BOOK THREE

THE MERE.

SITE ACQUISITION, BUILDING, FURNISHING, GROUND AND HOUSE NOTICES

THE BENTLEY FAMILY & THE MERE

The Bentleys are known to date back several hundred years. The branch relevant to UPTON is best traceable from a Richard Bentley of 1794-1871.

He, with brother Samuel, founded Bentley Publishers in 1819. They produced 'Miscellany' from 1837 onwards employing Charles Dickens as Editor. Other publications were 'Bentleys Quarterly Review', 1859, and several 'Standard Novels'.

Richard's son, George, 1828-1895, entered the business in 1845, Edited 'Temple Bar Magazine', 1866-1895, and introduced several well known writers, among them, Wilkie Collins, Mrs Henry Wood, and Mr 'Maarten Martens'.

George married Anne Williams from Aberystwyth.

George & Anne with son Richard, then 6, came in 1860 to live at 2, East Villas Upton Park until moving into The Mere in 1887.

2, East Villas, within 150 yarde of The Mere, still stands. This house, substantial by any standards, was described in Auction Sale, 10 May 1887 when all Upton Park was sold up as The Upton Park Estate Company was "In Chancery", as ;---

House of 3 Reception Rooms, 6 Bed & Dressing Rooms, also Stabling Premises, Coach-house and Loft. LET to GEORGE BENTLEY on a Yearly Tenancy, at -----£70. Annual Rent.

George Bentley purchased several plots of land very close to 2. East Villas in 1886 at a cost of £2450. His son, Richard, also purchased 3 adjoining plots at a cost of £1325.

Combining these, father & son formed the nucleus of what became Mere Estate.

THE MERE of 1887 was always regarded as George Bentley's product. With hindsight and items and information now having become available it seems that it must have been a father and son enterprise.

The building was lavish. Ideas, revolutionary then but commonplace today, were incorporated. Additional internal draughtproof windows made an early conception of double-glazing, thick walls allowing for an air cavity were 40-50 years before the idea was accepted in new building. Dual piped water supplies provided both mains and soft water, rain was collected in roof tanks, their levels were checked by novel gauges in the first floor.

A land purchase at £1000 in 1887 brought in 'The Private Road' from Datchet Road through Upton Park which became so abused that it had to be closed in 1912. This Road had effectively separated the major section of the developed gardens from an area of 3-4 acres known as 'The Copse' running down to a line, slightly back from, but following, the line of the present M4 Motorway.

GEORGE BENTLEY died in 1895.

RICHARD BENTLEY succeeded to the Publishers, selling out in 1898 to Macmillans. He then concentrated activities to developing his Estate, to Meteorology, becoming President of the Royal Meteorological Society 1905-1906. He researched local History, producing several publications including — 'Stray Notes on Slough & Upton, 1892', — 'Some Historic Inns of Slough, 1934', and a most comprehensive 'A Note on the History of Upton, 1910. Never published, it is of the Thames of pre-historic times through the Ancient Briton, Norman and all Mediaeval times. It includes descriptions of the Highwaymen, the Stage-coaches, Herschel, building the Great Western Railway and it's Electric Telegraph. Richard Bentley appears to have had a more than passing interest in the G.W.R.

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continuation... The Bentley Family & The Mere.

A considerable tract of land adjoining the main North Front of The Mere had long been occupied by Upton School. Richard Bentley leased this for £80. a Year, initially for 1910-1931. From The Mere front this extended out to a boundary separated from Albert Street only by small groups of cottages —— Cridland Cottages, Belle Vue Place and Pleasant Place running from the west extremity nearly opposite Park Street, eastwards across the end of Castle Street where a gate was made, then on to and round Datchet Road corner. When the plot eventually reverted back to it's owners —(the Slough Borough Council had bought it) there were no difficulties in cutting the new Mere Road, absorbing land for the Upton Roundabout, widening Datchet Road and building the Kenilworth Close complex of houses by the Council.

The Red Cow rear car park is close-by where the Castle Street Gate once stood.

RICHARD BENTLEY died in 1936 at the age of 82.

LUCY BENTLEY continued to live at The Mere until 1961. The House and contents were then sold. Mrs Bentley moved to Windsor. She died in 1974 at the fine old age of 95

The National Foundation for Educational Research took over for Offices in 1964.

Since 1961, I have been very fortunate in my gathering of information, photographs, copies of Bentley compositions, and considerable material with the help of many friends.

In particular, I wish to acknowledge the help of the late Bob. Bannister, for many years in the service of Mr & Mrs Bentley. Also to Miss Rosalind Bentley, Executor to Mrs Lucy Bentley, for many items.

And to, The Director and staff of the N.F.E.R. who have allowed me very recently to see the maintained fine condition of The Mere, so much a part of our local History.

31st March 1985.

90 Seacourt Road. Langley. Slough.

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90. Seacourt Road. Langley. Slough. Tenders for building the house at Upton which was to become known as The Mere were opened 8th July 1887

The contract was secured by A. Bush & Sons, Ridgemount Street, London

Subject to Correction, on \ Completion of Building.

NEW HOUSE

AT

UPTON.

Specification antities.

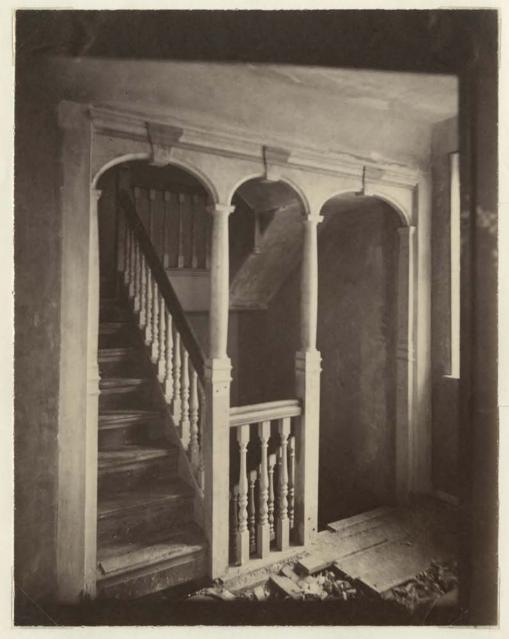


1887.

