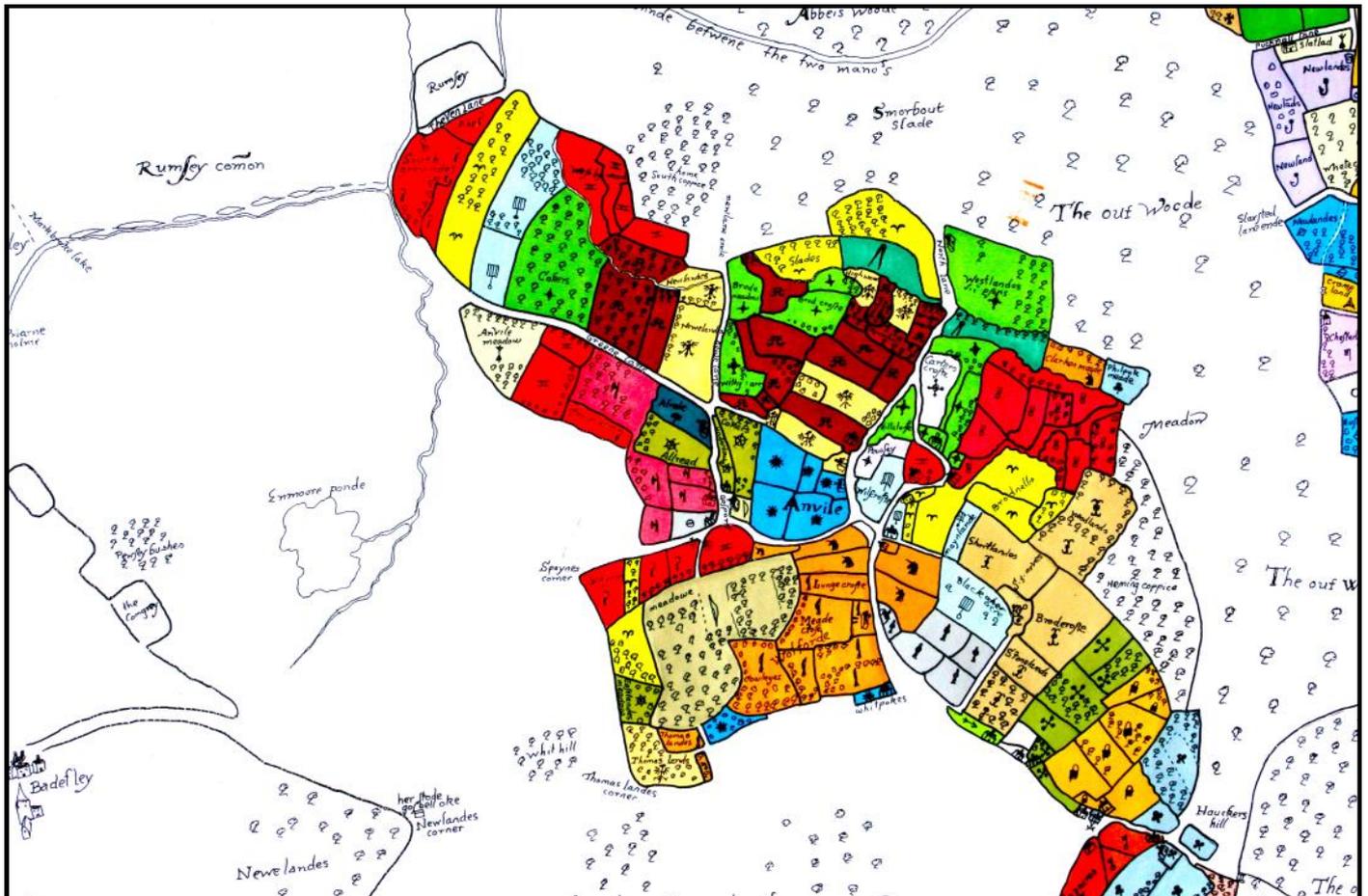


Romsey Local History Society

[LTVAS Group]



Copy of the Ampfield section of Ralph Treswell's 1588 Map of Merdon (Hursley)

(north is to the right)

Redrawn by Roger Harris

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Letter from the Chairman

24th March

When I first started planning this report 3 weeks ago I started it with: "Lectures and presentations continue with the recent ones extremely well attended." What a difference the last weeks have made! On Monday 16th March we decided to cancel all lectures, walks and workshops until August. It seemed a bit drastic at the time but it is clear that we made the right decision. Our intention is to wait until August and then if restrictions are over we will continue with our 2020 programme as planned. If restrictions continue we will cancel further meetings until it is safe to resume.

The Arts Festival organisers have cancelled this year's festival so our walks planned for that fortnight will not go ahead. We have not yet decided whether to reschedule our exhibition for later this year or defer it until the festival is held next year.

We have contacted the speakers we were due to have from March to June and they have all agreed to reschedule their talks for 2021.

In the meantime:

Highlights of the programme since January have been Jon Sims' account of the Salisbury and Southampton canal and Janet Cairney's well-researched talk on the French refugee groups who settled briefly in Romsey at the start of the 19th century. Tuesday morning talks on Moses Pepper the postmaster, the history of underwear, and flax milling, also drew substantial audiences. Our affiliated societies: Wellow and Nursling and Rownhams were both running full programmes but have now cancelled meetings until further notice. Details can be found on their websites:-

wellowhistory.wixsite.com

nandrhistorygroup.wixsite.com

Workshops through the winter have been very busy. Monday mornings seldom had less than eight regular members and three or four visitors. Tuesday evenings were quieter but we had several school children consulting our records as well as queries about house histories and a couple of professionals using our resources to further their work. As a result of so many queries we have done less of our own society research but closure will allow us to do more where we have resources at home or online.

Work on improving and updating the LTVAS website is continuing and we hope to put the newsletter and new articles on it very soon.

Research into RAODS and the Plaza has gained more active participants and reading through the reports in the Romsey Advertiser is still progressing. In addition we were working with the oral history group at King John's House to record the reminiscences of members to gain more personal angles on events. A very enjoyable afternoon was held in early March when RAODS members got together with the oral history group. Many brought old photographs and playbills which they had personally preserved. Diane Hargreaves, who was responsible for the conversion design for turning the cinema into a theatre, has also made available to us some of the model sets and costume designs made in the 1970s. Some of this research is continuing but, of course, the face-to-face interviews will have to wait until safer times.

The small 'Prehistoric group' have been trying to assemble all the material already known on the prehistory and Roman periods in the Test Valley and are beginning to propose some ideas of their own about ancient routes etc. Our QGIS maps which allow us to look at modern and early maps along with the 3D landscape created by the LiDAR surveys and the geological maps are proving very useful to the Prehistoric group as well as the Anglo-Saxon group.

Work was progressing slowly on our proposed publication of a book on the lower Test valley as shown in Domesday Book. However, we can now concentrate on this and get it finished. The text is largely written and we are now working on the maps and illustrations to accompany it. The members of the Anglo-Saxon group are working on writing up our ideas so that the work we have done is available to a wider audience. Since we have been working on this since 2014 we have a lot of material and the writing up is taking time. One result of the Anglo-Saxon study was the identification of the old bank marking the Saxon estate boundary between Romsey and Ampfield not only along the Straight Mile but also in Hiller Gardens. The Society is funding a couple of explanation boards to be put up in the Gardens and will run some talks and walks there when they reopen.

Improving the catalogue of our pictures and records is still progressing. Phoebe Merrick has taken the main catalogue home and is planning to work hard to create a full catalogue which will eventually be accessible to members and will be relatively easy to use. Working on this has taken a lot of her time and the study of place names had to be put on hold. People like the RAODS members have continued to loan and donate to us old photographs and archives which we need to add to the catalogue promptly. We are very grateful to Samantha Richley for a generous financial donation and Ted Mason's books and history research notes.

A number of the committee members have been holding on-line video conferences using 'Zoom'. We have been contacting each other using phone and email but actually seeing each other live has been a welcome break in isolation every Monday. I hope you are all managing to keep in touch with friends and family in these difficult times.

The text of this newsletter has been finalised on 15 April 2020. Any changes which have to be made to future plans due to the coronavirus are only up to date to that point. Please use the website for current information.



Viewing the model sets made for RAODs in 1970s and 80s



Early in March, we were treated to a fascinating talk by Dr Jeff Hawksley about flax mills in Romsey. Sadly that is the last talk we shall ever have from him because a fortnight later he passed away with pneumonia.

Jeff had been a marine engineer and then became a lecturer at Southampton Tech, as Solent University was then known, and a visiting lecturer at the University of Southampton. He lived in Romsey for many years and became interested in aspects of the town's history.

