

The Old Houses and Buildings of Hartley

Peter Mayer, January 2003

All Saints Church, Church Road



The parish church has been on this site for over 1,000 years. The present Grade 1 listed building is approximately a millennium old. The south and most of the north walls are norman, built of flint rubble and rendered inside. There are two small round norman windows at the west end. About 1300 new windows in the early english style were added. Extensive alterations

occurred in Victorian times, the east and west ends, the vestry and the porch all date to this era. There are two bells in the bellcote, one dates back to the 14th century

Bay Lodge, Ash Road



So called after its hedge, this cottage near the Black Lion was built in the early c19th. For many years it was the home of the village wheelwright.

Black Lion, Ash Road



Hartley's only pub was built as a smallholding in the 1690s by a Mr Best. In 1731 Richard Glover, the publican of the Black Lion in Fawkham (thought to have been by the Church there) bought the house and became the first landlord. Hartley's farmers Roy and Eric Glover are direct descendants. In the 1790s it was purchased by the brewer Hussey Fleet, and from then it passed by amalgamation through the Dartford Brewery Company to Courage. It is now a free house.

Brickend, Church Road

This house probably dates to the c17th. We first hear of it in 1708 when it was owned with Mintmakers by the Holker family. Originally it was two cottages called "Hartley Hole" but a third was added about 1840 giving it its "Brickend". In Victorian times most of the tenants living here were the poorest families in Hartley. The Greens bought the house in about 1920 and renamed it. Their daughter married Rev Bancks.

Fairby, Ash Road



Fairby is named after the John Feerby, who owned the house in 1420. The estate was a large one which extended for most of the west side of Ash Road, although originally it was smaller being the land between Castle Hill and Fairby Lane. By the late c15th this was owned by the Overy family. Meanwhile the remainder of what would become the estate (that is the

land from Castle Hill to Downs Valley and south of Fairby Lane) was owned by the Walter family of Pennis House, Fawkham. Thomas Young of Southfleet bought this land in 1657 and shortly after acquired and rebuilt the house, there is a fire brick in the house dated 1685 with the initials "TY". In 1747 the farm descended to Richard Treadwell who had married the heiress Mary Young. The Treadwells continued to be the owners for another century.

The next major milestone in the history of the house came in 1917, when Fairby was purchased by the Christian socialist Alfred Salter. He gave the house to Bermondsey Council in 1922 as a nursing home for expectant mothers. The council sold Fairby in 1956 and it is now a private residential home.

Forge Cottage, Ash Road



The home of generations of Blacksmiths since at least 1604. The Overy family of Fairby owned it then. In the 1700s the Glover family became the owners, and Forge Cottage became the first insured house in Hartley when Francis Glover insured it for £200 with the Sun Insurance Office in 1780. Then it was described as timber and tile with the forge under one roof. Elvy Cooper was smith here for 30

years in the c19th, but the blacksmith business here was over by the first war.

Goldsmiths Cottage, Hartley Bottom Road

This was once a 34 acre farm in its own right. It is first mentioned in 1573, although the present thatched house is c17th in date. In the c17th it was owned by the Beresford Family of Squerries Court, Westerham. For many years then the tenant was Richard Stephens, a charcoal maker. Later the Peckham family (1663-1729) and then the Burrowes of New House Farm were the owners. Elizabeth Selby (nee Burrowes) sold the farm to her tenant William Goldsmith in 1782. Goldsmiths is a case of history going full circle. For the tenant in the 1760s was one Francis Glover. It is now owned by his great-great-great-great grandson!

Goodwins Cottage and Orchard House (Whiffins Cottage), Church Road

These two cottages were built on land that had once been a 45 acre farm at the top of Church Road. They date to the c17th when they belonged to the Whiffin family of Ash. In the c18th they were owned by Robert Batt of Longfield, then Francis Glover and Edward Thorpe, whose wife Sarah is buried at All Saints' Church. The Goodwins lived (and unusually for this time also owned) at the cottage named after them from about 1800 to 1951. Generations of this family were thatchers, although their house is now tiled. Meanwhile a succession of tenants lived at Whiffins Cottage, including (from 1890) Thomas Whiffin after whom the cottage was named. He was the local carrier - an early form of public transport. A famous zoologist John Kershaw lived here for many years in the last century, he rebuilt it in a similar style after the original cottage was destroyed after a plane crashed into it in 1940.

Hartley Bottom Farm, Hartley Bottom Road

Now Hartley's only farm of any size, it started out as a smallholding only 6 acres in size! Hartley Bottom Farm is Grade II listed and is believed to be c17th or earlier. It is probably mentioned in a document from 1576, and is definitely mentioned in the will of Robert Averill of Ash in 1656. His nephew Richard Miller put a rentcharge on the property for the poor of Ash. By 1744 it was a pub called "The King's Arms", and continued to be so until 1873 when local magistrates refused to renew the license because of their habit of serving drinks during Church service times. The Glovers came here in 1913 and under their management the farm has expanded to include Goldsmiths, Hartley Manor Farm and the remnants of the Hartley Court Estate. The business continues to develop today with the addition of the nationally acclaimed farm butchers shop.

