

A LOOK AT LOCAL INDUSTRIES

BRICK MAKING & BREWING I

ain Wakeford 2014

A couple of weeks ago whilst looking at the building of the Basingstoke Canal, I related how the contractor, John Pinkerton, had been told that a 'Mr Wildgoose of Horsell' would know where the clay could be found to make the bricks for the locks and bridges.

Unfortunately nothing else is known of Mr Wildgoose, but it is possible that he may have been connected with the brick kiln more or less where the Winston Churchill School is today, marked on John Rocque's map of Surrey in 1768 (right).

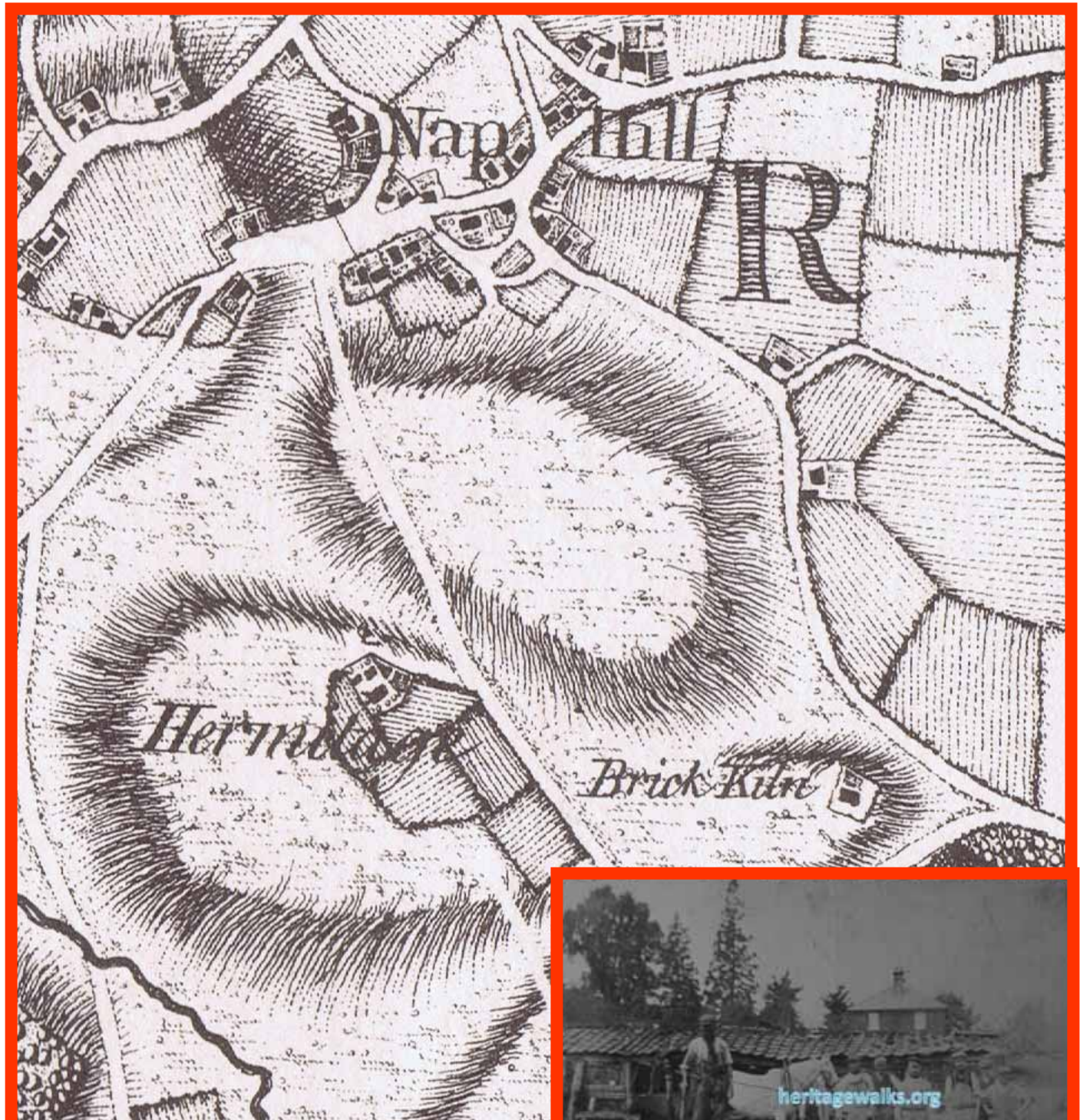
Other kilns were certainly opened in the 1780's and 90's for the building of the canal, with the nearby bridge over the waterway being named 'Kiln Bridge' as a result.

