

BUILDING BIGGER CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS TO COPE WITH AN EVER GROWING POPULATION

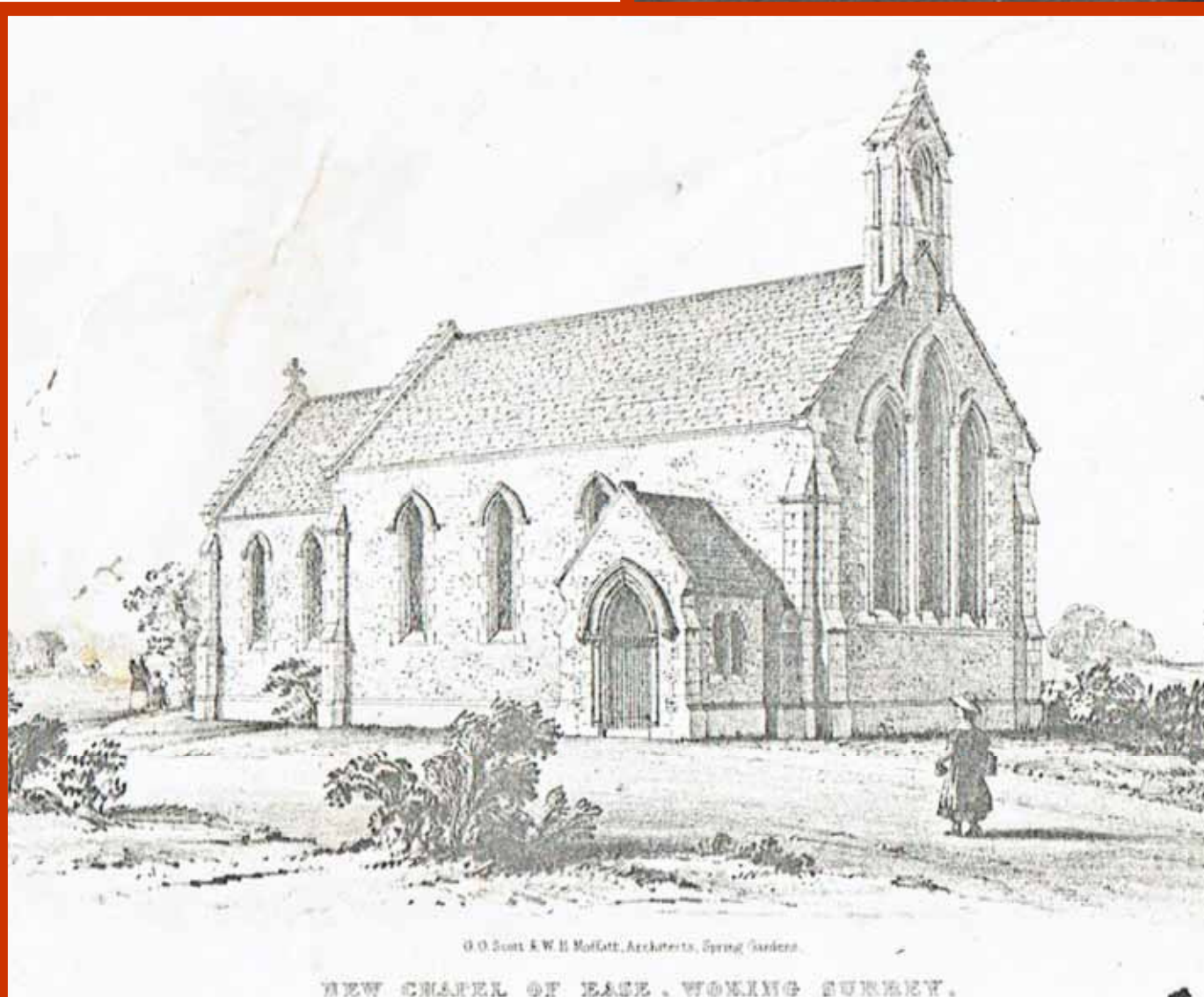
Iain Wakeford 2015

A couple of months ago I noted how the local Wesleyan Methodists had been the first to build a place of worship in what became Woking Town Centre – a little chapel that gave its name to Chapel Street (on the site now occupied by Provincial House). Those old enough to remember Woking before the redevelopment of the 1970's may recall the building as the children's library.

When the chapel opened in 1872 the congregation must have been quite small, but by 1884 it had evidently increased substantially as that is when the front part (later used as the adult and reference section of the library) was built.

