

Department of Continuing Education, University of Oxford

**PICTURESQUE URBAN PLANNING -
TUNBRIDGE WELLS AND THE SUBURBAN IDEAL
The Development of the Calverley Estate 1825-1855**

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Abstract

This study addresses the development of the English suburb in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Its proposition is that suburbs were where people wanted to live, and not just to avoid the dirt and disease of the city. They had an appeal beyond the practical. Whether it was a feeling of security, independence, oneness with nature, or of living in 'a place apart', there was an emotional, culturally-conditioned attraction.

The specific focus is on the development of the Calverley estate in Tunbridge Wells. The point is not that Calverley was typical, but that it represented a suburban 'ideal'. It was created by a London developer, John Ward, to be just such a 'place apart', an idyllic retreat for a wealthy metropolitan middle class.

The study starts by considering Ward's 'vision' for Calverley. Ward had been a major investor in Regent's Park. The study suggests that Calverley, with its 'picturesque' landscape setting, mirrored the fantasy world created by John Nash in Regent's Park. In Calverley, though, Ward and his architect, Decimus Burton, built individual houses in gardens, a model for what was later to become 'a universal suburbia'.

A second section considers what attracted Ward's customers. It suggests four influences: the notion of the Picturesque; historical associations; idealised visions of the countryside; and the appeal of certain architectural styles.

The final part then examines those customers in more detail. They were not drawn from the existing residents of Tunbridge Wells, but were metropolitan/cosmopolitan incomers (70% of them women). They could have lived anywhere. The study uses five themes of suburban historiography: movement, control, separation, withdrawal and identity, to show how they moulded the physical and social space around them to further achieve their ideal; to create, in the words of one advertisement, this 'enviable little English Elysium'.

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Abbreviations

CERC	Church of England Record Centre
ERO	Essex Record Office
ESRO	East Sussex Record Office
FWPC	Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery, Tunbridge Wells
JSAH	Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians
JUH	Journal of Urban History
KAS	Kent Archaeological Society
KHLC	Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
RTWCS	Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society
TNA	The National Archives
TUNWM	Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery
TWBC	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Archives
TW Ref Lib	Tunbridge Wells Reference Library
VO	Valuation Office
Impr Comm Minutes	Minutes of the Tunbridge Wells Improvement Commissioners (TWBC)

Picturesque Urban Planning – Tunbridge Wells and the Suburban Ideal The Development of the Calverley Estate. 1825-1855

Introduction

0.1 Preface

In the Annual Soane Lecture of November 2000, Prof J. Mordaunt Crook talked of 'that phenomenal change in the evolution of urban planning which we now conveniently term Picturesque'.¹ The lecture was entitled *London's Arcadia* and its subject was the development of Regent's Park between 1810 and 1830. Crook's objective was to demonstrate the pragmatism of John Nash, the supervising architect, in adapting to changing economic and political circumstances. The key point about the development, though, this 'phenomenal change in urban planning', was the move away from terraces to individual villas for urban and suburban housing. In practice there were only eight villas in Regent's Park, surrounded by grand 'palace-fronted' terraces. As Crook pointed out, it was only in miniature, in the peripheral developments of Park Villages East and West, that Nash's Picturesque vision was fully realised. These, though, with their 'variety of styles, their irregularity of plan, their coy self-consciousness ... turned out to be prototypes of a universal suburbia'.²

Nash was not the only such innovator. Over more or less the same period, roughly 1825 to 1836, two veterans of Regent's Park, the investor John Ward, and the architect Decimus Burton, were developing Calverley Park in Tunbridge Wells. This, too, has been recognised as an important marker for future suburban development. John Archer, the American architectural historian, called it 'Perhaps the most effectively executed marriage of country and city';³ while Terence

¹ J.M. Crook, *London's Arcadia. John Nash and the Planning of Regent's Park* ([London], 2001), p. 1.

² Ibid. p. 26. The phrase 'universal suburbia' should not be taken too literally: suburban development has taken different forms even in neighbouring countries. Robert Fishman contrasts, for example, the mid-nineteenth century development of Haussmann's boulevards in Paris with the preference for individual suburban villas around London. R. Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: the rise and fall of suburbia* (New York, 1987), pp. 103-116. The present study focuses on the English experience.

³ J. Archer, *Architecture and Suburbia: from English villa to American dream house, 1690-2000* (Minneapolis, 2005), p. 213.

Davis, biographer of John Nash, considered it 'the finest predecessor to all garden suburbs'.⁴

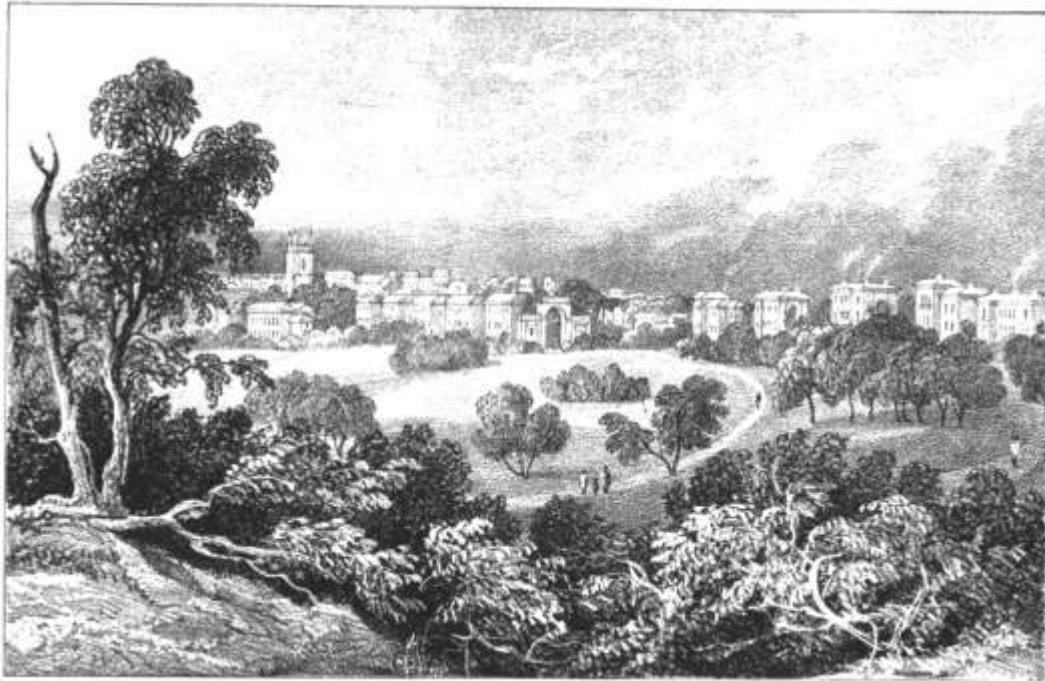


Figure 1. Calverley Park 1831 – individual houses in a parkland setting. Source: J. Britton, *Descriptive Sketches of Tunbridge Wells and the Calverley Estate* (London, 1832), p. 54.

Few national or international historians, however, have looked at Calverley in any detail. This study seeks to fill that gap. The widespread references to Calverley in the literature of suburbia would be justification enough, but this study has a further proposition. While John Summerson said (of Dyos and Camberwell) 'to take one suburb and scrutinise it, take it apart and minutely describe its components, is to learn ... about suburbia itself',⁵ there are features of Calverley in particular that can contribute to an understanding of a wider 'suburban ideal'.

The idea that suburbia might be idealised has not always resonated with commentators. F.M.L. Thompson, while accepting that suburbia 'represented [where] a great many people wanted to live', nevertheless considered that 'it is not necessary to admire it'. To him it was an 'unlovely,

⁴ T. Davis, *Tunbridge Wells. The Gentle Aspect* (Chichester, 1976), p. 54. Davis was perhaps not unbiased, as he lived in Calverley Park, but then what better demonstration of his belief?

⁵ J. Summerson, 'Foreword', in H.J. Dyos, *Victorian suburb: a study in the growth of Camberwell* (Leicester, 1961), p. 9. Elizabeth McKellar cites F.M.L. Thompson making a similar point about Hampstead 'scrutiny of any one of the satellites may yield clues about the development of the whole system', E. McKellar, *Landscapes of London: the city, the country and the suburbs, 1660-1840* (New Haven and London, 2013), p. xiii.

sprawling artefact of which few are particularly fond'.⁶ Thompson's collection of essays *The Rise of Suburbia* is essentially economic history. Yet in developing Regent's Park, with its Corinthian pilasters and serpentine lake, Nash and his builders were not addressing the economics of housing need, expressed in square footage and travel times. They were satisfying a dream on the part of their customers, of a different way of living, away from the ordinary. One benefit of studying Calverley is to pick up these non-economic motivations.⁷ The appeal of Calverley was largely that of Tunbridge Wells as a whole – picturesque, rustic and Romantic; and is available for study in a wide range of guide books and travellers' accounts.

Calverley also encourages a consideration of the very nature of suburbia. Thompson was working to a rather tight definition. He excluded dormitory towns, urbanized villages and infilling.⁸ Suburbia, though, can be defined in a number of ways, based variously on topography, style, social make-up; and sometimes the definitions are contradictory. Thompson considered Hampstead a possible prototype suburb geographically, but its varied appearance and diversified social life disqualified it on other grounds.⁹ Andrew Saint, though, ignored the urban feel of the West End estates in favour of location, for 'to deny them suburban status is to define the suburb in terms of style'.¹⁰ Donald Olsen found a compromise: 'While undeniably suburbs ... Bayswater and Kensington were never 'suburban''.¹¹ Most English commentators would agree that there must be some parent 'urbs' - as in H.J. Dyos' definition of suburb as 'a decentralised part of a city with which it is inseparably linked';¹² yet an American view might be to see it simply as a

⁶ F.M.L. Thompson, 'Introduction: The rise of suburbia', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982), pp. 23, 2.

⁷ Non-economic on the part of the customers. The developers were certainly intent on financial return. One objective of this study is to demonstrate how the developers used these non-economic motivations to increase sales.

⁸ Thompson, *Suburbia*, p. 2. He was making the distinction mainly to justify a cut-off date of 1945, and does accept that the 'social complexions of the[se] communities' are not so very different from earlier suburbs.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 8.

¹⁰ A. Saint, 'The Quality of the London Suburb', in J. Honer (ed), *London Suburbs* (London, 1999), p. 12.

¹¹ D. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (London, 1976), p. 163.

¹² Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 22.

synthesis offering the benefits of both city and countryside.¹³

It might be argued that Tunbridge Wells was a 'leisure town' rather than a suburb, and indeed that was its function in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even then, though, its defining characteristic was its relationship to London – close enough (for the wealthy) to be accessible, but sufficiently distant and different to offer that element of 'otherness'. Elizabeth McKellar hints at this in her 2013 study of the 'environs of London in the long eighteenth century'. She speaks of a 'novel landscape arising ... out of the consumer society of the metropolitan middle classes ... which created something neither city nor country ... a new suburban culture in which dwelling, leisure and commerce were all intertwined'.¹⁴ That is the context in which Calverley was created, and in which the elements of the suburban ideal might be examined.

¹³ Eg. J. Archer, 'Country and City in the American Romantic Suburb', *JSAH*, 42/2 (1983), p. 156.

¹⁴ McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. xiv.

0.2 Scope and Focus of the Study

The proposition, then, is that people wanted to live in the suburbs, and that this was not just for sensible, practical reasons like avoiding the dirt and disease of the city. There was an emotional, culturally-driven attraction, and this attraction might be exploited by developers.

The suggestion that houses are bought on their emotional appeal is hardly new. Perhaps the proposition is rather that this attraction should be taken seriously; that it is helpful not to find the appeal unfathomable, as did the Stones, who were surprised at merchants who bought a country seat as 'an act of purely personal self-gratification', perhaps 'to please their wives', rather than to join a landed elite;¹⁵ or to consider it irresponsible, as does Tristram Hunt, who blames the lack of a strong civic culture in northern cities on those who prefer 'a detached home with a garden on monotonous, Barratt-style housing estates'.¹⁶

A similar distinction between the practical and the emotional was identified in the field of industrial sociology in the 1960s: in Herzberg's two-factor theory of workplace satisfaction. Herzberg distinguished between 'hygiene' factors, such as reasonable pay, that simply reduce job dissatisfaction; and 'motivators', such as recognition and responsibility, that increase satisfaction.¹⁷ In terms of suburban housing, the hygiene factors might include cleanliness, security, and sufficient space – necessary but not sufficient; while the motivators would perhaps be a romantic, picturesque or high status setting. The present study suggests that looking at the motivators, the attractions of the suburb, rather than the problems of the city; and starting from the assumption that people wanted to live in the suburbs, rather than them being a second-best option; provides a different perspective on their development.

The further proposition is that the Calverley development in Tunbridge Wells between 1825 and

¹⁵ L. and J.C.F Stone, *An open elite? : England, 1540-1880*, Abridged edn. (Oxford, 1986), p. 100. See also p. 191.

¹⁶ T. Hunt, *Building Jerusalem, the Rise and Fall of the Victorian City*, Paperback edn. (London, 2005), pp. 477-8.

¹⁷ See F. Herzberg, *Work and the Nature of Man* (London, 1968).

1855 provides an especially useful case-study. The point is not that Calverley was a typical suburb; Jonathan Meades, writing of the present town of Tunbridge Wells, said ‘The disposition of its buildings and the delightful peculiarities of certain of its set pieces are, I believe, *sui generis*’,¹⁸ but that there were elements of Calverley that point to a suburban ‘ideal’. Calverley was not an organic development like the earlier piecemeal growth of individual suburban villas around London. Neither was it a paternalistic estate village, such as Blaise and Somerleyton. It was a planned, commercial (speculative) enterprise, by a London-based developer, John Ward, and his architect Decimus Burton. In *Paradise Planned*, Robert Stern, the American architect and academic, suggests that it was in these planned suburbs, rather than in picturesque estate villages that ‘a new typology, at once urban and arcadian, really began to take form’.¹⁹ The London connection was significant but was not new – the initial development of Tunbridge Wells in the 1680s was led by Thomas Neale, Master of the Royal Mint, and developer of Seven Dials and Shadwell.²⁰ Indeed the London connection has always been a fundamental part of Tunbridge Wells’ function and identity.²¹

What was particularly significant was the earlier involvement of Ward and Burton in the development of Regent’s Park. It introduced them to the world of architectural make-believe: John Nash’s stage-set of palace-like terraces and picturesque parkland; and the realisation that the setting was as important as the house. Setting was key to the appeal of Calverley: both its natural setting of heath and valley; and the make-believe social world of Tunbridge Wells, built up over two hundred years. The houses were important too, and particularly the move, noted by Mordaunt Crook, to a suburban typology of individual detached and semi-detached homes in their own gardens. Donald Olsen claimed that the speculative builder – ‘responding with some

¹⁸ J. Meades, ‘Villa triumphs’, *The Times* (4 Dec. 2004), p. 26.

¹⁹ R.A.M. Stern, D. Fishman, and J. Tilove, *Paradise planned : the garden suburb and the modern city* (New York, 2013), p. 19.

²⁰ C.W. Chalklin, *Royal Tunbridge Wells: a history* (Chichester, 2008), p. 21.

²¹ That Tunbridge Wells, alone among the Kentish electoral districts, voted ‘Remain’ in the 2016 referendum, is an indication of its continuing metropolitan consciousness.

sensitivity' - built the kind of London that middle-class Londoners desired²² and the same is true of Calverley. Decimus Burton produced designs that were novel, but, as the study will suggest, he and Ward were alert to what their customers preferred, and adapted their 'offer' accordingly.

The Calverley development started in about 1825, so it is logical to start the study at that point. The choice of 1855 as an end date is more arbitrary. John Ward died that year, though his personal influence was by then perhaps limited, and Decimus Burton was no longer involved. The first phase of development was well-established, and the shape of succeeding development was becoming clear. At times the study uses the 1861 and 1871 censuses to demonstrate the social make-up of those later developments, but essentially the focus is on those first thirty years. The second half of the century saw continued development, with the population of the town growing threefold. The suburban ideal of 1900 might well have been different from that of 1850, and to track it into those later years would be interesting, but is beyond the resources of this study.

Given the period and the subject matter, the study is necessarily focused on the middle class(es), and especially on the 'middle-middle' and 'upper-middle'. They had the greater freedom to choose where to live, and the resources to consider more than simply financial factors. In Archer's words they 'set the terms of the discussion and the debate'.²³ It was a middle class defined by income, rather than by family background or occupation, so it was a far from homogeneous group (*pace* Raymond Williams).²⁴ Calverley differed from many developments in that the producers were also middle class. The obvious contrast is with the development of Eastbourne by the Dukes of Devonshire, and of Edgbaston by the Calthorpe family, described by David Cannadine. Cannadine suggests that Tunbridge Wells was created by the aristocratic Abergavenny family but that is an over-statement – Chapter 1.3 of the study will demonstrate

²² Olsen, *Victorian London*, pp. 28-9.

²³ Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 204.

²⁴ R. Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York, 1973). Williams declined (eg p. 110) to distinguish between landowners with landed and with mercantile backgrounds, as they both practised capitalist agriculture, to the detriment of the labourers.

how the Abergavenny developments simply followed the Ward example.²⁵ There is an argument, noted in the Literature Review below, that the suburbs were deliberately intended to secure middle-class privilege. The study looks rather for a suburban ideal that might apply to all people, while accepting that the means to achieve it were unequally distributed.

Two points need to be made. Both relate to the concept of the 'suburban ideal' – a combination of ideas that drew people to the suburbs. Chapter 2.2 makes reference to a discussion on whether part of this appeal – the attractions of a particular type of landscape - is innate rather than cultural, part of the human condition. The actual proposition is rather more circumspect: that there was an appeal about the suburb that attracted many people, but not that it was universal: the study itself demonstrates that there were those who preferred to live in urban terraces. The second point develops from that proposition that the suburban ideal is culturally constructed: it will therefore differ in place and time. Reference has already been made to the contrasting urban/suburban development of Paris and London; the focus here is on England. In terms of period, the study is concerned primarily with the first half of the nineteenth century but with the suggestion that the suburban ideal identified in that period did in fact persist, being represented in inter-war suburban development, and in contemporary 'Barratt-style housing estates'. Reference will occasionally be made to the American experience: Archer, Fishman, and others identify similar cultural influences there, but that is not a primary focus.

Finally, there is Mordaunt Crook's comment about Picturesque Urban Planning, which provides part of the title. The term 'Picturesque' positions the study neatly in both historical time and the historiographical discourse. However, although the ideas of the Picturesque are an important part of the study, the subject of the paper is not the Picturesque as such, but the idea and experience of the Suburb.

²⁵ D. Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967* (Leicester, 1980), p. 63. The Nevill family, Earls of Abergavenny in the period of the study, were major landowners to the south of Tunbridge Wells.

0.3 The Idea of the Suburb

What, then, is a suburb? Arthur M. Edwards suggested in 1981 'it is a place where... the breadwinner sleeps but does not work, where houses are set in gardens, but where the streets have kerbs'.²⁶ The definition is imprecise but immediately recognisable, and it is broadly the one used by this study.²⁷ It should be said that Edwards, like Thompson above, disliked the appearance of the suburb 'at best dull, and at worst hideous'.

Commentators looking for the historical roots of the suburb cite the zones just outside city limits (in both a physical and a legal sense).²⁸ Southwark is the usual example, but Trastevere (Rome) and Oltrarno (Florence) had similar cross-river positions, and within England one might note Elvet, Framwellgate and Gilesgate clustering around the old city of Durham.²⁹ While it is perfectly valid to use the term 'suburb' for such early settlements, their economic function (they were often industrial) and their social composition (the very poor) were rather different from the later residential suburbs which are the subject of this study. They would, though, fit into one fairly obvious, geographical, definition used by Dyos: 'a decentralised part of a city with which it is inseparably linked'.³⁰

There are other bases for definition: functional, social, and aesthetic. Edwards' definition, above, has a functional element: 'where the breadwinner sleeps but does not work', and Thompson talked of 'separation of residence and workplace'.³¹ Again it is a fairly understandable definition, though problems arise when precision is attempted. It has been suggested that a level of 10% commuting defines a suburb,³² but to assume that separation of workplace from residence

²⁶ A.M. Edwards, *The Design of Suburbia: a Critical Study in Environmental History* (London, 1981), p. 1.

²⁷ John Stilgoe has a definition of his American suburbs 'distant enough from cities to be free of pigeons' J.R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: origins of the American suburb 1820-1939* (New Haven and London, 1989), p. 11.

²⁸ For example Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, pp. 20-1, 34-6 and McKellar, *Landscapes* p. 2.

²⁹ The legal status of such areas can be complicated. Some of the examples given were boroughs in their own right, and Elvet may have pre-dated the city of Durham. Their later development, though, was as adjuncts of the city.

³⁰ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 22.

³¹ Thompson, *Suburbia*, p. 2.

³² M. Waugh, 'Suburban Growth in North West Kent 1861-1961' (unpublished PhD thesis, London?, 1968)

implies daily travel between them is perhaps a little too literal. 'Separation' might be temporal rather than spatial, and the gap between employment and residence might be measured in years – for those in retirement; or generations – for those living on inherited wealth. The idea of a qualifying percentage, however, does recognise that there are usually people employed within the suburb: shopkeepers, professionals, and so on, supporting those whose income comes from elsewhere.

The functional definition being based around employment, might lead to the suggestion that the suburbs are for living and the city for working (and administration and entertainment). Yet the reality is that people do live in urban areas. Population density might be a better criterion of suburbia. Dyos dismissed its application to nineteenth century Camberwell as 'quite unrealistic',³³ yet seemed to use just such a consideration when deciding that by the end of the century it was 'increasingly difficult to think of most of the parish in any but purely urban terms'.³⁴ Density is clearly linked to housing type. Dyos had defined the 'single family dwelling' as a feature of the suburb, and most of the parish was made up of single-family dwellings, but they were in terraces. This suggests a simple rule: flats are urban,³⁵ terraces are inner-suburb and houses (detached and semi-detached) are outer-suburb, as with Calverley.

Population density was identified as one of the key features of a suburb in K.T. Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier*. It is a reminder that the US suburban tradition shares many features with the English. Jackson, for example, talked of a shared 'British-induced cultural dislike of cities'.³⁶ This study would represent it rather as a cultural idealisation of the countryside, reflected in the

p. 25, cited by T.M. Rawcliffe in 'Bromley: Kentish market town to London suburb, 1841-1881', in Thompson, *Suburbia*, p. 80.

³³ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 21. He was referring to a map produced by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in 1944. He may have been objecting to the specific density figures they used, rather than the concept.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 193.

³⁵ Though Andrew Saint points out that flats were popular in suburban Maida Vale and St John's Wood, Saint, *London Suburbs*, p. 18.

³⁶ K.T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The suburbanisation of the United States* (New York and Oxford, 1985), p. 7. One might question his use of 'British' rather than 'English'.

greenery of the outer-suburbs, but also in the smaller gardens of the inner-suburbs. This is the 'aesthetic' dimension of the suburban definition.

Finally there are social factors: class and a sense of community (or lack of it). Class is a major feature of Robert Fishman's suburban thesis in *Bourgeois Utopias*,³⁷ with social aspiration part of the motivation and social segregation the desired result. Other historians have questioned how far this was achieved: 'the nineteenth century suburban reality was a social patchwork'.³⁸ It depends on the size of the area being studied. The supposed absence of community is less a definition of the suburb than a criticism of it, as in the suggestions of 'social sterility' which Edwards addresses in *The Design of Suburbia*.³⁹ Dyos cites Sir Walter Besant in similar vein (writing of South London in 1899) 'It is a city ... without a centre ... it has no newspapers ... it has no colleges ... its residents have no local patriotism'.⁴⁰ While it might well be possible to dispute each of Besant's specific claims, the bigger point is that South London, and the other suburbs, were part of the greater community that was London.

This present paper looks to a definition of suburb combining a number of these factors. A suburb has a parent urbs 'to which it is inseparably linked', and which provides identity, services, and employment. A core segment of the suburban population does not make its living in the suburb itself: they may be commuters, rentiers, or retired. Suburban housing is typically detached or semi-detached, leading to a low population density; and the suburb seeks to recreate the appearance of the countryside yet is not In the countryside: as Edwards said 'the streets have kerbs'. That last point, or perhaps the last two points, are the most germane to the claim of this paper, that the suburbs had an appeal beyond the practical. Whether it was a feeling of safety, independence, oneness with nature, or a sense of 'otherness', there was an emotional aspect.

³⁷ Fishman, *Utopias*.

³⁸ Thompson, *Suburbia*, p. 20.

³⁹ Commenting on the claims by eg Stephen Taylor of a 'suburban neurosis', Edwards suggests that it was the break-up of established social networks, rather than the particular conditions in the suburbs that caused the problem: 'once they have settled down, people seem to be as happy or as miserable in suburbia as they would be anywhere else. Edwards, *Design of Suburbia*, p. 247.

⁴⁰ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 26.

The gardens were not just Picturesque but Edenic.

0.4 Literature Review

Suburbs have not always been considered a worthy subject for study. John Summerson provided a short chapter about them in *Georgian London* (1945) but commented on the absence of any serious analysis, saying it was ‘an urgent task for topographical students’.⁴¹ J.M. Richards’ *Castles on the Ground* (1946) may not have been quite what he intended. Richards was trying to understand the success of the suburbs so that modern architecture, which he supported, might be made equally popular. His underlying assumption, not unlike the proposition of this paper, was that the suburb seemed to satisfy the instincts and ideals of ‘ninety out of a hundred Englishmen’.⁴² His purpose, though, was misunderstood: his attempt to analyse the attraction of the suburb, was taken as an apologia for them. F.J. Osborn (progenitor of New Towns), was dismissive, unable to accept that Richards’ ‘suburban vernacular’ of ‘barge-boarded villas’ might represent what customers really wanted. He thought instead that ‘tasteful architecture would be welcomed’ if presented properly, a disregard for common tastes that was far from unusual.⁴³

The first detailed historical study was published in 1960: *Victorian Suburb: A study of the growth of Camberwell*, by H.J. Dyos with an enthusiastic foreword by Summerson. The subject then flourished for half a century with urban historians (like Dyos), architectural, economic, social and cultural historians, all bringing their own particular insights.⁴⁴ The following notes pick out some of the main threads, and suggest four main themes: Process, Form, Motivation and Experience. Process and Form are susceptible to analysis and explanation; Motivation and Experience provide opportunities for debate. All feature to some extent in the study.

In *Victorian Suburb* Dyos described in detail how local estates in Camberwell were developed:

⁴¹ J. Summerson, *Georgian London*, New edition, ed. H.M. Colvin (New Haven, 2003), p. 336. He was later to claim that his essay on the suburban villa in *The Unromantic Castle*, written in 1948, ‘was I think the first attempt to take the subject seriously’. J. Summerson, *The Unromantic Castle and other essays* (London, 1990), p. 7.

⁴² J.M. Richards, *The castles on the ground: the anatomy of suburbia*, 2nd edn. (London, 1973), p. 17.

⁴³ In a review in *The Spectator* (31 Jan. 1947), p. 22. See also, J. Kelly, ‘Classic Book Review: JM Richards’ *Castles on the Ground*’, *C20 Magazine*, 2013/3.

⁴⁴ And behind Dyos and other urban historians there was a large hinterland of research by urban geographers and students of town planning.

the nature of the leases, the provision of finance, the organisation of the building trades. He called it 'the obstetrics of suburban development'.⁴⁵ It was essentially Process and it addressed three of the four questions he had set himself. With the fourth: 'who inhabited [the suburbs]?' he was less successful, partly due to the limited information then available, but perhaps also to his preferred tools: 'there is no substitute ... for a careful scrutiny of maps and plans ... and surviving buildings'.⁴⁶ Increasing access to census data allowed later studies to include more analysis of the inhabitants, their occupations and origins. In 1982, for example, Thompson noted that many suburban dwellers had moved in from the countryside. He regretted, though, that 'the new suburban dwellers left no body of records of their life styles, their cultural outlook, or their motives'.⁴⁷ It was difficult, therefore, to assess their attitudes and aspirations, and to explain their Motivation.

Thompson was able, nevertheless, to conceive how a suburban dweller might have been attracted by a garden as representing some ideal of the countryside. Involvement at this human level was lost as research became more statistical, theoretical, and focused on the city. Living conditions in the slums became the focus, and blame for them was put on the suburb. In 1989 Richard Rodger wrote that 'the suburb was a spatial device which inoculated the middle class against the hazards of the city without requiring them to relinquish their political control over it',⁴⁸ which is not unreasonable as an explanation of Motivation; but that the suburbs were 'a consciously developed cog in the mechanism for maintaining, consolidating and defending political power' starts to sound like conspiracy theory. The debate has, by and large, moved on since then.

Even when stripped of political determinism, the explanation of Motivation often involves class. Dyos, for example, said 'To define the suburb is ... rather like defining the middle classes who

⁴⁵ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 84.

⁴⁶ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 169.

⁴⁷ Thompson, *Suburbia*, p. 15.

⁴⁸ R. Rodger, *Housing in urban Britain 1780-1914* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 42.

virtually created ... them'.⁴⁹ In 1976 Donald Olsen highlighted the desire for the 'maximum of privacy and the minimum of outside distraction', but social homogeneity was also key.⁵⁰ Robert Fishman provided a summary of the overall suburbanisation process in *Bourgeois Utopias* (1987). He acknowledged the increasing wealth of the mercantile and urban middle class as a factor, but, applying the work of social historians like Davidoff and Hall,⁵¹ he emphasised the effect of social and cultural changes. The family was becoming an emotional rather than an economic unit, and there was the influence of Evangelical Christianity: both encouraged a withdrawal from the city.⁵² Fishman is used in the study to represent this 'traditional' suburban historiography – Part Three takes elements from *Bourgeois Utopias* as themes for debate.

To turn to architectural history: Peter Guillery wrote in 2004 that 'houses are principally interesting because people live in them'.⁵³ When reviewing Guillery's book Peter Borsay said 'To urban historians the observation might seem unexceptional, even banal. To many architectural historians his comment would be incomprehensible.'⁵⁴ His point was clear if a little brutal: there were architectural historians who addressed the social aspects, but in general their focus, reasonably enough, was on Form. They came to the suburb, and the garden suburb in particular, via a very specific route: from country house by way of landscape garden and villa. It is not surprising that Regent's Park was a focus of their attention from Summerson onwards: it combines architecture and landscape, celebrity, politics and the whole Picturesque urban/rural conundrum. Suburbs in general though, held less appeal. Mark Girouard recognised their importance in 1990, saying that changes at the start of the nineteenth century were 'momentous for towns and cities all over the world',⁵⁵ but in a book of 313 pages, he allowed only 21 lines to

⁴⁹ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 22.

⁵⁰ Olsen, *Victorian London*, p. 214. Olsen was generally positive about the suburbs, but even he could be dismissive: 'Golders Green may be the price we have to pay for Hampstead' (p. 25).

⁵¹ In, for example, L. Davidoff, and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850* (London, 1992).

⁵² Fishman, *Utopias*, pp. 33 *et seq*, 213 (note 27).

⁵³ P. Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London* (New Haven and London, 2004), p. 10.

⁵⁴ P. Borsay, 'Why are houses interesting?' in *Urban History*, 34/2 (Aug. 2007), p. 338.

⁵⁵ M. Girouard, *The English Town* (New Haven and London, 1990), p. 283. He was referring to the

the 'inner suburbs': 'They are by no means without their qualities, but it can be a relief to move ... to the sturdy simplicity of the ... northern mill towns'.⁵⁶ There is an unhappy resonance in that comment, of statements about the honest countryman validated by toil, but there may be a simple explanation. Dyos described suburbia as 'an expressionless half-urban steppe' and Summerson had earlier complained about 'inchoate and remote "dormitory suburbs"'.⁵⁷ In his foreword to *Victorian Suburb* Summerson spoke of 'making ... without creating', and an 'absence of creation' that was clearly a problem to him.⁵⁸ Looking to understand the act of creation, architectural historians perhaps found little to study in seemingly creator-less suburbs.

If that were so, they were side-stepping a change in the historiographical landscape that 'shifted the focus of scholarship from the producer to the consumer'.⁵⁹ Historians, it was said, needed 'to understand the creation of cultural meaning and reception beyond a consideration of the artists' intentions'.⁶⁰ The meaning that a reader (consumer) took from a given text, picture or building was culturally conditioned. The reader might be unaware of this, but unpacking these systems of meanings gave the historian an insight into the workings of society. What some historians saw were systems of control. There were concerns about this approach: David Watkin suggested that the 'sociological approach ... is not without dangers for the art historian',⁶¹ and perhaps Ann Bermingham was a little too uncritical in applying the theories in *Landscape and Ideology* (1986). Speenhamland, as she suggests, may well have functioned to protect the landowner against a loss of power,⁶² but might reasonably be seen as an ad-hoc and understandable response to

separation of workplace from residence.

⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 264-5. Though he does have a useful chapter (pp. 279-288) on the development of garden suburbs.

⁵⁷ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 21. Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 343.

⁵⁸ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 9. He did say that the absence of creation was not only a horror but a fascination, but his conclusion that the creation was 'brutish, involuntary' suggests that it was not something that the architectural historian might find rewarding.

⁵⁹ D.M. Abramson, 'Commercialisation and backlash in late Georgian architecture', in B. Arciszewska and E. McKellar (eds.), *Articulating British Classicism...* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 146.

⁶⁰ E. McKellar, 'Architectural History – the invisible subject', *The Journal of Architecture*, 1/ 2 (1996), p. 161.

⁶¹ D. Watkin, *The English vision: the picturesque in architecture, landscape and garden design* (London, 1982), p. 200. He also said that the sociological approach 'has its usefulness'.

⁶² A. Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: the English rustic tradition 1740-1860* (Berkeley and London,

poverty in the countryside.⁶³ On the other hand, Dana Arnold's statement, that 'the aesthetic vocabularies of antiquity and arcadia were appropriated ... in the furtherance of the social and cultural hegemony of the ruling elite' seems more reasonable.⁶⁴ Robert Kerr, in 1864, included 'Importance' (ie the impression of stateliness or majesty that the building would impart) as a factor to be considered when choosing an architectural style.⁶⁵

These developments relate to Experience, and the Experience of space was central to the theories of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau.⁶⁶ While their actual propositions are rather technical and they tend to the Manichaeian, considerations of space can be a useful tool for the historian. There was the post-war idea of Townscape, a way of reading physical space which Pevsner linked with the urban Picturesque.⁶⁷ The richer concept is of social space. In 1982, David Cannadine demonstrated the limitations of maps and censuses when trying to navigate social groups: the subjective differentiation made by contemporaries was much more complex.⁶⁸ Thus Richard Cobb described Tunbridge Wells as having 'elaborate if unstated hierarchies of class relations of considerable subtlety'.⁶⁹ Cobb's memoirs give a personal view of the town and its class relations in the 1920s (though one mediated by his training as a historian) – how useful would such an account be from the 1820s. (Ironically his accounts of physical space, which should be more straightforward, are difficult to follow as he confuses the points of the compass.) For space on a grander scale one might look to the historical geographers Brandon and Short,

1986/7), p. 79.

⁶³ Even Raymond Williams allows this interpretation. No admirer of the landowner, he was perhaps less driven by theories. Williams, *Country and City*, p. 182.

⁶⁴ D. Arnold, *Rural Urbanism. London landscapes in the early nineteenth century* (Manchester, 2005), p. 1. James Anderson was sceptical – hungry rioters would not have been impressed. J. Anderson, 'Marylebone Park and the New Street...' (PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute, 1998), p. 20.

⁶⁵ R. Kerr, *The Gentleman's House Or, How to Plan English Residences from the Parsonage to the Palace* (London, 1864), p. 360 et seq.

⁶⁶ H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991). M. de Certeau, 'Walking in the City', in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1984), pp. 91-110.

⁶⁷ See N. Pevsner and M. Aitchison (ed), *Visual Planning and the Picturesque* (Los Angeles, 2010).

⁶⁸ D. Cannadine, 'Residential differentiation in nineteenth-century towns: from shapes on the ground to shapes in society', in J.H. Johnson and C.G. Pooley (eds.), *The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities* (London, 1982), pp. 235-251.

⁶⁹ R. Cobb, *Still Life. Sketches from a Tunbridge Wells Childhood* (London, 1983), p. xii.

and the impact on the Weald of 'the gigantic presence ... of London'.⁷⁰

A symposium in 2011 considered the future of architectural history in the face of these developments. The tone was thoughtful: the discipline was 'institutionally in crisis'. Mordaunt Crook declared that his previous work was 'methodologically redundant'.⁷¹ Yet the worst, he felt, may have passed: 'the humanities in general have been re-focused; away from the abstractions of literary theory – thank goodness – and towards the specificity of material form'. 'We are now free: free to do different things.' Some architectural historians had sought to adapt to the new dispensation. In *Reading Architectural History* (2002), Dana Arnold provided a primer for bringing together the 'canonical' and the 'theoretical'.⁷² John Archer sought to apply the new techniques and perceptions in an article about Leasowes that same year, with textual and morphic analysis, gender and identity.⁷³ Both are perhaps a little forced, but a collection of essays in 2004,⁷⁴ which sought to apply these 'alternative histories' towards an understanding of classicism, was praised for 'using lenses such as commercialisation, social reform, gender, and colonialism'.⁷⁵ Borsay suggested that this 'revisionist agenda' would make architectural history more accessible to urban historians.⁷⁶ Some continued to present their research in a more traditional way: Honer's collection of essays *London Suburbs* (1999), for example, is eminently accessible.⁷⁷

To adopt Crook's more optimistic tone, and to borrow a term from the architecture of the nineteenth century, the study of the suburb is now in an eclectic phase: 'free to do different things'. Graeme Davison's 2013 article 'The Suburban Idea and its enemies' shows that the subject is still current, though he has few citations from the recent past (and his concentration

⁷⁰ P. Brandon and B. Short, *The South East from AD 1000* (Harlow, 1990), p. 2.

⁷¹ J.M. Crook, 'Architectural History at Oxford: Past and Future', in M. Airs and W. Whyte (eds.), *Architectural history after Colvin: the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain Symposium, 2011* (Donington, 2013), pp.106,107.

⁷² D. Arnold, *Reading Architectural History* (London, 2002).

⁷³ J. Archer, 'Landscape and Identity: Baby Talk at the Leasowes, 1760', *Cultural Critique*, 51 (Spring, 2002), pp. 143-185.

⁷⁴ B. Arciszewska and E. McKellar (eds.), *Articulating British Classicism: new approaches to eighteenth-century architecture* (Aldershot, 2004).

⁷⁵ L.M. Soo, Review of 'Articulating British Classicism', *JSAH*, 65/3 (Sep. 2006), pp. 449-451.

⁷⁶ P. Borsay, 'Why are houses interesting?', pp. 342-3.

⁷⁷ J. Honer (ed.) *London Suburbs* (London, 1999).

on escape from the city runs rather counter to the argument of this paper).⁷⁸ It is encouraging therefore to see other recent works. Stern's *Paradise Planned* (2013) belongs to a town-planning rather than a historical debate – seeking to encourage the future use of the garden suburb, but it nevertheless provides a useful historical summary. 'Activist' writing like this has long contributed to the discussion: Rasmussen's *The Unique City* (1934), and Olsen's *Town Planning in London* (1964) were both intended to influence planning policies.⁷⁹ One notes that Davison was writing from an Australian university, and that Stern is an American architect (and Olsen too was American). It is a reminder of the importance of Americans to suburban historiography, and of the importance of suburbs to America, and Australia. Fishman writes that 'Americans have been convinced that it was they who invented suburbia', and Davison that Australia is 'one of the most suburbanized societies on earth'.⁸⁰ The present study makes use of a number of American sources, mainly from the 1980s: John Archer, Kenneth Jackson, Robert Fishman and John Stilgoe, not so much to understand suburban development in America, but for their insights into earlier English developments.

Of other recent works, Daniel Maudlin's *The Idea of the Cottage* (2015) and *Tudoresque* by Ballantyne and Law (2011) both look at the culturally-conditioned appeal of architectural styles – a topic addressed in Part Two of this study.⁸¹ The latter, in particular, provides a response to F.J. Osborn's 1947 comment quoted above about the 'suburban vernacular' with its 'barge-boarded villas'. Mireille Galinou's detailed study of St John's Wood: *Cottages and Villas* (2010), and Andrew Saint's more focused *Bedford Park, Radical Suburb* (2016), both address the question of what was the first garden suburb.⁸² It is Elizabeth McKellar's *Landscapes of London*, though, that best confirms the currency of the suburban debate, and demonstrates the eclectic approach to

⁷⁸ G. Davison, 'The Suburban Idea and Its Enemies', *JUH*, 39/5 (Sept. 2013), pp. 829-847.

⁷⁹ S.E. Rasmussen, *London: the unique city*, Rev'd edn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1982). D.J. Olsen, *Town Planning in London. The Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries*, 2nd edn. (New Haven, 1982).

⁸⁰ Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 14. Davison, 'Suburban Idea', p. 829.

⁸¹ D. Maudlin, *The Idea of the Cottage in English Architecture, 1760 – 1860* (Abingdon, 2015). A. Ballantyne and A. Law, *Tudoresque: in pursuit of the ideal home* (London, 2011).

⁸² M. Galinou, *Cottages and Villas: the birth of the garden suburb* (New Haven and London, 2010). A. Saint, *Bedford Park, Radical Suburb* (London, 2016).

treating it. She works on a broad canvas, yet fills it with incidents of telling detail: from the civic and ceremonial to the domestic and seemingly inconsequential. Her suggestion that little is known about the outer parts of her London landscape, 'something of a socio-economic vacuum',⁸³ is perhaps a justification for the present study.

⁸³ McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. xiii.

0.5 Methodology and Structure

The objective of the present study then is to use the specific example of Calverley to consider the development of a 'suburban ideal' in this early part of the nineteenth century. The method is to use the 'freedom to do different things' to apply a variety of lenses to the examination; to learn from architectural, urban, economic, social and cultural historians, but to be governed by the sources: testing theories rather than demonstrating them. In looking specifically at Calverley, the study also benefits from the work done by local historians over the last fifty years.

The study is presented in three parts, all addressing the central idea of the 'suburban ideal', but each with a distinct focus, and its own internal structure. Each might be read in isolation, except that Part One presents background information which is then assumed by Parts Two and Three.

Part One - 'Building the Houses', or 'The Suburban Ideal 'Planned'', explains what was built, when, how and by whom, addressing Process and Form and providing a framework for the other two, more discursive, parts. Part One, though, has its own discursive intent. While the general proposition is that people moved to the suburbs to achieve their 'ideal', Calverley is an example of a suburb being deliberately created to provide that ideal. The study positions Calverley firmly within the context of Regent's Park. While Decimus Burton's connection with Regent's Park is well-known, previous commentators have not appreciated the involvement there of the Calverley developer, John Ward.⁸⁴ The significance of this involvement is that Regent's Park demonstrated to Ward the importance of setting – of creating 'a place apart'. The availability of land for development at Calverley was fortuitous, but Ward saw in it a natural landscape equivalent to the artificial world of Regent's Park. The difference between Regent's Park and Calverley was in the buildings: palace-fronted terraces in the one case, individual houses in

⁸⁴ References to Calverley are typically based on Christopher Hussey's 1969 articles in *Country Life*. The articles have valuable insights and are discussed in Part One - Introduction below, but they have a limited understanding of Calverley's origin. C. Hussey, 'Calverley Park, Tunbridge Wells', *Country Life*, 145/3765-6. (1 and 8 May 1969), pp.1080-3, 1166-9. An earlier series of articles on Tunbridge Wells is also relevant: C. Hussey, 'Old Towns Revisited, Tunbridge Wells, Kent', *Country Life*, 144/3742,3,5 (21 and 28 Nov., 12 Dec. 1968), pp.1324-6, 1404-6, 1594-7.

gardens in the other – part of Mordaunt Crook’s ‘phenomenal change in the evolution of urban planning’. The study suggests that both were rejections of the sombre urban terraces of the later eighteenth century, but it was the ‘houses in the park’ that became the suburban ideal. Part One uses the as-yet uncatalogued ‘Ward papers’⁸⁵ to illustrate the development process: the initial plans in the 1820s; followed by a period of uncertainty in the 1830s; and the eventual acceptance of the ‘houses in the park’ model in the 1840s. The final section shows how this model was then carried forward in later developments. Donald Olsen was quoted above as saying that the speculative builder built the kind of London that middle-class Londoners wanted, and the same can be demonstrated in Tunbridge Wells: in ‘residential parks’ similar to Calverley; in a more piecemeal development on land owned by a Land Society; and even in Model Cottages for the ‘labouring classes’. Part One could be labelled ‘producer-centric’; an alternative view might be of a negotiation between developer and customer to deliver the suburban ideal that the latter desired.

Part Two, ‘Building the Image’, turns to the consumers and what it was that attracted them. It starts by demonstrating that the marketing of Calverley was a professional operation, with elements of branding, media management and celebrity endorsement. That should not be surprising, for the wider Tunbridge Wells ‘brand’ had been successfully ‘puffed’ for nearly two hundred years. The study looks at the material used to do this: guide books, histories and souvenirs. These were designed to attract wealthy and fashionable visitors to the town, and these were the same customers at whom Calverley was targeted: the wealthy metropolitan middle class - Calverley was never intended to provide homes for the local Tunbridge Wells population. Part Two then considers four areas that might have been part of a wider suburban ideal: the idea of the Picturesque; Romanticism; the appeal of the countryside; and specific

⁸⁵ KHLC U2737. Some 700 documents. The Ward papers are at present uncatalogued and not generally available for study. Philip Whitbourn used some of them in the 2nd edition of his monograph on Decimus Burton in 2006, and included the plans and elevations reproduced here, but had limited space to develop the story. P. Whitbourn, *Decimus Burton Esquire, Architect and Gentleman (1800-1881)*, 2nd edn. (Tunbridge Wells, 2006), pp. 59-75.

architectural styles. For each of these, it considers what the suburban historiography would suggest, and what appears to have been the national discourse at the time. It seeks to look beyond the usual references, so it cites Leigh Hunt as well as John Ruskin, Miss Mitford as well as Miss Austen. It then looks for evidence of those ideas in the advertising materials mentioned above and in the letters or memoirs of those who came to the town, to demonstrate that they were indeed part of the attraction. Part Two is the 'suburban ideal' as it was 'imagined'.

Part Three 'Building the Community' considers the people who came to Calverley – their identity and behaviour. It uses four principal sources. The first might be called a prosopographical model of the residents. This was based on a trawl through all sources, official and private, for any reference to anyone living in Calverley; followed by the use of genealogical tools, particularly Ancestry.com, to identify their geographical and social backgrounds. Previous studies were limited to explaining that most of the residents were 'living on own means': it is now possible to identify the origin of those 'means'. It should be noted that there were two distinct zones within Calverley: the 'suburban' residential area of 'houses in the park'; and a 'commercial' area with shops and houses for support workers. These latter, who are termed 'economic incomers', were vital to the success of the Calverley project, but they are not the subject of the study, which focuses rather on the 'suburban incomers'. The second source is the official records for the period held in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council archive, plus histories, and occasionally official records, of other local institutions. The third is local newspapers, though these are limited for most of the period; and the fourth is private papers: letters, journals and wills of residents and visitors. The objective of Part Three is to understand who the incomers were, and how they moulded the social and physical space around them to create their ideal. It is structured around five themes of suburban historiography: 'Movement' (geographical origin), 'Control' (local government), 'Separation' (residential segregation), 'Withdrawal' (into the home, though the focus is on 'engagement' rather than 'withdrawal') and 'Identity' (class); and considers how each of these was reflected in the Calverley experience. Part Three, then, is about groups and spaces:

the 'suburban ideal' as it was 'experienced'.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ The labels attached to the three Parts of the study: 'planned', 'imagined' and 'experienced', are deliberately differentiated from those used in Lefebvre's three-part analysis of space: 'le conçu' (conceived, official, planned space); 'le perçu' (perceived, everyday space as it is experienced); and 'le vécu' (which literally means 'lived' but seems to be used for idealised images of space). Lefebvre, *Production of Space*. The parallels are there but they are unintentional: the study does not claim to be applying or testing Lefebvre's theories.

0.6 Orientation

Before leaving this introductory section it is as well to establish some basic facts regarding the geography and history of Tunbridge Wells.

Tunbridge Wells is some thirty-five miles south-east of London, situated in an area of slightly higher ground called the High Weald. The nearby town of Tonbridge⁸⁷ is much older. Tonbridge developed around an eleventh-century castle built where the road from London to the Channel ports of Hastings and Rye crossed the marshy Medway valley. For more than two hundred years, under the Clare family, Tonbridge played a significant role in national affairs, but then declined into little more than a market town.

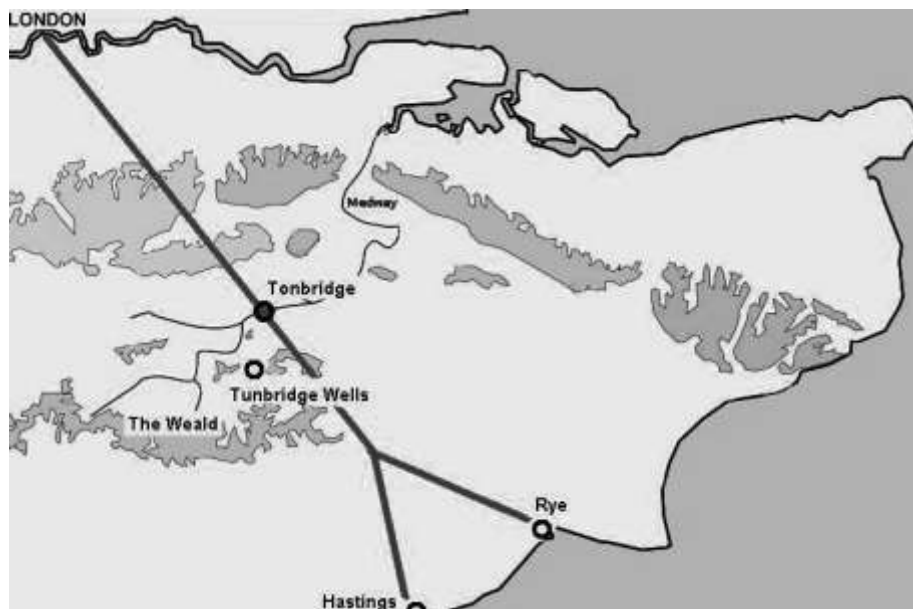


Figure 2. Position of Tunbridge Wells - 35 miles from London, in the area of the 'High Weald'. Source: author.

Tunbridge Wells is more recent. Like Regent's Park it was an artificial creation, developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a spa town, serving the Court and City of London. It is set in an irregular landscape of heath and woodland, which was part of the appeal when a chalybeate spring was discovered in 1606 and visitors started arriving.

For more than 150 years Tunbridge Wells was one of England's premier watering places, second

⁸⁷ Originally Tunbridge - the new spelling dates from the mid to late nineteenth century. The modern spelling is used throughout the study to help distinguish between the two settlements. The pronunciation is the same.

only to Bath, though the two were very different. There was no grand architecture in Tunbridge Wells; rather its attraction lay in its rustic nature. A visitor in 1749 wrote: 'We are not confined here in streets; the houses are scattered irregularly, and Tunbridge Wells looks, from the window I now sit by, a little like the village you see from our terrace at Sandleford, only that the inhabitants, instead of Jack and Joan, are my Lord and Lady'.⁸⁸ Fanny Burney, in 1779, noted: 'Tunbridge Wells is a place that to me appeared very singular ... every part of it is either up or down hill ... and the houses, too, are scattered about in a strange, wild manner, and look as if they had been dropped where they stand by accident, for they form neither streets nor squares, but seem strewed promiscuously'.⁸⁹

The birds-eye view below is from 1718, though there was little change in the next hundred years. It illustrates how the principal parade – the Walks⁹⁰ (marked 1 on the picture) - with the spring, the assembly room and shops, lay in a valley with open countryside on three sides. The only other development was the adjacent hamlet of Mount Sion (2), and a line of houses along the horizon at top left – Mount Ephraim (4). The area between the Walks and Mount Ephraim was the Common (3), which was protected from development by Act of Parliament in 1739. Mount Pleasant, which was to be the core of the Calverley development, is represented by the house marked 'Esq Strongs' on the horizon at top right (5).

⁸⁸ Mrs Elizabeth Montagu to Rev Mr Friend, cited in L. Melville, *Society at Tunbridge Wells. In the Eighteenth Century – and after* (London, 1912), p. 201-2.

⁸⁹ F. Burney, *The Diary of Fanny Burney*, ed. by L. Gibbs (London, 1940), p. 41. Cited in S. Brown, *Tunbridge Wells in Literature ...* (Tunbridge Wells, 2008), p. 61. (Many of these literary quotations are also in Melville, as above.)

⁹⁰ Called at various times, the 'Walks', 'Parade' and 'Pantiles'. Pantiles (the current name) is used in this study.

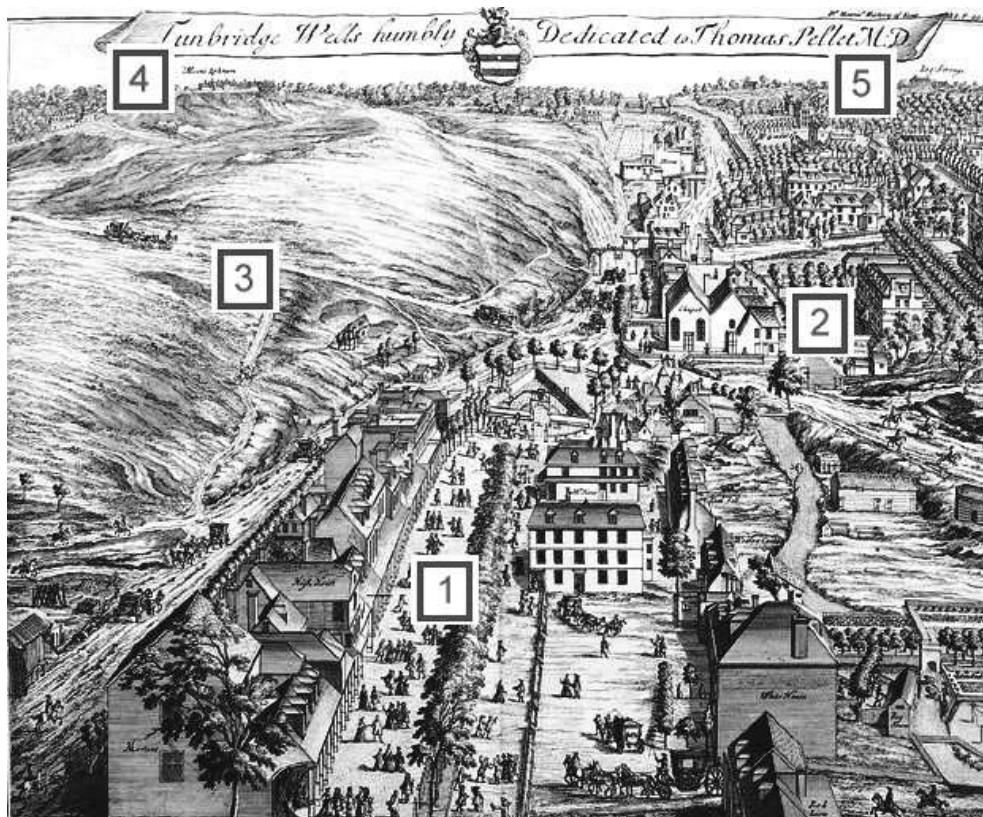


Figure 3. Birds-eye view of Tunbridge Wells, 1718. Source: T. Badslade, engd. J. Kip, from J. Harris, *The History Of Kent* (London, 1719). Reproduced from J. Cunningham (ed.), *An Historical Atlas of Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 2007), pp. 20-21.

'1' – The Walks or Pantiles, '2' – Mount Sion, '3' – The Common, '4' Mount Ephraim, '5' Mount Pleasant.

By the end of the eighteenth century the 'town'⁹¹ was facing competition from seaside resorts, and newly-fashionable inland resorts like Cheltenham. There does not seem to have been a fall in the number of visitors, rather a change in their activities. There were fewer public balls and concerts, but more private entertaining, and some of the visitors took up permanent residence. By 1800, though, the population was still only about 1,000. There was some development in the early decades of the nineteenth century, but the big change came with the arrival of John Ward in 1824.

The map below displays more or less the same area as the bird's-eye view, though as it was in 1832. The western boundary of Ward's land is marked, showing its relationship to the rest of the town and giving an indication of its extent. This western section was the part that was developed

⁹¹ It had no official identity until 1835, and lay on the borders of three parishes: Speldhurst, Tonbridge and Frant. It was usually described as a collection of hamlets, though 'town' is used here for convenience. Even today Jonathan Meades considers 'town', 'an epithet whose validity is moot', though he is stretching a point. Meades, 'Villa triumphs'.

in the period of the study, though Ward's land stretched a further two miles to the east.

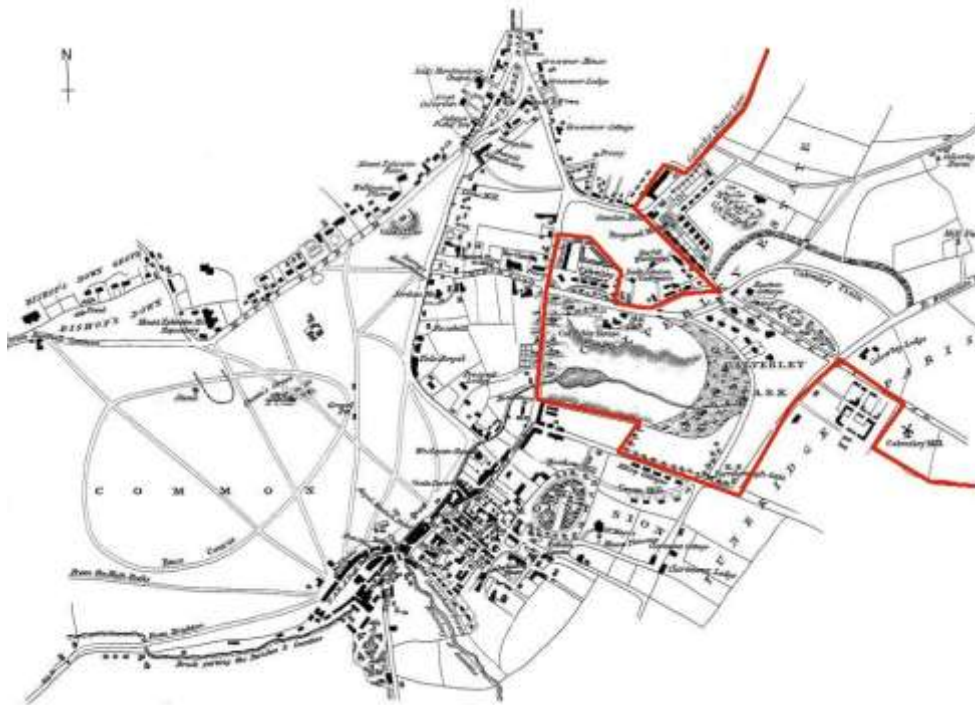


Figure 4. Tunbridge Wells 1832, showing the western boundary of the Calverley estate. Source: author, based on 'Billings' map in Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*.

It may be worth repeating here that Calverley did not develop as a retreat for the middle class of Tunbridge Wells. Like the spring and the visitor attractions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was created to serve a metropolitan market. As Part Three will demonstrate, only one resident of 'suburban' Calverley in the period of the study originated in the town itself.

Note. Within the study the single word 'Calverley' is used to indicate the land owned by John Ward (the Calverley estate) and the development of it as examined here. While useful for the purposes of the study, the word was not used in that sense at that time, nor is it at present.

Calverley Road and Calverley Park are well-known to present-day residents but 'Calverley' itself has no meaning other than as short-hand for the Calverley Grounds – a public park created in the 1920s in the 'picturesque' valley below Calverley Park.

Part One. Building the Houses - the Suburban Ideal 'Planned'

Introduction

At the start of *Georgian London* John Summerson makes the claim that a town 'like a plant or an anthill', 'is a product of a collective, unconscious will, and only to a very small extent of formulated intention'.¹ His point, in general, is a good one. Calverley, though, was to a very large extent, a 'formulated intention', a work of conscious will by a team who set out specifically to realise a suburban ideal by creating a Picturesque suburb in the Weald of Kent. Part One of the study explains the background and inspiration of that scheme; it examines the early plans and shows how they evolved in line with customer preferences; and it demonstrates how the idea of the 'houses in the park' went on to become the preferred model for later suburban development.

The discussion starts with a brief review of what architectural historians have said about Calverley. John Newman calls it 'suburbia's *beau idéal*, lavish with space, architecturally solid but not pretentious'.² He describes the architectural style: 'the idiom is spare, relaxed and remarkably homogeneous ... Great play is made with verandas; the roofs are low, on deep bracketed eaves', but the main point is that it is a group of individual houses in a parkland setting 'arranged in a rough semicircle, looking down ... the landscaped slope of Mount Pleasant.' In 1954 H-R Hitchcock identified it as 'probably the finest extant example' of the 'proto-garden-suburb'.³ Contemporaries of Hitchcock were more interested in the charms of its 'Regency' architecture. Reginald Turnor, writing of Tunbridge Wells in 1952, said 'the atmosphere ... is of Regency romanticism',⁴ and when George Hooper painted five watercolours of the town for the wartime 'Recording Britain' scheme, they all represented this 'Regency' ideal, with canopies and

¹ Summerson, *Georgian London*, pp. 1-2.

² J. Newman, *West Kent and the Weald*, 2nd edn. with corrections (London, 1980), p. 623. He is referring here specifically to Calverley Park, which he considers 'the *clou* of the whole ... great Calverley scheme'. The distinction is explained in Chapter 1.1 below.

³ H-R. Hitchcock, *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain* (New Haven, 1954), p. 449.

⁴ R. Turnor, *The smaller English house. 1500-1939* (London, 1952), p. 109.

delicate ironwork.⁵ Terence Davis, in 1975, was still enthusiastic about ‘modest but charming pairs of stuccoed Regency villas’.⁶

More recent emphasis has been on Calverley’s place in the evolution of the ‘garden’ or ‘Picturesque suburb’. David Watkin (1982) called it an ‘Arcadian’ scheme, using only half the site so that the houses overlooked each other as little as possible, with views into an attractively landscaped valley below (though he did add that they were ‘Designed in quietly asymmetrical Greek and Italianate styles’).⁷ John Archer in 2005 made no reference to architectural style. To him the importance was that they were ‘secluded, detached villas in relatively isolated and segregated private estates’.⁸ He too, commented on the picturesque nature of the landscape. Stern, following in 2013, described Calverley as ‘a self-contained community’ and ‘a middle-class village’ which is perhaps a misunderstanding, but ‘detached and semidetached houses separated by hedgerows for privacy ... with open space in front’ is accurate.⁹

The ‘houses in the park’ typology and the picturesque views, then, are clearly recognised as distinguishing features of Calverley. Christopher Hussey gave a more perceptive account in a series of *Country Life* articles in 1968-9. He followed the usual line in claiming that Calverley was ‘a landmark in English domestic architecture’, ‘the only example of the *genre* that was completely realised’ (the *genre* being Nash’s early unfulfilled proposal for villas in Regent’s Park), and he praised Burton’s architecture which displayed a ‘restrained eclectism’.¹⁰ His main point, though, was that it was Tunbridge Wells as a whole that was the ‘prototype garden city’. He claimed that it demonstrated ‘some surprisingly early precedents for modern town-planning

⁵ V&A Prints & Drawings. E.1681-1949, E1683-1949 – E1686-1949. One of the pictures is named simply ‘Regency House’. It is no. 2 Mount Ephraim Road, which was probably built about 1840. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O596794/regency-house-tunbridge-wells-watercolour-hooper-george/> (24 Apr. 2017).

⁶ Davis, *Tunbridge Wells*, p. xv.

⁷ Watkin, *English Vision*, p. 189.

⁸ Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 215.

⁹ Stern et al, *Paradise Planned*, p. 28. ‘Self-contained’ is probably taken from Hussey’s 1969 *Country Life* article (Hussey, ‘Calverley Park’, p. 1080) but Hussey goes on to explain how Calverley was just one part of the whole which was Tunbridge Wells (see following paragraph above).

¹⁰ Hussey, ‘Calverley Park’, pp. 1166, 1080, 1168.

devices': the garden-city concept of 'neighbourhoods', the idea of a town penetrated by wedges of country, a consciously planned 'landscape suburb', and a pedestrian shopping precinct.¹¹

Hussey was highlighting certain physical similarities between Calverley/Tunbridge Wells and the twentieth century 'garden city' rather than suggesting that it was designed with similar purpose, but his point was well-made: to limit the focus to Calverley itself is to miss the topographical and historical significance of the wider setting.

The various sources quoted above confirm the earlier claim that Calverley has a recognised place in suburban historiography; and they all point to the individual houses in a low-density parkland setting, with Hussey in particular identifying the importance of the wider natural setting. There is little explanation, though, of how it all came about, little explanation of either Process or Motivation. Part One of the study provides that explanation. It demonstrates that Calverley was a deliberate attempt, for commercial reasons, to satisfy the desire of a metropolitan middle class for a different way of living. It was the realisation of their suburban ideal.

Part One is presented in three chapters. The first explains the background to the scheme, how it was inspired by Nash's vision of Regent's Park, how the land was acquired, and what the initial designs looked like. The second explains the development process, suggests that there was a period of some uncertainty, but that the model of the 'houses in the park' was eventually established. The third chapter explains how that model was then applied in the later expansion of the estate and in developments in other parts of Tunbridge Wells.

¹¹ Hussey, 'Old Towns Revisited', p. 1324.

1.1 Calverley – the Intention

Calverley, then, was a ‘formulated intention’, a work of conscious will. Chapter 1.1 examines the background to this intention, and explains the nature of the development that was proposed.

That Calverley was a commercial initiative by metropolitan investors for a metropolitan market has not always been appreciated. Hussey, as above, suggested simply that there was ‘a landowner with vision’.¹ Christopher Chalklin, in an otherwise detailed analysis of developments in early nineteenth-century Tunbridge Wells, called John Ward a country gentleman whose source of wealth was not known.² Contemporaries, however, were quite clear about his status. A letter to the *Maidstone Journal* complained about:

... the sudden appearance of a rich London Merchant; who banged his tremendous purse about the heads of some dozen or so of the old inhabitants, who forthwith fled and left him in full possession of their ancient abodes. These were swept away at one breath of the enchanter³

This chapter explains how this rich London merchant came to take full possession of the place (there was little actual sweeping away of ancient abodes). It is presented in four sections. The first provides a brief outline of John Ward’s background, and uses his home in Marylebone as an example of the existing urban model which the ‘houses in the park’ model was to reject. The second, ‘Inspiration’, explains his exposure to John Nash’s stage-set architecture in Regent’s Park, and the awareness that this brought of an un-met demand for an idealised way of living. The third, ‘Opportunity’, shows how Ward saw the potential for development in Tunbridge Wells and put together the land-holding that was to become Calverley ‘banging his tremendous purse about the heads ... of the old inhabitants’. The fourth, ‘Vision’, examines Ward and Burton’s plans for Calverley: their ‘formulated intention’; and how Nash’s model of palace-fronted terraces was

¹ Hussey, ‘Old Towns Revisited’, p. 1324.

² C.W. Chalklin, ‘Estate Development and the beginnings of modern Tunbridge Wells’, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, C (1984), p. 393. Chalklin is a noted urban historian, but also has close links to Tonbridge. His undergraduate thesis (Oxford, 1960) was ‘A Kentish Wealden Parish (Tonbridge) 1550-1750’. Hussey, too, had a local connection: the family home at Scotney (see Chapter 2.2 below) is about eight miles away.

³ *Maidstone Journal* (23 July 1833).

transformed into picturesque villas.

1.1.1 Background

John Ward (1779-1855) was a successful London merchant. His father, William Ward, had established himself as a linen draper ('draper' in the sense of a wholesale merchant) in Basinghall Street in the 1770s. John and his brother, Samuel Neville Ward, built up the business and expanded into insurance. They seem to have withdrawn from business prior to 1820. Their commercial premises had remained in the City – Cateaton⁴ and Coleman Streets, but the brothers had moved into the suburbs: John to Tooting and Samuel Neville to Balham. (A description of their respective suburban journeys forms part of Chapter 3.1.)

In 1820 John Ward moved to 20 Devonshire Place in Marylebone. The house was at the northern edge of the Portland estate and bordered the 'New Road' – the main road from Paddington to Islington which had been established in the 1750s. Summerson considered the New Road 'the uttermost northward boundary of fashion'.⁵ The word 'fashion' is significant: Marylebone was part of the West End - had Ward crossed the line between 'commerce' and 'persons of quality'? Ward's house in Devonshire Place was a typical urban terrace of the later eighteenth century. It is presented below as an example of what the 'houses in the park' model was to replace. It was already suburban in one sense: for most residents, these eighteenth-century developments in West London represented a separation of workplace and residence, though there was little of the rustic about their immediate setting, and population densities were high. The uniform appearance – see Figure 5 below - was the result of three influences: architectural fashion, economics, and the constraints of the London Building Acts. The economics meant that the houses were narrow, long and tall; while the Building Acts prohibited wooden decoration, elaborate cornices for example, as a fire hazard. The design idiom, according to Summerson, went back to the classicism of Inigo Jones, based on proportion and modulation and very little

⁴ Now Gresham Street.

⁵ Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 196.

ornamentation.⁶ Internally, the narrow sites provided little option but to adopt a fairly standard layout - one room front and back with stairs to one side. To Summerson: 'There is no escape from it'.⁷ (Burton and Guillery suggest that six distinct layouts were used for terraced houses, but conclude that by the end of the eighteenth century the standard 'Summerson' model was probably the most common.)⁸



Figure 5. Devonshire Place in 1793. Looking south from the New Road. Source: A clipping from *Bellamy's Picturesque Magazine* 1793, City of Westminster Archives by permission, A07A2734, Ashbridge 160/DEV. Ward occupied the end house on the left.

The formal arrangement of the houses, in a grid pattern without green spaces (see below), epitomised what 'Picturesque urban planning' was to react against. A commentator, in a caption to the image above, sought to be positive:

These piles of building, which unite beauty with convenience, have arisen within these few years, and are at once proofs of the opulence and taste of the nation. Though neatness, rather than magnificence, have been consulted by the builders, they do not fail to produce, on the whole, a grand effect.⁹

⁶ Ibid. p. 18.

⁷ Ibid. p. 50.

⁸ N. Burton and P. Guillery, *Behind the Façade: London House Plans, 1660-1840* (Reading, 2006), pp. 14-23.

⁹ The writer is unknown. The text is taken from a clipping in City of Westminster Archives from *Bellamy's Picturesque Magazine*, which was published in 1793 (see Figure 5). The illustration and the text also appeared, without attribution, in *The European Magazine* in December 1801 (Vol. 40, p. 408).



Figure 6. Left: Typical house in Devonshire Place (no.15). Right: Grid of streets forming the Portland Estate, Ward's house identified. Source: R. Horwood, *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster ... 1792-99*. By permission of the British Library. Reproduced from www.romanticlondon.org/explore-horwoods-plan (9 May 2017).

Simple 'neatness', though, was losing its appeal. By 1820 such terraces were being dismissed by James Elmes as 'the eternal *two windows, iron railing, and a door – two windows, iron railing, and a door*'.¹⁰ He considered them selfish for not providing pleasure to the observer. Newer development took one of two directions: into a more ornate form of the terrace – what became 'Kensington Italianate' in Osbert Lancaster's phrase; or into the 'houses in the park' model of the suburb. Both, in their different ways, represented that change which 'we now conveniently term Picturesque'; one of them was to come to symbolise the suburban ideal.

1.1.2 Inspiration

The further significance of that particular Devonshire Place house lay in its position. According to an earlier occupant, it was 'the last house of London northward',¹¹ and what lay beyond it in

¹⁰ J. Elmes, *Lectures on architecture ...* 2nd edn. (London, 1823), p. 403. His phrase was obviously influential; it was being repeated thirty years later in W. Young, "'Model" Town Houses for the Middle Classes', *The Builder*, VII/356 (1 Dec. 1849), p. 568.

¹¹ M. Tupper, *Martin Tupper's autobiography. My life as an author* (London, 1886), p. 7. Tupper's book includes his memories of the 'broad meadows' that pre-dated Regent's Park – the setting for 'nursery

1820 was the developing Regent's Park.¹² Ward's involvement in Regent's Park was to lead directly to the development of Calverley. It gave him a taste of property development; it provided contacts with builders and architects; but above all it showed him how a developer might create a fantasy world for his customers. It is not clear whether Ward moved to Devonshire Place because of an existing involvement in Regent's Park or whether that came later. Ann Saunders, who identified the two Ward brothers as investors in the park, suggested an earlier involvement in the Regent's Canal Company, but it has not been possible to confirm this.¹³

The detailed story of Regent's Park does not need to be repeated here: Crook, Summerson, Saunders, Arnold, McKellar, Tyack, et al, have served it well. Crook's 2000 lecture (see Preface) looked at the evolution of the plans in the first years of the project. By 1820 the strategy was to create a ring of grand terraces around an extensive landscaped park containing a few well-hidden villas. To the east was to be an area of more dense urban housing, markets and a canal basin. The overall development approach was for the government to provide the infrastructure and a design framework, but to rely on private investors to take responsibility for specific terraces, villas or streets. John Nash was the supervising architect. After a slow start the project was revitalised by the involvement of James Burton, the builder who had earlier developed the Bedford, Foundling, Skinners and Lucas estates, a total of more than 1,750 houses.¹⁴ Burton invested in Regent Street, and then, in 1817, took a lease on land in the centre of the park to

rambles in search of cowslips and new milk'.

¹² What actually lay beyond, across the New Road, was the home of John White – architect/surveyor to the Portland Estate - McKellar, *Landscapes*, pp. 182-192. McKellar explains that, like a number of 'suburban villas', White's house served as both residence and office. This might seem to contradict the assumed suburban separation of home from work, but then this was White's 'town house' – he had a second, country house, in Hemel Hempstead.

¹³ A. Saunders, *Regent's Park. A Study of the Development of the Area from 1066 to the Present Day* (Newton Abbott, 1969), pp. 104, 106. There are references in the canal documentation to a William, George and George Henry Ward, but none to John or Samuel Neville. 'Regent's Canal. General meetings of Proprietors 1812-1819', TNA/ RAIL 860/1 (was BTC RGC1/1). Neither is there a connection to the John Ward, partner of John Nash, mentioned by James Anderson. Anderson, 'Marylebone Park', p. 62.

¹⁴ J. Manwaring Baines, *Burton's St. Leonards*, 2nd edn. (Hastings, 1990) p. 17. Burton's significance in the development of the West End was only recognised after the War, by Summerson, Olsen, and ultimately by Arnold. Rasmussen, though he praised Burton's buildings, did not name the builder. Rasmussen, *London: the unique city*, p. 200.

build himself a villa – ‘The Holme’, designed by his son, Decimus. Over the next ten years the Burtons, father and son, were responsible for four of the grand terraces.

Ward was soon involved. By 1823, he had taken leases on the main block of York Terrace East (eighteen houses), on York Gate East (five houses), on six houses behind York Terrace East, on the whole of Clarence Terrace (twelve houses), and on thirteen houses in Park Terrace – the outward-facing strip behind Sussex Place. The pricing of the leases on York Terrace East suggest that he was not simply a post-hoc purchaser. The normal procedure was for a builder to offer the Commissioners an annual ground rent for a plot of land on which he would build houses to an agreed design. The builder would then be granted leases, and could sell the individual houses. In the case of York Terrace East the leases were granted, on Burton’s nomination, to seven parties, including Ward.¹⁵ These were all 99 year leases paying ground rent to the Crown¹⁶ but the figure agreed by Burton for the complete plot was not allocated proportionately between them. Ward paid only £8 for each of his houses, whereas Joseph and Thomas Brindley paid between £39 and £45 for theirs. Perhaps Ward had funded the entire development and this was how he took his return.¹⁷

Ward’s houses in York Gate East and Clarence Terrace were also Burton developments. The houses in Park Terrace were by a different builder: William Smith, the developer of Sussex Place. Smith went on to build the first of the houses in Park Village East,¹⁸ but by then John Ward’s focus had turned to Kent. In 1823 he had bought William Pitt’s old home near Hayes and was having Decimus Burton design him a new country house there (see Chapter 3.1). Samuel Neville Ward, though, then became involved in the Park. In 1826-7 he took the leases on twenty nine

¹⁵ ‘James Burton to Alexander Milne, Secretary to the Commissioners’, 23 Nov. 1822, TNA CRES 2.771.

¹⁶ ‘Plans & Particulars of Leases Etc of Houses on the Regents Park Estate belonging to the Crown’, TNA MPZ 1/14.

¹⁷ Nash commented on the unusual split to the Commissioners but felt that the builders should have this flexibility. ‘John Nash to Milne’, (14 Jan 1823), TNA CRES 2.771.

¹⁸ G. Tyack, ‘John Nash and the Park Village’, *Georgian Group Journal*, 1993, p. 70.

houses in Albany Street, and in 1829 on ten of the eleven houses in Gloucester Terrace.¹⁹ He also took the leases of five houses in Park Square and five in St Andrew's Place. Like John Ward he was a long-term investor, and still held thirty nine of these properties at his death in 1850.²⁰ The two Ward brothers, then, were closely involved in the Regent's Park development.

John Nash's designs for Regent's Park (and his commercial methods) were not without their critics, at the time and for long afterwards,²¹ but they were nonetheless influential. Crook has suggested (as above) that it was the Park Villages that prefigured the 'houses in the park' suburban ideal, and one would not seek to disagree. This present study, though, suggests that it was as much the scale and showmanship of the overall scheme that inspired Ward. A few examples of Nash's involvement with the Burton / Ward terraces demonstrate his impact.

In 1821 Burton submitted a proposal for a terrace on the southern boundary of the park. Nash disliked the design: he felt it would look like a hospital or work-house 'and afford no dignity of Character to the Park'.²² He suggested it should be divided into distinct buildings and would then 'assume the characters of a nobleman's villa'. Burton's eventual design for what became Cornwall Terrace comprised a row of eighteen houses, but the facade is broken up by three blocks of Corinthian columns. The western elevation has a two-storey bow with caryatids.

¹⁹ 'Plans & Particulars of Leases', TNA MPZ 1/14.

²⁰ 'Will of Samuel Nevil Ward', Dec. 1850, TNA PROB 11/2124/244.

²¹ Mordaunt Crook names Cockerell as a contemporary critic, and Summerson as a later one, though he says that the latter changed his mind. Crook, *London's Arcadia*, pp. 24, 28. (Cockerell actually lived at no. 13, Chester Terrace.)

²² 'Nash to Milne', 23 April 1821, TNA CRES 2.767. Crook, *Arcadia*, p. 24.



Figure 7. Cornwall Terrace. Made more 'palace-like' at the suggestion of Nash. Source: author.

Beneath the Corinthian columns, caryatids and pediments, Cornwall Terrace was basically a line of terraced houses with front doors opening directly onto the pavement (across a narrow 'area') – very like Devonshire Place. The application of Classical features though, marks a clear rejection of what Soane called the 'disgusting insipidity and tiresome monotony'²³ of those earlier terraces. It was architecture to be noticed. Although this particular lead – the grand Classical terrace - was not to be followed in Calverley, it was to be seen in central London; in resort towns like St. Leonards and Leamington; and in suburbs such as Camberwell.

Nash's other innovation was the landscaped central parkland. There had always been some element of *rus-in-urbe* in the Marylebone Park plans: the original terms of reference had envisaged filling the northern part with villas that could be replaced by terraces as the southern part filled up. Gradually the plans became more Picturesque. Nash's proposition that 'open space, free air, and the scenery of nature will prove irresistible to the wealthy part of the Public' is often cited,²⁴ with his idea of a few large villas, hidden from each other, but where 'each should appear to possess the whole of the Park'.

²³ Cited, for example, in Olsen, *Victorian London*, p. 33. Some earlier eighteenth-century developments, though, like the eastern side of Grosvenor Square, might have been a model for Cornwall Terrace – a high level of ornamentation, and the terrace treated as a single architectural unit.

²⁴ For example in Crook, *London's Arcadia*, p. 13.

The houses in Cornwall Terrace had no front gardens, but they did have a view over the ornamental lake and into the Park. In his next proposal Burton suggested fencing off part of the Park opposite the houses, to be laid out in ornamental Plantations for the residents. Nash was against this, arguing that it would inevitably lead to the public being admitted (which was not then part of the scheme). It would be 'as arrant a public garden as White Conduit House was' – White Conduit House being a tea-garden in Islington.²⁵ Nash saw a clear distinction between a Park, designed on Picturesque lines to represent a landscaped country estate, and 'gardens'.²⁶ He was determined to safeguard his Park, but did suggest a 'garden' in front of the terraces. Burton amended his proposal accordingly.²⁷ This setting back of a terrace from the road became a standard feature. To further enhance the 'palatial' appearance, and differentiate these buildings from terraces like Devonshire Place, the entrance doors were placed at the back.²⁸ Burton's proposal for that particular site was rejected, as Nash had already agreed a higher price with another builder, but the two builders worked on a combined scheme for what became York Terraces East and West. The doors were to be at the back, but to further ensure that each Terrace looked like a single building Nash wanted no division of the gardens in front, and for all the householders to re-colour their houses in the same colour and at the same time.²⁹ That he succeeded is demonstrated by the comment in Limbird's guide to the Park: 'the terrace appear[s]

²⁵ The proposal was for what would have been York Terrace West. 'Nash to Milne', 18 Jan. 1822, TNA CRES 2.771. Saunders, *Regent's Park*, pp. 114-115.

²⁶ In the same way Priscilla Wakefield praised how Clapham Common had been manipulated to 'give it the appearance of a park'. P. Wakefield, *Perambulations in London, and its Environs*, 2nd edn. (London, 1814), p. 438.

²⁷ 'Burton to Milne', 25 Mar. 1822, TNA CRES 2.771.

²⁸ The source of this idea is not clear. On 30th March 1822 Nash wrote 'When the desire of the Board was first made known to me of entering the Range of Houses in question on the North side and forming a Road there' 30 Mar. 1822, TNA CRES 2.771. (Nash appears to be confusing south and north as otherwise the meaning is not clear).

