

LITTLE BOOKHAM HISTORY

Little Bookham dates from Saxon times, being named after the beech forest in the south. After the Conquest until about 1300 the Halsart family (probably the same Hansard family of House of Parliament note) held Little Bookham from the Braose family, the Lords of Bramber. The Halsarts built Little Bookham Church in the early twelfth century as a family chapel and for their tenants to worship in. Preston Cross, meaning Priest's Town, may have been an earlier religious centre.

Little Bookham was overshadowed by its neighbour Great Bookham which was owned by Chertsey Abbey until the Reformation and which had the right to hold a fair. So Little Bookham developed as a small rural village, changing little in hundreds of years, even when Lord Howard of Effingham inherited the manor from the last male Braose. In the 19th century the lord of the manor owned about 60% of land in Little Bookham and this had probably changed little for centuries. He also owned 160 acres in eastern Effingham.

In 1637 Benjamin Maddox inherited the manor at the age of 5 months. Maddox Street in Mayfair is named after him, being part of his London property portfolio inherited from his merchant forbears. A small local charity established by him still survives. Benjamin's daughter Mary, who had married Edward Pollen, inherited the manor and half his fortune. In about 1800 George Pollen, who was also rector of the church, built a grand Regency manor house (now Manor House School). He placed his fortune in a trust for the male descendants of his daughters and left the manor to a grandson, who was also rector. The trust still exists today as the Pollen Trust and owns part of Mayfair. The manor house was generally tenanted out and the lords lived in The Old Rectory on Rectory Lane from 1764 to 1847 and from 1906 until the late 1920s.

The coming of the railway in 1885 linking the village to London changed the village as it did other villages, but this was largely delayed until after 1906, as the estate had been held by trustees for the second half of the 19th century, setting it in aspic. Housing development around Maddox Lane and Woodland Road began after 1906, but was delayed by the World Wars. The gift of Banks Common to the National Trust by the lord of the manor, Henry Willock-Pollen and the establishment of the Green Belt suspended further development and is the main reason why the village retains its rural feel.

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Written by Vivien White M.A. (Historical Research). Designed by Bryan Sherwood.

The Bishop's Walk

In the early medieval period Bishops spent much of their time making visitations of the churches in their diocese in processions on foot. This footpath which is shown on old maps joins the two churches and is likely to have been 'The Bishop's Walk'.



Saint Lawrence Church – Effingham



All Saints Church – Little Bookham

The Walk



A. St Lawrence Church – Efingham, was built in the twelfth century and restored, enlarged and remodelled in the late Victorian era when the collapsed tower was rebuilt with exterior buttresses. Sir Barnes Wallis’ grave (he invented the bouncing bomb) is in the graveyard and there are three LB vaults.



