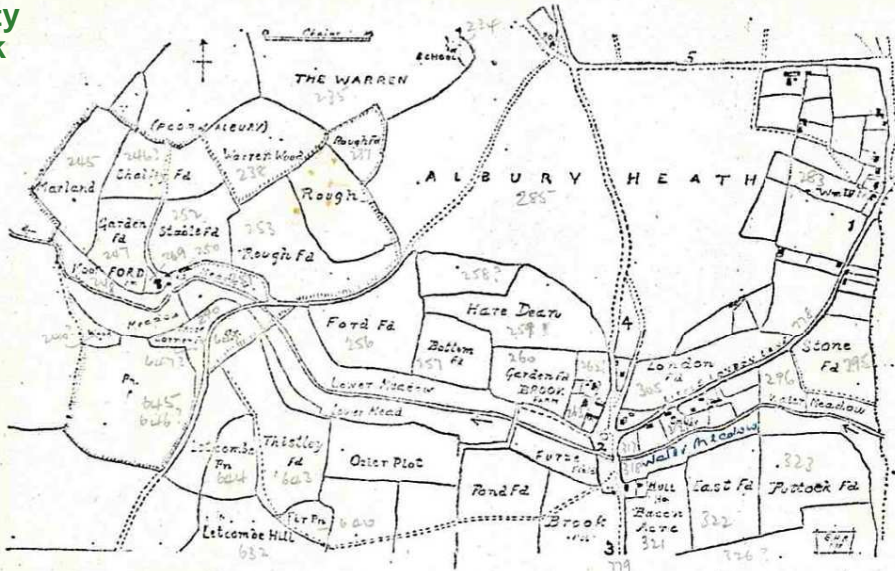


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The William IV,  
Little London  
and Ford Farm  
by E.H. Rideout

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## Delving into the depths of history

ADDICTS of the Detective story should have much in common with local historians. Their aims are similar. The one, more or less actively pits his brains against the author's. The other against the riddles of history and topography.

But the seasoned gourmet of detective fiction realises with pain that "things are not what they used to be"; not even in the Crime Club.

Local history students are not so satiated. The deeper they delve the more bottomless appears the pit of mystery. The best detective story can be solved in a few hours. No life is long enough to chart the depths of even a small area of our country. Both activities, if true to form, have to contend, in common, with the vagaries of human behaviour.

The plan shows such a small area. Reduced from the Tithe Plan of Albury it covers less than a square mile. It gives a picture of conditions in 1839. To complete the story we must discover how the picture arose and hence explain the present.

The stream is the dominant feature. It rises near Peaslake. It flows through the centre of the village northwards to Purser's Farm, turns north-west to Jessies, thence by Lawbrook House westwards to Ford Farm. Nameless on published maps, we dubbed it for convenience the Lawbrook. It is one of the rare streams flowing across the dip slope of the greensand. Clear, like the Tillingsbourne, it has proved eminently suitable for the watercess beds at Ford Farm. Its valley provides lush water meadows.

### Surrey rarity

Before our favourite detectives begin their detailed investigations, like wise travellers in a strange land they seek to establish their base camp. Should they arrive in this area they would indeed be in luck. For at the William IV (1) they would find that rarity in Surrey, an unspoilt village pub.

Consulting the current 6in. Ordnance Survey map, the investigator will find he is at Little London. A funny name, so the Place Names of Surrey considers it. "No doubt originally of humorous origin, referring to a settlement which grew very rapidly."

Perhaps they are right.

(There is a Little London in Roman Chichester.) It was known as Little London in 1680, but earlier it is recorded as Northworth al. Little London, 1647. Le Northe Worthe is the name as early as 1584.

This is no doubt interesting, but on reference to the Tithe Map the village green (2) is called Little London Green. It is truly a little thing, being just over two acres. But for all that it is a genuine village green, complete with duck or horse pond at the junction of the road (3) from Farley Green and Farley Heath, the road (4) north to Albury Heath, and the road to the William IV and Shere specifically called in 1839 — Little London Lane.

### By E. H. Rideout

The Ordnance Survey map (6in. of 1872) boldly calls (2) — Brook. This little settlement with its village shops in 1899, one occupied by Miss Catherine Wedgar, the other at the same date by Frederick Holt, grocer and beer retailer, certainly deserves some name. What was it? The 19th-century directories are too muddled to be of help. In 1899 the William IV is placed at Brook. By then, presumably, Mason's Smithy of 1839 in Little London Lane had closed.

Hull House, La Hull of 1398, called in Miss O. M. Heath's transcript of The Syon papers Le Boure or Le Voure in 1789, formed part of Shallford Bradstane Manor. This 70-acre holding, together with Rook's Land and Davie Field, had passed with John Whitbourne's great Brook Farm, 332 acres, to Henry Drummond by 1839. As this 17th/18th-century house, occupied by Mrs. Ann Charman in 1899, also offered furnished apartments, Brook had then some admirers of its beauty.

### Ford Farm

But in this neglected area our enthusiasm is concentrated on the 17th-century Ford Farm. Little Ford of The Ordnance Survey. The farm of 84 acres, called Fordland in 1638, lying in "the Forrest," passed from Richard Whitmore to Thomas Watford (O. M. Heath-Syon.)

Mrs. Margaret Fenwick left by will in 1725 £800 to be laid out in the purchase of Fordland for "the apprenticing of poor children, providing a marriage portion for maid servants who had lived blamelessly in the same family for seven years and the residue to the poor in alms." (V. C. H. iii 150.) On the plan the bounds of the farm in

1839 are hatched and are stated in the schedule to belong to The Poor of Dorking.

Adjoining are two fields on the poor sandy waste of the Warren and four other enclosures belonging to The Poor of Albury (42 acres). Suitable, too, for charity as education is still regarded, is the nearby school on The Warren. Another charity is represented by the Post Office (P.O.) at the cross roads of Parkside (5) and (4) from Brook to Albury and West Street. Perhaps this is Little London P.O., J. Gadd (1933), now closed.

### Hero worship

We are left with two questions unanswered. Where was Northe Worthe? Was it at Brook? We know of a settlement here since at least the early 14th Century; what was the Worth or enclosure north of — Farley Green or of the Temple site? (Surrey Search 10.)

Fortunately, with a wary eye on the clock, to consider these and far weightier problems we may adjourn to the Willie. How long the inn has been there we do not know. In the Seventies, or earlier, in a spasm of hero worship so typically modern and British it was called the Garibaldi. This was possibly by ancestors of those dear old ladies of our youth who so admired dear Mussolini. Surely Albury Heath and West Street was full of them.

The Tithe map ignores the inn — if it existed as such — yet lists T. D. Mercer as owner of the freehold house and garden and arable, and Thomas Mercer as tenant. William Mercer occupied the premises as the William IV public house in 1899 at Brook; many changes; then in 1933 E. S. Tibbs held the William IV inn at Little London.

So now while you enjoy beer or good cider by Doug Barber's merry wood fire — if you can get near it — you await a real bar lunch with cabbage cooked as it should be cooked, green and crisp and sweet, by the admirable Margot Barber.

You may solve the problem — why if you are in Little London, did it grow so very rapidly so to deserve the name? Perhaps by then you won't care, anyway!

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E.H. Rideout  
Forge Cottage  
Leith Hill, Dorking