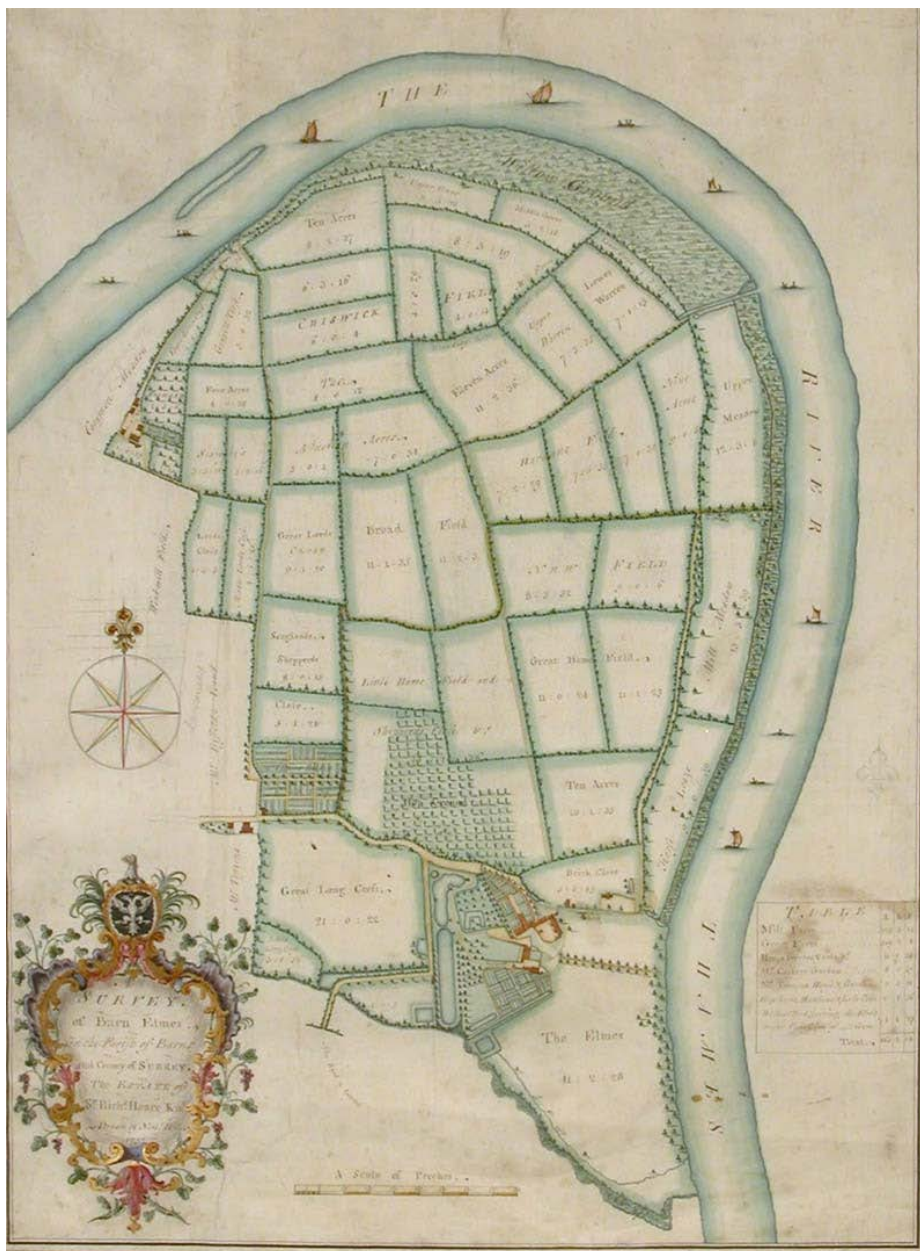


The Hoare family at Barn Elms

Barn Elms in the mid-18th century consisted of a mansion house with outbuildings, a walled kitchen garden, pleasure gardens, farmland, pasture, fishponds, and meadows. It extended over 480 acres and was fringed by willow grounds on the banks of the Thames. The estate lay within a pronounced curve of the River Thames between Barnes and Putney. Until bridges were built at Putney in 1729 and Westminster in 1750, Barn Elms could only be reached conveniently by boat from central London and was a fashionable resort for summer visitors. The road network west of London was developed north of the river enabling Barn Elms to remain a secluded rural retreat until Hammersmith Bridge opened in 1827.



