



The White House

Chevin Forest Park, Otley

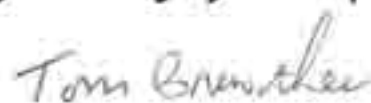
This book has been produced in 2011 by the Friends of Chevin Forest Park with the financial support of the Heritage Lottery Fund through a project called "Chevin Through Time". The White House and Jenny's Cottage are the two best known buildings on the Chevin, even though the latter building was demolished in the mid-1970s, and this stimulated us to produce two short publications to help keep their special memories alive.

We apologise if there are any inaccuracies in this publication or other information not included. If you want to provide any additional facts which you think are worth adding please contact us at admin@chevinforest.co.uk

A big "Thank You" to Otley Museum for providing many of the photographs and original documentary evidence, and also to Barbara Winfield for carrying out much of the detective work.

The "Chevin Through Time" project has seen a number of volunteers come together to help research the history of Chevin Forest Park and to identify and archive important historical documents. It is intended that the results of this research will be made more widely available through the Friends of Chevin Forest website www.chevinforest.co.uk and stimulate more interest in researching this fascinating piece of land overlooking the market town of Otley.

We hope you enjoy the publications



Tom Crowther

Chair of the Friends of Chevin Forest

The contents of this book are not to be reproduced without permission




Supported by
The National Lottery
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



