



CENSUS 1911 AND 2021

Research by
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Downs Road. Hastings, East Sussex,

Contents

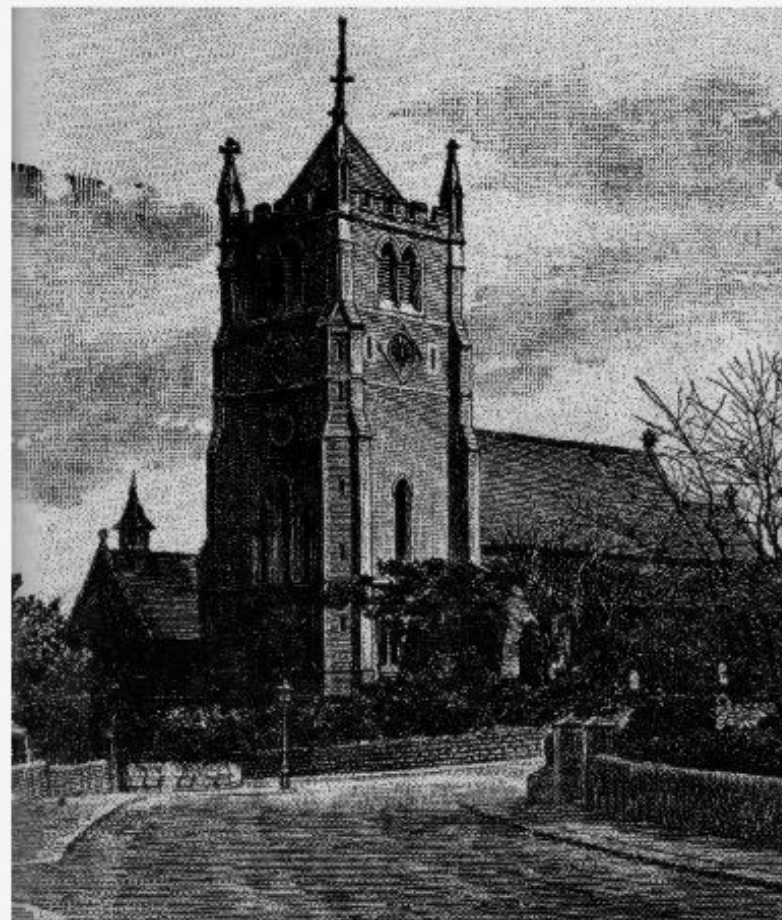
- The Blacklands area
- Kite's Nest/St Helen's Hotel
- 1904 - Thirlmere
- 1911 - census time
- 2021 - what remains

*Thirlmere, in
1904 or 5,
newly built*



BLACKLANDS

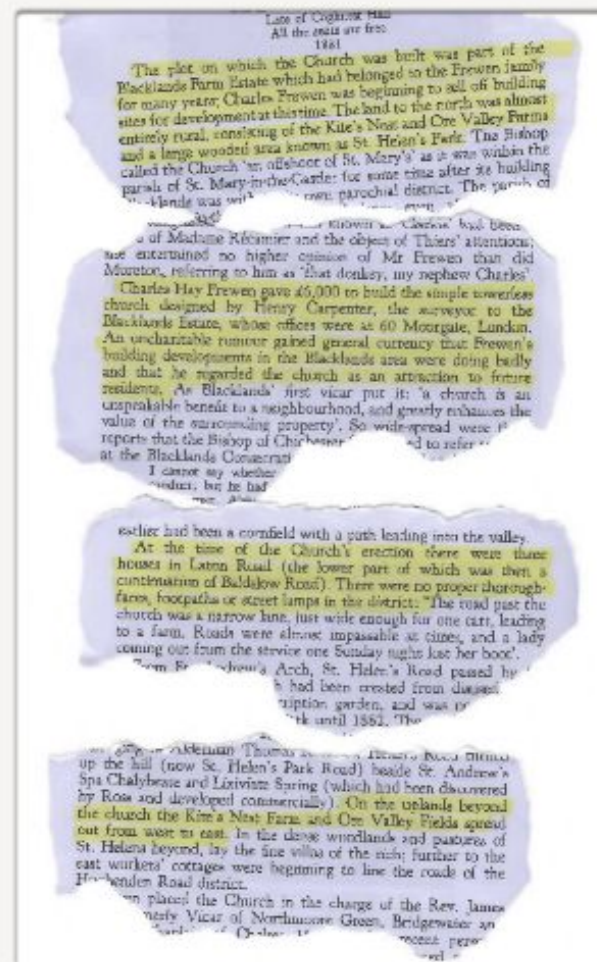
- In the mid 1870s, most of what we now call Blacklands was farmland. To be precise, Blacklands Farm, Kite's Nest Farm and Ore Valley Farm.
- The area is neglected in the published histories of the town but is covered in Richard Ralph's history of Christ Church Blacklands, from which the excerpts on the following page are taken



**CHRIST CHURCH,
BLACKLANDS, 1881-1981**

Looking from the new church, completed in 1877, toward the town, there were plenty of Victorian villas and terraces, to be followed by Edwardian houses in similar style. Looking away from the town, however, there was very little until the start of the twentieth century.

