Combe House, Street Farm and Granary Barn

A Village Property by Roger Batty

Estimated reading time: 10 minutes



Aerial View of Street Farm

Brief Background and History

Street Farm goes back a few hundred years. There was around 200 acres of farming land on the West/North Facing slopes of the Cotswold Escarpment. The Farm is mostly on the Eastern/Southern side of the B4030 road from Cam to Wotton-under-Edge. From Combe House round the hill past where ***Leaf and Ground*** is now built. See then ***1959*** plan. Plots 1,2,3.and Combe House and barns/outbuildings.



Aerial View of Combe House

Combe House

All about the Farmhouse



Combe House

We are not sure when it was first named Combe House but Combe House was the Farmhouse for Street Farm. Probably in the 1930’s. It used to have a walled garden across the road opposite the house. It was where the 4 houses in Combe Gardens

(now called Coombe Gardens) were built in the 1980's (***correction built in 1959 see comment below from Caryn Mitchell***) and we presume it was a kitchen garden. The red brick wall of the garden is still in evidence.

A note left to us by the previous owner states there was a report in the Berkeley Trespass,dated 1813 by Thomas Wood (aged 70) that Combe House (the original farmhouse) was built in 1764. That part is now the kitchen, bedroom above and another bedroom in the roof void on the 2nd floor (basically the left side of the house in the picture). The main part of the total house which is now let as Combe Cottage was added about 100 years later.

About Combe House

Combe House and all the surrounding barns and farm buildings are built from Marlstone (***Mudstone***). Like many of the other Village properties are and that stone contains an immense amount of fossils.

The Quarry on Stinchcombe Hill was considered to belong to Mr Pinfold of Piers Court. The stone for the farmhouse was dug from the quarry and hauled down by P Stone and his son who built the house. (*Note: This fact was in a paper left by Joan Willott. However, it's possible that the stone came from not from up the hill (which is lighter and harder), but from Cam quarry, on the left side of Taits Hill.*)

Listed Grade 2

The house was ***listed as Grade 2*** in April 1984. The main feature (previously taken out) being a spiral staircase next to the fireplace in the kitchen.

The listing included all the farm buildings owned by the Willotts who bought Combe House in 1959. All buildings within the curtilage of Combe House but excluded those barns which

subsequently obtained planning to be turned into dwelling houses. i.e. Granary Barn and Street Farm (was known as Banana Barn for a little while). Combe House still has the old piggery, a privy in the garden, 4 stables all in the original form with a hayloft above and open cart sheds.

An ugly (but very useful) extension built out of Bradstone was added in the 1980's. When a garden room, another bathroom, utility, study and another staircase.

The Battys improvements

Some 10 years ago the Batty's, who had lived at Combe House since 1996, decided they should downsize as they were rattling around. However, at the last moment, decided to stay as they loved the house. To make it work they converted the 'newer' north end of the house to a large 2 bedroomed Cottage for letting. In the Farmhouse there had also been a dairy. At the end of the house with a separate entrance. The Cottage also had a separate staircase. In future, it can be turned back quickly into one house. Or used as a granny annex or teenagers flat.

Recent Occupants of Combe House

Street Farm and Combe House were owned together with the acreage and barns/outbuildings by ***Doris Gadsden of Piers Court*** for several years.

In January 1959 Combe House, together with various barns and outbuildings from Street Farm were bought by ***Harold and Joan de Quetteville Willott*** for £2600. He was a solicitor with ***Francillon, Willott & Raby Hieatt*** of Long Street Dursley.

In January 1996 it was bought by the present owners Roger & Heather Batty.

Harold lived for his trainset that took up the whole of the attic rooms suspended on tables and going through tunnels

built in the walls. It is rumoured that when he invited friends to the house he would offer them an anorak, bobble hat and gloves to go into the attic to play with his trainset. The house was always known as one of the coldest in the Village with no central heating.

When Harold died it took his wife a long time to pack up the train set in its boxes and send it off to Christies for sale!

Before 1959 when Dorothy Gadsden owned it, previous owners are hard to find but we know it was occupied by various tenants some of whom we know details and some appear on various censuses.

The Bowlby Family

In May 2014 a Yorkshire man Tom Brown and his wife called at Combe House when we were not there and told our tenants living in the Cottage that his Grandmother ***Lady Maria Bowlby*** widow of ***Major-General Anthony Bowlby*** had lived in the house during the war and had died in the Village in September 1957. He sent us an interesting emails and photos about the Bowlby family which has been extended by Sophie Bowlby. See all the emails and learn all about The Bowlby Family at Combe House by following the link below.

