

A History of
Brook House, Compton, Surrey



Drawing by Sally Gorton

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Introduction

This is the history of Brook House, Compton, Surrey, from early incursions into common land above the marshes, through involvement in brickmaking, then a brewery and beer house, followed by the building of an early Victorian building later altered to its present-day form.

Today, Brook House stands slightly back from the main road at the eastern end of the village of Compton. It is a substantial residential building of early Victorian style behind a low scalloped stone wall with a looping in and out drive and two gateways. Adjoining to the north east is another property called Tudor Cottage which enjoys a shared driveway and for many years was in single ownership with Brook House, so forms an important part of this history.

In 1987, my family – being Bridget and I and our two children, Jessica and Richard, had decided to move to this area of Surrey. We had been given agent's details of the central portion known as 2 Brook House which was described as *"In a semi-rural setting – the major portion of a substantial early Victorian house with elegant accommodation and fine period features, set in landscaped grounds with paddock"*. It was the first house we viewed. It had all the accommodation we were seeking, an impressive yet friendly feel, interesting gardens with a stream and superb views towards the Loseley Estate owned woods. We bought it and moved in on 10th December that year on a very cold day. It has been a wonderful home for us for 38 years.

In 1989, a young man named Phil Gorton undertook a project to investigate and write about the history of Brook House. His interest arose from his grandfather who had been a chauffeur to the owner of Brook House before the Second World War. Phil went on to set up and operate a very successful business specialising as a professional researcher into houses and local history. Together with his wife, Sally, he has amassed an incredible volume of information on this area, its houses and its past residents.

Last year we asked Phil to update his research of Brook House, a chronological summary of which, with research references, is attached as an appendix. This latest history is based on Phil's 1989 report, his recent research, some excellent information in the 2024 publication "Compton Village Past and Present" by Fiona Curtis and my own further research.

This history is as accurate as I have been able to assess, but as with all historical research some of the sources on which we have relied may not have been correct or did not paint the full picture, so it needs to be read with that element of caution. And, of course, it is my interpretation of the information we now have.

I very much hope all those with an interest in Brook House or Tudor Cottage will enjoy this story.

William Bagnall 2025

Land, Water and Early Compton

Before looking at the early activity on the site of Brook House, it is interesting to understand the geographical characteristics of the area and how they may have had a material impact on the development and use of this part of Compton. In addition, the early major land ownerships of the area and evolution of the village play an important part in the history of our property.

Compton sits in a valley on the south side of The North Downs. The name had various earlier versions such as Conton in the Domesday Book, but the meaning has been the same, being a village or settlement in a valley. Old English/Anglo Saxon placenames ending in tun or ton meaning a village or farmstead or settlement. And com or coombe meaning a valley.

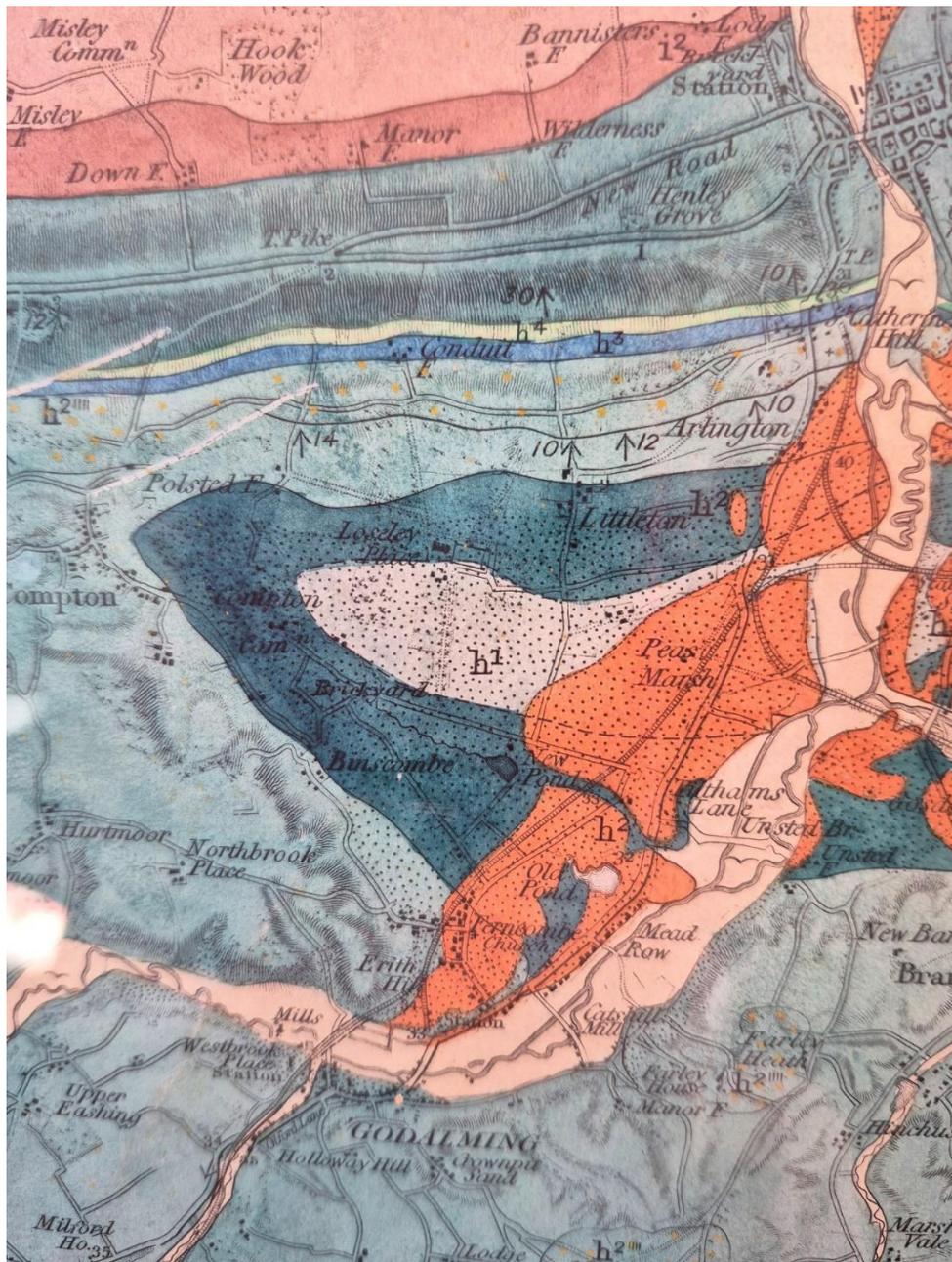
Geology

The North Downs are a ridge of chalk hills that stretch from Farnham in Surrey to the White Cliffs of Dover. The chalk was formed from small sea creatures with calcite skeletons which thrived 65 to 100 million years ago when south east England was covered by a warm, shallow sea. Beneath that are various greensand formations – some being a limey sandstone and some more sandy. You can still see places where chalk or sandstone have been mined. Further down when reaching flat land there are sections of mudstone or clay and this is important for the history of Brook House as the land here is part of a substantial belt of Atherfield Clay which prompted interest in this land for brick production – more about this later on.

On the wall of our sitting room at 2 Brook House hangs a huge geological map of Surrey that was published in 1816 by Col. William Mudge. Mudge was a founding member of the Ordnance Survey when it was an independent military unit based at The Tower of London.

On this map we can see this band of Atherfield Clay is horseshoe in shape, beginning in the east near the railway line at the Peasmarsh end of New Pond Road. It then heads in a north-westerly direction into Compton where it turns direction roughly in the area of the village green and then back in an easterly direction along part of the Loseley Estate, through Littleton and ending close to the Portsmouth Road at Artington.

When we installed the Klargester sewage treatment plant in 2008 in the orchard of Brook House, you could see the different soil strata with greensand at top and Atherton clay a few feet down.



Part of Geological Map of Surrey published by Col William Mudge 1816

Water and Tudor Cottage Early Records of Activity

Before this south eastern end of the village saw any significant development and before land drainage was installed much of this area was marsh land.

Old place names in the area demonstrate the watery nature of the area. Withies Lane and Polsted Lane have watery derivatives, as Withies or reeds grew near water and Polsted is thought to come from 'Pool' sted. We have Waterhaw Cottage and Island House, and we can see that the south eastern section of the village was referred to as Compton Marsh on Rocques Map of c.1760 – by which time there had been many incursions onto the common land.

John Rocque made his map of Surrey during the late 1750s/early 1760s. This extract shows the south east part of Compton. Given the era in which it was made, his map is surprisingly accurate. The field boundaries are largely symbolic but he did attempt to record land use, showing woodland, arable, pasture, hop gardens and meadow. Streams draining the Compton valley feed southwards towards our property and then south eastwards across what was Compton Marsh. Over the year many have evidently been diverted from their natural course but the overall direction remains the same.



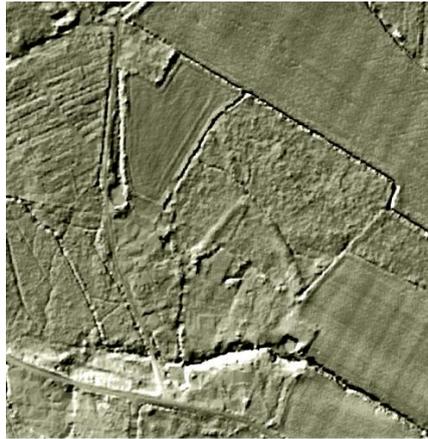
The land on which Brook House and Tudor Cottage now stand is roughly just above the “m” in Compton. Note that the brook runs behind all the buildings though the line may be indicative only.

We have the first records of use of property in our area. Philip Gorton's research has revealed medieval archival evidence of the existence of a mill in the Polsted area of Compton. He believes that the mill stood somewhere near what is now called Tudor Cottage but on which then stood a building known as Cutt Cottage. In 1199, in the reign of Richard I, a property agreement (or concord) refers to "a mill with appurtenances in Polsted". In 1199 a mill would have been water powered. In many years of Compton research, this is the only explicit archive reference Philip found to a mill in Compton or Polsted.

In the 1560s, a property called *Cutts* with 2½ acres of land was a freehold of the manor of Polsted. (ref: LM/S/14-15 Surrey History Centre). They are incomplete records of the Manor of Polsted. *Cutts* is named in various places throughout the records. The earliest record of *Cuttcroft* is an undated grant from the second half of the 13C ref:212/33/1. *Cutt* is a word meaning an artificial water channel and is often found associated with mills. By 1775, the property consisted of *Cutthouse*, *Cutt Garden* and *Cutt Croft* but there is no reference to a mill (ref: LM358/16/7-8 SHC).

In 1951, J. Hillier wrote in *Old Surrey Watermills by J Hillier, pub. Skeffington 1951* that he had: "obtained authentic confirmation from an old Compton resident that the pond behind the "Withies Inn" once supplied a mill which stood behind "The Bear" but it was pulled down a hundred years since, and no trace remains". Later in this history we will come to The Bear, a beer house so named until the late 1830s, located on the land upon which Brook House was later built. By the time of Roque's Map c.1760 there is no sign of a mill.

Finally in respect of the early evidence of watercourses and mills, Phillip has found a LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) image that shows embankments in an inverted V shape within Compton Wood that appear to be the edges of a large shallow pond. They are similar in shape to the artificial ponds in Bummoor Copse (The Moors), which are about ¼ mile to the north. If that were a pond then it might have acted as a reservoir that fed the mill. This would certainly fit the description of the mill's position as being behind the Withies Inn and ties with the watercourse shown on Rocque's c.1760 map which runs along the back boundaries of The Cottage, Brook House and Tudor Cottage rather than through the middle of them as they are today.



Link to National Library of Scotland website. It has a useful slider that overlays a LIDAR image to an OS map:

https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=17.1&lat=51.21224&lon=-0.62017&layers=168&b=LIDAR_DTM_1m&o=0&marker=51.211977,-0.619573

Brook House Early Records of Activity

So, we have early evidence of Tudor Cottage but what about Brook House? Phillip Gordon found as follows. Cuthill was the raised land above the Cutt - not a very steep hill as we walk up today from our orchards or Tudor Cottage to the front of Brook House but enough to raise it above the wetter marsh area and be of significance.

The minutes of the court baron of the manor of Compton Westbury that was held on 17 Jan 1649 record that Henry Bookham had encroached onto the waste of the manor of Westbury, an estimated three roods [$\frac{3}{4}$ acre], near to Cutthill. Such encroachments were the result of a rapidly growing population and need for land.

He was commanded to remove the encroachment by the first day of May or pay a 20-shilling penalty. However, court actions of this kind are not always what they seem: it was effectively a licence fee whereby the lord of the manor, Poynings More, accepted the *status quo* and allowed Bookham to keep this little piece of enclosed land on payment of a fine. While some other manorial lords would have had the squatter forcibly evicted, generally such settlements often became permanent after recognition by the lord of the manor who could receive some small income from previously unproductive land.

Another similar action is recorded in this meeting of the court in which Robert Scrivener was commanded to pull down a cottage that he had built on an enclosed piece of the waste by 1st May. Again, it is unlikely that he did demolish his house. This entry is significant in that it

suggests that, had there been a house on Henry Bookham's enclosure, it would have been noted by the steward of the court.

We can't identify exactly where this encroachment occurred but the proximity of Bookham's enclosure to Cutthill suggests it was land which became part of the larger landholdings now known as Brook House and The Cottage. (The Cottage is the property adjoining Brook House to the west and now owned by Osman and Joan Abdullah.) There are no other entries in the manor records that refer to this encroachment.

Searches on Ancestry.com give some indication of Bookhams in Compton and earlier in Elstead. A Henry Bookham was born in Elstead in 1616 and died there in 1693. Later that century, a Henry Bookham was baptised at St Nicholas Church Compton on 17 Jan 1689 whose father was John Bookham, and he appears to have been buried at St Nicholas on 30 Nov 1723. It seems likely these would have had a link to the encroached land and that one of this family built the first buildings on the site – but it is conjecture.

Local Manor Houses

So far, we have come across the manor of Polsted and the manor of Westbury. The other manor of relevance to our property was the manor of Loseley which was outside the parish of Compton but owned land within it. Polsted Manor dates back to 1160 and was purchased by the More-Molyneux family in 1558.

The other 3 local manor houses were Manor of Feld – now Field Place – the manor of Eastbury and the Manor of Down Place which was in the north of the parish and demolished in 1947.

In recent years I have seen estate agents' sale details of parts of Brook House describing it as a manor house, which it very definitely is not and never has been!

