

JAMES HARMER

1775/7 - 1853

James had Ingress Abbey built as his country seat.

But who was James Harmer?



This oil painting of James in Ingress Abbey was painted 1849/50 by T Brigstock and shows him in his old age. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1850. The window on the right is artistic licence! James is pointing with a pair of spectacles to a book page that says "..... of criminal code," James was a member of the Spectacle Makers Company even though by profession he was a lawyer. In the early 1820's James wanted to play a part in the politics of the city of London and in order to do so needed to be a Freeman of the City of London which required you to be member of one of the City Companies.

Lawyers had no such company, so on 31 March 1824 James purchased for £20 his membership of the Spectacle Makers Company and immediately obtained his Freedom of the City papers.

The candelabra to the left of James was presented to him by some 230 of his city friends at Ingress Abbey on Thursday 7 July 1842 to mark his retirement from the aldermanic gown in November 1840.

The painting was presented to Gravesend corporation by Charles Umfreville whose father had married James granddaughter Emma who had inherited Ingress Abbey from James.

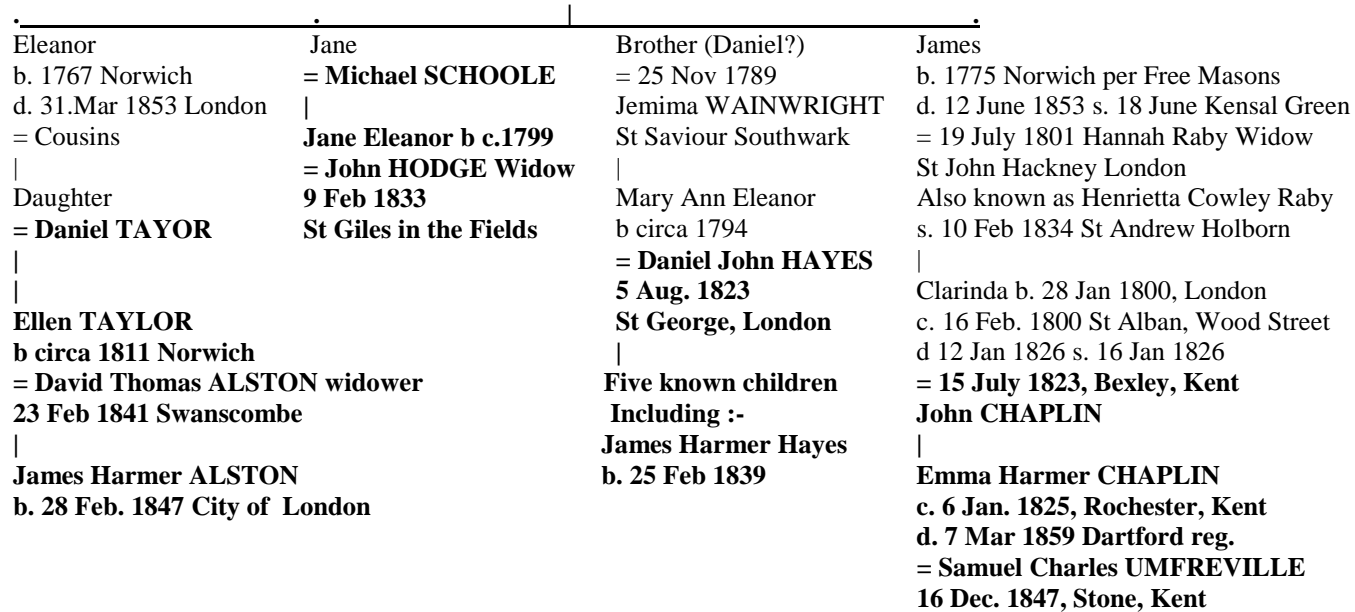
Ancestry and Family Tree

Most references to James's ancestry refer to his obituary printed in several newspapers of the time including his own, *The Weekly Dispatch* of Sunday 19 June 1853, which recorded that he was orphaned at 10, the son of a Spitalfields weaver. However it was only his father who died when he was ten as his mother Eleanor a widow was party to his "articles" to study law in November 1792. His father may have been a Spitalfields weaver but James himself on the 1851 census declares his place of birth as Norwich, Norfolk, also a centre for weaving and "Harmer" family territory. There is a possible baptism of a James Harmer the son of Daniel and Eleanor Harmer at St Stephens, Norwich, 6 August 1775 and though this doesn't fit in with his generally accepted age it does agree with his Masonic record. Piecing James's family tree together is quite difficult and relies on a wide range of records other than the traditional ones of baptism and marriage registers. The greatest puzzle is the birth of his daughter Clarinda and his marriage to Hannah/Henrietta Raby.

James's daughter Clarinda Harmer was born 28 January 1800 and baptised on the 16 February 1800 at Saint Albans, Wood-street, London the daughter of James Harmer and Henrietta his wife. However James didn't get married until 19 July 1801! The marriage register of St John Hackney records that James Harmer bachelor of this parish and Hannah Raby, widow were married in this church by banns! The *Times* death notices of 4 Feb 1834 records the death of ".....Henrietta Cowley Harmer, wife of James Harmer, Esq. sheriff and alderman....." and it was a Henrietta Cowley Talboys who married Philip Raby in 1798 so this is James's marriage 18 months after his daughter was born! To add further confusion in 1797 James was forced to transfer his articles from one firm of solicitors to another as he had "formed an attachment for a young lady, whom he afterwards married."

