

The History of Beckenham Place Park

latest update May 2018: work in progress ©Malvin Mitchell

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Introduction

Beckenham Place Park became a public park in 1929 after being purchased from the Cator Estate by the London County Council. It is the remains of a larger estate accumulated by John Cator between 1750 and 1800. For a long time the current park's creation was dated to 1773 when John Cator purchased the Manor and rights of Beckenham Manor from Frederick, Lord (Viscount) Bolingbroke. However the story begins significantly earlier and is more complex than hitherto believed.

Several local historians have mentioned Beckenham Place Park and a few have written more about it. But it is now time to clarify and expand on some details. Also, to dispel some myths and look at some details which are still vague or needing confirmation. This work takes the accounts of Beckenham's history from the 17th century and reviews the references to information relating to the Park and the area in which it was created. The works include:

Thomas Philipott's 1659 History of Kent "Villare Cantianum",

Edward Hasted's 1778 1st edition Topography and History of Kent and 2nd edition in 1797/99,

Daniel Lysons 1796 Environs of London,

W.H.Ireland 1828 A New and Complete History of Kent,

Robert Borrowmans's 1910 Beckenham Past and Present,

Rob Copeland's 1967 Manors of Beckenham,

Nancy Tonkin and Eric Inman's Beckenham,

Eric Inman's 1995 series of articles on the History of Beckenham Place Park written for the Friends of Beckenham Place Park,

Pat Manning's 2000 Cators of Beckenham and Woodbastwick

Then we add to and amend the information from these accounts with more recently discovered or rediscovered and re-assessed information.

Some if not all of these writers drew, as we do, on the works of their predecessors and contemporaries. Hasted refers to Philipott, Lysons to Hasted, etc. Sometimes fiction is written as fact such as we believe some assumptions referred to later in this account. In 1830 W.H.Ireland wrote another complete history of Kent but draws mainly on Hasted with some timely updates i.e. describing the then owner of Beckenham Place and the park being embellished with infinite taste by its affluent owner (John Barwell Cator). Ireland may have answered some outstanding questions regarding Cators acquisition of the mansion house site. I acknowledge the open source nature of some information which I would only have been aware of via the internet, catalogue searches, e-books, websites etc. At the same time asking researchers to be wary of some errors that still exist on several sources. With that in mind this work is intended to be open source and freely available subject to copyright restrictions of third party material.

Some information came to us from anecdotal and written information from visitors to the park or members of the Friends of BPP. Margaret and Malvin Mitchell have from time to time conducted various researches on different aspects of the park during their time in administering the Friends of Beckenham Place Park and the Friends Visitor Centre in the park. We have been 'enlightened' in some areas by the knowledge and opinions of others such as Ken White of Lewisham Local History Society. Sadly some of these people are no longer with us to proof read this account.

Some material in Local Studies and county archives was at some time derived from other archives such as the British Library. Our recent rediscovery of some of this material has

contributed toward our reassessment of the evolution of the park. Although some of the above writers knew of this material they may not have been so focussed on the park in order to analyse the content. The archive catalogues searched include: The British Library, The National Archive, National Library of Scotland (maps), Bromley Historic Collections, Surrey Archive, West Sussex Archive. Some archives do not have an online catalogue i.e. Lewisham, Lincolnshire, where we know some records are stored.

The Internet has also revealed sources as books become available in e-book form and various archives become electronically indexed. Google books and other versions include: Philipott's, Hasted's, Lyson's, Ireland's histories, Collinson's letters, Memorial of Humphrey Marshall and John Bartram, Dr. Johnson, Hester Thrale, Lady D'Arbly, Memoirs of George IV and Memoirs of William IV, etc.

We aim to represent as accurately as possible the evolution of what is now a public park in the ownership of a local authority (and acknowledge that the local authority is or should be owned by its constituents and the wider populace). Other information which can be authenticated is always welcome and we would aim to prove the accuracy of our account. We are still unravelling the various accounts which appear to have inconsistencies.

A Fuller History of the Park

A "Short Story" account and timeline is available but this fuller version is hoped to be informative.

It transpires that the Public Park is mostly on land once belonging mainly to the Manor of Foxgrove rather than the Manor of Beckenham. John Cator the Younger (1728-1806) acquired some land at Southend, Lewisham in 1757. He must have been purchasing land around the area for some time because in 1759/60 he exchanged other lands he had acquired around Langley Park in Beckenham for some parts of the Manor of Foxgrove from Jones Raymond of Langley and others. This will all be clarified in the timeline later on but mention of the previous owners of Foxgrove is relevant as it is the main location of the park. Hasted's History and Topography of Kent, second edition published in 1797 records some if not all of the people through who's ownership the land constituting the park and surrounds passed. Ownership did not always imply occupation as houses, estates and farmsteads were leased. For example, the Burrells had interests in Surrey and Lincolnshire, The Raymonds in Essex, The Bolingbrokes in Lincolnshire, the Cators came from Herefordshire and subsequently went to Norfolk. Rockinghams had estates in Yorkshire and Northamptonshire and became linked to the Sondes family/Lees Court estate in several parts of Kent. Some landowners may never have set foot on parts of their property.

The history of Beckenham Place Park is still shrouded in much mystery even though several local historians have recorded many facts about the place. It has become a jigsaw puzzle of facts and assumptions.

A pivotal period in its history is between 1757 and 1785 and even later when John Cator began to acquire the estate, lands and manorial rights of a sizeable area around and including the current park. The whole current public park area did not come into Cator's possession until after 1777 and some part possibly as late as 1795 although he had vast land holdings outside of the park area. Some of these holdings enabled him to exchange land with other landlords to construct a contiguous estate. After his death in 1806 his heirs began a long period of leasing or selling off parts of the estate. The Beckenham estates began to be leased or sold from 1825 onwards which we will explain later. The remaining public park, house and buildings are the remnants of the estate.

Among the authors, contributors and recorders we should acknowledge and thank:

Thomas Philipott: Villare Cantianum (1659)

Edward Hasted for his History and Topography of Kent, 2nd edition (1797),

Robert Borrowman "Beckenham Past and Present" (1910),

H. Rob Copeland "The Old Manors of Beckenham" (1962),

Nancy Tonkin and Eric Inman "Beckenham" (1990's)

Pat Manning of Beckenham Local History Society who still publishes local history books, 'The Cators of Beckenham and Woodbastwick' (2002) and other publications. Also Niel Rhind's Blackheath Village and Environs

Peter Collinson's plant catalogue with footnotes: Hortus Collinsonianus is available online- the printed version of his catalogue.

Eric Inman (in memorium) produced a series of articles for the newsletter of the Friends of Beckenham Place Park during the 1990's. His work is drawn upon here with updated information.

More recently I acknowledge the material sourced by Mother Mary Baptist formerly Bessie Taylor who wrote a thesis "Bromley, Beckenham and Penge from 1750" in 1967

Although we challenge some details in these works we recommend for reading any or all of them for background information and interesting detail. Some are now out of print and only available from libraries or reference libraries. Philipott's, Hasted's, Lyson's and Ireland's works are now published on-line and several archives can be searched. Borrowman's book is in Bromley Libraries and as he was church warden at St. Georges he draws upon interesting items from Parish Council records. Items from the Copeland collection of material have also provided clues and material from Bromley Local Studies library. Resources have been researched at Bromley Local Studies, Kent Archive Maidstone, The British Library, Portcullis House Parliament Archive Catalogue, the National Library of Scotland and elsewhere.

Dated estate plans in the British Library have enabled the analysis of landholdings by landlords at specific dates. This has allowed for discovering detail which is not in the earlier written records.

Other writers who drew on Philipott's and Hasted's work are Daniel Lysons (1796) and H.W.Ireland (1830). There are other publications drawing on these works and some contain what appear to be errors and omissions.

Lyson's work was published after Hasted's first edition but prompted a 2nd edition produced after Lyson's.

Since we focus on the land and history of the remaining now public Park reading Pat Manning's "The Cators of Beckenham and Woodbastwick" would explain the wider activities of the Cator family and other publications about Beckenham, Lewisham, Sydenham, Blackheath and any others regarding Cator property. However, we believe we have some updates here which correct some information in other publications. Although this timeline begins before the creation of the 'park' it contains events relevant to understanding the evolution.

We are always open to new information and corrections that can be substantiated and still conducting our own research. Checking the version number of these files will tell you if amended versions have been published. Errors exist in several histories i.e. Hasted has some transposed dates and names and others did not have access to some archives. Both Borrowman and Copeland comment that errors are possible and historians can only report what they find.

It should be noted that some conclusions drawn by various people and some leaps of faith may have slightly misconstrued some evidence. The lack of full documentary evidence is frustrating although many other archives hold evidence e.g. the papers of Hester Thrale, the letters of Peter Collinson, memoirs of Doctor Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, Memorials of John Bartram and Humphrey Marshall, Diaries of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay), Thraliana by Hester Thrale/Piozzi etc. etc. Of late we have the advantage of several archives being opened to the internet via online catalogues as well as several books being published as e-books e.g. Hortus Collinsonianus, Memorial of Humphrey Marshal and John Bartram, Memorial of George IV etc.

You can conduct your own online research using keywords in various combinations: Cator, Collinson, Thrale, Johnson, George IV, Burney, Boswell and others from the text here.

Pre-history

Evidence in the landscape shows that geologically the area was under a shallow sea 54 million years ago in the Eocene period as in some areas the Blackheath beds of shingle emerge overlain with London Clay. In one area of the park there is a conglomerate (concretion) of the Blackheath beds which is shingle cemented together with lime and sand. This would affect the later use of the land and economy. Locally there have been brick fields, gravel pits and lime kilns all using the natural resources laid down geologically. During the bronze and iron ages there was probably occupation as although no definite remains have been found there are hill forts and earthworks within walking distance at Keston, Halsted and Westerham.

During the Roman occupation of Britain a road passed through Beckenham en route from Lewes in Sussex to Londinium. Though no hard evidence has been found in the park or close by it is projected by some experts that the road cut across the corner of Beckenham Place near the Foxgrove Road Lodge. The area is now outside the public park and under an area of private housing. Roman remains exist again not far away at Keston, Titsey and Orpington. In the area where the roman road is projected to have crossed the park before the park was established there was a quarry or gravel pit and a lane called Limekiln Lane indicating that there were lime rich deposits or chalk here. Whether these were part of the Blackheath Bed conglomerate or underlying Chalk near the surface we cannot say. As much of Beckenham has been redeveloped more than once it is curious that no historic remains have been found. The Roman road structure was said to have been mainly gravel and as the area is largely of gravel composition then over time the road may have fallen into disrepair, the course became obscured and diversions created around areas which may have become impassable. Also we have to consider the local waterways although not considerable would have required crossing with bridges or fords and this may have caused the road to deviate from the accepted Roman practice of building straight roads wherever practical. One source suggests the road crossed what is now Langley Park Golf course and may have gone through Kelsey Park. Some local roads though not straight do approximately follow these lines.

The Ancient Pond in the park which is about 100 yards from the front of the mansion is so far undated. As we believe there was a building or farm predating the mansion on this site the pond may have been related to the previous buildings, or it may have been the result of excavating clay for brick making or may date back much further. What is most probable is that there is a spring at the edge of the pond as it is always full and old OS maps show other springs and ponds near the top of Stumps Hill. A small water-course was used as the Parish/Borough boundary between what is now Bellingham and the Manor of Beckenham. Unfortunately, very little survives locally of any Anglo-Saxon, Medieval, Tudor etc locally. One of the oldest structures is the lych gate of the church and that's a bit like Trigger's broom, 3 new heads and 2 new handles! It is said that parts of the Old Manor house survive in the interior of the building there opposite the church. Even the church was rebuilt in the Victorian period after fire damaged the previous medieval incarnation.

The Reverend William Rose had a Georgian rectory built but that gave way to a town hall and now a branch of Marks and Spencer and its car park cover the site.

Perhaps the George public house in the high street is the oldest most complete structure locally and that passed through the hands of the Cator Estate and is listed in the 1825 Act properties along with the Crooked Billet in Penge.

These are some of the unknowns and await discovery of firm evidence.

From 1354 to 1700 Manor of Foxgrove

The remaining records show that up to the mid to late eighteenth century the area occupied by the present Beckenham Place Park was a patchwork of woods and fields straddling the Lewisham and Beckenham parish boundary. Most of it was part of the ancient Manor of Foxgrove. It was bisected by two public roads leading from Southend to Beckenham and Southend to Clay Hill (near Shortlands) respectively. This is illustrated by maps shown later. Hasted says about Foxgrove:

Bartholomew de Burghersh died seised of it in 1354. About the year 1510, it came into the family of Baversea. Humphrey Baversea aliened it to Luke Hollingworth, who, about the year 1547, sold it to Sir John Olyffe whose only daughter and heir married John Leigh, Esq. of Addington, in Surrey. From him, it descended to Sir Francis Leigh, who died in 1711, having

directed this and other estates to be sold. This farm was purchased, in 1716, by Mr. John Tolson, and descended to Lancelot Tolson Tilly, who devised it to Timewell Brydges, Esq. for his life, with remainder to John and Edward Brydges, of Wotton. In 1765, it was sold by the Brydges's to Jones Raymond, Esq. who died in 1768, (editors note: by this time Cator had acquired the site of the Mansion in 1757) having left this estate between Amy his sister, relict of Peter Burrell, Esq. and William and George Evelyn Glanville, Esqrs. the sons of Bridget, another sister. Mrs. Burrell, having purchased their share, became possessed of the whole. She died in 1789, when this estate devolved upon her son, the late Sir William Burrell, Bart. who sold it to his nephew, Sir Peter (now Lord Gwedir). Sir Peter Burrell exchanged it, in 1793, for other lands, with John Cator, Esq. who is the present proprietor.

But we find even this is perhaps a bit of a generalisation.

definitions: Seised; having possession. Devised; disposed of through a will.

We should compare Hasted's account with below, Thomas Philipott's earlier account from 1659 with the original spellings.

“Foxgrove is the last place of Account in this Parish (Beckenham), it had in elder times Proprietaries of this Sirname; for I find John de Foxgrove paid respective Aid for it in the twentieth year of Edward the third, at making the Black Prince Knight. After this Family succeeded Bartholomew Lord Burwash, and he held it at his Decease, which was in the twenty ninth year of Edward the third, Rot. Esc. Num. 44. and from him it descended to his Son Bartholomew Lord Burwash, who in the forty third year of the above said Prince, passed it away to Sir Walter de Paveley, and in his Family it remained untill the latter End of Richard the second, and then it was conveyed to Vaux of the County of North-Hampton, and there made its abode untill the latter End of Henry the sixth, and then it was alienated to John Grene Esquire, and he died possest of it in fourth year of Edward the fourth; and in this Family did the Title reside, untill the Beginning of Henry the eighth, and then it was demised to Beversea, and Humphrey Beversea, I find held it in the eighteenth year of Henry the eighth, and his Descendant passed it away to Luke Hollingworth, and he about the Beginning of K. Edward the sixth, sold his Interest in it to Alderman Sir Jo. Oliff of London, and he dying without Issue Male, Joan matched to John Leigh of Addington Esquire, was his sole Heir, and in Right of this Alliance, did it come down to Sir Francis Leigh late of East-Wickham; whose Widow Dowager the Lady Christian Leigh, is now in Possession of it.”

If the Sir Francis Leighs in both accounts are the same person then according to Philipott he died before 1711 ie by 1659 or whether Lady Christian Leigh had a son also named Sir Francis Leigh who later sold Foxgrove remains a question, though not now of any great importance.

Expanded Timeline: 1530 to 2018

1530circa- From Hasted's history of Kent he relates that Thomas Philipott had recorded in his history of Kent that “Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, son of Elizabeth Bruyn, by her second husband, resided in the manor-house of Beckenham as lessee; and that he entertained Henry VIII there, "with all the cunning pompe of magnificence, as he went to bestow a visit, at Hever, on his discarded and repudiated wife, Anne of Cleve”

For clarity this is the old manor house opposite St. George's Church and not what we refer to as the Mansion in Beckenham Place. John Cator styled the house in the park as his Mansion because when he acquired the Manor of Beckenham land the old Manor house had already been sold previously to the Burrell family by Lord Bolingbroke.

Hever had been the home of the Boleyn's but after Henry VIII had Ann Boleyn or Bullen executed he confiscated Hever and subsequently rented it to his fourth and ex-wife Anne of Cleve. In my understanding local folklore referred to Henry VIII staying in Beckenham on

his way to see Anne Boleyn but maybe I misunderstood it. Philipott's version is the earliest we have rediscovered at this time.

Philipott writes of Hever "Hever in the Hundreds of Somerden and Ruxley, had in elder Times a Castle, * which was the Capital Seat or Mannor built by Thomas de Hever, who had liberty by the Charter of Edward the third, granted to him in the fourth of his Raign, not only to embattle his Mansion here, but likewise had Free-warren annexed to his Lands in this place. William Hever deceased without Issue Male, and left only two Daughters and Co-heirs; Joane married to Reginald Cobham of Sterborough, and the other wedded to Brocas, whence in Records it is sometimes called Hever Cobham and Hever Brocas, and when the Cobhams went out, the Bullens were the immediate Purchasers; for Geffrey Bullen purchased this Place, and his Grand-child Sir Thomas Bullen Knight of the Garter, and Earl of Wilts, lived here, who was Father to Anne Bullen, Wife to Henry the eighth; and as he had here his Habitation, so likewise he has here his Sepulcher, and lieth entombed in Hever-church; but when his Son George Viscount Rochford, upon pretence of some black Crimes acted against the Majesty of Henry the eighth, fell under the Censure of High Treason; this upon his Attainder or Conviction was escheated to the Crown, and began to be reputed a Mansion of some Estimate, when Anne of Cleve for some Time lived here, and made it her residence; but, in Times subsequent to this, I find it eminent for nothing, till King James granted it to Sir Edward Waldgrave, whose Successor yet possesses it."

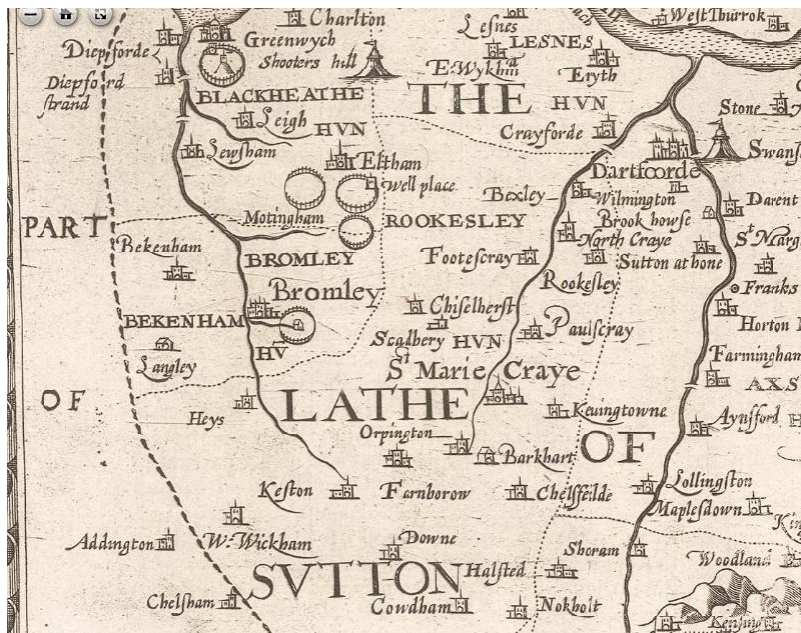
This just needs a bit of clarification but of no impact on our history of Beckenham Place. However, maybe it's an example of how information becomes distorted, confusing the two Anne's associated with Henry VIII and Hever. Hevercastle.co.uk states: In 1540 Henry VIII married his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves. Henry's decision to marry Anne was based on a portrait miniature painted by Hans Holbein. The marriage was made for political reasons but ended in divorce six months later. Henry VIII awarded her the honorary title of 'The King's Sister', £500 a year, a sufficient household and two houses. In addition, he allowed her to lease a number of manors to enhance her status and income, including Hever, at an annual rent of £9-13s-3½d. Anne settled happily in England and became good friends of the King and Anne Boleyn's daughter, the future Queen Elizabeth I.

Anne owned Hever Castle until her death in 1557 but it is not known how much time she spent at the Castle. However, there is a surviving letter written by Anne to Mary Tudor in 1554 signed 'from my poore house of Hever'.

Henry VIII took Hever from the Boleyn's or Bullens as Anne Boleyn had been accused of adultery with her brother etc.

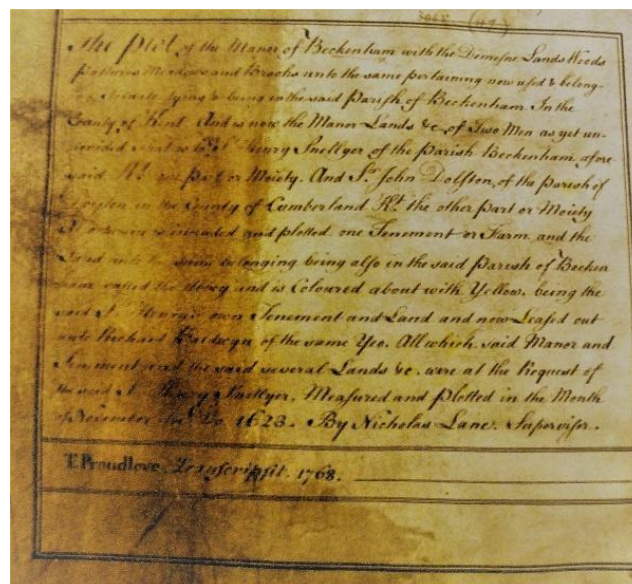
1590 - The Will of Izarde Curtis or Curtys of Beckenham is reported as recording "*my house and lande within the pische of Lewisham called Stumpeshill*" 'pische' is believed a misreading or spelling of parish. Whether this refers to property on the site of the current mansion is speculative but may be supported by indications of buildings on Rocque's map of 1745. At present it is the best indication we have for buildings on or near the site. (source: R.Reed)

1613 – Several early maps of Kent are on record showing Beckenham identified by a church or manor house but the only other detail is Langley placed between Beckenham and West Wickham.



From John Speed's map 1614

1623 - A Plan of the Manor of Beckenham lands is drawn by Nicholas Lane showing they are divided between Sir Henry Snellyer of Beckenham and Sir John Dolston of Cumberland. According to Hasted the manor was earlier inherited by two daughters and divided into two parts or moieties between them and their relevant husbands. After a few generations the owner of one part purchased the other part rejoining the Manor into one. This image from the plan is the legend explaining the division, written in 1623 and transcribed by T. Proudlove in 1768. The original map has not been discovered but this is from the later redrawn version. Matching the plan against the Foxgrove Manor plan and more modern maps also shows that very little Beckenham Manor land is in the current park. It would seem that only the edge of Stumps Hill Wood was in Beckenham Manor.



Transcript of the legend:

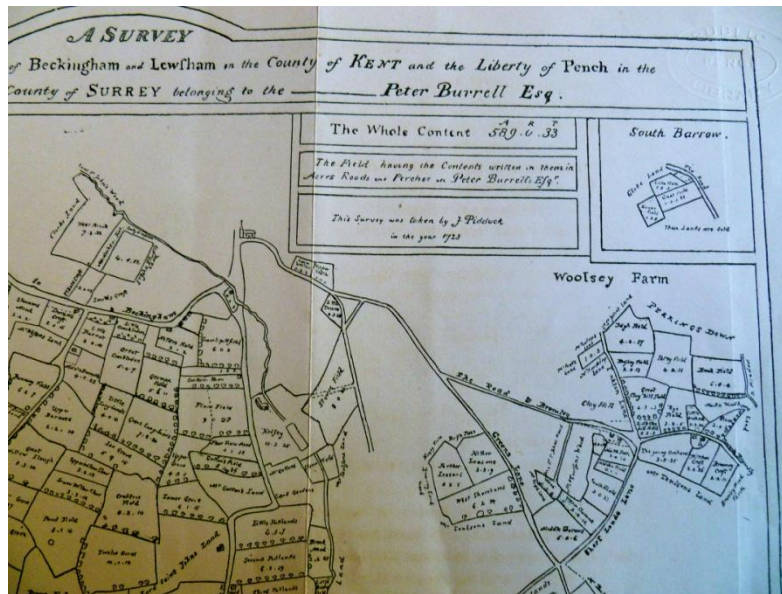
The Plot of the Manor of Beckenham with the Demesne Lands Woods Pastures Meadows and Brooks unto the same pertaining now used and belonging situate lying & being in the said Parish of Beckenham In the County of Kent. And is now the Manor Land etc. of Two Men as yet un-divided (that is to say?) Henry Snellyer of the Parish of Beckenham aforesaid his own part) or Moiety. And Sir John Dolston (sic Dalston?) of the Parish of Dolston in the County of Cumberland Kt. the other part or Moiety As... is inscribed and plotted one Tenement or Farm and the Land unto the same belonging being also in the said Parish of Beckenham called the Abbey and is

coloured about in Yellow. Being the said S. Henry's own tenement and Land and now Leased out unto Richard Baldwyn of the same Yeo. All which said Manor and Tenement and the said several Lands etc. were at the Request of the said Sir Henry Snellyer. Measured and Plotted in the month of November in the year 1623. By Nicholas Lane. Supervisor.

T. Proudlove. TransferiRfit. 1768

Sir John Dalston is traceable on History of Parliament online

Other maps are produced around this time and referred to in later histories but only a copy of one in the Hoare family estate papers is reproduced by R.Borrowman in his Beckenham Past and Present. And that is from a 19th century copy.



Part of Borrowman's copy

1644 - LEIGH, Sir Francis II (1590-1644), of Addington, Surr. and East Wickham, Kent dies. He is the Sir Francis Leigh identified as holding Foxgrove Manor by Thomas Philipott (see 1659 below) also see History of Parliament online.

1650 (?) - Manor of Beckenham rejoined which had been divided into two moieties (parts) becomes rejoined under Sir Walter St. John. This extract from Hasted's History and Topography of Kent is part of the explanation of how the manor was divided and then rejoined:

From him this moiety descended to Sir George Dalston of Cumberland, who about the middle of Charles I.'s reign, alienated it to Sir Patrick Curwin of Workinton, in the same county, who had been created a baronet, anno 1626, whose ancestors are said to be descended from Gospatrick Earl of Northumberland, who took that name from Culwen, vulgarly called Curwen, a family of Galloway, the heir of which they had married. They bore for their arms, Argent a fretty gules a chief azure. He, at the latter end of the same reign, conveyed his interest in it to Sir Oliver St. John of Battersea, in Surry, from whom it came to Mr. Walter St. John, afterwards a baronet, on the death of his nephew, Sir John St. John, bart. son of Oliver before mentioned, who having before purchased the other moiety of this manor and advowson of Mr. Henry Snelgrave, as has been already related, now possessed the entire see of them both.

