

**THE WOKING MINERAL WATER COMPANY**

**by**

**Trevor R Howard**

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## WOKING MINERAL WATER COMPANY

The Woking Mineral Water Company was a short-lived business producing bottled, carbonated water and soft drinks. It was started, in Woking, Surrey, by Tom Albert Sanderson in 1887.

### Tom Albert Sanderson

Tom Albert Sanderson was born in 1859, in Claxton in the East Riding of Yorkshire, the son of John and Jane Sanderson. His father was a butler.

Initially, Tom also went into service. The 1881 census shows him as a footman.<sup>1</sup> Tom married Susan Rutherford at St Barnabus's Church, Pimlico, in 1889. He was then butler at Ousefleet Hall, Goole.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1. Ousefleet Hall



Figure 2. The Cricketers

By the time of the 1891 census however, Tom and Susan had moved to Frensham in Surrey, where Tom was the landlord of *The Cricketers Inn*, near Lower Bourne.<sup>3</sup>

### Move to Woking

Tom and Susan moved to Woking, in 1897, where they lived in Goodage Villa, Walton Road.

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<sup>1</sup> TNA Census Returns of England and Wales, 1811; Class: RG11; Piece: 4798; Folio: 8; Page: 9

<sup>2</sup> City of Westminster Archives Centre Westminster Church of England Parish Registers; Reference: SML/PR/3/4 Part 1

<sup>3</sup> TNA Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 570; Folio: 76; Page: 16



In September that year, Tom started the Woking Mineral Water Company, which was situated in North Road, with a capital of about £300.<sup>4</sup> In his bankruptcy examination (see below), he claimed to have had prior knowledge of the mineral water business.

The business produced bottled carbonated water that imitated bottled natural spring water.

Figure 3. Goodage Villa, Walton Road

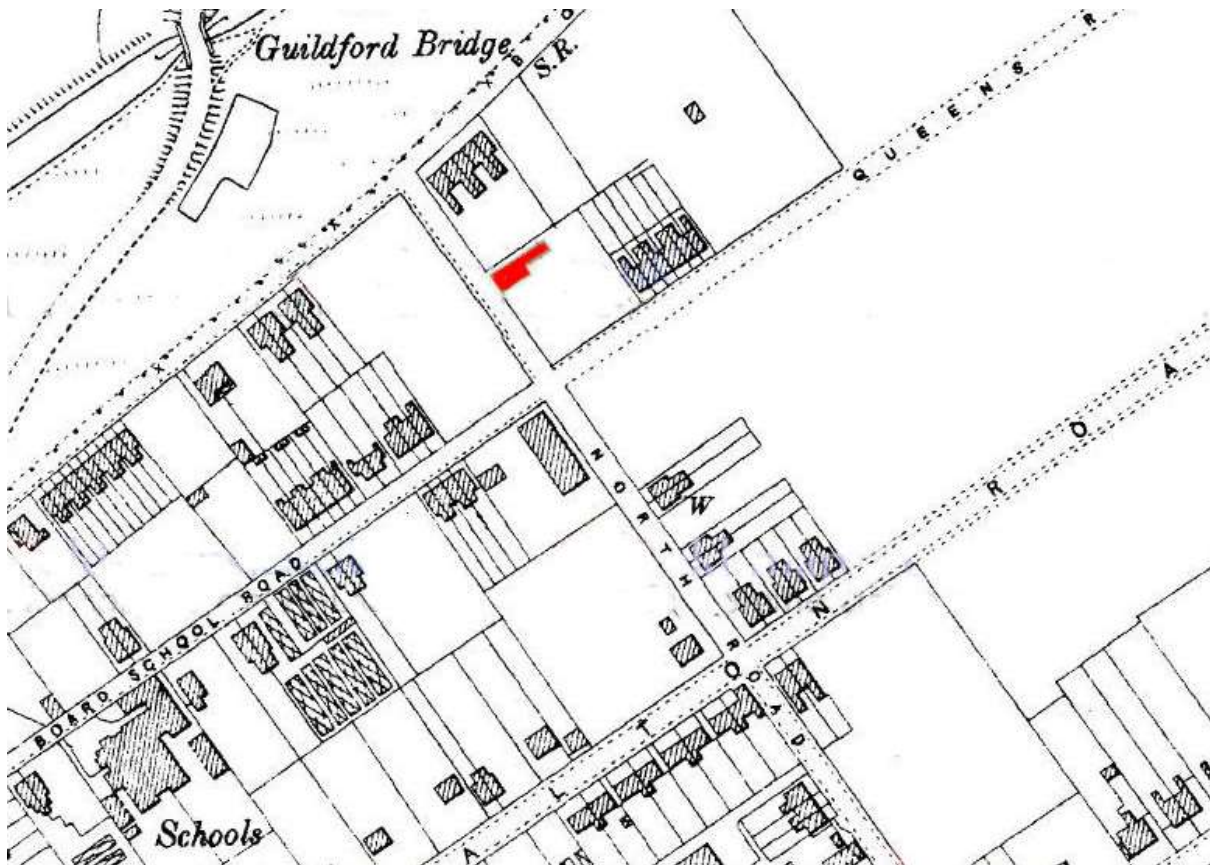


Figure 4. Location of the business in North Road

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<sup>4</sup> *West Surrey Times* 20 April 1901



