

# HARVEY: THE SCENE OF HIS LAST YEARS AND HOURS

by

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IT has traditionally been held that William Harvey died in his brother Eliab's house in Roehampton but there has hitherto been no really definite evidence on this point. The present paper results from an attempt to discover more about the connection of the Harvey family with the one-time village of Roehampton and to identify the exact location of the house in which the great physiologist died.

## *Harvey and Roehampton*

Before inquiring into the whereabouts of the house where Harvey died, it would be well to review the evidence for the belief that Harvey died in Roehampton. Clearly if he did not do so, then the search for the House would be futile. The evidence may be summarized as follows:

- (a) The manuscript letter\* recently in the possession of the Royal College of Physicians of London, thought to be from Heberden quotes Harvey's great-niece as having stated that Harvey had spent the later years of his life in Roehampton.
- (b) The probate of Harvey's will. This describes Harvey as being 'late of the parish of St. Peter's Poore, in London, but at Roehampton in the County of Surrey, deceased'.  
D'Arcy Power† says that 'this entry seems to set at rest the doubt that had been expressed as to the exact place of Harvey's death for Aubrey with his customary inaccuracy to detail stated that he died in London'. With this comment, one must certainly agree for the implication is quite clear that Harvey was normally a London man but actually died in Roehampton.
- (c) In his will, Harvey left 'among the servants of my brother Eliab which shall be dwelling with him at the time of my decease, ten pounds'. This is typical of the kindly thoughtfulness which would have inspired Harvey, who did not lose sight of the fact that the presence in a household of an elderly man whose powers might be failing, would place a considerable burden on the domestic staff, and this £10 is clearly some recognition to his brother Eliab's servants for the trouble he might be causing. It is difficult to see why Harvey should have gone out of his way to make this legacy of £10 to his brother Eliab's servants if he were not, during the last years of his life, living in his brother's house.
- (d) The account given by Aubrey‡ of Harvey's last years and hours may be taken as authentic. It is true that many Harvey historians, including Willis,§ D'Arcy Power¶ and Chauvois\*\* do not seem to have thought very highly of Aubrey as a biographer, for he is sometimes a trifle racy and is inclined to gossip. The latest commentator on Aubrey's works, O. L. Dick,†† who has studied his original manuscripts, on the contrary, has a high opinion of

\* The manuscript has now been presented by the Royal College of Physicians to the Heberden Society. The relevant part reads as follows: '1761, May 29th—Mrs. Harvey (great niece to Dr. Harvey) told me that the Doctor lived at his brother's at Roehampton the later part of his life. That he used to walk out in a morning combing his hair in the fields. . . .'

† Power, Sir D'Arcy, *William Harvey*, London, 1897.

‡ *Aubrey's Brief Lives*. Edited by O. L. Dick, London, 1949.

§ Willis, R., *William Harvey*, London, 1878. ¶ *op. cit.*

\*\* Chauvois, Louis, *William Harvey*, London, 1957. †† *op. cit.*

## *Harvey: The Scene of his Last Years and Hours*

Aubrey's powers of observation and description. Aubrey was a contemporary of Harvey, although a much younger man, and it is known that he went to considerable lengths to obtain personal information about the many famous people of whom he wrote. He was very well known and keenly interested in people and things, with a talent for concise but revealing description of contemporary people and events. It is quite justifiable to accept his account of Harvey's last hours. For instance, he mentions Harvey's calling on his brother and nephews. The brother could be none other than his brother Eliab, since all the other brothers at the time were already dead. The three nephews, that is to say, sons of his brother Eliab, would be Eliab, Matthew and William. They would respectively be aged twenty-two, eighteen and seventeen years. It may well be that nephew Eliab would not have been present in the household, but it is entirely understandable that nephews Matthew and William would have been. It is, moreover, again quite in keeping with Harvey's character that he would have wished to have given some personal token to his nephews whom he had watched grow up. The whole picture is convincing and I think may be taken as the truth.

- (e) Finally, if Harvey did not die in his brother Eliab's house in Roehampton, it is pertinent to ask where did he die? Eliab Harvey was the only surviving brother and Harvey obviously could not have died in the house or in the presence of any other brother. If we assume that the houses of his other brother's children were open to him, it is extremely unlikely that he would, in the last years of his life, have chosen to live with a young nephew rather than with his brother Eliab, who we know had taken charge of his affairs for the latter years of his life. Moreover, brother Eliab's house in Roehampton had by that time become the family home,\* and the evidence suggests that Eliab Harvey did not spend much time at this period at his other houses in the country. In other words, if Harvey did not die in his brother's house in Roehampton, no answer can be given to the question, where then did he die? Not the remotest nor most tentative suggestion can be put forward as an alternative and by a process of exclusion, it follows that it was in Roehampton that Harvey spent his last years and hours.

From this evidence, namely, Heberden's letter, Harvey's Will, Aubrey's contemporary account and by a process of exclusion, there can be no doubt that Harvey spent the last years of his life and died in his brother Eliab's house in Roehampton.

### *Materials, Methods, Nomenclature and the Harvey Family*

Apart from the wills of members of the Harvey family, most of the data presented here has been taken from Abstracts of Title or Deeds concerned with property transactions at different periods.† The ideal method of approach would be the legal one by which a lawyer would trace the title and the various parcellings of the land over the years from Eliab Harvey to the present day but the Harvey estate was a copyhold estate, which form of land tenure was abolished by legislation in 1925. The law of copyhold tenure is now a little-known branch of the law and it would undoubtedly be an extremely difficult task, if indeed it were possible at all, to trace the title of the property in a truly legal fashion over a period of three hundred years. For instance, it would be necessary to search the Rolls of the Court of the Manor of Wimbledon, and for a number of reasons these are not immediately available. Moreover, it is

\* This statement is based on a separate study to be reported elsewhere.

† I am grateful to Mr. David Kerr, solicitor to the Wandsworth Borough Council, for advice on the legal aspects of the deeds and documents examined in this inquiry.

extremely doubtful whether the original deeds could now be found. I thought it would be at least desirable to examine the original of the document I have called the 'Harvey Surrender' which has an important bearing on this investigation. Inquiry at Somerset House, the Public Records Office and the Surrey Records Office showed that there was no record of it in their archives. The most likely way in which it could be found would be to trace it amongst the records of the firm of solicitors or their successors who last held the deeds but since it was apparently last scrutinized in 1831, I did not think the chances of my being able to do so within a reasonable period would be very bright.

