

The Necropolis Company.

One of the reasons the canal and railway were built across Woking Heath was that, as commonland, it was cheaper than farmland. Both companies required Acts of Parliament to allow for their construction, but the restriction that no commonland could be 'enclosed' without Parliamentary approval was not a problem for projects of their size. Included in their Acts were provisions for them to buy and enclose the commonland and allow for the construction of buildings.

The coming of the railway in particular gave the area quick and easy access to the capital, but with plenty of undeveloped land closer to London there was little incentive to develop this area during the 1830s or '40s. In any case, when it came to enclosing the land for development, the cost involved in promoting an Act of Enclosure was too prohibitive for most speculative builders and so by the 1850s Woking Heath was still unenclosed and undeveloped.

During the 1840s London was facing a serious problem. Its churchyards were becoming full and with a growing population (and a corresponding increase in the death rate) there were cases of bodies not being buried at sufficient depth, or semi-decomposed bodies being dug up to make way for fresh corpses. Water courses and wells were being contaminated, with the result that in the late 1840s there was a major cholera epidemic in the capital. Something had to be done to remove the problem, and in 1848 the Government set up the General Board of Health to review the situation.

In 1850 they came up with the Burials Act, which prohibited all further burials in London churchyards and allowed large cemeteries to be established away from the capital.

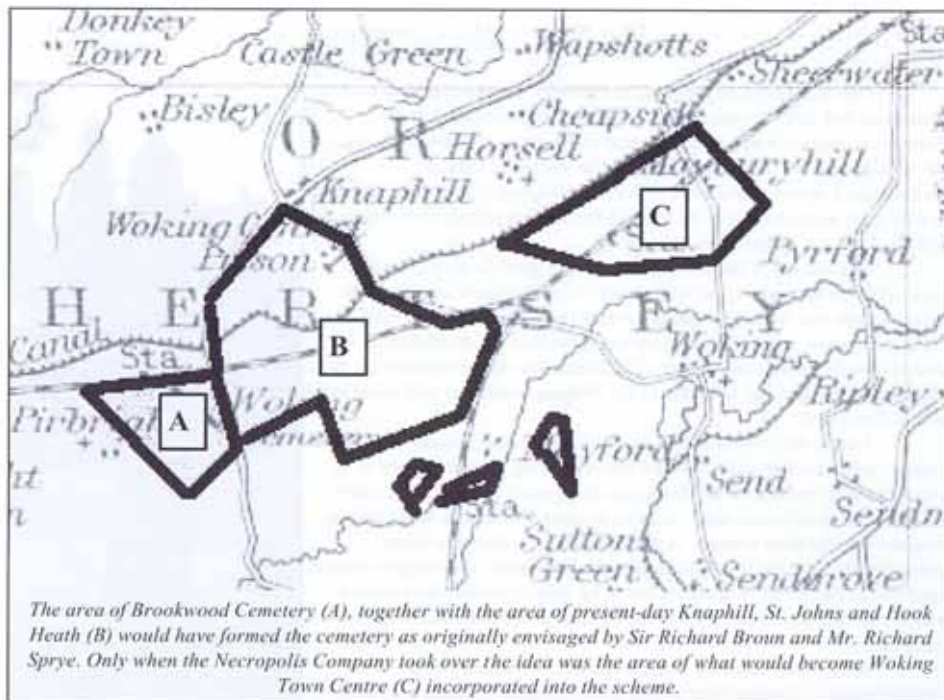
In the meantime, a gentleman called Dr. G.A. Walker suggested that London's dead could be transported by train away from the capital - far enough away that they would never be a health hazard. He suggested that a sparsely populated area with good communications to the capital should be used - an area that was of little use for anything else - an area like Woking Common.



Above – One of the pillars marking the plot of St. Anne's, Westminster, in the southern, Anglican, section.

Below – the cemetery soon after opening in 1854.





His idea was taken up by two other gentlemen, Sir Richard Broun and Mr. Richard Sprye. They devised the 'London Necropolis' (a city of the dead), covering the western part of Woking Common, where halts would be built beside the railway and chapels (of various denominations) dotted around the heathland for the services to take place. The bodies would be brought down to the morgue chapels during the 'dead of night', with the mourners coming on ordinary trains on the day of the funeral. By using the railway at off-peak times for the coffins they could negotiate a special cheap rate with the railway and therefore cut costs.

A Bill was placed before Parliament in 1850 to allow railway companies to purchase land and build cemeteries, but it was never passed. Then in 1851 a company called the London Necropolis & National Mausoleum Company was formed with the idea of promoting a scheme similar to Broun & Sprye's. Their Bill, in 1852, was to buy the whole of Woking Common (2,300 acres) - including the area around Woking Station, Maybury and Heathside - and to develop the whole as one 'national' cemetery.

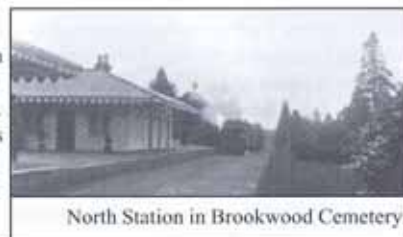


It must be said that there were doubts at the time over the Necropolis Company's intentions. At the second reading of their Bill on 27th February, 1852, the MP for this area, Mr. Henry Drummond, claimed that the Necropolis Company had calculated that 400 acres would be necessary for the purpose of the cemetery, and that they 'contemplated a direct fraud on the public'.

Left and right: the pillar in the southern, Anglican, section marking the site of the plot belonging to St. George the Martyr Church, Southwark.



With hindsight, many claim that the Necropolis Company was indeed a building company in disguise, but back in 1852 the Directors of the Necropolis Company did not have hindsight, and it was many years before any benefits came about. At the time of the Necropolis Company's plans there were serious problems in London. The Burials Act had closed nearly all the churchyards but provided no new space for burials. There were apparently serious proposals to make Woking one vast, national cemetery - not just the 'London Necropolis' but the 'National Mausoleum' Company as well. Woking was to be the 'dead centre of England'.



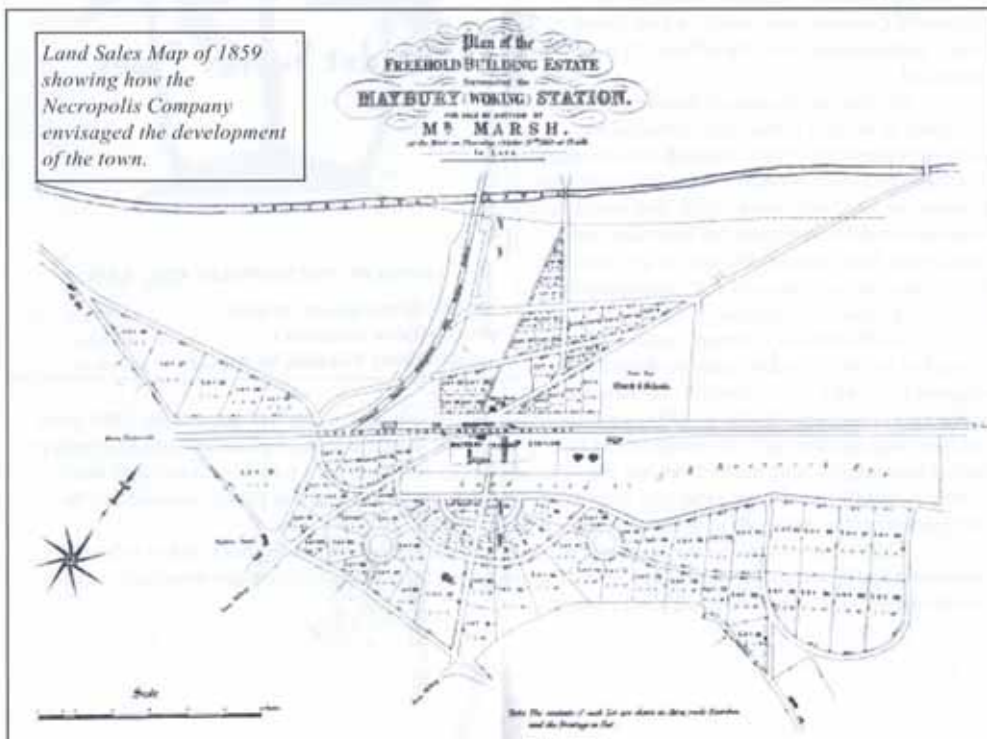
North Station in Brookwood Cemetery.

By the time the Bill reached its third and final reading in the Commons, several clauses had been attached (with the Company's approval) which prohibited, amongst other things, any development or sale of land without Parliament's permission. It should also be noted that by now Henry Drummond had declared his support for the scheme.

The Bill was passed by the Commons and with an easy ride through the Lords the Act received Royal Assent on 30th June 1852. In the meantime a provisional contract had been drawn up with Lord Onslow (the owner of the common) for 2,328 acres of land (costing £33,944) and talks about compensation for the loss of common-rights began with the local inhabitants. Compensation was finally agreed early in 1854 (costing the company £15,000) and in October the land was formally handed over to the Necropolis Company - although by then 60 acres had been excluded for the benefit of the villagers of the area, at what is now called St. Johns Lye.

Despite the purchase of 2,268 acres, however, the cemetery only covered 400 acres (another valuable argument for those with 'hindsight', bearing in mind Drummond's original claims). But what company doesn't take time to develop? - and by starting at the far western end they could, as the cemetery caught on, expand eastward with ease. In any case, in the Annual Report of the Company of 1856 it seems that it did not originally want to buy all the common but 'the purchase of this property [was] imposed by Parliament'.

Details of how the Necropolis operated are better covered in publications such as John Clarke's 'Brookwood Necropolis Railway' and leaflets by the Brookwood Cemetery Society (see further reading list at the back). The main point as far as our area is concerned began soon after the opening. In 1855 the company placed an Act before Parliament and received permission to sell 'surplus' land around Woking Station and Knaphill.



They were given only ten years to sell this land; and in anticipation of a new town growing up around Woking Common Station the Government insisted that five acres be set aside for a church, churchyard, parsonage house and a school for the poor of the area.

Land sales began almost immediately, but were very slow. Again from the Annual Report of 1856 it appears that the Company were well aware of the long-term value of the land. They refused to sell it for less than £100 per acre.

Most of the land sold was for two large institutions in the western part of the common (see chapter five), but even this only amounted to just over 200 acres. Business could hardly be described as brisk. In fact by October 1859, when the Company advertised its first major auction of land around Woking Station, very little land in the area had been sold. During 1859 almost 40 acres were bought by John Rastrick to the south of Woking Station and he apparently added a couple of acres during (or soon after) the sale.

