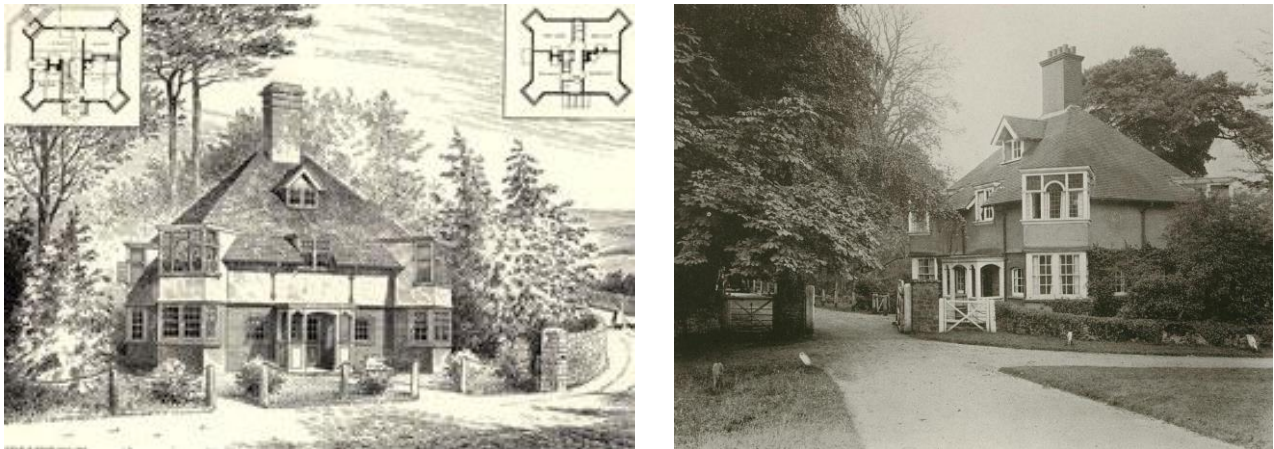


The development of the Coast Hill Estate

When George Fuller died in 1894 the Rookery Estate was put up for sale¹. The principal purchaser was Arthur Brooke who used his 'Brooke Bond' tea fortune to acquire the Rookery Mansion as a future home, and several hundred acres of land. Some continued to be farmed and some stayed as woodland but a significant acreage was identified as potential building sites. The principal areas were on either side of Coast Hill and around the Westcott Mill pond and a new company, Landowners Limited, was formed, with Brooke as Managing Director, to promote these.

Rookery Lodge

The Lodge (also known as the 'pepper pot' or 'cruet') was built in 1901 or thereabouts with a dual role; to provide accommodation for the Bailiff of the Rookery Estate and to act as the Estate Office for the planned Coast Hill and Westcott Mill housing developments.



It was designed by Maurice Bingham Adams (1849-1933), one of the 'arts and crafts' architects engaged by Landowners Ltd. Adams came to prominence when, with Norman Shaw, he designed houses for the Bedford Park 'garden suburb' in West London..

A contemporary description² states that "*The building occupies a most picturesque site at the entrance to a beautifully wooded estate, and it stands on the banks of a stream at the rear, there being a bridge for the high road to the right. The slope of the land necessitated a basement to the back part, and this is reached by external steps leading to woodshed and store places, the walls screening the administrative parts, thus making the building presentable from all sides; the projecting angle set-bays being provided to give outlooks in all directions to control the approaches. The office is planned for the secretary's occasional use. The bailiff has a separate entrance, and the remainder of the cottages is used by him.*"

Before the building of the Lodge the entrance to Rookery Drive was marked by a gate.

¹ The sale was authorised by Mortimer Drewe Malleson, Arthur Clarges Claude Fuller, Craven Burrell Fuller and Henry Claude Fuller - the executors of the Rookery estate.

