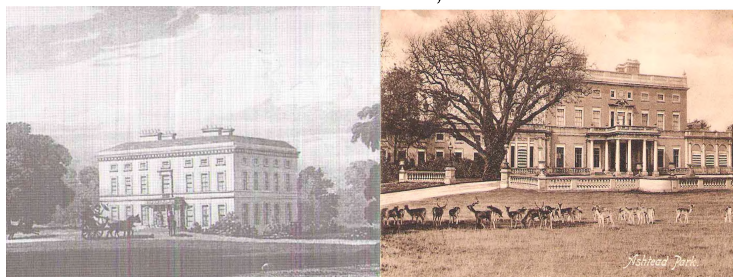


**Leatherhead & District Local History Society**  
**Potted Histories No: 8**  
**Ashtead Park House, Ashtead**



In 1680, the Lordship of the Manor of Ashtead was bought by Sir Robert Howard, the sixth son of the first earl of Berkshire. He held the lucrative office of Auditor of the Exchange. Howard had passed middle age when he became the owner of Ashtead Manor, and unlike some previous owners, he acquired the property to make it his home. His very considerable wealth enabled him to build a new and imposing house, planting it with avenues of trees, accompanied by fountains, ponds and gardens, in the formal taste of the day, and stocking it with deer. He built his house about 200 yards to the south-east of the old manor house of medieval and Tudor times. It was completed by the spring of 1684.

In 1783 Frances Howard inherited the estate and married Richard Bagot. Upon his marriage he changed his name to Howard. By now the mansion built by Sir Robert was in disrepair, and Richard and Frances decided to rebuild it. The present house was built in 1790-1792 on the same site to the design of an Italian architect called Bonomi. Richard and Frances occupied the new house until their deaths 1818, when their only surviving child Mary inherited the estate. In 1807 Mary had married the Honourable Fulk Greville Upton who also assumed the name Howard. Upon her death in 1877 the estate passed to a distant relative, Lieutenant-Colonel Ponsonby Bagot, who sold it after six years to Sir Thomas Lucas, a very wealthy industrialist, who lavished enormous sums of money on the estate, which included adding wings to the building.

When Sir Thomas left in 1889 it was purchased by the mother of the Greek banker Pantia Ralli as a wedding present. Ralli brought a new grandeur to Ashtead, holding many parties and receptions at the Park. An enthusiast for new technology, he installed a lift and electric light in the house. Troubled with burglaries in 1907, he fitted elaborate burglar alarms to the mansion. On the death of Pantia Ralli in 1924, the Mansion and its parkland were subsequently purchased by the Corporation of London and occupied since 1926 by the City of London Freeman's School.

***For information regarding Membership, Lectures and Museum  
opening hours contact***

**Leatherhead & District Local History Society, Leatherhead Museum  
Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street LEATHERHEAD Surrey KT22 8DP**

**Tel: 01372 386348**

**[Leatherheadmuseum@localhistory.free-online.co.uk](mailto:Leatherheadmuseum@localhistory.free-online.co.uk)**

**[Web site: www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk](http://www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk)**