

**COMMERCIAL ROAD  
BUILDING BY BUILDING**

**by**

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## Contents

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WOKING .....	1
ORIGINS .....	1
The Railway .....	1
The Necropolis .....	1
COMMERCIAL ROAD .....	3
Introduction.....	3
Numbering .....	4
Occupants.....	4
NORTH SIDE (ODD NUMBERS) .....	6
PERCY STREET TO BATH ROAD.....	6
Woking Water Company.....	6
Public Hall.....	8
No. 5 – Public Halls Cottage.....	10
No. 7.....	10
Premier House .....	10
Municipal Building / Council Offices .....	11
Fire Station .....	13
Woking Constitutional Club (No. 11) .....	14
Wesleyan Church & Schools (No. 13) .....	15
Rosslyn (No. 1/15) .....	16
Casa Rustica (No. 3/17).....	17
The Rest (No. 5/19).....	18
Cambridge House (No. 7/21) .....	18
Penrhyn (No. 9/23) .....	20
BATH ROAD TO CHURCH PATH.....	20
Tower Lodge / Victoria Hall (No. 11/25).....	21
Masonic Hall.....	22
Atalanta Dance Hall.....	22
Wesley Manse / Noel House (No. 17) .....	23
Cedar Villa (No. 19).....	25

Merton Villa (No. 21).....	25
Denmark Villas / Erica Villa / Galloway (No. 23).....	25
Heatherside / Sallmore / No. 14 (No. 25) .....	26
South Western Hotel / Myholme (No. 27) .....	26
Clovelly / Speedwell (No. 29) .....	27
Lynmouth House (No. 31).....	28
WOLSEY PLACE, COMMERCIAL WAY .....	29
No.s 1-9 Commercial Way.....	30
Victoria Square.....	31
No.s 11-13 Commercial Way.....	31
No. 15 Commercial Way .....	33
No. 17-19 Commercial Way.....	33
No. 21 Commercial Way .....	35
No. 23 Commercial Way .....	37
No. 25 Commercial Way .....	39
No. 27 Commercial Way .....	39
Figure 57. Burger King, 2023.....	40
Middle Walk.....	41
No. 29 Commercial Way .....	41
No. 31-33 Commercial Way.....	42
No. 35 Commercial Way .....	44
No.s 37-39 Commercial Way.....	46
No.s 41-43 Commercial Way.....	47
No. 45 Commercial Way .....	48
No. 47 Commercial Way .....	49
No. 49 Commercial Way .....	49
No. 51 Commercial Way .....	50
No. 1 Mercia Walk .....	51
No. 53 Commercial Way .....	53
Dance Hall.....	55
No. 55 Commercial Way .....	55

No. 57 Commercial Way .....	56
No. 59-61 Commercial Way.....	57
CHURCH PATH TO CHOBHAM ROAD .....	59
Skating Rink.....	59
No. 27 – 1-3 Commercial Buildings.....	60
No. 29 – 4 Commercial Buildings.....	61
No. 31 – 5 Commercial Buildings.....	63
No. 33 – 6 Commercial Buildings.....	65
No. 35 – 7 Commercial Buildings.....	66
No. 37 – 8 Commercial Buildings.....	67
No. 39 .....	69
Garage .....	71
No. 41 .....	72
Old Bank .....	73
Guildford House (No. 53) .....	77
CHOBHAM ROAD TO CHERTSEY ROAD .....	77
Drug Stores.....	78
Open Space.....	79
Sanders Cottages .....	79
Commercial Buildings.....	80
9 Commercial Buildings (No. 63/43) .....	80
8 Commercial Buildings (No. 65/45) .....	82
6 Commercial Buildings (No. 69/49) .....	84
5 Commercial Buildings (No. 71/51) .....	85
4 Commercial Buildings (No. 73/53) .....	86
3 Commercial Buildings (No. 75-77/55).....	89
2 Commercial Buildings (No. 79/57) .....	90
1 Commercial Buildings (No. 81/59) .....	91
Carriage Works (No. 83/61) .....	93
Thomas Cottages .....	95
No. 85/63.....	95

No. 87/65.....	97
Superstore.....	98
SOUTH SIDE (EVEN NUMBERS).....	101
VICTORIA GARDENS TO CHAPEL STREET .....	101
Victoria Gardens .....	101
No. 2.....	102
No. 4.....	104
No. 4a.....	106
No. 6.....	107
Stewart House (8/10) .....	108
No. 8.....	108
No. 12 .....	110
Steward House No.s 14-18 .....	111
Figure 174. Steward House, 2017 .....	111
No. 14 .....	111
No. 16 .....	113
No. 18 .....	114
No. 20 .....	115
No. 22 .....	116
No. 24 .....	117
CHAPEL STREET TO CHURCH PATH .....	119
Wesleyan Chapel / Library / No. 26 .....	119
Bon Marché .....	121
No. 28 – 3 Bon Marché.....	122
No. 30 – 2 Bon Marché .....	123
No. 32 – 1 Bon Marché .....	124
Morris House (No. 34).....	127
No.s 36-42 (previously 28-34) .....	129
No. 36 .....	130
No. 38 .....	131
No. 40 – No. 32 .....	132

No. 42 – No. 34 - The Dome .....	132
CHURCH PATH TO CHOBHAM ROAD .....	134
Tyldes / 6 Albion House .....	134
7 Albion House .....	135
No. 44 – Whittington Buildings.....	136
No. 44b – The Old Bakery.....	137
Harland House .....	138
5 Harland House.....	138
4 Harland House.....	140
3 Harland House.....	141
1-2 Harland House.....	143
No. 46 .....	144
No. 48 - Alfreton.....	148
CHOBHAM ROAD TO CHERTSEY ROAD .....	151
Red House .....	151
No 52 .....	152
No 62 .....	152
No. 64 .....	154
Guildford Doll's Hospital.....	155
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	156
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	157
INDEX.....	158

## Table of Figures

Figure 1. Station on Woking Common, October 1838.....	1
Figure 2. London Gazette 17 November 1868.....	2
Figure 3. 1857 plan for land sales by the Necropolis Company .....	3
Figure 4. Aerial view of Commercial Road (bottom left to top right) 1920 .....	4
Figure 5. Percy Street to Bath Road OS Plan 1912 .....	6
Figure 6. Municipal buildings, c.1910.....	6
Figure 7. Woking & District Water Company pumping station, Horsley .....	7
Figure 8. Announcement of new office .....	7
Figure 9. Woking Water Company office.....	7
Figure 10. Public Hall c1905 .....	8
Figure 11. Super Cinemas Ad .....	9
Figure 12. Preliminary sketch for the Grand Theatre .....	9
Figure 13. Premier House in 2000.....	10
Figure 14. 1899 fire at Council Offices.....	11
Figure 15. Council Offices c.1955.....	12
Figure 16. 1944 ration books .....	12
Figure 17. Central Post Office 1999 .....	12
Figure 18. Access way to fire station. ....	13
Figure 19. Fire brigade, outside of the station, c1914 .....	13
Figure 20. Constitutional Club next to Wesleyan Church.....	14
Figure 21. Building of Wesleyan Church, 1904.....	15
Figure 22. Peter McDonald.....	16
Figure 23. Rosslyn c.1920 .....	16
Figure 24. Casa Rustica & The Rest, 1924 .....	17
Figure 25. High School advertisement.....	18
Figure 26. High School for Girls, c.1903 .....	19
Figure 27. 1953 Shee's advertisement.....	20
Figure 28. Bath Road to Church Path, OS Plan 1912.....	20
Figure 29. Advertisement for English Language College .....	21
Figure 30. YWCA headquarters, May 1916.....	21
Figure 31. Surrey Advertiser October 1914.....	22



Figure 32. Soldiers' Recreation Room, May 1916.....	22
Figure 33. Atalanta Palais de Dance advertisement, September 1932.....	22
Figure 34. The Atalanta.....	23
Figure 35. Demolition of the Atalanta, c.1972.....	23
Figure 36. Commercial Road Carpark, c.1960, Christ Church in the background ..	24
Figure 37. South Western Hotel, 1902.....	27
Figure 38. 1882 advertisement to let.....	27
Figure 39. Clovelly and Lynmouth House, 1903.....	27
Figure 40. Construction of Wolsey Place, c.1973 .....	29
Figure 41. Plan of Wolsey Place, c.1972 .....	30
Figure 42. Boots 2017 .....	30
Figure 43. Harveys, 1992.....	31
Figure 44. Bonmarché, 2008.....	31
Figure 45. Bonmarché advertisement .....	31
Figure 46. The Trench Experience shop and upcycling centre .....	32
Figure 47. Early Learning Centre, 2008 .....	33
Figure 48. HomeForm - Möben/Sharps/Dolphin store.....	34
Figure 49. John Harwood, 2017.....	34
Figure 50. Sweat Shop, 2018 .....	34
Figure 51. Up & Running, 2025.....	35
Figure 52. DER advertisement.....	35
Figure 53. First Choice, 2008.....	36
Figure 54. Las Iguanas & Bill's, 2018 .....	36
Figure 55. Komo, 2023 .....	37
Figure 56. Thomson, 2008 .....	37
Figure 57. Fineweave, 2008 .....	39
Figure 58. Millets, 2008 .....	40
Figure 59. Burger King, 2023.....	40
Figure 60. Yorkshire Building Society, 2008.....	41
Figure 61. Clearance Outlet, 2008 .....	42
Figure 62. HomeLife, 2012 .....	42
Figure 63. Maplin, 2017.....	43
Figure 64. Mamas & Papas on-line advertisement, 2019 .....	43

Figure 65. Mamas & Papas with A&B Baby, 2020.....	44
Figure 66. Tesco Express, 2023.....	44
Figure 67. Innovations, 2008.....	45
Figure 68. Bayfields, 2020.....	46
Figure 69. Robert Dyas.....	47
Figure 70. W H Smith.....	47
Figure 71. TG Jones, Nov 2025.....	48
Figure 72. Superdrug, 2018.....	48
Figure 73. A-plan Insurance, 2018.....	50
Figure 74. Howden Insurance, 2023.....	50
Figure 75. Charity shop (formerly SDPP), 2018 .....	50
Figure 76. SnappySnaps, 2023.....	51
Figure 77. Freeman, Hardy & Willis.....	51
Figure 78. Foxtons, 2018.....	52
Figure 79. Itsu, 2023.....	53
Figure 80. Richard Shops .....	53
Figure 81. Carluccio's 2018 .....	54
Figure 82. Luciano's 2023 .....	54
Figure 83. Early plan of Woking centre development (1960s) .....	55
Figure 84. Rush, hairdressers, 2008 .....	56
Figure 85. Tante Marie, 2018 .....	56
Figure 86. Harpers Photographic, 2008.....	57
Figure 87. Gordon Ramsay Academy / Street Burger.....	58
Figure 88. Church Path to Chobham Road, OS Plan 1912 .....	59
Figure 89. Skating Rink advertisement 1909 .....	59
Figure 90. 1-5 Commercial Buildings.....	60
Figure 91. Halifax advertisement, 1948.....	60
Figure 92. Caffè Nero, 2020 .....	61
Figure 93. Advertisement for Tanduri Mahal .....	62
Figure 94. Oxfam shop in 2020.....	62
Figure 95. No.s 29 and 31, 2022.....	63
Figure 96. Gascoigne-Pees advert, 1968.....	64
Figure 97. Gascoigne-Pees, 2008 .....	64

Figure 98. Carson & Co., 2014 .....	64
Figure 99. Grants, 2015.....	64
Figure 100. Babyland advertisement, 1939 .....	65
Figure 101. Babyland advert, 1953.....	65
Figure 102. Aston Mead 2018 .....	65
Figure 103. No.s 33 and 35, Foundations, 2020 .....	66
Figure 104. 1933 advertisement for Harpers shop in Guildford Road .....	66
Figure 105. 1948 advertisement .....	66
Figure 106. BHF, 2008 .....	67
Figure 107. Cheque Centre, 2014.....	67
Figure 108. Poppins Restaurant, 2020 .....	68
Figure 109. Baker's advertisement, 1953 .....	69
Figure 110. La Bodega interior .....	69
Figure 111. Real China Express .....	69
Figure 112. Turkish Kitchen, 2020 .....	70
Figure 113. Ihlara Valley, 2025 .....	70
Figure 114. Garage, to left of Worlds Stores.....	71
Figure 115. Worlds Stores .....	72
Figure 116. Gammons expansion .....	72
Figure 117. British Home Stores, 2015 .....	72
Figure 118. British Heart Foundation store, 2020.....	73
Figure 119. Old Ashby Bank building .....	74
Figure 120. Women's Institute .....	75
Figure 121. Gammons, c.1960 .....	76
Figure 122. Guildford House, c.1910 .....	77
Figure 123. 1968 advertisement for Gammon's.....	77
Figure 124. Chobham Road to Chertsey Road, OS Plan 1912.....	77
Figure 125. Althorp's shop, 1888.....	78
Figure 126. E H Taylor advertisement.....	78
Figure 127. Open space .....	79
Figure 128. OS Plan, 1957 .....	79
Figure 129. John Sparkes Goldsmith 1878-1942 .....	81
Figure 130. Allen Price advertisement .....	81

Figure 131. Bernthal advertisement, 1905.....	82
Figure 132. 1933 advertisement .....	82
Figure 133. Lucy Shier's dress shop .....	82
Figure 134. The London Stores .....	83
Figure 135. Herbert Burnett's shop, 1905.....	85
Figure 136. Piggott advertisement, 1956.....	85
Figure 137. Caleb Bond's dining rooms.....	86
Figure 138. Advertisement for Bond's Temperance Hotel.....	86
Figure 139. Caleb Bond.....	87
Figure 140. Belfast Linen Warehouse.....	87
Figure 141. Belfast Linen Warehouse Advertisement, 1940.....	88
Figure 142. J H Barrenger Ltd .....	89
Figure 143. Singer Sewing Machine store .....	89
Figure 144. Barrenger advert, 1914.....	89
Figure 145. Barrenger advert, 1968 .....	89
Figure 146. Misses Rowland's confectionery store .....	90
Figure 147. Mayfair ad, 1953 .....	90
Figure 148. Robert Warren.....	91
Figure 149. William Brown's store.....	92
Figure 150. Brevitt Shoes .....	92
Figure 151. Carriage works (front right), c.1905.....	93
Figure 152. Head advert, 1894 .....	93
Figure 153. Robertson advert, 1934.....	94
Figure 154. Robertson Brothers .....	94
Figure 155. Woking Fruit & Vegetable Market .....	95
Figure 156. Announcement of Tesco's self-service supermarket, 1961 .....	96
Figure 157. Gerrards and Tesco, c.1965 .....	96
Figure 158. Orridge's Drug Store .....	97
Figure 159. Fine Fare Superstore, 1986.....	98
Figure 160. XX895 Blackburn Buccaneer standing on The Planets bar .....	99
Figure 161. Hawker Hunter T Mk7 outside of the Big Apple .....	100
Figure 162. Victoria Gardens to Chapel Street, OS Plan 1912 .....	101
Figure 163. Victoria Gardens to Chapel Street, OS Plan 1966 .....	101

Figure 164. Victoria Gardens and War Memorial, 1953.....	102
Figure 165. Paul Graham hair-dressers, c1973 .....	103
Figure 166. Photofinish, 1986 .....	103
Figure 167. Woking Hospice shop, 2017.....	104
Figure 168. Townends, 2018 .....	105
Figure 169. Stirling Ackroyd, 2023 .....	105
Figure 170. Sterling Street, mortgages, finance, 2025 .....	105
Figure 171. Bell & Butler, 1964 .....	106
Figure 172. HSBC, 2018.....	106
Figure 173. Scotts of Woking, 1964 .....	107
Figure 174. Midland Bank, 1968 .....	107
Figure 175. KFC, 1968 .....	108
Figure 176. Trustee Savings Bank, 1968.....	109
Figure 177. Stewart House, November 2025 .....	109
Figure 178. Stewart House, November 2025 .....	110
Figure 179. Seymours, 2020 .....	110
Figure 180. Steward House, 2017 .....	111
Figure 181. Times Ahead 1990 advertisement.....	111
Figure 182. Silver Spring, Peter Rapson and rear of J Sainsbury .....	111
Figure 183. Celly's, 2011.....	112
Figure 184. Elia, 2020 .....	112
Figure 185. Bel-Air advertisement, 1964 .....	113
Figure 186. Silver Spring advertisement, 1968.....	113
Figure 187. Going Places .....	113
Figure 188. No. 16 Araceli's, 2020 .....	114
Figure 189. Jessops .....	114
Figure 190. No. 18 Paddy Power, 2020.....	115
Figure 191. Surrey Advertiser, 1948.....	116
Figure 192. Ernest Robert Barlow (1900-97) as a young man .....	116
Figure 193. 1968 Mann & Co. advert .....	116
Figure 194. Halifax at No. 22, 2018.....	117
Figure 195. Erskine advertisement, 1939.....	118
Figure 196. Sidney F Erskine 1890-1971 .....	118

Figure 197. Commercial House, 2017.....	118
Figure 198. Chapel Street to Church Path, OS Plan 1912 .....	119
Figure 199. New chapel 1960s.....	119
Figure 200. Chapel/Library in early 1970s.....	120
Figure 201. WAVS .....	120
Figure 202. Côte Brasserie, 2020.....	121
Figure 203. G Tyrrell advertisement .....	122
Figure 204. Moldram & Wilson advertisement, 1968.....	122
Figure 205. Advertisement January 1893.....	123
Figure 206. Commercial Services advertisement, 1937 .....	124
Figure 207. Lambeth Building Society advertisement, 1968.....	124
Figure 208. Xmas 1893 Advertisement.....	124
Figure 209. Portrait by Marguerite Reed .....	125
Figure 210. Photographs from The Commercial Studio .....	125
Figure 211. No. 32 Lloyds Bank, 2020.....	126
Figure 212. Morris Depot advertisements from 1931 and 1932.....	127
Figure 213. Morris House, 1956 .....	127
Figure 214. Morris House, 2017 .....	129
Figure 215. UBX, Nov 2025 .....	129
Figure 216. Escape Hunt, Nov 2025 .....	129
Figure 217. No. 36, 2020 .....	130
Figure 218. Christine, 1960s.....	131
Figure 219. No. 38 Chancellors, 2020.....	131
Figure 220. Timpson advertisement, 1933.....	132
Figure 221. Sports House .....	133
Figure 222. Sports House advertisement, 1960 .....	133
Figure 223. The Dome, 2020 .....	133
Figure 224. Gascoigne-Pees, 2023.....	133
Figure 225. Church Path to Chobham Road, OS Plan 1912.....	134
Figure 226. Tyler’s store & warehouse .....	134
Figure 227. 6 & 7 Albion House .....	134
Figure 228. Marciano Lounge, 2020 .....	135
Figure 229. Relate West Surrey .....	135

Figure 230. Gloster's offices .....	136
Figure 231. OS Plan, 1894.....	137
Figure 232. A & S Romanesc Market .....	137
Figure 233. Harland House, 1968 .....	138
Figure 234. Establishment.....	139
Figure 235. Dec 2005 Advertisement .....	139
Figure 236. Café Class, 2015.....	139
Figure 237. Latino and Bacaró, 2020.....	140
Figure 238. Typical Wimpy interior.....	140
Figure 239. Olivo, 2008.....	140
Figure 240. Kendall .....	141
Figure 241. Kendall advertisement.....	141
Figure 242. Thorntons' advertisement, 1975.....	142
Figure 243. Waterfalls, 2020.....	142
Figure 244. District Bank c1968 .....	143
Figure 245. NatWest, c1992 .....	143
Figure 246. Cheltenham & Gloucester, 2008 .....	143
Figure 247. TSB, 2020.....	144
Figure 248. OS Plan, 1894.....	144
Figure 249. Surrey Advertiser May 1912 .....	145
Figure 250. <i>Surrey Advertiser</i> reports .....	146
Figure 251. Glosters Ltd .....	146
Figure 252. Shees advertisement, 1979 .....	147
Figure 253. Robinsons.....	147
Figure 254. Methven bookmark, c1995.....	147
Figure 255. County Property Management, 2019 .....	148
Figure 256. No. 46 Leaders, 2020.....	148
Figure 257. OS Plan, 1935 - Alfreton .....	148
Figure 258. Alfreton, incorporated into Slug & Lettuce, 2017.....	149
Figure 259. The London Stone, 2025 .....	150
Figure 260. Chobham Road to Chertsey Road, OS Plan 1912.....	151
Figure 261. c.1920.....	151
Figure 262. 1912 OS Plan .....	152

Figure 263. 1960 Susan Gay advert .....	152
Figure 264. Sidney Francis .....	153
Figure 265. Popular Studio, c.1955 .....	153
Figure 266. 1948 advertisement .....	154
Figure 267. 1966 OS Plan.....	154
Figure 268. East end of Commercial Road, c1934 .....	154



# THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WOKING

## ORIGINS

### The Railway

The modern town of Woking in Surrey did not exist before the 1850s. When, in May 1838, the London to Southampton railway first opened, early passengers would have looked out of the train windows upon wide stretches of heathland. The railway station, originally named Woking Common, was built on the southern side of the line to serve the coaches from Guildford and Ripley which brought and collected the mail.



Figure 1. Station on Woking Common, October 1838

### The Necropolis

In 1850, London had a problem; its ever growing population was filling all of the church graveyards.

The London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company was formed and proposed a solution. A huge cemetery would be built some distance from London, where everybody (and every body) in the city and later the country would be buried.

An Act of Parliament was passed which authorised the purchase of common land within the parish of the village of Woking (now Old Woking). The plan drew considerable criticism. Many thought that the 2600 acres authorised

to be purchased was far in excess of what would be needed and that the whole scheme was no more than land speculation.<sup>1</sup>

A cemetery of 400 acres was set out, as a first phase (in that corner of the land purchased farthest from London and the station of Woking Common). This cemetery is now Brookwood Cemetery and still one of the largest in Europe.

Before the first phase was complete, already the Necropolis Company was petitioning Parliament for a second Act which would allow them to sell off any surplus land for development. Land speculation?

**In Parliament—Session 1869.**

**London Necropolis and National Mausoleum.  
(Repeal of Restrictions as to the Sale of Surplus  
Lands; Amendment of Acts.)**

**N**OTICE is hereby given, that the London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company (hereinafter called the Company) intend to apply to Parliament in the ensuing session for leave to bring in a Bill and to pass an Act for the following, or some of the following purposes, that is to say :—

1. To enable the Company to sell, lease, and exchange the whole or any part of the lands purchased and acquired by them in the parish of Woking, in the county of Surrey, which have not been set apart as a cemetery or burial-ground, and which are not required for the purposes of the Company's undertaking; and to authorise the erection of houses and buildings upon such lands,

Figure 2. London Gazette 17 November 1868

Some of the first land sold was for institutions: The Woking Prison for Invalid Convicts, later to become Inkerman Barracks; the Surrey County Asylum for Pauper Lunatics, better known in more recent times as Brookwood Hospital; the Dramatic College for out of work actors, later the Oriental Institute.

The Company, however, had plans for a new town to be built around the station at Woking Common. It was the land sales policy of the Necropolis Company which ultimately saw the commercial centre of the new town grow up sandwiched between the railway and the Basingstoke Canal.

Their company architect, Henry Abraham, drew up a rough scheme which made no attempt to produce a sensible road network. It merely added to the existing tracks which had crossed the common, despite these having been cut and diverted by the canal and railway. North of the railway, the land was divided into small plots which were relatively attractive for commercial use, whereas south of the railway the plots were larger, allowing expensive houses to be built where they had nice views across towards Guildford and the Hogs Back. There was of course no local authority at this time to oversee matters, the Woking Local Board not being established until 1893 and Surrey County Council only created in 1889.

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard, HC Deb 27 February 1852 vol 119 cc925-30

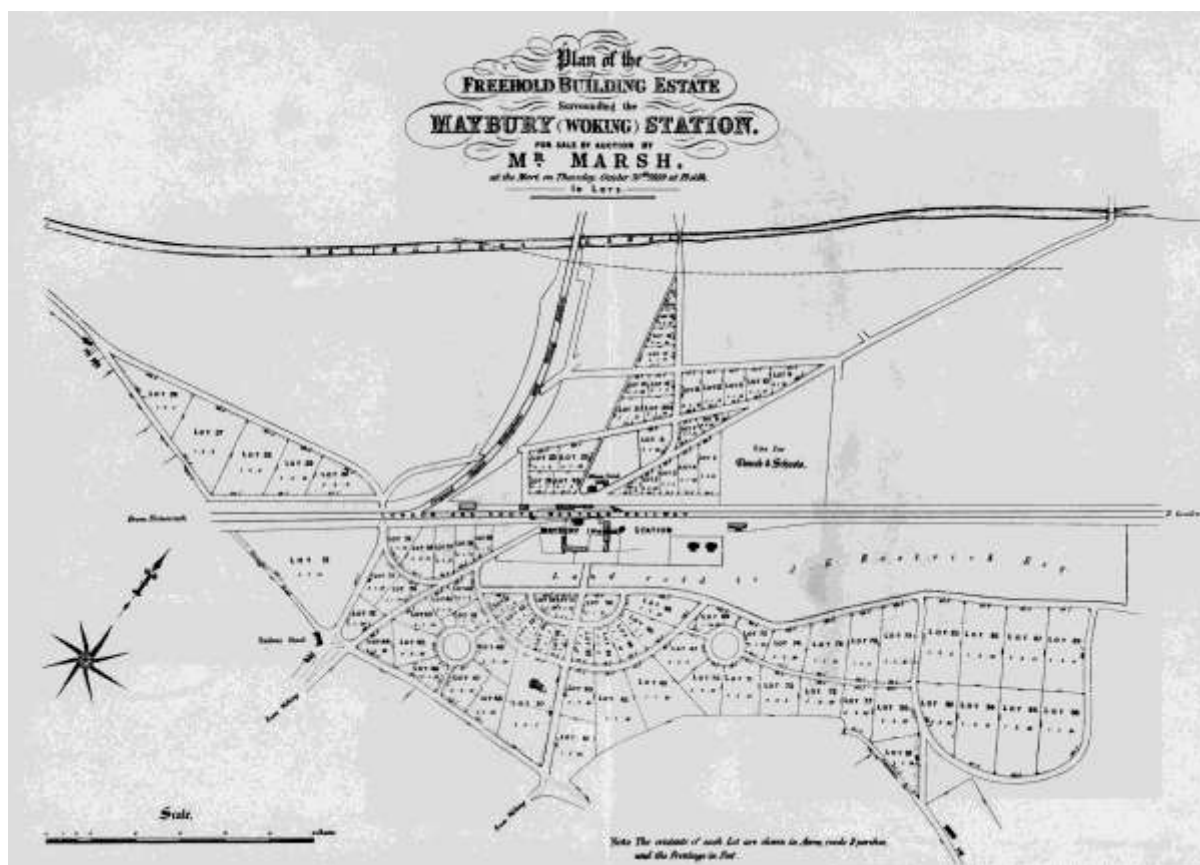


Figure 3. 1857 plan for land sales by the Necropolis Company

## COMMERCIAL ROAD

### Introduction

The first building to be built north of the railway was the Albion Hotel in 1856. This was followed by the development of a line of businesses along High Street. However, as High Street was bounded on one side by the railway, it never became the focus of the town; that mantle was taken *de facto* by Chertsey Road.

Commercial Road was one of the first streets to be laid out and named. Despite that (and its name<sup>2</sup>), large stretches of it remained undeveloped for decades. The northern side was developed piecemeal with large residential houses and community buildings. Some commercial development took place around the junction with Chobham Road, but it did not become a centre for commerce until most of the northern side of the road was redeveloped, in the 1970s, to provide the Wolsey Place shopping arcade.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1881 census (RG11/772 p16), Commercial Road appears to be referred to, in the Description of Enumeration District, as 'Silvester Road', although the actual household returns refer to Commercial Road. The enumerator was the postmaster, Jesse Mansell



Figure 4. Aerial view of Commercial Road (bottom left to top right) 1920

## Numbering

As various areas were infilled or redeveloped, different building numbering systems were employed for different stretches. The building numbers for individual buildings changed and different references published at about the same time used different numbers. In some instances, the same reference used different systems for the same stretch of road; the *1981 Woking Telephone Directory*, has Harper's Photographic listed at 71 Commercial Way, whilst Halfords, two doors down, are listed as being at 39 Commercial Road. In 1990/91 both Rumbelows and Richard Shops were listed as being at 53 Commercial Way. It has not been possible to provide a consistent reference throughout this work.

Commercial Road was first systematically numbered in 1922 running from east to west with odd numbers (1-87) on the northern side and even numbers (2-64) on the southern side. Following further development, a scheme for renumbering was approved by the Council in September 1950.

## Occupants

Because Woking was a new town, it is not surprising that the majority of the inhabitants were newcomers. People from all over the south of England saw the opportunity to buy land or property at cheap (or reasonable) prices and came to make a life for themselves. Of the twenty-nine heads of household listed in the 1901 census, nine were from elsewhere in Surrey and nineteen from outside of Surrey.

Dorset	3	Banstead	1
Essex	1	Chobham	1
Hampshire	1	Clapham	1
Herefordshire	1	Egham	1
Kent	1	Farncombe	1
London	4	Oatlands Park	1
Norfolk	1	Penge	1
Somerset	1	Sydenham	1
Staffordshire	1	Wandsworth	1
Sussex	1	Woking	1
Wiltshire	3		
Yorkshire	1		

Table 1 Place of birth of heads of households in Commercial Road (1901 census)

This work generally concentrates on the ground floors of the buildings, most of which were three or four stories high. In the early 1900s, some of the proprietors of smaller businesses lived over their shops. Others rented the upper floors to individuals or as office space.

The aim has been to produce a comprehensive chronology of occupants for each building. In many, if not most, cases this has not been possible.

- There are some gaps in the 1860-1890 period due to the paucity and/or ambiguity of the surviving records. The Ordnance Survey produced 1:1,250 scale plans, surveyed in 1870 and 1895; Most of the initial development of Chertsey Road (like the rest of Woking town centre) took place almost entirely during the intervening period.
- During the first and second World Wars, maps and directories were not produced, partly because of the shortage of paper and partly due to the risk of information coming into the hands of enemy agents. Electoral registers were not maintained as there were no elections during the fighting.
- Street directories were not produced after 1980, being replaced by the much less useful (for the historian) yellow pages and other trade directories. These have, in the main, not been preserved by libraries and record offices. In turn these directories have been replaced by online directories which are constantly updated and do not provide a historical record. Coupled with the faster turn-over of businesses, there are almost certainly gaps or omissions in the 1990-2010 period.



## NORTH SIDE (ODD NUMBERS)

### PERCY STREET TO BATH ROAD

This section of the north side of Commercial Road was first developed between 1890 and 1905. It was home to a number of public buildings and became a small early civic centre.

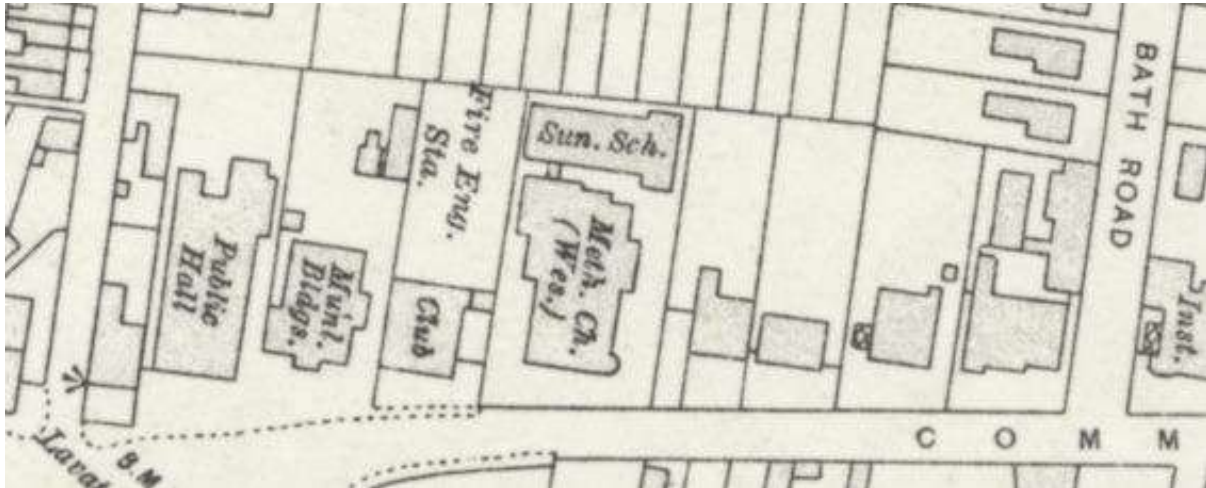


Figure 5. Percy Street to Bath Road OS Plan 1912



Figure 6. Municipal buildings, c.1910

### Woking Water Company

The Woking Water and Gas Company was incorporated by Special Act of Parliament on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1881. The Act authorised '*the construction of works for the supply of water and gas to Woking, Send and Ripley, East and West Horsley,*

*East and West Clandon, Merrow, Horsell and Pirbright*. A well was sunk and works constructed at Clandon, which were opened in August 1883<sup>3</sup>.



Figure 7. Woking & District Water Company pumping station, Horsley

In 1901, a new company district office building was erected in Commercial Road next to the Public Hall. The company moved from their old offices in Walton Road on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

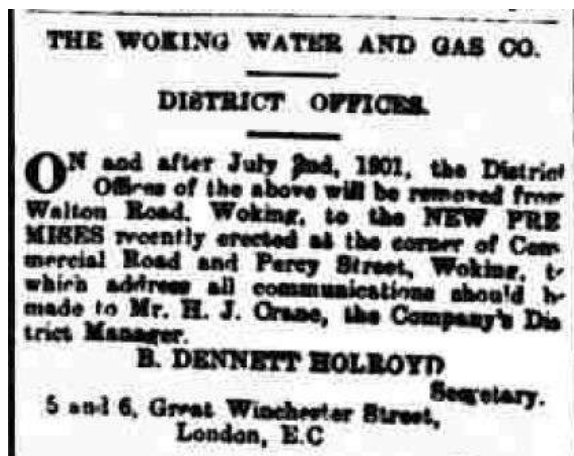


Figure 8. Announcement of new office



Figure 9. Woking Water Company office

The building was demolished in the early 1960s. Premier House (see page 9) was built on the site. In 1973, the Woking Water & Gas Company was amalgamated with several other local water companies to form North Surrey Water.

