

The Forge



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Blacksmiths & farriers

Both in mythology and since the Iron Age, forging metal has been an essential ingredient of agriculture, shaping tools and shoeing horses. The craft of the farrier has always been distinct from that of the blacksmith, although many blacksmiths were also farriers. Both were essential to East Meon's farming community until the 1980s when manufacturers' guarantees on machinery removed the demand for metal repairs and farriers took over the shoeing of horses which by now were principally kept for leisure. One forge building survives in East Meon, and efforts to preserve it from development in the 2010s provide a case study of community action.

Middle Ages

We can see the importance of blacksmiths to the agriculture of medieval East Meon by taking samples from three centuries of Winchester Pipe Rolls. The 1210 accounts for Menes Manerium include '*In the ironwork of two ploughs this year, 6s 2d. In payment of the smith, 3s*' and other references to ironwork. The account for Menes Ecclesia has "*In the ironwork for two ploughs with payment to the smith of 8s 6d*"¹. The roll for Menes Manerium for 1301/2 refers under 'Cost of Ploughs' to '*in ironwork of 1 horse-plough for the year, 1s 8d. In stipend of the smith forging the ironwork, 1s*', and under 'cost of carts' ... '*In 1 new binding, with clamps and large and small nails bought for the same, and with the stipend of the smith putting the said binding on the said wheels, 12s 6d ... in shoeing 2 cart-horses for the year, 2s*'. Under Menes Ecclesia: '*In ironwork of 1 horse-plough for the year 1s 8d. In stipend of the smith forging the ironwork 1s*'². The roll for Menes Manor for 1409/10 lists '*In ironwork and steel bought for the ironwork of 3 horse-ploughs and 5 ox-ploughs for the year, £1.2s. In stipend of the smith making the said ironwork for the year, 8s ...*' and under 'cost of carts', '*shoeing 3 cart-horses for the year 6s.*' Under Meon Ecclesia: '*In iron and steel bought for the ironwork of 1 plough with the stipend of the smith for the year 4s*'³. Enough work, evidently, in making and repairing equipment for at least one blacksmith and perhaps a farrier.

¹ P.R.O. Eccl 2-22-159270B Ed Holt N.R. *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester 1210-11* Manchester University Press 1964.

² Ed Page M. *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester 1301-2* Hampshire County Council 1996 p286.

³ Ed Page M. *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester 1409-10* Hampshire County Council 1996 p266.

18th and 19th centuries

Leaping forward three centuries, the parish registers show that a blacksmith named John Collins was buried at All Saints in 1772, aged 85, and the wife of 'Jno Lock, blacksmith' Mary Lock was buried in 1790; she was only 32. The Lock(e)s continued in the trade for three generations: George Lock died in 1805, succeeded by two Jameses, who died respectively in 1879 and 1939.⁴



Ordnance Survey map of East Meon, 1869, showing 'smithies' at the corner of 'The Square', west end of High Street, and at the intersection of the High Street and Frogmore Lane

Whites Directory of 1859 lists four blacksmiths in East Meon: *Carter Jas, Lock James, Love Wm and Stacey Ths*. By 1865, Kelly's locates two of these in the village of East Meon: James Locke and William Love.



The smithy and post office at Langrish, date unknown. Advertisements suggest late 19th century

It places James Carter in Langrish (left) with his son William and grandson James; they were blacksmiths and sub-postmasters. Thomas Stacey had a forge in Bordean from 1841 – 1871 and was joined by his son-in-law John Levy, also a blacksmith.

Inter-marriage within the trade appears to have been common: George Beckingham is listed as living in Alley (later Halley) Street, East Meon, first as a farm labourer and then as a blacksmith – possibly working at the smithy on 'The Square' (see O/S map above) at the corner of Halley and High Streets; the second James Locke married his sister Ann and they lived at Ivy House, next door to the eastern forge. In 1859 they had a daughter, also

⁴ Excerpts from the Registers of Burials and Baptisms are attached as Appendix 1

Ann, who married James Hobbs from Clanfield who joined his father-in-law at the Forge; they traded as Locke & Hobbs from around 1889. The Hobbs had six children, two girls and four boys, two of whom worked with their father in the Forge.



East Meon Forge c 1909. Master blacksmith Jim Hobbs (fourth from left) is flanked by two of his sons, Reginald Donald and Harold. Employee Walter Lambert holds the pony (extreme left). His father-in-law, Jimmy Locke, is now retired and blind and carries a blacksmith's travelling toolbox.

20th Century

Clara Smith described to Freddie Standfield her memories of the Forge in the 1920s and '30s. *"The smithy stood, as it still does, at the junction of the High Street and Frogmore Lane, a hive of activity, with many horses queuing up for shoeing. Three or four farriers worked there including Jim Hobbs, the boss. It was thrilling to watch horses being shod, and iron bands put on wagon wheels, with sparks flying from the fire, and more from the anvil, as shoes were hammered into shape."*



J. Hobbs & Sons "Shoeing and General Smiths, with Forge Cottage in the background.

'James Hobbs and sons', are listed as blacksmith until the 1920s; by then the owners of Drayton Mill, the Aburrows, also operated as blacksmiths and also had a wheelwright shop on the High Street (where East Meon Stores now stands). Jim Hobbs also operated a dairy from Ivy House. His son Reginald Donald is listed as a farrier in 1927 when his son, Reginald James, was baptised, while he is listed as a blacksmith in trade directories in the 1930s. The family lived at Orchard Cottage, next door to Ivy House where the Lockes had lived; he was buried in East Meon in 1957.

