

THREE HENBURY HOUSES.

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The last three houses in Henbury Road, before it bifurcates to become what are now Hallen Road and Kingsweston Road, are The Hollies (266), White Lodge (268) and Rosebank (270). Just before The Hollies are Biggs Cottages, though now amalgamated into one house. The names do not appear until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and there are a number of changes over the years. It is possible to deduce a reasonable history of the three houses from deeds, censuses and more recent documents.

The Hollies, White Lodge and Rosebank together with Biggs Cottages existed in 1798 when they were referred to in the will of Thomas Smyth of Stapleton who left them (with lots of other properties) to his brother Sir John Hugh Smyth from whom they passed to Sir John Smyth of Ashton Court, so they are connected with that estate rather than Blaise.

Thus the houses must pre-date 1798 though most original features suggest not much earlier. The Building Acts 1774 consolidated and made England-wide various acts which had started with ones following the Great Fire of London in 1666, which had been considerably contributed to by close packed wooden framed houses with thatched roofs. Initially the main impact of the Acts was in town and city areas such as Bristol rather than in country villages such as Henbury.

From about 1760 cast iron hob grates began to become fashionable replacing open grates or stoves. Two of the bedrooms in White Lodge have such grates, the design of which, together with the plaster marble style surrounds, suggest the 1770s. The two sitting rooms of the house appear to have the original marble fire surrounds (though no longer the grates) which again fit this period. From about 1770 Welsh slate for roofs became fashionable. White Lodge has these for the out-side pitches but the cheaper tiles for the inner, unseen pitches.

The Regency period saw the introduction of stuccoing of buildings rather than facing with stone or bare brick. White Lodge and Rosebank have mirrored stuccoing to the fronts and sides of the houses. One interesting feature is that they have wooden (but wrought iron appearance) front porches which are all but identical and seem typical of the latter part of the 18th century. The Hollies has a similar one, though of less complex design. It almost seems as though there was a local B & Q.

All this strongly suggests a date of around 1770-1790. There is one argument that the house is very much earlier and that is that the construction of the front sash lower and upper floor windows (box construction) which died out after the Great Fire. Perhaps the local builders of south Gloucestershire were merely somewhat behind the times.

A deed of 1848 has a very detailed plan of the houses. It shows exactly the same ground plan as for today for Rosebank and White Lodge and have therefore probably always been different. On the right of the main building is a flat roofed section which does not exist at Rosebank. At some relatively recent time it was split to provide a

garage and 'office'. Presumably it originally had two front sash windows and certainly had its own fireplace. What is to be noted is that the hinges and security bars to the shutters are identical with those in the two sitting rooms. This strongly suggests the flat roofed section was contemporaneous. The Hollies has since that date had a large flat roofed extension built on its west side.

Under the front of the main part of the house (duplicated in Rosebank) is a two section cellar connected from one house to the other by a shallow gulley, though it serves no obvious purpose. The principal room on the ground floor is a double sitting room divided by sliding doors. Each part has a marble fire surround though the grates had gone by the 1970s. There is a possibility that these are not original though those in Rosebank appear to be identical. The back window goes down to floor level though the original smaller panes of float glass have been replaced in each house by ones four times the size of toughened glass.

The rest of the ground floor of White Lodge has been changed considerably from the original. At the rear of flat roofed section is room with a flag stoned floor which in 1970 still had the remains of the butler's bell board. The rest of the ground floor has also been changed from a number of small rooms, no doubt sculleries, wash houses, kitchen and the like, to create a dining room, breakfast room and large kitchen in what was no doubt the dairy. Whilst having flooring works carried out at White Lodge a round hole was found in one of the flagstone. Peering down it and with the benefit of torch light it was possible to see that it was the cistern for the water supply. There is no sign of a well. The cistern is still filled from the roof though there is no sign now of where the water goes from the cistern. As one would expect there are bedrooms on the first floor and above the rear of this floor two attic rooms, no doubt servants' quarters.

We know a little more about the over-all ownership of the houses because Sir John Smyth, by his will in 1843, left the houses (and other hereditaments) to Edward Sampson the Younger and a lots more land and houses to 3 trustees:

Edward Francis Colston

Edward Gore Langton, an Army Captain

Edward Sampson Junior

on trust to provide an annuity of £500 to his sister Mary Way and the balance of the income to his sister Florence. In 1849 The Rev Hugh Way replaced Edwards Colston as a trustee.

From various sources it is possible to build up a reasonable picture of who has lived in the houses since 1841. In 1848 Benjamin Ford, a carpenter, then aged 61 leased all three properties, plus Biggs Cottages, from the trustees. Then he lived in The Hollies and also had an orchard to the rear, a timber yard and a paddock to the north and the west. White lodge was occupied by Anne Fisher and her next door neighbour was Jane Powell. That enables reasonable deductions to be drawn from the 1841 Census. Of course the houses did not have addresses. Anne Fisher and Benjamin Ford's names appear next to one another. Anne Fisher was at the time of the Census aged 33 and was of independent means. Living in the house with her were Margaret Jones aged 60, Ann Price aged 46 and Mary Coppe(?) aged 30. Benjamin Ford was 61 and had living with him Sarah Ford aged 25 and Maria Morgan, 13.

