descended from the Princes of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, still clinging onto their privileges in the collapsing Weimar Republic (Marie-Louse was to stay in Germany throughout the Hitler years and the War). Another bridesmaid was Miss Jasmine van der Weyer, from the family of her grandfather's first wife. And virtually every newspaper in the country, including regional papers from all over Britain, carried at least a report if not a photograph. Her "dowry" of £3,000 was frequently mentioned. The bridesmaids wore green, to defy superstition. Sadly, d'Arcy was to die in a car accident in 1938.



Bridesmaids in Green Gowns

**HON. MONICA BRAND
DEFIES SUPERSTITION**

Bridesmaids dressed in green were an unusual feature of yesterday's wedding at St. Martin-in-the-Fields of the Hon. Monica Brand and Mr. D'Arcy Lambton.

Miss Brand, who is nineteen and the youngest daughter of Viscount and Viscountess Hampden, is not superstitious about the so-called unlucky colour, for while she was wearing oyster satin her four attendants wore apple green chiffon velvet.

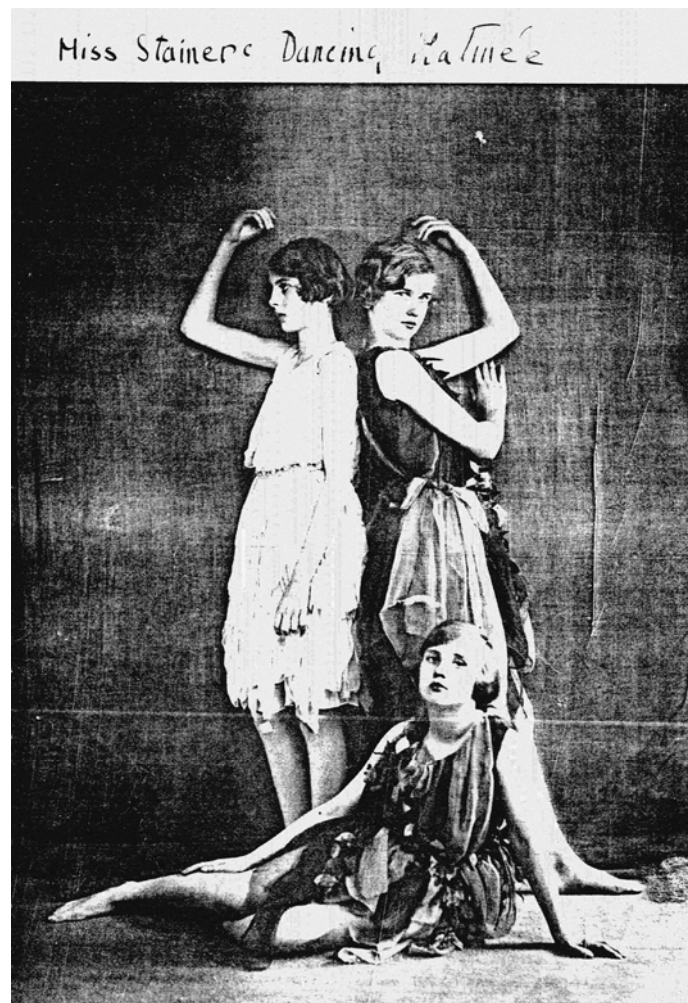
One of the bridesmaids was a member of a famous German noble family, Princess Marie Luise Reuss.

Huge crowds gathered outside the church, and there were murmurs of admiration when the bride arrived, ten minutes late, and the women in the crowd were able to catch a glimpse of her satin gown and the veil of old Brussels lace, several feet in length.

How The Daily Mirror reported Monica's wedding



Monica at The Hoo, aged 6. Below Monica (foreground), sister Elizabeth standing right



4 Time to go

The influence of the old landed aristocracy was continuing to decline throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The world was becoming ever more complex, what was needed were skills and education. Barriers to entry in the form of examinations meant that the educated upper middle classes had taken over the aristocrats' old areas of power - government, the civil service, the armed services - and with rents no longer sufficient to maintain the old landed estates, the aristocracy either adapted, marrying into money, exploiting their skills elsewhere, or fell into decline. This was the era in which novelists would begin portray members of the old upper classes as seedy, shady or figures of fun (Agatha Christie, P G Wodehouse, for example), and in which Noel Coward, the son of a piano tuner, would write the lines: "The stately homes of England how beautiful they stand To prove the upper classes have still the upper hand; Tho' the fact they have to be rebuilt And frequently mortgag'd to the hilt Is inclin'd to take the gilt off the gingerbread, And certainly damps the fun, Of the eldest son." On the other hand, whether sympathetically portrayed or not, we find characters in novels by Waugh, Lawrence and Isherwood conveying a profound and mystifying sense of loss at the passing of the old moneyed estates and a horror of the "vulgarity" that was succeeding them.

