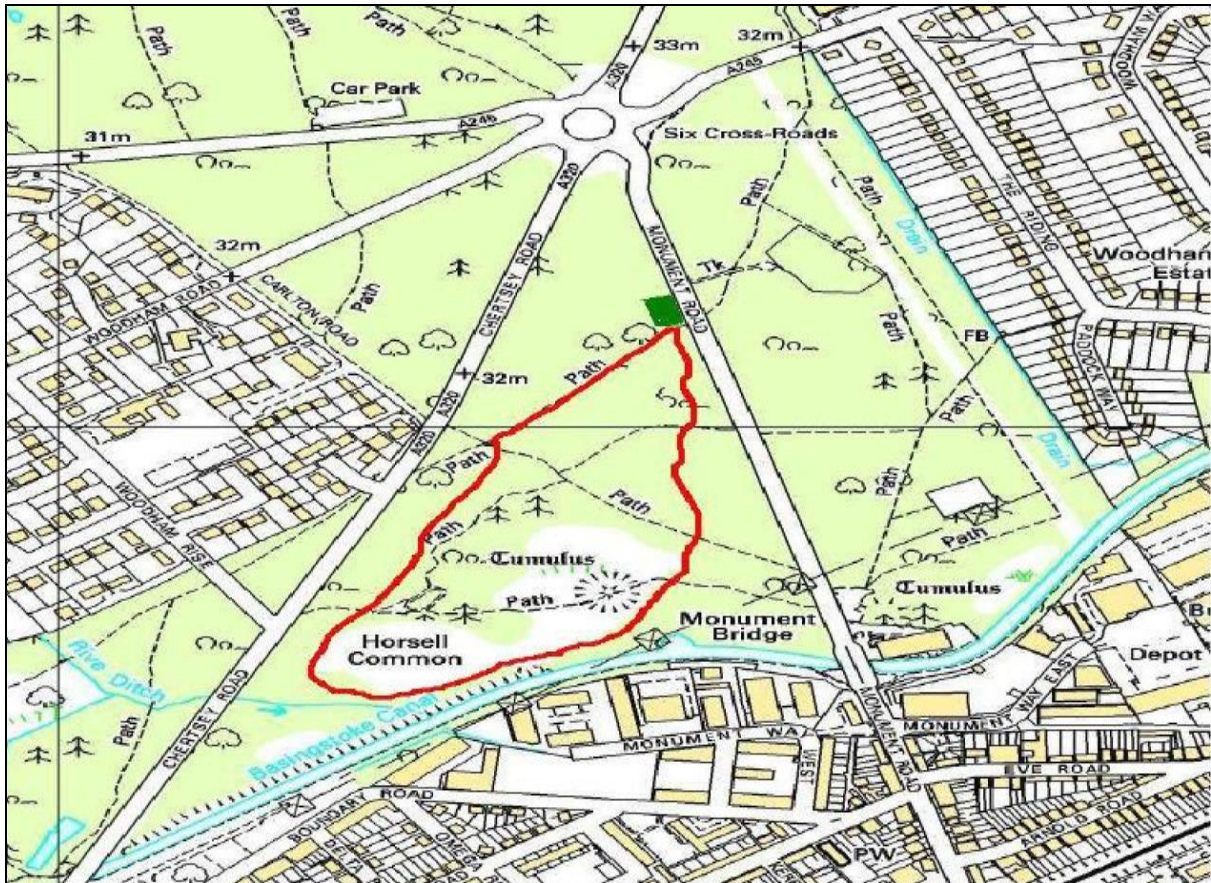


## **Thistle Cottage and The House in the Wood**

These two houses once stood on Horsell Common on the north side of Monument Road. Only Thistle Cottage is likely to have been of any age. The cottage having long since gone we only have a photograph and a drawing by Marguerite Howarth to show what the mud and wattle thatched building looked like although there is a picture of the cleared site taken in 2008. The building could have originally been a humble cottage on the edge of the common waste – there are number of these simple such dwellings in the Woking area – but in that case it is unlikely to have been erected in the form shown in the two pieces of evidence we have. An edge of waste cottage would have been a single dwelling and certainly not the semi detached pair of cottages shown in the photograph and drawing. A forester's cottage would be the most likely possibility.