The Barnes Family Years - 18th Century

Our property then has a lengthy period in the ownership of members of the Barnes family who were very prominent in Compton.

For a long time, the area around Godalming benefitted from its location on the main route from The Admiralty in London to Portsmouth Dockyard as was evident from the many coaching houses. From the early 18th century transport links began to improve with opening of turnpike roads and the construction of the Godalming Navigation in 1764.

What was happening in this eastern part of Compton? There is evidence of local brickmaking with references to brickmakers and also brickburners. Brickburners were in charge of the kiln in a brickyard responsible for ensuring correct temperature during firing. The Barnes family were directly involved in this trade.

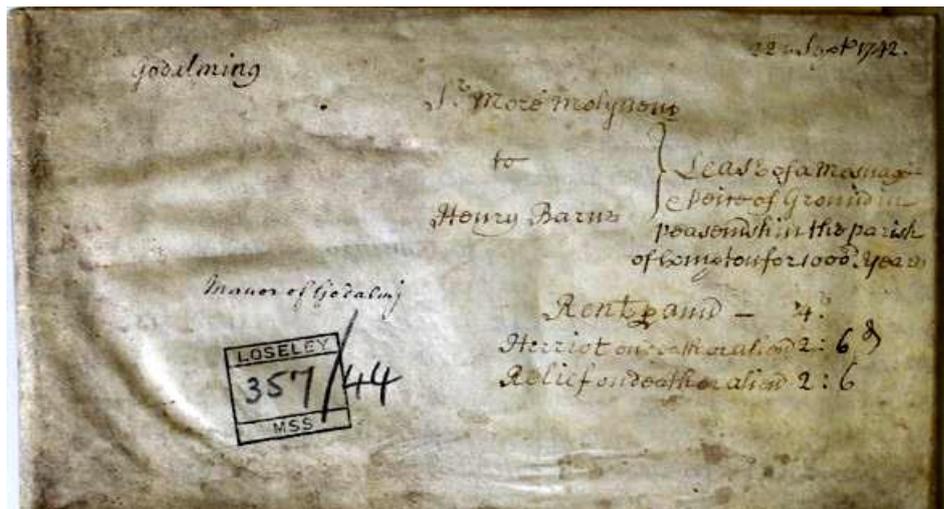
1742 Lease

This important lease of 1742 is stored in the archives of Surrey History Centre, Woking under The Loseley Manuscripts. Reference LM/357/44. It demises a property described as follows:-

"All that piece or parcel of ground containing by estimation sixty rods (to the same more or less) as the same is now inclosed parcel of the waste land of this Manor of Godalming situate lying and being in the said parish of Compton in this county of Surrey near to a tenement called Cutt House and adjoining to the land of the said Sr. More-Molyneux called the Moors [now called Compton Wood] towards the north part and to the common on the south and west parts with a messuage or tenement and buildings thereupon erected and built by the said Henry Barnes the said premises now are in the tenure or occupation of John Callingham . . .

Under the terms of the lease, Sir More Molyneux of Loseley demises the property to Henry Barnes of Compton, brickmaker, for a term of 1,000 years from 22 September 1742. Consideration was one pound and one shilling together with an annual payment of 4 shillings on the feast of St Michael the Archangel (known as Michaelmas which is on 29th September).

There is no plan of the leased land, but the description of near to Cutt House (where Tudor Cottage now stands) and adjoining what we know as Compton Woods to the north and common land to south and west, clearly identifies it as part of the land now forming Brook House and The Cottage



This lease reveals that the property was an encroachment onto the waste of the manor (common land). However, the area is described as 60 rods. A rod was a linear measurement of 10.5 ft or 5.5 yds (sometimes called a perch or pole). A rood was 40 sq. perches or 1/4 acre but, confusingly, was sometimes called a rod! So, in this case 60 rods equates to 3/8 acre, which is half the size of the encroachment plot in the manor court entry of 1649 and we don't know if these two encroachments were of the same land.

The lease tells us that a "a messuage or tenement and buildings" had already been built by Henry Barnes by 1742, which description usually means a dwelling and outbuildings, and Henry Barnes did not live there as it was in the occupation of John Callingham. Rocque's map of c.1760 shows two properties had been built on this land.

We know that this 1742 lease was not for the whole of the land on which, today, The Cottage and Brook House stand. When those properties were much later sold by auction in 1846, the sale particulars include this leasehold land and later on again we will find that that the leasehold part of the property was converted to freehold in 1949.

The lease refers to the waste land as being in the manor of Godalming, whereas it should have been described as the waste of the manor of Westbury, another of Sir William More Molyneux's manors. This was probably just a descriptive error.

Several Henry Barnes and some Brickmakers

It transpires that the Barnes family will have a long ownership of our property and that the series of registered owners will all have the name Henry Barnes, which makes it hard to differentiate between them. I have adopted a regnal numbering.

The earliest clue comes from a case in the Court of the Exchequer in 1721 where Henry Barnes, brickburner, age approximately 40 years [therefore born c.1680], is listed as a deponent (a person giving testimony under oath) in a court case between William Sanderson, clerk, and John Fulham Esq. of Eastbury regarding the rectory, glebe and tithes of Compton.

Ancestry website has family trees that have a Henry Barnes baptised in Compton 1675 and buried in Compton 1728. There is no certainty but I think it likely he was the father of the Henry who took the 1742 lease as the records show a Henry Barnes baptised in Compton Nov 1708 with father Henry and mother Mary. We have called the father Henry Barnes I and his son Henry Barnes II.

In 1735 Mary Barnes, brickmaker, widow, was fined 20 shillings by the manor court for digging clay pits by the King's highway between Compton and Godalming, on the Pease Marsh. Two other brickmakers were fined for the same offence at this court. This Mary would have been the widow of Henry Barnes I.

So, having obtained leasehold title to this property in 1742, Henry Barnes II, aged 30, and described as brickmaker, married Mary Goddins the following year and had a son called Henry born in 1746 in Compton – we therefore now have Henry Barnes III.

Henry Barnes II had many siblings – 10 are shown on the Mike Pointer Family Tree in Ancestry.com. As well as keeping the same first names through the generations which doesn't help in explaining their history, in this case, we also have 3 generations of Henry Barnes who married a Mary – Henry III duly following suit!

So, the 3 generations look something like this:-

Henry Barnes I	1675-1728	m Mary
Henry Barnes II	1708 -1788	m Mary Goddins 1743
Henry Barnes III	1746 - 1799	m Mary

At St Nicholas Church in Compton, there is a substantial chest tomb immediately opposite the main door of the church, on which is a memorial inscription.



*In memory
of Henry Barns
Who died 6th --- 1788
Aged 80 years
Also Henry Barns
Son of the abo[ve]
Who died in 8th [Feb] 1799
Aged ----- or year/s
Henry Barns
Who died the ----- 1835
Aged -- years*

The size and positioning of this chest tomb demonstrate that the Barnes family held a prominent position in the community. It includes Henry Barnes II, Henry Barnes III and a fourth Henry Barnes that we have yet to describe.

In 1751, Henry Barnes II assigns the lease of our property to Richard Barnes for £80. I think it is most likely that Richard was a brother of Henry. At this time the son of Henry Barnes II was only 5 years old. However, the Barnes family still did not occupy the premises as John Callingham remained the tenant. And we don't have any guidance as to the form and use of the property. The only relevant records I can find of a John Callingham are a marriage to Ann Wodger at St Nicholas on 15 Feb 1691 (but that is more likely to be his father) and a burial at the same church on 14 April 1782 which is likely to be him.

There is also record of John Callingham listed in the list of jury qualified freeholders and copyholders in 1763 under location of Loseley. Copyhold was the name for a type of land tenure that was derived from the act of giving a copy of the relevant title deed recorded in the manorial court roll to the tenant, rather than the actual land deed itself. However, we don't know the occupation of John Callingham, nor the use of the property on the site and we cannot find a record of him making a will. Was it related to brickmaking or had it become a beer house by then? Directories that might have helped were not published until later in the 19th century.

Then in 1765 the lease was assigned by Richard Barnes, Yeoman, to Jenny Barnes a widow of Allen Barnes who was a younger brother of Henry Barnes II and Richard. Jenny lived at Down Farm, Compton which was in the north of the parish on the northern side of the Hogs Back road and in an area now called Blackwell.

Jenny held the lease until 1781 together with Elizabeth Barnes, the widow of Richard. They assigned the lease to yet another Henry Barnes a brickburner and Thomas Barnes a yeoman. The tenant by then was William Hart. This could well be Henry Barnes III, the son of Henry II, who would have been 35 by then and who lived until 1799 according to his gravestone.

We then have an uncertainty regarding the final Henry Barnes in this history. Phil Gorton tells us that the Westbury Manor court rolls show Henry Barnes IV was proclaimed heir to Henry Barnes III in 1801, but being a minor was under the guardianship of Allen Barnes, and didn't take on the lease until coming of age in 1806 when he was admitted to the tenancy.

However, this conflicts with a will possibly made by Henry Barnes III in 1798 one year before his death but proved in 1810. This will suggests no heir as it leaves his property to his mother and then Henry Barnes, son of Alan Barnes of Woking.

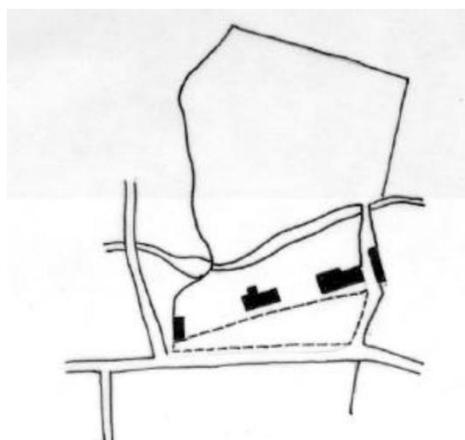
Whichever is the correct version, this is likely to be the third Henry Barnes buried in the chest tomb at St Nicholas as his death is 1835, the year that the property is sold by auction. Mercifully, this Henry married Ann in Compton in 1795 rather than yet another Mary.

Additional Land fronting Main Road

At this time the access would have been from Withies Lane. There was a small triangle of common land between the houses and the road that is now New Pond Road. Henry IV obviously saw an opportunity to enlarge his land holding and on 29 October 1822 he was granted the copyhold tenancy of this odd piece of land shown in broken lines on this sketch map. The event is recorded in the Westbury Court Roll:

"That peice or parcel of land part of the waste of this manor lying between the garden belonging to the house of the said Henry Barnes and the high road there containing on the side next to the said road two hundred and fifty feet more or less at one end one hundred and thirty five feet more or less and at the other end fifteen feet more or less to which the said Henry Barnes was admitted tenant at a Court Baron for this manor on the twenty ninth day of October one thousand eight hundred and twenty two".

This sketch is an outline copy of the map in the auction details we are about to consider, and we have shown the approximate area of this land with a dotted line. The 250 feet frontage would have been from close to Withies Lane up to a point close to where stand the current gates opposite 2 Brook House.



Sale by Auction in 1836

By 1835, the property had been in the ownership of the Barnes family for 93 years if taken from the date of the start of the leasehold section, and probably longer. During that time the property has had various occupational tenants - John Callingham, William Hart and George Spicer, but we have no information as to the use of the property. It could have been related to the brickmaking owners or possibly agricultural or some form of ale house – or a combination.

In 1835, Henry Barnes IV dies and the properties forming part of his estate are offered for sale by the auction by Baker and Son at the Harrow Inn, Compton on Wednesday 13th July 1836 at two o'clock. There are 9 lots. The lots included freehold properties in Binscomb, one being a Public Beer House, a 12 Acre Farm in Compton, and various land holdings for agriculture, coppicing, chalkpit and sand pit. The extent of this reinforces the view that the Barnes family had been a significant presence in Compton and explains the prominent position of their chest tomb outside the main door of St Nicholas church.

Below are the details of Lots 1 and 2. Lot 1 is our neighbouring property, The Cottage, shown as 10 on the plan. Lot 2 is Brook House shown as 11 on the plan.

LOT 1.

A VERY DESIRABLE
MESSUAGE OR COTTAGE RESIDENCE,
BRICK-BUILT AND TILED,

Containing Dining and Drawing Rooms, and 5 Bed Rooms, Kitchen, Wash-house,
Pantry, and Cellars;

**A capital Garden, with Shrubbery (partly walled in), and a compact Lawn, Conservatory,
Coach House, Stables, and Piggery,**

In the occupation of THOMAS SCOTT, Esq. as yearly Tenant, at the low Rent of £25. per annum; and situate next the
High Road leading from Compton to Guildford and Godalming.

Also,

A VALUABLE PIECE OF
Freehold Meadow Land,

Part of a Close of Meadow at the back or North side of the above mentioned Messuage, as marked or stumped out to
separate the same from the other part of the said Close, containing **1a. 1r. 28p.** (little more or less), in the occupation of
GEORGE SPICER as yearly Tenant. A Moiety of the Rent of the Meadow is to belong to the Purchaser of this Lot.

The above Premises are described on the Plan by the numbers 10, and comprise together

1A. 3R. 37P.

The above described Messuage and the Garden at the back are Leasehold, under a Grant from Sir MORE MOLYNEUX,
Knight, for the term of 1,000 years from Michaelmas, 1742, subject to the apportioned yearly Rent of 2s., and 2s. 6d. for
a Heriot, and 2s. 6d. for a Relief on death or alienation. And the Coach House, Stable, and Ground in front of the said
Messuage are Copyhold of the Manor of Compton Westbury, subject to two yearly Rents of 1s. each, and 2 Heriots of
5s. each on death.

A small Land Tax is apportioned to this Lot. The Purchaser is at his own Expence within One Month after he shall be let into
possession of the Western part of the Close of Meadow, to put up a Post and Rail Fence, or some equally good Fence, to separate the
same from the Eastern part of such Meadow; and such Fence with all the other Fences surrounding the several Premises comprised in
Lot 1, are to belong to the Purchaser of such Lot.

FIXTURES TO BE TAKEN AT A VALUATION.

The area of Lot 1 is a total of 1.98 acres.

LOT 2.

