

House Histories

The history of the houses of Strawberry Hill

Batcombe Lodge - 57 Pope's Avenue



**Written by Andrew Miller for Strawberry Hill Residents' Association
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House histories – 57 Popes Avenue

In the spring 2019 issue of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association Bulletin an offer was made to all residents of the area. Peter Lamb of the SHRA Committee had offered a service which would involve research on the history of the houses of Strawberry Hill. This fits with another undertaking by SHRA to research and publish, via its website, a number of street histories under the name, *Streetwise*. Clearly, the two projects are linked as streets comprise collections of individual houses.

A team of SHRA local historians are working on the project and, at the time of writing, we are working on eight house histories. In return for the time of the volunteer researchers, householders in receipt of a report on their house history, are invited to make a donation to SHRA (the suggested donation is £25).

At a minimum, the work involves:

- searching through various online genealogical databases, e.g. Ancestry, find my past, for Census data and other records;
- searching the British Newspaper Archive for references to the street and house residents;
- visiting the Local Studies Centre in Richmond town centre to view records, especially Kelly's director or Electoral rolls to find out the names of householders after 1911;
- writing a report to present a coherent house history (going as far as 2000 – we did not want to intrude too much on recent residents).

***Batcombe Lodge* - 57 Popes Avenue**

1862-1914 – The Brewer family (plus the Childs family in 1881)

The house is a handsome, detached, double-fronted Victorian mansion which has been altered and improved over the years. It was originally built in 1862 by Abraham Slade, a local builder¹ with premises on the North side of Twickenham Green. He was originally a carpenter who was born in Wanstrow, Somerset, in 1817. He gave No.57 the name *Batcombe Lodge* almost certainly because Batcombe was the next village to Wanstrow. Abraham also built No.59 Popes Avenue which he called *Longleat*, a famous house in Somerset.

The 1871 Census (the first after the house was built) locates the Brewer family as (probably) the first residents of No.57. Edward Griffith Brewer was a civil engineer and patent agent who was born in Cadgwith, Cornwall in 1836. He met and married Carlota Rangel (1836-1922) in St Austell in 1863 prior to moving to London. Carlota was a Mexican-born British subject who came to England sometime before her 15th birthday. In 1851, she was attending Alveston Street school in Madron, Penzance. By 1871, they had already had four of their eventual seven children: Lola (or Lota) (1866-); Griffith (1867-1944); Edward Griffith

¹ Anthony Beccles-Wilson (2010), *Strawberry Hill: A History of the Neighbourhood*, Strawberry Hill Residents' Association, p.67

(Junior) (1870-); and Thomas (1871-). Three servants also lived in the house: Eliza Bailey (24 from Cobham, Surrey); Rebecca Boxton, a nursemaid (15 from London); and Mary Shrimpton, a 'monthly nurse' (49 from High Wycombe).

Curiously, by the time of the 1881 Census the Brewer family had moved to 1 Clifden Road in Twickenham where they had added three more children: John A (1873-); Mary Eleanor (1876-); and Florence Ethel (1881-). They were able to employ a cook, housemaid and a nurse.

In 1881, No.57 was occupied by the Child family. Alfred Child (1841-) was a grocer and employer who was born in Essex and who was married to Ellen (1841-) from Middlesex. They had four children: Sydney age 16; Ada 8; Nellie 8; and Arthur 1. They employed a domestic servant, Alice Wells (1864-), and Louisa Mason (1865-), a nurse.



In 1891, the Brewer family had returned to *Batcombe Lodge*. Edward was now a Fellow of the Institute of Patent Agencies. His business was Brewer & Son, patent agents, of 33 Chancery Lane. Edward also had a Yorkshire Office based in Leeds. By this time, Thomas and Edward had left home, but Griffith was working in his father's business as a 'mechanical draughtsman' which he would have deployed in the work of drawing up patents. In fact, Griffith worked at Chancery Lane from 1885 until 1891 when he moved to Leeds to manage the Yorkshire Office. In 1891 Griffith and John lived at home with their parents and three sisters, plus one general servant, Mary Walters (1872-). Griffith was always interested in aeronautics and it was in 1891 that he made nine ascents in a hot-air balloon as a pupil of Mr Perceval Spenser.