POSSIBLE JAMES HARMER FAMILY TREE

DANIEL HARMER = ELEANOR



This tree is based on information from a wide range of records, including baptism/marriage/burial registers, wills, newspapers, affidavits and information passed down the generations to current descendants.

Note. Clarinda Harmer born 28 January 1800 was almost certainly named after Clarinda Talboys who died aged 3 and was a younger sister of James's future wife, Henrietta Cowley Raby (nee Talboys).

TIME LINE FOR JAMES HARMER

1775/7	Born Norwich
1785 circa	Father dies
1792 - November	Binds himself to Samuel Godfrey for 5 years to train as a solicitor
1796 - April	Turned out of Samuel Godfrey's house for falling in love
1796 - 1797	Completes his legal training with Fletcher and Wright
1797 - 1799	Continues to work for Fletcher and Wright
1799 - 1832	Practices in his own name
1800 - January	His only child a daughter Clarinda born
1801 - July	Marries Henrietta Raby a widow
1803 - September	Appointed Lieutenant in the 2 nd regiment of the London Volunteer Infantry
1811 1815	Vestry clerk for St Mary's Staining
1819	Appears as an expert witness before a parliamentary Committee reviewing criminal law.
1824 - March	Purchases membership of the Spectacle Makers Company
1824 - March	Gains freedom of the City of London
1825 - December	Elected Common Councilman for the ward of Farringdon Without
1826 - January	Clarinda his only child dies
1831 - June/July	Purchase Ingress Park from the Admiralty
1832 - 1840's	Builds Ingress Abbey as his country seat - This is the first time "Abbey" is attached to the name of a building in Ingress park

1832 - August	Takes on three partners in his law firm so he can devote more time to civic life
1833 - February	Elected Alderman for the ward of Farringdon Without
1833 - September	Appointed sheriff of the City of London with Samuel Wilson
1834 - February	Henrietta his wife dies
1840 - April	He retires as a practicing lawyer
1842	The orangery
1840 - October	Fails to be elected Mayor although by long tradition as the next senior alderman below the chair his appointment should have been a formality. His ownership of the Weekly Dispatch published on a Sunday and regarded as "prostituted press in advocating a system of blasphemous infidelity, democratic plunder, and gross licentiousness, the direct tendency of which is to subvert the whole of our social structure, and to revolutionize the property, the laws, the morals, and the religion of the country" - The Bishop of London speaking in the house of Lords
1840 - November	Resigns the Aldermanic Gown and centres his life at Ingress Abbey
1853 - 27 April	James suffers an attack of the ague at Ingress Abbey and is moved to the country home of his friend and partner Adam Rivers Steele at Cricklewood
1853 - 12 June	James dies at Cricklewood
1853 - 18 June	James is buried in compartment no. 3 vault 9 in the catacomb beneath the Dissenters Chapel at Kensal Green Cemetery as per the instructions in his will of 1843 - "As regards my funeral I request that it may be as plain, unostentatious and inexpensive as possible and as I consider it profane and impious in man to assume that he can by any form or ceremony make the earth more holy than it is has been made by the Almighty I desire that my remains may not be interred in what is called consecrated grounds"

Apart from the various pictures we have of him it is possible to gain an impression of James from various newspaper reports.

As lawyer he was well known for successfully defending the criminal classes and often using points of law to win the case when the defendant was most probably guilty. He was so well known at the Old Bailey and many of the other London courts that it is thought that Charles Dickens based Mr Jaggers, the London Lawyer in Great Expectations on James. Dickens knew James quite well through the Newsvendors Benevolent Institution of which James was its first president and Dickens its second.

Not everyone who claimed to know James actually did:-

The prisoner [George Field] had stated to Chaloner, that he had lived four years in the employ of Mr Harmer, the solicitor, in Hatton-garden; this however, he now denied, having only said he knew Mr Harmer. Mr Alderman Cox then asked him to look round him, and see if Mr Harmer was there, and point him out. The prisoner accordingly surveyed the office, but was unable to discover Mr Harmer, although he was in attendance upon another business, and stood close to the Alderman. Mr Harmer (addressing the prisoner) – “Do you know Mr Harmer?” Prisoner – “Yes, Sir, he lives in Hatton-garden.” Mr Harmer – “Do you know his person? Should you know him if you saw him?” Prisoner – “Yes, sir.” Mr Harmer – “What sort of a man is he; is he young or old? Is he as old as I am?” Prisoner – “He is a middle-aged man – about as old as you are.” This good guess occasioned a loud laugh through the office, which was repeated on Mr Harmer replying, “You are right indeed; he is exactly as old as I am.” The Times 14 January 1820.

James not only practiced law in London as in 1807 he travelled to Stafford, Derbyshire with his key witness, the clown Joseph Grimaldi, to successfully defend a Mr Mackintosh.

His most famous court case took place in 1819 at Oldham where he attended the inquest of the Peterloo rioter John Lees. During the inquest James accused the Manchester Yeomanry of murder and his skill as a lawyer was so far beyond the ability of the coroner to deal with that after a couple of months the inquest was adjourned never to be reopened. The inquest and James role in it was featured in the channel four documentary "The Peterloo Masacre."