A COMPLETE

MESSUAGE, BREWERY, AND BEER HOUSE,

KNOWN BY THE SIGN OF THE BEAR,

Comprising Parlor, Sitting Room, Tap Room, Kitchen, and 3 Bed Rooms, Brew-house, Store Houses, Stabling, Coach House, Skittle Grounds, Garden, and Shrubby, in the occupation of Mr. GEORGE SPICER as yearly Tenant, at the Rent of £25. per Annum, situate next the Guildford and Godalming Road on Compton Green ;

ALSO

A valuable Piece of Freehold Meadow Land,

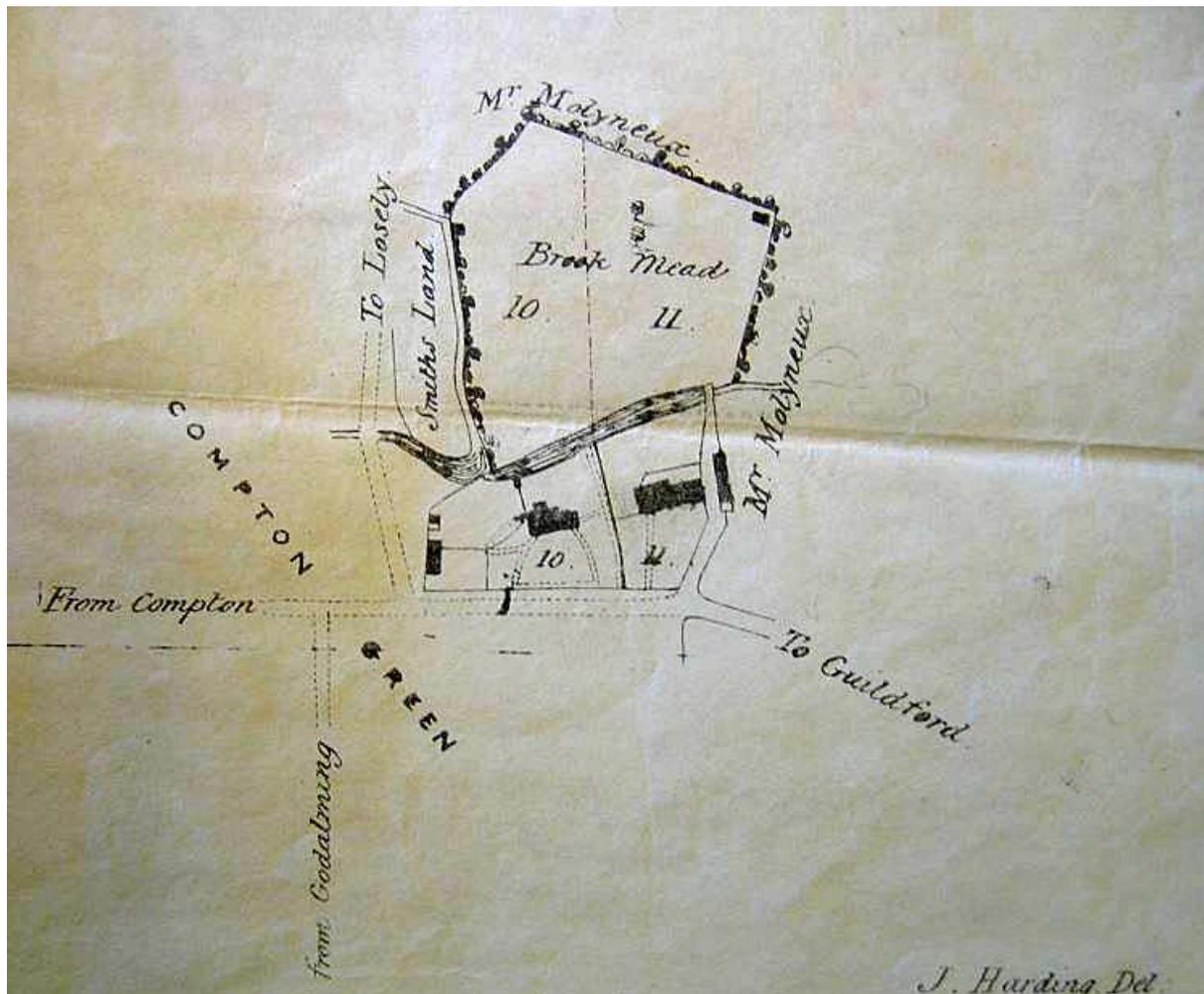
(the Eastern part of the Close of Meadow mentioned in Lot 1), containing 1 ACRE, 1 ROOD, and 7 PERCHES (little more or less) in the occupation of GEORGE SPICER as yearly Tenant.

A Moiety of the Rent of the Meadow is to belong to the Purchaser of this Lot.

The above Premises are described in the Plan by the Nos. 11, and comprise together 1 ACRE, 3 ROODS & 7 PERCHES.

This Messuage and the Garden at the back are also Leasehold, and comprised in the Lease for 1000 Years mentioned in Lot 1, and are subject to the apportioned yearly Rent of 2s.; also to 2s. 6d. for a Heriot, and 2s. 6d. for a Relief on Death or Alienation. The Ground and Premises in front of the Messuage are Copyhold of the Manor of Westbury. Subject to the yearly Rent of 1s. and Heriot certain of 5s. A small Land Tax is apportioned to this Lot.

FIXTURES TO BE TAKEN AT A VALUATION.



It is the particulars of this sale that provide us with a description and map of the house and its land, as well as details of the other properties in Compton and Binscombe owned by Henry Barnes IV. This was not the total of his estate; it is evident from other research that some of his properties had been sold prior to the auction.

On the land where Brook House now stands was a beer house called The Bear that was in the occupation of George Spicer. He was one of the witnesses to the will of Henry Barnes IV where he is described as a butcher. At that time, it was usual for a beer house keeper to have another occupation: the pub was usually only a part of a living. The Beer Act of 1830 allowed any rate payer to open a beer house on payment of an excise fee of two guineas per year. By the end of 1830, over 24,300 licences had been issued. For most, the income from the sales of beer did not constitute a living but merely a supplement to other income. It is possible that this Act was the origin of The Bear beer house.

We can deduce what the beer house looked like from the description in the sale particulars and because we know the approximate date of its construction: the 1742 lease indicates that it was built by Henry Barnes II sometime from about 1730, when he was 21 years old, and before c.1760 when it was recorded on Rocque's map.

The description of the cottage indicates that it was a double pile house with four rooms on the ground floor. The parlour and sitting room were likely on the south side, facing the road, whilst at the cooler, back of the house lay the tap room and kitchen. There was a central front door and it is likely that there was a stairway running up from the door to the three bedrooms. Double pile houses generally had two pitch roofs with a valley running between them. This was a very common house plan of the eighteenth century. There was a cellar that still lies under the present house, which was also a common 18C feature.

The chimney stacks were most likely at the ends of the house, the easterly one of which appears to have survived the rebuilding of the mid 19C.

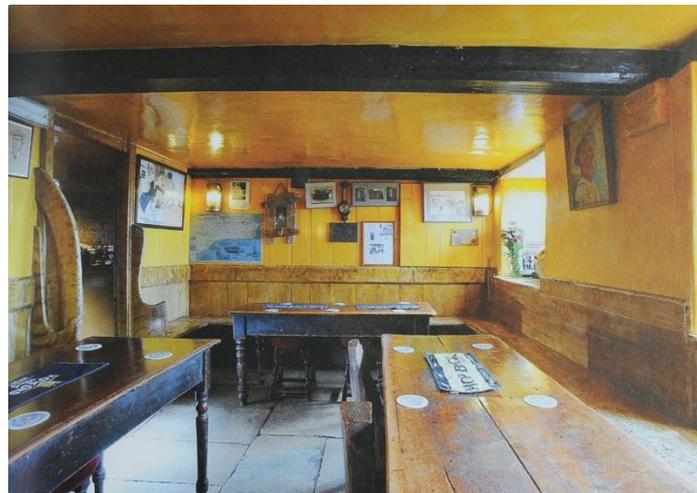
Bearing in mind the trade of its builder, it is reasonable to conclude that the house was built of brick, as opposed to the local bargate stone. There was further evidence of this was found in the 1980s when plaster was removed from one of the internal walls of No 2, where it adjoins No 1, revealing a part of the original brickwork of the old cottage.

As a beer house, The Bear would probably have had no bar counter. It had just a tap room, where the beer was stored and tapped ready for serving, and a parlour and sitting room where it was consumed. This was the pattern of very many rural pubs in the nineteenth century but only a handful of them with this arrangement survive today.

The vernacular double pile house in the 18th century would have looked something like this and our property would have had a sign.



We don't know what the inside of the beer house looked like but it may have resembled this rare surviving nineteenth century rural beer house interior at the Square and Compass at Worth Matravers, Dorset, which has no bar counter.



Outside there was also a brew-house, store houses, stabling, coach house, skittle grounds, garden and shrubbery. So, one envisages customers of the brew house would have enjoyed a stroll and playing in the skittle grounds and looking over the brook to meadow land of about 2.75 acres which was to be split in the sale between Lots 1 and 2.

The earliest deed identifying The Withies Inn as a public house dates from 1856, so it is likely that The Bear was the first beer house or public house in this end of Compton.

The Bear does raise the spectre of the cruel sport of bear baiting which was often associated with pubs of that name. However, bull and bear baiting declined during the 17th century and by the 18th century had largely died out in Britain. It was finally prohibited in the Cruelty to Animals Act 1835. If the beer house had been a result of the 1830 Beer Act, it is most unlikely that any animal cruelty took place but it would have been an odd choice of name. So, a much longer existence as a beer house or pub is possible although we have found no record of any needed licence attached to the property.

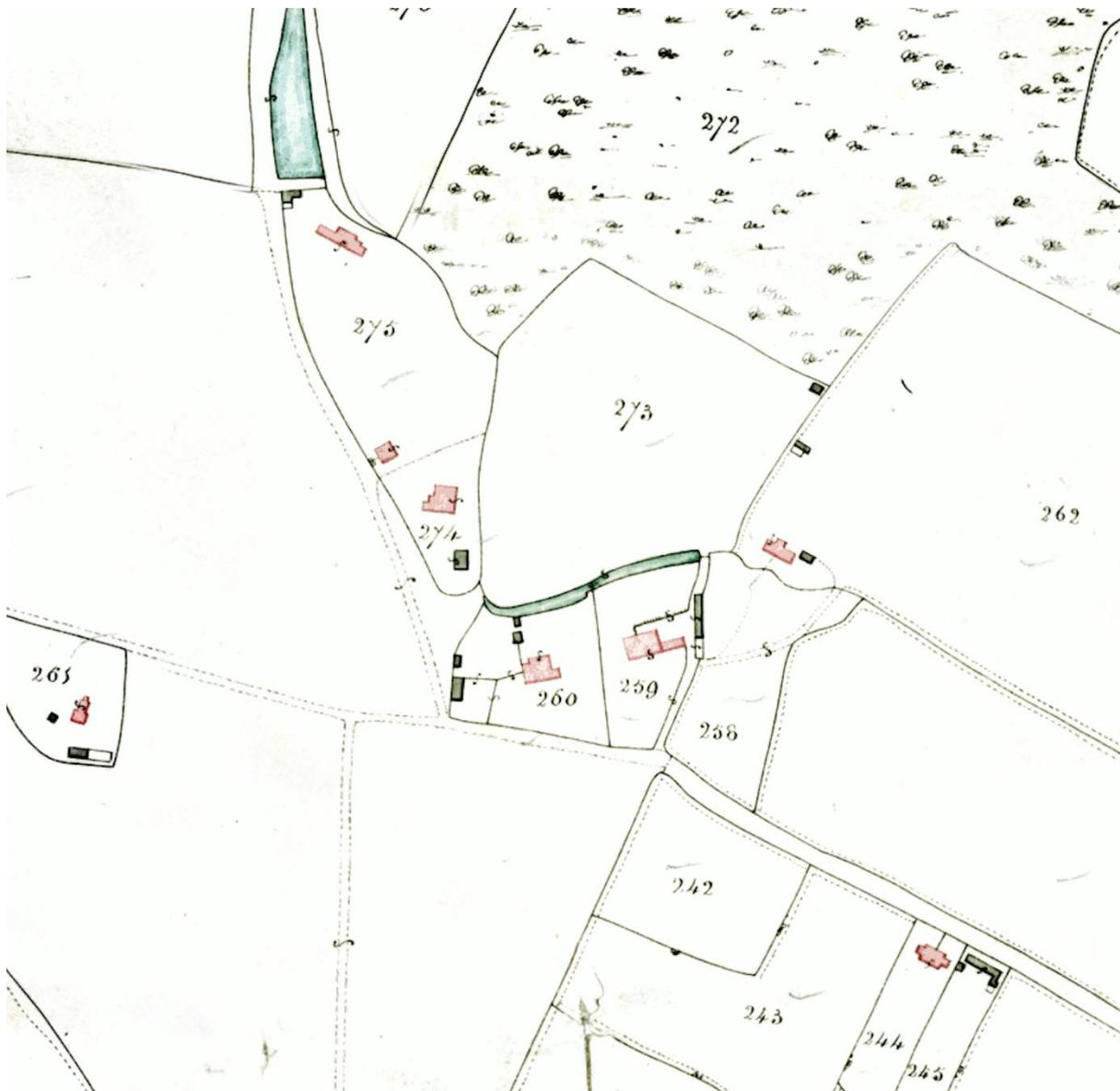
Boxall Family 1837 to 1850

We don't have a record of the purchase price but we do know that the purchaser of both Lots 1 and 2 was Charles Boxall.

Westbury manor court book entry of 12 April 1850 references a special court baron of 1837 when Henry Boxall was admitted as manorial tenant of the triangle of ex-common land between the house and the road on the surrender of the property by Messrs Twycross, Rand and Balchin, the trustees of Henry Barnes's will.

The Tithe survey of Compton has a map of 1839 and apportionment figures for 1841

			Acres	Roods	Perches
259	Boxall, Charles	Ellis, John Henry			2 16
273	Boxall, Charles	Ellis, John Henry	2	2	36
260	Boxall, Charles	Smallpiece, Job			2 30



There are 40 perches in a rood and 4 roods in an acre, so the above areas are

- 259 0.6 acres
- 260 0.687 5acres
- 273 2.725 acres

259 is the site of Brook House today although the plot is much smaller. The buildings shown on this are the same as in the sale particulars, so we can assume The Bear and the brew-house are still there. One can see that the frontage to the main road is significantly less than today. Conversely the frontage to the road for plot 258 is much longer than today and so at some stage in the future a sizeable area of land transferred from 258 to 259 – from today’s Tudor Cottage to Brook House. This tallies with the present day layout of the front garden and drive.

In the 1841 Census, the owner of the property, Charles Boxall aged 40, was an inn keeper who lived in the High Street, parish of St Mary’s, Guildford. The tenant, William Henry Ellis is listed as a farmer aged 60 and wife, Ann also aged 60 with daughter Ann aged 25. In that census the ages of those over 15 were rounded to the nearest 5 years. There is also a 7 year old male in the household, Thos Lockwood.