The first brick of this 35 roomed mansion was laid 8th August 1887.

The 1887 completed 'MERE' at Upton, Slough. Here, about 1888 the grounds on it's south side are being landscaped to form terraces, paths and lawns.





1883 Building THE MERE

Construction of 2nd floor landing and staircase leading up to the Tower.

1983

THE MERE.

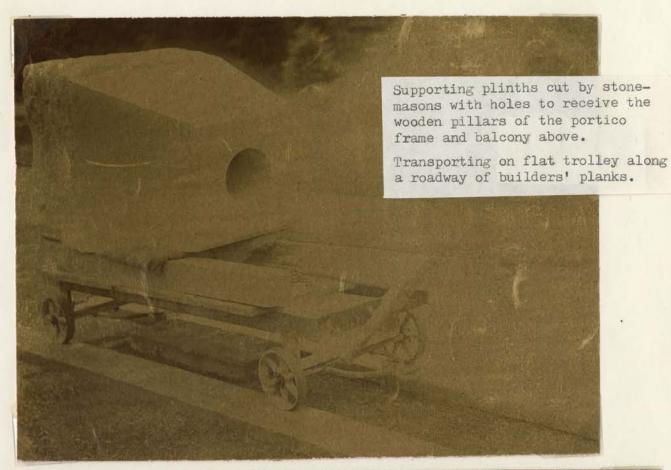
Rooftop view from the Tower past the original fire-bell still atteched to the chimneys, and out past the other Victorian chimneys, seeing the belltower of St Bernards Convent in the distance.



THE MERE 1887.



FRONT ENTRANCE NEARLY COMPLETE





1887. Nearing completion. The south door, portico and balcony.



The Mere. Photograph of 1887. Main House almost complete. Here building the South West corner outbuildings for housekeeper's quarters, stores, kitchen and scullery with attached 'cleaning room'.

This could be Richard Bentley. He was certainly of similar statue, and appearance, then with moustache &c. He would have been about 33 at this time.



THE MERE. Nearing Completion , 1887.

Painted on the rungs of the builders' trestles is the name A.Bush & Sons, Ridgmount St, Gower St. A London Firm

An original photograph of 1887 during the building of the Ground Floor outbuildings comprising housekeeper's room, stores, kitchen, scullery, and cleaning room.



Photograph of the architect's model now altered to show the cleaning room altered to be a laundry and an extension for a dairy about 1901-2.



INFORMATION AS TO THE WATER SERVICE OF THIS HOUSE,

AND HOW TO TURN IT OFF TEMPORARILY IN EVENT OF ACCIDENT OR OVERFLOW, OR FOR CLEANING OUT.

NOTE.—Any person cutting off the water is responsible for first seeing to the condition of the Boilers, Boiler Fires, and Supply Tanks.

In case of the sudden flooding of any of the rooms, corridors, or other parts of the House through any accident to the tanks or pipes, or from steam being improperly formed in the circulating system, it is advisable that each person in the building should know at once what steps to take to stop the continuous inflow of water from the Pumping Station or Water Tower. The condition of the tanks, valves, and taps also requires periodical inspection to be maintained in proper working order, and extra vigilance during frost. The last person going over the House at night should also note by ear the state of the taps. All taps and valves (see list below) should be 'worked' and dusted once a quarter, and ballcocks oiled, etc. The supply is taken from the Datchet rising main of the Slough Waterworks Company, situated about 130 feet south of the House. It is a continuous supply, but the pressure varies according to whether the water is being pumped from Datchet or is falling by gravitation from the tower at Slough.

OUTSIDE.—There is a large hydrant (in the south slope of the Lawn, near the stone steps) on the main itself in case of fire—also small draw-off taps on branches for the gardeners (usually shut off in winter-time). Twelve of these come from an east junction with the main, two improperly from the House supply, two central ones are directly tapped from the main, and sixteen other taps are taken from a north junction with the main. There is also a branch to the House, with a cut-off referred to in next paragraph. The lids of hydrants or valves should be protected by straw in frosty weather. The position of the level hydrant and cut-off valve in the Lawn not being ascertainable during the snowfall of 1890, a small red post is now placed to each. Indiarubber hose should be kept in the Big Cellar in winter, and not in the tool-sheds, where it might be injured by frost.

INSIDE.—The whole of the incoming supply can be cut off in case of accident by the plug in the branch main, in the slope of the Lawn south of the Tower. (The fact of the water being cut off or not can be tested, if required indoors at night, most expeditiously by reference to the feeding-cock of the glass drinking-water cistern.) There is also an emptying-cock to the House mains, connecting with the surface-water drain, in an iron box placed where the short path from the turret entrance joins the Terrace Walk. The water is taken from this main first* to the glass drinking-water cistern (C), then to the large tank over the offices (B), and lastly (after C and B have been supplied) to the main tanks (AA) at the top of the House. The tanks must always be kept charged in case of fire, and refilled immediately after cleaning. [For Instructions in case of Fire see large sheet of instructions printed in red ink.]

* At present there is a garden tap by the Back Door, drawing preferentially from this important service, which must be disconnected and united with the garden service. One other tap on the north side should be similarly treated.

DETAILS OF TAPS AND VALVES, Etc.

			To di	aw off.			Bath.		To Flush	ia: 1	Hydrant	S.	To C	ut Off.					
IN			Hot.	Cold.		Hot.	Cold.		Cold.		Cold.		Hot.	Cold.		Anti- Traps.	P	allcocks.	IN
Top Loft	****		0	0		I	Ī	200	0		0			4			-	ancouns.	
Ton Floor						-		***	-	***	0		0	4	****	0	***	I	Top Loft
Top Floor	***	***	1	2	9.65	0	0	9995	1	0 6000	I.		0	0	***	3		T-	Top Floor
Middle Floor	222	***	1	I		T	1		T		1		*	1		-			1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Lower Loft			- 9	2			-7:					***		4	455	2	***	2	Middle Floor
	***	***	0	1	***	0	2	***	0	****	0	4000	0	. 4	***	0	1000	2	Lower Loft
Lower Floor	***	***	1	1	***	0	0	***	2	224	1	***	7	*		140		2	
Offices			_						-	***		***		-	2.25	3	888	I	Lower Floor
Offices	***	***	5	5	16000	1	0		1	900	0	***	0	0	***	4		1	Offices
Basement (no su	nnlv)	There ic	one greace	intorcon	+0+	Thomas				1000	. 10		* 1	70 100 100	The same of	500	10000	a **	- Canada

Basement (no supply). There is one grease interceptor. There are five inspection chambers in the garden. Anti-D Traps (containing a 'water seal') are liable to be frozen, and so cause overflow, especially when taps are left to drip all night.