1821 saw James in Glasgow as the only English lawyer in the defence team at the trial of James Wilson for high treason.

Apart from his civic interests in the city of London already featured in the "Time Line" James appears to have taken an active interest in charities as apart from being president of the Newsvendors Institution he was also president of the Society for providing an asylum and relief for aged infirm Fishmongers and Poulterers and their wives. He was also chairman of the first meeting to set up the London General Institution for the Gratuitous Cure of Malignant Diseases- now known as The Royal Free Hospital. He also subscribed to very many other charities and good causes. He was initiated a mason in 1799 when he set up in practice in his own name. But was this philanthropy entirely to do good to others or was it part of his political agenda and did he have a need to be popular and seen to be at the centre of things? It is interesting to note that three of his nephews were given Harmer as one of the first names as was his granddaughter. Also a number of his city friends named their children Harmer and one even named his daughter Clarinda Harmer after James's deceased one and only child!

In 1841 James wrote a letter to his niece Fanny Talboys and the hand writing has been summarily examined by a professional graphologist who drew these initial conclusions about James character:-

Absolute organisation - shows someone who is very organised and tries to be very efficient but he may take on a bit too much.

He was very keen on socialising - quite an uncompromising character, you couldn't win an argument with him. He was highly argumentative and stubborn and would stick to his views very rigidly and express them in no uncertain terms.

Very loyal, as well, to what he believed in and had high morals.

Interestingly he seemed to be very generous but this was in fact a way of getting approval and attention it wasn't completely altruistic there was a tendency to need all this extra approval, he would display acts of generosity in order to get this.

Very diplomatic, critical, analytical - he had a real highly emotional response to life but he controlled it well with a dignified air except of course when he was in an argumentative mood - he was very fearful of disapproval so he was sensitive to personal criticism and this would trigger these uncompromising outbursts but generally very enthusiastic and very keen on people and a sociable person not in a sort of extravert way he would be quietly interested in meeting people and getting to know more and more people.

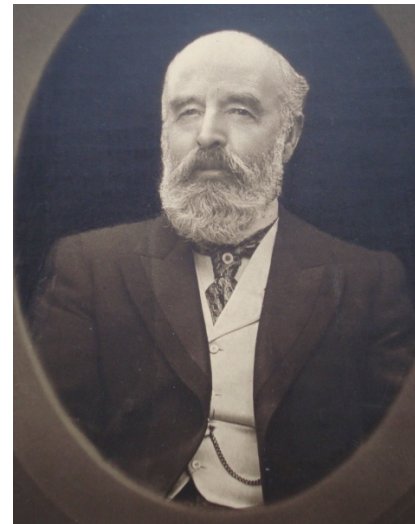
Portraits of James

There are at least six portraits of James and one that has yet to be located.

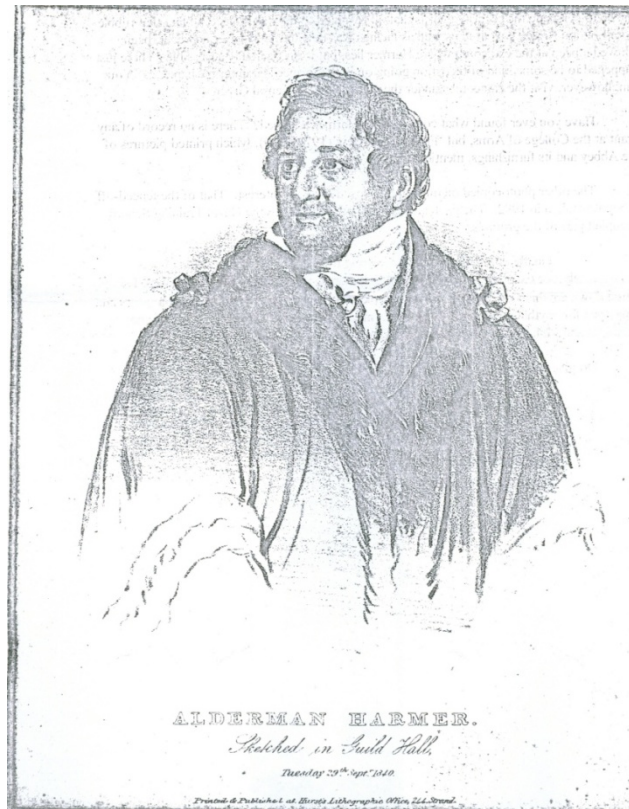
It is interesting to compare the one of James sitting in Ingress Abbey painted three years before he died which was commissioned by James and is full of significance and no doubt flatters him with the small painting below that shows a much older looking man, is this the real likeness? This painting was done by Daniel John Hayes who married James's niece and was an engraver. Interestingly Daniel named one of his children James Harmer in the belief that he would inherit Ingress Abbey and on the strength of that promise sent him to Paris to be educated. The only inheritance that the Hayes family got was an annuity of £50 per annum to Daniels wife, James's niece!



Alderman James Harmer



James Harmer Hayes - born 1839



This engraving shows James in his aldermanic gown and is the only dated portrait having been engraved at the Guildhall on Tuesday 29th September 1840 the first day of voting for the mayoralty of the City of London at which James lost though by long standing tradition the election should have been a formality.