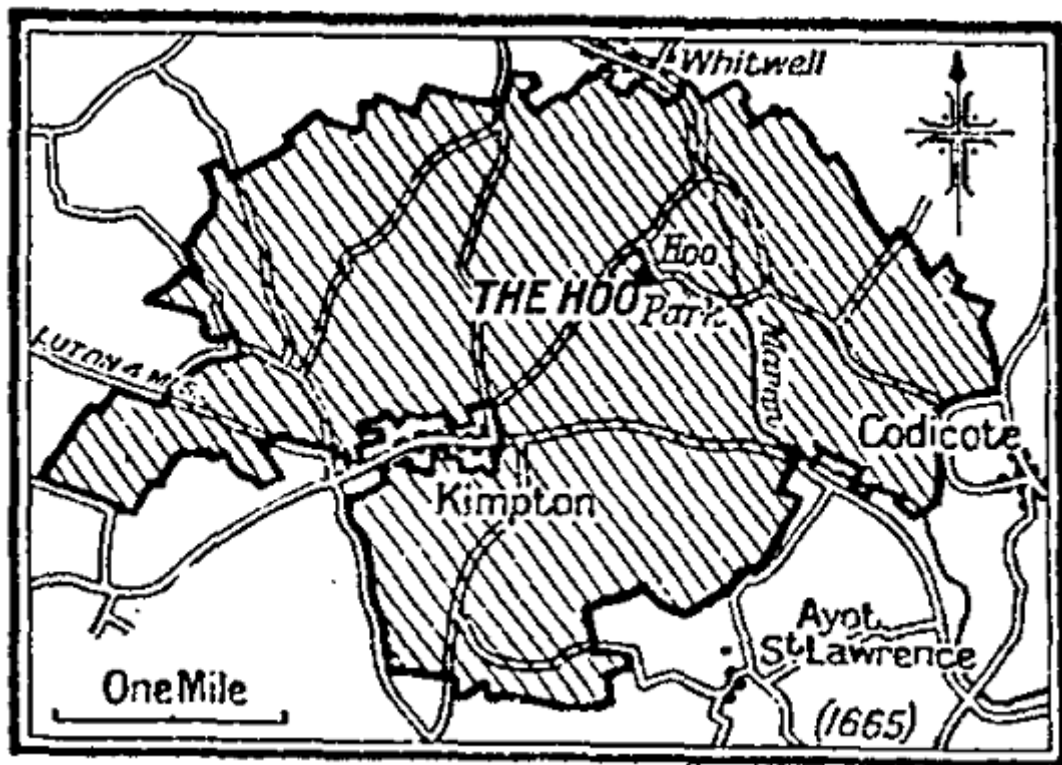
It was in 1938 that Thomas Walter finally completed the sale of The Hoo estate, and this time, not just the unsold outlying parts, but the house itself and the park. Two centuries of Brand ownership were over. In a letter to his tenants, he wrote, "I am assured that the estate will remain intact, that there is no idea of any building development, and that tenants will be treated sympathetically, with no likelihood of being disturbed...[we have] the assurance that the character of the estate will be retained. It was with great reluctance that I came to this decision to sell." The reason was that "I am unable to live at The Hoo, and my son feels that he will also be unable to do so." Was it age (Thomas Walter was 69) or the increasing burden of taxes and maintenance? Whereas Harry was constructing a lodge for The Hoo in 1902, about thirty years later Thomas Walter was debating the fate of one of the original lodges at the end of the main drive. Rebuild or demolish? It was demolished.