In the 1970s. the disused Forge was bought by Freddie Standfield for £250 and was let to an electrical contractor, Tom Pulley, who used it as a lock-up store until Tony Fry and his partner Derek Mustchin leased it in 1983 to operate it as a smithy once more. *"It had been locked up for years. One of the original two brick and iron forges remained, but the*

chimney had been demolished, and the bellows were missing". F.M. Engineering rebuilt the chimney, re-wired the building and installed an office and toilet at the back⁵.



F.M.Engineering in the 1980s. left to right Derek Mustchin, Michael Ibriani and Tony Fry. Michael was an apprentice, a foster child from Gowans, Pidham Hill.

1983 – 2003

Derek Mustchin and Tony Fry were Royal Navy Warrant Officers with engineering and metal-working skills. When they retired from the Navy in 1982, shortly after the Falklands War, they had started making wrought-iron items in Tony's garage in Horndean. They heard that the lease of a Forge in East Meon was available, and met the owner, Freddie Stanfield, village historian, who lived in Forge Cottage opposite. *"He was delighted we intended to re-open as a blacksmith's rather than a brothel or a fish-and-chip shop"*. Their intention was, says Tony Fry, *"to work as agricultural engineers, Derek to mend tractors, me to do welding repairs on farm equipment."* However, they commissioned market research from Portsmouth News, which indicated that *'We had missed the boat ... farmers were buying John Deere tractors under warranty, and they all had small welding machines. The days of using old clapped out Ferguson tractors were long gone.'* The pair turned their skills to any job with came their way, including patching roofs on chicken sheds, installing oak book shelves and replacing the glass in the back door of a cottage which the owner had broken when she locked herself out. They did some agricultural work for John Tosdevine and his sons, taking their mobile welding machine to a potato digger which kept breaking down in the middle of the field.



Then the Forge was damaged by a car avoiding collision by crashing through the double doors (*left*); burglars subsequently stole their portable tools and equipment but despite these setbacks, they developed a successful line of business making gates, railings and other decorative iron work, including a village sign for Catherington, the gates

to the Submarine Museum in Gosport, the hanging lights in both The Court Hall and the new Church Hall and the ornamental glasses rack in the newly-refurbished George Inn. In 1999, Tony Fry's son Simon took over from Derek Mustchin and the firm was re-named Fry and Son.

⁵ A full interview with Tony Fry can be accessed at <https://www.eastmeonhistory.org.uk/content/category/hwadings-under-which-the-archives-are-recorded/interviews-with-villagers-with-memories-of-the-village>



Decorative iron work at Ye Olde George Inn

The 21st century

Freddie Standfield was very involved in the early years of the Petersfield Museum; when he died in 2005, his will specified that, after bequests to family, friends and East Meon bodies such as the Village Hall, Almshouses and Cricket Club, the ‘*net proceeds*’ of ‘*the remainder of my property*’ be paid to the Museum to help fund a curator. The trustees were unable to sell the Forge and asked the Museum to accept it in lieu of payment⁶.



Steve Weeks in, and outside, the Forge



The Forge was then leased to Steven Weeks, another Navy welder. Tony Fry had retired in 2003 but continued to help Weeks when needed. The building was once more in poor condition and there were problems with rental payments; and the Museum decided in 2010 to sell it, putting it out to open tender. At least one East Meon resident, Denys Ryder, wanted to bid for the Forge, but failed to meet the deadline because he wanted to give the incumbent, Weeks, a chance to bid first⁷. The Museum sold the Forge, first, to property developers who in turn sold it to a Mr Croucher, who stated his intention to re-build it as a carpentry workshop for his son Jamie, with an extra floor containing a one-bedroom flat in which he would live...

The Crouchers claimed they had purchased a very dilapidated building. ‘*After 4 years of no occupancy and because of its poor design the roof spread problem is accelerating, with the result that the walls are now bowing out alarmingly. We understand the previous tenants had a full repair and maintenance lease on the workshop but simply could not afford to carry out the prohibitively expensive repairs, with the result the survey showed the building is now very close to collapse*’⁸.

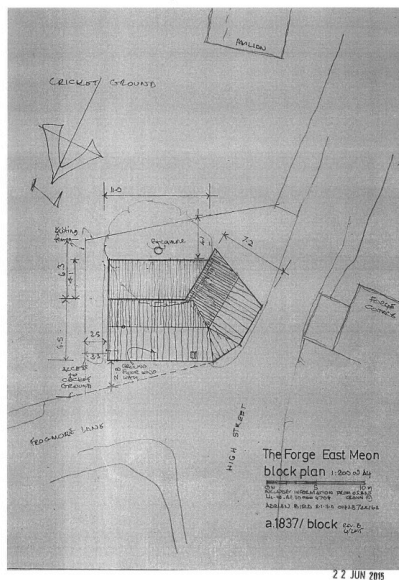
⁶ A summary of events from the perspective of Petersfield Museum is contained in Appendix 2

⁷ Denys Ryder’s account of his attempts to put together a bid are in Appendix 3.

