

# THE CHRONICLES OF A MANOR HOUSE

By Evelyn M. Barnett



## THE MANOR HOUSE



PROBABLY our proudest historical possession in Southall to-day is that picturesque Elizabethan building in the Green, known as the Manor House. Certainly it should not be under-rated, there are very few others of its type in London or Middlesex. When one observes the "cement jungle" which is growing up around us in the twentieth century, it is small wonder this house attracts the attention of the passer-by, and certainly is appreciated by all who enter its doors.

It is important to note it was built only 3/4 of a mile northwest of the ancient Church of St. Mary the Virgin at Norwood Green. When considering any historical evidence in the early centuries, we shall find these two buildings had a close relationship.

The Manor House is described in detail by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. A brief survey would show it to be a timber-framed structure consisting of a central hall, range of two storeys, flanked by gabled cross-wings of unequal width. The central hall boasts of a very fine large fireplace. The overmantel is of five bays standing on an enriched shelf. The middle panel has a shield-of-arms of Awsiter and strapwork with the initials R. A.. The outer bays have vine and snake ornament. The hall is lined with oak panelling, as are also several of the main rooms. Some of the ceilings are richly embossed.

An entirely new West wing was built in the late seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century a clock tower was added. The clock held a bell of very good tone. Fortunately the bell was rescued when this wing and tower was demolished in 1913 for road widening. The bell was handed over to the keeper of Southall Park to sound the time of closing.

The whole frontage of the house was partially hidden from the road by trees and rather elaborate iron railings. The adjoining grounds had a high brick wall facing on to the road and large wooden entrance gates. The other side of these were three Manor House Cottages. The first one was a bungalow type, the other two were much larger, each containing four bedrooms. All originally had front gardens. Latterly the front rooms of these cottages were turned into shops; one was occupied by a clocksmith, and the other a confectioner. These faced another large residence known as "The Romans". This house

MANOR HOUSE, SOUTHALL.



*The Manor House in rather a dilapidated condition. This shows the west wing and clock-tower.  
The probable date is 1913, before the purchase by the Urban District Council.*

was credited with historical connections. One legend being that Wolsey occupied it when Henry the Eighth was staying with the Lord of the Manor at "Dorman's".

The Manor House had many outbuildings, barns, a bailiff's cottage, two stables, harness room and a large coach house.

The magnificent grounds held some wonderful yew trees, and an old mulberry tree said to have been planted by Henry the Eighth. In the 19th century, croquet lawns and tennis courts were added. At the back of these, a large orchard, cow-sheds and piggeries.

A large very fine tithe barn about 360 years old stood on the south corner in close proximity to the road. At the turn of the century the occupant of the Manor House allowed a priest to come and say Mass here on Sundays. This soon became the original Roman Catholic Church in Southall, and was consecrated to St. Anselm. At the back of this the bailiff's cottage, about the same age as the barn was used as the Presbytery. When they fell into a dilapidated condition, they were demolished and the present school built, with an adjoining Church. The latter now being used as an extension to the school.

One might also mention the "Stocks" (that curious punishment for evil-doers). These stood a few hundred yards from the main entrance to the Manor House. Past historians mark it roughly at the top of Workhouse Lane (now Featherstone Road). The workhouse itself a short distance down the lane on the righthand side The Stocks were destroyed by vandalism at the beginning of the last century.

### **AN IMPRESSION**

Buildings are erected and objects manufactured because someone, somewhere thought it good to erect or manufacture. So far we have only considered the Manor House as an historic building. But no building can survive without the care and attention of people. Indeed one finds their whole personalities impregnated into the walls and atmosphere.

Therefore we must in imagination go back many centuries to consider a few of the many personalities who lived in another era, and have left us a part of their lives.

First it will be necessary to review a small part of the early records of these districts and carry in our minds a clear idea of "Manorial Rights".

## **MEDIAEVAL MANORS**

A "MANOR" is a freehold estate which carries with it certain rights, customs and privileges exercised by the owner who is styled "Lord of the Manor". As proprietor of the land he guided, directed and in some respects governed those under him, who were called his vassals or tenants; these vassals paid rent by service, most often in ancient times by service in war. When the Lord of the Manor made war on his own account, or when he had to furnish a contingent to the army of the State in any national war, the vassals were bound to do duty, or watch and ward the residence of their chief.

