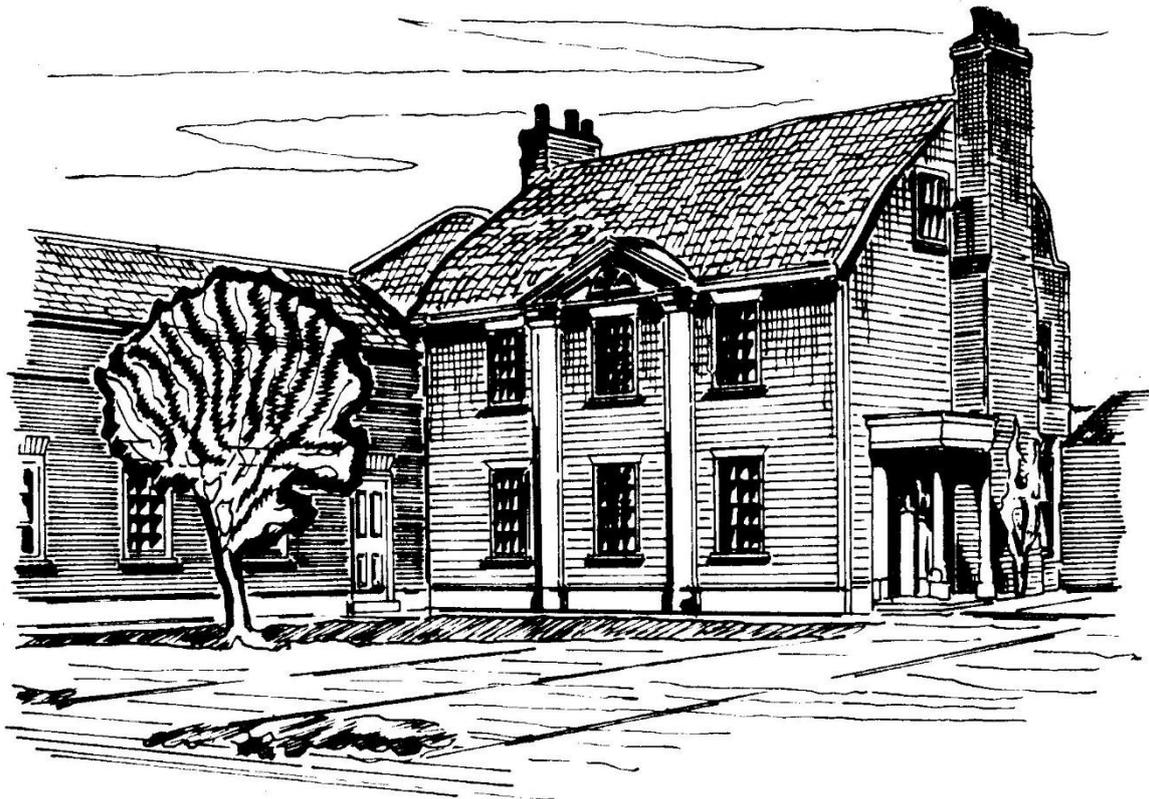


PICTON HOUSE

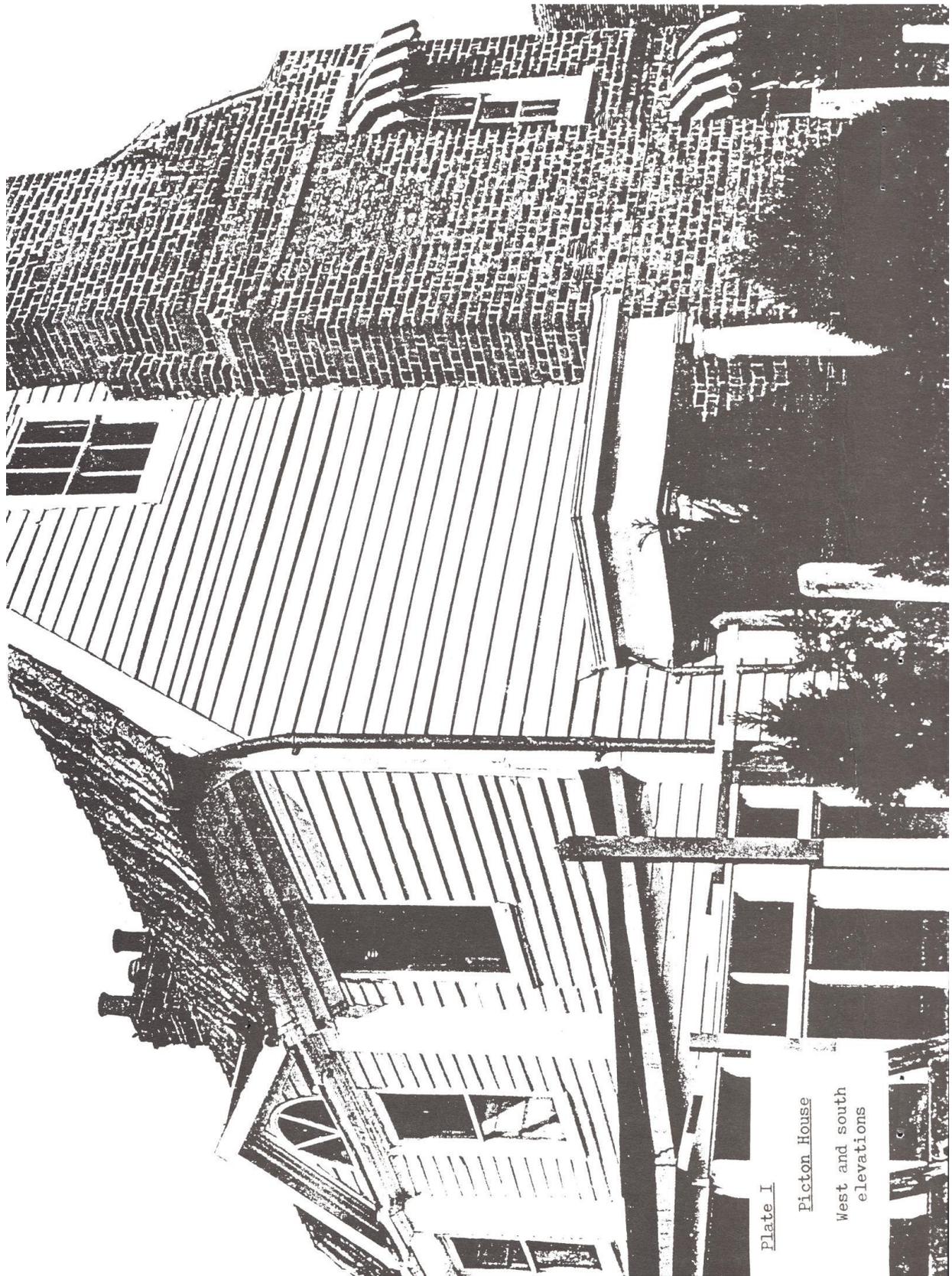
and the people connected with it.



**Kingston
Upon
Thames
Archaeological
Society**



OCCASIONAL PAPERS 2
Revised edition



Picton House, Kingston upon Thames and the people connected with it

*In which is narrated the curious story of
Cesar Picton
from Senegal on the west coast of Africa
later of Kingston upon Thames in the
County of Surrey Coal Merchant
and of Talworth and Thames Ditton
in the same county Gentleman*

1979

Occasional Paper Number 2

Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society

Important notes about this edition

The original documents were scanned in by Colin Rodger for the Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society, using Optical Character Recognition and other software. The documents produced in this way were subsequently reviewed by Patricia Smith. Ian West and Jo Jones have both provided additional advice. This edition is provided purely as an aid to research; the original documents continue to be the definitive versions.

After the publication of Occasional Paper 2, Marion Hinton (a founder member of KUTAS, and a member of the team that researched the original paper) wrote a follow-up article in 1981 for the KUTAS Newsletter. This has been included as Postscript 1.

In Postscript 2, Ian West brings the history of Picton House up to date to the year 2021.

Whilst compiling Postscript 2, Ian West noted that some revisions should be made to Chapter 3. These revisions have been included in the document. All other chapters are unchanged from the version published in 1979.

All the articles in this document should be understood as work in progress, based on the information available to the authors at the time of writing. There may have been later reports providing further information, or even different conclusions. Where the Society is aware of later reports, these have been noted at the start of the relevant section.

Contents

Important notes about this edition	4
Abbreviations and References	6
Foreword.....	7
Chapter 1: KUTAS and the Campaign to save Picton House	9
Chapter 2: The Early History of the Site.....	11
Chapter 3: The Building.....	14
Chapter 4: Cesar — from Senegal to Norbiton.....	26
Chapter 5: Life at Norbiton Place.....	30
Chapter 6: Cesar Picton, Coal Merchant.....	36
Chapter 7: Cesar Picton, Gentleman.....	40
Appendix: Will of Cesar Picton (with some notes on those mentioned in it).....	46
Postscript 1: Was Caesar Picton a Giant?	54
Postscript 2: Picton House after 1979.....	56

Plates	1	Picton House, West and south elevations	2
	2	Picton House in the late 1960s	13
	3	Picton House, first floor landing and Room 11	20
	4	Picton House, part of Room 3, ground floor	20

Figures	1	Four eighteenth century staircases	19
	2	Picton House, ground floor plan	15
	3	Picton House, first floor plan	16
	4	Picton House, first floor ceiling	21
	5	Picton House, phases 2 and 2a	57

Abbreviations and References

Ayliffe	G W Ayliffe, <u>Old Kingston</u> (1914), reprinted 1972
Biden	W D Biden, <u>History and Antiquities of Kingston upon Thames</u> (1852)
K	References beginning 'K' are to documents in Kingston upon Thames Borough Archives
Merryweather	F S Merryweather, <u>Half a Century of Kingston History</u> (1887)
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury (probate papers in PRO)
PC Colln	Picton Castle Collection (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth)
PRO	Public Record Office
SRO	Surrey Record Office

Individual references have not been given for Land Tax books (SRO QS 6/7), Kingston Poor Rate books (KG3/2/1-49) or Kingston parish registers (SRO P 33/1; transcript in Kingston Central Reference Library), all of which are more closely identifiable by the dates given in the text or notes.

Signatures as witness to two deeds dated 16/17 January 1816
(SRO 210/2/2a-b), reproduced by permission of County Archivist

Foreword

“He will not go far who knows from the first where he is going” said Napoleon. When in 1970 the committee of Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society (KUTAS) decided to oppose the application for permission to demolish Picton House, little was known about its past, though the building was evidently of interest. We could not foresee that the research into the history of the house would also reveal the interrelation of some of the successful trading families of Kingston, what an eighteenth century Welsh baronet paid to hire a sedan chair in London (usually a shilling), the fortunes of a British military expedition to West Africa in 1759, and the life of a small black boy brought back to England and to Kingston by one of its officers.

The notes of this research were scattered and not all readily accessible. The committee therefore thought it desirable to assemble and publish them as the Society’s second Occasional Paper. Although this has been undertaken by two or three members, the paper is based on the work of a number, involving not only documentary research, but also the study of the building itself, drawing plans, taking photographs and keeping the files. Nor could the Society’s case have been presented at the two Public Enquiries without the sustained labours of those who organised support from other bodies, local and national, watched the planning position, prepared or typed the case or ensured vital publicity. The names of those involved are given below and we trust that, although it is more than eight years since the campaign began, no substantial contribution has been overlooked.

Research etc

John Allen
Anne and David Baker
Lionel and Nora Gent
Anne McCormack
Martin Morris
Elizabeth Silverthorne
Marion and the late Ray Smith
Richard Taylor
Joan Wakeford
Ian West
Joan Wilkins

Organisation, Preparation of Case, Publicity etc

Glynda Clayden
David Grant
Margaret Hall
Robin Kenward
Richard Lloyd
Vivian Marchant
June Sampson

We are indebted to the County Archivist of Surrey (who is also the Honorary Borough Archivist of Kingston upon Thames), now Dr D B Robinson, but formerly Miss M Gollancz, to Mrs Anne McCormack, until recently Assistant Borough Archivist, and to the staff of the Surrey Record Office for their co-operation, assistance and patience during the long course of this investigation.

We also welcomed help from the staffs of the Reference Library and Museum of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, the Thames Ditton branch of the Surrey County Library, the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, and the Guildhall Library of the Corporation of the City of London.

Mrs Anne McCormack, Mrs Marion Smith and Mrs E Stazicker very kindly read the draft of this paper and we are grateful to them for undertaking this labour and for their helpful suggestions. It is not necessary to add that they are not responsible for any errors which may remain, nor for interpretations placed on the evidence. Ultimate responsibility must rest, as to Chapter 3 on Ian West, and as to the paper as a whole on Joan Wakeford who has put it into its final shape, drawing especially on files kept by Martin Morris in connection with the two Public Enquiries.

Plates 1, 3 and 4 and Figures 1 and 4 are reproduced with permission from material prepared by the architects of the Historic Buildings Division of the Greater London Council (we are sorry that the printing method used for economy gave disappointing results with Plates 3 and 4). In Chapter 3 we have drawn on that Division's proofs of evidence presented at the Public Enquiries by Dr Philip Whitbourn, as well as on the surveys made by KUTAS members.

We acknowledge also permission to use the Surrey Comet's photograph of the front of Picton House on page 13.

The cover design is by David Grant, who has based his view of the house from the river on drawings made by the G L C architects to show how it might look after restoration.

Chapter 1: KUTAS and the Campaign to save Picton House

Picton House is in High Street, Kingston upon Thames (TQ17786896) and has been owned by Kingston Corporation since 1964. It is within the Corporation's Conservation Area No 1 (Kingston Old Town) under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The house was formerly on a Supplementary List as a Grade III building of architectural or historic interest. In 1969 the Historic Buildings Board of the Greater London Council suggested to the Corporation that preservation of the building should be considered, but the Corporation decided on demolition.

In January 1970 Bulletin No 3 of the newly formed KUTAS told members that the committee had asked the then Ministry of Housing and Local Government to consider urgently whether the building should be placed on a Certified Statutory List and also that the GLC would seek the issue of a building preservation notice. Bulletin No 4 of March 1970 reported that Picton House had been listed Grade II and that the Corporation was to apply for 'Listed Building Consent' to demolish it. Because of the threat to the Conservation Area, the KUTAS committee asked members to protest against the application. A 'Save Picton House' special Bulletin was issued in October 1970, suggesting that the building should be restored for use as a small arts centre or as a River Thames museum or art gallery. Kingston upon Thames Civic Centre Society prepared a plan for a theatre to be built there after the demolition, but the Corporation indicated that there would be no money for this. With the prospect that the house would in the event be replaced by another car or caravan park, members embarked on a campaign against demolition. Support from both local and national societies was organised, a demonstration was arranged, many letters were sent, 1444 signatures were obtained to a petition. The outcome was that in April 1971 the Minister for the Environment ordered a Public Enquiry.

This first Enquiry was held on 25 and 26 August 1971 before the late Mr R J Harris, the Inspector appointed by the Minister. Mr Norman Nail presented the case for KUTAS and Surrey Archaeological Society, and a member, Martin Morris, put forward an individual case. In May 1972 the Minister refused permission to demolish the house.

It would be unprofitable at this late date to recount the story of Picton House during the next few years, but the building remained empty and its condition deteriorated. Eventually the Corporation made a further application for consent to demolition and as this was still opposed by KUTAS and others, a second Enquiry was ordered to be held on 28 and 29 September 1976. Opposition to the application was strengthened when it became apparent, immediately before the Enquiry, that the Corporation (which owned almost all the west side of High Street from Park Terrace to the Ram) intended the redevelopment of the whole of this part of the Conservation Area. The danger to the important principle of Conservation Areas was explained in the Press by our President, Mrs Robin Kenward, and by Mr Norman Westcombe on behalf of the Kingston upon Thames Society.

At the second Public Enquiry, held before Mr E W Berridge, we again had the benefit of having our case presented by Mr Norman Nail. Mr R J Lloyd, as a surveyor, supported the opponents of demolition, as did Mr T Manning, of the Richmond Society, (the architect concerned in the

reconstruction of the gabled building at the corner of Kingston Market Place), speaking for the Ancient Monuments Society, and Dr P Whitbourn for the Greater London Council.

Additional note from Ian West:

At the first enquiry, the GLC opposed demolition, but a change in leadership of the GLC just prior to the second enquiry, changed the Council's position to support demolition.

In February 1977 the Minister again decided to refuse to allow the demolition. The Inspector said in his report that in any long term plan for the area "the preservation of Picton House should be a prime objective" and that there should therefore be no objection to offering a long lease to a prospective tenant. Since it was precisely the Corporation's suspected determination to avoid long leases (in order to keep the land free for development despite its being in a Conservation Area) which had so alarmed the various bodies and persons interested in conservation, KUTAS could feel some satisfaction in having fought long and successfully for a principle as well as for a building. The next chapter in the history of Picton House is still awaited, but it is to be let on long lease and restored by the lessee, who will build an office in a suitable style on the adjoining site.

Chapter 2: The Early History of the Site

Mr Ayliffe, writing about the 1830s in Old Kingston (p 37), referred to Picton House by that name, but in the previous century it was known in the Poor Rate books only by the name of its current owner or tenant. In the later nineteenth century it was called Picton Villa. When street numbering arrived it became prosaically Nos 50/52 High Street.

The road southward from Clattern Bridge was re-named High Street in the 1850s when it was intended to become the main road linking the old town with Kingston-on-Railway or Surbiton (St James's Road did not then exist). It was never a High Street in the usual sense and had previously been more graphically called West by Thames. The area had probably been subject to floods in earlier times, but by the fifteenth century land was being gained from the river and when brewing grew as an industry in Kingston, it was in West by Thames that the early brewhouses and the allied trades such as coopering and malting were found. Wharfs built there to land timber brought down the river were used to bring in fuel for the malthouses and to take out malt for shipping to breweries elsewhere. Until the 1850s the building on our site was the last house on the west side of the street; beyond it were only malthouses, coking ovens and wharfs, with no shops or gardens.

