

The Chapel Lane cottages are clearly marked in what became known as the Alley Fields, presumably because access from the Green, at that time the centre of the village, was by the alley between Canter's Yard and the Old House Stables etc. Note that the entrance to 'Furlong Road' was between The Old House and Balchin's Stores; the present access from the A25 was not introduced until 1906

The 1840 Tithe Map of the Parish of Dorking identifies the houses existing in Westcott at that time and shows individual fields etc. The accompanying ‘tithe apportionment’ records owners and occupiers, field sizes and usage, and the proposed rent-charge to be introduced in lieu of the traditional tithe. An extract of the map centred on the area on which Chapel Lane would be built is shown below, with information from the apportionment:



931	Long Furlongs	arable
932	Long Furlongs	arable
933	Long Furlongs	meadow
934	Cottage & garden	
935	The Chapel Field	meadow
936	House, Garden, Orchard etc	
937	The Furlongs	arable
938	Peter's Den	arable
939	Petersden	arable

As a result we know that in 1840 the site of St John's Chapel had been identified (935 Chapel Field) but not yet built, that the Old House, as it is known today (936), had a dominant position on the Guildford Road with adjoining coachhouse and stables, that the area behind the house and extending to the Pipp Brook comprised several long narrow fields (e.g. 932) forming part of a larger area known as 'The Furlongs'

By comparing the Tithe Map with subsequent large scale Ordnance Survey maps and with the Westcott we know today it can be seen that the three pairs of semi-detached houses that comprise most of Chapel Lane today were built on the southern part of the strip of land known as Peter's den or Petersden (Tithe map reference 938).

The exact date of their construction is not known¹ but they existed in November 1857 when they were offered for sale as a desirable property 'to small capitalists', including eight plots of 'building ground' on the remainder of the original strip of land – see over. The sale was 'by direction of the proprietor, W Truelove, who resides near the property'. The sales particulars also state that the title to the land relates to an 'Indenture of Lease' dated 1st September 1855 made between Esther Williamson and John Truelove.

The particulars describe the cottages as follows:

"Well and substantially constructed of brick and tile, each having 2 rooms on the ground floor, 2 chambers over, and an attached wood house and private closet, standing in productive garden ground."

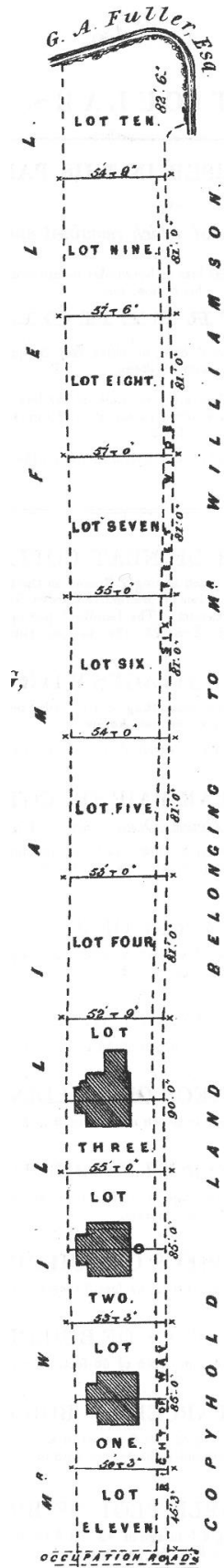
The first pair of cottages, at the southern end of the lane, was occupied at that time by Mr Torsell and Mr Gibbs, paying rent amounting to £19. 2s per annum.

The next pair was occupied by Mr Mansell and Mr Margesson, paying a total of £17. 10s and there is a note that this plot also contains a well of excellent water.

The third pair of cottages included a Brick Oven and a Carpenter's Shop and the annual rents amounted to £18. 2s. The occupants were Richard Vincent and Frederick Ansell

The plan on the left is copied from the 1857 sales prospectus.

¹ The sale particulars dated November 1857 state that the land is held under a lease, ninety-seven years of which remained unexpired at Michaelmas last. Given a 99 year lease, suggests that the property dates from September 1855



This extract from the 1896 Ordnance Survey map of Westcott shows the three pairs of semi-detached houses and illustrates the more extensive development along the 'furlong' that is now St John's Road. Although not clear from the map Chapel Lane is also approached by an 'alley' from the main road. This continues as a marked footpath. Originally it extended as far as the Pipp Brook; today it emerges into Springfield Road. It is assumed that the existence of this path from the main road is the reason why the houses in Chapel Lane today were known for many years at the Alley Fields cottages

The 1896 map also shows the approach to Chapel Lane by the right of way past the Chapel Grave Yard and round the boundary wall of The Old House garden.

