

A Walk down Dallington Street (for Uckfield U3A Local History Group)



More information about Dallington history is at <https://dallingtonhistory.wordpress.com/>, including the full text of *Dallington 'Six miles from everywhere': The History of a Sussex Village* by Karen Bryant-Mole, which contains an outline history of the village since 1000, drawing on documentary sources, along with photographs and accounts of life here from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. Also on the website are two booklets by Roy Iremonger: "Dallington: A Village at War", a tribute to Dallington residents who took part in the two world wars, and "Dallington's Transported Convicts".

View of Dallington Street looking north from top of Prinkle Lane.

Dallington Windmill

Just after you turn into The Street from the main road, you may be able to spot the remains of the mill base in the field on the left just before the primary school. It was demolished in 1913.



Dallington CE Primary School

This replaced the Victorian school building further down The Street (details below) .

At the field gate opposite the school, you can look towards the Downs in the south west and Dallington Forest in the north. The latter retains areas of ancient forest, with archaeological evidence of the local iron industry such as charcoal burning and ancient tracks. More information about the forest, including guided walks, at <https://dallington.org.uk/category/tree-warden/trees/>

Pantons & Pantons Coach House



The next two buildings on the left after the Primary School are Pantons and its former Coach House (extended in the 1980s for residential use). The main house was originally called Bakers, owned in 1693 by John Hicks, mercer, and in 1703 by Thomas York, carpenter. By 1842, it was named Pantons. Unlike most of the other houses on the street, it is not listed, perhaps because it

was substantially rebuilt in the 19thc. In 1940, a company of Devonshire Yeomanry was billeted in the village and used Pantons as their H.Q. Former residents include Vivien Drake, after a career on the London stage, who had numerous theatrical visitors in the 1940s and 50s and was active in the Dallington Amateur Dramatic Society. (Above right: Watercolour painting of Pantons, by M. Conway, c 1880)

The Old School (Village Hall)



In 1849 a small wooden building was erected to be used as a school. By 1853 it was considered unsuitable, so the vicar and churchwardens bought the freehold site for £100 and a new brick building was erected at total cost of £244.18s 10d. A plan of the new building described it as “brick walls, tiled roof...substantial nature, good workmanship, very respectable in appearance” However, by 1872 this was in turn judged inadequate by HM Inspectors, and a new extension (built from bricks donated by Lord Ashburnham) was opened on 1 January 1873. This is the extension you can see at the far end, with the pointed arch windows.



Forty years later, after a replacement school was built further up the Street, the Dallington Mutual Improvement and Recreation Society moved into the premises. The Society used one room as a billiard room and one as a reading room and club room. Now managed by a charitable trust, the hall and recently restored Billiard Room continue to be used for village activities to this day.

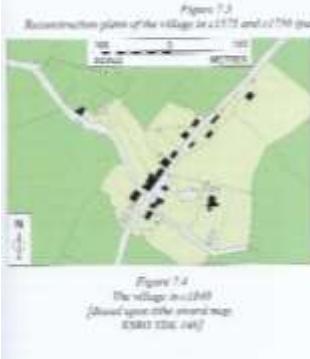
<https://dallington.org.uk/village-hall/>



Mediaeval Dallington (Street between Old School and the Old Manor)

The Street was not the original settlement hub in Iron Age and Roman times. The early iron works at Cinder Hill are connected by road to Ashburnham and on to Boreham Bridge, but there is no direct road from Cinder Hill up to what is now the centre of Dallington village. In the Domesday Book Dallington is a very small village (total population: 2 households) and half wooded. Brightling and Ashburnham are bigger and both had a church while there is no mention of one in Dallington. A church appears in the records some hundred years later when Dallington Church was given to the Priory of Holy Trinity Hastings by Emma de Germanville, “with all its appendages except for the house of Robert the priest while he lived”. She gave this in return for various spiritual benefits including daily mass.

For insights into the subsequent development of Dallington Street, and the construction history of the medieval and later houses, see the Dallington chapters of D. & B. Martin *Medieval Villages in the Eastern Weald 1250-1750* Vols 1 and 2 [MVEHW 1& 2]. The brief descriptions below draw largely on the information there, and numbers listed here refer to the diagrams and descriptions in the two volumes, with the modern house names, but the notes on the next few pages will follow the sequence of houses as encountered while walking down towards the church.



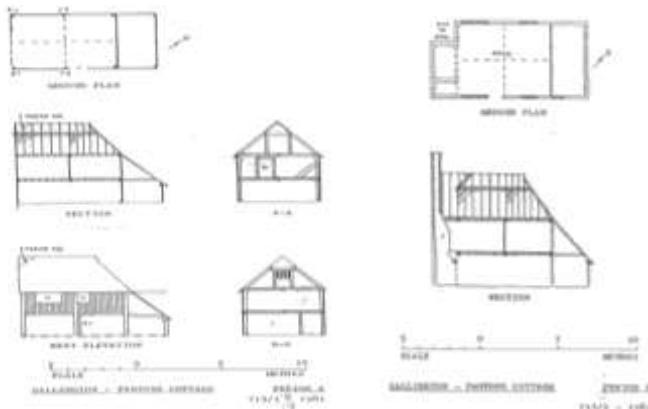
To judge from a photograph taken before its modernisation at the end of the 19th century, Rose Cottage [11] is also likely to retain work earlier than 1700. If so, although the wayside cottage [10] next to Pantons Cottage [10] has been demolished, the only houses which seem to have been rebuilt are Prickle (following war damage) [11] and Bakers [8]. No fewer than seven houses pre-date c.1600. Of these, three are medieval.

