

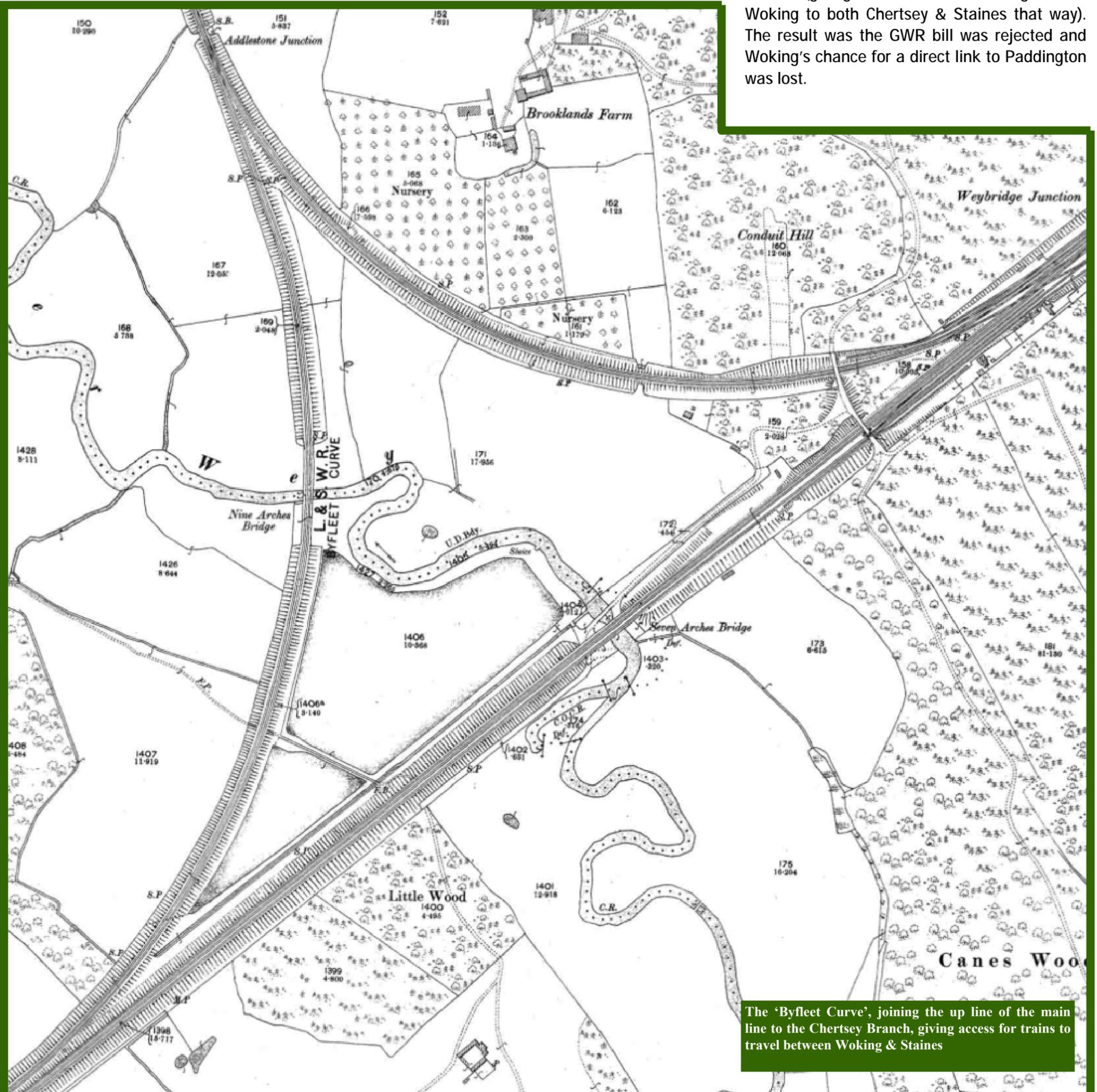
LOCAL BRANCH LINES AND STATIONS BRING BENEFITS TO COMMUTERS IN 1883

Iain Wakeford 2015

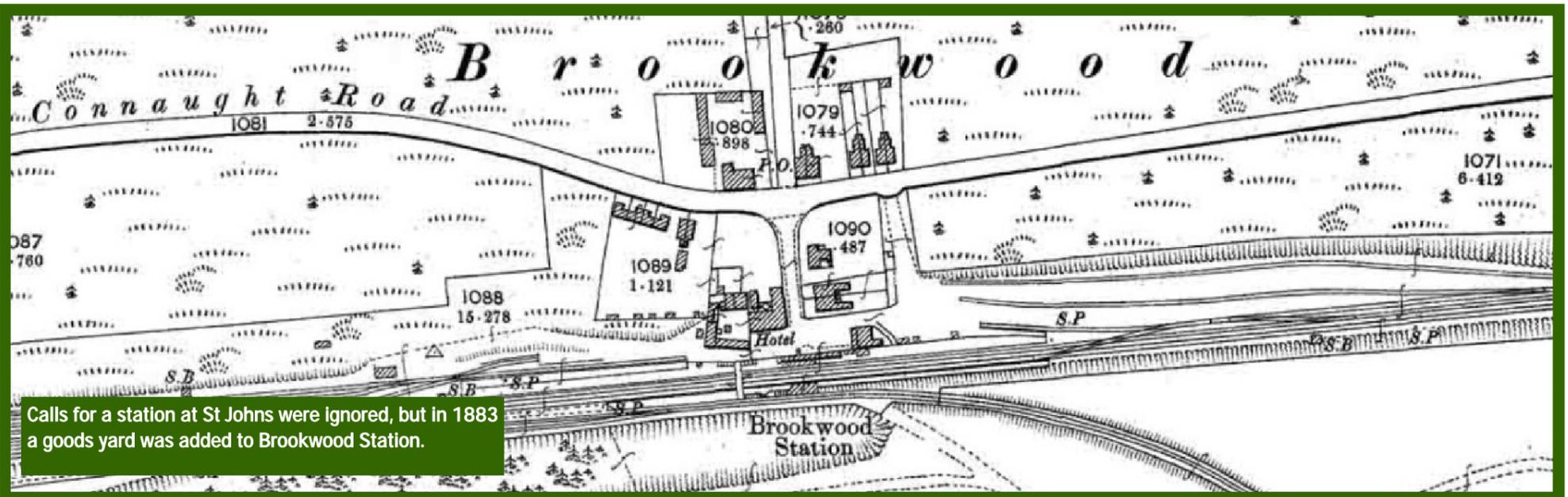
A few months ago I highlighted the various schemes proposed in the 1850's for new branch railways that would have cut across Woking Common (as it then was) to join the main line at Woking Station. At that stage there was very little development between the railway and the canal, but if the lines had been built any development would have been even more restricted, and the modern town centre very different as a result.

One scheme proposed at that time was the Staines, Wokingham & Woking Junction Railway – the 'Woking Junction' part of which was for a branch through Chobham to the town. The main Staines to Wokingham bit was built by the London & South Western Railway, but the branch to Woking was soon abandoned, much to the annoyance of the people of Chobham who had already named a road 'Station Road' in anticipation of that facility being provided.

In 1882 a similar scheme was proposed to link Woking to Staines (although not through Chobham), via the 'Staines, Chertsey & Woking Railway', which was proposed by the Great Western Railway Company (probably as a way of getting into the 'territory' of their rivals). Not surprisingly the London & South Western Railway Company opposed the Bill when it was presented to Parliament and instead proposed to build a link from the up-line of the main line at Byfleet to join the already existing Chertsey Branch (giving access for trains to get from Woking to both Chertsey & Staines that way). The result was the GWR bill was rejected and Woking's chance for a direct link to Paddington was lost.



The 'Byfleet Curve', joining the up line of the main line to the Chertsey Branch, giving access for trains to travel between Woking & Staines



Calls for a station at St Johns were ignored, but in 1883 a goods yard was added to Brookwood Station.