²⁹ 'Nash to Milne', 17 Apr. 1822, TNA CRES 2.771. That particular statement may relate only to York Gate (Nash appears to confuse East and West in this letter – repeated perhaps by Arnold in *Rural Urbanism* p. 60). However similar rules about colouring and gardens ('nor shall it on any account be divided') applied equally to the leases of York Terrace (eg 'Nash to Milne', 14 Jan. 1823, fifth and sixth pages, TNA CRES 2.771). Nash seemed to go further, and say that all the doors at the rear (the main entrances to the houses) were to be built flush with the wall and painted the same colour as if 'like Jibb doors in rooms'.

like suites of princely apartments, somewhat in the style of a little Versailles'.³⁰

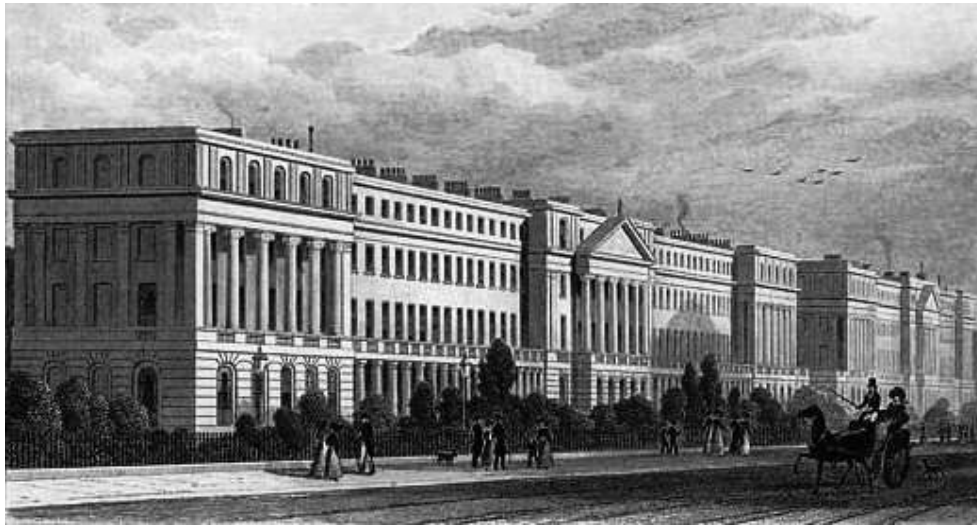


Figure 8. York Terrace East. A 'little Versailles'. Source: T. Shepherd, engr. T.Barber, in Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements; or London in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1827). Reproduced from www.ancestryimages.com ref. G9666 (9 May 2017).

Regent's Park, then, was a stage set of palaces, fronting a 'natural' countryside of forest and lake, and secure from the outside world. One reason Nash gave for accepting Burton's terms for Cornwall Terrace was that it would 'shut out the irregularities and ugly parts of the Town and give respectability to the neighbourhood'.³¹ He made a similar comment when responding to Burton's proposal for Clarence Terrace – that the houses on the far side of the 'parish' road, outside the park, should be screened from view.³² Decimus Burton's original design was of three blocks, separated by open arcades. Burton (and Ward, who took the leases on the whole of Clarence Terrace) were no doubt happy to fill the two gaps with additional houses instead, blocking the view beyond. Nash also requested an ornamental screen to hide the stables from view.³³

One aspect of make-believe for which Nash was criticised was the use of stucco rather than stone - 'He finds us all brick and he leaves us all plaster!'³⁴ They did consider stone for Clarence

³⁰ J. Limbird (publ.), *A Picturesque Guide to The Regent's Park* (London, 1829), p. 8.

³¹ 'Nash to Milne', 18 Jan. 1822, TNA CRES 2.771.

³² 'Nash to Milne?', 18 May 1822, TNA CRES 2.772.

³³ 'Nash to Milne?', 24 Mar. 1824, TNA CRES 2.772.

³⁴ Often cited, but perhaps first used in *The Quarterly Review*, XXXIV/LXVII (June 1826) p. 195.

Terrace but it would have cost nearly four times as much: £5,261 compared to £1,362.³⁵

Between 1820 and 1824 John Ward was not only a spectator (from Devonshire Place) but an active participant in this great venture. He would have come to understand the procedures that were involved, and he would have made valuable contacts. He would have seen how this artificial world was constructed: the palace-fronted terraces, the villas hidden behind their plantations, the exclusion of the outside world. Nash was adamant that he wanted nothing like a tea-garden, but, as McKellar suggests, this whole scheme was as artificial as any eighteenth century pleasure ground.³⁶

There was an even greater lesson from Regent's Park. By 1826 all but one of the twenty one Cornwall Terrace houses were occupied, and all forty nine in the two York Terraces.³⁷ Creating a suburban ideal could be good business.

1.1.3 Opportunity

So Ward was clearly aware of the gains to be made from property development. His involvement in Tunbridge Wells, though, was purely opportunistic. This section explains the process by which, between 1824 and 1826, he put together the Calverley estate.

1824 saw the height of the post-war house-building boom. Ann Saunders cites a witness at a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1829: 'in 1824 there was such a speculating spirit abroad that persons would have built upon almost any terms'.³⁸ The graph below, based on property transactions in Middlesex, shows the sharply increased activity in the early 1820s – similar trends have been demonstrated using taxes collected on bricks and other building materials.³⁹

³⁵ 'J. Lansdown, Estimate for stuccoing ...', May 1823, TNA CRES 2/772.

³⁶ McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. 224 *et seq.*

³⁷ 'Land Tax Assessment, St Marylebone Parish', 1826, pp. 23-26, LMA MR/PLT/4161, accessed via ancestry.com. (29 Mar. 2013). (Three further houses had been added to Cornwall Terrace by then. The York Terrace figures include the Doric Villa houses and the short terrace to the east.)

³⁸ The Committee was reviewing the Regent's Park leases. Saunders, *Regent's Park*, p. 205 note 29.

³⁹ A.K. Cairncross and B. Weber, 'Fluctuations in Building in Great Britain, 1785-1849', *Economic History Review*, New series 9/2 (1956), pp. 283-297, and H.A. Shannon, 'Bricks – A Trade Index', *Economica*, New

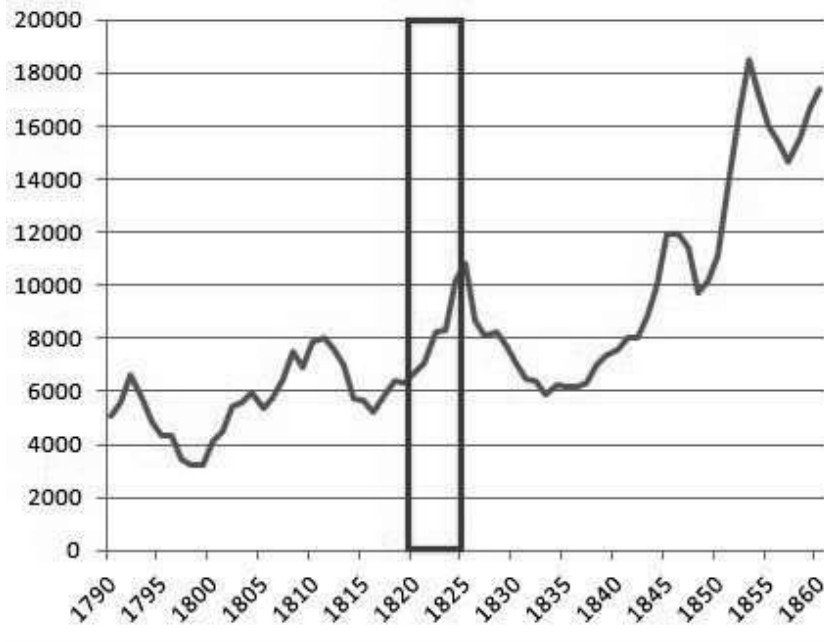


Figure 9. Transactions of the Middlesex Deeds Registry – an indication of the number of property transactions in the wider economy. Source: F.H.W. Sheppard, V. Belcher and P. Cottrell, ‘The Middlesex and Yorkshire Deeds Registries and the Study of Building Fluctuations’, *London Journal*, 5/2 (1979), p. 176.

Kentish newspapers, too, reflected the general optimism, with reports on the success of the local watering-places: Margate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate, Folkestone and Sandgate: it was ‘a spur to the employment of capital’. In December there was advertising for a proposed Kentish Railway Company.⁴⁰ There were developments, too, in Tunbridge Wells. A theatre and bath-house had been opened on the Pantiles, and a number of localised projects were started.⁴¹ It was the opportunity to purchase land in 1824 that attracted Ward.

The map (Figure 4) at the end of Section 0.6 above is from 1832, but provides a good indication of the situation in the early 1820s. The two areas to the south, the Pantiles and Mount Sion, might be thought of as the ‘Old Town’. They were the site of the chapel, the assembly rooms, libraries and shops. Most of the tradesmen lived there. The houses on Mount Ephraim, to the north-west, were bigger. They were either the permanent homes of wealthy incomers - a relatively new phenomenon, or served wealthier visitors. London Road, running along the east side of the Common, was similar. Compared to Mount Ephraim and the Old Town, Mount

series 1/3 (Aug. 1934), pp. 300-318.

⁴⁰ *Maidstone Journal* (24 Aug., 21 Sep., 14 and 28 Dec. 1824).

⁴¹ See Chalklin, ‘Estate Development’.

Pleasant was undeveloped. The map below shows two properties central to the Calverley story. Their position, on a hillside overlooking the Old Town and rich in Picturesque possibilities, was a key part of Calverley's appeal, and a differentiator between it and, say, Pittville in Cheltenham, Leamington, or St John's Wood, which were all relatively flat.

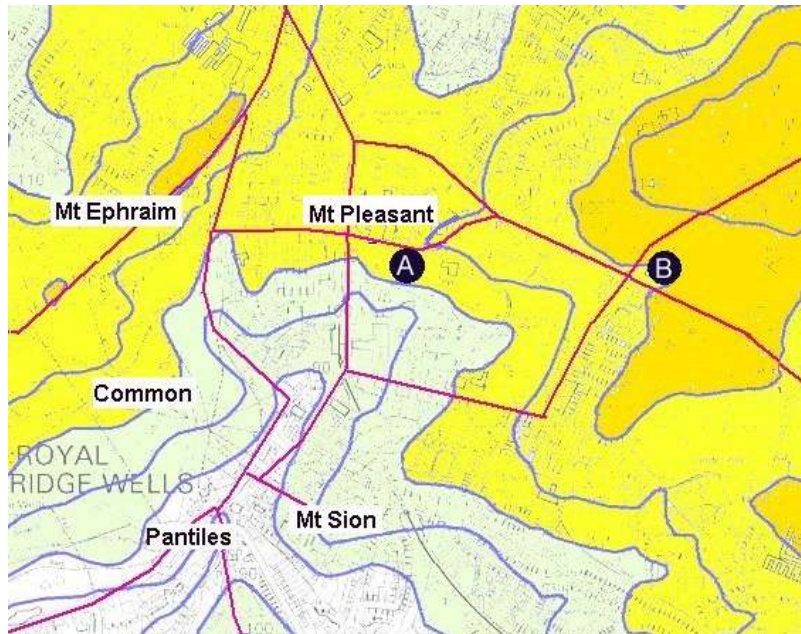


Figure 10. Mount Pleasant. A – (Great) Mount Pleasant House, B - Calverley Lodge. Source: author, based on OS map. © Crown Copyright. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey®

(Great) Mount Pleasant House (A) was the more prominent. It was built about 1700 for William Strange, a London merchant who had bought an extensive holding from the Manor of South Frith (see Appendix A), stretching from Mount Pleasant to Pembury, some two miles to the east. After his death the house, and some twenty-five acres, were bought by Lord Percival, though it was never his main, or even secondary, residence. Percival's diaries record a number of visits, usually in the summer, but the house was actually let to a local lodging-house keeper.⁴² The Percivals sold it in 1752 and it continued to serve as a lodging-house for the next sixty seven years – it was taken, for example, by the Duke of Leeds every summer for twenty years.

⁴² The Percivals were one of five families whose annual movements between town house and country villa were analysed by Dorian Gerhold in 2009, though their villa was actually in Charlton. The Tunbridge Wells house was more of an investment. D. Gerhold, 'London's Suburban Villas and Mansions, 1660-1830', *The London Journal*, 34/3 (2009), pp. 257-8.



Figure 11. (Great) Mount Pleasant House, pre-Calverley. The valley formed the view from Calverley Park. Source: Calverley Estate Book, TUNWM 1984.750. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery.

In 1819 Mount Pleasant House was bought by William Lushington. He and his brother had made their fortunes in India though by the 1810s they were in financial difficulties. William, nevertheless, acquired Mount Pleasant and doubled its size by buying adjoining plots from local tradesmen (see below). His objective in doing this is unclear as he died in December 1823.

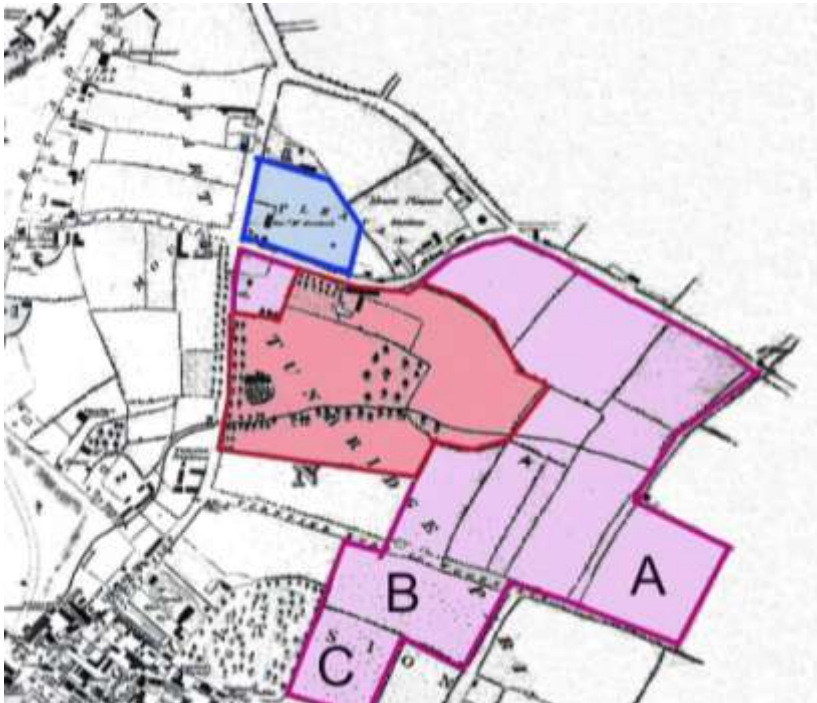


Figure 12. Mount Pleasant c. 1820 showing additional land acquired by Lushington. Source: author, based on T.T. Barrow, *A Plan of Tunbridge Wells ...* (Tunbridge Wells, 1808). By permission of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library. Reproduced from Cunningham, *Historical Atlas*, p. 39. Dark pink - original grounds of Mount Pleasant House; light pink - additional land (blocks A, B and C are rather tentative). Blue – Lanthorn House.

The remainder of Strange's land-holding, some 800 acres, had been acquired after his death by Thomas Panuwell, a captain in the East India Company. In 1820 it was held by another Thomas Panuwell (the third) who lived in Calverley Lodge (B). In September 1823 Panuwell died. Most historians of Tunbridge Wells, the present writer included,⁴³ have identified his death and the availability of his 800 acre estate as the trigger for the Calverley development. It seems more likely that the Mount Pleasant land was the main attraction.⁴⁴ The Panuwell property was advertised in May 1824, but the emphasis was on the farms and woods 'which abound with game'.⁴⁵ Despite the building boom, it is not clear that the advertisement attracted any attention. The response to Mount Pleasant advertisements in early July was very different. Within two weeks Ward had agreed a price of 11,000 guineas, put down a deposit and the public auction was cancelled.⁴⁶

It is not known whether Ward had had any earlier knowledge of the town. The attractions of the site though, were clear. It already had the romantic landscape that Nash had had to create artificially in Marylebone; it had an existing clientele of wealthy visitors; and it had an air of make-believe, though here the model was less the 'princely apartments' at Versailles than Marie Antoinette's 'Hameau de la Reine'. The Burtons, though, will have been quite aware of its potential. They had lived nearby, at Mabledon, on the road to Tonbridge, from 1805 to 1817, mixing with the local gentry and investing in local industry.⁴⁷ It is perhaps unlikely that Ward had never visited Tunbridge Wells, his new house at Holwood lay just off the main road between

⁴³ C. Jones, 'Ferndale: A Different Kind of Suburb' (MSc thesis, University of Oxford, 2011), p. 10.

⁴⁴ Chalklin assumed that Panuwell owned both estates. Chalklin, *Estate Development*, p. 391.

⁴⁵ *Morning Chronicle* (14 May 1824).

⁴⁶ *Morning Chronicle* (5 July 1824). *Morning Post* (6, 20 July). The land marked A, B and C on figure 12 was not included. A and B had perhaps already been sold (see Appendix B), C was retained by Lushington's daughter.

⁴⁷ The Leigh Powder Mills. William Ford Burton, another of James' sons, remained in charge until his death in 1856. There is some confusion over a claim by Summerson (Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 187) that James Burton deserted London prior to 1807 to start a big housing estate in Tunbridge Wells. None of the authorities contacted during this study (Roger Bowdler, Susie Barson, Neil Burton, Dana Arnold – emails May to July 2015) could elaborate. It was possibly a mistaken conflation of Mabledon (see Chapter 2.5) with Calverley. The suggestion (in the DNB) that Decimus Burton attended Tonbridge School is also questioned - by the school itself (Lesley Cumming, Smythe Library, Tonbridge School, April 2013).

London and the town. He was, nevertheless, an outsider, buying up the houses of the 'old inhabitants'.

In September 1824 the availability of the Panuwell estate re-surfaced. Its potential was better understood after Ward's purchase of Mount Pleasant. An auction was advertised with eight of the lots specifically labelled as building land. In October Ward announced that the auction would not take place – he was in negotiation for the whole estate.⁴⁸ Discussions and legal checks took many months. Ward meanwhile was looking for further land. In January 1825, he bought Lanthorn House to the north of Mount Pleasant House (see Figure 12). That month he also agreed a price of £1,050 for ten acres adjoining the Panuwell lands to the north-west, and in July paid £1,400 for the four acre 'Mill Field' to the south. Negotiations over Mount Pleasant were completed in September 1825. Negotiations over the Panuwell estate took much longer, with completion not until December 1826. Ward paid £24,135.⁴⁹ Earlier in 1826 he bought a further thirteen acres to the north, giving him access to building stone and a water supply (Jack Wood's Spring). The full extent of his purchases is shown on the map below.



Figure 13. Ward's purchases 1825-6. Source: author, based on 'General View of the Calverley Estate' in Calverley Estate Book, TUNWM 1984.750. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery. Reproduced from Cunningham, *Historical Atlas*, p. 45.

Ward was soon involved in town affairs. A public meeting in August 1824 put forward proposals for a new church. For 140 years the community had been served by a proprietary chapel near the

⁴⁸ *Maidstone Journal* (12 Oct. 1824).

⁴⁹ 'Bond between Grace Lobb et el and John Ward', Dec. 1826, KHLC U2737 09/D/02.

Pantiles, but for wedding and funerals residents had to attend their respective parish churches in Speldhurst, Tonbridge or Frant. Ward was nominated to the organising committee.⁵⁰ There was an offer of land from the Rev Stevens, who lived to the north. That the church (Holy Trinity) was built more or less at the gateway to Calverley, and designed by Decimus Burton, suggests either that Ward worked hard as an incomer to influence the committee, or that he and Burton already had contacts within the town. The presence of an Anglican church was a great boost to any speculative development: the 'New Church' was mentioned in virtually all house advertisements for Calverley.

In December 1825 a financial panic spread through the British banking system. Housing starts slumped. In Cheltenham, where over a thousand houses had been started between 1820 and 1825, building activity came to a virtual standstill.⁵¹ The graph in Figure 9 above makes clear the change. Ward could have been in a difficult position. By late 1826 he had spent more than £40,000 in Tunbridge Wells. Perhaps the only option was to go on. The initial plans for building occupied only a small proportion of the estate, leaving future potential if the initial development were a success, but also the possibility of raising cash from piecemeal sales.⁵² (It is not clear how Ward paid for his purchases. James Anderson has challenged the usual suggestion that property development was funded by borrowing and therefore encouraged by low interest rates. He accepts the link to lower rates, but suggests that it was the resulting increase in the value of government bonds for existing holders, that released capital looking for alternative uses.⁵³ The Wards may simply have been very successful as marine insurers during the French wars – they are recorded as Underwriters between 1804 and 1816.)⁵⁴

The financial crisis did not halt all development. In August 1825 George and William Haldimand

⁵⁰ He contributed £100 to the appeal H. Elwig, *Holy Trinity Church, Tunbridge Wells, 1829-1929, a centenary history* (Tunbridge Wells, 1929), pp. 6-9.

⁵¹ S. Blake, *Pittville: 1824-1860: a scene of gorgeous magnificence* (Cheltenham, 1988), pp. 9,30.

⁵² There are letters, for example, in the RIBA collection, between James Hakewill and G.W. Aylmer referring to a possible sale of Calverley land. 'James Hakewill Papers', 1829, RIBA HAJ.1.1-4.

⁵³ Anderson, 'Marylebone Park'. p. 34 *et seq.*

⁵⁴ In the 'Green Books' at Lloyd's Register.

took on the development of Belgrave Square in west London. George Basevi produced designs and work progressed regardless of the crisis. This was despite the Haldimands' bank being liquidated in 1827. Haldimand & Co happened also to be John Ward's bank, though the significance of the development to this study lies more in the nature of those houses. The four terraces in Belgrave Square followed the lead of Cornwall Terrace, and Nash / Burton's other palace-fronted structures in Regent's Park. They were long and symmetrical, stuccoed, with cornices and parapets and giant pilasters. As Hermione Hobhouse explained, they marked a change from previous Mayfair terraces considerably more modest in scale.⁵⁵ It was the same evolution as from Devonshire Place to York Terrace. Burton and Ward, though, were to adopt a different strategy for their new development in Tunbridge Wells.

1.1.4 Vision

'rows of houses ycleped parades and terraces, and colonnades and crescents, at the very mention of which in Tunbridge Wells we were wont to shudder'

Letter to the *Maidstone Journal* July 1833⁵⁶

That extract from the letter to the *Maidstone Journal* is a good demonstration of the scale of the Calverley development and its impact on the existing residents, but as a summary of the type of houses being built it is misleading. Calverley was not characterised by parades and terraces, colonnades and crescents. As with most developments there were changes over time, and these will be considered in Chapter 1.2, but the vision presented in the 1828 'Neele' map below is a good guide to both the original 'formulated intention' and to the actuality achieved over the following thirty years. The greater part of the scheme comprised houses in a park.

The map demonstrates, though, that Calverley was always meant to be more than this. It had both residential and commercial zones, and some of the houses might be characterised as 'semi-urban'. This section looks at the houses in these various zones and suggests that they represent

⁵⁵ H. Hobhouse, 'The Building of Belgravia – 1', *Country Life*, CXLV/3766 (8 May 1969), p. 1156.

⁵⁶ Noted in R. Farthing, *Royal Tunbridge Wells. A Pictorial History* (Chichester, 1990), plate 80.

stages in the move away from the urban terrace, characterised by Devonshire Place, towards the 'houses in the park' model of Calverley Park.

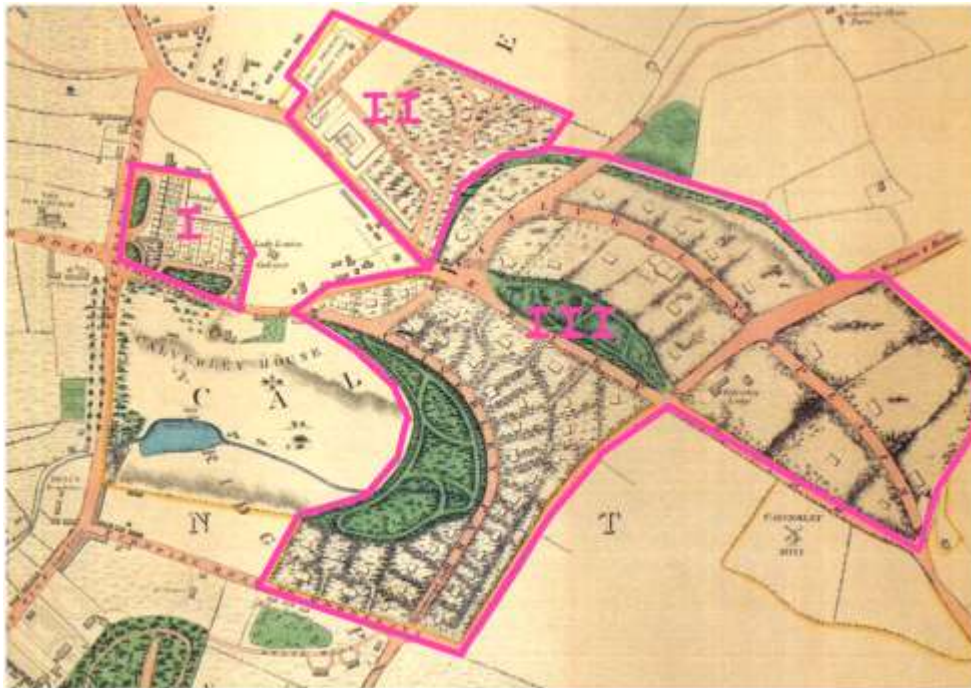


Figure 14. Detail from the 1828 'Neele' map, showing the Calverley 'zones'. Source: author, based on 'J. & J. Neele, Map of Tunbridge Wells ... showing the Situation of the New Church ...' (London, 1828), TUNWM 1956.67.44. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery. Reproduced from Cunningham, *Historical Atlas*, p. 53.

The map indicates three distinct zones: (zone I) the 'semi-urban' houses of Calverley Parade and Terrace; (zone II) the commercial area of Calverley Place; and (zone III) Calverley Park and Plain, the 'houses in the park' and by far the biggest section. Mount Pleasant House, by then renamed Calverley House, and its original grounds, were not included. The house had been let during the summers of 1826 and 1827 to the Duchess of Kent and her daughter, Princess Victoria.

Immediately afterwards it was leased by local house agent Richard Delves, who had owned it briefly before Lushington.

The later, informal, labelling of Calverley as a 'New Town' (see Chapter 3.2) might suggest that it was a separate settlement distinct from Tunbridge Wells. So Stern, as noted above, described it as a 'self-contained community'; and Archer, incorrectly, states that it was 'gated off at all entrances from the rest of Tunbridge Wells'.⁵⁷ It might better be described, to use Mireille

⁵⁷ Stern et al, *Paradise Planned*, p. 28. Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 216. Individual sections, eg the Park, were

Galinou's term, as a distinct 'quarter' within the town.⁵⁸ The Neele map shows, for example, the position of the New Church (Holy Trinity) (alongside zone I). It was conveniently close to Calverley, but it served the whole town. One should also be wary of describing Calverley as a suburb of Tunbridge Wells: it was indeed a suburb, but its suburban relationship was with London. For the same reason one would question Thompson's likening of the Brighton / Kemp Town relationship to that of Newcastle and Gosforth. Kemp Town, like Calverley, was an outgrowth of London; Gosforth was a more traditional adjunct of Newcastle.⁵⁹

To return to the design of the houses, the earliest reference is a little puzzling. It comes from an 1825 guide-book:

It is ... proposed to erect 13 large houses on the land recently purchased by J Ward Esq., to be called Calverley Crescent. The buildings are to be considerably elevated above the present site, and connected with a stone parapet promenade, raised eight or ten steps ... the grounds, as they appear in the plan, are to be very tastefully laid out and ... will have a very prominent effect.⁶⁰

It is impossible to be sure of either the location or appearance of this 'crescent'. 'Crescent' suggests grandeur and ostentation, such as in Regent's Park. If this had been the original intention, then there must have been some significant change in thinking. There was no such Crescent in Calverley.⁶¹ It is a reminder, though, that 'houses in the park' was not the only option for a suburban development, as later references to Leamington and Camberwell will demonstrate. The first image of the actual houses appears in the 1827 edition of the guide: a sketch and plan of what were to become Calverley Parade and Terrace.

indeed gated off – see Chapter 3.3.

⁵⁸ Galinou, *Cottages and Villas*, p. 13.

⁵⁹ Thompson, *Suburbia*, p.5.

⁶⁰ J. Clifford, *The Tunbridge Wells Guide* (Tunbridge Wells, 1825), p. 48. It is difficult to date statements in guidebooks, but this would seem to be plausible.

⁶¹ This proposal did not refer to what is currently called Calverley (Park) Crescent. That was a later design (1833) not included in any of the early plans – see Chapter 1.2.

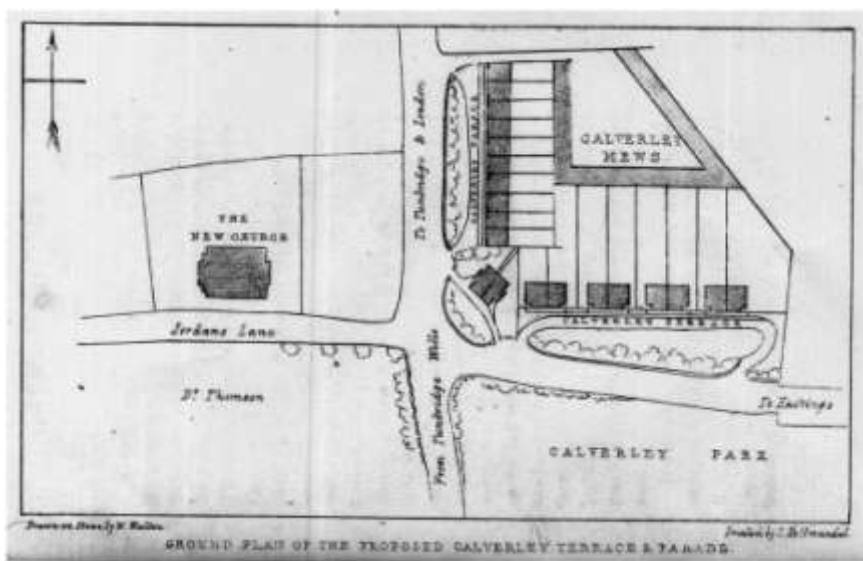


Figure 15. Sketch and plan of the proposed Calverley Parade and Terrace. Source: Clifford, *Guide* (1827).

The buildings are considered here in some detail; partly for the historical record, as all but two were demolished in the 1930s: but also to demonstrate the evolution of styles from terrace to park. There was a progression from Parade to Terrace and then on to Park; but also within the Terrace itself, from initial sketch to implementation.

Calverley Parade (to the left in the above sketch) comprised ten houses in five linked pairs; Calverley Terrace, to the right, was eight houses in four discrete pairs. A further pair was splayed across the corner. There were shared, gated, 'pleasure grounds' in front of both Parade and Terrace. Each house also had a private rear garden. There was provision for each to have a dedicated coach-house / stable in the mews behind. McKellar suggests that such provision

indicated the importance of commuting.⁶² In fact many Calverley residents chose not to lease a coach-house and part of the mews was used as a livery stable (and later to house a fire-engine).⁶³ Stefan Muthesius suggests that outside of London, only Brighton had mews to any extent;⁶⁴ their virtual absence in Tunbridge Wells after 1830 is another marker of the move away from urban form.

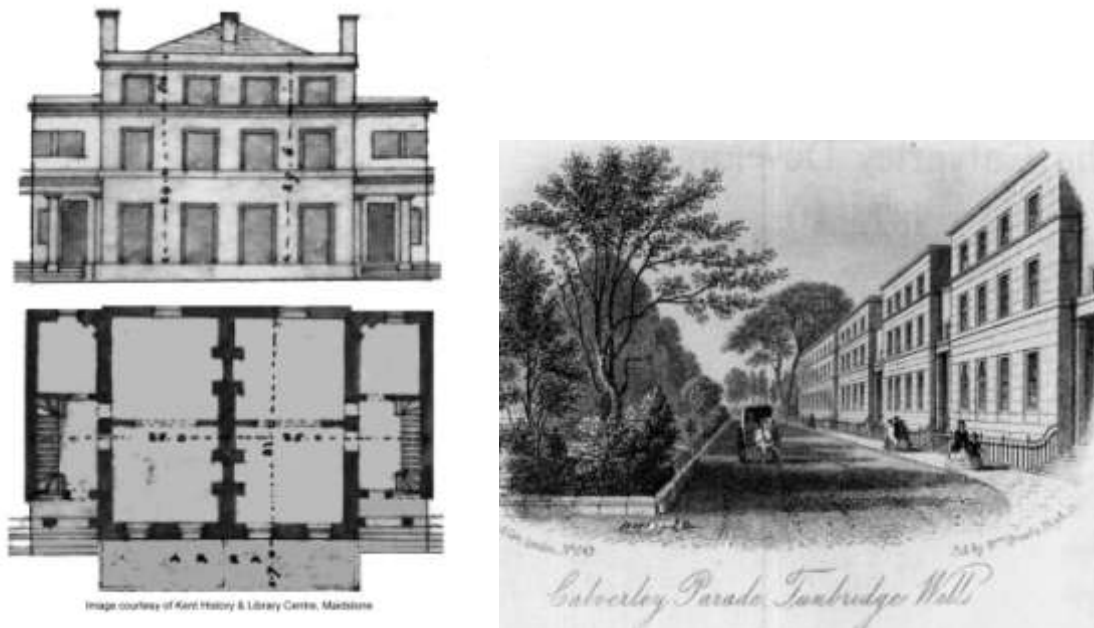


Figure 16. Calverley Parade houses. Sources: Left - from building agreement 'Agreement re Calverley Parade, with D. Burton', 29 Sep. 1831, KHLIC U2737 08/A/01. Image courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Not to be re-used without prior, written consent. Right – Kershaw & son print, no. 843. 1840s. TUNWM 1984.282. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery. Reproduced from Farthing, *Pictorial History*, pl. 80.

The Parade houses were what Summerson called quasi-semi-detached.⁶⁵ The Paragon at Blackheath (Michael Searles, c. 1793) is often cited as an example, but those are larger and the linking sections wider. Searles' earlier Paragon, in Walworth, was closer in scale to Calverley. There were others: Paragon Road in Hackney, a design of 1809-13;⁶⁶ and St Mary Abbots Terrace in Kensington which dates from the mid 1820s. (That some of the builders who worked on St Mary Abbots also worked on Calverley is noted below, but the similarity of the design is not

⁶² McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. 181.

⁶³ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Dec. 1845).

⁶⁴ S. Muthesius, *The English Terraced House* (New Haven and London, 1982), p. 73.

⁶⁵ Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 331.

⁶⁶ McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. 181.

considered to be significant.)⁶⁷ In Calverley the linking section accommodated the main staircase. The floor layout was therefore very like an urban terrace: two main rooms, one front and one back, on each floor; with services in the basement lit by an area at the front. The Calverley Parade houses were smaller than those in Devonshire Place, and Devonshire Place had an extra floor – so the first floor could be used for entertaining; but otherwise they were similar.⁶⁸ Calverley, though, was a move towards what Miele has described as ‘detachment as a signifier of status’.⁶⁹ It was a first, small step away from the urban terrace, though the appearance was still austere (see below). There was little ornamentation, and the pyramidal roofs were hidden by a parapet, giving the impression of a series of cubes.



Figure 17. Calverley Parade c.1930. Source: Local collection, origin unknown. The picture has been manipulated to remove the gable of the Adult Education Centre behind the end houses.

The houses in Calverley Terrace marked a further stage in the evolution from terrace to park.

They were definitely semi-detached, and much less austere – the effect of canopies and

⁶⁷ F.H.W. Sheppard (ed.), 'The Holland estate: To 1874', in *Survey of London: Volume 37, Northern Kensington* (London, 1973), pp. 101-126. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol37/pp101-126> (15 October 2016).

⁶⁸ Twenty five feet rather than thirty. Ward's house, being at the end, was even bigger.

⁶⁹ C. Miele, 'From Aristocratic Ideal to Middle-Class Idyll', in J. Honer (ed.), *London Suburbs* (London, 1999), p. 48.

balconies. While the intention seems to have always been for them to be semi-detached, there was a late change in the design that moved them closer to the ‘houses in the park’ model. The 1827 sketch (Figure 15 above) showed a 3-storey front elevation with central pediment.⁷⁰ The elevation provided in the 1829 building agreement (below, left) was significantly different – only two storeys, and a pitched roof with deep eaves.⁷¹

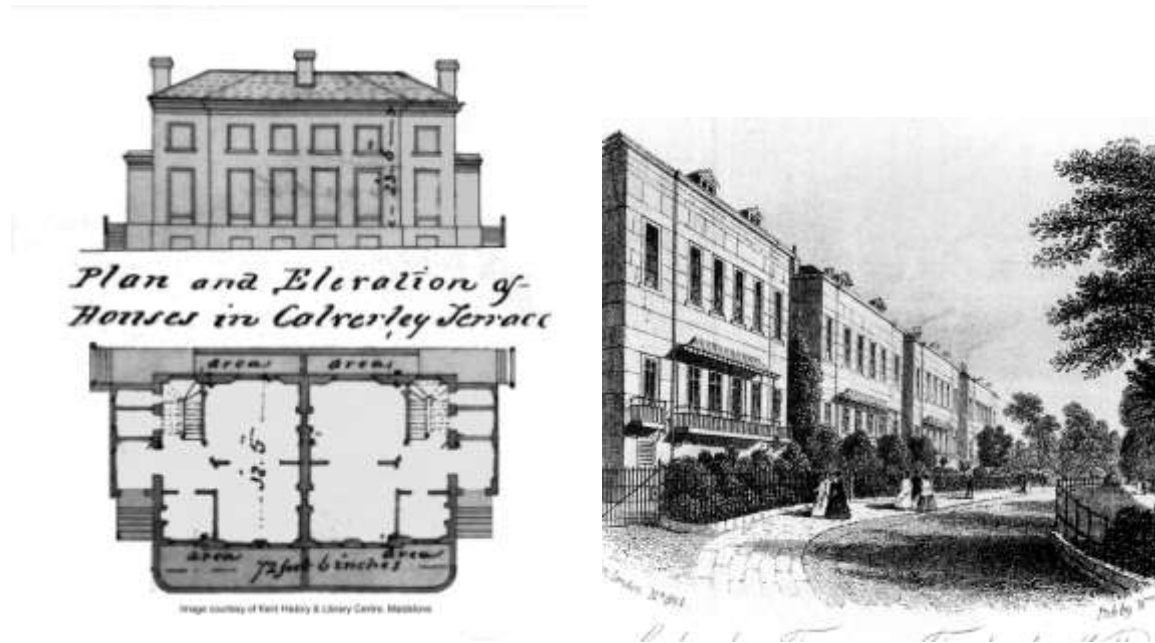


Figure 18. Calverley Terrace houses. Sources: Left - from building agreement ‘Agreement re Calverley Terrace, with Bramahs’, Apr. 1829, KHLC U2737 08/A/02. Image courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Not to be re-used without prior, written consent. Right – Kershaw & son print, no. 844, 1840s, TUNWM 1984.283. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery. Reproduced from Farthing, *Pictorial History*, pl. 80. The position of the main door on the plan/elevation is inconsistent. In practice it faced the front. The engraving is rather misleading – the gaps between each pair were greater than shown, and see below for the eaves.

Raising the ground floor allowed more classical proportions for the front elevation. Those proportions were not achieved in practice – perhaps because attic rooms with dormer windows were inserted. The third bay allowed for three main rooms on the ground floor, with the staircase within the main structure. The layout was no longer that of a terraced house, but was based around a central hall, lit by a large window over a half-landing on the rear wall. The extra width made the horizontal emphasis all the more noticeable – and it was further emphasised by

⁷⁰ Miele, looking for ‘signifiers of status’, suggests that a central pediment like this was intended ‘to enhance the illusion of social distinction’, by suggesting a single, grander dwelling. The effect was enhanced when the two entrances were positioned, as here, on the side elevations. Miele, *London Suburbs*, p. 49.

⁷¹ ‘Agreement re Calverley Terrace, with Bramahs’, Apr. 1829, KHLC U2737 08/A/02.

the deep eaves. There is more of a sense of detachment.

Though the placement – in a row - is still formal, there is also a focus on the gardens. Muthesius suggests that rear gardens were not valued in town houses until the mid nineteenth century, but this extract from an 1841 advertisement for Calverley Terrace suggests that it had always been a feature here:

There is a beautiful lawn, with shrubbery, flower garden in the rear of the house, which, in the bright days of spring, is clothed with flowers and blossom, and from the fine growth of the laurels is completely shut out from the gaze of the public, and forms a valuable addition to the comforts of this enviable little English Elysium.⁷²

It was a clear development from the tree-less grid of the Portland estate, where the back gardens served only as an extension to the service functions in the basement and mews.



Figure 19. Calverley Terrace - the surviving houses. Source: author.

Zone II, Calverley Place, was the commercial zone, comparable to the eastern part of the Regent's Park development beyond Albany Street, or to the eighteenth century developments of London's West End which typically included a mix of houses, and often a market. There were houses in Zone II but they were part of a different story. Calverley as a whole was populated by two distinct groups, identified in this study as 'suburban incomers' and 'economic incomers'. It is

⁷² *Morning Post* (28 Sep. 1841).

the former, wealthier, group that is the main focus – theirs was the suburban ideal that is being considered. The Calverley Place houses were aimed at the economic incomers. It is important, though, to understand Calverley Place as part of the wider scheme: the facilities it provided, and its role as a buffer between the Park houses and the earlier cottage developments to the north – blocking out the outside world as Nash sought to do in Regent’s Park. A commercial nursery within Zone II also served this purpose.

It was Zone III, Calverley Park and Plain, that really represented the suburban ideal: sixty nine detached and semi-detached houses, and a hotel, spread across some fifty to sixty acres (the twenty-five acre grounds of Calverley House might be added to the total – these provided the principal vista down the valley). Only part of this area – the twenty-six acres of Calverley Park – was included in the initial phase, but it was all, apart from the grounds of Calverley House, developed within the first thirty years. Calverley Park was very different to the palace-fronted terraces of Regent’s Park. The Alpha Cottages in St John’s Wood might have been a model – they were virtually adjacent to Ward’s houses in Park Terrace, and both Burtons worked in the area, but their setting and architecture were less ‘Picturesque/Romantic’ than Calverley.⁷³ The Park Villages were another possibility – Edward Mogg noted the similarities in 1843,⁷⁴ or Nash’s 1813 plan for Regent’s Park, with two dozen or so villas scattered notionally in the centre.⁷⁵ Pittville in Cheltenham, too, c.1824, included an area of detached villas, though the overall scheme there was dominated by terraces. Burton and Ward will have been aware of all of these, and of Blaise Hamlet; but it was the opportunity afforded by the setting of Calverley that allowed them to do something different: both its very specific position around the top of the Mount Pleasant valley; and its location in a town, where, to repeat Fanny Burney’s words: ‘the houses ... are scattered

⁷³ Galinou describes James Burton playing ‘a crucial role in the early days’ of the St John’s Wood development, and of the Burton and Eyre families being friends. Galinou, *Cottages and Villas*, pp. 133-137.

⁷⁴ E. Mogg, *Moggs South Eastern or London & Dover Railway Guide ...* (London, 1843), pp. 19-20.

⁷⁵ Crook, *London’s Arcadia*, plate 3.

about in a strange, wild manner' as if they were 'strewed promiscuously'.⁷⁶ The *Pigot's Guide* of 1824 had a similar description of the pre-Calverley town 'The houses ... are scattered about in all directions, and present a singular, though gratifying appearance'.⁷⁷ The initial building agreement for Calverley Park (see below) was for fifty two houses (twenty four detached and twenty eight semi-detached), of varying sizes and styles. While they were not 'strewed promiscuously' or 'scattered about in all directions', neither were they in any formal pattern of crescents or terraces.⁷⁸

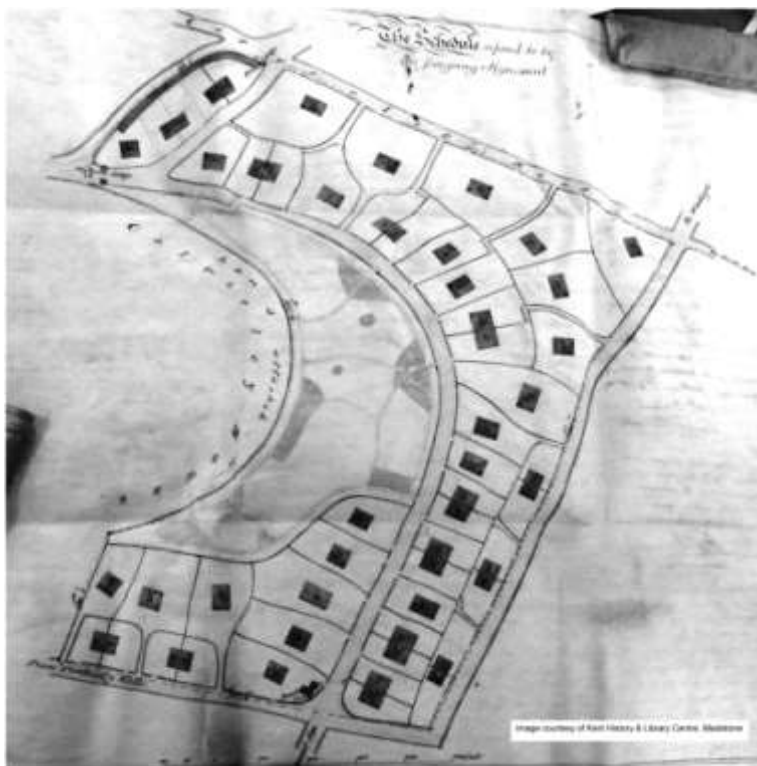


Figure 20. Layout of Calverley Park in the 1829 building agreement. Source: 'Agreement re Calverley Park, with Bramahs', Apr. 1829, KHLC U2737 08/A/05. Image courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Not to be re-used without prior, written consent.

The line of continuous buildings at the northern end was an intended mews.

The agreement provided sample designs at £1,200, £1,500 and £1,800 for the forty two houses in the main part of the park. (The ten smaller houses on the periphery were to be like the houses in Calverley Terrace, but none of these was built.) Given Decimus Burton's reputation as a designer of classical buildings, the design of the £1,800 house comes as no surprise. There are hints, in

⁷⁶ See Section 0.6 above.

⁷⁷ J. Pigot & Co., 'Pigot's Directory of Kent', in *Pigot and Co's London and Provincial New Commercial Directory* (London, 1823), p. 418.

⁷⁸ 'Agreement re Calverley Park, with Bramahs', Apr. 1829, KHLC U2737 08/A/05 .

the central semi-circular bay, of his first commission: 'The Holme' in Regent's Park.

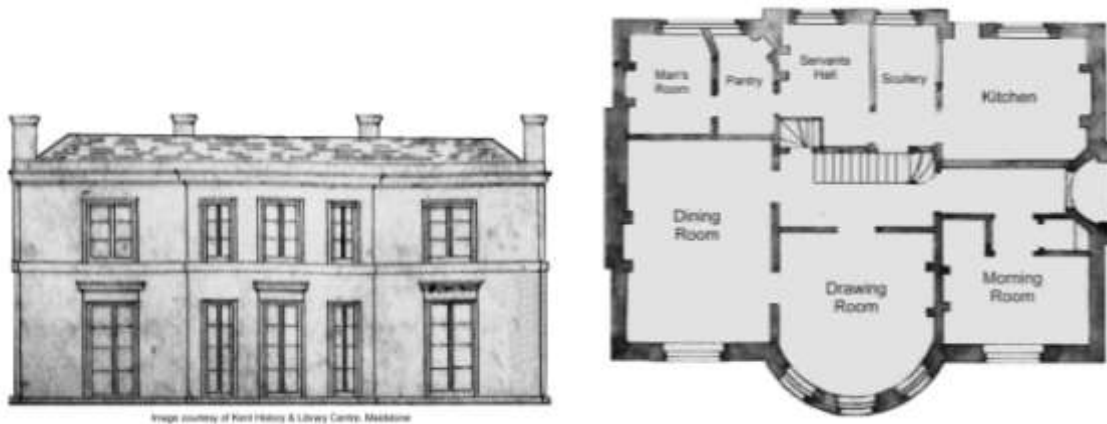


Figure 21. Calverley Park building agreement 1829. £1,800 house. Source: KHLC U2737 08/A/05. Image courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Not to be re-used without prior, written consent.

The £1,200 design was for semi-detached houses.

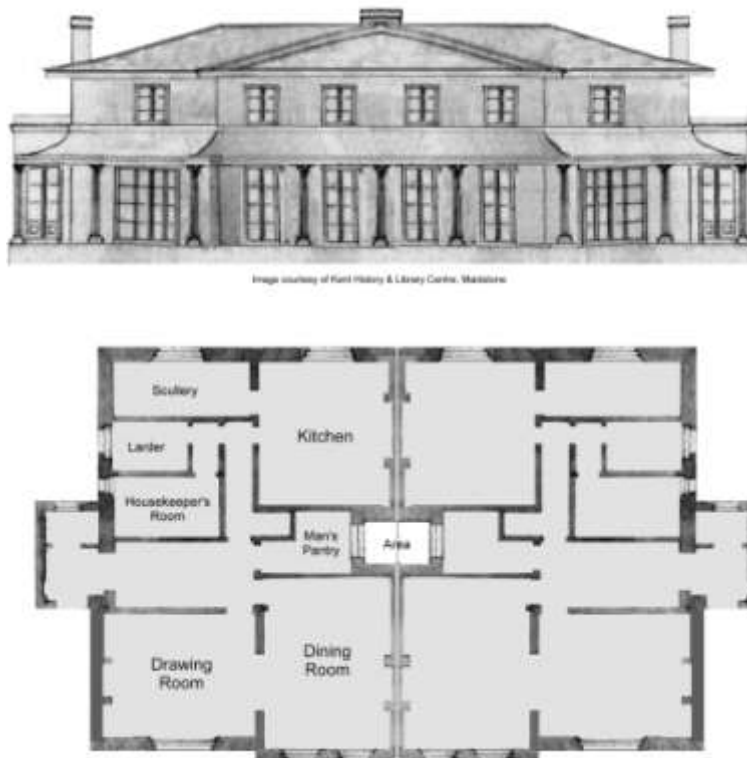


Figure 22. Calverley Park building agreement 1829. £1,200 house. Source: KHLC U2737 08/A/05. Image courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Not to be re-used without prior, written consent.

The third basic design, for a £1,500 house, was 'Olde English': gables with ornamental barge-boards and finials; horizontal windows with leaded lights, and drip-moulds.

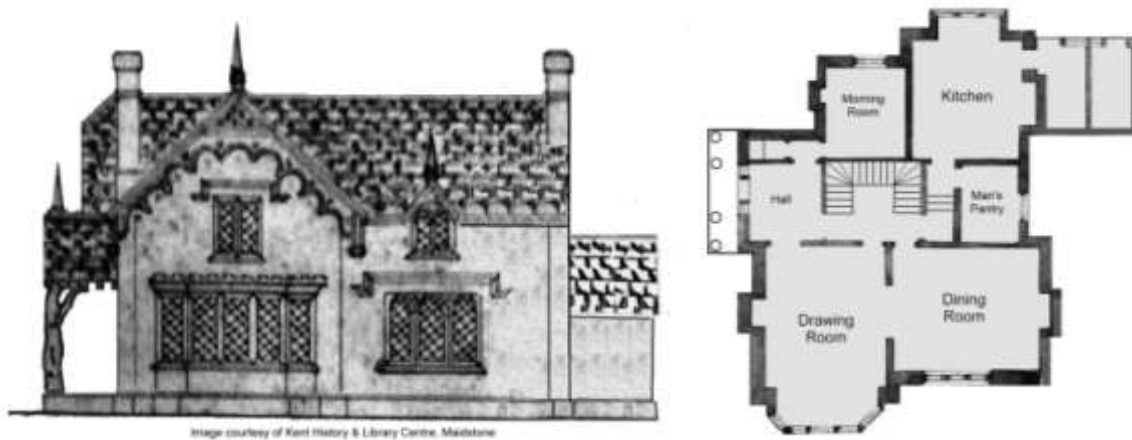


Figure 23. Calverley Park building agreement 1829. £1,500 house. Source: KHLC U2737 08/A/05. Image courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Not to be re-used without prior, written consent.

The three designs were only 'indicative'. While the agreement specified a particular combination of five houses to be built every year, in practice all were different. One noticeable feature, and something that differentiated them most clearly from an urban house, was the absence of a basement. This aspect will be considered further in Chapter 1.2.

While it may not have had the palace-fronted terraces, Calverley Park was as much a stage-set as Regent's Park. The architectural commentators cited earlier noted the views, the separation of the houses and the charm of their architecture; but did not perhaps capture the magical feel of the place. The exclusion of the outside world is a major factor, and the very instruments of that exclusion: the lodges, further express the other-worldliness of the Park in their variety of styles, Picturesque, Grecian and Roman.

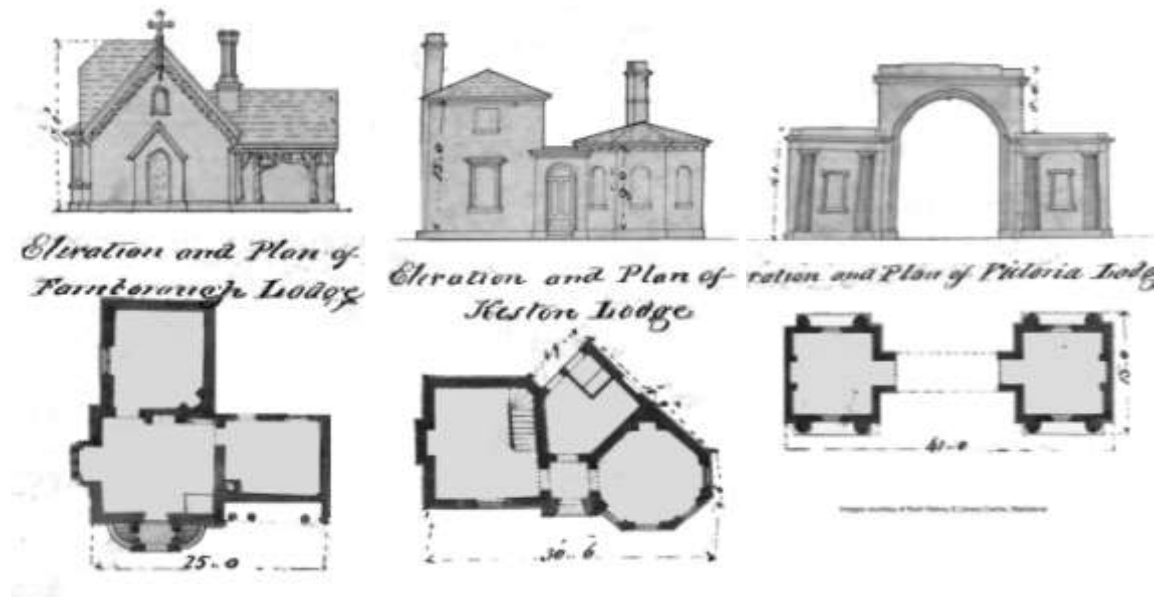


Figure 24. Calverley Park building agreement 1829. the three lodges. Source: KHLC U2737 08/A/05. Images courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Not to be re-used without prior, written consent. As built, the octagonal part of Keston Lodge (centre) was slightly higher, emphasising its Grecian inspiration, and the square part was only one storey.

1.1.5 Intention – Summary

Chapter 1.1 has demonstrated that there was nothing ‘unconscious’ or organic about the early development of Calverley, that it was the product, rather, of a ‘formulated intention’ by an outside investor with a clear objective – to satisfy the suburban ideal of the metropolitan middle class - and a plan for how to achieve it. The chapter has suggested that the inspiration for that vision lay in Regent’s Park, and that Calverley was selected because it provided in its natural setting the sort of artificial world that Nash had created in Regent’s Park. It has suggested that both Regent’s Park and Calverley represented a move away from what was becoming seen as the monotony of uniform urban terraces, though they adopted different approaches, with Calverley itself moving through a series of steps before presenting the full ‘houses in the park’ alternative. Chapter 1.2, though, will demonstrate that, after some initial success, there was a period of uncertainty lasting some ten to fifteen years, and that during that period Ward and Burton sought to be responsive to customer preferences.

1.2 Calverley – Implementation

Chapter 1.2 looks at the period between 1825 and 1845 when those initial plans – the formulated intention – were converted into shapes on the ground. It describes the building process; it demonstrates how the plans were adapted in response to economic difficulties; and it considers the features that came to represent the ‘houses in the park’.

Jonathan Meades, writing of Calverley Park, said that ‘the template he [Burton] established ... was one of great originality and whimsical accomplishment’.¹ There is a hint there, as in much of the commentary presented in the introduction to Part One, that what was achieved was what had been planned all along. This chapter will demonstrate that although the basic shape of the initial plan was indeed implemented, there were significant changes in the detail, as Burton and Ward responded to economic circumstances and customer preference. One word for this might be evolution, but there has been debate over its use to describe architectural change. Adrian Forty complained that the biological analogy was inappropriate because the process was not driven by random, naturally-occurring mutations.² Philip Steadman suggested a return to the use of the word ‘before its annexation into biology’³, as simply denoting a process of change or development. What should not be lost is the idea of selection – that those features that are most successful, in this case most successful in delivering the customer’s suburban ideal, are those that are carried forward.

The chapter is presented in three sections. The first identifies the main parties who were involved: partly to inform the narrative, but also to further demonstrate the close links with central London. The second outlines the events of those first twenty years: how the developers may have responded to early difficulties by reverting to a more urban idiom; but how, by the early 1840s, the ‘houses in the park’ model had been accepted. The third section considers

¹ Meades, ‘Villa triumphs’.

² A. Forty, *Objects of Desire. Design and Society since 1750* (London, 1986), p. 8.

³ P. Steadman, *The Evolution of Designs. Biological analogy in architecture and the applied arts*, Revised edn. (Abingdon, 2008), p. 179.

aspects of that model: placement, layout, form and setting; while noting that the urban terrace remained popular in other places.

1.2.1 Participation

When Joseph Pitt developed Pittville in Cheltenham he sold or leased the individual plots to separate builders. Between 1825 and 1860 some one hundred were involved.⁴ By contrast Ward and Burton adopted something closer to the Regent's Park model and assigned virtually all the work to one prime contractor: Messrs. Bramah. In this way they were more able to control the process: both the design and the speed of development. The exception was Calverley Parade – the first development. The first six houses there were built by a local firm, the Barratt brothers. The situation regarding the second six is less clear – it is possible that they were built by a London builder called Pettit.⁵

Messrs Bramah was a partnership between three brothers: Timothy, Edward and Francis, children of Joseph Bramah, the locksmith and mechanical engineer; and their cousin, John Joseph Bramah. The partnership was created in 1828, perhaps specifically for the Calverley project.⁶ The brothers had been involved earlier in the development of St Mary Abbots Terrace in Kensington, though as specialist 'engineers'.⁷ They may have become involved with Burton and Ward through the work they did in casting the ornamental gates for Burton's arch at Hyde Park Corner.⁸

Whatever the connection, they were given responsibility for all the building work on Calverley Terrace, Place and Park from 1829 onwards.

⁴ 216 houses were built in that period. 74 builders built only one house. Only nine built more than three. F. Clarke (ed) 'Pittville Estate History Part 2' (a summary of Blake, *Pittville*) on *Pittville History Works* <http://pittvillehistory.org.uk/estate/history2.php>.

⁵ There is an 1831 agreement (KHLC U2737 08/A/01) allowing Burton to take leases on these houses. This has been interpreted (eg Chalklin, *Estate Development*, p. 394) as Burton being the 'undertaker', but the wording is unusual. It is possible that they were actually built by Charles Allen Pettitt who was recorded as owner of this land in the Calverley Terrace agreement (KHLC U2737 08/A/02). Pettitt, carpenter and builder of Golden Square, was subject to bankruptcy proceedings in 1829 (*The London Gazette*, Issue 18579 (29 May 1879), p. 967). Burton may have been taking on houses already built.

⁶ 'Bramah v Bramah. Bill and two answers', 1832, TNA C 13/1837/18.

⁷ Sheppard, *Holland Estate*, note 11.

⁸ I. McNeil, *Joseph Bramah - A century of innovation, 1749-1851* (Newton Abbot, 1968), p. 180. Whitbourn, *Decimus Burton*, p. 18.

Bramah is the name that appears on all the documents.⁹ Theirs was the builders' yard in Zone II, the counting house in Calverley Place, and the brickyard next to the Calverley Mill, but little is known about their mode of operation.¹⁰ It seems certain that they involved other specialists, William Scantlebury for example. He held the ground leases on two houses in the Park: nos. 18 and 19. He may have built them, as Chalklin suggests,¹¹ or they may have been payment for working as a sub-contractor. He had been a carpenter but was calling himself 'builder' before arriving in Tunbridge Wells. He had leases in Ernest St, Regent's Park in 1824, and in Albany St in 1832.¹² In 1830 he was living in Park Village East.¹³ By 1841 he was back in London where he became a successful developer in Paddington (he is noted further in Chapter 3.5).

Other builders who had worked with the Bramahs at St Mary Abbots turn up in Calverley: James Haward and William Thomas Nixon, carpenters; and Richard Cobbett, glazier.¹⁴ The bulk of the workforce though remains nameless. An 1837 census indicates that 14% of heads of household in Tunbridge Wells were building workers, but with place of birth not recorded until 1851 it is difficult to establish whether they were drawn in from the country, or down from London. There are exceptions to the anonymity. The unfortunate George Neal was named in the *Maidstone Journal* when his jaw was broken while loading stone for Calverley Terrace.¹⁵ A happier example is William Willicombe. He was a plasterer who arrived from Bath in the early 1820s 'with 2s 6d in his pocket'. He went on to create the biggest building firm in the town and will figure prominently in Chapter 1.3.

The various building agreements between Ward and the Bramahs awarded leases to the builder, in consideration of the expense of erecting the buildings and on payment of a ground rent. The leases were always to run to 1900, so were typically of 69, 70 or 71 years (in Regent's Park they

⁹ And it is cast into the brass window fittings in eg no. 8 Calverley Park.

¹⁰ Fire in their Pimlico headquarters in 1843 destroyed company records. McNeil, *Joseph Bramah*, p. 187.

¹¹ Chalklin, *Estate Development*, p. 394.

¹² 'Plans & Particulars of Leases', TNA MPZ 1/14.

¹³ Recorded as 'abode' in the baptism record of Fanny Elizabeth Scantlebury 22 Nov. 1830 (ancestry.com).

¹⁴ See below in the description of Calverley Promenade.

¹⁵ *Maidstone Journal* (20 Oct. 1829).

were for 99 years and for 80 years on the Holland Estate)¹⁶. The agreements included ground floor layouts and elevation (as in Chapter 1.1 above). The houses were to be constructed ‘under direction of or with the approbation of’ Ward’s surveyor. All houses in the Park and Terrace were to be private dwellings, though houses in the Parade could be used as lodging houses: restrictions that were intended to maintain the specifically residential nature of the main part of the estate.

1.2.2 Adjustment

Ward completed the Mount Pleasant purchase in 1825 just as the British economy was affected by a financial panic. He pushed forward, nevertheless, and, while there may have been problems with one of the builders of Calverley Parade, agreements were signed in 1829 to develop the Terrace, Place and Park. Initially things went well: the houses in the Parade and Terrace were popular with customers; but by the early 1830s there were signs of difficulty. The problem mainly affected the Park houses, with little demand for them for the rest of that decade. This section suggests that the developers’ response was to change their approach – to introduce more urban elements. These were not successful either, so the problem appears to have been with general economic confidence, rather than the ‘houses in the park’ concept. By the middle of the 1840s, the houses in the Park were a success, boosted perhaps by the arrival of the railway in 1845/6.

The building agreements for Calverley Terrace and Park allowed the Bramahs to borrow money from Ward once certain stages were reached. In the case of the Terrace, they could borrow up to £800 per house – repayable when the house was let or sold. In practice they borrowed only £4,800 on the eight houses, suggesting that they were able to sell/lease some prior to completion.¹⁷ The Terrace, then, seems to have been popular, and this is confirmed by the leases. By 1832 four of the houses had been ‘sold’, ie the long ‘building’ lease had been assigned

¹⁶ Sheppard, *Holland Estate*.

¹⁷ The loans are recorded as annotations on the original building agreement.

to a third-party, and three had been let on 7-21 year leases.¹⁸ The eighth was used for furnished lettings. The Park houses were not as popular. They were slower to build and slower to sell. The building agreement specified that five houses were to be completed per year,¹⁹ and it, too, allowed for loans to the Bramahs. Analysing these loans suggests that the Bramahs were under-achieving (see the graph below). By March 1833 they should have completed twenty houses at a total value of £28,800, but had claimed only £12,875 (equivalent to nine complete houses, though more likely to represent a greater number of unfinished ones). A further indication comes from Poor Rate valuations in November 1834 which listed only fourteen houses.²⁰

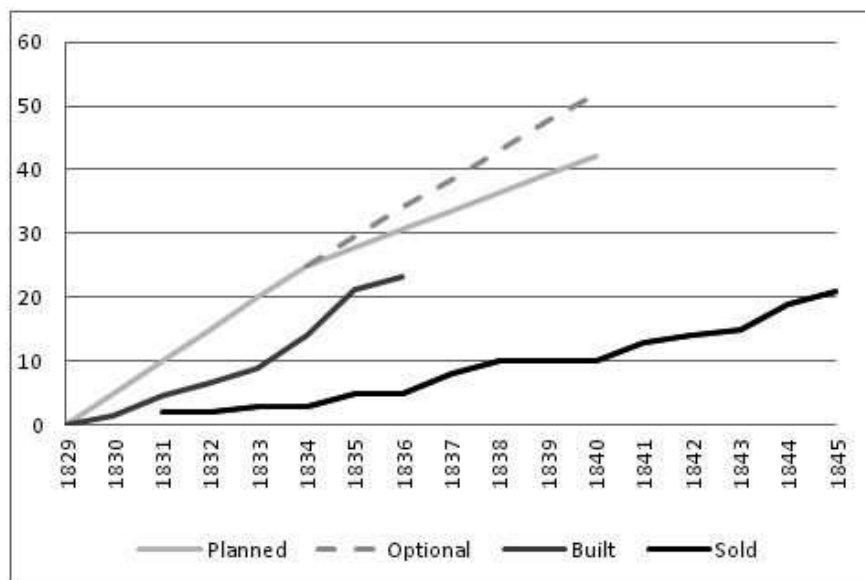


Figure 25. Calverley Park 1830-1845. Number of houses planned, built and sold. Source: author.

The evidence for sales and lettings also suggests a lack of interest.²¹ By 1834, when twenty-five houses should have been completed, and possibly fourteen had been, only three were occupied

¹⁸ 'Mortgage, S.N. Ward and Bramahs', Jan. 1834, KHLC U2737 08/A/04.

¹⁹ For the first five years. The remainder by 1840.

²⁰ 'Tonbridge parish Poor Rate', 1834, KHLC P371.11.85.

²¹ There is no complete set of leases for the Calverley Park houses in the 1830s. The occupancy figures here (and the analyses of residents in Part Three) are based on a trawl through multiple sources: occasional references to residents in *The Visitor* – local newspaper (TW Ref Lib); Poor Rate valuations for Tonbridge parish in 1834 (KHLC P371.11.85); poll-book for Tonbridge in 1835 – though it has no detailed addresses; rating valuations and census for Tunbridge Wells in 1837 (TWBC archives); tithe award schedules in 1838 (KAS); the minutes of the Tunbridge Wells Improvement Commissioners from 1835 (TWBC archives); Pigot's directory for Kent in 1839. There is a rather fragile list of leases in 1833 in the Ward papers (KHLC U2737 10/D/06), and a list of leases in 1846 which has their start dates – (KHLC U2737 06/B/14). Otherwise it is a case of fortuitous references in letters, memoirs, wills and newspapers. Individual house deeds, based on a study of those for no. 8 Calverley Park, only provide details from 1900 when the original ground leases expired. Better information is available from the 1840s.

by customers (two were allocated to Ward’s sons, and one or two others occupied by members of the Ward / Burton team. These are excluded from the sales figures). There is no obvious explanation. It may have reflected the general downturn nationally (see Figure 9 above), though that would have affected the Terrace too. Perhaps the houses in the Park were a little too unusual. The Terrace houses – semi-detached villas – were not a traditional design, but they had a secure, semi-urban feel. Two of the earlier Park houses were in a rustic Olde English style. Perhaps the early 1830s, so soon after the Captain Swing unrest, with rick-burning and threatening letters sent to isolated homes in the countryside around Tunbridge Wells (see Section 2.4.7), was not the time to play that particular tune.²² This poor performance may have caused Ward and Burton to make changes. In 1833 they reduced the number of houses planned in the Park from 52 to 40, and removed the stables.²³ In place of the stables, at the north-western edge of the Park, they inserted that most urban of structures: a crescent of shops, Calverley Promenade.

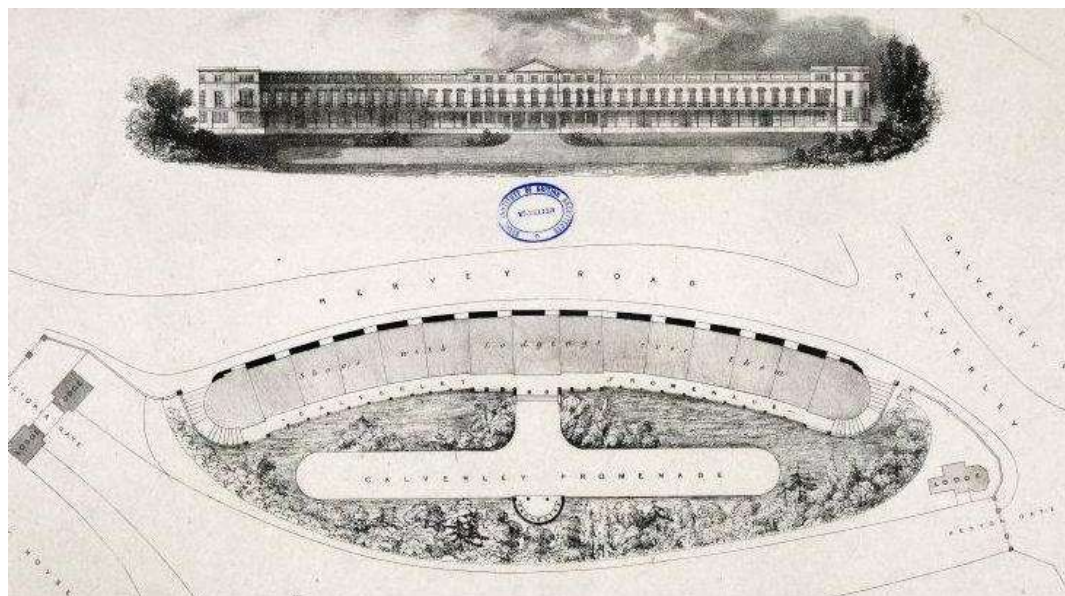


Figure 26. Proposal for Calverley Promenade. Source: unknown, but very similar to the March 1833 building agreement, KHLIC U2737 08/A/06. RIBApix ref. RIBA83078, www.architecture.com/image-library/ (9 May 2017).

²² It may have been the pricing model. No information is available on the rents that were asked, but the medium-term (7 – 21 year) leases that were eventually agreed (see above) suggest that the detached houses in the Park (c. £180) were about 50% more expensive than the semi-detached houses in the Terrace (c. £125).

²³ The change had obviously been discussed earlier than this. The map enclosed with Britton’s 1832 *Descriptive Sketches*, includes a reference to ‘Proposed Calverley Promenade’.

It was a slightly curved terrace of seventeen 3-storey 2-bay houses (shops with living accommodation over). The three central houses and the two end houses were slightly larger with prominent cornices. There was a pediment over the central house. The central and end blocks were further differentiated by tripartite first floor windows. The central sections of the end elevations were bowed. The intention was restrained but classical formality.



Figure 27. Calverley Promenade showing the colonnade and end elevation. Source: Author. Now called Calverley (Park) Crescent. To avoid down-pipes cluttering the front elevation, rainwater is channelled through the roof-space to down-pipes at the rear.

The most striking feature was the colonnade, which ran the entire length of the front elevation and provided shelter to the seventeen shop-fronts. It was an obvious mirroring of the colonnade in the Pantiles (see the birds-eye view in Section 0.6 above).²⁴ There were to be formal gardens in front with a promenade and ‘orchestra’. Internally the houses were like smaller London terraces. The staircases had to be accommodated within the width of the house, but were positioned to the rear, which was slightly wider. The basements provided a second row of shops, with the entrances on the rear elevation. In the typical explanation of the urban terrace it is shown that the road to the front is artificially built up, and that the garden at the rear represents the ‘natural’ level.²⁵ In Calverley Promenade there is no rear garden – the terrace abuts a public road (Hervey Road) providing access to these additional shops.

²⁴ To David Watkin it ‘echoes the original Quadrant’ (in Regent Street), though from the front the impression is of charm / prettiness rather than grandeur. Watkin, *English Vision*, p. 190.

²⁵ See, for example, Summerson, *Georgian London*, pp. 49-50, 219.

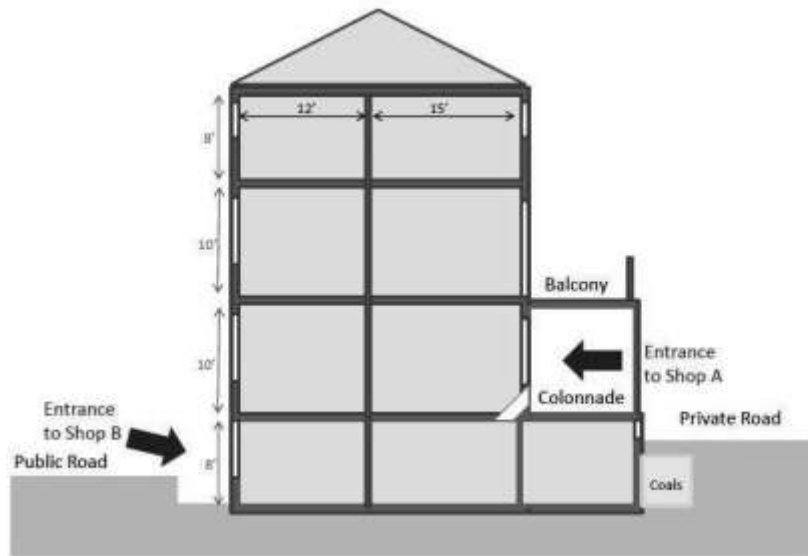


Figure 28. Calverley Promenade (now Crescent). Designed to have shops at front and back. Source: author. What would usually have been an open 'area' at the front was enclosed by the walkway of the colonnade. Light for the main basement room was provided by a window beneath the main window on the ground floor (as in the Dennis Severs House in Folgate Street).

The building agreement distinguished between the shops on the two sides. Those facing Hervey Road might be 'butcher, baker, fishmonger, greengrocer, furnishing ironmonger, ...' - workaday shops serving basic needs. Those on the Park side were: 'public library, stationer, billiard room, linen draper, milliner, tailor ...' and similar: recreational shopping.²⁶ This distinction between the workaday and the 'gentle' suggests the Promenade was intended as a barrier to the outside world – like Nash's strategy in Regent's Park. This is considered further in Chapter 3.3. The new shops in the Promenade were much puffed by a local newspaper with advertisements for a bazaar, tailor, library and reading room, and the 'Royal Baths' at no.1.²⁷ It is suggested then, that the Promenade was an attempt to give a more metropolitan feel to Calverley because at this point the 'houses in the park' were not selling. (It has to be said that this interpretation is not made by other commentators, but then the detailed sales/occupancy figures for the Park are not usually studied, and the events involving the Bramahs described below are not generally known.)

²⁶ The building agreement allocated specific leases to sub-contractors. Further London builders are named: Haward and Nixon of Lambeth, and William Hughes, ex-Albany Street. Local builders were also involved: the Barretts took the lease of no. 5.

²⁷ See, for example, *The Visitor* (19 May 1834). Use of the 'Royal' prefix is considered further in Chapter 2.1.

There was a significant change in the design of Calverley Place (Zone II) too. The 1829 agreement had envisaged an open market next to the Calverley Place shops, and a relatively plain commercial hotel. At some stage in the mid 1830s a rather grander design was adopted (as below). A porch was added to the hotel, and a third storey to the Calverley Place houses, but most striking was the two-storey 'Market Hall', with a colonnade of (cast-iron) Doric columns. It had an open courtyard behind with a fountain, and a 'splendid Ball-room' on the first floor.²⁸

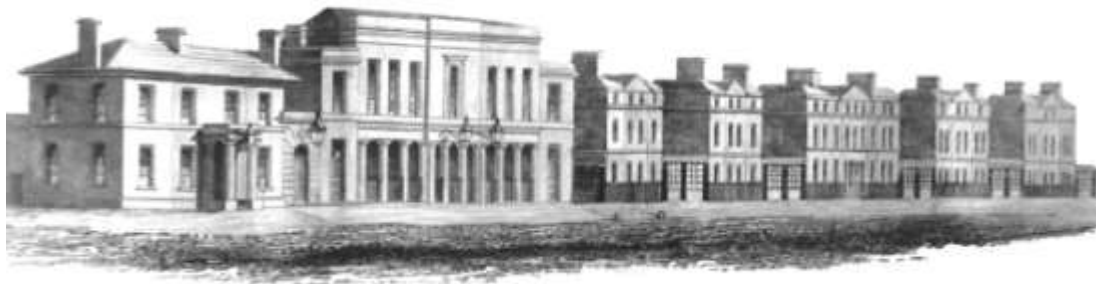


Figure 29. Calverley Place as built. Camden Hotel, Market Hall, Calverley Place houses with shops between. Source: Colbran, *Guide* (1840).

The partnership between the four Bramahs, however, was failing. Timothy ended his involvement in 1829 and John Joseph in 1832. In July of that year Timothy complained that his brothers had not met their obligations to him, and the case went to Chancery.²⁹ In 1836 the remaining brothers were forced to come to an arrangement with John Ward.³⁰ By then they owed him over £49,000. Ward released them of £45,000 of this, in return for the houses and leases, and on condition that they did not claim bankruptcy.³¹ By then they had completed 24 houses in Calverley Park.³² The remaining sixteen were never built. There were problems too with Calverley Place. In 1834 the lease on the Market (see above) had been assigned to James Dobson, builder of Northumberland Street, Strand. He died in 1838, leaving a premium unpaid, and a mortgage outstanding. Ward stepped in, agreeing to arrange a auction of the market, and

²⁸ *Brighton Patriot* (21 Aug. 1838).

²⁹ John Joseph had only a one-twelfth share. TNA C 13/1837/18.

³⁰ Their loans from Ward were repayable in 1836.

³¹ 'Release and assignment, with Bramahs', Apr. 1836, KHLC U2737 16/D/01.

³² Or perhaps they had started twenty-four houses, some of which had to be finished by others, such as Scantlebury.

to release Dobson's assignees from the agreement should the building not sell – which appears to have been the case.³³ By 1846 the Wards accepted that it was not going to be a success, and the building was leased to the Improvement Commissioners as a Town Hall.³⁴

In 1837 fourteen of the twenty four houses in Calverley Park were empty. Only seven had tenants and three were occupied 'in-house' – by Ward's son, Ward's agent, and a building worker. By 1841, half were still unoccupied. There was a change in the early 1840s. Leases were taken on three houses, and then on two more, by members of the Delves family, successful traders from the Old Town. They had a history as property investors, providing accommodation for long-term visitors. The same applied to Henry Edwards, a butcher, who took leases on three houses in 1841 and a fourth in 1844.³⁵ The graph in Figure 9 would suggest an increase in confidence generally about this time, and that would have been bolstered by the arrival of the railway in Tunbridge Wells in 1845.

The first, temporary, station was opened in September 1845, at the northern end of the Calverley estate. A tunnel was then cut under Mount Pleasant and the central station opened in December 1846 (convenient for Calverley Park – see Figure 46). There had already been a station at Tonbridge since 1842 with linking coach service from Tunbridge Wells.³⁶ The route to London at that time was via Redhill and took about two hours – an hour and a half on the express, though the fare for that was 10s.6d.³⁷ While the number who commuted for work was initially limited – there is an example in Section 3.4.3 – the improved access, with eight trains a day, would have appealed to many. Advertisers used the presence, or promise, of the railway as an attraction. An advertisement for no. 8 Calverley Terrace in 1841 rather prematurely claimed its

³³ 're Sale of Calverley Market', Aug. 1838, KHLC U2737 09/D/25.

³⁴ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (May to Dec. 1846). By then it was in the hands of Neville Ward – John's son, as part of his marriage settlement.

³⁵ 'List of leases', Dec. 1842, KHLC U2737 10/D/06. Leaseholders can also be identified on documents relating to the Succession Duty payable by Ward's sons in 1855, KHLC U2737 07/A/03 and 12/F/07.

³⁶ A. Gray, *South Eastern Railway* (London, 1990), p. 192.

³⁷ J. Arkell, 'The Railways and Tunbridge Wells (1846-2005)', in J. Cunningham, *400 Years of the Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 2005), p. 102.

arrival in 'a few months', promising, optimistically, that 'Tunbridge Wells will be within an hour and a quarter's ride of London'.³⁸

By 1851, only five of the houses in the Park were unoccupied and these were between tenants rather than empty since construction. The 'houses in the park' had come into their own. The alternative 'urban' strategy, though, represented by the Promenade, had not been a success. The shops had all gone by 1837, save the baths at no. 1 and library at no. 9. They became simple residential dwellings, or, increasingly, were kept by lodging-house keepers – eight of them by 1862. Olsen, in his work on the Bedford estate in Bloomsbury,³⁹ records the attempts by that estate to combat the 'lodging house dry rot' which lowered the values of surrounding houses. In Tunbridge Wells they were less of an issue: offering an additional option to visitors and longer-term residents.

There remains to be considered the situation of the original Calverley (Mount Pleasant) House. It was leased to Richard Delves in 1827,⁴⁰ but he went bankrupt in 1830 and the house reverted to Ward. Princess Victoria and her mother returned for six weeks in August 1834. Ward then advertised for 'Hotel Keepers, Builders, Wine Merchants and others' interested in converting it into a hotel.⁴¹ The old building was significantly altered during the conversion, which was completed by 1839. Like the Promenade, the Hotel was an attempt to link Calverley to fashionable London society, though the attempt here was more successful. Granville called it 'the Richmond Star and Garter of Tunbridge, but with an infinitely finer and more magnificent prospect before it', demonstrating yet again the importance of the setting.⁴²

1.2.3 Achievement

So, by 1850, all the Calverley Park houses were sold, but there had been considerable uncertainty

³⁸ *Morning Post* (28 Sep. 1841).

³⁹ Olsen, *Town Planning*, p. 175.

⁴⁰ 'Lease of Calverley House, R. Delves', Dec. 1828, KHLC U2737 13/E/05.

⁴¹ For example, *The Visitor* (2 Aug. 1834).

