

Kempshott Village
– the early years 1900-1920

Marion Wolstencroft

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1. The Historical Context

At least from early Mediaeval times onward, what we know as the Kempshott area was part of the great rural landscape of North Hampshire - downland farms, country estates and hunting parks with a network of tracks between small market towns like Whitchurch and Basingstoke and the intervening villages like Overton and Dummer.

Come the 18th century, the agricultural revolution meant major changes to the way farms were run and the capacity of farms to generate agricultural produce.

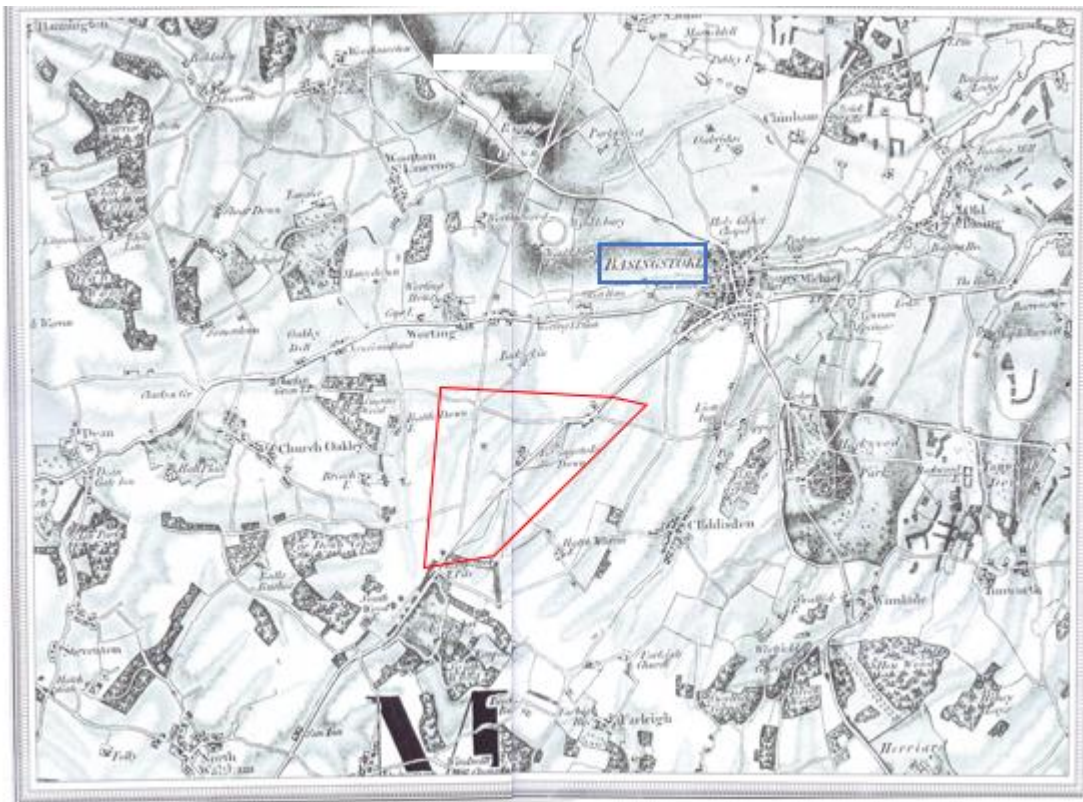
Come the 19th century and the transport revolution meant changes to all parts of society and the economy with the coming of the railways.

What impact did this have on our Kempshott?

To the end of the 19th century this was still a rural area of farms and country houses: Kempshott Park, Worting House, Buckskin Farm, Battle Down Farm, Hatch Warren Farm, and Basingstoke Down within which lay the common grazing land of Basingstoke residents until enclosed in 1788 (an area defined by the triangle of roads which bordered it - Pack Lane, the Winchester Road we know as the A30 and the Old Roman Trackway from Silchester)

The 1812 Ordnance Survey map shows the only permanent building on the Down was a property so new that it did not have a name on the map. This was to become Down Grange.

Fig 1 Ordnance Survey , north Hampshire 1816



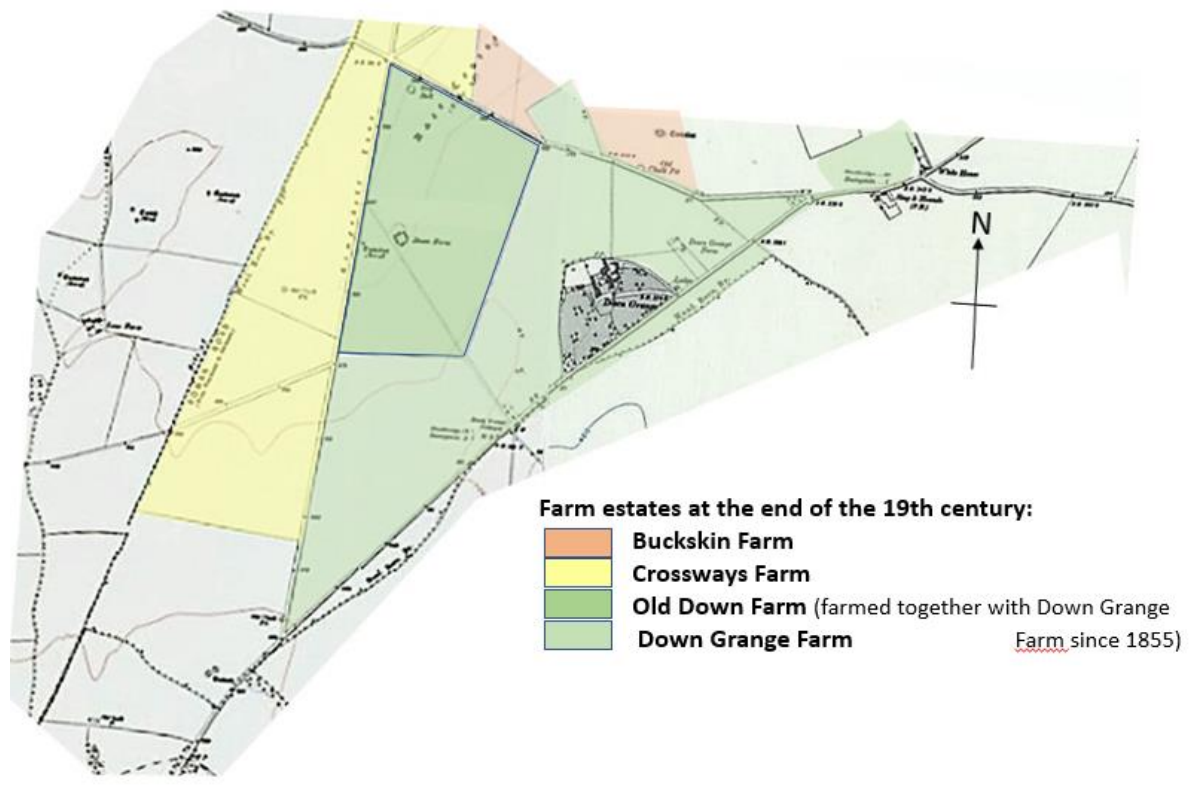
North Hampshire in 1816 – 200 years ago

Showing what is now Kempshott (outlined in red) – some 2 – 3 miles to the south west of Basingstoke

Land ownership and boundaries

Apart from physical features – hills and rivers for example – nothing endures longer in a landscape than boundaries of land ownership. For the Kempshott area these were last ‘fixed’ in 1788 when the Enclosure of Land in Basingstoke was enacted and the open fields and common land were parcelled up into individual land holdings. While this resulted in a scattered pattern of fields owned by a range of Basingstoke residents, for practical purposes this was rapidly rationalised into a series of farms which could be worked successfully. Individual fields were sold, or re-tenanted until the common land of Basingstoke Down and part of the open fields of Salisbury Field and Winchester Field became 4 farms as illustrated below.

