

In the Footsteps of the Silvesters & Stewarts

From the Hampshire downland to the terraces of Sydney — what is still there to see

This little guide takes you to the places that shaped the family — the Hampshire parishes where the Silvesters laboured for generations, and the Sydney streets where George and Ellen made a new life. For each place it tells you whether it still stands, what survives to see, and what is worth visiting nearby. Twelve places were confirmed and pinned; fifteen lightly-recorded spots were set aside so this guide stays walkable. [Open all twelve pins in Google Maps ↗](#)

In their footsteps — Hampshire, England

This is chalk-down country in the far south-east corner of Hampshire, a few miles north of Portsmouth. In the Silvesters' day — the 1820s to the 1880s — it was a landscape of scattered farms, flint cottages and sheep-walks, its life turning on the great estates and the harvest. People moved on foot, by horse and by carrier's cart along the old Portsmouth-to-London road (today's A3); the railway did not reach nearby Horndean until the very end of the century. Horndean itself gained **Gale's Brewery in 1850**, and the market town of Petersfield, a morning's walk north, was where business and the law were done. ^{1, 6} The Silvesters were agricultural labourers here for at least three generations — James Silvester worked one farm for some forty years — so to stand in these lanes is to stand where they spent their whole working lives.

Plan your visit: base yourself in **Petersfield** or **Horndean**, both inside or beside the **South Downs National Park**. Tourist information: **Visit Petersfield** and **Visit Hampshire**. Accommodation: **search stays near Petersfield ↗**. The Hampshire places sit close together and make an easy day or two by car.

Blendworth

George Silvester's birthplace & the family-of-origin home

PARTLY SURVIVES

Blendworth is where George was born and the Silvesters belonged. The ancient parish church, **old St Giles in Old Blendworth**, was already

decaying by Victorian times and was finally demolished in 1961.² But the church the family actually knew is still there: **Holy Trinity**, built brand-new in 1850–51 to designs by the Habershons of London, with flint walls, steep roofs and a broached spire — it replaced St Giles and served Blendworth and the eastern side of Horndean.^{2, 3}

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Holy Trinity's **FLINT WALLS AND BROACHED SPIRE**, and the matching **FLINT RECTORY OF 1850** beside it — the family would have watched both go up.
- The quieter site of **OLD BLENDWORTH** to the east, where St Giles once stood among the farms.
- The downland lanes linking Blendworth, Horndean and Catherington — little changed in scale.

Tips: Holy Trinity sits near the busy A3 at Horndean; combine with Pyle Farm and Deadman's Cottage, all within a mile.

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Chewmen

Pyle Farm, Blendworth

James Silvester laboured here some 40 years — “well respected”

STILL STANDING

If there is one working place to stand in, it is this. James Silvester laboured at Pyle Farm for roughly four decades, for the farmer Richard Gale. The good news for a visitor: **Pyle Farmhouse still stands and is a listed building** — an early-18th-century house with later 19th-century additions, its front of blue header brickwork in English bond with red dressings, and other walls of **flint with brick quoins and bands**, exactly the local building tradition.⁴ The flint-and-brick farm buildings were recorded still in place in 2026.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The **C18 FARMHOUSE** itself — blue-header brick front, flintwork with brick quoins — the same walls James knew.
- The flint-and-brick **BARNs AND OUTBUILDINGS** and the downland fields he worked through every season.
- Its position on the **1878 ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP**, which fixes the farm in the family's own time.

Tips: Pyle Farm is a private working property — view respectfully from the road and public footpaths; do not enter the yard.

