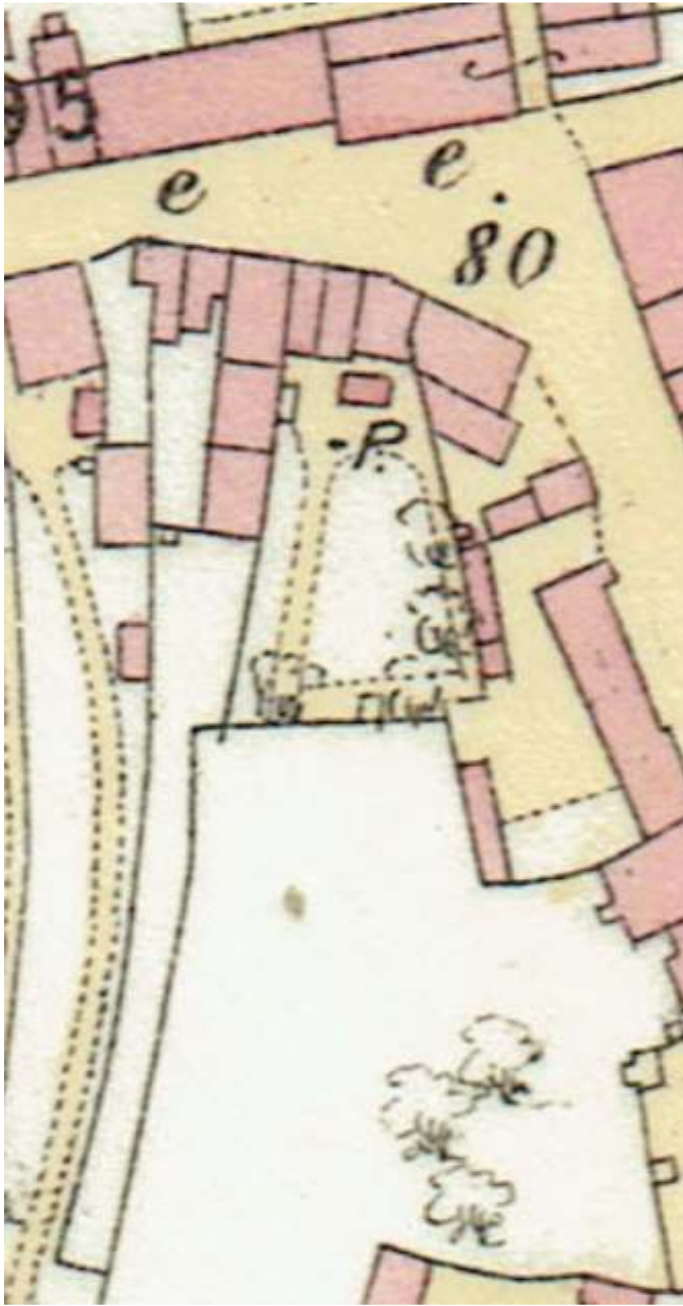


EDWARD HILDER

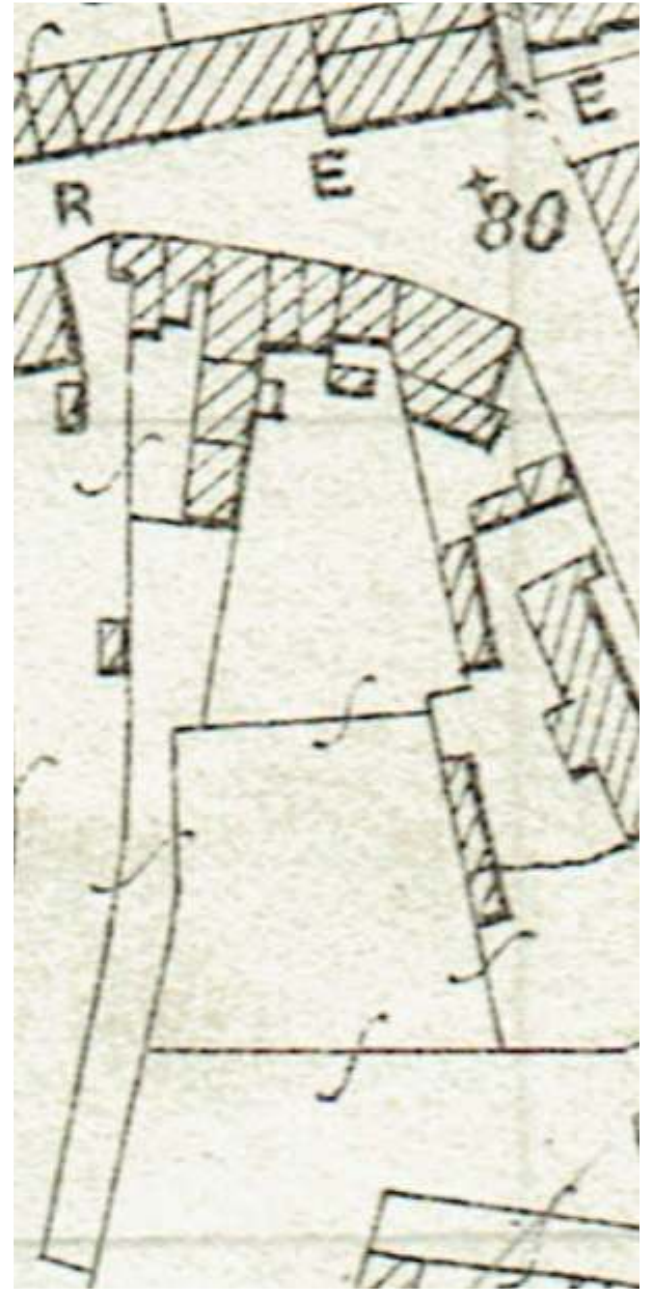


As I have noted before, the deeds to our property go back to 1897 with the sale by Ridley Thomas Hilder, Charlotte Elizabeth Hilder and Edmund Wright Brooks (the executors of the will of Edward Hilder), of 'five messuages' on the corner of the High Street and Church Street to Robert Clamp, for £250¹.

There is a slight variation in the Ordnance Survey 25" maps of 1871 (left) and 1896 (right), but they appear to show six properties between St George's Cottage on the corner with Church Street, and the yard at what later became 160 High Street.

They also appears to show the back garden of what would now be our part of the land, stretching a long way into what would now be The Cloisters development (is it too late for me to claim that land back!

Quite when (or why) Edward Hilder acquired the cottages I do not know, but I suspect they may originally have been used to house employees.



Edward Hilder was a prominent local figure, but he was actually born in Cockfield², Suffolk, the son of Richard and Ann Hilder.

COCKFIELD,
BETWEEN
BURY AND LAVENHAM.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By Messrs. BIDDELL AND BLENCOWE,
On Tuesday, September 21st,
At Eleven o'clock,
THE CAPITAL

FARMING STOCK,

