

The Old Post Office and adjacent cottages in High Street, Watchfield

The documents begin with an Indenture made on 1st May 1879 between John Taylor of Watchfield, a Carpenter and Wheelwright, and John Kent of Weybridge in Surrey, Gent. It refers to a previous Indenture made on 12th December 1878 between Charles Edward Belcher of Faringdon, Grocer, and John Habgood of Faringdon, Mercer and Draper, and John Taylor on the other part, which serves as a mortgage for the loan of £500. The property consists of a messuage, dwelling house and three cottages. The properties at Watchfield on which the money is secured were occupied by Thomas Morse, James Stratton and Richard Carter. There was a conversion of one of the properties to turn it into a Shop (*which would become the Post Office*). It also refers to a piece of land that measures 10 poles and had a premises erected on it by William Vines, which were formerly occupied by William Mulcock and John Carter. But this premises was converted into one messuage and dwellinghouse and occupied by George Knapp a Butcher.

Another Indenture dated 2nd June 1887 between William Stephenson of 103 Loughborough Park, Broxton, Surrey, Gent, and Robert Tucker of Faringdon, Berks, Gent, on the one part and Edward James Chamberlain of Faringdon, Grocer, on the other part. The loan of £500 made by John Kent gave him a hold on the property, but he died on 6th December 1879. In his Will dated 4th July 1879, he bequeathed to William Stephenson and Alfred Darling Bartlett, all his estates vested in mortgages or trusts and he appointed his wife, Sarah Kent, William Stephenson, Robert Tucker and Alfred Bartlett as Executors. Jane Kent died on 17th Feb 1886, and Alfred Bartlett died 16th Feb 1887, leaving the remaining Executors, William Stephenson and Robert Tucker, to sell the property to Edward James Chamberlain for £375. The property is still described as three messuages or tenements, with gardens, then after conversion, a Shop occupied by John Taylor and three cottages with gardens, one of which was at the time unoccupied and the other two occupied by William Irving and Thomas Moss. The piece of ground measuring 10 poles that had one dwelling on it, had been re-converted back to two dwellings again, then occupied by Sarah Morley and Frederick Fairthorne.

An Abstract of Title list shows that on 24th March 1891, Edward Chamberlain of Faringdon, Grocer, sold the property to Uriah Chivers of Watchfield, a Painter and Glazier for £360. The occupiers of the cottages at that time were Thomas Morse, James Stratton and Richard Carter. Uriah died on 16th September 1928, and in his Will dated 11th June 1925, he left everything to his wife Annie Chivers for her life, but then to pass to his daughter Edith Clara Chivers. Annie died on 13th June 1932. At this point with Edith owning the property, the cottages are occupied by Mr Wiltshire, Mrs Wyatt and Mrs Anger. In a Memorandum attached to a document it notes that by a conveyance dated 2nd December 1957, Florence Nally and Marion Eleanor Wiltshire, the personal representatives of Edith Clara Chivers (*deceased*) sold the property to Harry James Harding, the premises known as The Post Office Stores at Watchfield being a dwelling house and shop. It looks like it's at this point that the Post Office/Shop premises are separated from the three cottages.

A conveyance dated 3rd Jan 1958 shows Florence Nally of Watchfield, Widow, and Marian Eleanor Wiltshire of 22 Edgeware Road, Swindon, sold the three cottages to Frank George Adams of The Square, Watchfield, a Scavenging Contractor for £175.

A conveyance of 20th Sept 1958 shows that Frank Adams sold the three cottages to Ethel Miller of The Poplars, Callow Hill, Brinkworth, the wife of Jessie Ethlebert Miller for £225. The cottages were occupied by A. Collett, F. Harrison and Miss Wyatt. The witness to this document was Cyril Anger of Watchfield a Stoker.

A Land Charge document dated July 1975 identifies the cottages more accurately as Nos 104, 106 and 108 High Street.

A conveyance dated 16th Sept 1975 shows that Ethel Miller, who then resided at 53 High Street, Shrivenham, formerly of Brinkworth, sold the three cottages to Colin Albert Frederick Randles of 3 Barrington Road, Watchfield for £5000.