A Court was held once a year (usually at Eastertide) which settled disputes, received dues and regulated all affairs as between landlord and tenant. The Lords had power of life and death over all. They gathered the taxes, and distributed charity where it was needed. The only other force was the parish priest. The whole life of the peasant was divided between the parish Church and the Manor House. "Religion and life" were merely aspects of the same social existence.

## **FIRST RECORDS**

It is difficult to trace the first habitation of this part of Middlesex. Certainly it was part of the great forest stretching North of the Thames.

Touching on the history of Southall one cannot proceed without a brief glance back into the seventh or eighth century to realise how this district is so closely allied to the Church and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

One imagines at this period the inhabitants were probably converted to Christianity. Thus King Wiglaf of Mercia saw fit to grant these lands to the Archbishop. In turn he sent a monk by the name of Werhard to minister to the people. The first recorded reference is in this priest's Will of 830 A.D. in which he gives back the land to the Archbishop. A copy of this interesting document is kept in the Library of Lambeth Palace. In it we read "Firstly then I humbly return to Christ Church and my brother monks all the lands in and outside Kent which I have hitherto held as the gift of the Archbishop and the Community the name of the lands I give back are:— Hesa (now Hayes) 104 hides. I duly give back another measure of land at "Norwude".



*Manor House Cottages looking northwards. On the left, the wall and trees belonging to "The Roman's".*

A "Hide" was a Norman measurement which approximates to 120 acres. Thus the Archbishops of Canterbury were the largest landowners holding over 7000 acres in Hayes and Norwood.

Although they almost certainly never resided here, the Lords of the Manor at this time are very easy to trace, being the Archbishops of Canterbury. They include Lanfranc, military advisor to William the Conqueror, the unfortunate Thomas a Becket and Henry Chichele who gave considerable time and money to the rebuilding of Norwood Church in the fifteenth century. There is a cross erected in the churchyard to his memory.

After the Norman Conquest the history of the manor lands is somewhat sketchy and confusing because Archbishop Lanfranc leased them to laymen. The most likely site of the first manor was Dormans Well. We know there was a moated manor of some considerable size built comparatively early, which must have stood somewhere near the junction of Dormers Wells Lane with Telford Road. It is also recorded a chalybeate spring was nearby; these mineral waters were supposed to be beneficial to health.

The owner of the manor in 1496 was Edward Cheseman, Cofferer to King Henry the Seventh. His office was comparable with that of Keeper of the Wardrobe. He probably owed his elevation to services rendered during the Wars of the Roses. The King died in 1509 and Edward Cheseman a few months later. His son Robert succeeded him. In 1539 he was one of the esquires sent to meet Anne of Cleves on her arrival from Dusseldorf to marry Henry the Eighth. He was also concerned with the trials of Katherine Howard and Cardinal Wolsey.

In 1543 Henry the Eighth received the manors of Hayes, Norwood and Southall from Archbishop Cranmer in exchange for lands in Kent. The two manors of Norwood and Southall were immediately sold to Robert Cheseman and he thus became the first resident Lord of the Manor. During his lifetime, he supervised the building of his tomb in Norwood Church. On his death in 1547, the manor passed to his son-in-law Francis Chamberlayne and later to Lord and Lady Dacre. The last of the line died in 1595. The trustees of Lady Dacre's Will sold the Manor to Francis Awsiter in 1602.

### **FRANCIS AWSITER**

Francis Awsiter born in 1557 was no stranger to "Norwude" when he became Lord of the Manor on 12th April 1602. All records show him to be a man of very high position, a City merchant and alderman. He possessed large estates at Cowley, Harrow, Wembley,

Cranford and Hanwell. The first possession which he had in this parish — and it would appear to have been his original residence — was a place called "The Wrenns".

Various records mention a house by this name. It was built by John Cannon about 1500 and sold to Francis Awsiter on 18th April 1572.

As "The Wrenns" is not shown on any early maps, we can only gather this was the name given to our original building.

The date 1587 roughly and unclearly carved in the pediment above one of the windows, has been offered as irrefutable evidence that Francis Awsiter was the actual builder. It is probably much more correct to state he substantially altered the structure, or added a new wing in that year.

In a survey map of 1677 Robert Awsiter is mentioned at "The Wrenns" and Robert Hampton was living at Dormans Well so presumably the old manor was still standing. Probably "The Wrenns" did not change its name to Manor House until the original one was demolished.

Francis Awsiter married Jane Horseman. They had four children; Richard, Elizabeth, Mary Anne and Rebecka.

