

The Walking guides were first published in 2000. Therefore, it is essential to double check details of local pubs, restaurants, railway times etc



Wood End, Harlington is a hamlet situated about a mile to the west of the village centre and in mediaeval times consisted of several yeomen's cottages around a central green. In all probability Ralph Asty, grandson of Sir Ralph Asty, Lord Mayor of London in 1494, bought the estate from William Harding. He arrived at Wood End in the mid sixteenth century as prior to that time it was known as 'Hardyings Place'. Ralph or his son set about building a splendid mansion of three storeys with a clock tower and projecting wings in the Elizabethan/Jacobean style and here six generations of the Asty family lived until 1766 when the last of them, Reverend Francis Asty died. It is to him we are indebted as he commissioned William Wilmor to draw up an estate map which showed a sketch of the mansion, the Green, and listed the names and acreages of all his land in several surrounding parishes.

The Astrys were supporters of the Royalist party for Henry (1576 - 1630) was knighted by Charles I in 1627 at Amptill and his grandson James (1653 - 1709) received a similar distinction in 1683 from Charles II. Several Astrys were people of benevolence. For instance Dorothy Asty, who died in 1664, made provision for the poor by bequeathing the rent of three strips of land in Cranfield Mead to buy bread for widows in Harlington, Westoning and Tingrith. She also left money for alms houses to be built for poor widows in Toddington. Susannah Asty presented a silver Communion Cup to Harlington Church in 1743 which is still in use.

Quite what happened to the Mansion is unclear: Sometime between the drawing of William Wilmor's map and the Enclosure Award of 1810 it disappeared but whether burnt down or demolished is unknown.

