

## Stowe Maries

In 1975 Stowe Maries was surveyed by the Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey) who reported that.

*Stowe Maries is an impressive 3½ bay smoke bay house with heavy timbers. It has a continuous jetty, unusual for the area. The roof is of clasped purlin construction with queen struts. One jowl post remains and the walls are arch-braced. There is a small, 2 storey, 2 bay building 2½ metres in front of the jetty. No framing is visible on this building downstairs. It could have been a granary with a cart shed underneath. The rafters are smoke-blackened so a detached kitchen is another possibility. In either case, the position in front of the jetty is curious.*

*Modern timber-framing now encases much of both these builds and there has been some rebuilding of the older parts. There are suspicions that the north end and north east corner are rebuilds (even the jettying at this corner may be a reconstruction).*

*A date of late 16<sup>th</sup> century is expected for the main build, possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century for the 'granary'.*

A more specific date was provided in 2003 when tree ring dating undertaken within the Surrey Dendrochronology Project, a joint venture between the Surrey Archaeological Society and the DBRG (Surrey), concluded that the property was built over a period of 155 years from 1478 to 1632.

But the first recorded use of the name Stowe Maries does not occur until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before then various names were used although the most consistent was 'Nettlefold'.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Nettlefold family of Dorking possessed considerable property in Dorking, Milton and Logmore and William Netylfold who was buried in St Martin, churchyard, Dorking on 20 Jan 1554/55 owned a house and land in Westcott vide his will proven on 29 March 1555:

*In the name of God Amen...I William Netylfold of Dorking yeoman noew beying syke of bodye yet nevertheless in perfect mynd and good remembrance doe make this my last will and testament....I bequeath my soul unto Almighty God and my bodye to be buried in the churchyard at Dorkyng by my auncestors....I give and bequeath to Alles my wyff all my lands as well freehold as Copyhold for the term of her natural lyfe to Robard my sonne and the heyres of his body lawfully begotten my house in Westcott in which Thomas Peter now dwelleth together with the lands and tenements thereto belonging as well copyhold as freehold now in the occupation of the said Peter and Richard Stylwell*

'Stowe Maries' is identified as the former 'Nettlefold' by descriptions in the Court Rolls of the Manor of Westcott. Westcott was one of seven manors acquired by the Evelyn family during the fifty years from 1579 to 1629. Wotton was the first and Westcott the last, when it was bought from Lord Bergavenny, head of the Nevill family. The 'Nevill' papers are lost but those from Evelyn's time as Lord of the Manor are held at the Surrey History Centre.

In 1602, although no longer occupied by a Nettlefold, the name was retained when the property was sold to William Cumber who had purchased Chirgate, the Westcott house and estate that was later to become The Rookery. The Cumbers passed their ownership from

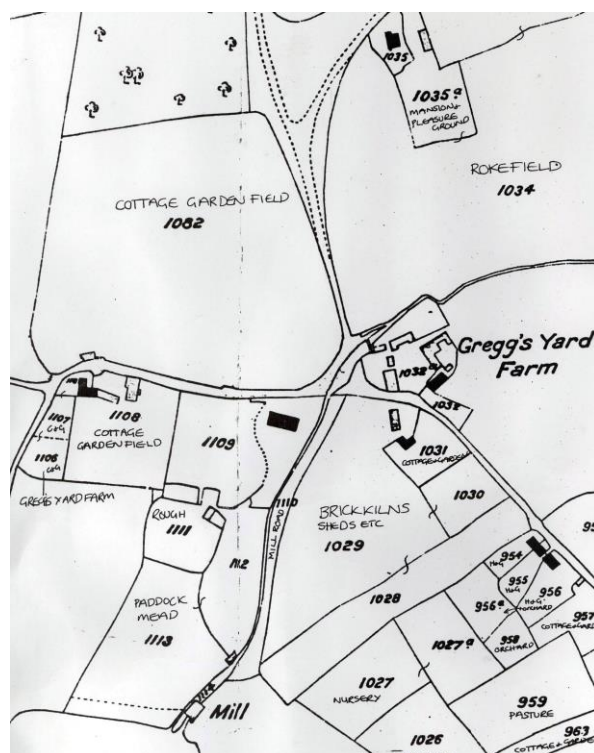
father to son for over a hundred years during which time ‘Nettlefolds’ was always the first property mentioned when the transfer was brought before the Manorial Court for approval. In 1740 when Sarah Cumber died there were no male heir to inherit and she left the Cumber estate, including Nettlefolds, to her nephew, John Mitchell. He in his turn bequeathed it to his four daughters and at that point Abraham Tucker of Betchworth Castle who was already holding a mortgage on the estate was able to acquire the property.

