

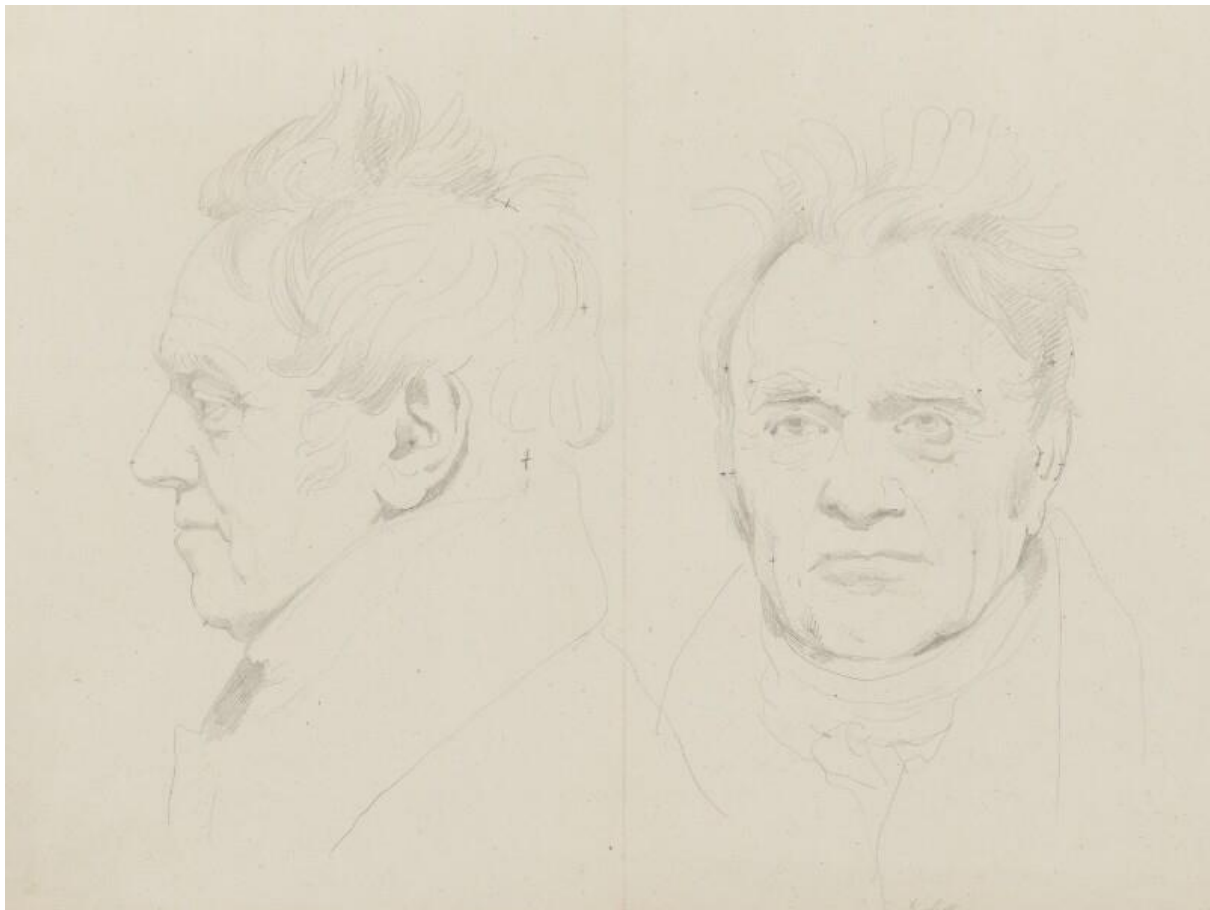
## James Scott of Bromley, Surgeon 1770 – 1848

### Dr Scott of Bromley

by Linda Baldwin

**Mr James Scott**, seems to have left very little impression as a private individual. Inhabitants of Shortlands may wonder who Scott was to have a road, previously called Shortlands Lane, named for him. They may be told he was a “famous doctor”, but few will know much more.

**James Scott** was baptised in 1770 at Royston, Hertfordshire, the youngest child of John Scott, a yeoman, and his wife Priscilla (Bowell). Like his older siblings, Sarah (1762 - before 1786), John (1764) and Ann (1766), he was baptised in the Old Meeting House (later the Congregational church). James was orphaned at the age of 16 when both parents died within 2 years and was left £15 and a share of possessions in his father’s will.



