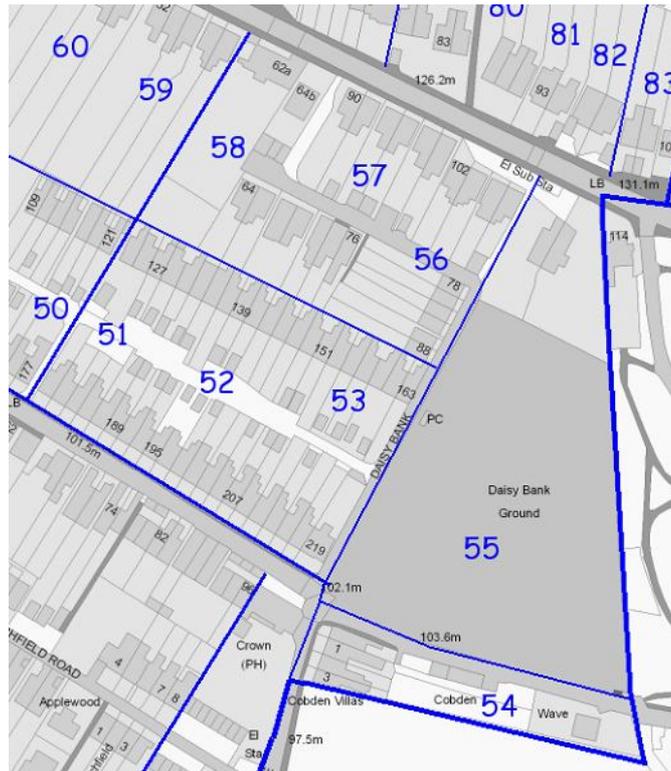


**Reuben Usher GREENHILL – purchaser in 1873 of Lots 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58 and 90**  
how did he get involved?



In 1873, Reuben Usher GREENHILL bought a block of building Lots at the auction of The Field Estate. At the time he was a farmer in Wiltshire, and I could not work out why he was involved. But very quickly three of the Lots were developed as the Upper and Lower Lypiatt Terraces by George Holloway, local factory owner, town benefactor and politician. How had this come about?



*Lower Lypiatt Terrace today; the lane leads to Upper Lypiatt Terrace*

Two years after starting this research, I was transcribing the Deeds for another Lot on The Field, and saw a familiar name. In 1887 Lot 3 had been used as security for a loan, and Edmund Greenhill BRODERIP took over the loan from Alfred Thomas FORD. Aha - Greenhill! I spent two days trying to find a link between Edmund's mother (Grace Dory GREENHILL) and Reuben's grandfather – who could have been Grace's brother, but turned out not to be. Then I searched my own documents for North Bradley, wanting to pick up references to Reuben again, and unexpectedly found a young woman in the Stroud 1871 census who had been born in North Bradley. She was called Eliza FORD, but freebmd told me that her maiden name was ROGERS. For the first time I looked at Reuben's wife Harriet – her maiden name was ROGERS too. I was off again.

In 1861, Edward and Martha ROGERS farmed at Road Farm, North Bradley, Wiltshire. The eldest daughters at home then were Harriet (22) and Eliza (20). Just along the road at Road Common was the farm of widow Jane GREENHILL. In the census she recorded that her son Reuben (18) an engineer apprentice, was at home. In fact he was lodging in Frome, Somerset, and working as an engineer

mechanic. But he must have returned home because in 1866 he married Harriet ROGERS and in the 1871 census Reuben and Harriet, and their baby son, were at Park Farm, Woolley Road, Bradford-on-Avon, where Reuben was a dairyman employing a boy and a dairymaid. In the meantime, Harriet's sister Eliza had married Somerset-born Alfred Thomas FORD in 1867 and by 1871 the couple was living in Stroud, on the Bisley Old Road. Alfred recorded his occupation as auctioneer. Interesting.