B. The entrance/exit to the walk at the north-east corner of the old churchyard of St. Lawrence.



C. The path towards All Saints. On the left is the wall of the house formerly called The Lodge.



D. The path runs alongside the playing fields.



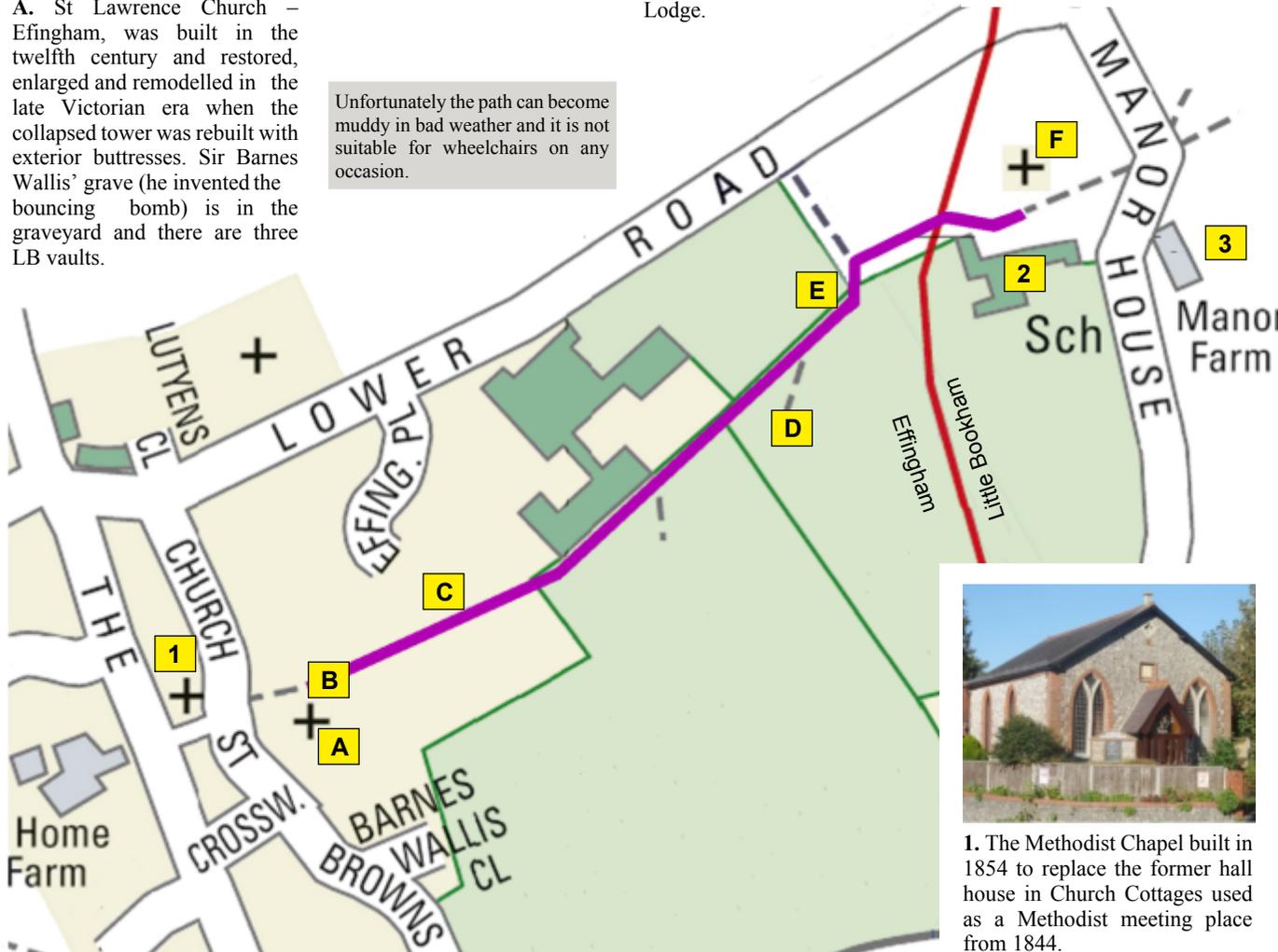
E. Manor House wall on right looking east.



F. All Saints Church – Little Bookham, built in the 12th century, although it did not receive its dedication until the twentieth century. Probably first built as a family chapel, which had not been significantly remodelled by the Victorians. The remains of a demolished 14th century aisle can still be seen in south wall and the church still retains its Norman font, although damaged.

Unfortunately the path can become muddy in bad weather and it is not suitable for wheelchairs on any occasion.

There is a car park at All Saints Church



2. Little Bookham Manor House, now Manor House School, was built in the 18th century and remodelled and extended at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the Pollen family, lords of the manor of Little Bookham. Gutted by a fire in 1919 it was restored by the notable architect, Mackay Baillie Scott. In 1936 the founders of Manor House School purchased the house and lordship of the manor from the Pollen family.



3. The Tithe Barn for All Saints Church, which is one of the largest in Surrey at 4,500 sq ft. A major conservation project has recently been completed and a 1920s courtyard garden recreated. Nearby is Manor Farm, dating from at least the early 17th century, which may have once been the Manor House.



1. The Methodist Chapel built in 1854 to replace the former hall house in Church Cottages used as a Methodist meeting place from 1844.