



Headlands in June 2009.

A history of  
**Headlands**

Peper Harow, Surrey

Philip and Sally Gorton

2009



**Philip Gorton**  
**House Historian**

**Sally Gorton**  
**Artist and Writer**

11 Orchardfield Road, Godalming, GU7 3PB.  
(01483) 420763

[www.house-history-research.co.uk](http://www.house-history-research.co.uk)

[house.history@virgin.net](mailto:house.history@virgin.net)

© Text 2009 Philip & Sally Gorton

# Contents

---

Acknowledgements

Introduction

The origins of the house

Peper Harow: a closed village

The nineteenth century inhabitants

The twentieth century

Appendix      Owners and occupiers

Addenda:      Census returns

## Acknowledgements

---

This work was commissioned by David and Jackie Sowerbutts of Headlands.

We would like to thank the staff of the Surrey History Centre, (SHC), the National Archives (TNA) and Godalming Museum Library (GML).



## Introduction

---

Headlands is a handsome brick and tile hung house that lies within a belt of woodland on the edge of Shackleford Heath between the villages of Shackleford and Peper Harow.

The house has been greatly extended from the original cottage that was built by Lord Midleton of Peper Harow during the early nineteenth century and which was one of a number of dwellings that were constructed to house the various people who worked on his estate. The cottage continued to house Peper Harow estate workers until the middle of the twentieth century.

The house passed out of the estate's ownership during the 1940s and from the 1970s was enlarged and altered. The current owners have made substantial changes to the house, disguising and improving the unsympathetic extensions that were built during the 1970s. Although Headlands is now a sizeable house, at its heart there is still to be found the attractive cottage constructed by George Brodrick, fourth Viscount Midleton.



## The origins of the house

---

Headlands was first built as a labourers' cottage by Lord Midleton of Peper Harow, one of a number that were built on the estate during the early nineteenth century. It was the product of the paternalistic regime of the Brodrick family who provided steady work and good accommodation for their tenants but who also controlled many aspects of their lives.



*Headlands as pictured in the sale particulars of 1944.*

The cottage was constructed using red brick made from the local clay and was given some attractive features such as dentilated eaves and wooden framed casement windows. The main body of the dwelling had two rooms upstairs and two downstairs with a central chimney dividing them. There were fireplaces provided in both of the downstairs rooms and, at the back of the building, there was an outshot that probably housed a bread oven and a copper.

Compared to the houses of the labouring population of Britain at that time Headlands was well constructed and provided relatively comfortable living. Unlike many rural workers of the time the inhabitants lived in housing that was adequate and which would have been regarded by their

landlord and his contemporaries as excellent accommodation for people of that class.

Amongst the other comparable cottages that were built on the Peper Harow estate during the early nineteenth century is Bagmoor Cottage, which lies on the edge of Bagmoor Common south of the Elstead to Milford Road. Both Bagmoor and Headlands were built to the same design and are so similar in their exterior details that it is reasonable to conclude that they were built at about the same time.

Neither of the two cottages is shown on Rocque's map of 1760 nor on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map, which was published in 1810. However, Bagmoor can be seen on Greenwood's map of 1823<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, it is not possible to distinguish whether Headlands is also shown because it lies within the woodland belt on Greenwood's map.

Three other estate cottages, including Oxenford Lodge and Eashing Lodge, are of a similar size to Headlands and Bagmoor Cottage but were built to a more elaborate design. The lodge at the Eashing entrance to the park has been constructed in a classical idiom, with pedimented gable ends and rusticated quoins. These two buildings were entrance lodges and were clearly designed for show whilst the third cottage, Warren Lodge, although built of the same grey brick and possessing similar rusticated quoins, is hidden away in the woods and does not have the same impressive classical appearance.