Another picture of James Harmer can be found at :-

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?sText=harmer&search=ss&OOnly=true&firstRun=true&LinkID=mp53193>

INGRESS PARK

And Ingress Abbey the country seat built for James Harmer

TIME LINE FOR INGRESS PARK

- 1363 Edward III founds Dartford Priory and endows a farm called of Ingryce and the Ferry at Greenhithe on the Priory. The manor at this time was a farm or grange.
- 1386 Richard II grants the Manor and Estate of Ingress to the convent called the Order of Preachers, (part of Dartford Priory)
- 1530 Dartford Priory leases Ingress to Robert Grove
- 1537 Robert Meriel of Swanscombe leases a farm called Ingryce for an annual rent of £10 from Dartford Priory
- 1538 Henry VIII dissolves Dartford Priory and grants Ingryce Manor to John Bere. It is said that at the time of the dissolution the prioress cursed the property "that no male heir would live to inherit the estate." No one family has held the estate for long. In the nineteenth century, James Harmer's only child a daughter died 6 years before James owned the park and his granddaughter died 6 years after she inherited it!
- 1560 Anthony Weldon held the estate from Queen Elizabeth I
- 1562 Elizabeth I grants the ownership of Ingress Manor to John Bere and Edward Derbyshire, who immediately sold it to Jones
- 1620 A man named Whaley buys Ingress Estates and settles it on his relative Thomas Holloway
- 1620 -1648 Holloway leaves by his will to Mr Shires who lived there until he died in 1648. This is the first time the records mention a large house at Ingries.
- 1649 Captain Edward Brent buys Ingries and its "Mansion"

1689	Edward Brent son of Captain Brent mortgages the estate to John Smith
1710	Jonathan and Nathniel Smith sons of John Smith own it outright.
1710 – 1721	Jonathan Smith (sheriff of Kent in 1721) alters and rebuilds the front of the house.
1737	John Carmichael, earl of Hyndford buys the house, garden and two acres of land
1748	William Ponsonby, Viscount Duncannon, 2 nd Earl of Bessborough buys the house and sets about improving the grounds.
1760	John Calcraft buys the house and rebuilds it.
1763	Capability Brown landscapes the grounds
1799	The estate was sold to William Haverlock
1808	The Board of Admiralty own Ingress Park, William Haverlock continues to live there as tenant.
1812 – 1815	Parts of the mansion are demolished.
1820	The Commissioners of His majesty's woods, forests and land Revenues advertise the brickwork, stone work, staircases and timber and other fixtures and fitting from the house at Ingress park for sale.
1831 - 1832	James Harmer purchases Ingress Park from the Admiralty and builds Ingress Abbey, the first time "Abbey" is used in the name.
1853	James dies and his granddaughter Emma Umfreville inherits the estate
1894	Samuel Umfreville's trustees lease the state to the Holder brothers
1906	The trustees sell the estate to Wallpaper Manufacturers and Cement Company
1914 - 1918	Used as a military hospital
1920	House and estate sold to HMS Worcester a merchant shipping training college
1970	Ingress Abbey listed as a grade II
1995	Site acquired by Crest Nicholson
2001	The Harmer Family Association visit Ingress Abbey

2001/2002

Pandora International Ltd purchase Ingress Abbey for their headquarters

GRAND PARTY AT INGRESS ABBEY

On Thursday there was a very interesting party at the residence of J Harmer Esq. at Ingress Abbey Greenhithe, for the purpose of presenting to him a service of plate as an acknowledgement of the opinion entertained of his public services and the estimation in which his private character is held. It was the result of a subscription commenced, it may be remembered after the gentleman resigned the Aldermanic gown. The subscribers agreeable to the arrangement proceeded there in a new iron steamer (Matrimony), belonging to the Iron Steam-boat company. Starting from Blackfriars Bridge soon after ten o'clock and calling for the remainder of the company at Brunswick-wharf, Black-wall. About 200 gentlemen were present. The vessel having arrived at Ingress Abbey greeted Mr Harmer with salutes of cannon, and there was a most liberal salute in return.

The company having landed proceeded in procession to Mr Harmer's residence where they were received by the worthy host. For the reception of the company there had been prepared a large marquee on the lawn in front of Mr Harmer's delightful residence. There were arranged under it two oblong tables and one upper and cross table. They were most profusely covered with a cold collation, fruits, wines &c and between three and four o'clock about 230 gentlemen sat down to partake thereof. The appearance at such time was admirable and most animated.

Mr Harmer presided: on his right were Ald. Sir J Duke and Hooper; and on his left, Ald. T Wood and Johnson; and near him were crowds of his old city friends – Mr Galloway, Mr deputy Blackett, Mr R Taylor &c.