1659 - Thomas Philipott writes his "Diligent Survey of the Mannors of KENT: Entitled, VILLARE CANTIANUM." Information is later extracted by Edward Hasted for his Topography and History of Kent.

This is Philipott's passage regarding The Manor of Foxgrove: (spellings in this tract are as they appear in the publication).

"*Foxgrove* is the last place of Account in this Parish (Beckenham), it had in elder times Proprietaries of this Sirname; for I find *John de Foxgrove* paid respective Aid for it in the twentieth year of *Edward* the third, at making the Black Prince Knight. After this Family succeeded *Bartholomew* Lord *Burwash*, and he held it at his Decease, which was in the twenty ninth year of *Edward* the third, and from him it descended to his Son *Bartholomew* Lord *Burwash*, who in the forty third year of the abovesaid Prince, passed it away to Sir *Walter de Paveley*, and in his Family it remained untill the latter End of *Richard* the second, and then it was conveyed to *Vaux* of the County of *NorthHampton*, and there made its abode untill the latter End of *Henry* the sixth, and then it was alienated to *John Grene* Esquire, and he died possest of it in fourth year of *Edward* the fourth; and in this Family did the Title reside, untill the Beginning of *Henry* the eighth, and then it was demised to *Beversea*, and *Humphrey Beversea*, I find held it in the eighteenth year of *Henry* the eighth, and his Descendant passed it away to *Luke Hollingworth*, and he about the Beginning of K. *Edward* the sixth, sold his Interest in it to Alderman Sir *Jo. Oliff* of London, and he dying without Issue Male, *Joan* matched to *John Leigh* of *Addington* Esquire, was his sole Heir, and in Right of this Alliance, did it come down to Sir *Francis Leigh* late of *East-Wickham*; whose Widow Dowager the Lady *Christian Leigh*, is now in Possession of it."

Hasted could report the events of the next 150 years

1671 – A list of benefactors to the Parish of Lewisham lists: "William Bond, A house at Stump's Hill, from which nothing is now received. To the poor of Lewisham and Southend (source: Lysons, Environs of London)." We cannot say if this is a house on the site of Beckenham Place or one near it.

1674 - Hugh Raymond's date of birth. He later becomes owner of Langley Park, Beckenham and father of Jones Raymond who will become owner of (some of ?) Foxgrove Manor much of which eventually becomes Beckenham Place Park. His family came from Saling in Essex and he is referred to as Hugh Raymond of Stepney, Saling and Langley. He becomes a ship's captain with the East India Company and a director of the South Sea Company. He is implicated in the South Sea Bubble affair. His story is interesting and deserves more investigation. Several records are in the British Library.

1688 - Peter Burrell I of Beckenham purchases Kelseys mansion and land from a descendant of the Brograves. (source: Hasted). Kelseys is an estate of which part will become Kelsey Park, Beckenham. Another public park in the remainder of a private estate. His descendants will acquire Foxgrove Manor through marriage to Amy Raymond, Jones Raymond's sister, at least until they exchange it with John Cator.

1692 - Peter Burrell II of Beckenham born, he will become Peter Burrell I of Langley through marrying Amy Raymond (daughter of Hugh Raymond, sister of Jones Raymond). Peter Burrells I, II, and III of Langley can be traced through History of Parliament online as they were all MP's and held various posts.

1699 - The birth of Amy Raymond, daughter of Hugh Raymond of Langley, she would

become Mrs Amy Burrell and later as Peter Burrell's widow hold ownership of Foxgrove Manor lands within the park.

The Years 1700 to 1800

1703 – John Cator the Elder (sometimes Cater or Catter) born in Ross on Wye. He would later live in Southwark and own the timber business. John Cator the younger's father

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Here Followeth Records of Birth of Friends Children In New Meeting.

		Days	Months	Years
657	John Cator Son of Jonah & Sarah Cator Born	25	3	1703
658	Elizabeth Merrish Daughter of James & Eliz. Merrish	24	4	1703
659	Elizabeth Bowler Daughter of Joseph & Eliz. Bowler	25	10	1703
660	John Gwin Son of John & Mary Gwin Born	07	11	1703
661	Isack Morgan Son of James & Ann Morgan	07	11	1703
662	James Corrie Son of Joseph & Sarah Corrie Born	07	02	1705
663	John Cator Son of Jonah & Sarah Cator Born	07	12	1706
664	James Russell Daughter of David & Hannah Russell	10	06	1708
665	Elizabeth Cator Daughter of Jonah & Sarah Cator	11	02	1710

1705 - Jones Raymond is born, son of Hugh Raymond, he will become landowner, if only for a short time before his death, of Foxgrove Manor and most of what would later become Beckenham Place Park under John Cator. Jones Raymond will be a director in the East India Company eventually selling a ship to the Royal Navy which would take part in the Anson voyage to the Pacific which made Anson an immensely rich person through capturing a Spanish treasure galleon. Ironically, the expedition was crewed by sailors from the Naval hospital most of whom would perish on the voyage one way or another.

1708 - Sir Walter St. John 3rd Baronet dies at his home in Battersea. (source; Hasted). Henry 1st Viscount St. John inherits the Manor of Beckenham. It should be noted that in some cases landowners may not have resided in the area. The St. Johns were from Wiltshire with homes in Battersea and Walworth, Bolingbroke had estates in Lincolnshire and elsewhere as did the Earl of Rockingham and Soudes families (Kent).

1714 – National Archive reference to document held in Bromley Historic Collections:

Title: Covenant to levy fine of 1 messuage, 1 stable, 1 barn, 1 orchard, 1 garden and water yard

Description: Crabb Grow (8a) ; woodland (2a) lying between the manors of Beckenham and Foxgrove, land (1a.) occ. Thomas Hughes; cottage, orchard yard backside occ. Thomas Stoute and cottage yard backside occ. Richard Steele, at Clay Hill, Beckenham Samuel Adgate of Bromley, yeoman, Thomas Matkins, Citizen of London, joiner, and Elizabeth his wife, and Robert Sutton of London, barber Chirurgeon, and Mary his wife. To Stephen Colstone of Southwark, Surrey, plumber, and William Wicker of Beckenham, yeoman

Date: 15 Apr. 1714

It would be tempting to identify Crabb Grow and Woodland as the strip of land roughly between the mansion and Beckenham Hill. See the later Foxgrove and Beckenham Manor maps overlain which show an area between the two.

1716 - Foxgrove changes hands. This farm was purchased, in 1716, by Mr. John Tolson, and descended to Lancelot Tolson Tilly, who devised it to Timewell Brydges, Esq. for his life, with remainder to John and Edward Brydges, of Wotton. In 1765, (Hasted)

1720 - An estate plan of Foxgrove Manor is drawn by surveyor John Holmes. (source: British Library). Though the plan only survives as the redrawn 1766 version it implies that fields and plots aren't much changed. Hasted states it was purchased by Jones Raymond from John and Edward Brydges in 1765 so perhaps the later 1766 plan is to reflect the change of ownership. The plan covers not only the area directly around the park but some plots quite isolated in Elmers End and elsewhere. see 1766 for part of the plan.

Another map of neighbouring land, Lodge Farm 1720, is in Bromley Historic Collections, showing the landowner on the Foxgrove side as Mr Towlson (spellings were often variable and phonetic).

1721 - An inventory is taken of all Hugh Raymond's assets to do with the South Sea Bubble affair. The officers of the South Sea Company are forced to compensate shareholders, a complex subject that cannot be adequately covered here but Hugh Raymond survives with enough assets to be able to purchase Langley Park in 1732. He will become indirectly associated with the story of Beckenham Place. The British Library has various records such as: "A True and Exact particular and inventory of all and singular the lands ... and personal estate whatsoever which H. Raymond was seised or possessed of, upon the first of June, 1720 ... Made and delivered pursuant to the late act of Parliament. Together with the abstract of the same".

Investigating this record at the British Library shows that Hugh Raymond did not own any of Foxgrove or Langley at this time but is resident of Saling, Essex Wapping and Stepney with extensive property assets. Hugh Raymond was also a ship's captain with the East India Company and other connections with the EIC will become apparent. He had also been a director in the South Sea Company. The Raymond family had extensive estates in Essex and elsewhere. Hugh Raymond has to forfeit some of his assets to do with the South Sea Bubble.

1723 - Amy Raymond, Hugh Raymond's daughter marries Peter Burrell II of Beckenham and Kelseys who will style himself subsequently "of Langley". The 'Peter Burrells' become confusing as there are four of them associated with Beckenham. Beginning with Peter Burrell of Beckenham (1649-1718), Peter Burrell I of Langley(1692-1756), Peter Burrell II of Langley Park(1723-1775), Peter Burrell III of Langley(1754-1820)made Lord (Baron) Gwydyr in 1796.

Some sources will number them I to IV. History of Parliament online is again a good source of information about them, offices they held etc.

1723 - A map of Peter Burrell's estate is drawn by J.Pidduck, copied by Robert Borrowman for his book of 1910 but the original has not been discovered. Borrowman copied the map from another copy made in 1829 which was in the Hoare family documents. Possibly relating to a Burrell/Raymond marriage settlement several plans were drawn in 1723. All the properties are south of Beckenham with little or none in the Manors of Beckenham or Foxgrove. By marrying Amy Raymond the Burrells came into line for inheriting Foxgrove and Langley Park. As we know two maps of 1723 which exist in the British Library of a property near Penge Common and of Woolseys Farm at Clay Hill then the possibility exists of the other 1723 map being in the British Library but un or mis-catalogued.

1728 - John Cator the elder marries Mary Brough, date of record 11th February (source: P.Manning and Ancestry.co.uk). We can now access the Quaker meeting house record via online heritage sites (Ancestry.co.uk). This marriage takes place at the Savoy and Westminster meeting house. John Cator (the elder) is described as a Timber Merchant and so

is his father-in-law John Brough of the Parish of St. James, Westminster. John's father Jonah is described as a glover late of Ross, Herefordshire also a Quaker. Looking at ancestry records, Ross was an epicentre of Cators, sometimes spelt Cater or Catter. Some Cators were following the established Church of England and others Quakerism, whether they were all the same extended family is a good question. Bearing in mind that the subsequent John Cator of Beckenham Place and his family, although raised as Quakers, were buried in C of E churchyards it seems that changing faith was not uncommon. Though early Quakers were fined for not attending Church, I haven't found any record of corporal or capital punishment unless one looks at Quakers in America, some of whom were executed by Puritans. As the officially recognized Church of England ran some of the functions now performed by Local Authorities via Parish Councils then avoiding paying money to the church was perhaps a bit like not paying your council tax.

The extract below is from John Cator the elder's marriage record. Note the other spelling 'variations' such as publickly. Also, the Quakers followed a different calendar with the year commencing on 25th of March.

Early Friends/Quakers objected to the names of the days and months in the English language because they were of a non-Christian origin. Sunday was called as such by the Saxons because it was the day they sacrificed to the sun. Monday was the day they sacrificed to the moon; Thursday was the day they sacrificed to the god Thor; and so on. Quakers thought it inconsistent for Christians to continue using the names of heathen idols. In an effort to distance themselves from these references, they created their own calendar terms using numbers, which seemed to them to be the most rational approach. Days of the week were known as "First Day" for Sunday, "Second Day" for Monday, and so forth. They used no other names but these, either in their spoken conversations or in their letters. Similarly, the months of the year were known as "First Month" for January, "Second Month" for February, and so forth. If you were a Quaker, you were expected to adopt these practices in your daily life.

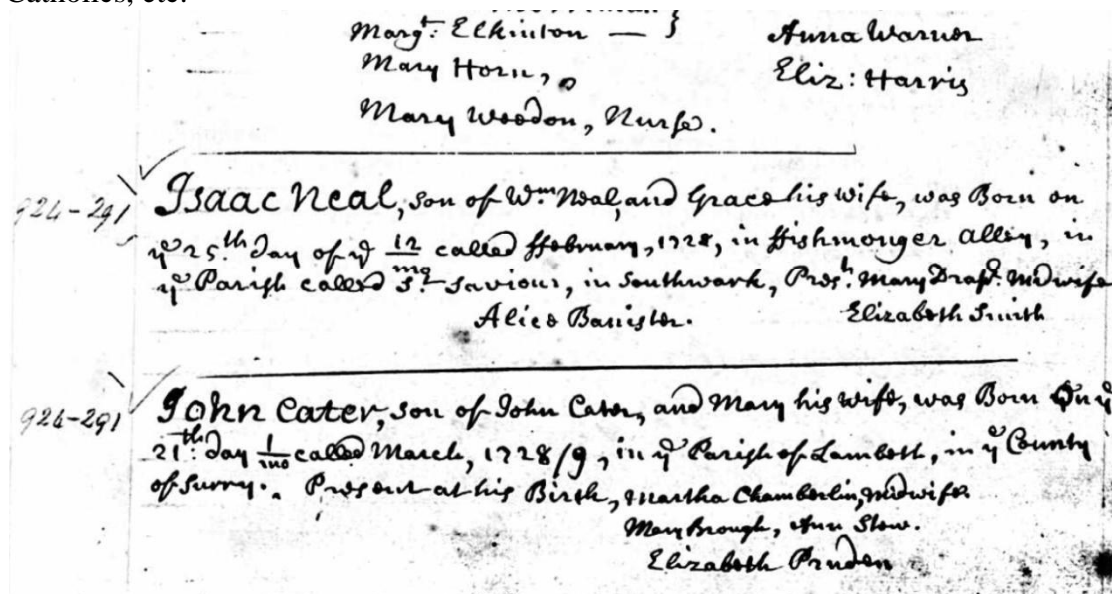
Hence, the 2nd month in this record is the month of May.

1728. *John Cator and } At y Savoy, the 11th day
Mary Brough - } of the 2^o: 1728:*

*John Cator, of the Parish of Lambeth, in the County of Surrey, Timber-
merchant, son of Jonah Cator, late of Ross, in y County of Hereford, Glover, Dec^d.
and Sarah his wife, him surviving, And Mary Brough Daughter of John -
Brough of the Parish of James's in y Liberty of Westminster, Timber Merchant, and
Mary his wife: Having Publickly declared their Intentions of taking each a
other in Marriage before several Meetings of y people of God called Quakers in London
according to y good Order used among them, whose Proceedings therein after due En-
quiry and deliberate Consideration thereof, (with Regard to y Righteous Law of God) re-
were allowed by y said Meetings, they appearing Clear of all others, and having
also consent of Parents and Relations Concerned. NOW, These are to Certifie
All whom it may Concern, That for the Accomplishing of their said Marriage -
This Eleventh day of the Second Month called Aprill, in the Year One Thousand
Seven Hundred and Twenty Eight they the said John Cator and Mary Brough -
appeared in a Publick Assembly of y aforesaid People, and others, met together
for that End, in their meeting House at y Savoy, in the Strand, in Middlesex.*

1728 - John Cator the younger is born in March to John Cator the elder and Mary (1703 - 1764). Recorded in Quaker Meeting House registers under Southwark Births, John Cator the elder (father) identified as of Parish of Lambeth, Surrey. John is often referred to as being born in Ross-on-Wye which is erroneous according to this record and perhaps a mistake as the father, John Cator the elder was from Ross but had become a timber merchant at Bankside Southwark by this time. The records show that the birth took place before the

marriage and this it seems was more common than generally known. Indeed, the only methods for monitoring population were from baptisms and burials known as the Bills of Mortality. Not everyone was baptised and probably not all deaths resulted in a church burial. The Quaker records are considered as one of the non-conformist religions. Wikipedia entry regarding Bills of Mortality states: It must be noticed that the record is of christenings, not births; hence the figures do not include the births of Quakers, Dissenters, Jews, Roman Catholics, etc.



1732 – Hugh Raymond purchases Langley Park Estate, presumably sold by Elizabeth Elwill (nee Style), widow of Sir John Elwill. Elizabeth was the daughter of William Style. The Styles had owned Langley for several generations.

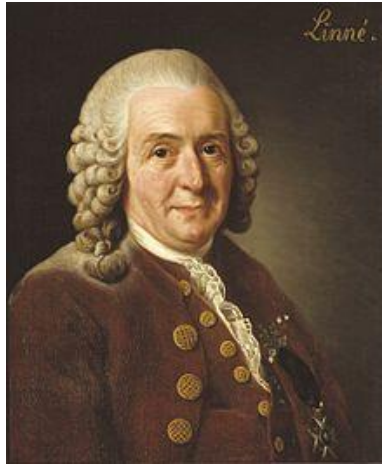
1733 – John Cator's brother Joseph is born. Recorded in St. Saviours Parish Southwark at the Monthly Meeting of Southwark: Union of Southwark and [St John] Horsleydown, Friends Meeting House. (from Quaker records)

1735/36 - Peter Collinson (John Cator's eventual father in law) meets Carl Linnaeus (Carl von Linne) on Linnaeus's only recorded visit to England and they become lifelong correspondents on botanical and other scientific matters. An association has been made between Cator, Collinson and Carl Linnaeus the botanist, assuming that Linnaeus contributed to the landscaping of the park. We have gathered evidence regarding relevant dates of birth and death as well as age of the individuals and known movements of Linnaeus indicating this was very unlikely if not impossible. The originating reference to such as event seems to be in Borrowman,s "Beckenham Past and Present" but I believe this to be a confusion arising out of the Collinson/Linnaeus connection. Linnaeus's son later visits London in 1781 in the time of John Cator and we are investigating whether they met. No evidence has emerged so far despite some material relating to Linnaeus the younger being discovered at the London Linnaean Society. Peter Collinson did communicate regularly with Linnaeus by letter. Linnaeus's only known visit to Britain was in 1735/36 when he met Collinson among many others, long before Cator then aged 7 married Collinson's daughter or created Beckenham Place. Collinson enabled Linnaeus to collect various plant specimens and collections. On Collinson's death his books and papers were passed to John Cator and thence inherited by John Barwell Cator, who then enabled them to be copied by the emergent Linnaean Society of London. One of many interesting exchanges Collinson had with Linnaeus and others was the speculation as to where swallows went in winter. It was even thought they might hibernate under water and they discussed experiments to see if this was true involving putting swallows in or near barrels of water. Collinson also discussed electricity with Franklin and the migration of people to America and its impact on the Native Americans. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society and contributed to the establishment of the Foundling Hospital. Having originated from a family home in Peckham he moved to a house inherited via his wife at Mill

Hill and established his garden there. It is now the Mill Hill School; see the Mill Hill Society for further information.



Peter Collinson (1694-1768)



Carl von Linne (1707-1778)

1737 - Hugh Raymond of Langley, dies and his son Jones Raymond inherits Langley Park. Hugh Raymond had purchased Langley Park in 1732 (source: Hasted). The name Jones is derived from Hugh's wife's maiden name. Her father was also in the EIC, another ship's captain, Samuel Jones, now we know that family intermarriage was the reason. We recently find heritage record evidence that Hugh's wife's name was Dinah(Dynah) Jones and Samuel Jones was her father. Again, referring to Hasted's entry for Langley Park can explain detail. Jones Raymond is also involved with the East India Company becoming a director. The memorials to the Raymond's are in St. Georges Church, Beckenham.

1739 - The Foundling Hospital: After 17 years of tireless campaigning, Thomas Coram finally received a Royal Charter from George II enabling him to establish his Foundling Hospital. Peter Collinson is one of the supporters of the Hospital established to address the problems of orphans, abandoned children, poverty and infant mortality. This was no immediate solution to problems but eventually led to improvements. As an illustration of living conditions in the 18th century, and even the 16th and 19th, it is enlightening. No direct link to the park but there was a small workhouse in Beckenham for the locally impoverished. For a long period people were associated with the Parish of their birth and if found in poverty in another parish were returned to their 'home' parish for poor relief. Some court records show rehabilitation orders for removal of people to home parishes. I recommend "London Life in the 18th Century" by M.Dorothy George if you can get a copy for a description of poverty, working conditions, housing and mortality.

1742 - Henry 1st Viscount St. John dies, the Manor of Beckenham is inherited by Henry, 2nd Viscount St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (ennobled with that title in 1712). See Wikipedia and History of Parliament online for more information on the St. Johns/Bolingbrokes. The family seat was in Wiltshire.



Henry 2nd Viscount St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke

1745 - Rocque's Map is published showing the park area and about 10 miles around London. Note the houses or farms on Stoms Hill which would predate the Mansion. Some buildings on Stumps or Stoms Hill make us curious about any pre-existing buildings. Certainly there was a house or farm near the Mansion which is illustrated on the Road Diversion plan, of which more later. The detail in Rocque's Map and some of the names are perhaps questionable. Rocque has Stoms instead of Stumps Hill and Langstead Wood is called Morrisswood or Lewisham Lands on estate plans. Also the road runs more north/south than it does east west on his map which might be regarded as schematic rather than accurate? As he was mapping all of London and its surroundings some short cuts and errors are likely. See the comparison with the Andrews and Drury map of 1769 later on which shows Cator's house on the site of the buildings indicated in this Rocque map. The will of Izarde Curtys of 1590 refers to his property at Stumpes hill so occupation and buildings predating the current mansion is most likely. If we take Rocque's map as reasonably accurate then perhaps building remains are under the mansion forecourt and on the opposite side of the drive through the park.



1748 - The Cator timber business recorded as John Cator and Son (source: Manning) at Mouldstrand Wharf, Bankside, Southwark.

1749 - Peter Collinson moves from his house in Peckham to Ridgeway House, Mill Hill. Though seemingly a long way from Cator's home at Southwark it must be remembered that Collinson had a business in Gracechurch Street, London and both families probably met at Quaker gatherings. The Meeting House in Long Lane, Southwark is a likely venue although Devonshire House in Bishopsgate is another possibility as it was the venue for John Cator and Mary Collinsons wedding. Whether any association had formed by this time is unknown. The subsequent marriage of Collinson's daughter to Cator identifies Collinson as of Gracechurch Street so it seems he resides at both Mill Hill and Gracechurch Street much in the same way as Cator comes to reside at Beckenham, Southwark and later the Adelphi on the Strand. Collinson's gardens at both Peckham and Mill Hill gain a reputation much respected in horticultural and botanical circles.

1749 (or 1751?) - Frederick, 3rd Viscount St. John, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke inherits the Manor of Beckenham and the title Viscount Bolingbroke from his uncle Henry. Some aristocrats had more than one title and sometimes changed names when intermarrying or inheriting estates. This can add some confusion to tracing events. Although it seems Bolingbroke did not own much land which is now in the park apart from a couple of plots, his sale of the Beckenham Manor lands to Cator did allow Cator to become 'Lord of the Manor' after 1773, but without any title other than Esquire.



Frederick St. John, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke

1751 - Death of Henry, 2nd Viscount St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke

1753 - John Cator the younger of Southwark marries Mary Collinson, daughter of Peter Collinson FRS, merchant and botanist on the 30th August. The ceremony takes place at The Quaker Meeting House, Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, London, recorded in Quaker marriage records. The guests and family members are listed, the document is viewable in Ancestry.co.uk. The marriage settlement document is in Surrey Archive but no property is mentioned in the settlement. There is more about John and Mary in later chapters although apart from some passing remarks not much is said or known about Mary. Hester Thrale later records 'Mr Cator, his wife and a niece, Miss Collison (sic)' visiting her at Streatham. Collison is a variation of Collinson and this would be Mary's brother's daughter.

1753 – John Cator's youngest brother is born. "This is to certify the birth of William Cator son of John Cator (the Elder) was registered in the books of Horsley Down Meeting, London, the 18th day of the first month called January 1753" and is dated October 26th 1770." There is reference to a William Cator as Cornet ensign 2nd Lt August 2 1769, who resigned April 3 1772, Madras in the book of Officers in the Indian Army by Dodwell and Miles. (source: Pat Manning)

1756 - Peter Burrell I of Langley (1692-1756) dies and properties inherited by his widow Mrs. Amy Burrell. This includes the parts of Foxgrove Manor which are now in the park. Also his son Peter Burrell II of Langley Park inherits other properties, this needs clarification as estate plans show properties in the names of both Peter Burrell (II) and his mother Mrs Amy Burrell. Peter Burrell I had been an MP, and a director of the South Sea Company also involved in the South Sea Bubble affair like Hugh Raymond. An image of part of his Will is below and mentions his properties at Beckenham and a house at Covent Garden.



will and desire, that I may be decently buried in the Vault or Burial place belonging to my family at Beckenham as aforesaid and that no more than sixty Pounds shall be laid out in the Expences of my funeral. I give and bequeath to my Dear and loving Wife Amy Burrell the sum of fifty Pounds to buy her Mourning and I give and bequeath unto my said dear wife while she continues my widow and no longer the use of all my Household Goods and furniture at my Dwelling House at Beckenham as aforesaid and the use of all such pieces of any my plate whatsoever and wheresoever as she shall think necessary - (the same to be taken within three Months next after my decease) Also I give and bequeath to my said dear Wife my Town- House in Kings Street Covent Garden wherein I now reside (with the Appurtenances) as also the use of all the Household Goods and furniture therein during such time as she shall continue my Widow and unmarried and shall think fit to make such House her place of residence and Abode when she shall be in Town and no longer and for preventing Disputes I direct that an Inventory or Particular of such plate Household Goods and furniture shall as soon as conveniently may be taken by and between my said dear Wife and my Son Peter Burrell To whom after the Marriage or decease of my dear Wife I give and bequeath the same. Also I give unto my dear Wife for her

1757 - **John Cator buys lands at Southend** (source P.Manning). "The property of Francis Valentine whose ownership was demonstrated by the inclusion of a family tree. John Cator paid £1000 on 25th November 1757 for a messuage, outbuildings, yard, garden and several pieces of land at Southend, Lewisham."

Possibly about this time or as part of the 1760 Act of Parliament Cator may have acquired parts of Foxgrove Manor. W.H.Ireland states "It (Foxgrove) passed through several hands and became divided in three parts, the woodlands and store farm were purchased by John Cator". This most likely is the manner in which Cator acquired the plots on the Foxgrove Manor plan of 1766.

Whether this is the Stumps Hill land on which the house is built is unconfirmed but it is the earliest record of John Cator and Southend. Moving records onto databases might not have the same detail as old card indexes and we cannot find the record online. However £1000 at

that time seems a lot of money unless it was for a substantial amount of land i.e. “several pieces”. Certain areas not covered by the Foxgrove or Beckenham Manor plans might have been part of this purchase or indeed might include a field called Morriswood West on a Foxgrove Manor plan. As Cator was acquiring land in several divers places and many landlords had widespread disconnected plots under their ownership several scenarios are possible.

1757 - Frederick Viscount Bolingbroke marries Lady Diana Spencer, daughter of the Duke of Marlborough.



