

House histories – Roymount Court, Wellesley Road

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. As a side project, we are aware that Strawberry Hill had many fine houses which have been demolished. Any street history must include these houses that have been lost. 'Roymount', which stood on the footprint of Roymount Court, was one such house.

The research for this house history involved searches in the following sources:

- Ancestry and Find my Past genealogical websites for Census and other data;
- British Newspaper Archive searches for Montrose, Roymount and Roymount Court;
- Richmond-upon-Thames Local Studies library for Electoral Registers and Kelly's Directories.

The research and report was completed by Andrew Miller during December 2021 and January 2022.



Roymount Court in December 2021

House history – Roymount Court – Wellesley Road

1880-1914

The original house, called 'Montrose', was probably built in about 1880 in Wellesley Road, next to the recently opened Strawberry Hill station. The house was one of three constructed in similar style near to the entrance to Strawberry Hill Golf Course – Milton House, Holm Glen and Montrose. They bear some resemblance to German Gothic style and had an interesting arrangement of different angled roofs over four or five floors. Only the historic dwarf piers of the original gates and the low wall remain (see photo). In addition to the main structure there was a separate block, the 'Montrose Stables'.



An aerial photograph from 1934 providing the only known image of 'Roymount' – the lower tall building fronting Wellesley Road and backing on to the Strawberry Hill Golf Course.

In the 1891 Census, the house was occupied by the spinster, Piggott sisters who had been born in Cambridge. Elizabeth (1855-1936), who was head of the household, was 36 years old and 'living on her own means' and Jane was a year younger and was also wealthy enough to be living independently. They had two servants, the 24-year-old Eliza Ashby and the 22-year-old Edith Dennehy. In the separate 'Montrose Stables' lived the coachman, Charles Harris (36) and his wife, Annie (31) with their two children, James (7) and Bessie (2). In the 1896 Kelly's Directory the house is not recorded, indicating that it was probably unoccupied at that time.



The 1894 map showing the four large properties at the eastern end of Wellesley Road with the Metropolitan Police Orphanage at the other end of the road.

At the time of the 1901 Census, the head of the household is recorded as William Hutchings (45), a general labourer from Oxford, his daughter, Laura (20) the housekeeper and his son Henry (13). It seems unlikely that he would be the owner of the house but more likely that they were acting as caretakers for an absent owner (with a country estate or travelling?). They also had a boarder called James Carpenter (40) who was also a carpenter from Twickenham. Henry William Hutchings was of an age to fight in the First World War and he joined up as a Gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery (Regimental number 54094). Aged 26 he was a plumber in 1914 and was sent to fight in Alexandria. In the Kelly's directories for 1904 and 1907 the owner of 'Montrose' is named as an A. Scarisbrick.

This pattern was repeated in 1911 when there were caretakers of the now, empty 'Montrose'. Arthur John Bixby (1846-1925) from Long Melford, Suffolk, lived in the house with his wife, Frances Elizabeth Bixby (56) from Weston-super-Mare. In the 1913 Kelly's Directory the home owner is named as Arthur G Holcroft, although I can find no further information about him.



Wellesley Road towards the station pictured about 1907. The large house on the left hand side of the picture is Holm Glen a similar, large property to Montrose. The perimeter wall of Montrose can be seen on the right hand side of the picture with that of Milton House in the right foreground.

1914-1945

It was around the start of the First World War that the house was acquired by a single woman, Alice Gertrude Montrion (Montrion in lots of records), who was born in India on 20 November 1869. Her father was Captain Francis Austin Montrion (born 18 May 1839 in Calcutta) and her mother was Alice Emma Elton (born in Bengal 1848). Her father died on active service in India on 19 November 1875 when he was a captain in the 37th British Infantry, leaving his wife with several young children, including Alice. Alice Emma Montrion moved to England with her children before ending up in Hornsey in 1911. Their address was 3, Holy Innocents Road in Hornsey, where she lived with her daughter Alice Gertrude and assorted boarders in 1911. Her mother died on 28 February 1912 leaving her daughter £296 17s.

Alice Gertrude Montrion would have been 45 year old at the start of the War. She was able to purchase 'Montrose' perhaps having sold the family home. She changed the name of 'Montrose' to 'Roymount' after the name of the house in Hornsey where she lived with her mother. In 1935 Alice Gertrude married the 73-year-old Charles Aymas Radcliffe.

Charles Radcliffe was born on 27 August 1861 in Devon, one of 11 children by his magistrate father, Walter Radcliffe. He joined the Royal Navy and in 1881 was a Midshipman on board 'The Ruby'. In 1891, he was a Lieutenant on board the 'Mistletoe'. In 1888, he married Georgina Louisa Gibson (1859-1934) and they had two children: Irene Marguerite Campbell Alexander Radcliffe (1891-1944) and George Amyas Radcliffe (1894-1917). George died in the First World War killed in action at Kilkis, Central Macedonia, Greece. In 1939, Charles is described in the Register as 'incapacitated' and on 21 March 1941 he died, leaving effects of just over £3,000.

1945-2000

At the end of the War the house was probably divided into five apartments with Alice continuing to live in no.4 until she died in 1950. In the 1947 Electoral Register the occupants of Roymount were as follows:

1. Anne B Harrington, Edna Harrington and Jeffrey B Harrington
2. Laura Lees and Eilleen McKee
3. John and Annie Molloy
4. Alice Gertrude Radcliffe
5. Thomas, Maggie and Mary Sloyan.

In 1952 and 1953 the occupants were: George and Joan Bisley; and Christopher and Josephine Keane. Then, in the mid-1950s, the Keanes were joined by Hiller R Finton, and Albert, Thomas and Doris Wise. The old 'Roymount' was demolished during 1957/58 and by 1959 the new Roymount Court was partly occupied (apartment numbers) by:

1. Margaret Morris
2. Reginald C & Winifred Partridge
3. Christopher and Margaret Watson
9. John & Isabella Glen
10. Alan & Brenda Boustridge
12. Howard & Barbara Leech
14. Douglas and Muriel McDonald.

By 1965 all apartments were occupied apart from number 5. Also in 1965, Mrs Winifred Mary Partridge of Roymount Court was found dead on the beach at Broadstairs harbour (Thanet Times, 19/1/1965). She had been reported missing the previous day.

**Andrew Miller, Vice Chair, Strawberry Hill Residents' Association
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