OTLEY MUSEUM

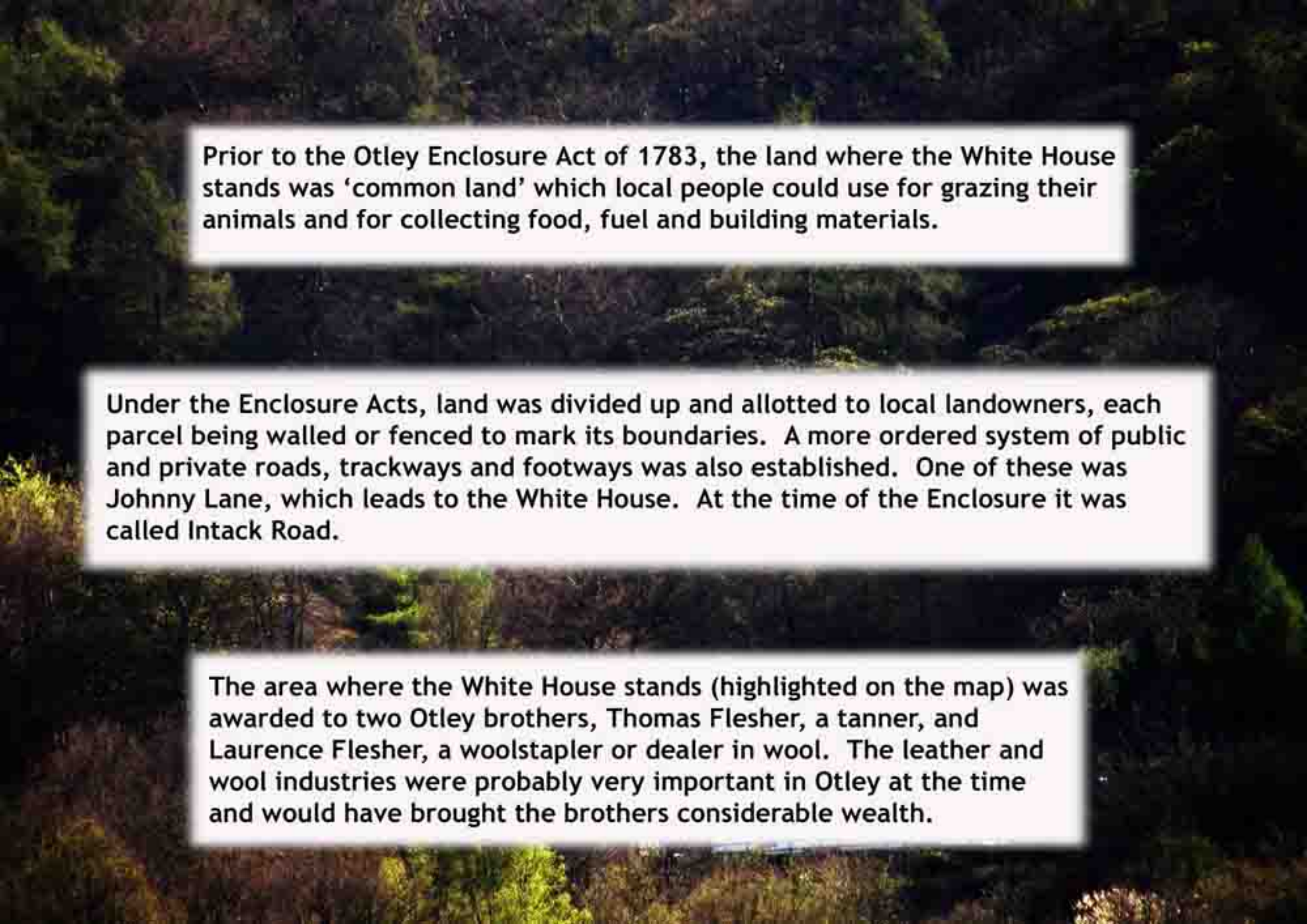


The Wharfedale Printing Machine



"It is a building in local stone and of a style reminiscent of the 18th and 19th century farm dwellings of the local dales. The property is much venerated by the local people and the White House is to Otley, what Bronte Parsonage is to Haworth. It is in view of all Otley and the surrounding district, a focal point when bringing someone to any part of the Chevin, all seem to be relative to the White House."

Keith Rawling, Forester and Head Forester of Danefield Estate, and Head Ranger of Chevin Forest Park 1958-1982



Prior to the Otley Enclosure Act of 1783, the land where the White House stands was 'common land' which local people could use for grazing their animals and for collecting food, fuel and building materials.

Under the Enclosure Acts, land was divided up and allotted to local landowners, each parcel being walled or fenced to mark its boundaries. A more ordered system of public and private roads, trackways and footways was also established. One of these was Johnny Lane, which leads to the White House. At the time of the Enclosure it was called Intack Road.

The area where the White House stands (highlighted on the map) was awarded to two Otley brothers, Thomas Flesher, a tanner, and Laurence Flesher, a woolstapler or dealer in wool. The leather and wool industries were probably very important in Otley at the time and would have brought the brothers considerable wealth.



By 1797 both brothers had died, and Laurence's son, Benjamin, inherited the land. The plot was then acquired by Henry Barker, a wealthy member of an old Otley family, who lived in London and who had already been allotted several other parcels of land on the Chevin under the Enclosure Act. For 50 years Henry Barker was one of six Clerks in the Court of Chancery in London. He owned property in various parts of the country, including Oakwell Hall near Birstall.

Henry Barker died in December 1807 and left the land he owned around Otley to his nieces, Ann and Sarah, daughters of his late brother, Edmund Barker. Ann married Robert Ray and Sarah married Robert Oliver. Descendants of the Ray and Oliver families retained the ownership until the 1970's.

Some time in the late 1700's or early 1800's a small building, possibly an early farmhouse, was erected on part of the plot and named "White House". By the 1840's this had become a ruin and can be seen marked as such on the 1851 OS map.

1851 Map



The White House does not appear in the Census Returns for the years 1841, 1851 or 1861, and was presumably still in a ruinous state.

In the 1871 Census a stonemason named Ben Naylor was living there with his family. It is probable that he had been employed to make the building habitable again so that the owners could rent it out to farming tenants.

