

A Twentieth-Century Squire in his Landscape

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There is a Surrey village set in a variously charming countryside and famed for beautiful buildings grouping delightfully together which preserve traditions in local architecture of the timber- and stone-building region of the Weald. Its almost entirely unspoilt appearance is due to a care to prevent the intrusion of inharmonious buildings on the part of the Brays, its ruling squires, whose association with the district still remains unbroken after nearly five hundred years. Who would guess that with all their attachment to the power and beauty of tradition, they were no less in anticipation for the future? This is patent in the career of Reginald Arthur Bray (1869–1950) who inherited the estate of some two thousand acres of farmland and woodland and two thousand acres of common-land in 1923.¹ He retained to his death what remained of the privileges, power and position of the later squirearchy but few men of his antecedents can have had a more unaffected attitude to life or prescribed more to social progress. He was too forward-looking to be true to his type and was a man who never hunted, seldom even rode, and did not race horses or indulge in country-house luxury. He was a progressively-minded intellectual, always ahead of his age, who plied his skills in estate management from 1896 during a period made difficult by rural disruption and when the urbanizing process was creating widespread disillusionment, even misery. More than most of his generation he appreciated how the quickening tempo of life was affecting environment and thought with a view to planning the process rationally to meet the new needs of the community.

It is a fallacy to assume that the scope for private action of the surviving twentieth-century squires fast dwindled into insignificance. A squire who chose to keep his estate together and was conscientious in his job, continued to render most of the traditional services to his tenants and added the many more from that wide

range of social and environment matters which have since become the concern of a bureaucratic public management. It is arguable that without the last survivors of the squirearchy the transition between nineteenth-century paternalism and the delayed advent of the Welfare State in the mid-twentieth century would have created hardship. This was Bray's own defence of his position:

'Feudalism is no doubt on the decline and has got to disappear. But if we attempt to hasten this disappearance without having anything except individualistic enterprise to take its place, it is certain that there will be, at any rate for a time, no little suffering in rural districts. A constructive policy must accompany the problem of destruction'.²

From Bray's voluminous family and estate documents and other contemporary evidence — accounts, correspondence, newspaper reports, government records, and the like — we can examine to what extent Bray fulfilled the considerable responsibilities placed upon him. His ideas and actions have an added significance in that they were not restricted solely to his estate but were encompassed within a perceptual framework created by residence in two totally different environments at the opposite poles of the London sphere, at Shere in the capacity of landowner and manager of neighbouring estates, and in working-class Camberwell where he spent the period 1900–1919 as a social reformer. From this dual position he acquired a unitary view of the Metropolis in a cross section from the inner city to its rural fringe. This unaccustomed and illuminating angle led him to believe in the necessity for the complementary planning of an indivisibly linked town and countryside. Bray's career marks an important chapter in the story of London's absorption of Surrey and that county's struggle to retain its remaining identity. His early work left a lasting mark on the education policy of the London County Council and the later achievements proved eventful in the history of town and country planning. In his involvement with his local countryside he was an environmental planner in the modern sense before his due time and part of his estate functioned as a regional or country park, anticipating by some forty years the common-places of our present age.

Reginald A. Bray was directly descended from a nephew of Sir Reginald Bray (he dying without issue in 1503), whose acquisition of the manor of Shere Vachery on the attainder and execution of Lord Audley in 1497 began the Brays' association with Shere, Cranleigh, Ewhurst, Farley Green, Holmbury and Peaslake. Sir Reginald Bray was a trusted minister of King Henry VII and is chiefly remembered for his building of the Henry VII chapels at Westminster and

Windsor, but his political prowess, inherited from his father, one of Henry VI's privy counsellors, was equally great. A contemporary describes him as 'a very father of his country, a sage and grave person, and a fervent lover of justice, insomuch that if anything had been done against good law and equity he would after a humble fashion plainly reprehend the king. . .'.³ It is a striking fact of the Bray family history that the character and ideals of this Tudor forbear are reproduced in many of his successors by ideas and actions which personify a liberal-mindedness and a progressive attitude to the changing social problems of the day. Reginald A. Bray is particularly recognisable as being of this same human species.

The succeeding Brays settled down in Shere as men of modest wealth and pretensions. In the manner of the sixteenth and seventeenth century landed gentry of the Weald they became Improvers and ironmasters and put down the characteristic rootedness of the old Surrey families.⁴ As landowners, they ranked below the Evelyns of Wotton, whose estate, built up by the Diarist's father and grandfather, exceeded 7000 acres and supported a baronetcy from 1713, or the Onslows of Clandon, whose luxurious mansion and park bespoke of political distinction. Few of the Brays, in fact, found the squire's environment satisfying by itself. Their realistic habits of mind found advance through Law, either in the capacity of a country solicitor or at the Bar.

It was William Bray (1736-1832) who relaid the foundations of the Bray estate by purchasing farms that had previously been sold off.⁵ He was an amateur in planting and the study of the picturesque, as was the fashion of his day.⁶ He had an extensive legal practice and was an accurate and well-informed antiquary. He took over, and completed, *The History of Surrey*, from the Rev. Owen Manning. He lionised John Evelyn and was the first editor of his *Diary*. He contributed frequently to *Archaeologia* and was the first to appreciate the great value in national and regional history of the Loseley manuscripts.⁷ By his son's marriage with Mary Ann Catherine Malthus, a daughter of Daniel Malthus of The Rookey, Dorking, and father of Thomas Malthus, the author of the economic classic on population, an additional strong strain of radical thinking was imparted to the Bray family connections.⁸ Reginald Bray, William's second son, married Frances, a daughter of T.N. Longman of the publishing house. His son, Reginald More Bray (1842-1923) was an eminent lawyer appointed a judge of the High Court in 1904. His wife was Emily, a daughter of Arthur Barclay of

Bury Hill, Dorking, a writer of children's stories from which she drew on her childhood experiences.⁹

Educating London

Reginald Arthur Bray, their eldest son, first achieved prominence as one of a group of *avant-garde* writers absorbed in the social and political problems dawning towards the end of the nineteenth century. His interest in social reform developed in partnership with Charles F.G. Masterman (d. 1927) at the Cambridge University Settlement in Camberwell from 1904. At Bray's suggestion they shared a working-class fifth-storey flat in a block building in Camberwell Road and after several years they moved together to Addington Square, Camberwell.¹⁰

Between 1900–10 Bray was a member of a remarkable group of young friends with whom he retained a lifelong connection: the historians-to-be G.M. Trevelyan and R.C.K. Ensor and the future politicians Charles Trevelyan, Noel Buxton and F.W. Pethick-Lawrence, each of whom held office in Labour administrations. The ideas and precepts generated in this brief, but fruitful, epoch set Bray on the path he was to follow for the rest of his life.

To Masterman, one of the greatest social evils of the day was the disproportionate growth of London, bringing concomitant difficulties both to working-class Londoners and to the depopulated countryside. He identified the amorphous, chaotic, coagulating, inner suburban ring of labouring poor dwelling in their infinite hopelessness amongst the gin palaces of ghettos which had sucked in people from the surrounding districts, which was London's most characteristic product. His picture of their monotonous daily lives, their long journey to work, the wolfed-up meals, 'the engine-like activity and moroseness even of pleasure', in short the bleakness and futility of human life in places such as Lambeth, Camberwell, Deptford and parts of Wandsworth is sketched in vivid, but unexaggerated phrases. Quite apart from the appalling social problems of these gigantic dormitories, Masterman was concerned with the 'awful barrier' which had been created between the urban and rural communities in and around London. He perceived London's lop-sided and monstrous growth as a 'menancing congestion' overshadowing what remained of Surrey's countryside, known only to its inmates when they came from the slums in nomadic hordes to 'blink in dull

wonder' on Kent and Surrey farms when they harvested crops on lands where cattle had taken the place of men. How to reveal to these 'townees' their countryside heritage when it was threatened with the relentless march of their buildings was regarded by the Masterman group as not the least of their problems.¹²