Lady Diana Spencer, later Diana Beauclerk when remarried after her divorce from Bolingbroke.

1757 - Viscount Bolingbroke exchanges the Beckenham 'Old' Manor House opposite St. George's Church and land for Woolsey's Farm with Peter Burrell II, son of Peter and Amy Burrell. As Peter Burrell I had died the previous year perhaps Woolsey's Farm was a legacy and the manor house was seen as an attractive exchange?

Bromley Historic Collections archive has this record:

1/2 August 1757 Lease and release and exchange of property between Right Honourable Frederick Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, Baron of Lydiard Cregote, Wiltshire and Viscount St John Baron Battersea of Surrey (1st part) and Peter Burrell of Beckenham, Kent, esquire. The first parties (one person with several titles) assign the mansion house known as the Manor House at Beckenham, Kent with 8 acres of land to Burrell, in exchange for a messuage called Woolsey's Farm and lands and woodland in Beckenham. (Bromley Historic Collections)

So the subsequent purchase of Beckenham Manor land by Cator, excludes the manor house site opposite St. George's Church.

The Cator estate plan of 1864 excludes the Old Manor house site and any land south of Beckenham High Street and Bromley Road.

Woolseys Farm seems to be land at Clay Hill near Shortlands which is on an estate map of 1723 in the British Library. The Old Manor house later becomes the property of Henry Hoare before the bulk of Burrell estates are sold in 1820.

1757-1765? – This is a complex time of land purchases and exchanges. W.H.Ireland writes his Foxgrove entry “It (*Foxgrove*) passed through several hands and became divided in three parts, the woodlands and store farm (*Stone Farm?*) were purchased by John Cator”

esq., in whose family it continued till the reign of Henry VIII., when it was demised by sale, to one Beversea, whose descendant passed it away to Luke Hollingworth. It afterwards passed through several names, and became divided into three parts; the woodlands and store farm were purchased by John Cator, esq., but the manor of Foxgrove passed to the name of Time-well, for his life, and afterwards to John and Edward Brydges, esqs. of Wotton, in this county, who, about the year 1765, conveyed it by sale to Jones Raymond, esq. of Langley, in this parish, on whose death, in 1766, it went by demise to Amy, his sister, widow of Peter Burnell, esq. At her death she left it to her son, Sir William Burnell, bart., who sold it to his nephew, Sir Peter Burnell, knight and baronet, since created lord Gwydir, who, in 1792, exchanged it for other lands in this parish, with John Cator, esq. of Beckenham place, the present proprietor.

KELSEYS is a seat of note, which, as early as the reign of Henry III., had owners of that name, as appears by deeds of the period. In the reign of Richard II., it was possessed by the family of the Brograve's, who resided there, one of whose descendants, A.D. 1688, conveyed this estate by sale to Peter Burnell, esq., in whose descendants it continued down to lord Gwydir, in 1796.

LANGLEY PARK is a seat of some eminence, formerly accounted a manor. In the reign of the Conqueror it was in the possession of Odo bishop of Bayeux, under the title of whose lands it was entered in Domesday record.

This place afterwards passed into the possession of the family of the Malmains', who were settled at Waldershare, in this county, at the period of the Conqueror. John de Mal-

1759 - John Cator exchanges lands in Beckenham and Lewisham with Jones Raymond and Peter Burrell II(1724-1775) via Parliamentary Private Act <http://www.portcullis.parliament.uk>. This may include the land at Stumps Hill but needs more research, However the transcript of the Act by Mother Mary Baptist (1967) throws some light on it. *"An Act for exchanging certain Messuages, Lands and Hereditaments, in the Parishes of Beckingham (sic) and Lewisham, in the County of Kent, Part of the Estate late of Hugh Raymond Esquire, deceased, for other Lands and Hereditaments in the said Parish of Beckingham, belonging to John Cator the younger, and for settling the Lands so taken in Exchange to the same Uses, as the Lands given in Exchange stand limited, and for enabling Jones Raymond and Peter Burrell Esquires, to grant Building Leases of other Parts of the Estate, late of the said Hugh Raymond."* ...from Parliament archive catalogue. This implies that John had considerable land holdings already by the age of 31. The mention of Lewisham here draws attention to the fact that the land is on both sides of the Parish boundary. The map in the British Library attributed to a later date may relate to some of these lands in the Langley and Kelsey area. I reproduce a small segment of the '1780' map to illustrate his possible holdings around 1759.

Frustratingly we cannot absolutely identify where these plots were, but can guess at some which must be on the 1766 Foxgrove Manor plan in Cator's name and most likely include the site of the mansion. Whether it is either of the: message let to Thomas Watford or, the message called Staceys is a tantalizing conundrum.

Cator transfers to Jones Raymond; Several woods or wood grounds in Beckenham called Barnfield Wood, Bushey Piggott and Bushey Ten Acres.

Of these Barnfield Wood and Bushey Ten Acres can be found on the 1780 Burrell map. Barnfield Wood Road now runs alongside Langley Park Golf Club.

1760 - 1762 - John's father retires in 1760 and passes the business to him. At the same time Samuel Cator, John's brother is taken into the business as a 7 year apprentice (source: Will of J.Cator the elder). Cator begins to build the house on Stumps Hill as recorded in the comment by Peter Collinson in his "Hortus Collinsonianus". I'm inclined to believe the mansion site is on one of the plots exchanged with Jones Raymond in the 1759/60 Act of Parliament. Cator perhaps would have lived here and at Southwark.

1762 – Peter Collinson records in a letter his visit to John's house newly built on Stumps Hill. (maybe visiting his now pregnant daughter?).

It is now established that John Cator certainly came to live at the house on Stumps Hill much earlier than 1773 as there are records of him buying land in the area in 1757 and exchanging land with Peter Burrell and Jones Raymond in 1759. John Cator's famous botanist father in law, Peter Collinson speaks of his purchasing a fine estate and building a house in letters dated 1761 and 1763. So we now know that the original house dates to 1760/2 as the most recent revelation is a note by Collinson in his Hortus Collinsonianus (catalogue of his plants) in which he says:

"Sept. 17, 1762, went, for the first time, to visit my son-in-law, John Cater (who married my daughter), at his new-built house, now finished, at Stump's Hill, half way (on the south side of the road) between Southend and Beckenham, in Kent, began in the spring 1760, on a pretty wooded estate which he had then purchased. The plantations about it, all of his own doing, I found in a very thriving condition, and when grown up will adorn so stately a house, in so delectable a situation, and make it a Paradise. In his woods grows the native English Chesnut spontaneously. P. Collinson, F.R.S."

Then the publisher of this catalogue, Lambert says :*When I visited these grounds, in 1812, I was much struck by the remarkably healthy appearance of many fine trees, including, as nearly as I can recollect, Cedars, Exotic Firs, Liriodendrons.*

Though this map is part of the 1766 Foxgrove Manor estate plan, it seems to show a building above the 't' in "Cator's" near the top right of picture



The architect for the building has been a puzzle for some time and remain so. An article in the Friends of BPP newsletter no.33 describes the ‘candidates’ for the design. It is reproduced in the Additional Information section of this history under “The House on Stumps Hill”. Briefly The ‘biggest’ name that gets a mention is Robert Adam.

Other contenders are: George Gibson Jnr., who built St Mary’s Church in Ladywell and Stone House, 281 Lewisham Way, Loampit Vale opposite Lewisham College.

Richard Jupp, Robert Taylor who built Danson House (listed Grade 1), Danson Park, Bexley is not considered to have the same style as displayed in Beckenham Place. Although his name has come up several times in the past, he is no longer thought a serious contender.

Henry Holland, who may have built Langley Farm.

Holland in collaboration with his father-in-law ‘Capability’ Brown constructed Benham Park, Berkshire in 1775. The style does have many similar elements to Beckenham Place, but is this again because this style was prevalent at the time or did Holland oversee the work here, as his family did settle in this area?

1762 - John Cator's father retires to Bromley (source: Pat Manning). It is said he had a house in Bromley and maybe some property as in his Will the following year he mentions rent from his houses and land left to his wife. Could it have been left to John the younger on his mother’s death? John certainly had some land in Bromley and whether he purchased it all or inherited some has not been discovered. But now I’m looking at the possibility that John the elder may have moved into property his son had purchased. Why? because in John Cator the elder’s Will below, he describes John Cator the younger as an astute businessman having improved his wealth and having ‘greater ability than I’. John Cator the Younger had taken over the timber business in 1760 and was left the business and the house on Bankside. The evidence of property to exchange in 1759/60 and the map attributed to 1780 but perhaps earlier show that John the younger had several properties that his Father and Mother could have moved into. No evidence has emerged of where John the elder resided though it would have been for a short time if he retired in 1760.

1763 - A daughter Maria (also referred to as Mary) born to John and Mary Cator. 1763 is also the year in which Cator’s father died and his mother came to stay with him. John the younger has been given the timber business and a house at Bankside back in 1760 when his father retired. His father’s Will settled in 1764 leaves substantial sums to his children i.e. £1500 to John’s brother Joseph who is in Jamaica at the time of the Will, perhaps with one of his brothers as a widow Bridget in Kingston Jamaica is left a legacy in the Will of 1806. John also gets the land owned in Ross, Herefordshire. John Cator the Elder’s Will mentions rents from his houses and land left to his wife which is another clue to the potential extent of John

with me and his brother, is now resolved, if he can, to rival us. In his new, fresh soil, plants thrive finely. I wish thou may pick out what I mean : being much engaged, can add no more, but that I am thy sincere friend, P. Collinson.” This is perhaps an indication as to why Cator was protective of his estate in his Last Will and Testament although as far as I can make out his land at Stumps Hill was only about 40 acres in 1763.

This example of a land exchange between Cator and Burrell illustrates how property deals were conducted..... 25/26 March 1763 Lease and release of a piece of land called Stone Mead in Beckenham, Kent, containing one acre and two rood from John Cator the younger of Southwark, Surrey, merchant to Peter Burrell of Beckenham, esquire in exchange for land called Gatton's Mead, containing 2 1/2 acres in Beckenham. (Bromley Historic Collections) Lease and release was a means of avoiding tax and was later prohibited.

1766 – John and Mary’s daughter Maria dies in infancy. John's sister Ann also dies after a long illness (source: P.Manning). Many infant deaths were attributed to 'fever' but diseases such as measles, dyptheria, whooping cough, smallpox, scarlet fever, typhus, cholera, typhoid were all common, attributable to poor hygiene, or not effectively treatable until well into the 19th century and beyond.

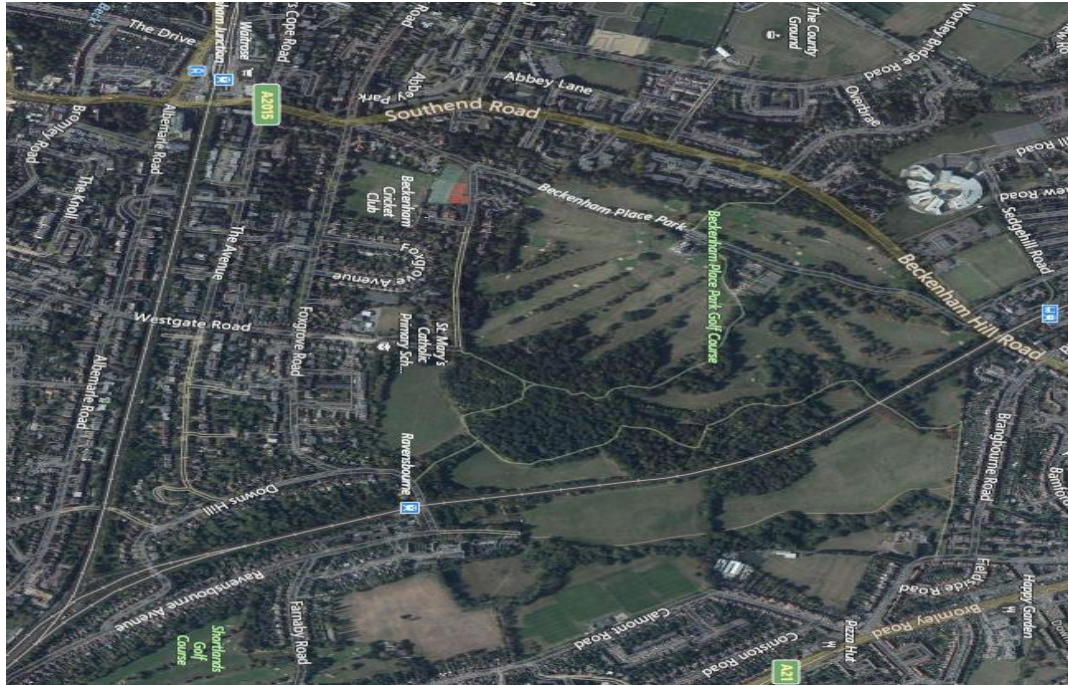
1766 – The Manor of Foxgrove estate plan is transcribed by Proudlove from a 1720 version, that earlier version has not surfaced...yet. It shows plots owned by John Cator. The land within the Foxgrove Manor which became the park was only the northernmost part of Foxgrove Manor but the more southerly part of Foxgrove Manor remained associated with Foxgrove Farm. The reference by W.H.Ireland in 1830 perhaps clarifies the situation; “It (Foxgrove) passed through several hands and became divided in three parts, the woodlands and store farm were purchased by John Cator”

Whether ‘store farm’ is the site of the mansion or other buildings is unclear. And whether the ‘woods’ may be Morisswood East and West and/or the plots bounding the small ‘Bolingbroke’ section. Another suggestion by Margaret Mitchell is that ‘store farm’ is a misprint for ‘Stone Farm’ which is on the 1766 plan but adjacent to what is now Kelsey Park. We know John Cator owned Stone Farm from the circa 1780 “Burrell” plan

John Cator added some land to the park purchased from the Forsters and Francis Flower of Southend in Lewisham and possibly the Earl of Rockingham who is identified on the Foxgrove Manor plan. The records of this area are more difficult to trace but the Rockinghams and Sondes family and Lees Court Estate possessed land at Mottingham, Lewisham and Bromley.

Estates were not always contiguous areas of land but very divers holdings often being the odd field, wood or farm. Intermarriage was one way these widespread estates accumulated. It seems John Cator acquired his early land acquisitions as they came on the market. The death of an estate holder might prompt the heir to sell some unwanted sites as we see later with John Cator’s heir, John Barwell Cator. The maps often raise as many questions as they answer.

Delves). So there was a jumble of ownership and occupation. Also few buildings are indicated on these plans so Rocque's map is an indicator of where buildings may have been. Some field shapes are recognizable to this day. Thistle Down is the modern day Crab Hill field and Lewisham Lands is most of the woodland (Summerhouse Wood). Lewisham Land Hills is Railway field and adjacent woodland. Natt Brooks is Summerhouse Field and the Common.



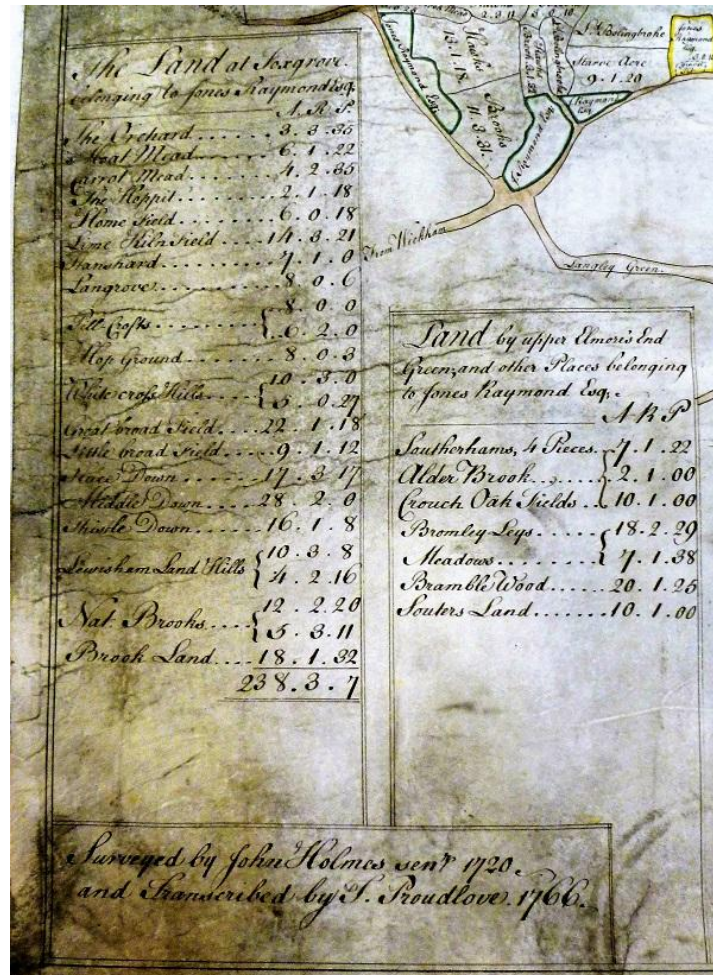
Aerial image is rotated to resemble the Foxgrove plan. Thistle Down is where the 'R' in Ravensbourne is.

A bit more can be said about the Foxgrove Manor plan as it depicts lands owned by Jones Raymond. It also depicts lands owned by the Burrells and Lord Bolingbroke as well as Cator. Some fields are outlined heavily to show they are Jones Raymond's and a list at the side shows field names and acreages. Some plots are just named without an owner indicated i.e. Lewisham Lands 18.2.29 (18 acres 2 rods 29 perches). 2 plots called Morrisswood west and east bound the hop ground and may already be Cator's. The part annotated 'A' Earl of Rockingham is indicated as being grazed by oxen (12 great beasts of Foxgrove). This part is believed to have been a marshy area by the river probably no good for agriculture.

The road which is now the drive through the park is the boundary of the Foxgrove Manor and partly of the Beckenham Manor lands, but it seems some of the land along the western side of the road is not in either manor, possibly being Forster Estate/Lewisham Manor and Flower House property.

The description Lewisham Lands may denote land in Lewisham Manor or Parish which was or would be acquired by Cator. Lewisham Land Hills and Nat Brooks are owned by Jones Raymond as indicated in the legend below. The small lozenge shaped plot is believed to be a sandpit on the river floodplain. No buildings are drawn, only boundaries and enclosures. In my reading of the various maps it seems the line between Hop Ground and Morriss Wood East is the line of the stream in the park going back almost to Foxgrove Farm before it was straightened as part of the golf course landscape. It would make sense for a stream to be a

boundary line. The Lord Bolingbroke plot by the church can be related to the Beckenham Manor plan (under 1768) as fields named the Pound, Church and Broom next to the church. Another plan of about 1780 of Burrell's holdings in Langley does show more 'habitation' as it was drawn for the purpose of recording leases and leaseholders. Some plans may have been drawn for marriage settlement or the Will of a landowner i.e. Jones Raymond dies 2 years after the 1766 plan. Or may be related to the sale of property or land tax assessment.



1766 - Two persons are accused of stealing and receiving timber taken from Cator's Bankside business, (Surrey Archive [QS2/6/1766/Mic/20-21](#)). It would be interesting to discover whether they were found guilty and any sentence received. Eighteenth century penalties were severe with death or transportation being common.

1768 - Jones Raymond dies with no issue or direct heir so Foxgrove Manor passes to Amy as Jones Raymond's widowed sister. Some lands appear in the name of Mrs Burrell or Peter Burrell (II of Langley) on estate plans. The Burrell's already owned other lands in Beckenham/Bromley such as Kelseys'. Jones Raymond's other property and Langley Park also passes to Amy and Peter (II) Burrell. It was common for intermarriage between land

owning families. There were at least two marriages between other members of the Burrells and Raymonds families. The Burrells had become 'of Langley' rather than 'of Beckenham' perhaps reflecting the grandeur of the estate. The Raymonds and Burrells probably never lived in Foxgrove manor house which was more of a farm. The house was moated perhaps reflecting that it was an older more fortified property at one time, maybe a bit like Ightham Moat. In any case the house and moat are now lost forever. The Will of Jones Raymond in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury may prove interesting reading for those inclined to struggle through it. Mention is made of several of his relatives and their bequests. The British Library have some documents from the East India Company with Jones Raymond's name and signature. He was appointed a new director of the EIC in The Gentleman's Magazine of April 1739. "A Voyage to the East Indies" John Henry Grose published 1766 states that Jones Raymond was still a named director of the EIC in 1755. And also later in 1757 in The London Chronicle.



Foxgrove farm/manor house 1865 OS map, note the Ice House

1768 - The Manor of Beckenham plan (below) is redrawn and transcribed by T. Proudlove from a 1623 plan. The 1768 plan is in The British Library. The two parts of Beckenham manor had been reunited under the St. Johns. With the Foxgrove plan above it is possible to fit The Bolingbroke land next to the church with Church Field and Broom Field in the plan below and see how a piece of land is unaccounted for by both Manors. This plan raises a question as to why the Manor opposite the church is not annotated as belonging to Peter Burrell from the prior exchange in 1757.



These two estate plans dovetail together showing how the Manors of Foxgrove and Beckenham are neighbours. And how very little of the modern day park is in Beckenham Manor.

1768 – Kent Archive has this record but unfortunately any plans are missing. See 1780 map reference as the map perhaps should be dated to circa 1768

Part of highway leading from Beckenham to West Wickham, from north end of Langley Pond Mead Hedge in Beckenham, southwards across avenue of capital messuage of Amy Burrell, widow, late of Jones Raymond, Esq., called Langley House, and thence south-eastward towards Langley Park, and thence south-westward between lands of Amy Burrell called Red Lodge Farm to north-west corner of Wickham Green in West Wickham, 295 rods [1,622 & 1/2 yards] long, 20 feet wide, to be diverted by Amy Burrell to new line from the beginning of the old highway, through Hawks Brooke Lane, thence westward towards farmhouse occupied by Job Floyd near Langley House, thence southward, through fields of Amy Burrell called Upper Ridleys, Walnuttree Field, James's Fields, Further Field and Barn Field to Beckenham - West Wickham road at Wheeler's house and shop, occupied by Thomas Hewman, 304 rods [1,672 yards] long, 20 feet wide.

Part of footpath in Beckenham and West Wickham, leading westward from messuage of Amy Burrell in Beckenham called Brewhouse Farm, across the above highway and the avenue, thence southward, through Four Fields belonging to Red Lodge Farm, called Ockfield, Conduit Field, James's Field, and Orchard Field, and out by a stile to the above old highway near Wickham Green, 260 rods [1,430 yards] long, 3 feet wide, to be diverted as above.

Part of the "1780" perhaps showing the 1768 road diversion



1768 - Viscount Bolingbroke and Diana Spencer are divorced by Act of Parliament, the estate plan of Beckenham Manor may relate to the settlement. Or as Bolingbroke reputedly had financial problems he may have been considering a sale of the estate. It seems Diana Spencer was awarded £800 per year from the estates of Bolingbroke, a considerable sum at the time and different sources will value it differently but £1 in 1750 may be equivalent to £180 to £240 today. So Ms. Spencer may have been receiving the equivalent of about £1.4 to £2 million p.a.

This book available online has a good account of the divorce.

"Dr Johnson's Friend and Robert Adam's Client Topham Beauclerk"

1768 – Is also the year in which John Cator first stands for parliament at Gloucester but is defeated.

1769 - John Cator was certainly living at Beckenham Place in 1769 for his house is clearly marked on a map published by Andrews, Drury & Herbert in that year. He may well have come to live here soon after his marriage in 1753 but now we know from Collinson that he certainly built a house by 1762. Peter Collinson writes to Benjamin Franklin about being on the eve of his daughters wedding 12th August 1753. John Cator retained property at Bankside, Southwark near his business until 1794. The Andrews map shows a building with a rounded bay at the rear as is the construction of the mansion but no projecting portico at this time nor a lake in the grounds. The scale prevents much detail being drawn but the record of other landowners is interesting and a clue to further investigations at various archives. The map does appear to be inaccurate in some respects and also similar to the earlier Rocque map. I guess the scale and accuracy are far below what was later achieved by the Ordnance Survey.

The Rocque map is further below for comparison and as the road alignment is almost the same on both maps 'it may be' that Rocque shows buildings either side of the road on or near the site of the mansion prior to the 1760/62 date of the building of the mansion. Investigation of the land around and opposite the mansion, under the current car park, might reveal some remains. Speculation probably based on these maps has been that the mansion is on the site of a previous building or is an alteration of it. If Cator bought an existing 'messuage' of buildings and land he may either have demolished and rebuilt in a fashionable design or altered the building. We may never know the full story.



1769



1745

1772/80 - John Cator is elected MP for Wallingford. This will be his longest period in the House of Commons ([History of Parliament online](#))

1773 - John purchases the Manor of Beckenham from Lord Bolingbroke who had inherited the estate and Bolingbroke title in 1749/51 from his uncle. John's house at Stumps Hill was adjacent to the Beckenham Manor lands and this may be the date when he decides to refer to his house as the mansion since the old manor house in Beckenham was never in his ownership. Included in the sale it seems from map evidence that some Bolingbroke land in Foxgrove Manor was acquired by Cator.

This purchase of the Lordship of the Manor of Beckenham in 1773 from Lord Bolingbroke confused the date of John Cator coming to live in the area and the date of the house for many years with many references still citing 1773 as the date of the building. It may be he altered the building at this date but no definitive evidence has emerged. Cator obviously occupied and had effective ownership of some of the land surrounding his home long before this and indeed did not acquire the Lordship of the Manor of Foxgrove until 1793 in a land rationalisation deal with his neighbour Peter Burrell III (Lord Gwydyr 1754-1820). That is not to be confused with the Private Act recorded in parliamentary archives describes some land exchanges in 1759 with the Peter Burrell who was Lord Gwydyr's grandfather.

