

## A History of 27 Meeting Street

Most people who live in an old house must wonder sometimes about the generations who have lived there before, slept in their rooms and played in their garden. Who were they? What were like? What became of them? Tracing this history is easier with some houses than others .....

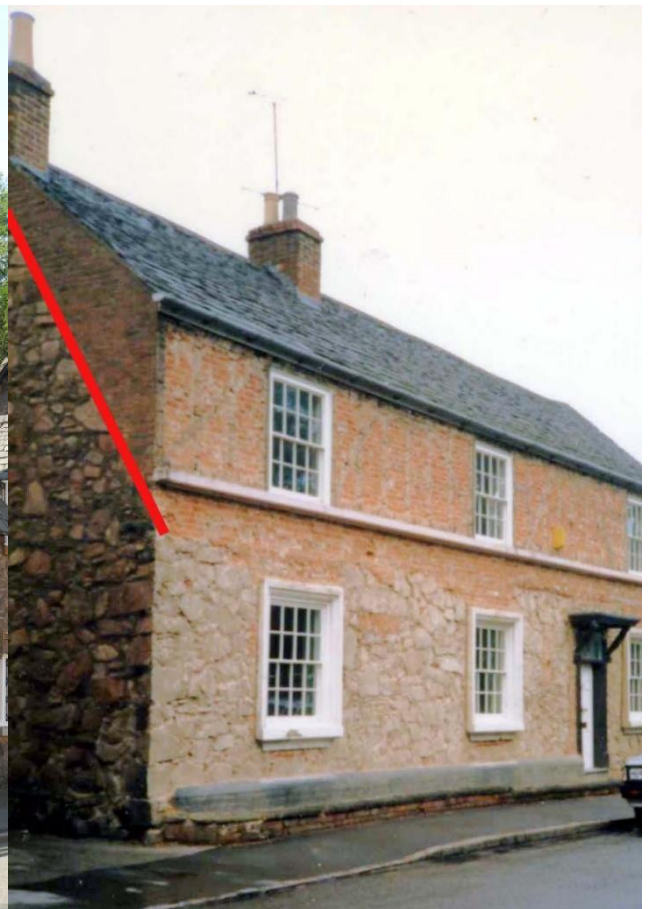
27 Meeting Street is a very old Quorn house with the earliest parts dating back to at least the 1600s.

Deeds show that former occupants include:

- Thomas Chapman
- Joseph Chapman
- James Sculthorpe
- Richard Sarson
- Thomas Hind
- George Snowden

Most of these names can be found on ancient gravestones in Quorn Churchyard.

When the house was renovated by Kate and John Hutchinson in the 1970s, some of its history started to come to light. Tufts of straw were found, indicating that the roof was once thatched, and when the walls were stripped back, it became obvious that the roof line had at one time been very different. It had once exactly matched the deep pitch of the forge on the opposite side of the road.



On the left is the old forge which is on the opposite side of the road to no 27. The picture on the right shows no 27 when it was stripped back. Note the original roof line.



## The Sanders Family

The property was lived in for about 100 years by the Sanders family, starting with George and Elizabeth Sanders, who moved from Cossington to Quorn in 1832 with their two young children. George was a butcher and a devoted member of the Baptist church. They went on to have three more children.

By 1871, George's nephew John Sanders had taken over 27 Meeting Street and he ran a successful building and joinery business from there. Below is an extract from the 1871 census showing John, his wife Elizabeth and their two children. He is shown as a master builder and joiner, employing six men and one boy.

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the									
Civil Parish (or Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town or Village or Hamlet of	Urban Sanitary District of	Rural Sanitary District of	Ecological District of	Page	
Quorn	Quorn		Leicester	Quorn	Quorn		Quorn	110	
ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON- DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN		
Meeting Street		Lucy Heape	Daughter	Unmarried	26	Housekeeper	Quorn Leicestershire		
31.	1	Thomas Rice	Head	Married	39	Quarryman	Quorn		
		Larry Rice	Wife	Married	26		Quorn		
		Elizabeth Tannery	Sister	Unmarried	14	Scholar	Quorn		
151	1	John Sanders	Head	Married	43	Master Builder & Joiner	Quorn Leicestershire		
152	32.	Elizabeth	Wife	Married	18	Employ 6 Men & 1 Boy	Quorn Leicestershire		
		John	Son	Unmarried	13	Scholar	Quorn Leicestershire		
		Elizabeth	Daughter	Unmarried	8		Quorn		
153		Samuel Barnett	Head	Married	41	Freight & Ironkeeper	Willoughby on the Wolds Leicestershire		
154		Hannah	Wife	Married	66	Wife	Quorn Leicestershire		
155		Mary Ann	Daughter	Unmarried	33		Willoughby on the Wolds Leicestershire		
156		Maria	Daughter	Unmarried	27		Quorn		
157		Maud Maria	Daughter	Unmarried	14	Scholar	Quorn Leicestershire		