For many years the Rastrick family were held responsible for the town being built on the 'wrong' side of the line. The main entrance to the station was to the south, but the town centre developed to the north. John Rastrick's son, George, was an eccentric gentleman, not at all popular with his fellow townsfolk. His refusal to sell his land immediately to the south of the station was seen by many as the cause for Woking's being sandwiched between the canal and the railway. But who sold the Rastricks the land in the first place?

The auction plan of 1859 shows not only Rastrick's land south of the railway but also the land allocated for the church and school. According to the 1855 Act, this land was to be approved by the Bishop of Winchester, but it is not clear whether he did actually approve of the land earmarked, as neither the church, parsonage nor school ended up where the plan had placed it. The site chosen by the Necropolis Company was roughly where Dukes Court, Wetherspoon's and the offices of Locke Way now stand.

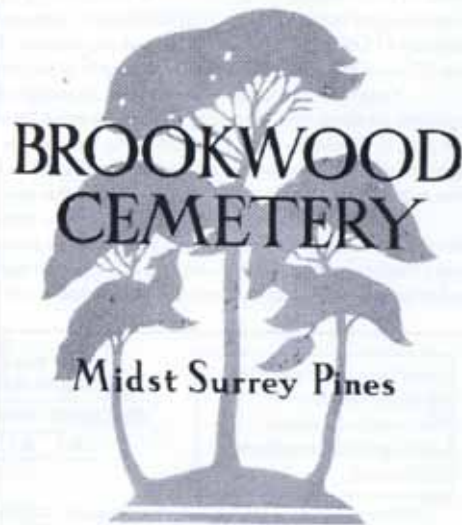
The fact that the church buildings were scheduled to be built to the north of the railway seems to suggest that this is where it was envisaged that the town would develop - on the low-lying area between the canal and railway. This land would have been hard to sell for anything but low-class and commercial development. The land to the south had good views, was well-drained and could easily be sold for high-class development.

The Necropolis Company had ten years to dispose of its land - it didn't matter to them who it was sold to, or what it was used for. To them the land was 'used' to make a profit! But by 1864, when the ten years were almost up, only 343 acres of the 1,868 acres had been sold, and then only for a total of £31,000. In 1864 they sought, and were given, an extra five years to market their surplus land, but by 1869 less than a hundred extra acres had been sold. It was not until after another Act of Parliament that same year that the time-limit on the sale of land was finally removed and the development of the new town of Woking could begin properly.

Chapter Six will look at the development from 1869, but first we shall take a brief look at some of the institutions that developed in the area in Victorian times, giving the Necropolis Company some hard-earned money and Woking a peculiar history and reputation.

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Victorian Institutions.

Some of the earliest land sales were to the west of Woking, around Knaphill. Although this is outside our area, their influence on the new town - its population and employment - was immense and the effect they had on Woking's reputation cannot be measured. In the 1880s and early '90s Woking was known as the home of 'the mad, the bad and the sad', not exactly the best advertisement for a new town!

The second of these (the bad) actually came first. In 1858 just over 64 acres were sold near Knaphill to the Home Office for the establishment of the Woking Invalid Convict Prison, the first prison to be built in this country specifically for disabled prisoners.

In the mid-1860s prison reform led to the separation of male and female prisoners, and in 1867 the site at Knaphill was chosen for a second, female, prison. By the mid-1880s, however, the prison population had declined and in 1886 a decision was made to phase out both prisons. The male prison closed in March 1889.

Meanwhile it was suggested that the buildings be turned into a barracks and in November 1889 ownership of the site was transferred to the War Department and Inkerman Barracks was formed. The female prison remained open until 1895, when it too was transferred to the War Department.



The Invalid Convict Prison, later Inkerman Barracks.



The Surrey County Pauper Lunatic Asylum – later renamed 'Brookwood Hospital' and now converted into apartments.

The barracks remained until the mid-1960s. The Inkerman Housing Estate now occupies the site.

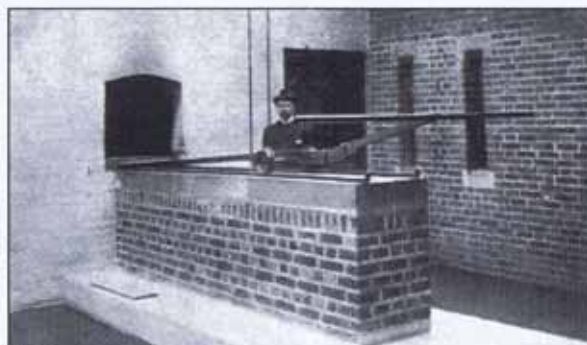
The other major institution near Knaphill began in 1860 when 150 acres of Necropolis land was sold to the Surrey County Justices. They established the 'Surrey County Pauper Lunatic Asylum' (later known as Brookwood Hospital), which opened in June 1867.

The Asylum was almost self-sufficient, with its own gas works, sewage farm and water supply. A farm provided not only food for the inmates but also therapy. There were also workshops making shoes and basket-ware, and even rug making.

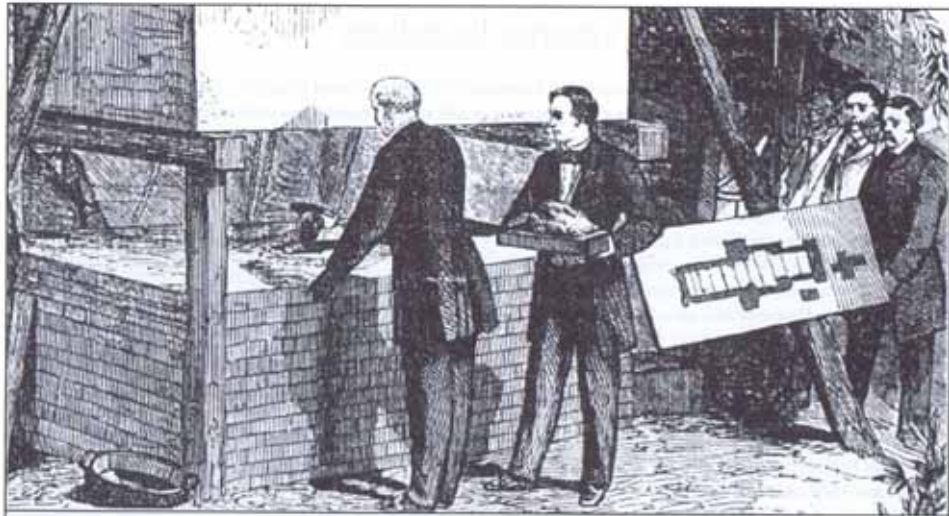
'The mad' had arrived!

As for the third category - 'the sad' - these not only visited Brookwood Cemetery (the largest cemetery in Britain), but from 1885 onwards could also be found at the Crematorium in St. Johns - the first Crematorium to be built in this country!

The Crematorium was not actually built on land owned by the Necropolis and despite the obvious connection between the two institutions they were completely separate. The Crematorium was built by the Cremation Society of England in 1879, but as the law regarding cremation was uncertain, it was not until 1884 that it could be carried out legally. The first cremation at Woking took place in March 1885, with a further two cremations taking place that year. After that, the numbers gradually increased (so taking trade away from the cemetery) until in the mid-1960s the annual number of cremations actually outnumbered burials.



A Victorian postcard of the first furnace at the Crematorium at St. Johns – not normally the sort of view you would expect to see with the words. 'Having a lovely time – wish you were here'!



The laying of the foundation stone of the Royal Dramatic College.

Back in the land of the living, and back to the area of the town centre, another large institution grew up on Necropolis land - this time in Maybury.

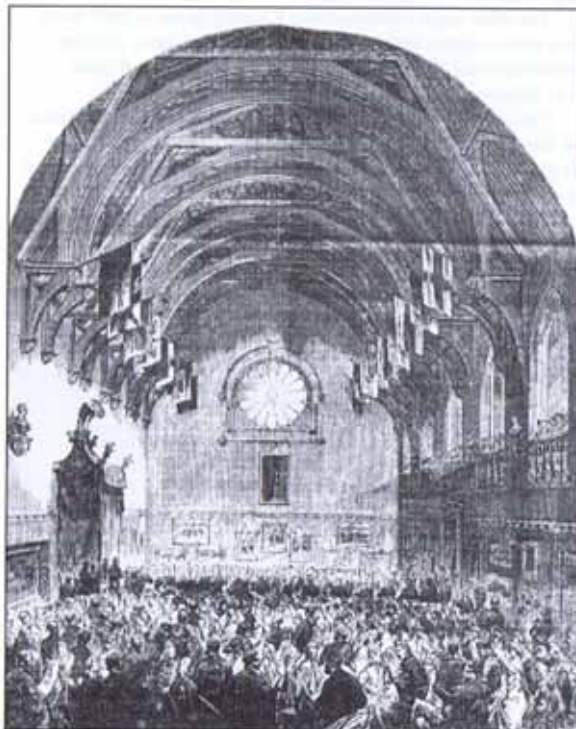
The Royal Dramatic College was designed to be a kind of 'fame-school', a centre for the dramatic arts, where retired actors and actresses would pass on their 'craft' to their younger pupils.

Charles Dickens and William Makepiece Thackeray were two of the trustees, whilst in 1858 Prince Albert conferred his patronage upon the plan. The land near the Maybury Arch was bought from the Necropolis Company in 1860 and on 1st June that year the Prince Consort came to Woking to lay the foundation stone for the new institution.

Unfortunately Prince Albert died in 1861, but in 1865, when the 'College' was officially opened, the ceremony was conducted by his son, Edward, Prince of Wales (whose interest in the theatre - and particularly actresses - is well known!).

The first 'retired' actors were actually admitted in September 1862 (*The Times* describing them as 'decaying actors and actresses') and it quickly became obvious that the idea of 'teaching' drama had been dropped. By the early 1870s the institution was in need of funds, and in 1877 it closed. The nearby College Road and the College Arms are reminders of the building.

The site was put up for auction in 1880 but did not reach its reserve price. A few days later it was sold privately to a property speculator who in 1884 re-sold it to a Hungarian gentleman by the name of Dr. Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner.

