

PIONEERS OF EARLY WOKING

Selected Portraits

Trevor R Howard

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by

Trevor R Howard

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INTRODUCTION

The London and Southampton Railway was built in 1838, across the common, some 1.4 miles north of the village of Woking. In 1853, the London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company bought a large tract of the common land around Woking Common Station, in order to provide a huge cemetery to relieve the burden on London's overflowing graveyards.

The 'first stage' of the cemetery was built at Brookwood. By July 1855, before it was completed, the Company had had an Act of Parliament passed, permitting them to sell off 'surplus land'. In the 1870s, a new town was springing up around the station.

There were, no doubt, many people who were influential businessmen and/or gave their time to committees and organisations which helped to grow the fledgling town of Woking. This work however concentrates on eight people who left an indelible mark on the town.

None of the eight were local to the Woking area. Because Woking was a new town, 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.

WILLIAM JOHN BUTT (1841-1919)

EARLY LIFE

William John Butt was born in 1841 in Kington Magna, Dorset. He was the eldest son of Job, an agricultural labourer, and Dorothea.

In 1867, he married Emily, daughter of Stephen Lush, who would also later move to Woking and live 2 doors down from William.

William and Emily moved to Hersham, Surrey (where their eldest son was born in April 1868). By 1871, they were living in Woking.



Figure 1. William John Butt 1841-1919

ARRIVAL IN WOKING

The 1871 census shows William John Butt and his family living in Ellen Street (later West Street), Woking. William, then 28, was described as a carpenter.

In 1881, William was in Goldsworth Road, described as a 'Master Builder' employing 14 men and 2 boys¹.

Building

Unlike James Harris, another builder (see pages 13-18), William Butt did not build many large public buildings, but instead concentrated on domestic and retail premises.

In April 1882, William's tender of £589 10s for the building of a new post-office and postmaster's residence in Chertsey Road was accepted. The architect was William F Hooper.



Figure 2. New post-office

The new building opened for business in October 1882.

The Rating Valuation list of 1882² shows William owning four buildings in Chertsey Road, between the junctions with Walton Road and Board School

¹ 1881 Census of England and Wales, Class: RG11; Piece: 772; Folio: 47; Page: 11

Road. These included No. 5 (later 77), which William occupied himself and would be his home for the rest of his life. Another was the Temperance Hotel which William had built in 1881³. By 1885, William had acquired all of No.s 1-12 (later 69-91) Chertsey Road⁴

William was summoned, in March 1884, by the Rural Sanitary Authority for providing contaminated water to his houses. At a second hearing it was stated that he had cleaned out the well and removed the lead pipe which was the cause.⁵

Most of the houses William owned in Chertsey Road were put up for sale at auction in 1887. Maybe he found managing a property portfolio on top of his building work too much or, perhaps, he needed the capital for other building projects.

In May 1886, William entered a tender of £1,830, for the erection of seven houses and a shop in North Road and another of £2,300 for the erection of a villa residence and stables at Maybury; both were accepted⁶. The architect for both was a Mr Cole. In December that year, William was attacked with a whip, by Walter Cole, architect of Chobham, ostensibly in a dispute over the ownership of a horse. Walter Cole was fined £5, in default of a month's imprisonment.

Buildings known to be erected by William J Butt	
1881	Temperance Hotel, Chertsey Road
1882	Post-office & Postmaster's residence, Chertsey Road
1886	7 houses and 1 shop in North Road
	Villa residence & stables, Maybury
1888	Mission Hall, Burpham
1893	Liberal Club, Chertsey Road
1899	Primitive Methodist Church, Chertsey Street, Guildford
	Repairs to Maybury School
1900	Infants School, Church Street
	Repairs to St Johns School
1901-3	Commercial Buildings, Commercial Road

The 1901 Woking Rate Book⁷ shows William owning seven cottages in Goldsworth Road, four houses in Arnold Road, and five in Church Street. It is presumed that he had also built these. In addition, he is shown as owning the two Sanders Cottages in Commercial Road. These were then demolished to

² SHC 6198/13/1 *Parish of Woking: Valuation, Rating and other Parish Records (1843-1936): Valuation list (1882)*

³ *West Surrey Times* 14 January 1882

⁴ SHC 6198/13/2 *Parish of Woking: Valuation, Rating and other Parish Records (1843-1936): Valuation list (1885)*

⁵ *Surrey Advertiser* 29 March 1884; *West Surrey Times* 12 April 1884

⁶ Generally, there were about four to eight (typically five or six) tenders for every job (of those reported in the press); invariably the lowest tender was accepted

⁷ SHC 6198/9/74 *General District Rate Book: Parish of Woking(1901*

make way for Commercial Buildings, which he built between the junctions with Chobham Road and Chertsey Road.



Figure 3. Commercial Buildings, Commercial Road c1930

In 1901, William was president of the Woking Master Builders Association, representing them at the funeral of James Harris.

During a Council debate in 1905, about the provision of workers' cottages and their possible provision by the Council, William Butt claimed that he had built between 400 and 500 houses in the Woking area.⁸

LOCAL AFFAIRS

William Butt was heavily involved in the local community, influencing Woking's spiritual and political character as well as its architecture. He was an active member of the Woking and District Tradesmen's Alliance, being voted a vice-president in 1903.

William was a leading light in Woking's temperance movement. As well as building the Temperance Hotel in Chertsey Road, and another within Commercial Buildings, Commercial Road, he regularly opposed applications for licences for new public houses and off-sales.

⁸ *West Surrey Times* 8 April 1905

William was a keen member and trustee of the Primitive Methodist Church in Walton Road and in later years often led debates, gave addresses and chaired meetings.

The Woking School Board was formed in 1874. In the elections for 1880, William was nominated but, apparently, withdrew as no votes were recorded for him⁹. This seems to be William's first foray into public life.

In 1883, he was elected to the Board and served for the next 15 years. When he stood down in 1898, the local press said "*Mr. Butt's position on the Board has altogether been that of an extremist. He is no advocate of the spirit of compromise ...*".¹⁰

WOKING SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION. TO THE ELECTORS OF WOKING.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WE beg to solicit the favour of your support at the Election which takes place on THURSDAY NEXT, APRIL 25th. If elected, we shall support the policy of the present majority, which has resulted in:

- (1) Reduction of Rates.
- (2) Establishment of Free Evening Classes without cost to the Ratepayers.
- (3) The assertion of the important principle that the Ratepayers should control the teaching given in all schools supported by the Rates.
- (4) Refusal to sign any lease which does not provide (when the lease expires) for fair compensation to be paid for additions made at the Ratepayers' expense.

To all Ratepayers, of whatever party or creed, who agree that the people who support the schools should control them, we appeal with confidence for support.

A. BRIANT.

W. J. BUTT.

J. H. INGRAM.

W. K. SKEET.

Figure 4. 1895 manifesto

William was elected to the Woking Local Board (later Woking Urban District Council) and served on the Highways Committee, which he chaired. An insight into his personality can be gained by the following extract from a report of a Council meeting:

With reference to the land at the junction of Commercial and Chestsey Roads, the Clerk stated that Mr. Holroyd wrote that he could not now let the Council have it himself.—Messrs. Capron and Sparkes wrote that the land from the angle back to Mr. Allum's shop had been purchased by Mr. W. J. Butt. They understood the Council were disposed to acquire a small portion of it extending 45 feet from the extreme angle for the purposes of street improvement. It was made a condition of the sale that this could be done, but that Mr. Butt should not be made liable for any expenses of road improvement.

Mr. Butt moved the adoption of the report, and Mr. Kirtledge seconded.—Mr. Weston, referring to this land, asked if the purchase had now fallen through.—The Chairman: We have an offer from Mr. Butt through the solicitors.—Mr. Godfrey: Can a member of the Council purchase a piece of land for which the Council were negotiating for a public improvement?—The Chairman: Mr. Butt is quite prepared to do away with all the restrictions which were imposed upon the Highway Committee. There were restrictions in Mr. Holroyd's conditions which I never approved of.—Mr. Godfrey: Then if we want to get this land we must get it through Mr. Butt. We have no power to get it from him. It is a most irregular thing for a member of the Council to negotiate behind the backs of the Council for the piece of land which the Council were negotiating for. It is a most irregular and improper proceeding. If Mr. Butt wished to purchase he should have asked the leave of the Council.

Mr. Butt said he should ask leave of no one. He had to look after himself, and he was not bound by the Council or anyone else. He was not going to stand still and see someone erect something in front of his property, which would prove detrimental not only to that property but to the whole town. If he had not purchased someone else would have done so. He had only done what was right.—The Chairman said it

would have been much better if Mr. Butt had informed the Council that he thought of purchasing this land, and that he did not desire to take away that portion of land for a street improvement. To have done that would have been more courteous.—Mr. Butt: That would not have answered my purpose.—Mr. Weston said it would be a great improvement if this corner piece of land could be thrown into the public highway, and if Mr. Butt would sell they should accept it.—Mr. Lushington said it was extremely unfortunate that Mr. Butt had placed himself in this position. Having sat as chairman of the Highways Committee he had recommended the purchase of the land, and he afterwards privately purchased the land himself. On a question of principle they should strongly deprecate such an action on the part of a councillor, and the Council would do well to lay it down as a principle that it strongly disapproved of any member entering into a bargain for anything which the Council to his knowledge were negotiating to purchase.—Mr. Gloster: It is a pity the land was not conveyed before.—Mr. Lushington, continuing, said Mr. Butt's subsequent conduct showed that his motives were laudable, though the way in which he carried them out was unfortunate. It was an excellent thing for Mr. Butt that the matter had been gone into so fully that evening, and had been brought into the light of day.—Mr. Butt: You can do what you like. I have done nothing dishonourable. I have opposed through thick and thin tying the Council up to conditions in a contract which would have been detrimental to the town. It was to get rid of those conditions that partly induced me to buy the land. The Council need not have the land if they do not want it. If you do want it you will have to buy it soon.—Mr. Aird opposed the Council's purchasing the land, as a member had no right to sell land to the Council.—Mr. Lushington remarked that the sale of land was excepted by Act of Parliament from causing a vacancy in the office of councillor.—This matter was then referred to the committee, and the report was adopted.

Figure 5. *West Surrey Times* 20 April 1901

⁹ *Surrey Advertiser* 24 April 1880

¹⁰ *Surrey Advertiser* 26 February 1898

It was, no doubt, due to this uncompromising nature that William was never elected to the chair of the council, despite his obvious talents.

William stood for election to the Surrey County Council, as member for Woking, in 1901 but was defeated. He was elected in 1904,¹¹ but defeated in 1907 & 1913.

LATER LIFE

William died on 4th November 1919, aged 78. After a service at the Primitive Methodist Church in Walton Road, he was interred in Brookwood Cemetery on 8th November. His obituary described him as ‘one of Woking’s best known and oldest public servants’.¹²

His widow, Emily, inherited the building business; she almost certainly did not take an active role, already being 72 years old. William’s estate was valued at £17,199 4s 3d (about £910,000 today).

