

Leatherhead & District Local History Society

Potted Histories No 56

Hampton & Devonshire Cottages - Church Street, Leatherhead



Devonshire & Hampton Cottages - photo courtesy of Gwen Hoad

Hampton Cottage is a labourer's cottage erected on glebe (church) land sometime between 1642 and 1682. It is timber framed of elm, some re-used and prefabricated as were many all timber framed houses in the town. Some of the original wattle and daub infilling can still be seen. In 1682 it was the home of the widow of William

Fering, a falconer, working possibly for the lord of the manor, either at Thorncroft or Pachesham. Since it was church property, most of the tenants worked for the Rectory (now Vale Lodge). In 1872 Margaret Ottaway, a widow of a 'brewer of the Swan Pit Brewhouse' owned it, together with Devonshire Cottage. She left it in 1822 to her niece Caroline Fisher who married Albion Ockenden of Littlehampton. It seems that is how the cottage got its name. In 1946 it was sold and in 1960 became the property of Mr and Mrs Hollis, Mrs Hollis being Hilda Barnard, the daughter of a Swan Hotel coachman. She was a dressmaker and lived and worked in the cottage. The Leatherhead and District Local History Society set up the Leatherhead Museum and Heritage Centre Trust to purchase the property in 1976. They carefully restored it and it is now the Leatherhead Museum.

Devonshire Cottage probably dates from the late 16th century when it was owned by Richard Rogers of the Rectory, but by 1708 it belonged to the Mansion. The building follows the extended hall range and jettied cross-wing form although the roof is post-medieval. During plaster stripping in 1979 some of the external framing has been revealed. There was a family connection with Hampton Cottage since Margaret Ottaway died there in 1886 and the Ockendens who had 10 children, moved next door when they grew older, leaving the larger house to the younger members of their family.

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

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