

# ARTHUR ALTHORP'S 1888 ALMANAC

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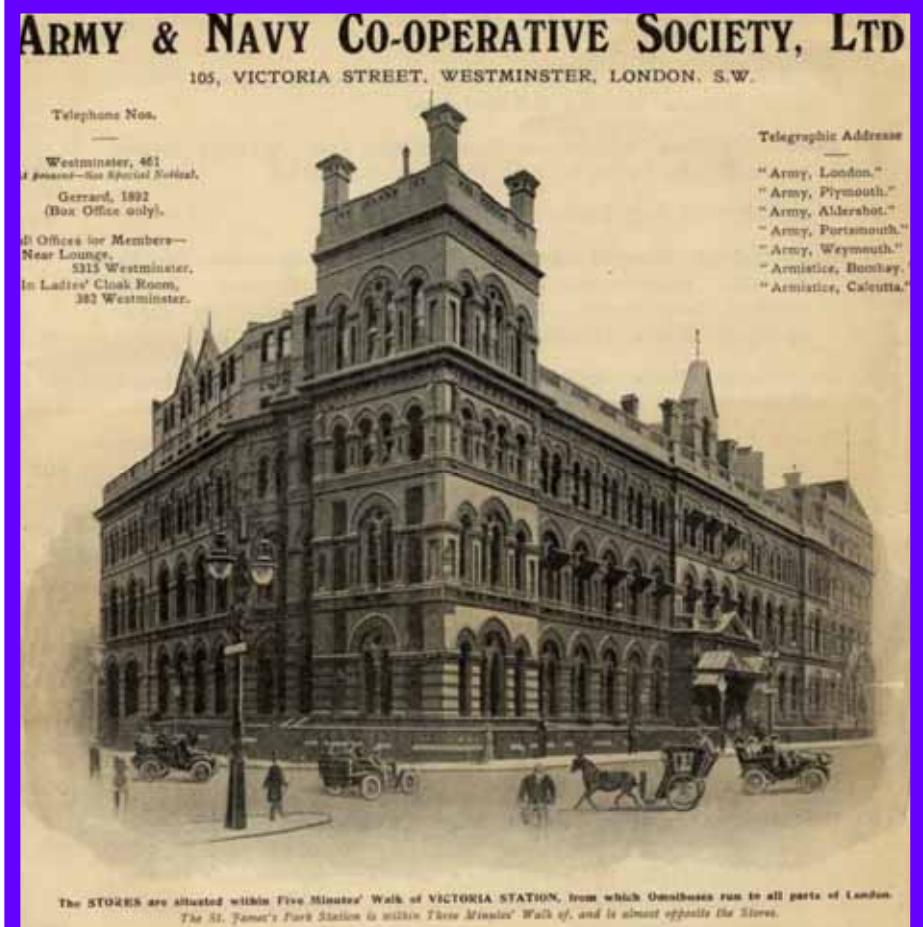
A few weeks ago we looked at Thomas Holloway and what the profits from selling his wonderful 'cure-alls' could build at Virginia Water and Egham. This week I want to look at some more Victorian remedies sold by another enterprising Victorian – Arthur Althorp. Although his advertising was not quite on the same scale as Holloway's, Althorp once more showed that advertising paid – at least for the Victorian Chemist. His Almanac & Directory was the first such publication for the fast-growing new town of Woking, and Althorp was clearly one of the town's early entrepreneurs.

Arthur Althorp came to Woking in the late 1870's marrying Sophia, the twenty year old daughter of Reuben Percy of the Albion Hotel on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 1879 at Battersea. By the time of the 1881 census they were living a few doors down from her father's hotel, with their baby daughter Mary Alice not yet a year old.