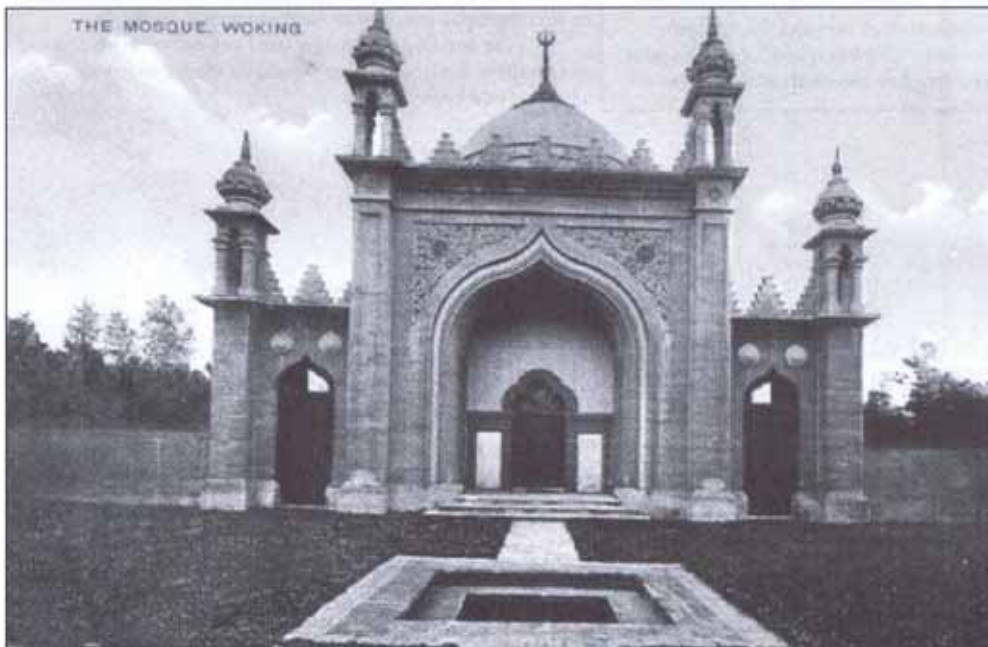


The Great Hall of the College at the opening ceremony.



Leitner wanted to establish an 'Oriental Institute', a type of 'university' teaching oriental language and culture to Europeans wishing to travel east. It also acted as a centre for Asians visiting Europe. By the late 1890s he was already awarding degrees at Woking on behalf of the University of Lahore. Woking was a "university town" long before Guildford!

He not only set up the Institute, but also established a museum of oriental art in the grounds and in 1889 built the Mosque - the first such building in this country.



Two postcards showing (top) the main buildings of the Oriental Institute and (below) the Mosque.

Unfortunately Leitner died only ten years later and with him died the Institute. The Mosque lived on - another unique feature of this truly unique town. Only the Mosque and the name 'Oriental Road' now remind us of Leitner's Institute.

The site was eventually used for various industries including Martinsyde's aircraft and motorcycle works, and after 1926 James Walker's 'Lion Works'. The original Royal Dramatic College building was demolished in the mid-1990s.



The St. Peter's Convent on Maybury Hill - now converted into apartments and renamed 'Oldfield Wood'. A new convent building has been built in the grounds.



The final institution to be built in the Maybury area during Victorian times was the St. Peter's Convent. Its impact on the area was not as great as those mentioned above, but it has left us with a Grade II listed building in the marvellous Byzantine-style chapel built in 1897-1901 to a design by J.L. Pearson.

The Convent itself was built in 1885 by the St. Peter's Sisterhood of Kilburn with money donated by Mr. Benjamin Lancaster - a London businessman who was a governor of St. George's Hospital. He had set up the original community in London in 1861 where discharged patients could convalesce, and the Woking home provided an ideal 'country' location.

The building is no longer used as a convent (a new one being built in the grounds) and the old buildings, have been converted into luxury homes.

Development of the New Town.

The development of the town after 1855 is complex. It began with the Necropolis Company selling land for development, but soon the local farmers surrounding the common caught on and either sold individual fields for development or in some cases their whole estate (farmhouse and all). Houses and shops were the best 'crop' they could have.

Over the next few years, much of the central area was built upon and the new town of Woking became established. Perhaps the best way to look at this early development is on a street-by-street, area-by-area basis, beginning with the Necropolis Company's land.

The Land Sales Map of 1859 shows just one building to the north of the railway - The Albion Hotel. The original hotel - with its stables facing Commercial Road and its garden stretching down Chertsey Road (almost to Chobham Road) - was built in 1856-57. Not only was it the first place to be built to the north of the railway, but it was also the first to be redeveloped (in 1899). Many older residents still remember the second hotel.

The High Street was Woking's first 'shopping centre', with the Post Office opening on the corner with Church Path in 1865, being joined in 1870 by a chemist, grocer's, butcher's and a draper and milliner when a row of newly constructed cottages was converted into shops.

The Post Office later moved into Chertsey Road and its old site was taken over by Mr. W.R. Skeet, an ironmonger. In 1908 the London County & Westminster Bank was built on this site (see the date-stone above the door), while Mr. Skeet moved to Chobham Road and joined forces with Mr. Jeffes to form Skeet & Jeffes (a firm that traded in Woking for over 100 years).

Later development further down the street included 'Sainsbury's, Provision Merchants' at No. 20 and Curry's at No. 16 (built in 1934), who were listed then as 'cycle makers, radio and sports dealers'.



The original 'Albion Hotel' was a tall, three-storey building, erected in 1856-7 by Reuben Percy. It was demolished and replaced in 1899 by the building shown here, which in turn was replaced by the 'Albion House' shops, public house and office block in the mid-1960s.



The High Street, showing the mid-1930's buildings between Chapel Street and Sparrow Park.



Above – The High Street, showing the original Albion Hotel on the right (before it was demolished in the late 1890s) and the shop of Mr. W.R. Skeet on the corner with Church Path (before it was demolished in 1908 and replaced by the London County & Westminster Bank).



The bottom end of the High Street, showing John Trigg and Son's dairy, followed by Conway Motors' showroom and then the shop of R. Pain & Sons Ltd., one of the longest-running local companies in the town.

**NO MORE COAL
FOR THE KITCHEN.**

**Scrap that Extravagant
Kitchen Range.**

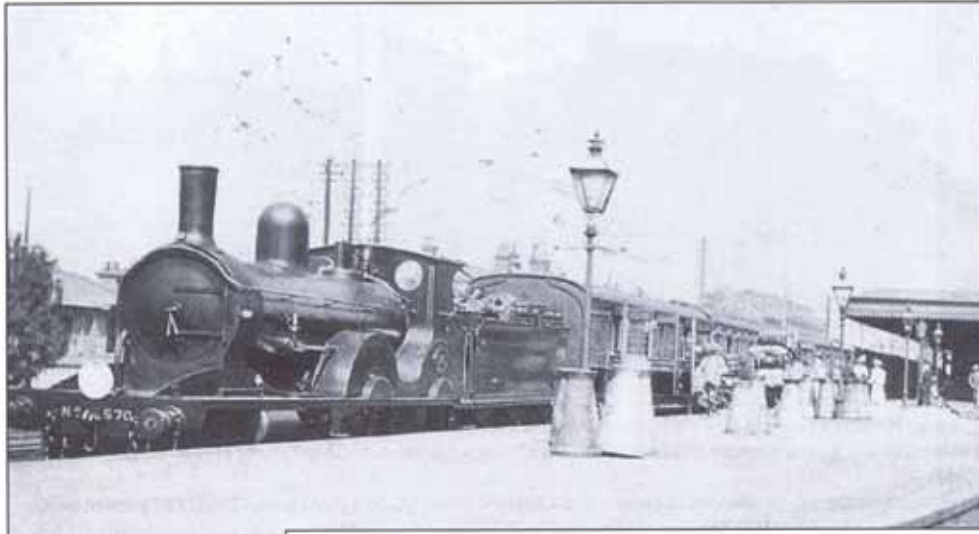
Hot Water
Always ready at hand with
 BREAK DOWN SYSTEM



Suits for cooking, washing, heating the kitchen, bath, the office, and heat radiators.

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 The Domestic Hot Water and
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 16, High Street, WOKING.
Established 1842

PAIN'S



Woking Station was opened in 1838 to serve the whole of west Surrey, with the stage-coaches from Guildford being diverted to the station here before the branch line to Guildford was opened in 1845. It was at that stage that Woking became an important junction – as recognised in the station name-plate on the picture to the right.



In 1936-7 the line through Woking was electrified and the station was rebuilt in the Southern Railways 'Odeon style'. Even today, the main entrance to the station is to the south - away from the town - as that is where the original station buildings were.



The original 'Red House Hotel', on the corner with Chertsey Road (right), with the 'new Red House' on the left.

Woking's second set of shops seems to have been in Chobham Road, where in 1874 Mr. Henry Gloster established the 'South Western Stores' and Mr. Hart opened his butcher's shop (on the corner with Commercial Road).

Opposite the Stores, on the corner with Chertsey Road, was the Red House Hotel. The present public house (now no longer called The Red House) was built in its garden.

Where Bhs is now was a row of shops built in the early 1880s. The one on the corner with Commercial Road (in later years Gammon's) was originally Woking's first bank - Thomas Ashby & Co. It is interesting to note that in 1882 trade was so slack that the bank was only open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 11am - 3pm!



Left - Wearing's chemist shop can be seen on the right (where the Visitor Information Centre is today), whilst Gammon's is on the left (part of the site of Bhs)

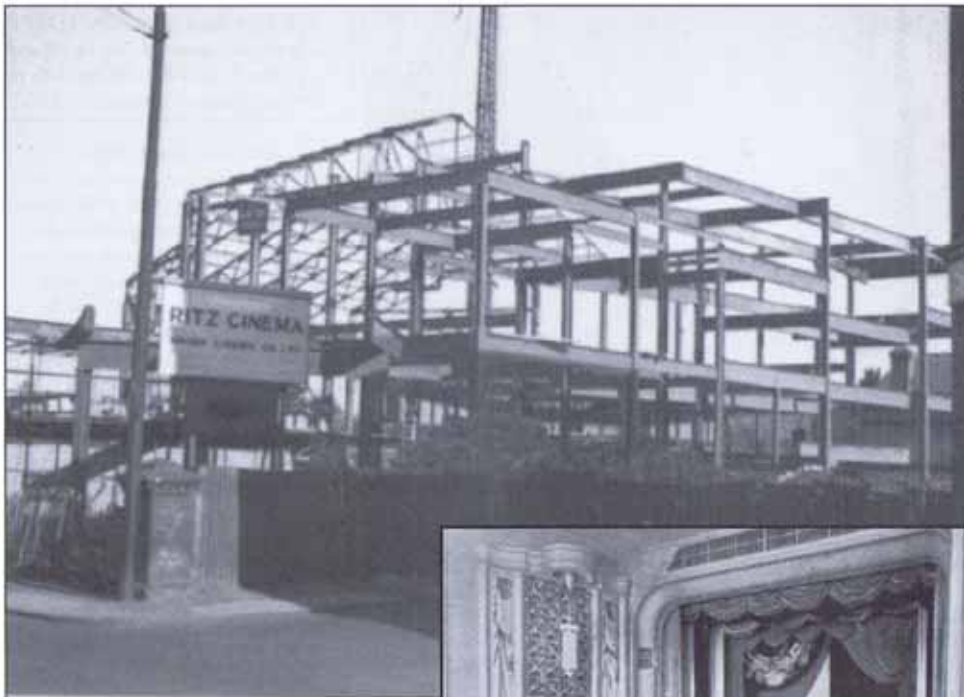
Below - Allnutt Brothers' sign can still be seen today.

