

Round and About in the Parish...

I have been continuing to carry out research about the Danehill Scouts from Ronald Hardy's diary, and it appears that from November 1931, Mr Frost, who was the Headmaster at Danehill Primary School was also now the Scoutmaster, and the Diary reveals that in 1932 the Scouts held a Camp from 14th May to 16th May at Hole House, Danehill. The Scout Master says, "it rained most of the time but valuable lessons were learned by the boys, only three of whom had been to camp before. Ask Leslie Lucas who made the duff. Before leaving camp, we made steps to help the Johnsons (living there) in their journeys out. It was really too wet to attempt much Scout work. Both Camp fires were washed out. Better luck next time when we are all looking forward to another."

Hole House has a very long history, but this article concerns only more recent details. The late Bob Pelling told me that the Johnsons were in occupation from about 1930-1950. The house at this stage was divided into two and Mr and Mrs Johnson lived on one side. They had three children, two boys and a girl.

Bob recalled that for many years there was no vehicle access to Hole House. He remembered that when Mrs Johnson was in occupation the coalman used to drop the coal near the top of the wood and the old lady carried it back to the house in a bucket as that was the only means available to her.

If there was any mail it had to be collected from the Post Office as the Postman would not go down that far. Shopping had to be done in bits and pieces, buying only as much as she could carry at a single time. There was no milk delivery and so the family had to use condensed milk.

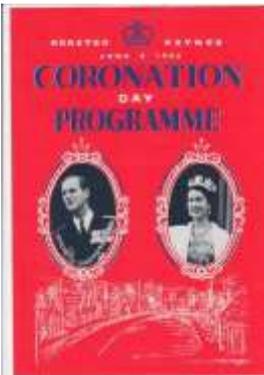
Access was from the footpath from Horsted Keynes which came south from Bonfire Lane, and the route through the woods was at times very muddy.



Mr Johnson was gassed in WWI and he was unable to work. He spent a lot of his time doing woodwork and whittling wood into shapes. He carved walking sticks/canes from wood he obtained locally, and the tops were fashioned into various shapes, one example being a resemblance to a British Bulldog. He made one of these canes especially for Winston Churchill and sent it to him during the period of WWII. Mr Johnson

received a letter of thanks from Winston Churchill although there is no knowledge of the whereabouts of that letter.

From about the period 1930 - 1947 a Mr and Mrs Stuart lived the other side, but there is not much known about them, although he was probably a gamekeeper and they did not have a family.



From about the 1950's to 1956 Mr and Mrs Pearman were in residence. They were both artists and Mr Pearman designed a Programme especially for the village of Horsted Keynes for Queen Elizabeth's II Coronation on June 2nd 1953.

Hole House became derelict for a while and was occupied by squatters on a number of occasions. This photo on the next page shows the property when it was in a bad condition. It did however deteriorate even further to the extent that it was open to the elements and cows took shelter in the downstairs rooms.

Going back even further in time, Guy Hardy has very kindly let me see information relating to Hole House and in 1910 the Hardy land agent wrote to a Mrs James saying the water supply had been condemned and, with much reluctance they had no alternative but to give her notice to quit. Poor Mrs James was going through a hard time. She had six sons, three of whom were killed in the 1st World War. These names are listed on the Horsted Keynes Roll of Honour. There's something a little odd here. The Roll of Honour says, "son of Thomas and Jane James of Solvang, Birch Grove. Mrs James later married George Francis and lived at Hole House". The Roll of Honour does in fact list the sons as James Oliver died aged 21 in 1916, Thomas James died also in 1916 aged 33 and William James died in 1915 aged 25. Does this mean they were all living at home?

It looks as if she was at Hole House in 1910, and had to leave. In 1915/16 she was at Solvang, Birch Grove, and subsequently re-married when her address is again given as Hole House. Not a happy time for her.



In 1917 a Mrs Pearson was at Hole House and it appears she was going to move to Latchetts (farm) where a cottage was available to her at the rate of £6 per annum.

During the time it was derelict shooting parties would take refuge in there to have their sandwiches and a drink. The house has now been sympathetically restored and is back to its full glory.

My thanks to Guy Hardy, Laurence Hardy, Nick Turner, and the late Bob Pelling.

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