

OUR HISTORY—The Tabby Cat—aka The Orchard

by Julie Beck

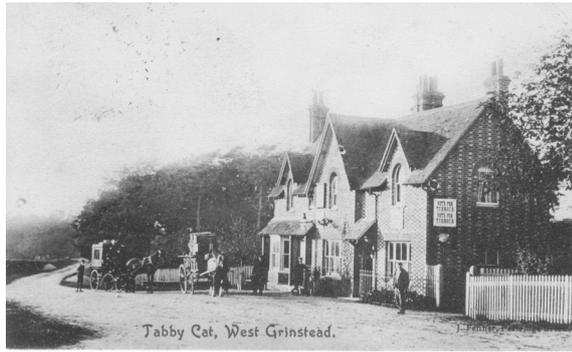
This is an extract from a recently completed a history board which is displayed in The Orchard. It tells of the origins of this purpose built 19th century inn.

The story of how it came to be built has not yet been uncovered, but it is popularly believed that it was built around 1865 for Sir Percy Burrell who resided at the neighbouring West Grinstead Park.

The first landlord of The Tabby Cat, (as it was called until it became a Little Chef outlet in the 1980s), was John Cray. He was a bachelor and previously in the employ of Sir Percy as his butler, and prior to that as butler to Sir Percy's wife's family the Pechells at Castle Goring.

Cray ran the pub, next door to the newly opened West Grinstead Station, along with his mother and one of his sisters, until his death in 1885. The tankard (pictured) is inscribed with his name and, certainly until the 1960s, was one of many measures still kept on display in the pub.

The picture above is dated around



1907. You can't really see it, but the hoarding on the side of the pub is a Vote for Turnour sign. Turnour was MP for Horsham from 1904 until 1951. I am dating the photo around 1907 as it is by J Fenner a local photographer whose work was prolific around then. Other landlords have included Alfred Greenfield, Alfred Pankhurst, Norman Jennings, Lilywhite and Nick Holman.

In 2008, a few years after the Tabby had ceased to play host to the Little Chef, Sarah and David Chadburn opened The Orchard, turning a derelict, rather sad looking property, into a thriving restaurant with its orchard of old fruit trees used as a garden for the summer months.

