

## **Names Old and New**

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Scattered all over West End are ancient names that give clues to the village's history. They fall into two groups, names associated with people and names that are descriptive of a place.

One of the oldest names in the first group is Rounce Lane dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and a man called Richard Rawnce. Pankhurst, or Pentecost as it used to be called, is of similar antiquity, associated with John Pentecost. Another name dating back to the same period is Hookstone Farm, a well documented ancient house, once the home of William de Hok. Henry Street, the blacksmith, had his forge opposite the former site of Holy Trinity School. He died in 1751 and no doubt gave his name to what is now Street's Heath. From 1762 onwards the name begins to appear on Surrey maps.

Although many farms had ancient names they were rarely used and were much more likely to be known by the name of the people living in them. When the Gosden family lived at the old cottage that still stands near the BP garage it was always known as Gosden's Farm and someone wrote the name boldly on an old photograph of the family standing outside the cottage's front door. The blacksmith's branch of the family moved to the old house that had a narrow entrance lane from Street's Heath. They called it 'Old Acre' but it probably had an ancient place name. My grandfather, William Lucock, occupying the house that stood close to Old Acre, always referred to his home as 'The Old Place',, but locals just called it 'Lucock's'. It was a surprise, when I looked at the deeds, to discover the correct name as long as ago the 1500s was Dickmore Lake, recalling a time when West End was a much more undrained and wetter place than it is today.

Miss Mary Tringham called her new Victorian house Brentmoor and so gave a name to a road and a piece of common. 'Brent' is an old word meaning 'burnt' and presumably Miss Tringham had in mind the nearby Burntstub Farm, a name that does not seem to date back much earlier than the 1800s. There were much more ancient names for this area, in particular, Hagthorn or Haggethorne (1300). It means a place covered with hawthorn bushes giving a picture of an area at the time similar to that which existed at Bisley (Byse Leah) 'a clearing overgrown with bushes' and not a moor at all. More old place names seem to have survived than names associated with people. Brock Hill on the common was Brockhulle in 1359. The name 'Le Benhaghe' has survived since 1341 because it is the modern Benner Lane.

I wonder how many people these days speak of 'Donkey Town'; probably only older residents who have been born in the village. When Sutton Palmer's book about Surrey was published in 1905 he called it the nicer sounding 'Donkey Green'. On Darton's map of Surrey published in 1830, when the settlement was still comparatively newly-created out of the common, it is interesting to see it called New Thorn.

The names of roads can change because of changed circumstances. When the Baptist Chapel flourished near the present Meadow Way all the houses along the road to Benner Lane, Dyckmore, Old Acre, Medhurst's Bolding House Farm and Walnut Tree Cottage, were known as numbers 1 to 4 Chapel Row. Frederick Hulbert rented old Dyckmore around 1895 and his wife started a laundry. For years afterwards, the site was always known as Victoria Laundry.

Local historians, not born in an area they are writing about always stress the importance of documentary evidence and often flatly deny the accuracy of the memories and knowledge of those born locally. A classic example, however, of the dangers of relying entirely on documentary evidence is seen in some of the entries in 1831 Census for West End. Although prepared by two Chobham residents, Richard Rowland junior and James Try senior, their names for some of the West End sites are very odd. Halebourne Lane, they called Eel Bourne Lane and Hagthorn Farm appears as Flagg Thorn Farm. Evidently, Rowland and Try did not venture very often to the wilder 'West End' of Chobham.