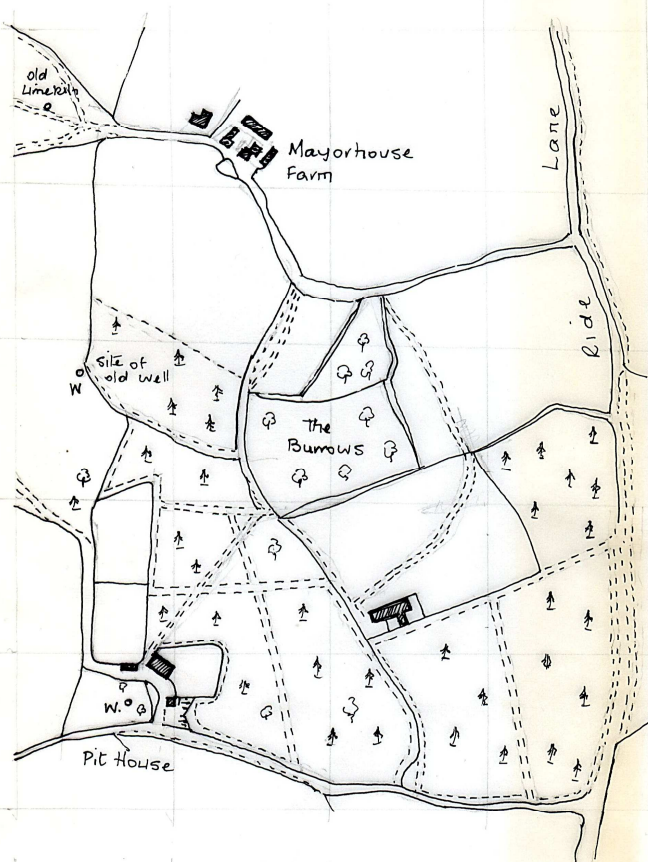


Pit House/Pithouse/Pitt House, Farley Heath - Albury History Society - alburyhistory.org.uk

RENT ROLLS FOR SHALFORD BRADSTONE:

25 March 1699	No 63.	Henry Chennell for Pithouse	7/3
Michaelmas 1719	No. 92	Thos. Chennell for Pithouse	2/3
?	1727	Thos. Chennell for Pithouse	2/3
1832	108	Hj. Drummond Croadalls als. Pittlands	12/3
1829	108	Hj. Drummond Croadalls alias Pittlands	12/3

Civilford Muniment Room 97/7/32

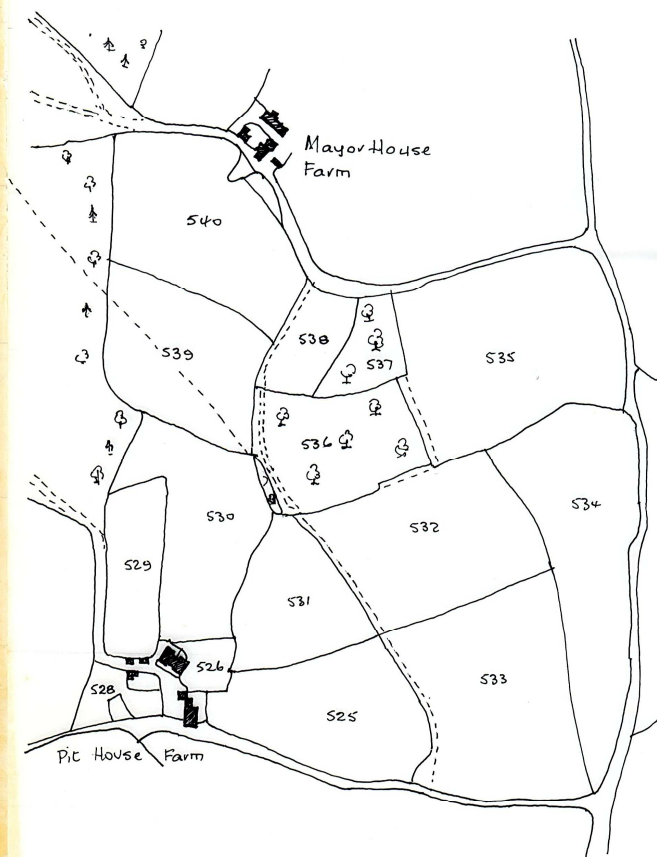


FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY 1920 Edⁿ
Enlarged to 3" : 1 mile

PIT HOUSE

All I know! 5/84

Caroline M. Martin



From TITHE MAP 1839
Enlarged to 3" : 1 mile

FOLIO 108 Copyhold. Pithouse als. Pittland als Croadalls.