Two plans for estate houses survive in the Peper Harow estate collection at Surrey History Centre. The drawings show two different designs and the overall dimensions of the houses are the same as at Headlands. However, the plans do not coincide with any of these five cottages, which all have central chimneys rather than the end chimneys shown on the plans. The two drawings are undated but we do have a clue as to their age for they were made on paper with a watermarked date of 1828.<sup>2</sup> Another undated plan of Oxenford Lodge, thought to originate from the 1840s, suggests that the three classical lodges may have been built or rebuilt at about that time. Certainly, the lodges were rebuilt sometime after the early 1820s because a painting of 1822 by John Hassell shows one of them, probably that at Eashing, in its former guise as a gothic revival structure.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Map published in 1823 from a survey made in 1822-23 by Christopher & John Greenwood.

<sup>2</sup> G145/91/22, SHC.

<sup>3</sup> Ref:438/3/55/2, SHC.

Thus, these two plans remain something of a mystery, although they are evidence of Lord Midleton's continuing interest in providing good quality accommodation for his workers.

Lord Midleton's approach to housing his workers was not unique. During the early nineteenth century a few landowners began to improve the housing stock on their estates. This was not for their own benefit, for the new cottages produced a very small return in rents and landowners would have received a far better return investing the money elsewhere. The reason for this philanthropy was the growing acceptance amongst the landed classes that they had a responsibility for the workers on their estates and a duty to provide them with a decent standard of housing.



*An extract from Greenwood's map of Surrey 1823. Bagmoor Cottage, shown in the bottom centre of the map, is marked Barmoor.*

The outspoken journalist William Cobbett frequently railed against the poor quality of accommodation that was so frequently home for the rural poor and his influence became increasingly strong. By the 1820s, and into the next decade, living conditions of the agricultural worker were generally very bad and were widely considered by many observers to be worse than the slum housing in the new industrial cities. It is against this background that landowners began to improve the houses on their estates.

If Headlands and Bagmoor were indeed built during the 1810s then George Brodrick, the fourth Viscount Midleton, was in the vanguard of this movement. Not that he had many houses to build, for the parish of Peper Harow was very sparsely populated: to the north of the River Wey were his house, his park and the village, which was a closed estate community; whilst to the south of the river lay the infertile and largely uninhabited common lands. It has never been a populous parish and in 1841 it contained 140 souls, a number which had increased to just 159 fifty years later.

## Peper Harow: a closed village

---

During the nineteenth century, Peper Harow was very much a closed community in which the houses and lives of its inhabitants were closely controlled by one landowner. As we have seen, the parish had a very small population and successive lords Midleton, who owned most of the property, housed what few labouring families there were in estate cottages.

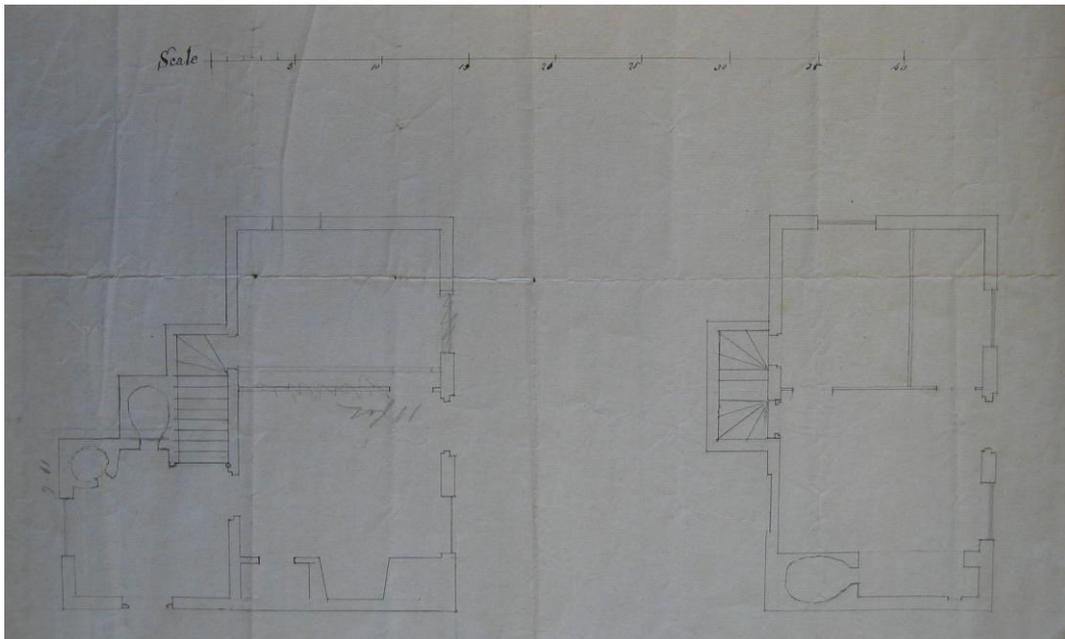
There was a price to be paid for occupying the relatively privileged position of working on the Peper Harow estate for, whilst the inhabitants of Headlands had a better than average security of employment and housing, they lived under a regime that controlled many aspects of their lives: where they lived, their work, their style of worship and their conduct both at work and at home. The paternal outlook of the Broderick family towards their tenants is summed up by a quote from William, the eighth viscount: *“As a large employer of labour, I have always taken the course which I intend still to pursue, of housing every man in my employment in a comfortable cottage, with an adequate garden attached, at a moderate rent, of employing him throughout the year, and of finding him, as he advances in life, work suited to his capacity.”*<sup>4</sup>

