

A history of
The Grange
Compton, Surrey

Philip and Sally Gorton



Philip Gorton

House Historian

Sally Gorton

Artist and Writer

11 Orchardfield Road, Godalming, GU7 3PB.

(01483) 420763

www.house-history-research.co.uk

© Text 2020 Philip & Sally Gorton

Printed by Craddock's of Godalming, Surrey: www.craddocksprinting.co.uk
Bound by the Abbey Bookbindery, Camberley, Surrey: www.bookbinders.co.uk

Contents

Dedication	4
Introduction	5
Church and parsonage, glebe and tithes	6
The rector's living	6
Some early rectors and their home at Compton	8
The purchasing of an advowson	10
Edward Fulham and his successors	10
Non-resident clergymen	15
The Lefroy family	17
William Hammond	21
The eighteenth century house.	22
George More-Molyneux and his successors	24
William Davies and the rebuilding of the house	26
Hugh Gillett and the last rectors at the parsonage	29
The Grange, new beginnings and owners	32
The next half century	35
The current owners and their home	37
Glossary	40
Notes and references	43

Dedication

This history of The Grange is dedicated to my husband, Nick, who initiated the writing of this book but sadly died before it was completed. We all miss him so much and are proud of all he has done to make this the family hub it has become.

Jill Eyles 2019



Nick driving the train at the Compton Fete.

Introduction

The Grange is a substantial house and is one of a succession of dwellings that have stood on the current site. This building and those that preceded it were home to the rectors of Compton for many centuries, until the house was sold in 1913. Its history is, therefore, inextricably linked with these clergymen and the patrons of the living who had the right to appoint them.

The property has been much altered and added to in its lifetime, particularly in the mid 1870s. Its north-western wing, which is now known as the cottage, is the earliest surviving part of the parsonage and this piece of the house appears to date from the eighteenth century. It is said that parts of an earlier structure are hidden in the present building, but these are not evident today.

At certain times in its history the rectors of Compton have made their homes elsewhere, during which time the parsonage was rented out to tenants. This occurred particularly between the late seventeenth and the early nineteenth century. During the late seventeenth century, the Rev Edward Fulham owned and lived at nearby Eastbury Manor but, a hundred years later, the two rectors from the Lefroy family lived over thirty miles away at Ashe near Basingstoke.

The Grange is an unusual building and has, in its long history, evolved in an eclectic sort of manner. Placed in a beautiful setting, it is today a most attractive property with many fine features.

The authors would like to acknowledge the help of the staff of the Surrey History Centre (SHC); Surrey Archaeological Society (SAS); Godalming Museum Library (GML), Guildford Borough Council (GBC), The National Archives (TNA), the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) and the custodian of Jane Austen's House in Chawton, Hampshire. Information about the Lefroy family was received from Mrs Jane Hurst of Alton. Thanks are also due to Duncan Mirylees for his help in identifying the arms of the Terry family of London.

Illustrations reproduced by permission of the More-Molyneux family and Surrey History Centre.



Church and parsonage, glebe and tithes

Historically, priests and their churches were maintained by income derived from the land of the parish. This came principally in two ways: the glebe land, a part of the ancient endowment of a parish church, was owned by the rector of the day who either farmed the land himself or derived an income by renting it to a farmer. As well as his glebe land, the rector also gained an income from tithes. These were a tenth part of the produce of the land in the parish and were payable to the rector by the landowners.

Glebe land to maintain its building was necessary for the foundation of any medieval church.¹ Compton church was founded and endowed with its glebe land before the Norman Conquest of 1066. Indeed the church, and by implication the glebe land, is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. It is possible that the founder of the church and the provider of the land was Brixii, the man listed in Domesday as owning the manor of Compton in the years immediately before the Conquest.

It was typical for the priest's house to lie within or adjacent to the glebe land. Endowments of these parcels of land have remained generally stable, changing little in size and shape between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries and, frequently, into the twenty-first.² A terrier of the Compton glebe was made in 1695 which reveals that, apart from some minor exchanges of land in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the heart of this glebe land has changed little over the centuries.³

The position of the old parsonage house, snugly surrounded on three sides by the fields, woodland and fishponds of its glebe land, suggests strongly that its site is an ancient one and that the present house is the latest of a series of dwellings that have been built here.

The rector's living

In medieval parishes, the parson was frequently a farmer who cultivated his glebe himself. As time went on, however, an increasing number of these clergymen decided to rent or lease this valuable asset and live on the income. However, it was not only the glebe land that could be leased to provide an income to the church but also all the assets of the living. A lease of 1568 reveals that the owner of the advowson of Compton, William More of Loseley, and the rector, Anthony Cawses, leased not only the glebe land but also the parsonage house and the tithes to Thomas Jones and John Austen.⁴ However, the rector did need to retain some of

the practical benefits of land ownership for his day-to-day needs and these are listed in the agreement.

As well as the income from the four annual offering days, Cawses retained the pasture of the churchyard and a half-share of the parsonage house. He also had the use of the orchard and one of the fishponds with its fish and fishing rights. The rector was able to “summer his nag on the glebe” and he had the liberty to cut timber and underwood from the glebe woodlands.⁵



One of the ancient fishponds.

Anthony Cawses’s right to fish one of the ponds was significant, for fishponds provided an important source of protein for fast days when the eating of meat was forbidden, such as on Fridays and during Lent. It was acceptable to consume fish on these occasions and many Roman Catholics still eat fish on Fridays for this reason.

The fishponds at the Grange are a survival from the early days of the parsonage and were an important part of the rector’s household economy. Fish farming was a large industry in the Middle Ages and it had been fully developed by the twelfth century. The most elaborate fishponds belonged to royal and monastic estates but the nobility and gentry had theirs too as did the rectors of Compton.⁶

Some fishponds were elaborate affairs with sluices and channels to control the water. At Compton, three dams across a small combe created a simpler kind of arrangement; a trio of ponds situated just below the spring line that were fed by a small but constant flow of water. This was an ingenious and practical method of farming as the three ponds could be used for different ages or species of fish. Typically, the ponds were in sight of the house for their contents were always a favourite target for thieves.

This source of food production continued at Compton until at least the latter half of the sixteenth century. The practice may have continued for some years afterwards, but the increasingly cold weather is likely to have brought about changes for the ponds themselves were around only around four to five feet deep, including an area of silt. By the seventeenth century the climate was considerably cooler throughout the year and the long winters were cold enough to freeze the River Thames for many weeks on end. Such weather would have soon turned these little ponds at Compton into solid ice.

Some early rectors and their home at Compton

The first houses that stood on the current site were timber-framed constructions: stone and brick were used only for the grandest buildings in this part of the country until the seventeenth century. South Cottage, situated nearby in The Street at Compton, is one of the earliest local examples of a stone-built cottage but elsewhere in the parish there are timber framed buildings still standing.

The parsonage that existed in Tudor times, some five hundred years after the establishment of the benefice, was several replacements further on from the original priest's house but this building too would have been timber-framed. Typically, a parsonage was similar in size and status to a small manor house or a wealthy farmer's dwelling; houses of decent size and quality that offered their occupants a good standard of living for the times.

Indeed, these properties had to be sufficiently large enough for the priest to offer hospitality to wayfarers who passed that way, as he was obliged to do. These people may have trudged many miles before reaching Compton and the priest was required to offer a meal and provide shelter for the night, irrespective of the status of his visitor; rich and poor alike could be sure of food and somewhere to sleep.