A Messuage & about 30 acres (not mentioned for now(?) on the Copy) bur by Tr. Lanes it amounts to 66.1.30, held of the Manor of Shalford Bradstone by the rent of 12/3, Fealty, Suit of Court & other services, Heriott wth dno(?) on Death or Surrender see Mr. Nicholas' Abstract p141. Rent Roll 92

Note - This must comprize part of the Freehold.

1721. Apr. 24 Thos. Chennell in consideration of a Marriage intended between him & Margaret Rutt and of her marriage portion surrendered a Messuage or Tenement & 30 acres of land called Croadalls, als Pittlands in Albury to the use of himself till the marriage, afterwards to himself for life & to Margaret for life for her Jointure in lieu of Dower. To the use of the heirs of the body of the aforesaid Thos. Chennell on the body of the aforesaid Margaret to be begotten surrendered to the heirs of Thomas. Both admitted accordingly and Thos. did fealty. 12/3 10-0-0

1759. Death of Thos. Chennell and Margaret his wife who holds as above. Thos. Chennell youngest son and heir of the body of the said Thomas on the body of the said Margaret he admitted and did fealty. 12/3. No cattle. 10-0-0

1788 Recovered suff(?) by Thomas Chennell and surrendered to will 12/3 - -

1801 Death of Thomas Chennell. 1st Proclamation 12/3. 1 gelding wth July. will of same. Admission of Elizabeth Lenbert & surrender to her will 12/3 - 34-0-0

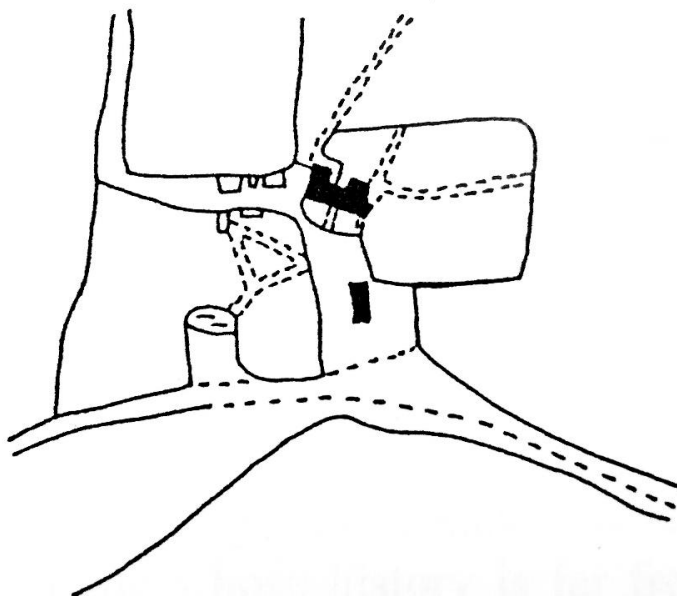
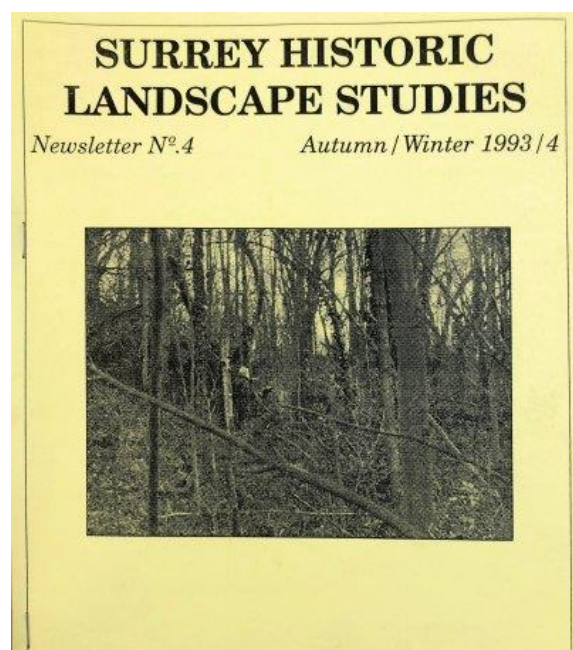
1825 Absolute surrender from James Lenbert and Elizabeth his wife to Henry Drummond Esq. & his admission 12/3 - 45-0-0

From Abstract of Court Rolls of Manor of Shalford Bradstone
Civilford Muniment Room 97/7/27

1922 Pithouse, then divided into 3 Tenements, sold, with 4 acres to Mr. French for £750.

? 1928 House burnt down.