<sup>3</sup> *Morning Post* 21 August 1883

## Public Hall

The Woking Public Hall was designed by architects Homer & Ridler of Woking and London. Construction began in late summer 1895 and was expected to take 9 months; the builder was James Harris & Son of Woking.<sup>4</sup>

The Public Hall was a private venture, run by the Woking Public Hall Company Ltd. The Hall included a theatre (in 1903, it was boasting 'electric lighting, scenery by Hinton and tip-up seats by Deans of Birmingham'<sup>5</sup>) and facilities for dances, concerts and club meetings.



Figure 10. Public Hall c1905

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<sup>4</sup> *West Surrey Times* 28 September 1895

<sup>5</sup> *The Era* 5 December 1903





Figure 11. Super Cinemas Ad

The Hall ran into financial difficulties because of reduced bookings during the First World War. In 1919s, it was purchased by Henry Quartermaine, who had it re-styled as the Grand Theatre; The architect for the remodelling was Robert Atkinson, whose preliminary sketch appears in Figure 12. Henry was granted a license for music & dancing in February 1920.<sup>6</sup>

In 1929, the London and Southern Super Cinemas Company Ltd purchased the Grand Theatre, with plans for the first cinema to show 'talkies' in Woking with seating capacity for over 2000.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 12. Preliminary sketch for the Grand Theatre

The Grand Theatre closed in about 1950 and the building was used for a short time as offices for Newland Brother, coal merchants, and the Prudential and Refuge Assurance Company.

The building was demolished in the early 1960s and Premier House built on the site (see page 10).

<sup>6</sup> Surrey Advertiser 25 February 1920

<sup>7</sup> Surrey Advertiser 4 May 1929

## **No. 5 – Public Halls Cottage**

Alongside the Public Halls was a cottage (probably to the rear) which was accommodation for the manager or caretaker.

The building was demolished in the early 1960s and Premier House built on the site.

Occupants of No. 5	
1898	Joseph Lewis
1920	Henry James
1957	HM Customs & Excise

## **No. 7**

No. 7 Commercial Road seems to have been built in about 1915. From 1916 until 1937, it was the offices of Harding & Sons, dyers and cleaners. In 1957, it was occupied by P F Fuller.

The building was demolished in the early 1960s and Premier House built on the site.

## **Premier House**

Premier House was built in 1964 following the demolition of the Water Company offices and Public Hall buildings. It was a six storey office block, designed by local architects Osborn & Hollis and constructed by James Miller and Partners (Hayes) Ltd. The five floors of offices covered 32,000 square feet, with a retail unit on the ground floor occupying 7,000 square feet; there was basement parking for 30 cars.



Figure 13. Premier House in 2000

The ground floor was occupied by Maple & Co. Maple & Co. was a British furniture and upholstery manufacturer established in 1841. The company became one of the prime makers and suppliers of furniture to the aristocracy and royalty in both the United Kingdom and around the world.

In 1980, the furniture maker Waring & Gillow joined with Maple & Co., to become Maple, Waring & Gillow. It subsequently became part of Allied Maples Group Ltd, which, when it was acquired by supermarket chain Asda in 1988, included Allied Carpets. The Woking branch closed at about this time.

Allied Maples became bankrupt in 1997 and the brand was acquired by Alders.

Premier House was later refurbished and renamed Globe House. Globe House was demolished in 2018 as part of the Victoria Square development.

Ground-floor occupants of Premier House	
1966-88	Maple & Co.
1989-97	Allied Maples Group Ltd
1999-2003	Be-wise, discount store
<i>Refurbishment &amp; rename to Globe House</i>	
2008-16	qs Circle 7

### **Municipal Building / Council Offices**

The Woking Local Board formed in 1894. It first met in Goldsworth Hall with 18 councillors representing the wards of Knaphill, St Johns, Mayford, Sutton Green, Brookwood, Old Woking, and Maybury. Woking Urban District Council was formed by 1895, replacing the Local Board.

Ashby's bank (see page 73), which was then at the junction of Chertsey Road and Maybury Road, offered the Council accommodation in the offices on the first floor of the building. In 1899, unhappy with the facilities and the rent being asked by the bank, the Council were in the process of building new premises in Commercial Road; on 6th June, their offices above Ashby's Bank were destroyed in a fire.



Figure 14. 1899 fire at Council Offices

The site for the new council offices had been purchased in 1897 and a plan approved. The scheme was abandoned after public protest at the cost.

A more modest new building was started in 1904 and completed, at a cost of £4,500, by William Drowley & Co. The Council met there for the first time in March 1906. As can be seen on the map in Figure 5 and Figure 15, a fire-engine station was built behind the council offices.





Figure 15. Council Offices c.1955

The attempt to save rate-payers' money had resulted in a building that was woefully inadequate. In 1939, most of the Council departments moved into temporary accommodation in three large detached houses off Guildford Road. They were still there forty years later.



Figure 16. 1944 ration books

In the era of war time and post-war rationing, the offices were home, until 1954, to the Food and Fuel Office.

In the late 1950s, the building was demolished and the new home for the Central Post Office was built on the site. The new Post Office opened on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1960.



Figure 17. Central Post Office 1999

The Post Office closed in 2008 and moved into the W H Smith's store in Wolsey Place. It was demolished in 2015 prior to the Victoria Square development.

### **Fire Station**

Having been reluctant, in the 1890s to pay for a new fire engine, Woking Council in 1899 lost their offices to a fire, just as they had finally agreed to fund a new engine. Having finally provided the town with a fire engine (and station in which to keep it), it was situated conveniently near to the site for their new offices in Commercial Road. The station, built in 1899, was situated to the rear of the Council Offices, with the access between the Council Offices and the Constitutional Club.



Figure 18. Access way to fire station.



Figure 19. Fire brigade, outside of the station, c1914  
(The engine is horse-drawn; the pump, steam powered)



The fire brigade moved to new premises, in Church Street, in July 1928. The older building was eventually demolished in about 1970, prior to Cawsey Way being built.

### **Woking Constitutional Club (No. 11)**

Founded in 1898, the Woking Constitutional Club, latterly the Woking Conservative Club, is one of the oldest established private members clubs in the South East of England. The site was purchased in 1895 for the erection of a 'Woking Conservative Club'.<sup>8</sup> The building, Renaissance in character, was designed by Mr H A Whitburn, a Woking architect and built by James Harris & Son for £2,227. The club opened its doors to the 230 members on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 1898; it was formally opened by the club's president, the 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Onslow, on 7<sup>th</sup> October.<sup>9</sup>



Figure 20. Constitutional Club next to Wesleyan Church

When Woking town centre was redeveloped in the 1970s, with the building of Wolsey Place shopping centre, a new road layout was seen as required to service the new town centre. The Constitutional Club was demolished in 1968 to make way for Cawsey Way which linked the bottom of the High Street with Church Street. Cawsey Way itself closed on 12 June 2017, as part of the Victoria Square development.

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<sup>8</sup> *West Surrey Times* 2 November 1895

<sup>9</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 1 October 1898

### **Wesleyan Church & Schools (No. 13)**

The rapidly growing methodist community of the early 1900's meant that the chapel at the corner of Chapel Street and Commercial Road (see page 119) was no longer adequate. The then Superintendent Minister, Rev.<sup>d</sup> George King-Pryor, proposed that a third, larger church with ancillary premises be designed to meet the new demands.

Land was acquired in Commercial Road for £1,200 and the foundation stone was laid on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1904 and the top stone of the spire on 16<sup>th</sup> September. The building was by William Drowley & Co. The new Wesleyan Methodist Church was opened on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1905 by the president of the conference, the Rev.<sup>d</sup> Sylvester Whitehead. It is recorded that the electric lighting failed during his address, but he carried on regardless! The contract price of the church was £6,900 and a further £1,685 for the school buildings<sup>10</sup>.



Figure 21. Building of Wesleyan Church, 1904

By 1927, membership had reached 250. Following the Methodist Union in 1932, the former Primitive Methodist Chapel in Walton Road was closed and its members added.

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<sup>10</sup> [www.trinitywoking.org.uk/about-trinity2808/history-of-trinity/](http://www.trinitywoking.org.uk/about-trinity2808/history-of-trinity/)

During the 1960's, in common with the whole Christian Church, the pattern of Church life was changing. The church itself proved too large and expensive, while its ancillary premises were inadequate. The plans for redevelopment of Woking town centre resulted in the sale of the church and the purchase of a new site in Brewery Road.

When the Wolsey Place shopping arcade was built, the church was demolished and Boots's new store was built on the site.

### **Rosslyn (No. 1/15)**

Rosslyn was a detached house of nine rooms, built in about 1900.

Peter MacDonald had moved to Woking from Clapham in 1882. Previously living in Poole Road, he was employed by the Local Board and subsequently by the District Council as general rate collector and, latterly, also as registrar of births and deaths.<sup>11</sup> As registrar, he was responsible for taking the 1901 census in the district. He moved into Rosslyn in 1901 and lived there until his death in 1921.



Figure 22. Peter McDonald



Figure 23. Rosslyn c.1920

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<sup>11</sup> In 1914, Peter MacDonald was interviewed by the *Woking News and Mail*, published in a supplement marking their first 20 years, in which he described the changes since his arrival in the town.



In 1924, George Richards-Smith, a dental surgeon, moved in, using the building for his practice up until his death in 1962.

Rosslyn was demolished in about 1970 for the Wolsey Place shopping centre development. Boots's new store was built on the site (along with that of the Wesleyan church).

Occupants of Rosslyn	
1901-22	Peter McDonald, registrar
1924-62	George Richards-Smith

### **Casa Rustica (No. 3/17)**

Casa Rustica (Italian for 'rustic house') was built in 1908<sup>12</sup> for Miss Helen Coulton, headmistress of the Woking Girls' School (see page 18). She lived there until her retirement, in 1911, when she moved to Cornwall. The next (long term) occupant was Ernest Blackham, a dental surgeon. He lived in the house from 1913 until 1934 and, presumably, ran his practise from there.



Figure 24. Casa Rustica & The Rest, 1924

Either side of the second world war, the house was occupied by two more dentists – Norman Alwyn Goudge and John L Hayes.

Occupants of Casa Rustica	
1908-11	Miss Helen Taylor Coulton
1912	Loftus Allan Liebhardt Ryan
1913-35	Ernest Blackham, dental surgeon
1937-45	Norman Alwyn Goudge, dental surgeon
1947-59	John L Hayes, dental surgeon
1964	<i>vacant</i>

<sup>12</sup> SHC, 6198/13/30, September supplement to 1908 Rate Book

The 1964 Woking Directory shows the building as vacant. Casa Rustica was demolished in about 1970 for the Wolsey Place shopping centre development.

### **The Rest (No. 5/19)**

The Rest (Figure 24) was built by James Harris, builder, in about 1890. James had run a business as builder and monumental mason from his yard in the High Street since the mid-1860s. The Rest was his residence for his retirement.

After James's death in 1901, his widow, Mary, continued living there until her death in 1908. The house then came into the possession of James Bartlett for about 15 years. In 1927, James Harris's son, Frank Boulton Harris took possession for the next ten years.

During the Second World War, The Rest briefly became home to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

The Rest was demolished in about 1970 for the Wolsey Place shopping centre development.

Occupants of The Rest	
1890-1901	James Harris
1902-08	Mrs Mary Harris
1911-26	James Bartlett
1927-37	Frank Boulton Harris
1942-44	Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)
1947-48	Frank L Buckley
1954	J Gardner Ltd
1957	H A Over
1961-68	Mann & Co.

### **Cambridge House (No. 7/21)**

Woking High School for Girls was an upmarket private school in Commercial Road. Founded in 1884, it lasted until 1922.

The school was established by a Miss Helen Taylor Coulton, for the education of girls up to the age of 18. A kindergarten for boys and girls was added in 1886.

Helen Coulton was joined by her sister, Lucy, in the early 1990s and they ran the school until

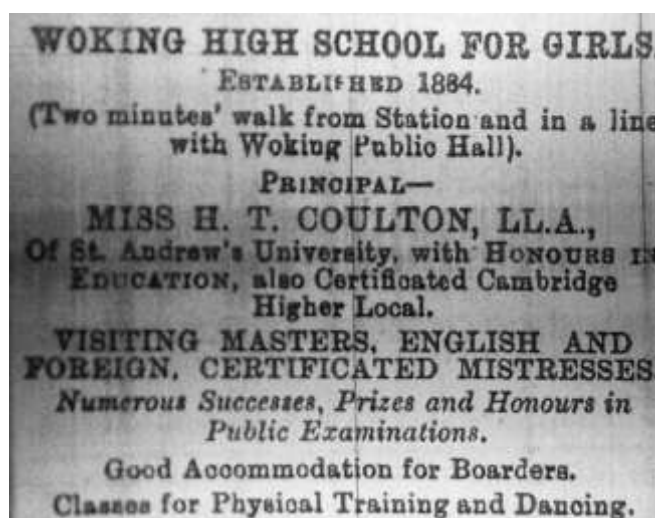


Figure 25. High School advertisement

they retired in 1911. A Miss Rebecca Webb then became headmistress.

Woking High School for Girls closed in 1922. From 1924-1926 the house was occupied by William Barnett Bayliss. The building was then converted into commercial use.

In about 1920, that part of Cambridge House adjacent to Bath Road (which may always have been for staff accommodation) was partitioned off, given the name 'Penrhyn' and became a separate tenement (see below).



Figure 26. High School for Girls, c.1903

From 1929 to 1935, the ground floor of the house was occupied by Doris Archer-Thomson. In the 1934 street directory, the address was given the description of 'photo studio'.

From 1931 until the Second World War, part of the building was home to the accountancy firm of Lintott, Clay & Carter. Frederick Mackey Lintott was resident. After the war, the main occupants were the firm of Radford & Sargeant.

Cambridge House was demolished in about 1970 for the Wolsey Place shopping centre development.

Occupants of Cambridge House	
1884-1922	Woking High School for Girls
1924-26	William Barnett Bayliss
1929-35	Doris Archer-Thomson, photographer
1931-42	Carter, Clay & Lintott, accountancy
1946-70	Mossop, Privett & Co., Radford & Sargeant, etc

## Penrhyn (No. 9/23)

In about 1918, that part of Cambridge House adjacent to Bath Road (which may always have been for staff accommodation) was partitioned off, given the name 'Penrhyn' and became a separate tenement. In the 1921 road numbering, Penrhyn became No. 9.

From 1918 until 1931, Penrhyn saw a succession of short-term tenants.

Miss Betty Louisa Baker ran the Beta Café from 1933 until 1949 (previously she had run the 'Corner Café' in Walton Road).

In 1950, Penrhyn was renumbered from No. 9 to No. 23. In about 1950, the building was taken over by John Shee for his television retail and rental business.



Figure 27. 1953 Shee's advertisement

Penrhyn was demolished in about 1970 for the Wolsey Place shopping centre development.

Occupants of Penrhyn	
1918-21	Mrs Dorothy Muriel Williams
1922	Edward Charles Williams
1924-25	Maurice Taylor Wood
1926	Elizabeth Baker
1928-31	Edith Emily (Meredith) Baker
1932	<i>vacant</i>
1933-49	Beta Café (Betty Louisa Baker)
1953-70	J Shee & Cox / Shees, televisions

## BATH ROAD TO CHURCH PATH

Between Bath Road and Church Path, on the northern side of Commercial Road, a number of institutional buildings and large semi-detached villas were built.



Figure 28. Bath Road to Church Path, OS Plan 1912

## Tower Lodge / Victoria Hall (No. 11/25)

The building on the corner opposite to the girls' high school was a private English language college for foreign students, run by a Joseph Tomlinson. The building, Tower Lodge, was a relatively large house with 10 rooms, built in about 1886. One corner had an octagonal tower, which gave Tower Lodge its name.

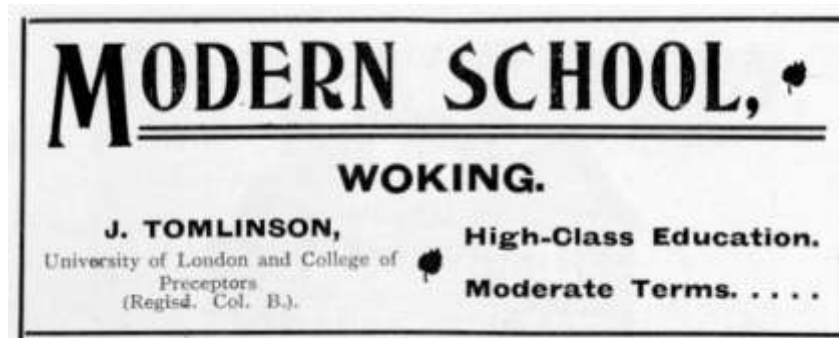


Figure 29. Advertisement for English Language College

The school seems to have been a success and survived for twenty-five years. The 1911 census shows Joseph with several family members, one general servant, and four male students from Spain – who were resident in the country for two years, learning English.

Later that year the school closed and Tower Lodge became home to the Woking branch of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). It was renamed as Victoria Hall.



Figure 30. YWCA headquarters, May 1916

In 1932, Victoria Hall was incorporated into the Atalanta Dance Hall. The western half (with the tower) became known as Atalanta Chambers and was home to the Broadway Travel Bureau, and various estate agents; ladies and gents hairdressers were on the first floor.

Occupants of Tower Lodge	
1886-1911	Modern School (Joseph Tomlinson)
1911-31	Young Women's Christian Association
1920-21	Edward Allen Frost
1921-25	Charles Taylor
1926-28	Robert Harrild Cowley
1932-68	Atalanta Dance Hall

## Masonic Hall

The Masonic Hall was built, in 1882, by the Weyside Lodge (the Old Woking branch of freemasons), which had been founded in 1872<sup>13</sup>. It was widely used by all sorts of clubs and organisations for meetings and activities; it was, for example, a venue for Woking Chess Club matches.

From 1914 to 1921, the hall was in use as a recreation room for soldiers.

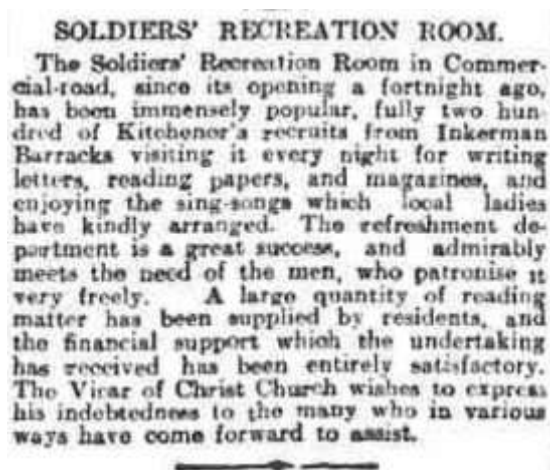


Figure 31. Surrey Advertiser October 1914



Figure 32. Soldiers' Recreation Room, May 1916

Throughout the 1920s, the hall resumed its role as a hall available for general public use. In 1932, it was incorporated into the Atalanta Dance Hall.

Occupants of Masonic Hall	
1882-1914	Public Hall
1914-21	Soldiers' Recreation Room
1922-1931	Public Hall
1932-68	Atalanta Dance Hall

## Atalanta Dance Hall

Tower Lodge and the Masonic Hall were converted into a dance hall (Figure 34), in 1932. The venue opened on 24<sup>th</sup> September, advertised as 'Atalanta Palais de Dance'. It was known thereafter simply as the Atalanta.

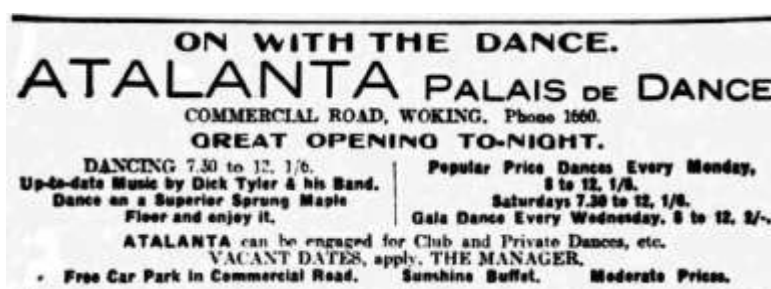


Figure 33. Atalanta Palais de Dance advertisement, September 1932

<sup>13</sup> <http://weyside1395.org.uk/history.html>



The Atalanta was run by Bob Potter, who later built the Lakeside Country Club, near Frimley.

Many of the top bands of the day played at the Atalanta, including, The Who, The Kinks, Tom Jones, Rod Stewart, The Small Faces, and on 19th August 1963, the Rolling Stones. Eric Clapton and Cream played the Atalanta three times in the autumn of 1966.



Figure 34. The Atalanta

Jazz artists who appeared included Kenny Ball and Acker Bilk.

Despite public outcry, the Atalanta was demolished in January 1972 and redeveloped as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre. A replacement for the Atalanta was planned as part of the development (see page 54), but the terms proposed by Norwich Union were unacceptable to Bob Potter and, after three years of negotiations, agreement had not been reached<sup>14</sup>. Bob Potter instead went on to build the Lakeside Country Club at Frimley Green.



Figure 35. Demolition of the Atalanta, c.1972

### **Wesley Manse / Noel House (No. 17)**

Wesley Manse was built in 1895 (at the same time as the extension to the Wesleyan Chapel in Chapel Street was built). It provided accommodation for

<sup>14</sup> *Woking News & Mail* 6 August 1971

the resident minister. Between 1895 and 1906, four different ministers lived in the house.

Following the building of the new Wesleyan church, new accommodation for the minister was provided in York Road.

Wesley Manse was acquired by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) which, in need of larger premises, started operating from there early in 1908. The formal opening was on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February; the building was renamed Noel House.<sup>15</sup>

From 1924 until 1935, Noel House was home to the Ministry of Labour Employment Exchange, run by Herbert Cox.

Noel House was demolished in 1938 and the site became part of a car park. During 1971-74 the carpark was redeveloped as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre.



Figure 36. Commercial Road Carpark, c.1960, Christ Church in the background

Occupants of Wesley Manse / Noel House	
1895-96	Reverend Charles Rose
1896-99	Reverend John R Cleminson
1900-02	Reverend James Spensley
1904-06	Reverend George Richard King-Prior
1908-21	Young Women's Christian Association
1923-35	Ministry of Labour Employment Exchange (Herbert Cox, prop.)
1936-37	Horace Charles Hope

<sup>15</sup> *West Surrey Times* 22 February 1908



### **Cedar Villa (No. 19)**

Cedar Villa was built, in about 1885, as a private house. The first occupant was Henry William Gloster junior and the house stayed in the family for the next 30 years. When the road was systematically numbered, in 1921, it became No. 19.

Cedar Villa was demolished in 1938 and the site became part of a car park. During 1971-74 the car park was redeveloped as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre.

Occupants of Cedar Villa	
1886-91	Henry William Gloster junior
1894-96	Thomas C Gloster
1901-1913	Frank J Gloster
1918-30	Alfred Joseph F Potter
1932	Frederick Levy
1934	Academy of Music

### **Merton Villa (No. 21)**

Merton Villa was built in about 1890 as a private house. The first occupant was William White, who lived there for more than 40 years. In 1921, when the road was systematically numbered, it became No. 23.

Merton Villa was demolished in 1938 and the site became part of a car park. During 1971-74 the car park was redeveloped as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre.

Occupants of Merton Villa	
1891-1935	William White
1935-36	Henry John Kessell / Edward Constantine Barber / A W Jones

### **Denmark Villas / Erica Villa / Galloway (No. 23)**

Denmark Villas was built in the early 1880s. The first known occupant was Frederick Shelley.

George Waterer seems to have renamed the house 'Erica Villa', when he moved in, in about 1901. Likewise when William Reid moved in, in 1911, he renamed the house to 'Galloway' which it remained for the next 27 years. In 1921, when the road was systematically numbered it became No. 23.

Occupants of Denmark Villas / Erica Villa / Galloway	
1884-91	Frederick Shelley
1901-04	George Waterer
1905-08	Alfred J R Aubrey
1911-30	William Reid
1932-37	Edith Emily (Meredith) Baker

Galloway was demolished in 1938 and the site became part of a car park. During 1971-74, the car park was redeveloped as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre.

### **Heatherside / Sallmore / No. 14 (No. 25)**

Heatherside was built in the early 1880s. The first known occupant was Joseph Hutchison who occupied the house from 1882 until 1885.

Ralph Taylor was born in Ashmansworth, Hampshire in 1857. He moved to Woking sometime in the mid-1880s. In the 1891 census, he was described as 'music seller and teacher of music'. By 1894, Ralph had moved into No. 23 High Street and had a business selling musical instruments.

By 1911, the name of the house had been changed to Sallmoor. This name then fell out of use as, from 1911 until the first systematic numbering of the road in 1921, the house was known as No. 14; presumably this was a hang-over of some earlier informal numbering system that existed, even though the records invariably refer to the houses on this stretch of the road by their names. In 1921 it was assigned No. 25.

The house was demolished in 1938 and the site became part of a car park. During 1971-74, the car park was redeveloped as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre.

Occupants of Heatherside	
1882-1885	Joseph Hutchison
1888-1894	Ralph Taylor
1895-96	Henry W Gloster junior
1899-1900	William White
1901	Edith Squibb
1911-21	Peters Gladden Wright
1924-26	William H Fisher
1928-34	John Milton Fifield
1937	G Rand

### **South Western Hotel / Myholme (No. 27)**

A building was erected between Heatherside and Clovelly in about 1895.

The building was taken over by Mrs Edith Squibb. Edith and her husband James had previously been proprietors of the Railway Hotel, from about 1877 until his death in 1880, from when Edith carried on alone. From 1895 until 1906, when she retired, Edith ran a temperance hotel called the South Western Hotel.

When the road was systematically numbered, in 1921, it became No. 27.

The hotel passed to Edith's son, George, who ran it until 1932. George changed the name to 'Myholme'. In 1938, Myholme was demolished and the site became part of a car park. During 1971-74 the car park was redeveloped as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre.



Figure 37. South Western Hotel, 1902

Occupants of Myholme	
1891	Joseph Pearson Fitzgerald
1895-1906	Mrs Edith Squibb
1907-32	George James Squibb
1932-35	John Arthur Swayne
1937	Woking Railway Men's Athletic Club (temporary accommodation)

### **Clovelly / Speedwell (No. 29)**

Clovelly was one of a pair of semi-detached houses (with Lynmouth House) built in 1881 by Sparkes Cornelius Knight. The house was let out, except for a short period, from 1908 to 1911, when Knight occupied it himself.

**Woking Station.**  
**TO LET, CLOVELLY AND LYNMOUTH HOUSES.**  
 Semi-detached. Bay windows, ground and first floor, with drawing, dining, and 6 bedrooms, large kitchen and scullery, cellars, &c. W.C., upstairs, usual out-offices, good gardens. Rent £45, further particulars and to view, apply Mr S. C. KNIGHT, Woking Station, Surrey.

Figure 38. 1882 advertisement to let

From 1913 until 1934, the building was home to the Woking Women's Club & Girls Friendly Society (G.F.S.) Institute, during which time it was known by the name Speedwell. The house acquired the address No. 29, in 1921.

In 1938, Speedwell was demolished and the site became part of a car park.



Figure 39. Clovelly and Lynmouth House, 1903

During 1971-74, the car park was redeveloped as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre.

Occupants of Clovelly	
1882	Henry F Askham
1882-85	Sparkes Cornelius Knight
1888	Mr Howard
1888-90	Reverend Charles W R Higham
1891-93	Joseph Pearson Fitzgerald
1896	Clement Witherby
1898-1906	Arthur Lintott
1908-11	Sparkes Harris Knight
1913-34	Woking Women's Club & G. F. S. Institute
1937	<i>vacant</i>

### **Lynmouth House (No. 31)**

Lynmouth House was one of a pair of semi-detached houses (with Clovelly – see above) built in 1881 by Sparkes Cornelius Knight. The house remained a private residence, being rented to a number of tenants, until 1935.

Lynmouth House then sat empty until it was demolished in 1938 and the site became part of a car park. During 1971-74 the car park was developed as part of the Wolsey Place shopping centre.

Occupants of Lynmouth House	
1882-89	Joseph Hayward
1891-95	Capt. Parker
1891-94	Henry William Gloster
1894-96	John Noakes Willsher
1898-1918	Frederick George Hawkins
1918-25	Thomas Marshall Weaver
1926-28	Mrs Ada Mary Ann Weaver
1928-34	Thomas Worthy
1935-37	<i>vacant</i>

## **WOLSEY PLACE, COMMERCIAL WAY**

Wolsey Place<sup>16</sup> was the first planned retail centre in Woking since Henry Abraham drew up a rough scheme for the Necropolis Company's land sales in 1857. Bath Road, most of West Street, much of Church Street and the northern side of Commercial Road from Percy Street to Church Path were laid waste. Construction started in mid-1971 and finished in about July 1974. The architects were Scott, Brownrigg and Turner and the main building contractor was Gilbert Ash; both were Woking firms.

The shopping precinct was nominally a pedestrian area, although there was some vehicular access; the western end of Commercial Road was renamed Commercial Way. Whilst firms started taking up occupancy in 1974, the official opening of Wolsey Place was on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1975. The developers designated each unit within the construction with a unique number (Figure 41).<sup>17</sup> Ketts who moved into 21 Commercial Way in 1976, originally had the address 'Unit 15 Central Development Area'.



Figure 40. Construction of Wolsey Place, c.1973

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<sup>16</sup> The name is an acknowledgement of the historical fact that Thomas Wolsey (advisor to Henry VIII) was at Woking Palace in 1515 when he received news that the Pope had made him a Cardinal, a fact that also gives Woking FC its nickname – the 'Cardinals' or 'Cards'

<sup>17</sup> Even this is a simplification, as there were three units designated as Stores C, D & E. Store D was originally reserved for Boots, however they eventually took Units 1-9 and Store D was subsequently divided into two (currently occupied by Robert Dyas and W H Smith)



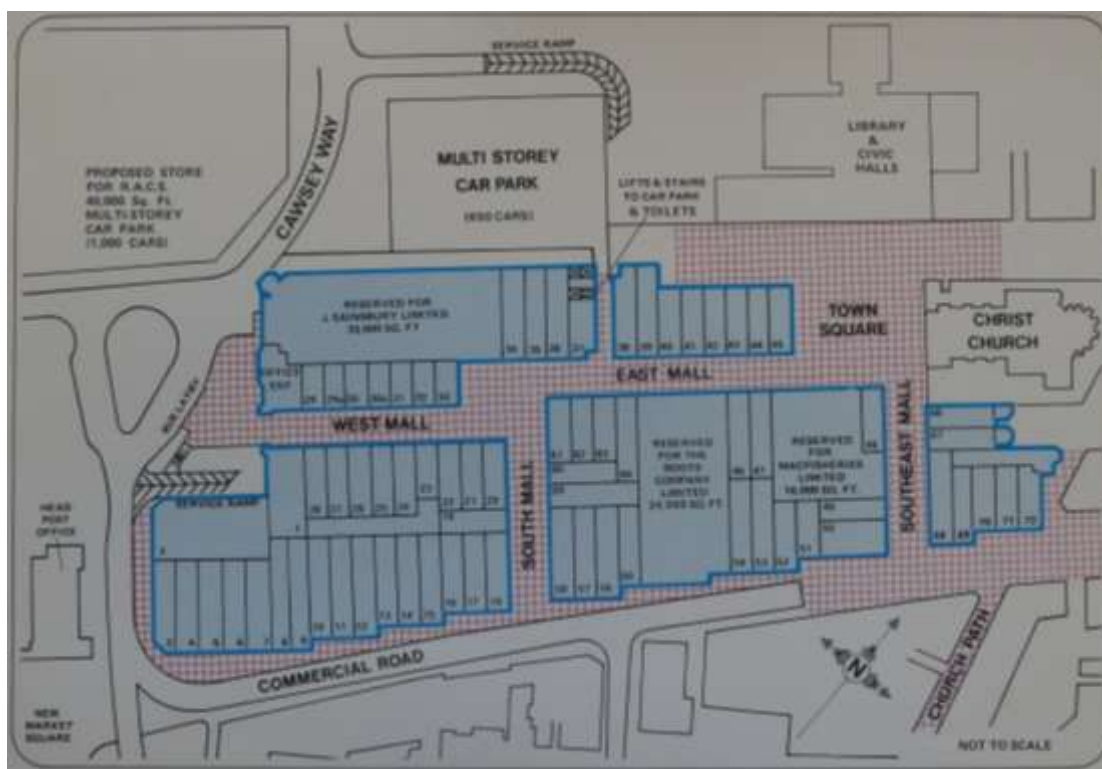


Figure 41. Plan of Wolsey Place, c.1972

## No.s 1-9 Commercial Way

No.s 1-9 Commercial Way was occupied by Boots the chemists in 1976, who had moved from 19-21 Chertsey Road.



Figure 42. Boots 2017

Boots was demolished in 2018 as part of the Victoria Square development, their new store being constructed on almost the same footprint (slightly to the east) and opening in December 2020.

## Victoria Square

Victoria Square is a 570 million pound transformation of part of Woking town centre by Victoria Square Woking Limited, a joint venture between Moyallen and Woking Borough Council. Those retail units facing onto Commercial Way as of October 2023 were as in the table below.

Old Commercial Road No.s	Occupants October 2023	
No.s 1	Gail's, bakery	
No. 3-7	Sostrene Grene, home design store	
No.s 9-11	Seymours, estate agents ( <i>coming soon</i> )	
No. 13	<i>vacant</i>	Lark, lifestyle & homeware
No.s 15-19	Boots, chemist	

## No.s 11-13 Commercial Way



Figure 43. Harveys, 1992

Bonmarché took over the two units in 2005 and occupied them until they moved into the Peacocks.

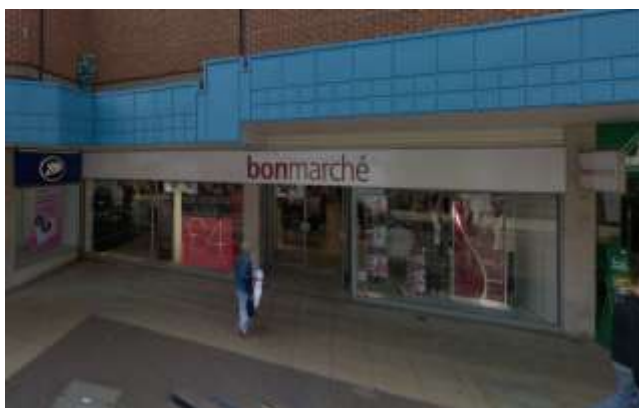


Figure 44. Bonmarché, 2008

The earliest occupants of No.s 11-13 are unknown.