¹¹ *West Surrey Times* 5 March 1904

¹² *Woking News & Mail* 14 November 1919

HENRY WILLIAM GLOSTER (1835-1908)

EARLY LIFE

Henry William Gloster was born in Bristol, Gloucestershire, on 12th July 1835, the son of William and Susannah. His father, William, was a labourer, later an engineer.

In the 1851 census, Henry was in service with a chemist in Swansea; his occupation is given as 'servant to chemist'.

On 6th March 1854, Henry married Elizabeth Davis. Their first son, also named Henry William, was born in Hackney in January 1856. At his baptism, Henry was recorded as a brewer's servant. Two years later, still in Hackney, Henry was a drayman. Henry and Elizabeth's third child was born in Swansea in 1859; by 1861, Henry was back in Bristol, working as a 'brewer's haulier'.

Henry remained in Bristol until at least 1862. By 1864 however, he had moved to Penge near Croydon, Surrey where he had a fruiterer's shop in the High Street.

In the summer of 1866, Henry's wife Elizabeth died. In November, Henry married Frances Helen Arnold – with five young children and a business, he needed a wife. In 1870, Henry was superintendent of the Tabernacle in Maple Road, Penge.¹³



Figure 6. Henry William Gloster 1835-1908

ARRIVAL IN WOKING

Henry William Gloster was one of early Woking's most significant figures in terms of commerce and local governance. In 1876, he moved from Penge and opened a shop at 5 Chobham Road, opposite the Red House;¹⁴ originally known as the South-western Service Supply Stores.

¹³ *Norwood News* 1 October 1870

¹⁴ At the stock-taking supper in 1890, Henry is quoted in the press as saying that the business was commenced in Woking 30 years earlier (1860), by him and one of his sons. This cannot be the case as his eldest son would have been only 5 years old at the time (probably the reporter misheard '13' as '30')

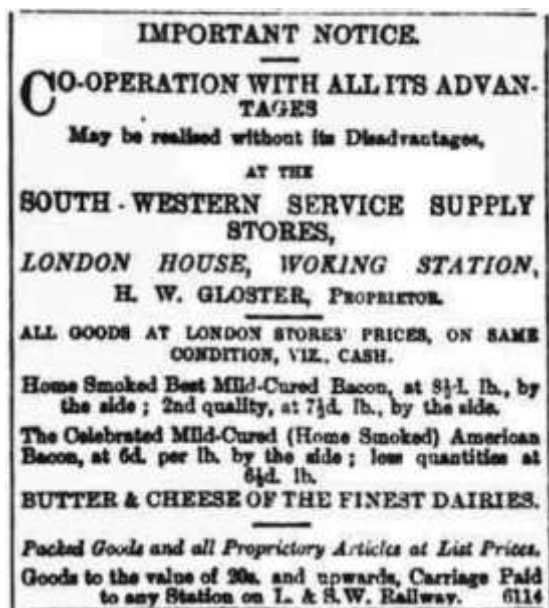


Figure 7. Gloster's ad 1879

Until 1888, William and his family were living above the shop.

In 1887, William bought the adjacent plot of land. On it, facing onto Chertsey Road, he built his Corn Exchange, opening in 1889. It was not long before Gloster required even more space and, in about 1893, he expanded next door into No. 16.

At the rear of the Corn Exchange, Henry built a warehouse and offices. These were known as Whittington Buildings and fronted onto Commercial Road.



Figure 8. Gloster's Stores

By 1887, there was also a branch store at St Johns, situated in Hermitage Road, near the canal bridge. This, incidentally, was the only freehold piece of property in Woking that he purchased; all his other property was either rented or leased.



Figure 9. Gloster's store in St Johns

By 1891, Henry and his wife, Frances, were living in *Lynmouth House*, Commercial Road. The house was situated near to the corner with Church Path – just about where Gordon Ramsay's burger restaurant now is.

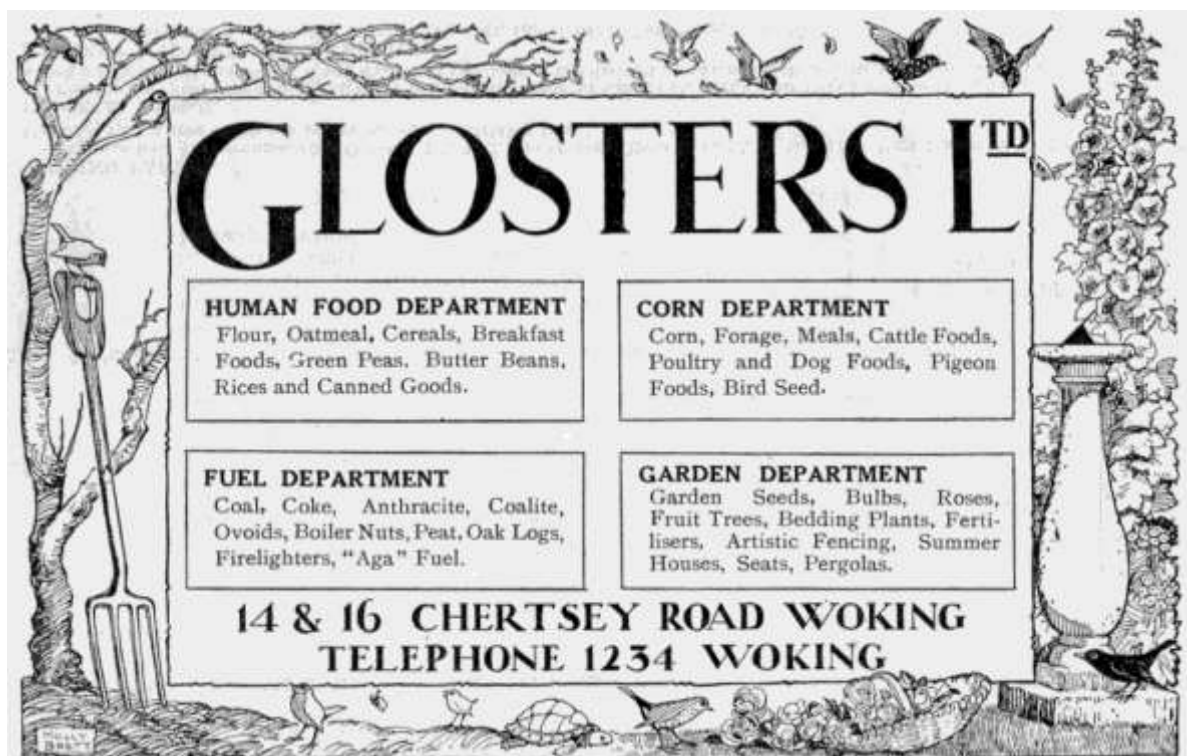


Figure 10. Glosters Advertisement from 1934

Following the building of the Corn Exchange, the shop at 5 Chobham Road was turned into an ironmongers and furnishing ironmongers (pots, pans, cutlery etc.) store. Henry's son, Charles, managed the furnishing ironmongery

business. By 1900, there was a one-storey extension on part of the site, for a china & glass department. This was pulled down in 1907¹⁵.



Figure 11. Gloster's ironmongery c1900

In 1901, the ironmongery shop was taken over by William Skeet (see page 40).



Figure 12. Advertisements from 1925 and 1930

A second warehouse (Figure 13) was built in Walton Road, in the early 1900s.

¹⁵ SHC 6198/13/29 *Parish of Woking: Valuation, Rating and other Parish Records (1843-1936): Supplemental valuation list (September 1907)*



Figure 13. Gloster's Warehouse in Walton Road c1920
The warehouse in Commercial Road was probably very similar

In September 1915, several employees of H W Gloster & Sons Ltd were awarded diplomas for long service. Evidently, either jobs were scarce or Henry was a good person to work for.

Figure 14. Long Service awards

LONG SERVICE.
In a competition promoted by the directors of the Grocery Exhibition for long service with wholesale grocers and provision dealers, diplomas were awarded the following employees of Messrs. H. W. Gloster and Sons, Ltd., of Woking: Thomas Bearman, 37 years; Thos. Howard, 33; Henry Mayhew, 31; George Annetts, 29. William W. French, 29, Fred Oliver, 29, C. H. Warner, 27, J. H. Wright, 27, Albert Harris, 26, H. E. Sturt, 23.

Henry William Gloster had eight sons from his two marriages. One died as a child, but six of the other seven went into the family business. By the time Henry died in 1908, his sons were running the business.

Henry had retired in 1903. In September that year, the Corn Exchange, warehouses and offices were transferred from 'H W Gloster & Sons' to 'Gloster's Limited'.¹⁶ The business was carried on until the death of the last surviving son, Daniel, in 1947; it was then wound up by the executors.

¹⁶ Surrey Advertiser 26 September 1903

LOCAL AFFAIRS

On arriving in Woking, Henry continued his participation in the Baptist Church, becoming the treasurer of the local church by 1882. He was the driving force behind the construction of the Baptist Chapel in Goldsworth Road.

Henry had an active political life. He sat on the Woking Vestry committee. In 1878, he was elected to the Woking School Board on which he served two terms with a break of three years.

When the Woking Local Board was formed in 1893, Henry sought election for the St John's Ward but was defeated. He was vigorously opposed to the proposed town drainage scheme which would have had an outflow in Horsell. However in 1894, the Woking Urban District Council was created and the 1895 elections were largely fought on the issue of drainage. All those who supported the old scheme were defeated and Henry was elected at the head of the poll.

Although defeated at a subsequent poll, Henry was re-elected for the Knaphill and Brookwood ward, a seat he retained until he retired from the council in 1906. Henry William Gloster was chairman of Woking Urban District Council in 1904¹⁷. He also served as Woking's representative on the County Council from 1895 until 1904.

Politically, Henry was a Radical and championed the Liberal cause in the face of much opposition. Henry's principal work was on the asylum committee. He was also a staunch supporter of the cottage hospital. In 1903, he was opposed to a rate-payer provided library which was subsequently voted down. This brought him into conflict with William Skeet.¹⁸

LATER LIFE

In 1893, Henry and Frances moved from *Lynmouth House*, to *Cedar Villa*, also in Commercial Road. In 1899, they moved to live in *Sunny Bank*, West Hill Road (off of Guildford Road).

Henry William Gloster died on 7th April 1908, at his home, after an illness of more than twelve months. He was interred in Brookwood Cemetery, following a service at the Baptist Church in Goldsworth Road. In an address at his funeral, the Reverend A J Stanton described him as “... *a man whose whole life was characterised by a great energy, a great enthusiasm for anything to which he put his hand, a man who built up what was, perhaps, the foremost business in Woking, on old-fashioned Christian principles, and a man who, he believed, had left upon Woking the mark of his righteous character.*”

His estate was valued at £4,489 3s 6d (approximately £550,000 today).

¹⁷ 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

¹⁸ *Surrey Advertiser* 24 October 1903.

