

Kings Bromley

Historians 2014

The Lucys and the Lanes Charlecote & Kings Bromley



The connection between the Lanes and the Lucys was made formal on 28th April 1788 when the Rev. John (Jack) Hammond Lucy of Charlecote married Maria Lane. Much of what we know about the relations between the Lanes and the Lucys comes from the writings of Mary Elizabeth Lucy (John Hammond Lucy's daughter-in-law) - her private diary (transcribed into 'Mistress of Charlecote' by Alice Fairfax Lucy, published in 1983), Charlecote & the Lucy's (by Alice Fairfax-Lucy), her journal and 'Grandmamma's Chapter of Accidents' her privately published book (all held at Charlecote library).

In 1786 the Rev. John Hammond had inherited Charlecote on the death of 'Bachelor George' Lucy. George was the last male descendant in the direct line of the Lucys and was probably the most colourful of all the Lucys. When he inherited in 1744, at the age of thirty, George had no family debts to pay and enjoyed an income of about £3,000 a year, making him one of the country's most eligible men: however he was a confirmed bachelor. He did the grand tour of Europe from 1755 to 1758 and had his portrait painted in Rome by the fashionable painter Pompeo Batoni in 1758 - he thought it made him look fat. His fondness of clothes came second only to his hypochondria; he was a regular taker of the waters at Cheltenham and Bath - where in 1760 he had his portrait done by Gainsborough. Both the Batoni and the Gainsborough are on show at Charlecote; both the reproductions below, the Gainsborough on the left from 'your picture' and the Batoni on the right from the National Trust website. He of course left no direct heir.



John Hammond was the great great grandson of the third Sir Thomas Lucy and was also the grandson of George's aunt Alice Lucy. This relatively distant connection made John George's nearest relative and George first made him his secretary and then in 1783 made him his heir. There was an odd clause in the will 'all my pictures whatsoever, and also all my household goods, linen, and other furniture of my mansion called

Charlecote House are to continue and remain as heirlooms forever after in Charlecote House'. According to the diary of Mary Elizabeth Lucy, George left:

"his Estate and all his Personality with the exception of Legacies to the large amount of ten thousand pounds eight hundred and twenty pounds...He and his issue were authorised to take and use the surname of Lucy only, and bear the arms of Lucy, pursuant to an Indenture of Settlement made by his great uncle Dr. William Lucy bearing date 26th May 1722."

John Hammond was born on Jan 13th 1733 and was therefore 53 when he inherited. He was a third son, but his elder brothers had died at the ages of 23 and 3 respectively. When he was born the chances of his inheriting Charlecote must have been vanishingly small, but inherit he did. He was authorised to use the name of Lucy and bear the arms of Lucy: he was thereafter known as John Hammond Lucy. On 28th April 1788 he married Maria Lane, who, having been born in 1757 was 31, and therefore 24 years his junior.

According to Alice Fairfax Lewis, in 'Charlecote and the Lucys', Maria was dowerless, but "There had been an understanding between them for some time. Back in 1765 George Lucy had employed a London lawyer called Lane (*probably Maria's father, John Lane*) to examine the ancient will of Constance Kingsmill, to whose Hampshire estates, freed by the death of Sir Berkeley Lucy, he thought of laying a claim. There was some correspondence on the subject for a year or two. Nothing came of it but a friendship between John Hammond and John Lane... John Hammond had begun to pay his addresses to [Maria] when she was just turned twenty."