NEARLY new Carriages and Implements, Brewing and Dairy Utensils, &c., the Property of Mr. EDWARD HILDER, who has disposed of the Old Hall Estate at Cockfield, and engaged a Farm in Surrey, upon which he has taken the Stock and Effects by valuation.

Among the Live Stock will be found 3 very powerful well shaped Chesnut Suffolk Horses, 2 excellent Chesnut Cart Fillys, rising 4 years old; a Black Filly and a Black Colt of the same age, all well deserving attention; a promising year-old Chesnut Cart Colt, and ditto Black ditto; a well-bred Brown Bay Cob; quantity of Swine, &c.; 3 superior and newly built waggons; 4 good Tumbrils, Pony Tumbril, nearly new; neat Gig and Harness, Rolls, Harrows and Ploughs, of the best description; 2 iron Scarifiers, Horse Rake; capital 10-coulter Drill; Woods's Double Action Chaff Engine, Bean Crusher and Weighing Machine, all nearly new; *Beuley's* Turnip Cutter; Hurdles, Cattle Bins, Sheep and Pig Troughs, Ladders, Hand Tools; excellent Cart and Plough Harness, &c., together with a Plant of Dairy and Brewing Utensils; 9 Beer Casks and other effects, fully expressed in Catalogues duly distributed in the Neighbourhood.

CROWN STREET

The census of 1841³ shows him as a farmer there, aged 25, along with his wife Mary (20) and one month old daughter, also called Mary.