JAMES HARRIS (1825-1901)

EARLY LIFE

James Harris was born in Tisbury, Wiltshire in 1825. He was the son of James, a mason, and Ann Maria. Like his father, he trained as a mason.

In 1849, James married Mary Boulton in Lambeth - where they were living in 1851.

During this period, James carried out substantial work, as a sub-contractor, on the Crystal Palace, built for the Great Exhibition of 1851.

From 1852 to 1854, James and his family were in Corsham, Wiltshire, before moving back to Lambeth, where their fourth child was born in 1857.

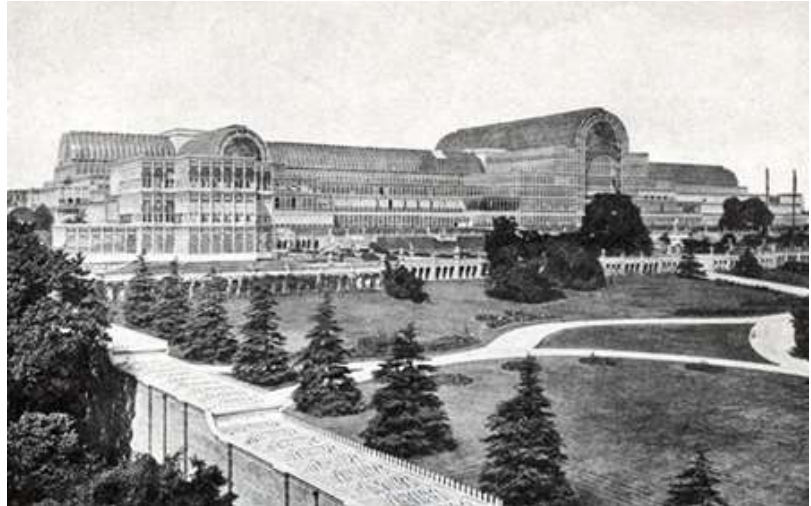


Figure 15. Crystal Palace

ARRIVAL IN WOKING

Occupation

In 1857/8 James, aged 32, moved to Woking. The 1861 census shows he was working for the Necropolis Company as a master mason. All four of his children were baptised at St Michael and All Angels church, Pirbright in February 1863, so he was probably living in Brookwood at this time.

By 1866, James had purchased about a half of an acre of land from the Necropolis Company and had established a builder's yard where the current No.s 15-20 High Street are located, stretching as far as Commercial Road (Figure 16). His land also included where No.s 21-24 were later to be built.

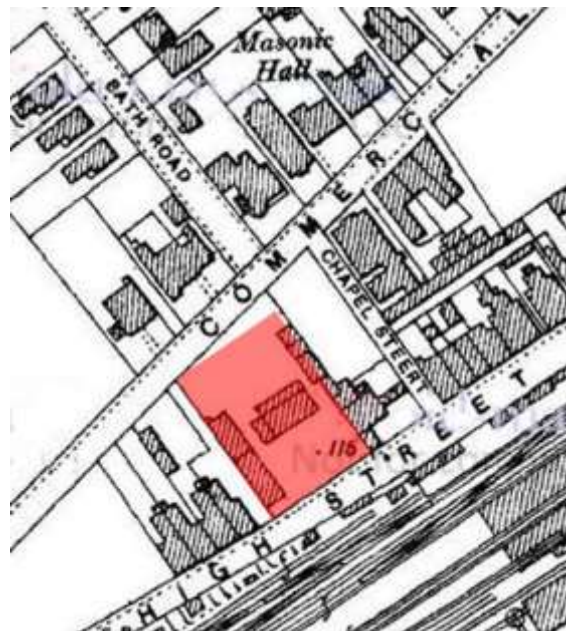


Figure 16. Location of builder's yard

The land also contained a residence, where James and his family lived; this was the building located to the right of the yard, with a garden to the rear (where No.s 13 & 14 now are).

When James's granddaughter got married in 1913, she gave her address as 13 High Street¹⁹.

James also established a business as undertaker and monumental stonemason. Today, a funeral costs a little more than the £2 charged in 1896 (Figure 17).

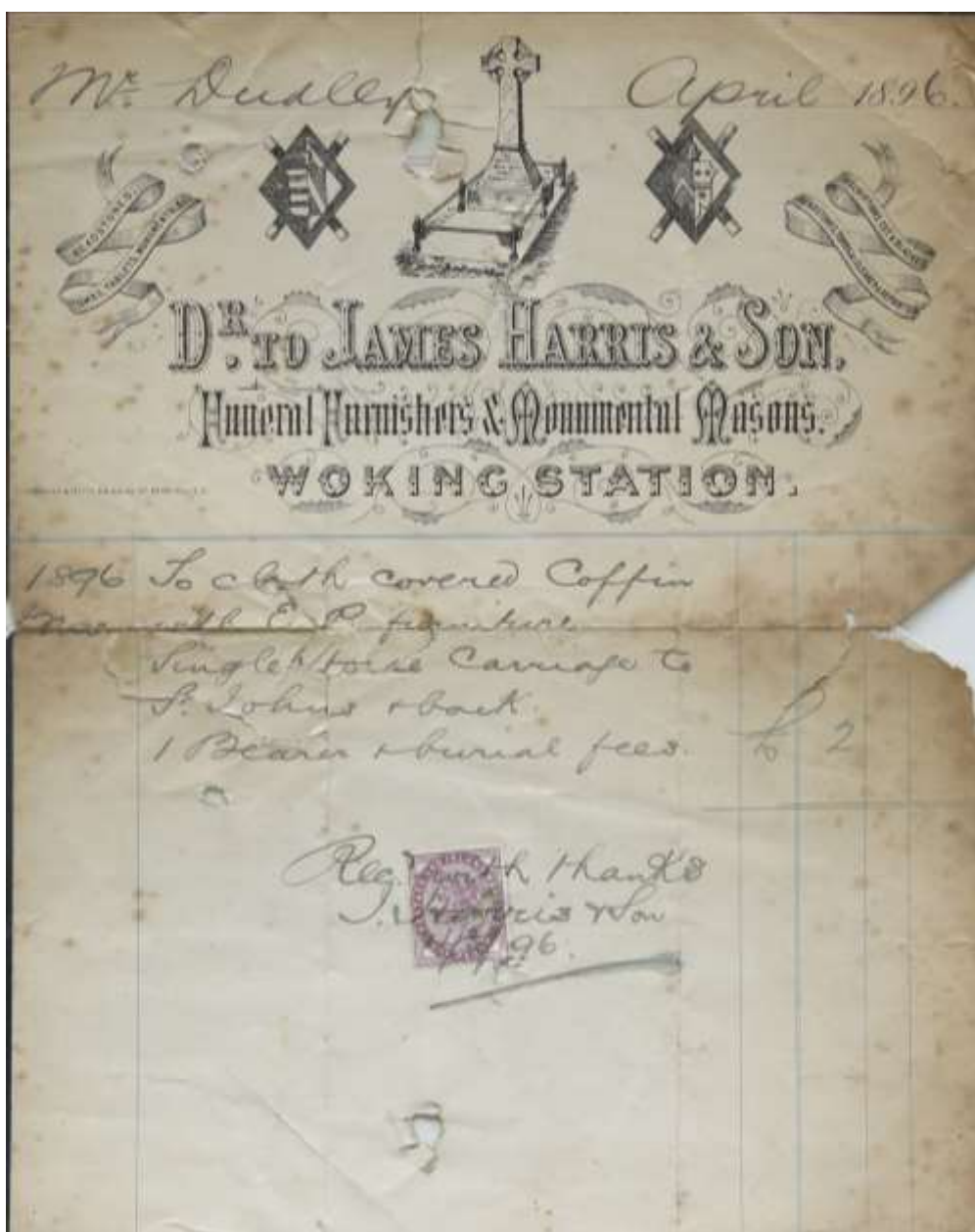


Figure 17. 1896 invoice/receipt for funeral charges

Buildings

James Harris was responsible for many significant buildings erected during the early development of Woking, including: the central hall of the Royal Dramatic

¹⁹ No.s 13 & 14 had yet to be built and so the yard/house was the next structure (and address) after No. 12

College (later the Oriental Institute), Christ Church, the Baptist Chapel and the police station.



Figure 18. Central Hall of Royal Dramatic College

The Woking Public Halls were designed by architects Homer & Ridler of Woking and London. Construction began in late summer 1895 and was expected to take 9 months; James Harris & Son were the builders.²⁰

In 1895, the site was purchased for the erection of a 'Woking Conservative Club'.²¹ 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 26th September 1898.²²

Significant buildings erected by James Harris & Son		
1858-65?	Central Hall of Royal Dramatic College	
187?-76	†Catholic church, Sutton Park	
1884-85	†St Paul's Church, Maybury	
1886	Baptist chapel, Goldsworth Road	
1887	Police station	
1887-89	†Christ Church	
1892	†21-24 High Street	
1895-6	Woking Public Halls	
1898	Woking Constitutional Club	
1918	†13-14 High Street	† Still extant

²⁰ *West Surrey Times* 28 September 1895

²¹ *West Surrey Times* 2 November 1895

²² *Surrey Advertiser* 1 October 1898



Figure 19. Woking Public Halls



Figure 20. Baptist Chapel, Goldsworth Road



Figure 21. Christ Church



Figure 22. Constitutional Club next to Wesleyan Church

The Rest was one of several substantial detached houses which used to lie in Commercial Road, between where Boots now is and Peacock Walk. James Harris built it in about 1890, as his residence for his retirement.



Figure 23. The Rest, Commercial Road



Figure 24. High St entrance to the yard 1914

Hugh Harris was the son of Richard Harris and grandson of James Harris. In 1918, Richard Harris built No.s 13 and 14 and Hugh Harris opened his gentleman's outfitters shop in No. 13.

In about 1890, James retired, through ill health, and his son Richard James Harris took over running the business²³. Richard ran the business for some 40 years, until about 1930.

No.s 21-24 High Street were built in about 1892. They were initially owned by James Harris so it is likely that his son, Richard, built them.



Figure 25. 13 High Street, Hugh Harris's shop

²³ Richard James Harris built St Paul's Church, Maybury in 1884/5

LOCAL AFFAIRS

In his obituary²⁴, James was described as ‘of a retiring disposition’. He never sought public office, but was held in great esteem by those who knew him.

LATER LIFE

James suffered from rheumatic gout from about 1890 and was an invalid for the last seven years of his life.

James Harris died on 27th June 1901. He was buried four days later, on 1st July, in St John the Baptist churchyard. His estate was valued at £14,097 19s 3d (equivalent to approximately £1.8 million today).

²⁴ *Surrey Advertiser* 29 June 1901

EDMUND GEORGE HUNT (1840-1911)

Edmund George Hunt was one of the leading figures in the early days of the new town of Woking. He had the first grocer's shop in the town and was soon investing in property in what would be West Street, Church Street and Chertsey Road.

