

SHAMLEY GREEN MATTERS
Michael Harding's Meander – Stonards Brow to Lords Hill

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 Jim Babington, who undertook the original recording of what Michael said.

MICHAEL'S MEANDER 2016 – STONARDS BROW TO LORDS HILL

The word Stonards suggests stones thought it may be the name of a resident who built Old Stonards on a medieval strip and also owned the field opposite, between what we now call Sweetwater Lane and Hulbrook Lane. Stonards Brow is not on 1640 map but Brow in topography means some area that is elevated. We still know the meaning of brow of the hill – it is a watershed or broad highest point in contrast to a narrow peak summit.

Geology

Our main village settlements are strongly influenced by drift geology in the form of three distinct terrace remnants of former river deposits of gravel and alluvium. The highest has the Church on it. The second highest were deposited when a much larger River Wey meandered across a wide plain at a lower level and that is where we find Stonards Brow. The third is the level of Westland Farm's fields. And then we get the current, fairly confined Cranleigh Water flood plain. The river's volume and power has depleted due to headwater capture by the River Arun, less rainfall now and a lower water table as we abstract so much groundwater

Old Boundaries

The site of Old Stonards is now a little over a chain (22 yards) in one direction (from Sweetwater Close to the far side of the access track to Orchard Cottage) and was a furlong (from Sweetwater Lane to the end of Sweetwater Close). It is a long narrow strip and the house was built with a nearby well for water. This was raised with a hand pump from a depth of up to 32 feet.

The rear half of the site was sold off, and had evidently been an orchard, hence **Orchard Cottage** – needing an access track. Alongside **Old Stonards** look for remnants of the lynchet side bank now narrowed for larger vehicles and supported by a wall. Bank boundaries of this sort date back to the early 1300's – before the Black Death, when there was a lot of cheap labour.

South View Villas/Cottages – 1895. Standing outside Old Stonards, notice three pairs of late Victorian (1890's) semis facing onto Sweetwater Lane. There were four. But one, adjacent to Old Stonards, was demolished to give access to the allotment field behind where Sweetwater Close was built in the 1970's. and sold for £6,000 each. An extra few

feet strip was given to Old Stonnards and Orchard Cottage owners to compensate for the Sweetwater Close development.

Map 1 – Stonnards Brow & Firs Lane



Kandersteg. The access track was also used to develop and sell off another plot on which Kandersteg was erected as a relatively modern cedar bungalow infill in the 1980's and is now under extensive renovation. Both Kandersteg and Orchard Cottage now also have direct access onto Sweetwater Close.

Old Stonnards itself has been extended. During World War II it was home to Miss Webber, secretary/companion to Sir Philip Gibbs the author and ex-war correspondent who stayed there whilst his own residence was used by refugee Italian Nuns. The current owner is an artist (Mrs L. Spencer). Sir Philip's gardener lived opposite in Wannock (now **Cherry Tree House**).

Opposite Old Stonnards was part of a nursery. Early spring crops or fruits grow well on sandy gravel, but it dries out in summer. By the late 1920's there was no money in agriculture so the land was sold to Mr. Parsons, a Bramley builder. He used two or three basic Ideal Home Exhibition designs: the one gable, the paired semi-oblong box and the

chalet bungalow. He used good bricks and was a very good bricklayer with a loyal workforce of locals. You see two of the designs opposite Old Stonnards. On the other side of the field overlooking Hullbrook Lane from the edge of the Stonnards river terrace remnant he used the gable and the chalet designs.

In Sweetwater Lane, on the north side between Old Stonnards and the junction with Firs Lane, was a large orchard plot purchased from Mr. Charman by a Mr. Waterman (nominative determinism?), a hydrology engineer, responsible for Hong Kong's New Territories' reservoirs. His wife lived in the bungalow he had built adjacent to a smaller bungalow called **Iona** where his mother lived. She was a wee energetic Scot from Iona. It is now a much-extended chalet bungalow for the Potts family called **Foxglove Cottage**.

