



## **GREATHED MANOR formerly 'Ford Manor'**

According to the Victoria County History, the manor of *FORD* was among the **Gainsford family** possessions in Lingfield, before 1430. The Gainsfords' principal seat was at Crowhurst Place. Ford remained the property of the Gainsford family, being always held by the lord of Blockfield (now Old Surrey Hall) until the 17th century.

A map of Blockfield, made in 1620, shows the earliest known representation of the Manor House of Forde. The field and enclosed boundaries are still recognisable in the present landscape. The Manor House with surrounding buildings was then sited in the area now occupied by the laundry, stables and kitchen gardens, in the valley to the south-east of the present 'Greathed' Manor. The relevant fragment of the map showing 'Forde' is reproduced below. The 1620 map is oriented to the south, rather than the now familiar north.



After 1682 the Gainsford connection ceased and the property passed through several hands. The daughter and heiress of the last Gainsford married into the **Johnson** family and in that year the Johnsons conveyed Ford to **Robert Linfield**, whose brother and heir conveyed it ten years later to **Anthony Faringdon**. The latter settled it on his son Anthony in 1715, and it apparently remained in this family until 1775.

In 1777 the estate was held by Samuel or William **Brown** and, according to Manning and Bray (ref. below) became in that year the property of **Sir James Burrows**, who had also purchased Starborough (Starborough Castle). In 1793/4 following the death of Sir James' nephew and heir (Richard Burrows), Ford Manor, Starborough Castle, and Chellows Manor were purchased by Thomas Turton.

**Thomas Turton's** brilliant career as a barrister brought financial rewards and public recognition. In 1795 he was made High-sheriff of the County and on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 1796 he was created a Baronet. In 1798 he exchanged his Chellows land for Billeshurst lands with John Nicholls.

Sir Thomas Turton was at one time owner of Starborough Castle, Ford Manor, Chellows & Felcourt Manor but by the time of his death in 1844, only the Felcourt estate remained in family occupation. Sir Thomas and his wife, Lady Mary Turton, lived their last days at Grosvenor St, Mayfair but are buried in a family vault in the Turton Chapel, Lingfield Church.

**Colonel Henry Malcolm** (1749-1834) retired from the East India Company's Army in Madras in 1798. On his return to England he looked for an estate in the country and eventually purchased The Ford Estate from Sir Thomas Turton Bt. in 1801. Col. Malcolm continued to hold Ford until 1826 when he sold to another servant of the East India Company, John Fullerton Elphinstone.

**John Fullerton Elphinstone** was born in 1778, the eldest son of William Elphinstone, a Director of the East India Company. Elphinstone went to Canton in 1794 where he was employed by the EIC as a 'Writer' (or clerk) but rapidly gained promotions. Elphinstone was clearly unhappy with his life in China, as is evident in his correspondence with his parents (see British Library Ref. below). He continued to serve the Company until his retirement as President of the China Select Committee on 18 March 1818, when he retired to England at the age of 40. John Elphinstone brought four Chinese servants to England to work for him and to nurse him through his years of declining health. When he purchased Ford Manor in 1826 three Chinese servants moved with him.

The closest to him was **Ho Chee**, the son of a mandarin. It is likely that Ho Chee had worked with or for the East India Company in Canton and Macao; his mandarin status could mean that he had an official Government sponsored post. When Ho Chee arrived in England he acquired an additional first name, 'John', his Chinese family name 'Ho' was joined to his personal name 'Chee' thus Ho Chee became 'John Hochee'. He married an English woman, Charlotte Mole, in the Parish Church at Braughing, Herts. in January 1823. John and Charlotte Hochee eventually had eight children, six were born in Lingfield and were baptised in the Parish Church.

The household led a fairly secluded life; Elphinstone's poor health continued to cause him great concern. The affairs of his estates in Lingfield kept him occupied (all those lands are now part of Dormansland parish, which was created out of Lingfield Parish). He wrote to his cousin, Mountstuart Elphinstone 'I busy myself by endeavouring to drain and fence this place of mine'. He later reflected that he had planted many trees, perhaps too many. He wrote again to his cousin of his concerns over the disturbances over the price of corn and that some hay stacks had been deliberately set alight in the area of Lingfield, fearing for his own hay ricks: 'I have some Wheat Stacks that would make a pretty Blaze and now that I have limited my donations to a certain quantity of Bread instead of money, it is received with grumbling, for Gin and Tobacco are preferred and so in spite my Stacks may go.'

John Elphinstone remained a bachelor and depended increasingly on Ho Chee who assumed complete administrative responsibility for Elphinstone's estate.

After September 1852 John Fullerton Elphinstone never returned to Ford Farm, or to York Terrace, his London home, preferring instead to live in a leased property called 'Stafford House' in Junction Road, Brighton, on the sea front. He died in Brighton on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1854 aged 75 and is buried in the Extramural Cemetery, Brighton. Ho Chee was the main beneficiary under the terms of Elphinstone's Will, inheriting Ford, Hoopers, Crosses and Milkhouse farms as well as Nortons; a total of over 550 acres.

