

## Fertilisers Farming and Philanthropy: an update

### Raymond Holland

'Fertilisers Farming and Philanthropy - The Proctor Story' was published in *BIAS Journal* 22 in 1990. Since then, there are a number of developments to report.

#### Fertilisers: Works Closure

The article in 1990 stated that H. & T. Proctor Ltd went into liquidation in April 1987 but the business was acquired, as a logical diversification, by Willetts and Son (Bristol) Ltd, the animal feed merchants, whose head office is at 51, Queen Square.

Willetts decided to change direction and make speciality horticultural products: mini-granules for sports grounds, together with garden and amenity products. The production continued until the Bristol Development Corporation (BDC) built a new road - St Philips Causeway - through the main storage area at the Feeder Road works. This new road caused the factory to close in 1993 and it was handed over to the BDC. From then products were made to Proctor specifications by other fertiliser manufacturers. In this way H. & T. Proctor Ltd have continued to market their own range of granulated products. Thus the brand name 'Proctors' still lives on but by 1995 BDC had demolished the old factory buildings and cleared the site.

#### Farming: Derelict Stanley Farm is Restored to Glory

The 1990 article described how Wallscourt Farm house and the derelict farm buildings had been taken over by Hewlett Packard Ltd. The farmhouse was completely refurbished for use as a staff amenity centre and the site was landscaped, with only token features of the farm buildings retained. Earlier, in 1960, part of the original site had been sold to build Bristol Polytechnic, now the Frenchay Campus of the University of the West of

England. Stanley Farm house was occupied until 1984. Once empty, it and the other outbuildings were sadly vandalised and became more and more derelict.

The rest of the original site which included Stanley Farm remained undeveloped until purchased by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 1991. At that time the site was known as the Bristol Business Park but it soon became the MoD Abbey Wood site, named after the adjacent Splatts Abbey Wood. It was a condition of the site purchase agreement and forthcoming planning permission that Stanley Farm was to be restored despite its severe neglect. The task was undertaken by craftsmen familiar with working on listed buildings. The house and outbuildings have been fully restored and are in pristine condition.

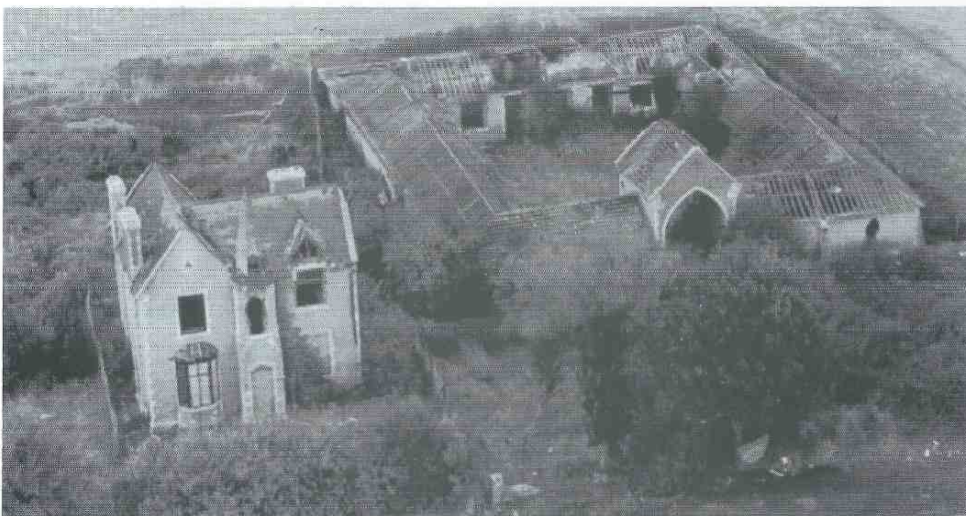
The first of 4,500 MoD staff arrived on the Abbey Wood site in December 1995. In 1996 the magnificently restored Stanley Farm buildings became the Management and Information Technology Training Centre for the Procurement Executive Headquarters Complex.

