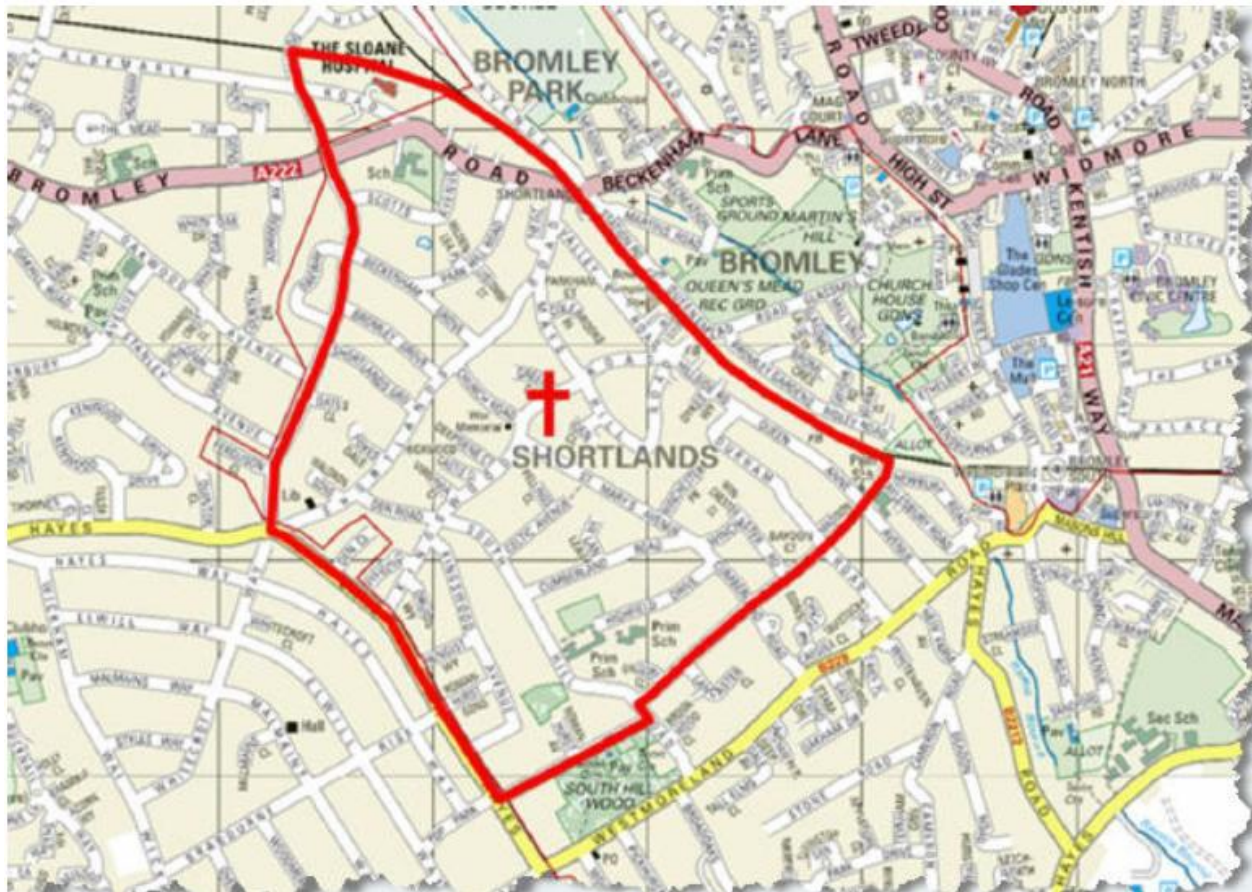


Shortlands & Clay Hill

A history by Keith Baldwin

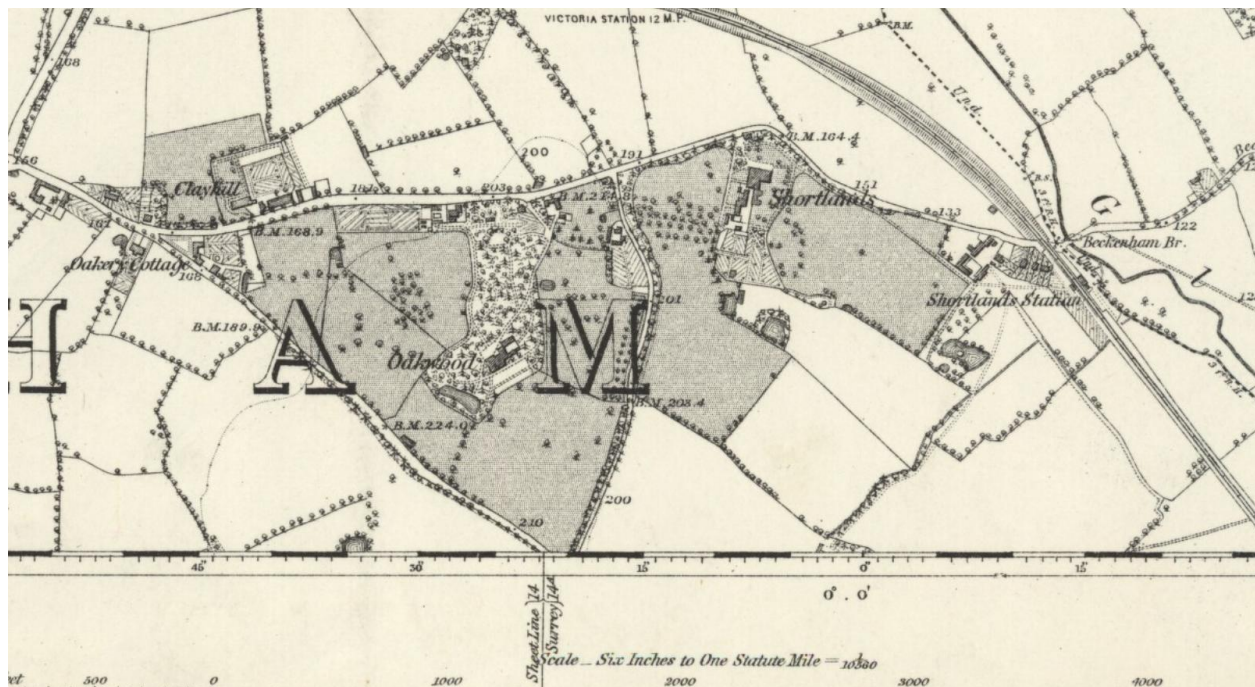
Previously part of Beckenham parish Shortlands became a separate parish constituted in 1868. It currently looks like this. *Source St Mary's Church Shortlands*



The original parish boundary between Beckenham and Bromley was the River Ravensbourne (rather than the railway) so what we refer to as Shortlands Village today was in fact in Bromley parish.

It was William Arthur Wilkinson, owner of Shortlands House (now Bishop Challoner School) who in 1863 registered the 137 acres of his estate at the newly formed Land Registry, complete with a road and plot plan, and bequeathed sufficient monies to erect a church in the middle. The area was to develop gradually as gentleman's villas on generous plots.

The area covered by Shortlands today was not held by just one landowner historically but by many with changing ownerships over time. It was largely undeveloped, the only dwellings being a farm (opposite what is now Shortlands Station) and the loose hamlet of Clay Hill. This 1863 map shows a few station cottages too.