His modelmaking skills were of the highest order. Working with the late architect, Don Hargreaves, he made a scale model of the frame of King John's House that could be partly dismantled for demonstration purposes. Later on he became very interested in Berthon boats and spent many hours tracking down the patented plans of them. Subsequently he made a model of a Berthon boat which is in King John's House. He also made a simpler model to demonstrate the basic principles of how Berthon boats folded and unfolded which is much appreciated when talks about Berthon are given.

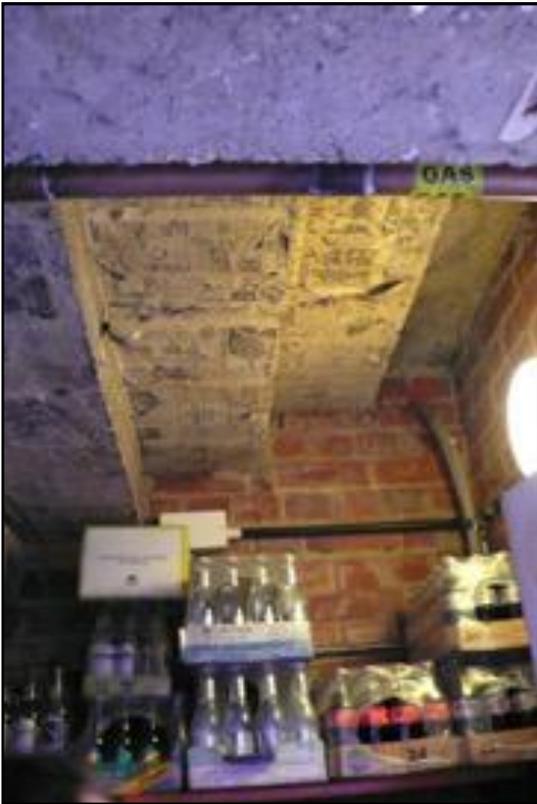
Jeff was one of the leading lights of our mills project that led to the best book we have ever produced, *Romsey's Mills and Waterways*. For weeks our workshops were full of discussions about the horse-power that given streams might generate, amongst other technical matters, and his plan of Romsey's waterways has become a classic. His wife, Mavis, to whom our sympathies go, played a significant role in this research as she interviewed a number of people who had personal memories of the town's mills in operation.



Jeff and Mavis assembling the model of the Berthon boat for exhibition in King John's House.

Exploring the Plaza Theatre

While exploring the Plaza building the Plaza/RAODS research group were shown these breeze blocks in one of the stores. This is part of the original building and the breeze blocks were made on a bed of newspapers. Some of these are still possible to read and the date is quite clear. This one is part of the Sunday News for May 17th 1931. The article on the Derby gives Cameronian as the favourite and he did indeed go on to win the race by three quarters of a length. over his main rival, Orpen. Cameronian's owner, John Arthur Dewar, decorated the [Savoy Hotel](#) with a hundred miles of tartan ribbon at the victory celebrations.



The underneath of the stairs forming the ceiling of the store.



The Sunday News



Cameronian, winner of the 1931 Derby.

The starting point for this study is an object which I am sure is familiar to Romsey Local History Society members; apart from being a star in the King John's House collection, a drawing of it is our logo. It is a simple object, a jug, an item of tableware to serve drinks at the meal table, but delving further into what it represents takes us into areas that are not at all simple, and not fully understood.

Let us start with some facts and some context. The jug was found in excavations in 1972, in what is now the car parking area behind Abbey Walk, a remarkable and very exciting find, with a probable dating of late 13th/early 14th century. Medieval pottery found in Romsey, as elsewhere, is predominately the local coarse-ware, functional and undecorated. Both heavy and fragile, transporting ceramics was difficult and costly so local wares filled most needs. The fabric of our jug is a finer ware and has been identified as South Hampshire Red ware, the source that accounts for most of the decorated wares found in Romsey. The distribution map of South Hampshire Red-ware suggests a source to the east of Southampton.

The colour of the jug is very typical of this period. A boom in building meant that greater volumes of metals and raw materials were being moved around the country, and becoming available to local craftsmen. Lead glazes in warm golds, reds and browns like that on our jug were popular as external decoration, not necessarily covering all or the interiors of vessels as they would do if they were intended to reduce porosity. Many decorated jugs have both the colours and the density of the glazing making abstract stripes and patterns, but where figurative imagery is used, faces like that on our jug are the favourite form, and they are ubiquitous, found throughout Britain and Northern Europe, over a very long period.

Decorated ceramics however were not at all common in Romsey. Ben Jervis analysed all the sherds found in local excavations, and found that the proportion within the post-Conquest ceramic assemblages of decorated items in Romsey is a good deal lower than that found not only in poorer areas in Southampton and Winchester, but even in a small town like Andover. This may of course be a function of the location of excavations, but he concludes that Romsey was then essentially agricultural, and not yet given to urban influences. This suggests that our jug was perhaps an object of considerable prestige, owned by someone with urban connections, though it would not appear refined enough for an aristocratic household. Did it survive because it was used rather rarely, and treasured?

How are we to understand these anthropomorphic jugs? It has been suggested that this was an imported fashion, perhaps from France, but without a method of accurate dating it is not really possible to prove that, and surely a fashion sustained over so many years and over such a large geographic area would have had to be widely meaningful. It is also suggested that jugs of this form were connected with the increasing consumption of wine, and that perhaps they represented a genial and generous host and the conviviality of the table. Can we really see our face jug as a sort of precursor of the 18th century Toby jug? Even a cursory examination suggests that this is unconvincing.

Looking critically at the Romsey jug and also a splendid jug from the British Museum in the Kingston white-ware that served the London market, one cannot see any feature that suggests good humour and bonhomie. When our jug was found one of his eyes was missing, and it was deliberately replaced with an obviously non-matching substitute, which perhaps gives him a slightly more benign look than he originally had. Eyes are prominent in medieval decorative art, but there is usually some suggestion of eyelids or brows, not just the circular staring eyes we see on the jugs. There is no suggestion at all of the facial expressions that are a universal human expression of pleasure, and which, as our modern emojis indicate, require little skill or effort to portray.



The Face Jug found in Romsey



Kingston White Ware face jug found in London

Many of the jugs share with the British Museum example a representation of a beard, some pulled at by rudimentary hands. The jug found in Romsey does not, but it does have an oddly shaped pointed chin, perhaps a nod in that direction. One researcher has discussed the medieval understanding of beards, and the surviving written fulminations from the pulpit comparing the bearded male to goats, held then to be particularly sexually licentious. Such sermons may not be the most reliable of sources, but all the depictions of real people of this period show clean shaven males.

And what if we widen our enquiry, and look at some other strange medieval faces in Romsey. What about the carvings that adorn the outside of the Abbey, eroded now, and very high up, but easily accessible on the internet? They are rather older than our jug, and by the time that it was made, churches in the high Gothic style carried an even more florid and extraordinary range of human figures and faces, making grotesque faces and pulling at their mouths, often in positions that are flagrantly rude, scatological and sometimes even downright obscene. These were all deemed appropriate visual representations for the outsides of churches by the artisans who carved them and importantly, their employers, the rich patrons who commissioned the churches in the fervent hope of a reduced period of suffering in purgatory. One strand of theoretical thinking about what seems so odd to us suggests that in a very largely non-literate society a rich oral culture must have existed that simply does not figure in our written sources. People told stories, they sang songs, but above all they performed, in the ceremonies, plays and processions that marked the annual round. Older pre-Christian practices and beliefs may have contributed, but in a devout Christian society, these cultural practices no less than formal religious preaching taught moral lessons, and taught them in a vivid high-contrast way; outside and inside, order and disorder, God and the Devil, virtue and vice, the soul and the vile body; the vile body rather more easily represented and more attention grabbing than the prayerful soul. It is suggested that it was in these cultural ideas and practices that this aspect of medieval visual language is rooted, approved and promulgated by the church throughout Latin Christendom.

So might this theory explain the jugs? Might the faces be another stock villainous figure, the drunkard? Only a privileged few drank wine, but all but the very poorest drank alcohol; the staple beverage was ale. Might our pop-eyed, unkempt, unshaven face be a dire warning against over-indulgence? Might a certain mercantile and mainly urban class of people have felt a desire or even a need to demonstrate that though they were more affluent than most, and more independent, they were nevertheless upright, sober and God-fearing?

Fast forward two hundred and fifty years or so, and interestingly, we find a new fashion for bearded faces on jugs. There is no mystery about their origin; it was in the Rhineland where two technical advances had been made. The first was a high heat kiln that vitrified clay, making sturdy, cheap, imporous vessels that were widely exported in great quantities through the Hanseatic port of Cologne. The second innovation was applied mould-made decoration, quicker by far than painting. One of the motifs, used only for jugs was, yes, bearded faces, *bartmasken* in German. And some early examples from the French potteries included written texts, a translated example is "*Drink and Eat, Forget not thy God*". The conventional explanation is that the faces refer to the Wild Man or Green Man mythology, but again, on examination, they are not so very wild. Indeed, in England these jugs were call "Bellarmines", after the Jesuit Cardinal Bellarmine, and there is a resemblance to the print portrait of the suave prince of the Church with his scholar's beard. The Cardinal was of course much against Protestantism, but also, it is said, disapproved of alcohol. Happy London consumers are said to have enjoyed smashing their jugs after drinking the contents, which accounts for the many shards that emerge from the eroding mud on the banks of the Thames.