His wife was born in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, on the 14th September 1819, the daughter of Thomas Ridley and his wife Mary. They were nonconformists, Mary's baptism being recorded at the Whiting Street Chapel in the town, on the 8th November that year⁴.

Edward too was a nonconformist and in 1842 apparently helped to set up the Cockfield Congregational Chapel and Schoolroom⁵.

In 1847, however, they moved to Woking, an advertisement in the Bury & Norwich Post announcing the sale by auction on Tuesday September 21st of 'The Capital Farming Stock, nearly new carriages and implements, brewing and dairy utensils &c., the property of Mr Edward Hilder, who has disposed of the Old Hall Estate at Cockfield, and engaged a farm in Surrey, upon which he had taken the stock and effects by valuation'.

The 1851 census⁶ shows Edward (37) as a farmer of 390 acres at Hoe Bridge Farm, employing 23 labourers, with his wife, Mary (31) and all but their youngest child being born in Suffolk – Mary (9), Edward (8), Ridley Thomas (6), Ernest Alfred (4) and Charlotte Elizabeth (1)

There was also in the household a Governess, Mary Ann Blyth (26, unmarried), originally from Essex, with three other servants all coming originally from Suffolk, Elizabeth Jane Edwards (16) a house servant, Elizabeth Sexton (14) also a house servant, and Henry Levett (17) a farm labourer.

¹ SHC 3468/2/1

² Not Cuckfield, Sussex, as some seem to believe.

³ TNA HO107/1011/10

⁴ TNA RG4/2962

⁵ East Anglian Daily Times, Friday 27th May, 1892, page 5 – 'Half a century ago meetings were held at Mr Palmer's farmhouse by a Mr Harwood of Cockfield and Mr Edward Hilder, now of Woking, Surrey.

⁶ TNA HO107/1594/95/1

EDWARD HILDER

According to a list of the ‘Names of parties keeping Sheep in the Parish of Woking and entitled to Common of Pasture’⁷, by then he had about 500 sheep on his farm.

By 1861⁸ the amount of land farmed at Hoe Bridge was 554 acres, with 23 men and 12 boys now being employed. Mary was not listed at Hoe Bridge Farm, as she was then staying with her brother, Thomas Ridley (with his wife, twelve children, and five employees) at his shop in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk⁹, along with her one year old daughter Clara J (who was born in Woking). Edward, junior, and Thomas Ridley Hilder were also missing from Hoe Bridge Farm on census night, but all the other Hilder children listed in 1851 were there – plus Alice (8), Eliza C (7), and Ann C (4).

There was also a number of servants in the household, including Mary Sturns (21) a governess, William Blyth (34) a farm assistant, John S Dyer (17) a farm pupil, Rosea A Gurf (26) a cook, Emily Atkins (19) a housemaid and Frederick Snell (11) an errand boy – most of whom also came originally from Suffolk (William Blyth coming originally from Essex).

There are documents in the Surrey History Centre that show that Hilder was not only farming Hoe Bridge, but also Round Bridge and Wilderness Farms, with leases from the Earl of Onslow dated 13th March 1861¹⁰ renewed on the 29th August 1868¹¹ for 380 acres of land, barns and buildings.

In 1866 Edward Hilder evidently acquired the Market House in Old Woking High Street previously belonging to James Fladgate¹², paying his executors £525 for the property. In the deeds it is described as ‘building formerly the old Market House, now used as flour, meal and corn stores, wagon and cart house, situate in High Street, Woking’ with two messuages to the rear and ‘buildings recently erected by James Fladgate and now used as a hay, straw and general store’¹³.

The Surrey Advertiser reported on the 9th July 1870¹⁴ the sale of ‘the collection of fat stock possessed by Mr Edward Hilder, well known as an extensive grazier and agriculturist, will be brought under the hammer at Hoebridge Farm, Woking on Tuesday next by John Ellis of Guildford’.

The sale, on the 12th of July, included ‘53 prime beasts, comprising 25 oxen and 28 heifers and cows, 400 fat sheep, all of first-rate quality, 20 one and two years old well-bred heifers and steers’.

