

THE HISTORY OF THE OAKLEIGH ESTATE-PEMBURY ROAD

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OVERVIEW

Oakleigh, as it was originally called, was designed for its first occupant, William Hogg(1825-1895) and his wife Eliza Susannah Hogg(1833-1894).Built in the 1860's it was a grand mansion ,constructed of the best materials, and lavishly furnished, befitting a wealthy man of his stature. The mansion sat on beautifully landscaped grounds upon which were constructed the mansion house, an entrance lodge, stable block/coachmans house, and other outbuildings suitable for a working farm where William Hogg raised and showed at the Royal Agricultural Fair cattle that had been attended to by his stockman.The grounds were laid out and maintained by the estate gardener.The earliest reference to Oakleigh is from a 1867 Kelly directory in which is stated " Oakleigh is another handsome modern stone mansion ...the residence of William Hogg, esq."

When William Hogg passed away at Oakleigh in 1895 the estate came into the hands of his son William Henry Jenner Hogg (1851-1900). He and his wife Mary Elizabeth Hogg had no children but enjoyed the country life at Oakleigh.When he died in 1900 his wife continued to live on the estate.Mary later left Oakleigh but the date of her departure is unknown to the researcher. A 1903 Kelly records her there but that is the last record for her.No records are found for Oakleigh until 1911 suggesting that it was vacant until then.

In 1911 Oakleigh became the residence of Hugh Hamilton Gordon (1847-1921) and his family.The 1911 census records the home as Oakleigh but soon after it was renamed Strathbogie, after the families former place of residence at Strathbogie, NSW, which itself is derived from their ancestral home in Strathbogie,Scotland.Hugh Hamilton Gordon was a magistrate in Australia and derived his wealth from the families extensive land holdings(exceeding 100,000 acres) in Australia and the ranching activities carried out by them at Strathbogie. In 1916 Strathbogie was put up for sale but the Gordon family remained there until they moved to a 17 room home at 8 Tonbridge Road in Pembury called Brackenston, in late 1919 which they renamed Strathbogie. Hugh died at 'Strathbogie' ,Pembury,in 1921 and was survived by his wife Maria who died in 1927 but had moved to London after her husband's death.She is known to have still been a resident of Strathbogie on the Tonbridge Road in 1922 and 1923.No exact date is known by the researcher as to when she left Strathbogie, but she would have been the one to sell it to new owners.Shown above is a photograph of Strathbogie on the Pembury Road taken during the time of its occupancy by the Gordon family.

After 1922 the ownership record of the estate,its occupancy and the name it went by (Strathbogie and Pembury Place)become uncertain.

Another occupant of the estate was Owen Parry (1856-1936) who made his fortune in the oil seed business with extensive premises in London and Colchester, Essex. His probate stated he was "of Pembury Place, Tunbridge Wells but died September 3, 1936 at Pulpit Rock Bonchurch Isle of Wight. He was survived by his wife Annie Gertrude Parry who died in 1951 while a resident of 10 Royal Chase, Tunbridge Wells. There is also a record of an Owen Parry living at Pulpit Rock, I.O.M. from 1911 to 1936 inclusive, who is believed by the researcher to be the same man.

The records of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Coral Society refer to an open air concert being held at "Pembury Place" on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of King George V (1935). So based on the above for 1935 the estate is given as both Pembury Place and Strathbogie and it is occupied that year by both Henry Noel Norcott Winter and Owen Parry.

Further research will be required to clarify the historical record during the years 1923 to 1948. The website of Oakley School states that St George's School purchased 'Pembury Place' in 1948, that it was formerly known as Oakleigh, Strathbogie and Pembury Place and that the former mansion was used to accommodate their Senior students until the school closed in 1960.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Oakleigh estate occupied a large tract of land (26 acres in 1916) on the south east side of Pembury Road about half way between Blackhurst Lane and the Hastings Road, on the current site of Oakley School. It is known that the main house was very large occupying at least two floors and constructed in the Victorian Era style and was well appointed inside and out. The home would have contained many large rooms each with a fireplace with fancy mantle. In addition to the main house was "Oakleigh Lodge" and "Oakleigh Stables", more details of which are given later. The estate grounds were well landscaped with trees, shrubs and extensive flower beds containing the best plants money could buy, all of which were attended to by their own gardening staff. The land of the estate was extensive enough to allow space for the raising and grazing of cattle, something William Hogg took a particular interest in, and William had a stockman living on the estate with helpers to care for the cattle. William and his family would travel back and forth between their Pembury estate and London as needed for personal and business reasons.

The best description of Oakleigh is given in The Builder dated April 9, 1887 from which the image opposite was obtained. This record refers to alterations and additions made to the mansion at that time, to the design of architect George Lethbridge. As one can see it was a very impressive and ornately decorated building of two storeys with a tall three storey tower with domed roof located on the front left side of the building. The roof would have been finished in tile. On each side of the front entrance are pillars upon which are mounted a lamp and above the front entrance are two statues of lions. The Builder gives in addition to the image of the place the following information, "The above illustration shows a new front to this house, the additions consisting of porch and entrance hall, with bed and dressing rooms etc over. The materials used are, for the exterior, Peterhead granite for columns and pilasters, and Portland Stone for the other portions of the work. The porch is finished in various coloured marbles, with mosaic ceilings and floor. The entrance hall has a high dado of mahogany, dull

polished, and the upper parts of the wall are furnished with Tymecastle tapestry, with a ceiling of the same material. The floor of the hall is of black and white marble. All the windows are fitted with double sashes, and all the walls are built hollow. The architect is Mr George Lethbridge". As can be seen from the image the area leading up to the front entrance was very well landscaped.

Shown here is a photograph of Oakleigh as it appeared circa 1920. The photograph appears on the website of Oakley School and a copy of it was provided to me by the school for inclusion with this article. As can be seen from the photograph the mansion is situated in lovely treed and landscaped grounds with part of the walls of the building covered with ivy. It was built with plenty of windows to take advantage of both the view and the sunlight which would have afforded a good measure of natural light into the rooms.

Access to Oakleigh was by two entrances off Pembury Road. The west entrance can be seen today by the presence of two wooden gate posts. On the left post is the sign "West Lodge Pembury Place". A recent photograph of these entrance posts is shown opposite. Just beyond these posts about 50 feet or so along Pembury Road, obscured by trees and the fence can be seen the ruins of what must have been the west gatehouse. Beyond the gate posts all one can see is open land. A wooden fence runs from these gate posts along Pembury Road up to the location of the current Oakley School at what was the east entrance gate to Oakleigh. At this location can be found the preserved entrance lodge, a photograph of which is shown opposite.

Today, beyond the east and main entrance to Oakley School, can be seen the original brick stable block of Oakleigh which has been preserved, restored and transformed into the school's classrooms. It is a large building, an image of which is shown opposite and sits today on nice grounds. Today Oakley School is operated from two sites. The first is the Primary department at Waveney Road in Tonbridge. The second, on the grounds of the former Oakleigh estate, is the Secondary department and Post 16 Centre on Pembury Road half way between Blackhurst Lane and the Hastings Road.

There is no indication that the original Oakleigh mansion itself still exists and therefore one must conclude that it was demolished in the 20th century. A representative from Oakley School in 2013 in fact confirmed that the original mansion was demolished in the 20th century to make way for the expansion of the school.

BUILDING ARCHITECT

Who the architect was that designed the original mansion in the 1860's is not known to the researcher however the architect responsible for the alterations and additions circa 1887 was George Lethbridge for whom the following information is given.