⁴² A.B. Granville, *The Spas of England and Principal Sea-bathing Places*, (3 vols, London, 1841), iii, p. 632.

in the earlier years. Had it been a problem with the 'houses in the park' concept? It would be easy to fall back on an economic explanation: the Middlesex graph in Figure 9 clearly demonstrates a general slump. Evidence from elsewhere is varied: Dyos claimed that Camberwell was not affected by 1825, and Stephen Blake suggests that the 1830s was the peak decade for building in Pittville;⁴³ but Busby and Kemp, developers of Brighton, both suffered.⁴⁴ Brighton was an essentially urban development, so the failure there cannot be blamed on the picturesque suburban ideal. That the increase in demand in Tunbridge Wells coincided with the arrival of the railway was not a coincidence. Railways did not create the desire to live in the suburbs, they simply made that desire easier to achieve. Perhaps, then, the earlier lack of demand was merely a question of practicality. Nevertheless in 1830 the idea of the 'houses in the park' was still tentative. The various aspects of 'suburban ideal' had yet to coalesce into an understood shape. The following section looks at the Calverley Park houses for elements that were to characterise the new suburban form: placement, layout, form and setting. It looks in particular for features that might have been changed during that period of uncertainty to better meet customer preferences.

The most notable feature of Calverley was the absence of terraces. The Promenade, essentially a terrace, was intended originally as shops, and, as suggested earlier, was perhaps a response to the uncertainties of the early 1830s. Otherwise there were no terraces in Calverley, and very few in the rest of 'suburban' Tunbridge Wells. Belvedere Terrace in Church Road (see Chapter 2.5) was an exception, but it is Picturesque rather than grand.⁴⁵ Terraces, though, were successful elsewhere. The development of Belgrave Square by the Haldimands has been mentioned earlier, and of course there were the Regent's Park terraces. They were not, though, just a feature of central London. They were a prominent part of Leamington Spa, which in other ways was a close

⁴³ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 46. Blake, *Pittville*, p. 35.

⁴⁴ E. Nathaniels, 'James and Decimus Burton's Regency New Town 1827-37', *The Georgian Group Journal*, XX, p. 152.

⁴⁵ There were a few terraces in the 'Old Town' of Tunbridge Wells, but they were aimed more at tradesmen than 'suburban incomers' (see comment in Section 3.2.4).

parallel to Calverley: a 'new town' added in the early years of the century to an existing small spa town. The map below contrasts the grid-like pattern of the new town with the more traditional layout south of the river. Much of the grid became lined with terraces, as in the following figure.

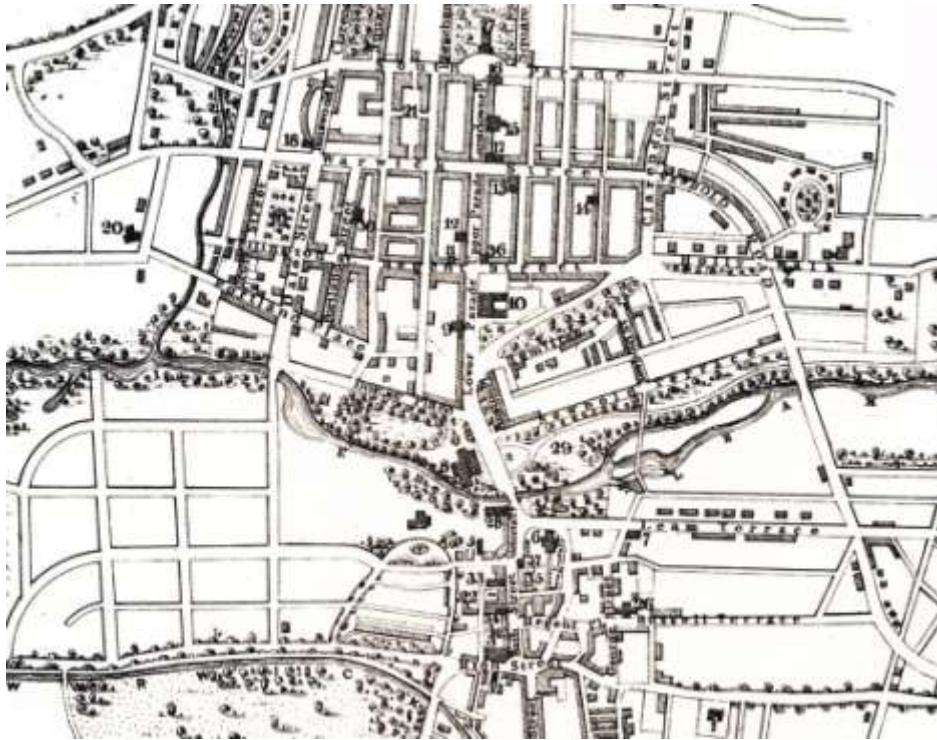


Figure 30. Leamington Spa 1843 showing the grid-like layout of the new town north of the river. Source: S.E.K. Nicklin, *Plan of Royal Leamington Spa ...* (Leamington, 1843). Reproduced from A. Griffin, 'A guide to burial grounds in Leamington', p. 3, on www.leamingtonhistory.co.uk/a-guide-to-burial-grounds-in-leamington/ (9 May 2017).



Figure 31. Leamington Spa – Lansdowne Place, urban terraces, 1824 and 1827. Source: Granville, *Spas of England*, ii, p.224.

In 1825 P.F. Robinson provided a plan for development further to the north (see below). Its essentially urban inspiration is indicated by an annotation which explains that Beauchamp Square, the central feature, was ‘the same size as Grosvenor Square, London’. Robinson will be cited in Chapter 2.5 for his designs for cottages and manor-houses. It is ironical that one of those ‘cottage’ designs is shown on this plan (at the left, seemingly at the end of the central avenue): a little piece of the Picturesque dominated by the formality of the rest. Robinson’s vision was never fully implemented, largely due to the absence of a major developer.⁴⁶ John Nash, too, provided a scheme for the eastern part of the town in 1827. It has been described as ‘a romantic layout of roads with sweeping curves and areas of parkland’, but it also included many straight roads of terraced housing.⁴⁷

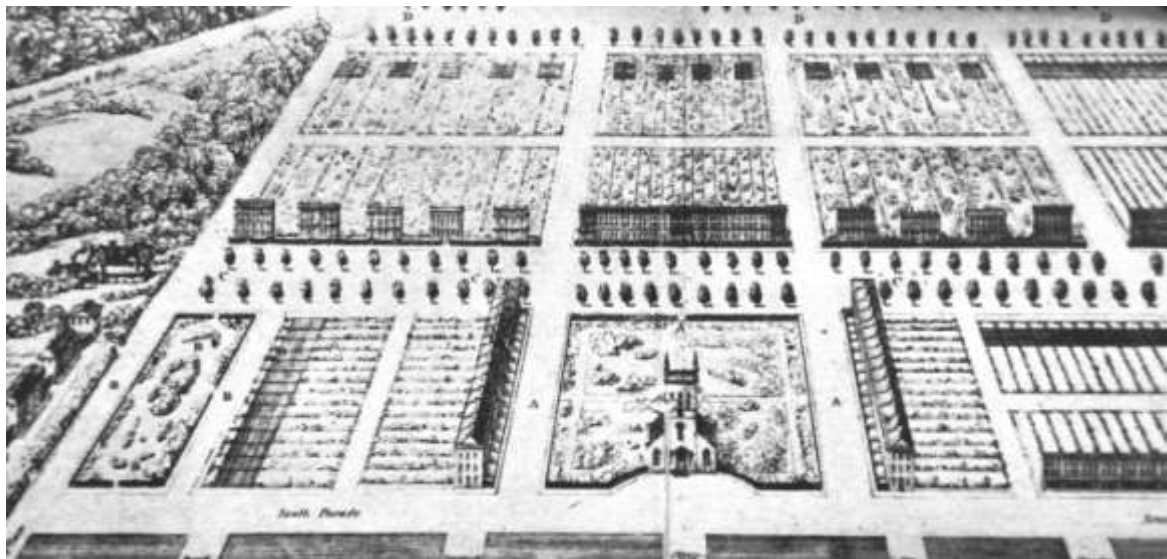


Figure 32. Proposal for further development of Leamington Spa, 1825 by P.F. Robinson. Source: C.H.G. Clarke, *Royal Leamington Spa. A century's growth...* (Leamington and London, 1947), pp. 88-89. A grid-like layout of terraces and matching semi-detached town-houses. Binswood Cottage to the left.

There was terrace development too, within the more obvious suburban area of Camberwell; not just in the north, along the main roads from town, but in the hills to the south. The terrace below, more accurately a row of quasi-semi-detached, was developed at the top end of Grove

⁴⁶ J.N. Croom, ‘Joseph Vincent Barber: Leamington Speculator, Birmingham Artist’, *Warwickshire History*, XIII/4 (Winter 2006/7), p. 156.

⁴⁷ L.F. Cave, *Royal Leamington Spa : its history and development* (Chichester, 1988), p. 55. The plan included some four hundred terraced units, perhaps ten times the number of individual houses, though the latter were larger.

Hill in the late 1830s.



Figure 33. Camberwell. Nos. 197-203 (odd nos.) Camberwell Grove. An urban terrace of late 1830s. Source: Collage – London Picture Archive, ref. 54474 <https://collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk> (28 Feb. 2018). Image courtesy of London Metropolitan Archives. (Replaces image of nos. 201-211 following uncertainty over licensing of Google StreetView images).

These were not speculative builders putting up houses at the lowest cost, but builders aiming to create, at some effort, a particular suburban ideal. The suburban ideal represented by Calverley Park was different. In particular contrast to the terrace was the avoidance of straight lines and regularity.

Mordaunt Crook talks of the Park Villages being ‘pictorially conceived on kinetic principles’. The houses, in their variety of forms, are revealed as the viewer moves along ‘kinetically adjusted and pictorially composed’. It was part of ‘Nash’s concept of the urban picturesque’.⁴⁸ The same comment could be applied to Calverley Park. A similar effect might have been achieved in the ring of villas in John White’s 1809 proposal for the Regent’s Park. This proposed some sixty villas, detached and semi-detached, in a ring around a central park. Unlike other early plans for the park, and those for St John’s Wood, it was not predominantly geometrical: the villas followed the natural perimeter of the park. Elizabeth McKellar calls it ‘perhaps the first suburban villa layout in which the demands of the individual house to privacy and prospect have been combined with a

⁴⁸ J.M. Crook, ‘John Nash and the genesis of Regent’s Park’, in G. Tyack (ed.), *John Nash. Architect of the Picturesque* (Swindon, 2013), p. 91.

landscaped parkland setting'.⁴⁹

The appeal of the irregular had been recognised earlier. Sir Joshua Reynolds, quoted by David Watkin, suggested that 'The forms and turnings of the streets of London ... produced by accident ... are not always the less pleasant to the walker or spectator, on that account'.⁵⁰ Variety produced by organic, incremental development was part of the Picturesque ideal, so Uvedale Price in his *Essay on Architecture* (1796) claimed that 'The characteristic beauties of a village, as distinct from a city, are intricacy, variety, and play of outline'.⁵¹ Pevsner saw the same intricacy and play of outline in the urban settings of Oxford and the Inns of Court, though it was important that they should be revealed progressively. His editor suggests 'his approach was cinematographic': basically the kinetic principle identified by Crook above.⁵²

The variety in Calverley Park was artificial and deliberate. In contrast to Calverley Parade and Terrace each house is different.⁵³ The panorama below is not a natural view, but celebrates this variety.



Figure 34. Calverley Park, 1840s. Contrived panorama showing the arc of houses. Source: print published by Edwin Marks, Calverley Library, but not otherwise identified. Davis, *Tunbridge Wells*, p. 52. The Promenade is at the extreme left.

⁴⁹ McKellar, *Landscapes*, pp. 214-216.

⁵⁰ Watkin, *English Vision*, p. 187.

⁵¹ Cited by Watkin, *English Vision*, p. 182, and C. Hussey, *The Picturesque. Studies in a point of view* (London, 1967), p. 206.

⁵² J. Macarthur, 'The Principle Ideas of *Visual Planning and the Picturesque*', in N. Pevsner and M. Aitchison (ed.), *Visual Planning and the Picturesque* (Los Angeles, 2010), p. 20.

⁵³ Philip Whitbourn provides a thumbnail sketch of each in Whitbourn, *Decimus Burton*, pp. 26-7.

Another benefit of moving away from the terrace form was the increased flexibility of layout. A feature common to all three models in the Calverley Park building agreement (see Chapter 1.1) was that there was no basement. It was clearly Burton's intention that the Park houses would be built in this way. Calverley Parade and Terrace had both used the traditional urban form, by which the basement housed the service functions: kitchen, scullery, larders and some staff accommodation. It was particularly noticeable in the Terrace houses in the raising of the ground floor. In the Park Burton was intending to set the houses more closely into the garden and the landscape. Summerson said that this was a feature of late eighteenth-century villas, where the absence of a basement allowed owners to walk through French windows directly into the garden;⁵⁴ and Watkin talks of Nash's design for Luscombe, where the large verandah 'blurs the distinction between interior and exterior'.⁵⁵ Dana Arnold sees the same objective in Burton's design for The Holme.⁵⁶ Avoiding a basement, though, had an impact on the ground-floor layout, which had to accommodate the displaced service functions. In the case of the £1,200 house, see below, these occupied nearly half the space.



Figure 35. Calverley Park building agreement, 1829. £1,200, £1,500 and £1,800 houses. Green - service zone, Pink - 'family' zone. Source: author, based on KHLC U2737 08/A/05. Not to be re-used without prior, written consent.

It might be noted that none of the Calverley houses adopted the urban strategy of a 'piano nobile', with 'reception' rooms on the first floor – Ward's house in Devonshire Place, for

⁵⁴ Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 319.

⁵⁵ D. Watkin, *A History of Western Architecture*, 4th edn. (London, 2005), p. 460.

⁵⁶ Arnold, *Rural Urbanism*, p. 66 (though The Holme did have a basement, see: Ackermann, *Repository*, 1 Oct. 1828).

example, had a double drawing room on the first floor (and higher ceilings on that floor). It might have seemed logical given the importance of the views – the early houses in Grove Hill, a slightly earlier example of ‘houses in the park’ between Calverley and the Old Town (see Appendix B), had them, as did some of the houses in the Old Town. The desire to set the house within the garden took precedence.

The plans in the building agreement were only an indication of what might be built, though the £1,800 design was followed fairly closely for no. 7. The plan below is a more accurate indication of what was actually built, showing the service area occupying an even greater proportion of the floor-space, and extending into a courtyard behind.



Figure 36. Calverley Park, no.7. Based on the £1,800 model. Source: Britton, *Descriptive Sketches* (the illustrations follow p. 54).

This plan and drawing are from Britton’s 1832 guide to Tunbridge Wells. The significance of the book as a selling-tool will be explained in Chapter 2.1. One should note that although it appears to illustrate four of the villas in the park, and has been understood in that way by some historians, they were actually just design options.⁵⁷

Thirty years later Robert Kerr in *The Gentleman’s House* strongly favoured designs without basements, and provided advice on maintaining the privacy and separation of family and staff in

⁵⁷ Newman, *West Kent*, p. 624 has three of the illustrations with no indication that they were only proposals, that one was never used, and one is shown as a mirror image of the actual design.

such situations.⁵⁸ He was also concerned about the best placement of the different rooms according to prospect and aspect, and whether they were used largely by females (drawing room, morning room) or by males (dining room, library). This is considered further in Chapter 1.3, in relationship to the houses built later in Broadwater Down. In Calverley Park most of the houses had a similar placement regardless of size and style, with four distinct elevations. No. 7, above, is an example. There was the 'garden front'. The drawing room and dining room were on this front. These typically had large opening windows looking out onto the formal, lawned area between the house and the park. This is the side that would enjoy the distant views. (They also had shutters and canopies against the afternoon and evening sunshine – a major concern in Kerr's discussion of prospect and aspect.) The 'entrance front' was at the side. It contained the main door, often in a pillared porch, but few windows (the apparent window to the left of the door of no.7 is false). The 'service front' faced the back, sometimes with additional storage areas across a small court. The 'boundary front' was usually plain and faced the equivalent front on the neighbouring/adjoining house.

A new design - included in Britton but not in the building agreement - is illustrated below. This was used for nos. 1 and 8. According to the building agreement, No. 8 should have been one of a pair of semi-detached. That it was the house for which Mrs Haily, uniquely, bought the ground lease, suggests that there was some customer involvement in the change of plan. There is the same placement, with four distinct elevations: entry, garden, service and boundary, with, again, false windows on the entrance front. This style, though, is asymmetrical, a feature of most of the later houses, and perhaps the influence of Park Villages – the earlier designs were perhaps based more on the Regent's Park villas.

⁵⁸ 'especially worthy of approbation, is the abandonment of Basement Offices', Kerr, *The Gentleman's House*, p. 61.



Figure 37. Calverley Park. Design of nos. 1 and 8. Source: Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*.

With these references to house numbers, it is useful to understand the sequence in which the houses were built. There is one main arc, with numbers (reading left to right): 1, 5, 6, 7 and up to 24; and three houses: 2, 3 and 4 lying behind the ones at the left of the main arc. Nos. 1, 5, 6 and 7 were built first; followed by 8 to 11, and 2 to 4, though these latter two batches may have been built in parallel.

The design of no. 2, part of the second/third batch, introduced changes. The most significant was the introduction of a full basement. This allowed four ‘family’ rooms on the ground floor around a central hall. It simplified the separation of staff from family. One of Kerr’s recommendations was for completely separate access for tradesmen. This was possible in the houses behind the main arc. In the case of nos. 2 and 3 a separate gate from the public road led through a tunnel to a back-door in the basement. Visiting tradesmen could not be seen from the garden, and were unable to wander into it. (Figure 20 in Chapter 1.1 shows Burton trying to provide separate access from the rear to all the houses.) The reason for re-introducing a basement to the design for no. 2 is not clear. Nos. 3 and 4 also had one, though in no.3 it was only partial. No. 11 had one, and then all the rest round to no.24. There may have been practical reasons for it or customers may simply have preferred to have the greater number of family rooms on the ground floor. As chapter 1.3 will indicate, full basements became fewer as the century progressed, but perhaps customers were not ready for the change in the 1830s. The lack of basements in Bedford

Park is said to be 'one of the innovations for which the suburb became famous'.⁵⁹ Burton was perhaps a little ahead of the market in Calverley. Customer preference may have also been the reason that only four semi-detached houses were built – the original plans had envisaged eighteen. With the exception of Mrs Haily, of course, the customers were only indirectly influencing the design as the houses were built speculatively.

No. 2, see below, also introduced the idea of the 'tower'.



Figure 38. Calverley Park, no. 2. Garden front with 'tower'. Source: author.

The word is misleading. As Hussey pointed out it is just the end elevation of a slightly higher section of the house⁶⁰ – a development of the asymmetrical design of no. 8. The idea was used again for some of the later houses. Nos. 16 and 23 below, for example, demonstrate Burton's practice of making each design different (and his use, in no. 16, of a roof gable to represent a pediment).

⁵⁹ Saint, *Bedford Park*, p. 17.

⁶⁰ Hussey, 'Calverley Park', p. 1168.

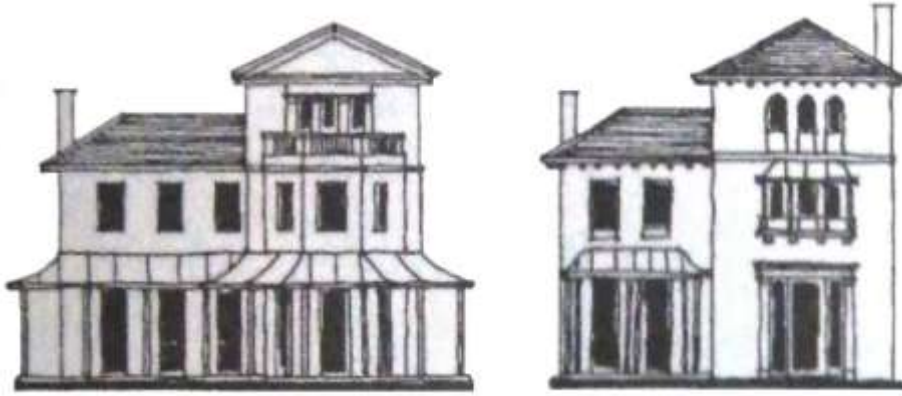


Figure 39. Calverley Park. 'Towers' - nos. 16 and 23. Source; Whitbourn, *Decimus Burton*, pp. 26-27.

No. 18, below, has been likened to the Tower House, no. 12 Park Village West. The comparison is particularly appealing as the ground lease of no. 18 was assigned to Scantlebury, the builder who had lived in Park Village East. Summerson saw elements of Nash's Cronkhill in 12 Park Village West⁶¹ – one could perhaps say the same about 18 Calverley Park, though the more direct influence seems to have just been earlier houses in the park, such as no. 2 (see above).



Figure 40. Tower houses. Left: Calverley Park, no. 18. Right: Park Village West, no. 12. Source: author.

It was a requirement in all of these early building agreements that the houses be faced in stone, which was provided free from 'Jack Wood's Quarry' on the Calverley estate. This had been bought by Ward in early 1826. It is not clear whether the stone had been Ward's original objective – the land also included springs which he used to supply the estate, or even whether

⁶¹ J. Summerson, *The life and work of John Nash, architect* (London, 1980), pp. 128-9.

there had been a working quarry at the time.⁶² In mandating its use he may have been seeking simply to make best use of the resources he had acquired, or perhaps its potential as a signifier of quality appealed to him. Its use in Calverley was distinctive. David Watkin, for example, says ‘the villas have a spare refinement of detail which is emphasised by their construction in stone as opposed to the slipshod stucco of Nash's Park Villages’ (it is not clear whether stucco per se was slipshod, or its particular application in Regent’s Park).⁶³ Unfortunately it was not very good stone. A reference in a technical journal in 1838 accepted that its use by Burton ‘has greatly improved the character of the architecture in that locality’ but nevertheless considered it ‘of an inferior quality’ – it doesn’t take a very sharp arris, and absorbs moisture.⁶⁴ The most obvious problem is that it weathers to a dark grey. It so depressed Hussey that he suggested that the replacement of Burton’s market-hall in Calverley Place by a supermarket ‘cannot honestly be regretted’.⁶⁵ It reminded Jonathan Meades of the dark-hued sandstones of West Yorkshire; he said it suggested ‘opulent melancholy’,⁶⁶ but that only became apparent later.

It has been noted that the houses are all different. The most obvious of the variations in style was the use of ‘Olde English’ for nos. 3 and 4. These were based on the design of the £1,500 house (see above Figure 24). The design also featured in Britton – see below.

⁶² Ward claimed that it had been re-opened for use on Holy Trinity. Letter to George Warde Norman, Dec. 1838, cited in G. Copus, *St Barnabas, Tunbridge Wells A Miscellany* (Tunbridge Wells, 1987) (no page numbers). Ward was hoping to persuade Norman to use the stone for a church on Bromley Common.

⁶³ Watkin, *English Vision*, p. 189.

⁶⁴ *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, 2 (1838). p. 188.

⁶⁵ Hussey, ‘Calverley Park’, p. 1082.

⁶⁶ Meades, ‘Villa triumphs’.

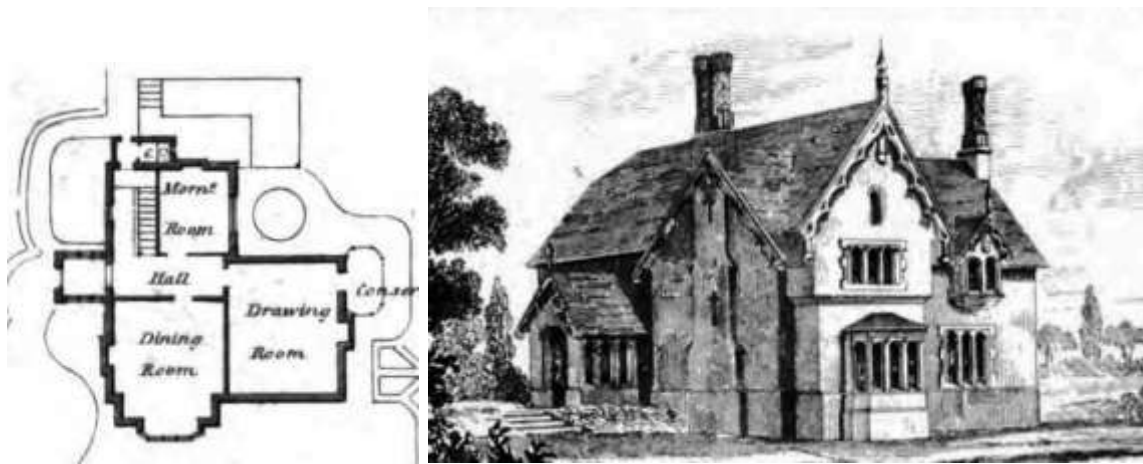


Figure 41. Calverley Park. Design (mirror image) used for nos. 3 and 4. Source: Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*.

The Britton plan and picture are mirror images of what was actually built (see below), indicating that Britton was working from the plans, rather than actual houses (and the layout of the morning room and stairs is different). The decision to include a basement had obviously already been taken.



Figure 42. Calverley Park, no. 3. Left: garden front. Right: entrance front. Source: author.

The ‘Olde English’ feel is further suggested by the materials used. Though the quoins and chimney structures are of ashlar like the main elevations of the rest of the Park, the stone is otherwise cut into brick-sized blocks, and the roofs are tiled rather than slated. Hussey suggested that the two houses were positioned here – behind the main arc ‘so they do not conflict with the main series’. The problem seems not to have occurred to the artist of Figure 34, where nos. 3 and 4 are clearly shown. The question nevertheless arises of why the design was not used in the later houses. It may have been another example of Ward / Burton / the Bramahs responding to

customer preference – there is no evidence that nos. 3 and 4 were occupied by customers until the early 1840s, some ten years after they were built.⁶⁷ It cannot be blamed on supposedly ‘neo-classicist’ Burton, as the house he built for his own use – Baston Cottage (below), across the road on the edge of Calverley Plain, was perhaps more stridently ‘Olde English’.



Figure 43. Baston Cottage and Lodge, with Keston Lodge to the right. Source: Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*.

In the period of some eight years when the Calverley Park houses were built⁶⁸ a number of changes were made. Basements were re-introduced. The Olde-English option was withdrawn, as was the choice of semi-detached. There seems to have been a move towards vertical sashes for the upper-storey windows – the earlier houses had outward-opening casements.⁶⁹ The ‘houses in the park’ model was evolving. It was a process of selection by the market place. Adrian Forty said, of the design of consumer products, that ‘the best historical evidence about consumer preferences ... comes from manufacturers, who can, after all, be expected to have had their fingers on the pulse of the market’.⁷⁰ We might reasonably assume that Burton / Ward / the Bramahs were similarly conscious of what their customers wanted.

⁶⁷ The lack of evidence must be treated with some caution, though it is notable that no. 4 was occupied at times by a Burton family member, and by his agent.

⁶⁸ 1828-1836 - they were all assessed for rates in 1837 (TWBC archives), so they must have been complete, though half were unoccupied.

⁶⁹ An impression that has not been investigated in detail, but there seems to have been a change from no. 11 onwards.

⁷⁰ Forty, *Objects of Desire*, p. 17.

It is the setting, though, as much as the houses that qualifies Calverley Park as a ‘picturesque’ or ‘garden suburb’ – the views down the valley, and the idea that the houses overlook each other as little as possible. This latter suggestion is a little problematic, particularly at the southern end where the plots are smaller, and where many of the houses have shared drives. The letter-heading, below left, demonstrates the variety in design, but also suggests an almost urban density. The adjoining image shows the actual distance between the houses.

Fig 44 Left.
 Calverley Park on mid
 19th century letter-
 heading.
 Image redacted due to
 licensing terms.



Figure 44. Left: Calverley Park on mid nineteenth-century letter-heading. Source: V&A E.1054B-1954 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. **Right:** Calverley Park, nos. 21, 22, 23. 2015. Source: author.

But this is to be too literal. Contemporary comment was favourable. Britton wrote this of the houses ‘placed as they are in the midst of a park, which is most pleasingly disposed by nature and adorned by art, they must be delightful... having a most extensive tract of wild and cultivated country within their command, they cannot fail of being peculiarly cheerful.’⁷¹ Britton was funded by Ward (see Chapter 2.1) so his comments are hardly unbiased, but two other commentators made much the same comment. A.B. Granville said, in 1841: ‘Calverley-park, a magnificent embowered and deep dell, whose gently inclined slopes, richly clothed with verdure, dotted with groups of trees and shrubberies ... offers ample room for first-rate insulated villas, in the style of those which decorate the inclosure of our Regent’s-park’.⁷² Edward Mogg, in 1843, spoke of ‘Calverley Park, which, in style and manner, somewhat resembles the Regent’s Park, near London ... or perhaps resembles, but upon a more extended scale, Park village, in its

⁷¹ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, pp. 53-4.

⁷² Granville, *Spas of England*, iii, p. 623.

vicinity.’ He continued ‘The Park, a beautiful inclosure, pleasingly disposed by nature and adorned by art, is studded with villas that command views over an extensive tract of wild and cultivated country’.⁷³ This was the response that Ward had anticipated when presented with the opportunity to buy Mount Pleasant.

1.2.4 Implementation – Summary

Chapter 1.2 has demonstrated that there was considerable uncertainty in the early days of Calverley with slow sales of the Park houses. This led, perhaps, to a more urban design in Calverley Promenade, yet the failure, nevertheless, of the Bramahs. In time, though, and perhaps assisted by the coming of the railway, the Calverley Park houses were all sold; the designs adjusted to reflect customer preference – away from ‘Olde English’, away from semi-detached, but in favour of basements. The park-land setting was all-important. Britton and Granville contrasted it with the ‘flat and insipid’ terraces of Brighton and other towns. Granville particularly disliked Brighton, which he described as ‘a portion of the ‘west end’ of London *maritimized*’.⁷⁴ Terraces continued to be favoured in other places, but they were not used in suburban Tunbridge Wells. It was the ‘houses in the park’ model that was carried forward to later developments. This will be demonstrated in Chapter 1.3 below.

⁷³ Mogg, *Moggs Guide*, pp. 19-20. Mogg was clearly borrowing from Britton there, but he certainly knew Regent’ Park – a map-maker and publisher, his publications include the early plans for Regent’s Park presented in Crook, *London’s Arcadia*. He did not, however, like the terraces in Regents Park – the passage quoted above includes a complaint that they ‘destroy the simplicity of that once delightful spot’.

⁷⁴ Granville, *Spas of England*, iii, p. 565.

1.3 Calverley - Extension

This final chapter of Part One looks at developments in the town after 1845, to show how the suburban ideal of the 'houses in the park' was spread and adapted. It looks first at developments within the Calverley estate, where the intensity of the initial vision, the 'authorial voice' of Ward and Burton, was somewhat diluted but where its essence was carried forward in the work of William Willicombe; and then at development elsewhere within the town. It demonstrates the continuing importance of the developer – responding to customer preferences, and of setting.

1.3.1 The Expansion of Calverley

The early development of Calverley was controlled by Ward and Burton through the allocation of building leases to a single prime contractor, Messrs Bramah, who were commissioned to build houses to specific designs. Later development was different. In 1849, sixty acres of the estate were put up for auction, in thirty-seven lots.¹ The advertisement stressed the success of the previous development: 120 houses all let on leases of four years or more, but this time the plots were to be sold freehold.² The estate still had an element of control over development through covenants, defining, for example, minimum building cost, maximum number and type of houses, building line and distance between houses.³ Donald Olsen suggested, with reference to Bloomsbury, that covenants are only useful if they are enforced.⁴ In fact there are examples of the Ward estate enforcing them as late as the 1930s, though this may have simply been a money-making exercise.⁵ For as long as there was demand for the sort of environment that the

¹ *Daily News* (1 Aug. 1849). Plus a 104 acre estate at the Pembury end of the estate.

² The auction may not have been wholly successful, as there was a later advertisement, this time with the option of building leases. *The Times* (18 Dec. 1849). See also *The Builder*, IV/184 (15 Aug. 1846), last page.

³ For example the agreement between the Wards and William Willicombe (and others) for the development of Lansdowne Road and Garden Street. Mar. 1859, KHLC U2737 12/B/09. Three areas were identified with minimum building costs of £150/£200 (pair), £400, £600/£1000 (pair). In Lansdowne Road the houses were to be no closer than thirty feet from the road.

⁴ Olsen, *Town Planning*, pp. 99-125.

⁵ For example: KHLC U2737 12/B/04 in Sep. 1931. The Wards agreed to release a covenant on a plot in Pembury Road (Ravensdale) to allow the house to be used as a nursing home, and for additional houses to be built in the grounds.

covenants envisaged (ie until the 1914-18 war at least) they were self-policing.

In 1849 there was still a vision for how the Calverley estate should develop – a ‘formulated intention’. The map below shows four distinct zones, reflected in the covenants that were applied as the land was sold. The zones illustrate the importance of setting. The central ‘pink’ zone was the higher land known as Calverley Plain. It provided fine views to the west. The high land continued in a ridge to the east. The south-facing slope of that ridge (in yellow) was particularly favoured and was allocated to ‘mansions’ – this became known as Calverley Fairmile. The ‘lake’ marked on the map was created at this time. The less-favoured north-facing slope, which still had fine views, was allocated to ‘houses’; and further down, without the views, to ‘cottages’.

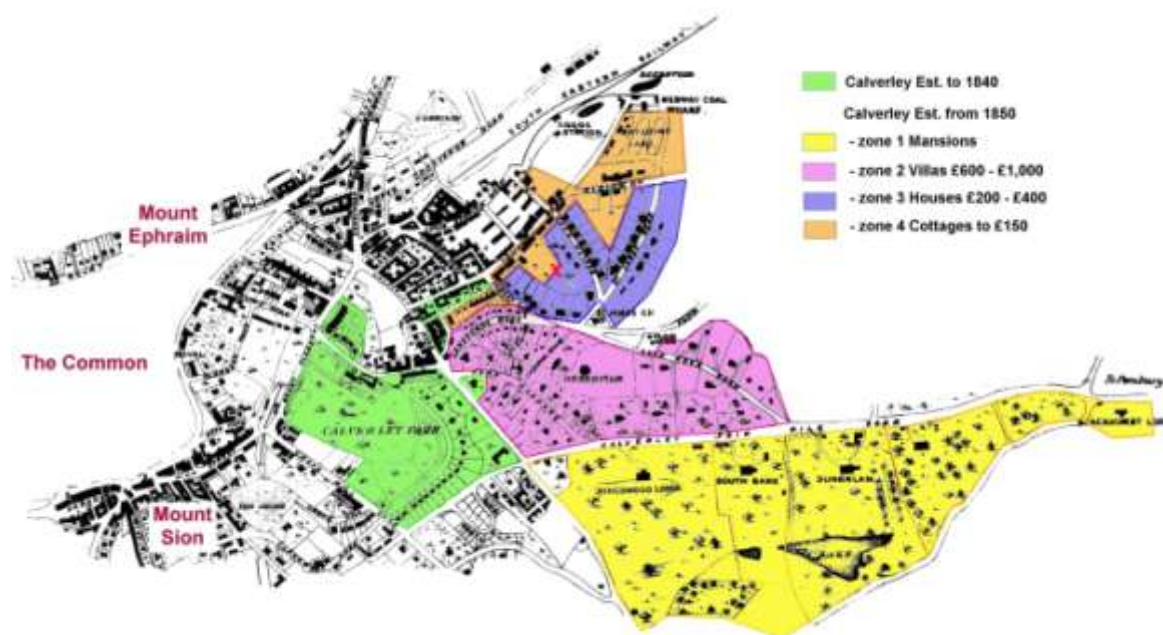


Figure 45. Calverley estate, showing zones of development. Source: author, based on W. Brackett, *Brackett's New Map of Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 1868). By permission of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library. Reproduced from Cunningham, *Historical Atlas*, p. 75.

The ‘villa zone’, pink on the map, extended further than is shown, into the area known as Ferndale to the north-east.

The estate further determined the shape of the development by its creation of infrastructure: roads and drains. The ‘Gisborne’ map of 1849, below, shows a new road running through the

Calverley Nursery and then climbing up past a sand quarry to join the main road to Pembury.⁶ It was called Calverley Sandrock Road,⁷ and opened up development opportunities north of Calverley Plain.

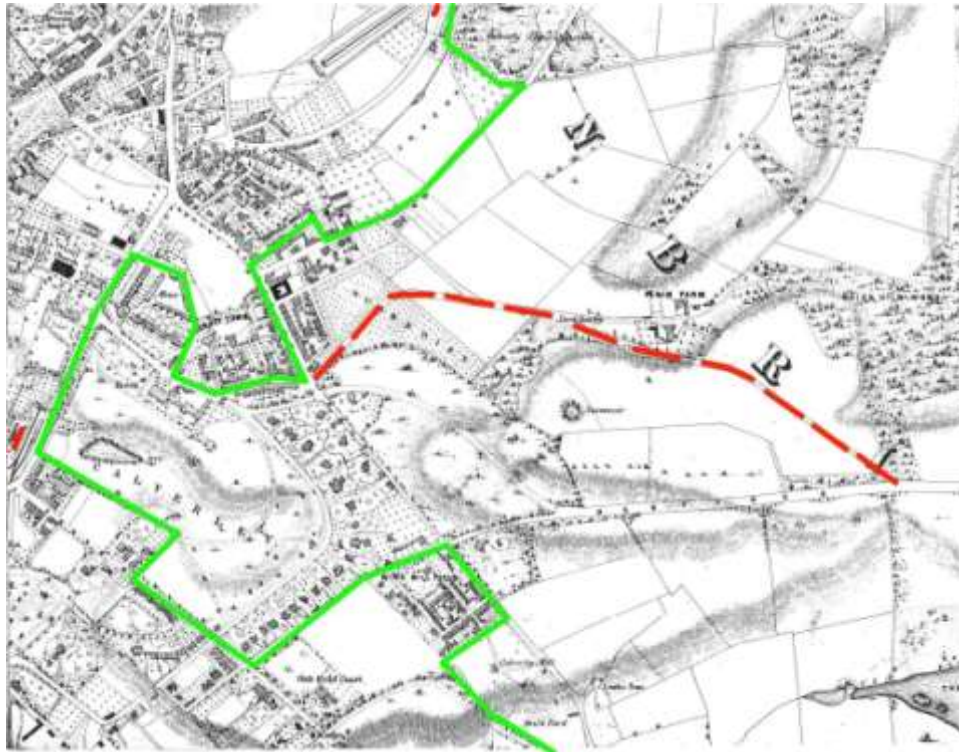


Figure 46. Map of 1849 showing the line of the new Calverley Sandrock Road. Source: author, based on E.S. Gisborne, *Plan of the Tunbridge Wells Local Act District ...* (Tunbridge Wells(?), 1849). By permission of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library.

Note the central station (red dash) on the western edge.

A further factor leading to a uniformity of approach was the involvement of one particular builder, William Willicombe. He had arrived in the 1820s as a plasterer, and prospered in the years that followed. In 1871 he was recorded as employing 190 men and boys. Although there is no evidence of any formal connection to the Calverley estate he dominated its development in this later period. The '1872' OS map below⁸ (surveyed 1868-9) shows the extent of development in just over twenty years. In the descriptions below, three specific areas – Calverley Park Gardens, Lansdowne Road and Beulah Road - are selected to demonstrate how the zoning policy

⁶ TW Ref Lib. E.S. Gisborne, *Plan of the Tunbridge Wells Local Act District ...* (Tunbridge Wells, 1849). The map was produced by the Improvement Commissioners as part of a town-wide rating valuation.

⁷ The western end was later called Lansdowne Road.

⁸ OS Six-inch Series. Kent LX. Surveyed 1868-9, Published 1872. <http://maps.nls.uk/view/102343615>. (7 Dec. 2016) Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

worked to produce quite different results, but each in its way addressing the same Suburban Ideal.

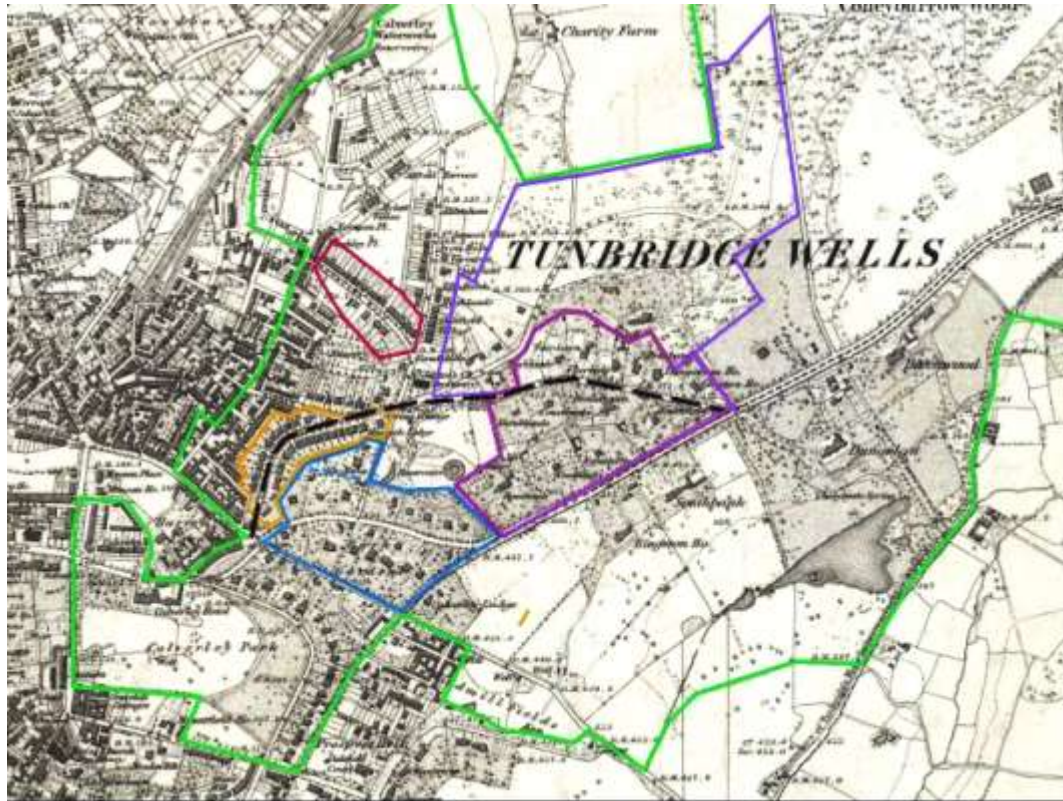


Figure 47. Calverley c 1870, showing developments since 1850. Source: author, based on OS Six-inch map, Kent LX, publ. 1872. Reproduced from National Library of Scotland. <http://maps.nls.uk/os/6inch-england-and-wales/index.html> (9 May 2017).

Blue area: Calverley Park Gardens; orange area: Lansdowne Road; red : Beulah Road – these are addressed below. Pink area: Sandrock/Pembury Roads; purple area: Ferndale – these are not addressed. Neither are the ‘mansions’ of Calverley Fairmile further east.

1.3.1a Calverley Park Gardens

Calverley Park Gardens was the name given from about 1856 to the area originally called Calverley Plain– ‘Plain’ sending the wrong message, as the view from this higher land was one of its selling points. This was part of Zone III on the original plan in Chapter 1.1. An indenture dated 1851 involving Willicombe, Robert Wallace, and others, set out the rules for development.⁹ At that time the only houses were Baston Cottage and Lodge (see Chapter 1.2). Ten or so years later

⁹ ‘Covenants re Calverley Park Gardens, with Wallace, Willicombe, and others’, Nov. 1851, KHLC U2737 12/B/03. Wallace was a London-born architect of Scottish descent. He designed the Athenaeum in Derby, and the Scotch Church in Bow Lane. Fellow IBA 1835.

the development of seventeen houses was complete.¹⁰ The houses on the two sides were different. Those on the south were of varying sizes, and included a pair of (large) semi-detached, but were all (except Baston) basically classical. They were probably all built by William Willicombe (he lived for a while at no 4). 'Wissenden' (no.16), below, is typical of a Willicombe style used in other parts of Tunbridge Wells.



Figure 48. No. 16 Calverley Park Gardens. Originally 'Wissenden'. Built c.1854. Source: Local collection, origin unknown.

In contrast, the houses on the north side tended towards the Jacobean / Cottage Orné. This may have originated in a house built for, and probably by, Robert Wallace. The house, 'Heather Bank' (see below) had an ornate gable, tower and diapered brickwork.

¹⁰ Not in the 1840s as per Newman, *West Kent*, p. 624.



Figure 49. 'Heather Bank', Calverley Park Gardens built c.1854 by/for Robert Wallace. Source: TW Ref Lib, Photograph: Joseph Chamberlain. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library. Later known as no. 5 Carlton Road. The house was demolished c.1960.

The further line of buildings on the north side (see below) is also usually attributed to Willicombe. Further houses of this type were built in Sandrock Road.



Figure 50. Calverley Park Gardens. 1860s. Source: J.S. & Co print no. 1675. Private collection. Heather Bank (as above) is the first, then three houses attributed to Willicombe. There was/is a fourth not shown on the picture.

The exception on the north side was (is) 'The Hollies', slightly smaller, stone-built, and much

closer to the size and design of the Calverley Park houses – no. 22, for example. Some¹¹ attribute it to Burton, but it is not clear whether he was still involved at this stage.

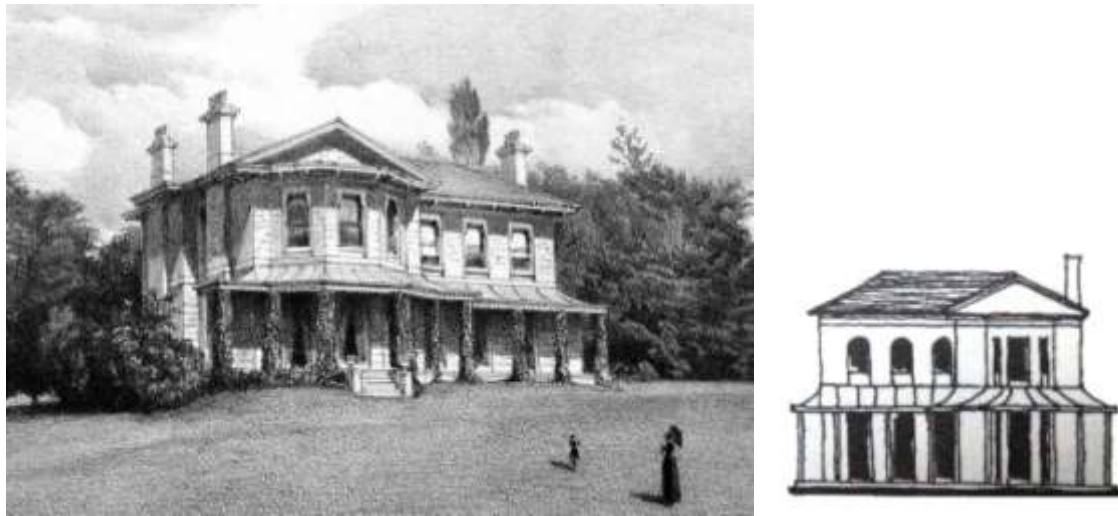


Figure 51. Left: 'The Hollies', Calverley Park Gardens. Built c.1854. Source: TW Ref Lib, Sales brochures, 1880s. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library. Right: No. 22 Calverley Park, built c.1836. Source: Whitbourn, *Decimus Burton*, p. 26-27.

Style is not really the subject here, though the variations would suggest a developer responsive to customer preferences; rather it is the type of house and the setting. Other than 'The Hollies' (four 'reception' and five bedrooms)¹² the Park Gardens houses were bigger than those in the Park and in bigger plots. So 'Wissenden' had twelve bedrooms and six 'receptions' in a plot of two acres, and 'The Ferns' (another 'Olde English' design in the adjoining Carlton Road) had nine bedrooms and four 'receptions': library (16'x12'), drawing room (38'x20'), dining room (25'x18') and billiard room (18'x24').¹³ It was possibly the size, but perhaps also the more private setting, that attracted some residents away from the Park. Alexander Beattie, for example, ex India merchant and director of the South Eastern Railway, moved from the Park to no. 8 Calverley Park Gardens in 1856. The particular sense of privacy in Calverley Park Gardens is discussed further in Chapter 3.3, but can be seen in the map below. 'St Katherine's', 'The Hollies' and 'Carlton Lodge', in Calverley Park Gardens, were all concealed by the planting in their grounds, the drives

¹¹ P. Whitbourn, 'Calverley Park', in J. Cunningham (ed.), *The Residential Parks of Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 2004), p. 12.

¹² 'The Hollies', 1891, TWRefLib. Sales brochures.

¹³ 'The Ferns', ND, TWRefLib. Sales brochures.

deliberately not providing a view of the house. This is a particular manifestation of the suburban ideal.



Figure 52. Comparative plot sizes: Calverley Park Gardens (bottom half of map) and Lansdowne Road (top half). Source: OS First Edition. 1/500 plan, Kent LX.12.16, surveyed 1866. By permission of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library.

1.3.1 b Lansdowne Road

The other two examples are slightly out of period, but illustrate the translation of that Calverley ideal to smaller houses and smaller plots.

In 1859 Ward's sons sold a block of land at the western end of the new road to Willicombe.¹⁴ He developed the central section of this between 1859 and 1867 as Lansdowne Road. The conditions of sale required houses of at least £600, and a building line at least thirty feet from the road, but otherwise the style and configuration were left to him. There were 28 houses in

¹⁴ 'Covenants re Lansdowne Road, with Willicombe and others', Mar. 1859, KHL U2737 12/B/09.

total.¹⁵ Newman calls them ‘Willicombe at his most attractive’.¹⁶ Like the houses in Calverley Park, they are similar to each other but not the same. They are all stuccoed Italianate, of about the same size. Some have the entrance doors to the front, some to the side. A few have accommodation in the attic storey, most do not. All have basements. Four are semi-detached. The floor plan below provides an example: three good-sized rooms on the ground floor. The area marked ‘Pantry/Cloakroom’ is open to the hall at present, but there was probably originally a wall.



Figure 53. Lansdowne Road. Left: no. 16. Right: floor plan to no. 22. Source: author. The configuration is very similar, but the two houses are differentiated by the treatment of the windows. (The bay window to the rear of no.22 may be recent.)

There is an urban feel to these houses. They are large relative to the size of the plots - the difference between them and the Calverley Park Garden plots is clear from Figure 52. There was generally no provision for stables, and there are no vistas (other than the view up to the church, see below). But they stand separately in their own gardens, very different from a terrace like Devonshire Place. There is no shared open space, but, in a way quite different from Calverley Park Gardens, they formed a unity. Bracketts, local estate agents, in 1869 called them - ‘very

¹⁵ Another was later squeezed into a narrow plot at the western end, and Willicombe used the corner plot at the eastern end for a larger house.

¹⁶ Newman, *West Kent*, p. 625.

genteel and convenient moderate-sized houses'.¹⁷ The residents in 1871 had a similar profile to those in Calverley Park itself (largely female, not employed – see chapter 3.4) though the households were smaller. There were only three male staff, and no gardeners or coachmen.



Figure 54. Lansdowne Road looking east, 1864, towards St James Church. Source: Rock & Co. print no. 5025, 1864, J. Cunningham, *Tunbridge Wells in the mid-19th Century* (Tunbridge Wells, 2013), p. 27.

1.3.1 c Beulah Road

The houses in Lansdowne Road, like those in Calverley Park, were designed and built by a single 'creator'.¹⁸ Any differences in layout and style were deliberate. In the third area, Beulah Road, the plots were acquired and developed by different builders. The houses are sometimes very different, but the road has a common 'look-and-feel'. This is due partly to the covenants, and partly because it was developed over a relatively short period c.1851-1871, and simply reflects the fashion of the time.

The pair at nos. 19/21 were built c.1862 by William Oakley, later a partner of Willicombe.¹⁹ They are more ornate and larger than most in the road, with six bedrooms - three on the top floor and

¹⁷ *Tunbridge Wells Timetable Compendium* (July 1869), p.10. TW Ref Lib.

¹⁸ So it is assumed, but even in the case of Calverley Park there is no documentary evidence that Burton designed, or that the Bramahs built, all the houses.

¹⁹ P. Whitbourn, *A further look into the History and Features of Beulah Road* (Tunbridge Wells, 2000), pp. 2-6.

three on the first floor. A full basement left space for three reception rooms on the ground floor. The narrow plots (about twenty-six feet), and the requirement that the houses have a twelve-foot gap between them, resulted in a footprint not unlike that of a terraced house. The designer has emphasised the side elevation though, with a pediment-like gable, cornice and deep channelling. Putting the entrance here means that the main rooms can use the full width of the house, and positioning the stairs against the party-wall, allows separate access to the three rooms. The stair-well is lit from above.



Figure 55. Nos. 19/21 Beulah Road. Built c.1861. Source: author.
The room at the rear has access to a verandah with ornate canopy. The lavatory is recent.

Opposite are three pairs: nos. 16-26, which were built around 1860 – similar to each other in size (though two pairs have basement rooms) but representing the three basic configurations of the smaller semi-detached form: side-entrance, hall-adjointing and room-adjointing. The names were intended to impress: St James Villas, Denmark Place and Cavendish Place. The name of Beulah Road itself, is part of the branding. It was initially Hydraulic Road²⁰ – this was the route between the Jack’s Wood spring (Calverley Water Works) and the company’s reservoir on

²⁰ For example, in the lists of ‘Residents and Visitors’ in the *Tunbridge Wells Gazette* in 1859 (see Introduction to Part Three).

Calverley Plain. The choice of 'Beulah' might have been a reference to Beulah Spa, in south London, opened in 1832 and designed by Burton (though rather run-down by 1860); or, given that the new St James' Church was about to open at the top of the road, it might been a reference to John Bunyan. In 'Pilgrim's Progress', the Land of Beulah is the final stage of Christian's journey, within sight of the Celestial City.



Figure 56. Beulah Road. Nos. 26 to 16. Built c. 1860. Similar sizes, different configurations. Source: author.

A brief look at the residents of these houses allows a preview to the more detailed analysis of the main Calverley residents in Part Three. In 1861 four of the houses were occupied. One occupant was an unmarried woman of 60, with companion, living on investment income. Ten years earlier, they had lived in another part of Tunbridge Wells. They were typical 'suburban incomers'. The next was a retired farmer from Sussex with wife and son. They owned two of the houses, perhaps to provide an income in their retirement. Then there was a 'supervisor of inland revenue' with his wife. They spent the next twenty years in Peckham. They may have been in Tunbridge Wells because that had been her home. Finally, a builder and his wife who had previously lived on Mount Ephraim. Ten years later, he had died, and there was a lodger – a lecturer in Modern History at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was probably living there because

his brother was vicar at St James.²¹

For the first time in this study the houses were being bought by existing residents of Tunbridge Wells. The original intention, and indeed the continuing intention in Calverley Park Gardens and Lansdowne Road, was to serve incomers – Calverley was a suburb of London, not of Tunbridge Wells. These smaller houses in Beulah Road showed the ideal of the ‘houses in the park’ being extended into a different market. It was taken further in 1872 when the area behind these six houses was auctioned – divided into 51 building plots. The wording of the advertisement could have applied to the Beulah Road houses, or indeed to most parts of Calverley: ‘The Estate is most delightfully and healthily situated on a dry soil, within two minutes’ walk of St. James’s Church, commanding a variety of pleasing and extensive Views, and well-adapted for the erection of VILLA RESIDENCES’.²² They were actually two-bedroom cottages, but semi-detached and with front gardens, so in that sense a representation of the suburban ideal.



Figure 57. Chandos Road. ‘Villa residences’. Source: author.
Small but, nevertheless, individual family homes, with gardens.

²¹ Charles Pearson. He was about to leave for Australia where he became a prominent politician.

²² ‘Beulah Estate’, 1872, TW Ref Lib. Sales brochures.

1.3.2 The Influence of Calverley

This second section looks at developments in Tunbridge Wells beyond the Calverley estate but which nevertheless demonstrate the influence of Ward's original vision. The 'Old Town' continued to develop at this time, but was more urban; and there was development on Mount Ephraim and along London Road, rather mixed. The developments considered here were consciously following the Calverley pattern. Some included an area of undeveloped land, as in Calverley, but this was not universal. Such 'parks' tended to be for wealthier clients, but there was also a scheme promoted by a Freehold Land Society, providing lower-cost homes for the 'middle-class', and a project to provide cottages for the 'labouring classes'. All involved individual houses in a garden setting – the Calverley suburban ideal.

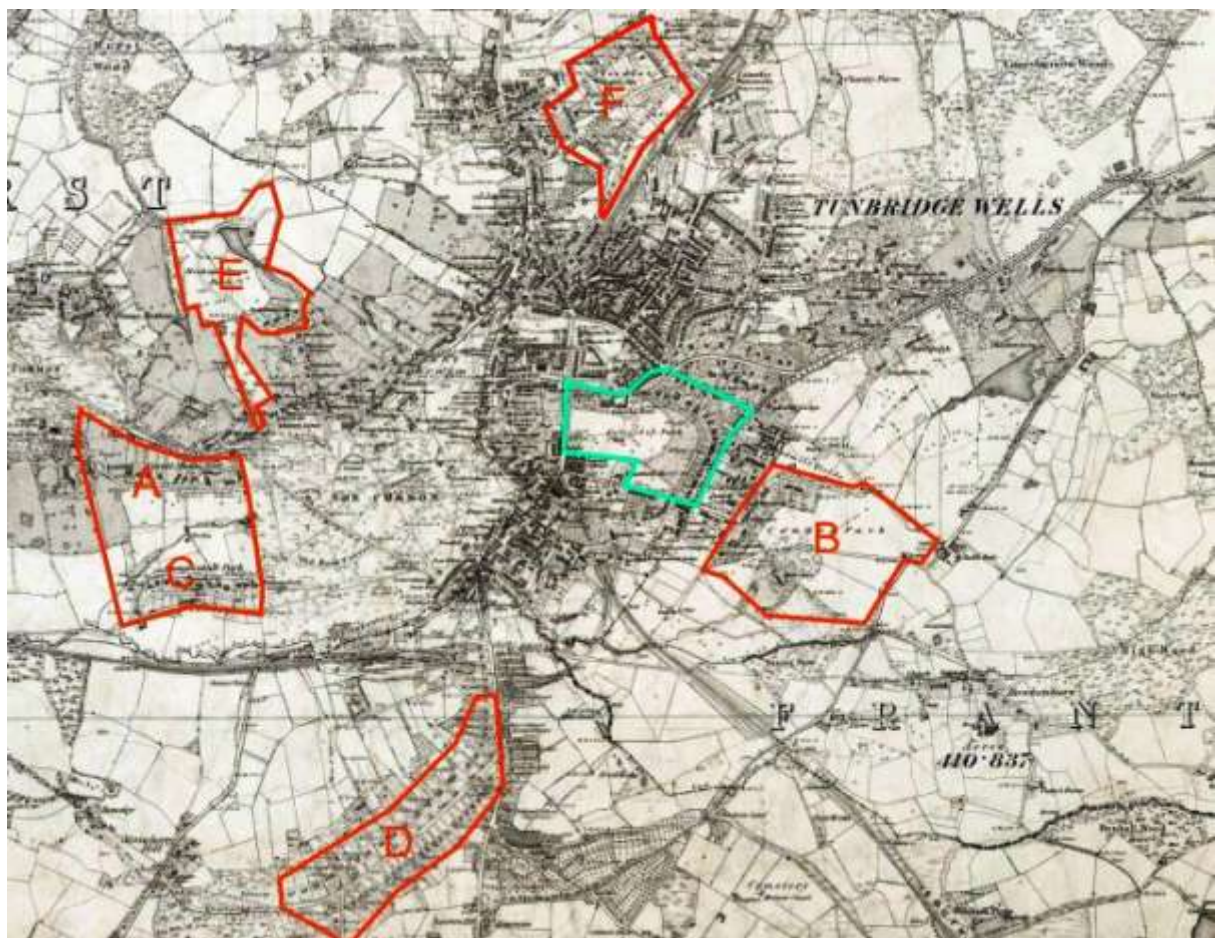


Figure 58. Tunbridge Wells c.1870, showing position of other 'residential parks'. Source: author, based on OS 6 inch map, Kent LX. publ 1872. Nat Lib Scotland.

A - Nevill Park, B - Camden Park, C - Hungershall Park, D - Broadwater Down, E - Bishops Down Park. F – Woodbury Park (Freehold Land Society) (the boundaries of this last one are uncertain).

1.3.2 a Nevill Park

The earliest of these schemes was Nevill Park, on the western edge of the Common. It was built on farmland owned by the Nevill family (earls of Abergavenny), but in an attractive setting. Just to the north was Rusthall Common, a favoured spot for walking and sketching, and to the west was a steep-sided and wooded valley that later became a visitor attraction called Happy Valley.

The earliest documentation is an 1831 building agreement between James Richardson, a local builder, and the Abergavenny estate.²³ The plan was to build houses along the south side of the main road, facing away from the road into a shallow valley. The estate would build a private road along the front of these plots, with a lodge at each end, and ensure that 'no building or erection whatsoever shall hereafter be made in the field or close of land' facing the new houses. It was very similar to Calverley, though the land 'not to be built on' was farmland rather than a 'pleasure ground'.



Figure 59. Nevill Park c.1860. Very similar layout to Calverley. Source: J.S & Co print no. 1874. Private collection.

Richardson was to build at least three houses at a minimum overall cost of £3000. He was only

²³ 'Agreement re Nevill Park, with J. Richardson', Sept. 1831, ESRO ABE/20H. See also G. and B. Copus, 'Nevill Park and Hungershall Park', in Cunningham, J. (ed.), *The Residential Parks of Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 2004).

allocated about four acres at the eastern end of the park, possibly because there was a ‘settled lands’ issue over the remainder.²⁴ The only other development during the 1830s was of no.6.²⁵ The lack of further development perhaps reflects the difficulties faced at that time by Calverley. A single additional house was built in 1847, but then, again as in Calverley, there was renewed activity in the early fifties with houses completed on the remaining five plots (a further house was squeezed into the eastern end in 1863). No details are known of builders or architects for these houses but no developer seems to have taken overall control.²⁶ The houses in Nevill Park were all different, though of a similar size and style (except for no. 3, which was ‘picturesque’ – ornate barge-boards, oriel window, and roof tiles, and no. 9, see below, in red brick). They are typically three storeys plus basement, rendered, Italianate, with deep eaves, and increasingly ornate decoration. Most adopted the Calverley practice of having the entrance door to the side, with a ‘garden’ elevation to the front. They are larger than the Calverley houses – the valuations given in 1912 were almost exactly double those for Calverley Park.²⁷



Figure 60. Nevill Park houses. Left: no.5 – typical of Nevill Park, right: no.9 – an exception in red-brick. Source: K. Mahler-Bech, by permission, from: *Historical and Interesting Views of Tunbridge Wells*, (CD) (Tunbridge Wells, 2003)

There was an additional house – no. 11, ‘Nevill Court’, at the western end. This was much larger,

²⁴ This has not been pursued, though there was an act of parliament (1836, William 6&7) ‘to enable the granting of leases ...’, and an advertisement in 1836 spoke of land being available ‘under an Act of Parliament’. *Brighton Patriot* (5 Oct. 1836).

²⁵ Viscount Nevill (the son of the Earl of Abergavenny) was resident in 1840, which might suggest that it was developed by/for the Nevills, though there was a different resident in 1834/37.

²⁶ Newman mentions John Billing. Newman, *West Kent*, p. 587.

²⁷ Average for Nevill Park (excluding no. 11 ‘Nevill Court’) c. £4580, Calverley Park c. £2275. ‘Valuation Office records resulting from the Finance Act 1909-1910’, TNA IR58/86000 Refs 3821-3833 (Nevill Park), IR58/85957 Refs 3212-3249 (Calverley Park).

with eight 'reception rooms' including a ballroom, more an independent mansion in its own extensive grounds than a house in a suburban park (see Chapter 2.5).

1.3.2 b Camden Park

In the same way that Nevill Park followed the initial success of Calverley in the late 1820s, Camden Park seems to have been a response to the later upsurge in interest in the late 1840s, though the potential had perhaps always been recognised as land for access roads was acquired in the 1820s.²⁸ The plan followed the original Calverley model – the landowner, the Marquis Camden, would construct a road and drains through an area of parkland, with a lodge at each end, and 7.5 acres in the centre would be kept as meadow or pasture. Nine, possibly ten, plots were made available in 1846, of about an acre each. Covenants were prepared specifying a minimum value of £1200.²⁹ By 1855 four houses were occupied, and eight by the mid 1860s. There does not seem to have been any overall developer, though Willicombe was involved with some of the houses,³⁰ and Charles Cripps, another local builder, with others.³¹ Unlike Nevill Park the houses were two-storey without basements. They were Italianate, but more in villa than palazzo style, perhaps because the plots allowed a bigger footprint. There was then a slowdown. An auction of further plots in 1875 had little success, and it was not until much later in the century that the arc of houses was complete.

1.3.2 c Hungershall Park and Broadwater Down

An editorial in the *Tunbridge Wells Gazette* in December 1856 called on landed proprietors to waken the town into more active life. Mr Willicombe had already done much, but the railways were bringing visitors who would wish to stay.³² A year later the Abergavenny agent, William Delves, was able to report on progress that had been made – in the development of Hungershall

²⁸ R. Farthing, *A History of Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells* (Chichester, 2003), p. 92.

²⁹ G. and B. Copus, 'Camden Park', in J. Cunningham (ed.), *The Residential Parks of Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 2004), p. 27.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p.28.

³¹ Letters of Georgiana Pratt refer to Mr Cripps' houses being taken. KHLC U840 C540/22 and 26.

³² *Tunbridge Wells Gazette* (26 Dec. 1856).

Park, and on negotiations over a new road and further development opportunities to the south. Hungershall Park can be seen as a mirror image of Nevill Park – eleven houses along a private road, looking northwards across the same area of not-to-be-developed farmland. Like Nevill Park, there was no overall developer. It would seem, though, that a Mr Charles Edwards, retired draper and occupier of no.1, was the developer of the last five.³³ As with Nevill Park the Hungershall houses had 99-year building leases from the Abergavenny estate.

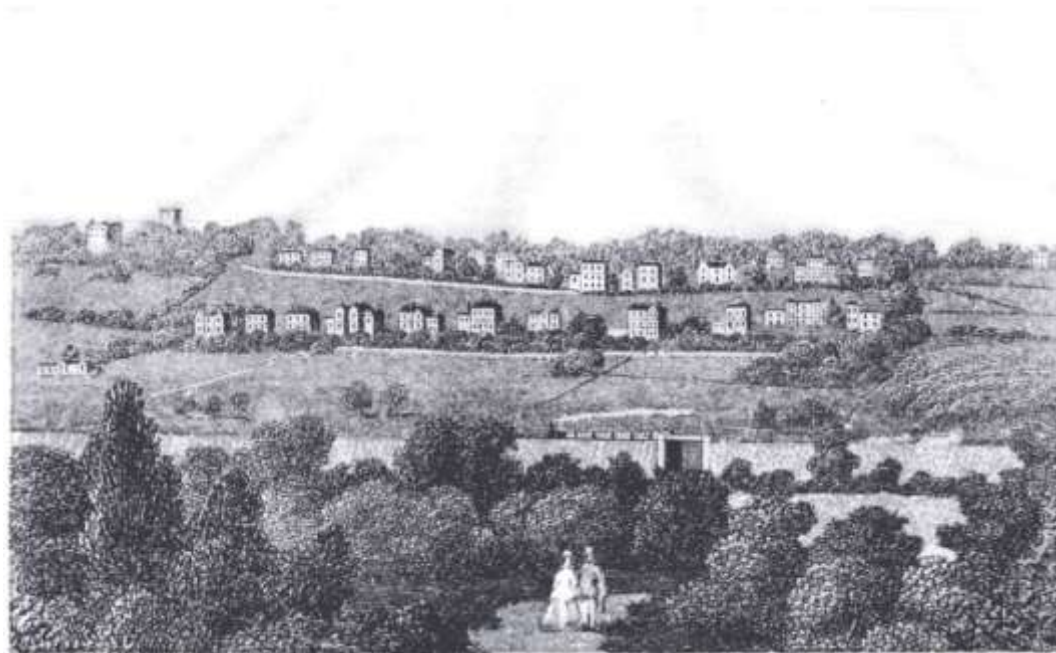


Figure 61. Hungershall and Nevill Parks, from the south. Source: Rock & Co. print, 1872. Private collection. Hungershall Park is the lower range. Nevill Court is to the top left.

The houses are all large (an average of 3 reception rooms and 10 bedrooms) in plots of about an acre. Nos. 7 and 8 seem to have the same design, as do nos. 9 and 10. These were developed by Edwards and Burden in the early 1860s. Otherwise the houses are all different. Only five have basements, and three have only two storeys, possibly reflecting a general movement into a more ‘country house’ style, with a greater emphasis on the horizontal. While basically Italianate, some seem more consciously ‘artistic’ than in Nevill Park.

³³ Edwards and Stephen Burden, silk mercer, are listed as owners of the five houses in an 1867 document about payment for making up the road. In Hungershall Park correspondence ESRO ABE/4P.



Figure 62. Hungershall Park houses. Left: no. 8, c.1861. Right: no. 4, c.1858. Source: author.

The setting is virtually unchanged today. Newman says of Hungershall and Nevill: ‘The delightful thing is that ... the villas face each other across gently sloping pasture fields’.³⁴ In one sense that is not true. As in Calverley Park, the houses in Nevill Park have a ‘garden front’ facing the ‘park’, with large windows to benefit from the view. In contrast, the Hungershall Park houses present a ‘front’ elevation, with a central front door. The main view from Hungershall Park is to the south, away from the ‘shared space’.

Robert Kerr in 1864 considered the relative importance of ‘aspect’ and ‘prospect’ in planning a house: the benefits and disadvantages of direct sunlight and cold winds, against the attractions of a view. He advised readers to pay more regard to the former.³⁵ In Hungershall and Nevill both features come together to favour a southern outlook, so the main rooms all face south, regardless of the position of the house relative to the road (or to the shared central area).

³⁴ Newman, *West Kent*, p. 587.

³⁵ Kerr, *Gentleman’s House*, p. 92.



Figure 63. Hungershall Park, nos.1 to 5. Early 1860s (a higher roof was fitted to no.2 in 1865). Source: J.S. & Co. print no. 1678. Private collection.

Front elevations with main entrance doors facing the road (unlike Nevill Park).

The importance of a view will be considered further in Chapter 2.2 – The Picturesque Ideal. It can also be seen in the second development mentioned by Delves: Broadwater Down. It was a development of the 1860s and 1870s so is out of period here, but it does provide some useful points (and it is used in the analysis of residents in Part Three). Broadwater Down was the work of George Mansfield, a London builder / developer.³⁶ It is not clear whether the initiative came from him or from the Abergavenny estate. That Mansfield's son had married Willicombe's daughter in 1859 may have some relevance, but the point is that having a practised developer drove forward the process. A building agreement was signed in 1862,³⁷ and twenty eight houses were occupied by 1871. Broadwater Down did not have an area of shared open space. Rather it followed that alternative definition of 'garden suburb' pondered by Andrew Saint in his recent history of Bedford Park: 'tree-lined streets with individual houses in ample gardens'.³⁸ The houses of Broadwater Down line both sides of a long avenue of lime trees. A sales brochure in the 1890s described it thus: 'a noble thoroughfare, 50ft. in width, flanked on either side by

³⁶ He was identified by Summerson as one of the top seven most active London builders in the early 1860s. Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, p. 179.

³⁷ 'Agreement re Broadwater Down, with George Mansfield', 1862, ESRO ABE/2C.

³⁸ Saint, *Bedford Park*, p. 38.

stately trees, forming a leafy avenue upwards of a mile in length, on each side of which stand handsome mansions ... surrounded by their own richly-wooded and well-kept grounds'.³⁹



Figure 64. Broadwater Down. c.1900?. Source: Local collection. Fred Scales, by permission. An alternative definition of the garden suburb - tree-lined roads.

The houses appear to have been built speculatively on 99-year leases, to fairly standard designs. They were a mixture of classical and 'semi-gothic'. The semi-Gothic included the vicarage built in 1864 by R.L. Roumieu. As with Hungershall and Nevill, 'prospect' was important, though the following claim in the *Standard* seems absurdly exaggerated: 'perhaps one of the most beautiful and extensive views which can be seen this side the Tweed'.⁴⁰ The view is shown in Figure 61. above – across the valley to Nevill and Hungershall Parks. (One notices the train – adding interest to the composition, but perhaps thought to be an asset to the view: Loudon considered a railroad, at a moderate distance, one of the 'finest artificial features' that might be introduced

³⁹ '22 Broadwater Down', 1898, TW Ref Lib. Sales brochures.

⁴⁰ *The Standard* (21 Oct. 1864).

into a landscape. This was a new line, opened in 1866 by the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. Its station, Tunbridge Wells West, was particularly convenient for Broadwater Down.)⁴¹ Here, though, the views were to the north, so aspect and prospect were not aligned. Looking at the configurations north and south of the road suggests that prospect took precedence. On the south side the houses presented a garden front to the road, with the entrances on the side; on the north side the houses presented an entrance front, and positioned the drawing room on the far side to enjoy the view.

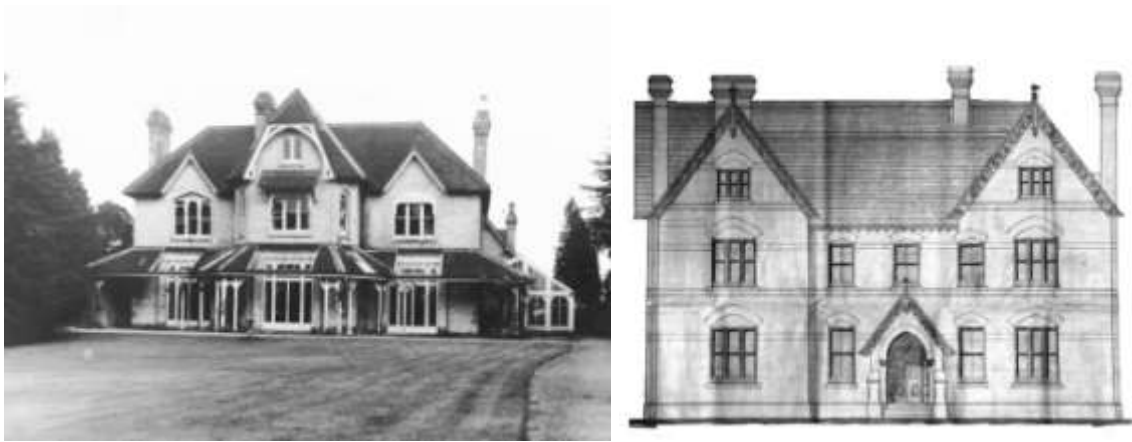


Figure 65. Broadwater Down houses. Left: No. 3 (south side) - 'garden front' faces the road. Source: TW Ref Lib, Sales brochures. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library. Right: No. 30 (north side) - 'entrance front' faces the road. Source: TWBC, Planning archives. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery.

As with Hungershall Park, Broadwater Down saw a move away from basements, and towards a more dispersed footprint, accommodating both family and service functions on the ground floor - what Burton seems to have been attempting in Calverley Park. The ground plans below show the effect of this. The first is of no. 30 (as above, right) which had a basement. The ground floor is allocated to family rooms, except for the 'butler's room', which, as in Lansdowne Road, is conveniently placed next to the dining room. As this house was on the north side, the main rooms are at the rear, to benefit from the view. The next (no.33) was on the south side, so the main rooms are at the front, with the entrance to the side. There is no basement so the service areas are behind. The third plan (no.28) was on the north side. The plots are wider there so the

⁴¹ J.C. Loudon, *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* (London, 1838), p. 30. (For Loudon, see Section 2.1.2.)

service area is to the side, again allowing the main rooms to benefit from the view.



Figure 66. Broadwater Down. Ground plans: left - no.30 (north side), right - no.33 (south side - no basement). Source: author, based on TWBC, Planning archives. Note that the plans are presented as viewed from the road.



Figure 67. Broadwater Down. Ground plan: no 28 (north side, no basement). Source: TW Ref Lib, Sales brochures. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library.

1.3.2 d Less successful schemes

Nevill, Camden and Hungershall Parks and Broadwater Down represented in their different ways the development of the Calverley model – the deliberate creation of upper-middle class housing

in a picturesque setting. There were other proposals that were not initially successful. The most notable was 'Bishops Down Park', on the northern slopes of Mount Ephraim, sponsored by the Lord of the Manor of Rusthall in the mid 1860s. It was a picturesque setting, with a central area 'not to be built on', and an artificial body of water. However, only four houses were built – one at least by Willicombe in his 'classical' style, and another, see below, by an unknown architect (though probably Charles Smith of Hastings), which was rather more interesting.

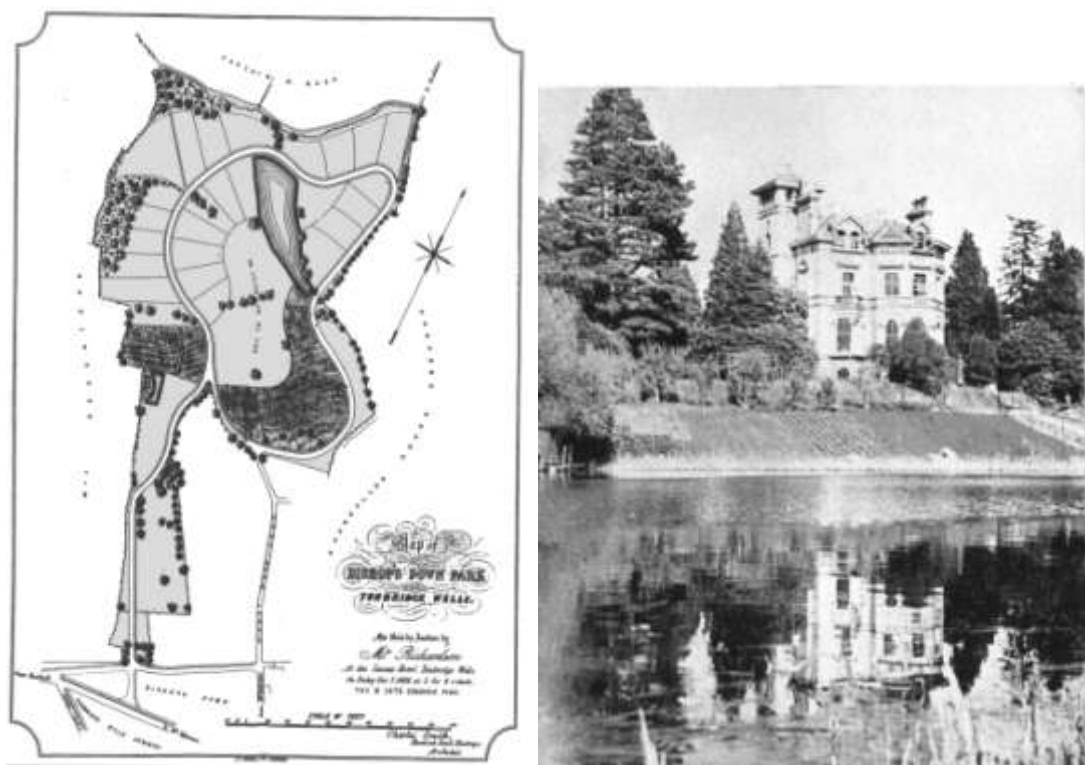


Figure 68. Bishops Down Park. Left: planned layout, with lake and shared central area. Source: TW Ref Lib, Sales brochures. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library. Right: Lake House, later Warbury House. Source: Local collection, Fred Scales, by permission.

The more successful schemes seem to have been those with a major builder behind them, like Mansfield at Broadwater Down. Topography was also important: so Ferndale, built around two deep and wooded valleys on the north-facing part of the Calverley estate (north-east of St James Church) succeeded, whereas a contemporary scheme on the flatter south-facing part failed, despite having a central area 'not to be built upon' and three of the seventeen plots being described as 'The Beautiful Plot', 'A very Beautiful Plot of Land', and 'The Adjoining and Similarly

Beautiful Plot'.⁴² Bishops Down Park was picturesque, but may have failed through the actions of a neighbouring landowner, David Salomons, who bought up a number of the plots, perhaps to prevent development.

1.3.2 e Co-operative and Philanthropic Schemes

The various schemes discussed above were aimed at those who could afford a plot of at least an acre, and a house valued at £1,000 or more. A different sort of scheme was initiated in 1856 – the Conservative Land Society bought a block of some sixty acres in the north of the town. They laid out roads and drains, donated land for the building of a new Anglican church (St John's), and gave it a name: Woodbury Park. They advertised plots in 1856 and 1863. The first tranche provided 75 plots varying in price from £52 to £365 'admirably adapted ... for building sites from the first class villa to the cottage'.⁴³ The second was more standardised – 37 plots from £63 to £77.

Freehold land societies were formed in the 1840s during the Anti-Corn Law campaign, to create large numbers of 'forty-shilling freeholds' each entitling the owner to vote. Initially a Liberal initiative, the name of the society operating in Tunbridge Wells indicates that the concept was used by both parties. By the 1850s they had evolved into a mixture of development company and building society. As Thomas Beggs pointed out in 1853, they had no power to compel a member to vote either way 'they could not if they would – and, I believe, would not, if they could'.⁴⁴ Dyos makes reference to the activities of the societies in Camberwell, saying that they were naturally very welcome to small speculating builders.⁴⁵ There were four main roads in Woodbury Park. In the period 1865 to 1880 there were forty three planning applications for one of them (Queens

⁴² 'Kingston Park Estate', 1865, TW Ref Lib. Sales brochures. It represented the remaining undeveloped part of Zone III (see Chapter 1.1). It was eventually developed c.1900. The developers at that time claimed that it was: 'situated in the highest part of the town on the famous Pembury sandstone ridge, and commanding magnificent views', *Country Life* (31 May 1902).

⁴³ *Kentish Gazette* (13 May 1856). See also A. Bates and S. Brown, 'Woodbury Park Road, Park Road and Grosvenor Park', in J. Cunningham (ed), *The Residential Parks of Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 2004).

⁴⁴ T. Beggs, 'Freehold Land Societies', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 16/ 4 (Dec. 1853), p. 345.

⁴⁵ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 117, though Summerson talks of 'the dreary activities of the Land Societies' Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, p. 231.

Road), covering a total of eighty-eight dwellings (23 villas, 51 houses and 14 cottages).⁴⁶ These were submitted by twenty seven different names, assumed to be the builders. No builder submitted more than seven applications, and none built more than eleven houses. Working on this basis it took some thirty years to complete the estate, but it ensured a pleasing variety of styles. The Woodbury Park estate had an attractive, sloping site, with views across the railway to Calverley Plain;⁴⁷ and it provided a range of detached and semi-detached houses in styles from Kensington Italianate to Art & Crafts.