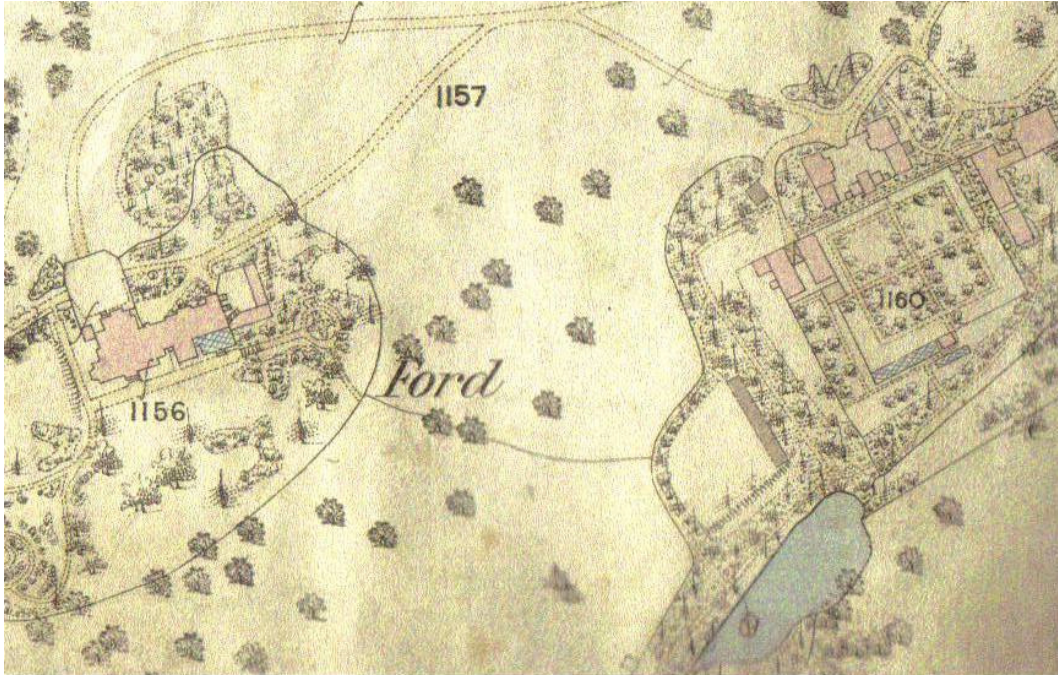
On 26<sup>th</sup> July 1854 John Hochee signed his Naturalisation Declaration which was granted on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 1854. John Hochee also died at Brighton, on 1st March 1869, and was buried at Brighton in the plot next to his patron and benefactor, John Fullerton Elphinstone; the plot having been purchased soon after Elphinstone's burial, 15 years earlier. Hochee had disposed of Ford Manor, Hoopers Farm and Milkhouse Farm before his death. He left his wife a life interest in Nortons and an annuity.

**Ford Manor was sold to Norman Morris** who in 1868 commissioned Robert Kerr to design a new house on the dry land to the north-west. Research is continuing on the subsequent fate of the old Manor House, of which there are no remains except the remnants of the once covered walkway, built by J F Elphinstone on the south side of the building. Evidently Norman Morris never lived in his new Manor House which he sold to Joseph Spender-Clay of Burton on Trent, one of the founders of Bass Breweries.

The subsequent history of the ownership of Ford manor by the Spender-Clay family has been published in *The Story of Dormansland*. Some of that family history was supplied by Mr Francis Nichols of Lawford, Essex, the present owner of the Ford Manor estate. Mr Nichols is the son of Philip Boverie Nichols and Phyllis Mary, daughter of Lt Col Herbert Spender-Clay and his wife the former Pauline Astor.

In 1959 the house was let on a long lease to Mutual Households (subsequently Country Houses Association) who converted it into retirement apartments. The CHA changed the name of the house to Greathed Manor in memory of their founder, Rear Admiral Greathed.

(For more information on Elphinstone and Ho Chee see RH7 Factsheet: *HO CHEE, John Fullerton ELPHINSTONE and the LOWDELL Family*. For more information on the Turton family see RH7 Factsheet: *The Turton Family: the highs and the lows*)



O.S. map XLIII.I, surveyed in 1870. New Ford Manor is on left.

The stable, laundry and kitchen garden areas on right (plot no. 1160) believed to be the site of Old 'Forde' Manor

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Sources:

The National Archive: HO 1/59/1917, John Hochee Naturalization, Aug. 1854

Surrey History Centre: Map of Blockfield, 1620

British Library, Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections: Elphinstone Papers  
*Hochee and Elphinstone* by Guy Duncan, privately published in 2003

Victoria County History: Surrey, Vol. 4

*The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* by Owen Manning &  
William Bray