In 1901, the Brewers still lived at No.57, although Edward (Senior) was by now retired. This was probably in 1899, as that was the year in which Griffith took charge of the family business in both London and Leeds. Edward lived with Carlota and their two unmarried daughters, Mary and Florence. They continued to have one general servant, Fanny Elizabeth Marshall (1874-). Edward died on 15 March 1904 leaving £1562 11s 4d to his widow and to Griffith.

By 1911, Carlota was 75 and living with her 30-year-old daughter Florence as a companion along with servant, Emily Bryan (1891-). By 1914, the house was empty (no one on the Electoral Roll). In 1919, Florence lived at 20 Waldegrave Park, Strawberry Hill, probably still with her mother. Carlota died in 1922.

Griffith Brewer – 1867-1944

From 1892 onwards, Griffith piloted balloons for the Spenser Brothers. In 1906, he was a pilot in the Gordon Bennett balloon race held in Paris. In the same year he married Beatrice Swanson, who was the first woman to cross the channel in a hot-air balloon. He also competed in later Gordon Bennett races in St Louis (1907), Berlin (1908) and Geneva (1922). He won the first international balloon race from Hurlingham in 1908 against 30 other competitors.

In October 1908, he travelled to Le Mans to witness Wilbur Wright's flights in the *Kitty Hawk* biplane and was invited to fly on a trial flight becoming the first Englishman to fly in a plane (although it was only up for just over four minutes). He became a close friend of the Wright Brothers and visited them in America on 30 occasions – on one occasion in the airship, *Hindenburg*. In 1909, he took Eustace and Horace Short with him to witness Wilbur's flights in France. They built six prototypes and this was the beginning of their aeronautical business. He was entrusted with setting up the British Wright Company, which managed Wright patents in England.



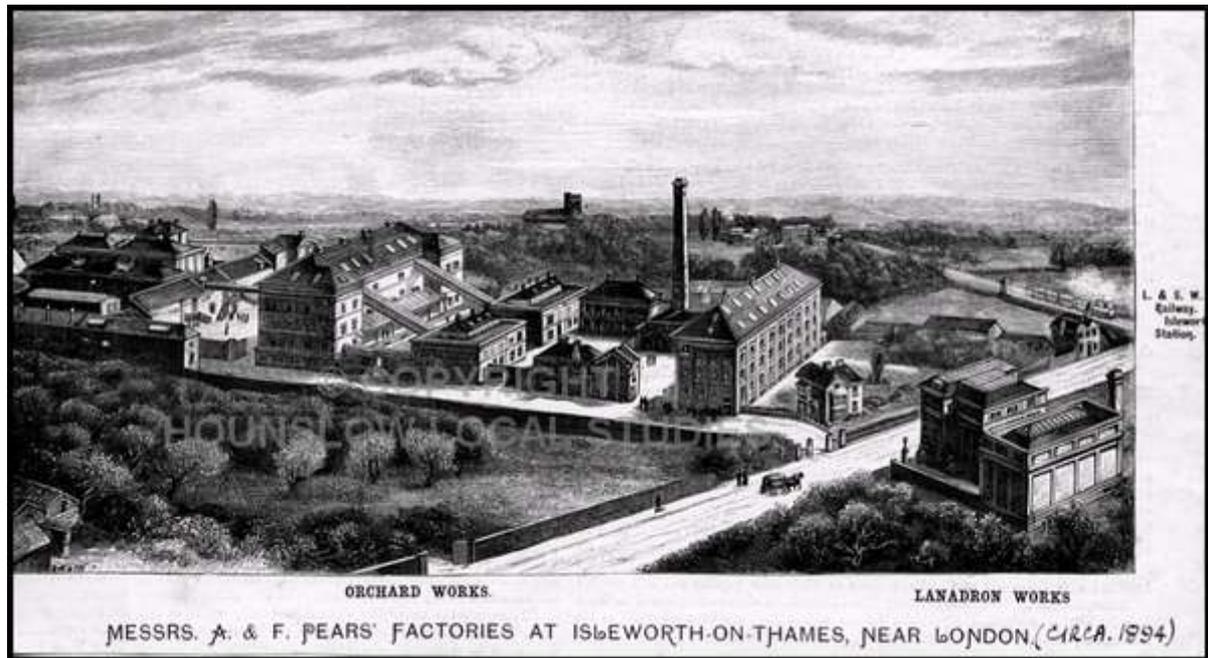
During World War 1 he was Honorary Adviser to the Royal Naval Air Service and he gave regular lectures to British and allied kite balloon and airship officers. For ten years after the war he returned to his work as a patent agent with Brewer & Son. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society in 1933 and was made President from 1940 to 1942. He was also made President of the Chartered Institute of Patent Agents in 1930 to 1931. He was a founder member of the Royal Aero Club.