In 1759 the estate was bought by Daniel Malthus who converted ‘Chertgate’ to a ‘gentleman’s seat’ and renamed it The Rookery. It was there that his son Thomas Robert ‘Population’ Malthus was born in 1766. A year later, in 1767, the estate was offered for sale and bought by Richard Fuller, a London banker and the MP for Steyning. The house and grounds, including Nettlefolds, were to stay in the Fuller family for over 100 years. By 1854 when Richard’s grandson, also Richard died the estate had been significantly extended.

The Westcott Tithe Map, drawn up in 1838, identifies the Stowe Maries site and the accompanying ‘Tithe Apportionment’ of 1840 confirms the owner as George Fuller but with various tenants, as follows:

- 1108 F E Blackbourne
- 1107 Wm Bennett
- 1106 Geo Souter
- 1105 Wm Pearson
- 1082 F E Blackbourne

The manorial records include the admission of Mrs Maria Fuller to the Rookery Estate, including Nettlefolds, on 29 December 1854 following the death of her husband. (Mrs Fuller vacated the Rookery mansion to make way for Richard’s brother George. She established her new home at Rokefield, which she shared with her two spinster sisters Juliana Elizabeth Barclay and Emily Barclay, but retained an interest in the Rookery estate.



Annotated extract from the 1838 Tithe Map

Specifically the Court record reads:

Admission of Maria Fuller, late of the Rookery, widow, to all the customary messuages or tenements, barns, stables, outhouses, gardens, orchard and lands therewith belonging with the appurtenances called Nettlefold and containing by estimation ten acres lying at Westcott, same consisting of the several closes, fields and parcels of land and containing by estimation the several quantities following

- a Meadow called Little Mead (1acre 3 roods 15 perches)
- another meadow called Upper Mead (1.3.36)
- a field of arable land called Round Mead (2.1.0)
- a part of Holmtree Field – being the south west end thereof from the bush in the said field to the hedge at the end of the Acre Plat ( $\frac{3}{4}$  acre)
- and the Platt at the Downs (0.3.4) more or less

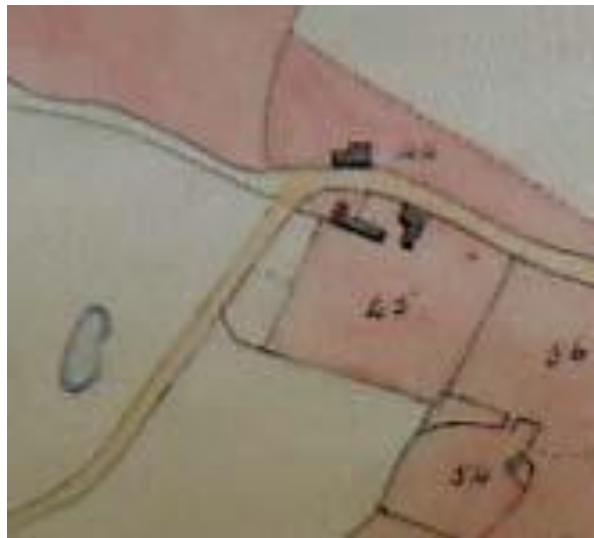
formerly the estate of Daniel Malthus.

Maria Fuller's ownership of Nettlefold and other property in Westcott is confirmed by a survey undertaken by the Lord of the Manor in 1859.

