

REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

AT ITS THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,

MAY 15, 1876,

WITH AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY
(INCLUDING THE ANNUAL REPORTS XXXIV, XXXV),
1873—1876.

ALSO

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XVIII.

BEING THE FOURTH AND CONCLUDING NUMBER OF THE
THIRD VOLUME.

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XXXIX. NOTES ON HOBSON'S HOUSE, THE WHITE HORSE, AND THE LATE MR CORY'S HOUSE. Communicated by the Rev. G. F. BROWNE, M.A., St Catharine's College.

[May 15, 1876.]

I. *On the site of Hobson's house.*

MR C. H. Cooper, in his *Annals of Cambridge* (III. 237), says that the White Swan, in St Botolph's parish, pulled down about 1760 for the improvement of Catharine Hall, was called Hobson's house, but that an old tradition made Joseph Stanley's house, at the south-west corner of Peas Hill, the residence of Hobson, the two houses adjoining on the west being on the site of his stables. The Editor of the *Cambridge Portfolio* says that Hobson lived at the south-west corner of Peas Hill, and as a proof of Hobson's popularity he says that two public houses bore his name as a sign, one being "Hobson's House" opposite Catharine Hall. Hobson, as is well known, lived in St Benet's parish, so that the White Swan in St Botolph was not his residence. Nor was it called "Hobson's House." At the time when Dr Wodelarke entered in his *Memoriale Nigrum* an account of the sites purchased for the erection of Catharine Hall, he believed that he had purchased the White Swan, then called Rasour's tenement (A.D. 1460—70). The purchase was not completed, and the College only acquired the tenement in 1516, when it is

described as 'the Swan.' They sold it to John Mere in 1556, and bought it again of Cornelius Archer in 1676, when it consisted of two houses with a frontage of 60 feet to Trumpington Street, occupying the southern half of the present grove between the College and the street. It had long appeared in leases, &c., as 'Archer's house,' and a portion of the old College, built on a scrap of the site purchased at an earlier date, was called 'Archer's Court.' Cornelius Archer was Hobson's cousin (see Hobson's will).

Hobson's house adjoined it to the north. It was in St Benet's parish, so that the junction of the two houses was the boundary of the parishes. Dr Wodelarke bought in 1459 two tenements in Mill Street, extending eastwards to a tenement called 'le George,' belonging to Corpus Christi College. These tenements extended from Mill Street 107 feet towards High (Trumpington) Street at the south end, and 90 feet at the north end, so that the George extended westwards from Trumpington Street about 170 feet. In the sale of the Swan (1556) it is said to be bounded on the north by the 'George,' a tenement of Corpus Christi College, in the occupation of John Cooke, innholder and carrier. In 1580 the 'George' is described as a tenement 'lately of Corpus Christi College, now of Helen Hobson, widow.' This was the mother of Thomas Hobson the carrier. Her husband, also Thomas and a carrier, settled in Cambridge in 1561, and died in 1568. The well-known Thomas Hobson died at the age of 86 in 1631, leaving the house where he dwelt in St Benet parish to his grandson Thomas. In 1637 Catharine Hall acquired it. They at once pulled down the stables, &c., in the yard, which the College books call Hobson's yard, but left the house standing, and its rent was long entered as from "Hobson's house." In 1760 it was pulled down. In Essex's plan (1745) the house is shewn with a frontage of 24 feet, the house and yard having had originally 60 feet of frontage to Trumpington Street, the northern half of the present grove.

It was then known in the College books as Mr Sadler's house. The yard and stables originally extended over the north-east quarter of the present court of St Catharine's, and over part, if not the whole, of the site of the Chapel. The old back approach to Catharine Hall from the High Street was on the north of Hobson's house.

II. *On the site of the White Horse, or "Germany," and on the late Mr Cory's house.*

Strype, who was a member of Catharine Hall, says in his *Life of Parker* (p. 6; there is a similar passage in his *Annals*) that the White Horse, which belonged to Catharine Hall, was the place of meeting of those who in secret favoured the reformed doctrines. It was "afterwards nicknamed Germany by their enemies. This house was chose because they of King's College, Queens' College, and St John's, might come in with the more privacy by the back door,"—why they of St John's it is difficult to see. The Editor of the *Cambridge Portfolio* discusses the claims of Mr Cory's house to be the White Horse. In his engraving of the old stall-work found there he describes it as "from the White Horse." He determines, however, that the White Horse must be supposed to have been incorporated with the Bull Hotel, since there is no evidence that Catharine Hall ever sold the White Horse.

The College papers shew, on the contrary, that the White Horse was sold twice by the College. They shew also that it was not Mr Cory's house. The first entry in Dr Wodelarke's *Memoriale Nigrum* records the acquisition of a tenement called Fordham place in 1455. The conveyance is in the College Treasury, and is endorsed "for the White Horse." The next entry records the acquisition of a tenement lying between Fordham place and the vennel called Pluttys lane, in 1461. The latter tenement included a small house set between the two main houses. John Caunterbury had these houses for his life,

and only the reversion was given to the College. In March, 1498, part of the property had come into possession, and was sold to William Myles. It was Fordham place, or the White Horse, the tenement adjoining the Black Bull. Its frontage to the High Street, including an entry, was 31 feet. Above the entry was a "garrith," which extended 5 feet over the kitchen of the tenement adjoining on the north. In Dec. 1498, the rest of the property came to the College, including 'the tenement in which John Caunterbury lately dwelt,' and other property 'between the Bull on the hoop and Nuttys lane.'

In 1509 the executors of William Myles conveyed to the College the property he had bought in 1498.

In 1513 a complete list of the College property was made. It includes these two tenements, one 'commonly called Fordham place,' the other 'commonly called the Corn-house.'

In 1556 the whole was sold to John Mere for £100. The White Horse is described as next the Black Bull, and as having the small tenement set betwixt it and the Corn-house.

Thus there can be no doubt that the house now in the occupation of Mr Jones, on the north side of the Bull, stands on the southern portion of the site of the White Horse, New King's Lane running through the old entry to the White Horse, and absorbing also the 5 feet of kitchen and garrith. The White Horse property extended to the north-west till it abutted on Pluttys lane, so that the back entrance mentioned by Strype is accounted for. The remaining tenement was Mr Cory's house. The plan of the property as purchased by King's College a few years ago shews a frontage of 54 feet for Mr Cory's house and the small tenement annexed, occupied by Mr Troughton, and 90 feet in all from the north-east corner of Mr Cory's house to the north-east corner of the Bull. Thus Mr Cory's 54 feet with the 36 feet already accounted for from the old deeds relating to the White Horse, exactly fill up the space between the Bull and Pluttys lane, *i.e.* Old King's Lane. The name Corn-house,

given in some of the Catharine Hall deeds to the house afterwards known as Mr Cory's, is an example of the mistakes which arise from a neglect of abbreviations. Dr Wodelarke calls it 'tenementum de cornerio,' and since Pluttys lane left the High Street at an angle of about 70° , no more apt name than 'corner house' could have been devised. The well-remembered appearance of projection beyond the line of houses to the south was caused by a change in the line of frontage of the White Horse, Fuller's plan shewing a continuous curve in place of the straight face of the Bull and of Mr Jones's house.

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