During the 1870's there had been calls, notably from nurserymen such as George Jackman, for a station to be opened on the main London to Southampton line at St Johns. He and his fellow nurserymen at Knaphill and Goldsworth sold thousands of plants a year to gardeners and other nurseries all over the country (if not the world), many of which had to be taken by cart to Woking Stations. The railway company refused stating that St Johns was too close to Woking to be viable, but perhaps as a concession they did provide Brookwood with a new goods yard in 1883, so that the nurserymen did at least have an alternative to travelling to Woking with their heavy and bulky plants.

In 1883 a new station was opened in the Woking area, however, but on the Portsmouth Main line, half-way between Woking and Guildford. For reasons that nobody can

satisfactorily explain the London & South Western Railway Company decided to call it 'Worplesdon Station' even though it was actually in Mayford! As to why it was built on the edge of Prey Heath, a long way from any major habitation, seems to be a mystery too. It has been suggested that Samuel Bircham, a solicitor to the London & South Western Railway, had something to do with it. He lived at Beech Hill in Mayford and must have used Worplesdon Station practically every day to get to his office at Waterloo, but it was not until about 1890 that he moved into the house, so it seems he probably came here because of the station and not the other way around.

The station was opened on the 1st March 1883. A timetable for the following year shows that the station was served with ten trains from London and nine trains to London each weekday and on Saturdays. Most were slow

trains, taking over an hour to get to Waterloo, but two evening down-trains took just forty-six minutes and one up-train was scheduled at fifty-four minutes (the ones that Mr Bircham later preferred I suspect) and there were four down- and five up-trains on Sundays!

Of course Mr Bircham was not the only person to take advantage of the new station, and eventually development would take place nearby (particularly at Pile Hill – or Pyle Hill as it was re-named), but that is for another week.



More in Mayford than Worplesdon, the station was opened on the 1st March 1883.



Beech Hill at Mayford was the home of Samuel Bircham, a solicitor for the London & South Western Railway.

THE SALE OF CROSS LANES FARM IN 1883



The sale of Heathside Farm in 1882 seems to have prompted other local farmers to follow suit and in 1883 part of Cross Lanes Farm was put up for sale. The land included the far end of Mount Hermon Road (now a conservation area for the high-quality of houses that were eventually built there), but in 1883 development was slow and in fact Edward Ryde recorded in his diary on the 18th July that the Farm remained unsold.

Fortunately the farmhouse was not demolished to make way for new houses and the 16th century, grade-two listed, timber-framed building remains – although often overlooked by passers-by on the busy Guildford Road.



PULLINGER'S BAKERY - ESTABLISHED IN 1883

In 1883 Frederick Pullinger came from Farnham to set up his bakers and confectionery business in one of the shops then known as 'The Pavement' in Chertsey Road. The name 'Pullinger' is thought to be a corruption of the French 'Boulangier' – a baker – so Frederick's occupation was quite appropriate.

The shop remained in business for many years with a tea room later established on the first floor (where I can remember my mother taking me for treats on the very rare occasions when I was behaving myself).

Since the 1970's the site has been occupied by numerous businesses, and the shop front considerably altered, but if you look up to the first and second floors the ornate wall tiles shown on this old postcard can still be seen.

F. Pullinger
LIMITED. EST. 1883

Bakers . Confectioners and Caterers.
CHERTSEY ROAD :: WOKING.