At the north western corner of the estate there had been a slightly earlier (1847) and rather different initiative. The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes was formed in 1844⁴⁸ to demonstrate that it was possible to provide sound housing for poorer people at reasonable rents. It was led by Lord Ashley (amongst others), had the support of Prince Albert, and used the professional services of the architect Henry Roberts. Its purpose was not to provide the housing, but to demonstrate, in plans, and in model villages, what was possible. A local group was formed in Tunbridge Wells in 1847⁴⁹ and over the next four to five years it built fourteen 'model cottages' and a 'model lodging house'. The cottages were (are) in pairs, of varying design, some asymmetrical, some symmetrical. The designs appeared a little later in a book by Roberts – the example below (nos. 2/4 Newcomen Road) is Design no. 5.⁵⁰ They were brick-built, two-storey, with 'Tudor-vernacular' styling. Each had a front and back garden of up to an eighth of an acre. Inside they had three bedrooms, something that Roberts considered essential. A journalist

⁴⁶ TWBC Planning archives.

⁴⁷ There were proposals in the 1880s to provide an additional railway station to serve Woodbury Park – close to the site of the original 1845 station. A new station was built instead in 1893 half a mile further out in the more industrial area of High Brooms. Arkell, *Railways and Tunbridge Wells*, p. 110.

⁴⁸ J.S. Curl, *The life and work of Henry Roberts, 1803-1876: the evangelical conscience and the campaign for model housing and healthy nations* (Chichester, 1983), p. 75 et seq. An earlier (1825) group evolved into the Labourers' Friend Society. It was re-formed in 1844 as SICLC.

⁴⁹ As yet the local membership is unknown. There is no mention of it in lists of charities in contemporary guidebooks.

⁵⁰ H. Roberts, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes, their arrangement and construction ...*, 3rd edn. (London, 1853). Pamela Lofthouse included that design in her paper 'The Development of English Semi-detached Dwellings during the Nineteenth Century', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 22 (2012), p.89 but seems unaware that an example was actually built.

from the *Morning Chronicle* found them 'exceedingly neat in their design'.⁵¹



Figure 69. Newcomen Road 'model cottages' c.1849. Source: P. Whitbourn, in G. Copus, *Woodbury Park* (Tunbridge Wells, 1983).

Housing for the labouring classes is a different, though related, story to that of suburban homes for the better off. The particular configuration of these cottages, though, was rather different to the usual urban tenement blocks proposed by the Society. Even the model cottages they displayed at the Great Exhibition were split into separate flats, upstairs and downstairs. Here they were individual family homes, with front and back gardens and 'vernacular' detailing, not so very far from the middle-class suburban ideal. Newcomen Road even had a gated entrance, 'a handsome iron gateway' according to the *Morning Chronicle*, leading to 'a broad, smooth, well-gravelled road'.

1.3.3 Extension – Summary

It was perhaps obvious that by looking specifically at 'park' developments, this chapter would discover a predominance of individual houses in garden settings. There were other formats in later nineteenth-century Tunbridge Wells. Terraces houses continued to be built: in the 'working-class' enclaves like Crown Fields, but also in the more expensive but 'urban' parts of the Old Town. It was the 'houses in the park' ideal, though, that was to dominate, and clearly

⁵¹ S. Brooks (?), 'Labour and the Poor: The Rural Districts: The Southern and Western Counties: Letter XXXIII', *Morning Chronicle* (30 March 1850).

represented a suburban ideal. Further 'park' developments came at the end of the century: Boyne Park and Molyneux Park on the northern slopes of Mount Ephraim; and Warwick Park, Madeira Park (see below, left), and Linden Park to the south-east of the Old Town. Between the wars, detached and semi-detached houses in gardens were the predominant house type as the town spread northwards (below, right). The style may have changed - this is addressed in Chapter 2.5 - but in other respects, the Calverley Park houses had been, in Mordaunt Crook's phrase, 'prototypes' for this later suburbia.



Figure 70. Later development: Left: Madeira Park, built c.1900. Right: St John's Rd., built 1930s. Source: author. (Replace equivalent images from Google StreetView following uncertainty over licensing).

Part One – Conclusion

'To a quite unusual degree ...we are treated to the spectacle of the becoming of places'

Brandon & Short. *South East England from AD 1000*⁵²

Brandon and Short were talking about the development of settlements in the Weald in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but the phrase might equally be applied to the development of suburbs in the early nineteenth century. It might be applied in particular to Calverley, developed by the 'formulated intention' of John Ward and Decimus Burton to realise the suburban ideal of the metropolitan middle-class.

While some of the details of that development might have been a little complicated, the overall proposition presented in Part One is a simple one. It is that John Ward, businessman and successful investor in the Regent's Park, recognised a demand from the metropolitan middle-class for a different style of living; a different sort of house, in a different sort of setting. John Nash had addressed that demand, had perhaps created that demand, by building the artificial stage-set of Regents Park with its palace-fronted terraces and landscaped park. John Ward came across an alternative, natural setting in the Wealden landscape of Tunbridge Wells. Inspired by the existing houses 'scattered about in all directions', or by the example of the Park Villages, or perhaps just by the desire to move away from the bleak urban architecture of Devonshire Place, Ward and Burton built individual family houses in gardens, what the study has called 'houses in the park'. These influenced other developments in the town, and in time they became the standard, the suburban ideal.

Calverley was not the only such development, though not all immediately adopted the model of the 'houses in the park'. The examples of Leamington and Camberwell show that terraces remained popular in other places. Indeed Decimus Burton went on to design terraces in Brighton (Adelaide Crescent, c.1832), and in Fleetwood (Queen's Terrace, c.1840), though neither was

⁵² Brandon and Short, *South East*, p. 2.

particularly successful.⁵³ Neither is it suggested that Calverley was the first such development. Mireille Galinou's claim on behalf of St John's Wood would seem to have more justification – a development of individual houses, relatively small, each in its garden, and within a setting that was rural if not Picturesque.⁵⁴

There were 'houses in the park' proposals that failed. Charles Barry's design for Queen's Park in Brighton (1829-30), where only one house was built, is occasionally cited.⁵⁵ (Local historians suggest that there were actually two houses, and have recently uncovered an earlier scheme for the park (1823-4) which proposed twenty eight detached villas, set around a central landscaped park.)⁵⁶ Furze Park, also in Brighton, is closer to the present study. The plans below were produced by Decimus Burton in 1832 for Isaac Goldsmid. They show serpentine roads winding through a parkland setting and houses of varied design set randomly in individual plots, but the scheme was never implemented.



Figure 71. Furze Hill proposal by Decimus Burton for Isaac Goldsmid 1832. Sources: 'View of proposed development of villas at Furze Hill, Brighton, for Sir Isaac Goldsmid', RIBA83088 / SC182/9(7). 'Plan of the proposed village of Furzehill on the Wick Estate, Hove', RIBA69230 / SC49/14.⁵⁷

⁵³ Whitbourn, *Decimus Burton*, pp. 47-49. C. Monkhouse, 'A New Lanark by the Sea: Fleetwood, Lancashire', *Country Life*, CLVIII/4072, 4074 (17 and 31 July 1975), pp. 126-128, 290-293.

⁵⁴ Galinou, *Cottages and Villas*. Yet it is Calverley that is used by Saint when considering the origins of Bedford Park (Saint, *Bedford Park*, pp. 38, 26-27.), and by Archer when looking at Llewellyn Park (Archer, 'Country and City', p.142). In both cases there is a specific reason for selecting Calverley: communitarian considerations in the first, and picturesque in the second; but it might simply be that widespread knowledge of Britton's *Descriptive Sketches* leads to it being cited more often than St John's Wood.

⁵⁵ Eg Hitchcock, *Early Victorian Architecture*, p. 449. Hussey, 'Calverley Park', p. 1167.

⁵⁶ The architect was a Mr Stanford of Lyon Place, Maida Hill, so maybe there was a St. John's Wood connection. L. Jones, et al, *The Story of Queen's Park Brighton* (Brighton, 2009), pp. 6,11,12,54.

⁵⁷ The view was used in Edwards, *Design of Suburbia*, p. 14.

One might say that such proposals did not fail, but were simply not taken up by a developer. The Calverley experience demonstrates the importance of a developer: George Mansfield delivered twenty eight houses in Broadwater Down in less than ten years, whereas Camden Park, without a lead developer, saw only nine completed after thirty.

The Calverley experience above all demonstrates the importance of setting. People live in houses, but they also live in places, and the importance of place was perhaps the main lesson of Regent's Park. Terence Davies said of Tunbridge Wells: 'estates of modest family houses were built on idyllic sites ... Nature and Man combined to make [it] ... the ideal picturesque country town'.⁵⁸ The Picturesque is one of the features considered in Part Two, below, which looks to understand the attraction of the suburb by examining a series of cultural constructs.

⁵⁸ Davis, *Tunbridge Wells*, p. xvi.

Part Two. Building the Image - the Suburban Ideal 'Imagined'

Introduction

Nobody had to live in Calverley. Tunbridge Wells had no industrial, commercial or administrative function.¹ Yet the population of the town grew from about 1,000 in 1801 to 10,000 in 1851, and to nearly 20,000 in 1872.² This part of the study seeks to understand what attracted these newcomers. They could have lived anywhere – why did they choose Tunbridge Wells? Were there aspects of it that might represent a generalised suburban ideal?

There were certain practical benefits. It was supposedly healthy. Tennyson's mother, for example, was advised by her doctor to move there in 1840.³ A *Medical Topography* published in 1846 divided the town into three zones, suitable for different ailments. Most of the Calverley development lay in the second zone 'Bracing, invigorating, soft and genial. Admirably suited for pulmonary invalids ... uterine affections in highly sensitive habits ...'.⁴ In truth, moving anywhere away from the dirt and disease of London would probably have helped. The attraction was more than this. Ann Bermingham considered the appeal of the suburb to be escapism (in her actual words it was a 'utopian ideological construction').⁵ 'Escapism' is a useful word. It hints at the artificial world that Nash was creating in Regent's Park – the villas and palace-fronted terraces deliberately isolated from the reality without. It has echoes too, in Strawberry Hill and the Brighton Pavilion. The suburban ideal, though, was not about bespoke creations for the fabulously wealthy. Rather it was the commodification of a dream that allowed entrepreneurs like Ward and Nash, and speculative builders like William Willicombe, to develop and supply a wider market.

¹ It is recognised that for perhaps 70 to 80% of the population there was indeed an economic imperative to living in the town. These were the people who provided the goods and services to the wealthier residents of the Calverley estate. Their story is equally valid but it is not the primary focus of the study.

² See Introduction to Part Three for further details of population.

³ C.Y. Lang and E.F. Shannon (eds), *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson Vol.1 1821-1850* (Cambridge Mass., 1981), p. 176.

⁴ R.H. Powell, *A Medical Topography of Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells and London, 1846), p. 134.

⁵ Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, p. 168.

Part Two considers this process, seeking to understand the various elements of the dream and how they were used by developers to sell their houses. Calverley provides a useful test-case but was not unique. Mireille Galinou cites a 1794 advertisement for St John's Wood that spoke of the 'elevated site ... prospects of great extent ... Residences of such novel description, as will unite the beauty and pleasure of a Country-House, with the convenience and advantage of a town one'.⁶ The *Cheltenham Chronicle* referred to Pittville in 1827 as 'realising every idea which can be found of the *rus in urbe*', and in 1835 as 'the terrestrial paradise'.⁷ Elizabeth McKellar's *Landscapes* looks at the wider publishing and print-making industry that during the eighteenth century delivered an increasing number of guidebooks and prints celebrating the 'environs', the area around London. She cites Peter Clark's analysis of the prints in the Guildhall collection, showing that the percentage representing the suburbs/periphery grew from 3.6% in the mid-seventeenth century, to 38.5% in the early nineteenth. Part of a 'new metropolitan public culture', they were selling the attractions of the countryside if not any specific houses.⁸ Yet Stephen Ward, in a recent study of how towns of varying types have been marketed, was a little dismissive of the period before 1850 - the 'Pre-History of Resorts' when 'the promotional process was essentially conducted by word of mouth'.⁹ He was perhaps influenced by the absence of posters – a colourful feature of suburban advertising in the twentieth century; but a speculative venture the size of Calverley clearly had to be advertised by more than word of mouth.

Chapter 2.1 starts by looking at how John Ward and Decimus Burton brought Calverley to market. There were relatively few press advertisements, but evidence enough that it was a professional, London-based operation, directed at a metropolitan audience. The most notable

⁶ Galinou, *Cottages*, pp. 69-70. She points out that the appeal was rustic rather than Picturesque - even in 1794, the year of Uvedale Price's essay; but then both Rustic and Picturesque will be identified here as elements of the ideal.

⁷ From Clarke, 'Pittville Estate History'. The 'terrestrial paradise' might not have been intended seriously, but suggests that the development was being described in that way by some.

⁸ McKellar, *Landscapes*, pp. 80, 79 (but see pp. 57-107 overall). John Archer saw 'a radically enlarged scale of suburban entrepreneurship' in the nineteenth century 'often accompanied by promotional rhetoric'. Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 210.

⁹ S.V. Ward, *Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities, 1850-2000* (London and New York, 1998), pp. 30, 83.

finding is that John Britton's *Descriptive Sketches of Tunbridge Wells* – the source of most studies of Calverley¹⁰ – was produced at the request of Burton and part-funded by Ward. The Calverley marketing emphasised 'the taste of Mr Burton', fashionable young architect, and the sturdiness of the new houses. There is little 'puffing' of Tunbridge Wells itself. The reason becomes clear: after two centuries as a fashionable resort, the town was well-known to the target audience. Ward did not need to 'sell' Tunbridge Wells: rather it was Calverley's location within Tunbridge Wells that 'sold' Calverley. The remainder of Chapter 2.1 looks at how the image of the town had been created over many years; at some of the means by which cultural ideals in general were spread; and at some of the more detailed sources for Tunbridge Wells: guide-books, histories, travellers' accounts, and souvenirs.

Chapters 2.2 to 2.5 then look more broadly at four aspects that might be considered part of the wider suburban appeal. These are: the Picturesque Ideal, the Romantic (Historical) Ideal, the Rustic Ideal, and the Architectural Ideal. In each case the claims or assumptions made about them in suburban studies are considered; evidence sought of their general applicability at the time; and any specific resonances with Calverley highlighted. One might argue that these are constructs of late twentieth century historiography, and that a commentator in 1825 might have chosen, for example, the 'Christian' element of the suburban ideal.¹¹ It does appear, though, that not only were they part of the ideal, but there was contemporary awareness that they were part of the appeal. Britton, for example, cites three of them: the picturesque, historical and rural, in his 'Preface' to *Descriptive Sketches*.¹² He was, he said 'Pleased with the wildness and picturesque features of the place ... [the] objects of art, and of historical fame, to be found ... [in] a fashionable hamlet so rural'; and of course the architectural attractions of the Calverley estate were the principal focus of his book.

¹⁰ For example: Archer, *Suburbia*, pp. 215-217.

¹¹ Davison does actually use Evangelicalism when he addresses broadly the same question in *Suburban Idea*.

¹² Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. vii.

Part Two then, seeks to demonstrate that the attraction of the suburb was not just the perfectly understandable desire to avoid the dirt, disease, and overcrowding of the city, but that there was a romantic, escapist element to it. That Ward was creating a fantasy world in the Kentish Weald may seem a rather fanciful proposition, but it was A.B. Granville, writing in 1841, who chose to describe Calverley as 'this fairy land'.¹³

¹³ Granville, *Spas of England*, iii, p. 623.

2.1 Selling Calverley

'Live in Kent, and Be Content'

Southern Railway poster. 1926.

There were no posters for Calverley to compare with those that advertised Metro-land, or the Southern Railway suburbs, one hundred years later.¹ There was, nevertheless, a definite marketing campaign in the period 1825 to 1845. It was metropolitan in its operation and in its targeting, and it went beyond simple advertising. There were elements of branding, image-building, and celebrity endorsement. As Part One has suggested, it was also responsive to the market: when 'houses in the park' were not selling, a terrace was included in the offer.

This chapter considers the question of the 'selling of places'. It is presented in three sections. The first selects certain features of the Calverley campaign to demonstrate its professionalism. The second looks wider: at how the image of Tunbridge Wells had been created over two centuries; and at some of the mechanics by which cultural ideals in general were established. The third section identifies a number of local products: histories, guidebooks and souvenirs, that imprinted and developed the image; and which provide sources that are used throughout the study.

2.1.1 The Selling of Calverley

The first reference to Calverley – in the sense of the Calverley estate - was in an 1825 guide book to Tunbridge Wells. It mentioned proposals by J. Ward Esq to build a crescent of large houses 'considerably elevated ... very tastefully laid-out'.² That particular proposal was not implemented, but Ward was putting down a marker that something significant was going to happen. Two years later an updated edition of the guide contained an insert with plans and an illustration of the proposed Calverley Parade and Terrace (see Chapter 1.1). The printer of the insert was Charles Hullmandel of Great Marlborough Street, London, described in the Dictionary

¹ Southern Railways also used the slogan 'Live in Surrey. Free from Worry'. Ward, *Selling Places*, p. 123.

² Clifford, *Guide* (1825), p. 48.

of National Biography as 'By this time ... the greatest lithographic printer in Britain'.³ This would suggest that the campaign was driven from London – with the insert perhaps being distributed by other means and in other places too.

What is noticeable is the early use of the name 'Calverley' – Crescent, Park, Terrace and Parade. This part of the town had hitherto been called Mount Pleasant. 'Calverley' related to an area of rough land to the east called 'Calverley's Plain' which was part of a separate parcel of land – the Panuwel estate. Ward had not yet completed the purchase of this in 1825, but had clearly decided that 'Calverley' was to be the branding for his new development. Using a single brand name gave a common identity and a presence to the venture, and emphasized its dominance in the town. In time the reputation of Calverley Park and the Calverley Hotel would add lustre to other parts of the development. What is not clear is why he chose that name – he might have used 'Mount Pleasant'.⁴ Calverley happens to be the name of a township near Leeds, and Ward's grandmother came from Leeds, but there is no evidence of a family connection.⁵

A more 'finished' publication than the 1827 insert was the 1828 'Neele' map showing the proposed development (see Chapter 1.1). It was based on an earlier map produced locally (1808, 'Barrow'), but had been updated by S. Rhodes, a London land surveyor, and engraved by J. & J. Neele of 352 Strand. A year or so earlier the Neeles had produced the well-known 'Greenwood' map of London which has been described as 'an enormously expensive business, especially if you used such specialists as James and Josiah Neele'.⁶ It is another indication of the professionalism of the Calverley operation. The Calverley development dominates the eastern half of the map.

³ M. Twyman, 'Hullmandel, Charles Joseph (1789–1850)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14113>] (28 March 2015).

⁴ Calverley Lodge was the name of Thomas Panuwel's house in 1820, and an earlier Panuwel property called Calverley was mentioned in Hasted's county history (1798). E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent ...* 2nd edn. (12 vols, Canterbury, 1797-1801), v, p. 237. The name, though, is not mentioned in guidebooks so would seem to have had little significance prior to Ward's arrival.

⁵ There were also proposals to develop a spa at the Yorkshire Calverley at about that time - perhaps all the more reason not to use it in Tunbridge Wells. Granville, *Spas of England*, i, p. 409.

⁶ R. Hyde, 'Christopher Greenwood and His Map of London', [<http://www.motco.com/Map/81003/Hyde.htm>] (29 Mar. 2015)

The name Calverley has been further applied to a Mill, Nursery, Spring, Wood, Farm, Quarry, Road and House. The more usual practice of choosing road names with fashionable or aristocratic connotations, such as Clarendon and Lansdowne as was done in Leamington, was only adopted later, perhaps by William Willicombe. In the early years, Ward was keen to stamp the Calverley identity on his development. 'Parade', 'Terrace' and especially 'Park' had their own connotations.

There is a vignette of the 'New Church' in the bottom corner of the map, and, although the title explains that the church is 'contiguous' to the Calverley Estate, the impression might easily have been gained that they were of a piece. The church was designed by Decimus Burton, possibly at the instigation of Ward, who had been appointed to the committee seeking to build a new church (see Chapter 1.1). Until the Calverley houses were built, the church provided a subject for illustration and a means of linking Decimus Burton to Tunbridge Wells. The significance of the map as a marketing tool is demonstrated by a report in the *Morning Post*. Having 'examined a plan designed by Mr DECIMUS BURTON', the paper declares that 'this delightful place cannot fail of attaining its due rank as a fashionable and general resort'.⁷ The *Gentleman's Magazine* of April 1829 also reported the development. Admittedly the report was short, but it contained the same message: that this 'quiet and genteel public place' was being enhanced by Mr Decimus Burton with 'Capital mansions, interspersed with pleasure grounds and delightful rides'. A telling detail is that it was being laid out 'in the manner of the Regent's Park'.⁸ Burton was by then a fashionable architect. Following his work in Regent's Park he had been commissioned to design the screen at Hyde Park Corner and the triumphal arch later named after Wellington. An advertisement in May 1829 for two houses he had designed in Harrow included the claim 'The taste of Mr Burton is proverbial'.⁹ He used the Royal Academy Exhibition that year to further bring Calverley to the attention of the public with pictures of Holy Trinity, Calverley Park and Calverley Parade /

⁷ *Morning Post* (5 June 1829).

⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine*. XCIX (Jan. – June 1829), p. 364.

⁹ *Morning Post* (23 May 1829).

Terrace.¹⁰

Burton and Ward's next move was rather less open. John Britton was a renowned antiquary and topographer – one contemporary called him 'one of the patriarchs of English antiquarian and topographical lore'.¹¹ His *Beauties of England and Wales*, produced between 1801 and 1816, ran to 27 volumes. In 1832 Britton produced *Descriptive Sketches of Tunbridge Wells and the Calverley Estate*. The book starts with the seemingly innocent statement that after visiting many other watering places he 'was at last tempted to sojourn a few days at Tunbridge Wells'. Pleased with what he found 'I was not only seduced to study its characteristics, but to commit to the press a few facts and reflections'. These few facts and reflections occupied some 148 pages including some very complimentary statements about the houses in Calverley Park: 'in the midst of a park, which is most pleasingly disposed by nature and adorned by art, they must be delightful'.¹² However, as Britton's autobiography admits, that initial statement 'does not sufficiently explain the origin of the volume ... as it was written at the instance of the author's good friend, Mr Decimus Burton'. Apparently John Ward had suggested that 'a judicious and well-written 'Hand Book' might tend to attract visitors' and he accordingly contributed towards the expenses of publication.¹³

Given Britton's eminence it is not surprising that the book was given a full two pages in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The reviewer perhaps understood the real objective of the book: 'very ample notice is taken ... of the buildings on the Calverley estate ... with ground plans of the houses erected under the direction of Mr Decimus Burton. ... Such plans are a very convenient

¹⁰ Item nos. 1127 – Calverley Parade, the new church, etc, and 1129 – Calverley Park. A. Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts : a complete dictionary of contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*, (8 vols, London, 1905).

¹¹ J.D. Parry, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Coast of Sussex* (Brighton and London, 1833), p. 429.

¹² Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, pp. vii, 53-4.

¹³ T.E. Jones, 'A Descriptive Account of the Literary Works of John Britton F.S.A.', Part Two of J. Britton and T.E. Jones (ed.), *The Autobiography of John Britton F.S.A.* (London, 1850), p. 60.

mode of informing persons who may desire to establish their residence at the Wells'.¹⁴ The book included the view of Calverley Park by T.H. Clarke shown in Figure 1 of this study. It may have been the picture exhibited by Clarke at the Royal Academy in 1831 - further advertising the development.¹⁵ Another artist involved in the work was R.W. Billings who provided an updated map with vignettes of the lodges at the three entrances to the park – 'imbowered' in trees, very rustic images. The lodges in particular, in their three distinct architectural styles, provided a point of interest to the general reader who may not have been interested in pictures of houses. They served their purpose in catching the eye, for example, of the artist George Barnard. Ackermann published a set of seven lithographs of Tunbridge Wells by him in 1833. The first plate featured vignettes of all three lodges. In its review of the prints, the *Court Journal*¹⁶ made the connection to Britton's earlier book. Thus word of Calverley was spread through a knowing use of the media.



Figure 72. Farnborough Lodge and Victoria Gate, by George Barnard, 1833. Source: G. Barnard, *Landscape Reminiscences, Part II, Tunbridge Wells ...* (London, 1833), Plate 1. Wellcome Library, London, by permission.

Another map was produced in 1838 – of the town as a whole but identifying the Calverley Park houses quite clearly.¹⁷ This time there were four vignettes, but in a very different style: elegant and urban rather than rustic. This might reflect the change in focus that is suggested in Chapter 1.2 – as Ward and Burton temporarily sought to introduce a more urban feel. It might be that the map was produced to advertise the Calverley Hotel. The hotel was advertised widely in national

¹⁴ *Gentleman's Magazine* 102/1 (June 1832), p. 535.

¹⁵ Item 516. Graves, *Dictionary*.

¹⁶ *The Court Journal* 17 Aug. 1833 (Vol.5 p. 573).

¹⁷ TWBC. Engraved and printed by J. Henshall of Islington.

and regional newspapers in 1838 and 1839.¹⁸ It was sold on its splendour ‘not surpassed by any rival Establishment throughout England’, and its position ‘on an eminence ... command[ing] extensive and very beautiful views of the adjacent lovely country, adorned by Woodland Scenery of surpassing beauty’.¹⁹ There were fewer advertisements in the national press for the Calverley houses. One exception, in May 1835, referred to ‘several substantially-built and well-finished VILLAS, in that well known and delightful spot called Calverley Park, the views from which are indisputably more varied and romantic than can be found in any other part of Tunbridge Wells, abounding, as it does in the richest scenery to be found in the country’.²⁰ As with the hotel, the setting of the houses in this romantic landscape was all-important.

There was publicity aplenty in both national and local newspapers for visits to the town by Princess Victoria and her mother in the years 1826, 1827, 1834 and 1836. On the first three occasions the royal party occupied Mount Pleasant (ie Calverley) House.²¹ It is not clear how the visits were arranged – the house was in Ward’s ownership on those dates. Traders throughout the town grasped the opportunity to claim royal patronage. The Sussex Hotel on the Pantiles became the Royal Victoria and Sussex Hotel, on the basis of a single night’s stay. The Baths and Library in Calverley Promenade appropriated the title Royal, as did the Calverley Archery Club. The naming of one of the lodges to Calverley Park as ‘Victoria’ Lodge seems rather restrained compared to Leamington, which in 1838 became Royal Leamington Spa, on the basis of a single visit.²² Prospective customers, however, were reminded of the royal visits for years afterwards. Britton, for example, dedicated his *Descriptive Sketches* to the Duchess of Kent (Victoria’s mother) to ensure that any reader would be aware of the association.

So there was clearly an extensive and professional marketing effort behind Calverley. The Metro-

¹⁸ Initially the advertisements were for lessees to take on the management of the hotel. It was advertised to customers from 1840.

¹⁹ *Brighton Patriot* (21 Aug. 1838).

²⁰ *Morning Post* (15 May 1835).

²¹ In 1834 other members of the party were accommodated in Calverley Park. D. Foreman, *Royal Visitors to Tunbridge Wells* (Speldhurst, 1993) p. 100.

²² It took Tunbridge Wells a further 71 years to achieve the same label.

land analogy is not far-fetched.

2.1.2 The Wider Discourse

In its review of *Descriptive Sketches*, the *Gentleman's Magazine* described the history of Tunbridge Wells as the '*decies repetita* story'. It might suggest a weariness on the part of the reviewer (its actual meaning is considered below), but implies that the readers too would have been well aware of the story. Ward had bought not only 900 acres of fine landscape, but a share in a franchise that had been created over two centuries. Ron Cooley, looking at the town as a successful spa in the eighteenth century, spoke of the image-building process: 'the town had also to be constructed discursively and imaginatively if it was to thrive. It had to come to signify something in the minds of those, chiefly Londoners, on whose trade it depended'.²³

Poets, dramatists, travel writers and diarists had contributed to this process since the mid-seventeenth century.²⁴ They had created a multi-faceted image, none of the facets being workaday or mundane. There was the creation-myth: that a young nobleman, his health blighted by excesses at Court, had discovered the spring while crossing a barren and uninhabited heath; and that Queen Henrietta-Maria and her entourage had to camp on the Common when they visited in 1629.²⁵ Recent research has suggested that the 'uninhabited heath' is an exaggeration: a sixteenth century map shows buildings, possibly on the site of Mount Pleasant House;²⁶ though the owners of lodgings in nearby villages were able to prevent residential development near the spring. Then there were the visits of the later Stuart monarchs, and their disreputable court; and the gambling and misbehaviour of the early eighteenth century. The later years of that century

²³ R.W. Cooley, 'Almost Miraculous': Lord North and the Healing Waters of Tunbridge Wells', in C. Kosso and A. Scott (eds.), *The Nature and Function of Water, Baths, Bathing and Hygiene from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (Leiden, 2009), p. 501.

²⁴ As had doctors peddling the medicinal qualities of its water. Dr Lodwick Rowzee is usually considered to have been the first, in 1632, eg A. Savidge, *Royal Tunbridge Wells* (Speldhurst, 1975), p. 30.

²⁵ Thus, for example: 'Tunbridge Wells is situated upon the side of a Heath, so barren and so poor, that had it not produced a Well, it would have been yielded nothing'. From Ned Ward's *Miscellaneous Writings* c.1718, cited in M. Barton, *Tunbridge Wells* (London, 1937), p. 189.

²⁶ 'Plan of land in the vicinity of Tunbridge Wells, Kent' (1509-1547), TNA MPI 1/68/7, 8 and 12. See also R. Mitchell and A. Janes, *Maps Their Untold Stories* (London, 2014), p. 24.

might have seen more polite manners, but it was still, in the words of Samuel Rogers in 1805, ‘a Castle of Indolence’:²⁷ a place of make-believe – a rustic retreat for fashionable Londoners.

Ward was perhaps looking for a little more intellectual respectability, which was why Britton’s *Sketches* were important. Collections of prints of topographical and antiquarian interest had been available for many years: John Harris’ *History of Kent* of 1719, for example, the source of the ‘Kip’ birds-eye view in Section 0.6 above. Harris’s biographer called the book ‘undistinguished, but handsomely subscribed’ and it is that latter point that is important: ownership of publications like this was a marker of cultural awareness.²⁸ Britton, though, was far from undistinguished: David Watkin writes that the ‘cult of illustrated topography reached its climax’ at this time, and identifies in particular the work of Britton (and of Rudolf Ackermann).²⁹ Periodicals, too, such as *Gentleman’s Magazine*, helped define cultural norms. One of Britton’s memories when describing his country childhood is that prior to 1780 nobody in his village took a newspaper or magazine and could not therefore participate in the cultural life of the nation.³⁰ The periodicals alerted their readers to what was new and what it was essential to know. They provided reviews of novels and poems but also the latest antiquarian research. Their tone and content, and cost, ensured a rather narrow readership: those with education, wealth and leisure. The phrase ‘*decies repetita*’ (as above) – a reference to Horace’s ‘*decies repetita placebit*’ (‘though ten times repeated it will continue to please’) – might be taken as an example of how the use of classical references, or simply of Latin itself, might have bolstered a sense of shared scholarship among some, but excluded others. (It may simply have been a phrase in common use at the time – Roland Barthes uses a paraphrase in the preface to *Mythologies* and was

²⁷ Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) banker and poet. Letter to his sister, cited by P. W Clayden, *Samuel Rogers and his Contemporaries* (London, 1899), i, p. 23.

²⁸ L. Stewart, ‘Harris, John (c.1666–1719)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2009), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12397> (13 Oct 2016).

²⁹ Watkin, *English Vision*, p. vii.

³⁰ J. Britton, ‘Personal and Literary Memoir of the Author’, Part One of J. Britton and T.E. Jones (ed.), *The Autobiography of John Britton F.S.A.* (London, 1850), p. 32.

presumably not seeking to exclude.)³¹

Chapters 2.2 to 2.5 make use of this corpus of cultural ideas in considering the possible ideals driving suburban development. There was a widening of access to it over the first half of the nineteenth century, as improvements in printing technology, lower costs and higher incomes increased the availability of books and periodicals. Of particular relevance to this study were the publications of J.C. Loudon. His *Gardener's Magazine* published from the mid 1820s was aimed mainly at the professional gardener, but the later *Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* was intended for amateurs. It ran from 1836 to 1838 and was then published in book form. It was aimed not only at existing suburban dwellers, but actively sold the benefits of suburban life to others. According to Archer, it 'canonised' the 'ideals of metropolitan suburban planning'.³² Loudon used the same procedure, of periodical followed by consolidated publication, for the *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture* in 1832-3. He encouraged a critical engagement on the part of his readers: a feature of the *Encyclopaedia* is the presentation of architectural designs with an analysis of their benefits and faults.

In addressing a wider audience there was sometimes a less scholarly tone which worried some. The condescending attitude to Gilpin's travel guides will be noted in Chapter 2.2; and the bad-tempered dispute over the 'cockney-poets' considered in Chapter 2.4. The disagreement between Miss Jenkyns and Captain Brown in *Cranford* over the validity of *Pickwick* is a comment on it.³³ Readership was still a minority of the population, but it was the minority with the resources to contemplate a home in the suburbs.

2.1.3 Local Sources

This section looks at sources produced at the time of Calverley which further enhanced the

³¹ R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, tr. A. Lavers (New York, 1972), p. 11.

³² Archer, 'Country and City', p. 143. Loudon consciously addressed readers in North America and Australia but he also had an indirect influence in the former through the use of his material by the American Andrew Jackson Downing. Jackson, *Crabgrass*, p. 63. Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 123-124.

³³ Neatly self-referential as Dickens was behind both publications.

image: guide-books, local histories and souvenirs. Though many were produced locally they were also part of the national discourse; partly because they were available through London booksellers,³⁴ and partly because the story they told, and sometimes the text itself, was copied in national guides, gazetteers and directories. The railway companies, for example, provided guides to the areas they served, and typically re-used material from earlier publications like these.

The first local history of Tunbridge Wells was published in 1766 by Thomas Benge Burr,³⁵ a native of the town who worked as a bookseller in London. He dedicated the book to Thomas Bowlby, a Commissioner of Excise. Bowlby's link with Burr and Tunbridge Wells is not clear, but as a self-consciously cultured and well-connected figure he is representative of the eighteenth-century visitor. While the list of subscribers to Burr's book does include some local residents it leans heavily towards court and metropolis, demonstrating the essential connection with London.³⁶

The book opens with a poem addressing Bowlby as Maecenas – the poem is in imitation of Horace, a conventional usage at the time. It suggests that although Bowlby might prefer to travel to Italy; for Burr, Tunbridge Wells is good enough. By making the comparison Burr is treating the two as equivalents. There is no mention of Bath, the real rival. With references to Penshurst, and to the poets, Sidney, Spenser and Waller, Burr establishes his academic and taste credentials, and, by implication, those of his readers. The book has a four-part structure that can also be seen in the later histories and guidebooks identified below. There was an explanation of the town's origin and early history – the creation myth; a description of the various localities within it; claims for its water and air; and finally descriptions of the 'seats' and other attractions in the

³⁴ Benge Burr's history, described in this section, was printed in London, and lists three London booksellers on the title-page. (One of them, James Dodsley, a prominent bookseller of Pall Mall, was the brother of Robert Dodsley whose guide to *London and its Environs* (1761) is identified by McKellar as one of those that first focused on the surrounding areas.) Burr himself worked for George Hawkins, bookseller of Temple Bar. In the 1740s Hawkins also took a shop on the Pantiles during the summer - demonstrating its role as a seasonal outpost of the capital. (P. Whitbourn, 'The Queen'd Welles', in J. Cunningham (ed.), *400 Years of the Wells...* (Tunbridge Wells, 2005), p. 16.) Onely and Amsinck were printed in London, but Sprange and the later guidebooks were printed locally; like Burr, though, they listed London booksellers on their title-pages.

³⁵ T.B. Burr, *The History of Tunbridge Wells* (London, 1766).

³⁶ There are just over ninety names, of which perhaps fifteen are recognisably local. A more detailed analysis would be useful but is rather peripheral to the general focus of the study.

area. Burr's tone is scholarly, though his account of the early history has more of a narrative drive than most county histories of the time which were largely genealogical.³⁷

Burr was followed in 1771 by Richard Onely, rector of Speldhurst.³⁸ His book is much shorter – only 54 pages. There is no list of subscribers – perhaps it was a personal hobby. He concentrates more on surrounding seats and views, and includes lists of the art-works that could be seen locally. While Burr understood that some of his readers might like the picturesque, Onely seems to have appreciated it himself.

The first guide book came in 1780, from Jasper Sprange, a local printer.³⁹ He also felt the need for a Horatian ode – in this case to the Duke of Leeds, an annual visitor: 'Most gracious Duke! Glad at your Call / Wait Nymphs, and Swains, young, old and all.' Sprange retained all of Burr's history, updated some of his descriptions, and added anecdotes about local characters, which were then repeated in all later histories. Sprange's guides were updated and re-issued for the next thirty to forty years.

In 1810 Paul Amsinck and Letitia Byrne produced a collection of etchings with historical descriptions – funded by subscription, again largely by outsiders.⁴⁰ The book covers the same topics as Burr and Sprange. The tone is serious, and at times critical of the behaviour of earlier visitors, regretting the influence of the Restoration court and the deleterious effect of

³⁷ Personal feelings sometimes surface: he disliked Catholics, and considered Methodists 'that deluded sect'. Burr, *History*, p. 104. Rosemary Sweet, in her account of eighteenth-century urban histories, has a problem with Burr – that he should attempt to write a history covering only 150 years; but then Tunbridge Wells did not fit her (otherwise reasonable) thesis: that urban histories served to confirm a distinctive provincial urban culture. Tunbridge Wells did not have a distinctive provincial urban culture: it was part of London, and the histories/guidebooks were aimed at metropolitan visitors/incomers. Sweet had no issue with Bath, 'a town whose histories were written from the start with a view to pandering ... to the thousands of visitors'. Like John Wood's *Description of Bath* in 1742, Burr's book both reflected a local loyalty, and presented an image of place already understood by most readers. That it had only 150 years of history, and that before that was uninhabited heathland, was an essential part of the image. R. Sweet, *The Writing of Urban Histories in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 110, 113-116.

³⁸ R.A. Onely, *A General Account of Tunbridge Wells, and its environs: historical and descriptive* (London, 1771).

³⁹ J. Sprange, *The Tunbridge Wells Guide* (Tunbridge Wells, 1780).

⁴⁰ P. Amsinck and L. Byrne, *Tunbridge Wells and its Neighbourhood* (London, 1810).

gambling.⁴¹

Sprange was replaced by his nephew John Clifford, who published guides from 1818 until 1840. His children continued the business until 1855. Clifford's history is largely a précis of Amsinck, though his tone is lighter, and he seems interested in providing what he thinks will interest his readers. Places of worship, including non-conformist, are accorded a new prominence. Guidebooks continued to be produced, by a number of publishers, up to and beyond the end of the century.

Travellers' accounts provide a different perspective. Three in particular have been used in the study: by Evans, Britton – as above, and Granville. The Rev John Evans produced his *Letters* in 1820, describing visits to Brighton, Tunbridge Wells and Southend. They were printed first in a periodical, and then combined as a book.⁴² They have a light personal tone – Evans, for example, found the biblical names of Mounts Sion and Ephraim pleasing - so the underlying sales message is less obvious. Britton's *Descriptive Sketches* has already been described. It was followed in 1833 by a cheaper book (price 1/6) produced by Kidd, which nevertheless covered much the same material, and used some of Britton's text.⁴³ Then in 1841 there was A.B. Granville's review of the *Spas of England*, in three volumes. Granville provided a very detailed review of each place from the visitor's viewpoint and was not afraid to be critical. He was scathing about the guide-books to Leamington, and their 'fulsome, hyperbolic, and improbable eulogisms'. Guide books are a major source for this study, so it is perhaps as well that they are used as evidence of myth-making rather than accurate reporting. Granville makes the point about Tunbridge Wells that 'the Spa, as a spa, is ... on its last legs.' – only 240 out of 5,000 visitors tasted the water - but is so complimentary about other aspects of the town that one wonders whether Ward might not have

⁴¹ Ibid. pp. 13, 15.

⁴² J. Evans, *Recreation for the young and old. An excursion to Brighton ... : A visit to Tunbridge Wells; and A trip to Southend. In a series of letters* (Chiswick, 1821). Their earlier publication had been in the *European Magazine and London Review*.

⁴³ *Kidd's Picturesque Pocket Companion to Tonbridge Wells* (London, ND but 1830s). Part of a series of 'Picturesque Guides'.

been involved.⁴⁴

There were also souvenirs. They were bought by visitors rather than residents, but then taken away and, effectively, represented Tunbridge Wells to the rest of the country. The most characteristic was Tunbridge Ware: small wooden items, often with a picture, and from 1830, usually formed in tessellated mosaic. With space for only one picture, the images chosen became iconic. Perhaps the most common was St Helena Cottage on the Common, further reinforcing the Picturesque image of the town.



Figure 73. Tunbridge Ware image of St Helena. c.1845. Source: D. Brick, *Landmarks. The King Collection of Topographical Tunbridge Ware* (Edenbridge,2012), p. 4, by permission.

Before the widespread use of photography, engravings by publishers such as Rock & Co. were a popular souvenir. The selection of subjects reinforced that same image of the town, as below with rocks and the Common.

⁴⁴ Granville, *Spas of England*, ii, p. 252, iii, p. 630.



Figure 74. Rock & Co. image of St Helena, the Common, and rocks. 1869. Source: Rock & Co. print no. 2363. Cunningham, *Mid-19th Century*, p. 22.

2.1.4 Selling Calverley - Summary

The proposition of Part Two is that people were attracted to Calverley, and other suburbs, by an ideal or ideals. Chapters 2.2 to 2.5 examine possible components of that ideal, and how they were represented in the cultural infrastructure of the time. Chapter 2.1 has demonstrated that Calverley was also actively promoted by the developers: that the Calverley brand was consciously constructed, and professionally marketed. The chapter has also shown that this was done within an existing framework by which Tunbridge Wells as a whole was presented to the public. The guide books and souvenirs define the image – the romanticism of the creation myth; the picturesque nature of the buildings; the excitement of the landscape. It is true that they were focused at visitors, but by encouraging visitors Ward was increasing the footfall into his showroom – for surely every purchaser of a house had previously been a visitor. Novels set in Tunbridge Wells were also a powerful marketing tool, but these are addressed separately in Chapter 3.4.

2.2 The Picturesque Ideal

Chapters 2.2 to 2.5 take four possible elements of a generalised 'suburban ideal': the 'picturesque', the 'romantic', the 'rustic', and the 'architectural'; and examine whether they formed part of the attraction of Calverley, and by extension, perhaps, of suburbs in general. The objective is examination rather than advocacy, but, in varying degrees, they do all seem to have been important. The incorporation of Mordaunt Crook's term 'Picturesque Urban Planning' in the title of this study is perhaps justification for assigning the first of these chapters to 'The Picturesque Ideal'.

The Picturesque has been a focus for art historians, and students of architecture and landscape, for many years.¹ That Dana Arnold produced a paper on 'Decimus Burton and the urban Picturesque'² shows how neatly Calverley could be fitted into that discourse. This chapter demonstrates how promoters of Calverley and Tunbridge Wells did indeed use Picturesque references to influence an audience already sensitized to their meaning. After an initial review of the basic concept, and after addressing a concern that it was no longer current at the time of Calverley; the chapter looks at three aspects: topography and rocks; landscape and views; and the idea of 'journey' – of Tunbridge Wells being 'a place apart'. The focus here is on the topographical aspects – 'Picturesque' architecture is addressed in Chapter 2.5.

2.2.1 The 'Picturesque'

The Picturesque was the intermediate aesthetic between the Classical and the Romantic. It lasted from about 1730 to 1830; and was basically an academic appreciation of landscape. That was the definition put forward by Christopher Hussey in 1927.³ Hussey's narrative is nearly a century old and some of his propositions are now questioned, but his work was a starting point

¹ A search in the Bibliography of British and Irish History for 'Picturesque movement' 1750-1850 resulted in 122 matches. The peak years were 1994-5, though 2013 was also productive. <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2172/bbih/search.cfm> (5 April 2015).

² D. Arnold, 'Decimus Burton and the urban picturesque', in D. Arnold (ed.), *The picturesque in late Georgian England: papers given at the Georgian Group symposium, 22nd October 1994* (London, 1995).

³ Hussey, *The Picturesque*.

for modern discussion of the subject.⁴ Hussey was at pains to include poetical influences but there was criticism at the time (in 1927) that the new theory over-stressed the influence of Italian landscape artists over that of British landscape poets.⁵ The Tunbridge Wells material does indeed demonstrate a richness of poetical reference, but nevertheless the three names most associated with the Picturesque are Claude Lorrain, Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Poussin: artists working in Italy in the seventeenth century. They developed a form of idealised landscape: precisely composed pastoral scenes usually featuring some architectural elements and often a ruin.⁶ Salvator's work was known for its more unsettling aspects, including 'banditti'; Claude for the effects of light; and Poussin for his draftsmanship.

Enthusiasts of the Picturesque tended to the theoretical, so there was debate on the nature of beauty and in particular on the human response to various types of landscape. Edmund Burke proposed that views could be categorised as either 'beautiful' or 'sublime' depending upon whether they triggered a sub-conscious response of 'self-propagation' or 'self-preservation'. A little later (in the 1790s) Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight added a third category - the Picturesque, not so much beautiful as interesting. The theorists differed on whether these various qualities were inherent in the objects or were triggered in the mind of the observers by association.

Initially the debate was restricted to the privileged few, familiar perhaps with Italy and looking to re-order their own country estates to create the perfect landscape; but from the 1780s the Rev William Gilpin's guide-books created a new Picturesque constituency - tourists visiting newly-

⁴ David Watkin, in 1982, said it 'is still the only book which investigates the Picturesque in all its manifestations'. Watkin, *English Vision*, p. xi. Malcolm Andrews was a little more critical, saying, of Hussey and of Elizabeth Manwaring: 'Their research remains invaluable, even if some of their judgements now seem unsatisfactory'. M. Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: landscape aesthetics and tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Aldershot, 1989), p. viii. Manwaring's work: *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth-Century England*, (New York, 1925) was one of Hussey's sources.

⁵ O. Doughty, for example, in a review of Manwaring's book, in: *The Review of English Studies*, 3/9 (Jan. 1927), pp. 95-97.

⁶ It may be that there are fewer ruins in Claude's work than is commonly assumed, but the perception was that there were many. Uvedale Price thought so, and provided an explanation for their presence. U. Price, 'Essay on Architecture and Buildings', in U. Price and T.D. Lauder (ed.), *Sir Uvedale Price, On the Picturesque* (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 361.

popular places, like the Lake District and Wales. Gilpin educated his readers on how to appreciate a vista, and capture it in a sketch. Correct composition was vital: foreground, middle and distance; and the proper selection of elements. The point was not to capture nature as it was, but the cultural construction of space - two centuries before Lefebvre and de Certeau. Like them it introduced a new vocabulary. Gilpin's guides were very popular. Six volumes were produced between 1782 and 1809. They may have provided the metaphor for John Britton's *Descriptive Sketches*, where each chapter is identified as a 'sketch' or a 'leaf in my portfolio'.⁷

Perhaps it was the widening of the audience beyond a few self-regarding connoisseurs, perhaps the new enthusiasts really did sound pretentious. Jane Austen was one of many who sought to prick the pomposities. Hussey started his 1927 book with a well-known quote from *Northanger Abbey*, and used another from *Sense and Sensibility* to the same effect.⁸ But Austen was ever gentle: not so Thomas James Mathias, who made 'a strong remonstrance against the language of Mr Gilpin's writings on Landscape and the Picturesque ... mere jargon and foolish affectation'.⁹ The best-known lampooning of Picturesque enthusiasm was the representation of Gilpin as Dr Syntax in a series of Rowlandson sketches published by Ackermann from 1808.¹⁰ The following extract mocks Gilpin's preference for irregularity rather than smoothness (in effect his definition of 'picturesque'):

The un-shorn sheep, the shaggy goat,
The ass with rugged, ragged coat,
Would to a taste-inspired mind,
Leave the far-famed Eclipse behind:¹¹

In fact Dr Syntax is not an unsympathetic character; the main villains are lawyers and absentee clergymen.

⁷ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. 64.

⁸ Hussey, *The Picturesque*, pp. 1, 231.

⁹ T.J. Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem*, 14th edn. (London, 1808), p. 345.

¹⁰ With accompanying text by W. Combe, and published in book form in 1812: W. Combe, *The Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of the Picturesque* (London, 1865).

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 137.

The satire, though, is so successful, and is so often reproduced in histories, that one might assume that enthusiasm for the Picturesque must have died away prior to the Calverley period; the end date of 1830 suggested by Hussey (and Watkin¹²) would suggest so. Material culture would indicate not. The image below is an example of Spode's 'Italian' design. It was introduced about 1816,¹³ yet presents the quintessential 'Claudean' landscape: ruins, rocks, a river curling into the distance, pastoralists with their flocks.



Figure 75. Spode 'Italian' design, c.1816. Typical 'Claudean' landscape. Source: author.

Compare the Spode image with the pictures below. These were 'advertisements' for Calverley, from 1831 and 1827, yet were still presented in this 'Picturesque' visual idiom. It was clearly still a strong enough image for commercial exploitation.

¹² Watkin, *English Vision*, p. vii.

¹³ It remained in production throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, well after Claude went out of fashion, so its use as a signifier of cultural tastes becomes a little problematic. Perhaps the image came to signify table-ware rather than landscape. Perhaps it was enough that it was blue and white, and the pattern was ignored (did nineteenth-century tea-drinkers consume their china?).



Figure 76. Calverley images in 'Picturesque' idiom. (See Chapter 1.1.)

Some quantitative data on the continuing use of the word 'picturesque' is also available. The graph below shows the relative popularity over time of particular words in a particular corpus of literature.¹⁴ The line in red is provided simply to demonstrate the principle. It shows that use of the word 'attractive' in British books has remained roughly constant over the last fifty years, but that it is of relatively recent usage and grew gradually from 1800. The blue line shows the use of 'picturesque' in the same corpus. It peaks across the period 1840-1910, which is later than one might have expected, given the general association of the picturesque with the later eighteenth century. The green line, however, which represents fictional work only,¹⁵ does have earlier peaks in late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There may be many reasons for this, and perhaps difficulties with the selection and availability of the data,¹⁶ but perhaps new fiction is a better indicator of what currently interests the culturally aware.

¹⁴ 'Ngrams' show the number of occurrences of a word (or phrase) as a percentage of occurrences of all words (or phrases of that length) in books produced in that year within the specified corpus.

¹⁵ The fictional data does not distinguish between British and American books. However, the overall pattern for 'picturesque' in the two countries is similar. Uses 5-year smoothing – that there are still sharp peaks prior to 1800 suggests that there is limited data

¹⁶ By 1825 there were some 100 fictional works per year. Prior to 1795 the average was less than 20. The overall figures (including non-fiction) were much higher, growing from about 600 in 1795 to about 2400 in 1825. <http://storage.googleapis.com/books/ngrams/books/datasetsv1.html> (8 April 2015).

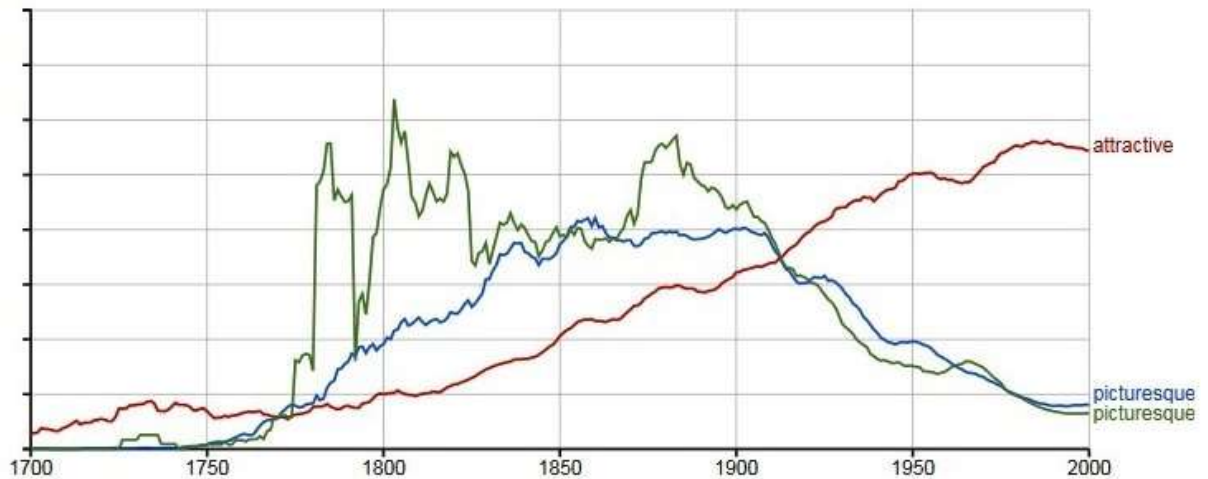


Figure 77. Ngram - frequency of use of 'Picturesque'. Source: author, using Google.com/ngrams. The graph compares the frequency of 'attractive' (red) and 'picturesque' (blue) in British books 1700-2000. The green line shows the frequency of 'picturesque' in English fiction (Britain and elsewhere). Use of Picturesque (capitalised) was insignificant.¹⁷

We might say that the Picturesque represented less of a distinct period than a transition from the intellectualism of the early eighteenth century to the emotion of the early nineteenth; that both aspects were represented at different times in differing proportions; and that there was no clear-cut end date.¹⁸ Ultimately the word lost much of its specific meaning and simply signified rustic prettiness. As Barthes said in his critique of the *Blue Guide*, 'picturesque is found any time the ground is uneven'.¹⁹

The following extracts from James Elmes' account of Regent's Park in 1829 demonstrate both his emotional response to the landscape, and his attempts to analyse that response:

cast another look ... at the terraces on the left, and at the beautiful plantations and lovely lake on our right. See ! the sparkling undulating line of beauty, [a swans neck] by the dark green shrubs of the Holme. The united powers of the magic pencils of Ruysdael and Claude would hardly do justice to that bit of brilliant nature. ... By heaven, I could stay here all day feasting my eyes²⁰

but hark! at that delightful harp. The very circumstance of not seeing the charming player enhances the romance of the scene... it accords so completely with the harmony of the scene, that I cannot tear myself away.²¹

¹⁷ Ngram: 'attractive' and 'picturesque' from corpus 'British English 2012', 'picturesque' from corpus 'English Fiction', 1700-2000, 5 year smoothing. <https://books.google.com/ngrams>. (3 Apr. 2015).

¹⁸ See Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, p. 239.

¹⁹ Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 74-77, reprinted in Arnold, *Reading Architectural History*, p. 195.

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 29-30.

²¹ Ibid. pp. 45-46.

(Visitors to Tunbridge Wells, as will be seen, had already grasped the use of music in the appreciation of landscape.)

Similar claims about the surroundings, rich in 'Picturesque' reference, abound in the Tunbridge Wells sources. The difference is that most of the 'Picturesque' features of Tunbridge Wells were natural. Burton's achievement was not so much to build a 'Picturesque' landscape in Calverley Park, but to build Calverley Park in a 'Picturesque' landscape.

2.2.2 Topography and Rocks

Topography is key to this discussion. Tunbridge Wells is positioned just within the High Weald, an area of intricate, steep-sided valleys and narrow ridges. The roads tend to run along the ridges, while the original settlement lay in a valley bottom. The naming of parts of the town: Mount Sion, Mount Ephraim and Mount Pleasant, emphasizes their relative height above that original settlement, but the vocabulary in the extract below is fanciful and demonstrates a delight in the names themselves. This was part of the attraction.

Hill, above hill, here boldly soars,
Resembling Greek, or Latian shores,
Or rather such as Judah claims,
And christen'd too with sacred names²²

This is part of a 24-page 'epistle' included in Burr's 1766 history.²³ Written in early eighteenth century poetical idiom, it locates Tunbridge Wells in a classical setting: 'methinks I tread Parnassian ground'. A little earlier, in 1753, Elizabeth Montagu had been on a picnic with William Pitt:

We drank tea yesterday in the most beautiful rural scene ... [Mr Pitt] ordered a tent to be pitched, tea to be prepared, and his French horn to breathe music like the unseen genius of the wood... After tea we rambled about for an hour, seeing several views, some wild as Salvator Rosa, others placid, and with the setting sun, worthy of Claud Lorrain.²⁴

²² Burr, *History*, p. 133.

²³ One might suspect that he wrote it himself, though at this point he corrects the poet for mistaking Calverley for Calvary (ie one of the hills with sacred names).

²⁴ Cited in Melville, *Society at Tunbridge Wells*, pp. 211-212.

Onely, in 1771, confirmed:

parties from the Wells frequently come here to drink tea, or to regale themselves with a cold collation, attended with music, especially French horns; the sound of which is melodiously re-echoed from the neighbouring woods, hills and water.²⁵

The image, with Elmes' earlier comment about the harpist in Regent's Park, brings to mind Peter de Bolla's proposition that the orthodox view of the 'Picturesque' is overly pictorial.²⁶ It may be, though, that Onely was exaggerating and there had only ever been the one picnic (there is an example of exaggeration like this in Chapter 2.3). Once documented it became part of the assumed experience of Tunbridge Wells.

These accounts refer to an area of outcrops known as 'High Rocks'. These were described on a 1723 map as a 'prodigious regular wall of rock'.²⁷ Burr called them 'stupendous ruins of nature'.²⁸

Isaac Watts the hymn-writer was there in 1729. They inspired him to meditation:

when I see such awful appearances in nature, huge and lofty rocks hanging over my head
... I can hardly think myself in safety... at best they give a sort of solemn and dreadful
delight.²⁹

It is a classic statement of the 'sublime'.

²⁵ Onely, *A General Account*, p. 26.

²⁶ P. De Bolla, 'Antipictorialism in the English Landscape Tradition: A Second Look at *The Country and the City*', in C. Prendergast, *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams* (Minneapolis, 1995).

²⁷ R. Budgen, *Map of Sussex (1723)* in Cunningham, *Historical Atlas*, p. 11.

²⁸ Burr, *History*, p. 47.

²⁹ In a sermon entitled 'A Meditation upon the Rocks near Tunbridge Wells', cited by E.P. Hood in *Isaac Watts: his life and writings, his homes and friends* (London, 1875), p. 251.



Figure 78. High Rocks, 1864. Source: Rock & Co. print no. 5045(5046?), Cunningham, *Mid-19th Century*, p. 37.

Whether those rocks would have excited visitors who had experienced Cheddar Gorge or Mont Blanc³⁰ is doubtful, but Rev. Evans found them thrilling in 1820:

Torrents of rain had fallen, so that deep ruts shook our vehicles. The Ladies were in trepidation! ... After winding hither and thither through a thickly wooded dell, the Rocks rose to sight ... huge masses of stone thrown up by an earthquake, or flung together by a deluge ... exhibiting a frowning aspect towards all who approach them.³¹

He was a little unsettled too by the Sand Rocks by the London Road (see below):

The Cavern below reminded me of some of the retreats in Gil Blas, whither a banditti withdrew after the depredations of the day. Its interior I did not explore.³²

Perhaps we over-estimate the number of people who had travelled more widely, Evans' book was called: *An excursion to Brighton ... A visit to Tunbridge Wells; and A trip to Southend*.

³⁰ After 1815 it was within the reach of determined British travellers. Frederick Clissold, son of a West Country textile manufacturer, climbed it in 1821. His journal records his feelings 'I felt a silent regret that I was not alone ... a still more subduing sublimity ... the pure and exalted affections of humility and universal charity, are excited' F. Clissold, *Narrative of an Ascent to the Summit of Mont Blanc August eighteenth 1821* (London, 1823), p. 31.

³¹ Evans, *Excursion*, p. 157.

³² Evans, *Excursion*, p. 196.



Figure 79. Sand Rocks by London Road. c 1850. Source: Drawing by C.T. Dodd, TUNWM 1995.232. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery. Reproduced from P. Whitbourn, *Charles Tattershall Dodd 1815-78* ... (Tunbridge Wells, 2011), p. 2.

This is the main entrance into Tunbridge Wells. The sand-pit ('cavern') beneath the rocks which unsettled Evans had by then been filled.

Montagu, Watts, and Evans were expressing their excitement in 'Picturesque' terms; doing so was part of the enjoyment. The figure below shows a group of visitors enjoying the rocks in 1863. At least two of them seem to be 'taking a picture'. These are not the High Rocks, but one of the many outcrops on the Common. Christopher Hussey called them 'extrusions of the primeval', and suggested that they 'contrast piquantly with [the] demure urbanity' of the houses on Mount Ephraim.³³ The picture demonstrates (in fact understates) how much the Common was an integral part of the town, and how much this Picturesque scenery could be part of daily life for residents as well as visitors. Britton wrote 'here the majority of houses ... command either extensive views over a wild or cultivated country, or into the furze-clad common in their immediate neighbourhood ... bestrewed with broom, and heath, and bramble'.³⁴ This is classic 'shaggy' 'picturesque'.

³³ Hussey, 'Old Towns Revisited', p. 1594.

³⁴ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, pp. 3-4.



Figure 80. Tunbridge Wells Common in 1863. Source: Rock & Co. print no. 4849, Cunningham, *Mid-19th Century*, p. 31.

Andrew Saint suggests that the rocks ‘gave a tang to the jaded palates of the Victorian urban middle classes ... they found in the bare outcrop and harsher vegetation of these slopes, token reminders of Scotland or the Alps’.³⁵ He suggests that similar outcrops three miles away at Groombridge were what attracted the builders of Glen Andred (see below), Norman Shaw’s first major commission (in 1866).³⁶ If so, they were only following the advice of J.C. Loudon regarding rocks ‘a most desirable feature on which to found a house...’.³⁷

³⁵ A. Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw* (New Haven, 2010), p. 49.

³⁶ An 1832 advertisement for the nearby Penn’s Rocks estate claimed that the grounds ‘are interspersed with some of the most magnificent and romantic rocks with which this kingdom can vie’ *The Times* (24 Sep. 1831).

³⁷ J.C. Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (London, 1842), p. 767.



Figure 81. Glen Andred, amidst rocks, c .1880. Source: TW Ref Lib, Sales brochures. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library.

2.2.3 Landscape and Views

All house advertisements in Tunbridge Wells that went beyond a simple statement of location and size mentioned the views. For example:

the rich scenery which on every side surrounds it [the Calverley estate] is extensive, beautifully diversified, and picturesque in the extreme, embracing views of Tunbridge Wells Common, Waterdown, and Broadwater Forests ... the hills around Crowborough and East Grinstead ... the distant hills of Kent and Surrey ...³⁸

Christopher Greenwood, describing the houses along the ridge to the west in 1838, was particularly taken by the views to the south:

fronting a glen that descends to the [county] boundary... Nothing can exceed the beauty of this well-selected spot (Hollands Farm: 'glen' is a particularly suggestive term)

good prospect over Sussex, where the eye is attracted by the picturesque domain of Eridge Castle (Ashurst Park)

Even poor Bishops Down Grove which 'has but little architectural beauty' was

a very agreeable residence: indeed no spot in this part of the county can boast of richer or more picturesque scenery.³⁹

³⁸ *Daily News* (1 Aug 1849).

³⁹ C. Greenwood, *Epitome of County History Vol. 1 Kent* (London, 1838), pp. 118-119.

Onely was more consciously 'Picturesque' in 1777 when describing a view near Frant:

a very fine semi-circular rural theatre, adorned with the richest scenery of nature ... and groves, woods, farms, and vills, are placed at proper distances all along the surrounding hills. This is a landscape fit for the pencil of a Claude-Lorrain, an Albano, or a Bassan. Imbosomed in the plain lies Bayham.⁴⁰

In the 1980s geographers sought to explain this seeming preference for certain landscape forms with claims about our savannah origins, and psychological needs for prospect and refuge ('habitat theory').⁴¹ They met with robust opposition from those preferring cultural explanations. Barthes, for example, somewhat earlier, quoted Gide in associating the 'Picturesque' liking for mountains with 'Helvetico-Protestant morality ... a morality of effort and solitude'.⁴² Jane Austen, too, seemed to favour the cultural over the innate, contrasting the sheltered old Parker family home with the fashionable new but exposed development at Sanditon 'Our Ancestors, you know always built in a hole'.⁴³ As part of the debate, Denis Cosgrove suggested that landscape is only meaningful for outsiders 'For the insider there is no separation of self from scene, subject from object'.⁴⁴

Whatever the underlying reason, the ideal in 1830, as shown by the advertisements, was for a view. The map below shows how neatly the Calverley Park houses made use of the relief - the natural valley fronting Calverley (Mount Pleasant) House providing distant views to the south-west. The view was actually in three parts: the meadow adjoining the houses; the grounds of Calverley House (later Hotel), and the distant views across the Common and beyond. A ha-ha separates the first two elements, preventing access into the meadow from the hotel grounds. It is uni-directional, so must have been created at the time of Calverley Park, as any earlier device would have operated in the opposite direction, to protect the grounds of Mount Pleasant House.

⁴⁰ Onely, *A General Account*, p. 28.

⁴¹ For example the Jay Appleton and GH Orians contributions to E.C. Penning-Rowsell and D. Lowenthal (eds.), *Landscape Meanings and Values* (London, 1986). Denis Cosgrove represented the alternative view.

⁴² Barthes, *Blue Guide* as reprinted in Arnold, *Reading Architectural History*, p. 195.

⁴³ J. Austen, *Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon* (Harmondsworth?, 2015), p. 129.

⁴⁴ D.Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London and Sydney, 1984), p. 19.

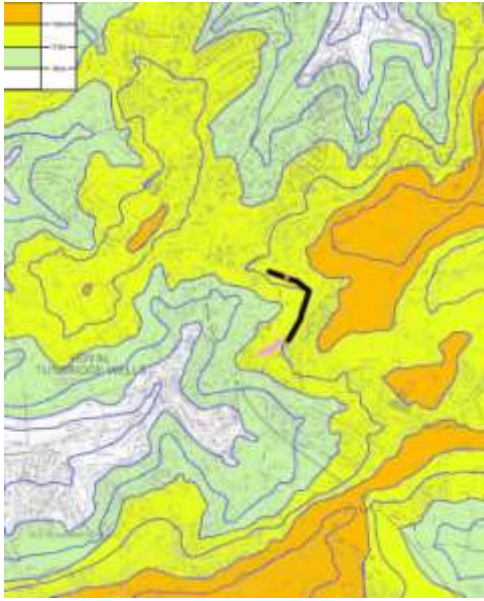


Figure 82. Tunbridge Wells topography. Source: author, based on OS map © Crown Copyright. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey®.

The Calverley Park houses (the black line) had fine views to the south-west.

The importance of the view is demonstrated by Ward's agreement in the Calverley Park leases not to build on the meadow.⁴⁵ In 1912, the Land Tax valuers put a price on it (the view). There was an agreement at that time that the undeveloped land in the Park, shared between all 24 houses, would remain undeveloped. The agreement, however, only ran until 1914. The valuers reduced the house values by 15% to reflect the possible loss of the view and of access to the land. The values of nos. 2, 3, and 4, which do not have a view down the valley, were reduced by only 5%. So the view from the houses in Calverley Park was thought to represent 10% of their values.⁴⁶

Developments in other towns demonstrate this same need for landscape, though often this had to be created artificially. At Birkenhead Park, for example, planned in 1843-47, lakes were dug and the excavated earth used to create artificial hills.⁴⁷ Other areas were more fortunate. Olsen quotes Sir Walter Besant: 'the loveliness of South London lay almost at the very doors of London

⁴⁵ KHLC U2737 8/A/05.

⁴⁶ 'Valuation Office – Calverley Park', TNA IR58/85957 Ref. 3212.

⁴⁷ Stern et al, *Paradise Planned*, p. 33. And Fishman points out that although Llewellyn Park in New Jersey had a 'dramatic mountainside site', when Olmstead came to plan Riverside, he was faced with a site that was 'low, flat, miry and forelorn'. His response was curving roads and an additional 40,000 trees. Fishman, *Utopias*, pp. 125, 130.

... one wild heath after another',⁴⁸ and Ruskin described the views from Herne Hill as 'entirely lovely: westward at evening, almost sublime, over softly wreathing distances of domestic wood ... on the other side ... the Norwood hills ... rose with the promise of all the rustic loveliness of Surrey and Kent in them'.⁴⁹ One notes too, Walford's use of the Horatian 'Hae latebrae dulces ...' (these sweet refuges) to label suburban hills: the phrase is applied to both Camberwell and Rossllyn Hill.⁵⁰ Ruskin's delight was in the rustic, but others saw wonder in the achievements of the modern-day Augusta to the north. Thomas Maurice's 1799 poem about Grove Hill a mile or so to the east of Ruskin, praised 'Unwearied Industry' and 'Active Commerce' and had no complaint about the telegraphs on adjoining hills.⁵¹

The advertisements and the descriptions, and the Land Tax valuations, demonstrate that landscape and views were part of the appeal of Calverley. They show why developers elsewhere would try to replicate those features. There is further support from Hussey. His book starts with his own realisation that landscape can be manufactured. He describes the view from the library of his grandfather's country house. There is a ruined castle on an island in a lake; in the foreground are exposed rock faces in a quarry garden; and beyond the castle are meadows and woods reaching up to a high sky-line. Pines and lime trees frame the view. It looks natural but it is all artifice.⁵² The house, Scotney, is about eight miles from Calverley, and almost contemporaneous (1837-1843, by Salvin). Newman calls it: 'one of the last and one of the loveliest landscapes in the C18 pictorial tradition',⁵³ and to David Watkin it is 'in some ways the *ne plus ultra* of the whole Picturesque movement'.⁵⁴ The round tower of old Scotney Castle

⁴⁸ Olsen, *Victorian London*, p. 205.

⁴⁹ J. Ruskin, *Praeterita* (3 vols, London, 1907), i, pp.56-7.

⁵⁰ E. Walford and G.W. Thornbury, *Old and New London* (6 vols, London, 1878), v, p. 483, vi, p. 269.

⁵¹ T. Maurice, *Grove Hill – a descriptive poem ...* (London, 1799), p. 20.

⁵² The ruined castle was indeed fourteenth century, but parts of the attached seventeenth century structure were demolished to show it to better effect. For a picture of the castle before this, see: J. Cornforth, 'The Husseys and the Picturesque', *Country Life*, 165/4270-1 (10 and 17 May 1979), p. 1440.

⁵³ Newman, *West Kent*, p. 506.

⁵⁴ Watkin, *English Vision*, p. 65. He uses a picture of Scotney as his frontispiece.

brings to mind the Italian landscapes of Claude.⁵⁵ That the constrained boundaries of the Wealden Teise valley are not the distant horizons of the Campagna, seems not to have worried Hussey.⁵⁶ While the castle and the lake are exceptional, the rocks and the gentle vistas are essentially what Calverley/Tunbridge Wells offered.



Figure 83. Scotney (Old) Castle - Starting-point for the 20th century study of the Picturesque. Left: from the terrace of the new (1834) house. Right: across the lake. Source: Charmian Clissold-Jones, by permission.

2.2.4 Journey

There is a further aspect to the Picturesque Ideal. The authors of *Paradise Planned* talk of Regent's Park making possible 'both a real and metaphoric journey from town to country'.⁵⁷ Elmes' descriptions of the landscape there, and Nash's deliberate screening out of the everyday world support this sense of otherness; but it was surely less a journey than a sudden transformation. Calverley had that same sense of Other, but unlike Regent's Park, it also involved Journey.

One of the advantages of Tunbridge Wells was its proximity to London. Yet it was not so very close as to require no effort to get there. This gave it some element of exclusivity, but also the sense of achievement at having made the effort. (Priscilla Wakefield may have been making the

⁵⁵ Despite this model, round towers do not seem to have been popular in the area. Perhaps the shape speaks too much of Kentish hop-gardens.

⁵⁶ William Sawrey Gilpin, who advised on the design defined the 'Picturesque' as 'marked by smaller and more abrupt folds of ground, with but little of flat surface ... frequent in some parts of Kent' W.S. Gilpin, *Practical Hints upon Landscape Gardening...* (London, 1832), p. 7.

⁵⁷ Stern et al, *Paradise Planned*, p. 23.

same points when she said of the spa water of Streatham that it 'would probably be more highly esteemed for its medicinal qualities by the Londoners, if it was not so near home'.⁵⁸ The journey to Calverley is about 35 miles. You must tackle the North Downs and the equally steep Greensand Hills; cross the muddy and wooded valley of the Medway; and then climb up into the Weald. By coach in 1814 it took 5-7 hours.⁵⁹ In good conditions and for healthy visitors it could be a pleasant experience:

I have also the remembrance of a very charming visit to Tunbridge Wells [1831?] ... We started early on horse-back from Leyton, and had a beautiful summer day's ride. I shall never forget the view which opened before us from the top of 'Madam's Court Hill'; nor the extatic gallops on my pony over the lovely hills and commons of that beautiful neighbourhood.⁶⁰

Britton and Evans both commented on that same view. Britton called it 'a picture of luxurious fertility and of picturesque beauty'.⁶¹ Samuel Palmer, the artist, lived at Shoreham, about two miles away, from 1827 to 1834, attracted by the view. A more usual description was of the appalling road conditions in the heavy mud of the Weald. In 1752 Horace Walpole wrote of the experience of descending Silver Hill after visiting Bayham: 'The roads grew bad beyond all badness, the night dark beyond all darkness, our guide frightened beyond all frightfulness...'. This is somebody enjoying the telling of the story, enriching the experience, and adding to the mystique of the area.⁶²

So part of the excitement of a visit was the experience of the journey. Certainly the final approach, from the Medway valley at Tonbridge, was memorable. There were two possible routes. The eastward, on the Hastings road, led past Somerhill and the old South Frith deer-park. The description in *Epitome* reads: 'ascending the hill ... we are struck by the increasing

⁵⁸ Wakefield, *Perambulations*, p. 457.

⁵⁹ Sprange, *Guide* (1814) p. 329. Burr, though, said in 1766: 'men of business, on any emergency, may get to town in 4 or 5 hours without difficulty' Burr, *History*, p. 111.

⁶⁰ H.Solly, *These eighty years': or, The story of an unfinished life* (London, 1893), p. 165. 'Madam's Court' is sometimes 'Morant's Court'.

⁶¹ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. 9. Evans, *Excursion*, p. 209.

⁶² Letter to Richard Bentley, August 1752, cited in Brandon and Short, *The South East*, p. 249. It may also have been the inspiration for the events in the opening page of Jane Austen's *Sanditon*, where the travellers, heading coast-wards from Tunbridge, are overturned in a narrow lane.

magnificence of the landscape, and at the same time the house, a grand specimen of an old English mansion,⁶³ meets the view.⁶⁴ Turner painted the scene in 1811. Onely recommended the view: 'a stranger may behold at leisure a valley equal to Tempe, Andalusia, or Tinian'.⁶⁵ Tempe was a valley in southern Greece, dedicated to the cult of Apollo. It featured in the classical and classically-inspired literature (Horace, Virgil, but also Spenser and Sidney) known to Onely and his readers. Tinian, on the other hand, is a Pacific Island visited by Anson during his circumnavigation. It provided his exhausted sailors with food and rest. Richard Walter's account of the voyage (1748)⁶⁶ provided Onely with an alternative vision of earthly paradise, more wonderful for being real and contemporary (and demonstrates an openness of reference on Onely's part, that he was not constrained by the classical). Walter's description of the abundant vegetable and animal produce on a seemingly uninhabited island seems strange until he explains that it was forcibly depopulated by the Spaniards some years earlier. It presents a striking parallel to Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*.

The western route led through Southborough, past Mabledon, the mansion built for James Burton in 1805, which 'elegant castellated structure stands on an eminence ... commanding a most interesting and beautiful prospect'.⁶⁷ Or, in Britton's words: 'Heartless and reckless must that man be who can deliberately view these vast and magnificent displays of nature without reverencing and adoring Nature's God'.⁶⁸ These descriptions of open vistas represent 'the beautiful', the third attribute of the 'Picturesque'. Both routes involved an immediate climb of about 300 feet, and then followed routes along the Wealden ridges. Having passed through Southborough on the western route, the travellers would have been aware of the ground falling away sharply on both sides – the views are hidden today by buildings. And then the prospect of

⁶³ Jacobean, run-down by 1750, but later restored.

⁶⁴ Greenwood, *Epitome*, p. 126.

⁶⁵ Onely, *A General Account*, p. 39.

⁶⁶ R. Walter (ed.), *A Voyage round the World in the years 1740, 1741 ... 1744 by George Anson* New Edn. (London, 1821), pp. 328-335.

⁶⁷ Greenwood, *Epitome*, p. 125.

⁶⁸ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. 13.

Tunbridge Wells itself opened up. The descriptions all tell the same story, not of grandeur, but of quiet charm:

The irregularity of the town adds to it a peculiar charm, the principal houses ... embosomed in groves and gardens⁶⁹ (1838)

as smiling, extensive, and magnificent a prospect as man could desire ... To the admirer of the picturesque, the romantic, the profound in nature, few localities offer more subjects for contemplation⁷⁰ (1846)

A kind of amphitheatre on hills, presenting a highly picturesque background⁷¹ (1853)

Archer sees, in the circle of buildings forming the suburban development of St Margaret's near Twickenham, a 'place for decompression' in passing from urban to rural worlds.⁷² It is surely not fanciful to imagine a similar sense, on encountering Tunbridge Wells, of entering a place apart.

2.2.5 The Picturesque Ideal - Summary

So the sources show that all three aspects of the 'Picturesque': the sublime, the picturesque, and the beautiful, could be found in the environs of Tunbridge Wells, and were used extensively by those seeking to promote Calverley. The Picturesque was clearly part of its Suburban Ideal, as it was in other places with similar topography: Camberwell, Hampstead and other areas of high ground surrounding London. In areas without such natural advantages, like Regent's Park, developers sought to replicate them with winding roads, plantations and artificial lakes.

That particular sense of Journey was to be lost with the coming of the railway in 1845. The journey time was cut to about two hours. Instead of arriving at the top of the Common with the town spread out beneath, the railway emerged from a tunnel at its lowest point. A railway guidebook of 1858 sought to make the journey more exciting by pointing out that 'The whole distance [from Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells] ... is full of geological interest on account of the

⁶⁹ Greenwood, *Epitome*, p. 123.

⁷⁰ Powell, *Medical Topography*, p. 79.

⁷¹ Anon ('for SPCK') *Watering Places of England* (London, 1853), p. 2.

⁷² Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 220.

depth and contortions of the strata ... which are exposed by the cuttings'.⁷³ Of course geology was part of the attraction: *Descriptive Sketches* included ten pages by Gideon Mantel describing the geology of the area and its fossils. The shorter journey times, though, meant less exclusivity - this is considered in Part 3. The railway guidebooks however provided another platform for publicising the houses:

by far the most beautiful quarter of this enchanting district lies to the north-east ... It is called, from having been formerly a private estate, Calverley Park; nor can it be denied that the natural beauties derived from the variety of its surface ... are much enhanced by the improvements of art, and the erection of the pretty insulated villas that fringe its borders without destroying its park-like appearance.⁷⁴

It was not presented as an advertisement, and was the more effective for that, but demonstrates the effectiveness of Calverley image building. It had never been a private estate, though the implication was there in the name: the promoters were probably not unhappy that the assumption was being made.

⁷³ G. Measom, *The Official Illustrated Guide to the South Eastern-Railway and its Branches ...* (London and Reigate, 1858), p. 197.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 200.

2.3 The Romantic/Historical Ideal

Chapter 2.2 demonstrated that the 'Picturesque Ideal' was a significant element in the appeal of Calverley, and that where the topography allowed, it was used too by the developers of other suburbs. This chapter addresses a second possible element of the Suburban Ideal: the appeal of a romantic past. It was not used so obviously in marketing the houses, but was part of the general image of the town.

There is a suggestion in *Paradise Planned* that one attraction of the garden suburb was its use of historical references to counter the dehumanising nature of the modern city.¹ The authors cite Jackson Lears: 'the co-opting of the past ... is a quintessential characteristic of modernity'.² Lears' main focus was on the later nineteenth century, and the theories, for example, of Ruskin and Morris. The *Paradise* authors probably had in mind suburbs such as Bedford Park, designed in a 'Queen Anne' style, according to Andrew Saint, to reflect a 'golden age' of English history popularised by Macaulay.³ This was not the design idiom adopted by Ward and Burton for Calverley. There are parallels, though, between Lears' 'antimodernism' later in the century and the earlier enthusiasm for historical novels. This section demonstrates that historical reference had always been important in Tunbridge Wells, and shows how the focus had evolved into what might be called 'Romanticism' just at the time of Calverley.

2.3.1 A change in historical reference – Penshurst to Hever

All historians of Tunbridge Wells believed that it had no medieval past; that there was nothing there prior to the assumed discovery of the wells in 1606. Only five miles away, though, was Penshurst, and Penshurst had huge historical appeal. Burr prefaced his 1766 history with an ode in the style of Horace, but it was Penshurst, and not 'Italia's weeping plains' that he praised:

¹ Stern et al, *Paradise Planned*, p.14.

² T.J. Jackson Lears, *No place of grace : antimodernism and the transformation of American culture, 1880-1920* (New York, 1981). Stern simply says Ch.2. Lears enjoys the paradoxical, and his definitions of modernism and anti-modernism can be confusing - see p.xvii.

³ Saint, *Bedford Park*, p. 23.

... where Medway's silver tides
Roll by yon gothic-visag'd walls,
Where Sidney's genius still presides,
And Spenser tun'd his madrigals.

It was the romantic, poetic associations that attracted him. He continued:

There o'er those wild Arcadian plains,
Where bards of old were wont to rove,
And Waller sung immortal strains,
To wake his Sacharissa's love.⁴

Of Sir Philip Sidney, he considered 'the esteem in which he was universally held ... [is] so generally known that it must be wholly unnecessary to mention here'. Penshurst was 'the mansion of hero's, patriots, arts, arms and beauty'.⁵ By 1810 there had been a change. Amsinck started his description of Penshurst: 'Few are the places in the county of Kent, perhaps in England, which will be approached with greater reverence', but then added: 'and quitted with more melancholy impressions'.⁶ The problem was that the inheritance had been split, the house was unoccupied, and was not being maintained. Worse still, recent occupiers had attempted modification. The 'barbarous hand of Modernization' had applied 'heedless and indiscriminate innovation'. What particularly irked Amsinck was a portrait of a recent owner 'in fat citizen-like apathy' in contrast to the 'sober and chaster' pictures of earlier days.⁷ By 1828, an unnamed writer, for whom Waller and Sacharissa were still relevant enough to justify two articles in a monthly publication, regretted:

It is the story of the past, that tells of thee, sweet Penshurst - Thou standest like deserted Auburn, once 'the loveliest village of the plain!' Lonely, in thy grey walls, - and silent too ...⁸

Penshurst, the village, was not deserted, just the house. The regrets were for the 'decline' of a family that had been symbolic of courtly love and military action (yet for all the courtly

⁴ Edmund Waller: seventeenth century politician and poet. He courted Dorothy Sidney (of Penshurst), whom he called 'Sacharissa', but was rejected by her.

⁵ Burr, *History*, pp. 179,184.

⁶ Amsinck, *Tunbridge Wells*, p. 129.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 134-6.