In previous weeks too we have seen how the original Chapel of Ease dedicated to St John the Baptist grew as the population of the western part of St Peter's Parish of Woking increased. It was originally built in 1840, when most of its congregation was probably farm labourers and nurserymen, but with the sale of Woking Common to the Necropolis Company, and the development of large institutions in the area, the chapel was soon enlarged to cope with the increased population of what had then become known as the village of St Johns.

In 1877 another Chapel of Ease dedicated to Christ Church had been built in the north-east of St Peter's Parish, but by 1884 it was clear that the work involved in serving the ever-increasing population of Woking required the creation of a new parish and St John's was formed.



Above: The original Wesleyan Chapel, built in 1872 was extended in 1884 onto Commercial Road. It later became Woking Library with the original chapel at the back becoming the Children's Library.

Left: The original Chapel of Ease dedicated to St John the Baptist (built in 1840) to serve the western part of the Woking became a Parish Church in 1884.

The new area included all the land in the north and west of the original St Peter's parish – including the Chapel of Ease at Christ Church, and the land around Maybury, Mount Herman, Hook Heath, Brookwood and Knaphill – where another 'Chapel of Ease' was erected in 1885 in Chobham Road, another 'tin tabernacle' this time dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

Following a bad report, Knaphill School was enlarged in 1884



At Knaphill a school had been opened by the Woking School Board in 1877 with accommodation for 250 children, but with the rapidly increasing population it was not long before it was found inadequate as a H.M. Inspector's report of May 1879 shows. It noted that it had 'crowded and unsuitable premises, and satisfactory results could hardly be looked for', so in 1884 the school was enlarged to take on another hundred children, at a cost of over £2,000 (including the Master's House). The land for it had apparently been bought in July 1884 from a Mr Wilson by the School Board (according to Edward Ryde's diary).

Byfleet's 'National School' was apparently also enlarged in 1884 (according to an article in a local newspaper published in 1956 to celebrate the school's centenary), but I have not been able to find out yet what sort of additions took place. The original school was just one long room divided by a curtain, so almost any extra building must have been an improvement!

But not all schools were being enlarged in 1884. At Sutton Green in 1881 the Board of Education had apparently tried to prevent children from attending 'Mrs Lilley's school, which is inefficient and therefore illegal', but in February 1884 'a competent person' was sent in to 'assess the efficiency of the non-Board National School at Sutton Green' as a result of which it was closed and the pupils transferred to the newly expanded school at Westfield (enlarged in 1881).

I cannot help wonder when efficiency became a legal requirement in a school (or what connection the 'competent person' may have had with the Woking School Board), but it seems that if Ofsted goes back over the old Board of Education reports, they might learn something.

