

A history of

Gatwick House

Shackleford, Surrey

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Introduction

At the heart of Gatwick House is a simple timber-framed cottage that started life as an encroachment onto Gatwick Common, which was a part of the waste of the manor of Godalming. Its is not known when the plot was first established but the lord of the manor of Godalming granted a retrospective lease on the cottage and land on which it stands to a widow, Anne Collins, in 1738.

The house was originally built as a simple two-bay dwelling of four rooms with an external end chimney. It was tiny even by the standards of the time and it reflected the modest way of life of its early occupants. This section of the house forms a snug nucleus of the dwelling that stands today, for the building has been extended around its original core at various times during the twentieth century.

For many years, it was the home of cottagers and agricultural labourers who relied on the resources of the common for their livelihood. During the early nineteenth century, social and economic changes diminished the importance of the common to the residents of the cottage and, during the 1920s, the growing use of the motorcar brought new people to the area. No longer a cottager's house, it was enlarged and it acquired its present name in the late '20s. Further extensions followed and the house is now considerably larger than the little cottage built on the common all those years ago.



The cottage on the common

Common land is an essential part of the story of the cottage that was to become Gatwick House. For countless generations, commons were a vital part of both the medieval and later communities, providing a living for those who lived on or near them. It was and frequently still is a part of the land of the manor and is owned by the lord of the manor. However, certain individuals have rights over the land, rights that have existed since time immemorial, certainly since early Saxon times and quite probably for long before that.

The determined actions of the people who claimed these rights in the past have ensured the survival of common land. In some places, for instance near large cities or on particularly fertile land, the commons could be potentially very valuable but the persistence of a handful of stubborn commoners who refused to give up their rights prevented the owner from using or developing the land as he wished.

Due to both lawful and illegal encroachments, the total area of common land has always been shrinking. One of the principal reasons for this was the erection of houses by those seeking a place to make their home. The practice was widespread and, during the later sixteenth century, the illegal erection of cottages on common land was regarded as a growing problem. The population of England was rising and an increasing demand for housing meant that many people made whatever provision they could, which frequently meant enclosing a piece of common land or roadside waste on which to build a home. To modern eyes this seems quite audacious; the squatter would simply enclose a piece of land in a suitable place and erect a dwelling on it.

As the seventeenth century progressed, the growing population gave rise to more unlawful building but this was increasingly tolerated. Faced with the problem of an illegal settlement, the manor court had a choice of removing the offending house or giving the cottager leave to remain by granting a lease, thus making the squatter a legitimate tenant of the manor. This arrangement could be of benefit to both parties for the lord could now hope to gain an income, albeit small, from an otherwise unproductive piece of land.

Such leases were being granted in the early seventeenth century, although the stagnation of population growth in the later part of the century probably reduced the amount of encroachment onto common land. However, after about 1720, the population began to increase once more

and there was an upsurge in the incidence of illegal squatting on the commons.

Gatwick House began its existence as one of these unauthorised squatter settlements. It was built on a plot of land that was taken from Gatwick Common, which was a part of the wasteland belonging to the manor of Godalming. Such settlements are easily recognisable and frequently found on common lands throughout England. They usually have irregular boundaries, are generally quite small and appear as islands in the waste or as bites out its boundaries.



An extract from John Rocque's map of Surrey from about 1760 showing the extent of the common and the cottage plot just to the southeast of Gatwick Bridge.

In about 1760, John Rocque, a highly skilled mapmaker, undertook a survey of Surrey, a major project that was to be his last piece of work. He produced a detailed, large-scale map of the county, which was then divided into six sections and produced as engravings. One of these sections clearly reveals the house on its island of land abutting against the lane to the north and surrounded on the other three sides by the common.¹

¹ John Rocque died before the map was published. Peter Andrews completed and engraved his work and Mary Anne Rocque published this invaluable document in 1770.

It is highly likely that Gatwick End, shown just across the lane, originated in the same, rather furtive way. As we have seen, illegal squats were not confined to the manor of Godalming and, across the stream in Puttenham parish, Cutmill Platts appears to be a similar encroachment on the waste of the manor of Puttenham Priory.²

In 1738, Sir More Molyneux had sold the widow, Ann Collins, a 500-year lease on her cottage for one guinea plus an annual rent of two shillings and sixpence per year.³ We know that the house had been built before the lease was granted as the building is described in the document as being “lately erected” but we should not infer from this that it had been recently erected. Therefore, we cannot be sure that it was Ann and her husband who first took in the land and built the house: it is possible that the plot had been established and the house built by someone else before they came into Ann’s occupation.

The structure of the house gives us a broad clue as to the age of the holding. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the timber framing tradition of building had all but died out and brick and stone had become the favoured materials for new buildings. The small size of the timbers used in the construction of the house suggests that it dates from a later period of timber framing, possibly in the late seventeenth century. However, a dendrochronological analysis would be the only way of finding the exact date of construction.