In later years (between 1877 and 1889) the brickfields were taken over by the Jackman family (see article on the nurserymen last month) with many local buildings in Victorian times using local bricks, before cheaper mass-produced ones were imported by rail from the Midlands.

According to the book *Brookwood Remembered*, bricks were delivered to Brookwood Station with a local carter called Alfred Fry charging 6d a cartload to deliver them to site – his daughter, Doris Harwood, recalled that 'he knew how many bricks were in each house'!

There were brickyards too off Robin Hood Road, with Robin Hood Crescent being built on those that opened in the late 1850's for the building of the Woking Invalid Convict Prison; the small industrial estate further along the road occupying another claypit that is thought to have been worked until the 1930's.

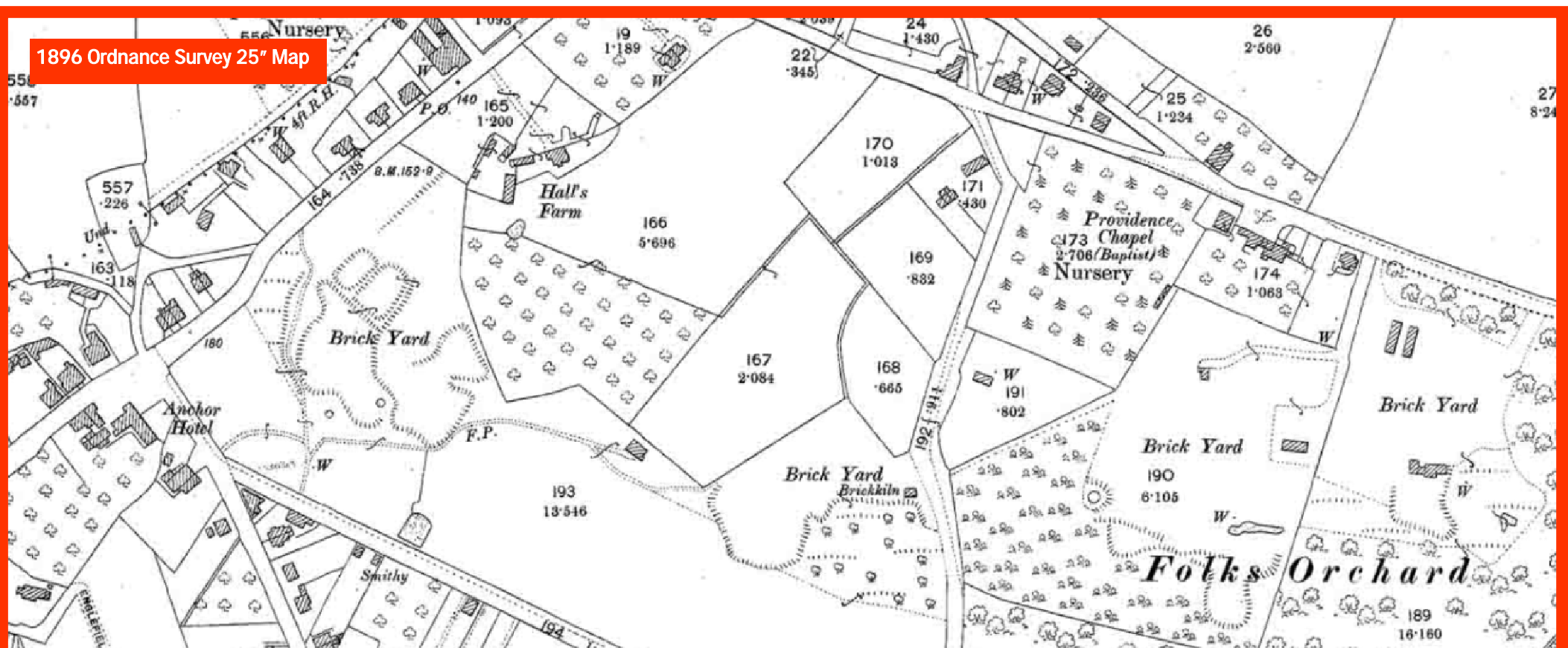
Off Anchor Hill were extensive brick works run by the Cook Brothers, with the dip as you enter Hillside Close and the sudden drop as you come



