

WESTCOTT HILL FARM

There is no documented record of the early history of Westcott Hill Farm but the building has been surveyed by the Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey) who believe that it dates from the Elizabethan period. i.e. mid 16th century.

The survey report suggests that it was originally built as a 'hearth room' house with a smoke bay – partitioned laterally to roof height. There is evidence of soot on the inside of the purlins¹ to support this. The old entrance is still evident in one of the service bays beside the chimney and access to the upper floor was by ladder. The house was timber framed with lattice and wattle walls typical of Wealden yeoman farmer houses.

In the mid 17th century it would appear that a timber-framed extension was added to the west side, probably for storage with a cellar below. A chimney was built into the smoke bay with back-to-back hearths in the hall and a new living room on the east side. The entrance remained in the service bay next to the chimney, making it a central chimney house.

Later, the timber-framed structure seems to have been enclosed with brick walls and the roof possibly converted from thatch to tiles. At about the same time the front door was probably moved to a central point in the hall.

In the 19th century a further bay was added to the brick wall at the west end with an additional chimney to serve a large cooking range, and another door added to the front that still exists, though sealed. At the back of the house two staircase annexes were added; one for family and one for servants.

More recently, probably in the period 1950-1960 the interior of the house was extensively modernized by the then occupant Basil Longley (Records of James Longley & Co Ltd, builders of Crawley to be examined in the West Sussex Record Office. Acc 12719)). Another extension was added at the east end with office below and nursery above, and bay windows were built into the south face to enlarge the living room and 1st floor bedroom.

When wealthy banker Richard Fuller bought The Rookery in 1768 he set about buying land to extend his estate and if Westcott Hill Farm was not part of the original purchase from Daniel Malthus, it would have soon been acquired. It was certainly in his possession in 1838 when it was recorded in the Tithe Apportionment as follows:

1161 Grinstead Farm House etc. 1a 0r 32p

1162 Orchard 1a 1r 27p

A revaluation in 1886 referred to the farm's present name ie Westcott Hill Farm. It also indicated the extent of the land that was managed as part of the Farm, as follows:

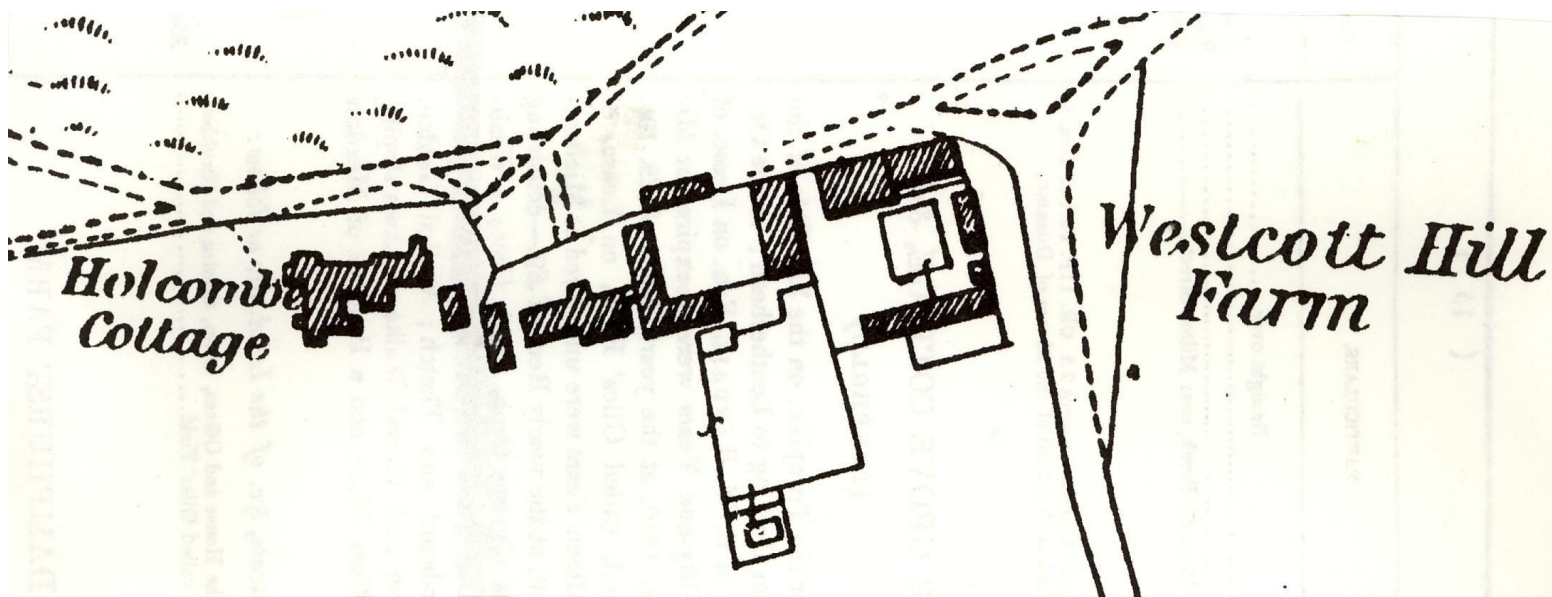
	a	r	p	
951 Pasture	1	12		
956 Orchard	1	33		
959 Pasture (inc 958 Orchard)	1	0	33	
1025 Pasture (inc 1026 Pasture)	1	1	5	pasture
1149 Long Mead	3	1	33	pasture
1151 Middle Hangar	7	1	0	arable