During dinner as well as afterwards the able band of the Royal Engineers performed a variety of excellent music. There was near them and about half-way down the marquee a stage under another marquee on

which the plate to be presented was arranged; and behind but towering above it a noble baron of beef, with a knight to carve the same and he was afterwards kept very fully occupied.The plate naturally attracted great attention. The centre piece consisted of a truly splendid and admirably designed candelabra, and was surrounded with four corner dishes and covers and two soup tureens the whole weighing about 1,000 ounces. The central piece deserves some particular description; it was formed of six massive branches, surmounted by a chased vase. The column was richly chased, decorated with the scanthus flower, the foliage displayed beautifully. The column was surrounded by three figures; the first representing Truth, with bible and mirror, the second Justice with sword and scales, and the third Liberty with memorable cup of liberty, the columns and figures resting on a triangular-shaped base, that bore on its three sides first the following inscription, boldly and neatly engraven:-

Presented to
JAMES HARMER ESQ.
With a service of Plate
by numerous Citizens and friends
on his retirement from the office of Alderman of London,
as a testimony of the high regard which his estimable qualities, both public and private,
have acquired for him during a long and useful life,
as an able, just and merciful magistrate,
a kind, sincere, and generous friend and neighbour,
a firm and disinterested patriot
the foe of every abuse
and the steady supporter of the rights of mankind,

On the second side of the plinth were the names of the committee. And on the third side Mr Harmer's armorial bearings with the motto "Labore et Honore". The whole was supported by three British lions. They and the oak branches were chased; the figures of Truth, Justice, and Liberty were frosted silver. The candelabra stood nearly three feet in height. The covers and tureen were beautifully finished with rich borders, and having on them Mr Harmer's armorial bearings. The appearance of the whole plate was most imposing and splendid, and it may not be out of place here to remark that, after the repast, the whole of it was removed and placed in front of Mr Harmer. Previous to the repast the Rev. Mr Knapp said grace, and after it the same Rev. Gentleman returned grateful acknowledgements.

The chairman (Mr Harmer), the tables having been partially cleared, but fresh supplies of wine placed on them, rose, he said, for the purpose of proposing the first toast among other falsehoods, it had been declared that he was a disloyal man. He denied the imputation- (Cheers). There was not a more loyal man in the kingdom; no man could give with greater sincerity than himself "The health of her Majesty the Queen" - (loud and long-continued cheering, followed by three times three, most enthusiastically given.)

Anthem "God Save Our Queen" powerfully and tastefully given by messrs. Broadhurst, Crew &c the company ably and boldly joining in the chorus. The Chairman afterwards gave "Prince Albert" - "The Prince of Wales and Princess Royal" - "prosperity to the Army and Navy" - which were most enthusiastically honoured.

(Sir James Duke then made a long speech praising James Harmer which was frequently interrupted by cheers and cries of hear, hear)

The toast was drunk with three times three, amid the firing of cannon and the cheers of the persons outside the tent. As soon as silence could be restored Mr Harmer rose, and addressed the company to the following effect:- "He was sure they would not be surprised when he told them that he was so

overpowered by the events of the day, and the compliments that had been paid him, that he could not find words to express his feelings. He could assure them that he received with the deepest feelings of gratitude the elegant testimonial before him. It was valuable from the intrinsic worth, but more so from the occasion which had given birth to its presentation, and the flattering inscription which it bore. ***(There followed a long speech interrupted by cheers and hear, hear.)***The worthy Chairman then sat down, amid loud and long-continued cheers.

William Hills Esq. the Vice president of the Fishmongers and Poulterers Society, next rose and addressed the Chairman

The Chairman said that he acknowledged with gratitude the compliment which had just been paid to him. And he thanked Mr W Hills for the flattering terms in which he had presented the address. In his early life he (the Chairman) had needed assistance, and he should be wanting in that gratitude which he owed to Divine Providence if he did not feel for the poor and friendless. He assured the deputation that he should always feel an interest in the welfare of their excellent institution.

The Chairman next proposed the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London, coupled with the name of Alderman Thomas Wood.

Alderman Thomas Wood acknowledged the compliment.

The chairman next proposed the health of Sir James Duke, and coupled with it the Ward of Farringdon Without.

Sir James Duke briefly returned thanks.

Mr Broadhurst then sang in his usual excellent style, one of Moore's Irish melodies.

Mr Alderman Johnson proposed the health of "Miss Emma Chaplin and the ladies" which was drunk with the usual honours. The Chairman then gave the health of Mr Blackett. "who, in a very appropriate speech, acknowledge the compliment.

The band continued playing at intervals, during the above proceeding and at 7 o'clock the chairman left his seat, and the company shortly afterwards returned home, highly gratified with proceedings of the day and the princely entertainment which their worthy host had provided them.

The Weekly Dispatch for Sunday July 10th 1842

INGRESS PARK AND ABBEY IN 1842

"Ingress Abbey is a fine pile of building in the Tudor style of domestic architecture. It is surrounded by a beautiful terrace, so cleverly constructed as to form a principal feature and enrichment to the scene. All that art could achieve to increase the natural beauties on Ingress have been accomplished through the taste and munificence of the respected proprietor, whose arrangement of the landscape scenery is beyond all praise. The harmonious beauty of the fine outlines preserved in the grouping of the park foliage, the powerful masses of light and shade, so artfully contrived and increased; and the melting of sweet blue and grey colour, as presented from the ever varying surface of the Thames, give a grandeur and freshness highly attractive."

"There is a wilderness leading to a romantic dell to which the proprietor has given frequent permission to charitable useful societies, and others to assemble and aid their funds by the enjoyment of innocent pleasure."