We do not know the identity of the first clergymen who lived on the site. The earliest Compton rector to be recorded was Michael de Polstede who held the post from around 1189 for an unspecified period. By 1300 Henry de Guldeford was serving the needs of the small parish and for the next two centuries there were 26 priests who undertook the post, most of whom stayed for just a handful of years before resigning.

More details are known about the rectors of the 1500s. This was not an easy period for members of the clergy; in particular, the mid sixteenth century was a very turbulent time and the inhabitants of the parsonage house were subject to the dramatically changing religious regimes of Henry VIII and his children.

By 1535, and during the time of Henry's break from Rome, Oliver Browne was the rector. He survived that difficult decade but his successor, Anthony Cawses, had a more chequered career. He had been chaplain to Sir Robert Weston's chantry chapel, Holy Trinity church in Guildford.⁷ However, after the suppression of the chantries during the reign of Henry's son, the protestant Edward VI, he found himself out of a job.⁸ Fortunately, he found employment as rector of Compton following the death of Oliver Browne and came to the parsonage house that same year.



The actions of Edward VI and his sister Queen Mary caused decades of problems for Anthony Cawses.

After the death of King Edward in 1553 his catholic half-sister, Mary, came to the throne and attempted to take the country back to the Roman Catholic faith. Consequently, Cawses was once more deprived of his living when, in 1554, she forbade her clergy to be married. It did not pay to be too publicly staunch in one's defence of the protestant faith during Mary's reign and many heretics were burnt during her bloody five years on the throne.

Wisely, perhaps, Anthony Cawses, stayed with his wife. He left Compton and was able to survive on the £5 per year pension he was paid from the

endowment of the dissolved chantry. Sometime after the death of Queen Mary, he was reinstated as rector of Compton. Although the date of his return is unknown he had, as we have seen, returned by 1568.⁹

The purchasing of an advowson

An advowson is the right to present a clergyman to a benefice. It is held by a patron who may be an individual, or an institution, either clerical or secular. The parson was frequently related to a family of consequence and a large proportion of Church of England livings were in the gift of landowners whose ancestors had acquired the advowson during dissolution of the monasteries in the late 1530s. The More family of Loseley had acquired the advowson of Compton in 1535 from the Abbot of Dureford, a handful of years before the abbey was dissolved. It passed out of the family but returned to the More-Molyneux family in 1823, shortly before James More-Molyneux appointed his son George as rector.

The rich frequently bought the advowson of a parish in order to provide a member of their family with a comfortable living. This would often be a younger son who would not be expected to inherit the family estate and who was, instead, installed as the parish rector.

The income was derived from the tithes and the glebe land. However, they were not the only valuable assets of the Compton living as the house was large and, by the mid seventeenth century, it was one the biggest in the parish. This is evident from the Hearth Tax records of 1662 that shows that Edmund Yalden, the rector of the time, was assessed for six hearths. This made the parsonage the fourth largest house in the parish after Eastbury Manor House with thirteen hearths, Field Place with twelve and Down Place with nine.¹⁰

Many livings were extremely valuable, to the extent that advowsons were bought and sold as any other property, their purchasers secure in the knowledge that they were buying a guaranteed income from their investment.

Edward Fulham and his successors

Dr Edward Fulham came to Compton in 1662 when he bought the lordship of the manor of Eastbury and, with it, the manor house and its land. Subsequently, he bought the advowson from Robert More of Loseley and presented his son George as rector in 1685. With the living

**A Terrier of All the Glebe Lande
pastured & meadowes belounging to the
Rectory of Compton. 1600.**

In acrie of curable Land in the parage some betwene
the Lande of Peter Anmell on the east side and the Lande
of William Grist on the west side } 3
In one halfe acre of curable Land in the same field betwene the
Lande of Peter Anmell on the west side and the enclosed ground
of the said glebe Land, called the 4. acres on the east side } 1/2
Two pieces of meadow ground containing by estimation six acres
called the green meadow and the lower meadow } 8
In the little Compton one Acre of land adjoining to the
said lower meadow on the west side and the Lande of Peter
Anmell on the east side And one halfe Acre of land adjoining
to the said lower meadow, and there is a way to the same
runneth betwene the said two pieces of meadow land on the south
end of the said little Compton } 1 1/2
In my Acrie of curable Land adjoining to the upper side
of the lower meadow enclosed Abutting vpon the little lane that
doeth serue the parishes of Goddellmyng & Compton on the
South, and the Lande of Thomas Emmanion on the east side } 4
In certayne stwille closes of curable Land & pasture containing
by estimation Twenty Acres abutting together vpon the
meadowe field on the North side And the said lower meadow on the
South, the Lande of Peter Anmell on the west side and the
Lande of John Bishopp on the East side } 20
In meadowe plote Lynging betwene the meadowe ground
by estimation, one acre and an halfe } 1 1/2
In closes of curable Land and pasture lying together
the same side containing by estimation six acres } 6

A terrier of the Compton glebe lands from around 1600.

went the parsonage and it is likely that George and his wife Katherine moved into the house at that time.

George Fulham inherited both Eastbury Manor and the advowson on the death of his father in 1695. It is probable that he went to live at Eastbury itself, leaving the parsonage available either to rent or to house a curate. Six years later, in 1701, George resigned as rector and, as owner of the advowson, he appointed Robert Newton to be his replacement and the next inhabitant of the parsonage.



This scene of the Street , showing Compton's timber framed dwellings, was painted by Edward Hassell in 1830.

The first twenty years or so of the eighteenth century was an unsettled time for the parsonage. During this relatively short time there were five different rectors in succession at the property. The first, Robert Newton, left his post after less than one year. His successor, Alexander Forbes, stayed for the next decade but his life was to end tragically when he drowned in 1712. In the meantime, George Fulham had died and his brother John now owned both Eastbury and the advowson.¹¹

The following decade was to be particularly turbulent for the clergy of Compton. John Fulham appointed Hugh Evans as rector but the latter resigned after less than three years in office. Why he left we do not know but it may have been for similar reasons that his successor, William Sanderson, departed in 1722 following an acrimonious dispute with Fulham over tithes.

Sanderson had been appointed as rector in 1715 and he went to live at the parsonage. Two years later he became John Fulham's son-in-law when he married his daughter Katherine. However happy his marriage may have been, William Sanderson's relationship with his father-in-law was very poor; the two men seem to have clashed head on and they were in continual dispute over tithes throughout Sanderson's time as rector.

By 1719, things were becoming very unpleasant. William Sanderson tried to take the tithes of four or five acres of hay to which he believed himself to be entitled. According to John Fulham, he and his men were forced to reclaim the tithes "under the shelter of clubs and staves" to protect themselves from Sanderson's violent behaviour.¹²

The tithes of a parish usually went to the incumbent, not to the patron. In Compton, it may have been that the patron owned not only the advowson but also the right to at least some of the tithes. This is suggested by Anthony Cawses lease of 1568 and an earlier lease of 1557 in which William More (the patron of the time) leased the parsonage, glebe and tithes to a farmer, William Smyth of Polsted.¹³

The animosity between the Sanderson and Fulham may also have stemmed from a belief that Katherine had married beneath herself. At the end of the seventeenth century many of the clergy were regarded, on the whole, as a lower social class. Macauley, in his *History Of England*, subdivided the clergy into two groups: firstly, the learned men of London, the universities and the cathedrals, who were men such as Fulham's father. To the second group belonged the poor clergy who were "not much more refined than small farmers or upper servants". This view was widespread.

