THORPE HAMLET HISTORY GROUP

Article 11: THE GENERAL, THE BANKER AND THE SOLICITOR

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The General : General Robert John Harvey

If you ever have the opportunity to see the deeds of the property you are living in, there is a very good chance that at some time the land will have been owned by the Harvey family. The family owned most of Thorpe Hamlet in the 18th century. Sir Robert John Harvey inherited from his father John Harvey in 1816. The Harvey family was well established, and had made its fortune from weaving and also the manufacture of the famous Norwich Shawls. Over the years the family held most of the important civic posts in Norwich including 8 mayors and 7 sheriffs

General Robert John Harvey was born in 1785 in what is now the Broadland Council Offices at the bottom of Harvey Lane. He had three brothers and eleven sisters. Among many of their achievements they introduced Horse Racing on Mousehold Heath. Part of General Harvey's education was in Leipzig, Germany, and although many of his family went into banking he joined the Army in 1803 aged 18.

After the invasion of Portugal by the French in 1807, the Portuguese Army was in disarray. The Portuguese made a request to the British Government for a senior British Officer to command, reorganise and modernise their Army. In 1809 William Carr Beresford was appointed to do this and was made a Field Marshall in the Portuguese Army. He appointed 350 officers and 23 sergeants from the British Army to the Portuguese Army and promoted them above their British Army Ranks. Harvey was one of these officers. He had a very distinguished military career and in particular in the peninsular War in Portugal and Spain against Napoleon. In 1810 he was made assistant Quarter Master General of the Portuguese Army. He organised the Portuguese Guerrilla Corps and the Intelligence Service where his skill in languages was useful, and in 1811 he was appointed to the General Headquarters of the Duke of Wellington as Liaison officer to the Portuguese Army until the end of the war in 1814. He was at most of the battles in the Peninsular War, and on Wellington's recommendation he was given the same rank in the British Army as he had held in the Portuguese Army. After the war the King of Portugal made him a Knight of the Order of the Tower and the Sword. The British Prince Regent also knighted him and in 1831 he was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath. He was considered to be one of the bravest men in England.

He developed Mousehold House and the surrounding area. The following street names and places were named in memory of the Harvey family, the Duke of Wellington and the Peninsular Wars:

- Cintra Road – after the treaty of Sintra, Portugal in 1808
- Harvey Lane
- Wellesley Avenue South (Wellesley is Wellington's family name)
- Wellesley Avenue North.

The Banker : Sir Robert John Harvey – 1st Baronet of Crown Point, Whitlingham 1817 – 1871

The son of General Robert Harvey. Trying to unravel the Harvey family tree can be very confusing because they tended to use the same Christian Names – Robert, John, and Robert John; Robert being the predominant one. He was the Senior Partner in the Harvey and Hudson Bank (The Norwich Crown Bank) at Bank Plain, founded by his Great Grandfather Robert Harvey (1730 – 1816) in 1792. At one time the bank had about 25 branches spread around Norfolk and Suffolk, and more than 3000 depositors. The Baronet was in full control in the 1860's and enjoyed a good life style while he rebuilt his house at Crown Point in Trowse which he had bought in 1861. This rebuilding was costing more than he had expected, and he speculated rather unsuccessfully on the Stock Exchange. The fall was partially due to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war which against all expectations Prussia won. To cover his losses he invented fictitious bank customers. Sir Robert shot himself at Whitlingham in 1870.

The Solicitor : Isaac Bugg-Coaks

The solicitor who was involved in winding up the Baronet's estate was Isaac Bugg-Coaks who is now buried in the Rosary Cemetery. During this time Bugg-Coaks became very wealthy and there were court cases about where this wealth had come from. These cases went on for over thirty years, but that's another story. Fourteen acres including the Hill House Estate were sold. Some of the land was sold for housing by Bugg-Coaks.

Street names and places associated with this sale are:

- Ella, Beatrice, Marion, Florence, Ethel and Primrose Roads named after Bugg-Coaks's six daughters.
- Hill House Road.
- Fernhill, where Bugg-Coaks lived.

Bugg-Coaks was later struck off from being a Solicitor, but for reasons not associated with winding up Harvey's affairs.

(This article borrows heavily from the book of June Marriage's articles '*A Thorpe Hamlet Miscellany*', published by the History Group)