⁸ PDF of Jamie Croucher’s defence ‘The Forge – The Facts – The Future – will be available on www.eastmeonhistory.net.

In January 2013 Croucher submitted his first application for planning permission to East Hants District Council to develop the Forge with an “*extension to create a first floor to provide habitable accommodation and provision of a decked area to the rear*”. The Conservation Officer recommended against their plans which were ‘*squeezing what seems like a quart into a pint pot*’ on the limited site; the application was withdrawn.

The Crouchers had suggested to Channel 4 that the series ‘Restoration Man’ follow the project for one of its documentaries about restoring ruined buildings; George Clark and in May 2013 the team filmed the Forge in anticipation of its conversion. In June that year they submitted a second planning application with a slight reduction in the height of the roof but otherwise similar to the first. This application drew a large number of objections from residents and in particular from East Meon Cricket Club and its supporters; the proposed residential building, with windows and a terrace immediately adjoining the ground, were seen as a threat to the continued playing of cricket on the ground.



Block plan of the Forge, showing steep banks below cricket ground.

The Forge had been built in a confined site, cut into steep banks on two sides and adjacent to ‘The Recreation Ground’, which contains the village cricket ground. Previously named Pill Meadow, this had belonged to the Oxenbourne Fuel and Recreation Ground Allotments Charity, established in the mid 19th century ‘*for purposes of exercise and recreation of the neighbouring population*’. Originally intended to support poor cottagers who had been deprived of land under the Enclosures, the meadow had been made over to the Parish Council with restrictions on development⁹. Because the Forge is at a lower level than the meadow, and within striking distance of the pitch, it had over the years been peppered by sixes and fours hit by batsmen; the Cricket Club was nervous that an accident to residents could subject it to substantial claims.

⁹ HRO 35/M84/186111 *Statements of accounts, 1903 – 1951*. See Appendix 5 for notes.



Revised plans for re-development of The Forge. The design included an open deck on the south-west side, facing the cricket pitch..

East Meon Parish Council had applied to have the building listed. English Heritage considered that the building did not meet the exacting criteria for listing, but it said: *“It is undeniably true that the Forge adds to the picturesque aspect of East Meon, and is a valuable reminder of the importance of the forge or smithy in village life. For this reason the building is of local interest and its protection should lie in the local designations of conservation area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Park.”*

The Parish Council was at first willing to listen to Croucher’s proposals and its vote had been equally divided; it asked the District Council to defer its consideration of the application so that cricketing issues could be considered¹⁰. On 29 August 2013, however, EHDC’s planning committee resolved to grant permission. Following this, on 28 September 2013, villagers formed the East Meon Forge and Cricket Ground Protection Association with the twin objectives of saving the building from the proposed development and acquiring it for restoration as a workshop. Within a short time of its formation the membership of the Association had risen to 146, the great majority of whom were residents of East Meon.¹¹ The Association sought judicial review of the decision because of the Council’s failure to take account of the damage to the Conservation Area and the playing of cricket on the ground. The Council accepted that the decision was unlawful, and the High Court quashed the permission.

In October 2013 Mr Croucher had made another application for the same development. The English Cricket Board, which had been approached by the Association, objected to this, as did the Association and many others, and they referred the matter to Sport England on whose advice a report was commissioned which stated that the very short distance between the square and the Forge represented a significant risk of damage by cricket balls and that the building should be designed to protect its residents. Mr Croucher proposed a 4-metre-high net to be

¹⁰ The statement made by the Chair of East Meon Parish Council to EHDC Planning Committee in August 2013 is attached as Appendix 3.

¹¹ A full account of events written by George Bartlett is available as Appendix 6

erected on match days, window and door shutters, and a protective net and an awning for the deck. Sport England advised that the proposed measures, while positive, were not enforceable through the planning system.

Despite this, again on April 3rd 2014 the council granted planning. The Association again applied for Judicial Review and this came before Mrs Justice Lang in the High Court on 23 and 24 October. Before then an attempt by Mr Croucher to remove the roof of the building and demolish substantial parts of the walls had been prevented by the High Court.

The Association's case came before Mrs Justice Lang in the High Court on 23 and 24 October 2014. On the first day of the hearing the judge surprised the world's press by asking the Association's counsel "What are sixes and fours¹²?" A week later she gave judgment for the Association, saying: "*The representations made by Sport England, that the proposed mitigating measures were unenforceable and a permanent ball-stop fence was required, were sound. In my judgment, the officers and the Planning Committee failed to have proper regard to the representations of Sport England in its capacity as statutory consultee. In consequence the proposed development creates unacceptable risks for its future occupants and for the cricket club.*" She accordingly quashed the planning permission and awarded the Association its costs against the Council. On 11 February 2016 the SDNPA planning committee, having heard representations from the chairman of East Meon Parish Council, Susan Davenport, and from George Bartlett, unanimously refused planning permission. The decision proved to be an important one for cricket clubs elsewhere in the country, enabling them to resist proposals for adjacent residential development that would pose a threat to the continued playing of cricket.