**James Scott** by Sir Francis Leggatt Chantrey 1831-1832 ©National Portrait Gallery

Sketch for a plaster model (Ashmolean Museum) and marble bust (Royal College of Surgeons of England)

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At 14 he was apprenticed to Mr Nunn, a surgeon in Royston and, having served his apprenticeship, became a pupil at the London Hospital. To enable him to pay for his tuition, he also worked as an assistant to Mr Hynam, surgeon of Ratcliffe Highway, and later as resident medical officer to the Eastern Dispensary, a charitable hospital on Leman Street. Sir William Blizard, surgeon, fellow of the Royal Society and President and lecturer on surgery and anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons noted Scott's promise as a surgeon. Before completion of his studies Scott was selected to temporarily practice in Bromley, Kent while the established general practitioner and surgeon, Mr Bradshaw, was severely ill. He was so successful that Bradshaw urged him to join his practice on completion of his studies in 1792. Soon after entering Bradshaw's practice, which was opposite "The Royal Bell" and close to other hostelrys offering accommodation on the busy coaching route, Scott obtained the full practice on Bradshaw's retirement.

Having increased the income of the practice 5-fold in the first few years and wishing to concentrate on the treatment of diseases of joints and ulceration, Scott entered into partnership with another surgeon practising in the town. Mr Taynton was to take on the general practice and midwifery work. Scott became nationally well known for his successful treatment of joint diseases. In later life he remarked that he never visited a town of any size without meeting a former patient (The Lancet, 1849).

His fame and good results earned him a handsome profit, estimated at over £10,000 annually (in excess of £1million equivalent in 2020) in addition to "tokens of gratitude" received from patients of high rank and wealth.

In about 1829 he retired to his residence in Clay Hill, an area between Chancery Lane, Beckenham and Shortlands, but continued to see a few favoured patients at his home.

From early in his career he was known to give medicines and treatment without remuneration if the patient was unable to afford them, paying for medicines from his own purse. He also performed all treatments personally whether dressings, manipulations or surgery and remained fascinated with medicine and the new learning and methods of his own and of the medical establishment in the treatment of conditions previously deemed incurable, such as venous ulcers and diseases of the joints.

His methods were credited in "Principles of Surgery" by James Miller of Edinburgh: "one of our first modern surgical authorities" according to The Lancet. Miller confirmed that the medical establishment referred to the treatment for ulceration as "Scott's Dressing".

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In 1823 a newspaper report of the trial and execution at Maidstone of two men found guilty of murder concludes that one of the coffined bodies had been “presented” by the high sheriff to “Dr Scott of Bromley”. The Murder Act 1752 restricted dissection to the corpses of executed murderers and these were given to surgeons for research and anatomy lessons. Eventually the number of murderers’ corpses was insufficient for the growing number of hospitals training surgeons which resulted in the illicit trade in corpses being stolen from new graves by “resurrection men”. The Anatomy Act 1832 provided for the use of donated bodies for legitimate medical use.

James Scott did not write papers or books to leave for posterity, preferring to discuss the latest treatments and successes with others of his profession.

In an article entitled “Chronic Inflammation” of 1828 John Scott, the son of James Scott, describes his father “Mr, or as he is generally called, Dr Scott, of Bromley, has been celebrated during the last quarter of a century for his success in curing scrofulous [a bacterial disease] complaints, obstinate diseases of the joints, and long-running ulcers, that have defied every change of climate and the whole art of the surgeon.” “His practice was peculiar [uncommon], if not a secret; which, together with his great success, caused him to be looked somewhat invidiously on by the profession.” John Scott proceeds to explain his father’s methods.

First, blood-letting for active inflammation. This would have reduced the tension of the fluid pooling in the afflicted limb. It is interesting that modern medicine is coming back to the idea of using leeches (*Hirudo medicinalis*) to improve blood supply by removing clots from small vessels around a wound following surgery.

However, “for chronic inflammation, or slow inflammation of long standing” mechanical support in the form of splints and bandages and the “local application of mercurial ointment” was used.