Bray's intellectual curiosity and underlying seriousness of purpose, together with his resolute modernity and the accident of his Surrey connections, made him ideally suited to the Masterman circle. The contrast between the beauty and security at Shere and the world of man as drably created in inner South London stirred Bray's conscience and remained a consistent source of inspiration to him. He became absorbed in what he considered to be a proper balance between town and country around London and their mutual dependence. From his dual perspective he saw both sides of every question. 'The sphinx of the twentieth century', he wrote, 'propounds to us the riddle as to what England will do with this town population or perhaps, more truly, what this town population will do with England'.¹³ In this perceptive phrase we can trace the germ of his life's work and the dual aspect of a Surrey landowner's traditional standpoint and that of his social conscience. He wanted to reduce the stark conflicts and tensions arising between town and country around London and to draw them more closely together. Prophetically couched with a sense of his own personal fatefulness is his own abstract of the difficulties:

'Each age is confronted by its own problem. . . . Men find themselves flung into the midst of an environment, in part friendly, in part hostile, but on the whole indifferent to their needs, and must battle with their circumstances as best they can. Wisdom brings to them a brief spell of happiness, folly a brief interlude of pain, but in either case they have left their mark upon the environment, and the environment has left a mark upon them, but before the problem can be solved and a final truce declared between the man and the environment, he is swept away and his descendants are faced by new conditions and a new riddle'.¹⁴

Bray chose to work towards improving the environment of London through the medium of education which he saw as the means of helping working-class people both to play a more effective role in society and to enrich their own lives. From 1905 until 1948 he was a member of the Fabian Society, being part of the new blood joining the society at the time of the Liberal-Labour election triumphs.¹⁵ He played an active part in the Education Group and its lively summer schools before the First World War.¹⁶ His most lasting work, however, in this chapter of his life was his work for the London

School Board during the time when he was an elected member of the London County Council between 1904 and 1919. In this capacity his practical idealism kept him constantly in the public eye.¹⁷ He had read Mathematics at Cambridge (becoming tenth Wrangler) but he now immersed himself in the current debates on Sociology, Psychology, Religion and Political Science. He began to write on education, including vocational training, and religion, subjects all considered from the standpoint of a Christian Socialist's conviction that Christian belief was wholly incompatible with a political economy based purely on self-interest.

His educational proposals set out in *The Town Child* (1905) were then considered radical in scope, and brought state intervention into every aspect of educational policy and its related aspects such as the provision of school meals, holidays in the country, and medical attention. He worked out an educational system for the L.C.C. which was gradually embodied into various Education Acts and it was remarked in 1940 that Bray's proposals 'could stand almost completely as a description of our present-day educational system'.¹⁸ He also considered new approaches to curricula, encouraged teachers to get into the open air, to teach new subjects, such as history, and sought and obtained for them the liberty to try new ways of teaching.¹⁹

When considering questions of education Bray attached a supremely important place to the traditional social values of the English village. As he saw it, the forces enlarging London had created maelstroms in which stable human associations and an affection for the local environment could not develop. 'The need of today', he wrote, 'is to find in the towns an adequate substitute for the village of yesterday'. To him the traditional village (not the impoverished modern one suffering from a drift of intelligent people to the towns) symbolised a place from whence local feeling and pride is drawn, at which old customs and games were closely connected with and grew out of life and where the present which had grown gradually out of a visible past gave strength and reassurance. He sought to revive some of these village-like qualities in the urban environment of the school halls which had taken the place of village greens.

If we can succeed in investing some one spot, even though it be but a school, with that charm which time serves to deepen and to hallow, . . . that spot will be to the man as Kelmscott was to William Morris'.²⁰

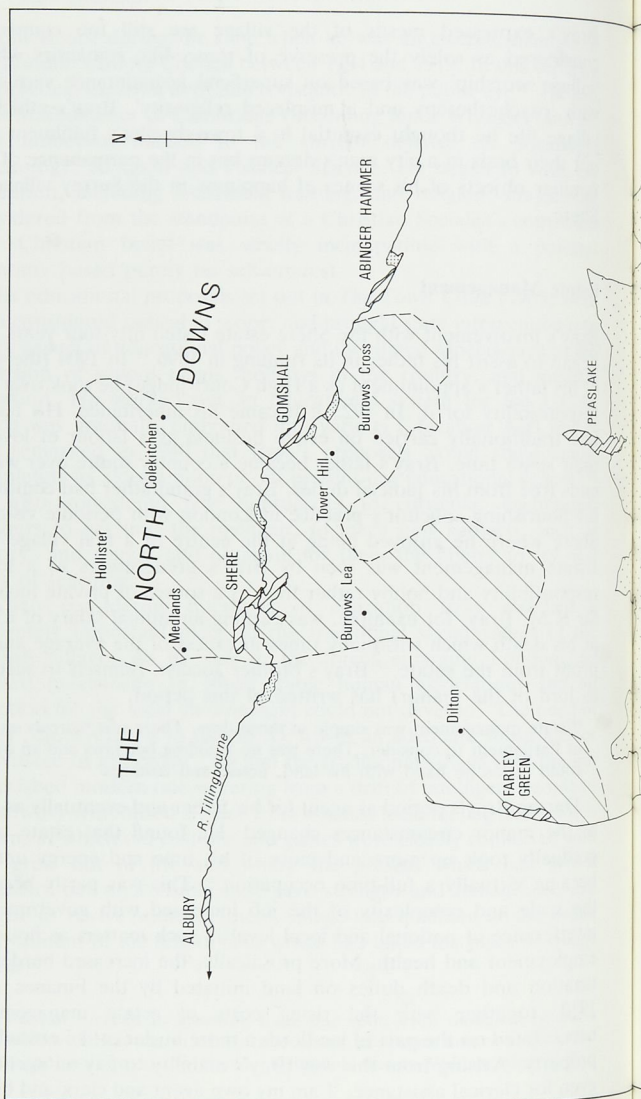
Bray's expressed merits of the village are still too commonly considered as solely the preserve of trance-like romantics whose 'village worship' was based on superficial acquaintance varnished with 'psychotherapy and a misplaced religiosity'. Bray's ethics of village life he thought essential to a town-dweller's fulfilment had not their basis in a city man's dreams but in the permanence of the familiar objects of his scenes of happiness in the Surrey village of Shere.

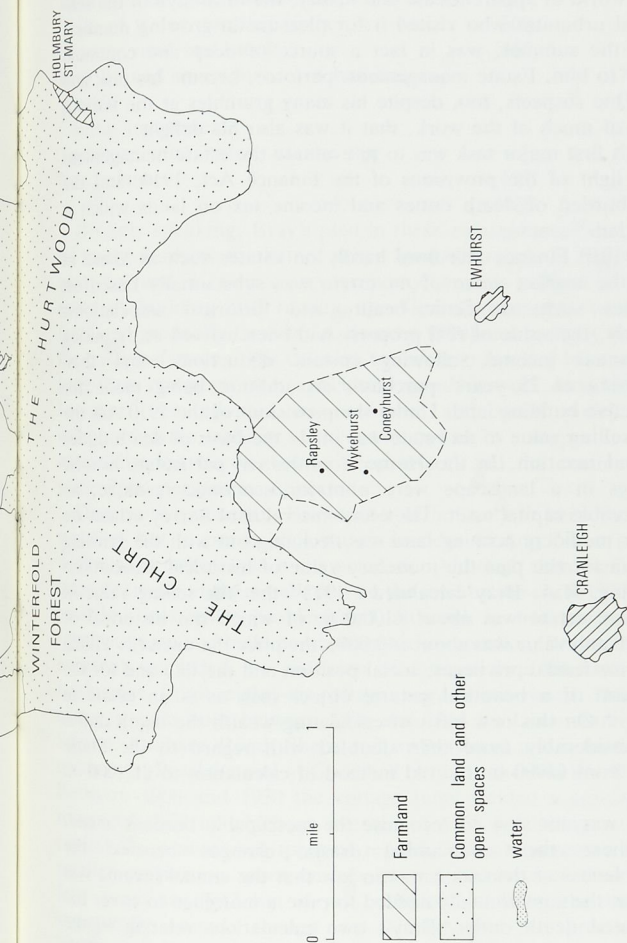
Estate Management

Bray's involvement with the Shere estate lasted fifty-four years. He began to assist his father in its running in 1896.²¹ In 1904 (the year of his father's appointment as a High Court judge) he took over full responsibility for it. In 1923 it became his inheritance. His family had traditionally carried on estate business as a labour of love in their spare time. Bray's father became a country squire over week-ends free from his judicial duties. Bray's grandfather had combined his flourishing solicitor's practice in London with periodic visits to Shere where he enjoyed being at the centre of a real village life. Estate management was seen by Bray's predecessors as a social responsibility and hobby rather than as a source of private income. Sir R.M. Bray, for example, was earning an annual salary of £5000 at his death which was many times in excess of the average annual profit from the estate.²² Bray's brother Jocelyn (himself to succeed as lord of the manor) has written of this period:

'Estate management was simple in those days. There was scarcely an Act of Parliament to consider. There was no Building bye-laws and an owner could do as he liked with his land, house and cottages'.²³

During Bray's period as agent for his father and eventually as lord of the manor circumstances changed. He found that estate work gradually took up more and more of his time and energy until it became virtually a full-time occupation.²⁴ This was partly because the scale and complexity of the job increased with governmental interference at national and local level in such matters as housing, employment and health. More prosaically, the increased burden of taxation and death duties on land initiated by the Finance Act, 1910, together with the rising costs of estate management, necessitated on the part of landlords a more business-like attitude to property. Arising from this was Bray's inability to pay an agent, or even for clerical assistance. 'I am my own agent and clerk and head-





The Bray estate c. 1900

woodman . . . I can afford neither clerk nor agent and have to do all clerical work myself', he wrote of his affairs in the mid 1920s.²⁵ Bray's world of apparent ease and luxury, the rural idyll of the sentimental urbanites who visited it for pleasure in growing numbers during the summer, was in fact a source of deep and continual anxiety to him. Estate management, perforce, became his task and craft. One suspects, too, despite his many grumbles at the tedious nature of much of the work, that it was also his delight.

Bray's first major task was to re-evaluate the estate management in the light of the provisions of the Finance Act, 1910, and the heavy burden of death duties and income tax on lands which it portended.²⁶

The 1910 Finance Act bore hardly on estates such as Shere in which the market value of an estate was substantially based on amenities such as scenic beauty and historical associations. Formerly, the value of real property had been arrived at by taking the annual income, allowing certain deductions, and then capitalising at 25 years' purchase, an addition being made for prospective building land. Under the provisions of the 1910 Act the actual selling value of an estate was made the basis of death duties and land taxation. In the Home Counties, in particular, historic buildings in a landscape were a major economic resource, an irreplaceable capital asset. The economic value of Surrey estates on poor or mediocre farming land was declining but with the growing nostalgia for the past the monetary value of historical associations was rising. R.A. Bray calculated c.1912²⁷ that the selling value of the Shere estate was about £100,000, of which the historical or 'sentimental' value was about £40,000, 'the price the owner is willing to pay for feudal privileges, social position and the like and for the possession of a beautiful natural object such as is an estate in Surrey'.²⁸ On this new basis of calculating wealth the death duties had considerably more than doubled with regard to the Shere estate, from £4900 on the old method of calculation to £12,000 on the new.

Bray was not slow to recognise the inescapable burdens ahead. For Shere these demanded drastic changes because the profitableness of the estate was so low that the annual income was less than the sum annually needed to raise a mortgage to cover the anticipated death duties. Bray's own calculations relating to the average annual income and expenditure over a four year period, probably 1909-1912, showed a net average balance of only £637 after expenditure (including taxation and capital investment):

	Revenue	Expenditure
	£	£
Rents of cottages, houses, shops and farms	3251	
Sales of water, worked timber, etc.	508	
Woods, sand and stone	667	
Repairs and maintenance of buildings		1775
Woods		293
Capital investment		1109
Taxation, tithe, rates, income tax		612
Net balance	637	
	4426	4426

Broadly speaking, Bray's plan in these circumstances was similar in many respects to that of other landowners. As a symptom of austerity and as a necessary economy, he was obliged to reduce costs of building and repairs, the size of the estate work-force (reduced gradually from ten to four by 1939) and multiply buildings for pasture-farming. His decision to invest in forestry because of its long-term prospects over agriculture gives his work added interest. In short, he adopted an economic and social policy which safeguarded the viability of the estate (which as a supporter of land nationalisation he wanted to keep intact) and the community of some 2500 persons it supported.

Despite the austerity, Bray was able not only to keep the estate together but to put it on a rather sounder footing.²⁹ The position with regard to cottages is characteristic. Although there had been a large decrease in the population on the land by the early 1900s overcrowding was still a problem and, although he had less means to repair, replace and build new cottage accommodation, Bray still wholeheartedly regarded the provision of cottages as a function of the landowner. In all, eighty-six cottages were estate owned. Thirty-two cottages were built between 1896 and 1914 (in Lower Street, The Square, Orchard Road, Shere and in Peaslake) and a further five cottages in Peaslake and at Gomshall between the two World Wars. Between 1908 and 1930 the cottage rents yielded a gross annual return of £620 of which an average of £158 (excluding rates and capital investment) was spent on repairs.³⁰ This represented a much smaller proportion spent on repairs and maintenance than in the four years to 1912 but it was sufficient to keep the buildings structurally sound, though not enough for the provision of bathrooms. Quite apart from the question of economy his aim was to modernise country cottages without sacrificing their external appearance. Additionally, 28 houses and shops were estate owned, of

which eight were built after 1918. Fortunately for Bray, most of these premises had been renovated in his father's time.

The tenanted farms numbered sixteen and proved an especially heavy burden. Improvements were periodically necessary — barns and granaries before 1914, piped water and dairies in the late 1920s and 1930s. The bad farming year of 1921,³¹ mainly due to falling prices, and that of 1925,³² led to a deterioration in the land and in the quality of farmers. By the end of the 1920s Bray found it difficult to secure good tenants for some of the poorer farms and through tenants' mismanagement was obliged to offer reduced rents to promising successors. Steadily the position worsened. Field after field was given up to thistle and ragwort. Farmers had a great difficulty in getting a living and made a certain amount of supplementary money by letting fields as week-end camps. During the Second World War the County War Agricultural Executive Committee compulsorily requisitioned Tower Hill farm (since partially built over with council houses), Scotland and part of Medland farms and it farmed a further 150 acres of Bray's tenant farms, ploughing up the old pasture and bringing the farmland under the newly-revived system of ley farming.³³

The water supply was not a commercially valuable undertaking. It was carried out by Bray's father with a view to developing part of the estate, notably in Holmbury St. Mary, for which purpose it was successful. Bray, however, was later to repent of this liability, especially during the droughts of the inter-war years. 'Not only do we find ourselves compelled in dry weather to curtail our own supply but we have the worry of the supply and the trouble of collection.'³⁴ The water company, however, was not sold until the estate was much diminished by sales on Bray's death.

On the question whether much land was prevented from being put to its best use by game, Bray was convinced that insofar as his own estate was concerned no attempt should be made to stop game preservation. 'It gives regular employment and healthy and decently paid employment to a considerable number of persons. Game keepers are a good set of people and almost the only rural inhabitants who know anything of the wild life of the country'.³⁵ With the conversion of fields from arable to grass the growing trespass and damage by dogs resulting from local building developments; and Bray's replacement of neglected and useless coppice with softwoods, conditions worsened for Bray's shooting tenants. Woods on the summit of the North Downs such as Staple and Tickner's Copse and The Netherlands, once fine holding

coverts, changed greatly in character. Despite this, it is characteristic of Bray's careful management that his shooting rents were kept at a high figure.³⁶ The shooting element of the population ran down in their cars on Saturdays from London and rushed back when time was up.³⁷

Bray's 2000 acres of productive land were almost equally divided into farmland and woodland. The former lay on the heavy, water-retentive lands of the Surrey Weald, the latter mainly on the sandy limeless soils of the Greensand Ridge or on the North Downs. The agricultural value of all the land in the neighbourhood was poor to mediocre and formed but a small proportion of the total value, the shooting being worth more. In practice people gave more for woodland than plain land not only for its shooting value but because its prospective value as building land was higher.³⁸ In the past, the social backbone of the area for generations had been small farmers of the farmer-artisan or farmer-tradesmen class who had supplemented their income from the land by other pursuits. Even in the heyday of High Farming in the mid-nineteenth century the neighbourhood had stood out as an 'island' of comparative agricultural neglect.³⁹ In the late nineteenth century land was rented or bought mainly for the value of the shooting. Against this rather poor agricultural background Bray turned to potentially afforestable land and in this respect was a notable creator of new landscapes. The art and practice of forestry also afforded him his happiest experiences and was the source of his most controversial decisions. He was strongly influenced by the popularity of afforestation with the new Labour Party as a possible means of relieving unemployment and a Fabian tract on forestry⁴⁰ into the conviction that private forestry on a scientific basis should play a large role in wealden estate management.