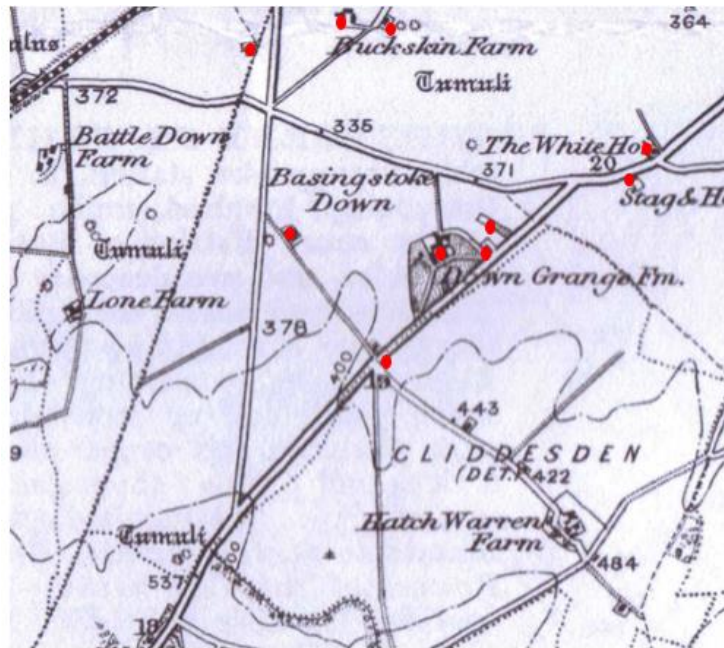
Fig 2 extract of Ordnance Survey 1901 with farm estates overlay



The Kempshott area on the 1901 Ordnance Survey map (below) is still rural chalk grassland and fields showing a pattern of farms and a network of country lanes, the road to the south West (London to Southampton) and the railway (running north of that) which makes the same connections.

Buckskin Farm & the workers cottages,

The Old Down Farm buildings (early 19thC)



The White House (early 19th C)
The Stag & Hounds Inn (17th C)

Down Grange & its outbuildings (stables, old farm house etc. early 19thC)

Down Grange Lodge (2 units late 19thC)

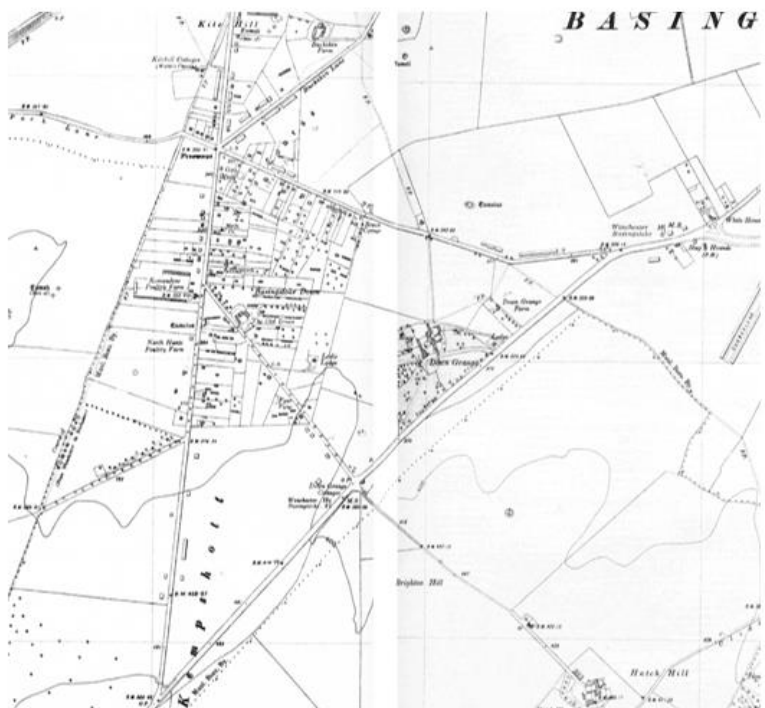
The new Down Grange Farm House (1895)

Down Grange Cottages (3 units 1870s)

Fig 3 extract of Ordnance Survey 1901 with properties overlay

According to the 1901 Census – 28 adults (over the age of 21) and a further 41 souls lived here (see the red dots) – it is still a rural economy.

Kempshott in the mid-1930s from the Ordnance Survey map



By 1934 the map shows an explosion of development.

What happened to change the area in a little over 20 years?

Fig 4 extract of Ordnance Survey 1934 for Kempshott

By the 1921 census there are 104 adults over 21 years of age in Kempshott (nearly a 400 percent increase in 20 years), The release of the 1921 census data however still leaves it quite difficult/expensive to establish how many children there were. What happened in those 30 years to change the picture so dramatically by 1934?

While farming in the 19th century had undergone many changes and technological improvements, and in many ways the arrival of the railways had been a benefit in providing easier access to markets and the growing conurbations, the expansion of the empire had meant captive markets for Britain's manufacturing economy, but competition for Britain's agricultural economy with cereal and meat imports from around the world.

Small mixed farms such as those in North Hampshire experienced an agricultural depression for the last 20 years of the 19th century.

The expansion of urban economies, especially in the south of England, meant that the balance of value in land used for agricultural purposes versus urban or suburban purposes tipped inexorably towards urban/suburban expansion.

The owners of Old Down farm (the trustees of Queen Mary's School, Basingstoke) decided to realise that value by selling the farmland ⁽ⁱ⁾

Milestones 1900 – 1920

1901 - 1921 Timeline

1901 The census of that year gives us a snapshot of the community at the beginning of the 20th century.

1908 April. Homesteads Ltd of London purchase the 103 acres of Old Down farmland, which has been tenant farmed by the Portsmouth family, along with Down Grange Farm, since the mid 19th century. The freehold of this land is owned by Queen Marys School, Basingstoke and sells for £1,600. The intention is to create a homestead village similar to developments elsewhere, including Oakley. There is a water supply to Old Down via the Winchester Rd from the town water company but no other utilities.

1909 The first plots are sold and planning permissions sought in March of this year. Twenty nine new residents have purchased land build houses.

1912 The Wesleyan Methodists establish their new church – the 'Tin Tabernacle' on Kempshott Lane.

1914 By April of this year at least 29 new houses are planned to be built when WW1 interrupts proceedings. All development activity cease during the First World War.