The Evelyn Estate map identifies the Stowe Maries site with the following descriptions:

45 Cottage fields (0a.2r.29p)  
 46 Three cottages, barn, stable, yard and orchard. (1a.1r. 9p).

The map clearly shows property on both sides of Balchins Lane (as does the tithe map but on a smaller scale)). The two sites were linked with a third 44 Nursery Mead (part) (6a.1r.37p) and together they were described as 'A messuage and lands called Charman (formerly Nettlefold)'.



This last reference is the only clue to locating the Nettlefold occupants in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century since Nettlefold is not named in any of the census returns but in 1851 one of the unnamed and unnumbered households in Westcott was occupied by the Charman family: Edward (41) was described as an Ag Lab from Dorking. His wife (30) was from Rusper and there were four children and two lodgers. By 1861 the family, with six more children, had moved to Newdigate where Edward was now described as a 'farmer of 260 acres employing 4 men and a boy' suggesting that the term 'Ag Lab' may have embraced all who worked on the land, including those that did so with some authority.

There is no obvious occupant of Nettlefold in 1861 but the following entries from the later returns could be relevant:

In 1871 there were four families living in 'Westcott Lane'

Westcot Lane	Haines	Thomas	M	2	Ag Lab
Westcot Lane	Wye	John	M	3	Ag Lab
Westcot Lane	Marshall	Martha	U	4	Laundress
Westcot Lane	Smith	Elizabeth	W	7	Formerly Laundress

In 1881 three different families are identified at Nos 1 to 3 Balchins Lane:

1 Balchins Lane	Bennett	Martha	W	6	Formerly Laundress in charge of Grandchildren
2 Balchins Lane	Peryer	James	M	6	General Labourer
3 Balchins Lane	Wilkins	Esau	M	3	Shepherd

There is no obvious entry in 1891 but there is this record for Griggs Farm Cottages:

Griggs Farm Cottage	Stedman	James	M	5	Agricultural Labourer
Griggs Farm Cottage	Plan	Geo	M	3	Agricultural Labourer

The Dorking Rate Book shows that a third occupant, Thomas Baker, was present in October 1891

When the Rookery Estate was auctioned in 1894 the sales prospectus for Lot Two (Westcott Mill and land) included three tenements adjoining The Mill House more or less on the

Stowe Maries site. At that time they were occupied by F Chennel, W Chennell and G Knight, all 'monthly tenants'.

Some time later it appears that the three dwellings in Balchins Lane ceased to be a group of adjoining cottages and were converted to a substantial family home that, according to the 1901 census, accommodated:

Dorothy Spicer	Widow	71	Living on own means	born Guildford
Hilda S Spicer	Daughter	57		born Germany

Also present were Miss Agnes Money (58) a boarder born in Sternfield, Suffolk and Miss Mary M Wilde (31) a visitor born in Uggesall, Suffolk.

There were also four live-in servants: Margaret Standen (Housekeeper), Bessie Stickley (Cook), Ellen Wilson (Parlourmaid) and Ellen Worlten (Housemaid)

The 1901 census was the first that made reference to the name Stowe Maries. The origin of the name is considered at Annex A

It is not known how long Mrs Spicer, Miss Spicer or Miss Money remained in Westcott. In the absence of further census returns and rate books (apart from 1913) little is known about the ownership and occupants of Stowe Maries in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

It is likely that the house was let at this time since the Holmesdale Directory for 1908 showed the occupant of Stowe Maries as Horace C White and in the same year the report of the Fifth of November procession around the large houses of the village refers to a Mr Wainwright hosting their visit

However the property was offered for sale by auction on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1911 and again on 23 July 1930 and the sales prospectuses, and the 'conditions of sale' they contain, provide some further information about its history although it is not always clear whether the quoted conveyances refer to the house, or just to pieces of adjoining land. Annex B refers.

The Dorking Rate Book entry dated 27 October 1913 records the occupant of Stowe Maries as Edgar Fairweather but the entry is annotated 'unoccupied'. The extent of the property for rateable purposes at that time was 1 acre and 2 roods.