“The Lodge, the plantations, and shrubberies are extensive. There is a cottage in the old English style, called the Farm, with a rustic bridge, which crosses a little lake, and leads to a high mound from which is obtained several fine views of the surrounding scenery. The raised terrace and Gothic balustrade, behind which is a sunk plane of sufficient dimensions to afford an abundant supply of fruit and vegetable produce of the rarest kinds, is very cleverly and successfully managed and the more to be admired as the terrace effectively screens the kitchen garden from being seen from the house.”

On entering the hall of this fine baronial dwelling the effect produced by Gothic tracery surmounting a handsome corridor or gallery leading to the upper rooms is very imposing, while the eye perceives through the plate glass of the opposite door the picturesque garden and foliage and embellished by two ornamental fountains containing gold fish.

The dining room is strictly in the Tudor style. The richly carved side-board, with Gothic perforated panels; the massive cellaret fit accompaniment to the huge barren of beef of olden time, so admirably restored to its pristine grandeur by the hospitable owner of the mansion, on receiving the “Harmer Testimonial” harmonise well with the Gothic side and centre tables. The beautiful oriel table, which is a facsimile of an old favourite in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford; the rich tracery of the ceiling, the chairs, all in strict keeping with the style, render this room at once imposing and grand.

We hasten through the “Sanctum Sanctorum” in which hang various illuminated and emblazoned drawings, presented to the worthy owner of the mansion for acts of kindness and merit, and attempt a description of the library. The style changes to Elizabethan. It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the intrinsic and very rich effect of the bookcases which are divided into 32 compartments, in each of which is a bas-relief of well designed subjects and very superior workmanship; at least ten of them are so considered by the first artists of the day, who have examined them carefully! They are in fact pictures possessing all the qualities of a painting with the exception of colour, describing, with all the minuteness

of German oak carving, the early history of Christ, his birth, the wise men's offerings, his working with his father's tools at the bench &c. These productions are so ingeniously conceived, so exquisitely grouped, and so beautifully carved, that no pencil, however delicate, could convey a more correct representation of these beautiful subjects. The richly carved mantel, intend to receive a portrait of the great Bacon, the beautiful panels on the doors, the enriched cornices, advancing boldly with the picturesque old oak pediments and busts of Camden and the learned characters of the day, are introduced in strict keeping with the other decorations of this room, and relieved by a background similar to old cloth of gold, arranged with cool and rich mellow colours. Messrs Arrowsmith of Bond Street, decorators to her Majesty have greatly added to their already high reputation by designing and erecting the Elizabethan, and Gothic decorations and furniture in the princely mansion.

On the ground floor are several other rooms, one of these leading to a conservatory, at present in the course of erection. The drawing rooms are in the style of Louis Quatorze and when painted will be exceedingly handsome. The Ladies boudoir, on the upper floor, is a perfect bijou, with its beautiful oriel window, the handsome carved mantel, with Cupids supporting baskets of flowers, and enframing plate glass, which reflects Father Thames and the scenery beyond.

THE LIBRARY

We must not omit to notice the carved whole-length figures in this room. Two of these Fortitude and Justice, are arranged as candelabras. A St Sebastian, finely carved, and reminding us of the picture of this subject so much admired at the Dulwich Gallery; is very ingeniously contrived to serve when required as a reading desk. Also St Paul, carved in the most masterly manner, the repose and dignity of this figure surpasses anything we have seen of Brustolini or Grindling Gibbons. The fine expansive forehead, the head gently leaning forward, the flowing beard and the grand lines of the drapery contrasting the flowing lines of the book which he is supposed to be expounding, and the fine effect of light and shade

proceeding from this arrangement, is grand and beautiful in the extreme; nor is utility forgotten. The rear of this fine figure displays, upon touching a spring, three apertures, one throwing forth a velvet cushion for kneeling, a recess for the book of prayer, and a projecting desk, thus most ingeniously forming a Prie Dieu, the whole most richly carved and restored, in most exquisite taste, without any regard to expense.

A description of Ingress Abbey, Greenhithe the seat of James Harmer, Esq. by Mr H Smithsmith C.M.A. from The Sun newspaper Monday July 11th 1842

Ingress Abbey Furniture

James Harmer had much of the furniture especially made for Ingress Abbey and when the Umfreville trustees sold Ingress they took a series of interior photographs and I believe the following were part of that series. They also kept in the family several pieces of his furniture until 1970 when Miss Phyllis Umfreville died and her home and its contents "Yeaton Hall", Shropshire were auctioned.



The library complete with the "portrait of the great Bacon"

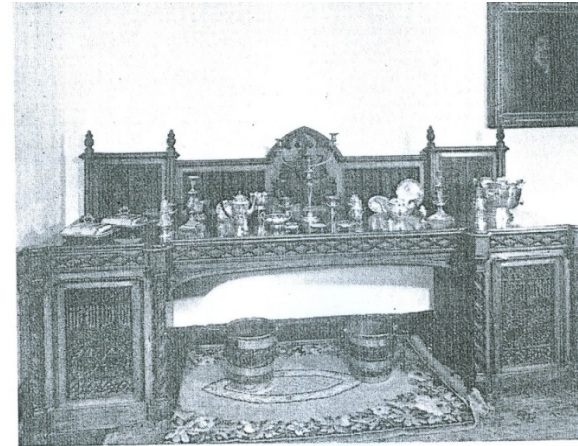


The gallery

SOME OF THE FURNITURE COMMISSIONED BY JAMES HARMER



Part of a set of nine gothic design oak framed dining chairs. One with a label, Stidolph cabinet manufacturer & upholsterer Dartford



19th century gothic pattern oak sideboard 10 feet long – described above?