For Cut Cottage the owner is recorded as James More-Molyneux and the tenant as George Burll.

	Burll, George	258	House & Garden			3	12.
		262	Cut Hill	Arable		7	0
						7	3
						14.	

The area of Cutt house and gardens is 0.825 acres

PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
	Uninhabited or Building	Inhabited		Males	Females		Whether Born in same County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Parts.
	1		John Stridwick	30		Ag Lab		x
			Jane Stridwick		20			x-
			Agnes Stridwick		2			x-
	1		Reuben Smith	50		Plasterer	y	
			Harriet d:-		45		y	
			Maria d:-		20		y	
			Andrew d:-		13		y	
			Jenn d:-		5		y	
	1		J. H. Ellis	60		Farmer	n	
			Ann Ellis		60		n	
			Jenn Ellis		26		n	
			J. Lockwood		7		y	
	1		Geo Burt	43		Ag Lab	y	
			Barbara d:-		42		y	
			Geo Burt		12		y	
			Henry Gyatt		24	Plumber	y	
			Caroline d:-		22		y	
	1		William Spratt	30		Ag Lab	n	
			Caroline d:-		30		y	
			Mary d:-		10		y	
			James d:-		9		y	
			Caroline d:-		8		y	
			George d:-		5		y	
			Offie d:-		3		y	
			Isaac d:-		2		y	
TOTAL in Page 3	6			13	12			

Just above W H Ellis in the 1841 census list is Reuben Smith, a plasterer, who would later move from the building trade to establish the Withies beer house. One can still see the name Reuben Smith inscribed on the timber over the hearth at the end of the Withies Inn dining room. The earliest date identifying The Withies as a public house is from 1856.

The Molineux Family Years – 1850 to 1927

The next era for Brook House was the 77 year ownership by the Molineux family and the building of the main part of the Victorian house that exists today. The Westbury Manor court book records that on 12 April 1850, the property was sold by Henry Boxall of Guildford, builder, to Richard Molineux Esquire and John Richard Molineux gentleman, both of Guildford, in consideration of the sum of £400. The reason this is recorded is that the triangle of ex-common land between the house and the road that was granted to Henry Barnes in 1822 remained in the interest of the lord of the manor of Westbury.

A number of questions arise. What relation was Henry Boxall to Charles Boxall who acquired the property at the 1836 auction? Did Henry, a builder, redevelop the site before April 1850 and then sell to Richard and John Richard Molineux, or was it the Molineux family who undertook that work? Who were the Molineux family, as it has been clearly stated that they had no relationship to the More-Molineux family of Loseley?

In 1811, Richard Molineux, a coach wheelmaker, married Louisa Bellamy in Westminster. They had a son, John Richard Molineux born in 1816 when they were living in Bloomsbury. Sadly, Louisa died 2 years later and Richard is eventually remarried to Sarah Webber in 1824.

John Richard followed his father to become a wheelwright and he went into business partnership with his father. We move on to the 1841 census (6 June), which finds John was living with his step-mother in Little Russell Street, working as a wheelwright. His father was lodging at a house over the river in the Clapham Road, in the next household to that of Marianne Stevens, who was to become his daughter-in-law just over two weeks later. According to the census, she was of independent means and had one servant living with her. The parish register entry for their marriage records that her father, John Stevens, was a gentleman. John Richard had evidently found himself a well-to-do wife. In 1843, the business partnership between him and his father was dissolved [London Gazette].

Having purchased our property in 1850, John R Molineux, his wife Marianne and two children, Richard John and Louisa, together with one servant, are confirmed as living here in the 1851 census. Although the house is not specifically identified in the census, their household is listed between those of Job Smallpiece at The Cottage and George Burl at Cutt Cottage. It is not known when it first became Brook Cottage, and later Brook House, although, by this time, the brook is being used as an identifier for adjacent land and property as can be seen in the 1836 sale particulars where the meadow land is called Brook Mead.

In both the 1851 and 1861 census, John is described as a proprietor of houses and Marianne as a fundholder. He had moved away from his early life as a wheelwright which may have provided a good start and which together with an advantageous marriage enabled him to move to a new house in the country.

Meanwhile, John Richard's father and step mother were living in Guildford, on The Mount. There is no evidence to indicate when they all came to live in Surrey but it is, perhaps, significant that the Woking to Guildford railway line was opened in 1845 bringing Guildford to within an hour's journey of London.

Between 1853 and 1856 Britain was at war with Russia – known as the Crimean War. In 1854 county militias were revived, intended for home defence. John Richard was involved. Commissions signed by the Lord Lieutenant of the county of Surrey included John Richard Molineux, gent, to be Ensign in the Royal Surrey Militia. In June of that year, he was made a lieutenant, in 1863 he was promoted to captain and in 1873 he was granted the honorary rank of major.

One of the joint purchasers of our property, father Richard Molineux, died in Guildford in 1854.

The census of 7 April 1861 gives us a bit more detail. Their daughter, listed as Louisa in 1851, now known by her other name, Marianne. At the time of the census, their son, Richard John was at school in Worthing. There is one servant resident. It is also the first mention of the house name, at this time called Brook Cottage

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the											
Parish (or Township) of		City or Municipal Borough of		Municipal Ward of		Parliamentary Borough of		Town of		Hamlet or Tything, &c., of	Ecclesiastical District of
No. of Schedule	Road, Street, &c., and No. or Name of House	HOUSES		Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf and Dumb
		Inhabited	Uninhabited (1851 or earlier)				Male	Female			
	<i>No Controversy</i>			<i>Frederick Martin</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Un</i>	<i>18</i>			<i>Surrey Corsham</i>	
				<i>Mary Ann</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>7</i>			<i>"</i>	
				<i>John</i>	<i>"</i>		<i>7</i>			<i>"</i>	
<i>65</i>	<i>Brook Cottage</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Richard Molineux</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>44</i>		<i>Proprietor of Houses & Landholder</i>	<i>Middsex Bloomsbury</i>	
				<i>Marianne</i>	<i>Wife</i>		<i>14</i>		<i>"</i>	<i>Bucks High Wycombe</i>	
				<i>Marianne</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Un</i>	<i>7</i>		<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Worthing</i>	
				<i>Sarah Clark</i>	<i>Servant</i>		<i>23</i>		<i>General Servant</i>	<i>Surrey Godalming</i>	
<i>66</i>	<i>Rectory House</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>George Mow Molineux</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>58</i>		<i>Rector of Corsham</i>	<i>" Salisbury</i>	
				<i>Ann Spurlow Mow</i>	<i>Wife</i>		<i>36</i>		<i>"</i>	<i>London Marlbone</i>	

By the time of the 1871 census the house is known as Brook House although it seems to vary in subsequent census between Brook Cottage and Brook House before settling on House in the 20th century.

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										Page 17
*Civil-Parish (or Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal-Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Village or Hamlet, &c., of	Local Board, or [Improvement Commissioners' District] of	Ecclesiastical District of			
Compton										Compton
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES In, or attached to, or being (1/2)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION	AGE of		Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	Whether 1. Deaf-and-Dumb 2. Blind 3. Imbecile or Idiot 4. Lunatic
						Males	Females			
			The Godwans	son			4	Scholar	Surrey Compton	
			Henry J.	son			7		S	
92	New Road	1	Samuel Lucas	Head	Mar	72		Ag. Lab.	S	
			Ellenor J.	Wife			70	Ag. Lab.	S	Guildford
			George J.	son			78	Ag. Lab.	S	Godalming
			Henry J.	Son			10	Scholar	S	
			Emily J.	S			7	S	S	
			William J.	son			5	S	S	Godalming
93	D D	1	The Stammers	Head	Mar	38		Ag. Lab.	S	Waverley
			Elizabeth Neal	Wife	Mar	29		S Housekeeper	S	Compton
			The Stammers	son			20	Ag. Lab.	S	
			Henry J.	S			16	S	S	
			James Neal	Wife	Mar	24		S	S	
94	D D	1	James Lou	Head	Mar	80		Ag. Lab.	S	Stoke Newington
			Geo J.	son	Mar	46		S	S	Godalming
			The Hammond	Wife	Mar	47		S	S	Godalming
95	Brook House	1	Jos R. Molineux	Head	Mar	34		Captain of Militia	S	London Bloomsbury
			Marianne J.	Wife				S Wife	S	London Bloomsbury
			Rich. Jno J.	son	Mar	28		S	S	
96	D D	1	Richard Clarke	Head	Mar			Merchant	S	
			Sarah Blatchin	Wife	Mar	32		Nurse Domestic Serv	S	Waverley
			Julia King	S				Widow's Domestic Serv	S	Waverley
97	Common Side	1	Alfred Goddard	Head	Mar	28		Ag Labor.	S	Godalming
			Annie J.	Wife				S	S	Godalming
			Alfred Henry J.	son				S	S	Compton
Total of Houses..		6	Total of Males and Females..		15	9				

John Richard Molineux now identifies himself as a Captain of Militia. There are three servants listed as separate household within Brook House. Son Richard is resident but daughter Marianne is no longer at the house.

Grettons and Burton-on-Trent

The reason has a bearing on future of Brook House. On 27 June 1866 Marianne had married John Gretton. As reported in the Army and Navy Gazette

GRETTON—MOLINEUX.—June 27, at the Church of St. Nicholas, Compton, near Guildford, by the Rev. G. More Molyneux, assisted by the Rev. Hugh H. Gillett, John Gretton, jun., Esq., Major 2nd Battalion Staffordshire Rifles, eldest son of John Gretton, Esq., of Bladon House, Burton-on-Trent, to Marianne Louise Molineux, only daughter of J. R. Molineux, Esq., Captain in the 2nd Royal Surrey Militia, Brook House, Compton, near Guildford.

John Gretton's father, also John, had been brought into the partnership of Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton in 1835. The opening of a railway in 1839 redoubled Buton's pre-eminence as a brewing town. By 1877, Bass was the largest brewery in the world.

One year after their marriage John and Marianne Louise have a son, John who is the first of their 7 children. This John goes on to win double Olympic Gold in sailing events in the games of 1900, become an MP, chairman of Bass and 1st Baron Gretton. He will play an important role in the history of Brook House as the executor charged with the sale of the property in 1928.

Before going back to the Molineux family and Brook House, there is one further slight link. I was born in Burton-on-Trent in 1947. My father, Bill Bagnall, was a solicitor in that town who acted for many of the brewing companies there. He was a prominent member of a gentleman's club, The Burton Club, where all the local businessmen met and in 1984 as President of the Club, he wrote the forward to a book celebrating their centenary. In that book the list of founding members in 1884 includes John Gretton – no doubt Marianne Molineux's husband.

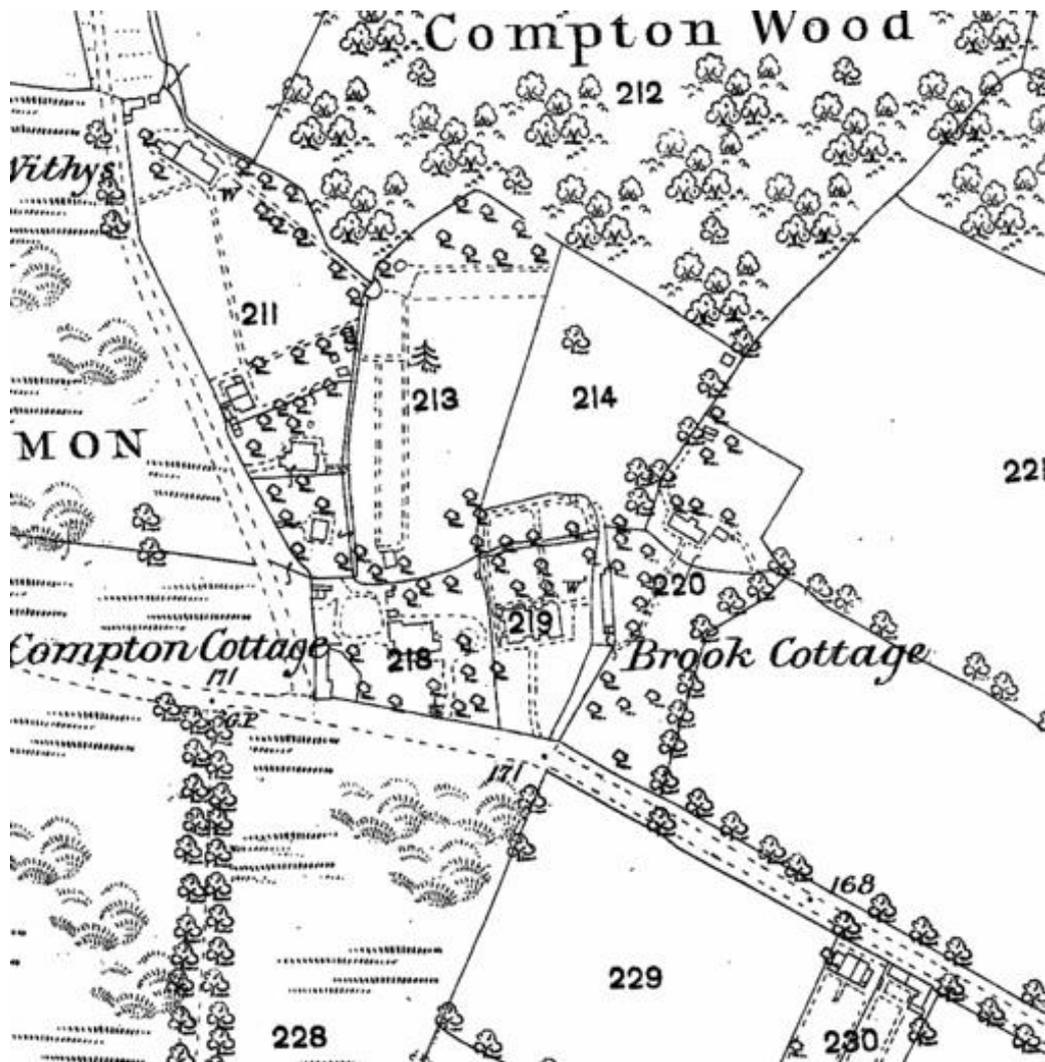
Date of Brook House Construction

When was today's Brook House first built. We don't know for certain, but what are the clues?

We know that in 1836 the beer house known as The Bear was still there when it was sold by auction to Charles Boxall and was still there on the tithe map of 1839. In the 1841 census there is a tenant J H Ellis, which strongly indicates it hadn't been redeveloped.

