

A LOOK AT FALCON LODGE

BY MARIAN BAXTER

The Estate created

A Georgian House, believed to have been built around 1820, is named as Falcon Lodge in a lease of 1824, and the present-day estate took its name from this house. The lease of 1824, to Mr. William Pepper, mentions the Lodge with barn, stable, cowhouse, yard, garden and orchard.

The name seems like an artificial and pretentious title given to the country house of an upstart, like the "Maple Grove" of the Sucklings in Jane Austen's *Emma*, but there is some local relevance in it.. A document of 1240 refers to a place called Hawksnest, as do some 17th century wills, and there is a good possibility that the place referred to was near to the present Falcon Lodge Estate¹. In 1824 the land attached to the house was 26 acres, a fairly small farm, surrounded by open commons. Mr. Pepper added to and consolidated his estate when the commons were enclosed. The Commissioner awarded him 6.5 acres as his entitlement, and he purchased a further 21.5 acres²

William Pepper remained in possession of Falcon Lodge until his death in 1862, when, according to Riland Bedford³, he was the oldest surviving volunteer officer in Britain, having served in the Nottingham Fencibles on their first embodiment at the end of the 18th century. Falcon Lodge was then put up for sale, and the Sales Catalogue⁴ dated 5th August 1852 describes the house and land as follows:

Plans and particulars of the Freehold Estate known as Falcon Lodge containing altogether 54 acres 2 rods and 9 perches of superior meadow, pasture and arable land.

The house, which stands in the centre of the estate, is adapted for a family of the first respectability and contains a large entrance hall, dining and drawing rooms of good dimensions, nine bedrooms, store rooms and closets, large kitchen, brewhouse and scullery, dairy, excellent cellars and other domestic conveniences.

The out-offices include stabling for 7 horses, coach house, granary barn, cowhouses with loft over, wagon and implement houses, piggeries and fold yards.

There is an excellent kitchen garden and orchard planted with the choicest fruit trees, now in full bearing.

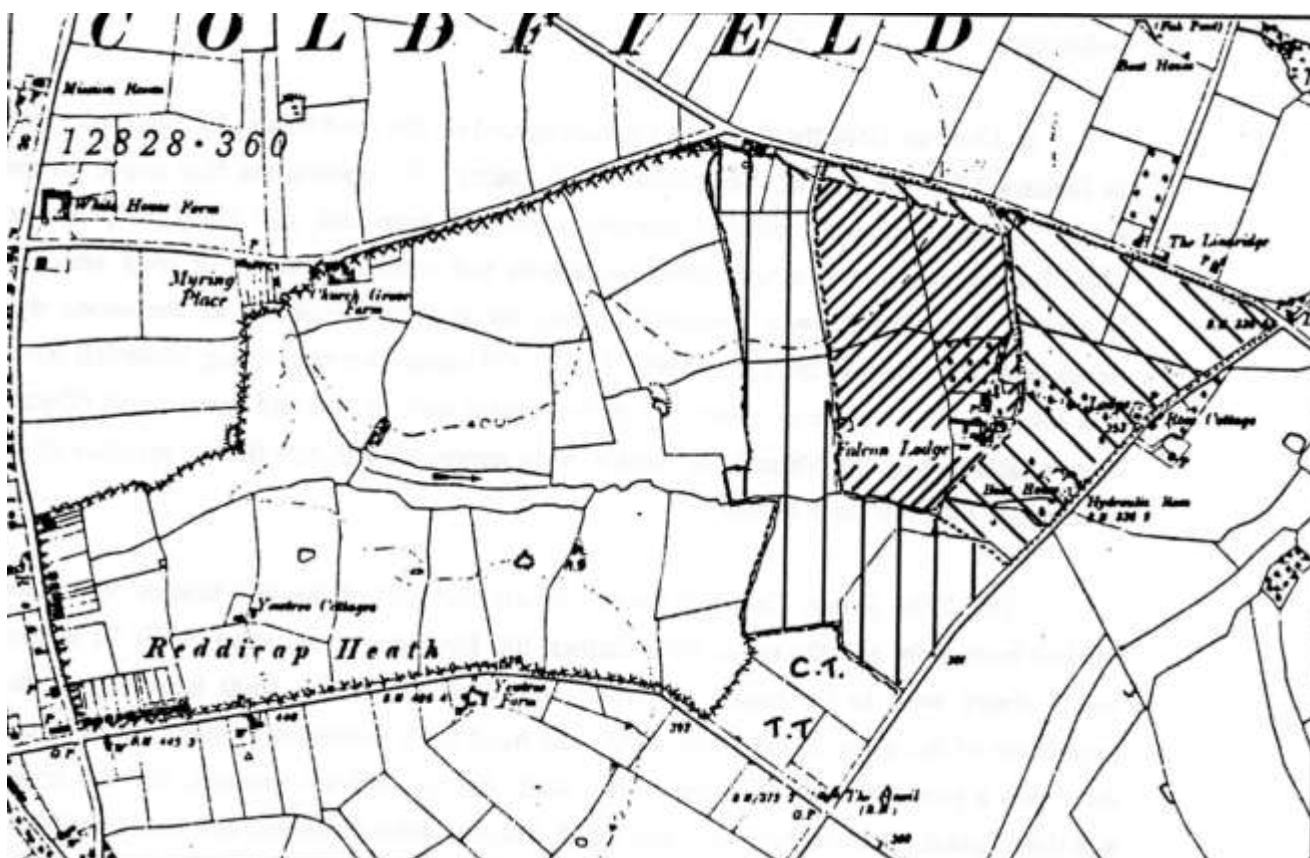
The Estate is belted by a thriving plantation and is nicely timbered and well watered, and the ornamental shrubs about the house are in perfection







