

Queen Square in the Eighteenth Century

Queen Square was in the middle of its fashionable and social hey-day. It was probably faithfully represented in the water-colour drawing by Dayes, the subject of an aquatint by Pollard and Dodd. In this picture the dull and stately effect of the masses of buildings as they appeared in 1785 is relieved by some groups of people and animals in the foreground. We see an elderly man with a charming daughter on his arm being importuned on one side by a little beggar boy and on the other by a flower-seller with a baby. Close by two gallants are apparently trying to make use of the incident to get on further terms with the family party. There are also a brewer's dray, a laundryman, a blind beggar and his dog and a butcher's boy. Wigs, three-cornered hats, voluminous skirts, tight trousers and stockings, picture the costumes of the day and the promenaders step gingerly over the cobblestones with all the leisureliness of the period . . .

The Curzon family sold or let on long leases a large part of Queen Square land in the eighteenth century.

In the Morning Post of 2-6 June 1780 the following advertisement appears:

By Mr Skinner on Wednesday the 28th June at Garraway's Coffee House, Change Alley at 12 o'clock in nine lots. A most Eligible Freehold Estate comprising all the ground rents of these nineteen capital houses which form the West Side of Queen Square, Bloomsbury, and four others in Brunswick Row adjoining, together with the indisputable sole right of Queen Square itself (within the rails) with every advantage to be derived from the freehold property therein, clear of any grant or privilege whatever. Also seven spacious valuable houses on the West Side of Great Ormonde Street with extensive gardens consisting of that in the possession of the Right Hon the Lord Chancellor, and the six adjoining, now on ground-rent leases for short terms, on the expiration of which the premises will become the absolute improved property of the purchasers, the present ground-rents near £500 per annum exclusive of the yearly value of the Square'

Printed particulars may soon be seen at Mr. Skinner's (Aldersgate Street) or the whole may be purchased by private contract

During the Gordon Riots trouble came near but not quite into Queen Square. From an undated letter written by the Recorder of London to Lord Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the Southern Division (Public Record Office), we take the following:

'Mr Sergeant Adair presents his respects to the Earl of Hillsborough and acquaints him that the mob are beginning to assemble with colours flying in Bloomsbury Square. The force the Sergeant mentioned will be absolutely necessary for the sure protection of Ormond Street, Queen Square and the neighbouring Streets' . . .

It is understood that when Queen Square was first 'designed' those who were responsible for the lay-out had in their minds a kind of town planning scheme in which there would be a chain of similar open spaces extending in the direction of Highgate. This excellent scheme was frustrated by the narrow vision of the ground landlord or landlords of Queen Square for at a special court of the Foundling Hospital held on the 26th January 1781, a plan prepared by Mr Merryweather, which an account of the Foundling Hospital 1796 says possessed considerable merit was adopted for the proposed buildings; in which the opening of Queen Square 'though with some diminution in the amount of the expected ground-rents, was proposed to be continued of the same width over the estate; a benefit which after every effort of persuasion the proprietors of that Square have declined to accept.' We learn from the account that the subject had been broached before. 'The refusal of the ground landlord of Queen Square to consent to the union of that Square with the Foundling Estate was reported to the General Court in March 1793; when an advantageous proposal being made for the ground lying north of Queen Square, and a meeting of the inhabitants of the Square, in consequence of a message from the building committee, having produced no alteration of opinion or inclination on the subject, the ground was at length let to Mr Burton, on a plan as favourable as well could be, to the adjoining Square' . . .

We cannot better conclude this chapter than by quoting a realistic passage from Mr Bedford's history of St George the Martyr: In those early days, the coffee houses in Great Ormond Street were thronged with fashionable gentlemen, bewigged, and silk stockinged, wearing sword, and bearing cane and snuff-box: then hardly an evening in the week Sundays included but to the great scandal of decent folk, sedan chairs and link men waited outside the houses in Queen Square for the ladies and gentlemen enjoying rout and card party within. These were the days when smartly dressed ladies and their beaux promenaded in Queen Square garden or rumbled over the cobblepaved streets in their chariots

Queen Square, Its Neighbourhood & Its Institutions

by Geoffrey Heathcote Hamilton, Secretary of the National Hospital, Queen Square, London

Gray's Inn Lane turnpike.