Following the quashing of the permission the planning application was called in by SDNPA for re-determination, and on 11 February 2016 ~~the SDNPA~~ its planning committee, having heard representations from the chairman of East Meon Parish Council, Susan Davenport, and from George Bartlett, chairman of the Association, unanimously refused-permission.

Although the Association had been frustrated in its attempts to buy the building for restoration as a workshop, the Forge was bought in 2016 by Kevin Davies, a resident of East Meon, and his business partner, Matthew Hampshire as an office for their new media agency Mandarin Kite. The building has now been sensitively restored and it remains, as English Heritage put it, "*a valuable reminder of the importance of the smithy in village life*".

¹² Notably the Times of India, which expressed surprise that an English High Court judge should need to ask the question.



The Forge as restored, June 2018, with Forge Cottage behind. Photo Paul Lafferty



Computer generated image showing how proposed development would have looked



Appendices

Appendix 1

Parish Registers of burials & Baptisms showing Blacksmiths

Burials

<i>Date</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>First name</i>	<i>Last name</i>	<i>Abode</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Est birth year</i>
27-Jan	1791	John	Collins		85	Blacksmith	1706
16-Aug	1790	Mary	Lock	Bordean	32	Wife of Jno. Lock, blacksmith	1767
01-Feb	1811	George	Locke		78	Blacksmith	1733
4-Apr	1843	James	Lock	Eastmeon	80		1763
30-Sep	1799	William	Love	Eastmeon		Blacksmith	
15-Dec	1803	William	Love	East Meon		Blacksmith	
28-Nov	1809	William	Love			Blacksmith	
23-Feb	1782	Wm.	Love?			Blacksmith	
26-Nov	1879	James William	Locke	East Meon	24		1855
3-Feb	1939	James	Hobbs	East Meon	80	Double grave	1859
19-Feb	1941	Anne	Hobbs	East Meon	81	Double	1860
19-Sep	1957	Reginald Donald	Hobbs	Orchard Cottage	62		1895

Baptisms

12-Mar	1883	Ada Louisa	James & Ann	Hobbs	East Meon	Blacksmith
03-Mar	1890	Ethel Grace	James & Annie	Hobbs	East Meon	Blacksmith
20-Sep	1891	Archibald Leslie	James & Annie	Hobbs	East Meon	Blacksmith
15-Oct	1893	Harold Edgar	James & Annie	Hobbs	East Meon	Blacksmith
05-Apr	1896	Reginald Donald	James & Annie	Hobbs	East Meon	Blacksmith
22-Mar	1898	Herbert Victor	James & Annie	Hobbs	East Meon	Blacksmith

Appendix 2

Email from Bill Gosney, Trustee of Petersfield Museum, 30th August 2018

1) Freddie was involved with the early years of the museum and during this time he indicated to the then chairman, John Holt, that he would leave the museum something in his will. However he did not indicate what or how much.

2) Following Freddie's death on 6th January 2004 his will included a bequest to the museum for the residual after all other benefactors and expenses had been paid. I attach a copy of the will for your perusal. Importantly you will note that no individual item or property was named or specified in the bequest to the museum. You will also note that he left small bequests to several organisations in East Meon including the Cricket Club.

3) The executors/trustees (details shown in will) disposed of all residual assets as specified, with the exception of the forge which they were unable to sell. They subsequently asked the museum to accept this property in lieu of payment as the will specified. The museum trustees agreed.

4) From the outset of their ownership of the forge, the museum experienced problems with rental payment (this is well documented in the museum records). For this reason the museum decided to sell the property.

5) The museum was advised that as a charitable trust they had to put the sale out to open tender, which they did. During this time individuals and organisations in East Meon indicated they may like to purchase the building for the benefit of the community. Unfortunately they could not proceed with a bid within the stated time scale for the bid and the museum were professionally advised that they could not extend the date as bids had already been received from others.

6) As will see in the will Freddie made no stipulation as to how the money should be used but knowing that Freddie was one of several people that had wanted the museum to employ a professional curator the trustees decided to invest the money and use the income earned to pay the salary of a curator. This principle has served the museum well and still survives.

7) Freddie's bequest is held as part of the museum's reserves, some of which will be used to fund the redevelopment but the principle in 6) still continues. Importantly, the proceeds of the sale of the forge were not used to fund the police station.

I have been totally open with you and I hope the information above, all of which can be verified from museum records is of help to you. In the circumstances I would greatly appreciate if you would allow me sight of the parts of your book that refer to matters relating to the bequest, the Forge and its disposal.

Having said all this, without Freddie's amazingly generous bequest and foresight the museum would not be where it is today and I am sure that he would be more than delighted to see the new museum open for Petersfield and the surrounding villages in 2020

Appendix 3

The Forge – What next? Statement by the late Denys Ryder

In the middle of January I received notice that the Forge was up for Sale. This interested me, because, for me it is an iconic part of the history of East Meon, and passing it every day on my travels, it has become somewhat of a piece of the furniture, if I may put it that way. But it does have its uses and I felt it was worth exploring to see if it could be obtained for the village. I approached other villagers, and over a dozen people pledged their support. They, like me, felt that it should be saved for the benefit of the village as a whole. After all it is still capable of being used as a working Smithy, or a workshop of some kind or other.

