

Village Echoes

Walking along Beresford Road you will see that on one side the properties are predominantly Victorian whereas on the other side most are of a much later date.

The land on which Beresford Road was developed belonged, in the 1840s, to Sarah Pope and was described in the 1842 tithe apportionment as a four acre mead at Tattlebury. Sarah lived at Trowswell and, following her death in 1857, her properties were put up for auction. It appears that the four acres at Tattlebury were purchased by Samuel Wilmot Newington, who owned Tattlebury House.

Samuel Newington died in 1868 and his lands were auctioned in that year; the four acres being described as the 'Great Meadow'. We do not know who purchased Great Meadow but its development seems to have started shortly thereafter. By the time of the 1871 census, Beresford Road had come into existence and a Methodist chapel and five cottages had been constructed on the eastern side. Four of the cottages are possibly now 10-13 Beresford Road. An advert of 1872 listed 'four brick-built and slated dwelling houses, let to good tenants at a combined rent of £44 pa.' for sale by auction. The remaining cottages were built by 1881, as they are shown on the 1881 census.

Not all of Great Meadow could have sold at auction in 1868, as the remaining part was put up for auction by Robert Newington (Samuel's son) in 1881. A map, believed to date from this time, shows most of the eastern side of Beresford Road as having already been sold. The advert for the auction describes the land as 'freehold building land'. We know that Thomas Burren bought one plot on the western side and built a house and forge there; the house now called The Lodge. The remaining part of the western side was purchased by Rev Kendon, who established Goudhurst Ladies' College on the site in 1882. Two plots fronting Cranbrook Road were sold to other buyers, whilst Mr W C Burgess (of Burgess Stores fame) bought the plot on the corner of Beresford Road and Cranbrook Road and used it as part of the garden of Goldwell House where he lived. He also purchased a plot further down the eastern side of Beresford Road, adjacent to the presbytery, and the house built there – Delaware – was later occupied by three of his daughters.

Thus, by 1882, most of Beresford Road on the western side was owned by the Ladies' College. The college expanded with the purchase of The Lodge in 1901 and again, in 1914, with the purchase of the property, now called Old School House, fronting Cranbrook Road. In 1924, the College purchased the Methodist Chapel converting it to school use. Although we do not know when, the College also acquired the cottages at 1-5 Beresford Road and the corner plot fronting Cranbrook Road, now occupied by Fairlop.

After the Second World War the College was gradually sold. The former Methodist Chapel was converted into a private house; Old School House and Annex (the latter now Old School Cottage) were sold and then resold as two separate properties. The remaining school property was sold privately in 1952/3 and resold in 1959. The purchaser demolished the school and built six bungalows on its site, four fronting Beresford Road and two fronting Tattlebury Lane. The Lodge was converted into a private house. The cottages at 1-5 were sold to their tenants.

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