

## WHYDOWN FARM

### DETAILS OF PROPERTY (NGR TQ 7071 0948)

Whydown Bridge not far away was recorded in 1455 as Swyneshambrigge taking it's name from Whydown Farm, originally a water meadow where swine were kept. (OE Swinham, Swinhamme in 772, Swinham 1189, Swynhamme 1307) In 1706 the name appears as Whitedown. (1)

The monks owned Whydown in the Middle Ages as part of Barnhorn Manor which in turn was owned by Battle Abbey. The survey of Barnhorn Manor made 15 March 1307 shows that William of Whydown was one of the senior tenants of the Manor of Barnhorn. The monks were great swan keepers hence the old name for the East Stream was 'Swanflete'. To get from Barnhorn to Battle the monks used the 'Royal Road' which we now know as Sandhurst Lane, via Whydown, Hooe Common and so to Ninfield and Battle. There was a water mill at Whydown bridge in the 16th century but more research has to be done into this. (2)

This finished being a working farm in 1984 when the last farmer Mr Harry E. Gardham sold the property in four lots. The farmhouse was sold with four acres to Mr and Mrs Hollington. The house is in two parts, the oldest at the back, (phase 1) this is estimated as being 17th century while the front part (phase 2) was added much later probably in the first half of the 19th century. The bonding of the brickwork of Phase 1 is English Garden Wall i.e. three rows of stretchers and one row of headers. There have been additional windows and a door. Phase 2 has grey bricks interlined with red. The outbuildings are exactly as shown on the O.S. Map of 1873. There is a stable next to the house and the Oast and barn which is now another property has been converted. The Oast (the kiln end of the barn) was built between 1840 and 1873. The barn may be 18th century being built after 1724 as on a survey of land which fell into the Manor of Barnhorn which was drawn in 1724 for Sir Thomas Webster, the barn appears in a different place, suggesting that this barn was either falling into disrepair or they needed a new and rather larger building. To see this clearer a comparison must be made between the Tithe Map of 1839 (3) and the Barnhorn survey (4). Between the house and the road there is a deep pond surrounded by trees. Another low building lies close to the present pond. At the entrance to the drive is a small two story building which has blocked in air vents. This building has a bench mark and appears to be 66 feet above sea level. It was built before 1840 as it is shown on the Tithe Map (3) In the Twentieth century it was used as a garage and owned separately. Directly across the road from the house is a small low building which has been renovated, this was also part of the farm complex. The well outside the rear part of the old house is filled in. Along the road side can be seen three Lime trees and it is said that there were originally five which signified a safe house for smugglers in the old days. This may well be true as upstairs in Phase 1 there is a large space between the two bedrooms, at least four feet, which cannot otherwise be accounted

for. In the roof the chimney rises up from the rooms and beside the chimney there is a large area which drops down between the two bedrooms. There are cellars beneath the Phase 2 containing two small chambers.

**OWNER/TENANT DETAILS** (Mores research has to be carried out)

- <1724> Sir Thomas Webster Bt owner (4)
- <1724> Samuel Gyles holds by copy, then known as Whitedown and Seebrook (4)
- <1727-1735 Martha Gyles (5)
- 1735-1737> George Hammond (5)
- <1801> Thomas Hammond owner, Thomas Duke tenant (9)
- <1802> John Wood with Messuage and 36 acres (6)
- 1823 Thomas Newman Collins Messuage Barn and 36a as Redford and White Down (10)
- <1833> Thomas Holland owner/occupier paying Land Tax (7)
- <1843> Henry Thwaites owner/occupier (3)
- <1896> William Russell (8)
- <1950> William Eric Wilcox (8)
- <1984 Harry Gardham last farmer sold in four plots.



Whydown Farmhouse 1993 no a private residence



Whydown converted oast and barn 1993

## SOURCES

- 1 The Place Names of Sussex by Judith Glover
- 2 James Donne, historian writing in Bexhill Observer 1973
- 3 ESRO TD/E 141 Tithe Map and Award
- 4 ESRO BAT 4426 Plan of Whydown and Gotham
- 5 ESRO AMS 5641/2 Rev Ott Tithe Book
- 6 Bexhill Manor Rental ESRO RAF Box unclassified
- 7 ESRO Late Land Tax
- 8 Bexhill Directory
- 9 ESRO Land Tax
- 10 Bexhill Museum Bexhill Manor Rental 1823