

The Old Manor House



TM275 Owner Richard Hodd Occupier Susan Bowles **FT** The Misses Ross

This property was in the small Manor of Woking Rectory which stretched along the north of High Street from Shackleford to the right angle corner at the junction with present day Old Woking Road

“Henry Brabonde of Farnham and Joan his wife hold by copy (1541)..... one cottage with a garden in Wokingstrete on the east of the parsonage at Woking and one acre of land lying in the common field to the north of the said cottage.” (*Court Rolls Of Woking Manor 1 – 3 Edward VI.*)

Pevsner says *mid-C17, brick.*

The house is said to have been built by James Zouch in the 1660s after he had pulled down Woking Palace but this is unlikely since it was not in the Royal Manor. Similarly the suggestion that it was built for the Duchess of Cleveland, one of Charles II’s mistresses and to whom the Royal Manor was granted in 1708, is probably untrue.

This house was probably built in the mid to late 17th century about the same time as near by Old House with which it shares a number of features. There is much re-used timber which may have come from Woking Palace or more likely from a previous house on the site.

Arthur Locke says the *Parsonage* was on the north side of the High Street built of red brick and on the site of the present Old Manor House. Arthur Locke's little yellow book has a great deal of information on Woking but unfortunately it is very seldom that he quotes his source. However, in this particular instance, confirmation does appear to be provided by the Woking Land Tax returns 1780 – 1811 and the Church Rate Assessments of St Peter's 1673 to 1685.

The Land Tax returns for Woking show the owner, occupier and amount assessed sometimes showing the name of the property but more often than not this information is omitted. During the period covered by the returns, by far the largest assessment in Town Street is for the *Parsonage*. Such a relatively large property in such a small area could only be what is now known as the Old Manor House. The reason for the amount of the assessment may have been because the holding included Parsonage Farm next door, long since demolished.

The ownership of the property appears to have followed that of the Manor (see below). The occupier from 1780 – and probably before this – was Richard Fenn described as a bachelor of Woking on his burial at St Mary's, Horsell in 1797. He was succeeded as occupier by James Fenn possibly a relative.

In 1673 the Church Rate Assessment for June shows Lord Aungier as the owner of the *Parsonage* with the highest assessment in Town Street. Only John Weston of Sutton Place has a higher assessment. The position is the same in October 1674, January 1675 and October 1676. There is no further mention of the *Parsonage* until October 1682 June 1683 and October 1885 when Richard Bird and William Harvest are assessed for a similar amount *as tenants*. There are no more surviving records after 1695.

Manning and Bray **MB** (p142, vol.I) say that the Manor of Woking Rectory was in the possession of Lord Aungier and that it descended on his death in 1632 to Gerald, Lord Aungier his son and from him who died in April 1655 to Francis his nephew who on 18th December 1677 was created Earl of Longford.

On 15th July 1682 the Manor passed to Maximilian Emily of Chilworth and remained in the possession of that family, finally being inherited by the Rev Edward Emily of West Clandon in 1762. On his death in 1792 he devised the estate to the then Bishop of Salisbury in who in turn sold the manor to Henry Halsey of Henley Park in 1800. **MB** There is a memorial to the Emily family in St Peter's.

These records fit very nicely with the estimated construction date of the Parsonage towards the end of the 17th century and the abandonment of Woking Palace and the reuse of materials for building in the village.

1841

- Susannah Bowles and Richard Stedman, maltster.
- *Town Street, not necessarily in the Manor House* William Ross, schoolmaster, Sarah possibly his wife and another William, a compositor and probably his son.
- *With William Ross* Valentine Blake surgeon, George Reynolds printer and Ethelred Thomas compositor plus two visitors, Mary Williamson and Alexander probably her son.

1851 *possibly at the Old Manor House*

- William Ross, schoolmaster and *registrar of births and deaths*, his wife Mary and a servant, Sarah Hardy and a young cousin, Henry Rumsey plus two visitors, William Jeffrey and Peter Lely both described as annuitants.

1861 *High Street*

- William Ross, his three young children, William, Mary and Fanny. and his sister in law, Emma Lucas, *assistant in school*.

1871 *High Street*

- William Ross, his children, William, assistant in the school, Mary and Fanny and his sister in law, Emma Lucas housekeeper plus a domestic servant, Mary Ann West. There were eleven boarders at the school.