¹ Purlins are continuous horizontal timbers running parallel to the ridge of roof.

1154 Great Hangar	6 2 30	arable
1155 Hangar Rough	1 1 13	arable
1156 Pt Barn Field	8 3 13	arable
1157 Round Hangar	4 2 14	arable
1158 Swanberry Field	7 1 25	arable
1161 Westcott Hill Farm	1 0 32	buildings
1162 The Orchard	1 1 27	pasture
1163 Kiln Field	5 3 20	arable
1165 Longfield	4 3 12	arable
1166 Stonepit Hangar	3 3 10	arable
1167 Little Hangar	3 3 11	arable
1169 The Seven Acres	7 0 8	arable
1171 Florence Farm	1 3 19	pasture
1172/3 Waterden & Southfield	8 1 9	arable
1174 Moors Mead	4 2 19	pasture
1175 The Six Acres	5 2 30	arable
1187 Orchard Field	3 0 30	arable
1188 Orchard Field	3 1 6	arable
1189 The Orchard	1 4	pasture
1189(a)	2 9	pasture
1190 Brook House Homestead	1 34	
1191 Barnfield	2 0 36	pasture
1203 Logmore Lane Field	4 0 21	arable

Whilst the Fuller family retained ownership during most of the 19th century the farmhouse had a succession of different occupants, as noted in the Westcott census returns.

Although the name of the farm varied during the 19th century it is reasonable to assume that all the census entries referred to Westcott Hill Farm since Hill House, on the extreme eastern edge of Westcott Common, was never a working farmhouse.



The Rookery Estate, including Westcott Hill Farm was sold on the death of George Fuller in 1892. The Sales Prospectus provides a detailed reference to the Farmhouse.

FARM HOUSE

Now let as a Private Residence and containing large Entrance Hall (used as a Sitting Room), 2 other Sitting Rooms, 5 Bedrooms, Kitchen and Domestic Offices; and having a large and productive Garden attached. Also the following commodious and well constructed

FARM BUILDINGS

Surrounding a large Yard, viz: a Double-Bayed Barn, Range of Piggeries, Open Hovel with inclosed Calf Pens at ends, Boiling House, Grain Pits, Stallage for 18 cows, 3-Stall Stable and Loose Box with lofts over, Harness, Machine and Store Rooms.

A SMALLER YARD contains a 2-stall Stable, Loose Box, Chaise-House, an Open Hovel and a covered Piggery.

DETACHED and near are a Granary on Brick Piers, a Waggon Lodge, Bull and Calf Houses, Pony Stable and Chaise-House, well fitted Dairy and Slop Dairy, Bakehouse etc.

The total area of the farmhouse and its immediately adjacent land was 2 acres, 2 rods and 23 perches

The letting referred to in the above notice was to William Lambert Penrose Mark. The Surrey History centre holds a Memorandum of an Agreement' dated 21 March 1892 whereby George Arthur Fuller of The Rookery let 'all that dwelling house situated and known as Westcott Hill Farm House and gardens and grounds' to William Lambert Penrose Mark'. The agreement added that 'the landlord retains the right to use the dairy and adjoining washhouse. The agreement took effect on 25 March 1892 and the rent was £35 per annum. [SHC reference 7398/8]

The Westcott Hill 'Homestead' (referred to as part 277c) was purchased by Robert Wyvill Barclay from the Rookery Estate wef 7th August or 2nd September 1895. following the death of George Fuller.