**PITHOUSE by Judie English, Surrey Historic Settlements Group,
Surrey Historic Landscape Studies Newsletter 4, Autumn/Winter 1993/4**

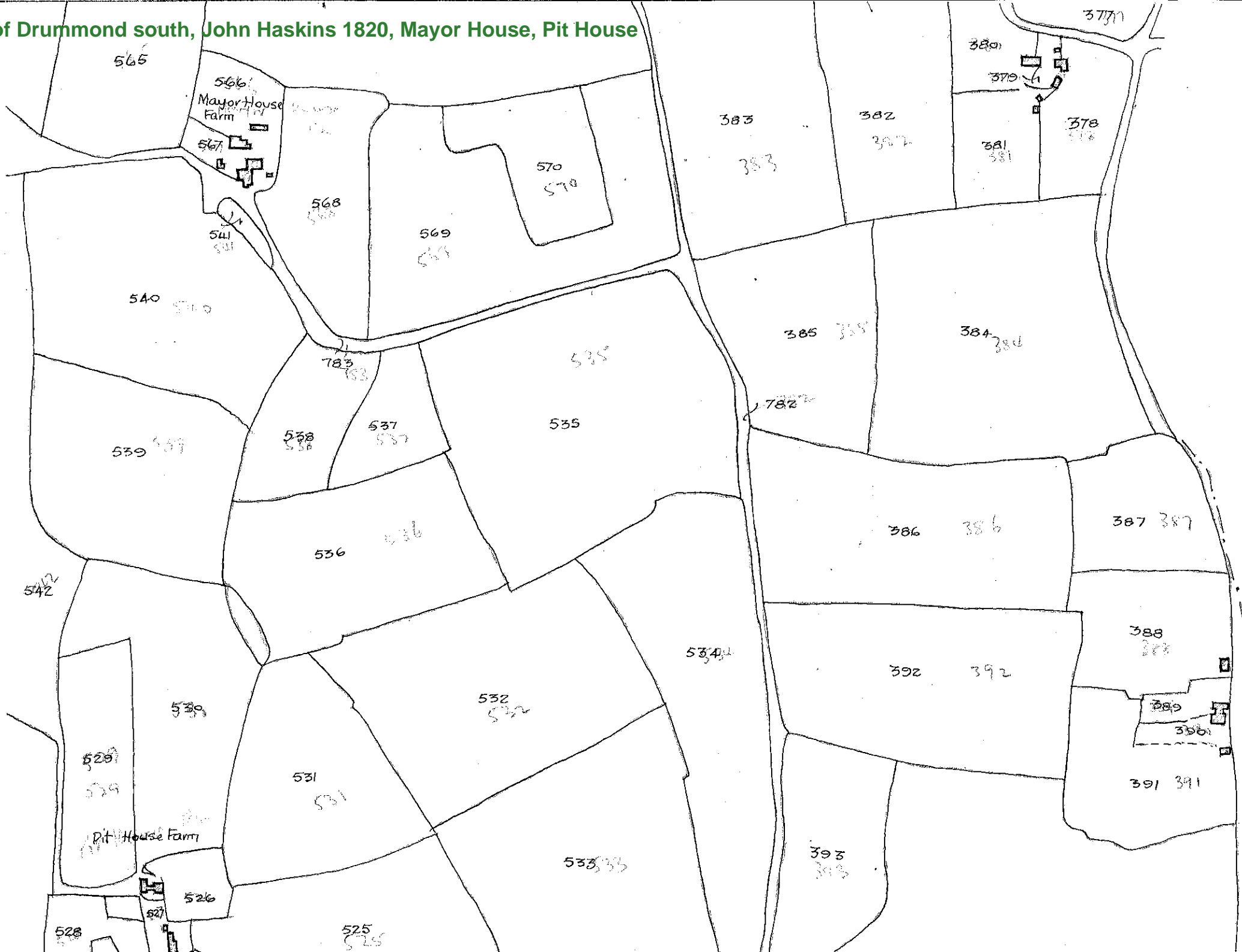


A study of Rocque's map of 1768 shows a network of rural tracks far more complex than the present road system. Only a portion of the old tracks became surfaced roads and houses on the remainder faced increasing isolation as traffic kept to the better roads. The old tracks are now the backbone of our system of public rights of way; their lines are respected by field systems, they may be banked on both sides, they may be worn into hollow ways and they link settlements with surviving roads.

Deserted sites beside these old tracks can leave clear signs. Even if the buildings are gone the rubble often means that the area is not worth cultivating and the house site with its garden and perhaps a pond remains as a small enclosure surrounded by a bank adjoining the track.

During the late 18th century arable farming went into a severe depression as steam ships brought increasing amounts of cheap wheat from Canada. In the century between 1840 and 1940 the arable land in Surrey fell from nearly 60,000a to under 17,000a. The land "fell into dereliction", with woodland gradually regenerating. The boundaries of these fields can be recognised as banks sometimes still bearing the decayed stumps of the hedgeline. The woodland they enclose comprises young trees often with silver birch, a primary coloniser. The ground cover is weak and species-poor. Farms on marginal land suffered most; one of these is Pithouse (TQ05604366) which lies on acid, infertile, sandy soil on the southern slopes of Farley Heath in Albury. The settlement dates from at latest 1294, it was owned by the Chennell family for at least 300 years, and by the late 18th century the boundaries of the 180a farm can be located from documentary evidence. In 1922 the house was rebuilt and sold as a Georgian mansion although it had no vehicular approach and no mains facilities. In 1928 the house burned down and no further attempt was made to rebuild on the site. Ruins of the house remain, some of the garden flowers have become naturalised and the fruit trees in the orchard are looking romantically gnarled. The fields have deteriorated into immature woodland but a ruined limekiln indicates their previous arable nature.

Lands of Drummond south, John Haskins 1820, Mayor House, Pit House



