

WILLIAM PINK – A Life of Shade

You wouldn't think, anyone named Pink, could be so hard to find?

But there's shade in his story, so William's nearly forty, 'fore he's of any other kind.

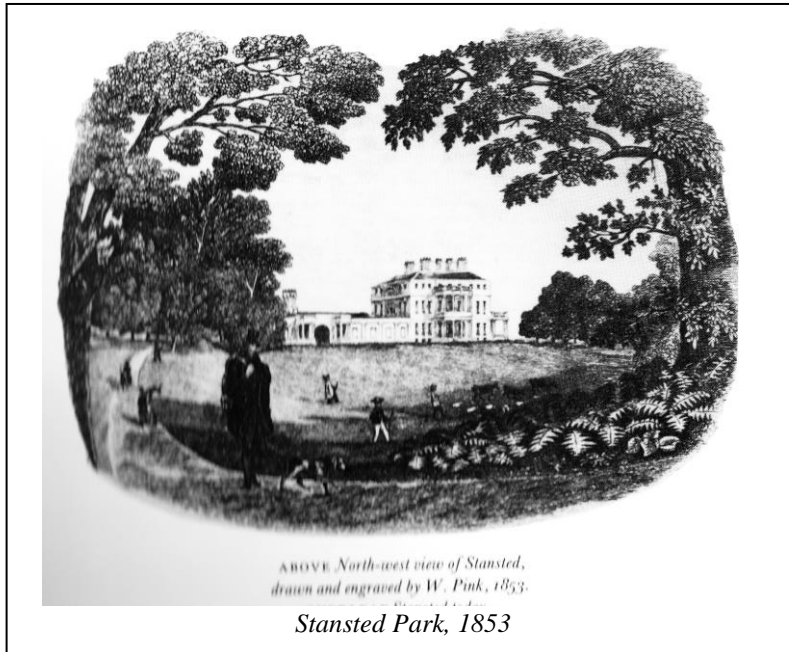
1 851, it's a landmark year. Having witnessed periods of violent disorder in continental Europe, and itself emerging from some two decades of social unrest, the UK mounts the Great Exhibition to display to the world, the peace, progress and prosperity of Britain. To show Britain as the land of promise and opportunity is the nation's hope, but back in Emsworth, it is already becoming a reality. The town, prospering from the construction of the railway just four years earlier, is about to see its population increase from around 1,500 in 1850, to about 2,000 in 1890 due in part to people attracted by promise and opportunity.

It's 1851, and William Pink is one of these people, I believe. At least the 1851 Census is the first recording of his presence in the town that I have been able to find, although it's probably true that he arrived a little earlier. Born in Warnford, Hampshire in around 1811, William Pink is baptized in Warnford on 8th August 1813 (although he consistently gives this as 1814 in the census records of 1851-71). His parents are Thomas (bap. 31.10.1784, with no parents listed) and Lydia Wadmore (bap. 6.04.1788, Corhampton, registered mother Lydia, but noted as illegitimate). In the 1851 Census, William is recorded as living in Hayfield Lodge, Warblington, (later to become Emsworth House School on what is now Havant Road, Emsworth) and working as a butler to Margaret Henville, a widow aged 50, who employs four other staff. Until this census, the only other possible reference to William that I have found comes in the 1841 Census where he is likely to be the butler listed as serving John and Francis Noris (just one "r", but two in the 1851 Census) in Cheriton, near Alresford. If William had had a shady past then he would no doubt have been easier to uncover. William's past, however, seems to have been spent in the shade, and that's an investigator's nightmare.

Anyway, he's a butler. But this is 1851, a landmark year, and no less such a year for William Pink. He is around 37 with a comfortable career seemingly mapped out in butlery. However it's in this remarkable year that, perhaps sensing the national mood, he emerges from the shade of his past to begin the realization of a dream, to form a close and everlasting friendship, and to find romance. Yes all these things come to William Pink in 1851. The promise of Emsworth, eh!