Other shops in Chobham Road included Allnutt Brothers, seed and corn merchants, whose painted sign can still be seen on the side of their old shop (built in the early 1890s), and (on the site now occupied by Crown House) Woking's first garage - built by Henry Quartermaine in the early 1900s.

The showrooms of the Woking Electric Supply Company later occupied this site, with Wearing's the Chemist on one side and Skeet & Jeffes' showrooms on the other (on the corner with Church Street).

Central Buildings were built in 1937, together with the Union Cinema's 'Ritz Cinema and Restaurant', the last (and perhaps best) of Woking's pre-war cinemas. It was built on what had once been the garden to 'Ryde House' - one of the original properties in the road and built by the late 1860s. Burton's, the tailors, was built on the site of the original Red House Hotel in 1935 (the foundation stone can still be seen next to the alleyway by O'Neill's Irish Bar).





The Ritz Cinema under construction (above) and the interior (right). Mr. J. Wearing's 'Woking Drug Store' (below) on the corner of Chobham Road and Commercial Road, where the Visitor Information Centre is today.





Barclay's Bank (originally Ashby's Bank) on the corner of Chertsey Road and The Broadway. The building is now an Alldays Convenience Store.

Although slower off the ground, Chertsey Road soon took over as the main shopping street of the town. In 1891/92, five shops were erected for the United Traders' Association on part of the garden of the old Albion Hotel. These were complemented in 1898 by the shops on the corner with Chobham Road (see date-stone at the top of the building) and by the shops on the opposite side of the Chertsey Road. These included the new Ashby's Bank (later Barclay's Bank - on the corner with Maybury Road), built in 1888, the Post

Office (of 1894) and all the shops down to Addison Road (built in the early 1890s). Amongst the early occupiers of these premises were some of Woking's first 'national' stores, such as Freeman, Hardy & Willis and the Home & Colonial Stores - who, according to an old handbill, first opened their doors at 5 o'clock on Friday, 31st January, 1896!

Later arrivals included J. Sainsbury's first Woking shop in 1920, Boots in 1924 and John Farmer's in 1925.

Chertsey Road looking towards the station from the junction of Chobham Road.



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BEAUTIFUL GIFT BOXES
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DELICIOUS CAKES and
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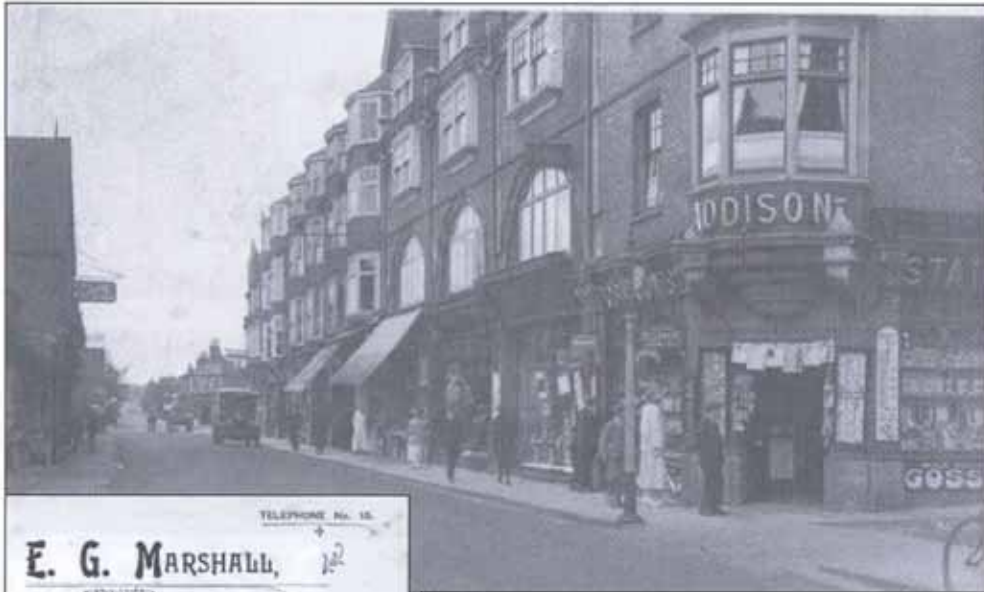


CRAFTSMEN IN CONFECTIONERY

10 CHERTSEY ROAD, WOKING

TELEPHONE WOKING 208





TELEPHONE No. 16.
E. G. MARSHALL,
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Scotch and Devon Beef. ————
 . . . English and Scotch Mutton and Lamb.
 ———— DAIRY FED PORK. ————
 ———— Pork Sausages our own make. ————

Chertsey Road was Woking's main shopping street, with national firms such as Freeman, Hardy & Willis' shoe shop, the Home & Colonial Tea Stores, the International Tea Stores, Boots the Chemist, Sainsbury's and Woolworth's in the road. But there was also a number of small, local, shops, such as Fred Pullinger's bakers and confectioners (opposite below) and E.G. Marshall's butcher's and grazier's (left): he had farms at Barnsbury as well as in Horsell.

Above - George Addison's newsagents gave its name to 'Addison Road' which can still be found between Chertsey Road and The Broadway.





J. SAINSBURY,
 19, CHERTSEY ROAD, WOKING.

PROVEYOR OF HIGH CLASS
Provisions & Groceries.
 POULTRY AND GAME DEALER.

Wiltshire, Irish, and Danish Bacon,
 York and Irish Hams a speciality.

Phone 325. H. A. CRISPIN, Manager

*Above - Chertsey Road
 decked out with banners for
 the Peace Celebrations in
 1919.*

*Below - Chertsey Road,
 looking towards the station
 from the old Burton's' build-
 ing on the corner with
 Chobham Road.*

Robinsons
 WOKING'S LEADING GROCERY STORE

At this a grand view of the ground floor of our modern and well lit shop where you will find a vast range of fresh produce, when shopping for one and a shilling, together with a permanent supply of delicacies at a reasonable price. Ask our personal assistance.

GET IT AT ROBINSONS
 19-21 CHERTSEY ROAD, WOKING. Tel. 325



The shops beyond Addison Road (which is named after the original owner of the newsagents on the corner) were built after 1892 - the land being marketed then as the 'Woking Station Estate', with a covenant apparently prohibiting the establishment of a 'tavern, beer-house or shop for the sale of intoxicating liquors'! Nowadays the majority of these premises sell little else but 'intoxicating liqueurs'!

There were a few lock-up shops on the other side of Chertsey Road and a few beyond the junction with Duke Street, but most of these were small local shops. Further down the street the shops gave way to houses, some of which still survive by the 'Brook House' roundabout.



The Broadway, originally just part of Maybury Road, acquired its shops in the 1890s. It is possible that the first row (those with the balconies) was built at the same time as the Post Office in Chertsey Road (1894), whilst the others came a few years later (they were certainly not marked on the 1894 Ordnance Survey map). Amongst the first occupiers of these premises were firms such as Walter Meek, 'High Class China and Glass Dealer', and John Fearon, Solicitor.

Duke Street was one of the last roads to be laid out in the town, being developed at the close of the Victorian period on what was then the 'Baltic Wharf' - a timber yard on the site allocated in the 1850s by the Necropolis Company for the church and school.

The Broadway (above) in the late 1890s, showing Woking's first telephone exchange (the low gabled building).



Edward Miller's 'high-class' milliners on the corner of Duke Street and Chertsey Road.

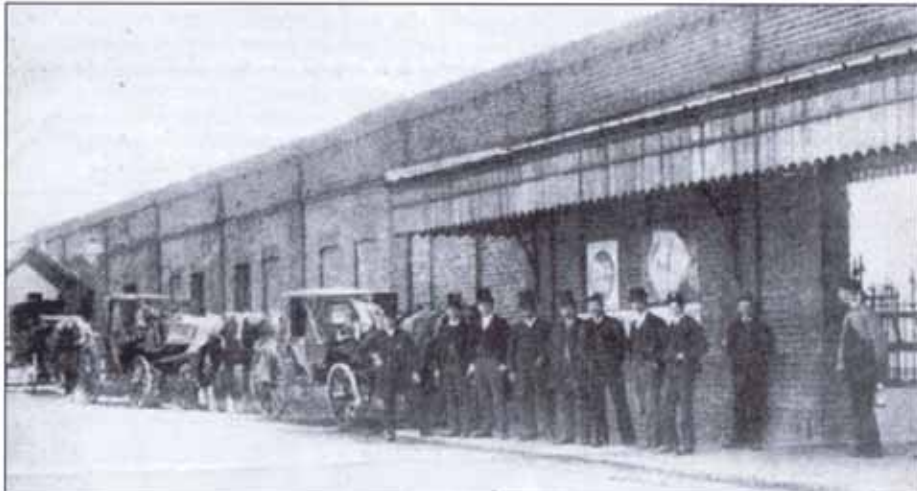
F. HARMAN.
WHOLESALE & RETAIL CONFECTIONER,
5, DUKE STREET, WOKING.

Specialities that cannot be beaten
CORDELIA ASSORTED CHOCOLATES,
 1/4 per lb.



Specialities that cannot be beaten
ALMOND CREAM NOUGAT,
 7d. per lb.

WE KEEP THE LARGEST ASSORTMENT OF SWEETS IN SURREY.
 GOLD MEDAL AWARDS 1907
 Owing to the delicate nature of best Goods, we never expose them in the window.



The entrance to Woking Station with the horse-drawn buses and taxi drivers ready to collect passengers, just as they do today along the High Street and the Broadway.



MAYBURY ROAD, WOKING

The shops of The Broadway (originally just part of Maybury Road). Most of these locally listed buildings still remain today, although the right hand half of J.D. Dingle & Co. (right) was demolished in the 1980s. Some of the wooden railings (above) still survive too.





The 'Woking Palace Theatre', later the 'Astoria', before becoming the 'Odeon'.



