

THE NORTH WEST SURREY PLAN OF 1928

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In the mid 1920's the local authorities across North-West Surrey got together to come up with a comprehensive plan for the whole area – ensuring that piecemeal development would be a thing of the past and the building of infrastructure such as new roads would be co-ordinated across district boundaries. Unfortunately whilst the Urban Districts of Woking, Bagshot Chertsey, Egham and Weybridge were well co-ordinated, their counterparts in Guildford were not necessarily in agreement, as the failed plans for the 'Woking to Ripley By-pass' showed.

The 'Woking' plan called for a new road to be built across what was then open fields to the north of Kingfield Road and Old Woking High Street, down Carters Lane and eventually out to Newark Lane at the Seven Stars.

Guildford Council, quite rightly (I never thought I would write such a remark!), questioned the logic of the Woking plan. It might have by-passed Old Woking, but it did nothing for Ripley, forcing all the traffic down Newark Lane to what is still a bottleneck as it joins Ripley High Street. It appears that Guildford's alternative idea, if Old Woking had to be by-passed, was to cut across the meadows by Woking Mill from the Cartbridge at Send to the 'Red House' (now Sainsbury's Local) junction of Old Woking High Street and Kingfield Road. Woking Council rejected that solution on the grounds that it would not alleviate pressure on Kingfield Road, so an impasse was reached and in the end no by-pass was built at all.

The North-West Surrey Plan was to impact the Old Woking area for many years with the resent controversial plans to build on the 'green' next

Named after Edward Ryde who owned the land in the 19th century, Rydens Way was to have been the line of Old Woking's by-pass in the late 1920's.

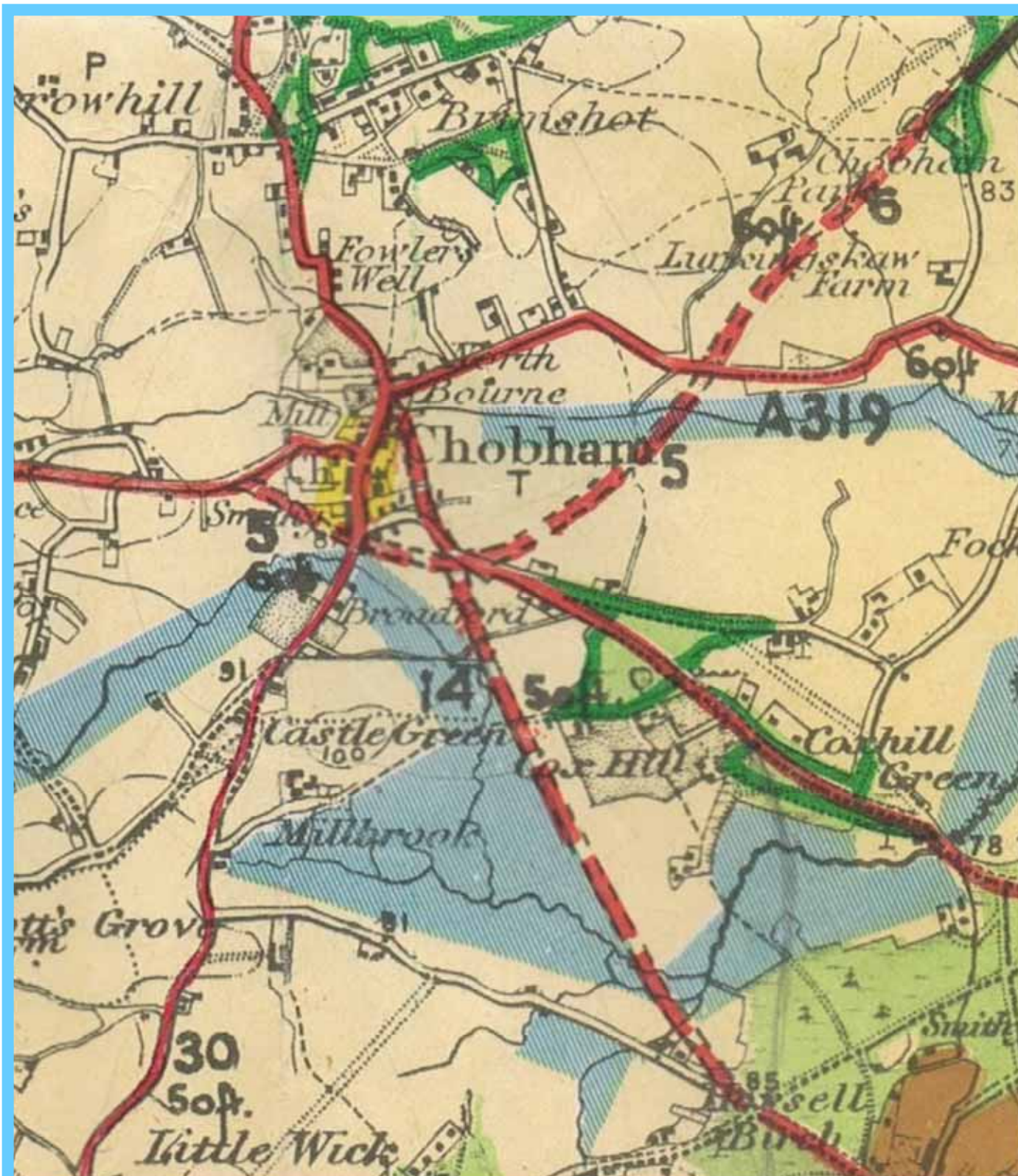
to the Old Woking Community Centre a remnant of the agreement reached between the council and the 1920's developers of what was then called the 'Hoebridge Estate' coming into force. Basically when 'Ryden's Way' (as it came to be called) was first planned the developers were forced to leave a gap down the middle for the Old Woking By-pass to eventually be built, but a clause was put in place that if the plans did not materialise then the builders would have the land back. All the time Woking Council kept the idea of the by-pass on its books the central reservation of Rydens Way had to remain open, but in the 1980's they formally abandoned the plans for the road, releasing the land for development once more.