² Modern Cottage Architecture edited by Maurice B Adams

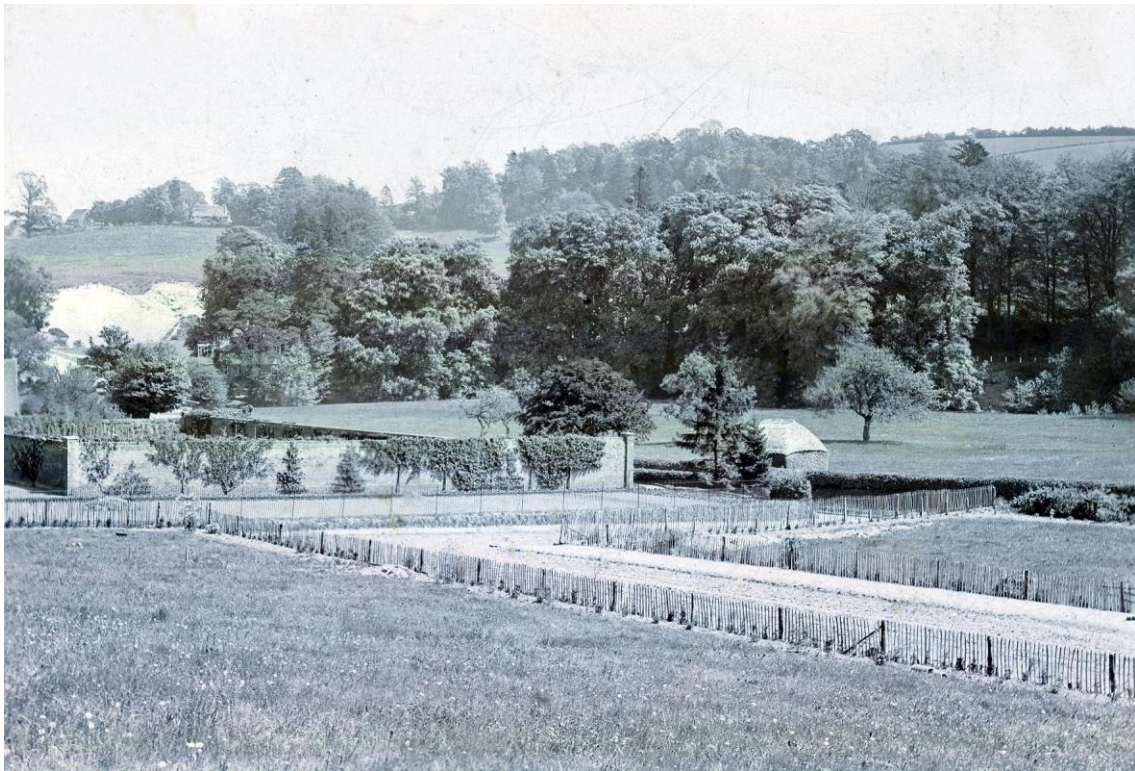
The Coast Hill development

When the Rookery Estate was sold in 1894 Lot Six was “An Enclosure of Arable Land” called Coneybury. It was described in the sales prospectus as follows:

This lot attains at its western extremity a considerable elevation. The Coast Hill Estate immediately adjacent has recently been laid out for building purposes, to which this land is well adapted, the area being 10a. 1r. 31p. A profitable division and resale might no doubt be carried out by the purchaser.

The Lot was sold to W Beall for £825, and it would appear that he followed this advice as a notice appeared in the Dorking Advertiser on 27th May 1899 advertising the sale of building plots in Coast Hill Field . In the same month a proposal was also made to reduce the gradient of Coast Hill.

To ensure that the Coast Hill Estate was not spoiled, purchasers of building plots were required to accept various restrictive covenants. For example, in addition to details relating to the building of walls and fences, and to the type of building (only a dwelling house or shop; the former to be of no less value than £400) covenants stipulated that ‘*No manufacture or burning of Bricks shall be carried on the said piece of land*’ and that ‘*No hut shed tent caravan house on wheels or other chattels adapted or intended for use as a dwelling house or sleeping apartment for any shows swings or roundabouts shall be erected or placed or be used or allowed to remain upon the said piece of land*’.



This photograph shows the recently laid ‘new road’ that would become Coast Hill Lane. The Sandrock and part of the Rookery Lodge are visible in the background beyond the walled garden of ‘Rookery Garden House’, formerly the home of the Rookery’s Head Gardener.

Woodlands

One of the building plots was purchased by W H Monk who built Woodlands, seen here nearing completion.



Dalesford House

The plot upon which Dalesford House was built was part of the land bought on 15th July 1895 by Mr Beall.