The early owners and occupiers

Although we know the name of the first lessee, no records survive to give clues about the house in the twenty years following the granting of the lease. Ann’s burial cannot be identified in the registers of Godalming or the surrounding parishes nor can the change of ownership of the lease be found in the manor records. However, by 1757, the property had passed to Thomas Collins, a husbandman from Frensham.⁴

The relationship of Thomas Collins to Ann is unknown but he may have been her son or perhaps a nephew. Indeed, it is possible that the burial of the Widow Collins that took place at Frensham in May 1746 may have been that of Ann, if she had moved to live with Thomas in her old age.

² Records of the manor of Puttenham Priory, G147, SHC.

³ Lease dated 1738, LM357/37, SHC.

⁴ Husbandman: a tenant farmer or one holding copyhold land.

With his life at Frensham to lead as a busy farmer it is unlikely that Thomas Collins ever lived at Gatwick. Certainly, the property was occupied by a tenant when he wrote his will in 1757 for the document states his intention of leaving to his nephew his “*messuage or tenement, garden, orchard and parcel of land at or near Attleford . . . in the occupation of Henry Ockley*”.



Ann Collins's original timber-framed cottage.

Thomas lived for another thirteen years after he made his will and when he died in 1770 the cottage passed to his brother's son, John Collins, who was to own it until 1797.⁵ He continued to rent the property to Henry Hockley and, after Henry's death in 1785, James Neale became the new occupier.⁶

John Collins never lived in the cottage but it provided him with a useful income for, as well as taking rent from the house and its plot of land, he also used it to raise a mortgage loan. We cannot be sure when he borrowed this money but by the early 1780s Collins

was in debt to a man named William Luff who became, in the eyes of the manor court, the lessee of the property because of his status as lender.

In 1783, the manor court heard that Luff had assigned the loan to a new lender, James Lambert, who was noted as the new owner of the lease.⁷ Assigning mortgage loans to other lenders was a frequent occurrence and it was to happen again in the mid 1790s when James Neale, who was still living in the house at the time, became the lender and was thus officially recorded as the owner of the property at the manor court in 1794.

⁵ Will of Thomas Collins, 27th April 1757, proved Archdeaconry Court of Surrey 12th April 1770. Quoted by Percy Woods, C1 p198, GML and Land Tax returns, QS6/7, SHC.

⁶ Land Tax returns and Godalming parish register, SHC.

⁷ Court baron 29 Oct 1783, Godalming manor court book LM/58/28/1, SHC.

Four years later, matters became a little more settled. Neale became both the actual owner and occupier of the house and was to remain so until his death in April 1811.⁸ This change of ownership had occurred either by Collins defaulting on the mortgage or by him selling the cottage to Neale. Neither of these events would be recorded in the manor records because, as we have seen, the manor court already regarded Neale as the owner.

Life on the common

Over the centuries, an increasing number of people lived on Surrey's commons and made a living founded on the resources that they provided, some of whom had legally defined common rights whilst others did not. The pasturing of animals, pigs, cattle and geese, was the most frequently claimed right but in many places there was also the entitlement to take wood, peat and turf for fuel and cut bracken for animal bedding.

The medieval manor courts regulated these common rights quite strictly and in many manors those who took what was not due to them were fined. In later centuries, an increasing number of manors became indifferent about the use of the commons and this laxity led to some of these areas being over-grazed. There is evidence that, by the mid eighteenth century, people who had no formal common rights pastured their animals on the waste of the manor of Godalming and those with rights did so with no restriction.

