

193-207 HIGH STREET – THE EARLY YEARS

Having looked at the history of the Market House and its various outbuildings up until the purchase by William Walter Gale in 1908 and their subsequent sale to Elizabeth Ogden Smith¹, I now want to turn to the occupiers of what became known as 'Market Cottages' or 'Market House Cottages'.

The first reference I can find to 'Market Cottages' is in the registers of St Peter's Church which records on the 12th December 1909 the baptism² of Ernest Alfred Bowers, the son of Celia Jane, of 'Market Cottages, Village, Woking' – but which cottage he was born in, I do not know.

At first I suspected that the mother might be the same Celia Jane Bowers who at the time of the 1911 census³ was a live-in general servant at the White Hart Hotel in the village. She was twenty-one and single, but there was no trace of an Ernest Alfred with her.

I did find a one-year-old Ernest Bowers elsewhere in the 1911 census⁴ living with his father, Elijah Bowers (27) who was also single, a farm labourer, living as a lodger with what I assumed were relations – Frederick & Mary Jane Bowers and their family⁵ - one of whom was a daughter called 'Cealier Mary Jane', a 'laundress, aged 17, who was born at Ockham Mill. Their address seemed to be one of the New Forest Cottages at Kingfield (coincidentally – or not - another of Elizabeth Kate Ogden-Smith's properties)!

I considered that 'Cealier' could be Celia Jane, but to be honest I have no idea whether either her or the girl at the White Hart were Ernest Alfred's mother – or whether the son of Elijah was born in the Market Cottage – I guess we may never know.

The baptism of Ernest Alfred Bowers does, however, give us a date by which one of the cottages (at least) must have been ready for habitation following the building (or rebuilding) by Walter Gale.

Strangely, it seems that the Frederick and Mary Jane Bowers mentioned above did subsequently occupy No 5 Market Cottages, as the registers at St Peter's church record the baptism of their child, Alfred Charles Bowers, on the 10th March 1912 at 5 Market House Cottages (although I can find no other record of the Bowers occupying the cottage at that time)!

The electoral registers show some of the occupiers of the properties, but only those eligible to vote – so they are not comprehensive.

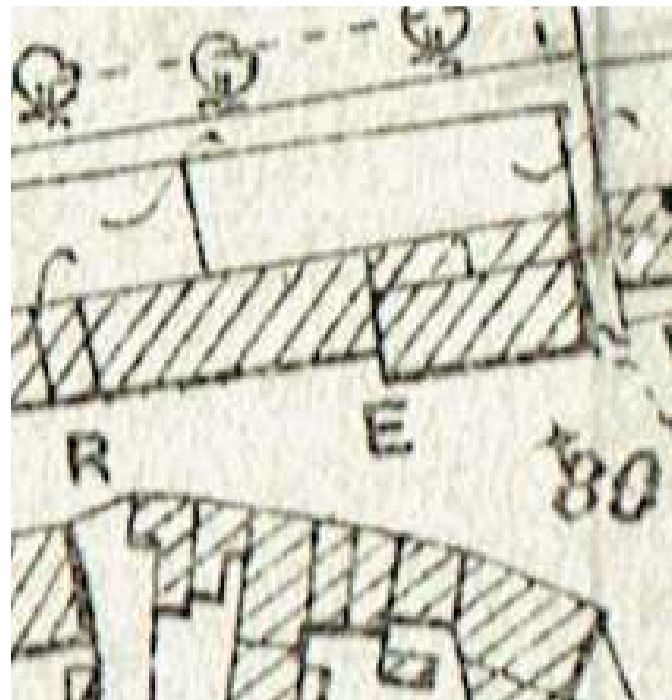
The 1910 register⁶ records James Mercer at 1 Market Cottage, with James Pullen at 4 Market Cottages, Henry Joseph Stevens at 5 Market Cottages and John Wright at 6 Market Cottages. Who (if any), were at 2,3,7 and 8 I do not know – it is possible that they were still unoccupied.

John Wright is still listed at 6 Market Cottages in the 1912 electoral register⁷, but strangely I cannot find him there in the 1911 census, although there are three men by that name in the Woking area at that time – one living in Boundary Road⁸, one living in Horsell⁹ his parents and siblings) and one living in Sunnyside Terrace, Knaphill¹⁰ (56, a blacksmith, married with a wife and eight children).