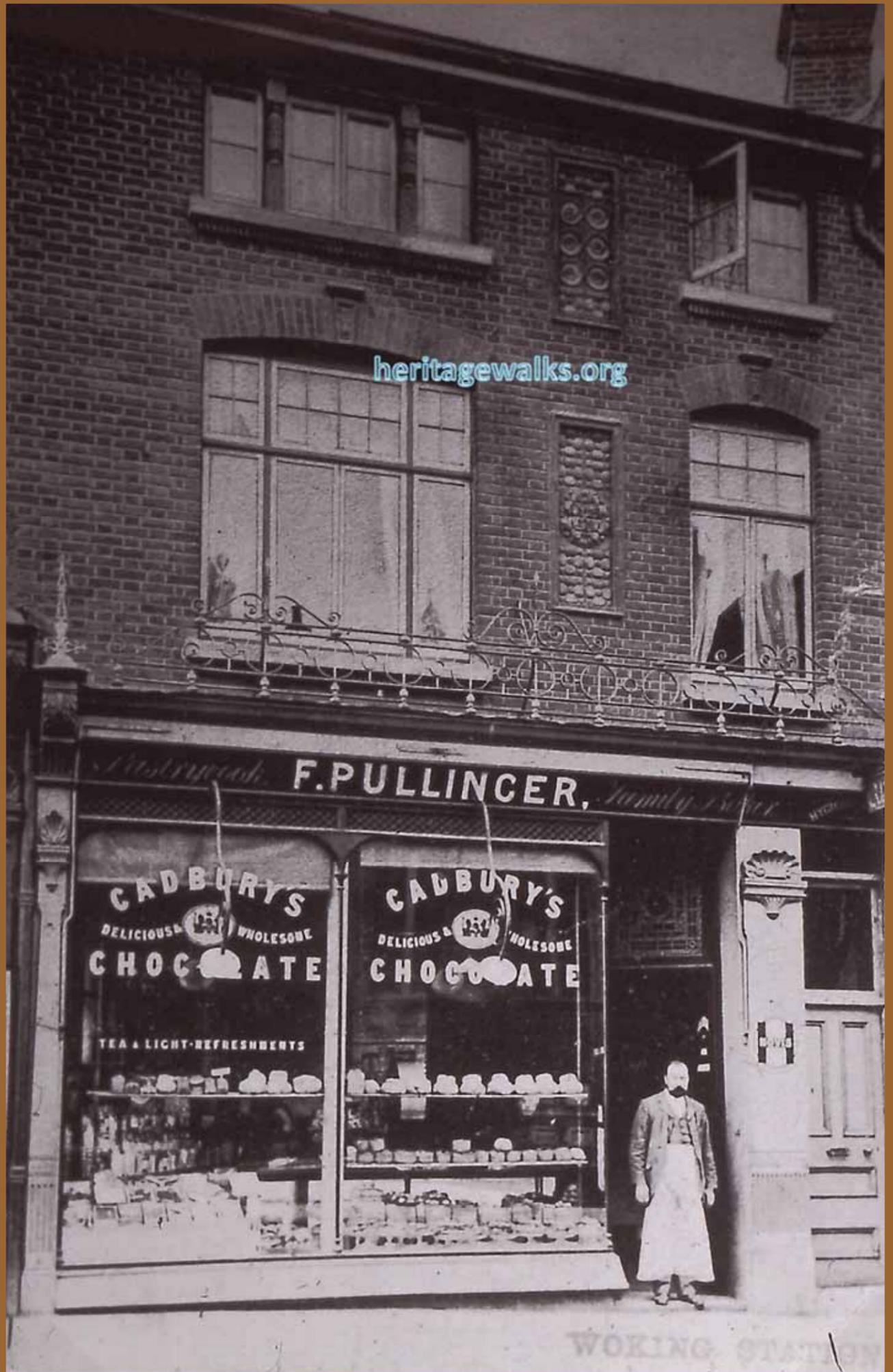
Plate, Cutlery and Linen on Hire.

Finest White, Whole-meal, Hovis, Bernaline, Milk, & Raisin Breads.

Pastries and Confectionery of all kinds.

WEDDING, BIRTHDAY & CHRISTENING CAKES : supplied at the shortest notice.
All goods made of the Choicest Ingredients under Personal Supervision. ::

DAILY DELIVERIES THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT.
Phone 208 Woking. Agents for Fuller's Confectionery.



The shops at the top of Chertsey Road, on the left hand side as you look down from the station, were originally known as 'The Pavement'. They were built by Henry Gloster on what had been the garden of the original Albion Hotel.

