

Hogs Hole Cottages

This row of cottages first appears in the poor rate books in 1819.

The name

The cottages were called "Hogs Hole Cottages" in a poor rate valuation done in 1838 and the Post Office Directory of 1845 gives Hogs Hole as the address of Thomas Hills, who is known to have lived in one of these cottages at that time. William Morris built his house on land known as Hogs Hole. One of his biographers says that the discovery that labourers cottages close by were known as Hogs Hole" gave unspeakable and lasting satisfaction" to Rossetti.

It is likely that the cottages took their name from the land on which they were built, rather than some contemptuous estimate of the buildings or their occupants. However, the origin of the name of that piece of land is obscure. Two surveys of the Manor of Bexley carried out in the 17th century contain references to lands called Hoghaw, or Hogshaw, though none of them seem to relate to this site. This suggests that the name was not uncommon locally for a little wood where pigs were kept and the form of the name might change to Hogs Hole in the course of time.

The original cottages

They consisted of five houses, which corresponded with the present day 44 Upton Road (formed in about 1857 by combining the two end cottages into one) and numbers 3 to 9 Red House Lane. Number 11 was added in 1876. Perhaps the numbering of Red House Lane reflects the fact the house that would have been number 1 in that road is actually part of number 44 Upton Road.

In their first form the cottages were very simple "two up two down" houses but successive occupants added extensions to them at the rear and by about 1860, all of them had projecting nibs which in two cases were more than twice the size of the original cottages. These alterations are shown on the O.S. 25 inch map published in about 1862, which also shows that the water supply was from a well in front of the cottages at the corner of Red House Lane and Upton Road.

The census of 1851 calls the cottages "Providence Place" and gives the occupants as three farm labourers, one carrier, one bricklayer's labourer and one thatcher. Small though the houses were, they held big families. One couple had eight children, others four or five, and one had four children and an adult lodger.

Alterations and additions

As was pointed out above, the two end cottages were joined together to form one house in about 1857 and extensions, some quite large, were added to all of them. The aim was to increase the living accommodation, for in the 1861 census no fewer than eight households were listed as living there.

The cottage at the other end of the row, now number 11, was added in about 1876. It appears in the rate book for that year as a house and workshop, along with a blank entry of a rateable value of £4. By 1885 the latter is entered as another workshop and in later years became a greenhouse.

Owners and occupiers

From 1819 to 1851 a family named Russell owned the cottages. Then T.W. Attreed had them, followed by C. Wren but the rate books are rather vague at this period. In 1864, Henry Hopkinson bought them and lived in the one now known as 44 Upton Road for about 20 years. After him came Henry Moules and then T. Jenkins until 1910, when Mrs Maufe, mother of the well-known architect, joined them to her ownership of the Red House. They belonged to her for about ten years.

In the 1920's and 1930's they were owned by a family named Peyto (pronounced within the family as 'Pee-toe', although by others as 'Pay-toe'), some of whose descendants are alive today. They were purchased by William Peyto, born 1863, a former labourer at Woolwich Arsenal who subsequently become a successful market gardener in Belvedere and Bexleyheath. On his death in 1930 he left a farm at Wilmington to his two sons, the Hogs Hole cottages to his eight daughters and 44 Upton Road (aka 'The Orchard') to his wife. In 1930 Mrs Peyto moved into a new bungalow that had been erected in the garden of the Orchard, and which became 46 Upton Road.

Most of the occupiers of the cottages were ordinary people who made no great mark in history. Names like Crafter and Elms were familiar ones in 19th century Upton and some of the first inhabitants bore these names. Thomas Hills, a carrier, lived in one of them for many years; his name was printed in the Post Office Directory of Kent for 1845, as noted above, but this is a rare exception. After the conversion of the two end cottages into one house, its occupiers tended to be more middle-class. One of them, C.J. Wilson, called the house 'Orchard Cottage', a name later varied to 'The Orchard', by which name it was known thereafter (see above).

The cottage added to the other end of the row in 1876 was occupied for over thirty years by John Barham, a market gardener. F.J. Durrant followed him in about 1912. This house was called 'Denmark Cottage' from 1829 onwards.

Other points

The name 'Hogs Hole' does not seem to have been a popular one. At the census of 1851 the cottages were called 'Providence Place'; in 1861 'Providence Row' and in 1871 'Denmark Cottages', a name recalled by that given to number 11 in 1929.

Despite their proximity to Danson, the cottages were not part of the Danson Estate. The first owners the Russells may have been connected by marriage with the Wybourns, a local family with considerable land-holdings in the 17th and 18th centuries. Certainly, the widow of a Wybourn married a Russell in the early 18th century. The Wybourns were also connected with the Judds, who farmed at Upton over a very long period of time.

Sources:

Bexley parish rate books, valuations, tithe map and award.

Electoral registers

J.W. Mackall, **Life of William Morris**