This little family though children of a nobleman must have been brought up under primitive conditions. Remembering there could only have been a few rough cart tracks instead of roads. No railway. No canal. No shops. No schools. Probably a few peasant cottages around the village green by the Church. However the land was rich and fertile especially in corn and wheat.

Plagues were common, chiefly because water was scarce. It could only be used for washing as a last resort.

The only suitable meeting place was the Church. One gathers Francis was a Puritan. In 1612 he erected a gallery in Norwood Church. During the last century this became unsafe and was pulled down. A beautiful oak plaque (recently restored) commemorating this gallery is still attached to one of the arches in the nave. It reads — "This gallerie was sett up and finished at the coste and charges of Francis Awsiter, Gentleman, in ye yeare of our Lorde God 1612."

He died in 1624 and was the first member of the family to be buried within the Church. In his Will he left some strange bequests. We read — "that thirty shillings a year for ever is to be paid on Good Friday to the Church of St. Mary. Eight shillings of which is to be given to the preacher and two shillings to the Parish Clerk". — "to tole the Bell halfe an hour before the sermon, and to make clean the Gallerie in the sayd Church or Chapell which I caused to be built and set up at my own charge". — He directed that these sums — "shall be distributed after sermon ended, above in the Gallerie; and such of the poor widows as should neglect to come in to the Sermon, not being hindered by God's visitation of sickness or infirmity, shall have no part thereof".

Although all the charities have now been amalgamated, the Rector still receives Awsiter's gift from the Trustees each year for preaching the Good Friday sermon.

### **RICHARD AWSITER**

Only son of Francis Awsiter. Became Lord of the Manor in 1624. He married a sister of Sir John Thorogood, a nobleman and owner of large estates. They had four sons, Francis, John, Robert and Thomas.

It is recorded that he preferred to reside in the more comfortable Elizabethan building, rather than Dormandswell.

He had Christopher Merrick as his steward. Another important personality and landowner in the district.

As we now come deeper in to the 17th century, we find a high road passing through Northcote from London to Oxford, and another of greater importance leading to Brentford. The cheapest means of commercial transport was navigable rivers. Brentford is of course on the Thames.

Richard Awsiter died in 1640. There is no memorial in Church

### **FRANCIS AWSITER II**

Eldest son of Richard. Became Lord of the Manor in 1640, while he was still under 21 years of age. His wife was Dorothy Cole. Little is known about his family life.

The Civil War began in 1642. One understands this affected the lives of local inhabitants. There were Parliamentary camps at Uxbridge, Hounslow and Brentford.

During this period an important Act of Parliament was passed, which required parish registers to be kept. These to record baptisms, marriages, and burials. Those at St. Mary's Norwood, date back to 1654.

A tally of lands in 1649 describes Francis Awsiter II as the largest landowner with 425 acres, second was Christopher Merrick with 241 acres, third came Robert Hampton of Dormandswell with 203 acres.

A census of the population of Southall in 1653 was 81.

In 1666 Francis Awsiter II died (this was the year of the great plague but there need not be any connection). His younger brother John had died earlier and without issue.

### **ROBERT AWSITER**

Younger brother of Francis Awsiter II. Became fourth of the Awsiter family to be Lord of the Manor in 1666. His residence is still called "The Wrenns". Robert Hampton was living at Dormandswell.

Robert Awsiter was married twice. First to Rose who bore him a son called Francis. He was a very sick boy and died at the age of seven. Rose died in 1661. In 1664 Robert married Margaret Awnsam of Heston, one of the oldest Middlesex families.

In the year 1665 the Church Register records "Richard the son of Robert Awsiter gent, was borne Januarie the 8th and baptized the 16th of the same month.

In the same year a daughter was born to Thomas Awsiter, and the birth is entered in the register as follows:— Susanna the daughter of Thomas Awsiter gent, was borne Aprill 9th and baptized the 30th of the same month.

Other entries around these dates showed many notable personalities living in this district. Probably the noblemen found it easy access to Westminster, Windsor and Hampton Court.