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Chewmen

Deadman's Cottage, Horndean

Family residence; James Silvester died here, 2 May 1888

SITE RECORDED — SURVIVAL UNVERIFIED

This was a family home, and the place where James Silvester died in 1888 — by family account, by his own hand. It is a sombre spot, and worth treating gently. The cottage is **marked on the 1878 Ordnance Survey map** near Blendworth/Horndean, which locates it firmly in the family's day.¹ Whether the building itself survives today has not been confirmed, so a visitor is best guided by the OS map and the surrounding lane rather than expecting a standing cottage.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The **LOCATION ON THE 1878 OS MAP** (compare against the modern map on the same spot).
- The flint cottages and lanes of the Blendworth/Horndean fringe that show what such a dwelling looked like.

Tips: survival of the cottage is unverified — please confirm on the ground; a local history group or the Hampshire Record Office may hold more.

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Chewmen

Idsworth House estate / Chalton

The Jervoise estate — James a labourer here; George's game offences

LANDSCAPE & CHAPEL SURVIVE

The Idsworth estate was the great landholding that framed the family's working world — James laboured on it, and it was on its land that George's poaching offences played out. The estate landscape endures, and it holds one of the most magical small churches in England: **St Hubert's, Idsworth**, a tiny medieval chapel standing alone in a field, famous for its **wall-paintings of about 1330** — reckoned the most important series in a Hampshire church outside Winchester, hidden under whitewash from the Reformation until 1864.⁵ A short way off at Chalton stands the thatched **Red Lion**, one of the oldest pubs in Hampshire.⁵

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- **ST HUBERT'S CHAPEL** alone in its field, and inside the c.1330 frescoes of St Peter, St Paul and the famous north-wall mural.
- The thatched **RED LION AT CHALTON** — a place to picture village life, claimed among Hampshire's oldest inns.
- The **DOWNLAND OF THE IDSWORTH ESTATE** itself — the fields and woods where James worked and George was caught.

Tips: St Hubert's is reached by a field path and is a working church — check opening before you go.

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East Meon

Harriet Wield's birthplace

STILL STANDING

East Meon is one of the loveliest of the Hampshire downland villages, threaded by a chalk stream and gathered around **All Saints' Church** — Grade I listed, mostly Norman, and the oldest building in the village. Its treasure is the great **Tournai marble font of about 1130-40**, carved by Flemish masters with Adam and Eve and the Temptation, probably a gift from Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester — one of only a handful in England.⁷ This is where Harriet Wield was born, and the church and village she would have known still read clearly today.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The **TOURNAI FONT** inside All Saints — the carved Creation and Expulsion friezes.
- The Norman church on its slope, and the **CHALK STREAM** running through the village.
- East Meon's standing as the chosen "**DOMESDAY VILLAGE**" for the 1986 anniversary.

Tips: an easy detour north-west of Petersfield; the village has a pub or two for lunch.

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Petersfield

Petty Sessions, 1853 — where the law was done

STILL STANDING

Petersfield was the market town at the centre of this world — an ancient Norman “new town” laid out around St Peter's Church, grown prosperous on the London road, sheep and the leather and cloth trades.⁸ It was here that George faced the Petty Sessions in 1853. The town keeps its historic shape, and at its heart the market square still carries the 18th-century **equestrian statue of King William III** by John Cheere — one of only five such statues in mainland Britain.⁸

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The **MARKET SQUARE AND THE GILDED WILLIAM III STATUE** on horseback.
- **ST PETER'S CHURCH**, dating to about 1120, on the south side of the square.
- The Georgian streets and the open **HEATH** on the town's edge.

Tips: the natural base for the Hampshire leg — good rail links and plenty to eat.

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Winchester — the Hants County Prison

George imprisoned 1851 & 1852

STANDING & STILL OPERATIONAL

George served two terms here at the start of the 1850s. The prison he entered was almost brand-new: the **County Gaol and House of Correction** on Romsey Road was built in 1846–50 to a Victorian radial plan, five cell-wings spoking from a central hub, behind a massive brick wall on an elevated site.⁹ It is still a working prison today — HMP Winchester — so you cannot go in, but the Victorian shell is very visible, and a rare **treadwheel-house shell** survives within.⁹

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The **GREAT BRICK PERIMETER WALL AND CENTRAL TURRET** on the Winchester skyline, seen from Romsey Road.
- The **RADIAL VICTORIAN LAYOUT** — the same building George was held in.
- Round it off with the city itself: Winchester Cathedral and the Great Hall are minutes away.