A month later Hoe Bridge Farm was in the newspapers again, when a man called John Wallace was charged with a ‘fire at Hilder’s’ on the 5th August 1870¹⁵. Edward Ryde mentions the incident in his diaries¹⁶, which appears to have been just one of a number of fires endured by Mr Hilder, with a reference to a ‘fire engine from Guildford’ attending Hilder’s Rick on the 26th August 1877¹⁷ and ‘Mr Hilder’s house at Roundbridge’ being ‘struck by lightning’ on the 17th July 1880¹⁸,

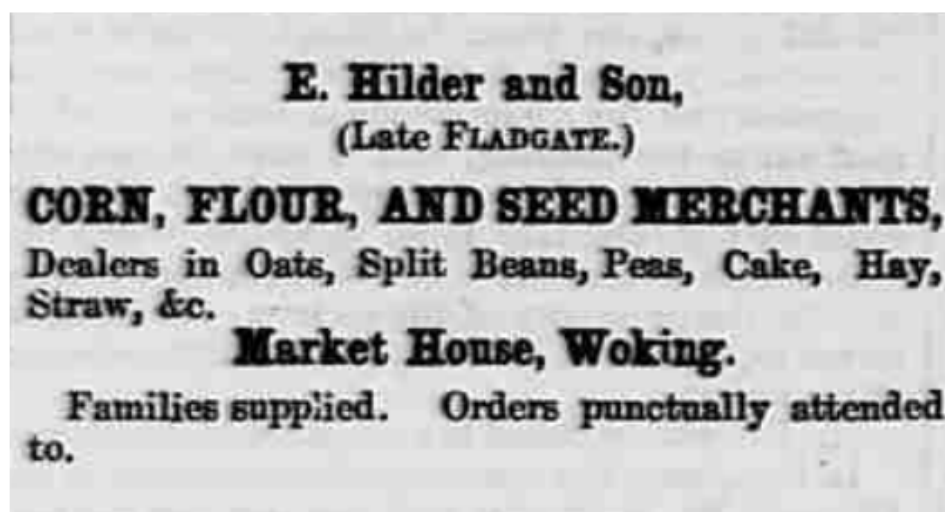
The 1871 census¹⁹ lists Edward (57) as a farmer of 870 acres, employing 54 men, 19 boys and 9 women, with his wife, Mary (51) and son Ridley Thomas (26) once more at the farm on census night.

Also present were Charlotte Elizabeth (27) Alice (19) Eliza Catherine (16) Ann Charles (14) Clara Jessie (11) Helen Joyce (9) Florence Grace (7), with the servants Helen Shepherd (23) Maria Ellen Whitley (24) Emma Killick (28) Jane Hiets (20) William Sturgeon (21) and Elijah Mant (15)

In the 1870’s Edward Hilder apparently held an annual sale of livestock, the one in June 1872 raising £5,549²⁰.

‘For down sheep the prices ranged from 56s to 71s (average £3.3s) and for the horned ewes the lowest figure was 48s and the highest 67s (average £2.19s). A pair of shorthorn steers went at £36 and £33.15s respectively. The prices of 35 shorthorn steers and heifers ranged from £23 to £36. Thirteen fat cows fetched on average £23.10s. Store beasts made about ten guineas a head’

As mentioned above, Edward was not just a prominent farmer, but was also active in the Congregational movement. According to Edward E Cleal in his book on ‘The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey’²¹, ‘meetings in connection with the Guildford church were held in the old Woking village as far back as 1865. Mr Edward Hilder, of Hoe Bridge, threw open his Market House for occasional gatherings’, before a more permanent venue could be found with the construction of the chapel at Cartbridge in Send.