This is alarming to modern readers, knowing that mercury employed in tooth filling amalgam, antiseptics and treatments for skin disease as late as the 1980s is considered harmful to health. Mercury has a long medicinal history and was described by Aristotle in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was known that ingesting mercury caused poisoning, but mercury, or its red ore cinnabar, was known to relieve skin complaints when mixed into a salve or ointment and applied to the skin. The author of this piece, John Scott, was an eminent ophthalmologist (eye surgeon) who, like others of his profession, used mercury at The Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital (Moorfields Hospital) to cure inflammation of the iris and cornea.

The third method employed by James Scott was based on the understanding of the body as a mechanical structure. His son quotes him: “The vein, being greatly dilated, its valves become

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unequal to their office, and can no longer sustain the column of blood which it contains; the consequent gravitation of fluid impedes the circulation in the minute venous ramifications, whence congestions an effusion of serum, and finally ulceration. On this theory of the disease, the limb is supported, adhesive plaster and bandages are generally applied to it, so as to cover the greater part of the limb; the vital power in the veins gradually becomes able to lift the superincumbent column; the circulation is improved; the local disease disappears; and the general health, deteriorated by the defective circulation of the diseased limb, is gradually restored. So far, the means of cure are as simple and plain, as the theory of the disease is obvious.”

The difference between Dr Scott’s treatment of leg ulcers and that of his peers was that he insisted that bandaging should start with the toes and progress up the leg to push the “congestion” away from the foot towards the healthy blood vessels. He was also an early advocate of raising the affected limb to reduce pressure on the weakened blood vessels and tissues. We are now told to Rest, Ice, Compress, and Elevate “RICE” injured joints.

In 1831, James wrote a letter to The Lancet signed “James Scott M.D. Junior Surgeon, etc., Royal Hospital”.

From 1840 newspapers across the land carried advertisements for “Dr Scott’s Bilious and Liver Pills” described as “from the recipe of Dr Scott of Bromley, who was much indebted to these pills for the celebrity he obtained ... and which have stood the test of public opinion nearly half a century.” The adverts appeared nationwide until 1879, some 30 years after his death.

### **Private Life**

James was born on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1770. His parents, John Scott, a yeoman, and his wife Priscilla (Bowell), had already baptised three older children between 1762 and 1766 at the non-conformist Old Meeting House in Royston. At the time of their father’s death in 1787, only John, Ann (Mayne) and James are mentioned in his will, also a granddaughter, Hester Mortlock. Priscilla had died two years before.

It was noted that he was not polished in his manner but, according to the author of his obituary, he had immense confidence in himself and possessed “a most happy and successful method of imparting this buoyant, hopeful feeling to his patients, whose confidence and attachment he rarely failed in gaining.”

When he was 21, James married Mary Robinson. The Banns were read during October 1791 at St Botolph Church, Aldgate, about a mile from the Royal London Hospital. Both parties are described as “of this parish”. James and Mary had three children christened in Bromley. Ann, 24 Apr 1795, Mary,

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1 May 1797 and John, 21 March 1799. Ann married James William Ogle in 1824, Mary died aged 4 years 7 months in 1801. John married Susanna Louisa St John, daughter of J.F.S. Fleming St John, Canon of Worcester. John followed his father into the medical profession and received a gentleman's education at Sevenoaks and Charterhouse and served his apprenticeship under Sir William Blizzard, surgeon, lecturer on surgery and anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons and fellow of the Royal Society.

The family may initially have lived "above the shop" in Bromley High Street, but in about 1829 James and Mary retired to a house on Clay Hill (now called Bromley Road), Shortlands once part of Cator's lands in the parish of Beckenham. A Tithe Apportionment Book of 1832 shows Dr James Scott at resident in 13 acres of land with further acres leased to him. His house was simply known as "Scott's House" in the environs of The Oakery at Clay Hill. Dr Scott is said to have continued to hold consultations with some of his favoured patients at this house.

James, his son John and his son-in-law, James Ogle, can be found in various newspaper reports attending society functions and fund-raising dinners.

