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In past volumes of the Journal we have included reports on the Woking History Festival, the Woking Community Play and 'Local History in the News'. Whilst these are all of interest at the time, they are very quickly dated. As space is at a premium and so many of our readers obviously enjoy the research articles (collecting them for future reference), we have decided that these items such as the 'Local History Diary' etc., will no longer appear in the Journal. Instead, for those who subscribe direct from us, we will be including from time to time a newsletter of future events and reports of past activities. We hope that this will improve the appearance of the Journal, whilst at the same time encourage more of you to subscribe.

Another change is in this page. From the next issue onwards this 'introduction' will be replaced by a short 'contents list', giving us even more space for articles.

And finally, as everything must come in threes, our third change is in the names of the publishers. From now on you will notice that the Woking History Journal is published by A.K., H.R. and D.A. Wakeford!

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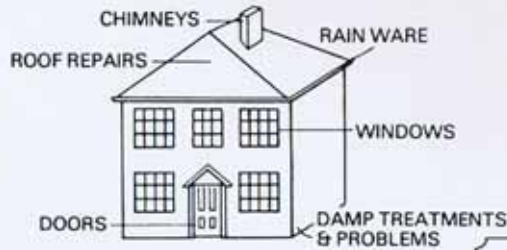
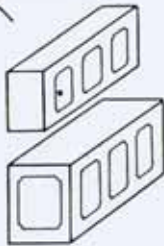
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# THE HISTORY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WOKING

by Peter Farr

One of the most interesting aspects of history is seeing not just how much things have changed down the years, but in finding out how much is familiar and how things appear to go around in circles. Local government – like the media or social moralities – is a reflection of its society, and in particular the nature of its local community. Nationally, local government has in many senses grown more sophisticated and these trends have been mirrored in our own Borough, but in just as many areas it has altered very little.

Local government in the Woking area began as it did in the rest of the country, growing from local communities of parishes, villages and counties whose boundaries dated back to Anglo-Saxon times. There were four Parishes in the present-day Borough; Woking, Byfleet, Horsell and Pyrford, all being administered by Vestrys. Each Vestry dealt with matters such as the upkeep of highways, management of land and property and relief for the poor. In return for their food, lodging, clothing and some rather unsophisticated healthcare, the impoverished of the Parish would be put to work in the Workhouse, or on the roads or on local farms. One assumes that the ratepayers of the day felt that they were getting value for money by this arrangement, but such things are of course relative.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 brought a greater degree of rationality to the matter, by merging the Parishes into more logical and efficient administrative bodies. Woking Parish was absorbed into the Guildford Union, the other three were incorporated into the one based in Chertsey.

Nationally, the picture of local government at this time was one of inefficiency and corruption. Our municipal forbears of the 19th Century were simply not geared up to meet the needs of a nation that was undergoing rapid industrialisation with accompanying social and economic stresses. This pattern was, to some extent, repeated locally, after the railway line from London arrived in 1838. The new town of Woking was a growing urban centre ruled and surrounded by a rural area with little time for – or appreciation of – its needs.

Woking's greater misfortune was that virtually all of its land capable of development was owned by the London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company. Their primary concern appears to have been profit, at the expense of a well planned and organised development of the growing town and its environs. Hence Woking grew in a piecemeal and unco-ordinated manner, without

any serious thought being given to building control, a road network, drainage system or the provision of amenity land. Woking's local government has come in for its share of criticism over the years, but few would deny that its presence and authority at this time would have helped ease the Borough's passage into modern times.

In fact Woking's local government was in a somewhat chaotic state at this time. By the 1870's the modern-day Borough was presided over by two Rural Sanitary Authorities (RSA's), two Highway Boards, two School Boards and the same four Parish Vestrys. To this long list Surrey County Council was added in 1888. Woking's different character to that of the majority of Guildford RSA prompted local calls for separation and autonomy. By 1893 the national local government Board capitulated to progress and agreed to the establishment of the Woking Local Board.



Local Government, Woking area 1890

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This was Woking's first real taste of Local Government, with the area divided into five wards returning a total of eighteen Councillors. In 1895 the Local Board became Woking Urban District Council with no change in the authority's responsibilities.

The scale of the task facing the new Council was not an enviable one. In many respects Woking was a medieval town with modern expectations. There was no mains drainage, piped water or street lighting, and the roads were simply appalling. The Council metaphorically rolled its sleeves up, and set to work with a will. This being Local Government, the action was accompanied with a plethora of Committees, meetings and long debates. Progress was impressive if not instantaneous. Councillors of the past faced the same purse-string problems confronting today's elected Members – financial supply never meeting demand or expectation.

The Council worked on the huge backlog of unmade roads which had never been levelled, drained or surfaced. Several bridges were also in need of repair, both rail and waterway. Another key problem at the time was sewerage – understandably everybody wanted to benefit from the service, but nobody was willing to have it treated on or near their own land. A system was finally established at the turn of the century for Woking's main central area. It was soon extended to adjoining areas such as Knaphill and Hook Heath. The drainage system was to prove a political advantage for the Council, as we shall see in due course.

The Urban District Council also played a leading role in the provision of a street lighting service, a major cause of concern for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In fact, in 1895, Woking became one of Britain's first towns to be lit up – although the service had numerous teething problems. Most cruelly these manifested themselves one night in 1895 when the entire system failed just as a Council Committee was due to discuss the costs of lighting. There was a similar sense of irony with the



*Wheatshaf bridge before reconstruction*



*Wheatshaf bridge after being rebuilt in 1913-14.*



*The watersplash, Saunders Lane – part of the council's improvements of the 1920's*



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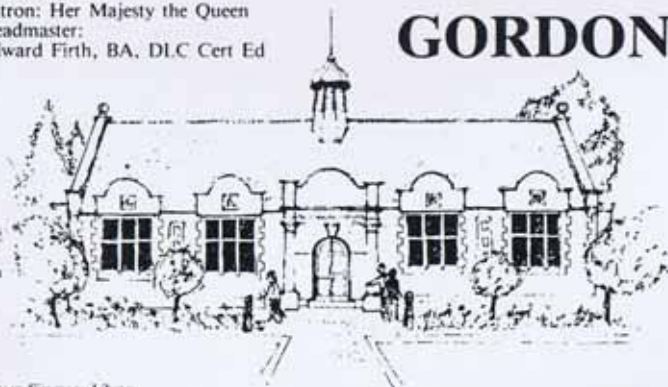
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now infamous episode of the equipment for Woking's voluntary fire brigade. The 1890's saw a good deal of acrimony between the brigade and their municipal overlords, chiefly over financial issues and in particular over the Council's unwillingness to purchase a steam-driven fire engine. The authority had much cause to rue its reluctance in 1899, when a fire gutted the then Council offices at the junction of The Broadway and Chertsey Road (see page 25).