By the seventeenth century both the technology and face motif were copied. For a short time in the 1670s a pottery in Southampton was producing Bellarmines. The moulds for the faces were much cruder than the originals, and the English produced jugs became the vessel of choice for burying in doorways, or placing up chimneys. Containing curious collections of small items, they were there to repel witches.



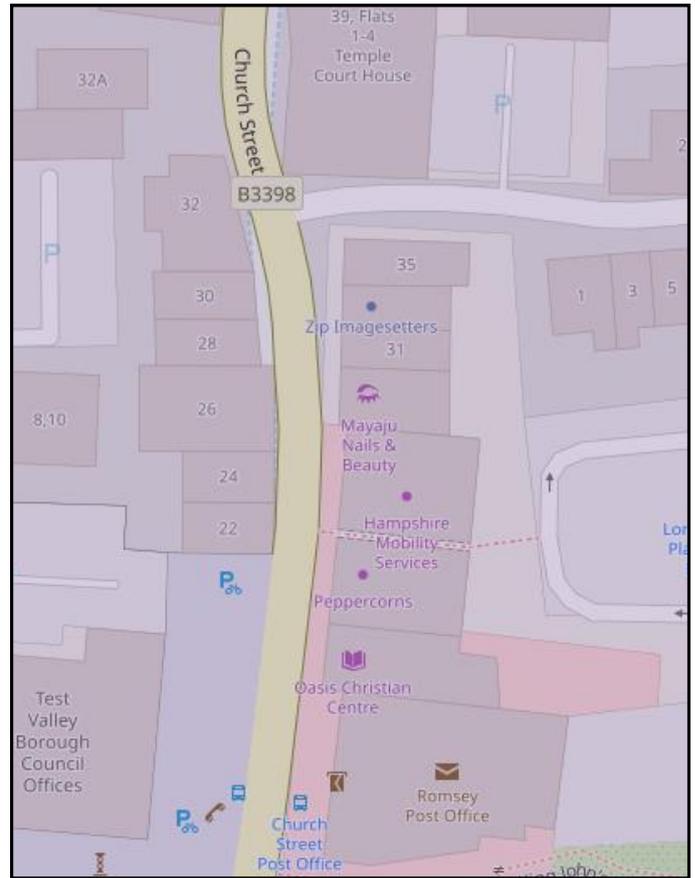
Spanning four centuries, my story amply demonstrates both the longevity of visual language, but also that, like spoken language, it is always changing and shifting, and becoming ever more multi-layered. I have suggested an interpretation of the jug faces that is plausible. But is it true? Well, of course, no-one knows. Go and look at our jug and an enigmatic and challenging face stares back at you, reminding you that people in the past thought very differently to us. I rather think that the enigma makes our jug a very good logo for a Historical Society. He reminds us that there is always more to learn, that there are no easy answers, and that there are many different ways to construct and envision the past.

Summary of the archaeological reports on the excavations in Church Street where the face jug was found.

Excavations took place in 1972, 1985 and 1989 in the area which is now covered by Abbey Walk, the two flanking shops and the car park behind. The earliest archaeological evidence retrieved dated from the late Roman period 3-4th century AD and consisted of pottery which may have originated from manure and rubbish spread onto arable fields. The remains of a late Saxon building and an associated latrine pit were recorded set back from the street. The building may have been a grain store as large quantities of burnt rye were found. The buildings on the street frontage were first built in the 13th century and the evidence from the cess and rubbish pits indicated that this site was occupied by people of high social status.

The 1989 excavation covered the area which is now occupied by Hampshire Mobility Services and the north part of Peppercorns. Two possible medieval buildings were identified, E and F on the diagram. Building E lay to the north end of the site, with the small boundary ditch to the south and parallel to it. The building was represented by post holes which would have formed the south wall. A beam slot and a row of stakeholes were probably the remains of internal partition walls. In what was probably the middle tenement of three. Evidence for another building (F) was located in the form of a hearth and successive floor layers. The hearth was constructed of tiles stacked on edge, within a shallow cut. No direct evidence of walls was recovered, but the edges of the floor layers may have marked the lines of the walls. The walls were of timber construction and probably rested on sleeper beams, which have left no trace in the archaeological record. At the southern edge of the site, possibly in the southern tenement, the fragmentary remains of another stacked tile hearth were found, but no evidence of any walls. The buildings would have fronted directly onto Church Street, with tofts, or garden areas, behind. Within the tofts were several medieval pits dating to the 13th and 14th centuries. One of the pits was cut by a well, also of the same period. Finds recovered from these features included a complete glazed face jug (from the 1972 excavations), a costrel (a drinking flask) and a copper alloy bowl. The fill of the well contained large fragments from several pottery vessels, both kitchen and table wares.





The excavation covered the present site of Peppercorns and the Hampshire Mobility Services and part of the car park behind. The map on the left shows the same area in about 1900.

Moses Pepper was appointed Postmaster at Romsey on May 2nd 1815, having pledged a £400 bond to the Post Office for the privilege. He was a linen Draper and his shop was situated in the Market Place, in what is now the NatWest Bank. He remained as town Postmaster until his death on December 19th 1859, aged 77. His son John took over as Postmaster on his father's death, having been Deputy for the previous year.

The Pepper family of eleven children lived in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, and Moses was fifth of seven children who lived to adulthood, four sons died in infancy. His mother Catherine, was born in 1748, and she married John Pepper, about two years her senior. John was a builder and architect, and responsible for several prestigious buildings in Newcastle-under-Lyme, he also built a section of the Wedgwood pottery works.

John Pepper died in June 1811, and in his will dated February 5th, he left each of the children a sum of money ranging from £200 to £700, except for Moses who was left just £5. It is possible that Moses had already been given his inheritance in advance.

<u>The John and Catherine Pepper family of Newcastle under Lyme.</u>		
John (junior)	1772-1811	architect
Margaret	1774-1859	husband was Mayor of Newcastle
Mary	1775-	married and lived in London
William	1780-1831	builder
MOSES	1782-1859	linen draper and Romsey Postmaster
Josiah	1785-	house painter and gilder
Jane	? -1811	
there were also four sons which died in infancy.		

1811 was a sad time for the family. John senior, John junior and Jane all died within the year, probably from either cholera or typhus which was circulating through the potteries at this time. Fortunately, Moses had moved away from home, and on January 8th 1811 he and Mary Tarver, a local Romsey girl, were married in Romsey Abbey. Over the next nineteen years they were to have nine children.

<u>The Moses and Mary Pepper family of Romsey, Hampshire.</u>		
Mary Jane	1812 Jan 12th.	lived briefly, buried Jan 12 1813
Ann	1813 March 28.	lived and died in Hastings, 1895
Louisa	1816 January 3rd.	married in Romsey Abbey 1843
Jane	1817 Sept. 2nd.	buried June 2nd. 1821
Margaret	1818 Sept. 23rd.	lived at 13 The Abbey, d.April 1903
Catherine Harriet 1	821 Feb. 28th.	lived and died in Hastings, 1866
John	1823 Nov. 11th.	Romsey postmaster 1859-67, living in New Zealand by 1875
William	1826 April 21st.	living in Australia by 1875
Mary Lerrier	1830 Nov. 24th.	married and lived in Hastings

The British Postal Service appointment books, which run from 1737 to 1969, record the appointment of Moses Pepper to the Romsey Office in 1815, the entry reads:

'Romsey - Moses Pepper - 2 May 1815 - Linen Draper - Mr. Hollis - resigned - 400'

In order, it records the name of the town, name of the new postmaster, date of his appointment, his trade, the name of the preceding Postmaster, and the reason for his leaving. Finally, the figure 400 records the bond in pounds sterling that the new postmaster was required to pledge against his dismissal from the Post Office, for any reason whatsoever. This was a large sum of money, and was designed to keep the postmaster on the straight and narrow path of honesty.