Surrey Advertiser
Saturday 20 July 1929

Fire at Pit House,
Farley Green
Tuesday 16 July 1929

HOUSE IN THE WILDS GUTTED

GUILDFORD FIRE BRIGADE HELPLESS

DOG WARNS OCCUPANTS OF OUTBREAK

HOUSE IN THE WILDS GUTTED.

GUILDFORD FIRE BRIGADE HELPLESS.

DOG WARNS OCCUPANTS OF OUTBREAK.

A large country residence, known as Pit House, situated in an extremely isolated part of Farley Green and surrounded by woods, was destroyed on Tuesday morning by a fire which broke out mysteriously soon after 10 o'clock.

Guildford Fire Brigade were called, but the motor engine had to be left at the bottom of a narrow lane about three-quarters of a mile from the house. The firemen helped in moving a good deal of furniture, and then, owing to there being no water available, were forced to watch the house burn itself out.

Pit House, which is several miles from Shamley Green, was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Grestreux. It was a large Georgian house, until 1822 the property of the Duke of Northumberland, and it had been used as a shooting box by the late Duke. In about 1740 it was rebuilt on the original foundations which, it has been surmised, were those of a shooting box used in the time of King John. The house, therefore, was of considerable historic interest, and was frequently visited by historians and others. A large amount of oak was employed in the rebuilding, and a feature of the house was a spacious oak staircase from the hall to the landing on the first floor.

THE DISCOVERY.

Mr. and Mrs. Grestreux were in the sitting

room when "Paddie," their large brown dog, ran through the doorway, obviously very frightened. Mrs. Grestreux followed the dog into the garden, and then saw smoke pouring from the roof at the east end of the house. As it was impossible to do anything without help, Mr. Grestreux commenced removing furniture and some valuable pictures, while his wife set off up a narrow track through the woods to Mayor House, where Mrs. Burt lives, a considerable distance away. From here the police and firemen were called.

Employees from Mayor House hurried to the scene of the fire, and, joined later by members of the Guildford Brigade, succeeded in removing about half the furniture from the lower rooms before the danger became too great. As it was, quantities of tiles and burning beams fell as a piano was carried into the hall.

