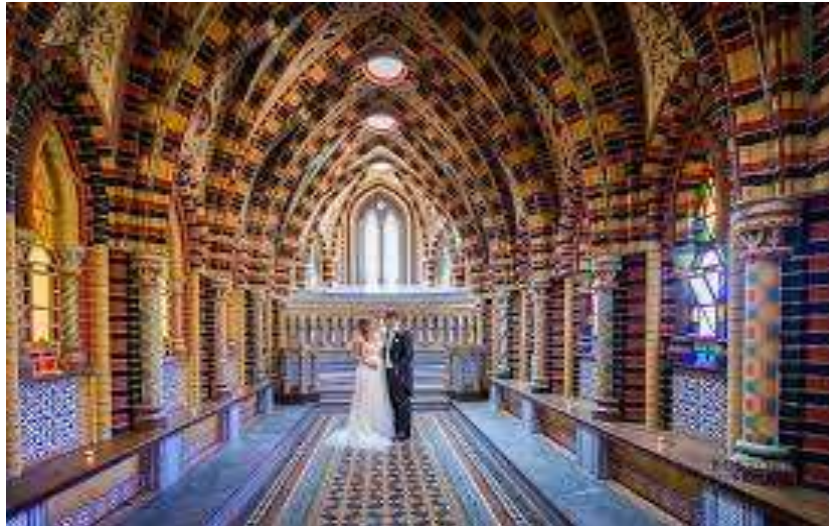


LORD LOVELACE'S ARCHITECTURAL ASPIRATIONS

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The Horsley Towers Chapel, designed by Lord Lovelace.

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This particular article was first written during the Covid shutdown but for various reasons was never published. Horsley Heritage believes it offers a helpful insight into the architectural aspirations driving the first Lord Lovelace, whose buildings are widely seen across East Horsley.

More details about Lord Lovelace's work may be found in the book by Pam Bowley entitled 'East Horsley: the Lovelace Village', available in the Horsley library. Copies can also be purchased from the Post Office in Bishopsmead Parade.

BACKGROUND

In 1833, Peter King, 7th Baron died, and his son William King gave up his career as Secretary to the Lord Commissioner of the Ionian Islands and returned to England. At the age of 28 he succeeded his father and became the 8th Lord King, Baron of Ockham. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Surrey and in 1835 he married Augusta Ada Byron, only daughter of Lord Byron and cousin to the Whig Prime Minister Lord Melbourne. Ada Lovelace was a brilliant mathematician, and the couple were popular at Court. In 1838, Lord King was made Earl Lovelace by Queen Victoria, taking the name of a Byron antecedent.

PURCHASE OF EAST HORSLEY PLACE

In 1840 the Earl became Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, and in that same year, he purchased the estate and manor house at East Horsley, now known as Horsley Towers, from William Currie Junior. The house had been designed for Currie's father by Sir Charles Barry, but the Tudor style was not at all to Lord Lovelace's taste. For the time being, the Lovelace's remained at Ockham Park, and East Horsley Place – as it was then called – was leased out briefly to Sir John Kirkham. The Earl set about designing the transformation of East Horsley Park: he had inherited a taste for Italianate/Gothic and neo-Gothic architecture from his father, possibly as a result of his Eastern Mediterranean travels.

The Lovelace's moved into East Horsley Park in 1846 and the Earl's plans for house and village commenced. Around this time he acquired the brickyard in Long Reach and in 1851 he won a medal for brickmaking at the Great Exhibition. The highly decorative tiles and escutcheons which Lord Lovelace designed were all made at these brickworks. The mould survives, and was given to Guildford Museum.

Some of the clay was from Long Reach, while the white clay was dug at Ockham Common. The red sand used for the terracotta bricks originated in Ripley. The land on which East Horsley is built, is largely chalk, and water tends to drain off easily, but the Earl used his bricks to construct reservoirs which ensured a good water supply for the village.