Thomas Walter and Katherine had been living mainly at their London residence, by then in Cumberland Terrace, near Regent's Park. They also had a house on the Isle of Wight. The Hoo was always up for letting in the 1930s, although not apparently often, for their faithful gardener Mr Cann resigned in 1934, and Katherine wrote, "I don't blame you, as it must be horrid work, working with an empty house & none of the people about to take any interest in things, & really no money being put in the garden to improve it. I have often thought how very dull it must be for you." Their formal position on the Committee of the Hertfordshire branch of the Red Cross bore their London address of Great Cumberland Place.

The buyer was Oxford University, who had just received a significant donation from Lord Nuffield, the Morris car manufacturer, which was to be invested to provide a steady income. With rents on the various farms of £6,000, and a purchase price of £142,000, The Hoo estate of 4,000 acres, fully let and with two miles of trout fishing, was seen as a good investment opportunity. The manorial rights to The Green at Kimpton, however, were not sold. Instead, Thomas Walter presented them to the people of Kimpton.

Just before the sale Thomas Walter auctioned the remaining contents of The Hoo. From two days of auctions held at the house itself Christies achieved £6,000 – the same as a year's income from the estate – from Thomas Walter's excellent collections of books and furniture.

A first edition of “Tom Jones”, dated 1749, spoke of the literary interests of Thomas Brand, while a carpet, especially woven for a later Thomas, the 23rd, in 1840 fetched the equivalent of several thousand pounds. Chippendale, Sheraton and Adam furniture and a George I chest were noted by The Times as making exceptional prices. One particular Chippendale piece was festooned with medallions showing “amatory subjects”. Christies held an art sale later, although one piece, in the Brand family since the late 18th century, did not go on the market and today is on loan to the National Gallery: a set of sketches by Rubens for a ceiling in the Banqueting House at the Palace of Westminster.



The estates that Oxford University purchased

The sale of the Hoo Estate was just one of the subjects in that quarter’s parish magazine, and took up half of a column. There seems to have been an acceptance that the situation was inevitable. “The house,” it reads “has been unoccupied for some years.” But it mentions the “very personal association with the Hoo...we have always looked upon the Brand family as belonging to Kimpton, and Kimpton belonging to them.” It goes on to speak of a “personal loss...Viscount and Viscountess Hampden have endured themselves to us by their never failing and unassuming interest and kindness in numberless ways.”

5 Robert Brand, the celebrated younger brother

Although this history concentrates on the elder sons, the title holders, the intriguing exploits of Thomas Walter’s brother Robert Henry are well worth reading. Robert Henry began his career as a civil servant in South Africa at the beginning of the 20th century. He was fortunate to serve under Milner, the Governor, who, following the defeat of the Boers, was determined to continue Rhodes’s dream that the British Empire might one day stretch from Cape to Cairo. Milner gathered around him bright and influential men like Robert, mainly from Oxford, who gained the nickname of “Milner’s Kindergarten” and who are said to have

formed a quasi “secret society” heavily influencing British politics for many years. Another member of Milner’s Kindergarten was the novelist John Buchan, best known for his stories of daring and adventure, like “The 39 Steps”. In his other life, however, he was also active in public service, holding a number of posts culminating in the Governor-Generalship of Canada in 1935.

Certainly Robert Brand was to move in elevated circles, and was connected with Prime Ministers Asquith and Rosebery. He served in the transitional government of the former Boer Colonies, and drafted the constitution of the new Union of South Africa. During the First World War was a member of the Imperial Munitions Board of Canada and deputy chairman of the British Mission in Washington, and was an advisor to the government at the Versailles peace conference. While in Washington he married the sister of Nancy Astor, the first female MP and wife of Waldorf Astor, the American Anglophile and heir to a vast fortune from land and hotels (and co-founder with Thomas Walter of the CCPR). They had bought Cliveden, the stately home on the banks of the Thames, and around them the Kindergarten had gravitated to form the so-called “Cliveden Set”.

Many of the Kindergarten were Imperialists, who believed that the combination of Britain and the six “white dominions” (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Irish Free State and Newfoundland) could and should form an alliance to equal the growing power of The United States. From this point of view, Continental Europe was not of concern to Britain; the appropriate response to the rising Fascist tendencies was to recognise them as partly justified by the harsh terms imposed on Germany at the end of the First World War, and to assume that they were merely a phase. Robert, however, had had closer experience of their darker side, and did not share this stance.

