

HORSELL'S HOLYOAK ESTATE - HOUSING BEFORE THEY WERE HEROES

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A few weeks ago we looked at the workers houses in West Byfleet built by the Birchwood Tenants Company. Birchwood Road is now a Conservation Area, but it is not the only 'workers' housing in this area to be so designated, as Holyoak Crescent in Horsell also has conservation status, having been built in 1912 as the 'Woking Garden Suburb'.



The estate was developed by the Woking Co-operative Society on part of the fields bought from Mr James Fenn in 1908 (and added to the following year). At first the fields were used by the Society's delivery horses, although part was fenced off as allotments and the fields were occasionally used for Society fairs and fetes, but in 1912 it was decided to help alleviate the housing crisis and the architect of the Co-operative Garden Committee, Mr H Clapham Lander, was asked to draw up plans for a scheme.

Direct Labour was employed under the foreman, Mr C A Cook, and the Building Committee, with financial support from the Co-operative Wholesale Society, started work on the first thirty houses and the new branch store facing Well Lane.

The official opening was carried out the following July, when the Director of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, Mr W Lander, gave the opening address, in front of a crowd of local dignitaries and members of the Society.

The W.C.S. Garden Suburb of 1912 is now a conservation area.

I don't know for certain but I suspect that Mr W Lander was a relative of the architect – Lander Cottages facing Black Patch apparently being named after the gentleman that opened them, rather than the one that designed them!

The Woking Co-operative Society was originally formed in 1899 by a number of local trade-unionists, with a small shop, next to the Temperance Hotel in Chertsey Road, being rented for three years from a Mrs Dowden and fitted out by October that year as a Grocery & Provisions store.



The side of house next to the shop on Well Lane proudly proclaims the initials of the Woking, Horsell & District Co-operative Society.

At first bread was supplied by the Guildford Co-operative Society, but in the Spring of 1901 a bakehouse was acquired in Walton Road, which in the first quarter apparently produced 8,512 loaves.

By 1902 the Society was looking to expand, but perhaps through financial restraints their move to a more permanent home necessitated them buying a plot of land in Church Street (some way away from what was then the centre of town). Here plans were drawn up for a purpose built shop.

It opened in September that year, and was so successful that within three years extra land was bought adjoining the site (where Toys R Us is today), and a new Drapery, Crockery and Ironmongery Departments added, along with a new Warehouse, Cellar, Committee Room and Secretary's Office.

Five years later the Woking Co-operative Society effectively became the 'Woking & District' with a small shop in Kingfield (where the car park of the Kingfield Arms is today)

being at first rented from the Friary, Holroyd & Healy Brewery Company (in April 1910) and then purchased by the Society just five months later.

A second village branch was opened in Knaphill on the 6th July 1913 on land bought from Mr Boullin the previous April, so that by the time the Woking Garden Suburb was complete in 1914 (at a cost of some £9,000), the branch store in Well Lane (with the initials W.H & D. C.S. on the side) was their third village branch.



The site on the corner of The Broadway and the High Street in Knaphill became the site for the Co-op's second village branch.

THE LIQUIDATION OF THE HORSELL LAND COMPANY



Architect—Mr. T. A. Allen.

"SOUTHCOTE," CHURCH HILL ESTATE, HORSELL.

Residence faced with purple stocks and covered with dark hand-made tiles.

Last year I made reference to the land of the 'Church Hill Estate' at Horsell that had been purchased over the years by the Rev John Back, and left to his wife in his will to be sold for housing development. A company called the Horsell Land Company was formed to divide up the land and market the estate – originally covering some seventy-three acres between Cheapside, Kettlewell Hill and Horsell Village. They apparently paid the trustees of Mrs Back £17,500 which was raised on a mortgage held by the London & South Western Bank Ltd.

The estate was dissected by a number of footpaths, one of which became Church Road, with what is now Morton Road described as 'an old avenue road', but soon new roads were laid out on the land such as The Ridgeway, Fletcher Road (later re-named Horsell Vale) and Horsell Rise – which originally was to stop where Horsell Rise Close is today and then swing westwards to join Morton Road.

The first sale appears to have been on the 18th February 1901 when the 'highly valuable freehold building land ripe for immediate



Architect—Mr. T. A. Allen.

"HORSELL DENE," CHURCH HILL ESTATE, HORSELL.

Built in purple stocks with oak half-timbering and plaster, dark tiles, iron casements, and leaded lights.

development' was sold with 'no restrictions' and 'possession on completion'. The site 'convenient for the Woking and New Zealand Golf Links' offered high ground, fine views, sandy soil', with gas, water and electric light mains passing the property that was 'seven minutes walk from Woking Junction with its unrivalled train service - there being eighty-four trains daily up and down, the best trains occupying about thirty five minutes in the journey.