During World War II Mr. Waterman was an internee of the Japanese but had to continue maintaining Hong Kong's water supply. He returned in 1945 and died 10 years later, and at that time his wife went into a care home.

A developer demolished the bungalow, cut down the last of the fruit trees (I particularly remember a line of Quinces adjacent to the lane). In the place of the large plot three separate ones were created with three chalet bungalows of identical designs being erected in the 1980's (**Little Orchard, Russett and No.3**) by George Thomas, a builder from Cranleigh.

Notice on the South side the last remnants of an ancient boundary bank on the side of Sweetwater Lane. This marked the change between the forested Weald and the cleared land in the early 12th century. It runs down Woodhill Lane, crosses the Green to follow Sweetwater Lane to the sharp turn, marking the point where the lane's name changes. It is rare for an ancient boundary to take a right hand turn like this.

Notice the width of the plot on which the last house on the south side (at the junction with Firs Lane) stands, named **Fir Tree Cottage**. It is just over a metre narrower now because the owners were persuaded to sell the narrow slip so that a former alley/footpath could be widened to create Firs Lane and give access to the block of trees and wildscape between the two rows of Parsons built houses. On land, covenanted to be left undeveloped, three neo-Georgian houses were erected by Mr. Morwood. Four other houses were constructed on the edge of land that once formed part of Long Acre Estate. Their ages vary by up to 40 years.

Two houses, set well back to the far right at the end of Firs Lane, were owned by Long Acre and used as Victorian estate workers' cottages. **Little Gilling**, a chalet bungalow, was inserted in front of these in the 1990's.

Reaching the top end of Sweetwater Lane, facing down the road, is another bungalow, **Blendelm**. It was largely rebuilt in the 1970's – 1980's era, but had originally been the home of a Mr. and Mrs. Clark. He was the retired Head of the Essex state boarding school called Elmbridge (which is now the site of the retirement village of the same name near Nanhurst Corner). Their son, also a retired teacher, became a recluse and continued to live in the kitchen letting the rest of the bungalow decay. Subsequent owners rebuilt and redeveloped

it. To one side of the house we see the remnant guard to the original Victorian kiss gate pedestrian access to Long Acre.

The Long Acre is just that. It was one long continuous strip but was gradually sold off for development. Some of the medieval banks remain to define boundaries. Hugh de Longanacre gets a mention in medieval records in 1275. The current house was erected in the 1880's and was the private residence, with an attached home farm for Sir Henry Crossthwaite (1890 -1910). He is commemorated on a plaque in the Church. It is now the Longacre School admin block.

Stonards Hatch (re-named Hatch End in 2020) was one of the homes of the Bowbrick family. Two of the girls married Canadians. Sid and his second wife Margaret will still be remembered by many. He was a skilled carpenter and much extended the bungalow. He inherited it from his Aunt in the 1980's. It had been built in the early 1930's as one of the first of the post World War I house building period. Sid had served with two friends throughout the 1939-45 War and active service took him across much of North Africa, Egypt and into Europe. He committed many of his war memories to a book "Reluctant Soldier". Called Stonards Hatch, his former home was renamed by the new owner in 2020 and is now known as **Hatch End**. Hatch is a gate into a forest so it is a very appropriate use of the word in this context.

Maplecroft was an infill erected much later, in the 1970's. The adjacent electricity sub-station was enhanced to meet greater demand at the same time.

There used to be four separate Elliott families in the village post-war; my grandfather George's, the linesmen's, the Hullmead Cricketers and the Inglenook Elliotts. The latter resided where Mrs. B. Timothy now lives. Her husband pioneered the idea of reading for the blind and her step-son Christopher was a star of the Yorkshire vet series. An Inglenook suggesting a cosy fireside.

The private road section of Stonards Brow is particularly wide – double that of the access lane. It was actually two separate access routes with an old wire and iron post fence running down the centre to define the original boundary lines of the fields. In the late 1890's Mr. Charman sold off some of his orchard in plots. The two oldest houses on the far right are late Victorian or early Edwardian houses and were erected for Thanescroft estate staff. I recall Henry Cooper and his wife, he was the Gordon-Clarke's chauffeur and Mr. Andrews, a gardener, who was also a verger at the Church all through the Second World War. Mrs. Andrews washed vestments and goffered (crimped) the choir boys collars using hot tongs to make them curl.