The site of the two houses today is surrounded by the remains of a ditch and earth bank to the right of Monument Road - see the map below. There was originally a gravel driveway to the site almost opposite the new car park on the opposite side of the road but this has now been subsumed into the surrounding common. Permission to put this gravel down was granted by the Earl of Onslow to Arthur Bellin on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1910. A path runs around the rear of the site.



*The above map is taken from the Horsell Common Preservation Society website.*



*image Kevin Smith*

*This black and white drawing by Marguerite Howarth misleadingly entitled The House in the Wood is actually Thistle Cottage which at the time it was drawn had the appearance of a pair of semi detached cottages with two separate front doors.*



*This photograph supplied by Paul Rimmer of HCPS shows the original Thistle Cottage with part of The House in the Wood visible on the left*

The 1834 Survey of the Parish of Horsell (SHC reference 2283/7/1) has Henry Martin as the occupier of a cottage almost certainly Thistle Cottage and measuring 3 rods 1 pole.

Thistle Cottage appears in the census returns 1841-1911

1841 census						
Horsell	1	Henry MARTIN	55		ag lab	Y
		Mary MARTIN		48		Y
		Henry TAYLOR	10			Y
		David TAYLOR	7			Y
		Charles TAYLOR	6			Y



1851 census						
East extremity of Horsell parish	Henry MARTIN	head	w	66	ag lab	Surrey Chobham
	Anne FAULKNER	serv	u	55	house serv	Surrey Pyrford
	David TAYLOR	neph	u	16	labourer	Surrey Woking
	Charles TAYLOR	neph	u	14	labourer	Surrey Woking



*This extract from the 1851 Ryde map shows the site numbered 153. Thistle Cottage is on the left inside the site boundaries. The 6 cross roads (then only with 5 roads) is bottom left with Monument Road running across the map from left to right.*

The Book of Reference to Edward Ryde's 1851 survey of Horsell shows Henry Martin as the owner and occupier of a cottage on the site. The measurements are given as 3 rods 30 poles very similar to those shown in the 1834 survey (see above). Although neither of the 1841-51 censuses mention the cottage, the 1834 and 1851 Ryde surveys when taken together with the description of the title in the 1879 agreement (see below) seem to indicate that Henry was the occupier from 1834 until the property passed to his son of the same name. Perhaps the isolated position of the cottage led to imprecise description of its location. The 1861 census is more precise.

1861 census						
Thistle - Cottage	Henry MARTIN	head	W	77	ag lab	Surrey Chobham
	William MARTIN	grdsn	U	25	ag lab	Surrey Chertsey

Henry Martin senior died in 1862 and was buried in Horsell on 7<sup>th</sup> January from Chertsey Union

1871 census						
Horsell Moor	Henry MARTIN	head	M	64	thatcher & pork butcher	Surrey Horsell
	Mary MARTIN	wife	M	60		Surrey Woking
	Elizabeth Golding	d	M	40		Surrey Chobham
	Ann MARTIN	d	U	13		Surrey Woking
	Georgina GOLDING	d	U	8		Surrey Chertsey Union
	George MARTIN	s	U	37	labourer	Surrey Horsell
	James HOWARD	boarder	?	37	nursery labourer	Surrey Horsell

This is the son of the same name, One might expect a thatcher to live in a thatched cottage. Being a pig butcher could suggest he kept pigs.

There is a copy of an agreement (6856/6) at the Surrey History Centre by Charles John Worthington of Cowley House, Chertsey, with Sarah Ann Creuze of Oakfield Road, Penge, for the sale to her of a cottage and land of 1a(*cre*) called Thistle Cottage in Horsell, for £300 dated 29th September 1879.