PARTICULARS OF COLD WATER TANKS.

			PARTICULARS OF C	COLD WATER TANKS.	
TANKS.	WHERE PLACED.	CAPACITY.	SUPPLYING	VALVES, IN AND OUT.	REMARKS.
AA. Two coupled to- gether. Square slate.	In the Uppermost Loft of the main Building (Trap Entrance from top corridor).	Each tank over 400 gal- lons.	Kitchen and Scullery Boilers, the Bath, the Lavatory, the Fire Hydrants on each floor, Three W.C.'s, the Water-Cupboards, the Pantry, Photographic Room, and (indirectly) two Hot Water Chests.	A screw-down for all incoming water. The Fire Hydrants cannot be cut off. There are three screw-downs for outgoing water, viz., one to the Boilers on the west side, and two to on the east side.	Furnished with Thermometer. There is a shallow lead tray round these tanks, in case of leakage. The Indicator Gauge in the top corridor should show the amount of water in store against contingencies, and should be glanced at every night, but cannot be relied upon.
B. (Auxiliary) Square slate.		About 360 gallons. The above may, however, be liable to be 'drawn down.'	The Scullery, Attic Room, Outer W.C., and one outside to a tap in the garden. Tank B is liable to become frozen in very severe weather, and if so must at once be disconnected, and the direct 'draw-off' by Larder-door used instead.	A screw-down for incoming water. One to cut off the supply to the Offices, and one to cut off the supply to one tap in the garden.	Furnished with Thermometer. There is a shallow lead tray round this tank, in case of leakage. The garden tap referred to at side—an extra one—must not be used for hose purposes, unless it is first ascertained that all the tanks have been refilled after the daily consumption.
C. Small cir- cular glass.	In the Lower Loft over the offices.	5 gallons only.	Drinking water exclusively—for filter in the Pantry underneath. ALL DRINKING WATER MUST BE PASSED THROUGH THIS FILTER, ALSO ALL WATER FOR COOKING PURPOSES.	A screw-down for incoming water.	Has a tin and lead safe and a double escape pipe Sunlight must be kept off the glass. [This tank burst in the summer of 1890, and many hundreds of gallons of water poured into the house from the feed pipe during the night.]
Ватн.	Middle Floor.	17 gallons.	JONES TO STOCK TO A COSES.	A screw - down for hot water, and another for cold water.	The warm water supply here is usually about 112° Fah. The cold varies from 35° Fah. to 65° Fah., according to the time of year.

There are cut-off valves to the Lavatory Supply. There is a small reservoir cistern to each W.C. (the one belonging to the main Staircase is in a cupboard in the Breakfast Room), and there is an additional one (in the floor above: disused) in case of need for the Lavatory. The cut-off valve is behind the Bookcase in the North Room upstairs.

HOT WATER.—A sealed hot water square chest (with small air tap) is situated in the Loft at the top of the House, and another larger one—a cylinder—is concealed in the big cupboard in the kitchen. The joint capacity of these is 114 gallons. There are no trays for leakage to these. There is one safety-valve in the scullery, and a blow-off pipe on the top of the roof. The boilers should be periodically examined, and all incrustation removed every October, to avoid interruption of the hot water service in winter—and at other times if required. The formation of deposit is greatly increased by over-driving of the fire up the boiler flues. If the cinder and caked coal or coke is cleared out every morning from these, an ample supply of hot water can be obtained (unless the boiler is in a state requiring cleaning from incrustation). After breakfast-time the boiler damper should never be drawn out. Water which is boiled very hard is sure to be discoloured, as the excessive agitation stirs up sediment in boiler, rust in pipes, etc. The warm water in the store cylinder must never be allowed to boil. The Cook, being the person most frequently on the spot, must report at once deficiency of water at any tap. The nearest Coroner resides in Mackenzie Street. Any noises or vibration in the pipes should be at once reported and traced.

Pressure Taps should not be turned off so abruptly as to cause concussion and strain to the pipes. Nails for fixtures or pictures are not to be driven into walls until it is ascertained that no water, gas, or electric wire pipes are imbedded out of sight. (A hydrant pipe was once punctured in an unexpected situation, causing outbreak of water.) Naked lights must not be used in the Lofts for purpose of examination, and the Lofts should be inspected an hour after any workman has been in them. If children are staying in the House it may be advisable to put glass over the hydrants to avoid flooding. The electric batteries will require a small charge of water each summer. A small tell-tale pipe inserted three-quarters full into the top tanks with test-tap on one of the lower floors will shortly be provided, the present globe and chain indicator semetimes failing to record accurately until it is shaken.

PIPES.—The Company's main (1) is of iron—the house connection (2) also of iron—the cold water service (3) of lead—the hot water service (4) of iron ('steam barrel')—the drinking-water connection (5) of tin. The diameter of No. 1 is six inches; of No. 2, one inch; of No. 3, one and a half to half an inch; of No. 4, one and a quarter inch; of No. 5, half an inch. The deposit usually met with here is chalk and rust.

WASTE AND OVERFLOWS.—The outside disconnected pipes run from the Photographic Room, the overflow 'safes' to the Tanks and Hydrants—the overfilling of the Bath, etc. The other connections are either with the surface water or the main drainage pipes.

RAIN-WATER.—At present there is inadequate provision for this. There is one circular subterranean well for storage (unfiltered) in the shrubbery—depth, seven feet; diameter, six feet. Also a small tank adjoins North Garden House. No separators are in use.

