

The House in the Woods and the Church at Hertingfordbury, my retrospective notes for a talk given on 27.04.22 Robin Densem.

Country house. Personal, near, house, church, Stanley Cowper, Cowper family. HADAS

C. 5,000 Country Houses ("Great Houses") at their peak in Britain in the mid C19

"Seats" "Parks"

All 7 earls Cowper are buried in Hertingfordbury Church, in the mausoleum under their chapel

"Panshanger: The termination hanger, (from the A.S. hangra, a meadow usually situated by the side of a wood,) is not of such frequent occurrence in England. In Hertfordshire it is found in Panshanger, which is most probably derived from pine, the pine-tree, and signifies meadow with the pine trees ..."

The Cowper family had restored the church in 1845 under the sixth earl, and carried out an almost complete restoration in 1888-91 at the expense of the seventh earl Cowper when the church was also richly furnished. A temporary structure for worship was erected to the east of the church during the second restoration.

"In 1664, Sarah, the daughter of a London merchant, married Sir William Cowper, a man above her social rank, whose landed estate was inadequate for his high status. Sir William was one of many men who used government office, professional training, and mercantile marriage to obtain an estate and a seat in Parliament. "Never met two more Averse than we in Humour, Passions, and Affections; our Reason and Sense, Religion or Morals agree not" quipped Sarah. Nor did she receive the respect due to her from her two barrister sons, William and Spencer, who achieved spectacular success in the Whig political world. William eventually became Lord Chancellor and an earl, while Spencer held high legal office. After producing her sons, however, Sarah spent the rest of her life without leverage, financial security, or a compatible mate. She turned to her diary to express her most intimate thoughts, and the political and religious views that developed from her reading. An appendix of a hundred thirty-three books that she owned in 1701 is, in fact, a lengthy, but otherwise typical reading list of a moderate Anglican woman." (<https://networks.h-net.org/node/16749/reviews/17765/whyman-kugler-errant-plagiary-life-and-writing-lady-sarah-cowper-1644> accessed 10/04/2022).

Lady Sarah Cowper died in 1724, and it must have been her daughter, another Sarah, who paid for the funeral of the Witch of Hertingfordbury in 1730

List of the Earls Coper assembled by Robin Densem 2022

Sir William Cowper, 2nd Baronet, lived 1639-1705 married Sarah (1644-1720) in 1664. Sarah was a famous diarist who also wrote

William Cowper, First Earl Cowper, c. 1665 – 1723 son of Sir William and Lady Sarah Cowper. made 1st Earl Cowper in 1718 by George I. He first married Judith as his first wife in about 1686, and after Judith's death in 1705 he married Mary in 1706, she died in 1724

William Clavering-Cowper 1709 – 1764., 2nd Earl Cowper 1723-1764 second Earl Cowper (Son of William, first earl, and Mary. He succeeded to the earldom in October 1723 aged 14.

He married Henrietta de Nassau d'Auverquerque Cowper in 1732 she died in 1747

Their son George became third earl in 1764

George lived 1738 – 1789, 3rd Earl Cowper 1764–1789

son of Second Earl and Henrietta Nassau d'Auverquerque.

He married the 16year old Hannah Clavering-Cowper née Gore in 1775

He lived most of his life in Italy. Children included George Augustus Clavering-Cowper, 4th Earl

Peter Leopold Louis Francis Nassau Cowper, 5th Earl

The Hon. Edward Spencer Cowper

George 1776-1799

4th Earl Cowper, 1789-1799

He died on 12 February 1799 while at camp with the Militia in England, unmarried

Peter 1778-1837

5th Earl Cowper 1799-1837

Inherited title from his brother George Augustus on his death in 1799, married Emily Amelia Lamb, daughter of 1st Viscount Melbourne in 1805. Peter passed the title on to his son George Augustus

Peter and Emily had five children:

- George Cowper, 6th Earl Cowper (26 June 1806 – 15 April 1856) he married Anne Florence Weddell, Baroness Lucas (daughter of Thomas) on 7 October 1833. They had six children.
- Lady Emily Cowper (1810 – 15 October 1872) she married Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury on 10 June 1830. They had ten children.
- William Cowper-Temple, 1st Baron Mount Temple (13 December 1811 – 17 October 1888) he married Harriet Gurney on 27 June 1843. He remarried Georgiana Tollemach on 22 November 1848.
- The Honourable Charles Cowper (7 June 1816 – 30 March 1879) he married Lady Harriett Gardiner (daughter of Charles John Gardiner, 1st Earl of Blessington) on 1 September 1852. They had one daughter. He remarried Jessie McLean on 11 April 1871.
- Frances Jocelyn, Viscountess Jocelyn (1820 – 26 March 1880) she married Robert Jocelyn, Viscount Jocelyn on 9 April 1841. They had five children.