The auction of William Cowle's newly-acquired hillside called The Field Estate took place on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1873. The auctioneers were Messrs Restall & Ford. Yes! The solicitor for all the transactions was Wilberforce HEELAS, whose clerk E C Davis did much of the work, and whose offices were in Rowcroft.

John Libby writes at length about the Holloway brothers in his *Twenty Years of Stroud*. He describes George HOLLOWAY as a man who "after repeated defeats, was elected [MP] in 1886". George had long campaigned for the dignity of the working man, whom he thought ought to be able to vote, and own his own house. Unfortunately at that time voters had to be property-owners in order to vote. Libby goes on to say

"In 1883 Mr. Holloway proposed a society to be established for making tenants the owners of their own dwelling-houses by the payment of an ordinary rent; and under the auspices of The National Thrift Society, in April of that year, he read a paper at Stroud dealing exhaustively with that subject."

He started the Stroud or Mid-Gloucester Working Men's Benefit Society, whose financial setup and aims are described in detail in Libby's book (and which provided many of the early mortgages for investors in The Field's early development). In Stroud, the off-shoot Holloway Friendly Society exists today, as does a statue of the man himself.

George must have decided that he should practise what he preached, and the acquisition in 1873 of The Field estate by local businessman William Cowle was a good opportunity (and the timing of his 1886 political success cannot have been a coincidence). Maybe for political reasons, maybe financial, he did not want to take part directly in the auction. Instead he must have asked the auctioneer, or William Cowle's solicitor, for advice. I suspect that the auctioneer said it would be perfectly easy and proper to ask a substitute to act on his behalf, no doubt for a consideration, and I think that the auctioneer suggested his wife's brother-in-law would be a prudent and reliable man. So Reuben Usher GREENHILL bought a block of seven lots at the end of the Horns Road (these became the Lypiatt Terraces, plus some larger villas on the Bisley Road), and another single lot that now contains Nos 34 and 36 on the Bisley Old Road, which look like this on Google Street View:



I do not know when these two houses were built, because we have not yet seen the Deeds (although right now one is for sale and I have contacted the estate agents), so we do not know how long Reuben held on to Lot 90. But did Alfred and Eliza live just across the road? The Bisley Old Road forms the northern boundary of The Field estate so they would have had a good view of it, with its pasture land and quarries stretching from their house down to the river. The 1871 census suggests they lived about half-way up the hill but gives no further clues. And whatever housing was there on the north side in 1871 was replaced by the modern bungalows and houses around Middle Hill.

Alfred did very well for himself and his family and by the time of the 1881 census they were living at No 8 Rowcroft, next door to solicitor E C Davis (who also bought one of The Field lots for a house for himself) and Alfred soon became a partner in Restall & Ford. He is mentioned in John Libby's book too, as an active member of the Library committee (whose members included various Doringtons, Marlings and Holloways); in 1897 he was the Hon Sec of the Stroud Free Library and

secretary of the Stroud Conservative Building Society *and* a chartered accountant and auctioneer. He and Eliza were still at Rowcroft in the 1901 census, along with their still-unmarried children Mabel (33) and William Hartley (31, now an estate agent presumably working with his father). I cannot find the parents in the 1911 census, or local registrations of their deaths, but William was by then living in Wandsworth and I think Mabel married Frank WHEELER in 1917 in Stroud.

Nor do I know how Alfred Thomas FORD knew Edmund Greenhill BRODERIP (to whom he sold on the mortgage for Lot 3), born in Wells and later a magistrate and landowner at the Manor House, Cossington. Both were Somerset men; maybe the link is there, rather than in the Greenhill name. In 1861 Edmund and his wife Sarah (aged 52, nee MILLS) were living at 8 Princes Buildings, Clifton; in that census she gave her place of birth as Miserden, which is not far from Stroud. That could make her the daughter of Daniel and Hester who baptised a daughter there in November 1811, but there were other possible local matches. It would be satisfying to tie this end in too, eventually, and find a connection between Edmund's mother Grace Dory GREENHILL (born ~1784) and Reuben Usher GREENHILL (b 1842).