Such closed societies could help to encourage a loyal workforce but there was another significant motivation for creating these communities. From the late sixteenth century, help for the poor was arranged on a parochial basis and a parish rate was raised to pay for it. In parishes where there were just one or two landowners it was possible for them to control who lived in the parish and to exclude those who were more likely to become a burden to the ratepayers. The exclusive nature of these closed parishes, of which Peper Harow was a classic example, were in marked contrast to more open communities where nobody had overall control.

---

<sup>4</sup> Letter to the editor of the Surrey Advertiser, 13 June 1872., microfilm, SHC.

Neighbouring Elstead, for instance, was an open village with no dominant landowner. Here lived many of the labouring poor, both agricultural and industrial workers, people who did not or could not live in closed communities. This may have been because they were or likely to become dependent on poor relief but many abhorred the stifling way of life of the estate communities and would not compromise their freedom to live in such a place. Such independently minded people were unlikely to be housed in estate cottages like Headlands although many of them would have worked in Peper Harow when casual labour was required.



*Two cottage plans from the Midleton collection at Surrey History Centre.*

For many of the people who lived in Elstead it was a matter of religious choice. Whereas the tenants of Lord Midleton were expected to support the Church of England and attend the parish church regularly each Sunday, non-conformism thrived in Elstead at that time. The tradition continues, for the United Reform chapel in the Milford Road is still very active today.<sup>5</sup>

In many open villages property developers built poor-quality accommodation or divided older houses into tiny and unsanitary cottages that became the homes of the labouring poor. Apple Tree Cottage in Thursley Road, Elstead was such an example. During the late eighteenth century, it was divided into two cottages and a row of poorly built terraced dwellings was shoe-horned into the back garden.

---

<sup>5</sup> Now the United Church.

During the nineteenth century one of the cottages was the cramped home of two unmarried sisters who had a number of illegitimate children and who, in their latter years, were dependent on the parish poor rate. Despite having worked hard all their lives, they would certainly not have found a billet on Lord Midleton's estate.

## The nineteenth century inhabitants

---

The early occupants of Headlands, those who lived there during the reign of Queen Victoria, can be traced using the census returns of 1841 to 1911. Identifying small houses in the returns can be difficult because the enumerators did not usually give house names, particularly in more populated areas. However, when dealing with more remote houses, names are sometimes given and, in some of the census years, this is the case with Headlands.

The usual technique for identifying occupants is to work on the assumption that the census enumerators covered their district in a logical, geographical manner. On the whole this is what they did in Peper Harow. By plotting the households in a tabular form, comparing one census year with the next, one can see the pattern emerge. We can also compare the information with other sources such as rate books, rentals and the early twentieth century Inland Revenue valuations. By using this method it is possible to identify the inhabitants of Headlands with a high degree of certainty.