Before the First World War he raised plantations of larch and spruce in the Churt (a 350 acre private open space adjoining the Hurtwood Common) and he helped to replace the appalling losses of softwoods in World War I (but which were remuneratively sold by him in 1915, the fruits of his grandfather's plantings)⁴¹ by replanting from 1923 under various government schemes for the unemployed,⁴² and later under the subsidised forestry schemes of the Forestry Commission.⁴³ The fine high forest of Spanish Chestnut on the North Downs in West Horsley, the beech stands around Hollister and Medland Farms in Shere and plantations of now flourishing Corsican Pine, Douglas Fir and larch in the Churt are of this period.⁴⁴ Some 10–20 acres of woodland were planted annually,

the maximum the estate could afford in terms of costs, though Bray fully appreciated that it should have been larger.⁴⁵

This limitation was rectified in 1949 when almost all the mature trees on his estate had been used for the war effort. In 1925 Bray had considered afforesting the 2000 acre Hurtwood Commons but the supposed danger of forest fires had deterred him.⁴⁶ In 1949 he decided upon this and entered into a dedication scheme with the Forestry Commission for a ten-year planting scheme on the Hurtwood Common, the Churt and on other parts of the estate.⁴⁷ Basically, this decision has given the modern face to the district. Neither the Trustees of the Commons nor Sir Jocelyn Bray, his successor as lord of the manor, approved such drastic changes in the landscape,⁴⁸ much of which was open heath, and Bray's plans were much criticised by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, rambles' associations and other amenity societies.⁴⁹ Bray took the firm view that national considerations of timber supply must take precedence over any other considerations.⁵⁰ The former carefree heather walking can only be recaptured in old landscape paintings by John Clayton Adams, who expresses with great fidelity the character of the local landscape in the 1890s. Many now regret that 'The wind in the heath' is not an enjoyment we still possess.

Bray was a highly competent forester. He had more than his fair share of failures from drought, frost and rabbits at a time when the afforestation of sandy soils was essentially a pioneering venture. Through his interest and zeal he became a director of the English Forestry Association, a body dedicated to providing services to landowners intent on afforestation, and thus became a colleague of Sir (later Lord) Courthope of Whiligh, the best known of the wealden foresters,⁵¹ and so helped to diffuse the rapidly growing art and practice of tree-planting. Bray's forestry activities gave him a good average return over a number of years. He spent some £21,000 in the 32 years from 1908 and sold timber worth £52,000, though in this he had an element of luck on his side caused by the 'famine' years of two world wars.⁵²

Leisure Planning

Between 1919 and 1939 Bray's estate and the mid-Surrey district generally were near enough to London for thousands to go on trains, on bicycles or in cars and on foot to enjoy its unrivalled facilities for recreation. East of Shere rose wooded country to the vantage point of Leith Hill, the highest point in southern England, with its

commanding views of the South Downs and the intervening Weald. Westwards lay Bray's Hurtwood Common of some 2000 acres bordered by similar open country around Winterfold on the Albury estate. Along the southern slopes and crest of the North Downs between Merrow and Ranmore lay another ten square miles of woodland of high landscape and public amenity value. These long fine stretches of uninterrupted countryside had been for more than a generation one of the earliest holiday grounds for Londoners and the favourite walking spaces of the long-distance Rambler, a landscape one could go over and picnic at will, without the presence of a single hedge or notices saying 'private'. They now came under increasing pressure from leisure activity by a town-bred population subscribing to the now established enthusiasm for the open air and long country walks using the cheap new transport facilities of the petrol engine and the electric train and became to so great an extent a playground for Londoners as to be a matter of concern to a very wide public. A continuous stream of ramblers through places like Clandon followed the arrival of each London train during summer week-ends⁵³ and a ramblers' rally at St. Martha's in 1934 attracted over 2000 persons to whom messages were addressed by the Prime Minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury.⁵⁴ Furthermore, mass visiting by cyclists and car-borne Londoners using the public roads for recreation and enjoying a camping holiday became fully established, as also was the habit of week-end tripping to a country cottage or cabin.

This increasing number of visitors in the countryside, accelerating in the 1930s with the Two Weeks' Holiday Movement and shorter working hours, was a sudden, and in many ways, a worrying phenomenon. It created new jobs for squires like Bray whose estates of beautiful open or wooded country bordered London. The new role called for decision-making to resolve the conflicts arising between agriculture, forestry, conservation and recreation at a time when government, either national or local, had hardly any power or influence — indeed hardly any interest — to assist. The contradictory attitude of Bray's increasingly rootless and mobile generation to nature itself created many problems because although it developed a quickened sense of beauty of the countryside none did so much thoughtless damage to what it professed to enjoy. There is no doubt that the many problems arising from increased leisure activity — the problems of trespass, heath and forest fires, litter, trampling, noise — cost Bray much time and money but his readiness for service in the interests of the community at large is as

apparent in this as in other respects. He was ideologically committed to the provision of outdoor recreation in the health-giving climatic conditions of his district, especially for those of limited means, subject to its compatibility with the welfare of the local community as a whole. This attitude was consistent with the fact that contributory factors in the growth of mass recreational activity before the Second World War were the successful battles against illiteracy, poverty and long working hours which Bray had himself helped to win with others of 'The Heart of the Empire' group a generation before. It was not until the 1930s that working-class persons, living and working in an urban environment, first received the chance to use leisure for mass self-fulfilment.

Bray's most important provision for outdoor recreation was in 1927 when he brought the Hurtwood and adjacent commonland on the Albury estate to the extent of more than 2000 acres under the provisions of the Law of Property Act 1925, consequently giving the public freedom of access subject to regulation in the common interest.⁵⁵ Its popularity amongst motorists, in particular, had created the need to regulate access by means of approved parking places and the issue of a 'country code' laying down common sense rules for its use. The problem of regulation at that time was one of great difficulty for few people were of sufficient experience to help. A scheme of regulation by a local authority was considered but the precedents were discouraging.⁵⁶ Eventually, with the advice of Sir Lawrence Chubb, Secretary of the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society,⁵⁷ he set up a board of trustees, the Hurtwood Control Committee (which still exists) which supervised the open spaces with the help of a countryside warden and other labour on the ground. Bray also scheduled another public open space, the Churt, an enclosed portion of waste extending to 350 acres.⁵⁸

Holding such views on land ownership as he did, and with a long standing interest in the south London poor thanks to his well-spent stay in Camberwell, it is not surprising that he generously afforded facilities for outdoor recreation for persons of limited means. He leased land for a holiday home for the Bermondsey Settlement⁵⁹ and helped to set up the National League of Hikers, sponsored by the *Daily Herald* in 1931.⁶⁰ He strongly identified himself with the Youth Hostel Movement and provided a site for hostels at Holmbury St. Mary and at Ewhurst in 1935, amongst the first in the country, where more than 14,000 persons stayed in the first two years of their existence.⁶⁰ His close connections with the Boy Scout and Girl Guide Movements, and similar organisations, made his

estate one of the most popular for camping. Older people found attractive the Treetops Holiday Camp, which provided wooden cabins in a pinewood at Farley Green, on land leased by Bray.⁶²

Apart from serving the needs of urban-based ramblers, tourists, excursion parties from works and schools, educational organisations, sketching clubs, motor cyclists, youth hostellers, and the like, Bray helped the villagers to turn their own leisure to good account by the erection of village halls, club premises, recreation grounds and playing fields.⁶³ Bray also shared the taste in amateur acting of his day, and gave financial help and encouragement to Cambridge undergraduates who performed in the rustically improvised auditorium at High House farm in Shere.⁶⁴

Bray's ambition to preserve the countryside for the town and not from it involved him in the intractable problems created by the custom of week-ending. By the mid 1920s the habit of owning or renting a country cottage or wooden cabin for week-end use by physically exhausted Londoners during the summer for recreation, exercise, or simply for a change of air and scene, had become a middle class cult. The advent of the cheap motor car in the 1930s brought country within 30-40 miles of London easily accessible at week-ends to many more. From the West End, and such places as Highbury, Stoke Newington, and the south-east London business district urban dwellers were brought into touch with the delightful range of wooded and heather clad hills of mid-Surrey and they wanted to share in its beautiful and healthy environment as a refuge from noise, smoke and worries. Many built for the enjoyment of the walks for to Londoners the wonderful freedom of heather slopes offering magnificent views was their earthly paradise.