#### Philanthropy: Unanswered Questions

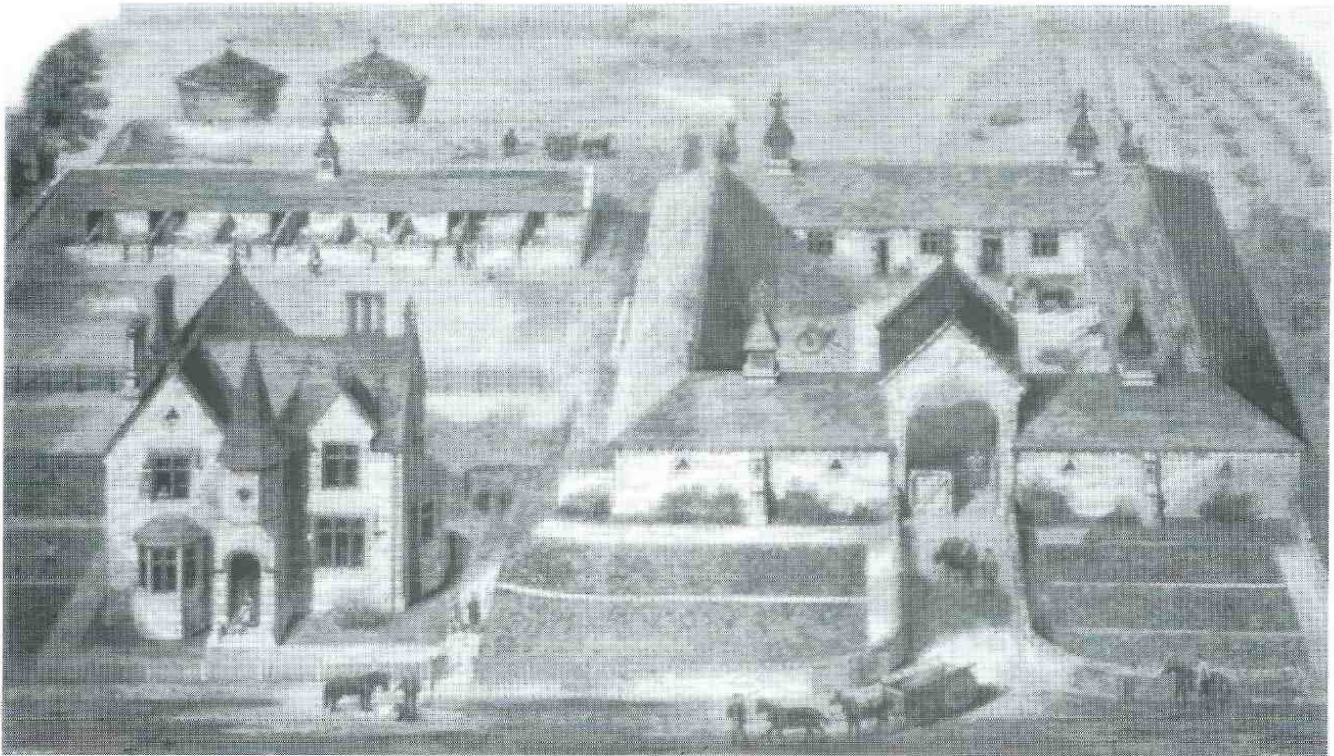
Thomas Proctor's most widely-known act of philanthropy was the gift to the City of Bristol of the Mansion House in 1874. In 1861 Thomas Proctor moved from Wallscourt Farm to 'Elmdale House', Clifton Down. Where was this house? 'Elmdale' on the Promenade, Clifton - the Mansion House - was not built until 1867.

In 1875 Thomas Proctor's final gift to the City was Fishponds Park. This is clearly stated in Latimer's Annals of Bristol but at Fishponds Park there is nothing to connect it with Proctor. The Gloucester Record Office has no documentary confirmation of this gift.

Any information to solve these two mysteries would be welcomed.



Stanley Farm before restoration by the Ministry of Defence Procurement Executive Collocation Project Team at Abbey Wood, north Bristol. (Courtesy of CS (Photography) P3, 91/185/60)



Stanley Farm as it was in 1860. Proctor's Farm Bailiff lived here. The outbuildings to the right were originally used as stables for the farm horses, and sheds for carts, wagons and agricultural implements. Behind the house was the piggery, which has long since disappeared. *(The Builder, 3 March 1860)*



Stanley Farm fully restored.

*(Courtesy of CS (Photography) P3, 95/356/A/3)*