Although the house cannot be positively identified in the 1841 census returns we can be reasonably sure that it was the home of George and Lucy Berry who, we know from the later returns and other records, lived there until 1875. George worked as a gardener, almost certainly on the gardens of Peper Harow house, whilst Lucy, who did not give an occupation in the returns, was probably organising the house. Living in the tiny cottage with the couple in 1841 were three of their children: Daniel Pateman aged thirteen, Ann aged eleven and Ellen aged eight.

Ten years later all the children had left home (or were absent on census day) and for a while George and Lucy apparently had the house to themselves. They were still occupying the cottage in 1861 with George, now in his late sixties, still working as a gardener for Lord Midleton.

At first glance, it appears from these returns that Lucy came from a different social background to George for, not only was she working as a

school mistress at the age of 58 in 1861, but John Pateman, her 79-year-old father who was now living with them, is described as a fund holder, indicating that he had some independent income. His fortune was probably rather modest; however, as the 1851 census shows him living at Rotherfield Greys in Oxfordshire working as a general servant. It would be interesting to know where he obtained his money; perhaps it was a legacy or small pension of some kind. Unfortunately Pateman did not leave a will that may have provided an additional clue to his earlier days.

By 1871 Lucy was no longer teaching but had become a full-time carer. George Berry was now aged 78, infirm and no longer able to work. Lucy, as well as looking after her husband, was also responsible for a three-year-old boarder, Walter Franks. How Walter came to be living in their home is unclear. Being described as a boarder implies that someone was paying for his keep and if he was a close relative it would have been stated in the returns.

It is possible that the young boy was a cousin, a relationship not recorded by the census or, possibly, he may have been an illegitimate son of one of Mrs Berry's daughters, a fact that she would wish to keep from the enumerator. The challenge of caring for both an infirm husband and a young child was probably the reason why they employed thirteen-year-old Alice Cheeseman as a servant at that time.

Whatever the relationship was between Walter and Lucy, he was to remain with her throughout the 1870s and he moved with her to Haslemere some time after George Berry's death in 1875.<sup>6</sup> By the time of the census recording in 1881 Lucy and Walter had left Peper Harow and were living with her widowed daughter Ellen over her glass and china shop in Haslemere High Street.