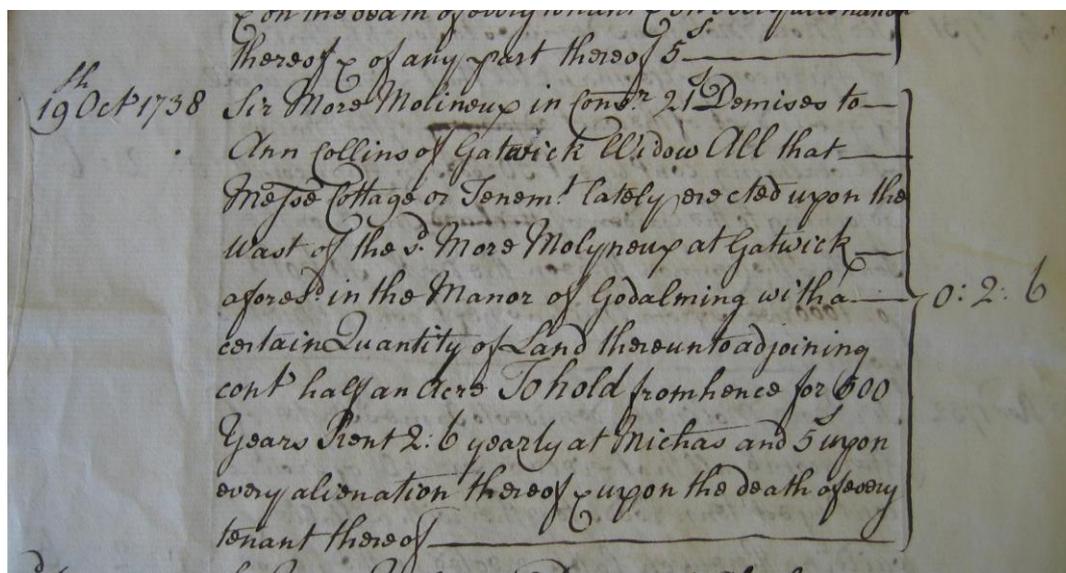
As we have seen, the resources of the common were very valuable to cottagers. Those who lived in the houses on or near the common relied greatly on it for grazing and fuel, both of which represented a substantial part of their income and which were an essential part of the household economy for many people. It has been estimated that in the eighteenth century the pasturing of just one cow on the common could constitute as much as 40% of the income of an agricultural labourer, whilst the right to collect wood for fuel made up another 10% - 15% of his earnings.⁹ This income frequently enabled a family of cottagers to remain self-sufficient rather than become dependent on the parish.

The people of the commons lived in a modest, small-scale way. They practised crafts that utilised the products of the land and produced things that could be made at home: walking sticks, sheep crooks, wooden barrel

⁸ Land tax returns for Godalming, SHC.

⁹ Poplar Cottage – a wasteland cottage from Washington, West Sussex, printed in the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum magazine, Autumn 2007.

hoops, trugs, baskets, wooden shovels, rush mats, hurdles or any number of other humble but necessary things that would be sold to bring in some ready money to supplement their common rights. These people existed on the margins of the economy, utilising resources that would otherwise be ignored, working for themselves rather than as employees.



A rental of Godalming manor recording the original grant to Ann Collins in 1738.

Although far from wealthy, they prided themselves on their self-sufficiency and valued the independence it gave to them: they were autonomous and free from the direct control of the local landowners. The way of life suited both the commoners and the wealthier householders who had to support the poor of the parish via the rates. They were happy that the cottager and his family who made use of the common were more likely to be able to maintain themselves and not become a burden on the parish poor rate.

William Cobbett was a great champion of commoners and here he describes a typical south-country common as it was in the year 1804. He conjures up a lively picture of people using the resources of the land with their animals wandering over the waste, much as they still do in the New Forest:

“I used to go around a little common, called Horton Heath, on a Sunday. I found the husbands at home. The common contained about 150 acres; and I found round the skirts of it about thirty cottages and gardens. I remember one hundred and twenty-five or thirty-five stalls of bees; cows

*there were about fifteen besides heifers and calves; about sixty pigs great and small; and not less than five hundred heads of poultry!”*¹⁰

His description paints a picture of independence and industry that typified the life of the commoner. However, their way of life was not to everyone’s taste and, by the middle of the eighteenth century, agricultural commentators such as Arthur Young and William Marshall began to decry the commons as an inefficient use of land and to argue for their enclosure. Moreover, some of the larger landowners, those who contributed most to the poor rates, perceived the independent way of life of the commoners as a threat. Perhaps, due to their self-sufficiency, they were not as biddable as their betters would have liked.

There were other problems to deal with too: the illegal use of the commons could create problems for the cottagers because the resources of the land were often overstretched. Those who wanted to see the commons enclosed also used it as an argument in favour of their cause. In 1788 James More Molyneux of Loseley wrote to the steward of his manor, William Bray, about the unauthorised cutting of turf on Gatwick Common and Shackleford Heath to the extent that he thought that they would be ruined: “*there is not a blade of grass for the poor people’s cattle and . . . they would not pay their quit rents because they had no grass*”.¹¹

Over grazing was also prevalent on many of the common lands of the manor. One such situation could be found on one of the biggest of the Godalming commons, the Pease Marsh, where uncontrolled numbers of animals caused many problems. Not surprisingly, those who wished to see the commons enclosed cited this as a telling example of the inefficiencies of the old system.