George Augustus Frederick Cowper 1806-1856

6th Earl Cowper 1837-1856, son of Peter, fifth earl

WORKS TO THE CHURCH 1845

George married Oct 1833 Lady Anne Florence De Grey, suo jure Baroness Lucas of Crudwell (b. 8 Jun 1806; d. 25 Jul 1880), 1st dau. of Thomas Philip [Robinson later Weddell later De Grey], 2nd Earl de Grey, by his wife Lady Henrietta Frances Cole, 5th dau. of William Willoughby [Cole], 1st Earl of Enniskillen

George and Anne had six children

- Hon Francis Thomas de Grey Cowper, later 7th Earl Cowper
- Hon Henry Frederick Cowper, Member of Parliament for Hertfordshire 1865-85 (b. 18 Apr 1836; d. 10 Nov 1887)
- Lady Henrietta Emily Mary Cowper (d. 28 Jun 1853)
- Lady Florence Amabell Cowper (d. 26 Apr 1886), mar. 9 Aug 1871 Hon Auberon Edward William Molyneux Herbert, of Old House, Berry Wood, Ringwood, co. Hampshire, Member of Parliament for Nottingham 1870-74 (b. 18 Jun 1838; d. 5 Nov 1906), 2nd son of Henry John George [Herbert], 3rd Earl of Carnarvon, and had issue
- Lady Adine Eliza Anne Cowper (d. 20 Oct 1868), mar. 29 Sep 1866 Hon Julian Henry Charles Fane (b. 10 Oct 1827; d. 19 Apr 1870), 4th son of John [Fane], 11th Earl of Westmorland, and had issue
- Lady Amabell Cowper (d. 15 Oct 1906), mar. 18 Nov 1873 Admiral of the Fleet Lord Walter Talbot Kerr GCB RN (b. 28 Sep 1839; d. 12 May 1927), 4th son of John William Robert [Kerr], 7th Marquess of Lothian, and had issue

Francis Cowper 1834-1905.7th Earl Cowper 1856-1905

WORKS TO THE CHURCH 1888-91

Married to Katrina, died 1913. No children.

PANSHANGER HOUSE: Many years ago, in around 1704 William Cowper, First Earl Cowper (c. 1665 – 10 October 1723) pictured left in an 18th century portrait built Cole Green House, near the site of the family's later Panshanger House "Around 1704 the mansion house called Fitzjohns was pulled down and replaced by Cole Green House, a seven-bay mansion built for William Cowper, first Earl Cowper (first Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, 1707-10, again 1714-18; d at Cole Green 1723). He occupied the house in 1711 and settled there upon his retirement in 1718. Fruit and formal flower gardens lay close to the house, closely attended by the Countess. In 1719 the Earl bought the adjacent Panshanger estate." Fitzjohns and Cole Green House stood at Cole Green, near Panshanger in Hertfordshire, but on the opposite, south, side of the River Mimram. The Cowper family were well established in Hertfordshire and Kent, and William Cowper was an English lawyer who threw his lot in with William of Orange when he landed in England in 1688. He became a Member of Parliament for Hertford and as a politician he moved in the highest circles at court and became the first Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain in 1707. George I created him the First Earl Cowper in 1718.



Cole Green is about a mile west of the village of Hertingfordbury and the church of St Mary and the Earl died at his Cole Green House in 1723 after catching a severe cold while travelling there from London. He was buried at St Mary, Hertingfordbury where most if not all the seven Earls Cowper were buried. Cole Green House below:

The Second Earl left Cole Green House largely untouched, but he commissioned Capability Brown to landscape its park In 1755. The Earl died in 1764. The image to the right shows Cole Green House in the 1790s.

The Second Earl's son George Nassau Clavering-Cowper left England in January 1757 to undertake his Grand Tour of Europe. Styled Viscount Fordwich, he was 18 years old and heir to the earldom. All went well until the summer of 1759 when he arrived in Florence and fell passionately in love with a beautiful young Florentine lady. Hannah Gore.



The image to the left shows the Gore family in Florence, painted by Johann Zoffany in c. 1775. Charles Gore's daughter, Hannah, is top left, Gore is centre and the aspiring groom, George Clavering-Cowper, Lord Fordwich, is the standing figure on the right. He married the sixteen-year-old Hannah Anne Gore on 2 June 1775. Their betrothal was commemorated with this painting that was commissioned by Fordwich's new father-in-law. Fordwich declined to return home at the end of his tour, but instead headed back to Florence and was still living there when he succeeded his father to the earldom as the Third Earl Cowper in 1764. By then he was thoroughly embedded in the cultural and social life of Florence and, apart

from one short visit to England in 1786, he remained in Italy until his death in 1789. Despite being Member of Parliament for Hertford from 1759-81, George lived in Italy, collecting fine art, and founded the famous Cowper art collection, that was later housed in Panshanger House.