Henry Joseph Stevens is also a bit of a mystery as he does not show up in the 1911 census in the Market Cottages, although he is probably the Joseph Stevens (67) a widower (born in Bisley), 'unable to work', living around the corner in Hoe Bridge Road with his son, William (28, single, labourer), his daughter Ellen Alyward (38, married, laundress) and her two children, John (14) and Violet (8)¹¹.

The 1913 electoral register¹² lists Joseph Stevens at 6 Market Cottages, Woking Village, but by then he had apparently passed away, being buried on the 29th October 1912 – the burial register¹³ of St Peter's Church noting he was 69 years old and a resident of 203 High Street, Woking Village.

Going back to the list of occupiers from the electoral register of 1910¹⁴, you may recall that we have come across James Pullen before – in 1909¹⁵ as the first occupant of our house, 4 Butts Cottages, and probably as one of the occupiers of the old Clamp's Cottages at



The 1895 Ordnance Survey, 25" Map (above) shows the Market House and its associated buildings before conversion/reconstruction as the Market Cottage.

The 1912 Ordnance Survey, 25" Map (below), shows the cottages after.



¹ SHC 3468/1/12

² SHC 7692/1/1

³ TNA RG14/3037

⁴ TNA RG14/3038

⁵ Frederick Bowers was 39, married for 19 years to Mary Jane (also 39), with the eight surviving children (of nine) living with them.

⁶ SHC CC802/21/4

⁷ SHC CC802/23/4

⁸ TNA RG14/3034/93 – John Henry Wright, 37, a grocer's warehouseman, single, living with his sister

⁹ TNA RG14/3017/321 – John Alfred Wright, 17, a bank clerk, living with his parents and siblings

¹⁰ TNA RG14/3041/53

¹¹ TNA RG14/3037/185

¹² SHC CC802/24/4

¹³ SHC WOKP/5/2

¹⁴ SHC CC802/21/4

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the time of the 1901 census¹⁶. Although he is still listed at 4 Market Cottages in 1911¹⁷, by the time of the census that year he has evidently moved on – although where I do not know for certain.

The only one of the four mentioned in 1910 that stayed for any length of time in the Cottages, was James Mercer, who we can see from the 1911 census¹⁸, was thirty-eight, originally from Guildford and had been married eighteen years to Florence (36, from Normandy, Surrey). They had seven children, Albert (17), William (15), Lily (11), Kathleen (10), Elizabeth (7), Edith (5) and Dorothy (5 months¹⁹). The eldest four children were all born in Wood Street, whilst the other three were born in Woking.

James was employed as a 'horseman on farm', with Albert a 'shepherd' and William a 'farm labourer'. There was also a boarder listed at the house in the census, 55 year old Charles Garman, a farm labourer (according to the census originally from Woodbridge in Suffolk).

I should, perhaps point out, that on the census form James does not actually give his address as '1 Market Cottage' (just noting it as 'High Street, Woking Village', but it is clear from the next entry in the census (and from other sources) that this was their home – all ten living in the five habitable rooms of the cottage!

The next entry in the 1911 census²⁰, is for James Baker –who does give his address as '2 Market Cottages, Woking Village' – a 36 year old farm labourer, who was born in Frimley, Surrey. He was married to Clara (28, originally from Guildford), who had given birth to six children, only five of whom were still alive, Ernest (13), Emily (11), Walter (8), Sophia (5) and James (3) – the eldest being born in Chobham whilst the rest were all born in Woking. The census states that they had only been married four years, but I found James, Clara and the eldest two children in the 1901 census²¹ living in Shay Copse – which (knowing the history of that area) made me wonder whether they were originally from a 'traveller's family'.

My suspicions were confirmed when I discovered James and Clara's marriage in the registers of St Peter's Church, on the 11th December 1906²² – one of a number on that day (and indeed the week before and after) that attracted the attention of the press²³.



All the reports (in at least twenty-eight newspapers across the country) appear to have been the same – the Vicar of St Peter's, the Rev Oliphant (or one of his parishioners) appearing to have been the originator.