During the Second War Robert helped negotiate the loan that the United States made to Britain for post war reconstruction. In the meantime he had joined Lazards, the merchant bank, where he was to become managing director, and became a director of Lloyd’s Bank and a board member of The Times. In recognition of his work for the government he was awarded his own title, Baron Brand, in 1946, though as he had no male heirs the title is now extinct following his death in 1963. His nephew, Thomas Henry, Thomas Walter’s eldest son and next holder of the Hampden and Dacre titles, took over as managing director of Lazards on his retirement in 1946.

It is probable that it was through Robert’s connections with Oxford (he had been a Fellow of All Souls’ College since 1901) that the University came to purchase The Hoo estate, since Thomas Walter was a Cambridge man, attending Trinity College, after Eton.

PART X

POSTSCRIPT

1 The Hampdens after The Hoo

Thomas Walter did not sever his connection entirely, however, for he moved into the old Codicote Mill, once the home of water and then steam power, and now to be a gentrified country residence. One of the things he did was to dig an outdoor swimming pool fed by the waters of the Mimram. In an event which perhaps symbolised the diminishing rural nature of the county after the war, the water level in many rivers such as the Mimram fell as a result of an increasing demand for water in the towns, and the pool dried up. The fish that had been so prolific in the past had dwindled too in the county's rivers, one theory being that it was due to the lakes at stately homes like The Hoo having been drained at the start of the Second World War to prevent them reflecting moonlight and thus being used by German bombers for navigation. This action had, it was said, deposited inorganic silt and rubbish along their courses.

He remained Lord Lieutenant of the county and it was in this role that gave him a final opportunity to put into practice his Army training. When the decision was made at the outbreak of war to set up the Home Guard as a civilian defence force designed to hamper any invading army, the job was given to each county's Lord Lieutenant.



Mr. C. J. Patrick
Headmaster
Kimpton School

Mr. C. Canham

Mr. H. Wardill

Mr. Edgar Stone
Architect

**Mr. Charles
Smith**
Builder

**Lord
Hampden**

**Mrs. Elsie
Harding**

*Thomas Walter at the opening of Kimpton Memorial Hall,
built in memory of the village's war dead, in 1956 aged 87*

Katherine, Lady Hampden, died in 1951 at Codicote Mill. At her funeral in Kimpton Parish Church one of the guests was her niece, her sister's daughter, who was now the Duchess of Gloucester. Thomas Walter passed away in 1958. Both Thomas Walter and Katherine are buried in Kimpton Churchyard.

The year of Thomas Walter's death, 1958, was in many ways the passing of an era; it was the last year that the daughters of the aristocracy were paraded in front of Royalty at the annual Debutants' Ball. The aristocracy, it was judged, were too mixed up with new money and Americans; it was said that "any tart" could join.

The son that Thomas Walter referred to in his last letter to his tenants, as "no longer able to reside at The Hoo" was Thomas Henry, born in 1900, who was to become the 26th Baron and 4th Viscount, the director of Lazard's following on from his uncle Robert Henry. His wife, Leila, came from an Army family.

For 75 years, ever since Henry Bouverie, the first to hold the newly-revived title of Viscount Hampden inherited his brother's title, the titles of Baron Dacre and of Viscount Hampden were held by the same person. As we know, however, while the Dacre title can be inherited by a female, a viscountcy like the Hampden title cannot.

Thomas Henry had no sons, so on his death in 1965 the Viscountcy went to his brother, Lt-Col David Francis Brand (also a bank director, this time of ANZ Bank) and in turn to his son, Anthony David, the 6th Viscount, who lived at Glynde until his death in January 2008, and to his son, Francis.

The Barony on the other hand went into "abeyance", since it is a peculiarity of the Baron title that it is not necessarily the oldest daughter who inherits (though it is always the oldest son). Sadly, only two of Thomas Henry's four daughters survived him, and the title was eventually granted to the older survivor, Rachel Leila, who is related to the Lambtons and incidentally is married to the playwright William Douglas-Home, brother of the former Tory Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, who six years after her grandfather's death was ousted by the blunt-speaking middle-class man-of-the-people Harold Wilson as a major sign of the passing of the aristocracy as a political force. (However, we should note that Sandra Howard, the wife of the recent leader of the Conservative party Michael Howard, was first married to Rachel Leila's nephew, Cecil Robin Douglas-Home.)

