

The History of Pitfold House

Pitfold House was originally an old farm, which, with its land was acquired by William Baker in 1765.

A plaque on the wall of Pitfold House bears the initials B.J & A., 1792. James Baker was Williams's brother and Anne his sister-in-law.

It is not known if James Baker lived there, but if he did, he made it a home of comfort and style. The Pitfold House Estate, comprising house and an old farmstead, was put up for auction in London in 1884, the whole comprising 68 acres. The sales particulars mention pleasure grounds with vineries and orchard houses.

The house had 6 bedrooms, a bathroom and WC, a butler's pantry and laundry, a library and on an upper floor an observatory affording extensive views. Outside there was much stabling; a coach house; dog kennels and a large room (previously a barn) was converted into a billiards room.

In 1893, Henry and Annette Beveridge heard through friends that Middle Pitfold was for sale. They purchased Pitfold House with 10 acres and remained there until 1929.

Annette Beveridge was once described as a terrifying old lady who used to point a large ear-trumpet at visitors.

Henry and Annette were the parents of William, later Lord Beveridge of the 1942 Beveridge Report which laid the foundations of the Welfare State. He was Director of the London School of Economics and founder of the Haslemere Labour Exchange and Unemployment Society.

The House was let to George Bernard Shaw for his honeymoon in 1895.