Kingston Corporation was lord of the manor of Kingston, with the right to grant or lease the waste of the manor to tenants. Land so granted was subject to a fixed annual quit-rent which was recorded in the rental of the manor;¹ if the land changed hands a 'relief' equal to one year's quit-rent was payable, so transfers of property were recorded in the manorial rolls.² The clerks who wrote them would copy the names or descriptions of the properties from year to year for generations, often long after they had become inappropriate or had gone out of use. In the case of the site of Picton House, its owners seem always to have held also the land opposite, on part of which stood, until it was illegally demolished in 1965, the building still recalled as the Old Malthouse. The annual quit-rent paid by the owner appeared always as 1s 8d "for the Three Pigeons". This tells us that there was once an inn on the land, though we cannot say for certain whether it was on the Old Malthouse site or on the Picton House land. By the nineteenth century only the name in the manorial rental remained, but because the only local 'Three Pigeons' the clerk knew was further up the river, he added "at Seething Wells" to this entry in the 1830 rental.³ In fact the rent of 1s 8d clearly related to the West by Thames property and there was no connection with the Three Pigeons in the Portsmouth Road.

The first reference discovered to the Kingston Three Pigeons is an entry in Kingston Parish register that "A soldier from the Three Pigeons" was buried on 19 January 1643/44; evidently soldiers were quartered there as at so many other Kingston inns. The name was still in actual use in 1733, when a man was fined for leaving timber on the highway near the Three Pigeons in Kingston.⁴ By this time the property on both sides of the street had been acquired by Charles Cazart⁵ or Cossart, whose ownership may have inaugurated a new phase in the use of both sites. Few rate assessments have survived for the first forty years of the eighteenth century, but there is one for 1737 where the malthouse is traceable for the first time⁶ (the building demolished in 1965 seems from photographs to date from the first half of the eighteenth century, but it had not been examined for dating purposes – the various dates attributed to it may have been taken from deeds relating to the Old Brewhouse, a different

property). On the riverside site opposite there were in 1729 when Mr Cossart bought it a wharf and a house “late in the possession of John Mudghett”.⁷ The Mudgett family had been in the West by Thames area for over a century and were mostly carpenters, bringing in their timber to the wharfs there. They may have acquired the Three Pigeons in order to use the wharf, for they were not innkeepers and probably let the inn.

Soon after Mr Cossart bought the properties the Corporation granted him two leases which are of interest in connection with the buildings. Both were ordered by the Court of Assembly (in effect the Town Council) on 17 September 1729⁷ and the terms of the two leases of 25 September 1729 are given in the Corporation Ledger.⁸ One was for a 500 years’ lease, at an annual rent of 2s 6d, of a long triangular piece of waste ground “lying before and adjacent to the wharf dwelling house and ground late in the possession of John Mudgett in West by Thames”, presumably taken in from the street, for its north-south length of 152 feet is that of the frontage of the property. The shape of the piece is interesting, as it was 10½ feet wide at the south end, 9 feet in the middle and “at the north end at the corner of the old house now standing 2 feet”. This addition made the frontage of the site run due north-south, but the street-line must earlier have swung rather more towards the south-west.

The other lease of 1729 was for 21 years at 22s per annum and it concerned 1½ acres of waste ground in Surbiton Common near the New Pond “to be made use of for digging brickearth and making bricks, tiles etc on the same”. This was granted to Mr Cossart and Mr Stephen South junior, but Mr South’s name was added as an afterthought and the rent and rates are shown as payable by Mr Cossart. As neither of the two lessees was a brickmaker by trade, it seems that they needed bricks and tiles for their own use, to build on Mr Cossart’s newly-acquired land and perhaps on the site immediately to the south by the river, where Mr South already had a malthouse.

“Mr Cossart’s malthouse” on the Old Malthouse site is referred to in a document of 24 September 1741 noted in the Ledger;⁹ already in 1737 it was let to the Porter family of maltsters, who ran it for many years.⁶ Its rateable value of £15 remained unaltered from 1737 to 1780 and during that time the occupiers of the house opposite were never the maltsters. The 1737 assessment shows “Mr Cazart’s house empty”. Nothing is known about Mr Cossart and the name is unfamiliar in Kingston records. The death on 22 March 1732/33 of a Mr Cossart “a Hamburg Merchant; worth 50,000 li.” was announced in the 1733 Gentleman’s Magazine; he was a Londoner, Abraham Cossart, and though they shared an unusual name, no connection has been traced with Chas Cossart of Kingston, who is not mentioned in Abraham’s will.¹⁰

Notes

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|----|--|
| 1 | KF1/3 | 6 | KG3/2/7 – Mr Ralph Porter for malthouse late Tickner’s |
| 2 | KF1/1 | 7 | KB1/2 Court of Assembly Book |
| 3 | KF1/3/21 | 8 | KB9/1, pp 265-6 |
| 4 | KF1/1/71 | 9 | KB9/1, p 320 |
| 5 | KF1/1/68 – Court Baron of 19 May 1730 | 10 | PCC PROB 11/658 110 |

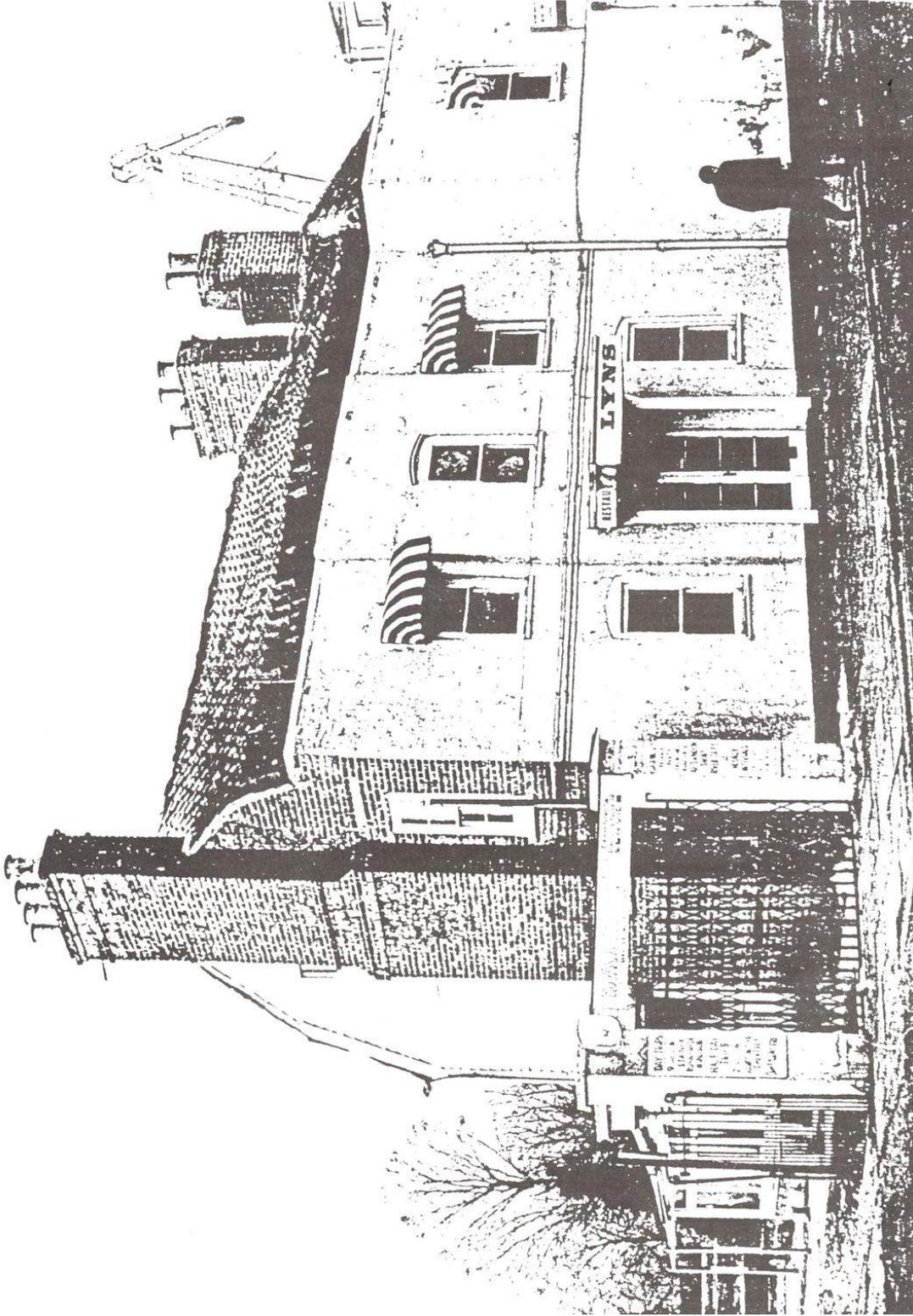


Plate 2

Picton House in the late 1960s

Surrey Comet

Chapter 3: The Building

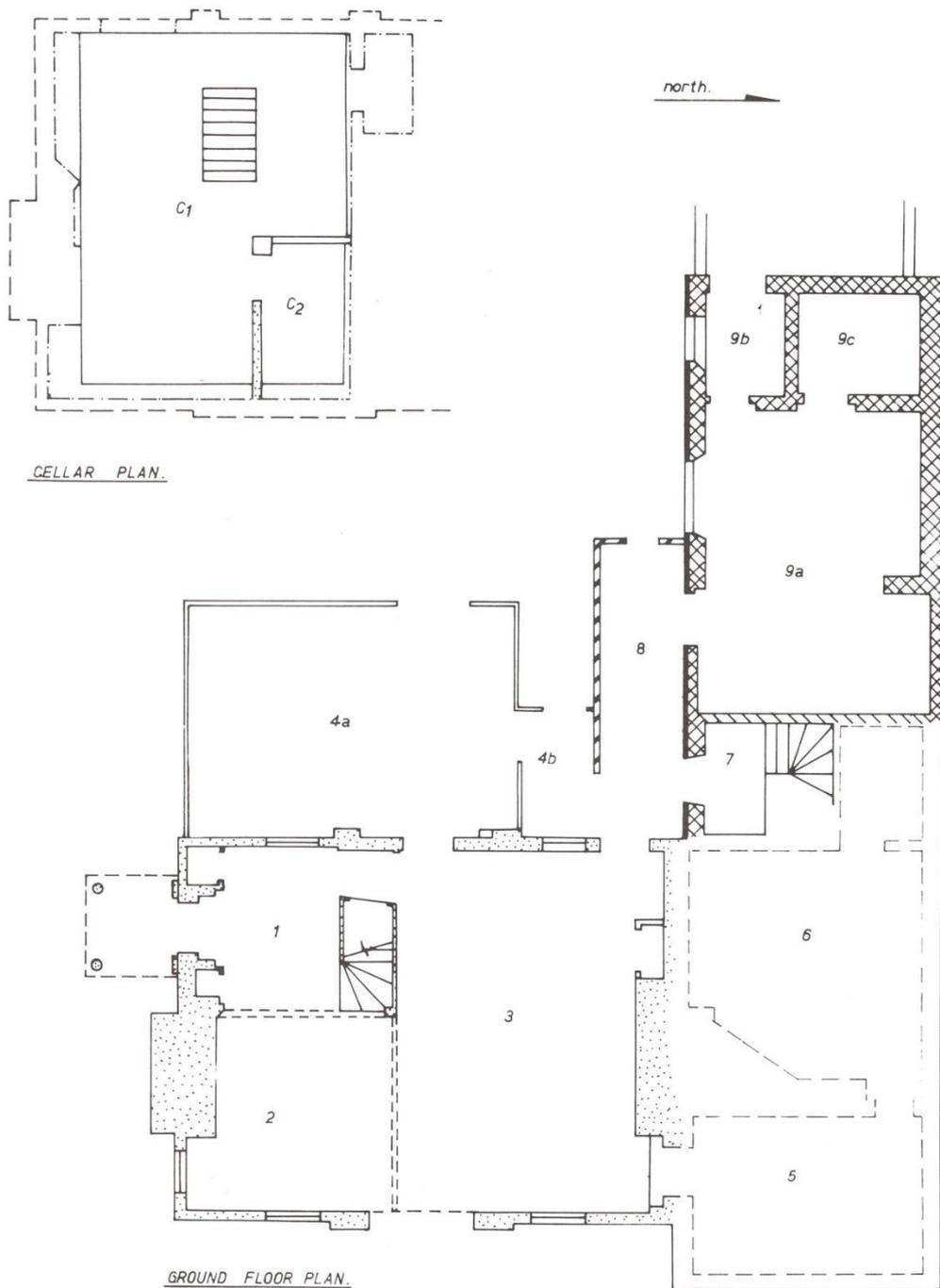
This chapter has been completely revised by Ian West in the light of more recent information about Picton House. A short biography of Ian can be found on page 56.

The earliest remaining structures on the Picton House site are the cellar and the western part of the north wing (Phase 1). These were retained from the buildings that existed on the site that were acquired by Mr Cossart in 1729. The cellar is constructed of brick and occupies about two-thirds of the ground floor plan of the eighteenth century house built by Mr Cossart but does not relate to the plan of the new building. A former 'light well' projects from the west end of the north wall but is built over by the new house, and the south and east walls of the latter are constructed outside the line of the cellar walls. No date for the construction of the cellar has been established.

Phase 1. A date of around 1700 has been suggested for the construction of the west end of the north wing. This originally extended from room 6 to 9b and 9c on the ground floor, and at first floor from 14a to 18. This is built of red bricks, with the roof covered with plain clay tiles. It may have been constructed without a first floor, the floor being added to create one and a half storey accommodation for Mr Cossart. The large inglenook fireplace on the north wall is contemporary with the building, but the beam over the fireplace opening has been sawn away, leaving only the stumps of the brickwork to show where it was. This was evidently the kitchen for Mr Cossart's house and would have been fitted with a bar grate suitable for coal burning cooking fires but would have functioned as a downhearth fire when built for the pre Cossart house. The staircase in room 7 on the ground floor and 15 at first floor level will be contemporary with the construction of the upper floor.

Mr Cossart must have had enough bricks and tiles by July 1742, when a brickmaker, Thomas Norris, applied to the Corporation for the freehold of the land on Surbiton Common leased in 1729 to Cossart and South¹ (see page 12). Norris was already living in a newly-built house there and he may well have been there originally to make the bricks required by Mr Cossart. The latter's lease had probably been assigned to him, for Mrs Cossart is not shown as paying the rent for it in 1744, though her husband was paying it in 1737². Mr Cossart lived in Heathen Street, and after his death in January 1744³, his wife Elizabeth stayed there until 1749. By his will⁴ he left her his whole estate. John Mudgett had paid rates on his West by Thames House at £10 in 1724. In the next surviving assessment, that of 1737 already mentioned, Mr Cazart's house is shown as empty and we cannot tell whether it was the old or a new house, or one in the process of rebuilding. In any case his death may have occasioned a further delay before the house was occupied.

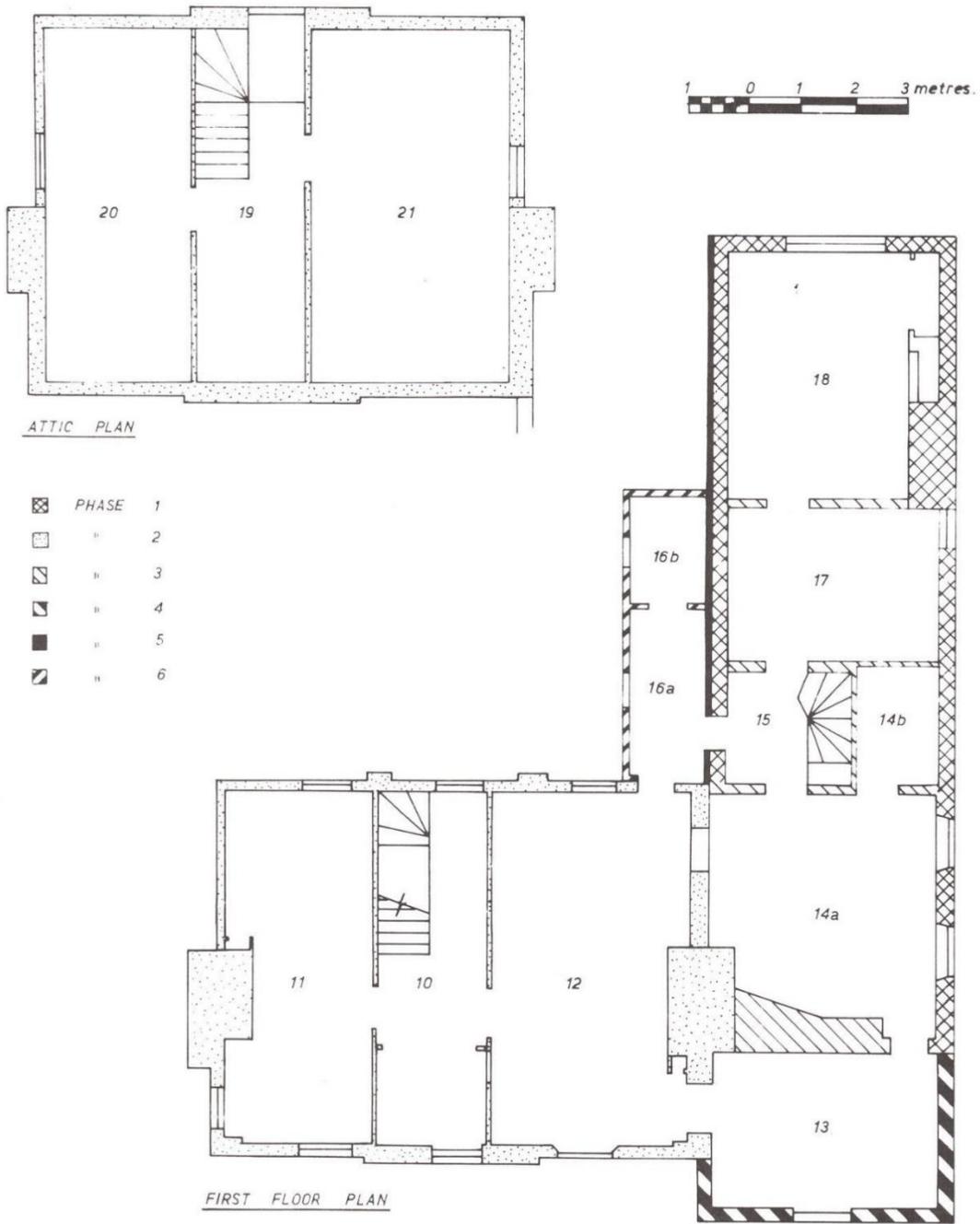
Before March 1747 Mrs Cossart had sold the property to Richard Gore, a Londoner. It appears that initially he bought only a long lease⁵. There was no general re-valuation for rates in Kingston from 1724 to the second half of 1780, so variations in the rateable value of a particular house reflect changes either in the building or, if let, in the actual rent. The Kingston Poor Rate books are continuous from 1744, but the house is not traced until 1749, when Mr Gore was assessed on it, at first at the old valuation of £10, but at £12 from the second half of 1753. In 1756 Mr Dunbar became the occupier and was assessed at £16. The owner (by then Mrs Cole) resumed occupation in 1760 and the valuation



PICTON HOUSE
52, HIGH STREET, KINGSTON.