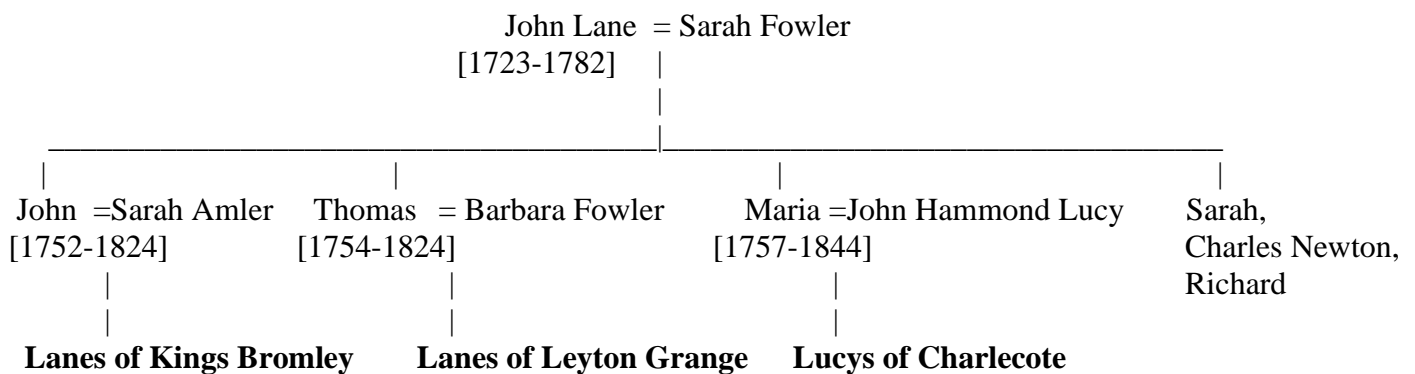
The paintings of Maria and John reproduced below by Artaud are undated; they hang in the Great Hall at Charlecote. The reproductions are taken from the National Trust website.





Alice Fairfax-Lucy wrote " ... the twin oval portraits hung high up in the darkest corner of the Great Hall for over a hundred years. They do not flatter; a port wine flush suffuses the bridegroom's cheeks. Maria, with her hair dressed up, twirls a sprig of myrtle. They look a homely, unfashionable pair amongst the arrogant Dahls, the thoughtful Jansens, the worldly Knellers."

Maria's father John Lane was the last Lane to be styled 'of Bentley', he having had to sell Bentley Hall. His children had to take professions: John was a Barrister, Thomas a solicitor and Clerk to the Goldsmith's company, Richard a captain in the Royal Navy and Newton Charles a cleric. In 1794 John & Thomas Lane unexpectedly inherited the greatest part of the fortune of Elizabeth Newton of Kings Bromley: this included the manor and 2000 acres in Kings Bromley Parish and two sugar plantations, Newtons and Seawells in Barbados.



Below, left, is an engraving of Maria's brother Thomas. Below, right, is a carving of her brother John. The engraving is by Turner of an oil painting by Sir William Beechey made to celebrate Thomas Lane's thirty years of service as Clerk to the Goldsmiths Company. The carving is on the north wall of the chancel aisle of All Saints Church, Kings Bromley.



Kings Bromley Historians have uncovered no representations of Maria's other brothers Richard or Charles Newton. Her sister Sarah died at the age of ten.

The main claim to fame of the Lanes was the fact that it was their ancestor Jane Lane who had helped the future Charles II escape from the battle of Worcester disguised as her servant. In early 1788 the family was probably at its lowest ebb; while the boys were progressing in their careers, Maria, who as we have seen, had long had an 'understanding' with John Hammond, must have been looking forward to life as an old maid. However she finally got John to propose. In a letter to his sister transcribed in Mary Elizabeth's diary he wrote:

Dear Sister,

Long before this you must have heard, or seen in the papers of my having at last married. May the providence of Heaven cause it to turn out propitious and fortunate. It was quite a 'sudden start', not that I can account why it should be so, only as we were before engaged. Maria thought it trifling to wait longer. We were married the 28th April and after staying a week at Charlecote set off for this place Tuesday May 6th. Our continuance at this large, wild, extravagant, bustling city will be but short, as we intend to return to Charlecote in a few days. We came up for a new carriage and a new service of Plate with the exchange of some of the very old pieces worn out at home, new China for dinner, desert and tea with many other articles etc.

your affectionate brother

John Lucy

Lothian's Hotel Albemarle St., London

The wedding took place at Treddington Church (near Charlecote) and was conducted by Maria's brother the Rev. Charles Newton Lane, who was staying at Tolton? Foston? where Miss Lane was staying with her dear friend Anne Parker. Only two people are recorded as being present- Anne Parker and Maria's brother John Lane. It is rather peculiar that, given his position, John's wedding should have been so rushed and insignificant - he did not even invite or tell his sister about it.

(The Lucy authoresses appear to be a little confused about their Lane relations. Mary Elizabeth Lucy seems to give Maria's father the seat of Kings Bromley, which only came into the family in 1794, twelve years after he died, and she calls Charles Newton Lane Maria's uncle and not her brother. Alice Fairfax Lucy gives Maria's father the seat of Kings Bentley.) Jane Lane and her nephew Thomas, the direct ancestor of the Lanes of Bentley, and therefore of Maria, were promised pensions from the grateful Charles II, which were only intermittently paid. Nevertheless the Lane family were allowed an 'augmentation' on their arms of the three lions of the king; the only commoners ever to receive this (inexpensive) honour.