The names Dacre and Hampden are recorded in road names in Kimpton placed long after the sale of the estate. The land across which the roads run was one of the first sizeable areas to be sold off by Thomas Walter; bought in the 1920s sales it was a series of fields and orchards - a few houses were built, and part became a caravan site for local residents until development in the 1960s. The same fate has befallen most of the other plots round the village purchased at the time. Other than the Garden Fields site (Parkfield Crescent) the land purchased by Oxford University has however remained practically undeveloped, protected by the post-war Green Belt.

2 The Hoo after the Hampdens

As for The Hoo, it found new tenants, tenants who were to write glowing and fond reports of the place. First, the London and North Eastern Railway evacuated their London headquarters and occupied The Hoo until 1945 when they moved back to Town. Their farewell dinner

souvenir programme speaks of the Hoo: “Do you, I wonder, e’er remember The high spirits of the year at Hoo? The snowdrifts of that grim December The triumphs of the Hoo Revue? The putting and the hard court tennis The Stable’s joyous opening rites The dry lake bridge that mimics Venice The sunny days, the glamorous nights?” The poet fondly remembers also evenings in the pubs of Kimpton, Whitwell and Codicote, and “the smithy and the sparkling brooks.” Peace, while the rest of the world was at war.



H.Q. 1 Calling
Some friends to a Farewell Party
“I’LL PUT YOU THROUGH”

How the LNER celebrated their departure from The Hoo

Next came ICI, who were developing their base at the newly expanding Welwyn Garden City. Robin Wells remembers attending their Christmas parties as a member of the Whitwell Handbell Ringers - large open fires and excellent hospitality.



ICI cleaned the house of ivy, but ran a large metal fire escape up the side

Many of the staff were local, such as Diane Graham from Kimpton who remembers the place with fondness. As well as the various scientific and administrative departments, it housed students from their new laboratories in Blackfan Road. They too had a farewell dinner in December 1954, when the departments moved into their new offices, and in their souvenir booklet we feel the same affection for the place.

That was the last time that The Hoo was occupied. In an article in Hertfordshire Countryside of around 1957 we read that “the owners have been unable to find a new tenant and have come to the conclusion that they have no choice but to demolish it. This county landmark which has stood for well-nigh 300 years, will therefore, like so many other mansions for which no further use can be found, shortly be just another memory”. In those days there was little interest in large houses that were expensive to maintain and those which did not get used for private schools or hotels, or attractive enough to find a rich businessman, were a liability. Hundreds of country houses were demolished in that decade.

The Hoo had some residual use, though. The water supply, on which farms such as Rye End still depended, was still pumped up from the river and stored. Frequently the valve or some mechanism would jam. Jimmy Williamson, the local electrician, would climb into the old house, up the stairs, to free it. The coach house and the bridge over the now-drained lake, were given some protection from demolition, however.

In 1957 the interior fittings were auctioned; items such as wood and marble mantelpieces, ornate door frames, bookcases, a wood and glass panelled telephone kiosk, the “imposing” oak staircase (treads sold separately), and even the window frames and light fittings, were all laid out and open to offers. Georgina Thompson, who with her husband had recently taken over the tenancy of Kimpton Hall Farm, remembers looking round the gaunt old building and marvelling at the “30 or so” box rooms on the top floor, no doubt the servant’s quarters. She recalls “rows of white baths” spread out on the lawns.



Splendid fittings, yours to buy, from the pre-demolition sale, 1957

In 1958 the house was demolished, together with the adjoining outbuildings. The water supply was rerouted to a new tower. Just three years short of its 300th birthday, Jonathan Keate's mansion was gone. The coach house, the next-door stables and some cottages nearby were left, for the land around did have a tenant, the local firm of Abbotshay Chickens. The site was to be marked on maps as "slaughter house".

Abbotshay Chickens had started at another former Brand property, Abbotshay near Ayot St Lawrence. Charlie Graham, for a long time the manager of the business, describes how at its peak 12,000 chickens were brought in to The Hoo every day from all around the country. A staff of 50 or 60 staff, mainly women, were collected from all the surrounding villages and as far away as Hitchin and Stevenage to process the birds. Every evening lorries would arrive to transport the packaged birds to Smithfield market and for the growing chains of Fine Fare and Co-Op. Increasingly strict hygiene regulations had led to considerable expenditure, with automated plant and conveyor belts contrasting more and more with the buildings in which they were housed.

