



THE WHITE HORSE, DORKING.

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BY

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OWING to the kindness of Trust Houses Ltd. in allowing use of their title deeds I am able, with the help of the late Dr. W. Hooper's notes at Castle Arch, to add to the printed history of the White Horse at Dorking. The earliest mention of the property occurs in Cottonian MS. Nero E.6 in the British Museum, this being a register (in Latin) of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England, compiled in 1442. On folios 151 and 151d is an undated entry described as a charter of William, Earl Warenne:

For the health of my soul and the souls of my ancestors and successors I have granted to the Templars, in frankalmoin, Pagan Wrong, my man, with his whole tenement that he held of me in the vill of Dorking; to hold freely of me and my heirs quit of all secular service.

Folios 152d and 153 contain an extent of the lands and tenements of Shepley (Shipley, Sussex) in 1308, and describe Dorking as a member of this manor.

In the said member of Derkyng that they had of the certain rent, of a free tenant, 2s.

They say that an ancestor of John, the now living Earl Warenne, whose name they do not recall, gave them the said rent in Derkyng, to hold in fee and frankalmoin.

This extent of 1308 was presumably drawn up on the occasion of the suppression of the Templars and the transference of their property to the Hospitallers.

In the absence of the original court rolls there is a gap in the history of the house until just before the suppression of the Hospitallers in 1540, from which point we can pick up the threads from another survey in the British Museum. This is Additional MS. 27535, a Survey of the Manor of Dorking and West Betchworth in 1622. The property under discussion is numbered 189 in "Dorkinge. Estburgh." We learn that on May 4, 1531:

At the Court of Wm. Weston Prior of St. Johns of Jerusalem in England holden at the Mannor of Clerkenwell Myles Hogg Clark surd a Cotag with a curtel and a crofte adioyninge in Dorkinge late Wm. Lanes to the use of George Rolle gen and Xtofer his sonn etc.

This Myles Hogg was vicar of Dorking, and had lived on the premises since at least 1520. In that year he had an alarming experience which can be traced in the Star Chamber Proceedings at the Public Record Office (St. Ch. 2/24/148 and 2/33/13). Hogg complained that one day while he was sick by the visitation of God in his own house five local men with "dyvers yll dysposyd Ryotous

persons" with bills and staves assaulted beat and wounded Thomas Averei his servant and pursued him to Hogg's house door, and these would have killed him had not help come to him from "dyvers discrete and honest men" who were at the time visiting Hogg. The vicar let his servant in, and shut the door against his pursuers, whereupon they tried to break down the door, and "with greate and detestable oaths" threatened to kill Averei in his master's presence although Hogg had given them no cause of complaint, and promised that Averei should be forthcoming to answer any charges his attackers might bring against him. Finally their threats were so alarming that the vicar was forced to send Averei away for safety at midnight, and himself though still sick to come to London to plead his cause before the Star Chamber. There it was alleged that Averei had started the trouble and "did lay in awayte with hys sword and buckeler to make affray and assaute uppon Rychard Reed," whereupon Reed took possession of the sword and gave it to his wife to take care of.

After 1531 the next relevant date in the Survey is May 3, 1574, when there are the following entries:

At the view of Francpleg and court baron holden at Clerkenwell Tho. Wroth Styward there Recorded a sum to him pd out of courte by Xtofer Rolle gen to the use of Ellynor Gaynsford wid and her heires and assignes for ever, one Cottage with a Curtel and a crofte of land Adioyning in Darken alias Dorking in the County of Surr late Wm Lanes etc.

Ellynor Gaynsford wid hadd license att the Court holden att Clerkenwell for the Mannor of St. Johns of Jerusalem in England to let to farm a Cottage with a curtel and a crofte of land Adioyninge lyinge in Dorking called the Crosse howse for 21 yeres.

It is well known that the Templars marked their property with crosses, and in fact a papal bull of 1223 complained that the English Templars also put crosses on houses which did not belong to them.

We now come to the 17th-century entries in the Survey, before which time part of the now existing house appears to have been built, according to the County Council's *Antiquities of Surrey*.

On October 24, 1609:

Edw. Sackville gen. for a some of money demised to Jo: Hatcher all his two messuages in the streete called Rolles boundinge between the messuage of Wm Radcliffe gen towards the west the ten of J. Goodwyns est the K: highwaye North And the land of Wm Radcliff South And ij acres of land upon Bughams hill for 21 yeres from the date of the lease for the yerely rent of a Redrose at Midsommer with a proviso that if 45 li be pd on the 20th day of November 1610 to the sd Jo: Hatcher at this house the lease to be void etc.

In 1622, the date of the Survey, we find that:

The same Edward Sackville gent., holdeth by Copie of the Mannor of Clerkenwell sometymes the Mannor of St Johnes of Jerusalem in England on ten in Estreete of Dorkinge sometymes called the crosse house and now called the Rolls, which premises were sometymes one Wm Lanes after Myles hoggs after George Rolles gen after Xtofer Rolles gen whoe surr the same premises to Ellynor Gaynsford wid mother of the sd Edw. Sackville. . . .

The name of Tho. James is bracketed against the property.

Now we come to the title deeds, an abstract of which is at the County Record Office at Kingston. The earliest (T.D. 90/1/1) is dated January 2, 1643, and records an

Assignment by Thomas Godman of Lethered, esq., to Thomas James of Dorking, yeoman, of messuages in Dorking called Roulles and Tipsham, also a close called Bungham Hill (2 a.) and another parcel of land lying on the backside of the said messuage called Roulles (2 a.), leased 16th November 8 Jac. 1 (1610) by Edward Sackvill of Dorking, gent., to the said Thomas Godman for 100 years.

