

## Village Echoes

There are a number of places in Kent, Sussex and elsewhere which are called Frog's Hole and in each case these are usually connected with a farm. Goudhurst had its own Frog's Hole in Mile Lane, in this case a farm of between 10 and 12 acres which for most of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was farmed by Charles Standen, assisted by his very large family.

A "For Sale" advertisement in 1933 described the building as a "charming, 16<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse" which is shown in the photograph published in the Goudhurst Coronation Book in 1937. (pictured). However, the earliest references known to the Local History Society date only from the beginning of the 1840s. The tithe records for Goudhurst, dated 1842, show the owner/occupier was a Thomas Williams and confirm that the farm consisted of a hop garden, woods, and several arable and rough fields, but only a year earlier, in June 1841, the Census for Frog's Hole lists the occupants as three females aged 20 or under, one youth aged 15, 2 small children and a baby. However, it is evident from the surnames that these are connected to the Standen family mentioned above, so in all likelihood the Standens were already renting the farm from Thomas Williams. Although maps show the property as Frog's Hole, it was sometimes referred to as Frog's Hall. Indeed, in 1861 Charles Standen stated he lived at Frogs Hall, Frogs Hole, Goudhurst.

Once the Standen family left the farm (sometime in the late 1880s) the property had a number of different occupants and was eventually sold at auction in November 1907 on instructions from the trustees of the late John Francis Newman. The farm, now described as a freehold poultry farm, was at that time let to Horace Brackfield at a rent of £30 per annum. Brackfield eventually moved on and the farming stock, including horses, ducks, cows and so forth were auctioned off in June 1909. By that time the house and land had already been let, most probably to architect and surveyor, Richard Sharp, a 47 year old bachelor who the 1911 census shows living at Frog's Hall, as he called it, along with his housekeeper. Frog's Hall was then a seven roomed private house.

Sharp didn't stay long, as by the time of the First World War, Frog's Hole was occupied by Percival Foster and his widowed mother, Agnes. Although a conscientious objector, Percy, as he was known, served in the Army Pay Corps so was away from the village for much of the war. Despite this he still managed to organise supplies of coal and other items to be delivered to the poorer households of Goudhurst at Christmas each year. Mrs Foster died in 1917 and her son was tragically killed in a car crash in Spain in 1927. In 1928, with no family to inherit it, the house, now described as "Frog's Hall an old fashioned cottage residence with 10 acres", along with its contents, was once again on the market.

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