PUMP.—One in the Stables. Depth of well, feet.

To avoid the charges of the Water Company it is in contemplation to sink a deep well and put in a small Pumping Engine driven by gas.

A LIGHT LEVER for opening lids of hydrants, etc., is hung in the Lower Passage.

THE PLUMBER at present employed is, in case of sudden accident, Mr.

His present address,

The Mere.

DIRECTIONS IN EVENT OF FIRE.

THERE are fire hydrants on each floor, fitted with hose and nozzles, also ordinary draw-off taps in the cupboards available for buckets. The depth of water in the upper tanks is shown in inches and feet by the automatic indicator on the top floor. There is a hydrant (directly attached to the Water Company's feed main) in the slope of the lawn, on the south front of house (near the stone steps). Some additional water can be got from pool at east end of garden, or rain-water subterranean tank, on the south-west side of the house (in the shrubs). The water supply on the north side of the garden is derived from a wholly distinct main, practically an additional one.

The nearest fire-engines are at Slough, Eton, Windsor, Burnham, Maidenhead, or Colnbrook. To secure sufficient pressure of water information must be sent immediately to the engine-man at the waterworks on the Datchet Road. The Slough fire station is at the Royal Hotel, near the railway station. The nearest fireman is Mr.

, who lives at

The gardener lives at

From the solidity of the house it is improbable that the progress of fire would be very rapid under ordinary circumstances. There would, therefore, be a good chance of arresting it, as well as the opportunity for making a well-directed and organized attack upon it. Much depends upon coolness and intelligence, but the youngest and least experienced person is *capable* of filling and handing on buckets, or conveying messages. One calm person with presence of mind speedily imparts the same collectedness to those around, while an excited or confused person would be worse than useless.

Everyone in house should be warned (but not alarmed), and if there happen to be any children they should be removed from the building. Apprise fire station. Turn on electric alarm in grounds. Shut off gas at the mains both upstairs and downstairs. Keep all doors and windows shut, and draw any shutters together found open. It is most important to diminish the supply of air, even at expense of smoke, as soon as everyone is out of danger, and if time permits, even the chimney registers and tobin tubes for ventilation should be closed, and the air-bricks outside ventilating the ground-floor. Fasten iron cut-off fire doors. Block any staircase shafts with carpets, curtains, etc., but not oilcloth, which is inflammable. Bring rugs and blankets to wet and apply if the area ignited is a small one. Can the outbreak be extinguished, or should steps be taken for removing furniture, etc., at once?

Make certain that everybody is accounted for. Everyone should report him or herself outside the north door.

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Most important to act decisively at the outset. The first ten minutes of a fire generally determine the issue. The importance of the outbreak must be on no account under-rated, and there must be no hesitation in breaking through doors, ceilings, floors, or destroying furniture, in promptly dealing with the flames. Use every effort to localize the outbreak, but pour water round the flames and not on them, if they have any hold. Do not squirt water on the glass of any windows that may be hot. If the fire gains a footing, operate on the most threatened side, according to the importance of the buildings or the direction of the wind or draught; and from above where clear of smoke. Select the best points in advance to check it at, probably at some of the thick brick fire partitions. Keep any roofs threatened by falling sparks wetted. Do not waste water on minor points.

Look out, if underneath, for rafters, tiles, falling ceilings, fire-places, hearths, molten lead, or plate glass. If cut off by heat or smoke, creep along close down to floor with wet handkerchief to face.

There is an escape rope-ladder kept in the corridor of the top floor, also a plain rope and a sack for lowering young persons. An inferior substitute can also be made at a pinch in any bedroom by tearing sheets and counterpanes into strips, and knotting them together; but in this case especial care is necessary to test the strength of the fastenings before trusting to them. It is well to throw down mattresses at foot of any ladder. A long wooden ladder is kept in the big fowl-shed, and many others are close at hand at Mr. Atkins the builder's.

Appoint a rendezvous for moving persons and valuables to, and put also someone in charge outside. No *strangers* should be admitted in the building without good reason, except firemen or fire-escape-men, salvage-men or police. A few trained men can cope with an emergency which an aimless crowd would be powerless to deal with, and merely impede the efforts of others.

Things to save first, after all persons are out of danger, are notified beforehand to a few responsible persons, resident in the house.

If a person catches fire, she (or he) should be at once thrown down and rolled on floor in a rug or coat, or if unaided, should attempt the same course. Do not run into open air or a draughty passage.

If successful in putting out a fire in the building, a strict watch must be kept on the spot for some hours afterwards. There are cut-off valves outside the house as well as inside for turning off water.

SOME DAILY PRECAUTIONS AGAINST FIRE.

The tanks in the top of the house hold 850 gallons, and the large one over the offices holds 425 gallons, besides some slight additional supply in the two hot-water cisterns. In frosty weather a little water should be run off each night to try them. The hydrants on the various floors are to be periodically tested, also the hose. The fire-buckets should always be kept full of water, and not used for any other purpose. The rope ladder must under no circumstances, except actual emergency, be removed from the top floor. A hatchet and a strong hooked pole is kept in the top and middle floor corridors, and a small portable hand-pump on the middle floor. The lightning-conductors require examination once a year, in the spring. Iron fire doors must be shut at night, and gas main turned off.

A responsible person must go round the last thing each night—preferably in the dark—to see that all fires are thoroughly out, doors fastened, etc. The kitchen fire must be kept clear of wood, shavings, or paper, left for next morning's lighting. Fires must be lowered gradually towards bedtime, and not raked violently out at the last moment. No reliance is to be placed on electric fire alarms.

If there is any escape of gas use No light (and extinguish any in vicinity), but open windows and trace source of escape by odour only. No stoves are allowed, being dangerous, both in regard to hot flues and fumes. Chimneys must be cleaned at sufficiently frequent intervals, and flues and walls should be occasionally felt to ascertain if they are subject to heating. If coal is stocked in quantity the cellars should be well ventilated. Firewood, candle-ends, or waste paper or shavings must be kept in outbuilding, particularly all kinds of patent firewood dipped in inflammable matter. No petroline oils are to be kept on the premises under any name ("Sunlight," "Safety," "Crystal," etc.), or benzoline lamps used, or methylated spirits. A large box of dry sand should be kept handy in case of any upset.