*All that messuage cottage or tenement formerly used as two tenements and the piece or parcel of land thereto belonging situate lying and being in the Parish of Horsell in the County of Surrey containing in the whole by estimation one acre be the same little more or less and commonly called or known by the name of Thistle Cottage and which said premises were formerly in the occupation of Henry Martin and now of Henry Martin the younger and the appurtenances thereunto belonging and the freehold and inheritance thereof in fee simple freed from all charges and in cumbrances.*

*Title commences with the Indenture dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1853 from one Henry Martin to Jacob Martin and his Dower Trustee and any earlier title. (We do not have this earlier Indenture.)*

On the outside of the Memorandum in red *sold Febry 1910 by J Browne to Mrs Bellin.(see below) This document is consequently valueless.* This refers to Thistle Cottage and the land on which The House in the Wood was to be built. The conveyance was dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1910 and included the full names of the purchaser, Beatrice Margaret Anna

1881 census						
Thistle Cottage	Henry MARTIN	head	M	48	Gardner	Surrey Horsell
	Rebecca MARTIN	Wife	M	36		Surrey Horsell
	Emily MARTIN	Daur	U	15	Servant	Surrey Horsell
	May MARTIN	Daur	U	5		Surrey Horsell
	Harry MARTIN	Son	U	9 m		Surrey Horsell

1891 census						
Thistle Cottage	Henry MARTIN	head	wdr	58	general labourer	Surrey Horsell
	Henry MARTIN	son	U	10	scholar	Surrey Horsell
	Percy MARTIN	son	U	9	scholar	Surrey Horsell
	Isaac WIGMAN	boarder	M	27	general labourer	Surrey Chertsey
	Georgina WIGMAN	niece	M	28	housekeeper	Surrey Chertsey

1901 census						
Thistle Cottage	Henry HALL	head	S	21	gardener domestic	Hants Whitway
	Frank HAMPTON	boarder	S	21	gardener domestic	Surrey Horsell
	John TURNER	boarder	S	20	gardener domestic	Surrey Addlestone

1911 census								
Thistle Cottage	Frederick Charles REIID	head	M	M	55	1856	gardener domestic	Harpندن Herts
	Selina Ann REIID	wife	M 2yrs	F	50	1861		London City

This property was most likely tenanted up to the time the Bellins acquired the cottage. On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1910 there is a conveyance from John Brown to Beatrice Margaret Anna Bellin of Thistle Cottage and the site of what was to be The House in the Woods for. £650.

1911 census								
The House in Wood	Arthur BELLIN	head	M	M	58	1853	independent means	London
	Beatrice MA	wife	M 22 yrs	F	51	1860		Eton College
	Ella DRILLOT		S	F	19	1892	house parlour maid	Sark CI



**The Lobsterers Landing Place, Sark. 1887  
Arthur Bellin**

**Arthur Bellin was the son of Samuel Bellin, 1779-1893, another artist. He was born in 1852 and died in 1925. The family lived in Camden in North London. Arthur married Beatrice Margaret Anna Marriott at Bradfield, Berks, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1888. Beatrice was born in 1860 the daughter of Wharton Booth Marriott and Julia Soltau. Marriott was educated at Eton (1838-43) ordained by Bishop Wilberforce 1849, appointed assistant master at Eton 1850, housemaster 1853, resigned due to ill health 1860 and died at Eton 1871. Beatrice died 1919.**

*image Kirklees Museums & Galleries, Dewsbury Town Hall.*



The 1911 census shows that there were now two buildings on the site, the original Thistle Cottage and a new building, The House in the Wood. It is said that the house was bought by an elderly couple for their son who was serving in WW1 and who never returned. There is no proof of this suggestion and the story is best left unproven in the absence of confirmatory evidence.



*This image of The House in the Wood is comes from the Lightbox file on the house.*



The plaque in the Lady Chapel

The Lightbox have a file on The House in the Wood which contains a note by Mrs MJ Richardson who lived in the house as a child with her parents and her three brothers. She describes the house as an attractive, fair sized, family house and remembers six happy years there. A lot of what we know about the house has been taken from Mrs Richardson's note.

Arthur Bellin and his wife are said to have collected a number of items on their travels in Europe which found their way into the newly built house. These items included green glazed pantiles, Delft tiles surrounding the open fireplace in the white panelled drawing room, fire baskets and the heavy wrought iron door fittings. The 10<sup>th</sup> century plaque from Ishia in Italy which Mrs Bellin gave to nearby All Saints church in 1907 for the Lady Chapel there must also have come from this source. Some one who went inside the house but only into the kitchen described it as a very large Victorian/Edwardian kitchen with very high ceilings and very high cupboards and distinctly remembers a servants bell on the wall with the rooms highlighted (per Kevin Smith). Whilst probably not an authentic Arts & Crafts house The House in the Wood was certainly built with

that movement in mind. It is difficult to believe today that the site once contained a putting green, tennis court and a well kept rose garden.

