

Information relating to numbers 5 & 7 Farm Close Lane, Wheatley
(from deeds in possession of Mrs Best of no.7)

The name Farm Close for this property appears in a conveyance of 31 March 1952. It applied to the area occupied by both houses and included the old orchard subsequently developed as the Beech Road extension in the 1960s. The total land was then stated as 1 acre, 6 poles. Ever since 1794 the deeds refer to “a close of pasture ground” as part of the property, and in a deed of 1806 Stile Cottage is shown on the south as being bounded on the south by Farm Close. However, on the Wheatley enclosure map of 1809 in his Wheatley Records, Dr Hassall shows Farm Close to the east of what is now Mulberry Drive. Perhaps the name originally covered a wider area. It has now been used for the development to the west of us (without our knowing in time) which is why we have had to modify the name of No. 5.)

The first deed of which there is trace in these documents is a conveyance from Edward and Agnes Newport to Thomas Lee on 30 April 1697. The property then passed from Lee to Richard Piddington on 1 June 1700, and from him to Valentine Wakelin on 29 September 1702. The Wakelins appear to have been in possession until 9 May 1787, when a second generation of them sold the property to Francis Poollin. However, its extent is not stated until the first full deed, dated 29 October 1794, when Francis Poollin sold what was evidently part of it to John and William Davis; but the mists of the past are still obscure.

The property sold for £60 in 1794 consisted of:

- 2 cottages, outhouses, gardens and appurtenances
- 1.5 acre close of land adjoining
- 0.5 acre of arable land on the west side of “the Hitchin”

(a communal field south of old railway and east of Jackies Lane) cottage on S side of the other two.

There is no further trace of this part of the property in the documents.

A further transaction took place between Poollin and John Davis on 3 April 1812. For £250 Davis acquired:

- Cottage with yard and garden formerly occupied by Wakelin 0.5 acre of pasturage ground adjoining.

Poollin kept for himself a cottage “newly erected” to the w of this cottage, together with its garden and also a “stable or hovel” to the N of it together with a piece of ground 4 ft wide to serve as passage between the two. Poollin and his daughter-in-law Rebecca were also to have the use of Davis’s pump. This cottage, now part of Stile Cottage, is the one tenanted subsequently by widow Jones, and Joby Edwards, who used to keep ducks in the hovel . (illustrated in Dr Hassall’s book) which was in fact an ancient peasant’s cottage with the sleeping loft intact and almost restorable until an elm tree fell on it two or three years ago; it was in the garden of No. 7 and part of it is incorporated in an extension to that house now being built.

John Davis died in 1837 and his heirs sold to James Clarke in 1838 for £330

Cottage with yard and garden

Close of pasture ground, hereditaments and premises

1/2 acre of pasture ground, now an orchard.

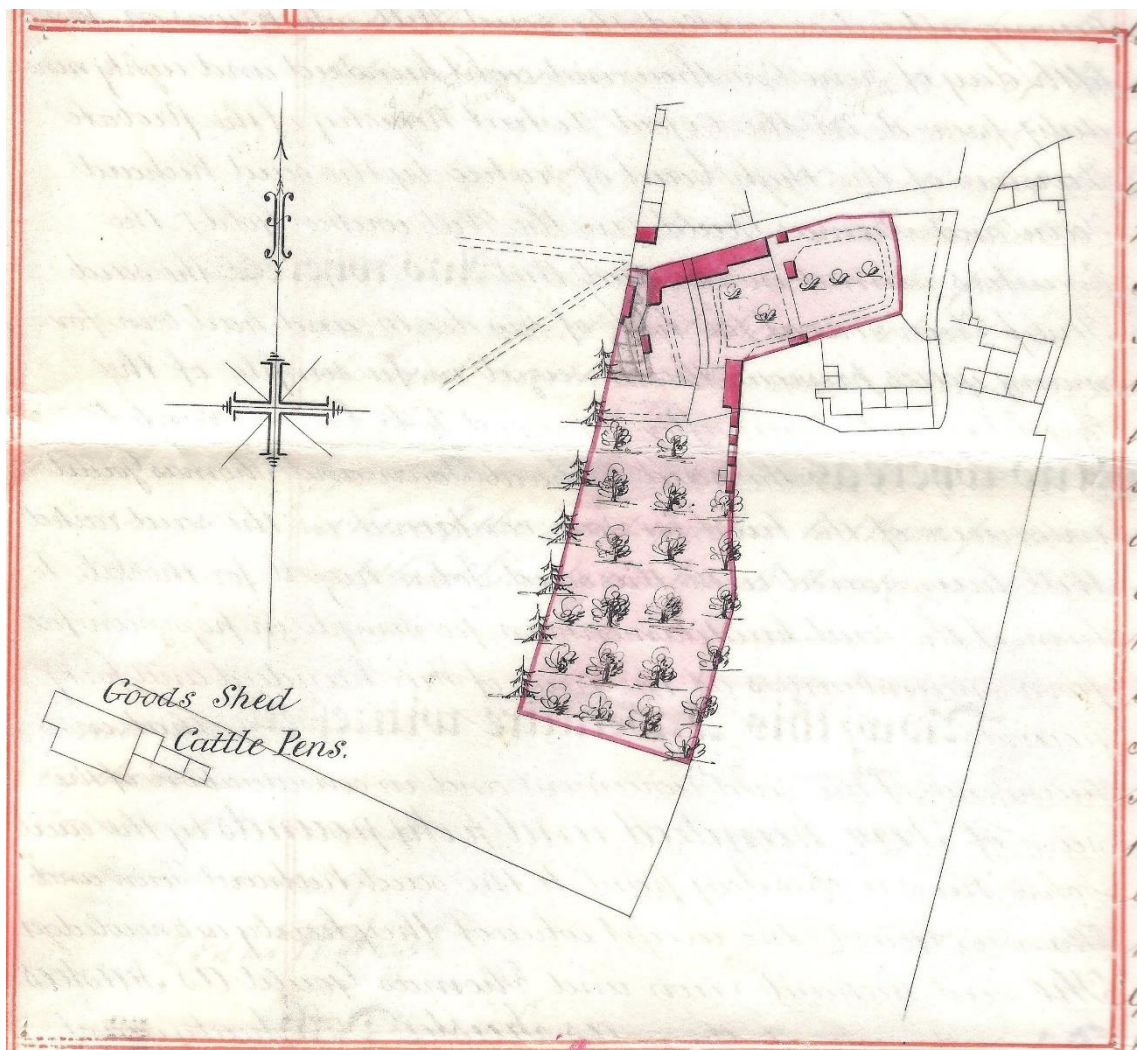
The whole of this had in the interval been let to John Harper, farmer.