The Gaumont, Chertsey Road, originally the Woking Central Halls Cinema and then the Plaza.

The road had few shops and its main 'claim to fame' was the opening in 1899 of the 'Palace Theatre', which was apparently rebuilt in 1913 with 1,000 seats (including 250 in the balcony), and equipment to project the latest in film entertainment. In 1931 the 'Palace' became the 'Astoria' and finally the 'Odeon'.

The 'Palace's' biggest rival was the Central Halls Cinema in Chertsey Road, it was probably Woking's first purpose-built cinema, opening in March 1913. The Central Halls Cinema was originally owned by Henry Quartermaine (the garage owner from Chobham Road). The old cinema closed in September 1926 and four months later the new Plaza Cinema (known by some as the 'flea-pit') was opened on the site. This later became the 'Gaumont'.



The Woking Amateur Operatic Society's performance of 'Merrie England' performed at the 'Woking Palace Theatre' on Thursday 15th and Friday 16th January, 1925.



An aerial view of Woking, showing the original Wesleyan Chapel in Chapel Street and their first extension onto Commercial Road.

Commercial Road was far from commercial to start off with, some of the first buildings in the street being a few semi-detached houses between Bath Road and Church Path, followed by other late-Victorian houses to the west of Bath Road. The first 'commerce' came at the junction with Chobham Road (mentioned above).

Other early development resulted from the Wesleyan Movement who in 1872 had built Woking's first place of worship (a small 'school/chapel'), in what was later to be called Chapel Street.



Above – The new school and manse became the YMCA and later the 'Atalanta Ballroom' in Commercial Road.

The main public buildings of Commercial Road with (from left to right) the Grand Theatre, the Council Offices, the Constitutional Club and the Wesleyan Church (built in 1904).

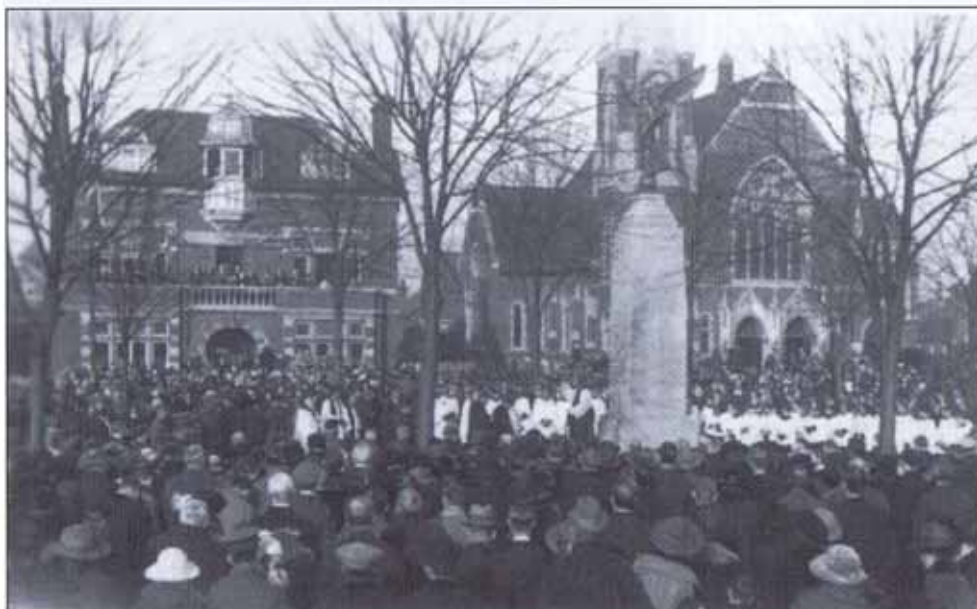


The chapel was extended to the junction with Commercial Road in 1884, and in 1893 a new school and manse were built opposite. The Wesleyans (Methodists) soon outgrew these building and in 1904 their third chapel - the 'Trinity Methodist Church' was built further down Commercial Road where there was then a concentration of public buildings.

The original chapel eventually became the children's section of Woking Library, with the 1884 extension being the main Central Library until the 1970s. The 1893 school and manse were converted into the YMCA and later became the Atalanta Ballroom.



The Atalanta was by no means the only place of entertainment in the road, as from 1910 until about 1913 the 'Woking Electric Empire' operated from converted buildings in the street to show some of the earliest 'moving pictures'. It was probably at the Woking Public Halls, however, that the inhabitants of Woking saw their first silent films.



The 'public buildings' of Commercial Road, together with the War Memorial in 'Sparrow Park' featured in many old pictures and postcards of the area, such as these views, all from the 1920s.



Above – The public buildings again showing the mass of traffic lights that were eventually installed to control the junction of Commercial Road, High Street, Goldsworth Road and Percy Street by Victoria Arch.



Right – The corner with Percy Street (Victoria Way), showing the office of the Woking Water Company on the right.

Below – Members of the 'Woking Conservative and Unionist Club' – the Constitutional Club – in the back garden of their premises in Commercial Road.





A parade, possibly for 'Empire Day', in the early 20th century.

The Woking Public Halls (later known as The Grand Theatre) were built in 1894, the first of the 'public' buildings in this area. They were joined four years later by the Constitutional Club and soon after by the offices of the Woking Water & Gas Co. (on the corner with Percy Street). The Methodist Church came in 1904, followed in 1905 by the Council Offices.

More shops were finally built in Commercial Road, both eastward from Chobham Road to the junction with Chertsey Road and westward from Chobham Road to Church Path. These included the warehouse of Gloster's (built in 1892) and opposite, in the 1920s, the 'Commercial Buildings' (and the premises next to Bhs).



The junction of Commercial Road and Chertsey Road. Nowadays this end of the street is blocked off by the 'Big Apple' building.



Commercial Road looking towards the junction with Chobham Road. The only building still standing is the first one (by the parked car); it is now the bar (no. 19) next to Bhs.

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Barrenger's later moved into Chertsey Road, on the corner with Duke Street (now part of Wetherspoon's).

Below - The houses of Commercial Road, between Church Path and the Atalanta Ballroom, on the corner with Bath Road, were demolished in the late 1930s. When the car came the land was used as a car park until the mid-1970s when the new town centre (Wolsey Place) was built on the site.





John Perring's furnisners in Goldsworth Road.

Goldsworth Road was one of Woking's first shopping streets - despite being recently described as an 'out-of-town' shopping area by the Council.

By 1894 most of the road between Percy Street and the Goldsworth Arms had been developed, not just with houses, but also with workshops, shops, a Baptist Church and the Goldsworth Hall. The shops on the corner with Oak Road were apparently built in 1890 and the building now occupied by the Woking Funeral Service (on the corner with Vale Farm Road) is dated 1880.

Closer to town, the Goldsworth Hall and the cottages adjoining it were bought in 1897 by Mr. Sparks Cornelius Knight. Mr. Knight had first opened as a draper in the High Street in 1870, but he was now branching out by selling furniture, china and glass and even bicycles. Part of this site was later taken over by John Perring's in 1930.

On the other side of the road was the bus depot, originally belonging to the Woking & District Bus Company, but from the early 1930s onwards to the Aldershot & District Traction Co. Ltd.

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spring interior mattress



Advertisement from the early 1960s, after the shop was rebuilt.



Above – The original 'Woking, Horsell & District Co-operative Society' store in Church Street on the site now occupied by Toys-R-Us. Below – their new store as advertised in the early 1960s.

Percy Street also had a few houses by the mid-1890s, but when the town's first Catholic Church opened in 1899 there were hardly any other buildings in the road and certainly no shops. It was, therefore, strange that the Woking Co-operative Society should choose the corner of Percy Street and Church Street for the site of their store in 1903 - far away from the main shopping centre of Chertsey Road. Over the years they expanded on the site (where Toys'R'Us is now) and in the 1930s built a new department store on the opposite corner of the road.

Clarence Avenue, a continuation of Percy Street which looped around to join Church Street, is said by one writer to be named after Prince Albert Edward, the Duke of Clarence, who died in 1892. But Clarence Avenue was not laid out until the late 1890s and even by the early 1920s only had eight or nine houses.


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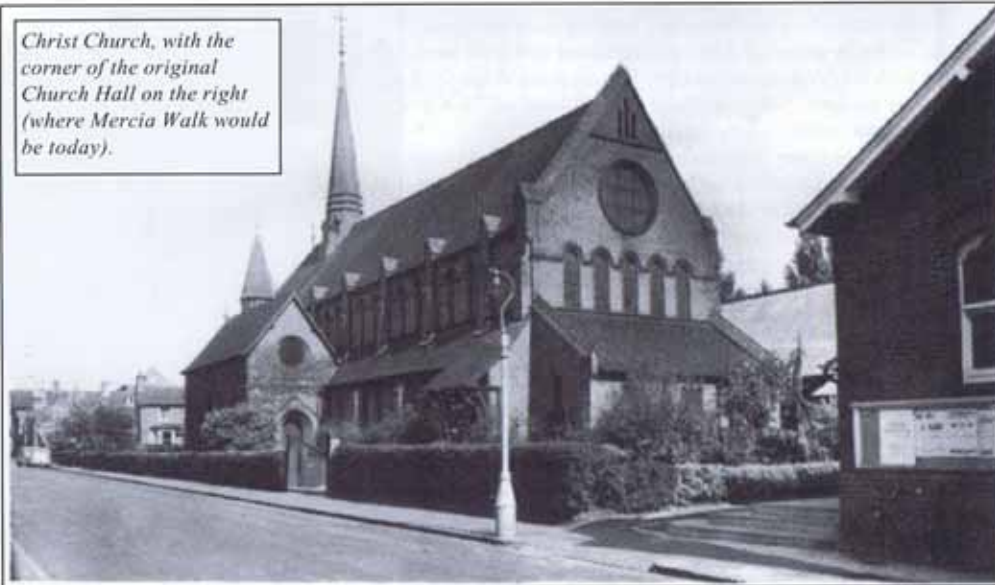


Church Street was originally known as Providence Street, with the first houses being built before 1870. These included ten semi-detached villas near the junction with Chertsey Road and a similar number of houses on the land between Church Path and 'Ellen Street'.

The new name for the road came after an iron church was opened in 1876 by the Church of England, the land being conveyed in 1861 by the Necropolis Company (as part of the 1855 agreement).

The Salvation Army Citadel on the corner of Clarence Avenue and Church Street.

Christ Church, with the corner of the original Church Hall on the right (where Mercia Walk would be today).



In 1887 work began on a new brick-built church to replace the iron one, and although it was opened for worship less than fourteen months later, it was not consecrated until 1893 nor completed until 1908. Christ Church Parish was formed in 1894.