*The Steward's House belonging to the Awsiter family, just before its demolition. Last used as a Presbytery for the R.C. Tithe Barn Church. It is probable that Elisha Biscoe (founder of the first Free School in Norwood) lived here with his parents between the years 1730 and 1750. In that year he became Steward to John Awsiter.*

Robert Awsiter took a keen interest in parish affairs, as did his brothers Francis and Thomas. In the oldest local Rate Book that is preserved dating from the year 1652, their signatures are often to be found, showing they were present at the Vestries. Until the inauguration of the District Council in 1895 these Church Vestries levied rates, and confirmed the disbursement made to the poor of the parish. The rates could not have been a grievous burden for an entry in 1653, gives — Mr. Christopher Merrick owner of 203 acres paid £.1.2.8 and Mr. Thomas Awsiter £1.0.0 for that year.

One finds that even a small charity of Forty Shillings a year was carefully distributed to the poorest inhabitants. It comprised of 13 good and wholesome loaves to the poorest in Northcote on Xmas Day. 13 loaves to the poor of Southall on Easter Day, and 13 loaves to the poor of Norwood on Whitsun Day, and the remaining shilling to the Parish Clerk for ever. One of many bequests in the care of Norwood Vestry.

In 1683 Robert Awsiter was layed to rest in the chancel of Norwood Church. Four months after his wife was placed beside him.

### **RICHARD AWSITER II**

Fifth of the family to become Lord of the Manor was Richard Awsiter II, son of Robert and Margaret. He could only have been 18 years of age.

During the latter part of the 17th century, the Merricks gradually eclipsed the Awsiters as landowners in the district, though the Awsiters still remained Lords of the Manor.

Francis Merrick (a nephew of Christopher Merrick) lived in a large mansion on ground now known as Southall Park. In 1698 he obtained a Charter from William III to hold a weekly cattle market on his land at "Northcott otherwise Southall". It is very unusual for a Charter to be granted to someone other than the Lord of the Manor. However this was a most notable event for the district. The weekly cattle market is still flourishing, the largest and most important in south-east England. The original Charter hangs in our Central Library (minus its Seal!).

Evidently there was much rivalry between Richard Awsiter and Francis Merrick, for in the Overseers Account Book one reads — "Memorandum. It was agreed upon at a Parish Meeting held at Norwood in the Parish of Hayes in the County of Middlesex on Easter Monday being the 5th day of April 1697. By the Vicar and Churchwardens with the rest of the inhabitants. That Francis Merrick Esq. shall have the first Pew being newly built in

the Church next to the Chancelle upon the south side of the Church of Norwood, and that Richard Awsiter Esq. shall have the Second Seate and that Wm. Sincleer Gent shall have the Third Seate upon the Same Side to sit in, for them their heirs and successors having already payd for the Erecting them at their own propper costs and charges."

According to custom the pew nearest the chancel would be assigned to the most important parishoner, until at the back of the Church there were a few rough benches for elderly paupers.

In 1705 Richard died and was succeeded by his brother Robert.

### **ROBERT AWSITER II**

Little is known of the sixth Lord of the Manor. He was married and had two children, but both had died in infancy.

One understands the appearance and everyday life of the precinct was only changing very slowly.

In 1714 the Turnpike Trust assumed control of the Uxbridge Road, At Hanwell, Hayes and remote points on the road, toll gates were set up and small amounts of money collected from the road users.

Robert Awsiter II died in 1730.

### **JOHN AWSITER**

Seventh and last of the family to assume the dignity of Lord of the Manor. The relationship of John to his predecessors is unknown. There are over fifty entries under the name of Awsiter in the Norwood Registers, and it becomes most difficult to trace their relationships. However we know John had nine children, but only one survived infancy. This son, Thomas, is the last one mentioned in the records.

From his memorial tablet in the Church we gather John was a Doctor of Medicine. He claimed to be the discoverer of the beneficial effects of sea-water to which Brighton and other resorts owed their prosperity during the Regency.



*The Green  
Southall*

*C. B.  
Sears*

*"Welch's Folly" opposite the Manor House.*

Rev. Daniel Lysons the great historian of that period tells us — "John Awsiter M.D. lives in an old mansion at Southall Green. In the garden are several yew trees cut into the form of temples" — These are clearly the same yews to be seen to-day.

It is interesting to note that John Awsiter had a certain steward by the name of Joseph Biscoe. Twenty years later his son Elisha succeeded him in that position To-day his memorial still stands in Tentelow Lane. He founded a school in 1767 for children of poor parents, 34 boys and 6 girls from the parishes of Hayes, Heston and Norwood. This was undoubtedly the first school to be opened in these districts. It served its original purpose for 183 years, finally closing down in 1950.

John Awsiter died in 1756 and the Manor passed to his son Thomas.

