

GARRATTS HALL, BANSTEAD.

BY

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THIS house is now demolished, and it seems desirable that there should be some record of its history and appearance in our *Collections*, more especially as interest in houses of its style and date (a number of which continue to disappear) is on the increase.

The name is derived from the family of Gerard, which was resident in Banstead in the fifteenth century, *e.g.* John Gerard appears among the jurors on the Court Roll of 1421 and Thomas Gerard in 1489. There was no doubt a medieval house on the spot, but of this no trace remains. It has, indeed, been supposed that the great thickness of the walls of the basement of Garratts Hall pointed to part of the structure of an earlier building having been incorporated, but, if this was so, it was more probably part of a Tudor house. Traces of an earlier house were, in fact, discovered many years ago when excavating for drainage purposes, but that house occupied a larger space than the modern Garratts Hall,¹ nor did what was revealed during the recent demolition suggest a date for any part very much before 1700.

In the early part of the sixteenth century Garratts was in the possession of the Colcoke family, and on 25 November 1533 Elizabeth Colcoke, of Chipstead, widow, who held by copy of Court Roll for life, and Aleyne Colcoke, her son, conveyed to Geoffrey Lamberd of Woodmansterne all those lands and tenements in Banstead which had belonged to Thomas Gerard. Geoffrey was the son of that John Lambert who had bought Perrotts and Well Farm in Banstead in 1516 and had

¹ Notes published by Col. F. A. H. Lambert in the Banstead Parish Magazine, undated but apparently about 1884.

died in the summer of 1533. Geoffrey, who was five times married and left nineteen children,¹ probably bought the place for his own occupation. In any case his descendants lived there till 1708,² and their description as of Garratts served to distinguish them from cousins in other parts of the parish, e.g. the Parish Register in 1603 distinguishes Daniell Lambart of Garratts and Daniell Lambart of Tadwoorth. The property being copyhold land descended according to the custom of the manor to the youngest son. It is described in the Survey of the Manor of 1680 as "all that messuage, three barnes, one stable, one garden and orchard, called Garretts" with two parcels of land called Moncks land.

John Lambert, who in 1698 sold Garratts to his nephew, Thomas Lambert, of London, merchant, has left an account book, now in the British Museum,³ which contains a number of miscellaneous entries relating mainly to his farming or to his work as churchwarden at Banstead and Woodmansterne. It shows under 1692 four quarterly payments of £1 9s. each for the King's tax for the house and land at Bansted, and also the following "December ye 12th 1692 paid to ye glaies^r for worke at ye new house att Bansted" £1 1s. This appears to be Garratts, and we may therefore fix the date of building as 1691 or 1692.

Subsequently—probably in 1744 when Lambert Ludlow, the then owner died—Garratts was bought by Isaac Hughes, of London, merchant (he was described in 1767 as of Broad Street Buildings). He had a double connection with Banstead, for in 1729 he married Elizabeth Harris, of Yewlands in Banstead (she died in 1745), and in 1747 he married Sarah Buckle, one of the Buckles of Great Burgh (she died in 1758). He lived at Garratts, and was buried at Banstead in 1776.

The house descended to his son John Hughes, and it was described by Edwards⁴ as "a large red brick house, pretty lofty, with good gardens belonging thereto." The red brick

¹ See *S.A.C.*, XVI, 16 and 4. The date 1537 should be 1533.

² See the stemma in *S.A.C.*, XVI, for this date.

³ Add. MS. 12492. See also *Hist. Banstead*, I, 224.

⁴ Edwards' *Companion from London to Brightelmstone* was published in 1801, but much of the information was collected a good deal earlier, and as Garratts is described by Edwards as the property of John Hughes this description must date from before 1791.



Garratts Hall, from the South-West.



Garratts Hall. South Front.



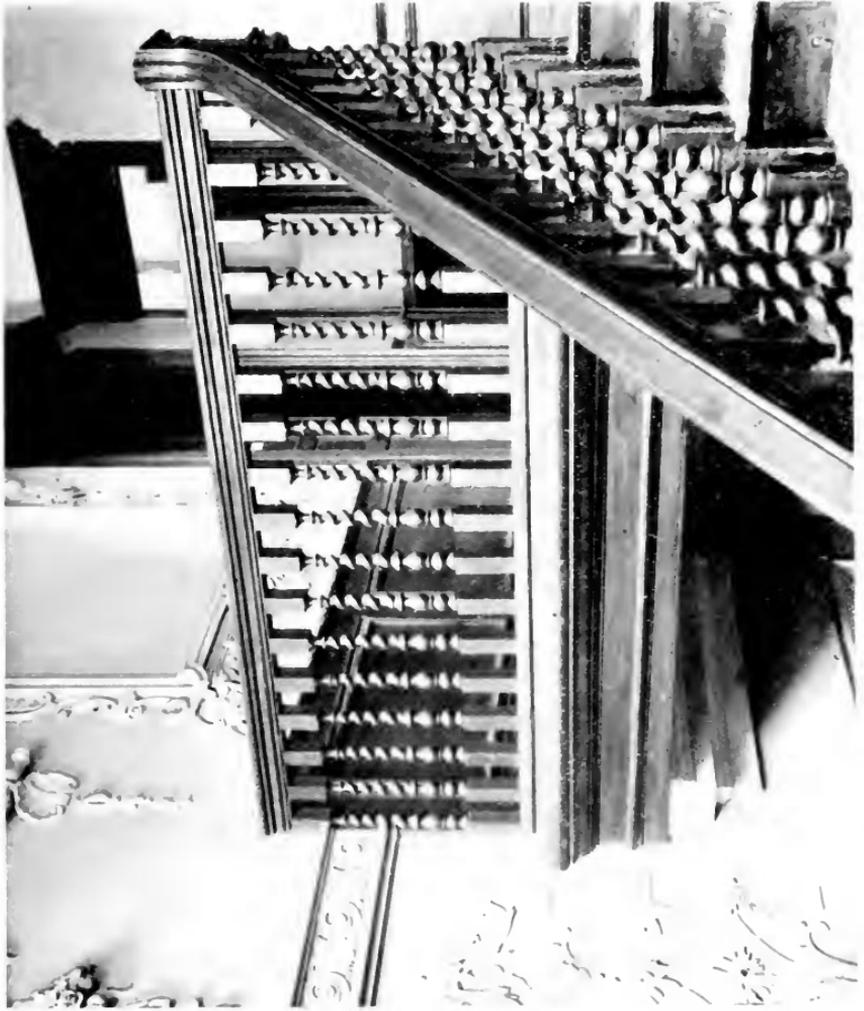
Garratts Hall. South Door.