1918 War ceases. Representation of the People Act passed enfranchising all males over 21 year of age and females over 21 for local elections but over 30 for national elections, and still retaining a property qualification. (Electoral Registers from 1918 onwards are an important source of data (in the absence of census data).

1922 Homestead development resumes and now includes land on the Crossways Estate.

1926 water main brings a water supply from the Worting Road to the Kempshott area.

2. Homesteading and The Plan for Kempshott Village

The homestead movement has appeared periodically through the 18th and 19th century and earlier – not always with that title, and is mostly associated with European settlement and expansion in colonial lands (Ireland, America and the Antipodes). But it manifests itself in England before and after WW1.

For Homesteads Ltd, the company which bought the 104 acres, we have few records but we know it was based in Dorset (although it had an office and operations in London) and had developed some homesteads in Oakley before coming to Kempshott.

The prime mover was a Mr Carter. Who had lived in Canada for some years before returning to England and settling in Dorset.

Why was the name 'Kempshott Village' adopted for this development? The area we now know as Kempshott was known as Basingstoke Down, even after the Down had been enclosed in 1788 and turned into farmland. A parish of Kempshott had existed since Domesday but, being a small and undistinguished parish had, at various times, been combined with bigger and more populous parishes adjacent to it – Cliddesden and Dummer. What is clear is that Kempshott of old lay to the south of the A30 ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾.

It was reported in the Hampshire Chronicle of 28th November 1908 that a company was advertising the sale of land on Basingstoke Down calling it Kempshott Village. The residents of Dummer with Kempshott, the Dummer Parish Council, the Rural District Council, Sir Richard Rycroft of Kempshott Park and Mr C Franklin Simmonds all opposing the proposed name as leading to confusion and inconvenience with two places within a couple of miles of each other having the same name – the County Council was requested to take such action as was possible in the matter.

Clearly that had no effect on the development of Kempshott Village and the adoption of that name.

In developing the Kempshott Village Estate, as it was to become known, the company had several standard 'off the shelf' bungalow and house designs which it offered. These can be seen in the Building Permit documentation submitted to Basingstoke Borough Council for approval – these are an invaluable source of information on what was built where and for whom – but the records in the county archives are by no means complete and piecing together the story of Kempshott becomes a 'Sherlock Homes' exercise.

While we have extracts from the 'master plan' of land plots, we do not have a copy of the whole scheme, that is still to be discovered in the archives. We suspect it changed over time anyhow as circumstances dictated.

At that time house numbering was not usual in rural areas so most houses were named by their residents, a practice which of course allowed for name changes on change of owner. The only solid foundation in the early years was the plot numbering on the Homesteads Ltd master plans and building permit documentation. House numbers in Kempshott were not introduced until the 1950s.



Fig 5 Kempshott Village phase 1 and 2 locations

What is known of the initial plan is detailed here for the two main development areas (in pink) outlined on the attached diagram.

Subsequently, in the interwar period, the land of Crossways farm was added to the development as Phase 2 – to the west of Kempshott Lane and north of Five-Ways (shaded blue)

Homesteading Comes to Kempshott

As a Homestead development it was considered entirely acceptable for land to be sold with no utilities available:

- no clean water supply (the solution for residents was a water tank or a well),
- no electricity supply (the solution would be to use your own generator for industrial/farm purposes,
- for residential purposes the use of alternative fuels for heat (solid fuel stoves and fireplaces) and kerosene or gas lamps for light.
- no telephone, of course until the inter-war period,
- no sewerage network – each house had an earth closet toilet in the early days and then septic tanks later.

While some new residents came to Kempshott to retire, or live here and work in Basingstoke (a 2-3 mile cycle ride away), many came to develop a market garden life style – with poultry bred mainly for eggs, orchards and nurseries for fruit and veg. Our previous research papers have documented the development of the egg production industry in Kempshott from 1910 – 1960 and the issues with water supply (both for new residents and for agricultural purposes) ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

Fig 6. Pack Lane plots

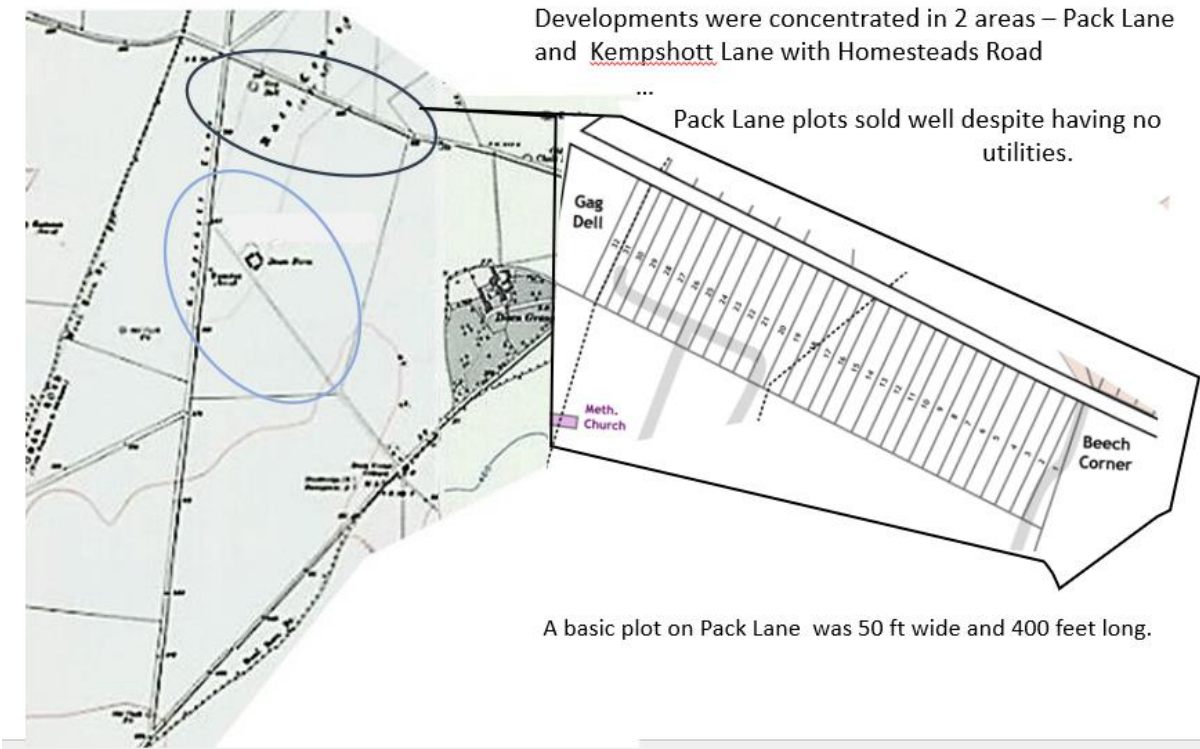
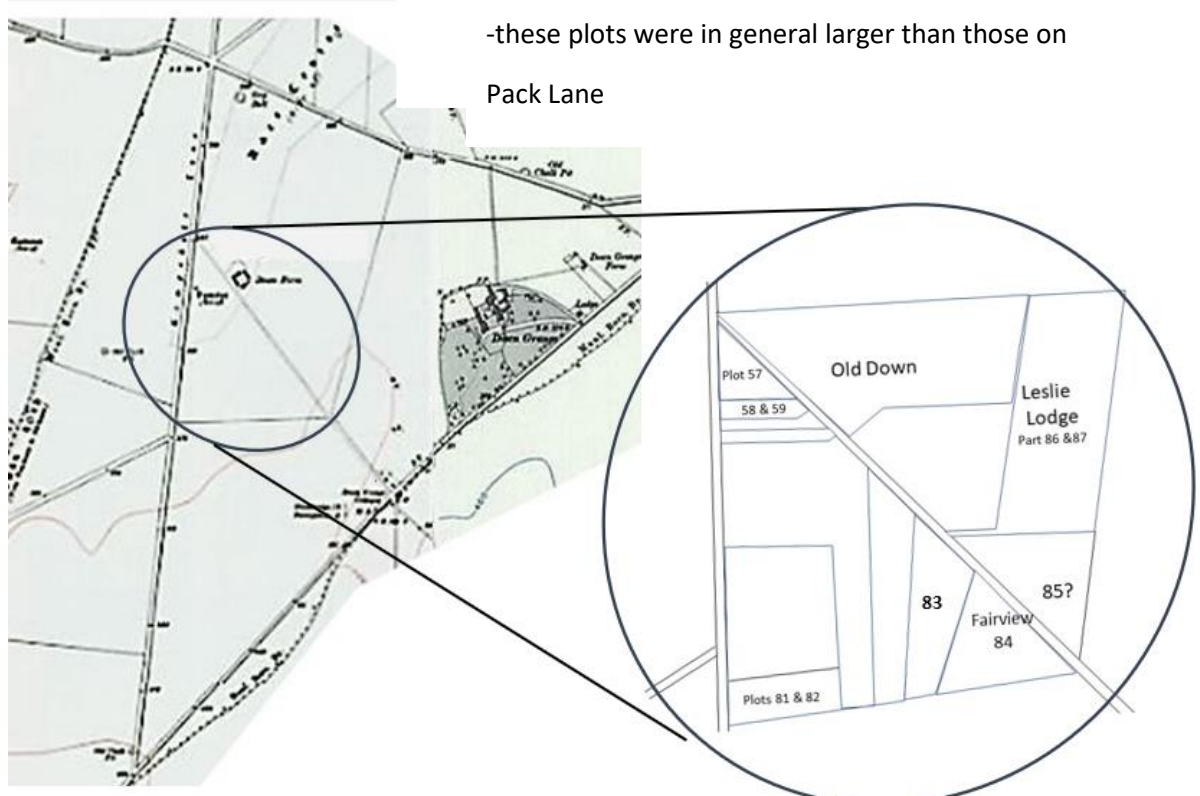