The flames quickly demolished the roof, and as there were no mains near and no water supply at the house other than two wells in the garden, the firemen had no alternative but to let the place burn.

SALVAGE UNDER SWAYING ROOF.

Messrs. A. Tanner and J. Welch were the first helpers to arrive from Mayor House, and they told a "Surrey Advertiser" representative that the flames ran quickly from end to end of the roof and made it impossible to get at the furniture upstairs. "As we were moving the piano," they said, "we looked up and saw the roof swaying slightly as if it was going to come on top of us all."

The house burned slowly owing to nearly all the woodwork being of oak, and it was several hours before the beams supporting the first floor gave way. When they did collapse, the house became like a furnace, and sparks threatened to set fire to a field of grass nearby and a large shed.

It appears that the fire originated in the upper storey at the east end—a part of the house which Mr. and Mrs. Grestreux had allowed a Mr. Stead, Mrs. Percival and two

LORD JELlicoe AT PIRBRIGHT.

BRITISH LEGION RALLY.

APPEAL FOR RECRUITS WITH HIGH IDEALS.

The Pirbright and District branch of the British Legion has reason to be proud of a rally and fete held on Saturday at Farns Hill, Pirbright, by invitation of Capt. D. M. Stanley, late 14th Hussars. The spectacle of 23 British Legion banners on a parade, which was inspected and addressed by Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Jellicoe, was one which much impressed the onlookers.

Capt. Stanley met Lord Jellicoe at the house and conducted him to the ground, where Lord Jellicoe was received with cheers. The band of the Woking branch attended, and the number of members actually in the parade was 284. A goodly company of visitors included over 150 British Legion members from outlying branches. The Union Jack was unfurled at a masthead near the middle of the inspection ground, and Lord Jellicoe passed along the ranks shaking hands with the standard bearers and their escorts.

Those attending the inspection included Capt. R. Arbuthnot (president), Commander B. J. D. Guy, V.C., D.S.O. (vice-president), Lieut.-Col. R. M. Crose, Major W. F. Heyland (in charge of the parade), the Ven. R. Irwin, D.S.O. (Archdeacon of Dorking), Col. C. F. Grantham (chairman, S.E. Area), Major G. E. Cohen (chairman of the Surrey county organisation), Capt. H. J. Johnson (county secretary) and the Rev. H. S. Kelsey (vicar of Pirbright).

Branch banners borne in the parade were those of the South Eastern Area, Surrey County, Guildford and District, Woking, Wimbledon, Pirbright, Camberley, The

Dittons, Shalford and District, Albury, Blackheath and Chilworth, Pattenham and Wagonborough, Horley (men's and women's sections), Ash, Ripley, Sandhurst, Farnborough (Hants), Lightwater, Bagshot and Windlesham, Holmwood, Compton, Virginia Water, Cobham, Horsley, Westfield, Dufafeld, Claygate, Ashted, and Frimham.

THE OPENING.

Viscount Jellicoe mounted a small platform, and the Legion members formed three sides of a square to hear his address. He said a gathering like that was a sign of the rising strength of the Legion, and he was glad to know that its strength was increasing year by year. There were a great many ex-Servicemen still outside the Legion, men whom they would welcome in their ranks (hear, hear). They were men who did not hesitate to join up when the Empire was in danger, and he did not think it right that they should hesitate to join up to help their comrades who were in distress. They were wanted; every extra man joining the Legion added strength to what the Legion could do for ex-Servicemen who needed help. If the organisation could represent five million men when it formed a deputation to the Government it could speak with greater force than if it represented a much smaller number. He did not mean to say that they wanted to threaten anybody because they were powerful and represented a large number of men. They did not want to intimidate anybody, but if they were really speaking for five million men, people were bound to listen. The Government was always sympathetic toward ex-Servicemen's needs. The late Government helped them, and he had every hope that the present Government would also help them. Deputations already sent had been most sympathetically received. There was another side of the question of adding strength to the Legion numbers. If ex-Servicemen held aloof from the British Legion, what encouragement was there for the rest of the community



The fire which destroyed Pit House, near Farley Green, on Tuesday.
[Photo] [D. E. H. Box.]

children to occupy recently until they could find other accommodation. At the time of the fire, however, this portion of the house was empty.

