

Rookhurst, Coast Hill

In 1898 the availability of building plots at Coast Hill was advertised. It is understood that the Rookhurst site was bought on 11th July 1901.

It is believed that George and Elaine Palmer bought the house in 1926. It is also understood that when the Westcott telephone exchange was introduced Rookhurst's number was 'Westcott 1'. Arthur G Palmer was shown as the occupant in the Dorking Directories of 1933 and 1936 and Kelly's Directory of 1950.

After Mr Palmer's death, Mrs Palmer moved into Green Hedges, a smaller house on the other side of the road, and Rookhurst was sold by auction on 29th October 1962. The prospectus (there is a copy in the Westcott Local History Group HQ) describes the gardens and refers to the follies although it gives no clue as to their origins. It also refers to Mr Stannard, the gardener (see below) whose cottage in the grounds was excluded from the sale.

In May 1936 the Westcott Women's Institute met at Rookhurst, courtesy of Mr & Mrs Palmer.

Marian Herridge knew the Palmers well and advises that it was George Palmer and his two gardeners who constructed the follies.

The Westcott School Register includes Greta Stannard (born 19 December 1916), daughter of Ernest Stannard of Rookhurst who was admitted on 25th January 1927 from Bickley & Widmore School. She left at the end of July 1931 to attend Wimbledon Commercial School. She subsequently married and her daughter, also Greta, owns but does not necessarily live at, Rookery Cottage, Rookery Drive.



Rookhurst and its garden (before and after!)