

THE CHOWN HOUSES WALK

This self-guided circular walk explores an area of East Horsley developed by Frank Chown during the 1930's, profiling his 'arts & crafts' designs which have helped to define the character of housing in East Horsley.

Walk distance	2.2 miles. <i>See map on Page 5 for the outline route.</i>
Start	Station Parade, East Horsley.
Parking	Station Parade car park (<i>up to 3 hours</i>).
Cafes	Quaich, Bollo & Brew, Orindi's Deli, (<i>Station Parade</i>).
Access	All buildings referenced on this walk are private dwellings with viewing only permissible from a public footway or right of way.

BACKGROUND:

During the 1930's Frank Herbert Chown (1878-1942) pioneered the development of residential housing in East Horsley. After acquiring 500 acres of land in 1927 in an auction of Tommy Sopworth's Horsley Park estate, Frank Chown dominated the development of residential housing in East Horsley throughout the 1930's. Chown offered 'arts & crafts' housing on relatively large plots within a rural setting with designs which included thatched roofs with first floor 'eye-brow' windows, decorative facing brickwork, inglenook fireplaces and the widespread use of oak internally. Each house was slightly different, creating interest and originality; collectively they came to define the housing character of East Horsley.

This circular route focuses on six residential roads in East Horsley. Specific houses are shown highlighted in bold and illustrate facets of Frank Chown's work, although these represent only a small proportion of his interesting houses to be seen on this comfortable walk.

WALK DIRECTIONS:

a) Glendene Avenue

Leave the Station Parade car park, turn left and pass the row of shops. After the Parish Council notice board follow the pavement left around the corner and enter Glendene Avenue. This residential road was first developed in the 1930's and contains a mixture of houses of different styles including some distinctive Chown houses. The third house on the right is **Hopgarden** (*see right*), with finely decorative brickwork beneath an intricate thatched roof. Three houses down on the right is another thatched cottage, **Little Thatchers**, displaying a single Chown style 'eye-brow' window. Near the end of the road on the left side **Thaxted Cottage** has three eye-brow windows set in a low-reaching thatch roof.



After the metal gate at the end of Glendene Avenue take the cinder track to the right through the trees that runs parallel with Forest Road. There are no pedestrian pavements here so this informal path was constructed by local residents and the Parish Council. Follow this path to its end by Sway Cottage, then carefully cross over Forest Road to join another part of the informal path on the opposite side. Follow this path to its end, then turn left into Woodland Drive.

b) Woodland Drive

Woodland Drive is a leafy residential road of 39 houses, of which 12 were developed by Frank Chown during the 1930's, mostly within the first half of the road. His eldest son, Donald Chown, also built three houses here in the 1940's, continuing the business after Frank's death.

Walk up Woodland Drive to the third house on your right, **Fairmead**. This locally-listed Chown house was built in 1932 using Norfolk Water reed for thatching. Next on the left-hand side lies **Robins Thatch**, also locally-listed. Built in 1931 this house largely retains Frank Chown's original footprint and displays many of his characteristic features.



After Robin's Thatch is **Rosemount**, also built in 1931. This was home to Frank Chown and his wife Eileen from 1931 to 1937, (*see left*). They called their house Franleen, an amalgam of their first names, which they used on two subsequent homes in East Horsley. Rosemount served as a show house displaying Chown's particular 'arts & crafts' features to potential buyers, including an elegant thatched roof, 'eye brow' profiles, elaborate brick fireplaces and leaded windows. The exterior has decorative brickwork in an unusual rose-pink.

Continue along Woodland Drive for another 250 metres until you reach **Thatchwick** on the right side, a house with a particularly exuberant thatched roof. This was built in the late 1940's by Burbridge Builders adopting Frank Chown's designs, although the present thatching is a later design. At this point you must retrace your footsteps back by one house and take the lane between Thatchwick and The Ridings which leads down to the Pennymead Sports Ground.

c) Pennymead Sports ground

The cricket ground lies on the right side of the access road with the tennis club on the left. When this club first opened in 1937 Frank Chown was a founder member. He also provided land for the pavilion at a nominal sum. Continue along the access road through the sports ground until you come to a crossroads. On your left side is a large house called **Pennymead Lodge**, built by Lord Lovelace in 1851. It was originally called Laundry Cottage as the place where all of the Horsley Towers laundry was done. Turn left at these crossroads and enter Pine Walk.

d) Pine Walk

Pine Walk is a tree-lined residential road formerly part of the Horsley Park estate. Frank Chown built six houses along here, of which one has since been demolished. The first house he built was for himself and his wife - naturally he also called it **Franleen**. It is the third house on the right, (*see right*). Nearby on the other side of the road is **Sable Lodge**, probably the longest thatched bungalow in East Horsley. Continue along Pine Walk for another 70 metres, then turn right into Farm Lane.

