

Ightham Mote, Ivy Hatch, Sevenoaks, Kent.

This moated manor house was built in 1330 with additions through 1500. It survived during Oliver Cromwell's time only because his troops could not locate it and so raided another house instead. Believed to be one of the best-preserved medieval houses in the country, it has been the home to many important people although none were royalty. In approximately 1346, Robert Cawne, who fought alongside the Black Prince at Crècy, France, inherited the home from his father, Sir Thomas Cawne. During Elizabeth I's reign, the Lord Mayor of London hid his catholic wife at Ightham Mote in an attempt to protect her from the Protestant queen.

Queen Palmer and her daughters moved into Ightham Mote in 1886, and particularly enjoyed the home referring to it as my "dearly beloved Mote." During their stay at the Mote,

John Singer Sargent painted a portrait of Elsie Palmer and also included her in another painting called A Game of Bowls. The portrait has Elsie seated in a chair in front of beautifully carved wooden panels for which the Mote is known. The portrait of Elsie now hangs in the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. The second painting, A Game of Bowls is exhibited at The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

General Palmer was worried that his family was living in a cold, drafty place but Queen answered his concerns in a letter "...this place is not damp in the autumn - and the children are in splendid health..." However, they would later have to leave the Mote and were unhappy at doing so, as Elsie writes in her journal, "Last place I sat on at the Mote, was the first place I had sat on there: the bench under the little fir tree, looking across the lake to the house..."



Blackdown Cottage, Haslemere, Surrey

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The Palmers were not the only Americans to love the Mote. The last owner was an American named Charles Henry Robinson. Robinson first saw the home as he bicycled around the countryside and fell in love with it. When the home came on the market years later, he purchased it with every good intention of making it his permanent home but the refurbishment was too costly. He died in 1985 and left it to the National Trust. During recent renovations, shoes have been found in the walls at the mote. They were usually placed at the weakest point of entry such as above fireplaces, doorways and under the stairs. The intent was to keep evil spirits from entering the house.

Blackdown Cottage, Haslemere, Surrey.

During the late 1800s, the areas of Haslemere and Hindhead districts hosted many artistic and literary people. As recorded in the Windsor

Magazine in 1898, Blackdown Cottage was the home of Frederic Harrison, a famous English author. He lived in the home from 1888 to 1897, and wrote many of his best works in the summerhouse. Records show that Queen Palmer and family also lived briefly at Blackdown Cottage from April 1st until September 30th, 1890. It is possible that Harrison leased his home to the Palmers while he took refuge in the summerhouse. Or perhaps he traveled from April until September and took advantage of renting his home. In any case, there is little information about the Palmers' stay at this location but its style and setting would have appealed to Queen, who sought a quiet and serene life for her family. The house itself is Jacobean in style with several fluted chimneys and a fine brick wall surrounding the garden. There are exposed wooden beams in the ceilings and walls of the house and excellent stonework around the fireplaces. The area surrounding the cottage has a won-



Blackdown Cottage, Haslemere, Surrey



Loseley Park, Guildford, Surrey

derful view of the Blackdown Hills, which belong to the National Trust.

Loseley Park, Guildford, Surrey.

Sir William More, a trusted advisor to Queen Elizabeth I, built Loseley Park from 1562-1568. Most of the stone used to build Loseley came from the ruins of Cistercian Waverley Abbey, which had been destroyed by King Henry VIII. Queen Elizabeth visited Loseley on at least four occasions and it was one of her favorite places to visit. There is an inscription on the inner door of the Entrance Hall in Latin. Loosely translated it reads: "I am shut to envy, but always open to a friend." The home is full of exquisite art, furniture, tapestries and paneling from King Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace. The library has another inscription in Latin: "I soothe troubled minds and while away the centuries."

Over the years, Loseley Park has retained its beauty and character. The original garden wall complete with archways can still be seen on the North East side of the home. A secret pas-

sage that once led from the mote to the cellars of Loseley Park has been sealed for many years.

An archivist from the Surrey Historical Society notes that the More-Molyneux family who owned Loseley Park during the late 1800s had trouble maintaining the large property and probably leased the property to the Palmers, although no records (other than Queen's letters to the General) can be found of their occupancy.

The Palmers moved into Loseley Park on April 20th, 1892, and described it as a "graceful, Elizabethan" home. A friend and architect, Fred Jamieson, supervised the alterations to the home as Elsie notes in her diary. "Today Mother and I moved into Loseley...Helen Mellen and Fred (Jamieson) came with us...the dining room and my future bedroom are in the greatest state of confusion...felt a little badly (sic) at leaving the dear cottage... (Oak Cottage, Frant, Sussex).

Queen Palmer was known to have entertained many artistic and literary people while she lived in England. We know that John Singer