1863 Ordnance Survey (National Library of Scotland)

The area of Clay Hill appears to have covered the area from Chancery Lane as far as Shortlands House and consisted of Clayhill Cottage adjacent to Chancery Lane occupied by Mr Louis Schillio a horse breeder, Clayhill (here but more often referred to as The Hall), Oakery Cottage, Oakwood (previously The Oakery until 1848), "Scotts House" and Shortlands House together with five other small cottages near to Oakery Cottage. On early maps the lane leading south East from Oakery Cottage is referred to as Green Lane and that between the end of Green Lane and Bromley Road as Short Lands Lane (which also led south to Pickards Green). There was a workhouse at the Bromley Road/Green Lane junction which became redundant after the Bromley Poor law Union was established on 19th May 1836 and was subsequently let until being demolished in 1858. (BeckenhamHistory.co.uk)

The land between Chancery Lane and Green Lane subsequently became the Oakhill Estate in the hands of Robert Booth Latter, Henry Latter and Robinson Latter. After 1864 they sold plots of land for building on a gradual basis. (*Land Registry*)

The tithe map of 1838 shows more clearly the individual properties and offers a more detailed insight into the freehold owners and leasehold occupiers and the schedule also includes some later owners and occupiers as it was revised in subsequent years.



Tithe Map 1838 (*The Genealogist*)

Shortlands House was purchased by Thomas Carey Palmer in 1837 from John *Barwell* Cator (*Codicil to will of Thomas Carey Palmer*) together with much of the surrounding land, about 140 acres in all bounded by Bromley Road, Shortlands Lane and lands belonging to the Langley Estate, New Farm and Robert Gibson. Elizabeth Palmer his widow is recorded as owner and occupier in the tithe schedule following his death in 1839.



An 1833 map of the Cator Estate (Bromley Historic Collections) shows that John Cator the younger had acquired most of the land at Clay Hill by means of exchange and purchase and this process had been carried on after his death in 1806 by his heirs who then needed a private Act of Parliament in 1825 to amend restrictions in his will “An Act to enable John (*Barwell*) 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 John Cator in 1806.” From this time 99 year building leases were granted and various freeholds sold.