One of the Earl's first projects was to add a clock tower to the west side of the house, increasing the height of the building. He added a porch to the front entrance, but the major addition was the Great Hall, or Banqueting Hall. The four arched wooden trusses in the Hall were shaped using steam heat. The Earl presented a paper to the Institute of Civil Engineers describing this work, which earned him praise from the great Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

The Hall measures 56 feet by 24 feet, and boasts a Minstrel's Gallery and fine oak panelling, which is embellished with 150 coats of arms, representing Lovelace of Hurley, the origin of his chosen title, as well those with Ada's Byron, Wentworth and Noel connections. The stained-glass windows in the Hall carry 38 more armorial bearings of the families.

In 1852, the Earl took on the role of Rt. Hon. Colonel of the 2nd Royal Surrey Regiment of Militia. The Militia consisted of volunteers who signed on for a period of five years: there was no sizeable regular army at this time. The Earl devoted himself to this post, and created sentry boxes in the customary Lovelace style in the grounds around the house. The Militia were entertained in the summer, with officers staying in the house and other ranks camping outside.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF EAST HORSLEY PLACE

After the death of Ada Lovelace, in 1852 deeply upset by the events surrounding this the Earl travelled abroad. When he returned, he embarked on a frenzy of building work, designing and building a steeply-roofed Italianate/neo-Gothic tower using flint and polychrome brickwork.

There are many of his favourite architectural details: machicolated parapets; (machicolation is an opening between the corbels of a projecting parapet, used for discharging missiles such as boiling oil on assailants!). There is the customary Lovelace abundance of architectural details in polychrome terracotta, such as arcading, arched windows, dentils and military badges.

Inside a spiral staircase leads to three circular rooms and there are stained glass windows on the second floor. The top floor is striking with a magnificent inverted umbrella-like structure supported by painted curved wooden supports. The brick supports on the sides of the room are ornate and impressive, and the whole is topped with a painted glass ceiling. There is also a dungeon, complete with ball and chains, and handcuffs, continuing the machicolation theme. On completion of this tower the Earl renamed his house 'Horsley Towers.' The vista of the tower and house from across the lake transports the viewer to the Mediterranean.

In 1859, Lord Lovelace designed the Cloisters and Chapel (*See Page 2*), which are amongst the most striking interior features of Horsley Towers.

In the estate yard, Lord Lovelace created a new model Home Farm, with a tunnel leading to the fields. This was intended as a working farm, but also offered an opportunity to teach children about farming. They could see cows being milked and watch the pigs and chickens. The children were also able to study the skills of the blacksmith, wheelwright and carpenter, now part of the Earls estate.

THE LODGES & LODGE COTTAGES

Lord Lovelace built a number of lodges between 1846 and 1874. The earliest were Blueryde and Pennymead, and the latest North Forest and Octagon: the latter is sometimes known as Ranmore Lodge. These buildings follow the pattern of the village houses, with the earliest being less ornate

Possibly the oldest Lovelace house was Blueryde Lodge, built around 1846. The name derives from an owner of the land in 1206 – John de Bruis – and in the archive version the house appears as 'Brewesruden,' meaning 'land cleared by Brewes', an alternative spelling of John's name. Blueryde stands beside the Earl's private drive from Ockham Manor to the newly acquired East Horsley Place.

The next two cottages built were Pennymead Lodge in 1851 and Sheepwash Cottage in 1852. These early cottages are not as elaborately decorated as the later editions, but all have the typical slate roofs. Pennymead was once 'Laundry Cottage,' which took care of all the laundry from Horsley Towers and the Earl's London residence - the Lovelace crest and coronet is on the gable of Pennymead, while Sheepwash Cottage sports elaborate chimney pots.

While still residing at Ockham, the Earl had a driveway built from Ockham Park to East Horsley Place, across part of Norrels Farm land. The farm was demolished and two lodges - Norrels Lodge and Salve Hospes - were built on each side of the new drive. It is difficult to date these two lodges, but the 1860s seems likely.