The enclosure of the common

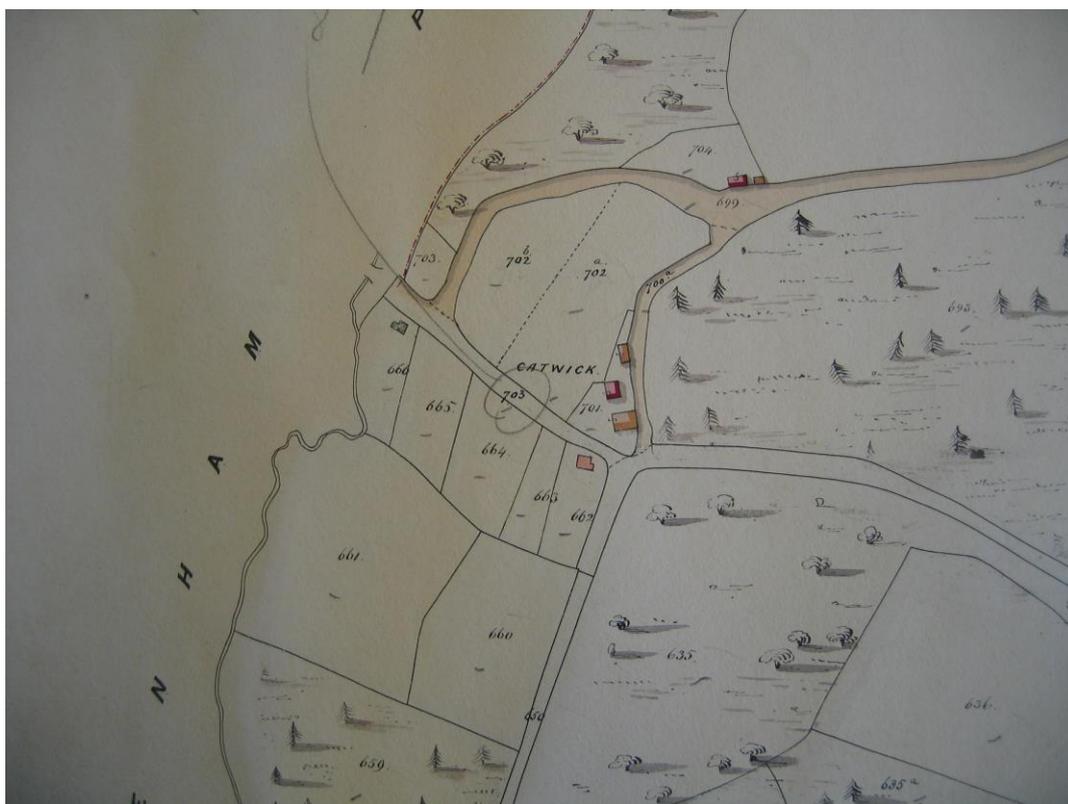
The self-sufficient way life of the commoners was under increasing threat during the eighteenth century because of the desire of larger landowners to enclose both common land and open field. There had been proposals to enclose the commons of the manor of Godalming from the middle of the eighteenth century but the various petitions put forward to parliament by the commoners staved off the event for several decades. However, the

¹⁰ Letter to Mr Coke, Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register 26 May 1821.

¹¹ Ref: 7473/box 4, SHC.

arguments in favour of the scheme were strong and the tide of fashion began to flow in their favour.

From the 1750s, the enclosure of open fields and common lands was gathering pace all over England and the landscape would alter dramatically. The agricultural commentators of the time were scathing in their condemnation of the inefficiencies of the old ways. Most of the larger landowners were in favour of enclosure for they viewed commons as a wasted resource that could not be exploited all the time commoners had rights over the land. Understandably, the commoners clung defiantly to their rights and it was not until the increasing food shortages caused by the Napoleonic Wars that the proponents of enclosure in Godalming manor finally won the argument.



An extract from the tithe survey of Godalming, 1841. The surveyor has omitted the cottage, although we can be sure that it was there at that time.

An act authorising the enclosure of the waste within the manors of Godalming and Catteshall was passed by parliament in 1803. The enclosure commissioners who were responsible for carrying out the provisions of the act drew up an enclosure map and award that defined the new fields and roads that were to be created.¹² The land was

¹² Godalming & Catteshall enclosure award 1811, QS6/4/10, SHC. See page 4.

apportioned to its new owners and they quickly planted hedges around their new plots.

The secret nooks and crannies of the rambling and extensive commons were destroyed, old trees were felled and ancient grassland was ploughed. The wildness had gone and with it the way of life and the independence of many cottagers throughout the manor. As far as James Neale's cottage was concerned, it was no longer an island in the waste for it now lay surrounded by the new enclosures created by the act. His plot had been enlarged by the addition of nearly half an acre of newly enclosed common land that had been allotted to him as compensation for his lost common rights.