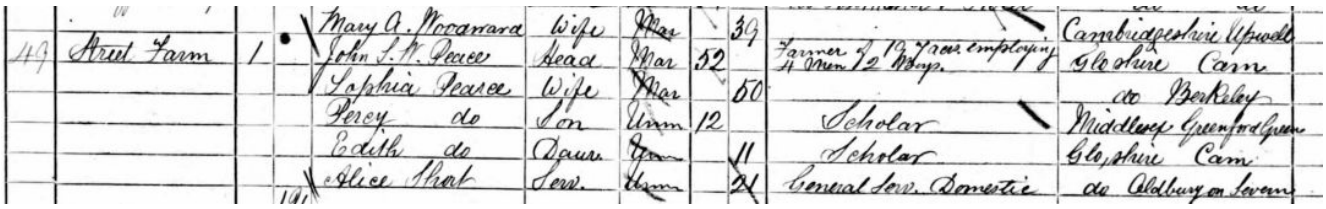
- ***The Bowlby Family at Combe House***

Previous Owners of Stree Farm

Mary Mabbett had inherited Street Farm from her father John Mabbett, who owned it when the ***1839 Tithe Map*** was drawn. It looks as though it was rented out to John Williams at that stage. On the reproduction Tithe Map, an orchard called Mill House Orchard is shown behind the house. (Mill House Orchard, means “The House orchard of Fruit Tree that need to be milled”..i.e. Cider Apples.)

In the ***1881 census records*** it shows that the ***Pearces*** occupied

Street Farm as tenant farmers. John Pearce employed 4 men and two boys



49	Street Farm	1	Mary A. Navarra	Wife	Mar		39		Cambridgeshire Upwell
			John S. W. Pearce	Head	Mar	52		Farmer of 12 Acres employing 4 Men 2 Boys	Glocshire Cam
			Sophia Pearce	Wife	Mar		50		do Berkeley
			Percy do	Son	Unm	12		Scholar	Middlesex Greenford Gren
			Edith do	Daur	Unm		11	Scholar	Glocshire Cam
			Alice Short	Serv.	Unm		24	General Serv. Domestic	do Oldbury on Severn

The 1881 Census – Street Farm

By 1891 they had moved to Middlesex. As tenant farmers the move would have been forced by the death in 1890 of ***Miss Mary Mabbett***, who owned Street Farm and much else in and around the village.

Mary Mabbett's land and property was auctioned on 7th August 1890 (see illustration below). ***Street Farm was Lot 2***.

In 1890 the tenancy of Street Farm was passed to ***Samuel and Emily Gabb*** who lived in Slimbridge, but by the ***1901 census*** he was living at Street Farm.

STINCHCOMBE, CAM, NORTH NIBLEY, COALEY, AND BERKELEY,

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

PARTICULARS AND PLANS

OF THREE VALUABLE

FREEHOLD

ESTATES

A FINE OLD

COUNTRY RESIDENCE,

TWENTY-ONE

HOUSES & COTTAGES

AND SEVERAL CLOSES OF

ACCOMMODATION LAND,

CONTAINING ALTOGETHER

370 ACRES,

OR THEREABOUTS;

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

BY

MESSRS. D. LEGGE, SON, & PEARCE,

By direction of Messrs. Isaac Holbrow the younger, Thomas Hillier, and James Gordon Wenden, the Trustees and Executors of the Will of the late Miss MARY MABBETT, deceased,