Eventually, John Fulham brought a case against his son-in-law in the Court of Exchequer in 1721 that ended with Sanderson resigning his post. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the case (and one must remember that the surviving papers give only Fulham's side of the argument), there is no doubt that Sanderson was claiming tithes that Fulham considered to be his and there was a continuing animosity between the two men.

Although Sanderson was living at the parsonage, he did not have the run of the nearby farmstead. That remained under Fulham's control but he did his best, nonetheless, to gain access to his father-in-law's property. One witness in the court case, Edward Gerrard, stated that three years previously, Sanderson had asked him to unlock the barn at the parsonage to ascertain what was inside.

Kathleen Sanderson either colluded with her husband or was afraid to oppose him; another witness, John Terry, stated that he was working at the parsonage farmstead when Mrs Sanderson called over from the house to offer him a pot of ale. When he returned to his work he found that the rector had locked the barn. Inside, it was discovered, were fourteen quarters of barley that Sanderson had taken for himself.

The records of the case confirm that the parsonage was the house of the rector at that time and that there were functioning farm buildings there. It is also interesting to note that the barn was actually used for the purpose that its modern name suggests: for the storing of tithes. Unfortunately, the records regarding the outcome of the case have not been found but when Sanderson resigned in 1722, Fulham's second son, John, replaced him as rector. One can conclude that it is not a good idea to upset the boss, even if one is married to his daughter.

A long period of stability followed. The John Fulham was rector for fifty-five years until his death in 1777 and, following the death of his father in 1726, he lived at the family home of Eastbury manor house. As well as the rectory of Compton, Fulham acquired other ecclesiastical positions through his life: he held the living of Merrow in 1736 and the vicarage of Isleworth in 1751. He was made a prebendary of Chichester Cathedral in 1745 and during the following year he was appointed chaplain to the House of Commons.¹⁴ Needless to say, these posts came with their associated incomes.

In his early years as rector, he had no curate at Compton, which indicates that he was undertaking the parish work himself.¹⁵ Once he became the owner of Eastbury he may have rented out the parsonage but, as he grew older, he employed a series of curates to undertake his duties, one of whom was his son, Edward. The curates probably lived at the parsonage house, an idea supported by the fact that Fulham was responsible for paying its rates.

Non-resident clergymen

As we have seen, it was possible for a clergyman to have more than one living and consequently, it frequently happened that they rarely visited some of their parishes. The parishioners of Compton were fortunate in having a resident clergyman during John Fulham's incumbency, although his various duties would have taken him away from Compton for some of the time. This was certainly the case with his successors. Isaac George Lefroy and subsequently his son John Henry Lefroy who, between them, held the living from 1777 to 1823, lived at Ashe near Basingstoke and only occasionally made the 31 mile journey to Compton.



Eastbury Manor House in the 1870s. The Jacobean part of the house with the end gables was the home of George and, later, John Fulham.

Non-residence was the major scandal of the late eighteenth century church and was rightly considered to be a serious abuse of the landed assets of the parish. Farmers were, quite understandably, reluctant to pay tithes but to see their money leaving the parish to keep an absentee rector in comfort elsewhere merely rubbed salt into the wound. In 1803, an Act of Parliament required bishops to present annual returns of non-resident

clergy. The survey revealed that about half of all parishes had no resident parson serving their church.

As was usual in these circumstances, the Lefroys took the tithes of Compton and employed various curates to do the work. The curates probably lived at the parsonage house but the glebe land was certainly rented to local farmers.¹⁶ However assiduous the curates may have been, the lack of a resident rector must have irked the parishioners; they had no senior representative of the Church to hand and, lacking a figure of authority, they surely felt somewhat overlooked.

We have no structural description of the parsonage during the Lefroy era but, if Compton were typical of benefices held by absentee rectors, the house may not have been in the best of condition. Many absent rectors tended to neglect their remote properties and they simply derived an income from the tithes, from renting out the glebe land and frequently the parsonage house itself.



John Fulham believed that William Sanderson was stealing his hay and barley.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a growing concern about the number of clergymen holding multiple livings because it was leading to a decline in the strength of the established church. Not surprisingly, increasing numbers of the various affected congregations had become disenchanted with the situation and were taking their spiritual beliefs elsewhere.

Faced with the stiff competition now posed by non-conformism, Parliament acted to limit the number of multiple incumbencies. Consequently, the early nineteenth century saw a decline in the number absentee rectors: in 1810 nearly half of the beneficed clergy were absentee but by 1850 the proportion had reduced to less than one sixth.¹⁷ As a result of these changes, John Henry Lefroy was destined to be the last absentee rector of Compton.

The Lefroy family

The earliest English Lefroys were Huguenots who came to this country in the late sixteenth century and settled in Kent. They became a wealthy family. Isaac Peter George Lefroy, known as George, was born in Italy in 1745 and sent to Canterbury at the age of seven to be brought up by his aunt and elder sister. He was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church College, Oxford and was ordained in 1772. Five years later he became rector of Compton. As this was one of his subsidiary livings it is unlikely that he lived in the parish.¹⁸



The farmyard in the early twentieth century.

In December 1778 George Lefroy married Anne Brydges at Wootton in Surrey. The Brydges family also came from Kent and they owned the advowson of Compton. George's marriage to Anne, therefore, brought him not only personal joy but also this lucrative living. The couple had seven children. Three died young and, of the four who survived, two were destined to play a part in this story.

The Lefroys made their family home in Ashe in Hampshire, near Basingstoke. Mrs Lefroy, also known as Madam Lefroy, was soon to

become a great friend and mentor of Jane Austen who, at the time of their first meeting, was only eight years old. Mrs Lefroy gave every encouragement to her protégée towards her literary interests. The young girl lived in the neighbouring parish of Steventon where her father was rector and it is not surprising that her future novels would be set into the world in which the Austens and Lefroys lived.

George Lefroy employed curates at Compton to conduct services and undertake the regular work in the parish but he did visit sometimes and his correspondence make frequent references to riding or driving over from Ashe.¹⁹ How often he officiated at services is difficult to ascertain but he certainly made several visits a year to the parish. A number of Anne Lefroy's letters, written to their second son Edward, give us some clues as to the frequency and nature of these trips, which were often part of a roundabout journey to his other outposts.²⁰

His earliest signing of the marriage register occurred when he read banns of marriage the day after Easter 1780, three years after he was inducted as rector. If one is charitable, this appearance at Easter could be viewed as the rector visiting his flock at the most important time in the Christian calendar. More cynically, one could speculate that he had made the long journey from Ashe to claim his traditional Easter offerings from his distant parishioners.

