

Eddie's Paddock

The field behind this sign is known as Eddie's Paddock, after a bull who lived here a few years ago. In the 18th century it was the site of a fine mansion. But we are getting ahead of ourselves — let's go back a bit further.

In 1601 a John Inwood paid the Lord of the Manor of Farnham 2/6d (12½ pence in today's coinage) rent for "6 acres at Tankards Forde with a cottage and barn new built". Tankards, or Tancred's Ford (the origin of the name of today's Tankersford Wood), was a crossing place for the River Wey before Millbridge was built half a mile upstream. When George Mabanke of Guildford wrote his will in 1725, he described a larger farm. In those days the area was a haunt of rogues and vagabonds. Twenty eight years and two owners after Mr Mabanke's will, the Earl of Lincoln (known as Lincoln the Fat) built a house on this site called Clinton Lodge, after his family name.

In 1761, Clinton Lodge was bought by the Duke of Kingston (that's Kingston-upon-Hull, not Kingston-upon-Thames), who renamed it Pierrepont Lodge after *his* family name and added a splendid ballroom and a new kitchen. The Duke and his wife lived here for ten years until his health failed. Pierrepont Lodge was sold through two rich merchants and a minor MP to Ralph Winstanley Wood.

Wood demolished Pierrepont Lodge and built his own mansion half a mile to the west, calling it Highfield Lodge. Around 1817, he lost his fortune but his son-in-law, Crawford Davison, purchased Highfield, allowing his father-in-law to remain there. Crawford died in 1836 and the estate, now over 300 acres, passed to his son, also Crawford, but the house must have been too large for this bachelor, as he rented it out until 1862, when he sold it to Richard Henry Combe, of the brewery firm which later became Watney, Combe and Reid.

Richard Combe added greatly to the estate and in 1876 he built a new house on the Highfield site. Designed by Norman Shaw and reverting to the name of Pierrepont, this is the building that stands there today. His son, another Richard, inherited 1,500 acres in 1900 but his one son was killed in the First World War, so after the deaths of Richard and his wife in 1939 and 1941, the estate was auctioned.

The house was requisitioned by the military (WWII was in progress), but the farm and other property were purchased by Major Allnat, a property developer. As children, his son and daughter Jo were brought up on the farm, and it was to here she would return many years later to start her own beloved pedigree Jersey herd and, with great generosity, gift it to the Countryside Restoration Trust in 2006.

This sign was first published in 2012.

Abridged from Pierrepont: a potted history, by CRT volunteer Jonathan Foster. The original article is on our website.

Pierrepont Farm

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No, your eyes are not playing tricks on you, the first line of the fourth paragraph has been set in smaller type (we didn't notice until after the signs were printed).

To see where Eddie's Paddock is, go here: <http://crtinsurrey.org.uk/pierrepont-farm-2/pierrepont-farm-map/>