

Chapter 2 Part 2 The 1890s
Rowhill Coppice/Copse, Caesar's Camp

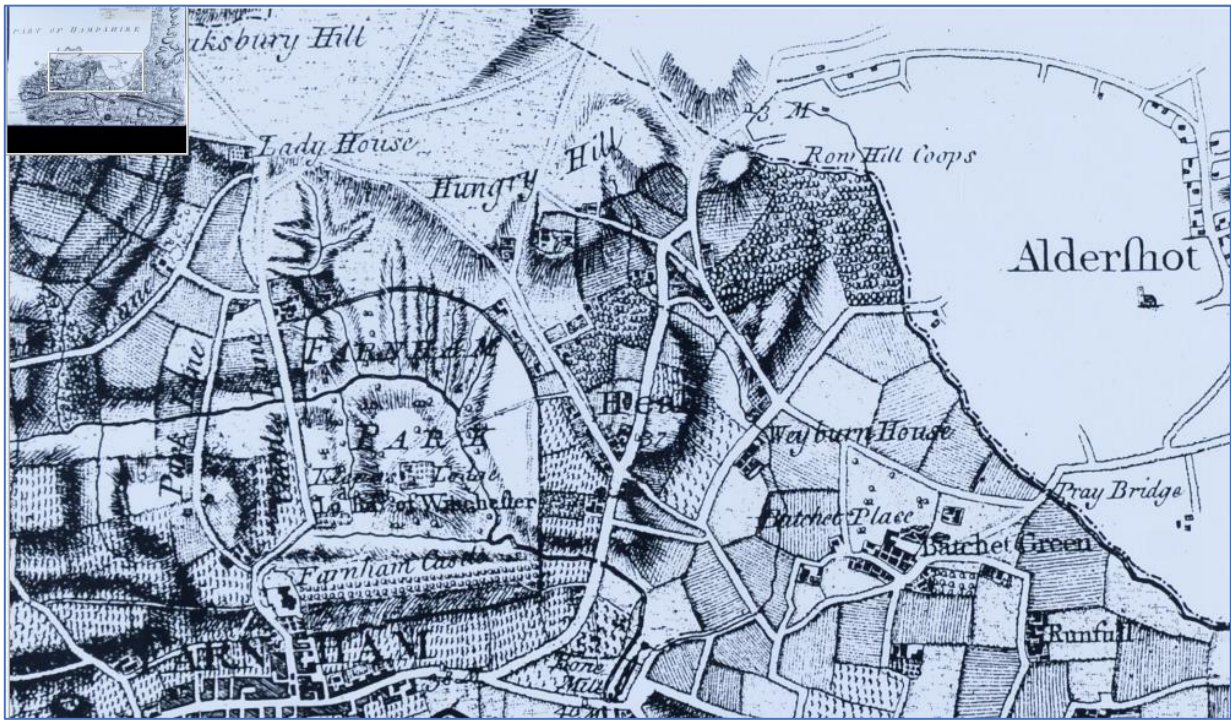


The Ordnance Survey map (above) published in 1897 shows a track which we now know as Rowhills. The military boundary was indicated by B.S. (Boundary Stone) and W↑D (War Department). This military boundary swept from the west of what is now Farnborough Road into the western part of the track then north into the coppice.

Now let us backtrack to the Farnham Tithe map of 1840 showing Rowhills Coppice, a map which is harder to follow. Note the name Trimmers Mead.



Going back in time even further to the John Roque map of 1768 the coppice can be seen as Row Hill Coops with Weybourne House south and Farnham Park west, helping with orientation.



An 1888 sketch map shows the west part of Rowhills as access being given to a Mrs Knight as a right of way. That west end of the track belonged to the War department and a guess is that Mrs Knight needed access to her home in Cranmore Lane? Later maps show a clear distinction on Rowhills of War department land to the west and residential road to the east.