Plan of Barn Elms 1752

In 1742 Richard Hoare, Fleet Street banker at the Sign of the Golden Bottle and Alderman of Farringdon Without in the City of London, moved to Barn Elms with his second wife Elizabeth. Their son Henry was born there in 1744 and the following year Richard was made Lord Mayor of London and knighted. His year of office was dominated by the threat of the Jacobite rebellion and his health suffered. Despite being selected as a Tory candidate for Middlesex in the 1747 Parliamentary election he declined to stand and instead went on an extensive tour of France hoping for a cure. Following his return, he bought the leasehold of Barn Elms in 1750 for £7000; the freehold of the manor and land at Barn Elms had been granted to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's by King Athelstan in the early 10th Century.

Sir Richard Hoare commissioned a survey of the Barn Elms estate in 1752. He planted trees and shrubs including a grand avenue leading from the river to the house and engaged Henry Flitcroft, his brother Henry's architectural advisor at Stourhead in Wiltshire, to re-model the garden structure. The full realisation of their plans was cut short by Sir Richard's early death in 1754, at the age of 45.



Sir Richard Hoare 1st Bart. by John Opie 1780-85 Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter



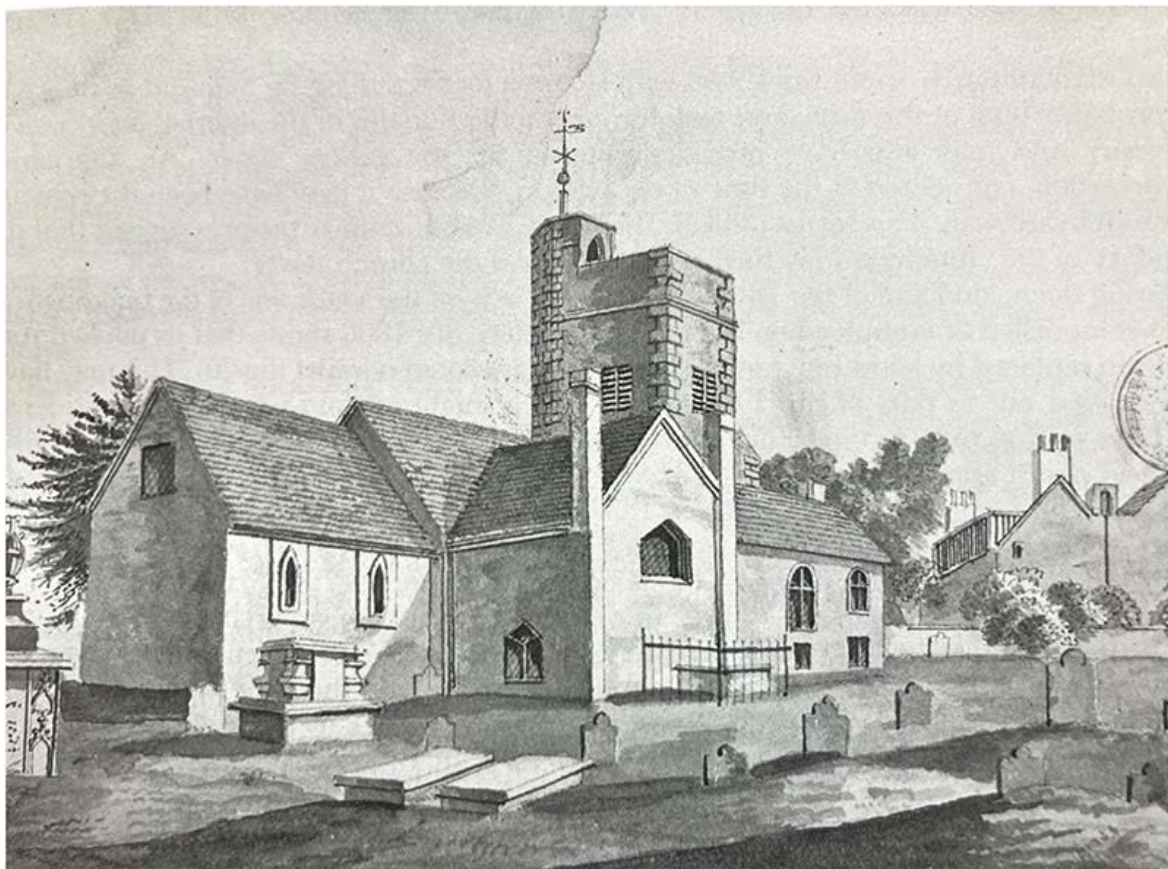
Lady Frances Hoare by John Opie c.1780-85 Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

His eldest son and heir, Richard, also a banker, spent his childhood at Barn Elms. He married Frances Anne Acland in 1761 and in 1772 added wings to the house to accommodate their family of six children. Two Gothic Lodges were built on the carriage approach from Putney and the formal canal to the west of the house was enlarged to create a lake of four acres, nearly one third the size of the garden. However, it was philanthropy, rather than garden design, that engaged his interest. From 1756 until his death in 1787 Richard Hoare rarely, if ever, missed the Easter Monday Vestry meetings in the parish and for periods of time held office as Churchwarden, Overseer of the Poor, and Surveyor of the Highway. He served on the committee for management of the workhouse in Barnes and arranged the finance for the new building completed in 1778. In 1775 the first charity school in Barnes was opened for 10 boys and 10 girls in two cottages, on The Green, belonging to Richard Hoare.