What transpired is that, I and other interested parties, knowing that the present tenant of the building was interested in purchasing it, decided to stand back and not attempt to over bid him, as we thought his bid was a very reasonable one, as well as knowing some of the problems and pitfalls. The sellers, who were the Trustees of the Petersfield Museum, decided to sell it outside the village to someone who is thought to be a developer. This is not yet another article on 'developer bashing'. Far from it. It is a wake up call to all those living in the village to say what do you want done with buildings which have passed their 'Best before' date?

The late Freddie Stanfield who gave the Forge to the Petersfield Museum in his Will, and who had lived opposite the Forge for many years, once said to me "It was up for sale just after I came to the village, and I put in a bid of £250 in order that it was not turned into either a Fish & Chip shop or a Brothel". We shall never know now what his true feelings were about it, but what we do know is that in the early 1970s he purchased Heycroft House in the Square which was in a poor state of repair, and with Gerald Lambert as his head workman, spent a lot of time and money, renovating it to what it is today. So one might assume that he was a conservationist not a 'knock it down and put up some other monstrosity' type of person.

I am not saying that the Trustees of the Petersfield Museum have acted in any improper way, but knowing the extent of the munificence that Freddie bestowed upon the Museum at the time of his death, I would have thought it would have been only polite for them to have contacted the 'Elders' in the village and discussed with them as to whether the village would have been prepared to buy the Forge for the benefit of the village. From where I stand it would appear that £ signs loomed in front of some eyes and we now know that the present tenant of the Forge was unsuccessful in his bid. He has another nine and a bit years of his lease to run so maybe any change will be for the future, but again I ask "What Next"?

An interesting iconic building in the village stands just inside the garden of one of the 'Forbes Arms Houses'. It is the old Village Well and has long since passed its useful life, but the building still stands and features in most pictures when photographers are taking a picture up Church Street and the Church. I think if anyone said that it should be knocked down and used as a public toilet, there would be an outcry around the village.

Some may think the Forge, as a building, is of no particular architectural interest, but then neither is the Isaac Walton or the Village Stores. But both serve a purpose which is needed by some in the village... If I suggested that the former should be knocked down to make way for more houses, however important accommodation for the younger families in the village currently is, I feel sure there would be uproar. If I were to suggest that there is greater variety and more choice to be found in the supermarkets in Petersfield and neighbouring villages, so why do we need the village stores, I would be likely to find myself being strung up. The community only exists as a community if there are every day facilities for all to use and enjoy.

Appendix 4

Submission by Chair of East Meon Parish Council, to EHDC planning committee - 29/08/13

To provide some context to some of the interest and legitimate concerns around the future of the Old Forge, I'd like to briefly touch upon recent chronology and the process leading to the parish council's present position.

The Old Forge has been, an historic village landmark building. It was part of a very generous bequest to the Petersfield Museum by an East Meon resident, who was also a local historian of some renown. There is a strong feeling in the parish that the museum undermined the spirit of that bequest by subsequently selling the Forge, after a few years. The consequence of this was that with a significant rent increase and other repair demands, the artisan tenant of the Forge, of many years, had little option other than to move. The Forge became vacant and progressively deteriorated over 3 years until it was bought by Mr Croucher. During this period the parish council had also unsuccessfully applied to have the building listed by English Heritage, although they did recognise it as an important historic building.

Earlier this year Mr Croucher submitted a planning application which he also presented at a full parish council meeting. After considering the proposal, the parish council as a consultee, submitted their objection because of two key concerns: Firstly, the scale of the enlarged building was inappropriate for the site and secondly, given the raised height and addition of windows/solar panels at the rear, the very real potential for disputes with the adjoining cricket club ground, of which the parish council have responsibilities as trustees.

That application was subsequently withdrawn. With the present revised application, the parish council's sub planning group have had several on-site visits with Mr Croucher to better assess the new proposal, and its impact on both the cricket club and any other neighbouring properties. A full set of hard copy drawings were also distributed to all parish councillors, together with an objective list of pros/cons for all councillors to consider. The resulting vote was tied. Given this situation, we requested that the application should also be reviewed and given the wider consideration of this planning committee. We felt that this was in the best interests of all parties.

As trustees of the recreation ground the parish council has a responsibility to ensure the proposed development should not impact, or threaten, the cricket club's modus operandi, either now or in the future - and that their views and articulated issues should be given the fullest consideration of this committee. Finally, there is also general agreement that the future preservation of the building is best achieved as a working artisan business.

Alan Redpath

Appendix 5

Notes from Statement of Accounts of Oxenbourne Fuel & Recreation Ground Charity 1903 – 1951

1903

Trustees: Rev T.H. Masters, J. Bonham Carter Esq, Henry Berry, Henry Coles, *James Hobbs (blacksmith owning the Forge)*

Balance in Hand at beginning of Account:

Rent paid by East Meon Cricket Club:	£3. 3s
Rent of Pasture	£5

Payments

17 Cottagers Fuels	£14.5
Poor rates	16s.11d
Salary of caretaker	£1
Repairs to fencing	£1.15s
Room for meetings	4s

1904

Ditto, but Balance in hand includes Subscription of John Bonham Carter, £1

1906

Ditto

1907 - 1912

The charity is now named 'East Meon Recreation Ground'. Trustees now include William Graham Nicholson MP, Basing Park Alton, Walter Dicker, East Meon, George Williams, East Meon

Nicholson pays the Subscription of £1. Tax and rates come under Payments

1918 - 20

Dicker no longer a Trustee, Ernest Jordan takes over. Rev Masters now has a CBE.