⁷ SHC 97/5/66

⁸ TNA RG9/424/117/12

⁹ TNA RG9/1440/4/2

¹⁰ SHC 1320/29/11

¹¹ SHC 1320/29/12

¹² Surrey Advertiser, Saturday 1st September 1866, page 1

¹³ SHC 3468/1/6

¹⁴ Surrey Advertiser, Saturday 9th July 1870, page 5

¹⁵ West Surrey Times, Saturday 20th August 1870, page 2

¹⁶ SHC 1262/32

¹⁷ SHC 1262/34

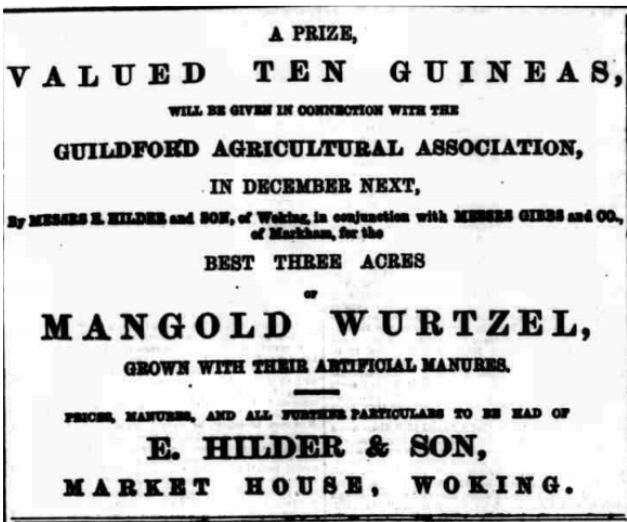
¹⁸ SHC 1262/37

¹⁹ TNA RG10/807/67/34

²⁰ Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser, Saturday 22nd June 1872, page 2

²¹ The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey, by Edward E Cleal, James Clarke & Co, 1908, page 397

EDWARD HILDER



One of those meetings was reported on in 1875²², when the ‘British & Foreign Bible Society’ held a meeting in the Market House – the meeting presenting a ‘very novel appearance, the room round the walls being lined with a double row of sacks of corn on which many of the audience sat’. The Surrey Advertiser went on to note that the Rev G Jones, of Tunbridge Wells delivered a ‘very interesting address’ drawing on ‘a very happy parallel between the bread to feed the body as represented by the sacks of corn in the room and the Bread of life’. ‘The meeting was subsequently addressed by several clergymen and gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and thus terminated a very satisfactory evening unique of its kind considering the place in which the meeting was held’.

He was also busy wining prizes for his ‘Mangold Wurtzel’²³ as the Surrey Advertiser (left) reported in April 1879.

The 1881 census²⁴ shows Edward now as a farmer of 950 acres employing 43 men, 10 boys and 3 women, with his daughters Ann C (21) and Clara J (21) then at home at Hoe Bridge, along with the staff – this time a book keeper, an agricultural pupil, a needlewomen, a housemaid, a cook and the groom.

His wife, Mary (62), was once again not at Hoe Bridge at the time of the census, this time showing up at Church Farm in Cockfield²⁵, with their daughter Helen Joyce (19), and their farm bailiff, John Game (50), being responsible for 170 acres employing 7 men and 2 boys (with his wife and two children plus a domestic servant living at the farm).

Edward Hilder	Head	M	66	Farmer of 950 acres employing 43 men 10 boys 3 women	Suffolk Cockfield
Ann C D ^o	Daughter	Unmar	24	Farmer's Daughter	Surrey Woking
Clara J D ^o	Daughter	Unmar	21	D ^o G ^o	D ^o D ^o
Helen Shepherd	Book Keeper	Unmar	33	Book Keeper	Berks Reading
Alfred Nunns	Pupil	Unmar	21	Ag. Pupil	Surrey Woking
Mary A Harmsworth	Servant	W	64	Needle Woman	Suffolk Thorpe
Sarah Freeman	D ^o	Unmar	25	Housemaid	Berks Greenham
Annie Wright	D ^o	Unmar	23	Cook	Suffolk Gazeley
William Surgeon	Groom	Unmar	34	Groom	D ^o Gt Welnetham

It is perhaps interesting to note that the ‘agricultural pupil’ at Hoe Bridge was Alfred Nunns (21), who would go on to be a prominent local farmer himself, farming Oaks Farm, in Goldsworth Road (where the Surrey History Centre is today).

The Hilder’s continued to farm both properties in Old Woking and Cockfield, with both of them apparently visiting Suffolk on a regular basis. On the 14th May 1887, the Bury Free Press²⁶ reported that ‘Mr and Mrs Hilder came over last Friday to their farm at Cockfield as they were in the habit of doing occasionally, and on Sunday they attended divine service in the Congregational chapel, in which place Mr Hilder had always taken a lively interest, having been largely instrumental in establishing the cause there when a resident in Cockfield some forty years ago. On Monday morning, about seven o’clock, Mrs Hilder had an apoplectic seizure, and died about four hours later’.