Having been built without a tower, the church finally gained one in 1890, with the commissioning of the bells and clock on 25 September 1890



Following the establishment of the parish of Blacklands in 1881, the area became known as "The Paradise" as new homes were built. The map from 1900 shows a line of about eight houses along the west side of what we now know as St Helen's Park Road. The lower part of the road is still shown as "St Helen's Road" whilst Downs Road is shown as such. The area around Thirlmere sprung up soon after 1900, the parish boundary having been extended in 1891 to include Ore Valley.



The aerial photograph, believed to be taken from a balloon in 1900, shows St Helen's Road and Park Road running either side of Alexandra Park, just right of centre at the bottom. Christ Church would be just below the centre bottom edge. The image captures all the built up parts of the town at that time

KITE'S NEST HOTEL

There was, however, a significant property approaching the entrance to St Helens Wood - a hotel initially known as Kite's Nest and then changed to the St Helen's Hotel.

It was designed for Henry Phillips by Henry Carpenter whose offices were at 36 Robertson Street.



ST HELEN'S HOTEL, HASTINGS.

The advertisement for the hotel shows how times have changed - families were enticed with the promise of "new" milk.

ROOMS,
KITE'S NEST FARM, ST. HELEN'S ROAD,
HASTINGS.
THE New Hotel is NOW OPENED with every accommodation for Visitors. Rooms (on site) Large and airy bedrooms, southern aspect, well sheltered with large trees. One of the most beautiful parts of Hastings, about a mile from the Sea. It may be reached by a pretty walk through St. Andrew's Gardens and Spa.
THE ONLY TEA AND PLEASURE GARDENS IN
HASTINGS.
 Good accommodation for Fêtes, Banquets, Dances, Luncheon, Picnic, and Tea Parties.
BARBERS AND SCHOOLS LIBERALLY TREATED WITH
A Large Field for Cricket Matches.
 Croquet, Badminton, Swings, and other Games provided.
A GOOD QUOIT COURT.
 Wines and Spirits of the Finest Quality. *Best* Golden Hop Ales.
Guinness's Stout in Bottles. Superior Sparkling Ale and London Stout and Porter on Draught.
 Families supplied with New Milk and New-Laid Eggs. Fruit and Vegetables from the Farm.



This extract from the OS map shows houses along the south of St Helen's Park Road but none on the north. Thirlmere would be adjacent to the "S" in St Helen's.

THIRLMERE

The deeds for Thirlmere mention the owner of the land in 1904 as Edward William Hodge. He may have been only the owner, or he may have been the builder responsible for erecting this and other properties.

Hodge appears regularly in the electoral records for Hastings though his "abode" appears to have been Great Hornead, near Buntingford Herts - see for example the electoral register of 1910 which quotes the Hertfordshire address and also shows him as owning nos. 3, 5, 6, 10, 12 and 13 Down's Road. Number 1 would presumably be the site of the St Helen's Hotel, whilst nos. 7, 9 and 11 will have been built and sold on.

The reference to Hornead is interesting. Most of the houses built at the same time as Thirlmere have names, some of which have no obvious relevance to the area. The house opposite Thirlmere has the word "Hornead" in stained glass above the front door.

- 1 A Conveyance of the land tinted pink on the filed plan dated 26 March 1904 made between (1) Edward William Hodge (Vendor) (2) Arthur Davis Thorpe and (3) Stanley John Weston contains covenants details of which are set out in the schedule of restrictive covenants hereto.
- 2 A Conveyance of the land tinted blue on the filed plan and other land dated 24 May 1904 made between (1) Edward William Hodge (Vendor) and (2) Thomas Sidney Smith (Purchaser) contains covenants details of which are set out in the schedule of restrictive covenants hereto.

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ARTHUR DAVIS THORPE

- Without access to a full copy of the 1904 title deeds it is not possible to say why Arthur Davis Thorpe is mentioned in the conveyance of the main plot, dated 26 March 1904. He was a solicitor in the town and it is likely that he, either acting on his own behalf or on behalf of un-named financiers, provided money to help Edward William Hodge with the development and so had to execute the deed in order to confirm that he had no further charge on the land.
- Of all the names associated with the house at this time, his comes up most frequently in searches. As a young man, though already referred to as a solicitor at the age of 26, he still lived with his parents and their extensive household at Highcroft Villa, Old London Road at the time of the 1891 census. His father, George Archibald Thorpe, had been mayor of Hastings in 1874, 1875, 1883 and 1886
- By 1896 he had moved to Keston, Milward Road and by the time of the 1901 census he was at Hill Crest, Linton Road/ Priory Avenue with his wife Alice Elsie (formerly Lloyd) and three servants. They had married on 1 September 1892. They had no children.
- In the 1939 register he is shown as having moved to Highfield, Sedlescombe. He was by then married to Ellen, formerly Roberts, 30 years his junior. They had five servants but again there is no suggestion of any children.
- Thorpe is of particular interest to Geoff, who is a retired solicitor. Thorpe was partner in a firm called Meadows, Thorpe and Menneer. Menneer went on to form Menneer Idle and Bracket in St Leonards, which became Menneer Shuttleworth and ultimately merged with Heringtons, in which Geoff had been a partner for many years.
- Meadows, Thorpe and Menneer practiced from offices at 32 Havelock Road. The purchaser of the house in 1904, Stanley John Weston, showed his business address in the directories at the time as 26 Havelock Road, so they may easily have known each other through business.
- Thorpe died on 13 December 1946 at St Augustine's Nursing Home, now St Michael's Hospice. Probate records show his "effects" valued at £66,533 which equates to £2.8 million at 2020 values