The first expansion of the new Council took place in 1907 with the addition of the parish of Horsell. Horsell, like Pyrford and Byfleet, had been accommodated into Chertsey Rural District Council (RDC), an oddly dispersed authority. There were logical links between Woking and Horsell which were growing towards each other in any case. The Parish Council were finally wooed into unification with the tempting offer of connection with Woking's sewerage system. Feelings were further soothed by Horsell receiving four seats on the Council, as this was double the representation the village had on Chertsey RDC. A short time after, the Rural Council's difficulties encouraged Byfleet to make a bid for Urban District Council status in its own right involving a merger with Pyrford parish. The move was, however, vetoed by Surrey County Council as not viable.



Local government, Woking area 1900-07

In the following period, the expanded Woking UDC broadened its range of interests and services until the First World War broke out. As well as continuing to make progress on areas such as highways, sewerage and refuse collection, the Council moved into new fields like Town Planning, Leisure and Housing. The early twentieth century saw a boom in the legislative powers for Local Authorities, although they grew increasingly dependent on Westminster and Whitehall to exercise and fund these.

Nonetheless, Woking's first Library was opened in 1929, and the first Council house to be occupied was in 1920. Housing problems at this time have a familiar ring to them – there was too little stock for the level of demand in the community, and the Council's flexibility was further reduced by Central Government controls on the number of houses that Local Authorities could build. Nevertheless, and despite a growing waiting list, the Council built 785 houses between 1919 and 1936. Town Planning at this time was an even more tortuous process, with Woking in theory working with its neighbours in the county on a comprehensive regional plan. In the event, this was not adopted until 1938, and was then promptly nullified by the outbreak of the Second World War.

On the leisure front, the Council gained in 1902 the land that 25 years later was to form Woking Park. The sporting facilities were greatly improved and the adjoining refuse tip was landscaped over to provide welcome amenity land. This example was followed at other sites, and the 20's and 30's heralded many of the present recreation grounds. An outdoor swimming pool was added in 1932, the option of a heated indoor pool having been rejected as too costly!



PUTTING GREEN, THE PARK, WOKING.

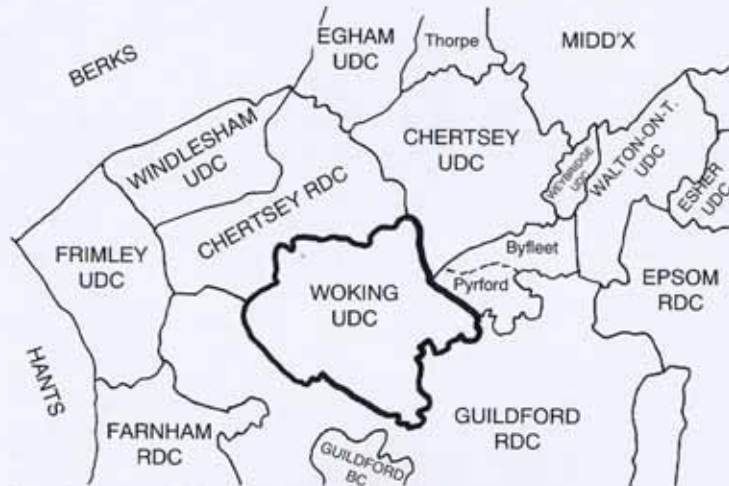
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Woking Park, laid out by the council in 1902

More widely, boundary issues were a large bone of contention after the Local Government Act 1929, which amongst other changes called for an end to the former Rural District Councils. All of the existing Surrey urban authorities cast covetous eyes at the villages and parishes on their borders. Woking UDC was keen to absorb Bisley, Send, Pirbright, Ripley, Pyrford and Woodham, but ironically not West Byfleet or Byfleet which form an important part of our present day Borough. In the event Surrey County Council had to resolve a multitude of claims and counter claims, and one of the compromises ended with an expanded Woking swallowing Pyrford parish, most of Byfleet parish and small tracts of Bisley and Woodham. Since that time, with the exception of an addition of 14½ acres around Byfleet Mill in 1936 (just three years after the reforms), Woking's boundaries have remained unchanged. This forms a stark contrast to most of its neighbours, who were greatly changed by the major reorganisation in 1974.

To further enhance its enlarged status, the Council pressed and petitioned the Crown for Borough status (amongst other things this enables a Local Authority to elect its own Mayor). In fact despite periodic lobbying, Borough status was not achieved until the wider reforms of 1974 had taken place. Politics on the

Council in its earliest days were divided between the vested interests of town against country. By the 1930's, however, today's political parties were competing for seats in the Council Chamber. The first female Councillor (Lady Betty Balfour) was elected in 1919, while those who enjoy stereotyping Surrey



*Local government, Woking area 1909-33*

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as a stockbroker belt will be disturbed to discover that a Communist Councillor was once elected!

Since the Second World War, Woking Council has overseen the town and area's rapid expansion and redevelopment. The first new growth in the 1950's saw the construction of the Sheerwater estate by London County Council, to house some of the capital's overspill population. This estate did not fall under Woking Council control until 1980.

More broadly, development was constrained by tighter controls to protect the remaining common land and the green belt. Nonetheless there have been some notable developments – in housing terms this reached its zenith with the Goldsworth Park estate on former nursery garden land. The venture was a joint one between the Council and Ideal Homes, and a number of properties are owned by the Borough, including the large Lakeview estate (formerly known as Bullbeggars). Since the 1968 Town Planning Act, the Council has designated some of

the oldest and prettiest areas of the Borough as Conservation areas. This status provides greater powers to protect the preserve properties and local character – Old Woking was the first beneficiary in 1975, with Pyrford a close second. The Council's own home building efforts

over recent years have been hampered by economic factors, and have focused on providing suitable accommodation for the increasing elderly population. Special day care facilities have also been provided, including the popular St. Mary's Day Centre at Byfleet.