⁸ 'J.P.', 'Rambles round Tunbridge Wells', *The Ladies' Monthly Museum*, XXVIII (1828), p.305.

references, the house had originally been built for a successful London merchant). Lady Louisa Stuart had the same concerns. In 1818 she wrote to her young confidante Louisa Clinton 'We quite agree about Penshurst, — the most disappointing place I ever beheld. ... it looked desolate and belonged to a minor ... Such old scenes had better be neglected than improved ; which commonly means vulgarised'.⁹

Penshurst, the house, had deteriorated, but this decline coincided with a change in historical focus. The Louisas were enthusiastic readers of Walter Scott. They spoke at length about the newly released (1820) *Ivanhoe*, and later about *Kenilworth* (1821). They identified with the Saxon cause.¹⁰ Conveniently there were other houses nearby that fitted the new fashion, Hever, for example. Amsinck started his description of it by suggesting that the chief interest was that it provided 'a very accurate idea of the mode of living ... of a country gentleman of the fourteenth century' - all very academic. But then added: 'Who can enter these walls, without recalling to his mind the unfortunate Ann Bullen? ... and will not allow his imagination some play of fancy toward those extraordinary scenes'.¹¹ Lucy Aikin was one such visitor. Writing to an American friend in 1831 she said: 'we are going to view our English vintage, the Kentish hop-picking ; also to see pretty Tunbridge, and make a pilgrimage to Penshurst of the Sidneys, or perhaps to Hever Castle, the birthplace of Anne Boleyn. Do you not a little envy us the historic recollections of an old country?'¹²

⁹ L. Stuart and J.A. Home (ed), *Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart to Miss Louisa Clinton* (Edinburgh, 1901). Letter VII. Lady Louisa was born in 1757. Her father, the Earl of Bute, had been George III's Prime Minister.

¹⁰ Stuart, *Letters*, Letter XXII. Tristram Hunt provides a summary of the academic scholarship that was already seeking to demonstrate the Saxon heritage of the English people. Hunt, *Building Jerusalem*, pp. 263-274.

¹¹ Amsinck, *Tunbridge Wells*, p.143.

¹² L. Aikin, W.E. Channing and A.L. Le Breton (ed.), *Correspondence of William Ellery Channing, D. D., and Lucy Aikin, from 1826 to 1842* (London, 1874), p.92. Her visits to Kent were presumably at least partly for professional purposes. In 1818 she had published *Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth* and in 1827 a *Life of Anne Boleyn*. (It has to be said that her efforts were not appreciated by Lady Louisa. 'I stand out too against another most popular book, Miss Aikin's *Elizabeth* ... the flimsy novel language with which she has sewn it together ... disgusts me in every page' (Stuart, *Letters*, Letter VIII). She considered the dialogue and manners anachronistic.)

Another was Cyrus Redding¹³ who, with Horace Smith¹⁴, came 'in an excellent tone of mind for entering into the spirit of the old romance'.¹⁵ Following the visit Smith wrote his historical novel *Brambletye House, Or Cavaliers and Roundheads* (1826). Brambletye was a ruined building of the early seventeenth century, about twelve miles from Tunbridge Wells. Burr dismissed it in just over three lines, and Sprange in twelve. Amsinck, however, gave it eight pages plus a picture: another indication of the move from the 'pastoral' to 'real-life' English history. As Cyrus Redding wrote in a slightly different context '[the] Pastorellas and Damons have departed'.¹⁶ Redding provides a demonstration of how these historical links could be manipulated. He had noticed that one of the newspapers had said that pic-nic parties were continually made up to visit the remains of that old place [ie Brambletye]. 'The paragraph had the simplicity and air of truth ... [but, later] ... I found, had been concocted in town, and sent to the country papers by the publisher. I allowed I was taken in by an unworthy practice.'¹⁷

One might argue that these were visitors rather than residents, but the example of Horace Smith shows that the distinction was not always simple. In 1825/6 he lived in Mount Edgcumbe Cottage, on Tunbridge Wells Common. He then moved to Brighton, but frequently spent the summer in Tunbridge Wells. Family papers record him at various addresses in the town in the summers of 1839, 1841, 1844, and 1846.¹⁸ In 1849 he took no.6 Calverley Park, but died there a few weeks later, and is buried in the churchyard of Holy Trinity.

2.3.2 Antiquarianism and County Identity

This interest in the romantic past was not just reflected in novels. Daniel Rowland, agent to the Abergavenny estate, was a serious antiquarian. He built himself a Gothick house (Saxonbury

¹³ 1785-1870. Writer and journalist.

¹⁴ 1779-1849 Successful stockbroker, poet and novelist. Co-author of *Rejected Addresses*.

¹⁵ C. Redding, *Fifty years' recollections, literary and personal, with observations on men and things* (3 vols, London, 1858), ii, p.209. Redding himself, while enjoying the countryside, was no medieval fantasist, criticising: 'the obliquitous tendencies of a few weak minds ... who dream in their sleep of ignorance about the past' iii, pp. 356/7.

¹⁶ Redding, *Recollections*, ii, p. 222.

¹⁷ Redding, *Recollections*, ii, p. 345.

¹⁸ [Letters of Horace Smith (1839-49)], Essex Record Office, D/DRh C84/8, C123/1, C134/6, 8, 13, 16, 20, 36.

Lodge - see Chapter 2.5) and in 1830 produced a genealogical history of the Nevill family. The Nevills were his employers so that was perhaps not so surprising, but also reflected a general interest in 'noble' families – *Burke's Peerage* was established in 1826. Opinions about the aristocracy could be complex. Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845) is mainly known for highlighting the living conditions of working people. It is also contemptuous of most peerages created since Tudor times: 'He [Pitt] made peers of second-rate squires and fat graziers'.¹⁹ Yet the nobility of the main characters, the Gerards, is clearly meant to derive from their aristocratic bloodline. Cyrus Redding, mentioned above, would not have agreed. In Redding's view 'The mind that reasons can hardly come to the conclusion ... that to have such ruffians back, to recall the Nevils and Plantagenets, we should give up our arts and learning! our commerce and the brotherhood of nations.'²⁰ But Redding was perhaps in a minority.

R.W. Blencowe, a Tunbridge Wells magistrate, was another antiquarian. He edited letters of the Sidney family (of Penshurst), but also secured the diary of a Sussex shopkeeper, still used by students of English Local History.²¹ Blencowe was a founder of the Sussex Archaeological Society in 1846, and Rowland lived across the border in the Sussex village of Frant. The position of Tunbridge Wells, lying across the Kent – Sussex border, makes life difficult for the present-day local historian. It may have brought a conflict of loyalties to antiquarians then. Claims about distinct county identities were common at the time. It was not just county identities: in *The Poetry of Architecture* (1837) Ruskin attempted to identify national characteristics in architecture, part of what Denis Cosgrove calls an 'ideology of nationhood [that] was widespread in post-Napoleonic Europe'.²² Hasted, who published his history of Kent in the years just prior to 1800, summarised the people as: 'famous for their valor and intrepidity' and 'far more civilised

¹⁹ B. Disraeli, *Sybil* (Harmondsworth, 1980), p. 44. One of the main characters, 'Baptist' Hatton, was a 'consulting' antiquary who, by manipulating pedigrees, 'has made more peers of the realm than our gracious Sovereign' Book IV Chap. 7.

²⁰ Redding, *Recollections*, iii, pp. 356/7.

²¹ The diaries, of Thomas Turner, were published by the Sussex Archaeological Society in 1859, and later in book form as *The Diary of a Georgian Shopkeeper*. There are 4 copies in the OUDCE library.

²² D. Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision: seeing, imagining and representing the world* (London and New York, 2008), p. 140.

than those of any other part of Britain'.²³ William Lambarde, whose 1576 *Perambulation of Kent* was republished in 1826 had been more restrained but made the same points. Central to their claims was the suggestion that the particularly Kentish form of land tenure – gavelkind – allowed the development of a securely-based and prosperous yeomanry. Gavelkind had supposedly been the tradition of the Jutish people of Kent, which they were allowed to retain in return for not opposing the Normans. Greenwood in his history of Kent was a little dubious about it 'some romantic circumstances which ... wear rather an apocryphal appearance', and later questioned the ethics of making a separate peace with the conqueror; but he accepted that certain ancient customs had survived.²⁴

It is unlikely that this Kentish county identity was a primary motivation for moving to Calverley, but its adoption by incomers, or perhaps simply an awareness of it by incomers, might have created a sense of belonging.²⁵ Maria Edgeworth tells of a visit to Kent in 1831, where her host, Richard Jones, the economist, explained its history with great enthusiasm: 'Mr. Jones would delight you; he is so full of history and biography'.²⁶ He started with Hengist and of course included gavelkind in the story. There was the more populist image of Kent: in Dickens' words: 'Kent, Sir - Everybody knows Kent - apples, cherries, hops, and women'.²⁷ Lambarde had hymned the apples and cherries with Virgilian references,²⁸ and Aikin, above, had celebrated the hops, though the last of Dickens' Kentish attractions tended not to appear in the guidebooks. The notion of 'gavelkind' and 'the courage of the men of the county of Kent', however, remained in the consciousness, and was brought out again in 1871 when a Tunbridge Wells solicitor produced a response to the *Battle of Dorking*. This time the men of Kent, and of Tunbridge Wells in

²³ Hasted, *History*, i, p. 2.

²⁴ Greenwood, *Epitome*, pp. v, xv.

²⁵ And appropriate that F.W.Stone, from the family of Tunbridge Wells lawyers, though originally from Sussex, should present a set of Hasted's *History of Kent* to the library in 1874.

²⁶ M. Edgeworth and C. Colvin (ed.), *Maria Edgeworth; Letters from England 1813-1844* (Oxford, 1971), p. 520.

²⁷ C. Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (Oxford, 1986). p. 15.

²⁸ W. Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent: Conteyning the description, Hystorie, and Customes of that Shyre*. 3rd edn. (London, 1656). p. 5.

particular, did repel the invader.²⁹

2.3.3 Archery and the lure of Famous Names

Other aspects of this interest in things medieval were less academic: archery for example. There had been a revival in the late eighteenth century – Edward Hussey’s grandfather at Scotney had been keen,³⁰ but Scott’s novels brought a new audience in the 1820s. An archery ground was established in Regent’s Park in 1834,³¹ and a Society formed in St Leonards in 1833³². An ‘extensive Archery Ground’ was advertised at the Calverley Nursery in 1834,³³ later with a ‘Royal’ prefix. One advantage of archery was its suitability for both sexes: usually associated with women, Elmes recommended it too for growing boys – to build up their muscles.³⁴ It was, of course, limited to a small section of the population: fees at the Calverley ground were a guinea per month. Yet for all its social uses – as a means both of mixing and of excluding - the underlying historical references were perhaps more important. Medieval symbols were being used to build a stronger modern identity. Archery was not a traditional activity: it had not been practised by the parents and grandparents of these 1830s toxophilites. Rather they were rejecting the recent past and reaching further back to construct a new identity. They sought the nobility and apparent simplicity of medieval life in contrast to their own; and they relished the connection it gave them to the country – in the sense of both nation and land. References in Onely to the porch of Frant church having been used to store bows and arrows in case of invasion, would have appealed.³⁵

One final point might be made. The idea repeatedly occurs in the guide books that it is satisfying to be in a place where heroic figures lived, or where noted historical events took place. Britton

²⁹ C.J. Stone, *What happened after the battle of Dorking : reminiscences of a volunteer. Being an account of the victory at Tunbridge Wells*, (London, 1871), p.14. Both books were part of the ‘invasion literature’ occasioned by the Franco-Prussian War.

³⁰ National Trust, *Scotney Castle* (London?, 1985), p. 19.

³¹ ‘H.W’, ‘A Short History of the Society’, Royal Toxophilite Society (2014), www.royal-toxophilite-society.org/history/ (8 May 2015). McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. 223 dates it from 1832.

³² Manwaring Baines, *Burton’s St. Leonards*, p. 40.

³³ *The Visitor* (23 Aug. 1834).

³⁴ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 54.

³⁵ Onely, *A General Account*, p. 26. He also suggested that hillocks on the village green had been butts used by the villagers for practice.

invoked the authority of Samuel Johnson in making this point. Johnson had said: 'That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona'.³⁶ In Tunbridge Wells it is seen in the references to the Sidneys of Penshurst, but there were other examples. Evans said of Tunbridge Wells: 'It was a favourite resort of Dr Isaac Watts [the hymn writer]. This is a recommendation'.³⁷ The idea appealed to residents as well as visitors. Katherine Tynan, the novelist, moved to Southborough some years later 'having fallen in love with the glorious view from the hill over the Weald ... and with bright, clean Tunbridge Wells, its Pantiles, and all its many historical associations'. She was particularly attracted to Southborough as the place where Thackeray's Pendennis was married, so the connection could even be fictional.³⁸ Mary Mitford, too, excited to hear that a friend had moved to Somerhill, wrote 'Oh! Dear Miss Goldsmid, what a pedigree for Summerhill! But how could the woman, who had been the wife of that Lord Essex, ever marry again? He has always been amongst my pet heroes ... What a combination of temptations to visit you! ... Oh! I must come next year.'³⁹

Brandon and Short identify an instance where a historical novel was specifically written to attract interest to a place – Albury near Guildford.⁴⁰ The author explained that his objective was: 'to win the eyes of men this way-wards, not only by our present pastoral beauties, but also by our past chivalrous sublimities'.⁴¹ The modern practice of fixing 'blue plaques' is surely part of this same feeling. The present writer, returning to north-west London after many years, was unexpectedly

³⁶ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. 5. Johnson's words were inspired by Iona on his Tour of the Western Isles.

³⁷ Evans, *Excursion*, p. 123.

³⁸ K. Tynan, *The Middle Years* (London, 1916), pp. 376,378. Even in 1910 she was conditioned to think of Sir Philip Sydney when walking in the countryside near Penshurst (p. 385).

³⁹ To Miss Goldsmid, August, 1852. In A.G. L'estrang (ed.), *The Life of Mary Russell Mitford...Related in a Selection from her Letters to her Friend* (3 vols, London, 1870), i, p. 237. 'The woman' she was referring to was Frances Walsingham. She makes reference in the letter to 'Grammont's' *Memoirs*, so was obviously aware of this other component in the story of Tunbridge Wells which describes visits by Charles II and his court.

⁴⁰ Brandon and Short, *South East*, p. 337.

⁴¹ M. Tupper, *Stephan Langton* [sic] (2 vols, London, 1858), i, p. 3. (Tupper was the early resident of Ward's house in Devonshire Place quoted in Chapter 1.1.)

pleased to find that he had lived in the same block of flats as Learie Constantine.

2.3.4 The Romantic/Historical Ideal - Summary

So a feeling for the medieval was common in the Calverley period, and the medieval connections of Tunbridge Wells were celebrated in the guide books and literature. Whether it was a significant part of the appeal to prospective residents, despite Tynan and Mitford, is less obvious. And medieval imagery cannot be claimed exclusively for the suburbs: Tristram Hunt, having described *Ivanhoe* as an 'anti-urban utopia', nevertheless demonstrates how Manchester's civic pride was displayed in frescoes in what can only be described as a medieval idiom.⁴² It is probable, though, that the 'Elizabethan' architecture of later suburbs does indicate some historical aspect to the Suburban Ideal; and Chapter 2.5 will suggest just that in relation to Tunbridge Wells. It is probably true, too, that part of the Rustic Ideal, in Chapter 2.4, was a longing for a simpler past. There were perhaps two further aspects: being able to make reference to the Sidneys and Ann Boleyn, and eighteenth-century visitors such as Samuel Johnston, was an easy addition to the cultural capital of incomers; and the historical references were confirmation that this, and not the industrialising north and midlands, was the real England.

⁴² Hunt, *Building Jerusalem*, pp. 133,146. The Manchester frescoes, though, were not created until the 1870s, and, as Hunt suggests, were intended to celebrate the liberal values represented by the city, whereas the earlier medievalism was backward-looking.

2.4 The Rustic Ideal

The message from suburban historiography and from the historical sources is the same: that Tunbridge Wells provided the perfect combination of *rus* and *urbs*. Thus Archer described Calverley in 2005 as ‘Perhaps the most effectively executed marriage of country and city’;¹ while Burr said of Mount Sion in 1766, that ‘it bears the appearance of a town in the midst of woods, and conveys to the imagination the soothing idea of a rural romantic retirement, while it actually affords all the conveniences of a city life.’² It would seem reasonable, therefore, to propose that a ‘rustic ideal’ formed part of the suburban dream: that people were attracted to the idea of living in the country. The practicality, and indeed the ideal, was that they did not actually live in the country, but that the suburb satisfied all of their rustic fantasies. In the words of Robert Stern: it addressed ‘the hunger of the very many who wish to be Hamiltonian by day and Jeffersonian by night’ ‘combin[ing] the material and cultural advantages of city life with the restorative powers of dwelling amidst nature’.³

Archer followed his statement about Tunbridge Wells (above) with a suggestion that suburbs were less a happy combination of town and country, than a negation of both ‘best described as neither-nor’. He also suggested, of Tunbridge Wells, that ‘there was precious little ... to connect [it] ... with the country at large’ – which suggestion will be challenged later.⁴ He went on, however, to propose that private dwellings, within suburbs, might be ‘a positive apparatus for appropriating the best of both worlds’.⁵ Chapter 2.4 follows the pattern established in chapters 2.2 and 2.3. It looks for evidence of a generalised rustic ideal, which is not difficult as it was a trope of English culture. It looks for evidence that it was applied in the direct and indirect marketing of Calverley / Tunbridge Wells, which again is not difficult. It then considers how far

¹ Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 213.

² Burr, *History*, p. 103.

³ Stern et al, *Paradise Planned*, p. 15. ‘Hamiltonian’ – banker / merchant / industrialist, ‘Jeffersonian’ – yeoman farmer.

⁴ Archer, *Suburbia*, pp. 217,216.

⁵ He used St Margaret’s, Twickenham, as an example.

the image matched the reality of Calverley. While arguing that there was more ‘real’ country in Tunbridge Wells than Archer claimed, the study suggests that it was nature rather than the agricultural aspects of the countryside that appealed.

Evidence of a ‘generalised rustic ideal’ might be easy to find, but the objective here is to look specifically at the time of Calverley; and, just as Chapter 2.3 saw a move from ‘courtly’ Penshurst in 1766, to ‘bloody’ Hever in 1810, so this chapter must accommodate a re-calibration from pastoral to rustic between eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. So, rather than a single section presenting a ‘generalised rustic ideal’, there are four, seeking to capture different aspects of a changing ideal. The first takes a baseline expression of the rustic ideal from the eighteenth century. For simplicity, it is one expressed without classical references. The second looks at Elmes’ description of Regent’s Park, in *Metropolitan Improvements* – a standard source for suburban historiography, but one that struggled a little in its references and in deciding what exactly the ideal was. The third is different: the expression of the rustic ideal in a celebration of community in a rural setting – Mary Russell Mitford’s *Our Village*; and the fourth is the simple appreciation of nature as presented by the ‘Cockney’ poet, Leigh Hunt. The chapter also takes a brief step away from ‘the ideal’, to look at the reality of the countryside in Kent in 1830: to consider whether the arson and intimidation of ‘Captain Swing’ had any impact on the fantasies of the incomer. On a more positive note, it suggests that it was in the suburban garden that the rustic ideal was most obviously achieved.

2.4.1 The Rustic Ideal – the continuing trope

The idea of an idyllic rustic past is powerful and long-lived. Raymond Williams, in *The Country and the City*, tracked backwards, demonstrating that this vision of Eden was always just out of reach – one or two generations earlier than each of the successive examples he used.⁶ Tracking forward, he then analysed stylistic developments in the poems and novels that carry the image –

⁶ Williams, *Country and City*. He demonstrates this ‘problem of perspective’, or ‘escalator’ on pages 9 to 12.

from classical allegory to supposed realism. His principal point, that the image almost always ignored the actuality of hard physical labour, is demonstrated by Ben Jonson's poem *To Penshurst*, where fish 'leap on land, before the fisher, or into his hand', 'partridge lies in every field ... willing to be killed', and apricot and peach 'hang on thy walls, that every child may reach'.⁷ Williams' concern for the agricultural worker makes for powerful writing, though his refusal to distinguish between old and new investors in the countryside is to deny a reality that is addressed in Chapter 3.5 below. Williams is useful, though, in identifying different themes in the evolving literature: the use of classical pastoral as a vehicle for a love story or allegory; the contemplation of nature in a reflection on life and death; the celebration of the productivity of the countryside; puzzlement / sadness at the loss of a half-remembered world; and the vision of the countryside as a place of innocence and retreat.⁸ These last two resonate with the rustic ideal as addressed here.

One particular poem, *The Spleen* by Matthew Green, summarises the ideal especially well:

... my desire.
Two hundred pounds half-yearly paid,
Annuity securely made,
A farm some twenty miles from town, ...
Two maids, that never saw the town,
A serving-man not quite a clown,
A boy to help to tread the mow,
And drive, while t' other holds the plough; ...
May heav'n (it's all I wish for) send
One genial room to treat a friend,
Where decent cup-board, little plate,
Display benevolence, not state. ...
With trips to town life to amuse,
To purchase books, and hear the news, ...
And once in seven years I'm seen
At Bath or Tunbridge, to careen.

A carefree, respected situation with scope to offer hospitality and make trips to town, and all within a delightful setting (as below). The attraction is clear.

⁷ Cited in Williams, *Country and City*, pp. 27-34. *To Penshurst* was published in 1616.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 20 *et seq.*

A pond before full to the brim,
Where cows may cool, and geese may swim;
Behind, a green like velvet neat,
Soft to the eye, and to the feet;
Where odorous plants in evening fair
Breathe all around ambrosial air; ...
Thus sheltered, free from care and strife,
May I enjoy a calm through life;

The poem was written in 1737, a little early for Calverley, but was re-published in 1796.⁹ The editor of this later edition was John Aikin, co-author of the children's stories noted in Chapter 3.4, and father of the Lucy Aikin noted above (Chapter 2.3). Aikin pointed out that Green had had neither the education nor station in life to develop 'the exquisite charms of versification' but neither had he 'the cant of poetical phraseology ... no hackneyed combinations of substantives and epithets; none of the tropes and figures of a schoolboy's *Gradus*.'¹⁰ Aikin called *The Spleen* 'delightful as a piece of landscape painting' – another pointer to the Picturesque being as much a poetic as a painterly concept.¹¹ Green's ideal life might have been selfish and unreal (given the need for £200 a year), but it is clearly presented. So we might skip over the better-known works of Pope and Thomson, and references to Horace and Virgil's *Georgics*. They remained, much more than Green, in the canon, but it is Green's vision that is represented in Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, where Mr Pickwick has woken on his first day in the countryside:

'Pleasant, pleasant country,' sighed the enthusiastic gentleman, as he opened his lattice window. 'Who could live to gaze from day to day on bricks and slates who had once felt the influence of a scene like this?' ... The rich, sweet smell of the hay-ricks rose to his chamber window; the hundred perfumes of the little flower-garden beneath scented the air around.¹²

The following sections of this chapter look at three variations on this ideal. The first is an appreciation of *rus-in-urbe* as achieved in Regent's Park. The second is an idyll in a very different setting: not the grand, palace-fronted terraces of Regent's Park but the agricultural cottages of *Our Village*, Miss Mitford's soap opera of daily life in the countryside. Finally, the low-key

⁹ J. Aikin (ed.), *The Spleen and other Poems by Matthew Green* (London, 1796), pp. 45-49.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. v-vii.

¹¹ J. Aikin and L. Aikin, *Memoir of John Aikin, MD* (London, 1823), p. 233.

¹² Dickens, *Pickwick*, p.75.

appreciation of the countryside around London: the hedgerows and meadows of Hampstead and Kilburn that nevertheless triggered a poisonous debate; the ‘commodification’ of ‘ordinary’ countryside but appreciated in a new way.

2.4.2 The Rustic Ideal - Elmes

This first section considers James Elmes’ *Metropolitan Improvements* – a celebration of the rebuilding of London in the early nineteenth century. The first two chapters describe Regent’s Park. They include the following summary of the whole *rus-in-urbe* ideal: ‘all the elegancies of the town, and all the beauties of the country are co-mingled with happy art and blissful union’.¹³

Metropolitan Improvements was published in 1827, with further editions in 1828, 1829 and 1831. Its success, according to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of March 1829 ‘induced many publishers to embark in similar works’.¹⁴ A shorter guidebook *A Picturesque Guide to The Regent’s Park* followed in 1829, published by Limbird.¹⁵ The Limbird book has a slightly different focus, though most of the descriptions are simple précis of Elmes’ text.¹⁶ It positions Regent’s Park firmly in the classical, pastoral tradition. The development, according to Limbird, was ‘the *Daphne* of our vast City’.¹⁷ Both books include long extracts from an article by Charles Ollier published in the *Literary Pocket Book* of 1823.¹⁸

Elmes presented Regent’s Park as an eighteenth century landscape garden – what John Archer in a recent study of Leasowes calls a ‘circuit park’. Archer explains how the enclosed design of Leasowes ‘effected an inward focus, while a host of landscaping techniques intensified the sense of a sequestered locale’.¹⁹ Chapter 1.1 above explained how Nash had similarly required Burton to

¹³ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 21. Cited, for example, in Arnold, *Rural Urbanism*, p. 57.

¹⁴ ‘Cheap Topographical Publications’, *Gentlemen’s Magazine*, XCIX (Mar. 1829), pp.253-4.

¹⁵ J. Limbird (publ), *A Picturesque Guide to The Regent’s Park ...* (London, 1829).

¹⁶ Compare, for example, the descriptions of Cornwall Terrace: Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 46 and Limbird, *Picturesque Guide*, p. 9. Occasionally, eg p.16, Elmes is named and quoted directly.

¹⁷ Limbird, *Picturesque Guide*, p. 1. *Daphne* – possibly the suburb of Antioch in Syria.

¹⁸ C. Ollier, ‘Walks Round London. No. IV. Marylebone Park’, *Literary Pocket Book*, 1823, pp. 107-111. See Section 2.4.4 below for further consideration of the *Literary Pocket Book*.

¹⁹ Archer, ‘Leasowes’, p. 148.

block out external views behind Clarence Terrace in Regent's Park. In one of the *Pocket Book* extracts Ollier talked of the mansions (ie the terraces) 'entirely excluding all signs of the streets'.²⁰ It was the central and northern parts that really drew praise. Ollier said of the central plantation: 'you are in a perfect Arcadia. The mind cannot conceive any thing more hushed, more sylvan, more entirely removed from the slightest evidence of proximity to a town',²¹ while in the belts of trees near the canal, Limbird suggested: 'the sentimentalist might almost imagine himself in the lap of Elysium'.²² He pictured 'the Lake School of Poets' writing a set of Georgics there, though one wonders whether 'the Lake School of Poets' would have approved of the artifice.

Both descriptions were written as a circuit or tour of the park. At one point Elmes suggested they should 'sit down for a few minutes ... and survey the delightful prospect before us', of 'splendour, health, dressed rurality and comforts such as nothing but a metropolis can afford ... "Trim gardens", lawns and shrubs, towering spires, ample domes, banks clothed with flowers'.²³ It is idyllic but it is not the productive rustic ideal of Green's *Spleen*. Elmes made clear his dislike of the 'paltry cabins and monotonous cow-lairs' of the old Marylebone farm, in other words the reality of rural life.²⁴ Ollier had different memories: 'the fresh and fragrant air, the green herbage, the quiet and the privacy of country spots', though he approved of the new park: he was 'not only reconciled to the change ... but rejoiced in it'.²⁵ It is not clear whether either of them read it as Picturesque. The description quoted above about 'dressed rurality and comforts such as nothing but a metropolis can afford' suggests a municipal park. In an earlier edition of the *Pocket-Book*, Ollier had praised Kensington Gardens for not being in the 'picturesque, or wild,

²⁰ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 86.

²¹ Ibid. p. 86.

²² Limbird, *Picturesque Guide*, p. 18.

²³ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, pp. 20-21 There followed the extract about the co-mingling of town and country already cited.

²⁴ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 2, see also p. 7.

²⁵ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 84 and Limbird, *Picturesque Guide*, p. 5.

or natural manner',²⁶ and was praised by Elmes for doing so. They wanted 'fountains, statues, shapely groves and trim arbours' and not the 'untamed caprices of nature'.²⁷ The phrase 'trim gardens' as above, was part of the debate, as they sought the authority of Milton in claiming that gardens should be neat.²⁸ It may not have been quite what Nash had intended.

Elmes' praise of London, too, is also a little problematic. He quoted Cowper:

Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich , so throng'd, so drain'd and so supplied,
As LONDON – opulent, enlarg'd and still
increasing LONDON.²⁹

Yet Cowper's intention had not been to praise the city – a few lines later he wrote 'this queen of cities ... so fair / May yet be foul',³⁰ and later comes the well-known phrase 'God made the country, and man made the town' with further deep criticism of city-dwellers. This is perhaps to take it all a little too literally. Elmes' real focus was on the buildings. He described the book as a work 'illustrative of ARCHITECTURE'.³¹ He started with an extract from Thomson,³² in which he (Elmes) highlighted various building types: Palace, Temple, Private Dwelling and so on. These were to be his subjects – he excluded four lines from the original poem that spoke of 'Sylvan Scenes', so perhaps it is unfair to quibble. What appealed to him were the architectural aspects of the landscape, the artifice, not its naturalness, and that was surely the point of the park. Nash, as Elizabeth McKellar says, 'grasped the opportunity ... to orchestrate a thrilling landscape of

²⁶ C. Ollier, 'Walks round London. No III Kensington Gardens', *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1822, p. 106-7.

²⁷ J. Elmes. *A General and bibliographical Dictionary of the Fine Arts* (London, 1826). Entry on 'Landscape Gardening'.

²⁸ 'Trim gardens' is from *Il Penseroso*. Opponents of Ollier's views about gardens had suggested that when Milton described the Garden of Eden, he used Picturesque terms. Ollier's response was that when Milton wanted to describe an actual garden, he used 'trim'. Eden, he said, represented, the whole world, and not just a garden. Ollier, 'Walks ... No III', p. 110. Elmes did, though, make a point of distancing himself from the geometric garden designs of such as Kent. Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 51.

²⁹ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 21.

³⁰ W. Cowper from *The Task* Book 1 (1785). (From an edition of 1859 by C.P. Mason)

³¹ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. iii. This might simply have been to draw attention to his earlier book on Christopher Wren.

³² *Ibid.* p.1. From a long poem called *Liberty* (c. 1735). Part V 'The Prospect' marks 'the happiness and grandeur of Great Britain as arising from her [Liberty's] influence'. J. Aikin (ed), *Select Works of the British Poets* (London, 1826), p. 498.

visual spectacle ... and breathtaking theatricality'.³³ Elmes ensured that the landscape was understood as a key part of the development.

2.4.3 The Rustic Ideal - Mitford

This second selection was very different. If it was theatrical it was on a domestic scale, and in a deliberately rustic setting. Mary Russell Mitford (1787-1855) had wanted to be a poet, achieved some success as a playwright, but was celebrated for her accounts of country life: a series of sketches called *Our Village* published in book form between 1824 and 1832. They start:

Of all situations for a constant residence, that which appears to me most delightful is a little village far in the country; a small neighbourhood, not of fine mansions finely peopled, but of cottages and cottage-like houses.³⁴

They present a very detailed description of life in a small village south of Reading; very detailed but reflecting a somewhat optimistic worldview. Their success, however, suggests that their rustic vision resonated with many.

John Britton, in his autobiography, chose to point out how different was the real village life of his own childhood. Not for him the 'picture full of innocence, cheerfulness, and social happiness', but a dull, monotonous life with few links to the outside world, where the lack of a regular clergyman and resident gentleman left the inhabitants undisciplined and illiterate.³⁵ But then he was seeking social realism, and in particular wanting to emphasise the life journey he had made; whereas she was writing an idyll. Cyrus Redding in his *Recollections* (1858) was more generous: 'She wrote the most graphic and minute descriptions of country life and manners. She was in prose what Clare was in the poetry of the country ... Miss Mitford dwelt rather on rural life, than

³³ McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. 224.

³⁴ M.R. Mitford, *The Works of Mary Russell Mitford, Prose and Verse ...* (Philadelphia, 1841), p.7. The *Our Village* sketches were published initially in the *Lady's Magazine*, and then in five collections between 1824 and 1832. There were two further collections of similar material: *Belford Regis* (1835) and *Country Stories* (1837). The American collection cited here also includes some of her dramatic work.

³⁵ Britton, *Autobiography*, pp. 26-29.

on inanimate nature. She was faithful, ingenious, and pretty in her works.³⁶

An example will illustrate her style. In the third series, she responds to the enquiry: 'What news of May and Lizzy and Fanny and Lucy? Is the pretty nymph of the shoe-shop married yet?' It was in a letter from a friend in India, but could have been on the minds of any of her readers. She answers. May - the greyhound, has had a puppy. The shoe-maker's daughter too has a child, and is married, but not to her handsome admirer Jem Tanner, nor to the dashing horse-dealer or the snug young grocer or her father's apprentice; but to John Ford, brother of the blacksmith, tall, sinewy, comely. Lucy has moved away; as has Fanny, the gipsy girl, who married the gamekeeper, which was just as well as she had caught the 'ways and manners suited to her new station...which the worthies of her society found unpardonable'. As for Lizzy, happy young child, 'her mother's comfort, her father's delight ... poor Lizzy is dead'.³⁷ It is soap-opera: a wide cast of characters and long-running stories of birth, marriage and death.

Clive Aslet suggests 'she gave readers whose sensibilities had been honed by the Picturesque exactly what they wanted: an account of rural life that was as pretty and decorous as a model village by Nash'. He calls it a 'slightly simpering account'.³⁸ It is that but more too. Mitford was part of literary London. In 'The London Visitor' there are teasing references to the tide of fashion ebbing away from Devonshire Place and Wimpole Street³⁹ 'and threatening to leave this once distinguished quartier as bare and open to the jesters of the silver-fork school as the ignoble precincts of Bloomsbury'. ('Silver-fork' literature was set in aristocratic circles, just as simpering and contrived as Mitford's village.) Her protagonist, Mr Thomson, becoming ashamed of what he had once been proud 'spoke slightly of the Regent's Park, and eschewed as much as possible

³⁶ Redding, *Recollections*, ii, p. 222. He did, though, think her fees rather high: 6 guineas an article, but they simply reflected her popularity, and she was supporting a seemingly feckless father on her earnings.

³⁷ Mitford, *Works of ...*, pp. 150-153.

³⁸ C. Aslet, *Villages of Britain : the five hundred villages that made the countryside* (London, 2010). Entry for 'Three Mile Cross Berkshire'. He later comments that, given her situation, 'the light touch, laced with wit ... is remarkable'.

³⁹ She was a friend of Elizabeth Barrett.

all mention of the Diorama'.⁴⁰ There is a knowingness worthy of Austen. In the first *Our Village* sketch she describes two children playing: 'What a pretty picture they would make; what a pretty foreground they do make to the real landscape'. And then a most intriguing comparison: 'The road winding down the hill with a slight bend, like that in the High Street at Oxford'.⁴¹ That is surely not accidental, but a reference to Nash and Regent Street.⁴²

Can it have been part of the appeal of Calverley? A friend of Mitford, visiting Tunbridge Wells in 1824, wrote that 'in spite of the rank and fashion with which it [Tunbridge Wells] is crowded, the country is as rural and the denizens as independent as in your own village'.⁴³ She was staying at Vale Cottage – one sitting room, two 'best' bedrooms, one servant's room (Clifford, *Guide* (1822)) – at the foot of Mount Sion and facing the Common. Its similarity to Miss Mitford's home was probably part of its appeal. It seems unlikely, though, that she would have made acquaintance with any Lizzie, Fanny or Lucy, but then that was not really the point. Mitford had created this 'class fantasy of stability and social harmony',⁴⁴ a reassuring image associated with the countryside; and Tunbridge Wells in its particular way provided an experience of the countryside.

At a distance of two centuries *Our Village* can be seen as a denial of fundamental changes taking place in the countryside. Gradual change, though, is difficult to understand, and what was perhaps more worrying at the time were the changes taking place in the industrial north. Louisa Stuart recalled a visit to Lancashire. She arrived during celebrations: 'usually a gay, cheerful scene; the rustics, even if a little tipsy, look merry and happy, and it does not enter one's head to be afraid of them. On the contrary, I thought I never had seen so savage, so surly, so dark a

⁴⁰ Mitford, *Works of ...*, p. 502. 'The London Visitor' was in the *Country Stories* collection.

⁴¹ Mitford, *Works of ...*, p. 10.

⁴² Supposedly a comparison made by Nash when presenting his proposal for the Quadrant. Watkin, *English Vision*, p.187. Watkin cites John Summerson, *The Life and Work of John Nash, Architect* (London, 1980), p.79, though Summerson seems to imply that the comment was made by the commissioners.

⁴³ Letter from Eleanor A. Franklin (first wife of the polar explorer). A.G. L'Estrange. *The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford As Recorded in Letters from Her Literary Correspondents* (2 vols, London, 1882), i, pp. 156-7.

⁴⁴ E.K. Helsinger, *Rural scenes and national representation : Britain, 1815-1850* (Princeton, 1997), p.128.

looking set as these festive Oldhamites'.⁴⁵ She contrasted this with the 'gratitude and goodness ... found in the real peasantry'. The reality of this is considered later.

2.4.4 The Rustic Ideal – Hunt

One writer with mixed views about Regent's Park was Leigh Hunt. Dana Arnold cites this begrudging comment from 1833: 'We have reason to be thankful that the Regent's Park has saved us from worse places in the same quarter, for it is at all events a park, and has trees and grass ... it has prevented Harley and Wimpole Streets from going further'.⁴⁶ In 1837 he said: "Regent's Park"; a place that once had primroses, and doubtless trees, of which latter there are three or four remaining, or were lately'.⁴⁷ Hunt had lived in York Buildings, on the New Road, just to the west of Devonshire Place, so he too remembered 'the dear old fields that once occupied the site ... where we made verses, and saw visions of mythological beauty'.⁴⁸ He was not as accepting as Ollier of the change: the artifice was a denial of the nature that he sought.

Hunt was born in Southgate and educated in London. From 1808 he edited the radical journal *The Examiner*, and in 1813 was gaoled for criticizing the Prince Regent. For two years he and his brother produced the journal from prison, including his sonnet *To Hampstead* (quoted below), which praised its 'green lanes, brown dells, and breezy skies'. On their release he set up a studio in the Vale of Health which attracted a group of younger poets including Shelley and Keats. In his poems and essays Hunt presented a new vision of the countryside, and triggered a long-running and bad-tempered debate on the nature of culture, rusticity and class. His 'Cockney' perspective was different from the pastoral of the classicists, and the sublimities of the Picturesque tourists, but his was surely the real rustic ideal of suburbia.

It was Hunt's poem *The Story of Rimini* (1816) which started the 'debate', triggering a stream of

⁴⁵ Stuart, *Letters*. Letter XXII. 25 Feb. 1820.

⁴⁶ From an essay in *Weekly True Sun* (15 Sep. 1833), Arnold, *Rural Urbanism*, p. 57.

⁴⁷ L. Hunt, 'Primrose Hill', *The Idler* (27 May 1837), cited in 'Hunt, Leigh', in *Regent's Park & Primrose Hill in Literature and Music: A Bibliography* http://www.regentsparklit.org.uk/authors_e_i.htm (21 May 2015).

⁴⁸ *Weekly True Sun* (8 Sep. 1833) cited in 'Hunt, Leigh' as above..

poisonous invective from *Blackwood's Edinburgh Review*. In a series of anonymous essays on 'On the Cockney School of Poetry'⁴⁹ the author ('Z', assumed to be John Gibson Lockhart) sought to portray Hunt and his colleagues as uneducated and vulgar. Two centuries later the vitriol in Lockhart's prose shocks, but it was only an extreme form of the aggressive journalism that Hunt himself practised. Elizabeth Jones attributes the continuous stress on Hunt's Cockney⁵⁰ baseness to fears of class-encroachment.⁵¹ Lockhart's main focus was on the poets' supposed lack of morals and education. A third target was Hunt's love of nature, expressed in his fondness for Primrose Hill and Hampstead. Lockhart purported to find this laughable and not to be compared with real Romantic poetry:

He raves perpetually about 'green fields,' 'jaunty streams,' and 'o'er-arching leafiness,' exactly as a Cheapside shop-keeper does about the beauties of his box on the Camberwell road. Mr Hunt is altogether unacquainted with the face of nature in her magnificent scenes; he has never seen any mountain higher than Highgate-hill, nor reclined by any stream more pastoral than the Serpentine River.⁵²

The sneering at 'cits' was nothing new. Elmes dabbled in it, referring to a description of 'an upright villa ... with a round weedy pond on a lawn, looking like a basin of green pease soup on a card table' - not the sort of thing that was wanted in Regent's Park.⁵³ The difference is that Hunt's own writing gave a voice to the 'Cheapside shop-keeper', and provides a picture, perhaps a validation, of their usually derided small-scale suburban ideal.⁵⁴

Hunt edited a weekly newspaper *The Indicator* between 1819 and 1821 and used it to express his

⁴⁹ J. G. Lockhart, ('Z'), 'On the Cockney School of Poetry. No. 1', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 2/7 (Oct. 1817), pp. 38-40. With a further seven articles on the same topic on to 1825.

⁵⁰ Lockhart's use of 'Cockney' was intended to be derogatory, though its meaning at the time was of the aspiring lower middle-class.

⁵¹ E. Jones, 'Suburb Sinners; Sex and Disease in the Cockney School', in N. Roe (ed.), *Leigh Hunt: Life, Poetics, Politics* (London, 2003), p. 91.

⁵² Lockhart, 'On the Cockney School', p. 39. Nicholas Roe has a nice phrase, about Lockhart. 'Catching the drift and missing the point' (Roe, *Leigh Hunt*, p. 12), but that does assume that Lockhart was conducting serious literary criticism rather than school-room debate.

⁵³ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, pp. 52-3. The reference is to the story 'Passion and Principle' in T.E. Hook, *Sayings and Doings, or Sketches from Life*, 2nd series (3 vols, London, 1825), iii, p. 8. It had no particular significance other than being a striking analogy.

⁵⁴ Though even the *Literary Pocket Book* which he edited has the occasional comment. In Charles Cowden Clarke's walk to Enfield (see next page) he ponders on why so many 'citizens' choose the flatter land south of the river, and suggests it is to 'make a greater and more visible figure among his neighbours' C.C. Clarke, 'Walks Round London. No. 1', *Literary Pocket Book*, (1820), p. 140.

enjoyment of the ordinary countryside:

It is perfectly transporting, in fine weather... to lounge under the hedge-row elms in one of these sylvan places, and see the light smoke of the cottages fuming up among the green trees, the cattle grazing or lying about with a heavy placidity ... the linnets, thrushes and blackbirds, the grave gladness of the bee ...⁵⁵

Hunt also edited the *Literary Pocket Book* (from which Elmes took Ollier's description of Regent's Park). Later editions⁵⁶ included a series of 'walks round London'. In the first, 'CCC' (Charles Cowden Clarke) walked to Enfield. Climbing up alongside the New River, he wrote 'Behind us we see the whole extent of London - its solid masses of building - its domes and spires - the full view of a great city from a neighbouring eminence is always impressive'.⁵⁷ The following year Charles Ollier went to Kilburn and Willesden: 'here we are perfectly retired and quiet, and may be as meditative as we please ... An hundred miles from town ... we could not meet with any place more hushed and hidden'.⁵⁸ Clearly this is a different aesthetic from that which Lockhart was claiming to support. Hunt's ideal was not nature at its most magnificent or sublime, but experienced at a domestic level. His description of Hampstead might apply equally to Tunbridge Wells.

Streets, hills, and dells, trees overhead now seen,
Now down below, with smoking roofs between, -
A village, revelling in varieties.
Then northward what a range,- with heath and pond,
Nature's own ground; woods that let mansions through,
And cottaged vales with pillowy fields beyond,⁵⁹

Another of Hunt's work (*To Horatio Smith*) with an even more suburban setting is quoted in Section 2.4.6 below.

It was not just a love of nature, but of relaxation and sociability. Hunt claimed that his two

⁵⁵ L. Hunt, 'Country Little Known', *The Indicator*, XXXIII (24 May 1820), pp. 263-4.

⁵⁶ There were five altogether. 1819-1823. The copy of the 1819 diary in the British Library had belonged to Mary Mitford. It includes hand-written references to May, the actual greyhound.

⁵⁷ Clarke, 'Walk ... No. I', p. 141.

⁵⁸ C. Ollier, 'Walks Round London. No. II', *Literary Pocket Book*, 1821, p. 111.

⁵⁹ L. Hunt, 'Description of Hampstead', in *Foliage: Or, Poems Original and Translated* (London, 1818), pp. cxv-cxvi.

objects were 'a love of nature out of doors, and of sociality within'.⁶⁰ He spoke of the delights of the fireside:

Here we are then again, with our fire before us, and our books on each side. What shall we do? Shall we take out a Life of somebody... Or shall we sit with tilted chairs ... while we discourse of manners and of man's heart and hopes ...⁶¹

Jane Stabler contrasts this domesticity and sociability with the solitariness of Wordsworth 'Hunt is one of the few Romantic writers who invites his readers to imagine taking tea with him by the fireside'.⁶² It was not just Hunt who enjoyed this suburban lifestyle. Cyrus Redding described dinners held by Thomas Hill, City dry-salter, at his villa in Sydenham. His guests 'did not object to a jaunt of eight miles for a merry meeting ... They often sat late, and got back to town at the dawn of morning'.⁶³ Redding recorded seeing 'the early summer dawn from that hill ... London ... seemed a vast sepulchre'.

These distant views of the city were popular: thus the description from the New River quoted above, and views from Camberwell described in Chapter 2.2. Priscilla Wakefield described the view from above Lewisham in 1810:

To those who love city views, that of the metropolis, enclosed by the hills of Middlesex, with the windings of the Thames appearing at certain intervals, is one of the richest that can be seen,⁶⁴

and John Stilgoe comments on the number of American city views taken from neighbouring heights.⁶⁵ When the view was from the writer's own place of suburban retirement there is an additional sense of achievement in the distancing – but that is to move beyond the present topic. So Hunt's Cockney vision had the withdrawal and the lack of stress of Green's *Spleen* without the pretence of agriculture; and the suburban setting without any sense of social isolation.

⁶⁰ Hunt, *Foliage*, p. 8. Cited by J.N. Cox, 'Leigh Hunt's Foliage', in Roe, *Leigh Hunt*, p. 66.

⁶¹ L. Hunt, 'The Indicator and Examiner – Autumnal Commencement of Fires - Mantle-pieces – Apartments for Study', *The Indicator*, II (20 Oct. 1819), p. 10.

⁶² J. Stabler, 'Leigh Hunt's aesthetics of intimacy', in Roe, *Leigh Hunt*, p. 97.

⁶³ Redding, *Recollections*, ii, p. 213.

⁶⁴ Wakefield, *Perambulations*, p. 457.

⁶⁵ For example, of Cincinnati, Stilgoe, *Borderland*, p. 60.

One final example has a direct connection to Tunbridge Wells. John Watson Dalby was a member of Hunt's 'Hampstead Circle'. His account of a ramble into the country includes many of the features of Hunt's own vision. There is the escape from the city, and the appreciation of books and friends:

I love to walk from town; to feel its chain dropping link by link as I proceed, and, looking back, now and then, on the high, wide, smoking, stupendous mass, experience no regret, excepting that I cannot carry with me a few more books, and – all my friends.⁶⁶

And a love of the countryside. His destination was 'beautiful, and young, and wild, but withal *modest*, Tunbridge Wells' but he chose to stay at a nearby hamlet, to enjoy the walk between them every day. Returning to his lodgings one evening, he wrote: 'It is a lovely night, and the wild and diversified beauties of the neighbourhood ... are clothed in all that mellow and romantic lustre ...'. But he is unsure whether to go via the rocks – 'huge, wide, majestic, solitary; or [by] the more gentle slopes nearer home, on which the moonbeams fall so placidly.'

The emotion of the response may be similar to Elmes' and 'Limbird's' in the centre of Regent's Park, but this was not a contrived landscape. His reference points are different too: Coleridge and Byron; and though Thomson (the poet) is mentioned, so too are Miss Mitford and Mrs Barbaud. Dalby visited the Races at Tunbridge Wells, and noted the effect of the side-show theatre on its audience:

What can present a truer and fuller picture of animal gratification than the face of a country girl at such a time? The cheeks flushed with even more than health, and the eyes full of unusual fire; no coquetry, no by-play, no smiling or sighing ... she has an eye, heart, and soul, only for the scene before her.

It is stereotypical, and a little patronizing but full of humanity, which is what distinguishes the Cockney from Lockwood.

⁶⁶ J.W. Dalby, 'Recollections of a Ramble in Kent', *The Ladies Penny Gazette* (27 July 1833). The article is signed 'Reuben Ramble', but the same basic text, without the introduction given here, is presented over Dalby's name in *The Pocket Magazine* in November 1835 (though the date is unclear).

2.4.5 Calverley and the Rustic ideal



Figure 84. How far to Tunbridge Wells? Source: Clifford, *Guide* (1834), p. 1.

The rustic ideal had been part of the image, one might say the identity, of Tunbridge Wells since its early days. The vignette above is from the first page of Clifford's *Guide* of 1834. Beneath it were the lines:

Welcome, ye scenes! Ye bowery thickets, hail!
Delicious is your shelter to the soul!⁶⁷

Sometimes, as here, the image was expressed in pastoral, and sometimes in simple description.

Evans in 1820 had rooms on the Pantiles, in the centre of the 'town', yet he was able to enjoy the birds chirping outside his window: 'It is a grove, or rather an aviary! ... So retired is our spot, that we can imagine ourselves a hundred miles distant from the metropolis, buried in the recesses of the country.'⁶⁸ He noted the sheep on the Common 'nibbling the grass in placid luxury'. Evans was a visitor but a similar view attracted the Durnford family when they arrived: 'There was much beauty in the new situation, and the novel sight of the fine Common, with flocks of sheep, that disported with little lambs under the windows.'⁶⁹ It was only Amsinck who pointed out that the reason it was able to retain this rustic feel, was the operation of the 1739 Rusthall Manor

⁶⁷ Thomson, this time 'Summer', though slightly modified.

⁶⁸ Evans, *Excursion*, p. 140.

⁶⁹ M. Durnford, *Family recollections of Lieut. General Elias Walker Durnford ...* (Montreal, 1863), p. 170.

Act, which prevented building on the Common:

To this act Tunbridge Wells may be said to owe its continued prosperity; without it, it might have been increased by buildings, rivalling those of St. George's Fields [ie Southwark] ... it would not have continued to yield attractions to the lovers of pure air and romantic scenery;⁷⁰

It was a landscape that had been used for leisure for two hundred years. Amongst the sheep grazing on the Common were donkeys, for the use and amusement of visitors. Yet Archer was not correct to say that there was 'hardly anything that could have been mistaken for actual rural living'.⁷¹ There were farms just behind Calverley Park; the hay in the hotel grounds was harvested; and hops grown and picked just beyond the Calverley mill.⁷² An auction was advertised in 1796 at the White Bear in Mount Sion for 'A LARGE quantity of exceeding good ROT DUNG, containing by estimation, Thirty Waggon Load'.⁷³ The following memory of the town in about 1830 was written nearly sixty years later, so must be interpreted with care: the Busks did not actually live in the farm-house, this was the view from their drawing-room window; but it does demonstrate that 'actual rural living' did take place on Mount Ephraim.

we saw one of the loveliest views imaginable, and we lived there an absolutely country life. Cows and sheep enlivened the meadows, and the dear old low-roofed farm with barns and farm buildings grouped round it, the farm-yard and the duck pond might have been 500 miles away from London ... we grew our own corn, ground it in our own mill, and the bread was baked in the farm-house oven.⁷⁴

The Busks owned the farm, but they were not farmers – they lived an urban lifestyle in a rural setting. It was Amsinck who made the Archer point that the suburb offered something different to the country. Tunbridge Wells, he said, provided 'a rescue from the ennui of a mere country retirement'.⁷⁵ An example of the limitations of country living comes from a young woman living

⁷⁰ Amsinck, *Tunbridge Wells*, p. 8.

⁷¹ Archer, *Suburbia*, pp. 216-7.

⁷² These statements are based on a 'A Ramble round Tunbridge Wells c. 1850' – a memoir by a long-time resident printed in *The Courier* in 1908.

⁷³ TUNWM. 'Sprange' collection. Cited in C. Jones, '1789 to 1825 The End of an Era?', in J. Cunningham (ed.), *400 Years of the Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 2005), p. 61.

⁷⁴ R.H. Busk (ed.), *Social hours with celebrities, by Mrs. W.P. Byrne* (2 vols, London, 1898), ii, p. 272. Mrs W.P. Byrne was Julia Busk.

⁷⁵ Amsinck, *Tunbridge Wells*, p. 1.

in the country near Tonbridge. She had been staying with friends in Stockwell and was thrilled by the big city. They went to the theatre, and to the bazaar. 'I have purchased [an opera cloak] which I think *very neat*; I shall not tell you *the damage* until you have *seen it*.' Her principal object was to learn the essential life-skills. 'I have lessons in *Dancing twice a week, in Music twice a week, in Drawing once a week...* My greatest favourite is my dancing master'.⁷⁶ She could have shopped and learned to dance in Tunbridge Wells.

2.4.6 The Rustic Ideal – Summary

So the rustic ideal was a trope of English culture,⁷⁷ but as the four examples have demonstrated there were differing emphases. *Spleen* envisaged an actual farm, with ploughboy, cows and geese; Miss Mitford described a vibrant village community with blacksmith and shoe-maker. Elmes sought literary references for his *rus-in-urbe*, while Hunt simply liked nature and sociability.

The idea of an actual farm might be put to one side: it was impractical, and the fashion for Virgil which was behind it, rather passé by 1830.⁷⁸ There was certainly an interest in farming: Amsinck, in describing a visit to Mereworth (Castle), was rather dismissive of the 'foreign' (Palladian) architecture, but provided a long description of the local agriculture;⁷⁹ and Sprange recorded his pleasure that a hundred acres to the south of the town had been brought into cultivation. He

⁷⁶ G. and G.M.G. Woodgate, *A History of the Woodgates of Stonewall Park and of Summerhill in Kent* (Wisbech, 1910), p. 451.

⁷⁷ The reference to the Jeffersonian yeoman farmer earlier in this chapter is a reminder of a different vision of the countryside in the American consciousness. Stephen Ward suggests that in England the countryside had essentially historical connotations, of stability and continuity, as described in this chapter. In America the image was of homesteaders or pioneers 'colonising a pure and virgin land, untainted by the city'. Ward, *Selling Places*, pp. 115,117. Archer sees a nationalist, patriotic tone in the literature with the suburban dweller identified as a 'self-made individualist who epitomised the American republican form of polity'. Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 207. Fishman, though, would seem to disagree: the suburban ideal 'did not emerge from an indigenous Jeffersonian tradition of domestic architecture and antiurbanism'. To Fishman the main driver for suburbanisation was to create segregated estates for the wealthy. He acknowledges some cultural influences: Catharine Beecher, Downing and Calvert Vaux, though the main feature of all three was 'their debt to the English sources'. Fishman, *Utopias*, pp. 121-125.

⁷⁸ Though the Ruskins in Denmark Hill had cows and pigs. Ruskin, *Praeterita*, ii, pp. 116, 237.

⁷⁹ Mereworth Castle, 1720s by Colen Campbell, but based closely on the Villa Rotonda, near Vicenza. Amsinck, *Tunbridge Wells*, pp. 115-120.

quoted Pope in his 1814 edition: 'Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes, / And 'midst the desert, fruitful fields arise'.⁸⁰ What was more important, though, was the reassurance from *Our Village* that a traditional country way of life continued – despite the industrialisation and the growth of cities, and the economic misery of many of the actual residents.

What is common to all four accounts is the enjoyment of nature: of 'hedgerows, elms and hillocks green',⁸¹ and the desire to escape from stress. So Green talks of being 'free from care and strife'; and the repeated idea that a peaceful spot (Kilburn or the Pantiles) felt one hundred miles from London. It could also be created artificially, and not just in the sense of a Regent's Park. In a sonnet addressed to Horace Smith, Leigh Hunt celebrated how Nature could flourish in even suburban environments:

... Vulgar he, who goes
By suburb gardens which she [Nature] deigns to dress,
And does not recognize her green caress
Reaching back to us in those genial shows
Of box-encircled flowers and poplar rows,
Or other nests for evening weariness.⁸²

And surely part of the appeal of *Our Village* was Miss Mitford's descriptions of her garden:

The pride of my heart and the delight of my eye is my garden ... covered with vines, cherry-trees, roses, honeysuckles and jessamines, with great clusters of tall hollyhocks running up between them ... tiny paths of smooth gravel ... overrun by convolvulus, and heart's-ease, and mignonette, and other sweet stragglers.⁸³

The development of the domestic garden is a large subject and is not addressed here. The conclusion of the chapter, though, must be that while Calverley did indeed provide this 'marriage of country and city', the rustic ideal of nature and repose might equally be achieved in a suburban garden. J.C. Loudon described its appeal in 1838:

what can be more refreshing than, in a warm summer's evening, to hear, while sitting in

⁸⁰ Sprange, *Guide* (1814), p. x.

⁸¹ A paraphrase of Milton's 'hedgerow elms, on hillocks green' (*L'Allegro*). Applied to Camberwell in the 1840s. C. Stanford, *A memorial of the Rev Edward Steane DD* (London, 1882), p. 21.

⁸² 'To Horatio Smith', in Hunt, *Foliage*, p. cxxviii.

⁸³ Mitford, *Works of ...*, p. 185. 'Whitson-Eve' – part of the Third Series.

a cool parlour, with the windows open, or in a summer-house, the showering of water by the syringe upon the leaves of the vines or fig-trees trained under the adjoining veranda.⁸⁴

The subject of the rustic ideal, however, cannot be left without consideration of conditions in the actual countryside at that time.

2.4.7 An alternative reality – Captain Swing

One positive aspect of the Tunbridge Wells guide-books is that local people were not presented as objects for the amusement of visitors. This happened in more distant parts of the country and even on the Isle of Wight. Stewart Abbott suggests that Niton on the Undercliff was ‘a popular destination for visitors possibly to view the inhabitants as much as the sublime landscape’.⁸⁵ The following extract, from an 1886 guide to Crowborough, nine miles south-west of Tunbridge Wells, comes uncomfortably close: ‘Amidst the forests and commons ... something remains of the old Saxon life: primitive, hard-headed, open-hearted, generous. You meet an old forester ... If you talk to him, you might fancy you were in the Australian bush ... He has brought up a family of eight ... and if they are a trifle uncultivated they are good at heart, and their father is proud of them’.⁸⁶ Louisa Stuart’s image of the grateful peasantry (in Chapter 2.3 above) was just as much a caricature, and reflected a lack of understanding of rural life in 1830.

Southern England that summer has been described as ‘a social powder keg’⁸⁷ and the autumn and winter saw a terrifying outbreak of arson and destruction. There is disagreement whether the ‘Swing’ riots were politically or economically driven,⁸⁸ but certainly a long-term decline in the living standards of farm-workers had been made worse by poor harvests in 1828 and 1829.⁸⁹ The

⁸⁴ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, p. 3.

⁸⁵ S. Abbott, ‘The Isle of Wight, c.1750-1840: Aspects of Viewing, Recording and Consumption’ (PhD thesis. Univ of Southampton. 2006), pp. 47-48.

⁸⁶ W.T. Pike, *Local Blue Book and Directory [of East Sussex]*(Hastings, 1885), p.118. At that time Crowborough was trying to establish itself as a resort.

⁸⁷ C.J. Griffin, *The rural war: Captain Swing and the politics of protest* (Manchester, 2012), p.9.

⁸⁸ A. Charlesworth, *Social protest in a rural society : the spatial diffusion of the Captain Swing disturbances of 1830-1831* (Norwich, 1979), p.2. Charlesworth sides with Tilly and Thompson rather than Hobsbawm and Rude in thinking that they were political.

⁸⁹ Griffin, *Rural war*, p.89. In September 1829 the *Maidstone Journal* recorded a young man collapsing on

uprising is traditionally dated from the destruction of a threshing machine in East Kent on 28 August 1830,⁹⁰ but there had been arson attacks in the north-west of the county earlier in the summer and these intensified during September. There were mass meetings in central Kent in October and in November it spread into the Weald, with fires, intimidation and the destruction of machinery in a wide arc around Tunbridge Wells, from Hadlow to the north-east round to Withyham in the west. The traditional approach of historians has been to consider the motivation and activities of the rioters and the punishments they received; and in most cases they have been, understandably, 'fascinated, touched, and moved'.⁹¹ Of more relevance here, though, is the impact of the events upon the 'rustic ideal' of the incomers.

The early events, mainly arson and intimidation, happened around Orpington, Bromley and Sevenoaks, on the main road from London to Tunbridge Wells. Andrew Charlesworth demonstrates that the main coaching roads were probably the network by which enthusiasm for revolt spread,⁹² but they would also ensure that anyone travelling that route would be aware of what was happening. The initial response of the authorities was conciliatory, to the despair of some of those fearing for their safety. A resident of Sevenoaks wrote to Sir Edward Knatchbull

I can speak as an eye witness, having seen from our windows fires night after night ... the cottagers tremble for their lives. No one goes to rest in any security and hope seems to be banished from the neighbourhood ... Why is justice asleep or afraid to show itself?⁹³

That letter was private, but the events were reported in the press. A *Times* report of 21 October was headed 'More Outrages in Kent' and cites Tunbridge Wells in the second sentence.

The disturbances reached Frant, two miles south of Tunbridge Wells, on 12/13 November. There were ineffective attempts to besiege Eridge Castle but little actual violence or damage. Many of the small farmers supported the rioters' objectives, especially their opposition to tithes, and

the Pantiles from hunger. Soup kitchens were opened that winter and in following years.

⁹⁰ E. Hobsbawm and G. Rude, *Captain Swing* (London, 2001), p. 97.

⁹¹ Hobsbawm and Rude, *Captain Swing*, p. 281.

⁹² Charlesworth, *Social Protest*, p. 46.

⁹³ Letter dated 1 Nov. 1830 from Mary Tylden, in Knatchbull papers, KHLC. Quoted in M. Matthews, *Captain Swing in Sussex and Kent: rural rebellion in 1830* (Hastings, 2006), p.17.

none of the Frant villagers signed up as special constables.⁹⁴ The importance, though, was not so much any actual violence as the fear of it. An anonymous letter sent to a clergyman in Maresfield said 'we have determined to set fire to you in your bed ... You and your daughter shall be burned in your beds'.⁹⁵ Reports of an earlier attack near Sevenoaks had commented that the victim was 'quiet and unlikely to have given offence'. Griffin suggests that this 'highlight[s] the huge gulf between the way rural workers perceived the wealthy and how the wealthy *thought* they were perceived by the poor'.⁹⁶ It also illustrates the understandable fear that anybody living in the countryside was at risk.

If the idea of living in a peaceful rustic retreat was part of the appeal of Calverley then the publicity given to Swing can only have been negative, and may have been part of the reason for the slow sales in the 1830s (see Chapter 1.2). On the other hand, rather than representing a rural escape to those living in the City, Tunbridge Wells might have been seen as an area of urban security to those living in the countryside. Detachments of the 5th Dragoon Guards were stationed in the town from autumn 1830.⁹⁷ Looking specifically at Calverley Park, it is noticeable that the first lease was sold, in 1831, to a recently widowed woman who had been living in Frant. The only other known resident in 1831 was a 38-year-old single woman whose family home was between Sevenoaks and Maidstone.

Miss Mitford recorded the experience of the events in Three Mile Cross:

we tasted of fear, the bitterest cup that an imaginative woman can taste, in all its agonising varieties ... the horrors of those fires – breaking forth night after night, sudden, yet expected, always seeming nearer than they actually were, and always said to have been more mischievous to life and property than they actually had been'.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ P. Wright, *Frant: the story of a Wealden parish* (Frant, 1982), p.77.

⁹⁵ Matthews, *Captain Swing*, p.28.

⁹⁶ Griffin, *Rural war*, p. 79, though many of Griffin's examples suggest that the victims were selected for some specific local reason.

⁹⁷ Griffin, *Rural war*, p. 242. Griffin specifies 14 troops of cavalry stationed in Tunbridge Wells in late October. Earlier accounts had them in surrounding villages from mid-November, eg Hobsbawn and Rude, *Captain Swing*, p. 254.

⁹⁸ 'The Incendiary. A Country Tale' was the first item in *Friendship's Offering. A Literary Album and Christmas and New Year's Present* (London, 1832). *The Evangelical Magazine* of Nov 1832 thought it 'a

Yet she played down their significance: claiming that pity for the arrested rioters replaced the fear, and taking comfort from the belief that the leaders of the affair could not have been locals. Economic distress continued, and there was further unrest in Kent later in the decade; but the ideal of a benign countryside survived. The country as a whole needed the reassurance of its rustic myth. Miss Mitford was re-published in 1870; by then Helen Allingham, with her visual representations of a rustic ideal, was also on the horizon.

tremendous tale, true to nature and excellent in its moral'. It was part of the fifth collection of *Our Village* stories but is not in the collected works edition cited earlier, so see: Mitford, M.R., 'The Incendiary', in M.R. Mitford, *Our Village, Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery*, New edn. (2 series, London, 1865/70), ii, pp. 318-300.

2.5 The Architectural Ideal

'suburban dwellings were premiere instruments for self-articulation ... highly complex instrument[s] for fashioning personal identity'

J. Archer (2005)¹

This last chapter of Part Two considers the place of architectural style in the suburban ideal. It is not a simple story. To John Archer, as above, suburban houses clearly had meaning. The evidence from Calverley and Tunbridge Wells is of two distinct stylistic trends; different aspects, perhaps, of a suburban ideal. In one sense, it was the suggestion of style, rather than any particular style, that was important.

Certain elements of Archer's analysis relate uniquely to the American model: the self-sufficiency and political independence of the Jeffersonian farmer, for example, played little part in English suburban consciousness.² Other aspects of the suburban ideal, though: the urge for privacy, and the liking for a natural setting, applied in both countries. To some extent these ideals were achieved through configuration rather than style, through the preference for single-family homes in private plots. Even this seemingly straightforward preference has depths of meaning: Jeffersonian farms, Picturesque views, and Dingley-Dell rustic cosiness are all cultural constructs. Architectural style simply adds an extra layer, though an extra layer which has complicating features: style is subject to changes in fashion, and seems to trigger particularly judgemental comment. Using style to 'fashion personal identity' had its risks.

There were few references to style in the advertising of the Calverley houses. Press advertisements stressed instead that the houses were substantial, and recent, and built of stone; while the longer descriptions in the topographies concentrated on the setting – the fairy land of picturesque dells. Britton suggested that the architect of Calverley 'has evidently studied variety, but restrained his fancy to ... simple forms', while Granville thought the architecture 'rather

¹ Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 203.

² Though see Fishman's view of the Jeffersonian farmer in Section 2.4.6 above.

pleasing than striking'.³ They seem non-committal, but then Greenwood's *Epitome of County History* (1838) which included plates of eighty one country houses in Kent, was also limited in its descriptions. It may have been a lack of vocabulary rather than of interest, or a fear of saying the wrong thing. The most commonly used adjectives were 'elegant' and 'modern'. So Sundridge Park is described as 'a very elegant mansion', and Holwood 'a beautiful specimen of modern architecture'.⁴

In 1830 style was fluid. Architectural theorists of the late eighteenth century had demonstrated that there were few absolutes: that any style might reasonably be selected that best fitted the setting. David Watkin says that James Wyatt 'made a name for himself as a stylistic weathercock prepared to work in any style demanded',⁵ while John Newman, in early editions of *West Kent*, referred to it being 'an uneasy period for architects, who had to satisfy their clients' craving for 'Stylemongering'.⁶ It was uneasy too for clients. Robert Kerr described the difficulty facing the prospective home-owner when asked to choose a style:

But really, I would much rather not. I want a plain, substantial, comfortable Gentleman's House; and, I beg leave to repeat, I don't want any style at all ... I dare say it would cost a great deal of money.⁷

Kerr went on to summarise the benefits and drawbacks of some half-dozen styles, based on utility, cost, and so on. It was image, though, that mattered. The buyer wanted a *Gentleman's House*: it had to convey status and taste. Calverley purchasers were not in the same situation as Kerr's would-be gentleman. Like most suburban incomers they were buying 'off the peg' from a speculative developer, but that only transferred the decision-making further up the chain: the builder had to calculate what style would best convey status and taste to his customers.

The later parts of this chapter will demonstrate that there were two distinct stylistic trends

³ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, pp. 53-4. Granville, *Spas of England*, iii, p. 624.

⁴ Greenwood, *Epitome*, pp. 34, 64. By contrast John Newman explains that Holwood uses 'the austere Ionic of the Ilyssus temple'. Newman, *West Kent*, p. 110.

⁵ Watkin, *English Vision*, p. 102.

⁶ Newman, *West Kent*, p. 110.

⁷ Kerr, *Gentleman's House*, p. 357.

within Calverley, but it starts by looking at the national discourse, and shows that there was a lively debate.

2.5.1 The Discourse

This first section considers the wider discourse about architectural style in the period prior to Calverley. It demonstrates the wide range of styles that were available following what Hussey called 'the rapid multiplication of eligible styles' in the late eighteenth century,⁸ and it demonstrates a popular awareness of the architectural debate. This awareness still involved only a small percentage of the population, but it went much wider than the architectural dilettanti of the early eighteenth century. Part of this was to do with the popularisation of the Picturesque. So readers of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) were expected to understand the comment about Barton Cottage, though small, being acceptable as a house 'but as a cottage it was defective, for the building was regular'.⁹

There was also the increasing availability of periodicals: Ackermann's *Repository of Arts, etc.*¹⁰ for example, which started each issue with coloured plates of two 'Country seats'. There was a more detailed description of the architecture than in Greenwood, but the telling point is the regular reference to 'the good taste of the proprietor' – the house being used to judge the owner. The *Repository* cost four shillings. *The Mirror*, at two pence a week, reached a different market, but, with an engraving on the front of each issue, it also encouraged an interest in buildings.¹¹

Adelaide Lodge, for example, as below, designed for the Queen at Windsor, was said to display 'much of the quaint elegance of the embellished order of domestic architecture in the Old

⁸ Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p. 210.

⁹ J. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 26.

¹⁰ *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics* was published by Rudolph Ackermann between 1809 and 1829.

¹¹ *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* was published by John Limbird from 1822 to 1847. Typical circulation was 10 to 15,000, comparable to the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* (J. Topham, 'John Limbird, Thomas Byerley, and the Production of Cheap Periodicals in the 1820s', *Book History*, 8 (2005), p. 76).

English school'.¹²

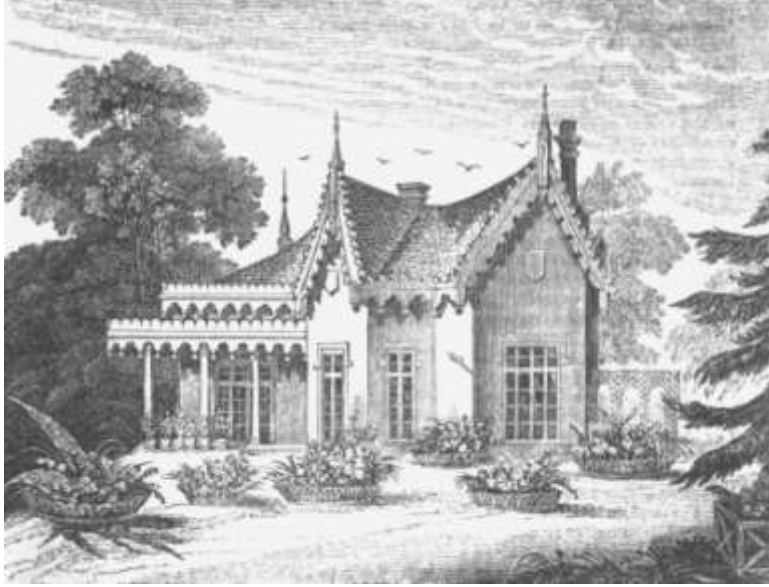


Figure 85. Adelaide Lodge, Windsor. Source: *The Mirror*, XVIII/504 (20 August 1831).

An 1835 advertisement for John Weale's Architectural Library demonstrates the range of architectural literature that was available: Gothic architecture - 68 entries ranging from 5s. to 12 guineas, Grecian Architecture - 56 entries from 5s., and 42 entries on 'Cottage, Villa and Rural Architecture', though much of this was aimed at the professionals¹³ The focus in this study is rather on the client, and the imperative to display taste through one's house. Austen poked fun at it in *Mansfield Park*. Edmund has been viewing his prospective new home: Thornton Lacey. He believes that, with a little adjustment, it could serve as a 'gentleman's residence'. Henry Crawford has bigger ideas, so that 'From being the mere gentleman's residence, it becomes, by judicious improvement, the residence of a man of education, taste, modern manners, good connections'.¹⁴

An article in Ackermann's *Repository* went further and used architectural style as a marker not just of taste, but of goodness. It is a moralising tale of two widowed ladies, one wealthy, begrudging and disliked; the other reduced in circumstances, but kind, and loved by all. It

¹² 'Adelaide Lodge, Windsor', *The Mirror*, XVIII/504 (20 August 1831).

¹³ In a 24-page supplement to the *Edinburgh Review* of July 1835. Weale's library was at 59 High Holborn.

¹⁴ J. Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 216. Edmund of course is being praised for his restraint – the essence of good taste, Henry shown up for his pretension.

describes their two houses:

On an eminence ... stands (I had almost said stares) a large square brick mansion, in the formal style of the beginning of the last century ... What a blot on the beautiful landscape are its four everlasting red fronts.

... under a hill and the shelter of a wood, a low-roofed cottage, the picture of humility. What a little Paradise! Its verandah front covered with gay flowers, its miniature shrubbery putting forth ... a profusion of blossoms,

The contrast between mansion and cottage is obvious, but the mansion is also compared unfavourably with more modern designs. The mansion brings to mind:

none of those refined associations which the sight of an elegant modern residence creates, nor any of those retrospections of romance and chivalry which a glance at Gothic arches and embattled towers immediately awakens.¹⁵

Modern and Gothic architecture, square brick mansions of the previous century, and the paradise of a country cottage: they were competing images for a value-laden architectural ideal.

That 'modern' (basically classical) and 'Gothic' styles might be presented as equally acceptable alternatives to the traditional brick mansion, might seem odd given the vehemence of Pugin's moralistic denouncement of those 'nests of monstrosities' (Regent's Park and Regent Street) in *Contrasts* (1836).¹⁶ In the literature of cottage and villa, though, it was not a question of morality, but of which style best suited the setting. So Lugar, in his *Architectural Sketches for Cottages, Rural Dwellings and Villas* (1805) offered designs in 'the Grecian, Gothic and Fancy Styles';¹⁷ and Elsam in *Essay on Rural Architecture* (1803) promised 'rural retreats and villas in the Gothic, Castle, Roman, and Grecian styles'.¹⁸ Two particular stylistic developments in the early 1800s are relevant here: the increasing importance of 'Italian' design; and the standardisation of the 'picturesque cottage' on the Adelaide Lodge model. Lugar had included a design in 1805 'in the style of an Italian villa', with a 'prospect room' in an octagonal half-tower,¹⁹ but the 'Italian'

¹⁵ 'Which is the Best?', *Repository of Arts*, XII/LXVII (July 1828), pp. 3-6.

¹⁶ A.N. Pugin, *Contrasts; ... showing The Present Decay of Taste* (London, 1836), p. 31.

¹⁷ R. Lugar, *Architectural Sketches for Cottages, Rural Dwellings and Villas ...* (London, 1805), Title page.

¹⁸ R. Elsam, *An Essay on Rural Architecture* (London, 1803), Title page.

¹⁹ Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, plates XXVII and XXVIII.

style really came to prominence in the 1820s with books by T.F. Hunt (1827), G.L. Meason (1828) and Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica* of 1832. By 1860 Robert Kerr claimed 'Our so-called Italian is, in reality, the vernacular English style of modern home-building'.²⁰

The 'cottage' had a longer back-story, and generated perhaps a livelier debate, but does involve some difficulty of interpretation. James Malton, in his *Essay on British Cottage Architecture* (1798), claimed that his designs represented the 'genuine British Cottage', and provided a checklist of the required features: a porch; varying heights; a boldly projecting roof, and so on.²¹ His vision was Picturesque, with references to Uvedale Price, and he favoured irregularity. This irregularity brought a critical response from Richard Elsam. Elsam's 1803 essay had seventeen designs that were all symmetrical, though his list of features desirable in a cottage was very similar to Malton's.²² There is little, though, in the designs of either Malton (see below) or Elsam to suggest Adelaide Lodge.

Andrew Ballantyne has suggested that certain simple cottage designs at this time were produced in response to suggestions from the Board of Agriculture that landlords provide better accommodation, and thus avoid unrest among their employees. The design below, though, is for a 'substantial farmer'. It probably reflects Malton dislike for 'ponderous magnificence' in any domestic buildings, and for foreign styles: 'the peculiars of every nation form a mongrel species in England', which he blamed on the newly-rich 'from commerce and bold enterprise'.²³ In his designs he favoured simple touches of the 'Tudoresque'. Ballantyne suggests that in these designs 'we are looking at ... the pre-history of the suburb'.²⁴

²⁰ Kerr, *Gentleman's House*, p. 375.

²¹ J. Malton, *Essay on British Cottage Architecture* (London, 1798), p. 5.

²² Elsam, *Essay*, pp. 7-8.

²³ Malton, *Essay*. pp. 9-11.

²⁴ A. Ballantyne, 'Joseph Gandy and the politics of rustic charm', in B. Arciszewska, and E. McKellar, (eds.), *Articulating British Classicism: new approaches to eighteenth-century architecture* (Aldershot, 2004), p. ??



Figure 86. Cottage: design 10 from Malton's 'Essay on British Cottage Architecture' 1798. Source: Malton, *Essay*. 'designs that were genuinely futuristic ... the shape of things to come' Ballantyne.

The Adelaide Lodge idea of the cottage was better represented in P.F. Robinson's *Rural Architecture* (1822).²⁵ The style involves steeply-pitched roofs, prominent gables, ornate barge boards with pendants, tall, complex and highly ornate chimneys, arched doorways, lattice windows with mullions and hood-moulds. Daniel Maudlin calls this a change in 'the grammar of cottage ornament'.²⁶

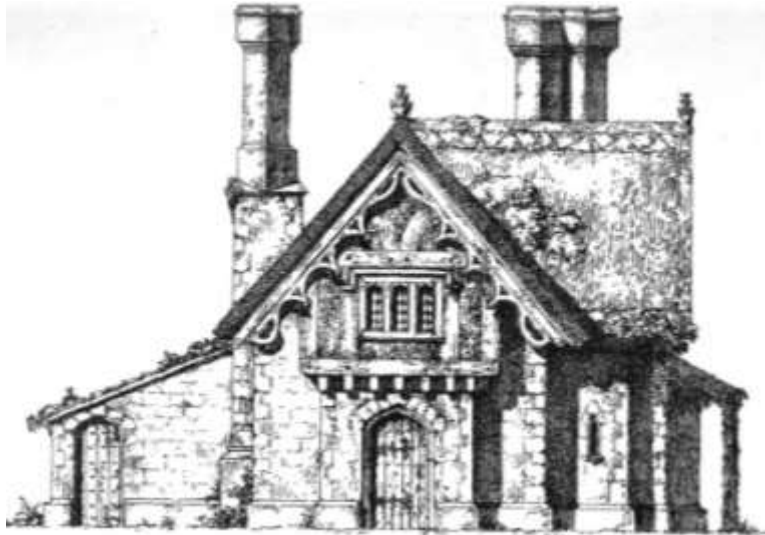


Figure 87. Cottage: design 1 from P.F. Robinson's 'Rural Architecture' 1828. Source: Robinson, *Rural Architecture*.

One difficulty in following the debate is judging whether 'cottage' is being used to denote size or

²⁵ P.F. Robinson, *Rural Architecture being a series of designs for ornamental cottages*, 3rd edn. (London, 1828). He then produced a work on larger houses: P.F. Robinson, *Designs for Ornamental Villas* 3rd edn. (London, 1836).

²⁶ Maudlin, *Idea of the Cottage*, p. 179.

style. Of Malton's fourteen designs, five were for 'peasants', but for three, Malton could 'conceive a splendid equipage might be drawn up [outside]'.²⁷ Yet they were all 'cottages'. In *Metropolitan Improvements* Elmes described his 'perfect cottage': it has dining room, morning room, breakfast room, drawing room, ladies' room, sufficient space in the entrance hall for a billiard table, and a separate tradesman's entrance. Here too, 'cottage' implies style rather than size, and indeed Elmes' cottage is thatched, low, and festooned with woodbine, jessamine and clematis 'the labourer's welcome home'.²⁸ Robinson recognised the problem and suggested for one of his designs that the term 'Manor House' be used instead 'for it can hardly for its size be denominated a Cottage'.²⁹ Loudon, complicated the issue by including a design for 'a cottage villa'.³⁰

Elmes' description of his perfect cottage was in response to an article in *Blackwoods* pointing to the absurdity of the fashion for cottages, with the smells and the noise and the smoke from the kitchen, all manner of bugs, and the damp 'Now be candid - Did you ever sleep in perfectly dry sheets in a Cottage Ornée [sic]?'³¹ This particular exchange extended the discourse, for even those with no interest in the cottage as an architectural form, might have an opinion on who was being absurd in the debate.

There was also the concept of the 'villa'. 'Villa' has the broader historiography: Summerson (1959), Ackerman (1986/1990), Arnold (1996) and others have pondered its meaning, explored its heritage in classical Rome and the sixteenth-century Veneto, and relished its devaluation in nineteenth-century suburbia. It was used in the pattern-books to describe the rural retreat of a

²⁷ Malton, *Essay*, p. 3.

²⁸ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, pp. 52-57. Yet he appears to use 'cottage ornée' [sic] for Albany Cottage on the basis of size rather than style, as it is a symmetrical, classical design p. 49. (Arnold makes the same point - Arnold, *Rural Urbanism*, p. 66.) Lugar defines Cottage Ornée [sic] as a 'gentleman's cot' which should 'possess particular neatness'. 'No common creepers or honeysuckles should be seen ... their province is to shade and enrich the peasant's cot', yet he seems to assume that it would be thatched (Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, pp. 10-11).

²⁹ Robinson, *Ornamental Cottages*, Design XX.

³⁰ Loudon, *Encyclopaedia*, p. 844.

³¹ 'Cottages', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Review*, XIX/CX (March 1826), p. 245.

‘person of fortune’. Lugar (1805/1815) said of the villa that ‘the style should at once declare it to be the residence of the Gentleman’ and display exact proportion and regularity of parts – in contrast to the picturesque Cottage. This, together with the suggestion that the exterior should be stucco or stone, might suggest a classical style.³² Robinson, though, in *New Series of Designs for Ornamental Cottages and Villas* (1838), divides his designs into ornamental cottages and ornamental villas, but both share the same ‘Elizabethan’ cottage/manor house style, the distinction was in size and cost.