The journey however, was not an easy one, especially in the winter months, and Mr Lefroy usually stayed away for a night or two in Compton after undertaking the trip. Sometimes, despite his best efforts, the conditions prevented him from reaching the parish at all. On 27th November 1801 Mrs Lefroy wrote "*Your father is gone to Ewshot and Compton the weather is so bad I could not get to Deane today*". Later in the year, on Tuesday 1st December she reported that "*the post brought me a letter from your father saying the roads were so bad he had given up all thoughts of reaching Compton and should stay at Ewshot*".²¹

However, on certain occasions George Lefroy's duties away from home may have afforded him some relief and were perhaps timed to do so as this further extract from his wife's correspondence shows: "*November 16th 1802 - Lord Portsmouth has sent invitations to a Ball on the 19th . . . your father will be at Compton which he is very glad of for you know he is not fond of Balls*"

Most of the parish work during his rectorship was undertaken by a series of different curates, the longest serving of whom was John Monkhouse between 1787 and 1794. Their names feature in the signing of the

marriage registers, including that of Rev A Robinson, who officiated at Compton at the start of the nineteenth century. Several of Anne Lefroy's letters mention a friendship with a Hampshire family of clergy named Robinson and it is possible that the Compton curate had a connection with these people.



Rev. George Lefroy, who became rector of Compton in 1777.

Throughout his period in office, George Lefroy was liable for paying land tax on the parsonage land and also for the poor rates on the “passnidge”. This suggests that, like John Fulham before him, he was not subletting the parsonage house but was using it to house his curates during his absentee incumbency.

The opportunity to live in a good house in this way was of some benefit to a curate, especially those who came from the higher echelons of society. However, most people of this class viewed the income, as well as the post, as meagre in the extreme, especially for a young man with intentions of marrying soon: “*He could get*

nothing but a curacy, and how was they to live upon that? . . . They will wait a twelvemonth, and finding no good comes of it, will set down upon a curacy of £50 a year, with the interest of his £200 – Then they will have a child every year! And lord help ‘em! How poor they will be.” ²²

In December 1804 Anne Lefroy died suddenly, following a violent fall from her horse. The animal had taken fright and bolted at great speed and neither Mrs Lefroy nor her accompanying groom had been able to rein the horse in. Her husband was devastated by his loss and did not long outlive her; his widowhood lasted for just over one year until January 1806. His eldest surviving son, John Lefroy, took his position as rector of Ashe and the various outposts, including Compton.

John Henry George Lefroy had been born in 1782 and, like his father, he had been educated at Westminster and Christ Church College. He was just 24 years old when he succeeded to the living at Compton. He married Sophia Cottrell and they had a large family; a total of eleven children

were born to them but John Lefroy was not destined to make old bones for he died in 1823, aged just 41 years.

During his time as rector of Compton he too employed curates to undertake the regular parish duties and, from 1819 until the time of his death, it was his youngest brother, Ben Lefroy, who was to carry out this role. For four years, Ben and his wife Anna lived in the parish with their young family and their home was at the parsonage. They appear to have been a close and loving family and hopefully, relations between the rector of Compton and his curate were very much more cordial than they had been a century earlier.²³

Jane Anna Elizabeth Lefroy was born on 15th April 1793 and was the eldest daughter of Rev James Austen, Jane Austen's eldest brother. Her mother died when she was an infant and Anna had spent many of her formative years living at Steventon rectory, in the company of her aunts and grandparents. She was a gifted artist and, as she was also an aspiring writer, her Aunt Jane was able to act as a mentor. Despite her very cordial relations with her aunt, Jane Austen's response to the news of her engagement had sounded a cautionary note on the affair and gives us an interesting insight into the character of the two young people:



Anne Lefroy, wife of Rev George Lefroy and friend and mentor to Jane Austen

“It came upon us without much preparation; - at the same time there was that about her which kept us in a constant preparation for something. – We are anxious to have it go on well, there being quite as much in his favour as the chances are likely to give her in any matrimonial connection. I believe he is sensible, certainly very religious, well connected and with some independence. There is an unfortunate dissimilarity of taste between them in one respect which gives us some apprehensions, he hates company and she is very fond of it; - this, with

*some queerness of temper on his side and much unsteadiness on hers, is untoward.”*²⁴

Despite the fears of relatives and friends the marriage was a happy one and for Anna, especially, it was the chance to build her own family. When the couple moved from Chawton to Compton in 1819, their first three young children, Anna, Julia and George accompanied them. Two more girls were to be born at the parsonage: Fanny Caroline Lefroy arrived in 1820 and Georgiana Brydges Lefroy was born in 1822.²⁵

When John Lefroy died the following year, Ben Lefroy succeeded him as rector of Ashe and the family moved back to Hampshire. Sadly, he too was destined to die young for he passed away in 1829 at the age of only 38. Anna, by now the mother of seven young children, described his passing as an “irreparable loss”. She did not re-marry and died in 1872 at the age of 79. It is interesting to note that Jane Austen’s early influence bore fruit for Anna published two books for children later in life.²⁶

Ben Lefroy, unlike his brother and father before him, did not become rector of Compton. In 1822, James More-Molyneux had purchased the advowson and, during the following year, he appointed his son George as rector of Compton, a position that he was to occupy for the next fifty years. A new era had begun for the parish and its small population.

William Hammond

When George Lefroy was rector of Compton he rented the glebe to a local farmer, William Hammond, who had been the owner of nearby Binscombe Farm since 1758. Hammond had inherited the farm and a number of properties on the land on the death of his father. He had been forced to sell his property in 1767 due to severe financial difficulties but the Loseley estate, that had taken over the ownership of his farm, allowed him remain there as its tenant.

This agreement continued until 1776, which may have been when he took on the tenancy of the glebe land. He was in the occupation of these lands in 1780 and this situation remained in place until 1805 when they were passed to Richard Hammond.²⁷

From 1791 to 1801 William Hammond rented Cutt Croft in Compton. This cottage, now known as Tudor Cottage, had also been one of his family properties that had been sold in 1767. The Hammonds were clearly made of stern stuff. Despite the financial difficulties of their earlier years both William and his wife, Easter, lived to good ages: he

died in 1819 aged 79 and she outlived him by nine years dying at the age of ninety. They are buried at Compton church.²⁸

After William's death, Richard Hammond continued to rent the glebe land and farm for some years into the nineteenth century and he was still doing so during the time that Ben and Anna Lefroy and their family lived at the parsonage.



*Anna Lefroy sketched Steventon Rectory in 1820.
She lived here for many of her formative years with her aunt,
Jane Austen and other close relatives.*

The eighteenth century house.

Unusually, as well as being a farmer, William Hammond was also a skilled cartographer and a beautifully drawn map of the parsonage and glebe, executed by him in 1788, survives today.²⁹ The map has a detailed outline plan of the house showing its farmyard, garden and orchard as the Lefroy family would have known it. Comparing it with the tithe map of 1840, it is evident that the house changed very little during the intervening period.

There were, however, some changes to the grounds during that time. On the southeast side of the house was a formal garden in 1788 and, adjacent to it, was the orchard. At the front of the house was a pond, then a common feature of farmyards. Both the shape of the garden and the position of the pond had changed by 1840 but the orchard was still in the same place, although smaller, in 1872.

In 1824, one year after George More-Molyneux became rector of Compton, the artist John Hassell painted a watercolour of the parsonage, adding another dimension to these two maps.³⁰ Viewing the house from the north-east, his picture shows no timber framing, although it may have survived in other, unseen, parts of the building. It is evident, though, that the house had undergone significant changes during the seventeenth century.



Fanny Caroline Lefroy was born at the parsonage in 1820.

The parts of the house shown by Hassell were built of brick, a material that was becoming increasingly popular from the middle of the century, and the tile-hung gable end and the tall diamond plan chimneys are common features on buildings of that time. The windows above and to the left of the doorway, with their prominent mullions, were a favourite style of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The right-hand wing of the house (the cottage) painted by Hassell still exists. This, too, is brick built and appears to date from the eighteenth century.