From the position of names in the Census, Rosebank appears to have been occupied by James Harvey (42) a labourer, Elizabeth Harvey (4), William Harvey (16) and Samuel Harvey (12) but on the face of it would seem that the house was far too 'posh' for a labourer.

The 1848 deed shows that a Jane Powell was living at Rosebank.

We can move on to the 1851 Census. Anne Fisher was still living at White Lodge and still unmarried. This census tells us that she was born in Henbury in 1806 and describes her as a 'fund holder', so a lady of independent means. A memorial window in the south wall of the chancel of Henbury Parish church is to an Anne Fisher who died in 1876 so it is a reasonable assumption that it is to the same lady. Also in the house on the night of the Census were Caroline Castaway (43) an unmarried housemaid, who had been born in Clifton and Mary Bath (36) an unmarried cook. Next door, Jane Powell was still living at Rosebank and now we know she was also an unmarried fund holder, aged 53 having been born in Bristol. Her staff consisted of Elizabeth Loader (56) a widow, who had been born in Winterbourne and who was the cook. The housemaid was Elizabeth Skidmore (26), a spinster born in Frampton Cotterel (sic).

Benjamin Ford was no longer at The Hollies. Mary Coles (45) an unmarried annuitant born in Leominster now lived there. Also on the particular night were James Daniel a visitor aged 23 from Henbury and William Tuppick (19) a lodger from Filton, which all sounds a little racey.

About this time or the time of the next Census in 1861 there is apparently a reference in a letter to the three houses being known as 'spinsters' row'.

By the time of the 1861 Census a Sarah Parrott had moved into The Hollies with her four sons, Benjamin (17) who had been born in Manchester and was a warehouseman, Edward (15), Thomas (13) and Joseph (11) all 'scholars'. At White Lodge, Mary Bath had been replaced by Jane Perry (30) as the cook whilst at Rosebank, Jane Powell had her brother (55) a 'landed proprietor' there and there was also a visitor Ann Pullen (44) an unmarried nurse. She had also changed her servants and they were now Emma Pickett (37) an unmarried cook and Sarah Ann Taylor (26) an unmarried housemaid.

Jumping to the 1881 Census there is something of a mystery in relation to White Lodge. The head of the household seems to be William M Fowler a captain in the 101st Regiment of Foot (The Royal Bengal Lancers) which by merger with the 104th Regiment of Foot (The Bengal Fusiliers) became the Royal Munster Fusiliers on the 1st July of that year. His wife Katherine (32) had been born in Nova Scotia. There were three children, Frances (8) born in Armagh, Katherine (7) born in Londonderry and William (5) born at Curragh Camp and all described as 'scholars'. The 101st had been based in England from 1869 when it arrived from Bombay and from 1873 the brigade depot had been at Tralee but in 1874 it had gone to Malta, in 1878 to Cyprus and in the same year to Halifax, Nova Scotia where it remain until 1883. The on-line regimental history suggests no reason why the captain should have been in Bristol. On the face of the movements of his regiment there is no clear reason why the Captain

should have met his Canadian wife in time to have an 8 year old daughter. Perhaps she was a step-mother.

In addition to his wife and children, he had a groom, Frederick Riding (35), married, a private in the 27th Brigade, who had been born in Bolton. Mrs Fowler had the help of Alice Hawtin (17), unmarried and described as a servant and a private governess, Ellen Coles (21) a spinster servant/housemaid born in Aldershot and Ellen Whiting (20) also unmarried and a servant/cook who had been born at Lawford (? Lawford's Gate).

Sarah Parrot was now described as a widow and continuing to live at The Hollies with her son Edward, an unmarried accountant, son Thomas an unmarried traveller in groceries, with Ann Robbins (20) an unmarried servant. As her husband was not mentioned in the previous Census he had presumably died before 1861.