THE PARSONS FAMILY

The 1911 census shows the house in the occupation of the Parsons family - with their two children and two servants. Two servants may strike us as extravagant but Bill Bryson, describing life in the mid nineteenth century, says that "It was an age of servants. Households had servants the way modern people have appliances. Common labourers had servants. Sometimes servants had servants."

Household Members

Members that resided in the household at the time of the census.

| First name(s) | Last name | Relationship | Marital status | Sex | Age | Birth year |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----|------------|
| Wilfred Arthur | Parsons | Head | Married | Male | 29 | 1882 |
| Elizabeth | Parsons | Wife | Married | Female | 32 | 1879 |
| Eric | Parsons | Son | - | Male | 3 | 1908 |
| Detain | Parsons | Son | - | Male | 0 | 1911 |
| Margaret | Hibberd | Servant | Single | Female | 22 | 1889 |
| Ivy | Smyth | Servant | Single | Female | 21 | 1890 |

Wilfred Arthur Parsons's Census Details

Details taken from the original census record.

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| First name(s) | Wilfred Arthur |
| Last name | Parsons |
| Relationship | Head |
| Marital status | Married |
| Sex | Male |
| Age | 29 |
| Birth year | 1882 |
| Birth place | Devizes Wiltshire |
| Occupation | Tailor Cutter |
| House name | Thimere |
| House number | 7 |
| Street | Downs Road |
| Address | Thimere 7 Downs Road |
| Parish | Hastings |
| County | Sussex |
| Country | England |
| Registration district | Hastings |
| Registration district number | 69 |
| Sub-district | One |
| Sub-district number | 1 |
| Enumeration district number | 6 |
| Series | RG 14 |
| Piece number | 4723 |

SERVANTS.

Margaret Hibbert was the general servant whose duties would have included washing, cleaning and cooking for the family, with no modern labour-saving devices. The weekly wash would involve boiling, stirring, mangling, drying and ironing, which could have filled four days!

Ivy Smyth was the nurse maid, whose duties would include washing nappies and removing soiled items from sight! A bonus might have been walking with the baby in nearby Alexandra Park



WILFRED ARTHUR PARSONS

Wilfred Arthur Parsons is described in the 1911 census as a tailor's cutter. At that time, there were ten people showing in the Hastings census as having that occupation, plus one retired. By 1930 his name could be found in this advertisement for A. Maconie Ltd, whose shop is at 29 Robertson Street - now trading as Hanushka Coffee shop. In the 1939 Register Wilfred is described as a master tailor. Sadly, he is not mentioned after that.



OCCUPIERS

According to Kelly's Directory, the following people have lived at Thirlmere

- 1905-9 S J Weston Esq
- 1910-2 Wilfred A Parsons
- 1913-5 Thomas Wright
- 1917-22 Mrs Stacey Lyle
- 1923-48 Noel John Hastings Tutt
- 1950-60 Misses Martin
- 1966-8 William H Barber
- 1970-4 Brian G M Thompson

2021 CENSUS

In 2016 Thirlmere was bought by Geoffrey Eric Longmire and is occupied by him and his partner, Teresa Sleet. The 2021 Census shows them to be the sole occupiers. Geoff is a retired solicitor and Teresa a retired teacher. They have no servants!

The house has changed since 1911. It was built with five bedrooms of which one has been converted into the en-suite bathroom for the main bedroom. The original bathroom was separate from the toilet and they are now merged. Downstairs, at the rear of the kitchen, space taken up by a coal store, a toilet accessed from outside and a pantry is now combined as a utility room with a toilet separated by an internal partition wall with sliding door. The former breakfast/dining room is no longer separated from the kitchen.

Outside, a garage has been added, whilst the rear garden has lost its lawn - too often the victim of night-time tricks by local badgers and other wildlife. It is now largely pebbles with planting spaces.

Despite the changes, many original features remain

- above the front door, the name is preserved in stained glass
- the internal front door also has original glass



- in the front room, the ceiling features are still apparent



- and in the back room, the lighting rose is even more elaborate



Upstairs, these appear to be original fireplaces.



Then ... and now