In his study of architectural literature John Archer sought to understand/explain the ‘fundamental transformation’ in the meaning of ‘cottage’ and ‘villa’ over the long eighteenth century.³³ The word ‘cottage’ had been used traditionally to denote the dwelling of a labourer on a farm or in a village. By the early nineteenth century it was also applied to small houses in a Picturesque style used as rural retreats for the better-off. Archer talks of ‘considerable confusion’, and this has confusion been suggested in the examples given above, though an awareness of period and context usually makes the meaning clear. There were changes too in the use of ‘villa’. The villas in the sixteenth-century Veneto were farming estates used as rural retreats for wealthy families from the city. By the mid-eighteenth century the farming element had disappeared but the idea of a rural retreat for the wealthy remained. Archer cites Middleton (1793)³⁴ as defining three types of villa: the occasional rural retreat of the nobility; the country (suburban) house of a wealthy citizen; and the habitation of a country gentleman of moderate fortune. He (Archer) struggles, though, with size – how much smaller than a ‘country-house’ should a villa be? – the evidence from late eighteenth-century pattern books is inconsistent. John Summerson identified the problem: ‘in the eighteenth century the word was never used with any

³² Lugar, *Architectural Sketches*, pp. 15-16.

³³ J. Archer, *The Literature of British Domestic Architecture, 1715-1842* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1985), pp. 59-71.

³⁴ Charles Middleton, *Picturesque and Architectural Views ...* (1793). Archer, *Literature*, p. 64.

architectural precision at all'.³⁵ It might be considered rather a marketing term than a definition of architectural form (for what are architectural pattern books but selling tools?). It is the associations attached to the word that were important: rural, certainly, though ideally close to a town; a retreat, rather than a place of work; but perhaps it was that third element – that it indicated the dwelling of a wealthy family – that most appealed to the aspirations of the suburban house-buyers.

So architectural ideas and styles were part of a national discourse in the decades before Calverley, and they offered a range of choices: Gothic, Grecian, Cottage and Villa. The graph below (orange line) shows this interest in architecture reflected in the fiction of the period – use of the words 'architect' and 'architecture' peaking, relatively, between 1800 and 1820.³⁶ It also shows that, with the exception of a few years before 1820, 'cottage' was considerably more common than 'villa'.

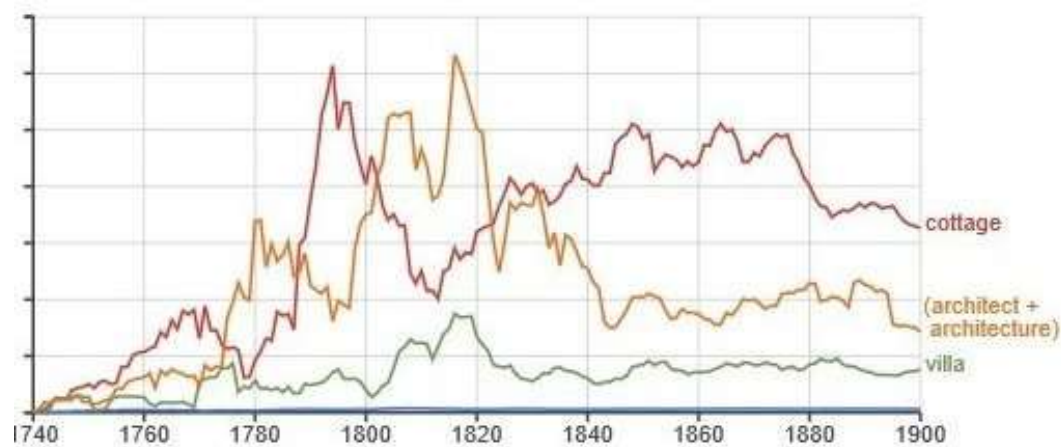


Figure 88. Ngram: 'architect'/'architecture', 'cottage' and 'villa'. Source: author, using Google.com/ngrams. In English language fiction.³⁷

One might ask how far all this reflected a specifically suburban interest in architectural style.

Most of the buildings featured by Ackermann were country houses, and the earlier pattern books

³⁵ J. Summerson, 'The Idea of the Villa', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 107:5036, (July 1959), p. 570. He points out (p.571) that in Middleton's definition of the villa 'no specific architectural character is ascribed'.

³⁶ Use of the word 'mansion' had a similar profile to that of 'architect/architecture'.

³⁷ Ngram: 'cottage', 'villa' and 'architect/architecture' from corpus 'English Fiction', 1700-1900, 3 year smoothing. <https://books.google.com/ngrams>. (31 Dec. 2015).

of cottage and villa were split between gate lodges and rather large houses. Later ones, though, were aimed at a more suburban market. James Thomson's *Retreats* (1827/1835), for example, included eleven cottages: 'retirements of a limited description, adapted ... to the environs of the metropolis'.³⁸ Then there was J.C. Loudon proselytising for suburban life in periodical and encyclopaedia. (Loudon was particularly keen on encouraging women, in both gardening and architecture.)³⁹ The more general point is that architectural style was something to be aware of, and, given that a move into the suburbs was an opportunity to move beyond the practical, style was something that might be considered. Care, though, was needed. A Google ngram enquiry (not displayed here) shows that the pejorative phrase 'suburban villa' was not commonly used until 1835, though instances of its use can be found. The *Mirror*, describing Beulah Spa in 1832, commented that 'The road-side is set with "suburban villas" which would make the spleen of Cowper blaze into madness'.⁴⁰ Given such comments, the suburban newcomer might have approached architectural style with caution.

There was, then, a lively national discourse on style. The following notes present some of the larger houses built in the Tunbridge Wells area prior to Calverley: a demonstration of the influence of that national discourse, but also a palette of examples from which Calverley developers might have selected. With few exceptions, the Picturesque / Gothic dominated. The Nevill family, for example, major landowners to the south of the town, re-built an earlier home at Eridge, with towers and battlements (see below). For most of the eighteenth century they had lived instead at Kidbrooke, a Palladian house near East Grinstead.

³⁸ J. Thomson, *Retreats: A Series of Designs consisting of Plans and Elevations for Cottages, Villas, and Ornamental Buildings* (London, 1835), p. v.

³⁹ Loudon, *Encyclopaedia*, p. 1105.

⁴⁰ 'The Beulah Saline Spa, Norwood', *The Mirror*, XIX/542 (14 April 1832), p.226. The article is illustrated by a wood-cut of the entrance lodge, by Decimus Burton in full P.F. Robinson / Adelaide Lodge style.



Figure 89. Eridge Castle. Source: Clifford, *Guide* (1832), p.61.

Another local family, the Streatfeilds, also adopted the castellated look when they rebuilt their house, Chiddingstone 'Castle' in 1805. Most new houses, though, were for incomers: Mabledon (below, left), for example, built for James Burton in 1805; and Saxonbury Lodge at Frant (below, right), for Daniel Rowland, agent to the Nevills, in the 1820s. Both, again, were in a Picturesque Gothic.



Figure 90. Left: Mabledon. Source: Amsinck, *Tunbridge Wells*, p. 93. Right: Saxonbury Lodge. Source: T.W. Horsfield, *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex* (Lewes, 1835). Reproduced from www.ancestryimages.com, ref. H5426 (6 May 2017).

It may have been Rowland who encouraged the Nevills to apply Picturesque designs for new cottages and lodges on the Eridge estate, as below.



Figure 91. Whitehill and Chase Cottages on the Eridge estate. 1820s. Source: author.
 (Replace equivalent images from Google StreetView following uncertainty over licensing).

Various Picturesque styles, then, had been applied locally. Peter Guillery, though, warns against too great a ‘concentration on the new’, so one might also note the building of Stonewall, near Chiddingstone, about 1815, ‘a large red-brick Georgian house’.⁴¹ Greenwood described it as ‘a handsome house, with beautiful grounds’⁴² but it might actually have resembled the house in the *Repository* story, ‘in the formal style of the beginning of the last century ... a blot on the beautiful landscape’.

2.5.2 The Buildings

There were options aplenty, then, in the architectural literature. Section 2.5.2 turns to the houses that were actually built: the only real proof of an architectural ideal being applied. Two trends are noted: classical / Italianate in the early period, and Elizabethan later. This would appear to go against the emphasis on Picturesque cottage architecture discussed above, but this too had a place. A theme of both Parts One and Two of the study is that people live in places as well as in houses, and there was an architectural dimension to the natural setting that gave Tunbridge Wells its particular sense of place. While few incomers chose to live in cottages, there were the earlier houses ‘scattered about in a strange, wild manner’, and one or two new Picturesque buildings in strategic positions. The northern tip of the Common, for example, was

⁴¹ Woodgates. *History*, p. 373.

⁴² Guillery, *Small House*, p.2. Greenwood, *Epitome*, p. 114.

probably the most frequently reproduced image of the town (see below and Section 2.1.3 above). The rocks alone would have made it Picturesque, but they were enhanced by a new building, St Helena cottage, and the crenellated lodging-house behind.⁴³



Figure 92. St Helena in c. 1844. Source: J. Colbran (publ.), *Colbran's new guide for Tunbridge Wells ...* (Tunbridge Wells, 1844), frontispiece.

The remainder of this section looks at more typical houses in Calverley and other suburban parts of the town. Two strands can be seen: classical / Italianate and rustic / Elizabethan, with distinct periods, locations and customers. That there were these patterns suggests that the style of individual houses did have significance. They are considered here under the headings 'builders' classical' and 'architect's vernacular' – 'classical' and 'vernacular' simply to highlight the distinction: true vernacular would probably have involved weather-boarding. Contemporary (Robert Kerr, 1864) descriptions might have been 'Italian' and 'Elizabethan'. Both represent an architectural ideal.

2.5.2a Builders' Classical

This first trend – for the classical / Italian style - extended throughout the period of the study and on into the 1880s. It was not a specifically suburban style in itself, but it was the suburban

⁴³ St Helena was described in the 1837 rate-book (TWBC) as 'New House by the Rock', and appears in Barnard's 1833 sketches (see Chapter 2.1).

experience – of new opportunities - that enabled incomers to adopt a style that they felt comfortable with, or one that they had perhaps always aspired to.

Any consideration of the houses on the Calverley estate must start with those provided by Ward and Burton around 1830. These were, generally speaking, classical. Burton's designs for the villas in Regent's Park had been highly praised. Elmes said of the Marquess of Hertford's villa 'This is decorated simplicity, such as the hand of taste, aided by the purse of wealth can alone execute'.⁴⁴ The houses in Calverley Park were much smaller but had that same simplicity. Twentieth-century commentators praised it. Hussey spoke of 'reticence', and J.F. McRae said that Burton's domestic work 'impresses the observer with a sense of purity and simplicity'.⁴⁵ Contemporary observers were perhaps a little less sure. Granville, cited earlier, said they were 'rather pleasing than striking',⁴⁶ and *Kidd's* guide summarised Calverley Park as 'best adapted to an economical expenditure' for families 'of moderate extent'.⁴⁷ In commodifying the 'villa in the park', Burton had perhaps destroyed some of its appeal. At least four of the early residents built themselves larger, grander houses elsewhere on the estate.

It is the slightly later houses that better indicate the architectural ideal of the incomers and some of Burton's restraint is lacking. The use of stucco/cement rather than stone made it easier to add ornamentation. Brackets became more ornate, and there were cornices and quoins.

'Beechwood' (below, left) was one of the 'mansions' on Calverley Fairmile, built c.1855, for a Mile End distiller who had previously lived in Calverley Park. No. 15 Lansdowne Road (below, right) was much smaller and the ornamentation a little more restrained, but the intention was the same.

⁴⁴ Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, pp. 28-31, 52.

⁴⁵ J.F. McRae, 'Burton's Tunbridge Wells', *The Architects' Journal*, (16 Feb. 1927), pp. 249-250.

⁴⁶ Granville, *Spas of England*, iii, p. 624. Though of Calverley Parade and Terrace he wrote 'every house here ... wears the aspect of style and inward ease', p. 622.

⁴⁷ *Kidd's Picturesque Pocket Companion*, p. 34. It was a direct copy from Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, pp. 53-4.



Figure 93. Ornate decoration. Left: Beechwood. Source: Local collection, origin unknown. Right: 15 Lansdowne Road. Source: author.

Most of the houses in Nevill and Hungershall Parks were similar. Much of this was speculative development but was clearly meeting a demand from customers. One non-speculative development was no. 11 Nevill Park. Built in the late 1850s of white brick 'faced in scagliola', Nevill Court was the suburban ideal of the sherry magnate Robert Blake Byass.



Figure 94. Nevill Court. Source: TW Ref Lib, Sales brochures. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library.

Robert Kerr in 1860 would have called it 'Rural Italian' (though tending to the 'palatial'), and would have approved. He liked the 'singular majesty-and-grace-combined' of classical

ornament.⁴⁸ One of the criteria used by Kerr in judging a style was the sense of ‘importance’ it implied. With Rural Italian it would depend upon the particular building, but when approaching the ‘Palatial Italian’ (as with the main block here) it could suggest majesty and stateliness. So Nevill Court demonstrated the standing and taste of its owner. For once, the newly-rich might be said not to be slavishly following the previously-rich: these Italianate houses – particularly the ‘palatial Italian’ form – might represent rather the urban, mercantile heritage of the Italian Renaissance (though its use by the Royal Family at Osborne might have also appealed).⁴⁹

How a building is read, though, depends also on the observer. Contemporary references to houses in Calverley Fairmile offer opposing views. Beechwood (see Fig. 93) was later acquired by George Sandars, from a family of successful corn factors/maltsters. He had earlier bought a country estate in Essex, but his wife preferred Tunbridge Wells. His granddaughter, though, was dismissive of Beechwood: ‘an overgrown villa type rather disappointing after Little Chesterford Park [the Essex estate]’.⁵⁰ The neighbouring property was Dunorlan, built by Henry Reed, a Yorkshireman who had made his fortune in Tasmania. It was broadly similar, but with steep roofs – what Kerr might have called ‘English Renaissance’ - so rather more palatial. Reed was a proto-Salvationist, and some of his fellow-worshippers considered the house excessive, and inappropriate for someone of his beliefs, ‘some Christian people ... found fault with him on the score of the house’. He blamed it on his architect.⁵¹ Houses have meanings but the meanings are contingent on the viewpoint of the observer.

John Summerson in his post-war essay on the suburban villa was splendidly outraged by the abuse of architectural rules by Victorian builders.⁵² Elsewhere he described his own house as

⁴⁸ Kerr, *Gentleman’s House*, pp. 371, 69.

⁴⁹ While Hussey considered Thomas Hope’s Italianate Deepdene, near Dorking ‘the parent of ... innumerable suburban villas’, Hussey, *The Picturesque*, p. 223.

⁵⁰ N. Lawes, ‘Some notes on the Sandars Family’ (no date) on *Sandars: Now and Then* <http://www.sandars.org.uk/24192.html> (4 May 2016), p.5.

⁵¹ M.S.E. Reed, *Henry Reed: an eventful life devoted to God and man* (London, 1906), pp. 65-66.

⁵² His particular bugbear was the flat-sided arch: a ‘singularly meaningless mannerism which ... spread like a drug habit’. Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, p. 226.

‘that peculiarly imbecile kind which is architecturally half a villa’. He commented on the mixture of Greek and Italian elements, and pondered on the builder’s motives in choosing them: ‘Doubtless he conceived this to be ‘taste’ and believed that taste was marketable’.⁵³ Doubtless, though, the builder was right. Within Tunbridge Wells - though moving a little out of period - the ornamentation was being taken further. In the 1870s, Hori Pink, builder and cabinet-maker, built five pairs of ‘villas’ on London Road (below left). There is no architect named on the plans (below centre) – much of the detail seems to have been copied from an earlier house in Lansdowne Road (below right), probably by Willicombe: an actual example, then, of builders’ Classical.



Figure 95. Wellington Villas. Left: as built, centre: as planned, right: a possible model – no. 23 Lansdowne Road. Sources: left and right - author; centre - TWBC Planning archives. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery.

(Author’s images replace equivalents from Google StreetView following uncertainty over licensing).

To Summerson, Wellington Villas were probably ‘trite stucco-work with an increasing quantity of distorted and misplaced ornament and neglected proportion’.⁵⁴ To prospective occupiers in 1877, these buildings probably ‘said’ fashionable London – Paddington, Kensington, Belgravia. Perhaps a more appropriate point of reference than Kerr for Calverley might be Loudon, who was writing in the 1830s. Loudon claimed not to be advocating any particular style ‘architectural style ... may be left to the taste of the occupant’, though his preference was for the Classical: ‘the

⁵³ In his ‘Foreword’ to Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴ Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, p. 227.

Roman, or as it is commonly called, the Grecian, is obviously preferable to the Gothic'.⁵⁵ He claimed that this was because of its compactness, and therefore cheapness, but he also liked the impression of solidity and magnitude. He had a rather particular view towards truth in design. He criticised designs where the symbolic structures of the surface decoration – representing pilasters and lintels – could not have worked in practice. This fictive architecture had to be true to the story it was telling.⁵⁶ It was a fiction that would be harder to support as classical features were added to progressively smaller houses, like those in Dukes Road (below left): the moulded string course, the shouldered surrounds to the windows; the keystone, the eaves brackets and corniced chimney.



Figure 96. Dukes Road. Source: Philip Whitbourn, by permission.

It may not have been grammatical, but the point was that somebody had cared enough to bother. Some sense of order implied by that particular style might have been the appeal, though it may simply have been that there was formal decoration of any sort – other houses in the road display the polychromatic brickwork of an alternative style. So maybe it was the fact of a style being applied rather than the meaning of that style that was the architectural ideal here. That is not to say that any style was acceptable for small houses. When the 'model cottages' were built in Newcomen Road in 1850 (see Chapter 1.3) they were in a rustic 'cottage' style. When small 'villas' were built for the market ten years later on the opposite side of the road, they had

⁵⁵ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, pp. 117, 120.

⁵⁶ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, pp. 124 et seq.

classical features. The realities of cottage life were too real for these customers: their suburban ideal was for something a little smarter – the equivalent of a suit for Sundays.



**Figure 97. Newcomen Road. Cottages c.1850. Houses c.1860. Source: author.
(Replace equivalent images from Google StreetView following uncertainty over licensing)..**

Dana Arnold saw in the eighteenth century country house ‘aesthetic vocabularies of antiquity and arcadia’ which might be used to further the hegemony of the ruling elite.⁵⁷ Greenwood, in *Epitome*, simply saw houses that were ‘elegant’ and ‘modern’. For suburban house builders and buyers, the classical style, increasingly Italianate, was the safe choice. For the merchant in Nevill Park it told of financial success and social standing; for members of the existing establishment in Lansdowne Road or Wellington Villas, it affirmed their continuing association with fashionable London. In Beulah Road (see Chapter 1.3) it again told of success and conformity, and in Dukes Road of respectability and of being taken seriously.

Reference was made earlier to ‘Stonewall’, the 1815 house in the old red-brick Georgian style. Its location was difficult to identify until it became obvious that the present ‘Stonewall Park’ is just that house, despite being described as ‘Italianate, tall and square ... the walls faced with Roman cement and lined out to look like ashlar. The effect is of an opulent villa of c.1860 that has strayed incongruously from Kensington to this romantic corner of the Weald’.⁵⁸ It seems that its mid-century owners also felt the attraction of the ‘builders’ classical’ and had it covered in stucco.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Arnold, *Rural Urbanism*, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Newman, *West Kent*, 3rd edition, p. 173.

⁵⁹ Ptolemy Dean, who restored the house in 2008-9 has confirmed that ‘we found the old red brickwork

2.5.2b Architect's Vernacular

Summerson blamed the distressing confusion of suburban architecture on the urge to add 'character' to a property, and by extension, to its owner.⁶⁰ The proposition in the section above is that the dominant architectural ideal within Calverley / Tunbridge Wells was the opposite, the urge to conform and to demonstrate that conformity in a formal classical architecture, even if not always grammatically correct. The style was not specifically suburban, but the suburban environment allowed the incomers to do this. There was an alternative approach which adopted a rustic / Elizabethan style, though it tended to be later and mainly on the outskirts of the town. As it developed it became a more specifically suburban architectural ideal.

It is true, as Chapter 1.1 demonstrated, that there were examples of this style in the early days of Calverley: nos. 3 and 4 in the Park, and Burton's own Baston Cottage. They were not, though, taken as models for other houses apart from a few lodges. (Though there were two notable 'Elizabethan' developments in the centre of town: the Priory next to Holy Trinity (below, left); and Belvedere Terrace (1840s), opposite (below, right).)



Figure 98. 'Elizabethan' style in the centre of town. Left: The Priory 1830. Source: TWBC archives. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery. Right: Belvedere Terrace 1840s. Source: J.S. & Co. print no. 1672. Private collection.

Some of Burton's private commissions, however, were in this rustic style, though they tended to be in the surrounding countryside. Spring Grove in Pembury, and The Grove, in Penshurst (below,

under the present render'. Email to the present author 17 April 2015.

⁶⁰ Summerson, *Unromantic Castle*, p. 221.

left and right), both had ornate barge boards and hooded, mullioned windows, and The Grove had rustic pillars, like the early design for Farnborough Lodge in Calverley Park.⁶¹

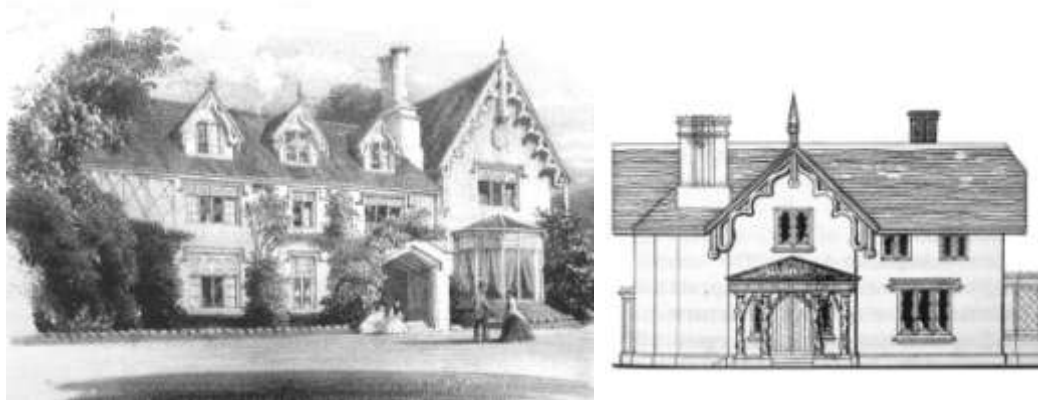


Figure 99. Burton commissions in a 'rustic' idiom. Left: Spring Grove, Pembury. Source: TW Ref Lib, Sales brochures. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library. Right: The Grove, Penshurst. Source: Whitbourn, *Decimus Burton*, p. 35.

The style of these larger houses was 'Elizabethan' / Manor house rather than Cottage, and this can also be seen in two of his other commissions. The early picture of Burrswood (c.1831), below left, has gables, hooded windows and a Gothic loggia. Bentham Hill (c.1832), below right, had irregular hipped roofs and complex chimneys, and some unusual features: a canted porch and divided chimney-breast.⁶²



Figure 100. Further Burton commissions. Left: Burrswood. Source: 'Burrswood', Salomons Museum, dsm.m.00276. Courtesy of Salomons Museum, Salomons UK Ltd. Further use of this image requires the prior, written consent of the Museum. Right: Bentham Hill. Source: photo, Ian Kinghorn, by permission.

⁶¹ These details are taken largely from Whitbourn, *Decimus Burton*, pp. 35-7. Burton also had a commission for a traditional 'Grecian' house within Tunbridge Wells – Great Culverdon on the northern extension of Mount Ephraim. A Gothic 'castle' (folly) and Swiss Cottage were built in the grounds. (The architect of these latter is unknown. There is a possibility that P.F. Robinson was involved.)

⁶² Newman thought them 'weird hybrid Tudoresque, of an elephantine playfulness' Newman, *West Kent*, p. 110.

Mordaunt Crook, William Whyte and others have suggested that certain types of owner were attracted to certain architectural styles. So Whyte claimed that 'Italianate architecture was utilitarian, and associated with both industry and commerce. French... was the style of choice of the super-rich ...ostentatious and expensive'; and Crook that by the 1840s 'for bourgeois patrons, Italianate had become almost a badge of upward mobility'.⁶³ That was perhaps demonstrated in Section 2.5.1 above, but no clear pattern is apparent in these commissions of Burton's.

Burrswood was for a City financier; Bentham Hill for a vinegar manufacturer; The Grove for a merchant family married into local gentry; and Spring Grove for that same gentry family. The new Scotney Castle, Jacobean in its Picturesque setting (see Chapter 2.2), was built in the 1830s for the Husseys – local gentry descended from Wealden ironmasters. Christopher Hussey pondered why Burton was not given the commission – assuming, presumably, that Burton would have produced a classical design.⁶⁴ The examples above demonstrate that a Burton design would not necessarily have been classical. The architect, Anthony Salvin, was perhaps inspired by Somerhill (three miles from Calverley) which was genuinely Jacobean: he was employed there about 1831 to make improvements.⁶⁵

These various examples cover some quite distinct styles, but all might reflect a romantic, historical appeal, as suggested in Chapter 2.3 – the Romantic/Historical Ideal. Kerr would have termed them 'Revived Elizabethan'. He believed the Elizabethan plan – without basements - to be particularly advantageous, and felt that a desire to retain a traditional English style praiseworthy. Within Calverley there was a particular interpretation of the style. Chapter 1.3 explained that the architect Robert Wallace designed his own 'Jacobean' house in Calverley Park Gardens (Figure 49), and that this provided a model for a further ten to twelve houses by Willicombe.

⁶³ W. Whyte, *Oxford Jackson: Architecture, Education, Status, and Style 1835-1924* (Oxford, 2006), p. 217. J.M. Crook, *The Rise of the Nouveaux Riches: Style and Status in Victorian and Edwardian Architecture* (London, 1999), pp. 40-41.

⁶⁴ He writes that his grandfather had himself produced sketches 'quite in the style of Decimus Burton'. C. Hussey, *English Country Houses: Late Georgian 1800-1840* (London, 1958), p. 220.

⁶⁵ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. 121.



Figure 101. Willicombe houses in Carlton Road. Left: The Ferns. Source: TW Ref Lib, Sales brochures. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library. Right: Rock Bank. Source: author.

Willicombe's designs differed from Wallace's in using sash windows, and Wallace may not have put a little gable atop the bay window as in the example above right. To worry too much about grammar, though, and whether sash windows and spurious gables are 'correct', would be to follow the path of John Summerson. These houses were built and sold over a period of ten to fifteen years, so clearly had meaning for their purchasers. Loudon, presenting some rather extreme stylistic options for a small house that might be built in one of the colonies, argued the appeal of 'English associations' to someone building in Van Diemen's Land 'surrounded by primeval forests or wastes'.⁶⁶ It might be that similar thoughts of 'British scenery and civilisation' had been the retirement dream of members of the Indian Civil Service, for it was such as these who bought these houses.

At the opposite end of town George Mansfield was developing Broadwater Down in a mixture of styles, though with 'semi-Gothic' in the majority. They were not unlike the houses in Calverley Park Gardens / Carlton Road, though typically in white brick, and with mullioned windows. Towards the later, western end they tended more to the Elizabethan 'manor-house': the houses were bigger and professional architects were involved, the example below by William Young, in 1878.

⁶⁶ Loudon, *Encyclopaedia*, p. 80.



Figure 102. 40/42 Broadwater Down. 1878 (by William Young). Source: *The Building News* (11 Oct. 1878). Reproduced from P. Whitbourn, *Broadwater Down* (unpublished leaflet, Tunbridge Wells, 1985)

This is moving rather beyond the period of the study but the point is that, parallel to the appeal of the classical for the smaller, more central houses, there was this celebration of a traditional ‘English’ house on the outskirts. Daniel Maudlin talks of the ideal of the cottage morphing into the more patriotic image of Elizabethan manor-house at this time: ‘Old England ... replaced Arcadia as the imaginary destination of retreat’.⁶⁷ Ballantyne and Law see a similar explanation for the development of ‘Tudoresque’: ‘when times are changing rapidly ... the “old” starts to have a value ... It acquires authority and gives a comforting feeling of stability’ – even if many of the details were not historically valid.⁶⁸ It was a style, Kerr suggested, best suited to the country, or as in Tunbridge Wells, for the larger plots on the outskirts of town. With well-planted gardens, and space for stables and outdoor staff, there was a sense of privacy, and perhaps privilege. Combining the Rustic Ideal with the Romantic/Historical Ideal, here was a second Architectural Ideal.

It also provides a clear path through into twentieth-century suburbia, and here Calverley was perhaps a trend-setter. In 1869 John Ward’s son Neville commissioned an architect to design him a house - Calverley Grange (below left). It was the size and shape of a ‘manor house’, and had

⁶⁷ Maudlin, *Idea of the Cottage*. The Old England theme is developed from p. 177. Maudlin exaggerates the amount of cottage architecture in Tunbridge Wells – influenced perhaps by St Helena and Baston Cottage, pp. 78-9 and 96. There is an unfortunate confusion between Calverley Park and Calverley Park Gardens on p. 79.

⁶⁸ Ballantyne and Law, *Tudoresque*, p. 18.

gables, and chimneys, diapered brickwork and mullioned windows, but nevertheless looked rather different. The architect was George Devey, and this was the beginning of a new tradition of ‘vernacular’ design, to be carried forward, amongst others, by Richard Norman Shaw and Charles Voysey. The house was featured in a *Country Life* article in 1971 with Mark Girouard suggesting incorrectly that it had been demolished.⁶⁹ The front elevation shown here has suffered over the years, but is perhaps all the more ‘suburban’. The garden front, to judge from an aerial photograph, is closer to Devey’s original plan (see RIBApix, RIBA29448) which was similar to his earlier Hammerfield in Penshurst. Devey provided another, slightly smaller, design for a speculative development closer to the centre of Calverley in Ferndale (below, right). Here was a link to the suburban designs of the next century.⁷⁰



Figure 103. Devey designs in Calverley, c.1869. Left: Calverley Grange. Source: author. Right: Kelsall Lodge, Ferndale. Source: Philip Whitbourn, by permission. (Author’s image replaces equivalent image from Google StreetView following uncertainty over licensing).

2.5.3 The Architectural Ideal - Summary

This chapter has discussed whether there was an architectural aspect to the suburban ideal. Part One has already demonstrated that architectural configuration, in the sense of individual family homes in gardens, was a fundamental part of it; and this chapter suggests an architectural aspect

⁶⁹ M. Girouard, ‘Rural Architecture for the Rich: George Devey in Kent. II’, *Country Life*, 149/3852 (8 Apr. 1971), p. 812-815.

⁷⁰ It was demolished in 1981, despite opposition. See: J. Allibone, ‘Pioneer of the Vernacular’ (letter), *Country Life*, 165/4260 (1 Mar. 1979), p.556.

to the picturesque setting which was part of the appeal of this particular town. The bigger question is of architectural style and whether the style of the individual houses was also part of the appeal. The chapter has looked at the actual buildings, and noted two trends. The first was a preference throughout the period of the study, and later, for a classical / 'Italian' style, applied equally to large villas on Calverley Fairmile and, with correspondingly less grammatical 'correctness', to two-bedroomed cottages behind Beulah Road ('cottage' being used here to denote size). The study suggests that this was because the classical / 'Italian' style spoke of formality, convention and taste. With the social insecurities that applied at both villa and cottage level, and the range of value-laden architectural options available, the classical was the safe choice. The 'distorted and misplaced ornament and neglected proportion' may have distressed aesthetes, but it differentiated the houses from the by-then boring eighteenth-century terraces of London; it differentiated them from any hint of involvement in agriculture, and it was an obvious link to the country houses of the wealthy and admired.

The second trend, for the 'Elizabethan', started a little later, and was initially applied to the larger houses on the outskirts. It was perhaps more specifically suburban, speaking to the Romantic / Historical and to the Rustic Ideals. In the earlier days this was a style for those secure in their command of cultural trends, but it came to represent tradition: a symbol of stability and security in a changing world. Putting a house like this, in a garden, with a view, brought together all aspects of the Suburban Ideal, and it came eventually to represent the suburbia of the following century, celebrated by James Richards in *Castles on the Ground*.

Part Two - Conclusion

'The cities and mansions that people dream of...'

Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopias*

Part Two has suggested that there was a utopian aspect to suburban life; represented in various forms in art, poetry and novels; and that this utopian vision could be, and was, packaged and sold. Even without the railway posters of later campaigns, branding and image building were part of the Calverley initiative. The suburb, to use Ron Cooley's phrase about Tunbridge Wells the leisure town, was 'constructed discursively and imaginatively'.

Different aspects of this image have been considered: Chapter 2.2 showed how elements of the Picturesque – the beautiful, the sublime and the 'shaggy' - were presented to a public already sensitised to their meaning; Chapter 2.3 demonstrated how associations were made with newly-popular medieval and Elizabethan romance; and Chapter 2.4 presented four variations on the Rustic Ideal with a hint at the importance of gardens. The following extract from the journal of Fanny Wood, new to the town in the 1830's, shows how an incomer was alert to each of these features: 'Truly this is a lovely country! I never saw any place abounding with so many cottages, such fantastic rocks, such magnificent trees!'¹ There were social aspects, touched on in chapters 2.4 and 2.5: suggestions of the aspirational in the preference for certain architectural styles; and references to the importance of sociability. The suburban ideal was not to retreat into isolation. It was noted that while people live in houses, they also live in places, and much of Part Two was about the attraction of the place: the Picturesque, historical and rustic setting of Tunbridge Wells. The suburban house, though, the individual family home in its own garden, is the essence of suburbia, and Chapter 2.5 demonstrated how the ideals of rusticity, of patriotism, stability and security, gradually came to be represented in the 'Elizabethan' architectural style, that was to be carried forward into the next century.

¹ F.A. Wood and M.S. Rolt (ed.), *A great-niece's journals; being extracts from the journals of Fanny Anne Burney (Mrs. Wood) from 1830 to 1842* (London, 1926), p. 72 (31 Oct. 1835).

One of the most effective campaigners for the suburban ideal was J.C. Loudon. In *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* (1838) he claimed that a 'suburban residence with a very small portion of land attached will contain all that is essential to happiness'.² It was not just the power of Loudon's argument: the mere volume of cottage and villa literature- Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture* (1834) had over 1,300 pages - had a normalising effect. The initial proposition was that to have a suburban retreat was a good thing; in time it became the expected thing. Loudon was also capable of using emotion to sell the dream. At one point he described the joys of watering a garden, and the 'satisfaction which the ... master of the house enjoys, when he returns from the city to his garden in the summer evenings, and applies the syringe to his wall trees, with refreshing enjoyment to himself and ... the delight of his children'.³ Repose, retirement, summer evenings, the delight of one's children – 'All the necessaries of life may be obtained in as great perfection by the occupier of a suburban residence ... as by the greatest nobleman in England'.⁴ In that one sentence Loudon summarised the suburban ideal.

² Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, p. 8.

³ *Ibid.* p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 9.

Part Three. Building the Community - the Suburban Ideal 'Experienced'

Introduction

Part Three of the study is about people, class and community. It is about the people who came to Calverley and how they moulded the social and physical space around them to create their ideal.

In 1982 F.M.L. Thompson set out to explain 'the social zoning, social segregation, and social intermingling of the suburban scene'¹, and the words might equally apply here. Considerations such as these have been behind much suburban historiography, from the local studies of Dyos and Thompson, to the economic analyses of Rodger and the historical geographers, and the cultural explorations of Archer and McKellar. It is Robert Fishman's presentation, though, in *Bourgeois Utopias*, which provides the starting point for most of the five chapters that follow. Each of them addresses a particular theme of suburban historiography: movement, control, separation, withdrawal and identity.

Fishman's analysis starts with Clapham Common in the late eighteenth century, and Victoria Park, Manchester, in the mid nineteenth. In both cases the story is of outward movement from the city: what might be termed a 'dispersal' model of population movement. Chapter 3.1 – 'Movement' – considers how far this 'dispersal' model was reflected in Calverley – was it an outward flow from London? Developer John Ward's own experience fits it very well, but the movement patterns of those who actually settled in Calverley were more complex.

Fishman had little to say about the interaction between suburban incomers, and existing residents. Chapter 3.2 – 'Control' - starts, rather, with a hint from Denis Cosgrove, the historical geographer, that suburbanisation might be viewed as a quasi-colonial situation, with the original population dispossessed by the incomers. The chapter suggests an alternative analogy: of the incomers as customers to be exploited. Despite early disagreements between 'Old Town' and

¹ Thompson, *Suburbia* – on book jacket.

'New' over a 'local improvement act', the interests of the two groups generally coincided, with the 'Old Town' keen to create a suburban ideal that would attract further incomers.

Chapters 3.3 and 3.4 return to Fishman. His description of Victoria Park stressed exclusion and segregation – that its purpose was to separate the successful bourgeoisie from the warehouses and factories that represented their wealth, and the homes of the workers who created it.

Calverley Park with its lodges and gates is a straightforward example of physical segregation, but Chapter 3.3 – 'Separation' - demonstrates that segregation was also achieved by other forms of zoning. It looks at the boundaries between zones where problems sometimes occurred, and at spaces that remained shared. It suggests that the separation between Tunbridge Wells and the outside world, specifically London, was equally significant.

Chapter 3.4 – 'Withdrawal, or Engagement?' – considers Fishman's proposition that the move to the suburbs was driven by a change in the family dynamic that urged a separation of the private world of the home from the public world of business – the 'separate spheres' concept/construct that was highlighted by the work of Davidoff and Hall. The chapter suggests, rather, that the locus of the suburban ideal within Calverley/Tunbridge Wells was not the private home, nor the segregated park, but the town as a whole. It looks at strategies for creating a 'safe space' for the incomers in the wider town: a combination of 'control' and 'encouragement'. It also addresses the question of gender balance, and ponders why Calverley would seem to have been so attractive to women.

The final chapter, 3.5 – 'Identity' – considers the social backgrounds of the suburban incomers. Were they, in Elmes' words, 'happy free-born sons of commerce', and, if so, were they looking to adopt the values and behaviours of an older elite? The chapter shows that there were, indeed, self-made men from commerce and industry; and there were representatives of landed families. The majority, though, were from a broader group, non-landed, but of comparable status: respectable, comfortable, confident, established. It was towards this group that the newly-rich

in Calverley were evolving, rather than some landed / aristocratic elite.

Part Three, then, is about groups and sub-groups sharing a space but remaining distinct: a rather different proposition from the suggestion in *Paradise Planned* that 'garden suburbs' evoked 'the physical structure of preindustrial-era villages ... to shape neighbourhoods and foster a sense of community'.² The intention was not to foster a sense of community, but rather to deliver an idealized way of life to a small section of society. While enjoying their ideal life, though, they had to find a way of living alongside others in that same space.

Before leaving this introductory section it is useful to identify some of these spaces and groups, and to provide some indication of numbers. During the nineteenth century the population of England and Wales increased more than threefold (c.9 million to more than 32 million). The increase in Tunbridge Wells was much greater, from c.1,000 in 1801 to more than 33,000 in 1901.³ Getting precise figures for Tunbridge Wells is difficult as it had no official identity until 1835. Even afterwards, boundary changes make comparisons difficult. The graphs below, though, make two fairly clear points: that population increased significantly in the 1820s, and that it continued to increase at a faster rate than the national and county averages.

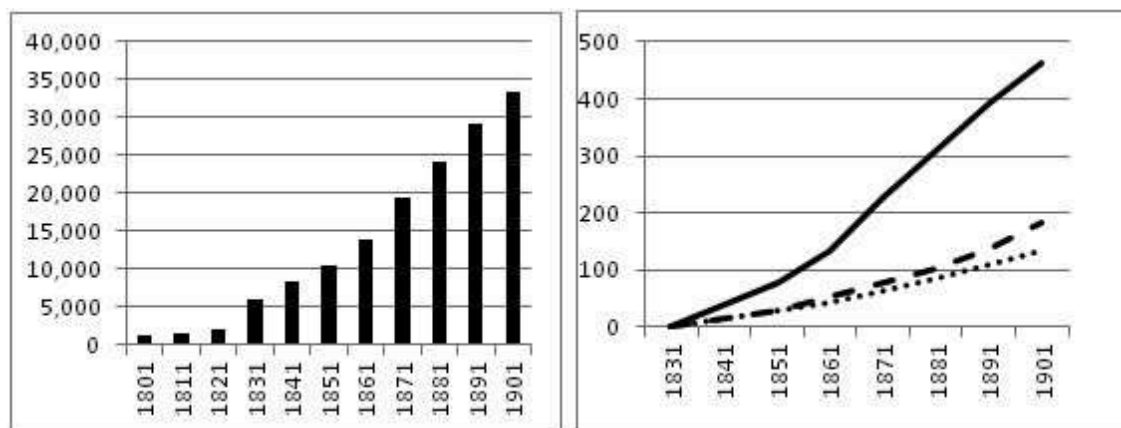


Figure 104. Left: Population of Tunbridge Wells 1801-1901. Right: Percentage population growth from 1831. Solid line - Tunbridge Wells, Dashes - Kent, Dots - England & Wales. Source: author.⁴

² Stern et al, *Paradise Planned*, p. 11.

³ C.M. Law calculated an 18-fold increase in population of resort towns, compared to 12-fold increase in industrial towns. C.M. Law, 'The Growth of Urban Population in England and Wales, 1801-1911', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 41 (1967), p. 139.

⁴ Figures for England and Wales from 'Census of England and Wales, 1901, Preliminary report and tables

A local census from 1837 provides the first detailed figures. The total population recorded was 9064,⁵ considerably higher than the 8032 in the 1841 national census. The difference has not been investigated, but it is unlikely to represent a real fall. The absolute figure is less important than the division it allows into zones and groups. In terms of 'zones', the Old Town, Mount Ephraim / London Road, and Calverley are the ones that dominate the study. They were not formal administrative divisions, but would have been recognised at the time.



Figure 105. Tunbridge Wells. Zones and population in 1837. Source: author, based on 'Billings' map in Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*.

The 'Old Town' held about a quarter of the population, and represented the old centre of settlement: the Pantiles, Mount Sion, and the High Street. It was a mixed commercial and residential area. It is taken as representing the local traders, but also included small cottages, and a number of resident gentry and visitors. Mount Ephraim / London Road, with 14% of the

...', BPP 1901 XC [Cd.616], p. 2, from 'Online Historical Population Reports' <http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/Browse?path=Browse/Census> (19 Dec. 2014). Figures for Kent from G.S. Minchin, 'Table of Population', in W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Kent* (3 vols, London, 1908-1932), iii, pp. 358. Figures for Tunbridge Wells from a number of sources, eg L. Anderson, 'The Growth of Population and the Local Economy ...', in J. Cunningham (ed.), *400 Years of the Wells ...* (Tunbridge Wells, 2005), pp. 81-2, though Anderson's figures for 1881 and 1891 were from the 1891 census and had been amended in 1901.

⁵ TWBC 1837 Census. The total used here has been adjusted to correct errors in the original.

population, is the area bordering the Common. It had always been popular with visitors, and remained so into the nineteenth century. That period saw the development of Church Road, York Road and Clarence Road in the space between London Road and Mount Pleasant. These were popular with visitors, but also attracted ‘suburban’ incomers and local professionals: doctors, lawyers and bankers. Calverley in 1837 had only about 5% of the population, and that included both the ‘commercial’ part (188 residents), and the ‘suburban’ part (263 residents) that is the main focus here. The ‘other suburban’ zone was represented in 1837 by Grove Hill (see Appendix B). Over the period of the study other developments such as Hungershall and Nevill Parks, would fall within this category. There were four, relatively new and densely occupied areas of ‘working class’ houses: Windmill Fields, to the east; Herveytown and Crown Fields in the centre; and The Lew, to the north and off the map. Together these represented 30% of the population.

The 1837 census also allows an analysis by occupation (of the head of household).⁶

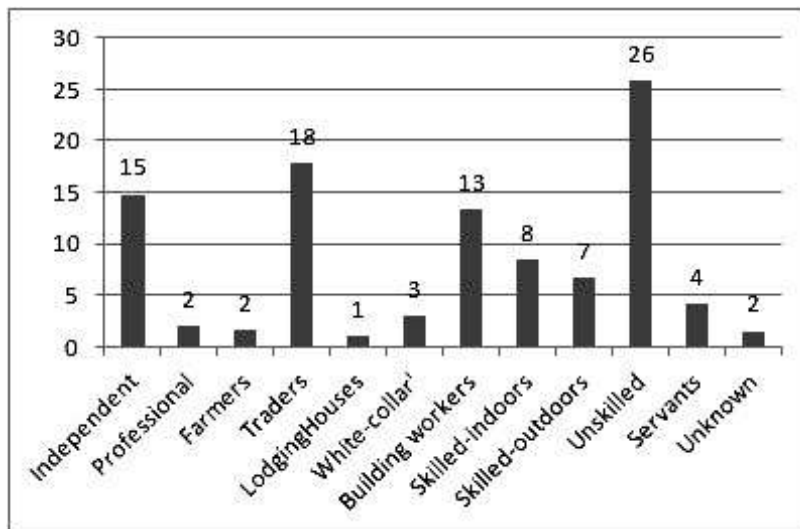


Figure 106. Tunbridge Wells 1837. Occupation of head of household (%). Source: author.

The ‘Traders’ (18%) and ‘Independents’ (15%) are the focus of this study. Traders were the more traditional residents of the town, serving the seasonal visitors, though, as the study will demonstrate, by 1837 many were incomers. About half were based in the Old Town, where they

⁶ Analysis by head of household hides the number of domestic staff. In 1837 there were 887 female servants (18% of the female population), and 335 male servants (8% of the male population). Comparable figures for Kent in 1841 were 10.1% and 2.8%. It also hides lodger households, but including these does not significantly change the figures.

represented 36% of households.⁷ Independents were mainly rentiers and the wealthy retired: those with the means to seek out their suburban ideal. 22% lived in the Old Town; 22% in Calverley and the 'other suburban' areas, and 48% in Mount Ephraim / London Road. The study focuses mainly on those in Calverley, but many in the other two zones shared the same background and motivation in coming to the town. They integrated more with the rest of the town: perhaps their choice of a house in these more mixed areas indicates a different personality.

At times there was also a considerable population of visitors. By mid-century they probably had the same 'suburban ideal' as the incomers: seeking a picturesque, 'rustic' retreat, rather than the opportunities for misbehaviour that attracted earlier visitors. Their relationship to the community, though, would have been different, so they are excluded from the analysis.⁸ Weekly lists in the *Tunbridge Wells Gazette* from 1855 provide some indication of visitor numbers compared to 'independent' residents. Most visitors (70% in 1855) stayed in Mount Ephraim / London Road, outnumbering the residents there. They represented only 26% of the combined visitor/resident total in Calverley (16% if Calverley Promenade is excluded - it was especially suitable for visitors). Ten years later visitor numbers had increased only slightly, but resident households had almost doubled. Their preference for Mount Ephraim / London Road continued, so their proportion in other areas fell, in Calverley to 21% (15% excluding Calverley Promenade). Combining Calverley with other 'suburban' developments brings the visitor proportion down to 13%. (The figures relate to peak season.) The visitors remained important for traders, but by the later nineteenth century the town was predominantly a residential suburb rather than a resort. Chapter 3.1, below, starts the Part Three analysis by considering the geographical origin of the Calverley residents.

⁷ 'Traders': shop-keepers, inn-keepers, auctioneers, etc. Butchers, bakers and grocers are always included, but shoemakers and similar only when the premises appears to be a shop. 'Building workers' includes both those involved in the construction/maintenance of buildings, and those producing the materials, such as brick-makers and sawyers.

⁸ They often stayed for lengthy periods – an average of eleven weeks for visitors to Calverley Park in 1855.

3.1 Movement

The suburb: *'one of the transit camps of modern society'*

H.J. Dyos.⁹

Movement is one of the fundamentals of the suburban story, and movement in particular outwards from the city. It is basic to Fishman's model: Victoria Park and Clapham are just case studies for a bigger story.

So: successful London merchants in the eighteenth century retreated at weekends to nearby villages on the northern heights; the better-connected built themselves river-side villas to the south-west; and smart terraces and squares were developed in 'suburban' Westminster and Bloomsbury. These last, though, were not for the likes of merchants, who took advantage, instead, of new roads, bridges and the introduction of the horse-bus, to build themselves 'suburban villas' along the dusty roads leading out of town.¹⁰ It was never enough: they had to keep moving on as exclusive outer-suburb was transformed inexorably into semi-urban inner-suburb. Charles Booth's statement that 'Southwark is moving to Walworth, Walworth to North Brixton and Stockwell, while the servant-keepers of outer South London go to Croydon' is cited by many.¹¹ Dyos called it 'social leap-frogging' and thus the comment at the top of the page about the suburb being a 'transit camp'. It was a striving for a suburban ideal without ever quite achieving it.

This 'dispersal' model is a commonplace of suburban historiography, but it is not the only model. The more significant population flows in the nineteenth century were in the opposite direction: into the city. The statistician E.G. Ravenstein, working in the 1880s, proposed certain 'Laws of Migration'. One of these stated that 'the major direction of migration is from the agricultural

⁹ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 23.

¹⁰ See, for example, Fishman, *Utopias*, Chap. 2.

¹¹ For example, Brandon and Short, *South East*, pp. 285-6. The original is in: C. Booth *Life and Labour of the People in London* 3rd series (London, 1902), iv, p. 166.

areas to the centres of industry and commerce'.¹² It might be called the 'concentration' model. The move might be accomplished in stages: from village to town, and town to city. Or from village to suburb, as Thompson noted in 1982, citing research that two-thirds of south London residents had come from neighbouring rural areas.¹³ He suggested that this might explain the suburban preference for houses with gardens.

This chapter considers the movement patterns of people moving into Calverley. Some quite distinct patterns are evident: both dispersal and concentration, but looking at them in detail suggests that the process is a little more complicated than is usually acknowledged. The analysis is presented in three parts. The first uses the Ward family as an example of the dispersal model. It is the experience of a single family so has no statistical significance, but it does provide a good demonstration of the model. It also provides an opportunity to look at other aspects of the story: the nature of the City streets they left behind; the place of north-west Kent in the suburban story; and the use of the suburbs for non-residential purposes.

The second part presents an analysis of those moving into Calverley – the 'suburban incomers'. It confirms that there was indeed a dispersal effect, mainly from the City though with some from the West End. There was also concentration, with landed families moving in from the Kentish countryside. Approximately half, though, followed no clear pattern. They were either peripatetic, having no obvious geographical base; or were simply moving from some other place of origin. They chose Calverley on its intrinsic attractions rather than because it was a logical geographical move from their previous base. One important factor in their choice was its position relative to London.

The third part looks at other groups within the town: High Street traders, skilled and unskilled

¹² Discussed in D.B. Grigg, 'EG Ravenstein and the "Laws of Migration"' in M. Drake (ed.), *Time, Family and Community* (Oxford, 1994), p. 149.

¹³ Thompson, *Suburbia*, p. 16. Thompson cited J.R. Kellett, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (London, 1969), pp. 408-9. Kellett's claim related mainly to Liverpool, but he said that it 'was also the impression gained by H.J. Dyos' of south London in his 1952 PhD thesis. Fishman recognises these other flows - Fishman, *Utopias*, p.10 - but his focus is on movement out from the centre.

workers, and domestic servants. These had a quite different pattern. There was a clear concentration effect, with movement in from the Kent and Sussex countryside; but also from across the south of England. There was a clear distinction between the 'suburban' incomers to Calverley, and these 'economic' incomers.

Two points arise from the analysis. The first relates to the idea of the escape from the city. So Dyos talked of 'the retreat to the suburbs', Davison that 'the well-to-do fled to the suburbs', and Rodger that 'the middle class began to withdraw from congested town centre living from the 1820s'. As the Ward family experience demonstrates, there was some truth in this, but it was not the predominant pattern. The peripatetic middle class who came to Calverley were avoiding the city, not escaping from it. The danger is that explanations of suburban living are based on assumptions such as the 'escape from the city' that have limited validity. The second point is a development of the first and relates to studies where origins have been identified but where the data is applied too simplistically. So Thompson, above, identified the flow into the suburb from the countryside and used it to explain a suburban liking for gardens. Ann Bermingham did the same when considering the preference for the 'picturesque' in Denmark Hill and Camberwell: 'Significantly, population figures for the suburbs south of London ... show that at least two-thirds ... were rural born ...'¹⁴. If those two-thirds, though, were domestic staff or similar, as in Tunbridge Wells, they would not have had much influence on architecture or gardens. More precision is needed in using this movement data.

3.1.1 The Ward Family

The chapter starts with an account of John Ward's own suburban journey as an illustration of the 'dispersal' model. The later examination of Calverley incomers will demonstrate that the Wards were only partially representative, but their journey nevertheless provides an opportunity to examine various aspects of the wider suburban story.

¹⁴ Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, pp. 167-8. She cites Thompson as above. Richard Rodger makes a similar assumption: Rodger, *Housing in Urban Britain*, p. 40.

John Ward was a second-generation Londoner. His parents were from Yorkshire and Lancashire. They established a linen-draper's business in Basinghall Street about 1770, and raised their family there. They may have been sponsored by the Leathams next door, also from Yorkshire, an example of 'chain migration', a typical feature of rural-urban migration. Basinghall Street falls within the area used by Summerson in *Georgian London* to illustrate the medieval street patterns of the City, so provides a contrast to Ward's later homes in Devonshire Place and the suburbs.¹⁵ The houses dated from the late seventeenth century, and the re-building after the fire. They were in brick but the original layouts were retained so they were narrow and long; of three stories with living accommodation above a shop or counting-house. The space behind, which may once have been a small garden, became part of a network of alleyways, warehouses and workshops.

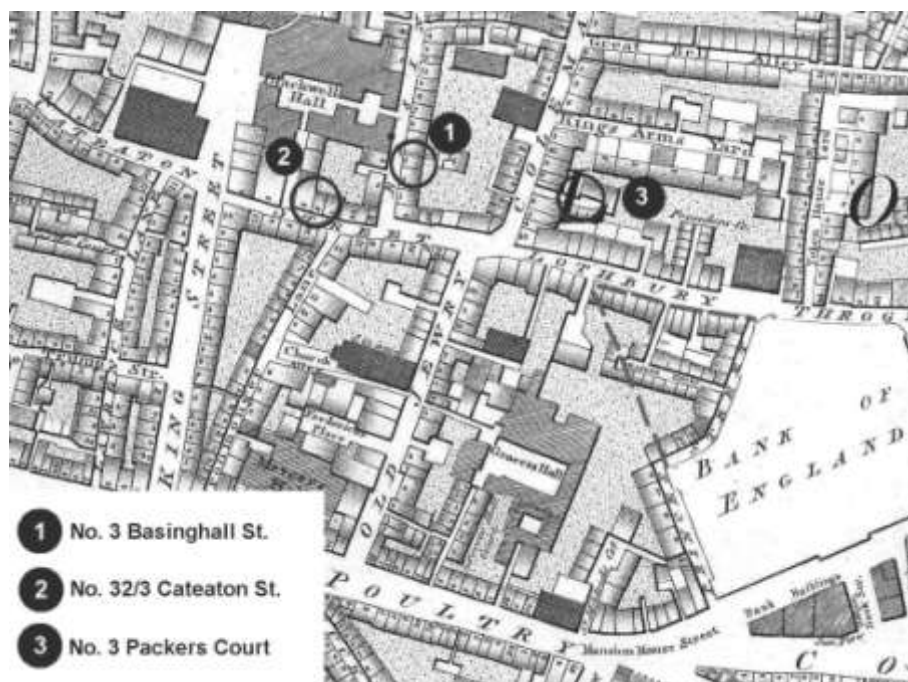


Figure 107. Ward business premises 1780-1820. A medieval street pattern of tightly-packed lanes, alleys and courts. Source: author, based on Horwood, *Plan of the Cities* By permission of the British Library.

To Summerson it was 'an inscrutable topographical jigsaw' and 'warrens of mercantile domesticity'.¹⁶ This 'jigsaw', or 'warren', though, was also 'a highly efficient mechanism for

¹⁵ Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 40.

¹⁶ Summerson, *Georgian London*, pp. 39-42.

[exchanging] ... information'.¹⁷ Ward dealt in Irish linen: the southern end of Basinghall Street, and neighbouring Cateaton Street, were especially associated with linen and trade with Ireland.¹⁸

There were occasional schemes to re-order the area, the most notable being suggested by John Gwynn, who envisaged a grid of wide streets and squares in 1766. One of Gwynn's objectives, according to Fishman, was to keep the merchants away from Westminster and 'persons of quality, whose manner of living and pursuits are totally unsuitable to men of business'.¹⁹ One improvement that did take place was the building of Blackfriars Bridge (1769), and of Chatham Place, a square of town-houses at its northern end. The Leathams (the Wards' neighbours and possible sponsors) had a house there –an early separation of home from place of business.²⁰ Not only was it an elegant building, with drawing room 24 feet by 17, but it had views of the Surrey Hills – this need for vistas that was the essence of the suburban ideal.²¹ A more usual escape from the city was the weekend retreat to the north and it is William Ward (John's father) who provides the example: in 1803 he had a house in Hornsey.²² The usual assumption is that the family retreated to these houses after business on Saturday, returning early on Monday.²³

'Suburban theory' has it that there was a change in the family/business dynamic about this time. Wife and children were no longer involved in the business, so the family home could be separated from the workplace. While access to the city was still important, considerations of privacy and architectural style were now possible. Fishman uses Clapham to illustrate this

¹⁷ Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 21.

¹⁸ More than forty firms with Irish connections were active in the immediate vicinity in the mid eighteenth century. T.M. Truxes, 'London's Irish Community and North Atlantic Commerce in the mid eighteenth century', in D. Dickson, J. Parmentier and J.H. Ohlmeyer (eds.), *Irish and Scottish Mercantile Networks in Europe and Overseas in the 17th and 18th centuries* (Gent, 2007), pp.271-309.

¹⁹ Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 25. Fishman is quoting Gwynn: *London and Westminster Improved* (London, 1766), p. viii.

²⁰ The Chatham Place address was used by Leatham for his membership of the RSA in the 1780/90s, see for example: *Transactions of the Society ...* (London, 1792), p. 413, but the business address for Leatham, Walker & Co, remained in Basinghall St.

²¹ Advertisement for sale following death of William Leatham. *Morning Chronicle* (3 March 1802).

²² Policy with Sun Insurance Office Ltd. LMA CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/427/743620.

²³ For example: Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 42.

process.²⁴ Less than five miles from the city, it had open vistas and picturesque scenery. The Leathams also had a house there (they let the house in Chatham Place).²⁵ William Ward moved out too – to Grove House in Tooting.²⁶ Whereas Clapham represented a conscious clustering of like-minded families, Grove House was just one of the country ‘seats’ spread out along the main roads out of town. It had extensive grounds and was significant enough to be mentioned in Cary’s *Itinerary*.²⁷ The name ‘Grove House’ sums up the suburban ideal, with its connotations of rusticity and antiquity. John Ward lived there after William’s death in 1811.²⁸ The extent of his involvement in local affairs is unclear, though he was a parish overseer in 1819, and in 1814 had joined a committee to oppose the creation of an ‘establishment for the reception of Lunaticks’.²⁹ As McKellar explains, the ‘outskirts were not just a bucolic paradise; they were also a zone of marginality and displacement ... a human dumping ground’.³⁰ Johanna Schopenhauer noted something similar in Manchester (c. 1803):

The countryside around Manchester is not particularly inviting. The main public walk ... would not be unpleasing, did it not pass all the time close to hospitals and lunatic asylums ... one constantly hears the screaming and babbling of the poor mad folk.³¹

In Tooting there was also a ‘school’ for some 700 pauper children, site of a cholera outbreak in 1849.³²

²⁴ Fishman, *Utopias*, pp. 51-62.

²⁵ At the north-west corner, opposite Battersea Rise. Leatham appears in the Battersea Land Tax returns for 1799; and on a map for 1800: ‘Perambulation of Clapham Common, Clapham 1800’, on Ideal Homes: A history of South-East London Suburbs, <http://www.ideal-homes.org.uk/lambeth/lambeth-assets/galleries/clapham/perambulation-1800> (23 Nov. 2017). The house is described in the advertisement following Leatham’s death: *Morning Chronicle* (3 March 1802).

²⁶ It is not clear when this took place. He died there in 1811 (aged 68), but made no reference to it when writing his will in 1808.

²⁷ J. Cary, *Cary’s New Itinerary: or an Accurate Delineation of the Great Roads ...* 4th edn. (London, 1810), p. 51.

²⁸ It is not clear where he lived prior to 1811. In 1806 he married the daughter of a Halifax mill-owner. Her father, though, had only recently inherited the mill, and the family had previously lived in London, possibly at no. 1 Devonshire St. Ward’s first two children were baptised in St Pancras Old Church in 1807 and 1809, so he may have made the move to the West End before taking the Devonshire Place house in 1820.

²⁹ W.E. Morden, *The History of Tooting Graveney, Surrey* (London, 1897), pp. 315, 95.

³⁰ McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. 22.

³¹ J.H. Schopenhauer, R. Michaelis-Jena and W. Merson, (eds.), *A Lady Travels. Journeys in England and Scotland from the Diaries of Johanna Schopenhauer* (London, 1988), p. 37.

³² J. Weeks, *The Paradise at Tooting: an account of the tragedy at Drouet’s infant pauper asylum ...*

Samuel Neville Ward, the elder brother, lived at Balham Hill, a little nearer the City.³³ In 1816 he moved to 'The Grove' (that name again) on Hayes Common in Kent.³⁴ North-west Kent had long attracted immigrants from the city. Lambard in 1570 wrote of 'the partes [of Kent] neerer to London, from whiche citie (as it were from a certeine riche and wealthy seed plot) courtiers, lawyers, and marchants be continually translated'.³⁵ The attractions of the area were recorded by Gilbert West in the early eighteenth century:

Not wrapt in smoky London's sulphurous clouds.
And not far distant stands my rural cot;
Neither obnoxious to intruding crowds
Nor for the good and friendly too remote.
And when too much repose brings on the spleen,
Or the gay city's idle pleasures cloy ;
Swift as my changing wish, I change the scene,
And now the country, now the town enjoy.

The verses were being reproduced well into the nineteenth century in guidebooks and periodicals, an example of the Rustic Ideal.³⁶

John Ward left Tooting for Devonshire Place in 1820 (see Chapter 1.1). He kept that house into the 1830s, but in 1823 bought Holwood, at Keston near Hayes. It was previously the home of William Pitt. Ward had the house demolished and a replacement designed by Decimus Burton, 'splendidly Grecian ... the best thing of its kind in Kent'.³⁷

(London, 2000), p. 6. See also: A.W.C. Brice, 'Dickens and the Tooting Disaster', *Victorian Studies*, 12/2 (Dec. 1968), pp. 227-244.

³³ He had earlier lived in Ireland, having married Mary Jackson - Jackson & Eyre, linen producers, were partners of the Wards and Leathams. He probably moved back to London on the death of his father in 1811.

³⁴ J. Wilson and T. Woodman, *Hayes: a history of a Kentish village* (Bromley, 2012), p. 100.

³⁵ Lambard, *Perambulation of Kent*, p. 6.

³⁶ E.g. W. Hone, *The Table Book of Daily Recreation and Information ...* (London, 1827), p. 406.

³⁷ Newman, *West Kent*, p. 110. Newman suggests that Pitt's house burned down (p.331) though this is not the usual story.



Figure 108. Holwood Park. John Ward's country house. Source: 'Holwood House, Keston', engd. J. Roffe, RIBApix ref. RIBA82686, www.architecture.com/image-library/ (9 May 2017).

In 1824 Samuel Neville Ward bought Baston Manor, about a mile away, and the two brothers were neighbours for twenty-five years.³⁸ Around them were the homes of other successful merchants and bankers: the Darwins and Lubbocks a mile or so to the south, the Marshes and Normans to the north.³⁹

Between them the Wards and Leathams illustrate the various stages of the standard 'dispersal' model: the weekend villa/town-house in Hornsey and Chatham Place; the permanent move to the suburbs: Clapham, Tooting and Balham; a town-house in the West-End; and a second move further into the countryside, to Hayes, Keston and Baston.

³⁸ Email from Jean Wilson (historian of Hayes) 25 Feb. 2013.

³⁹ William Marsh, banker (1755-1846). George Warde Norman, timber merchant and director of the Bank of England (1793-1882). See: D.P. O'Brien and J. Creedy, *Darwin's Clever Neighbour. George Warde Norman and his Circle* (Cheltenham, 2010).

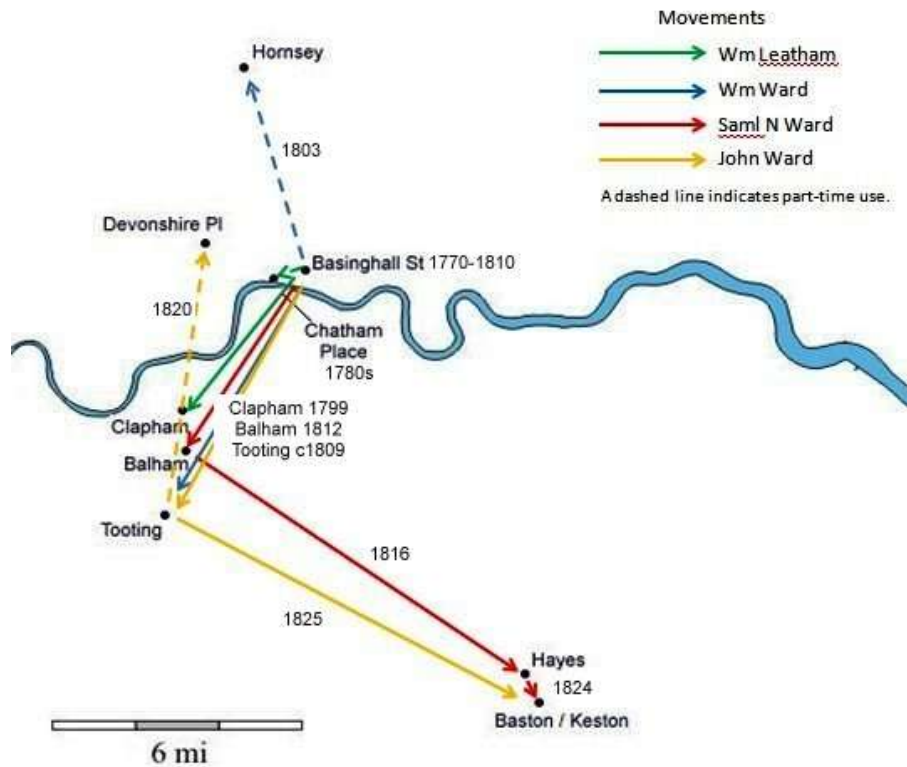


Figure 109. The 'dispersal' model represented by the Ward and Leatham families. 1780-1850. Source: author. (In addition, the newly-married Samuel N Ward lived for some five years in Ireland, and the newly-married John Ward some three years in St Pancras.)

Hayes was a rather extreme suburb. Newman describes Pitt's enjoyment of Holwood as 'suburban in the Roman sense': providing a suburban lifestyle without being in a suburb.⁴⁰ It was possible to get into town for business but it was not easy. William Marsh got up at 5am to catch the morning coach. It left on its return journey at 3pm so that he got home between six and half past. It was not something he did every day.⁴¹ John James Ruskin's business partner lived nearby. He only attended the office when Ruskin was away. On those occasions, he rode into town daily, 'signed what letters and bills needed signature, read the papers, and rode home again'.⁴² Gilbert West's arrangement was different – his 'rural cot' was not a permanent residence, only used when the 'gay city's idle pleasures cloyed'. Even that approach had drawbacks. Edward Montagu leased a house at Hayes with the same intention, but his wife, Elizabeth's, description of it can

⁴⁰ Newman, *West Kent*, p. 330.

⁴¹ During the years 1823-24. 'Diary of William Marsh (1755-1846)' <http://www.ijhc.info/marshwilliam1846diary.htm> (3 Jan. 2017).

⁴² Ruskin, *Praeterita*, i, p. 25.

only be described as faint praise 'it is not a beautiful place, but it is quiet, and when one steps out of the bustle of town, appears on that account amiable'.⁴³ She preferred the livelier society of Tunbridge Wells (see chapter 3.4). That was the appeal of Calverley: it provided the picturesque setting without the social isolation. Despite being farther out, it remained part of London.

3.1.2 Residents of Calverley

The Ward family provides a good illustration of the dispersal model, but it was the experience of only one family. This next section looks at the origins / movements of all those who moved into Calverley in the period.

The analysis is based on the sixty-six households who came to Calverley Parade, Terrace, Park and Park Gardens as permanent residents in the period of the study.⁴⁴ Calverley Promenade was excluded because it focused on visitors, and Calverley Place because its occupants had essentially economic objectives (it was basically a row of shops). Only households which could be identified with some certainty were included; and only those who appeared for more than one year- to exclude visitors. Occupants of 'tied' accommodation: Decimus Burton's assistant and the Ward agent, were also excluded; as were Ward's sons, who were allocated houses in the Park.

⁴³ Wilson and Woodman, *Hayes*, p. 75.

⁴⁴ For Calverley Park Gardens it was the period between 1855 and 1861.

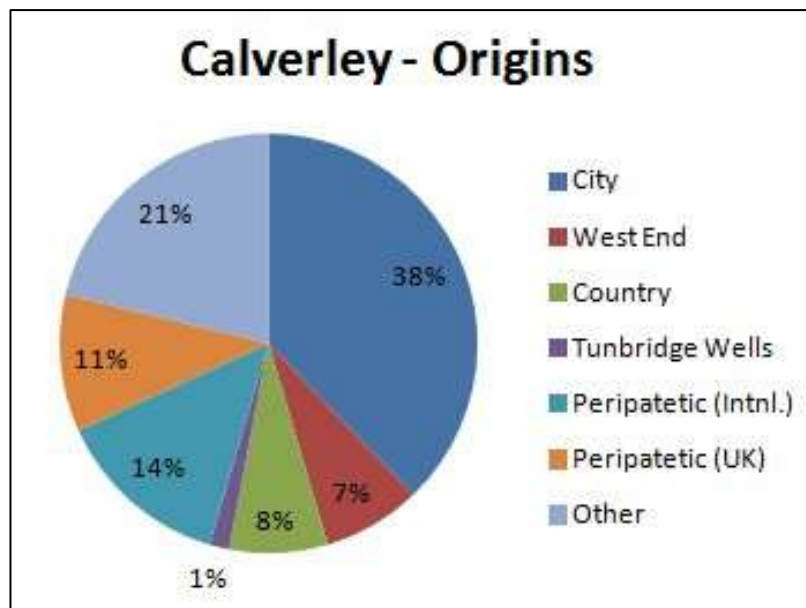


Figure 110. Calverley 1831-61. Origin of 'suburban' incomers. Source: author.

The chart above, provides at least partial confirmation of the dispersal model. 38% of the households originated, either directly or within one generation, in the City of London, or on its immediate eastern borders. There was not then the overriding association of the 'City' with financial services. Five of the incoming families were manufacturers, thirteen were 'merchants'; only three could be termed 'financial'. Some were administrative rather than entrepreneurial, and in two cases were from Westminster rather than the City. They were included in the 'City' totals to distinguish them from more 'leisured' incomers from the West-End. This latter group are shown separately on the chart (7%) but their association with the West End might simply indicate a lack of information on their earlier origin. They might better be grouped with the 'peripatetic' group described below. Only about half the city incomers came directly to Calverley. The others had earlier moved out to other suburbs, more often to north than south: Woodford in Essex being a particular favourite. This is compatible with the dispersal model and is what the Wards had done. In most cases, though, the additional move to Calverley was done by a second generation, and usually by daughters⁴⁵ - these households, too, might better be classified as 'peripatetic'.

⁴⁵ Some 45% of Calverley heads of household were female – this is considered further in Chapter 3.4.

The 'concentration' model was represented by 8% of the sample (marked Country). These were mainly daughters of landed gentry. There was one head of a landed family. As he later died in an 'asylum', health might have been a factor. The countryside was a more significant source for other groups within the town, as will be shown below. Only one resident of Calverley was from a long-established Tunbridge Wells family. She owned property in Mount Sion. For about half the Calverley residents, then, a fairly clear geographical pattern can be seen: they moved out from the City of London or Westminster, or in from the Kentish countryside. While each of them had their own specific reason for moving, and for choosing Calverley rather than any other suburb, they followed a clear-cut path, and would fit into the standard suburban story. The others do not have such obvious patterns.

About half this second group might be termed peripatetic (this covers both the 'Intnl' and 'UK' sectors on the chart). Their profession involved either travelling (army, navy, Indian service, trade) or appointments away from home (the church). On return from overseas, or on retirement or widowhood, they had no obvious geographical base. The others (marked Other on the chart) did have a clear place of origin. One or two had moved to Calverley to further their career, for example as doctors or lawyers. This was common in other parts of Tunbridge Wells, but less so in the residential parts of Calverley where the leases forbade all but residential use. Apart from these economic migrants, the 'others' had made, or inherited, their money elsewhere, but had chosen to leave their place of origin. As a group there is no obvious pattern to their movements.

Something like half of the Calverley residents, then, fell outside the dispersal / concentration models. They were not escaping from the work-focused city with its dirt and disease, nor the tedium of the countryside. They could have lived anywhere. Of all the incomers these must have been the ones most attracted by the particular appeal of Tunbridge Wells: the picturesque, the historical, the rustic and the architectural ideals considered in Part Two, combined, in contrast to Hayes, with the social and cultural possibilities of a leisure town. Its proximity to London was

important: John Britton, on the first page of his *Descriptive Sketches*, claimed that one could be 'wafted rapidly and easily from the metropolis'.⁴⁶ That was before the railway arrived; but there had always been the sense that Tunbridge Wells was part of the London cultural world. Thus the concern in this complaint in the *Kent & Sussex Courier* in 1875 about the lack of late-evening trains back from London:

Lucullus would in vain be invited by a London friend to discuss the merits of a bottle of *twenty* Port. Terpsichore sighs to no purpose to accept Mrs Matchmaker's invitation to an early dance. We are vainly wooed by pantomime; or by cotillion; or by the more solid attraction of Albemarle Street [the Royal Institution].⁴⁷

Similar patterns of origin were observed in an earlier study of the residents of Ferndale - part of Calverley that was developed between 1863 and 1877.⁴⁸ Only a third of the heads of household there had originated in Kent, Sussex or London: almost as many were from the north of England, Scotland and Wales. It was suggested in that study that Ferndale and similar parts of Eastbourne, Folkestone, etc formed part of a 'virtual suburb' all having easy access to the capital, and sharing a common culture. Peter Borsay was cited, referring in 2000 to such a 'network of resorts' in competition with each other, but effectively part of the same urban system.⁴⁹ The phenomenon had been noted as early as 1891. S.J. Low, commenting on the increased population of Sussex, suggested that it was 'largely due to the growth of watering-places like Brighton, Eastbourne, and Hastings, which are in reality only isolated suburbs of London'.⁵⁰

So while Fishman's dispersal model of successful merchants moving out from the city was a part of the Calverley story it was far from being the whole story. The chart below moves the analysis from origin to destination – where the residents went after leaving Calverley.

⁴⁶ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. vii.

⁴⁷ *Kent & Sussex Courier* (8 Jan. 1875).

⁴⁸ Jones, 'Ferndale', pp. 47-51.

⁴⁹ P. Borsay, 'Health and leisure resorts 1700-1840' in P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol.2 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 802.

⁵⁰ S.J. Low, 'The Rise of the Suburbs. A lesson of the census', *Contemporary Review*, 60 (Oct. 1891), p. 547.

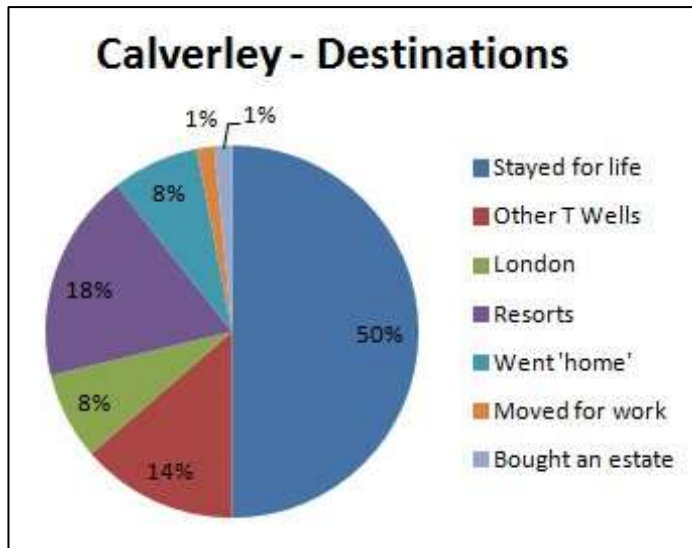


Figure 111. Calverley 1831-61. Destination of 'suburban' incomers. Source: author.

Nearly half the sample remained in Calverley. They had found their suburban ideal, and, in that period, were not being swamped by further incomers. That the largest group of those who did leave went to 'resorts' ties in with Borsay's suggestion of a 'network of resorts' forming a virtual suburb.⁵¹ The average age of the head of household on arrival in Calverley was 54. These would seem, then, to be somewhat different from the early residents of Eton Villas / Provost Road, part of the Eton estate in Chalk Farm, North London, built in the 1840s. John Summerson suggested that they 'came here young and moved on'.⁵² The average length of stay in Calverley was fourteen years, though this is possibly an overstatement – in attempting to exclude 'visitors' the study may have also excluded short-term residents.

3.1.3 Other Residents

The 'suburban' Calverley incomers, then, displayed a range of movement patterns. This next section looks at the origins of other groups within the town, interesting in themselves, but also demonstrating a problem in using aggregated figures.

The first sample is of 100 households from three areas: High Street and Chapel Place in the 'Old

⁵¹ Most went to Brighton, St Leonards or Dover, only two to Bath and Cheltenham. There was also H.W. Burgess, excluded for only appearing once, who later lived in 'Villa Bianca' on Bathwick Hill – Italianate style in a picturesque setting. See A. Frost, 'From Classicist to Eclectic: The Stylistic Development of Henry Edmund Goodridge, 1797-1864' (PhD thesis, University of Bath, 2009), p. 251 *et seq.*

⁵² In his preface to Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, pp. 7-8. See also Summerson, *Unromantic Castles*, pp. 217, 220.

Town'; Windmill Fields, one of the new working class areas; and Quarry Road, in the 'commercial' part of Calverley. They were chosen for contrast: High Street and Chapel Place were shopping areas, with traders representing two-thirds of the sample, whereas Windmill Fields was largely 'Unskilled', mainly agricultural labourers.⁵³ The charts below shows the origins of the combined sample, based on the place of birth of the head of household in 1861. The chart is divided into three colourways: blue, Tunbridge Wells, its suburbs and 'hinterland'; green: the rest of Kent and Sussex; and red: London and the rest of the country. The Calverley figures from section 3.1.2 are re-presented alongside using the same colours. The origin pattern of the new sample is very different from that for Calverley, exhibiting much more of a 'concentration' pattern.

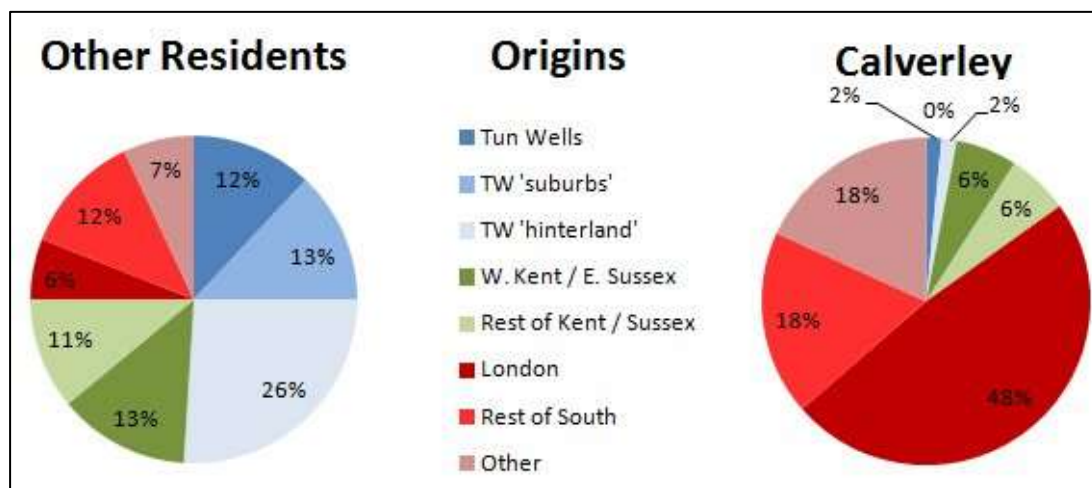


Figure 112. Left: Origins of 100 residents in Old Town / Windmill Fields / Quarry Lane. 1861. Right: Origins of Calverley 'suburban' residents (see Section 3.1.2) in the same colour scheme. Source: author.

Just over half the new sample had been born in the town or its economic hinterland (up to about ten miles), and a further quarter in the rest of Kent and Sussex. Nine of the sample were from Frant, three miles to the south.⁵⁴ Nobody claimed to have been born in Southborough the semi-urban settlement a similar distance to the north. It may be that the flow from country into town was affected by the gravitational pull of London (such that migrants in this area would tend to move northwards). These local incomers were attracted by employment opportunities rather

⁵³ The classification of agricultural labourers as 'unskilled' might be challenged, but is not material to the study.

⁵⁴ Interpreting 'Frant' is problematic – thirty years earlier the southern half of the Pantiles (ie the commercial centre of Tunbridge Wells) was in Frant parish, so someone born in 'Frant' may actually have been from Tunbridge Wells.

than the appeal of the 'houses in the park'. The same applies to the 25% from London and the rest of the country. This is not Fishman's 'dispersal' model of successful merchants, but shopkeepers, building workers, and others attracted to the town for economic reasons. The three areas within the sample had different patterns (see below). The % from 'London and elsewhere' varied from 45% in High St / Chapel Place (a reminder that the term 'Old Town' must not be taken to imply long-term residence) to 12% in Windmill Fields.

