

A Chemist in Trouble, 1728

In Southwark MSS. Vol. II there is a letter to "Lawford Godfrey Chymist at the Green Man and Still¹ on the Backside of Thomas Hospital, Southwark."

Lawford Godfrey was a ministering Friend prominent in Horsleydown M.M. But in 1728 we read in the M.M. minutes, "We apprehend that by the base and crafty insinuations of George Roberts a pretended alchemist and a contriver & proposer of the scheme of transmuting metals, the said Lawford Godfrey hath been most grossly deluded with relation to the undertaking before mentioned and entertained some erroneous Principles, which the said Geo Roberts pretended were necessary to the attending the Art of making Gold & Silver. The Meeting requests him to make them all [creditors] the satisfaction he is able to do and forbear Preaching and sitting in the Gallery as a Minister till this meeting is better satisfied."

He acknowledged his fault and over credulity and was in 1732 reinstated, having in the meantime moved to Kingsbridge, Devon. It is not known that he had any official connection with the hospital.

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¹ W. T. Fernie in *Herbal Simples* writes "down to the first part of the 19th century purveyors of medicinal & savoury herbs wandered over the whole of England. . . . These practitioners were known as 'green men', who carried with them their portable apparatus for distilling essences . . . there may yet be seen taverns bearing the curious sign 'The Green Man & Still.'"