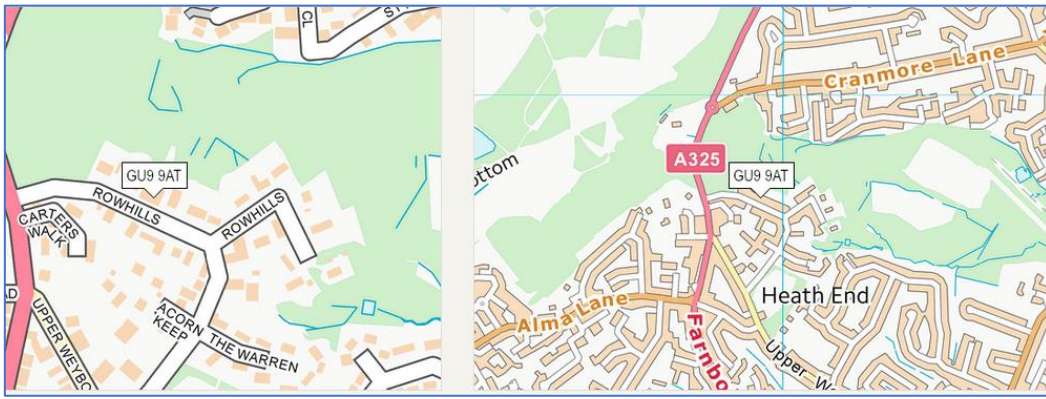
The two cottages by Heath End Nursery are clearly shown and Cranmore Villas is shown on Cranmore Lane.



Rowhill/Rowhills Coppice

With nearly half of the current properties in Rowhills being adjacent to the Rowhill Nature Reserve, now is the time to discuss this wooded land although of course ancient woodland does not fit into any particular decade relating to history. Ancient woodland is classified as wooded continuously since 1600AD and can be coppiced.

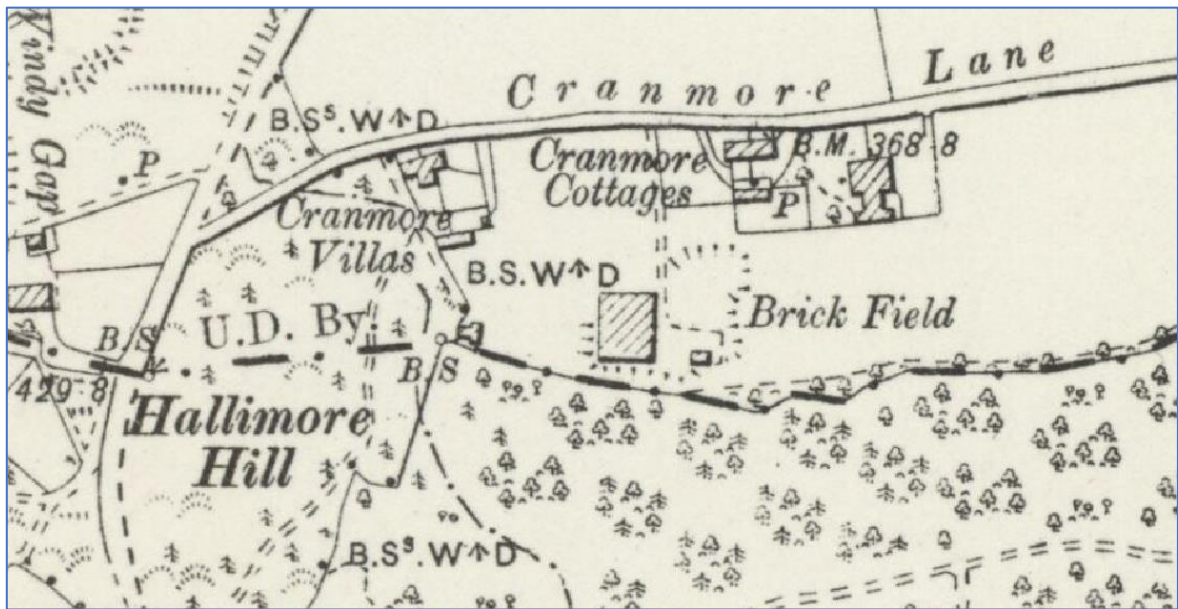
Just to get orientation, getthedata.com shows GU9 9AT as:-



Maps in the 1800s show the coppice extending from Heath End Hill on the western side, down to the Running Stream Public House. Hallimore Hill was at the west end of the coppice and as military land belonging to the War Department, it was used in military exercises. Perhaps we could sneak into this Government area and listen out for army exercises.