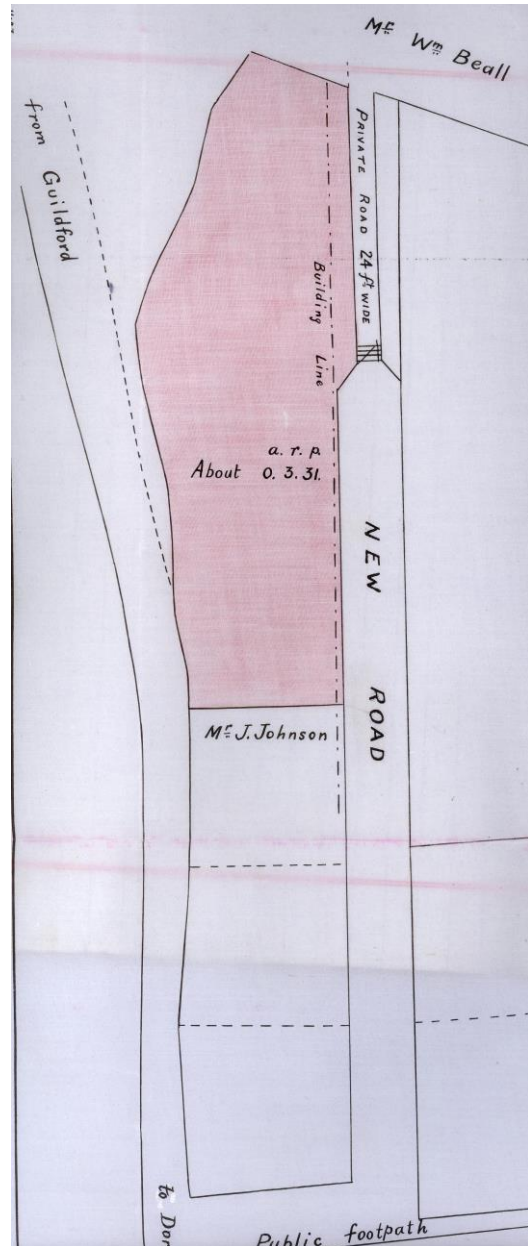
Surviving deeds show that on 28 June 1904 Mabel Hills of Sunnybank Fernwood Road Newcastle on Tyne acquired from Caroline Large “all that piece of land containing by estimation 3 roods, 31 perches (more or less) situate on the North side of the High Road leading from Dorking to Guildford and delineated on the plan drawn in the margin of a conveyance dated 11 July 1901 between William Beall³ and Frederick Fisher⁴” formerly part of an estate known as the Coast Hill Building Estate together with the recently erected house known as **Overdale**. In connection with this purchase an £800 mortgage was taken out on the property with the Liverpool, London & Globe Insurance Company. Charles Henry Hills and Lt Col Georg Johnson Gossling were involved as Trustees.

On 1 March 1919 the property was acquired for £1750 by Ada Ethel Shorland Ball, wife of Captain Francis Shorland Ball of the Red House Newdigate.

Two years later, on 24 June 1921, the property was bought from Ada Ball by Lt Col Frederick William Charles Turner for £2,400.

On 12 December 1927 the property was sold by Lt Col Turner to Emily Doris Sawyer the wife of George Alexander Sawyer C.B.E. of The Old House, Westcott for £2,500. At this time the house was known as **The Little House**.

On 23 March 1937 the property was conveyed to Major Edsall Munt of Conway, Rectory Road, Farnborough for £2700.



³ In the 1901 census, William Beall was a 58 year old Butcher of 47 West Street Dorking

⁴ Frederick Fisher subsequently(?) purchased Hawthorndene in Westcott Street.]



Overdale, the residence of Miss Mabel Hills, from 'Surrey at the Opening of the 20th Century' by W E Hitchin - Pike's New Century Series No. 18 [Copy in the Surrey History Centre]

Deerhurst



The site of Deerhurst was purchased in July 1901 and a house was built shortly afterwards and named Rookhurst. This was sold in 1926 to (Arthur) George and Elaine Palmer. It is noteworthy for several reasons. When the Westcott telephone exchange was introduced Rookhurst's number was 'Westcott 1'. More significant is the fact that in the 1930s George Palmer and his two gardeners constructed a number of follies in the garden, including 'Rookhurst Castle', a Japanese water garden and several woodland walks. The garden also contains an old lime kiln.

George Palmer died in 1962 and according to a note in The Times on 4th October ‘*Mr Arthur George Palmer left £55,235 net. He left ‘my ivory carving by Richard Garbe⁵ called ‘Primovera’ to his wife for life and then to the Victoria and Albert Museum’, £100 to the Rector and church wardens of Wotton for the general purposes of the parish church, and subject to other family and personal bequests, the residue to his wife during her widowhood and then one quarter to Church missionary Society Medical Missions, and one eighth to such Home for Aged or Elderly People as his trustees direct.’*

After Mr Palmer’s death, Mrs Palmer moved into Green Hedges, a smaller house on the other side of the road, and Rookhurst was sold by auction on 29th October 1962. The prospectus describes the gardens and refers to the follies although it gives no clue as to their origins. It also refers to Mr Stannard, the gardener (see below) whose cottage in the grounds was excluded from the sale.