The international House on drugs within the Rotterdam of the

Page 11

Name of the person or firm	Address	Occupation	Residence	Sex	Age	Last date of departure (month and year)	Remarks
Name	Address	Occupation	Residence	Sex	Age	Last date of departure (month and year)	Remarks
No. of	Name	Address	Occupation	Sex	Age	Last date of departure (month and year)	Remarks
1	White House	1	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
2	White House	2	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
3	White House	3	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
4	White House	4	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
5	White House	5	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
6	White House	6	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
7	White House	7	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
8	White House	8	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
9	White House	9	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
10	White House	10	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
11	White House	11	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
12	White House	12	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
13	White House	13	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
14	White House	14	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
15	White House	15	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
16	White House	16	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
17	White House	17	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
18	White House	18	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
19	White House	19	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
20	White House	20	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
21	White House	21	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
22	White House	22	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
23	White House	23	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
24	White House	24	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
25	White House	25	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
26	White House	26	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
27	White House	27	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
28	White House	28	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
29	White House	29	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
30	White House	30	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
31	White House	31	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
32	White House	32	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
33	White House	33	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
34	White House	34	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
35	White House	35	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
36	White House	36	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
37	White House	37	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
38	White House	38	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
39	White House	39	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
40	White House	40	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
41	White House	41	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener
42	White House	42	Gardener	M	35	1871	Gardener

Looking at the exterior of the building, the original structure can be seen in the centre, with later additions at each end, one of which was probably a cart house, or even a small stable, as there is evidence of what was once a larger opening in the outer wall.



Inside the White House the original external walls now form two interior walls



At the top of the farm holding stands what is called the 'Vacca Wall', which formed the southern boundary of the White House Farm and which was most probably erected to prevent the farm's livestock from straying. The slabs of stone were likely to have been slid down the hillside to the site of the wall from one of the many small quarries dotted around the Chevin.