In "Mansions and Country Seats of Staffordshire and Warwickshire", by Williams and Mallett, published 1894 it states of Kings Bromley Manor that:

"Over the mantel-piece is a portrait of Jane Lane, presented to her by Charles II, and in a glass case is the identical letter which the King wrote to her, acquainting her with the fact that he had given orders for the picture to be prepared. The following is the text of the letter:

Paris, March 20th, 1654

Mistris Lane, I hope you doe not believe that hiering from a personne, that I am so much beholding to, can be in the least degree troublesome to me that I am so sensible of the obligations I have to you, but on the contrary 'tis a very great satisfaction to me to hear from you, and for that which Mr. Boswell is pleased to tell you concerning me giving you good counsel in a letter, and making it publick in my bed-chamber is not the first lie that he hath made nor will it be the last, for I am certaine that there was anything spoken in the bedchamber in my hearing to any such purpose nor I am confident when I was not there, but I believe Mr. Boswell's end is to show he is frequent in my bedchamber, which is as true as the other. Your cousin will let you know that I have given orders for my picture; and if this or anything else I can shew the sense I have of this which I owe you, pray let me know it, and it shall be done by,

Your most assured

And constant friend

CHARLES R

Over the door is another portrait of Charles II which he presented to Jane Lane when he gave her the other picture. Each of these was painted by Sir Peter Lily, the great painter of those days"



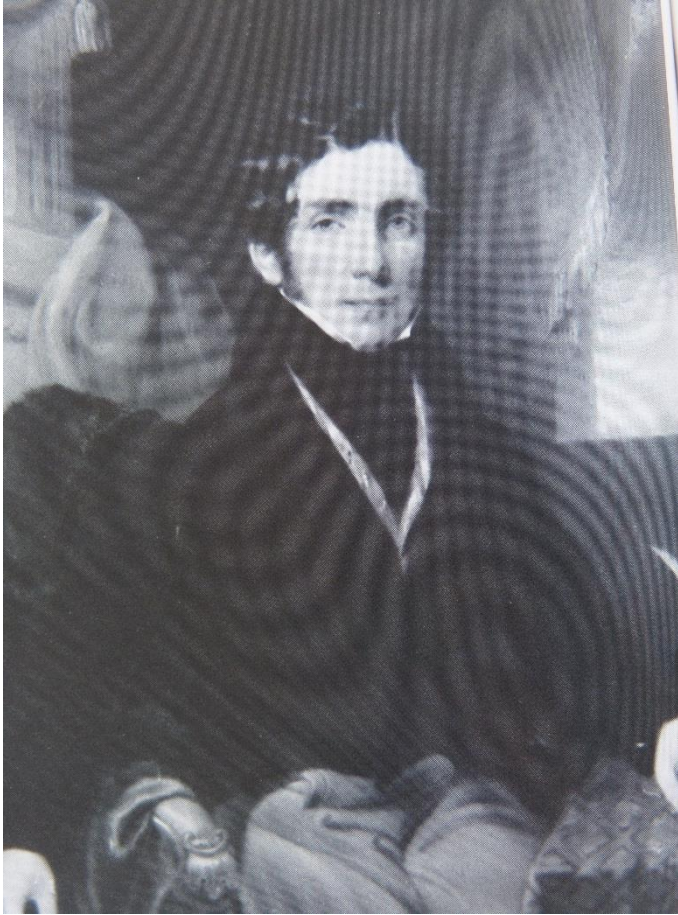
These two paintings are now held at Moseley Old Hall, together with others which once hung at Kings Bromley Hall.