*Part of Goldsworth Park under construction – c. 1980*

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More significant (and controversial) changes have taken place in Woking town centre. The Council's original aims for the works which began in the 1960's were to improve shopping and office facilities, reorganise the highway network and to create a more pleasant environment. The project's starting point was the demolition of the residential properties in the central area in the sixties. Offices prospered as Woking's lower business rates encouraged major companies to relocate from Central London – this has helped create the buoyancy of the local economy, although traditionalists bemoan the impact on Woking's skyline. A modern shopping precinct was opened in the heart of the centre, and a new Civic Offices suite was opened by the Duke of Gloucester in 1983. Leisure facilities were not forgotten in this process – a heated indoor swimming pool finally arrived in 1973, and the multi-purpose Central Halls and Rhoda McGaw theatre were also built to host a range of arts and entertainments.

This progress itself is in the course of change at the time of writing, with the exciting Peacocks development under construction. This is being funded by London and Edinburgh Trust, on land made available by the Council on the former Central Halls and pool site with a new range of shopping and leisure facilities that should enable Woking to compete on equal terms with rival town centre complexes. These developments continue to prompt a lively local debate, although only our successors with the glorious benefit of hindsight will be in a position to judge the matter – just as we are now able to give firm opinions on the necessity of investing in roads which were properly levelled and surfaced.

This brings us rather neatly to the conclusion that even a very short history of local government in Woking (such as this) provides us with insights into how and why the Borough has developed as it has. The modern-day Council official recognises the long history of contemporary issues and problems, such as the struggle to balance the

competing demands of development and conservation, the inexorable pace of housing demand versus supply, the imposition of restraints by Central Government and numerous other examples. Similarly, today's Councillor will be resigned to the number and length of Committee meetings and the problems of trying to represent as many shades of opinion as there are people in the Borough.

In the final analysis we find Local Government's perpetual dilemma of just how much public money can be justifiably invested in local services

which benefit the public. That fundamental issue is as relevant for public servants today as it was for those in the 1890's, as they agonised over the benefits that a steam-driven fire engine would confer.

The chief works consulted for this article were:

- Byrne, Tony "Local Government in Britain" Penguin 1985
- Crosby, Alan "A History of Woking" Phillimore 1982
- Official Guides and Annual Reports produced by Woking Borough Council.



Woking Council Offices, as seen from Chobham Road, under construction in 1983



Local government, Woking area today



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## A LOOK AT GOLDSWORTH

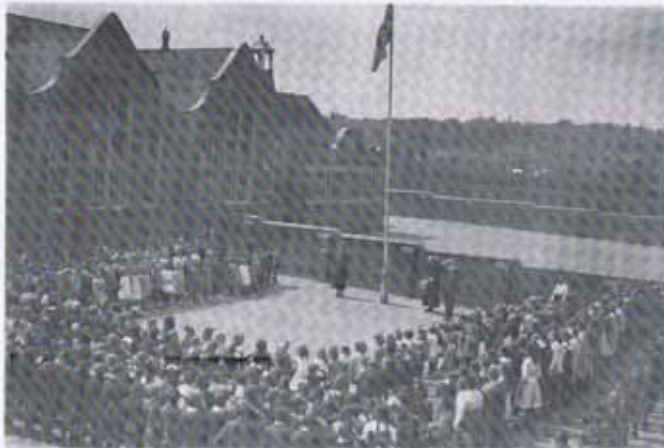
Goldsworth, as a name, goes back to the early 13th century when it was recorded as 'La Goldhorde'. This hoard of gold (possibly buried Roman coins) must have been discovered some time before 1229 and was sufficiently memorable to have given its name to the district. Goldings was one of the tithings of Woking and the road itself appears to have originally linked the ancient squatter settlements around Heathside and Bunkers Hill (Maybury Hill), with the outlying settlements at 'La Cnappe' (Knaphill) and 'Brocwude' (Brookwod). The original road (before the railway was built in 1838), crossed Woking Heath via what is now known as Poole Road, through Bradfield Close, to the Sovereigns Public House and Harris Lane (now called Heathside Road). The part of Goldsworth Road from the Goldsworth Arms to Victoria Arch was only built in 1838 to avoid having to construct another tunnel under the railway!

As part of Woking Heath, much of the Goldsworth Road area near the town centre was acquired by the London Necropolis Co. (just like Maybury Road – as reported in the last issue), and sold for development after 1855. However, there were some small farms in the district – Vale Farm and Oaks Farm – and towards the St. John's end of the road the famous Goldsworth Nursery of



Robert Donald, later Slococks. The owners of these farms (and later the nursery) 'cashed in' on the town's growth and sold their land for development too. But because the ancient road wound its way between the railway and the canal, each parcel of land was small and unconnected to the rest. As a result piecemeal development took place, with five separate areas of growth:

1. Poole Road, Snelgar Road, Cherry Street.
2. Vale Farm Road, Oaks Road.
3. Mable Street, Wilfred Street.
4. Royal Oak Road, Elm Road, Kingsway.
5. Silversmith Way, Goldsmith Way.





The Basingstoke Canal (top right) is once again full of water, but this tranquil country scene has been lost forever as the 'ferry' has been replaced by Parley Drive Bridge! The House-boats would be just behind the photographer.

Our last photograph – straight from the family album – shows the V.E. Day celebrations in Cherry Street, including amongst the ranks (somewhere) members of the Wakeford households of 1945. The same view today would show Woking Dyeline's warehouse in the background and Pain's building on the right! Goldsworth has certainly changed over the years!

The photograph above shows part of Goldsworth Road near its junction with Church Street. The shops on the right are still standing (just)! Perrings used to occupy the building with the writing on the side and Ashplants Toy Shop was in the single storey building to its right. Phillips Court, would now be on the left of the road.

The picture of Goldsworth School (bottom left), is an interesting one, with a large crowd of pupils on parade in one of the playgrounds. Most of the boys and school-masters seem to be saluting, but why? Has anybody any idea what the special occasion was?

The view above, of Goldsworth Road near The Triangle, has not altered a great deal. Behind the green on the left would now be Goldsmith Way and in the distance you would see the mini-roundabout at the entrance to Bridge Barn Lane, but the

houses on the right all remain. The traffic, on the other hand, has increased slightly over the years!