James Neale had inhabited an old, almost medieval, world and, for just a few years, he was in the new one of market driven commercial agriculture that had been created by the enclosure. When he died in April 1811, his son James inherited the property and the change of ownership was reported to the court baron on 21st October. His son was not a young man when he inherited the property and he was to own it for less than a year. His death was reported to the next manor court held in October 1812 when William Neale was named as the new lessee.¹³

Nineteenth century inhabitants

Both the land tax returns and the Godalming poor rate books confirm that William was both the owner and occupier of the cottage. He was fifty-three years old when the property came into his ownership and he had been married to Martha since 1782.¹⁴ We know that they had at least one child because their son, Francis, inherited the house on his father's death in 1830.¹⁵ The rate books show that William was liable for both the house and land until 1816 but from the following year he was charged only for his land, an indication that he had moved away and was renting out the house.¹⁶

In his turn, Francis Neale also rented out the property and the 1841 tithe survey names James Eade as the occupier of both the cottage and its land.¹⁷ In fact, Eade lived at Cutmill Platts, over the bridge in Puttenham

¹³ Godalming manor extract book, LM/S/9, SHC.

¹⁴ Godalming and Puttenham parish registers, SHC.

¹⁵ Godalming extract book, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Godalming poor rate books, 2253/12/1-12, SHC.

¹⁷ Godalming tithe survey, 864/1/71-72, SHC.

parish and the rate books show that he was sub-letting the cottage to Henry Bennett.

James Eade was one of the last of the old-fashioned cottagers who, like earlier householders of Gatwick, made a part of his living by exploiting his rights over Cutmill Common. Although he is listed as an agricultural labourer in the 1841 census, the enumerators of that year were instructed to use this term for anyone who worked on the land in whatever capacity, from landowning farmers to day-labourers. He was somewhere between these two extremes. He owned his own home, which was a copyhold property held from the manor of Puttenham Priory, but he owned no land, although he was renting the acre of garden that went with Neale's cottage. It seems likely, therefore, that he was cultivating this land as well as gaining an income from Bennett's rent.

James Eade lived a long life by the standards of the day and he died in 1846 at the good age of 85 years.¹⁸ He was more fortunate than many of his contemporaries for he had managed to continue his independence throughout his life. This had been possible because the waste of the manor of Puttenham Priory was never subject to enclosure and, indeed, it remains as open common land to this day.

What sort of tenants did James Eade have? The occupations given in the census returns imply that the inhabitants of the cottages at Gatwick were now employees, reflecting the social changes that had taken place in the years following enclosure and the disappearance of the cottagers' independent way of life. The working males were mainly now employed on the land as labourers but there was also a shepherd, a gamekeeper and a gardener living in the hamlet.

It is the rate books that enable us to identify the inhabitants of the cottage. They confirm that in 1850 it was the home of Henry Bennett and that he had come to Gatwick from Peper Harow in 1834, a year or two after his marriage.¹⁹ Henry was an agricultural labourer and, by 1841, he and his wife Mary had four children, Henry, William, Mary and James. The eldest, seven-year-old Henry, was not at home on census day: perhaps he was living elsewhere to allow room for their lodger, Robert Bennett, who was sharing the tiny dwelling with them. Over the next few years Sarah and Jane were born but little James died in 1842 aged just two years.

¹⁸ Puttenham parish register, SHC.

¹⁹ Godalming parish poor rate books, 2253/10/1-12, SHC.

The eldest child, Henry, was back at home in 1851 with added responsibilities. He was, by now, seventeen years old and was officially ‘the man of the house’, a role that he had probably fulfilled for some while. His father had died in 1845 aged just thirty-seven years, leaving a young widow with five children to bring up on her own.²⁰

By 1861, the Bennetts had moved away and George Lock was living in the house with his wife Mary and their three sons, George, Joseph and Dedan.²¹ George was fifty-one years old at the time of the census and was employed as a carter. Mary was five years his junior and the eldest of their three sons, George, worked as an agricultural labourer whilst the other two boys were still at school.



The original cottage would still be recognisable to any of its earlier inhabitants.