John was very talented and was often commissioned to make furniture for the important Farnham and Warner families. When he died in 1900, his son, also called John, took over the business.



John Sanders (the younger), taken in about 1904, with his eldest daughter Mary.

The younger John was also very gifted. He carved the Rood Screen for the Church in 1913, and did fine work, as well as taking full trees and operating a saw mill.

By 1911 business was thriving and the census shows John (the younger) living with his wife Mary and four daughters Mary, Grace, Alice and Elizabeth (known as Beth). They were aged 11, 10, 8 and 6

During WW1 workers were scarce and the daughters had to pull their weight. Alice and Beth had to work the band saw to cut handles for picks, for the soldiers for cutting trenches. By 1919 after the war was over - and John was exhausted and dissatisfied. His old school friend George North, whose father was the postmaster in Quorn, had emigrated to Saskatchewan in Canada in 1903, and John wanted to join him.

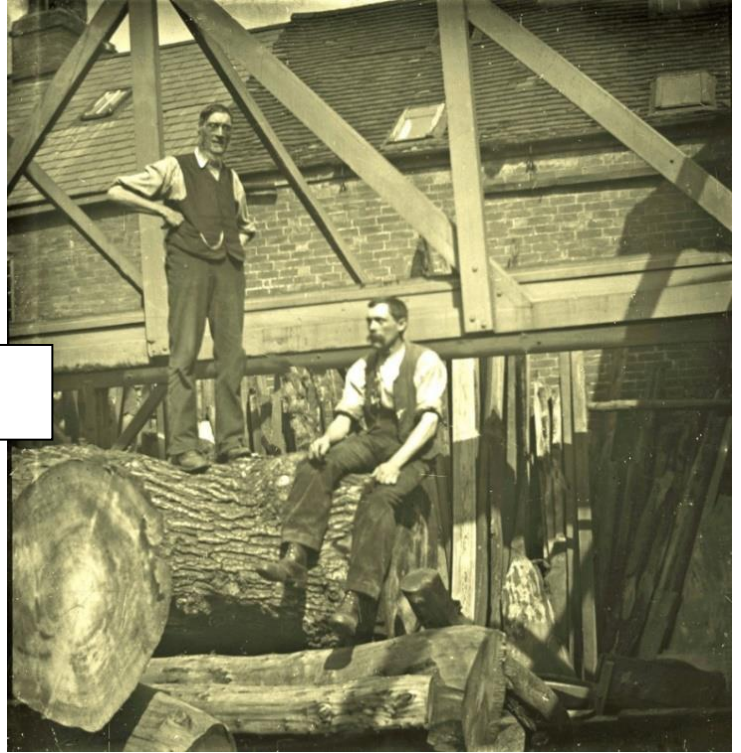


An advert from the 1891 Parish Magazine



John's wife Mary was against the move as. She had brought her family up in Quorn and John was 52 - but he was adamant and went over to Canada in 1920. Mary and the three youngest girls joined him in 1921. Beth, the youngest, was allowed to take her exams at Rawlins a year early at age 15, so that they were complete before she went to Canada.

