

The Ommanney Family of Warblington House

Geoff Higgins, our Treasurer, has down-loaded and transcribed the 1851 census for Emsworth. During this work he found that a family called Ommanney was living at Warblington House, and he has done further research into their history.

Sir John Acworth Ommanney was there in 1851, with his wife, five family members and eight servants. Sir John was the eldest son of Rear-Admiral Cornthwaite Ommanney and entered the Navy himself in 1786 aged 13. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography traces his naval career in detail. He served in the Mediterranean, China, the Channel, West Indies, Newfoundland and Lisbon. He received many decorations during his naval service, including French, Russian and Greek. He was regularly promoted and became a Rear-Admiral in 1830 and was knighted in 1835. He was appointed Knight Commander of the Bath in 1838 and became a Vice-Admiral in 1841 and a full Admiral in 1849. He ended his long and distinguished naval career as Commander-in-Chief at Devonport, retiring at the age of 81 in 1854. He was also a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Southampton.

In the 1838 Tithe Map and Schedule, he was shown as the owner and occupier of Warblington House, described as a "mansion house" with extensive grounds, including 3 gardens, a two and a half acre lawn with large fish pond, coach-houses and yards. He also owned several fields to the north of Havant Road, which probably provided pasture for his horses. The house has been demolished and the land is now a small housing estate on the eastern side of Pook Lane.

Sir John died in July 1855 at the age of 82 and his wife, Lady Frances, died a month later. In his lengthy Will, also down-loaded by Geoff from the Public Record Office and transcribed by Sheila Morgan, he passed his real and personal estate first to his wife, in trust, for her natural life, and after her death to his four daughters, equally, and again in trust to their children. He was a wealthy man, and his Will gives details of his investments in various bonds, stocks and shares, providing the income for his Trusts.

We gain a glimpse of his personality from the Will. He wished to be buried "in the Parish of Oving in Sussex in the vault belonging to me and I request that my funeral

may be conducted in as plain and unostentatious manner as may be consistent with my rank". His four Executors each receive "Nineteen Pounds nineteen shillings as a token of my regard and as a trifling compensation for the trouble they may incur in the execution of the Trusts in this my Will".

One other bequest is of interest. He set up a Trust Fund of £800, the interest and dividends of which go to "my servant Frances Hall spinster who has for many years contributed to the comfort of my said wife Lady Ommanney and of myself by her care and attention particularly in times of illness".

Frances Hall was shown on the 1851 Census as a ladies maid. A ladies maid would have been paid about 20 guineas a year at this time. The income from £800 was thus designed to cover wages and keep for the rest of her life. And so we come full circle back to the 1851 Census where this story all started.

Roy and Sheila Morgan