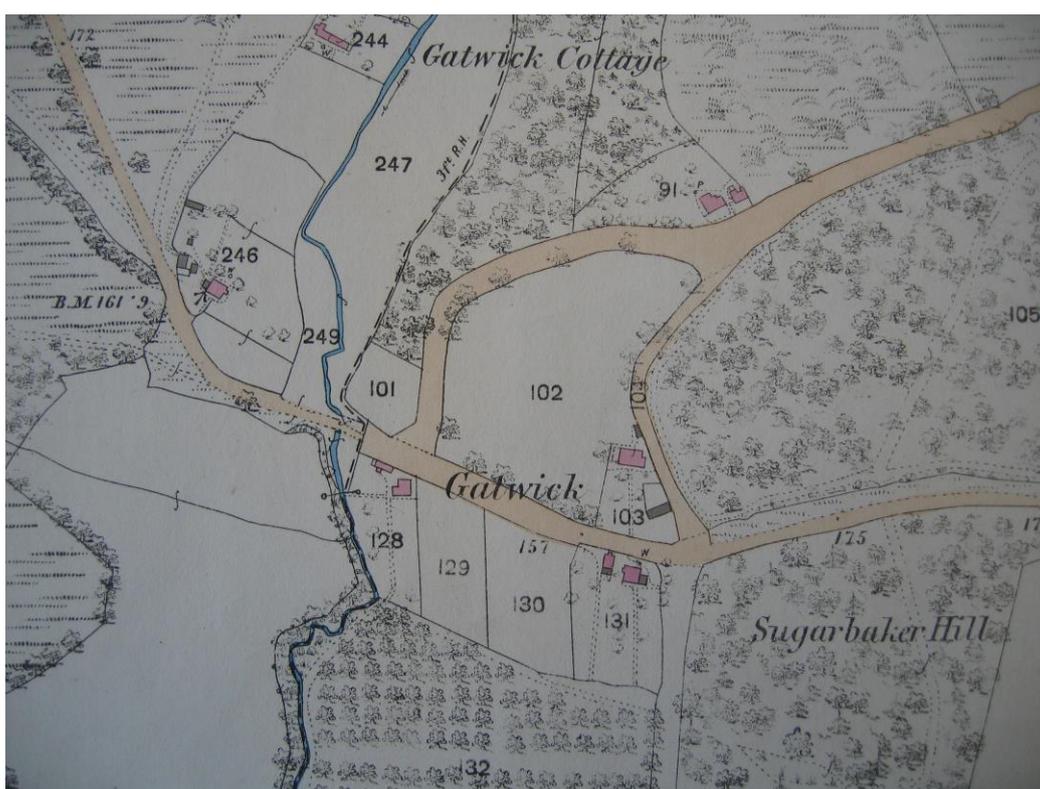
As a carter, George Lock would have been considered a class above the ordinary agricultural worker because he had extra responsibilities over the farm labourers for which he received slightly higher wages. Along with the milkers, the carters were the first to arrive for work at four or five o'clock in the morning to feed the horses and prepare them for work before the day labourers arrived a couple of hours later. Occasionally they might be on the road much earlier, walking by the side of the wagon,

²⁰ Peper Harow parish registers, SHC.

²¹ Penfold Survey, GML.

whip in hand, wearing a smock with breeches tied at the knees. A boy or under-carter would be there to help fix the drag on hills and with loading.

To our eyes, the extra shilling or two that George received at the end of the week hardly seems adequate compensation for the added responsibility and the extra hours in an already long day. But every additional penny counted and, with his children to support, he probably considered himself fortunate that he was able to earn a little above the basic labouring wage. As well as earning the extra money, carters also had status amongst the farm labouring community and exhibited a pride in their work and their teams, as Gertrude Jekyll described:



Ordnance Survey map of 1871.

“In the older days the country towns on market days were gay with the brightly-painted farm-waggons with their well-groomed teams. There was an amicable rivalry among the carters as to the dressing of their horses, for the brightly-polished brass ornaments and the gay rosettes of worsted ribbon were the carter's own property, and when not on the horses, were often arranged as a trophy over the cottage fireplace. The love of decorating his horses is still a matter of pleasant pride to the good carter, and when I see a well-looking team, made unusually smart for the road or

town, I know that the carter is a good fellow, who takes a right pride in his work and cattle."²²

The Lock family left the house during the 1860s and, during the last few decades of the nineteenth century, it was the home of Frederick Edwards and his wife Eliza. They make their first appearance in the 1871 census returns when Frederick was forty-two and Eliza was thirty-three years old.

Frederick earned his living as a sawyer, a job that was very physical, as so many were in the rural community. Before mechanical saws became commonplace, trees were converted to planks by using large, two-man saws. The tree was placed over a pit that was seven or eight feet deep. One man stood in the pit, working one end of the long vertical saw whilst his companion stood above him controlling the other end. Both men in their turn pulled the saw up and down through the tree with the sawdust showering down on the man below. The top sawyer was inevitably the senior man for it was he that avoided the worst of the dust and he also controlled the direction of the saw. It was hard, dusty and tedious work and Frederick Edwards was engaged upon it for most of his working life.

In 1871, Frederick and Eliza had three children living at home and their eldest child, fourteen-year-old Frederick, was living at Rodsall Farm in Puttenham, where the farmer, Henry Tice, employed him as a houseboy. The next eldest, Eliza, was twelve years old and both she and her brother Mark were at school. The youngest child, two-year-old Frank, had been born in the house.