A considerable number of personal belongings were lost in the fire, and Mrs. Grestreux is particularly concerned over the destruction of several valuable pictures which were hung around the landing. Among these was a family portrait by Sir Peter Lely which was of great sentimental worth.

to look after ex-Servicemen who needed help? It was as an example to the rest of the community that he appealed to men who were standing outside to come in and help. He could not help thinking that as time went on they would get more and more men joining their ranks, and he hoped they would come in with the high ideals that inspired the Legion—ideals of loyalty to the King and the Empire and of comradeship with one another. They should show an example to the rest of the community of comradeship and of a desire for peace. Knowing what war was, ex-Servicemen should be able to look at their

HISTORIC HUNTING-BOX DESTROYED.

July 1929

Surrey Times
20 July 1929

Lost portrait by
Sir Peter Lely of
Miss Howlett, an
ancestor of Mrs.
A. R. Greatrex



Believed to have been built in the reign of King John, Pitt House, Shamley Green, was destroyed by fire on Tuesday. For news story, see page 9.

[Photo by Harold G. Bailey.]

BIG BLAZE AT SHAMLEY GREEN. 20/7/29

Historical House Destroyed.

MYSTERIOUS OUTBREAK IN SECLUDED SPOT.

Pitt House, a secluded country house nearly two miles from Shamley Green, was gutted by a mysterious fire which broke out in the upper floor of the house at about 10.30 on Tuesday morning.

Guildford Fire Brigade received a call to the fire, and were quickly in attendance under Chief Officer G. Hickman. Little could be done except the salving of furniture owing to the inaccessibility of the property. The house lies in a valley between two steep hills, and can only be approached by a narrow path quite a mile in length, and there is no water available.

The house is of considerable value, and some articles of worth are missing, including a portrait by Sir Peter Lely, a quantity of plate and old books.

AN ANCIENT HUNTING BOX.

The house is an extremely interesting one and of considerable antiquity. It is believed to have been built in the time of King John and it was certainly standing in the early part of the sixteenth century. In 1739 it was extended and improved with a noble frontage, and became a hunting box fre-

quently occupied by the Dukes of Northumberland. Recently it was sold, together with other parts of the ducal estates, and subsequently was purchased by Miss May Key, of Dulwich.

It has of late years been separated into three portions. At the time of the fire the west end was unoccupied, and the centre portion was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Greatrex, whilst the remaining section had just been vacated by Mr. Stead, a temporary caretaker.

Warning of the fire was given first by Mrs. Greatrex's dog. Noticing that the animal was sniffing and appeared extremely uneasy, Mrs. Greatrex opened a door so that it might go out. It refused to leave the house, but continued sniffing and barking. Its owner then went into the garden and noticed smoke issuing from the roof of the eastern portion of the residence. At first no notice was taken of the smoke, for, as Mrs. Greatrex told a 'Surrey Times' representative, the Stead family had only just left the premises, and she concluded that they had been burning rubbish.

Later, however, Mrs. Greatrex added, I realised that the smoke was getting stronger and that it was a more serious matter. I immediately rushed to Manor House Farm and telephoned for the police to give me assistance, leaving my husband to remove certain articles of sentimental value from the house. When I returned the fire was very much worse and the house was well alight. Several of the men from Manor House Farm had preceded me and had assisted my husband in the removal of a great deal of the furniture, but there were certain things we could not save and which could never be replaced.

VALUABLE PICTURE LOST.

We had stored in a loft a quantity of pictures and valuable books on medical subjects and languages which had belonged to my son when he was a medical student. I was hoping that another son who is a Rector in Lincoln would have made use of these articles and was keeping them for him. A large

and was keeping them for him. A large quantity of silver plate is also missing. One object which I had prized very much was a portrait by Sir Peter Lely, the Elizabethan painter, of a Miss Howlett, who was an ancestor of mine. The picture has always remained in my family and was one of my mother's cherished possessions. We have also lost a carved oak desk which was very valuable. It was too heavy and bulky to move.