They mention 'no fewer than ten Romany weddings' of families encamped in the area – Tinker's Lane (now Elmbridge Lane) and the 'Sundridge' area of Kingfield probably being the most likely location.

The 'halting bridegroom' was evidently Ernest Batten (21) who married Amy Williams (19) on the 27th November. A couple of weeks later, on the 11th December, the 'triple weddings' took place (all 'in the presence of' Margaret E Wilson and Agnata B Biscoe) – although from the wedding register of St Peter's it seems there was actually four weddings that day. First in the register was our James Baker (28) to Clara Eales (26), with Henry Williams (25), marrying Mary Ann Baker (22), followed by Charles Baker (26) to Alice Gregory (22) and finally on that day John Williams (31), to Annie Eales (32).

These were followed on the 17th December by Charles Baker (47) marrying Mary Williams (44), followed by Moses Williams (24) to Rosie Baker (22) and finally Walter Baker (25) to Patience Williams (23) on the 18th December!

James (or Jim) Baker was the father of all with that surname, whilst Abraham Williams was the father of all except Mary (whose father, William Williams, was I believe Abraham's brother), but whether the two Eales girls were related I have so far been unable to work out.

James was listed in the electoral register for '2 Market Cottages, Woking Village' in 1912²⁴, but after that I cannot positively identify them through records in Old Woking.

¹⁵ SHC CC802/20/4

¹⁶ SHC CC802/12/4

¹⁷ SHC CC802/22/4

¹⁸ TNA RG14/3037/165

¹⁹ Her baptism at St Peter's Church taking place on the 12th February 1911 (SHC 7692/1/1), with the address of James & Florence being given as 1 Market Cottages, The Village, Woking.

²⁰ TNA RG14/3037/164

²¹ TNA RG13/596/25

²² SHC WOKP/3/6

²³ Amongst those reporting were - Daily Telegraph & Courier (London) Monday 24th December 1906, page 5; Eastern Evening News, Monday 24th December 1906, page 2; Gloucestershire Echo, Monday 24th December 1906, page 4; Hull Daily Mail, Monday 24th December 1906, page 3; Liverpool Echo, Monday 24th December 1906, page 5; Morning Post, Monday 24th December 1906, page 8; Nottingham Evening Post, Monday 24th December 1906, page 4; Sheffield Evening Telegraph, Monday 24th December 1906, page 2; Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Wednesday 26th December, 1906, page 5; Western Daily Press, Wednesday 26th December 1906, page 8; Burton Chronicle, Thursday 27th December 1906, page 4; Bicester Herald, Friday 28th December 1906, page 7; Diss Express, Friday 28th December 1906, page 7; Henley & South Oxford Standard, Friday 28th December 1906, page 6; Kentish Mercury, Friday 28th December 1906, page 3; Leamington Spa Courier, Friday 28th December 1906, page 2; Beverley & East Riding Recorder, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 3; Christchurch Times, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 3; Folkestone Express, Sandgate, Shornciffe & Hythe Advertiser, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 2; Norfolk News, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 7; Portsmouth Evening News, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 4; Marylebone Mercury, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 3; The Tewkesbury Register & Agricultural Gazette, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 6; Warminster & Westbury Journal and Wilts County Advertiser, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 2; Wilts & Gloucestershire Standard, Saturday 29th December 1906, page 6; Tenbury Wells Advertiser, Tuesday 1st January 1907, page 2; and the Hampshire Telegraph, Saturday 5th January 1907, page 12.

²⁴ SHC CC802/23/4

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In 1911 they too had a lodger, 56 year old farm labourer Henry Smith, who came originally from Pyrford, but as the name is so common, I have not been able to find out anything further on this gentleman either (although I suspect he too was a member of the travelling community).

In 1912²⁵ and 1913²⁶ a Robert James Fox is listed at '2 Market Place, Woking Village', but again I have not been able to positively identify this gentleman, although I was a little luckier with the next occupant of No 2 Market Cottages – George Gibbs Engall, who first appears in the 1915 electoral register²⁷.