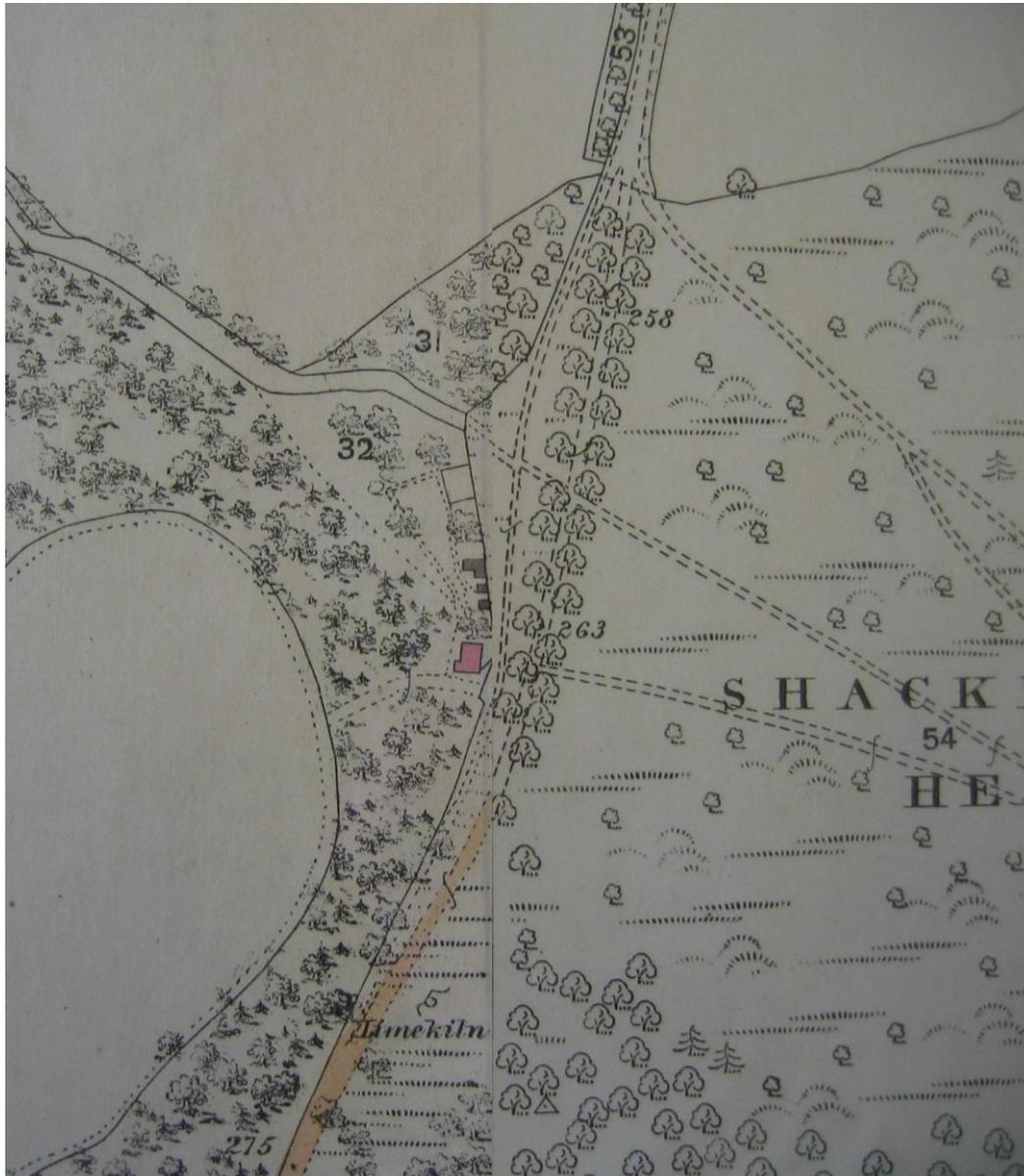
It appears that Lord Middleton regarded Headlands as the gardener's cottage because its new occupant, 49-year-old John Boxall, was also employed in that capacity. He and his wife Hannah had five children as well as a three-year-old boarder in the household, all of whom must have made it a very crowded cottage. The three eldest, the boys, were all of working age. John was a gardener like his father whilst William and Percy were labourers. Kate and Olive were still at school.

By 1891 there had been another change of tenant. Thomas and Sarah Welland were living at Headlands with three of their children, George, Lydia and Ellen. In this case it was George, who was by then aged 28,

---

<sup>6</sup> Peper Harow parish registers, SHC.

who held the more senior post of gardener and who would have been the principal breadwinner. His father was employed by Lord Midleton as a general labourer and his sister Lydia, who was also in her twenties, worked as a dressmaker. The youngest child Ellen was still at school.



*Ordnance Survey edition of 1871.*

Thomas Welland had not moved far at all from his childhood home; he was a local man born of local parents, whose father was also a labourer. Francis Welland and Ann Page were both of Peper Harow parish when they married on 18 April 1829 and Thomas was the third of their four

children.<sup>7</sup> He was baptised in Peper Harow in November 1836. Francis and Ann and their family lived in one of the group of houses near Glebe Farm.

Thomas never strayed very far from the confines of Peper Harow during his long life. When he lived with his parents they had always been housed on or near the estate and after his marriage to Sarah in the early 1860s the couple still lived locally, at Pond Cottage on Royal Common.

## The twentieth century

The start of the new century heralded no dramatic changes in the way of life for the occupants at Headlands. The Queen died in 1901 and the Edwardian era began but the Victorian way of life continued for those at the cottage and in the village; it was a steady, peaceful and stable period for the people who worked for Lord Middleton and who were happy to conduct themselves appropriately.