The London Ophthalmic Infirmary (Moorfields) advertised its intention to hold a public dinner for benevolent donors at The Albion Tavern at Aldgate Street in July 1834. Both James and John Scott are listed as stewards of this event from whom tickets could be purchased at the cost of £1. The event must have been successful in its aims to attract funding to treat up to 5,000 patients annually, as similar advertisements appeared annually. (British Newspaper Archive)

In June 1838, The Brighton Gazette reported in the "Fashionable Chronicle" that Dr Scott of Bromley and Mr Ogle were among the arrivals at the fashionable Pegg's Royal York Hotel in the town. In December of that year reports were published of the second flight of Mr Green's gigantic silk hot air balloon from Vauxhall Gardens pleasure ground. The balloon ascended at 5 p.m. to the sound of "martial music" and watched by a multitude of spectators within the pleasure grounds and along Millbank and Vauxhall Bridge which was "almost impassable". After a flight of about two hours, during which time "a young horse attached to a break" at Kennington Oval had become skittish at the unusual sight and sound, the magnificent balloon with 18 passengers in the "handsome and tasteful" decorated car or basket "the party descended safely in a field belonging to Dr Scott in Kent" "between Bromley and Beckenham". One of the gentlemen returned to Vauxhall "at precisely 8 o'clock. Mr Green arrived at about ten o'clock with the balloon." (British Newspaper Archive)

James and John Scott are again listed as stewards for the sale of tickets (20 shillings) for the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner for the Artists' Benevolent Fund at the Freemasons' Hall in May 1843.

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In 1841 the Census shows Ann and James Ogle and their six children and eight indoor servants at “The Hall” (now St Christopher’s School) in Clay Hill in the next house on the enumerator’s route to 70-year-old James and Mary. Mary died in 1842 and on James’ death in 1848 he left his house and the additional lands on the other side of Clay Hill “which I purchased of Mr Cator” (c1837) to his only surviving child, Ann Ogle. She and her husband bought and demolished The Oakery (c1842), and built a new house called “Oakwood” between The Hall and Scott’s House. Unlike The Hall and The Oakery, the new house was situated well back from Bromley Road and “Scott’s Road”, which was formerly on maps as Shortlands Lane. An engraving of 1838, said to be The Oakery, shows an impressive house with a crenelated roofline and a large glasshouse surrounded by manicured gardens and a gardener, dragging a heavy grass roller behind him to make stripes in the lawn after mowing. (Bromley Historic Collections)

James and Mary are buried at St Peter and St Paul church in Bromley. An inscription on the south wall, under the gallery was transcribed in 1914/15: *“In a vault in the church yard lie the remains of James SCOTT Esqre many years resident in this Parish. He was born on the 8th day of January 1770 and died on the 3rd day of December 1848 deeply lamented by many whom he had benefited by his consummate skill as a surgeon, and to whom by his kind and amiable qualities he was endeared as a friend. Mary his wife not less beloved or less lamented is interred in the same vault. She was born on the 29th day of March 1771 and died on the 11th day of May 1842.”*

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### **John SCOTT (1799 – 1846)**

John worked with his father, Dr Scott of Bromley, after completing his medical studies. After his marriage in 1820 to Susanna Louisa St John, they returned to London as a member of The Royal College of Surgeons and was elected Surgeon to the London Ophthalmic Infirmary at Moorfields (now Moorfields Eye Hospital) in 1826. The following year he was elected assistant surgeon at the London Hospital before becoming a full surgeon in 1831. According to his entry in the Directory of National Biography (1922) “Scott was distinguished as a surgeon by the rapidity and by the general accuracy of his diagnosis. He displayed great decision and energy in the treatment of his patients.” He used the methods learned from his father in the treatment of joint disease and the relief of ulceration and was said to be “the most skilful bandager in London, at a time when bandaging in London hospitals was almost a fine art.”

He published works on the treatment of chronic inflammation, cataracts and neuralgia. Illness forced him to resign his post in 1845 and he died 4 months later on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1846 aged 47. He is buried at St Peter and St Paul church in Bromley, Kent with his wife and father-in-law.

In 1851 John Scott’s widow, Susanna Louisa Scott (née St John) was living at Church House, Bromley with Ann and James William Ogle’s two youngest children, Jessie and Katherina, and five servants. In 1861 she is still the Head of the Family at Church House with her brother, a vicar, and his wife and three children aged 12 – 21 and another niece and five servants.