George Lethbridge was born in 1847 or 1848 at Bickleigh, Devon and was one of four children born to Robert and Susan Lethbridge. He was educated in the house of the Rector of Beaworthy, Devonshire and came to London at an early age where he practiced architecture for more than a half a century. He served his articles with architect William Henry Reid of Plymouth and commenced independent practice in London in 1870. He became ARIBA May 14, 1880 and FRIBA March 7, 1898. His office in London was

located at 7 Drapers Gardens, Throgmorton Ave, in the period of 1890 to about 1914. He was the father of architect James Morton Lethbridge (1878- 1943) who articed to George Lethbridge. George had married Jessie Naismith Lethbridge (maiden name unknown) in about 1870 and with Jessie produced two sons and two daughters. George designed a large quantity of lavish homes expecially in Chislehurst and Potters Bar. George died February 27, 1924 in Highgate. London being a resident of 205 Archway Road in Higate. He was survived by his wife and left his estate of about 5,600 pounds to her. His obituary which was published in the RIBA Journal also refers to him as the "Presbyterian Architect" for amongst his work were a large number of Presbyterian churches. Details of his work as an architect are too extensive for inclusion here but in addition to houses and churches they included many schools, hospitals, banks, office blocks and other substantial buildings, some of which were constructed in South America. When William Hogg hired him to work on Oakleigh in Pembury his services would not have come cheaply .

ESTATE PARTICULARS FROM A 1916 SALES BROCHURE

English Heritage were able to send to me a complete set of sale documents pertaining to the sale of the Strathbogie estate by auctioneers Messrs Curtis & Henson on Wednesday July 5, 1916. The auction was held at The Mart, Tokenhouse Yard, E.C. Their offices were at 5 Mount Street, London, West. . Particulars of the sale were also available at W. Brackett & sons at 27 and 29 High Street, Tunbridge Wells. On the front of this document is written " 14,500 pounds the highest bid". The solicitor handling the sale was Messrs Crawford, Chester & Slade of 90 Cannon Street, London E.C. The sale took place when the estate was occupied by the Gordon family . The Gordan family must have been renting the home for they still lived there after the sale.

Shown opposite is a map of the estate as it appeared just prior to the sale. The title on this map (too large to include) was "Plan of Strathbogie near Tunbridge Wells for sale by Messrs Curtis & Henson ". At the bottom of the map is a scale of $\frac{1}{2}$ " equals 100 feet which I have used to determine the measurements given below. Beginning at the west end of the estate is shown a single outbuilding and a second group of six outbuildings all connected by a drive to the location of the west lodge labelled on the map as "Lodge" at the estates westerly entrance to Pembury Road. From the "West Lodge" a drive extended eastward in a sweeping direction towards a second building, the "Gardeners Cottage" and further east from there was the main mansion of the estate. To the east of the main mansion was the large stable block near which are several smaller buildings and to the south of that another group of outbuildings. At the far south east corner of the estate was an extensive garden. At this time there is no indication that the estate had an "East Lodge" at the driveway access on to Pembury Road. The entire estate is described as being 26 acres. Using the map scale the Pembury Road frontage was about 1,200 feet with the greatest depth of the grounds being about 900 feet.

The brochure states that the estate had "magnificent panoramic views over Ashdown Forest and was $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from two golf courses. A very choice freehold residential property in a beautiful situation at Pembury approached by carriage drive with lodge at entrance and standing 500 feet above sea level on sandy loam soil surrounded by very beautiful pleasure grounds and a miniature park of 26 acres".
.. "Strathbogie, 36 miles by road from London, forms an ideal residential property of medium size and

possesses unique attractions. It occupies a commanding situation amidst perfectly rural surroundings, enjoys most healthy and bracing air, very picturesque scenery and first-class railway facilities to London and also to the principal South Coast watering places". The brochure goes on to describe Tunbridge Wells, the social advantages of living there, such as packs of foxhounds, the castles of Tonbridge, Eridge etc and other interesting areas as well as the availability of golf courses. Shown opposite, from the brochure, is a photograph of the mansion showing the "Southern Aspect", and what a grand view it is, with its expansive terrace overlooking the southern landscaped grounds.

The "Sale Particulars" are given as follows; "Strathbogie is situated three-quarters of a mile from the Villiage of Pembury with its Post and Telegraph Office and St Peter's Church, about 2 miles from Tunbridge Wells and its stations on the South Eastern Railway and London Brighton and South Coast Railway. The property is approached by a carriage drive about 200 yards in length, with excellent well-built lodge at entrance containing sitting room, kitchen, three good bed rooms etc, water laid on. The drive winds through a finely-timbered miniature park and continues past the north front to the back drive and stabling. The Mansion occupies a magnificent position 500 feet above sea level and from almost every part of the property very beautiful panoramic views are obtained embracing the Crowborough Hills, Ashdown Forest, and the finely wooded country extending for many miles to the South (see photo opposite). The Park falls sharply away to the valley beneath so that the commanding position the House enjoys can never be spoiled.

The Residence stands on sandstone soil, is built of brick and partially clad with a variety of creepers and specimen plants, it is entered under a stone portico by a broad flight of stone steps through a pair of heavy oak panelled doors to the Spacious Lounge Hall (see photo opposite). The Lounge Hall 27 ft 6 in by 26 ft 6 in, well lighted and supported by columns. This apartment is principally paved with marble, has a panelled dado and a finely moulded ceiling, and in addition to the handsome fireplace with marble mantelpiece and curb, is heated by two large radiators. There are also Two Inner Halls, giving access to the Cloak Room, the Terrace and Gardens, and also to the Domestic Offices. They have marble surrounds, are both lighted by handsome stained glass windows and heated by radiators. Approached from the foregoing is The Luxurious Suite of Entertaining Apartments, most beautifully decorated in excellent taste and fitted in a sumptuous manner, the woodwork is of mahogany and oak and exceptionally well carried out regardless of cost; they are now in perfect order and condition throughout.

Approached from the Entrance hall are Two Very Charming Drawing Rooms, measuring respectively 20 ft by 21 ft and 23 ft by 24 ft, and easily adapted for use as one room if desired; they overlook the Terrace and Park and are beautifully light spacious apartments with double windows. The ceilings are handsomely moulded, the walls covered with silk panels, and they have parquet floors; both have handsome fireplaces with overmantels, and are also heated by radiators.

Leading from the Inner Hall is the Very fine Library (photo opposite). A magnificent Apartment 30 ft by 27 ft excluding bay, very handsomely panelled in oak to a height of 9 ft with lofty moulded arches ceiling. There are fittings of book shelves and cupboards, the window recesses are fitted with seats, and the floor has an oak parquet border. The fireplace is fitted with a large carved stone mantelpiece

and embossed iron fire back, and the room is also heated by radiator and coils fitted under the window seats.

The Noble Dining Room (photo opposite) 40 ft by 23 ft 6 in adjoins, and is entered through a pair of oak panelled doors; this elegant apartment is very lofty but well proportioned, it has open beam ceiling supported by carved stone corbels, is very light, having handsome stone mullioned bay window of considerable height overlooking the Terrace and Grounds, also side windows and others in the roof. This room is most beautifully fitted, it is panelled in oak to a height of nine feet, finished with handsome cornice, and fitted in a recess is a very fine oak sideboard with drawers and cupboards. The floor is surrounded by an oak parquet border, the fireplace has a massive carved stone mantelpiece with iron fire back, and the room is also heated by hot water coils in oak frames.

The Winter Garden adjoining is separated from the Dining Room by an oak panelled screen; it has a lantern roof, stone floor, and is heated by coils. There is also a very fine Billiard Room, 31 ft 6 in by 18 ft 6 in excluding bay, it has fireplace with carved walnut mantelpiece and overmantel, marble curb, and is also heated by two radiators. This room is well lighted by three double windows and has oak parquet floor.

Entered from the Billiard Room Corridor is Gentleman's Lavatory (h. & c.), and W.C., and small room suitable for an Office with fireplace and cupboard.