Arthur was born in Saltaire, Yorkshire, now the famous World Heritage Site founded by Titus Salt in the 1850's, but by the time he was two his family had moved to nearby Shipley where his father, Christopher, worked as a 'wash house man'. Young Arthur was obviously very intelligent, being sent to the ancient Grammar School at Burnsall in the Yorkshire Dales before moving to London where he worked as a compounder at the Army & Navy Stores in Westminster. There he gained the 'Compounder's Certificate of the Society of Apothecaries' before moving to Woking, where in 1881 he is listed as an 'assistant chemist'. In 1887 he had set up his own 'Dispensing and Family Chemists' on the corner of Commercial Road and Chobham Road and was obviously doing quite well for himself.

His Directory is full of useful information for the local historian, but this week I want to concentrate more on the advertisements for himself and other traders in the town – such as the Gidding Brother's who ran a carrier service 'from Wich Street, Star Hill, Woking, through

At the age of twelve Arthur is listed as a 'scholar' at the Burnsall Grammar School, near Grassington in the Yorkshire Dales.



Later Althorp worked as a 'compounder' at the Army & Navy Stores in London before marrying the daughter of the landlord of Woking's Albion Hotel.

Advertisements for local businesses can be found throughout the Almanac.

## C. DORSEY, BOOT AND SHOE WAREHOUSE, CHOBHAM ROAD, WOKING,

*REGS to inform the Public that he has always in stock a  
large assortment of  
GENTS' STOUT WALKING BOOTS  
With or without nails in all styles and prices.  
GAITERS IN VARIOUS SORTS.*

*A large and choice assortment of Ladies' and  
Children's Walking Boots, Kid, Levant, &c., either in  
Lace, Button, or Side Springs, of the latest style, quality, and  
lowest possible price.*

*Warm Felt Boots, Slippers, and Overshoes;  
also Hard wearing, durable toe, school Boots.*

*All kinds of repairs executed with neatness and despatch.*

**THE NOTED HOUSE, CHOBHAM ROAD, WOKING.**

## GIDDINGS BROTHERS, CARRIERS,

*From Wich Street, Star Hill, Woking, through Goldsworth Road, to Lion and  
Crown Inn, Guildford,*

*ON TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS, AND SATURDAYS,*

*Calling at Mr. PLAYERS, Grocer, &c., Kiln Bridge, and through Goldsworth Road and  
Woking Station; thence to the Lion and Crown Inn, Guildford; returning from thence  
at THREE o'clock p.m. Orders received at the Mission Room, Star Hill; by Mr.  
PLAYER, Kiln Bridge; at the SOAP WORKS; or by Mrs. SQUIBB, the Railway  
Hotel, Woking Station.*



In 1887 he had set up a shop of his own on the corner of Chobham Road and Commercial Road.

Goldsworth Road, to Lion & Crown Inn, Guildford, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays'. Interestingly orders could be placed at 'the Mission Room' on Star Hill, as well as Mr Player's Grocers shop at Kiln Bridge in St Johns, Mrs Squibb at the Railway Hotel and at 'the soap works' in Woking.

We have come across the soap works (or saponine factory) run by Mr Sowerbutts, in earlier directories, but I cannot find out anything about the 'mission room' on Star Hill (any ideas please let me know).

But it is the adverts for Althorp's own products that are perhaps the most interesting with testimonials from local residents and traders such as John Brown, dairyman of Chertsey Road who wrote 'I have great pleasure in giving my testimony as to the efficacy of your Pectoral Drops. Exposed as I am to all kinds of weather, I have been a great sufferer (especially in winter) to an irritable cough, disturbing me very much during the night. I find great relief by taking your remedy: an occasional dose, and one at bedtime being all that's required to ensure me a good night's rest' – 'In Bottles, 7½d (8 Adult Doses), 1½d (24 doses), 2/9 (64 doses)'.

Other adverts included one for 'Hunter's Infallible Vermin and Insect Destroyer' and

'McNulty's Hair Restorer' prepared by James McNulty, an old associate of Arthur's who had a 'wholesale chemists' back in Shipley.

On the latter, for some reason, the testimonials never give their full name, and whether any are local is unknown. 'J.W' was 'very glad to say my hair has regained its wonted growth, which I entirely attribute to the regular use of your hair restorer', whilst A.S's hair 'was rapidly falling off and turning grey' but is now 'completely restored'.

