

The History of the Bluebell

The common of Beale manor stretched from Batsherne in the west to Inhams in the east, and it was sandwiched between the woodlands of Pitlands on the north and Abbots Wood on the south. In the medieval period an acre of purpresture near the "herne" was enclosed out of the common.

At the end of the 17th century the acre with its messuage and a barn was in the possession of Robert Trigg as a Beale copyhold. The Trigg family had been in possession of nearby lands in the bishop's manor since the 15th century, and they may have had the Beale copyhold for a similar length of time. On the death of Robert Trigg in 1728 the property was inherited by his nephew Francis Bird.

By the early 19th century the Chuter family held the property and it had gained "new erections and buildings"; in 1841 their tenants were William Hill and others. In 1854, James Cole of Frensham, husbandman then sold the property to John Cole of Batt's Corner for £140. The following year John Cole acquired an alehouse licence for The Bluebell at Batts Corner and he mortgaged the property to John Barratt, the Farnham brewer, eventually selling to him in 1862.'

And the very next day, David has another contribution, this time from Jean Parratt, editor of The Farnham Diary, who writes:

Regarding the history of The Bluebell at Batts Corner, Dockenfield about which you asked. I can tell you that it had an alehouse (i.e. not wines or spirits, only beer) licence, the first on record being given on 8 March 1855 when the licensee was John Cole, but I do not know how long he had held it before this first recorded date. Subsequent licensees were Edward Baker who had the licence granted to him on 6 March 1862, Thomas Aldred (5 March 1863) and George Cobbett (26 October 1893).

In 1904 it had a Poor Rate of £23, sold luncheons, teas and minerals and had accommodation for two persons and two horses. In 1872 the licensing register shows that the public house was owned by Barrett's Brewery followed by Farnham United Breweries.'

The History of the 'Bluebell' (and Batts Corner): continued

In edition 239 (page 8) an article appeared called 'The History of the Bluebell' with contributions from David Graham, Pat Heather and Jean Parratt. I then asked for anyone else who had memories of the Bluebell to share them via DNL. I am delighted to say that the following piece has been written by Pauline Duke, aged 81, an ex-resident of Dockenfield who now lives in Torquay. It seems her stepson, Barry Duke of Farnham is a member of the Local History Group and he heard about DNL's request for more facts about the Bluebell. He mentioned it to Pauline and hey presto she put pen to paper.

The 'Blue Bell'

I was born in 1933 and lived at the 'Blue Bell' for 6 years, my grandparents Edwin and Ellen Lampard, being the then licensees. My family then moved just across the road to a bungalow aptly named 'Belle View', so of course I spent a great deal of time visiting my grandparents. I remember seeing the delivery of beer barrels, rolled down a chute into the long cellar and put into position ready to be 'tapped'. The wholesalers, Naylor's (from Aldershot I believe) brought crisps, packets of biscuits

and I think cigarettes etc. A large portion of the garden was used to grow strawberries which we then packed into punnets and sold to the local customers whilst the very tiny berries were sold for jam making. When war was declared, the local 'Dad's Army' met in the large shed in the grounds of the 'Blue Bell'

I am unsure when my grandparents retired, but I seem to remember a family called Wiseman (from London I think) moved into the 'Blue Bell' but after that I am afraid I have no details.

Batts Corner

Having lived in Batts Corner until I was 11 years old I have lots of memories of the people there. We lived opposite the farm owned by John Cole from whom we had our milk.

There was a forge run by Fred Collier: people came from quite long distances to have their horses 'shoed'. There were kennels owned by Miss Robinson who was a very familiar sight walking her dogs.

In 'Notes on old Dockenfield' it is suggested that there was a school at Batts Corner. I wonder if this is the tiny chapel which was almost next door to where I lived at 'Belle View'.

It was my Sunday School run by Mrs Jessica Baker, who lived next door to the chapel and who also played the organ.

When I started school at Frensham a Mr Teddy Bailey from Frensham transported the children from the Dockenfield area to school in his 'charabanc'. If my memory is correct we qualified for this journey from the age of five until (I think) seven after which we had to make our own way. Quite a journey by foot in all weathers! A highlight of my life then was being the proud and welcome owner of my first bicycle at the age of (approximately) eight. No more walking to school!