

Our History

Miss Flower-Grimes 1889-1969 (researched by Herbie Whitmore)

Miss Flower-Grimes bought West Grinstead Lodge from the Hornung family after J P Hornung's death in 1940. The Lodge was a substantial house in Park Lane, about 200 metres north east of the Catholic Church, and was requisitioned by the Canadians during the war; King George VI visited the Division "A" Mess HQ there on March 9th 1944.

We do not know what brought Miss Flower-Grimes to this part of the world, but she soon become something of a pillar of the community. She was a councillor at Horsham Rural District Council for 19 years, sat on the Parish Council for 17 years from 1950, was on the church Parochial Council for 17 years, was treasurer of Dial Post Village Hall and secretary for the WI for many years. She was clearly a lady of some means: she is listed in the Kelly's Directories of 1922 and 1937 as farmer of two farms (Clock House and Eastcrofts) in Purleigh, Essex, which she inherited from her father. She will be remembered by those who knew her as a tall, friendly woman who drove two Bentleys. She died a spinster in 1969, having moved to Horsham two years earlier after selling West Grinstead Lodge to the Southwark Catholic Children's Society, which was at the time responsible for St. Thomas More Approved School. The house was demolished a few years later, but several large trees of the garden, including an impressive redwood, are still visible from the Catholic Church car park.

Grace Annie Flower-Grimes was born in Streatham, Surrey, a year after her parents' marriage in 1888. Her father Farnham was listed in the 1891 census as a solicitor, but by 1911 he was described as a dredging contractor, barge builder, lighterman, tug owner, wharfinger, solicitor and company director in Tooting, London. In partnership with a relative named Flower (hence that element in his daughter's name) in a lighterage tug company, he took delivery in 1902 of a tug that they renamed "Grace". He died in 1921 and is buried, along with his wife (who died in 1916), younger daughter Ethel (who died aged one in 1892) in the family plot in West Norwood Cemetery. "Our" Miss Flower-Grimes is also buried there; a photo of her grave can be found at www.findagrave.com.

(go to www.westgrinsteadnews.co.uk for a fuller story)



Courtesy of John Winstanley

West Grinstead Lodge before the war