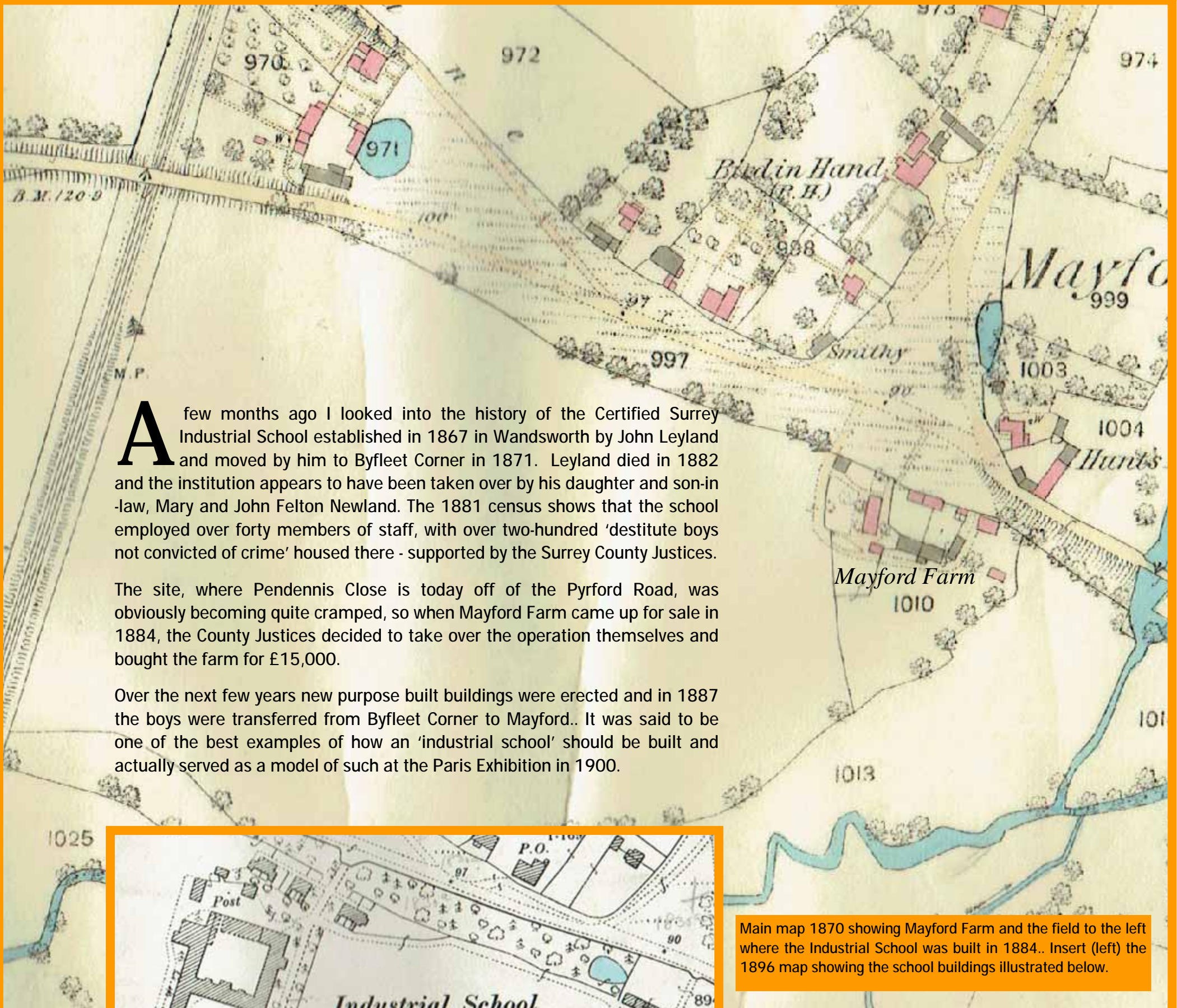


The National School at Byfleet was also enlarged in 1884.



The children of Sutton Green were transferred to Westfield following the closure of their village school.

THE MAYFORD INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL



A few months ago I looked into the history of the Certified Surrey Industrial School established in 1867 in Wandsworth by John Leyland and moved by him to Byfleet Corner in 1871. Leyland died in 1882 and the institution appears to have been taken over by his daughter and son-in-law, Mary and John Felton Newland. The 1881 census shows that the school employed over forty members of staff, with over two-hundred 'destitute boys not convicted of crime' housed there - supported by the Surrey County Justices.

The site, where Pendennis Close is today off of the Pyrford Road, was obviously becoming quite cramped, so when Mayford Farm came up for sale in 1884, the County Justices decided to take over the operation themselves and bought the farm for £15,000.

Over the next few years new purpose built buildings were erected and in 1887 the boys were transferred from Byfleet Corner to Mayford.. It was said to be one of the best examples of how an 'industrial school' should be built and actually served as a model of such at the Paris Exhibition in 1900.



Main map 1870 showing Mayford Farm and the field to the left where the Industrial School was built in 1884.. Insert (left) the 1896 map showing the school buildings illustrated below.



WALSHAM WEIR, 1884

Warren Farm

Last year in this column I detailed the early history of the Wey Navigation and how Sir Richard Weston of Sutton Place had introduced 'pound-locks' into this country. Before then the only way to get barges up-stream past weirs or waterfalls was to use what was known as a 'flash-lock' – basically to drag the boat up a flash of water created by removing a temporary dam!

The pound lock – impounding the water between two sets of gates – made navigation much easier, and with almost two thirds of the new waterway new mad-made cuts, the Wey Navigation could be said to be one of the first canals in this country.

Work on maintaining the Wey Navigation (like any piece of infrastructure) is constant, with lock gates having to be replaced,

banks maintained, and the waterway dredged and kept clear of obstructions. Many of the old bridges over the Navigation have been rebuilt (most recently the one at Newark Lane), but some old structures do still survive on the waterway such as part of the weir at Walsham whose workings, as you can see here, were engineered by Jesse Stone in 1884.

Walsham Meadow



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