Since the legal approach would undoubtedly have been extremely difficult and long-drawn-out and since in any case I had no qualifications for the task myself, there was no alternative but to adopt the historical approach and for this I have relied in the main on Abstracts of Title or Mortgage Deeds concerning the property. Rather more than thirty documents, many of them long and not easy to read because of legal phraseology and archaic script, have been examined to find any reference to the Harvey family. The Mortgage Deeds, most of which were the original documents, were not very helpful but the Abstracts of Title contained many references to the Harvey family and it is necessary to say a little more about these documents.

An Abstract of Title is essentially a statement prepared by a lawyer acting for a vendor of a property, which sets out the vendor's title to the property and states the various stages when the property had changed hands. It quotes the legal documents on which the title is based and the abstract is then studied and verified by the purchaser's lawyer who, on being satisfied of the authenticity of the legal documents quoted and that the vendor has a good title and, therefore, a right to dispose of the property, so advises the purchaser. These Abstracts of Title are not legal documents as such although they do contain a great deal of valuable information about a property. I have already referred to the difficulty at this distance of time of acquiring the original deeds necessary for legal purposes. For historical purposes, however, it may be conceded that a scrutiny of the original documents is not strictly necessary. It is not part of one's purpose to usurp the work of a lawyer and since all the documents which are quoted in this paper have been seen and checked at some time or other with the originals and accepted as authentic by the lawyers concerned at different periods, they may certainly be accepted for historical purposes. It is fair to assume that an Abstract of Title quoting earlier legal documents which has been accepted by the responsible lawyers as authentic to the extent of justifying a sale or conveyance of valuable land would certainly be enough for historical purposes. It remains, nevertheless, for me to emphasize and make quite clear that although these abstracts and documents have been freely used, my approach has not been that of a lawyer, for that would be both futile and presumptuous, but merely of one who is interested in the problem from the historical point of view. Lack of space prevents the inclusion of these deeds, but I have in my possession transcripts of the relevant parts of each document quoted.

Various members of the Harvey family will frequently be referred to in this

paper and as there are a number of 'Williams' and 'Eliabs', some form of nomenclature must be used to avoid confusion. *The William Harvey* I shall simply call 'Harvey'. There is a good precedent for this for we speak of Shakespeare, Dante, Beethoven, and Marlborough without regard to Christian names. The other members of the family I shall refer to according to their relationship to Harvey, followed immediately by their birth and death dates in brackets.\* Thus, Harvey's brother Eliab, by all accounts a true brother in every way, may appropriately be described as brother Eliab (1588–1661). Brother Eliab's sons—nephews of Harvey—Eliab, William and Matthew—I shall call nephews Eliab (1635–98), William (1640–1719) and Matthew (1639–93) respectively. Nephew Eliab's sons—Eliab and William—I shall call great-nephews Eliab (1659–81) and William (1663–1731) respectively. Any other members of the family mentioned will be similarly named. Brother Eliab's house, the main object of this investigation, I shall refer to merely as the House. The Roehampton estate of the Harvey family which great-nephew William (1663–1731) finally disposed of in 1724, I shall call the Harvey estate and the Deed of Surrender by which he did this, I shall call the Harvey Surrender.

It will be useful also to say something of the Harvey family and the occupation of the House in Roehampton. A study of the wills of brother Eliab (1588–1661) and nephews Eliab (1635–98) and William (1640–1719) and some of the deeds enable a fairly good guess to be made as to who occupied the House down the years, without in any way anticipating the more important question of the location of the House. The following brief account summarizes a more detailed study.

Brother Eliab (1588–1661) occupied the House up to the time of his death in 1661. Thereafter, his widow, Mary Harvey, with her servants, continued to live there until her death in 1673. Their eldest son, also an Eliab (nephew Eliab (1635–98)) had married in 1658 and his father about this time had settled on him a property in Chigwell in Essex and a house in the City. Nephew Eliab (1635–98), latterly, had little direct contact with Roehampton and at the time of his mother's death had been settled in Chigwell for fifteen years. The third son of the house, William (nephew William (1640–1719)), was a Roehampton man born and bred. He married in 1661 a daughter of a Lord Mayor of London and set up house in Roehampton, probably somewhere to the east of Roehampton Lane. On the death of his mother in 1673, he leased the House from his eldest brother Eliab (nephew Eliab (1635–98)) and lived there until his death in 1719 at the age of seventy-nine years. He is the William Harvey named in the Parker Abstract of Title referred to later.

The House had been left to nephew Eliab (1635–98) and his male heirs. He had eight children, the elder two of whom were boys (great-nephews Eliab (1659–81) and William (1663–1731) respectively). Great-nephew Eliab (1659–81) died in 1681 as a young man, very soon after his marriage, whereupon his younger brother William (great-nephew William (1663–1731)) married the

\* The dates used here are taken from *Genealogy of the Family of Harvey* by William J. Harvey, F.S.A., 1889.

widow. Great-nephew William (1663–1731) thus appears to have possessed the same business acumen as his grandfather for on the death of his elder brother he not only became heir to his father's estate in Essex and the House in Roehampton but no doubt also to a substantial fortune brought to him by his brother's widow. He himself seems to have had very little direct contact with Roehampton. He was born in St. Peter-the-Poor in the City and on the death of his father (nephew Eliab (1635–98)) in 1698 at the age of sixty-three years, he succeeded to his father's estates in Essex and also to the ownership of the House in Roehampton. On the death of his uncle who had been occupying the House (nephew William (1640–1719)) in 1719, he also inherited a further substantial property. The House was now vacant again but by this time great-nephew William (1663–1731) had been settled in Chigwell for twenty-one years and there were no reasons for him to take up his roots and move to Roehampton. He, therefore, leased the House to Bartholomew Clarke, a merchant, who occupied it. In 1724, having wide interests in many parts of the country (he was Member of Parliament for among other places Weatherby and Old Sarum) and no close family ties left in Roehampton, he disposed of his copyhold estate, including the House and land, to Bartholomew Clarke who already had a lease of the House and was living there. Thus ended the Harvey connection with Roehampton.