Jane Lane was also given a watch by Charles II, which was passed down through the Lane family through the female line. According to Alice Fairfax Lucy, Maria's most prized possession was:

"... a watch , an orb of gold with upon the cover a portrait of Charles II set in diamonds and on the back a painted sun, moon, and stars. This and some Lane miniatures by Nicholas Hone, frames in garnets, she kept in her sitting room in George Lucy's kingwood *escritoire* inlaid with flowers and scrolls in tulipwood. [In 1850 the watch was stolen from Charlecote by two men, Bradshaw and Evans. They walked out from Birmingham, coolly carrying carpet bags , very early one morning and cut a pane of glass out of the west door. A shepherd seeing the shutters open, gave the alarm. The thieves were overconfident and were taken on their return to Birmingham, but not before many of the objects stolen had been melted down or passed on to a receiver ... When Bradshaw returned to England, after serving a sentence of transportation, he wrote to the Mistress of Charlecote hinting that King Charles' watch had been hidden near a railway bridge. She refused to see him or give him money and the watch, if it had escaped the melting pot, at least did not return to Charlecote. The Lane miniatures were found in fragments in a ditch, having been wrenched from their jewelled settings]."

In June 1789, Maria gave birth to a son, George, and in 1790 to another, John. John Hammond Lucy died in 1823, and in December of the same year George married Mary Elizabeth [1803-1890], daughter of Sir John Williams of Bodelwyddan, Bart.

These pictures of George and Mary Elizabeth, painted shortly before her marriage are taken from the book 'Mistress of Charlecote':



In Mary Elizabeth's diary, which was published in 1862, she wrote:

On the 20th of August George Lucy came to Bodelwyddan ... on a visit as the friend of my eldest brother and like Caleb in search of a wife. On the third day of his arrival he settled in his own mind that I was "The Mary" after his own heart & so he wooed and won me - and on the 2nd day of December we were married.

This is the official version. In her private journal, which was unpublished and forms the basis of "Mistress of Charlecote" by Alice Fairfax Lucy, she says there that she actually much preferred her cousins John Newton Lane and Thomas Leveson Lane of Kings Bromley (the sons of Maria's brother John) who were 23 and 21 respectively. When George and Mary Elizabeth met he was 34 and she was 20. She wrote:

"The following year (1822) dear Miggy (Mary Elizabeth's sister) went to London for the season...She enjoyed herself immensely. She confided in me that she thought she had made a conquest of Mr. George Lucy of Charlecote ... She had met with him a number of times in London and he had danced with her and promised to come in the autumn as Brother had invited him. They had become acquainted at a private tutor's.

On the 20th of August he did come bringing with him two lively cousins, Newton and Leveson Lane. I perfectly well remember Miggy and I standing on the balcony out of Mamma's room and seeing a carriage with four post horses drive up, and a smart valet jump off the box to ring the bell and open the carriage door. As the three young men alighted she pointed out which was Mr. Lucy and then flew down the stairs to welcome him, as Brother happened to be out. That evening after dinner we had music - harp, piano and singing - and then danced quadrilles until bedtime, and this was repeated every

evening (Sundays excepted) during the fortnight the three cousins stayed with us. Mr. Lucy always asked me to dance much oftener than any of my sisters. I was sorry for I knew it vexed Miggy and indeed it vexed myself for I preferred dancing with Newton or Leveson Lane who were much more lively and younger, only a few years older than I was.

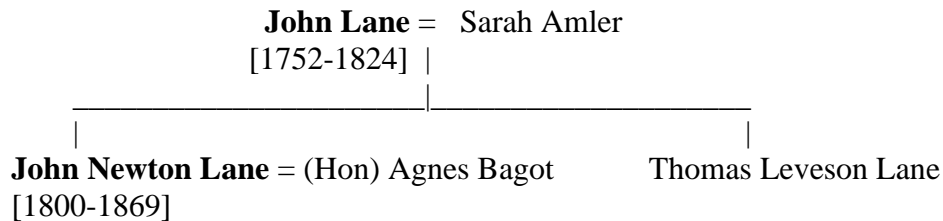
I shall now skip over the next six weeks to when my fate was sealed. On the 14th of October 1823 Mr. Lucy came again to Boddlewyddan and at the close of the week Papa sent for me and told me Mr. Lucy had asked for my hand. In an agony I fell to my knees and implored him to refuse, as I did not, *could not*, love him. I cried 'Oh why wont he have Miggy who does!'

However Papa would not listen to me and insisted on my submission, so my tears were in vain. I had been brought up to obey my parents in everything and, though I dearly loved Papa, I had always rather feared him. I felt I dared not disobey him so went into the library and there found Mr Lucy waiting to ask me to be his wife. I was so agitated that I never remembered what he said or what I said, all I knew was that he put a beautiful turquoise hoop on my finger and I rushed out of the room and flew upstairs to my own precious darling Mamma, telling her everything and weeping bitterly. She kissed me and comforted me again and again, and said all she could to comfort me, adding 'My sweet Mary, love *will come* when you know all Mr. Lucy's good qualities' - and it did come - but oh the sunshiny morning of youth!"