The 1911 census²⁸ lists him (aged 38) and his family at 12 Eve Road in Maybury, Woking, with his place of birth given as Guildford and his occupation as a painter. His wife, Mary Ann (36) was born in Farnham – the couple having been married for sixteen years, with five children – four of whom were still at home, Mary Ann (15), Violet Daisy (14), Percy Giles (12) and Frederick Christopher (9), all being born in Guildford.

The registers of St Peter's Church notes that Mary Ann Engell was married²⁹ on the 2nd September 1916, with both her and her husband-to-be, Arthur James Welsh (21, whose 'rank or professions' was given as 'finance') residing at 195 High Street, Old Woking.

The Engall family continued to reside at 195 High Street (2 Market Cottages) until the mid-1920's, so I intend to concentrate on their story in a later article when I look in turn at the occupants of 193-207 High Street in the inter-war years.

Moving on to 3 Market Cottages, I discovered the baptism of Robert Sidney Goodyear, the son of Ada Sophia and Robert George Goodyear (a hairdresser) on the 4th May 1911³⁰, but the Goodyear's do not show up in the electoral register at that address, nor in the census of 1911³¹ - their residence appearing to be further along the High Street towards the Broadmead Road junction. Robert George was from Great Malvern (27), with Ada Sophia (22) born in Hersham, and another son, William Frank (2) being born in Guildford

At the time of the 1911 census³² it appears that 3 Market Cottages was the home of the Curr family – although like Mercer, Henry Curr (47) simply put his address as 'High Street, Woking Village'. He was born in Pimlico, London, and had been married for eight years to Ellen (32, born in Byfleet). They had seven children, only five of whom had survived – Margaret (10), Rebecca (8), Nellie (7), Caroline (5) and Hilda (2). Henry was a house painter, whilst Ellen worked as a laundress. I know from the parish registers of St Peter's Church that another daughter, Florence, was baptised³³ on the 12th October 1913 – the register giving their address as 197 High Street, and noting Henry's occupation as 'house decorator'.

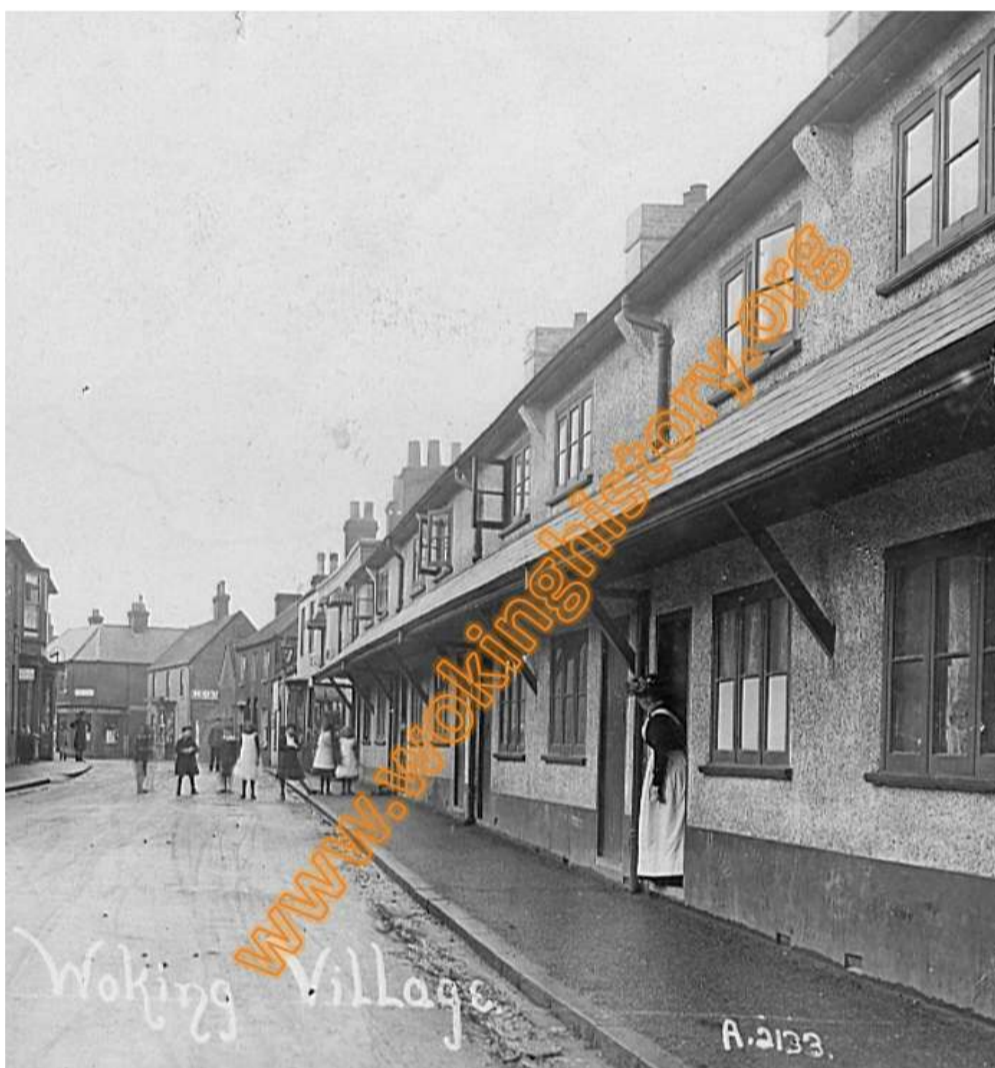
His name appears in the 1912³⁴ and 1913³⁵ electoral registers at 3 Market Cottages, Woking Village, but after that (like so many of the early inhabitants of the Market Cottages) they apparently move on.