Fig 2

© I.J.West Oct. '75



PICTON HOUSE
52, HIGH STREET, KINGSTON.

Fig 3

© I. J. West, Oct. '75

returned temporarily to £10, but was immediately corrected to £15. It seems therefore that the increase from £10 in 1752 to £15 in 1761 represents a considerable change in the amount of accommodation.

These facts from the records correspond remarkably well with deductions made about the architectural history from surveys of the house, noting additions and the style of various features. Thus two quite different types of evidence reinforce each other, so that the dating arrived at may be used in studying other similar buildings for which there are no records. The suggested phases of building in this house are shown on the plans in Figures 2 and 3. The photographs in Plates 1 and 2 show the High Street frontage and the south wall and back of the original building. These and the other photographs, taken in the 1960s or in 1971, show the house before the later rapid deterioration: It was surveyed before the first Public Enquiry and for the most part it is now described as it was then.

Phase 2 of Picton house is seen in Plate 2 between the two original chimney stacks with the later extension of the north wing projecting on the right of the photograph. The double entrance door at the central front, with its canopy, is entirely modern but one can still appreciate the proportions and symmetry of the street frontage, which is two-storeyed and divided vertically into three sections, the central section slightly projecting.

The front of the house (at present heavily lime-washed) and round the sides to the stacks are built in dark red-brown bricks laid in Flemish bond with a string course at first floor level. There are three windows at first floor and one each side of the front doors. They have segmental arches and shallow inset sash frames, now with single-pane glazing. Originally they would have had fenestration bars similar to those remaining at ground and first floor on the south elevation. Between the two chimney stacks is a mansard roof of red pantiles. Random black tiles (later repair?) are present on the front elevation where the lower courses are obscured by a brick parapet.

This part of the house is considered, on architectural grounds, to date from the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The back and side walls, beyond the chimney stacks, add considerably to the interest and attractiveness of the house, for they are timber-framed and weather-boarded. The boards are feathered and their lower edges chamfered, one of many indications of the high quality of the craftsmanship in Picton House. The back is especially unusual and is more elaborate than other timber-framed houses of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries in this area. Like the street front, it is divided into three, but the central bay is framed by two giant wooden pilasters ascending to the full height of the wall. This section has a pediment which rises above the line of the eaves and contains a semi-circular lunette which lights a landing between two rooms in the roof space. On the south façade the ground floor window has two six-pane sashes with (the now rare feature of) two vertically sliding shutters internally covered by a hinged window sill. Above this at first floor is a similar window but without the internal shutters. To the west of the chimney stack is another sash window providing light to the southern attic room. This has two three-pane sashes as it is shorter than the windows on the lower floors of the house. A similar window is located on the north elevation serving that attic room. The weatherboarding on this elevation would have continued down to the original eaves level of Phase 1, later to become 'internalised' when the height of room 14 was raised.

It is considered that the door and porch on the south elevation are work associated with Phase 2a although it may have been relocated from the east façade.

When Phase 2 was constructed it would not have been acceptable for the main doorway in a house of this quality to open into the principal reception room. It is therefore considered that the original ground floor plan of Picton House was the same as the plan at first floor. This would provide for the door on the east front to open into a passage that, as at first floor, extended right through the house, a door at the west end opened in to the garden and the river side. The stairs would have been against the south wall and been a straight flight with a right hand turn to meet the first floor. To the south of this hallway would have been a room similar to room 11 at first floor and to the north a room similar to room 12.

These were the principal rooms of Mr Cossart's house with the service rooms located in the retained building Phase 1. The stairs to the cellar are located in the usual position of under the stairs to the first floor. This positions the stairs away from any of the cellar walls (an unusual location) although there may have been timber partitions now removed.

Owing to the north wing being only one and a half storeys high it was not possible to connect Phases 1 and 2 at first floor level hence the need for the two staircases.

Rooms 1, 2 and 3 on the ground floor plan have in recent years formed one large space, used for commercial purposes, but previously were three rooms. In room 2 there is simple square-section full height panelling on the front wall and on the side of the chimney-breast. The fireplace, which was not the original, has been removed, exposing the form of the chimney-piece, which had an architrave with crossettes. In the large room (No. 3) the form of the panelling, the crossettes to the fireplace surround and double crossettes to the over-mantel, can also be seen, although the mouldings have been removed.

The staircase leading up to the attic from the first floor is of very good quality but that down to the ground floor has lost its balustrade and was adapted in Phase 2a.

The drawings in Figure 1 were put forward in Dr Whitbourn's statements at the Public Enquiry, to compare the fine turned balusters (rising in sets of three from steps, the ends of which are enriched with a simple scroll), the turned columnar newel post and moulded handrail of the Picton House staircase with some very similar examples from London houses dated 1732, 1737 and 1741. This provides further evidence of the date when Picton House was built and fits the date in the late 1730s suggested by the records.

Rooms 11 and 12 on the first floor have the original panelling in good condition. In room 11 it is curious that although the panelling of the front part of the long narrow room is noticeably different from that of the back part, so that it looks as though it was originally two rooms, access to both must have been through the only door, which is opposite the fireplace. It may be, however, that the plainer half was intended for a dressing room or to be obscured by a curtain or a screen. Plate 3 shows the entrance to this room and the graceful chimneypiece, over which is a framed space intended for a specially

Examples of early-mid eighteenth century staircases

Long Lane
Bermondsey
(1732)

36 Gerrard Street
Westminster
(1737)

Picton House
Kingston

48 Greek Street
Westminster
(1741-42)



Fig 1



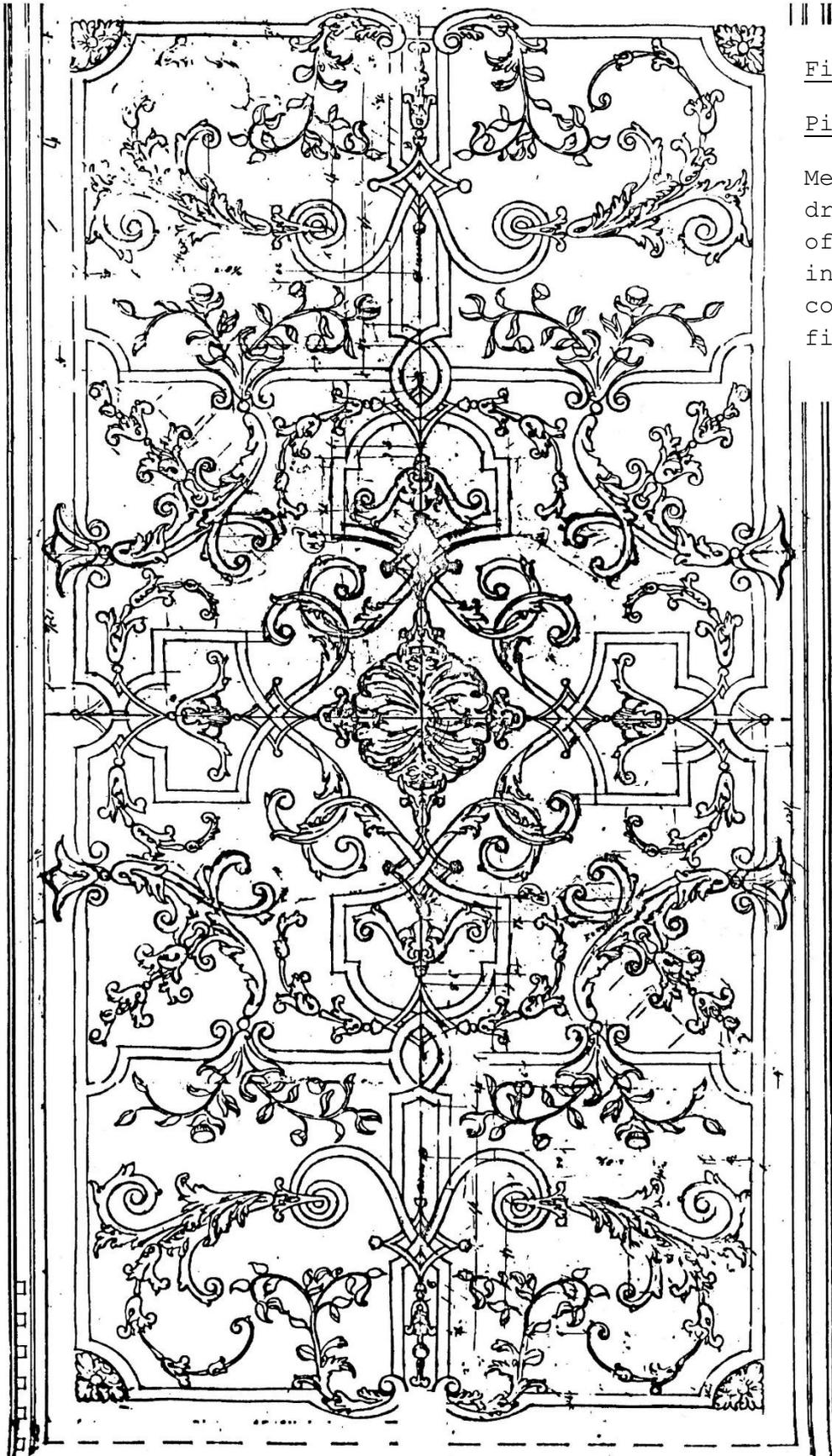


Fig 4

Picton House

Measured
drawing of part
of the ceiling
in staircase
compartment on
first floor

(GLC)

painted picture. It was particularly in connection with this room that Dr Whitbourn remarked at the Public Enquiry that “a walk through Picton House seems at times almost like entering the pages of a copybook of the period, such as Rules for drawing the several Parts of Architecture, written in 1732 by James Gibbs, the famous architect of St Martin in the Fields”. By means of such books, the builders of quite small houses were made aware of and could copy the fashionable details of the houses being built for the wealthy.

The architectural history of Picton House during the mid-18th century may be summarised as beginning with a small, carefully detailed house of the 1730s, which owing to the owners death in 1744 was sold to a London business-man Richard Gore. In the late 1740s (Phase 2a) he embellished it with fine plasterwork perhaps to indicate his own wealth and success. Mrs Cole extended the north wing eastwards and altered the east end in Phase 1 in the mid 1750s or a little later.

Phase 2a. (See page 57 for plans.) In order to provide a larger ‘reception’ room (room 3) Richard Gore formed a new entrance hall (room 1) in the south-west corner of Phase 2. This allowed the present south wall of room 3 to be moved to the edge of the stairs which were adapted to access off the new entrance hall. The eastern part of the original south room became room 2 and was extended into part of the original hall area.

The main feature of room 3 is the decorative plaster ceiling, marred by the insertion of a steel beam (now removed), obscured by the successive layers of paint and finally mutilated by the removal of about a quarter of the ceiling (now restored) after the first Public Enquiry, yet still to be appreciated as an exceptionally rich design. According to Dr Whitbourn of the Greater London Council, the ceiling “is characteristic of the best plaster work of about the 1740s”. The ceiling of the central staircase bay on the first floor (room 10 in Figure 3) dates from the same period. It has a “complicated design of strapwork finely inter-twined with delicately moulded tendrils” which “is very remarkable indeed” (Figure 4). Over the doors of rooms 11 and 12 on this landing are the lion’s heads with garlands of fruit and flowers shown in Plate 3. These are contemporary with the plasterwork.

The wooden porch on the south side of the house and the door into room 1 will have been erected here as part of Mr Gore’s works. It is a fine flat-roofed portico with proto-Doric columns, turned from solid oak posts, and as it is larger than the slab on which it stands, it may have been moved from elsewhere. The side door is old but has had later mouldings applied to it. Inside there are cupboards on both sides, each with a two-panelled door with old hinges, which are of mid 18th century date.

On the east façade the front door of Mr Cossart’s day may have been retained, relocated to the south side or disposed of. In the case of the second and last options its location would have been taken up by a window as it is unlikely that a visitor would enter Mr Gore’s house directly into the main reception area, even if the original entrance door had been retained.

Picton House must have been a pleasant place to live in. If it had happened to be a little further up or down the river the house might now be the luxurious retreat of a minor celebrity, but in Kingston industry and commerce have usually been more important than amenities. The large riverside garden

of the house was on the south. As late as the 1860s, the garden is shown on the 25 inch OS map as laid out with lawns, paths and flower-beds, but later in the century it became a boat-builder's yard.

Mr Richard Gore was described as "of the City of London, cutler"⁶ (though he has not been found in the surviving records of the Cutlers' Company of London)⁷ and he had a hardware business in Cannon Street⁸. Perhaps he bought the Kingston House as a country retreat. A little earlier, Daniel Defoe in A Tour through the whole island of Great Britain had written of the villages in this part of the Thames valley, where there were fine houses which were not "the mansion houses of families, the antient residents of ancestors ... nor have the rich possessors any lands to a considerable value about them; but these are all houses of retreat ... gentlemen's mere summer houses, or citizens' country houses, whither they retire from the hurries of business, and getting away from money, to draw their breath in a clear air and to divert themselves and their families in the hot weather". The little house by the river, with its beautifully proportioned staircase and panelling, its graceful and lively plaster-work and its windows and garden overlooking the river, may well have had the same appeal to the family of the hardwareman from Cannon Street in the City of London.

Unfortunately Mr Gore did not live very long to enjoy his house, for on 18 June 1757 he was buried at Kingston. Frances and Mary Gore, who had been buried there on 15 January 1744/45 and 10 July 1753 respectively, may have been members of his family, though he did not live in Kingston before he moved into Picton House in about 1749. His wife Susan or Susannah (née Henson)⁹ was left the residue of his estate under his will¹⁰, but he gave his Kingston property to his sister Elizabeth Cole for her life, and after her death to her daughter, also Elizabeth Cole. The names are often found in the neighbourhood, among both the gentry and the tradespeople, and it is difficult to identify these particular ladies. Mrs Cole may have been the widow of Thomas Cole who died in 1747/48¹¹. Although Mr Gore had had only a lease of the house, Mrs Cole is shown in 1747 (in the next available quit-rental)¹² as paying the manorial quit-rent for the property (still referred to as the Three Pigeons) as freeholder; she may have bought the freehold in 1748, perhaps after her husband's death, at the same time as her brother took a lease.

Phase 3. Perhaps in order to connect the first floor of Phases 1 and 2, room 14a was increased in height in order to provide for a connecting door into room 12. This room was provided with two windows on the north wall and a chimney stack on the east. The provision of no windows on the east wall indicates that a structure existed where rooms 5 and 13 now stand or there was the intention to construct them.

As there is a straight joint in the brickwork in the north wall indicating that Phases 1, 3 and 4 were constructed at different times. Room 14a has an interesting 18th century hob grate (covered for protection after the first Public Enquiry) of the type often referred to as a 'ducks nest' or 'Bath grate'. The chimney-piece has a stepped border of marble, which has been replaced at the top by a row of tiles, with a conspicuous fleur de lis on the central tile identified as a Minton pattern.

Note. Rooms 5 and 6 on the ground floor have for many years been used separately from Picton House and they were not accessible for survey. This separation probably dates from the late nineteenth century.

Phase 4. The eastern part of the north wing (rooms 5 and 13) is thought to date from the middle of the eighteenth century, not later than about 1760, and this presumably accounts for the increase in the rateable value from £12 in 1752 to £15 in 1761. Two Window Tax assessments for 1774 and 1779 which happen to have survived¹³ show that the occupiers, Mr and Miss Hammond, were taxed on 28 'lights', which seems to be correct if the whole of the north wing was already in existence. This front part is two full storeys high. Some trouble was taken to make it fit with the front of the house, although it projects a little. The two front windows (the lower, later made into a door, now bricked up) match those of the original house. The line of the main roof (Phase 2) is continued to meet that of the wing at the front only (it was originally gabled like the south end) and here at the front pantiles were again used.