Amid the trees and undergrowth, near the footpath at the foot of Hallimore Hill, just over eighty yards from the end of Cranmore Lane, stands a moss-covered boundary stone, marking both the County and the Borough boundaries. The Hallimore Hill-Rowhills Copse area is encircled by War Department boundary stones, marking the extent of the Government lands. The County boundary is shown on the Ordnance Map as running in a straight line over Hallimore Hill to a point where another boundary stone used to stand by the spring which is the source of the River Blackwater. From here the rivulet runs down the wooded hillside to wind away to south-east and east, broadening into the stream which forms the boundary between Hampshire and Surrey.





Hallimore Hill being the highest point of the coppice has quite a drop down on its western side to the road now called Farnborough Road. A local yarn suggests that this valley was a perfect spot for highwaymen to strike. It was thought that gallows were placed on Hallimore Hill for criminals guilty of such outrageous activity. A walk up that western side path to the top of Hallimore Hill now takes on a slightly eerier feeling, even if that myth is total rubbish?

The 1983 Rowhill Review of the Rowhill Nature Reserve Society dipped into a discussion about heathland:-

An often-neglected little patch of heathland is Hallimore Hill. Stand on the hill and look around. In front of you is an area of open heath, to the right reverting to woodland, behind you is a stand of mature pines - quite a selection on 5 or 6 acres. Hallimore Hill is just the last, odd corner of Aldershot Common, stretching away beyond Hungry Hill and Caesar's Camp to Fleet.

The booklet went on to discuss Surrey Heaths.

From 1794-1804 there were approximately 110,000 acres of heathland. By 1977 this had contracted to about 10,000 acres and by 1983 the estimate was 6000 acres.

The military exercises were vast because the total of (Aldershot) army land which had been purchased in the 1850s was hundreds of acres. It is one thing to be told by a local that the bullets are blank but what of the letter from 1890 in the Portsmouth News about stray bullets?

BROWNDOWN RANGES.

SIR,—The recent accident at Caesar's Camp, Aldershot, gives a hint of what fishermen, yachting-men, and those who travel by excursion steamers may expect in the coming season, if the new magazine rifle is to be used at the Browndown ranges. Things are bad enough already. Last summer many people had narrow escapes of being hit by stray bullets. It would be good news to hear confirmation of a recent rumour, to the effect that the War Department had selected a new inland site for rifle practice, and intend ceasing the practice at Browndown altogether.

Yours faithfully,
VIGILANS,

Maps showed words like Hallimore Hill and Hungry Hill but newspaper reporters were happy to use the term Hungary Hill not Hungry Hill. Anyway, quite an exciting day might include a 'War Game' between a Red team and a Blue team. This was the annual Volunteer training at a long Easter weekend or in the autumn after harvesting. We won't read it all, it's a detailed account.

(Outstanding history of Aldershot Military by Paul Vickers with chapter 6 describing the Volunteer Easter Manoeuvres at Aldershot

<https://friendsofthealdershotmilitarymuseum.org.uk/garrison.006.html>)