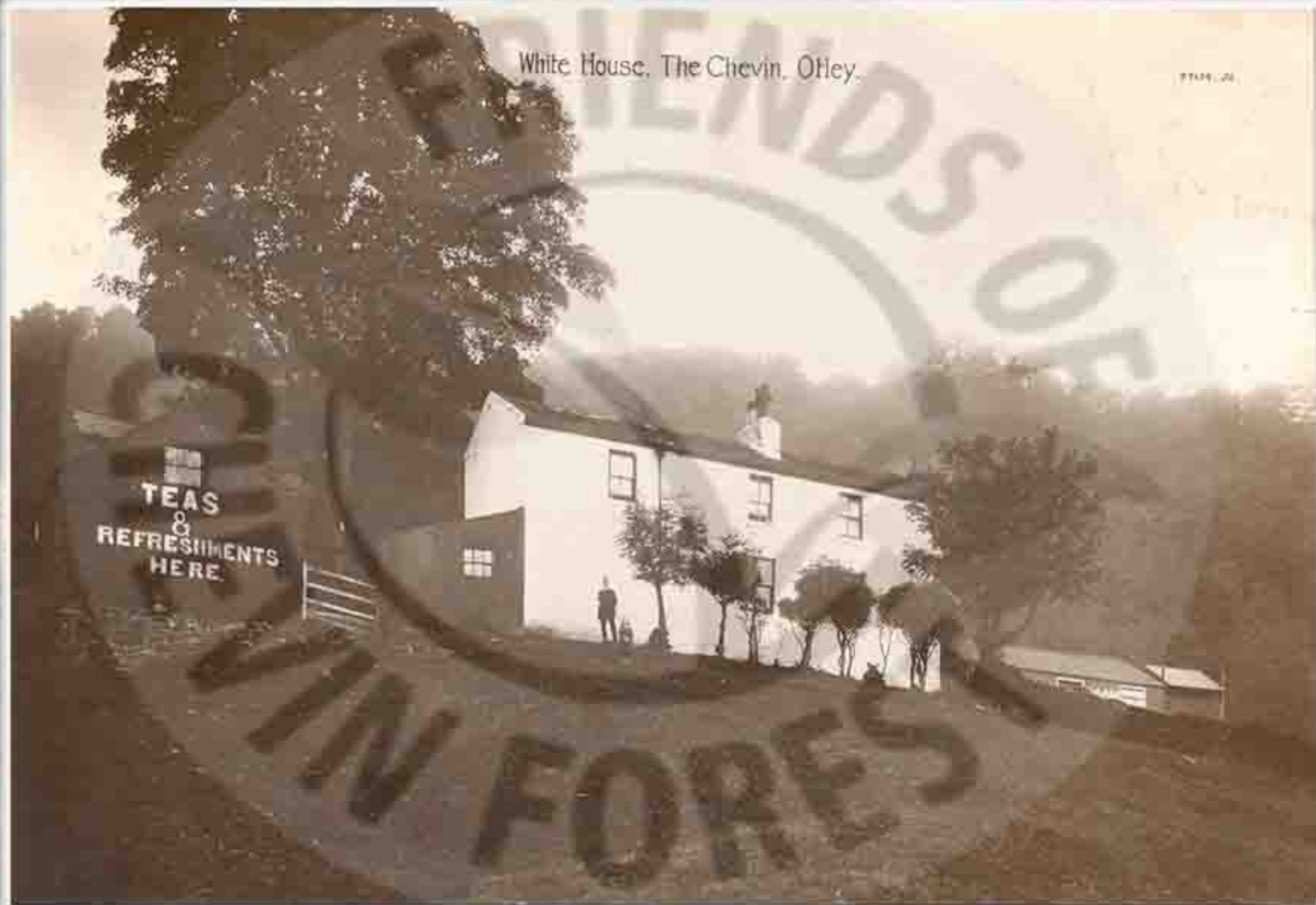


Photo by Chris Tomkins

White House, The Chevin, Otley.

PT 191.26

TEAS
&
REFRESHMENTS
HERE





These photographs showing the White House were probably taken before 1910



WHITE HOUSE, OTLEY CHEVIN, c1906.
Enoch Wigglesworth, Farmer and refreshments.

OTLEY MUSEUM



George Shepherd took over the tenancy of White House Farm in 1907. He had previously been a pig dealer, living with his family in Kirkgate, Otley. The 1911 Census for the White House tells us that he was now a farmer and that the dwelling had six rooms, the same number as it has today. He lived there with his wife and daughter, and also had a “*servant*”, who helped on the farm. Whether he continued running the refreshment rooms is uncertain.

[illegible]

Name	Relationship to head	Marital Status	Years married	Sex	Age in 1911	Occupation	Where born
SHEPHERD, GEORGE	HEAD	MARRIED		M	34	FARMER	YORKS OTLEY
SHEPHERD, LAURA	WIFE	MARRIED	5	F	29	ASSISTING ON THE FARM	YORKS MARKET WEIGHTON
SHEPHERD, FLORRIE	DAUGHTER			F	4		YORKS OTLEY
PAYNE, THOMAS	SERVANT	SINGLE		M	18	FARM LABOURER	U.S.A. KANSAS CITY



The next tenant of White House Farm was Frederick William Clements, who was born in London. According to the Census he previously worked in Bingley as a cloth weaver (1891) and Otley as a printing machine driller (1901 & 1911), before moving to White House Farm and turning his hand to farming. He stayed until about 1926.



One of the ancient routes up and over the Chevin leads from the top of Station Road in Otley and passes to the east of the White House. It is likely that this was used for many years by people travelling between settlements in the area and particularly going to and from the market in Otley. In more recent times visitors using this path would have been able to stop off at the White House for some refreshment on their way to the Chevin Top.



VIEW ON CHEVIN, OTLEY.



Miss Mary Harland, a farmer's daughter from the Wetherby area, moved into the White House in 1927 when she was about 55 years old. She lived there for 28 years until her death in 1955, and held the tenancy longer than anyone else.

Miss Harland did not live there alone for most of this time. She had various lodgers, including members of her own family, and there were also several wooden chalets erected on the White House land which were used as holiday homes by families from Otley and further afield. Camping was also allowed on the flat piece of land above the White House buildings.



Dennis Cable's Hut 1956





Callaghan family from Leeds



A. Nixon in tent



Callaghan family



Looking down towards stone steps

Some of the chalets in 1958.
Photos courtesy of Dennis
Cable (pictured bottom left
and top middle photos)



J. Valentine camping

The Birkett family shared the White House with Miss Harland during the late 1930's. Mrs Irene Tankard (nee Birkett) has vivid memories of the time spent there during her childhood when the White House was split into two dwellings.