The first record is in the early 1990s, when Harveys Furnishings moved in. Harveys moved to Lion Retail Park in the early 2000s.



Figure 45. Bonmarché advertisement



Figure 46. The Trench Experience shop and upcycling centre

The Trench Experience is an educational registered charity, founded by Eddie Jones in 2005. The object of The Trench Experience is “to further the education of the public in relation to the sacrifice of soldiers in The Great War 1914-1918 and to show what happened on the 'Home Front' in 'Blighty'”.

The Trench Experience shop and Upcycling Centre occupied No.s 11-13 Commercial Way from 2014 to 2017, before they were demolished in 2018, as part of the Victoria Square development. The Trench Experience shop is now located in Ash Road (off Egley Road).

Occupants of No. 11-13 Commercial Way	
	?
1992-2003	Harveys Furnishings
2005-2009	Bonmarché
2014-17	The Trench Experience
2018-20	<i>Redevelopment</i>
2020	Boots, chemist



## No. 15 Commercial Way

The first occupants of 15 Commercial Way were Harris Carpets.

By 1992, a branch of the Early Learning Centre had opened. Early Learning Centre was established in 1974, by John Beale. It was acquired by Mothercare in 2007. In March 2019, Early Learning Centre was then acquired by The Entertainer.



Figure 47. Early Learning Centre, 2008

Originally inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Celebrate Woking is now a

well-established annual programme of events across the Borough. Funded by Woking Borough Council, the events that make up the Celebrate Woking calendar aim to bring communities together and encourage participation. In 2012, Celebrate Woking had an office in No. 15 Commercial Way.

No. 15 was demolished in 2018, as part of the Victoria Square development.

Occupants of No. 15 Commercial Way	
1981-91	Harris Carpets
1992-2009	Early Learning Centre
2012	Celebrate Woking
2018-20	<i>Redevelopment</i>
2020	Boots, chemist

## No. 17-19 Commercial Way

No.s 17-19 were first occupied by FADS, a decorating supplies and furnishings store, in the mid-1970s. It later underwent a rebranding and traded as Homestyle by Fads.

In 2005, the shop was home to a HomeForm store. HomeForm Group, one of the largest retailers of fitted home improvement products in the UK, was founded in July 2000. HomeForm operated several brands, Möben Kitchens, Sharps Bedrooms, and Dolphin Bathrooms, as well as Kitchens Direct.

It was announced, in June 2011, that HomeForm had gone into administration.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *The Independent* 22 October 2011



Figure 48. HomeForm - Möben/Sharps/Dolphin store

In 2011, No. 17 was occupied by John Harwood, optometrists and contact lens specialists.

No. 17 was demolished in 2018, as part of the Victoria Square development. The footprint of No. 17 became the easternmost part of the new Boots store.

By 2014, No. 19 was occupied by Sweatshop, which had previously been in the High Street since the mid-1980s. Sweatshop was then the UK's largest specialist running retailer and organiser of running events around the country. It was founded by Chris Brasher<sup>19</sup> in 1971.

In 2020, Sweatshop was superseded by the Run Company, a running shoe specialist retailer.



Figure 49. John Harwood, 2017



Figure 50. Sweat Shop, 2018

<sup>19</sup> On May 6, 1954, Chris Brasher helped pace Roger Bannister to become the first person to run a mile in less than four minutes. Brasher set the pace with a first lap of 57.5 seconds, and a second of 60.7, for a half-mile time of 1:58.2. Bannister's final four-lap time was 3:59.4.

Occupants of No. 17-19 Commercial Way		
1977-97	FADS / Homestyle by Fads	
2005-11	HomeForm (Möben Sharps Dolphin)	
2011-14	John Harwood, optometrists	Sweatshop
2014-17		
2018-20	<i>Redevelopment</i>	
2020-25	Boots, chemist	Run Company
2025-		Up & Running



Figure 51. Up & Running, 2025

## No. 21 Commercial Way

The first firm to move into No. 21 Commercial Way was Ketts, radio & tv retailers, in about 1975. Their address then was 'Unit 15'.

In 1990, Ketts was replaced by Domestic Electric Rentals (DER) Ltd, a subsidiary of Thorn EMI.

In 1996, the shop was vacant.



Figure 52. DER advertisement



First Choice, travel agents was occupying the shop in 2008. In March 2007, the merger was announced of the travel division of TUI AG with First Choice Group plc. The merged company began operations in September. In October 2011 it was announced that the First Choice branding would be phased out. High street shops would operate under the Thomson brand.



Figure 53. First Choice, 2008

First Choice, and the Thomson store next door, were closed and a store was opened in Wolsey Walk under the Tui name.



Figure 54. Las Iguanas & Bill's, 2018

By 2015, No. 21 (along with 23) was home to Las Iguanas incorporating Bill's restaurant. Las Iguanas closed in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic.

In 2022, the site was occupied by cocktail bar, Komo, but closed after just a year of trading.



Figure 55. Komo, 2023

In 2025, Barclays Bank relocated to No.s 21-25 from their previous location in Town Square.

Occupants of No. 21 Commercial Way	
1976-89	Ketts, radio & TV
1990-91	DER Ltd (Domestic Electric Rentals)
1995	<i>vacant</i>
2005-09	First Choice
2015-20	Las Iguanas
2022-23	Komo
2025-	Barclays Bank

### No. 23 Commercial Way

The first firm to move into No. 23 Commercial Way was Supasports, in about 1975. After about fifteen years, they moved a couple of doors down, to No. 27.

Supasports was replaced by the travel firm, Lunn Poly. In 2005, Lunn Poly was rebranded as Thomson.

Figure 56. Thomson, 2008



Thomson, and the First Choice store next door, were closed and a store was opened in Wolsey Walk under the Tui name.

### **Lunn Poly**

Lunn Poly originated from two successful travel agencies established in the 1890s: the Polytechnic Touring Association and Sir Henry Lunn Travel. Both firms were acquired in the 1950s by the British Eagle airline group, and combined into Lunn Poly in 1965.

In June 1971, Sunair bought Lunn Poly for £175,000. In 1972, the company became part of Thomson Travel Group.

Lunn Poly became an early trade innovator, by splitting its leisure and business travel. High street shops concentrated on package holidays; offices were structured to serve the needs of business and industry. This business model was highly successful throughout the 1970s and 1980s. By the mid-1990s it was the largest travel agency in the UK.

When TUI UK, which had acquired Thomson Travel, rebranded Britannia Airways as Thomsonfly in November 2003, the company insisted that there were no plans to rebrand Lunn Poly. On 2nd November 2004, an announcement was made that all 800 Lunn Poly shops in the United Kingdom were to be rebranded as Thomson.



By 2015, No. 23 (along with 21) was home to Las Iguanas incorporating Bill's restaurant. Las Iguanas closed in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic. In 2023, the site was occupied by Komo.

Occupants of No. 23 Commercial Way	
1976-87	SupaSports
1990-2004	Lunn Poly, travel agents
2005-09	Thomson Holidays
2015-20	Las Iguanas
2022-23	Komo
2025-	Barclays Bank

In 2025, Barclays Bank relocated to No.s 21-25 from their previous location in Town Square.



## No. 25 Commercial Way

The first firm to move into No. 25 Commercial Way was Radio Rentals, in about 1975.

### Radio Rentals

Radio Rentals was formed, in 1930, in Brighton, Sussex to rent out radio sets. It later moved into televisions and ultimately video recorders. They also offered a small range of white goods, mainly from Philips/Whirlpool.

In 1964, Radio Rentals merged with RentaSet. Then, in 1968, it was acquired by Thorn Electrical Industries and joined with Thorn's DER chain (founded 1938), though the two companies were run completely separately. The urge to rent instead of buy reduced, as domestic electronics became cheaper and more reliable (through greater use of integrated circuits and better design methods). The company went through many restructures, shedding staff and rebranding itself.

In 1980, Thorne and thus Radio Rentals became part of the merged Thorn EMI and, in 2000, it merged with Granada Limited to form Boxclever.

Fineweave Carpets began with its first shop in Fleet, Hampshire in 1968.

They opened a Woking store, in No. 25, in about 2000. The store closed around 2010.<sup>20</sup>

By 2014, No. 25 (along with 27) was home to Bill's restaurant. Bill's closed in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic. Black & Irons opened on 18<sup>th</sup> December, but lasted under a year.



Figure 57. Fineweave, 2008

In 2025, Barclays Bank relocated to No.s 21-25 from their previous location in Town Square.

Occupants of No. 25 Commercial Way	
1977-97	Radio Rentals
1998-2009	Fineweave Carpets
2014-20	Bill's
2020-22	Black & Irons
2022-233	Komo
2025-	Barclays Bank

## No. 27 Commercial Way

K Shoes was the first firm to move into No. 27 Commercial Way, in about 1975. K Shoes was started, in Kendall, by Robert Miller Somervell, in 1842.

<sup>20</sup> Fineweave's website states: 'Our Woking and Wokingham branches have now been integrated into our Woodley Showroom.'

In about 1990, the shop moved into new premises in Wolsey Walk. Supasports then moved in, from No. 23, two doors down.

By 1995, the shop had become home to Millets which traded there for the next twenty years, before relocating into the Peacocks Centre.



Figure 58. Millets, 2008

By 2015, No. 27 (along with 25) was home to Bill's restaurant, which closed in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic. Black & Irons opened on 18<sup>th</sup> December, but lasted under a year.

Since 2023, the shop has been home to Burger King.

Occupants of No. 27 Commercial Way	
1977-87	K Shoes
1990-91	Supasports
1995-2009	Millets
2014-20	Bill's
2021-22	Black & Irons
2023-	Burger King



Figure 59. Burger King, 2023

## **Middle Walk**

Middle Walk was built where Bath Road used to run. It was renamed Peacock Walk following the construction of The Peacocks centre.

### **No. 29 Commercial Way**

The Shimco Collection was the first firm known to occupy No. 29 Commercial Way, in 1977. Mr Howard, gentlemen's outfitters, then had the shop from 1979. Mr Howard closed in 1995.

The current occupiers, the Yorkshire Building Society, have been present since at least as early as 1998. The Yorkshire Building Society was created in 1982, by the merger of the Huddersfield & Bradford and West Yorkshire Building Societies.

Occupants of No. 29 Commercial Way	
1977-78	The Shimco Collection
1979-95	Mr Howard
1998-	Yorkshire Building Society



Figure 60. Yorkshire Building Society, 2008



### **No. 31-33 Commercial Way**

Mothercare was the first occupant of 31/33 Commercial Way, from as early as 1977.

Zoom the Loom, who were occupying the shop, entered into administration in July 2007. In 2008, Clearance Outlet were selling off Zoom the Loom's remaining stock



Figure 61. Clearance Outlet, 2008  
– the end of Zoom the Loom



Figure 62. HomeLife, 2012



Figure 63. Maplin, 2017

With the falling pound and post-Brexit decline in consumer confidence hitting sales hard, Maplin fell into administration in early 2018. The last store closed its doors that summer

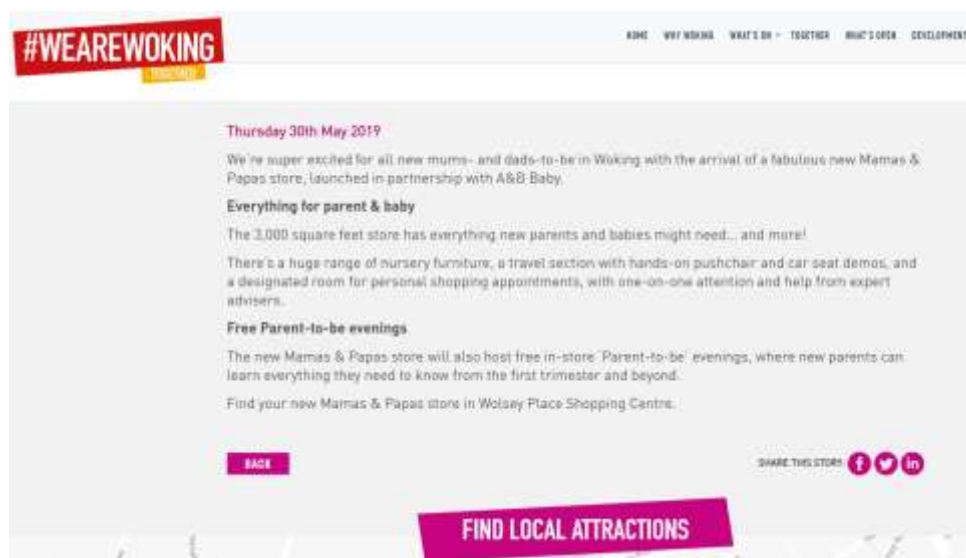


Figure 64. Mamas & Papas on-line advertisement, 2019

Occupants of No. 31-33 Commercial Way	
1977-2003	Mothercare
2005-07	Zoom the Loom, linen shop
2008	Clearance Outlet
2009-12	HomeLife
2013-2018	Maplin
2019-21	Mamas and Papas with A&B Baby
2023-	Tesco Express



Figure 65. Mamas & Papas with A&B Baby, 2020



Figure 66. Tesco Express, 2023

### **No. 35 Commercial Way**

Van Allan, a ladies' fashion shop was the first occupant of 35 Commercial Way, from 1975 to 1978.

Dunn & Co. was the next occupant, from about 1980 having closed their previous shop at No. 51 Commercial Way a couple of years earlier. Dunn & Co. was the most recognisable chain of men's hatters throughout the first three-quarters of the 20th century. By the late 1920s it was also a men's outfitters. A failure to keep up with changing fashions – which no longer involved hats – led to the company's demise in the 1990s.

Dunn's was founded by an idealistic Quaker, George Arthur Dunn (1865-1939), who was born and raised in Birmingham. By 1881, George was



working as an assistant to a hatter. The family seems to have moved briefly to Gloucester, then to Stoke Newington in north London. By 1889, they had settled at 140 High Street, Shoreditch. It was probably in London, around 1887, that George Arthur Dunn started his own business as a hatter, and began to open branch shops.

The Dunns were strictly vegetarian. All of Dunn's sons refused, for ethical reasons, to enter their father's business. Dunn shared his sons' values, saying: 'There are a great many things in my business of which I disapprove, and I am scheming gradually to get out of it, to hand it over for the benefit of those engaged in it, with a limit, I hope, to the amount anyone may make out of it before retiring'<sup>21</sup>. So, in around 1929, Dunn transferred the company to his managers.

At the time of Dunn's retirement there were around 300 Dunn's hat shops throughout the country, plus franchises. Already, despite the small size of many of the outlets, Dunn's had branched out into men's formal wear.

By the early 1990s, Dunn's was facing serious difficulties. Forty shops were sold in 1991 to Hodges, who kept the Dunn & Co. name. In 1994, however, a major stake was sold, and just two years later, in December 1996, the receivers were brought in to wind up the business. At that time 130 shops still bore the Dunn's brand name.

In the second half of the 1990s, the shop was home to Concept, fitted bedrooms. They were followed by Innovations, seller of household items and gifts, and then the British Heart Foundation shop (Figure 62, page 42).

Since 2012, the shop has been occupied by Bayfields, opticians.



Figure 67. Innovations, 2008

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<sup>21</sup> *Liverpool Echo*, 4 May 1916

Occupants of No. 35 Commercial Way	
1975-78	Van Allan, ladies' fashion
1981-94	G A Dunn & Co., outfitters
1995-96	Concept, fitted bedrooms
2005-08	Innovations, household & gifts
2011-12	British Heart Foundation shop
2012-	Bayfields, opticians



Figure 68. Bayfields, 2020

### **No.s 37-39 Commercial Way**

On a plan of the Wolsey Place development c1972, three units were designated as Stores C, D & E. Store D was originally reserved for Boots, however they eventually took Units 1-9 and Store D was subsequently divided into two. Robert Dyas was the first occupant of what would be 37-39 Commercial Way, moving in, in 1976.

The units are double length and extend right through to Wolsey Walk. With an entrance at each end, Robert Dyas decided to make Wolsey Walk their main entrance and took the address 32 Wolsey Walk.

Robert Dyas still trades from the same premises today.

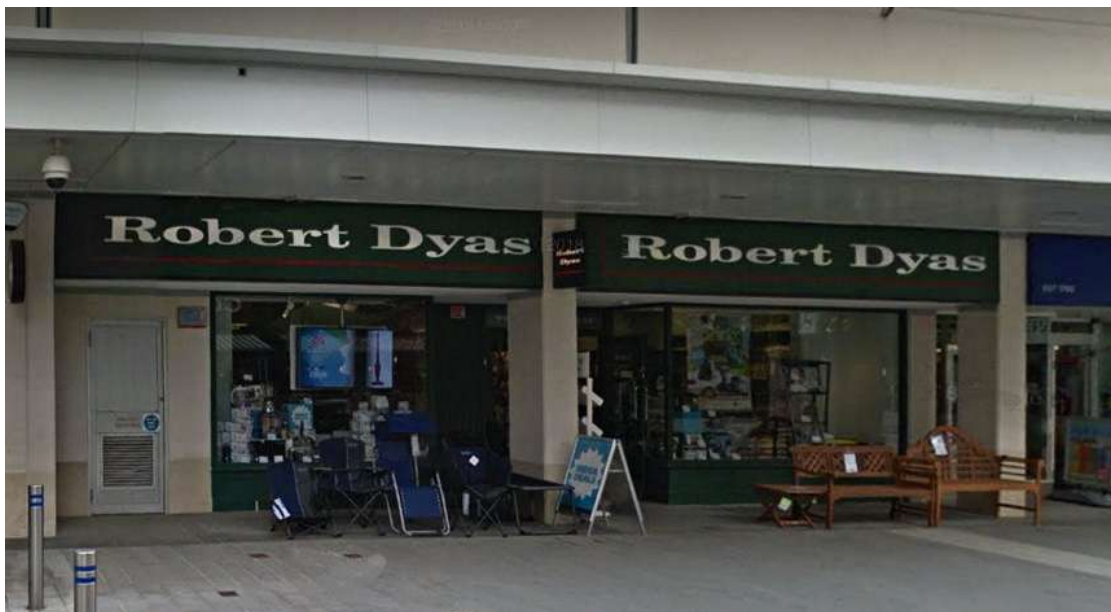


Figure 69. Robert Dyas

### **No.s 41-43 Commercial Way**

On a plan of the Wolsey Place development, Store D was originally reserved for Boots, however they eventually took Units 1-9 and Store D was subsequently divided into two. W H Smith was the first occupant of 41-43 Commercial Way, moving in in 1976. The units are double length and extend right through to Wolsey Walk. With an entrance at each end, W H Smith made Commercial Way their main entrance.



Figure 70. W H Smith

In 2008, the Post Office moved into the store, from its site at Market Square. Today it occupies part of the basement floor.

The company, WHSmith PLC, sold its high street and online retail businesses to Modella Capital in June 2025, in order to focus on its (more profitable) travel retail division. The stores are now trading as TG Jones, retaining familiar elements like the blue and white brand colours and Post Office counters.



Figure 71. TG Jones, Nov 2025

### No. 45 Commercial Way

In 1975, D W Hughes, tv and hi-fi dealers, became the first occupants of 45 Commercial Way, moving from their shop in Chobham Road. In 1981, Hughes joined forces with Merrow Sound, trading as Merrow Sound and Vision. Merrow Sound operated the showroom, selling audio and visual equipment, whilst D W Hughes operated the servicing and repairs department.

Since at least 1998, the shop has been home to Superdrug, chemists



Figure 72. Superdrug, 2018

Occupants of No. 45 Commercial Way	
1975-80	D W Hughes
1981-89	Merrow Sound & Vision / D W Hughes
1989-97	Sony Centre
1998-	Superdrug



## No. 47 Commercial Way

Rumbelows became the first occupants of No. 47, in 1975. Initially, their address was 'Unit 53, Central Development Area'. The shop was closed in 1995.

### Rumbelows

Rumbelows was established in the 1950 by Fred Dawes, as a chain of television and radio rental shops; the business was initially named Fred Dawes.

In 1971, Thorn acquired a group of shops called Sidney Rumbelow's, and Fred Dawes stores were renamed Rumbelows.

In 1989, the business was sold to Radio Rentals (which had merged with Thorn Electrical Industries in 1968), and all the rental accounts were transferred to Radio Rentals. With its core business removed, Rumbelows sought a new identity as a more conventional (non-rental) retailer, even adding computers to the product mix.

In 1992, Thorn converted some of the remaining Rumbelows shops into DER, Multibroadcast or Radio Rentals branches. Thorn closed the remaining 285 Rumbelows shops in February 1995.<sup>22</sup>

Since at least 1998, the shop has been home to Superdrug, chemists

Occupants of No. 47 Commercial Way	
1975-95	Rumbelows, electrical
1995	vacant
1998-	Superdrug, chemists

## No. 49 Commercial Way

John Collier, men's outfitter, was the first occupant of No. 49. The firm was founded in Leeds, in 1907. The chain expanded to around 400 stores across the country, most of which traded under the Fifty Shilling Tailors brand. In 1958, the brand was renamed John Collier.

The company was sold on to the Burton Group, in 1985, and the brand discontinued in the mid-1990s.

Since before 2012, the shop had been home to A-plan Insurance. In 2023, Howden, insurance brokers, moved in.

Occupants of No. 49 Commercial Way	
1975-95	John Collier, men's outfitter
1995	vacant
1996-97	Global Emporium
2009	Reed
2012-21	A-plan Insurance
2023-	Howden, insurance brokers

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<sup>22</sup> Rumbelows had been losing £12 million a year, and had never made a profit in its 24 years of existence



Figure 73. A-plan Insurance, 2018



Figure 74. Howden Insurance, 2023

## No. 51 Commercial Way

The first occupant of 51 Commercial Way, in 1975-76 was G A Dunn (see page 44).

The next occupant, in 1977, was Hall of Cards.

Surrey Disabled People's Partnership (SDPP) started, in July 1993, as North West Surrey Association of Disabled People. It became a registered charity in 1996 and introduced an advocacy service in the North West Surrey boroughs of Woking and Runnymede, in 1998. The name became Surrey Disabled People's Partnership (SDPP) in 2010.

In January 2012, SDPP relocated their office in Woking to the new Hub Woking in Commercial Way. The store closed in April 2017; the registered office moved to Staines.



Figure 75. Charity shop (formerly SDPP), 2018

In 2018, the shop was occupied by a charity shop. Since 2023, it has been home to SnappySnaps.



Occupants of No. 51 Commercial Way	
1975-76	G A Dunn, outfitters
1977-81	Hall of Cards
1987-2005	Lynn's Hallmark Cards
2012-17	Surrey Disabled People's Partnership (SDPP)
2018	<i>Charity shop</i>
2023-	SnappySnaps



Figure 76. SnappySnaps, 2023

## No. 1 Mercia Walk

No. 1 Mercia walk is on the corner of Mercia Walk and Commercial Way. It stands where Heatherside and Myholme (see page 26) formerly were. Mercia Walk was built where the garden on the right-hand side of Myholme formerly was.

Freeman, Hardy & Willis (FHW), the shoe retailer, was established in 1875 and was named after three employees of the company, one of whom was Alfred Freeman, a Russian shoe maker who resided in St Pancras, London. A branch was opened in Chertsey Road, Woking, in about 1894. This moved to Wolsey Place in about 1975.



Figure 77. Freeman, Hardy & Willis

British Shoe Corporation (BSC), the shoe division of Sears, used to be the UK's biggest seller of shoes, with a market share of more than 20 per cent as

recently as 1990. BSC used to own: FHW, Lilley & Skinner, Saxone, Trueform, Bertie, Dolcis, Manfield, Curtess, Roland Cartier, Shoe Express, Shoe City, and Shoe Connection.

Sometime around 1990, the shop was rebranded from FHW to Shoe Express.

In 1996, Sears sold FHW, Manfield, True Form, Saxone and Curtess to entrepreneur Stephen Hinchliffe and his business Facia. The remaining parts of British Shoe Corporation were sold by 1998, at an accounting loss of £150 million.



Figure 78. Foxtons, 2018

Foxtons was founded in Notting Hill Gate, London, as a two-person estate agency, in 1981. The Woking office was opened in 2006, as the firm expanded out of Greater London and into Surrey. In 2019, the office moved to new premises in Albion House, following its refurbishment.

The building is now home to the Japanese restaurant, Itsu.

Occupants of No. 1 Mercia Walk	
1980-86	Freeman, Hardy & Willis
1995-2003	Shoe Express
2006-19	Foxtons, estate agents
2020-	Itsu, restaurant



Figure 79. Itsu, 2023

### **No. 53 Commercial Way**

The first occupant of 53 Commercial Way, in 1974, was Richard Shops. Richard Shops occupied the building for twenty-five years.

Richard Shops was sold to British retailing giant Sears plc in 1992.

In 1999, Philip Green, who had acquired Sears plc, transferred Richard Shops to the Arcadia Group, which immediately announced the closure of all branches of Richard Shops.



Figure 80. Richard Shops

Esquires coffee house closed in December 2013, after trading at No.53 since 2005.

Esquires was succeeded by Carluccio's, an Italian café-deli chain. Carluccio's closed in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic, the group having gone into administration in March that year, following a 'sustained period of challenging trading conditions, which have been exacerbated by COVID-19'.





Figure 81. Carluccio's 2018

Marco Pierre White's son, Luciano opened his Italian restaurant, Luciano's, in early 2022. The establishment failed, and was formally dissolved on 5 September 2025 with just £31.94 in the bank<sup>23</sup>.

Occupants of No.s 53 Commercial Way	
1974-99	Richard Shops / Richard Ltd
2005-13	Esquires Coffee House
2014-20	Carluccio's
2022-2025	Luciano's



Figure 82. Luciano's 2023

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Mail* 29 September 2025

## Dance Hall

The section where No.s 55-61 Commercial Way now are was originally designated for the dance hall that was to be the replacement for the Atalanta (see page 23); it is clearly marked on the early plan shown in Figure 83.

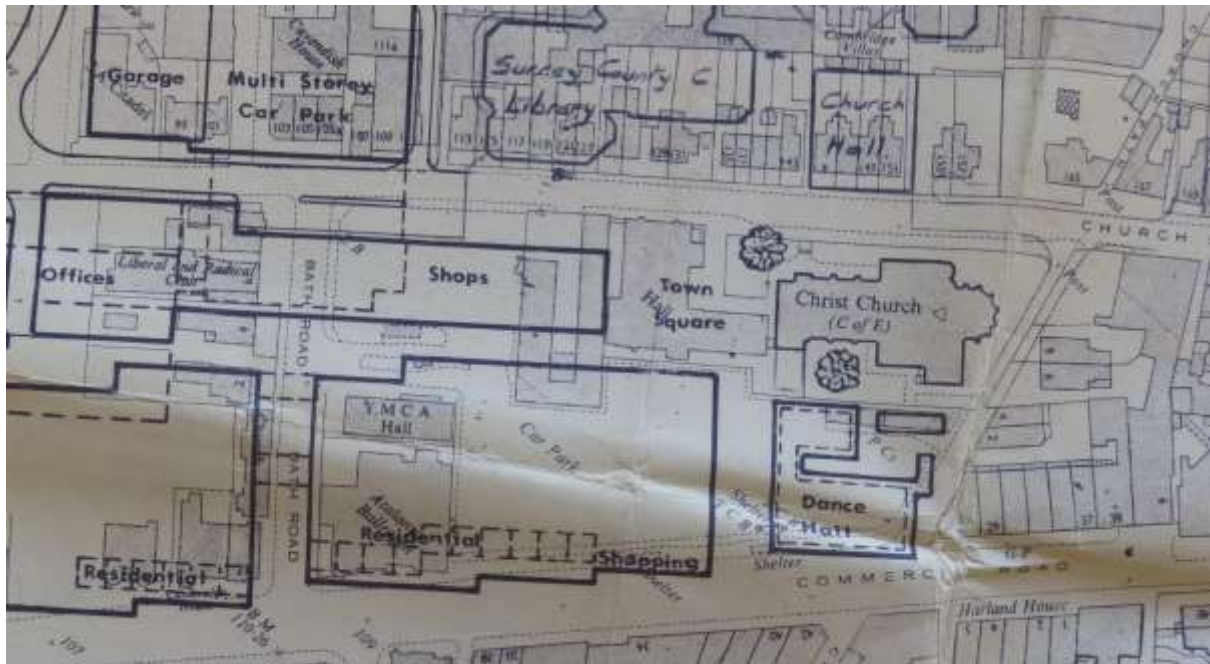


Figure 83. Early plan of Woking centre development (1960s)

## No. 55 Commercial Way

Peter Lord were one of the first occupants of Wolsey Place shopping centre; in 1974, they moved into No.s 55 and 57 Commercial Way, from Chobham Road, where they had been for the previous twenty years.

### Clarks Shoes

1825 in the Somerset village of Street and James Clark was busy working at the tannery owned by his brother, Cyrus. Among the sheepskin rugs, the off-cuts and cast-offs were piling up when James had a brainwave: "Slippers!" A few stitches and a few years later, the sheepskin slipper was born. It was the very first Clarks shoe; by 1842 sales were averaging 1000 pairs a month.



Brown Petersburgh, the original Clarks slipper

In 1863, James's son, William, took control of the company. William modernised the manufacturing process and the company continued to move forward with developments like the Hygienic range. Launched in 1883, it was the first ever shoe designed to fit the shape of the foot.

Clarks opened their own chain of shops called Peter Lord. In the 1990s, the Peter Lord name was retired and the shops traded under the Clarks name.

Occupants of No. 55 Commercial Way	
1974-91	Peter Lord, shoes
1994-2003	Clarks Footwear
	Vision Express
2009-12	Bateman's opticians
2014-20	Carluccio's
2022-	Luciano's

## No. 57 Commercial Way

Peter Lord moved into No.s 55 and 57 Commercial Way, from Chobham Road, in 1974 (see above).

Between 2008 and 2012, No. 57 was home to Rush hairdressers.



Figure 84. Rush, hairdressers, 2008

Tante Marie Culinary Academy is the United Kingdom's oldest independent cookery school, established in 1954 by the cookery writer Iris Syrett<sup>24</sup>. It was the first school in the UK to offer a Cordon Bleu Diploma. In 2014/15 it moved from Carlton Road, Woodham to Commercial Way.



Figure 85. Tante Marie, 2018

<sup>24</sup> It was named after Ann-Marie Taride, the author of the 1925 French culinary bible *La Véritable Cuisine de Famille*



Tante Marie was bought by Gordon Ramsay in 2021, with the Gordon Ramsay Academy opening on the first floor and the first branch of Street Burger outside of London on the ground floor.

Occupants of No. 57 Commercial Way	
1974-91	Peter Lord
1994-96	Clarkes Footwear
2008-12	Rush, hairdressers
2014-20	Tante Marie
2021-	Gordon Ramsay Academy / Street Burger

### **No. 59-61 Commercial Way**

The first occupant of 59-61 Commercial Way, in 1976, was Hepworths, men's outfitters.

Hepworths was followed by Next and then, in 1992, Harpers Photographic moved from 7 & 8 Commercial Buildings (see page 66).



Figure 86. Harpers Photographic, 2008

In 2012, Harpers moved again, into Wolsey Walk, and were replaced by Tante Marie (see above).

Occupants of No. 59 Commercial Way	
1976-83	Hepworths, men's outfitters
1985-91	Next
1992-2012	Harpers Photographic
2014-20	Tante Marie
2021-	Gordon Ramsey Academy / Street Burger



Figure 87. Gordon Ramsay Academy / Street Burger

## CHURCH PATH TO CHOBHAM ROAD

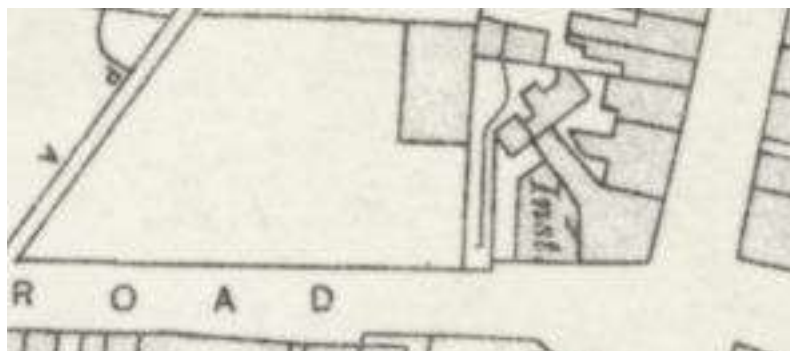


Figure 88. Church Path to Chobham Road, OS Plan 1912

Numbers here are taken from the 1964 street directory.

### Skating Rink

In December 1909, a roller-skating rink was erected on a piece of empty waste ground adjacent to Church Path, which was owned by Sparkes C Knight. Roller-skating rinks had proved popular in many places around the country and it was thought the same would be true in Woking. A temporary pavilion was erected with a maple wooden floor for the rink. The proprietor was Mr Arthur Pitcher and the manager Mr Nick Forster.

The rink did indeed prove very popular and competitions and charity fund raisers were held throughout 1910. This success actually led to a degree of controversy; Mr S C Knight was chairman of the council and the land had recently been assessed at a low rateable value. With rental income from the rink, and also from two stalls selling fish and meat, Mr Knight was then making a tidy profit from the land. The rateable value was reassessed.<sup>25</sup>

The skating rink was in use until the end of 1918, but its popularity fell off during the war.

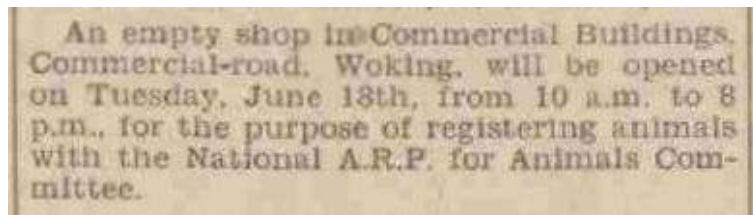


Figure 89. Skating Rink advertisement 1909

<sup>25</sup> Surrey Advertiser 25 June 1910

## No. 27 – 1-3 Commercial Buildings

Commercial Buildings was a development of 8 retail units, constructed in 1936. It was the second row of shops in Commercial Road to be known by the name Commercial Buildings (see page 80).



Surrey Advertiser 15 June 1940

Units 1-3, to be numbered as 27 Commercial Road in 1953, was occupied in 1937 by The Sports Shop.

By 1948, the Halifax Building Society had moved in.



Figure 90. 1-5 Commercial Buildings



Figure 91. Halifax advertisement, 1948

In 1973, the Halifax moved into The Dome, on the opposite corner of Church Path, previously occupied by the Sports House. They were replaced by the Leicester Building Society, which had been incorporated in 1853, as The Leicester Permanent Building Society.