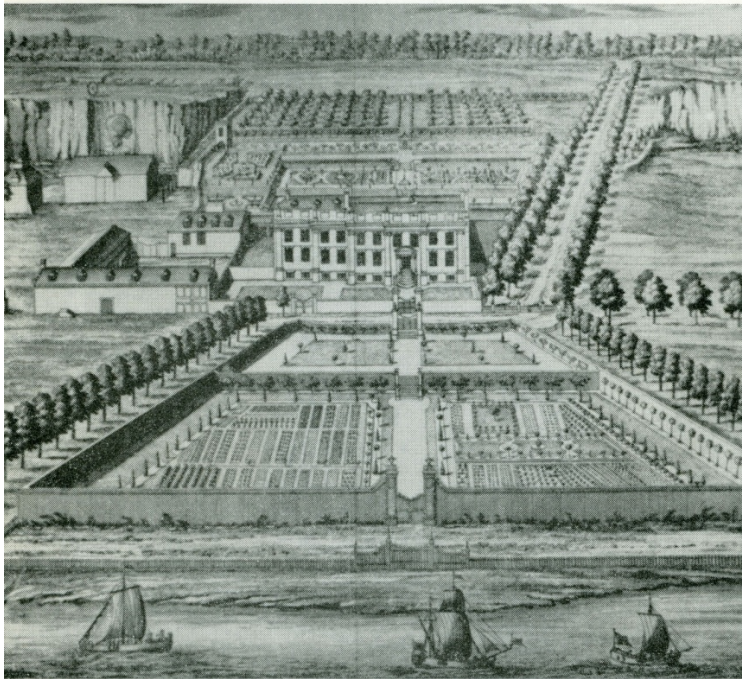


Gothic style bed and canopy – James Harmer's bed?



18th century Continental side table

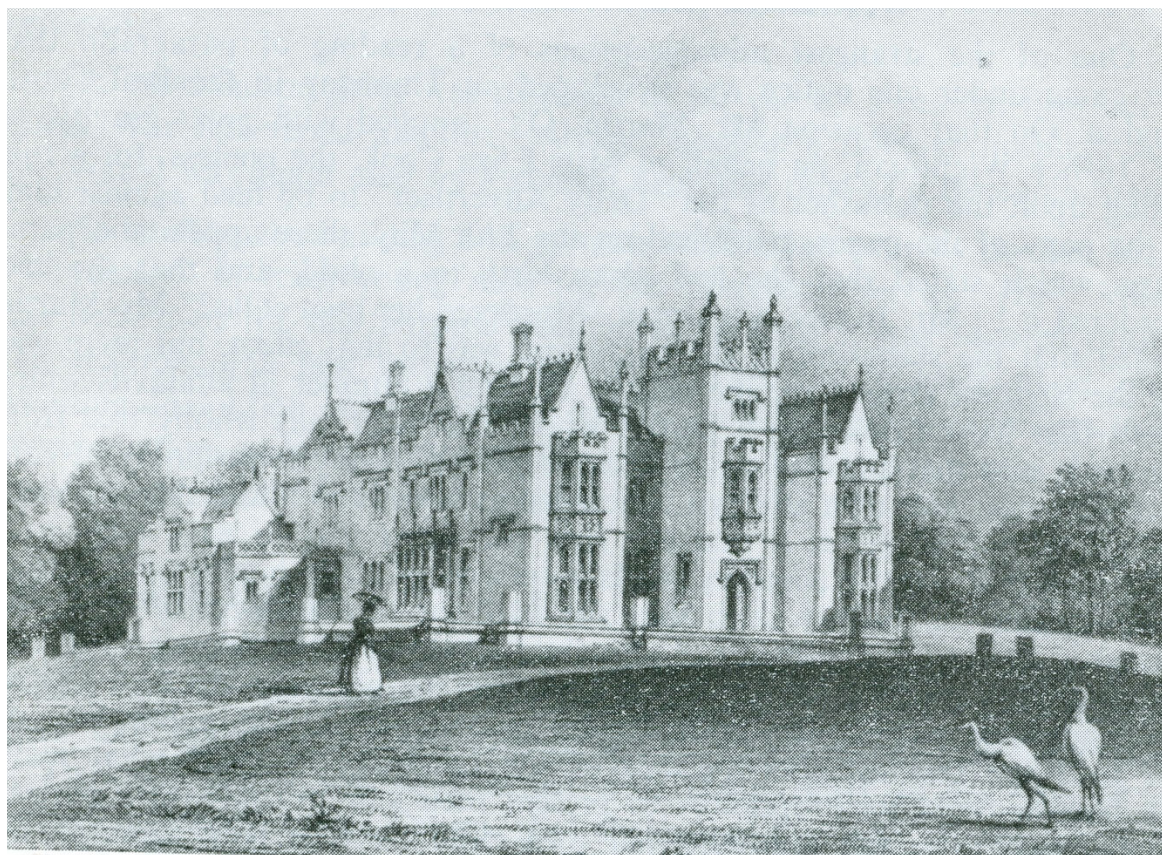
INGRESS PARK MANSIONS THROUGH THE AGES



The Mansion at Ingress circa 1719



Ingress at Greenhithe, drawn by S Owen pub. 1 Nov 1810



Ingress Abbey 1838 built by Alderman James Harmer – The two birds in the right hand corner are a pair of cranes from Egypt given circa 1836 to James Harmer by his friend Galloway. In the summer of 1839 they laid four eggs, but a thunder storm destroyed them. The female crane is called Gypt and in 1841 she reared 4 chicks.