William's dream, it seems, is to be an artist, actually an engraver to be precise. In 1851 he produces what I believe to be his first two prints. The first of these is a certificate entitled "Importance of Punctuality". It is a strange production, a little naïve in its execution, which might have been expected given that he was probably entirely self-taught. Nevertheless shining through the considerable detail of the engraving, and the numerous cartouches and vignettes involved, is the light of a great passion and commitment for the task. Quite what was the reason for this work is a matter of conjecture. It has been suggested that it may have been a sampler or apprentice piece, to illustrate his abilities in his newly chosen profession. The certificate contains the dedication "Most Respectfully dedicated, by permission, to Mr Tho^s Francis (Butler) of Stansted House, Sussex" which could possibly indicate a different motivation.

In 1851, Thomas Francis had been butler at Stansted House, West Sussex, for approximately ten years. He and his wife Dorothy (nee Munro) had moved there shortly after their marriage in the parish of St George, Hanover Square, London in 1841. At the time of their marriage they were living/working at the same address in Hertford Street, London, but by the time of the 1841 Census they had taken up their respective positions of butler and cook at Stansted. The owner of Stansted House over the period 1826 -1855, was Charles Dixon, a noted



philanthropist, supporter of good and charitable deeds, and one time High Sheriff of Sussex. Perhaps, as a good employer, Charles Dixon commissioned the certificate in recognition of Thomas Francis' ten years of service? We may never know, but by one means or another, William Pink's work becomes known to Charles Dixon, for William's second print (I am assuming this to be the order of production) of 1851 is "*Stansted House, Sussex, seat of C. Dixon Esq*". Charles Dixon may have commissioned both,

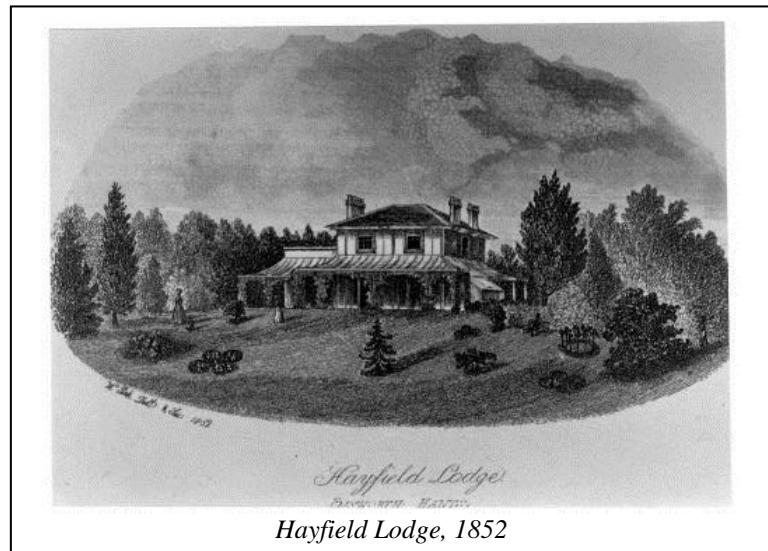
either or none, of these prints. Who knows? Whatever, we do know of the existence of two original issues of the Stansted House print and both can be seen at the house. This apparent digression to Stansted House and its butler is nothing of the sort. It turns out to be the point around which the building revolution in William Pink's life takes place.

William Pink is on his way. In 1852 he produces two more prints, one of Westbourne Church (available to see in West Sussex Record Office, Chichester) and one of Hayfield Lodge (shown below) where he was registered as butler in 1851. In 1853 William publishes four prints, one of which is another view of Stansted (shown). This particular print occurs as the frontispiece of the book "*Enchanted Forest*" by Lord Bessborough with Clive Aslet but I have not as yet been able to track down an original copy of the print. A list of those twenty-odd prints I have discovered (I do not claim to have seen original copies) may be seen in Emsworth Museum, and I am grateful to a number of people who have helped in the task. The list is still a work in progress, so any contributions to it are most welcome. As usual the search is not aided by the lack of credit given to the originator of the print. Hantsphere, for example, tends to credit the print to the person who has taken the photograph that is eventually loaded onto their website. Looking at my current list of Pink's prints reveals some quirks. It is strange, for example, that although William produced an engraving of Havant Railway Station in 1858, he does not appear to have produced a corresponding one for Emsworth. In fact Emsworth appears to be generally under-represented in the list given that he typically "signs" a print as "W Pink, Emsworth". Another curiosity is the frequent inclusion of the imprint "Drawn from Nature and engraved by". William Pink seems to pride himself on the use of his own original drawings, rather than trust other artist's pictures.