The purchase of land from Bolingbroke was less than straightforward as subsequent court cases in Chancery and Kings Bench demonstrate which involved the transfer of land and obligations to third parties i.e. Mrs Hare had lien on part of the lands (see Internet searches). 'Hare' is shown as the owner of some fields on various estate plans outside of the park area. Bolingbroke's reason for selling the land seems to be related to the dissolution of his marriage to his wife Lady Diana and his financial problems. He had a reputation for gambling and general excess. This extract from legal proceedings illustrates from:

"Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the High Court of Chancery ..., Volume 2"

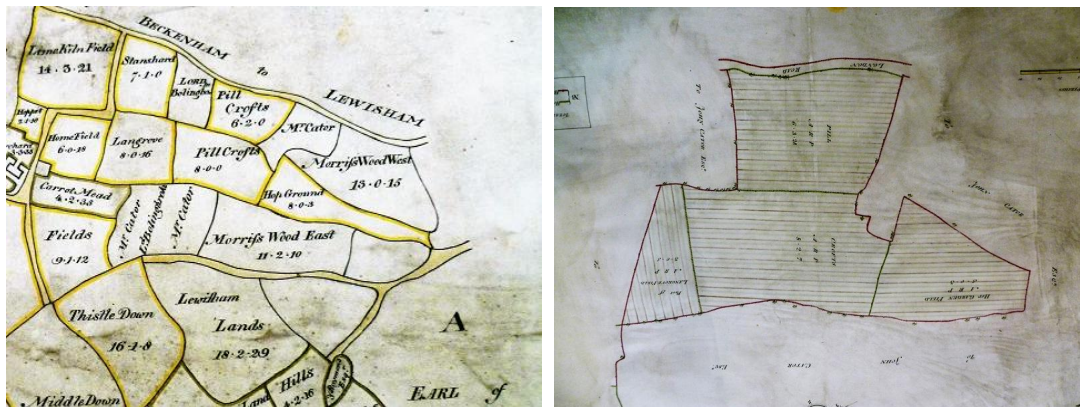
for the said *Margaret Hare* to re-enter; That memorials of the said indentures of the 24th and 25th of *July*, 1770, were duly inrolled in Chancery, before the commencement of the action, in pursuance of the statute of 17 *Geo. 3. c. 26*; That, by an act of the 8th of *Geo. 3.* the marriage between Lord *Bolingbroke* and Lady *Diana* was dissolved, and it was enacted that she should, during her life, receive £800 a year out of the premises contained in the deeds of 1757 and 1765, with power of distress and entry, to secure the payment thereof, and that the yearly sum for her separate use, and also the jointure settled on her, as aforesaid, should cease and be void; That, by indenture of the 20th of *October*, 1773, between Lord *Bolingbroke* and the trustees in the deed of the 4th of *November*, 1765, reciting that deed, and the power of revocation above set forth, and that it was thought convenient by Lord *Bolingbroke*, and the trustees, to sell the estates therein mentioned, (being the same with those granted and conveyed by the said deed of the 4th of *November*, 1765,) and

So when Cator bought the Beckenham Manor estate it seems not knowing that other parties had some 'lien' on either land or income from land. The details in case records are complex and in legal jargon but make some interesting reading. It seems the cases dragged on until about 1787. Perhaps a lawyer may offer us a simplified summary of the related cases concerning Mrs Hare, Boldero, Cator and Bolingbroke. In any case the various land transfers, purchases, and presumably management of the estates took up much of Cator's time. This extract from 'The Law Library - published 1841 indicates that Bolingbroke may have been fraudulent in the sale of the estate....

1775 – Peter Burrell (III) dies, son of Amy Burrell she outlives him and the estates eventually pass to her grandson, yes another Peter Burrell who will become Baron Gwydyr.

1776 – The Foxgrove Manor plan is redrawn by from several plans John Sale (in British Library). It shows there was no change in Cator's holdings in the park area but does show he has acquired some land in Beckenham Village. The map under '1766' is this version but as said is easier to read. Other plans of Langley Park of 1780 show his holdings were considerable but widespread from Bromley to Elmers End and West Wickham and intermingled with the Burrell's lands.

Although the fields annotated Ld Bolingbroke or Ld St.John are still named that way I believe they've passed to Cator with the Manor of Beckenham 1773 sale. One piece of evidence is the field named Lord Bolingbroke next to Pill Crofts which is identified as John Cator's on the 1777 plan on the right below. (rotated for easier identification).



1776 - From 1776 to 1806 John Cator is listed as also being resident at the Adelphi, a development of apartments near The Strand built by the Adam brothers, on www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol18/pt2/pp131-137#h3-0007

He is recorded as being at number 5 from 1776 to 82 and number 7 from 1782 to 1806. He would have desired a town residence for his business and political career. Other residents in the Adelphi were the Adam brothers themselves and Garrick the actor. He died there in 1806 and his apartment was left to his heir John Barwell Cator.



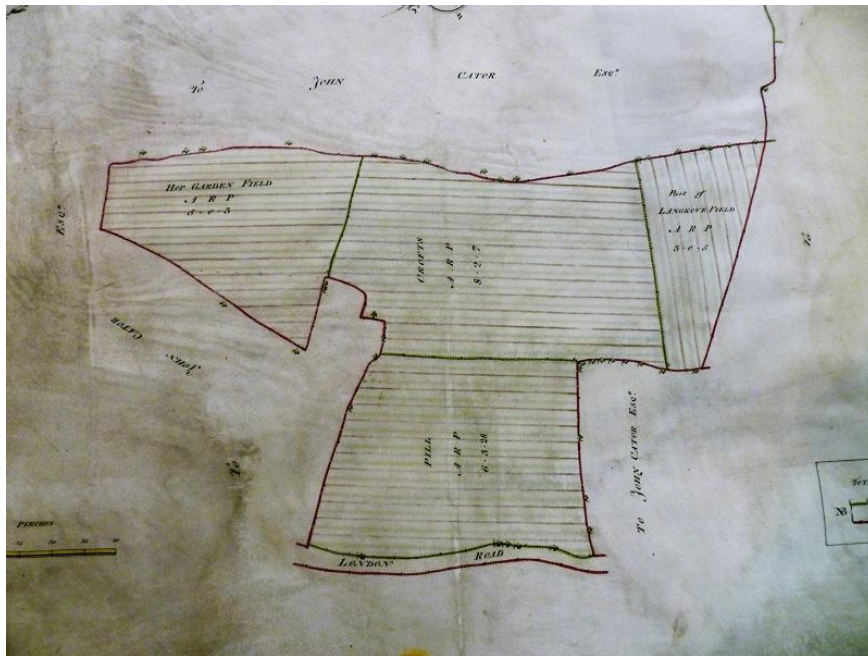
1777 - In this estate plan of 1777 below, the plots called Pill Crofts and Hop Ground (or part

of it) are belonging to Mrs. (Amy) Burrell so we might assume that Cator had Morrisswood east and west and maybe part of the hop ground. If these plans accompanied an exchange it demonstrates that Cator did not own all of the park area until 1777 or later. He is shown as owning land surrounding Mrs. Burrell's. Similarly a plan also of 1777 of some fields belonging to John Cator in the Langley Park area is made. Does this imply some exchange of land at this date as Cator and the Burrells reorganize their estates.

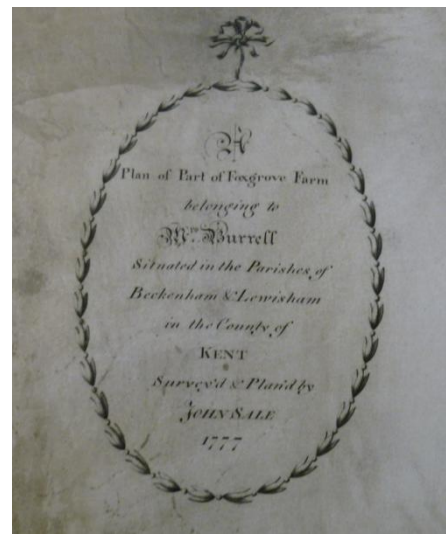
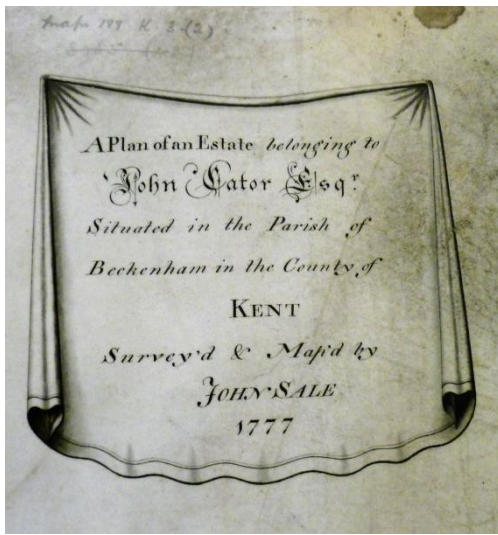
Then we have to ask how the 1793 exchanges between Cator and Burrell affected holdings or indeed whether any other exchanges took place of which we are not yet aware.

Some of the field boundaries in these maps are still visible in the landscape on aerial photo maps such as Google Earth and Bing. The tree lined boundary is I believe the route of the stream and some trees may still be in the landscape, particularly one near the southern boundary of the park on the stream/ditch line.

The earlier map published by John Rocque in 1745 does not show the hop field, but depicts a continuous stretch of woodland called Langstead Wood stretching all the way to the Ravensbourne. The hop field may have been created between 1748 and 1766, but Rocque's map is not highly detailed being of a scale of about 1 inch to the mile. The two later maps of 1766 and 1776 are probably accurate as traces of the features depicted on them can still be seen on modern ordnance survey maps. By the time of this plan below of 1777 the Amy Burrell holding is surrounded almost by John Cator's land. The top boundary of Hop Garden, Pill Croft and part of Langrove Field is I believe the original course of the stream which supplied Cator's lake. The stream was later straightened and buried in a pipe perhaps to extend parts of the golf course.



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Maps 188.k.3.(3.)



Title lozenges from the two estate plans of 1777

1778 – Edward Hasted publishes the first edition of his Topography and History of Kent. So far we haven't seen what entry this held for Beckenham but we have the second edition entry in 1798.

1780 (circa, I suspect earlier) - A Map of the “Burrell” Langley Park area: In the British Library, part of which is missing, illustrates how Cator's and Burrell's possessions are very mixed. The Cator properties are extensive to the south of Beckenham village but the subsequent estate maps of the early 19th century show that the Burrells owned most land to the south of the village and the Cators the land mainly to the north following exchanges in 1793. Whether this plan forms the basis for land exchanges is not confirmed but it does give an insight into the complexity of property ownership. The question mark over the date of this map could mean it relates to 1777 plans and exchanges but that is unconfirmed.

British Library catalogue Title: [Part of a large map of estates belonging to Peter Burrell and to other members of his family in the parish of Beckenham, surveyed about 1780. Mutilated, wanting the title and scale and all the north-western and south eastern parts of the map]

Subjects: [BECKENHAM, Kent \(Parish\) -- Estates - -- Maps and charts -- 1780](#)

Publication Details: [1780?]

Identifier: System number 004801191

Physical Description: 1016 x 1350 mm.

Shelfmark(s): Cartographic Items Maps * 3065.(50.)



1780 part of an incomplete plan showing parts of Langley Park etc.,

The names of Burrell, Cator, Hare, Lethieulier can be identified as landowners and several leaseholders names are shown. The Cator lands will become subject to land exchanges. These plans are tantalising glimpses into the landowning situation.

This map has drafted outlines of road diversions and may relate to 1768 road diversions recorded at Kent Archive, see 1768. If so this may mean the map is earlier?

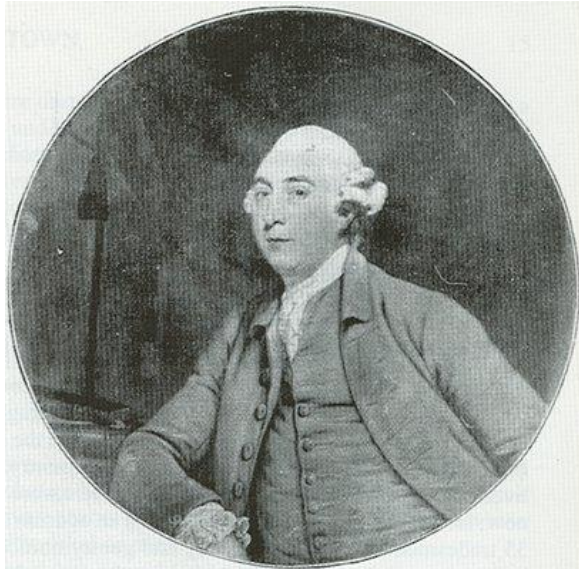
Below, Stone Farm although called Barnfield House owned by John Cator, the site bounded by the neighbouring 'Kelseys' belonging to the Burrells.



1780 – John's brother Joseph marries Diana Bertie in Calcutta. He is 47 and John Barwell Cator is born the following year. There is some thought that Joseph had married a Sarah

Villers in 1753 but it may have been a different Joseph Cator. (recorded in clandestine marriages register for Spittlefield)

1781 - John Cator is High Sheriff of Kent, a position appointed each year from March.



John Cator - Portrait by Joshua Reynolds

This portrait would have been in the round plaster border over the fireplace in the south facing room. It is supposed to be now at Woodbastwick in Norfolk but may have been sold by the family so whereabouts unknown. The plaster surround is approximately 36 inches diameter and the picture is described as about the same size in a catalogue of Reynolds paintings.

1781 - Carl von Linne the younger, Linnaeus' son, comes to London. There is no evidence to say whether this is the Linnaeus who might have met John Cator but as Carl junior did meet Joseph Banks, Solander and others who knew Peter Collinson then there is a potential link. Carl contracted an illness which killed him on his return to Sweden in 1783. It is recorded as jaundice. See Linnaean Society and Wikipedia entries. IF this is the Carl von Linne who met Cator then its unlikely he had anything to do with estate planting as Cator had been at Stumps Hill for about 20 years.

1782 - John's brother Joseph is in possession of the house and land at Clockhouse between Beckenham and Penge according to the estate plan in Bromley Library Historic Collections. Being a younger brother he had not it seems inherited a large estate and had worked for the East India Company as a factor (merchant). As Joseph had married in Calcutta in 1780 it may be he was returning home with some amassed fortune. John and other members of the family were shareholders in the EIC. Records in the British Library and elsewhere beg investigation. It is remarkable how many local landowners and politicians had dealings with the East India Co. and it must be regarded as a source of some wealth. Chinaware, spices, silk and luxury items were traded for British manufactures. During the 18th century the practices of the EIC were questioned and investigated in parliament on several occasions but it is too complicated to relate it here. Joseph had worked and probably traded in the Far East. Naming his son 'John Barwell Cator' was both a reference to his own father, John Cator the elder and a reference to the Barwell family who lived in Benghal and were directors of the East India Company whom it seems were patrons of Joseph and may have influenced his fortunes. Joseph had been in Jamaica in 1763 at the time of his father's death. He acquired Clockhouse after the death of Sir Piercey Brett, Admiral of the Blue. Clockhouse is said to have been built around 1720 for one of the Lethieullier family. Piercey Brett probably moved there after 1760 as his daughter was born in Buckinghamshire in 1753. He is recorded on History of Parliament online as MP for Queenborough as Sir Piercey Brett of Beckenham and his career posts were Lt. R.N. 1734; capt. 1743; r.-adm. 1762; v.-adm. 1770; adm. 1778. Ld. of Admiralty Dec. 1766-Jan. 1770. His wife survived him until 1781, they are both buried at St. George's Beckenham. We don't know where his wife lived after 1781.



Clockhouse between Beckenham and Penge (looking towards Penge)

1783 - John Cator purchases Wricklemarsh at Blackheath, the house and estate of Gregory Page Turner for £22,000. The pillars of the portico along with several ornate windows from Wricklemarsh House at Blackheath were added to the mansion when much remodeling was carried out but date is debatable. The Ordnance Survey surveyors preliminary sketches of 1799 in the British Library clearly show a house at Beckenham Place without the portico though the curved bay at the rear of the house and a stable block and a lake are shown. It is thought that Beckenham Place was originally red brick but that limestone ashlar covering came from Wricklemarsh along with the portico masonry. This could have been prior to 1800 but the map evidence and the potential for John Cator's heir, John Barwell Cator to have carried out alterations is a real possibility.



Wricklemarsh: Some of the columns and windows came to Beckenham Place
 the large ground floor window is the same as at the sides of portico



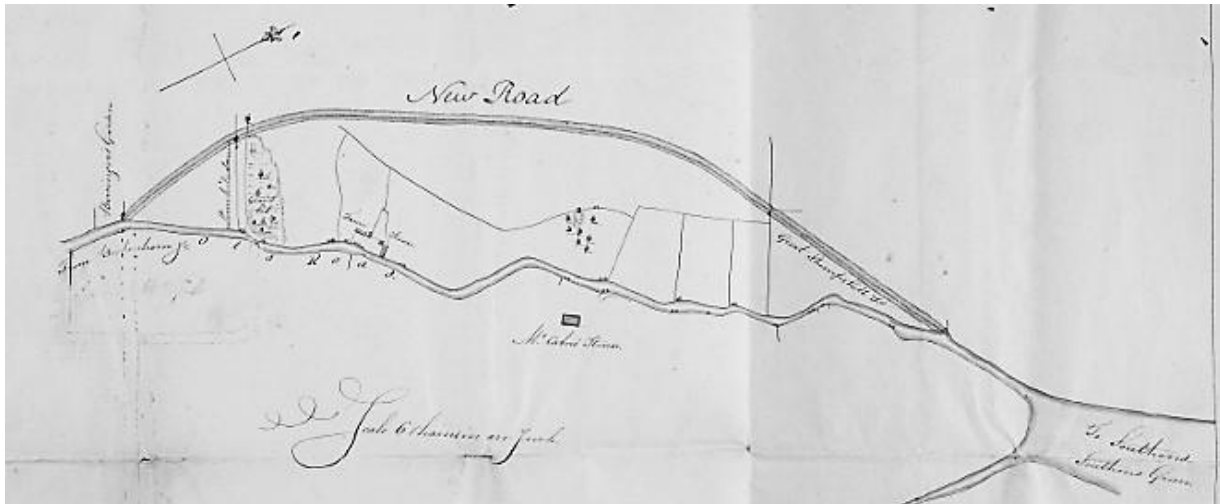
This window from Beckenham Place Portico is the same as in the print of Wricklemarsh as well as other similarities in masonry



Wricklemarsh painted by J.M.W. Turner circa 1790's

1784 - Elected MP for Ipswich but unseated. The History of Parliament online describes John Cator's political career or in 'The House of Commons 1754-1790 by Lewis Namier and John Brooke' available as an e-book

1785 - Cator has the road diverted to current Beckenham Hill, Southend Road line and also closes Langstead Lane between Southend and Clay Hill. New road at first called Great Stumpshill Road. It is noteworthy that the present pond is clearly marked on the eighteenth century road diversion plan, though the site of its farmhouse on the same side of the road is now mostly outside the park boundary and occupied by modern housing.



Centre for Kentish Studies has this document:

Part of highway between village of Southend in Lewisham and village of Beckenham, 1,500 yards long, to be diverted to a new line, through lands of John Cator, Esq., 1,518 yards long, 30 feet wide. Highway from Southend Green near vill of Southend to Clayhill in Beckenham, 2,250 yards long, to be stopped up, since it is disused, and the road from Southend to Clayhill by Beckenham Church is used in its place. Order: at Beckenham 22 March 1785, with plan (scale: 10 ins. to mile). Endorsed: consent of John Cator of Beckenham, Esq., same date Certificate of completion: 4 April 1785. Order enrolled 5 April 1785 [Q/So.W11.pp529 - 530]

At this time the local gentry were vying with each other in improving their estates and almost all of them adopted what was then the height of fashion, large scale landscaping to produce vistas of pasture leading down to stretches of water with a backdrop of trees. The closing of Langstead Lane which would have crossed the footprint of the lake was probably with a view to creating the lake and excluding the public. This redevelopment might partly explain why few traces now remain of any exotic planting, which John Cator is reported to have carried out on the estate under the influence of his wife and eminent botanist father in law, Peter Collinson, during the early days of his marriage. However, introduced species such as Turkey Oak, Holm Oak, Rhododendron, Swamp Cypress are present whether due to original plantings or later landscaping. the Turkey Oak which blew down in 2002 was dated to 230 years of age (planted 1772 or earlier). Collinson remarks in a letter to John Bartram "my two sons (Cator his son in law and his own natural son) vye with each other in acquiring plants and ask Collinson for azaleas, khalmeias and rhodedendrons. Search The Memorials of John Bartram and Humphrey Marshal for Collinson's letter, it makes entertaining reading and an insight into the Collinson/Cator relationship. Collinson was a supplier of many plants to a wide number of clients including the aristocracy. However, the passage of time, changing fashion and various tennants have had an impact on the landscape.

Cator also buys the title to a cottage in two tenements with several pieces of land in Lewisham received in exchange from Francis Motley Austin Esq of Court Lodge, Lamberhurst on 9th May 1785 with Cator paying £600 by way of equality of the property.

The exact whereabouts of the property unknown. Francis Motley Austin or Austen is an extensive landowner in Kent from Beckenham to Sevenoaks and an uncle to Jane Austen's father. He acquired the Manor of Billingham (Bellingham) which I assume to include Bellingham Farm Catford.

The core of the park probably took most of its present form in the 1780's. For it is then that the public was excluded from the park roads the existing road becoming a driveway through his park and he also closed another road called Langstead Lane (or Lagg Street Lane on some maps) which ran from Southend to Clay Hill, effectively excluding the public from his parkland estate. The gatehouses at the north and south ends of the drive through the park still remain though the southerly one is now outside of the public park being at the entrance to what is now a private road confusingly also called Beckenham Place Park.

Similarly the Burrell's of Langley Park diverted a road away from the front door of their house, it now constitutes South Eden Park Road.

1787 – Cator's mother Mary dies in this year and is buried in what becomes the family vault Beckenham parish churchyard, St. George's. I have not found a Will for Mary but she had been left money and houses or at least the income from them from her husband. Cator buys Grangewood in Upper Norwood as part of his acquisition of the Manor of Whitehorse or Bensham, now a public park. It is subsequently sold by his heir and nephew, John Barwell Cator. Just another example of Cator's acquisitions. Maybe or probably part of the same purchase as Cator also purchases the Manor of Croydon according to History of The County of Surrey by Thomas Allen. This must be the Manor of Bensham or Whitehorse and include parts of what is now Upper Norwood and is listed in the 1825 Act among the other properties and consists of about 560 acres. In the 1825 Act it is identified as 'to be sold' by J. Barwell Cator to pay for other land in Kent, Surrey or near Woodbastwick. Cator ownership of lands in Croydon may have been as short as 20 years? Having looked at land dealings of others such as John Evelyn, buying and selling estates was common and frequent. As banks and investments were perhaps less divers then investing in land was perhaps seen as safer than other forms of saving.

1788 - Pat Manning's research records an exchange of lands from Lees Court, Kent with certain lands in Lewisham for which John Cator paid over £550 for equality 19 November 1788. These would probably have been Earl of Rockingham/Sondes/Lees Court lands which are identified on the Foxgrove Manor plan as being in the area of what is now Downham/Southend. The Rockingham connection is certainly complex. It seems that the last Earl of Rockingham died in 1746 without a direct heir and the Earldom became extinct. Lewis Watson 1st Earl of Rockingham had married Lady Catherine Sondes daughter of the 1st Earl of Feversham (Faversham). His title passed to his grandson also named Lewis Watson who styled himself Viscount Sondes. He was succeeded by his brother Thomas who died in 1746 without a direct heir. So far as I can see he was succeeded by Thomas Watson-Wentworth, 1st Marquess of Rockingham, KB, PC (I) (13 November 1693 – 14 December 1750) was a British peer and Whig politician. The succeeded by Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, KG, PC, FRS (13 May 1730 – 1 July 1782). In 1782 with no heir The Marquess of Rockingham title also becomes extinct. But the property would pass back along another branch of the family and they, probably having no local interests must have sold this part to John Cator. Perhaps the estates reverted to the Sondes family who had large estates in Kent.

This extract from the 1833 estate plan may give a clue to where the land acquired from Rockingham was situated if we compare it to the 1776 Foxgrove Manor plan.



I have kept the site of the mansion in the top left corner. Also refer to 1795 purchase of land from John Forster at Southend which would also be on this 1833 plan.

1788 - John Cator negotiates lending money via bonds to the Prince of Wales (later to become George IV) but he and another party withdraw before the transaction is completed (Memoirs of George IV). These books are available on the internet "The history of the life and reign of William the fourth, the reform monarch ...By Robert Huish "

As the Princes were anticipating being able to repay the bonds upon the death of their father George III the lenders, Cator and others could have been held as 'treasonable'. The circumstances surrounding the financial position of the Prince of Wales later Prince Regent and George IV are even more astounding as some Dutch bankers were found to make a loan. They issued bonds in Europe and Napoleon invaded Belgium and Holland giving the Prince of Wales an excuse not to repay the loan. The Dutch bankers were left bankrupt and both committed suicide. This extract is from the book. It goes further to explain that some French royalists advanced money against these bonds and seemingly some of them were found treasonable in France for lending money to an enemy during the Napoleonic wars and subsequently executed. The book requires reading to fully understand the circumstances. In any case, Cator either had a close call or had he continued with the transaction he may well have been raised to the Peerage on the crowning of George IV.

‘ KNOW ALL MEN by these presents that We, **George** Prince of Wales, Frederick Duke of York, and William Henry Duke of Clarence, all living in the City of Westminster, in the County of Middlesex, are jointly and severally, justly and truly indebted to **John Cator**, of Beckenham, in the County of Kent, Esquire, and his executors, administrators, and assigns, in the penal sum of Sixty Thousand Pounds of good and lawful money of Great Britain, well and truly paid to us at or before the sealing of these presents. Sealed with our seals this 16th day of December, in the 29th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord **George III.**, by the Grace of God, King, Defender of the Faith, Anno Domini 1788.

‘ The condition of the above-written obligation is such, that if the above bounden **George** Prince of Wales, Frederick Duke of York, and William Henry Duke of Clarence, or any or either of them, or any other of their heirs, executors, or administrators, shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto the above-named **John Cator**, his executors, administrators, or assigns, the full sum of Thirty Thousand Pounds of lawful money of Great Britain, within the space or time of six calendar months next after any one or either of us, the said **George** Prince of Wales, Frederick Duke of York, and William Henry Duke of Clarence, shall come to and ascend the throne of England, together with lawful interest on the same, to be computed from the day that such event shall happen, up and home to the time of paying off this obligation, then, and in such case, the same shall become null and void; otherwise to be and remain in full force and virtue.

‘ **GEORGE** Prince of Wales, L. S.

‘ **FREDERICK**, L. S.

