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Research Team

## Whitsbury (formerly Olinka Cottage), 38 Silver Street

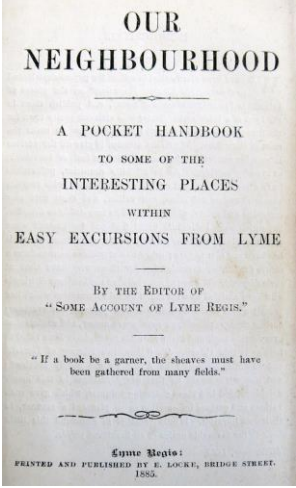
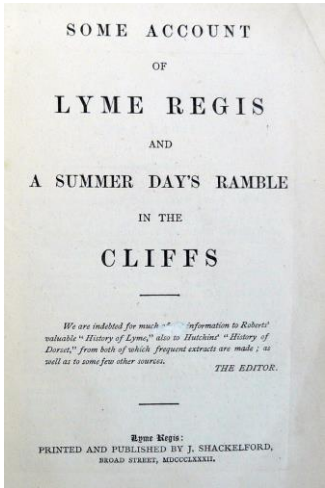
Graham Davies, 2012, revised 2019

This house, at 38 Silver Street, was renamed **Whitsbury** during the 1920s.



The name **Olinka Cottage** is still on the gate pillars.  
Today, the house has been divided into five flats bearing little resemblance to its Victorian heyday.

I first came across Olinka Cottage when I discovered two pocket handbooks written by a Miss Stanger-Leathes, in the Museum archives, whilst researching for an exhibition in 2006.  
Fanny Stanger-Leathes of Olinka Cottage, Silver Street, wrote/edited *Some Account of Lyme Regis* (1882) and *Our Neighbourhood* (1885).

