



## Local History Collection

### 03 - New Lodge

Summer 2019

Researched & written by Sarah Grace

In this issue I cover the history of New Lodge which I discussed with the children at Braywood School in the Spring term of 2019. I always welcome additional information to add to the notes and articles I have written.



### History Of New Lodge

The large estate of New Lodge (previously known as Hounds Lodge) on the Drift Road was a Keeper's House in the reign of King James 1. I cannot confirm if the Keeper; Mr Stafordton, was a Keeper in the Royal Household as a Keeper of the Royal Wardrobes, Swans, Archives or Privy purse! However the house is thought to date back to 1518 and the site was originally a hunting lodge during the Medieval period. It was used by Lord Ranleigh during the 1600's and then George II son William Duke of Cumberland (Commander in Chief of the Army) during the late 1700's but he died childless and the house was then occupied by General Hodson and then Princess Sophia of Gloucester from 1798 (Ranger of Greenwich Park) until around 1844.

The estate was then granted by Queen Victoria to the 1st Belgian Ambassador to the English Court; Jean Sylvain Van De Weyer and his wife Elizabeth in 1857. Elizabeth's Father was Joshua Bates (an American banker with Barings Bank) who had the current Tudor Gothic style house built in the style of Pugin/Barry as a wedding present to his Daughter and son-in-law.

Jean Van De Weyer was the 1st Ambassador of the newly created land of Belgium formed from the Southern half of the Netherlands which in 1832 rebelled against the Dutch. The new King of Belgium was King Leopold, Uncle of Queen Victoria. Although Queen Victoria had offered safe storage at Windsor Castle Jean Van De Weyer stored all the documents recording the beginning of the Country of Belgium in the fireproof and waterproof strong room at New Lodge where they were undisturbed for 50 years. Upon Jean Van De Weyer's death the strong room was opened and all the papers were destroyed as the strong room had previously been a still, and the dripping taps had destroyed all the papers.

The house remained in the Van De Weyer family until the early 1900s when it was sold and used as a private clinic from 1925 for wounded WW1 soldiers. From 1939 it was used for refugees and then a Dr. Barnardo's home from 1942. In 1956 New Lodge was a training school for the British Transport Commission for their railway catering staff and then Barbour Index Ltd from 1972. I believe that New Lodge was used for offices for a period and at present there are many renovations taking place such as re-alignment of the entrance drive and internal improvements.

If anyone has further information that they would like to add to New Lodge and its history, perhaps you attended a party or event there and would like to share your first hand knowledge of the interior or gardens etc, then please let Alison Brayshaw (Editor) have your contribution.

In the next issue I will continue with some history of Braywood Church and the Van De Weyer's cottages in the village of Fifield and Oakley Green.

If you live in one of these cottages you may have a carved plaque on your exterior wall similar to the picture here. Please do send in your contributions to the story.