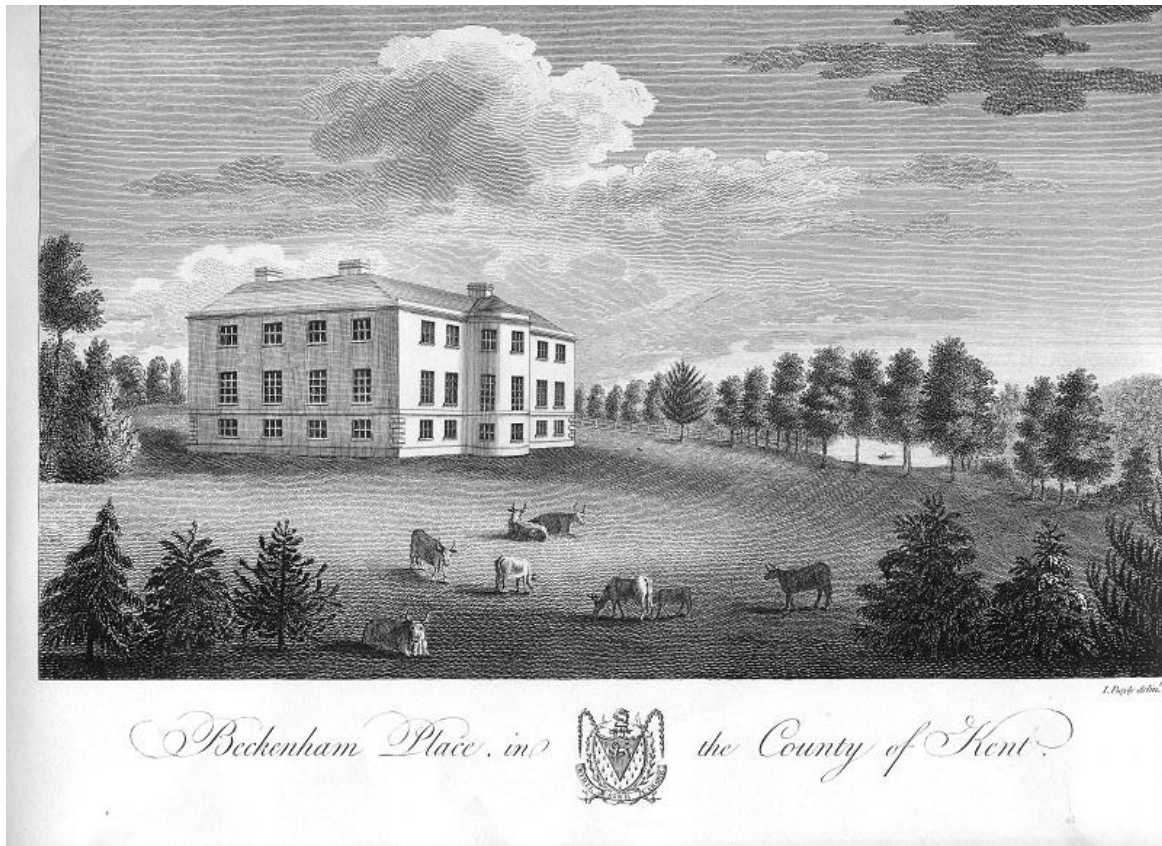
‘ **WILLIAM HENRY**, L. S.’

These post-obit bond transactions began, however, in time to wear a very serious aspect, when Mr. Jones and Mr. **Cator** withdrew themselves entirely from the business. The purchasers of the bonds became alarmed, and, even up to the present hour, have been afraid of acknowledging they held

1789 - Bayly's Print of the mansion is produced. It shows a villa with views of a lake but no evidence of the portico which is constructed with materials from Wricklemarsh at a later date. The house originally had no attic dormer windows. The internal staircase shows that the attic rooms were a later alteration, possibly mid 19th century. As Cator had acquired Wricklemarsh in 1783 it's possible that demolition material was brought to Beckenham Place to clad the red brick building with portland stone by this time. The lack of an image of the original house on Stumps Hill is frustrating.

This image is the first evidence of an ornamental lake and as it is not geographically or architecturally accurate may be regarded as schematic or an impression. The closure of Langstead Lane in 1785 which would have passed through the lake bed enabled the siting of the lake in this position and the stream from the south of the park was its source of water. The various maps show water from springs and ponds and in some cases from the moat of

Foxgrove Farm. In recent years the stream has become progressively dry due to phases of building redevelopment around Foxgrove and Westgate Roads.



1789 – Amy Burrell dies and the Langley estates are inherited by her grandson Peter Burrell who would become Lord (Baron) Gwydyr in 1796. This inheritance perhaps prompts the 1793 land exchanges. Amy Burrell’s will mentions property in Berkley Square and Peter inherits a property in Whitehall which would be renamed Gwydyr House “ House was built for Peter Burrell of Beckenham, Kent, in 1772 at an estimated cost of £6,000. The house is named after his son, also called Peter Burrell, who was created 1st Baron in 1796. It remained privately owned until 1835 when the house became unoccupied. Between 1838 and 1840 the premises served as temporary accommodation for the Reform Club. Since 1871 the House has been used for official purposes.”

1790/93 - John Cator is MP for Stockbridge. This would be his final seat in parliament. His entry in History of Parliament online makes interesting reading.

1792 – Cator publishes ‘Answers to the Complaints of Hester Lynch Piozzi and Cecelia Thrale’



John Cator
1792 - 672 pages

Cator's 1793 Nov. 21 response (with fellow executor Jeremiah Crutchley) to a complaint from Henry Thrale's youngest daughter Cecilia (later Cecilia Mostyn), then a minor, filed by her advisor Bertie Greatheed. In the response, Cator expands on his narrative of his handling of the Thrale estate, including transcripts of schedule of accounts through 1785 Sept. (pp. 130-169), June 1787 (pp. 170-185), 1792 July (pp. 186-206), 1793 Mar. (pp. 206-212), and 1793 Aug. (pp. 213-237). It is signed by Cator and Crutchley on p. 129, by witness John Ord (p. 1), and by James Trower (transcriber?) (p. 129). A payment from the estate to "Gabriel Piozzi, music master" is listed on p. 142.

Cator had acted as money lender and will executor for Henry Thrale. Hester Thrale had remarried Gabriel Piozzi.

1793 - John Cator acquires Foxgrove Manor in a land rationalisation exchange with Peter Burrell III who has attained the title Lord Gwydyr. Amy Burrell's death is recorded the next year so she has passed the estates to her grandson, Peter Burrell III.



Foxgrove Farm circa 1870 ?

This exchange probably involved more of the lands Cator had amassed south of Beckenham village as a later Cator estate plan of 1834 excludes any property south of the village. It appears that both Cator and Burrell are concentrating their holdings into large contiguous areas.

Also in this year; Part of the highway between village of Beckenham and village of West Wickham, 563 & 3/4 yards long, to be diverted to new line through lands of Sir Peter Burrell of Langley Park, baronet, 563 & 3/4 yards long, 36 feet wide.

Order: at Beckenham, 4 March 1793, with plan, surveyed by John Sale, Bromley.

Endorsed: consent of Sir Peter Burrell, same date; certificate of completion, 8 March 1793.

The plan for this diversion shows lands belonging to John/Jno Cator next to Burrell's land.

This may be associated with the aforementioned exchange.

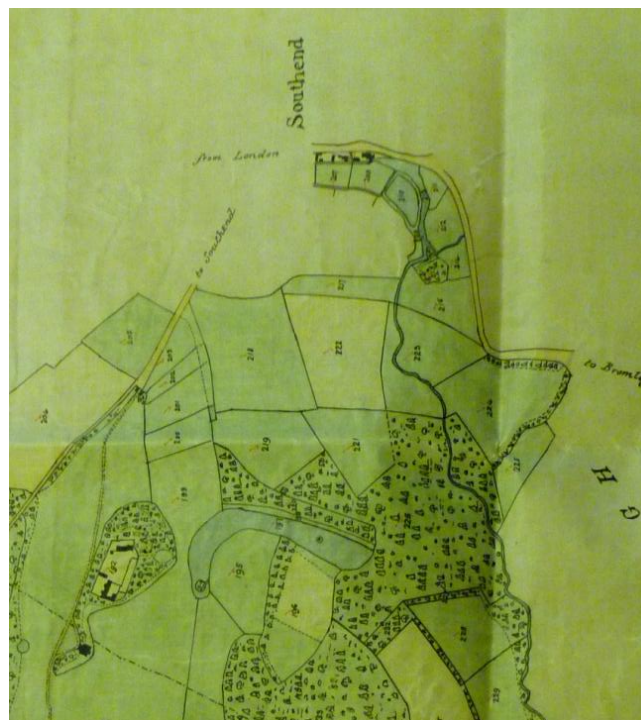
1794 - John sells the Bankside business and property (source: P.Manning). Maybe this is prompted by the death of the younger brother Samuel who was taken into the business as apprentice and partner. We can only guess until information is forthcoming. John is aged 66 so without a family member wanting to take over the business he is perhaps reorganizing his commitments.

1795 - A record of a conveyance of a messuage, water corn mill and lands in Southend, Kent from John Forster Esq. of Lincolns Inn, Middlesex, to John Cator of Beckenham, Kent in consideration of the sum of £1750. Maybe including some part of the park by the Ravensbourne?

..... land at Southend purchased from John Forster Esq of Lincoln's Inn for £1750 on 1st/2nd Jan 1795 detailed as Flowers Garden, 3r 1p, Tree Crafts, 4a 1r 31p and Sand Pitt field 3a 1r

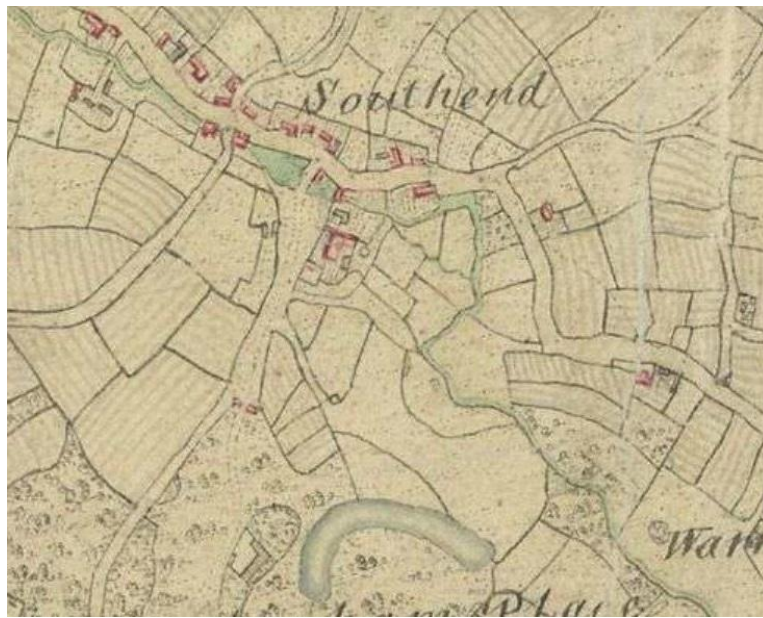
22p. The fifth abstract concerns land purchased from the widow Jane Weatherall of Deptford by John Cator of Stumps Hill for £850. It is described as "All that one close of pasture and arable called Broomfield 7 acres and one close of pasture or arable. Called Two Acres adjoining Morrises Wood, also 2 acres of meadow lying in Rookey Meadow adjoining East lands, also Bullocks Meadow 2 acres and a pasture called Three Acres." Proof of ownership was provided by the inclusion of the will dated 11.2.1735 of Robert Friend gardener of Deptford who was Jane Weatherall's father. (source: Pat Manning)

Of the above, the last one mentions Morrises Wood, called Morrifs (Morriss) Wood East and West on the Foxgrove Manor Map. It is likely these are the same plots and perhaps this land is around 'A' Earl of Rockingham's land on the 1766 Foxgrove plan. The land at A on the Foxgrove plan is described as being grazed by oxen which may be the Bullocks Meadow mentioned here? and perhaps East Lands is adjacent to Morrisswood and Lewisham Lands. Until we find a relevant estate plan, if one exists, this is conjecture. The Ordnance Survey drawing shows Southend in about 1799 and the estate plan of 1833 shows a millpond and the mill? It is possible to identify the positions of pubs, mills and Flower House as well as lodges at the park entrance. The Ravensbourne was the source of power for several mills along its course.



From the 1833 estate plan showing the area around the mills at Southend.

The blank area includes land around Flower House. William Flower died in 1789 'Probate of will of William Flower of Southend, Lewisham, Kent, esquire, granted 15 August 1789. Bequeaths to his sister, Elizabeth Flowers, a house in Southend and all other freehold and leasehold estates. Daughter Frances Flowers. She is also to act as executrix.'



This 1799 map is accessible on the British Library map collections website, this is only a small extract

1796 – Daniel Lysons publishes *Environs of London* volume 4 with entries for Beckenham. He draws on information from Thomas Phillipott and Edward Hasted with some additions.

1797 - Croydon Enclosure Act; (source Wikipedia) between 1750 and 1850 there were many Enclosure Acts which allowed landowners to exclude people from what was Common Land with access to all for grazing, growing some food, foraging and pannage. The Croydon act allowed the enclosure of what included Crystal Palace Park. There is some anecdotal evidence that the Cator estate had at least some of this land and sold it to the Crystal Palace company. This story needs confirmation and is included here to illustrate how public access and use can be lost all too easily. Of course you might have to go back to Adam and Eve for the first enclosure of the Garden of Eden for history of this aspect of property ownership.

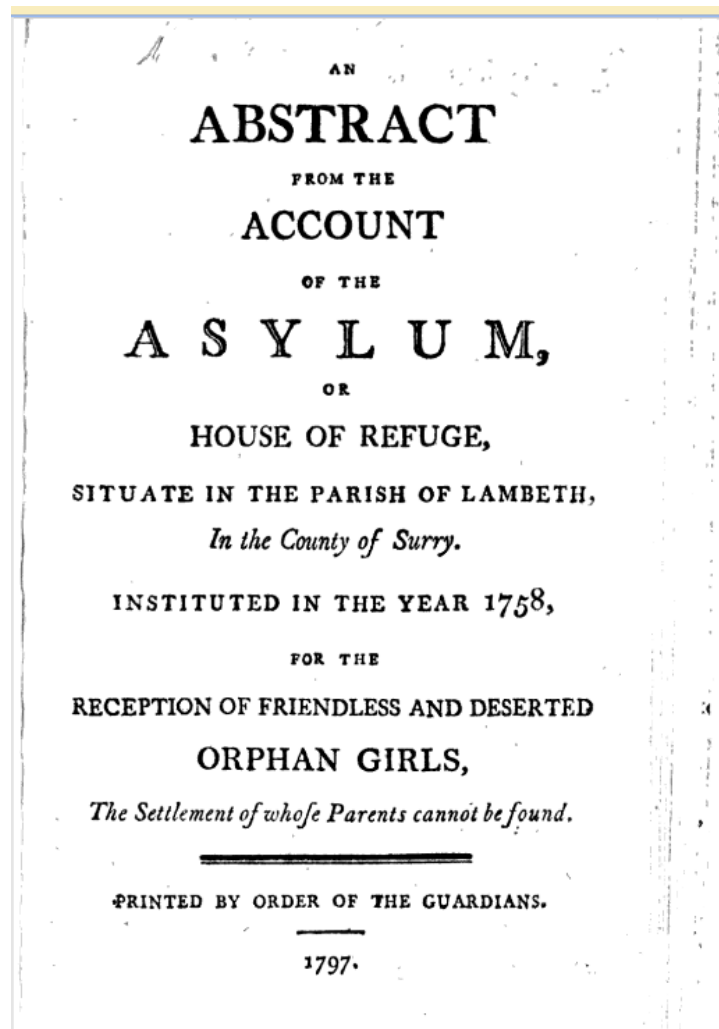
1799 - The earliest version of the Ordnance Survey map of Kent. Not published by the OS until 1860's but printed by other publishers such as Stanford's reproduced by kind permission of the British Library. This map shows clearly how the lake is supplied with water from a stream and pond. The pond is now filled in and in a school playground. By 1799 the Ordnance Survey surveyors working drawing (below) in the British Library and viewable on their website, shows the park and nearby details. Some field outlines are still similar to the 1766 Foxgrove Manor plan. John Cator has removed field boundaries inside much of his 'park' landscape.

A farm to the south of the mansion still exists as it had been on the 1785 road diversion plan and it is still visible on some early 1800 maps but gone by 1860. A house in the now private road "Tudor Manor" may have acquired its name if some remains were discovered at the time of its building (. The buildings of home farm are just visible between the stable block and Southend Lodge. The field pattern here may relate to the 1795 land transfer? Land marked with stripes is cultivated, woodland is apparent, mottled land is probably pasture and parkland marked with less dense concentrations of trees.



1799 – Hasted's 2nd edition of his Topography and History of Kent perhaps prompted by the Lysons publication of Environs of London. Said to contain new material and edits.

1797 – Mrs. Cator of The Terrace, Adelphi is listed as a donor of 5 guineas for this orphanage. Reading the on-line book is ‘insightful’ to say the least about the conditions of orphans at this time.



The Years 1800 to 1900.

The Park is mostly leased to a series of tenants. But other events affect the park such as the building of the railways and inheritance of the park by other members of the Cator family.

1804 - Mary Cator dies and is buried in St. Georges churchyard with her daughter.

1805 – John Cator prepares his Last Will and Testament, mentioning properties in Kent, Surrey, Essex and Middlesex. These include his Mansion at Beckenham Place and an estate “situate near Addington”. Copies are in the National Archive, Surrey Archive and Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills. Middlesex may refer to his Adelphi apartment? It must be remembered that County boundaries have been modified. The original Southwark based business was in Surrey as were any properties in Croydon, Norwood and Addington.

1806 - John Cator dies at his apartment in the Adelphi near The Strand and is buried in St George’s churchyard, Beckenham with his wife and daughter in the family vault. Having lived on Bankside in Southwark near his business and later acquiring an apartment in the Adam Brothers Adelphi near the Strand Cator was a man of property and we can only speculate on how he accumulated his wealth.

The family tomb bears this inscription:

JOHN CATOR, late of Beckenham Place, 21st February

1806 aged 76 years/ MARY his wife 13th August 1804 aged 71

years/ MARIA their only child April 1766 aged 3 years/

MARY his mother 28 August 1787 aged 78 years/ ANN his

sister 27th July 1766 aged 17 years/ MARY daughter of his brother SAMUEL August 1793 aged 8 years.” (source: P.Manning)

1806 – John Barwell Cator marries Miss Elizabeth Louisa Mahon, a niece to Lord Vigo.

1806-1825 - John Barwell Cator (1781-1858), son of John's oldest brother Joseph, ultimately inherits the estate with other trustees although substantial assets are directly left to him in the Will. It is held in trust by his father Joseph until Joseph's death in 1818. But not before two cousins of Barwell Cator who are also named in the will die before majority and hence the whole estate becomes J.Barwell Cator's via an act of parliament, though this has yet to be fully unravelled. According to John Cator’s will of 1805, No one person was left in charge of his estates and there were strict instructions in the will to keep the estates intact, avoid cutting down timber, defacing or destroying the land. He also wished that the property should remain in the family and be passed from father to son. Subject to limitations and conditions, Beckenham Place, all Manors and hereditaments in Kent, Surrey, Essex, Middx, Hereford and elsewhere including an Addington estate were left in trust to George Sparkes and Henry Sparkes, sons of John’s deceased sister, Mary Sparkes. Sarah Cator, the widow of his late brother William was left an annuity of £60 pa for life. £20 p.a. annuities went to Bridget Cator, widow of Kingston, Jamaica and Elizabeth Scott of Rodborough, Glos. Susannah Scott, Elizabeth’s daughter received dividends from bank annuities, similarly niece Harriet Heapy and great-niece Mary Ann Sparkes. Ann Frances Baynes, wife of Lt Col Baynes and daughter of John’s late brother William received £2000. By 1825, the Cators found the estates impossible to administer because the Sparkes brothers had died intestate and their heirs were all minors.

They submitted a private Act dated 27.6.1825 to King George IV to enable the descent to go down through Joseph’s eldest son, John Barwell Cator. (source: P.Manning “Cators of Beckenham and Woodbastwick”)



John Barwell Cator 1781-1858

1806 - Building leases begin to be sold for parts of the Wrinklemarsh, Blackheath estate. There is some debate about the alterations to Beckenham Place Mansion. Possibly John Barwell Cator having acquired great wealth through his inheritance indulged in adding the portico to the mansion and remodelling the lake as part of his spending spree. Without written records the maps available are a source of information. In 1799 the mansion appears on a map without a portico and it's unlikely that John Cator the younger would engage in such alterations at this late stage in his life. The lake is of a different shape in the 1799 and later maps. The print of 1812 shows the portico and the maps of about 1860 show a different lake outline.

This description is from the 2009 Conservation Management Plan produced by Rees Bolter Architects:

Although the fabric of the north wing is of considerable archaeological significance, the architectural relationship between the extension and parent is clumsy and it is hard, almost impossible, to believe that the patron of the first house could have sanctioned such work. The survival of the shell of Wrinklemarsh into the nineteenth century and the internal character of the extension make it far more likely that the extension was the work of John Barwell Cator, undertaken in the whirlwind of expenditure following his inheritance, to impress his new wife and family. Major expenditure on country houses usually follows a change of ownership. The wing has, within this report, generally been referred to as work of c1810 although no secure dating has been established.

The new wing required the main hall to be approached along a rather long central corridor, with long rooms flanking it on each side. The overall impression of the new wing is that it was conceived as a showcase for masonry salvaged from Wrinklemarsh, compromised by the levels existing within the original house. The pediment supported by the columns is visually too light and the rooms on each side of the central corridor are ill-proportioned. The additional accommodation was, presumably, welcome.

1807 - J.Barwell Cator buys land at Woodbastwick, Norfolk. This is the beginning of the gradual move away from the Beckenham estate (source: P.Manning, see her account on www.bblhs.org.uk/download/i/mark_dl/u/4010072272/.../Cator%20Pre2.pdf)

1808 - John Barwell Cator's wife's relative Mr Aylmer Bourke Lambert has access to Barwell's papers inherited from Peter Collinson via John Cator at the mansion. Lambert's letter to James Edward Smith of the Linnaean Society in their archive is the route which leads

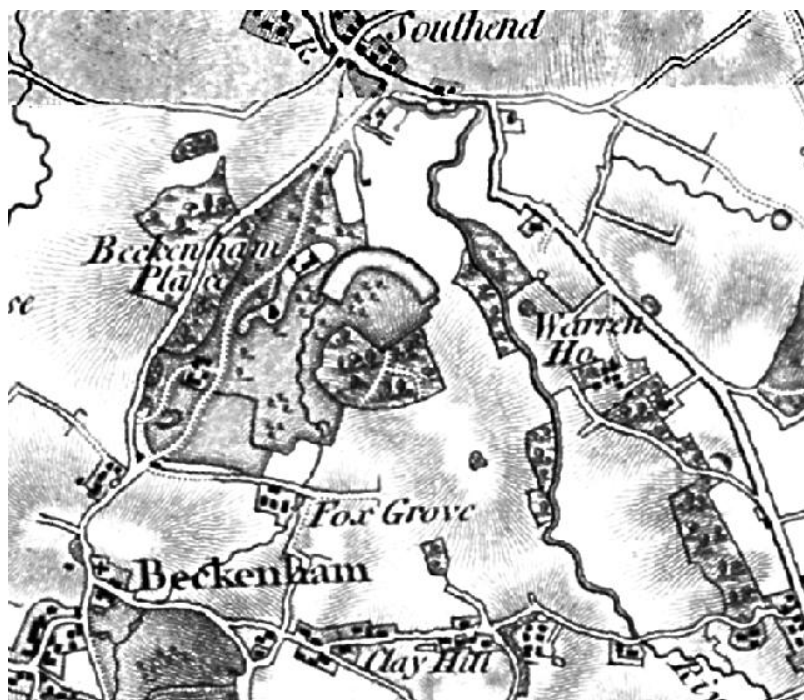
to Collinson's revelation about the date of the mansion. Lambert made copies of the catalogue which became the property of Lewis Weston Dillwyn who printed the version which we can now access on the internet and reveals the first date of the mansion at Beckenham Place.

Lambert comments about J.Barwell Cator "who has just come into all his uncles immense property" and "Cator has lately married a relative of mine Miss Mahon, a niece to Lord Vigo"

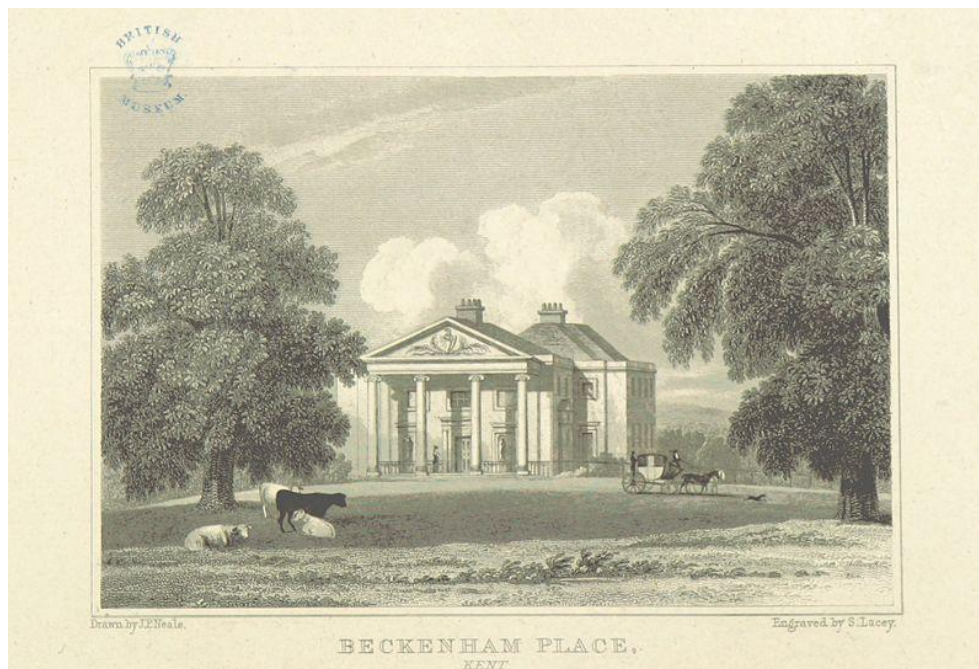
1812 - J. Preston Neale produces a print of the Mansion although the pediment on top of the columns is not drawn accurately. It does depict how it perhaps should have been built. Preston Neale's work was published from 1812 to 1825 so different dates may be attributed to this print.

1813 – Albemarle Cator (the first) is born at Beckenham, J.B.Cator's eldest son who will inherit the estates.

1816 – This map is said to be published in 1816, probably surveyed earlier. At 1 mile to the inch the lake is more of a curved canal shape than the kidney shape on later maps. See the 1833 estate map etc.



1818 – Joseph Cator dies at Clockhouse. On 25th March, the College of Arms authorised to John (Barwell) Cator of Beckenham and Woodbastwick the Cator Arms, an earlier form of which can still be seen over the pediment at the front.(source: P.Manning). Joseph's wife Diana dies in 1829 in Beckenham and whether she remained at Clockhouse is unknown.