Bray was sympathetic to the needs of such people. He was himself no less a Londoner for living thirty miles out. He enjoyed the intellectual company of a number of week-enders and their patronage of summer drama and music festivals was helping to re-invigorate village life. He enjoyed finding, adapting and building suitable property for the townsman who ran down from London on Saturdays. From week-end cottages on his estate in the inter-war years musical scores, books and journalism were delivered to their publishers. Radio commentaries were written which are entitled to more than a footnote in the history of wireless. Poetry, sketches and watercolours were created. There is some irony in the fact that the spirited attack against the spreading infection of the bungalow virus was mounted by the occupant of a week-end cabin deeply buried in a wood overlooking a perfect paradise of Surrey landscape!⁶⁵

Although many of the week-ending fraternity entered fully into the life of the villages and found some of their closest friends thereabouts, others of 'the comers and goers' found it less easy to come to terms with the country and its life. Moreover, week-enders not only wanted new and different facilities but they developed a different awareness of the environment from that of the villager. For example, 'the blossoming gorse', valued by the newcomers as a landscape resource, was cut and burnt traditionally by local brick-makers.⁶⁶ When Bray in 1924 sought to find a site for a village hall in Holmbury St. Mary a ludicrous situation developed. Bray saw Holmbury 'as a small place up in the hills which stands sadly in the need of some centre where meetings and entertainments could be held'.⁶⁷ Opposition to the proposal came mainly from week-enders with 'smart' London addresses who feared for their week-end peace.⁶⁸ The finally chosen site lies on the remotest edge of the settlement, buried in woodland. More perniciously, week-end visitors in the mid 1920s were offering high prices for workmen's cottages, getting out the tenants by some means and converting the cottages to week-end villas. The working people became very bitter when local men who wanted to marry had to wait a considerable time before obtaining a cottage.⁶⁹ It was not only the week-enders who was causing the problem. The building of large country houses had created a famine in dwellings for chauffeurs, gardeners, and the like. In the late nineteenth century the really big householders had built their own suites of cottages in Holmbury or at farms; now it was more customary for newcomers to take over the old village cottages for their servants' use. By the late 1930s the situation changed for the better because the shortage of domestic servants in the area meant that fewer wealthy persons could contemplate a move from London.

Bray recognised that the welfare of the country people on his estate was being prejudiced by the habit of week-ending. 'The week-enders are the curse of this district', he wrote to the Minister of Agriculture in 1925.⁷⁰ By strict control on the numbers of week-end cottages he built or let he avoided the twin problems of the wooden hutments or the caravans which rapidly disfigured parts of Surrey between the wars and the potential social disintegration of the various village communities around him. To minimise damage to the locality Bray's hutments were confined to the Devil's Oven district of Ewhurst and at Farley Green and none of his own cottages were let to other than local workers.⁷¹

Land Development and Landscape Protection

Bray's landownership coincided with the spread of unregulated and unaesthetic building as part of the motor revolution. A large population was growing up around London which was neither rural, suburban nor urban for which in 1931 the term 'rurban' was coined. As one of the most perfect examples of English rural beauty near London, Bray's home district was severely threatened. To Bray this crisis was seen not as an occasion for narrowly restrictive attitudes but as an opportunity for experiments in rural reconstruction which would yet preserve the balanced pattern of life which had its basis in a well-integrated town and country. The countryside to him was a living organism which had been evolved over generations by its landlords, yeomen and peasants to meet changing practical needs; it could not now be exempt from change. He therefore saw the problem of his generation with regard to the countryside as not to arrest change but to direct it into courses producing new prosperity and beauty. He fully appreciated that country space was no longer the sole prerogative of country people. He considered his role was not to stem the advance of building but to guide and control its advance with a proper balance between town and country in mind. His broad objective was the general basis of a design which would allow adequate room for facilities for development, while at the same time preserving the essential character of the Surrey countryside. Few people, indeed, were more impatient with the standard negative and protectionist attitudes in preserving countryside amenities than Bray. In this outlook can be recognised that of a planner.⁷²

Bray's fundamental perspective was formed on his wide experience as a land developer and manager on his Surrey estate. Before the First World War he and his father had used great discrimination in the matter of land development. The most profitable form in the Home Counties had been the sale or let of some 5-10 acres of land for the building of a moderate-sized or large house. The Brays did not sell land for building but instead granted 99 year leases of land after the architects' plans for the proposed house had been approved and the house finished. The minimum amount of money to be expended on the house was specified.⁷³ By this simple device the Brays were able to impose a strict control on the size, type and design of any dwelling erected on the estate between c.1880 and 1914. By inference from the architectural style of existing buildings (e.g. at Rapsley and Coneyhurst farms) it is clear that

their definition of suitability included the stipulation that new buildings should harmonise with older structures and reflect the ancient traditions of the countryside. The general use of building stone from the Brays' own quarries and locally-made brick rendered this control the easier and the employment of a local builder, Kings of Abinger Hammer,⁷⁴ in whom the Brays had trust, also meant that craftsmen using the methods and styles of former times were generally employed. R.M. Bray's friendship with the architect Edwin Lutyens resulted in several of the latter's⁷⁵ brilliant transcripts of old buildings.

By 1914 the Brays had disposed of all the sites they considered suitable for larger houses. Some 230 acres of ground was let for this purpose, typically high enough to afford southern views over the Weald but not so elevated as to preclude well water. The ridge running south of the railway, Round Down, the Kingswood and Coneyhurst hangers and Holmbury Hill became sprinkled with villas, each fitting quite unobtrusively into its wooden background. Characteristically, the Brays had detached a copse or field from the acreage of a tenanted farm and put it under the terms of a building lease. The most striking change in the landscape, and Bray's father's most important estate transaction, was the distinct settlement of affluent residents at Holmbury St. Mary including the artists Henry Wells and Frank Walton, the famous accountant Henry Waterhouse⁷⁶ (who built a suite of cottages and was mainly responsible for the men's clubhouse) and the architect George Edmund Street (the architect of the Law Courts in the Strand) who designed the magnificent church for the new community and has left an important mark on Surrey in his many other churches.⁷⁷ R.M. Bray was also responsible for the development of Coneyhurst Warren and its vicinity.

Many of the facts and circumstances of the construction of one of these country houses can be pieced together. Coneyhurst was created by a typical collaboration between landowner, house owner, architect and builder so that the contribution of each is not easily extricable for all four parties shared an instinct in handling local materials and a deep feeling for what the landscape could assimilate. The history of Coneyhurst begins with Miss Ewart's enquiry of R.M. Bray in 1882 in the polite third-person of the usage of the time as to whether he would be 'disposed to part with any land for building a small house for a lady in the Warren on Coneyhurst Hill'.⁷⁸ Bray was unable to comply with her request either as to site or to sale for he had reserved the highest parts of Coneyhurst Hill in

the cause of amenity, public as well as private, and it was not his practice to sell land, but he found her an alternative site in a copse at the foot of Coneyhurst Hill which provided a southern aspect overlooking the Weald. The standard 99-year building lease granted to Miss Ewart gave Bray an effective control over the style of architecture but his advocacy of traditional methods of building and the use of local materials and local workmen were shared by Philip Webb who designed a small country dwelling (but large enough to be converted into four quite substantial modern houses) as 'a woman's house with delicate ways'.⁸⁰ Webb was also particularly sensitive to how he should be able 'to least mar the site with the coming house'. This was resolved by discussions on the spot between architect, prospective owner and Mr. Bray. Webb's builders were the local firm of King's at Abinger Hammer who developed their experience of working under Webb by building in the local Surrey tradition at East Clandon with Goodhart-Rendel.⁸¹ For twenty-five years Miss Ewart had the happiness of living under Coneyhurst's roof, dispensing philanthropy at Ewhurst with the liberality of the spinsters Augusta and Rosa Spottiswoode at the adjacent hamlet of Peaslake.⁸² As for Coneyhurst itself, it was the progenitor of other country houses, all unobtrusively fitted into the landscape, which R.A. Bray permitted to be developed on the flanks of Coneyhurst Hill after Miss Ewart's death.