In May 1920 The Times reported the birth of a son to Captain E H Dormer of Stowe Maries, Westcott. [Captain Edward Henry Dormer was born on 13 October 1870. He was the son of Hon. Hubert Francis Dormer and Mary Jane Elizabeth Digby. He married Hon. Vanessa Margaret Borwick, daughter of Sir Robert Hudson Borwick, 1st Baron Borwick and Caroline Smith Johnston, on 24 June 1903. He died on 9 July 1943 at age 72]

Major (retired) Augustus Wieland Bird was the owner occupier in the early 1920s. Various references to his occupancy have been noted from the Dorking Advertiser and other sources. (These have been recorded at Annex D). Older villagers have also claimed to recall his extensive kennels, with West Highland Terriers the dominant breed.

On 10<sup>th</sup> November 1924 the site adjacent to Stowe Maries on which the Stowe Cottage now stands was sold by Landowners Limited to Major (retired) Augustus Wieland Bird for £1135. It was used to accommodate Major Bird's 200 terriers and possibly a kennelmaid..

Stowe Cottage was occupied by Leslie Howard's Groom and Cook. It was also the home of Phillipa Hasluck whose parents lived in Mead House. (She has since died but her sister Angela Duffin lives at Greensand in Logmore Lane.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1930 The Times carried a notice that Stowe Maries was to be offered for sale 'privately or by auction on 23 July 1930'. This time it was bought by actor and film star, Leslie Howard. He removed the stucco, exposing the original timber frame, and made considerable improvements to the house and grounds including the construction of a small cinema. When not filming in America and elsewhere he lived at Stowe Maries until June 1943 when the aircraft in which he was returning from a lecture tour in Portugal, was shot down over the sea.

After Leslie Howard's death his wife was unable to afford to retain Stowe Maries and the property was once more offered at auction. It was bought by Sir Richard Costain (1902–1966), building contractor and industrialist.

The house was sold in 1952, allegedly because it was too expensive to heat. The Costain's moved to Mill Way but when they separated he moved out and Lady Costain moved to Jarrm Cottage (named from the initials of the Costain children).

Subsequent owners of Stowe Maries included the Easthams (1952-1972), Lanhams (1972-1980) and then John and Ann Wickham (1980 – 2008).

In 1973 the house was granted Grade II Listed status

#### **Sources:**

DBRG (Surrey) Report

Tree-Ring Services Report: WESM/23/03 by A K Moir dated 16 July 2003

Times Digital Archive

The Nettlefolds: a genealogical account of the family of Nettlefold settled in the county of Surrey by record from the 14th century and in particular of the family and descendants to the present day of Edward Netylfold of Dorking. By C Anthony Crofton published in 1962`

Research notes of Marion Herridge

Surrey History Centre references include:6256 Manor of Westcott

**Esher Place:** The first house on this site was erected in the 11th century and was demolished by William Waynefleete, Bishop of Winchester in the 15th century. He built a stately new residence of red brick- the gate house of which still stands. Cardinal Wolesey extended the house in 1528. It passed through several owners including Richard Drake, cousin to Sir Francis Drake. After the Armada three captured Spanish Admirals were confined there in some style for five years. The estate was acquired in 1680 by Sir Thomas Lynch first Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica. Henry Pelham, Prime Minister to George II purchased it in 1729 and made lavish alterations to the house and grounds. *When John Spicer, a wealthy stockbroker, bought it in 1805 he pulled down all but the remaining gatehouse by the river and built a new home on higher ground.* The present mansion, incorporating Spicer's house, was completed by Lord D'Abernon. It is now owned by the

Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Unions, having been for several years the Shaftesbury Home for Girls

## Annex A

### Why Stowe Maries?

It is assumed that the house was given its present name at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was rebuilt as a single dwelling. The first known reference to the name is on a postcard dated 28 August 1900 requesting Mr Attlee, the Dorking corn merchant, to supply Mrs Spicer with 2 bushels of crushed oats, 2 bushels of cracked maize (not too fine) and 2 bushels of wheat for poultry. In the absence of any other suggestion it is assumed that the house was so named by somebody who had an affinity with the Essex village of that name.