Loseley Park, Guildford, Surrey

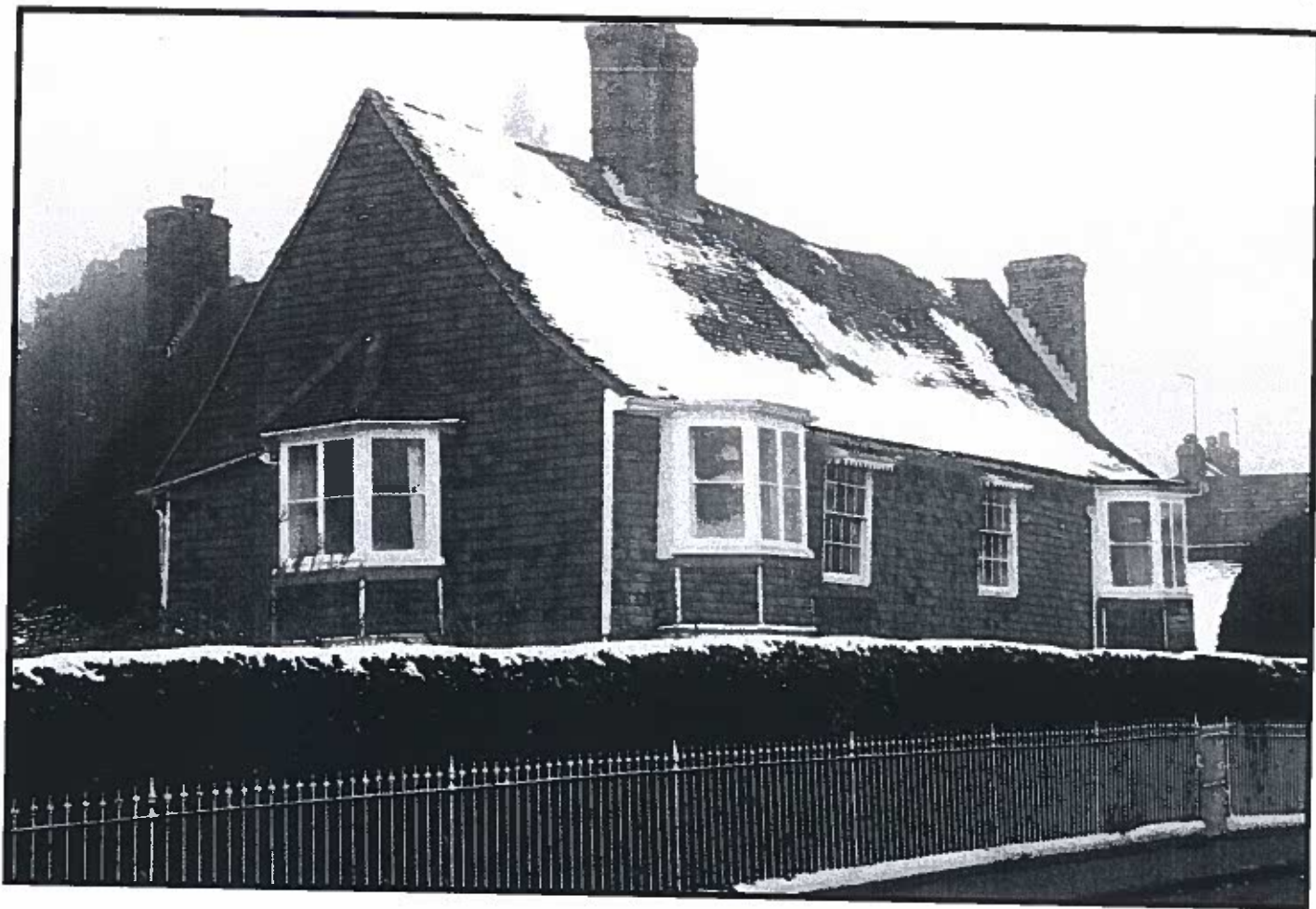
Sargent, the famous painter was a good friend as was Henry James who lived in Rye, East Sussex. James's friends believed he retreated to Rye to escape the criticism he found in London. He was unable to accept negative comments about his works and when his play *Guy Domville* was jeered and heckled off stage, he was mortified. Another blow came when his novel *The Europeans* was given back to him unread by G.H. Lewes. These two incidents affected him greatly and he left London to find solace on the south coast of England.

Oak Cottage, Frant, Sussex.

It appears from letters, journals and diaries that the Palmers lived at Oak Cottage from November 1, 1890 until 1892. Then, when Loseley Park became available, they left the "dear cottage" to take residence at the stately manor house in Surrey. However, as General Palmer's investments floundered, the family returned to Oak Cottage in 1893, and it would become the last residence of the Palmers.

Oak Cottage was built during the 1500s and is the oldest building in the village of Frant. It originally belonged to an ancient family called the Gyles but was sold and leased over the centuries to many people. In 1893, the Palmers leased Oak Cottage where they had previously lived from November 1, 1890 until 1892. It appears that Queen's health deteriorated rapidly during the latter part of 1894 and she took to her upstairs rooms in an attempt to protect her daughters from seeing her in a distressed condition.

Elsie had recently returned to England from Colorado Springs where she had visited her father. For years Queen had prepared her eldest daughter to assume the responsibilities of caring for her younger sisters should her worst fears materialize. On Christmas day, 1894, Elsie wrote a letter to her mother thanking her for her gift. "Good Morning - my own darling Motherling: I can write you - now - though I can't talk to you because it tires you. It was a splendid stocking! And the dress doesn't need a single alteration. I



Oak Cottage, Frant, Sussex

wonder if you think we are not having a happy Xmas – because we are – dearest Motherling – and we feel your presence with us every second. It’s wonderful how you do that! And all your little thoughts for people’s pleasure – come showering downstairs to every one; and are kept close all the time – almost as if you were there.....Your own Elsie.”

Elsie notified her father of the sad turn of events regarding her mother’s health and he left Colorado Springs immediately. Unfortunately, he did not arrive in time to be at his wife’s side at her death. She died on December 27, 1894, at the age of forty-four years, having lived half her married life apart from her husband.

General Palmer returned to Colorado Springs with his three daughters and they settled into life at Glen Eyrie. In 1907, an unfortunate riding accident left the General paralyzed and he died two years later with his three daughters at his side.

It is likely that Queen was buried in the churchyard of St. Albans, Frant since it is the only church in the parish. There are no church records of Queen’s burial but an archivist in the village suggested that as Queen was disinterred in approximately 1911, and her remains shipped to Colorado Springs, it is likely her gravesite was reused.

General and Queen Palmer now lie together at their raised plot in Evergreen Cemetery, Colorado Springs.