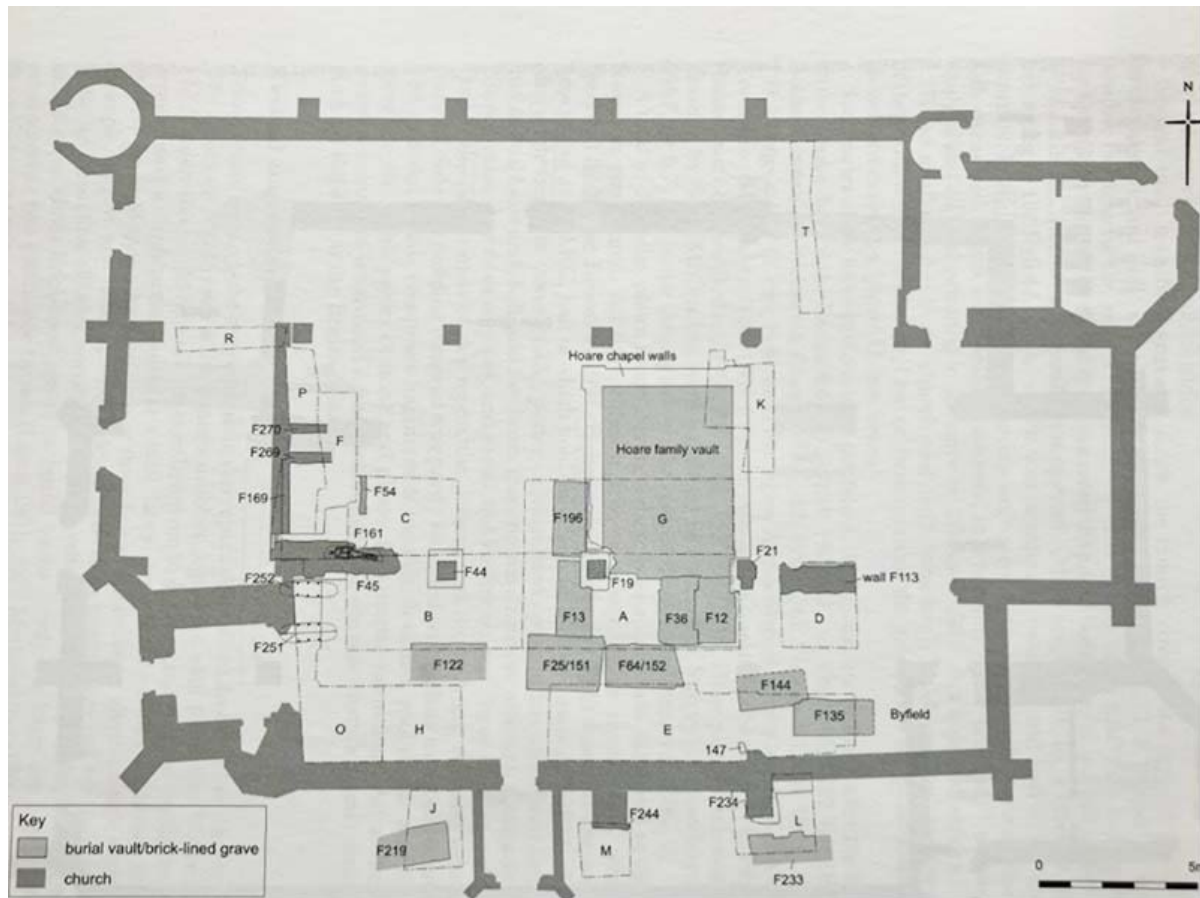


View of Barn Elms manor house watercolour by Buckler c.1793

In 1777 Richard Hoare was granted leave as ‘one of the principal parishioners and inhabitants’ of Barnes to demolish the north wall of the nave of the old church and extend into the churchyard to provide a gallery with seating for his family with pews below for his servants. This was known as the Hoare family chapel. Beneath it was created a burial vault for exclusive family use. (The worn oval brass plate, with the Hoare coat of arms, now on the north wall of the Langton chapel, was originally fixed to the floor of the central aisle of the main church to mark the entrance to the vault). The Vestry meeting of 26 April 1777 unanimously agreed these changes and Richard Hoare was granted permission to proceed at his own expense. In 1786 the church was enlarged by the addition of a north aisle with gallery seating for the parishioners from the workhouse and a vestry room. Richard Hoare sat on the committee to superintend the work which was paid for by subscription; he gave £100 of the £280 subscribed. Richard Hoare was created Sir Richard Hoare 1st Bart. of Barn Elms in 1786. His newly granted arms were displayed within the triangular pediment on the east side of the manor house at Barn Elms. He died in 1787 at the age of 52 applauded, in an article on Barn Elms in the Gentleman’s Magazine (September 1788), as ‘the father of the wretched, and patron of every undertaking in the parish calculated to relieve distress and promote religion and morality’.