Further down the road, at the junction with Clarence Avenue, was the Salvation Army Citadel, built in 1910 at a cost of £1,528.

Leading off Church Street was a number of small streets including Bath Road (which linked it with Commercial Road), Ellen Street (which joined with Church Path) and Oakfield Terrace. These were all largely developed with houses by the mid-1890s. Ellen Street (which in later years was renamed West Street) is the only one of the three to survive (even if it is only as the entrance to an underground car park).

Church Path, which by the mid-1890s had a few cottages (especially near its junction with Chobham Road), still suffers from being dominated by the back view of shops, although in the 1930s an improvement was made when 'The Dome' (built in 1934 for The Sports House) and the shops going up towards the Station were built. One of the earliest businesses in the path was the bakery, opened in 1868, near the junction with Chobham Road - in later years Heater's Bakery.



The shops of West Street and Church Path. The building in the dim distance was Heater's Bakery.

Boundary Lane and Boundary Road were, as the names suggest, on the boundary of Woking and Horsell so that, at least to begin with, no development took place to the north of the road - hence the open spaces (for the moment at least) of 'Brook House Common' and Boundary Road.

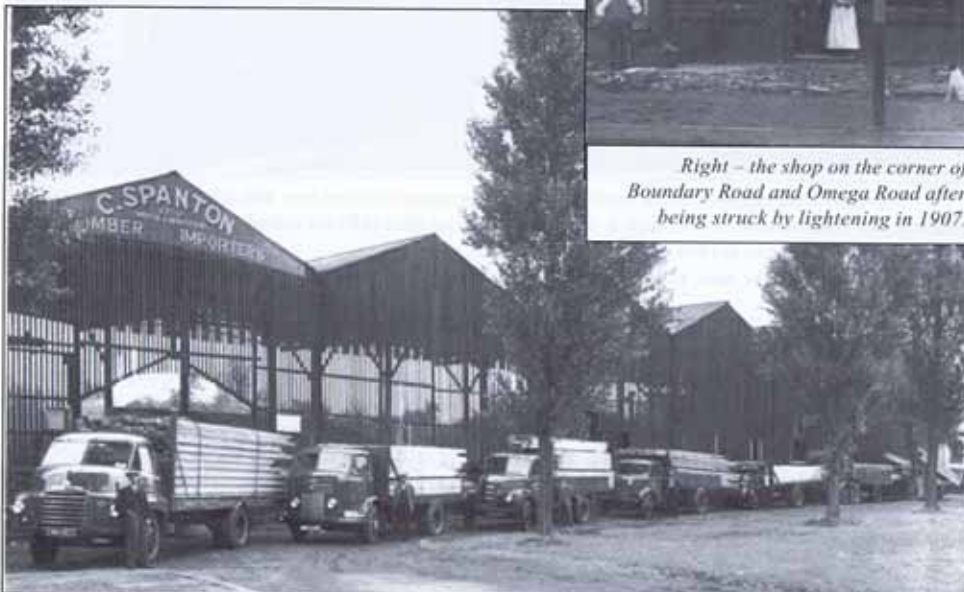
The Lane (from the canal cottages near Clarence Avenue to Chertsey Road) did have a few houses built on the Horsell side after the mid-1890s; and in 1897 the Woking Victoria Hospital was built at the junction with Chobham Road (see Chapter Seven).

Boundary Road was developed mainly from the 1890s onwards, with some of the houses facing the canal showing dates, such as 'North West View - 1895' and 'Bridge View - 1896'.

Spanton's Timber Yard by Chertsey Road Bridge and the Woking Gas Works were some of the early industries in the road.



Right - the shop on the corner of Boundary Road and Omega Road after being struck by lightning in 1907.



Spanton's Timber Yard on the site now occupied by the skateboard park of Boundary Road Common.



Some of the houses of Board School Road, with Boundary Road behind.

Board School Road, not surprisingly, was named after the school built there in 1874-5 by the newly formed Woking School Board (see Chapter Seven). The houses of Board School Road were built from the 1870s onwards, as the dates on some buildings show - Flora Cottage on the corner of Portugal Road being the oldest, dated 1877.

Beyond North Road, where the street becomes Courtney Road, the houses are much younger, although a small terrace of houses had been built (backing on to Boundary Road) by the mid-1890s.

The original 'Courtney Free Church', an un-sectarian mission church, was built in 1906 on the corner with Omega Road (where the flats are now).

Walton Road, now one of the main roads of the area, was developed in stages from the mid-1870s. The land at the town end was sold piecemeal by the Necropolis Company before 1880 (Walton Villas are dated 1876), whilst the land between North Road and Kings Road appears to have been sold in about 1888. By 1894, however, only two semi-detached villas had been built at this end of the road.

Nearest to the town were a number of shops and businesses, including Battrick's boot and shoe makers and Gloster's corn stores. On the corner with Chertsey Road was Sallabank's, the barbers and tobacconists. In fact, most of the junctions in the street had 'corner shops', many of which still survive, including those on the corner with Grove Road, Marlborough Road, North Road, Omega Road, Kings Road, Kerry Terrace and Monument Road!



Sallabank Corner – the corner of Chertsey Road and Walton Road.



*Above – the corner of Omega Road and Walton Road.
Below – the houses of Stanley Road before demolition.*

Maybury Road, like Walton Road, acquired most of its early development nearest the town (from Portugal Road onwards). There were, by 1894, a few cottages on either side of the North Road junction and just two small villas between the Maybury Arch and Kings Road. One of these (now No. 164) was the home of a man who was to make Woking famous as the landing place of his Martians - H.G. Wells lived here during 1895-96.

The shops near the Maybury Arch were built about the turn of the 20th century.

The Necropolis Company laid out the whole of this area in a grid pattern, making the most of the land available for development. Linking Maybury Road and the roads to the north, therefore, was a series of streets at right angles, beginning with Stanley Road.

Stanley Road was largely developed by the early 1890s and, apart from the workshops of a couple of decorators and builders, consisted solely of semi-detached and terraced houses. Unlike today, Stanley Road only linked Maybury Road to Walton Road and did not extend to Chertsey Road.



The next road along was Grove Road. This had fewer houses than Stanley Road, but in the early years of this century included Juniper Lodge, a school 'for young ladies and little boys'. The house on the corner with Maybury Road is dated 1884.

Portugal Road (which crossed Walton Road to link Board School Road with Maybury Road) was largely undeveloped by the early 1890s, the Brethren Gospel Hall being the only building in the road by 1894.

Later buildings included (as well as the villas and houses) The Ivy Leaf Club 'for discharged soldiers and sailors' and the 'Mirror Laundry'.

Marlborough Road was an 'after-thought', the road not appearing on the maps until the early years of the last century. This was one of the few roads in this area laid out by the builder and not the Necropolis Company. By 1914 the only significant building in the road was the skating rink on the corner with Walton Road.

The one road that links all the east-west aligned roads is North Road. Apart from that fact, however, the road was not particularly remarkable – except for the Electric Light Works (see Chapter Seven) - most of the houses dating from the later part of the Victorian period.

Delta Road and Omega Road (like Marlborough Road) were not on the original plans but had been laid out by the beginning of the First World War. Kings Road (between Maybury and Walton Roads) were, however, one of the original roads. One of the area's first industries - the Maybury Laundry - was built on the



The Woking Joinery Co Ltd., formerly on the corner of Maybury Road and North Road.

corner with Maybury Road by the end of the 19th century. This building was later used by Sorbo Rubber Products (from 1918-1920), the Acetex Glass Works and the Parazone Company before becoming a motor showroom.

Kilrush, Kerry and Walton Terraces were all built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, although the houses on the right hand side of Kerry Terrace are later.

In Monument Road there are a number of properties with date-stones. The oldest appears to be the one dated 1892, but other early buildings include Oriental Place (the gabled terrace nearest the arch) and the detached villas between Maybury Road and Walton Road. Guildford Terrace, on the corner with Eve Road, is dated 1904.

Eve Road and Arnold Road mark the edge of the Necropolis land. It was sold to the United Land Company in 1882 and developed by them soon after. The back gardens of Eve Road mark the boundary of Woking Common and Horsell (Monument Way East is in the ancient parish of Horsell), whilst to the east was the filled-in Sheerwater Lake (in the parishes of Woodham and Pyrford). The Maybury Estate is also in the old Pyrford parish, with the first part of Alpha Road, the footpath to Oak Lane and Sandy Lane marking the ancient boundary.

The Maybury Laundry.



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An advertisement for the Maybury Steam Laundry on the corner of Maybury Road and Kings Road, c1914.

Alpha Road and Beta Road were almost completely redeveloped after the demolition of the old Monument Hill School, but there were houses there before, built in the late 1890s, and two of these still remain in Beta Road.

Pollard Road (only made up at the end of the last century) still has a number of Victorian and Edwardian properties, as does Princess Road and Frailey Hill. The houses on the corner of the two roads are dated 1894 and bear the name 'Windsor Cottages' - a grander title perhaps than their appearance would suggest.

The name College Road dates only from the time of the Royal Dramatic College (see Chapter Five), but the road was almost certainly in existence before this and the pub may be older, too. There were squatter cottages in this area prior to the Necropolis Company's arrival, but nothing now remains from those days. Nor does anything remain either of the Primitive Methodist Chapel opened in 1863 on the site now occupied by the petrol station. The oldest properties now in the road seem to be those between Frailey Hill and Sandy Lane, with Azalea Cottage dating from 1863.

Sandy Lane and Lavender Road had a few small cottages and villas by the mid-1890s, 'The Wood' (later called Westerfolds - after which Westerfolds Close is named) being one of the largest and earliest. The former Post Office, on the corner of Lavender Road, together with the cottages next to it, is also late Victorian in date.

Maybury Hill (or Bunkers Hill, as it was originally called) is dominated by the former St. Peter's Convent on the brow of the hill. Opposite, on the corner of The Ridge, is Maybury Rough, a large late-1880s or early-1890s building - one of the first 'upper-class' residences in the area. It was soon joined by other large houses such as Firlands (since demolished) and 'Heathlands', now divided into flats and called Maybury House.



Maybury Hill in the early 20th century, showing several of the large houses that have since been demolished and replaced.



Above – Maybury Hill, looking up the hill from the junction with Sandy Lane.

Below – The Maybury Inn and Old Woking Road.

The drive to these houses (later extended around the top of the hill) became The Ridge, but in those days the northern section of the road was known as Hillview Road. This should not be confused with the Hill View Road near the park, just as 'Marlborough Road', which is now known as Lytton Road, should not be confused with the newer road of the same name to the north of the railway!