And the building Lots themselves? Lot 55 is Daisy Bank, and some arrangement was made whereby Sir John Dorington, Bart, MP, of Lypiatt Park, was able to present the Daisy Bank Recreation Ground to the town of Stroud in April 1890 (there is a plaque on the wall to commemorate this – I bet there were tea and buns for the local residents, too). Locals will recognise his surname and home as the names of the four terraces of cottages that were quickly built on The Field estate. Sycophancy on Holloway's part? Patronage by the Lord of the Manor? (the Lots on which the two Dorington Terraces were built were also bought by a substitute....).

Lots 51, 52, 53 are those on which the Upper and Lower Lypiatt Terraces were built. We have not yet seen any Deeds from these terraces so do not know how quickly Reuben relinquished the title. He still owned the land in December 1874 but by 1880 it belonged to George HOLLOWAY and the 1881 census lists ten households on Upper Lypiatt and five on Lower Lypiatt, so he didn't hang about.

Lots 56, 57 and 58 faced onto Bisley Road. No 62 Bisley Road (built on two-thirds of Lot 58) occupies the largest plot and the garden there once contained glasshouses and stables, and still has a separate lane to a back gate. The Deeds for No 102 Bisley Road – one of the block of houses built on Lot 56, later named Lypiatt Villas but first called Bristol and Leominster Villas – identified George HOLLOWAY, Gent, of Stroud, as the Vendor in a conveyance in 1884.



*(here are Lypiatt Villas today, thanks to Google Street View)*

The Deeds for No 62 make it clear that Reuben did make some money for himself. In 1874 John FRANKLIN, builder, of Ruscomb, Stroud, bought lots 56, 57 and 58 from Reuben for the sum of £360. (We do not know how much Reuben paid but in 1873 Thomas LONGFORD paid £95 for Lot 50 next door along Horns Road, so a cautious estimate would say that Reuben paid  $3 \times £95 = £285$  for Lots 56, 57 and 58, making a profit of £75. In today's money, £75 had a purchasing power equivalent of about £38,500. Not bad.) John FRANKLIN's initial mortgage of £300 was arranged by ... Thomas RESTALL of Chalford, auctioneer. One of the conditions of the sale was that the purchaser "within three months would erect and maintain a good and sufficient fence along the southern sides of the lots to separate them from the remaining property there [Lots 51, 52 and 53] of the sd R U GREENHILL". A further loan of £60 was arranged in 1874 by Alfred Thomas FORD, auctioneer (yes, Reuben's brother-in-law) – at 5%pa, interest to be paid six-monthly.

In the summer of 1880 Lots 56, 57 and 58 were subdivided and the Lots sold at auction. George HOLLOWAY bought at least Lot 22 on the auction plan because he sold Bristol Villas in 1884 (see above). Lots 15 and 16 (on which stands the house now known as Waverley, 62 Bisley Road) were sold to Edmund EDWARDS of the Railway Inn, Stroud. The conveyance included the fact that he would have access to the quarry until the 31<sup>st</sup> December. The plan that accompanied the conveyance shows the location of the quarry, and also shows that the land to the south of this planned development now belonged to George HOLLOWAY.



I don't know when Reuben sold it on. No doubt his brother-in-law Alfred arranged it all (and probably charged a family-rate commission). I don't know if Reuben even attended the original auction in 1873 – Alfred would have been there anyway, of course, so his bid might have been recorded rather like a telephone bid would nowadays. The deal could even have been finalised before the auction so nobody else got a chance to bid anyway. Only the records of Restall & Ford would prove that. Their name does appear in the catalogue of the Gloucestershire Archives, but only in relation to the sale of other properties; I shall search no further.

The research notes that back up this story are filed separately.  
 Marion Hearfield  
 January 2011