1881 *Old Manor House.*

- William Ross, his son William and daughter Mary both teachers and his sister in law Emma Lucas housekeeper. The younger daughter Fanny is the domestic. There are 12 boarders

1891

- William Ross, his daughters Mary and Fanny and his sister in law Emma Lucas
- Catherine Gristock, widow and her three sons, John, George and William and daughter Eliza
- Charles Southin, widower and gardener and his two daughters, Matilda and Holly *Elizabeth Rachel Southin wife of Charles was buried at St Peter's on 20th March 1890.*

1901 *High Street*

- Mary Ross, school teacher, her sister Fanny, living on own means and their aunt, Emma Lucas, living on own means.

As Registrar, William Ross was responsible for certifying the accuracy of the Census

In 1871 the Gristock family were living at Poundfield Lodge but the father John Gristock, described then as gardener and domestic servant died in January 1885. In 1881 this family had been living in nearby Shackelford.

There are references in Edward Ryde's diary to *Gristock* who was his farm baliff and often drove Mr Ryde and

his family. This must be the same man. On 29th September 1869, Edward Ryde wrote in his diary *Speak to Gristock this morning about the future. Complain of the past and of his getting into debt. Require him to let me have a list of his debts.*

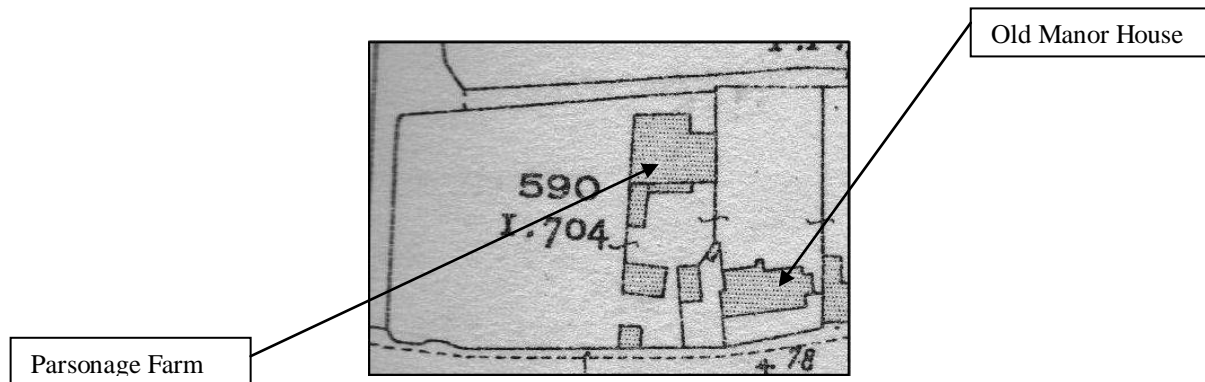
Catherine Gristock, widow aged 62 and previously an occupant is living on her own means in High Street in 1901.

1919-22 Miss F Ross **1923-39** Miss GL Beckton **1948-9** CV Hassall **1957-1964** F Harbord **1969** BM Martin
WNM

The Misses Ross, daughters of William Ross sold the house to Miss GL Beckton in 1921. (*Wise Collection – Surrey Archaeological Society*) *The Directories were a little late to record the name of the new owner!*

Amongst the owners of the house was the playwright Christopher Hassall, one of whose guests, the artist Rex Whistler, it is said, engraved a verse on a window pane in the bathroom: ‘*Teach me I pray O Lord, to dread my bath as little as my bed*’. The engraver is more likely to have been the artist’s brother Lawrence, the distinguished engraver, since Rex Whistler was killed in Normandy in 1944. There is a superb revolving memorial by Lawrence Whistler to his brother in Salisbury Cathedral

Below is a sketch of The Old Manor House and Parsonage Farm in 1934



Sources

TM275 the Tithe Map reference for the Horsell, Sutton and Woking Maps. These references are correct for isolated easily identifiable buildings but only approximate for individual buildings in groups of buildings eg one house in a street of houses.

FT Frank E.Taylor's Local West Surrey Directory of 1913

WNM Directories published by Woking News and Mail

MB Manning & Bray

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