Unfortunately Mr McNulty's recipe (bottles one shilling) has probably not survived, although if it had I am not certain that I would have considered giving it a try.

You certainly cannot now buy Hunter's Vermin Destroyer whose main ingredient appears to have been two grains of strychnine for every 3d packet.

It is not mentioned in the testimonials, but it was certainly used on at least one occasion for apparently poisoning a spouse, rather than a mouse!



James McNulty's Hair Restorer and Hunter's 'Infallible Vermin and Insect Destroyer' were just two of a number of questionable cure-alls and remedies available from Arthur Althorp's shop.

#### ALTHORP'S WOKING ILLUSTRATED ALMANACK & DIRECTORY.

EQUAL TO THE BEST, AT ONE-THIRD THE PRICE.

In all ages and in every country the HAIR has been regarded as one of the most essential characteristics of beauty. To embellish, improve, and preserve it has ever been the object of all who entertain any regard for their personal appearance.

# McNULTY'S HAIR RESTORER

Will restore grey Hair to its original colour,  
and will also darken light Hair.

It is not a dye, but acting directly on the roots of the Hair, arrests the fall, promotes the growth, gives to it all its pristine colour and beauty, and removes dandruff and other impurities.

# MURDEROUS TIMES IN BYFLEET IN 1888



Until the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Byfleet had just two public houses – the Anchor (or Blue Anchor – sometimes referred to as 'Hollidays') and the Plough, but in 1841 a 'beer house' appears to have been established on the Woking Road on, or at least near to, the site of Queen's Head.

The occupier was John Chuter (55) who described himself as a carpenter, living in the property with his fifty-eight year old wife Sarah and two sons, twenty year old George and fifteen year old John.

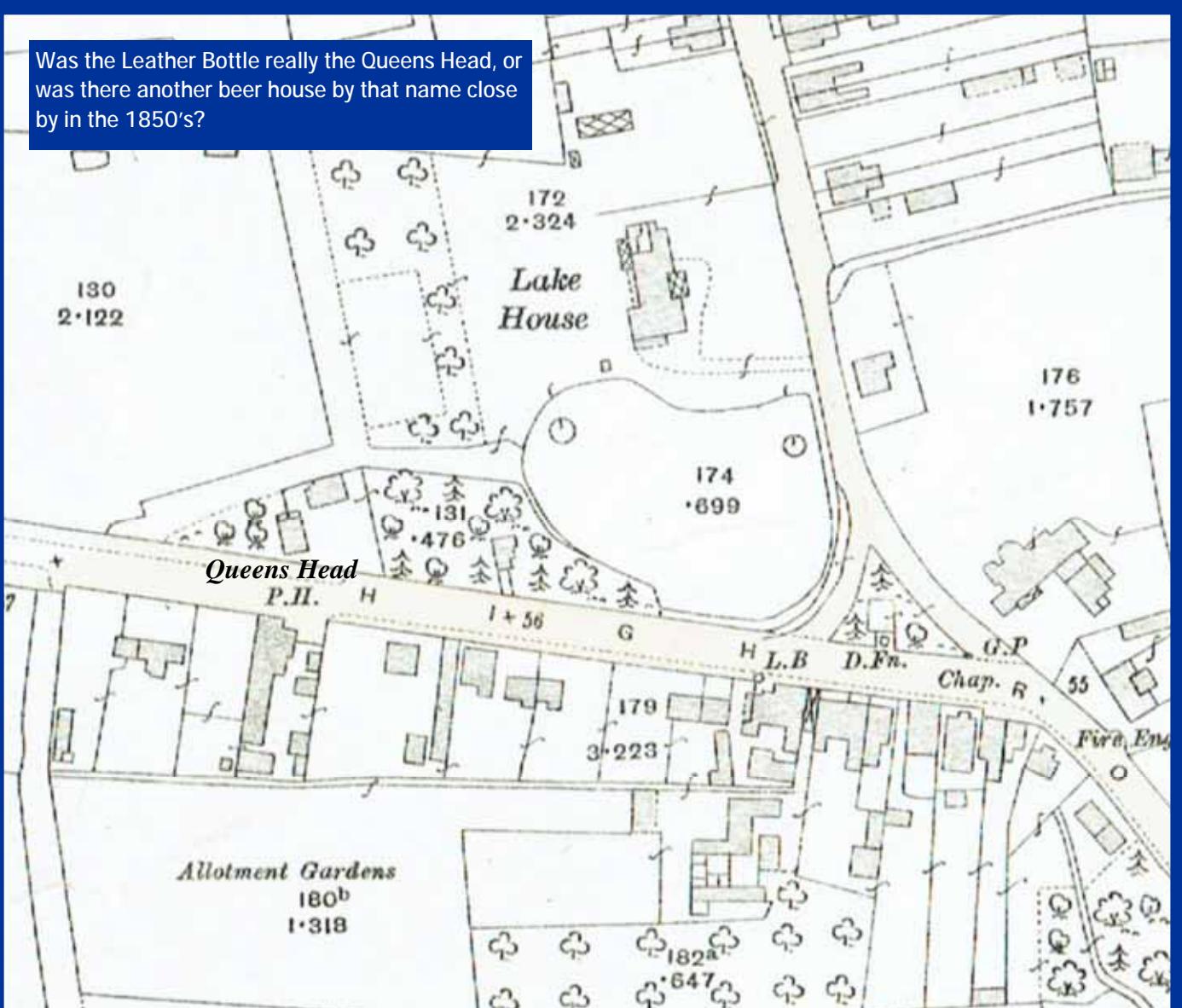
By 1851 George appears to have succeeded his father with his trade being listed as 'carpenter and victualler' at the 'Leather Bottle' but a directory of 1851 lists George at the Queen's Head with no mention of the Leather Bottle (or carpentry), so perhaps the Leather Bottle and the Queens Head were actually one and the same.