We don't know if it had been redeveloped before it was sold in 1850 by Henry Boxall, builder, to the Molineux family. In 1871 an Ordnance Survey, 25" – 1 mile, is published which clearly shows a new building has been constructed.

In the early 1980s during building work, plaster was removed from an internal wall between Nos 1 and 2 and revealed old brickwork that showed some of the old property remained. And some of the existing cellars have chalk stone walling – probably clunch which is softer than bargate stone. And we have earlier suggested that the eastern chimney stack was retained. So, we can deduce that there wasn't a full demolition and rebuild. It may have been redeveloped in phases but I suspect the early Victorian structure we see was created as one project although there were later additions such as the porch and balcony.

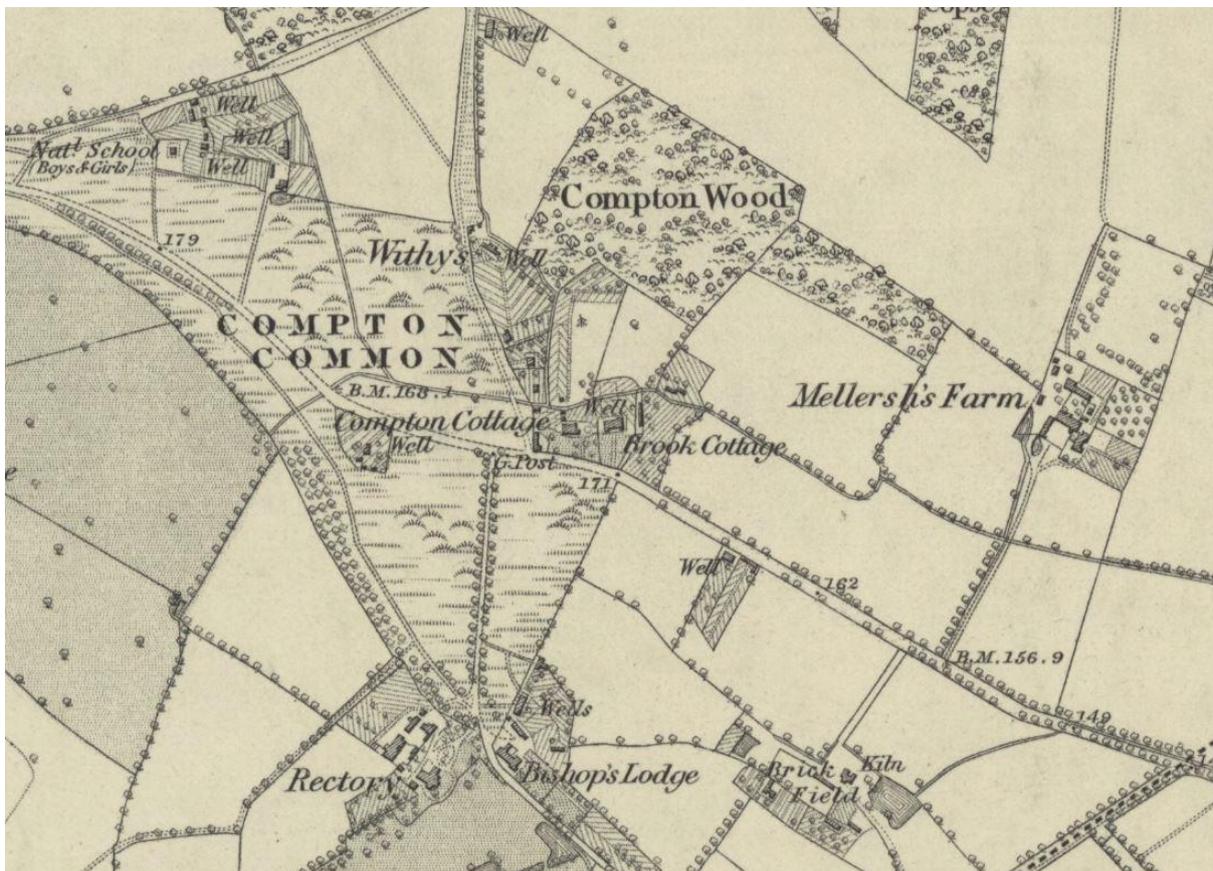


This 1871 survey is very informative. The census had named our house as Brook House, but this survey has Brook Cottage seemingly applying to it.

- The frontage to the main road is still much narrower than today and that of Tudor Cottage is much wider.
- The building looks to have the three gables that still exist but the porch and balcony at the front didn't exist.
- The land to the right of the building where No 3 now stands is part of the garden.
- The garden has been extended beyond the brook into the meadow land and it is possible that the garden wall has been constructed.
- To the right of the building is a long thin building beside the drive. That was also shown on the sale particulars, so predates the new house and is probably the garage/store building shared today by Nos 1 and 3. Was it the brewery?
- All of Tudor Cottage and its land now sits in 220 whereas it was uncertain in the title map of 1839. It has an access midway down the drive which still exists. However, the present access from the Brook House drive to Tudor Cottage on the far side of the brook did not exist.

- The route of the waterway along Withies Lane that leads to the brook now follows its current route but is different to that shown on Roque's map of one hundred years earlier. The line of the former may have been mainly indicative, but was on the north side of Cutt Cottage. It is now on the south side of the latest building. Either Roque's map is wrong or the brook has been realigned.

A different scale map of the same time shows the surrounding area. There is a well marked at the back of Brook House. At some time, the sides of the well were enclosed with white tiles to form a large tank which still exists today although not easily accessible. In the late 20th century, the hand pump for the well was still situated at the back of No 1 Brook House close to the current beech hedge.



By 1881 John Richard and Marianne are living at what is called Brook Cottage. They are in their mid 60s. John is now described as a retired Captain of Militia. Their 38 years old unmarried son, Richard John, lives with them and has no profession. There is one servant.

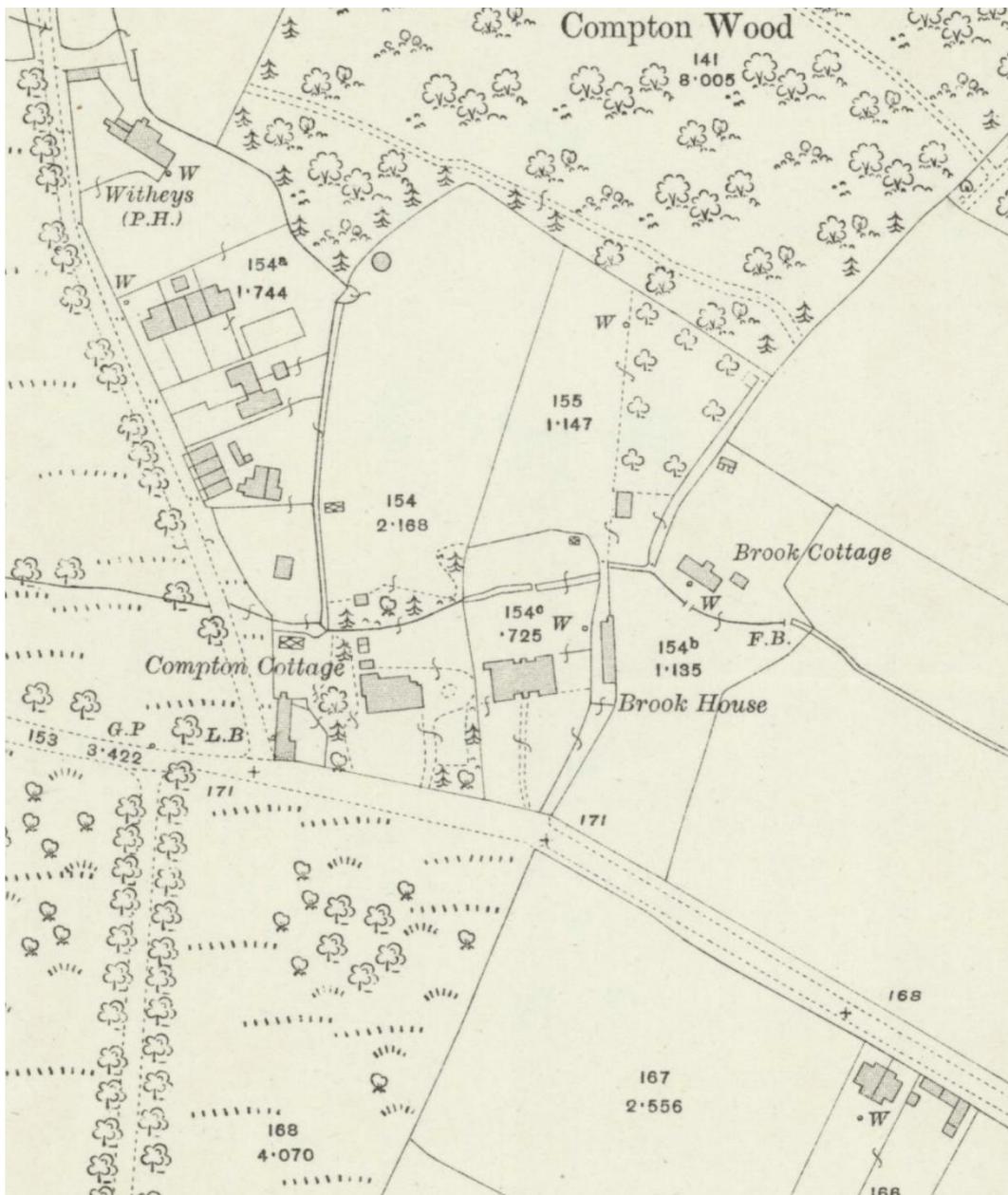
On another 10 years to the 1891 census, which has no indication of house name. There is no change other than son Richard was not at home on census day; he was staying at Drakelow Hall in Derbyshire, the home of the 23 years old brewer, John Gretton, his nephew.

John Richard's wife Marianne died on 22nd October 1900, and by the time of the 1901 census he is still living at what is by then called Brook House with his son Richard and one servant. One year later on 28th July, John dies aged 85 and leaves an estate worth £23,894.

The Last Molineux

The house now passes to Richard John Molineux and by 1911 he is aged 68 and has one live-in house keeper, Mary Howard aged 77 years, but who is recorded as having been "feeble minded" since she was 75. There was some confusion over the many terms used in this census for mental conditions, but it is thought feeble minded tended to be used in the case of mental infirmity in advanced age.

The Ordnance Survey of 1913 gives us an idea of the property at that time.



The layout looks to be unchanged from the 1871 map. Our property is now clearly named Brook House and Cutt Cottage has become Brook Cottage. The land areas have been measured at very slightly more than in the 1835 auction details.

Richard continues in residence until his death on 21 December 1927, on his own in later years but he probably had servants coming in to help him. He never had any profession, living on the wealth accumulated by his father and grandfather.

Phil Gorton's grandfather, Walter Bachelor, had memories of this last of the Molineux. Phil says *He remained unmarried and as time went on became a recluse surrounding the house with wire netting, a fence of corrugated iron sheet and a wall topped with spikes. My grandfather, Walter Batchelor who lived in Brook Cottages just down the road, was one of his tenants and remembered him as a very old, eccentric man with a long white beard. He was very fond of walking, frequently making excursions on foot to Aldershot. On one occasion the old man, on his return journey late at night, took the wrong turning at the bottom of Puttenham Hill and, following a 'phone call, he had to be picked up from Shackelford by granddad on his motorbike.*

If you stand on a ladder or bench to look at the top of the coping stones that sit on the garden wall at the bottom of No 2 and No 3, you will see the remains of the spikes where they were cut off.

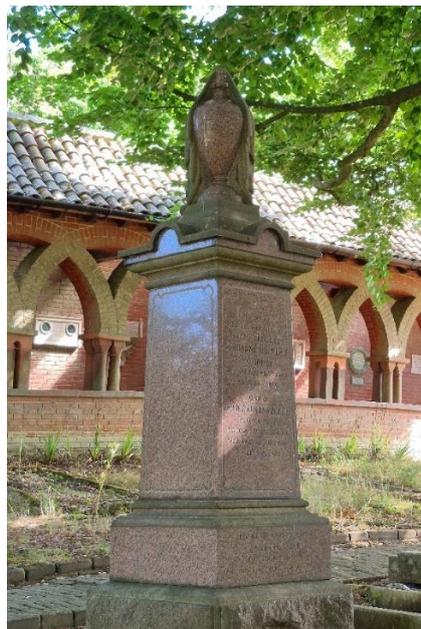
Probate lists his effects at £53,686 13s 5d. In his will his executor is named as John Gretton of Stapleford Park, Melton Mowbray, Leics, who we know was his nephew being the son of his sister, Marianne Louisa Molineux. John Gretton was bequeathed Richard's "books, manuscripts, pictures, statuettes and other objects of art". His nephew, Hugh Gretton, received his "carpentering and other tools and appliances".

The rest was to be sold and residue to be invested in trust for his nieces, Katherine Gretton, Ethel Gretton, Christine Gretton and Muriel Gretton.

We do get a sense of how Brook House was furnished from the sale of the contents advertised from which we can see there were some interesting paintings.

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY NEXT.
R. J. Molineux, Esq., decd.
Removed for convenience of Sale from Brook
House, Compton, to COUNTY AND
BOROUGH HALLS, GUILDFORD. — Valu-
able Collection of Oil Paintings, by or
after Reubens, Wouvermans, Henry O'Neil,
Poussin, E. H. Bell, J. Wighton, R. Head-
ley, Patchel, John Constable, R.A., A. Le
Grandé Miens, Van Goyen, Percelli, etc.,
Japanese and Chinese bronzes, Capo-de-
Monti, Dresden, and other china, carved
ivory figures and ornaments, Copeland and
biscuit china groups and figures, antique
armour, glass, bric-a-brac, and other
effects.

So, the Molineux family had owned the property for 77 years and had built the main part of the Victorian house and the garden layout we enjoy today. They were buried in the Watts Compton Cemetery with a very grand memorial monument under the Beech tree in the centre of the cemetery.



The Rudkin Family Years – 1928 to 1948

We now move on to a shorter ownership of Brook House but one of equal importance in its development.

Hugh Robert Ernest Rudkin married Dorothy Alice Fleetwood Arding in 1908 in the parish of Ipsden, Oxfordshire. Her father, Alfred Charles Arding was a director of Wells Brewery in Wallingford Berkshire and at some stage Hugh Rudkin, a retired Major of Royal Irish regiment, also became a director of the Wallingford Brewery. The business was taken over by Usher's Wiltshire Brewery Ltd in 1928 along with its 77 public houses and brewing ceased shortly afterwards. He was also a director of the Friary Brewery in Guildford which is probably why he and family moved to Compton. At some stage he was awarded an OBE.

