

Street Farmhouse : 230 Canterbury Road

No. 230 Canterbury Road is the right-hand part of the original timber-framed farmhouse of Street Farm. The original layout of the house was a large open to roof hall in the centre of the building built c. 1450-1500. In c. 1600 a pair of inglenook chimneys were inserted and by 1720 the whole building had been divided into three dwellings.



The entrance to 230 is now on the side of the house. The rear of the building has a two storey, brown brick extension, added in 1720 according to the deeds for the house. This part of the building now houses the kitchen on the ground floor, with an extra bedroom above, together with a small bathroom. The ground floor of the front timber-framed part holds just a single room, set at two slightly different levels. This room holds one of the large inglenook fireplaces, inserted in about 1600, which stands back to back with its twin next door. The bressummer above the fireplace has had to be replaced, as the old one was crumbling away when the later plaster-covering was removed. The new one now runs from the right side of the chimney-breast to the front outside wall.

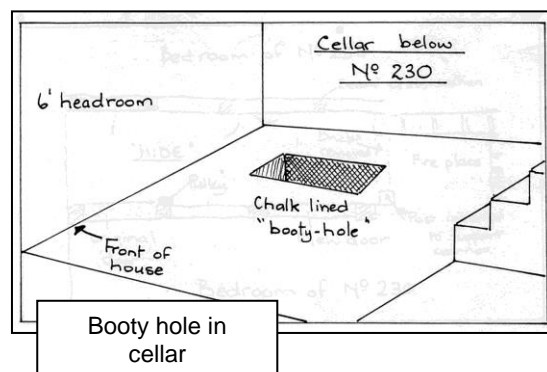


The huge beams, which run from front to back of the room, are original ones and still contain numerous different carpenters' marks. Two of the doors are very old and have handmade hinges, each of which has the blacksmith's mark [**F.H.**] enclosed in a square, stamped into them. There have been two

active forges in the village since at least 1687, but as yet, the owner of the mark has not yet been traced.

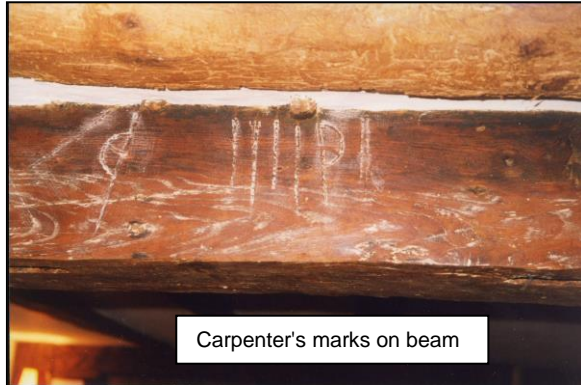
When the crumbling plaster was removed from between the framework of the outer walls of this room, it was replaced by the old slow-setting lime, sand and hair mixture, as it was originally. The quick drying version does not allow for the movement in the timber and, consequently, results in numerous cracks appearing.

Beneath the ground floor, in the centre of the higher level of the room, there is the entry to a cellar, which is lined with clunch blocks. When one of the owners was putting a brick lining over these blocks and cleaning up the flooring, he



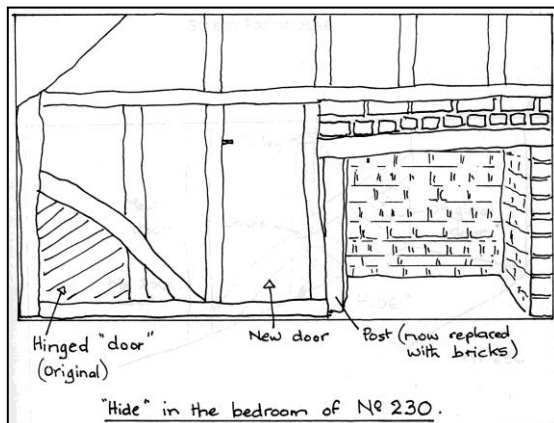
discovered another lower hole in the cellar floor. He called it a 'booty hole' and was fairly certain the house was used for smuggling during the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Discoveries in the room above the living room add even more weight to his theory. In the cellar hole were found several French coins, some buttons (possibly military?), a bone that had been shaped and a very smooth white marble-like ball which is strangely cold.

In the renovations to the ceiling of the ground floor, all the joints and floorboards were found to be full of various kinds of corn (wheat, barley and oats), giving the impression that the upper floor was used for grain storage at some time. There are a number of empty mortises of different sizes and shapes in the large beam just in front of the



fireplace in the living room, indicating either alterations in the layout of the partitions or that the timbers are re-used ones. The staircase is at the right hand rear corner of the room, with a wide splayed turn as you reach the junction with the new rear wing and again when you reach the room above the living room. They are narrow and steep, with an old window high up under the eaves near the top. The windows here are a later insertion into a much older, probably 18th century, frame.

In the room above the living room, (now the main bedroom), is a small fireplace. When the owner in the 1990s bought the house, this was hidden under the unframed plaster, although the left side of the wall still retained its visible wooden framework with lathe and plaster infills. He decided to uncover the plaster over the section where he thought the old fireplace must have been. When he did so, he found the right side of the chimney-breast was supported on an old brick wall, which he eventually had to re-mortar. The left side, however, had been cut away and was only supported by a short wooden beam. Puzzled by this, he poked a stick behind and to the left of the post, but there was no obstruction. He then broke into the plaster in the framework next to the fireplace and shone a light into the space to the left. He discovered that the cavity ran the full length of the room. The entry into this



cavity was through the triangular panel at the bottom left hand corner, nearest to the front of the house.

There is a mechanism for automatically closing the door after entering the area, consisting of a very old pulley around which ran a piece of ancient cord. This then ran down through a large iron staple about 6 inches above the floor and originally held a weight. The opening still works and is just large enough

for a slim person to enter. In the right hand end of the space, there is an entry through the chimney-breast, which can then be scaled and would bring the

climber out into the loft above. The beams in the cavity beside the hidden fireplace are all smoke blackened.

The loft above also contains huge smoke-blackened timbers, indicating that there was once a central, open fireplace down below and that the smoke then found its way up into the roof space and out through the thatch and later, the tiles and the two gablets at each end of the enormous roof. When the great fireplaces and chimneystacks were inserted in the 17th century, this must have made a real difference to the quality of life that was led in the old house. The front door into the house could well have been altered from a passage entry into a lobby-entry at this date.



As can be seen from the details noted during these visits, the house is certainly considerably older than the listing states. This was the farmhouse that belonged to what was known as Street Farm, whose land stretched up to the edge of the old churchyard. Barns on this farm are shown on an old etching of about 1845. This etching also shows the end of the pair of cottages now known as Street Farm Cottages.

Street Farm barns & cottages 1845