Here we break off for another survey, consulted by kind permission of the Duke of Norfolk's solicitors, Messrs. Holmes, Campbell and Co., at their office at Arundel Road, Littlehampton. It reads:

The Surveigh of the Manor of Dorking in the Countie of Surrie performed by William Foster Anno Domini 1649.

p. 74. Thomas James (now William Marter). Hee holdeth of the Mannor of Clarkenwell some tyme the Mannor of St. Johns of Jerusalem A Tenement and back-side (lying in the South side of the East streete of Dorking) called formerly the Crosse-house, now Rolls-tenement Bounded on the North East in parte with George Rose his Tenement called Rounds, in parte in parte [*sic*] with Chergate Crofte, and in parte with Tephams last mentioned: On the South west with Richard Hollmans land. And on the South east with the land of Sir Ambr. Browne.

A contemporary map belonging to the Survey shows the house as being opposite Mill Lane, thus identifying it with the site of the present White Horse.

On May 30, 1659 (T.D. 90/1/2), Thomas James of Dorking, brasier, assigned the premises to Daniell Ryall, citizen and carpenter of London, and John Shoe of Horley, yeoman. Dated September 23, 1742, is a counterpart lease (T.D. 90/2/1)

for 50 years by Hannah Rose of Hounsdtich, London, wid. of William Rose, late citizen and tallow chandler of London, and Elizabeth Rose of the same, spinster, dau. of the said William Rose, and William Gardner of Guldeford, carpenter, eldest son and heir of Anne Gardner, decd., late wife of William Gardner late of Dorking, maltster, decd., to James Smith of Dorking, potter, of two moieties of two messuages on the south side of the East Street of the town of Dorking, one lately in the tenure of Joseph Dudley now decd. and the other lately in the tenure of William Dudley, blacksmith, with liberty of ingress, egress and regress to load or unload wood or goods into or out of the yards.

On November 7, 1750 (T.D. 90/2/2) comes the first mention of the house as the White Horse (and presumably as an inn), and also the beginning of the century-old connection with the Ansell family. This is a

Counterpart lease for 21 years by William Gardiner and Elizabeth Rose of Barbican, London, to Edward Ansell of Dorking, carpenter, of two moieties of a messuage on the south side of East Street, Dorking, formerly called the Cross house and now known by the sign of the White Horse and a piece of ground lying to the south thereof, adjoining the footway leading from Ram Ally, also a close of land containing 2 acres at Bungham Hill in Dorking Downs.

Dated August 17, 1772, are two deeds, T.D.s 90/2/12 and 13. One is a

Counterpart lease for 14 years by Edward Ansell of Dorking, innkeeper, to Jacob Hewitt of Dorking, innkeeper, of a messuage and inn on the south side of East Street now in the occupation of the said Jacob Hewitt, reserving to the lessor liberty to pass through the yard and to use the carpenter's yard adjoining the said premises, with liberty for the lessee to put a carriage under and in the passage that leads from the inn yard to the said carpenter's yard, and to use the two-stall stable and the granary over the passage.

The other deed is a

Bond of Jacob Hewitt by which he is bound to Edward Ansell in £100 to pay £10 per annum, part of the rent of the premises leased, the rent having been given in the lease at a lower figure to enable the lessee to pay lower taxes.

A deed of February 28, 1781 (T.D. 90/2/18) tells of the death of Edward Ansell, and informs us that the parcel of land called Bunghams was sold to Joseph Denison, Esq. The *Victoria County History*, Vol. II, p. 278, indicates that Denison's property was that now called Denbies.

A 19th-century court roll book has been consulted by kind permission at Messrs. Holmes, Campbell and Co.'s Arundel office. From this we learn that at a court held at Dorking on October 18, 1802, it was presented that:

E dward Ansell late of Dorking Carpenter who held . . . a Messuage called the White Horse in East Street in Dorking [has died]. And also that William Ansell of Dorking aforesaid Surgeon is his Brother and heir and now holds the said premises.

This was, of course, not the Edward Ansell of 1781, as is proved by the Land Tax returns at the County Record Office. There Edward Ansell the Elder is given as proprietor in 1780, and plain Edward Ansell from 1781 to 1801. Then, as we should expect, we read of William Ansell, whose name appears until 1830. It was in the latter's time that George Scharf the Elder painted his fine water-colour of the White Horse, dated 1823, now in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. George Scharf, born in Bavaria in 1788, died in 1860; a valuable collection of his drawings was deposited in the British Museum in 1862. His son, Sir George Scharf (1820-95) was director of the National Portrait Gallery. The sign in the drawing bears the name of William Penn who, according to Rose's *Recollections of Old Dorking*, p. 29, claimed to be descended from the founder of Pennsylvania. A note on the back of the drawing quotes the inscription on the front of the inn as "The White Horse Inn and Original Posting House." Edwards's *Companion from London to Brighthelmston*, 1801, refers to the post-chaise and saddle horses to be had here, stating also that the inn, though the least of the three in the town, had the greatest share of business on market days. The *Universal British Directory* of 1793 stated that the Brighton coach via Steyning stopped here for meals. A brief note on the White Horse and the coaching revival

is in the Lyne Collection ("ENYL. 1938," p. 4) at Castle Arch. Displayed in the hotel is a coach horn inscribed "'Venture' Post Chaise. London to White Horse, Dorking. W.R.III, 1837."

(The view of the White Horse is reproduced by kind permission of the Oxford University Press.)