Illustration of Falcon Lodge copied from the 1862 sale particulars

The situation in 1862, at the time of the sale, is confirmed by the evidence of the Parochial Valuation of 1856, which was made to establish new parishes including Walmley - the boundary of Walmley Parish was just to the north of Springfield Road, putting the gate-house into a different parish from the main house. Mr. Thomas Terry was the purchaser, and he already owned an extensive estate in this area; he is given as the owner of most of the 198 acres later to form the Falcon Lodge Estate, as well as several neighbouring farms. The Falcon Lodge Estate of 1897 is described in a later deed as being nearly 87 acres, with boundaries shown on a plan, so Mr. Terry had presumably reorganised his properties to give extra land to the estate at the expense of his neighbouring farms, but Mr. Terry, described as "Retired Colonel of Militia" had by then mortgaged his Sutton property and retired to Walton-on-Thames⁵. The estate later belonged to Mr.

Cattell, late of Ivy House in the High Street, and he sold it to the Corporation of Sutton on 31st May 1937 for £37,500. The Corporation's intention to develop it as a housing estate was thwarted first by the war and then by government restrictions; in 1947 there was a rancorous dispute between Mr. Cattell and the Corporation over liability for a sewer at Falcon Lodge, and Norman Evans, who knew Mr. Cattell well, said that he determined from that date that none of his extensive collection of local and railway memorabilia would be bequeathed to Sutton.



THE GROWTH OF THE FALCON LODGE ESTATE, 1824 - 1897

	The original 26 acre farm		Falcon Lodge Estate, 1862
	Falcon Lodge Estate, 1897		Boundary of Thomas Terry's lands
	CT - Charity Trustees' land		TT - Land of Thomas Turner (1857)
	Base - OS 6" : mile second edition		

Development of the Housing Estate

On 17th June 1946 the Corporation of Sutton purchased another plot of land, about 4.6 acres, from the Trustees of the Municipal Charities for £1500, fronting Springfield Road; by September the same year the purchase of the whole Falcon Lodge Estate had been completed. In 1947 the Ministry of Works approved the Borough Surveyor's plans for the roads and sewers, and on 19th November 1947 tenders were invited for the erection of 28 houses in Springfield Road. The 1948 Sutton Coldfield Guide states that no houses had yet been built, but "the Falcon Lodge Estate will be a self-contained community having shops, schools, a church and cinema, branch library and civic buildings".

In October 1948 the Borough Council agreed on the road names for the estate, and in January 1949 the Mayor, Councillor C. H. Dainty J.P., opened the first house on the estate. At that time, 1.44 miles of concrete roads had been laid, and 34 of the proposed 1500 houses completed; a year later the figures had risen to 3 miles of road and 158 houses. The Council was frequently called on to make decisions as the estate was developed, for example on 13th March 1950 1374 square yards fronting Churchill Road was sold for £714 for the erection of 2 police houses with offices and garage, and 60-year loans sanctioned by the Minister of Health were approved, £56,405 for the erection of 46 houses and £39,300 for a further 32.

The 1951 *Sutton Coldfield Guide* reports that 390 of the 690 houses contracted for had been built, and the roads for a further 200 frontages constructed, while 71 houses and 2 shops were to be begun that year, the target still being 1500 houses. As the population of the estate approached 4,000, the need for a community centre was felt, and there was a proposal to use Falcon Lodge itself, but this did not succeed, and the house was demolished. It stood behind Wyatt Road, Falcon Lodge Crescent, and Goodeve Walk, opposite Langley Hall Road. In 1955 Falcon Lodge Community Hall was given to the town by the late Lord Bennett, to be used for "meetings, concerts, wedding and dances". It could seat 220 and was licensed for dancing for 150 people.

