

Conveyance of the dovecote to the National Trust

Following a successful fund raising campaign to save the dovecote led by Caroline Orlebar, her brother Augustus Scobell Orlebar, wrote on June 10th 2013, that the Board of Works had agreed that it would:

'take over the Dovecote and the whole of the land but that my sister Caroline 'should be at liberty to let the land for grazing or other purposes, which would not be detrimental to the monument, but the Board would be in a position to prevent its use for building purpose. '

Sadly, Caroline died before the transfer was completed and after her death Augustus found that the Board of Works could not accept the building, so he arranged for it to be transferred to the National Trust. He wrote:

We wish to transfer the dovecote and the land but with the stipulation that the income derived from the land shall be devoted in the first place to the upkeep of the fence surrounding it, to necessary repairs to the dovecote, and secondly to the upkeep of the adjoining churchyard, and especially to the graves of the Orlebar family: this was my sister's intention and now that she is buried there it is especially appropriate.

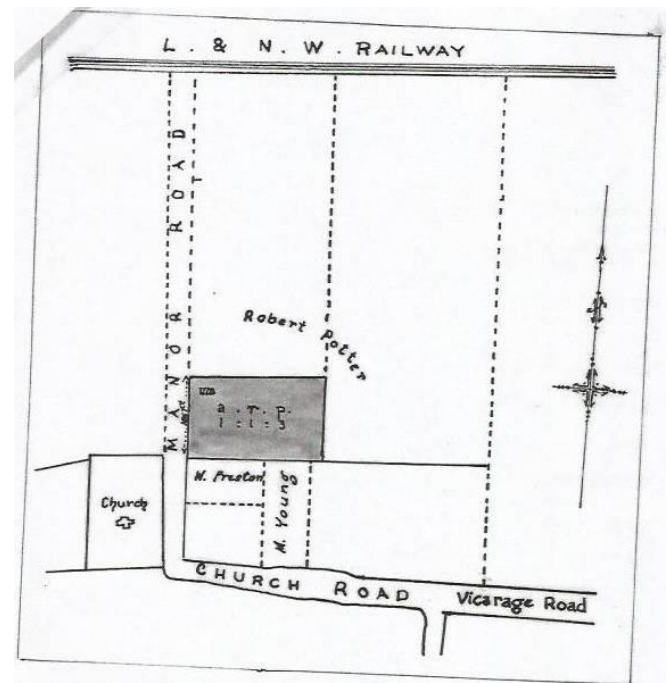
On the 24th day of December 1914 an indenture was signed:

'BETWEEN AUGUSTUS SCOBELL ORLEBAR of Tetworth Hall near Sandy in the County of Bedford, Justice of the Peace and **ERNEST EDWARD BIRD** of Grays Inn in the County of London, Solicitor (hereinafter called the Donors) of the one part and **THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR PLACES OF HISTORIC INTEREST OR NATURAL BEAUTY** of No 25 Victoria Street Westminster in the County of London incorporated by the National Trust Act 1907 (hereinafter called the National Trust) of the other part.'

It said that Caroline Orlebar had 'acquired the said hereditaments with moneys wholly or largely collected by her from the Public for the express purpose of perpetually preserving the said dovecote and the land



held therewith as an object of Historic Interest but she died before such purpose could be carried into effect.' She had appointed her executors to give 'all that piece of land containing one acre one rood and three perches (1a: 1r: 3p) or thereabouts, situate on the east side of Manor Road in the parish of Willington in the County



of Bedford, together with the old Dovecote built and erected thereon,' to the Nation. The property 'shall for ever hereafter be held as an open space for the recreation of the Public for the purposes of and according to the provisions declared by and contained in the National Trust Act 1907.'

The income from letting the piece of land became insufficient to pay for maintenance of the Orlebar graves, and in 1960 the Trust paid £30 to extinguish this obligation.