BANSTEAD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

BY

SIR HENRY LAMBERT, K.C.M.G., C.B.

IT is sometimes thought that the 18th century is less interesting than earlier centuries, and that though it has long receded beyond the reach of living memory it is still too near us to be worthy of as much attention. But even apart from the extreme value and interest of much of the 18th-century work which has come down to us, it is questionable whether any archæological society would be wise in accepting such a limitation. The fact is that to most of us a sympathetic understanding of the past is easier as we get nearer to our own day, and it may be claimed for the 18th century that it is already far enough removed from us to have acquired something of the glamour of the past; while its men and women, its language and social habits, its opinions and its style of building, though they differ from those of our own day, are sufficiently familiar to make us feel that, if by some magic we were to be transported back into it, we should find a world in some respects inferior and in others superior, but one to which we could adapt ourselves without any great difficulty.

Banstead, the subject of this paper, would indeed be different from the Banstead of to-day, but many of the houses which were standing there in 1750 can still be seen, and the personal appearance of some and the handwriting of many of the inhabitants are at least

familiar to the writer. The methods of agriculture, though antiquated now, were approaching to the modern, and the general appearance of the parish,[1] if we eliminate the modern houses, the railway and the telephone poles, if we imagine the roads not hard but green, was much what it is now. We should indeed wonder to see how much the place had gained in appearance by the absence of modern conveniences, and by the fact that such houses as existed were all the handiwork of people who had a sound sense of proportion and a taste which was not merely eclectic and ministered to by mechanical production on a large scale. If, however, we wanted to travel to London, or even to fetch a doctor, it must be admitted that we should find the delay exasperating.

The following sketch is based mainly on the papers relating to the administration of the estate of John Lambert, who died intestate in 1762, aged 72. His ledger, written in a fine, clear, bold hand, and showing all his transactions between 1750 and his death, complete inventories of his furniture and effects, and all the bills paid by the administrator, are in my possession. He lived with his sister at Well Farm, in Banstead, a house whose 18th-century facade conceals a much older building. He farmed a good deal of land and had no doubt been a farmer all his life, for as youngest son he had succeeded in 1721 to his father's copyhold lands.[2] His father was also a farmer. His eldest brother Thomas had lived at Perrotts (the existing building is modern); another brother, Sir Daniel, an ex-Lord Mayor of London, lived till his death in 1750 at Well House (he added the dining-room wing to the 17th-century house), and his widow lived on there; a nephew, Daniel Lambert (the administrator of the estate), after 1756 lived at Rooksnest, now Rosehill School (the original house is the block with the five windows to the north of the

[1] All the main features of a map of Banstead Place Farm in 1756 can be traced without difficulty on the Ordnance survey map, though fields have been thrown together and there was more arable.

[2] See *History of Banstead*, p. 204.

present front door, and the rest is modern). Before 1756 Simon Wilmot, a relation by marriage, had lived there. His brother, Edward Lambert, was a good deal at Banstead, so there was a large family circle.

First let us look at the farm. In addition to his own land, mostly near Well Farm, John leased the Free Down—that is the Hundred Acres where the Lunatic Asylum now stands—from Sir Nicholas Carew, and also certain other land belonging to Mr. Isaac Hughes. "Mr. Isaac Hughs and Mrs. Sarah Buckle," his second wife (Miss Buckle, as we should say), the daughter of Christopher Buckle, of Great Burgh, who built Nork, were married, according to the Parish Register, in 1747. Hughes lived at Garratts, which was then a fine modern house (built on older foundations), and which, though largely added to, has been little altered, and he also owned Yewlands (which he no doubt acquired through his first wife, Elizabeth Harris). Yewlands was built about 1730, and is clearly distinguishable from the modern additions at each end of it. It closely resembled Rooksnest opposite to it.

And here it may be remarked that at this time very few houses had names, though in some cases they may have been called after the land on which they were built. Names such as Rooksnest or Well House seem all to be later, *e.g.*, in the inventory of furniture at Rooksnest in 1765 the house is called simply Mr. Daniel Lambert's late dwelling-house, and Well House in the same year is described, not by its name, but as a customary brick messuage, etc., situate near the well, and identified by the names of its past and present occupants.

