

PARKGATE FARM is located on the south side of Silchester Road, just beyond North Lodge, to the east of Bramley Corner. This interesting T-shaped two-storeyed, timber-framed house with brick in-filling, has some herringbone work and a steep tiled roof, with two large chimneys. The central section dates back to the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, with Nineteenth Century additions.



We know that Daniel Holloway came here to live around 1835 and lived here until his death in November 1868 at the age of eighty-four years. In 1830 his eldest daughter Sarah married the eminent water-colour artist, William Henry Hunt (1790-1864), who was made a Member of the Society of Painters in Watercolours in 1827 and often submitted pictures in their exhibitions. Although born in London he liked to paint country scenes and still life. (See his self portrait opposite.) One of his most famous paintings was a still-life of a birds nest by some primroses. It was beautifully done and earned him the nickname of 'Birds Nest' Hunt. He suffered from frail health, but deeply loved the country, often visiting Bramley, staying with his in-laws and painting pictures in the area. Sarah and he had a very happy marriage and she appears in many of his paintings, including 'An Interesting Letter'.

Parkgate Farm was one of the properties retained within the Beaurepaire Estate, so it was not sold in the sale of 1922, when the Welch Thorntons left the area. In 1931 Thomas Farrant was farming here and during World War II the farmhouse was lived in by two separate families, one being the Lewises from Wales and the other being Jack Thatcher the gamekeeper and his family.



In 1951 Norman and Jean Cole from Bishops Waltham married and bought the farm from Mr Green the timber-merchant, who was then the owner of the estate. Their first farming enterprise was in pigs, with a sow they brought from Bishop's Waltham. They also kept hens, many of the eggs going to supply Bramey Camp and local butchers' shops in Bramley and Sherfield, as well as a good door-to-door trade. They had a daughter Susan born to them in 1953 and a son David in 1957. In 1968 they started a dairy herd and the cows were milked in the old brick stables. Sadly Norman died suddenly of a heart-attack in 1977, and his widow continued to live in the house, but sold the land back to the Beaurepaire Estate. Jean struggled to come to terms with his death and gradually rebuilt her life.

She spent many years caring for her old mother, who was now suffering from short-term memory loss, until her death in 1984. Jean herself died in 2003 aged 78 years.

The old brick stables where the cows had been milked were later converted by David and friend into a cottage for Jean and she moved in 1992. Thereafter the farmhouse was let to a succession of tenants. Her son David and his wife Mary now own the farmhouse, but live in Boarsbridge Farm, which he built.