The ownership of the house during the third quarter of the century and the occupation of the Edwards family is uncertain. The name of Francis Neale re-appears in our history for he is listed as the owner in the Penfold rating survey of the early 1860s but, according to a series of Godalming manorial rentals, the lease owner's name at that time was a Mr Day. It is probable, therefore, that Neale had mortgaged the property to Mr Day who thus became the owner of the lease. By 1873, however, we can be sure who was the owner as a manor rental of that year reveals that Lord Midleton, of Peper Harow, had recently added the cottage and its garden to his extensive estate.²³

The 1881 census shows that the population of the cottage had grown. Young Frederick Edwards was back at home, now working as an

²² Old West Surrey by Gertrude Jekyll, 1904

²³ Ac1363/11/26, SHC.

agricultural labourer, and there had been a new addition to the household, Ellen, who was born in 1876. This was the time when the little four-roomed cottage was at its most crowded with two adults and four children. Ten years later, however, only Ellen remained at the house with her parents. Young Frederick had moved away from the village but in later years he returned to run the Cider House in Shackleford with his wife Louisa where he was living in 1920.²⁴

When the first census of the new century was recorded, in 1901, Frederick Edwards was still working but he was no longer employed as a sawyer. A mechanical saw may have replaced his labour but, at 72 years old, he would surely have lost the strength needed to work over a sawpit day after day and he was now working as an agricultural labourer.

There was no retirement for men of his class at that time and, unless they had were able to live with a younger relative or had an alternative source of income such as an army pension, ordinary people worked all the time whilst they had the strength to do so. Until the introduction of old-age pensions in 1909, the alternative for those unable to support themselves was to be removed from their community to the distant Union Workhouse, a fate feared by all in the labouring classes.

The twentieth century

With the new century came many changes to the house, its owners and its occupants. The first new owner appeared in 1909, or thereabouts, when a farmer named Henry Harding bought the house from Lord Midleton for the sum of £125.²⁵ In 1901 Harding had been working and living nearby at Cutmill Platts. Perhaps he had retired from farming at the time of this move for he bought the cottage when he was about 65 years old.

He was still living there in March 1914 when a valuer from the Inland Revenue visited the property. The valuation shows that an eight-foot extension had been built onto the western side of the house at some time after the revision of the 1895 Ordnance Survey. This was probably a recent construction erected by Harding for it seems unlikely that Lord Midleton would have made such a change for his tenants.

Despite the enlargement of the dwelling, the accommodation was little altered and there were still only four rooms, as there had been since the

²⁴ Electoral register CC802/31/5, SHC.

²⁵ Inland Revenue valuation IR58/34343, TNA.

cottage was first built. The valuer also noted a stable that was clad with corrugated iron – this building is now the garage. There was also a single-storey wood and coal shed attached to the southern end of the house.

Henry Harding's time as owner and occupier of the cottage lasted for only about six years. He had certainly left the house soon after the valuer's visit for he ceased to be listed in the Godalming Directory after that year.²⁶ He was the last recorded occupant to have local, rural links and after his departure a new breed of resident would shortly appear in Gatwick.



The southern extension to the house.

The years following the Great War saw dramatic changes to the social and economic structure of rural Surrey. The motorcar had arrived and an increasing number of people were acquiring driving skills. Suddenly, Surrey and its adjoining counties were within the orbit of London. At this time the south-east of England was experiencing a large migration of homeowners who came from urban areas seeking an attractive rural house. These newcomers had first appeared in Godalming after 1849 when the coming of the railways provided them with easy links to the capital. Now, with the increase in car ownership, the change was occurring on an even greater and swifter scale and in places far from

²⁶ Craddock's Godalming Directory, GML.

railway stations. Previously remote areas of the county were becoming accessible to those who worked in London but wished to live in more congenial and peaceful surroundings.

Gatwick's position set in fine countryside yet close to the country town of Godalming with its fast links to London, made it a very desirable location to this new breed of country dweller. Consequently, during the 1920s, the house was home to a series of tenants. Little is known of some of these inhabitants but we can be sure that many of them had a very different pedigree to its earlier occupants.



The western wing was built and then extended in the early twentieth century

One such family certainly came from the upper echelons of society. The Hon. Antony Schomberg Byng lived at Gatwick with his wife Lucy in the early part of the decade. He was born in 1876 and he was the fifth son of the Earl of Stafford. He married Lady Lucy Margaret Greenly in 1902 and the couple had a son and a daughter, William and Gillian. During the Great War, Antony Byng was a major in the Royal Flying Corps and a commander of the Kite Balloon Squadron. He received the Distinguished Service Order.²⁷

It seems, perhaps surprisingly, that Gatwick House was a more than just a place in the country for the family as their name appears in the electoral

²⁷ Electoral registers, CC802, SHC; Who's Who, 1931.

register several times, including 1924, the year in which Gillian married. The wedding was at Westminster and the family residence is quoted as Queens Gate, London at the time,²⁸ so they evidently had at least two homes. The Byngs remained at the house for just a few years after which they moved to Eashing.