The crops grown, according to the valuation when the farm was let after John's death, were wheat (46 acres), barley (44½ acres), oats (47½ acres), and pease (8½ acres), and some tares, besides apples, pears and walnuts—John's father had been a great planter of walnuts. There was also some clover, and 46 acres of fallow, and 474 sheep and lambs, six cows and calves, eight hogs and four pigs on the farm.

But it is rather with persons than farming that these notes are concerned. The highest paid man on the farm from 1756 was James Brown, "Shephard," whose wages were £7 : 10*s*. a year. Thomas Watts, evidently his predecessor, had the same, but in 1750 there is a note, "Md gave him to buy pr shoes as p. promise 5*s*.," so Watts did better than Brown. The other rates of wages are lower, *e.g.*, "Jno. Sanders my servant," gets £6 : 10*s*. for a year's service to 29th September, 1751, and for the three following years £7. But after that Sanders, like most of the others, is paid by the week—6*s*. a week, except during harvest, when he gets 9*s*. a week. Benjamin Flint, however, got 10*s*. for harvest in 1753. Men paid by the week evidently did not take much holiday, for in 1755 is the note on payment of 24 weeks' wages to Sanders, "N.B.—2 Xmas Hollydays excep^{td}."

It would appear that in the absence of savings banks some of the regular hands left their wages with their employer, *e.g.*, John Foster put his mark to a receipt from the administrator for two and three-quarters years' wages at £7 a year.

The 18th century had heard nothing of the equality of the sexes, and the women were paid at a much lower rate. Their usual wage was £4 a year, though Elizabeth Martin rose to £5—perhaps she was head dairymaid. Sarah Martin, I regret to say, "went away without warning," but was allowed a month's wages. These were then at the rate of £2 : 10*s*. No doubt a flighty young thing.

Hester Cain, a predecessor of Elizabeth Martin, drew £5. The last entry is, "To cash p^{d} for 29 weeks wages from 16 July to this 7 Feb. 1752 and went away £2 . 17 . 0—To d° to buy something towards Housekeeping, 6s." The Parish Register shows that that very morning Hester was married to Henry Simmonds, who was for 46 years Parish Clerk, so the "something" was a wedding present.

The receipts for wages given to the Administrator show that most of these people could not sign their

names, and writing evidently presented great difficulties to many who were above the position of a hired servant. Here is the bill of the thatcher, Thomas Brown:—

> "Mr Danil Lambrrt his Bill
> for thithing the haystack 4 . 0 .
> for thitching one side of the duck
> barn at puden Lane 8 square 1 . 0 . 0."

Thatch is no doubt a difficult word to spell, but his next effort, an item for thatching "at the Whiddo Clark" is no more successful. Puden (pudding) Lane was the Woodmansterne Lane, and as it was of course unmetalled it no doubt deserved its name.

Thomas Richardson, the carpenter (who charged 2*s.* a day); William Lancashire, the wheelwright; Nicholas Travis and Thomas Waterer, the woodmen; William Woodman, the sawyer, all sign their names, as does Mary Harrow, the baker who supplied the bread in 1762 after the funeral, for distribution to the poor of Banstead. She, however, found "shilling" as troublesome to spell as Brown found "thatch."

"For nine bushels & haf of Bread at Sicks shielns & atepence Bushel £3 . 3 . 4."

It should be added that the parish accounts show that throughout the 18th century churchwardens and overseers who could not write were rare; they were, of course, the well-to-do men of the parish.

Let us go through the village and see some of the people to whom John Lambert sold his wheat or barley or apples or beasts, and from whom he bought various things. First, there was the butcher, Robert Hawkins, who on the 2nd February, 1754, "left of(f) his shop," and was succeeded by Edward Chapman (the shop was probably at the south-east corner of the High Street). Hawkins, when he bought calves, paid 2*s.* 8*d.* a stone—the price never varied—and 2*s.* 1*d.* for a fat heifer, weight 73 stone; but in 1754 Chapman began to pay 3*s.* for calves. In 1758 the price rises to 3*s.* 4*d.* and falls next year to 2*s.* 8*d.* In February, 1759, he buys a

fat cow, weight 77½ stones at 2*s.* 4*d.*, but except for a few sheep and lambs, most of the purchases are calves. Hawkins also bought "sider apples." No doubt everyone then made cider.