#### *The Village of Roehampton*

The question to be answered is: Where in Roehampton was the House?\*

A word about Roehampton, a modern sketch map of which is shown in Fig. 1, in relation to the present inquiry is necessary.

Immediate interest starts in 1627, the year in which Charles I granted the northern portion of the Manor of Wimbledon, then called Roehampton Park, to Sir Richard Weston who, about 1630, built a house called Roehampton Great House or Chief House in Roehampton. In 1633 Weston was created Earl of Portland and died in 1635, being succeeded by his son, Jerome, the second earl, who decided to sell the property. As a result, Roehampton Great House, with most of the land, passed to Sir Abraham Dawes and eventually to his son, Sir Thomas Dawes, whose statue is to be seen in Putney Parish Church. About this time, however, some of the land was alienated and it is likely that brother Eliab (1588–1661) was one of the first purchasers of land in this area. About 1650, Sir Thomas Dawes let the property and later sold it to Christian, Dowager Countess of Devonshire, in whose family it remained until about 1689.

After the Devonshire family the property was held at different times up to the early part of the nineteenth century by Sir Jeffrey Jeffries, Joshua Bagnall, Mr. Fordyce, who was a banker, Thomas Parker, Sir Joshua Vanneck, Mr. Fitzherbert, and William Gosling, also a banker.

\* This section is based on the following works: Lysons, D., *The Environs of London*. London 1792–6; Brayley, E. W., *History of Surrey*. Revised and edited by E. Walford, III, London, 1878–81; *Victoria History of Surrey*, IV, London, 1912; Manning, D. and Bray, W., *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey*, III, London, 1814.

*Harvey: The Scene of his Last Years and Hours*

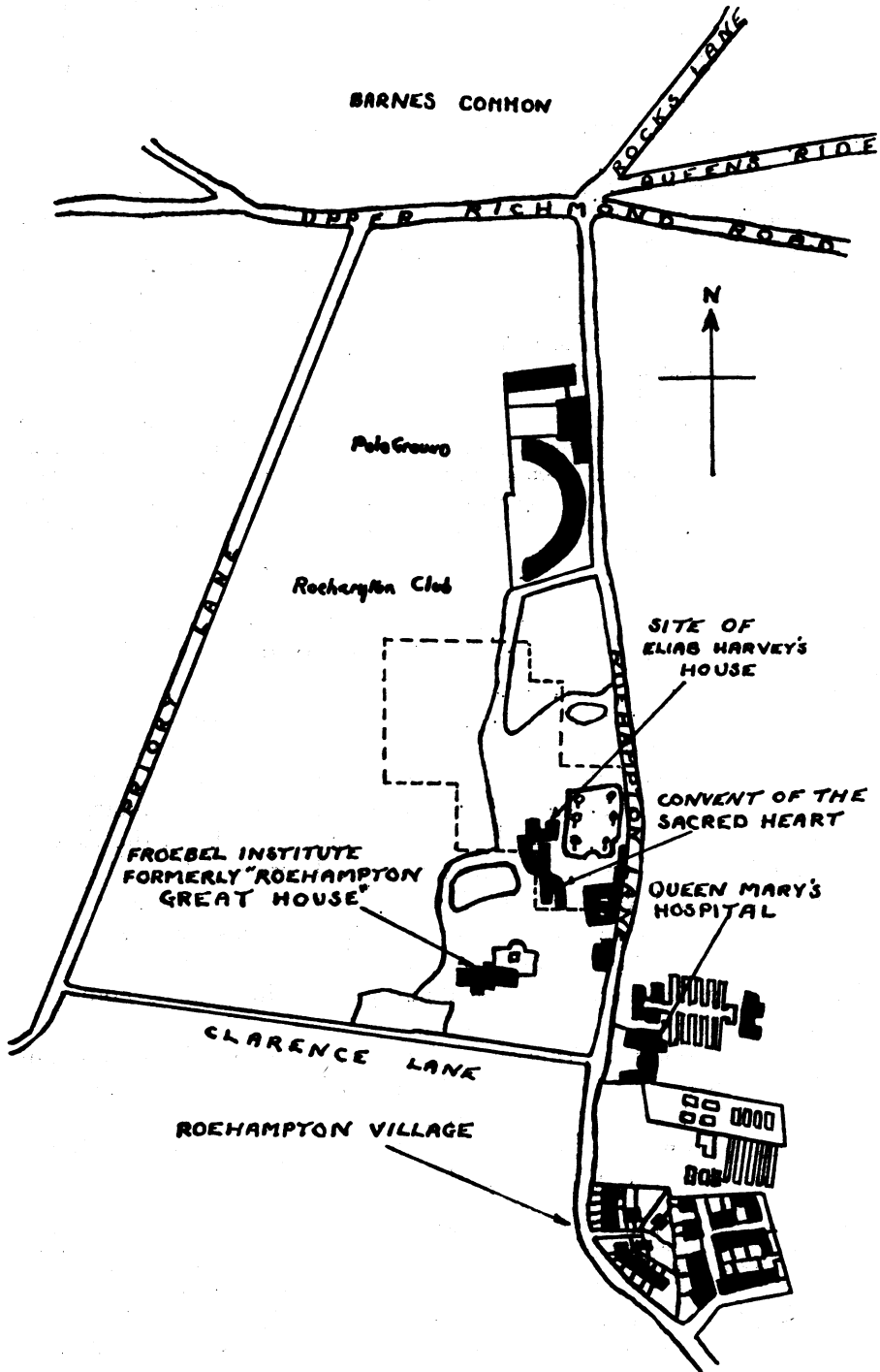


Fig. 1.  
Sketch map of present-day Roehampton  
showing site of Eliab Harvey's house



Since Roehampton Great House is an important landmark and figures quite prominently in this paper, it is necessary to know where it was situated. Competent opinion considers the house was on the site now occupied by the Froebel Institute in Roehampton Lane\* and this is confirmed by the following which emerges incidentally to the main subject of this paper.