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## WOKING PEOPLE IN THE PAST

by  
*Robert J. Mesley,*  
Chairman of the  
West Surrey  
Family History Society

The history of a town or village is essentially the history of its people, but published histories all too often confine themselves to the landed gentry, with an occasional mention of the clergy. The reason is obvious – these are the people who left documentary records of their own activities.

However, almost everyone who lived in a parish gets a mention in the parish records, even if it is only the dates of their baptism, marriage and burial. These tell you little about the people concerned, though the registers of St. Peter's Woking (now deposited in Guildford Muniment Room) are better than most. Thus for much of the 18th century the register of baptisms records the occupation of the father and the tithing in which he lived.

Some insight into the lives they led and the contents of their houses is provided by wills, left by many yeomen and husbandmen and some tradesmen and craftsmen. For example, Richard Hayward, a carpenter of Hale End, whose will was proved in Surrey Commissary Court in 1731, left to his wife Elizabeth two feather beds with pillows and bolsters, six pairs of sheets, a chest, a chest of drawers, an oaken box, four pewter dishes, a brass pot, a skillet and a warming pan, as well as admitting her to his copyhold lands in the Manor of Sutton.

Where an inventory survives, it may tell something more about the testator's house as well as its contents. Thus Richard's brother Thomas Hayward, another carpenter of Kingfield, died a year earlier, his will being proved in the Surrey Archdeaconry Court in 1730. Filed with the will in the Greater London Record Office is an inventory of all his movable property (see Panel 1). The will itself deals mainly with various parcels of land, suggesting that Thomas was a husbandman as well as a carpenter, and this is borne out by the list of agricultural produce in the inventory. The will also refers to beds in the chamber over the parlour and the chamber over the milkhouse, so with the list of rooms and their contents in the inventory one can almost imagine the layout of the house.

This sort of thing is fascinating when you find it, but what of the peasants, the labourers in the fields? These people no doubt did their best to avoid appearing in any official records, but there is a good deal to be found in documents relating to the operation of the Poor Law, and those which survive for the parish of Woking can be found in the Surrey Record Office at Kingston.

The Poor Law of 1601 laid a duty on churchwardens and overseers of the poor to maintain the poor of their parish, with funds levied by a rate payable by all inhabitants (except, of course, the poor themselves). Parishes soon encountered problems deciding which paupers they had to maintain, and they were naturally reluctant to help those which came from outside their parish. From 1662 the concept of settlement was introduced, whereby each person was deemed to be settled in a particular parish, which would be responsible for his or her relief should the need arise. Settlement was normally obtained by inheritance, tenure of property, residence in the parish, apprenticeship to a parishioner or service as a servant to a parishioner for a year.

Parish authorities were anxious to control employment of people from other parishes, and from 1697 such people were required to bring certificates from their parish of settlement, to which they could be removed if they fell in need of relief. 65 settlement certificates survive in the Woking documents for the period 1698 to 1796, giving the names of the people concerned and in some cases names and ages of their children. The distribution is of interest: of those from adjacent parishes, ten came from Worplesdon and nine from Horsell, with three each from Chertsey and Pirbright, but only one each from Bisley and Send and none from Pyrford. Nine were from outside

Surrey, of which the most distant was Thornbury in Gloucestershire.

Allied to settlement certificates are removal orders of persons sent back from Woking to their place of settlement, or in some cases returned to Woking from elsewhere. In particular there are several orders for removal of vagrants who had settlement in Woking and had been apprehended elsewhere. For example, Catherine Williams, a widow with three children, was apprehended in St. George Southwark in 1752; on examination she said that her deceased husband had been a house servant to Edward Hughes, a miller of Woking, so the family were returned to Woking.

Another returned to Woking was Mary Cumber, who was apprehended in 1804 in Wymering and Fareham, Hants, and imprisoned in Gosport Bridewell; she had been born in Woking and had been house servant to Mr. Ride of Woking Mill for 12 months at £4 per annum. An interesting example concerned the family of Michael Matthew, a native of New York, who had no settlement in England. His wife Elizabeth and two children were ordered in 1807 to be removed from Woking to her birthplace, Lydiard Tregoze in Wiltshire.

Interesting as these documents may be, they do not relate to permanent residents of Woking. Of more local interest are those records relating to bastardy. Legitimate children were deemed to be settled in their father's place of settlement or, failing that, as in the case above, the mother's. Illegitimate children had no such rights of settlement and could therefore become a charge on the parish where they were born. Parish officials often went to great lengths to prevent this happening, for example by removing pregnant girls from the parish before the child was born. Where the mother had settlement in the parish they would try to identify the father and make him liable for the child. If he was a person of some substance he might be persuaded to enter in to a bond to indemnify the parish for the child's upkeep.

*Inventory of the goods of Thomas Hayward,  
late carpenter of Woking  
taken by John Vincent and John Tickner 8 September 1730.*

	<i>£</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>d</i>
<i>Wearing apparel and money in purse</i>	5	0	0
<i>In the kitchen:</i>			
<i>1 table, 1 jack lines and weight, 5 pewter dishes, 12 pewter plates, 6 chairs, 1 warming pan and other furniture</i>	4	0	0
<i>In the parlour:</i>			
<i>1 table and other things</i>	1	0	0
<i>In the milkhouse:</i>			
<i>1 brass kettle, 5 pewter dishes and other things</i>	2	0	0
<i>In the washhouse:</i>			
<i>1 furnace, 1 kettle, 1 boiling pot and other things</i>	1	10	0
<i>In another room:</i>			
<i>4 drink tubs, a cheese press and other things</i>	0	15	0
<i>In the best chamber:</i>			
<i>1 bed and furnishings, 1 chest of drawers, 12 pair of sheets and other things</i>	0	0	0
<i>In the other chamber:</i>			
<i>1 chest, 2 sacks of rye</i>	1	0	0
<i>In the cheese chamber:</i>			
<i>6 bushels of wheat, 6 bushels of rye, 7 sacks and cheeses</i>	5	0	0
<i>In the shop:</i>			
<i>Planks, boards, working tools etc</i>	4	0	0
<i>1 cow and horse</i>	3	10	0
<i>1 hog and 2 pigs</i>	3	5	0
<i>Corn in the barn: wheat</i>	2	10	0
<i>rye</i>	1	4	0
<i>barley</i>	7	0	0
<i>10 bushels of pease</i>	1	0	0
<i>6 loads of hay</i>	0	0	0
<i>In the field 3 acres of (. . .) wheat</i>	2	0	0
<i>In the gale dung</i>	1	12	0
<i>Debts owing to deceased</i>	10	0	0
<i>TOTAL</i>	71	12	0

Panel 1. *Inventory of goods of Thomas Hayward*

The Woking records include 29 bastardy bonds dated between 1723 and 1812 and also 11 bastardy maintenance orders imposed by officials on less well-to-do fathers between 1807 and 1822. Bastardy bonds are normally signed by the father and often by a second

bondsman, and the majority of the signatories were local yeomen. One can only speculate on the circumstances in which they got the girls pregnant, but one would suspect that the mothers were often servants employed in their households.

