



THE WAY

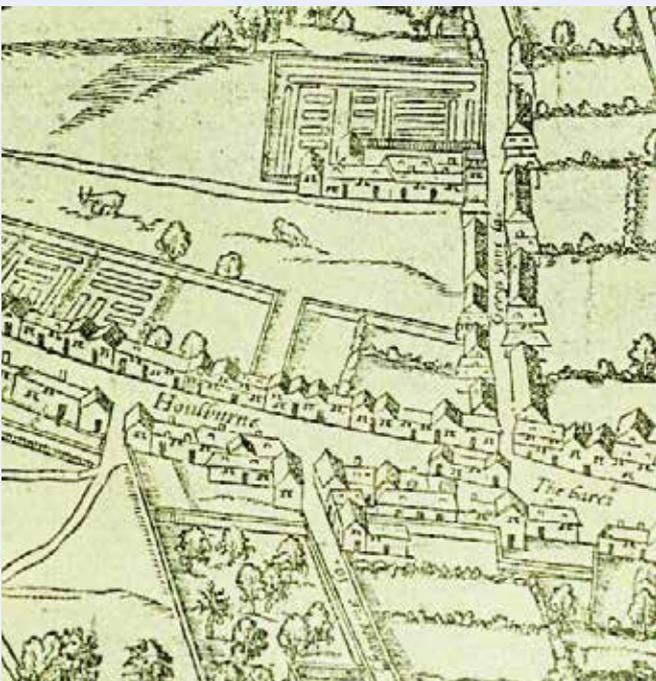
MASTER LUCINDA ORR

The completion of the new building at 19/20 High Holborn was a cause for much celebration after the main access into the Inn from High Holborn had been closed for so long. And now, the building is fully let to Hardwicke Chambers. However, as the entrance for Hardwicke Chambers' building is not on High Holborn, but on the vehicular access route between High Holborn and South Square, Hardwicke Chambers quite rightly enquired what this road into the Inn is called.

In the late medieval period, the principal entrance into Gray's Inn was from Gray's Inn Lane (later upgraded to Gray's Inn 'Road'), with all of the Inn buildings standing some distance from High Holborn. In 1587, the Inn decided that 'Mr Aunger, Mr Stanhope, Mr Sherrington, and Mr Penruddock be appointed to consider whether it be needful to have a passage from ye House to Holborn, and what way may be taken for obtaining ye same.' On 5 February 1593, another order directed: 'that 15 ol. be paid to Mr Fullwood for a parcel of ground in Holborn, provided that the gentlemen of the house will contribute such a sufficient sum of 15 ol. as will be sufficient to finish the building of the said gate.' On 22 April 1594, it is accordingly recorded that Mr Aunger, Mr Fullwood and two others viewed the place for the new gate, and laid out 'the way for the same'.

It was thus that by the late 1590s the stretch of land that now connects South Square to High Holborn was acquired by the Inn, the outline set, and a 'fayre' Elizabethan gate built. The layout of this ingress can be seen from maps in the following decades and centuries – and the entrance continues to retain the same outline to this day.

The name of Mr Fullwood, from whom the Inn purchased the land, lives on in nearby 'Fulwood Place'. Meanwhile, Richard Aunger, who was Treasurer of the Inn three times, and obviously very closely associated with the management of the Inn, was murdered on 12 November 1597 in his chambers by his youngest son, also Richard, and his wife. According to the Middlesex Session Rolls, they 'with their hands violently broke, twisted and strangled the neck of the same Richard Aunger senr. esq., so that he then and there died. Putting themselves "Guilty", Richard Aunger gentleman and his wife Agnes were sentenced to be hung'.



An early map with no access from Holborn.

THROUGH THE GATE



This map of 1862 describes 'the way' as 'Gray's Inn Coleway'.

As an aside, the adoption of the Griffin as the badge of the Inn also occurred in the 1590s and appears to have been adopted from the arms of Richard Aunger, although the Griffin in his arms was azure. Aunger's eldest son, Francis, also of Gray's Inn, became first Baron Aungier of Longford and the progenitor of the Earldom of Longford (the spelling of the name settling on 'Aungier'). The azure Griffin is still incorporated in their arms.

So, the Inn has had the land for over 400 years, but a review of maps over the following centuries did not reveal a name ever being attached to this route. However, in a map of 1862 there is a name attached to the stretch of land – 'Gray's Inn Coleway'. It has not been possible to ascertain the reason for the appearance of the name (or its disappearance from later maps), but it is unlikely to be linked to the moving

of coal. The Celtic word 'coel' means a 'magical place'... Well, Gray's is rather magical, isn't it?

However, in the present day, in order to agree a new name for this access road into the Inn, Camden Council stated that any name the Inn chose could not include 'The' in the title, or 'Gray's Inn', or 'Griffin' due to 'duplication in the surrounding area which may cause confusion and possible delay in the event of an emergency'.

So, several names of historic relevance and of eminent members of the Inn were voted on by Management Committee and Pension, and the overwhelming choice was 'Lady Hale Gate'. It is fantastic that the first female President of the Supreme Court will be celebrated for centuries more to come – and Hardwicke Chambers now have a smart new address! ■



The Longford Arms.