The following photograph, probably taken in the early 1850s shows an older version of the 'lively' young John Newton Lane who so impressed Mary Elizabeth:



In 1824, the year after Mary Elizabeth's marriage to George Lucy, John Lane of Kings Bromley died in a riding accident and John Newton Lane inherited at the age of 24. John Newton Lane had been born at Aston Hall when Heneage Legge owned it. In 1828 he married the Hon. Agnes Bagot, daughter of William, 2nd. Lord Bagot and Lady Louisa Legge, daughter of the Earl of Dartmouth (and therefore cousin of Heneage Legge). John and Agnes had fourteen children, 8 of whom survived to adulthood. The other 'lively' brother Thomas Leveson Lane pursued a career in the church and never married. However, he was not forgotten by Mary Elizabeth and George; he was vicar of Wasperton, a few miles north of Charlecote, from 1835 to 1883. Wasperton was in the gift of the Lucys.



Despite her initial misgivings Mary Elizabeth and George appear to have had a successful marriage. They had a son, William Fulke, born in 1824 and another, Henry Spencer, born in 1830. They also had several children who died in childhood, including a Herbert Almeric (born 1834), who was baptised by Rev. Leveson Lane.

In 1825, about 18 months after her marriage, Mary Elizabeth at last met her mother-in-law Maria Lucy, née Lane. She wrote in her journal (as transcribed by Alice Fairfax Lucy):

"Mrs Lucy, George's mother, came to stay: it was the first time we had met. She was a dear kind old lady, taking me to her heart from the moment she saw me, cherishing me as her own daughter, divesting herself of all her jewels, her pearls and her fine old lace to adorn her 'own dear darling' as she used to call me. She then lived at Bath, but eventually lived and died here (at Charlecote)."

Mary Elizabeth kept in touch with her husband's Lane cousins. Thomas and John Lane, Maria's brothers, both died in 1824. Thomas' son John inherited Leyton Grange. Mary Elizabeth wrote (as transcribed by Alice Fairfax Lucy):

"In May (1827) Brother, George and I left Charlecote for Leyton Grange, Mr John Lane's. We slept at Salt Hill and got to the Grange the following evening when there was a very gay ball to celebrate his pretty wife's coming of age; and there I met Mr Disraeli (the late Lord Beaconsfield) who no one could have foretold would have become Prime Minister and so great a man. I thought him in appearance an insignificant looking man and quite a fop with his black corkscrew curls and Jewish nose."

John Lane of Leyton Grange succeeded his father as Clerk to the Goldsmith's Company. His first wife died in 1818 and in 1825 he married Elizabeth, only daughter and heir of William Carter, Esq. John and Elizabeth lived at Leyton Grange only briefly until it was tenanted by a William Rhodes, brickmaker and grandfather of Cecil Rhodes, empiremaker, from 1829 to 1843. John and Elizabeth returned to live at Leyton Grange from 1848 until their deaths in 1852.

Maria Lucy died in 1844 at the age of 86. The Lanes and the Lucys had clearly kept in touch as John Newton Lane and Thomas Leveson Lane both attended the funeral at Charlecote. (Interestingly, Maria's last remaining sibling Newton Charles is not recorded as attending). After the funeral John Newton Lane wrote to Mary:

Kings Bromley Manor
My Dearest Mary,

November 21st 1843

I trust and hope by this time George is becoming less depressed and suffering less than when I saw him indeed his unaffected and genuine grief was very touching. The last sad ceremony was performed as well as it could be, so respectfully, so quietly. I think I never saw anything more mournfully beautiful than the scene as the coffin covered with its Black and White Pall was carried along the church avenue, the sun shining brightly and a few last autumn leaves falling around, with the Black figures, the Deer and the Trees, made a picture I never can forget.

John Newton Lane



The famous portrait above left of Mary Elizabeth, which features on the cover of "Mistress of Charlecote", and in the current National Trust brochure is by Richard Buckner and is taken from the National Trust website. In it she is 44, but still a beauty. The photograph above right, taken from the same source shows her at 63.