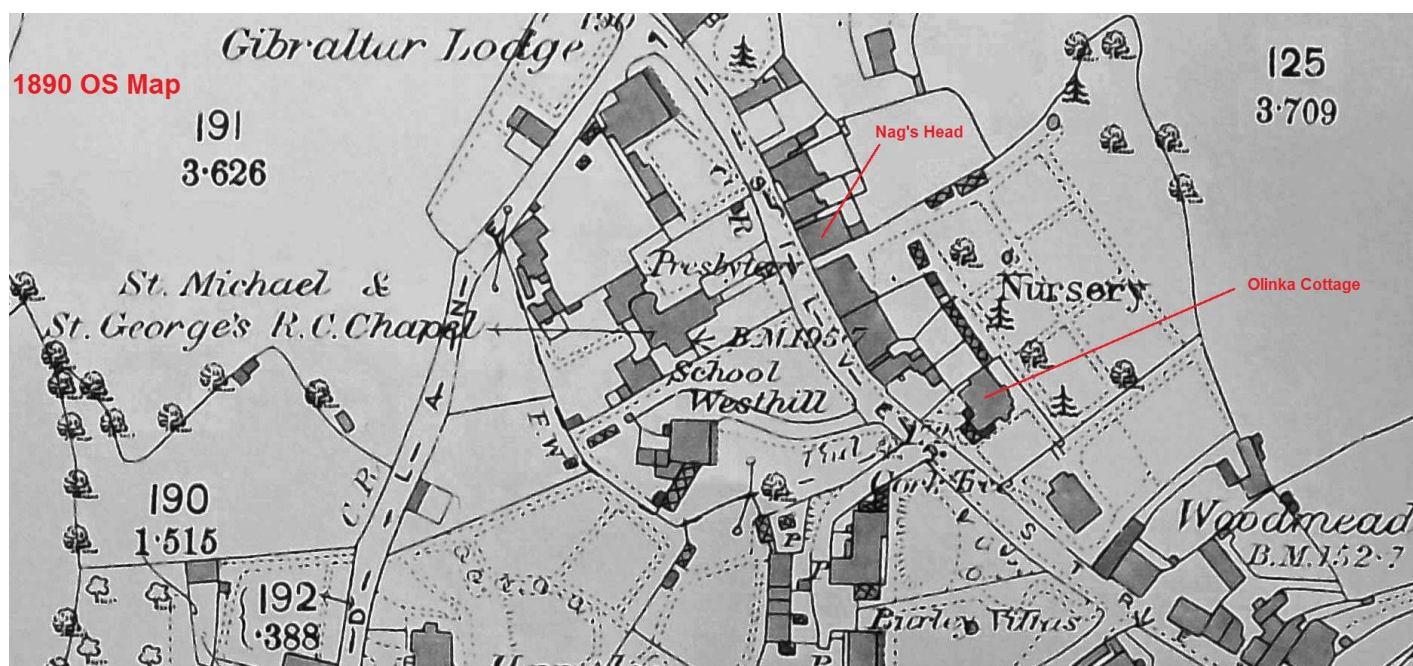


## Timeline for Olinka Cottage/Whitsbury -

1875-80 Robert Hansford  
1881-1925 Misses Stanger-Leathes  
1926-74 Purvis family

Robert Hansford is probably the Baptist minister recorded as living in Pound Street in 1871.

1875 is the earliest reference I have found for Olinka Cottage, but the property is not recorded on the 1841 tithe map or the later 1856 Cox & Davis map, which reduces the 'when built' window of this Victorian house.



The 1890 OS map is the earliest map we have in the Museum that shows Olinka Cottage. The buildings shown on the map between the Nag's Head and Olinka Cottage were destroyed by fire in 1910, as was the Nag's head in 1902. Olinka Cottage avoided such tribulations!

When Thomas L Stanger-Leathes of Elm Bank, Lillington, Warwickshire, and Dalehead Hall, Cumberland, died in 1876, he left Elm Bank to his three daughters, Fanny, Sophia and Emma. They were born in St Mary, Lambeth, Surrey. Their father was a wool merchant. They lived with their parents in Surrey and later (1860s-70s) at Elm Bank, Lillington, Warwickshire.

Dalehead Hall and its estate, having been in the Leathes family since Elizabethan times, was sold to Manchester Corporation in 1877, which developed the valley containing the Leathes Water lake, creating the Thirlmere reservoir to provide the growing industrial city of Manchester with water supplies via the 96 mile long Thirlmere Aqueduct.

By 1881, the three Stanger-Leathes sisters had come to live at Olinka Cottage. The publication of a handbook as early as 1882 suggests that Fanny, at least, had prior knowledge of the area. The house had twelve rooms and they had three servants; cook, parlour maid and housemaid, and probably further staff from Lyme itself, such as a gardener. This level of domestic service is again recorded in 1911.

Sophia, aged 56, died in 1882 and was buried at St Mary Magdalene's Church, Lillington.



Grave of Fanny & Emma  
Stanger Leathes

Death - Stanger-Leathes, on Feb 26, 1909, at Olinka, Lyme Regis, Fanny, eldest daughter of the late T L Stanger-Leathes Esq of Dalehead Hall, Cumberland, and of Elm Bank, Lillington, Warwickshire, in her 90th year. (The Times, March 1, 1909)

Death - On Aug 2, 1925, at Olinka, Lyme Regis, Emma, daughter of Thomas Stanger-Leathes, of Dalehead Hall, Keswick, aged 94. (The Times, Aug 4, 1925)

Fanny and Emma are buried in Lyme Regis cemetery.

After the death of Emma Stanger-Leathes, the house was sold by auction for £1600 to a Mrs Purvis who in October 1925 completed the purchase of Olinka from Mr Thomas Denton Stanger- Leathes, who was a nephew of the sisters and executor of Emma's will. Mrs Constance Purvis and her daughters lived at Whitsbury for many years, with Miss Margaret Constance Purvis still living at 38 Silver Street in 1974.

The Purvis family changed the name of the house to Whitsbury. I note that it was incorrectly named as Westbury in the 1928 Electoral Register.



Whitsbury 2012

### References

Ancestry.co.uk  
 Lyme Regis Museum Archives  
 LRM Research Team's Digital Archive  
 Old Cumbria Gazetteer – Dalehead Hall  
 St Mary Magdalene's Church, Lillington - website