Occupants of Hill Farm House in the 20th century have included:

Ruth and Lucy Wood (see 1901 census). Ruth and Lucy Wood had an elder sister – Rebekah – who married Richard Gamon on 10th May 1871. Richard Gamon was born at Braunton in Devon. His sister Mary also came to Westcott where she married Griffin Beall who founded the Prince of Wales public house. The house next door but one to the Inn was named Braunton House.

Florence Jane Maw acquired Hill Farm House on 8 December 1920 from Robert Barclay and lived there until her death in 1930. Her brothers, Henry Trentham Maw and Arthur Trentham Maw both lived in the village at The Old House (formerly The Elms) on the main road and at Furzefield in Logmore Lane, respectively.

Sheila Emily Redmond was the owner from 10 June 1938, having inherited it from her aunt Florence Maw.

The property was acquired by Basil & Phyllis Longley in 1950 or thereabouts. He was a builder (James Longley & Co of Crawley who went into administration in 2001)

Subsequent owners include

18 November 1966	Donald & Jean Cook
August 1976	Harold & Doris Dyer
April 1978	David Randolph Dyer
2 December 1982	Roger & Janet Christian

The present owners are Mr & Mrs Witt.

The Woods sisters grazed cattle on the Common, and later on Mrs Sheila Redmond bred goats and these were also grazed on the common in front of the house.

Spencer Broyd died November 1980 (age 79)

Joseph Lloyd died Jun 1923 (age 59)

20 July 1945 Funeral of Mrs Adelaide Lloyd, widow of Joseph Lloyd of Hill Farm.
Peppermint & Lavender grower.

According to the Westcott WI Village Survey of 1962 Westcott Hill Farm has a long history as a Guest House as well as its role as a farmhouse. This is borne out not only by the 1901 census return but reference to a letter dated 8 September 1876 from George Meredith to fellow author John Morley in which he writes:

“But here is my proposal: There is an old farmhouse, long windowed, red bricked, Elizabethan, just far enough from us to ensure your sense of solitude, near enough to make it possible to meet: south west of Dorking, between the chalk hills and the sand, set in lovely rolling country, with moral attraction to you that George Eliot has resided there; backed a pine wood that was sown by Heaven’s hand for contemplations mood: and this used to be let for four guineas a week. Shall I walk to it, see if it is open, or better will you come and

visit it with me?

George Eliot is believed to have lodged at Westcott Hill Farm when writing part of Middlemarch – published in instalments in 1871-72. (vide Dorking Advertiser 2 Feb 1862)

NB In the 1881 census William L P Mark (24) was a British subject born in Spain employed as Clerk to a Copper Merchant and Lieutenant in the 2nd Staffordshire Militia. He was a lodger at 1 Wimpole Street. In 1891 he was shown as a Copper Smelter and Manufacturer and a Lieutenant in the 3rd Bn North Staffordshire Regiment. By this time he had a wife, Florence, and 4 children: Helen (6) born in Battersea, Margaret (5) and William (4) both born in Sutton, and Alexander (1 month) born in Ealing where the family were living in 1891.

N H Fairley in 1932?

Hill Farm Barn Clachan

The conversion of disused farm buildings into a detached house and garage was proposed in 1958 and executed in 1966. The planning application was submitted on behalf of W E Broyd.

Westcott Hill House Massey

A planning application for the construction of a house was made in December 1972.

Hill Farm Martin Thomas

Hill Cottage Audrey Burgess

Bow Court Browton

The conversion of a former Coach House and Squash Court to a detached house was approved in 1957

Quanda Mair

Holcombe End

The construction of a detached house on Holcombe land took place in 1957.

Pipp Acre

The Middle House

Menewathen

The proposal to convert Holcombe into these three self-contained houses was made in 1955.

A water supply from the Rookery Estate was pumped up to a reservoir behind Hill Farm House and made available to selected houses in Westcott.