The Domestic Offices are entirely shut off from the Reception Rooms, they are very spacious, light and well aired, they include Butler's Pantry (h. & c.), with lift to Kitchen, plate cupboard and store cupboard; Servant's Hall; Wine Cellar; Store Room; Second Wine Cellar; Kitchen, fitted with Flavel's modern range, dresser etc; Fitted Scullery (h. & c.); Larder; Butler's Bed Room; Fitted Bath Room (h. & c.) Knife, Wood and Boot Houses.

Adjoining are various domestic outbuildings approached by Covered Yard, they include Dairy with slate shelving; Very Large Coal House; Servants W.C. and Extensive Cellarage.

Under the Conservatory is the Furnace room with Robin Hood boiler and heating apparatus; Fitted Fruit Room; and under the Billiard Room is a Very Large Store Room, about 40 ft by 20 ft, with concrete floor.

Approached by a very Handsome Oak Staircase of easy ascent from the Lounge Hall, and also by a Secondary Staircase is The Bed Room Accommodation, which opens from the spacious main landing. The Principal Suite comprises Bed Room, 28 ft by 24 ft, facing South, with double windows, fireplace, walnut mantel and overmantel and marble curb, and is also heated by radiator. Bed or Dressing Room adjoining, with dress cupboard, register stove, marble mantelpiece and radiator.

Adjacent are West Bed Room, 16 ft 9 in by 15 ft 9 in, with double windows, embossed frieze and ceiling, handsome walnut mantelpiece and overmantel, modern stove and radiator.

Bed or Dressing Room adjoining, with marble mantelpiece and register stove. Two Other Bed Rooms, each with fireplace, marble mantelpiece and register stove and one with dress cupboard. North-East Bed Room 20 ft by 18 ft 6 in, with double windows, mahogany mantelpiece and overmantel, modern stove

and two radiators. Bed or Dressing room adjoining, walnut mantelpiece and overmantel and marble curb. Excellent Bath Room with tiled walls, fitted bath in mahogany case (h. & c.) and hot water towel coil, lavatory basin (h. & c.),fireplace with marble mantelpiece and curb. Housemaids Cupboard with sink and soft water supply,.W.C. The Corridor is heated by radiators and has a range of fitted linen cupboards.

On the Second Floor is a Large Landing. Five spacious Servants Bed Rooms, four of which will easily take two beds each; they have ample cupboard accommodation, four are fitted with register stoves and two have marble mantelpieces. Good Box Room. Electric Light is laid to each floor and throughout the house; it is supplied from the mains belonging to the Corporation of Tunbridge Wells. Telephone is connected, affording direct communication to London. Heating-The Rooms,corridors, etc. , of the ground and first floors are thoroughly heated by numerous radiators, supplied from a boiler under the Conservatory. Water supply is of excellent quality and is obtained from the mains of the Tunbridge Wells Corporation in the roof of the Mansion are several large storage tanks, and in addition there is a huge underground circular tank, near the Billiard Room for soft water storage.Drainage-The internal fittings are of the best quality and approved pattern; the external drains are provided with inspection chambers, they are ventilated, have interceptors and facilities for flushing; the overflow is to a cesspool about 100 yards from the mansion, the fall of the land rendering the disposal of the overflow a very simple matter.

The Garage and Stabling Accommodation which has a separate approach by a back drive, is very conveniently situated from the house,yet most effectively shut off from the Grounds, it is substantially built of brick, in simple style to the Residence; it is surrounded by broad paths of chancelled bricks, is in very substantial repair and has Gas and Water laid on throughout. There are Three Large Garages or Coach Houses with large washing space covered with glazed roof. The Main Stable comprises Six Loose Boxes, fitted in a very superior manner, the walls are tiled and the floors well drained. Adjacent are Two Smaller Blocks of Stalls and Boxes and an additional Range of Boxes, well fitted and suitable for breeding purposes. Various Mens Rooms include Coachmans Queaters of four rooms with scullery and W.C.; Grooms Quarters of three rooms and scullery; Footmans Room, Harness Room,Feeding House with copper and two large tanks, Tank Room and Extensive Lofts. At the other extremity of the property (the North-West side) there are two other Sheds.

The Gardens and Grounds afford considerable attraction, and are a feature of the property. They are delightfully placed, enjoying a southern exposure, and Magnificent views are obtained from almost every spot.

The Principal Rooms open on to a Beautiful Terrace Walk enclosed by a handsome balustrade, terminating in a flight of stone steps at either end. At one end of the Terrace us a substantially-erected Tea House (see photo above of the Tea House at the east end of the terrace), with copper-covered roof,at the other is a recessed circular seat.The stone steps above referred to descend to a Wide Spreading Lawn adorned with some choice Timber-Cedars,Wellingtonias, etc.,-affording abundance of shade and giving room for Tennis or Croquet. Adjoining is a Beautiful Old-World Flower Garden ,chiefly given over to roses; it is divided into beds by brick-paved paths, spanned by archways and pergola, and in the centre is a sundial on stone pedestal.The Laurel Walk, a Charming Shady Brick-paved Path. About

250 years in length skirts a portion of the Eastern boundary of the property, and leads to the Kitchen Garden, over an acre in extent, intersected by broad paths. Water is laid on by standpipes to various points.

The Glasshouses comprise: Peach House, about 80 ft long, with well-trained trees in excellent condition. Range of Greenhouses and Stove House and Range of Forcing Pits. In the Garden Yard, which is paved in brick, there is a Potting Shed, Stoke House and Two Large Water Tanks. To the North of the Residence are Large Lawns studded with various species of Pine and Fir trees, also a large variety of ornamental shrubs, clusters of Rhododendrons, etc., the latter bordering the Carriage Drive.

Situated on the Pembury Road is the Gardeners Cottage, built in character with the House. It contains Entrance Hall, two living rooms, two bed rooms, scullery etc., The Small Park, which slopes away to the South, is nicely timbered, and adds considerable attraction to the property. The Total Area extends to 26 acres, 3 roods, 5 poles.

The sale brochure closes off by giving the Outgoings as Land Tax Free and tithe Rent Charge for the past year as 4 pounds, 11 s, 11d. It also states that the owner of the adjoining property to the East had right of way into his adjoining fields between points marked on the map above as A to B and the vendor also has right of way over the roadway belonging to the adjoining owner between points B-C on the map.

THE OCCUPANCY OF OAKLEIGH

Described below separately is a description of the life and time of the various occupants of the estate from the time of its construction up to 2013. The information was compiled from a variety of sources such as genealogical records from Ancestry UK; newspaper and other archival records; the history of Oakley School from their website and others too numerous to list. The estate remained as a single family residence until 1948 when it was acquired by St George's School and used by them as one of three sites for the operation of their school until the school closed in 1960.

The occupancy record of the estate as given in the "the History of Oakley School" on the website of the school varies from my own research. The school site states that "Oakleigh was built between 1867 and 1880 and built in the grounds of Oakleigh Park by a man named William H.J. Hogg who served as the local Justice of the Peace. William died in 1900 and his widow lived in the house until 1906. The original entrance to the house was by Oakleigh Lodge off Pembury Road. It was originally named "West Lodge, Pembury Place". The house was vacant from 1907 to early 1911. The 1911 census shows that in 1911 the house was occupied by a man named Gordon Hamilton and his family..... The original stable block is now used as classrooms..... By 1911 George Hamilton had changed the name of the house to "Strathbogie". In 1919 the house was bought by Owen William Parry who renamed it "Pembury Place" ... The family had a pet dog Chang. He died in 1923 and was buried in the woods. The school pond was built in the grounds in about 1930. It may originally have been used as a small swimming pool. We know it was built in the 1930's as it does not appear on aerial photographs until after 1930. Owen Parry died in 1936 and his widow continued to live in the house until 1948... The dias was found in the original

garden near the pond. It can now be found in our vegetable garden area.”. Their site goes on to explain the founding of the school; the plan to acquire Pembury Place; details about the 1951 anniversary of the school and school rates; details of the schools prospectus; details of the classes taught in 1947; the measles outbreak at the Junior school in 1951 and then states “ St George’s School closed in 1969...”