On the other hand, Chapman charged, in 1761, for his mutton, 3½*d.* a pound; for pork, 4*d*; for veal, 4½*d.*; and for beef, 2*s.* a stone (8 lbs.)—prices which we may envy.

Chapman was evidently a man of some education. He wrote a very fair hand, and collected tithe and poor rate.

The smith was Jacob Harrow. In 1755 he was shoeing the carthorses at 8*s.* each per annum, but in 1758 he raised his charge to 10*s.* He was at the same time buying "sider apples," wheat, &c., and the rise in his charge may perhaps be explained by the note: "£1 . 7 . 0 not paid to be allowed out of his next Bill, being distressed for money." Anyhow, poor Jacob died, and his widow, who carried on the business with a man named Gosden, charged 8*s.* again. The long bills for repairs to ploughs, etc., were no doubt written by Gosden, for Elizabeth Harrow put her mark to the receipts.

John Ingram (or Ingrams or Ingrimes) kept the Woolpack, and we naturally find him selling "granes" to John Lambert, and buying his apples for "sider" at 1*s.* 2*d.* a bushel and supplying "Bear for y^e^ apple grinders, 1/–." For the 4th of March, 1762, the day of John's funeral, he sends in a bill for "Beer and baco, For pudden, For Bread, butter, etc., For Dreassen,"—in all, 13*s.* 4*d.*—a dinner for the bearers; and he duly signs the receipt. But his activities were by no means confined to keeping an inn. He was also a barber, and shaved John, and supplied him with the wigs which 18th-century respectability demanded. In September, 1756, I find: "By a new wig, £3 . 0 . 0. By new making the old one & Hair added, 14 . 0." But the added hair must have worn off, or the new wig worn out, for in February, 1759, a new wig is charged, £1 : 15*s.* 0*d.*, and two years later yet another one.

The parish did all its business at the Woolpack (except what it did at the Tangier). So under his churchwardens account John Lambert enters "pd. at y^e^ Woolpack on settling George Harrisons accounts, 2*s.* 6*d*," and when as churchwarden he pays for "Ringing State days" it is to J^no^ Ingram. Ringing the church bells at that time was clearly as impossible without beer as was the conduct of parish business, and Ingrimes must have been a prosperous man.

Samuel Morris was a bricklayer, or rather a small builder, who owned some land of his own. He was employed in doing various repairs to the church,[1] where, if his work was not of a very high order, it was less mischievous than that of successors with more pretensions, and also in building a Parish House (*i. e.*, a Poor House). Unfortunately none of his detailed bills remain except the charge for "taking up a stone and paving in the church for M^r^ John Lambert and laing off downe. Time and morter and paving Tiles com to £1 . 1 . 0."—the usual horrid practice of intra-mural burial. Morris must have been a man of some education despite his erratic spelling, for he was also a collector of taxes.

William Steward was the carrier, and after his death his widow continued the business. She charges 2*d.* in 1762 for bringing "a parcil of tea down." And "four pounds of solt peter cost 4*s.* For bringing the peter down, 2*d.*," and "a dussin of wine down," 9*d.* As she only put her mark someone else devised the spelling. But the bulk of the carriage of goods from a distance must have been done by the farmers, for there being no water carriage, no one else then possessed any considerable motive power. John Lambert in fact did a good deal of carting. For instance, he carts "Load Goods from London 15*s.*," for Lady Lambert pretty regularly each spring besides carting coals ("carriage 2 chaldron coales from London £1"), and mould and dung, probably for the Well House garden. Similarly, he carts for Isaac Hughes "3 chaldron coales from Kingston

[1] *History of Banstead*, p. 233.