Avoid keeping matches, spirits, candles, etc. in wooden cupboards (also in one in the kitchen which has a bot-water boiler in it). No easily inflammable things, bandboxes, etc., should be put into such cupboards as may have flues in the walls and no ventilators. Only "Safety" matches are to be used. Matchboxes, magnifying glasses, cut-glass decanters, tumblers, or glass ornaments must not be left near windows, or where the rays of the sun can reach them to render them a source of danger. Nightlights in use, whether in glasses or not should have water round their base.

Tanks must be periodically cleaned, and all taps occasionally turned on, to ensure their efficiency; *i.e.*, that they may not be found airsealed on a critical occasion. In frosty weather the supply of water to the boilers must be constantly watched

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The top floor baying lower ceilings and a great deal of timber in it easily inflammable things, bandboxes, etc., should be put into such cupboards as may have flues in the walls and no ventilators. Only "Safety" matches are to be used. Matchboxes, magnifying glasses, cut-glass decanters, tumblers, or glass ornaments must not be left near windows, or where the rays of the sun can reach them to render them a source of danger. Nightlights in use, whether in glasses or not, should have water round their base.

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The top fleor, having lower ceilings and a great-deal of timber in it, as well as slightly thinner walls, requires especial watchfulness. Care must be taken to avoid placing lighted candles on shelves underneath other shelves, or on the top of furniture beneath a slanting ceiling, or leaving them with children unattended, or in lighting gas burners, or leaving candles alight in summer anywhere near blinds or curtains liable to movement when windows or doors are open. (Example: The great fire in High Street, Slough, in 1889, through the wind toying with a blind, which spread to several houses.)

Some other fertile sources of danger are airing clothes, mattresses, sheets, etc., without someone being present the whole time. (Example: The great fire at Salt Hill, in 187, when the whole of Botham's Hotel, over 100 rooms, was burnt to the ground from this cause). Reading in bed, the absence of fire-guards while people are temporarily out of a room, throwing away match-ends (or dropping the heads of matches), an unpardonable carelessness, and a most frequent cause of mishap.

Any workmen on the premises must be closely supervised, especially if engaged in metal work, or between floors, or in lofts, or employing artificial light in winter, or smoking. No fire-pots permitted without special notice.

In event of **electric lighting** being employed, the special directions for its use must be closely attended to. The visible portion of the system is the least dangerous, the connecting wires or apparatus often the most dangerous—though hidden frequently from view. Overcharged wires and badly-made connections are liable to get hot, even to white heat, setting fire to anything in contact with them. Conducting wires placed too closely together, or with their coating frayed away, will transmit the electric current from one to the other (instead of through the lamps) at the risk of setting the surrounding material on fire. Moisture will facilitate any improper contact between the wires or connection "to earth," and so cause fire. Some fires have even arisen from the mere washing of floors when connecting wires have been laid underneath [Phenix Fire Office Report]. No nails must be used in the vicinity of the wires, or carpets put down without someone watching the work. When an electrically-caused fire breaks out, turn off the current at the nearest and at the main switch, or sever the conducting wires, one at a time (if the current in use is a powerful one, stand on dry wood and use a tool with a dry handle to avoid personal injury)—the injudicious use of water before these precautions are taken may actually increase the outbreak of the fire.

All persons in the house are responsible for the observance of these precautions for the common safety. To reflective people most of the foregoing comments are needless, but they are serviceable to those who may not have previously given thought to the subject. Each person should think for themselves beforehand—not to be taken by surprise in emergency—what are the best and most useful steps to

GARDEN DIRECTIONS.

IN EVENT OF SNOWFALL, ETC.

- 1. BARGUS is to sweep a clear path from kitchen entrance to the green gates opposite Havelock Place, with a spur path to the Fowl-runs and to the Stables; to see that the Poultry have food and unfrozen water. KNOTT is to sweep from the North door to the Oak (Entrance) Gates, and to take a foot path forward along the Outside road as far as the red brick pillar. Also to sweep a narrow path from the South Centre entrance as far as the Rain-gauges, and to clear the South Terrace in front of the House.
- 2. If either gardener is absent through any unavoidable cause the *most importan* part of both men's work must be done first, until the other arrives; or if the snowfall is heavy a substitute is to be put on.
- 3. The Snow is next to be "poled" gently from the shrubs and more delicate trees, care being taken not to break the shoots or chafe the bark. After the Main Garden has been attended to, the more valuable trees in the Plantation across the road will require to be taken in hand.
- 4. On Sundays only the most urgent part of the work can be c rried out, i.e. that for purposes of access to House or outbuildings—or to relieve any tree that is breaking down, etc.
- 5. BARGUS is then to sweep a path from the Glasshouse to the Oak (Entrance) Gates going round by No. 4 gate; KNOTT is to sweep a path to the No. 10 (Eton) gate; also one from the North (Front) door to the No. 14 (Church) gate.
- 6. Other paths can be done afterwards as directed or found requisite, if an immediate thaw is not expected. Sweeping should be in the centre of paths to avoid casting gravel or grit into the borders. Snow to be piled, if a deep fall, at intervals where good drainage can be got when the thaw comes. If this is not obtainable, the collected snow must be wheeled clear of the paths at the earliest

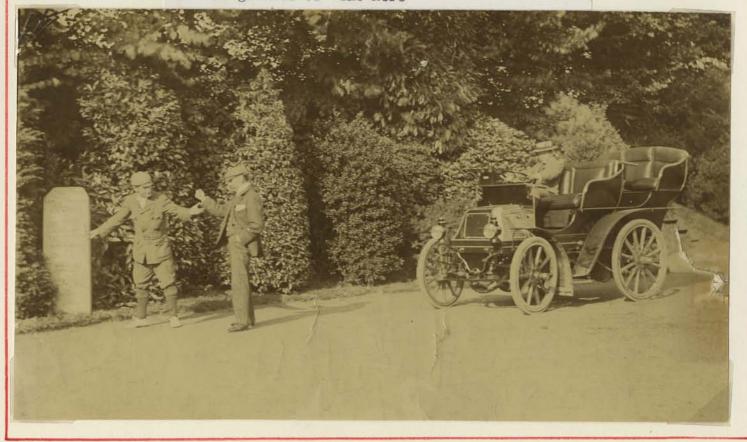
BENTLEY MOTORING

In 'The Mere' Grounds. Lucy Bentley in driving seat.