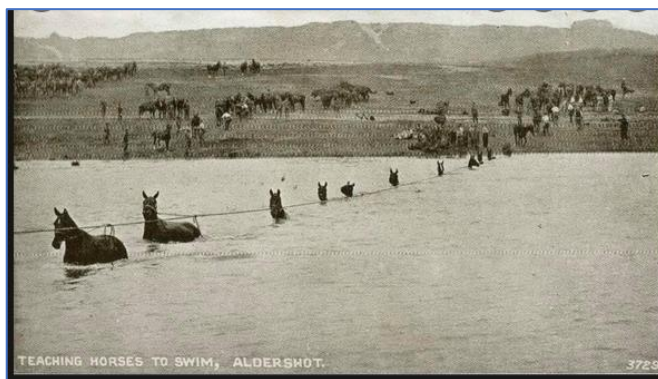
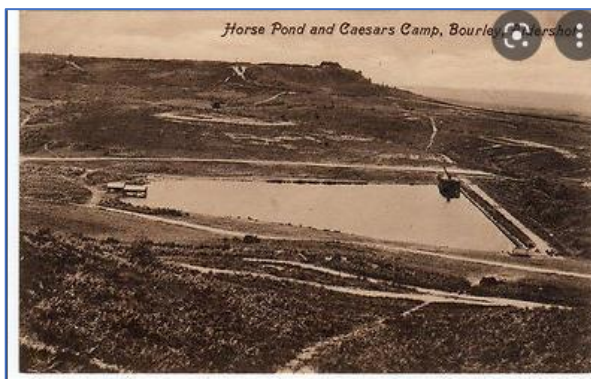
If we stand on Hallimore Hill, the troops will be approaching us past Ayling House and then the Brick Field with machine guns proceeding towards Rowhill Copse - that's us. Better move hastily on.

The orders from the commander of the advanced guard of Red were that the troops would move at 9 a.m. on the road—Gasworks, Parsnage, Ayling House, and Brickfield, the Cavalry to reconnoitre towards Hungary Hill along the bottom to Aldershot Common, and to discover and report the strength of the enemy. The Mounted Infantry were to proceed towards Hungary Hill, which they would endeavour to seize and hold; the Artillery would proceed towards the Pavilion, take up position, and assist the Infantry attack, which would probably be towards the left flank. The officer commanding the Infantry was desired to detail two companies to act as escort to the guns, and the remainder of

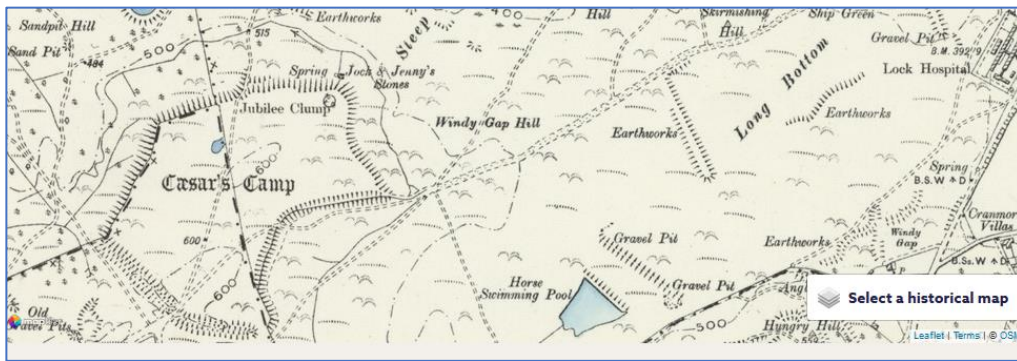
the Infantry, with the machine guns, would proceed towards Rowhill Copse and Hungary Hill, and endeavour to seize and Hold the last-named place. The orders issued by Blue commander were that two battalions would get a position from Caesar's Camp to Hungary Hill; two battalions on the left flank with advanced positions on Long Hill, with the machine guns and three battalions in reserve at Beacon Hill. The Artillery division was to hold the position from Bricksbury Hill to North Horns, and to advance with the leading column to take up a position near Caesar's Camp; while the Cavalry were to reconnoitre the ground between the Canal and Heath House, Odiham Road. The

By heading North and dropping down to Cranmore Villas, there is a brief walk west across to Windy Gap. Many of the tracks were wide enough for four Cavalry horses and we may see some training of horses in the Pond.

Private J. Ritchie, 14th Hussars, has been drowned whilst swimming horses in the horse bathing pond under Caesar's Camp, Aldershot.



The map shows clearly the section of heathland called Caesar's camp. Caesar might have had a Gallic War but this did not extend to the Iron Age (or Bronze Age) hill fort with its ditches, triple vallums and ramparts. The hill fort was an outlying fort separating the territories of the Belgae and Regni tribes.