Petition of owners, etc., of land ... Red Lion Street, Red Lion Square, Queen's Square, Ormond Street ... of the Parish of Saint George, Bloomsbury, in the ... Parish of Saint George the Martyr, on Behalf ... Gray's Inn Lane turnpike. Petition of owners, etc., of land situated near the turnpike

Issuing Body/Bodies: House of Commons.

Committee to Whom the Petition[s] ...[relating to] the Turnpike Road leading from the North End of Gray's Inn Lane to the New Road Near Battle Bridge ... Were Severally Referred Chairman/presented by: Adair, Mr.

Abstract:

"**Mr Serjeant Adair** reported from the Committee, to whom the Petition of the several Persons whose Names are thereunto subscribed, on Behalf of themselves and others, Owners and Proprietors of Lands, Builders and Occupiers of Houses, in Swinton Street, Acton Street, Constitution Row, and several other Streets and Places, situated on the Side of, or near to, the Turnpike Road leading from the North End of Gray's Inn Lane, to the New Road near Battle Bridge, in the Parish of Saint Pancras, in the County of Middlesex, as also of the several Inhabitants in Gray's Inn Lane, **Lamb's Conduit Street, Red Lion Street, Red Lion Square, Queen's Square, Ormond Street**, Muilman Street, James Street, Bedford Row, King's Road, John Street, Hutton Garden, Gray's Inn, and other Streets, Squares, and Places, thereabouts, who have Occasion to travel or pass by the Way of Gray's Inn Lane Road, and the New Road, to the East End of the City of London, and to the Great Essex Road, as also to the Edgware Road near Paddington, and to the Great Western Road; and also, the Petition of the Treasurers, Governors, and Trustees, of the Society for supporting a Charity School for the Maintenance, Education, and Apprenticing out, of the Poor Children of Welsh Parents, born in and near London, who have no Parochial Settlement here; and also, the Petition of the Rector and Churchwardens of the **Parish of Saint George, Bloomsbury**, in the County of Middlesex, on Behalf of themselves and the rest of the Inhabitants of the said Parish;

and also, the Petition of the Rector, Churchwardens, and other Officers, of the **Parish of Saint George the Martyr**, on Behalf of the Inhabitants of the said Parish; and also, the Petition of **Cutts Barton**, Doctor of Divinity, Dean of Bristol, and Rector of Saint Andrew's, Holborn, the Churchwardens, and other Officers of the Upper, Lower and City, Divisions of the said Parish, for and on the Behalf of themselves and the other Inhabitants of the said Divisions; and also, the Petition of the Governors and Guardians of the Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of exposed and deserted young Children, were severally referred;

That the Committee had examined, and found that the Standing Orders of the House of the 25th of April **1774**, relative to **Turnpike Bills**, **had not been complied with**; and that the Committee had examined the Matters of the said Petitions; and had directed him to report the same, as they appeared to them, to the House; and he read the Report in his Place; and afterwards delivered it in at the Clerk's Table. Ordered, That the said Report be taken into Consideration upon **Wednesday Morning next**."

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St George's Gardens

These gardens two and half acres in extent situated at the rear of the **Foundling Hospital** between Gray's Inn Road and Judd Street were formerly the burial grounds belonging to St George-the-Martyr, Holborn and St George, Bloomsbury.

According to a deed executed on the 12th August 1713, we find that the Commissioners appointed under Queen Anne's Act for building fifty new churches with churchyards in and about the cities of London and Westminster by means of a **duty on coals**, under the powers invested in them, purchased on 8th July 1713 the piece of ground referred to above. Of the three acres then purchased, one acre and a quarter was set apart to serve as a burial ground for **St George-the-Martyr**: a further piece of the same size being held in reserve to serve as a burial ground for another parish, and subsequently assigned to the Parish of St George's, Bloomsbury whilst the remainder was set apart to form the approach to the new grounds and is now known as Prospect Terrace, Gray's Inn Road. This approach became somewhat famous on account of a rector of St George-the-Martyr having endeavoured to dispose of it for building purposes. In this he would probably had been successful had it not been for the opposition of the St Pancras Vestry.

