

(Herewith the brief history of Grove House which I have tried to piece together. I have deliberately omitted much that is in Winter's text. It keeps it brief, and Winter's document is there for those who wish to read it.)

After the discovery that Robert Covell, the Cinque Port deputy, had spawned a generation of blacksmiths, I had hoped to find some more genealogical evidence to link the house to John Covell, his youngest son, or the latter's elder son John. However, as you will see, the only trace of either is the appearance before the Archdeacon's court of the father, in 1666, for not going to church. At present, there is no trace of either being a blacksmith, which would give a plausible link to the house. (It seems that Robert Covell's will is available from the National Archives for a small sum. This may provide some more information, but I did not pursue the line of enquiry. Time is limited and I need to move on!)

Given the evidence from the maps, from the reading of the building, and the known history of the Covells, my own imagined version of the construction of the house would be the following.

That it was built around 1680 by John Covell, blacksmith, about 60 years old, and whose son, also a blacksmith, was about 25 years old at the time. Their forge was the building now occupied by the Conservative Party. The trade seems to have been central to the local economy at the time, and sufficiently lucrative to allow him to build what must have been a costly building.

Two of the Covell brothers, Andrew and Silas, had been plying their trade in Godmersham and Littlebourne, respectively. I can imagine the brothers working together on larger jobs, travelling between the different villages in which they had set up their forges. This would have been a family business with several bases in the area. This set-up would have given them the flexibility to take on small and large jobs alike. Grove House was built to accommodate John senior and wife Catherine, by this time at the end of their working lives, in the small, southern part, with John junior, his wife and young family in the larger part. Young John's wife, Mary East by her maiden name, helped out her husband by doing some of the paper and administrative work. The initials on the south gable could be those of John and Catherine, and John and Mary on the north gable.

I hope that the historical details given are correct. Please let me know if you see any errors. Thanks again for your help. I would not have been able to do this without you.

Best

wishes

Philip Merritt