On the death of George, the Fourth Earl, in 1799, Peter (1778 – 1837) became the Fifth Earl Cowper and he was, by then, the largest landowner in Hertfordshire. Little happened with Cole Green Park until 1801-2 when he had Cole Green House demolished but he did set about landscaping the land at Panshanger, in line with Humphrey Repton's proposals, doubtless with a view to providing a setting for the new house he intended to have built there, close to and probably incorporating an earlier house.



The above extract from Dury and Andrews Map of Hertfordshire 1766 shows Cole Green House at upper left. The house is labelled 'Earl Cowper' and stands at the north end of an avenue of trees within 'Cole Green Park'. The house lay at Cole Green, on the south-west side of the River Mimram, labelled 'Maran River'. A farm had existed at Panshanger, on the other side of the river, since perhaps medieval times and the farm, or perhaps manorial, buildings as they were in 1766 are located in the top middle of the above extract from the Dury and Andrews 1766 map where they are labelled 'Panshanger Earl Cowper'. Hertingfordbury (the village) is labelled and drawn near the bottom of the extract, on the north-south road, two thirds along the extract from the left edge.



The image to the left shows the old house at Panshanger as it was in the 1790s. Anne Rowe in her 2006 'History of the pleasure gardens at Panshanger' she researched for the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust explains in the caption to her Fig 4 that the painting she illustrates shows a house with at least two main building phases: the Elizabethan house on the right and the newer and grander extension on the left, perhaps dating from the first half of the 18th century. These comments are also applicable to the image reproduced here. The buildings should be amongst the Panshanger buildings shown on the Drury and Andrews map extract

Peter 5th Earl Cowper 1799-1837 built first phases of Panshanger..

The 1799 plan by Humphrey Repton from his Red Book for Panshanger showed Cole Green House at A and the old, existing, house at Panshanger at C. Repton. This plan can be found on the internet. Repton seems to have taken little part in the implementation of his suggestions, which were instead supervised by Peter, the Fifth Earl 5th Earl 1799-1837, until his death in 1837. Planting began in 1799 and continued over several years. Andrew Bryant's map of Hertfordshire of 1822 shows the park, in dark tone, around Panshanger House

The early form of Panshanger House, that was modified from Repton's suggestions, was built on the site of and perhaps around the old house in 1806-9 and the Earl occupied it in 1811.

The design of the house was modified from Repton's suggestions, first under the architect Samuel Whyatt and then, following his death in 1807, under another architect, William Atkinson who continued the work, building further additions and Gothicising the house. The site was carefully chosen to take advantage of the beautiful, landscaped view south from the house. across the River Mimram, as shown in this recent photograph.

After the fifth Earl's death in 1837 his wife Emily, nee Lamb. continued to manage Panshanger until 1867 when she died, having, a widow, remarried, to Lord Palmerston.

6th Earl Cowper 1837-1856, son of Peter, fifth earl
WORKS TO THE CHURCH 1845

Following her Emily's death in 1869 the estate was managed until 1913 by the seventh Earl's wife, Katrine, who supervised the addition of formal garden features around the house. Katrine died in 1912. Additions were built and the house reached the width, shown below left in a painting of the south front of the house that was published in 1868 and at that time had deer in the park. The house was carefully sited to take advantage of views southwards across the valley and the River Mimram that had been widened to the south of the house to form the 'Broadwater'.

By 1890 the east-west aligned range of Panshanger House with its Orangery and conservatory joined on to its western end had reached a length of c. 187.5m, measured from the Ordnance Survey 1980 25 inch to the mile map.

Deliberate 19th century landscape engineering had widened the River Mimram to the south of the house, to beautify the view from the house, forming what was called 'The Broadwater'