EARLY LIFE

Edmund George Hunt was born in Kington Magna, Dorset in 1840, the son of Jeremiah Hunt, a farmer, and his wife Elizabeth. Edmund was baptised in Kington Magna parish church on October 18th 1840²⁵.

Jeremiah farmed what is now Dairy House Farm in Church Hill. In the 1861 census, this is referred to as 'Hunt's Farm'.



Figure 26. Map of Hunt's farm 1887 and pictured today

The youngest of six children, Edmund had four brothers and a sister, Jane, the eldest, born in 1825.

Another Kington Magna family was that of George Lanning. It is likely that Edmund attended school with George's daughter Caroline. After leaving school, Edmund worked on his father's farm.

In 1862, Caroline Lanning fell pregnant. Edmund and Caroline were married in the Baptist Chapel, Wincanton, on 11th May that year²⁶. Shortly after their marriage, Edmund and Caroline moved to Woking, Surrey, where their first child was born in December 1862.

²⁵ Dorset History Centre PE/KIM Dorset, *England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1906*

²⁶ The families were obviously quite close – the previous year, Edmund's brother, William, had married Caroline's sister, Florence.

ARRIVAL IN WOKING

Occupation

Initially Edmund, presumably, was working on a farm as a farm-hand; he does not appear in the electoral rolls until 1868 (only landowners or leaseholders could vote at this time²⁷).

By 1869, Edmund had a grocer's shop at No. 2 Woking High Street, next to the Post Office, rented from the freeholder, William Wells of Guildford. A dairy farmer by training and calling, over the next 25 years Edmund would be described as grocer, farmer, cheese merchant, butter merchant and provision merchant.

Farming

Whilst Edmund was first and foremost a dairy farmer, it is unclear how much day to day involvement he had.

The first farm that was 'his' may have been Clews Farm in Bisley; for which he first appears as the tenant in the 1873 electoral roll. When some sheep went missing in 1870, Edmund offered a reward, so he may have acquired it earlier.



Figure 27. Clews Farm
Picture by John Baker

²⁷ Prior to the *Representation of the People Act, 1867*, only landowners, tenant farmers, shopkeepers and householders paying £10 or more rent could vote (and since 1832, only men)

£1 REWARD.—Stolen or strayed from Bisley Farm on May 30th, Eight Teg Sheep and one Long Tail Suck Lamb. Whoever will give information to Mr. E. Hunt, Woking, Station, will receive the above reward.

Figure 28. Reward notice

On 26th January 1872 a 21 years' lease was granted to Edmund on Woodham's Farm [sic], Chertsey. The following year Edmund was also the tenant of Rodwell's Farm, Chertsey.

In March 1875 the Chertsey Board of Guardians accepted a tender from Edmund Hunt 'of Bowsley Farm' for the supply of milk at 11d per gallon.²⁸

Dated 26th January 1872
Countersigned
The Hon. Mr. Norton
Seize
of Woodham's Farm in the Parish of Chertsey in the County of Surrey
for
Mr. Edmund G. Hunt
Commencing 26th Sept 1871
Term of Years 21 years
Termination 25th September 1892
Rent £200

Figure 29. Lease for Woodham Farm

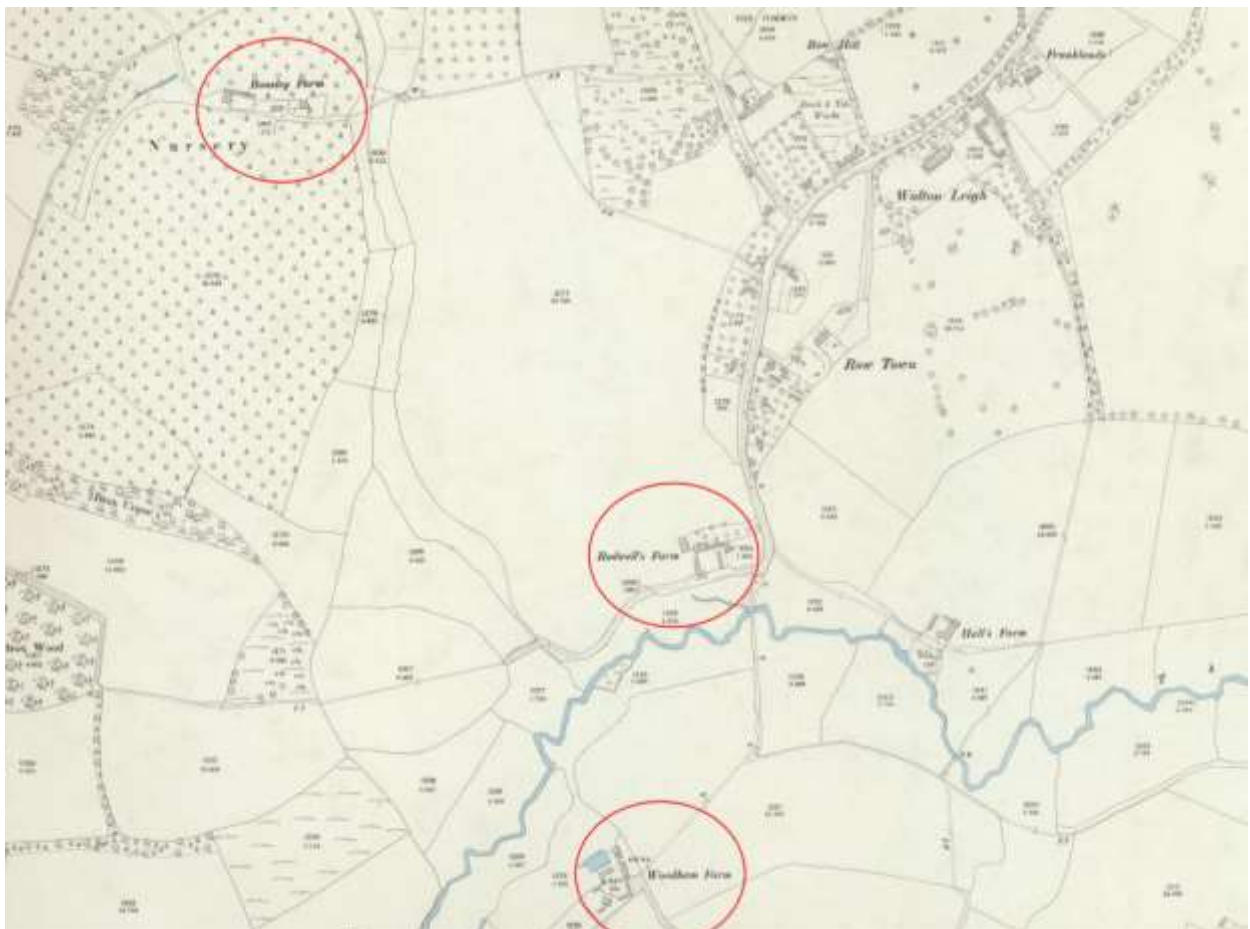


Figure 30. Sites of farms in Chertsey parish

²⁸ *Surrey Advertiser* 3 April 1875

Woodham Farm, Rodwell's Farm and Bowsley Farm were all neighbouring farms at the southern edge of Chertsey parish, near the boundary with Woking parish, as shown in Figure 30.

PROPERTY INVESTMENT

In 1868, Edmund purchased four cottages.²⁹ Unfortunately, the records of the time refer to these as simply being 'near station'; they were probably in either Ellen Street (later West Street) or Providence Row – the north-eastern end of Providence Street (later Church Street). From the Woking rating valuations lists of 1882 onwards, we know he owned these from 1882 to 1895. These four cottages are cited as giving Edmund his entitlement to vote, in each of the electoral rolls from 1869 until at least 1885²⁹.

It is not clear where Edmund obtained his money. Within six years of moving to Woking he had purchased four cottages, despite being married with a young family. Within another five years, he had bought the tenancies of at least two farms.

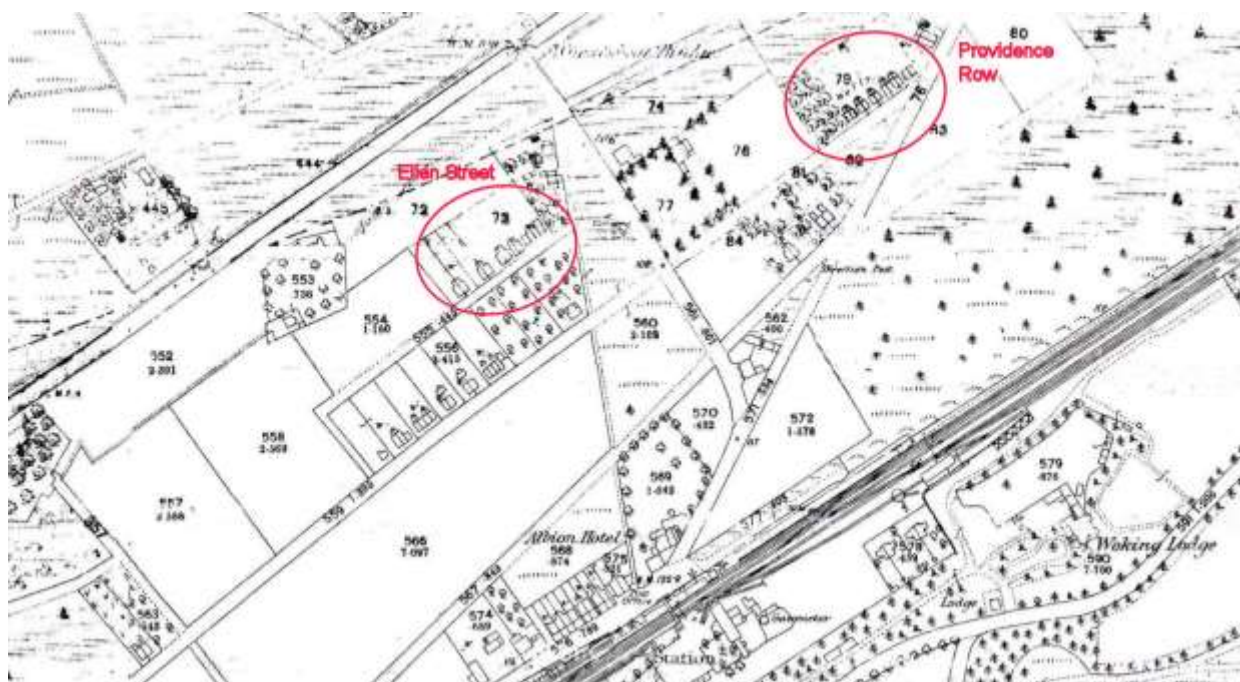


Figure 31. Possible locations of Edmund's cottages in 1868

Despite it not being mentioned in the electoral rolls, Edmund continued to invest in property within the growing town centre. The earliest of the Valuation and Rating lists (1882)³⁰ shows that he owned three houses in High Street³¹, two houses and shops in Chertsey Road, eight houses and shops in Providence Street, another six houses in Providence Street, seven houses in Ellen Street and one house described as 'near station'. The difference between Edmund's gross estate when he died and its nett value, suggests that he borrowed the money for his property investments.