When R.A. Bray inherited the estate in 1923 the demand for land for the building of large houses had ceased and development by way of small houses, then a relatively new event, he considered had poor prospects on account of the slow and expensive railway journey to London on the Redhill and Guildford branch of the London and South-East Railway.⁸³ He argued that retired persons and 'second-homers' would want to build away from existing villages for quietness and a view. In this judgement was founded the present haphazard scatter of houses at Farley Green and Peaslake.

His most tangible planning achievements were the voluntary agreements he secured with landowners for the protection from the speculative builder of the wooded and heathy range of hills dominated by Leith Hill and the crest and southern slopes of the North Downs, between Merrow and Ranmore, in all some twenty square miles of the finest Surrey scenery. Bray was not, of course, the first to appreciate the need to protect these areas. Seven years earlier a consultant's report to the Surrey Joint Town Planning Committee had remarked of the Leith Hill district that there was 'no more important duty than the mid-Surrey Joint Town Planning

Committee has to perform than to take adequate steps to preserve intact this gem of rural England'. Of the North Downs it spoke of the preservation of the crest and slopes 'as much of national importance as the preservation of the South Downs'.⁸⁴ But both these tasks were beyond the capabilities of the J.T.P.C. and they now awaited someone with the energy and patience to get all the owners concerned to agree to preservation. Bray was ideally suited to this role and his successes may prove the most enduring of his life's work.

These planning schemes fathered by Bray were big by the standards of the 1930s — and larger than Surrey County Council had dealt with up to that time — but their importance was out of all proportion to the area of land involved on account of the high landscape value of the districts concerned and the example they set to others. For their ultimate success the schemes were dependent upon a 'combined operations' exercise involving the cordial welcome and support of landowners and that of the chairman of the County Council, R. Chuter Ede, and of the chairman of the County Town and Planning Committee, Capt. E.H. Tuckwell; council members; officials of local government and of the Ministry of Health; and the active help and encouragement of various voluntary amenity bodies and propagandists such as the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and Clough Williams-Ellis. But with regard to the influence of personalities and organisations Bray's own contribution stands out. He and his brother Jocelyn were the originators of the schemes; through Bray's tireless efforts they were tirelessly launched and through his great skills as a conciliator they finally triumphed. It was a sure instinct of a Surrey landowner that persuaded him to make the proposals but it was his ability to expound their first principles as never before in English planning which finally won the day.

Bray's schemes were departures from the orthodox planning procedures of the day which were unsatisfactory with regard to the planning of large tracts of land under the jurisdiction of several local authorities. The 1932 Town and Country Planning Act was passed by the National Government to remove the restrictions of the 1919 and 1909 Acts which had been largely limited to suburban development but the planning authorities set up were too small in area for effective planning and, resulting from an amendment carried against the government in the House of Commons, had the statutory obligation to pay compensation to those seeking to develop land for building at rates which few authorities could

afford.

Bray's fundamental principle, outlined in a memorandum which was widely discussed nationally, and tirelessly put across to Surrey landowners by correspondence or at meetings during 1934, was that in Surrey it was strongly to the advantage of landowners to preserve amenities because these added market value to adjoining landed property which potentially more than outweighed the loss of building land elsewhere.⁸⁵ Such an argument, if not acceptable in the new mood towards the environment after the Second World War, was a valid one at a time when compensation was statutorily payable for the loss of building 'rights'. Many landowners, in fact, exercised real self-denial in the matter of land protection and did not put up for sale land for building outside 'protected' zones but others who agreed to drastic limitation on their ordinary rights of development in order to preserve amenities expected to be able to recoup losses elsewhere. Bray's market 'law' was a way round the impossible compensation requirement and it brought landowners into general agreement on landscape protection. It offered a means towards the planning of relatively large areas and not simply of beauty-spots.

Bray's initiative in the matter of landscape protection was much praised but it had inherent weaknesses. It was most applicable to the grander scenery which there was a general desire to save. The idea that it would pay a landowner to preserve 'ordinary' scenery was not widely understood at the time. His schemes of limitation of development were potentially much cheaper than the buying of land as public open space which was the essence of the London Green Belt proposal. Unfortunately, they did not work in the favour of the small landowner. To overcome this difficulty Bray envisaged the payment of compensation to such persons affected by a landscape protection proposal but the very protracted discussion on this point brought out the difficulties. Persons living in isolated cottages affected by Bray's severely restricted scheme had their own particular point of view. They were too poor to pay for beauty and in any case considered their environment so far from a paradise as to be 'a rural slum derived of the essential conveniences of modern life', a standpoint which predictably interested officials of the Ministry of Health. They, and the smaller landowners, had other grievances, notably a resentment against campers who invaded the district in summer and combined to turn it into a fire and health hazard.⁸⁶

The effects of these objections to Bray's scheme can be traced in

the history of the Leith Hill scheme from 1934. The object of this was to make special provisions for this delightfully wooded district of some 5500 acres by restricting building to a minimum and carefully controlling every aspect of land use to ensure that it remained in its existing condition. The intention was to create what was in effect a public park on privately-owned land. It began as a scheme of the big landowners, including the largest, the Wotton Estate, and then proceeded to an outline local agreement with the 38 smaller occupiers.⁸⁷ In 1935 Surrey County Council took over responsibility for the scheme with a view to the payment of any necessary compensation and as it was such a very special scheme it received a great deal of attention from officials of the Planning Division of the Ministry of Health. Such were the long delays between the Surrey County Council and the smaller landowners on the question of compensation and other matters, particularly the question of camping, that even in May 1938 the scheme was considered at the Ministry as being 'still in an embryonic stage'.⁸⁸ It had still not reached the stage when it could be the subject of a Public Inquiry at the outbreak of the Second World War.⁸⁹ Bray's North Downs scheme, modelled on the Leith Hill proposal, was in a still more rudimentary stage, although an outline scheme with the larger landowners had been reached five years earlier.⁹⁰

Bray's drastic schemes for landscape protection in mid-Surrey fell short of perfection and were too ambitious in scale for the rudimentary planning machinery of the day. Ultimately, they were superseded by the tougher measures of post-war planning legislation.⁹¹ Yet both locally and nationally they were seen as very special schemes which demanded the support of everyone concerned with the preservation of the countryside. They were considered as examples which might well be widely followed elsewhere, and they were in fact the parent of a number of voluntary schemes in the south-east of England.⁹² At a time when so many 'airy futilities' were being talked and so few useful things being done, Bray's schemes stand out as examples of pioneering practical idealism and so deserve a niche in planning history. He also achieved his immediate object for, although a formal planning scheme did not materialise, landowners honoured their 'gentlemen's agreement' of 1934 which proved invaluable with the rising public use of the finest parts of the Surrey countryside. The building crisis was causing serious damage in the short term which might have been irretrievable had Bray not taken steps to stop it.

This protection of land of the highest landscape value was seen by

Bray as the salient feature of a broad development plan which was intended to preserve broad swaithes of countryside between other zones reserved for various forms of building. The proposals were set out in the Guildford District Council's planning scheme of 1938, for which Bray as chairman of the planning committee, and his brother Jocelyn, as chairman of the council, had a direct responsibility.⁹³ At a Public Enquiry in March 1938 there were 487 written objections mainly centred upon the provision of a new road replacing the A.25 between Abinger Hammer and Chilworth (a Surrey County Council proposal) and the zoning of several hundred acres of exceptionally beautiful woodland for house building. Fears were expressed that the beauty of the Tillingbourne valley would be spoiled. Much of the opposition came from newcomers into the district who saw planning issues in the much more restrictive light of the true Surrey 'die-hards'.⁹⁴ After the war the 1938 scheme was trimmed down in the light of the Green Belt policy prevailing. The proposed new road has not been built and in 1960 a short by-pass alleviated traffic problems in Shere; the woodlands and farmland remain unviolated. The rift which developed between Bray's own ideas for the future of his locality and that of a vocal body of new residents was symptomatic of the fast-waning power of a squire in the democratic climate of the late 1930s. His desire for a greater building development in mid-Surrey than was approved by both local feeling and national planning policy was based on the belief that the still overcrowded London of his day required healthy rural spaces in which people could enjoy a happier existence. Who in this argument was right? We have to ask ourselves this question as urgently now as people had to in 1938 and no consensus or solution is yet in sight.