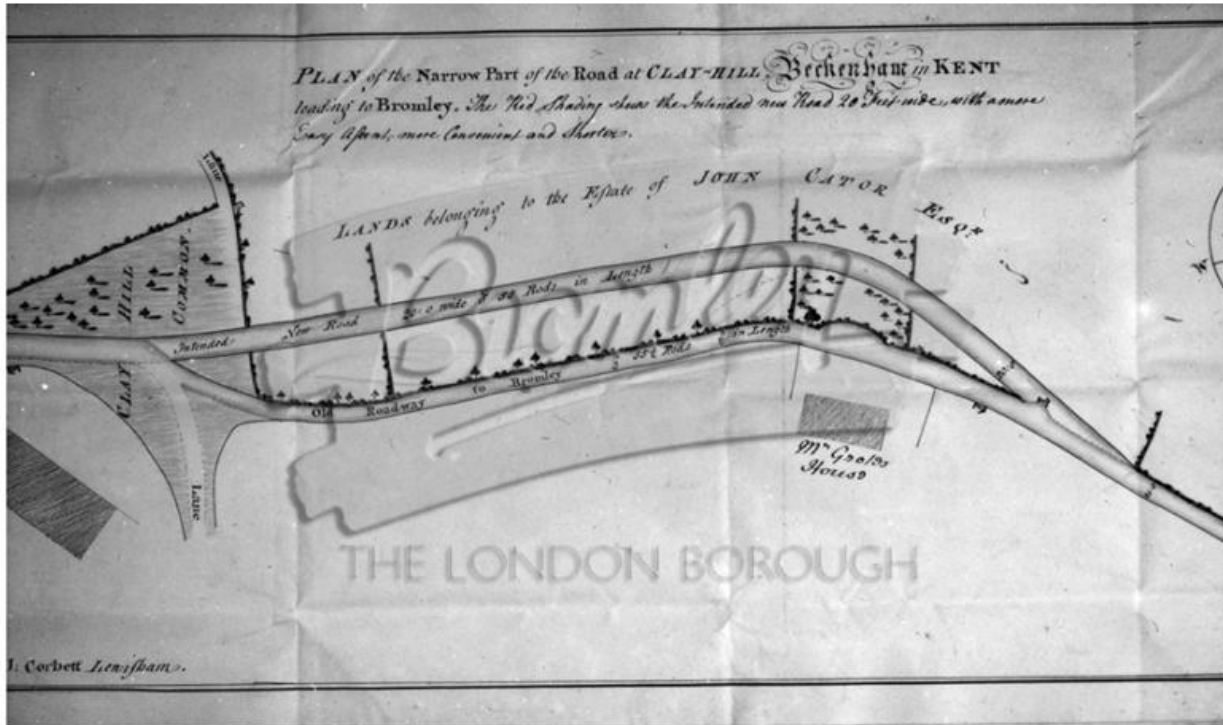


An 1809 map of Burrell Estates (British Library) shows the lands south of Bromley Road and Green Lane contiguous to the parks of Kelsey and Langley. You can clearly see Clay Hill Cottage (in pink), the workhouse and that Oakery Cottage is at this time a boarding school. The Hall, The Oakery and “Scotts House” are also shown even though in Cator’s hands by this time.



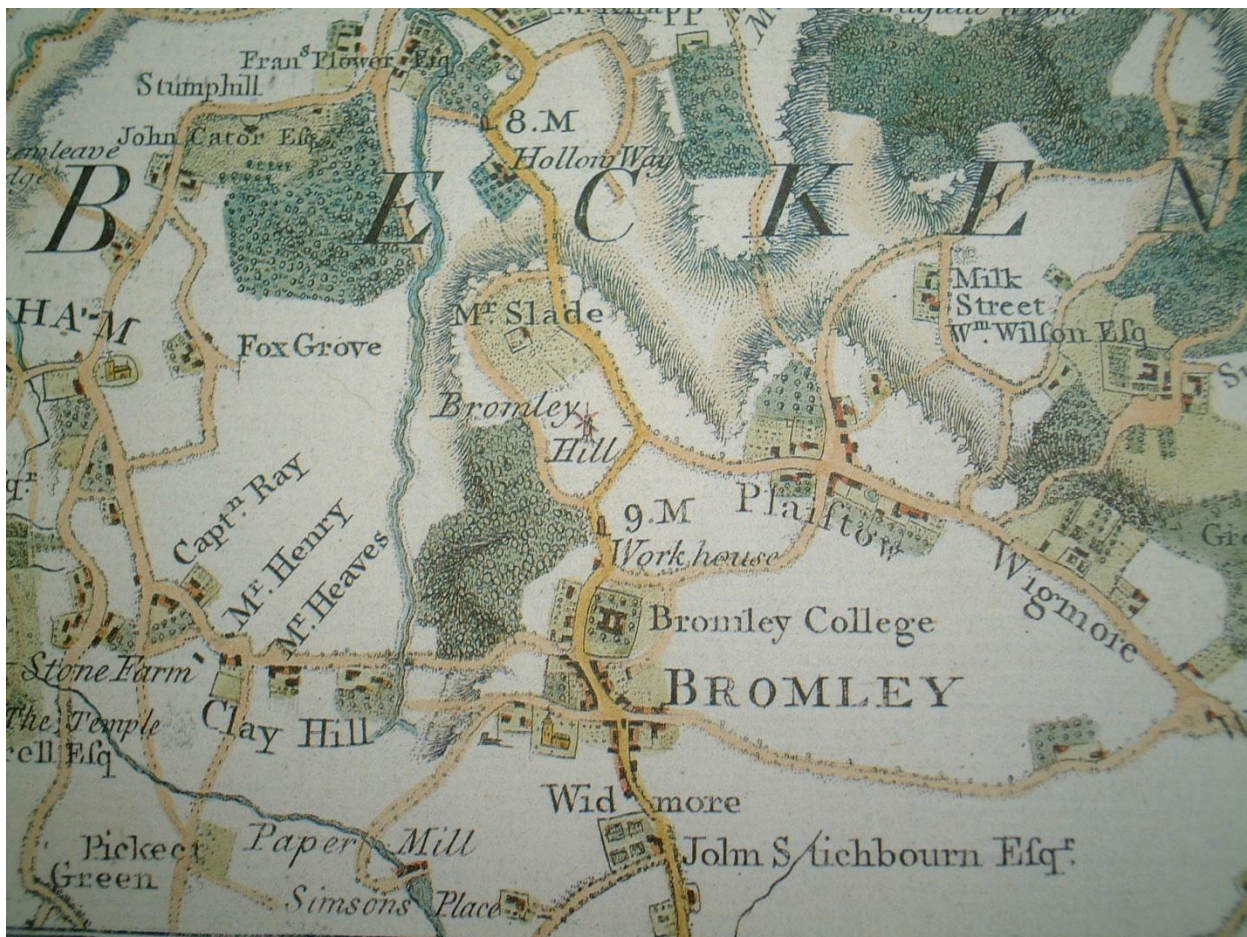
A slightly wider view of a 1799 map (British Library) reiterates just how undeveloped the area was.