*STOW-MARIES (St. Mary and St. Margaret), a parish, in the union of Maldon, hundred of Dengie, S. division of Essex, 7 miles (S. by W.) from Maldon; containing 257 inhabitants. This parish takes the adjunct to its name from the family of Marey, to whom the lands at one time belonged. It is situated on the river Crouch, and comprises by admeasurement 2466 acres, whereof 1755 are arable, 99 pasture, 155 meadow, and 82 wood. A fair is held on the 24th of June. The living is a rectory, valued in the king's books at £18. 6. 8., and in the gift of the Rev. T. H. Storie: the tithes have been commuted for £660; there is a glebe-house, and the glebe contains 40 acres. The church is ancient. (A Topographical Dictionary of England 1848)*

Given that Dorothea Spicer may well have been the first occupant of the modernised property it is possible that she was the person who gave it the name Stowe Maries, but there is no evidence that she did so. On previous census returns Dorothea was described as the wife of William Webb Spicer, the rector of Itchen Abbas, and her birthplace given as Ash in Surrey. Her daughter Hilda was born in Dresden.

Reference to 19<sup>th</sup> century marriage registers reveals that William Webb Spicer married Dorothea Halsey in Dec 1849. The 1851 census includes Dorothea's parents – Richard and Caroline Halsey – who at that time were visitors at Esher Place, the home of John & Harriet Spicer, where their son W W Spicer, the 30 year old Rector of Itchen Abbas, was also present along with his new wife.. John Spicer was born in Warley, Essex just 20 miles from Stowe Maries and this is the closest connection so far established.

The Revd W W Spicer was the Rector of Itchen Abbas from 1850 to 1876 after which he went to Tasmania.

Dorothea Spicer died on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1910 at which time she was living at 'The Small House, Fleet, Hampshire'. Her will, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1909, left 'all property of which at my death I shall have power to dispose' to her daughter Hilda Sidonia Spicer – but the value of the estate was a modest £325.

Agnes Louise Money, Mrs Spicer's boarder in 1901, died on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1910. Her address was then 99 Prince of Wales's Mansions, Battersea Park. Her estate was valued at £10,506 and her will refers to the ownership of property but without naming it and there is no reference to Stowe Maries. Miss Money was the author of a definitive history of the Girls Friendly Society, published in 1897

There is another property in Dorking with the name 'Stowe Maries' - 9 Deepdene Vale. This was built c1925. The present owner has no knowledge of how the name was chosen. [An

early, if not the original, owner was John G Hughes. There were 31 people with that name in the 1901 census but none with any known link to Essex.]



## Annex B

### Stowe Maries Conveyances

The prospectus for the sale of ‘a delightful little freehold property of 3 acres’ on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1911 does not name the vendor but the conditions of sale indicate how he(or she) acquired title to the property viz:

- 1 as to part of the property - a conveyance dated 31 May 1855 between (1)Mrs Maria Fuller, (2)George Fuller, (3)Sir John Henry Pelly and William Walter Fuller and (4)John Coles Symes.
- 2 as to (an)other part formerly copyhold of the Manor of Westcott but since enfranchised with the admission of Mrs Maria Fuller on the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1854.
- 3 and as to the remainder with an indenture dated 29 July 1896 made between (1)Arthur Clarges Loraine Fuller and (2)A C L Fuller and others as trustees, (3)Mortimer Drewe Malleson as mortgagee and (4)Landowners Limited.

The conditions of sale state that this last conveyance contained ‘certain recitals in reference to the prior title, including recitals shewing that portions of the heridatements included in the conveyance were formerly copyhold of the Manor of Westcott but had been enfranchised, but such portions cannot be distinguished’.

Reference is also made to an agreement dated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1881 made between the Dorking Water Company and George Arthur Fuller, giving the company a right to carry their main water from springs on another part of the estate through the property offered for sale..