1923

Major M. Nicholson of Bereleigh has taken over from William Nicholson MP; Rev Claude Beckwith has now taken over from Masters. G Atkinson of South Farm and Mr Morris of Frogmore from Williams and Jordan. No subscription paid.

Payments now include 'Tithe & stamps', 'Tithe', Rates, Income Tax ...

1929

Balance includes £6 from *James Hobbs*, who operated the Forge. 'Particulars of Endowment and Income includes 'Herbage W.J. Hobbs'

1932.

Rev C.E.Mylne takes over from Beckwith

Under 'Particulars' &c: Pill Meadow East Meon feed let annually by tender *Mr J Hobbs*, the Cricket pitch the same

The next set of accounts is for 1950 ...

Trustees:

P.H.Berry, farmer (Hon Treas), C.W. Pollard insurance agent and clerk to the parish council (Hon Sec), J.M.Steel, Engineer and Chairman Parish Council, H. B. Goddard (Herbie) Motor mechanic, Parish Councillor, Rev. F Goddard, vicar

The only figure in the Balance is rent for electric light pole (1s)

1951. ditto, but Balance includes also grazing (£1)

Picking the bones:

There are no accounts from 1932 to 1950. The original Trustees included the vicar and, first, John Bonham Carter and then W.Nicholson, MP, followed by Major Nicholson of Bereleigh, plus Oxenbourne farmers, then Atkinsons, and Hobbs who was the blacksmith at the Forge.

From 1950, the Parish Council provided the bulk of the Trustees, including the doughty Herbie Goddard, later to be chair of the PC and of the VH, known as the Mayor of East Meon.

Appendix 6

Account by George Bartlett, Chair of The East Meon Forge and Cricket Ground Protection Association

Account by George Bartlett, Chairman of The East Meon Forge and Cricket Ground Protection Association

The Forge was bought in the 1970s by Freddie Standfield, who lived in Forge Cottage, immediately opposite. He was the author of the History of East Meon and was keen to preserve its heritage. During his ownership the building remained in use as a working forge. He served the Cricket Club for many years as its President and was its greatest supporter.

Freddie Standfield died in 2004 and in his will he left the Forge to the Petersfield Museum along with rest of his residuary estate. The building had a low rental value, and in 2010 the Museum decided to sell it. It was sold to a property developer, who in turn sold it to a Mr Croucher for £68,000.

When the East Meon Conservation Area was designated in 1968 its boundary had been drawn so as to include the Forge. The Forge was not a listed building, although it was on

Hampshire County Council's list of "Treasures", and in 2009 the Parish Council had sought to have it placed on the statutory list. English Heritage considered that the building did not meet the exacting criteria for listing, but it said:

"It is undeniably true that the Forge adds to the picturesque aspect of East Meon, and is a valuable reminder of the importance of the forge or smithy in village life. For this reason the building is of local interest and its protection should lie in the local designations of conservation area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Park."

Petersfield Museum took the view that it ought to maximise the amount of money it could obtain by selling the Forge. It did not consider that it needed to have regard to the historic value of the building or its contribution to the Conservation Area or the setting of Forge Cottage. The conveyance therefore placed no restrictions on what might be done with the building, and it provided for an uplift in the purchase price in the event of planning permission being granted for development.

In January 2013 Mr Croucher, who said that he wished to provide a carpentry workshop for his son with a flat above, applied to East Hampshire District Council for planning permission to develop the Forge with an *"extension to create first floor to provide habitable accommodation and provision of decked area to rear"*. The consultation advice of the Council's Conservation Officer, however, was adverse. It said:

"Whatever heritage interest and significance one might attribute to the current building will be largely eroded. I do not therefore consider support for the intended scheme could be derived from it being shown to preserve or enhance the Forge as a heritage asset...Because the scheme is dependent to some extent on squeezing what seems like a quart into a pint pot it is difficult to suggest an obvious resolution."

In consequence of this advice the application was withdrawn. In June 2013 Mr Croucher submitted a second planning application with the same description of development as in the first application and in materially the same form (the roof having been slightly reduced in height). This application drew a large number of objections from East Meon residents, who were particularly concerned about the damage to the building and the Conservation Area. In addition, objectors, including the East Meon Cricket Club and its supporters, saw the proposed residential building, with windows and a terrace overlooking and immediately adjoining the ground, as posing a threat to the continued playing of cricket on the ground. Case law has established that if a cricket ball is hit out of the ground and causes injury to a person or damage to property, the home cricket club as occupier of the ground is liable in law to pay damages for the injury suffered or the damage that has been done. And the fact that cricket has been played on the ground since long before the neighbouring land was developed is no bar to entitlement to damages. The Forge had frequently been hit by cricket balls.

