

ST AUSTIN'S

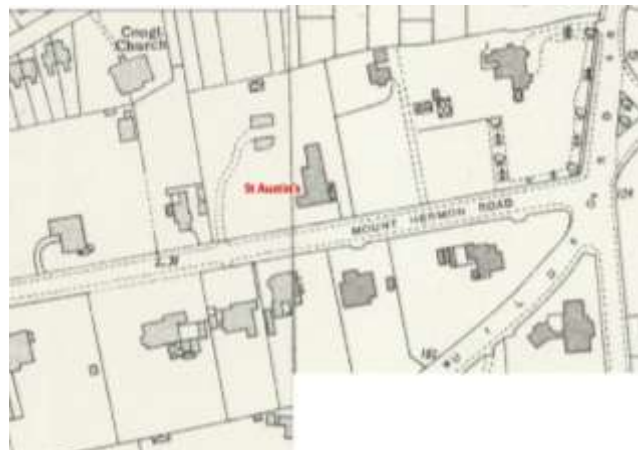
INTRODUCTION

In 1886, work started on what was called the Mount Hermon Estate development. It was situated on the west side of the road from Woking Station to Turnoak Corner (Guildford Road), on land formerly part of Crosslanes Farm.



Area of Mount Hermon Estate (1870 OS Plan & *Surrey Advertiser* 2 January 1886)

St Austin's was one of the earlier houses to be built, in a 1¼ acre plot, on the north side of Mount Hermon Road towards Guildford Road. It would later be allocated the house number 5, Mount Hermon Road. It was probably built in the latter half of 1886.



1895 OS Plan

PRIVATE HOUSE

Edward Winstanley Cobb

The first occupant of St Austin's was Edward Winstanley Cobb, who moved in, in 1887. He is recorded in the 1888 electoral roll, which would have been compiled in the Autumn of 1887.

Edward Winstanley Cobb was born in 1860, in Oporto, Portugal, the son of a wine merchant. After the death of his mother, Eliza, in 1885, the family returned to England. Edward took a position working in London for Cockburn, Smithes & Co., wine merchants, eventually becoming a partner.¹

In July 1886, Edward married Rosalie Emily Margaret Doxat. He presumably took St Austin's as a family home (he had an address in London).

In 1894/5, Edward Cobb and his family moved to live in Horsell.

John Rutter

John Rutter was born in Morden, Surrey in 1832, the son of a tobacconist. John Rutter made his money as a tobacco merchant (later described as a cigar merchant).

John Rutter married Jane Adams in 1857 and together they had four children. Unfortunately, Jane died in 1964, less than three weeks after the birth of their youngest – presumably through complications.

In 1967, John remarried – to Susan Rutter, daughter of Isaac Rutter. Susan was probably a distant cousin; Isaac had lived in Mitcham and was also in the tobacco trade.

John and Susan moved into St Austin's in 1895. They did not stay long and left in 1899, moving to Eastbourne in Sussex. The house was then empty for a year.

William Timothy Synnott

William Timothy Synnott was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1857. He moved, in 1900, to Woking from France, where he had married and his son was born. His daughter was born on 28th August 1900 at Woking.

In the 1901 census, William was living 'on own means'. The 1911 and 1921 censuses give his occupation as Director of a Public Company.

William and his family lived in St Austin's for less than four years before they moved to Park Road. The house was again empty for about a year.

¹ Cockburn's was founded in 1815 in Oporto by Robert Cockburn, a Scottish wine merchant from a distinguished family in Edinburgh. In the 19th century, three other families joined the company: The Smithes, the Teages and the Cobbs – and together with the Cockburns, they developed it into one of the greatest names in Port.

John Edward Gripper

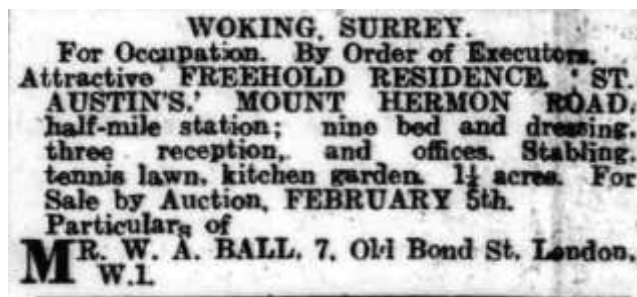
John Edward Gripper was born in Hertford, Hertfordshire in 1843. His father, John Jasper Gripper, was a corn and coal merchant; he was also mayor of Hertford in 1848, 1854, 1860, 1861 and 1864.

In 1901, John Gripper was living in Horsell. In the census that year, he gave his occupation as retired corn factor.

John Gripper moved into St Austin's in 1905.

In December 1917, John's son, Edward Cutbush Gripper, died of wounds sustained in the Cambrai push.

John died in August 1918 and his widow, Jessie Mary, lived there for another six months.



John's executors put the house up for auction in February 1919. It was reported as having been sold at 'a satisfactory price'.

LADIES' REST HOME

Fanny Louisa Anne Roberts

In 1921, presumably after a period of conversion, St Austin's opened as a ladies' rest home. The first superintendent was Miss Fanny Louisa Anne Roberts. She was 72 and died just two years later in May 1923.

There are no people recorded as occupying St Austin's between May 1923 and October 1926. However Mrs Mary Eliza Griffith seems to have taken over, sometime in late 1923.

Capt. A. G. Gripper Dies From Wounds

Widespread sympathy will be felt with Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Gripper, Mount Hermon Road, Woking, in the loss of their son Capt. Edward Cutbush Gripper, K.O.Y.L.I., who died in hospital in France, on Dec. 5th, from wounds received on Nov. 20th in the Cambrai Push.