Probably a Panhard about 1904 vintage. No number plates, solid tyres, with lights -probably candle, wheel steering.



The same Panhard by Bentley's special milestone in the grounds of 'The Mere'



opportunity, after a pathway has been cleared through for use.

- 7. See if attention is required in consequence of the accumulation of snow against house or ventilators, or on roofs or cills of gates, or if hanging overhead on gutters, branches, etc. Notice that all gates are free to swing back, and see also that the electric buttons are not hidden (or coated with snow that may melt and get inside). Slippery surfaces, particularly stone steps, must be sprinkled with fine ashes or sand-grit. No salt or hot water must be used on any account.
- 8. Brooms and poles (for shrubs) must be kept in readiness after October 1st, after which date, also, most of the garden water mains are usually shut off in case of frost. Straw plugs must be put into the outside Fire Hydrants (as the water supply in these is always on). See that there is an uninterrupted supply of water to the boilers of Glasshouses, and it would be well to keep some coke at hand if the customary supply of fuel is carried any distance.
- 9. It is presumed that the usual arrangements for winter weather have been carried out in October: Garden-seats and Watering-pots, aced under shelter, Plants taken in, Manure put on special beds or borders, Matting over delicate plants or frames, a covering of dead leaves to the borders, Creepers fastened up BEFORE the Equinoctial gales, new stakes to all heavy Rose-trees, Dahlia roots taken in, Ferns covered with leaves or fibre, Peonies (and other things which die down) marked, etc., old Nests taken out of water-pipes, Sink-stones in the paths cleared of grit and leaves, etc. After gales young trees must be examined to see that any holes round the stems are filled in.
- 10. If the ordinary work of the garden is temporarily stopped during the falling of the snow, etc., the greenhouses, stables, fowl-runs, etc., should be cleaned out and put in thorough order, preparations made for repotting, stakes pointed, wood chopped, etc., or if hindered by frost, manure wheeled and *surface* gravel dug in readiness for use, to be replaced by mould.
- 11. In severe weather, the song-birds, Thrushes, Blackbirds, etc., and Bees, will require some assistance in the way of food. (The Hives must not be opened in cold weather, but sirup supplied beforehand.)

GEORGE BENTLEY.

BENTLEY MOTORING

Motor manufacturers' chassis with coachmakers' built-on bodies of horse drawn ('Dog-Cart') rear entry design. Probably 1908-1912 vintages.





MRS. LUCY BENTLEY, PASSENGER. BAKER, DRIVER?



THORNEYCROFT TOURER. Vintage about 1907.





About 1900 1888

The completed MERE and landscaped gardens.



The original coach-houses of The Mere. These became farm implement and materials stores when the new garage (now N.F.E.R Print Shop) was built to accommodate the Motor Cars replacing horses & carriages.



About 1903 as the Estate Yard, after new coach-houses 1900



MRS. ANNE BENTLEY WITH CARRIAGE AND PAIR Circa 1895





Another view of the library of The Mere, about 1887. now the Blue Room of the N.F.E.R. of 1980's





At The Mere, about 1894.

Mrs CLARA BENTLEY. (born 1844)
Wife of HORATIO, grandson of EDWARD,
original Publisher Mother of LUCY,
and cousin of Miss ROSALIND BENTLEY.





The Inner Hall of 1887, with it's fireplace and the windows overlooking the then terraced lawns. The laid out books make it appear that it was used as a Waiting or Reception Room.

(The N.F.E.R. in 1985 call it their Brown Room)





THE MERE

Oil Lit Library.

about 1887.

In 1987, a Century later, this is the beautifully preserved Blue Room of the house which has become the headquarters of

THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH.



This was the Library when The Mere was built in 1887.

It was subsequently made into the Drawing Room.

Since it has been occupied by the National Foundation for Educational Research it has been beautifully re-decorated & restored & now, 1985, is 'The Blue Room'.



The Mere, Upton.
(before 1936.)
The first floor hallway.



THE MERE INGLENOOK

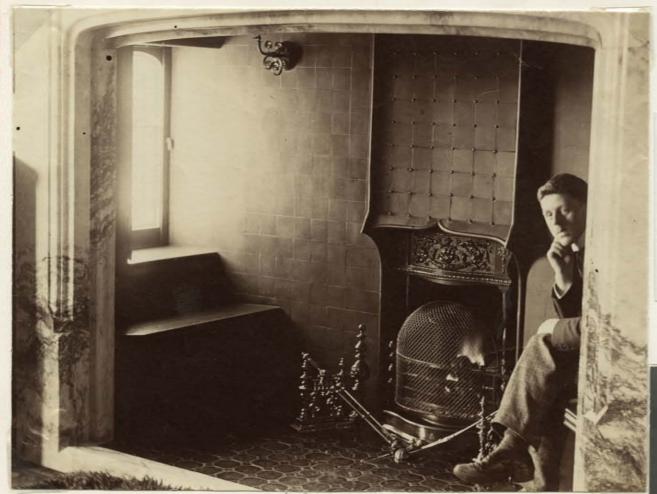




SIESTA TIME IN THE INGLENOOK,
WITH RICHARD BENTLEY IN THE
ARMCHAIR

SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR BEFORE 1936





THE MERE

The Inglenook.

A Visitor.

Was this the

PRINCE OF WALES?

Edward. Prince of Wales was President of King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor. The Bentleys were members of the Management Committee.

Here, the picture is of the Prince with the Matrons, Surgeon (Sir Joseph Skevington?) and Committee Members. Richard Bentley is seated front left. Probable date, early 1920's.