Fig 7 Kempshott Lane and Homesteads Road plots



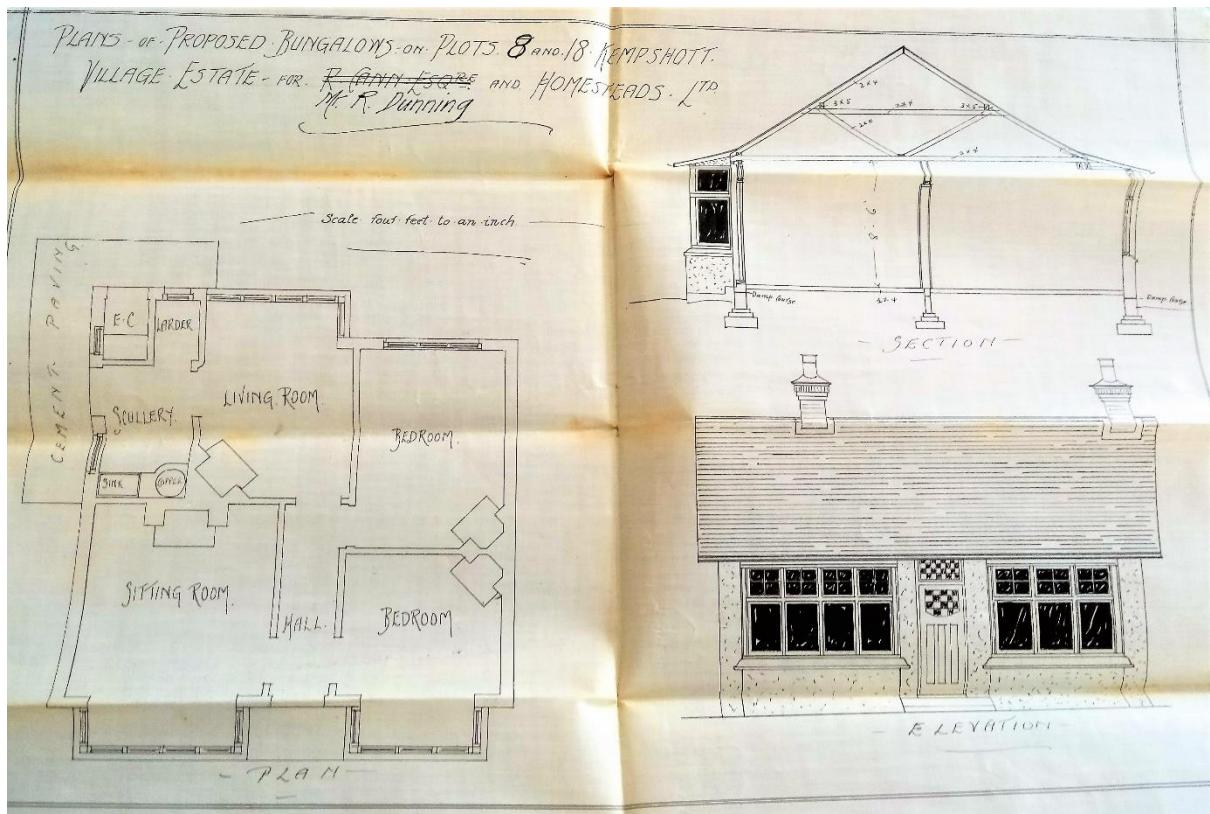
So what did a basic homestead look like?

We know roughly what a 'Homestead' house looked like from the Architects drawings for Mr Dunning's house "Shirley" now 134 Pack Lane. This house still stands but has been much improved and extended in the last 100 years ^(iv).

Closer to the original appearance is 166 Pack Lane photographed below before it was demolished in 2018.



8. Photo and building plans of plot 26 - 166 Pack Lane (demolished in 2018)



3. Kempshott Methodist Church - 'The Tin Tabernacle'

As a small 'rural' development it was also considered perfectly acceptable for there to be no provision by the developer for community services – shop, school, community hall, church. That was for the residents to develop.

Being a market gardening and poultry community local initiative supplied most things – and it was only a few miles into town ... But a place of worship was a different matter ^(v).

From the earliest days a place of worship was desired by the residents – many being non-conformist rather than Church of England members. The nearest church and school were at Worting until the 1970s, so the founding members of the Kempshott non-conformist congregation came together in 1912. Outdoor services were held in good weather during the year and in inclement weather Mr Southey of Merrileas in Homesteads Rd. offered his front room.