In June 1916 the 'Petersden' site was again on the market; part of a larger sale of 'freehold and leasehold investments' by the executors of William Mansell. The six

cottages were described as containing 4 rooms, with woodshed and WC and good gardens. By this time there was no need to rely on well water, the sales particulars note that the Water Company's water is available and that drainage is connected to the public sewer. The occupants were now Walter Smithers and Miss Garrard, Messrs Shepherd and Stedman, and Mr Edser, the remaining cottage being 'in hand' i.e. vacant, although in a note of the outcome of the sale in the Dorking Advertiser it was reported that on the day of the sale, a Mr Wool had replaced Garrard and that the last cottage was no longer in hand, it having been let to Mr Long.

The enclosure of freehold meadow land to the north was included in the sale, as was a much smaller plot at the southern end having a frontage of 58ft 6in with an average depth of 102feet. This was being used as a garden with 'a good piggery erected thereon' but it was suggested that it was suitable for the erection of a pair of cottages.

The auction realised £300 for each pair of semi-detached cottages; £45 for the small building plot and £240 for the enclosure of Grassland plus £15 for the hay crop. The purchaser of all five Lots was Dr Henry Trentham Maw of The Old House.

Four years later, in June 1920, the 3 pairs of cottages and the enclosure of grass land were again offered for sale. The location was described as 'The Alley Fields'. As in 1916, the title to the property referred to an Indenture of Conveyance dated 15 April 1890.

This time the cottages were described as being in a good state of repair, each containing 4 rooms with wood shed and W.C., with good gardens, with depths ranging from 102 ft to 110 ft. They also detail the various rights of way that apply to each pair of cottages. The occupants, all on weekly tenancies, were now W Smithers and Miss Wood, Messrs Shepherd and Stedman and Messrs Long and Edser.

It would appear that the sale failed to attract a buyer since in August 1935 all the properties were again put up for sale, this time on the instructions of Mrs Maw. They were now described as

Numbers Nos. 1 to 6 Chapel Lane

'Situated in a secluded and quiet position in rear of The Old House and approached by a lane at the side of the Congregational Church and also by a footpath from the main road. The cottages are built of brick, partly stuccoed and have tiled roofs. Each contains:

GROUND FLOOR: *Front Sitting Room, with fireplace. Kitchen, fitted range, copper and sink.*

FIRST FLOOR: *Two Bedrooms, both with fireplaces.*

OUTSIDE: *Brick-built lean-to Coal Store and W.C., with corrugated iron roofs.*

NOTE – *The copper in No. 1 is in the outside lean-to, which has a concrete floor. Company's Water and Gas are connected. Main Drainage. Each Cottage stands in an unusually large Garden and the total area of Cottages and Gardens is 3 Roods and 3 Poles. There is ample room for the erection of at least a further pair of cottages.'*

The sales prospectus does not name the occupants but states that the cottages are let to excellent weekly tenants at rents of 7s/8d, 7/10, 7/8, 8/2, 7/10 and 8/2 respectively.

The former 'enclosure of grassland' is advertised as a piece of valuable freehold potential building land having an average length of about 530 feet and an average depth of about 115 feet, giving an area of 1 acre, 1 rood and 30 poles.

“The land is one of the very few areas within the Dorking Urban District zoned under the Local Town Planning Scheme for 12 houses to the acre. The main sewer runs the whole length of the land.”

The sales particulars note that the title to the property commenced with a conveyance dated 26th July 1916 (which was when it was purchased by Dr Maw) and that it was leased to Professor L F Rushbrook Williams from 25th March 1926. (Dr Maw died in 1925). The particulars also state that ‘there is a right of way over the strip of land on the south side where it adjoins the garden wall of The Old House, but the soil is included in the sale.’