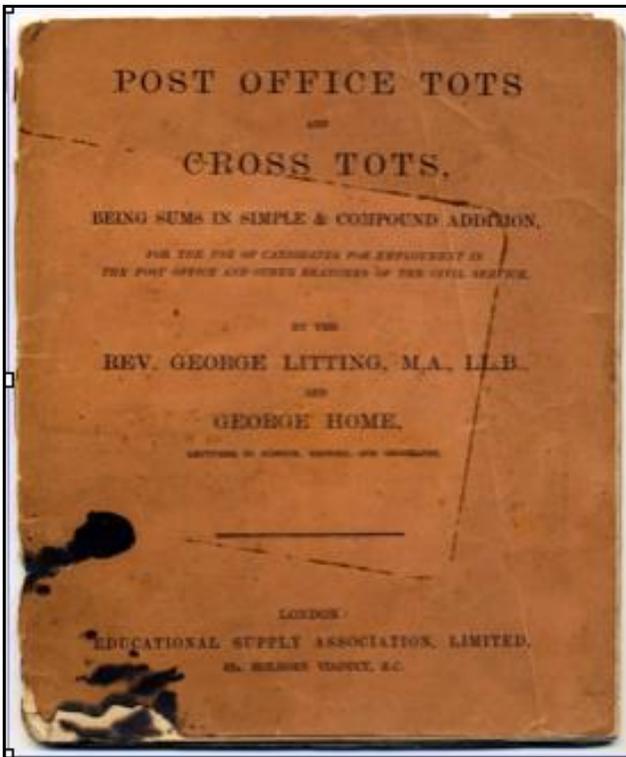
Postmasters, at this time were normally established tradesmen who ran a post office within their business premises, with an area or room being set aside for the postal work. From a sale document dated June 6th 1867, when John Pepper, son of Moses, who followed his father as Romsey Postmaster sold the business and moved to New Zealand, we have a brief description of all the fixtures and fittings in the 'Post Office Room'.

Most of the list concerns shelves and cupboards for shop stock, i.e 'shoe and boot cupboard with 11 shelves and sliding front', 'shoe and boot cupboard with 10 shelves and sliding front', and '2 tier 2 rail shelving over shoe and boot cupboard 2ft. 4in. However, the last three items listed concern the post office itself, and these are '1 gas pendant in Post Office', '1 gas standard with jet in counter' and '10ft. 6in. counter with panelled front, 4 drawers, and 2 closet doors and flap at end'.



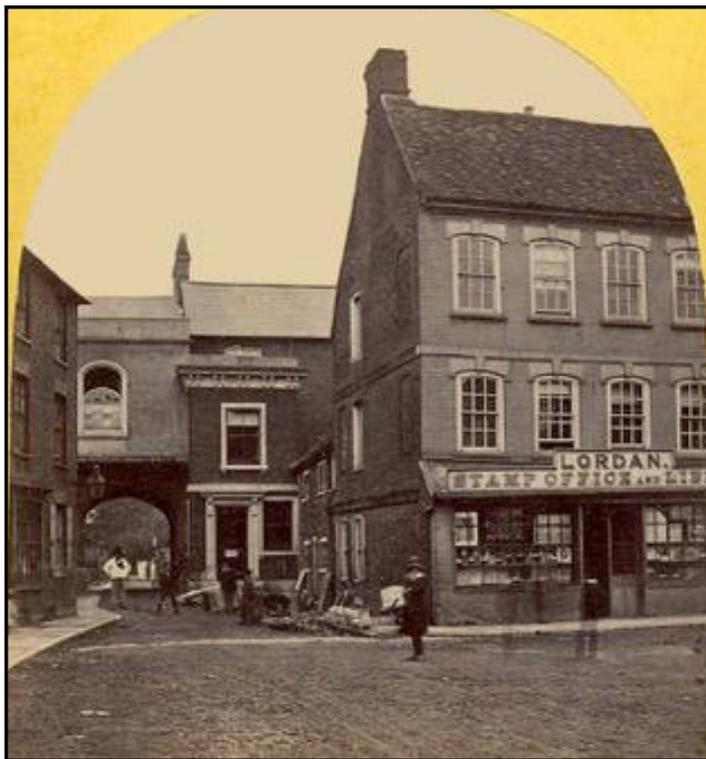
late 19th image of Romsey Post Office

When Moses was first appointed, postmasters were expected to be literate and numerate, and a tradesman would have been capable of what was required from the Post Office. However, entry tests were gradually introduced, becoming more complex as time progressed, and by the mid 19th century, books such as the 'POST OFFICE TOTS and CROSS TOTS' (Totals and Cross Totals), shown below, were used in entry examinations. Each of the three columns on the right hand page were expected to be totalled correctly in five minutes, but in competitions and for senior posts the act of addition was timed.



TOTS.

(a)			(b)			(c)		
£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
854067	8	3	596475	18	10	889257	9	6
899654	13	5	9846	13	8	875965	12	5
975879	17	6	804983	8	4	7638	4	8
7565	8	4	57938	15	7	658473	7	10
648638	14	9	88057	16	5	935946	15	3
536493	7	11	985784	7	11	587585	13	7
65786	15	5	479496	14	9	843798	18	4
789357	8	9	750845	8	7	9464	6	9
435094	18	7	847963	13	10	76939	19	5
878569	19	4	98578	15	3	498076	16	8
895785	10	6	563459	6	8	753947	13	2
49748	5	3	987696	12	10	886594	15	9
567863	18	10	674835	17	9	39865	8	3
934876	9	5	38587	4	4	595639	13	4
689549	15	8	795643	17	5	847392	18	7
67984	4	6	458798	13	8	78857	9	5
95657	15	9	979485	8	6	976573	12	10
548763	16	4	46959	14	7	658495	8	8
874495	7	7	685793	19	2	587968	17	9
6839	12	8	358567	5	9	46783	14	11
364758	4	6	93845	16	3	873856	15	8
59684	13	3	567578	13	4	348595	16	5



Stamp Office and Library

Romsey Post Office and Romsey Stamp Office faced one another across the Market Place, and were contemporary throughout most of the nineteenth century, but they performed different functions which are often confused.

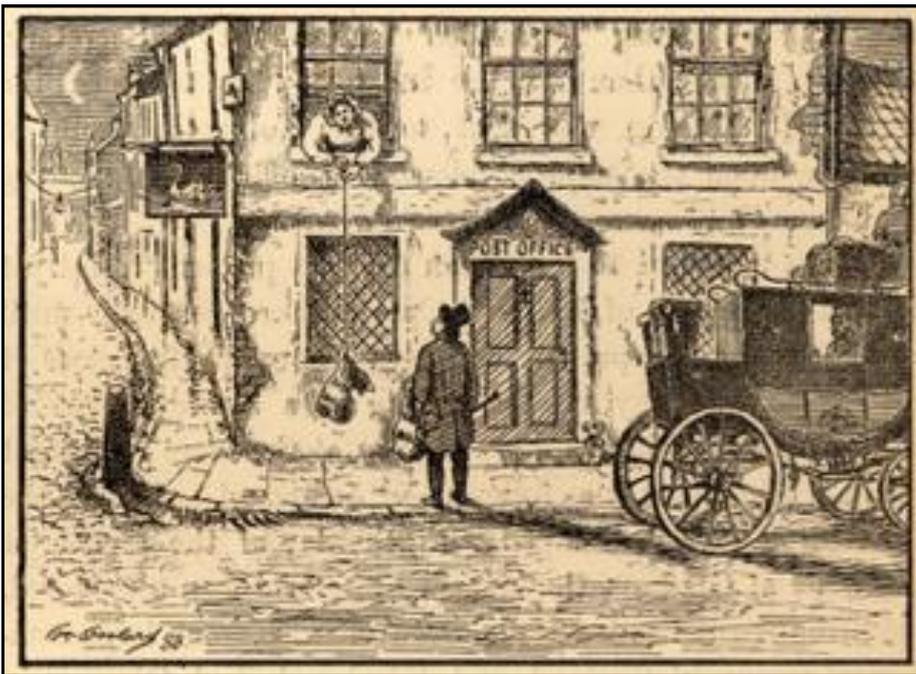


Embossed and handstruck Revenue stamps

The Stamp Office was responsible for the application of revenue stamps to paper, which was taxed, or to legal documents written on paper or parchment, these were also taxed. The revenue stamps themselves were either embossed into or printed onto the document, or printed onto paper which could be affixed to the taxed document. Later, printed Revenue stamps were provided for the same purpose.

The Post Office was responsible for the transmission of letters and newspapers, and eventually parcels. From May 6th 1840, postage stamps, initially called adhesive labels, were available in London Post Offices, and shortly thereafter from all provincial offices. In the provinces, postage stamps were supplied to Stamp Offices, and the local postmaster would buy his postage stamps from the Stamp Office.

This was sometimes a cause of friction between the two offices, because if the postmaster's account with the Post Office was in arrears, he was not permitted to acquire postage stamps from the Stamp Office. Until those arrears were cleared, and postage stamps again became available to the post office, the postage charge was written on the front of the letter or marked with a numeral handstamp in red ink, denoting that postage had been paid. This was not only an inconvenience to the business community who sent the larger proportion of letters, but also inconvenient and embarrassing for the postal staff.