They were replaced in 1914³⁶ by Fred Elliott and his family (members of which continued to live here until the late 1940's), so although Fred died in November 1918, again I wish to relate their story in a later article, rather than tackle it here.

The 1911 electoral register³⁷ lists Frederick Stevens at 3 Market Cottages, but in the census of that year³⁸ he is listed at 4 Market Cottages, aged 40, born in Chobham, living with his wife of ten years, Sarah (41, from Ewhurst) and their three children, Olive (9, Chobham), Grace (7, Woking) and Lewis (4, Guildford) – Frederick being employed as a farm labourer.

But we also find at No 4, Jerome Voneshen (29), a bricklayer from Switzerland, with his wife of four years, Eva Jane (24, born in Suffolk), and three of her four children (two apparently born before she married

Jerome), Victor Wright (6, also born in Suffolk), Frederick John Wright (4, born in Croydon on the 27th May 1906, a couple of months before Jerome and Eva Jane were married) and William Wilfred Voneshen (7 months, born in Woking on the 12th August 1910).



²⁵ ibid

²⁶ SHC CC802/24/4

²⁷ SHC CC802/26/4

²⁸ TNA RG14/3031/321

²⁹ SHC WOKP/3/6

³⁰ SHC 7692/1/1

³¹ TNA RG14/3037/126

³² TNA RG14/3037/163

³³ SHC 7692/1/1

³⁴ SHC CC802/23/4

³⁵ SHC CC802/24/4

³⁶ SHC CC802/25/4

³⁷ SHC CC802/22/4

³⁸ TNA RG14/3037/162

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The other child was probably Walter Edward Voneshen, born of the 25th September 1907, who along with William Wilfred and Frederick John was baptised at St Peter's Church on the 11th December 1910³⁹ – with John (rather than Jerome) being listed as the parent, his occupation given as 'carpenter', rather than bricklayer. Where Walter Edward was at the time of the census is unclear.

The 1912-14 electoral registers⁴⁰ lists John Voneshen at 4 Market Cottages (a daughter Ethel Eva being born here on the 3rd August 1912 and baptised on the 13th October at St Peter's Church⁴¹), with Joseph Voneshen in 1915⁴² (when another daughter, Alice Daisy was born).

I do not know exactly how the cottage was divided in 1911, but judging from the fact that the Voneshen's occupied three rooms and the Steven's two, I suspect that the latter were downstairs, where the scullery etc., were not usually counted as 'habitable rooms'.

Number 4 was not the only property divided like this, and it appears that Mrs Ogden Smith had found a way of maximising the return on her investment.