²⁹ Surrey, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1962

³⁰ SHC 6198/13/1 *Parish of Woking: Valuation, Rating and other Parish Records (1843-1936): Valuation list (1882)*

The 1881 census shows that Edmund's nephew, Jeremiah James Hunt (son of his brother, William) was resident in Chertsey Road, Woking as a grocer. The census record is confused: Jeremiah had been entered as the head of the household, which had then been overwritten as 'son'; his age was given as 48 (William's age) instead of 18; his mother, Florence, was listed as 'wife'. It appears as though William (who was listed as being at his farm in Buckhorn Weston, Dorset) was supposed to be present. Two of Jeremiah's siblings were also at the house in Chertsey Road. The 1882 valuation list shows the occupant to be 'Mrs Hunt'.



Figure 32. William Hunt 1833-98



Figure 33. Florence Lanning

After moving away to Edmonton and getting married, Jeremiah returned to Woking where he lived from 1892-1900, seemingly in one of Edmund's houses.

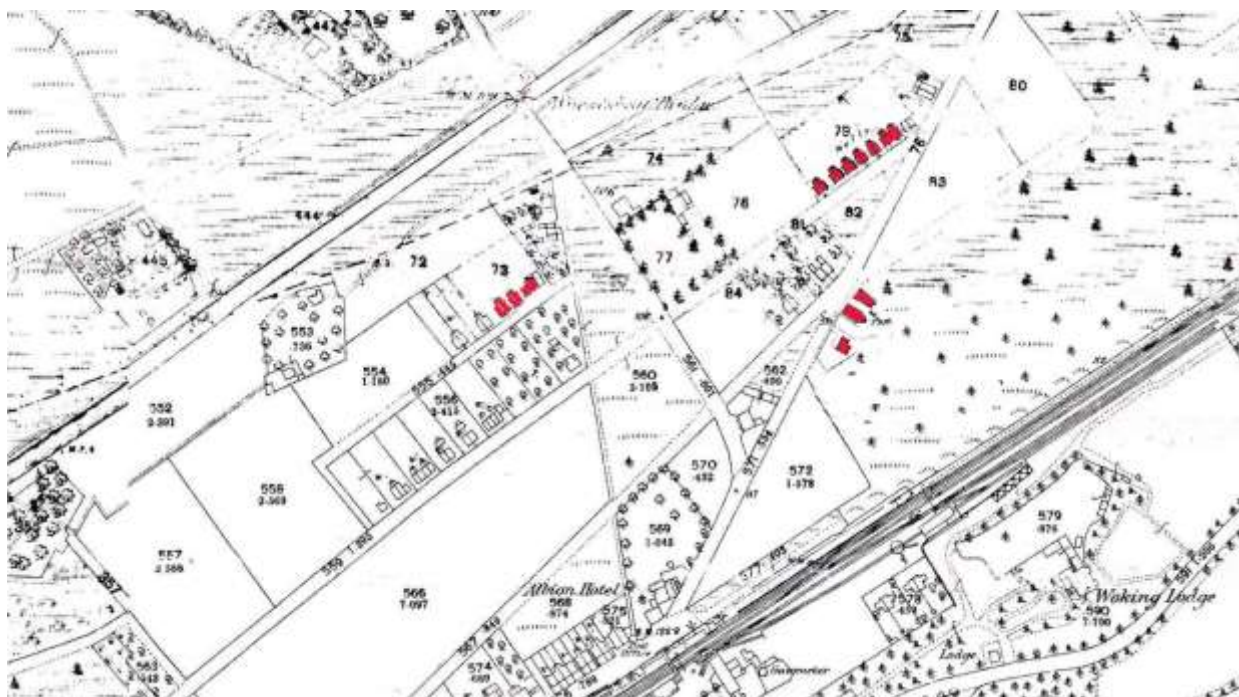


Figure 34. Edmund's property in Woking 1882

The 1885 valuation list shows an additional five houses and shops, four described as being in High Street, although comparison of the occupants' names with other records indicates they were actually in Chertsey Road³¹.

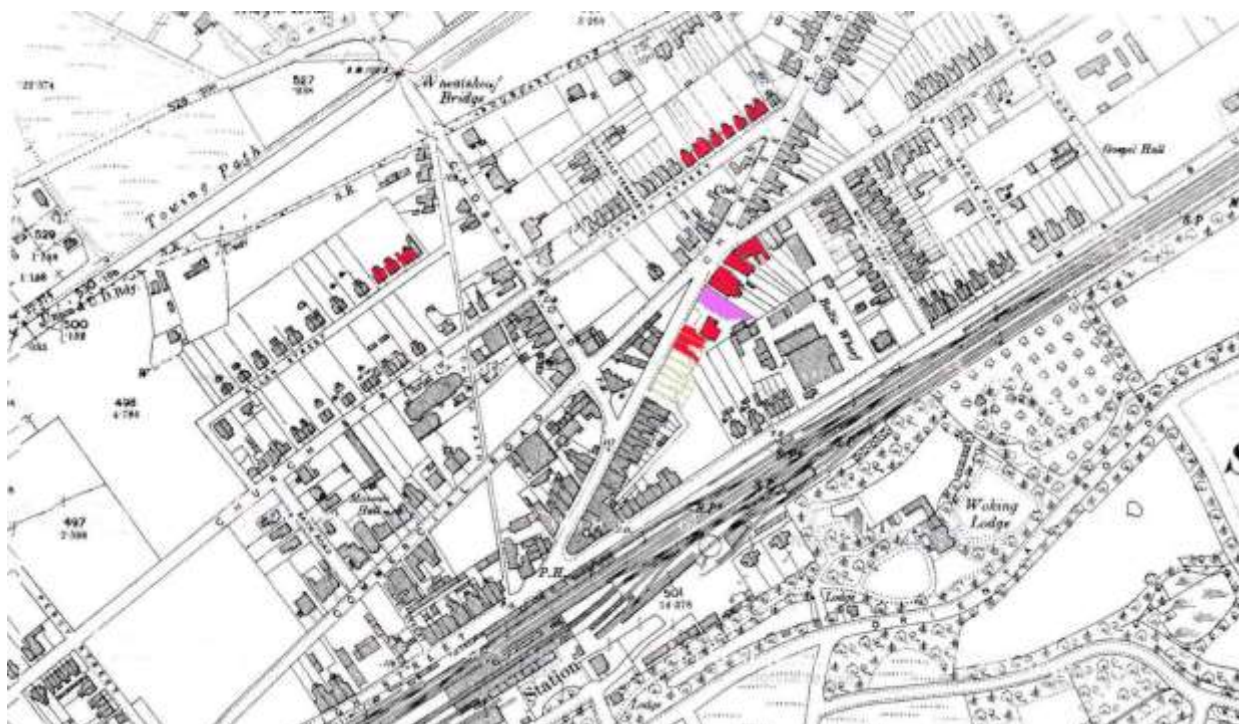


Figure 35. Edmund's property in Woking 1901
(The buildings marked in red and the plot of land in pink)

³¹ It appears that, at this time, what we now know as Chertsey Road, from its junction with the Broadway as far as the junction with Walton Road, was [also] known as the High Street and that Chertsey Road was considered to start at the Walton Road junction.

The Hollies

In about 1882, Edmund moved into a house called 'The Hollies' which he had built on a half-acre plot in Chertsey Road. The location of the house (shown in Figure 36) can just be seen in Figure 37; it is set back, behind the row of four-storey buildings on the right-hand side of the road, where the holly trees are (later No.s 51-53).

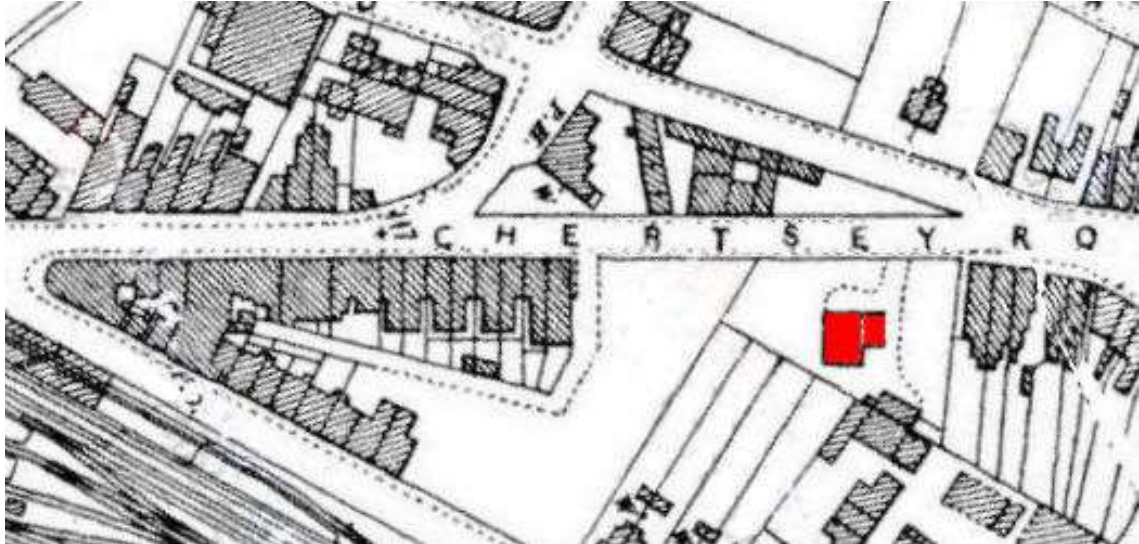


Figure 36. Location of The Hollies



Figure 37. The Hollies

In 1903, The Hollies was pulled down.³² It was replaced by two shops (No.s 51 and 53) – that of Harrison Brothers and The A1 Boot Company.

Edmund's family moved from Chertsey Road to a house in Heathside which, confusingly (for us), he also named 'The Hollies'. This house still exists at 31 Heathside Road.

Although Edmund moved to Hampshire in about 1905, his wife Caroline lived in the Heathside house until her death in 1921; Edmund's daughter Caroline Sarah Hunt then had the house until her death in 1955.



Figure 38. The Hollies, Heathside 2019

When the Hollies in Chertsey Road was pulled down, the 1903 rating valuation list³² shows the owner as Edmund Hunt but the occupier as Mrs Hunt; It appears that Edmund and Caroline were already separated.

In 1905, Caroline was also shown as the owner of the shops occupied by William Merrifield and Frank Bayliss before they were pulled down to build London House.