If we are lucky, we may sneak up to see shooting.

75TH FOOT.—A shooting match took place at **Caesar's Camp, Aldershot**, between the above regiment and the Gymnastic Staff, which resulted in a decisive victory for the regimental team, as will be seen from the following score:—75th Regiment, distances 200 and 500 yards, Sergeant Williams, 48 points; Colour-Sergeant McWally, 48 points; Sergeant Howard, 46; Colour-Sergeant Costello, 45; Colour-Sergeant Skelly, 45; Colour-Sergeant Slater, 41; Sergeant Godfrey,

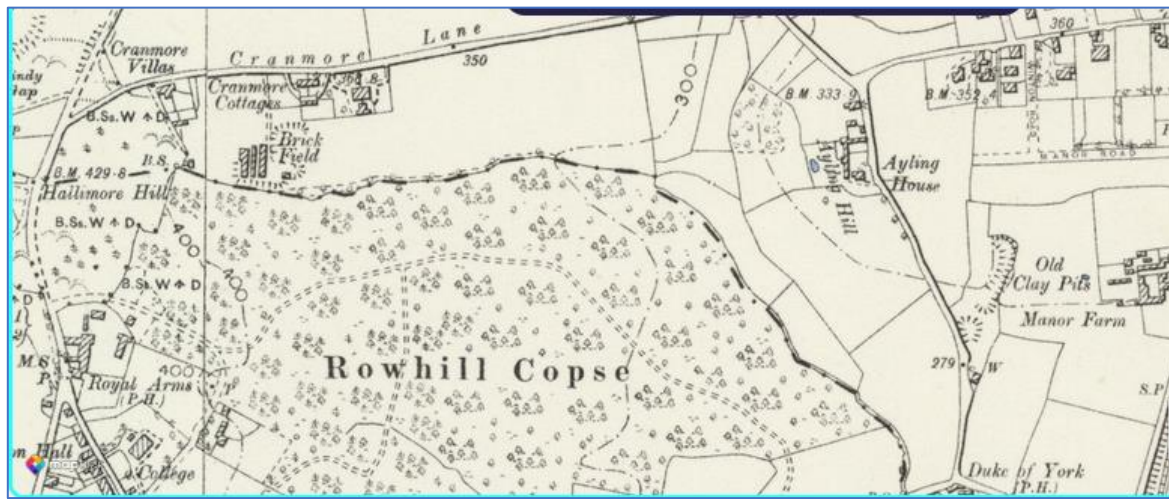
The ninth annual rifle meeting of all branches of the army opened yesterday at **Caesar's Camp, Aldershot**, and was very fully attended. Some very good shooting was made.

Clearly though there was a chance of danger.

THE MURDER OF AN OFFICER AT ALDERSHOT.
As already briefly mentioned, on Monday afternoon an inquest was held at Aldershot into the circumstances attending the death of Captain John Dent Bird, of the 20th Hussars, who was shot by a private of his regiment on Saturday morning, while at target practice at the ranges near **Caesar's Camp, Aldershot Common**.

Luckily for us the Military Lands Act of 1892 legislation regarding land purchased for military purpose protected the heath lands for Caesar's Camp in preventing land development of housing. We had better head back since we were told to get some pea sticks from Mr Egger in the coppice.

In 1878 in the Aldershot Military Gazette, Frederick Eggar the proprietor of the Aldershot Brick and Tile Works advertised the company wares and this company may have had links to the brickworks just east of Hallimore Hill. Possibly the same Mr Eggar, who signed off his advertisements as "surveyor etc Aldershot", advertised hop poles, fencing poles and pea-sticks from Rowhills Coppice.



During the late 1870s and 1880s, there were many auction sales advertising land in Rowhills Coppice, indicating an already rapidly expanding population. Here is one example:-

One Lot: All that excellent piece of woodland known as Rowhills Coppice 89 acres, 2 enclosures of arable land, five cottages, total of 103 acres all lying in a ring fence. Might be converted into beautifully timbered park. Three springs rise in the coppice, the streams intercept the property so that a lake or canal can be formed.