He shows the typical sash windows of that century on the lower floor with smaller, casement windows above. A late nineteenth century addition now covers this side of the cottage.

The dwelling depicted by Hassell has the unplanned, pleasantly disorganised, appearance of the house that is described in the dilapidation survey of 1872. This document tells us of a house that had grown bit by bit over the centuries by a succession of additions, but with no particular plan.³¹

George More-Molyneux and his successors

As we have seen, George More-Molyneux became rector in 1823, the year after his father James had acquired the advowson. He was aged about 26 years. He graduated from Trinity College, Oxford in 1821 and gained his MA in 1822. The following year, he was presented as a deacon in the diocese of Chester and a prebendary in the diocese of Lincoln.³² Both of these positions would have secured him an income in addition to that derived from the living at Compton.

As the nineteenth century progressed, clergymen acquired a higher social standing than in previous centuries, although though their income did not always reflect this. The majority of nineteenth century clergymen had an income of less than £400 per annum, which was well below that of the landed gentry with whom they socialised, and it was their education rather than their wealth that established their social position.

George More-Molyneux would certainly have had no doubts about his social position. Not only was he from a long-established landed family but he also had an income from his various church posts, as well as an above average income of over £500 from the living of Compton.³³ It is likely, too, that he had other forms of revenue or legacy from his father, as he was the eldest son. He certainly had the resources to employ a curate who, in his later years, was his own son.

George More-Molyneux and his wife Ann had six children, born over a comparatively long period of two decades. The first four, Eleanor, Blanche, Caroline and Barbara were born between 1825 and 1835. Following a gap of eight years they had their only son, Henry and the family was completed by the arrival of their youngest daughter Margaret, who was born two years later in 1845.

The census returns of 30th March 1851 reveal that the More-Molyneux family had a visitor at the parsonage. Henry George Hand, a forty year old clergyman, was evidently there as a suitor to Caroline, who was then 19 years of age, for the two were married later that year, on 30th July.

The census also reflects a comfortable standard of living as the family kept four servants at the parsonage: a footman, a cook, a lady's maid and a housemaid. The presence of a footman suggests a rather fashionable style of living and reveals that the rector's household was one of the most affluent in the parish. In the middle of the nineteenth century footmen were seen very much as a status symbol. They were often far better paid

than their fellow servants and the tallest of them, who looked especially dashing in their uniforms, could command the highest wages.³⁴



This fine sketch of Anna Lefroy is attributed to her sister-in-law, Emma Austen-Leigh.

By 1871 a part of Compton's history was repeating itself, for the parish again had its rector and curate provided by the same family. In the case of the Lefroys, the spiritual needs of the population had, for while, been served by the two brothers but this time it was to be administered by father and son. Henry More-Molyneux was now Compton's curate and living nearby in The Street at The Limes. At this time he was around twenty-seven years old.

This time, the first family link was to be very brief for George More-Molyneux died in 1872, aged about 75. It is probable that Henry had been undertaking much of the work on his behalf, given his father's mature age. The successor and new occupant of the rectory was Thomas Hand who evidently had a family connection. This incumbency was also destined to be brief, however, for Hand died in 1874.

Henry More-Molyneux's two eldest sisters did not marry and by 1881 Eleanor and Blanche, then aged 56 and 53 respectively, were living across the road at Bishop's Lodge with three servants. Their staff included Charlotte Norris, who had been the cook for their father at the rectory ten years earlier.



An extract from William Hammond's map of 1788. It shows Compton glebe and Parsonage and includes the house, gardens and farmyard.

William Davies and the rebuilding of the house

One of the difficulties frequently faced by an incoming parson was the need to repair his new home. This was traditionally the responsibility of the outgoing rector but it was often disregarded, leaving any restoration to the new incumbent. The Dilapidations Act of 1871 sought to address this problem by ensuring that dilapidations of church property were made

following the end of an incumbency and placing the responsibility of repairs with the departing parson or his executors.

George More-Molyneux had died in 1872. His fifty years as rector and occupier of the house had left it with a considerable amount of work to be done to bring it up to standard, which the diocesan surveyor estimated would cost £255 to complete. In his report to the Bishop of Winchester he wrote: “*The house, which was originally a small one, has been added to from time to time and although now large in its cubical contents is in many respect cramped and very inconvenient in some of its arrangements. Repairs are needed internally to floors and plaster &c. and externally to chimneys, roofs and gutters, windows and wall faces generally*”.³⁵



John Hassell's painting of the parsonage, viewed from the north east, was undertaken in 1824.

Whether Thomas Hand had any plans to change the building is unknown but his successor, William Davies, wasted little time in making his new home more comfortable. Mr Davies came to Compton with his wife in 1874 but, unfortunately, his tenure as rector was also brief lasting for just around fifteen months. Despite his short stay, however, he left his mark upon the house for he was responsible for the rebuilding of the rectory in 1875.³⁶

The dilapidation document of 1872 and the evidence of the maps suggests that there had been some recent work on the house. The document makes a distinction between the “old house” and the “new building” and there is a noticeable difference between the 1840 tithe map and the OS map of thirty years later where the eastern corner of the building appears to have been altered.

The surveyor describes the northern and eastern walls of the new building but no other faces are identified in the document. All of which suggests that this particular side of the parsonage had been re-constructed at some point in the three decades leading up to the dilapidation survey, during the occupation of George More-Molyneux and his family.

The second edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1895 shows the alterations made by William Davies, whose new south-east wing was built onto that side of the old house. Lady Boston wrote that when this piece of reconstruction was undertaken in 1875, parts of the Tudor dwelling were incorporated into the new building. If that is the case, they are well hidden. The chimneys with their diamond shaped plan resemble those depicted in John Hassell’s painting of 1824 but it is likely that they were simply rebuilt in the same style.

The new wing did not fit comfortably with the old and a cosmetic arch was incorporated between the two parts, on the south-west wall of the building, a feature that has a rather pleasing eccentricity about it. William Davies, in his short time at the property, also updated the older parts of the house in various ways and made various changes. This can be seen in many of the features around the house, both inside and out. Externally, the walls were refaced with Bargate stone with brick dressings around the doors, windows and quoins. Bay windows were added and fashionable interior and exterior doors were installed.

Davies had wasted no time in altering the house after his arrival at the parsonage; he clearly had ambitious plans for the house in which he and his wife lived and perhaps they intended to settle down in the area for some time. Sadly, however, this was not to be and William Davies’s life was to end in a most shocking manner for he had an apoplectic fit during one Sunday evensong in 1876. Despite the ministrations of Dr Stedman of Godalming he died shortly afterwards.³⁷ He was a popular rector and his obituary notes that he had already gained much respect during his short time at Compton.

Hugh Gillett and the last rectors at the parsonage

After the death of Mr Davies, Hugh Hodgson Gillett was appointed as Compton's next rector. Mr Gillett had graduated in 1858 from Exeter College, Oxford and gained his MA two years later. He held curacies in several places in the midlands and Compton was his first and only living.³⁸ In contrast to his two unfortunate predecessors, he was to stay in his post for over thirty-five years.



An extract from the tithe map of Compton, 1840.