On her death in 1863 Susanna, “Widow of the late John Scott of Penge Place, Sydenham, Kent” is hailed in the press for her charitable work for the religious and educational welfare of the poor. A bequest from the will of her husband of about £51,000 (£6.4 million equivalent 2020) was shared among six church, educational and missionary charities.

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### **Further reading:**

The Lancet: Obituary James Scott Volume IX p 156 - Google Books

The Dictionary of National Biography

Kent Archaeology: Monumental inscriptions – St Peter & St Paul Church Bromley

England & Wales Deaths 1837-2007: Parish records: Royston, Hertfordshire

The National Archives: England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858

The British Newspaper Collection

The London Metropolitan Archives

Bromley Borough Photo Archive

Len Hevey: Shortlands (1992)

Bromley Civic Society: Famous People Dr James Scott

Amy Smith: "What the doctors ordered: the early history of the London Hospital, 1740–78", for The Georgian Group Journal, Volume XXV, 2017

National Portrait Gallery: James Scott by Sir Francis Leggatt Chantrey 1831-1832

The Beauties of England and Wales Vol VIII, E W Brayley (1808)

Cary's New Itinerary: Or, An Accurate Delineation of the Great Roads (1828)

Kent Online Parish Clerk Bromley CMBs

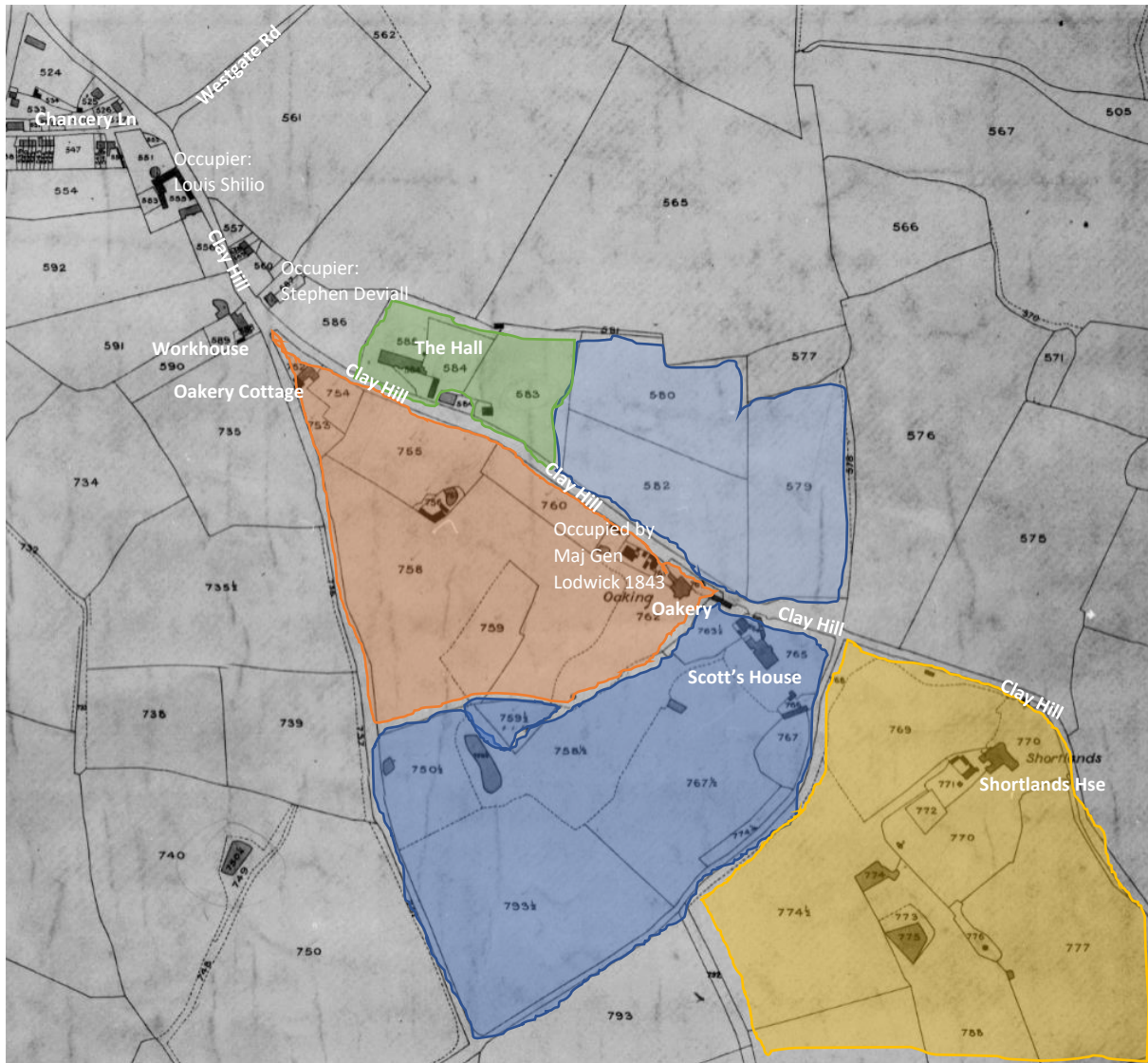
Beckenhamplaceparkfriends.org.uk "A Shortlands House History" Keith Baldwin