The property was sold subject to above easement and to the restrictions and stipulations in a conveyance dated 24<sup>th</sup> June 1904 made between (1)Agnes Louise Money and Edward John Moore Lascelles, and in a conveyance dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 1908. This suggests that Miss Money may have become more than simply a ‘boarder’; her description in the 1901 census.

The prospectus for sale by auction in July 1930 included a reference to a later conveyance dated 10 November 1924 details of which are not held. This may have been when Major Bird acquired the property. The deed apparently referred to various rights of way for (a) the owner of The Mill House (b) the owners of the mill stream and Westcott Mill, to maintain a bridge over a stream and to clean the stream.

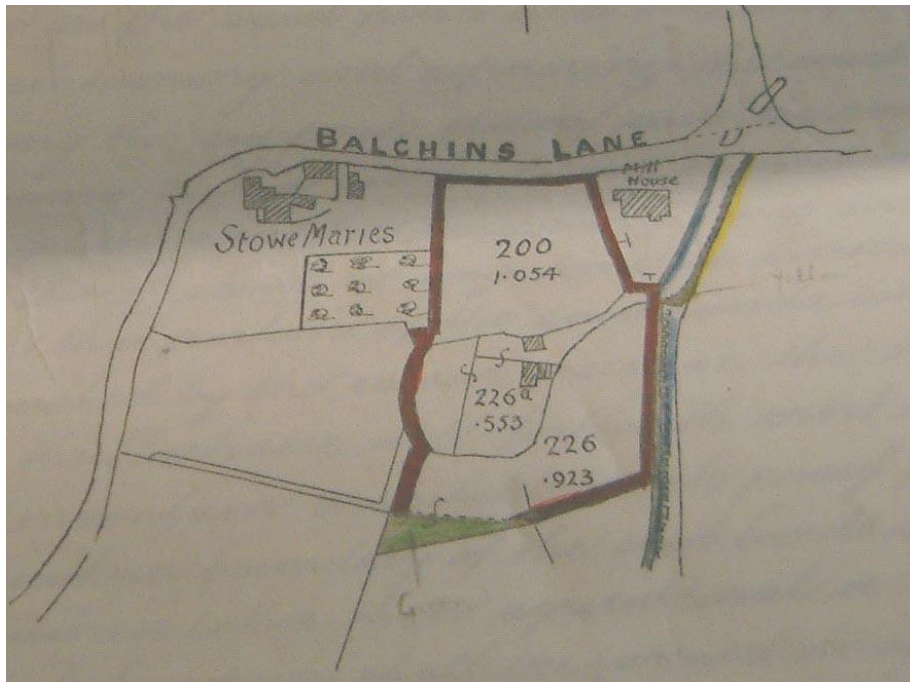
In 1930 the property extended to 7 acres and 3 roods but the water main mentioned in the earlier conveyance was now said to be no longer in use.

## Stowe Maries Cottages

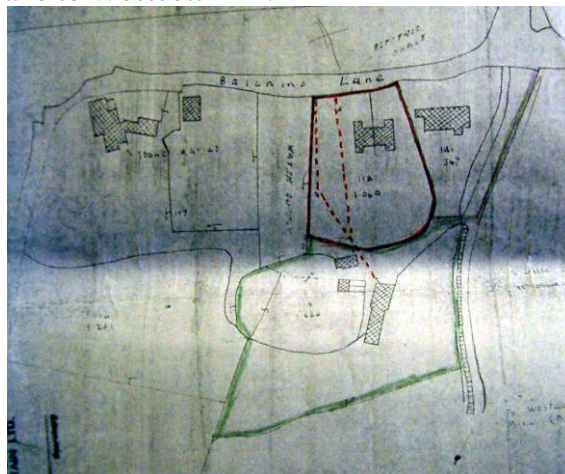
The site on which Stowe Maries Cottages now stand was sold by Landowners Limited to Major (retired) Augustus Wieland Bird of Stowe Maries on 10 November 1924 for £1135. The site comprised three adjoining plots, shown on the 1914 Ordnance Survey map as

200.	with an area of 1.054 acres
226a	0.553 acres
226	0.923 acres
Total area	2.53 acres

The conveyance excludes a strip six feet wide adjoining the east side of the hedge which is on the west side of the piece of land coloured green on the accompanying plan – but including the tunnel at the south west corner of 226.