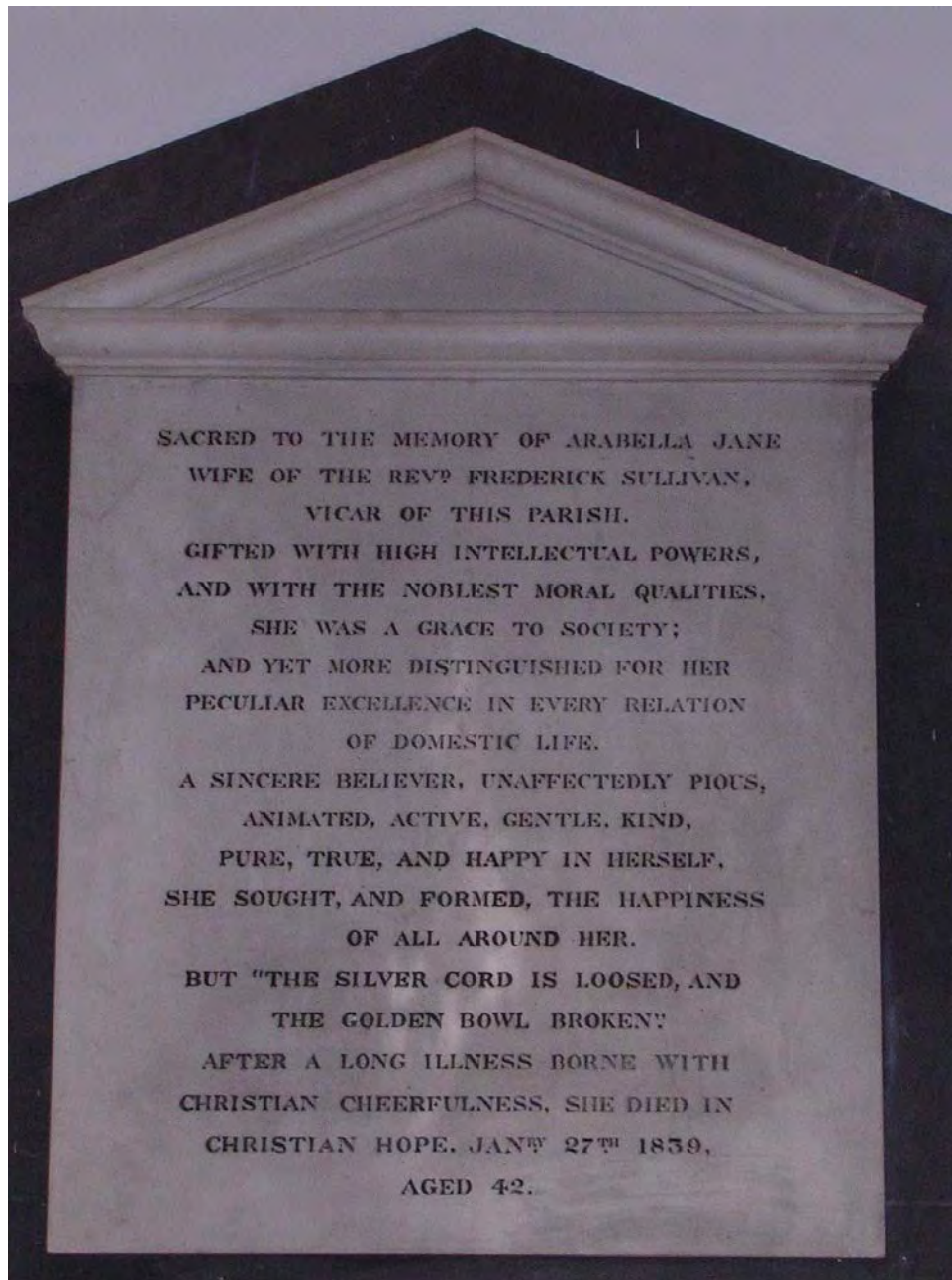
Eventually, however, the rise of the larger supermarket chains with their demands for greater throughput made the business less viable. After a spell as a plant for packaging salmon and game from Scotland and Lincolnshire for export to France, Fitch Lovell, the then owners, decided to close it apart from a handful of people. Most of the workers lost their jobs, though some retired and others went to work at Stagenhoe for Sue Ryder. Finally, the site was sold in 1990 in a deal that was to transform the land back into residential use.

