

## 🌀 Villagers and Their Houses 🌀

Finmere is a village of modest houses, with a few larger houses, including Finmere House, the Old Rectory, Stone House, Glebe House and Little Tingewick House. The building styles are mixed, with only a few buildings of architectural note, and relatively few old cottages remain between the twentieth century houses.

### Houses of Rubble and Thatch

In 1955, historians writing about Finmere in the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire noted that 'many of the old cottages still have thatched roofs... some are [built] of red or vitreous brick, timber and rubble [undressed stone], others of brick and rubble only.' Many of these houses were in poor condition and some had been so since the nineteenth century. Most have since been swept away and replaced with modern housing.

Houses and cottages were very crowded in the nineteenth century. The 1840 Tithe Map records five tenants in a house on the site of Titch's Cottage and eight in the cottages on the site of Cross Tree House. Another crowded area was Barrack Yard on the south side of Fulwell Road. This was probably built between 1813 and 1840. Before the Second World War, there were thirteen houses there; only two now remain. It is unlikely that there were barracks in Finmere and the origin of the name 'Barrack Yard' is not known. Wilfred Davis was born in the house nearest the road and his identity card has the name 'Barrick Yard.' This may be an error or may suggest that the name does not refer to a barracks but to a [hay] rick yard, possibly the 'back rick yard.'

### Twentieth Century Developments

After eighty years of decline, the population of Finmere began to grow again after the Second World War. Many houses were in a poor state of repair before the war and, on 2 April 1935, the Parish Meeting proposed to write to the Rural District Council (RDC) to request new houses. Nothing resulted and the matter was again raised at the 1936 and 1937 meetings. In 1938, the Meeting was informed that RDC awaited the decision of the Ministry of Health. Finally, in 1939, the Meeting was informed that two houses were ready for occupation; these became Nos. 1 and 2 White Houses. A second pair of house (Nos. 3 and 4) were built in 1945.

After the Second World War, housing shortages in the area were acute. In 1946, the Parish Meeting heard that two new council houses might be built. At the 1947 Meeting, questions were asked about the method the RDC used to allocate houses and why so few houses had been built. The Meeting resolved to request that twelve prefabricated Airey Houses should be built immediately. Agricultural workers were to be given first priority as tenants,



**Identify Card for Wilfred Davis, 27 May 1940**  
Wilfred was then two years old and he did not sign the card.  
Note the address 'Barrick Yard'

followed by ex-servicemen resident in Finmere. These houses were not built but two further pairs of council houses were erected (Nos. 5 to 8 White Houses).

Although there was a housing shortage, many of the old stone cottages in Finmere were in a poor condition and were due for demolition. In 1950, the Parish Council heard that a number of the condemned cottages had been partly demolished and the sites left in an untidy condition. The RDC was asked to complete the demolition as soon as possible and leave the site in good order. This was delayed for at least two years, while the RDC waited for the last remaining tenant to move. At last, in 1952, the RDC informed the Parish Council that new council houses would be built. Numbers 9 to 16 Town Close were built in early 1952 and numbers 17 to 24 later that year. It was agreed that the new houses would be called 'Town Close,' after the name of field in which they were built.

Chinalls Close, built in 1973, is named after the field on which the houses were built. The field was named after its early owners, the Chennell family (also spelt Chenels, Cheynell, Channel), which is mentioned in parish records from 1663 to 1776.

## Village Views



**The old Post Office and the Cross Tree in 1909**

Alfred [possibly Alf Lepper] sent this postcard to Miss Collingridge at Finmere Grounds on 18 March 1909.



**The old Post Office and the Cross Tree probably in the in 1920s**  
The Post Office is the second thatched building to the right.



**Stone House and Cross Tree Cottage in the early twentieth century**



**Fulwell Road in the late 1940s**  
The House now known as Thatched House is to the right. A thatched cottage, now demolished, stands between it and the brick built Merton Cottage.



**Valley Road looking towards Stone House in the 1920s**  
Note the thatched cottage on the right where Debdale now stands



**Mere Road in the 1920s**



**Mere Road in the 1950s**



**Mere Road in the 1920s**



**Finnmere Garage and the Red Lion in 1971**  
The house in the background, Coldharbour, was demolished in 1997 for new housing.