In 1789 the road at Shortlands House was diverted to increase the width, John Cator providing the necessary land. This served to add land to the grounds of Shortlands House and possibly some screening from the road.



Diversion Map, Clay Hill , Beckenham

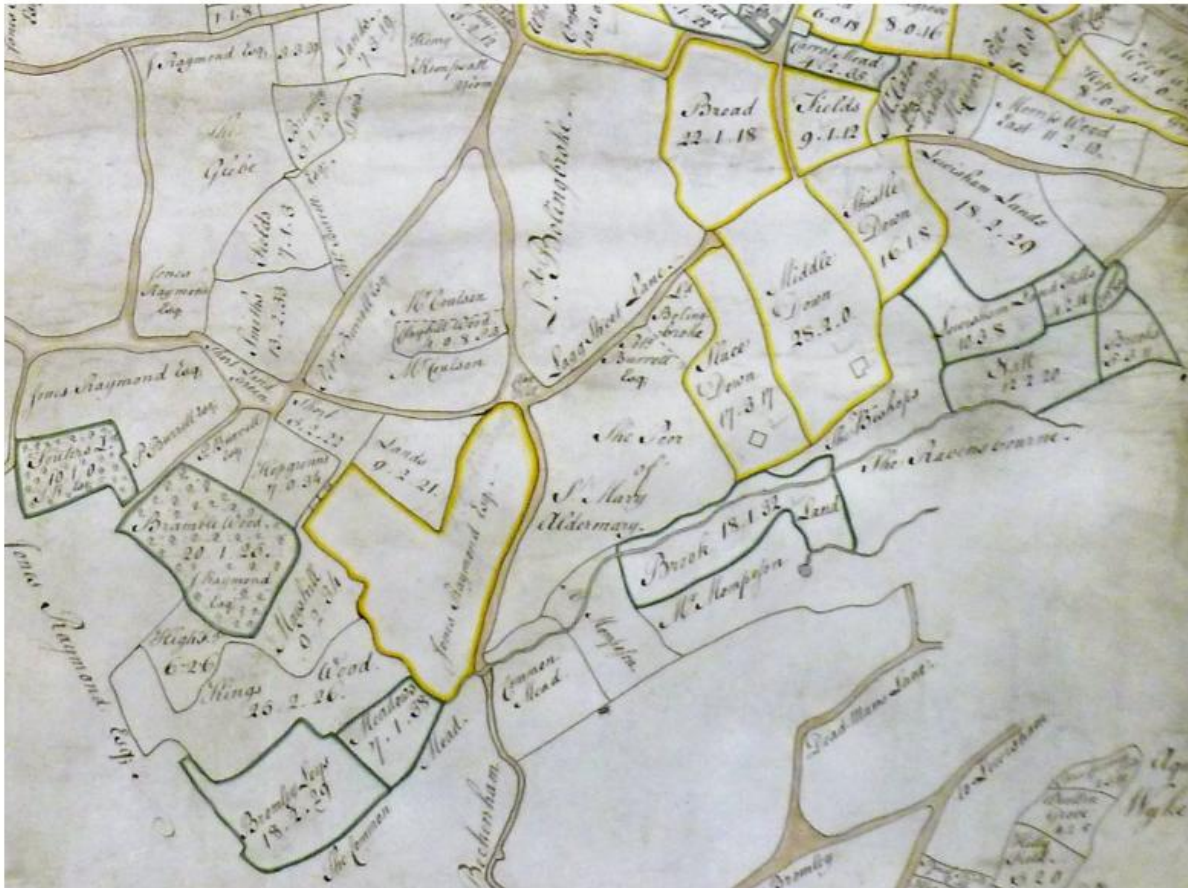
A plan of the narrow part of the road at Clay Hill, Beckenham leading to Bromley. Plan for intended new road. Appears to be drawn by J. Corbett, Lewisham.