If you compare the account by the school to my own research you will find a number of differences. These will become obvious as you read the information given in the remainder of my article.

THE HOGG FAMILY

1) OVERVIEW

The Hogg’s were a family of privilege with great wealth and social standing and the branches of the family I have researched are found in London and Pembury, Kent although many of their decedents are found in Cheshire and Essex. The connection of William and his wife Eliza Susannah Hogg to Tunbridge Wells is firstly from the fact that they were both buried in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Cemetery and occupy what is believed to be the largest mausoleum in the cemetery, an ornate and grand structure of stone, and secondly the fact that they were residents of the “Oakleigh” estate near the village of Pembury on Pembury Road, a huge estate consisting of a lavish mansion, stable block, lodge, and cottages for workers on the estate. The beautifully landscaped grounds were a reflection of their wealth and the buildings sat on a large tract of land. William Hogg was an East India and China merchant involved in the China silk trade; a Consul to Shanghai; a Justice of the Peace and at Oakleigh he even raised prize winning cattle. To begin my coverage of the family I put the lives of William and Eliza into perspective by beginning with their parents and siblings and then concentrate on William and Eliza with a particular emphasis of their residency in Pembury and their burial in Tunbridge Wells. The roots of the Hogg clan are found in Scotland and shown above is the family crest.

2) ANCESTORS OF WILLIAM AND ELIZA SUSANNAH HOGG

William Hogg was born July 9, 1825 at Congleton, Cheshire and was the eldest of seven children born to Henry Hogg (1787-1864) and Charlotte Hogg (nee Coppings) who were married June 1, 1822. William’s father was born August 7, 1787, the son of Thomas Hogg and Sarah Hogg (nee Jordan). Henry was a Justice of the Peace for Congleton and lived at Davenshaw House, Congleton, Cheshire. He died March 12, 1864 at Cheshire. Shown opposite is an early 20th century postcard view of Congleton.

William’s siblings were James, born June 23, 1830; Mary Sophia, born May 16, 1836; Edward Jenner, born February 15, 1828; Henry Jenner Holder, born November 9, 1839; Capel Wilson, born April 29, 1841 and Herbert Octavius born January 25, 1843. All of his siblings married well and went on to live full and privileged lives. Although all of William’s siblings were married his brothers Edward Jenner, Henry Jenner Holder and Herbert Octavius never had children.

William’s wife Eliza Susannah Hogg, whom he married October 1, 1850 was born Eliza Susannah Hickson 1833 at Chigwell, Essex. She was the youngest daughter of George Hickson, esq, of Chigwell, Essex. Details about Eliza’s family are sparse but she was one of several children born to her parents and lived her life

before marriage in Chigwell. She did however come from a well-connected and well-off family. Her father was deceased at the time of her marriage. Shown opposite is an early 20th century postcard view of Chigwell.

3) WILLIAM AND ELIZA SUSANNAH HOGG

William Hogg lived his early life in Congleton, Cheshire. Details about his education are unknown but since he was from a wealthy family he no doubt received a good education attending boarding school. After marrying Eliza in 1850 he and his wife left England and took up residence in Shanghai, China where he worked for the foreign office as Consul for the Hanseatic States in Shanghai.

While living in Shanghai William and Eliza produced two children. The first William Henry Jenner Hogg born July 12, 1851 at Shanghai and the second Lindsay born March 10, 1853 at the same place. By 1856 the family returned to England taking up residence at Congleton, Cheshire. While there the couple had two more children namely Mary Edith, born October 10, 1855 and Alice Charlotte, born February 7, 1858. These were the last of the children born to the couple.

The 1861 census, taken at #1 Washbourne Square in Paddington, London, records William Hogg, age 35, an East India and China merchant. Living with him is his wife Eliza; their four children; and five domestic servants.

By 1881 the family had moved into grand premises at 63 Lancaster Gate, London. Lancaster Gate, of which I have shown two images, was a mid 19th century development in the Bayswater district of west central London, immediately to the north of Kensington Gardens. It consisted of two long terraces of houses overlooking the park, with a wide gap between them opening onto a square containing a church. It was in this church that several members of the Hogg family would later be married. The terraces were stuccoed in an eclectic classical style featuring English Baroque details and French touches. The church, known as Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, was an asymmetrical gothic composition with a needle spire. Sadly today only the spire remains as the structure had to be demolished when dry rot was discovered. The last service at the church took place in 1977 and demolition began August 15, 1977. In its heyday the church was nicknamed "the thousand pound church" because of the large sums collected from the wealthy congregation. Lancaster Gate remains today and stands alongside Hyde Park Gardens as one of the two grandest housing schemes lining the northern side of the park. The development was planned in 1856-57 on the site of a nursery and tea gardens, and construction took at least 10 years to the designs of architect Sancton Wood and John Johnson.

The 1881 census finds the Hogg family living at 63 Lancaster Gate, London. William at that time was age 55 and retired for under the heading "occupation" is written "none". His wife Eliza and his daughter Alice Charlotte were living with him and their domestic needs were attended to by six servants.

In the 1891 census taken at 63 Lancaster Gate, London is found William, age 66 and his wife Eliza, age 58 with seven servants. William is listed as "living on own means".

Given all the references to their residence in London you might well ask how does the Pembury estate of Oakleigh fit into the picture. Well the first clue is from an 1867 Kelly Directory for Pembury which states "Oakleigh is another handsome modern mansion stone mansion, the seat of William Hogg, esquire". This description appears in the directory in the narrative section where the grand mansions of Pembury are referred to. In the main part of the directory is also "William Hogg, Oakleigh & Lancaster Gate. London W. Oakleigh therefore was the "country estate" of the Hogg family which they began occupying sometime before 1867 and it is believed that William Hogg had the estate designed and constructed for him in the early 1860's not long after he and his family returned to England from China. Kelly directories for Pembury of 1874 and 1882 repeat the listings for 1867. The Hogg family divided their time between their Lancaster Gate residence in London and their Oakleigh country home in Pembury, no doubt spending much of their summers there and perhaps the occasional visit at other times of the year. The 1891 census taken at Pembury shows census taking along Pembury Road with listings of occupants pertaining to Oakleigh as follows; At Oakleigh Stables is and agricultural labourer his wife and two sons. At Oakleigh Lodge Gate is Walter Winchcombe a stockman and agricultural worker and his wife. At Oakleigh Lodge is found the Richard Wood, a gardener, along with his wife and a visitor. This census does not provide a listing for Oakleigh House, the mansion of the estate, which would mean that the mansion was not occupied at the time of the census.

It was while living at Oakleigh that Eliza Susannah Hogg passed away. She died during the last week of May 1894 and was buried in the Tunbridge Wells Cemetery on June 2nd. Details about the logistics of her burial are unknown and since she was buried in a large elaborate mausoleum, perhaps the largest in the cemetery, it begs the question of what was done with her remains while the mausoleum was being designed and built, assuming that the mausoleum was not constructed before the time of her death. Further research in this regard is required to clarify her burial arrangements.