A plot was purchased from Homesteads Ltd. and Messrs Hedderley & Purdue, builders, constructed a corrugated

iron structure, lined with matchboard (tongue and groove boarding) on a brick foundation.

The building accommodated up to 80 people for services. The total cost of the land , building and furnishings was £135 which would be £15,000 in current purchasing power.

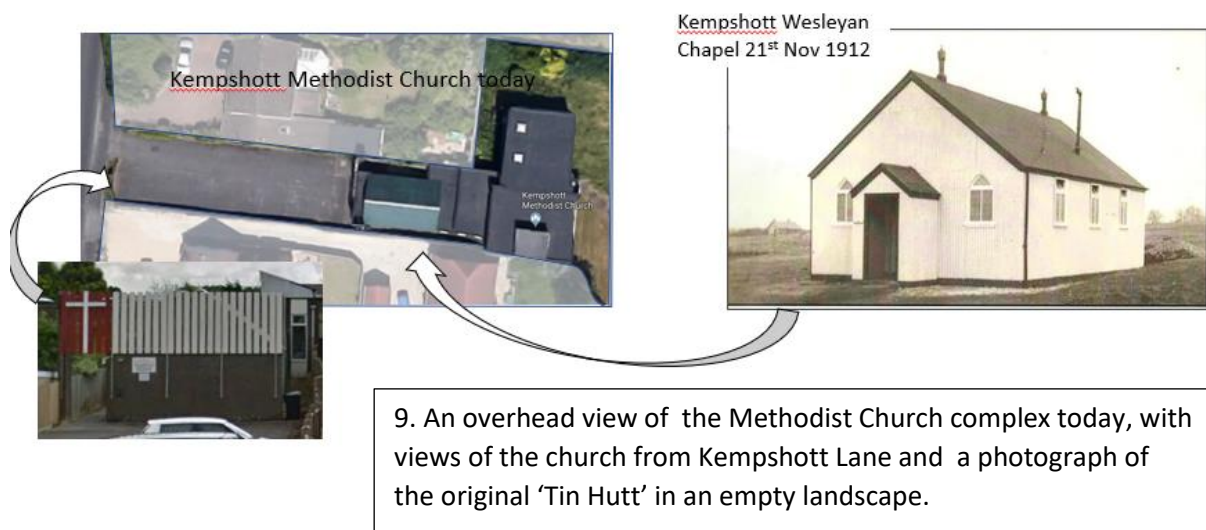
At its inauguration on Thur 21st November 1912 the congregation were supported by friends and representatives

from across Basingstoke and a number of donations from well wishers were announced – including 3 guineas from Mr Carter of Homesteads Ltd, a £5 anonymous donation, the proceeds of sale of refreshments and the children's collecting boxes – in all £17 11s 8d. That represents over £1,900 in current money terms.

A further £1 12s 9d (£183) was collected at the evening service which included recitals, a hymn by the children's choir and finally the singing of a doxology.

Founding members of the church included:

Mr Harry Carter, Mr T & Mrs E Southey, Mr G K Whiteman, Mr A Batley, Mr G H Webber, Mr G Wright, Mr W J Bird



4. 'Old Kempshott'

While the development of new homesteads proceeded apace, what else was there in the Basingstoke Down triangle? A number of properties, largely on the Winchester Road had been serving the agricultural community, travellers and landowners for over two hundred years.

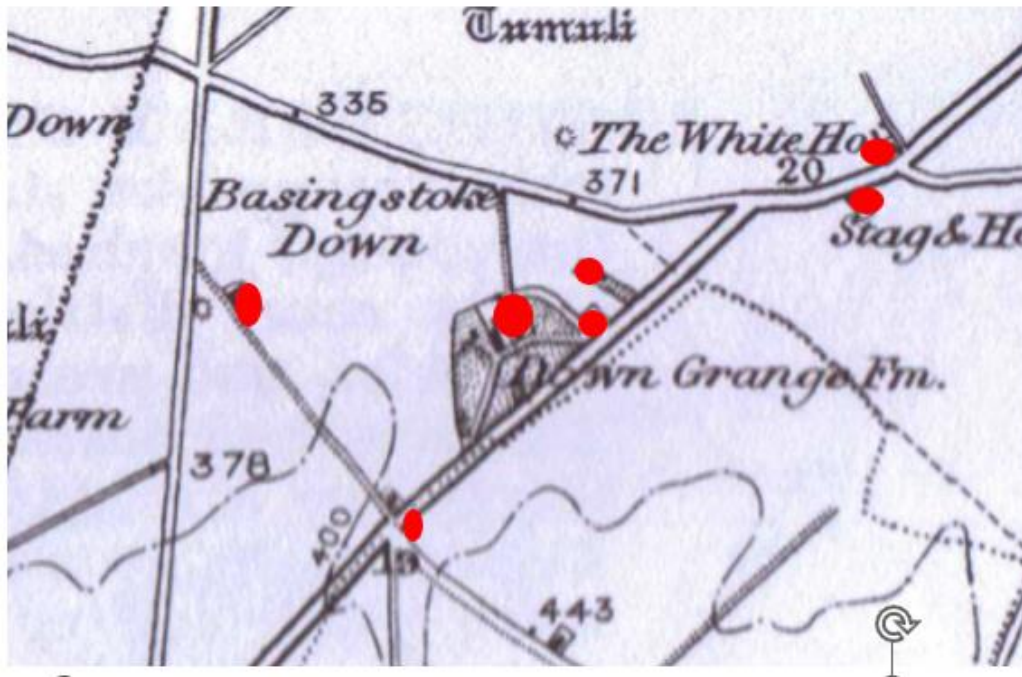


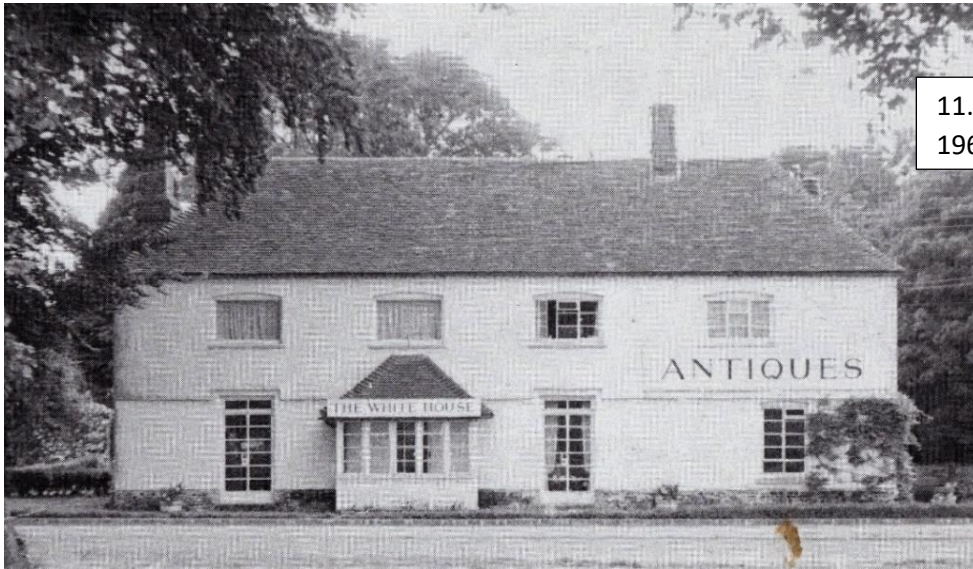
Fig 3 repeated.