The 1929 Electoral register of Berkshire shows Hugh Robert Ernest Rudkin and Dorothy Alice Fleetwood Rudkin at 47 High Street, Wallingford but the 1930 electoral register, which was compiled in Autumn 1929, has them living at Brook Cottage (Tudor Cottage) in Compton.

According to the electoral register Brook House at that time is occupied by Bridget Lane and Elizabeth Lane. However, Bridget is recorded in the 1921 census as a servant in the Rudkin household in Wallingford so must have moved with them to Compton and this confirms that by 1929 both Brook House and Brook Cottage are in one ownership.

By then Hugh was 53 and his wife Dorothy 47. They had two daughters, Nancy Amore Fleetwood Rudkin aged 18 and Kathleen Hermione Fleetwood Rudkin aged 12 (always called Mollie, as initially used by her Irish nanny).

Building a major extension and land change

The Rudkins undertook major internal and external works at this time.

When we moved to Brook House, the then owner of No 3, Ken Zoeller, told us that No 3 had been built as an extension to the house to provide a ballroom and further upper floor accommodation in time for the 21st birthday of the owner's eldest daughter. I don't have any firm proof of this but, if that account is correct, it clearly doesn't fit with the Molineux ownership. The Rudkins bought Brook House in 1928 and daughter Nancy was 18 at that time, so I think that dates No 3 as built around 1930.

In the dining room of No 2, you can still see the outline of the arch or doorway that led from the centre of Brook House into the new ballroom. It is likely this is when the central staircase and grand ground floor doors were installed in what is now No 2.

At the same time the porch and balcony extension to the centre of the property was created, about 0.15 acres of the front land of Tudor Cottage was incorporated into the front land of Brook House to enable the looped driveway and second entrance.

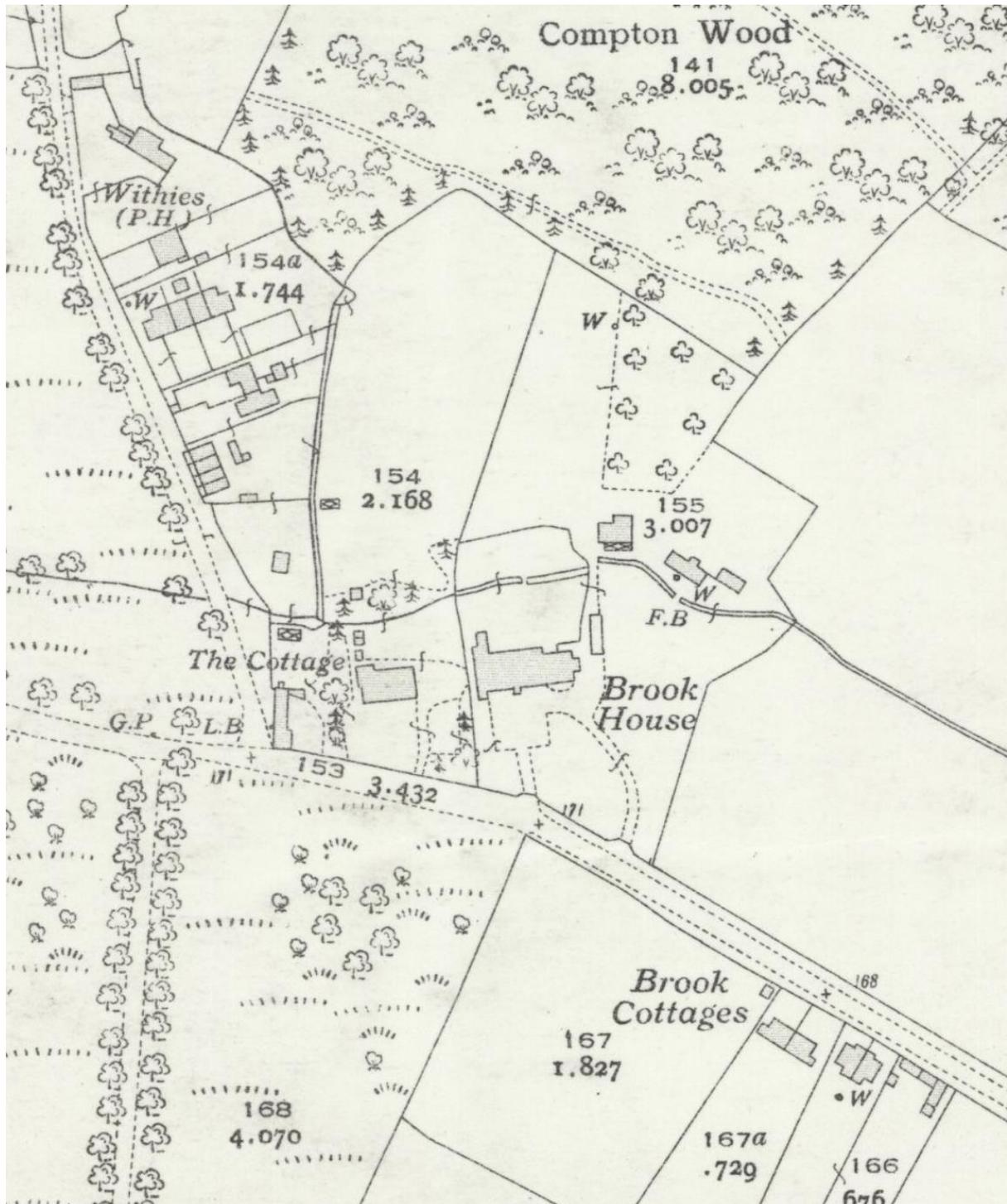
Fiona Curtis' book states that Compton resident Eric Benwell remembered the builder, Mr Winter, single-handedly building the lovely scalloped front wall.



Although this image was painted around 2000 , the building itself is how it would have looked in 1930 after the ballroom extension, and indeed is how it looks to this day.

At some stage, Hugh Rudkin also organised works to Tudor Cottage according to Phil's grandfather, but I don't have any details of this.

The 1934 Ordnance Survey shows the changes that had taken place and one can see for the first time, the garage at the bottom of the drive that is used by No 2. It has a fireplace included and a vehicle inspection pit, all of which was used by Walter Bachelor as chauffeur to the family.



Compton Involvement in 1930s

Hugh was a very active member of the Compton community. In 1930 Major Hugh Rudkin is appointed as a churchwarden of St Nicholas, Compton and is described as “of Brook House”.

By 1938 Hugh is shown as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. He is seated on the right. He also served on many committees including the allotment and the burial committees.



Seated Albert Bullen, Brigadier General F C More-Molyneux, Mrs Eleanor Terry, Major Rudkin

In 1940, Hugh compiled a “Village Album” which is a photographic record of the village in the 19th and 20th century. It can still be seen on the village website

<https://www.compton-surrey.co.uk/parish-council#>

Included in this album are photographs of laying the foundation stone for the village hall and the opening of the hall. Major Rudkin was chairman of the building committee of the parish council and had used his position as a director of Friary Breweries to acquire the land for the building at a cost of £90. The hall was constructed and furnished at a cost of £2,980 which had been raised by villagers and supporters. So, this past resident of Brook House had a huge involvement in a village facility still in much demand – with another Brook House resident, my wife Bridget, continuing the link in 2025 as a trustee of the hall.

For Brook House there is one photograph in the album of the front wall and road



Hugh was also involved in the leasing of land to the British Legion

Sometime during this period, the Loseley Estate created a ditch from the pool at the junction of Polsted Lane and Withies Lane which noticeably reduced the historic flow of water along Withies Lane, into the pond near The Withies Inn and then leading to the brook which was also affected. It is understood that Major Rudkin wrote to the estate objecting to this, there was a battle between the parties of blocking and unblocking the new channel, but sadly that diversion of some of the water continued and has remained an issue to this day.

Also, the A3 was built to bypass Guildford and Godalming at this time. Access was provided from the A3 to Compton which hitherto had been limited to vehicular access at that end of the village via Down Lane up to the A31. The increase in traffic must have had a noticeable impact on the village, which has continued to suffer from huge growth in traffic volumes ever since. In 1971 Surrey County Council compulsorily acquired land for road widening. In the photograph above one can see that the verge was much wider than it is today.

Weddings from Brook House

Hugh and Dorothy's daughters were both married during the Rudkin years at Brook House.

At St Nicholas Church Compton, on 5th June 1934, Nancy, aged 21, married Edward William Francis de Vere Hunt 25, Lieutenant in Royal Artillery. He was known as Ted and was an outstanding sportsman including rugby at top level.

I think the wedding group photograph, sent to me by Tim Combe, may well have been taken in the grounds of Brook House. Sister Mollie is in the back row , second from the right.

I'm not sure where the couple lived initially but they had two children, Sue and Johnny.

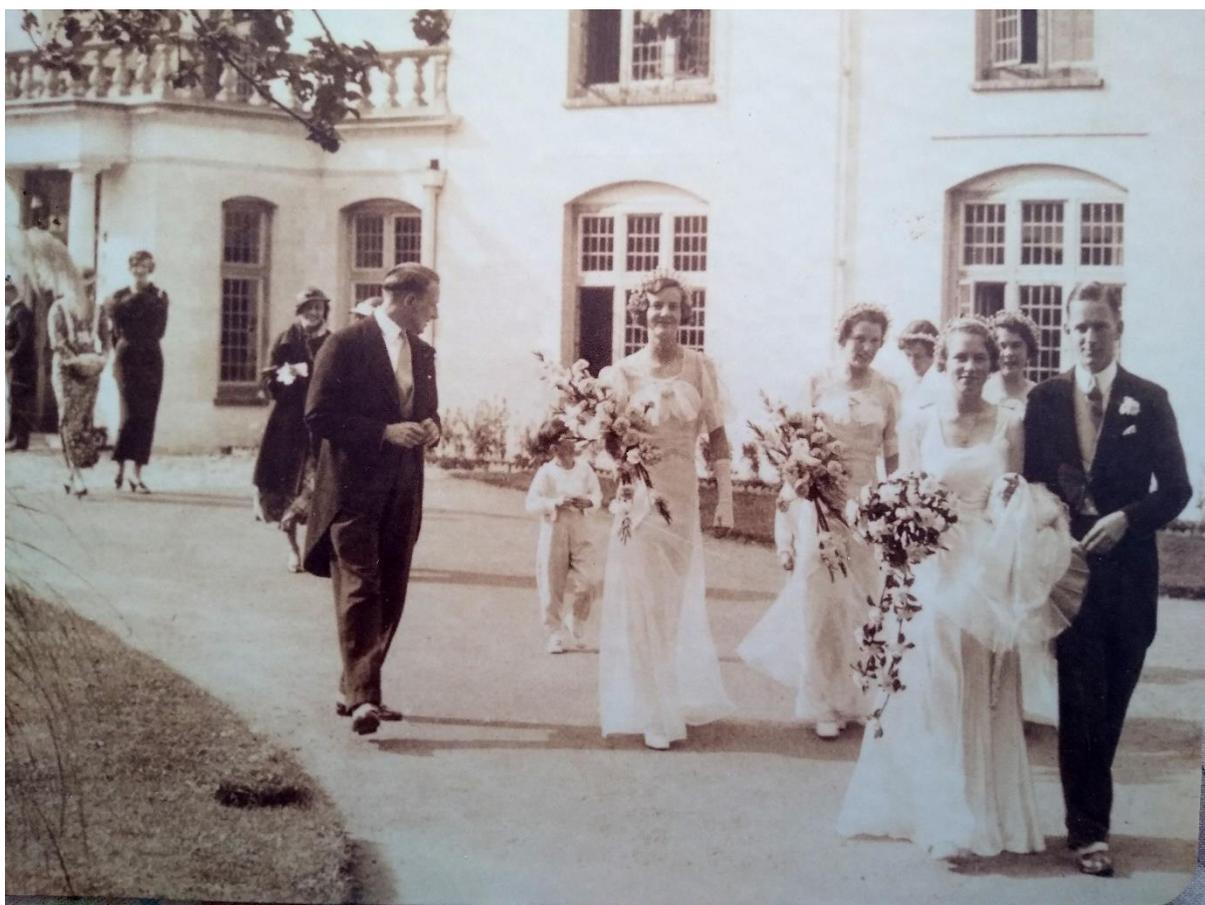


The next year the Rudkin's younger daughter Mollie (Kathleen), aged 18 married 23 year old Patrick Haddon Harvey Combe, stockbroker of Hook Heath, Woking on 10 September 1935, also in St Nicholas Church Compton. They had two children, Timothy H C R Combe in October 1936 and Belinda Anne Combe in October 1938



Combe — Rudkin

Patrick Combe, only son of the late Lieut.-Colonel H. Combe and Mrs. Combe, of Crossways, Hook Heath, Woking, and Kathleen Rudkin, younger daughter of Major and Mrs. H. Rudkin, of Brook House, Compton, were married at Compton Parish Church



Tim Combe has also sent me this photograph of the couple and family in front of Brook House. Both the ballroom extension and porch are clearly visible.

I think we can assume the 30's were happy years at Brook House for the Rudkin family. Hugh very busy and very effective in parish matters and he and Dorothy must have been delighted at their daughters' weddings and the arrival of 4 grandchildren. One can envisage many family gatherings at the house and cottage.

On 15 July 1939, The Surrey Advertiser had the following entry:-

GARDEN FETE At BROOK HOUSE, COMPTON (By kind permission of Major Rudkin) On Wednesday, 19th July, p.m. to 11 p.m. Plays and Musical Fantasy Children. Physical Drill by Boys of Sunnydown School "Bowling: for Ham" and other Sideshows. Stalls for Home-made Cakes and Sweets, etc "Ankle" and other Competitions. TEAS AND REFRESHMENTS. DANCING 8.30 to 11 p.m. "The Royals" Dance Band. Entrance 6d. Children Half-price. Proceeds to the Compton Sports Club

The War Years

In 1938 Major Hugh Rudkin retired from being joint managing director of Friary Breweries although he remained a director until early 1948. At the start of the war years, he became a member of the Compton and Puttenham Home Guard. Underground shelters were built at various places in the village as many bombs were dropped on Surrey in 1940 – an unexploded bomb was found near Poplar Cottage.