In the 1901 census Thomas Welland, who had been widowed in 1892, was living with his three children. It is not certain if they were at Headlands in 1901, partly because it is not named in the census returns and partly because it shows the household of Thomas Welland living at Warren Lodge. The estate gamekeeper John Dodman and his son are shown living in Peper Harow Lane in an unnamed cottage that is listed in a place in the returns where one would expect to find Headlands. This is not conclusive however, for a schedule of estate lands thought to date from 1899 lists Thomas Welland as being resident at Headlands and he was living there at the time of the 1911 census.<sup>8</sup>

Did Thomas swap with John Dodman for a period and move into what was traditionally the gamekeeper's house? If he did one wonders why as there was nothing to be gained by way of accommodation, for both cottages were the same size. Perhaps the enumerator simply made a mistake: he did, after all, manage to record George Welland's age incorrectly on the same return.

Wherever he was living in 1901, Thomas Welland was a long-time occupant of Headlands and was still occupying the cottage when he died in December 1918 after spending most of his 83 years under the wing of the Peper Harow estate. He had been more fortunate than most elderly

---

<sup>7</sup> Peper Harow parish registers and 1841 census.

<sup>8</sup> G145/Box 80/4, SHC.

labourers; not only had he escaped the horrors of the workhouse but for the last nine years of his life he would have also received a state pension.<sup>9</sup>

After the end of the Great War, Headlands continued to be the home of Lord Midleton's employees. Charles and Annie Knights came to Headlands in 1919, where the family was to live for the next fifty years. They were not local people: Annie was born in Over Wallop in Hampshire in 1881 and she met Charles (known to all as Charlie) in his home village of Caston in Norfolk where she was working as a cook in the household of a local farmer. Charlie was four years older than Annie and was working as a carpenter, having followed his father into the trade.<sup>10</sup>



*Giving rides to the children was no new experience to the donkey which Mr. C. Knight and his daughter took to the Shackleford show on Saturday. Before he came into Mr. Knight's possession, 13 years ago, he earned his keep at it on Heath. Young rider here is Marion Lamberth.*  
[H. C. Fielder]

They married in 1903 and soon after moved to Hambledon in Surrey where their first daughter, Emmeline, was born in 1904.<sup>11</sup> They were still there in 1911 by then with another child, Charles, who was one year old.

The story of their meeting and their subsequent move to Surrey was typical of the later nineteenth century.

Sixty years before, such mobility was virtually unthinkable and people chose marriage partners from their own or the adjacent parish. The rapid growth of the railway network after 1840 was to change that insularity. It was, in particular, domestic servants who took advantage of this, casting their net countrywide to find the best jobs. The census returns of 1901 show that those who lived in Peper Harow house came from all over the country whilst labourers tended to stay within the community where they had been born and raised.