Some *Birmingham Post* adverts:-

28.4.56 Tenancy of 27 Churchill Parade- Gentlemen's Hairdressing Saloon

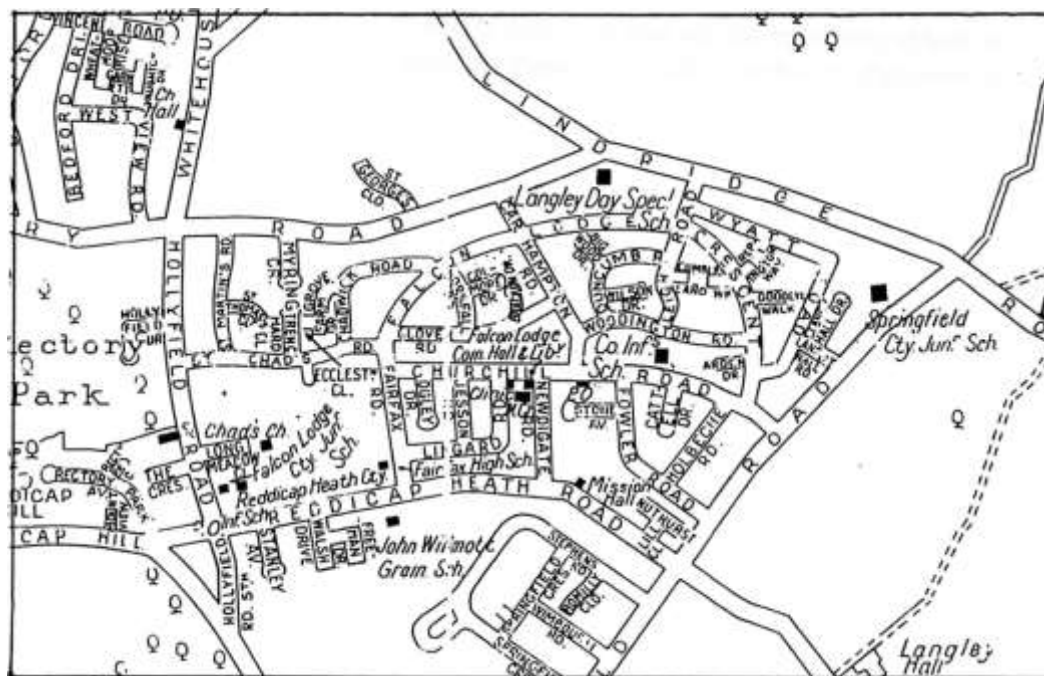
14.7.56 17 Churchill Parade - baker, confectioner, delicatessen and cooked meats.

27.11.57 23 Churchill Parade - dealer in the repair of boots and shoes.

The 1959 *Guide* describes the almost completed estate as " a fine model estate comprising of some 1539 houses attractively laid out, having an up-to-date shopping centre and a community hall with a branch library". The estate was considered to be well in advance of its time in layout and design.

Falcon Lodge Road Names

Most of the roads on the estate are named after prominent people with local associations. These include High Stewards of Sutton - Richard Newdigate of Arbury Hall, Nuneaton, 1642; Lords Leigh of Stoneleigh, 1859 and 1951, and Sir Henry William Cameron Ramsay Fairfax-Lucy, 1936 - (Newdigate Road, Leigh Road and Fairfax Road); Mayors and Wardens - Wilfred Bigwood, 1937-8, who opened Vesey Gardens in 1939, (Bigwood Drive), Thomas Colmore (1864), who lived at Ashfurlong Hall (Colmore Drive), John Townshend Glover, 1891, 1900, and 1901 (Glover Road), James T. Ogley, 1938-40, (Ogley Drive) and Sir John Benjamin Stone, Sutton's first Mayor in 1886, M.P. and photographer (Stone Avenue).



Other roads are named after local families such as the Jessons and Holbeches, while artists and architects such as Wilson, Woodington and Wyatt are also commemorated. Frank H. Cattell, who purchased Falcon Lodge in 1919, (Cattell Road), is the only parson connected with the earlier history of Falcon Lodge to be so commemorated.

References

1. The Beauchamp Cartulary Charters, Pipe Roll Society Vol. 81, 1980, No. 301, a Quitclaim dated 3rd Nov. 1240 (copy and translation in Sutton Reference Library, 957598); Will of Ambrose Cowper - "The middle peice of Ground in the Hawkesnest" 13.7.1677; Probate Inventory of Richard Ashford, 1683 - "Two dayes worke and a halfe of Peese and Oates in the Lindridge and 2 acres of oates in the Haweksnest" (copies in Sutton Reference Library). The Field Name Map produced by the Research Group based on the 1824/5 Com Rent map shows fields called "The Hawksnests" on the south side of Reddicap Heath Road.
2. The Corn Rent Schedule - Survey made by Henry Jacob and William Fowler surveyors to the Inclosure, 1824-5, p.50; The Award of Thomas Wedge, Commissioner for Dividing, Allotting and Inclosing the Commons and Waste Lands in the Parish of Sutton Coldfield 1851.
3. W. K. *History of Sutton Coldfield*, 1891, p.59.
4. Copy in Sutton Reference Library, Falcon Lodge Folder.
5. Recited in an *Abstract of Title to Freehold dwelling house and farm lands known as Falcon Lodge*, copy in Sutton Reference Library, Falcon Lodge Folder, not dated but probably produced for the sale to Cattell in 1919.
6. Borough of Sutton Coldfield Council Minutes.