At the time of his arrival in the village he was forty years old and his wife Evelyn was just seventeen. They had known each other for some time, for he had met Hon Evelyn Vernon when he was curate at Wadenhoe in Northamptonshire between 1871 and 1877. She was born in the nearby village of Grafton Underwood. They had evidently delayed their marriage until he gained a living and also on account of Evelyn's youthfulness. Their family arrived quickly; their first child was named Hugh Vernon and was born in Compton in 1879. By 1881, they had two more children: Sybil, who was one-year-old on census day, and baby Charles who was eight months old.

Three more children were born in quick succession to complete the family: Marjorie, George and Gertrude. The living of Compton continued to be a reasonably comfortable one for the Gilletts were able to afford four servants at the rectory: a cook, a house & parlour maid, a nursemaid and a nurse. The nursemaid must have been invaluable to Evelyn Gillett, with so many young children to care for.³⁹

Hugh Gillett was very interested in the natural world and he made frequent and rather charming notes in the parish registers about unusual weather conditions and other outdoor happenings. The entry here is somewhat poignant:

*“Winter of 1880-81. The most severe of three consecutive severe winters, the thermometer going down on two separate nights to 3° Fahrenheit or 29° of frost. The birds suffered greatly. Villagers tell of picking up starlings, blackbirds and thrushes &c. I myself picked up two blackbirds. The road between Compton and Godalming filled with drifted snow and traffic stopped for a day till the worst portion of the lane was cleared and even then for a week or two it was very hard travelling”.*⁴⁰

Hugh and Evelyn Gillett were to suffer a sad loss in 1907 when their second daughter, Marjorie died at the early age of twenty five. She was at Littlehampton at the time and was not married.⁴¹ Her father was to remain as rector of Compton for a further five years and he did not resign the living until he was 75 years old. He died in 1915 and he and Marjorie are both buried at Compton.

The villagers of Compton must have been saddened to hear of the death of Captain George Gillett on 26th September 1916. The youngest son of the Gillett family, he was then aged 33 and had been killed during the Battle of the Somme. He, together with the other young men of the village who lost their lives, is commemorated on Compton’s war memorial.

The departure of the Gillet family from Compton marked the end of a very long way of life at the parsonage, for Hugh Gillett was the last rector to live at the house. Andrew Betton Gwynn had arrived to take up office in 1912 but he did not wish to live at the rectory; at the time he was not in robust health and he felt that the house was too large and chilly and too distant from the church. A buyer was sought for the property and a new rectory, situated at the western end of the village, was subsequently built for Mr Gwynn with the proceeds.⁴²

The parsonage was sold in September 1913 and its long links with the clergy of Compton were finally broken after nearly 1000 years. Its new



The south-east and south-west wings of the house were added by Rev William Davies in 1875.

owner was Major Horace Augustus Terry, a 56-year-old retired army officer, and its new identity and name was to be Compton Grange.

The Grange, new beginnings and owners

Major Terry was born in Hersham, Surrey in 1857, the youngest son of Thomas and Charlotte Terry. The family lived comfortably at Burvale, a substantial house near Burwood Park, where they were looked after by five servants.⁴³ After a career in the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, Major Terry retired at the age of 41 and moved to Halliford Lodge in Sunbury-on-Thames to live with his elder brother and sister, Arthur and Ella. The Terrys were a military family; his father had been a colonel and his brother had also retired from an army career. At the time of the 1901 census all three siblings were still unmarried.

Major Terry was to remain a bachelor for twelve years following his retirement. His wife-to-be did not live very far away, however, and on 20th July 1910 he married Eleanor Wallnorth of Sunbury-on-Thames. Mrs Terry was 30 years of age at the time of her marriage. Three years later the couple moved to Compton, to become the first owners in the history of the house who did not have a link with Compton church.

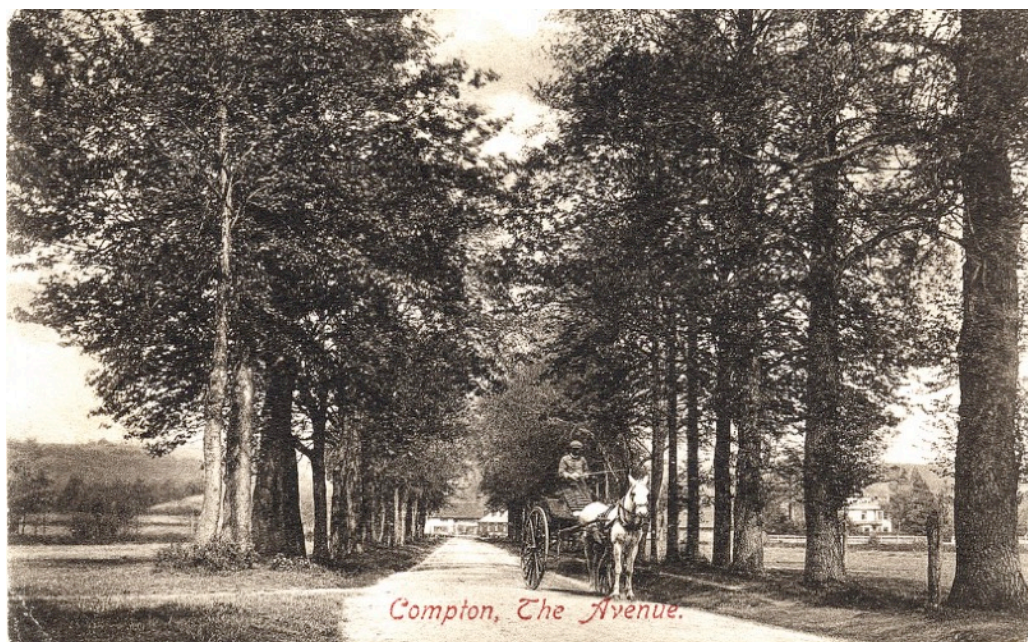
After their arrival, Major and Mrs Terry soon set about making the necessary improvements to their domestic arrangements, both indoors and out. Accordingly, they erected Compton Grange Cottage, a pleasant three-bedroomed dwelling, in the grounds of the property in 1915. It is highly likely that the cottage was built to accommodate their gardener but the absence of electoral records at this time means that we do not have a record of the occupant at the time that it was built.⁴⁴

As we shall see, Major Terry had a number of absorbing interests to pursue in his retirement, especially in the study and library at Compton Grange. However, his time at the property was to last less than a decade. The couple had been married for just under twelve years when Major Terry died in March 1922 at the age of 65. Eleanor Terry was only 42 years old at the time and she was to be destined for a long widowhood.

After Major Terry's death, Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge of New Bond Street arranged an auction of his literary and cartographic collection in June 1923. Books, correspondence, relics and manuscripts relating to such literary giants as Charles Dickens and George Eliot were for sale, as well as a letter written by Percy Bysshe Shelley to the Duchess of Norfolk.

Buyers might also have been able to purchase the original logs of Captain Cooke's ventures or maps belonging to General Wolfe's campaign of 1759. The acquisition of such a fascinating collection must have given Major Terry much pleasure and one can imagine that the sale would have excited a great deal of interest.⁴⁵

Mrs Terry did not re-marry and by 1925, and in many subsequent years, she was the sole registered voter at the property. A charming woman, she was very much involved in village affairs and sat on the parish council with other members of the community, who came from various ranks of life. These included members of the More-Molyneux family of Loseley House. James More-Molyneux recollected his memory of "a delightful widow, Mrs Nellie Terry" when he knew her in the 1930s.