Shown here are two photographs of the mausoleum constructed for Eliza. As can be seen it was and still is a very impressive structure that would have been very expensive. It is four sided, built of stone, with a portico supported by two stone columns with decorative stone capitals. On the corners of the structure are additional columns and on one side wall there is a carved stone decorative element in the style of a mother with children. The entrance to the structure consists of a large door with ornamental stonework around under the portico which is raised above ground level and accessed by walking up a short flight of stone steps. Upon the roof of the structure above the front entrance is a stone cross. Upon the mausoleum is the name Eliza Susannah Hogg. Although no probate record for Eliza could be found her estate would have been left to her husband William with perhaps some monies passed directly to her children who all survived her.

William Hogg by the time of his wife's death had taken up permanent residence at Oakleigh in Pembury and lived out his retirement years in quiet luxury. Most of his children remained in London but no doubt visited from time to time. I mentioned earlier that William had an interest in cattle and some detail in this regard is found in the records of the Royal Agricultural Society, a society founded in London in 1838 as the English Agricultural Society but incorporated under the new name in 1840. The society has run agricultural shows annually at different places since 1839. In 1899 they held their show at Windsor, which the Queen attended and exhibited at, and at that show are two references to William

Hogg under the category of cattle . The first reads “ black,calved May 1887, owner William Hogg, Oakleigh,Tunbridge Wells,England,breeder unknown.Reserve No. R.A.S.E show, Windsor 1889” and the second “black, calved May 12,1887, owner William Hogg, Oakleigh,Tunbridge Wells, breeder unknown, 3rd Prize R.A.S.E. show Windsor 1889”. The first entry was for a beast called “Miss Glen” and the second for “Miss Blarney”.Shown opposite is a composite view of the pavilions at the 1899 show.

William Hogg did not survive long after the death of his wife for he passed away April 12,1895.Probate records give the following “ William Hogg, esq, of Oakleigh near Tunbridge Wells died April 12,1895. Probate to William Henry Jenner Hogg, Lindsay Hogg and George Arthur Drought Gosett,esquires”. William left an estate valued at over 280,000 pounds. William was buried in the same mausoleum as his wife and on it appears the inscription “William Hogg husband of Eliza Susannah Hogg “along with the dates of birth and death .William was buried there on April 17,1895.

After Williams death his Oakleigh estate was occupied by his son William Henry Jenner Hogg (1851-1900).W.H.J. Hogg had married Mary Elizabeth Dummett, daughter of Jeremiah Dummett on July 4,1877 at Christ Church, Lancaster Gate,London. He and his wife never had any children and he was a Justice of the the Peace.He was living at Oakleigh at the time of his death on May 1,1900. The 1899 Kelly, obviously out of date for his father had already passed away, gives “William Hogg,esq, Oakleigh” and William Henry Jenner Hogg, J.P.,Oakleigh, Pembury”. W.H.J. Hogg must have taken up occupancy at Oakleigh at the time of his father’s death for he is found in the census records of 1881 at 85 Gloucester Place, London as a silk merchant and in the 1891 census at Moorhouse,Linpsfield,Surrey with his wife and seven servants. He died May 1,`1900 at Chelsea London leaving an estate valued at over 122,000 pounds to his wife and his brother Lindsay.He was buried in the Tunbridge Wells Cemetery on May 5,1900.After his death his wife Mary continued to live at Oakleigh. She is found in the 1901 census at “Oakleigh House”,age 45, born 1856 Glasgow,Scotland, living on own means plus a staff of seven domestic servants in the house. At “Oakleigh Stables” are another seven people consisting of the estates coachman, stableman and their families.At “Oakleigh Lodge” is the estates stockman and his family as well as the estates gardener and his family. It is not known by me how long after the 1901 census that Mary Elizabeth Hogg lived at Oakleigh but she is still listed there in a 1903 Kelly directory.It is known that Oakleigh was vacant from 1907 until early 1911 when in that year it became occupied by Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon(1847-1921) and his family.

THE GORDON FAMILY

The head of the family was Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon born October 10,1847 at Strathbogie, Emmaville,NSW,Australia. He was one of seven children born to Hugh Gordon (1816-1895) of which a photograph is shown opposite. Hugh’s mother was Emily Catherine Goron,nee Hollingworth (1816-1856),the daughter of Captain Hollingworth of the Royal Navy,of surry Hills.His father had been married twice and as a result Hugh had two half siblings. Shown opposite is a map giving the location of Strathbogie in NSW.

Hugh Gordon(1816-1895) had been born at Mains of Rhynie,Abadeenshire,Scotland and died March 14,1895 at Strathbogie,NSW. His first marriage was on June 14,1845 to Emily Catherine

Hollingworth(1816-1855) with which he had seven children. After his first wife died he married November 7,1960 Caroline Eliza Hollingworth(1827-1900), his first wifes sister,at Neuchatel, Switzerland.A decendent of the family states that Hugh was a first cousin once removed of Hugh Gordon(1816-1857) of Manar Australia and a grand nephew of Hugh Gordon(1766-1834) of Manar Scotland.Walcha historian Jillian Oppenheimer tells about her great grandfather Hugh Gordon who lived on a remote property at Strathbogie near Emmaville, and his two wives, who were sisters-one marriage followed the next. She said that Hugh's wife Emily was pregnant fot the 6th time, but was unaware she was expecting twins. Jillian said one baby was born November 9,1855 and eight days later the second baby was born, or still born. The baby died and the mother died November 17,1855; and a few months later the first baby of the twins died. Jillian tells how Hugh called on his sister-in-law Caroline to care for the children, and eventually romance blossomed.She ends her brief account by stating they had a battle to get married and that was why the marriage was held in Switzerland. Shown opposite is a photograph of 'Strathbogie Station' referred to above, the birth place of Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon, and the source of the families wealth.

Shown opposite is a photograph of Hugh Gordon (1816-1895) and of his wife Emily Catherine Gordon(1816-1855).

Shown opposite is a general view of the landscape at Strathbogie, NSW.

Shown opposite is an interior of the families home in Strathbogie, NSW taken in 1897.

Shown opposite is an exterior view of the Strathbogie home in NSW taken in 1897.

Shown opposite is a modern photograph of the Strathbogie home in NSW. This twin gabled, pink granite homestead was built in 1868 for Mr Hugh Gordon who had taken up Strathbogie in 1839.This homestead is set among the best remaining gardens of what was one two acres of garden and orchard.By 1855 the station was 102,000 acres and was growing in importance and production every year.Hugh Gordon and his family lived on Strathbogie for nearly 60 years. In 1900-1901 it was bought by Mr C. Body and family and owned it until the 1960's developing the property towards the modern enterprise it is today.It was owned after 1988 by the Dunne family and about 1997 Tim & Gina Fairfax purchase the property. The grand building has been well cared for and remains much the way it was when built.The area of Strathbogie NSW remains a largely unpopulated region without a single town of any significance other than perhaps the town of Strathbogie itself. In addition to ranching the area is well known for the production of olives and wine.

Local papers in Australia gave the following account of the life and death of Hugh Gordon(1816-1895). "Mr Hugh Gordon of Strathbogie, Gragin, and Gramin stations,New England, probably the oldest pioneer squatter of that district, died very suddenly last Thursday morning at Strathbogie. Mr Gordon represented New England for many years in the Legislative Assembly of NSW. To his many friends and several relatives in this colony it may be interesting to learn that his death took place at Strathbogie on Friday afternoon, in the presence of his sons, Mr Hollingworth Gordon of Gragin and Mr Hamilton Gordon of Strathbogie, and other relatives and friends. The deceased gentleman was interred beside his first wife in the family vault in the garden. Mr Gordon had been born in Aberdeenshire,Scotland and

arrived in Sydney in 1839 and in the New England district took up two stations, Strathbogie and Rocky Creek. In 1860 he represented the electorate of Tenteffield. When parliament was dissolved in 1870 he did not again offer himself as a candidate. His obituary states that Owen left two sons and four daughters. Hugh (1816-1895) was a pastoralist and a politician. He was the original owner of Strathbogie Station New England, a huge ranching operation.