down Beechwood Road from Victoria Road, clearly showing where the original hillside has been cut away to reveal the thin layer of clay beneath the Bagshot Sand.



Cook Brother's Brickyard off Anchor Hill, where Hillside Close is today.

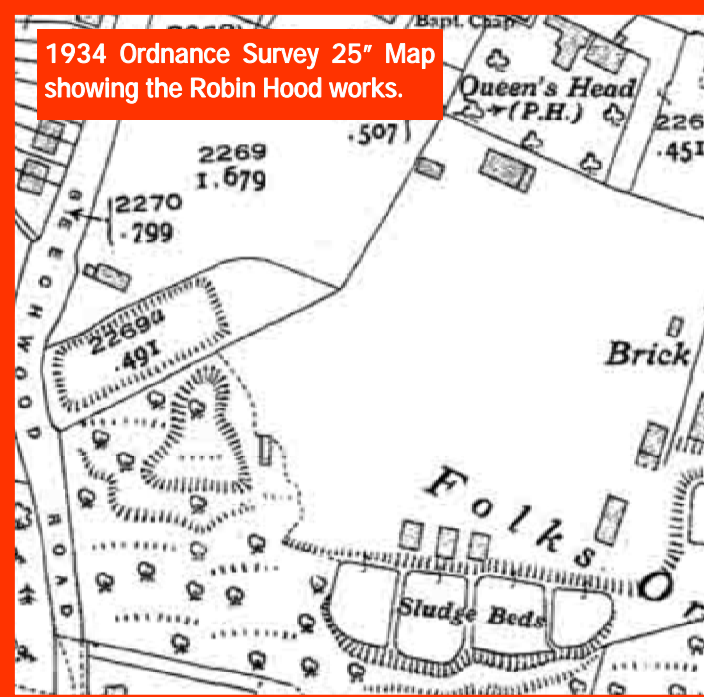


In the 1921 census there were twenty-one brick-makers listed in Woking (with many others working pits in Chobham), but with the depression in the building trade by the mid 1920's, many of the local pits had closed with just one left in Woking where the Lansbury Estate is off the Lower Guildford Road. It finally closed in 1942, bringing to an end an industry that had evidently been going on in this area, albeit on a small scale, for centuries.

It is possible that local bricks, or at least tiles, were made in Roman times as they have been found on several sites from that period, and in Old Woking a couple of fields near the village centre revealed in an excavation in 2009 'substantial rectangular brick clamps of probable medieval date'. The paddocks were marked on the 19th century Tithe Map as 'Brickhill' and 'Brick Kiln', and it is possible that they were used in Tudor times or before, maybe for bricks used on Woking Palace where recent excavations have revealed numerous medieval brick foundations.



The Lansbury Estate at Knaphill, like the industrial estate off Robin Hood Road, was once a brick works.