MEDIEVAL HOUSES (Figure 7.6)

The three medieval houses stand in the core of the village near the church and were constructed to standard three-cell layouts of textbook design. Being between 11.10 and 13.30 metres (36ft 5in and 43ft 8in) in length and having overall roof spans of between 6.15 and 6.60 metres (20ft 3in and 21ft 6in), all are of average size for such houses in the area. Some show features which differentiate them from houses

1. Yew Arch
2. The White House
3. Martlet
4. Old Post Office
5. Thrums
6. Frog House
7. Staces
8. Bakers (now Pantons)
9. Wayside Cottage (now demolished)
10. Pantons Cottage
11. Rose Cottage
12. Old Church Cottage
13. Old Manor
14. Old Rectory

Pantons Cottage (formerly Woodsells/ Chesters)



Thanks to the current owner David Wilson for sharing information about the house. Architectural survey suggests build date 1525-1550. Framework all oak heart wood (estimated twenty 200 year old oaks.) Style of timbering similar to Bridge Cottage Hall House in Uckfield. Stone local - similar to that inside well (unknown age) . Limestone door step. Owned in 1661 by John West, yeoman, described as messuage, orchard and 2 acres. Later belonged to the Herrings Estate. Water supply was from stream by Stream Farm. Mains water came to village 1957. Pump for 19th rain water cistern.

Missing houses



The cottage on the left in the photo stood between the Old School & Pantons Cottage on the site of Wayside Cottage (described in MVEHW #9). It was bought & demolished in the 1920s in order to re-use the oak weatherboarding for Padgham Farm.

The brick wall seen on the right of the photo enclosed the Victorian school playground, later partially demolished to build the two houses now known as Hillside and Mole Cottage.

Another building that no longer exists is the light coloured house shown in this photo, just beyond Staces and adjoining what is now Frog House. It was known as Brides Cottage because newly-weds often made their first home there. In the 1940s it was the home of Grandma (Alma) Keeley, and another senior citizen, Mrs Beeney, who was the last person to live in the cottage before it was demolished.



Staces (formerly Yew Tree Cottages)

Probably 16th c, initially 2 bays originally open to the roof, later extended to south. *'The 1681 rental of Dallington Manor describes this as 'a freehold messuage, barn and 12 acres called Staces held by Michael Cadman in the right of his wife'. Previous owners John Moore and Stephen Stace. By 1726 land tax returns suggest the barn and 11 acres had been separated. [MVEHW p313]*

Many alterations from mid 18thc onwards including division into 2 cottages, a third cottage added (Bay Tree Cottage?), ground floor walling inbuilt in brick, upper storey tile-hung.



Frog House

'A tiny $\frac{1}{4}$ acre plot formed in 1722 by selling off part of the adjacent property (Thrums). By 1727 when sold to Samuel Barker it had a house on it...Re-fronted in rendered brick in the 19thc. However, internal inspection by the listing inspector revealed timber framing and exposed beams'. [MVEHW p 313]



Mid 20th century residents included the journalist and literary critic Louise Morgan and her husband Otto Theis, seen here with their friend the writer Nancy Cunard outside the front door of Frog House [Photo from Yale Archive] This doorway has since been blocked in.



Brookfield House & Rokesby

The two houses in an elevated position on the left are Brookfield House and Rokesby. They are of much later construction than the others in the Street.

Thrums

17th c or earlier, timber framed building rebuilt externally in early-mid 19th century. *'A plot divided off from the Old Post Office. Described in 1681 as a freehold messuage and land held of Dallington manor, late Richard Glydd's, afterwards Richard Weller's and later owned by Thomas Madgwick in the right of his wife. By 1703 acquired by Thomas York, carpenter, who sold part of the land in 1727 (previous entry). Later sold to his son John York, bricklayer'* [MVEHW p313]



The Old Post Office

Freehold of Dallington Manor, messuage and orchard. Assessed in 1662 hearth tax return at three flues. Owner in 1681 John Hicks, mercer, by 1703 Thomas York, carpenter, and by 1714 owner occupier Doctor Panton, gentleman. Originally a three bay Wealden hall-house. Early-mid 18thc, front facade rebuilt in brick (Flemish bond), sides tile hung. Since divided into two dwellings (Clematis Cottage next door)

Fuller construction details and diagrams at MVEHW p.311-313.