The clauses in the deed specially referring to the purchase of the ground and of this approach read as follows:-
The said Commissioners so appointed as aforesaid, and Five or more of them, by virtue and in Further pursuance of the said severall recited Acts of Parliament, have bought and purchased of and from Henry Proctor, of Hemell hempsted, in the County of hertford practitioner in physick a piece or parcell of ground situate lying and being in the hamlett or Inship of the pinder of Wakefield in the parish of St Pancras in the said County of middlesex contayning three Acres be the same more or less now or late in the occupation of one Richard Gray for the making two Church yards or Cemetrys for the buryall of the dead, one Whereof contayning one Acre and a quarter or a little more part thereof lying Southward is and is intended to be laid to the said New Chappell called St Georges Chapell and the other containing likewise near one other acre and a quarter other part of the said one acre and a quarter other part, of the said three acres, and lying on the North side of the said piece or parcell of ground is intended to be appropriated For some new church, intended to be erected and Which shall hereafter be appointed and declared by the said Commission or Five or more of them pursuant to the said Acts of parliament and the remaining part of the said three Acres contayning near half an Acre is to remain and be For an open Way to the said two Church yards respectively as the same is more plainly set Forth and described in the plann scheme on ground plott to the deeds of purchase or conveyance thereof

St Pancras Open Spaces & Disused Burial Grounds by Walter E Brown 1911

Lebeck House, Dowry Square, Hotwells Bristol

Nat Archives - Bristol Record Office

Deeds of Lebeck House, Dowry Square and No 1 Hope Square, Clifton and Hotwells

Source: deposited in the city archives by Messrs Lloyd, Burch & Inskip, solicitors 5 Marsh Street, Bristol 1. Creators ditto
Lebeck House, Dowry Square 26990/1 - 26990/15

26990/1 21 March 1768

Contents - copy release of equity of redemption

1. Rowles Scudamore esq, Jeremiah Osbourne and Henry Bengough gents, commissioners of bankruptcy against William Bishop of Clifton coffee and wine dealer
2. Robert Bush, pewterer and ors. all of Bristol
3. William Bishop
4. Richard Blake of Bristol gent

Parcel of land on Green Street, part of Dowry Square Clifton with messuage

26990/2 17 May 1793

Contents - Copy appointment by deed poll

1. Susanna Woodward wife of Rev Richard Lord Bishop of Cloyne, Ireland and daughter of Richard Blake of Bristol gent. Land in Bitton, Oldland, Hanham, Upton, Wick, Winterbourne and Westerleigh to her son Eichard Woodward. Messuage call the Lebeck, Dowry Square, and rent charges from various other Bristol properties, to her children Louisa, Benjamin Blake, Thomas, and Henry Woodward.

26990/3/a-b 20/21 Dec 1799

Contents - Lease and release

1. Louisa Woodward of Dublin spinster, Benjamin Blake Woodward of Dublin barrister. Thomas Woodward of Cork esq. Rev Henry Woodward of Baltenlet co Cavan Ireland.
 2. Benjamin Harenc of Kent esq trustee
 3. Danvers Ward of Bristol surgeon and Richard Ward of Wick and Abson gent
- Messuage call the Lebeck in Dowry Square, subject to yearly rent charge of £3.
With schedule of deeds - 21 March 1768 to 17 May 1793. Consideration £700

26990/4 22 Oct 1750 - 1799

Contents - Abstract of title of Louisa Woodward, Benjamin Blake Woodward, Thomas Woodward and Rev Henry Woodward to Lebeck House, Hotwells

26990/5/a-d 20/21 Dec 1820

Contents - Lease and release

1. Danvers Ward of Bristol surgeon
 2. Mary Mead of Hotwells Clifton widow
- Lebeck House Dowry Square Clifton. Consideration £735 (£235 only paid, premises charged with further payment of £500
Covenant conveying insurance policy on premises to Danvers Ward as security for payment of sum outstanding
Enclosed: 21 Dec 1820 Bond in £1000, Mary Mead to Danvers Ward for payment of £500 21 Feb 1814 Receipt for part purchase price of Lebeck House, Danvers Ward to Dr Nott.

26990/6/a-b 21 March 1768 - 1820

Contents - Abstract and additional abstract of the title of Danvers Ward to Lebeck House, Hotwells, 'sold to Dr Nott'

26990/7 18 April 1838

Contents - Assignment of mortgage

1. Danvers Ward late of Bristol surgeon, now of Olveston Glos
 2. Thomas Crossman of Olveston gent, Rev Charles Richard Ward of Wapley Glos, James Bush of Beach, Bitton Glos gent
- Lebeck House Hotwells. Consideration £500.

26990/15 20 Dec 1799 - 1900 Schedule of deeds of Lebeck House