On May 4, 1903 Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon married Maria Angelica Carlotta Francisca "Mollie" de Meirelles at the Chapel of the Palace of Dafundo, Lisbon, Portugal. The following marriage announcement appeared in the newspaper. "Gordon-De Meirelles-May 4, at St Mathius Dajando, Portugal. Hamilton Gordon, second son of the late Hugh Gordon of Strathbogie, New England, to Maria de Dores, youngest daughter of Viscount de Meirelles, K,C,M.G. , and of Vicountess de Meirelles". Shown opposite is a photograph of Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon as a young man.

The Maitland Mercury of September 14, 1875 announced that Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon had been appointed a Magistrate and that he was of "Strathbogie near vegetable creek". Records also show that he was a diplomat in Lisbon, Portugal.

In about 1909 Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon and his family took up residence in England and purchased Oakleigh. The 1911 census, taken at Oakleigh, Pembury Road does not record the presence of Hugh Gordon but does list Mary Hamilton Gordon, age 28, born 1883 at Lisbon Portugal, with an occupation of 'employer'. Living with her is her son Francis, age 7, born 1904 at Sydney, Australia; her daughter Mary Catherine Gordon, age 5, born 1906 Sydney, Australia; her son Gordon Hamilton Gordon, age 3, born 1908 at Lisbon, Portugal. Also present in the household are six visitors including two governesses and a house maid. Two of these visitors were the Vicountess Meirelles, married, age 52, born Lisbon, Spain and Pedro Du Meirelles, age 14, born Lisbon, Spain. It would appear most likely that the Vicountess was the mother of Mary Hamilton Gordon, nee Meirelles. Also present in the household were six domestic servants including a dook, butler, housemaid, footman, nurse domestic and a ladies maid. This census records that Oakleigh was a mansion of 21 rooms. Shown opposite is a photograph of Maria Angelica, Hugh's wife, with two of their children.

The 1911 census also shows that Oakleigh Lodge was occupied by a Mr Albert Hobbs, his wife Ellen and their two children, Kathleen, age 6, and James, age 3. Albert Hobbs was listed as a domestic gardener. Albert Hobbs had been born 1877 at Thorpe, Birkshire; his wife 1877 at Surrey and his two children in Tunbridge Wells. The couple had been married seven years and the Lodge was given as having four rooms. At Oakleigh Stables in the same census was Charles Vincent, a 55 year old coachman, born 1856 at Salisbury and his wife Rachel, age 46, born 1865 in London. The couple had been married 28 years and had one child. The stable building had four rooms.

Soon after the 1911 census was taken Oakleigh became known as Strathbogie, after the families ancestral home by that name in NSW.

In 1913 Mrs Gordon and her daughter Mary Catherine made are found travelling from Argentina to Southampton. The Gordon's were frequent travellers with several trips to Portugal. Mrs Gordon and her maid, as an example, made a trip to Lisbon, Portugal in July 1914 and were still travelling back and forth

to Portugal in the 1920's. Shown opposite is a photograph of Hugh in his later years. In 1916 Strathbogie was put up for sale and the Gordon family moved to a grand 17 room residence in Pembury named Brackenston, which they renamed Strathbogie.

Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon died June 5,1921 at 'Strathbogie',Pembury,Tunbridge Wells. His probate records confirm this and show he left an estate valued at about 51,000 pounds. The executor of his estate was Maria Gordon, widow, and the Royal Exchange Insurance Company. It is not known where he was buried for there is no burial record for him in the Tunbridge Wells Cemetery. He was survived by his wife who remarried.

The Sydney Morning Herald of Friday July 8,1921 gave the following announcement . " News has been received by Mr G.H. Gordon (by cable) of the death of his brother Mr Hamilton Gordon at Strathbogie, Pembury,England of heart failure, in his 74th year. Mr Hamilton Gordon was born at Strathbogie, Emmaville, New South Wales, and was educated at the Sydney Grammar School and Sydney University.With his elder brother, Mr G.H. Gordon, he took a keen interest in sport,especially cricket. On leaving the University he resided at and managed the property of his father Mr Hugh Gordon, one of the pioneers of the district, and for some years member for the New England district.On his father's death, Strathbogie was sold, and Mr Hamilton Gordon left for England.After several years of travel he married the youngest daughter of the Count de Mairelles, and had since resided in England. He has left a family of two sons and two daughters".

In the 4th quarter of 1921 at Maylebone, Maria Gordon married Joao A De Bianchi. The Sydney Morning Herald of March 12,1924 gave the following announcement. " Death-February 28,1924 Maria Angelica Carlotta Francisca de Bianchi, wife of Joao Antonio Bianchi, Concellor of Portugues Legation,London, formerly widow of Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon, of Strathbogie, Tunbridge Wells,Pembury,Kent,England (by cable)".

THE PARRY FAMILY

A review of local directories shows surprisingly that Owen Parry was residing at Pembury Place,Tunbridge Wells in 1918, when the probate record for Hugh Edwin Hamilton Gordon has him at 'Strathbogie',Pembury Road when he died there in 1921. The researcher has not been able to unravel this mystery for it has always been believed, as stated by Oakley school that Strathbogie was renamed Pembury Place.The only document that would tie in with Owen Parry's occupancy of Pembury Place in 1918 is the 1916 sale brochure for Strathbogie,but the connection between the two records, if any, is unknown to the researcher.

A review of later directories shows that from 1922 onward Pembury Place was occupied by Owen Parry and that from 1937 to 1948 it was occupied by "Mrs Owen Parry". The website of Oakley school states "In 1919 the mansion was purchased by Owen William Parry who renamed it Pembury Place.When he died in 1936 the mansion continued to be occupied by his widow until 1948".

On the premise that Strathbogie and Pembury Place are one and the same estates and that it was Owen Parry who acquired Strathbogie from the Gordon family and renamed it Pembury Place I offer the following information about the Parry family.

Directories for Hampshire throughout the period of 1911 to 1936 record Owen Parry with premises at Pulpit Rock, Bonchurch, Ventnor, Hampshire, I.O.W. He is also found in directories in Essex as the owner of a seed crushing company, and his company Owen Parry Ltd which had business premises in both London and Colchester, Essex is found in directories of those locations.

With respect to his company Owen Parry Ltd it is recorded that in 1896 the company was established as an oil-seed crushing mill and he in London on the Thames was Owen Parry's Wharf. Parry ran barges which transported seeds and barrels of oil back and forth from the wharf to Colchester, Essex, turning the oil from the seeds into a product used in the making of varnish and paint. Parry continued to occupy the wharf until the 1930's when H.B. Barnard and Sons Ltd took it over who reclaimed zinc and copper from scrap metal. Owen's nephew Thomas Sydney Parry took an active role in the business and took it over after Owen's death in 1936.

Owen Parry was born 1856 at Ealing, Middlesex, one of twelve children born to Thomas Sparke Parry (1815-1892) and Maria Elizabeth Parry, nee Jennings (1818-1895). The 1871 census records Thomas S. Parry as a shipowner and coal merchant. Owen Parry was at that time living with his parent and siblings along with nine servants and one visitor.

Owen Parry married Annie Gertrude Narraway in the 4th qtr of 1901 at Greenwich, London. She had been born 1865 at London. The couple never had any children. The marriage records give that Owen Parry was born 1857, a bachelor and a mill owner at Eweland Hall, Essex. Annie was identified as age 36, a spinster living at Greenwich. Annie's father was William Frederick Narraway, a bank manager. Thomas Sparke Parry was a coal merchant.