Phases 3 and 4 were constructed during the ownership of the property by Mrs Cole who was sometimes rated as occupied of the house in West by Thames but it was usually let. From 1768 to 1776 Mr Nathaniel Hammond had it and was also assessed at £4 on a coach-house and stables. He had been a butcher, grazing his cattle on various lands in Kingston. He died in December 1775 and was of sufficient standing for his death to be mentioned in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Vol 47). Two Misses Hammond occupied the house after him and were there when the general re-valuation for rates took place in 1780; the increase of 50% for this house, from £20 to £30, must have come as a considerable shock to the rate-payer and suggests that the valuations had become very out-of-date during the sixty years (or perhaps longer) that they had remained unchanged. Kingston Parish Register records the burials of Miss Elizabeth Hammond on 1 November 1781 and of Miss Jane on 31 January 1782. In the next few years there were three successive tenants. The freehold was still owned by Elizabeth Cole's heirs at this time, but in 1785 the manorial quit-rent was paid by Baines¹⁴ (who may have been her heir) and the court book records at the 1796 court baron the sale during the previous year of the Three Pigeons by Robert Baynes, esq to Caesar Picton¹⁵.

Thus the two main lines of the story of Picton House converge. We have followed the history of the building to the point when it became Picton House and we must now go back about forty years to discover who Caesar Picton was and how he came to be there.

Prior to doing this there are two further phases of Picton House's development that need to be considered; the first may have been carried out by Caesar Picton and the other probably dates from the late nineteenth century.

Phase 5 is the re-facing of the south wall of Phase 1 in brickwork that incorporate flat gauged brick arches over the openings. This is a feature that does not occur elsewhere in the house so it is not associated with any of the other phases of construction. The new wall was continued above eaves level to form a parapet. This re-facing was carried out to improve the appearance of the property from the garden and river and is considered to date from the early nineteenth century.

Phase 6 (rooms 8; 16a and 16b) provides an effective link between Phases 1 and 2 and would have been required when rooms 5 and 6 were let separately from the main house along with the land to the north of it. The site always had a wharf, which was probably used by the maltster opposite from the beginning. When the malthouse went to a separate owner in the late nineteenth century, he was

given a right of way to the wharf over Picton House land on the north side of the house (where there is still a yard with old wood block paving). Without rooms 5 and 6 there would have been no means of communication between the main part of the house and the service rooms. It was therefore necessary to construct the timber framed 'link' which being two storey enhanced the circulation at first floor level as well as the essential connection at ground floor. Phase 6 is of timber framed construction with the unusual feature of being clad externally with vertical planks. Adaptation was also required to the roof of Phase 1 to allow access from the new first floor where a water closet was located at the west end of the new link.

Notes

- 1 KB 1/2 (29 7 1742); KB 9/1, p322 (16 9 1742); KC 1/1/267
- 2 The rent of 22s per annum was payable as to 20s to the Kingston chamberlains and as to 2s for the poor. The Corporation's 20s is shown for convenience in the rate books (KG 3/2/7-8)
- 3 Buried at Kingston 20 1 1743/44
- 4 PCC PROB 11/731 (proved 31 1 1743)
- 5 KB 1/2 (26 3 and 5 11 1747); KIF 9/1, p324 (2 8 1748). Mr Gore was granted a lease of a piece of waste 210 ft long by 11 ft wide (on part of which he had built a brick wall), at 5s per annum for 99 years "to expire with the lease of the house"
- 6 KF 9/1, p324 (2 9 1748)
- 7 Cutler's Company, Apprentice Book and Admissions to Freedom Ms 7158/1 (City of London Guildhall Library, Ms Dept)
- 8 Complete Guide to London, 1749, 1752 (in City Guildhall Library)
- 9 London Marriage Licences Richard Gore and Susan Henson 20 12 1726
- 10 Probate not traced in PCC or Surrey Archdeaconry, but copy will in SRO 35/2/15 among documents or title to endowment of Kingston Bridge (Mr Gore owned property in Thames Street, Kingston, which belonged to the Bridge)
- 11 KF 1/1/86 (31 5 1748)
- 12 KF 1/3/5 (there is rental for 1764, but the West by Thames portion is missing)
- 13 KD 8/3/1-2
- 14 KF 1/3/19
- 15 KF 1/1/109
- 16 Will of Sarah Goldring, proved Principal Probate Registry 5 3 1891.

Chapter 4: Cesar --- from Senegal to Norbiton

About the time of Mr Richard Gore's death in 1757 events in the wider world were creating waves, the last ripples from which would long afterwards reach Picton House. In 1756 Britain had declared war on France and Austria in support of Frederick the Great of Prussia. This was the beginning of the Seven Years' War, for long called the Great War. France and Britain were already at loggerheads in various parts of the world where their trading operations conflicted. The economic interests of so many areas of Britain were affected that it was not difficult to arouse great popular enthusiasm for the war; this was necessary because money had to be found for a rapid increase in the fighting forces, since there was a rooted objection to the maintenance of a standing army. One of the methods used to limit the inevitable increases in taxation was to give a command in the army to any gentleman who was prepared to finance his own company (and to purchase a commission for himself if he was not already an officer). When these independent companies were sent abroad as reinforcements, friction with the regular army was likely because the independent officers were in the habit of corresponding directly with the Secretary of State, ignoring their superior officers.¹

This was the time of Clive's successes against the French in India and of the campaign which led to Wolfe's capture of Quebec, but it is another operation which concerns us. For many years the French had been in control of the west coast of Africa, northwards from the British trading settlements on the river Gambia, and they had a virtual monopoly of the trade in gum senega (known to us as gum arabic), then an important commodity.² The French had forts on the island of Goree (at the most westerly point of Africa, opposite modern Dakar) and at St Louis at the mouth of the river Senegal, with trading settlements two hundred leagues up the river. British merchants on the Gambia complained that the French stirred up the natives against them³ (though since both were engaged in shipping slaves to America and the West Indies, local hostility to all Europeans might be expected) and when Britain entered the war, Pitt the Elder sent a small naval expedition to Senegal. Early in 1758 Goree and Cap Verde were captured from the French and later in the year, with troops under Lt. Col. Worge, 'Fort Lewis' was occupied.² Worge was made the British Governor of St Louis and placed in command of a battalion of nine companies formed in 1759 to maintain the British conquests there.⁶

Horace Walpole in a letter of 11 June 1758 refers to an express report just arrived "of great conquests and captures which three of our ships have made on the river Gambia (sic) to the destruction of the French trade and settlements there".⁴

Walpole also wrote of the passage through Kingston of a detachment of militia (a Home Guard, embodied in emergencies) under his nephew Lord Orford. On 17 July 1759 in a letter from Strawberry Hill, his house at Twickenham, he told George Montagu, "My Lord Orford, their colonel, I hear, looked gloriously martial and genteel, and I believe it; his person and air have a noble wildness in them; the regimentals, too, are very becoming, scarlet faced with black, buff waistcoats and gold buttons. How knights of shires, who have never shot anything but woodcocks, like this warfare, I don't know; but the towns through which they pass adore them: everywhere they are treated and regaled. The Prince

of Wales followed them to Kingston and gave fifty guineas amongst the private men”.⁵ It sounds like a good day for the Kingston ale-houses.

Meanwhile Lt. Col. Worge was exchanging letters with the War Office about his difficulties in Senegal.⁶ British garrisons had been established at Fort Louis and Goree and also some way up the river at Podore. The climate was very unfavourable to Europeans, there was much sickness among the troops and Col. Worge complained of a shortage of medicines. Early in 1760 he mentioned that he had “caused negroes to be hired for the laborious part of the hospital business” and was trying to obtain black nurses. The War Office replied promising stores, hospital personnel so far as they were available and merchandise for traffic with the Africans. These letters concern us because they indicate that the Army was employing and not enslaving the local population.

We also gather from the War Office correspondence that the people of the Senegal coast were mainly Moslems. Cary, the British Governor of Goree, reported that as he had no chaplain for either the garrison or the regiment, “it was the wonder of the Mahometans here that we had not anybody to bury our Dead, or to preach the Gospel, they used to say we were of no Religion at all”. He appointed a stranded British clergyman to be chaplain at Goree and asked for War Office approval “as you may be assured it must be a comfort to every Christian, more especially in such a climate as this, to see some sort of Religion carried on, at the same time to convince the Inhabitants of this part of the World, who are very religious in their own way, that we have some Religion, who till now, beleived (sic) we had none”.

In addition to the nine companies of Worge’s battalion, the Senegal garrisons had been reinforced by a division of four independent companies formed early in 1760 under the command of a Captain John Parr.⁷ There were soon difficulties over Parr’s independent position. The officers at Fort Lewis took turns to ‘go upon command’, which evidently meant their doing detached duty at the various garrisons. Captain Parr maintained that as, under the terms of his commission, he was responsible to the King for his four companies, he could not be expected to separate himself from them for this duty. The colonel advised him to write home about it, but meanwhile the officers of the garrison saw no reason why he should get away with it “and thinking it a very great hardship that an officer of the same rank should be excused from doing the most severe part of the duty”, they complained to the Colonel, who set up a Court of Enquiry. It sat on 4 July 1761 and quickly decided that the orders and papers brought out from England by Captain Parr did not exempt him from doing the same duty as the other captains. He at once requested and was given leave to resign his commission and his senior lieutenant, Thomas Rees, immediately “in a very pressing manner desired leave to resign, having (as he represents) Business of such consequence in England that his personal attendance is absolutely necessary”. The story was accepted by Col. Worge, who sent the commission back to the War Office with Parr’s in July 1761. Perhaps the two officers sailed home by the same ship.

A few months later we hear of them in a quite different context. On 8 November 1761 Sir John Philipps, Bt. who represented his native Pembrokeshire in Parliament and lived at Norbiton Place in Kingston upon Thames, wrote in his Journal, “Went to Norbiton with Capt. Parr and Lieut. Rees, taking with me a Black Boy from Senegal given me by Capt. Parr, also a Paraquet and foreign Duck”.⁸

Lady Philipps and her three daughters must have had a thrilling weekend hearing of the experiences of the two officers, whose gifts were well-chosen tokens of the exotic coast where they had served. In the next century it was said that the local parakeets were sold by dealers in St Louis and the lagoons with their ducks were the striking feature of the Senegal estuary.⁹

We do not know why the two officers got in touch with Sir John so soon after their return from an episode which had ended with their falling out with the Army (not irretrievably, for Parr later rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel)¹⁰ nor why the captain brought gifts to him. Their names do not occur elsewhere in Sir John's Journal (which has survived for the period 11 November 1757 to 23 May 1763), nor in his letter-books from 1757 to 1759.¹¹ But just at the time when the four independent companies were being formed, early in 1760, Sir John and Parr (then a lieutenant stationed at Dover Castle) exchanged several letters, the content of which is not noted. There is no indication that Sir John contributed money for the new companies – perhaps he just said a word in the right quarter, or perhaps it was simply that Parr (whose lieutenant had the Welsh name of Rees) was a fellow-countryman of Sir John, for on 14 June 1760 Parr, by then a captain, wrote to him from Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire. Sir John replied immediately, but no more letters between them are recorded before the last surviving letter-book ends on 29 September 1760.

Whatever truth lies behind these few facts, it strangely affected the fate of one little black boy. The six year old African¹² probably a Mohammedan, perhaps understanding some French and even (after his long voyage) some English, who had left the coast of Senegal in the wet season when the temperature was about 80°F,⁹ was brought shivering to a fine house in Norbiton on a November Sunday in 1761, to enter a notably Christian household with a long family tradition of support for education and for missionary work.¹³ Lady Philipps provided him with new clothes (for which Sir John later reimbursed her) and Sir John himself in London the following week remembered to buy for 10s.6d. from Mr Thomas Sebree “a velvet Turbet for black boy”.⁸

A little later he bestowed upon the young stranger the other benefits normally provided by well-disposed masters in the eighteenth century for their African or Indian servants – Christian godparents and a classical name. A month after receiving Captain Parr's gifts, Sir John took the Rev. Dr. Philipps down to Norbiton and on Sunday 6 December 1761 wrote in his Journal “Dr. Philipps christen'd my black Boy, Caesar, gave Eliz. Cooper, Tho. Davies and Thomas Lewis his Gossips 7s.6d.”. The three “gossips” or godparents were upper servants in the Norbiton Place household (Davies was the butler).¹⁴ Sir John was very conservative and in all this was following well-established practice, which had not passed without comment in an earlier and more satirical age. The Tatler (No. 245) on 2 November 1710 published the following mock ‘Letter to the Editor’: -

“Sir,

I am a Blackmore Boy and have, by my Lady's Order, been Christened by the Chaplain. The good Man has gone further with me, and told me a great deal of good News; as, that I am as good as my Lady herself as I am a Christian, and many other Things: But for all this, the Parrat who came over with me from our Country is as much esteemed by her as I am. Besides this, the Shock-Dog has a Collar that cost almost as much as mine.

I desire also to know, whether now I am a Christian, I am obliged to dress like a Turk, and wear a Turbant. I am, Sir, Your most humble Servant,

Pompey”.

Sixty years later and in a family as high-principled as Sir John’s, it is unlikely that the little Cesar wore a collar. The accounts show no expenditure on such an article. Unlike those black servants who had been brought to England from the West Indies by plantation owners or sea captains, Cesar would not have been a slave before arriving here and would be treated at least as well as the rest of the household, and as he was so young, very probably better. It is perhaps significant that this Welsh baronet in his Journal always refers to his servants by their names, and those names are recognisably Welsh or the same as those of others in his employment in Pembrokeshire;¹⁵ within the limits of the normal attitude of the ruling classes towards their servants, and to ‘the Poor’ in general, the atmosphere seems reassuringly human.

Notes:

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|---|
| 1 | J W Fortescue, <u>History of the British Army</u> (1899) II p 576 | 9 | Reclus, <u>Africa and its Inhabitants</u> (late C19), II (i) Chap. 4 |
| 2 | <u>Annual Register</u> 1758 pp 75/6 | 10 | <u>Army List 1770</u> . He retired in 1776 with the rank of Lt. Col. |
| 3 | J W Fortescue <u>op. cit.</u> p 346 | 11 | PC Colln Nos 572/3 |
| 4 | <u>Yale Edition of Horace Walpole’s Correspondence</u> (1960) ed. W S Lewis, 21 pp 211/212 | 12 | Kingston Parish Register gives his age as 81 at his death in 1836 |
| 5 | <u>Letters of Horace Walpole</u> (1905) ed. Mrs Paget Toynbee IV p 281 | 13 | PC Colln No 4817; M M Philipps, <u>History of the Family of Philipps of Picton</u> (1906) |
| 6 | PRO WO 1/319 | 14 | PC Colln No 589, 20 May 1758 |
| 7 | <u>Army List 1761</u> , p 161 | 15 | do. Nos 589, 591, 937 |
| 8 | PC Colln No 589 | | |

Chapter 5: Life at Norbiton Place

Cesar (the spelling which he and others used for his name in his later life) lived in the Philipps household until he was well into his thirties. There are only fragments of information about him during those years, but something can be gathered from knowing how the family lived. At least he survived his first English winter and did not succumb to the diseases, such as smallpox, tuberculosis and bronchitis, which so often attacked those unused to city life in a damp climate. This may have been because the family did not live in unhealthy London.

The principal seat of the Philipps family was Picton Castle near Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire, owned by their ancestors since Norman times.¹ Sir John, the sixth baronet, had succeeded unexpectedly to the baronetcy and estates in 1743, on the death by accidental drowning of his elder brother, Sir Erasmus.² Their father, also Sir John, the fourth baronet (1662-1736), known as “the good Sir John”, had been celebrated for his high principles and charitable works.³ He had been active in political and public life from the time of Queen Anne and had been away from Pembrokeshire for long periods, staying in lodgings in London and leaving his wife at home to make important business decisions, supervise the agents on his Welsh estates and bring up their six children. His wife evidently felt resentful and neglected and enjoyed poor health.⁴ Their second son, known in the family as Jack, probably determined not to create a similar situation for his own wife. He also was much involved in both political and charitable work and soon after inheriting the title and estates, he settled his family at Norbiton Place, a substantial house at Kingston upon Thames, with a small park between the present Coombe, London and Cambridge Roads. His wife’s brother-in-law, the wealthy lawyer Edward Greenly,⁵ had moved from Surbiton to Norbiton Hall in 1737.⁶ He may have told Sir John when the property opposite (earlier known as Pope’s from a sixteenth century owner) became vacant on the deaths of Mrs Frances Nicolls and Lady Maynard.⁷ Sir John took a furnished tenancy of the house and lived there from 1744, though he did not buy it until 1758.⁸

While Parliament was sitting Sir John would take lodgings for himself and his servant in London, riding down to Norbiton at the weekend. Sometimes he would rent a furnished house in fashionable St James’s and take his ladies and perhaps their cousin Miss Greenly to enjoy a little London life. Each year in June the Philipps family with most of their Norbiton servants would set forth on the long journey to South Wales, which would take them about eight days.⁹ Sir John would himself have written to each of the inns at which they were to stay for a night on the way, beginning at Mr March’s Orkney Arms at Maidenhead Bridge.¹⁰ They would remain in Pembrokeshire for several months (usually until Parliament reassembled in October), months which were filled with both official and social engagements and less formal pleasures such as sailing in Sir John’s yacht or visiting their cousins, the fiercely Jacobite Mr James Philipps of Pen y Parc and his family.¹¹

At the beginning of June in 1762, the summer after the black boy arrived at Norbiton, he was taken down to Picton Castle with others of the household, including his two godfathers. From Mr Peter Turnbull the tailor in Churchyard Row (facing the old Guildhall in Kingston Market Place), Cesar had been provided with breeches (for which Sir John paid 9s.), so perhaps the boy made the journey on horseback with one of the men. The party travelled with a coach and a chaise and with four saddle

horses as well as eight coach horses (one of which died at Monmouth). On their arrival Sir John paid his wife what she had spent on the journey, including shoes and stockings for Cesar. And that is the last we hear of him for some years. All the servants who had gone to Wales with the family returned with them to Norbiton Place, but Cesar did not. They arrived back in Kingston on the evening of 31 October 1762, to a welcome from the bells of the parish church (Sir John gave the ringers 5s.).¹² Three days earlier it had snowed in London, the harbinger of a cold winter with intense frost and strong east winds from Christmas to the end of January;¹³ it was well for the boy from the tropics if he was in South Wales, where the weather may have been less severe.