### **THOMAS AWSITER**

Thomas immediately sold the manorial rights to Agatha Child, widow of the banker Francis Child of Osterley Park. However the family did not part with their old Manor House until the early part of the nineteenth century. Thus it had the same family name for over two centuries, and through twelve Reigns.

In the year that Thomas Awsiter took over the Manor House (1756), a census was taken of the dwelling houses in the district. They numbered 117 and were scattered over Norwood, Southall and Northcote. The population is given as 697.

But industrialisation was soon to come. By 1798 the waterway was in construction by the Grand Junction Canal Company cutting through from Brentford to Uxbridge. Three years later a branch was cut from Bulls Bridge (for the first mile or two running parallel to the course of the Yeading Brook) to the small village of Paddington. With this easy method of transportation close at hand, gravel pits were opened and brickmaking commenced. In a few years Southall bricks became a commercial proposition up and down the country.

Incidentally our first postmaster came to Southall in 1794. William Hayes — an artist — arrived with his wife and family of twenty-one children. The Post Office at that time is believed to have been somewhere in the vicinity of the Red Lion hostelry. He embraced all the general postal duties which are now spread over many departments; receiving mail, delivering it, selling letter forms and giving information about the next stage coach to Bath. However at this period the life of a postman lacked the security it now enjoys, and by 1799 William Hayes was in such dire straits that the Vicar of Hanwell published an

appeal to the public to supplement his income, which scarcely ever exceeded £90 per annum. Gradually his health broke, and weighed down with family worries he apparently died soon after, for in an inventory of 1806, the humble cottage and land are shown in the name of his wife. As a hobby he painted portraits of many of the exotic birds in Osterley Park. One volume of these is displayed at the British Museum.

Thomas Awsiter died in 1801. Seemingly he was the last of the family to reside at the Manor House, but it was still in the Awsiter name until 1821.

### **WILLIAM WELCH**

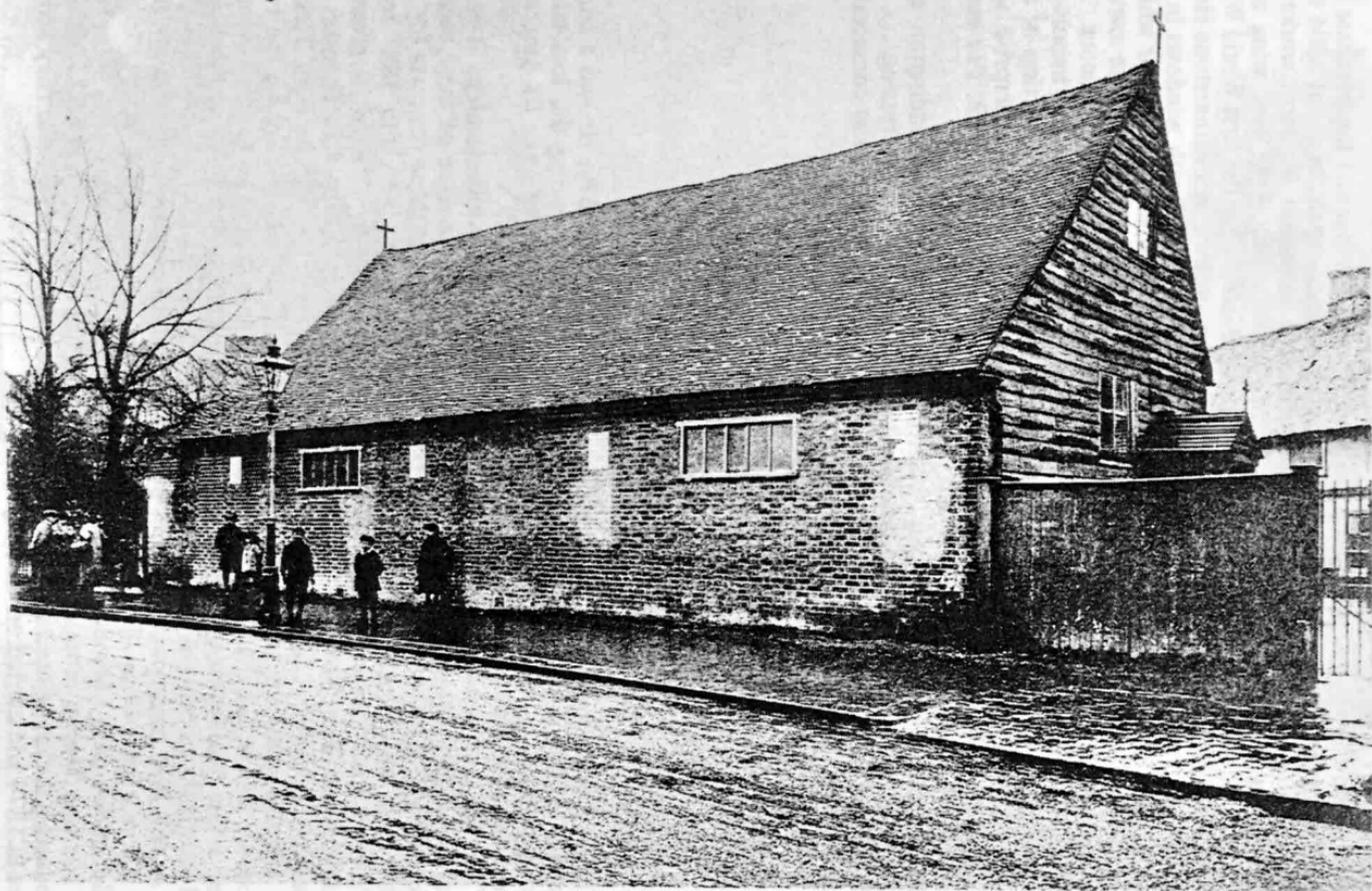
William, Welch purchased the Manor House from the Awsiters in 1821. He was no stranger to the district, having acquired the lease of the market from the Earl of Jersey in 1801. This market had become very popular and Welch almost re-built it at a cost of £1,277.6.4