In 1858 Lord Lovelace started replacing the Regency style lodge at the Guildford Road entrance to Horsley Towers. The pattern mirrors the style of the Italianate tower in front of the house. It has a fortress like aspect and is adorned with moulded corbelling and a terracotta balustrade-like frieze. The only Regency style lodge remaining from William Currie's time is the one on Dirtham Lane. Another lodge - Outdowns built in 1859 - was the Head Keeper's residence and this cottage still has the original underground cistern which the Earl designed to store rainwater from the roof.

Bishop's Gate, built in 1860, was once the tradesman's entrance to the estate yard and artisans' workshops, is now the main vehicle entry into Horsley Towers. The lodge cottage was once the home of the estate carpenter.

THE VILLAGE

The Earl of Lovelace was involved with the development of the railway system from the 1840s, and was able to profit by selling land to the prospectors for this new transport potential. He began purchasing land, such as the acreage at Norrels Farm which he later sold to the railways for a goodly sum.

He then turned his attention to the village, which he completely transformed. William Currie senior had restored some of these old houses in the early 1800s, but kept to their original style, which did not accord with Lord Lovelace's preferences. The old houses may have been picturesque, but by the early 1800s many of them had been divided into two or three dwellings for farm and estate workers. The Earl saw it as his moral duty to improve their living standards.

ST.MARTIN'S SCHOOL

He built the school in 1860, the same year as Bishop's Gate Lodge. It was built as one storey, and with one room, measuring about 32 feet by 18 feet. There were two entrances and a porch and lobby. The school was constructed of brick and flint: and has the customary slate roof with beams, and a basement below. The tiles were decorative, and there is an escutcheon with the Noel family crest.

In the schoolroom were benches and tiers of desks, and in the corner stood the stove. Most children walked to school, whatever the weather, so the stove came in handy for rain-soaked clothes and to warm and comfort poorly children. In 1891 an infants' classroom was added, and later to the south side, a porch and lobby. The headmistress's residence was on the north side of the school.

DAISY, VIOLET AND BLUEBELL COTTAGES

These three cottages were built between 1862 and 1865. St. Martin's School was erected partly on a small green where there was once a row of old cottages. These cottages sold goods from a room on the ground floor: there was a grocer, a dairy, and Conisbee's butcher shop. William Conisbee started a butchers shop here in the 1780s. These cottages were replaced by the three new cottages in the 1860s. (In 1861 the Earl had designed Park Corner, where Conisbee's were re-housed.) Two of the three cottages Daisy and Violet were semi-detached, with balustrade and balcony. There are dramatic chimneys and the usual escutcheons and coats of arms including Lovelace, Byron Noel and an East Surrey Regiment badge. Bluebell Cottage was the third of these new cottages behind St. Martin's School: it has typical Lovelace windows and escutcheons, as well as a balustrade and frieze of roses. There is an intriguing garden wall, with arrow slits and military badges.

PARK CORNER & YE OLDE SHOPPE

The Park Corner Shop was originally three separate units, with Conisbee's shop in the centre and a cottage on either side. Generations of the Conisbee family have served East Horsley village as butchers, and the family are still in residence. The three separate entrances can still be seen, with an arched doorway into the shop. There is a simple frieze around the building, and a rose motif, which was a favourite of Lord Lovelace, and can be seen on many of the cottages.

Ye Olde Shoppe was built especially as a village shop by the Earl in 1862, close to where the three cottages selling goods once stood. Ye Olde Shoppe boasts more adornment than Park Corner with many windows enclosed in a large arch, and an elaborate frieze of roses.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

In 1864, the Earl turned his attention to the Duke of Wellington inn, which had been rebuilt by Charles Barrie to face the new Turnpike Road, on the instructions of William Currie. 'The Duke' was subjected to the usual Lovelace treatment of brick, flint, friezes of terracotta adorned with heraldic escutcheons and military badges and metal windows. He also added two new wings to the building.