In 1938 Ted de Vere Hunt was posted to Hong Kong and served as a major in a branch of the Royal Artillery. His family lived there with him. The Japanese invaded the island in December 1941 and Ted was killed in action when bravely leading fierce fighting. His body was not recovered. Tim Combe says *Nancy and her children managed to escape to Singapore, but then were forced to flee again and were lucky enough to catch the last boat back to England. Both Sue and Johnny loved their grandparents and often stayed at Brook House.*

Military History articles state that Nancy did not know what had happened to her husband and she placed an advertisement in The Times in March 1942 seeking information on her husband's whereabouts. She was not officially informed of his death until June 1944. I have always been told that on their return to UK, Nancy and the children lived in Tudor Cottage and were very close to her parents. One hopes that living here was of some comfort to them during this traumatic period of their lives.

Meantime, Patrick Combe was also leading a distinguished army service. Serving in the 3rd Hussars, Pat Combe, a young subaltern, won an MC for gallantry under fire in the Libyan Desert in 1940. For a while he was reported missing in action but ended up in Cairo where he had a lung removed. Back in England in 1941, he reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, played a major role in preparation for the D Day landings and was one of the few people who knew where the landings were to take place. It is reported that Mollie long remembered his anxious tappings of the barometer in days leading up to the invasion. He was awarded an OBE.

Again, one can imagine the stressful period for the Rudkin family in 1940 and 1941 until Pat was safely back home.



Combe family visiting Brook House in 1940 before Pat embarks for North Africa

What was happening at Brook House? Memories of Walter Batchelor were that at some time during the war, Major Rudkin created an air raid shelter in the cellar of the house. He also painted the house in camouflage colours to make it less visible to enemy aircraft. We have never found any evidence of camouflage paint but the cellars certainly do have an unusual reinforced ceiling.

While Pat Combe had been abroad, I understand that Mollie and children came to live in Brook House. That seems to be confirmed by an advertisement in 1st Nov 1939 by Mrs Combe of Brook House for a Nannie under 25 for 2 children 3 & 1 years. Earlier in the year Mrs Rudkin had been advertising for a cook under 30 for 2 in the family and 4 maids. In March that year the head gardener at Brook House was advertising the sale of asparagus plants

I have a first-hand account from Hugh's grandson, Tim Combe. He recalls as follows:-
The digging of the air raid shelter down by the brook near Tudor Cottage.



In this photo are the two gardeners, Benwell and McNeill, my Mother and Grandpa, and my Granny holding me. This would have been in 1940. The shelter was always referred to as the Dugout and it was very damp inside. We mainly used the cellar in the big house when the siren went off for an air raid. I can remember one night being brought up from the cellar in my dressing gown and slippers to watch a "dogfight" up in the sky above. A special treat and very exciting. The "dogfight" was about the time of the Battle of Britain in 1940 when we were living in Brook House and my father was fighting in the Desert.

Benwell, McNeill and Gasson were the three gardeners employed by my grandfather. All had served in the first world war and were too old for call-up.

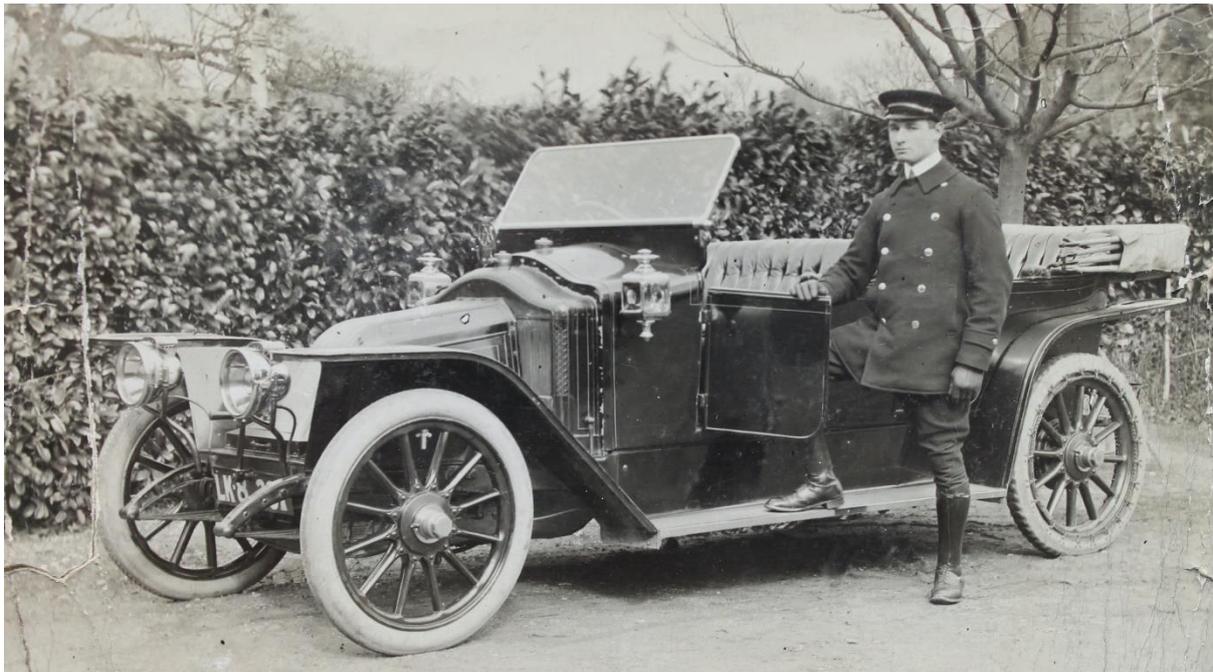
Another memory of Brook House, again in 1940, was waking up one morning, drawing the curtains and seeing a military jeep parked on the other side of the road, opposite our entrance gate, with lots of soldiers milling round it. I didn't know it but this was the time when the whole country feared we might be invaded by the Germans. My Grandpa, dressed in his uniform, had hurriedly left the house and downstairs everyone was huddled around the radio listening to the news on the BBC. I was just under four years old at the time, but I do remember feeling a bit scared.

Tim Combe believes that his grandfather was appointed as commanding officer of the Compton and Puttenham Home Guard. Tim continues :-

I always took a keen interest in cars and remember Grandpa had a Hudson. This was kept in the garage and was lovingly looked after by Bachelor, the chauffeur, who always seemed to be

polishing it. With petrol rationing the car didn't often leave the garage. The exception was on Sundays when Bachelor would drive us to church. Being an American car and therefore quite rare, it always attracted a lot of attention.

We don't have a photograph of the Hudson but Phil has one of his grandfather, Walter Bachelor, with a Pre WW1 Renault – no certainty of when it was taken. Walter lived close by in what are now known as Brook Cottages on the other side of New Pond Road.



Tim Combe continues:-

My grandparents eventually moved out of Brook House and into Tudor Cottage. After the war we would often visit them. I remember catching tadpoles in the brook in front of the house under the shade of a beautiful Weeping Willow. Also feeding the chickens in the paddock where, William, you practice your chipping! Thinking back to those days, Tudor Cottage was a lovely old house but my preference was always for Brook House.

Sir Walter Scott short story

I had wondered how Brook House was used when the Rudkins moved into Tudor Cottage. I then found an entry in Queen magazine (not a regular read for me!) dated 9th Feb 1944.

Above: Photographed with their two young attendants after the recent wedding at Holy Trinity Church, Coleman's Hatch, Sussex, between Captain Walter Scott, 1st Royal Dragoons, only son of Major Sir Walter Scott, Bart., and Lady Scott, of Brook House, Compton, Guildford, and Miss Diana Owen, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Owen, of Holly Hill, Coleman's Hatch, Sussex

It seems that Major Sir Walter Scott, Bart. and Lady Scott had taken a tenancy or were given permission to live in Brook House. This Walter Scott is not a direct descendant of the Sir Walter Scott who wrote Ivanhoe and other novels in the early 19th century. Rather, he was the 3rd baronet Scott of Beauclerc in Northumberland. Born in 1895, he had been educated at Charterhouse and in 1915 married Nancie Margaret (Margo) March. While they lived at Brook House their son married as shown above.

Very sadly, Nancie Scott died only 3 months later in Brook House and I assume that Sir Walter then moved away to Sussex where he lived with his second wife until he died in 1967.



Registration District SURREY SOUTH-WESTERN.									
1944 DEATHS in the Sub-District of GUILDFORD and GODALMING in the County of SURREY.									
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
151	South May 19 44 Brook House Compton Guildford, R.D.	Nancie Margaret Scott	Female	50	Wife of Walter Scott Major R. A. S. C. (Company Retired)	(a) Acute Chloroemia (b) Chronic Septic Certified by W. P. Over R. R. C. P.	W. Scott Nephew of deceased Brook House Compton Guildford	South May 1944	E. J. Brown Bessie Registrar

End of the Rudkin Era

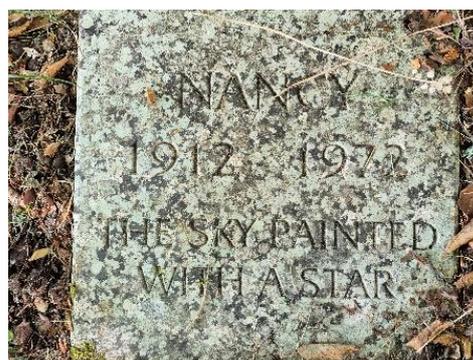
At some stage after the war there was meeting of The Old Contemptibles, the story and photograph of this is on page 81 of Fiona Curtis' book Compton Village Past and Present.

After the war, in 1946, Nancy married Geoffrey Dean and they lived in Tudor Cottage where their son David was born. Maybe Hugh and Dorothy then moved back into Brook House

Tim Combe has told me that Geoffrey Dean had lost a leg while commanding a tank squadron in North Africa and was nicknamed Tinny. He had been captured by the Italians and became a prisoner of war before eventually being released and returned to England. He had known Nancy's late husband Ted well as they had played top level rugby together. After David was born, he and Nancy moved to a lovely old cottage in Old Woking and then after Brook House and Tudor Cottage were sold, they bought a smallholding in Dorset at Corfe Castle. Sadly Nancy later became seriously ill and died in 1972 aged only 60.

David came to visit us in 2025 together with Tim Combe and family. He enjoyed visiting Tudor Cottage and seeing where he was born although he was too young to remember about his early life here.

Dorothy Rudkin died on 3rd July 1948 and very soon after Hugh died at Brook House on 28th October 1948. They were buried in the cemetery in Down Lane, Compton which includes Watts Chapel. Their two daughters dealt with probate. Their headstones are under the beech tree in the centre of the cemetery where a plaque of remembrance of their daughter Nancy was installed after her death in 1972.



1948 Building Division

A completely different era for Brook House and Tudor Cottage began after the war. Probate was granted to the Rudkin daughters, Nancy and Mollie, on 19th Jan 1949. They then entered into a Deed of Enlargement on 17th March that turned the 1742 long leasehold into a freehold under the provisions of Section 153 of the Law of Property Act 1925. They then sold the various interests in Brook House and Tudor Cottage on 28th July 1949 for £16,000. The purchaser was Ernest Harold Childs, a builder of Horsell, Woking and in the conveyance deed there is a sub-sale of Tudor Cottage to Leonard Herbert Norman for £8,000.

I don't have any record of the work that was done by Mr Childs, but clearly this was when Brook House was divided into 3 separate dwellings. The division is vertical with no resulting flying freeholds for any part over another part. I think the work would have been the bricking up of access from No 2 into the other two parts, and then internal redesign of each section to provide suitable living space, kitchens, bathrooms and access between floors. The whole of the basement remained under No 2.

Externally, beech hedges dividing the walled garden and a mix of hedges and fences dividing the paddock/orchard area would have been created.

By 29th November 1949, 2 Brook House was sold to Rev Wallace Harold Elliott for £5,950 and on 6th Jan 1950 1 Brook House was sold to Anthony John Lawson Reuss for £3,950. 3 Brook House was sold to Leslie William Kemp but I don't have a record of the date or sale price.

The conveyances included various rights of way, easements for services, use restrictions and sharing of upkeep costs that together would enable the beneficial occupation of each of the three new households and Tudor Cottage. These documents remain the legal basis for these matters as there has been no subsequent mutual deed of covenants between the parties to reflect the circumstances nearly 80 years later. I'm pleased to say that that goodwill between the four ownerships has always ensured practical management of the estate and enjoyable residence.

I have listed the subsequent changes of ownership in so far as I have the information.

28 July 1949

Nancy Amore Fleetwood Dean and Kathleen Hermione Fleetwood Combe
(daughters of Hugh Robert Ernest Rudkin)

Ernest Harold Childs (Builder) £16,000

1 Brook House	2 Brook House	3 Brook House	Tudor Cottage
6 th Jan 1950 Anthony John Lawson Reuss £3,950	29 th Nov 1949 Rev Wallace Harold and Edith Evelyn Plaistowe Elliott £5,950	Leslie William and Olive Kemp	28 th July 1949 Leonard Herbert Norman £8,000
	Frederick and Lillian Disney		
John and Margaret Wood	18 Oct 1957 Eric George and Edna Lassiter £4,500	1956 Cicely Maria Godwin-Austen	
25 Oct 1977 Francis Louis and Christine Audrey Abbott	12 Sept 1973 Robert MacLoughlin and Ann-Marie Farr £35,500	Robert and Barbara Cunliffe	
5 Nov 1979 Terence Michael Charles and Linda Evelyn Pantling	17 Nov 1975 Gilbert Richard and Jane Richards £36,500	1978 Kenneth Norman Zoeller	
	10 Dec 1987 William and Bridget Bagnall £236,650		3 Jan 1984 Valerie Anne Forbes
		About 1994 Paul and Helen Brown	About 1994 Tom and Grace Watson
		About 2004 John and Anne Matheson	About 2000 Adrian and Lucy Jackson
About 2015 Bob and Liz Jolliffe			

Owners

The first owner of 2 Brook House was Rev Wallace Elliott and his wife, Edith. He remained the owner of 2 Brook House until his death in 1957 in St Leonards on Sea nursing home. He had been unwell for a few years with thyroid problems.

Wallace Harold Elliott had been a famous cleric. He had held various posts in Yorkshire and then Folkestone. He was a powerful preacher who had spoken in all the main cathedrals. He became famous for starting radio broadcasts before the war including regular Thursday



evening services. He became Canon and Precentor of St Pauls and was appointed Chaplain to the King in 1926. He was known as the “Wireless Canon” He married in 1918 and had a daughter and two sons.

We don't have much information about the other owners of 2 Brook House before our purchase in 1987. Our predecessor Rick Richards was a very keen car enthusiast who spent a great deal of time looking after a vintage Rolls Royce, making use of the inspection pit in the garage. The car was hired out for local weddings. Rick did not have good relations with his neighbours which made communal maintenance decisions difficult to agree.