That first sale included Cheapside Farm with its stabling, cart shed, barn, granary, cow house, kennels, Bailiff's and two other cottages with gardens, covering just over an acre of land, as well as pasture land and a small area of oasier beds (where Woking High School is today).

There was another sale on the 17th July 1901 when according to the sale particulars 'each plot will be offered separately, but the purchaser of one plot may, at the discretion of the Auctioneers, take the adjoining plot at the same price per acre' The only problem was that there were only two plots actually adjoining each other on the sales plan!

The Auctioneers were F G Wheatly & Son and the sale took place 'in a marquee on the estate' with a 'limited number of return railway tickets' issued by the vendors at a reduced fare of 2s6d each. Luncheon was provided at 1pm.

Revised plans were drawn up for the estate by May 1907 when another sale took place, but sales were evidently quite slow as by the 19th September 1912 there were still un-sold plots and undeveloped land available – some that had previously been marked as 'sold' on earlier sales plans! A final sale took place on the 24th July 1913 when Southcote and thirty-one large plots of freehold building land' were sold by Messrs Protheroe and Morris of London in conjunction with Messrs Stanley Atherton & Co of Woking and the 'receiver of the Horsell Land



Architect—Mr. T. A. Allen.

"MEADOW LEA," CHURCH HILL ESTATE, HORSELL.

Built of dark stocks with half timbering and cream colored rough cast, dark hand made tiles, iron casements, and leaded lights.

Company'.

In 1901 a plot had sold for £246.14s.0d and in 1910 two plots in Church Road had apparently sold for £330, but in the auction of 1913 the prices paid were considerably less! Those on Horsell Rise near the common were between £55 and £60, with seven plots along South Road being sold for £300 for the lot. Even in Fletcher Road plots were only attracting bids of about £120 each. Four plots in Horsell Rise apparently attracted no bids at all, although others did fetch considerably more, including

Southcote House itself that appears to have been sold for £1,900.

Southcote had been built by the local firm of builders called Drowley & Co., whose Arts & Craft style is comparable (and often mistaken for) that of the more famous W G Tarrant. All the houses illustrated here were built by Drowley's, whose brochure from 1907 can be viewed in the archive section of this website.

The auction plan describes the house as having 'on the ground floor – entrance vestibule with lavatory and WC; charming inner hall, 23ft by 15ft9in, fitted with dog grate fireplace and casement doors leading to terrace and lawn; drawing room 22ft by 18ft3in., with handsomely proportioned semi-circular window; dining room, 19ft by 13ft; kitchen; servants' hall; pantry; scullery; larder; coal cellar and servants' WC. On the first floor (approached by two staircases), four bedrooms measuring respectively 19ft by 13ft; 14ft by 16ft (into bay); 15ft.6in by 12ft; and 12ft by 9ft.9in.'

There was also 'two good dressing rooms 12ft by 8ft. 9in and 12ft by 6ft., bath room with hot and cold supplies, WC, housemaid's sink and hot linen cupboard, and a light airy landing and principal staircase.

On the second floor were four bedrooms, a boxroom and a 'cistern cupboard'.

Finally the plans noted that 'the pleasure grounds are particularly attractive and well matured and form a special feature of the property. The borders contain a number of very fine specimen shrubs and conifers. There are also flower, kitchen and fruit gardens, tennis lawn and terraces' – there was also a 'useful wooden erection suitable for a small motor car'



Architect—Mr. J. B. Drower.

"HILLSIDE," CHURCH HILL ESTATE, HORSELL.

Red bricks and white rough cast, red tiled roof and lead glazing.

THE HOCKERING & ST GEORGE'S HILL ESTATES



Whilst the workers houses of the Woking Garden Suburb were being built and the Horsell Land Company was going into liquidation, in the Maybury/Heathside area another development was progressing – The Hockering Estate.

The name comes from a village in Norfolk where the Smallpiece family (original developers of the site) once lived, but the building scheme

was quickly taken over by local Master Builder, W G Tarrant, who added to the site by purchasing the adjoining fields of the Roundhill Estate from the Earl and Dowager Countess of Lovelace.

Tarrant had already built a few large properties in the Hook Heath area of Woking, but in 1913 he expanded his operation with the construction not just the initial houses at the

Hockering, but also a little development between Byfleet and Weybridge called St George's Hill.

Of course it wouldn't be long before events in Europe would suspend most building operations, but the future of The Hockering as a private estate, looked after by the Hockering Residents Committee (formed in 1913), was by then assured.



Kenwood - one of the 'little' houses of St George's Hill (later the home of John Lennon).