The Old Down Farm buildings (early 19thC) became a private residence when the farm land was sold. While its origins were in the 19th century and it had been much extended and improved, it was sadly demolished in 1971, we only have an external picture or two ^(vi).



10. Old Down Farm House 1924

The White House (early 19thC)



11. The White House, photo 1964 (vii)

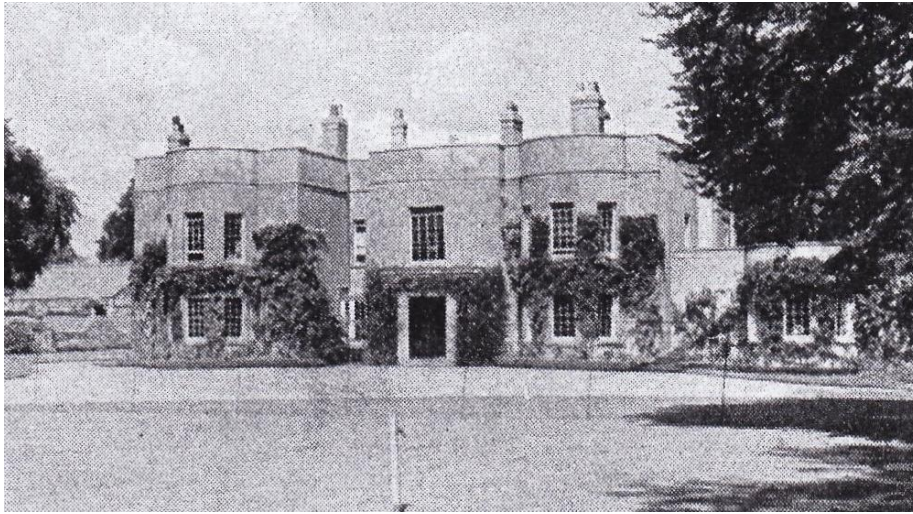
Currently a Pizza Express, this building has an interesting history in its own right and has been detailed in a separate paper.

The Stag & Hounds Inn (early 18th C)



12. The Stag & Hounds pictured in the 1930s (vii)

Down Grange Estate (1810 – 1960) comprised of the Grange Itself and its associated buildings as a gentleman’s residence and immediately adjacent to these the Down Grange Farm buildings.



13. Down Grange ^(viii) with its parkland and walled garden had its origins in a simple farmhouse prior to 1810 , much improved and expanded over the 19th century it was purchased by the borough council to form a key part of the leisure and recreational facilities known as Down Grange Park – it has been a restaurant since 1983(photo from 1934)



The 1981 services for the houseand the old farmhouse photographed at the same date.

14. Down Grange Lodge



15. Built as 2 semi-detached lodge houses for estate workers in the late 19th century at the main entrance to the Grange and the farm buildings which lie behind it. Photo 2016

15. Down Grange Cottages



3 agricultural workers cottages built on the south side of Winchester Road close to the former junction with Homesteads Road in the 1870s photographed in 1968.

The 'new' Down Grange Farm House (1895) built by the Down Grange Farm owner /farmer Mr Henry Portsmouth



16. Beechdown built in the swiss chalet style ... photo 2016

5. Kempshott Village architecture

Returning to the pre-1914 building boom in Kempshott...

The building permit archive provides a wealth of information on early 1909 – 1914 building activity in Kempshott but the records are not complete – we have not, so far, found the records for Leslie Lodge(1909) or the Methodist Chapel (1912), or the semi-detached houses at Plot 7 Pack Lane... but we will keep looking (iv). There are several other interesting files , however.

5.1.2 Semi-detached agricultural cottages built on Pack Lane in 1909 for the Down Grange estate during ownership by Col G L E May. Now 95 and 97 Pack Lane. Designed by a Bristol architect in a style sympathetic to the arts and crafts movement. They stand by the pedestrian entrance to Stratton Park.

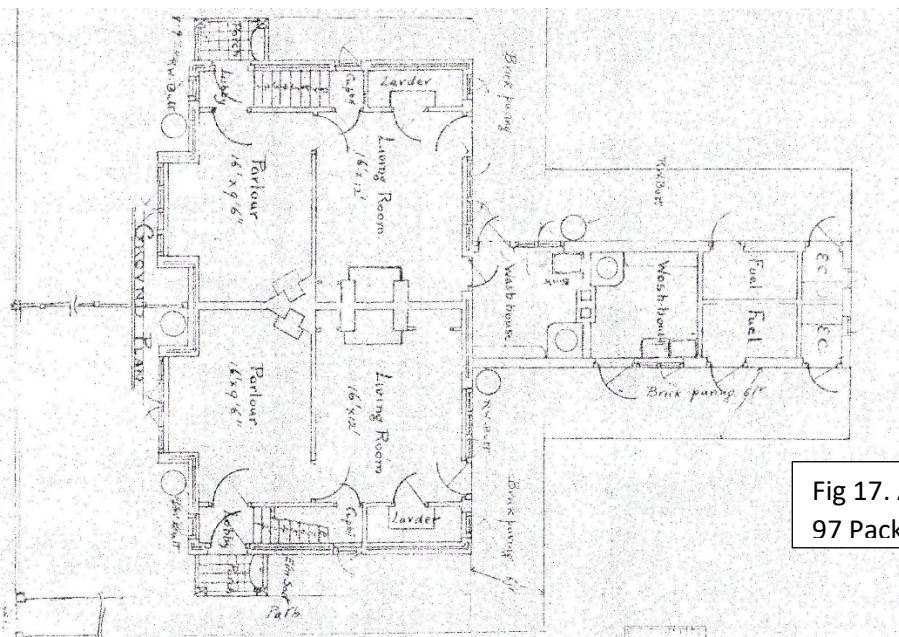
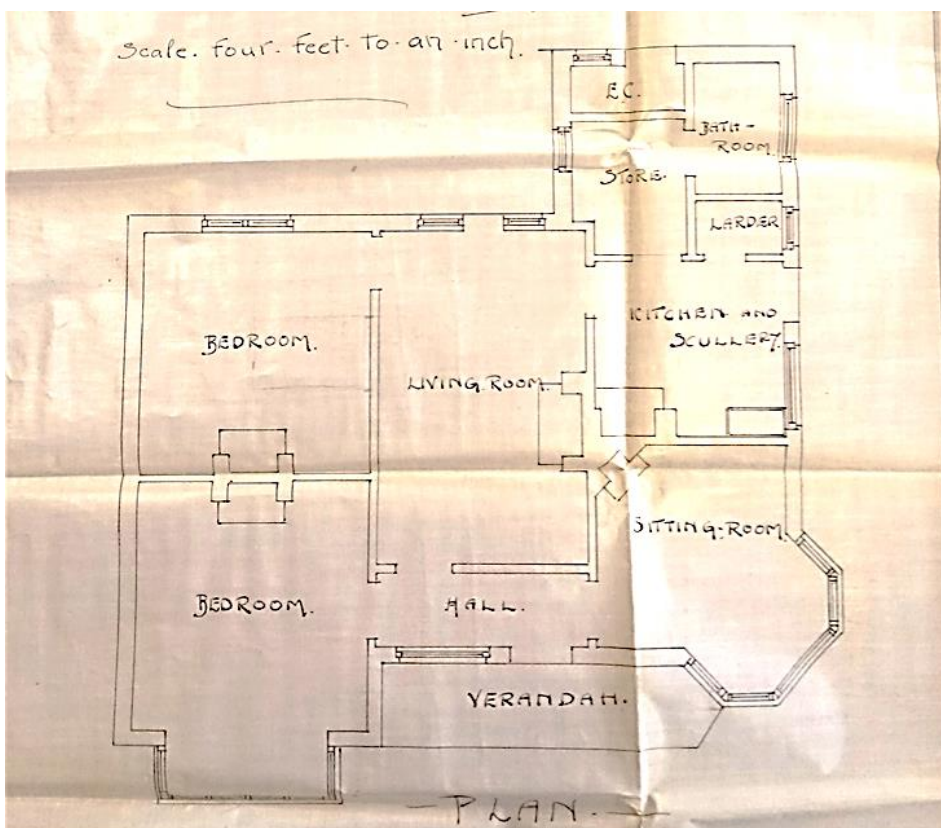