The Bagnall Family Years 1987 -

First Year Activity

William and Bridget Bagnall purchased 2 Brook House in December 1987. They and their two children, Jessica Jane (Jess) and William Richard (Rick), had returned from a 3 year expatriate life in Singapore where William had established a Far East business for property consultancy firm, Chesterton.

The previous year they had decided to move to this area on their return and had agreed school places for Jess at St Catherine's Bramley and Rick at Cranleigh Prep. All that remained was to find a new home near Guildford and sell their existing house in East Sheen. Brook House was the first house they viewed and it ticked all the boxes – plenty of accommodation, interesting gardens, excellent location for travel by road, rail and plane, lovely surrounding countryside but not remote from other dwellings. And the impact of the entrance hall and views over the gardens were a clincher.

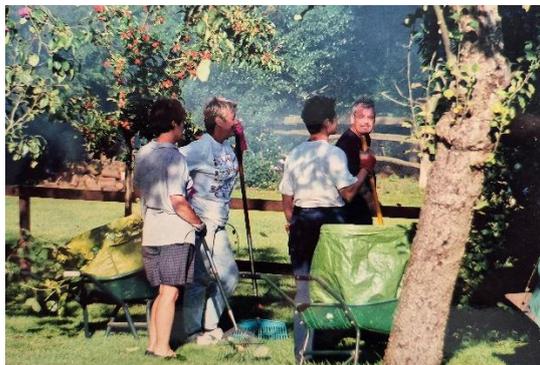
William (40) and Bridget (39) were both chartered surveyors. The house was in poor decorative condition and the gardens were neglected and overgrown, but they could see that it was structurally solid and sound. The initial months were spent with paint brushes and rollers in hand redecorating the interior, recovering overgrown paths and clearing the orchard nettle field. Shelving and cupboards were installed in the many of the ground and first floor rooms. The stone steps in the walled garden had fallen into disrepair and were rebuilt.



Soon, the house and grounds were much improved and being enjoyed by the family and new friends. Jess and Rick had new school friends and William and Bridget were made very welcome by several families in Compton who remained enduring friends.

In addition, the Brook House neighbours were hugely welcoming and delighted that the Bagnalls enthusiastically entered into helping maintain the estate for the benefit of everyone.

The first autumn saw them introduced to the annual hedge cutting weekend – two days of hard work cutting, clearing and burning interspersed with two good lunches and a lively Saturday dinner that left the participants slow to start on Sunday morning. Much of it organised by the enthusiastic Terry Pantling from No 1. And it has carried on each year since.



Settled Early Years 1987 to 1994

By April 1988, Bridget had secured a job as a surveyor with Hamptons in Guildford. She specialised in survey and valuation of residential property and very quickly became familiar with the area. In 1988 William took on responsibility for the UK advisory business of Chesterton which was the start of 9 very busy years based in London but involving regular travel to the many offices around the UK which made weekends at Brook House a special and much needed time to refresh.

William spent a couple of years investigating the golf clubs in the area and in 1991 joined Hankley Common Golf Club, one of the UK's finest inland heathland courses and with a very friendly clubhouse. It proved to be a brilliant choice and provided good exercise in great countryside as well as the challenge of the game. He made some very good friends there.

Jess and Rick were growing up fast, enjoying hobbies, sports and many friendships. At the time of the 1949 property division, the second floor had been left as former staff rooms with lightweight partitioning. Access was via a Slingsby ladder, presumably the staircase to this area had been in what became 1 Brook House. These rooms were ideal for table tennis, darts and model railways. Brook House was the scene of many happy parties, including some fairly lively ones in the orchard in the children's teenage years.

After about 7 years, some improvements were undertaken. The rear of the ground floor had a small kitchen, a utility room and several corridors which together weren't very suitable for a house of this size. A beam was installed which enabled this area to be opened up to provide a kitchen and adjoining eating area. The main dining room was used for entertaining friends and bigger family occasions.

At the same time the first floor bathrooms were altered. The two adjacent small ones were knocked into one and a new small shower room created where previously there had been just a WC.

1994 to 2005

William encountered knee problems and wasn't able to deal with some of the heavier gardening and maintenance work around the estate. Enter Collin Light, who was recommended by friends, and who took on some of the mowing and heavier work as well as some general maintenance. Collin stayed working one day a week for No 2 and No 3 until he finally retired in 2010 when a young man Tom Partick took over and who has ever since excellently looked after various gardening aspects for all four households as he developed his landscape gardening business.

In 1994 Jess had started a 3 year degree course at Loughborough University in French and Politics. 2 years later, Rick began an architectural degree course at University College London. These were very busy years for all the family in work and study with happy gatherings at Brook House with an ever widening number of friends.

Bridget took the exciting decision in 1996 to join up with a former colleague, Simon Lloyd Davies, to start a new firm of chartered surveyors based in Quarry Street Guildford. Thus began a highly successful independent business focussed on survey and valuation of residential properties in the area.

In the summer of 1997, a marquee was erected in the orchard of Brook House which was an ideal setting for three consecutive parties – William's 50th birthday, his 25 years at Chesterton and Jess' 21st birthday.



3 different caterers and 3 different themes over 3 days saw a wide range of friends celebrate with the family. There was one guest missing as, very sadly, Bridget's mother Brookie Pearce had died that week after a long illness. She too had spent many relaxing and happy times at Brook House over the years.

Just over a decade after moving in, some garden changes were made. Firstly, the conifers at the top of the orchard were taken down, significantly improving the view over the orchard and to the oaks of Compton Wood. The shrubbery there was expanded, although all shrubs and plants in this area have to cope with, or be protected from, the attention of the many species of wildlife, including deer, that live in Compton Wood. The wood is a wild area owned by Loseley Estate away from public access, full of bird life and largely peaceful except when the estate fails to fence in its cattle properly on adjoining fields.

Secondly, a paved terrace was laid at the back of the house which enabled much easier enjoyment of the garden. An unusual shape was created to maximise the use of different parts, with the young aspiring architect, Rick, lying on the first floor flat roof and directing the layout lines. The manhole cover to the well was immediately outside the back door and was also covered over with the paving slabs without any subsequent problems.

In the year 2000 neighbours Paul and Helen Brown constructed a ground floor rear extension for No 3. Up to that time, the basement in No 2 had very occasionally suffered a very shallow level of flooding through the floor and wall adjoining the land behind No 3. This was usually when there was heavy rain after a period of either drought or hard frost which had hardened the subsoil and the water couldn't follow its normal route. Since the 2000 extension there has never been any further damp or water penetration, so a problem was solved!



Bridget was enjoying running as a relaxation and it wasn't long before neighbour, Mike More-Molyneux of Loseley, had persuaded her to run a marathon in aid of the children's hospice Chase (now called Shooting Star Children's Hospices). Her first marathon was in London with a further 8 over the following years in London, Paris, New York, Rome.

Around this time William had become very busy with a ten year stint as Chair of the Sixth Form College Farnborough. He had joined the governing body in 1997 and remained in various governance roles for 26 years during which time the highly successful college expanded from around 1,500 to over 4,000 full time students. He was honoured with an MBE for service to education in the Queen's birthday honours list of 2017.

2005 to 2015

In 2005, William set up a one person property consultancy based in Brook House. It wasn't long before the work of Bagnall Property Consultancy was taking up too much room in the ground floor snug and investigations began into creating modern space on the second floor.

The following year a new staircase was installed from the first to the second floor taking space from one of the larger bedrooms and the old Slingsby ladder was removed. The second floor was completely refurbished, the ceiling reshaped with additional roof timbers added, the water tank relocated and an independent heating circuit installed. The resulting space provided a large studio room with wonderful views over the gardens, a bedroom used as a sewing room and a store.



These photographs show the location of the old Slingsby ladder, how the new staircase took space from the second bedroom, which had a new opening. It also shows the work in strengthening the roof timbers and creating a new ceiling.

Turning to some basic practical aspects, the three households in Brook House have a shared foul drainage system. It used to be an ancient cesspit, then converted to a septic tank, both of which caused endless problems. In 2008, a sewage treatment plant was installed in the first part of No 2's orchard with an environmental agency approval for treated water outflow into the ditch at the bottom of the orchard.



In 2011 Adrian and Lucy Jackson undertook a significant enlargement and improvement to Tudor Cottage – a very different property to the Cutt Cottage that had once stood there.

In the years 2010 to 2012, another generation arrived and began regular visits to Brook House. Jess and her partner Pete (Peadar Sean Pol Conneely) moved from their flat in Crystal Palace having purchased a house in Wolseley Road Godalming. With them came 1 year old Finnian Joe followed in 2012 by the birth of Lochlainn Liam. Again, Brook House proved to be a great place for them to visit and play as they grew up.

In the Brook,

Wood at the bottom of the Orchard

Easter Egg Hunt



2015 Onwards

William closed his property consultancy in 2015 after 10 busy and very enjoyable years and fully retired. Bridget and her business partner had sold their partnership in 2010. Bridget stayed on until 2012 when she also retired. Both of them remained very busy with charitable and voluntary activities, but there was also much more time to enjoy the house and garden.

Brook House remained a lovely property to entertain, both formally and informally, including William's 70th birthday party.



By 2018 it was clear the wiring of the house was getting fragile and so the whole house was rewired, apart from the 2nd floor which had wiring installed in 2006. At the same time there was a major refurbishment of the kitchen and French windows installed which give a wonderful view of the gardens.

Unfortunately, at the end of 2018, part of the garden wall fell down in strong winds. The cause was leylandii that had been planted by our neighbours which developed large roots that undermined this old structure with minimal foundations. This explains why the wall at the bottom of No 2, and part of that for No 1, looks different to the remainder – although the general consensus is that the new wall is a considerable improvement!



Rebuilding the garden wall



Creating the brick arch

This was all completed in time for the 2019 golden wedding celebrations which included a barn dance at the village hall – the same hall that previous owner, Major Rudkin, had been so instrumental in developing.

On a sunny note, in 2020 a 12 solar panel system was installed on the roof of No 2 garage, with slates removed so the panels are flush with the rest of the roof and not visually intrusive. Although not an ideal location at the lower end of the drive and with trees around, it has been very successful, producing an average of 2,750 kWh a year.

As the years progressed, the impact of climate change became more evident. 2022 was a very hot dry summer and 2024 a very wet summer which was the year No 1 refurbished and extended their ground floor extension.

The Watercourse along Withies Lane

The Brook is a major feature of the historic garden designs at The Cottage, Brook House and Tudor Cottage. So, it was a concern in recent years when the flow of water through the Brook reduced and eventually ceased altogether for a long part of the summer in 2020 – photo on left. At the same time the Pond in Withies Lane dried out - photo on right.



In the past there had been a strong flow of water along the Withies Lane watercourse and into the Pond. This watercourse has existed for a very long time as evidenced by early plans, the willows along its route and the name Withies Lane. In the mid 20th century, the Pond was much larger than today as can be seen on page 137 of Fiona Curtis's book, *Compton Village, Past and Present* although the flow was reduced around that time when Loseley Estate dug a second channel from the catchpool at the junction of Withies Lane and Polsted Lane despite the strong objections of Major Rudkin.

The water flows from the catchpool into a pipe that runs in front of Waterhaw and Broadstone Cottage, then down the Withies Lane ditch, into the Pond, into a pipe running under the car parking at the rear of The Withies Inn, back into a ditch that runs behind Willowcroft, Oak Cottages and Puttock Cottages and finally joining The Brook in the grounds of The Cottage (the property on the corner of Withies Lane and New Pond Road).

The reason that the brook dried up in 2020 was eventually identified in September two years later by William after he arranged for a camera survey of the pipe in front of Waterhaw and Broadstone Cottage. Roots had found their way into the old concrete pipe. After 2 years of abortive attempts to get either Guildford Borough Council or Surrey County Council to deal with it, William instructed a private contractor who on 23 Sept 2024 excavated and found that original pipe was old concrete with no joint fixings and in one section was full of roots from the tree and bamboo in neighbouring Waterhaw. 4 metres of that pipe was replaced with a 300mm diameter Twinwall pipe with proper joint fixings. There was no evidence of other root ingress in the pipe along its 40 metres. All the details were provided to Compton Parish Council who, together with William's neighbours in Withies Lane and New Pond Road, paid for the work.



Blocked pipe location

Roots around and in pipe

New pipe

After that, water flowed consistently once again and the work was expected to prevent this problem recurring in the near future. Maintenance of the catchpool and monitoring the effectiveness of the old pipe will be needed to ensure this condition remains.

Recent Bagnall Activity at Brook House in the 2020s

Life at 2 Brook House continued to be busy for William and Bridget with a happy mix of hobbies, social and physical activities, community involvement and volunteering for charities. There were no internal building works but regular maintenance and decoration of the exterior. The garden had plenty of attention and the old gates repainted with grandson help. There were fun lunches, suppers and dinners with friends visiting and enjoying Bridget's wonderful cooking. Inside bridge and other games were regularly played and outside the orchard was a good golf short game practice area. Having grandsons living only 5 minutes away gave great pleasure in their regular visits to Brook House and in supporting their local sporting activities.



This photograph was taken on New Year's Eve 2023 in the sitting room at 2 Brook House

Back Row Left to Right

Jessica Jane Bagnall (Jess), daughter.

Elizabeth Jane Bagnall (née Cromer), wife of son Richard.

Lochlainn Liam Conneely (Lochie), grandson, son of Jess and Pete

Bridget Catherine Faith Bagnall

Back Row Left to Right

Finnian Joe Conneely, grandson, son of Jess and Pete

William Edward Hampshire Bagnall

William Richard Bagnall (Rick), son

Peadar Sean Pol Conneely (Pete), partner of daughter Jess

Summary

I will keep this as a live document so that it can be updated as and when new information comes to light and I will put it on a website, or sites, that can be accessed by all. The main parts of this story are about the whole of Brook House whereas the last section is about the Bagnall ownership of 2 Brook House since 1987. Our neighbours at 1 Brook House, 3 Brook House and Tudor Cottage will be very welcome to add the stories of their properties if they wish to do so.

It has been huge fun researching and writing this history – I have learnt a great deal about Compton village and the area as well as the buildings on this site and the life of their inhabitants. In this document I haven't referenced the sources used but all the background information and sources can be seen in two associated files entitled *Phil Gorton Research* and *William Bagnall Research*. Many people have been of great help to me but Philip Gorton's research has been invaluable.

Today, Brook House together with Tudor Cottage form a very effective small community for four households with all the benefits of excellent accommodation and a beautiful environment. I hope that this history will add to the enjoyment of living here.

William Bagnall