Capt. Gripper was born at Barnes, Surrey, in August, 1888, and educated at The Grange, Eastbourne, and Haileybury College, Hertford, where he was in the football XV. He volunteered for the Army on the outbreak of war, but, being in Government service, was unable to join until Nov., 1915, when he entered the Inns of Courts, O.T.C. He passed out of the Cadet School at Berkhamstead in July, 1916, and was gazetted to the K.O.Y.L.I. on August 5th, proceeding to France in the following October. In February this year he obtained his second star, and was promoted captain in April.

He took part in the battles of the Somme, and was wounded at Havrincourt Wood. Later he saw fighting in the Ypres sector, and finally he participated in the big push towards Cambrai, where he was mortally wounded. He leaves a widow and one child.

On Thursday morning Mrs. E. C. Gripper received a letter from Lieut.-Col. J. T. Janson, commanding the battalion in which her husband was serving. The writer states:

'He was leading his company in the attack, when hit in the mouth by a bullet. He received every possible attention, and was very soon got away to the dressing station, but I have just heard that he has died at No. 1 Red Cross Hospital from septic pneumonia, following on the wound. I cannot say how sorry we all are. He had been with us over a year, and was always so cheery and a great friend of everybody. He very soon showed his ability and got his company, and he proved himself a splendid company commander. His death is a very great loss to the battalion.'

Mary Eliza Griffith

Mary was born Mary Eliza Welchman, in Bristol, Gloucestershire, in 1871.

In 1900, she married Dr Alfred Hume-Griffith. Immediately thereafter, they went out to Persia so that he might take temporary charge of the medical missionary work at Ispahan. Apart from a period in 1903, when Alfred studied at Edinburgh, they travelled Persia and Turkey until Alfred was invalided home in 1908. Mary wrote a description of their travels and the lives she witnessed, entitled *Behind the Veil in Persia and Turkish Arabia*, published in 1909.

Alfred Hume-Griffith died at Lingfield in 1918, leaving Mary widowed at 46.

The author and her husband in Bakhtian Costume (from *Behind the Veil in Persia and Turkish Arabia*)

Dr Hume-Griffith's dress is that of a chief, and is of blue cloth lined with red flannel: hers is of richly-brocaded velvet; her head-coverings are of muslin, embroidered with silk.



As a result of the Rev. T. Robinson's recent lantern lecture, £17 was raised for the Iron Room renovation fund.

The thank-offering fund in connection with Christ Church, Woking, has now reached £800. Two cheques, for £5 and £20 respectively, were given on Sunday.

By a sale of work, chiefly organised by Mrs. Hume Griffith, held at St. Austin's, Mount Hermon-road, Woking, on Thursday last week, £31 was raised for overseas missions.

The Rev. T. Robinson is relinquishing his duties as curate of Christ Church, having been appointed organising secretary of the S.P.C.K. in the Winchester and Salisbury Diocese. He will continue to reside at Woking.

At Christ Church on Sunday afternoon last there was a special toy service for children. A large number of toys were given for poor children of South London. Similar services will be held at St. Paul's and St. Mary's to-morrow (Sunday).

Mary stayed at St Austin's for seven years, where she continued her fund-raising work.

In 1931, she retired and, following a trip to Australia, moved to Eastbourne, Sussex, where she died in November 1958.

Surrey Advertiser,
22 December 1923



St Austin's, c.1930

Winifred Mary Copley

Mary Griffith was succeeded by Miss Winifred Mary Copley. Winifred was born in Pontypool, Monmouthshire, Wales, in 1877, the daughter of a bank manager.

In the 1921 census, Winifred's occupation is described as 'Org Sec for the C.E.I.M.S.²'.

Winifred arrived in Woking in 1931. A postcard written by one of the ladies staying there in 1934 gives a picture of the home:

'I thought you would like to know where I am staying. This is the Home, a lovely place, everything so beautifully arranged & so restful. Am feeling better already. Weather is lovely. There is such an abundance of trees & flowers all around here you would enjoy it all I know.'

'We had a drive to Virginia Waters and Windsor Castle one day. It was lovely. Hope you are well, warmest love,'

Winifred died at Woking in May 1936, aged 59.

Eva Marianne Heath

After Winifred Copley's death, the next superintendent was Miss Eva Marianne Heath. Eva was born in Warbleton, Sussex, in May 1902; she was thus just 34 when she arrived at St Austin's. Eva was a grocer's daughter. In 1921, she was working as a secretary for R William (Felixstowe) Ltd, grocers.

² No reference to this abbreviation has been found but it could be related to the Church of England Missionary Society (C.E.M.S.); The address she gave as her place of work was, in 1927, the Church Missionary House.

Eva was the longest serving superintendent, remaining in post until at least 1962. She retired to Eastbourne, Sussex, where she died, at the age of 92, in 1995.

St Austin's was closed in about 1965. It is listed in the 1964 street directory (no superintendent is named), but not in the 1968 directory (which would have been compiled in 1967). The building was demolished and the houses of The Rowans, Montgomery Road now sit on the site.

OCCUPIERS OF ST AUSTIN'S

Edward Winstanley Cobb	1887-94	Wine merchant
John Rutter	1895-99	Cigar merchant
William Timothy Synnott	1901-03	Company director
John Edward Gripper	1905-18	Corn merchant
Mrs Jessie Mary Gripper	1918-19	<i>widow of John</i>
Miss Fanny Louisa Anne Roberts	1921-23	} Superintendents of } ladies' rest home }
Mrs Mary Eliza Griffith	1923-30	
Miss Winifred Mary Copley	1931-36	
Miss Eva Marianne Heath	1948-62	