The sawmill and timber yard at the rear of no 27

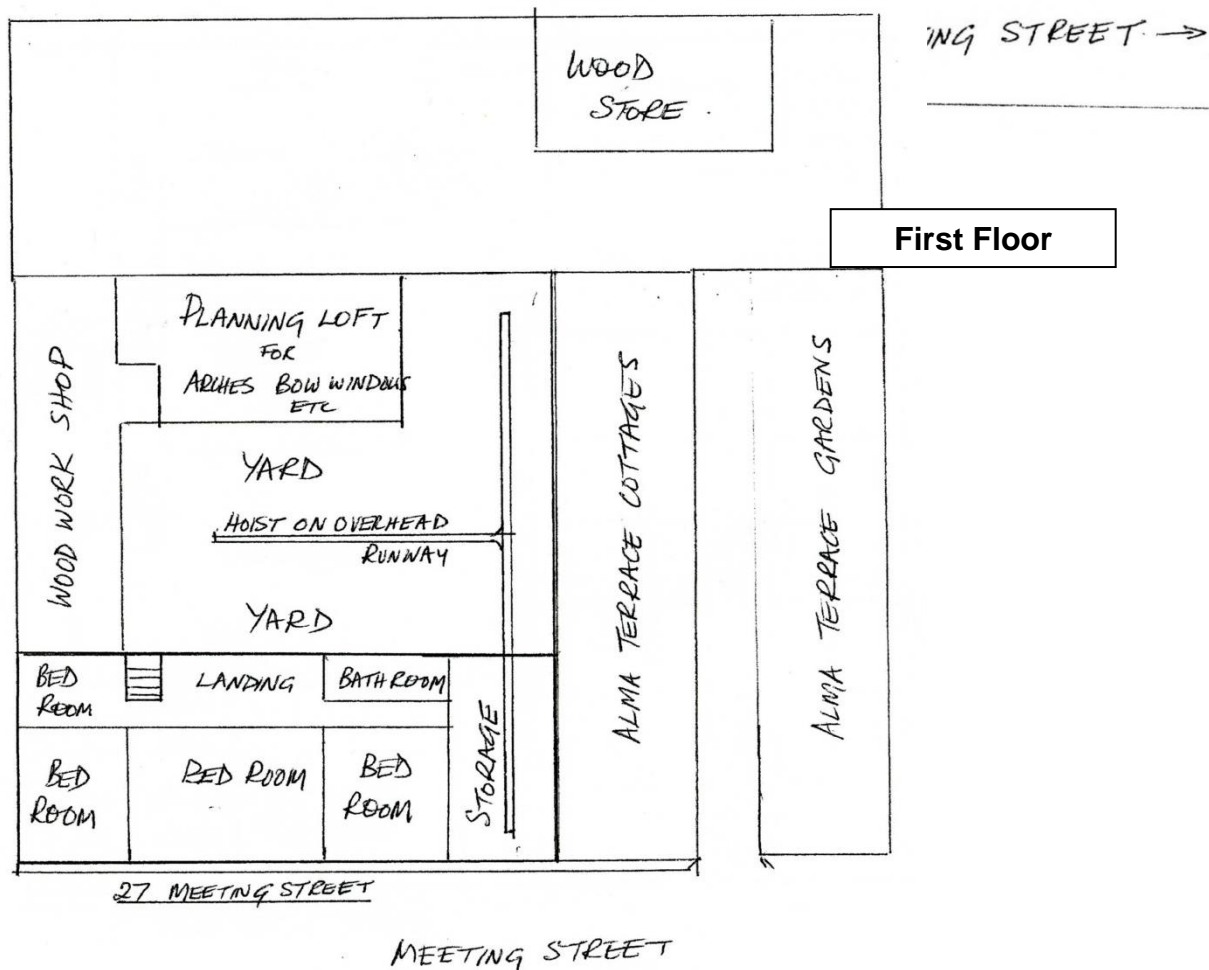
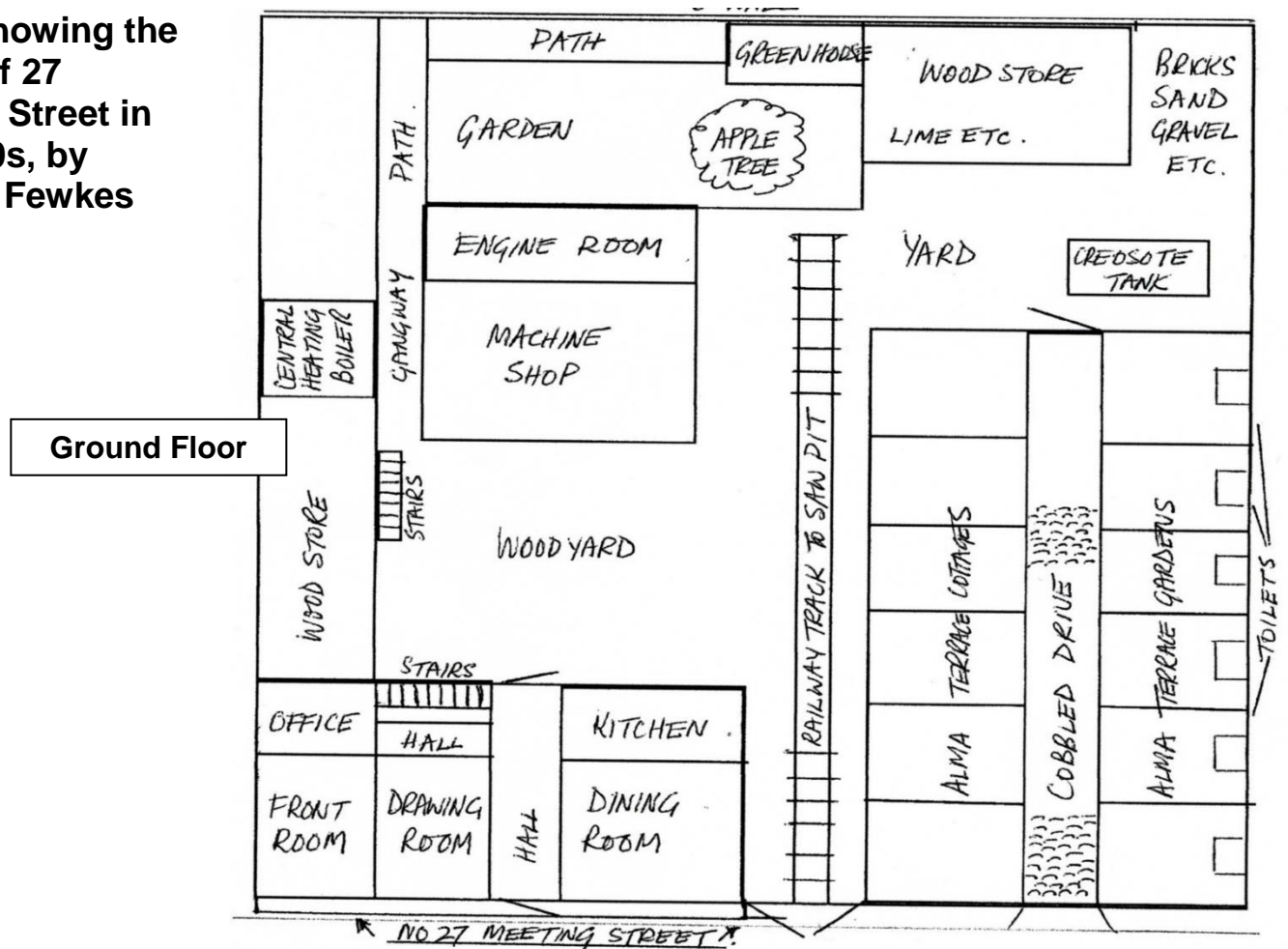