THE WHITE HOUSE AT THAT TIME WAS THE DWELLING OF MY GRANDFATHER - MR & MRS C. H. BIRKETT AND MYSELF IN ONE AND A MISS IRELAND IN THE OTHER. THERE WAS A BUILDING (POSSIBLY TACKER) TO THE RIGHT OF THE HOUSE (VACANT). FLOOR WITH MISS IRELAND'S BED ROOMS, ETC. IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE WERE SEVERAL LIME TREES, WHICH GAVE ROOM OUTSIDE OF BACK AND AT HUSBANDS. I DO REMEMBER ONE PARTICULAR COURSE (MR & MRS J. GURRINGTON FROM SWINDON) (TO BE THEY WERE AUNTIE, RAY AND UNCLE JIM) THEY USED TO COME EVERY WEDNESDAY IN SUMMER. I USED TO GO TO SCHOOL EVERYDAY WITH THEM IN AFTERNOON AND WAS THERE WHEN LINDA WENT AWAY FOR THE FIRST TIME. I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT VIOLET WITH CURTIS. I WAS

NOT ALLOWED TO GO THERE. I WAS ALLOWED TO GO AFTER JIMMY'S DEATH TO PLAY WITH DORIS BURCHARD AND SEE HIS SISTER MARY.

THERE WAS AN ROAD UP TO THE WHITE HOUSE, MY FATHER HAD A FURNACE AND A ROOM, WHICH USED TO BE USED AT THE TOP OF SPRING LANE AND HE HAD TO TRAVEL BACK UP COULD BE TO THE HOUSE.

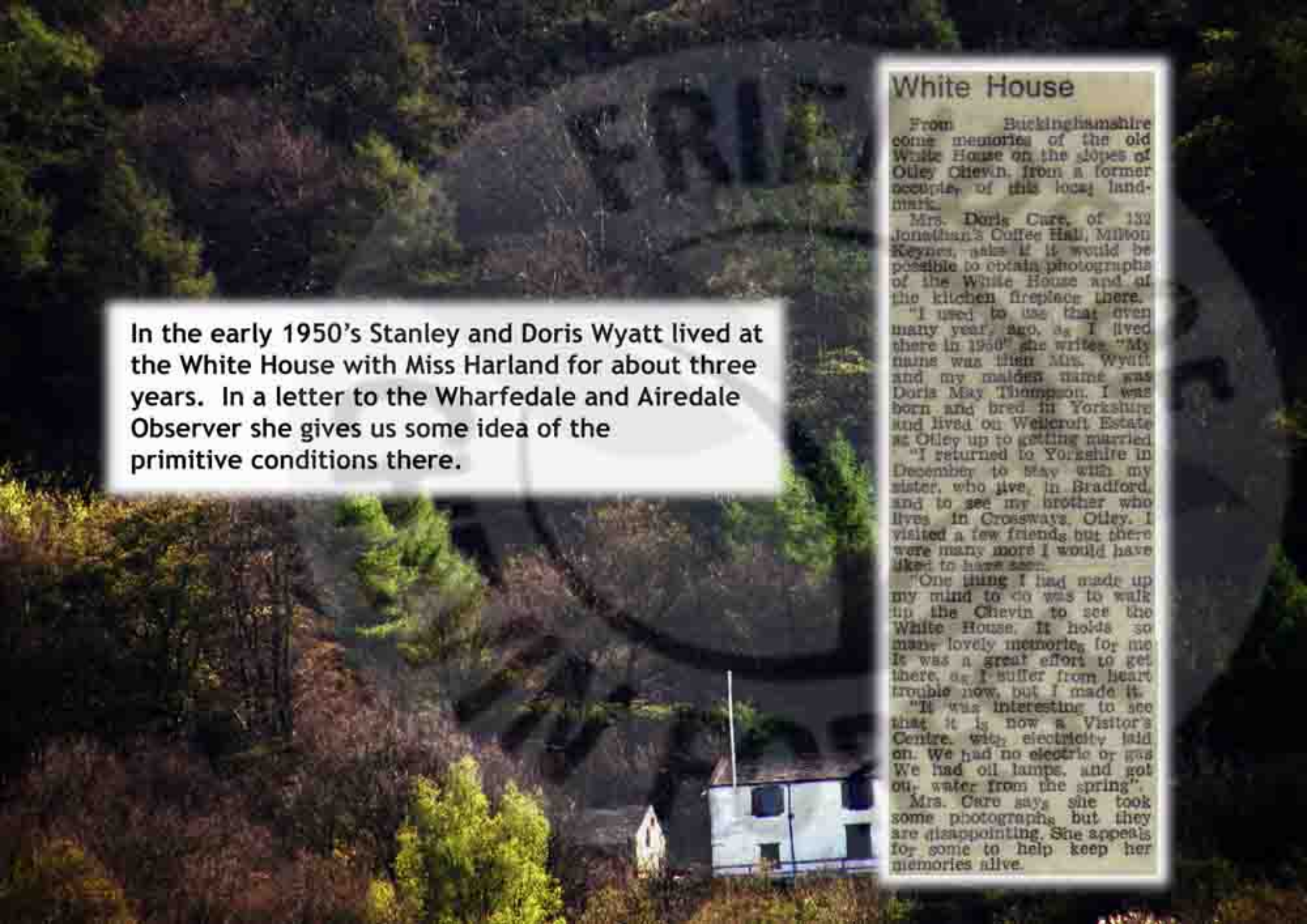
LETTER FOR MOTHER, DAD, FROM ROOM, GOING TO THE NATIONAL YACHTING CLUB ON PEARL ROAD. I REMEMBER THAT ROOM IN PARTICULAR WHEN I WENT TO SCHOOL WITH 10 DOWN HARBOR AND HAD A BIKERBOXED WAS USED IN THE HOUSE TRAVELING THROUGH THE SPRING LANE.