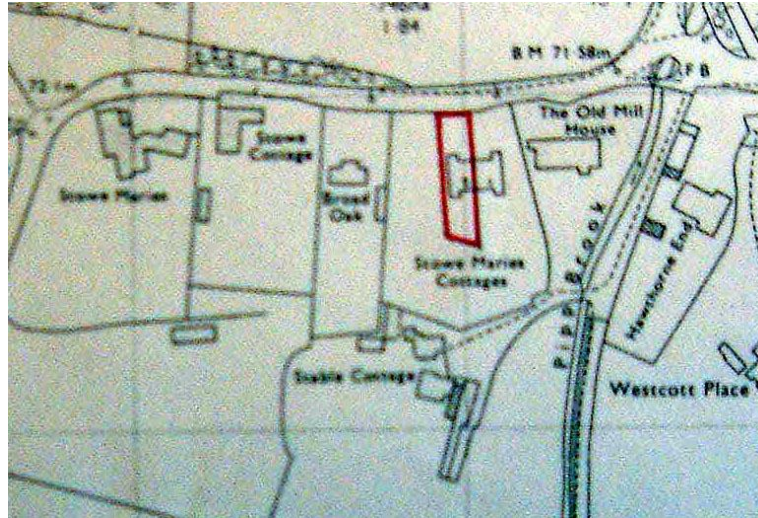
On 11 September 1959 part of the original sale area was sold by Richard Costain to Elizabeth Dora Tod of the Old Mill House for £5250. The land was described as having a frontage to Balchins Lane together with two dwellings known as 1 and 2 The Haven. Both the above sales included a reference to a right of way over land and a bridge to the road leading from Balchins Lane to Westcott Mill.



In October 1981 it was proposed to replace the two prefabricated bungalows (Nos 1 and 2 Stowe Maries Cottages) by a detached house, but this was not pursued.

On 12 July 1984 one cottage was sold by Clarvic Limited to William John and Maureen Joan Foster of 162a Ruxley Lane Ewell for £49,500.

The house was bought by Margaret Whitley on 27 March 2000.



John Watts lived at the adjoining cottage from about 1980 but in 2007 moved into Bramley House and has since died.

The cottage previously belonged to a Mrs McFarlane and was sold by her daughter Atwood? who lived nearby in Balchins Lane.

### References to Major **Augustus Wieland Bird**

In February 1926 Major A W Bird complained that Messrs Mansfield, who held the refuse collection contract for Westcott, refused to take more than one small dustbin from Stowe Maries. He claimed that ‘this was inadequate for a house his size and he had to bury the contents of one bin in his garden each week, which was rapidly transforming it into a rubbish dump’. In reply the Dorking Rural District Council pointed out that the Mansfield contract was restricted to properties within 400 yards of Willmot’s Corner (where Furlong Road joins Guildford Road) plus the council cottages in Westcott Street and Balchin’s Lane. Major Bird argued that it was invidious to collect from council cottages but not from privately owned houses on the route; but to no avail. The Council view was that ‘the property on the way to the council cottages was of a better class and the residents could see to the removal of their own dust, although there was no objection to residents making private arrangements with Mr Mansfield.’

In 1927 the history of Sunny Mount records that ex-serviceman and pig farmer George Anscomb was offered a plot of land off Balchins Lane but Major Bird of Stowe Maries was appalled at the prospect of an agricultural labourer’s cottage being built on land opposite his house. He immediately lodged a strong objection and did all he could to have the application rejected, adding the fact that Anscomb had been summoned for assault two years earlier and was clearly a very undesirable man to have as a neighbour. George responded by drawing attention to the fact that Major Bird was a dog breeder; *‘It only wants inquiring of the neighbouring gentry which they prefer – kennels or a cottage holding!’*

There followed extensive consultation between the interested parties to see if an alternative site could be agreed upon. Major Bird said he was prepared to make up the difference if another site proved more expensive than the one near Stowe Maries, and Anscomb said that at a pinch he would settle for a smaller area, but the trustees of the Wotton Estate disapproved of any of the alternative locations proposed. Moreover, Surrey County Council would not entertain any site where construction costs would be increased and so Sunny Mount was built in the originally chosen site despite Major Bird’s objection that it would reduce the value of his property.