1820 - Peter Burrell III, Lord Gwydyr dies and his estates at Kelsey and Langley are sold to new owners including the Hoare Banking family and the Goodharts. (source: BLS). These estates are mostly south of the Beckenham village whereas the Cator estates are mostly north of the village. Burrell was MP for Boston, Lincolnshire and has an entry on History of Parliament online. It was said the Burrells rose to fame by not doing anything much i.e. Lord Gwydyr inherited one of his titles from a great uncle, Merrick Burrell, and a high position through his wife's family. She was Baroness Willoughby de Eresby. The mainstream of the family later changed its name to Drummond-Burrell and then to Drummond-Willoughby. The title of Baron Gwydyr was passed to a cousin. Wikipedia and History of Parliament are sources of information.

1821 – William Thornhill Cator is born at Beckenham Place, the younger of J.Barwell Cator's two sons. This evidences that the Cators were still occupying the mansion up to this time. At least for some of the time as Barwell spent some time in Ireland and Norfolk.

1825 - J.Barwell Cator and other trustees of the estate acquire permission via act of parliament from George IV to lease plots of land for development on the Beckenham Estates. John Cator's Will had put restrictions on selling land. It seems an Act of Parliament was required to permit JBCator to dispose of lands. This extract explains that sales from the estate have to be matched by purchases of new lands. John Barwell Cator is said to have sold land in Croydon to enable the purchase of lands in Norfolk:

“An Act to enable John Cator, Esquire to grant building leases of lands in the counties of Kent, Surrey, Essex and Hereford; and also for vesting in Trustees for sale part of the Estates in said Counties devised by the will of John Cator Esquire, deceased, and for laying out the money arising from such Sales respectively, under the Direction of the High Court of Chancery, in the Purchase of other estates, to be settled to the same Uses; and for other purposes. Schedule 1 includes particulars of property purchased prior to and after the death of Cator.”

The intention was that the ‘estate’ remained intact for the family at least in value if not geographically fixed.

The papers of Mother Mary Baptist (formerly Bessie Taylor) for her 1967 thesis include the transcript of the properties covered by the Act. It illuminates the extent of the Cator properties in Beckenham and the section for “Additional Information”. Briefly, the bulk of the estate was in Beckenham, Penge, (??acres), Carshalton (12 acres), Croydon (about 560 acres), Addington, Chelsham and Farleigh (over 1000 acres), Ross, Herefordshire (only 9 acres), Chingford, Loughton and Waltham Abbey (about 140 acres), Bromley (about 25 acres), Lewisham (about 95 acres), Chittenden Farm 193 acres, Penge (55 acres before

Cator's death, 176 acres purchased after his death.), Leigh, Kent 280 acres, Chiddingstone and Hever 193 acres. Wricklemarsh isn't separately identified and whether it is included in the Lewisham figure is unclear. Of note is the land in Penge acquired after John's death in 1806. References to the Cator involvement in Penge Common enclosures can be found. I was surprised to see that land in Ross was only 9 acres compared to the vastness of the other estates.

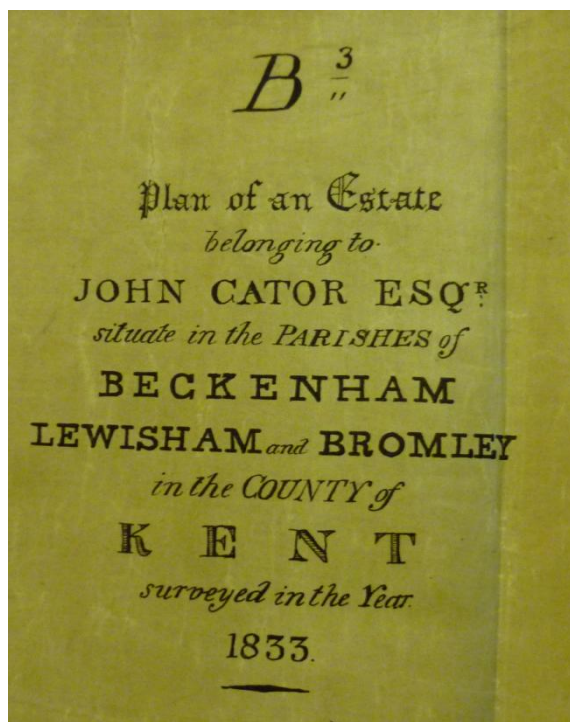
1828 – The Cators acquire Kent House Farm bordering Penge Common from Alexander and Thomas Baring (National Archive and Lewisham Local Studies)

1828 – W.H.Ireland publishes his New and Complete History of Kent drawing on previous publications by Phillipott, Hasted and Lysons. He describes the Manor of Foxgrove becoming divided in the 1700's in three parts which I assume to be Raymond and the Burrell's, Cator, and Bolingbroke. He describes Beckenham Place Park being embellished with infinite taste by its affluent proprietor (John Barwell Cator).

1829 - Alexander D. Inglis recorded as tenant of the Mansion. Pat Manning reports that the Cator family believe J.Barwell Cator occupied the mansion up to 1841 but these other tenants cast some doubt on it. Although in 1830....below. It's entirely possible that J.Barwell Cator leased the mansion during periods when he was resident in Ireland or Woodbastwich, Norfolk.

1830 – John Cator (1830-1859) is born but will not survive to inherit the estates, he dies of wounds received in the Crimea. Foxgrove Manor house is demolished and a new farm house built. (source: Rob Copeland)

1833 - An estate plan is produced: Map entitled: 'Plan of an Estate belonging to John (Barwell) Cator Esq situate in the Parishes of Beckenham, Lewisham and Bromley in the County of Kent'. Shows roads, field boundaries, Southend, parish boundaries (with Croydon and Penge) and boundary with Lord Farnborough's lands. Scale is 5 1/2 cm: 1/4 mile. Certified as 'Plan marked B3' in declaration of Thomas Henry Burroughes and John Cator (Bromley Library).





This extract from the map raises some questions as a subsequent estate plan says that shaded areas are on long leases to tenants. It is frustrating that any accompanying documents are not with the map which would have given field names and leaseholders. Comparison with the Foxgrove plan and Beckenham Manor plan shows that field patterns changed. Maybe some leaseholds can be identified from the descriptions in the 1825 Act of Parliament document.

1835 - Mr Peters, a banker is tenant. Peters was succeeded by Captain Walter Raleigh Gilbert, R.H.A., no dates available. Followed by R.H. Page who later changed his name to Page-Henderson. Although census records note the occupants of the village there are not addresses in the first records. Later census records give addresses and eventually occupiers complete their own census returns.

1836 - Albemarle Cator II is born at Woodbastwick, Norfolk

1851 to 1873 - Peter Cator is living at The Hall, Bromley Road, Beckenham. He is believed to have had a lot to do with the management of the Cator estate locally after spending several years in Madras. (census and Manning).

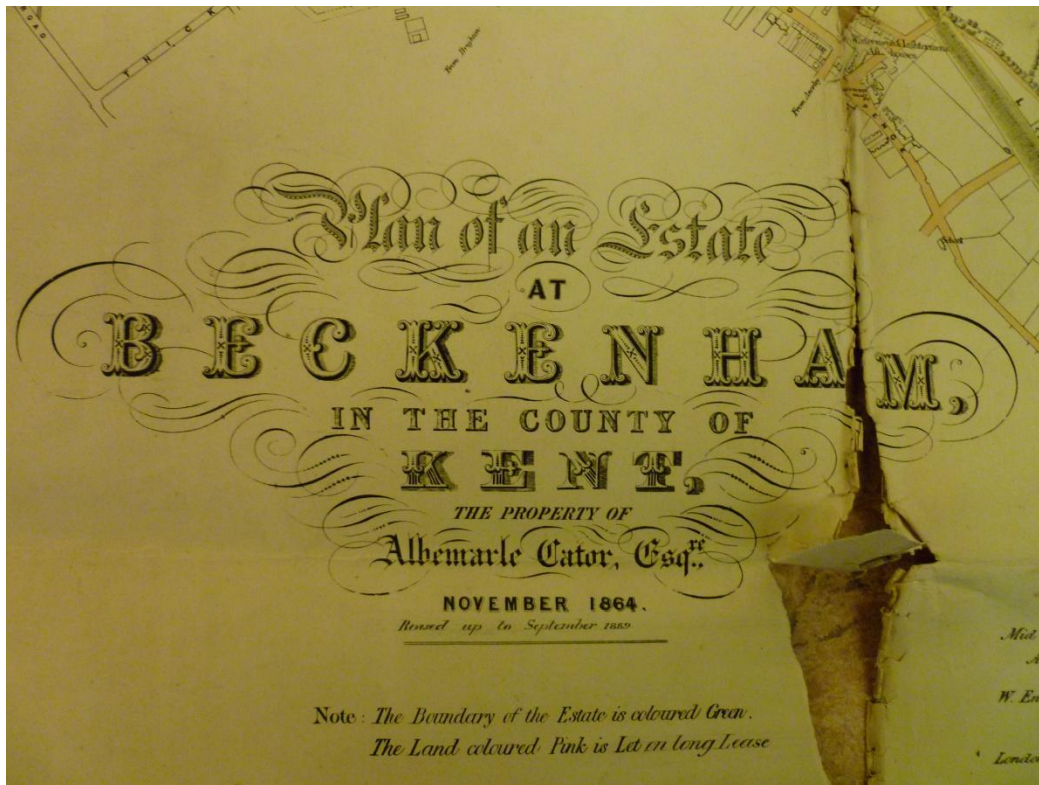
1853 – Rob Copeland records in his Manors of Beckenham that occupation of Foxgrove Farm passes from William Gibbons to his son Henry Gibbons. Whether as freeholders or under lease we don't know.

1857 - John Abrahms in occupation at the mansion (Pat Manning source)

1858 - John Barwell Cator dies at Woodbastwick Hall, Norfolk, estates inherited by his son Albermarle (1813-1868). Albermarle will eventually succeeded by his 2nd son also named Albermarle. Pat Manning records that J.B.Cator and his wife lived in Germany for some time to save money. Though he had great wealth the restrictions on disposing of the net worth of the estate seem to have caught up with him and there are several opinions that he was extravagant.

1861 - Robert Henry Page and family reside in the mansion. A Merchant and Russia Broker. (census)

1864 - November, a map of the Beckenham Estate of Albemarle Cator is printed (Bromley Library Historic Collections). It excludes the site of Old Manor House opposite the church as that is part of the Burrell estate. That map shows a proposed road extending Westgate Road into Summerhouse Wood and illustrates the intention of the Cators to build on or sell/lease the land. The legend also states 'revised upto 1889' indicating that this is a later publication. It is also recorded as being part of documents lodged with a commissioner for oaths in 1906.



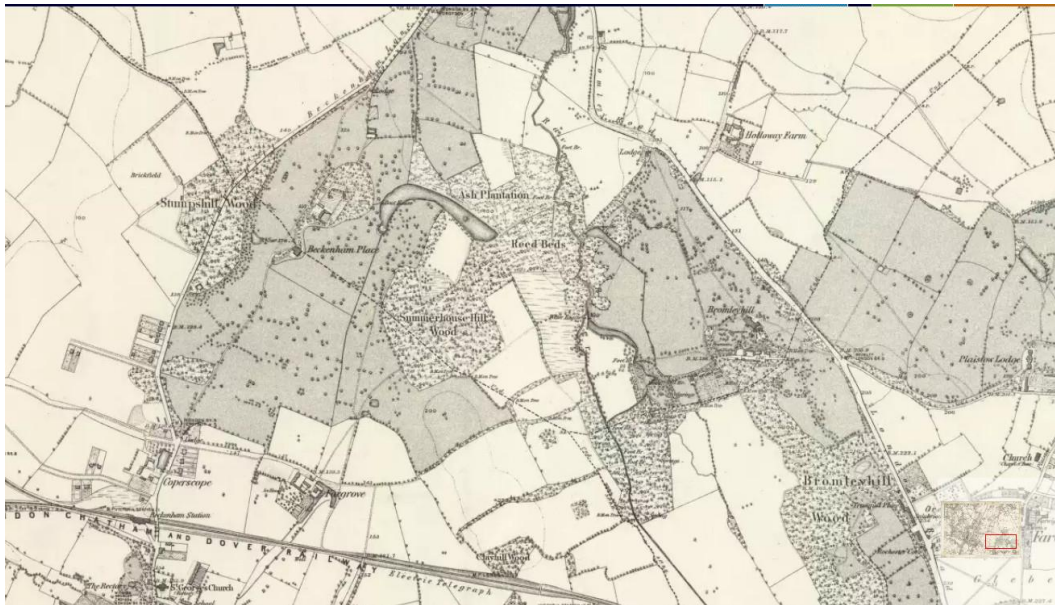
The Albemarle Cator referred to here could be the eldest son of John Barwell Cator or the second son of Albemarle Cator (the elder d.1869) as his first son John died before inheriting the estate. Albemarle Cator the younger died 1890 so this 'revised to 1889' plan could be part of a Will.

1866 - The Mansion occupier is still given as Robert Henry Page Esq. (directory)

1868 - Albermarle Cator dies, Albermarle's eldest son John did not marry, dying without issue as they term it in 1859, hence Albermarle's second son, Albemarle junior (1836-1906) inherited the estates (P.Manning). John had lost an arm due to injuries received in the Crimean War.

1869/71 – Mansion occupier **Sir John Kirkland, Bart. J.P.** an army agent who had good relations with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and received gifts from them but he dies in 1871 prior to census. He is associated with Blackfen and is referred to on a relevant website.

1870 - The first publication of the Ordnance Survey maps shows very little built development around the park. Field patterns from the Foxgrove and Beckenham manor plans may be detected. The Ordnance Survey maps in the British Library and National Library of Scotland illustrate the mainly rural nature of the estates at Beckenham and Blackheath up to the 1860's and 1890's. An internet search for 'NLS Kent VII' should access the full map from which the extract below is taken. We might assume that John Barwell Cator made changes to the estate as the lake is of a quite different outline to the 1799 Ordnance Survey drawing and comparing the two maps shows the difference in the footprint of the house ie with a portico on this map, without on the 1799 drawing.



1871 - John Kirkland the younger is mansion occupant in the 1871 census with son, aunt and servants. Albemarle Cator and family are resident at Trewsbury House, Coates, Gloucestershire.

1873 - No one listed as in occupation.

1874-6 John Fell Christie is listed in a directory.

1875 – This record looks like it relates to at least some of the disposal of the southern part of the park, being on the north side of Foxgrove Road:

Bromley Library archive: Agreement between Albemarle Cator of Woodbastock Hall, Norfolk, esquire (1st part) and William Henry Maltby of Beckenham, Kent, builder (2nd part) in relation to 2 pieces of ground on the north and south sides of Foxgrove Road, Beckenham. Cator agrees to let the property to Maltby for 90 years at the annual rent of £10 per year for the first year and £40 thereafter. Maltby is to build a dwelling House. Includes a map of the premises and draft form of lease.

A large house in a large site was built called 'Foxgrove', not to be confused with Foxgrove Farm. Foxgrove Avenue is now on the site.

1876 – Peter Cator, youngest son of Joseph Cator, dies. He had lived at The Hall, Bromley Road, Beckenham and is credited with administering the Beckenham estates for some time. By the 1881 census The Hall is one of the Cator properties leased, in this case to Henry Phillipps a merchant who came from Padstow.

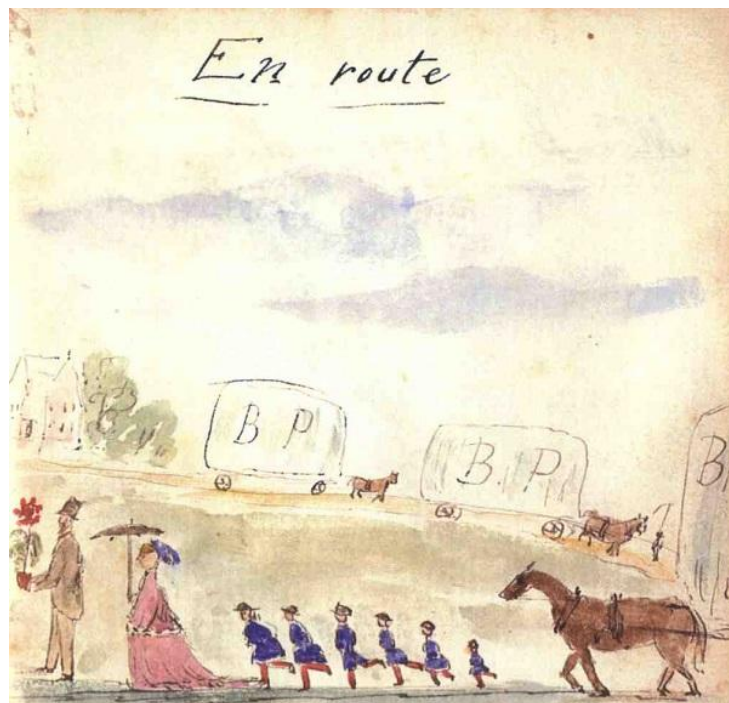
1877-8 No one listed as in occupation. Albemarle Cator the younger, second son of Albemarle the elder is born at Coates, Gloucestershire. He will inherit the estates as his brother John does not survive to inherit.

1878 – Foxgrove Farm demolished (source: RHCopeland)



Foxgrove Farm shortly before demolition

1879 - Spencer Brunton and family in occupation of the mansion. The Brunton children made a story book Christmas card depicting a royal family visit, maybe this harks back to the Kirkland residency. This page from the book depicts a move into the mansion. But by 1881 they are in the census as living at Brook St with their 6 children and a string of about 10 servants including a butler and two footmen. Spencer was a member of the London Stock Exchange but by 1891 his wife had filed for divorce. Earlier 1871(census) they had lived in Copers Cope Road at a house called The Ferns with a daughter and only 3 servants. The six children were born in quick succession.



1881 - The mansion is occupied by Owen Henley aged 32 and family, a gardener - so we might assume he is acting as gardener/caretaker?
In the census for this year Albemarle Cator is recorded as being at Trewsbury House, Coates, Cirencester with his wife, 12 children and a string of servants. Spencer Brunton had moved to Brook Street, Westminster. We find Owen Henley previously in 1871 aged 22 unmarried living in St. George's Villas, Beckenham as a domestic gardener,



Trewsbury House built 1879?

But 1881 is also the year for this event in June:

This article was discovered by one of our 'eagle-eyed Friends' in the Local Studies library in Bromley. It is from The Beckenham Journal. JUNE 1881.

BAZAAR AT BECKENHAM PLACE.

On Saturday and Monday last, the 25th and 27th June (1881), a grand bazaar was held in Beckenham Place, which was kindly lent for the purpose by Albemarle Cator Esq., the object being to aid in defraying the debt remaining on the Building Fund of St James' Church, School, and Working Men's Club, Elmer's End. The idea of the bazaar had been originated and carried into effect by a number of ladies desirous of assisting the church, whose efforts had been made quite apart from those of the Building Committee. They had secured influential patronage, H.R.H. Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, who had kindly promised to honor the bazaar with her presence, and to perform the opening ceremony, and of Viscount Lewisham, M.P., and Lady Lewisham, Major-General Lord Chelmsford, G C B and Lady Chelmsford, Right Hon. Lord Forbes, Hon. Lady Inglis, Hon. Mary Thesiger, Sir Charles Mills, Sir Edward Scott, Bart and Lady Scott, Col. Sir John Farnaby Lennard, Bart., and Lady Lennard, Lady Cave, Lewis Loyd, Esq., and Mrs. Loyd, Mrs. George Lillie Craik, and Albemarle Cator, Esq. Great anxiety had been manifested to make the bazaar a success, the ladies who consented to take stalls, pledging themselves to provide stock to the value of at least £100, a sum which was unquestionably exceeded in nearly every case.

Consequently there was no lack for those who came, to use the words of Marzials' popular song, "With their pockets full o' money," to exercise their liberality in a good cause.

At Beckenham Place excellent arrangements had been made for accommodating the large number of visitors expected, and all that was necessary to render the occasion completely successful was fine weather. Unhappily Saturday proved unpropitious in this respect for rain fell during the greater part of the morning, at times very heavily, so that by two o'clock, the hour fixed for opening the grounds, every place was thoroughly wet. This misfortune necessitated the alterations of some of the arrangements by rendering any proceeding in the open air impossible. Thanks, however, to the care of those who had the arrangements in hand, no inconvenience was felt beyond that occasioned by the crowding of the rooms.

Shortly after three o'clock, Princess Mary arrived, accompanied by her daughter, Princess May, and her little son, Prince Randolph, and attended by the Honorable Mary Thesiger. The Princess was received at the entrance of the fine old mansion by the Rev. A. Barber, Incumbent of St. James', Lady Inglis, Lord Chelmsford, G.C.B., Albemarle Cator, Esq., Mrs. A. Cator, and Rev. W. Cator. Having declared the bazaar open, the Princess proceeded to inspect the stalls. In the apartment on the left of the entrance hall were three stalls, the first held by Lady Inglis, the Misses Inglis, and Miss Buckworth; the second by Mrs. Barber, Mrs. Pascall, Mrs. Strickland, and Miss Isaacson; and the third by Mrs. Wallace and family, assisted by Mrs. Phillips. Each of these stalls was well stocked with the thousand-and-one articles always

provided for such occasions, Lady Inglis' being arranged as effectively, perhaps, as any in the bazaar. Mrs. Barber's stall, the goods on which were valued at upwards of £250, contained a number of contributions from working men and women, who had devoted their spare time of some months past to their production. A room on the other side of the building contained stalls kept by Mrs. and Miss Kirby, and by Mrs. W. C. Jones, Mrs. Green, and Miss Smart. The latter stall was stocked to a large extent with fancy stationery and kindred articles, amongst them being some beautiful views taken by instantaneous photography. There was also a collection of New Zealand native spears and other arms, which soon secured purchasers. A spacious apartment, arranged in a most enticing manner, was devoted to refreshments, which were dispensed by a number of ladies under the direction of Mrs. Cameron and Mrs. Bicknell. Further provision in the way of creature comforts was made by Mr. Cameron, who had furnished a first-rate cold collation. The most attractive stall, at any rate in appearance, was that for flowers and fruit, which occupied a room by itself, presided over by Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Blundell, Mrs. Newcombe, Miss Burleigh, and Miss Jones. These ladies had furnished themselves with a stock of choice flowers and fruit, which they had arranged so artistically that it was not at all surprising to find that the Duchess of Teck spent some little time there - indeed there was no department more worthy of a visit than this. Upstairs, Dr. Phillips had a number of microscopes, with some most interesting and instructive slides, on view; while Mr. Bloken was in charge of a Fine Art Collection, which preferred no claim to be considered "aesthetical." Another item calling for notice is that sketches of the new church of St. James, which has been designed by Mr. A. R. Stenning and will be a very handsome structure, were on view.

Her Royal Highness, having completed her tour of the stalls and made several purchases, proceeded to a concert room, where some of the pupils of the Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind, Upper Norwood, were about to give selection of music. Mr. F. J. Campbell, the Principal, having been introduced to the Princess, who referred to the affection entertained for him by his late pupil, Prince Alexander of Hesse, the following pieces were performed, by Her Royal Highness' request :-Humerous glee, "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall" (Caldicott); song, "Die beiden Grandieri" (Schumann), Mr J. Prydie; trio, "O Memory" (Leslie), Miss A. Campbell, Miss A. Carson, and Mr A. Hughes; piano solo, "Silver Spring," by W. Mason, a lad aged 14; and the humorous glee, "Little Jack Horner" (Caldicott.) All these pieces were performed with that skill and effect for which the members of the College are justly renowned, and they secured the hearty applause of the Duchess. Her Royal Highness left soon afterwards, to the strains of the "National Anthem."

During the afternoon a very large number of persons visited the bazaar. A brisk trade was carried on at the different stalls, and there were several canvases for subscriptions towards articles to be drawn for. A second selection of music was given by the Blind College, and the Band of the Royal Artillery, which was present under the conductorship of the Band Master, Mr. Albert Mansfield, also provided some most enjoyable music.

In the evening a Promenade Concert was given under the direction of Mr F. T. Newcombe at which the following ladies and gentleman took part:-Mrs. Pascall, Mrs. Newcombe, Mrs. Radcliffe, Misses Brown, Miss Wigan, (an exceedingly good performer), Miss Burleigh, Mr. M. Beaumont, Mr. Sternhardt, Mr. Weber, Mr. A. H. Neuffert.

On Monday there was a very large attendance. The proceedings were enlivened by the band of the Duke of York's School. The total receipts of the two days amounts to over £750, which sum, after paying all expenses, provides the Ladies Committee sufficient to pay off the debt on the building fund, and a balance of £50 for other purposes.

This passage was taken from The Beckenham Journal and Penge and Sydenham Advertiser, JUNE 1880. Copies of these journals are in the Local Studies library in the Central Library in Bromley.

The area referred to is not clear, the Friends would be please to hear ideas on the location mentioned.

‘NOTES BY THE WAY’.

We have mentioned that a proposal has been made on behalf of Mr. Albermarle Cator to let on lease 42 acres of land for 99 years to the Local Board, to be appropriated as a recreation

ground. The exact terms and covenants are not stated, but we believe they are liberal. The Board have applied for a statement of the conditions, and are favourably disposed to its consideration. The main difficulty is that which meets the Board at every point—that however moderate the terms, there will be some cost incurred, and with the many claims upon the rates for the execution of absolutely necessary works, there is much hesitation in entering upon others, however desirable, that will lay the slightest burden on the ratepayers. The ways and means are always approached with caution, and discussed with anxious care. It will always be the case that in a scattered district the expenses will be heavy and appear out of proportion when compared with compact and covered districts. We observe that about one-fifth of the amount collected is spent upon lighting and upon watering and repairing the roads, and these items of expense would not be greatly increased if the houses were much more numerous. The rating value of the neighbourhood in such case would be increased, and the expenses would appear lighter. We feel bound to say so much, when such a proposal is before the Local Board; but, at the same time, we should deeply regret if such a favourable opportunity of obtaining a recreation ground of suitable extent and in perpetuity is lost. The opportunity may never occur again, if allowed to pass away. We are aware another pressing matter is before the Board; that of obtaining a burial ground. We think that the leading ratepayers ought to assist, and there is one way of doing so that at once occurs to us. If the Cricket Club would unite in any way, the case might be met. No doubt the money required for laying out the grounds for such a purpose might be borrowed upon a long term, so that it really would be little more than the interest that would fall upon the ratepayers. We trust that the proposal of Mr Cator will not only be a liberal, but a generous one, and that the Board will be strengthened by the public approval to enter upon the undertaking.