*The Avenue in the early twentieth century.
This is very much how it looked in Hugh Gillet's time.*

In the 1930s it was still commonplace for owners of houses such as Compton Grange to employ domestic servants and Mrs Terry was no exception. She had four or five maids to run the house and, in 1938 and 1939, she placed several advertisements in *The Times* seeking the services of others.⁴⁶ She also had outdoor staff housed in Compton Grange Cottage (now called Compton Glebe). By the end of the 1930s it was the home of her gardener, Frederick Keats, his wife Louise and their family.⁴⁷

World War II brought about a great many social changes and there was a general reduction in the number of people employed in domestic service. By 1947, the Keats family had left the cottage and their old home was occupied by Isobel Lloyd Thomas and Alice Read.⁴⁸ We do not know if the two ladies were employed as gardeners or domestic servants. It is also possible that they were friends of Mrs Terry as many people had lost their homes during the war and were scattered about in various places.



*A view of the church in Hugh Gillett's time.
He was the last Compton clergyman to live at the parsonage.*

In February 1954 Mrs Terry died after forty years at Compton Grange and her executors put it up for sale. Baverstock and Son arranged the auction in May 1954 and the particulars give us an interesting insight into the scale and layout of the property at that time. The sale of Compton Grange was offered as a whole or in five lots: Lot 3 offered Compton Grange Cottage, which was occupied by Mr Lisle. Lot 4 comprised the pastureland and the three ponds, survivors of the parsonage's earliest days, and Lot 5 consisted of the paddock.

Compton Grange itself formed Lot 1. This was advertised as an eight bedroom property, including three that were housed in the staff wing. There were four well-appointed and sizeable ground floor rooms; the 'green drawing room', a dining room, a study and a library. The domestic offices (the part of the building now known as the cottage) included the kitchen and staff sitting room and were approached by a link service

passage, the latter being another twentieth century addition to the property. The garden, just over two acres in total, included fine trees, rose and fruit bushes, greenhouses and a kitchen garden. Lot 2 comprised of the garage block and outbuildings.



The arms of the Terry family.

Two ambitious planning applications were made in respect of Compton Grange at this time. One sought ‘alterations and part demolition to form two detached dwellings’⁴⁹ and the other applied for ‘conversion of property into two dwellings, conversion of garage building into a dwelling and erection of three further dwellings on land adjoining Compton Grange’.⁵⁰ Approval with conditions was granted to both requests in the autumn of 1954 but the work was never undertaken and the house remains undivided to this day.

The next half century

The next owner of Compton Grange was Mary James, generally known as ‘Madge’, who was a widow. The second daughter of Charles and Rosalie James Fox, she had one elder sister, Kitty, and two younger brothers, James and Jack. She and her late husband Sam were local people and, by the time that she moved to Compton Grange, Mrs James already knew many people in the area. She is remembered as a warm and compassionate woman who was very supportive, in a diplomatic way, to those in less fortunate circumstances. She herself had experienced her own troubles; after being widowed she had lost her son in a tragic car accident in 1951.⁵¹

A slim and elegant figure, she was a keen walker who could regularly be seen out and about with her two german shepherd dogs. A visit to take afternoon tea at the house was always a pleasure; her style was apparently as elegant as her person and the tea, good traditional fare, would be served on beautiful plates and in fine china cups. She was fortunate to have an excellent housekeeper, Mrs Batters, who lived in the cottage with her husband, William.⁵²

Mrs James remained at the property for at least three decades as she was still living there in 1984. Presumably, it became too large for her needs as she subsequently moved to smaller accommodation at nearby Polsted Manor. The new owners were Richard and Denise Roberts who lived there with their family.



Mrs Terry with her fellow members of Compton Parish Council in June 1938.

Dick Roberts had connections with a very familiar and much loved household product: his father had been the founder, in East Molesey, of Roberts Radios. The couple had four daughters and the family were very popular. Various social gatherings took place at the house and in the gardens. In particular, the Christmas carol party, where the guests would gather round the piano in the drawing room is remembered with much pleasure!

It is not clear exactly when the name of the property changed from Compton Grange to The Grange but it had certainly been altered by the late 1980's. In 1988 the Roberts family sought planning permission for a single storey, open veranda to the front elevation of the cottage.⁵³ In this application the main house was referred to by its current name of The

Grange. Five years later, in 1993 Dick Roberts died and his wife remained at the property for a few more years.

The current owners and their home

The Grange was purchased in 1995 by Nick and Jill Eyles and in one sense history has repeated itself for they too have four daughters; Victoria, Philippa, Laura and Sophie. The family moved in during May 1996.



The house as it appeared in the sales particulars of 1954.

In December 1995 consent was granted to restore the link between the main house and the cottage. This was achieved by the construction of an extension to create a kitchen and breakfast room.⁵⁴

When Nick and Jill Eyles purchased The Grange in 1995 they acquired what had been Lots 1 and 4 in the auction of 1954: the house and the pastureland with its ponds, together with a part of lot 2: the garage block, greenhouse and shed. The ponds needed urgent attention and Jill took advantage of her husband's extended yachting trip soon after their arrival

to set this up as her project: expert help was summoned to rebuild the ditches surrounding the ponds to enable them to flourish again. Thanks to this they are an attractive feature today and although they no longer provide their owners with fish for the table they are beautiful feature of the grounds as well as being an important sanctuary for wildlife.

Other challenges awaited them outdoors. The greenhouse, which was in a poor state of repair, was removed. A swimming pool is in its place and the former garden shed, which is covered seasonally in creeper and clematis, makes a very attractive pool house. Many of the fruit trees were in a bad state and these have recently been removed and replaced.

This area of new fruit trees is now known at The Grange as ‘Grandma’s Orchard’. The trees were bought with vouchers given to Jill by Nick’s late mother, whose funeral and memorial service at St Nicholas Church was a great celebration of her long life and service to others.



*Garden sculpture added by
Nick and Jill Eyles.*

The whole family have become involved in either fundraising or helping at Christopher’s, the local hospice for children. Jill’s involvement with this charity began before their arrival at Compton for she has been linked with it, coincidentally, since it began in the Richmond area. Nick and Jill have also been involved with the parish council, the Compton Village Association and the local Conservative Association.

They have also, unwittingly, carried on the tradition of a Christmas drinks party although piano playing is apparently not Nick’s forte. The Grange is a comparatively large property but the presence of four daughters, three sons-in-law (with the possible addition of a fourth), eight grandchildren and some dogs means that at week-ends and holidays the house can feel as if it is bursting at the seams!

Certainly, the house has a welcoming feel. It also maintains an attractive and individual character; the many features introduced by William Davies remaining as a testament to his energy and ideas. We are fortunate in this respect for this type of architecture became unfashionable in the 1920s

and was supplanted by many an owner for something more contemporary. Fortunately, Major and Mrs Terry were not of their number.

One of the most enduring features of the property can be found outside in the grounds: a fine Wellingtonia tree, planted after the alterations made by Mr Davies, still flourishes, looking over to the house and its inhabitants as it has done for so many years. Let us hope that this landmark and the property that it is such a part of can be enjoyed by the Eyles family and their successors for many generations to come.



Glossary

Advowson

The right to present a clergyman to a benefice, a nomination subject to the approval of a diocesan bishop.