- (a) The property was situated in Roehampton Lane for Phillips,† writing in 1817, describes ‘the superb mansion of Mr. Gosling’ in Roehampton Lane; Gosling, as stated earlier being one of the later owners of the property.
- (b) A copy of a plan was found in the Surrey Records Office of ‘Putney Parish and parts of the parishes of Wimbledon and Mortlake’ by John Corris, dated 1787 (Fig. 2).‡ This plan shows a property on the west side of Roehampton Lane described as ‘Mr. Vanneck’s’. It is known that a man named Vanneck obtained the property from Thomas Parker who sold it about that date. ‘Mr. Vanneck’s’ occupies the same position as does the Froebel Institute today.
- (c) The historians quoted earlier refer to a chapel in the grounds of Roehampton Great House which was consecrated in 1632 by Archbishop Laud. This chapel, according to the historians, was pulled down in 1777 by Thomas Parker (the then owner) who built another 100 yards from the house itself. Corris’s plan shows such a chapel just about this distance away from the house, thereby confirming that ‘Mr. Vanneck’s’ was in fact Roehampton Great House.

There is then little doubt that Roehampton Great House and grounds was situated in the same position as the Froebel Institute occupies today, in Roehampton Lane.

As the years passed, the land was parcelled and other great houses were built, some of which still stand. The eastern part of the estate became known as Putney Park and was so described up to recent times, Putney Park Lane being still in existence. It is not easy to define geographically the boundaries of what was and is Roehampton, which is now a separate parish; in the time of the Harvey family, it was in the parish of Putney. There was little change up to the end of the First World War when a large municipal housing estate was built and private housing was also developed. In the last five years extensive building has taken place in and around Roehampton although the village itself still remains relatively unchanged and people still speak of ‘going into the village’.

The important points bearing on this inquiry are the situation of Roehampton Great House on the west side of Roehampton Lane, and Roehampton Lane itself, both of which are important landmarks; and the occupants of Roehampton Great House who will be mentioned in this inquiry, namely, the Devonshire family, Thomas Parker, Vanneck and Gosling.

\* Miss A. K. Davies, M.A., Lecturer in History at the Froebel Institute, Roehampton, who has studied this question quite independently assures me that there can be no reasonable doubt that Roehampton Great House was situated on the site now occupied by the Froebel Institute.

† Phillips, Sir Richard, *A Morning’s Walk from London to Kew*. London, 1817.

‡ The owner of the original plan is Earl Spencer of Althorp who very willingly permitted it to be photographed and most kindly brought it himself from Northampton to the British Museum for this purpose. We are grateful to Lord Spencer for his kind co-operation in this matter and also for his permission to publish the plan.