He must have been left with the Picton Castle servants to be educated and trained for his future duties in the household. As a child he would have been a page to the ladies and when he grew up he might in the normal course have expected to become personal servant to one of the young gentlemen of the family. But Sir John had only one surviving son, Richard (later Lord Milford), who already had his own servant, John Prothero, when Cesar first came to Norbiton Place. Sir John died on 22 June 1764. His will does not refer to Cesar and it is evident that from the first he was the protégé of Lady Philipps. In her will, written in her own hand on 12 April 1766, when Cesar was about eleven years old, he was the only person mentioned (apart from her own family). It said “ --- (illegible) guineas to Cesar to be paid him at the age of 21 years and hope my Children will take some care of him and not let him want”. Lady Philipps also wrote “To Cesar my Box” (or possibly “my Boy”). As she lived on for more than twenty years she made various alterations to the will and in its final form left Cesar £100 – a very substantial sum in the eighteenth century and evidence of the special position he came to hold in her household.¹⁴

There was an observer who noticed and left a record of this position, for it must be Cesar who is referred to in a letter from Horace Walpole, written from Strawberry Hill on 19 October 1788.¹⁵ Walpole wrote, “As you will allow me to fill my letters with any scraps I can amass, I will tell your Ladyship how I was struck lately by a sentence of a negro. I was at Kingston, with the sisters of Lord Milford, who are my relations, and who have lately lost their very aged mother. They have a favourite black, who has lived with them a great many years and is remarkably sensible. To amuse Lady Philipps under a long illness, they had read to her the account of the Pelew Islands. Somebody happened to say we were sending, or have just sent, a ship thither; the black, who was in the room, exclaimed ‘Then there is an end of their happiness’.” Walpole adds, with no sign of disagreement with the servant’s remark or of surprise at his joining in the conversation, “What a satire on Europe.”

An Account of the Pelew Islands was a newly-published book which was a natural choice for the ladies of Norbiton Place. The author, George Keate, had been educated at Kingston Grammar School,¹⁶ which the famous Woodeson (master from 1732 to 1772)¹⁶ conducted in the old house (later the parish workhouse) opposite Norbiton Place¹⁷ as a select boarding school, where “a considerable portion of the nobility and gentry” of the neighbourhood received their early education.¹⁸ The book told of the shipwreck of the East India Company’s packet *Antelope* on the remote Pelew Islands in the West Pacific in 1783 and of the kindness of the natives to Captain Wilson and his crew. It aroused considerable public sympathy for them and for their king, whose son, Lee Boo, had returned with Captain Wilson to be educated in England, but had died of smallpox in London. A review of the book

in the Gentleman's Magazine in the latter part of 1788 said of Lee Boo's death "We could not dismiss this affecting story without repeating a wish that it may stimulate ... the Court of Directors of the East India Company ... to give orders for a vessel to be dispatched to the island of Pelew, with a proper cargo of seeds and useful animals, to repay that debt which, as a nation, we certainly owe to the father of Lee Boo; and we are happy to learn, since this article was written, that the Ariel sloop is fitting out at Portsmouth for that benevolent purpose". This must have been the ship which according to Cesar was to bring to an end the happiness of the Pelew Islanders. According to the 1803 edition of Keate's book, two ships with suitable cargoes reached the islands on 22 January 1791. There seems to have been no intention to colonize the islands, which were very remote and inaccessible, nor even to begin any regular trade; the gifts to the king were in truth what they purported to be, a return for his help to the crew of the Antelope. Thus, as far as that particular episode was concerned, Cesar's fears for the islanders were unfounded (a century later, however, the islands were bought from Spain by Germany for copper mining).

Cesar's remark is interesting in the context of growing public debate at this time about the slave trade (the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade had been founded a year before in May 1787) and the part being played in the discussion by a few articulate negroes such as Olaudah Equiano (called Gustavus Vasa). No evidence has been found that Cesar himself was active in the movement; he is not, for example, mentioned in the Life of Olaudah Equiano,¹⁹ nor is he among the signatories of various letters of 1787/89 concerning the slave trade, now available as Appendix II in Black People in Britain, by Folarin Shyllon. It is interesting that two of the letters were signed by a Jasper Goree, who, as Goree was in Senegal, presumably came from the same part of the world as Cesar, and whose real name is given as Broughwar Jogensmel. Cesar may well have discussed these questions with other Africans or Indians, for we know from parish registers of several who lived in the neighbourhood at different times²⁰ and doubtless there were others like himself in the gentlemen's houses round about. He will certainly have heard talk about the slave trade in the drawing-rooms at Norbiton Place; Horace Walpole, for example, was referring to the "horrid traffic" in a letter to Hannah More about this time and equating the "disinterested" on the subject with those "who have no sugar plantations".²¹

That the Philipps ladies were reading the Account of the Pelew Islands is almost evidence that they were Abolitionists, for writings on the Tropics or remote islands were dividing (according to the opinions of their authors about slavery) into, on the one hand, glowing accounts of the "Noble Savage" and, on the other, grim pictures of primitive societies whose natives would positively benefit from being shipped to the plantations of the West Indies. Keate's book clearly belongs to the former category. The Philipps family had no interests in sugar plantations or the Liverpool trade to affect their views and they had a tradition of active support of overseas missions – and even of being mildly subversive, for in the days of the first Hanoverian kings they had hoped for a Stuart restoration. The Norbiton sixth baronet himself had been known at the time of the Forty Five Rebellion as a Jacobite and had been a member, and later president, of the Jacobite secret (though probably fairly harmless) Society of Sea Serjeants, before which also the Rev Dr Philipps (who christened Cesar) preached. The Jacobite songs they sang are still in the Picton Castle Collection.²²

By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, such feelings found an outlet in pride in the descent of the family from the ancient Welsh princes.²³ This was fashionably romantic and was appreciated by their friend the minor poet Mr Edward Lovibond of Hampton (another of Woodeson's Kingston Grammar School pupils)¹⁶ who addressed several of his poems to the Philipps ladies.²⁴ His banal verses do at least give some idea of their life and thus in a sense of the atmosphere in which their servants also lived. The pace was gentle and the tone intellectual and artistic. The house was embellished with drawings from antique statues and no doubt with some of the fine pictures, sculptures, bronzes and books sent back from Italy by Sir John in 1741.²⁵ The daughters, Miss Kitty, Miss Molly and Miss Joyce, painted and drew and played their own songs on the harpsichord and in their middle age flirted mildly with the middle-aged Mr Lovibond. Even in their younger days life had hardly been more lively, if some lines written by the eldest, Miss Mary, were anything more than a family joke. She describes her parents and their three eldest daughters sitting round the fire at Picton Castle one evening in 1754: ---

The party consisted of no more than five,
And a list'ner would scarcely have thought them alive,
Such undisturbed silence there reigned, so profound,
That no mortal creature could hear the least sound.
The Knight, as superior, first appears on the stage,
He was carefully turning o'er many a page,
While sleep did her Ladyship kindly engage.
The next were her daughters, nor handsome nor gay,
But all honest good kind of girls in their way ...
Miss Betty all meekness, and mildness, and merit,
Miss Kitty, though good, has a little more spirit.
So much for their characters; now I'm to say
How they were employed; not in romping and play,
But instead of all that, and flirting and stuff,
Miss Betty was dextrously making a ruff.
And instead of crying eagerly, who'd cut and shuffle,
Miss Kitty was busily altering a ruffle.
While silently thus our time steals away,
We're envied by none, and despised by the gay.²⁶

So they lived for twenty-five years at Norbiton Place, cared for by Cesar and a full household of other servants, three ageing maiden ladies looking after their invalid mother and reading, to divert her, books of voyages to the ends of the earth. And Cesar had a comfortable home in elegant surroundings. It is at present fashionable to deplore the fate of the domestic servants of other days, but their life is not to be judged by the reminiscences of the cook-generals in the middle class households of the 1920s. Servants, particularly the upper and personal servants, of the aristocracy and gentry were envied by other working people for the security of their position and their high standard of living. In addition the servants in a wealthy eighteenth century family might expect such large 'vails' or tips that some of their master's guests could scarcely afford to dine with him. We may believe that Cesar, a trusted personal attendant (perhaps even a butler or steward) who had lived in the same family for

so many years, was as well-rewarded by his employer and her circle as any other servant, but he may have looked forward to a more satisfying use of his talents when circumstances at Norbiton changed. Meeting local people, both in Pembrokeshire and at Kingston, he probably formulated some plan for the future and kept an eye open for opportunities. Sir John Philipps by his will had left Norbiton Place and its contents to Lady Philipps for her life, but after her death it was to go to his son, not to the daughters, and the old way of life must come to an end.

When Lady Philipps died on 28 September 1788 in her 88th year, she was buried in Kingston Church and Norbiton Place was quickly sold by Lord Milford.²⁷ A year later, when their mother's will was proved, the three daughters, by then in their fifties, were already installed at Hampton Court.¹⁴ With his legacy of £100 and probably some savings, Cesar took a first step towards his new life. In the Kingston Poor Rate assessment covering the six months from Michaelmas 1788, a coach house and stables in West by Thames (previously held by James Forth and earlier by Mr Hammond, when tenant of the house later known as Picton House) are shown as "now Ceasor". Cesar was on his own.

Notes:

- 1 PC Colln No 4817
- 2 Dictionary of National Biography
- 3 PC Colln, Introduction and 4817
- 4 PC Colln, correspondence in Nos 1459/61, 1464/65, 1452/5
- 5 PC Colln No 591, April 1757; Gentleman's Magazine 20 (1750) P 332
- 6 Kingston Poor Rate 1737; KF 1/1/84
- 7 KF 1/1/82-3; Kingston Poor Rate 1744
- 8 PC Colln No 591, 28 8 1758
- 9 do. passim
- 10 do. No 571/3, e g 8 letters dated 21 6 1760
- 11 PC Colln, Introduction
- 12 do. No 589
- 13 J H Brazell, London Weather p 153; PC Colln No 589, 29 1 1763 (Sir John gave two guineas to the curate of Kingston for the poor on account of the long frost)
- 14 PCC PROB 11/901, will of Sir John Philipps; PROB 11/1184, will of Lady Philipps
- 15 Letters of Horace Walpole ed. Mrs Paget Toynbee (1905) IV 95. The letter is quoted in Folarin Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain (1976) p 16
- 16 Dictionary of National Biography
- 17 Biden p 75, note r
- 18 Gilbert Wakefield, Memoirs (1804) I 42, 49
- 19 Life of Olaudah Equiano (1789) reprinted 1969 in Dawson Colonial History Series
- 20 The following baptisms have chanced to be noted: --- in Wimbledon Parish Register (1924 John Evelyn Club)
18 2 1703/4 "Cesar Ornadine, servant to the Duke of Leeds, a Black"
15 7 1746 "John, an adult negro, servant to the Right Honourable the Lady Georgiana Spencer"
In Kingston Parish Register 5 7 1778 "William Pucker son of a negro was 20 years of age"
16 1 1785 "Lucy Duncomb a black from Captain Pierce's" (sc. from Walnut Tree House, now Elmfield, London Road, Kingston)
31 8 1787 "Ann Parker a black from Hampton Wick"
- 21 Walpole's Letters ed. C B Lucas (1904) p 746
- 22 PC Colln, Introduction; Nos 589 (19 6 1761), 591, 1492
- 23 Letters of Horace Walpole (as Note 15) II p 330
- 24 E Lovibond, Poems on Several Occasions (1785)
- 25 PC Colln No 592 (list wrongly attributed to Sir Erasmus in Country Life magazine 14 1 1960)
- 26 Quoted in C Cobb-Webber, Haverfordwest and its Story (1882) p 152. Miss Betty (Elizabeth) died at Norbiton Place on 31 12 1758
- 27 KF 1/1/109

Chapter 6: Cesar Picton, Coal Merchant

To the rate collectors the newcomer in West by Thames was at first simply “Ceasor”, but in the next assessment, when he was rated at £25 for the house coach house and stables, he was shown as “Caesar Pickton”. He had been named only as Cesar in the will of Lady Philipps twenty years earlier and it may be that he had not needed an English surname when he lived at Norbiton Place. But now he had the name of the ancestral home of the Philipps family and of the estate where he had probably passed his earliest years in Britain. To his house he gave the same name. Variations in the assessment of the house in the 1780s suggest that it was becoming more difficult to let it as a high-class residential property, but apart from this we should not be surprised that a former servant should take a house of this quality. He had lived in a mansion for at least twenty-eight of his thirty-four years and those features of the house which still commend themselves to us would no doubt appeal also to Cesar. But perhaps more important to him were the wharf and yard there, for he had chosen to become a coal merchant.

It is not likely that a coal merchant would go round selling coals from a cart like the coal chandlers and there seems to have been some doubt on the Corporation’s side whether the usual rules about trading in Kingston were applicable to his type of business. Only freemen of Kingston (i.e. members of the Trade Companies or of the Corporation) were permitted to trade in the town, unless the Corporation granted a “toleration”, or licence, and by this time the fines of £5 or £10 were a steady source of income for the Corporation. On 2 May 1789, soon after he established himself in West by Thames, the Corporation ordered “Cazar Picton is to have notice to attend”. On 2 July 1789 “Caesar Picton appeared and it not being determined whether he is a dealer in Coals or not, his matter is to be considered of”. On 4 March 1790 the order was that he be given notice to attend at the next meeting, but his name does not occur again in the minutes until 3 July 1792 when “Caesar Picton appeared and desired a Toleration to follow the trade of a Coal Merchant which is agreed to on his paying £10 for a fine”. He paid the £10 at the meeting of 19 July 1792 and his toleration was sealed on 5 November 1792 (the leisurely pace of these proceedings was not unusual).¹ Tolerations were occasionally issued to coal merchants² as well as to coal chandlers, but when two merchants, Richard Rose and Robert Galley, were “warned” by the Corporation on 24 October 1776 because they would not pay for tolerations, no action seems to have followed.¹ Unlike Cesar Picton they were barge owners³ and they presumably belonged to the London Company of Watermen and Lightermen; this may have been the deciding factor.

There is also the possibility that coal delivered at the Picton wharf was sold, not in the town but elsewhere in Surrey. We know from the Gentleman’s Magazine for 1763, for example, that the waggon teams which brought timber from Dorking returned there with great quantities of coal from Kingston and Thames Ditton for use in the brick and tile works around Dorking. But there was another industrial use for coal nearer at hand. According to Ayliffe (p 47) there were extensive coking ovens providing fuel for the Kingston maltings and they were close to Picton House (on the riverside site later occupied by the Harris Foundry and then by Wilcox Motors Ltd). Ayliffe was writing of the 1830s, but the same buildings are identifiable on the Horner map of 1813 and were presumably there in Picton’s time. As early as the 1620s coke had been recognised as the ideal fuel for malting⁴ “culm” (i.e.

anthracite) or “Welch coal” is mentioned in this connection in 1758⁵ and was the chief product of the Pembrokeshire coal pits,⁶ some of which were on the Philipps estates.

Sir John Philipps and his brother Erasmus (later a writer on economics) had taken an active interest in the coal industry from an early age. In 1713 the thirteen year old ‘Jack’ was writing to his sister to tell her how the brothers had been to see the seven acres of fine timber recently bought for use at one of their pits, and of the great quantity of coal available there, which would make it worthwhile to improve the quays.⁷ A few years later their father took them on a tour of north-east England and they remarked on the coal trade of Newcastle and Sunderland and the coal fleet at the mouth of the Tyne.⁷ Pembrokeshire had a fine natural harbour at Milford, in the eighteenth century the principal port for the coastwise trade in Welsh coal.⁶ Although the commercial mechanics of the trade at this period (before the great mines of the Rhondda valley began to dominate the Welsh industry) are not clear, it is probable that culm reaching Kingston would have been bought at London, perhaps by the barge-masters for shipment up the Thames. Certainly Sir John Philipps, though himself a coal-owner, bought domestic fuel for Norbiton Place in the 1760s⁸ from Thomas Cooke, one of the most important of the Kingston watermen, and from Edward Langley, who had Buckland’s Wharf on the north side of Kingston Bridge.⁹ There are some records of the production and shipping of coal and culm from the Philipps pits in the time of the sixth baronet and of his son Lord Milford (some at the time when Cesar Picton went into business), but they show only the Welsh end of the trade and give no indication of the ultimate destination of the cargoes.¹⁰

Cesar must have known about both the Pembrokeshire coal trade (the source of much of the wealth of his employers) and the Kingston malshouses. As the businessman he proved to be, he probably saw the opportunity to bring the two ends of the matter together (if indeed commercial links had not already been forged by Lord Milford). Cesar’s choice of a trade now seems inescapable. He would not have needed large amounts of capital, since he rented the West by Thames property for his first few years there. By 1795¹¹ he was able to buy from Robert Baynes the property still shown in the Kingston Manor books as the Three Pigeons, which as we have seen in Chapter 2 seems to have meant the land on both sides of the street. At the rating revaluation of 1803 his property was “House Buildings Wharf Garden, Yard and Buildings opposite £32”, with a separate rateable value of £24 for his malshouse. By the purchase Cesar became a freeholder and liable to serve on juries. In 1801 he appears in the Surrey Freeholders List as “Caesar Picton coalmerchant” in Kingston Hundred, but, for whatever reason, he is on the Kingston list for only that one year.¹²

We know little about Cesar’s life while he was at Picton House. His will¹³ is dated 1826, nearly twenty years after he left Kingston, but it names many from local families, with whom he must have kept in touch, and it expresses his wish to be buried in Kingston Parish Church. His social contacts may have been made through the church, but the impression is rather that he made the friendships which any prosperous tradesman would have made. His interest in parish affairs seems to have been practical, for between 1789 and 1807 (when he left Kingston) the only vestries (meetings of rate-paying parishioners) which he attended were three particularly large gatherings,¹⁴ when financial matters which had evidently aroused some public concern were discussed. On Friday 15 March 1793 he was at a vestry, held in the chancel of the parish church, which decided “that the ten Bells belonging to

this Church be new hung by Mr John Wheatley of Maldon” and appointed Mr Thomas Strange to look after, clean and keep in repair the clock and chimes of the parish at a salary of £10.10s. per annum; as the vestry added that no repairs were to be undertaken without its prior approval, it may be that there had been an outcry over some previous expenditure. “Mr Cesar Picton” was present also on Tuesday 27 August 1793, when the vestry decided to have a gallery built on the north side of the church by Mr John Tallemach for £98.10s. and on 31 August 1802 when final authorisation was given for spending £210 to buy the site of a demolished house, adjoining the passage from the Market Place to the church (the land was to be consecrated and used for burials).