Bastardy bonds, like other poor law documents, are also signed by churchwardens and overseers of the poor, and sometimes by additional witnesses. They are essentially legal documents committing specific sums of money (the going rate was usually £40 or £50 in the earlier years, but by 1800 they were often for £100), and there may have been no great moral stigma attached to them. Thus in 1774 Jesse Waterer signed two such bonds as churchwarden, while at the same time he was fathering a bastard himself by Ann Norgrove, for which he entered a bond of £40 in 1775 (he had previously given a bond in 1770 for a child of Sarah Slaughter).

One interesting bond of 1745 was signed by John Smith senior of Lambeth, a farmer then dwelling in Coldharbour Lane near Camberwell, who gave a bond of £100 re Frances Wells, a spinster pregnant by Smith's son James. It is difficult now to imagine anyone farming in Lambeth or Camberwell.

The bastardy maintenance orders are all against labourers, who were usually ordered to pay two shillings per week (with an additional shilling to be paid by the mother) as well as the costs of the filiation order, usually eleven shillings. At this time the standard agricultural wage was no more (and probably less) than ten shillings per week.

The 40 bastardy documents, spread over 100 years, represent only a quarter of the illegitimate births in Woking, of which the baptism register records about 160 during this period. Presumably less formal arrangements were reached for the support of the others if they survived beyond infancy.

**Panel 2. List of inhabitants of Woking's Workhouse on 5th November 1801**

The documents also give an indication of the families of yeomen and husbandmen who were called upon to carry out the sometimes onerous duties of churchwardens and overseers of the poor. Among familiar local names which keep recurring are Waterer, Fenn, Garment, Kemp, Baker, Stevens, Collyer, Bonsey, Vincent and Trigg. These were the people on whom the whole burden of poor law administration fell.

Also included in the parish documents are lists of all those, mostly widows and orphans, who received parish relief between 1662 and 1680. The 1662 document, in particular, names those who received relief for looking after orphans: Katherine Richbell was kept by Samuel Heath, while her sister Penelope was cared for by John Trigge; John Keene was paid for looking after George Cobbett while William Synacle received payment for Ann Purdham. Altogether 25 paupers were supported in 1662, but by 1680 the number was down to 10. In later years paupers were put into the workhouse instead of being supported in their homes, and a list survives (see Panel 2) of all those in the workhouse on 5 November 1801. Of the 33 names six were men aged between 67 and 83 and most of the other were families who had probably lost one parent.

I am grateful to Cliff Webb for providing transcripts of many of the documents mentioned above.

*List of paupers in Woking workhouse on 5 November 1801 (SRO ref: P52/7/229)*

<i>Henry Collyer</i>	83
<i>Richard Stedman</i>	72
<i>Charles Callsay</i>	07
<i>John Collins</i>	72
<i>James Tiggner</i>	75
<i>William Wells</i>	72
<i>George Shurrog</i>	30
<i>John Hall</i>	25
<i>John King</i>	24
<i>William Rose</i>	17
<i>Richard Gravatt</i>	10
<i>Thomas Johnson</i>	10
<i>George Johnson</i>	14
<i>James Jolley</i>	15
<i>Matthew Phillips</i>	12
<i>James Wells</i>	9
<i>William Wells</i>	7
<i>John Donor</i>	8
<i>William Smith</i>	4
<i>Lucy Wells</i>	13
<i>Sarah Wells</i>	13
<i>Elizabeth Wells</i>	11
<i>Molly Wells</i>	4
<i>Olave Stedman</i>	0
<i>Catherine Davis</i>	5
<i>Sarah Smith</i>	0
<i>Elizabeth Smith</i>	0
<i>Ann Smith</i>	1
<i>Sarah Wells</i>	50
<i>Ann Phillips</i>	30
<i>Mary Stidman</i>	35
<i>Elizabeth Smotter</i>	54
<i>Elizabeth Smith</i>	20



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## TWO PUPIL TEACHERS OF ST JOHNS IN THE LATE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

by  
*Valerie Keary*

While researching the history of St. John's School, Woking, it became clear that the pupil teacher played an important role in the life of the school. I decided to follow the careers of two – one who became a successful teacher and one who had problems with her studies.

Here then are the stories of Charlotte and Clara as told in the pages of the school log books and the census return in the Surrey Room of Guildford Library.

One cold February day, three teenagers met in an empty classroom for a chat. They should not have been there, they should have been watching the children who had been kept in from play to re-do their lessons. But Charlotte (15), Jessie (17) and William (16) were "gossiping". They were not prepared for the anger shown by their normally friendly Headmaster when he found them. He had occasion to reprimand them for this only a short while beforehand and they were later amazed to learn that he had written in the log book recording their negligence.

In February 1880, Robert Howson had a lot to worry about. The state of the school building was causing so much concern to the Inspectors that they had refused to pay the grant for that year. During one of the coldest months on record, the schoolroom had been bitterly cold with an average temperature of 39.5°F. Even his wife was wearing her cloak to teach in and her pupils, 'the babies', could not hold their slate pencils their fingers were so cold. His pupil teachers were not working as well as he would have wished – Charlotte's needlework, a subject she was particularly good at, was behindhand and so were Jessie's History and Geography. It was his responsibility to teach them, in fact, part of his salary was dependent on them passing their examinations and so he was anxious for them to succeed.

Luckily, in the middle of March, news came that the Inspectors had relented and the grant would be paid. Not only that, but his Parchment Certificate was upgraded from the second to the first grade. He must have gone off to the National Union of Elementary Teachers' Conference at Brighton two weeks later in a much more cheerful frame of mind.