During the twenty years after the death of Thomas Awsiter and the purchase by Welch, the Manor House had fallen into a terrible state of repair. In about 1804 the building was a Roman Catholic School, and later a tenement for farm workers. William Welch restored it extensively. Probably added the new West wing and Clock Tower; this part was demolished for road widening after the first World War.

His son Alfred lived opposite in an old farmhouse known as Featherstone Hall. This was also enlarged in 1876, and a high wall built round with windows in it. This building earned the name of "Welch's Folly", because the purpose for which it was designed puzzled the inhabitants. About 1880 this became a private mental home, and was ultimately demolished to make room for the Dominion Cinema.

While William Welch was in residence at the Manor House, a most important contribution to the development of Southall took place. The construction of the railway caused village life to gradually decline and industrial enterprise was encouraged. Southall Railway Station was opened on May 1st 1839. For some twenty years it had a level crossing, with a large pond close by.

Eight trains per day each way, carried passengers between Paddington and Maidenhead. Since 1800 the population had doubled and was still increasing.



*The Tith Barn R.C. Church, looking out on to a rather muddy main road.  
Presbytery in the back-ground. Probable date about 1920.*

In 1838 a new parish was created when the church in King St. was consecrated in the name of St. John the Evangelist.

### **WILLIAM THOMAS**

William Thomas took up residence at the Manor House in 1879. He was a corset manufacturer of Cheapside and was instrumental in introducing the lock-stitch sewing machine into this country in 1847, securing the patent from its American inventor, and equipping his own factory with it.