I CAN VIVIDLY REMEMBER AND FATHER WORKING FOR ME THE NIGHT WHEN THE CHURCH BELL RANG IN SPRING LANE WAS ON FIRE AND GOING TO SEE HOW THE CHURCH WAS DESTROYED. RUN DOWN SPRING LANE. THERE WAS ALSO A BUILDING BEHIND FACTORY, MY GRAND FATHER HAD WHERE YOU COULD BUY BROWN BISCUITS OR A CROQUET.

DO NOT REMEMBER ANYTHING ELSE. THE PLOT AND THE SERVICE WAS THE BEST.

IN FEBRUARY OF 1949, HE MOVED TO GREEN HALL FARM ON THE WEST END OF THE ROAD, BEHIND THE FARM, AND WAS THERE UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1988.

Yours sincerely
Irene Tankard



In the early 1950's Stanley and Doris Wyatt lived at the White House with Miss Harland for about three years. In a letter to the Wharfedale and Airedale Observer she gives us some idea of the primitive conditions there.

White House

From Buckinghamshire come memories of the old White House on the slopes of Otley Chevin, from a former occupier of this local landmark.

Mrs. Doris Carr, of 132 Jonathan's Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, asks if it would be possible to obtain photographs of the White House and of the kitchen fireplace there.

"I used to use that oven many years ago, as I lived there in 1950" she writes. "My name was then Mrs. Wyatt and my maiden name was Doris May Thompson. I was born and bred in Yorkshire and lived on Wellcroft Estate at Otley up to getting married."

"I returned to Yorkshire in December to stay with my sister, who lives in Bradford, and to see my brother who lives in Crossways, Otley. I visited a few friends but there were many more I would have liked to have seen."

"One thing I had made up my mind to do was to walk up the Chevin to see the White House. It holds so many lovely memories for me it was a great effort to get there, as I suffer from heart trouble now, but I made it."

"It was interesting to see that it is now a Visitor's Centre, with electricity laid on. We had no electric or gas. We had oil lamps, and got our water from the spring."

Mrs. Carr says she took some photographs but they are disappointing. She appeals for some to help keep her memories alive.

The last tenants of the White House were Thomas and Kathleen Powell, and David Stone. According to Otley resident, Dick Brown, Thomas was known locally as "Tommy Whitehouse".