1934 Ordnance Survey 25" Map showing the Robin Hood works.

Another important local industry in this area since at least the 17th century was the brewery at Old Woking, first recorded in 1678 when Robert Tacka left his brewhouse to his sister, Mary Merist (wife of the Vicar of Woking, John Merest). Presumably she didn't carry on the trade herself but sold it, as in 1694 the 'Falcon Brewery' at Woking is recorded as being occupied by a James Beauchamp and John Freeland, but surrendered to James Zouch (the Lord of the Manor) to be occupied by William Harvest junior.

It is William Harvest, who is thought to have built what is now called 'The Old Brew House' in Old Woking High Street in 1715 - the initials 'HWM' and the date being carved into bricks on the front of the building (the 'M' being for Mary, his wife, whom he married in 1689).

Within a few years George Harvest (presumably his son) was involved in the business along with a Thomas Russell, but in 1744 it appears that Russell sold Harvest his share in the business and in 1762 the Manor Court Rolls record 'William Harvest of the Brew House' surrendering the property 'late in the occupation of George Harvest' to a John Fenn.

The next record I can find is of John Whitburn, a brewer from Ripley, who had a brew-house in Woking, but whether that is connected with the old Harvest brewery I do not know.

By 1838 that was certainly in the hands of a Thomas Newman who in that year acquired the White Horse Hotel on the opposite side of the road, later turned into a motor garage run in the

early 20th century by the Fleming family, then by Conway West Motors and later known as Leigh's Garage (before being demolished and Manor Mews built on the site).

In 1841 Newman is recorded at the Brew House employing seven men, but six years later the records show that he sold the business to George Robinson the younger (for £2,900) although whether he was actually involved in the brewing business, or just an investor in the property, is uncertain. When he died in 1852 the Manor Court Rolls recorded 'a messuage and tenement together with the brewhouse and



In the late 20th century the Old Brew House partially burnt down, but it has since been restored as added to



malthouse formerly in the occupation of Simon Parsons, afterwards John Fenn the elder, since of John Fenn, then of Messrs Gilbert and Emmens & then of Thomas Newman’.

The property then seems to have passed to his brother, Francis, but when he too died in 1856 it is interesting to note that amongst the trustees was one Samuel Strong, a member of the famous Hampshire brewing family.

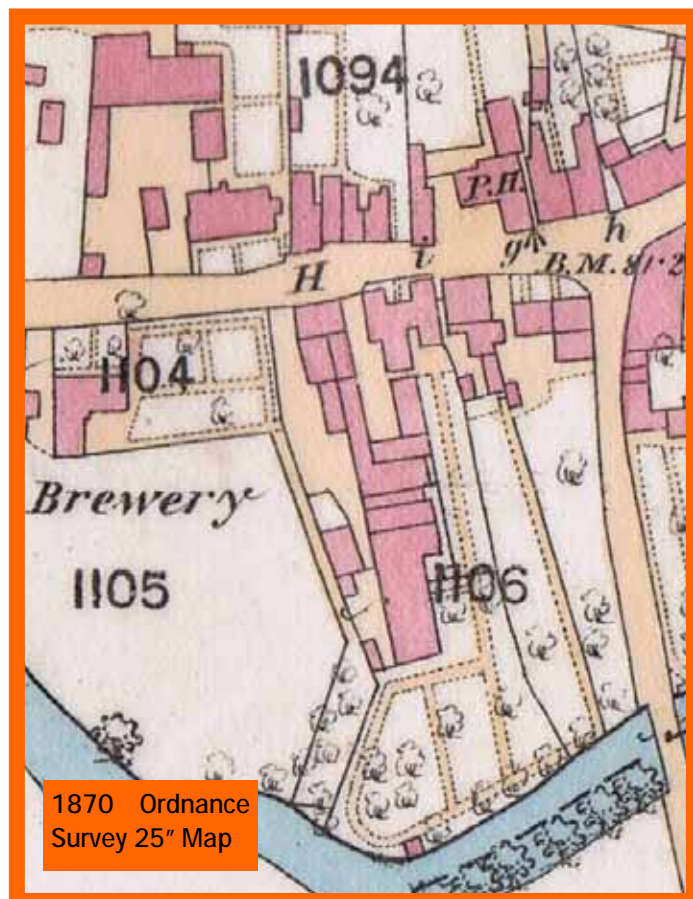
His connection with the brewery probably goes