The 1901 census taken at Eweland Hall, Margarett, Essex lists Owen Parry, age 44, born 1857 Ealing, Middlesex, a seed broker and varnish maker. Living with him was his nephew Thomas Sydney Parry, a varnish maker; his two sisters Katherine and Beatrice; as well as four servants and one visitor.

The 1911 census taken at Brooklands Cottages, Broomfield, Essex records Owen Parry as the owner of a seed crushing business. Living with him was his wife Annie and seven servants.

The website of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Coral Society states "To celebrate King George V's Silver Jubilee (1935) an open-air performance of 'Merrie England' was given at Pembury Place (now St George's school, then the home of Mr & Mrs Owen Parry who were related to the composer Charles Hubert Parry)". Francis J. Foote A.R.A.M. was the Society's conductor and teacher and he had organized many similar performances in town, and elsewhere, such as an open-air concert held at Dunorlan Park on June 20, 1928. The website has an excellent historical account of the Coral Society with many references to the importance of Mr Foote in the Society's history. Charles Hubert Parry (1848-1918) was a famous English composer, teacher and historian of music. There is a considerable amount of information about him on the internet for anyone interested in his life and career.

Probate records give the following “ Owen Parry of Pembury Place, Tunbridge Wells died September 3, 1936 at Pulpit Rock Bonchurch Isle of Wight”. His executors were Thomas Sydney Parry, retired company director, Thomas Kennett Brown, solicitor and Owen Sydney Parry, hotelier. Owen left an estate valued at over 200,000 pounds. There was a resealing of this will at Nairobi, Africa May 13, 1937.

The Official Gazette dated April 20, 1937 gives a lengthy report about the matter of Owen Parry's will and it being resealed at Nairobi but apart from a few spelling discrepancies in the names gives few clues about what all the fuss was about. It does state that an application for resealing “in the Colony of Kenya of a certified copy of the Grant of Probate....made in England” had been made in the court at Nairobi by “Messrs Hamilton, Harrison and Mathes, advocates, Nairobi, for and on behalf Messrs J. Kennett Brown & Son of 20 The Mall, Ealing, London, solicitors for Thomas Sydney Parry, Thomas Jennett Brown and Owen Sydney Parry, executors of the estate”. Thomas Sydney Parry is identified as a company director and as the nephew of Owen Parry, the deceased, and Owen Sydney Parry was given as a hotelier and great nephew of the deceased. Owen Sydney Parry was a resident at the time of San Joseph Kingsdown Deal, Kent. A similar report on the same matter appeared in The Examiner newspaper of Launceston, Tasmania, on August 10, 1937 and offered no new information.

After Owen Parry died his wife continued to live at Pembury Place until it was sold to St George's School in 1948.

Owen Parry's wife Annie Gertrude Parry was a resident of 10 Royal Chase, Tunbridge Wells when she died August 5, 1951. Her executors were Geoffrey Sandford Hall and Thomas Kennett Brown, solicitors, and Anthony Edward John Etheridge, doctor of medicine. She left an estate valued at about 7,500 pounds. There is no record of her being buried in the Tunbridge Wells Cemetery. She was probably buried in the same cemetery as her husband.

Probate records for Thomas Sydney Parry of Pulpit Rock Bonchurch Isle of Wight record his death on January 14, 1962 and that he was a retired oil seed crusher. His executors were the Westminster Bank Ltd and Owen Sydney Parry, hotel proprietor. He left an estate valued at over 145,000 pounds. Thomas Sydney Parry (1875-1961) married Ethel Mary Louise 1903 at St George Hanover Square. She was the daughter of Sarah Louisa Phillips. Thomas, among other things, worked at the Baltic Stock Exchange and lived for many years at the place of his death. A review of passenger lists shows he was a well-travelled man with business connections in Durban, South Africa (1926 trip) listed as age 51, company director; Mozambique (1935) listed as age 60, retired; France in 1937 and 1938 and Indonesia in 1938 to list but a few of his trips.

ST GEORGE' SCHOOL

St. George's School was founded by Mr and Mrs Benians at 8 Calverley Park Gardens in Tunbridge Wells. The school opened there on September 25, 1930. In the first year the school had 17 pupils and 3 members of staff with Mr and Mrs Benians running the school. There were a few boarders at the school but after one year enrollment had doubled and they found themselves in need of more space. As a result

the school acquired Arlington House at 8 Calverley Park Gardens, which was used for boarding pupils. The history of the school, as given on their website under the name of "Oakley School" is contradictory in explaining when Arlington House was acquired. In one case they state " By 1952 the school was overcrowded and the school acquired Arlington House..." In another place they refer to acquiring "Pembury Place" in 1948 and a letter referring to taking occupancy of Pembury Place refers to them already occupying #8 Calverley Park Gardens and Arlington House from which it can only be concluded , if the date of 1948 is correct, that they had acquired Arlington House by 1948. Also, they state " A boarder at the school from 1942-1949 named Michael Brett recalls that the Junior School was in Arlington Road, Tunbridge Wells and the Senior School was at Pembury Place".

A letter(undated) sent to parents to explain the expansion plans of the school states " During the summer term ,when a very desirable estate in Pembury Road was offered, we decided that the school, which is meeting a very definite education requirement, should be allowed to expand further by acquiring those premises and transferring part of the school there. The estate is known as Pembury Place and is situated on the main Pembury Road,just beyond Blackhurst Lane.It is served by frequent bus services and is conveniently close to the present school buildings. The building is a fine modern one,with extensive outbuildings and a reasonably level park,where it is hoped to take football fields and cricket pitches which will be available at all times for all departments of the school.Many other activities which we should have liked to do on a bigger scale than present will now be possible –scouting,athletics, ,hobbies,workshops and practical work in biology.The interior of the house (Pembury Place) is remarkable, and the largest room is able to accommodate over 200 people,and will be used for morning prayers and assemblies. Other fine rooms will be used as classrooms and there will be accommodation for senior boarders,who will be under the care of Mrs Benians.In the near future it is hoped to provide an opportunity for parents to see over the new premises. It is proposed to transfer the thee Senior classes to Pembury Place. Starting with these 30 pupils,we look forward to being able to accommodate some 30 boarders and up to 150 day boys,when the existing premises have been adapted in the course of a year or two. The transfer will allow for an expansion of the Middle school,which will be at #8 Calverley Park Gardens,and the boarders of this Department will be at Arlington House as at present. The Juniors will still be at #9 Calverley Park Gardens,but this Department will be increased in numbers to take three separate classes and later the Junior boarders will be accommodate here also. The boarding arrangements will be managed by Mrs Hokmott,assisted by a competent staff.We anticipate that this expansion will enable us to provide more opportunities for a wider education and to carry out the work more effectively".

A school report dated Spring 1947 showed "that pupils studied reading,writing,dictation,arithmetic, scripture,history,geography,French,nature study,drawing,handwork,singing,physical training and music". Harold Worthington Greenwood Betteridge(1892-1972), an artist,photographer,ornithologist, and a man of many other talents came to Tunbridge Wells from London in 1940. In addition to carrying on with his art work his obituary states " Mr Betteridge was for many years art master at St George's School..." The Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery has a large collection of his works.

In 1951 the school celebrated its 21st anniversary on its annual Speech Day and many important guests, including the Mayor, attended the celebrations. A 1951 schedule Scale of Fees document shows that in 1951 the Senior school was located at Pembury Place; the Middle school at 8 Calverley Park Gardens, and the Junior school at 9 Calverley Park Gardens. The school at that time was run by P. Benians Ltd with three directors, P.S. Denians, D.M. Denians and P.R. Denians. School fees for 1951 ranged from 12 to 18 guineas for day boys aged 8 to 11 years. Boarders under 11 paid 55 guineas per term and 60 guineas for over 11 years of age. An extra fee of 3 guineas per term was charged for piano or violin music. A fee of 5 guineas was charged per term for dinner at Mid-day (5 days a week). There was a reduction in fees of 3-1/2 guineas per term for weekly boarders and a reduction in fees was offered for brothers. The Courier announced that the Junior school had to be closed two weeks early in 1951 due to an outbreak of measles.