³² SHC 6198/13/29 *Parish of Woking: Valuation, Rating and other Parish Records (1843-1936): Supplemental valuation list (June 1903)*

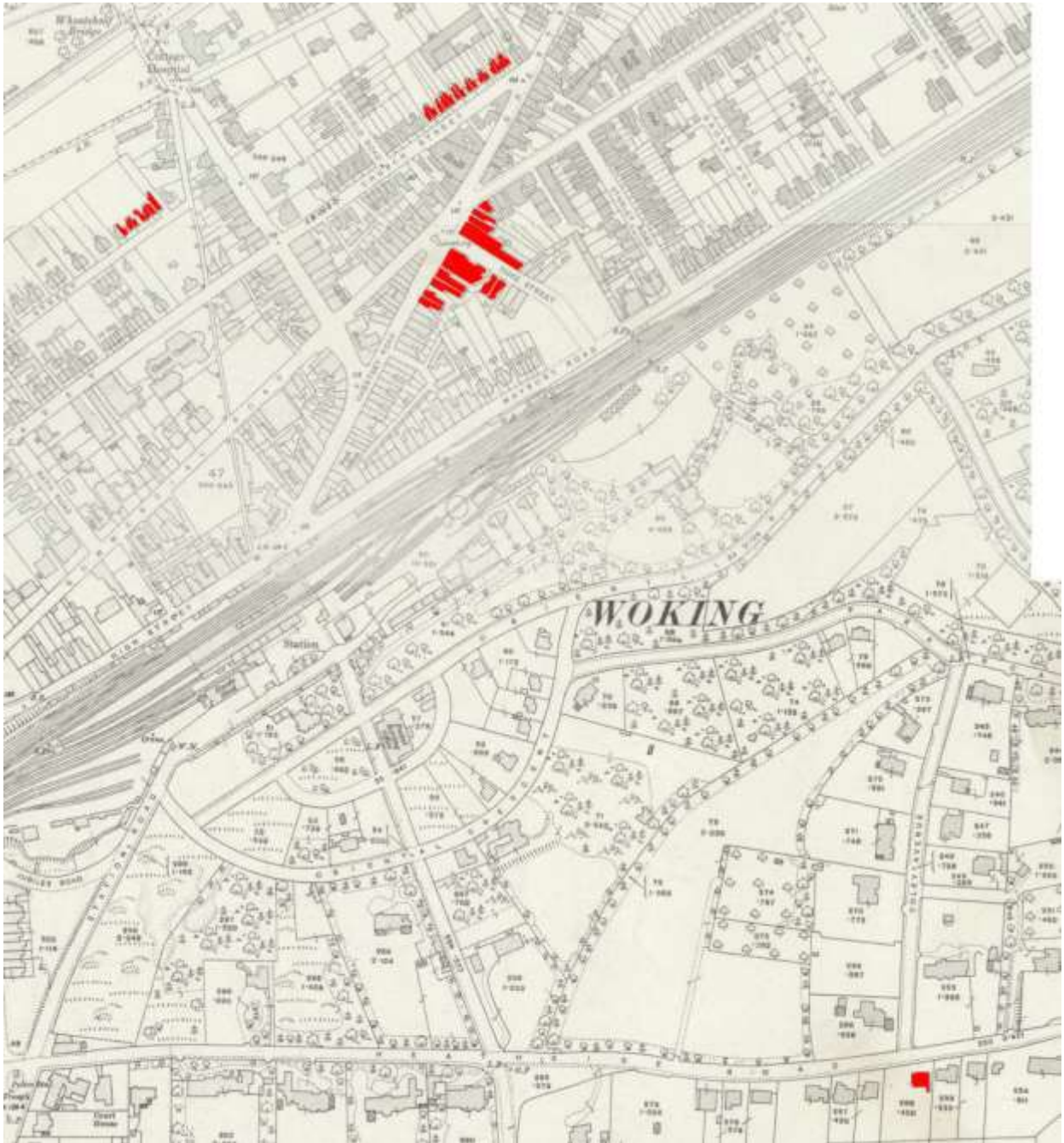


Figure 39. Edmund's property in Woking 1911

LOCAL AFFAIRS

As well as his numerous business interests, Edmund was also involved in the local community.

From at least as early as 1880, Edmund was a member of the Woking School Board. He stood for election again in 1886.³³

In 1887, Edmund was the judge of the butter entries at the Chobham, Windlesham, Horsell and Bisley Agricultural Show.³⁴

³³ *Surrey Advertiser* 13 November 1880; *West Surrey Times* 17 April 1886

³⁴ *West Surrey Times* 29 October 1887

Because of his tenancy of various farms in Chertsey parish, he was also entitled to vote in that constituency. In 1878 he was chosen, at the annual vestry meeting (as a 'landowner of £100 per annum'), as one of the trustees of the allotments for poor occupiers within the manor of Chertsey Beomond.³⁵

The Woking Local Board was created at the end of 1893. In September, Edmund put himself up for election. He failed, however, to obtain one of the six places on the Board allocated for Woking Station and Maybury Ward, polling the seventh highest number of votes (198) of the twelve candidates. Mr Sparkes Cornelius Knight won the most votes (339); Mr H Dalziel was sixth with 257.³⁶

WOKING LOCAL BOARD ELECTION, 1893.
TO THE RATEPAYERS OF WOKING STATION.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—
AT the request of several well-known Ratepayers, I have decided to offer myself as a Candidate for a seat on your Local Board about to be formed. Being one of the largest Ratepayers in the district, I have a personal interest in the legitimate expenditure of Local Funds, and having been a resident for over thirty years, consider that I am fully qualified to understand the wants of the locality. Should you favour me with sufficient support and influence to secure my return, it will be my duty and pleasure to see that the necessary improvements in the Ward are carried out efficiently and with a due regard to economy—I remain, Ladies and Gentlemen, your obedient servant,
EDMUND HUNT.
 The Hollies, Woking Station,
 September 20th, 1893. [8091]

Figure 40. Edmund's election announcement

In October 1895, Edmund was a member of the grand jury at the Surrey Quarter Sessions, held in Kingston-upon-Thames.

EDMUND AS A PERSON

We do not know much about Edmund as a person. No photographs have been discovered (as yet), but he may have resembled his brother, William (Figure 32); likewise his wife, Caroline, may have been similar in looks to her sister, Florence (Figure 33).

Edmund and Caroline had nine children, eight of whom survived into adulthood. They were married for 49 years, although they appear to have lived apart for the last few years of Edmund's life.

In 1893, Edmund is recorded, at a meeting of the School Board, as seconding a motion 'with an amusing speech' – so he presumably had a sense of humour.

³⁵ *Surrey Advertiser* 27 April 1878

³⁶ *West Surrey Times* 30 September 1893

Although baptised into the Anglican Church, Edmund was a dissenter. He and Caroline were married in a Baptist chapel. At Woking, he was involved with the Wesleyan Primitive Methodist Chapel (sited at the corner of Chapel Street and Commercial Road).

A service was held on Good Friday in 1895, to celebrate the Chapel's anniversary. At the evening meeting, Edmund delivered one of the addresses.³⁷



Figure 41. Wesleyan Chapel

Edmund appeared as a character witness at the trial of William Lambert in 1878. He spoke in support of the defendant, who was subsequently described as having '*been caught after a nefarious life of some length*'. In 1881, Edmund appeared as a prosecution witness at the trial of Henry Clenk. Clenk was discharged. In 1906, a carter working for Edmund was found guilty of cruelty to a horse, by working it whilst it had a large sore on its withers. Edmund and his head carter were also fined, in addition to the carter. These three incidents do not mean that Edmund was either dishonest or cruel, but perhaps a poor judge of character.

LATER LIFE

In about 1903, Edmund Hunt moved to Manor Farm, Goodworth Clatford, near Andover, Hampshire. His eldest son, also Edmund George Hunt, was running the Parsonage Farm at nearby King's Somborne.

In the 1911 census (taken 2nd April), Edmund was living at Manor Farm with his daughter, Florence. His wife, Caroline was living at The Hollies, Heathside, Woking, with four of their other children.

³⁷ *West Surrey Times* 20 April 1895

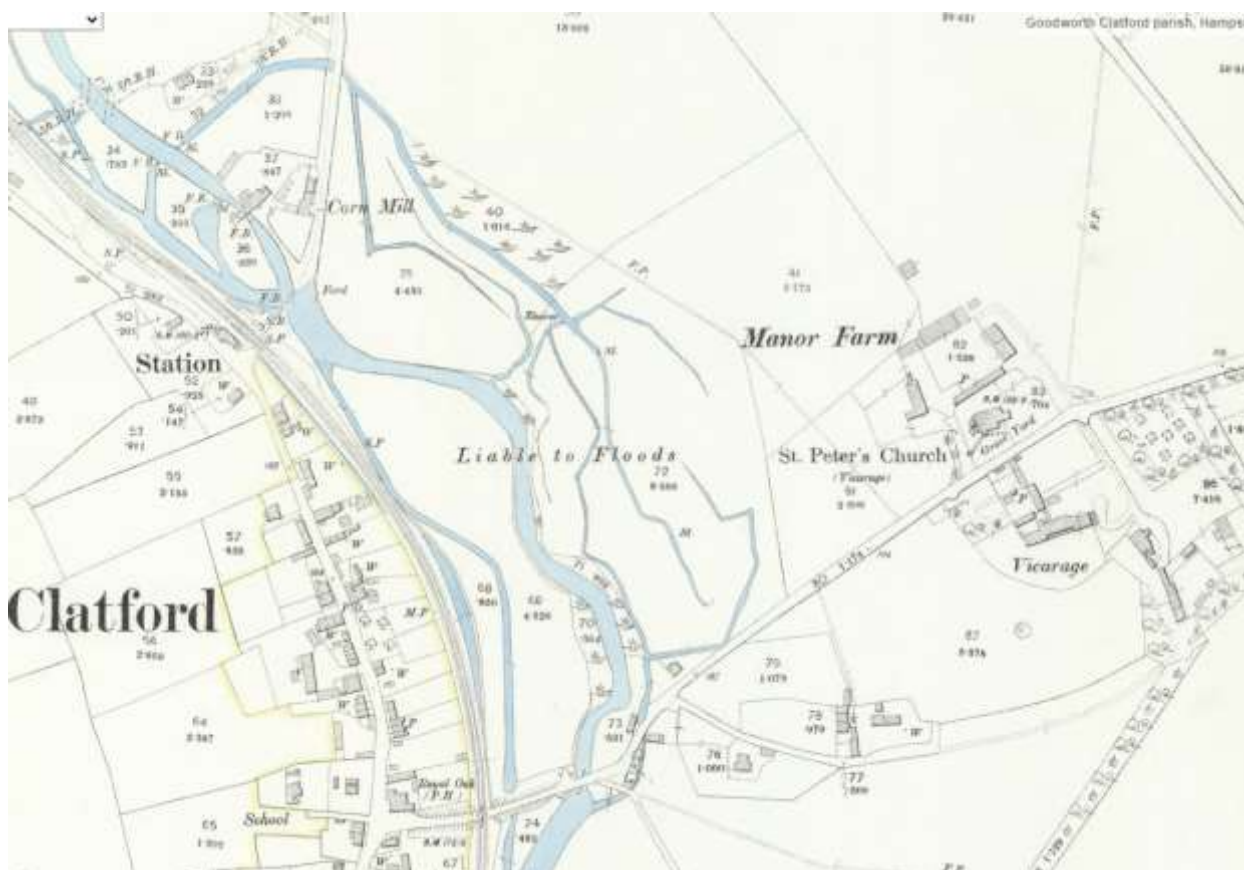


Figure 42. 1912 map showing Manor Farm, Goodworth Clatford

Edmund George Hunt died, aged 70, at Lower Clatford on 23rd July 1911. He was buried on 26th July in Brookwood Cemetery.