At 5 Market Cottages in 1911⁴³, in three rooms, were Moses Williams (28), a farm labourer with his wife of four years, Rosie (26, from Bisley) and their four children, Ernest (7), Ester (5), James (3) and Ivy (11 months) – all being born in Woking except James (Chobham), whilst the other two habitable rooms were occupied by Walter Baker (28 – originally from Bisley), a nursery labourer, with his wife of four years, Patricia (24, from Pyrford) and three of their four children, Rosey (8), Walter (4) and Lily May (5 months) – again where the fourth child was, I do not know – the census clearly shows that there were four children born, four living, and none that had died!

Incidentally, we know that the Bakers were here when Lily May was born, as the registers at St Peter's Church record her baptism from 5 Market Cottages on the 11th December 1910⁴⁴. I should also point out that these two families were the last two couple of the 'Romany Weddings' of December 1906⁴⁵ mentioned above.

At No.6 in the 1911 census⁴⁶ was Henry Davis (31) a general labourer, with his wife of nine years, Edith (32), and three of their five children (with again one of their four living children missing from the census), Kathleen (7), Lily (4), and Faith (1) – the last two being born in Woking – the two adults and Kathleen originating from London.

The Davis' had three rooms of No.6, the other two being occupied by the widower, Joseph Pantling (58, born in Byfleet) – who, as I mentioned in my article on 1 Butt's Cottages (172 High Street), was a carter at Woking Sewage Works, who had evidently only lived across for road for a matter of weeks, as he was in the 1911 electoral register⁴⁷ at Butts Cottages, but here by the 1911 census⁴⁸ (where he was described as a 'lodger'). He was still here in 1915⁴⁹ at the time the electoral register was drawn up, but after that he appears to have moved along the road to No 189 High Street (which I shall look at in a subsequent article).

What would now be 205 High Street (No.7, Market Cottages), was in 1911⁵⁰ the home of Emery Elliott (45), from Sussex, who had been married for eighteen years to Sarah (46, from Chobham), with their son, William (17), born in Old Woking and like his father working as a farm labourer. Their entry (as just High Street, Old Woking), shows they occupied five rooms, but they did house a 'boarder', Henry Daniels (55) an unmarried 'roadman' who was born in Ripley.

Emery Elliott went on to be a stalwart of Market Cottages, being listed in the electoral registers at 7 Market Cottages in 1912⁵¹ and 1913⁵², and then from 1914⁵³ onwards at 207 High Street (next door), the Elliott's being replaced in 1914-15⁵⁴ at 205 High Street by Walter Sale, whose family continued to occupy the cottage (and others in the terrace) after the war.

I should note that back in 1911⁵⁵, No 8 Market Cottages (207 High Street), was the home of Walter Slyfield (32) another farm labourer, who noted his place of birth as 'Star Hill (Surrey)' – the enumerator adding 'Woking' above the line. He had been married ten years to Lily Sarah Ann (27) of Thornton Heath, who had had three children, one of whom had died – probably very recently as the census records Hilda May (10), Arthur (6 months) and Alice (3) - the latter name being crossed through! She had been born in Westfield, Woking, with her elder sister born in Ottershaw and the six-month old son in Whitechapel, London.

Also with the Slyfield's was 95 year-old Rebecca Harding, a widow, and her son, James Harding (70) a 'day labourer' who is listed as 'married', but for how long and to who, is not recorded. He was born in Maybury Hill, Woking, whilst Rebecca, was born in Sutton Green. The census helpfully notes that she had been married eighty years, had six children (only three of whom were still alive) and that she was deaf (with the words 'been always', written to the side).

³⁹ SHC 7692/1/1

⁴⁰ SHC CC802/23/4 & CC802/25/4

⁴¹ SHC 7692/1/1

⁴² SHC CC802/26/4

⁴³ TNA RG14/3037/160

⁴⁴ SHC 7692/1/1

⁴⁵ SHC WOKP/3/6

⁴⁶ TNA RG14/3037/158

⁴⁷ SHC CC802/22/4

⁴⁸ TNA RG14/3037/157

⁴⁹ SHC CC802/26/4

⁵⁰ TNA RG14/3037/156

⁵¹ SHC CC802/23/4

⁵² SHC CC802/24/4

⁵³ SHC CC802/25/4

⁵⁴ SHC CC802/25/4 & SHC CC802/26/4

⁵⁵ TNA RG14/3037/155