During his time at The Hoo, Charlie Graham recalls the overgrown gardens which he and his daughters would explore - at one time finding an iron band still attached to an old cedar tree - was it, perhaps, the remains of a child's swing? The path up the old drive and across to the Kimpton drive was then open to riders and walkers and the gates were not allowed to be closed.

In 1990 the land was sold to Kenneth Jarrett, a young chemist with ICI who had stayed at The Hoo and could see its potential for the luxury housing development which now stands there. Chambers' coach house, left virtually derelict and surrounded by ugly sheds, has been turned into one of the luxury houses. The residents have restored his bridge, which had lost its parapets, with the help of English Heritage. The Hoo is now once again residential, but will its inhabitants will be as closely-connected with royalty and statesmen, artists and the Church, the armed forces and the government, or as influential over so many acres, or as conscious of their pedigree and duties, as the Brands, Keates and de Hoos were for the previous thousand years?



PART XI:
VISIBLE MONUMENTS: WHAT YOU CAN SEE TODAY



Among the many monuments in Kimpton Church to the families of The Hoo there is this paean of praise to Barbarina's daughter, Arabella

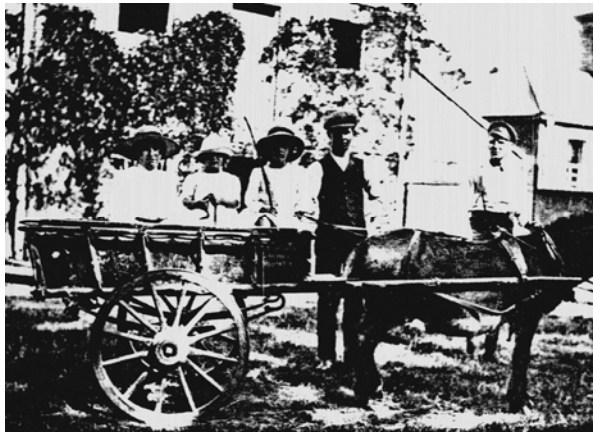


*Above: Tim and Barbarina's grave in Kimpton Churchyard.
Below: The Workingmen's Institute today - the Dacre Rooms used by the Youth Club.
The foundation stone can be seen on the left of the door.*





Chambers' listed coach house has been restored as a private house. Access is not open to the public. Below: in 1917, with Thomas Walter's family and servants in the foreground, and in the mid 1980s, after the closure of the food processing plants



Chambers' bridge over Capability Brown's now-drained lake has now been restored by the residents of the new houses at The Hoo. It lies on a public footpath



SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has been compiled from a number of sources, many of which can be found on the internet or at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) at County Hall, Hertford. Articles in "Herts Past and Present" published by Hertfordshire Association for Local History have revealed interesting nuggets. "Recollections of a Girlhood" by Fanny Kemble can be found on the internet, as can a copy of "A Family Chronicle" compiled by Gertrude Lister from letters kept by Barbarina Brand's granddaughter, and an illustrated version is kept at HALS. I have drawn on "Henry and Eliza" by Anthony Hampden and a number of illustrations come from it with permission, from John Pollington's "A Short History of Kimpton", and from Eric L Lawrance's transcription of the "Occurrences" noted by the Codicote diarist, available from Codicote History Group. Other sources were "Burke's Peerage", "The Cliveden Set" by Norman Rose for the life of Robert Brand (Jonathan Cape) and "The Decline & Fall of the British Aristocracy" by David Cannadine about the economic and political influences (Penguin).

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Illustrations on page 12 (The Hoo, from architectural drawings by Buckler) and page 33 (Barbarina, from "A Family Chronicle") are reproduced by permission of HALS. Other illustrations are reproduced with the permission of the owners and/or donors where known, including most of those of members of the Brand family.



The Hoo by Kimpton in Hertfordshire has been the home of three families, most notably the Brands, later to become the Lords Dacre and Hampden. In this concise account of their influential lives we meet artists, politicians and aristocrats both noble and ignoble, against the backdrop of events and movements in British history and the lives of ordinary people.