Watford Post office

The combined shop and Post Office hours worked were exceedingly long. To avoid traffic jams by day, mail coaches commonly ran overnight and so the coaches through Romsey, between Southampton, London, Bristol and the far west country would pick up the Romsey letters in the early morning. Mail bags would have been lowered down from the bedroom window, as shown in the image of Watford post office. On one occasion, when the Romsey bag was opened in London, it was found to be full not of letters, but of the Pepper family dirty washing, Moses

having confused the letter bag with his linen bag.

The great change came in 1847 when Romsey was finally connected to the London and South Western Railway, and much of the long distance mail travelled by train. In 1830 Romsey Post Office operating hours were 3am to 11pm. In 1847 they were 7am to 1am.

Moses Pepper was not an exemplary Postmaster, judging by this letter from Lord Palmerston to Francis Freeling, then Secretary to the Post Office.

'Broadlands

27 Jany

1830

Lord Palmerston presents his compliments to Sir Francis Freeling, & begs to inclose a note which he has received from the Postmaster at Romsey in reply to one, which he wrote to the Postmaster, in consequence of finding that no date or time was ever affixed to the post mark of letters put into the office at Romsey; and Lord Palmerston would be much obliged to Sir Francis if he would inform him whether the Regulations of the Post Office do not require, that the date at which a letter is put into a country Post office should be marked upon the letter; such a rule appearing to be well calculated to prevent or at least to detect, any irregularity or negligence on the part of the Postmaster.'

Moses was not only a linen and woollen draper, hatter and silk mercer, and Romsey Postmaster, he was also a Capital Burgess of Romsey and was Town Mayor in 1826, 1838, and 1845. In addition to his shop profits he also had a number of salaried positions as shown below, which should have placed him in a very stable financial situation.

In 1837, the General Post Office accounts record the following for ROMSEY Post Office,

gross income	£75-7-00
net income	£54-17-00
fixed salary	£ 6
fees on late letters	15/-
1d fees for delivery	15/-
gratuities, Christmas boxes etc.	£7-7-00
profit on money orders	£7-7-00
paid to Postmaster for rent	£15
other outlays	£5-10-00
at the Post Office:	1 clerk paid by the crown
	1 clerk, fixed salary paid by the Postmaster

He was Treasurer to:

Romsey and Ringwood Turnpike trust 1835	income	£5
Romsey and Ringwood Turnpike trust 1836	income	£5
Romsey and Ringwood Turnpike trust 1839	income	£10
Whiteparish, Romsey and Southampton T'pike Trust' 1835	income	£5
Ditto 1836	income	£2-2-0
Ditto 1839	income	£ ?

In 1841 Moses received the salary of £74 as Postmaster.

By 1848 Moses was again in trouble, but this was much more serious. Two entries in the Postmaster General's Minute books record serious financial lapses which could have led to dismissal. The first is dated September 1848.

'No. 6139

Romsey Deputy admonished for his irregular remittance of P.O. revenue.

For the Postmaster General.

The Postmaster of 'Romsey' having been so frequently cautioned on the subject of the Remittance of the Public money and warned as to the consequences which would result if he neglected so important a part of his duty but without any good effect - I am compelled to report his conduct to your Lordship - If approved I will write to him in your name and inform him that if he does not for the future act in strict obedience with his Instructions by making his remittances with the regularity they require, it will become a question [of] whether he is a fit person to be retained in the service.

J R approved

7 september Sept 8 / 48'

[No 6139 In Postmaster General's Minutes, Jan. 1846 - June 1852, volume 102, pages 508/509]

Moses was clearly in some sort of financial difficulty. Failing to keep a clear account with the Post Office was a serious matter, and he may also have been in debt to Mr. Lordan at the Romsey Stamp Office. Unless his Post Office account was fully paid up he would have been unable to purchase postage stamps, which may in part account for the lack of stamps on letters leaving Romsey, the payment being marked in pen instead.

By December of 1848 Moses was still in a desperate situation. Post Office minute no. 7650 shown below suggests that although he had cleared his debts to the Post office and was making regular payments, the threat of dismissal for any further infringement of regulations remained, which would have been a great source of concern to him. If dismissed for poor accounting he would have been liable for the £400 bond to the Post Office, which he pledged on his appointment in 1815. This was a very large sum of money, which he clearly did not have.

'104

No 7650

Romsey Deputy severely reprimanded for irregular remittances.

The Postmaster General.

The numerous papers submitted to your Lordship with this minute arise out of the neglect of duty which has been repeatedly shown by the Postmaster of Romsey with respect to the remittance of the Public Money and although his accounts are now reported to be in a satisfactory state yet I think his conduct should not be passed over without your serious notice; I submit therefore, that he may be severely reprimanded and informed, that unless his Official proceedings are, in future regular in every respect, your Lordship will remove him from his situation

11.187. JT approved

8th December 1848 Dec. 9 / 48'

[In Postmaster General's Minutes, Jan. 1846 - June 1852, volume 112, page 104]

By 1849 Moses Pepper's drapery business was in grave difficulties, as the Auditor's report below shows.

'MOSES PEPPER 1849

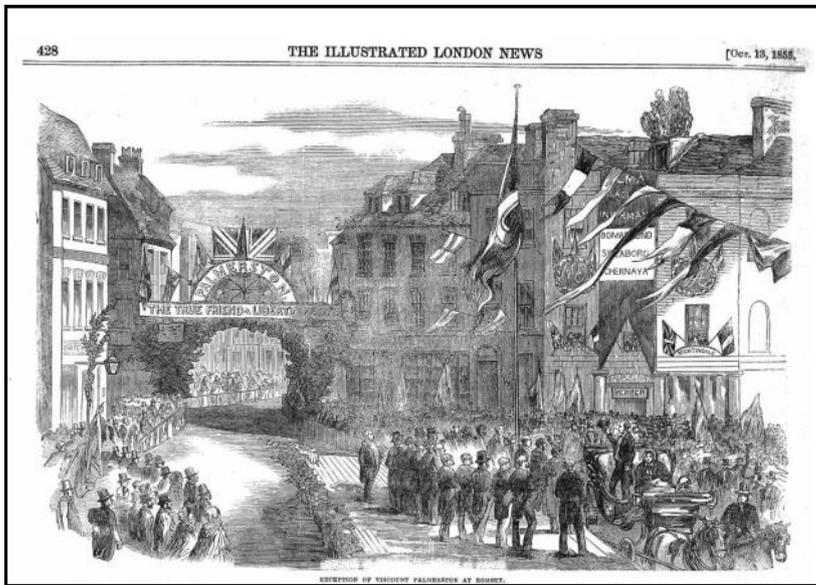
This is to certify that within the last fortnight I have examined the stock of Mr. Moses Pepper, Draper and have balanced the same at £750. But a great portion of the said stock being the accumulation of goods purchased during a long series of years - it would not I feel satisfied, if put into the market, realize (sic) anything like the above amount.

2 Church Passage

Samuel Stable

Guildhall

Moses may have been down, but he was certainly not out, and national events possibly saved him. The Crimean War came to his aid in a most peculiar way. The Campaign opened in 1854 with the Battle of Alma, and was not a howling success. In 1855 Queen Victoria reluctantly appointed Lord Palmerston Prime Minister, because no one else wanted the post. Palmerston took a tough line on the war and by September, Sevastopol had surrendered, and the war was all but over. Lord Palmerston returned home to Broadlands in October of 1855, and was feted by the Civic Dignitaries and townspeople of Romsey. Fortunately there was an illustrated London News artist on hand to record the scene in the Market Place, which was printed in the October 13th edition. Lord Palmerston is seen in an open carriage, acknowledging the cheering crowd, and just behind him is the door to Moses Pepper's shop and post office. To show his allegiance to a local hero Moses has a banner over his door reading 'PALMERSTON' in large letters, but just below that is another banner with the name 'PEPPER', in slightly larger letters.



At a stroke, Moses Pepper had an image of his shop and his name, in the most prestigious newspaper in the Empire, and intimately connected with the Hero of the hour. With his shop advertised across the globe, sales may well have risen, and the prospect of dismissal from the Post Office, and payment of the £400 bond appears to have faded into the background.



The grave marker of Moses Pepper has not yet been identified, but the plot is probably next to that of his daughter Margaret, shown left, which also commemorates the death of John, son of Moses, who died in New Zealand in 1894. Moses Pepper died in Romsey on December 19th 1859 and was buried in Botley Road Cemetery. Mary, his wife died in November 1857 and is buried with him. The burial plot was purchased by their son, John, who took over from his father as Postmaster of Romsey. he remained in office until his resignation in 1867 and by 1875 was living in Aukland, New Zealand. He died there in 1894. Margaret Pepper who was blind from birth lived in Romsey until her death in 1903. Ann and Catherine Harriet Pepper remained single. They and Mary Lerrier Pepper who married Mr White all lived in Hastings. Catherine died in 1886 and Ann in 1895.

A very dramatic crime was reported in *The Times* on 30th November 1820. It concerned horse-stealers and murderers and had its origins far from Romsey. The story began, in fact, at Maidstone gaol, but reached its climax in the lanes around Romsey.

