

## John, Ann and Sarah Chandler

One of the largest memorials in the graveyard is sited on the north side of the churchyard, just a few yards from the boundary wall with Eastbury Manor (memorial no. 37, Compton churchyard survey). A plain slab, which is set into the ground, it commemorates the very long life and many years of work achieved by John Chandler, who worked for the Eastbury Manor estate. It also remembers his two wives, Ann and Sarah.

John Chandler and his spouses were not of high birth but his good character and his exceptional service in Compton marked him out for particular recognition. The inscription on this enormous stone is loving and respectful. It was paid for by his last employer, George Best of Eastbury Manor House:

*Beneath are the remains of John Chandler  
Nearly sixty years resident of this parish  
The faithful and [valu]ed servant  
of the successive owners of the  
Eastbury Manor Estate  
The present proprietor of which  
.....The record of service  
for his [mem]ory  
Died February 26<sup>th</sup> 1870  
Aged as supposed  
100 years  
Ann Chandler  
His first wife  
Died March 6<sup>th</sup> 1824  
Aged 40  
Sarah his second wife  
Died 1866  
Both are buried beside him*

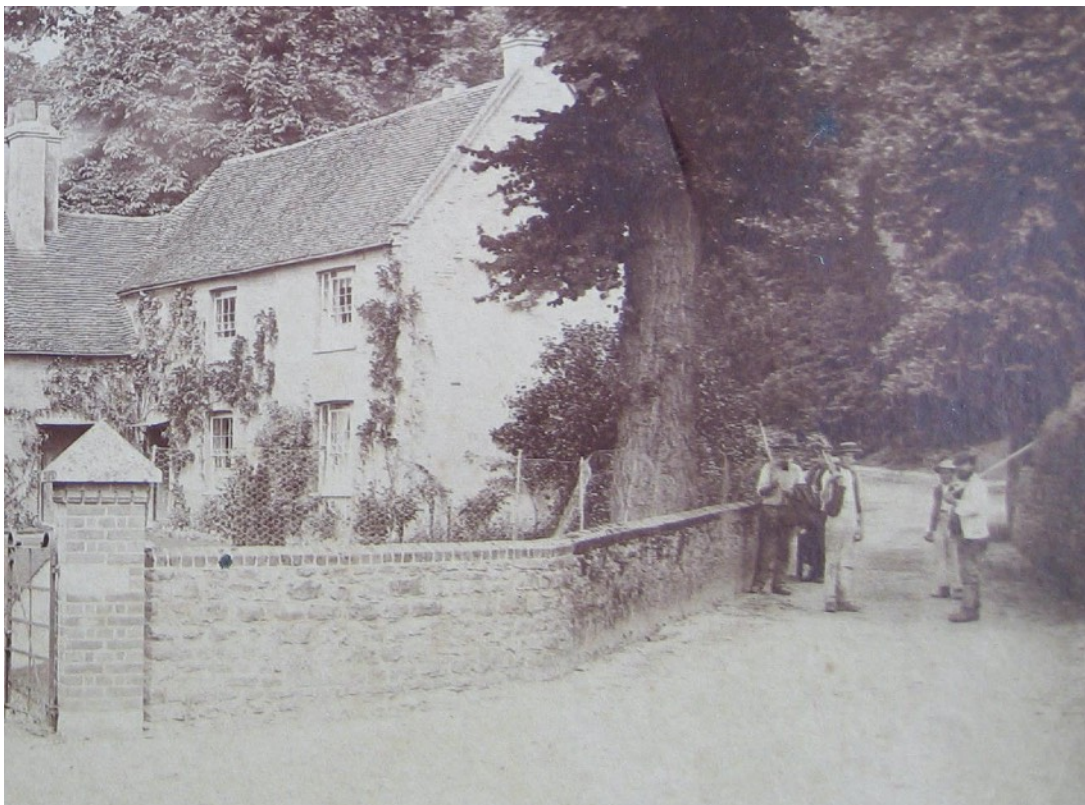
Did John really reach the age of one hundred? The burial register notes that he was 95 at the time of his death and the census returns give conflicting answers. It is very probable that he could not remember the year of his birth. Many people did not have access to their baptismal records and there was usually little need for them to seek it.

However, his birthplace was at Puttenham and a baptism took place there in 1772 that tallies with his probable age and his family's status. John, the son of William and Mary Chandler was baptised on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

William was a farmer and rented a small piece of land, which the Land Tax returns indicate that he held for at least two decades at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

John and Ann had at least four children who were baptised at Compton; James, Henry, Rhoda and Harriet were christened in 1811, 1814, 1816 and 1819 respectively. The records show us that, at that time, John was working as a gamekeeper and bailiff. He evidently had a number of responsible roles within the estate over the years; the term bailiff changed its meaning over time but it can be loosely translated as 'manager' in modern terms. John Chandler was evidently a trusted and increasingly indispensable part of the Eastbury estate.

Ann Chandler died when her children were young and three years later a marriage took place in Godalming in 1827 between Sarah Elsley and 'John Chandler of Compton'. Sarah Elsley was aged about forty and she came from Witley.



*The east wing of Westbury manor house was the home of John and Sarah Chandler.*

No records survive to suggest that Sarah and John had children and Sarah's role as stepmother would have kept her very busy. Sadly, James Chandler died in 1829 at the age of seventeen but John's younger son,

Henry, stayed close to Compton; after working on the land for a while he lived with his family in Binscombe and worked as a shoemaker. No doubt his father, unlike so many who worked on the land, had the benefit of well-made and well-fitting footwear in which to undertake his outdoor tasks.

In 1841, the tithe survey recorded that John was occupying the eastern wing of Westbury manor house, which was a tied cottage belonging to the Eastbury estate, and that he also owned the house on the common that is now called Island Cottage.

In 1851 the census tells us that John Chandler still held the position of agricultural bailiff. A decade later, in the spring of 1861 he and Sarah were still living in Westbury Road and John's occupation is listed as woodsman. Remarkably, for a man who was probably in his ninetieth year, he was still undertaking work that required much physical fitness.

A few weeks after the census was recorded, John's daughter Rhoda passed away. She had not married and had worked for some years in a domestic post in the house of a solicitor in Godalming. She is buried at Compton. Sarah Chandler passed away in early 1866 and her husband John died in early 1870. As we have seen, he had reached a great age and was highly regarded by his employer. When Mr Best himself died just a few months later, it must have seemed like the end of an era at Eastbury.

The Chandler family name lived on in the locality. In later years John's son James returned to working on the land and he and his family lived at Loseley Lodge in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

### Sources

Parish registers of Compton, Puttenham, Elstead and Godalming.  
Compton tithe survey 1841.  
Land tax returns, Puttenham  
Census returns

Sally Gorton May 2021