Tips: an operational prison — view only from the public road; do not photograph entrances or staff.

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Chawman

Froxfield

Silvester / Sylvester ancestral holding (owner research)

CHURCH SURVIVES · LINK IS FAMILY RESEARCH

Froxfield Green sits in the high hanger country three miles north-west of Petersfield, and the family's own research ties the Silvester/Sylvester name to a holding here.¹⁰ The present church, **St Peter-on-the-Green**, was built in 1886 (by Arthur Blomfield) on the site of a Saxon church demolished in 1861 — so a Silvester of the early 1800s would have known the older building, but the green and the setting endure.¹⁰

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- **ST PETER-ON-THE-GREEN** standing apart on its green.
- The steep wooded **HANGERS** and scattered farmsteads of the parish.

Tips: the ancestral-holding link rests on owner research — treat it as a family-tradition lead, not a proven fact.

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Chawman

Hawkley

Ancestral holding — Champlers Farm (owner research)

CHURCH SURVIVES · LINK IS FAMILY RESEARCH

Hawkley is a small, tranquil village in the South Downs National Park, and family research connects the Silvesters to a holding here (Champlers Farm).¹⁰ Its 19th-century church is a charming surprise — a Romanesque-style building with an unusual **Rhenish helm spire**, a rare roof-form in England.¹⁰

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The church's distinctive **RHENISH HELM SPIRE** — worth the visit in itself.
- **HAWKLEY HANGER**, the dramatic wooded escarpment above the village.

Tips: as with Froxfield, the family link is owner research; enjoy the village on its own merits while you confirm.

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Chawman

In their footsteps — Sydney, New South Wales

George and Ellen built their life on the other side of the world, in a Sydney swelling with gold-rush prosperity. From 1855 they settled south of the city, and from the late 1850s their long home was **Newtown** — then a fast-growing working-class suburb strung along King Street, the main road and high street south out of town.¹¹ From about 1870 hundreds of cheap Victorian **terrace houses** went up, “two-up two-down” with iron-lace balconies, housing families who worked in the city, the local factories and brickyards, and the great Eveleigh railway workshops.¹¹ People moved by horse omnibus and, increasingly, by train. It was a hard-working, crowded, neighbourly world — and because 20th-century developers largely passed Newtown by, its streets survive today as some of the best-preserved Victorian streetscapes in Sydney.¹¹

Plan your visit: Newtown is a 10-minute train ride from Central; Rookwood is reached via Lidcombe station. Tourist information: [Visit NSW — Sydney](#) and [City of Sydney](#). Accommodation: [search stays near Newtown / inner-west Sydney](#).

Bedford Street, Newtown

The long-term family home (recorded as Nos. 31, 111 & 113)

STREETSCAPE SURVIVES

This was home for decades. The family is recorded at Bedford Street across the years at numbers 31 (1891), 111 (1919) and 113 — the last being the Torrens title address (Lots 34–35, Section 6, North Kingston Estate). Newtown's Victorian terraces, built from the 1870s with stuccoed fronts and iron-lace balconies, still line streets like this one — the suburb is now celebrated as one of Sydney's best-kept Victorian high streets.¹¹ Walking Bedford Street, you are walking the family's own pavement.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The **TWO-STOREY TERRACES WITH IRON-LACE BALCONIES** and stuccoed fronts — the family's housing type.
- **KING STREET** a block away: Victorian shopfronts, pubs and chapels that were their high street.
- The dense **TWO-UP TWO-DOWN** grain of the streets, little changed since their day.

Tips: these are private homes — admire from the footpath. Pair with a King Street wander.