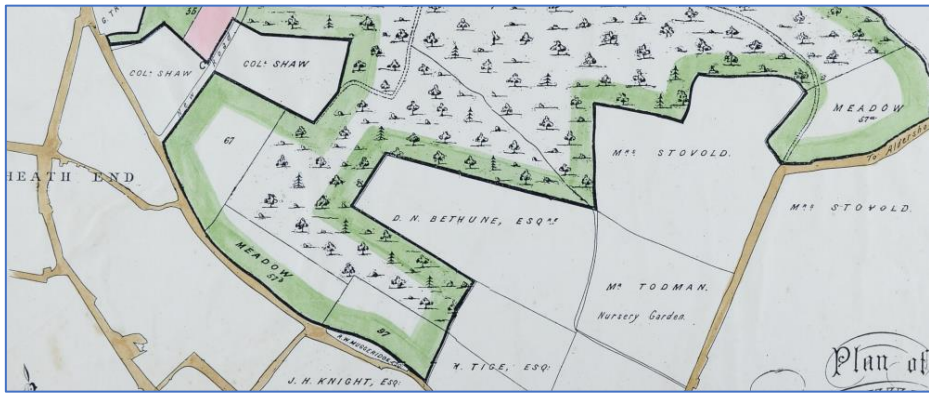
A portion of the property is freehold and the remainder copyhold of the Manor of Farnham, a tenure nearly equal to freehold.

Right up to the 1950s the Imperial (as opposed to Metric) Weights and Measures had tables on the back of exercise books and many a classroom had children chanting by rote 16 ounces one pound, 14 pounds one stone and so on. A 10 or a 100 barely seemed to occur. Fascinating words like **acre**, **rood**, **perch**, bushel, gallon, chain, furlong, hundredweight, maybe even slugs had to be learnt. So the reader is invited to work out the size of Rowhill Coppice being sold which was "89a. 2r. 2p. and land containing 13a. 1r. 12p., the whole embracing 103a. 1r. 37p."

Some advertisements made it clear that the land was in the parish of Farnham, Surrey. They also stated that "Farnham was an important junction on the London and South-Western Railway, only an 80 minute journey to the metropolis." Further luring of prospective investors was the following:-

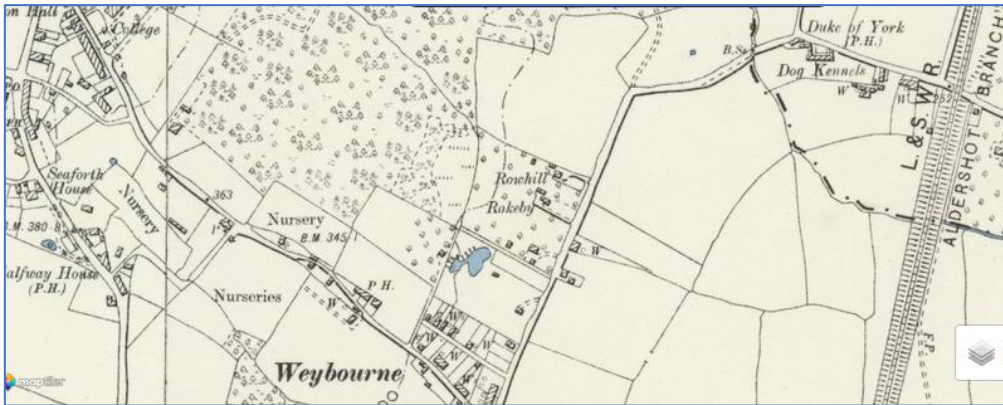
The land is almost midway between the capital market town of Farnham and the Royal Military Camp and town of Aldershot. The merits of the Hampshire, Garth's and Surrey Union Foxhounds are within easy reach."

In 1890 Duncan Norfolk Bethune, Esquire of Vernon House, 28 West Street, Farnham (the present Farnham library building) advertised 8 acres of valuable freehold land for sale in the middle of Rowhills Copse. He stated that this land was suitable for the erection of a chemical works or brickyard. His land is marked as D N Bethune.