Figure 5. Bottle embossed with name



Figure 6. Bottle stopper

As well as mineral water, the Woking Mineral Water Company also produced a range (probably) of other products, as indicated by the ginger beer bottle pictured in Figure 7.

The business was presumably supplied with its water by the Woking Water and Gas Company, which had been incorporated in 1881, and then had its headquarters in nearby Walton Road.



Figure 7. Ginger beer bottle

### **Sidney Lambert**

Tom became acquainted with Sidney Lambert, a solicitor of Bishopsgate Street, London, who helped him raise a mortgage of £280 on his lease and plant.

In May 1898, Sidney Lambert, who had taken a great interest in the business, prepared a balance sheet which put the capital at £1,017; in November that year, the capital was entered as £450 1s 11d. The gross profit of the first year's trading was £65 and the net loss £73.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *West Surrey Times* 20 April 1901





In 1899, Sanderson and Lambert went into business together with the intention of turning the business into a company, although there was no deed of partnership. On 4<sup>th</sup> September, Tom Sanderson transferred his banking account at the Capital & Counties Bank into a joint account on which he and Sidney Lambert could draw, but neither could draw separately.<sup>5</sup>

Tom Sanderson was not to be one of the directors of the company, but would be the manager for the first five years.

Figure 8. Ceramic jug  
(Courtesy of Iain Wakeford)

Susan Sanderson, in November 1899, applied for a divorce on the grounds of cruelty and adultery.<sup>6</sup> She claimed that Tom had on occasions beaten her (including knocking out three teeth in 1897) and had committed adultery with a 'Mrs Dickinson'. A decree nisi and custody of the three children of the marriage were granted in January 1900.

The final decree for Tom and Susan's divorce was made on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1900. Tom then married Dorothea Godrich Dickinson, less than two weeks later, on 1<sup>st</sup> September, at Guildford Register Office.

Woking Mineral Water Company Ltd was incorporated towards the end of 1900<sup>7</sup>, but nothing else was done and no capital raised.

### **Bankruptcy**

A Receiving Order was made against Tom Sanderson on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1901. By this time, Tom had moved out of Goodage Villa and briefly lived at Oak Villa in Church Street, Woking; at the time of the order, his address was 36 Church Road, Richmond.<sup>8</sup>

At the first meeting of Tom Sanderson's creditors, held on 26<sup>th</sup> March, it was explained that: An agreement had been made between Sanderson and Lambert, that Lambert would purchase the business for £650, as trustee for a company that he thought he could form. There was a clause under which

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<sup>6</sup> TNA Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes: Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Files J77/682/728

<sup>7</sup> TNA BT 31/9276/68940 Board of Trade: Companies Registration Office: Files of Dissolved Companies

<sup>8</sup> London Gazette 17 March 1901

Sanderson could cancel the agreement if Lambert failed to convert the business into a limited company or if the conversion was delayed. Lambert was also to advance money into the business prior to formation of the company. In December 1900, Tom Sanderson gave notice under the clause and the partnership was ended. Sanderson now owed Lambert the money he had advanced. Lambert claimed that he was a creditor rather than a partner; this was disputed by some of the other creditors.

Oscar Berry, chartered accountant, was appointed as trustee of the estate. It was stated that the premises (in North Street) 'had been closed for weeks'.

Sidney Lambert was sued for £152 by Mess<sup>rs</sup> Barnard & Sons, mineral water, bottle and box, and machinery manufacturers of Fenchurch Street, London. Lambert had ordered bottles, boxes and siphons on behalf of the Woking Mineral Water Company, representing himself as a partner in the business.<sup>9</sup> Lambert denied he had represented himself as a partner. The judge posed three questions for the jury:

Was defendant a partner with Sanderson?

On whose behalf did he give the orders?

Did he hold himself out that he was a partner?

The jury answered only the third question – the defendant did hold himself out as a partner. They found for the plaintiffs for the amount claimed.

During the evidence, Gilbert Barnard stated that on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1900, they were asked to add the word 'limited' to the bottles as the business was being turned into a limited company.