At the beginning of September 1820 two men by the names of Hughes and Greenstreet had been committed to Maidstone gaol for horse-stealing. Hughes seems to have remained silent but Greenstreet offered to confess about the horse-stealing gang of gypsies that had plagued the countryside for some time. Unfortunately for Greenstreet, his willingness to confess became known to gang members still at large.

On Thursday, 5th October, a basket addressed to Greenstreet was delivered at the gaol. It purported to be from his wife, family and friends at Rowland-castle in Hampshire. Among other things it contained a plum-pudding, which Greenstreet tucked into, sharing a portion with a fellow prisoner called Hearn. In no time both were taken so extremely ill that the prison authorities were sure that they had been poisoned, with the plum-pudding as chief suspect. Analysis confirmed this – the pudding contained a large dose of arsenic.

Both men died, but not before Greenstreet had had time to accuse a man called Proudly, an associate of 'a desperate gang of gypsies'. In an effort to make atonement to society, Greenstreet also confessed to all the robberies he knew. This information was then laid before the Bow-Street Magistrates, who sent two officers called Lavender and Bishop to track down the offenders.

The officers seem to have been quite methodical, first making sure that the basket had not been sent by Greenstreet's family. Instead they found that all the contents of the basket had been bought in Tunbridge Wells by a gypsy woman, who probably made the pudding. She persuaded a local serving woman to address the package. It was at that point that Romsey entered the story. Lavender discovered that a gang of gypsies planned to go to Romsey fair; so he travelled to the fair in the hopes of tracing Proudly. He discovered that Proudly was, indeed, expected, but failed to spot him despite watching all day. Between 9pm and 10pm he left the town accompanied only by a Romsey constable, and in a lane met a couple of horsemen one of whom he was sure was Proudly. He grabbed his horse and tried to pull him to the ground. The man was indeed the suspect and resisted violently, but Lavender prevailed. To quote the article:

'Lavender ... having once seized hold of him, he was determined not to let him go. When he got him on the ground, he resisted still more violently, in which he was assisted by his companion on horseback, and probably a more desperate rencontre never took place, except with fire-arms and deadly weapons. Lavender threatened to shoot him if he did not surrender, but to no effect; he kicked and plunged, and made every possible resistance, and he nearly accomplished the object he had in view, of stripping himself naked, when it is almost impossible to hold a person by any means; he got off all his clothes except his breeches. Lavender with the greatest difficulty handcuffed him. In the conflict Lavender received several severe bruises.' Strangely, the second horseman turned out to be the brother of the Hughes who had been arrested along with Greenstreet. It was probably through Hughes that the gang found out about Greenstreet's betrayal.

Taken before the Mayor of Romsey, Proudly was confined to the local gaol for the night; on the following day Lavender took him from Romsey back to Maidstone, where he was committed.

PS: The Intrepid Lavender

Although not to do with the Romsey area, it is interesting to know that Lavender still pursued another thread in the case. He wanted to trace the woman who had made (and poisoned) the plum-pudding and prepared the basket for delivery to Greenstreet in Maidstone gaol.

Lavender went off in pursuit, following a suggestion that she might have joined a gang of gypsies encamped in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. He eventually found her – a woman called Mary Baker – and she was with an old man and woman who were said to be the parents of the same Hughes captured with Greenstreet. All these links back to Hughes in Maidstone gaol confirming that he must have been the source of the information about Greenstreet betraying them. In the event the Berkhamstead magistrates ordered Mary Baker to be taken to Maidstone gaol, where Lavender duly conveyed her. He must have felt well satisfied with himself.



A gypsy encampment in Essex in the 19th century

The 1588 Hursley Map

by Mary Harris

On the wall in the IBM offices in Hursley is a map of the Hursley Estate dated 1588. A photograph of this is held by the HRO in Winchester. As a result of our interest in the area of Ampfield and Pucknall we decided to make a copy of the map. Roger Harris did the actual copying and it was this process which made us realise how much information the map includes and led to further research being done.

The first questions were: Is the map original? and who made it? Although IBM have labelled the map a 17th century copy it seems to be an original, fully in agreement with the schedule of 1588 and very similar in style to other work by Ralph Treswell. The schedule which accompanies the map is headed:

"The Survaye of the Manour of Marden in Comitatu Southt made by Ralphe Treswell in Anno Domini 1588"

Knowing this it is just possible to read, in the damaged bottom left hand corner of the map, the name, 'Ralph Treswell 1588'

Ralph Treswell was probably born about 1540 and died in 1616. The first known reference to him at work is 1567-8. He was by trade a Painter-Stainer, a painter of banners. He was a Trustee of the Painter-Stainers' Company in London from 1580. He extended this work into being a surveyor and map-maker, doing pictorial surveys from 1580. His earliest known surveys are a series of plans of the estate of Sir Christopher Hatton at Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire. In 1585 and 86 he was engaged in making maps of Isle of Purbeck, Corfe Castle, Manor of Studland, and Langton Wallis in Dorset, all for Hatton. By 1587-8 he seems to have been busy in Essex and Hertford although this was the same time as the map of Merdon was drawn. Then there is a gap in his known work until 1592 when work in Brittany as well as Essex and the home counties restarts. His first London survey was in 1585 but the rest were done from 1607-11. It is as a Surveyor that he is best known particularly for the work commissioned in London by Christ's Hospital and the Clothworkers' Company between 1607 and 1612.

Ralph had several sons. Robert Treswell was appointed Surveyor General of Woods south of the Trent in 1610 and his assistants included John Norden who was later responsible for a number of county maps. Another son, Ralph, made a number of maps of private estates. He possibly worked with his father on a number but usually signed himself clearly - 'Ralph Treswell the younger'.

The development of scaled drawing of maps developed in the 15th and 16th centuries, originally driven by the need to have accurate surveys of fortifications. The large scale transfer of land which occurred after the confiscation of monastic and Church land in England in 1530s led to the new owners funding the surveying and the drawing of 'pictorial surveys' of their estates.

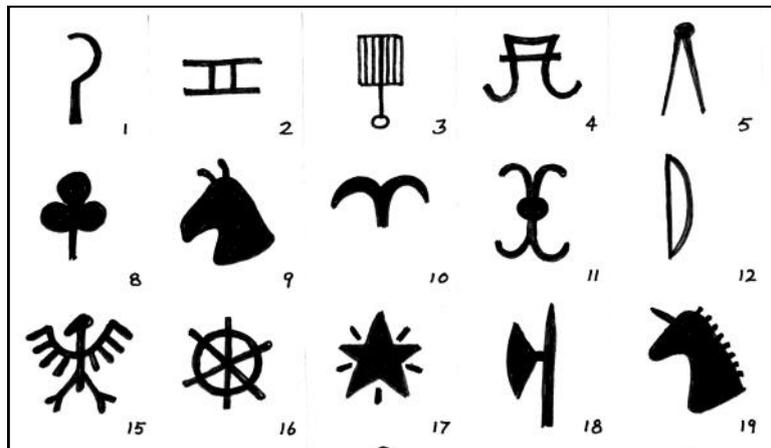


Ampfield Common. North is to the right.

The Map of Merdon

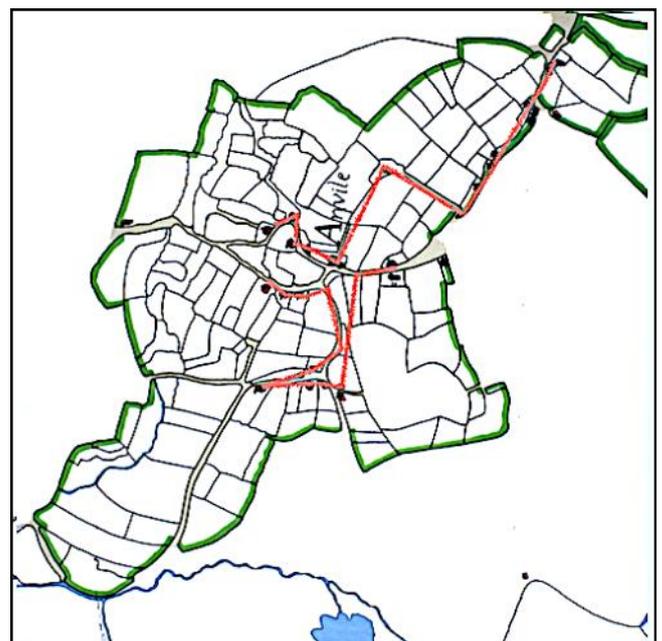
The map is drawn with north to the right. It covers the whole of the parish of Hursley which was an estate held by the Bishopric of Winchester until the Reformation. Although the Bishop of Winchester retained many of his lands at the dissolution of the monasteries, the lands which had been held by the monks of St Swithun's were confiscated. This included the Hursley estate. It was acquired by Sir Philip Hoby in 1552. After being repossessed by Queen Mary and given to Bishop John White of Winchester, Queen Elizabeth regranted it to Sir Philip's half-brother, William Hoby, in 1559. The manor was inherited by his son Giles, who sold the castle and manor to his father-in-law, Thomas Clerke in 1600. The map must have been drawn for William Hoby or his son, Giles. The map covers Hursley parish as it was in 1588 stretching from Ampfield in the west, close to Farley Mount in the north, Pitt on the east and Chandlers Ford and Hiltingbury in the southeast. It marks the fields, houses, woods and some individual trees.