Hartley Cottage, Hartley Green, Ash Road



A delightful Grade II thatched cottage on Hartley Green. It was built some time between 1604 and 1646. For a while in the c17th century it was a rival forge to Forge Cottage, but for most of its history it was a smallholding of 9 acres belonging to larger estates. In the c19th century it was a grocer's and baker's shop run by Harriet Longhurst. During the early years of the c20th it

was owned by Mrs Green, whose husband William was a boot maker, and boot nails are still found in the garden!

Hartley Court, Church Road

Hartley Court is the original manor house of Hartley, although the current building only dates back to 1650. The Domesday Book (1086) says that in the time of Edward the Confessor it belonged to "some woman". Its subsequent history for many centuries is one of absentee landowners often great families, with the estate being run by bailiffs. In 1392 the court was said to be a thatched hall with a solar at one end as living quarters. By the 16th century it was already known as the court. Smallowners Ltd purchased the estate in 1913 and parcelled it out into smaller holdings. Most of the estate is now built upon, but some is now part of Hartley Bottom Farm.

Hartley Hill Cottage, Church Road



Truly a chocolate box cottage, and probably Hartley's most photographed house. This wood, brick and thatch cottage dates back to the c17th and has a Grade II listing. For about a century from 1790 the Packman family lived here. In the 1930s it was nicknamed "The Honey House" because of the prize winning produce of the then owners Mr Robertson and his sisters.

Hartley House, Ash Road



A very striking Grade II listed building, which unlike Hartley's other old houses has always been a gentleman's residence. It was built about 1818 and one of the first tenants was Richard Prowse, a retired naval officer, whose daughters ran the first village school.

Hartley Manor, Manor Drive

The history of this house and holding can be traced back to the c14th when it was called Daltons, after the family that owned it. Warin Dalton must have made himself unpopular locally by collecting the poll tax in 1377! By the c16th it was owned by William White, who sold Daltons in 1571 to Thomas Walter of Pennis Place, Fawkham. We know from a court case about then that the farm was mostly arable. In 1634 we find the farm has a new owner - John Hickmott, whose family owned it until it was sold to the Huguenot Leithieuller family in 1726. By now it was called "Hartley Wood Farm". It acquired the Hartley Manor misnomer in 1872 when Colonel Evelyn rebuilt the house and moved there. The farm is now part of Hartley Bottom Farm, but the house is in separate ownership.

Hartley Wood Corner, Manor Drive



Now a pair of mid c19th cottages at the top of Manor Drive, but it was once a 21 acre farm in its own right. The barn still standing is earlier by a century. The earliest reference is in 1642, John Gifford of Pennis House bought it in 1681. Some confusion arose on the dues payable to the lord of the manor and he was sued for them in 1702, but appears to have won. The holding was merged with Stocks Farm in about 1772, subsequently it became workers' cottages.

Middle Farm, Church Road



This is now Hartley's oldest domestic building, but is actually one of the last holdings to be created. The current house was probably built by Richard Best, shortly after he bought the land in 1589. The Best family lived here until about 1880, although for the last two centuries they had only been tenants after one of the family had

defaulted on a loan. Miss Davies Cooke bought the farm in 1913 and gave it to a monastic order. Over 50 years later the house was in considerable disrepair and the order wanted to demolish it, but fortunately it was saved and is now a very fine private house.

Mintmakers, Church Road



Mintmakers used to be a rather scattered farm which encompassed Cherry Trees and Wellfield. It has been known at times as "Bassedean" (c15th); "St Peters" (1604); "Blue House Farm" (c19th); Armstrong's Farm (c19th) and Willow Lodge (early c20th). It gets its current name because a former owner worked for the bank of England. The original farm burnt down about 1860 and a pair of worker's cottages built, some of the window glass from the old house is thought to be

preserved in the new. They were merged into one by Orpins in about 1960. Mintmakers was once owned by the Overy family of Fairby, and for all the c18th by the Holker family of Gravesend, who also owned the New Inn in Milton Road.

Stocks Farm, Church Road



This 10½ acre farm has been called so since at least 1451, when John Cotyer was the owner. The present building looks Victorian but may well be much older. In 1660 Richard Boycott of Horton Kirby bought it for £41 from Mr and Mrs Edwards, his widow sold it to her son in law John Young of Fairby. He left Stocks, along with Hartley Cottage and Forge Cottage to his younger son

Thomas. Eventually Stocks came to Thomas Young under the Kent inheritance system of Gavelkind in 1796. He sold it to William Bensted of Hartley Court. In the mid c19th David and Sarah Wellard and their 15 children lived here. A later owner William Lockwood, left the house in 1942 to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to help the war effort. On the opposite side of the road was a barn that was not demolished until the 1960s.

Woodins, Church Road

We can trace the history of Woodins back to 1380 when a Robert at Haye paid 18d tax. It was called "Hayes" after the Old English word for enclosure. In the c15th it was owned by a John Cotyer (d 1452) and his son Thomas (d 1473). Later it came into the hands of the Overy family of Fairby, who sold it in 1617. For a while it was owned by Geoffrey Eves, the rector of Hartley, but let to one Leonard Carrier. It gets its name from the c19th tenant.

Yew Cottage, Hartley Green, Ash Road



Yew Cottage was built by John Young on land that had once formed part of Hartley Green between 1713 and 1747. Like many other properties this was always part of Fairby Farm.