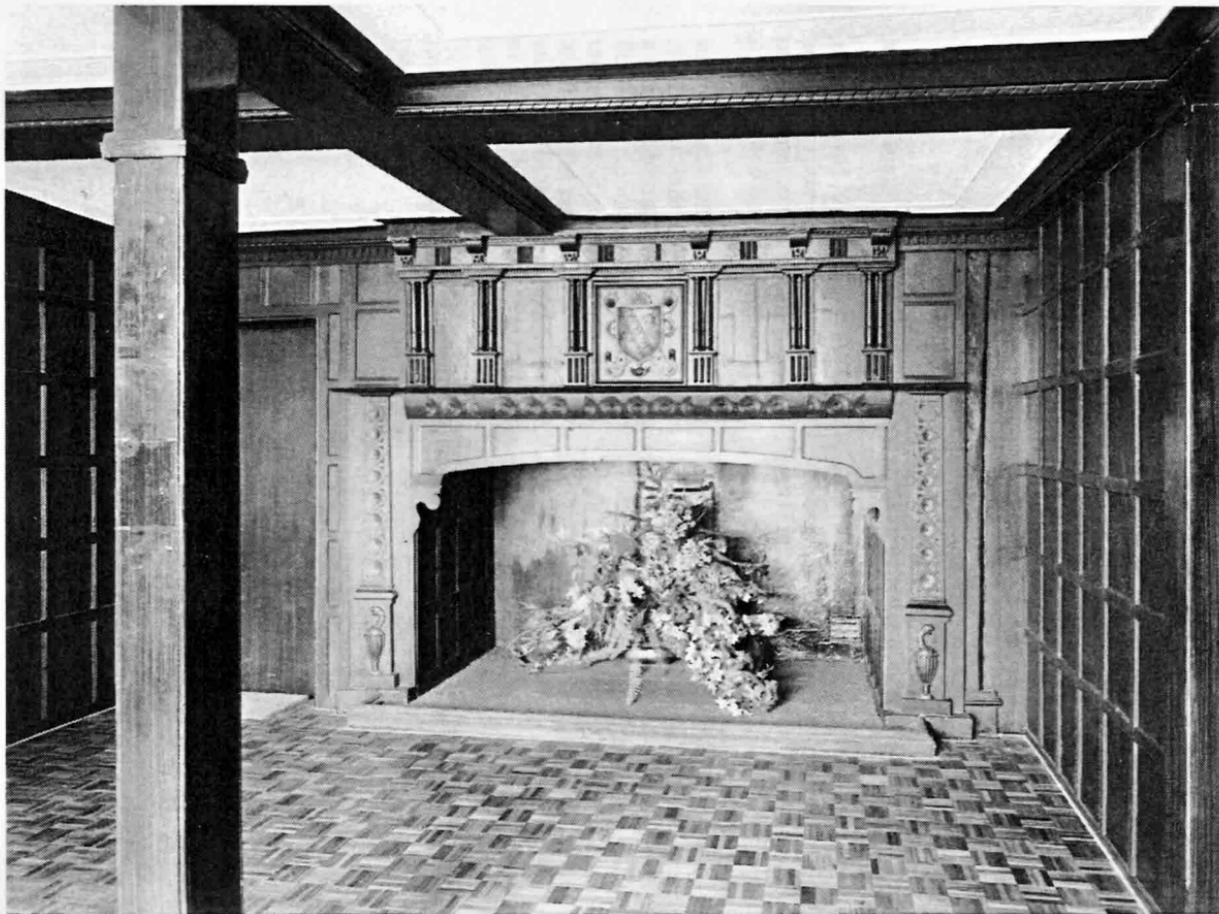
The Thomas family was popular and did much lavish entertaining. A small local newspaper published between 1885 and 1888 records some of these events. One reads of the foremost artistes of the day appearing at these concerts for the public. An announcement in the Southall News of November 30th 1887 reads "We have great pleasure in introducing a Grand Evening Concert to be given at Manor House Barn Southall (by kind permission of Mr & Mrs W.F. Thomas) On Tuesday December 13th. Doors open at 7.30 commencing at 8.00 p.m. Tickets 5/- and 2/6. This will undoubtedly be a grand success when it is known the total proceeds will be for the poor at Southall." Apparently these had to be abandoned after a few years owing to lack of support. One gathers the price of the tickets did not fit the pockets of the local inhabitants.

At this time there was a slump in work at the brick fields, causing much poverty. Mr Thomas generously threw open the Barn and provided penny dinners for 100 children five days a week. These proved so popular it was later extended for adults.

The four Martin brothers were already working in their Havelock Road pottery, producing the salt glazed stone-ware which made them world famous. They arrived here in 1874 and carried on working until 1914.

### **JOHN HOWARD MUMMERY. C.B.E; F.R.C.S.**

A famous surgeon of the day, took up residence at the Manor House in 1895. His wife Mary Lily Mummery died there on May 24th 1897. A stained glass window to her memory is in the nave of St. Leonard's Church Heston



*The Central Hall with fireplace attributed to Grinling Gibbons.  
Decoration placed there for the official opening after restoration by Chamber of Commerce.*

## **MR. SCARISBRICK**

Bought the Manor House from John Mummery in about 1898. Again it was a family home.

Mr. Scarisbrick soon became a popular member of the community. He gave over one of the barns to a visiting priest to say Mass every Sunday. The walls and floor were boarded and heating installed. It is from that barn that our Roman Catholic Church of St. Anselm originated. For a few years the stewards house was used as a Presbytery. This ultimately fell into disrepair and was demolished.