A Prospectus for St George's School advised "that the school provided a homely atmosphere, a splendid health record, routine, visits to town on a Saturday and Church of England services on Sunday. Pupils could remain at the school during school holidays or sent to camps or boarding houses if their parents were abroad. Boys sat their School Certificate between aged 16-17 years."

St George's closed in 1969 and the school contents sold at auction. It reopened in 1975 as a special school. St George's became Oakley School on September 1, 2000 with its Headteacher being Mr Absolom. The grand opening of the school took place June 24, 2003. Oakley Primary School is currently located on Waveney Road in Tonbridge. Its Secondary School and Post 16 Centre is today located on Pembury Road on the former site of the Oakleigh estate.

RECENT HISTORY

The original stable block of the estate have survived and although modified and added onto it is still used today by Oakley school as part of their main teaching premises. The original West Lodge near the west entrance to the site was still there in the 1980's but had been added onto and converted into a private residence. Today the building has fallen into disuse and is no longer occupied. The estate must have had an East Lodge originally, and if this assertion is correct then it was demolished in the 20th century along with the main mansion house which was taken down to make room for part of the current premises of the school. Based on a map of the site it would appear that the mansion house was located to the west of the stable block where a more modern school building has been constructed. The Gardeners cottage survives to this day and is now referred to as the East Lodge and has been undergone alterations and modernization and although used initially by the school as premises for the school caretaker has become a private residence. The upright arch top headstone for the dog Chan can still be found in the woods. It is inscribed "Chang died May 1923".

Shown opposite is a modern photograph of "Oakley Lodge" which Oakley school described as being the "Oakleigh" lodge occupied in the 1911 census by Albert Hobbs, the estates gardener.

Shown opposite is a modern photograph of part of the old stable block still in use by the school.

The information below was obtained from my review of Planning Authority applications covering the years 1987 to 2013 and provides some insight into the redevelopment of the estate buildings and grounds.

An application was made in 1987 by Kent County Council for a change in use of "The Bungalow, St George's School" from its current use as a caretakers bungalow into a residential dwelling and change of use of school grounds to private residential curtilage. The application was approved. The site map which accompanied the application is shown opposite with the caretakers bungalow and associated grounds encircled in a black boundary, denoting the boundaries of the application site. The map also shows the location of the West Lodge (labelled "Lodge") where the drive entrance meets Pembury Road. The main school complex is shown in the middle and consists of the old stable block near the top right corner of the complex and extending out from that are school buildings of more modern construction. Also labelled on the map is "The Pond" just to the left of the main complex. This pond is referred to in the school's history as being built in the grounds in about 1930 and they also state "The dias was found in the original garden near the pond and can now be found in our vegetable garden". This garden is also shown on the map just to the right of the pond.

In 1987 a second application for approval was made, this time by Mr & Mrs Hayward, who were the owners of what was originally the West Lodge at the entrance gate, labelled as "Lodge" on the above map but was used by them as their private residence. They obtained approval in this application for a first floor extension to the building.

Shown opposite is a photograph of this building taken at my request in 2013.

In 1988 Andrew J. Butler, the owner of what was the caretakers bungalow and repurposed in the 1987 as a private residence requested approval for two detached bungalows with linked garages but was refused. His premises were referred to in the application as the "East Lodge" but appears on some maps as "The Bungalow". In the same year Mr Butler made a second application, which was approved, for 'alterations and extension to East Lodge and the construction of a detached double garage.

The next application was in 2002 for the construction of a "lean to conservatory" at "East Lodge" Pembury Place. This application was made by T.R. Mannering on behalf of the owner Mr Williamson who had acquired the premises from Mr. Butler. The application called for the construction of the conservatory along the front south facing elevation of the building. Approval was granted on the basis that it be designed and finished in such a manner that it complemented or matched the finishes on the existing residence. An internal report on the application stated "The lodge is rather interesting-mid 19th century- and quite nicely detailed with corner quions, a shallow peaked slate roof and central chimney feature, modern windows though".

A second series of applications under the title of St Georges School were reviewed for the period of 1979 to 2013 and apart for a few pertaining to minor matters or trees below are the details. An application was approved in 1979 for the installation of two standard timber mobile classrooms. These temporary classrooms were to be removed from the site by March 31, 1985. In 1985 an application was

made for an extended use of these temporary classrooms and approval was given with the stipulation that they were to be removed by July 31,1990.

In 1983 approval was given for the construction of a small summer house near the main school complex.In 1985 approval was given for “conversion of house into ground floor teaching areas and first floor self-contained flat. The location of this structure is shown on the above map and labelled “The Flat” and is located at the top right hand corner of the main school complex.

In 1991 approval was given for “Timber building for Science laboratory and rural studies”. Approval was granted on the basis that it be removed on or before February 28,1996.

In 2000 an application was made for ‘Demolition of garages/part stable block,new block to rear of stable block with link and porch to new building/existing school and adaptations within existing school.Car park and mobile toilet/classrooms whilst building is in operation’. This application was approved. A set of drawings was submitted for the proposed work (both plan and elevations). The elevation drawings are shown below.

The application provided a report outlining the proposed work and the reasons for it,part of which I have provided here. The report stated that originally St George’s school catered for pupils of both primary and secondary ages. Following public consultation it was decided to amalgamate St Georges on Pembury Road with Waveny School in Tonbridge to create a single school on two sites. This was to enable the St George site to cater specifically for secondary age pupils while the younger children would be accommodated at the Waveny site. To change the premises at St George school from 4-18 years to 11-18 years “will mean many adaptations will need to be made to the buildings. The main changes include the demolition of a disused and dilapidated section of the old stable block together with the creation of a new block to house two science laboratories and a hall with changing facilities.These would be supplemented by the refurbishment of other parts of the stable block to improve the teaching there.The second area of requirement would involve major changes to the interior of the main teaching block to provide improvements and create appropriate sized premises and general classrooms.Access around the interior of the school to be improved and enhanced for the less mobile students. The proposal for the new extension is to build behind the existing older part of the stable block of the old demolished mansion.The newer part of the stable block to the east of the site now dilapidated and unsafe is to be demolished.The proposed new work is of single storey construction of yellow stock bricks and slate roof with powder coated aluminum vertical sliding windows.The existing stable block fronting the main road to be refurbished and renovated.The old garage situated near the existing vehicle access to be demolished. An area to the east of the site now rough weather ground used during the war for shed and storage and now used as further car parking is to be re-graded and tarpaved and marked out for staff and visitor parking.The existing SEAC school building positioned in the site of the old mansion is to be extensively refurbished internally”.

The website of “Finlog”,a name derived from the words Finnish and log home, announced the Finlog recently won the contract to supply Oakley School in Tunbridge Wells with an extra log classroom/conference centre .It states “ The school has a program for teaching special needs staff, and

needed a space that would not only be a relaxing environment for teaching the children but also the adults and for holding functions too. The building is made from our 88mm laminated log and is constructed to full building regulations. As part of the tender process we had to design a scheme that would cause minimal damage to the forest floor and when completed would have little or no negative impact. We used galvanized steel piles screwed into the ground to at least 2m depth. We have designed the cabin to be wheelchair friendly and when the rubber topped deck is installed it will be a pleasure to use. We are on time and on budget and will be finished before the Christmas break". Shown opposite and below are some photographs of the building during construction and below is a plan of the building.

This work was approved with some changes to the building plans and the type and colour of the bricks. This is the last record of any planning applications for the school and brings the history of the old estate and the current school up to date.