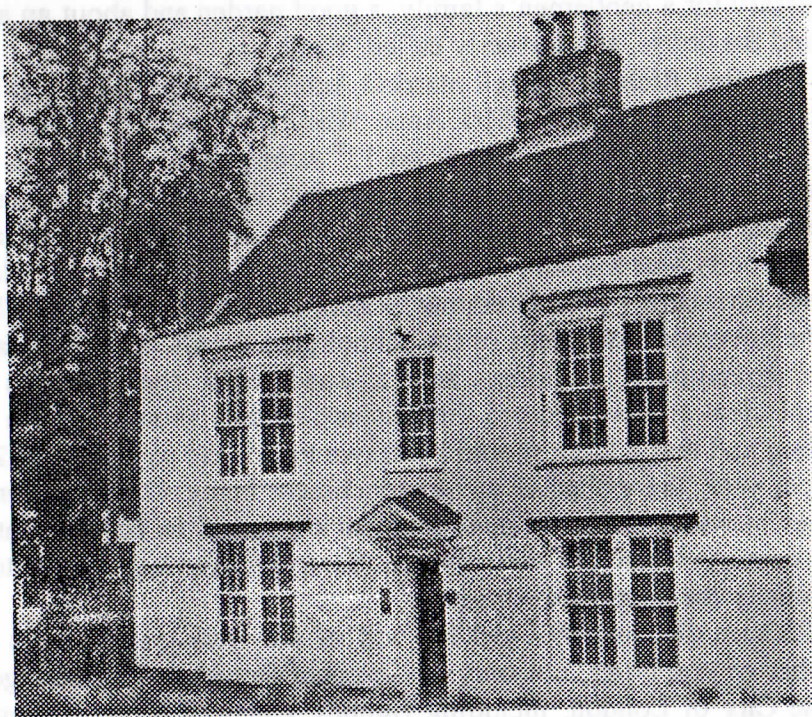


# *Barnet & District Local History Society*

Bulletin 40  
Pauline Brown

November 2003

## THE HASSELLS OF WOOD STREET



The Hassell family must have dominated the life of Barnet and particularly Wood Street for more than one hundred years in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were land-owners and patrons as well as civil dignitaries.

The earliest mention of the family in the Manorial Court records of Chipping Barnet is in 1631 when Edward Hassell was admitted to :

tenement in East Barnet, a field called Homefield and another called Sawyers Field.

The family's first connection with Wood Street seems to have been in 1663 when Richard Hassell, salter and citizen of London was admitted to 'a messuage called Kymbles and a croft containing one acre, late in the occupation of Nicholas Sheppard'.<sup>1</sup> This property stood on the site now occupied by Barnet Museum. It was described one hundred years later in a list of copyholds of 1787 as 'a large brick house with sundry other buildings necessary for a gentlemen's family, a good garden and about an acre of land behind the house, and formerly called 'Kimble's'.<sup>2</sup>

This first Richard Hassell married Anne (formerly West). It is probable that she was the widow, Mrs Anne West who married a Richard Heasel (sic) at Monken Hadley church on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1685. He began to acquire several properties in Chipping Barnet and Wood Street besides Kimbles. The most notable was 'The Brewhouse' (now Hatherley House) in 1672 and this property was the subject of a dispute in 1681 between the Hassells and Queen Elizabeth's Free Grammar School situated next door. The minutes of the governor's meetings of the school give details of an encroachment of 'The Brewhouse' building and a shed onto the school's property. Independent arbiters decreed that Richard Hassell should pay the sum of £4 sterling and that a lease should be drawn up for the payment for 21 years of 4s. per year, the extent of the encroachment being 42 feet in length and 9 inches in width. This annual payment continued to be paid until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when the then owner, Sampson Rumball failed to pay and eventually the matter was dropped.<sup>3</sup>

Richard died in 1697 and his will of that year gives details of a large number of properties, not only in Chipping Barnet and Totteridge, but also in the City of London, including Bunhill, Chiswell Street, Coleman Street and Grub Street, Finsbury. These he bequeathed to his wife Anne for life, and thereafter to his nephew Ralph Hassell, the son of his late brother John. One of the conditions of the will was that Anne should pay 'to twenty poor widows of 50 years of age yearly 20s. a piece; to a pious minister 40s.



yearly for a sermon at which sermon the twenty poor widows shall be present.’ After a number of small bequests to tenants and servants he left his ‘riding dun mare’ and a cottage in Finchley for life to his friend William Moore.<sup>4</sup>