In 1863, the Brighton & Sussex Equitable Building Society was founded. Following a series of amalgamations involving the Brighton & Sussex, the Alliance Building Society was formed in 1945.

The Alliance Building Society and the Leicester Building Society merged in 1985 to form the Alliance & Leicester plc. The business demutualised in the middle of 1997, when it was floated on the London Stock Exchange. It was listed in the FTSE 250 Index, and had been listed in the FTSE 100 Index from April 1997 until June 2008. After running into difficulty during the financial crisis, the bank was acquired by the Santander Group in October 2008, and transferred its business into Santander UK plc in May 2010.



Since 2007, the building has been home to Caffè Nero.

Occupants of No. 27 / 63	
1936	Sports Shop
1948-73	Halifax Building Society
1974-85	Leicester Building Society
1985-2003	Alliance & Leicester Building Society
2007-	Caffè Nero



Figure 92. Caffè Nero, 2020

## **No. 29 – 4 Commercial Buildings**

The first occupant of 4 Commercial Buildings was the Yorkshire Café, (seen in Figure 90 directly behind the lamp-post), which was there in 1941. It was later rebranded as the Yorkshire Restaurant.

In 1950, the shop was designated as No. 29 Commercial Road. Following the development of Wolsey Place, it became 65 Commercial Way.





Figure 93. Advertisement for Tanduri Mahal

Mr & Mrs Jaffar Ahmed paid £27,000 for the lease in 1968, and opened the Tanduri Mahal restaurant.

The Tanduri Mahal closed, in the early 1980s, due to a fire. The shop then became a cut-price jewellery store, called C & M Jewellery. This survived for some eight to ten years and was then followed, briefly, by David De L'Or, another jeweller.

Since 1996, the building had been occupied by Oxfam.



Figure 94. Oxfam shop in 2020

The Oxfam shop closed in 2020 and, in 2022, was replaced by Cake Box, specializing in egg-free cakes.

Occupants of No. 29 / 65	
1936	<i>New shop (vacant)</i>
1941-67	Yorkshire Restaurant
1967-82	Tanduri Mahal
1985-91	C & M Jewellery
1995	David De L'Or
1996-2020	Oxfam
2022	Cake Box



Figure 95. No.s 29 and 31, 2022

### **No. 31 – 5 Commercial Buildings**

The first occupant of 5 Commercial Buildings was Winifred Wilson, ladies outfitter, run by Hilda Winifred Duncan Wilson. It can be seen in Figure 90 to the right of the Yorkshire Restaurant. Hilda's shop traded until about 1968<sup>26</sup>.

In 1950, the shop was designated as No. 31 Commercial Road. Following the development of Wolsey Place, it became 67 Commercial Way.

From 1968 until 2020, the shop was home to a succession of estate agents. Gascoigne-Pees (a partner of Lloyds Bank) was there from 1968 until 2012. It was then briefly occupied by Carson & Co.

From 2015, the building had been occupied by Grants, estate agents; in 2021 it became the Lionsheart Bookshop.

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<sup>26</sup> The 1968 Woking street directory shows Winifred Wilson, ladies outfitter as still occupying the premises, but the same publication carries an advertisement (Figure 96) for Gascoigne Pees at the same address

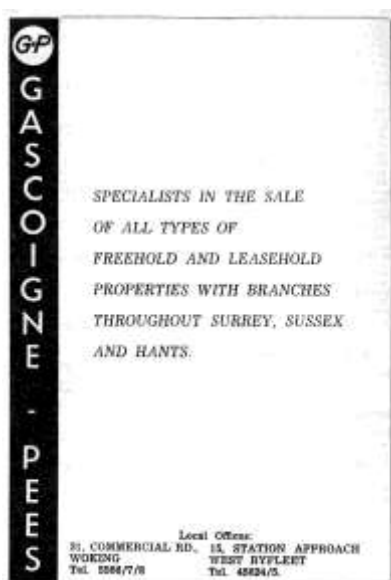


Figure 96. Gascoigne-Pees advert, 1968



Figure 97. Gascoigne-Pees, 2008



Figure 98. Carson & Co., 2014



Figure 99. Grants, 2015

Occupants of No. 31 / 67	
1936	<i>New shop (vacant)</i>
1937-65	Winifred Wilson, ladies outfitter (Hilda Winifred Duncan Wilson)
1965-2012	Gascoigne-Pees, estate agents
2014	Carson & Co.
2015-20	Grants
2021-	Lionsheart Bookshop



## No. 33 – 6 Commercial Buildings

The first occupant of 6 Commercial Buildings was William John Heselwood's Babyland. Babyland continued to trade from the store for over fifty years. They also had a store in Goldsworth Road.



Figure 100. Babyland advertisement, 1939



Figure 101. Babyland advert, 1953

In 1950, the shop was designated as No. 33 Commercial Road. Following the development of Wolsey Place, it became 69 Commercial Way.

Babyland finally closed in the early 1990s. It was followed by Chapmans, a shoe shop, who occupied the shop for about fifteen years.

Chapmans was followed in the mid-2000s by the estate agents, Aston Mead.

Since 2016, the building, along with No. 71, has been occupied by Foundations, estate agents.



Figure 102. Aston Mead 2018

Occupants of No. 33 / 69	
1936	<i>New shop (vacant)</i>
1937-92	Heselwood's 'Babyland'
1992?-199?	Duncan's ?
1995-2005	Chapmans, footwear
2008-15	Aston Mead, estate agents
2016-	Foundations



Figure 103. No.s 33 and 35, Foundations, 2020

## No. 35 – 7 Commercial Buildings

The first occupant of 7 Commercial Buildings was Albert George Harper's photographic shop. Harper had previously had a shop in Guildford Road.

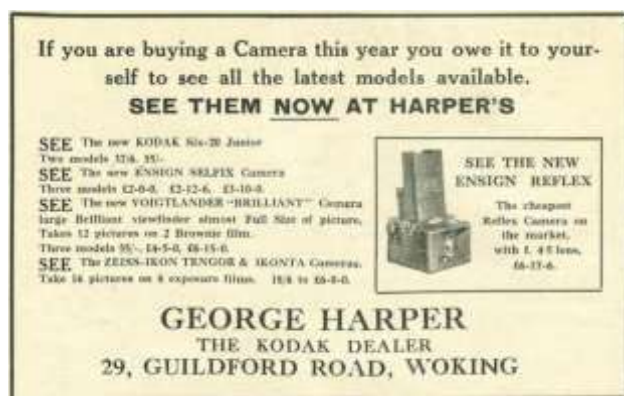


Figure 104. 1933 advertisement for Harpers shop in Guildford Road



Figure 105. 1948 advertisement

In 1950, the shop was designated as No. 35 Commercial Road. Following the development of Wolsey Place, it became 71 Commercial Way.

In 198? The business expanded into No. 37 next door. Harpers traded here until 1993, when they moved into No.s 59-61. In the 2000s, they moved again, to premises in Wolsey Walk.



After 17 years of retail photographic experience, in 1991, Paul Waller formed Commercial Cameras. From 1993-1995, the company occupied 71-73 Commercial Way. In 1995, the company relocated to premises in Church Stretton, Shropshire.<sup>27</sup>



Figure 106. BHF, 2008



Figure 107. Cheque Centre, 2014

71 Commercial Way later became home to the British Heart Foundation shop and then, in 2012-14 it was the Cheque Centre. Since 2016, the building, along with No. 69, has been occupied by Foundations, estate agents.

Occupants of No. 35/71	
1936	<i>New shop (vacant)</i>
1937-91	Harpers Photographic (Albert George Harper)
1991-96	Commercial Cameras
1997	Woking Aerials
2001-09	British Heart Foundation
2012-14	Cheque Centre
2016-	Foundations

### **No. 37 – 8 Commercial Buildings**

The first occupant of 8 Commercial Buildings was French Rapid Cleaners; the proprietor was John A Kelsey.

Following the second world war, the premises were occupied by a branch of HM Taxes.

In 1950, the shop was designated as No. 37 Commercial Road. Following the development of Wolsey Place, it became 73 Commercial Way.

By 1957, the shop was occupied by Springbok, tobacconist and confectioner.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.commercialcameras.co.uk/pages/about>

Harpers Photographic expanded into No. 73 in about 1980. From 1991-1995 Commercial Cameras occupied 71-73 Commercial Way before relocating to its current premises in Church Stretton, Shropshire.

Since 1997, the building has been home to Poppins Restaurant.

Occupants of No. 37 / 73	
1936	French Rapid Cleaners
1948-52	HM Taxes
1957-68	Springbok, tobacconists & confectioners
1974-79	Ogden Mossop
1982-91	Harpers Photographic
1991-96	Commercial Cameras
1997-	Poppins Restaurant



Figure 108. Poppins Restaurant, 2020

### No. 39

Joseph Baker was born in Churt, Surrey in 1877. He moved to Woking, in about 1901, and worked as a cycle engineer.

Joseph seems to have taken over the business of William Cox at 62 Commercial Road in about 1928. When No. 47 Commercial Road was built in about 1929, Joseph became its first occupant, presumably as it was a more central location.

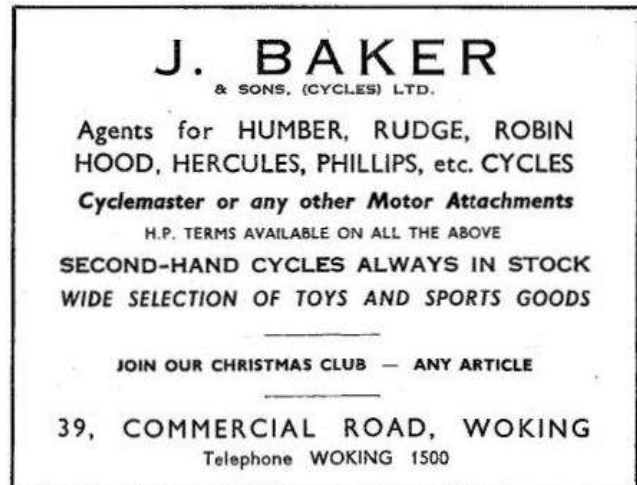


Figure 109. Baker's advertisement, 1953

No. 47 was renumbered as No. 39 in 1950; today it is No. 75 Commercial Way.

After Joseph Baker died in 1954, the business was carried on for another ten years, presumably by his sons Albert and Ronald. The building was then taken over by Halfords, the cycles and motor spares and accessories chain. Halfords traded from the store until the late 1990s, when they moved to become one of the original tenants of the Lion Retail Park in Oriental Road.

The shop then opened as a French restaurant, named Dix Neuf, under the proprietorship of a Ms L Choong. By 2005, Ms Choong had transformed the restaurant into one serving English cuisine, called La Bodega.



Figure 110. La Bodega interior



Figure 111. Real China Express

After a brief spell as CTC Insurance, it became a restaurant again with the opening of the Real China Express



From 2016 until 2021, 75 Commercial Way was home to the Turkish Kitchen restaurant.

In 2022 it became Ihlara Valley, another Turkish restaurant.



Figure 112. Turkish Kitchen, 2020

Occupants of No. 45 / 39 / 75	
1929-64	Joseph Baker, cycles
1965-95	Halfords
1998-2001	Dix Neuf, French restaurant
2005-08	La Bodega, restaurant (English cuisine)
2009	CTC Insurance
2012-15	Real China Express
2016-21	Turkish Kitchen
2022-	Ihlara Valley, Turkish restaurant



Figure 113. Ihlara Valley, 2025

## Garage

Edmund James Waters was born in Ash in 1842. He moved to Woking in about 1882 and established himself as a fly proprietor in Church Street.



Figure 114. Garage, to left of Worlds Stores  
The letters 'PH' (start of 'Phipps?') can be made out on the door

In 1924, Edmund James Waters & Sons are described as 'jobmasters'.<sup>28</sup> By 1932, they had moved to (and perhaps built) the garage between Joseph Baker's Bicycle shop and the Worlds Stores.

Edmund James Waters died in 1936. The garage was carried on by his sons until the early to mid-1950s.

In 1955, Phipps Autos was established by Leslie Theodore Phipps. Phipps only stayed in Commercial Road a couple of years before relocating, in about 1957, to the corner of St John's Road and St John's Hill Road, where it remains to this day.

The garage building was vacant for at least most of the 1960s and the entire 1970s, before being demolished to allow for the construction of British Home Stores.

### British Home Stores

British Home Stores (BHS) was a British-founded department store retailer that primarily sold clothing and household items. It was established as a variety store in 1928 by a group of American entrepreneurs, and grew to be one of the UK's largest department store chains which traded until 2016.

In May 2000, the retailer was purchased by Sir Philip Green and taken private. The company later became part of Green's Arcadia Group in 2009. In March 2015, the retailer was sold to the Retail Acquisitions Ltd consortium for the nominal sum of £1, following sustained losses. In April 2016, British Home Stores entered administration, and the final 22 UK stores closed on 28 August 2016.

Occupants of Garage	
1934-48	Edmund James Waters & Sons, garage
1955-57	Phipps Autos, garage
1964-80	<i>vacant</i>
<i>Demolished</i>	
1982-2016	British Home Stores
2017-25	British Heart Foundation
<i>Demolished</i>	

<sup>28</sup> Kelly's Directory of Surrey 1924



## No. 41

No. 41 Commercial Road was built in the early-1920s. The first occupant was the Worlds Stores (Figure 115), a chain of grocery and provisions shops across the south of England<sup>29</sup>.



Figure 115. Worlds Stores



Figure 116. Gammons expansion

Worlds Stores had previously been in Chertsey Road from about 1910 to 1923.



Figure 117. British Home Stores, 2015

<sup>29</sup> In 1930 the Company had 199 stores (*Chain-Store Developments in Great Britain, U.S. Department of Commerce Trade Information Bulletin No. 697*)

Gammons (which had already expanded into the old Ashby's Bank building next door), in 1965, took over No. 41. After Gammons closed in 1973, the building was vacant for most of the 1970s, before being demolished to allow for the construction of British Home Stores.

British Home Stores closed in 2016 and the shop was taken over by the British Heart Foundation.



Figure 118. British Heart Foundation store, 2020

The British Heart Foundation was forced to find new premises in 2015 and the building was demolished for redevelopment (again).

Occupants of No. 41	
1934-64	Worlds Stores
1966-73	Gammons
1973-79	<i>vacant</i>
1980-81	<i>construction</i>
1982-2016	British Home Stores
2017-2025	British Heart Foundation
<i>Demolished</i>	

## Old Bank

Thomas Ashby, a Quaker, had moved to Staines from Northamptonshire in about 1757. He started Staines Bank, trading as Thomas Ashby & Co., in 1796.

In 1880<sup>30</sup>, Thomas Ashby & Co. opened a branch in Commercial Road, Woking near the corner with Chobham Road. This was a sub-branch of the Chertsey branch. The building can be seen in Figure 119 - on the left, partly hidden by the foreground rooftops.

<sup>30</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 6 Dec 1879 & 7 February 1880

The manager in 1881, A T Frampton, was in attendance only on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 11am until 3pm<sup>31</sup> - the new town of Woking was not yet providing much business.

From 1882 to 1885, the manager was R Brettle. The building was rented by Ashby from Frederick Spenceley. Between 1885 and 1888, Ashby obtained the freehold.

In about 1892, the branch moved to new premises at the corner of Chertsey Road and the Broadway (then called Maybury Road).



Figure 119. Old Ashby Bank building

### Staines Bank

Thomas Ashby started Staines Bank, trading as Thomas Ashby & Co., in 1796. Originally it was located in a room of a house in Church Street, Staines opposite where the brewery gates would be. Thomas's son, also Thomas, started the brewery in about 1805.

When Thomas junior died in 1841, the bank, was continued by his four sons, Thomas III, Henry, Charles and Frederick together with their cousin, Skidmore.

The bank, like nearly all local banks of the time, issued its own notes - of £1, £5, £10, £20 and £50 denominations.



In May 1866, the English Joint Stock Bank, which had a branch in Egham, failed - on Monday 13th its doors were closed. On Tuesday 14th, the name of Thomas Ashby & Co. Bankers appeared in the window of the King's Head Hotel. Ashby's continued trading from the Kings Head for four weeks, after which they took over the business, premises and manager of the failed bank. Egham was the first of Ashby's branches in Surrey.

On January 1st 1904 Thomas Ashby & Co. was sold to Barclays Bank. The sixteen partners in the bank from 1796-1903 were Thomas Ashby senior and fifteen of his direct descendants, all with the surname Ashby.

The building was sold at auction on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1895<sup>32</sup>. It was presumably bought by Glosters Ltd as it was used for their tea blending department and

<sup>31</sup> Kelly's Directory of Surrey 1882

<sup>32</sup> West Surrey Times 8 June 1895



store. In 1901, Gloster's tea store was given over to the Woking Women's Institute.<sup>33</sup>

The Women's Institute is a community-based organisation for women in the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand, generally known as the WI and famous for the phrase 'Jam and Jerusalem'. The movement was founded in Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada, by Erland and Janet Lee in 1897.

The first WI meeting in Great Britain took place on 16th September 1915 at Llanfairpwll on Anglesey, Wales. However Woking had its own Women's Institute in 1901.

### **Woking Women's Institute**

Woking Women's Institute was established in October 1901 by Mrs Sophia Neate. Originally more of a facility than an organisation, it opened its doors on 13<sup>th</sup> November. It was housed in the former Ashby's Bank, later Gloster's Tea Store. It comprised a reading room (with piano) on the ground floor and a social room, where tea was served, and library & writing room upstairs. There was a shed for bicycles.

The Institute was to be open weekdays from 11 to 12.30 and from 3 to 10 and on Sundays from 2.30 to 5.<sup>34</sup> The stated aim was to 'provide the means of rest, recreation, and social life for those women who will be able to avail themselves of membership'. [The membership fee was 1 shilling and an annual subscription of 4-5 shillings, paid quarterly. It was not for the working classes.]

Mrs Neate died in 1908 and, following the death also of Frederick William Bockett, one of the trustees, in January 1913, it appears impetus was lost and the Institute closed.

In November 1913, a Women's Club and Girl's Friendly Society was opened in Clovelly, Commercial Road (see page 27)<sup>35</sup>.



Figure 120. Women's Institute

The building is designated as 'Institute' on the 1914 Ordnance Survey map.

<sup>33</sup> The 1900 and 1905 Woking street directories incorrectly place Glosters tea blending department and the Women's Institute, respectively, as being on the other side of Church Path

<sup>34</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 19 October and 16 November 1901

<sup>35</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 29 November 1913

From 1916 to 1921 the building housed the County Council Dispensary for the treatment of tuberculosis. The Council had assumed the responsibility for the treatment of tuberculosis in July 1912<sup>36</sup>.

In 1921, the old bank building had been taken over by Gammons, which expanded from Guildford House next door. The building was given a new façade at this time so the two buildings, externally, looked the same.

After Gammon's closed in 1973, the building was vacant for most of the 1970s, before being demolished to allow for the construction of British Home Stores.



Figure 121. Gammons, c.1960

Occupants of Old Bank Building	
1880-92	Ashby's Bank
1895-1900	Glosters' Tea blending department and store
1901-14	Women's Institute
1916-21	Surrey County Council Dispensary
1921-73	Gammons
1973-79	<i>vacant</i>
1980-81	<i>construction</i>
1982-2016	British Home Stores
2017-2025	British Heart Foundation
<i>Demolition</i>	

<sup>36</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 21 September 1912



## Guildford House (No. 53)



Figure 122. Guildford House, c.1910

Guildford House was built on the corner of Commercial Road and Chobham Road in the 1880s by James Fielder Gammon, a draper from Godalming. The store grew by taking over adjacent buildings in each road, including the Old Bank building (in 1921) and the Worlds Stores in c1965 (see above).

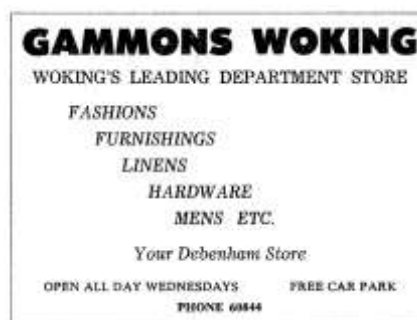


Figure 123. 1968 advertisement for Gammon's

In 1967, Gammon's was taken over by Debenhams, although it retained its name for trading (as shown in Figure 123).

Gammon's closed in 1973 and, after lying vacant for over 5 years, was demolished for the construction of British Home Stores (later the British Heart Foundation shop).

## CHOBHAM ROAD TO CHERTSEY ROAD

This section of Commercial Road was largely undeveloped for the first 40 years of Woking's existence. In about 1860/70, two cottages named 'Sanders Cottages' were built about half way along. Then in 1887, Arthur Althorp built the Woking Drug Stores on the corner with Chobham Road. In 1902, Sanders Cottages were demolished and nine retail units - 'Commercial Buildings'<sup>37</sup> - were erected.

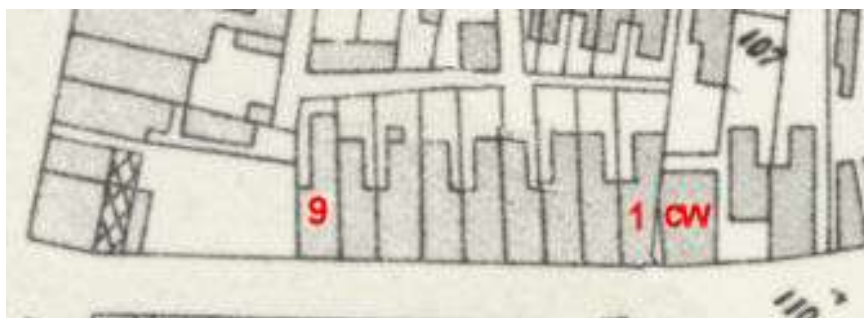


Figure 124. Chobham Road to Chertsey Road, OS Plan 1912

<sup>37</sup> Not to be confused with the eight retail units, also named Commercial Buildings, which still exist today as 61-75 Commercial Way (page 57)

Numbers here are taken from the 1948 street directory.

## Drug Stores

The Woking Drug Stores were opened in April 1887, by Arthur Althorp<sup>38</sup>, on the corner of Chobham Road and Commercial Road. Although later the address of the shop was 2 Chobham Road, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it was usually advertised as in Commercial Road. In about 1902 Arthur, who was born in Yorkshire, retired and moved back to Yorkshire.



Figure 125. Althorp's shop, 1888

After Arthur Althorp's retirement, the shop was taken over by Edward H Taylor, in 1903. He ran the shop (also a chemists) for just five years.

In 1910, John Wearing took over the shop, continuing the business of a chemist until his death in 1953. The shop continued trading under the name of J Wearing, presumably run by his widow and daughter.

WHERE TO SHOP AT WOKING.

High-Class Store Chemist.

**Edward H. Taylor,**

Member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.  
Medallist of the Westminster College of Chemistry and Pharmacy.

Formerly with Messrs. SQUIRE, Chemists on  
the Establishment of His Majesty the King.

*Prescriptions accurately dispensed with Drugs  
and Chemicals of guaranteed Purity.*

FOREIGN PRESCRIPTIONS.—French, German, Italian, etc., dispensed in  
strict accordance with the Pharmacopœias of the respective countries.

The Largest  
Stock in the  
District of

Photographic Materials  
and Appliances. . . .

*Developing and Printing for Amateurs.*

STORE PRICES FOR CASH.

COMMERCIAL ROAD AND  
CHOBHAM ROAD, **WOKING.**

TELEPHONE No. 6184.

Figure 126. E H Taylor  
advertisement

Occupants of Drug Stores	
1887-1901	Arthur Althorp, chemist
1903-08	Edward H Taylor, chemist
1910-53	John Wearing, chemist
1953-72	Mrs Annie E Wearing

<sup>38</sup> Arthur Althorp produced the first guide and directory of Woking, published and distributed for free, in 1888, 1891 and 1895.

## Open Space



Figure 127. Open space



Figure 128. OS Plan, 1957

The 1912 OS Plan (Figure 124) shows an open area between Woking Drug stores and Commercial Buildings (see below). This open space remained undeveloped until this whole section of Commercial Road was demolished in about 1975.

## Sanders Cottages

Sanders Cottages were two early houses built in Commercial Road; they are shown on the 1873 OS plan<sup>39</sup>. No. 1 Sanders Cottages, was occupied by William Moore in the 1861 census; No. 2 was unoccupied. In the 1871 census, No. 2 was occupied by William Chandler.

In 1885, the two cottages were sold, at auction; they were purchased by Mr John Percy, for £455<sup>40</sup>.

Occupants of Sanders Cottages		
	No. 1	No. 2
1861	William Moore	
1871	James Gaines	William Chandler
1881-86	James Greetham	William James Punter
1886-87	Richard Scholar	
1888-90		
1891		
1892-98	Albert Carter ?	Sydney H Cullum, saddler
1899-1900	William May	Frederick Freeman
1900	George Ellis	Stephen Lush
1901-02		
1903		

<sup>39</sup> The 1873 Ordnance Survey Plan was surveyed in 1869/70.

<sup>40</sup> *West Surrey Times* 23 May 1885

Sanders Cottages remained as private dwellings until they were demolished, in 1902, to allow for the building of the row of nine shops known as Commercial Buildings.

### **Commercial Buildings**

The row of nine houses known as Commercial Buildings were mostly built in 1902; Sanders Cottages, which were demolished to build them, were still occupied in early 1902 and No.s 8 & 9 Commercial Buildings were occupied that same year. No. 1 was occupied as early as 1901 (the builder obviously starting work whilst waiting for Sanders Cottages to be vacated).

Commercial Buildings were all owned and rented out by the builder William John Butt (who had his business in Chertsey Road); presumably he also erected them.

The section of Commercial Road from Chobham Road to Chertsey Road, including Commercial Buildings, was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

### **9 Commercial Buildings (No. 63/43)**

No. 9 Commercial Buildings was known as No. 9 Commercial Road until about 1921, when it became No. 63 under the first road numbering scheme. Then in 1950 it changed to No. 43.

The first occupants were Harrison Brothers, tailors and hosiers; the two brothers were Albert Edward and Alfred Ernest. They already had another shop in Guildford High Street. In 1905, following Edmund Hunt's departure, they moved to, and converted to retail use, *The Hollies* in Chertsey Road. In February the following year, the partnership between the brothers was dissolved, with Albert keeping the Guildford branch and Alfred the Woking branch.<sup>41</sup>

In 1909-10, Albert Bayliss, greengrocer and fruiterer, had his shop at No. 9.

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<sup>41</sup> *London Gazette* 6 March 1906





Figure 129. John Sparkes Goldsmith  
1878-1942

John Sparkes Goldsmith was born in Lewes, Sussex in 1877. He came to Woking in 1904, working as a journalist with the *Woking News & Mail*.

In 1914, John Goldsmith opened a domestic agency and typewriting office in 9 Commercial Buildings, operating until 1929.

In 1929, Edward Walter opened a business as a watch and clock repairer.

Edward Walter was followed, in 1938, by John Evan Allen Price, jeweller, who traded as Allen Price. Allen Price was still there in 1953, but the shop was vacant from 1957 until at least 1964.

Hopwoods Gift Shop occupied the shop in 1868/69 (and probably into the 1970s).

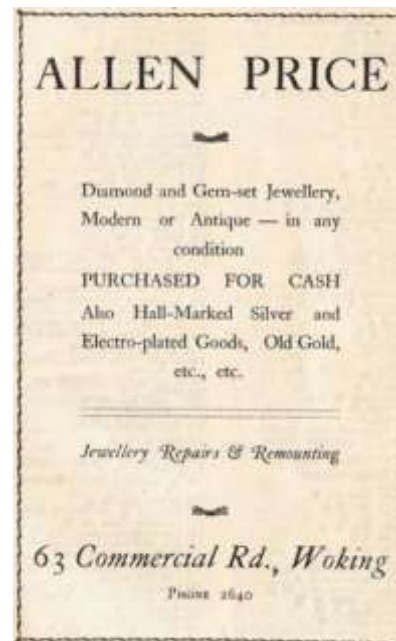


Figure 130. Allen Price advertisement

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 63	
1903-04	Harrison Brothers, gents outfitters
1904-05	London & Counties Meat Supply Company
1906	Alfred Morris Cowley
1909-10	Albert Bayliss, greengrocer, fruiterer
1914-29	John Sparkes Goldsmith, domestic agency, typewriting office
1921-24	Madame L Shier, milliner
1929-37	Edward Walter, watch & clock repairer
1938-53	John Evan Allen Price, jeweller
1957-64	<i>Vacant</i>
1968-69	Hopwoods Gift Shop

## 8 Commercial Buildings (No. 65/45)

No. 8 Commercial Buildings was built in about 1901. It was known as No. 8 Commercial Road until about 1921, when it became No. 85 under the first road numbering scheme. Then, in 1950, it changed to No. 45.

The first occupant was Arthur Walter Bernthal, general and fancy draper. In the 1901 census, Arthur is listed as a draper's assistant, aged 21; in 1902 he had his own business. Although he traded until 1906, presumably he was not very successful – in the 1911 census he is in Abingdon, following his father's career as a Registration agent.

In 1908, Lucy Shier was living above Timothy Whites in Chertsey Road (possibly employed in the shop). In 1909 she married Samuel Mullett and that year opened a dress shop, in partnership with her mother<sup>42</sup>. Lucy Mullett née Shier traded at 8 Commercial Buildings until her death in 1960. She named the building Warwick House.



Figure 132. 1933 advertisement

From the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s, the building was occupied by Quality Carpets.

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road)

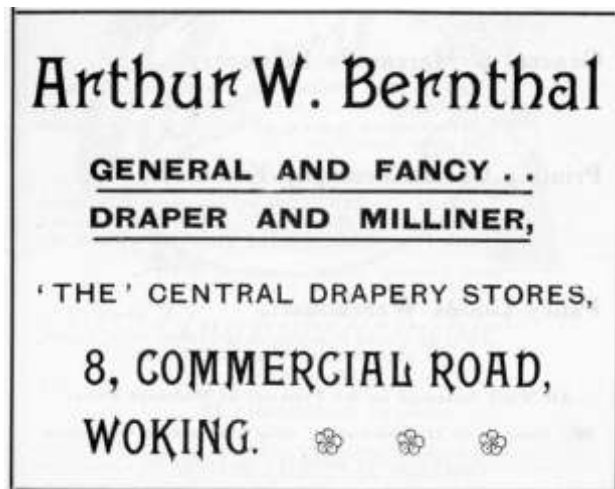


Figure 131. Bernthal advertisement, 1905



Figure 133. Lucy Shier's dress shop

<sup>42</sup> Lucy's mother, also named Lucy, was twice widowed. Her married name was then Britton. The two women traded as Lucy Shier senior and Lucy Shier junior however, and appeared as such in the electoral lists.

was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 65	
1902-06	Arthur Walter Bernthal, draper
1910-60	Mrs Lucy Shier / Miss Lucy Shier (aka Mrs Lucy Mullett)
1964	<i>vacant</i>
1968-73	Quality Carpets

## 7 Commercial Buildings (No. 67/47)

No. 7 Commercial Buildings was known as No. 7 Commercial Road until about 1921, when it became No. 67 under the first road numbering scheme. Then in 1950 it changed to No. 47.

In 1902, it had opened as Giles's Stores (owned by Edward Giles of Farnham), managed by William Henry Pledger and later by Frederick George Jones.

Edward Giles died in 1916. Shortly afterwards, the shop was trading as London Stores<sup>43</sup>; the proprietor was still Frederick Jones.

In 1923, Frederick moved to Elstead, becoming landlord of the Star Inn. The new manager of London Stores was Alfred Neale. There was a bizarre accident in 1929; an assistant at the shop lost the use of his right hand after it went through the glass top of a biscuit tin and badly cut the tendons in the wrist.<sup>44</sup> In 1930 the manager changed again to Charles Gardiner.

In 1936/7 Owens, wools, who had occupied No. 69 next door since 1926, (see below) expanded into No. 67 opening a drapery department. In 1968, Owens was replaced by Flaks.

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine



Figure 134. The London Stores

<sup>43</sup> *Woking Yearbook & Directory* 1921

<sup>44</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 6 July 1929

Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 67	
1902-18	Edward Giles's Stores (Mngr: William Henry Pledger / Frederick George Jones), grocer
1921-34	London Stores
1921-23	Frederick George Jones
1923-30	Alfred John Thomas Neale
1930-35	Charles Gardiner
1937-68	M Owens, wools
1968-74	Flaks

## 6 Commercial Buildings (No. 69/49)

No. 6 Commercial Buildings was known as No. 6 Commercial Road until about 1921, when it became No. 69 under the first road numbering scheme. Then in 1950 it changed to No. 49.

William Arthur Elton was born in Malton, Yorkshire in 1874. In 1901 he was employed as a bookseller's assistant in Brighton, Sussex. Later advertisements give the establishment of his business as 1901. William seems to have moved to Woking in 1903<sup>45</sup> and opened his first shop in 6 Commercial Buildings. Two years later, he moved to No. 22 Chertsey Road.

From 1905 to 1908 the building was occupied by Edward Edwin John White. In the 1901 census Edward was employed as a commercial clerk. In 1911 he was living in Maybury Road and employed as a draper.

In 1908 Mrs Margaret Helen Shore (née Parkhouse) took up residence, trading as a milliner. She appears to have separated from her husband and in 1911 was living in 3 rooms with her three sons. Margaret left Woking sometime during the first world war, her last record is in the 1915 electoral register. She died at Kingston-upon-Thames in 1937.

Miss Rose Spratt was born in Canning Town, Essex in 1866. In 1891 she was working in Hastings, Sussex as a milliner. Miss Sarah Eliza Morris, born in Harlington, Middlesex in 1860, was employed as her assistant. In 1911, Rose and Sarah were occupying the other 3 rooms in No. 6 and both also gave their occupations as milliners.

Rose and Sarah traded from No. 6 until 1926. They were evidently more than just co-workers; in 1924 they moved into a house in Kingsway and, in 1926, they retired to Herne Bay in Kent and lived together there.

Frederick Charles Holdstock & Son were drapers in Chobham Road. In 1926, Frederick's son, Owen Enness Holdstock, opened a wool shop in 69

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<sup>45</sup> He first appears in the Electoral Register list for 1904



Commercial Road. Owen traded (as Owens, wools) from the premises until his death in 1965, expanding into No. 67 next door in 1937. After Owen's decease, the business was carried on, presumably by his widow Margaret and son Donald, until about 1968.