MRS. ANNE BENTLEY WITH CARRIAGE AND PAIR Circa 1895





Another view of the library of The Mere, about 1887. now the Blue Room of the N.F.E.R. of 1980's

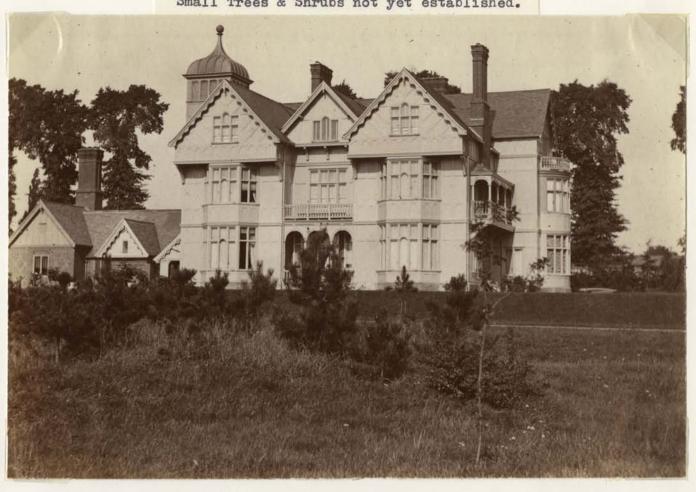


Built 1887.- Into it's Centenary Year The Mere, Upton Park.

1986 Christmas Card from NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES.



Probably about 1890.
Small Trees & Shrubs not yet established.



Early 1900's. THE MERE approaching it's best. Trained trees and shrubs, with immaculate paths



The lawn of The Mere seen from inside the Thatched Cottage out through the front door and porch soon after being built. The garden was soon developed.



PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL METEOROLOGICAL SOCIETY

In 1898 Richard sold the publishing house to Macmillan and spent his remaining years on gardening, local history and meteorology. He was elected President of the Royal Meteorological Society in 1905 and installed his own meteorological station in the grounds.

He produced a number of publications on local history and physical phenomena.

The beautiful Mere gardens still bear traces of his other enthusiasms in the form of various marker stones with one commemorating the great flood of 1894.

BUILDING THE MERE

George and son Richard, who both lived at 2 East Villas, Upton Park (now converted to flats) were the joint builders of The Mere. They, individually, acquired several plots of land at a total cost of £8,700, comprising most of the area now bounded by Albert St., Datchet Rd., the M4 and Upton Park.

The 35 roomed house was built in the 'Shropshire timbered style'. Revolutionary innovations were adopted, including double-casement windows, cavity walls and dual plumbing for mains and soft water. Rain was collected in large roof tanks, checked by gauges on the second floor.

It was noted for fine views of Windsor Castle and Eton College, sadly no longer in view.

THE PUBLISHING HOUSE

The brothers Samuel and Richard Bentley founded Bentley Publishers in 1819. They produced their *Miscellany*, a monthly periodical with humorous articles, with young Charles Dickens as its editor. George Bentley introduced several famous authors including Wilkie Collins, Mrs Henry Wood and Marie Corelli, whose popular gothic romances along with 'Bentley's Standard Novels and Romances' formed the basis of the family fortune.

THE DICKENS CONNECTION

In 1836 Richard Bentley agreed to pay Charles Dickens £1,000 to write Oliver Twist and Barnaby Rudge to be serialised with the Cruikshank illustrations in Miscellany. Dickens was very disgruntled over their financial agreements and in 1839 resigned his editorship, buying back the rights to Oliver Twist.

Their quarrel was healed at a later date.



Richard Bentley's Milestone.

About 1895 being cut by the stonemason Mr Edward Sargeant, grandfather of the present Mr Sargeant.

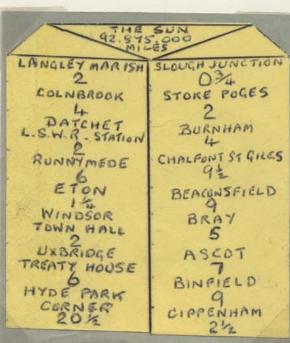
Originally installed in the area of Richard Bentley's Meteorological Station

These stones were dragged out and thrown onto the rubble heap by Contractors making the new Datchet Road with it's Bridge over the Motorway.

Worthy conservation minded people salvaged these and they were installed in the present position in front of the The Mere entrance door.



Liverpool is used as the level indicator as this is the basis of all Marine Charts.





May 1983.

An original walnut corner cupboard and bookshelves with inserted ceramic tiles of Netherlands origin depicting Belgian, Dutch or French chateaux.







1887

front hall.

"THE POSTMAN'S WALK" 1985 The original side entrance now incorporated into a

corridor leading to the new extension of the N F E R.



The private 'Upton Post Box' originally in the front hall of The Mere, standing by the House-gong which the Postman sounded to indicate that he was about to collect the Mail.



The Post-box register plate with it's notice written on the back of a calendar page dated April 1893.

Upton Post Box

Weekdays

Cleared Morning.

Afternoon

Evening.

Sundays

POSTAL PARALYSIS.



November 1986 The Post-box in one of the well maintained main rooms, with an original gas bracket and the fireplace of marble showing the date of 1887. Whether this was to indicate the date of building of the house or the date of Queen Victoria's Jubilee is a matter for speculation as there was also another fire place bearing the Diamond Jubilee date 1897.



1983.

First floor hallway still with it's Victorian gasbrackets and furnishings. Fire safety doors have now been fitted.



1983.

One of the smaller marbelled fire surrounds with it's now 95 year old ceramic tiling and cast—iron grate.



1983.

A very fine example in the 'ship's corridor of a late Victorian fireplace and tiling With the passing of the horse carriage and the coming of the motor-car Richard Bentley soon became enthusiastic of this means of transport.

He had a series of these motor cars from the late 1800's onwards and build a new, heated, garage for them. Chauffeur's accommodation was made on site. The new building shows the date "Added 1900".



The garage has now (1984) been made into the NFER printing works.

Above the converted front, still on the fascia is :
IN MEDIO TUTTESSIMUS IBIS

The translation appears to mean: -

You shall travel most safely in the middle way.

He travels safest who journeys in the middle way.



