

# Leatherhead & District Local History Society

Potted Histories No 39

## Givons Grove House, Leatherhead

Givons Grove House c: 1920s



The oldest building on the Givons Grove Estate is the 'Old Farmhouse'; it is part 16th century, though much altered. It has a clock tower and a parapet and the beamed interior has an oak staircase. It was part of the manor of Thorncroft. Once it was known as Gibbons Farm, perhaps because a yeoman farmer called Charles Gibbons tilled it. He is mentioned in the parish registers of 1686, as is another Gibbon, Henry, who died in 1734. It maybe because the meadows of Thorncroft so near the Mole were often flooded that a new building 'Gibbons Grove' was built near the farm. It was described in the Universal British Directory of 1791 as 'a beautiful house and garden, the property of Henry Boulton (who leased Thorncroft) and occupied by Sir William Altum'. In the early 1800s the name of the house changed from Gibbons to Givons. The Boulton family sold the estate of 238 acres in 1859 to Duncan Fletcher who sold it to Thomas Grissell of Norbury Park in 1865 for £35,000. Grissell was a wealthy builder whose firm built Nelson's Column and the Houses of Parliament. He leased the house with 40 acres to Russell Sturgis of the bankers Baring Brothers and it remained with that family until 1919 when it was sold to Humphrey Verdon Roe, the aircraft manufacturer and his wife Dr Marie Stopes the palaeontologist, later to be more widely known for her interest in birth control.

It was sold again in 1927 to a Leatherhead building syndicate headed by Mr F H Bartlett, as a 'large house with 21 principal and secondary bedrooms and dressing rooms. Reception rooms, park, cottages, home farm' and so on, all in 130 acres. They demolished two wings of the mansion and wooded plots of one-half to three acres were advertised for sale in 1928 at prices from £300 to £3,000.

*Goff Powell - with acknowledgement to Edwina Vardey - History of Leatherhead - A Town at the Crossroads - L&DLHS 1988 with additions*

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