SARTOR RESARTUS

Sartor Resartus is a fine example of the Lovelace edifices in the village. The old cottage had been occupied for 200 years by the Webb family, who were tailors. Lord Lovelace bought the property from the last Webb widow. When he rebuilt the house in 1866, he named it 'Sartor Resartus,' meaning 'The tailor re-tailored,' and referring to an essay by Thomas Carlyle, who was one of the Earl's favourite writers. This house boasts bay windows, and these and the small added wing suggest it may have been for renting, or for one of the Earl's white collar workers. There is an elaborate frieze of balustrading, and a row of dentils surmounting moulded corbelling just below the line of the roof. The garden wall has the arrow-slit style of brattice work found in other Lovelace cottage gardens.

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CHURCHYARD AND GAZEBO

In 1869, Lord Lovelace began an extensive restoration in St. Martin's Church, rebuilding the chancel, which needed urgent work as the walls were crumbling, and south wall of the nave. Three lancet windows were installed in the east wall. In the churchyard, a new wall was constructed, adding such Lovelace touches as corbelling, moulded terracotta and arrow slits.

There is a Gazebo in the south east corner of the churchyard. This was restored in 1986 by the Horsley Countryside Preservation Society. It is said that before the Sunday Service, the youngest choirboy would act as sentinel in the Gazebo, and when he spotted the Earl's carriage nearing the Church, he would run back to tell the Rector.

THE MAUSOLEUM

Towards the end of the 19th century the Earl began work on his Mausoleum. All the Lovelace characteristics are present; moulded red and white terracotta bricks and the architectural embellishments which pleased the Earl. The tall vault and brickwork dome resembles the chapel in Horsley Towers. Lord Lovelace was interred after his death in 1893. Jane, his second wife, died in 1908 and was buried beside him. The mausoleum fell into disrepair over the years, but has now been beautifully restored.

THE LOVELACE BRIDGES

The Earl had a great interest in forestry and arboriculture, and the fifteen bridges he built made the wooden areas accessible. The bridges were built of the customary flint and red brick, and varied in size, with the largest at Dorking Arch across the road leading to Ranmore Common. Sadly, many have become derelict, but the Horsley Countryside Preservation Society has been involved in a preservation programme.

THE MAN

Descriptions of the Earl almost always include the adjective 'autocratic,' though it is interesting that he was depicted as 'easy going,' as a young man. But there are also references to his kindness, and he certainly treated his step-sons generously. The 5th Earl of Onslow describes Lord Lovelace's kindness to his father, William Hillier Onslow, who had unexpectedly inherited Clandon Park and the title in 1871, aged only 17. At this time, Lord Lovelace was Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, an '*autocratic old gentleman*', but he was very kind to the young 4th Earl of Onslow, giving him a warm welcome to the county, and possibly advice on how to run a large country estate.

Clandon Park had been virtually neglected for nearly 40 years as the 3rd Earl had quarrelled badly with his father. However, the 4th Earl had some rather radical views – such as the desirability of major landowners giving up land for allotments – and he expressed his opinions in a public address. Lord Lovelace was not happy, and wrote a long letter of rebuke in his own hand, beginning 'My Lord,' and finishing 'Your Lordship's Obedient Servant.' But he quickly forgave the young man, who rode over to Horsley Towers to make amends.

Lord Lovelace told him the story of his meeting with George, 1st Earl of Onslow, when he was a very young boy. He was greatly impressed when Lord Onslow told him of a meeting with a very old man, aged 103, called Augustin Boisragon, who had actually been a sentinel on the scaffold of Charles 1st. Lord Lovelace undoubtedly mellowed as he aged.

In 1860, Arthur J Munby was visiting a doctor friend, and driving from Ockham to East Horsley. In his diary he remarks upon some of the old houses en route, and then comments that: '*Many of these houses are being pulled down by Lord Lovelace, who builds instead of them places of outstanding eccentricity, barbarous to the last degree.*' The Earl's building may – to some – appear eccentric, but the houses will certainly stand the test of time.

It would be interesting to learn what the inhabitants of the Lovelace cottages thought of their unusual dwellings in the mid to late 19th century. They would probably have been rather proud of the adornments and relished the internal comforts. In all, he probably left his mark on fifty properties, extending from the Downs to the south and Ockham in the north.

This article has only touched upon a sample. As Lord Lovelace's project for the village included new school and shops, he surely had the good of the village at heart.

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