One indication of Cesar Picton’s standing as a businessman and the friend of businessmen appears in the will of William Porter,¹⁵ who died in 1807. The Porters were successful maltsters and William had at one time been tenant of the Old Malthouse. He appointed as his executors and trustees “my trusty Friends” John Fox of Richmond, gentleman, Caesar Picton of Tallath (Tolworth), gentleman, and two others, both of Richmond. His estate, which his trustees would have had to manage, included various properties in Norbiton Street, Kingston. Cesar Picton was the survivor of the four trustees and must have acted for nearly thirty years. It may have been in connection with this estate that he was paying a quit-rent of 3½d to the manor of Kingston in 1830¹⁶ for the property held jointly with one Elsam and described for many years in these rentals as “part of land in Littlefield late Rogers”. William Porter’s will mentions his half of “four lands in Littlefield” and presumably Elsam owned the other half. In the Land Tax assessment of 1829 Elsam and Picton were taxed for a barn at Norbiton, which was no doubt the same property.

Until 1806 Cesar Picton was rated as occupier of Picton House and usually also of the malthouse, but the occasional appearance of another name as occupier of the malthouse suggests that he either let it or put in a manager. Maltmaking in those days was an art rather than a science and if Cesar made part of his fortune through that trade, it must have been indirectly. He can never have been one of those Kingston maltsters who, however wealthy they might be, worked with their men and were seen about the town in their maltsters’ caps¹⁷ Cesar Picton probably had no such egalitarian ideas; his aspirations were to a gentleman’s life and by 1807, after nearly twenty years, he had evidently made enough to retire and leave Kingston, to live on his rents and income and be called “Cesar Picton of Tolworth, gentleman”.

Some years before he did so, Miss Mary Philipps died; the parish register records her burial in Kingston Church on 8 April 1801. By her will,¹⁸ made at Hampton Court in 1795, she left “to Caesar Picton £100”. Her legacies to other servants were very much smaller (e.g. John Ast the coachman received £20 and the cook, housemaid and footman then serving her only £10 each). Cesar’s long service and special position were thus recognised, but even so, he must have made most of his money by his own efforts in business.

Notes

- 1 KB 1/3 – dates in text, and 17 12 1767, 24 10 1776
- 2 KB 9/1, pp 482,499
- 3 SRO OS 5/14/1
- 4 J R Harris, 'The Rise of Coal Technology', in Scientific American, August 1974, following J U Nef, The Rise of the British Coal Industry
- 5 P Mathias, The Brewing Industry in England (1959)
- 6 B M Evans, 'The Welsh Coal Trade during the Stuart Period', Univ. Coll. of Wales, Aberystwyth, Dissertations 1928/17
- 7 PC Colln Nos 1458, 1468
- 8 do. No 589, e g 6. 1. and 30.12. 1761
- 9 KB 9/1, p323
- 10 PC Colln Nos 586, 591, 4081/2
- 11 KF 1/1/109
- 12 SRO QS 7/5/5
- 13 PCC PROB 11/1863
- 14 SRO P33/4/1
- 15 Copy in SRO 262/3/5
- 16 KF 1/3/21
- 17 Reminiscences of Alderman Gould, Surrey Comet Diamond Jubilee Number (1897)
- 18 PCC PROB II/1359, fo. 409

Chapter 7: Cesar Picton, Gentleman

When Cesar Picton moved to Tolworth in 1807 perhaps it was because it was more profitable to let the Kingston house with the wharf and the other buildings to his successors in business. His Kingston interests were not neglected and by comparing the descriptions of his properties at different times some 'development' can be seen.¹ By the late 1820s a baker's shop and a blacksmith's, each with a house and with yards and other buildings, had appeared on his land next to the malthouse. The baker's was occupied in the 1830s by an enterprising grocer called Thomas Brown and the building, said by Ayliffe (pp 40/41) to have been a small shop and dwellinghouse all on one floor, was apparently still there in the early 1960s. The forge, as often happened, became a cycle-maker's towards the end of the nineteenth century and its site was later taken into a car dealer's premises.

All Cesar's West by Thames property was leased to John Hance and then sub-let and Cesar's will directed the payment of a total of £120 per annum from the rent.² By this time Picton House was let in two units³ and the rateable value of £32 was split into £20 for the residence and £12 for the wharf and industrial part on the north, let with some living accommodation, which may have been in Rooms 5 and 6 in the north wing, occupied separately from the house in more recent times. In the 1830s this end was occupied by Thomas Earl,³ a corn and coal merchant and a member of a well-known family of barge-owners.⁴ A Miss Graham lived at Picton House;³ Ayliffe (p 37) refers to it as the residence of "Mr Justice Graham", presumably the Sir Robert Graham who died at the age of 92 and was buried in Kingston Church in 1836. According to Biden (p 47) his memorial in the church stated that he was one of the Barons of the Exchequer (a particular type of judge) and his obituary in the Gentleman's Magazine (1836) described him as "an urbane but inefficient judge". He came of a branch of the Montrose family and had been a favourite of the Prince Regent, to whom he was Attorney General.⁵ Picton House seems to be rather small for such a personage, even in his eighties and with his royal patron dead, but the presence of such tenants indicates that it was still maintained as a suitable residence for a gentleman.

A copyhold house in a back lane near the old bridge, bought from Robert Baynes² (from whom he had purchased the West by Thames property) must have been a less profitable investment for Cesar. By 1838 it had been sold either by him or by his executors.⁶ According to the 1828 Land Tax assessment it was owned by him and occupied by Ann Ellis and had a taxable value of only £2 per annum. The house appeared earlier (in a list which may have been connected with the relief measures for the poor after the bad floods of 1821) as occupied by a widow Smith with a child of five.⁷

By the time of the floods Cesar himself was well away from the town. He lived at Tolworth⁸ for about eight years, but apparently did not own his own residence there. According to his will, made after he had again moved, he had a garden and cottage at Tolworth, rented from the lord of the manor, John Polhill esq, part of the garden being kept for his own use and the rest, together with the cottage, occupied by James Howard (perhaps Cesar's gardener) as tenant at will. It does not seem likely that Cesar ever lived at the cottage, which sounds much less impressive than either of his other two houses.

It is possible that Cesar went to live at Tolworth as an upper servant in a wealthy household there. This would not be inconsistent with his being described as 'gentleman'. His friend John Todd of Picton Castle (to whom he left a mourning ring by his will, though he revoked the gift by a codicil) was described in an affidavit⁹ which he made in 1820 as "John Todd of the parish of St James's, Westminster, gentleman", although he was at the time butler to Lord Milford, who owned both Picton Castle and a town house in St James's.¹⁰ Cesar was acquainted with the Neale family, the most substantial tenants of the Tolworth manor,⁸ and as "Cesar Picton Tolworth Surrey Gent." witnessed two deeds by which Mrs Jane Neale sold some property in January 1816,¹¹ just after Mr John Neale ceased to be the tenant of the Neale's Tolworth house and was succeeded by Mrs Jane Neale. If the master of the house had died, the household might be reduced; alternatively, if Cesar was living with them as a friend, he would not continue there with the ladies of the family. In 1830 Mrs Jane Neale was herself succeeded as tenant at Tolworth by Elizabeth Neale.⁸ By his will of 1826 Cesar left to "my much esteemed friend Elizabeth Neale of Tolworth Surry my quart silver tankard as a token of my respect, and I also give unto her a handsome gold ring"; this does not sound like the terms he would use of the family of a former employer.

From 1817 Cesar is again in the Surrey Freeholders List, now at Thames Ditton in Elmbridge Hundred:¹² His name is given in error first as John and later as Charles Picton, but from 1824 as Caesar Picton; he is always described as "gent." except in one year when he is called "esquire". This move to Thames Ditton marks what was probably the major financial undertaking of Cesar's later years. In February 1816, when he was about sixty, he bought property formerly occupied by Job Bracey from the latter's heirs. As there is no suggestion (either in his will or in the late Mr. T S Mercer's notes of the title to the property)¹³ that he raised a mortgage and he did not sell his Kingston properties, the substantial price, £4000, indicates how successful he had been in his earlier enterprises. According to the 1816 deed the Thames Ditton property consisted of two messuages, two cottages, two barns, two stables, two outhouses, two curtilages and two gardens. Mr Mercer, however, found that the property occupied by the Braceys had been described in the Thames Ditton Poor Rate books as a house, garden, stables, coach house and two acres of land in the Street;¹⁴ except for the two acres, it appears in the same terms in Cesar's will. This second Picton House (52 High Street, Thames Ditton), which has a smaller house adjoining, formerly called Picton Cottage but later Sunnyside House,¹⁵ is illustrated in T S Mercer's A Souvenir of Old Thames Ditton (p 19). From its exterior it appears to date from the early nineteenth century, but it is not known who had it built and the Land Tax records from 1780 are not helpful on this point.

Cesar lived in this house for twenty years. His will tells us a little more about him and his possessions. He had a horse and chaise in his stables and coach-house. He mentioned his two watches with gold chains and seals, his brooches, gold rings and shirt pins (men's dress was more elaborate in those days) and an interesting tortoiseshell tea chest with silver caddy spoon, tea tongs and six silver spoons marked "R S" -- the initials are unexplained, but it is possible that the silver came from Lady Philipps, whose family name was Shepherd.¹⁶ One wonders what happened to "the Paintings of six pointer dogs which I beg he will keep" and "the Portrait of my person and those of two other friends" which Cesar left to Thomas Bushell. Are they still in the attic of some descendant of Mr Bushell, or were they part of a sale lot, long ago when only the frames of old pictures were worth selling? Even without his own

portrait, we may perhaps get some idea of his appearance from a picture reproduced in Folarin Shyllon's Black People in Britain (opposite p 62), taken from the Gentleman's Magazine for 1750. It is a portrait of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, who was of the Jaloff people and came from the same area as Cesar, though their histories were very different. Suleiman was captured as an adult and sold into slavery (after actually dealing in slaves himself). He remained a Moslem and evidently continued to wear a turban when living in England as a free man and being made much of as an accomplished Arabic scholar. Cesar, who had come here so young and was a Christian, is not likely to have worn a turban when he grew up, for he was obviously completely assimilated to the way of life of the wealthy British household. That he was well-educated in English is evident from the will and first two codicils, which were in his own hand and (judging by a few phrases with an individual ring) probably also composed by him.

Not long after Cesar went to live at Thames Ditton his last links with the Norbiton Place life must have been broken by the deaths of the three remaining children of Sir John Philipps. On 2 March 1820 Mistress Joyce Philipps died at the age of 83. Three weeks later her 86 year old sister followed her.¹⁷ They had not forgotten Cesar. Miss Joyce left him £100 by her will made in 1802; Miss Katherine bequeathed him a legacy of £50 and also £30 yearly for his life.¹⁸ In both wills he is referred to as Cesar Picton, but nothing else is said about him or about any of the servants mentioned. All three sisters left a small legacy to a Hannah Spinks, the wife of William Spinks, a market gardener of East Moulsey, who was one of the friends whom Cesar in his will asked to "show me the respect" to attend his funeral. Perhaps Hannah's service in the Philipps household was the link between her husband and Cesar.

On 28 November 1823 Lord Milford, the brother of the old ladies, died without issue, leaving a will and several codicils, two of which were signed "Milford" but not witnessed. Before they could be admitted to probate, "Cesar Picton of Thames Ditton in the County of Surrey gentleman" appeared before the probate officials to swear "that he knew and was well acquainted with" Lord Milford "for several years before his death and having often seen him write and subscribe his name" had become familiar with his handwriting and could say that the name "Milford" on the two codicils was written by Lord Milford himself.¹⁹ The affidavit (which uses a formula common to such cases) is interesting as an indication that although Lord Milford did not live with his sisters and Cesar was never, as far as we know, in his service, he was in touch with him, though Norbiton Place had been sold thirty-five years earlier.

Cesar may have continued to visit Pembrokehire friends even after Picton Castle had passed to another branch of the Philipps family, for between the date of his will of 1826 and a codicil of 1828 he was given by a Miss Trevor of Haverfordwest a half-pint silver mug with a coat of arms on it. He asked his executor to give it to S T Phillips esq, Solicitor, Norfolk Street, Strand, London, adding "I have promised it him, having been in his family". The arms might be assumed to have been those of the family at Picton Castle, except that the solicitor's name, like those of other members of his firm (later Phillips and Peake of 12 Norfolk Street)²⁰ is consistently spelt "Phillips". The baronets in the eighteenth century were true to their classics and wrote their own name as "Philipps". It may be that the solicitor was related, not to the baronets, but to a Mr John Phillips of Haverfordwest, whose name (always spelt so) appears in the account book of Sir John Philipps in the 1740s.²¹ He was evidently one of Sir

John's agents in Pembrokeshire and this sounds a more likely background for a solicitor at this period (Sir John was a barrister).²²

Shortly before Cesar's death a Thames Ditton acquaintance, Daniel White, gentleman, called on him and was shown a sealed paper parcel on which was written "the will of C. Picton and codicils thereto", which Cesar then restored to the drawer where he kept it. On the day of the death Mr White went again to the house and showed Mr William Ranyard, one of the executors, where the package was.² It would be Mr Ranyard's care to arrange for Cesar to be "plain but decently buried within the Parish Church of Kingston" as the will requested and to see that the sixteen mourning rings (costing no more than £5 each) were distributed to the friends indicated in the will and a suit of mourning bought for his servant Mary Tester (to whom he also left an annuity of £10 for her life). He was buried on 16 June 1836 and Kingston Parish Register gives his age as eighty-one. In a list of memorials in the church Biden (p 42) gives, under the heading "South Aisle, Pavement", the name "Caesar Picton" without a date or other particulars. It would be curious if Biden, who was writing about 1851, had in this one case left out the date of death if it had been on the simple memorial. The church was extensively 'restored' in the 1890s and possibly the original slab had to be replaced, for at present there is a diamond-shaped slate panel, in the floor about half-way down the south aisle, with no name but with the inscription "C P 1836". Rather surprisingly the gossipy Mr Ayliffe, writing about the 1830s nearly eighty years later, does not mention Cesar, though he names Picton House. But Cesar had left Kingston some years before Ayliffe was born and Ayliffe was concerned mainly with the residents he could himself remember. Probably the story did not seem at the time so unusual as we now think it and Cesar as a person had already been forgotten in High Street, Kingston.

So Cesar's long journey left no local record and KUTAS members, when they began to investigate the history of Picton House, had little to go on but an apparent link (suggested by Cesar's will) with Picton Castle. Thus the search was laborious and at some stages unrewarding, until it was set off on a new course by a member's chance discovery, in an old Country Life magazine (28 January 1960) of the reference to the black boy in the Journal of Sir John Philipps. Thus it was with some chagrin that at the end of a long trek after information, it was learned (again by chance) that a knowledge of Cesar's origins had survived in the traditions of a Kingston family and they been known all the time to Mr James J Howse of Surbiton. How many other such problems might find easier solutions if the historian had the small vital facts known to those whose families have lived in the district for generations.

Soon after Cesar Picton's death there was an agreement to commute the tithes of Kingston; the Tithe Apportionment and Map²³ show that his executors owned in 1840 the plots numbered on the map 2185 on the west side of West by Thames (viz Picton House and wharf with the garden to the south and the yard to the north) and on the opposite side 1355 (the one-storeyed shop and house of Thomas Brown and the blacksmith's shop of John Cannon, with various yards and buildings) and 1356 (the Old Malthouse). These properties, charged with the payment of annuities amounting to £120, had been left by Cesar to his god-daughter Sarah Lock Pamphilon for life and afterwards to her three children. The railway line through Surbiton was opened soon after Cesar's death and the immediate result was the decline in the Kingston malting trade, for goods could be carried more quickly by rail, and the river

and wharfs were no longer so important. By March 1841 seventeen of the thirty-eight Kingston malthouses were vacant.²⁴ No tenant is shown at Picton's malthouse in the Tithe Apportionment, though in 1838 it had been occupied by Downes and Collins.²⁵ From Census returns and directories we can see that the Picton House wharf and yard were used first by stone-masons, then by slate merchants, later by timber and lime and cement merchants, all trades which flourished during the building development which followed the railways. Soon the malthouses upstream from the Picton House garden were sold and the row of shops and houses called Park Terrace (Nos 54/66 High Street) was built there. This change in the surroundings must have affected Picton House, already well over a hundred years old. In Victorian times the tenants of the house were usually professional men (e.g. a solicitor and later a dentist). Towards the end of the nineteenth century Mr Pope, a boat builder, took the house. The boat-sheds, as well as the old entrance to the pier for the river steamers, can still be seen on the garden site.