£1. 1. 0" (to which he adds "4*d.* per chaldron for Beer by Custom," but as he subsequently carted more coals without charging for the beer, Mr. Hughes may be supposed to have resented the customary payment). Again, in 1754, he carried "2 Load Goods to Mitcham for Madam Haltien," the widow of James Haultain, who lived in Banstead, perhaps at Yewlands. In March, 1761, he carts 2,000 bricks for Sam[l] Morris to Ewell. He also carts oats for his brother Edward, "delivered att his House in London" (Edward, who lived in Southwark, was a woolstapler, and John sold him wool). Edward, it should be added, reciprocated by getting various things for John, hops, tea, brandy, tobacco, a Gloucester cheese, vinegar, and so forth. It is curious that in 1753, Edward should buy butter for him in London, but the account seems to imply that this was so. All the little things no doubt came down by the carrier, unless Edward brought some of them when he rode down in the summer. From 1752 onward, he kept his horse in the winter with his brother at Banstead, paying 1*s.* a week. As he was 72 in 1752 (he lived to be 82), it may be supposed that he found riding down in winter too trying.

The vicars at this time were John Edwards and James Wagstaffe. The former held office from 1714 to 1754, the latter from 1754 to 1789, and if we add to these the tenures of their immediate predecessor and successor, it will be found that from soon after the Restoration till into the reign of George IV, Banstead had only four vicars. The vicar, however, will only appear here as the recipient of tithe, which, before the passing of the Tithe Act of 1839, was apt to be a source of trouble; so much so indeed, that Stevenson in his *Agriculture of Surrey* (1813) argued that the uncertainty of tithe seriously depreciated the value of a tithed farm, even when let at a reduced rent, as compared with one that was tithe free. It was usual to pay a composition per acre, and this was in fact done at Banstead in 1762 with the great tithe, which then, as now, belonged to Newport Grammar School. The basis was 4*s.* 6*d.* per

acre under wheat; barley, 3*s*; oats, 2*s*. 6*d*.—(In a paper headed "Tithe of Banstead Place Farme," 3 acres under tares and 15 under clover are included at 2*s*. 6*d*., and these are presumably included in the total under "oats, etc.," debited to "M[r] Phineas Cotes, Esq.," of Banstead Place).

The vicar's tithe must have been more troublesome. Here it is, for 1762, on John Lambert's land:—

" 106	Lambs at 3*d*. - - -	1	6	6
6	Calves at 4*d*. - - -		2	
1	Barren Cow at 2*d*. - -			2
1,700	Bavins at 1/8 - - -		17	–
300	Kiln Bavins at 10*d*. - -		2	6
2½	hundred Tods at 1/- - -		2	6
1	hundred Stakes at - -		3	0
21	Hirdles at 2½*d*. - - -		4	4
	Hoops - - - -		5	
	72 lb. of Wool at 6½ - -	1	19	
	a Pig - - - -		2	
	Easter offering - - -		5	
		13	13	–"

The paper is receipted by Wagstaffe in his beautifully clear Italian hand. Edwards also wrote a good hand—not so good as Wagstaffe's, but better than most hands of to-day.

There are a few dealings in the papers with people outside Banstead: Widow Wells of Cheam, a maltster; probably George Carter the mason, who charged 2*s*. a dozen for 132 letters on the memorial stone; and some others. One is Mr. Francis Hutchins, from whom in 1757 John Lambert had a yard and a-half of superfine cloth at 17*s*. a yard. He was probably either a merchant or a ship's captain who commanded one of the ships engaged in the Oporto or Spanish trade, in which the Wilmots and some of the Lamberts were interested. (Simon Wilmot owned a ship named the *Banstead*, and one of John's nephews had been at Oporto for

many years.) An extract from a letter written home four years after John's death by his great nephew, Thomas Lambert, at Oporto, will bring home the difficulties of communication in the 18th century very vividly:—"Poor [Captain] Bradshaw has been out a long time. He says he laid five weeks in Portland Road, two anchors out all the while, and hard gales of wind at South West." The posts between Oporto and Banstead were erratic, and there was small inducement for ordinary folk to travel far for pleasure.

One other bill must be mentioned, that of Samuel Horne, the apothecary, who attended John in his last illness. Banstead, of course, had no doctor of its own, and Horne made 32 journeys (? from Epsom) between 6 January and 22 February to Banstead, besides two journeys to London—perhaps for consultation or to get special medicine. For this and for numerous "draughts" "cordial nervose boluses," and what not, he charged £13 : 11*s.* 2*d.* But they were of no effect, for the old man died on 24 February.