

SHAMLEY GREEN MATTERS

Michael Harding's Meander – Hullbrook Lane

These are Michael's personal notes and reflections. If you own any of the properties mentioned and would like to add, delete or amend any information, please advise Valerie Esplen. With thanks to Valerie Esplen, who undertook the original recording of what Michael said.

MICHAEL'S MEANDER 20 JULY 2017 – HULLBROOK LANE

In July a large gathering began their walk close to **Potters** on the edge of the Green where Michael spoke about the geology and hydrology resulting from the close proximity to the junction between porous sand and gravels resting on the impervious clay beneath, and to three distinct former river terrace remnants which created the various changes in ground



level that were of much significance to drainage, water supply, wells and spring issues nearby where the Hullbrook and its current headwater sources.

On the 1641 Montague Map the Potters holding extends to about 30 acres and was one of the properties shown with more than one chimney but there is a possibility that its timber frame was relocated to a better-drained location. After a brief look around part of the 1947/48 Hullmead development with its five subsequent extensions to create a total of 68 dwellings, we continued down Hullbrook Lane, noting how the fragmentation of the 1641 **Potters** holding had proceeded. The pond, which gave the now much extended Victorian **Little Pond** semi its name, was filled in 1947 when building at Hullmead began. Michael recalled some of the former residents including Mr and Mrs Kelsey and Miss Franks of **Woodside**, Albert and May Latham of **Hurstleigh** and the adjacent semi-detached bungalows (**House Martins** and **Ferndale**), which Albert built himself when over 78 years of age and the aid of a part-time bricklayer and carpenter. Julie Martin had provided original photos of the development. Albert wrote an interesting 50+ page autobiography in his 100th year. Several examples of more modern infills such as **Carolina Cottage**, **Coppers Walk**, **Touchstone** and **Fairmount** were noted. The latter two had been erected on two long strips of **Greenways** and **Nostra** (now **Lavender Cottage**), which originally extended the whole way from Sweetwater to Hullbrook Lane. The next development undertaken by a Bramley builder in 1928/9 consisted of 11 dwellings, some being chalets, other small detached houses erected when there was still no mains drainage or electricity. Michael said his grandfather had purchased one of these in 1930 when new. It had mains water and gas for lighting, cooking, washing and ironing. **Hullbrook**, formerly Red Cottage (because of its large red gate), now owned by Mr and Mrs M Gell, had formerly been the home where E H Shepard and his first wife brought up their son and daughter while he made a living drawing illustrations for Punch and books such as 'Wind in the Willows'. He did his work in a studio wood cabin which recently had to be replaced.

Dominating the view on the opposite side of the Hullbrook meadows, and set on the edge of a river terrace, is the 18th Century **Hullbrook House**, formerly part of the Ashcombe/Cubitt Birtley Estate. It is a good example of Georgian architecture, adjacent was a Victorian model farmyard bordered on three of its sides by stables, ouns and stores.

For many years, between 1860 to 1905, it was the home base of the Messenger family. During and after WWII Mr Bailey lived there and farmed the surrounding land. His nephew, who lived briefly at Hullhatch, was an Ack Ack (anti aircraft) Gunnery officer, killed during the Battle of Britain. Like Mrs Shepard he is buried in our churchyard. Post war occupants included the Farrers, Cavaleroes, Freirs, Dentons and Steinbergs. Since the time of the Farrers the agricultural land around most of Hullbrook House has been farmed by the Harrison family for three generations over a sixty year period since 1960.

See Map 2

Longacre's history goes back even further with muster roll references dated 1275. Together with **Hullbrook Cottage** it had been part of the 1641 Map holding formed from what are now **Dawsons Cottages** that border Lords Hill Common. Since 'Chum' (Miss Fairfax Cholmondley) purchased it in 1945, Longacre's 20 roomed 1898 Victorian detached house

has been greatly expanded. Her original 40 pupils, most of whom were boarders, has now become a day school for a wider age range; there are almost 300 on roll.

Cutting through the school grounds by kind permission of school authorities, our one and a half hour walk ended in the garden of **Greenfern Cottage** with tea and cake, kindly organized by Valerie Esplen assisted by Penny Hodgson.

Map 2



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