Anne Hassell outlived her husband by ten years. By the time of her death in 1707 she was paying the Barnet Rental, on ‘part of a messuage late the Swan and a close and 3 messuages occupied therewith’; also on ‘the Angel Inne and 2 acres and 2 closes of ten acres late of Gregory Lovells.’ These properties were in addition to Kimbles and The Brewhouse. Anne Hassell is revealed in her will, not only as a very wealthy woman, but also a benefactor and a lady with a mind of her own. She bequeathed various sums to many of her friends and relations. Pieces of jewellery such as a gold bracelet with blue stones, a diamond ring and diamond knot with a jewel hanging in the middle’ were to be given to her brother and her nieces. To the poor of Chipping Barnet and to the poor of Wood Street in particular she left £5.

In a codicil, Anne Hassell showed her determination when she decreed ‘I do not give to Mrs Mary Hooker my sable tippet nor ermine scarf nor muff ..... that was my Aunt Barkers nor the gold and silver petticoat nor mantle, four aprons and some Holland smocks that was my Aunts, with hoods, scarfes (sic), gloves, ribbons and other wearing clothes. I give her what she pleases to my other maid.’ Obviously Anne had had a disagreement with Mrs Hooker and made it very clear that she was not to benefit from her mistress’ death!<sup>5</sup>

She also gave 20 guineas to the Church ‘to be laid out in plate or what shall be amounted most ornamental by the minister.’ The Queen Anne silver salver and chalice hallmarked 1706 which were purchased are still amongst the plate of Chipping Barnet Church and are inscribed ‘The Gift of Mrs Anne Hassell.’ The bill for these appears in the church wardens’ accounts for 1708 – and amounted to £11. 17. 0d. The rest of the money was spent on an embroidered cushion and for ‘lyning the reading pew and work about the pulpit’.<sup>6</sup>

When Anne Hassell died the bulk of her estate went to her nephew Ralph Hassell. It is unclear whether he lived in Barnet – he and his wife Martha were eventually buried in St. Botolph's, Aldersgate. However he did serve as a governor at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School from 1708 until 1712 so he certainly maintained the family connection with the town. He died in 1717.

Ralph and Martha had two sons, Richard born in 1701 and John born in 1702. Both boys went to Queen's College, Cambridge in 1717 and their lives ran in parallel as both were admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1720 and were called to the Bar in June 1727. John died in 1749 but Richard went on to become a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1726 and a pillar of Barnet society. Not only was he a rich landowner, but he also officiated in church affairs such as signing the overseers' accounts and donating money for good causes. He was also a governor of Queen Elizabeth's School in 1730 and treasurer in 1737 and from 1743 until 1753.

During this period the Hassell estates were being added to considerably and by the time the Land Tax of 1753 was assessed, there were at least nine properties and lands in the family's possession in Chipping Barnet. In 1757 he acquired 'The Goat', the series of cottages in Wood Street, alongside The Brewhouse and he gradually purchased the remaining properties in Wood Street until he owned the whole stretch from what is now Hatherley House to No 33. The Tithe Books from 1734 until 1765 show the rates paid on varying amounts of acreage from 8 acres in 1743 to 27 acres in 1761. It seems however that Richard Hassell was rather lax in paying these tithes. The tithe book for 1737 says 'This year Richard Hassell, Esq, who had hitherto refused it, paid me his tythes (sic) at High Barnet for six years last ye rates of two shillings', presumably per acre.

Richard had three sons, another Richard (born 1733), Robert, who became a barrister in Lincoln's Inn and a commissioner of bankrupts, and James (born 1735) who went into the church and became the Vicar of Roxton with Great Barford in Bedfordshire. When their father died in 1770, he left no will. It is surprising that such an eminent and wealthy man should



die intestate and the administration of his effects was left in the hands of his son and heir Richard.

According to the Cambridge University archives, Richard Hassell III was educated privately and admitted aged 19 to Trinity College on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1752. He matriculated in the Michaelmas term of 1752, became a Scholar in 1753 and gained his BA (8<sup>th</sup> Wrangler) in 1756. By 1759 he had gained an MA and was made a Fellow 1757.

Richard later became a J.P and was prominent in both church and legal affairs in the town. From 1759 he was a governor of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School. In 1787 the school buildings had fallen into disrepair and Richard Hassell advanced the sum of £100 so that work could proceed.<sup>7</sup>

Richard married his wife Charlotte (née Armstrong) and they had three children. The first was Harriet Frances, then came Charlotte Eleanor Mary, baptized 17<sup>th</sup> December 1778, and lastly a son, Richard Armstrong, baptized 6<sup>th</sup> April 1781.