Roadways are marked but mostly only where they have fences or hedges at their edges. Where routeways went over open, unenclosed, land they are sometimes shaded in and sometimes not marked at all. This reminds us that these were routeways not made roads. Each field and house is marked with a symbol which is recorded in the schedule alongside the name of the copyholder. These are an intriguing collection of symbols, some bear a relationship to designs used on slip trailed pottery at the time, others are similar to heraldic designs.



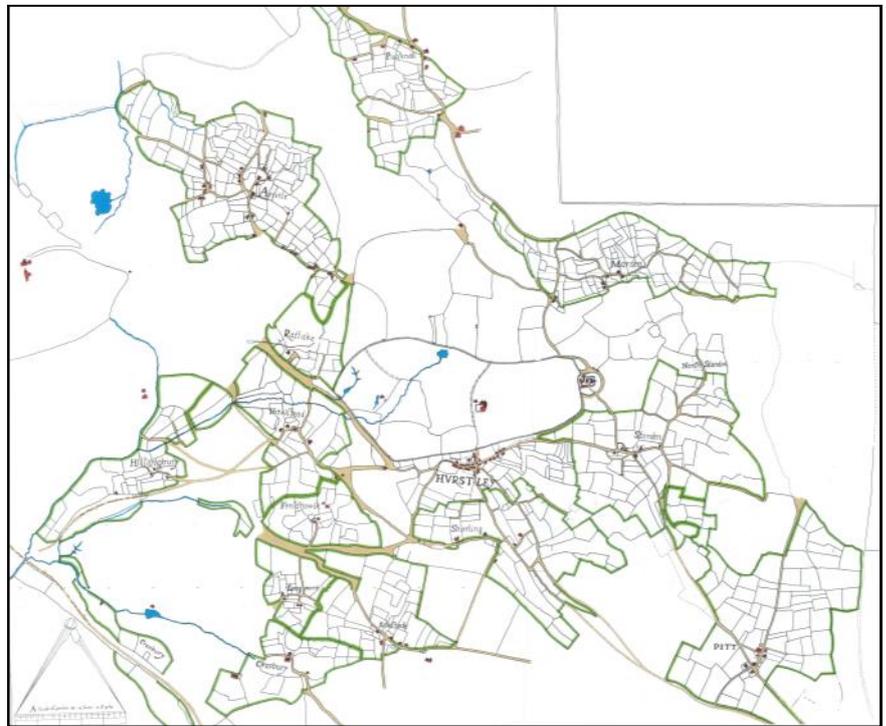
A selection of copyholder symbols

Very similar symbols were used by Ralph Treswell on many of his other maps. Each symbol identifies an individual tenant. In the schedule each of the copyholders and freeholders is listed under the heading of the village where his dwelling house was. In many cases it is possible to identify the cottages and houses where individuals lived. It is also possible to see how Treswell or his assistants walked around the hamlet to collect the information and rents.

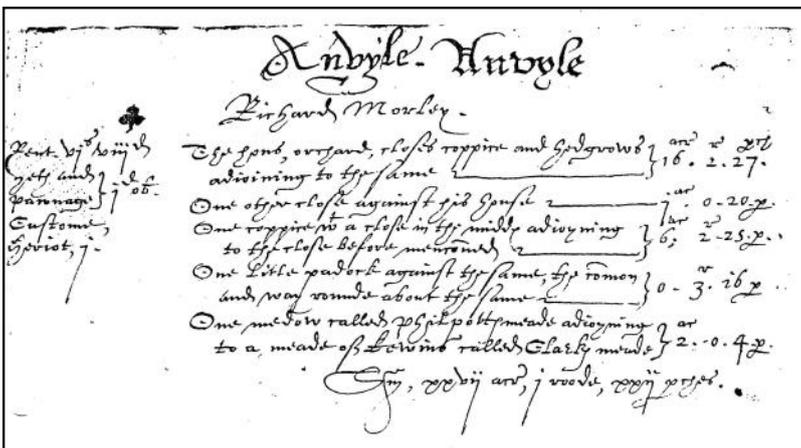


Ampfield showing the route followed by the surveyors

The map shows that in the 16th century in Hursley most people lived in small clustered hamlets close to the fields they held and worked and all around the same area or the adjacent one. Only a very few men held land in more than one hamlet.



Map of the hamlets



Extract from the schedule

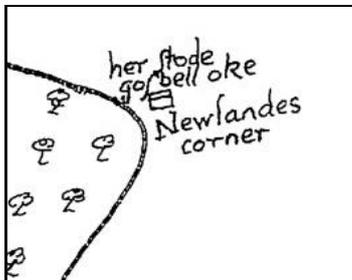
The schedule which goes with the map lists the holdings of each copyholder and the rent they owed. Field names are listed on the schedule. Most are simple descriptions of the land like 'brodemead' or 'fernehill'. Others refer to previous holders of the land like 'Reades' or 'Thoms land'. Some still survive in modern names like 'Doores' alongside the present Dores Lane.

What is very clear is that each hamlet and its fields were surrounded by open common pasture. Some of this is labelled common or heath and some 'the Lord's Waste'. When the land was enclosed in 1812 it became the private property of the owner of the manor, Sir William Heathcote. However, there is evidence that the copyholders did have rights to use the waste as these were listed in 1692 after a dispute and settlement in Chancery. The copyholders had the right to use the Lord's waste for grazing their livestock and as the source of small wood, and gravel and chalk from pits. The map shows clearly that virtually all copyholders had a lane leading from their enclosed fields to the open common land. Also, there are pathways giving access to the common land at frequent points.



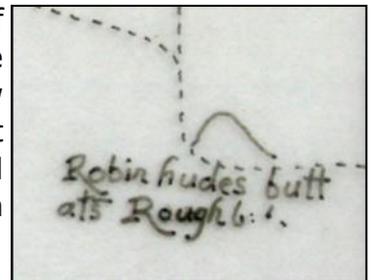
Ampfield, showing paths to the waste

There are a number of different ways in which fences, trees and houses are shown and this seems quite deliberate. In this case the map is more like a picture showing the local detail. The positioning of trees is not random. Some areas of woodland are shown with trees more closely spaced - this seems likely to reflect the actual situation. In some places residual trees show the position of an earlier hedgerow. Some individual trees seem to have had a special significance and are marked and named. South of Ampfield is the Gospel Oak which was where the beating of the bounds on Rogation day would pause to hear a reading from the Gospels.



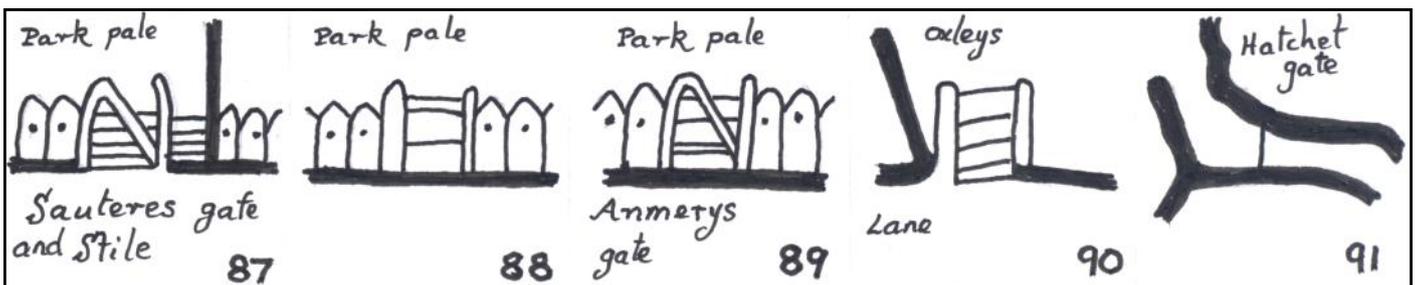
The Gospel Oak

Another major landmark on the boundary of the estate is 'Robin hudes Butt' This was the 16th century name for a Bronze Age barrow situated near Farley Mount but on the point where three parishes meet. This may well have been the site of the 'old execution

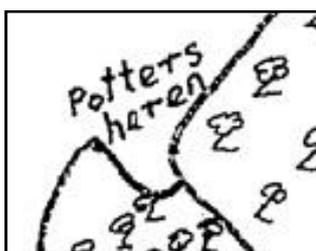


Robin hudes Butt

There are several different types of gate shown, some into Hursley Park itself and others into other enclosed land. These seem to be a genuine effort to show the types of gate being used.