In 1861 George, now listed at the 'Queens Head public house', declared himself as a 'carpenter employing two men' and by the time of the 1871 census was 'employing nine men and one boy' describing himself as a 'builder and contractor' now living in Chertsey Road, Byfleet (with the Queen's Head now run by a Richard Minett).

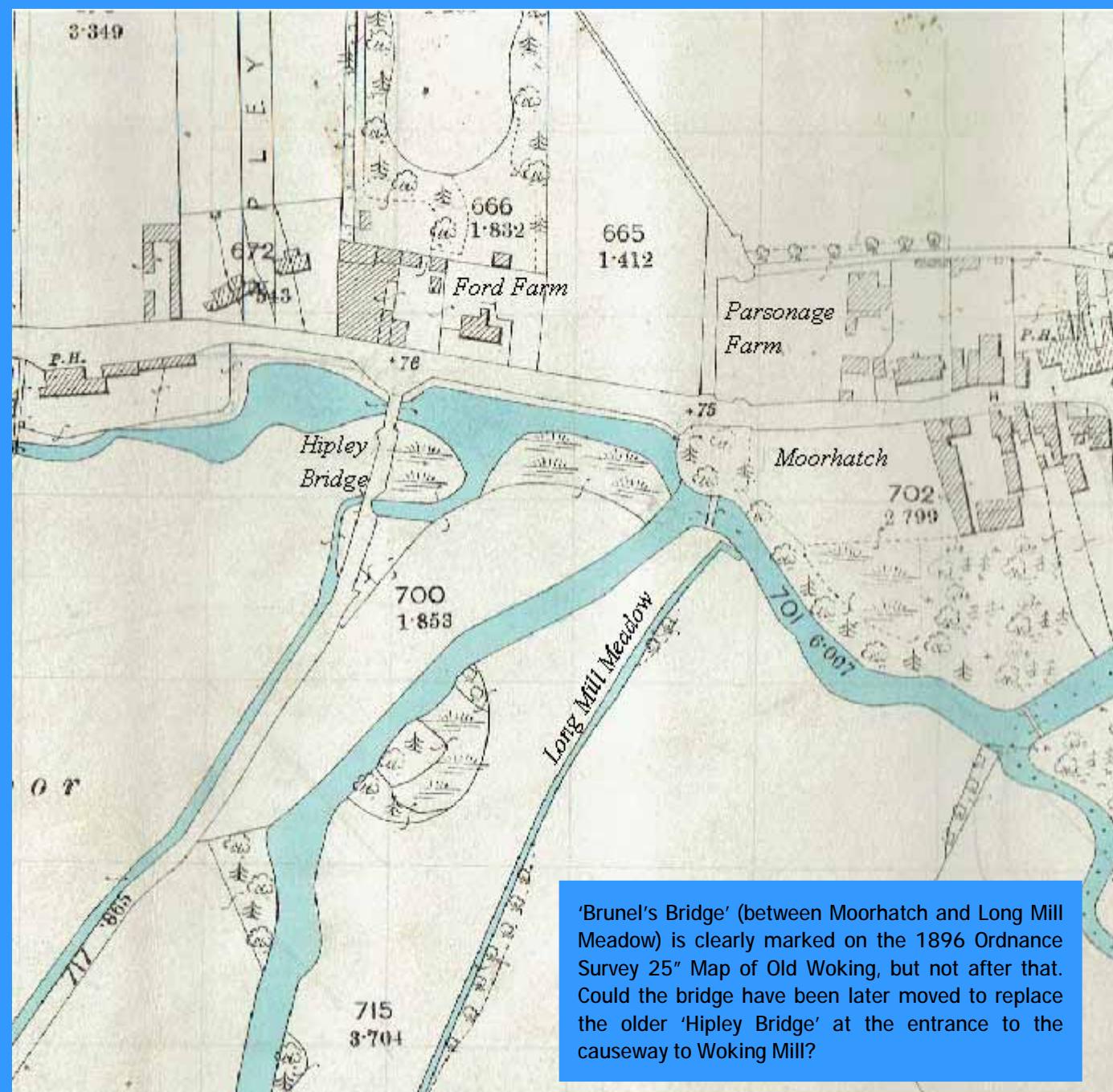
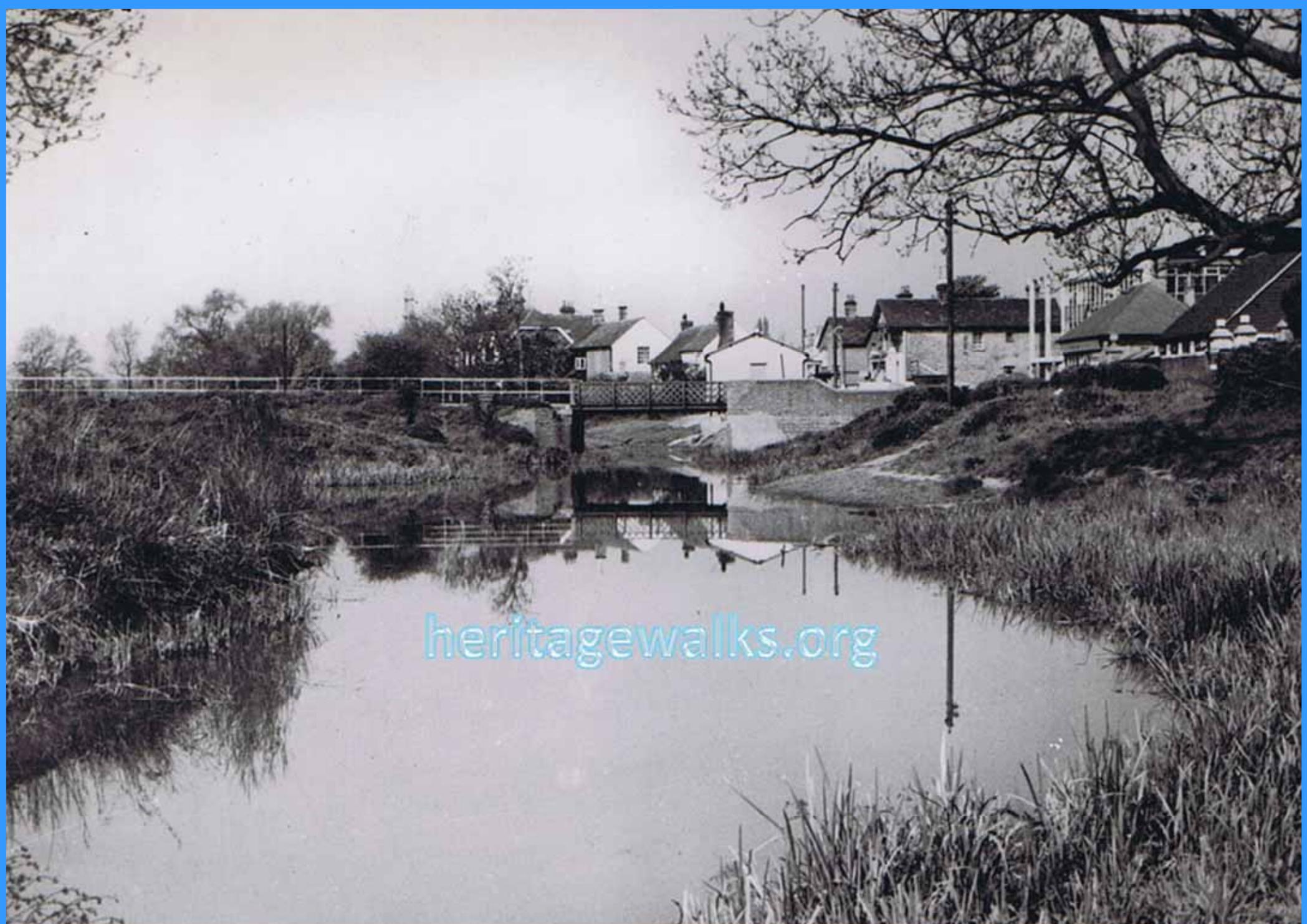
By 1881 George had retired from the building trade and at the time of the census was living in Chelsea, but he evidently still kept his cottage in Byfleet as according to Leonard Stevens in his book 'Byfleet – A Village in England' on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1888 George Chuter 'one time landlord of the Queen's Head was brutally murdered in his cottage in Chertsey Road'.