When the family went to Canada, Mary, the eldest daughter stayed behind. She was settled in her job as a teacher at Quorn Primary School and was engaged to her childhood sweetheart George Horspool, who also lived on Meeting Street.



This photograph was taken in the early 1900s. No 27 is on the right-hand side of the road with ivy on the walls and iron railings. The tall building next to it with the gateway and loft above, was also part of the property, the loft being used for joinery storage. The building next to this (far right), was the end of Alma Terrace, a row of small cottages at right angles to Meeting Street.

**Plans showing the layout of 27 Meeting Street in the 1930s, by Michael Fewkes**





## Mixed Fortunes

John Sanders sold 27 Meeting Street to two bachelors called Knight and Day. They only kept it a short time, before selling it to Ernest Fewkes, who by coincidence was returning from Canada. He continued the business as a joiners and builders. He not only built houses, but also offered a full undertaking service and sold toilet seats in varying sizes! It was Ernest Fewkes who put mock gabling on the house. On the picture on the right, you can also see the trellis he put up to grow roses, but apparently they wouldn't thrive and he swore that the ivy that had been there previously, had 'poisoned' the ground. Ernest Fewkes closed his business in 1939 when house building declined due to the war. Number 27 was then bought by Wrights factory, who used it to house their munitions workers.

In 1944 the house was used as an officers' mess by the 82nd Airborne Division, American Paratroopers, who were stationed in Wood Lane.

## After the war

Once the war had ended Wright's let the house out as two flats, one upstairs and one downstairs. Our story is taken up at this point by Olive Thompson. Olive Outen had married Frank Thompson on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1946, and whilst on their honeymoon. Olive's mother-in-law wrote to say that the ground floor flat of 27 Meeting Street was available to rent. The young couple jumped at the chance and moved in shortly afterwards. Olive continues:

*"On October 2nd we arrived back home and collected the keys to the flat, and started to make plans as to what we should need to set up our home. We already had a bed, and Frank had collected a few things when he was single, a chest of drawers, and two bookcases. He had a vast collection of books bought over the years, being a great reader, not novels, architectural books, and books about the great Cathedrals of the land. Frank had also bought Dorothy's piano that she had decided to part with, and also a three-piece suite from a second hand shop in Barrow on Soar, (it turned out to be full of moths' eggs). At Clemersons we bought a dining table and four chairs and although it was 'Utility', it was very well made, and lasted many years. We moved into 11 Meeting Street on January 1st 1947 and stayed there for 5 years. We enjoyed living there, rooms were very large, and consisted of a kitchen with a stone floor, which looked lovely after I had scrubbed it. There was a dining room with an old fire range which needed black leading from time to time. The sitting room was huge as was the bedroom, and the bathroom was also on the large side and a bit bleak. There was a long passage running along the back of the building, and also another from the front door to the back door, they were all tiled in coloured tiles, in humid weather were covered in condensation which was rather unfortunate but I put newspapers down on the floor until it dried off. There was quite a*



Meeting Street with number 27 on the right in the



27 Meeting Street in the 1970s

*bit of garden at the back of the house, which we shared with the Wilmores in the top flat. We grew some of our own vegetables, and Frank helped his father on the allotment in Farnham Street . The first winter that we were at the flat was very cold, there was frost and snow, and we had many power cuts."*

The Thompsons had their first child (Mary) in 1948, and in 1952, when they were expecting their second child (Richard), they moved to Leicester Road.

Far right: Frank Thompson in the back garden of 27 Meeting Street  
Near right: Olive Thompson in the back garden of 27 Meeting Street with Mary in 1949



Over the next twenty years the condition of the house declined, and by 1970 it was in a very sorry state.

### **The Hutchinson Years!**

In 1971 the tide turned for this lovely old house. Wright's put 27 Meeting Street up for auction and it was bought by an excited Kate and John Hutchinson. Over the next months they renovated the whole property and turned it into a lovely family home.



What a transformation! From jungle to beautiful garden!



Not only did their refurbishment reveal the history of the roof, but many other features became apparent. An old external doorway was found, which opened into what is now the driveway. This turned out to be the old entrance to George Sanders' butchers shop – a room which would become their dining room. They also found – and opened up - two windows which had been bricked up to avoid the window tax, first introduced in 1696.





Beth Thompson (nee Sanders) with Kate and John in 1992. They are standing in front of the fireplace carved by Beth's father.

The story didn't quite end there though. In 1979 there was a knock on the door and there stood a lady in her 70s. This was Beth Sanders - the youngest daughter of John and Mary Sanders. She had last seen the house in 1921 when she left for Canada as a girl of 16, in the reign of George 5<sup>th</sup>. It was very poignant as Beth stood in the lounge and saw and remembered the fireplace that her father had carved all those years before.

Beth became good friends with Kate and John, and as she wrote to them after the visit, she recorded as much of the history of the property as she could remember.

27 Meeting Street is now owned by Chris and Liz Lucas (2019), who are not only putting their own mark on the house, but also continue to enjoy apples from the gnarled apple tree which appears on the old plan, and has been there for over 100 years!



A panorama showing 27 Meeting Street in 2011

This article was brought together by Sue Templeman on behalf of [www.quornmuseum.com](http://www.quornmuseum.com), but all credit and thanks for the content goes to Kate & John Hutchinson, the late Beth Thompson (nee Sanders), Tony Fewkes, Michael Fewkes, Olive Thompson and Richard Thompson.



Beth Thompson (nee Sanders)  
Left: As a young girl at Rawlins aged 15. Right: Beth over 50 years later