1921-1954 – The Adam family

In 1921, Albert Wallace Adam lived in the house with his wife Elsie. He had been born in Acton on 22 May 1892 and, in 1911, he was working as a chemist for a soap manufacturer (The Pears Company of Hounslow). The Pears factory was the first large-scale enterprise to be established in Hounslow from 1862. It was taken over by Lever Brothers and manufacturing was moved to Port Sunlight in Cheshire in the 1910s. However, Albert as a chemist would have kept his job working in the laboratories in Hounslow. Albert married Elsie May Partington (1898-1971) at St Stephen's Church Hounslow on 29 April 1921. They

had at least two children (names redacted on the 1939 Register) Roderic W. Adam (1928-) and Richard J. Adam (1935-).

In the 1939 Register (a 'Census' taken at the outset of World War 2 to facilitate ration cards etc.) Albert Wallace Adam was a Technical Director with the Pears Company ('Perfumers') of Hounslow and he lived with his wife, Elsie Mary, and two children. In 1951/52, the adult Roderic was living at No.57 with his parents. Albert died at Bridport in 1975.



The Pears factory where Albert worked – courtesy of London Borough of Hounslow Local Studies

1955-1959 – The Niven family

In 1955, William G. Niven moved into the house with his new wife Jean Niven (nee Thompson married in South Middlesex in 1953). They moved from Twickenham to live in Esher.

1960-1962 - The Owen family

In 1960, John N. Owen and his wife, Constance, moved into No.57. They had married in Cambridge in 1941.

1962-1978 – The Goldring family

In 1967, Patrick Thomas Zachary Goldring (1921-2004) and his wife, Joan Dorothy Stevens Goldsmith, moved into the house. Patrick was born in Dublin on 21 February 1921. His brother, Brendan Herbert Hugh Goldring, died of his wounds in 1942. The couple were married at Hailsham, Sussex, in 1946, and previously lived in Hammersmith. In 1939, Patrick was a 'features writer in crosswords and puzzles' living at The Vicarage, Samford, Suffolk.

Later he was a writer on social problems and travel. His books included: *Yugoslavia* (1967), *The Broilerhouse Society* (1969) and *Multipurpose Man* (1974).

They had four children: Hugh, Polly, Zachary and Sarah. In 1969, Hugh and Polly Goldring joined the Electoral Roll. In 1971, Zachary (1952-) was eligible to vote and, in the following year, Sarah Goldring joined the Electoral Roll. Patrick later married Christiane Genevieve Wiener (1929-2006) who was born in France.

1978-1981 – The Sunderland family

In 1978, Gerald and Catherine Sunderland moved into the house. Gerald Francis Sunderland (1941-2012) married Catherine A. Baxter in Calder, Yorkshire, in 1970.

1982-1983 - empty

1984-1998 – The Mills family

In 1984, David A. Mills and Barbara R. Mills (nee Chelchowska) moved into the house. They had married in Marlborough, Wiltshire, in 1975 in Marlborough, Wiltshire. In 1995, Joanna Mills appeared on the Electoral Roll.

1999-2000 – Nicola Baker

In this period, there was a single person living at no.57 on the Electoral Roll, Ms. Nicola H. Baker (born 1963-1965).