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Lidcombe — the former Rookwood Asylum

George's last residence & place of death, 1918–1919

PARTLY SURVIVES — ADAPTED TO HOUSING

George spent his final months at the **Rookwood Asylum for the Aged and Infirm**, the great refuge for the destitute elderly of New South Wales, opened on this site in 1892 and renamed Lidcombe State Hospital in 1927.¹² The institution closed and moved in the 1990s, but you can still visit: between 2006 and 2011 the **historic core of hospital buildings on Joseph Street, Lidcombe, was carefully restored and converted to apartments**, so the heritage architecture George knew survives in adapted form.¹²

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The surviving **HERITAGE HOSPITAL BUILDINGS** of the Lidcombe Hospital Precinct on Joseph Street.
- Interpretation and heritage listing explaining its life as asylum and state hospital.
- Its closeness to Rookwood Cemetery — the two are barely a mile apart, as the next stop.

Tips: the precinct is now private residential — view the exteriors respectfully from public areas.

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Rookwood Cemetery

George & Ellen both buried here, 1919 — he Church of England, she Roman Catholic

STANDING & STILL OPERATING

The journey ends here, at the largest necropolis in the southern hemisphere and the world's biggest surviving operating Victorian cemetery, laid out from 1867.¹³ George and Ellen both came here in 1919 — and, tellingly, they lie in **different denominational grounds**, George in the Church of England section and Ellen in the Roman Catholic. In the cemetery's great age, the dead arrived by funeral train at the grand **Mortuary Station**, built 1868–69 by colonial architect James Barnet; the rail spur ran until 1948.¹³

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The **ANGLICAN AND CATHOLIC SECTIONS** — visit both, since George and Ellen rest apart.
- The **VICTORIAN MONUMENTS AND AVENUES**, and traces of the old funeral railway and Mortuary Station.
- The cemetery **OFFICE / RECORDS**, which can help you locate the exact graves before you go.

Tips: contact Rookwood in advance for plot locations; it is vast, so plan your route. Reached via Lidcombe station.

[Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

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Sources

1. Project Ledger places & residence trail (1878 OS map references for Pyle Farm and Deadman's Cottage); Wikipedia, [Horndean](#).
2. Local Histories, [A History of Blendworth](#); [VCH Hampshire vol.3 — Blendworth](#) (St Giles demolished 1961).
3. BCI Churches, [Holy Trinity, Blendworth](#) (built 1850–51, Habershon, flint, broached spire).
4. British Listed Buildings, [Pyle Farmhouse, Horndean](#) (Early C18; blue header brick; flint with brick quoins).
5. Hampshire History, [St Hubert's Church, Idsworth](#) (c.1330 wall-paintings); WhatPub, [Red Lion, Chalton](#).
6. Wikipedia, [Horndean](#) (Gale's Brewery, 1850; A3 staging post).
7. Wikipedia, [All Saints Church, East Meon](#) (Grade I; Tournai font c.1130–40, gift of Henry of Blois).
8. Wikipedia, [Petersfield](#) (Norman new town; St Peter's c.1120; William III statue by John Cheere).
9. Wikipedia, [HM Prison Winchester](#) (built 1846–50, radial plan, Romsey Road; still operational; treadwheel-house shell).
10. Wikipedia, [Froxfield](#) & National Churches Trust, [St Peter-on-the-Green](#); Hawkley church (Rhenish helm spire); Silvester ancestral-holding links per owner research (S-042).
11. Wikipedia, [Newtown, NSW](#) & [King Street, Newtown](#) (Victorian terraces; working-class suburb; best-preserved high street).
12. Wikipedia, [Lidcombe Hospital Precinct](#) (Rookwood Asylum 1892 → Lidcombe State Hospital 1927; heritage core converted to apartments 2006–11).
13. Wikipedia, [Rookwood Cemetery](#) & [Rookwood Necropolis Trust](#) (est. 1867; Mortuary Station, Barnet, 1868–69; funeral railway to 1948).