AT THE

OLD BELL HOTEL, DURSLEY,

On THURSDAY, the 7th day of AUGUST, 1890,

At THREE for FOUR o'Clock in the AFTERNOON, subject to Conditions,

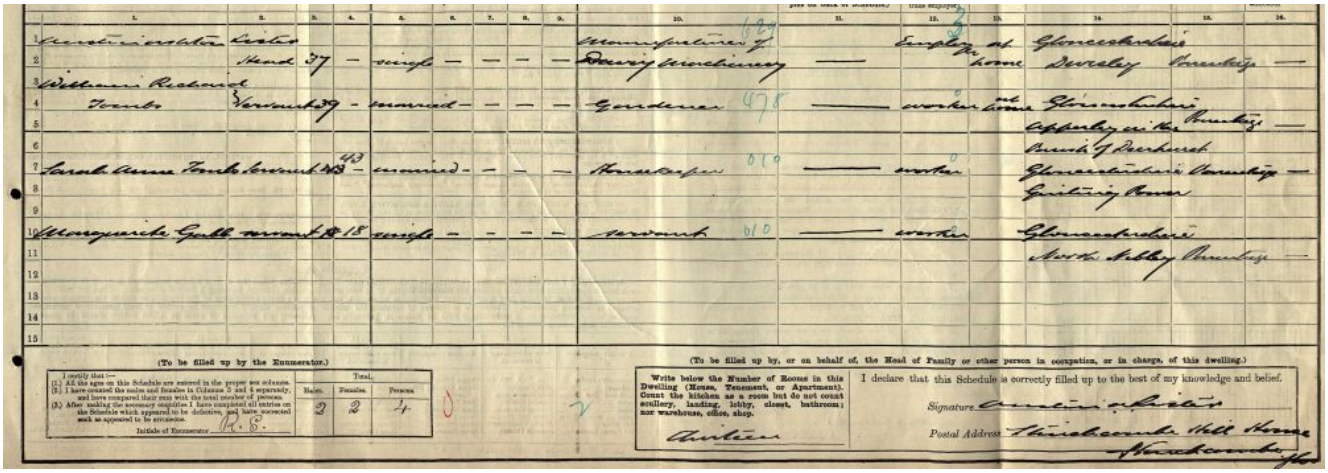
In the following or such other Lots as may be determined on at the time of Sale.

To View Lot 1, apply on the Premises, Lots 2, 3, and 14, to Mr. J. S. W. Pearce, Stinchcombe, and the remainder of the Lots to the respective Tenants.

For Particulars, Plans, and Conditions of Sale *apply to the AUCTIONEERS, Berkeley, or to Messrs. MABBETT, ROGERS, & EDGE, Estate Agents, 34, Aldford Street, Park Lane, London, W., or Messrs. VIZARD, WENDEN, & MACDONALD, Solicitors, Dursley.*

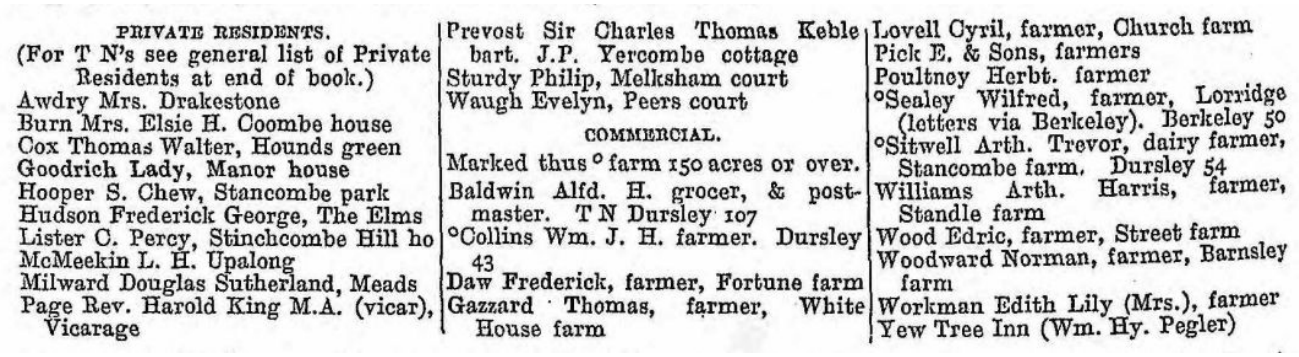
WHITMORE AND SON, STEAM PRINTERS, LONG STREET, DURSLEY.

Auction of Combe House and Street Farm 1890
In June 1909 Samuel Gabb sold Street Farm to Mr ***Austin Ashton Lister*** of Stinchcombe Hill House



Census 1911 Austin Ashton single living at Stinchcombe Hill House
By ***1911 census*** the ***Brazingtons*** had moved into Street Farm.

During the War, while Combe House was rented to Lady Bowlby, Street Farm was farmed by Edric Eric Wood. Edric was born at Castle Farm in Dursley (Now Tescos) in 1904. Like his father he was a Dairyman and lived at Houndsgreen while farming at Street Farm. At that point, Street Farm was just a Farm, however he was a Dairyman, and son of a Dairyman and the house of "Street Farm" was a converted dairy. So maybe this is when come dairy cattle appeared at Street Farm, during the war.