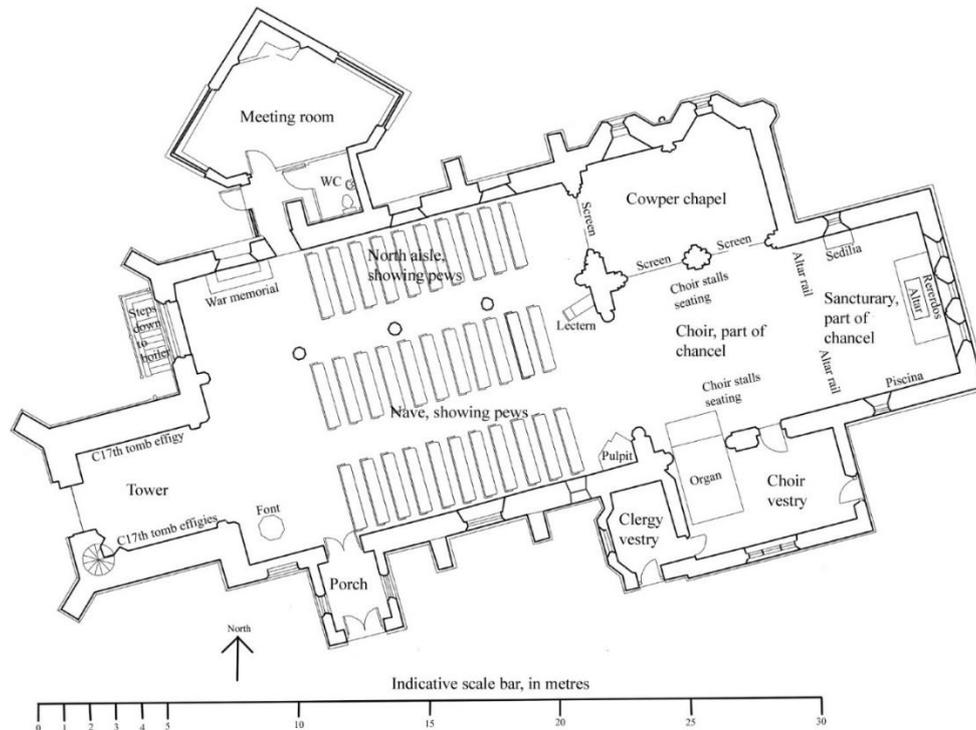
The Stables and the Orangery were added in c.1856 by Francis, the Seventh Earl Cowper who lived 11 June 1834 – 18 July 1905), and who succeeded his father, George the sixth earl, as seventh Earl Cowper on 15th April 1856. Francis was very wealthy and "He came to own more than £1M of assets which Sir Leo Chiozza Money, an analyst of the rich of the era, estimated was true of only eight British people who died "in an average year". He died in 1905 and his fine memorial is in the Church of St Mary Hertingfordbury where he was buried. Despite a happy marriage he and his wife, Countess Catrine Cowper, had no children and their niece, Ettie Fane, the daughter to his sister, inherited Panshanger, together with other Cowper family estates in Hertfordshire, Kent and London under the terms of the will of her late uncle, the late Seventh Earl Cowper. Ettie had married William Grenfell in 1887, and he was raised to the peerage in 1905 and died in 1945. In 1095 Ettie became Lady Desborough. She added more bathrooms to the house and by time **she died in 1952 the house had some 90 rooms.**

The 7th earl and his wife had no children, so the ultimate heiress was his sister's orphaned daughter Ethel (Ettie) Fane. Having been orphaned at the age of 3 she was brought up at Wrest Park by aunts and grandmother. In 1905 Panshanger came to Lord Desborough of Taplow Court who had married Ettie in 1887. As a secondary estate it was not subject to much redevelopment although it was kept up until the end of the first World War. The Desboroughs had an active social life at Taplow Court, one of the centres for 'The Souls' founded c. 1886 but also found time to lay out a skittle alley at the back of the orangery. The Desboroughs' two sons were killed in the First World War, with the third dying in a car crash in 1926. The estate deteriorated, and Lord Desborough sold 4000 acres of it in 1919, some to Ebenezer Howard for the establishment of his second Garden City, near Welwyn. More land at Sele Farm went for housing and Hertfordshire County Council bought up land for smallholdings – part of the post-war initiative of Homes for Heroes

Following the death of Lord Desborough in 1945 and of his wife in 1952, the estate was finally broken up and put up for sale in 1953. Although attempts were made to sell the house as an institution or school, there were no buyers after World War Two. The house and 89 acres of land was purchased for £17,750 and the house demolished. Although some of the park is now in private hands, much was purchased for gravel extraction which continues.

The Orangery that had been built to the west of the house in about 1865 by Francis, the Seventh Earl, is still standing and can be seen through a wire fence, but the North Lodge and the Stables are in use by the gravel extraction firm, Tarmac, and are not publicly accessible. There is a lot of material on Panshanger House, the park and the Cowpers and the Desboroughs on the internet.

A plan of the Church of St Mary, Hertingfordbury, amended from an architect's plan:



Robin Densem, 28.05.2022

There is a mass or material on the internet, here are a few websites accessed today:

https://friendsofpanshangerpark.co.uk/?page_id=1073

<https://www.ourhertfordandware.org.uk/content/places/hertingfordbury/panshanger-park/the-panshanger-estate-sale-1953/panshanger-house-sale-document>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000916>

<https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/herts-history/topics/the-word-is-hertfordshire/thousand-years-of-the-written-word/18th-century/humphry-reptons-red-book-1799>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earl_Cowper there are also separate individual entries for most of the Earls Cowper

<https://friendsofpanshangerpark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Landscape-Poster-L.pdf>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panshanger> .