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 69	
1903-05	William Arthur Elton
1905-08	Edward Edwin John White
1908-15	Mrs Margaret Helen Shore, milliner
1911-26	Miss Sarah Eliza Morris, milliner / Rose Spratt, art needlework
1926-68	M Owen, wools, ladies wear
1969-74	Boomerang Taxis

## 5 Commercial Buildings (No. 71/51)

No. 5 Commercial Buildings was built on the site of 2 Sanders Cottages. It was known as No. 5 Commercial Road until about 1921, when it became No. 71 under the first road numbering scheme. Then in 1950 it changed to No. 51.

The last occupants of 2 Sanders Cottages were Frederick Freeman, painter and decorator, in 1900 and George Ellis, railway worker, in 1901/2.



Figure 135. Herbert Burnett's shop, 1905

The first occupant of 5 Commercial Buildings was Herbert Edwin Burnett, a watchmaker and jeweller, who traded there from 1903 until 1906.

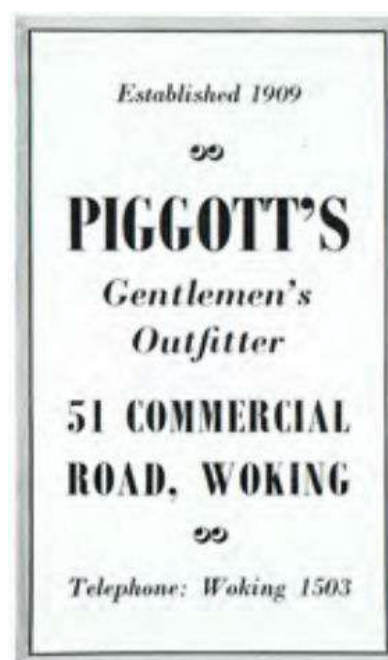


Figure 136. Piggott advertisement, 1956

Frederick Arthur Piggott was born in 1872 in Cambridgeshire. He moved to Woking, probably between 1895 and 1900; in 1901 he was working as a draper's assistant in Reuben Fincham's shop in Chertsey Road. In 1909, he opened his own gentlemen's outfitter shop in 5 Commercial Buildings.

Frederick Piggott died in December 1947. The business continued trading until 1973, Frederick's wife, Edith, occupying the premises until 1954.

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 71	
1903-06	Herbert Edwin Burnett, jeweller
1908-73	Frederick Arthur Piggott, men's outfitter

#### 4 Commercial Buildings (No. 73/53)

No. 4 Commercial Buildings was known as No. 4 Commercial Road until about 1921, when it became No. 73 under the first road numbering scheme. Then in 1950 it changed to No. 53.



Figure 137. Caleb Bond's dining rooms

In about 1898, Ernest Bond, butcher, opened his shop in Chobham Road. In 1901<sup>46</sup> his younger brother, Caleb, was his assistant.

Caleb Bond opened his dining rooms (later a Temperance Hotel) in 4 Commercial Buildings in about 1904.



Figure 138. Advertisement for Bond's Temperance Hotel

The hotel closed in about 1935, Caleb who was then aged 60 presumably retiring. He died in Horsell in 1956.

<sup>46</sup> 1901 Census for England & Wales

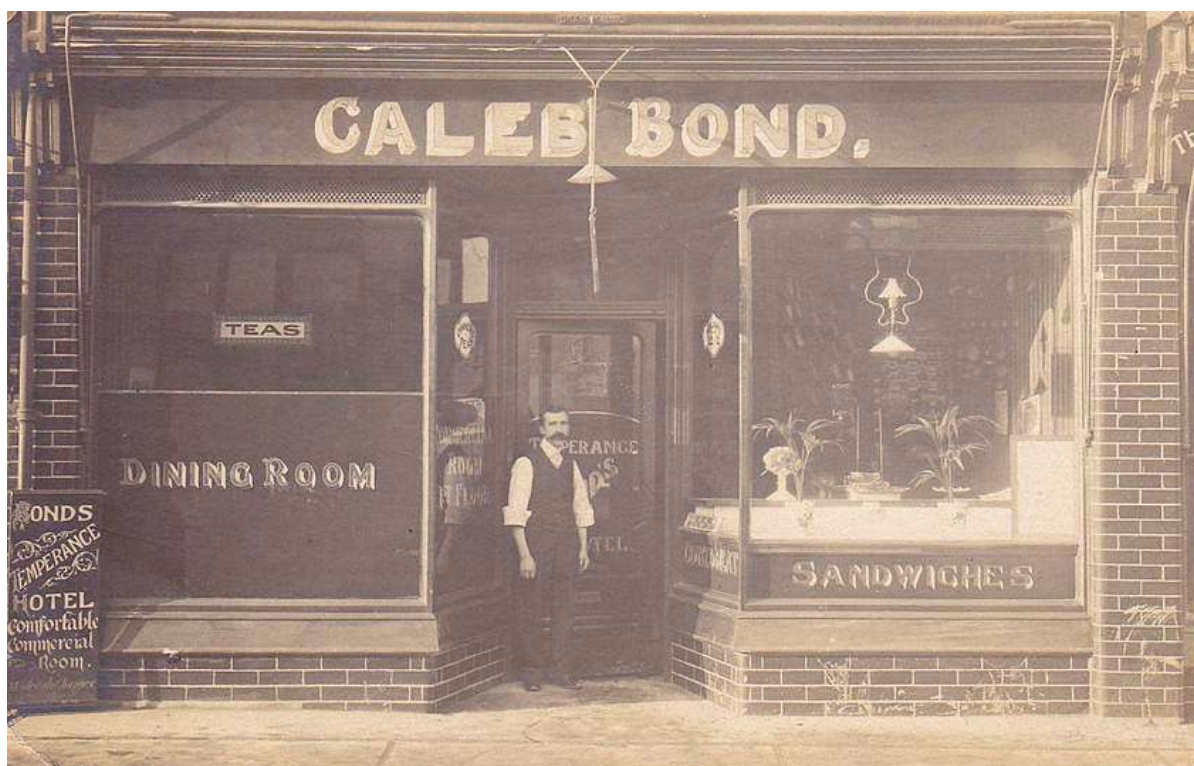


Figure 139. Caleb Bond

No. 73 (as it then was) then briefly became a pet shop, called Pets Corner.<sup>47</sup>

By 1940, the building had been taken over by the Belfast Linen Warehouse.

Belfast Linen Warehouse Ltd, was incorporated in 1935. The company became a subsidiary of Kingston-upon-Thames department store retailers Hide & Co. Ltd who, in 1975, were bought by House of Fraser.<sup>48</sup>



Figure 140. Belfast Linen Warehouse

<sup>47</sup> *Woking Directory & Yearbook 1937*

<sup>48</sup> House of Fraser Archive (web-site)



**BELFAST LINEN WAREHOUSE**

# SALE

OF BED & TABLE LINEN, FANCY LINENS & HANDKERCHIEFS  
CURTAIN FABRICS, DOWN QUILTS  
PILLOWS, MATTRESSES, DIVANS  
etc. etc.

STARTS ON **THURSDAY** NEXT AT **9 a.m.**



**DOWN QUILTS & BEDSPREADS**

In addition to our existing stock, which are being heavily reduced, we have taken early delivery of our New Autumn Down Quilts and Bedspreads, and have decided to include these in this sale. They are marked at very attractive prices, and we suggest you anticipate your winter requirements and buy now.

**SPLINTER PROOF CURTAIN NET!**

Generative window treatment, giving protection from splintered glass, without obstruction to light. Just requires damping and pressing on window.

OFFERED IN THREE QUALITIES:

- 1 Plain Cotton Net, 40ins wide. Per yard **1/0 $\frac{1}{2}$**
- 2 For Cutting into Narrow Strips, or can be used plain, 36in. wide. Per yard **1/3 $\frac{1}{2}$**
- 3 Good Quality Cotton Mesh in Reel, Made 40in. wide. Per yard **1/11 $\frac{1}{2}$**

**Hundreds of Oddments**

including

Short Lengths of  
Curtain Fabrics,  
etc.

Sale  
Price **9d.** each

**BELFAST LINEN WAREHOUSE**

2, 3 & 6, SWAN LANE, GUILDFORD Phone 2751  
73, COMMERCIAL ROAD, WOKING Phone 2322

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 73	
1904-08	Bond's Dining Rooms
1909-34	Bond's Temperance Hotel
1937	Pets Corner
1940-74	Belfast Linen Warehouse

Figure 141. Belfast Linen Warehouse Advertisement, 1940



### 3 Commercial Buildings (No. 75-77/55)

No. 3 Commercial Buildings was known as No. 3 Commercial Road until about 1921, when it became No.s 75 and 77 under the first road numbering scheme (due presumably to the double occupancy – see below). Then, in 1950, it changed to No. 55.

In 1904, 3 Commercial Buildings was shared by The Singer Sewing Machine Company and the West Surrey Laundry.

By 1909, the laundry half of the building had become home to Rowland Day, saddler, which was succeeded in 1914 by James Barrenger.



Figure 143. Singer Sewing Machine store



Figure 142. J H Barrenger Ltd

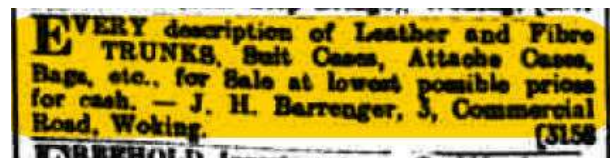


Figure 144. Barrenger advert, 1914



Figure 145. Barrenger advert, 1968

In 1925, the Singer Sewing Machine Company moved into Chertsey Road and James Barrenger expanded into the whole of the building.

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for

the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 75	
1904-5	West Surrey Laundry
1907-8	E Lawson, picture dealer & gilder
1909-13	Rowland Frederick Day, saddler
1914-75	James Henry Barrenger, saddlery & leather goods

Occupants of No. 77	
1904-24	Singer Sewing Machine Company
1925-75	James Henry Barrenger, saddlery & leather goods

## 2 Commercial Buildings (No. 79/57)

No. 2 Commercial Buildings was built, in 1903, on the site of 1 Sanders Cottages<sup>49</sup>. It was known as No. 2 Commercial Road until about 1921, when it became No. 79 under the first road numbering scheme. Then in 1950 it changed to No. 57.

In about 1904, spinster sisters Elizabeth and Emily Rowland acquired the new building and established a confectionery shop. Elizabeth and Emily ran their shop until 1930, when they retired. They were sisters-in-law of George Sumner who ran the shop next door at No. 1 (see page 91).



Figure 146. Misses Rowland's confectionery store



Figure 147. Mayfair ad, 1953

In about 1934, following a couple of short-term tenants, Charles James Jones took over the shop. He and his wife also ran a confectionery business, trading as 'Mayfair'. In 1945, Charles was fined £3 for using 'an

<sup>49</sup> The last occupant of 1 Sanders Cottages was Stephen Lush, in 1901-03.

unjust scale'<sup>50</sup>. Charles and his wife had their business for almost fifteen years, until Charles died in 1948. The business was then taken over by James W Gibbons.

From 1963, until the early 1970s, the shop was occupied by Robert Warren, outfitters.

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).



Figure 148. Robert Warren

Occupants of No. 79	
1905-30	Misses Elizabeth & Emily Rowland, confectioners
1930-31	William John Massey
1931-32	Harold Sidney Murton
1933	Leslie Arthur Marsh
1934-60	Mayfair, confectioners
1963-72	Robert Warren, outfitters

## 1 Commercial Buildings (No. 81/59)

No. 1 Commercial Buildings was known as No. 1 Commercial Road<sup>51</sup> until about 1921, when it became No. 81 under the first road numbering scheme. Then in 1950 it changed to become No. 59.

William Brown was born in about 1861, at Oatlands Park near Weybridge. In the 1881 and 1891 censuses he was described as a draper's assistant. He moved to Woking, perhaps following his marriage in 1889.

In 1901 he opened his own shop in 1 Commercial Buildings. The shop closed in 1914, when William apparently retired.

<sup>50</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 31 March 1945

<sup>51</sup> In the 1901 census, 1 Commercial Buildings is listed as No. 2 Commercial Road; the implication is that the Carriage Works was No. 1 Commercial Road although, as it was not residential, it had no entry in the census return



Figure 149. William Brown's store

In July 1914, two floors of the building were leased by the County Council for use as a sub-dispensary for the treatment of tuberculosis.<sup>52</sup>

By 1917, George Sumner had opened his Central Domestic Stores. George was born in Stepney, London in 1863. In 1889, he married Ada Sophia Rowland of Ilford, Essex. In the 1891 census he is shown at Goring, Oxfordshire as manager of a gas works.

George Sumner moved to Woking in about 1895, becoming manager of the gas works in Boundary Road. After Ada died in early 1896, George, who had two

infant sons, married her cousin, Sophia Rowland (also of Ilford) a year later. In about 1905, George moved on to become foreman of Richmond gas works.

In (presumably) 1817, George retired from the gas works, moved back to Woking and opened his store. Sophia's sisters, Elizabeth and Emily had followed her to Woking and, in 1904, had established their confectionery shop, next door at No. 2 (see page 90).

George died in 1926 and the business was carried on by Sophia and their son, Rowland. By 1950, Rowland had taken on the business. Sophia died in 1960.

The shop was home to Brevitt Shoes in 1963-64, and then to Robinson Rentals in the late 1960s.

From 1970-74, Granada tv rentals, traded from the premises.

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).



Figure 150. Brevitt Shoes

<sup>52</sup> *West Surrey Times* 13 June 1914



Occupants of No. 81	
1901-14	William Brown
1916-47	Central Domestic Stores (George & Sophia Sumner)
1947-57	Rowland Sumner
1963-64	Brevitt Shoes
1966-69	Robinson Rentals
1970-74	Granada tv rentals

### Carriage Works (No. 83/61)

No. 61 Commercial Road was close to the junction with Chertsey Road.<sup>53</sup>



The building was generally listed as 'Carriage Works' until about 1921 when it became No. 83 Commercial Road. Under the 1950 renumbering scheme, it became No. 61.

The building was constructed in about 1890. The first known occupants were Head & Sons, carriage builders, who were present in 1894.

Figure 151. Carriage works (front right), c.1905

Head & Sons was established in Kensington and Chertsey by Charles Head, in the 1860s. It was Charles's son, Edward, who started the Carriage Works in Woking in about 1890.

Edward retired in about 1913, and the building was taken over by Robertson Brothers. Alexander Gordon Robertson and Gordon Caddel Robertson were sons of solicitor, William Henry Raymond Robertson who moved to Woking in about 1880.

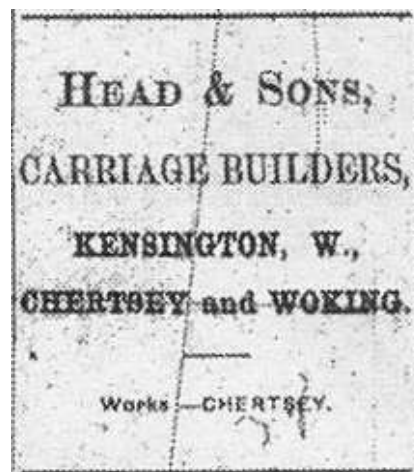


Figure 152. Head advert, 1894

Alexander and Gordon established their furniture and auctioneering business in Chertsey Road between the junctions with Duke Street and

<sup>53</sup> In the late 19th and early 20th century, due to the acute angle at which the roads met, the low density of buildings and the fact that the roads were not made up, it was not clear whether 61-65 Commercial Road were in Commercial Road or in Chertsey Road. Censuses and directories of the period changed from one to the other.

Walton Road in the late 1890s. In 1906/7 they moved into Maybury Road.

The business expanded and the brothers had depositories in Boundary Road and auction rooms in 83 Commercial Road (described as in Chertsey Road in the advertisement in Figure 153).

Gordon Robertson died in 1918 and Alexander continued the business on his own.

In 1950, the business in Commercial Road expanded into No. 63, next door. After Alexander's death in 1961, the business was wound up.

The building was then taken over by Gerrards, greengrocers, who occupied the building until 1975, after which they moved into Wolsey Walk.



Figure 153. Robertson advert, 1934



Figure 154. Robertson Brothers

Most of Commercial Road from Chobham Road to Chertsey Road was demolished in about 1975 for the building of the Fine Fare superstore,

which blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road. No.s 61, 63 and 65 became incorporated into Chertsey Road.

Occupants of No. 83	
1891-1910	Head & Sons
1914-61	Robertson Brothers, auction rooms
1964-75	G M Gerrards Ltd

### Thomas Cottages

Thomas Cottages were in Commercial Road but directly on the junction with Chertsey Road; like 61 Commercial Road (see above), they were often included in directories and census returns for Chertsey Road. They were among the first houses to be built on Woking Common, north of the railway, being constructed in about 1860. In 1861, they were occupied by Edward Sullivan and George Watmore, both employees of the railway.

In 1885, the two cottages were sold, at auction; they were purchased by Mrs Mary A Otham, for £515<sup>54</sup>. Mary Otham had previously had a drapers shop in Woking, in 1877<sup>55</sup>, presumably in the High Street. Separated from her husband, she had then (1885) lived in Kingston-upon-Thames.

In about 1910, when Chertsey Road was systematically numbered, Thomas Cottages became No.s 85/87 (later 63/65) Commercial Road.

### No. 85/63

In about 1930, No. 85 (2 Thomas Cottages) was converted to a commercial property, extending over the front garden.

Direct Fruit Supply, also known as Woking Fruit & Vegetable Market (Figure 155), traded there up until the second world war.

From 1945 to 1948 it was Miller's Café; the proprietor being Frederick Thomas Miller. In 1948 the café moved to a new location in Chertsey Road.

Robertson Brothers expanded into No. 63, from No. 61 next door, in 1950.



Figure 155. Woking Fruit & Vegetable Market

<sup>54</sup> *West Surrey Times* 23 May 1885

<sup>55</sup> *Post Office Directory of Surrey* 1878



Between 1960 and 1965, the building was extended sideways (towards No. 61) and rearwards, almost quadrupling in size.

**GRAND OPENING**  
**OF YET ANOTHER**  
**TESCO**  
**SUPERMARKET**  
**63, COMMERCIAL ROAD WOKING**

**THURSDAY JUNE 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9 a.m.**

**\* FREE GIFT \***  
**6 KEMP'S ARCTIC BARS FREE**  
 with each packet of KEMP'S CHOC-O-LAIT BISCUITS 1/7  
 SAVE 1/-

**HARTLEY'S STRAWBERRY JAM**  
 1/9s CUT TO **1/6** 1st  
 save 3d

**AUSTRALIAN SLICED PEACHES**  
 2/6 Family CUT TO **2/-** 1st  
 save 6d

**KELLOGGS CORN FLAKES**  
 1/8s CUT TO **1/3** Family Size  
 save 3d

**PAR THE PEOPLE**  
 1/3 1st  
 save 1/-

**GOLDEN RING CORNED BEEF**  
 2/9 1st  
 save 1/-

**ST. MARTIN'S ORANGE MARMALADE**  
 10d 1st  
 save 1/-

**CHOSSE & BLACKWELL'S SALAD CREAM**  
 1/8 1st  
 save 1/-

**GOLDEN RING SELF-RAISING FLOUR**  
 1/2 1st  
 save 1/-

**BAKED BEANS in Tomato**  
 7d 1st  
 save 1/-

**PROVISION DEPARTMENT**  
 All perishables sold under constant refrigeration  
 Finest Quality Specially Selected BACON, CURED MEATS, CHEESE, SAUSAGES, Etc.

**\* FREE GIFT \***  
**ONE WALL'S PIE FREE** with every Pound of Wall's Sausages  
**OVEN READY CHICKENS**  
 Chicken Portions **3/-** per pound

**\* FREE GIFT \***  
**1 x 3pt. FOSTER CLARK'S BLANCHMANGE** FREE with each tin of Foster Clark's Blackcurrants  
 2/4 CUT TO **1/6** SAVE 10d

**\* FREE GIFT \***  
**1 Tin Batchelors Baked Beans** FREE with each tin Batchelors Chopped Pork with Ham  
 2/11 CUT TO **2/4** SAVE 7d

**\* FREE GIFT \***  
**1 x 1/- Jar Epicure Mint Sauce** FREE with Joint of Fresh Meat over 3/6

**KRAFT FRUIT SALAD**  
 1/6 1st  
 save 1/-

**GOLDEN RING DARTY CREAM**  
 8d 1st  
 save 1/-

**FINEST QUALITY STRAWBERRIES**  
 1/6 1st  
 save 1/-

**GOLDEN RING EVAPORATED MILK**  
 11d 1st  
 save 1/-

**SUNFRESH ORANGE or LEMON SQUASH**  
 2/3 1st  
 save 1/3

**SHEDLEY'S RASPBERRIES**  
 1/7 1st  
 save 1/3

**Family Shopping Night**  
**Every Friday**  
**OPEN UNTIL 7.30 p.m.**

**WE HAVE OVER 400 BRANCHES AND SUPERMARKETS**

Figure 156. Announcement of Tesco's self-service supermarket, 1961



Figure 157. Gerrards and Tesco, c.1965

Most of Commercial Road from Chobham Road to Chertsey Road was demolished in about 1975 for the building of the Fine Fare superstore, which blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road. No.s 61, 63 and 65 became incorporated into Chertsey Road.



Occupants of 2 Thomas Cottages	
1858-61	Edward Sullivan
1864-73	James Eagle
1881-81	James Rice
1883-84	William James Punter junior
1885-93	Edwin Moore
1894-98	<i>vacant</i>
1899-1911	Alfred Wells
1915-28	Henry James Reeve
1931-39	Direct Fruit Supply
1931-32	Frank Parker
1932-33	Fred L Hampton
1933-37	Horace James Tomkinson
1937-43	Bert William Andrew Johns
1945-48	Millers Café (Frederick Thomas Miller)
1950-61	Robertson Brothers, auction rooms
1961-81	Tesco self-service supermarket

## No. 87/65

In around 1915, No. 87 (1 Thomas Cottages) was converted to a commercial property, being extended out over the front garden to the road. From 1918 to 1938 it was occupied by Charles Edward Orridge's Modern Drug Store.

Charles died in 1929 and his wife, Mary Ann (who was his third wife), carried the business on.

In 1938, the building became a restaurant and snack bar, run firstly by John Charles Barbara, until 1948, and then by Margery Caine, until 1950.



Figure 158. Orridge's Drug Store

From 1957 until 1967, the shop was home to a launderette.

Tesco expanded into No. 65 (previously 87), from No. 63 (previously 85), in 1968. The front of the building was taken back, in line with No.s 61 and 63, and it was extended rearwards.

Most of Commercial Road from Chobham Road to Chertsey Road was demolished in about 1975 for the building of the Fine Fare superstore, which blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road. No.s 61, 63 and 65 became incorporated into Chertsey Road.

Occupants of 1 Thomas Cottages	
1861-71	George Watmore
1881-1890	John Ballard
1891	Louisa H Williams
1891-98	Sydney H Cullum, saddler
1899-1905	William Cobbett
1911	<i>vacant</i>
1916-38	Charles Edward Orridge, druggist
1938-48	Snack bar (John Charles Barbara)
1948-50	Snack bar? (Margery Caine)
1957-64	Launderette
1969-76+	Tesco self-service supermarket

## Superstore

The section of Commercial Road from Chobham Road to Chertsey Road was demolished in about 1975 for the building of the Fine Fare superstore, which blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road. Fine Fare, which opened in November 1977, became Gateway in 1987 and then Asda in 1991.



Figure 159. Fine Fare Superstore, 1986

In 1993, supermarkets gave way to entertainment; Asda closed its doors on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October and was converted into The Planets, completed in 1996, with the official opening in April that year.

### The Planets

The Planets was a mixed use scheme comprising hotel, restaurant, nightclub and leisure facilities (see right).

The ground floor bar had its own in-house brewery. The names of the beers reflected Woking's history – H G Wells, nearby Newark Priory, and its connection with aviation: Martian Invasion, HG's, Newark Abbey Ale, Buccaneer and Stealth Stout, amongst



others. The head brewer was Bob Dupre; the brewery also sold to the free trade under the name 'Brooklands Brewery'. The brewery was closed down in 2000 after The Planets became The Big Apple.

Another feature of note was the Blackburn Buccaneer aircraft standing over the bar. This was XX895, a veteran of the first Gulf War. The tail-fin was cut off to clear the roof, the undercarriage

doors and pitot were removed, and it was adorned with various drinks advertisements. The Buccaneer also was removed by the new owners, in 1999.



Figure 160. XX895 Blackburn Buccaneer standing on The Planets bar

In 1999, The Planets came under new ownership and was rebadged as The Big Apple. The removal of the brewery allowed the creation of new retail units fronting onto Chertsey Road.



Figure 161. Hawker Hunter T Mk7 outside of the Big Apple

In 1996, another aircraft - a Hawker Hunter T Mk7<sup>56</sup> - was mounted on a pole outside of the entrance to the Planets, as a piece of civic art. It was removed in July 2018, for health and safety reasons; Woking Borough Council gifted the plane to the Hawker Association.

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<sup>56</sup> This particular Hawker Hunter, XL623, was the last T MK7 built at the factory in Kingston; it was first flown from Dunsfold aerodrome early in 1959. The aircraft saw some 23 years of flying service in the RAF as an operational and flying trainer for Hunter squadrons, followed by a further six years at engineering training schools.



## **SOUTH SIDE (EVEN NUMBERS)**

### **VICTORIA GARDENS TO CHAPEL STREET**

This section of Commercial Road remained mostly undeveloped into the 1950s. From the 1870s until the 1930s, James Harris, builder, and Richard Pain, plumber, who had their businesses in the High Street, had yards which extended down to and rear entrances opening on to Commercial Road. After the High Street had been infilled with No.s 15-20 in 1934, directories listed the rear entrance to Sainsbury's supermarket alongside the two yards.

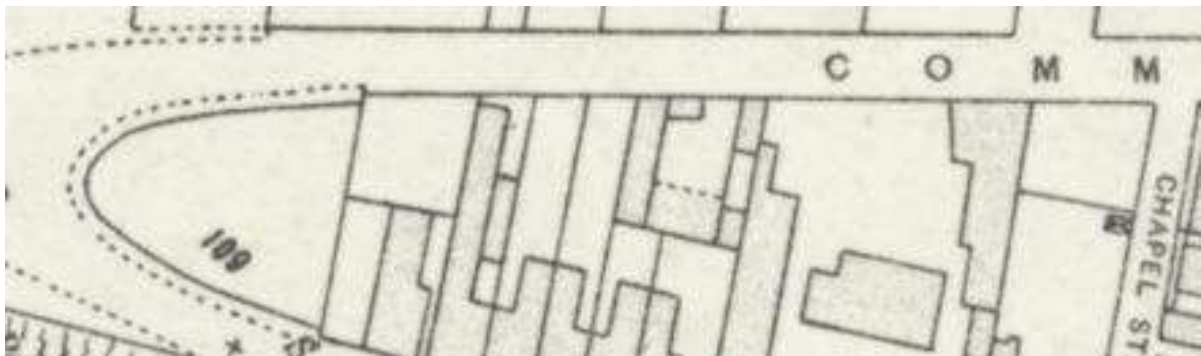


Figure 162. Victoria Gardens to Chapel Street, OS Plan 1912

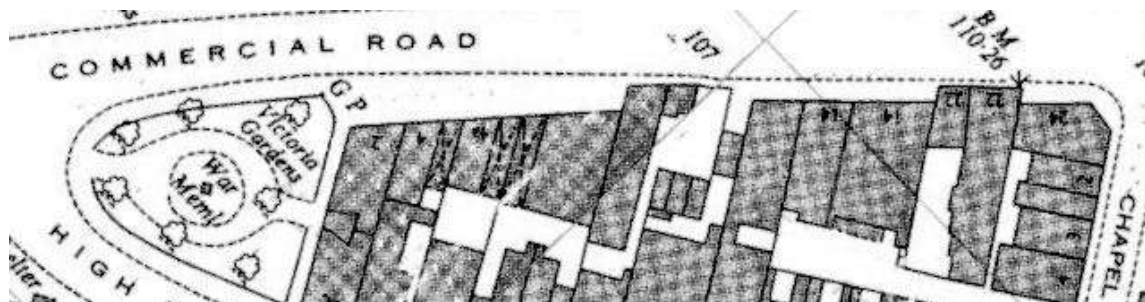


Figure 163. Victoria Gardens to Chapel Street, OS Plan 1966

The building numbering along this stretch was very haphazard until the mid-1970s. The 1966 plan (above) shows no numbers for 6, 8 and 12 (there is no 10); there are two 14s, no 16, 18 or 20 and two 22s.

### **Victoria Gardens**

Victoria Gardens was laid out in 1904 as a memorial to Queen Victoria. A quiet spot at the saddler junction of Commercial Road and the bottom of High Street, it became known to locals as 'Sparrow Park' because of the number of those birds that frequented the site.

In 1922, the memorial to Woking's fallen in the first World War was erected in the park.

With the construction of Cawsey Way, having reduced the size of the garden, in 1975 the war memorial was moved to the new Town Square.

The Woking war memorial was built by Mess.<sup>rs</sup> William Kirkpatrick, with the bronze statue by the sculptor Francis William Doyle Jones. The memorial was unveiled on 24th May 1922 by Field Marshal Sir William Robert Robertson BART GCB GCMG KCVO DSO.

Francis William Doyle Jones (1873-1938) trained at the South Kensington School, under Edouard Lanteri. He made his début at the Royal Academy in 1903, with subjects relating to the then recent Boer War.

In 1950, an inscription dedicated to those who lost their lives in the Second World War was added by the London Necropolis Company.

The memorial comprises a bronze statue of a winged Victory, rewarding the worthy victors with glory and fame, symbolized by holding up a wreath of laurel leaves in her right hand, and holding a palm branch in her left hand. The figure stands upon a globe on a pedestal with carved foliate details. The base of the pedestal steps down in two stages and is set upon a tall, square column. The column is of sandstone and rises from a plinth on a two-stepped base. On the front (south-east) face of the column is an inverted Sword of Sacrifice carved in relief, which is suspended from a scroll draped over two carved badges with foliate designs to the centre. Beneath is the inscription which reads THE GREAT WAR/ 1914 – 1919/ REMEMBER WITH THANKSGIVING/ THE TRUE AND FAITHFUL MEN/ AND WOMEN OF THIS TOWN/ AND COUNTRYSIDE/ WHO IN THESE YEARS OF WAR/ WENT FORTH/ FOR/ GOD AND THE RIGHT./ THE NAMES OF THOSE/ WHO RETURNED NOT AGAIN/ ARE HERE INSCRIBED/ “THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE”. The other faces of the column carry the names.

On the face, at the base of the column is a small, carved wreath. Inscribed on the plinth underneath is the Second World War dedication AND/ THE WORLD WAR/ 1939 – 1945.



Figure 164. Victoria Gardens and War Memorial, 1953

## No. 2

Pearl Assurance House was built, by the Pearl Assurance Company, in about 1956, at the bottom of the High Street, abutting both the High Street

and Commercial Road. The ground floor was divided into two and the left-hand half had the address of 2 Commercial Road.

From 1958 until 1963, Hugh Harris (himself by then deceased), gentleman's outfitters in the High Street, had possession of the whole of the ground floor of Pearl Assurance House as a branch dedicated to children's clothing. 2 Commercial Road housed the shoe department.

Paul Graham was a hair stylist who had a number of branches in the southern Greater London and northern Surrey area<sup>57</sup>. In 1963, Paul Graham opened his Woking branch in 2 Commercial Way, trading there for over ten years.

From 1978 to 1981, the shop was home to Quality Seconds, ladies' and children's clothing.

From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, PhotoFinish, a same-day film development service occupied the shop (Figure 166).



Figure 165. Paul Graham hair-dressers, c1973



Figure 166. Photofinish, 1986

Since 2008, the building has been home to a Woking Hospice charity shop.

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<sup>57</sup> In 1956 they were advertising a head office in Chase Road, London with two branches in Wimbledon and branches at Streatham, Epsom & North Finchley.



### Woking Hospice

Woking & Sam Beare Hospice and Wellbeing Care is a charity that cares for over 2,000 patients and their carers and families each year. It specialises in delivering holistic care for patients with progressive advanced conditions that are life limiting.

Woking Hospice opened at Hill View Road, Woking in 1996, after Rhod Lofting launched an appeal for a local hospice.

The Sam Beare Palliative Care Ward, which had opened in Weybridge Hospital in 1977, became a charity under the management of Woking Hospice in 2006 and, in 2014, the Woking and Sam Beare Hospices merged.

In May 2017 a new hospice building opened in Goldsworth Park.

Occupants of No. 2	
1957-63	Hugh Harris, children (shoes)
1963-73	Paul Graham, hairdresser
1978-83	Quality Seconds, ladies' and children's clothes
1985-91	PhotoFinish
2001-05	Randstad Employment Bureau
2008-	Woking Hospice shop



Figure 167. Woking Hospice shop, 2017

### No. 4

No. 4 Commercial Way was built in about 1960. The first occupants were Preston & Co., estate agents (a Woking company), and the building was named Preston House. In 1986, Preston & Co. were taken over by Windsor Fareham & Co.

The building had been occupied by estate agents ever since, but currently by Sterling Street.





Figure 168. Townends, 2018

#### Occupants of No. 4

1962-86	Preston & Co.
1986-88	Windsor Fareham & Co., est agents
1993-95	Cornerstone, estate agents
1996-2022	Townends, estate agents
2022-23	Stirling Ackroyd, estate agents
2023-	Sterling Street, mortgages, finance



Figure 169. Stirling Ackroyd, 2023



Figure 170. Sterling Street, mortgages, finance, 2025

## No. 4a

No. 4a Commercial Road was built, in about 1960, by the Prudential Assurance Company. They had their offices on the first and second floors, whilst the ground floor was a retail outlet. It was numbered 4a as it was built between No.s 4 and 6, at the rear of No. 25 High Street

The first occupant of the ground floor unit was Bell & Butler, the bakers.

In 1968, Oswald Boll AG, a Swiss company, part of the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Merchant Wholesalers Industry were occupying the second floor.

From the mid-1980s and through the 2000s, the shop was occupied by Brook Street bureau. HSBC moved in, in 2010, expanding from No. 6 (see below).



Figure 171. Bell & Butler, 1964

Occupants of No. 4a	
1964-79	Bell & Butler, bakers
1986-2009	Brook Street, employment bureau
2010-23	HSBC



Figure 172. HSBC, 2018

## No. 6

In about 1960, Scotts, house furnishers, took over the building in the rear of 22 High Street that faced onto Commercial Road (it became No. 8 Commercial Road) and built a large, glass-fronted showroom next door.