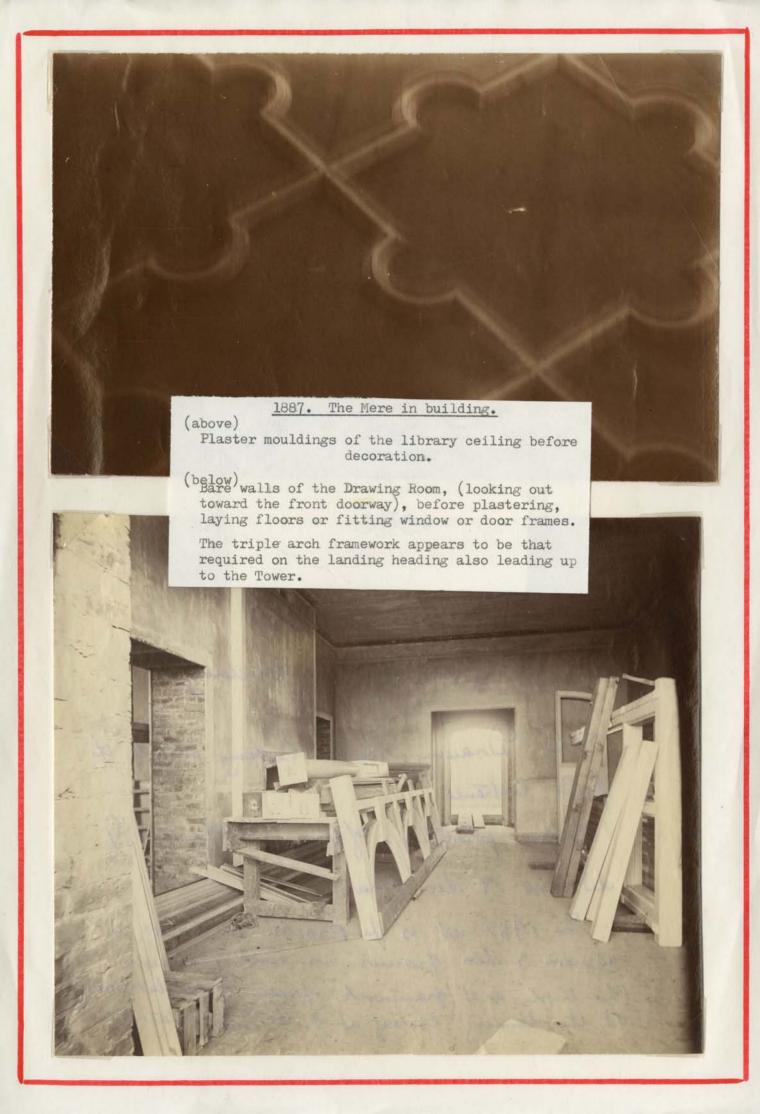
The side entrance to the garage (print shop) with the panel 'ADDED 1900' above the window



To the rear of the garage the chauffeur's house.



By The Mere multiple milestone.
Mrs Anne Bentley (1826-1898), the Archer, with companion.



In 'The Mere' Grounds. Richard Bentley, seated.

A very early Daimler-Benz. Probably about 1895.
No number plates, windscreen or lamps, solid tyres,
Tiller-bar steering.



An early vintage NAPIER, about 1905-6. at the Watersplash. IVER.





The Albert Street Gate.

Leading into Cridland Cottages then across Albert Street into Park Street.



'The Entrance Road' to The Mere as originally seen from the Main Gate, in the late 1800's. Nearly 100 years later, 1985, this is still the main road through Upton Park. Victoria Terrace stands among the trees on the left. The right side is now almost completely built up.



The Mere, UPTON. The Thatched Cottage. By the gate on the sharp bend of Datchet Road Gate, nearest to St Laurence Church. Used as a library for a few years after the death of Richard Bentley, 1936., it survived until the making of the new Datchet Road in conjunction with the M4 Motorway.



THE THATCHED LODGE. Mrs Lucy Bentley standing in the now matured garden. This lodge eventually became Richard Bentley's Library. Guarded by Police in early days of the 1939 outbreak of War. Demolished c. 1969.





THE THATCHED LODGE

THE MERE. Datchet Road Gate. Upton. Slough.
Rear entrance.

Until 1912 there was a Private Road from a gate on the Datchet Road, along the southern boundary of 'The Mere', past Victoria Terrace to the lodge-gate entrance at Arbor Hill.

This Notice, autumn 1912, announces agreement between Richard Bentley and the owners or mortgagees of Upton Park Estates for closure from the Datchet Road along where has become the small roadway to Spring Cottage, to Victoria Terrace.

OMPLAINTS having been received from residents on the spot of the growing frequency of the long-distance traffic, and sometimes of the noisy behaviour of loiterers, entering Upton Park through the back way from the Datchet road whenever the gates were open, an interview was arranged between Mr. Rigby and Mr. Bentley in the summer of 1911 for the consideration of the matter. The inrush of outsiders each year was steadily increasing. Mr. Bentley asked if another lodge could be erected in the Park, with a gate-keeper installed, so that only those having occasion should be admitted. Mr. Rigby stated that this would involve both a considerable initial, and a permanent, expense to the owners, and enquired if Mr. Bentley would put up one at the East end, but this was also found impracticable for the same reason. The subject was further discussed, but nothing was done at the moment to abate the inconvenience.

Owing to the still larger number of persons (driving, and on foot) diverging from the public road (some even from London and Staines, and many from Datchet), and the change from slow to propelled vehicles, further remonstrances were received in 1912 from residents whose privacy and quiet had been broken in upon, despite all notifications put up of "No Thoroughfare," etc., and some objections of more weighty character were also brought under notice. In consequence another meeting took place in the autumn of 1912 between Mr. Rigby and Mr. Bentley, and, after carefully reviewing all the circumstances, it was decided to close the eastern end of the private way which had become so largely made use of by persons unconnected with the Park. Since the arrival of the London omnibuses at Slough the passing through of strangers has further increased, and damage has frequently been done by loafers. It is hoped to preserve the quiet of the Park and also the roads in better condition through the absence of the stream of outside traffic which has lately come through.