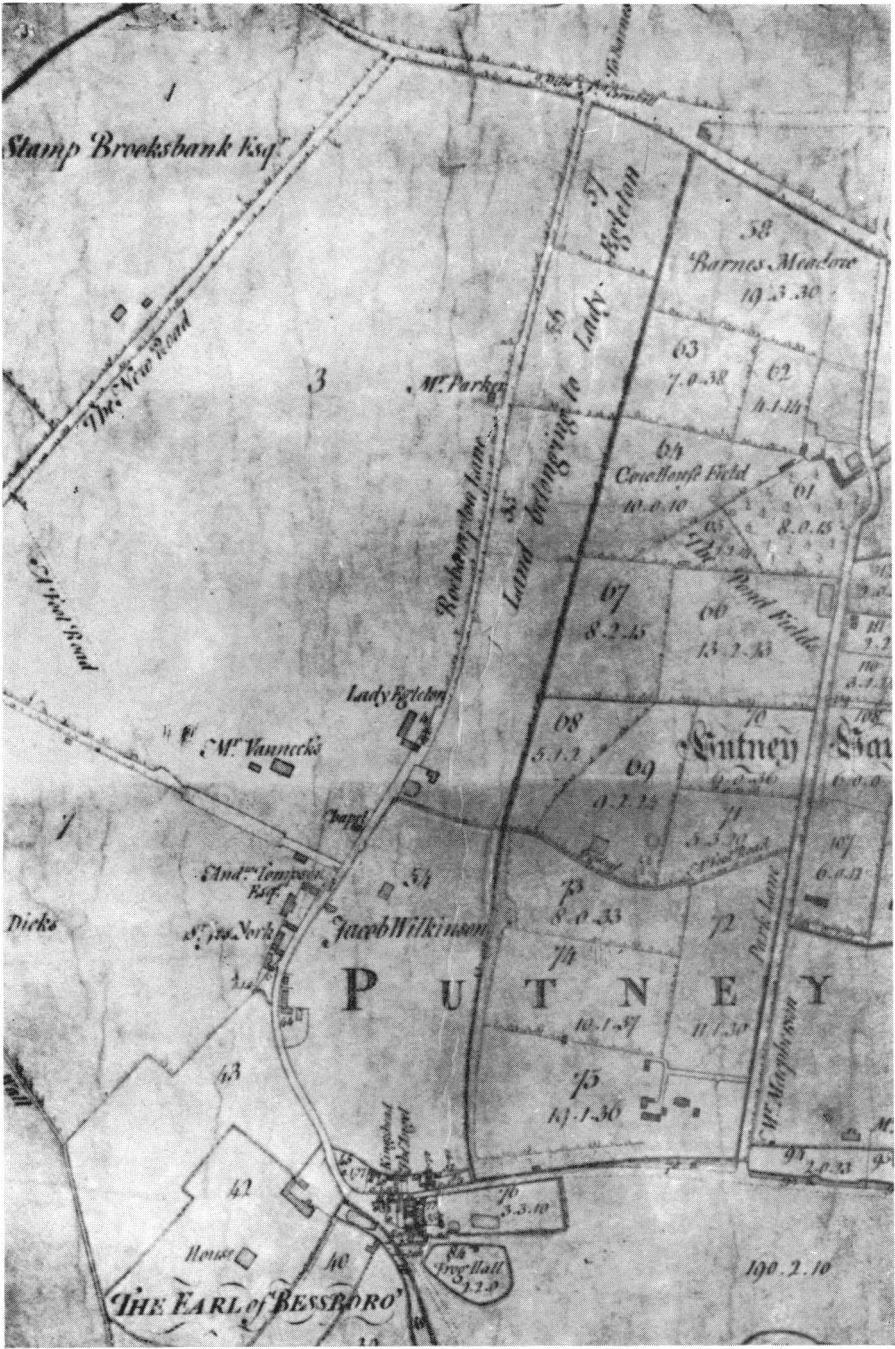


Fig. 2.  
Copy of John Corris's plan of 1787



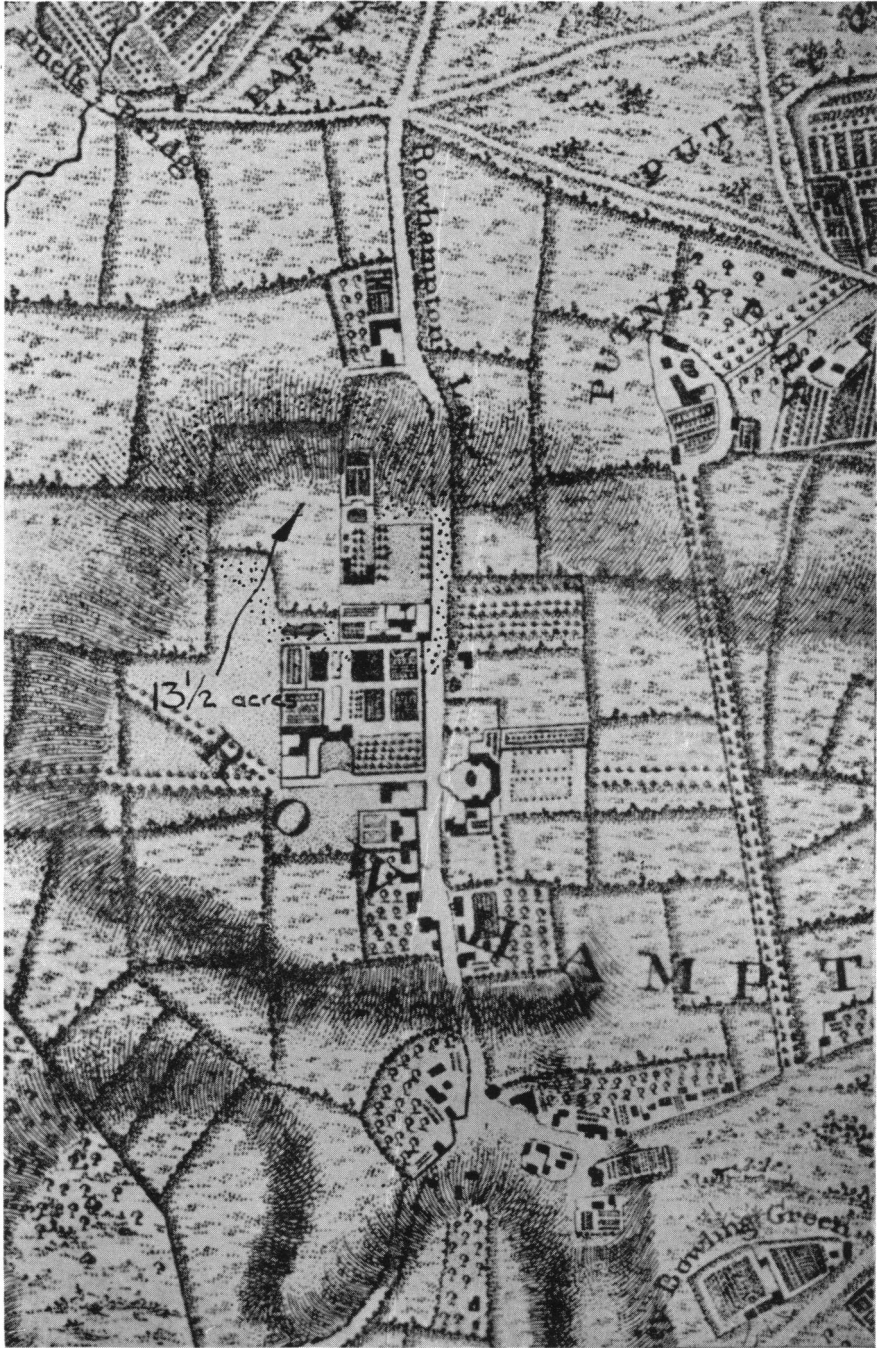


Fig. 3.  
Copy of John Rocque's plan of 1741-5

*The Site of the House in Roehampton*

As a first step towards finding the site of the House, a few preliminary castings were made but the search really started in the Surrey Records Office at Kingston.\*

*The Parker Abstract of Title*

A search of the catalogues in the Surrey Records Office revealed two references to a William Harvey. These were found in an 'Abstract of Mr. Parker's Title to an estate in Roehampton, Surrey' prepared in 1787.

This Abstract did two things. Firstly, it showed that in 1676 there had been a transaction involving the lease of land which had been carried out by a William Harvey and secondly, it referred to a kitchen garden of a William Harvey. On the assumption that where there is a kitchen garden there ought also to be a house, it seemed that a house occupied by a William Harvey could not have been far away from Roehampton Great House at that period, that is in 1676.

The Parker Abstract refers to a 'piece of ground . . . adjoining to the garden wall belonging to the said capital messe and abutting south on the kitchen garden of William Harvey Esq.' The words 'abutting south on' were not absolutely clear; they were, in fact, equivocal, a point discussed more fully later. However, the most obvious meaning seemed to be the literal one, that is to say, that this piece of ground abutted on the kitchen garden and south of that garden. That would put William Harvey's kitchen garden to the north of the piece of ground and also of Roehampton Great House since the ground in question adjoined the garden wall of that house but at this distance of time it is quite impossible to identify such small parcels of land. The important point was that William Harvey's garden and his house, if there was a house, appeared to lie to the north of Roehampton Great House.

Corris's plan (Fig. 2) which showed 'Mr. Vanneck's' showed also to the north of Mr. Vanneck's (i.e. of Roehampton Great House) a house labelled 'Lady Egleton' and on the other side of Roehampton Lane was shown a strip of land described as belonging to Lady Egleton. If Corris's plan is compared with a modern map of Roehampton (Fig. 1), it will be seen that 'Lady Egleton' occupied roughly about the same situation as does the Convent of the Sacred Heart today. At this point it is interesting to refer to the earliest large scale map of the area, that by John Rocque,† which shows Roehampton as it was in 1741-5 (Fig. 3). Rocque's map shows, on the same site as is now occupied by the Convent of the Sacred Heart, a substantial house and grounds lying north of another even more substantial house which, from its situation, is clearly Roehampton Great House. Other houses of interest in the area are also shown.