A selection of gates



Several places on the map are labelled as 'heren'. This is an old word meaning 'small piece of land at a corner'. This is the original meaning of 'Potters Heron'.

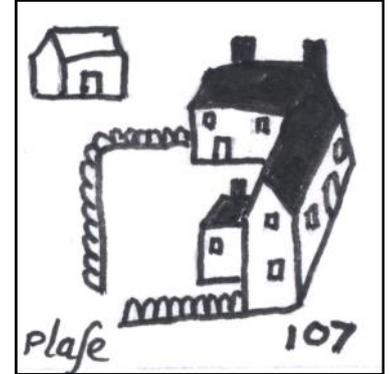


Buildings shown on the map

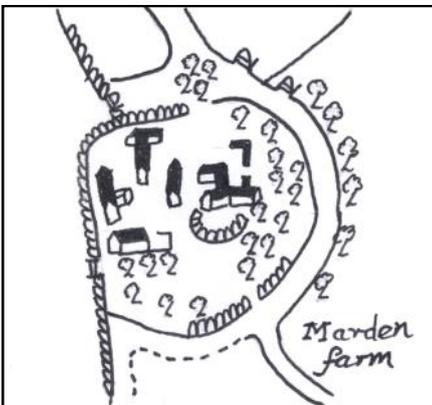
The houses are shown to a convention but some buildings have chimneys and some do not. This seems to show the difference between barns and houses but may not actually prove that all houses had chimneys at that time. However, the amount of variation in the buildings suggests that the map maker was trying to show accurate details.

The details of the enclosures and open commons of Hursley did not change until the enclosure agreements of the 19th century. Even then the old pattern of the small fields of each hamlet was preserved and can still be seen today, contrasting with the larger fields in the areas which were common and heath.

The manor house in Hursley Park is shown as an L-shaped house named 'plafe'.

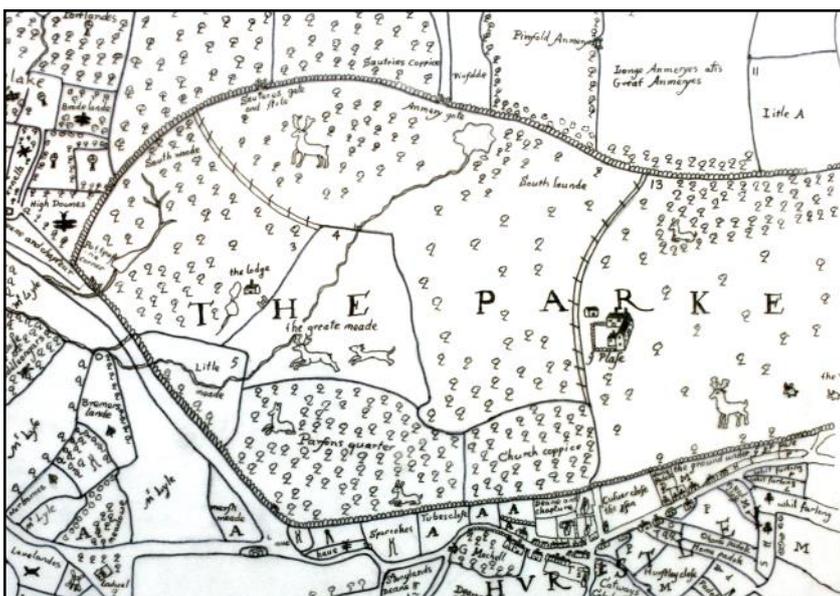


Manor House



Merdon Castle

Merdon Castle, which had been built by Bishop Henry of Blois in the 12th century is shown in use as the manor farm.



Hursley Park. North is to the right.

The park at Hursley is shown with deer and rabbits drawn within the park pale.

Questions and Answers

Is it true that Church Road used to be called Church Lane?

Yes, it is indeed true. The name Church Lane used to apply to an L-shaped way starting at the turning off Church Street (now designated as Church Place) and then turning at right angles to go northwards to the east of the churchyard to the junction with Mill Lane alongside Cherville House.

When did all this change? Well, we need to look back to the middle of the 19th century when there was no through road from the west end of the Abbey to Mill Lane.

What happened for all the changes to take place? The answer is that new buildings of note were constructed in the early 1850s. These stone buildings still survive, one being the old vicarage, now known as Folly House, and the other the Girls' National School, now Romsey Abbey Primary School. A link road was created to give access to the new buildings from both The Abbey and from Mill Lane. It is uncertain why this new way took over the 'Lane' element, making it necessary to introduce 'Road' for the older route.

Just to add to the confusion, two other 'church' names were once applied to public ways in the vicinity.

One is found in the records of Winchester College, which once owned much property in the town. In the reign of King Edward I (1272-1307) a property changed hands several times in *Churchegatestrete*. It was a tenement that measured just 20ft deep and 12ft long and granted with it, presumably nearby, was a corner plot even smaller at 10ft deep and 5ft long. It is the only appearance of this name, and we are left with the puzzle about the gate referred to.

The second name is Church Court. This applied to the way off No. 13 Church Street to King John's House and Tudor Cottage. In the 19th and early 20th century it was a public way to a rundown area of buildings that housed 16 households with no indoor facilities.



The area to the north of Romsey Abbey from the OS map of 1908.

What is this and why is it important?



This interesting artefact was found hiding in plain sight in King John's House. Originally identified as a Roman spatula, it is now recognised as an Anglo-Saxon stylus dating from the 8th or 9th century. A stylus was an implement used for writing on a wax tablet, with a pointed tip used to incise letters into the wax and a flat 'eraser' at the other end. The stylus has stylish bands around the shaft. The circular depression near the top would have held a decorative setting. This was not an everyday item; it resembles bronze dress pins of the period. At a time when few people could write, this stylus was designed to impress.

The stylus is important in our understanding of Romsey's early history. These objects have been found exclusively on ecclesiastical sites. It provides clear evidence that Romsey was the site of a minster church before the founding of the Abbey by King Edward the Elder in 907. The stylus was found during excavations in Narrow Lane in 1979. It was buried within a layer of iron slag, debris from the iron smelting industry. This enterprise was probably controlled by the minster and would have provided a valuable source of income. Archaeologists working on the site ended each day 'looking like coal miners', blackened by the ash and soot from the smelting. The Old English word for soot was *hrum*. Perhaps our Rumsey owes its name to those Saxon iron smelters.

Karen Anderson

Our Programme

In the current circumstances we have cancelled all our meetings for the first half of this year but we hope that we will be able to resume for the second half; at the moment we have the following planned:

August

The War Memorial Park: a slide show

Speaker: Phoebe Merrick

Venue: Town Hall Court Room

Date: Friday 14th August at 2.15 pm

September

The mysterious death of William Rufus

Speaker: Andrew Skinner

Venue: Town Hall Council Chamber

Date: Monday 14th September, 7.30 pm

Botley Road Cemetery: a walk

Guide: Phoebe Merrick

Venue: Botley Road Cemetery

Date: Tuesday 15th September at 10.30 am

Broken by age or war: Life at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea

Speaker: Mick Kippin

Venue: Town Hall Court Room

Date: Thursday 24th September at 7.30 pm

October

Amateur Dramatics before RAODS: a slide show

Speaker: Mary Harris

Venue: Town Hall Council Chamber

Date: Monday 12th October at 7.30 pm

People of Romsey on the Eve of the First World War

Speaker: Jean Brent

Venue: Town Hall Court Room

Date: Tuesday 13th October at 10.30 am

Waterways of Romsey

Speaker: Alec Morley

Venue: Town Hall Court Room

Date: Thursday 22nd October at 7.30 pm

Greatbridge: a slide show

Speaker: Phoebe Merrick

Venue: Town Hall Court Room

Date: Friday 23rd October at 2.15 pm

November

Annual General Meeting

followed by

Buses serving Romsey from the 1960s

Speaker: Neal Kearns

Venue: Town Hall Council Chamber

Date: Monday 9th November at 7.30 pm

Two Victorians who remade Romsey Abbey

Speaker: Terry Proctor

Venue: Town Hall Court Room

Date: Tuesday 10th November at 10.30

Waitrose, etc: a slide show

Speaker: Phoebe Merrick

Venue: Town Hall Court Room

Date: Friday 20th November at 2.15

The Lower Test Valley in Roman Times

Speaker: Steve Cooper

Venue: Town Hall Court Room

Date: Thursday 12th November at 7.30 pm

December

Christmas Film Show

Host: Phoebe Merrick

Venue: Town Hall Council Chamber

Date: Monday 14th December at 7.30 pm

For updates and further information please visit our website:

www.ltvas.org.uk

or email:

romseyhistory@gmail.com