back to when George Robinson bought the business, as the 1851 census shows him as the occupier of the brewery, employing seven men.

In 1860 Richard Isaac Strong bought the brewery (and presumably its tied houses, including the White Horse Hotel opposite) for £8,000, but by 1873 the business had passed to another famous brewing family in the form of Henry Charrington. He only held onto it for two or three years before selling to Joseph

Oldfield, who in turn sold it to Lascelles Tickner’s Brewery of Guildford. In the early 1880’s they closed it down, bringing to an end over two-hundred years of continuous brewing on the site.

Edward Ryde’s diary records in October 1888 that ‘the place is much dilapidated and neglected, but there is much old building and the house will convert into two tenements’ - which is what he apparently went on to do.



BYFLEET’S BREWERY LANE

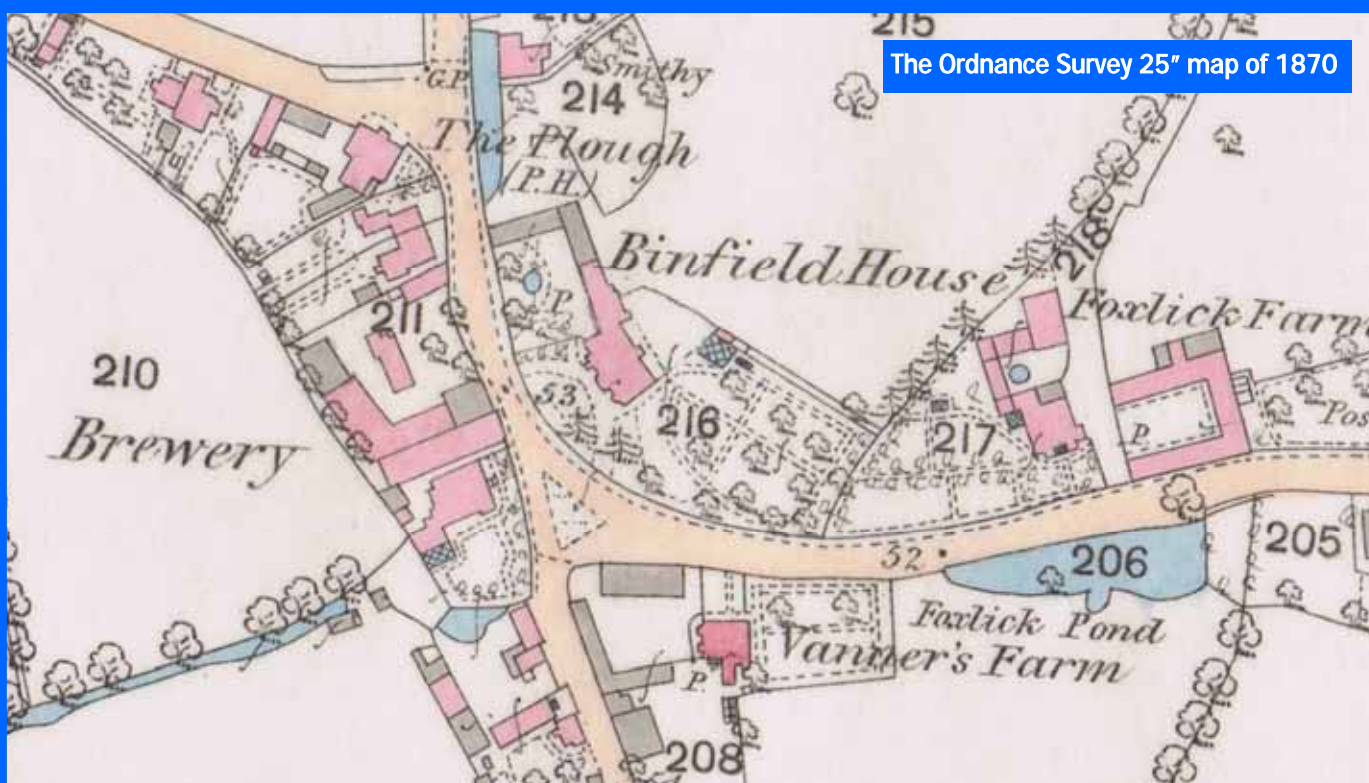
Whilst some of the buildings of Horsell’s brewery still survive (see below), little can now be found of Byfleet’s brewery – apart from the name of the lane and the Brewer’s house, now turned into flats.