These three young people were all pupil teachers. The scheme for training young teachers had been introduced in 1846 to replace the inadequate monitorial system. Certain promising students could be articled at the age of 13 to schools which satisfied the requirements of the Council of the Committee of Education. A formal "Memorandum of Agreement" needed to be signed by the parents of the child, the Board representative and the Headteacher. The young teachers were paid a small salary during their apprenticeship which was originally 5 years but by the time Charlotte and William became pupil teachers had reduced to four years. At the end of this time they could sit an examination for a Queen's Scholarship and, if they were successful, they, in theory, could go to a Normal School (Training College). Very few in fact did go even if they had successfully passed the Examination. This seems partly because of lack of places and partly because, although tuition and board were free, parents could not afford to support their children through the two years they were at College.

Charlotte Maria Stacey was the daughter of William and Ellen Stacey. The family had travelled widely. The eldest daughter, Amelia, had been born in Kent in 1858, Ellen in Mauritius in 1862, Charlotte in King Williams Town, South Africa on July 12th 1864 and young William at Dover on June 29th 1866. At the age of 43, William Stacey was appointed Clerk of the Works at Woking Prison and it was here that his fourth daughter, Annie was born in 1869. Charlotte was admitted to St. John's School on April 26th 1871 when she was six years old. About this time Amelia was engaged as a pupil teacher at the school. On September 15th 1875 nine year old William fell

and cut his leg on a scraper. He was so ill that Amelia was required to stay at home and nurse him. She was still to have "frequent leave" to attend to his "long and dangerous illness" two months later. William was well enough to return to school in May, eight months after the accident. Amelia finished her apprenticeship the following month and left St. John's to move on to another school.

In October of the same year, Charlotte and William Cook were in the top class and good pupils. When one of the pupil teachers was transferred to Westfield School, William took over as a paid monitor at the sum of 2/6 (12½p) per week to be paid by the Rev. Arnold (Correspondent to St. John's School). Mr. Howson "did not think it a good plan to keep a first class boy out of his class for a considerable time", so he arranged that William and Charlotte should share the class, changing every two weeks. On November 21st the school transferred to the Woking School Board and both youngsters were kept on as paid monitors with a salary of £5 a year. When they were accepted as pupil teachers they would be able to earn £15 (£10 for girls) increasing each year by £3 (£2.05 for girls). William had his indentures sealed in

November 1877, passed all his examinations well and qualified four years later. He left St. John's on March 31st 1882 "having successfully completed his apprenticeship" possibly to join the Civil Service whose entrance examination he had sat in February. He revisited his old school three years later.

Life was not so easy for Charlotte. Having decided to become a teacher she remained a paid monitor for a total of two years after which she was transferred to Maybury Board School in October 1878 returning to St. John's a year later as a pupil teacher. During her first year she had to study arithmetic, grammar, elementary geography, religious knowledge and needlework (being a girl) as well as being able to read fluently and write neatly. She started badly as we saw, neglecting her needlework. However after this lapse she worked well as a teacher during the day, completing her home lessons in the evening and attending her own lessons school in the winter and before school in the summer (7.00-8.00). It was hard work and a long day and by May she was far from well. "Charlotte Stacey has been working for a few days in the Infant Department in order to give her more rest as she is very unwell through outgrowing her strength". She was

nearly 16. Again in September she was poorly – an "affection of the heart" and was advised by a "Medical Man" to discontinue her lessons for a while. Between 1871 and 1881 Charlotte's mother, Ellen, died and her father married Euphemia. Was this the cause of her upset?

Nevertheless she was able to pass her examinations satisfactorily at the end of the year. The written part of the examination was taken in October or November at a test centre which was usually Maybury Board School or Holy Trinity School, Guildford (now the Teachers' Centre). The practical part which included repetition, "critical lessons" and needlework, were demonstrated in front of the Inspectors when they came for their annual inspection a few weeks later. In her second year, knitting and history were added to her list of subjects. Had she been a boy she would not have had to knit or sew but could have studied mechanics, decimal arithmetic, mensuration, surveying and algebra. (Girls were not supposed to do mathematics!)

She might have been confirmed the following year when all the children had a holiday to attend the pupil teachers' confirmation at St. Peter's Church. But in March we read that

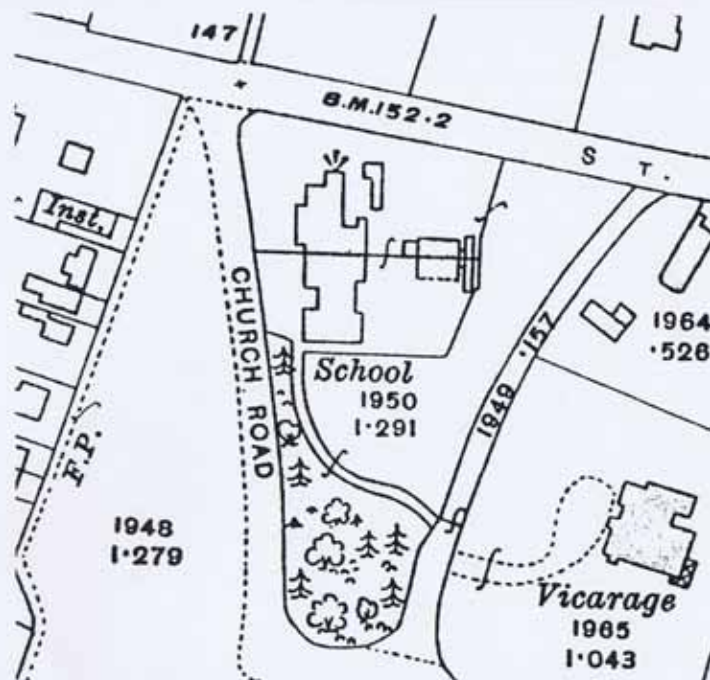


Group of children at St Johns School – date unknown!

she was away on account of her sister's death. We do not know which sister it was. Amelia had probably left home to teach so it might have been Ellen (19) or Annie (12). Whoever it was, the family left St. John's soon afterwards and moved to Almondsbury in Gloucestershire. As Patchway Prison is nearby it seems possible that Mr. Stacey obtained a post there. Charlotte completed her apprenticeship on October 31st 1882 and the Inspectors' Report of December 16th stated she was qualified under both Articles 60 and 79. She left on December 19th "to go home" to rejoin her family. She had obtained a post at Patchway N. School.