Mr. Charman sold the plots and encouraged people to self-build. Tom Booker Snr was a bricklayer whose small house (notice the brickwork with quoining colours is typically Edwardian style and erected just prior to the 1st World War). The carpenter who helped with all the woodwork was a young chap called Tim Stevens whose sister married a member of the Heather family who lived in Quoin Cottage in the corner of the village green. He used his savings to buy a plot but never got to build the bungalow as he was killed serving in the Australian Army in the 1st World War. His sister's family had **The Bungalow** built post WW1

in the early 1920's It is now lived in by Ellen Portress and family. One of the Heather aunt's lived to be 100. Ellen's mother was married to J. Redman. Tim's name does not appear on our war memorial but does on the main Australian national memorial in Canberra.

Before the 2nd World War much of the Charman's orchard remained and it was regularly used each summer as a Girl Guides camp. The house called **West View** was built just prior to WW2 and some of its occupants in the 1990- 2015 era were the Coughtrey family – Peter, Joy and their daughters. Dr. Peter Coughtrey was a world expert on radiation control and much in demand after the Chernobyl disaster in Southern Russia.

Fifteen years ago the fence remnant down the centre of this stretch of road was removed and so the road was surfaced with tarmac. Other infills on the right hand side have numerous extensions and the piecemeal development over a 100 year period explains the contrasting styles.

The Goff development of Stonards Brow 1936 – 1938. Arthur Goff built all the houses on the north side of the main reach of Stonards Brow to varied designs, in most cases as two matching pairs. Houses on the west side of the private road were smaller and their gardens were not so long. John Steele's home, now **Brow Cottage**, previously known as Tillingham or Tara, it was initially the home of Mrs. Booker, a relative by marriage of Tom. She was a great sweet maker, needle woman and had previously lived in May Tree Cottages – part of the present Court House.

Sweetbriar was squeezed in almost as an after thought as a home for Rita Thumbwood, daughter of the coal merchant Ted, who's lorry was involved in a fatal accident at the road junction when he backed, unaware that a young boy (John Payne aged 11) was trying to tailgate. John's parents lived in what is now **Troopers Ridge**. You can see the similarity in **Applegarth, The Knoll, Brow Cottage, Cherry Trees** and **Saffron Gate**. They had the same architect and builder. Mr. & Mrs. Goff lived for quite a while at **Claremont**, then The Blower family who in 1949 moved to **Greenways**. More recent owners who modified and much extended it were Tim and Jane Mercer.

The road remained unsurfaced without tarmac until 1946/47 even though construction of houses ended in 1938/39 due to the outbreak of war. It was covered in large loose flint stones and had huge potholes in it.

Some of the houses on the south side beyond **Hatch End**, like **The Cottage** and **Jerwyn** had been built in Longacre plots in the late 1920's. The Cottage was only a small bungalow with a rotating wooden summer house in the garden. It was the home for many years of Miss Barratt, a St. John Ambulance nurse instructor. The owner of Jerwyn was a Miss Chapman who loved dogs. Potential male partners for such ladies had largely been killed in WWI. **Oak Hatch** has been a Cameron-Mitchell home since 1948.

Mr. Goff may well have had a hand in building **Uplands**, currently under extension, where the Harlow's live, and **Cranley Cottage** home of my namesakes Neil and Alison (not related).

Earlsfield, is one of two semi detached Victorian houses and was built for the Cokeler shop manager. At the back of their garden an infill (**Fintry Brae**) was built with access from Lords Hill Common. Fintry Brae was built relatively recently (about 20 years ago) and is owned by the people who live in the house now on the Cokeler Chapel site. The Cokeler's were a local extreme Protestant Sect responsible for many Lords Hill houses between 1850 and 1880.