Mrs. Greatrex paid a high tribute to the fire brigade and others who assisted in salving the furniture under considerable danger. 'I am particularly grieved,' she added, 'because the old place has been my home for 30 years. My mother lived there until she died, and my husband and I have since occupied the centre portion of the house. I have no idea at the moment where we shall go. We may go to Treetops, where we have friends, for a time, and we may get a hut. Everybody has been remarkably kind and we have had shelter offered us in several homes.'

A MASS OF FLAMES.

A graphic description of the fire was given by Mr. Henry Denham, a gardener at Mayor House, who, in company with Mr. J. Walsh, Mr. J. Boxall and Mr. Albert Tanner, who are also employed at Mayor House, helped to remove the furniture. 'When we arrived,' Mr. Denham said, 'all the ceilings in the upper part of the house were ablaze. You could see right through them as the flames travelled along the beams and rafters. Tiles were continually falling and all the furniture in the bedrooms was destroyed. The beam supporting the roof fell to the floor a mass of flames and burnt its way through until it collapsed on to the ground floor. We had a narrow escape when a piano we were moving became jammed in the doorway. The ceiling was going up and down above us and we expected that the blazing beam might fall through at any moment. If it had, it would have been all up with a fireman who was working behind us, and we could not have got away. Fortunately, we got out in time and the piano was saved. The firemen worked hard saving the furniture with flames all round them after Mrs. Greatrex had dissuaded us from entering the house again.'

FIRE BRIGADE HELPLESS.

One of the firemen said, 'We could do nothing. There was no water available, which was a dreadful handicap, and we could not bring the engine within a mile of the house because there is only a footpath. All we could do was to salve as much of the furniture as possible and then watch the house burn. The task was somewhat difficult, as tiles were continually falling, and there was a large amount of old timber which was so dry that it burnt very rapidly.'

Our representative found Mrs. Stead a short distance from the house on a hill, where she and Mr. Stead had spent the night. She was surrounded with furniture, which had been moved out of the house and was to be collected and conveyed to their new home. Mrs. Stead explained that the furniture was moved out of the house on Monday, as they had received notice to quit. It was temporarily taken to the common, as it could not be collected until the following day.

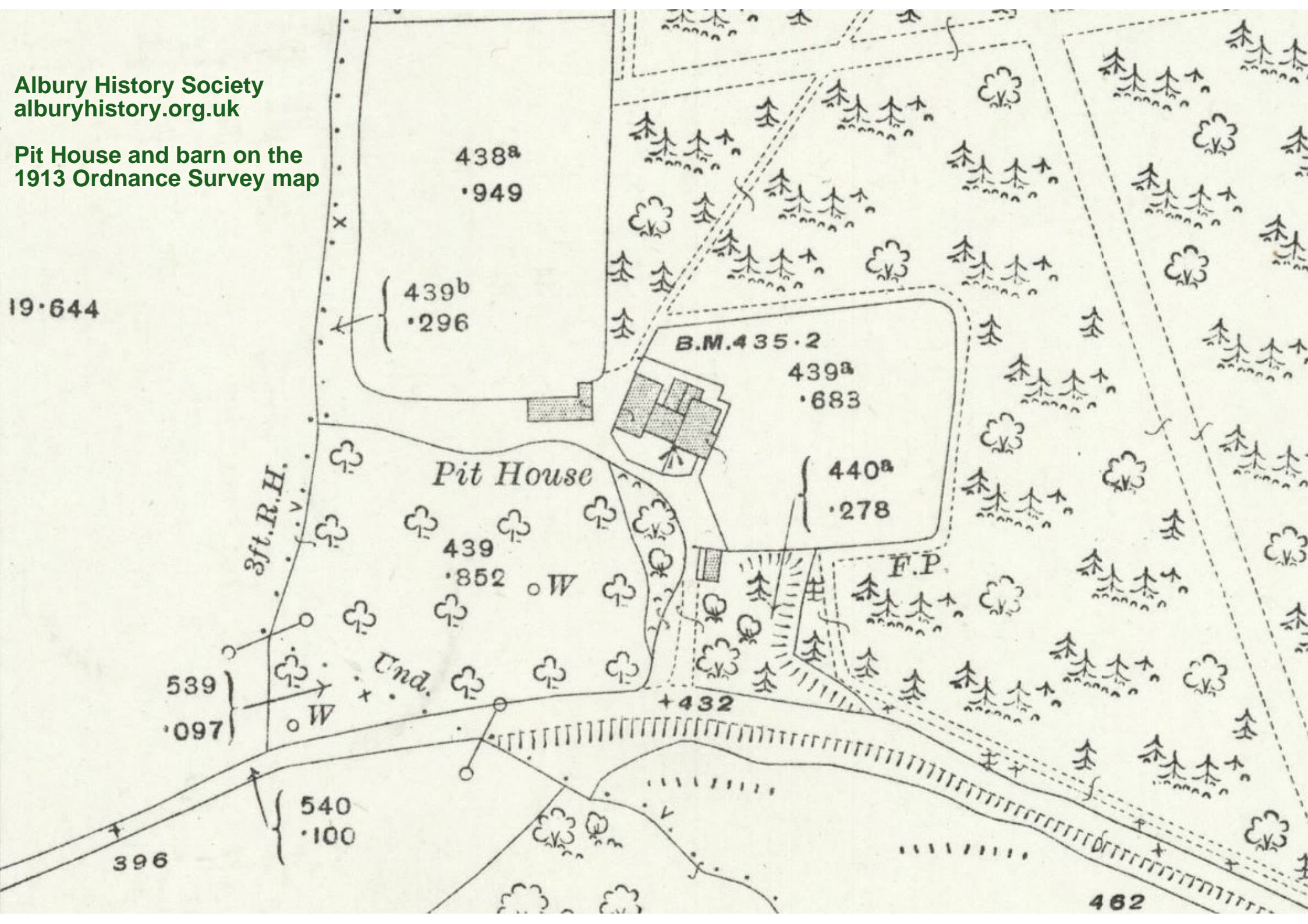
Mrs. Stead said that the first she knew of the outbreak was when the men passed her on their way from Mayor House to Pitt House. 'I could not believe it,' she said, 'when they told me the house was on fire. It was all right when I left it this morning. We moved our furniture out yesterday and I went down this morning to make some tea and clear up a bit. I lighted a fire to burn some rubbish and swept the floor. When I left there was only a little dust in the grate.'