Unlike many other interesting old buildings, Picton House and the Old Malthouse escaped demolition in the wholesale Victorian re-building of the old town and both eventually became antique shops. In this phase, according to Miss R A Job of Kingston (formerly a partner in R Montoya and Co, antique dealers at Picton House) the house had a poltergeist. On many occasions short, light and decided footsteps (apparently a woman's) were heard on the first floor and on the stairs to the attics. Large and heavy mirrors and pictures, particularly if ornate or florid, would be removed undamaged from walls to floor, but if replaced on the wall would be damaged later.²⁶ Was the Scottish Miss Graham or one of the eighteenth century Miss Hammonds a strait-laced lady who was still making herself felt in this way in her former home?

By this time the house was over two hundred years old and had not been used as a residence since the 1920s.²⁷ It became a restaurant, but the deterioration in its physical condition inevitably led to pressure for demolition and redevelopment. The destruction of the Old Malthouse robbed Kingston of a building which had added character and interest to the street-scene. The demolition of Picton House would ultimately have resulted in the loss of the pleasant and informal mixture of eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings leading to Clattern Bridge on the west side of High Street. We must continue to be vigilant that the same end is not reached by other means.

Notes

- 1 Poor Rate and Land Tax books
- 2 Probate of Cesar Picton's will PCC PROB 11/1863 798
- 3 SRO Kingston Land Tax
- 4 SRO QS 5/14/1; Thomas Earl was probably Secretary of the Barge-owners Association founded 1802 (A G Linney, The Lure and Lore of London's River)
- 5 Walford, Greater London II p 306
- 6 1838 Poor Rate revaluation
- 7 KH 5/1/12a, p 5
- 8 SRO QS 6/7 – Tolworth Land Tax
- 9 PCC PROB 11/1628 (probate papers re will of Joyce Philipps)
- 10 PC Colln No 316; Country Life magazine 28.1.1960
- 11 SRO 210/2/2a-b
- 12 SRO QS 7/5/8
- 13 Mercer Collection F 88 in Surrey County Library, Thames Ditton Branch
- 14 do. C 125
- 15 T S Mercer, Tales and Scandals of Old Thames Ditton (map at back)
- 16 PC Colln No 4817
- 17 Kingston Parish Register; Gentleman's Magazine 90(i) 378
- 18 PCC PROB II 1628 and 1630; Joyce's will proved 29.4.1820, Katherine's proved 2.5.1820
- 19 Proved PCC 13.2.1824; British Library, Reference Section, TAB 436 b 4
- 20 Law Lists 1828-1836
- 21 PC Colln No 591, e g 29.4.1746, 28.12.1747
- 22 PC Colln No 4817 p 10 and No 1473. Sir John was counsel for the claimants in the 1750s in the litigation over rights of way through Richmond Park (Manning and Bray, History of Surrey (1804) I p 349, note h
- 23 Copies in SRO and PRO (IR 30/34/75)
- 24 Seeley's Kingston Miscellany (1841) p 17; Merryweather p 61
- 25 Tithe Apportionment Book p 61; SRO Acc 635 (Kingston Poor Rate revaluation) No 831
- 26 Per Miss Job on telephone; June Sampson in Surrey Comet, 7.8.1976
- 27 Mr Henry Wright of Surbiton (a member of the Pope family, the last to live at Picton House), per Margaret Bellars in Kingston Borough News, 18.3.1975

Appendix: Will of Cesar Picton (with some notes on those mentioned in it)

Will and three codicils proved at London on 30.6.1836 by the Executors William Ranyard and Thomas Bushell.

PCC PROB 11/1863 798 54

Third codicil dated 13.4.1833 deals with a legal technicality in connection with Picton's trusteeship of the will of William Porter (see page 38).

Second codicil of same date but in his own hand

£30 per annum to William Spinks market gardener of East Moulsey and his wife and the survivor of them; on death of the survivor, to be paid half yearly to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in the Kent Road, to be laid out as to £5 each for six of the poorest children that leave the school annually "three at one election, and three at the other".

£20 per annum to Thomas Farmer and his wife Elizabeth for their joint lives and to the survivor for life; on the death of the survivor to their grandson William Farmer, a deaf and dumb child, for life; on his death to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum for four other poor children.

The sums of £30 and £20 per annum are charged on Picton's freehold estate at Kingston.

The bequest by will of a copyhold house in a back lane near the Bridge, Kingston, purchased of Robert Bains (sic) esq, to Mrs Weston, widow of Weston who kept the Eight Bells, Kingston, revoked and his trustees directed to sell the house and use the proceeds for the purposes of his will.

£20 and a mourning ring each to "my friend George Taylor M D of Kingston" and Mrs Broughton of Weston Green, Thames Ditton "as a mark of my respect".

£50 to the Blind Charity Obelisk, St George's Fields, Surrey.

His friend Thomas Bushell, dealer in wines and spirits, of Great Surry Street, Blackfriars Road, Surry, to be joint executor and trustee with his friend William Ranyard of Kingston.

To his friend Thomas Bushell "the Portrait of my person and those of two other friends. I also give him the Paintings of six Pointer dogs which I beg he will keep, I also give him the sum of twenty pound, and to his two daughters I give the sum of ten pound each."

£10 to John Stripp senior of Thames Ditton.

£10 to "my servant Mary Tester".

The bequest of a mourning ring to John Todd and his wife Mary of Picton Castle is revoked.

A mourning ring each to William Ranyard, Thomas Bushell (his trustees) and to his friends George Taylor, M D, Mrs French of Richmond, Mrs Nicholls of Putney, Mrs Stone of Leatherhead, Mrs Broughton of Weston Green, John Flinn of Long Ditton, Mary How of Hampton Wick. The rings not to cost more than £5 each.

If there is insufficient money after providing for funeral expenses, debts, the legacies of £10, mourning rings and expenses of trustees, the other legacies to be proportionately reduced, except that to Wm. Ranyard.

First Codicil in the form of a note dated 12.4.1828 to Mr Wm. Ranyard in Picton's own hand on the will

"Dear Sir You will find an half pint silver mug with a coat of arms on it which was given me since I made my will by a Miss Trevor of Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, which cup I request you will give to S T Phillips Esq'r, Solicitor, Norfolk Street, Strand, London I have promised it him, having been in his family".

Will dated 29.11.1826 in his own hand and signed and sealed by him before witnesses Charles Pepper, Richard Pepper jun'r and Richard Hobbs, Kingston.

"It is my desire to be plain but decently burried within the Parish Church of Kingston upon Thames, County of Surry, should I die within fifty miles of the same. I request my friends Willm. Spinks, Gardner of East Moulsey, Surry, Thos. Bushell and John Smith (late a farmer) both of Kingston will show me the respect to attend my funeral, also my Executr. & Trustee under his direction I desire my funeral may be conducted".

William Ranyard, tallow chandler, of Kingston appointed Executor and trustee of the will. £50 to him for his trouble.

To William Ranyard in trust for the purposes of the will the following property ; ---

Freehold dwelling house "in which I may live" (at Thames Ditton, per second codicil), with Coach-house, Stable, yard, sheds and all buildings thereon and all appurtenances

Two freehold pieces of land in Surbiton Common, one bought from Wm. Nottidge esq, the other an allotment "for my estate at Kingston" under the Enclosure Act

Lease of a house and premises at Kingston rented of Geo. Gleney esq underlet to Messrs Dyke and Key

His interest in a garden and cottage at Tolworth rented from John Pollhill esq (the house and part of the garden sub-let to James Howard, tenant at will, the rest of the garden in his own hands)

His horse and chaise, household goods, furniture, plate ("except what I have given away"), linen, china, wearing apparel, money, investments "with all my other property and effects" not

otherwise disposed of --- all to be sold and proceeds used to pay funeral expenses, debts and legacies.

£20 each to Henry Chambers of Kingston, Elizabeth Hill and Elizabeth Farmer, both of Twickenham, the three children of Sarah Pinner of Kingston, the six children of Ann Sawyer of Richmond Park, the three children of Jas. Elphick of Bushy Park, Hampton

To “my much esteemed friend Eliz’th Neale of Tolworth, Surry, my quart silver tankard as a token of my respect, and I also give unto her a handsom gold ring”.

Tortoiseshell Tea Chest with silver caddy spoon, tea tongs, six silver spoons marked “R S” to Rebecca Stone, daughter of Thos. Stone, maltster of Leatherhead.

“My two watches with gold chain and seals, my broaches, gold rings and shirt pins” to his god daughter Sarah Lock Pinner.

A mourning ring each to Wm. Spinks of East Moulsey, Thomas Bushell senior, John Smith, Sarah Pinner, widow of Kingston, and Ann Sawyer widow of Richmond Park, James Elphick of Bushy Park, Hampton.

£50 to Harriett, daughter of Ed. Vernon of Strand Green, Middlesex.

His freehold house, garden, coal wharf, coal sheds and all buildings, a dwelling house, baker’s shop, yard and all buildings thereon or that may hereafter be built, all on east or west sides of West by Thames Street, Kingston and let on lease to John Hance --- to his trustee, “charged with the payment of the following annuitys as the rent shall become due half yearly” : ---

(£30 to Spinks and £20 to Farmer --- see second codicil for amendments)

£20 to Elizabeth Sawyer, daughter of Ann Sawyer of Richmond Park

£10 to Elizabeth French widow of Vauxhall

£10 to Mary Clements “late a shopkeeper in Norbiton Street, Kingston”

£10 to Christain (sic) Nicholls of Putney for her sole use independent of her husband

£10 to “my servant Mary Tester”

£10 to Sarah Lock Pinner

--- each annuity for the life of the person named

A suit of mourning to his servant Mary Tester

On the death of any of the annuitants, that annuity to Sarah Lock Pinner.

The property in West by Thames Street (charged with the annuities) on trust for Sarah Lock Pinner for life, for her sole use independent of any husband she may marry. On her death, the property to her children who survive her as joint tenants and not as tenants in common. (An alternative remainder after her death to her brother and sister Edward and Elizabeth Pinner failed as she left children).

A mourning ring to Thos Stone of Leatherhead.

Sarah Lock Pinner (referred to in second codicil as Sarah Lock Pampillion) to be residuary legatee.

The probate papers include affidavits by Daniel White of Thames Ditton, gentleman, and Robert Francis Lambert of Kingston, Banker, that they were well-acquainted with the testator Cesar Picton and knew his handwriting and that his will and the first two codicils, with the alterations, and his signature to the third codicil were all in his own handwriting; and by Daniel White that shortly before his death the testator showed him where he kept his will and that the deponent told Mr William Ranyard on the day of the testator's death; and an affidavit by William Ranyard of Kingston upon Thames, tallow chandler, that the will and codicils were in the same condition in which he had found them.

William Ranyard

Tallow chandler, premises on west side of Kingston Market Place (formerly called High Row) described by Ayliffe (p 65). Son of Robert Ranyard, who was first tolerated as a tallow chandler in 1762,¹ when he took over the candlemaker's business of John Hook on the site of No 4 Market Place.² In 1764 he bought the former Crown Inn,³ immediately to the north of Mr Beichier's Castle Inn (both sites now occupied by the Chiesman's store) and on 13.9.1767 married Miss Sarah Belchier.⁴ He died in 1794 and William (aged 24) took over the business premises. William left the Established Church, founded the first Kingston Sunday School (to teach the poor to read so that they could read the Bible) in 1798 in the Union Street building which was later the first Kingston YMCA⁵ and in 1803 declined the office of bailiff of Kingston because as a Dissenter he could not take the required oath.⁶ In 1799 he gave land and lent £1000 for building a new chapel (the predecessor of the Congregational, now the United Reformed Church in Eden Street), to re-found the Independent Chapel which had been in decline since the departure of the Rev John Townsend, minister in the early 1780s.⁷

William Ranyard's business prospered and "Kingston candles obtained a name and were sent wholesale all over the country".⁸ Gas lighting, introduced in the 1830s in the face of some opposition, threatened the candle-making business, but William's son, Samuel, was on the board of Kingston Gas Co incorporated in 1854.⁸ The Ranyards gave up the business soon afterwards and it moved to Eden Street, at the corner of St James's Road. Samuel Ranyard was one of a syndicate which bought the Rowlls mansion and Kingston Hall Estate, through which St James's Road was cut in about 1858 as an improved way to the new town (Surbiton) and the railway station.⁹ Samuel also played a leading part in obtaining self-government for Surbiton¹⁰ and Claremont Road, where he lived, was the first to be lighted by gas.¹¹ He was also interested in Kingston's past, was an early member of both the Kingston Literary and Scientific Institution, founded in 1839,¹² and the Surrey Archaeological Society, a subscriber to Biden's History of Kingston in 1852 and a leader in the 'rescue' of the Coronation Stone in 1850.¹³

Thomas Bushell

May be the Thomas Bushell who later kept the Coach and Horses in the Strand,¹⁴ but was presumably the son of Thomas Bushell senior of Kingston, to whom Cesar left a mourning ring and who died in 1831 at the age of 95, having been “a prominent man in parish affairs”, churchwarden in 1789 and 1790.¹⁵ One of the Thomas Bushells was also bailiff of Kingston in 1807, 1813 and 1821.¹⁵ The old man’s tombstone is in Kingston churchyard and records also the deaths of his first wife Mary in 1798, aged 50, and of the wife (Frances, aged 27) and the two year old son of his son Thomas in 1820. The elder couple had lived from 1779 to 1794 in West by Thames, near Picton House.

The Deaf and Dumb Asylum

Now the Royal School for Deaf and Dumb Children, Margate. Founded in 1792 by the Rev John Townsend,¹⁶ who kept his links with Kingston and was probably known to William Ranyard (see page 49).

Dr George Taylor

Described by Ayliffe (page 53), who also says he took a great interest in the working classes and was instrumental in creating the first Mechanics Institute in Kingston in the 1840s, His house, beside the approach to the new bridge (Kingston Tithe map No 1988) can still be seen behind the furniture shop on the corner of Thames Street. On the opposite corner (Nos 7/9 Clarence Street) is the building erected by him at a cost of £1800 and let by him to the newly-formed Kingston Literary and Scientific Institute, which had there a committee room, a lecture room with gallery, a library and a chemistry room in the basement.¹⁷

S T Phillips

See page 42.

Penner, Pamphilon and Abbott families

The Kingston Penners were prosperous butchers. The family came from Chiswick in the early eighteenth century. Edward, son of John Penner of Chiswick, was apprenticed for seven years to Edward Woodman, a Kingston butcher, in 1703.¹⁸ He married in 1711 and died in 1750; his wife Elizabeth was buried on 4.9.1728, the day her thirteenth child was baptised; the baby lived only twelve weeks and seven others died in early childhood. The names Edward, Elizabeth and John occur (often several times) in each generation of this family and tracing their relationships is difficult, but it seems that Sarah Lock Penner’s grandfather Edward Penner (buried 26.9.1767) was one of the thirteen children. Her father Edward (1754-1821) was also a butcher and had taken over the business from his elder brother John Lock Penner (1752-1812).¹⁹ Her mother Sarah Penner, then a widow, lived in Heathen Street and is shown in the 1839 Tithe Book as the owner of a considerable amount of property, including a house, shop, slaughterhouse etc in Gigghill (between modern Eden Street and Bath Passage). Her son Edward Penner carried on the butcher’s business there.

The alternative spelling “Pinner” in Picton’s will is often found and may indicate their original trade. Wimbledon Parish Register²⁰ has on 29.7.1634 “John Penner a forraner was here married”, perhaps one of the French or Dutch workers making wire at the local iron works,²¹ possibly Protestant refugees.

There were Penners among the early Quakers in the Kingston area, e.g. Hannah Penner, also spelt Pinner and Peaner (suggesting a foreign pronunciation) of Thames Ditton married John Sproson, who was a pinmaker of Bermondsey, on 11.6.1693, with witness Edward Penner.²²

Picton's goddaughter Sarah Lock Penner married William Pamphilon about 1830. There were several Pamphilon households in Kingston in the early nineteenth century, but it is not a local name and their origins may have been in Essex, where it occurs as early as 1305 and is explained by their having been merchants trading from Pampeluna in Spain.²³ Of the Kingston families, James S Pamphilon aged 57 and his wife Lydia were born in Essex according to the 1851 Census and lived at Gloucester House in the Bittoms: he was a "retired coffee and eating house proprietor". In 1837 when some of the 'young sparks' of Kingston took a trip by the new railway to see Queen Victoria's coronation procession, they wound up a glorious day with refreshments at "one of the late Mr Pamphilon's (an old Kingstonian) coffee houses" in Sherwood Street near Piccadilly Circus.²⁴

The 1851 Census also shows that Sarah Lock Pamphilon was born about 1800 in Wimbledon; the record of her baptism has not been traced, though her sister and two brothers were christened there.²⁰ Her husband William Pamphilon was born at Godalming, Surrey, about 1801, but his parents Wm (died 1833) and Charlotte (died 1829) evidently moved soon afterwards to Kingston, where their younger children were baptised. Their cheesemonger's shop (on the site of 25 Market Place, still a grocer's until recently) and Sarah's husband are described by Ayliffe (p 57). He and his brother-in-law Edward Penner were wardens of the Kingston Victuallers Company²⁵ and as mayor of Kingston in 1850 he played a leading part in the Coronation Stone ceremonies.²⁴ In 1851 William and Sarah L Pamphilon were living at the shop with two of their three surviving children, Sarah (19) and Ann (16): Eliza (14) was one of six girl boarders at the select Laburnum House School in Heathen Street run by Mr James Biden and his wife and daughter. Soon afterwards William Pamphilon retired and they went to live in part of Picton House.²⁶ He also rented a garden in Knight's Park and in the summerhouse there he committed suicide on the night of 10.6.1862.²⁷ His widow died three weeks later.²⁸

Their daughter Eliza was married on 27.1.1863 at All Saints Church to the organist there, George Zacchaeus Abbott, who had a china shop in Richmond, previously run by his father John Abbott (died 1862).²⁹ Another Abbott family had a china shop on the east side of Kingston Market Place, where at the 1861 Census Thomas (35) was living with his wife Ann, sons Thomas (10) and John (9) and his mother-in-law Ann Bark. Thomas Abbott, born in Richmond, was probably the younger brother of John. The Kingston business flourished, moved to 35 High Street and was carried on by Thomas junior³⁰ who in 1889 was responsible for the remarkable repair of an ewer, deliberately broken into 289 pieces (now in Kingston Museum).