Fig 17. Architects drawings for 95 & 97 Pack Lane

5.2 A number of 'superior' bungalows on Pack Lane and Kempshott Lane with 2 bed, 2 reception, kitchen & other offices

– a design used from 1910 into the 1930s



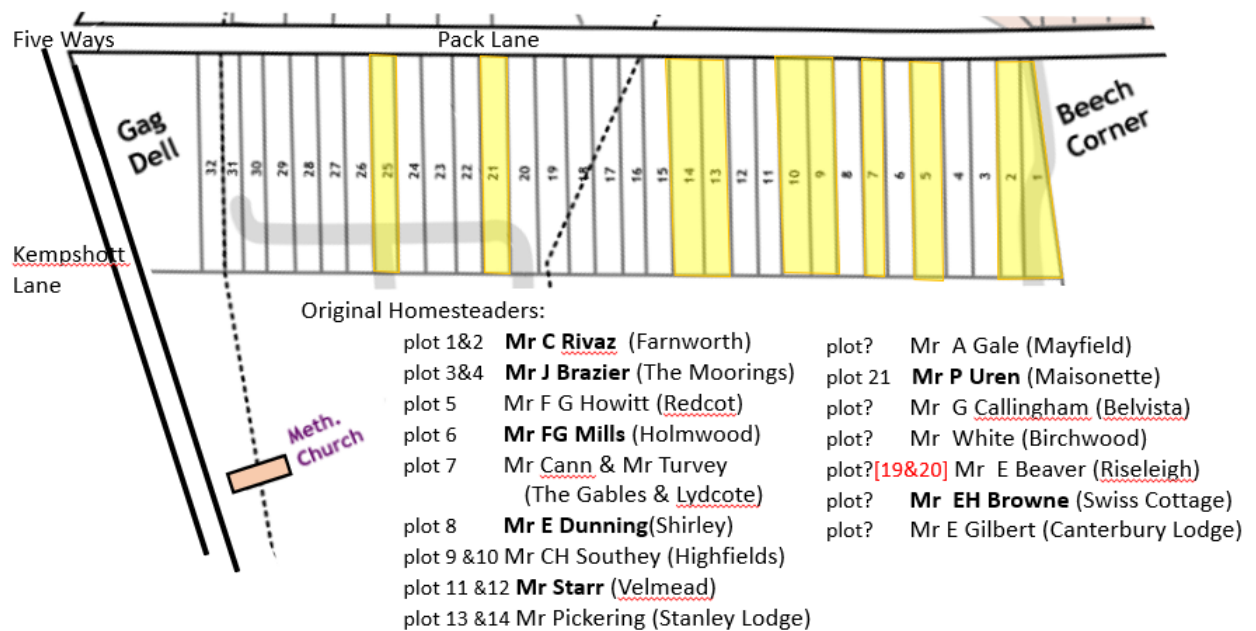
6. Some of the pioneering families of Kempshott Village

These records are far from complete – there is much more investigating to be done in the County Archives .

6.1 Church Elders in 1912 when the church was consecrated included:

Mr Harry Carter, Mr T & Mrs E Southey, Mr G K Whiteman, Mr A Batley, Mr G H Webber, Mr G Wright, Mr W J Bird

Fig 19. Pack Lane Homesteaders



19.

Claude Farnworth RIVAZ (1872-1958) - born Chorley, Lancashire, listed as Artist, footballer & market gardener. He was schooled in Westminster and then studies for 3 years at the Antwerp Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Being a keen footballer he played for Antwerp FC and was a chairman of the Antwerp Cricket Association. Then lived in Paris in the 1890s. He turned to painting after his football career and arrived in Basingstoke some time before 1914. Later listed as nurseryman running Jubilee Nurseries, Pack Lane.

Middle name Farnworth because that was his mother's maiden name. His parents and the rest of family remained in the north Cheshire area – Knutsford/Cheadle He had two sons.

George Jesse Ernest BRAZIER (1868-1933) although born in Alresford, family lived in Portsmouth as George joined the Royal Navy in 1890 ending as a Chief Stoker, although retired in 1912 he signed up for the duration of WW1 finally being demobbed in 1919 - family of 5 children associated with house in Pack Lane from 1911.

Robert MILLS (1843-) born in Lincolnshire went to London where met his wife and worked for the Post Office from which he retired and came to Pack Lane with his wife and son in 1909 he and his son were insurance agents.