The houses on the southern slope of Maybury Hill (towards the Maybury Inn) date from the early years of the 20th century, whilst in the other direction there are a few late-19th-century buildings prior to the junction with Oriental Road, with early Edwardian villas further down towards the arch. The shop by the arch was originally built in 1919 for the Woking Co-operative Society.



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Name _____
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Advertisement from 1938 for some of the new houses of Oriental Road.

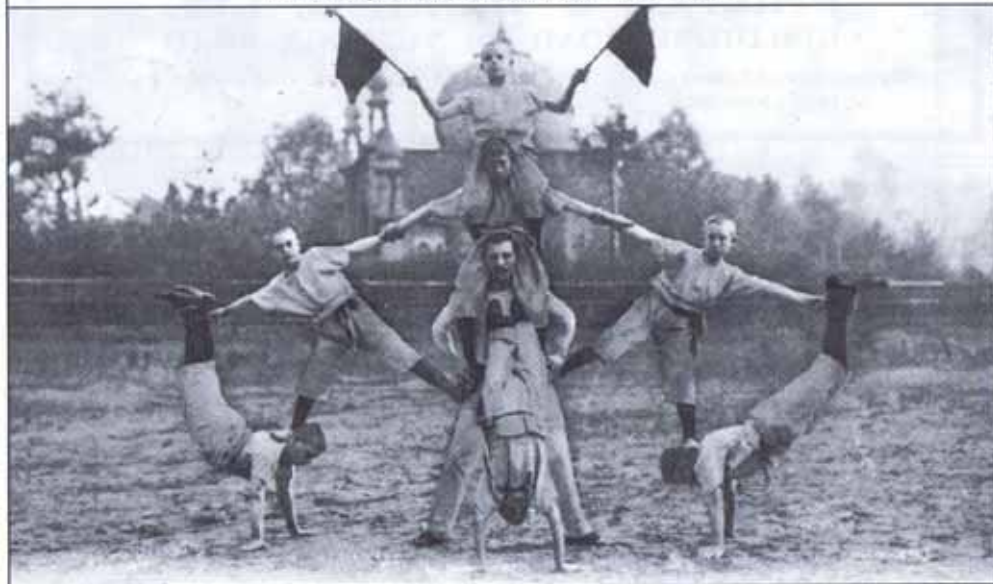
Oriental Road is obviously named after the Institute and as a name therefore only dates from after 1884. But the section from the station to Lytton Road pre-dates the Institute, probably being laid out by the Necropolis Company in the early 1860s to serve the Royal Dramatic College. There were, however, no houses in the road until the early years of the 20th century apart from the Rastrick's' home at 'Woking Lodge'. Oriental Close was built on this site in the late 1930s.

The College (and later Institute) were not the only institutions to have developed in the road. In 1909 the London & South Western Railway Servants' Orphanage transferred here from Clapham. The Orphanage has since been demolished, but the Railwaymen's Home is still on part of the site.



Above – The London & South Western Railway Servants' Orphanage (later the Southern Railwaymen's Home) built in 1909 in Oriental Road.

Below – The Orphanage's Boys' Gymnastic Squad practising on the playing fields beside the Mosque. The estate of Dorchester Close now occupies the site.



St. Paul's Church (built in 1895) was originally a chapel of ease to Christ Church, the Vicarage for which was built in 1898 in Onslow Crescent. The present St. Dunstan's R.C. School is on the site of the former C.of.E Vicarage!

Onslow Crescent was one of three Crescents laid out by the Necropolis Company to the south of the station in the late 1850s. Heathside Crescent was another, with an 'inner crescent' surviving, in part, as the drive around the back of the Royal Mail Sorting Office.

The first house to be built in Heathside Crescent appears to have been 'Heathside House' (later called Heatherside), which stood on the corner with White Rose Lane (now the site of the Car Park). This is marked on the Land Sales Map of 1859 (lot 50), but was probably sold before then. Ten years later it had been joined by only one other property - Werg Cottage (later called Lavender Cottage) - on the site later occupied in the late 1960s by the presbytery of the old St. Dunstan's Church in White Rose Lane.

Station Approach was the original Guildford-to-Chertsey Road, with Victoria Road and the first section of Guildford Road being the diversions created by the railway company in the late 1830s. It was in this area that a 'Sapoline' factory was established in the 1880s by C.T. Tyler & Co. (later J.C. Sowerbutts & Co.).


The shops in this section of Guildford Road date from about 1905 - those further down (and across the road) being dated to about 1894.

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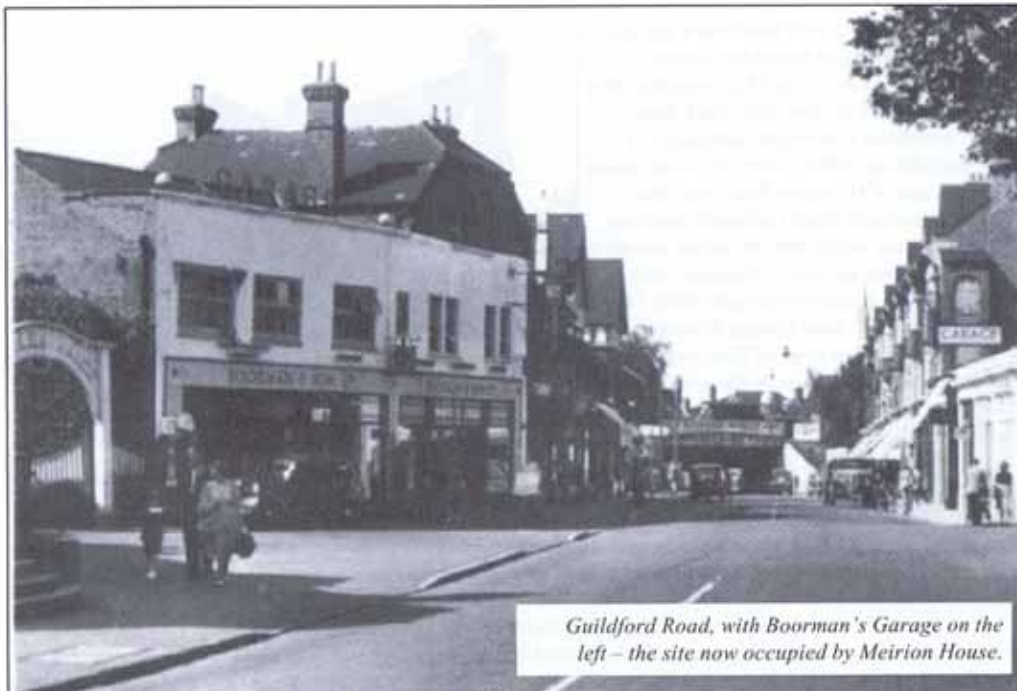
PHILPOT'S WOKING, Ltd.
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PHONE - 351

Philpot's occupied the corner of Guildford Road and Victoria Road, where Evans. Cycles are today.



Above - Guildford Road showing the Railway Hotel (now Sovereigns) on the right.

Left - The Railway Hotel on the left with Conway West's garage on the corner with Station Approach, where Blockbuster is today.



Guildford Road, with Boorman's Garage on the left – the site now occupied by Meirion House.

Maxwell's Music Shop on the corner of Heathside Road and Station Approach.



The land on either side of Station Approach was apparently bought by George Rastrick from the Necropolis Company, and when he died in 1905 the plot where the Magistrates Courts and Police Station are now was bought by Mr. W.C. Slocock, the nurseryman. In 1909 he sold it to the County Council, who in 1914 built the Boys' Grammar School. The school is now the Police Station, the original Police Station having been on the other corner of Heathside Road. It was built in 1887, along with The Retreat (see date-stone).

The land to the north of Heathside Road (between Station Approach and White Rose Lane) was Necropolis land, but as the name suggests, this road marked the 'side' of the 'heath' and, as the Necropolis

Company bought only the heath, the farmland to the south was in different hands.

Much of the Necropolis land in this area was bought by Rastrick so that by the turn of the century it remained undeveloped; but as we now move away from the influence of the Necropolis Company, we discover the local landowners cashing in on the growth of the new town.

In 1883 the Fladgate family sold their land – Cross Lanes Farm – and by 1894 places like Lismore, Beech Croft and Wilmington House had been built on the south side of Heathside Road.



Heathside Road, looking towards the junction with White Rose Lane.

To the west of White Rose Lane (and the north of Heathside Road) the land of Heathside Farm was sold in 1882, creating Coley Avenue and the large houses of Park Road (west). Heathside Farm itself continued as a farm until the late 1890s, when the houses along the south side of Heathside Road were built.

Heathside Road eventually becomes Pembroke Road, which was developed mainly in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods (there were few houses in the road before 1894), whilst Shaftesbury Road (linking Pembroke Road to the southern slope of Maybury Hill) had only one small cottage by the mid-1890s! This area quickly became popular, however, as the many large houses of the period testify.

The name Park Road does confuse some people, who think that it should be near Woking Park. But in fact this ancient track across Woking Heath refers to the Deer Park attached to Woking Palace and not to the Edwardian pleasure park down in the Hoc Valley - more of which later!

The ancient origin of the road is reinforced by the two 16th-century, Grade II cottages still in the road. The Old Cottage is in the southern section, whilst Ramwick Cottage is opposite Downside Orchard.

Ramwick Cottage was previously a public house known as the Castle Ramwick Inn. This apparently was one of the favourite meeting places for the 'Prize Fights' - illegal competitions that took place on the edge of Woking Common up until the late 1860s. The site of the Sorting Office in White Rose Lane was apparently the site of the 'ring'.



Ganges Lodge in Pembroke Road, designed by C.B. Tubbs and A.A. Meser and built in the early 20th century by Messrs. Drowley & Co. of Bath Road, Woking.



Ivy Lane was laid out by the 1890s, but only a couple of houses were built by the end of the century (nearest the Maybury Inn end). It remains an un-made track, typical of many such roads in the Woking area.

The Hockering Estate was laid out in 1904 with 107 plots, each not less than an acre in size and many much more than that. The name comes from the village in Norfolk where the owners of the land originated - the Smallpiece family. They sold the land in 1911 to Mr. W. G. Tarrant, who the previous year had bought the Roundhill Estate from the Earl and Countess of Lovelace. He developed both estates as exclusive high-class developments. It is interesting to note that Hockering Gardens is built upon the former site of Woking Football Club's ground (before it moved to Kingfield in 1923)!