In recent years the six original cottages have all been enlarged to a greater or less extent e.g:

- 1- Two-story side extension, new porch and detached single garage (1991).
- 2- Two-story extension (1969), first floor rear extension (2002)
- 3- Two-story extension (1990), conservatory (1990), single-story rear extension (2002)
- 4- Two-story extension (1968), porch (1983)
- 5- Single-story extension (1968), porch and single-story kitchen extension (1982)
- 6- Detached garage (1957), two-story extension (1987), single-story extension (1998)

The building plot originally offered for sale in 1857 as Lot 11, and again in 1916 as a site suitable for the erection of a pair of cottages, was eventually developed in 1991 for Mr & Mrs Keen of Hersham by the construction of a two-story, four bed roomed detached house. This has been named Ranmore View (although the Post Office refer to it as 1A). It, too, has since been extended to the side and rear (2000)

The Chapel Lane cottages and their front gardens were built on field number 938 on the 1840 tithe map. The adjoining strip (937), with virtually the same name (Petersden) has not been developed. During the 19th century it presumably remained as arable land but for much of the 20th century it was used as allotments. Exceptionally, in 1949 temporary permission was sought to erect a hut on the land for use as a Bookmaker’s Office.

In 1974 the executors of R J Mansfield sought planning permission to erect two single story dwellings but even with the proposed utilisation of part of the public footpath that bordered the land the bid was rejected because the site was deemed to be too cramped and access too restricted. The allotment land was subsequently offered to the owners of the Chapel Lane cottages and the ground has since been fenced in and now forms part of the cottage gardens.

Occupants of Chapel Lane

Because the houses were subject to weekly lets it is impossible to provide a continuous record of occupancy but 19th century census returns and early 20th street directories supplement the information provided by the sales particulars. This information is detailed at Annex A although in some cases the location has had to be assumed because until the 1920’s recorded addresses were insufficiently precise to separately identify individual properties.

An attempt has been made to isolate The White House and St John's Cottage, both of which are part of the modern Chapel Lane (RH4 3PJ), but there is no assurance that this has always been done correctly. Moreover when today's Chapel Lane was known as Alley Fields the name Chapel Lane was being used to describe St John's Road and initially the main road end of Furlong Road. For example in 1895 'a pair of well-built Brick, Stucco and Tiled Cottages' were offered for sale in Chapel Road by the executors of W W Caffyn and but these had nothing to do with the properties referred to above.

Rights of Way

The sales particulars referred to above include details of various rights-of-way. In 1857 the accompanying plan indicates a six feet way extending along the east side of the strip of land from the southern end (shown as an Occupation Road) almost as far as the Pipp Brook, to allow access to each of the eleven plots.

There is no plan to support the 1916 sale but the particulars refer to the earlier way – now ten feet wide and applying only to the three pairs of cottages – and also to a right of way 9ft 6in wide at the southern end of the site 'reserved to the owner and occupier of land adjoining on the west side' i.e. the parallel strip of land – field 939 on the tithe map.

The small building plot at the southern end of the site was not included in either the 1920 or 1935 sales but the 1935 particulars state that 'there is a right of way over the strip of land on the south side of the lot where it adjoins the garden wall of The Old House, but the soil is included in the sale.'

Miscellaneous

It is understood that during the renovation of Number 1 Chapel Lane a number of old tombstones, allegedly from somewhere in the Tillingbourne Valley, were found embedded in one of the walls by the then occupant, Mr Batts.

The 1935 sales particulars for the building land between the houses and the Pipp Brook state that the Main Sewer runs the whole length of the land. During the building of Ranmore View / modernisation of No. 1, an impressive access chamber to the sewer was revealed.

Current Owners

According to the 2003 Electoral Register, the present occupants are

- Ranmore View Keen
1. Wallis
 2. Dobson
 3. Jauregui
 4. Percival
 5. Killick
 6. Day

When permission was sought to construct Ranmore View the owner of the land was shown as Humfrey Malins of Highbury, Westcott Street. And it is assumed that he purchased the vacant site at that time. (Mr Malins is the MP for Woking)

A note written by Peter Knight provides some additional and in some case conflicting information insofar as it claims that the six houses and the accompanying land that was developed as Westcott Dairy, and the field extending down to the Pippbrook, was purchased in 1920 by Mr G Tunnell for £1000 from Mr William Mansell, who lived at The White House.

The occupants of the three pairs of semidetached houses were said to have included:

No. 1 Walter Smithers, then Bert Batts, then Mr L Jones.

No. 2 Miss Woods, George Knight, Mr Lucas, Mrs Molyneux, Mr & Mrs Dyson

No. 3 Mr & Mrs Ted Shepherd, Mr & Mrs Peter Knight

No. 4 William Stedman, Ron Foster, Mr N Wright, Mr M Dawson

No. 5 Mr Long, Tony Killick

No. 6 Ernie Edser, Jack Edser (son) Hugh Sesford, Mr A Marshall

Before the Westcott dairy was built there used to be wood yard and saw mill on the site.