James Clarke then erected, to the S of Poollin's (?Pullen) and adjacent to Wakelin's, a stone and slate cottage with bedroom over the gateway; this is clearly described in a deed dated 13 August 1855 and can only be the present No. 7.

On 8 April 1854, 13 August 1855 and 12 March 1857, Philip Town, described as an earthenware dealer in Gardner's directory for 1852 purchased in succession:

Poollin's cottage by the widow Jane Jones. This cottage was incorporated into Stile Cottage (itself a good deal older) in 1954.

Town died on 2 April 1889 and his heirs sold the whole property to John Russell, the postmaster, for £540 on 24 June, as shown by the plan attached to the sale.



John Russell died in October, but his widow continued the postal business (in a building at the bottom of Station Road which subsequently became Barclays Bank and is now an architect's office). His two sisters, Elizabeth Farthing (born 1840) and Mary Jane Russell (born 1846), who had contributed to the purchase of the property, moved into number 5. George Farthing was a bootmaker and all three were still there in 1927. the sisters are still remembered in the village: Miss Russell as a pleasant, if somewhat potty, lady. As they grew very old, their neighbours in The Croft used to send their daughter in to see they were all right from time to time, and to provide increasingly necessary assistance with basic chores. Number 7 was now occupied by W. Smith, and the widow Jones had been replaced across the lane by W. Putt, who figures as a boot-repairer in Gardner's Directory for 1852.

Mrs Farthing died in 1931 at the age of 91, and her husband at about the same time. Miss Russell was moved to the Public Assistance Institution in Thame and died at Woodstock shortly afterwards. Inland Revenue document of 1932 attached separately.

The executors acting on her behalf sold the three cottages to Mrs E. M. Hughes, wife of Leonard Hughes, for £890 On 9 November 1931. On 31 March 1952 Mrs Hughes sold numbers 5 & 7 to Mr J. W. E. Wills and on 10 August 1954 the cottage formerly occupied by W. Putt and since then by Mr Edwards, to the owners of Stile Cottage.

Number 7 was by now tenanted by Mr and Mrs Wood. Mr Wills sold number 7 to the Woods in December 1954 and number 5 and the orchard to Mrs Vallance in April 1955. From Mrs Vallance number 5 passed to Mrs Gisborne and the orchard to developers in about 1960. Colonel and Mrs Hugh Toye bought number 5 from Mrs Gisborne's trustees on 16 September 1969. Mrs Wood died at the end of 1969 and number 7 was bought by the present owners early in 1970.

The construction of the roof and look of the place argues that the basic, four roomed house with front door and staircase in the middle, was the house occupied by the Wakelins in the 18th century and hence built before the first deed of which there is evidence, Newport to Lee in 1697, and which sold by Poollin to Davis in 1812. It is clear from the roof and from the walls that the rooms containing the kitchens and bathrooms, which run at a slight angle to the basic Wakelin house, and under which there was a small cellar, were a 19th century addition, probably later than 1808 because of the datestone at the west end of the basic house.

The datestone IE D 1808 must mark either a major repair in 1808, or an addition to the Wakelin house, which in that case must have contained two, not four, rooms. This latter explanation is supported by Mr Wills's discoveries when he was renovating the house in 1952-4, which indicated that the house had been made in three parts.

Poollin (Pullen is still a village name) and Davis were considerable citizens and figure on a petition to the bishop Oxford at the end of the 18th century. (p.82 of Dr Hassall's book).

A 2019 photo shows that the spur of houses in Beech Road was built on the Orchard to the south of the properties, as shown in the 1889 deed map.



2019 photo showing (different roof colours) from the rear of 7 Farm Close Lane (grey roof) and 5 Farm Close Lane (red roof). The part of 7 Farm Close Lane 'flies over' the original large gateway access to the rear of the two properties (with No 7 have a right of access to the well), owned by 5 Farm Close Lane.



Acc No. 2368