The Westcott School Register includes Greta Stannard (born 19 December 1916), daughter of Ernest Stannard of Rookhurst, who was admitted on 25th January 1927 from Bickley & Widmore School at Bromley, Kent. She left at the end of July 1931 to attend Wimbledon Commercial School. She subsequently married and her daughter, also Greta, lives at Rookery Cottage, Rookery Drive.



Rookhurst and its garden (before and after!)



Alan Reif in the grounds of Deerhurst (formerly Rookhurst) and the Rookhurst Wellhead

⁵ Richard Garbe was a noted sculptor who lived in the village at Milton Way.

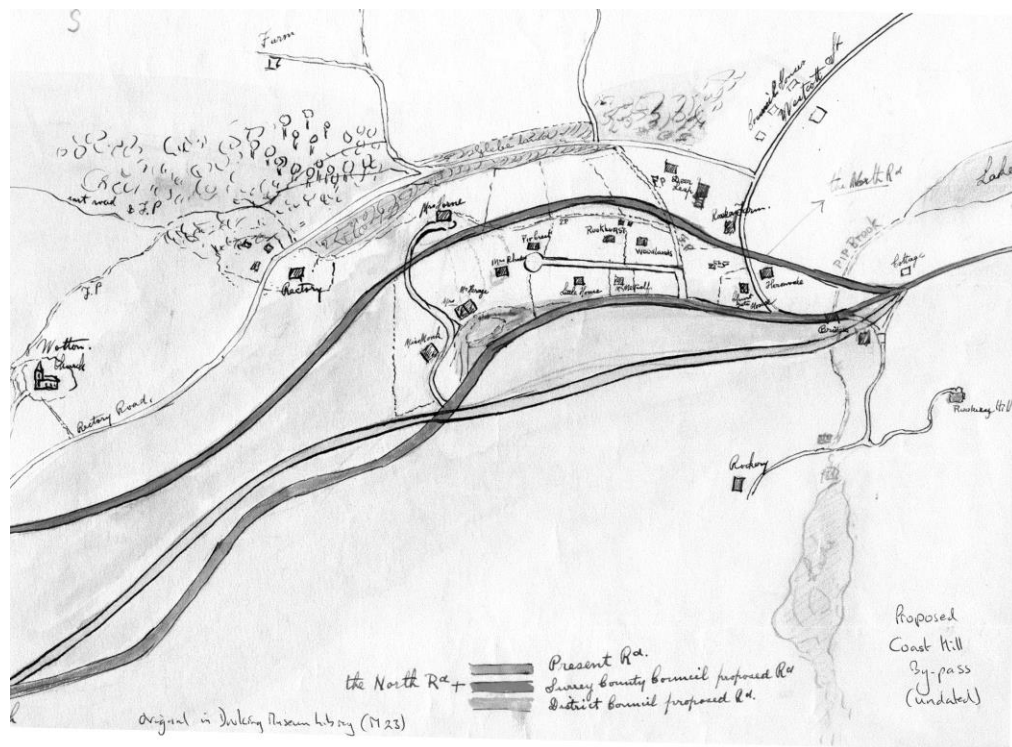
Coast Hill



At the beginning of the 20th century Coast Hill had a steeper gradient and more dangerous bends than it has today. Various proposals were put forward to make negotiating the hill less dangerous including one in May 1999 at about the same time that building plots were being advertised for sale in ‘Coast Hill Field’.

A diversion was proposed in May 1913 and further proposals appeared in September 1926 with a suggested Coast Hill footpath in January 1927.

An entirely new road was proposed in the 1930s (?). This would have run to the north of Coast Hill Lane at the rear of Rookhurst and Woodlands but it was not pursued, possibly because of the opposition voiced by the owners of these two properties.



The steep gradient of Coast hill made it a popular venue for cycling, motor cycling and motor car 'hill climb' competitions

1904 The Southern Motor Club's annual hill climbing, on a half mile course on Coast Hill where the gradient was steepest (one in 7), attracted a large crowd. The single motor cycle event was won by G. Fisher riding a 3½hp chain-driven MMC, followed by 3½hp belt-driven Minerva and a 2¼hp belt-driven Kerry.