The Old Woking By-Pass was not the only scheme of 1928 never to see the light of day. At Chobham a new road was to leave the Stonehill Road by Gracious Pond Common, cutting across the grounds of Chobham Park House to Chertsey Road, and then continuing across the meadows to the east of the village to a junction with Station Road just to the west of what became Flexlands School. Here it was to meet another new road that was to be built from Horsell Birch, across the Millbrook meadows to Station Road and then to the east of the cricket ground to the junction of Chertsey Road and Windsor Road. There was also to be a 'southern bypass' for Station Road, across what is now the recreation ground to Grants Bridge and then out to the Bagshot Road to the west of the village. I am not certain about some of the proposed routes, but if just a couple had been built it might have made a big difference to the traffic flow (or should I say lack of flow) around the village today!

The bypass for Byfleet High Road was eventually built, although a couple of other plans for roads through what is now the Hermitage Estate and across Mount Hermon and Goldsworth (on the line of the footpath from Goldsworth Road, over Twin Bridges to Brooklyn Road) were thankfully quickly dropped, although a small spur cutting the corner from Brookwood Lye Road to the railway arch on Bagshot Road would probably have been an improvement (and debatably still could be)!

Sadly the one lesson that can be learned from the 1928 Development Plan is that no matter how hard the local authorities try to predict what could (and perhaps should) happen in their area, what actually happens is that in a few years a contrary plan is often developed,



followed by another and then another and then another...

The dotted red lines show how Chobham would have been surrounded by by-pass roads.

THE SEVEN STARS - REBUILT 1927

The first reference to an inn called the Seven Stars at Papercourt dates from 1801 when a Sarah Rogers inherited 'all that messuage and two crofts of land of half an acre with an orchard and garden, sometimes called Punters, but now called the Seven Stars'. It appears that the cottage (in the 1690's owned by a man called Richard Punter), may have dated back to at least 1536, but in the 1830's the pub was obviously rebuilt as in 1838 the copyhold property 'lately erected' was bought by a brewery in Godalming, who by 1851 had evidently sold the property to Henry Charrington of Woking's Brewery.

In 1889 Woking's brewery was taken over by Lascelles Tickner's of Guildford who in turn sold the property to the Friary, Holroyd & Healy Brewery Company, who in 1927 demolished the old inn (shown here) and built the current property on the site.

Was the prospect of the pub being on the new link road between Woking and the A3 a factor in their decision making?



THE WIDENING OF VICARAGE ROAD



— VICARAGE LANE, OLD WOKING. —
— LOOKING EAST. —
— OCT. 26TH, 1928. —



Although Woking Urban District Council were not prepared to consider Guildford Council's plans for a bypass linking the Cartbridge at Send to Old Woking High Street at its junction with Kingfield Road, they were evidently working towards widening the width of Vicarage Road (or Lane as it appears to have been originally) as these photographs show.

The ones on this page are looking east towards the junction with Kingfield Road (Road House being just visible in the distance), whilst those on the next page were taken looking in the opposite direction towards the Vicarage and the junction with Loop Road.