The building was run for many years by the Dennett family (who apparently started it in the 1840’s at a house called Vanners) and then by the Holroyd’s (who were also involved in Byfleet Mill). In the 1880’s they joined forces with the Healy family (who ran a brewery in Chertsey) and when the two then merged with Guildford’s Friary Brewery (to become the Friary, Holroyd and Healy Brewery), the Byfleet works were closed.

Prior to that the brewery had apparently caused some nuisance in the village, as Leonard Stevens recorded in his book on *Byfleet - A Village in England*. It seems the outfall from the works were polluting the local watercourses so in July 1870 ‘it was proposed by Messrs. Dennett and Holroyd, to cut off all connection between their Brewery premises and Foxlake Pond: and this proposition was strongly approved by the Vestry’!

The brewery closed in 1905 and about that time a small laundry at Sanway in Byfleet was looking to expand and the old brewery building behind the Plough pub seemed ideal.

The picture above right shows one of the Sanway works outings, before it too closed in the late 1950’s and the site was demolished and redeveloped with the houses of the Hollies. Vanners Farm was demolished about the same time and redeveloped with a row of shops with apartments above.



HORSELL'S BREWERY ROAD



The history of Horsell's Brewery is harder to piece together, mainly because it appears to have been quite small and only operated by one family – the Stedman's. Consequently, without many changes of ownership, the records are more meagre, but it appears from local directories that James Stedman was listed as a farmer and brewer as far back as the mid 1850's. John Stedman is recorded as the same from 1867 to 1890 when his son (also called John) took over until the business closed at the outbreak of the First World War (presumably as the workers went off to fight).

Their farm, now called Malt House Farm, still survives in Old Malt Way, whilst the brewery appears to have been in outbuildings across the road and onto Brewery Road itself.

The road name 'Hopfields' records where some of the ingredients were grown and indeed hops can still be found growing in some of the nearby hedgerows, such as along the one shown above along the edge of the cricket field.

When John Stedman senior died in 1906 aged 78 it is said that he left property worth over £18,000, with the brewery at one stage apparently owning The Sun at Chobham, as well as the Plough in Horsell.

It has also been claimed that the Red Lion had a connection to Stedman's Brewery, but at the time of Horsell's Tithe Map of 1854 Edmund Elkins, a brewer from Guildford, owned that property and when Elkins' North Street Brewery was closed in 1890 the 'Red Lion Hotel' at Horsell was one of their tied houses (along with eleven others, including the White Hart Commercial Hotel in Woking and the Anchor Inn at Pyrford).

The brewery buildings were subsequently turned into two houses.



Edward Ryde in his diary entry for the 17th December 1886 records the death of the former landlord when he notes 'death of Moore, delivery agent and fly proprietor for fifty years, who kept the Red Lion at Horsell in 1849'.