1884? – The Boundary posts are installed between Beckenham and Lewisham parishes. Robert Borrowman's book from 1910 records the ceremony of Beating the Bounds from parish records, but that the parish boundaries had become lost or forgotten so a sum of money was made available and cast iron boundary posts installed to mark the parish boundaries. Several of these posts are in Beckenham Place Park marked 'Beckenham' along with some marked 'Lewisham'. The parish, or now Borough, boundary has since been moved. Some posts are near old oak trees which for many years or even centuries were used as boundary markers. Some old maps record 'boundary mark on tree'. One interesting speculation or story is that the Beckenham parish boundary is strangely shaped as a body was found near Crystal Palace but no parish claimed it for burial apart from Beckenham so the boundary was drawn to where the body was discovered. Now boundaries are more 'political' and determined by the Boundaries Commission.

One curiosity is perhaps that Foxgrove Manor seems to have been partly in Beckenham Parish and a small part in Lewisham Parish. As Borrowman records that the Parish boundaries were forgotten perhaps the ancient parish boundary was more to the north than it was fixed in 1884. The Cator estate plan revised to 1889 shows a disputed boundary near the mansion.



1885-90 Edwin Covell lives in the mansion, a butchers proprietor. Below is an 1885 directory advertisement for his business. Another Covell family occupies Kent House Farm as farmers presumably also as leaseholders.

ADVERTISEMENT. 185

PURVEYORS BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY.



HAYR & COVELL,
FAMILY BUTCHERS,
OAK HILL, BECKENHAM.

HIGHLAND	PRIME	HOUSE
SCOTCH,	SOUTHDOWN,	LAMB,
and	DARTMOOR,	DAIRY FED
HEREFORD	SCOTCH and	PORK.
BEEF, of the	WELSH	PICKLED
FINEST QUALITY.	MUTTON.	TONGUES.

Families Supplied on the Most Reasonable Terms.

1889 – Perhaps we should revisit the 1864 Estate Plan annotated as ‘revised up to 1889’ as the plan shows areas leased in several cases to developers. Although this is the plan which shows an intention to have a road through Summerhouse Wood the plan predates the coming of the railway, its route is not even indicated on the plan but the map might be the basis for planning the railway which is authorized by an Act of Parliament in 1889.

As already said, the Albemarle Cator referred to in the legend could be the eldest son of John Barwell Cator or the second son of Albemarle Cator (the elder d.1869) as his first son John died before inheriting the estate. Albemarle Cator the younger died 1906 so this ‘1889’ revised plan could be part of a Will. Also, this Albemarle Cator (1836-1906) was acted for by trustees as he was of unsound mind.

Looking at the areas outside the park on the map it shows that very little development has taken place in Beckenham, Lewisham and Bromley. The OS map shows development near to Beckenham village, mainly large Victorian villas. The census returns for the period illustrate large households often with servants occupying coach houses, some houses used as schools, and often accommodating what is referred to as ‘professionals’. Of course there are some artisan housing areas of terraced property near the village centre. The records of the estates of the Wythes and Hoare families illustrate the nature of property leasing and development. Again searching online catalogues of Bromley Local Studies is informative.

The legend of this map states that land coloured pink is on long lease to leaseholders and that roads made and now being made coloured brown whereas intended roads are outlined. The landlord reserves the right to alter omit or substitute other roads. What is now The Avenue is called Mote Road (after the moated Foxgrove Farm/Manor). Leased property can be seen in the southern corner of what was the original park. This is perhaps the cusp upon which the

existence of the current public park is turned. Copers Cope Road, Brackley, Worsley Bridge, Park Road seem to bear the brunt of development over the next years. The small area next to the mansion is shown as disputed parish boundary.



1889 - An Act of Parliament authorises building of the Nunhead to Shortlands railway which runs via Beckenham Hill station to Ravensbourne station across the park. It states that Albermarle Cator is to be compensated for lands purchased etc. Negotiations began as early as 1884. The Cators had obtained parliamentary approval to develop their Beckenham estates for housing in the 1825 Act and the 1865 estate plans show an intended road slicing right through Summerhouse Hill Wood, a proposal which fortunately never materialised. In 1879 discussions took place between the Cators, neighbouring landowners and the London, Chatham and Dover Railway concerning a proposal to build a railway along the Ravensbourne valley in order to encourage speculative builders to construct houses in the area. This came to nought, as did a bill brought before Parliament in 1884. However in March 1889, an agreement was signed between Albermarle Cator of Woodbastwick Hall, Norfolk, Sir John Farnaby of Wickham Court and representatives of the London, Chatham & Dover Railway, which paved the way later the same year for the passing of an Act authorising the construction of the Shortlands and Nunhead Railway. The landowners contributed land as well as finance whilst the L.C.D.R. guaranteed to operate the line once it was constructed. Records in Bromley Library note the Forsters and a Mr Redman as being promoters of the bill to authorise the railway with compensations and land purchases from Albermarle Cator (jnr.).

05/07/1889 Agreement between Alfred George Renshaw, of The Hall, Southend, Kent, esquire and William Stewart Forster, of 28 Lincolns Inn Fields, esquire, promoters of the Bill relating to the Incorporation of the Shortlands and Nunhead Railway Company (1st part) and Albermarle Cator, of Woodbastwick Hall, Norfolk, esquire (2nd part). It is agreed between the parties that if the Bill is passed in to law to authorise the construction of the railway, then the Company erect stations at Ravensbourne and Beckenham Hill and will pay compensation to Cator. Cator will sell property to the Company as required. (source: Bromley local studies) The attraction for the railway company was that it offered an alternative route to that through the Penge tunnel, an important role it provides to this day. Maximum charges per mile were set at 3d, 2d & 1d for first, second and third class passengers, 4d for horses, 1d for cats and

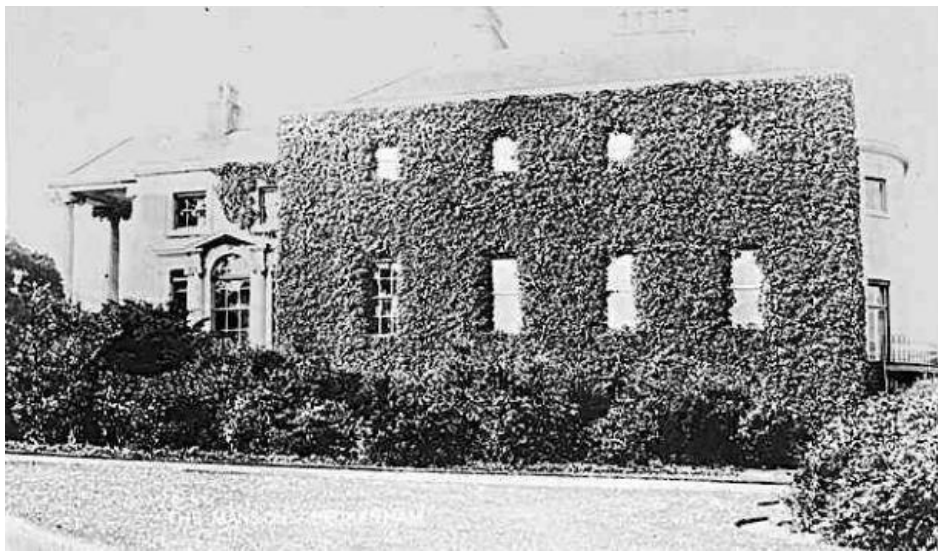
dogs and 5d or 4d for carts and carriages depending on whether they had two or four wheels. Five stations were to be provided on sites selected by the landowners, each well staffed and provided with all comforts for both lady and gentleman passengers despite the fact that when they first opened they were surrounded by fields with hardly a dwelling within sight! As the landowners provided the lions share of the resources the precise route of the line was dictated by them, not by the operational needs of the railway company. The result is that the line winds its way along the valley carefully avoiding major features, such as the former lake in Beckenham Place Park as can be seen from the sketch plan which shows the original field boundaries.

The railway company was very happy with their new route, which cost £265,000 and opened for business on 1st July 1892. Under a new Act passed in 1896, they assumed complete control of the Shortlands & Nunhead Co exactly five years after it opened. Ravensbourne Avenue, Crab Hill, Downs Hill and Farnaby Road owe their existence to the building of the line, as does the gully, which forms the present entrance to the park from Crab Hill. This was said to be the source of much of the gravel used in the construction. Many of the trees, which still shield the line, are the successors of those originally planted to screen it from the expected housing development. This house building never took place, but evidence of the Catons' expectations can still be seen today.

The width of the bridge, now connecting nothing but two parts of the park, suggests that it was originally designed to take considerable traffic. It contrasts markedly with the two earlier ones nearby in Westgate and Downs Bridge Roads, which are much narrower as they were probably intended solely to provide farm access. Despite several changes of ownership the railway service through the park continues substantially unchanged. Ravensbourne station lost its goods yard in the 1960s and in 1986 the booking office was badly damaged by fire. It has been rebuilt in a sympathetic style and the remains of the porter's accommodation can still be seen in its basement by peering through a gap in the wall. Beckenham Hill station is basically unchanged apart from the loss of the down side canopy which was removed in 1968. We believe there was also a goods depot at one time.



Beckenham Place circa 1892 – if accurately dated this photo shows the roof dormers installed prior to the house being used as a school or sanatorium.

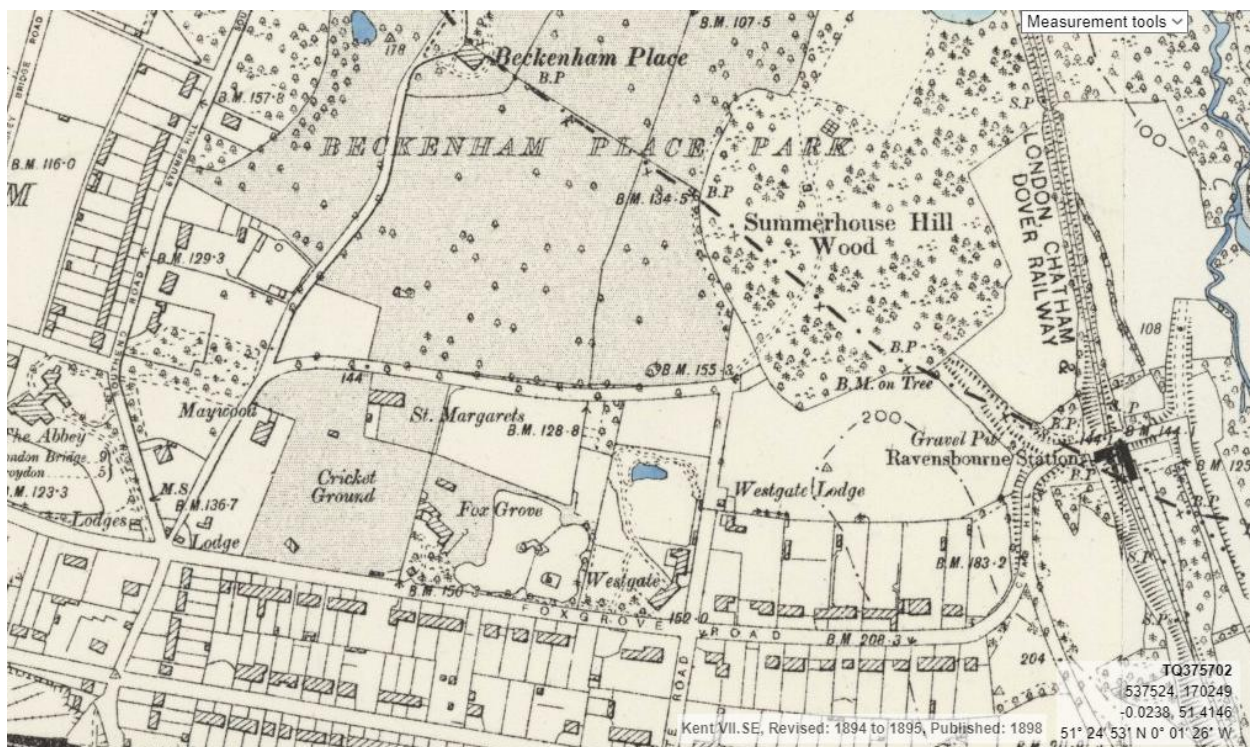


This earlier undated photo shows a roof without dormer windows, note the shrubs and ivy on the south wall.

1894 The mansion occupier is listed as Mrs Covell, her husband Edwin has presumably recently died. E. Covell is also recorded as the tenant in the documents concerned with the authorisation of the construction of the Shortlands Nunhead railway through the estate.

1895-99 No one listed as in occupation.

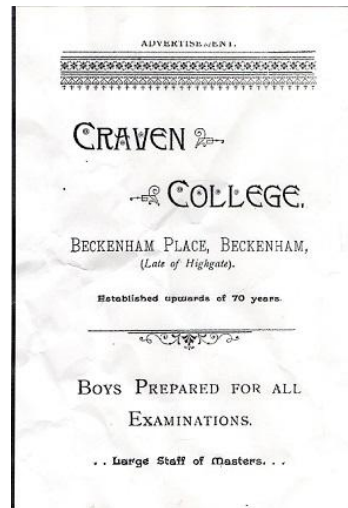
The Ordnance Survey map for 1894 below shows the road now called Beckenham Place Park and Westgate Road which partitions off part of the original park. Only a few houses have been built, St. Margaret's which still exists, Maywood, Westgate and Fox Grove as well as some houses on Southend Road. The proposed extension of Westgate Road into Summerhouse Hill Wood from the 1833 estate plan has not taken place.



1897 - Albermarle Cator jnr. becomes ill and described as of unsound mind as a result. The family believe the illness to be porphria. Trustees manage the estate. Peter Cator is reputed to have been very active in administering the estate at this time as he had

1902 - Beckenham Place is listed as Craven College School. It had always been difficult, especially as the area became increasingly urban, to find tenants for Beckenham Place

sufficiently wealthy to rent both the house and the whole of the surrounding park. At the turn of the century there was still a pheasantry in Summerhouse Hill Wood and a photograph of the participants at the last shoot together with their bag used to hang in the mansion. The local hunt last met in Beckenham in 1905, by which time the house was occupied by a private boys school called Craven College. An advertisement for which copied from Thornton's 1902 Beckenham Directory by kind permission of Bromley Library, is reproduced below. The advertisement implies that the College was founded in the 1830s, but nothing is known of its early history or whether its name is derived from a place or a person. Immediately before coming to Beckenham it was only in Highgate for a few years, occupying a house in Millfield Lane on the north-east corner of Hampstead Heath.



The College occupied Beckenham Place from approximately 1900 to 1905 under the headmastership of J. Hartley French. It then moved to Elmer Lodge at Elmers End, possibly because of the loss of sports facilities due to the lease of the park to the newly formed Foxgrove Golf Club.

Elmer Lodge was built in 1856 on the site of a 17th century predecessor and still exists today, substantially unchanged externally apart from the loss of its conservatory. Today it is a mosque after many years existing as a public house called appropriately 'The Elmer Lodge'



Elmer Lodge

J. Hartley French was succeeded as headmaster by Mr W.T. Carlin who held the post initially assisted by a Mr E M Verall, until the demise of the College at the outbreak of the 1914-18 war. The existence of the former college was commemorated by the nearby 1930s shopping parade, known as "College Parade" until comparatively recently.

1905 to 1933 - From 1905 until 1933 Beckenham Place was the home of the Norwood Sanatorium which specialised in the voluntary treatment of wealthy(?) alcoholics and drug

addicts. It was founded by a Dr Frances Hare, a retired Inspector of Hospitals for the Australian State of Queensland. The occupations of the patients in the 1911 census return is perhaps informative i.e. Medical practitioners and a chemist, a retired army officer, private means and an artist.

The reason for the name is probably because the sanatorium previously occupied a building at Crystal Palace, strictly speaking Upper Norwood, now called The Alma public house. The faint inscription 'Sans Souci' still to be seen over the front door of the mansion is believed to date back to this sanatorium period or was imported with the stonework from Wricklemarsh in the eighteenth century.

Eric Inman relates: The sanatorium opened its doors on September 25th 1905 with 13 patients, a number which peaked at 232 in 1913. The average length of stay was six to eight weeks and the inclusive weekly charges pre-war were £7.17s.6d a week, falling to £7.7s.0d after six weeks. This included medical attendance, medicines, board and lodging, games and ordinary services all provided in luxurious surroundings, as can be seen from the four interior pictures which are included by kind permission of Bromley Libraries.

The billiard and smoking rooms were reserved for gentlemen. The room housing the current Visitor Centre is thought to be the billiard room. The drawing room was for the sole use of ladies, except when afternoon tea was taken there or gentlemen were invited for music or evening games. These could not last long for 'lights out' was at 10.30pm.

The sanatorium advertises its amenities as including, lawns for croquet, tennis and bowls. The home farm supplied fresh milk, new laid eggs and chickens for the table, whilst the hothouses and vegetable gardens provided fresh fruit and vegetables, including grapes, peaches and tomatoes.

Dr Hare retired in 1925 and died three years later at his home, 'Oakland's', 15 The Avenue. Kelly's Directory lists his successors as being Dr George (1926-7), Dr Barham (1931) and Dr Given (1933). A Dr Walter Masters, who is not listed in the surviving editions of Kellys, is, in a detailed biography, described as taking over from Dr Hare before 1928 and moving the business to Chislehurst, because of a lack of space.

Doctor Hare authored several books on the treatment of addiction. We have accessed the 1911 census records which we reproduce here for illustration of the numbers of staff and patients present at Beckenham Place.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.		6.		7.		8.		9.		10.	
				MARRIED	SINGLE	MARRIED	SINGLE	MARRIED	SINGLE	MARRIED	SINGLE	MARRIED	SINGLE	PROFESSION	RESIDENCE
1	Francis Washington Seward Hartz	Head. Med. Sup.	54	—	married	8	1	1	0	Physician. Med. Sup. Norwood Sanatorium.	Norwood				
2	Elise Marie Hartz	Wife	—	35	married	8	1	1	0						
3	Francis Paul Seward Hartz	Son	3	—	—	—	—	—	—						
4	Edith Dunn	Immater	33	—	Single	—	—	—	—	Matron. Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood S				
5	Sarah Williams	Immater	—	39	Single	—	—	—	—	Nurse Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood S				
6	Florence Smith	Servant nurse	—	22	Single	—	—	—	—	Servant, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
7	Joseph Amoskin	Servant nurse	29	—	Single	—	—	—	—	Servant, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
8	Arthur Lunnell	Servant nurse	19	—	Single	—	—	—	—	House porter, Norwood Sanatorium.	Norwood				
9	Arthur Dyleo	Servant nurse	18	—	Single	—	—	—	—	House porter, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
10	Catherine Duff.	Servant nurse	—	55	Widow	30 yrs	—	—	—	Cost R., Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
11	Tom's Tucker.	Servant nurse	—	20	Single	—	—	—	—	Kitchen maid, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
12	Edmund Durham	Servant nurse	18	—	Single	—	—	—	—	Waiter Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
13	Florence Collins	Servant nurse	—	27	Single	—	—	—	—	Housemaid, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
14	Stanley Rowlands	Servant nurse	16	—	Single	—	—	—	—	House porter, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
15	Horace Austin.	Servant nurse	19	—	Single	—	—	—	—	Kitchen porter, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
16	Susan Greens	Servant	—	20	Single	—	—	—	—	Children's nurse maid, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
17	William Fever	Servant	25	—	Single	—	—	—	—	Gardener, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
18	Albert Ferr	Servant	24	—	Single	—	—	—	—	Gardener, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
19	Edwiger Pickett	Servant	20	—	Single	—	—	—	—	Gardener, Norwood Sanatorium	Norwood				
20	Jacob, William Vickers.	Patient	59	—	Married	24 yrs	2	2	—	Private means.					

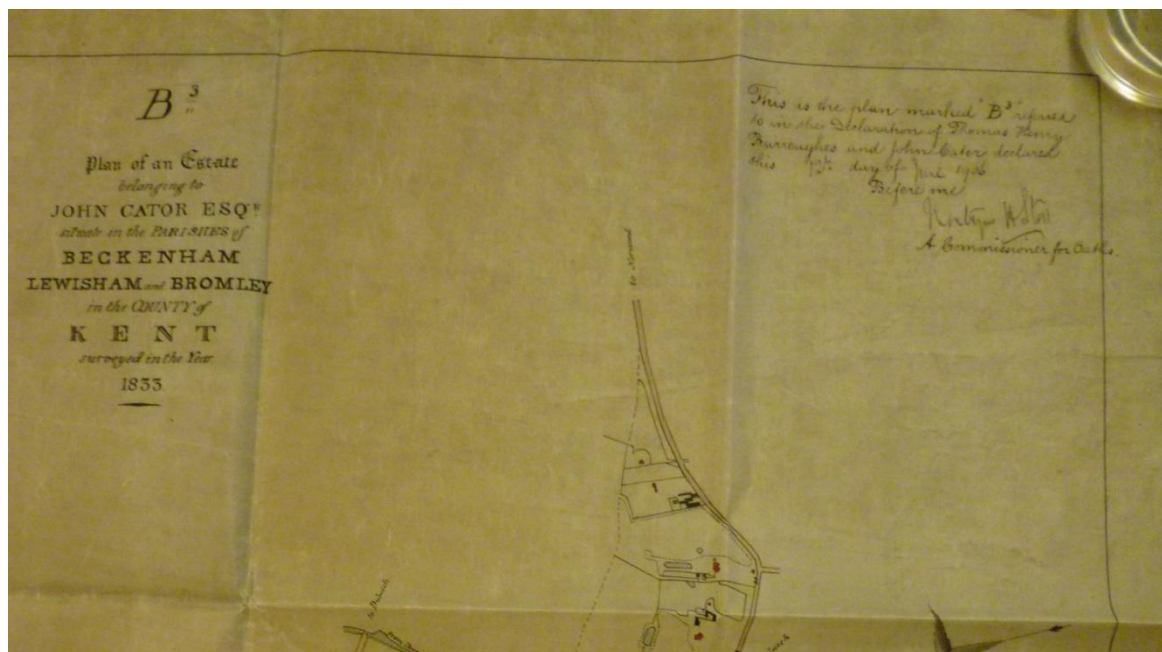
(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family or Position in Institution	AGE (last birthday)	SEX		PARTICULARS OF MARRIAGE				PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION (if Patient give his place and service)					
			Male	Female	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
21	Walter Miles Stone	Patient	31	—	Single	—	—	—	Wine merchant.	929	—	—	—	at home
22	Charles William Miller	Patient	38	—	Married	7	0	0	0	General Practitioner	489	—	—	at home
23	Edwin Southwood Jones	Patient	37	—	Married	23	3	3	0	Menialing Regiment.	629	—	—	at home
24	Minnie Valentine Baker	Patient	53	—	Single	—	—	—	Private means.	370	—	—	—	at home
25	Henry Cecil Mitchell	Patient	46	—	Married	7	1	1	0	Artist	36	—	—	at home
26	Robert William Howard Spemann	Patient	40	—	Single	—	—	—	Private means	770	—	—	—	at home
27	William Gordon Lyle	Patient	53	—	Married	16	1	1	0	Medical practitioner.	43	—	—	at home
28	Lydney Jackson	Patient	37	—	Single	—	—	—	Private means	370	—	—	—	at home
29	Thomas James Pottage	Patient	44	—	Single	—	—	—	Hospital Nurse	439	—	—	at home	
30	Richard Callie	Patient	60	—	Married	28	7	4	3	Retired Army Officer.	617	—	—	at home
31	Mary Jane Callie	Visitor	50	—	Married	33	7	4	3	Wife of 30.	—	—	—	at home
32	Montague Griffin	Patient	50	—	Married	20	6	5	1	Medical practitioner	431	—	—	at home
33	George Wilson	Patient	45	—	Married	—	1	1	0	Medical practitioner	1	—	—	at home
34	Agnes Wilson	Visitor	52	—	Married	4	1	1	0	Wife of 33	—	—	—	at home
35	Robert Knobloch	Patient	30	—	Married	5	2	2	0	Chemist and Druggist	789	—	—	at home
36	William Henry Chapin (Jr)	Patient	30	—	Married	4	1	1	0	Wine merchant and Wine Merchant	—	—	—	at home
37	Ellen Edward Hove	Visitor	28	—	Single	—	—	—	—	Wife of 36	—	—	—	at home



An interior of the mansion when a sanatorium

1906 - Albemarle Cator jnr. dies and is succeeded by his son John Cator (1862-1944). It is under this John Cator that we presume the park was sold to the London County Council. The various leases and sales of other land is too complicated and lengthy to attempt to relate here. A reminder that Pat Manning's book covers the Cator family in some detail and researching the various online archive catalogues is informative. Looking at the online catalogue of Bromley Local Studies also reveals some basic details of land sales and development. The estate plan of 1833 is annotated as being part of the Will documents of Albemarle Cator



1907 - The Foxgrove Golf Club is established on the grounds of the estate. The "Foxgrove Club" Edwardian building is built circa 1912 by club members. From 1933 to 2016 it is a private social club. In 2017 it is occupied by caretaker tenants.

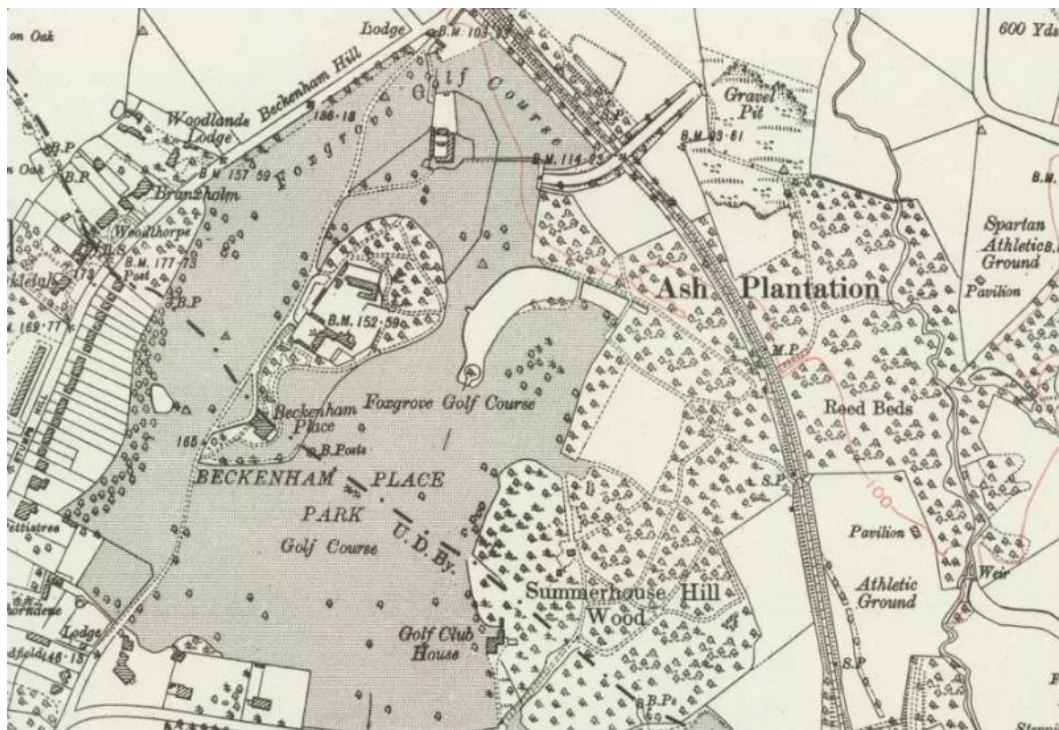
The Creation of the Golf Course

A group of Beckenham residents formed the Foxgrove Golf Club and in March of the same year leased most of Beckenham Place Park, apart from the woods and the immediate surroundings of the home farm, for a period of 21 years. Little time was lost in building a club house and laying out the greens, for in October of the same year the first monthly medal meetings were held for both ladies and gentlemen. Shortly afterwards a commemorative dinner was held in the new clubhouse, which over fifty members attended. (source: Eric Inman)



1911 – The 1911 Census is now available and we can tell who was occupying the various buildings in the park. The Mansion was the aforementioned sanatorium which came under Beckenham district. The Stables, Garden Cottage and North gate Lodge, under Lewisham district, were occupied by golf course groundsmen and gardeners. It would appear that the Stables only had two families in residence whereas later as a public park the stables had 5 'Homesteads' for park workers and families. In 1911 the Gamekeepers Cottage had a couple living there, we take this to mean the cottage that was in Summerhouse Wood. No mention of occupants of Home Farm in this census apparently.