Garratts Hall. Fireplace in Library. 1581



Garratts Hall. Lower part of Staircase.



Garratts Hall. Upper part of Staircase.



Garratts Hall. Plasterwork of Staircase Hall.

must have been covered over later, for the house in living memory has always been white.

In 1791 the property was acquired by Richard Ladbroke, and remained for some time in the possession of that family,¹ some of whom, probably Miss Ladbroke, who owned it from 1794 to 1818, spent money in improving the place, for it is assessed for taxation very much higher in 1810 than it was before Richard Ladbroke bought.² It is probable that it was at this time that the additions to the north of the main block were made. These, however, did not involve any substantial alterations in the main block dating from 1691. The east and west wings were not erected till the late Mr. John Lambert's time.

In 1854 Mr. William Clowes, the printer, who had had a lease for the previous ten years, purchased the property, and he sold to the late Mr. John Lambert in 1857, and the house thus returned to the possession of the same family as had held it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He took a great interest in the place, and in local affairs generally. The Elizabethan fireplace, which stood for many years in the library at Garratts, was given to him by Mr. William Lambert after Shortes Place, Woodmansterne, from which it came, had been pulled down.³ He died in 1878, and his cousin, Mr. Frederick Lambert, then bought Garratts and lived there till he died in 1902. His son, Col. F. A. H. Lambert, who was for many years a member of the Council of this Society, let, and subsequently sold, the place to Mrs. Davies, who carried on a well-known girls' school there. After her death the house with 32 acres was sold in 1930, and the property was developed for building, with the result that the old house has now been pulled down.

The building had no special architectural pretensions, but possessed that character of dignity, comfort and tranquillity,

¹ An account of them is given in Manning and Bray, I, 311. See also *Notting Hill in Bygone Days*, by F. M. Gladstone (1924). Richard Ladbroke (d. 1793) owned Frenches in Reigate and Notting Barns. Robert Ladbroke owned and lived at Hedley Place when Manning wrote (1809).

² *Hist. Banstead*, I, 241.

³ For its history see *Hist. Banstead*, II, 75. It is now in the possession of Mr. Uvedale Lambert of South Park, Bletchingley.

which our own time, except when our architects follow the models of the past, seems incapable of producing. The original house was square, and its general style and details, such as the English bond used throughout the brickwork except where later alterations had been made, were quite consistent with the date 1691. The staircase with elaborate plaster work festoons of flowers, all of course destroyed in the demolition, was particularly pleasing, and the whole of the detail, as indeed might be expected seeing that it dated from so good a period, was admirable. The modillions under the cornice, for instance, on the outside of the house, when stripped of the innumerable coats of paint which disguised their shape, proved to be the most delightful carving.¹

The timber employed in the house except for some large oak beams in the roof was pine throughout. There were, however, a few bits of oak found elsewhere, apparently reused from an earlier house. One of these had some plaster still adhering in one of the mortices, and it is possible that this was a beam from an earlier house of timber and wattle and daub.

The photographs, for which the Society is indebted to Mr. Duncan Rose, show the exterior of the house and the staircase hall, which, as already observed, was very attractive with its spaciousness and decorative plaster work. The garden door shown in the first photograph was originally the front door. This arrangement was inconsistent with any privacy in the garden, a consideration of less account in earlier days, but objectionable to more modern ideas. In this connection it may be mentioned that the property, as it was known to us, was to some extent a consolidation, Little Garratts being originally no part of it.² About the end of the eighteenth century or a little later a new entrance was made to the north of the house. When the demolition took place, the brickwork by the garden door showed signs of alteration, and the fan-light looks more like 1791 than 1691.

¹ I purchased a number of them at the sale of materials, and have presented specimens to the Guildford Museum, and one also to Kingston Museum.

² Little Garratts appears, for instance, in the Tithe apportionment (1841) as owned and occupied by Robert Shallcross.

The available facts then seem to point to the original house of 1691 having been a red brick house, and to one of the Ladbroke's about a hundred years afterwards altering its appearance by plastering and painting it, and making an addition on the north side which gave a north entrance, the original south entrance becoming a garden door. But whoever was responsible for doing this and for making the gardens, which, as we have seen, were described before 1800 as good gardens, was a person of taste and skill, or—shall we say?—lived in an age when such things were more readily available than they are in our day.