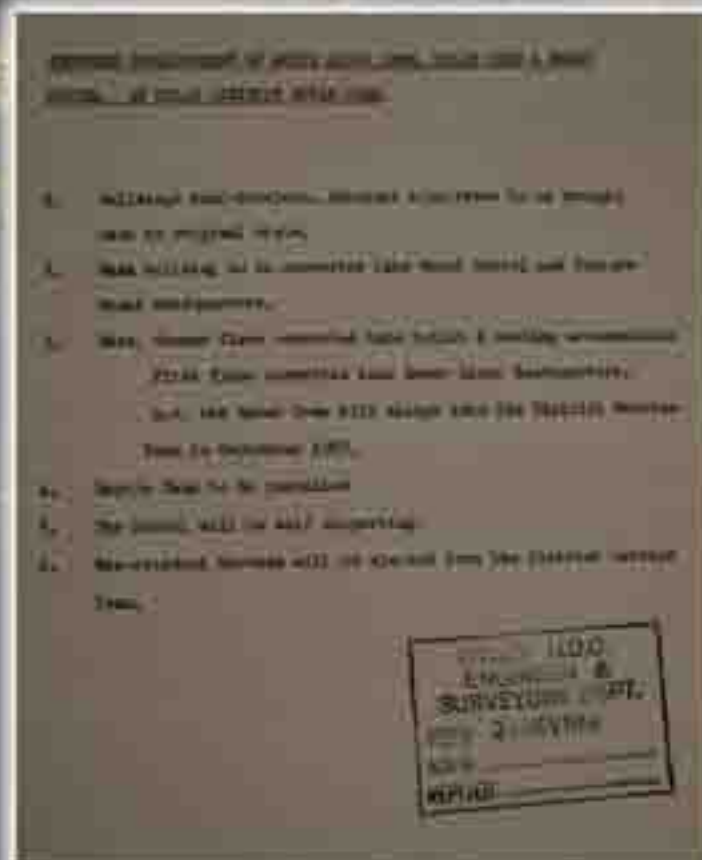


Mrs Kathleen Powell sitting outside the old barn at the White House sometime in the late 1950's



The last residents moved out in the early 1960's after which the buildings were left empty and became semi-derelict.





In 1966 a plan was submitted by Otley District Rover Crew to turn the farmhouse and barn into a Scout Hostel and Venture Scout Headquarters. At the time the report stated "*the farmhouse and adjoining buildings have been vacant and semi-derelect for the past two years*".



WHITE HOUSE FARM TO BECOME A SCOUT HOSTEL

Rover crew needs £1,000 for converting Chevin landmark

The old White House Farm, a familiar landmark half way up the slopes of The Chevin overlooking Otley, is being transformed by local Scouts into a hostel and camping headquarters at a cost estimated at about £1,000.

Despite extensive interior alterations, however, the outside character of the building is being retained—whitewash and all.

The Otley and District Rover Crew, which comprises Scouts from various troops in the Otley and Burley areas, took over the building on rental some time ago. Already they have put in a tremendous amount of work, tidying up the premises and modernising some of the rooms.

Assisted by Scouts from local troops, the Rovers have been at the White House every weekend, stripping old plaster from the walls, repairing woodwork, and preparing for the installation of electricity.

The full cost of modernising the building was estimated at £2,000. By doing much of the work themselves, the Rovers hope to cut this figure by half.

On the ground floor of the building are two large rooms, one of which is being converted into a dining room. The adjoining stable is being equipped as a kitchen.

Upstairs, there are another two large rooms, together with two smaller rooms which could be used

to accommodate those in charge of any courses which are held at the hostel.

Stone Fireplace

Renovations to one of the rooms are almost completed. This has included the building of a natural stone fireplace which contains an extra large grate. When the room has been decorated, the Rovers hope to be able to live at the White House Farm at weekends in order to spend more time doing the rest of the work.

The expanse of land sloping down below the White House Farm is heavy with water at this time of the year, but it is anticipated that in the summer months it will make an ideal camping ground.

The biggest problem facing the Rovers at the moment is how to raise the £1,000 they require to carry out the conversion. A Working Committee which has been formed also incorporates a Finance Committee whose job it will be to supervise the organising of fund-raising events.

By early 1967 the Scouts had begun to transform the derelict building, stripping the old plaster from the walls, repairing the woodwork and building a stone fireplace in one of the downstairs rooms.



It seems that the proposed scheme did not go ahead as planned, possibly due to a lack of funding.