Scotts were not there long; in the 1968 directory, the building is listed as vacant. Midland Bank took over the shop in about 1969, moving from their Chertsey Road location.



Figure 173. Scotts of Woking, 1964

Midland Bank was taken over by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Company (HSBC) in 1992; high street branches were renamed as HSBC from 1999.



Figure 174. Midland Bank, 1968  
[Construction of Wolsey Place on left]

Occupants of No. 6	
1961-64	Scotts of Woking, house furnishers
1967	<i>vacant</i>
1968-99	Midland Bank
1999-2023	HSBC



## Stewart House (8/10)

Stewart House is a three-storey brick building built in about 1964. The upper two floors were initially residential flats. The upper two floors are now serviced office space.

### No. 8

In 1968, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) moved into No. 8. They traded there for over twenty years, until the Trustee Savings Bank (TSB) expanded from No. 10, in 1990/91, at which time KFC moved to premises in Chertsey Road.



Figure 175. KFC, 1968

#### TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS

Trustee savings banks (TSBs) originated to accept savings deposits from those with moderate means. Their shares were not traded on the stock market but, unlike with mutually held building societies, depositors had no voting rights; nor did they have the power to direct the financial and managerial goals of the organisation. Directors were appointed as trustees (hence the name) on a voluntary basis.

In 1887, the Trustee Savings Banks Association was established, with two aims: to protect the interests of depositors, and to increase co-operation among savings banks. To give the savings bank movement a national profile, the TSB Association adopted an emblem in 1922. All TSBs were encouraged to use it.

Historically, individual savings banks had been largely independent of one another. However, this all changed with the TSB Act of 1976. The Act stipulated that the 73 existing savings banks should merge into 20 (later 16) regional institutions. Crucially, the Act also allowed TSBs to offer similar financial services to those of the clearing banks, such as personal loans.

TSB Group was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1986. For the first time, it had shareholders and could compete with other high street banks on an equal footing.

The Woking Trustee Savings Bank opened in Chobham Road, in May 1944; it was a branch of Reading Trustee Savings Bank. Local savings banks went through a continual process of amalgamation; the Woking TSB became a branch of the Thames Valley Trustee Savings Bank in 1948.

In 1968, TSB moved into No. 10 Commercial Road.





Figure 176. Trustee Savings Bank, 1968

TSB merged with Lloyds Bank in 1995, resulting in the formation of Lloyds TSB in 1999. The merger was structured as a reverse takeover by TSB. Lloyds Bank was delisted from the London Stock Exchange and TSB Group was renamed Lloyds TSB Group in 1995. The new bank commenced trading in 1999, after the statutory process of integration was completed. Lloyds Bank then changed its name to Lloyds TSB Bank.

In 1986, the legal entity, Trustee Savings Bank, was renamed TSB Scotland. This company was re-registered under the name TSB Bank in 2013. The parent, TSB Banking Group, was registered in England in 2014 and later that year TSB Bank ceased to be part of the Lloyds Banking Group.

TSB was succeeded in Stewart House by William Hill, bookmakers.



Figure 177. Stewart House, November 2025

Occupants of Stewart House		
1961-64	Scotts of Woking, house furnishers	
	<i>demolished</i>	
1968-90	KFC	TSB
1991-2004	TSB	
2005-23	William Hill, bookmakers	
2023-	<i>vacant</i>	



Figure 178. Stewart House, November 2025

## No. 12

In 1973, Sainsbury's grocery store moved from the High Street into Wolsey Place, becoming a self-service supermarket. The rear of the High Street shop was converted into No. 12 Commercial Road. A four-storey brick building, the upper three floors were initially residential flats, named Winston Lodge; they are now serviced office space.

From 1979 until 1995 No. 12 was home to Woking Jobcentre. In 1995, the Jobcentre moved to premises in Goldsworth Road.

The building was occupied by Seymours, estate agents, from 2001 until 2023.

At time of writing, the building is vacant.



Figure 179. Seymours, 2020

Occupants of No. 12	
1979-95	Jobcentre (Manpower Services Commission)
2001-23	Seymours
2025	<i>vacant</i>

### Steward House No.s 14-18

Steward House is a three-unit-wide, four-storey building which was erected in the early 1960s. There are three retail units on the ground floor and office space on the upper three floors.



Figure 180. Steward House, 2017

### No. 14

The first recorded occupant of No. 14, the first unit of Steward House, was Martyn, ladies' hairdresser, in 1962/3; who also opened a salon in Guildford High Street at about the same time.



Figure 181. Times Ahead 1990 advertisement

Martyn was followed by Grant Peters and Peter Rapson, both also ladies hairdressers. It was then briefly home to Alfred Marks recruitment bureau in the late 1980s, before reverting to a [unisex] hairdressers in 1990 with Times Ahead.



Figure 182. Silver Spring, Peter Rapson and rear of J Sainsbury



Since the mid-2000s, the occupants of No. 14 have flip-flopped between estate agents and restaurants, with a brief return to hairdressing in 2010/11, when Celly's was occupying the building.

Since 2018, it has been home to Eliá, a Greek & Mediterranean restaurant.



Figure 183. Celly's, 2011

Occupants of No. 14	
1963-67	Martyn, ladies' hairdresser
1967-69	Grant Peters, hairdresser
1970-83	Peter Rapson, hairdresser
1988	Alfred Marks, recruitment
1989-96	Times Ahead, hairdresser
2005-08	Simon Bance, estate agents
2009-10	Primavera, restaurant
2010-11	Celly's, hair salon
2014-18	Leaders, estate agents
2018-	Eliá, restaurant



Figure 184. Eliá, 2020



## No. 16

Bel-Air, dry cleaners, were the first to occupy Steward House, moving into two units, No.s 16 & 18, in 1962. They were followed by Silver Spring Cleaners.



Figure 185. Bel-Air advertisement, 1964



Figure 186. Silver Spring advertisement, 1968

In 1977/8, Jeans Gentry took over No. 16, whilst Granada, TV rental moved into No. 18.

Pickfords Travel moved into No. 16 in the mid-1980s, followed in turn by Going Places and Hays Travel.



Figure 187. Going Places

Since 2013, it has been home to Araceli's, Mexican restaurant.

Occupants of No. 16	
1962-64	Bel-Air Cleaners
1967-76	Silver Spring Cleaners
1978-79	Jeans Gentry
1981-83	Adloo Enterprises
1986-93	Pickfords Travel
1995-2008	Going Places
2009	Hays Travel
2013-	Araceli's, Mexican food



Figure 188. No. 16 Araceli's, 2020

## No. 18

After Bel-Air and Silver Spring, dry cleaners, in 1977/8 Granada TV rental took over No. 18, whilst Jeans Gentry moved into No. 16.

From the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, No. 18 was a showroom for Möben, kitchens and Dolphin, bathrooms.

It was occupied by Jessops, a photographic equipment retailer, from 2005 until 2013.

Since 2013, No. 18 has been home to Paddy Power.



Figure 189. Jessops

Occupants of No. 18	
1962-64	Bel-Air Cleaners
1968-76	Silver Spring Cleaners
1977-91	Granada, TV rental
1995-2003	Möben, kitchens / Dolphin, bathrooms
2005-13	Jessops
2013-	Paddy Power



Figure 190. No. 18 Paddy Power, 2020

## No. 20

In today's numbering of Commercial Road, there is no No. 20. What was No. 20 is now No. 22.



## No. 22

In 1935, Ernest Robert Barlow moved to Woking, from Berkshire, and opened an auto-electrical business. Ernest took over a building that butted onto Commercial Road, which had previously been part of James Harris's builder's yard.



Figure 191. Surrey Advertiser, 1948



Figure 192. Ernest Robert Barlow (1900-97) as a young man

This building was demolished in the late 1950s and the current 3-storey, 5 windows-wide, building erected in its place.

Gray's Travel Bureau moved from the Broadway to No. 22 Commercial Road in 1960; it traded there, as Gray's World Travel, until 1964 when it moved to 5 Harland House (see page 138).

Frederick Charles Thomas Mann was born near Horsham, Sussex in 1872. Having established Mann & Co. in 1891, he moved to live in Woking in about 1895 and opened an office in Woking High Street in about 1908.

In 1968, Wolsey Place shopping mall was about to be built - which would make Commercial Road actually the commercial centre of Woking. In that year, Mann & Co. moved from the High Street into Nos 22 & 24 Commercial Road.

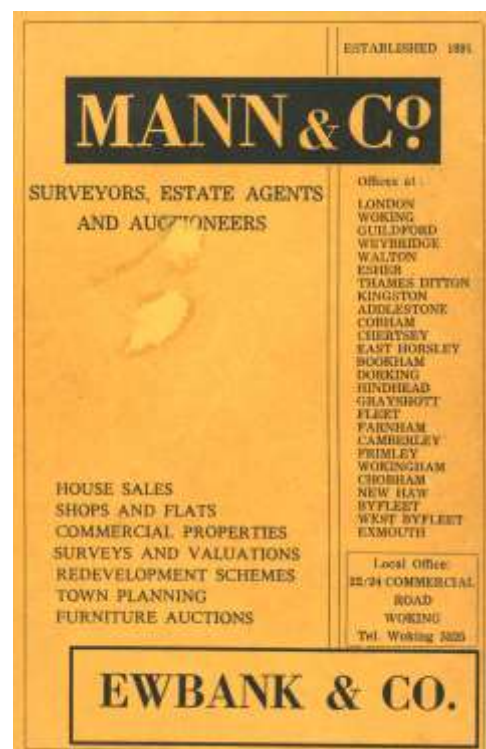


Figure 193. 1968 Mann & Co. advert



In 1986 Mann & Co., was acquired by Hambros plc and merged with Bairstow Eves to form Hambro Countrywide.<sup>58</sup>

Occupants of No. 22	
1936-58	Barlow's electrical services
1960-64	Gray's World Travel
1968-95	Mann & Co., estate agents
1998-	Halifax Building Society



Figure 194. Halifax at No. 22, 2018

## No. 24

Sidney Frank Erskine established his used-car business in Connaught Road, Brookwood in 1907. In the mid-1930s he opened a second establishment in Woking, at the corner of Commercial Road and Chapel Street, named Commercial House. Originally, the address was 1 Chapel Street but it very quickly changed, to become 24 Commercial Road.

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.countrywide.co.uk/corporate/who-we-are/history/>; Mann & Co. and Bairstow Eves were the first two UK Stock Exchange listed estate agency groups

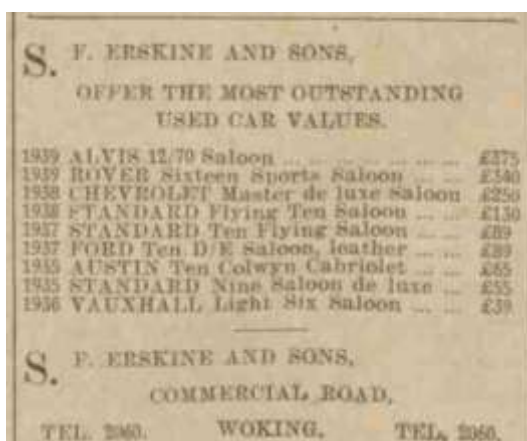


Figure 195. Erskine advertisement, 1939



Figure 196. Sidney F Erskine 1890-1971



Figure 197. Commercial House, 2017

Sidney Erskine moved to Maybury Road in the mid-1960s and No. 24 was taken over by Mann & Co., estate agents (see page 116). In 1977, Mann & Co. expanded into the newly-built No. 20 and vacated No. 24. They were replaced by the Leeds Permanent Building Society.

Occupants of No. 24	
1937-64	Sidney Frank Erskine & Sons
1968-76	Mann & Co., est agents
1977-91	Leeds Permanent Building Society
1995-	Halifax Building Society

## CHAPEL STREET TO CHURCH PATH

About half of this section of Commercial Road remained undeveloped until the 1930s. The Wesleyan chapel (marked 'Hall' in Figure 198) and Bon Marché were the only buildings, until the Morris Car Depot opened in August 1929.



Figure 198. Chapel Street to Church Path, OS Plan 1912

### Wesleyan Chapel / Library / No. 26

In 1872 a small methodist chapel was built alongside the road linking the centre of the High Street to Commercial Road. The road was later named Chapel Street, after the chapel. The chapel soon became too small to meet the needs of Woking's growing population and an extension (more than twice the size of the original chapel) was built in 1884, stretching down to the corner of Chapel Street and Commercial Road.

By the early 1900s, this new chapel too was proving inadequate, and a new Wesleyan church was built on the opposite side of the road near Victoria Gardens. The chapel was vacated in 1906.

The chapel was then taken over by Surrey County Council Education Committee who used it as a Domestic and Handicrafts Centre, under the Special Subjects sub-Committee.<sup>59</sup> The centre started with classes from the elementary day schools at Maybury, Goldsworth and Westfield. In 1909, the capacity was increased to cater for teaching 40 boys woodwork and 28 girls cookery or laundry work.



Figure 199. New chapel 1960s

<sup>59</sup> *West Surrey Times* 4 August 1906 and 23 October 1909



As Woking grew, so did pressure for a public library and, in 1902, Andrew Carnegie, the Scottish-born American philanthropist, offered the Council £5000<sup>60</sup> to get a library off the ground. The proposal was rejected as being ‘unnecessary and expensive’.

Woking’s first library came in 1928 partly linked to Surrey County Council’s library system, but with (unique in the country) Woking Council providing staff salaries, the building and reference stock and the County Council the lending stock. It was housed in a tin chapel in Percy Street, vacated by the Roman Catholic Church in 1923.

The stay in Percy Street was brief and, in 1934, the library moved to the chapel in Commercial Road<sup>61</sup>.

Initially, the library occupied the first floor only, the lower part being the Labour Exchange or job centre. It was not until after the war that the library took over the whole building. The original small chapel, which became the children’s library, had been used for many years by a scout troop (thought to be 1st Woking).<sup>62</sup>



Figure 200. Chapel/Library in early 1970s

The library also ran a picture loan service for works by local artists. In 1975, the library moved to purpose-built quarters on Town Square.



Figure 201. WAVS

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<sup>60</sup> Worth about £785,000 today

<sup>61</sup> The library can be seen posing as a town hall at the start of the 1965 film, “The Great St Trinian’s Train Robbery”

<sup>62</sup> Memories of Peter Readings (Surrey Live)



The chapel was demolished in the late 1970s and replaced with an office block, which was occupied by a number of council functions, including: Voluntary Services, Citizens Advice and Relate the marriage guidance service. The ground floor was home to the Provincial Building Society (later National & Provincial Building Society) and Gale Employment.

The ground floor of the building is currently taken by Côte Brasserie.

Occupants of No. 26		
1896-1905	Wesleyan Chapel	
1906-24	Woking Domestic & Handicrafts Centre (S.C.C. Education Committee)	
1934-75	Woking Central Library	
	<i>redeveloped</i>	
1979-80	Provincial Building Society	Gale Employment
1981-82		
1982-94	National & Provincial Building Society	Reed Accountancy Appointments
1995-96		
1997-98		
1999-2005	Relate	
2005-12	Woking Association of Voluntary Services	
2016-	Côte Brasserie	



Figure 202. Côte Brasserie, 2020

## Bon Marché

Bon Marché - translates from the French as inexpensive (literally 'good market') - was a terrace of three shops built in about 1882, by Alfred A Gale. It was sited next to where the Wesleyan Chapel extension would be built some 12 years later.

Bon Marché was numbered from east to west, counter to the later numbering system, so that 3 Bon Marché was nearest to the chapel.

There is a reference to a meeting being held at 'Mr Rothwell's, Bon Marché' in 1883 (probably Thomas Rothwell).<sup>63</sup>

Between 1911 and 1921, Bon Marché was owned by a W Schurberger.<sup>64</sup>

Bon Marché was demolished in about 1960 and the current Lloyds Bank building erected in its place.

### **No. 28 – 3 Bon Marché**

The first known occupant of 3 Bon Marché was William Cook. The 1881 census saw William in Kingston-upon-Thames as an 'oil and colourman'; he was in Woking by 1885 and in 1891 he described himself as 'ironmonger' in Bon Marché. Ten years later he was living in Croydon as a 'retired Italian warehouseman'.



Figure 203. G Tyrrell advertisement

In 1897, George Tyrrell took over the shop and established his business as oil and colourman. George died in 1926 and the business was carried on by his sons, George Richard W 'Warren' Tyrrell and Stanley Frederick Tyrrell.

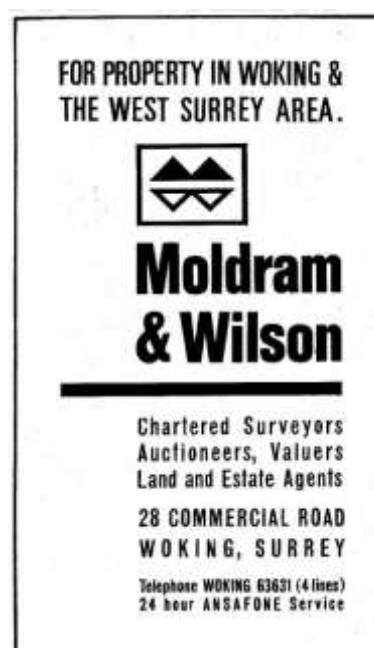
Warren died in 1938 and Stanley in 1949. The business seems to have continued until the death of Stanley's wife, May, in 1958.

In about 1960, Bon Marché was demolished and redeveloped.

The new building is listed as vacant in the 1964 street directory but, by 1967, the estate agents Moldram & Wilson had moved in.

The shop was occupied by various estate agencies and property services agencies until the mid-1990s. Cubitt & West acquired Moldram & Wilson in 1986; they were then absorbed by Prudential Property Services the next year. Prudential became Woolwich estate agents in 1991.

Figure 204. Moldram & Wilson advertisement, 1968



<sup>63</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 5 May 1883

<sup>64</sup> SHC, 6198/13, *Woking Rates Supplemental Valuation Lists, 1911, 1914, 1921*

The building, since 2009, been home to Headmasters, hair stylists.

Occupants of 3 Bon Marché	
1886-96	William Cook, ironmonger
1897-1958	George Tyrrell and sons, oil & colourmen
	<i>redeveloped</i>
1964	<i>vacant</i>
1967-86	Moldram, Clarke & Edgley / Moldram & Wilson
1986-87	Cubitt & West
1987-90	Prudential Property Services
1991-96	Woolwich, estate agents
2001-05	Haart Ltd, estate agents
2009-	Headmasters

### No. 30 – 2 Bon Marché

George Frederick Saul was born, illegitimately, in Camden Town in about 1854. His parents married six years later but his father died in 1861, when George was seven. George married in 1880 and, in 1881, was living in Sunbury, Middlesex. He moved to Woking and opened a grocery and provisions store at 2 Bon Marché in about 1883.

By 1885, he had opened a second store in the High Street. George was found guilty of having ‘unjust weights’ for his scales in September 1886 and fined £2<sup>65</sup>.

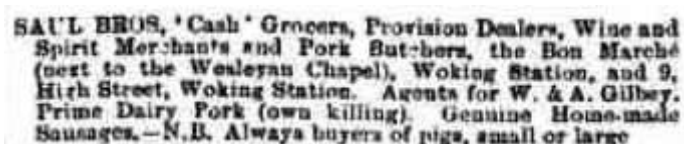


Figure 205. Advertisement January 1893

In 1893 George opened a third shop in Chertsey Road and the Commercial Road store was closed.

William Beavan Baynham, chemist & druggist, arrived in Woking in 1895 and took over 2 Bon Marché. In 1908, he moved to Walton upon Thames.

Following the closure, in 1909, of its premises in Chertsey Road, the Woking Liberal and Radical Club moved to Church Street. In 1913, the club took up residence in Commercial Road, in 2 Bon Marché. In 1929, the Liberal Club moved yet again to Bath Road.

<sup>65</sup> West Surrey Times 25 September 1886



Figure 206. Commercial Services advertisement, 1937

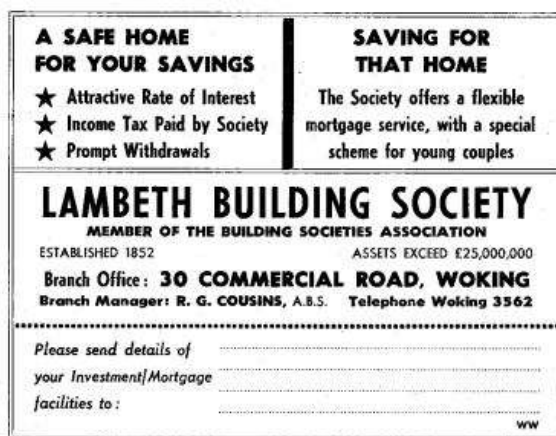


Figure 207. Lambeth Building Society advertisement, 1968

Occupants of 2 Bon Marché	
1883-1893	George F Saul, grocer
1894-95	Alexander Bridger, draper
1895-1908	William Beavan Baynham, chemist & druggist
1913-29	Woking Liberal and Radical Club
1933-34	Albert Richard Staples, electricians etc.
1934	Edward Albert Maund
1937-45	Commercial & Domestic Bureau (Mrs Emily Drew)
1941	Horace W Smith
1957-58	Gilbert H White & Co.
	<i>redeveloped</i>
1964	<i>vacant</i>
1967-76	Lambeth Building Society
1976-	Lloyds Bank

## No. 32 – 1 Bon Marché

Alexander Bridger, draper, was born in Rotherfield, Sussex in 1849. After moving to London, getting married and the birth of his first child, he tried his hand in Sandwich, Kent for 15 years before arriving in Woking in about 1884/5.

The first record of him at 1 Bon Marché is a newspaper report of an attempted robbery in September 1885.<sup>66</sup>

In 1895, Alexander was advertising as also trading at Ottershaw<sup>67</sup>. In 1909/10, he was also an agent for the Sun Fire Office.

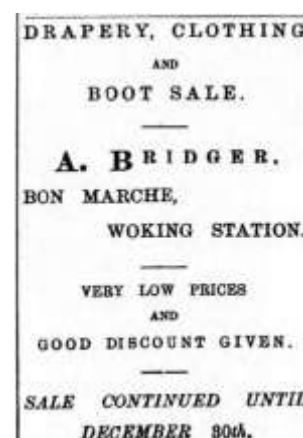


Figure 208. Xmas 1893 Advertisement

<sup>66</sup> West Surrey Times 26 September 1885

<sup>67</sup> West Surrey Times 17 August 1895



Alexander traded at Bon Marché for 25 years. In 1894 he expanded into No. 2 Bon Marché, before relinquishing it the following year when William Baynham took it over.

In 1910, however, Robertson Brothers auctioned off a quantity of his stock-in-trade, fixtures and counters, which had been seized under 'distrain for unpaid rent'.<sup>68</sup>

Marguerite Reed was born Margaret Emma Reed in 1884, the youngest of three daughters of postal worker Thomas Reed and his wife Elizabeth. Marguerite had taken over the studio, formerly run by Alfred Wildman at 88 Maybury Road in April 1917, advertising in the Woking News & Mail that she specialised in photographing children.

In 1917, she married Thomas Hendra at the Guildford Registry Office. Their professions were given as 'Army Pensioner' and 'Photographer' respectively.

Marguerite left the Maybury Road studio in 1922 and for two years had a studio in Bon Marché, Commercial Road (called The Studio) before moving briefly to 56a Chertsey Road. Sidney Francis took over the Maybury Road studio in 1924; it has been suggested that many of his credited photographs were actually taken by Marguerite.

Marguerite carried on her photography business from her parents' former home (Stone House, 2 Sandy Lane, Maybury), from about 1927 until her retirement, contributing photographs to the local newspapers for many years.



Figure 209. Portrait by Marguerite Reed



Figure 210. Photographs from The Commercial Studio

<sup>68</sup> *West Surrey Times* 20 August 1910

It is possible that The Studio was upstairs or ‘out back’ at Bon Marché. It is also likely that it existed for some years before Marguerite’s time; the two photographs in Figure 210 are ‘cabinet cards’ a format that went out of favour before the first World War<sup>69</sup>. William Baynham (see above), occupied 2 Bon Marché from 1895 until 1908 and was a keen amateur photographer.

From the mid-1930s until the late 1950s, C C Moldram & Co. occupied 1 Bon Marché. Bon Marché was demolished and redeveloped in about 1960.

Occupants of 1 Bon Marché	
1885-1910	Alexander Bridger, draper
1911-12	Edward Lawson
1912-18	Commercial Road Furnishing Stores (William Hollett)
1921	Mrs Hardy
1922-24	The Studio (Marguerite Reed)
1933	E Timpson
1937-57	C C Moldram & Co.
1942-45	War Savings Centre
	<i>redeveloped</i>
1964-	Lloyds Bank




Figure 211. No. 32 Lloyds Bank, 2020

<sup>69</sup> Although some were produced into the 1930s

## Morris House (No. 34)

In August 1929, the Morris Car Depot, owned by the Haslemere Motor Company (founded in 1912), opened its doors in a new building, which was named Morris House.

THE MORRIS DEPOTS: GUILDFORD: HASLEMERE: ALDERSHOT: WOKING



**£100 (EX WORKS)**

### The Morris Minor S.V. Two Seater

In response to the great local interest shown, and the many enquiries we have received concerning the new £100 Morris Minor, we feel it incumbent on us as Main Agents for all Morris Products to publish this brief specification, which gives some definite facts about this epoch-making little Car.

**Brief Specification**

**Engine.** Four-cylinder, side valve, detachable head, 48 Treasury Tax, forced lubrication, S.U. Carburettor, Lucas coil ignition.

**Body.** Coachbuilt, giving ample accommodation for two persons, finished in grey cellulose and upholstered in black. Hand, side-screens, and hand bag are provided; hanging forward seat squab gives access in easy manner to spare wheel, luggage, tools, etc.

**Chassis.** Upweight at front and rear, 46, 46, 46, wheels, 20, 46, track; suspension is by four semi-elliptic springs fitted with shock absorbers; brakes operate direct on all four wheels.

**Equipment.** Lucas lighting and starting set (six volt), combined head and side lamps, Triples single panel windscreen with automatic wiper, driving mirror, Lucas battery, speedometer, five detachable rear wheels with Dunlop motorised road tyres, spare wheel carried in rear locker.

**The Morris Depot**  
(Sole Proprietors: Haslemere Motor Co., Ltd.)

THE MORRIS DEPOTS: GUILDFORD: HASLEMERE: ALDERSHOT: WOKING

## THE MORRIS DEPOT

*announce a*  
**SPECIAL  
DISPLAY WEEK**  
OF  
**SELECTED USED CARS**

from  
**Monday, Feb. 22nd to Saturday, Feb. 27th**  
**9 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.**  
at the showrooms of the

### WOKING MOTORS

Chertsey Road, WOKING  
(By special arrangement with Mr. W. Pearce).

**Recent Models, Morris Oxfords,  
Cowleys and Minors, and other makes  
at Bargain prices.**

*Part Exchanges and Deferred Terms arranged.*

Figure 212. Morris Depot advertisements from 1931 and 1932



Figure 213. Morris House, 1956



In 1957, the Haslemere Motor Company had branches in Aldershot, Haslemere, Guildford, and Woking. In June that year, they were bought by Wadham Brothers of Waterloo and became part of the Wadham (Holdings) Group.<sup>70</sup> Wadham moved their business to the corner of Goldsworth Road and Poole Road, in the late 1960s, trading as Wadham Stringer and then Wadham Kenning.

Morris House was demolished and redeveloped in about 1970. The new building was also called Morris House. In 1972, the estate agents Gascoigne-Pees were occupying the new Morris House.

From 1974 until 1980, at least part of the building was occupied by Woolwich Equitable Building Society. They shared the premises with Argos from 1981 until 2005.

### **ARGOS**

Argos was founded by Richard Tompkins who had previously established Green Shield Stamps in the United Kingdom. He came up with the idea that people could purchase goods from his "Green Shield Gift House" with cash rather than savings stamps. He began rebranding the original Green Shield Stamps catalogue shops as Argos in July 1973.

Argos was purchased by BAT Industries in 1979 for £32 million. In 1980, Argos opened its Elizabeth Duke jewellery counter (named after a director's wife) and by 1982, was the United Kingdom's fourth-biggest jewellery retailer. The Elizabeth Duke brand was later phased out.

The company was demerged from BAT Industries and listed on the London Stock Exchange in 1990.

In April 1998, the company was acquired by GUS plc. In October 2006, it subsequently became part of Home Retail Group.

In April 2016, Argos's parent, Home Retail Group, agreed to a £1.4 billion takeover by Sainsbury's, following a bidding war between the supermarket chain and South African conglomerate Steinhoff International. The acquisition was completed on 2 September 2016. A large number of high street and retail park shops were closed, replaced by an Argos outlet in a nearby Sainsbury's shop.

In July 2020, Argos announced that it would be discontinuing production of its printed catalogue after 47 years. In-store customers would order via in-store terminals that accessed the electronic catalogue.

On 5 November 2020, Sainsbury's announced that it would close 420 Argos standalone outlets by March 2024, leaving about 100. The measures were reported to be due to changing consumer habits and the growth of online shopping.

Argos left Commercial Way in around 2010, moving to the Lion Retail Park.

In 2015/16, Morris House was home to the British Heart Foundation shop.

From 2017 until 2023, part of the building (the left side, viewing from the front) was occupied by bookmakers, BetFred. The rest of the building was unoccupied; in 2017, the windows were used for notices detailing plans for the further redevelopment of Woking town centre.

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<sup>70</sup> *Portsmouth Evening News* 21 June 1957; *West Sussex Gazette* 25 June 1957





Figure 214. Morris House, 2017

In 2023, the empty centre section of the building was taken over by Escape Hunt, running escape room adventures. In 2025, the right-hand section was occupied by UBX, a boxing gym. The upper floors are used as offices.

Occupants of Morris House			
1918-29	Liberal & Radical Club		
1929-68	Morris Car Depot (Haslemere Motor Co. Ltd)		
c.1970	<i>redeveloped</i>		
1972	Gascoigne-Pees, estate agents		
1974-80			Woolwich Equitable Building Society
1981-2005	Argos		
2006-09			
2015-16	British Heart Foundation shop		
2017-23	<i>vacant</i>	<i>vacant</i>	BetFred
2023-24		Escape Hunt	
2025-			



Figure 215. UBX, Nov 2025



Figure 216. Escape Hunt, Nov 2025

### No.s 36-42 (previously 28-34)

The four buildings between Morris House and Church Path were constructed in the early 1930s. They appear to have initially been numbered 28-34 (Bon Marché having its own numbering and Morris House not being numbered). In the 1951 renumbering, they became No.s 36-42.

## No. 36

The first occupants (from 1933 to 1936) of No. 36 (then No. 28) were Surrey Cleaners, run by Miriam Alexander. A succession of different cleaning firms occupied the premises – most memorably, Ashley Cook from 1964 to 1991.

After a brief occupation by Reed Employment Agency in the 1990s, Keelans, estate agents, moved in. Keelans were acquired by Bourne in June 2015, and the business rebranded from Keelans to Bourne early in 2016.

Occupants of No. 36	
1933-36	Surrey Cleaners (Miriam Alexander)
1936-37	Vitesse Cleaners
1947-48	Ten-thirty Cleaners (Victor Bolton)
1948-49	Same Day Cleaners
1957	Hockley's, cleaners
1964-91	Ashley Cook
1992-99	Reed Employment Agency
2009-2016	Keelans, estate agents
2016-	Bourne, estate agents



Figure 217. No. 36, 2020

## No. 38

No.s 36-42 were built in about 1933. The first occupant of No. 38 (then No. 30) was Joan, a costumier, who had vacated by 1937.<sup>71</sup>

The next occupant was Christine, children's outfitter (Figure 218), who opened in 1939. The proprietor was Daisy Evelyn Jones, an ex-nurse who had been widowed in 1937. It was later run by a D W Gea.

Christine closed in 1973 and was replaced by Chancellors, estate agents, who still occupy the building today.



Figure 218. Christine, 1960s

Occupants of No. 38	
1934	Joan, costumier
1937	<i>vacant</i>
1939-73	Christine, children's outfitter (D E Jones / D W Gea)
1974-	Chancellors, estate agents



Figure 219. No. 38 Chancellors, 2020

<sup>71</sup> *Woking Year Book and Directory*, 1934 & 1937

## No. 40 – No. 32

The first occupant of No. 40, then No. 32, was Frederick (aka Edward) Timpson, a tailor, who is known, from a newspaper advertisement, to have been there in 1933. Unfortunately, the advertisement does not seem to have had the desired effect as, just weeks later, Frederick committed suicide because of financial worries.<sup>72</sup>

From 1934 until the second world war, the shop was occupied by Stephen Clarke, also a tailor.

Following the war, the Sports House, who had occupied No. 42 since 1934, expanded into and took over No. 40 (see below).



Figure 220. Timpson advertisement, 1933

## No. 42 – No. 34 - The Dome

The building known as The Dome, was built in 1933, with No.s 28-32 (now 36-40). The first occupant was the Woking Autocar Company, who opened a sports shop there in 1934, trading as Sports House. In 1948, following the second world war, Sports House expanded into No. 40 (then 32).

The Halifax Building Society moved into No.s 40 and 42 in 1973, staying until 1996.

Halifax were followed, in turn, by estate agents, Mann & Co., Carson & Co., and Gascoigne-Pees. The building has been vacant since 2024.

Occupants of No.s 40 & 42		
1933	Frederick Timpson, tailor	<i>vacant</i>
1934-39	Stephen Clarke, tailor	Sports House
1939-47		
1948-72	Sports House	
1973-96	Halifax Building Society	
2001-12	Mann & Co., estate agents	
2018-23	Carson & Co., estate agents	
2023-24	Gascoigne-Pees, estate agents	
2024-25	<i>vacant</i>	

<sup>72</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 26 October 1933



The Sports House moved, in 1934, from Chertsey Road to The Dome at 42 Commercial Road. The Chertsey Road premises then traded for a few years as Radio House.

Francis Derry moved away from Woking in 1941. He died on 18 December 1951 at Eastbourne, Sussex. He was 82.