FORMER TENANT'S THEORY.

'I can only think that the fire must have started in the loft where Mrs. Greatrex kept some of her things. She used to call it the "rat room" because it had been infested with rats. There was no window in the room and we had to use candles whenever I helped her, as occasionally I did, to move the stuff about and clean up. Somebody might have gone up there this morning and dropped a match or upset the candle, and thus started the fire. I don't know. When I locked up and gave the key to Mr. Greatrex there was no signs of a fire.'

Late in the day the fire was still smouldering, and intermittent crashes came from the falling masonry. The roof had gone and most of the woodwork had fallen easy prey to the conflagration. A swarm of bees driven out by the heat buzzed angrily round a corner of the building as if loath to leave the scarred ruins.

Pit House and barn on the
1913 Ordnance Survey map



Pithouse HER record SHHER_MSE2335 with incorrect fire year:

Recorded as probable home of William ate Putte in 1294 and also frequently mentioned as a freeholding of Albury Manor owned by the Chennell family for several generations. Named Pit House Farm on the 1839 Albury Tithe map. Rebuilt as a mansion in the 1922 and burned down in 1928, after which the site was abandoned. A visit in 1995 by a member of Surrey Archaeological Society found the remains of a garden wall, house walls, cellars and foundations, as well as greensand blocks and brick, a well and small garden and orchard enclosures.

Pit House particulars appearing in the 1922 Albury Estate Sale as Lot 76a

76.	Arable	4 1/2 acres	£135	Mr. Wall
76a	Pit House. 3 Tenements.	4 acres	£730	Mr. French
76b.	Woodland	13 1/2 acres	£450	Mr. French

76a Pit House 4 acres. Georgian Hs. 3 recp. & P. C. 5 beds. 2 cellars
3 Woods. Wash. Lobby. 2 Hrs. 2 Pns.
Mrs Scott. Mrs Small. Mrs Hemphill. £4. £3.10.0. £4.0.0.
Shook, 6/- . Timber £24. Land 4/11. Title 13/2.

land, £135; Mr. Wall. Lot 76a: A Georgian residence, known as Pit House, converted into three tenements, with about four acres of land, about 1 1/2 miles from Shamley Green. The house contains a fine old staircase, sold to Mr. French, £730. Lot 76b: About 13 1/2 acres of