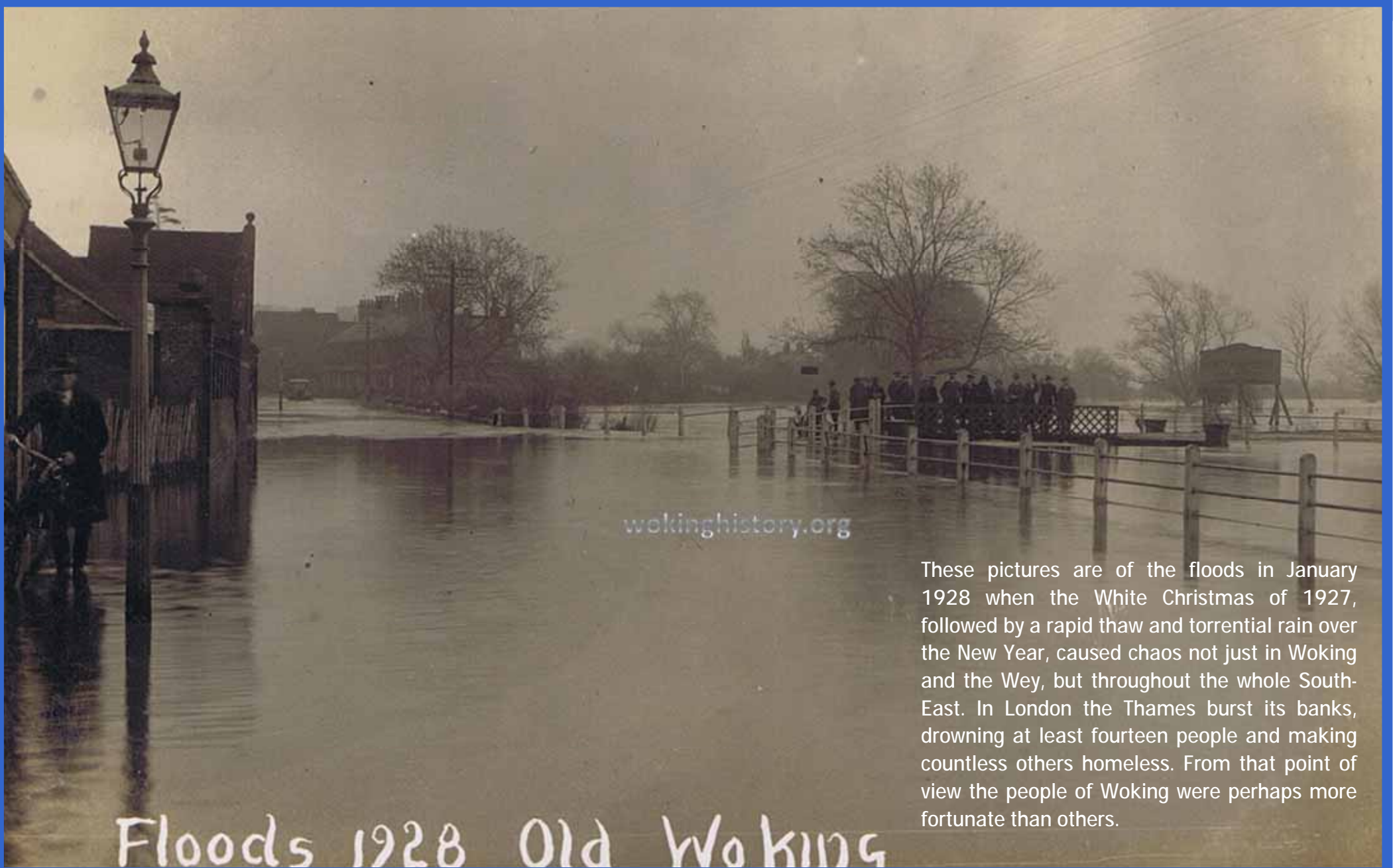
How long after October 1928 the second set of photographs were taken is not known, but it must have been in the early 1930's when the houses to the north were constructed.



THE OLD WOKING FLOODS OF 1928



Nowadays it is not vehicles by-passing Old Woking that seems to concern the planners as much as the waters of the rivers Wey and Hoe Stream 'by-passing' the area! Indeed the problem of flooding is obviously much older than the problem of the streets being inundated with traffic, and judging from old postcards it appears that the River Wey regularly burst its banks and flooded the High Street.



These pictures are of the floods in January 1928 when the White Christmas of 1927, followed by a rapid thaw and torrential rain over the New Year, caused chaos not just in Woking and the Wey, but throughout the whole South-East. In London the Thames burst its banks, drowning at least fourteen people and making countless others homeless. From that point of view the people of Woking were perhaps more fortunate than others.