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## The conundrum of “Clay Hill”

Much confusion is caused by the use of the words “Clay Hill” in documents. It is variously an area; a road and a house depending on which document or map you are reading. Using the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries Tithe map and list of 1838 (The Genealogist) and the Census of 1841 I hope to clarify where the various houses were placed between Beckenham and Shortlands.



### Key:



Owned by James Scott



Owned by John Cator, leased to James Scott



Owned by John Cator, leased to James Ogle



Owned by Robert Gibson



Owned by Mrs Palmer and later by William A & Conrad Wilkinson

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### 1841 Census – Clay Hill (from Beckenham to Shortlands)

Oakery Cottage, Clay Hill	Robert Gibson (+ wife & 2 servants) - <i>Oakery Cottage</i>
[new household] Clay Hill	James Ogle (+ wife, 5 children & 8 servants) - <i>The Hall</i>
[new household] Clay Hill	William Kirk, gardener + 1 female servant – <i>Lodge (The Hall)</i>
[new household] Clay Hill	James Scott (+wife & 8 servants) - <i>Scott's House</i>
[new household] Clay Hill	William Gibbs, gardener & wife – <i>Lodge (Shortlands House)</i>
[new household] Clay Hill	Elizabeth Palmer (+6 relatives & 5 servants) - <i>Shortlands House</i>
[new household] Clay Hill	Robert French, servant, wife & 4 children
[new household] Clay Hill	Charles Cork, servant, wife & 4 children
[new household] Clay Hill	James Winchester, wife and 1 child
[new household] Clay Hill	Louis Schillio, (+3 and 3 servants)
[new household] Clay Hill	William Cumberland (+ wife & 5 children & 2 lodgers)
[new household] Clay Hill	Mary Babbs (+ 1 servant)
[new household] Clay Hill	William Merrick, surgeon, (+wife, 2 children & 4 others)

**1842** Oakery advertised for sale-Major General Peter Lodwick occupying with 4 years to run on lease

### 1851 Census -Beckenham (from Beckenham to Shortlands)

[Here is Chancery Lane, Beckenham]

[new household] Clay Hill	Louis Schillio (+ 2 relatives & 2 servants)
[new household] Clay Hill	Thomas Dennis, Army Pensioner, (+ wife & 7 children)
[new household] Clay Hill	Henry Austin, Ag Lab & wife
[new household] Clay Hill	William Kingswood, Ag Lab (+ wife, 4 children & 1 cousin)
[new household] Clay Hill	Uninhabited house -
[new household] Clay Hill	Stephen Divall, coachman (+wife & 8 children)
[new household] Clay Hill	James J Talman (+ wife, 1 child & 3 servants)
[new household] Clay Hill	Christiana Filby, Footman's wife (+ 6 children)
[new household] Clay Hill	Peter Cator (+wife, 2 children & 5 servants) <i>The Hall</i>
Oakwood Lodge	James Winchester, gardener, & wife
Oakwood	David Thomas, House Servant (+wife, 1 child, 1 visitor)
Gardeners Cottage Oakwood	Enoch Rodway, coachman (+wife & 1 child)
Shortlands House	William Wilkinson (+wife, 4 children, 1 visitor & 7 servants)
Shortlands Lodge	James Evans (+wife & 5 children)
Shortlands Farm x 6	30 occupiers