

ROUND AND ABOUT IN THE PARISH [CHURCH LANE]

Recently the Historical Society was contacted by a lady who was taking her elderly mother around old haunts of Danehill and she asked the Society for help as she couldn't trace a property called Woodlands, located in Church Lane, where her parents had lived in the 1950's. Woodlands has had various names - hence the difficulty in locating the property, but Anne Drewery and myself managed, with help from the Society's archives, to work out where it probably was. Woodlands was originally known as Highcroft.

The earliest reference I have is from young Kenneth Loader's diary of Sunday 23rd August 1896. He was on holiday with his family at Divalls Farm, Birch Grove and tells us that he walked to Dane Hill (then spelt as two words) to Highcroft which he refers to as being near the 'Kirk' (another name for a Church) as Mrs Blatch wanted him to show a young friend of hers around the countryside. This they did going in the direction of Chelwood Common and past The Aggons. Kenneth then tells us he went to Dane Hill Church for the evening service after which he ran back to Highcroft for a lovely bunch of roses which Mrs Blatch had given him for his mother. It seems the family knew Mrs Blatch quite well as in August/

September of 1895 one of Kenneth's sisters, Kathleen, was staying with Mrs Blatch who was then at Knockholt.



This photo of All Saints Church was taken by Kenneth the previous day, 22nd August 1896. In his diary he says "I had my camera with me and took a distant view

of Dane Hill Church resting my camera on the side of the road, near a bend. Just as I took the photo a cyclist came round the corner. He saw what I was up to directly but was too late to stop himself, and so, yelling 'hello' he sped quickly on out of the way of my work. However he didn't seem to have appeared in the photo at all".



This photo from Geoff Isted shows Mrs Blatch outside Highcroft beneath a rose pergola holding a basket of roses. It is not clear if Mrs Blatch owned the property or was just renting it.

From Kelly's Directory Mr Richard Luck is recorded as being at High Croft (sometimes spelt as two words) and he is there in 1905. But from 1910 Highcroft was owned and occupied by Miss Boulderson. However around that time the serenity of Church Lane was shattered when there was a fire at High Croft and this photo from the Society's archives is of local



men who turned out to help extinguish the fire using the pond at North Northlands. On top of the pump sits farmer Walter Coppard and one of his daughters. The boy on the left is probably 14 year old John Coppard, one of the young men killed in the First World War. The taller man wearing a straw boater is Frank Elias May,

the butcher at Christopher Fields. The man on his left wearing a cap is Mark Awcock and the man holding a straw hat is Trayton Funnell.

In 1921 Miss Emily Tatham and Miss Nevins came to live in the parish and by the 1930's the house was renamed Mynys Garth. Miss Tatham and Miss Nevins took part in village activities and in July 1933 arranged a treasure hunt and had a stand entitled 'clock golf' at a fête at Highfields to raise funds for the Danehill and Horsted Keynes Nursing Association. In 1935 both ladies were stallholders at another fête at Christopher Fields, again to raise funds for the Nursing Association.

In July 1939 Miss Tatham had another 'clock golf' stand at a fête held at Shotover [now Church Hill House] . Mrs Hawkins Turner [owner of Shotover] and the Rev Porter made the round with the least number of strokes-so it appears this was a very successful stand. Miss Tatham arranged entertainments in the house, one sketch being A Dust-Up at Madame's together with other entertainment. This was to raise funds for an extension to the Danehill Memorial Hall.

In the 1950's Miss Tatham had a smaller house built in the garden and sold Mynys Garth and moved into the new house. A new chapter had begun.

My thanks to Anne Drewery, Geoff Isted and Richard Loader.

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