1927 - The London County Council acquires the park from the Cator Estate. The minutes of the LCC record that there is a need for public open space for the housing estates of Downham and Bellingham which are being developed. A transcript of the minutes can be found later on. Of course the LCC did not see the Local Authority boundaries which bisected the park as overly important. The price was £47,000. At some point the Mansion and Homesteads have living accommodation provided for park staff. The Garden Cottage and the Gatehouse lodge also are lived in by staff. Seven 'cottages' and maybe 2 apartments in the Mansion. Over time managers, supervisors, gardeners and groundsmen are accommodated there with their families. Maintenance and security are provided by on-site staff. Large areas of woodland are fenced to protect it with a balance of areas of protection with areas of free access. The condition of the lake is not clearly known but the 1930's map below shows the lake has been reduced in size. To the east of the railway the land is described as a gravel pit, reed beds and an athletics ground. Thomas Cook's had the athletics ground for a period of time but it later became the Catford Sports and Social Club for council employees. The gravel pit and reed beds are believed to have been used for wartime bomb rubble or as one source describes for spoil from the building of housing estates. Anyone having more information please contact us. Old family photos or similar information welcome. Apart from the reason that the LCC saw a need for open space, the landed gentry had been finding it difficult to maintain estates after WWI and maybe this was an incentive for the Cator Estate to dispose of the park.



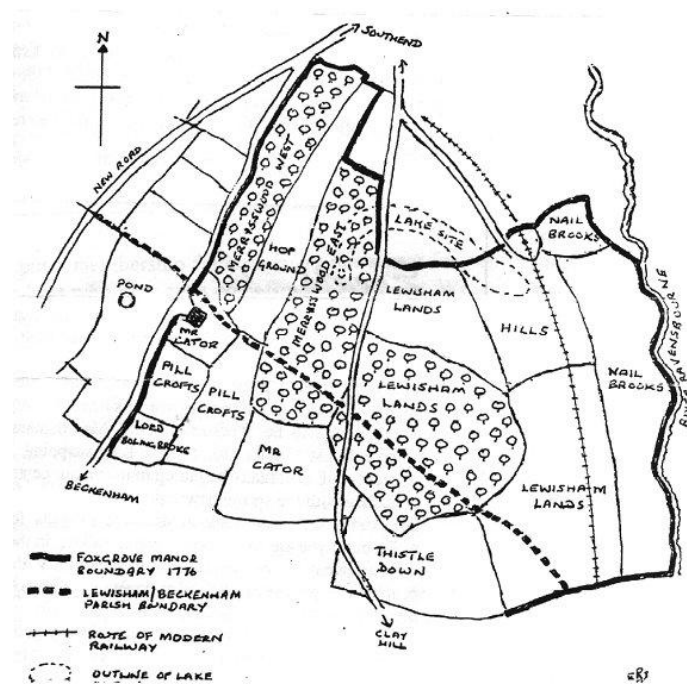
1931 - The Home Farm is vacated and demolished. Above are some paintings produced by a lady who lived at the farm when she was a young girl. Some references to fresh milk, new laid eggs and chickens being supplied to the sanatorium in the 1920s from a home farm, no trace of which now exists other than in some aerial views of the park taken in 1996 the 'footprint' of the building can be seen clearly in the grass as 'crop marks'. Maybe at least two farmhouses were destroyed in the original creation of Beckenham Place Park and perhaps a new one built to supply John Cator in his mansion. It could be that Home Farm was in existence when Cator bought the land as the Rocque map shows buildings between the site of the mansion and Flower House. Some buildings shown on early maps appear to have been swept away in the creation of the park. Home farm was just inside the north gate. This was not demolished until 1931.

If one studies the Rocque map it might be deduced that there was a house already in this

position and a farm in the vicinity of Home Farm. As map making was inaccurate before the Ordnance Survey then exact positions cannot be identified.

One of the early farms was on the opposite side of the road to the mansion, just outside the present southern gate to the park on a site now occupied by modern houses. Rocque's 1745 map also shows a building and gardens opposite the position of the present mansion, though whether this was a farm, outbuildings or gardens belonging to the previous house is not clear. It consisted of a picturesque huddle of buildings, which had obviously grown up over the years and is well depicted in this watercolour made in the early 1920s/30s by an unknown lady artist. Reproduced by courtesy of Miss I Krombach, who spent some of her childhood at the farm and is probably the artist.

The farm lost much of its land when the private golf course was constructed, originally consisting of 9 holes. The purchase of the park by the LCC and the departure of the sanatorium to Chislehurst deprived the farm of its reason for existence. Its final occupants from 1931-33 were the Krombach family, in residence when the farm was leased by United Dairies to stable its horses. It was demolished soon after they left and the site incorporated into the now public golf course. The position of Home Farm shown on a sketch map.



1933 - The Golf Course becomes public and at one time the busiest in Europe, see 2016 for history and closure.

1939/45 - WWII An Italian Prisoner of War 'Summerhouse' Camp was constructed on Crab Hill and an anti aircraft gun and barrage balloon emplacements are installed. Sheep grazing and growing of some crops for the war effort is introduced. Curiously enough the nearer one comes to the present day the more difficult it becomes to find out what happened to the mansion and park but Eric Inman wrote most of the following... I know of no bombs or rockets actually falling on the park, which is quite surprising considering the numbers, which fell on the built-up areas close by.

However, the recollections of Derek Bates who was aged 6 or 7 at the end of WWII and lived in the stable yard homesteads because his father was part of the park staff although he joined the RAF during the war. Derek recalls a V1 falling on the golf course in front of the mansion. In a memoir written primarily for his family but a copy donated to the Friends of Beckenham Place Park he recounts the windows and roof of their cottage being damaged and repaired, collecting bits of V1 and the army taking away parts of the rocket. Disappointedly he recalls

his mother giving his shrapnel collection to the army. He also recalls seeing a V1 destroy housing nearby which must be the record below.

Nearby residents recall a bomb crater just off of Worsley Bridge Road and Greycot Road. The area experienced several bomb hits, V1's and V11's. Bomb strikes were mapped quite comprehensively.

This entry recalls a V1 strike near the park: *"The Flying bomb exploded In Beckenham Hill Road. 1-11 ,2-16 Highland Croft,1-23 and 2-50 Braeside.184,186,188 Beckenham Hill Road, 37b Beckenham Hill Road, 31-37Southend Road, 42-80 Southend Road, Ada Lewis House Southend Road. Were damaged."*

An anti-aircraft gun and later a barrage balloon was sited near the mansion, with the operators of the latter being based in a wooden hut to one side of the mansion forecourt. (A recent park visitor, who had been stationed with the AA battery, informed us it was only here for a short time as the tactic was changed from having single weapons stationed locally, to having a larger battery at West Wickham). It has been said that Anti Aircraft fire injured or killed more civilians than it did enemy aircraft. Sheep were grazed on the golf course, but whether this displaced or supplemented the golf is something else it would be interesting to know.

Part of the park was dug up to grow potatoes and other vegetables particularly during the latter part of the war, when it was used as a prisoner of war camp. It housed Italian prisoners and according to one Italian book entitled 'Prigionieri Italiani in Gran Bretagna (1940-47) was Camp No 233, known as Summerhouse Camp, Ravensbourne, Bromley, Kent. Probably some of the bumps in the ground may owe their origins to this period and not to some more distant times as some believe. Some of the paths through the woods also owe something to the efforts of the prisoners, as well as stonework and path-laying in some local houses. Another camp on Worsley Bridge Road accommodated German navy POW's according to local residents.

A consultants report produced for the Heritage Lottery Fund bid found that several high explosive bombs fell in the park but no damage to buildings is recorded. Several websites show maps of bomb and rocket explosion sites. No deaths were reported for those in the park.



This image shows the POW camp on Crab Hill from Google Earth Historic imagery

1945 – from here until 1990 very little is known apart from the fact that the LCC/GLC managed the park and golf course and kept it maintained to a high standard with staff and wardens. Derek Bates is again a source of some information relating how his father spoke with visitors to the gardens giving horticultural advice. Some photos from his family album show how the park was well maintained.

I personally recall how busy the golf course was, with a long queue of cars waiting for the park to open with eager golfers. It was almost impossible to get a game at weekends and usually very busy during the week. For many years the golf course brought plenty of money into the coffers of Lewisham Council after 1970's but very little money was spent on the infrastructure of the park. Regretably few records are easy to acquire but at the Public Enquiry recent accounts

1971 - Control and ownership of the park passed from the Greater London Council to the London Borough of Lewisham (LBL) and in 1995 the boundaries were adjusted so that the whole of the park fell within Lewisham. Prior to this the mansion was in Beckenham, (since 1965 part of the new London Borough of Bromley), whilst the stables were in Lewisham as evidenced by a number of parish boundary posts which can still be seen within the park today. The present condition of the mansion and stables reflects the inability of any borough council to fund, repair and maintain a Grade 11* nationally listed building, when faced with competing higher priority responsibilities. Some sources mention the park was briefly in the possession of Bromley Council but we can't confirm that.

1976 - The Park and other open space is designated Metropolitan Open Land, a form of inner city Green Belt under the Greater London Development Plan.

1984-7 – This extract from the Conservation Management Plan of 2009: Records at English Heritage confirm the undertaking of further repair works in 1984-7 including the insertion of the large steel beams above the lantern, repairs to stacks, the aluminium light over the main hall, dry rot repairs. Investigation of the decorations to the ground floor ceilings was undertaken by English Heritage in about 1985. No record of the investigations has been found but they are understood to have been entirely consistent with the ceilings being of late C18 date.

1992 - Football pitches and changing rooms in the eastern part of the park are closed to enable David Lloyd scheme (DLL). Stable Block Homesteads and other accommodation cleared of tenants to provide vacant possession to DLL. 11 football pitches were fully used at weekends so this was another example of removing one group of park users for another as with the golfers at a later date.

1992 – London Borough of Lewisham attempt to pass occupation of the park to David Lloyd Leisure for the purposes of an indoor Tennis centre and extended golf facilities. A Public Enquiry leads to rejection of the plans to extend golf and add indoor tennis centre. Ironically, this scheme would have more than doubled the golf area, as well as covering a large area of the park with indoor sports facilities. Later, in 2015, the golf is deemed unviable and removed completely.

1993/2000 – Although the Tennis Centre scheme is refused the Park is managed by David Lloyd Leisure as a 7 year management contract had been awarded prior to public enquiry rejection of the tennis centre and golf extension plans, largely because of MOL status of the park. In 1993 planning permission was granted in principle by London Borough of Lewisham for a sporting venture, which would have radically transformed what is Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) into inaccessible sporting areas, at the expense of informal leisure activities by the general public. Determined opposition by a widely supported and well-organised 'Save Beckenham Place Park Campaign' and other groups led to a public inquiry and rejection of the application in 1994. Many local and national groups were active in the campaign, primarily the Ravensbourne Valley Preservation Society, a local residents association. Other groups included The London Wildlife Trust, Council for the Protection of Rural England, Friends of the Earth and Save BPP Campaign group. Despite DLL being a large tennis related company they cannot provide enough nets for 3 tennis courts?

1993 - The Friends of Beckenham Place Park is inaugurated to attempt to positively influence the management of the park for conservation, heritage and open space use. At the same time the London Borough of Lewisham ex-Mayor John Rudd establishes the Beckenham Place Park Working Party for all interested parties to have a forum to discuss park related matters. Unfortunately the Council disband this forum in 2016 in a democratic backward step, in favour of forums which divide opinion.

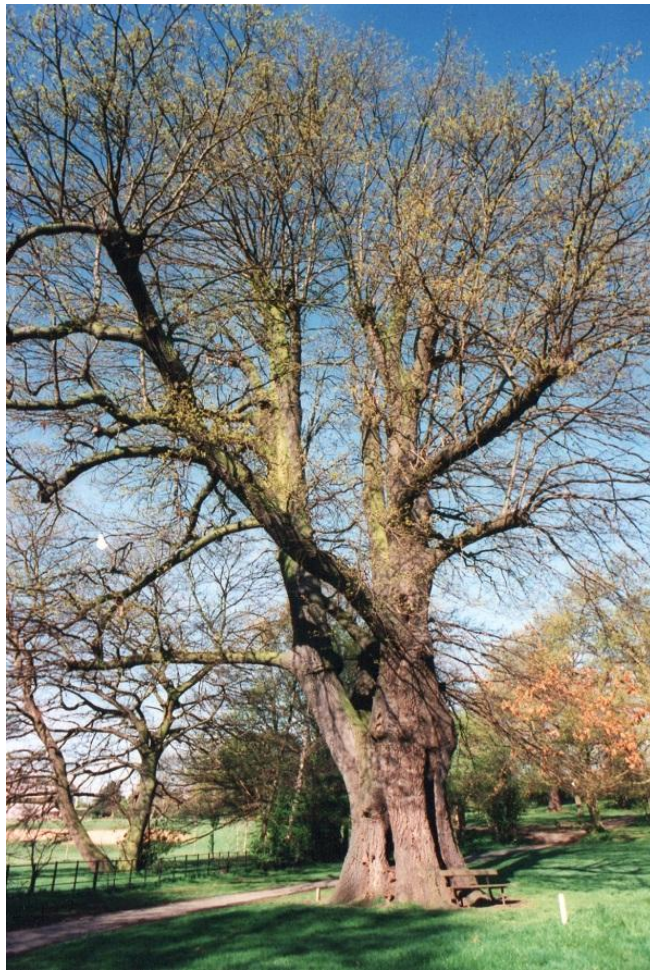
1996 – The Friends of Beckenham Place Park open a volunteer run visitor centre in a vacant cottage in the stable block. There had already been a high level of vandalism and the Friends repaired and decorated the cottage to a degree where a park conservation worker lived there for some years afterwards. Permission was granted to open a Visitor Centre in the stable block in January 1996 to be run by volunteers from the Friends. (Visitor Centre removed to the Mansion in November 1999). We regret leaving it as it might have saved the stable block from the later fire in 2011.

The 21st Century

2000 - The visitor centre moves into the Mansion at the invitation of a park manager.

2000/2014 - various changes in park management, consultations regarding use of buildings, including rejection of a charitable trust bid for management of the mansion. As part of one management tendering exercise around 2009 a firm of architects, Rees Bolter, produced a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Mansion and a summary of possible uses. The CMP has a lot of interesting information about the park and mansion including details of past stages of renovation and repair. It is worth a read but bear in mind that some of the history has since been altered and revealed. The CMP describes how the mansion resembles Palladian designs in Italy among other things.

2002 - Local Nature Reserve Listing (LNR) and Large Turkey Oak blown down: Wayne Butler as an in-park conservation officer employed by a park management company gets the park listed as a nature reserve. The Turkey Oak tree which was the second largest of its species in the UK and was over 230 years old came down on a windy day. The trunk had been hollow for many years and it had suffered from vandalism which weakened it. The date and age indicates it may have been planted by Cator. Perhaps supplied by his father in law, Peter Collinson who supplied many of his contacts with young trees probably cultivated in his Mill Hill garden. Turkey Oak was introduced from Turkey early in the 18th century and thought to be a valuable timber but it decays quickly when harvested. 15 years after its demise very little can be seen of it apart from some largest pieces of its trunk. It would have stood very near the end of the original lake.



Turkey Oak - over 230 years old

2004 (?) - Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection leaves the mansion: having occupied most of the mansion upper floors for over 20 years the collection is moved to first the Greenwich University and then to Bristol University to join other theatre memorabilia. Though the collection originally had plans to turn the mansion into a theatre museum they both did not raise enough funding and also did not in my opinion take the opportunity to apply to the National Lottery Arts Fund to achieve their aims. Though occupying the mansion the collection made no contribution to its upkeep and was not open to the public.

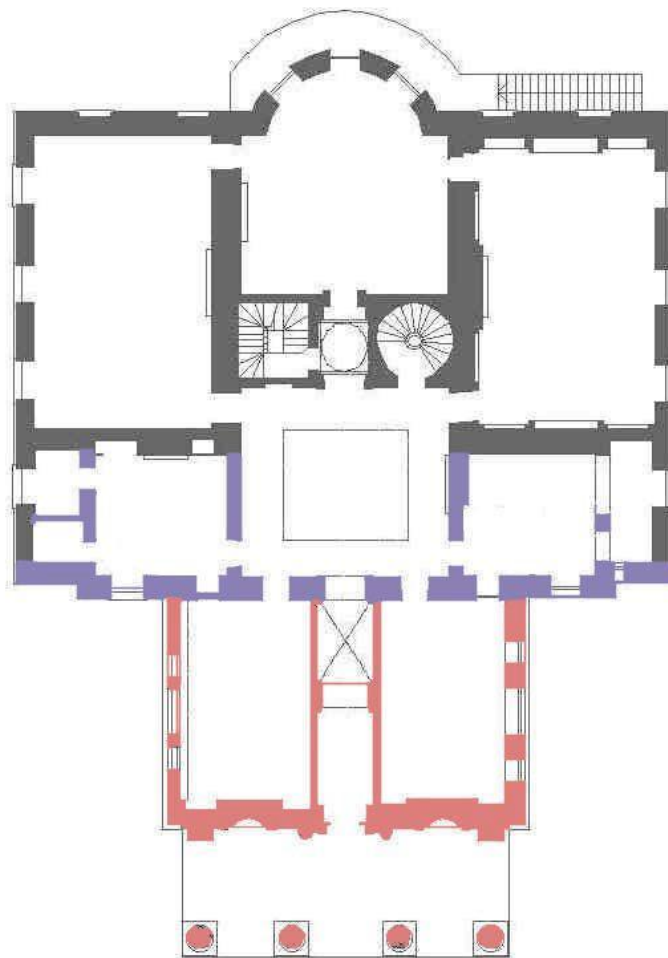
2009 – A Conservation Management Plan is produced by Rees Bolter Architects. One of several ‘consultations’ commissioned by L.B.Lewisham this plan outlines possible uses for the mansion, its condition and history of maintenance. Though containing some errors or omissions regarding the history in our view, the Plan was comprehensive but not acted upon to any great degree. The Plan may be viewed through a link on the Friends of BPP website.

The management plan was introduced thus: (but in this history we dispute some dates) but the plan does reveal some otherwise unknowns.

Beckenham Place is a Grade II* listed mansion of c1774 with a simple stone faced exterior and a number of important interior rooms. It was extended in about 1810 by the construction of a new entrance front which incorporates a great deal of material from the great house of c1723 at Wricklemarsh. The estate was purchased by John Cator in 1773 and remained in the Cator family until 1926 when it was purchased by the London County Council. The Cators occupied the house until about 1825; it was let to a series of tenants during the remainder of the nineteenth century and was in institutional use in the early twentieth century. Since passing into public ownership the house has provided accommodation for refreshment rooms and golf related uses on upper and lower ground floor levels. Upper floors were in residential use for a time, were briefly occupied by a theatre archive and have now been empty for about ten years.

The mansion is an important building, reflected in its Grade II* listing, principally because of its position in the designed landscape, the interiors of the upper ground floor and the salvaged fragments of Wricklemarsh.

As the conservation management plan concentrated on the house more will be said in 'Additional Information' under 'The House on Stumps Hill'



Floor Plan of the Mansion from the Conservation Management Plan

A gap in the history here needs filling with information regarding Consultations and Tendering for use of the Mansion, such as the bid by a Korean Hotelier which would have involved unacceptable extension of the building.

The Golf Course is put under the management of Glendale with the intention of increasing income from the course. However, Lewisham retain all the cost centre expenses such as grounds staff and machinery therefore most income remains with Glendale and all costs incur to L.B.Lewisham

2011 - Most of the Stable Block destroyed by fire after being left abandoned and insecure for several years. Most of the heritage features of the building are destroyed including the clock which was about 300 years old. Below, the rear of the stable block facing the gardens in less than perfect but complete condition. The righthand end had been extensively remodelled probably after LCC takeover but the centre and left hand end had old if not original features. The clock was nearly 300 years old and may have once been at Clockhouse, Penge.



2012 - The Friends and the Sensory Garden: Over time and with cutbacks in park staffing levels one part of the gardens became a bit past its best. The old Rose Garden had overgrown and spent plants, overgrown path edges and weeds in the paths. A grant application was made via Groundwork Trust and the Big Lottery to obtain funding for a Sensory and Nature garden. Cooperation between the Friends and a Local Authority officer on behalf of the landowner produced an application and after much ado funding was awarded allowing for upgrading of the landscaping including an improved disability access ramp. A local landscaping firm completed that work after Friends and other volunteer groups grubbed out the old planting and dug over the beds. When the landscaping was finished the park gardeners turfed around the beds and planted the central area with lavender. The Friends began a program of planting and maintenance gardening. Corporate volunteers from Deloitte put in a stag beetle loggery and installed a bench and helped with a wet area for wildlife. The garden changes with the seasons providing habitat for birds, invertebrates, small mammals and amphibians. We get the occasional surprise if a bank vole or frog jump out while gardening. Some local people keep the bird table supplied with seed and leftovers. The beds are broadly themed for touch, smell, sight and a bit of sound if its windy. Volunteer gardeners are welcome to come along to workdays regardless of experience. Although there's a kind of plan its flexible.

2014 - London Borough of Lewisham decide to bid for Heritage Lottery Fund money under the 'Parks for People' scheme to fund improvements to the park. The mansion remains excluded from any funding at this time. Although various works had been done to the mansion over a long period such as repairing the roof, installing disabled toilets etc. No complete restoration has been done. If we added up all the money spent on tinkering it would probably have paid for a proper job or at least provided match funding for a grant a long time ago. However, the scheme is not popular with all and various people object, not least the golfers whose course is deemed to close under the scheme. The Public Consultation such as it was presented four schemes either including the existing golf course or closing the golf course in favour of an 'Eighteenth Century Parkland Landscape' restoration. The latter narrowly won having the biggest quarter of the votes out of about 300 public responses. The restoration should include the reconstruction of a lake, rebuilding of the stable block and restoration of other Homestead buildings.

2014 - The Environment Agency are evaluating a flood alleviation scheme to use part of the park to prevent flooding further downriver. Floods have been recorded in Lewisham, Southend, and Beckenham over hundreds of years but infrequently i.e. the 100 year flood which intimates a flood event will happen even if rarely. A prevention scheme was installed

on the River Quaggy at Sutcliffe Park some years ago. the Quaggy / Ravensbourne and Pool rivers have combined by the time they get to Lewisham near the station. A deluge backs up at that point threatening housing and businesses. The result of uncontrolled or ill advised development on river floodplains. There could be some landscaping and nature habitat advantages to this scheme but at time of writing detailed plans and consultation is awaited.

2015 - The mansion remains at risk awaiting HLF restoration bid, The park and homesteads await the production of stage 2 HLF bid for restoration etc.

2016 - Lewisham Council close public golf course, unable to make it financially viable. The Mansion is put on short term lease to a property management organisation RJK Properties with intentions to increase use of the building.

2017 - Heritage Lottery Fund bid for £4.9million approved for park and some buildings regeneration. At time of writing the Local Authority are tendering for design consultants for the actual scheme after former consultants produced plans for the bid? Why the original tender couldn't have included a proviso that if the bid was approved the former consultants would continue with the scheme God alone knows. Seems a lot of the money will be spent before a shovel hits the ground or a brick is laid. Fairly comprehensive plans were submitted with the bid and for the planning permission application but a further 'detailed design' phase is being tendered.

2017 - May 13th The Public Park's 90th anniversary. This is the date of the LCC meeting which appears to have decided the purchase of the Park from The Cator estate. The Foxgrove Club Golf Course and the Norwood Sanatorium had active leases for a short time.

2017 - August: New design consultants have been appointed to perform the detailed planning. Planning permission for the scheme is still not granted awaiting, we assume, presentation of detailed plans. Apparently some concerns remain regarding the lake and its proposed source of water i.e. the stream appears inadequate, a borehole would be perhaps inadmissible and its event suggested that filling of the lake would be by mains water.

2017 - October. The planning application for grant related works is approved by Lewisham Council. Alterations to the landscaping will include removal of some trees which were planted to define the now closed golf course. The Mansion although in use and under a short term lease to RJK Properties is still on the English Heritage at risk register and not included in any current restoration grant or scheme.

2018 – Over the winter of 2017/2018 a large number of trees have been felled to meet the ‘vision’ of the landscape architects and faceless ‘design team’. The desire to recreate a lake and wetland area required the felling of what were quite mature trees of up to 100 years age. Due to the lack of maintenance of the former artificial lake it was either overgrown, partially filled in and generally left to its own devices. As the new lake may have to be filled with an engineered water supply I wonder what the long term future of any new lake will be. As previously mentioned it seemed the original lake was created for John Cator circa 1790, probably extended or remodelled by his nephew John Barwell Cator upon inheriting the estate circa 1810. Subsequently reduced in size and mostly dried up due to diversion or building over the supplying stream. Any overflow of the lake area is taken by a conduit under the railway to the Ravensbourne. At time of writing (Spring 2018) I’m informed that the current rainfall is creating a pond. The area will require artificial lining as most man-made lakes either made use of natural clay beds or clay was imported and ‘puddled’ down as a liner.

Some work is commencing around the Stable Block but we have no indication as to whether original 18th century heritage features will be conserved or restored. “Heritage Lottery” seems just that.....a lottery as to whether any heritage is preserved.

A Crystal Ball is required beyond this point.

See Additional Information in the next file.