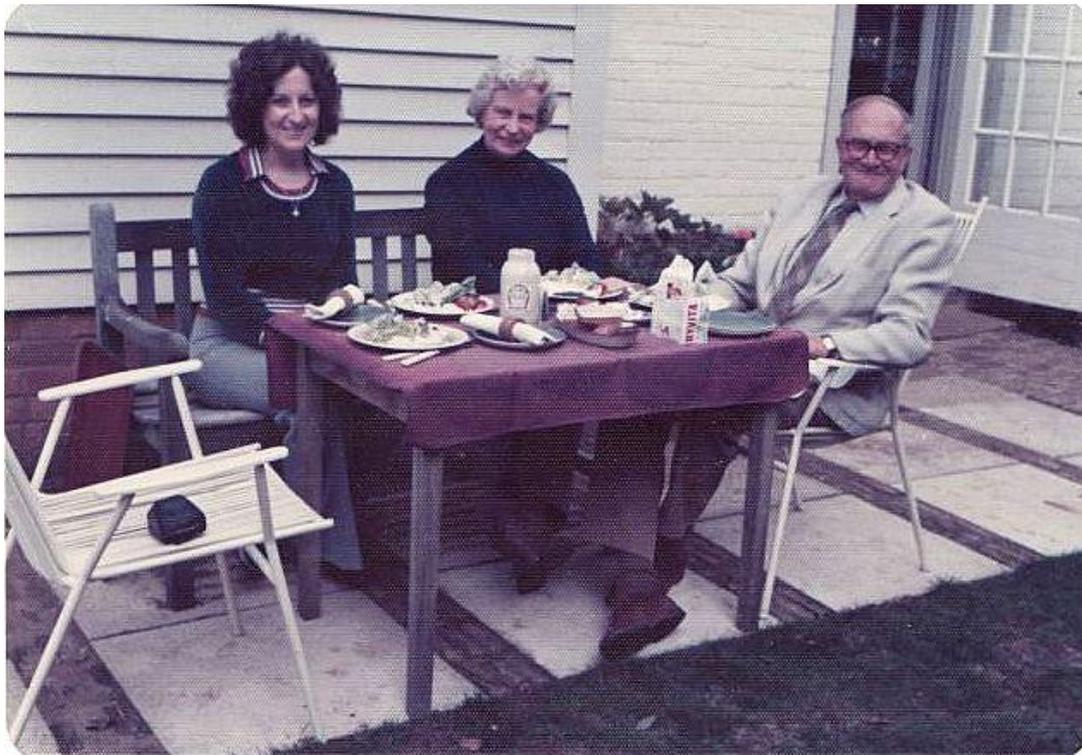
---

<sup>9</sup> The old age pension was introduced in 1909 for men aged 70 and over. Few lived long enough to enjoy it.

<sup>10</sup> 1901 census.

<sup>11</sup> GRO Index.

As with their predecessors the security of an estate job with its accommodation appealed to Charlie and Annie, for they were to remain here for the rest of their lives, becoming fixtures in the life of Shackleford and Peper Harow. They lived an old-fashioned rural life: Charlie was employed as a carpenter on the Peper Harow estate and he travelled around the area in a donkey cart. This was an increasingly outmoded form of transport and Headlands became known locally as the Donkey Cottage: the donkey was stabled in the outbuilding that is now used as a garage. Emmie had a job delivering post in the area. Inevitably, she became a well-known figure and is remembered by the older inhabitants of the village with fondness.<sup>12</sup> Sadly though, their son Charles did not make old bones and he died in 1926 aged sixteen.<sup>13</sup>



*Judith, Gwen and Alan Chalmers.*

The Second World War, which had particularly tragic consequences for the Brodrick family, brought about dramatic changes to the closed society of Peper Harow. In 1942 the ninth viscount Middleton died and, during the next year, both his sons were killed in action at Salerno.<sup>14</sup> These events led to the sale of the Peper Harow estate, which was auctioned in 1944 with Headlands included in the sale. It was still an estate worker's cottage

---

<sup>12</sup> Information from the research of David Sowerbutts.

<sup>13</sup> Monumental inscription, Peper Harow churchyard.

<sup>14</sup> National Dictionary of Biography.

at that time with Charlie Knight as tenant.<sup>15</sup> Apart from the northern extension that appears to have been built in about 1900 the house itself was virtually unaltered from when it was first built. Like so many dwellings of rural Surrey at that time there was no piped water or electricity supplied to the house.

The new owner of Headlands was to wait a long time to come into full possession of the property as Mr & Mrs Knight were to remain there as sitting tenants for the rest of their lives. Charlie was aged 83 when he died in 1961<sup>16</sup> but his widow and daughter continued to live there for a further nine years. However, after Annie died in 1970, Emmie moved away, probably because the death of her mother ended the sitting tenancy.<sup>17</sup>

By the autumn of 1970, Headlands was home to Elsie Chalmers, the sister of an architect, Alan Chalmers, who lived with his wife Gwendoline at Cobblers in Lombard Street, Shackleford. Mr Chalmers designed Orchard House in The Street, and having bought Headlands in the early 1970s he extended it to the west to provide two flats for his unmarried sisters Elsie and Doris.<sup>18</sup>

Although built with the best of intentions his extensions were not sympathetic to the original building and the result looked like two dissimilar houses stuck together. The new building was very much of its time with typical features of the 1970s such as flat and shallow pitched roofs, glazed door surrounds and weather-boarded panels in the walls. Rather than building with similar red brick, engineering bricks were used and, to give the house some semblance of cohesion, all the exterior walls were painted white.