In 1977 in a case called *Miller v Jackson* the owners of a house on a recently built estate took proceedings against the local cricket club, which had played cricket on the adjoining land for many decades. The great 20th century judge Lord Denning, who did not seek in his judgment to disguise where his sympathies lay (he began: "In summertime village cricket is the delight of everyone..."), was in no doubt about the root of the problem caused by the new development. He said: "The planning authorities ought not to have allowed it."

Here the planning authority did allow it.

Despite the objections to the proposed development, on 29 August 2013 EHDC's planning committee resolved to grant permission. Following this, on 28 September 2013, villagers formed the East Meon Forge and Cricket Ground Protection Association with the twin objectives of saving the building from the proposed development and acquiring it for restoration as a workshop. Within a short time of its formation the membership of the Association had risen to 146, the great majority of whom were residents of East Meon, although there were also some who had moved away after a long residence. One of these was Sir John Chadwick, a retired Court of Appeal judge, who had not long before moved to Winchester after living at Lower House Farm for many years. Sir John was particularly concerned about the harm to the building and, as a Vice-President of the cricket club, the threat to the playing of cricket. The Association's Committee, with Sir John as President, consisted of George Bartlett (Chairman), Stuart Martin (Vice-Chairman), Emma Burton (Secretary), Joe Selby (Treasurer), Denys Ryder, Chris Moor, Richard Bartlett, Russell Wright and John Ball. Chris Moor later succeeded Joe Selby as Treasurer. The committee met frequently in the course of the 2½ years that it took to resolve the planning problem.

Immediately after its formation the Association instructed its solicitor, William Bartlett of Prospect Law, to seek Judicial Review of the Council's decision. The decision was challenged on the basis that it was unlawful because of the Council's failure to take account of the damage to the Conservation Area and the playing of cricket on the ground. On 5 November 2013 the Council said that it would consent to judgment against it, accepting the unlawfulness of its decision. The decision was accordingly quashed by the High Court by agreement, the Council paying the Association's costs in full.

On 14 October 2013 Mr Croucher had made a third application for the development. It was in identical terms to the second one. The Association for its part took two steps. It applied for the registration of the Forge as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011, and, because of its concern about the threat to cricket-playing that the proposed development represented, it sought assistance from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), the governing body of cricket in this country. Liaison with the ECB (and in due course Sport England) was maintained throughout by Chris Moor, the Association committee member who was also Treasurer of the Cricket Club (and later Treasurer of the Association).

The Association's application for registration of the Forge as an Asset of Community Value was successful and the registration was in due course made on 6 March 2014. The effect of registration was to prevent the owner of the building from disposing of it without first giving a community body the opportunity to bid for it. It was also a recognition of the importance of the building to the local community. The Association sought advice from a conservation architect, a quantity surveyor and a commercial estate agent, and their reports showed that restoration of the building for use as a workshop was viable. Offers to purchase the building were in due course made by the Association, but these were not accepted.

On the cricket front the ECB entered an objection to the planning application. It also referred the matter to Sport England (the statutory body with responsibility for the protection of playing fields) and put the Association in touch with a laboratory called

Labosport, which gives independent expert advice on hazards arising from sporting events and the measures required to protect against them. Labosport produced a report which concluded that in view of the very short distance between the square and the Forge (36m at its shortest) and the velocity of the cricket balls the risk of damage was significant and a design solution for protection of the building was required.

In the light of the Labosport report Mr Croucher proposed a range of protective measures, such as a 4 metre high net to be erected on match days, window and door shutters, and a protective net and an awning for the deck. Sport England advised that the proposed measures, while positive, were not enforceable through the planning system. The only piece of enforceable mitigation would be a ball-stop fence, permanently installed, with a planning condition requiring its installation and maintenance.

At the end of January 2014 it had been observed that excavations to the floor of the building were being carried out, and the chimney was being demolished. The Association requested the Council to take enforcement action in respect of these works, but the Council said that the works were works of repair and therefore did not need planning permission. The Association then sought judicial review of the Council's refusal. The result of this application was that the works were stopped, and, although the court refused an injunction, they were not resumed.

On 3 April 2014 the council granted planning permission on the further application that had been made in October 2013. The Association had provided evidence that restoration of the building as a workshop was economically viable, whereas the proposed works to create a first floor flat were only viable if the expectation was that the whole building would in due course be turned into a house. The Association pointed out that the Forge had now been registered as a community asset and that it had the funds to acquire it and restore it as a workshop. Reliance was placed on the objection of Sport England, the statutory consultee, that the proposed safety measures would not be adequate or capable of planning control. And the Association made the very obvious contention that restoration of the building was better in terms of conservation than destroying it with a first floor flat constructed of timber and glass. These contentions having been ignored or rejected without adequate reason, the Association applied to the High Court for permission to apply for Judicial Review to quash the planning permission.

On 5 June 2014 Mr Justice Collins granted the Association permission to apply for Judicial Review, and on 23 June 2014 Mr Justice Mitting, as the Association had asked, granted a stay preventing the council from approving details under the planning permission and an injunction preventing the Crouchers from carrying out works of development or demolition.