Andrews, Drury & Herbert map 1769 (Bromley Historic Collections)

Not the most accurate map as the drainage system is evidently wrong, but helpful in providing details of the occupants of various properties.

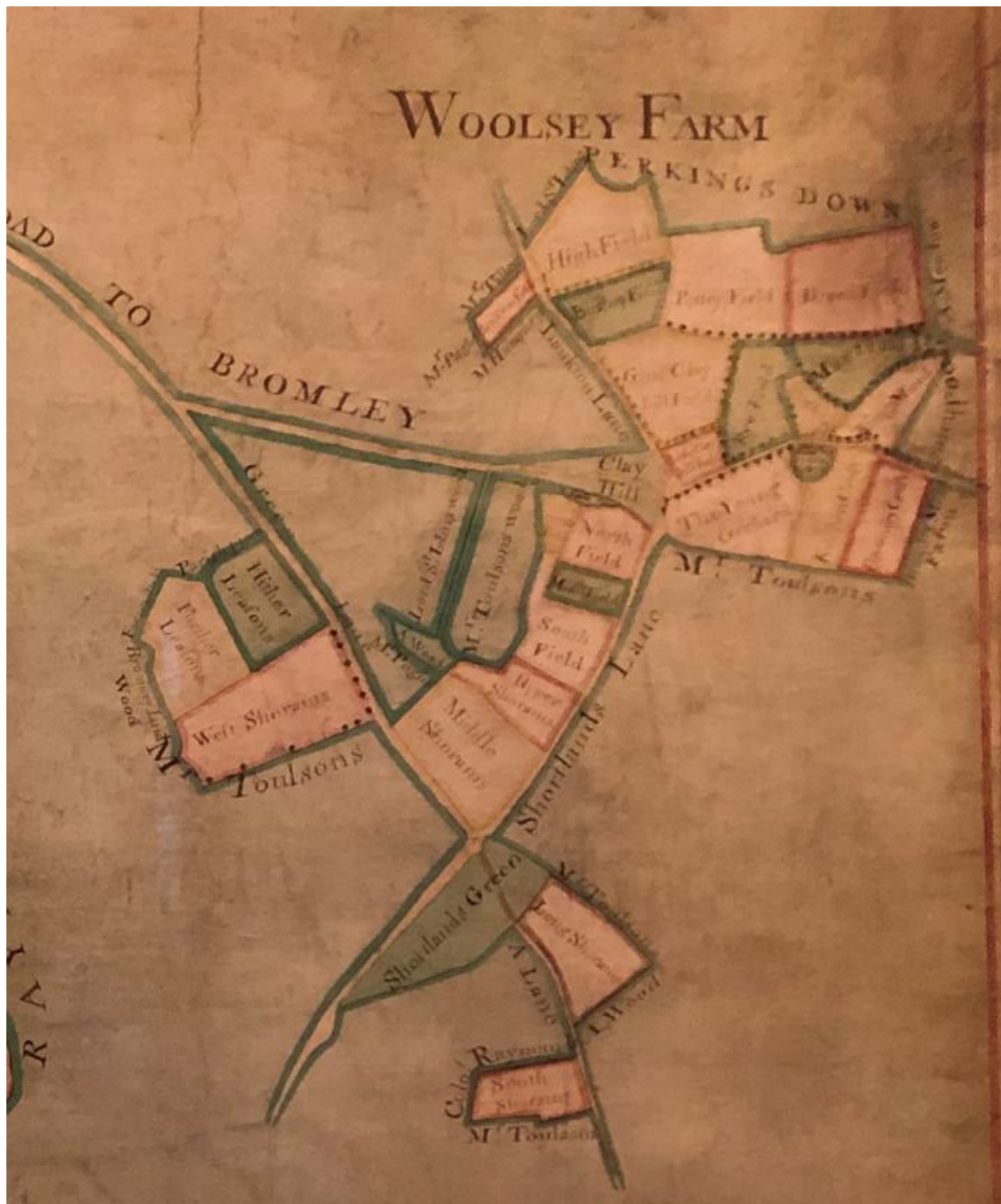
Captain Ray would be Charles Wray who was a captain in the East India Company and would have been residing in Oakery Cottage leased from David Henry occupant of The Oakery. The Hall and "Scotts House" are shown but the occupants not mentioned. Mr Heaves appears to be the occupant of Shortlands House *and is something of a mystery as I cannot unearth any information about him.*