In 1904, Tom Sanderson applied for discharge from his bankruptcy. The discharge was suspended for two years; Tom was to be discharged 'as from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1906'.<sup>10</sup> The reasons for the suspension were threefold:

Bankrupt's assets were not of a value equal to 10s in the pound on unsecured liabilities

He had continued to trade after knowledge of insolvency

He had contracted provable debts without reasonable expectation of being able to pay them.

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<sup>9</sup> *West Surrey Times* 28 June 1901

<sup>10</sup> *London Gazette* 19 July 1904

## Limited Company

In July 1902, an announcement (shown in Figure 10) appeared in the local press stating that the Woking Mineral Water Company Ltd had issued their prospectus and were desirous of raising £5000 via a share issue. The Company had been incorporated towards the end of 1900 as Company No. 68940<sup>11</sup>, but nothing else was done and no capital raised at that time.

Optimism must have been high as, the previous month, a notice had appeared advertising for staff.

**W**ANTED, respectable LADS, for bottle washing and labelling. — Apply, F. Daniells, Woking Mineral Water Works, Woking. [2010]

Figure 9. Advertisement June 1902

**THE WOKING MINERAL WATER CO., LTD.**, have issued their prospectus. Share Capital £5,000, divided into 5,000 Shares of £1 each. To show the confidence of the Vendors in the future of the business, they will between them, guarantee a dividend of five per cent. upon the whole of the paid-up Share Capital of the Company, for a period of three years from the 31st March 1902. 2,850 Shares are now offered for subscription, payable as follows: 2s. 6d. per Share on application, 7s. 6d. per share on allotment, 5s. per Share on the 30th August 1902, and the balance 5s. per share as and when the directors may decide.

Directors: J. Skogg, Woburn Park Hotel, Addlestone; Stanley Lambert, 59a, Bishopsgate Street, E.C.; Frank Daniells, Addlestone Mineral Water Works.

Bankers: Thos. Ashby and Co., Woking and Branches.

Solicitors: Messrs. Ranger, Burton, and Frost, 17, Fenchurch Street, E.C.; Auditors, Messrs. Feast Drake and Co.; Chartered Accountants, St. George's House, Eastcheap; Secretary and Registered Office, Alfred Wills, North Road, Woking.

The Subscription will open on Tuesday, 29th July, and close at 4 o'clock on Friday, August 1st, for town and country.

Figure 10. Prospectus

One of the directors named, Frank Daniells, gave his address as Addlestone Mineral Water Works. His name also appeared in the advertisement for staff. Evidently, he was providing the technical expertise and would manage the business on a day-to-day basis.

Perhaps also noteworthy, is that the bankers of the limited company were Thomas Ashby & Co., rather than Capital & Counties Bank with whom they had dealt before.

In April 1904, Sidney Lambert was in court again. He was being sued by multiple parties for debts of the original business, alleging that he was a partner of Sanderson and therefore liable. The court found for the plaintiffs in each case with costs, as below; leave to appeal was refused.

H W Gloster & Sons	£5 10s
Price, Sons & Co., Bristol	£41 10s
Thomas & Co., Leeds	£32 10s
W Hay Limited, Hull & London	£39 19s 6d
Carbonic Acid Gas Company, Clapton	£7 13s 6d

<sup>11</sup> TNA BT 31/9276/68940 Board of Trade: Companies Registration Office: Files of Dissolved Companies



Burgoyne, Burbidges & Co., London      £14 8s 7d  
W and H Gideen, London                      £7 18s 6d

These verdicts presumably persuaded (or helped to persuade) the directors and share-holders that the venture was not viable.

The Woking Mineral Water Company Ltd was formally dissolved on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1904 by the Companies' Registration Office, Somerset House, London.<sup>12</sup> In March 1905, the premises in North Road were advertised for sale.

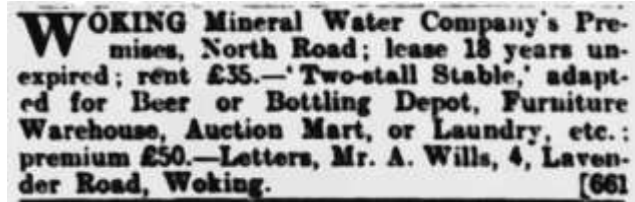


Figure 11. Sale notice

Tom Albert Sanderson died on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1908, in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. He died of aortic regurgitation – a problem with the heart's valves; he was 48. Between the time of his bankruptcy and his death, Tom was probably supported by Dorothea, who had money of her own. His death certificate states that he was a salesman.

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<sup>12</sup> *London Gazette* 10 May & 4 September 1904

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