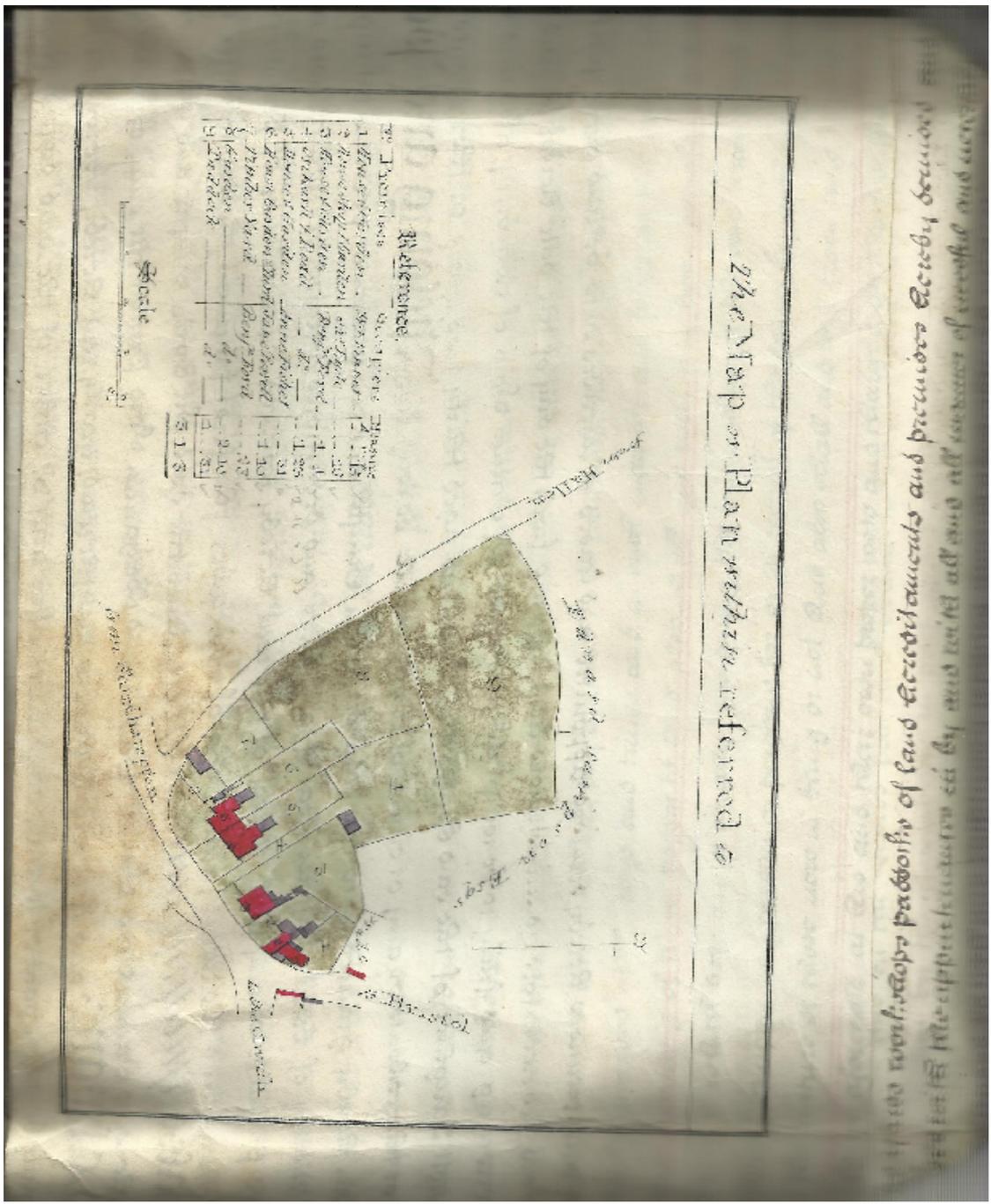
A note with the deeds shows that on 24th October 1891 Benjamin and Edward Parrott were still living at The Hollies and occupied the orchard to the rear of it as well as the roadway between it and White Lodge. The same document shows White Lodge as unoccupied and named 'The Den'. Rose Bank (sic) is now described by that name and reference is made to its stables and coach house. It was occupied by Revd Thos. Evans.

On the 1st February 1895 John Henry Greville Smyth, Edward Sampson, Revd. John Way and John Smyth-Osborne convey all three houses (and some smaller properties) to Henry Parrott (accountant), perhaps a brother-in-law of Sarah Parrott and Thomas Ford Parrott (commercial traveller). The plan indicates that The Hollies was occupied by 'Ogborne'; White Lodge, still called The Den, was occupied by the Revd. Way (some works going on at the Vicarage?) and Rose Bank was occupied by 'Howes'.

Kelly's Directory for 1897 shows The Den as being occupied by Miss Cooper. By 14th April 1910 The Hollies is known as Ogborne's Farm: White Lodge is called The Vicarage and Rose Bank is occupied by Mr Howes. Kelly's Directory for 1914 has Miss Gibbs living at White Lodge (now called The Woodlands, a name it retained until Abigail Way moved in). Thomas Howe continued to live at Rose Bank (or Rosebank). By June 1917 the Revd. Cannonbury had moved into White Lodge and changed its name to The Parsonage. September 1917 saw the sale of The Hollies by Charles Alfred Newman and Edward James Parrott to John Hopkins (farmer). A year later Rosebank was sold to Annie Matilda Hort (widow), a well known family name in Bristol. On 8th May 1924 Newman and Parrott sold White Lodge to Agnes Baker (full name Agnes Mary Vining Baker (spinster).

Miss Baker continued to live at White Lodge until she sold it to Colin Taylor Ross MRCS LRCP in October 1952. On the 27th July 1957 he sold to Flora Abigail Way (spinster), of The White House, Leigh Woods. No doubt it was as a reminder of that home that led her to change The Woodlands to White Lodge. She died at White Lodge on 17th November 1970 when the Silveys were living at The Hollies and Ann Bartlett (widow) of a physician at Rose Bank. Since the early 1970s the three houses have had their current owners.

No doubt further research would provide a more detailed history but at least this is a start.



Plan on 1848 Deed.