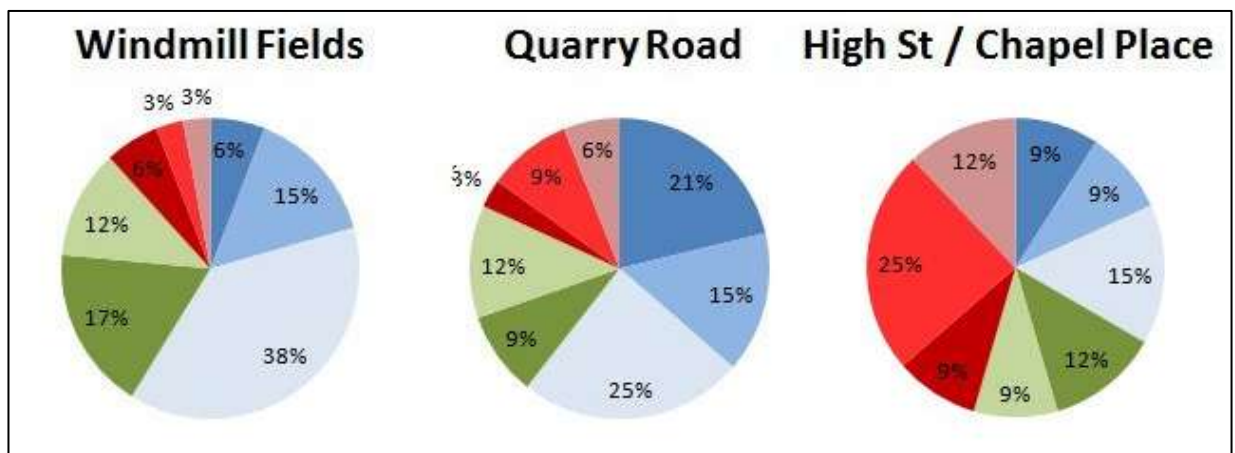


Figure 113. Origins (percentages) of residents in three sample areas. 1861. Source: author.

Two further analyses of 'place of birth' make equally clear statements about movement patterns.

The thirty three households in the High St / Chapel Place sample included thirty three servants - all female, average age 21.

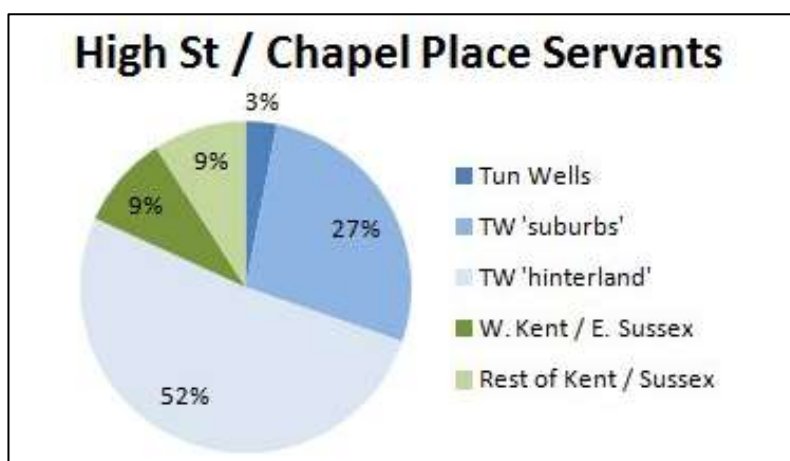


Figure 114. Origin of servants in High St / Chapel Place. 1861. Source: author.

Only one of these was born in Tunbridge Wells. Rather they came from the 'hinterland': the wide arc of countryside, perhaps ten miles deep, stretching clockwise from north-east round to north-

west. It is a reminder of a trope of the Tunbridge Wells story: of country girls serving visitors from stalls on the Pantiles. One visitor in 1663 spoke of ‘young, fair, fresh-coloured country girls, with clean linens, small straw hats, and neat shoes and stockings ‘.⁵⁵ Celia Fiennes mentions them too c.1697. They represented the purity of the countryside in contrast to the Court. Their significance here is that although only 50% of the householders in the High St / Chapel Place sample were from Kent and Sussex, they had this grounding in the area through the local links of their domestic staff.

The chart below shows a very different situation amongst the domestic staff in Calverley Park Gardens. More than half were born outside of Kent and Sussex.

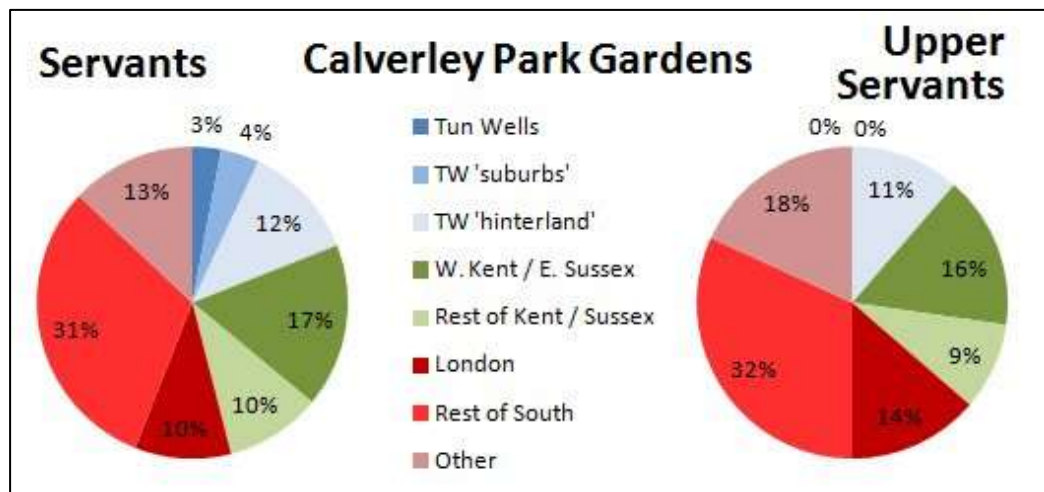


Figure 115. Origin of servants in Calverley Park Gardens. 1861. Source: author.

Most of these households were new to the town. It would seem that they brought their staff with them, placing a potential barrier between themselves and the townspeople. The pattern is further emphasised when the chart is restricted to more senior staff – the ones who had most contact with the family. Sixty percent were from beyond Kent and Sussex, and none had been born within the town or its suburbs. Later chapters consider the questions of segregation and withdrawal as features of a suburban lifestyle. These employment patterns of domestic staff were a factor.

⁵⁵ *Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont*, by Anthony Hamilton, first published in English in 1714, cited by Melville, *Society at Tunbridge Wells*, p. 43.

3.1.4 Movement – Summary

Chapter 3.1, then, answers one part of the question – ‘who were the incomers?’ – by considering their geographical origin. The first section, looking at John Ward’s family, told the traditional story, of merchants moving progressively outwards from the City of London. The Wards, though, were only one family. The second section looked at the origins of all families who moved into ‘suburban’ Calverley. Some of them had moved out from the City, and some had come in from the surrounding countryside, but most had followed no obvious path. This lack of an obvious geographical explanation for their move is significant. They did not have to live in Calverley, but chose it for its intrinsic attractions: its setting and its houses. Its location and its identity as part of a greater London, were also important. Mordaunt Crook used the words ‘London’s Arcadia’ to describe Regent’s Park: it might equally be applied to Calverley / Tunbridge Wells. Finally, there were the ‘economic’ incomers: the shopkeepers, domestic staff, and building workers. They came from across southern England but mainly from the countryside of Kent and Sussex. They were important, Calverley could not have existed without them, but they are not the focus of the study. Because of their numbers, however, they dominate any aggregate figures on the origin of incomers, so care should be taken when using such figures.

Ward’s particular narrative had an unexpected ending, and it demonstrates that these movement patterns, however detailed, tell only part of the story. His wife died in 1851. She was not buried in Keston where they had lived for nearly thirty years, but in Tooting. Four of her children had been born there, and four were buried there. Four years later John joined her. Tooting had clearly been more than a ‘transit camp’ for them. It is a reminder that personal associations can be as important as ‘splendidly Grecian’ architecture and picturesque views.

The following chapter considers how the incomers were viewed by the longer-term residents of the town: as unwelcome ‘colonisers’, or as potential customers to be exploited.

3.2 Control - Colonisers or Customers?

In his study of Camberwell, H.J. Dyos spoke of 'suburbanisation [having] come over rural England like some subtle climatic change'.¹ This chapter considers whether the development of a suburb might not have been more brutal than that. The quote at the start of Chapter 1.1 from an old inhabitant who was 'struck with dismay' at the speed and violence of the changes on the Calverley estate would suggest that some thought so.

Denis Cosgrove made a similar point in 2008.² Examining the origins of the Arcadia myth, Cosgrove looked at Virgil's account of the foundation of Rome, where existing residents – the Arcadians – were dispossessed by incomers. He drew parallels with the later colonisation of North America, identified by its early explorers as a new arcadia, and where the original inhabitants were similarly treated. Might this be a useful analogy for the development of the English suburb - Chapter 3.1 having demonstrated that 99% of Calverley's 'suburban' households were from outside the town? A rather different analogy might be more appropriate to Tunbridge Wells. For two hundred years the residents had made their living from visitors, providing them with lodgings, sustenance, entertainment and souvenirs. That there was an element of exploitation in this seems to have been accepted, and not always with good grace, as the cartoon of Mrs Brittle, below, demonstrates. She is holding a list of half-guinea tickets sold in a raffle, which was 'Won by a Lady that went away yesterday' – the implication being that the prize was not paid – how very convenient for Mrs Brittle.

¹ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 29.

² Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision*, pp. 77-78.



Figure 116. Mrs Brittle. c.1798. A customer's view of the Tunbridge Wells trader. Source: TUNWM 1956.67.37. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery.

Burr's history, too, despite being aimed at visitors as much as residents, included advice on keeping prices high by avoiding competition. He cited the butchers as an example, and indeed, one extended family of successful traders, the Delves and Frys, had started as butchers.³ Should the Calverley incomers, then, be characterised as colonisers, seeking to take control; or customers, ripe for exploitation? The idea of conflict between the two groups resonates with one particular episode in the Tunbridge Wells story - the disagreement in 1833 over proposals for a Local Improvement Act. The townspeople, according to the story, were keen to get a Local Act to improve the town, but were opposed by John Ward who threatened to oppose their Bill in Parliament. At a bad-tempered meeting he was burned in effigy.⁴ It is suggested here that this is a misreading of what actually happened, but the story nevertheless provides a useful introduction to the relationship between 'suburban' incomers, the 'New Town', and existing residents, the 'Old'.

The chapter is presented in four sections. The first looks at this disagreement over the Local Act.

Was this a group of small traders standing up to a powerful external competitor, or just

³ Burr, *History*, p. 278.

⁴ The story is told, for example, in Savidge, *Royal Tunbridge Wells*, p. 122, and in Jones, 'Ferndale', p. 12.

backward locals unwilling to embrace the new? However interpreted, it demonstrates a clear separation between the two groups. The second section examines the composition of the Improvement Commission that arose from the Act. With the exception of some wealthy incomers, it was largely controlled by the Old Town – the Delves family (wealthy ex-butchers), lawyers and bankers, builders and traders. There was little involvement from Calverley. The next section looks at the activities of the Commission, and demonstrates that there was actually a commonality of interest between Old and New. The improvements made by the Commission, often to the disadvantage of the remaining ‘rural’ inhabitants, served to enhance the ‘suburban’ lifestyle of the incomers. The intention was to attract further incomers and visitors, bringing additional business for the traders. The fourth section looks at further development, usually a threat to the suburban ideal of the earlier incomers. For the period of the study and for some years afterwards there was no problem – the particular topography of the town was able to accommodate new buildings without affecting the amenity of the old. Further conflict was avoided until much later in the century.

3.2.1 The Campaign for a Local Improvement Act

This first section looks at events around the campaign for a ‘Local Act’. A Local Act provided the legislative structure necessary for ‘improvements’: lighting, policing and so on. In Tunbridge Wells it led to the creation of an Improvement Commission in 1835. The campaign, though, triggered disagreement between the Old Town and the New. The story as usually told is probably a misreading of what actually happened, but confirms hostility between the two groups.

In 1825 Tunbridge Wells had no official identity. It consisted of three small settlements scattered across the outlying parts of three parishes, with a county boundary running through the middle. With no legal status, it nevertheless managed to function as a unit. It supported a chapel and a charity school, poor-rates were collected and applied, and roads maintained. Civil power was in the hands of the magistrates. During the season social arrangements were made by the Master

of Ceremonies. The lord of the manor of Rusthall, and the agent to the Earl of Abergavenny, as the major landlords, were influential; while the chapel and school and minor works were the responsibility of the 'Vestry'.⁵ By the 1820s such ad-hoc arrangements were no longer satisfactory. The campaign for a new church has already been noted (see Chapter 1.1). Calls for other improvements crystallised in 1829 with the formation of a committee to campaign for a 'Local Act'.⁶ The *Maidstone Journal* recorded widespread support at a public meeting, saying 'the long projected measure of obtaining a Local Act is now likely to be carried into effect'.⁷

The story appears to be taken forward in the minutes of a further committee established in 1833 which eventually carried the project through to the Tunbridge Wells Improvement Act of 1835.⁸ These minutes talk of the committee's puzzlement at opposition from Ward, of him insisting that Calverley be excluded, and of the onerous conditions that he placed on his eventual agreement. Negotiations continued for over a year, with Ward blamed for the delay. This represents the 'orthodox' story, with Ward appearing to act against the wishes of the townspeople for an Act. Other sources offer a different interpretation. The first is a short-lived local 'newspaper', *The Visitor*, which appeared from September 1833.⁹ The editor was James Phippen, a bookseller in the Old Town, though originally from Bristol. Phippen saw himself as a campaigning journalist, attacking, for example, the monopoly position of the Medway Navigation Company.¹⁰ In the early issues Phippen confirmed his support for a Local Act, hoping that the resulting commission might include at least two thirds tradesmen, with no magistrates, clergymen or lawyers. It is surprising that he then expressed dissatisfaction with the public meeting to create the new committee, as it appears to have contained a number of tradesmen. His dissatisfaction continued

⁵ Despite being called the 'Chapel of Ease' it was a proprietary chapel. The 'Vestry' was a private body, selected from resident gentry and visitors. J. Fuller, *The Church of King Charles the Martyr, Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 2000), pp. 41-46.

⁶ By the 1820s Parliament was passing about twenty such Acts each year. James Burton organised one for St Leonards in 1832. Manwaring Baines, *Burton's St. Leonards*, p. 28.

⁷ *Maidstone Journal* (25 Aug. 1829, 29 Sep. 1829, 13 Apr. 1830).

⁸ 'Tunbridge Wells Local Act Minute Book', TWBC archives.

⁹ *The Visitor*. It was not officially a newspaper, so was unable to report on meetings.

¹⁰ For example, *The Visitor* (14 and 28 Dec. 1833).

over the following months. He said of the committee's first report 'A more crude and unsatisfactory document ... never emanated from the "collective wisdom" of any deliberative assembly'.¹¹ It was during a meeting in December 1833 to accept this report that the violence occurred: brickbats were thrown, and the effigy burned.¹²

The second alternative source provides some explanation. It is a report from December 1832 produced by the earlier committee.¹³ The writers claimed to have canvassed the opinions of all parts of the town, and to have specifically sought the views of those opposing an Act. Their conclusion was that some features: lighting, watching and the control of 'flies' were essential; and they strongly recommended day policing and drainage. They acknowledged that there was less support for paving, watering and a market, but suggested that these be included, for implementation later. It is clear from the report that there had been considerable opposition, and that it had come mainly from the Old Town. This is confirmed by annotations on the copy of the report held in the borough archives. Where the report states that it was collecting information for the public, an annotation says that it was for 'Mr Ward and Messrs Bramahs'. Where the report states there was a need for improved drainage, paving and watering, an annotation says 'Let the New Town pay'. Where the report states that some paving was particularly poor, for example in getting to Church in winter, an annotation says 'New Church. Do not trust them'. It seems that seventy two residents of the Old Town then approached their landlord, the Earl of Abergavenny, for help in opposing the proposals. His agent, Daniel Rowland, had engineered the creation of the new committee in late 1833 to produce an alternative proposal. It was to this greatly reduced alternative proposal, presented at the December 1833 meetings that Ward and others objected.

¹¹ *The Visitor* (28 Dec. 1833).

¹² *The Visitor* (4 Jan. 1834). The wording is actually rather vague.

¹³ 'The Report of the Committee appointed to consider the question of a Local Act for Tunbridge Wells' (Dec. 1832), TWBC archives. Members of the committee are not named, but later articles in *The Visitor* suggest that they included magistrates and professionals, and Decimus Burton, presumably representing Ward.

Intemperate meetings continued for some weeks with Phippen continuing his campaign in *The Visitor*. One of his tactics was to write sneering allegories pointing up the backwardness of the new committee. One of these described the residents of a village which he called Furze 'one of the prettiest to be found ... its hills and dales – its extensive commons'.¹⁴ Charging outsiders who came to drink at their well, the Furzites lived in 'a state of happy indolence', until a wealthy merchant moved into the village and started building houses. Despite the increased income that this generated, the Furzites resented the intrusion, and things came to a head when the newcomer proposed building a clock for the village. The Furzites managed to prevent this, but the merchant then proposed a clock for his own tenants only. Infuriated by this the Furzites erected their own clock but showed their defiance of the merchant by removing the hands. The handless clock represented the cut-down Local Act proposal, worthless in itself but intended as a spoiler to prevent progress with the earlier proposal. Phippen's use of the clock as a symbol of modernisation and improvement is a reminder of E.P. Thompson's essay claiming that industrialisation imposed 'time-discipline' on traditional ways of life.¹⁵

So, clearly there was opposition by the existing residents (the Old Town) to intrusion by incomers (the New Town) and specifically to Ward. To suggest that they saw him as a coloniser would not be far-fetched. One reason for the traders' opposition was financial, with the 1832 report suggesting a rate of up to two shillings in the pound. In 1833 they talked of one and sixpence, and investigated a levy on coal sales to reduce it further. They felt aggrieved that the New Town might benefit more than them. There was also concern that excessive development would damage the Picturesque appeal of the town, though this was also recognised by the original committee, who spoke of 'the importance of preserving the rural character of the Place'.¹⁶ It is a reminder that while the town's appearance was not wholly artificial in the way of, say, Vauxhall,

¹⁴ One of the main attractions of Tunbridge Wells was the colour of the furze on the Common. The Furzites meet in an inn called the 'Bull's Head', which happened to be the Abergavenny crest.

¹⁵ E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38 (Dec 1967), pp. 56-97.

¹⁶ TWBC archives, 'Report of the Committee', p. 8.

there was an element of artifice in its preservation. What was especially problematic was that the New Town brought not only new customers, but new competitors for their business. In 1834 Ward was building the Calverley Promenade, with capacity for thirty-four new shops. To the Old Town traders he was a powerful competitor.

Agreement, however, was eventually reached. A new bill, not unlike the proposals in the 1832 report, was enacted in 1835. The story is then one of co-operation. Perhaps New and Old were brought together by a new Poor Rate set by Tonbridge, which significantly raised valuations in the Tunbridge Wells end of the parish.¹⁷ The shops in Calverley Promenade failed anyway. In 1841 Henry Edwards, a butcher and house agent in the High Street, acquired leases on three of the Calverley Park houses. Joseph Delves, another Old Town resident, took one in 1842. By 1855 they held leases on nine. In 1840 Edward Churchill, an inn-keeper from the Old Town, took the lease on the Calverley Hotel.¹⁸ Commercially, Old and New were coming together. Phippen's image of the 'Furzites', though, – stubborn and backward – no doubt represented how the Old Town was viewed by the New, and the annotations on the 1832 report show the suspicions held by the Old of the New. The two sides did eventually work together: it was a commercial rather than a colonial relationship, but not necessarily a happy one. The spirit of Mrs Brittle, perhaps, lived on.

3.2.2 The Improvement Commissioners

Given the controversy over the Local Act, one might have expected some jockeying for influence on the resulting Improvement Commission. Unfortunately *The Visitor* closed in 1835 so there is little contemporary comment, bar some sneering in another short-lived paper, *The Sphinx*, which considered the Commission 'a self-conceited oligarchy of incapacity'.¹⁹ The following paragraphs

¹⁷ *The Visitor* (18 Oct. 1834).

¹⁸ 'Lease of Calverley Hotel, E. Churchill', Dec. 1839, KHLC U2737 11/B/02.

¹⁹ *The Sphinx*, 3 (10 Dec. 1835).

use attendance at meetings to measure involvement by the two groups.²⁰

The 1835 Act specified that any male owning or occupying property with an annual value of £50 or more could be a Commissioner. This property qualification meant that it was a very restricted form of democracy, but it was a direct democracy in that all commissioners could attend and vote at meetings. Between July and October 1835 some 135 confirmed their qualification. The chart below classifies them by occupation.

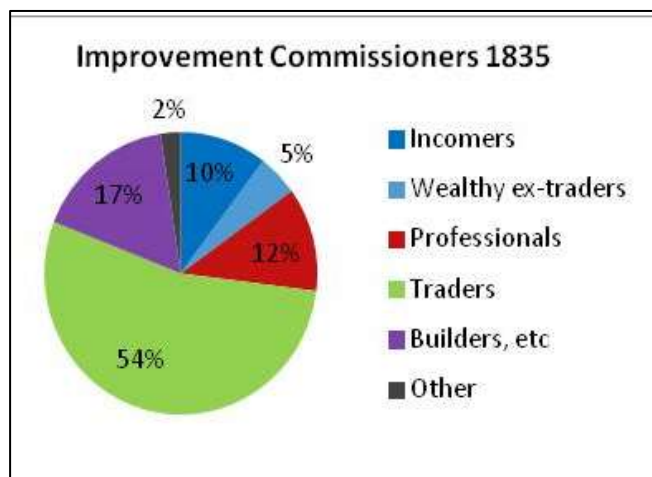


Figure 117. The 'sworn-in' Improvement Commissioners 1835. Source: author.

'Incomers' here implies 'suburban' incomers, rather than those who came for economic purposes. It covers those in Calverley and the 'Independent' households in other parts. These would represent the 'New Town'. 'Wealthy ex-traders' covers two or three families, the most significant being the Delves and Frys, descendants of Richard Delves, a butcher. 'Professionals' comprises doctors, clergymen, lawyers and bankers. 'Traders' includes lodging-house keepers and small manufacturers as well as shop-keepers.

Phippen had hoped for a commission of two thirds tradesmen and one third gentry. He should have been pleased with the result. In the 1837 census the ratio of trader households to independent households was 19:15 (see Figure 107), the ratio of traders to incomers amongst the Commissioners was 54:10. So the traders seem to have been more interested than the incomers in being involved – perhaps they were still suspicious of the 'New Town'. Only a small

²⁰ 'Minute Book of the Improvement Commission'. TWBC archives.

percentage, though, were able to attend as the main meetings were held at 11am on Mondays, not very convenient for shopkeepers.

During the first year eighteen people attended more than three times: five professionals, four wealthy ex-traders, four builders, four traders and one 'Incomer' – see below. The expertise of the professionals: bankers and lawyers, was perhaps needed and reflected practice in other bodies.²¹ The builders were interested in the development of the town, and in contracts for drainage work. The traders, and wealthy ex-traders, tended to be those with property interests.

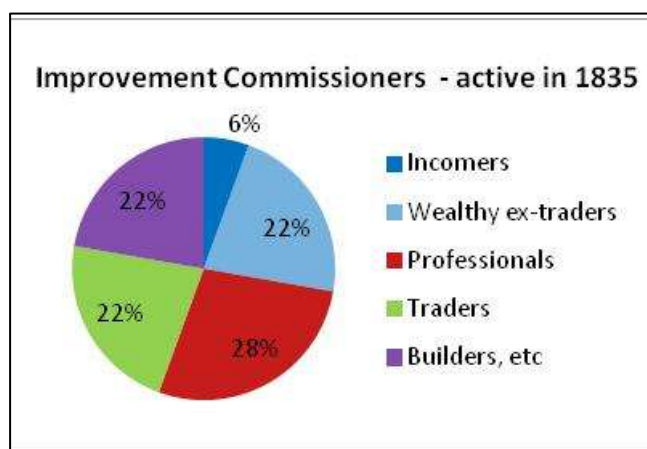


Figure 118. Commissioners who attended more than 3 meetings in 1835. Source: author.

The single 'incomer' was Anthony St John Baker. He had retired in 1832 after twenty years as Consul General to the United States, and maybe felt a need for occupation. Particular problems relating to the position of his house, adjoining Windmill Fields, might also have been a reason.

The chart below shows attendance at a sample of twenty meetings over the following fifteen years. It shows the continuing involvement of the professionals: John Stone, solicitor, chaired five of the meetings, and Stephen Beeching, banker, chaired two; and the wealthy ex-traders – Joseph Delves was present on seventeen occasions. The big change is the increased involvement of incomers.

²¹ Turnpike trusts for example. B. Keith-Lucas, 'Kentish Turnpikes', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, C (1984), pp. 359, 361.

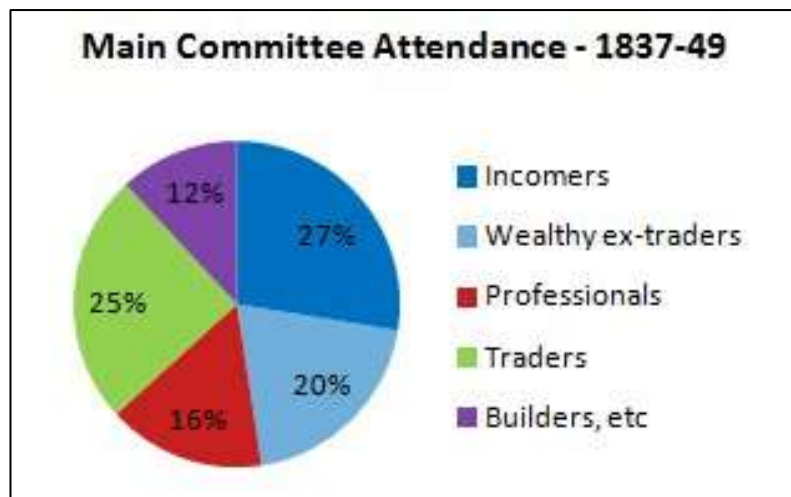


Figure 119. Attendance at a sample of 20 meetings between 1837 and 1849. Source: author. 51 individuals, 187 attendances.

This was mainly the involvement of two or three individuals: Edward Suart, for example, from London Road, and W.S. Taylor of Mount Sion, both of whom chaired meetings. There were only three from Calverley, and one of those owned other property within the town which was probably significant. One reason for the lack of involvement by Calverley may have been that 46% of heads of household there were female, and therefore ineligible. A disinclination to become involved in municipal bureaucracy though, by either gender, would seem to be entirely consistent with the suburban urge to withdraw - those incomers who were most involved: Baker, Suart and Taylor, and later John Stone-Wigg, the first mayor - lived in more prominent houses. While proper drains and a secure neighbourhood are part of the suburban ideal, their achievement is nicer left to somebody else. It was a pattern seen in other towns – in Bristol and Eastbourne, for example, ‘rentiers’ were poorly represented in local government.²²

3.2.3 The Indirect Influence of the Incomers

Calverley residents, then, avoided involvement with the Commission, but nevertheless had an impact on its actions. They canvassed the commissioners, as shown below, but their indirect influence was probably greater. It is suggested that the commissioners sought to make ‘improvements’ that would benefit visitors and incomers, in the hope of attracting more. As a

²² H.E. Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City 1870-1914* (London, 1976), p.87. Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords*, pp.309,356. Cited in Jones, ‘Ferndale’, p.66.

letter to *The Visitor* said, 'they pay the bills'.²³

Lighting and policing were the main activities in the early years. This section looks rather at drainage and the control of nuisances. Drainage had been an early priority for Ward. A report on Crown Fields talked of 'a vast accumulation of soil and filth being offensively stagnant'.²⁴ His concern was its impact on neighbouring Calverley. It did not worry the Old Town – they were sufficiently far away, but they were worried about the cost, so a maximum of £100 p.a. was allocated for drainage. In 1836 the Commissioners decided to lay drains in Crown Fields and The Lew, but to do it at the expense of the proprietors, thus addressing both concerns.

The Commission's main project was a new drain alongside part of London Road, linking a stream from Mount Pleasant to the Grom Brook. They were keen to avoid drainage issues here as it was the main entry point into the town, but it exacerbated another problem. The Grom Brook runs behind the Pantiles. A look at the 1719 birds-eye view in Section 0.6 will reveal a building at the bottom right labelled 'Bog House', confirming that the stream had long served as a sewer. A traditional practice of farmers downstream from the Pantiles had been to dam the stream, creating 'bays' in which the sewage would settle and be available for spreading. In 1837 there were complaints about the 'great stench and nuisance' that this caused.²⁵ The Commissioners took action to stop it, though action was again needed in 1847.²⁶ Water-borne sewage was only part of the problem; the other aspect of 'cleansing' was the work of the scavenger. It is perhaps less relevant to this discussion, unless the rules about the time of day that privies might be emptied were to satisfy the refined sensibilities of the incomers.²⁷ The point is that these various improvements were mainly to satisfy the incomers, and that many residents of longer standing, such as the farmers with their 'bays', might have preferred the old ways.

²³ *The Visitor* (8 Jan. 1834).

²⁴ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Jan. 1836).

²⁵ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Aug. 1837).

²⁶ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Sep. 1847).

²⁷ Article XLVIII forbade the emptying of privies other than between midnight and 4am. 'An Act for lighting', TWBC archives.

There was an issue, too, with a tallow-works in Windmill Fields. Early complaints led the commissioners to insist on a proper chimney. In 1838 and 1840 there were complaints from Baker and from Miss Harman of Calverley Lodge about the 'disgusting smell and vapour'. The operators were then required to operate the works at night-time only. The other cause for complaint was more widespread: pig-keeping, and the problems that this caused in urban situations. The commission had campaigned against pigs from the start, but complaints about slurry running into neighbouring properties continued. In 1847 there were twenty-nine styes in Crown Fields. It was a question of identity: rural, urban or suburban, and the commission favoured the suburban. The question of identity applied particularly to the long-standing residents ('freeholders') of the Manor of Rusthall, who took the name 'hogpounders'. Used derisively against them to begin with, they adopted it as a mark of honour.²⁸ Lying within the Manor of Rusthall, the Common symbolised the dilemma. Confirmed free from development by the 1739 Rusthall Manor Act, it was one of the prime attractions for visitors. It was also, though, a working environment – for grazing animals, digging sand and stone, and used by washerwomen to dry clothes. While the visitors and incomers might appreciate some evidence of this to add interest in a drawing, as below, they really wanted the Common to be an unspoiled picturesque wilderness.

²⁸ After the annual perambulation of the bounds of the manor, they held a 'Hogpounder Feast'. I. Beavis, 'History of the Commons', in M.L.J. Rowlands (ed.), *Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons* (Tunbridge Wells, 2001), p. 16.



Figure 120. The Common as a working environment. Barnard, *Landscape reminiscences*, 1833. Source: TW Ref Lib, Local studies collection. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Reference Library.

In trying to balance the needs of the remaining rural inhabitants and the incomers, the Hogpounders were not of a single mind. Many were also traders and needed to please the visitors. They tightened up the rules about incursions onto the Common. They refused a request for land to build a hospital and interfered with daily working.²⁹ In 1847, they told Henry Baldock to stop placing dung on the Common.³⁰ In ways like this, the interests of the incomers prevailed, not by the actions of the incomers themselves, but by those keen to manufacture a suburban ideal that would attract them.

3.2.4 Summary and Further Development

So the two groups, New Town and Old, initially hostile, were at one in seeking to create and maintain the suburban ideal of the Incomers. It is an axiom of the suburb, though, that further development will eventually destroy the very thing: seclusion perhaps, or a picturesque setting, that attracted the first incomers.

For a while little happened. Dr Yeats, a surgeon, was probably referring to new terraces at the

²⁹ F.W. Elers, *The Tunbridge Wells General Hospital: a diary of the principal events* (Tunbridge Wells, 1910). Between 1840 and 1844

³⁰ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Jan. 1847).

end of the High Street when he warned that ‘if speculative builders, to save ground, erect rows of connected, instead of detached houses they will injure the beauties and comforts, and lessen the attractions and healthiness of the place’.³¹ As a surgeon with a detached house overlooking the Old Town, he was between Old and New, and his comment was intended to appeal to the interests of both.

There was lively debate, though, over possible railway links. The railway would have brought many benefits, including lower commodity prices, and, as Section 1.2.2 has indicated, its arrival in 1845 coincided with renewed interest in the Calverley Park houses, as achievement of the suburban ideal became more practical. There was concern, though, about its impact on the landscape, and therefore on the visitors ‘on whose attachment we chiefly depend ... [who] enjoy the *quiet* of our scenery; ... they do *not* wish ... to see their favourite *retreat* – Manchester and Liverpooled’.³² That particular comment related to a proposal in 1832 for a line that would have tunnelled under Mount Ephraim to terminate in a station on the Common close to the site of St Helena cottage – a most insensitive location in landscape terms.³³ When the railway did arrive, the main station was at the bottom of Mount Pleasant hill: the trains emerging from one tunnel and disappearing almost immediately into another. It was an ideal position: *The Builder* said ‘the existence of a railway ... is scarcely perceptible’.³⁴

There was little debate, however, over a development in 1857. At the annual dinner for Abergavenny tenants (many Old Town traders amongst them), the agent spoke of the changes he had seen over thirty years. Many, he said, had thought the town already overbuilt in 1827, but it had grown four-fold since then. He hoped that the estate would be able to contribute to its further growth - he was referring to plans for Hungershall Park and Broadwater Down (see Chapter 1.3). There was loud applause at that point, and a toast ‘Prosperity to the town of

³¹ Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. 68 (Yeats contributed a section to the book.)

³² *The Visitor* (23 and 30 Nov. 1833).

³³ KHLC Q/Rum 101. The line would have connected Tunbridge Wells with the Medway at Penshurst, so was probably intended primarily for freight.

³⁴ *The Builder*, 4 (5 Dec. 1846), p. 585.

Tunbridge Wells'. The Furzites of 1833 had become enthusiasts for expansion in 1857.³⁵

There is little indication of opposition to Hungershall Park from the New Town (though see Chapter 3.3). In practice, the dramatic topography of the town, and the prohibition on development of the Common, meant that later developments did not destroy its picturesque appeal. William Thackeray came in 1863. He noted the changes since he had visited as a child forty years earlier, yet seems to have been pleased 'I stroll over the Common and survey the beautiful purple hills around, twinkling with a thousand bright villas, which have sprung up ... Can the world show a land fairer, richer, more cheerful?'³⁶ His daughter came thirty-six years later, and still found it enchanting: 'We had the very most lovely drive imaginable ... a little carriage ... and a frisky pony who made nothing of the hills and took us into Arcady'.³⁷

So there was little need for antagonism between incomers and traders, New Town and Old. The wealthier incomers, particularly those living on Mounts Ephraim and Sion, perhaps saw themselves as the 'resident gentry' of earlier years: expecting, and expected, to take leadership roles. The others, in Calverley enjoyed their suburban ideal in peace. When differences did surface, at the end of the century, it was more for political reasons: between a town council, seen to be dominated by the Old Town, but now Progressive and keen to invest in a telephone exchange and electric lighting; and a Ratepayers' League, essentially Incomers, opposed on principle to 'municipal trading'.

The next chapter will consider the relationship between the incomers and a different group of residents: those who did not qualify for membership of the Improvement Commission, who lived in the tightly-packed and poorly-serviced 'working-class' areas of the town.

³⁵ *Gazette* (24 Dec. 1857).

³⁶ W.M. Thackeray, 'Tunbridge Toys' ('Roundabout Papers no. VII'), *The Cornhill Magazine*, II (July – Dec. 1860), pp. 380-384. Brown, *Tunbridge Wells in Literature*, pp. 71-2.

³⁷ A.T. Ritchie and H. Ritchie (ed), *Letters of Anne Thackeray Ritchie* (London, 1924), p. 252. March 1899.

3.3 Separation

'modern society acknowledges no neighbour'

The comment above comes from Disraeli's *Sybil*, as Stephen Morley and Walter Gerard contrast life in the 1840s with an idealised view of an earlier society under monastic landlords. It heralds the more familiar statement about: 'Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; ... ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones'.¹

The echo of the 'two nations' is strong in Fishman's theory of the suburb. He claims that 'the keynote of the bourgeois city was to be separation and wilful blindness [to the condition of poorer people]' and that 'suburbia accomplished both.'² He takes the example of Victoria Park in Manchester, an 'exclusive Victorian paradise' and contrasts it with 'Little Ireland', only half a mile away yet one of the worst slums in the district.³ He cites Engels on the latter, 'the creatures who inhabit these dwellings ... must surely have sunk to the lowest level of humanity'.⁴ The idea that suburbs were segregated is commonplace; and that this was a nineteenth century development. So Dyos talked of 'the rise of the middle-class suburbs in which geographical insularity was often a symptom of a more fundamental social and political separation'; and Borsay of 'the more rigid, class-oriented patterns of zoning associated with the nineteenth century'.⁵ Olsen suggested that 'Strict social segregation became a prerequisite for success in any new development'.⁶

With his juxtaposition of Victoria Park and 'Little Ireland' Fishman was making a more serious point, following Disraeli, but in line with the sensitivities of historians in the 1980s: that the

¹ Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 5.

² Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 84.

³ Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 91.

⁴ Cited by Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 93. Engels was writing in 1844/5 (*The Condition of the Working Class in England*).

⁵ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, p. 15. P. Borsay (ed.), *The Eighteenth-century town : a reader in English urban history 1688-1820* (London, 1990), p. 19. Borsay is suggesting that there were exceptions to this rule, but in doing so confirms that it is the accepted notion.

⁶ Olsen, *Victorian London*, p. 268.

pleasures of life in the one were made possible by the suffering of those in the other. To Disraeli and the 'condition of England' campaigners, the segregation was a problem because the middle-class, unaware of conditions in "Little Ireland's", had no interest in correcting them. To Engels, the segregation was inevitable, and the problem ultimately self-correcting through class-formation and action. To the extent that the problem was eventually addressed, it was through a combination of both. This present chapter has a more limited objective: to consider how far this nineteenth-century 'segregation' of rich and poor can be seen in Calverley.

Segregation was built into Calverley from the start with the division into the 'commercial' and 'residential' zones noted in Chapter 1.1. Housing for the workers was hidden away in the 'commercial' area (Zone II), screened by a nursery from the 'suburban incomers' in the 'residential' parts. Calverley Park, with its gates and lodges, took separation even further. This chapter starts by looking at Calverley Park, and similar developments, to consider the reality of their apparent extreme separation. It then turns to other parts of Calverley where segregation was achieved by zoning, and to other parts of town where an earlier mixing was continued. Studying lines on the map like this, though, cannot describe the day-to-day experience, so some contemporary comment is provided, illustrating difficulties, for example, on the boundary between Calverley and Herveytown.

There is then a change in focus. It is a proposition of the study that the locus of the incomers' 'suburban ideal' was not the private house or park but Tunbridge Wells itself - the idea is developed further in Chapter 3.4. The more significant separation was between Tunbridge Wells and the outside world, specifically London. Chapter 3.3 ends with brief look at how this separation was expressed in the response to day-trippers, and in the treatment of vagrants where there was a clear demonstration of Fishman's 'wilful blindness'.

3.3.1 Physical Exclusion

This first section considers the more extreme form of segregation, where outsiders were physically excluded by gates and hedges. The picture below is of Victoria Lodge, Calverley Park, in 1831.



Figure 121. Victoria Gate, Calverley Park. Source: Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*.

Gated areas were not just a suburban phenomenon, as the picture of Devonshire Place in Chapter 1.1 demonstrates. Most of London's West End estates abutting the New Road had gates, to turn back 'droves of cattle ... omnibuses, carts and other low vehicles',⁷ and insulate residents from the poorer areas to the north. Residents liked the gates: the seclusion and quietness at night compensated for any inconvenience; but they were unpopular with the public and were banned in the 1890s.⁸ It is not clear just how tightly access to Calverley Park was regulated. An 1840 guidebook claimed that visitors 'of whatever rank' had previously needed a ticket, but nowadays 'persons of respectability no longer find an obstacle to their *entré*'.⁹ The picture below, from a souvenir album c. 1860, suggests furious activity – carriages, riders and pedestrians, but this may have simply been for pictorial effect. That statement about 'persons of

⁷ Olsen, *Town Planning*, p. 145.

⁸ Olsen, *Town Planning*, p. 148. He cites a *Sunday Times* article as early as 1826 calling for legislation to ban them.

⁹ Colbran. *Guide* (1840), p. 31.

respectability' having *entré* had gone from the 1844 edition, and later guidebooks say little about admittance.



Figure 122. Calverley Park in mid-century. Source: J.S. & Co. print no. 1674. Private collection.

One account of the town would suggest that the Park was not open.¹⁰ The writer describes a 'ramble' around the town in about 1850, but makes little reference to the Park. Talking of Calverley Promenade he mentions a band playing occasionally on the lawn, as people promenaded. On the far side was a turnstile, through which 'the people of the Park' could enter the Park itself. Unless 'the people of the Park' was a euphemism for wealthy visitors, it seems to have been for residents only. A Rule Book from 1938 seems to confirm this impression.¹¹ All three gates were manned, and locked from 10pm until 6am. They were also locked from 2 to 6 on Sunday afternoons, and after 1:30pm on bank holidays, making clear that strollers/picnickers were not wanted. The open grassed area was especially 'reserved for the exclusive use of Residents and holders of permits'. Residents were allowed permits for five personal friends to use the road through the Park, but only two for the enclosure, to be issued 'as sparing as possible'. Servants were allowed on the grass only when accompanying children of residents. In

¹⁰ 'Ramble Round Tunbridge Wells', p. 13. The author was probably of low to middling income, which makes his evidence the more valuable, but might have restricted his access.

¹¹ *Calverley Park, Tunbridge Wells, Rules and Arrangements* (Tunbridge Wells, 1938). Private collection.

1927 the trustees agreed that five of the houses - those with separate access from outside - could be used as nursing homes, provided that staff and patients did not use the Park.¹²

C.C. Savage in his account of the gated streets of St Louis claims that even when the gates there were open, the presence of the lodges deterred ingress.¹³ One feels that a closed area like Calverley Park in such a central location must have tempted some to break the rules, but evidence is limited. A reference to the Park being 'much frequented by couples' in the evening, might apply rather to the grounds of the Calverley Hotel.¹⁴ The same almost certainly applies to a comment in *Ramble* about 'jolly times in the Park at the time of haying'.¹⁵ The picture below is of the Farnborough Gate in about 1900, from the outside looking in, making a clear statement of separation. The presence of the children might be noted. (The Farnborough Gate is still locked on Sundays.)

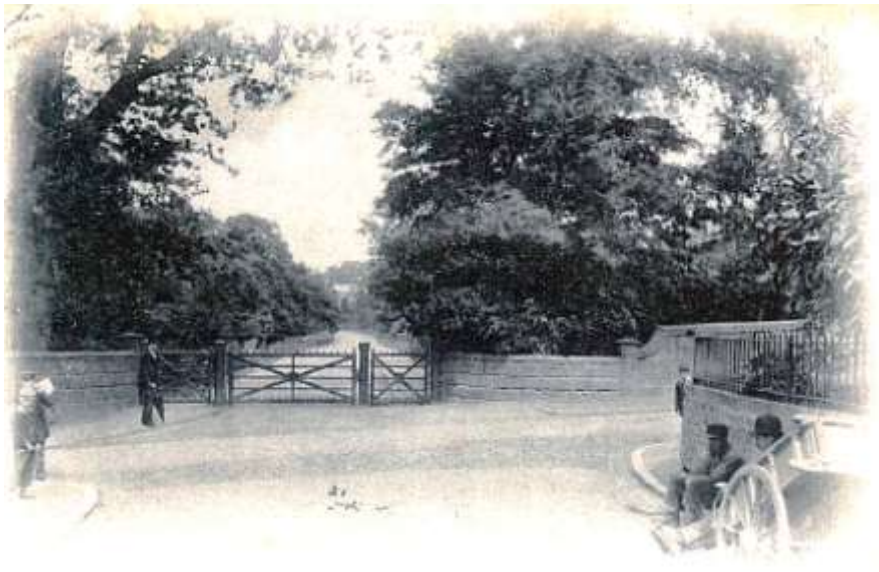


Figure 123. Farnborough Lodge entrance to Calverley Park. c 1900. Source: Local collection, Fred Scales, by permission.

The original intention (see Chapter 1.1) had been to develop a second gated park on Calverley Plain. When Calverley Park Gardens was eventually developed in the 1850s, the gates were

¹² Deeds to no. 8.

¹³ C.C. Savage, *Architecture of the Private Streets of St. Louis: The Architects and the Houses They Designed* (Columbia, MO, 1987), p. 44. Savage suggests that Shaw Place in St. Louis may have been modelled on Calverley. p. 7.

¹⁴ Anon. *The Comic Guide to Tunbridge Wells* (Tunbridge Wells, 1880(?)), p. 9.

¹⁵ 'Ramble Round Tunbridge Wells', p. 14.

removed, and the Improvement Commissioners petitioned to adopt the road. The road itself was featured in an 1863 guidebook: ‘the best lighted, best drained, and best kept public thoroughfare’.¹⁶ Despite the absence of gates, though, and with this well-lit and publicly-maintained thoroughfare running through the middle, Calverley Park Gardens also represented separation. The emphasis here was on privacy, with the houses set in large gardens and hidden behind double hedges. In Victoria Park, Manchester, the practice had been to surround the houses with high walls. Fishman cites criticism of them by the American developer Frederick Law Olmsted ‘high dead walls ... as of a series of private mad-houses’.¹⁷ It was perhaps to avoid the ‘dead wall’ effect that the Ward estate specified iron railings and hedges in later Calverley covenants. Yet the effect of the double hedges was very similar – to exclude the passer-by. Ruskin described the effect in a lecture in Tunbridge Wells in 1858. His overall subject was iron. At one point he turned to iron railings, which he disliked. He preferred low walls of brick or stone ‘That’s the sort of fence to have in a Christian country’. Iron railings:

say plainly to everybody who passes—“You may be an honest person,--but, also, you may be a thief: honest or not, you shall not get in here, for I am a respectable person, and much above you; you shall only see what a grand place I have got to keep you out of—look here, and depart in humiliation”.¹⁸



Figure 124. Calverley Park Gardens, c.1865. Source: J.S. & Co print no. 1675. Private collection. The artist has exaggerated the visibility of the houses. The thickness of the hedges is nevertheless clear.

¹⁶ W. Bracket, *Brackett’s descriptive, illustrated hand guide ...* (1863), p. 24.

¹⁷ Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 130.

¹⁸ J. Ruskin, ‘The Work of Iron, in Nature, Art, and Policy’, in *Sesame and Lilies, The Two Paths, The King of the Golden River*, Everyman edn. (London, 1974). p. 204.

Similar points about segregation and exclusion were also features of Nevill and Hungershall Parks. Nevill Park had lodges and gates at each end. Restrictions were particularly important to ensure that it was not used to avoid the turnpike on the adjoining main road.¹⁹ Pedestrian access was also controlled. Complaints as late as 1920 note that the 'public are making a practice of walking along the road, especially on Sunday afternoons ... if they are allowed they are apt to think that they acquire the right'.²⁰ There was a further issue with Hungershall Park as it lay across the traditional route to the High Rocks. There were no gates but the residents wanted to restrict access. A letter from an 'old resident' complained about Hungershall Park gardeners spoiling 'one of the pretty old-time walks of Tunbridge Wells'.²¹ There were similar concerns about the closure of a path near 'Blackhurst' – in Calverley Fairmile.²² With no indication of authorship, one cannot say whether these were New Town / Old Town issues between 'incomers' and 'existing residents' whose customary practices were being affected. The complaints might equally have come from other incomers who had been expecting access to the countryside: whose suburban ideal was not just their own private garden, but a wider picturesque setting.

It may be that the appeal of the parks was not just social exclusivity, but the sense of entering a place apart, a magical place. The Picturesque lodges and the absence of municipal gas lighting added to a sense of otherness. Rusthall Park, developed much later in the century on the rock-strewn Rusthall Common, is entered between two sheer rock-faces, making it even more dramatic. John Archer described the appeal of St Margaret's in Twickenham in such a way, with the inner parkland a place of retirement and leisure, isolated and protected from the outside world.²³ The rejection of picnickers and Sunday afternoon walkers, and of housing for poorer people, might have been just a means of promoting this sense of 'otherness'.

¹⁹ E.g. 'Agreement and Indenture re Nevill Park' (Sept. 1831), 'Conveyance of no. 1 Nevill Park' (Apr. 1923), ESRO ABE/20H.

²⁰ 'Letter to E.W. Johnson' (Sept. 1920). ESRO ABE/20H.

²¹ 'Hungershall Park. Correspondence. Vol. 2', ESRO ABE/4P.

²² *Gazette* (26 Dec. 1856).

²³ Archer, *Suburbia*, p. 220.

Social exclusivity, though, is an easy explanation. It was the theme of a book by Robert Liddell based on Nevill Park. His narrator explains: 'Sunday, in our town, is letter-writing day. We do not then go out on the heath much, because it is in the occupation of the lower classes. Far be it from us to grudge it to them ... we think some distraction ought to be allowed to those who sell us bread and bacon and postage stamps.'²⁴ A caricature by a twentieth-century liberal is hardly evidence of what a nineteenth-century resident really thought, but there are nice touches: the limited perception of the 'lower classes' as grocers' assistants and post-office clerks - indicating an ignorance of life in 'Little Irelands'; and the suggestion of a temporal aspect to segregation. Richard Dennis made this latter point in 1980, urging historical geographers to explore the way that spaces were used by different people at different times of day.²⁵

The views of those on the opposite side of the walls are seldom documented. The following incidents in 1842 might suggest resentment: 3 May, a window broken at no.4 Calverley Terrace; 7 May, four windows broken at no.2 Calverley Terrace; 23 May, gates removed from Calverley Terrace and the Park. It may have been drunkenness – but it could be significant that 3 May saw the rejection by Parliament of the Chartist petition.²⁶

3.3.2 Zoning

So the gated parks and the double hedges conform to the segregation story. Development elsewhere followed different patterns, but still had the effect of separating richer from poorer. Covenants ensured that only 'mansions' were built along Calverley Fairmile, and only 'villas' in Calverley Park Gardens. There were areas, like Lansdowne Road (see Chapter 1.3), where the values specified in the covenants were lower, but where the result, nevertheless, was standardisation, which is demonstrated in their rateable values.²⁷ One thinks of Loudon's advice to 'choose a neighbourhood where the houses and inhabitants are all ... of the same description

²⁴ R. Liddell, *Watering-Place* (London, 1945), p. 45.

²⁵ R.J. Dennis, 'More Thoughts on Victorian Cities', *Area*, 12/4 (1980), pp. 313-317.

²⁶ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (July 1842).

²⁷ 'Election of Commissioners Poll Book', 1885, TWBC.

and class ... as ourselves'.²⁸

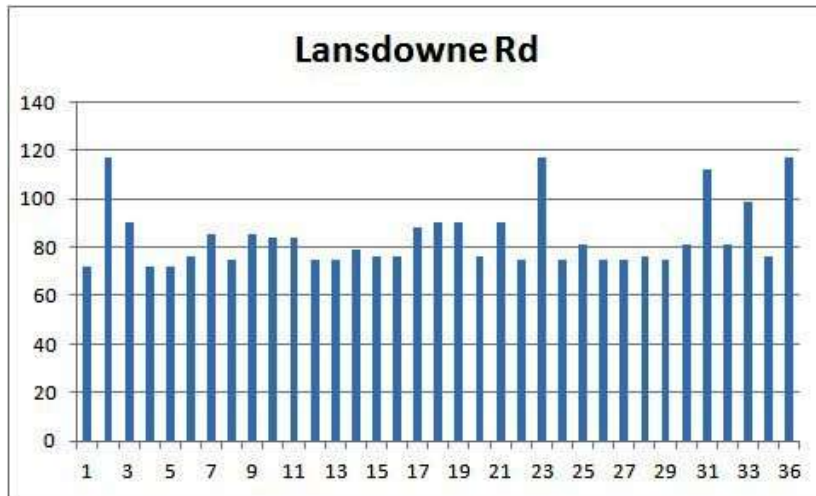


Figure 125. Lansdowne Road. Rateable values 1885. Source: author.
Similar values - Nos. 2, 23 and 36 were corner sites.

Development in the northern part of Calverley was more complicated, with elements of both the 'commercial' and the 'residential'. The terms are a little misleading. The 'commercial' area included houses – but they were for 'economic incomers', those attracted by business and employment opportunities; the 'residential' area served the 'suburban incomers' seeking their suburban ideal. It was Cannadine's distinction between 'the welcomed wealthy and the tolerated tradesman'.²⁹ Development of the two areas proceeded in parallel:

²⁸ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, p. 32.

²⁹ Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords*, p. 113.

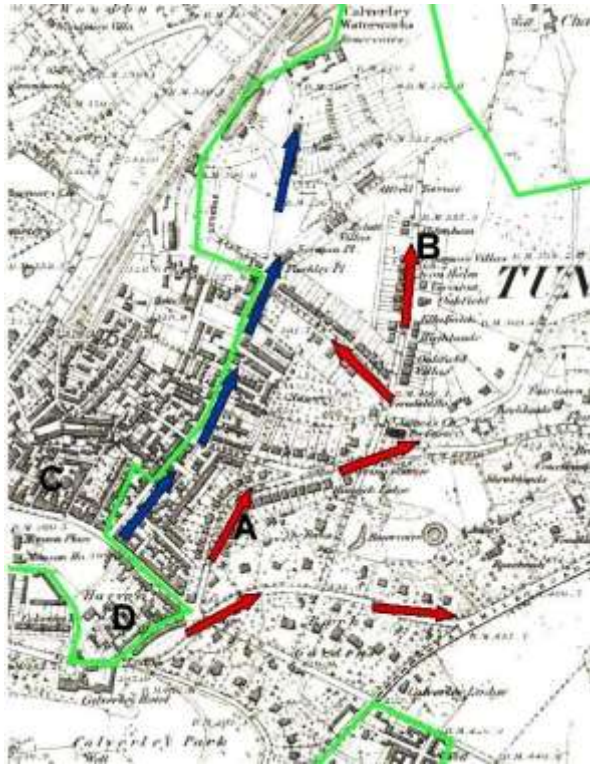


Figure 126. Calverley - development to the north. Source: author, based on OS 6 inch map.
 Blue - 'economic incomers'; Red - 'suburban incomers'.
 A – Lansdowne Road, B – St. James Road, C – Crown Fields, D – Herveytown.

Lansdowne Road, lying within the 'residential' zone³⁰ had houses of similar value and status. The roads which linked the two zones, had what might be described as localised uniformity: neighbouring houses were very similar, but values gradually decreased northwards.

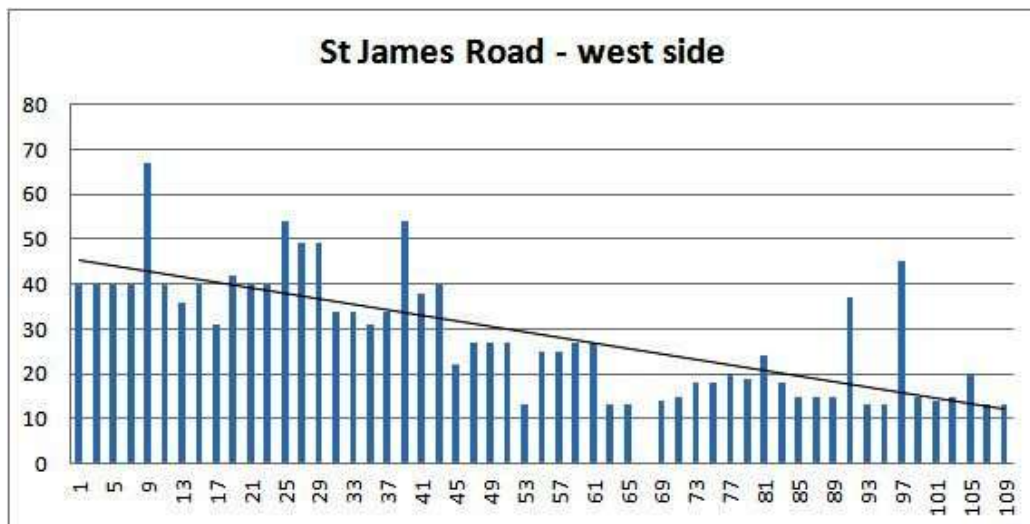


Figure 127. St James Road. Rateable values 1885. Source: author.
 Stratified values - nos. 91 and 97 were shops. Development was incomplete between 63 and 73 but eventually followed the trend-line.

³⁰ It was actually built on the nursery that had earlier separated 'commercial' from 'residential' zones.

St James Road was stratified rather than segregated. The separation may seem less blatant, but there was nevertheless a boundary here between two distinct zones. An advertisement for a shop near the northern end described the area as ‘inhabited by the Middle Classes, as well as Respectable Mechanics ... both Family and Ready-money Customers’.³¹ When a new parish, St. James, was carved out of Holy Trinity in the late 1850s to serve the growing Calverley estate, the intention was to include both rich and poor areas.³² The distinction between them, though, is obvious in the arrangements for district visiting (see below). The visitors came from the wealthier, southern end of the parish; those who were visited lived in the north.³³ (That original intention of providing a mixed parish was negated by a High Church / Low Church dispute in the 1880s which resulted in the establishment of a new parish made up almost wholly of the very poorest streets at the northern end.)

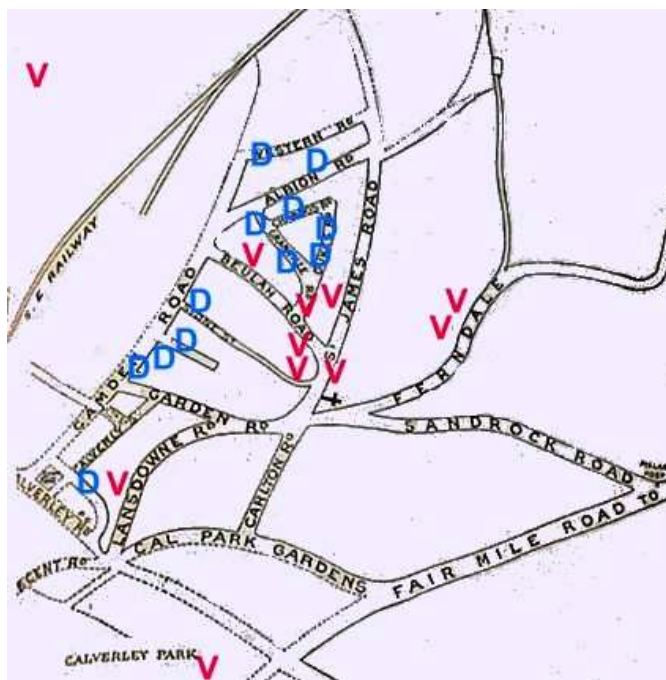


Figure 128. St James Parish. 1891. District Visiting. Source: author.
A marker of social status. V - home of a district visitor. D - a district that was visited.

These gradations, Richard Cobb called them ‘elaborate if unstated hierarchies of class relations of

³¹ *Brackets Sales Catalogue* (11 Aug.1893), TW Ref Lib. Shops were not permitted in any other part of ‘residential’ Calverley.

³² Willicombe was the largest subscriber to the church-building appeal, again demonstrating the importance of an Anglican church for estate development. *Gazette* (26 Dec. 1856).

³³ *St James’ Parish Magazine* (Jan. 1891), p. 6. KHLC P371G/28/17.

considerable subtlety³⁴ are worthy of study but are outside the period of the study, and are not the extremes that Fishman saw in the 'two nations'. Yet there were areas of very poor housing in Tunbridge Wells. The journalist reviewing the model cottages in Newcomen Road (see Chapter 1.3) spoke of 'filthy and disgusting dens' elsewhere in the town.³⁵ Crown Fields (marked 'C' on Figure 129), where the lack of drains had caused 'a vast accumulation of soil and filth' was very close to Calverley. Yet when another commentator came, hoping to publicise the 'two nations' issue, he found it 'almost cut off from the other parts of the town ... it seemed as if I was quite alone ... Had the people been inclined for pocket-picking, or taking forcible possession of my person, no obstacle stood in the way to prevent them'.³⁶

Suburban Calverley was protected from Crown Fields by its 'commercial' zone but another of the four working-class districts directly abutted it. Herveytown ('D' on Figure 129) was an area of small cottages. In 1837 they had a population of 280, sixty-nine of them children under 12. It may be that Calverley Promenade was built as a barrier between Calverley Park and Herveytown, in the same way that Albany Street separated London's Regent's Park from Somers Town;³⁷ and Regent Street divided Mayfair from Soho.³⁸ The image below highlights the chasm-like appearance of its rear elevation, especially as the original Herveytown houses opposite were smaller than those in the picture. Reginald Turnor called it 'austere and almost forbidding'.³⁹

³⁴ Cobb, *Still Life*, p. xii.

³⁵ Brooks, 'Labour and the Poor'.

³⁶ J. Shaw, *Travels in England: a ramble with the city and town missionaries* (London, 1861), p. 243. Cited by Brown, *Tunbridge Wells in Literature*, p.77.

³⁷ L. Clarke, *Building capitalism : historical change and the labour process in the production of built environment* (London,2011), p. 240.

³⁸ Nash said it was 'to provide a boundary and complete separation'. Cited by Arnold, *Rural Urbanism*, p. 80.

³⁹ Turnor, *Smaller English house*, p. 110.



Figure 129. Crescent Road c.1900. Source: local collection, Fred Scales, by permission. Herveytown to the left, Calverley Promenade to the right. The original Herveytown houses were even smaller.

At this point of direct interface between zones, there is evidence of what the segregation elsewhere was trying to achieve. In 1840, George Robinson, the Calverley agent, complained to local magistrates about children from Herveytown running about the Promenade: 'They were very insolent, and if they were spoken to, they would throw stones at the parties complaining'.⁴⁰ In 1846 the residents wrote to the Commissioners about the nuisance from beershops and lodging houses at the back of the Promenade.⁴¹ The police were instructed to pay particular attention to the area. There may have been a particular problem that year as railway workers were building a tunnel under Mount Pleasant. The reference to lodging houses may also have been a coded reference to another issue: the 1837 census recorded three prostitutes living in Herveytown. In 1855 the Promenade residents sought permission to appoint a constable to keep the Herveytown children out.⁴²

Other people's children can be annoying in any situation, especially when there are sixty-nine of them (there were only three children actually living in the Promenade). In this case there was possibly also an element of 'New Town' / 'Old Town' annoyance to the complaints of the

⁴⁰ *Sussex Agricultural Express* (24 Oct. 1840).

⁴¹ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (May 1846).

⁴² *Gazette* (6 July 1855).

incomers. They had selected their suburban ideal on the basis of its picturesque / rustic appeal, and here it was being disturbed by locals for whom they felt no responsibility – who were employed by Old Town traders, who probably also owned the cottages.

3.3.3 Mixing

So the suburban ideal for many of the incomers did involve separation, yet segregation was not part of the Tunbridge Wells tradition. Before 1800 it was but a few hamlets spread across an area of heathland. It served a temporary summer population for whom it was a world of make-believe, a world where normal rules of behaviour did not apply, and where normal arrangements for accommodation might be put aside. The idea that Queen Henrietta Maria and her court camped on the Common in 1629 may not have been true, but it was part of the story and perhaps influenced expectations of later visitors. The reality, as suggested in Section 0.6, was rustic enough. The Assembly Rooms, libraries and coffee-shops had an open common to one side, and a few huts to the other. The lodging houses and gardens of Mount Sion beyond, and the line of buildings along Mount Ephraim were the extent of the buildings. To the right of the Wells is a cluttered area. This might be, in Fanny Burney's words, 'where the shopkeepers live, who have got two or three dirty little lanes, much like dirty little lanes in other places'.⁴³

So, prior to 1800 there was little segregation, and, despite the new, segregated working class areas of the 1820s, and the single-class zones of Calverley, this mixing continued in the older areas. The map below shows parts of Church Road and London Road in 1838. The Common is to the left. Both roads were popular with visitors and incomers. Yet tucked behind them, amongst the stables and workshops, were two rows of newly-built cottages. Clarence Row and Rock Cottages were occupied in 1837 by working people: a smith, postboy, laundress, coachman, bricklayer and labourers. The visitors and incomers in this area seem to have had little concern about living in a mixed area.

⁴³ Burney, *Diary*, p. 41. Of course the dirty little lanes where the shopkeepers lived were segregated, though not by any great distance.

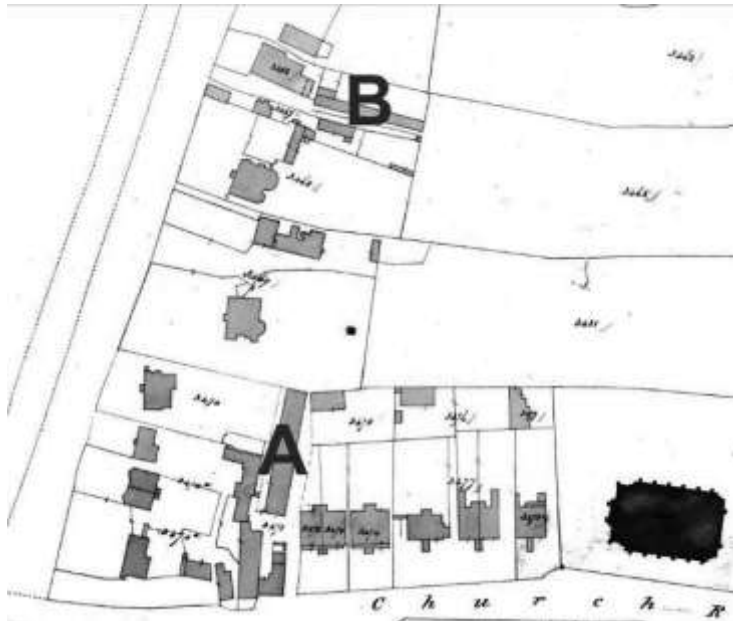


Figure 130. Infilling behind the Clarence Tavern and Rock Lodge. c.1838. Source: author, based on Tunbridge Wells tithe map, KHL CTR/371E.

A - Clarence Row, B - Rock Cottages.

There was similar mixing in an area to the north, though here the insertion was of middle-class housing. Mount Ephraim Road was built in the 1850s. It was an attractive area: the Common was just to the west; but immediately to the east was Crown Fields. The point again is that there seems to have been little problem about building these new houses in a mixed area. The occupiers were similar to those in Calverley, and perhaps suffered from similar problems to those in Calverley Promenade. In 1856 a boy was caught ringing door-bells in Mount Ephraim Road. He was arrested and brought before the magistrate, who spoke sternly: 'complaints of this nature had been so frequent; he thought it necessary to make an example'.⁴⁴

Such stories allow a glimpse into the day-to-day realities on the ground. Clarence Road, running south from Church Road, provides another example. The houses were large, in big gardens, and the owners made a point of retaining its privacy (refusing an offer by the Improvement Commission to install gas-lights). One might therefore assume it was another no-go area like Calverley Park. Yet the 'Ramble' author remembered 'Down this road most of the uptown people

⁴⁴ *Gazette* (4 Jan. 1856). The point having been made, he released the boy after a day in custody.

passed to the Wesleyan Chapel, a shorter distance than going down High Street'.⁴⁵ Another 'glimpse' relates to the bottom of Mount Pleasant hill, where a lodge protected the entrance into the Calverley Hotel grounds. Edward Churchill, lessee of the hotel, complained about the lowering of the wall there 'a nuisance to passers-by from its being a constant lounge for idle persons also children [who run along the top of it]'.⁴⁶ So the experience of the older parts of town was that eighteenth century patterns of development continued. Even supposedly private roads like Clarence were treated as thoroughfares. Perhaps the suburban incomers here were less concerned about privacy: these were the ones who joined the Improvement Commission.

3.3.4 Summary and The Treatment of Outsiders

The chapter has viewed separation through the eyes of the privileged incomers. A more usual focus would be on those who were excluded, like the Herveytown children with nowhere to play. The subject of the study, though, is the motivation of the privileged incomers, and for many, separation was desirable. Having identified Calverley / Tunbridge Wells as their suburban ideal, they sought to preserve it. One can see three strategies at work. The first was, indeed, separation: the creation of private spaces, an individual house and garden, or a park. The problem with that was that much of what was 'special' lay beyond their garden walls, in the town as a whole. Efforts were needed to persuade fellow residents not to disturb that 'specialness' – by not ringing door-bells, or lounging on hotel walls. These are considered in chapter 3.4.

The third strategy was to protect the town as a whole from outsiders. One threat was the easier access afforded by the railway. A common story in suburban histories is of an 1874 petition against cheap third-class season tickets raised by the citizens of Tunbridge Wells – fearing an influx of poorer residents.⁴⁷ It has not been possible to confirm this: neither *Courier* nor *Journal*

⁴⁵ 'Ramble Round Tunbridge Wells', p. 15. Vale Road (which goes to the Wesleyan Chapel) did not then exist.

⁴⁶ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (July 1850).

⁴⁷ Olsen, *Victorian London*, p. 318 (p. 320 in the 1979 edition).

mentions any such petition.⁴⁸ The more usual complaint was that the fares were unfairly high, that season tickets from Tunbridge Wells were the same price as from Hastings.⁴⁹ The *Courier* in January 1875 called for reductions in prices, especially for third-class.⁵⁰ Might the railway company have arranged the supposed petition itself, to counter this criticism of their fares? There was concern, though, about cheap excursion fares bringing in unsuitable day-trippers. They must have benefited some traders but were a threat to the image of the town as a whole. *The Builder* commented in 1857 on the ‘very beer-shoppy aspect’ that had been given to the High Rocks; while Rev James Hamilton wrote of an earlier age when ‘there were no excursion trains, nor did Tunbridge Wells or Brighton tempt from his pestilential lanes the Londoner’.⁵¹ There was an extreme reaction to a rather extreme incidence of day-trippers in 1870 when Henry Reed, of Calverley Fairmile, brought down 1,400 Salvationist East-Enders for an outing. Their behaviour was apparently praiseworthy as they marched to his home from the station, but disapproving townspeople met them on their return. Reed wrote:

the feeling in the town ... was becoming very bitter amongst all classes. On our return to the station with Mr Booth’s people ... we found upwards of 5,000 people waiting for us, and then we had hooting, yelling and abuse ... Some of our women, poor things, were fainting.⁵²

In the case of day-trippers, then, there was a clear preference for separation, though hardly a wilful blindness. That cannot be said for the treatment of another group that the town sought to exclude – vagrants. The question of the itinerant poor had taxed England for centuries, resulting in complex bureaucracies and some grotesquely harsh treatment. They were just not wanted in Tunbridge Wells. It was an uncharitable stance, though it simply followed parliamentary guidance which claimed to show ‘beyond all possibility of doubt, the gross and monstrous frauds

⁴⁸ Olsen cited Coppock and Prince, who cited Edwin Course, *London Railways* (London, 1962), pp. 205-6, but Course did not provide a source.

⁴⁹ Gray, *South Eastern Railway*, p. 202.

⁵⁰ *Courier* (8 Jan. 1875). There were complaints that rail fares for the middle and lower classes were too high from the start of local newspapers. For example in the *Gazette* (26 Dec. 1856).

⁵¹ *The Builder* (May 1857). J. Hamilton, ‘Erasmus in England’, in *Works of the late Rev. James Hamilton* (6 vols, London, 1873), iv, p. 512.

⁵² Reed, *Henry Reed*, p. 71.

practised by Mendicants' which gave them much more 'than is earned by the sober and most industrious artificers and labourers'.⁵³ The town felt it was being unfairly targeted, that other parishes were encouraging their poor to go to Tunbridge Wells.⁵⁴ One response was to put up signs warning vagrants that they would be 'apprehended and punished'.⁵⁵ A Mendicity Society was formed. Its subscribers, instead of giving money to beggars, gave them a ticket entitling them to 'a lodging for the night and a sufficiency of good plain food for supper and breakfast'.⁵⁶ The bargain was that they would then leave and never return. There were similar societies elsewhere, but no evidence of one in, for example, Tonbridge.

The problem was not solved – the police became increasingly involved. In the years 1844-1847 they arrested an average of five vagrants per month.⁵⁷ Some were discharged on promising to leave; most got a spell in Maidstone goal. Plain-clothes officers were appointed to catch them. In one of Henry Mayhew's accounts of the London poor, he interviewed a young woman gaoled in Tunbridge Wells. She had been a maid in London, but her employer's business failed and she lost her job. She tried selling water-cress in Oxford Street, but then took to the road: to Croydon and Brighton, where she sang in the streets, and then to Tunbridge Wells, where she was arrested.⁵⁸ The numbers increased further. Between June 1848 and June 1849 the police apprehended 115 people for felonies, 90 for misdemeanours, but 353 vagrants.⁵⁹ This was the much harder face of separation.

The following chapter will look at other strategies for protecting the 'safe space' that the incomers sought to create within their suburban ideal.

⁵³ *Report from the Select Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis* (London, 1816), p. 3.

⁵⁴ Letter to *The Visitor* (21 Sep. 1833).

⁵⁵ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Feb. 1845, July 1847).

⁵⁶ *The Visitor* (13 June 1835).

⁵⁷ 'Impr Comm Minutes'.

⁵⁸ H. Mayhew, 'Labour and the Poor: Letter XXVII', *Morning Chronicle* (18 Jan. 1850).

⁵⁹ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (July 1849).

3.4 Withdrawal, or Engagement?

'the maximum of privacy and the minimum of outside distraction'

Donald Olsen.¹

Fishman used Victoria Park to suggest class segregation as a feature of the suburb. He used Clapham to link the suburb to a new idealisation of the home and family and a withdrawal from the world of work and business. He attributed these changes to the influence of Evangelical Christianity. Withdrawal was a theme, too, of Olsen's history of Victorian London: 'The flight to the suburbs involved the temporary rejection of the rest of society', as was the 'closed domesticated nuclear family'.² Fishman's work, in particular, is a representation of the idea of the 'separate spheres' highlighted by Davidoff and Hall: the dichotomy between the public, commercial, male world of business, and the private, domestic, female world of the home.³

The idealised family unit provided a powerful image. Loudon, describing the delights of a suburban garden on a warm summer's evening, showed how they were enhanced by the involvement of the family: 'What more delightful than to see the master or the mistress ... with all the boys and girls, the maids, and, in short, all the strength of the house, carrying pots and pails of water to different parts of the garden ...'.⁴ It is encapsulated in the following image from a popular book of children's stories.⁵ The premise of the book is actually that the children read to each other, but the significance here is that it is the father – at home in the evening – reading to them.

¹ Olsen, *Victorian London*, p. 214.

² Olsen, *Victorian London*, p. 214, Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 9 (Fishman is citing the Stones).

³ Davidoff and Hall set out to demonstrate the restrictions that this construct placed on female life opportunities; but also that female and male nevertheless both contributed to the success of business; and that women might work within and around the restrictions. It is ironical that their attempt 'to move beyond the nineteenth-century inheritance of "separate spheres"' is so often cited as a reference to that structure. Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 33.

⁴ Loudon, *Suburban Gardener*, p. 3.

⁵ J. Aikin and A.L. Barbauld, *Evenings at Home ...* (6 vols, London, 1792-1796, but multiple later editions).



Figure 131. 'Evenings at Home'. Idealisation of the family unit. Source: Aikin and Barbauld, *Evenings at Home*, frontispiece to 1858 edn.

The earlier description of the houses in Calverley Park Gardens, hidden behind their double hedges, suggests that withdrawal was indeed part of the suburban ideal; and there are references among the suburban incomers to cosy family evenings. General Durnford, for example, in Clarence Road, read to his wife in the evening as she worked at her needle. (He would have preferred to sing – Dibdin's songs were his favourite (patriotic sea-shanties) - but she didn't like the sound of his voice.)⁶

This chapter takes a slightly different viewpoint. The proposition, which was introduced in the previous chapter, is that the locus of the suburban ideal was not the individual house, nor the segregated park, but the town as a whole. The withdrawal from the world of business was achieved by the move to Tunbridge Wells, not by retreat into the family home. Just as the earlier aristocratic and intellectual visitors created an artificial world in this wild bit of the Kentish Weald; the nineteenth century suburban incomers sought to mould that same bit of countryside in their own image. Chapter 3.2 has shown that it was in the interests of the trading families to deliver the special space that the incomers sought, but there were others who did not have that

⁶ Durnford, *Family recollections*, p. 235.

commercial imperative. This chapter looks at how those others were persuaded, and sometimes required, to conform to the incomers' notions of behaviour. Two strategies are described – control, by policing; and encouragement.

The chapter ends with a related aspect of suburban theory: the role of women in the family and in the suburb. Calverley seems to have been particularly attractive to women. The final section considers what might have been the appeal, and what might have been the consequences of this. The presence of a large number of single women, many as head of household, also brings into question the focus on the nuclear family.

3.4.1 Measures of Control

“[Dost thou think,] because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?” Because Horticultural Societies and German Bazaars are to be patronised by a certain class, must we have no races?⁷

The proposition then is that the suburban ideal for many of the incomers involved not just the home, but the town as a whole – its picturesque setting, and its public spaces – the features that made it suburban rather than rural. One aspect of the Herveytown problem was that Calverley Promenade was a semi-public space – the children could not be excluded – but the Calverley incomers wanted to be able to enjoy their public spaces without exposure to unpleasant, threatening, or even just irritating behaviour. They wished to extend the ‘safe space’ of their homes into the town as a whole. They had to engage with the wider community to do this. This first section looks at the use of ‘control’ measures.

Amsinck, the local commentator, had hinted at a growing lack of deference in 1810. Referring to ‘tea-drinkings’ previously held on the Pantiles, he claimed: ‘It may be noticed, as a singular contrast to the unmannerly intrusion of the present times, that ... there was never any advance

⁷ *The Visitor* (June 1834).

on the part of the lower classes to disturb the comfort of the meeting'.⁸ Perhaps he was optimistic in assuming some earlier Golden Age: Hussey cited a proposal for a 'cage' in 1729 'to put the Vagrants and Sturdy Beggars in on account of the Disorders daily committed about the place'.⁹ Borsay suggests that similar situations had always existed in other towns.¹⁰ But there was clearly a perception around 1830 that there was a problem. Local newspapers spoke of 'the Parade [being]... infested on Sunday evenings with those characters who assemble there to the annoyance of more respectable visitors'.¹¹ It may have been a reflection of conditions in the countryside. Looking for some positive result from Swing, Carl Griffin suggests that rural workers had adopted a different set of 'everyday social relations', citing a reference to 'the churlish demeanour which these men ... now assume'.¹²

Examples of similar non-deference can be seen among those whose livelihood seemingly depended upon the goodwill of the wealthy. In the debate about a Local Act there were complaints about fly-drivers: their aggression towards women when touting for business, refusing to accept that they were not wanted, and splashing them with mud. There was presumably some gender powerplay in this; but the fly-drivers would then 'offer the same annoyance to a luckless dandy with milk-white trousers ... splashing him with mire – they then raise a howl of derision and brandish their whips with delight'.¹³ One of the first acts of the Improvement Commission was to seek control of the fly-drivers.¹⁴ Licensing was instituted and fares regulated, for donkeys and goat-chaises as well as flies. Owners were required to display the licence number, as below:

⁸ Amsinck, *Tunbridge Wells*, p. 27-28.

⁹ Hussey, 'Old Towns Revisited', p. 1406.

¹⁰ P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance. Culture and Society in The Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 293-4.

¹¹ *Maidstone Journal*. (9 June 1829, 13 Nov. 1832).

¹² Griffin, *Rural war*, p. 325.

¹³ *The Visitor* (4 Jan. 1834).

¹⁴ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Aug. 1835, Sep. 1835).

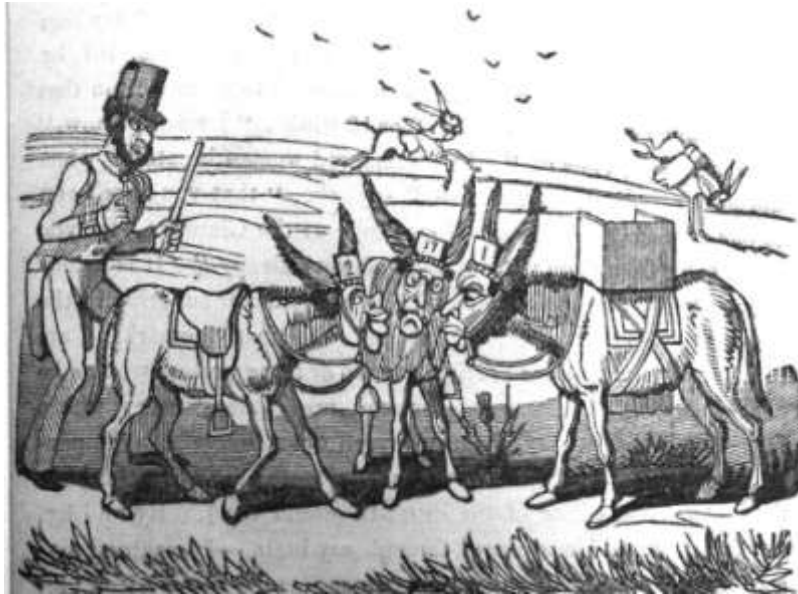


Figure 132. Donkeys with licence plates. Source: *The Sphinx*. 1 (26 Nov. 1835), TUNWM 2006.150. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery.

While these measures did not directly address the problem of rudeness, the commissioners showed themselves willing to enforce regulations on, for example, proper queuing at cab-stands, and the numbers meant that offensive fly-drivers could be identified. It was a marker of a more ordered society to come. The commissioners also took action against touting. For years visitors had complained about touters: they were 'sufficiently annoying to Visitors to disgust them with the town'.¹⁵ In 1847 they started congregating at the railway station to meet new arrivals. The police were required to meet the trains 'to prevent any ... annoyance by touting or otherwise'.¹⁶ Drinking could not be banned but public houses were fined for staying open until 2 and 3 in the morning, and plain clothes officers appointed to better enforce this. There were also bye-laws against serving beer during the hours of divine service. Seemingly minor actions like this sought to push the boundaries of suburban security beyond the front garden, so that one could walk abroad without fear of attack, or of being accosted by touts, or taunted by fly-drivers. Or, given the requirement placed on beer-shops in 1847 to provide urinals 'in recesses', without unwanted displays.¹⁷

¹⁵ *The Sphinx*. 3 (10 Dec. 1835).

¹⁶ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Apr. 1847).

¹⁷ 'Impr Comm Minutes' (Apr. 1847).

The reformers also sought to enforce polite, suburban notions of behaviour on traditional country activities, in the same way that suburban development ended the fairs in Camberwell and Peckham.¹⁸ There is little record of traditional customs in Tunbridge Wells - it is the visitor story that is usually told - but there are glimpses of rural life in posters for 'Annual Diversions' at the annual hiring fair in Tonbridge.¹⁹ The equivalent in Tunbridge Wells was the race meeting – held on the Common in August, accompanied by stalls and side-shows (see Chapter 2.4 for the enjoyment they brought to a country girl). They were discussed in *The Visitor* in 1834 following 'disgraceful scenes' in 1833. Phippen, the editor, was keen to retain them. He urged the 'resident and neighbouring gentry' to remain involved 'surely it is not too much to require that the only public amusement from which *all* classes can derive amusement should be spared'.²⁰ Extra care was taken that year: Bow Street officers were hired; the sale of food and drink restricted to local suppliers, and gambling booths banned. The races survived but they were under threat. The 'cakes and ale' quotation at the start of this section would seem to blame the incomers. It continued 'Because there are persons who love to be humbugged by these and similar exhibitions, are the middling and lower class to have no amusement?' The races survived into the late 1840s, but the organising committee in 1844 was drawn from the Old Town, rather than the landed gentry of earlier years, and there were no names identifiable as 'suburban' incomers.²¹ Abandoned by local landed families, the races, with the attendant crime and disorder, did not appeal.