Beatrice Bellin died in 1919 and husband Arthur in 1925. Mr Leslie Bellin-Carter, Arthur's executor and nephew, took over the house on his retirement as art master at Wellington College. For a time the Bellins' housekeeper, Miss Leach, continued to live there and ran it as a guest house moving into Thistle Cottage on her retirement.

The Richardsons then moved into The House in the Wood. Mrs Richardson's father was Mr HOM Herbert one time headmaster of Knaphill Secondary School and a Woking Urban District Councillor who rented the house between 1932 and 1938.

An agreement with the Earl of Onslow dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 1932 allowed the placing of a water pipe on the Earl's land.

Leslie Bellin-Carter sold The House in the Wood and Thistle Cottage to Edward Douglas Money of Chobham on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1957 for £5350. It would seem that the house remained largely empty becoming a target for vandals not helped by its isolated position.

The Woking News & Mail reported in its issue of 25<sup>th</sup> November 1966 that *the owner of the derelict House in the Wood, Monument Road has been traced. He is Mr ED Money of ... Chobham who bought the house for his son when he returned from abroad.* It would appear that this story is largely apocryphal and can be ignored.

Woking Urban District refused two planning applications in 1967, on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1967 for the demolition of both houses and the erection of four detached houses and later that year for the building of just two houses on the 21<sup>st</sup> November.

By 17<sup>th</sup> April 1968 Thistle Cottage had gone destroyed it is said by fire and The House in the Wood remained on the site being acquired by the Urban District Council on 14<sup>th</sup> May that year for £5350. By paying the same amount as had been expended by Mr Money when he purchased the site in 1957 presumably the Council felt this was a fair price given that it had refused the two planning applications for development.

Appendix A lists the occupiers or owners of the two houses shown in the directories published by the Woking News & Mail between 1919 and 1948. Experience has shown that entries were not always up to date. Subsequently following public concern about the danger arising out of the state of the house the building was demolished by the Borough Council. Thistle Cottage is said have been destroyed by fire caused by vandals. Woking Borough Council gave notice in the Woking News & Mail of 12<sup>th</sup> January 1995 that they had applied to the Secretary of State for the Environment under the Inclosure Acts 1845-1882 and Commons Act 1899 for the exchange of Lands between Brewery Road car park for certain other lands belonging to the Council consisting of the Thistle Cottage/House in the Wood site and Land at Cartchers Farm.



*image Dr. Richard & Mrs Rosemary Christophers*  
Footings at the site in February 2008

Sources

1834 survey of the parish of Horsell (SHC reference 2283/7/1)  
Census returns 1841-1911  
Dr. Richard and Mrs Rosemary Christophers  
Horsell Common Preservation Society  
[Kirklees Museums & Galleries, Dewsbury Town Hall](#)  
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Edward Ryde’s 1851 survey of Horsell parish  
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**Appendix A**

Occupiers/Owners of Thistle Cottage and The House in the Wood as  
shown in Directories published by the Woking News & Mail 1919-1948

Year	Thistle_Cottage	The House in the Wood
1911 – 1925	no entry	Arthur Bellin
1921	James Brown*	no entry
1923 – 1925	Mr PW Giles	no entry
1926	D Brigden	no entry
1926 - 1948	no entry	Miss BK Leach.
1927 – 1929	Mr J Crockford	no entry

1930 – 1936	Mr FO Cornelius	no entry
1938	no entry	Mr HOM Herbert
1948	no entry	L Bellin Carter
1948	Miss BK Leach and Mr WG Atkins**	no entry

\*Is this the same J Brown(e) as shown on p7 above?

\*\*Hannah Lane mentions that she met a William Atkins in connection with her History of Ottershaw whose wife's family lived at the House in the Wood in the 1950's. Although it was his wife's family who lived there it may be that the newly married couple remained there for a while albeit in Thistle Cottage after they were married and William Atkins and WG Atkins are one and the same person.