Edmund's will was written in his ledger – the page being removed, reportedly, on the orders of the registrar.³⁸ Probate was granted in September 1911. The gross value of his estate was initially estimated at £41,926 10s 9d (about £5 million today), with a net value of £286 10s 5d (£34,000 today). It was subsequently re-sworn with a gross value of £15,840 10s.³⁹

³⁸ *Bournemouth Graphic* 13 October 1911 and others

³⁹ It would appear that Edmund's estate was 'mortgaged to the hilt' though, no doubt, the farms and rental from the other properties produced a substantial income

SPARKES CORNELIUS KNIGHT (1847-1918)

EARLY LIFE

Sparkes Cornelius Knight was born in Crondall, Hampshire in January 1847. He was the son of Edmund, a grocer and baker, and Eliza.

Sparkes was educated in Farnham. On leaving school he was apprenticed to a draper in Guildford.

ARRIVAL IN WOKING

In 1870, Sparkes moved to Woking and, in June, opened a drapery store from the building which is now No.s 6 and 7, High Street.

In 1872, Sparkes married Mary Louisa, daughter of James Harris the builder.

Knight soon rebuilt his store and expanded into No. 8. He eventually had shops in Chertsey Road and Goldsworth Road, as well as the High Street. Knight also acquired No. 3 High Street in around 1900.

He does not seem to have spent much on advertising; his few early advertisements are quite simple (Figure 43). Knight's generosity, however, was well known.

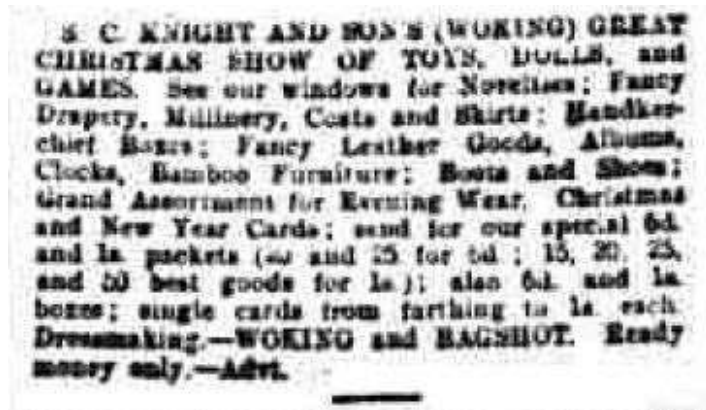


Figure 43. Knight advertisement xmas 1901



Figure 44. Children outside of Knight's High Street store
– probably on the occasion of his birthday

Every year on his birthday (January 1st), Sparkes would distribute gifts and buns to the poor children of the neighbourhood. In 1913, it was reported that about 1,400 children (all under 10 years of age) received gifts and buns.⁴⁰ He would also lay on a dinner for all the staff (and their partners) after the annual stocktaking.

In April 1892, Knight opened a new store at No. 1 the Pavement, Chertsey Road (later No. 2, now demolished). The London and South Western Bank took over the shop in 1901, for their Woking branch; Sparkes moved next door into No. 2 (later No. 4 and also now demolished).

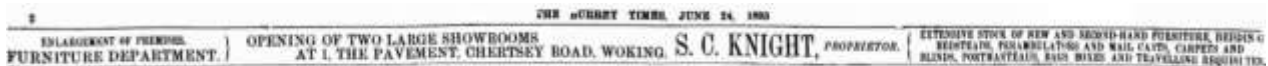


Figure 45. Knight advertisement, 1893

Sparkes Cornelius Knight, who had his draper's shop at No.s 6-8, acquired No. 3a in 1895 and opened a ladies' and children's boot shop.



Figure 46. Knight advert November 1895

By 1896, Sparkes had the boot & shoe shop at 3 High Street; the



Figure 47. Knight invoice 1896

⁴⁰ West Surrey Times 4 January 1913

Store at 6-8 High Street was now a millinery and dressmakers; The store in Chertsey Road was a general drapers and ladies, gents and boy's clothier and outfitter. He also had a further shop in Bagshot.

In 1908, the Boot shop moved to new premises in Goldsworth Road, within a row of shops, built by Knight. A further store was also established in Byfleet.

LOCAL AFFAIRS

As well as his business activity, Knight was involved in local politics; when the local board was formed in 1893, he was returned as one of its members by a large majority. He served continuously and, in 1909, Sparkes was chairman of the Woking Urban District Council⁴¹.

In politics, Sparkes was a staunch Conservative and was an active member of the Constitutional Club.

In 1887, Sparkes became a freemason, being admitted to the Weyside Lodge. He succeeded to the position of Master of the Lodge in 1894. Sparkes also became Provincial Grand Standard Bearer of Surrey.

LATER LIFE

Sparkes fell ill, in 1914, necessitating an operation which left him with a weak heart. Thereafter he took little further part in the running of the business.

Sparkes Cornelius Knight died, after suffering a heart attack, on 16th April 1918, at his house 'Montdale', Mount Hermon Road. He was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 22nd April, following a memorial service in Christ Church.⁴² His estate was valued at £60,805 7s 8d (equivalent to approximately £3.5 million today).

⁴¹ 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

⁴² *Surrey Advertiser* 20 April 1918

DR GOTTLIEB WILHELM SAPHIR LEITNER (1840-1899)

EARLY LIFE

Gottlieb Wilhelm Saphir was born on the 14th October 1840 in the city of Pest, Hungary. His mother was Marie Henriette Herzberg. His father, Leopold Saphir, died when Gottlieb was young and his mother then married Johann Moritz Leitner.

As a child he showed an extraordinary ability in languages. At the age of eight he went to Constantinople to learn Arabic and Turkish, and by the age of ten he was fluent in Turkish, Arabic and most European languages. At fifteen, he was appointed Interpreter (First Class) to the British Commissariat in the Crimea, with the rank of colonel. When the Crimean War ended, he wanted to become a priest and went to London to study at King's College.



Figure 48. Dr Leitner aged 21

As a linguist, he is said to have had acquaintance with some fifty languages many of which he spoke fluently. At nineteen, he became lecturer in Arabic, Turkish and Modern Greek, and at twenty-three was appointed Professor in Arabic and Muslim Law at King's College, London.

Sometime in 1864, he became Principal of Government College University (Lahore) (then British India, present day Pakistan). He founded over 80 institutions in India and elsewhere, including the Oriental College, the Government College and finally and most famously the University of the Punjab, at Lahore.

Leitner was responsible for making Woking, a major centre for Islam. He returned to Europe in the late 1870s, to pursue studies at Heidelberg University (Germany); he also undertook work for the Austrian, Prussian, and British Governments.



Figure 49. Dr Leitner in India

ARRIVAL IN WOKING

Leitner's ambition now was to found a centre for the study, in Europe, of Oriental languages, culture and history. On his return to England in 1881, he sought a suitable site for his proposed institution and, in 1883, came upon the vacant Royal Dramatic College in Woking, a building admirably suited for the purpose. In 1884 he founded the Oriental Institute in Woking.



Figure 50. Oriental Institute, Woking



Figure 51. Dr Leitner 1840-1899

For the benefit of Muslim students, Leitner commissioned the construction of a mosque.

The Shah Jahan Mosque was built in 1889, as one of the first mosques in Western Europe and the first purpose-built one in Britain; it survives to this day. It was built in Indo-Saracenic style and named after Sultan Shah Jahan, Begum of Bhopal (1868–1901).



Figure 52. Shah Jahan Mosque

The Institute and (equally or perhaps more so) its associated mosque encouraged an influx of Asian immigrants to the Woking area. This greatly influenced the present day multi-cultural character of the town.

Leitner contracted pneumonia during a cold spell in February 1899, and on 22 March, he died in Bonn at the age of 58.

His body was returned to England and, on 6 April, 1899, was buried (at his own request) in the Cyprian Avenue of the Brookwood Cemetery.

Unfortunately, following Leitner's death, the Oriental Institute was closed and its collection sold off. Woking thus never got the university it might otherwise have had.

Leitner's estate was valued at £17,941 2s 6d (equivalent to approximately £2.3 million today).



Figure 53. Dr Leitner's grave

HENRY DAFTER QUARTERMAINE (1868-1941)

EARLY LIFE

Henry Dafter Quartermaine was born in Maidenhead, Berkshire in 1868, the son of Thomas, a plumber and gas engineer, and Mary Ann Dafter. He married Emily Jane Jefferies in 1890.

In 1891, in Maidenhead, Henry was described as an oilman.



Figure 54. Henry Dafter Quartermaine (1868-1941)


ARRIVAL IN WOKING

Henry moved to Woking with his wife and first daughter in 1894; he set himself up as a plumber and sanitary engineer, in Chertsey Road.

Business and entrepreneurship

By 1901, Henry had also opened a cycle manufactory a few doors down.

Henry moved his plumber's yard to Chobham Road in 1903. In 1902, he was describing himself as an electrical engineer. Henry was responsible for converting the lighting of several local churches, including Woking St Peter's, St John's and Horsell St Mary's, from oil lamps to electric.



H. Quartermaine,
(LATE OF MAIDENHEAD.)
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER,
WOKING,

CONTRACTOR TO THE WOKING ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO
FOR THEIR FREE-WIRING, & THE WAR OFFICE.

Showroom: Chertsey Road. Telephone, No. 0178
Works: Church Street. Telegrams, "Quartermaine, Woking."

Employing a Competent Staff and having a long and varied experience with installing the Electric Light in a large number of Public Buildings, Private Houses and Shops, is prepared to Estimate for and promptly Carry Out First-class Work Only, compatible with Really Low Charges.

H. Q. begs to call attention to the following Installations recently carried out, to any of whom he would be pleased for prospective customers to refer:—New Military Prison, Knaphill; Woking Public Hall, Woking Conservative Club, Woking Cottage Hospital, Woking Urban District Council Offices, Woking Electric Supply Station, Woking Old Bank, London and South Western Bank, St. John's Church, St. John's Institute, also a large number of Private Houses & Shops.

Contractor for Temporary Illuminations. (See unsolicited Testimonials.)

Re Carnival and Torchlight Procession, Aldershot.

Dear Sir,—Herewith cheque as agreed. Your work gave great satisfaction and was much admired at the Carnival, and I beg to thank you on behalf of the Fire Brigade for our success in taking the first prize for the best feature in the show.—Yours sincerely,
N. SOLOMON, Supt. Aldershot Fire Brigade.

Woking District Constitutional Club.