**e) Farm Lane, Highfields & Ockham Road South**

Farm Lane is a short residential road containing several Chown houses including the first on the left, **Polkeris**, and two houses down **Pennyfield** which has large eye-brow windows set into the tiled roof. Two houses after Pennyfield turn right into the narrow lane that runs between the high hedges of Oakbeams and Brooklands. At the end of the lane you enter Highfields, another short residential road.

Walk the full length of Highfields, passing the interesting oak tree in the centre of the road near the end. The final bungalow on the right is **Deer Pond Cottage**, built by Frank Chown's son, Donald, who continued to work in East Horsley for a time after Frank's death. Built in the late 1940's, its simple design seems to echo that era of austerity.

After Deer Pond Cottage turn right into Ockham Road South. Walk for 100 metres and reach Conisbee butcher's shop at **Park Corner**. This listed building was built by Lord Lovelace in 1861. The Conisbee family have been selling meat in East Horsley village since 1780. Turn right beside the Conisbee shop at Park Corner and enter Lynx Hill.

**f) Lynx Hill**

There were 12 houses built along Lynx Hill between 1934 and 1939 either by Frank Chown or builder JB Bower following Chown's designs. They represent around half of the current houses in this leafy residential lane. Of particular note are **Oakdale**, second on the right with some fine decorative brickwork; **Oak Lodge** (*see left*), four houses further up on the right side, is a much-extended property whose central core displays original oak

beams dividing chevron brickwork above a distinguished arched entrance. Three houses further on the left is **Magpies** with a line of shallow eye-brow windows at the first-floor level.

At the end of Lynx Hill, you arrive at Pennymead Lodge once again. Turn left at the crossroads and enter Pennymead Drive.

g) Pennymead Drive

Pennymead Drive is a private residential road of 27 houses, all but three of which were designed by Frank Chown. Collectively they provide an impressive show-case of his work.



Second on the right is **Quested House**, (see left). Believed to be Chown's largest house, it displays intricate random brick patterns at the first-floor level, with the same style of brick decoration used on each side of the house.

Moving down Pennymead Drive you encounter a succession of interesting Chown houses. Look out for **Dray Cottage** on the left after the Pennymead Rise turning, with its three elegant eye-brow windows.

Three houses further along is **Thatchdale**, a masterpiece of thatch, oak beams and decorative brickwork. Equally impressive is the next-door neighbour, **Glengall**, with intricate beams dividing chevron brickwork beneath four eyebrow windows. Opposite Glengall sits **Dove Cottage**, with a newly re-thatched house, twin thatched garages and, of course, a dovecot.

The last house in Pennymead Drive is **Sheepwash Lodge** built by Lord Lovelace in 1852 as a gatehouse for his Horsley Towers estate. In those days sheep fleeces were washed in the nearby pond, hence the name, although the pond is now hidden by the roadside hedge.

Leave Pennymead Drive through the wrought-iron gates beside Sheepwash Lodge, then take the left-hand grass verge into Ockham Road South. Carefully cross over this busy road, then turn right and follow Ockham Road South back to Station Parade and the village centre.

Further information:

For more information about Frank Chown and his work see the Horsley Heritage website at www.horsleyheritage.info. In the Local History section is a presentation entitled '**Frank Chown: East Horsley's housing pioneer**'.

On the corner of Cobham Way and Ockham Road South is a small building (see right) now used by funeral directors, James & Thomas.

This locally-listed building was built by Frank Chown and functioned as his sales office in the 1930's. Reflective of this heritage, in 2024 James & Thomas funded the refurbishment of Frank Chown's grave in St Martin's Church graveyard.



The Chown Houses Walk

3.55 km / 2.21 miles / Ascent 41m