PRIVATE RESIDENTS.
(For T N's see general list of Private Residents at end of book.)
Awdry Mrs. Drakestone
Burn Mrs. Elsie H. Coombe house
Cox Thomas Walter, Hounds green
Goodrich Lady, Manor house
Hooper S. Chew, Stancombe park
Hudson Frederick George, The Elms
Lister C. Percy, Stinchcombe Hill ho
McMeekin L. H. Upalong
Milward Douglas Sutherland, Meads
Page Rev. Harold King M.A. (vicar), Vicarage
Prevost Sir Charles Thomas Keble bart. J.P. Yercombe cottage
Sturdy Philip, Melksham court
Waugh Evelyn, Peers court

COMMERCIAL.
Marked thus ° farm 150 acres or over.
Baldwin Alfd. H. grocer, & post-master. T N Dursley 107
°Collins Wm. J. H. farmer. Dursley 43
Daw Frederick, farmer, Fortune farm
Gazzard Thomas, farmer, White House farm
Lovell Cyril, farmer, Church farm
Pick E. & Sons, farmers
Poultney Herbt. farmer
°Sealey Wilfred, farmer, Lorridge (letters via Berkeley). Berkeley 50
°Sitwell Arth. Trevor, dairy farmer, Stancombe farm. Dursley 54
Williams Arth. Harris, farmer, Standle farm
Wood Edric, farmer, Street farm
Woodward Norman, farmer, Barnsley farm
Workman Edith Lily (Mrs.), farmer
Yew Tree Inn (Wm. Hy. Pegler)

Extract from the 1939 Kelly's Directory
Street Farm remained with the Lister family until it was sold by Robert Browning Lister and Sir Charles Percy Lister to Doris Lillian Gadsen for £5,240 in 1958

Mrs Gadsen then sold Combe House in 1959, the other parts of

Street Farm continued to be owned by Dorothy Gadsden. In May 1987 she sold 5.481 acres to the owners of Melksham Court, George Robert Clarke.

Planning to convert “Granary Barn” into a dwelling house was agreed in July 1990. Clarke then sold the 5.481 acres to Linda and Norman Sellers in 1992 who then obtained planning to convert the Cattle Barn.

“Granary Barn” was sold by Linda and Norman Sellers to Peter and Jane Small who renovated that Barn into their dwelling house. (***before*** and ***after***)

In August 2001, after the conversion of the Cattle Barn, (***before & after***). The Sellers sold the newly named called “Street Farm” to the present owners Richard and Jane Bartlam.



“Street Farm” in 2001 after conversion

Interesting finds

The Batty’s have had some interesting finds since they have lived at Combe House for the last 25 years.

The pedestrian entrance used to be straight onto the road at the front of the house where the main front door is (the door

is still there but not used any more) but with increasing traffic volumes the entrance into the farm at the North end of the house was used for the main entrance which was presumably used for the cattle and horses/carts – it appears this change took place before 1940.

When digging a soakaway across the front lawn a 10 ft underground cubed brick chamber was found with an iron ladder down to beside a well which is 70ft deep. Next to the well is an engine that used to pump the water from the well to the house. The pumping engine which appears in good condition was ***manufactured in Fairford Glos***.

Also at the back of the house under the lawn and pathway there is another (but a lot larger) bricked reservoir which contains water. No measurements of the size of it have been taken but it appears approx. 5ft deep and possibly 15ft length x 12ft width. It is suggested that this water reservoir was used to collect all the water that came off the hill to supply water to the animals.

In the house itself when we moved in there needed to be some updating and we started to try to restore it to its original farmhouse. The kitchen and hall were covered in lino tiles and we looked to replace these with new tiles. However, when removing the floor covering we discovered two inches of bitumen on top of the original flagstone floor in the kitchen and Victorian tiles in the hall. So after removing the bitumen we lightly sand blasted the floors to bring them back as best as possible. They appear to be original and laid on earth but there is no damp in them. The kitchen has an original 6 inch drain made by ***A Kendrick & Sons*** .

Street Farm Itself

It was known as a mixed farm of arable crops and cattle and a substantial and interesting article of what crops were being grown on the farm around 1840 can be seen on ***this link***

Missing History

This is a brief history of Combe House and Street Farm but there are lots of gaps which we hope to fill in eventually from others knowledge or documented information. So if anyone has stories or information regarding the properties please advise ***Roger Batty***.