Duncan Bethune (1862-1926) came from a family with a degree of money. His father Duncan Munro Bethune had been a Lieutenant Colonel at the Aldershot Camp and his mother Jane Knight was the daughter of a banker.

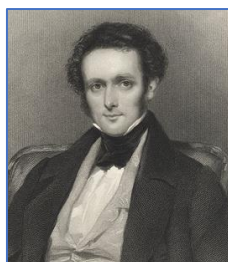
The Rowhill Copse extended from Cranmore Villas in the north to nearly Weybourne cross roads in the south. Plot by plot, parcels of land were sold off.



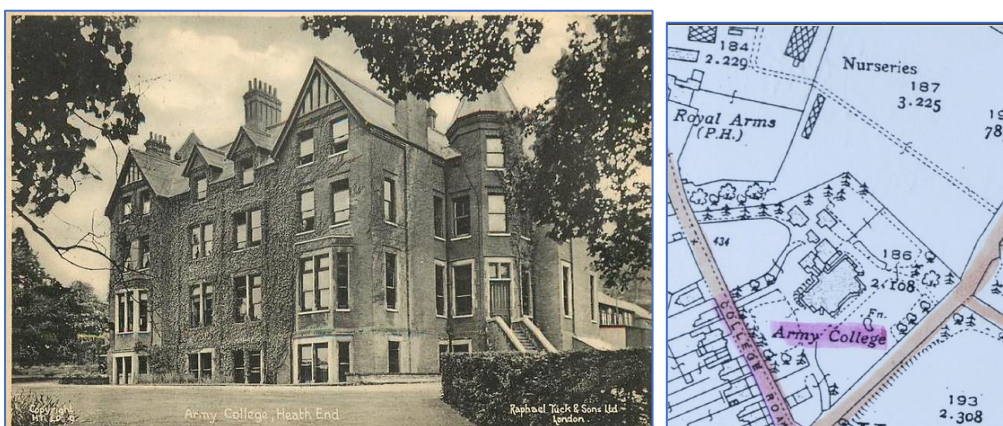
Time to return now to the lower part of Rowhills. The 1888 sale by J Alfred Eggar had the road between the Army College and The Warren as being called New Road. Both plots were shown as belonging to Colonel Shaw.



It is really not clear on the comings and goings of who was living in The Warren, the large property we had met previously, built for Wilkinson Jocelyn Shaw, a younger son of Sir Frederick Shaw, 3rd Baronet, MP.



Wilkinson owned the property and had voting rights by registering against this property but there appeared to be others living there. Perhaps he lived at the Army College opposite, an imposing building with a drive that swept round in an arc.



Since others appeared to live at The Warren, one wonders if Colonel Wilkinson Jocelyn Shaw arranged for the Army to use it as a "hiring" for officers? That is, an accommodation of suitable calibre and standard as might be expected by the people living there temporarily.

Let's see who we are hob-nobbing with in The Warren by turning to the newspapers again. The Wigan Observer and District Advertiser - Saturday 11 March 1893

THE DRAWING ROOM.—At the recent drawing-room held by Her Majesty the Queen, Mrs. Hemming, of The **Warren**, Heath End, Farham, who was presented, on her marriage, by Lady Alice Havelock-Allen, wore a lovely gown of satin and brocade, petticoats of ivory white l'Alençon and cassage draped with eame; train of a very handsome design in white brocade draped from one shoulder, and lined through with white Onduline silk; headdress plume and veil, ornaments diamonds, and emeralds.

Then in 1895 the Reading Mercury reported on Saturday 19 October

Sir James Andrew and Lady Clarke, who have been passing the summer at Tidmarsh Rectory, returned on Saturday to The **Warren**, Heath End, Aldershot.

Is this Colonel Sir James Richardson Andrew Clark, Bt., CB, CMG, FRCSE 2nd Baronet (1852-1948) who received the Bailiff Grand Cross in 1928 and a catalogue of other awards? If it is then his father was Physician-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria between 1837 and 1860, and was previously physician to the poet John Keats in Rome.