After the death of their son Jonathan in early 1972 Mr & Mrs Chalmers moved into Headlands because Cobblers held too many sad memories for them. They lived there for a decade and died within three days of each other in December 1982. Like their predecessors at Headlands they are both buried in Peper Harow churchyard.<sup>19</sup>

After the departure of Mr & Mrs Chalmers the house was divided into dual occupation and became home both to Antony and Venetia Rist and to David and Susan Whiddett. The house was owned jointly by the two

---

<sup>15</sup> Sale particulars of Peper Harow estate, 1944, ref: 1384/26/1, SHC.

<sup>16</sup> GRO index.

<sup>17</sup> Electoral registers, SHC.

<sup>18</sup> Sowerbutts.

<sup>19</sup> Monumental inscriptions, Peper Harow churchyard.

couples, with the Rists living predominantly in the modern western part of the house and the Whiddetts in the old eastern end, both families entering through a common front door. During this period the well-kept garden tended by the Chalmers became wilder as the Rists not only kept horses, chickens and goats but also bred chocolate labradors. The men of the house were very different in character: Tony Rist was a quiet history lecturer whilst his neighbour was an extravert photocopier salesman. They all lived at Headlands until they sold the house to its present owners David and Jackie Sowerbutts in 1988.

It was the location rather than the house that David and Jackie loved and, despite an uninspiring report from their building surveyor, they bought the house in 1988 with the intention of rebuilding and considerably changing the 1970s extensions. The flat roofs were removed and the paint was stripped from the brickwork. The rebuilding required the removal of the entire central section of the house and, during this time, they and their children Rhiannon and Christopher lived in a cottage in Chalk Lane.



*The north front of the house showing the extension built in the 1970s.*

At the end of the work the footprint of the house had changed just a little but the accommodation and the exterior appearance of the house had been radically altered. Pitched roofs replaced the flat ones and clay tiles replaced slates. Hand-made bricks were used to clad the brickwork of the 1970s and the entire upper storey was tile hung. The result has proved to

be a vast improvement with the house now looking more in keeping with its surroundings and other local houses that are built in the early twentieth century ‘Surrey Style’.

There have been considerable changes made to the house during the last forty years. During the latter half of the twentieth century it grew from a tiny estate cottage to a spacious and comfortable family home and the current inhabitants live very different lives from those for whom Headlands was home just four decades ago.



*The Sowerbutts family in 2002.*

Today, containing the estate cottage at its heart, Headlands presents an attractive and traditional exterior which sits comfortably in its rural surroundings.



## Appendix 1

---

### Known owners and occupiers of Headlands.

	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Occupier</b>
1810s	George Brodrick, Fourth Viscount Midleton	Unknown
1835	George Alan Brodrick, (fifth viscount).	Unknown
1841	“ “	George and Lucy Berry
1848	Charles Brodrick, (sixth viscount)	
1851	“ “	“ “ “
1861	“ “	“ “ “
1863	Very Rev. Wm John Brodrick, (seventh viscount).	“ “ “
1870	William Brodrick, (eighth viscount).	“ “ “
1881	“ “	John & Hannah Boxall
1891	“ “	Thomas & Sarah Welland
1901	“ “	Thomas Welland
1907	William Brodrick, (ninth viscount)	“ “
1914	“ “	“ “
1919	“ “	Charles & Annie Knight
1942	Heirs of William Brodrick	“ “ “
1946	Unknown	“ “ “
1970	Alan & Gwen Chalmers	Elsie Chalmers
1975 - 1982	“ “ “	Themselves Elsie and Doris Chalmers. Themselves
	Anthony & Venetia Rist	
	David & Susan Whiddett	
1988	David & Jackie Sowerbutts	Themselves with their children, Rhiannon & Christopher.

## Addenda

---

Census returns 1841 - 1911