Martlet

Freehold tenement of Dallington Manor held by William Foster in 1681, still owner in 1726 when it was described as messuage, woodhouse, garden and orchard. By 1785 owned by Herrings estate. Phase 1 16th c four-bay continuously jettied house Mid 18th c first floor walls tile hung and ground floor rebuilt in brick removing the front jetty.

Fuller construction details and diagrams at MVEHW p.311.



The White House

16th c four bay construction; brick façade added early to mid 18thc. More details of the complex history of additions and alterations can be found at MVEHW p309-11, where it is also described as:

"A freehold of Dallington Manor called Homestall House, described in a 1627 will as a house and orchard. Left to his daughter and then her son Thomas Weller. By 1681, Richard Weller shopkeeper had inherited, succeeded by William Weller, mercer. Land tax of 1745 describes this as 'the shop house'"

It retained its identity as a shop house and later post office stores well into the 20th century.

Kellys Directory of 1867 lists Thomas Peters as 'grocer, linen draper & postmaster' He was succeeded by his son Roland, who can be seen in the photograph here with his wife and family c1910 outside the shop and an impressive display of oil lamps in the shop window. Tea rooms and a public telephone were added later.

Two of Roland's sisters ran the Post Office until around 1912 when they transferred the business to another house further along The Street, subsequently named as The Old Post Office.

In 1936 when Miss Peters retired, the business returned complete with telephone to The White House then being run by the Henderson family. In 1940 the shop was closed and the Post Office moved finally to its present location at the top of the village on the B2096.

Attached to the southern end of the White House is the White Cottage, probably added mid 18thc.

And finally in this 1920s postcard, you can see the Yew Arch which gives the next house its name, although sadly the yew has had to be removed recently due to disease.

Yew Arch

15th c four bay hall-house. A freehold tenement of Dallington Manor, otherwise Prinkles otherwise Palmers. 1681 owned by John French, in 1727 by John Tutty when it was a messuage, barn and 4 acres called The George indicating use as an alehouse. It retained the name Tuttys into the 19th century.

By 1881 the house was owned by Samuel Peters, who ran the grocer's shop at The White House. The house was also home to Fanny Gosling, his nephew's sister-in-law. Fanny lived there until she died in 1927, aged 94 years. She is probably the Miss Gosling with whom the newly appointed schoolmaster Mr Peploe and his sister found lodgings in 1884. In a letter home he recounted the bleak welcome she offered, describing Dallington as '*six miles from everywhere*' and those first twenty-four hours as '*the most miserable I ever spent in my life*'. Things must have improved as he remained at Dallington until his retirement in 1923.

In 1932, Yew Arch was sold to a Dr and Mrs Tutton. Dr Tutton was a scientist and it was apparently by his methods that the length of the Imperial Yard was officially determined. (Karen Bryant Mole "*Six Miles from Everywhere*")



Rose Cottage



Back on the left hand side of the Street we find Rose Cottage just before the path to the church.

'Mostly rebuilt but perhaps incorporating earlier work. A parcel of wasteland held of the Rape of Hastings by 200 year lease dated 1612. Earliest known leaseholder William Wilson 1717. By 1788 in owner occupation of John Blackman, shoemaker.'

The black and white photograph below shows the entrance to the churchyard c1850, with Rose Cottage on the left and the two linked buildings at Old Church Cottage on the right Description and photo from MVEHW p. 316.

Old Church Cottage



Another building with a complex history outlined in MVEHW p316-317, where it is described as 'one of the narrowest historic houses to survive in East Sussex'.

In 1612, it was mentioned as a house at the Church Gate, tenement of Robert

Chapman. By 1681 it had been divided into two parts, (which returned to single ownership by 1842). The earliest deed, dated 1675, was between Robert Chapman labourer and Stephen Baker yeoman. Two years earlier, Chapman had conveyed to John Baker, tailor, *'all that his shop which was then in the occupation of the said John Baker which said shop did belong and was fixed to and under part of the same roof as the tenement then in the occupation of Robert Chapman'*.

The Old Manor



Probably 14th-15th century though the early history is uncertain. Only two bays survive of the original three bay Wealden hall-house, the southern end having been destroyed in the 17th c. By 1761 a survey of lands held by the Pelham family described it as the manor house of Dallington 'of timber and thatch, old and wants repair'. John Baker, tailor, lived here in 1711, later tenants were Thomas York senior (1734) and Benjamin York (1740). The 1761 survey gives the tenant as Robert Randall esq.

During the second half of the nineteenth century this property was home to Thomas and Eliza Noakes and their 17 children. Thomas Noakes was a farmer and master butcher. His shop premises were a wooden building, erected in the front garden which can be seen in this photograph c 1903 – the girls are believed to be Irene and Grace Noakes.

Another of Thomas's daughters, Mabel, married Roland Peters who ran the grocery store at The White House, while several of his sons also became butchers. However, the eldest son, another Thomas, became a showman known as the Silver King, and it was he who toured with and showed the Elephant Man. You can read about his extraordinary career at <https://dallingtonhistory.wordpress.com/2013/09/03/thomas-noakes-aka-tom-norman-fairground-showman/>.

And now, turn back towards the Church to hear about its history.....