The newspaper went on to report on the ‘Church of England burial service’ that was ‘conducted by the rector (Rev Dr Babington) and at Mr Hilder’s request, Dr Babington assenting, the Rev W.H. Cole of Bury, gave a short and impressive address before the company at the grave’ – noting that ‘this is the first instance of a Nonconformist minister taking part in a burial service in Cockfield churchyard that we know of’.

I can find nothing in the Surrey Press regarding Mrs Hilder’s death, with the next item I could find in the Surrey Advertiser four years later concerning an altogether different matter concerning Mr Hilder.

In February 1891 the Surrey Advertiser²⁷ reported on the ‘Serious Charges of Stealing and Receiving’ – George Edes of Woking being charged with stealing a sack of meal, the property of Mr Hilder of Woking, and Herbert Turner of Ockham of receiving the same ‘well knowing it to have been stolen’.

Apparently Edes was one of Edward Hilder’s employees who regularly took sacks of produce to be ground at various local mills. On the 30th January 1891 he took a couple of sacks of maize to be ground at Newark Mill in Ripley. He handed the sacks to Thomas Parker, one of the employees at the mill, and said that he wanted a sack of barley meal to take back. Apparently it was common practice for Hilder’s men to take back meal without an order, with the miller, George Jarman, making out a ‘ticket’ for 15s., for the sack to be delivered back to Mr Hilder’s Corn Stores in Woking.

²² Surrey Advertiser, Saturday 20th November 1875, page 5
²³ Surrey Gazette, Saturday 26th April, 1879, page 4
²⁴ TNA RG11/772/34
²⁵ TNA RG11/1832/74/19
²⁶ Bury Free Press, Saturday 14th May 1887, page 8
²⁷ Surrey Advertiser, Saturday 21st February 1891, page 5

EDWARD HILDER

Hoebridge Farm, Woking.—1½ miles from the Woking Junction.—Important 2 days' sale by order of the executors of the late Edward Hilder, Esq., who are giving up the farm.

ERNEST H. ELLIS has been instructed to Sell by Auction on WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9TH and 10TH, 1895, commencing at Eleven a.m. punctually on both days, in consequence of the number of the lots, the valuable LIVE and DEAD STOCK, including 34 excellent milch cows in profit and forward in calf, which have been selected with great judgment for their milking qualities, 2 well-bred shorthorn heifers, 3 shorthorn bulls 18 months old, 6 powerful and active cart horses, 2 capital nags, 16 hands, quiet to ride or drive, a valuable mare, 5 years off, 15 hands 1 inch, suitable for a brougham or light van, 2 useful ponies, quiet in harness, about 140 head of poultry, including 30 turkeys, 70 pure-bred Indian game fowls, 22 guinea fowls, 18 pure-bred Aylesbury ducks, and 20 pigeons, 9 well-built harvest waggons, 14 manure carts, cattle cart, 3 water carts, 2 mill carts, spring tip pony cart, milk cart, with crank axles, light spring cart, 3 pony ditto, a well-built Battlesden car, by King, and a ditto governess car, by Chapman, 4 Wood's self-delivery reaping machines, 4 Wood's self-binders, 7 Burgess and Key's mowing machines, elevator by Amey, Barford and Co., a capital 3-horse power horizontal steam engine, as fixed with chaff cutter and corn mill, 4 haymaking machines by Howard and Ransome, 3 horse rakes by Nicholson, Ransome, and Howard, corn and seed drills, 21 iron, digging, strike-furrow, and subsoil ploughs, by Howard and others, Coleman and Kell's cultivators, 20 sets of drag, pair-horse, and seed harrows, by Howard and Wood, chain harrows, iron cylinder and Cambridge rollers, land pressers, Kettering steerage and other horse hoes, root cutters and disc pulpers by Samuelson, Woods, and Hornsby, Bentall's and Warren's cake crushers, chaff-cutters, for hand or power, by Richmond and Chandler, and Barrett and Cornish, set of horse gear, Dray and Co.'s weighing machines, patent sack lifter, corn blowers, Bushnell's and Garrad's winnowers, Boby and Nalders corn screens, 28 sets of thill, trace, plough, light cart, and donkey harness, wagon and cart cloths, sheep, pig, and water troughs, ladders, grindstones, 30 dozen hurdles, the dairy utensils, including 20 milk churns, and numerous other effects, necessary on a farm of upwards of 500 acres.