Dear Sir,—I am requested by my Committee to inform you how thoroughly pleased they were by your Electric Lighting of the Club Grounds on the occasion of our out-door fête. It was the admiration of all present, and in no small measure helped to make the function a great success.
Yours sincerely,
JNO. B. LANCASTER, Hon. Sec.

Figure 55. Maidstone Advertiser 30 July 1902

The following year, 1906, he established the motor works and garage (for which he is probably best remembered) at 6-8 Chobham Road. This was equipped with a lift to transfer vehicles between the floors (still regarded as modern in 1940).

Henry Quartermaine was not just a tradesman and

businessman, but a true entrepreneur. He seems to have had a fascination with cinema, becoming involved with early bioscopes⁴³.



Figure 56. 1908 advertisement for Henry Quartermaine's garage

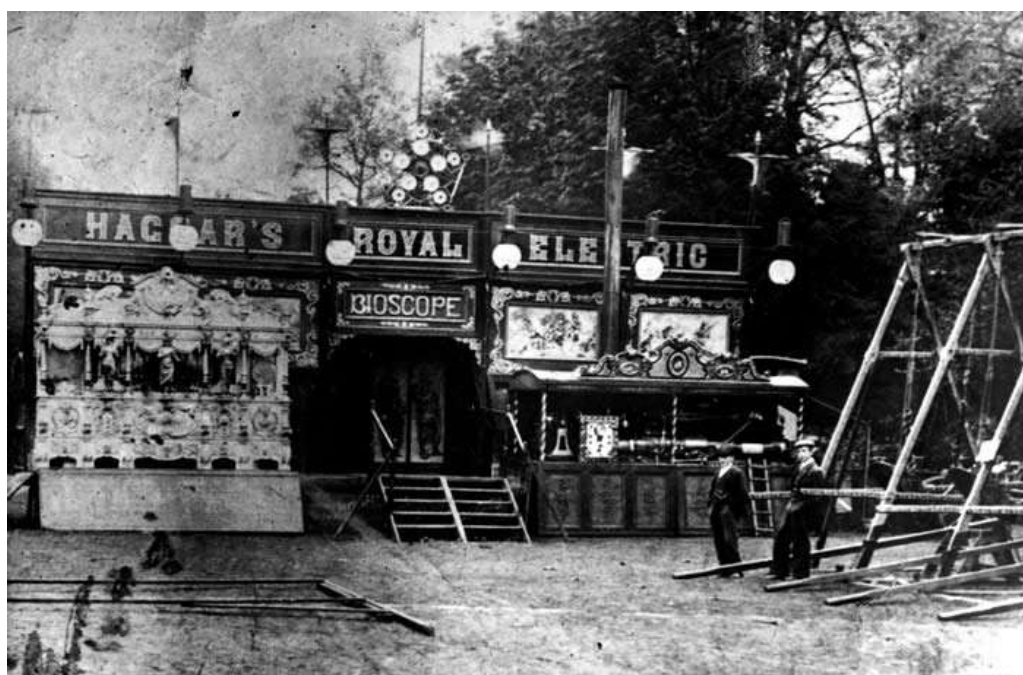


Figure 57. A typical *Bioscope*

In about 1910 he built the Central Assembly Halls, on the site of the Liberal Club, in Chertsey Road; the Palace Cinema installed in 1913 was the town's first. In the 1920s he purchased the Woking Public Halls in Commercial Road, converting it into the Grand Theatre.

⁴³ A Bioscope show was a music hall and fairground attraction, consisting of a travelling cinema. The heyday of the Bioscope was from the late 1890s until World War I. Bioscope shows were fronted by the largest fairground organs, and these formed the entire public face of the show. A stage was usually in front of the organ, and dancing girls would entertain the crowds between film shows. Films shown in the Bioscope were primitive, and the earliest of these were made by the showmen themselves. Later, films were commercially produced.

LOCAL AFFAIRS

Unlike several of his contemporaries, Henry Quartermaine did not immediately seek public office. He was however involved in many aspects of Woking's public and social scene. He was a member and superintendent of Woking's first fire-brigade.

On Boxing Day, 1908, Henry gave a 'cinematograph display' to the patients in the Victoria Cottage Hospital.

Empire day celebrations in 1909 featured a number of events and entertainments in the Recreation Ground. The concluding item was Henry's 'bioscope entertainment'.

Henry Quartermaine was an active member of the Trademen's Alliance, becoming its vice-president in 1902.

The motor works (which was used to produce shells in the first world war) was closed in about 1920 as Henry went into politics full time. He was a long-time member of Woking Urban District Council and its chairman in 1925 and 1930⁴⁴.



Figure 58. Henry Quartermaine out campaigning

Henry also became a Justice of the Peace and was treasurer of the Bisley Lodge of Freemasons.

LATER LIFE

Henry Quartermaine was a lover of the sea. He was a member of the Sussex Yacht Club and the Brighton Deep Sea Anglers Association. He maintained a house in Hove. He was also a keen golfer, playing at West Hill.

Henry Dafter Quartermaine died on 8th February 1941, five months after he and his wife celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Besides his widow, he left two daughters and three grandchildren. A service was held, on the 12th February, at Christ Church, Woking, before burial at Brookwood Cemetery.

His estate was valued at £44,239 18s 11d (equivalent to approximately £2.3 million today).

⁴⁴ 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

WILLIAM ROBERT CLINTON SKEET (1867-1945)

EARLY LIFE

William Robert Clinton Skeet was born in Aldershot, Hampshire on 4 August 1867 (although the local paper⁴⁵ announced the birth as 'of a daughter'). He was the son of William, a furnishing ironmonger, and his wife, Ellen. The family was living in Wellington Street.

After leaving school, William junior joined his father's business in 1883.

Following the death of his wife, Ellen, in 1889, William senior seems to have retired and moved to Woking.⁴⁶



Figure 59. William R C Skeet

ARRIVAL IN WOKING

By 1873, the Woking Station post-office had moved to new premises in Chertsey Road. The building was then occupied by Edward Breakwell, an ironmonger. At this time, the shop had a smithy with two forges⁴⁷ (probably one or both of the tin huts seen in Figure 60).



Figure 60. No. 1 c1900

Edward Breakwell was succeeded, in 1887, by George William Wells, who ran the business for four years.

William Skeet junior took over the building from William Wells and established his own ironmongery business, probably in late 1890 – he is shown there in the 1891 census, taken on 5th April.

In the same census, William senior is shown as living above 2 Bank Buildings in Chertsey Road. He is described as an ironmonger and a 'worker' so was probably then employed by his son.

⁴⁵ *Sheldrake's Aldershot & Sandhurst Military Gazette* 6 April 1867

⁴⁶ In September 1890, William senior took part in a debate about street lighting in Woking (*Surrey Advertiser* 22 September 1890) and when, in December that year, he gave a talk on Abraham Lincoln, he was described as 'of Woking (late of Aldershot)' (*Aldershot Military Gazette* 13 December 1890)

⁴⁷ *West Surrey Times* 1 April 1882

In April 1891, William R C Skeet married Katie Jones.

The building was then known as No. 2 High Street (The Albion Hotel was No. 1). It was on the site where the National Westminster Bank now is.

Figure 61. 1905 Advert
(note misspelling of 'Skeet')



Figure 62. Skeet's High Street shop, June 1902

William opened a second shop in 1901, at No. 5 Chobham Road, taking over what had previously been Henry William Gloster's 'South-western Service Supply Stores'.⁴⁸

In 1907, the lease on the High Street shop was expiring and William was outbid at auction by the London, County & Westminster Bank, who bought the premises for £3,300.

⁴⁸ SHC 6198/9/74 General district rate book, parish of Woking, 1901

William needed to find a new place to live, as well as new premises for the main store. He purchased a pair of semi-detached houses at 141 and 142 Maybury Road. William and his family lived at No. 141 whilst he let 142 to a young writer named H G Wells.

At about this time, William joined up with Charles Job Fooks and they opened a new store at No.s 10 and 12 Chobham Road.

In 1910, Skeet and Fooks were joined by Hartley Davey Jeffes. Fooks subsequently left the partnership in around 1920 and the firm became the well-known 'Skeet & Jeffes'. A third partner, Andrew W Sharpe, joined shortly afterwards.



Figure 63. Stoneware jars with Skeet & Fooks and Skeet, Fooks & Jeffes brands



Figure 64. Hardware House pictured in a catalogue from 1950



Figure 65. Firm's annual outing c1910:
W R Skeet – seated front, fifth from left; A W Sharpe – seated front, seventh from left;
H D Jeffes – seated front, ninth from left

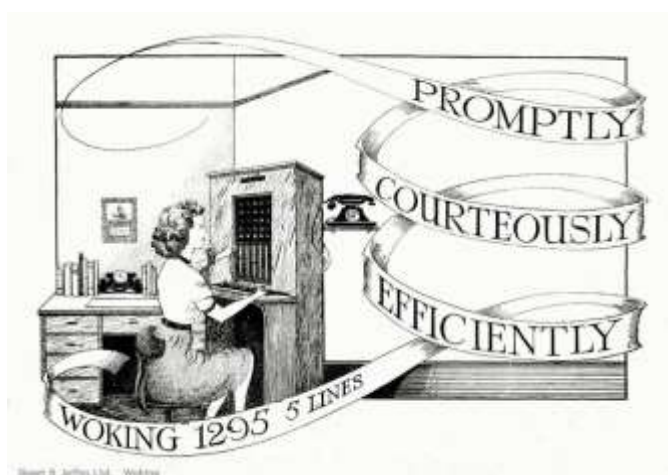


Figure 66. Skeet & Jeffes advertisement

The shop at No. 5 Chobham Road was closed in around 1922.

The business expanded next door, into No. 8, during the 1950s. It became clear that the plans for Woking's redevelopment would have an impact and, in 1968, the business moved into Church Street.

LOCAL AFFAIRS

William Skeet was a champion for education. Although he never served on the Woking District Council, he was a founding member of the Woking School Board in 1894. He subsequently was a member of the school managers and of the school governors and became chairman of both bodies.

In 1928, William was elected, unopposed, as county councillor for Woking South. That same year, he joined the Education Committee, becoming its vice-chairman in 1935 and chairman in 1940 and 1941. He was also chairman of

the Higher Education sub-committee from 1931-1945. He showed both a progressive outlook and a practical understanding of educational needs and problems. In 1938, William was elected a county alderman.

Besides his educational work, William was a magistrate at Woking from 1910. He was a member of the Woking District Chamber of Trade from its early days and had been a president of its forerunner the Trademen's Alliance.

LATER LIFE

The two eldest of William's three sons (William and John) were killed during the first world war. His wife, Katie, died in 1941.

William Robert Clinton Skeet, then residing at *Tilloy*, Oriental Road, died on 3rd February 1945, aged 77. He left two daughters, Margaret & Elizabeth, and his youngest son, Arthur. Following a service at the Congregational Church, the body was cremated.⁴⁹

His estate was valued at £57,905 3s 9d (equivalent to approximately £2.5 million today).

⁴⁹ *Surrey Advertiser* 10 February 1945

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