In September 1970, at the invitation of the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, the eldest daughter and son of Mr. Scarisbrick visited their old home. Sister Emmanuel now 82 years of age, and Father Gerald were delighted to make a tour of the house and grounds. To their amazement many of the rooms were still the same as in their childhood days, though now occupied as offices. Further excitement at finding the old mulberry tree and lily pond. Tea was served in the Conference Room (their original drawing room) Sister Emmanuel told us of the secret panel behind one of the fireplaces which led to an underground tunnel. In past centuries the priests used to hide there from their persecutors. It is also believed that Cardinal Wolsey had associations with the house.

Mr. Scarisbrick left the Manor House in 1912. It was put into Agents hands for sale.



## **SOUTHALL URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Manor House was bought by the Council in 1913 at a cost of £6,100.

Now in official hands, it enabled very necessary road widening improvements to be effected in The Green after the first World War. The west wing and clock tower were demolished. The grounds open to the public for the first time. These are both beautiful and imaginative, entirely maintained by the Parks Department of the Council.

Our local War Memorial was erected and unveiled.

A Bowling Green was added, and became the headquarters of the Southall Bowling Club. It was in use for several years, but proved too small for matches and County games. Later it was incorporated into the gardens. The Manor House was then occupied by the Public Health and Welfare Depts., and later by the Borough Treasurer.

In 1936 the Council applied for incorporation as a municipal Borough. This was one of the few Charters granted during the brief reign of Edward VIII.

In less than thirty years, Southall was to lose its distinction as a separate Borough. The Minister of Housing and Local Government decided it would be more desirable to have fewer and larger Boroughs. In April 1965 we were incorporated into the Borough of Ealing and Acton. All Departments at the Manor House were transferred to other headquarters and once again it closed its doors.

Several years went by, it was in need of structural repairs. Developers commenced to feast their greedy eyes on the land with several projects in view. Menacing cries went up — "Let's knock the old place down!"

The Southall Historical Society became extremely anxious, the building must be preserved at all costs. Under its chairman Mr. A. Hilson, an approach was made to the Council for its restoration. Unfortunately the Council would not negotiate, the Manor House still stood empty and forlorn.

But Wait!.....



*Harold Hallett, Secretary of the Southall Chamber of Commerce in his office.*

## **SOUTHALL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

The Southall Chamber of Commerce had a new Secretary, Mr. Harold Hallett. A man of vision, he had ideas of permanent headquarters to extend its work. Gaining the authority of the Executive Council he commenced negotiations with the Borough. It did not proceed smoothly. In fact it was on the brink of breaking down. Eventually after many months of waiting, the exciting news was announced that the Chamber was to lease the building at a nominal rent. The Borough Council spent in the region of £7,000 on repairing the exterior and making the inside structurally sound. The Chamber adding its own internal decorations and furnishings. Part of the building was to be let as separate offices.

On June 27th 1970 the Mayor and Mayoress (Cllr. and Mrs. Ernest Crook) accompanied by the Town Clerk and many Councilors, gathered for the official re-opening. The Chamber President, (Mr. Bernard Bass) with the Secretary and members proudly showed the visitors around the ancient building.

Once more the Manor House is dedicated to the business needs of the district. The comfortable and gracious office is always opened with a welcoming smile to all. The Conference Room, with the portraits of past Presidents gazing down from the wall, is now the meeting place of the Executive Council. On informal occasions the whole building is filled with the sound of music, laughter and gaiety.

Southall Manor House lives again.

### **SOMEONE BUILT A MANSION**

Someone built a mansion four hundred years ago  
—to stand against the weather, the wind, the rain,  
the snow. He set it stout and sturdy a great desire  
to fill. His work was good to look at, and it is lovely  
still. Upon a frame of timber the russet tiles were  
laid. That roof is still a fine one for it was truly  
made.

The beams that span the ceiling, so cosy, snug and  
low — reflect the shine and shadow from sun and  
firelight glow. The hearth that warmed his

children on cold and wintry days — still give content and comfort within its modern blaze .

Someone built a mansion. His name I do not know —but when he made that mansion four hundred years ago - He would have been astonished to know that it would be — an official home for someone in the twentieth century.

With acknowledgement to Patience Strong.

*The President and Officers of the Southall Chamber of Commerce are glad to have this opportunity to acknowledge, gratefully, the contribution of photographs of Southall and the Manor House made by one of our longest standing membership firms — Leonard and Marcus Taylor Ltd.*