Map 2 – Lord's Hill



Down the footpath to the right hand side of Stonards Brow, beyond the last of the Goff's developments called **Hollyhocks** which is now twice its original size. Nearly all the houses have been much enlarged, especially **Claremont** and Hollyhocks.

Cherry Tree Cottage – a timber framed structure like Old Stonnards, but perhaps a bit older. It had its own well and raised bank like Old Stonnards. The far end of its long strip was sold off. It once extended to the end of Stonards Brow private road. One of its past residents, Reg Higden founded SHADES (The Shamley Amateur Dramatics Society). Like other properties of its size it was greatly increased with a Victorian wing with a big gable and a substantial recent addition. The timbers may have come from old ships. I think it may pre-date the 17th century but it does not appear on my 1640 transcript although that may not be a 100% reliable map.

Little Tew. The oldest place? Very old deeds make it a tied property of Thanescroft. It is now separately owned by the former owner of Thanescroft, Jenny Talbot-Wilcox. In war time Sid Bowbrick's father lived there and a boy evacuee slept on a bed housed under the stairs. He had been Sir Harry Crossthwaite's stable boy.

Moving on into the field, the rear of **Thanescroft** can be seen. The main part is Georgian but some is much earlier. Napoleon III's mistress – ghost. My take on it is that in the early dawn light someone saw Mrs. Gordon Clarke descending the back stairs without her wig on. She was Queen Mary's double with all the whalebone stays in her corset to sustain her. She ran the Girl's Friendly Society (GFS).

In the 1890's the house was owned by the Dacre sisters who did so much to decorate and beautify the east end of the Church as one was a wood carver and the other an artist. Their two brothers drowned at sea as young midshipmen. A third sister married into the Cavaleroe family who were once at Hullbrook Court and were distant cousins. Once there were large glass houses when Mr. Peter Talbot-Wilcox ran a nursery growing lettuces and tomatoes. He also enclosed part of the field into the rear garden to make a swimming pool. He was an important lay member of the Church of England General Synod and a shipping broker. The property is now owned by Chris and Peter Collins.

Retracing our steps we see **Spring Cottage** (The Gables until 1932) and now the home of the Townsend-Smith's. At this point we have come off the river terrace and are close to the junction between Greensand and clay. This is a spring zone. A couple of springs have fed a pond now filled in. The original Tudor timber framed Valler family house was demolished and a new single gabled brick house replaced it in about 1932. Here in the 1940s and 50s the widowed Mrs Jane Valler kept bees. In the garden was a small brick outhouse where she clarified honey. I recall visiting to watch and taste. Post war Mrs. and Miss Stadbolt lived here having downsized from Hyde Farm.

Lords Hill Common was once called Parsons Common. The Parson needed a horse to get about and it had to graze somewhere.

Lords Hill Cottage is not to be confused with the pre-war council houses (known as Lords Hill Cottages). The left wing is original Tudor timber framed. In the 1920/30 period it was the home of the Hon. Admiral Menzies who became by default of a direct male heir The Earl of Egremont (Petworth House). He used old timbers to extend the house creating the right hand wing. The Hawkshaw family have lived there for quite a while.

The old main road ran by way of Wonersh Mill, Lords Hill and Long Commons so along its route there are numerous old timber framed houses such as **Yieldhurst, Barnett Farm, Hullhatch, Oriel** and **Long Common Cottages**. This route avoided three steep hills.

Westlands Farm. The original buildings were replaced by Cubitts as a model farm of the Victorian era built on the model created by the Prince Consort at Windsor Castle. Mr. Carter was an old-style farmer. Post-war Mr. Farrer combined Hullbrook with Westlands and built

a bungalow for his manager, Mr. Bunting, who found a number of old artefacts when field walking as have others like Ian Williams and Chris Cory-Wright.

The farmyard was turned into flats after Mr. Wren left and the farm became an equestrian centre. It is now run as a special learning centre called Elysian, which uses nature and animals to help clients refocus in the 7 to 16 age range.

