



Local History Collection

07 - Braywood House and All Saints Church

Summer 2020

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Just on the cusp of lockdown Alison Brayshaw and I were invited by the gardener of Braywood House on Drift Road to visit the private grounds and gardens and learn more about this historic site where Braywood Church once stood and its links to properties in Oakley Green and New Lodge.



Braywood House sits in 10 acres of private grounds which includes the site of what was Braywood Church and the churchyard which has 23 graves. The original churchyard gates and wall still stand and can be seen when you walk along the public footpath.

Behind Braywood House a pathway leads through the woods, which are part of the grounds, to the two Lodge Houses we can see today on the Oakley Green Road.

The grounds border onto the crown estate of Windsor and Swinley Forest and anyone staying at Braywood House has free access to roam the 3,100 hectares of forest.



Madame Van de Weyer. 1860.



The Grave Chest of Jean-Sylvain de Weyer

Among the 23 graves is the grave of Elizabeth Van De Weyer who was born in 1817 and was the daughter of Joshua and Lucretia Augusta Bates from Boston U.S.A. She married Jean-Sylvain Van De Weyer in 1839 after meeting Sylvain in London.

Sylvain was special representative to King Leopold 1 in London. He also served briefly as the 8th Prime Minister of Belgium and was the Belgian Ambassador to London for many years. Elizabeth and Sylvain had two sons and five daughters who lived in London and at New Lodge. The land at New Lodge was a gift from Queen Victoria to the family, as Elizabeth and her husband were close and honoured friends. Elizabeth comforted the Queen after the death of Prince Albert. Louise, their daughter, was close friends with Princess Louise, Queen Victoria's 6th child.



Braywood's All Saints Church was originally built and endowed by Elizabeth and her husband as a memorial to her father, the late Joshua Bates of Barings Bank in 1866. It was a cruciform building of cut flint with Bath stone dressings in the early English style. It contained a chancel, nave, transepts and South and West porches. Against the South transept was a bell tower with 5 bells, an angle turret and battlements. The lower part of the tower and South transept formed a memorial chapel. The roof was of a very high pitch and the tall chancel and lower arches of the transepts were polished granite.

Mr. Thomas Talbot Bury was the architect (he had been articled to Pugin in 1824) and he also built Braywood House for the Van De Weyers. The first vicar at All Saints was the Revd. William Browning Turner B.A. of Balliol College Oxford who received the vicarage (now Braywood House) and £98 per year.

The gardener we met is slowly uncovering the original stonework of the church and planting sympathetically to expose all the remains.

It is hoped that an invitation will be extended to local residents interested to visit in the future. In the next magazine I hope to write about Bishops Farm.