Goldring family

Sarah Lock Pamphilon's eldest daughter, Sarah (1831-1891) married into another of Kingston's established trading families. Her husband Mr Thomas Goldring (1824-86) and his brother John (1827-98) had inherited a successful business of gunsmiths, locksmiths and ironmongers, said to have been founded about 1750³¹ and owned by their family since about 1788. Their grandfather Thomas Goldring applied to the Corporation on 10.7.1788 to be 'tolerated' as a smith and paid £5, apparently

soon after settling in the town.³² It is not known where he came from, but on 10.4.1788 he had married Anne Soreter of Rogate, Sussex, who died in 1822 aged 62. He died on 23.12.1840 aged 85. Their son George (1796-1854) married Sarah Clarke in 1822 and later took over the business. He was one of the two High Constables of Kingston in 1829;³³ his truncheon and staff of office, and his handcuffs and keys were presented to Kingston Corporation for the Museum by his descendant Mrs Joan Bryant of Ontario when she visited the town in 1975. Under the reformed corporation in the 1840s George was elected to such offices as auditor and assessor.³³

The Goldrings had contracts for metal work and for keeping all the locks in repair at Hampton Court and other local Crown property. They employed large numbers of workmen, who were remembered in the town for their noisy celebrations of the feast of St Clement, the patron saint of smiths (23 November) by banging the anvils and exploding gunpowder. They were well-known gunsmiths and had a big window-display of guns at their Clarence Street shop. This side of the business was run by John Goldring who lived at 80 Eden Street:³⁴ when that house was to be pulled down, his grandson Mr James Howse of Surbiton found in a desk there some interesting documents, which he deposited in Kingston Central Reference Library and which included an order dated 20.4.1830 about the provision of transport for the army, addressed to the Constable of Kingston, relating to George Goldring's term of office as High Constable.³¹

Thomas Goldring and his wife Sarah lived at the double-fronted shop and house at 39/41 Clarence Street, where the family had been for so long. On this deep site (Nos 1728/29 on Tithe Map) there was a long range of buildings with forges and firing-ranges "stretching far back towards Canbury". The land may have been used for centuries by metal-workers, for in 1546³⁵ part of it belonged to Nicholas Walker, described in 1560 as a blacksmith,³⁶ who gave it to the Corporation for the upkeep of the old Kingston Bridge.³⁷ In 1596 and from 1625 the tenants were plumbers (i.e. workers in lead)³⁸ and later the Banfords, who were blacksmiths, had it.³⁹ In 1652 the Corporation sold the land, reserving a fee farm rent of £3 payable yearly to the Bridgewardens; this was still being paid by the Goldrings in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰

Thomas Pamphilon Goldring (1867-1954), the son of Thomas and Sarah, married on 27.11.1895 Annie, the daughter of William Parslow (another old Kingston name, variously spelt in the past, of Old French origin and said to mean "cross the water"); a Mrs Parsley had a house in Norbiton rated at £5 in 1724 and in 1737 she is spelt "Persloo".⁴¹ Thomas P Goldring carried on the business, by then largely an ironmonger's (for the trade in sporting guns left the town as the open land was sold for building), until the premises were bought by Bentall's in 1906 for a new wing to their steadily expanding shop.⁴²

Notes

(Unless otherwise stated, the biographical details in the Appendix are taken from Kingston Parish Registers or from tombstones in All Saints Church, Kingston upon Thames).

- 1 KB 19/3/32
- 2 Kingston Rate Books: Sir John Philipps bought his candles from Mr Hook and then from Mr Ranyard PC Colln no 589, 10.5.1759, 28.5 1762
- 3 KF 1/3/4
- 4 As to Belchier family, see Biden p 36; KB 1/1, 2.12.1708
- 5 Merryweather p 81
- 6 KB 16/24
- 7 A C Sturney, The Story of Kingston Congregational Church (1955)
- 8 Merryweather pp 69-72
- 9 do. p 45; SRO 2029/2/8
- 10 Merryweather p 48
- 11 R W C Richardson, Surbiton (1888) pp 19, 33
- 12 Seeley's Kingston Miscellany (1841) p 30
- 13 Merryweather p 13
- 14 London Commercial Directory (1851)
- 15 Biden pp 124, 122
- 16 Dictionary of National Biography
- 17 Seeley's Kingston Miscellany (1841) pp 191-3
- 18 Kingston upon Thames Apprentices (1563-1713) ed. Anne Daly (Surrey Record Society XXVIII 1974) 1403
- 19 Kingston Poor Rate and Land Tax Books
- 20 Wimbledon Parish Register (John Evelyn Club 1924)
- 21 R S Milward, Wimbledon in the Time of the Civil War (1976) p 61
- 22 J S L Pulford, Index of Kingston Quakers in the Seventeenth Century (Walton and Weybridge Local History Society 1971)
- 23 Cal Close 1302-07 p 286. Geoffrey de Pamphilun held land in Thaxted, Essex in 1305; K C Newton, Thaxted in the Fourteenth Century, (Essex Record Office 1960) e g p 68 - land "sometime of Pamfyloun" in 1361 and references passim to John and William Pamphilon there in 1393
- 24 Reminiscences of Mr Philip Jones, Surrey Comet Diamond Jubilee Number (1897) pp 3,7
- 25 Kingston Central Reference Library Collection
- 26 1861 Kingston Census (microfilm in Kingston Central Reference Library)
- 27 Surrey Comet, 14.6.1862, where a full account of the inquest is given
- 28 Probate of her will Principal Probate Registry 14.8.1862
- 29 Will of John Abbott, proved Principal Prob. Regy. 1.7.1863
- 30 Ayliffe p 59
- 31 Margaret Bellars in Kingston Borough News 5.5.1972
- 32 KB 1/3 (10.7, 11.11.1788)
- 32 KB 12/1/104
- 34 Kingston and Surbiton News 3.12.1898, Obituary notice of John Goldring (from June Sampson) and article by W D(rewett), November 1924; and as 31 above
- 35 KP 2/1/32
- 36 KP 2/1/3; KB 18/3/2 (Bridge Accounts 1567)
- 37 KC 2/5/30
- 38 KC 2/5/31-2
- 39 KB 18/3/3 (Bridge Accounts e g 1684, 1694, 1701); KG 4/1/2,9
- 40 Rastrick, Account of some of the Municipal Charities of Kingston upon Thames (1864)
- 41 Kingston Poor Rate Books
- 42 Rowan Bentall, My Store of Memories (1974), p 17 (where the Goldring name is mis-spelt), p 47

Postscript 1: Was Caesar Picton a Giant?

An article written by Marion Hinton for a KUTAS Newsletter.

Marion was the Curator at Kingston Museum for 20 years (check this with Ann Baker) and although she had an archaeological background took a great interest in all matters relating to Kingston history. This perhaps is best demonstrated by her not only being one of the founder members of KUTAS but being its first secretary and being the person who brought the first committee together.

As Curator of Kingston Museum it was Marion's responsibility to collect, identify and catalogue items that were donated or loaned to the Museum. It would have been as part of this work that Marion examined the annotated copy of Biden's History and Antiquities of Kingston. Although further research into the "Phillips" family who once owned the book may be interesting Marion has provided the foundations for this work. By writing this article for KUTAS Marion provided the only indication easily available as to the appearance of Caesar Picton that is at present widely known, and so extends our knowledge about the person who gave his name to the house KUTAS saved from demolition. June Sampson had already seen and told us about the funeral arrangements and costs after she had seen Hides' Accounts.

Members who are familiar with the Society's publication on Picton House¹ will recall that the central character was Caesar Picton, an African, who as a young boy had been brought up in the household of Sir John Philipps at Norbiton Place, Kingston. In 1788 Caesar moved to Picton House where he traded as a coal merchant and subsequently lived at Tolworth and Thames Ditton. He was buried on 16 June 1836, aged 81, at All Saints Church, Kingston.

Details of Caesar's personal appearance eluded us during our research for the public enquiries on Picton House and we could only hope that his portrait which he willed to Thomas Bushell might one day come to light.² New information however is contained in an annotated copy of Biden's "History and Antiquities of Kingston-upon-Thames" (1852) which I examined recently. Two manuscript additions appear on page 42 of the copy, the page on which is recorded Caesar Picton's memorial in the South Aisle of All Saints Church. The first, in the margin against Caesar Picton's name, reads:

"A man of colour and huge dimensions and weight. He lived in the house once occupied by my brother G.S.P."

The second, at the foot of the page, reads:

"Caesar Picton, a man of colour (negro), and of immense bulk, so much so, that his body had to be brought to the Church, for interment, on a 4 wheel trolley, and lowered into the grave, or vault, down an inclined plane of planks, on rollers. He lived at the house next Fricker's Timberyard, West by Thames".

The book, which retains its original binding, is heavily annotated and differences in hand-writing suggest the work of more than one person. Indications of the book's former owners are given by hand-written inscriptions on the fly-leaf at the front: one, "Miss Walker, the Gift of W.B.B. (?or M.B.B) 3rd Oct. 1852", under which another hand has written "? the Author? W.D.B?"; the second reads:

"Chas. T Phillips. 1891. Born in Heathen Street, Kingston upon Thames – 30 November 1832 –. I received the rudiments of education from Mary Biden, the Sister of the Author of this book, whom also I knew well".

The hand-writing of the latter inscription is bold and sloping compared with the careful, upright hand of most of the notes in the book. It is nevertheless tempting to identify the major annotator as a "Phillips" since several notes against the name "Phillips" in the printed text indicate a family relationship. In the list of subscribers against "Phillips, C. Esq. Hampton Wick" there is a dash and the initials "C.T.P"; there is also a dash against "Phillips, W. Esq. Clement's Inn, London". On page 67 against the printed references to the offices of ale-conners and chamberlains is a note: "I believe I am correct in stating that my Father Chas. Thomas Phillips, served both these offices." On page 123, beneath the list of Town Clerks is the note "Wm. Phillips – my eldest Brother. ob. 1862".

There are no annotations on page 94 against Norbiton Place and I have not attempted to establish whether the annotator's family is a descendant branch of the Norbiton Place family. The only link at present seems to be the reference quoted above to "my brother G.S.P" who once occupied the house of Caesar Picton.

I have singled out the references to Caesar Picton as being of obvious interest to KUTAS members but many other notes contain information which, to me at least, is new. Archaeologists will also respect the annotator for his corrections to the captions for the drawings of antiquities on pages 3 and 4 and his dry comment against the reference on page 10 to underground passages of the Saxon palace being converted to "an ignoble sewer". His terse note here is "Very probably their original design – drains". If Charles T Phillips is indeed the author of these notes, Mary Biden taught him well.

I am preparing a full list of the annotations and shall be happy to make them available to anyone interested.

Marion Hinton
4/10/81

- (1) Picton House and the people connected with it (KUTAS, Occasional Papers 2, 1979) [the original of this document]
- (2) [op.cit](#) Will of Cesar Picton, p. 47 [see page 46 of this document]

Postscript 2: Picton House after 1979

Ian led the recording of Coombe Hill Farm House in 1969 which was the first activity of KUTAS. Since then he has recorded over 40 buildings in Kingston and was the first KUTAS representative on the Town Centre Conservation Advisory Committee.

With the Domestic Building Research Group (Surrey) he has been recording Surrey buildings for over 50 years although most of his work has been in Epsom and Ewell as well as Kingston. As a member of the Vernacular Architecture Group he has assisted in organising conferences in Surrey and Shropshire where he has also carried out much building recording. He has a special interest in Mathematical Tiles (none yet recorded in Kingston) and co-organised a conference on the subject. Ian was a Chartered Surveyor spending much of his time working on Listed Buildings.

I am pleased that KUTAS is re-publishing occasional paper 2 as it has allowed me to reconsider my report made 45 years ago. The period for constructing the main part of the house (Phase 2) has now been divided into two (2 and 2a), enabling the adaptation of a 'standard' house plan for Phase 2 to be transformed in Phase 2a into the form Picton House remained for almost 200 years. A house built to have such an elaborate ceiling as there is in room 3 would normally have had a greater ceiling height and would not have the main entrance directly into it. The original ground floor layout perhaps only remained for a few years before Mr Gore adapted the property into the house of high quality that KUTAS did so much in order to save from demolition.

It may be of interest to record what happened at the close of the formal enquiry when Mr E W Bairridge (the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Inspector) conducted a site visit accompanied by a few of the people involved in the previous two days hearing. In the days leading up to 28th September 1976 workmen from Kingston Corporation erected a large timber 'prop' against the front wall of Picton House and erected a complex series of timber shoring within the building. This was said to be for the safety of those entering the building for the 'site visit' but it also emphasised the (purported) poor structural state of the building. During the 'site visit' the Councils representatives continually referred to the (purported) poor structural state of the building.

Whilst in the room 20 someone tripped over the floor level wedges under one of the props causing it to fall over and the collapse of a horizontal timber at ceiling level which fell on Mr Bairridge's shoulder. His response to this was that he felt in more danger from the Councils shoring up than he did from any collapse of Picton House. I doubt that this changed the outcome of the enquiry but aided the cause for retention.

It took the Corporation several years to prepare the tender documentation for the restoration of Picton House and the land to the north of it on which a new office block could be built. This documentation failed to specify the height to which the new office could be built only specifying that it had to be of a suitable style. The construction of additional office space on site was to provide a building that would have a lettable value that would repay the cost of the new building and the

restoration of Picton House. Although at least one tender provided for a two storey new build the one accepted by the Council was for the three storey block that now exists. This offer provided the highest financial return to the Corporation. The new building does not reflect the scale of other buildings in the conservation area but clearly identifies its self as being late twentieth century date.

The restoration has been most successful with all the historic features sensitively restored.

At the Public Enquiry in September 1976 the Greater London Council (GLC) included in their 'evidence' a proposed restoration of the front (east elevation) of Picton House with the glazing bars put back in the windows and an eighteenth century door case that was in the GLC store that had been salvaged from a London house. Sadly by the time the restoration took place this doorcase had been allocated elsewhere and that now at Picton House is a replica based on eighteenth century designs. The removal of Phase 6 has reinstated the main west elevation to its original form and the restoration of the panelling and plasterwork is once again as it was in the eighteenth century.

It would have been useful if it had been possible to monitor the building works in Picton House as there is no doubt that it would have been possible to obtain more details about the building's history.

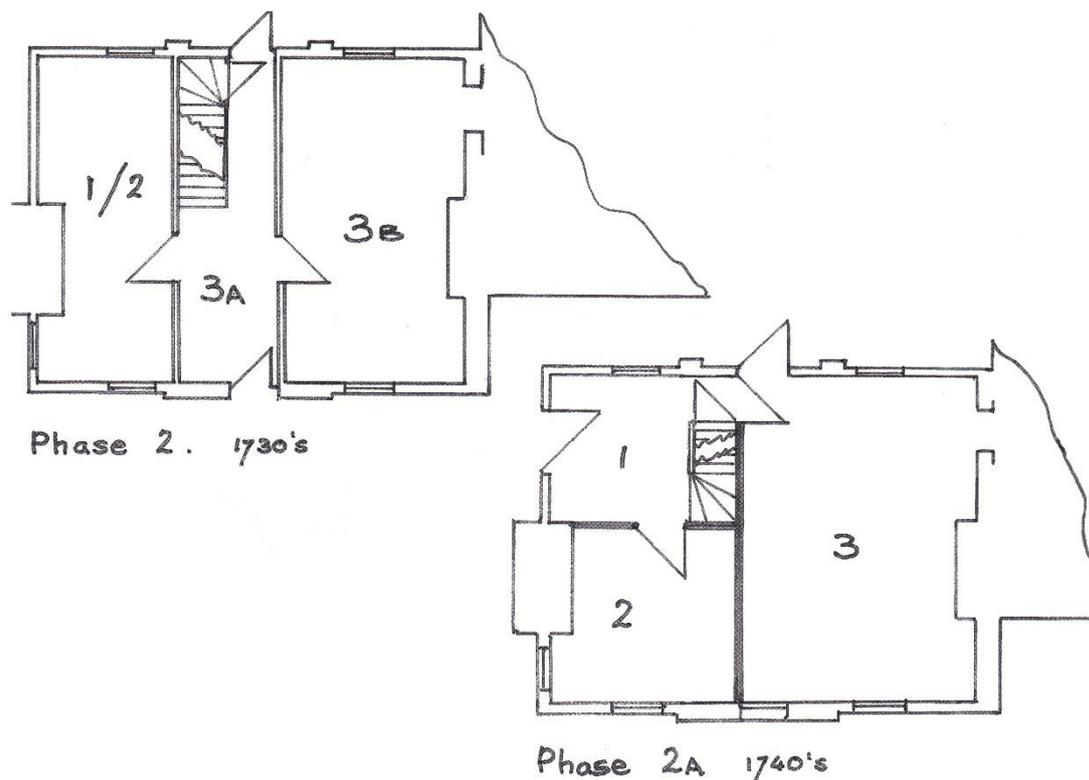


FIGURE 5: PICTON HOUSE – PHASES 2 AND 2A