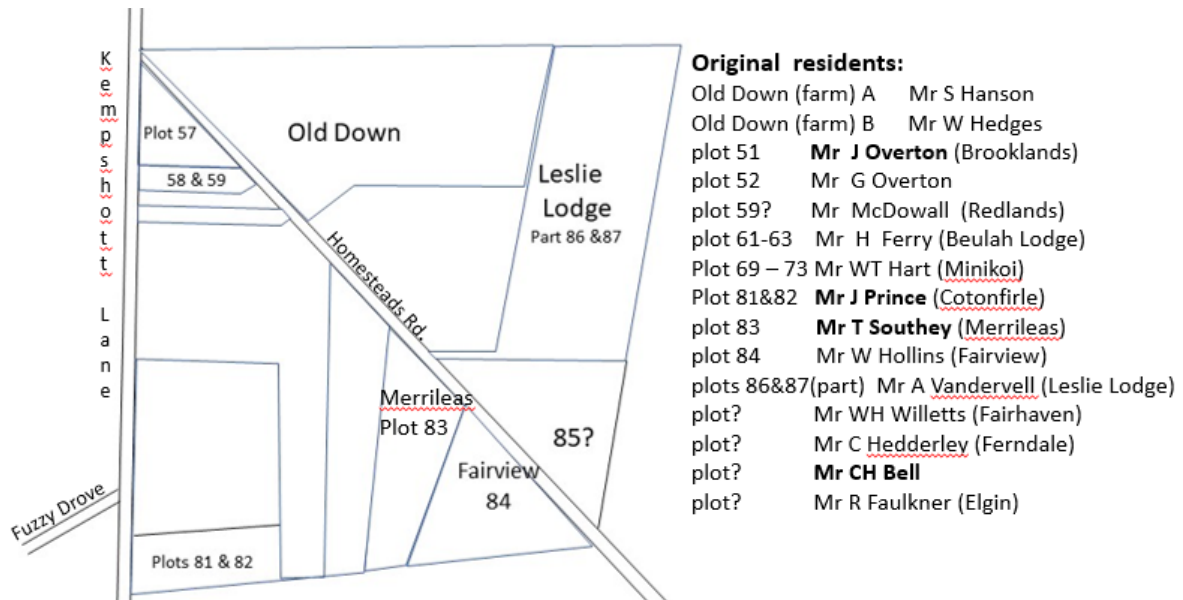
Ernest DUNNING (1877-) (born in Southampton lived for a time in Surrey before he and his family (2 children) moved to Basingstoke and their house in Pack Lane before 1911 (perhaps 1909). Ernest was an Auctioneer's porter.

Job STARR (1855-1921) he, his wife (married 1884) and 5 children had lived in Basingstoke, Bramley , Church Crookham and Whitchurch. While Job and his eldest son were listed as General Labourers his youngest was listed as a baker in Basingstoke Co-op. The girls were machine tailoresses. They moved to Pack Lane in 1909.

Philip UREN (1865-1936) came from the Isle of Wight, married 1886 in Winchester where they lived for several years until moving to Basingstoke before 1892. They and 5 children moved to Pack Lane by 1911. the family earned a living as tailor/tailoresses and by working their smallholding plot in Kempshott

Edward Hungerford Caulfield BROWNE (1867-1940) a man of Somerset who, as a young man of 25 sailed from London to South Africa ... and adventure! Some years later he is listed as being retired from the Bechuanaland Border Police, and in 1893 fought in the Matabele campaign. In 1894 he returned to London from Durban and is described as a 'mechanic'. He married in Kent in 1910 at the age of 43 and lived in Market Place, Basingstoke thereafter, moving to Pack Lane by 1912.

Fig 21. Kempshott Lane and Homesteads Road Residents



Joseph Arch(ibal) OVERTON (1875-1958) came from Northamptonshire and was a Railway Dining Car Attendant with the Midland Railway living in Middlesex in 1911 until he, his wife and 5 children came to Kempshott to work their smallholding.

His brother **George Overton** joined him.

John Paul PRINCE (1860-1943) was born in Coton in Staffordshire, while his wife came from Sussex, but they lived in central London as he was a police constable with the Metropolitan Police for some years, retiring to live in their new house 'Cotonfirse' on a double plot on Kempshott Lane 1911 - 22 until they moved to Dorset where they gave their house the same name (a combination of Coton and Firse in Sussex where they were married).

Thomas SOUTHEY (1861-) The Southey family were founding members of the Kempshott community, elders of the new non-conformist church and resident at Merrileas nursery from at least 1914 onwards. Thomas was an agricultural traction engine driver from Gt Durnford, Wiltshire, worked in Wiltshire in the 1890s and 1900s, with a son (also called Thomas) and 2 daughters, the family had moved east to Mitcheldever by 1911 and by 1914 are living at Merrileas in Homesteads Rd.

Charles Henry BELL (1873-1953) born in Stone, Staffordshire son of a joiner, he enlisted in the North Staffordshire regiment in 1890 (aged 18) and completed 21 years service with the regiment. He was first stationed on Portland Bill in 1891. By 1894 he has been posted to Ireland where he married in Dublin, Kate who was born in Dorchester. They have 9 children, who's birth places reflect a British Army life in which, having left Belfast after 1896 they are posted to: Umballa (near Dheli) by 1897, Subattee in Punjab by 1899, Rausalie in Punjab in 1901, Colaba (Bombay) 1903 - 1908, with 2 other children who's births are registered in England in 1905 and 1908 (Kent and Staffordshire). Charles finally retires from the 64th Regiment as Sergeant on completing 22 years in 1911 immediately taking up residence in his new house on Kempshott Lane. But that was not the end of his army career. In 1914 when war breaks out he re-enlists with the Hampshire Regiment in Winchester (although now 41 years old and quite a lot bigger than his teenage self). He is posted to France in Dec 1915 in the Labour Corp but was hospitalised in 1918 in Nottingham and was awarded a disability pension due to acute rheumatism. All the while the family were living at what is now 301 Kempshott Lane – until 1922. there is some evidence they moved to Walthamstow at that point but he died in Basingstoke at the age of 80.

The Beavers

John BEAVER (1851-1921) was the founder of the Beaver clan in Kempshott as far as we can find at the moment –we have no details of mother or father but John was born in Great Marlow, Buckinghamshire. He and his wife married in 1873 and moved to Kingsclere having 9 children – among them Eli and Maurice and Ida May(Sturgess) who are leading members of the Kempshott community from at least 1912. They merit a family history session of their own.

Leslie Lodge

Arthur VANDERVELL (1874-1921) born in London to Henry Eugene Vandervell and Fanny (nee Thornton) and married there in 1895. The family , with 5 children born and 3 surviving childhood, lived in Croydon for a number of years before coming to Basingstoke some time before 1910. His occupation is listed as Fruit and Poultry farmer. He died at a relatively young age ,at 46 ,and both his sons died relatively young (37 & 46) although his wife lived into her 90s at Leslie Lodge.

The second section of the history of Kempshott Village development – from 1920 to 1940 will continue the story of semi-rural community development, the rise of the egg production industry, and the slow expansion of Basingstoke suburbs westwards.

Finally, the third section records the profound changes wrought by the second world war and its aftermath – leading to the dramatic expansion of Basingstoke in many directions – including south westwards - until Kempshott becomes another suburb of the town, but with its own character and history, we like to think.

References

- (i) Sale at auction as reported in the Hampshire Chronicle of October 1908.
- (ii) Proceedings of Hampshire County Council as reported in Hampshire Chronicle of 28th November 1908.
- (iii) The Early History of Kempshott Water Supply , Jane Hussey 2016, and The Rise and Demise of Egg Farming in Kempshott, Jane Hussey 2018 at www.kempshotthistory.org.uk
- (iv) Hampshire Record Office various files of Building Plans referenced 58M74/BP454 to 659, dated March 1909 – April 1914.
- (v) The history of Kempshott Methodist Church kindly supplied by the church community through Mr & Mrs Harrison, Church Wardens.
- (vi) Hampshire Chronicle advert of property sale 1924
- (vii) Robert Brown Photo collection.
- (viii) Hampshire Chronicle notice of sale 1927.