Colour version 1766 British Library

Manor of Foxgrove from a 1720 map (original not located) revised by Proudlove in 1766, showing the various owners quite clearly. *I am not sure this revision is entirely accurate, some evidence seems to exist to the contrary but with that proviso useful just the same.*

In 1759 Peter Burrell & Jones Raymond obtained a private Act of Parliament enabling them to alter the terms of Hugh Raymond's will, exchange property with John Cator and grant building leases. They granted a 60 year lease to David Henry, editor of The Gentlemans Magazine, who demolished three cottages and replaced them with The Oakery and Oakery Cottage. That is on the piece called Clayhill Wood on this map otherwise known as Crabgrove.



1735 map of Burrell Estates (with kind permission Charles Burrell Knepp Castle)

A view of the same in 1735 shows Woolsey Farm and various fields (in pink) adjacent to Shortlands Lane in the ownership of Peter Burrell. It is not entirely clear whether Woolsey Farmhouse is on the site of Shortlands House or opposite. I believe that a house on the site of "Scotts House" is also evident next to the Clay Hill notation and this appears not to have been in the ownership of Burrell even though all the surrounding land is. Samuel Pugh (a very eminent scarlet dyer from Southwark) mentions in his will of 1737 "Also freehold messuage bought of John Cliff since rebuilt in occupation of Robert Howard and 5 acres of land near lane leading to Pickards Green" (*a spelling variation for Pickhurst Green*) for the benefit of his daughter Eleanor. Robert Howard is most likely to be closely related to the Earl of Effingham who died 1817 whose relatives were occupants of The Oakery at a later date. Needs more research.

In 1757 Woolsey Farm (being all that shown here) is exchanged with Frederick St John Viscount Bolingbroke for Beckenham Manor and 8 acres. In 1773 Bolingbroke sold the remainder of Beckenham Manor lands (including Woolsey Farm) to John Cator *the younger*. In 1793 Burrell exchanges land again with Cator in return for Stone Farm, he gives Foxgrove Manor, a common called Boyland, a capital messuage or mansion house at Clayhill with stable, 6 houses, garden, orchard, fields and appurtenances late in occupation of Rev William Rose and lands at Clayhill to John Cator *the younger*. (*the mansion mentioned here is yet to be identified*)

For more detailed information relating to each of the properties mentioned please see*