St Mary's Barnes from the north showing the Hoare family chapel with chimneys and an arched window between. Pen and wash drawing 1793. London Metropolitan Archive



Plan of St Mary's Barnes during archaeological investigations 1978-1983 showing site of Hoare family chapel and burial vault

His eldest son, Sir Richard Colt Hoare, inherited Stourhead from his grandfather; Sir Richard's second son, Henry Hugh succeeded his father at Barn Elms. He continued his father's charitable work for the local community but with less regularity after he moved from Barn Elms to Wavendon in Buckinghamshire in 1797. He and his wife Maria had 16 children nine of whom pre-deceased them. Although Barn Elms was not their principal residence it was still regarded as their family home, and they chose to have their nine children buried in the family vault in St Mary's. By 1827 the strong family connection with Barn Elms had come to an end. Hammersmith bridge opened that year and since the Barn Elms estate was then divided by an approach road to the bridge on the Surrey side of the river Henry Hugh Hoare sold his lease to the Hammersmith Bridge Company for £35,000; they kept the land they needed and sold the manor house and farm. Henry Hugh didn't abandon Barnes altogether, he still retained some freehold land and a house on Barnes Green, 'The Laurels', which he kept until 1845.

Little or nothing remains on the site of the Barn Elms estate today to mark the years of the Hoare family's occupation. It is in the parish church, where 16 family members are buried, that we find evidence of the Hoare's close attachment to their family home. Sir Richard Hoare 1st Bart. died in Bath but was buried in St Mary's. An elaborate wall monument in his memory, made of white marble with the figure of a weeping woman leaning over a draped urn and holding a portrait medallion, was designed by the Irish sculptor John Hickey. The names of Sir Richard Hoare's widow, Dame Frances Anne Hoare, who died at Barn Elms in 1800 and Sir Henry Hugh's widow, Dame Maria Hoare, who died in York Street, St. James's in 1845 were added later. The monument originally hung on the north wall of the old church near the Hoare chapel. It was removed to the south wall during a major programme of building work in 1852 when the Hoare chapel was demolished to allow for extra seating in an enlarged north aisle.



Hoare memorial, c.1788, by John Hickey on the south wall; the site of the 12th century church. Looking east towards the 13th century Langton chapel built as a chancel to the earlier church.

Hickey's monument did not survive the disastrous fire of 1978. Two blackened fragments were salvaged from the broken remains and placed on the north wall of the surviving Langton Chapel. The brick family vault was discovered during the archaeological investigations which followed the fire although it was left unopened. Records reveal that there were 16 burials within. In 2013 work began to research the feasibility of commissioning a new memorial and in 2023 the project was realised when a new stone wall monument, by Daniel Martin and Gary Newton, was completed and placed alongside the historical fragments in the Langton chapel.

List of Hoare family burials St Mary's Barnes

Henry James Hoare, (only son of Henry and Mary Hoare) 1767-1779 aged 11 years

Henry Hoare 1785 aged 2 weeks *

Sir Richard Hoare 1st Bt. 1735-1787

Dame Frances Anne Hoare 1736-1800

Sophia Elizabeth Hoare 1798-1801 aged 3 years *

Henry Hoare 1796-1802 aged 6 years*

Arthur Hoare 1802 aged 3 months *

Isabella Jane Hoare 1795 -1810 aged 15 years *

Henry Montagu Hoare 1805-1810 aged 5 years *

Elizabeth Sarah Hoare 1809-1814 aged 4 years*

Lavinia Frances Hoare 1792-1814 aged 22 years*

Georgiana Sophia Hoare 1808-1817 aged 8 years*

Henrietta Anne Fortescue (daughter of Sir Richard Hoare) 1763-1841

The Hon. Matthew Fortescue 1754-1842

Dame Maria Palmer Hoare 1766-1845

A sister of Henrietta Anne, possibly Jane, unmarried.

*Sir Richard and Lady Hoare's second son, Henry Hugh and his wife Maria Palmer Hoare had 16 children, 9 of whom pre-deceased them and are buried in the family vault in St Mary's.



New Hoare family memorial 2023.