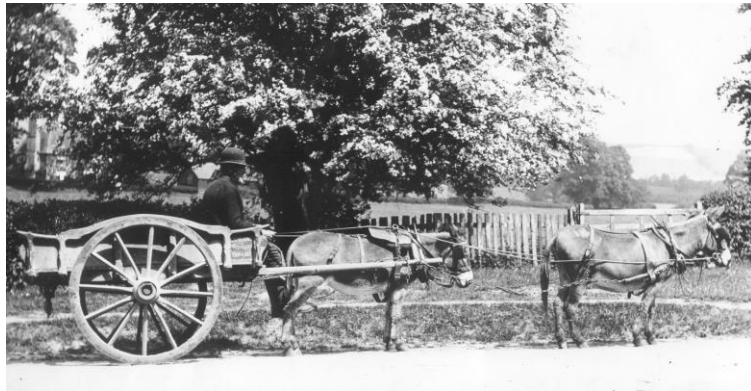
1905 The winner of the Polytechnic Cycling Club hill climb at Coast Hill was H Hyatt in a time of 2minutes, 18 3/5 seconds, which failed to break the record of 1 minute 55 seconds set by A Kirton in 1899.

1932 There were complaints in the newspaper about the disturbance caused by motor cyclists assembling at Wotton before tackling Coast Hill.

The Hill also led to many accidents. This one in 1909



Another accident left Morris Charman, a Rookery Estate employee, with two broken legs. Because he could no longer work on the estate George Fuller set him up as a carter with his own cart and a pair of ponies., pictured below.



Coast Hill Field

In 1929 Landowners Limited were still hoping to see the Coast Hill Field developed as a Building Estate. The sales prospectus produced by Messrs White & Sons included Lot 9 – a 'valuable enclosure of pasture land' containing 37 acres, 1 rood and 5 poles. This property is situated at the top of Coast Hill, some 460 feet above sea level. It possesses a very long frontage of some 2,500 feet and is very suitable for development.

This land was formerly part of the glebe lands of the Rectory of Wotton with a conveyance dated the 20th February 1892.

The Coast Hill Field had been included in an earlier sale, in 1924, when the area was quoted as 37.252 acres and identified as ‘arable land and plantation’ let to Messrs J & J Mansfield.



In February 1905 Landowners Limited offered for sale 11 stacks of upland, seed and meadow hay, the produce of harvests in 1902, 1903 and 1904. Four of the stacks were located at the north end of Coast Hill Field and two at the south end.

The Rookery Fault

Coast Hill has been given a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) accreditation because the ‘Rookery Fault’ provides an interesting alignment of the Bargate and Hythe Beds of Lower Greens as can be seen by this photograph of the roadside strata:



The Occupants of Coast Hill
1950 Kelly's Directory

Bredon	Home Mrs G
Coast Hill Cottage	Clinton Fredk W
Conybury	Joseph Leonard
Ferrers	Herridge Chas Stanley
Fir Crest	Syrett Herbt
Holmbank	Metcalfe Rev Jn Wm
Overdale	Munt Col Edsall
Rookery Gardens	Wrenn Leslie A
Rookhurst	Palmer Arth Geo
Rookhurst Lodge	Stannard Ernest
Wayside	Crocker Hy Ernest

1972 Kemp's Directory

Bredon	Carey D
Coast Hill Cottage	Clinton F W G
Conybury	Joseph L
Dalesford	Frank
Ferrers	Herridge Mrs G
Fircrest	Alcock
Green Hedges	Palmer C S
Holmbank	Metcalfe O J
Rookhurst	McKay Neil
Rookhurst Lodge	Stannard E
Wayside	Crocker H E
Woodlands Cottage	Bagshaw Mrs F G
Woodlands Cottage	Grimwood A W

See also: The Motor Cycle Problem in Westcott Annual Report 2001
 The Legend of Coast Hill, as published in the Abinger Monthly Record for 1890

Other occupamts

Holmbank	Becher
Rookhurst	Jennings, Barnard,
Woodlands	J B Geake, Matthew, Fairclough,
Woodlands Lodge/Cottage	Randall, Eve,
Coast Hill Cottage	Sawyers
Bredon	Horne, Beckett, Davies,
Wayside	Macaire, Squier, Robinson

Although both the Coast Hill and Westcott Mill estates were developed the number of houses built was much smaller than originally envisaged. The initial purchasers of Mill Pond land bought up neighbouring plots to protect their privacy and much of the Coast Hill Estate failed to materialise, with no houses at all being built on the southern side of the A25 and only a select few to the north in Coast Hill Lane.