In front of Lords Hill Cottages, the Hullbrook comes out of a conduit behind the playground area. The conduit was blocked last year and the road was flooded too deep for traffic for three days. Mrs. Welsh, Briget St. John, Nick Skinner and Sam Godwin helped keep the childrens' playground going. The Parish Council should be informed if a resident notices anything of concern re the playground facilities.

Lords Hill Cottages. This row of houses was built by the Hambledon Rural District Council in 1938 with a belt of trees behind to screen the development. Most are now privately owned.

Dawson Cottages. These are possibly 17th century but may be earlier. It was the Yeoman cottage of a 30 acre holding in 1640. When the land was subdivided for less substantial workers the party wall between them was stepped or staggered. Following disposal of Mr. Farrer's Hulbrook Farm assets, Dawson Cottages were owned by the Farrer family Trust and managed by his granddaughter Mrs. Jane Anthony. Tenants included Mrs. Knight whose husband Walter had worked on Hulbrook Farm, and Mr and Mrs. Sid Bowbrick. The cottages were sold in 2004 to a developer, who refurbished these, by then Grade II listed, cottages. He sold one and let the other, while retaining part of the curtilage as a separate building plot (in 2020 a large new house was erected on it.)

The Cokeler Estate. This was established in the 1860's. They had a sister community that was much larger in Loxwood but both have died out. The story of the Cokeler's is covered in a Shamley Green History Society booklet written by Mrs. M. May. The Cokelers built **Lords Hill House** as their commercial centre with bakery and butchers behind the grocery and emporium for hardware and haberdashery. They lived in the adjacent cottages and semi detached cottages overlooking the common. The last shopkeeper was Mr. Partridge and one of the houses is named after him.

Three dwelling units look out across the bridleway which locals, who share upkeep costs, can use for access. There are two Edwardian semi-detached brick built cottages and the **Old Cottage** which is a timber framed building and once had another small cottage protruding on the corner in front of it which went by the delightful name of Plum Pie Cottage.

When more people got cars and went further to supermarkets in Cranleigh or Guildford for their main shopping the village self sufficiency was more dented or reduced. Delivery rounds came under pressure and the shops closed and the buildings were converted into residencies. A few new builds were erected behind the Victorian outhouse stores and the tin tabernacle chapel was demolished and replaced by a small house looking down the access named with misspelling as **Coaklers**. Since then it has been further extended and doubled in size.

April Cottage and Well. This was originally built as a hay loft and animal barn with timber framing. It was converted into accommodation in the 1920's and has undergone several refurbishments. It was the long time home of Bob Sable, ex-pilot and insurance broker. Bob Sable and his wife June were both great characters. They had to downsize from The Malt House.

Opposite to April Cottage the area behind the hedge is where Long Acre's farmyard was located. It was also the place in the narrow unmetalled track which had gates that were locked once a year until the second world war to retain control as a bridleway. In wartime the need for access in event of a raid left the gate neglected so it was eventually swept away and the track was tarmaced.

A Victorian semi-detached pair of houses with a single gable end was for long the home on one side of the Hill family with a well at the front. He kept pet geese who followed him around the village. These were the houses **Chilton** and **Charlotte's**.

Next to April Cottage is an unusual modern infill. Now about 20 years old. **Meads** was the one-time home of Dr. and Mrs. Finn whose daughter is commemorated by the Phoenix Batik in the Church made by Thetis Blacker, ex opera singer and artist (and also a member of the UK Arts Council). For the last 15 years Mr. & Mrs. Grant have lived here.

On the right are two other post war infills; **Sycamore**, home of the Bull family. A very recent development is **Appletrees**, owned by Mr & Mrs A. Hodgson, who transferred the house name from their original home, now called **Hill Rising**. As the name suggests, a large garden and all parts of the original Long Acre was an orchard. During wartime I recall a serviceman's wife living here with her children and then a Mr. Killick. The Hodgson's are keen gardeners who for some years, under the Yellow Book Scheme, opened their garden to the public. Parts of Hill Rising are quite old and some of the brickwork includes Rat Trap bonding and timber framework.

That completes the circuit.

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