\* I am greatly indebted to Mr. E. V. Corbett, Borough Librarian of Wandsworth, for advice and help and especially to Mrs. J. E. Walford, at the time Reference Librarian on Mr. Corbett's staff, who first found the clues in Kingston on which the subsequent work was based.

† Inquiries at the British Museum and of a well-known firm dealing in ancient maps confirms that no earlier map of this area is known although a survey of the Manor of Wimbledon of about 1617 is thought to exist among the Manorial Rolls.

*The Convent Deeds*

The next step was to approach the authorities of the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Roehampton Lane.\* There was no known connection with the Harvey family but the Deeds relating to the property, which I shall call the 'Convent Deeds', were obtained and placed at my disposal and yielded much interesting information.

1. William Harvey's (great-nephew William (1663–1731)) Deed of Surrender which I have called 'the Harvey Surrender', refers to various parcels of land which it describes as being held of the Lord of the Manor of Wimbledon by five separate copies of Court Roll. It is, in fact, possible to separate the lands and properties referred to in this Surrender Deed into five separate lots but whether or not they correspond with the five copies of Court Roll is uncertain. In analysing this Deed, however, I have separated these five lots to facilitate description and the deductions to be drawn from them, although there is no such separation in the Deed itself.

*Lot 1.* This describes one customary messe or mansion house together with certain pastures of an acreage of 14 acres 'more or less' formerly in the tenure or occupation of Eliab Harvey, merchant. In the same lot is another messuage or tenement but not, be it noted, described as a mansion house, together with the appurtenances and pastures attached and also one other messuage with cottages and appurtenances. No reference is made as to where these properties lie.

*Lot 2* refers to a close or pasture of arable land called 'Dock Furlong' about 5 acres in area. This is the key to an understanding of where the properties described in the Deed of Surrender are situated.

*Lot 3* describes various properties as abutting on the south part on Dock Furlong (that is to say, they must have been to the north of Dock Furlong close). It is then further described as abutting on the north on Barnes Common, on the east on Putney Park and on the west on the highway leading from Roehampton to Barnes, that is to say, on Roehampton Lane. It is quite clear that this particular lot was situated to the east of Roehampton Lane and to the south of what we now know as Upper Richmond Road.

*Lot 4.* Here are described properties lying together between Putney Park and the King's Highway (Roehampton Lane) and abutting on the east part upon Putney Park, on the west part on the King's Highway and on the north part upon Dock Furlong (that is, it is south of Dock Furlong), and in the south upon several cottages on Roehampton Common (which is now Putney Heath). *Lot 4* constitutes the remainder of the land lying immediately to the east of Roehampton Lane.

*Lot 5.* It is not possible definitely to demarcate the land in this lot, some of which is as far north as the River Thames. It does not seem to have any bearing on the immediate problem.

The three lots of land arbitrarily numbered 2, 3 and 4, together take up all the area immediately to the east of Roehampton Lane and extending from what is now Upper Richmond Road in the north to what is now Putney Heath in the south and all the land in that area has been accounted for.

It follows that the property and land described in *Lot 1*, including the mansion house formerly occupied by Eliab Harvey, merchant, could not have been on the east side of Roehampton Lane.

2. Further Abstracts of Title relating to this property provide proof and confirmation that the House was on the west side of Roehampton Lane. They also bring to light the sad but important fact that in May 1796 only the remains of the mansion house were to be seen for on 4 May 1796 it had been 'lately burnt down'.

\* It is a pleasure to acknowledge most gratefully the help received from the authorities of the Convent of the Sacred Heart and particularly from a member of the community, Mother H. Davidson, herself a historian of no mean order, who took an active interest in studying the deeds and who was a very great help through her local historical knowledge.



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3. It is clear from the foregoing that the House was situated on the west side of Roehampton Lane. It is now necessary to site the House more exactly and to relate it specifically to brother Eliab (1588–1661) as the last surviving brother of Harvey.

- (i) The original clue on which much of this paper depends was the reference in the Parker Abstract of Title to the piece of ground abutting south on the kitchen garden of William Harvey. This piece of ground adjoined the garden wall of Roehampton Great House (that is, the 'said capital messe'). As indicated earlier, we assumed that where there is a kitchen garden, there also is usually a house so that a house occupied by a William Harvey was clearly not far away from Roehampton Great House. It follows also, depending on the interpretation placed on the phrase 'abutting south on' that William Harvey's kitchen garden and, therefore, his house, was either immediately to the north or south of Roehampton Great House which becomes an important land mark. It is also well at this stage to emphasize that the William Harvey referred to in the Parker Abstract is not, of course, great-nephew William (1663–1731) of the Harvey Surrender, who in 1676 was only a boy of thirteen years but nephew William (1640–1719) who was aged thirty-six years. There are good reasons for thinking that nephew William (1640–1719) was, in fact, living in his father's house at the time, probably on lease from his brother. There is no doubt that nephew William (1640–1719) was a Roehampton man born and bred who lived in Roehampton and there is a reference in the Harvey Surrender to his having formerly had the tenure or occupation of premises, probably somewhere on the east side of Roehampton Lane.
- (ii) The interpretation which we placed on the phrase 'abutting south on' was that the piece of land in question abutted on the south side of the kitchen garden, i.e. that the piece of land projected to the south from the kitchen garden. Consequently, the kitchen garden was to the north of the piece of land and hence of the garden wall of Roehampton Great House. In other words, William Harvey's house and garden was to the north of Roehampton Great House. This led us, as already described, to the Convent of the Sacred Heart where, in the deeds and documents relating to that property, specific references were found to brother Eliab's (1588–1661) mansion house. This might, of itself, be enough to suggest, *prima facie*, that the House was on the site now occupied by the Convent of the Sacred Heart.
- (iii) It is evident from the description given in his will, that brother Eliab's (1588–1661) 'great message' was a large and substantial house with outhouses, stables, yards and gardens. The description of the 'Mansion House' given in the Harvey Surrender confirms that it was a substantial property and, in addition, that there was adjoining in the north and west pastures to a total area of 14 acres 'more or less'.