Most of the 'modern' houses of White Rose Lane were built during the 20th century, although the farmhouse and its barn are, of course, much older. The name 'White Rose' has nothing to do with the 'Wars of the Roses', as many people believe: it is apparently a corruption of 'White Trees' - referring to the silver birches that once grew in the lane.

Ashwood Road, Heathfield Road and Heathside Park Road (designated as a Conservation Area in 1997) were all built on the land of Heathside and Oldlands Farm from the late 1890s onwards. They included large houses such as Friars Rise, Normanhurst and Ashwood - built in 1929 to the design of the famous 'Arts & Crafts' architect, Mackay Hugh Ballie-Scott. Greystone, in Heathside Park Road, has the unusual feature of drain heads dated 1905.

Meanwhile, on the other side of White Rose Lane the land of Cross Lanes Farm was being developed, with large houses being built in Hill View Road.

The attractiveness of Hill View Road was increased in the early years of this century when the developer of Blackness Farm, the Suburban Land Company, offered some of its land to Woking Council as a park. The guaranteed view across parkland helped them to sell their houses on the southern side of the road.



Normanhurst in Heathside Park Road was another property built by Drowley and Co. in the early 20th century. In their brochure of 1907 it is described as "built of red bricks, with orange rough cast, dark tiles, and green shutters".

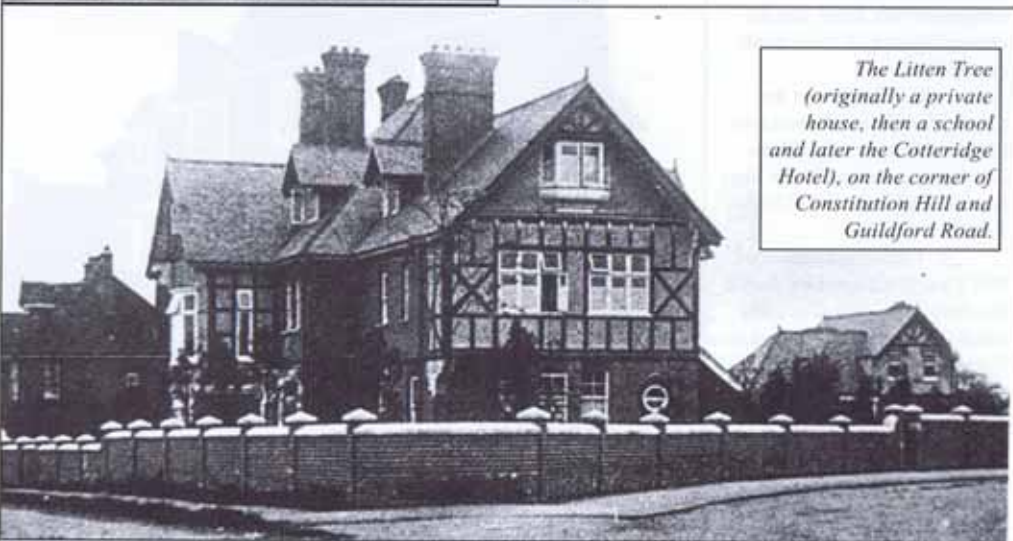


*Hill View Road in the early 20th century (above),
with The Nook (below), one of the houses of the original 'Hillview Estate'.*



Constitution Hill also benefited from the park, although like Hill View Road it had already seen some development by the turn of the 20th century. On the corner with Guildford Road, the Litten Tree (formerly the Cotteridge Hotel) had been built in the late 1890s as a private house (although it was later used as a private school before becoming the hotel).

Blackness Lane, which originally led to Blackness Farm (where the bowling green is now), had a few late-Victorian or early-Edwardian properties, whilst Popular Grove still retains some of its early buildings.

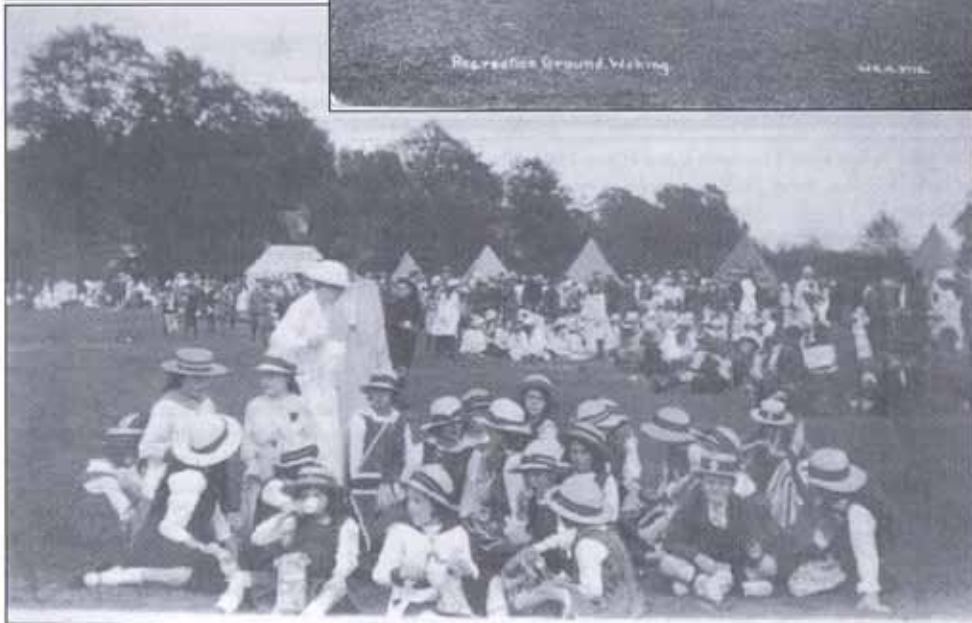


*The Litten Tree
(originally a private
house, then a school
and later the Cotteridge
Hotel), on the corner of
Constitution Hill and
Guildford Road.*



Several views of Woking Park, or the Mount Hermon Recreation Ground, as it was originally known.

Below - Woking Park at the time of the Peace Celebrations marking the end of the First World War.



Claremont Avenue was built in 1887, the year the Duchess of Albany (who lived at Claremont in Esher) came to lay the foundation stone for Christ Church. Some of the original detached villas still survive, although many (such as the Northfleet Hotel) have been demolished and replaced by modern flats.

Opposite Claremont Avenue, where it joins Wych Hill Lane, is Turnoak Avenue, which was begun in the late 1930s. By 1938 there were just five properties in the road, including the Vicarage for St. Peters (Old Woking).

The northern side of Wych Hill Lane (between Claremont Avenue and Turnoak Corner), and Salisbury Road, were also part of the Cross Lanes Estate; and some of the late Victorian houses here still survive. Most of the older houses in Guildford Road have not, however, being replaced by modern flats or houses.

The first section of Mount Hermon Road has suffered the same fate, as has Brooklyn Road. Both of these were also part of the Fladgates', Cross Lane Farm land, whilst the lower section of Mount Hermon Road, Midhope Road and West Hill Road were all part of Wych Hill Farm.

The Brooklyn Road/Guildford Road/Mount Hermon Road triangle was developed from the mid-1880s onwards, whilst the other roads were not begun until the later part of the 1890s.



Mount Hermon Road in the early 20th century.

The view below must have been taken before 1906-07 when St. Mary of Bethany Church was built on the plot of empty land on the left of the scene.



York Road was also once part of Wych Hill Farm and was consequently developed quite separately from the Mount Hermon Estate to the south. It was laid out in 1893 - the year of the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York.

The road was not as affluent as Mount Hermon, possibly because of the close proximity of the railway, but at its western end there are still some pleasant Victorian properties, as well as St. Mary of Bethany Church (a Grade II Listed building), built in 1906-7 to the design of W.D. Caroe. The Congregational Church (now the United Reformed Church) at the other end of the road dates from 1901.

Wych Hill Farm was at the junction with Triggs Lane (now the entrance to Wych Hill Park), whilst the land to the south of Wych Hill Lane was connected with Bedford's Farm (where Evelyn Close is now). Bedford's Farm was bought by George Jackman in the 1880s and became the main Jackman Nursery from the early 1890s until after the Second World War. The large Atlas Cedar in the centre of Wych Hill Way and the trees on the green near Turnoak Roundabout are all that remain of the old nursery.

Blackbridge Road is really a continuation of Triggs Lane and both roads had a few houses in late Victorian times. Fernhill Park, near the railway arch, also contains some early 20th-century villas.

Triggs Farm, later utilised as the 'Farm Hotel' (where Triggs Close is now), had land on both sides of the road, as well as three small fields to the north of the railway. These fields were developed in the 1890s as Royal Oak Road and Elm Road. Later houses were built at the junction with Goldsworth Road in an area known as 'The Triangle' - originally called the Royal Oak Estate.

Tilehurst Cottages, near the railway arch, are unusual for the use of an enamel name-plate and the precise date of their construction - June 1907!



The development of the Goldsworth Road area was restricted by the canal and railway.

Arthur's Bridge, above, was once one of the main routes between (Old) Woking and Horsell, whilst Step Bridge, below, was (and still is) a pedestrian route from the Mount Hermon area to Horsell via Twin Bridges.

The Goldsworth sidings (right) have largely been replaced by the car park of Safeway's supermarket.



The old Step Bridge was replaced by a new 'swing bridge' in the early 1960s. This in turn has been replaced by the current 'step bridge' crossing the canal and Lockfield Drive (the houses in the picture being demolished to make way for its construction).



The Goldsworth Arms, on the corner with Poole Road, was opened before 1865.



The houses of Vale Farm Road, above, have been replaced by the Cap Gemini offices, whilst the houses of Butts Road (below left), and being demolished, below right), have been replaced by a number of small factory units.



To the north of Goldsworth Road, a small field known as 'Sheppards' was sold for development in the mid-1890s; and although no roads are shown on the 1894 Ordnance Survey map, by 1896 'Haven Villa' and 'Haven Side' were being built at the junction of Mable Street and Wilfred Street. The growth of the area by the turn of the 20th century is demonstrated by the Post Office, whose Victorian letter box still stands on the corner of Goldsworth Road and Wilfred Street.

Closer to town, another field (known as 'Bowling Green' on the Tithe Map) was developed in the early 1890s as Snelgar Road and Cherry Street, with houses also being built in what is now Poole Road. To the north, Vale Farm Road and Oaks Road were also built about this time, although Oaks Farm itself was further down Goldsworth Road.

The Kingsway was built on its land in the early years of this century, whilst in 1898 the old Goldsworth School was built slightly to the west of Oaks Farm house. It is a shame that the school (my old school) didn't last to see its centenary year, but it is perhaps appropriate that the site is now the Surrey History Centre!