Bray never fell out of step with his changing and advancing world and worked quietly and ungrudgingly in multifarious pursuits in the service of his community without any desire for recognition or for what would now be considered an adequate financial reward. His outlook never altered from youth to old age and, although conforming to no pattern, he closely resembled in many ways his ancestors who had lived similarly in the embrace of his well-loved hills and woods. As a squire, he was many sided, interested not only in public affairs but in plays and books and, in the manner of the old country gentry, was studious in the pursuit of many hobbies.⁹⁵ He was a bachelor who never mixed freely in general society but his memory was recalled by many with an unusual depth of feeling for his good nature and entire absence of ostentation. The image he evokes in persons' minds is as a cyclist travelling about the estate

dressed in an old Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers or as a walker about the village of Shere "in a suit of baggy and ancient plus fours and an equally ancient Burberry".⁹⁶

His career marks a significant episode in the changeful relations between London and its surrounding countryside and of the impact of the gentry upon economic and social life in rural areas. His life of useful service is recorded in the mass of estate correspondence, accounts and similar papers which he preserved covering both his own and his father's working life. His incoming estate correspondence was neatly filed and a duplicate copy of his outgoing letters kept. From time to time he reviewed at length estate policy and maintained meticulous accounts, both of day-to-day transactions and detailed annual analyses of profits and losses. Turning over the pages of these records one finds a priceless museum which acts as a quiet and accurate chronicle of Bray's times. What a various gallery of human types is glimpsed!

Now that archivists have correlated a good part of what was hitherto an unsorted mass of family and estate papers the social historian and the historical geographer can now resurrect from oblivion many fresh and fascinating personalities in the setting of their landed estates. In so far as a man's mind is revealed in the management of his land and tenants and in other public and private acts, we can also examine in a truer light the personalities, deeds and thoughts of squires of different periods. Thanks to the satirical creation of the sporting squire, colourful stock-figures, built up to be larger than life step by step in burlesque fashion, have been held up to light-hearted ridicule. These humoristic images viewed through the looking glass of fiction, the time honoured butts of every radical or reformer, are amongst the masterpieces of British comedy. How closely these caricatures square with the actual ways of living and thinking of the squires of different ages is a question that the historian will now be able to answer. The real persons at work and play, still elusive in their anonymity, deserve recall. It will be in no way surprising when the revisionist literature finds its way into print if the authentically historical personages now hidden from us in their obscure landscapes are more than equal in interest and value to those long familiar to us from the broad strokes of the literary pen.⁹⁷

Notes

- ¹ G(uildford) M(uniment) R(oom) 85/37/15, f.376; 85/37/17, f.330.
- ² G.M.R. 85/42/5.
- ³ B(ritish) L(ibrary), Lansdowne Ms.979, f.23v; Add. Mss. 5833, f.666. See also Roger Lockyer *Henry VII* (1968), p.130.
- ⁴ G.M.R. 85/4/4; 85/13/204-8.
- ⁵ G.M.R. 85/23/23.
- ⁶ G.M.R. 85/23/23.
- ⁷ Now in the Foulger Library, Massachusetts and the G.M.R.
- ⁸ In 1950 R.A. Bray donated the Malthus Library to King's College, Cambridge. G.M.R. 85/23(4), p. 16.
- ⁹ Emily Bray, *Family Feats, or The Old House* (1884); *Old Time and The Boy* (1885). *The Times*, 23 March 1923, 15d.
- ¹⁰ Lucy Masterman, *C.F.G. Masterman* (1939), pp.28-9, 33, 37, 51, 100, 126. Well-intentioned architects and planners in the 1950s did not follow their example and so missed the chance of discovering what it meant to bring up a family in a south London tower block.
- ¹¹ Lucy Masterman, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- ¹² Charles F.G. Masterman, *The Heart of the Empire* (1901), pp. 1-52; *From the Abyss* (1902) (dedicated to R.A. Bray; in Lucian Oldershaw (ed.), *England: a Nation* (1904), pp. 44-94; *The Condition of England* (1909); in *Peril of Change* (1905), pp. 155-166. Masterman was on the editorial board of *The Independent Review*, 1903-7. See also Lucy Masterman, *op. cit.*, and Bray's own reflections on a south London block building when he was working there, R.A. Bray, *The Town Child* (1907), p. 86.
- ¹³ R.A. Bray, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. vii.
- ¹⁵ Nuffield College, Oxford, Fabian Society Membership cards (1905-1948) and minute books (1905-1919).
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*; E.R. Pease, *The history of the Fabian Society* (1916), p. 222, 270.
- ¹⁷ For example, *The Times*, June 8 1906, 15c; Sept. 28 1908; 14b; 13 Oct 1910 6b; Jan 26 1911, 10c. See also B. Drake and M. Cole (eds.) *Beatrice Webb: Our Partnership* (1948), pp. 291, 301-2, 373, 498, for Bray's support of Sidney Webb's educational plans for the L.C.C. Bray's main publications are: 'The Children of the Town', in *The Heart of the Empire* (1901), pp. 111-164; 'Patriotism and Education', in Lucian Oldershaw (ed.), *op.cit.*, (1904), pp. 200-233; *The Town Child* (1907); *The Family* (1908); *Boy Labour and Apprenticeship* (1911); *Labour and the Churches* (1912).
- ¹⁸ Lucy Masterman, *op.cit.*, p.43.
- ¹⁹ R.A. Bray, *The Town Child* (1907), pp. 334-8. See Clive Bell, *Old Friends* (1956), p. 29, for a comment on Bray at this period as 'one of the most sympathetic of all Christian intellectuals'.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.323.
- ²¹ G.M.R. 85/36/3.
- ²² G.M.R. 85/36/17, f.130.
- ²³ G.M.R. 85/23(4).
- ²⁴ G.M.R. 85/37/17.
- ²⁵ G.M.R. *Ibid.*, f.256 and *passim*.
- ²⁶ G.M.R. 85/42/5.
- ²⁷ G.M.R. 85/42/5.
- ²⁸ G.M.R. 85/42/5.
- ²⁹ G.M.R. 85/25/27; 85/36/3; 85/36/4 (1932-42).
- ³⁰ G.M.R. 85/36/3.
- ³¹ G.M.R. 85/37/17, f.43.

³² G.M.R. 85/37/17, f.265.

³³ G.M.R. 85/38/19-23; 85/37/10; 85/38/10a/85/38/18a-19a.

³⁴ G.M.R. 85/37/17, f.146; 85/29/26.

³⁵ G.M.R. 85/42/5.

³⁶ G.M.R. 85/38/10a; 85/36/3.

³⁷ G.M.R. 85/38/10a; 85/38/15, and *passim*.

³⁸ G.M.R. 85/29/13.

³⁹ James Caird, *English agriculture in 1850-1* (1851), p. 118. Taken as an illustration were the 'undrained marshes, ill-kept roads, untrimmed hedges, rickety farm-buildings, shabby-looking cows of various breeds and dirty cottages', encountered on a walk from Gomshall railway station. According to Caird this amounted to 'a state of rural management as completely neglected as one is likely to meet in the remotest parts of the island'. In the 1890s several farms on the Weald Clay in Ewhurst, Cranleigh and Rudgwick were in a dilapidated state, the roughest parts being used for shooting or poultry rearing and not for cultivation. Poor farming practices in the Brays' district were then widespread. G.M.R. 85/29/12.

⁴⁰ A.P. Grenfell, *Afforestation and unemployment* (1912).

⁴¹ G.M.R. 84/42/5.

⁴² G.M.R. 85/36/3; 85/38/1-4; 85/38/20a-23a).

⁴³ G.M.R. 85/38/10a; 85/38/5a.

⁴⁴ G.M.R. 85/38/10a, *et seq.*

⁴⁵ G.M.R. 85/38/10a, *et seq.*

⁴⁶ G.M.R. 85/38/8a.

⁴⁷ G.M.R. 85/38/43.

⁴⁸ G.M.R. 85/23/(4).

⁴⁹ G.M.R. 85/38/43.

⁵⁰ G.M.R. 85/38/43.

⁵¹ G.M.R. 85/38/17a; 85/38/24a.

⁵² G.M.R. 85/42/5; 85/36/4; 85/38/20a-23a; 85/25/27.