The Lanes continued to interact with the Lucys, as can be seen by their attendance at formal Lucy occasions:

The funeral of Mary Elizabeth's husband George Lucy in 1845 was attended by John Newton Lane and Thomas Leveson Lane. In 1847 The marriage of Mary Emily Lucy to Tom Fitz Hugh was attended by John Newton Lane, his wife and their children Sidney and Cecil, along with Thomas Leveson Lane and Mr. and Mrs Bracebridge (the heirs of Aston Hall) and Mr. & Mrs Barnard. John Newton Lane and Thomas also attended the funeral of William Fulke Lucy in 1848. The marriage of Mary's daughter Caroline to Capt Pawlett Lane (no relation) in 1852 was attended by John Newton Lane, Thomas Leveson Lane and John's children Sidney, Beatrice and Emily.

The youngest son of John Newton Lane Ronald Bertram Lane was born on 19th Feb. 1847 and christened 29th August 1847. His sponsors (godparents) were the Rev. John Lucy, his cousin, Rev. Charles Lane, his cousin, William Tomline, his cousin, The Lady Francis Finch and Emily Mary Lucy (now Mrs. Fitz Hugh), his cousin.

In 1859 records from Kings Bromley Hall show that Mrs. Lucy visited and slept in the Pink room on August 12th.

Mary Elizabeth Lucy died in 1889 at the age of 86. John Newton Lane had died in 1869 and Agnes Lane had died in 1885. Thomas Leveson Lane had died in 1883 and was buried at Wasperton church, which he had spent £4000 rebuilding in 1848. I would like to think that the 80 year old Mary Elizabeth attended his funeral.

Grandmamma's Chapter of Accidents

Mary Elizabeth seemed to be particularly accident prone. In 1869 she had a book printed privately for her grandchildren called 'Grandmamma's Chapter of Accidents' in which she humorously recounted some of them. Chapter 15 is called 'The Wasp'. She wrote:

On the 20th of September, 1850, I was stung for the first time by a wasp. Your dear Papa, my dear Carry, and I were on a visit to Kings Bromley, and we had all been spending the day at Ingestre, and Lord Shrewsbury and his daughters had taken us over the gardens, which were very beautiful, and no doubt this naughty wasp crept up my clothes there, for when I came home it was time to dress for dinner, and I was pulling off my things in a great hurry, when I felt something run into me, sharper than any needle. I rang the bell furiously, and up came Tizzard (now Mrs. Parsons), and found me dancing about the room, with a wasp just above my knee stinging away its hardest. She soon killed it, and ran off to the laundry to get what she called blue-bag, assuring me it would cure the pain directly; she was soon back, and covered the place with blue, and then the dinner bell rang, and I had to be dressed as quickly as possible, and fly downstairs.

I sat next to Lord Bagot, who was an old man, and always used to complain to me if he was sick or in pain, so I thought I would tell him what pain I was in, and he suggested many remedies, but none did me good. Then Mrs. Newton Lane said, "Why not try currant jelly ? it cures a burn, and I dare say it will cure a sting" ; so then I was covered with currant jelly as if I was going to be eaten up as venison; but that was of no use. The wasp had stung me on a vein and left his sting in. For three days my leg was so swollen I could hardly walk.

(It should be said that Anne Andrews, Ingestre Historian, writes of this account " .. in 1850 Lord Shrewsbury would not have been at Ingestre and had no daughters. The 18th Earl did have 4 daughters so either the date or the Shrewsbury title are wrong in 1850". Perhaps Mary Elizabeth's old memory was faulty.

In 1850, William 2nd Lord Bagot, and Mrs Agnes Newton Lane's brother, was 77; he died in 1856. This photograph of Agnes, Mrs Newton Lane, was probably taken in the early 1850's:



This document has been prepared by Allan Howard for Kings Bromley Historians, 1st October 2012, revised 6th August 2014. Thanks to the staff and helpers at Charlecote, especially Julie Griffiths, who made me feel so welcome and allowed me access to Mary Elizabeth's journals, diary and "Grandmamma's Chapter of Accidents". It has not been possible to locate the manuscript private journal from which Alice Fairfax Lucy extracted the information for "Mistress of Charlecote", but I will keep on trying to find it.

The photograph of Charlecote Hall on the frontispiece was taken by the author. The watercolour of Kings Bromley Hall was painted in 1877 by Susan Anne Lane, wife of John Henry Bagot Lane: John Newton Lane's son and successor. The hall was demolished in 1928 and the park turned into a gravel quarry.