At least we have one end of the road apparently 'talking' to the other. The parochial event organised by Lady Clarke to raise money for the soup kitchen at Hale had decorations provided by the Charman family at Heath End Nurseries.

HALE.

A POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT.—With the laudable object of raising funds for the soup kitchen at the Church House, and for other parochial work, Lady Clark, of the Warren Heath End, kindly organised a programme of music and dramatic sketches, which were performed before a large and appreciative audience at the Board Schools on Wednesday evening. The Vicar (the Rev G. E. Hitchcock) presided, and was assisted by the Rev C. S. Gray (curate) and other friends in carrying through the entertainment. Messrs P. Caesar and W. Reader carried out the seating arrangements. The

Miss Hinge, and Miss Wilder. The Vicar tendered hearty thanks to the kind performers. The platform was nicely decorated with plants, kindly lent by Mr Charman, Heath End Nurseries.

The Mr Charman referred to above was Mr William Henry Charman. His father William Heath Charman, the nurseryman, seedsman and florist had died in July 1891 leaving an estate to his children of £1516.

CHARMAN William Heath.

Personal Estate £1,516 15s. 2d.

25 July. The Will of William Heath Charman late of Heath End in the Parish of Farnham in the County of Surrey Nurseryman who died 6 May 1891 at Heath End was proved at the Principal Registry by William Henry Charman Nurseryman the Son and Caroline Charman Spinster the Daughter both of Heath End the Executors.

A sketch from the 1888 sale of Rowhills Copse showed the name G Trimmer. (George Trimmer, well known in Aldershot.) The Royal Arms was established in 1853 and the sketch of this Public House and Heath End Nursery is not an accurate representation of land ownership.

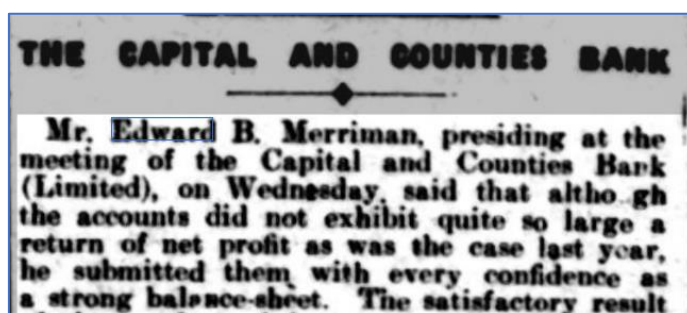


After the death of William Charman Senior, the new owner of Heath End Nurseries William Henry Charman, and wife Louisa as florist, clearly entered into the business with gusto. In 1898 a conveyance of land was made between

- (1) Capital and Counties Bank Limited
- (2) Edward Bavistock Merriman and John Reid and
- (3) William Henry Charman.

This showed restrictive covenants on fencing and repairs. Other restrictions were to **NOT** erect, open or carry on upon the land any hospital, asylum or other charitable institution, manufactory, brewery, inn, tavern, or beershop and will not sell any spirituous or fermented liquors ...and will not at any time make bricks or tiles or burn clay or limeand will not at any time excavate or dig sand or gravel.

Edward Bavistock Merriman was the chief Accountant for the Capital and Counties bank.



So on that clear point on what we **cannot** do, we will leave the road in peace and head for one of the local inns, because **that** we are allowed to do. So much land is being sold there might be changes ahead for Rowhills and this needs some reflection, aided with a little ale. Let's ask ourselves while we sip, how many people can say that Queen Victoria rode on a horse past their road?

The road called College Road from the Royal Arms to the Army College, continued down to the crossroads in Weybourne and this lower section was called Queens Road. Why was that?

In May 1860, 23 years after she came to the throne, Queen Victoria paid a surprise visit to Farnham. Accompanied by Prince Albert, the 41-year-old Queen rode on horseback from Aldershot where she had been inspecting the troops. They made their way to Farnham Park and Farnham Castle. Two roads which formed part of the Monarch's route were later named in her honour.

So maybe we are no ordinary road? Perhaps Queen Victoria chose this leafy way on her journey?