The family settled down to family life in Barnet but sadly tragedy struck as his son Richard Armstrong died at the age of five months and in 1783 his wife Charlotte suffered injuries from which she never recovered when she was thrown from a single horse chaise.<sup>8</sup> She was buried in the family vault in Chipping Barnet Church and Richard was left to bring up the two young girls.

Richard Hassell died at the age of 58 in November 1791. His estate was divided between his two daughters. Harriet was bequeathed all his 'freehold, copyhold and leasehold messuages and tenements and hereditaments in the Parish of Barnet aforesaid with my Estate situate in Fashion Street, Spitalfields in the County of Middlesex and my Estate in the County of Burks and also give to my said daughter, my plate, furniture books, chariot, horses, farming and gardening utensils and all other things used with the house.' Charlotte received his 'estates, freeholds and copyholds situate in London and Middlesex not before devised and also the mortgage of certain houses in Mimms Side.'<sup>9</sup>

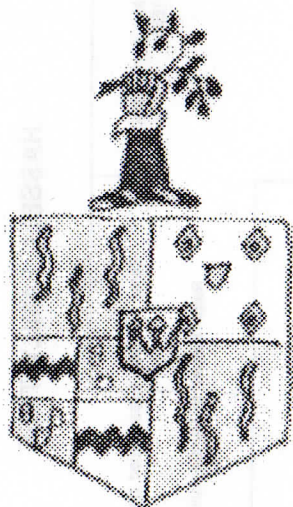
yearly for a sermon at which sermon the twenty poor widows shall be present.’ After a number of small bequests to tenants and servants he left his ‘riding dun mare’ and a cottage in Finchley for life to his friend William Moore.<sup>4</sup>

Anne Hassell outlived her husband by ten years. By the time of her death in 1707 she was paying the Barnet Rental, on ‘part of a messuage late the Swan and a close and 3 messuages occupied therewith’; also on ‘the Angel Inne and 2 acres and 2 closes of ten acres late of Gregory Lovells.’ These properties were in addition to Kimbles and The Brewhouse. Anne Hassell is revealed in her will, not only as a very wealthy woman, but also a benefactor and a lady with a mind of her own. She bequeathed various sums to many of her friends and relations. Pieces of jewellery such as a gold bracelet with blue stones, a diamond ring and diamond knot with a jewel hanging in the middle’ were to be given to her brother and her nieces. To the poor of Chipping Barnet and to the poor of Wood Street in particular she left £5.

In a codicil, Anne Hassell showed her determination when she decreed ‘I do not give to Mrs Mary Hooker my sable tippet nor ermine scarf nor muff ..... that was my Aunt Barkers nor the gold and silver petticoat nor mantle, four aprons and some Holland smocks that was my Aunts, with hoods, scarfes (sic), gloves, ribbons and other wearing clothes. I give her what she pleases to my other maid.’ Obviously Anne had had a disagreement with Mrs Hooker and made it very clear that she was not to benefit from her mistress’ death!<sup>5</sup>

She also gave 20 guineas to the Church ‘to be laid out in plate or what shall be amounted most ornamental by the minister.’ The Queen Anne silver salver and chalice hallmarked 1706 which were purchased are still amongst the plate of Chipping Barnet Church and are inscribed ‘The Gift of Mrs Anne Hassell.’ The bill for these appears in the church wardens’ accounts for 1708 – and amounted to £11. 17. 0d. The rest of the money was spent on an embroidered cushion and for ‘lyning the reading pew and work about the pulpit’.<sup>6</sup>

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Manorial Records, Barnet Museum
  - <sup>2</sup> Document D/EB983, HALS\*
  - <sup>3</sup> Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Barnet by Cecil L. Tripp, pp 64 & 127
  - <sup>4</sup> Barnet Wills Transcript by Godley 1958, Barnet Museum
  - <sup>5</sup> Will PCC 202 Gee 1705
  - <sup>6</sup> Chipping Barnet Church Wardens' Accounts HALS
  - <sup>7</sup> Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Barnet by Cecil L. Tripp, p.77
  - <sup>8</sup> Gentleman's Magazine Richard Hassell's obituary 1791
  - <sup>9</sup> Will PCC 1792



Richard Hassell II's  
Coat of Arms  
Taken from an anonymous watercolour  
in the Guildhall Library collection.

# HASELL FAMILY TREE

