

## HAWTHORN DENE

We have a copy of a Sales Prospectus for Hawthorn Dene when it was auctioned on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1920 by Harrods (who evidently had an auctioneering department in those days). At that time the property included 'fine pleasure grounds' extending to between 3 and 4 acres. The sales prospectus describes the house including such detail as the fact that 'A speaking tube is fitted from the First Floor Morning Room and Drawing Room to the Domestic Offices'.

The site was formerly part of the Fuller family's Rookery Estate but was sold in July 1895 and it is believed that the present house was built shortly afterwards for a Frederick Fisher. He was certainly resident in 1899 and 1903 according to Directories produced for those years.

We have also found a newspaper report that in October 1899 'promises were received from Mr Trower (£50), Lord Ashcombe (£50), Land Owners Ltd (£25) and Mr Fisher (£20) towards the estimated £300 cost of a suitable rustic bridge at the foot of Westcott Street. In the same year we learn that 'Mr Fisher of Hawthorndene wanted to improve the road opposite the house he had been altering near Westcott Mill by turning the water from the road through Mr Trower's shrubbery into the watercourse so as to prevent flood water pouring down the road.'

The next known occupant is a Miss Hammerton (1907 and 1909) followed by Harold Barlow in 1918 and Mr R M C James in 1924. We know nothing about any of these people, who may have been tenants and not owners of the property.

William Leslie Spratt (believed to have been an Essex Draper) is shown as the occupant in 1930 and 1938

Sir John George Hay was there in 1950. He was a banker and East India Merchant; managing director of the Guthrie Estate Agency which had extensive interests in the Far East before retiring to Hawthorn Dene. He died in 1964 and is buried in the village churchyard.

Kemp's directory for 1972 records S J Jordan as the occupier but was apparently not up to date as I have noted that you bought the house in 1970.

Dr MacDonald was there when I came to the village in 1987 but he left soon after and the village surgery was established elsewhere.

We obviously have a lot more work to do but I hope that this helps, and if you can add to our knowledge with your own records, memories, photographs etc of your time in Westcott we would be very pleased to hear further from you.

PS Hawthorn Dene also received a mention in a 1959 poem about Westcott. I will attach a copy.

# WESTCOTT

I sometimes think Jehovah must have smiled  
At the hamlet in the hollow of His Hand,  
Before He set it, quiet and gently down  
On this tiny bit of lovely, fertile land;  
And Ranmore, stirring in the dawn  
It's silver veil in curiosity drew,  
That through those spectacles of tangled thorn  
It might watch the village as it grew.

A few stone cots, a winding road,  
Fair leas of bracken, gorse and cuckoo-pint,  
A forge - a farm - a cattle pound,  
And fields of green and purple peppermint.

Then what sweet sounds from this fair hamlet rose,  
Plough-mans scythe in full-eared yellow corn,  
The ring of cooper's axe in Deerleap Woods,  
And the winding of the yeastman's horn,  
The stamp of patient hooves and spurs ajingle,  
From the Barracks of a royal retreat,  
The milkmaids song, the lowing kine,  
The rustic roundelay of Westcott Street.

Set in jewelled acres, noble houses rise,  
Milton, Rookery, Kings-cote, Hawthorndene,  
While smaller palaces, for smaller folk  
Crowd snugly round the brief, three-cornered green,  
Upon the common heath, with lychgate, bell and spire,  
Westcott now its flinty church can boast,  
While lesser hills, once nameless, have become,  
Old Bury, Hungry and Coast.

Old father time moves on, inevitable, but slow,  
His consort, suspect change goes on apace,  
While modern moods and up-to-date occasions,  
Etch lines upon this Westcott's lovely face.  
Where once were few the many now take part,  
Yet from the gallant stronghold of her pride,  
Time-honoured in her brave tradition,  
Westcott does not fear the modern tide.

For still the prideful heron treads his silent way,  
And on the reeded lake the moorhen rests serene,  
And still in cedars tall and needled pine,  
The rooks their raucous parliaments convene.  
This was His plan, the ever changing scene,  
As seasons change with each succeeding year;  
I lift my eyes to Ranmore's smiling hill,  
To thank the gracious Hand that led me here.