On 26th October 1953 an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Woking Autocar Co. Ltd was held. It passed a resolution that the company be voluntarily wound up and appointed Mr C H S Lewis, chartered accountant, of London to be the liquidator.<sup>73</sup>



Figure 221. Sports House

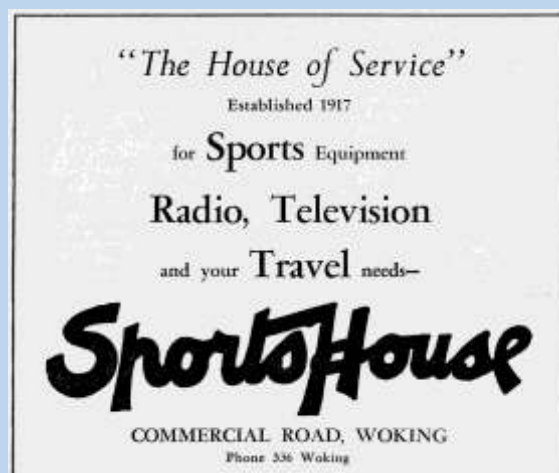


Figure 222. Sports House advertisement, 1960

Liquidation of the company obviously took some time. The Sports House was still advertising in 1960 and traded until 1972 (possibly someone bought the rights to the name along with the business).



Figure 223. The Dome, 2020



Figure 224. Gascoigne-Pees, 2023

<sup>73</sup> *London Gazette* 6 November 1953

## CHURCH PATH TO CHOBHAM ROAD



Figure 225. Church Path to Chobham Road, OS Plan 1912

### Tylers / 6 Albion House

In 1894, Charles Thomas Tyler opened a wine and spirits shop in Chertsey Road. By 1901, he had a store and warehouse situated on the corner of Church Path and Commercial Road.

In 1966, the second incarnation of the Albion Hotel was demolished to be replaced with Albion House, a complex containing a new Albion Hotel, offices and a number of retail outlets. A parade of 5 shops faced onto High Street, but the complex stretched along Church Path as far as Commercial Road. Tyler's store was demolished, but then occupied Unit 6 of Albion House, on a similar footprint.



Figure 226. Tyler's store & warehouse advertising the Chertsey Road shop



Figure 227. 6 & 7 Albion House

Occupants 6 Albion House	
1901-66	Tyler & Co., wines & spirits store / warehouse
	<i>Redeveloped</i>
1968-81	Tyler & Co., wines & spirits
1987-89	Victoria Wine
1995	Relate (temporary home)
2008-15	Foundations
2018-	Marciano Lounge



Figure 228. Marciano Lounge, 2020

## 7 Albion House



Figure 229. Relate West Surrey



Occupants	
1973-91	Sketchley, cleaners
1995-14	Relate (temporary home)
2014-15	Relate
2018-	Marciano Lounge (opened Oct 31)

## **No. 44 – Whittington Buildings**

Whittington Buildings were erected in 1889. They consisted of Gloster's warehouse, various offices and accommodation.

Henry William Gloster was one of early Woking's most significant figures in terms of commerce and local governance. He was born in Bristol in 1835.

In 1876, he moved his grocery business from Penge to Chobham Road, opposite the Red House; in 1889 he opened his Corn Exchange, in Chertsey Road and also built a wholesale warehouse in Commercial Road, where Harland House now is (see page 138).



Figure 230. Gloster's offices

A second warehouse in Walton Road, followed soon afterwards.

Henry William Gloster had eight sons from his two marriages. Six of these went into the family business.

Henry William Gloster was chairman of Woking Urban District Council in 1904<sup>74</sup>.

When Henry William Gloster died in 1908, his sons were running the business. It carried on until the death of the last surviving son,

Whittington Buildings were demolished in the early 1960s and replaced by Harland House (see page 138).

<sup>74</sup> Equivalent to today's mayor; the conferment on Woking, by Royal Charter, of Borough status in 1974 gave the Chairman of the council the right to use the title of mayor



### No. 44b – The Old Bakery

No. 44b Commercial Road is situated behind No. 44. A passage to the side of Gloster's warehouse led to it. It was built probably in around 1890 and appears on the 1894 OS Plan (Figure 231). Now known as the Old Bakery, it was probably associated with Pullinger's restaurant in Chertsey Road, from c.1900; on the 1966 OS Plan, it appears to be integral with Pullinger's shop. The building is not mentioned in any early census, street directory, electoral list or general rate book; it is unlikely therefore that it was a separate entity at that time.

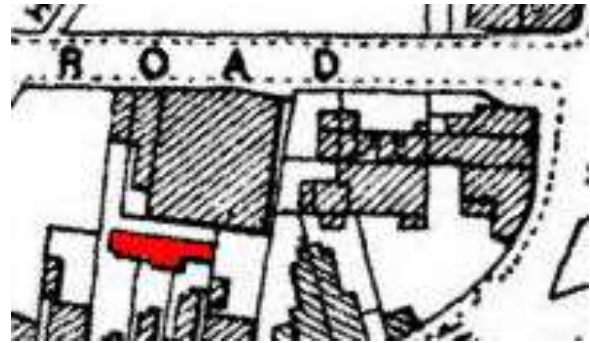


Figure 231. OS Plan, 1894

Since the 1970s, the building has been used as offices for a number of firms, before being converted into a Romanian speciality food shop.

Occupants of No. 44b	
1890-1968	Bakery for Pullinger
1969-74	Bakery for Acres the Bakers
1981-85	Micrelec Ltd, electronic forecourt equipment
1989-90	Churchill Recruitment
1996	Mentor Direct
2001-03	Telepeople
2009	iO1 Ltd, website software development
2010?	Vincent James Homes Ltd
2017-	A & S Magazin Romanesc Market



Figure 232. A & S Romanesc Market

## Harland House

Harland House replaced Gloster's warehouse and offices which were pulled down in the early 1960s. The building was constructed in 1963. In the 1964 *Woking Directory*, it is described as 'five new shops'; as this directory was likely compiled in late 1963, it is probable that most of the units were first occupied sometime in 1964.



Figure 233. Harland House, 1968

Harland House has the address 44 Commercial Road. The five units were originally numbered 1-5 in an east to west direction (contrary to the direction of the general numbering of the street); by the mid-1980s, this had been reversed. The original numbering has been used below.

## 5 Harland House

The first occupants of 5 Harland House were Gray's World Travel who had previously been in 22 Commercial Road. In 1973 Gray's was superseded by Woking Travel Service who, the following year, were replaced by Hogg Robinson, travel agents. Hogg Robinson were, in turn, replaced by Going Places.

From 2005 to 2015, 5 Harland House was home to Establishment, a ladies fashion store.



Figure 234. Establishment



Figure 235. Dec 2005 Advertisement

Since 2015, the unit has been a restaurant – firstly Café Class, an Italian coffee and gelato shop, and since 2018, Bacaró.



Figure 236. Café Class, 2015

Occupants of 5 Harland House	
1964-72	Gray's World Travel
1973	Woking Travel Service
1974-90	Hogg Robinson, travel agents
1995-96	Going Places, travel agents
2005-15	Establishment (Est 1981 Ltd)
2015-18	Café Class, Italian coffee & gelato
2018-	Bacaró, Italian bar & restaurant





Figure 237. Latino and Bacaró, 2020

#### 4 Harland House

Unit 4 Harland House has always been home to a restaurant. The first to move in were Wimpy in 1965/6.



Figure 238. Typical Wimpy interior



Figure 239. Olivo, 2008

After Wimpy, came La Reggia opening on 21st February 1990, Café Latino c.2000, Olivo and, since 2015, Latino's.

Occupants of 4 Harland House	
1967-90	Wimpy Bar
1990-96	La Reggia
2001	Café Latino
2008-14	Olivo
2015-	Latino's



### 3 Harland House

In 1968, 3 Harland House was occupied by Kendall's rainwear; Kendall & Sons was an umbrella company founded in 1870. The shop can be seen in Figure 240, below.



Figure 240. Kendall



Figure 241. Kendall advertisement

During the 20th century, Kendall continued to manufacture umbrellas, but also developed rainwear and ladies clothing retail lines. During the World War 2, it manufactured macintoshes for the army as well as using the skills in handling silk, built up over 70 years of the umbrella manufacturing, to produce parachutes. The main emphasis of Kendall's sales and marketing throughout its history was quality and high standards. Kendall was bought by Combined English Stores in 1977 and subsequently by Hepworths, the Leeds-based menswear company; it was then converted into the Next ladies' wear chain.

By 1971, the shop had been taken over by Thorntons, chartered surveyors & estate agents, who had moved from Ryde House in Chobham Road.



Figure 242. Thorntons' advertisement, 1975

Since the mid-1990s, the shop has been occupied by estate agents.

Occupants of 3 Harland House	
1968	Kendall's, rainwear & ladies' wear
1971-82	Thorntons, chartered surveyors & estate agents
1987-89	Reed Employment Agency
1990-91	Brook Street Bureau
1995-2023	Waterfall, Durrant & Barclay / Waterfalls
2023-	Stirling Ackroyd



Figure 243. Waterfalls, 2020

## 1-2 Harland House

Originally the 'Manchester & Liverpool District Bank', the District Bank opened a branch at Harland House in 1965. Although the District Bank had been acquired by the National Provincial Bank in 1962, it retained its own identity until after National Provincial Bank merged with Westminster Bank, in 1968.

The branch was closed by NatWest in the early 1990s.

The Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society, a subsidiary of Lloyds Bank, succeeded NatWest.

In September 2013, the branch network of Cheltenham & Gloucester was transferred to the newly established TSB Bank plc; C&G branches were rebranded under the TSB brand. 1-2 Harland House was been the home of TSB since then until 2021.



Figure 244. District Bank c1968



Figure 245. NatWest, c1992



Figure 246. Cheltenham & Gloucester, 2008





Figure 247. TSB, 2020

From 2022, both units have been vacant and were available for let.

In 2024, the shop was taken on by Woking Food Centre Ltd.<sup>75</sup> The units were then split for the first time since they were built. In 2025, Unit 1 was occupied by Pablo, a barber shop and Unit 2 by Woking Food Centre.

Occupants of 1-2 Harland House		
1965-72	District Bank	
1973-92	National Westminster Bank	
1994-2013	Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society	
2013-21	TSB Bank	
2022-25	<i>Vacant</i>	
2025-	Pablo, barber	Woking Food Centre

## No. 46

No. 46 Commercial Road was built in about 1910, probably in 1907<sup>76</sup>. It replaced a number of older buildings on the site (circled in Figure 248). The building was named Surrey House; it was given the number 46 in the 1921 road re-numbering.

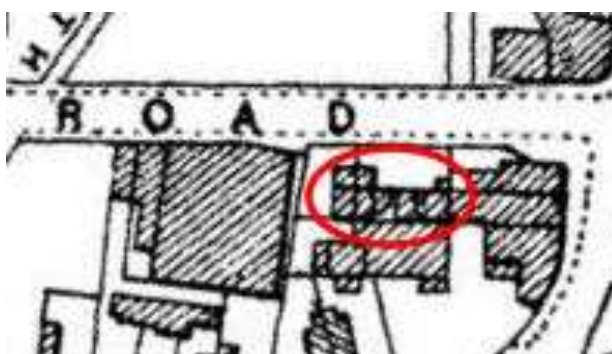


Figure 248. OS Plan, 1894

As no other potential occupant

<sup>75</sup> [company-information.service.gov.uk](https://company-information.service.gov.uk)

<sup>76</sup> It appears on the 1912 OS Plan and the 1908 directory lists '2 New shops empty' next to Gloster's warehouse



has been found for the period c1910 to 1915, it is possible that this building was the home of the Electric Empire, which is recorded as being in Commercial Road at that time.

The Electric Empire seems to have closed sometime during the first World War.

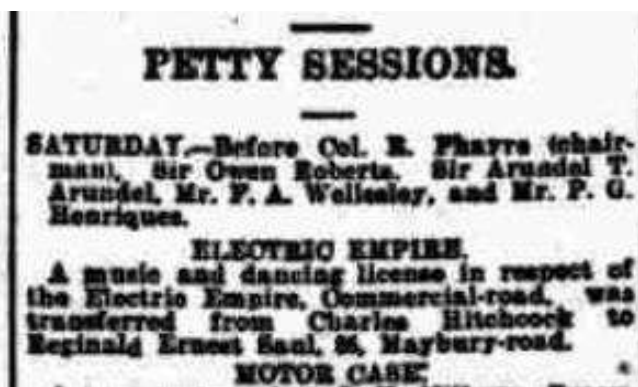


Figure 249. Surrey Advertiser May 1912

The first recorded occupancy was in 1916/17, when half of the building was vacant and half was (temporarily) occupied by Woking Urban District Council to provide baths for soldiers.<sup>77</sup> In 1919, it was probably the home of the Popular Restaurant. In 1920 it became the Rendezvous Restaurant.

Heinrich Sehrt, confectioner, and Hermann Achille Marfurt, chef, were both Swiss nationals living in London around 1910. Hermann Marfurt married an English girl, Eva Briscoe Mackie in 1911. Hermann died in 1919 and it appears that, shortly afterwards, Eva established the Rendezvous in Woking, with (probably) Heinrich Sehrt<sup>78</sup>.

The Rendezvous was sold in 1937, along with other buildings in Chertsey and Chobham Roads.<sup>79</sup> The auction catalogue described it thus: Pair of shops used as confectioners with restaurant, tea rooms, etc., on the ground floor. On the first floor are large lounge, tea rooms, store etc.<sup>80</sup> It was bought by the well-known Woking firm of Glosters Ltd.

In 1938, Eva opened another restaurant in West Byfleet (also called the Rendezvous). The manager (and chef?) was Charles Henry Hudson<sup>81</sup>. Eva Marfurt retired in about 1950, moving to the Isle of Wight, where she married Charles Henry Hudson in 1953.

During the years of the Second World War, Surrey House appears to have been vacant the majority of the time. In January 1944, the newly formed Woking Racing Pigeon Club held a show of racing and Service pigeons, in aid of the Red Cross.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>77</sup> *Woking Yearbook & Directory 1917*

<sup>78</sup> Local directories list the proprietors as 'Sehrt & Marfurt'

<sup>79</sup> *Surrey Advertiser 17 April 1937*

<sup>80</sup> SHC, SP/4149, *Sales Particulars*

<sup>81</sup> *Surrey Advertiser 28 January 1939*

<sup>82</sup> *Surrey Advertiser 11 December 1943*

In March the same year, the Woking and District Rabbit Club also held a show at Surrey House.<sup>83</sup>

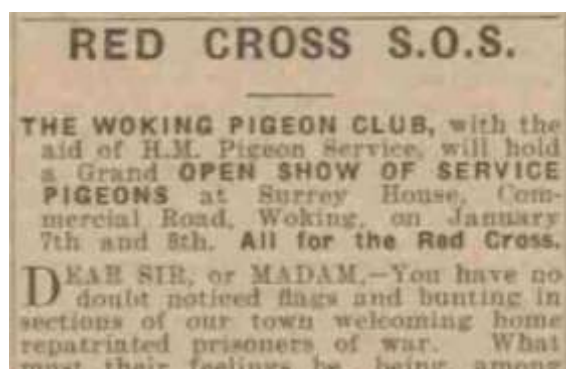


Figure 250. *Surrey Advertiser* reports

December 1944 saw an estimated 12% drop in the number of Christmas cards posted, but a 25% increase in the number of parcels. Surrey House was used as a post office for parcels, as was Christ Church hall. The Brookwood Motor Company's garage, opposite the sorting office, was used as a temporary parcel sorting office.<sup>84</sup> Surrey House fulfilled the same purpose during 11-24 December the following year and again in 1946.

It was already obvious that, with Woking's continued growth, the Post Office building in Chertsey Road was inadequate for the town's needs. A new building in a new location would be needed. In 1947, the Post Office moved from Chertsey Road into No. 46 Commercial Road, leasing the building from Glosters Ltd<sup>85</sup>. This was to be its temporary home whilst waiting for the new Post Office building to be erected. The new building at Market Square opened in 1960.

Following the closure of their Chertsey Road store, Glosters made No. 46 their home, from 1960 until 1965.

In 1967, Glosters Ltd sold Surrey House to the Norwich Union Insurance Society.<sup>86</sup>



Figure 251. Glosters Ltd

<sup>83</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 11 March 1944

<sup>84</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 30 December 1944

<sup>85</sup> SHC, 7655/4/4, *Surrey House, Commercial Road, Woking: underlease by Glosters to the Postmaster General*

<sup>86</sup> SHC, 7655/4/2, *Agreement by Glosters Ltd to sell Surrey House, Commercial Road, Woking to the Norwich Union Insurance Society, 1967*

In 1972, John Shee opened a branch of his television rental business in the building. When Shees moved out in 1985, Robinsons, who were downsizing from their department store in Chertsey Road, replaced them.



Figure 252. Shees advertisement, 1979



Figure 253. Robinsons

Robinsons stayed for almost 8 years before finally closing on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March 1993. They were succeeded by Methven's bookshop.

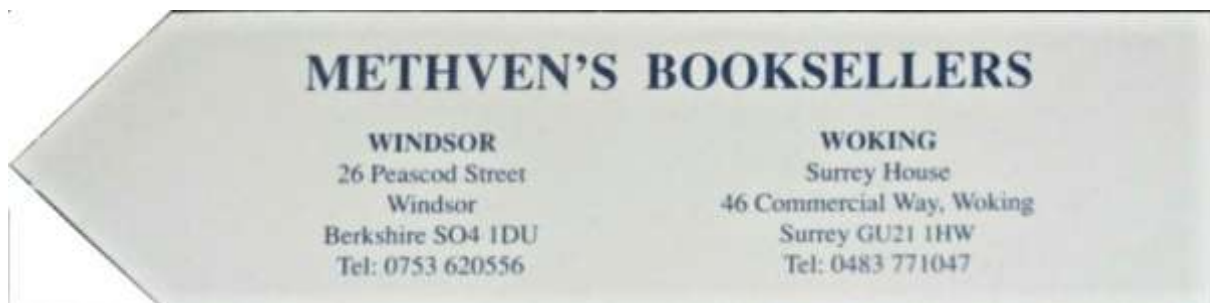


Figure 254. Methven bookmark, c1995

Since Methven's closed in 1998, No. 46 has been home to a succession of real estate businesses, currently Leaders.





Figure 255. County Property Management, 2019



Figure 256. No. 46 Leaders, 2020

Occupants of No. 46	
1911-13	Electric Empire ?
1914	Soldiers' recreation hall ?
1916	<i>vacant</i> / Woking Urban District Council (baths for soldiers)
1918-19	National Kitchen ?
1919	Popular Restaurant ?
1920-38	Rendezvous Restaurant
1939-45	<i>Ad hoc use</i>
1947-60	Post Office (temporary home)
1960-67	Glosters
1972-85	Shees, television rental
1986-93	Robinsons
1993-2001	Methven's, bookshop
2003-17	County Property Management
2020-	Leaders, estate agents

## No. 48 - Alfreston

Alfreston was built in about 1925 onto the side of No. 7 Chobham Road (or in front of it as viewed from Commercial Road – see Figure 257). The house appears in many records as 'Alfriston'.

The first known occupants of Alfreston were Richard William Saunders and his wife who moved in, as a newly married couple, in 1926.

In 1930, the Saunders were succeeded by Thomas Alfred Yoko and his wife, Christina.

Thomas Yoko died in 1950; Christina continued living in Alfreston, with their son, Peter, until her death in 1980.

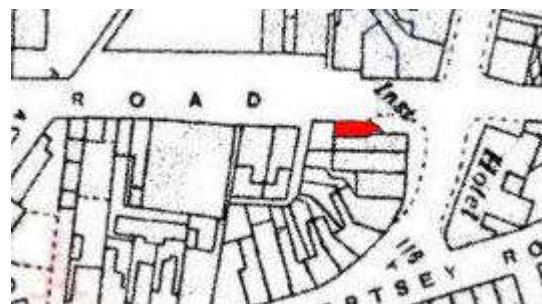


Figure 257. OS Plan, 1935 - Alfreston



Thomas Alfred Yoko was born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1894 to a Greek father and an Irish mother.

In 1917, Thomas signed up for the South African Expeditionary Force, joining the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment South African Infantry. On enlistment, he admitted to having previously served for 1 year 120 days with the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment South African Infantry, in German South-west Africa (now Namibia) and German East Africa (now Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania). He gave his then occupation as 'painter'. Thomas was described as 5 feet 5 inches tall, weighing 140 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes.

Thomas served 88 days in South Africa and was then posted to the UK. He served for another 283 days (making 366 in total), based at Bordon Camp, before being medically discharged in April 1918, having suffered from rheumatic fever.

Thomas settled in Woking, living in Eve Road and Walton Road, working as a painter and decorator. In 1926, he married Christina Glenn and, in 1930, they moved into Alfreston.

In 2002, Alfreston, along with No.s 5 and 7 Chobham Road, was converted into a wine bar trading as Yates. In 2016, this became the Slug & Lettuce.



Figure 258. Alfreston, incorporated into Slug & Lettuce, 2017

In 2025, the Slug & Lettuce closed its doors. On 31<sup>st</sup> October, a new bar, the London Stone, opened.

Occupants of Alfreston	
1926-30	Richard William Saunders
1930-80	Thomas Alfred Yoko / Christina Yoko
1995	Robert Shaw
1996	<i>vacant</i>
2001-2016	Yates
2016-2025	Slug & Lettuce
2025-	The London Stone



Figure 259. The London Stone, 2025

## CHOBHAM ROAD TO CHERTSEY ROAD

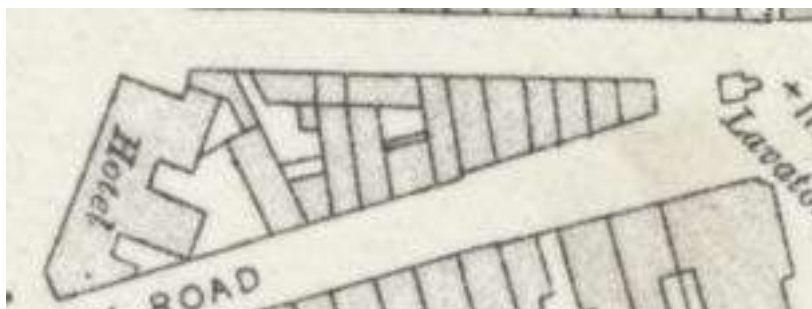


Figure 260. Chobham Road to Chertsey Road, OS Plan 1912

### Red House

When the Red House Hotel was first built in 1869, it had a Chobham Road address and its main entrance opened onto Chobham Road. It was enlarged in 1896 by the addition of a saloon bar, a coffee room and a billiard room. This resulted in the entrance of the hotel fronting onto the junction of Chobham Road and Chertsey Road; the hotel gained a 26 Chertsey Road address when that road was renumbered in c.1910. Throughout this period, the hotel's garden backed onto Commercial Road.

The Red House Hotel was demolished in 1936 and a new Red House public house built on the corner of Chobham Road and Commercial Road. The address now reverted back to Chobham Road. Despite this, it has been included in the listing for Commercial Road in several street directories (1935-50).

The southern side of Commercial Road between the Red House and the junction with Chertsey Road was largely undeveloped until the building of the Triangle (36-46 Chertsey Road), in 1903. It then consisted of the rears of those buildings which fronted onto Chertsey Road.



Figure 261. c.1920

Between the Red House and The Triangle, was infilled in a somewhat piecemeal manner. The 1912 and 1934 OS Plans, show four buildings facing onto Commercial Road, labelled A, B, C & D, in Figure 262.

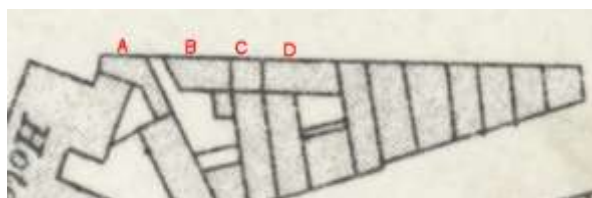


Figure 262. 1912 OS Plan

These may have been numbered 54, 56, 58 and 60.

Building 'A' was demolished in about 1936, to allow for the building of the new Red House. Between 1934 and 1966, buildings 'C' & half of 'D' were absorbed into 30 and 30a Chertsey Road respectively.

The first recorded occupant in this stretch was Mrs Caroline Mary Webb (whose husband ran the Alpine Dairy in Chertsey Road). In 1904/5, she was trading there as a china dealer.

From 1911 until 1929, George Arthur Kinipple, a fishmonger had his shop there, probably in what was later No. 64.

## No 52

There is no official record of any building being numbered 52 Commercial Road. However, the records of building numbers along this stretch of the street are very inconsistent.

In 1960, an advertisement appeared for Susan Gay, ladies fashions, which stated that their maternity department was located at 52 Commercial Road (Figure 263). This may possibly have been a misprint and it may actually have been in [part of] No. 62.

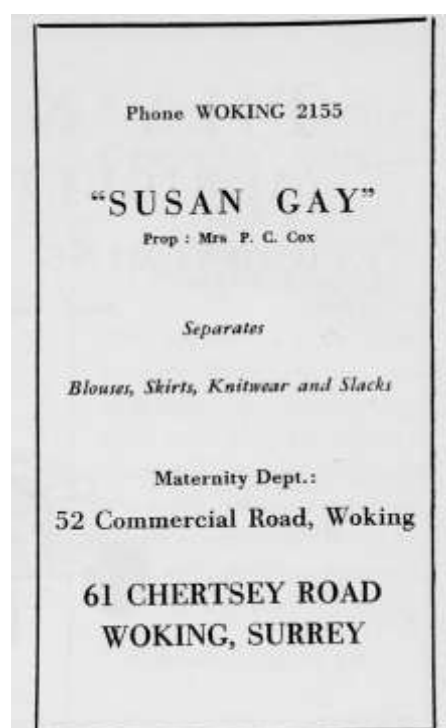


Figure 263. 1960 Susan Gay advert

## No 62

The building that was numbered No. 62 in 1951 is shown on Ordnance Survey plans as early as 1912. It was previously known as No. 56 (see Figure 266). There is no record of any occupation until 1924; prior to this date, the building may have been associated with either the Red House Hotel or with one of the businesses in Chertsey Road that backed onto it.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> It is also another possible location for the Electric Empire (see page 144)



William Henry Cox was born in Hounslow, Middlesex in 1877. He moved to Woking after being demobbed from the army following the First World War. With his wife, Georgina, he ran an hotel in Clifton House, Duke Street.

Before the war, William had been a motor engineer; afterwards, he set up in business as a retailer, renter and repairer of bicycles, located in Commercial Road<sup>88</sup>. William died in 1932.

In 1928 the cycle business was being run by a T Baker<sup>89</sup>.

Sidney Francis was born Sidney Francis Patient in Southwark on 8 October 1891. In 1920, he married Edith Heaysman in Maidstone, and from 1923 they lived in Woking, at 88 Maybury Road, from where also he initially ran his photography business.

In about 1930, Sidney opened the Popular Studio in Commercial Road (seen in Figure 265, beyond the Red House).



Figure 264. Sidney Francis



Figure 265. Popular Studio, c.1955

In addition to his work as a portrait and wedding photographer, Sidney also undertook commercial projects for the local newspaper and local businesses and produced a number of postcards.

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<sup>88</sup> *Surrey Advertiser* 23 November 1818

<sup>89</sup> *Woking Yearbook & Directory* 1928-39

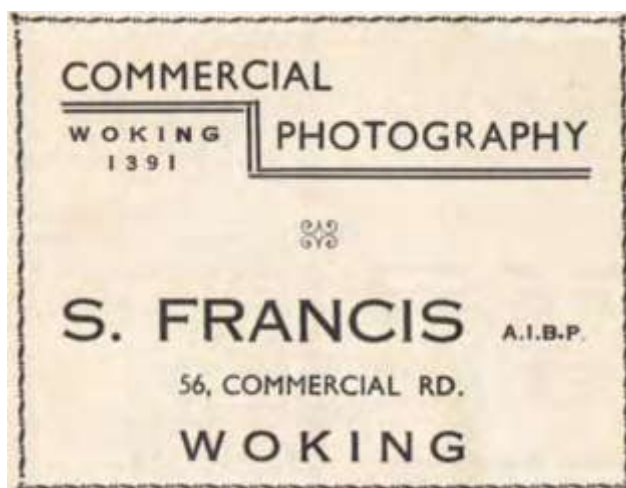


Figure 266. 1948 advertisement

The Popular Studio was closed in about 1960 (when Sidney would have been 69). Sidney Francis died in 1973, aged 81.

It is possible that the building (or part of it) was used by Susan Gay, ladies fashions for their maternity department (see page 152).

The studio (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about

1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 62	
1918-24	William Henry Cox, cycles
1928	T Baker, cycles
1932-57	Sidney Francis, Popular Studio, photographer
c1960	Susan Gay, maternity department ?
c1969	S H Cox & Son, greengrocers

## No. 64

One building which did front onto Commercial way (position shown in Figure 267) was half of building 'D' (see Figure 262), designated No. 64 in 1951.

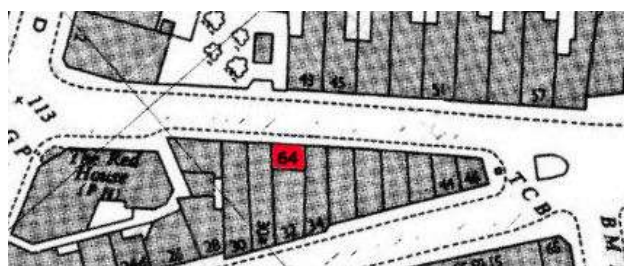


Figure 267. 1966 OS Plan



Figure 268. East end of Commercial Road, c1934

In 1934, Edward Albert Maund, tailor is recorded as occupying the shop. In Figure 268, the shop is on the extreme right-hand edge of the photo; a sign advertising Jaeger pure wool suits can be seen.

The building (along with the whole of this section of Commercial Road) was demolished in about 1975 for the building of Crown Life House and the Fine

Fare superstore, which then blocked off the eastern end of Commercial Road (see page 98).

Occupants of No. 64	
1911-29	George Arthur Kinipple, fishmonger
1932	Mac Fisheries
1934	Edward Albert Maund, tailor
1937	Smith Brothers, builders
1948-49	Woking Savings Centre
1951	H M Government
1961-64	Mayhill Restaurant
1968-70	Katy Mae, ladies fashions
c1969	The Pantry

### **Guildford Doll's Hospital**

The Woking branch of Guildford Doll's Hospital was located somewhere in Commercial Way between 1976 and 1980.