Apparently 'on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1888 a public meeting was called at the School which was attended by 150 persons. There a committee was set up and it was agreed to offer a reward of £100 for information leading to the

discovery of the murderer.' Although the money was raised by the villagers, a not inconsiderable sum in those days, sadly nobody was ever caught for the murder of George Chuter.



# BRUNEL'S BRIDGE BUILT IN OLD WOKING IN 1888



In 1888 Edward Ryde enigmatically records in his diary on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 'see Ham (one of his employees) in the afternoon about the bridge of which Brunel has given me a drawing'. The following week he mentions measuring the river for the bridge 'in Moorhatch', and a week after that he records that 'Ham has put up a scaffold across the river to erect a Brunel bridge into the Long Mill Meadow'.

Moor Hatch is the name of the cottages (built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) near the river in Old Woking - opposite Manor Way (where Edward Ryde's Parsonage Farm was). Long Mill Meadow is recorded on old maps as the field that runs down on the right hand side of the millstream from Woking Mill towards Old Woking.

There is no bridge there now, but it is clear from the above that there once was and that it was designed by Brunel – probably Henry Marc Brunel, son of the celebrated Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who followed in his father's footsteps and no doubt came into contact with Edward Ryde whilst working on various railway projects.

The bridge is marked on the 1895 Ordnance Survey map of the village but after that appears to have disappeared, although it is possible that it was moved slightly upstream to replace the Hipley Bridge – the old entrance to the causeway to Woking (now Gresham) Mill.

If so, it is clear that Woking's 'Brunel Bridge' was probably not the best example of engineering to bear that title!