Luncheon by ticket. Catalogues of the Auctioneer, Town Hall Chambers, Guildford.

3915

Mr Samuel Ashford, Acting Manager of the Corn Stores, confirmed that when Edes returned he did not hand over the barley meal nor the ticket, and noted that if Mr Edes had collected a sack of meal on Mr Hilder's behalf to be delivered direct to a customer, then he would have been issued with one of the Corn Store's tickets beforehand, to give to the customer.

It turned out that Edes had not only sold the sack of barley meal from Newark to Sarah Nicholls of the Cricketers beerhouse in Ripley, but had also sold 'a sack of crammings²⁸' to Mrs Kingston at the White Hart, Addlestone, that he had similarly stolen from Cox's Lock Mill, and another sack of meal 'to Turner, the knacker man, at Woking Station', whom he had met at the Talbot Tap in Ripley.

The case was even reported in the national press, *The People*, noting on the 22nd February²⁹, that 'when Edes fetched the meal from the mill, it was stated that he sold some of it for a purely nominal sum. All the prisoners were committed for trial'.

The case was concluded in April 1891³⁰, with the Mr Horace Avory, setting out the case for the prosecution. 'He said that the prisoner Edes was a carman in the employ of the prosecutor. On one occasion he was sent to Cox's mill at Weybridge, and on two other occasions to a mill at Ripley, and having delivered the corn he took to the ground, he pretended that he was to take back some cramming in one instance and barley meal in two other instances. The millers gave him sacks of barley meal and cramming, believing they were for Mr Hilder, and also made out delivery notes. Instead of delivering the sacks to his employer, he sold them to the three other prisoners on his own account. Eades had pleaded guilty, but it was for the jury to consider the prices he got for the sacks in connection with the other cases'.

The 1891 census³¹ lists Hilder as a 'Corn Merchant and Farmer' at 'Hoe Bridge' a widower aged 77, with his son Ridley (46) as a visitor on census night, along with Charlotte Hilder (41) and a grandchild, Ada Colebrook (24).

Ada was presumably one of the children of the Mary Colebrook (nee Hilder), who according to the Ipswich Journal in 1874 'died in childbirth, aged 32 years – the beloved wife of Mr May Colebrook, butcher, of Guildford Surrey, the eldest daughter of Mr Edward Hilder, farmer of Cockfield, leaving seven small children to mourn their loss'³².

I could not find notice of either Mary or her daughter's death in the Surrey press, and even Edward's own demise in 1894 only warranted a brief note in the Surrey Advertiser³³, with the Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser reporting on the 22nd February³⁴, the death of 'Mr Edward Hilder of Woking, one of the largest farmers of West Surrey died last week in his 80th year' - the Sussex Agricultural Express³⁵ adding that he died 'within a few days of his 80th birthday'.

Hoebridge Farm was put up for sale in October, 1895, the sale, held by the auctioneer Ernest H Ellis, lasting two days³⁶, whilst Church Farm at Cockfield was sold the following September³⁷, and as we know the year after that that the executors, got around to disposing of the cottages on the corner of Church Street and the High Street.

It was not until 1899 that the executors sold the old Market House – the story of which we shall examine in our next essay.

On SATURDAY, September 26th.
At the CHURCH FARM, COCKFIELD.
ALL the Live and Dead FARMING STOCK on the above and adjoining Farms, HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, &c., by order of the Executors of Mr. Edward Hilder, deceased.

²⁸ A by-product of the milling process, after the flour and the bran had been made, usually used as a feed for fowl, but sometimes turned by the poor into a sort of pudding or dumpling – especially during the agricultural depression.

²⁹ The People, Sunday 22nd February 1891, page 7

³⁰ Surrey Advertiser, Saturday 11th April 1891, page 2

³¹ TNA RG12/555/98/30

³² Ipswich Journal, Saturday 18th July 1874, page 7.

³³ Surrey Advertiser, Saturday 24th February 1894, page 1

³⁴ Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser, Thursday 22 February 1894, page 5

³⁵ Sussex Agricultural Express, Friday 23rd February 1894, page 4

³⁶ Surrey Mirror, Friday 27th September, 1895, page 1

³⁷ Bury Free Press, Saturday 15th August 1896, page 4