William continued to flourish as an engraver through to 1861, when he declares himself as such in the Census of that year. At this point, however, he slips under the radar somewhat,

only to appear again with two stunning large scale prints entitled “*Cricket match at Stansted*”, in 1874 and “*The Meet*”, in 1876. Both these prints are reproduced in “*Enchanted Forest*”, while the originals are at Stansted House itself. These two prints together with the certificate/sampler of 1851 are the only large prints I have unearthed. Also, I have not as yet discovered a reason for the 13 year break in William Pink’s publication record. I’m hopeful that more prints will be found to fill in this and other voids.

The 1861 and 1871 Census records for both William Pink and Thomas Francis give interesting insights into their lives. At some point around 1855 William leaves service at Hayfield House, but does not move far away. He lives a little further along Warblington Road (now Emsworth Road, Havant). The actual property is listed as “Warblington Villa” in 1871 and he may have moved next door, to “Walberton Villa” sometime before 1881. On the 1898 Ordnance Survey map these



properties are shown adjacent to Glebe Manor on its Havant side and opposite Denvilles House and not a hundred yards from today’s Spring Centre, Havant. According to the 1861 Census, Thomas Francis, too, has left service at Stansted House, and has now moved a little closer to Emsworth than William Pink, in fact to Havant Road, Emsworth, at what is now No.14. These are all substantial properties and where the money came from to fund William and Thomas’ lifestyle changes is still a mystery to me.

It’s rarely correct to assume close neighbours are close friends, and these are hardly close neighbours. However there is more than enough evidence to verify the suggestion that they were very close friends. Note for instance that in 1859, with the nation again worried by possible war with France (not an envisaged part of the Great Exhibition legacy), William Pink and Thomas Francis attended a preliminary meeting of the Havant and Emsworth Volunteer Rifle Corps (Hampshire Telegraph 3rd Dec.) and felt sufficiently moved to make donations of one guinea and ten shillings respectively. With Thomas age 63 and William age 48, there is more than a touch of “Captain Mainwaring” about this episode, which may be verified by reading the reports of the meetings of the Corps appearing in the Hampshire Telegraph. A more relevant indicator of the closeness of their friendship is the record from the Census of 1861 that William Pink is married. His wife, Sarah, took a little time to trace, but good old library habits (the book you need is next to the one you’re looking for) came into play, and by such means Sarah’s birth details were found to correspond exactly to those of Sarah Jackson the listed Housekeeper at Stansted in 1851. It seems that while beavering away on etchings of Stansted House, William was quietly working on another project – or maybe it was the other way round? At any rate, their relationship blossomed over some five years or so, and finally resulted in their marriage in 1856, despite Sarah being thirteen years William’s senior. A marriage made in Heaven? Nearly, but not quite – more like the enchanted forest, Stansted!

Sarah Jackson is living at an address in Hertford Street in the St George’s registration district in London in the 1841 Census. This is the same year that Thomas and Dorothy Francis are married, and Hertford Street is their declared joint address on their wedding certificate. In all

probability then the three of them were acquainted with each other at this time, and it is highly probable that the Francis's played some role in Sarah's subsequent appointment as Housekeeper at Stansted.