**Mrs Zilpha Parrott outside Vine Cottage, then the Post Office,  
in the 1930s**



**Mrs Rhoda Wootton at Hawthorne Cottage, Mere Road, in the  
early 1930s**



**Percy Clifford outside the Long House in the mid-1930s**



**Roy, age 4, and Fred Barnes, age 1, with their mother Rose  
Barnes outside Cross Tree Cottage in 1931**



**Members of the Barnes family outside School House (now Glebe House)**  
Mr Hitchcock, Mr Ayris, Arthur Horwood, Fred Barnes (age 5), Mrs Rose Barnes, Louie Davis

## Larger Houses

### Glebe House

1792	2000
£126	£9,500

Glebe House was built by Reverend Robert Holt for his father. The work was paid for by the Stowe estate and the Steward's account books show the building cost at least £126. On 20 September 1792, Parrott inspected the work. He was obviously pleased with progress as he bought the masons, John Inns and Rick Wilson, a drink at the cost of three shillings. The masons worked throughout the winter and had completed their work by the following March. The house was then whitewashed, painted, plumbed glazed and thatched. The majority of work was complete by the end of 1793, though sporadic work continued into 1794.

In May 1841, William Jocelyn Palmer wrote to the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos requesting use of the house for a curate. Palmer let the house to tenants in 1844. At that time, considerable carpentry was done, probably by William Bayliss, including repairing the entrance doorways and cellar windows.

## Stone House

The Yates family erected Stone House, formerly called Mr Lepper's House, in 1638. It was sold by two women named Harding to Mr Baldwin in 1810. Thomas Ceates owned it in 1840. When purchased by Alfred Lepper from Mr Kendall, it was one storey high and thatched. He raised the walls in 1879, at the same time as the Seymour Ashwell's Rectory was extended. The original building is commemorated by a date stone on the south wall and Alf Lepper's rebuilding by a date stone on the east porch with the monogram A.T.L.

## Cedar Lawn

Little Tingewick House was known as Cedar Lawn until it was sold at auction in 1928. The house was built before 1881. Corbett Barrett, Overseer of the poor, was born at Finmere Grounds and moved to Cedar Lawn with his wife Ellen between 1915 and 1920. Corbett took an active part in village life and he assumed the post of Overseer of the poor on his father's death. He held the post until his own death in 1928. Between 1903 and 1918, he was appointed by the Parish Meeting to represent it as a School Manager. In 1926, he was elected a trustee of the Poor's Plot, Ells Charity and Keat's Crowns. The couple had three daughters. He died aged 68 at Cedar Lawn and his wife, Ellen, died ten years later.



The daughters of Corbett and Ellen Barrett in the 1920s



Corbett Charles Barrett pictured at Cedar Lawn in the 1920s

*Centre of the Bicester Hunt  
Cedar Lawn  
Tingewick  
for sale by Auction at the  
White Hart Hotel, Buckingham  
on Saturday, September 22nd 1928 3 pm*

*Situated on the outskirts of the pleasant village of  
Finmere, in a healthy good Sports and Social part of the  
Country. Five miles from the Bicester Hunt Kennels and  
within an easy reach of the Grafton, Whaddon Chase  
and Warwickshire Hunts.*

*[The house] is placed well back from the Road and  
approached by a Carriage Drive. It is substantially built  
of Brick with Slated Roof, of pleasing elevation, creeper  
clad and comfortably planned.*

*4 bedrooms  
Work House  
Cleaning room  
Coal and wood houses  
Saddle and harness room  
Stabling*

*The Pleasure Grounds are very attractive and secluded,  
the timbering being exceptionally fine and includes  
grandly grown Oak, Beech, Cedar, Acacia, Tulip, Laburnum  
and other Trees and ornamental Shrubs.*

*Two highly productive fruit and vegetable gardens  
Water supply from well  
Telephone Finmere no 18  
Gardener's cottage  
Three pasture closes  
Building site ripe for early development*

After Corbett's death, Cedar Lawn was put up for auction at the White Hart Hotel, Buckingham. Hoping to attract a country gentleman, the auctioneers made much of it being a convenient location for the local fox hunts. The auction catalogue set out the details.

Major Francis Wilfred Gore-Langton OBE purchased the house and changed its name to Little Tingewick House.