In 1929 the Dorking Advertiser reported the curious case of stolen vehicles involving an unemployed labourer of no fixed abode. Edmund J Sherlock, a gardener of 10 Furlong Road found a motor cycle lying by the roadside. He recognised it as a Sunbeam motor cycle belonging to Ralph Dorrell, the chauffeur to Major Bird of Stowe Maries. PC Parrott was called and a car from the Stowe Maries garage was also found to have been moved. Later William Monk of Rookery Hill reported that his car had been tampered with. PC Parrott subsequently apprehended Walter Horan on Westcott Common, who was found to have the Stowe Maries garage key in his possession. He was sent to prison for attempted theft.

### Stowe Maries references in the Holy Trinity Registers

#### From the Baptism Register

1922 Sylvia Rosalie Trent, daughter of Harold Edwin & Emily Mabel, Gardener of The Cottage, Stowe Maries

1934 Esme Elizabeth Marie Bone daughter of Percival William & Elsie Sarah Alice, Gardener of The Lodge, Stowe Maries

1942 Wendy Ivy Elizabeth Hooper, daughter of William Henry & Ivy Elizabeth, Gardener of Stowe Maries Cottage

1960 Guy Allister Tom Fordy, son of Donald Tom & Maureen Beatrice Elizabeth, Sales Engineer of 2 Stowe Maries Cottage.

#### From the Marriage Register

1951 David Charles Cooper (24) of Walton and Jane Maude Costain (22) of Stowe Maries.

1956 John Wallace Finch (22) of Florence Cottage, Logmore Lane and Margaret Luch Garland (22) of Stowe Maries.

1966 Derek Alan Dymond (21) and Jane Caroline Lynne Eastham of Stowe Maries

2000 Paul Arthur Sweatman (49) of Barns Green and Ann Clare Wickham (33) of Stowe Maries

#### From the Burial Register

1988 Michael William John Foster (51) of Stowe Marie Cottage

1994 Dorothy Elizabeth Loney (86) of Stowe Maries

## **Stowe Maries additional detail to be incorporated in the official history**

Dr John E and Gwendoline A Wickham  
Ronald & Nora or Norma Watson – Broad Oak  
Clifford & Fiona Burrell Stowe Cottage  
Graham & Faith Race 1 Stowe Maries Cottages

### MVDC Planning Applications

850 dated 24 July 1953

850a(851) 879 2 Sep 1953

81/0997

88/1655 – site between Broad Oak and Stowe Maries Cottages

Also proposal to build detached house to replace two prefabricated buildings

DOR 879 Extension to bungalow at 1 Stowe Cottage

DOR 851 1954 (Stowe Maries vacant at that time)

DOR 850 Tennis Court adjoining Stowe Maries

1970 Outcome of Ministerial appeal against MVDC rejection of planning application

William Webb Spicer Deacon 1845. Priest 1847

Rector of Itchen Abass where J W Spicer was the patron

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War various pieces of land were offered up for housing, as a result of which the pre-war Stowe Maries estate now includes:

Nos 1 and 2 Stowe Maries Cottages

Broad Oak, as well as

Stowe Cottage which was extended in 1953, at which time Stowe Maries was vacant.

The development of the site between Broad Oak and Stowe Maries proved particularly contentious. An appeal went to ministerial level with the response that “The Minister would not accept the fact that country houses with large gardens are now difficult to maintain as necessarily justifying the building of new houses on plots formed from the break up of the estate, but it was recognised that as Stowe Maries is on the edge of the village and the Council have already permitted the conversion of outbuildings and the erection of new houses, the appeal is allowed. But then n