The departure of the three most senior staff from Stansted at around the middle of the 1850s has a possible connection with uncertainty of employment there, Charles Dixon having died in 1855. Unfortunately Dorothy Francis did not survive in her new life for very long, dying age 57 on 11.04.1859. This means of course that she does not appear in the 1861 Census. However there is evidence to suggest that she did make the move to Havant Road, for she was buried at Warblington Church, and is recorded as being of Warblington in the Record of Churchyard Memorial Inscriptions (Headstone record no. SW196). Thomas Francis re-married some eighteen months later, in the third quarter of 1860, and so it is his second wife Ellen, 18 years his junior, who appears on the 1861 Census return. In 1861, the Pink household includes William, Sarah, William's father Thomas (now age 80 and a widower), William's sister Mary (aged 35 and a widow), and a servant. It is the detail of this return that confirms that the William Pink I've been talking about is the one baptized in Warnford on 8th August 1813 (despite the consistent census declaration of 1814) and of father, Thomas.

From the 1871 Census, it is seen that William Pink is living alone with his wife Sarah, and that they are employing one servant, as they have done since they married. The real surprise in 1871, however, is contained in the Francis household where there is listed a second Thomas Francis who is recorded as "son". There had been no reference to such a person living with the Francis' at Stansted in the 1851 Census, nor living with Thomas Francis in Warblington Road (now Havant Road, Emsworth) in the 1861 Census. Thomas Francis Jnr's birth was registered by his father Thomas Francis (presumably he of Stansted) in Havant in the third quarter of 1844 (no mother named), and in 1851 a six year-old Thomas Jnr is shown to be living in Westbourne with three single middle aged women (two sisters and a cousin). At this moment, I guess your nose is pointing in the same direction as mine on the explanation of this situation. If it is then we would all be wrong! I don't know why I didn't do this sooner, but looking at the baptism record at Warblington shows his mother to be Dorothy Francis and that no doubt conceals sadness. Notice that Thomas Jnr's birth comes just three years after Thomas senior's marriage to Dorothy Munro and about the same length of time that the two had been in post at Stansted. Presumably therefore they were in a position where the child could not be accommodated at Stansted, and with their livelihood threatened, Thomas Snr and Dorothy took the unenviable decision to "foster" out their son. On the question of where the money came from to pay for all of this, I have not been able to make progress.

Although our evidence thus far indicates close friendship, it is through their deaths that the true depth of this relationship between these four people is revealed. In 1871 Sarah Pink dies age 71 on 22nd October, shortly after the 1871 Census point. As with Dorothy Francis (nee Munro), Sarah Pink is buried at Warblington Church in the recorded grave SW198. Thomas Francis dies age 80 in 1876, while William Pink dies age 67 in 1880. Both Thomas Francis and William Pink are buried at Warblington in the recorded graves SW197 and SW 199 respectively. These four people dying over a period of 21 years and then being interred in immediately adjacent graves is due reference to a deep and permanent attachment, which is simultaneously both metaphorical and literal.

William Pink died in 1880, and so does not have an 1881 Census record. Had he survived another year the Census would have shown something I only discovered on finding his headstone. Appropriately for William the headstone lies in one of the shadiest parts of the graveyard and is difficult to read. However, according to the Church Records, William re-

married in 1875 and it is his second wife Mary Ann, eleven years his junior, who shares his grave SW199 in the churchyard. Call me romantic, but I was a little saddened by this event.

Then again there have been a number of highs and lows throughout the researching of William Pink. Disappointments at not being able to unravel his early life, caused by the shade of his past, have been tempered by the joys of finding another Pink print. Imagine, for example, the high of my finding of the last print, and one of my last discoveries of any new information on William Pink. It was William's "first" production, the certificate/sampler. Shade may have been a recurring theme throughout his life, limiting a full telling of his story, but it is enlightenment that comes from the shade provided in his prints. I hope people will properly reference them in future. Though the feel-good factor of 1851 soon evaporated across the nation, as evidenced by the need to feel protected by the Havant and Emsworth Volunteer Rifle Corps, it is clear that the feeling continued much longer within the mind of William Pink.

*Now what do you think of William Pink, the man with a shaded past?
He comes to light, so shade he might, an age gone by to last.*

A Clive Pugh

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