Various other tenants followed them quick succession. By the spring of 1927, Mr & Mrs Victor Adeley occupied the house. Nothing is known of them but the fact that they advertised in *The Times* for a nanny to look after their daughter suggests that they lived quite comfortably.²⁹ They did not stay at the property for long and by 1930 Richard Richardson was at Gatwick House. He was a poultry farmer who had become bankrupt and a petition to this effect had been filed in June 1930.³⁰

After the departure of Mr Richardson, the house continued to be the home of short-term occupants who were probably renting the premises. Then in the early 1950s began a more settled period when the house, which by then known as *The Cottage*, became occupied by Miss Elise Lucas-Scudamore who was to live there until her death in July 1969.

Although the house in the 1920s was bigger than it was in 1914, it was rather too small and humble, one might think, to have the comparatively grand name of Gatwick House that it had acquired by the end of the decade. Changes to the house were to follow in later years with two large extensions southwards to create a sizable dwelling that is more worthy of the name and more fitting to the lifestyle of its occupants. At the heart of the expanded Gatwick House, however, remains the tiny timber-framed cottage that was the home of Ann Collins in the early eighteenth century and which is a reminder of both the change and continuity that this corner of Godalming has seen over the last few centuries.

She would doubtless recognise her old home and probably be surprised that it still stands. We can be sure that she would be shocked at the disappearance of the common which was so important to her way of life and, at the same time, astounded at the way its current inhabitants live and work far beyond the confines of the parish that was once her world. Despite all the changes, one hopes that she would be pleased with the fact that her old home was still cherished and that, now in good hands, it looks likely to remain a local landmark for many years to come.

²⁸ *The Times* 29th October 1924

²⁹ *The Times* 5th May 1927.

³⁰ *London Gazette* 8th August 1930.

Appendix 1

Known owners and occupiers of Gatwick House.

	Owners	Occupier
1738	Ann Collins	
1757	Thomas Collins	Henry Hockley
1770	John Collins	“ “
1786	“ “	James Neale
1798	James Neale I	Himself
1811	James Neal II	Himself
1812	William Neale	“
1830	Francis Neale	
1841	“ “	James Eade (but did not inhabit).
1861	“ “	George Lock
1871	Mr Day	Frederick Edwards
1873	Lord Midleton	“ “
1881	“ “	“ “
1891	“ “	“ “
1901	“ “	“ “
1909	Henry Harding	Himself
1914	Henry Harding	Himself
1922-24	Unknown	Hon. Antony Schomberg Byng
1927-28	“	Mr & Mrs Victor Adeley
1930	“	Richard Richardson
1931		Lt. Col. Cecil & Mrs Iris Gibb
1933		Ian & Charlotte Pite
1935 & 1937		Annie Elsley
1951 - 1968	“	Elsie M Lucas-Scudamore
1971	“	Jeffery J Collins
1974	“	Robert & Daphne Robertson

Appendix 2

The history of Gatwick House in relation to national and world events.³¹

1738	Lease granted to Ann Collins	1739	Dick Turpin hanged at Tyburn.
1770	Cottage inherited by John Collins	1770	Captain Cook discovered and named Botany Bay.
1785	Burial of Henry Hockley.	1785	Prince of Wales married a widow, Mrs Fitzherbert.
1798	Cottage acquired by James Neale	1798	Battle of the Nile: Nelson destroyed French fleet.
1811	Death of James Neale I	1811	Organised machine breaking in Nottingham by the Luddites.
1812	Death of James Neale II	1812	Napoleon invades and subsequently retreats from Moscow.
1830	Death of William Neale.	1830	Captain Swing riots in southern England against enclosures and threshing machines.
1841	Godalming tithe survey: cottage owned by Francis Neale.	1841	Hong Kong became British territory.
1861	George and Mary Lock occupied the cottage.	1861	Death of Prince Albert.
1871	Frederick Edwards occupied the cottage.	1871	Lewis Carroll published <i>Alice through the Looking Glass</i> .
1909	Henry Harding bought and occupied the cottage.	1909	First payment of old-age pensions: 5 shillings per week for people over 70.
Early 1920s	House occupied by the Hon. Antony and Lucy Schomberg Byng.	1923	Richmal Crompton's <i>Just William</i> published, the first of the series.
1930	Bankruptcy of Richard Richardson.	1930	Airship R101 crashed in France whilst on its maiden flight to India.
1969	Death of Mrs Elsie Maude Lucas-Scudamore (née Scott).	1969	Maiden flight of supersonic aircraft, Concorde.

³¹ Information from various sources but principally from *The Pimlico Chronology of British History*, Alan & Veronica Parker, pub. Pimlico, 1996.

Addenda

Census returns 1851 - 1901