However, it seems that she was not happy there and declined the post. News of this reached St. John's where Mr. Howson was very short staffed and the School Board wrote on January 9th 1883 offering her a post as assistant Mistress. Charlotte returned and on January 15th resumed her work as teacher of Standard V (the 10 year-olds). Her appointment was confirmed by the School Board in February with a salary of £35 per annum. The following June she was summoned home to Patchway as one of her sisters was ill. Unfortunately Charlotte did not arrive in time and her sister was dead when she reached home. She stayed with her family for a week. Mrs. Howson, the Infants teacher, wrote, "the shock of her sudden death has quite upset Miss Stacey and she is not fit to come back to duty yet." This was quite understandable as she had lost two sisters in just over two years.

At the end of 1884 she was allowed time off from her work to study and on December 15th she sat the examination for her teacher's certificate at South Kensington. She heard the following March that she had obtained a second class pass. She received her Parchment Certificate later in the year. On December 8th 1886 the Woking School Board presented her with a 'testimonial' (reference) and on Christmas Eve Charlotte said 'Good-bye' to the children and her colleagues and disappears from our records.



*St John's School buildings on the corner of Church Road and St Johns Hill Road*

Charlotte Stacey was evidently an intelligent girl well able to cope with the hard work that was needed to pass examinations. Some pupil teachers found the academic aspect of their studies very difficult and possibly somewhat irrelevant if they were working with 3-6 year old babies in the Infants School. Certainly Miss Clara Flux did! She seems to have been a sympathetic teacher of the young children but found history and geography a sore trial. She was sent to the Infants School as a monitress on probation on April 28th 1893. As her father was a warder at the prison we can assume they moved into the area about this time. It may be that they moved back into the area as three Flux children; Georgina, Harry and Susan were admitted in 1870 and these may have been Clara's older brother and sisters.

At first she helped with each class in turn except on Tuesdays and Thursdays when she assisted with the girls' needlework in the Mixed Department. She had barely settled in when there was an outbreak of scarlet fever and, in May, the school was closed for two weeks and again in

June for nearly four weeks. On July 6th the schools had a holiday for the wedding of Prince George and Princess Victoria Mary (the present Queen's grandparents). The Summer holiday was restricted to two weeks to make up time lost during the epidemic. School reassembled on August 21st and then Clara's problems really started.

The mistress, Mrs. Louisa Higham, faithfully records what happened. August 25th "The Monitress (C. Flux) is very backward with her lessons especially grammar and geography as she had never learnt any geography before she came here a few months ago. It is scarcely possible that she can get it up well before the examination in November as she did not even know the definitions. Her handwriting too is very indifferent and her style anything but neat. I have given her a copy book and tried to impress upon her the importance of working diligently if she wishes to pass as a candidate." Her wise words had their effect as the Inspectors' report for 1893 shows she passed and was classed as a pupil teacher (1st year).

The effort did not last long.

April 13th "The homework done by Clara Flux (PT) has been very unsatisfactory of late, here lessons especially the grammar exercises show great carelessness and all her work is wanting in neatness. I have spoken to her about it and pointed out how necessary it is for her to take more pains with her work."

April 27th "The 3rd class have progressed fairly in the elementary subjects but the teacher (C. Flux) has not an interesting way with her in Object lessons or varied occupations. I try to take these as much as possible myself."

September 4th "The 1st year PT (Clara Flux) appears to have forgotten all the Geography she ever knew. The ignorance she displayed in her lesson this morning is almost incredible. She could not tell me in what county London was, neither did she know in what part of England the cotton manufacture was carried on. She had no idea what country ships starting from Liverpool would probably be bound for, nor did she

know that by crossing the Atlantic Ocean we should get to America and in answer to the question 'Which Hemisphere do we live in?' she replied, 'The Western.' Her excuse is that she cannot remember geography. This is of course the result of her never having learnt that subject in going through the standards; this is the first year she has ever attempted to learn any and as she only learns it parrot-fashion, it is a hopeless task to get her to know the geography prescribed by the Code for the 1st year PTs. I am sorry as she is a very good girl and can do fairly well in Arithmetic and Grammar; but she has certainly mistaken her vocation as she has no aptitude either for learning or teaching."

Clara attended the PTs examination at Guildford on Saturday, October 13th and was examined in practical subjects in November by the Inspectors. She passed 'fairly' but was advised to attend to Geography and History. She must have taken the remarks to heart as she worked steadily, visited

children during a whooping cough epidemic and helped out in the Mixed School when they were short staffed. By the end of May it was clear that the Prison was finally closing down and her father would be leaving so she gave the Board six months notice. She left on November 27th 1895 when her notice expired. "The reason for her leaving is that her father who is a warder in H.M. Convict Prison, Woking has been removed to Aylesbury prison as the building is now to be used as a Barracks."

From July 1st 1895 instruction of pupil teachers was centralised at Goldsworth School and instruction was given in school time - one hour every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, and three hours on Saturday mornings. This must have made life easier for the Master and Mistress by reducing their teaching responsibilities and much less onerous for the young people; lessons from 7.00 till 8.00 in the morning must have been hard even in the summer.



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*The Troubled  
times of Woking's  
firefighters  
in the last  
century.*

## WOKING'S FIRE BRIGADE

*by Iain Wakeford*

In our Autumn 1990 edition we told the story of Woking's first firefighters and the Great Fire of 1870. Woking's own fire brigade had not been formed and the town relied on Guildford for its fire cover. By the early 1890's this was obviously a very unsatisfactory arrangement. The town of Woking, around the station, was developing rapidly and the need for a fire service of its own was expressed.



*Merryweather engine of the type ordered by the Council in 1895*

### THE TORCHLIGHT SOCIETY

The story of the formation of the brigade really begins with the formation of the 'Woking Torchlight Society', who organised Guy Fawkes' night processions through the streets of Woking. The first such event took place in 1888 with a bonfire being held at the Mount Hermon Estate. By the early 1890s the Torchlight Society's displays were 'the talk of West Surrey'.

One of the leading lights was Charles Sherlock. He suggested in 1892 that reserve funds should be used to purchase hose and hydrant equipment. This was agreed and with the committee acting as volunteer firemen the equipment was purchased. It was housed by Mr H.W. Gloster at his Chertsey Road premises.

