

Historical Note

It appears that what is now known as Brookmans Park was originally two manors and two estates – More Hall (later known as Gobions or ‘Gubbins’) and Brokemans. In the reign of Henry VIII, More Hall was owned by Sir John More, the father of England’s famous Chancellor and on Sir John’s death it became the jointure of his widow, who was his third wife. It is said that the famous group of the More family, which was Holbein’s first work in England, was painted at More Hall and this seems probable enough for a copy of the picture is known to have hung for many years in the Hall.

There are several views extant of the exterior of the Hall which show it to have been a fine mansion, and if we may judge of the interior from the magnificent staircase said to have been removed to Hook House at Northaw, More Hall must have been the finest house (excepting Hatfield) for miles around.

When Sir Thomas More was executed in 1535, Henry VIII turned the Chancellor’s stepmother out of the estate, which reverted to the Crown, but later it was restored to Cresacre More, a son of Sir Thomas. It passed through various hands in succeeding reigns until we find it in the ownership of the Kemble family, c. 1800, at which time the gardens were noted for their beauty and extant. It was purchased by Robert William Gaussen in 1838, the then owner



of Brookmans (previously known as Mymme Hall, or Mimm Hall, and later as Brokemans) at which time the two estates were merged. More Hall, Gobions or Gubbins was pulled down c. 1839 at the time that Hook House at Northaw was being built.

The companion manor of Brookmans (or Brokemans) was held in 1420 by John Brokeman, but the family died out in the reign of Edward IV. The original manor is said to have been pulled down in 1666, and the house that replaced it bore the

date 1682, but this house was destroyed by fire in 1891. The present Club House which is one of the Tudor period was originally the stables, but after the fire until the Gaussen family sold the estate in 1923, it was used by them as the mansion house. Some of the walls are three feet thick, and it is interesting to note that the old Great North Road formerly passed directly by the present Club House and on through the adjacent farmyard into Bell Bar.