From a card posted in 1903



From a card posted in 1931



Ingress Abbey May 1998



Hercule Poirot visits Ingress Abbey!
"The Kidnapped Prime Minister" circa 1990



Above, The Harmer Family Association visit Ingress Abbey May 2001.

Right, Checking out the progress of the restoration.



To see more pictures of Ingress Abbey go to the link below and click on " ViewSteve's Gallery"

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/W1bWORX/IngressAbbey>

Ingress Abbey the Myths

There is no historical or archaeological evidence that a religious house was ever built at Ingress Park. The only religious connection with the site was its endowment to the nuns of Dartford priory who farmed it. It was Alderman James Harmer who attached "Abbey" to the name of his newly built country seat at Ingress Park. Since in his will he wrote ".....I consider it profane and impious in man to assume that he can by any form or ceremony make the earth more holy than it is has been made by the Almighty....." why he should choose to add "Abbey" to the name of his house remains a puzzle.

Ingress Abbey is not built from the stone of the old London Bridge. When Alderman James Harmer bought Ingress Park the old house had been mostly pulled down, but what was left was incorporated into the left wing as you look at it, the rest of the house was built of brick rendered with cement as was confirmed during the recent restoration work. James Harmer did buy some of the old medieval London Bridge stones but investigations by AOC Archaeology on behalf of Crest Nicholson prior to restoration revealed that Kentish Ragstone from the old London Bridge was used as core stone in the middle of the structure and in the London road perimeter wall

James Harmer and Eliza Cook

The Victorian poetess Eliza Cook was a regular columnist in James's paper the Weekly Dispatch and it seems that James regarded her as his protégée. She certainly stayed at Ingress Abbey regularly as there are several surviving letters written by Eliza from Ingress Abbey, though she wasn't present on either of the census nights. In May 1847 The Daily Advertiser published the following "Eliza Cook - Considerable anxiety has been exacted on the part of the public who do not read the poetical contributions to the Dispatch, to know what reason can have induced its proprietors to present their subscribers with the portrait of a woman who has murdered her own child. Such is fame amongst the masses. A murderess is a heroine and a poetess unknown" Eliza Cook took the Advertiser to court who claimed that they did not mean to infer that Eliza Cook the poetess was the same person as the child murderer and upon them publishing an explanation and apology the case went no further. However many people suggested that Eliza was James's mistress, this is very unlikely as Eliza Cook was a lesbian. John Dix who met Eliza Cook at least twice claims that "...she became governess to Mr Harmer's daughter (grand daughter) and lived at Ingress Abbey..." in his "Lions; Living and Dead." Lisa Merrill in her book "When Romeo was a Woman" in referring to Eliza's intimate relationship with the American actress Charlotte Cushman quotes "There had been whispers about Eliza having become "warmly attached" to the granddaughter of Alderman Harmer." which is a much more likely explanation of what happened at Ingress Abbey

The Ionic Temple – Cobham Hall, Kent



SOLD ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 1820.

Ingress Park.—By Messrs. DRIVER and Mr. SHUTTLEWORTH, on the Premises, THIS DAY, the 24th Instant, at 11, and several following days, by order of the Right Hon. the Commissioners of his Majesty's Woods, Forests, and Land Revenues,

THE capital and very valuable Materials, interior fittings and fixtures, of the Mansion and Offices of Ingress-park, situate at Northfleet, in the county of Kent, adjoining Greenhithe, on the banks of the Thames, 5 miles from Dartford, 4 from Gravesend, and 18 from London, with every possible convenience for water carriage; the materials comprise several hundred rods of sound brick work, excellent slating and tiling, stone coping, flag and other paving; stone steps, lofty portico, cupolas, and skylights, stout oak and fir timbers in girders, joists, rafters, quartering, wainscoting, excellent flooring boards, oak and other staircases, window frames and sashes, shutters, doors, casements, closets, presses, marble and other chimney-pieces, several tons of lead and iron, a pair of large sphinxes, cast in lead, columns, pilasters, urns, a doric temple, with beautiful marble columns and pilasters, an ionic temple, with elegant stone columns, pilasters, and cariatides, and other architectural ornaments, stone posts, and chains, and numerous valuable articles. May be viewed on Friday and Saturday preceding the sale, when catalogues may be had on the premises; the Inns at Dartford, Gravesend, Chatham, Rochester, Stroud, Grays, and Purfleet; at the Mart; of Messrs. Driver, land-agents and surveyors, New Bridge-street, Blackfriars; and of Mr. Shuttleworth, 27, Poultry.

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