---

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

British Newspaper Archive

House of Fraser Archive

Iain Wakeford

London Metropolitan Archives

National Archives, Kew

Sainsbury Archive

Surrey History Centre

1:2500 Ordnance Survey Plans for 1871, 1896, 1914, 1935, 1965 and 1976 have been used extensively



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# INDEX

## 1

1<sup>st</sup> Regiment South African Infantry, 149

## A

A & S Magazin Romanesc Market, 137  
 A&B Baby, 43, 44  
 Abingdon, 82  
 Abraham, Henry, 2, 29  
 Academy of Music, 25  
 Acres the Bakers, 137  
 Adloo Enterprises, 114  
 Ahmed, Jaffar, 62  
 Albion Hotel, 3, 134  
 Albion House, 52, 134, 135, 153, 154  
 Alders, 11  
 Aldershot, 128  
 Alexander, Miriam, 130  
 Alfred Marks, 111, 112  
 Alfreston, 148, 149  
 Alfriston, 148  
 Allen Price, 81  
 Alliance & Leicester Building Society, 61  
 Alliance & Leicester plc, 60  
 Alliance Building Society, 60  
 Allied Carpets, 11  
 Allied Maples Group Ltd, 11  
 Alpine Dairy, 152  
 Althorp, Arthur, 77, 78  
 Anglesey, 75  
 A-plan Insurance, 49, 50  
 Araceli's, 113, 114  
 Arcadia Group, 53, 71  
 Archer-Thomson, Doris, 19  
 Argos, 128, 129  
 Asda, 11, 98  
 Ash, 71  
 Ash Road, 32  
 Ashby, Charles, 74  
 Ashby, Frederick, 74  
 Ashby, Henry, 74  
 Ashby, Skidmore, 74  
 Ashby, Thomas, 11, 73, 74, 76  
 Ashby's Bank, 11, 73-76  
 Ashley Cook, 130  
 Ashmansworth, 26  
 Askham, Henry F, 28  
 Aston Mead, 65  
 Atalanta Chambers, 21  
 Atalanta Dance Hall, 21, 22, 23, 55  
 Atalanta Palais de Dance, 22  
 Atkinson, Robert, 9  
 Aubrey, Alfred J R, 25

## B

Babyland, 65  
 Bacaró, 139, 140  
 Bairstow Eves, 117  
 Baker, Albert, 69  
 Baker, Betty Louisa, 20  
 Baker, Joseph, 69, 70, 71  
 Baker, Miss Betty Louisa, 20  
 Baker, Miss Edith Emily, 20, 25  
 Baker, Miss Elizabeth, 20  
 Baker, Ronald, 69  
 Baker, T, 153, 154  
 Ball, Kenny, 23  
 Ballard, John, 98  
 Bannister, Roger, 34  
 Banstead, 5  
 Barbara, John Charles, 97, 98  
 Barber, Edward Constantine, 25  
 Barclays Bank, 37, 38, 39, 74  
 Barlow, Ernest Robert, 116  
 Barlow's electrical services, 116, 117  
 Barrenger, James Henry, 89, 90  
 Bartlett, James, 18  
 Basingstoke Canal, 2  
 BAT Industries, 128  
 Bateman's, 56  
 Bath Road, 6, 19, 20, 29, 41, 123  
 Bayfields, 45, 46  
 Bayliss, Albert, 19, 80, 81  
 Bayliss, William B, 19  
 Baynham, William Beavan, 123, 124, 125, 126  
 Beale, John, 33  
 Bel-Air, 113, 114, 115  
 Belfast Linen Warehouse, 87, 88  
 Bell & Butler, 106  
 Berkshire, 116  
 Bernthal, Arthur Walter, 82, 83  
 Bertie, 52  
 Beta Café, 20  
 BetFred, 128, 129  
 Be-wise, 11  
 Big Apple, 99, 100  
 Bilk, Acker, 23  
 Bill's, 36, 38, 39, 40  
 Birmingham, 8, 44  
 Black & Irons, 39, 40  
 Blackburn Buccaneer, 99  
 Blackham, Ernest, 17  
 Bockett, Frederick William, 75  
 Bolton, Victor, 130  
 Bon Marché, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 129  
 Bond, Caleb, 86, 87  
 Bond, Ernest, 86

Bond's Dining Rooms, 88  
 Bond's Temperance Hotel, 86, 88  
 Bonmarché, 31, 32  
 Boomerang Taxis, 85  
 Boots, 16, 17, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 46, 47  
 Boundary Road, 92, 94  
 Bourne, 130  
 Boxclever, 39  
 Brasher, Chris, 34  
 Brettle, R, 74  
 Brevitt Shoes, 92, 93  
 Brewery Road, 16  
 Bridger, Alexander, 124, 125, 126  
 Brighton, 39, 84  
 Brighton & Sussex Equitable Building Society, 60  
 Bristol, 136  
 Britannia Airways, 38  
 British Eagle, 38  
 British Heart Foundation, 45, 46, 67, 71, 73, 76, 77, 128, 129  
 British Home Stores, 71, 72, 73, 76, 77  
 British Shoe Corporation, 51, 52  
 Britton, Mrs Lucy, 82  
 Broadway, 74  
 Broadway Travel Bureau, 21  
 Brook Street, 106, 142  
 Brooklands Brewery, 99  
 Brookwood, 2, 11, 117  
 Brookwood Cemetery, 2  
 Brookwood Hospital, 2  
 Brookwood Motor Company, 146  
 Brown, William, 91, 92, 93  
 Buckley, Frank L, 18  
 Burger King, 40  
 Burnett, Herbert Edwin, 85, 86  
 Burton Group, 49  
 Burundi, 149  
 Butt, William John, 80

## C

C & M Jewellery, 62  
 C C Moldram & Co., 126  
 Café Class, 139  
 Café Latino, 140  
 Caffè Nero, 61  
 Caine, Margery, 97, 98  
 Cake Box, 62  
 Cambridge House, 18, 19, 20  
 Camden Town, 123  
 Canada, 75  
 Canning Town, 84  
 Carlton Road, 56  
 Carluccio's, 53, 54, 56  
 Carnegie, Andrew, 120  
 Carriage Works, 91, 93  
 Carson & Co., 63, 64, 132, 133

Carter, Albert, 79  
 Carter, Clay & Lintott, 19  
 Casa Rustica, 17, 18  
 Cawsey Way, 14, 101  
 Cedar Villa, 25  
 Celebrate Woking, 33  
 Celly's, 112  
 Central Development Area, 29  
 Central Domestic Stores, 92, 93  
 Chancellors, 131  
 Chandler, William, 79  
 Chapel Street, 15, 23, 101, 117, 119  
 Chapmans, 65  
 Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society, 143, 144  
 Cheque Centre, 67  
 Chertsey, 73, 93, 151, 152  
 Chertsey Road, 3, 5, 11, 30, 51, 72, 74, 77, 80, 82, 84, 86, 89, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 107, 108, 123, 125, 133, 134, 137, 146, 147, 151, 152  
 Chobham, 5  
 Chobham Road, 3, 48, 55, 56, 59, 73, 77, 78, 80, 84, 86, 94, 96, 97, 98, 108, 134, 136, 141, 148, 149, 151  
 Choong, Ms L, 69  
 Christ Church, 24, 146  
 Christine, 131  
 Church Path, 20, 29, 59, 60, 75, 119, 129, 134  
 Church Street, 14, 29, 71, 74, 123  
 Church Stretton, 67, 68  
 Churchill Recruitment, 137  
 Churt, 69  
 Citizens Advice, 121  
 Clandon, 7  
 Clapham, 5, 16  
 Clark, Cyrus, 55  
 Clark, James, 55  
 Clark, William, 55  
 Clarke, Stephen, 132  
 Clarks Footwear, 56  
 Clearance Outlet, 42, 43  
 Cleminson, Reverend John R, 24  
 Clifton House, 153  
 Clovelly, 26, 27, 28, 75  
 Cobbett, William, 98  
 Combined English Stores, 141  
 Commercial & Domestic Bureau, 124  
 Commercial Buildings, 57, 60-67, 77, 79-91  
 Commercial Cameras, 67, 68  
 Commercial House, 117, 118  
 Commercial Road Carpark, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28  
 Commercial Studio, 125  
 Concept, 45, 46  
 Constitutional Club, 13  
 Cook, William, 122, 123  
 Corn Exchange, 136  
 Cornerstone, 105

Cornwall, 17  
 Côte Brasserie, 121  
 Coulton, Miss Helen Taylor, 17, 18  
 Coulton, Miss Lucy, 18  
 Council Offices, 11, 12, 13  
 County Council Dispensary, 76  
 County Property Management, 148  
 Covid pandemic, 36, 38, 39, 40, 53  
 Cowley, Alfred Morris, 81  
 Cowley, Robert Harrild, 21  
 Cox, Herbert, 24  
 Cox, Mrs Georgina, 153  
 Cox, William Henry, 69, 153, 154  
 Crown Life House, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 89, 91, 92, 154  
 Croydon, 122  
 CTC Insurance, 69, 70  
 Cubitt & West, 122, 123  
 Cullum, Sydney H, 79, 98  
 Curtess, 52

## D

D W Hughes, 48  
 dance hall, 55  
 David De L'Or, 62  
 Day, Rowland Frederick, 89, 90  
 Deans, 8  
 Debenhams, 77  
 Denmark Villas, 25  
 Derry, Francis, 133  
 Direct Fruit Supply, 95, 97  
 District Bank, 143, 144  
 Dix Neuf, 69, 70  
 Dolcis, 52  
 Dolphin Bathrooms, 33, 34, 35, 114, 115  
 Domestic and Handicrafts Centre, 119, 121  
 Domestic Electric Rentals (DER) Ltd, 35, 37  
 Dorset, 5  
 Drew, Mrs Emily, 124  
 Duke Street, 93, 153  
 Duncan's, 65  
 Dunn & Co., 44, 45, 46, 50, 51  
 Dunn, George Arthur, 44, 45  
 Dunsfold, 100  
 Dupre, Bob, 99

## E

Eagle, James, 97  
 Early Learning Centre, 33  
 Eastbourne, 133  
 Edward Timpson, 126, 132  
 Egham, 5, 74  
 Egley Road, 32  
 Electric Empire, 144, 148  
 Eliá, 112  
 Elizabeth Duke, 128  
 Ellis, George, 79, 85

Elstead, 83  
 Elton, William Arthur, 84, 85  
 English Joint Stock Bank, 74  
 Eric Clapton and Cream, 23  
 Erica Villa, 25  
 Erskine, Sidney Frank, 117, 118  
 Escape Hunt, 129  
 Esquires, 53, 54  
 Essex, 5, 84, 92  
 Establishment, 138, 139  
 Eve Road, 149

## F

Facia, 52  
 FADS, 33, 35  
 Farncombe, 5  
 Farnham, 83  
 Fifield, John Milton, 26  
 Fifty Shilling Tailors, 49  
 Fincham, Reuben, 86  
 Fine Fare, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 91, 92, 94, 96, 97, 98, 154, 155  
 Fineweave Carpets, 39  
 fire station, 11, 13  
 First Choice, 36, 37  
 First Choice Group plc, 36  
 Fisher, William H, 26  
 Fitzgerald, Joseph Pearson, 27, 28  
 Flaks, 83, 84  
 Fleet, 39  
 Food and Fuel Office, 12  
 Forster, Nick, 59  
 Foundations, 65, 66, 67, 135  
 Foxtons, 52  
 Frampton, A T, 74  
 Francis, Sidney, 125, 153, 154  
 Frederick Charles Holdstock & Son, 84  
 Freeman, Alfred, 51  
 Freeman, Frederick, 79, 85  
 Freeman, Hardy & Willis, 51, 52  
 French Rapid Cleaners, 67, 68  
 Frimley, 23  
 Frimley Green, 23  
 Frost, Edward Allen, 21  
 Fuller, P F, 10

## G

G M Gerrards Ltd, 94, 95  
 Gail's, 31  
 Gaines, James, 79  
 Gale Employment, 121  
 Gale, Alfred A, 121  
 Galloway, 25  
 Gammon, James Fielder, 77  
 Gammons, 72, 73, 76  
 Gardiner, Charles, 83, 84  
 Gascoigne-Pees, 63, 64, 128, 129, 132, 133



Gateway, 98  
 Gea, D W, 131  
 Gerrards, 96  
 Gibbons, James W, 91  
 Gilbert Ash, 29  
 Gilbert H White & Co., 124  
 Giles, Edward, 83, 84  
 Giles's Stores, 83, 84  
 Girls Friendly Society, 27, 28  
 Glenn, Miss Christina, 149  
 Global Emporium, 49  
 Globe House, 11  
 Gloster, Frank J, 25  
 Gloster, Henry William, 25, 26, 28  
 Gloster, Thomas C, 25  
 Gloster, William Henry, 136  
 Glosters Ltd, 74, 145, 146, 148  
 Gloucester, 45, 144  
 Godalming, 77  
 Going Places, 113, 114, 138, 139  
 Goldsmith, John Sparkes, 81  
 Goldsworth, 11, 119  
 Goldsworth Hall, 11  
 Goldsworth Park, 104  
 Goldsworth Road, 65, 110, 128  
 Gordon Ramsay Academy, 57, 58  
 Goring, 92  
 Goudge, Norman Alwyn, 17  
 Graham, Paul, 103  
 Granada, 39, 92, 93, 113, 114, 115  
 Granada Limited, 39  
 Grand Theatre, 9  
 Grant Peters, 111, 112  
 Grants, 63, 64  
 Gray's Travel Bureau, 116  
 Gray's World Travel, 116, 117, 138, 139  
 Green Shield Stamps, 128  
 Green, Philip, 53, 71  
 Greetham, James, 79  
 Guildford, 1, 2, 80, 111  
 Guildford Doll's Hospital, 155  
 Guildford House, 76, 77  
 Guildford Road, 12

## H

Haart Ltd, 123  
 Halfords, 4, 69, 70  
 Halifax Building Society, 60, 61, 117, 118, 132  
 Hall of Cards, 50, 51  
 Hambro Countrywide, 117  
 Hambros plc, 117  
 Hampshire, 5, 26, 39  
 Hampton, Fred L, 97  
 Harding & Sons, 10  
 Hardy, Mrs, 126  
 Harland House, 116, 136-144  
 Harlington, 84  
 Harper, Albert George, 66

Harper's Photographic, 4  
 Harpers Photographic, 57, 66, 67, 68  
 Harris Carpets, 33  
 Harris, Frank Boulton, 18  
 Harris, James, 8, 14, 18, 101, 116  
 Harris, Mrs Mary, 18  
 Harrison Brothers, 80, 81  
 Harrison, Albert Edward, 80  
 Harrison, Alfred Ernest, 80  
 Harveys Furnishings, 31, 32  
 Haslemere, 127, 128, 129  
 Haslemere Motor Company, 127, 128  
 Hastings, 84  
 Hawker Association, 100  
 Hawker Hunter, 100  
 Hawkins, Frederick George, 28  
 Hayes, John L, 17  
 Hays Travel, 113, 114  
 Hayward, Joseph, 28  
 Head & Sons, 93, 95  
 Head, Charles, 93  
 Head, Edward, 93  
 Headmasters, 123  
 Heatherside, 26, 51  
 Heaysman, Edith, 153  
 Hendra, Thomas, 125  
 Hepworths, 57, 141  
 Herefordshire, 5  
 Herne Bay, 84  
 Heselwood, William John, 65  
 Hide & Co. Ltd, 87  
 High Street, 3, 14, 18, 26, 101, 102, 110, 116, 119, 123  
 Higham, Rev. Charles W R, 28  
 Hill View Road, 104  
 Hinchliffe, Stephen, 52  
 Hinton, 8  
 HM Customs & Excise, 10  
 HM Taxes, 67, 68  
 Hockley's, 130  
 Hogg Robinson, 138, 139  
 Hogs Back, 2  
 Holdstock, Donald, 85  
 Holdstock, Mrs Margaret, 85  
 Holdstock, Owen Enness, 84  
 Hollett, William, 126  
 HomeForm, 33, 34, 35  
 HomeForm Group, 33  
 HomeLife, 42, 43  
 Homer & Ridler, 8  
 Homestyle by Fads, 33, 35  
 Hope, Horace Charles, 24  
 Hopwoods Gift Shop, 81  
 Horsell, 7, 86  
 Horsham, 116  
 Horsley, 6  
 Hounslow, 153  
 House of Fraser, 87  
 Howden, 49, 50

HSBC, 106, 107  
 Hub Woking, 50  
 Huddersfield & Bradford Building Society, 41  
 Hudson, Charles Henry, 145  
 Hugh Harris, 103, 104  
 Hunt, Edmund George, 80  
 Hutchison, Joseph, 26  
 Hygienic, 55

## I

Ihlara Valley, 70  
 Ilford, 92  
 Inkerman Barracks, 2  
 Innovations, 45, 46  
 iO1 Ltd, 137  
 Isle of Wight, 145  
 Itsu, 52, 53

## J

J Gardner Ltd, 18  
 J H Barrenger Ltd, 89  
 J Shee & Cox, 20  
 James Harris & Son, 8, 14  
 James Miller and Partners (Hayes) Ltd, 10  
 James, Henry, 10  
 Jeans Gentry, 113, 114  
 Jessops, 114, 115  
 Joan, 131  
 Jobcentre, 110, 111  
 John Collier, 49  
 John Harwood, 34, 35  
 Jones, A W, 25  
 Jones, Charles James, 90  
 Jones, Eddie, 32  
 Jones, Francis William Doyle, 102  
 Jones, Frederick George, 83, 84  
 Jones, Mrs Daisy Evelyn, 131  
 Jones, Tom, 23

## K

K Shoes, 39, 40  
 Katy Mae, 155  
 Keelans, 130  
 Kelsey, John A, 67  
 Kendall, 39, 141, 142  
 Kendall & Sons, 141  
 Kensington, 93  
 Kent, 5, 84, 124  
 Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), 108, 110  
 Kessell, Henry John, 25  
 Ketts, 29, 35, 37  
 King-Prior, Rev. George, 15  
 King-Prior, Reverend. George Richard, 24  
 Kingston-upon-Thames, 84, 87, 95, 122  
 Kingsway, 84  
 Kinipple, George Arthur, 152, 155

Kitchens Direct, 33  
 Knaphill, 11  
 Knight, Sparkes Cornelius, 27, 28, 59  
 Knight, Sparkes Harris, 28  
 Komo, 37, 38, 39

## L

La Bodega, 69, 70  
 La Reggia, 140  
 Lakeside Country Club, 23  
 Lambeth Building Society, 124  
 Lanteri, Edouard, 102  
 Lark, 31  
 Las Iguanas, 36, 37, 38  
 Latino's, 140  
 Lawson, E, 90  
 Lawson, Edward, 126  
 Leaders, 112, 147, 148  
 Lee, Erland, 75  
 Lee, Janet, 75  
 Leeds, 49  
 Leeds Permanent Building Society, 118  
 Leicester Building Society, 60, 61  
 Levy, Frederick, 25  
 Lewis, C H S, 133  
 Lewis, Joseph, 10  
 Lilley & Skinner, 52  
 Lintott, Arthur, 28  
 Lintott, Frederick Mackey, 19  
 Lion Retail Park, 31, 69, 128  
 Lionsheart Bookshop, 63, 64  
 Llanfairpwll, 75  
 Lloyds Bank, 63, 109, 122, 124, 126, 143  
 Lloyds TSB, 109  
 London, 1, 2, 5, 8, 45, 51, 52, 83, 84, 124, 157  
 London & Counties Meat Supply Company, 81  
 London and Southern Super Cinemas Company Ltd, 9  
 London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company, 1, 2  
 London Stone, 149, 150  
 London Stores, 83, 84  
 Luciano's, 54, 56  
 Lunn Poly, 37, 38  
 Lush, Stephen, 79, 90  
 Lynmouth House, 27, 28  
 Lynn's Hallmark Cards, 51

## M

Mac Fisheries, 155  
 MacDonald, Peter, 16  
 Mackie, Miss Eva Briscoe, 145  
 Maidstone, 153  
 Malton, 84  
 Mamas & Papas, 44  
 Mamas and Papas, 43

Manchester & Liverpool District Bank, 143  
 Manfield, 52  
 Mann & Co., 18, 116, 117, 118, 132  
 Mann, Frederick Charles Thomas, 116  
 Manpower Services Commission, 111  
 Mansell, Jesse, 3  
 Maple & Co., 10, 11  
 Maple, Waring & Gillow, 11  
 Maplin, 43  
 Marciano Lounge, 135, 136  
 Marfurt, Hermann Achille, 145  
 Marfurt, Mrs Eva Briscoe, 145  
 Market Square, 47, 146  
 Marsh, Leslie Arthur, 91  
 Martyn, 111, 112  
 Masonic Hall, 22  
 Massey, William John, 91  
 Maund, Edward Albert, 124, 154, 155  
 May, William, 79  
 Maybury, 11, 119, 125  
 Maybury Road, 11, 74, 84, 94, 118, 125, 153  
 Mayfair, 90, 91  
 Mayford, 11  
 Mayhill Restaurant, 155  
 Mentor Direct, 137  
 Mercia Walk, 51, 52  
 Merrow, 7  
 Merrow Sound, 48  
 Merrow Sound & Vision, 48  
 Merton Villa, 25  
 Mess.<sup>rs</sup> William Kirkpatrick, 102  
 Methodist Union, 15  
 Methven's, 147, 148  
 Mirelec Ltd, 137  
 Middle Walk, 41  
 Middlesex, 84, 123, 153  
 Midland Bank, 107  
 Miller, Frederick Thomas Miller, 95, 97  
 Miller's Café, 95  
 Millets, 40  
 Ministry of Labour Employment Exchange, 24  
 Möben Kitchens, 33, 114, 115  
 Möben Kitchens, 35  
 Modern Drug Store, 97  
 Modern School, 21  
 Moldram & Wilson, 122, 123  
 Moldram, Clarke & Edgley, 123  
 Moore, Edwin, 97  
 Moore, William, 79  
 Morris Car Depot, 119, 127, 129  
 Morris House, 127, 128, 129  
 Morris, Miss Sarah Eliza, 84, 85  
 Mossop, Privett & Co., 19  
 Mothercare, 33, 42, 43  
 Moyallen, 31  
 Mr Howard, 41  
 Mullett, Mrs Lucy, 82  
 Mullett, Samuel, 82  
 Murton, Harold Sidney, 91

Myholme, 26, 27, 51

## N

Namibia, 149  
 National & Provincial Building Society, 121  
 National Kitchen, 148  
 National Provincial Bank, 143  
 National Westminster Bank, 144  
 NatWest Bank, 143  
 Neale, Alfred John Thomas, 83, 84  
 Neate, Mrs Sophia, 75  
 New Zealand, 75  
 Newark Priory, 99  
 Newland Brother, 9  
 Next, 57, 141  
 Noel House, 23, 24  
 Norfolk, 5  
 North Surrey Water, 7  
 North West Surrey Association of Disabled  
     People, 50  
 Northamptonshire, 73  
 Norwich Union, 23  
 Norwich Union Insurance Society, 146  
 Notting Hill Gate, 52

## O

Oatlands Park, 5, 91  
 Ogden Mossop, 68  
 Old Bakery, 137  
 Old Woking, 1, 11, 22  
 Olivo, 140  
 Onslow, Lord, 14  
 Oriental Road, 69  
 Orridge, Charles Edward, 97, 98  
 Orridge, Mrs Mary Ann, 97  
 Osborn & Hollis, 10  
 Oswald Boll AG, 106  
 Otham, Mrs Mary A, 95  
 Ottershaw, 124  
 Over, H A, 18  
 Owens, 83, 84, 85  
 Oxfam, 62  
 Oxfordshire, 92

## P

Paddy Power, 114, 115  
 Pain, Richard, 101  
 Parker, Frank, 97  
 Parkhouse, Miss Margaret Helen, 84  
 Patient, Sidney Francis, 153  
 Paul Graham, 104  
 Peacock Walk, 41  
 Pearl Assurance Company, 102  
 Pearl Assurance House, 102, 103  
 Penge, 5, 136  
 Penrhyn, 20

Percy Street, 6, 29, 120  
 Peter Lord, 55, 56, 57  
 Peter Rapson, 111, 112  
 Petroleum and Petroleum Products Merchant  
   Wholesalers Industry, 106  
 Pets Corner, 87, 88  
 Phipps Autos, 71  
 Phipps, Leslie Theodore, 71  
 PhotoFinish, 103, 104  
 Pickfords Travel, 113, 114  
 Pierre White, Luciano, 54  
 Pierre White, Marco, 54  
 Piggott, Frederick Arthur, 86  
 Piggott, Mrs Edith, 86  
 Pirbright, 7  
 Pitcher, Arthur, 59  
 Pledger, William Henry, 83, 84  
 Polytechnic Touring Association, 38  
 Poole Road, 16, 128  
 Poppins Restaurant, 68  
 Popular Restaurant, 145, 148  
 Popular Studio, 153, 154  
 Post Office, 12, 13, 47, 146, 148  
 Potter, Alfred Joseph F, 25  
 Potter, Bob, 23  
 Premier House, 7, 9, 10, 11  
 Preston & Co., 104, 105  
 Preston House, 104  
 Price, John Evan Allen, 81  
 Primavera, 112  
 Primitive Methodist Chapel, 15  
 Provincial Building Society, 121  
 Prudential and Refuge Assurance Company, 9  
 Prudential Assurance Company, 106  
 Prudential Property Services, 122, 123  
 Public Hall, 7, 8, 9, 10, 22  
 Public Halls Cottage, 10  
 Punter, William James, 79, 97

## Q

qs Circle 7, 11  
 Quality Carpets, 82, 83  
 Quality Seconds, 103, 104  
 Quartermaine, Henry, 9  
 Queen Victoria, 101

## R

Radford & Sargeant, 19  
 Radio House, 133  
 Radio Rentals, 39, 49  
 Railway Hotel, 26  
 Ramsay, Gordon, 57  
 Rand, G, 26  
 Randstad Employment Bureau, 104  
 Reading Trustee Savings Bank, 108  
 Real China Express, 69, 70  
 Red Cross, 145

Red House Hotel, 136, 151, 152  
 Reed, 49  
 Reed Accountancy Appointments, 121  
 Reed Employment Agency, 130, 142  
 Reed, Margaret Emma, 125  
 Reed, Marguerite, 125, 126  
 Reed, Mrs Elizabeth, 125  
 Reed, Thomas, 125  
 Reeve, Henry James, 97  
 Reid, William, 25  
 Relate, 121, 135, 136  
 Rendezvous Restaurant, 145, 148  
 RentaSet, 39  
 Retail Acquisitions Ltd, 71  
 Rice, James, 97  
 Richard Shops, 4, 53, 54  
 Richards-Smith, George, 17  
 Richmond, 92  
 Ripley, 1, 6, 157  
 Robert Dyas, 29, 46  
 Robert Warren, 91  
 Robertson Brothers, 93, 94, 95, 97, 125  
 Robertson, Alexander Gordon, 93, 94  
 Robertson, Field Marshal Sir William Robert,  
   102  
 Robertson, Gorden Caddel, 93, 94  
 Robertson, William Henry Raymond, 93  
 Robinson Rentals, 92, 93  
 Robinsons, 147, 148  
 Roland Cartier, 52  
 roller-skating rink, 59  
 Rolling Stones, 23  
 Rose, Reverend Charles, 24  
 Rosslyn, 16, 17  
 Rotherfield, 124  
 Rothwell, Thomas, 122  
 Rowland, Miss Ada Sophia, 92  
 Rowland, Miss Elizabeth, 90, 91, 92  
 Rowland, Miss Emily, 90, 91, 92  
 Rowland, Miss Sophia, 89, 90, 92, 93  
 Rumbelows, 4, 40, 49, 50, 57  
 Run Company, 34, 35  
 Runnymede, 50  
 Rush, 56, 57  
 Rwanda, 149  
 Ryan, Loftus Allan Liebhardt, 17  
 Ryde House, 141

## S

S H Cox & Son, 154  
 Sainsbury, 101, 110  
 Sallmoor, 26  
 Sam Beare Palliative Care Ward, 104  
 Same Day Cleaners, 130  
 Sanders Cottages, 77, 79, 80, 85, 90  
 Sandwich, 124  
 Santander Group, 60  
 Santander UK plc, 60



Saul, George Frederick, 123, 124  
 Saunders, Richard William, 148, 149  
 Saxone, 52  
 Scholar, Richard, 79  
 Schurberger, W, 122  
 Scott, Brownrigg and Turner, 29  
 Scotts, 107, 110  
 Sears plc, 51, 52, 53  
 Sehrt, Heinrich, 145  
 Seymours, 31, 110, 111  
 Sharps Bedrooms, 33  
 Shaw, Robert, 149  
 Shee, John, 20, 147  
 Shees, 20, 147, 148  
 Shelley, Frederick, 25  
 Shier, Miss Lucy, 82  
 Shier, Mrs Lucy, 81, 82, 83  
 Shimco Collection, 41  
 Shoe City, 52  
 Shoe Connection, 52  
 Shoe Express, 52  
 Shore, Mrs Margaret Helen, 84, 85  
 Shoreditch, 45  
 Shropshire, 67, 68  
 Silver Spring Cleaners, 113, 114, 115  
 Silvester Road, 3  
 Simon Bance, 112  
 Singer Sewing Machine Company, 89, 90  
 Sir Henry Lunn Travel, 38  
 Sketchley, 136  
 Slug & Lettuce, 149  
 Smith Brothers, 155  
 Smith, Horace W, 124  
 SnappySnaps, 50, 51  
 Soldiers' recreation hall, 148  
 Soldiers' Recreation Room, 22  
 Somerset, 5, 55  
 Somervell, Robert Miller, 39  
 Sony Centre, 48  
 Sostrene Grene, 31  
 South Africa, 75, 149  
 South African Expeditionary Force, 149  
 South Kensington School, 102  
 South Western Hotel, 26  
 Southampton, 1  
 Southwark, 153  
 Spain, 21  
 Sparrow Park, 101  
 Speedwell, 27  
 Spenceley, Frederick, 74  
 Spensley, Reverend James, 24  
 Sports House, 60, 132, 133  
 Sports Shop, 60, 61  
 Spratt, Miss Rose, 84, 85  
 Springbok, 67, 68  
 Squibb, George James, 27  
 Squibb, James, 26  
 Squibb, Mrs Edith, 26, 27  
 St John's Hill Road, 71

St John's Road, 71  
 St Johns, 11  
 St Pancras, 51  
 Staffordshire, 5  
 Staines, 50, 73, 74  
 Staines Bank, 73, 74  
 Staples, Albert Richard, 124  
 Steinhoff International, 128  
 Stepney, 92  
 Sterling Street, 105  
 Steward House, 111, 113  
 Stewart House, 108, 109, 110  
 Stewart, Rod, 23  
 Stirling Ackroyd, 104, 105, 142  
 Stoke Newington, 45  
 Stoney Creek, Ontario, 75  
 Street, 55  
 Street Burger, 57, 58  
 Sullivan, Edward, 95, 97  
 Sumner, George, 90, 92  
 Sumner, Mrs Sophia, 92  
 Sumner, Rowland, 92  
 Sun Fire Office, 124  
 Sunair, 38  
 Sunbury, 123  
 Supasports, 37, 38, 40  
 Superdrug, 48, 49  
 Surrey Cleaners, 130  
 Surrey County Asylum for Pauper Lunatics, 2  
 Surrey County Council, 76, 92, 120  
 Surrey County Council Education Committee, 119  
 Surrey Disabled People's Partnership, 50, 51  
 Surrey House, 144, 145, 146  
 Susan Gay, 152, 154  
 Sussex, 5, 39, 81, 84, 116, 124, 133  
 Sutton Green, 11  
 Swayne, John Arthur, 27  
 Sweatshop, 34, 35  
 Sydenham, 5  
 Syrett, Iris, 56

## T

Tanduri Mahal, 62  
 Tante Marie Culinary Academy, 56, 57  
 Tanzania, 149  
 Taride, Ann-Marie, 56  
 Taylor, Charles, 21  
 Taylor, Edward H, 78  
 Taylor, Ralph, 26  
 Telepeople, 137  
 Ten-thirty Cleaners, 130  
 Tesco, 97, 98  
 Tesco Express, 43, 44  
 Thames Valley Trustee Savings Bank, 108  
 The Dome, 60, 132, 133  
 The Entertainer, 33  
 The Hollies, 80

The Kinks, 23  
 The Pantry, 155  
 The Peacocks, 31, 40, 41  
 The Planets, 98, 99, 100  
 The Rest, 17, 18  
 The Small Faces, 23  
 The Studio, 126  
 The Triangle, 152  
 The Who, 23  
 Thomas Ashby & Co., 73, 74  
 Thomas Cottages, 95, 97, 98  
 Thomson, 36, 37  
 Thomson Holidays, 38  
 Thomson Travel Group, 38  
 Thomsonfly, 38  
 Thorn Electrical Industries, 39  
 Thorn EMI, 35, 39  
 Thorntons, 141, 142  
 Times Ahead, 111, 112  
 Timothy Whites, 82  
 Timpson, Frederick, 132  
 Tomkinson, Horace James, 97  
 Tomlinson, Joseph, 21  
 Tower Lodge, 21, 22  
 Town Square, 37, 38, 39, 101, 120  
 Townends, 105  
 Trench Experience, 32  
 Trench Experience shop and Upcycling Centre, 32  
 Trueform, 52  
 Trustee Savings Bank, 109, 110  
 Trustee Savings Banks Association, 108  
 TSB Act 1976, 108  
 TSB Bank plc, 143, 144  
 TSB Banking Group, 109  
 TSB Group, 108  
 TSB Scotland, 109  
 tuberculosis, 76, 92  
 TUI AG, 36  
 Turkish Kitchen, 70  
 Tyler & Co., 135  
 Tyler, Charles Thomas, 134  
 Tyrell, Mrs May, 122  
 Tyrrell, George, 122, 123  
 Tyrrell, George Richard Warren, 122  
 Tyrrell, Stanley Frederick, 122

## U

UBX, 129  
 Up & Running, 35

## V

Van Allan, 44, 46  
 Victoria Gardens, 101, 102, 119  
 Victoria Hall, 21  
 Victoria Square, 11, 13, 14, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34  
 Victoria Square Woking Limited, 31

Victoria Wine, 135  
 Vincent James Homes Ltd, 137  
 Vision Express, 56  
 Vitesse Cleaners, 130

## W

W H Smith, 13, 29, 47, 48  
 Wadham (Holdings) Group, 128  
 Wadham Brothers, 128  
 Wadham Kenning, 128  
 Wadham Stringer, 128  
 Wales, 75  
 Waller, Paul, 67  
 Walter, Edward, 81  
 Walton Road, 7, 15, 20, 94, 136, 149  
 Walton upon Thames, 123  
 Wandsworth, 5  
 War Savings Centre, 126  
 Waring & Gillow, 11  
 Warwick House, 82  
 Waterer, George, 25  
 Waterfall, Durrant & Barclay, 142  
 Waterfalls, 142  
 Waterlooville, 128  
 Waters, Edmund James, 71  
 Watmore, George, 95, 98  
 Wearing, John, 78  
 Wearing, Mrs Annie E, 78  
 Weaver, Mrs Ada Mary Ann, 28  
 Weaver, Thomas Marshall, 28  
 Webb, Miss Rebecca, 19  
 Webb, Mrs Caroline Mary, 152  
 Wells, Alfred, 97  
 Wells, H G, 99  
 Wesley Manse, 23, 24  
 Wesleyan Chapel, 23, 121  
 Wesleyan Methodist Church, 14, 15, 17, 24  
 West Street, 29  
 West Surrey Laundry, 89, 90  
 West Yorkshire Building Society, 41  
 Westfield, 119  
 Westminster Bank, 143  
 Weybridge, 91  
 Weybridge Hospital, 104  
 Weyside Lodge, 22  
 Whitburn, H A, 14  
 White, Edward Edwin John, 84, 85  
 White, William, 25, 26  
 Whitehead, Rev. Sylvester, 15  
 Whittington Buildings, 136  
 Wildman, Alfred, 125  
 William Drowley & Co., 11, 15  
 William Hill, 109, 110  
 Williams, Edward Charles, 20  
 Williams, Louisa H, 98  
 Williams, Mrs Dorothy Muriel, 20  
 Wilsher, John Noakes, 28  
 Wilson, Hilda Winifred Duncan, 63, 64

Wiltshire, 5  
 Wimpy, 140  
 Windsor Fareham & Co., 104, 105  
 Winifred Wilson, 63, 64  
 Winston Lodge, 110  
 Witherby, Clement, 28  
 Woking & District Rabbit Club, 146  
 Woking & Sam Beare Hospice and Wellbeing  
     Care, 104  
 Woking Aerials, 67  
 Woking Association of Voluntary Services, 121  
 Woking Autocar Company, 132  
 Woking Borough Council, 31, 33, 100  
 Woking Central Library, 121  
 Woking Chess Club, 22  
 Woking Common, 1, 2, 95  
 Woking Conservative Club, 14  
 Woking Constitutional Club, 14  
 Woking Drug Stores, 77, 78  
 Woking Fruit & Vegetable Market, 95  
 Woking High School for Girls, 17, 18, 19  
 Woking Hospice, 103, 104  
 Woking Liberal & Radical Club, 123, 129  
 Woking Liberal and Radical Club, 124  
 Woking Local Board, 2, 10, 11, 16  
 Woking Prison for Invalid Convicts, 2  
 Woking Public Hall Company Ltd, 8  
 Woking Racing Pigeon Club, 145  
 Woking Railway Men's Athletic Club, 27  
 Woking Savings Centre, 155  
 Woking Travel Service, 138, 139  
 Woking Trustee Savings Bank, 108  
 Woking Urban District Council, 4, 11, 13, 16,  
     120, 136, 145, 148, 157  
 Woking Water & Gas Company, 6, 7  
 Woking Women's Club, 27, 28  
 Woking Women's Club & Girls Friendly Society  
     Institute, 27, 28

Woking Women's Institute, 75, 76  
 Wolsey Place, 3, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23,  
     24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 46, 47, 51, 55,  
     61, 63, 65, 66, 67, 107, 110, 116  
 Wolsey Walk, 36, 37, 40, 46, 47, 57, 66, 94  
 Wood, Maurice Taylor, 20  
 Woodham, 56  
 Woolwich, 122, 123  
 Woolwich Equitable Building Society, 128, 129  
 Worlds Stores, 71, 72, 73, 77  
 Worthy, Thomas, 28  
 Wright, Peters Gladden, 26

## X

XL623, 100  
 XX895, 99

## Y

Yates, 149  
 Yoko, Mrs Christina, 148, 149  
 Yoko, Peter, 148  
 Yoko, Thomas Alfred, 148, 149  
 York Road, 24  
 Yorkshire, 5, 41, 62, 78, 84  
 Yorkshire Building Society, 41  
 Yorkshire Café, 61  
 Yorkshire Restaurant, 61, 62, 63  
 Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), 18  
 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA),  
     21, 24

## Z

Zoom the Loom, 42, 43