

## House History - 29 Littleworth Road, Benson by Dave Rushton

The cottage now known as 29 Littleworth Rd is probably the second oldest house in Littleworth, with the original bricklayer's markings (TC 1772) still being visible on the path side. It may well have been a squatter's cottage originally, thrown up on a patch of land between road and path. The horizontal sliding sash window still in place on the path side was once quite common in the village.

In 1838, the property belonged to **William Holgate**, a merchant corn dealer. William made his will in July 1838 and subsequently died in Feb 1840, leaving his estate to his son also called William, and also a corn dealer, although his widow -**Sarah Holgate** - was to enjoy all incomes for her lifetime. By April 1853 Sarah had died, and in accordance with his father's wishes, **William Holgate** jnr put the Littleworth properties (consisting of three cottages) up for auction. The winning bidder was **Benjamin Butcher**, a courier/tanner of Wallingford, who paid £150 for the properties.

Living in the cottages through this period were James Pugh, John Coates, Will Skinner, Mrs Archer, Thomas Rislingbury and Cato.

**Benjamin Butcher** made his will in Oct 1862 and died not long after in Dec 1862. He left his estate to his widow **Elizabeth Butcher**, who later died in March 1874. Subsequently, the heirs - son **Henry Butcher** (a tanner/courier), and son in law **John Pittman King** (farmer) - sold the properties for £130 to **Ralph Hutchings**, a baker of Bensington.

Ralph Hutchings made his will in Jan 1879 and died on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 1881, his estate being settled by the trustees - **William Littleboy** (a miller of Crowmarsh), **William Bartholomew Goodey** (postmaster of Bensington) and **Thomas Field** (a miller's clerk of Hope Cottage, Bensington)

In March 1882, the trustees sold the 2 cottages (plus the one next door) to a **Francis Polley** of Lancaster Gate, for the sum of £135. Francis obviously bought other properties, since a Land Tax settlement of 1897 showed **Francis Polley** as paying 9s/4d on his estate in Littleworth, consisting of 3 cottages (24 poles in area) occupied by William Spyer, A Orchard and A Wise, and 2 cottages (3 poles) let to Samuel Hine.

**Francis Polley** gave the cottages to his son - **Francis Edward Polley** - in July 1906, not long before he died on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1907. The Conveyance document lists:

- 3 cottages with various tenants - incl *George Polley*
- 2 cottages
- 3 other separate cottages

According to the 1924 Statutory Declaration, the tenants of the two cottages on this site were **Mrs Chislett** and **Mrs Pudwell**.

At some later date - probably 1924 - the cottages on the site were owned by **Harry West** a local builder and rented out. The original two cottages were knocked into one larger cottage, and a sweet shop was run for a time from the front room, with a soup kitchen for the school in the garage.

By 1963, the cottage was in a bad state of repair when it was bought by **Mick & Beryl Winfield** just before they were married. The Winfields lived in the cottage all their married life until Beryl's early death led to Mick's move down the road. They renovated the cottage and enlarged it over the years, including replacing the old sharply pitched roof on the north side whilst enlarging the kitchen.

Finally in 2007, **Julian & Sarah Vaccari** bought the cottage from **Mick Winfield** and moved in with their young family.