⁵³ *The West Surrey Advertiser* Aug. 25, 1934, p. 6. Shere had become a Londoners' playground much earlier and it had developed a self-consciousness to their needs which more than matched a sea-side resort's. R.A. Bray wrote in 1898 'So much of the prosperity of Shere depends on its visitors that nothing must be allowed which would tend to throw any doubt as to its sanitary condition'. In 1886 (by which date Londoners on safety cycles had discovered Shere) most of the available lodgings in the village were taken by landscape artists who combined successfully to prevent the demolition of the bridge over the River Tillingbourne on the grounds that it would deprive the village of much of its picturesqueness and so impair both their calling and the tourist business. 'A Collection of Drawings by Mrs. Allingham, R.W.S., illustrating Surrey Cottages', The Fine Art Society, (London, 1886), prefatory note, p. 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, June 23 1934, p.9.

⁵⁵ *The Times*, 22 March 1927, IIc.

⁵⁶ G.M.R. 85/38/5a.

⁵⁷ G.M.R. 85/37/8, f.81.

⁵⁸ G.M.R. 85/37/9.

⁵⁹ G.M.R. 85/38/5a (Dr. J. Scott Lidgett).

⁶⁰ G.M.R. 85/38/9a.

⁶¹ *The West Surrey Advertiser* Aug. 2 1937, p. 8; G.M.R. 85/38/16.

⁶² G.M.R. 85/38/IIa.

⁶³ Holmbury, G.M.R. 85/29/11; Peaslake, G.M.R. 85/29/10.

⁶⁴ G.M.R. 85/31/17; *The Spectator*, July 8 1937, p. 1070.

⁶⁵ For example, Dr. (Sir) Adrian Boulton, Miss Helen Waddell, (Sir) G.M. Trevelyan, Wilson Harris (editor, *The Spectator*), the radio commentator Raymond Gram Swing, artist Mary Freeman and architect-planner Clough Williams Ellis. G.M.R. 85/38/14a; 85/38/5-8. But the main function of Shere week-end houses was

to provide short periods of relaxation from London. J.W. Mackail, the biographer of William Morris and leading literary critic, wrote in 1934 from Quaker's Orchard, Peaslake (a house also rented by Sir Adrian Boulton). . . it is a beautiful bit of country just on the edge of Hurt Wood, with any amount of woodland walks. . . (B.M. Add.Ms.52734).

For an early example of this development see "Home Counties" (J.W. Robertson-Scott) *How to build or buy a country cottage and fit it up* (1905).

⁶⁶ G.M.R. 85/29/4.

⁶⁷ G.M.R. 85/29/11. (Noel Buxton).

⁶⁸ Ibid., (C.H. Grinling).

⁶⁹ Ibid., (Noel Buxton).

⁷⁰ Ibid.,

⁷¹ G.M.R. 85/29/12.

⁷² *The Times* July 3 1934, 9d; G.M.R. 85/37/13 (see footnote 85); *The Surrey Advertiser*, April 2 1938, p. 6, 11. It should not be overlooked that Bray in the 1930s was successfully defending amenities against the Surrey County Council's road widening and tree felling activities in remote rural areas. G.M.R. 85/38/15.

⁷³ G.M.R. 85/29/12 (Feb. 9 1887; Jan. 1 1882; Sept. 28 1882 and Oct. 4 1882; Sept. 1883. In 1899, in respect of such a building lease R.M. Bray wrote 'you are to build a house to cost not less than £400, the plans to be approved by me, the lease to be granted on the house being finished'.

⁷⁴ G.M.R. 85/29/12, Feb. 9 1887. See also H.S. Goodhart Rendel, *Hatchlands National Trust* (1962), p. 11, for the statement that W. and G. King of Abinger Hammer had worked under Philip Webb.

⁷⁵ G.M.R. 85/23/(4). Edwin Lutyens was also in close friendship with the architect (Sir) Felix Clay who designed a number of houses in Shere and was R.A. Bray's first cousin. He married Beatrice Webb's niece. G.M.R. 85/29/13; 85/23/(4).

⁷⁶ G.M.R. 85/29/4; G.M.R. 84/18/12; G.M.R. 85/29/13.

⁷⁷ G.M.R. 85/31/7.

⁷⁸ G.M.R. 85/29/12.

⁷⁹ Ibid;

⁸⁰ W.R. Lethaby, *Philip Webb and his work* (1935), p.80.

⁸¹ G.M.R. 85/29/12. Webb subsequently noted the 'Victorian beast of a house' which was built shortly after Miss Ewart's. 'It quite mars the landscape. Truth to tell all this kind of luxury house does that and I am under the lash too'. B.M. Add. Ms.45354 f.189.

Of Coneyhurst he wrote 'Miss Ewart seems to like it well enough — when she gets some pretty things to grow against and veil the brickwork I shall like it better'. Ibid., f.251r-v.

⁸² G.M.R. 85/23(4).

⁸³ G.M.R. 85/31/7.

⁸⁴ P(ublic) R(ecord) O(ffice) HLG 4 /3642, 3352.

⁸⁵ *The Times*, Jan. 31 1934, 14c; Feb. 10 1934, 16c; July 3 1934, 9d; *The Surrey Advertiser* June 23 1934, p.9. For congratulations on the memorandum by Sir Felix Clay and (Sir) Clough Williams-Ellis, see G.M.R. 85/38/13a. Bray's standpoint is essentially that expressed earlier by Clough Williams-Ellis, *Lawrence Weaver* (1933), p.90: 'Good development paid an owner not merely in pride and pleasure but actually in money to do things generally to a carefully thought out plan rather than dispose of the property for cutting up by speculating land butchers'.

⁸⁶ *The Surrey Weekly Advertiser* Sept. 14 1935, p.9; P.R.O. HLG4/58, Parts 1 & 2; *The Dorking Advertiser*, Jan 1 1937, p. 1; June 3 1938, p. 2; June 24 1938, p. 6. *The Times*, July 3 1934, 9d. The Ministry of Health was shaken by these allegations and they proved to be a stumbling block towards formal approval of the scheme.

⁸⁷ P.R.O. HLG 4/58, Parts 1 and 2; *The Listener* 15 Aug. 1934, p. 266. *The Spectator* 27 July 1934, p. 131.

⁸⁸ P.R.O. HLG 4/58.

⁸⁹ Ibid., *The Spectator*, June 25 1937, p. 1177 attributed the slowness of the formal negotiations to the Planning Division of the Ministry of Health. This was resented by senior officials who drew attention to the protracted negotiation between the Surrey County Council and landowners and other interested parties. The Ministry's request to the editor of *The Spectator* to retract his allegation did not meet with a response.

⁹⁰ This involved Bray in months of letter-writing and visits during 1934. G.M.R. 85/37/13, fs. 29, 30, 41, 49, 54, 81, 92, 97, 104, 110, 113, 114, 126, 132, 128, 157, 198, 204, 209, 211, 213. S(urrey) C(ounty) R(ecord) O(ffice) Kingston 2196/1/38, et seq; 2196/1/28, 26 July 1934. See also the *Surrey Advertiser* Feb. 2 1935, p. 9.

⁹¹ P.R.O. HLG4/58: HLG4/2780.

⁹² *The Spectator* June 25 1937, p. 1177; *The Surrey Advertiser*, Feb 2 1935, p. 9; July 27 1935, p. 6 G.M.R. 85/38/10, 85/38/13a.

⁹³ S.C.R.O. 2196/1/38.

⁹⁴ P.R.O. HLG 4/2780; HLG 5/2647-50. *The Surrey Weekly Advertiser* April 2 1938, p. 6, p. 11; May 8 1938, p. 12; May 15 1939, p. 8. *The Times* May 6 1937, 12c, May 2 1937 8d, 27 July 1939 11d; *The Evening Standard* 25 July 1939, p. 4; S.C.R.O. 2196/1/38, 11 Mar. 1937; P.R.O. HLG 4/2780 (17 March 1939).

⁹⁵ Information from Mrs. Margaret Elston.

⁹⁶ *The Surrey Times and Weekly Press* Aug. 5 1950, p. 4. *The Guildford and Dorking Times*, Feb. 21 1964, pp. 7-8. Verbal information from Mr. Walter Stemp, Ewhurst, and Mrs M. Elston.

⁹⁷ The author wishes to express his gratitude for help to the following members of the Bray family: Mrs. Handa Bray, Miss Rachel Warren and Mrs. Margaret Elston; to Mr. F.L. Ryan; and to Miss Geraldine Beck and Mrs. Shirley Corke of the Surrey Record Office, Guildford, but they are not responsible for any statements which appear therein.