We also know from the Abstracts of Title that at a later date there was a piece of land on the west side of Roehampton Lane, between Roehampton Lane and the east part of the land formerly occupied by Eliab Harvey (1588–1661) and that this piece of land was not part of the Harvey estate.

Reference to Rocque's map of 1741–5 (Fig. 3), shows a house and grounds lying north of Roehampton Great House and corresponding in almost every particular with this description. It shows, for instance, a substantial residence with outbuildings and gardens at the back of the house, that is to say, to the south, with a formal garden in the front to the north, and in the north-west an area of pasture land calculated from the map to be about  $13\frac{1}{2}$  acres. There is a piece of land also shown between Roehampton Lane and the east part of the pastures comprising the property, which is clearly outside and not included in the boundary of the property as such. The similarity between the land and property shown on Rocque's map and the picture of the property obtained from the various deeds is very striking. Rocque's map, it is true, shows the area as it was in 1741–5, some 100 years after Harvey's day. The detailed lay-out of the gardens may well have changed in that period but a house such as this would have been a well-built structure and, save for some calamity, would have lasted for 100 years or more. The



suggestion is clear that the House was on the site north of Roehampton Great House which is now occupied by the Convent of the Sacred Heart and is, in fact, actually shown on Rocque's map of 1741–5.

- (iv) If instead of interpreting 'abutting south on' in the sense that the piece of ground in question projected to the southwards of the kitchen garden, we had interpreted it to mean that the piece of land terminated *to the southwards* at the kitchen garden, the kitchen garden would have been to the south of Roehampton Great House. Is this interpretation intelligible in the light of the facts?:
- (a) It is known that the House was surrounded in the north and west by at least 14 acres of pasture. If the House and grounds were to the south of Roehampton Great House, there must have been an extensive expanse of field and pasture between the two houses but we know that the kitchen garden of William Harvey's house was near the garden wall of Roehampton Great House. Clearly, under these conditions, William Harvey's kitchen garden would be separated from its house by a considerable expanse of field and pasture amounting in all to 14 acres and entailing, it can be calculated, a walk of 300 yards to reach it. It is hardly conceivable that the kitchen garden would have been so far separated from its house and accordingly it is difficult to believe that the house was, in fact, in this position.
- (b) A mansion house such as brother Eliab (1588–1661) built about 1635 to 1640 would, as already indicated, certainly have been standing in 1741–5 and would presumably have appeared on Rocque's map. If the House were to the south of Roehampton Great House, it would surely have been shown in that position. Rocque's map shows a number of houses lying south of Roehampton Great House but they are comparatively small houses and there is nothing to suggest the description of the house as we know it from the various deeds.

It is concluded, therefore, that on the known facts, it would be inconsistent to suggest that the House was situated to the southwards of Roehampton Great House.

4. Amongst the Convent Deeds is an 'Abstract of Title of James Harwick Oughton to certain freehold, copyhold and leasehold premises at Roehampton' which was prepared in 1847. This Abstract contains a Schedule setting out the holders of the estate from the date of the Harvey Surrender up to the time of James Harwick Oughton and the various legal processes by which the land changed hands. Historically, it provides very useful supporting evidence of the exact site of the House. Since I am not concerned primarily with the legal aspects of the problem nor competent to deal with them, I shall ignore the exact sequence of the holders of the property and concentrate on three holders mentioned in the Schedule about whom there is independent evidence that they held the land:

- (i) The Schedule begins by quoting the Harvey Surrender of 1724 and the subsequent entry in the Manorial Court Rolls of the transfer of the copyhold estate. This Surrender Deed has already been carefully studied and there can be no doubt that in 1724 the Harvey estate consisted of extensive lands on the east side of Roehampton Lane and a Mansion House and grounds on the west side of Roehampton Lane, the exact site of which is not stated.
- (ii) The Schedule refers to Lady Egleton being in possession of the estate up to 1787. John Corris's plan of 1787 (Fig. 2) shows land belonging to Lady Egleton on the east side of Roehampton Lane practically but not absolutely corresponding to that known from the Harvey Surrender to have been held by great-nephew William (1663–1731). The plan also shows, although not to scale, a house on the west side of Roehampton Lane, north of Roehampton Great House, as being Lady Egleton's. There is a reference also in Lyson's *Environs of London* to a tree being blown down in Lady Egleton's in Roehampton Lane in 1780 during a big hurricane.
- (iii) In the Schedule, Benjamin Goldsmid and family are shown as holding the estate up to 1814. The Goldsmids were a well-known family in the financial world of that time and

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are mentioned in Phillips' *A Morning's Walk from London to Kew* (1817), in which various mansions in Roehampton Lane are described and on p. 178 is the following: 'and further north is the splendid mansion of the late Benjamin Goldsmid since become the property of Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough'.

There is a description of the house and grounds and then the following:

'but the object which more particularly called to mind the unbounded wealth of its former proprietor is a subterraneous way to the kitchen garden and lands on the opposite side of the road'.

This subterranean way is still in existence and can be seen by a visit.

A print of 1804 in the possession of the Wandsworth Central Library shows Goldsmid's house. I have been able to compare this with an aerial photograph of the property taken before the bombing of 1940. The photograph shows a house apparently identical with the house portrayed in the 1804 print. There can be no doubt that the Goldsmid house of 1804 and the house destroyed by a bomb in 1940 were one and the same.

- (iv) At the present time, the Convent of the Sacred Heart holds property consisting of land to the east of Roehampton Lane, part of which was sold quite recently to the London County Council for building purposes; and to the west side of Roehampton Lane immediately to the north of the Froebel Institute, comprising extensive buildings, lawns and playing fields. A subterranean way connects the two parts of the property underneath the roadway.