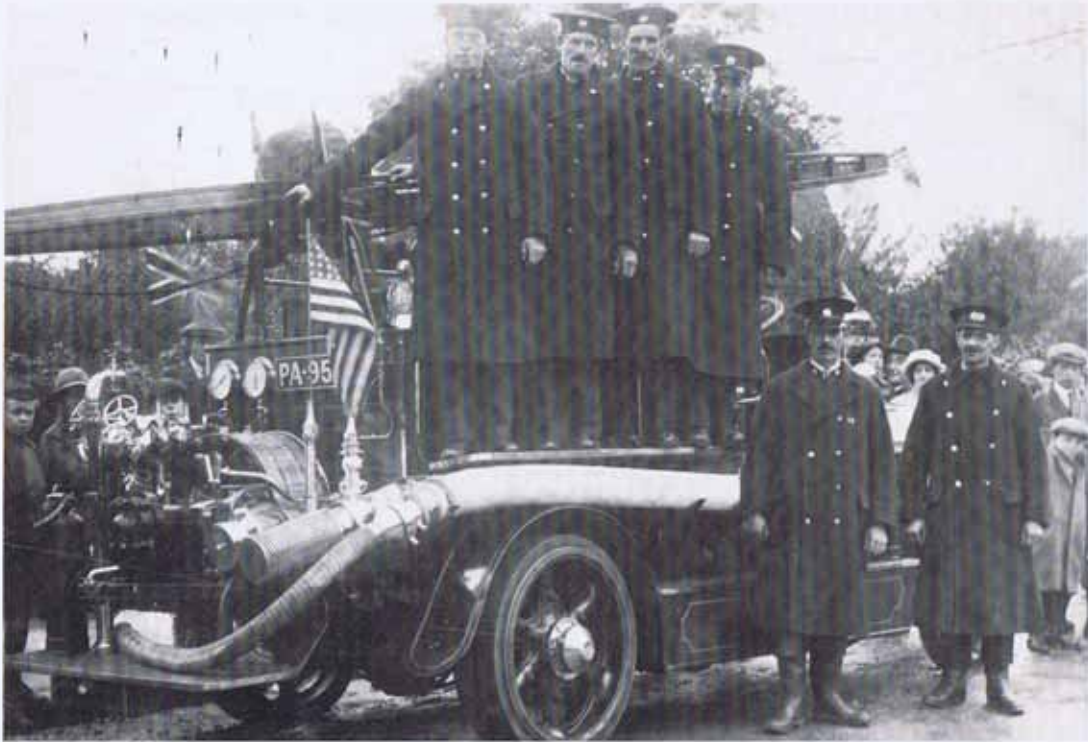
### WOKING LOCAL BOARD & THE FIRE BRIGADE COMMITTEE

When the Woking Local Board was formed in October 1893 a fire brigade committee was set up under the chairmanship of James Orlando Law. In May 1894 his committee recommended purchasing a steam powered fire engine, hoses and

uniforms so that brigades could be formed "in the four urban wards" of the district. But this proposal was rejected by the full Board in August 1894.

In January 1895 the Local Board became the Woking Urban District Council and in May 1895 the new council provisionally ordered an engine from Merryweathers. The vote split the council – who were as indecisive as they have ever been – and in October 1895 when the tender came up for formal acceptance it was rejected in favour of spending just £300 on various items, including four jumping sheets, four 35ft ladders, seventeen lengths of 40ft leather hose, and some short ladders. These were to be deployed amongst the four sites chosen at Chertsey Road, Woking; Kiln Bridge, St. Johns; High Street, Knaphill; and Hipley Bridge, Old Woking.

Mr Sherlock became the captain of the central brigade, with Supt. Henry Quartermaine and four other men making up the total force for the town centre. At the other three sites there were four men each. The foremen being Mr G.A. Jackson (St. Johns), Mr J.W. Grantham (Village), and Mr A. Gunner (Knaphill).



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Left: *Woking Fire Brigade*

### FIRST PARADE & FIRE

The new council funded volunteer fire brigade first appeared in public on the 5th November 1895 at the Torchlight Society's Carnival, and their first fire occurred a month later at some stables behind a grocery shop in Goldsworth Road. Fortunately for the owner, Mr Sheppard, the hoses bought in October for all the branches of the brigade had not been distributed, as without the use of them all the Central division could not have coped. This serious lack of equipment was partially remedied by the council, who immediately ordered additional canvas hoses. But this was still not enough and Captain Sherlock suggested that the only solution was to buy a steam powered fire engine, similar to the one ordered in May. Unfortunately the chairman of the first brigade committee, Councillor Kitteridge of St. Johns, opposed all council spending and in August 1877 dismissed a petition from the entire brigade for an engine.

### PUBLIC OUTCRY

In October 1897 there were three fires in the space of one week. The brigade could not hope to cope and in November after further unsuccessful attempts to persuade the council to buy an engine, Captain Sherlock and seventeen of his men resigned in protest. Woking was left to rely on the Guildford Brigade again.

The Clerk to the council, Robert Mossop, managed to persuade the crews to return. But with no signs of the council buying an engine, plus the fact that the fire brigade committee publicly reprimanded the men, resulted in the Knaphill section again walking out – this time permanently.

There was public outcry. At a meeting on the 23rd December, residents demanded the council purchase an engine. At the same time they condemned the council's recent decision to spend ratepayers money on new council offices at a cost of £6,000. The engine would have only cost about £450.

The outcome of the meeting was that in the local elections of March 1898 several of the councillors opposed to the fire engine (but in favour of the offices) were not re-elected. The new council at its first meeting on the 11th May, voted to buy an engine from William Rose of

Manchester for £430. But things did not end there. A local government inquiry delayed the proceedings, so that by the time the council eventually confirmed their order in February 1899, the manufacturer had sold the Woking engine to Ipswich Corporation.

### THE GREAT FIRE OF 1899

The council's delay in receiving the engine had other consequences as well. On the 6th June 1899, two months before the engine arrived, Woking's Council Offices in Chertsey Road (above Ashby's Bank – later to become Barclays Bank) were destroyed by fire. The lack of brigade equipment was dramatically emphasized. From then on whenever the brigade asked for new equipment, they got new equipment, and when the council built their new offices (as they were now forced to do) they built the new fire station immediately behind them – on the site still occupied by the brigade today. The Council made certain that lightning would not strike twice – or at least if it did then the brigade would soon be on hand to put out the blaze.

*Woking Fire Brigade c.1924*



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