Benefice (Living)

An ecclesiastical office or the income derived from it. It is a term usually denoting the incumbency of a parish church.

Chantry

A chapel, often within a church, established by a wealthy person or body, whose endowment supported the cost of building and the perpetual saying of mass for the souls of the founding family or body. In 1547 nearly 2,400 chantries were suppressed.

Deacon

A clergyman without the full status of a priest - he cannot, for example, perform marriages. He acts as an assistant to the beneficed incumbent.

Incumbent

A rector, parson, vicar or minister of a parish.

Offering days

Certain days of the year when parishioners gave money for the maintenance of the priest and the church.

Prebend

The stipend granted to a member of a cathedral chapter for his support, usually derived from the revenue of chapter lands. A prebendary is a recipient of the revenues.

Rector

Originally, the incumbent of a parish who received all the tithes, customary offerings and dues. He was responsible for the upkeep of the chancel and rectory, and for the provision of vestments and service books. When an ecclesiastical body, such as a monastery, annexed a benefice it became, nominally, the rector and it appointed a deputy called a vicar to administer the parish. The Great Tithes went to the monastery as rector,

and the Small Tithes to the vicar. After the Reformation many monastic estates fell into lay hands and subsequently Lay Rectors became common; they had the right to nominate the vicar but had to seek the bishop's approval. They also inherited the obligation to keep up the chancel and vicarage.

Rectory

Either a rectorial benefice or the house attached to a rectorial benefice.

Tithes

The ancient system consisted of three separate tithes: Praedial Tithes which were calculated on income from produce (corn, oats, wood etc), Mixed Tithes which were calculated on the income from a combination of stock and labour (wood, pigs, milk etc), and Personal Tithes assessed on income derived from labour. Income from barren heath, waste woodland and glebe land was exempt. The produce was stored in tithe barns, many of which survive today.

The tithes, theoretically a tenth part of the income, went towards the upkeep of the incumbent of the parish church. This was straightforward where the rector was also the incumbent, but in cases where the rector was a monastic institution which appointed a vicar to be in charge of the parish, the tithes were divided between rector and vicar. These were called Great or Rectorial Tithes and Small or Vicarial Tithes respectively.

An Act of 1391 obliged monastic rectors to use some of their tithe income to support the parish poor. The Reformation then complicated things even further; many of the holdings of the monastic bodies fell into the hands of the Crown and then into lay hands, so that a lay person could claim the Rectorial Tithes. The incumbent (the vicar) had the most troublesome tithes to collect - those from minor produce and labour.

Under the Tithe Commutation Act 1836 tithes could be commuted to a rent-charge, and Commissioners were appointed to negotiate fair land values with the inhabitants. The Tithe Act 1925 transferred the income to the Queen Anne's Bounty fund and the Tithe Act 1936 extinguished tithes altogether.

Although Lay Advowsons existed from the 8th century they became common after the Reformation when monastic estates and holdings fell into lay hands. Since 1924 a Lay Advowson may not be sold after two vacancies have occurred, and in 1933 parochial councils were allowed to

purchase an advowson except where it was in the gift of the Crown or a bishop.

Vicar

An ecclesiastical body, such as a monastery, which annexed a living and became its rector, appointed a deputy called a vicar to care for the parish. The religious house received the Great or Rectorial Tithes and the vicar the Small or Vicarial Tithes. This system continued after the Reformation when many monastic estates fell into lay hands.



Notes and references

- ¹ Early medieval Surrey: landholding, church and settlement, John Blair, pub. Alan Sutton & Surrey Archaeology Society, 1991.
- ² Blair, *op. cit*
- ³ Ref: COM/1/1, SHC.
- ⁴ Advowson: the right to select and present a clergyman to the position of parish priest.
- ⁵ Ref: LM/348/58/1-2, SHC
- ⁶ The History of the Countryside, Oliver Rackham, Dent, 1986.
- ⁷ During the middle ages, a wealthy person often endowed a chantry chapel in which priests said masses for the souls of him and his descendants.
- ⁸ History of Compton in Surrey, Cecilia Lady Boston, 1933.
- ⁹ Ref: LM/348/58/1, SHC.
- ¹⁰ Ref: E179/187/479, TNA.
- ¹¹ Boston, *op. cit*.
- ¹² Court of Exchequer 1721, ref: E134/7Geol/East/3, TNA.
- ¹³ Ref: LM/347/34/1-1, SHC.
- ¹⁴ A prebend was the stipend granted to a member of a cathedral chapter for his support, usually derived from the revenues of cathedral lands.
- ¹⁵ Visitation, 1724/5, quoted by Boston, *op. cit*.
- ¹⁶ Land Tax returns, 1780 – 1831, SHC.
- ¹⁷ Rural life in Victorian England by G E Mingay, Sutton, 1998.
- ¹⁸ Jane Austen's Letters, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, Oxford, 1995.
- ¹⁹ Jane Austen Society annual report 1982.
- ²⁰ The Letters of Mrs Lefroy, ed. Helen Lefroy and Gavin Turner, pub. the Jane Austen Society, 2007.
- ²¹ Lefroy & Turner, *op. cit*.
- ²² Sense and Sensibility, Jane Austen.
- ²³ Jane Austen Society Annual Report 1982.
- ²⁴ From a letter written to Francis Austen, Jane's brother, in 1813.
- ²⁵ Jane Austen's family through five generations by Maggie Lane, Hale, 1997.
- ²⁶ These were *The Winters Tale: to which is Added Little Bertram's Dream* 1841 and *Springtide* 1842. Information from Jane Austen's Family by George Holbert Tucker. Sutton 1998.
- ²⁷ Land Tax returns, Compton, QS6/7, SHC.
- ²⁸ Compton monumental inscriptions, SHC.
- ²⁹ Ref: G25/9, SHC.
- ³⁰ Ref: 4348/3/56/6, SHC.
- ³¹ Ref: DW/OP/C/227, LMA.
- ³² Deacon: a clergyman without the full status of a priest - he cannot, for example, perform marriages. He acts as an assistant to the beneficed incumbent.
- ³³ Crockford's Clerical Directory. 1865, SHC.
- ³⁴ The Victorian Domestic Servant by Trevor May, Shire Publications, 2003.
- ³⁵ DW/OP/C/227, LMA.
- ³⁶ Boston, *op. cit*.
- ³⁷ Obituary of William Davies, Surrey Advertiser
- ³⁸ Crockford's Clerical Directory, 1893, SHC.
- ³⁹ 1881 census returns.
- ⁴⁰ Compton parish registers, SHC.
- ⁴¹ Compton burial registers, SHC.
- ⁴² Boston, *op. cit*.
- ⁴³ 1881 census.
- ⁴⁴ No electoral registers were produced from 1914-1919.
- ⁴⁵ The Times, 19 June 1923.
- ⁴⁶ The Times, 22 Feb 1938 and 27 Feb 1939.
- ⁴⁷ Electoral register 1937, SHC.
- ⁴⁸ Electoral register 1947, SHC.
- ⁴⁹ Planning application: GU/R 3829, Guildford Borough Council (GBC).
- ⁵⁰ Planning application: GU/R 3491, GBC.
- ⁵¹ The Times, November 1951.
- ⁵² Electoral registers 1963-65, SHC.
- ⁵³ Planning application: 88/P/00844, GBC.
- ⁵⁴ Planning application: 95/P/001434