The position then is this. Although the land has inevitably undergone parcelling and division over the years, the Harvey estate of 1724 mentioned in the Schedule can be recognized and identified at later periods from sources quite independent of the Schedule, thus:

- (a) The Schedule refers to William Harvey (great-nephew William (1663–1731)) being the owner of the property in 1724 and it is already known from a study of the Harvey Surrender that he held the land to the east of Roehampton Lane and the Mansion House and grounds to the west of Roehampton Lane, the exact site of which is not stated.
- (b) The Schedule indicates that Lady Eggleton possessed the estate in 1787 and it is confirmed from John Corris's plan that the estate consisted of land to the east of Roehampton Lane and a house on the west of Roehampton Lane immediately to the north of Roehampton Great House.
- (c) The Schedule indicates that in 1814 Benjamin Goldsmid held the property and from contemporary sources it is confirmed that this was so and that it consisted of land on the east side of Roehampton Lane and a house and property on the west side of Roehampton Lane to the north of Roehampton Great House.
- (d) At the present time, the Convent of the Sacred Heart possesses the property in this position consisting of land to the east of Roehampton Lane and buildings and playing fields to the west of Roehampton Lane immediately to the north of the Froebel Institute, which is situated where Roehampton Great House formerly stood.

Clearly then, this estate can be recognized at four different periods from 1724 to the present day and the identity of the property cannot be in doubt. If we ignore the land on the east side of Roehampton Lane, it is concluded that the property to the west of Roehampton Lane was immediately to the north of Roehampton Great House (now the Froebel Institute). It follows that the 'messe or mansion house' owned by William Harvey (great-nephew William 1663–1731) in 1724, the site of which was not known, must have been immediately to the north of Roehampton Great House on the west side of Roehampton Lane and since it is known that this was the house formerly occupied by Eliab Harvey (brother Eliab (1588–1661)) and which great-nephew William (1663–1731) had inherited from his grandfather through his father, it follows that the house we are looking for was on the west side of Roehampton Lane immediately to the north of Roehampton Great House, (now the Froebel Institute).

*Conclusion*

The evidence presented here may be summarized thus:

1. From about 1673 to 1719 it is likely that the House was occupied by William Harvey (nephew William (1640–1719)) the physician's nephew who probably held it on lease from his eldest brother (nephew Eliab (1635–98)) who had inherited it from his father (brother Eliab (1588–1661)) brother of the physician.  
The Parker Abstract of Title indicates that in 1676 there was a house, occupied by a William Harvey, either immediately to the north or south of a property known as Roehampton Great House on the west side of Roehampton Lane in Roehampton. At the present time, the Froebel Institute is situated on the site which in former days was occupied by Roehampton Great House and immediately to the north of the Froebel Institute lies the property and land belonging to the Convent of the Sacred Heart.
2. The deeds relating to the property owned since 1850 by the Convent of the Sacred Heart (the Convent Deeds) reveal many references to a house 'formerly occupied by Eliab Harvey, Merchant'.
3. The Harvey Surrender, the deed by which the Harvey family estates in Roehampton were finally relinquished in 1724, shows that the House could not have been on the east side of Roehampton Lane.
4. Other documents amongst the Convent Deeds show that the House was unquestionably situated on the west side of Roehampton Lane and that it was burnt down about 1796.
5. An examination of the evidence makes it practically certain that the House could not have been to the south of Roehampton Great House.
6. The description of the House and its grounds as obtained from the will of Eliab Harvey (brother Eliab (1588–1661)) the Harvey Surrender and other deeds corresponds closely with the property shown on John Rocque's map of 1741–5 on the west side of Roehampton Lane in a position to the north of Roehampton Great House in the same situation as is today occupied by the Convent of the Sacred Heart.
7. One of the deeds examined contains a list of the holders of the property to which it relates. In the case of three of the holders, namely, William Harvey (great-nephew William (1663–1731)), Lady Egleton and Benjamin Goldsmid, there is independent evidence that they held the property which can thus be identified at three separate periods, namely, 1724, 1787, and 1814. This estate, clearly one and the same, can also be identified with the property as it exists today which is owned by the Convent of the Sacred Heart and which consists of buildings and land on the west side of Roehampton Lane north of the Froebel Institute and land on the east of Roehampton Lane. Since it is known, without any doubt, that the House itself was on the west side of Roehampton Lane, it follows that it must have been on the site now occupied by the buildings of the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

The evidence thus points unequivocally to the fact that the House and grounds were on the site occupied today by the Convent of the Sacred Heart on the west side of Roehampton Lane.

It is probable that the house shown on Rocque's map was the Harvey house. On this assumption, some of the features from Rocque's map have been superimposed to scale on a modern sketch-map of Roehampton which is shown in Fig. 1. It is clear that the house was a substantial mansion standing well back from the highway in extensive grounds. The grounds, of course, have undergone many changes but a large lawn or small field flanked by trees can be seen today and is clearly shown on Rocque's map adjacent to the mansion. There are solid reasons for thinking that it has altered but little since Harvey's

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time although the trees we see today, except for some well-grown oaks, are not the trees that Harvey saw. Nevertheless, it is not improbable that this field is one of those where Harvey 'used to walk out in a morning, combing his hair' as recounted in Heberden's letter.

#### *Summary*

1. It has traditionally been held that Harvey died in his brother Eliab's home in Roehampton and a review of the evidence confirms this.

2. The situation of this house was not known.

3. An investigation is described, based on the examination of old deeds and maps, which shows that the house where Harvey died was situated in Roehampton Lane, Roehampton, on the site now occupied by the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

4. The House was a substantial mansion standing in extensive grounds. It was burnt down about 1796 but parts of the grounds remain today, probably much as they were in the mid-seventeenth century. They may provide a present-day link with Harvey and will be described more fully in a later paper.

#### *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

Mr. A. Dickson Wright, lately President of the Harveian Society, first suggested this work and I am grateful to him for his interest, for reading the draft of this paper and for making a number of valuable suggestions.

Mr. L. M. Payne, Librarian, Royal College of Physicians, has been a great help in making his wide knowledge of Harvey available to me and advising me on this paper.

Many other people have helped me in this work and I have tried to acknowledge my debt to them in the footnotes. I would like to thank also members of my staff who have assisted me, in preparing some of the maps (Mr. E. V. Roots), in transcribing the Deeds (Mrs. F. N. Hull) and in correcting the typescript (Mr. A. J. K. Green).