Another traditional practice that the police sought to control was the firing of the furze on the Common on Bonfire Night. Police Committee reports throughout the 1830s record the police being on duty from sunset until after midnight on 5 November. In 1837 a crowd of two to three hundred threw stones at them as they tried to make arrests. In 1839 two people were sent for

¹⁸ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁹ [Sprange Collection], TW Museum.

²⁰ *The Visitor* (5 July 1834).

²¹ *Sussex Agric Express* (15 June 1844).

trial for firing the furze. There are fewer reports in the 1840s, but concern was expressed again in 1850, and there was police intervention in 1855 when a masked group tried to roll lighted tar barrels along the Pantiles.²² While firing the furze was more or less brought under control, celebrations on Bonfire Night remained a concern throughout the century. In 1872 there was an organised bonfire and torchlight procession intended to replace unregulated activities, but nevertheless about 11pm 'a number of roughs ... took over the Parade, and let off squibs, etc ... the police not being in sufficient force to make a stand against them'.²³

3.4.2 Measures of Encouragement

A longer-term strategy to prevent unacceptable behaviour was the encouragement of temperance, thrift and self-control. The adoption of such virtues by the mercantile middle-class, associated with the spread of Evangelical Christianity in the late eighteenth century, is central to Fishman's theory of the suburb. (It is also said to have restrained some of the excessive behaviour of the upper-classes – the Evangelicals targeting the rich, as the Wesleyans did the poor.²⁴) The focus here on their use for social control is not to suggest that they were applied hypocritically; to Evangelical Christians their intrinsic rightness was obvious.

Tunbridge Wells became identified with Evangelicalism. Mona Wilson even claimed it affected the architecture: 'Tunbridge Wells was by tradition evangelical; ... Decimus Burton's laying out of the Calverley estate is the best surviving embodiment of Early Victorian seriousness and refinement'.²⁵ That is overstated – in 1825 the town might be more accurately described as traditional Anglican. It was subject to Evangelical missionary activity in the period of the study, linked to suburban incomers; and to competing missionary activity by Congregationalists via a separate group of suburban incomers. These various religious affiliations, and their conflicts, are

²² 'Impr Comm Minutes' (various). *Gazette* (9 Nov. 1855).

²³ *Courier* (8 Nov. 1872). Bonfires and torchlight processions remain popular in the area. Burning tar barrels are still used, for example in Hastings.

²⁴ I.C. Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness: the Evangelical Impact on the Victorians* 2nd edn. (Oxford, 2006) p. 37 et seq.

²⁵ M. Wilson, 'Travel and Holidays', in G.M. Young (ed.), *Early Victorian England, 1830-1865* (2 vols, London, 1934), ii, p. 288.

not the subject here, though they were important motivators behind what is addressed.

Charities, though, are a useful source. An 1857 guidebook listed fifty four.²⁶ Some, the dispensary and soup kitchens, for example, simply tried to help those who had fallen on hard times. Many were involved in education: valuable for socialising the growing generation. One practical point about them is that they required involvement on the part of their supporters – not just the secretaries and treasurers, but the greater numbers involved in fund-raising. The charities, then, are in themselves evidence against withdrawal, though it is difficult to determine who was involved. Of the forty four names associated with those charities (excluding ministers and their families), seventeen were definitely suburban incomers.

In 1855 the *Gazette* claimed ‘Perhaps there is no town in England in which so much is done with a view to elevate its labouring population, socially and morally, as in Tunbridge Wells’.²⁷ That was not the opinion of Thomas Geldart of the Country Towns Mission Society, who studied the town in the early 1840s. His conclusion was that ‘wherever the aristocracy, squirearchy, and gentry were congregated together, there the moral, social, and physical conditions of the people were lower and more frightful than in the manufacturing towns’.²⁸ It is a pointer back to the wilful blindness of the ‘two nations’ debate in Chapter 3.3. Perhaps the *Gazette* was reflecting what happened after Geldart’s visit. A Society missionary, Thomas Jay, was appointed and set up a Ragged School in Crown Fields. A Mrs M, whose eight-year old son went to the school, provided one of its success stories. His father, ‘a sad drunkard’, seeing the boy at his prayers, was transformed. He stopped swearing and ‘he don’t come home drunk and smash everything ... as he used to’.²⁹ He was also, perhaps, a more acceptable fellow resident to the suburban incomers.

The picture below was part of the title page of the Society’s journal, mirroring the idealised

²⁶ Colbran, *Guide* (1857), pp. 150-152.

²⁷ *Gazette* (21 Dec. 1855).

²⁸ It has not been possible to trace Geldart’s actual report. The information is taken from Shaw, *Travels in England*, p. 242.

²⁹ T. Jay(?), ‘The Ragged School’, *Country Towns Mission Record*, 1/12 (Oct. 1854), p. 93. See also *Tunbridge Wells Journal* (16 Oct. 1862) for the annual report of the Mission.

family at the start of this chapter. Here it is the missionary sitting at the centre of the family. He is reading from the Bible rather than *Evenings at Home*, though that might have been equally appropriate – they were all improving tales: the moral behind ‘The Wasp and the Bee’ on page 3 is not difficult to guess. It is a reminder that the children of the suburban incomers had also to be socialised.



Figure 133. The Country Towns Mission: the missionary in the place of paterfamilias. Source: *Country Towns Mission Record*, part of the banner on the front page.

While driven by missionary spirit, the Society’s activities chimed with the vision of George Godwin, architect and editor of *The Builder*. His message was that improving the conditions of poorer people would make them more comfortable fellow-citizens to the better-off. In *Town Swamps and Social Bridges* (1859) he recommended ragged schools, mechanics’ institutes, playgrounds and savings banks.³⁰ He was particularly interested in better housing ‘as the writer has said elsewhere again and again ... homes are the manufactories of men, - as the home, so what it sends forth’.³¹ This was the motivation behind the model cottages described in Chapter

³⁰ G. Godwin and A. King (ed), *Town Swamps and Social Bridges* (Leicester, 1972), p. 15.

³¹ G. Godwin, *London Shadows: a glance at the ‘homes’ of the thousands* (New York and London, 1985), p. 1.

1.3. A review of them in the *Morning Chronicle* was complimentary of both the cottages and the housekeeping skills of one of the residents. It ended, though, with criticism: 'About Tunbridge Wells the labouring classes seem to be peculiarly destitute of anything approaching ... good management ... The women are still deplorably deficient in knowledge of cookery.'³²

The suburban incomers were keen to encourage better management but were selective in their approach. A Horticultural Society was formed in 1832, as both a social network for the better-off, and a means of encouraging sober habits amongst the poorer. The Duchess of Kent gave £5 each year 'for the promotion of habits of economy and industry among the labouring classes'.³³ Most of the prizes at the Society's annual show went to professional gardeners in the big houses, but there were also categories for 'cottagers'. W.S.Taylor's speech to the cottagers in 1849 makes the intention clear: 'A cottage garden gave to a man employment after the hours of his ordinary labour were over, and if he had not his garden he would want to be doing something – perhaps he would take his half-pint, and they knew that half-pints too frequently led to gallons'.³⁴ The top nine prizes, though, went to 'cottagers' from Southborough and Frant. Having willed the end, the gentry of Tunbridge Wells had not willed the means – the cottagers of Crown Fields and Herveytown did not have gardens. A committee had been formed in Southborough in 1830 to fund allotments there,³⁵ and the results were clear. (Allotments were seen by some as a form of out-relief, against the principles of the New Poor Law.)³⁶

Temperance was an obvious part of the campaign to improve lives and behaviour, but the experience in Tunbridge Wells was little different to elsewhere. There were also initiatives to encourage thrift, such as the coal and clothing clubs. Subscriptions from supporters of the clubs provided a 50% bonus when the savings were withdrawn, an encouragement to good

³² S. Brooks (?), 'Labour and the Poor: The Rural Districts: The Southern and Western Counties: Letter XXXIII', *Morning Chronicle* (3 Mar. 1850).

³³ D. Bushell, *William Law Pope and Henry Bishop* (Tunbridge Wells, c.2010), p. 23.

³⁴ *Sussex Agric Express* (30 June 1849).

³⁵ *Maidstone Journal* (13 and 20 April 1830).

³⁶ Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 73. Lord Marney was 'tremendously fierce against allotments'.

management and self-help. The ultimate self-help organisation was the friendly society, where workers subscribed small amounts each week to cover expenses arising from sickness and death. The *Gazette* claimed 'There is perhaps no branch of the social system more eminently calculated to improve the position of the industrial element, than Benefit or Friendly Associations', yet opinions amongst the better-off seem mixed.³⁷ There were two in Tunbridge Wells: the 'United Brothers' and the 'Mechanics and Artisans'. Charles Trustram, a surgeon and chairman of the latter society, praised its members at their annual dinner in 1844: 'the practice of one virtue leads to another – provident in other ways ... Persons of this description were among the best conducted in the country'. He expressed great surprise at the 'total want of interest which clergy and gentry seemed to take'.³⁸ It was the same in 1849. H.L. Sopwith, another surgeon, said 'societies like these not only benefited the members themselves but every inhabitant of the parish'. 'The day is not far off' he thought, when people would realise this and 'render these societies more assistance than hitherto'.³⁹

It was possibly the very notion of self-help, independent of middle-class guidance, that repelled. The Rev Pope, otherwise a great supporter of community initiatives, opposed the co-operative societies in a sermon in 1829.⁴⁰ Perhaps it was the association of friendly societies with drinking – their meetings were usually held in public houses, but more likely it was the idea of surrendering control of the public space of the town to these independent groups of working people. The United Brothers held their annual dinner in 1856 in a large marquee near Calverley Place. Once wives were admitted after the formal dinner was over, the numbers exceeded three hundred. So self-improvement was to be welcomed but only on certain terms. Ruskin's lecture at the Sussex Hotel in 1858 has already been cited (Chapter 3.3). It was 'one of the most brilliant we have ever listened to - full of the weightiest matter, the choicest language, the highest morality

³⁷ *Gazette* (11 July 1856).

³⁸ *Sussex Agric Express* (8 June 1844).

³⁹ *Ibid.* (16 June 1849).

⁴⁰ *Maidstone Journal* (1 Dec 1829). He was minister of the Chapel of Ease.

...'.⁴¹ The fashionable and crowded audience was apparently spell-bound, yet at its heart was a sermon on 'The Oppression of the Poor', that questioned their attempts to improve their neighbours. Ruskin called it 'the oppression of expecting too much'.

"Be assured, my good man,"--you say to him,--"that if you work steadily for ten hours a day all your life long, and if you drink nothing but water ... and never lose your temper, and go to church every Sunday, and always remain content in the position in which Providence has placed you ... and use every opportunity of improving yourself, you will get on very well, and never come to the parish."... but before giving the advice so confidently, it would be well if we sometimes tried it practically ourselves.⁴²

The objective here is not to judge those who gave this advice 'so confidently'. It is simply to note that there were these attempts to 'engage', to 'improve'; and that they were in part intended to make the town a more comfortable space for the many incomers whose suburban ideal lay beyond their own home.

3.4.3 The Suburb - A Female-dominated Space?

Closely related to the ideal of the nuclear family, is the idea of the suburban home as a feminine zone, distinct from the masculine world of the street: the 'separate spheres' concept presented by Davidoff and Hall. Ruskin summarised the separate roles:

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive ... in his rough work in open world [he] must encounter all peril and trial ... But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her ... need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence ... it is the place of Peace⁴³

Gail Cunningham called the front garden a 'liminal space' between the two worlds.⁴⁴ She took it further, claiming that: 'The daily exodus of men from commuter suburbs created a uniquely female-dominated space, not only within the house but more widely across suburban spaces'.

Isabel Smith described just such an experience:

⁴¹ Local reports cited, but not identified, in E.C. Cook, 'Introduction to this volume', in E.C. Cook and A. Wedderburn (eds.), *The Works of John Ruskin* (39 vols, London, 1903-12), xvi, p. lx.

⁴² Ruskin, 'Work of Iron', p. 212.

⁴³ Ruskin, J., 'Of Queens' Gardens', in *Sesame and Lilies, The Two Paths, The King of the Golden River*, Everyman edn. (London, 1974), p. 59.

⁴⁴ G. Cunningham, 'Houses in between: Navigating Suburbia in late Victorian Writing', *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2004), p. 427.

We then took a house ... in Calvely Park ... [and] I first realised how very lonely I was. Your Father was away all day and I knew nobody, so I used to read and work and draw all day and never hear my voice from the time he left me in the morning, till he returned in the evening, except to order the dinner or the pony carriage to meet him at the station.⁴⁵

She was eighteen and newly-married. Her husband worked in the City of London. They were the type of commuter household assumed by Gail Cunningham, but they were not typical of Tunbridge Wells. Yet suburban Tunbridge Wells was indeed a 'female-dominated space'. In 1851 women represented 70% of the adult population of 'suburban' Calverley (18 and over, excluding family visitors and servants). The figure for Calverley Park Gardens in 1861 was 71%, and for Lansdowne Road in 1871, 78%. (Similar figures – 66% female in 1871, and 74% female in 1881 - were given by Tanis Hinchcliffe for suburban North Oxford, though these include servants so are not directly comparable.⁴⁶)

The chart below provides some explanation. 46% of the heads of household in 'suburban' Calverley were female.⁴⁷ Where there were other adults, they were usually daughters, sisters or nieces. The 54% of households with a male head always had at least one adult female.

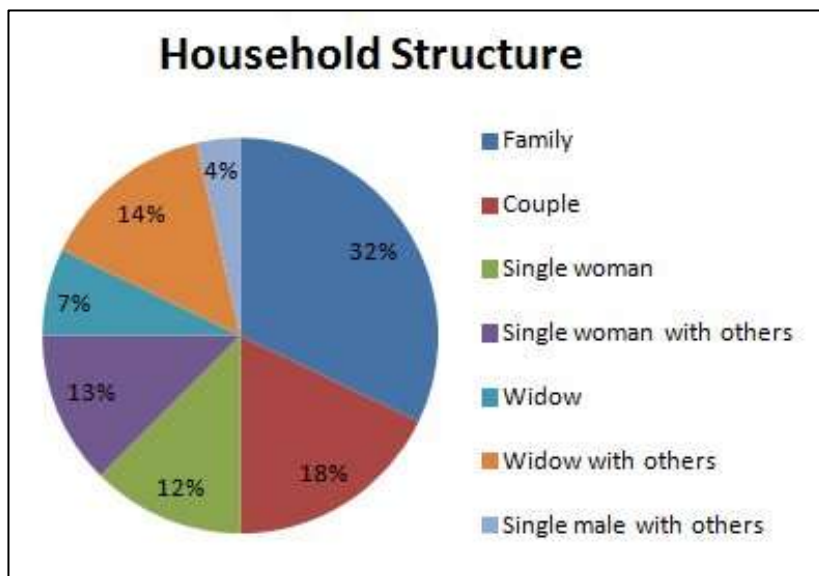


Figure 134. 'Suburban' Calverley - family structure at start of residence. 1831-1861. Source: author.

⁴⁵ D. Abel Smith (ed.), *'And such a name' -: The Recollections of Mrs Robert Smith of Goldings (1839-1913)* (Knebworth, 2003), p. 61. It was no. 11 Calverley Park (in 1857).

⁴⁶ T. Hinchcliffe, *North Oxford* (New Haven and London, 1992), p.168.

⁴⁷ The % would be higher if allowance were made for the length of residence.

A relatively high proportion of female heads of household is recognised as a feature of middle-class areas. Simpson and Lloyd suggest a quarter of households in middle-class areas of Glasgow, Davidoff and Hall cite 21% across the middle-class households in their survey areas of Essex/Suffolk and Birmingham in 1851, and Hinchcliffe calculates 29% in central parts of North Oxford.⁴⁸ A more focused survey shows figures of 21% in Devonshire Place/Upper Wimpole St, and 20% in the middle and upper sections of Camberwell Grove in 1856.⁴⁹

The much greater proportion of female households in Calverley suggests that the traditional 'separate spheres' analysis must be extended. What was the appeal to women – and what might have been the consequences? One might start by assuming that the appeal was the same as for men, some combination of the Picturesque, Romantic, Rustic and the Architectural. Fanny Wood's appreciation of them was noted in the concluding section of Part Two. One might rather ask why males were not so attracted, as Fanny Wood did in 1837:

It is really difficult to account satisfactorily for the wonderful preponderance of the female over the male sex at this place, and still more difficult to understand *why* the Lords of the Creation appear to consider it so hateful ... They say Gentlemen are enchanted the first day with the beauty of Tunbridge Wells, yawn through the second, and gallop away from it the third, but it is certainly the *Paradise* of old Ladies.⁵⁰

She perhaps answered her own question. Single-sex environments, or those dominated by one gender were not to everyone's taste. Johanna Schopenhauer, visiting Manchester, noted how males and females relaxed in separate groups. 'Just how amusing a circle entirely composed of

⁴⁸ M.A. Simpson, and T.H. Lloyd, (eds.), *Middle Class Housing in Britain* (Newton Abbot, 1977), p. 9. Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 466, Sample size 1413.

⁴⁹ *Post Office Directory* (1856) (Ancestry.com). Sample sizes 66 and 69. The female households in the first sample appear to cluster together. The 1851 census unfortunately does not provide comparable national figures. The report talks of separating households headed by widows and widowers, and bachelors and spinsters, but in the tables the male and female figures are combined. However, from a sample of 67,000 households across fourteen areas, 45% were identified as 'families' – ie couples with children, and 18% as 'couples' without children, considerably larger proportions than in Calverley. 'Census of Great Britain, 1851, Population tables, I. Number of the inhabitants Vol. I', BPP 1852-53 LXXXV (1631), pp. xli-xlii. from 'Online Historical Population Reports'

<http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/Browse?path=Browse/Census> (12 Oct. 2017).

⁵⁰ Wood, *Journals*, p. 73.

Englishwomen could be, we preferred to leave to the imagination'.⁵¹

It was perhaps a female-friendly environment.⁵² Alison Hurley suggests that 'spas became famous for promoting informal and yet genteel intercourse across differences—including that of gender', that they 'legitimized women's access to public places'.⁵³ There were still gendered spaces. A comment in Sprange's 1814 guidebook praising the book-sellers' shops for being open to ladies, suggests that other places were not, perhaps the coffee-houses.⁵⁴ While there might have been restrictions, there were also freedoms. Mary Berry wrote in 1807:

after dinner strolled on the common; it is the charm of this place to be able to do this at any hour of the day, without hat or gloves, and in any way you please, without observation or comment.⁵⁵

James Hamilton would not have expected any restriction or comment on his freedom to enjoy the Common. In 1842 he 'Lay most of the time under the trees, and read ... Hetherington's *History of the Church of Scotland*, and Haldane on *Romans*'.⁵⁶ To labour the contrast, though, might be to over-exaggerate the differences. As Olivia Murphy points out 'For the most part, [Jane] Austen's heroines walk freely through their landscapes, seeking conversation and exercise.'⁵⁷

Berry's correspondence was not published until 1865, but she was well-known from the 1790s. Elizabeth Montagu's letters were published in 1810, and Fanny Burney's in 1846 – these were parts of the 'correspondence' that Hurley discusses (see above). They presented stories of active and interesting women, and Tunbridge Wells was central to the life they describe: an alternative

⁵¹ Schopenhauer, *A Lady Travels*, p. 37.

⁵² Perhaps it was in parts. A letter to *The Visitor* claimed 'the neighbourhood which I happen to be so unfortunate to reside in, is so badly attended to, that it is absolutely improper for a decent female to pass along; the language and gestures used are truly disgusting'. *The Visitor*, i, p. 121.

⁵³ A.E. Hurley, 'A Conversation of Their Own: Watering-Place Correspondence Among the Bluestockings', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40/1 (Fall 2006), pp. 1-4.

⁵⁴ Sprange, *Guide* (1814), p. 106.

⁵⁵ M. Berry and T. Lewis (ed), *Extracts of the Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry...* (3 vols, London, 1865), ii, p. 329.

⁵⁶ W. Arnot, *The Life of James Hamilton* (London, 1870), p. 531.

⁵⁷ O. Murray, 'Prospect and Refuge in the Landscape of Jane Austen (review)', *Romanticism*, 14/ 2 (2008), p. 201.

to the male-dominated City, and the isolation of the country house. Together with novels like *Camilla*⁵⁸ they were part of the Tunbridge Wells appeal. A letter from Maria Edgeworth in 1831 demonstrates the importance of the novels:

... delighted with Tunbridge Wells – especially with Mount Ephraim and all the views ... *Camilla* present everywhere. What astonishing power a good author has to give local interest. I suppose no man woman or child who can read ever goes to Tunbridge for the first time without thinking of *Camilla*⁵⁹

The emphasis within the letters and novels, though, was on the town and not the family home – and it was perhaps significant that the areas with the higher proportion of women were in the centre: Lansdowne Road – 68% female heads of household in 1871; compared to only 22% in Broadwater Down (the Broadwater Down houses were considerably more expensive). If the urge to withdrawal was a function of the nuclear family, then these non-nuclear households might have been more outward-facing. *Cranford* (1851), where ‘all the holders of houses, above a certain rent, are women’ was about community and not withdrawal, and similar involvement can be seen amongst Calverley women. They were involved in the ‘engagement’ activities discussed above: Miss Waithman, for example, of Calverley Park, worked with the Ragged School, and the Lying-in-Charity where she followed Miss Jacomb of Calverley Parade as Treasurer; and in socialising, though Fanny Wood was rather dismissive of Lady Dampier’s efforts in Calverley Terrace:

select Evening Parties, at which assemble about twenty ladies to three old Gentlemen (there are only five *young* men in Tunbridge Wells, three of whom are Physicians), to play at Whist, yawn, drink a cup of Coffee ... and return home wearied to death with doing nothing⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Camilla*, by Fanny Burney (1796). Her niece (Fanny Wood) was a little disappointed by the reality. Wood, *Journals*, pp. 74-6.

⁵⁹ Letter to Harriet Butler (16 Apr. 1831) cited by J. Pearson, *Women’s Reading in Britain 1750-1835: a Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 21. James Stilgoe notes the importance of novels in presenting a woman’s perspective of life in the American suburbs, eg Stilgoe, *Borderland*, p. 64, though his references are not to *Camilla* or *Cranford*.

⁶⁰ Wood, *Journals*, p. 73. In North Oxford, the predominantly female residents worked for the development of university education for women. Hinchcliffe, *North Oxford*, pp. 174-176. Davidoff and Hall claim to ‘have uncovered little evidence of an exclusively female culture in practice’ – the Calverley and Oxford experience would seem to suggest something of this. Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 32.

Fanny, though, was only twenty three. Arthur Hallam, at twenty, felt the same: 'Damned to a series of most awful dinners, With coteries of ancient Tunbridge sinners'.⁶¹ His father was more complimentary, calling it 'excellent wintering',⁶² and Fanny came to enjoy the social life: her social networks are considered further in Chapter 3.5.

3.4.4 Engagement – Summary

Chapter 3.4 started by observing that the closed, domesticated, nuclear family, living in the security of its own home, has been used by commentators as an explanation as well as a description of suburban life; and it acknowledged that this was indeed an ideal of the early nineteenth century. The proposition here, though, is that the locus of the suburban ideal for many in Calverley was the town as a whole rather than the home. This would have been natural enough given that much of the appeal lay in the town's picturesque natural setting; but the fact that nearly half the households were not closed nuclear families might suggest that some were also attracted by social opportunities outside the home.

The chapter has suggested that steps were taken to ensure that the wider town provided a 'safe space' in which the suburban incomers could enjoy these attractions. These steps involved both control of the behaviour of other residents who might threaten this safe space; and attempts, by education, encouragement and example, to change the way of life leading to these behaviours. These were not necessarily actions taken by the incomers themselves - the fact of their gender disqualified many of them from holding positions of authority. Chapter 3.2, though, has demonstrated that the Improvement Commissioners were willing to work towards creating the suburban ideal of the incomers – to the economic benefit of the whole town; and the impact of Evangelical Christianity on beliefs and behaviours across all levels of society was a powerful force at this time. The high social status of the incomers added weight to their concerns.

⁶¹ M. Blocksidge, *'A life lived quickly': Tennyson's friend Arthur Hallam and his legend* (Brighton, 2011), p. 180.

⁶² Letter to Samuel Rogers (Oct? 1831). The Hallams were staying at Rose Hill, between London and Clarence Roads. P.W. Clayden, *Rogers and his contemporaries* (2 vols, London, 1889), ii, p. 72.

The chapter does not suggest that the incomers were completely integrated into the day-to-day life of the town, or that they would have felt comfortable in all parts of town at all times of day. As a result of the initiatives considered here, though, they would have felt comfortable in those parts that they wished to visit, at those times of day when they wished to visit them.

Having considered the relationship of the suburban incomers with the Old Town traders in Chapter 3.2, and with the poorer residents of Herveytown and Crown Fields in Chapters 3.3 and 3.4, the study ends in Chapter 3.5 with a consideration of the groups and sub-groups within the suburban incomers themselves.

3.5 Identity

*'middle-class people but very kind'*¹

In 1851, twelve-year-old Isabel Adeane was taken to the Great Exhibition by her governess, Harriett Meredith. They stayed with Miss Meredith's sister in Islington. Isabel considered her hosts to be 'middle-class people, but very kind'. Isabel was from a landed/mercantile family with estates in Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire. She would not have considered herself middle-class. She lived in Calverley Park in early 1857 (as Isabel Smith, see Chapter 3.4). This chapter considers such social distinctions. It asks whether the Calverley houses, like the villas of Regent's Park, were 'retreats of the happy free-born sons of commerce'.²

Elmes' comment has a hint of self-congratulation – that Britain was secure and fair-minded enough to afford tradesmen such high-profile accommodation; that it was not just 'noble ancestry' but 'Industry and a daring spirit of commercial enterprise, [that] have characterised the British nation'.³ There was a less pleasant tone to an article about Calverley in *The Architects Journal* in 1927. Burton was said to have adapted his design to 'the tastes and proclivities of the newly-rich middle-class "gentry" who ... had ousted "the Quality" but was struggling desperately to follow aristocratic manners and customs'.⁴

That distinction between the 'newly-rich middle-class' and the 'quality' - between 'mercantile' and 'landed' - has been the focus of much scholarship. Was the landed elite open to newcomers? Did the anti-enterprise culture of that elite damage Britain's economic vigour?⁵ To Raymond Williams, with his focus on the agricultural labourer, the distinction was unimportant. To Williams, even Cobbett was missing the point with his list of the newcomers brought in by the

¹ Abel Smith, *Recollections*, p. 38.

² Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 21. Mordaunt Crook suggests that the grander terraces were occupied by 'upper middle-class rentiers, the commercial *nouveaux riches*', the villas by 'plutocrats', and the peripheral areas by 'respectable professionals'. Crook, *London's Arcadia*, p.27.

³ *Ibid.* p. v.

⁴ McRae, 'Burton's Tunbridge Wells', p. 249.

⁵ Stones, *Open elite*, for example, and F.M.L. Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture. Britain 1780-1980* (Oxford, 2001).

war and the 'paper-system':

' nabobs, negro-drivers, generals, admirals, governors, commissaries, contractors, pensioners, sinecurists, commissioners, loan-jobbers, lottery-dealers, bankers, stock-jobbers; not to mention the long and black list in gowns and three-tailed wigs'.⁶

Cobbett contrasted them with a native gentry 'known to every farmer and labourer from their childhood'. To Williams they were not newcomers, but the people who had been buying up the countryside since the sixteenth century. Most were the younger sons of rural gentry anyway.⁷ All were party to the system that was destroying the livelihood of agricultural workers.

For the purposes of this study the definition of elite used in most of those studies was a little too literal: that to be 'landed gentry' implied ownership of an estate big enough to support a gentry lifestyle. In his study of the 'nouveaux riches', Mordaunt Crook set a threshold of two thousand acres.⁸ The 'newly-rich middle class gentry' of Calverley were not in that league. There were, nevertheless, gradations of status within the Calverley residents that might have had similar significance. In 2000 Richard Trainor proposed a division of the Middle Class (1840-1950) into three sectors: lower, middle and upper, with incomes, respectively, of under £300; £300 to £1000; and over £1000.⁹ Harriett Meredith's relations in Islington, one might assume, were lower-middle. Trainor acknowledged, though, that there were finer divisions within these groups and talked of differences in wealth and income that 'contributed to feelings of superiority and resentment'.¹⁰

The pettiness of these distinctions was a theme in contemporary literature. So Alfred Jingle explained protocol at the ball in Rochester to Mr Pickwick: 'queer place - Dock-yard people of upper rank don't know Dock-yard people of lower rank - Dock-yard people of lower rank don't

⁶ W. Cobbett, *Rural Rides* (2 vols, London, 1912), i, p. 38 at Burghclere.

⁷ Williams, *Country and City*, p. 110.

⁸ Crook, *Nouveaux Riches*, p. 18.

⁹ R.H. Trainor, 'The Middle Class', in Daunton, M. (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol.3 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 674. Trainor explained that the bands were similar to those proposed by RD Baxter in 1861.

¹⁰ Trainor, 'The Middle Class', p. 687.

know small gentry - small gentry don't know tradespeople'.¹¹ It was the premise underlying *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice*. A sense of class was nonetheless real. The virulence of Lockhart's attacks on Leigh Hunt (see Chapter 2.4) was based on something more than literary criticism.

A.B. Granville, the physician and writer on spas even saw physical differences in the:

'... countenance of certain people in each distinct class of society ... besides 'blood', which is always sure of showing itself, and is different in different castes – the distinction of faces must have been implanted ... by the respective daily occupations – the habitual state of their mind – their diet – and, above all, their associations'.¹²

Its impact, too, was real, and sometimes self-inflicted. John James Ruskin's social insecurity led him to restrict contact with his wife's Croydon relatives; and later to isolate his family in their Herne Hill home: the Ruskins were unwilling or unable to match the ostentation of their 'shop-keeping neighbours'. That reference to 'shop-keeping' was all part of the game – the Ruskins were wine merchants – considered superior to shopkeepers.¹³

It may have been the reality too of Calverley, and a rather complex reality that went beyond just the mercantile and the landed. There was a social group that was not necessarily landed, but which was nevertheless established, confident and comfortable. It corresponded broadly to the group defined as peripatetic in Chapter 3.1, and to Cobbett's list reproduced above. In their work on elites, the Stones accepted that some non-landed sources of wealth were 'perfectly respectable and indeed honourable gentlemanly pursuits'. 'Government office, the Court, the law, and the army were always respectable, and the church became so in the eighteenth century'. (And, according to Edward Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*, the navy 'had fashion on its side'.)¹⁴ The Stones continued: 'Bankers brewers and EIC directors shared with the landed classes in the spoils of 'Old Corruption' ... a more or less homogenised elite'.¹⁵ It is against this group, rather than a landed gentry/aristocracy that the 'newly-rich middle-class' in Calverley might be

¹¹ Dickens, *Pickwick*, p. 18.

¹² Granville, *Spas of England*, i, p. 69.

¹³ J.D. Hunt, *The Wider Sea. A Life of John Ruskin* (London, 1982), pp. 23, 37. Ruskin, *Praeterita*, i, pp. 192-3.

¹⁴ Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 99.

¹⁵ Stones, *Open Elite*, p. 193.

calibrated. This chapter analyses the Calverley residents to establish their social background; it looks for evidence of interaction between the groups; and it considers whether moving to Calverley was part of becoming 'established'. It starts with a look back at an earlier period when different rules on class and status applied.

3.5.1 Anything That Looks Like a Gentleman

Daniel Defoe claimed in the 1720s that 'the nobility and gentry go to Tunbridge, the merchants and rich citizens to Epsome' and the common people to 'Dullwich and Stretham'; but he also suggested that, in Tunbridge Wells 'anything that looks like a gentleman, has an address agreeable, and behaves with decency and good manners, may single out whom he pleases ... and may talk, rally, be merry'.¹⁶ It was part of this heterotopia in the Kentish Weald where normal rules did not apply. It was to be understood though, that 'all this makes no acquaintance'.

Melville tells the story of a later encounter in London, of two men who had met frequently at the Wells, but were of different social standing 'But my Lord, you knew me at Tunbridge Wells.' 'Ah! Then I shall doubtless know you again – at Tunbridge Wells'.¹⁷ Thomas Baker, too, in his play *Tunbridge Walks* (1703) has a character explain, 'tis a Place wholly dedicated to Freedom, no Distinction, either of Quality or Estate, but ev'ry Man that appears well, converses with the best'.¹⁸ The true nature of this mixing, though, is revealed in a second of his plays *Hampstead Heath*, cited by Elizabeth McKellar.¹⁹ A merchant is unhappy about his wife's wish to go to the Wells. He prefers that she should 'rest contented with my Country House at Hogsdon, instead of fluttering through the Walks at Tunbridge ... where you are laugh'd at by People of Quality and despis'd by People of Sense'.

Nevertheless the claims continued. Burr (1766) wrote of the balls 'where all ranks are mingled

¹⁶ D. Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 166, 142. Brown, *Tunbridge Wells in Literature*, p. 33.

¹⁷ Melville, *Society at Tunbridge Wells*, p. 236.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 83.

¹⁹ McKellar, *Landscapes*, p. 124.

together without any distinction. The nobility, and the merchants; the gentry, and the traders; are all upon an equal footing ... so long as you behave with ... decorum', and Onely (1771) claimed that 'people of every degree, condition, and occupation of life, (if well dressed, and well behaved) meet amicably here'.²⁰ That very public social scene was in decline at the start of the nineteenth century. Lady Jerningham wrote in 1806 'We have not such fine People here this year, but perhaps more Sociability, for there are Meetings every Night in private Houses'.²¹ It made it easier to exclude outsiders.

By 1830 there was a different narrative. Britton described Tunbridge Wells as 'Retaining its character for selectness and gentility of company'.²² John Evans made a similar claim: 'Unlike Margate, Ramsgate, and even Brighton, the company frequenting THE WELLS are of a select description ... characterised by that affability and real politeness, which attach to the well educated classes of the community'.²³ It was used in house advertising, with claims that the town was fashionable, and references to tenants who were 'most respectable', 'genteel', and a 'lady of rank'. It was sometimes expressed in the form of warnings. Granville said that with little money 'let no man attempt Tunbridge Wells'. The problem was the wealth, and 'aristocratic spirit for spending it', of those who came down from London: he recommended Cheltenham instead.²⁴ These suggestions of exclusivity were perhaps part of the appeal for anyone looking for status by association.

3.5.2 A Social Patchwork

Each of the Calverley households considered in Chapter 3.1 has been further analysed to identify social background. In the chart below they are divided between mercantile (in the red colourway) and landed/establishment (in the blue colourway). There were also a few 'locals' who

²⁰ Burr, *History*, p. 121. Onely, *A General Account*, p. 10.

²¹ Jerningham, F.D., Bedingfield, C.G., and Castle, E. (ed.), *The Jerningham letters (1780-1843) ...* (2 vols, London, 1896), i, pp. 277,285.

²² Britton, *Descriptive Sketches*, p. 41.

²³ Evans, *Excursion*, pp. 150,154.

²⁴ Granville, *Spas of England*, iii, p. 620.

did not fall easily into either group.

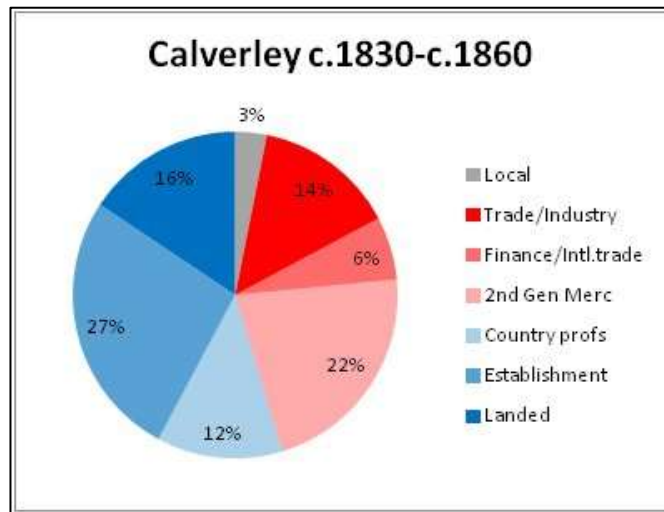


Figure 135. Calverley. Social background. Source: author. Sample size: 64.

Those with a mercantile background formed a significant proportion (42%), but were not the majority. Landed families represented 16%, and the 'established' 27%. The further breakdown into sub-groups highlights important distinctions. The red sector (14%) represents families where the head of household was either still active in trade, or, more usually, retired. The adjoining pink sector (6%) are those in banking / finance, which, particularly towards the end of the period, might have had a higher social standing. The lighter pink sector (22%) are families whose wealth derived from trade, but who had withdrawn to the suburbs or countryside one to four generations earlier. The bright blue sector (16%) are landed families. The larger, mid-blue sector (27%) is the 'more or less homogenised elite' recognised by the Stones. Finally there is the sector (12%) labelled 'Country professionals'. These also were 'perfectly respectable', but perhaps a little provincial, like 'country attorneys' – whom *Pride and Prejudice's* Mr Darcy thought unsuitable as in-laws for Mr Bingley. The classification cannot be exact, and individual cases might be argued: the objective is a broad picture. The following notes provide some examples. They also demonstrate that the proportions varied in different parts of Calverley, and changed over time.

Calverley Parade and Terrace were the earliest parts of the estate, developed when the town

was still a fashionable resort. The differences between them are probably due to the difference in house-size.

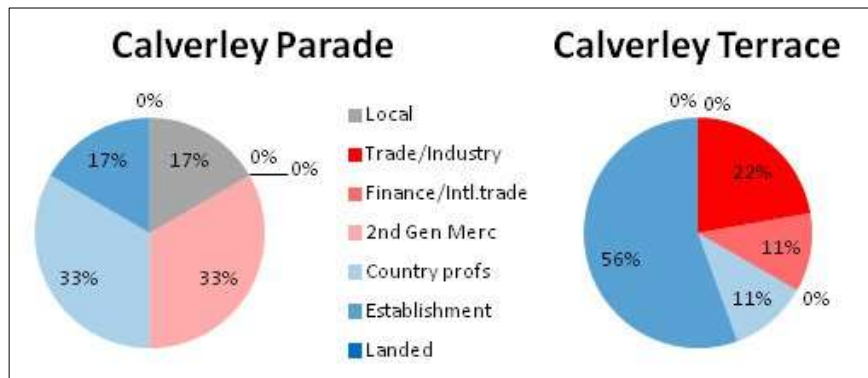


Figure 136. Calverley Parade and Terrace. Social background. Source: author. Sample sizes: 12, 9.

The Parade houses were smaller than the Terrace. There were no self-made industrialists or merchants here, no landed families, and only two from the ‘establishment’. Two of the four households labelled as ‘2nd generation mercantile’, however, the Jacombs and the Eyles, demonstrate how far such families might have moved into the establishment, with MPs, Lords Mayor, and baronets amongst them. A third, Sarah Ann Consett, illustrates further difficulties with the classification. She is classed as the daughter of a London Merchant: his address – Bartlett’s Buildings off Holborn – serves in *Sense and Sensibility* as a marker of the mercantile City rather than the grander West End.²⁵ Yet he came from a land-owning family in North Yorkshire: part of the process described by Defoe by which ‘tradesmen become gentlemen, by gentlemen becoming tradesmen’. Two of the four households classed as ‘country professionals’ also demonstrate how close to ‘establishment’ they might be. Samuel Rix, a surgeon, was the son of a successful farmer in Suffolk, who had John Soane design his house.²⁶ Charlotte Harrison was the widow of an Anglican clergyman, who must therefore have been a university graduate.²⁷ So, while the Parade residents came from a range of backgrounds, they were not so very different in

²⁵ ‘Bartlett’s Buildings, Holborn’, on Austenonly, <https://austenonly.com/2010/05/20/bartletts-buildings-holborn/> (7 Jan. 2017).

²⁶ Blundeston Hall.

²⁷ Her father-in-law, a Daventry attorney, had his book purchases analysed in a recent study. J. Fergus, *Provincial readers in eighteenth-century England* (Oxford, 2006).

social standing. Mrs Hodgson, Tunbridge Wells-born and property-owner on Mount Sion, was perhaps an exception.

The Terrace houses were larger. One of the residents in the mercantile category was the daughter, wife and mother of brewers, so, despite having brought up her family in the countryside (Barnet), she was still close to business. There were five families with a more fashionable / establishment background: the widow of a senior judge; a socialite and ‘silver-fork’ novelist, wife (consecutively) of an MP and a baronet; a writer and academic who taught at Haileybury after service in India; a third-generation baronet from a naval family; and the widow of a civil engineer/ land agent in the Fenland. The resident defined as ‘country professional’ was decidedly metropolitan. The classification is an attempt to give some indication of social standing: in public service rather than trade, but on the edge of fashionable society.²⁸

There were differences too between Calverley Park and Park Gardens, though both, in their different ways, were ‘houses in the park’, proxies for ‘proper’ country houses. The difference is probably a function of time, the Park Gardens data is from the late 1850s.

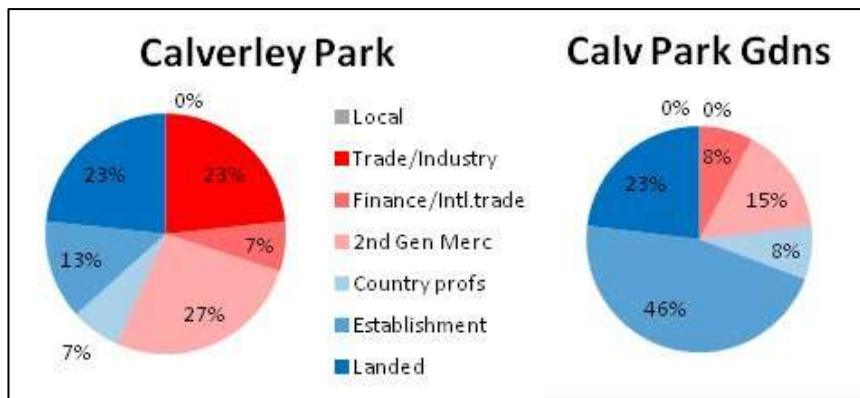


Figure 137. Calverley Park / Park Gardens. Social background. Source: author. Sample sizes: 30, 13.

Over half the households in the Park had a commercial background, but there were also some from landed families. An example from the latter demonstrates the fluidity in this sector too.

Miss Wildman (no.24) was born at Chilham Castle, her father’s property in east Kent. He, though,

²⁸ J.T. Smith in his book about the sculptor Nollekens, claimed to have known her father, John Deacon, as an excise officer and sometime engraver. J.T. Smith, *Nollekens and his Times ...* (London, 1828), p. 275.

and his brothers, had been lawyers. They are said to have managed, and exploited, the West Indian properties of the young William Beckford; thus allowing them to buy land. About half of those with a commercial background were from families that were already established. There was one from the Bevan banking family; one a 'West Indian' merchant, possibly mixed-race, also related to the Bevans; and Arabella Graham-Clarke (Elizabeth Barrett's aunt) whose family wealth came from industry in the north-east with some investments in the West Indies. Among the less well-established families were a paper-maker and a distiller, and John Waithman who inherited a draper's shop in Fleet Street from his father. The father, Robert, was Lord Mayor in 1833, and an MP, but took a pride in achieving these positions as a 'shopkeeper' rather than a 'merchant'.²⁹

T.O. Stock was another Fleet Street retailer. He married into the Wilson family, prosperous North London silk manufacturers (Highbury and Stamford Hill). Members of the family had developed Grove Hill (see Appendix B) in the 1820s, and others, living in Nevill Park and Calverley Fairmile slightly later, funded the Congregational expansion in the town.³⁰ It is a reminder, when considering the notion of the closed nuclear family in the suburbs that many belonged to these extended family networks. F.H. Brandram was another example. Son of a Rotherhithe colour-man (paint manufacturer), his sister married into the Allnut family, wealthy wine merchants of Clapham Common (also related to the Wilsons), and his daughter married the son of Aretas Akers, of whom shortly. Then there was a Levant merchant; a wholesale chemist; and Francis Sheriff, partner of Richard Cobden in the calico business.

There were few from the 'establishment' sector, and some of those so classified, were perhaps

²⁹ J.R. Dinwiddy, *Radicalism and Reform in Britain, 1780-1850* (London, 1992), p. 84.

³⁰ Samuel and Josiah Wilson developed Grove Hill (see Appendix B), but never lived in the town. Their brother, Ford Wilson, though, lived at Blackhurst at the eastern end of Calverley (designed by Burton c.1833). A cousin, Thomas Wilson, funded the first Congregational church in the town. His son, Joshua Wilson, lived in Nevill Park, and funded its replacement on Mount Pleasant. Another cousin, John Remington Mills who lived on Calverley Fairmile from the 1860s, paid for a further Congregational church at the northern end of Calverley. It is tempting to think that T.O. Stock (Thomas Osborne) was named after the bookseller of that name whose attempts to establish a suburban ideal in Hampstead are described in McKellar, *Landscapes*, pp. 140-143, but there is no actual evidence yet.

closer to 'country professional'. There was William Brande, Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution and Superintendent at the Royal Mint, whose father had been an apothecary; John Newton from a family of public notaries; Charles Christmas, who worked for the office of Land Revenues, and whose father had been described as a bank clerk; and William Clayton, Congregationalist minister. Non-conformist ministers are usually assigned a lower social standing than Anglicans, though Clayton's family was described as the 'aristocracy of dissent'.³¹ Someone who might have been classified as 'establishment', being the widow of a clergyman, has been included with the landed families as a family estate was later passed down to her son, who grew up in the Park. This was the Lutwidge-Dodgson family – she was Lewis Carroll's aunt.

There was, then, some truth in the suggestion that the Park houses attracted the 'newly-rich' from commerce. The trend does not seem to have applied slightly later (1855-61) to the early inhabitants of Calverley Park Gardens. Significant here is the appearance of four families returned from colonial service in India (administrators and judges rather than the traders who typified earlier incomers); and two families whose inherited wealth came from northern industry: Manchester calico and Hull ship-building. The wholesale chemists and linen-drapers are also absent from two later samples: Broadwater Down and Lansdowne Road in 1871.

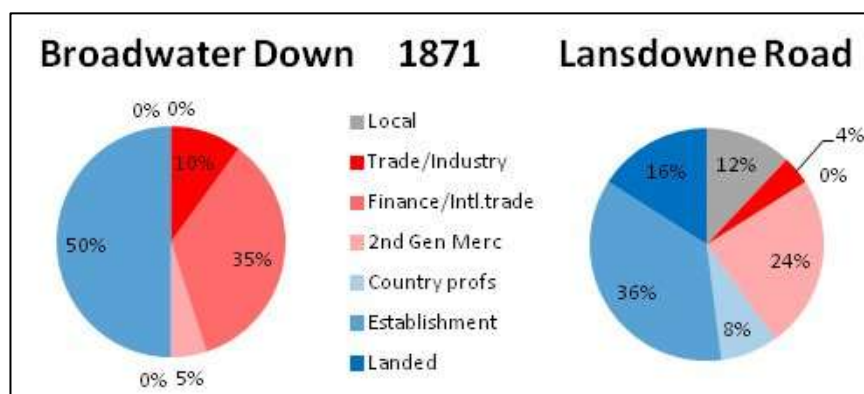


Figure 138. Broadwater Down / Lansdowne Road 1871. Social background. Source: author. Sample sizes: 20, 25.

Broadwater Down was split between 'establishment': army, navy and colonial service, but also

³¹ Anon., 'The Rev. John Clayton, Jun., M.A.' in *Living Preachers Portrait Gallery* (London, 1842) (no page numbers)

law, medicine and the Church, nearly all retired or widows; and those involved in finance and international trade, and mainly still active. (The two examples classified as trade/industry are tentative.) The Lansdowne Road houses are smaller and much closer to town, and the residence pattern quite different. Three heads of household worked in the town: as doctor, banker, and 'professor of dance', and there was a 'stockdealer' working in London. Three had retired from the army, navy and Indian service. The others had a wide range of backgrounds: landed, professional, and mercantile, but the more significant characteristic was that these were nearly all women.

Few, then, of Cobbett's list of the non-landed establishment were missing from Calverley (the 'nabobs' perhaps preferred a real country house), but they lived alongside the newly-rich from commerce: distillers, paper-makers and chemists. It is possible that Calverley Park was developed at a time when the 'terms of trade' were particularly favourable to this latter group, as later residents tended more to colonial servants, international merchants and industrialists.

3.5.3 Sociable Intercourse

Lady Jerningham described Tunbridge Wells in 1806 as 'that Elisium of quiet, pleasant, Sociable Intercourse'.³² That was before the arrival of the suburban incomers. This section looks for evidence of similar social intercourse thirty years later, and especially whether that intercourse crossed the divide between mercantile and landed.

Georgiana Pratt was one of the 'landed' residents in Calverley Park. Her family were major landowners to the east of the town (her father was the 1st Marquis Camden). Her letters record visits to local landowning families: the Hardinges near Penshurst, the Gearys near Hadlow, Lady de la Warr, and Mrs Hussey at Scotney.³³ She also had a letter from William Wells at Redleaf, near Penshurst. Wells was from a shipbuilding family in Deptford and Rotherhithe, but had retired and built up an art collection. That Lady Georgiana was requesting permission to visit it

³² Jerningham, *The Jerningham Letters*, i, p. 285. Cited by Farthing, *Mount Sion*, p. 376.

³³ 'Letters of Georgiana Pratt', KHL C U840/C540.

inverts the usual practice of visiting the homes of the aristocracy. The only reference to a Calverley resident is to Miss Hawley, whom she took to an archery meeting. Miss Hawley, though, was from another Kentish landowning family. On this, admittedly limited, evidence, there was little interaction with non-landed neighbours, possibly because Georgiana already had a network of local contacts before moving to Calverley.

Lucy Harman at Calverley Lodge³⁴ was from a mercantile/banking background. Named in her will were Harriett Bedford, from Mount Sion, and Sophia Dirs in Calverley Parade.³⁵ Miss Dirs is the more significant – both Harman and Dirs families had lived in Woodford, bankers and sugar-refiners respectively. Perhaps they had known each other there. A more elaborate network can be constructed from the will of Mrs Haily (no. 8 Calverley Park).³⁶ Her husband had been a corn-factor in the City, in Savage Gardens, though they had lived in Tunbridge Wells from at least 1815. Savage Gardens was close to the Royal Mint and that seems to have been important. She left money to the family of William Brande, Superintendent at the Mint but also a neighbour in Calverley Park. Among the thirty recipients of mourning rings were Miss Harman and Miss Bedford as above, and, possibly, though it is difficult to read, a Mrs Whewell. This could have been Cordelia, wife of William Whewell, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. The Whewells stayed in Tunbridge Wells in 1842 ‘there were several of our acquaintances there’.³⁷ Whewell was the son of a Lancashire carpenter and Cordelia’s family, the Marshalls of Leeds, were successful industrialists. They may have met Mrs Haily through the Brandes. After Cordelia died in 1855, Whewell married Everina Affleck, who had lived at 12 Calverley Park in the 1850s.³⁸ John Dixon at no. 2 had also lived in Savage Gardens. He may, like Haily, have been a corn dealer, and was perhaps part of this group.

³⁴ The Panuwel house on the edge of Calverley Plain.

³⁵ ‘Will of Lucy Harman’, Dec 1845, TNA PROB/11/2028/97. Accessed via Ancestry.com.

³⁶ ‘Will of Mary Haily’, Sep. 1846, TNA PROB/11/2042/112. Accessed via Ancestry.com.

³⁷ J. M. Douglas, *The Life and Correspondence of William Whewell*, ... (London, 1881), p. 272. Letter to his sister, 11 Aug 1842.

³⁸ Richard Yeo in 1993 pondered on the social journey Whewell had taken. R.R. Yeo, *Defining Science: William Whewell, natural knowledge and public debate in early Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 16 *et seq.*

Fanny Wood came to Tunbridge Wells on her marriage in 1835. Her father was a clergyman and her husband an army officer. They were non-landed establishment. Over the following three years she recorded dinners, outings, and tea with a range of companions: Mrs Tighe, from a wealthy landed family who lived on Mount Ephraim; Rev Keene, writer and ex-Indian civil servant in Calverley Terrace; Mrs Robertson, possibly a cousin of Mrs Haily's; and Mrs Abell who lived on Mount Sion: her father had been a merchant on St Helena. There was also 'A nice little Dance at Mrs Hailey's'.³⁹ Gen. Durnford and his wife came to Tunbridge Wells after a career with the Royal Engineers in Canada. It was recommended by the widow of a fellow officer who had retired to Frant.⁴⁰ The North American experience also provided a link to Mr St. John Baker and his sister at Mount Calverley Lodge. 'Miss Baker liked to talk of America, and my parents liked to hear her'. They were also friends of Miss Sheppard on Bishops Down: 'a city lady, born, as she said, within the sound of 'Bow Bells' and her neighbour William Wix, 'the old bachelor city beau', a retired attorney. When Durnford died, his widow moved to Calverley Parade, when she made the acquaintance of Charlotte Harrison.⁴¹

These various sources demonstrate that social links were not restricted to Calverley itself, but involved the Old Town, Mount Ephraim / London Road and beyond. While those from landed families perhaps kept to themselves, otherwise there was mixing between incomers with different backgrounds. There seems to have been little social interaction, though, with local professionals and traders - except for clergymen and doctors who benefitted from the general shortage of men. The following account suggests that even those incomers living in the Old Town avoided socialising with their 'local' neighbours. Aretas Akers was a barrister and soldier from a wealthy West Indian family: an incomer who lived on Mount Sion and served as magistrate. His local circle included the Blencowes - a fellow magistrate; the Daniells, retired army officer; and the Offleys, port-shippers, but no members of the Delves family, who were also neighbours but

³⁹ Wood, *Journals*, pp. 83-89. There was also Lady Dampier in Calverley Terrace.

⁴⁰ Durnford, *Family recollections*, p. 169.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 236-7, 248.

were 'wealthy ex-traders' (see Chapter 3.2). How the Akers viewed the Delves is indicated in a story written by their daughter in a family magazine. One of the characters is described as 'a morose rough-mannered sturdy yeoman, full of the contradictions which belonged to that fast-failing class'. The story is fictionalised, but naming him 'Digges' hardly hides his identity.⁴²

3.5.4 A Consideration of Process

In terms of social background, then, Calverley represented a patchwork: of mercantile, landed and established. It was more than this, as the daughters and grand-daughters of earlier merchants demonstrate: it was part of a process by which 'mercantile' became 'established'. McRae's comment in 1927 about the 'newly-rich middle-class ... struggling desperately to follow aristocratic manners' is patronising, but is not so very different from John Archer's claim that suburban houses were 'instruments for fashioning personal identity' (see Chapter 2.5). The house is a very powerful marker, but so is the community. The phrase 'you are where you live' operates at various levels.

Personal labels were also important – Frances Sheriff, of Calverley Park, moved from 'warehouseman', to 'merchant', to 'gentleman', in the course of three years⁴³. His father had been 'shopkeeper'. John Ward took this to an extreme. Having acquired his country estate, he collected trophy positions: JP, DL, MP (for Leominster, in 1830). In 1835 he was 'pricked' as High Sheriff of Kent. It was a purely ceremonial role, and expensive. The Stones suggest that it was only of interest to newcomers, an 'onerous and expensive office ... which nearly everyone else tried to avoid'.⁴⁴ He was able, though, to use it in his entry in *Burke's*. Someone had found him some arms, and a motto: 'Forward'.⁴⁵ William Scantlebury, the builder who worked in Calverley Park, also had a grant of arms. The design recognised his occupation by including a surveyors /

⁴² *Belle Vue Magazine*, i, pp. 313-27. KHLC U1157.F.1. Cited in Farthing, *Mount Zion* pp. 335-9.

⁴³ 1841 census, then baptisms of his daughters Hannah and Francis in 1842 and 1843.

⁴⁴ Stones, *Open Elite*, p. 41.

⁴⁵ 'Azure, a cross flory, or, a crescent for difference'. *Burke's Landed Gentry* (London, 1847), ii, pp. 1516-1517. See *Sybil* (p.289), for Disraeli's creation 'Baptist' Hatton, who was 'a heraldic antiquary; a discoverer, inventor, framer, arranger of pedigrees'.

bricklayers 'level' (was this Scantlebury showing pride in his profession, or a ploy by the heralds to ensure it could not be forgotten?) Acquiring a Calverley address was an easier way to accumulate cultural capital. Fishman points to the use of 'Park' - with its connotations of a landed estate - in the naming of Victoria Park.⁴⁶ The absence of individual house names in Calverley Park bolsters that suggestion, as in the announcement of the death of John Newton 'At his residence, Calverley-park'.⁴⁷ Sheriff, the calico salesman, lived for ten years between Calverley Park and Brighton. He then emigrated to New Zealand. He died there nearly forty years later, yet was still described, and perhaps defined, as 'of Brighton and Tunbridge Wells'.

In seeking this association with 'selectness and gentility', were the mercantile incomers actually rejecting an alternative urban, mercantile culture? Tristram Hunt suggests this in his regret at the decline of northern cities. Were they accepting the hegemony of the old ruling class or simply claiming access to a culture equally relevant to them? Why should Mrs John Allnut, nee Eleanor Brandram (daughter of a paint manufacturer), not be painted by Lawrence; or visitors to Josiah Wilson (silk manufacturer) not listen to his sister-in-law play on the harp? Richard Cobden's comment, as a twenty-one year old commercial traveller seems genuine enough: 'Oh that I had money, to be deep skilled in the mysteries of mullions and architraves, in lieu of black and purple and pin grounds! How happy I should be'.⁴⁸

There was certainly pride expressed in things commercial. Cyrus Redding claimed 'The British merchant is the animating spirit The banker and manufacturer are linked to him ... forming the wheels that bear along the stupendous machine of natural prosperity'.⁴⁹ Johanna Schopenhauer, proud citizen of mercantile Danzig, was horrified when, encountering a princess, she was expected to kiss her hand: 'Were we then, free-born women, subjects of no prince on earth, to kiss the hand of another woman who was neither our mother nor our grandmother? ... [it]

⁴⁶ Fishman, *Utopias*, p. 94.

⁴⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 211 (Nov. 1861), p. 578.

⁴⁸ J. Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden* (London, 1881), p. 9.

⁴⁹ Redding, *Recollections*, iii, pp 359-60.

caused my republican blood to boil'.⁵⁰ Even John Ward, explaining his withdrawal from Parliament blamed the un-businesslike way it operated: 'where desultory conversations and equally frivolous discussions have absorbed nearly the whole of that attention which should have been occupied by useful business'.⁵¹

But they didn't put their children to trade (with the exception of international merchants, such as the Cazalets in Broadwater Down, and Maingays in Church Road, who seemed able to combine commerce with establishment status). Samuel Neville Ward, for example, had five sons. Three went to Haileybury and the Indian civil service, the others became Anglican clergymen. John Ward's approach was different. Only two of his sons survived to adulthood. Nothing is known of their education, or of any employment or occupation. Perhaps the thinking followed that attributed to Edward Ferrars 'as there was no necessity for my having any profession at all ... idleness was pronounced on the whole to be the most advantageous and honourable'.⁵² They were perhaps slightly unusual in imitating/emulating this more aristocratic lifestyle, but then even the aristocracy are said to have moderated the excesses of their behaviour and become more serious, middle-class even.⁵³

It was in the education and occupation of the next generation that the move to established status was fully achieved, but in the meantime Calverley residence served as a proxy – the big house behind its shrubbery, the fund-raising charity bazaars, card-playing evenings with Lady Dampier. There is less evidence that this social acceptance extended to self-made men from the local community. William Willicombe, builder of much of Calverley and living in one of the Calverley Fairmile mansions, died in 1875. He was a popular and respected figure and had an impressive funeral, but the *Courier* began its account: 'The greatest possible respect that could

⁵⁰ J.H. Schopenhauer, *Youthful life, and pictures of travel, the autobiography of Madame Schopenhauer* tr. from German (2 vols, London, 1847), ii, pp. 48-9.

⁵¹ M. Escott and D.R. Fisher, 'John Ward (1779-1855)', in *Member Biographies*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/ward-john-1779-1855> (3 Jan. 2107).

⁵² Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 99.

⁵³ Bradley, *Call to Seriousness*, p. 37.

be paid to the mortal remains of any tradesman were paid to those of the late Mr Willicombe'.⁵⁴

It was intended as a compliment, to demonstrate the extent of his success, but it showed that, despite everything, he was still a tradesman.

⁵⁴ *Courier* (12 Feb. 1875), cited in P. Whitbourn, *William Willicombe (1800-1875) The 'Cubitt' of Tunbridge Wells* (FWPC booklet, Tunbridge Wells, 2009), p. 35.

Part Three – Conclusion

Who is my neighbour?

Part Three set out to consider the people of Calverley – who they were and how they lived alongside others in the town.

It looked first at the geographical origins of the newcomers and found them more varied than might have been expected. While Calverley might be considered a suburb of London the incomers were not just those moving out from the city centre. Rather they were a ‘peripatetic’ middle-class who might have lived anywhere – a finding that cautions against too easy assumptions about ‘escaping the city’ (the chapter also demonstrated the need to distinguish between ‘suburban’ and ‘economic’ incomers when analysing origin). It then looked at the relationship between these suburban incomers and the existing residents of the Old Town, and suggested a commercial relationship of customer and supplier, with little social mixing and some mutual suspicion. Chapter 3.5 considered the social status of the incomers: a mixture of mercantile, landed and established. There was a trend, perhaps, over the period towards those already established, but a sense, too, that coming to Calverley was part of the move to established status – a fashioning of identity by association and address. Chapter 3.4 noted that there was high proportion of women: 70% of the adult population of suburban Calverley, with implications on their ability to be involved in town affairs.

Chapters 3.3 and 3.4 considered segregation and/or integration within the wider population. Chapter 3.3 provided examples of distinct residential segregation, but also more complex patterns including mixing on what might be called an eighteenth-century pattern. It looked too at the unwelcoming treatment of outsiders: day-trippers and vagrants. Chapter 3.4 considered the idea of withdrawal – that suburban life was characterised by a retreat into the family home. It suggested rather that the incomers considered the town as a whole to represent their suburban ideal, and they sought to extend the safe space of their home to a wider area. To do this they

had to engage with the wider population, and sought to change their beliefs and behaviours by a combination of police action and socialisation.

The title of Part Three 'Building the Community' begs the question of whether there was any communitarian intent in suburban Calverley - as was suggested for Bedford Park,⁵⁵ and inherent in the claim by Stern that garden suburbs 'evoked the physical structures of pre-industrial villages ... to foster a sense of community'. The extracts from *Sybil* used at the start of Chapter 3.3 show that there was contemporary concern about social divisions, and the graph below demonstrates one particular phrase being used to remind Victorians of their responsibility to others. Its declining use towards the end of the century and in the 1960s might reflect the municipalisation of those responsibilities; or simply a change in vocabulary – usage of the word 'community' displays the opposite trajectory

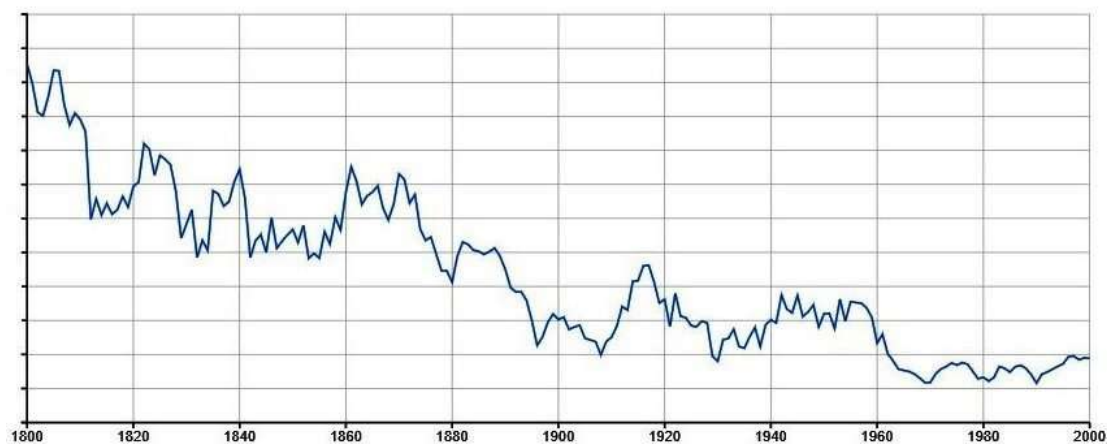


Figure 139. Ngram: 'who is my neighbour'. Source: author, using Google.com/ngrams.⁵⁶

The question 'Who is my neighbour' might have been asked at a number of points within the Part Three discussion. Was it the Herveytown child, throwing stones on Calverley Promenade? The young unemployed woman who had walked from Brighton, but was imprisoned for vagrancy in Tunbridge Wells? Supporters of the New Church - 'Do not trust them'? The 'ready-money' family five doors down St James Road who were not to be trusted with credit? Or Isabel

⁵⁵ Discussed in Saint, *Bedford Park*, p. 26 et seq.

⁵⁶ Ngram: 'who is my neighbour' from corpus 'British English', 1800-2000, 3 year smoothing. <https://books.google.com/ngrams> (11 June 2016).

Smith, seemingly privileged, but isolated in 'Calvely Park'? The conclusion must be that Tunbridge Wells was not a community, but a collection of discrete groups in overlapping but carefully defined spaces.

Conclusion – The Suburban Ideal?

The overall proposition of the study, then, is that the suburbs were where people wanted to live, and that it was the positive appeal of the suburb, culturally conditioned, that motivated them rather than practical issues like avoiding the dirt and disease of the city. It is not, perhaps, a proposition that is susceptible to mathematical proof, for what would be the test of their motivation, and for what proportion of what population would it have to apply? The study has sought, rather, to demonstrate its plausibility by illustration and example, with Calverley as a useful case-study.

Three approaches were adopted, reflected in the three parts of the document. The first approach was to look at the building and the buildings of Calverley, at what Dyos called the ‘obstetrics of suburban development’. Calverley is acknowledged as one of the earliest Picturesque / garden suburbs: that alone would have justified an exploration of its origins, its layout and architecture. Part One also makes one very obvious point: that the demonstration that people wanted to live in suburbs is that they did live in suburbs, and that builders were prepared to invest in building them. Daniel Olsen said much the same thing: that speculative builders built the kind of London that middle-class Londoners wanted. Calverley provides a particularly powerful argument because it was not simply organic growth of an existing settlement. It was created specifically to realise the suburban ideal of wealthy metropolitan customers who could have lived anywhere. The site was chosen for its Picturesque landscape setting; the houses – individual family homes in gardens – were a reaction against plain urban terraces which were beginning to be seen as bleak; and the location was the ideal compromise – distant enough from London to feel rural, yet for two hundred years a significant part of the cultural life of Londoners. Initial sales were perhaps a little slow, but within twenty years the ‘houses in the park’ model was established.

Part Two sought to examine what it was that attracted those customers. One obvious approach was to look at the advertising used by the developers, as they might be assumed to have known

what would appeal. As Adrian Forty said of the manufacturers of consumer products they 'had their fingers on the pulse of the market'. Straightforward house advertisements were relatively few, but there was a richness of other sources: guidebooks, topographies, press articles and novels, souvenirs even; and evidence that the developers were aware of their value and knew how to manipulate them. Part Two considered a number of more general influences. The appeal of the Picturesque was the most straightforward. There were houses in the area with their own Picturesque landscapes: Nevill Court had a 'wilderness walk' complete with ravine; and Great Culverden, a Swiss Cottage and 'castle'; but all houses in Calverley benefited from the Picturesque topography of the town as a whole: the Common, the rocks, and the distant views. These featured prominently in advertisements and in guide-books and travellers accounts. Attractive views were a feature of other suburbs: Rosslyn Hill and Camberwell for example, 'Hae latebrae dulces ...'. The views from them of the distant city had the added relish of reminding residents of the journey they had made. A second influence was the idea of *rus-in-urbe* – the idealisation of the countryside and the suggestion that this could be enjoyed in the suburb. By the early nineteenth century notions of classical pastoral were fading, though certain phrases remained in use: Milton's 'hedgerow elms, on hillocks green' for example. Often garbled, and their origin perhaps not always realised, they might have had a sub-conscious influence - difficult to prove, but their frequency of use is suggestive. The study selected Leigh Hunt's poetry and journalism to demonstrate the more low-key appreciation of nature in the early nineteenth century, and the idealistic view of country life presented in *Our Village*. These were reflected in the Tunbridge Wells experience in the Rev Evans' pleasure at birds chirping outside his window and sheep 'nibbling the grass in placid luxury'; and in Miss Mitford's friend's claim that Tunbridge Wells was as rural as Three Mile Cross. Tunbridge Wells had the benefit of its Common; a more general link to the rustic was found in suburban gardens, and here there was the evangelising of J.C. Loudon: 'a suburban residence, with a very small portion of land attached, will contain all that is essential to happiness'. Architectural style as part of the appeal was a little more

complex. The frequent use of St Helena (Picturesque cottage) on advertising material and souvenirs might have suggested that such buildings were common. In fact the predominant style in the early development of Calverley was a mixture of classical and Italianate. Archer talks of the suburban house 'fashioning personal identity', and the message of these houses was respectability and stability. It was only from the late 1850s that there was a move to the Elizabethan: a patriotic choice, and demonstrating another aspect of the suburb: a search for identity and grounding in historical associations.

Part Three considered the suburban residents themselves: having acquired their suburban retreat how did they enjoy it? Who indeed were they? A significant proportion, like Ward himself had followed a 'dispersal pattern' of movement out from the city, and some had come in from the surrounding countryside but the greater proportion were 'peripatetic': they followed no obvious movement patterns. They could indeed have lived anywhere, further demonstration that they came to the suburb from choice (and a warning against too easily assuming the escape from the city narrative). They were from a varied selection of middle-class backgrounds: some were successful retailers, some were from landed families, but most from a broad group of the comfortably established: in the law, government office, international trade. There was a high proportion of women – 70% of the adults – perhaps reflecting the town's history as a spa. The study sought to test their behaviour against typical themes of suburban historiography. Two were particularly useful: separation and withdrawal – 'separation' suggesting that the suburbs were middle-class enclaves, and 'withdrawal' implying that the suburban home was a retreat from the dangers and temptations of the outside world. The latter proposition is rather difficult to demonstrate, and two of the influences on the incomers – Leigh Hunt's journalism and Miss Mitfords stories tended more to a quiet sociability than to withdrawal. The study suggests rather that the incomers considered the town as a whole to be their suburban ideal. There were certainly examples of quite rigid residential segregation, but there were also areas of mixed development. There was a sense though that the incomers were seeking to create a safe space

for themselves across a wider area of the town. They were wary of outsiders – while they benefitted themselves from easy access to London, they disliked others coming in the opposite direction: day-trippers and vagrants. Within the town they sought to manage the behaviour of other residents – by strategies of control and encouragement. They discouraged traditional activities: the annual races and Bonfire Night celebrations, that led to unruly behaviour; and they encouraged thrift, temperance and horticulture. Within their safe space, to judge from letters and journals, there was sociable intercourse, not perhaps with the local trading families, but within the group of incomers.

The sparseness of data was a limitation. The restricted census information prior to 1851 meant that some of the earlier residents could not be satisfactorily identified; and the absence of local newspapers meant that it was difficult to get a sense of cultural life. The availability of information about the Improvement Commissioners led perhaps to an overfocus on them, to the exclusion, for example, of the magistrates, and the governing bodies of the hospital and schools, who were just as significant. There was little opportunity, too, to study the lives of the poorer inhabitants; or to investigate differences within the Old Town trading community – intriguing suggestions of discord in the late 1840s as the railways disrupted the previous monopoly position of the Medway Navigation Company and its partners.

The objective of the study, though, was to consider the motivation of the suburban incomers, and not to present a general history of the town. Two suggestions for future study might extend the investigation. The first would be to consider a later generation of ‘residential parks’. Were the residents of Madeira, Warwick, Molyneux and Boyne Parks, developed between 1880 and 1914, similarly incomers, or did these developments serve a growing middle-class from within the town? How were they advertised? Was there still a gender imbalance? A second suggestion would be to consider that other trope of suburban life: ‘group-monitored respectability’.

Tunbridge Wells in the second half of the century saw itself as a bastion of Protestantism. An

archbishop of Canterbury referred to it as 'the very Beulah of these darling old Evangelicals'.¹

The Irish novelist Katharine Tynan came to Southborough just before the first war. Delighted by the views and the historical associations, she nevertheless 'began to detect something of mouldiness about the beauty; the mental atmosphere perhaps'.² The air was oppressive with disapproval. Her friend Sarah Grand, author and 'New Woman', was 'a green oasis in the arid waste of Tunbridge Wells'. Was this specific to the town or a feature of suburbs in general?

They are subjects, though, for the future. The plausibility of the present proposition – that there was a positive attraction to living in a suburb - has been demonstrated, even if it cannot be proven. There is no suggestion that the attraction was universal; even Richards' estimate of 'ninety out of a hundred Englishmen' was probably too high. For a great many people, though, there was clearly an appeal: whether it was a feeling of security, of independence, of oneness with nature, of community even, or, and perhaps especially in the case of Calverley, a sense of living in 'a place apart'.

¹ In the diary of Edward Benson, May 1883. Cited by A.C. Benson, *The Life of Edward White Benson ...* (2 vols, London, 1899), ii, p. 12.

² Tynan, *Middle Years*, p. 385.

Appendices

Appendix A. Gazetteer of Local Place Names

Camden Road – road running along the north-western boundary of the Calverley estate, and separating it from Crown Fields. Led to the Jack Wood’s spring and quarry, hence its earlier name: Calverley Quarry Lane.

Chiddingstone – village 10 miles north-west of Tunbridge Wells. Hever Castle is nearby.

The **Common(s)** – 256 acres of heathland (now mainly wooded) to the west of Tunbridge Wells – see Section 0.6. Protected from development by the Rusthall Manor Act 1739. (There are two Commons – Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall.)

Crown Fields – area of ‘working class’ housing. Site of the present RVP shopping centre.

Culverden – northern extension of Mount Ephraim.

Eridge - village 3 miles south-west of Tunbridge Wells. Eridge Castle - seat of the Nevill family (Earls of Abergavenny during the period of the study), major land-holders to the south and west of the town.

Frant - village 3 miles south of Tunbridge Wells. Prior to 1833 the southern third of Tunbridge Wells, including part of the Pantiles, was in Frant parish. Most of Frant was in Sussex.

The **Grove** – small park in Mount Sion. Grove Hill (now Grove Hall Gardens) - development of 12 semi-detached houses in parkland setting – see Appendix B.

Herveytown – area of ‘working class’ housing. East of the present Crescent Road car park.

High Rocks – sandstone outcrop 2 miles west of Tunbridge Wells. A visitor attraction.

The **Lew** – area of ‘working class’ housing to the north of town. Opposite Skinners’ School.

London Road – road running up the eastern edge of the Common, and on towards Tonbridge.

Mabledon – country house between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. Built in 1805 for James Burton.

Mount Ephraim, Mount Pleasant, Mount Sion - parts of Tunbridge Wells - see Section 0.6.

(Mount Edgcumbe – group of three buildings on the Common.)

The **Pantiles** (also The Parade, The Walks) - the original centre of Tunbridge Wells - the spring, shops and leisure facilities – see Section 0.6.

Pembury - village 3 miles east of Tunbridge Wells, lying on the main road from London to Hastings. Pembury Road - road from Tunbridge Wells to Pembury, through the centre of the Calverley estate. Originally called Calverley Fairmile.

Penshurst - village 5 miles north-west of Tunbridge Wells. Penshurst Place - seat of the Sidney family from the sixteenth century.

Rusthall - village 2 miles west of Tunbridge Wells. Early visitors to the Wells (seventeenth century) stayed here. There were cold baths and other leisure facilities. Rusthall Common - Picturesque heathland. Manor of Rusthall - included the Common and part of the Pantiles - significant in the early development of Tunbridge Wells.

Scotney – country house ('Castle') 8 miles south-east of Tunbridge Wells, built 1833. Picturesque grounds. Family home of Christopher Hussey.

Somerhill – Jacobean country house between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

Southborough - village 2 miles north of Tunbridge Wells on the road to Tonbridge.

South Frith - a deer-park lying between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. It delayed settlement and development of the area until the seventeenth century. Manor of South Frith - included Mount Sion and Mount Pleasant. The sale of land by the Manor in the late seventeenth century allowed the development of Mount Sion.

Speldhurst - village 3 miles west of Tunbridge Wells. Prior to 1833 the western third of Tunbridge

Wells, including Mount Ephraim, the Common, and part of the Pantiles, was in Speldhurst parish.

Tonbridge - town 5 miles north of Tunbridge Wells, and a much older settlement. Prior to 1833 the eastern third of Tunbridge Wells: Mount Sion and Mount Pleasant, was in Tonbridge parish.

Windmill Fields – area of ‘working class’ housing. Between the Royal Oak and St. Peter’s church.

Appendix B. Grove Hill and Kelsey Cottages

The study has indicated that there were other developments in Tunbridge Wells at the time of Calverley. One such development – Grove Hill, with the adjoining Kelsey Cottages - is worth noting as providing ‘houses in the park’ slightly earlier than Calverley. It lies to the south of Calverley Park, and seems to have been built on one of the plots acquired by William Lushington when he extended Mount Pleasant in about 1820 (Plot B on Figure 12 in Chapter 1.1).¹

Grove Hill is a crescent of six pairs of semi-detached houses around a shared garden with a formal gateway at each end (see below). Kelsey Cottages is a row of eight smaller semi-detached houses on the edge of the same plot, though with their backs to the garden. Parts of both groups appear on the 1828 Neele map (see Figure 14) so would seem to pre-date Calverley.

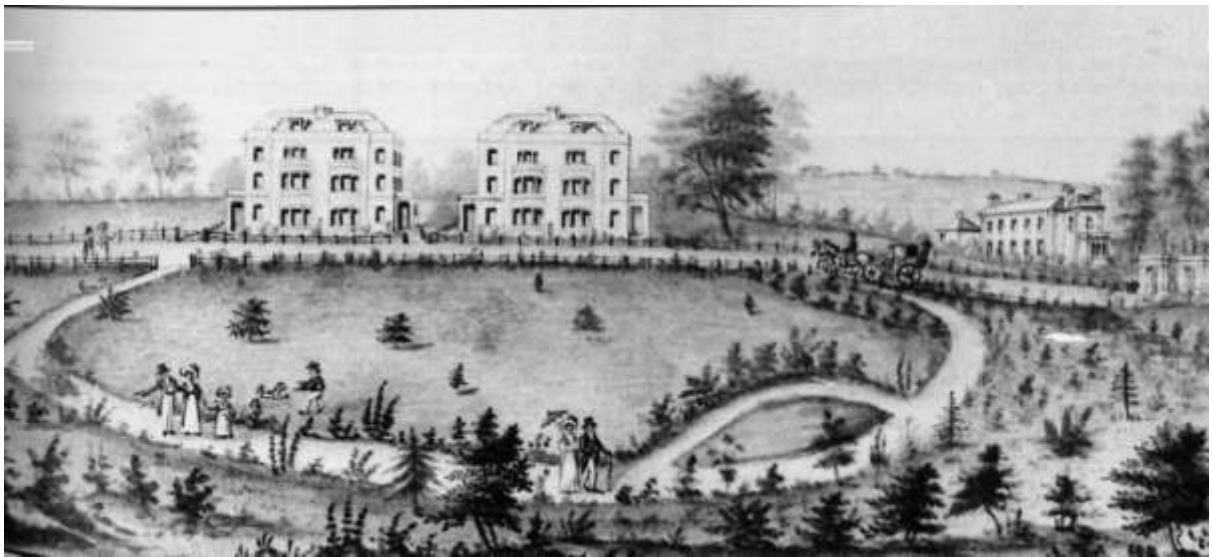


Figure 140. Grove Hill (western end), 1820s. Source: Unknown, TUNWM 1984.708. Image courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery. Reproduced from Farthing, *Pictorial History*, pl. 91. The view would have been from above Kelsey Cottages. One of the entrance gates is at the extreme right. The building beyond the gate, ‘Grecian Villa’, was a separate development.

Grove Hill was owned by Josiah and Stephen Wilson, from the family of silk manufacturers noted in Chapter 3.5. Nothing is known about the building of the houses, though it is possible that the two northernmost pairs were bought from another developer. There were three distinct designs. The earliest, as above, were the largest, three storeys with attics and basements, similar to the

¹ There are no details of its sale, though see Farthing, *Mount Zion*, p. 435 (note re p. 60) and KHLC U2737 09/D/02 and 09/D/25.

Paragon houses in Blackheath though without the linking sections. When built they were outside the built-up area of the Old Town, and had fine views to front and back, enjoyed from double drawing rooms on the first floor. The style and placement were a little more urban than Calverley Park. Perhaps that was why they achieved higher occupancy rates through the 1830s than Calverley, or perhaps they had just been completed earlier.

Kelsey Cottages were very different. Though on the edge of the same plot they seem to have been a separate development, by the Barrett brothers who built Holy Trinity and part of Calverley Parade (see Chapter 1.2). The name 'Cottages' has suggested to some that they were intended for artisans / servants, but they are much bigger than the 'artisans'-dwellings' in nearby Windmill Fields (their rateable value in 1834 was £14 compared to £2.10s in Windmill Fields). They might better be described as small villas, aimed at incomers and visitors. Horace Smith, the stockbroker and poet (see Chapter 2.3) took one for at least one summer. By 1851 some had been renamed 'Park Villas' and 'Bayham Place'. They were two-storey, with, probably, a room in the attics, and, possibly, a kitchen in the basement.



Figure 141. Kelsey Cottages, 1820s . Source: author.
There were originally no linking sections.

The external decoration: the string courses and channelled rendering, is more ornate than on contemporary development for the local market such as Bedford Terrace and Cumberland Gardens. The splayed / canted corner on the front elevation is particularly noticeable, its shape

reminiscent of the 'tower' of no. 2 Calverley Park (there were originally no windows in the splay). One notes that Decimus Burton was working with the Barretts on Holy Trinity at about this time, and later (1829-30) on 'The Grove' in Penshurst. Philip Whitbourn has uncovered letters written from Kelsey Cottages by his assistant, Henry Sandall. Might Burton have been involved in their design?

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KHLC U2737 Box number / bundle letter / document number, where:

'Box' numbers are part of the KHLC numbering scheme; 'bundle' letters were assigned to each bundle by the current author but will ideally be retained by KHLC; 'document'

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