

The Old Sweet Shop – Chipstead

The Old Sweet Shop is a Grade II listed cottage that has been situated along Chipstead High Street for over 500 years. The original building dates back to the late 15th century and although it has been altered many times, it is still possible to see a glimpse of what is believed to be the old house in the stone cellar. The cottage later became the village sweet shop, the focal point for all local children during the 19th century.

Medieval Hall

Today, The Old Sweet Shop is officially known as No.22 the High Street and is the end cottage attached to a larger building that includes Nos. 24 and 26 the High Street. However, the early history shows that the three homes were originally one house, and started life as a Medieval Hall house. Original features of the medieval structure can still be seen in Nos. 24 and 26.

The Chipstead Place Estate and the croft house

The house was formerly owned by the Chipstead Place Estate, which can be traced back to the time of Elizabeth I. Before this, the house was most likely part of the Manor of *Chepstead alias Wilkes*, which dates back to around the 14th century. The Chipstead Place Estate was bought by David Polhill in 1711 and passed through his descendants until it was sold to Frederick Perkins Esq. in 1829. The Tithe map from 1840 clearly shows today's No. 22, 24 and 26 as one house and labelled, 'The Croft House and Garden', with the owner recorded as Frederick Perkins.

The Cowland Family

The census records for Chipstead from 1841 to 1901 do not clearly list house numbers, house names or even street names; however, it appears that all three cottages had a long association with the Cowland family. The first recorded resident in the 1841 census was William Cowland, a 60 year-old agricultural labourer, along with his 60 year-old wife, Sophia Cowland, 20 year-old Susannah Cowland and two year-old Sophia Durling. It appears that the cottages were still connected at the time of the 1851 census and it was the home of another member of the Cowland family, James, a 60 year-old carpenter. He was listed in the house with his wife, Charlotte, and two grown up children, Frederick and Harriet.

The Sweet Shop and Working Men's Club

It is uncertain exactly when the house was divided into separate cottages, especially as it is likely it has changed a number of times; however it appears that the cottages were divided sometime during the 1850s. It was also during this time that the large Victorian shop window was added to today's No.22. The 1861 census was the first reference to the separate cottages and today's No.22 was recorded as the home of "bricklayer and grocer", Jesse Cowland, his wife Susannah and their three children, Charles, Martha and George. At this time it appears that James Cowland and his family were still living in the neighbouring part of the house.

It is believed to be during this mid-Victorian period that No.22 became the village sweet shop. An old photograph from the late 19th century clearly shows the village children spending their pocket-money on their favourite sweets and congregating around the shop. It is also around the mid to late 19th century that the cottage known as No.26 first became a working men's club, with the 1881 census listing the house as "Club House".

The Cowland Family into the 20th Century

Jesse and Susannah Cowland continued to live in the cottage shop, known today as No.22, until the 1890s. The 1891 census shows that Jesse had passed away but Susannah, aged 76, was still living in the house with two unmarried children, daughter, Selina and son, Charles.

William Arthur Ford

The 1901 census shows James Cowland's daughter, Isabel was still living next door, but today's No.22 was now the home of William Arthur Ford, a 38 year-old "Prudential Agent" from Surrey. William was in the house with his wife, Emily Jane, and three children, Mabel, Arthur and Ethel.



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Cottages sold - 1916

By the turn of the 20th century, the cottages were still owned by a descendent of Frederick Perkins; however by 1916 the cottages were sold to Edward Cordy. The sales particulars from 1916 tell us that today's No.22 was still occupied by Mrs Ford and she was paying 5 shillings and 6 pence a week, equating to an annual rent of £14. Today's Nos. 22, 24 and 26 were being sold together and were described as "Two Old Fashioned Freehold cottages and the Working Men's Club". No.22 was described as "the end cottage compris[ing] a Shop and Parlour, Kitchen and Cellar...three good Bed Rooms and an Attic".

The Avis Family

Further property details tell us that in 1925 the house was home to Mrs Ford's daughter, Mabel Alice Ford. The electoral register for 1933 then shows that the house became the home of George and Edith Avis. The Avis' made No.22 The High Street their home for almost 50 years, with George Avis last recorded in the house in the late 1970s, when it became the home of Mary Glass.

The Old Sweet Shop

When the current owners heard neighbours and friends referring to their home as "The Old Sweet Shop", they decided to make the name official and renamed the house, allowing the heritage of the old village sweet shop to be remembered for future generations.

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Historian
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