Sometime shortly after Mr Justice Mitting had granted the injunction against the Crouchers, they applied to have the injunction varied to enable them to carry out what they said were "vital works". On 14 July 2014 Prospect Law requested them to specify what these "vital works" were and the urgency for them. The next day the Council's Building Surveyor visited the building and wrote to the Crouchers under the Building Act 1984 saying that the building was "in imminent danger of collapse". Mr Croucher thereupon surrounded the building in security fencing and posted upon it an enlargement of the

Building Surveyor's letter and a notice saying "Dangerous Building – Keep Out by order of East Hants District Council".

The Crouchers' application to vary the injunction was heard by Mr Justice Sales on 23 July 2014. The judge asked Mr Croucher what were the "vital works" that he wished to carry out and what evidence was relied on, and Mr Croucher said that the works were the removal of the roof and the substantial demolition of the walls and that the evidence was the letter from the Council's Building Surveyor. The judge said that the letter was no evidence that the works were needed, and he ordered that the Association's building surveyor be given access to the building to enable him to produce a report. The judge refused the application to vary the injunction, and he ordered Mr Croucher to pay the Association's costs.

On 29 July 2014 the Association's surveyor, Mr Smalley, inspected the building together with the Council's Building Surveyor. Mr Smalley wrote a report stating that the only section of wall requiring attention was a small section above a door on the north elevation, that there had been no recent movement (as was confirmed by the surveyor who had inspected the building in 2012 on behalf of Mr Croucher), and that (as the Council's Building Surveyor agreed) all that was needed to prevent further movement was the insertion of some timber cross beams in the roof.

Mr Croucher did not renew his application to the court. The Council's Building Surveyor did not disagree with Mr Smalley's report, and no works to the building were carried out. The security fencing surrounding the building, and the notices affixed to it, nevertheless remained in place for a number of months.

The Association's judicial review challenge to the grant of planning permission came before Mrs Justice Lang in the High Court on 23 and 24 October 2014. On the first day, when the Association's counsel told the judge that the building was frequently hit by sixes and fours, she asked him: "What are sixes and fours?" This question received extensive coverage in the world's press the next day, the *Times of India* showing the greatest astonishment that an English High Court judge should need to ask it. And the judge's notorious question was later the subject of an entry in the 2015 edition of *Wisden (Wisden's Cricketers' Almanac, 152nd edn, p168)*, almost certainly the only reference to East Meon CC in the long history of the publication.

Mrs Justice Lang gave judgment on 31 October 2014 (*R (East Meon Forge and Cricket Ground Protection Association) v East Hampshire District Council* [2014] EWHC 3543 (Admin)). She concluded that EHDC had not erred in law in deciding as it did on the Conservation Area and alternative schemes grounds of challenge, but that the Council had failed to have proper regard to the representations of Sport England. She said:

"The representations made by Sport England, that the proposed mitigating measures were unenforceable and a permanent ball-stop fence was required, were sound. In my judgment, the officers and the Planning Committee failed to have proper regard to the representations of Sport England in its capacity as statutory consultee. In consequence the proposed development creates unacceptable risks for its future occupants and for the cricket club."

The judge accordingly quashed the planning permission and awarded the Association its costs against the Council.

The decision immediately became an important precedent. Forty years on from *Miller v Jackson*, the *East Meon Forge* case now provides a firm basis for resisting the grant of planning permission for residential development that would conflict with the playing of cricket. Both developers and planning authorities recognise that such development has to be situated sufficiently far from the playing area, or to be adequately protected by physical measures against damage by cricket balls, if it is to be acceptable.

After the planning permission had been quashed, the application had to be determined afresh, and South Downs National Park Authority called the application in for its own determination. On 11 February 2016 the SDNPA planning committee, having heard representations from the chairman of East Meon Parish Council, Susan Davenport, and from the Association's chairman, unanimously refused planning permission.

That was effectively the end of the long-running planning saga, which had involved two judicial reviews as well as other proceedings in the High Court. It left the Association with the need to finalise the finances. At the outset the Association had received generous offers financial support, and, during the 13 months that the proceedings had taken, Stuart Martin, the Deputy Chairman, had ensured that there was a sufficient cash flow to meet all the outgoings. The Association had been awarded its costs against the Council, but such an award never results in a full recovery of all that has been spent, and the Association was in the end left with a deficit of £24,875, which, between them, a number of members and the Cricket Club agreed to finance. (The costs that had been incurred by EHDC in resisting the proceedings would have been well in excess of £100,000, and this gives some idea of the financial risk that had been incurred in making the challenges to the development proposals.) Then, however, the England and Wales Cricket Board wrote to the Cricket Club to say that in gratitude for the achievement of a decision that had established protection for cricket clubs up and down the country, it would finance the whole of the deficit.

Further good news was to follow. Although the Association had been frustrated in its attempts to buy the building for restoration as a workshop, the building was sold in 2016 to Kevin Davies, a long-standing resident of East Meon, and his business partner, Matthew Hampshire, for restoration as an office for their design company, Mandarin Kite. The result is that the building has now been sensitively restored to a very high standard, so that its future is assured. It thus remains, as English Heritage put it, "a valuable reminder of the importance of the forge or smithy in village life", and it will continue to make its contribution to the Conservation Area and the setting of Forge Cottage.