

FURTHER EDUCATION IN WOKING

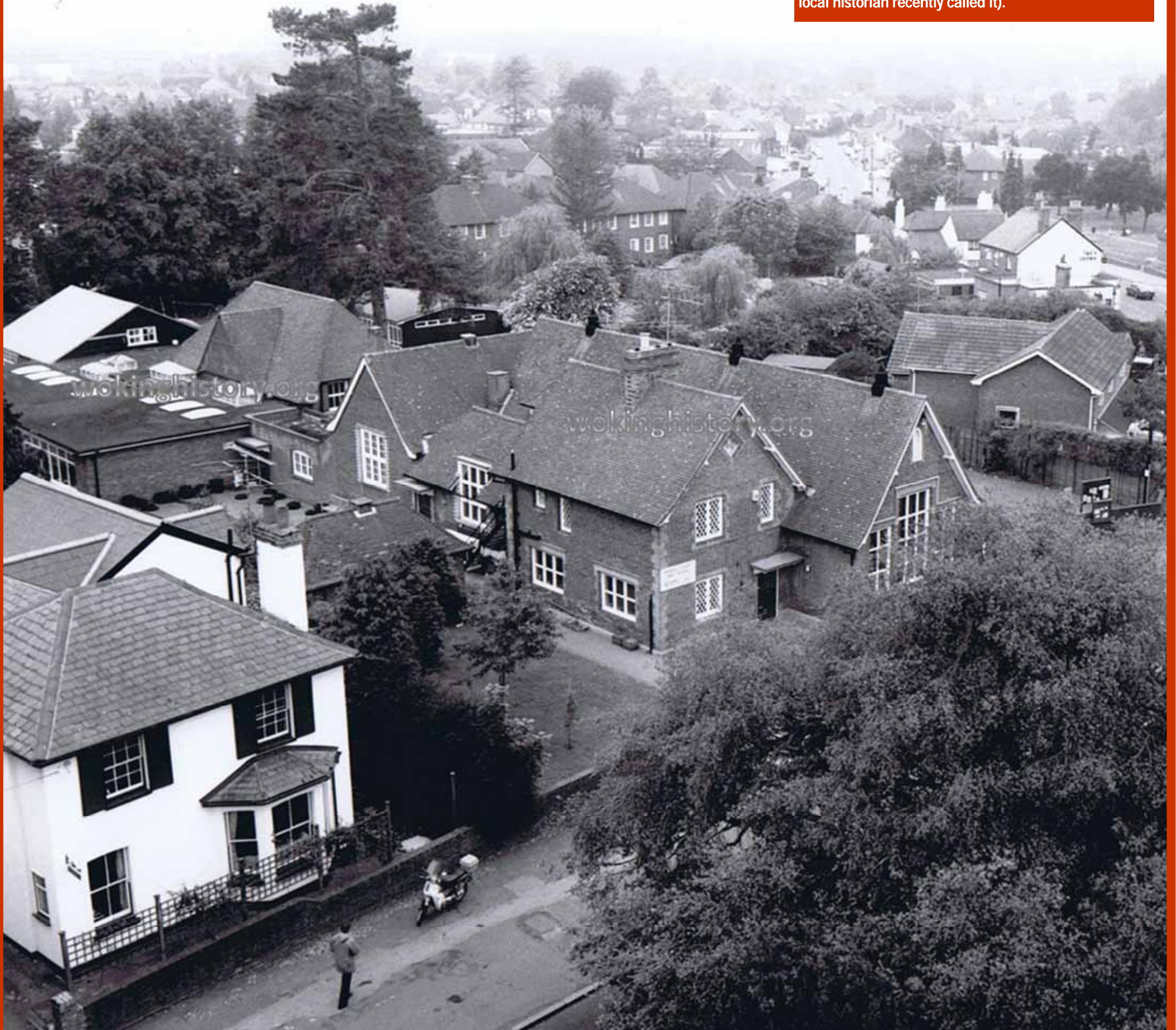
Iain Wakeford 2016

Over the past couple of years we have gradually been looking at the history of Woking in a more or less chronological order. I started in January 2014 with an article on the geology and geography of the region, before moving onto the prehistory and then the ancient history of the area. By this time last year we had reached the 1870's and with so much going on in the town by that stage (and more information being available) it became possible to look at the history of people, places and events in a much more detailed way. We have, in effect, been chronicling the town's story each week on a year by year basis.

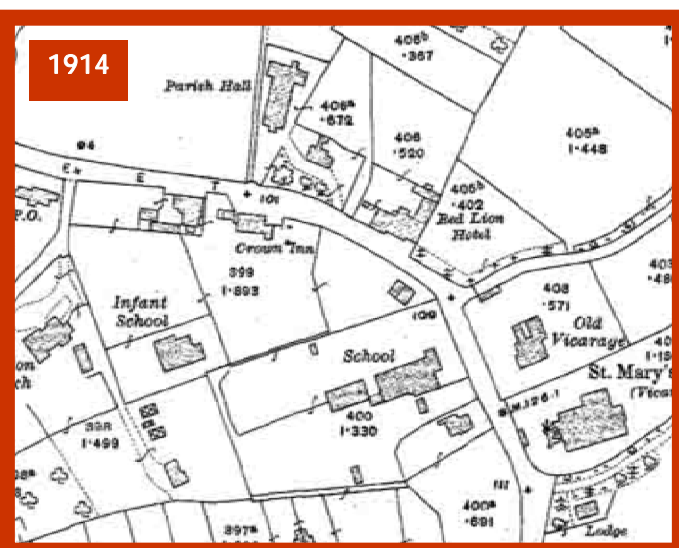
That doesn't mean that I have been looking at the stories from each calendar year and producing some sort of 'end of year report' – history is much more complicated than that. Most stories do not fit neatly into a twelve month period beginning in January and ending in December, so that my chronology has to be more flexible. Where possible, each week, I have grouped together stories that were substantially about a certain period, and up to last week we had reached the years 1912-13. In fact you may have noted that we reached that period several weeks ago (so much was going on in this area at that time). But now we have come to 1914 and the end of an era is almost upon us.

But before we get to the storm of September 1914 and the 'War to end all Wars' (if only that had been true!), there are two-thirds of a year of fitful peace to study. So this week the Edwardian era effectively comes to an end with a look at the continued growth of educational facilities in the town.

In 1914 additions took place at what was then Horsell's 'mixed school' (not 'middle school' as one local historian recently called it).



In 1913 the Kellys Directory recorded that in Horsell an 'infants' school, built in 1912 (where Bury Close is now), at a cost of £1,200 for 200 children' (average attendance 106; Mrs J Blackett, mistress), but from later editions it appears that this was just a temporary building (and only accommodating up to 150 children). It was set up by the council and was not, apparently, part of the former 'church school' which continued to operate at Church Hill as a 'mixed' school' which itself was enlarged in 1914 at a cost of £2,000 to accommodate 242 children.



No doubt the enlargement of Horsell School was much needed, but the opening in 1914 of a new 'Public Elementary School (mixed and infant) in West Byfleet (for 350 children) must have been greeted with even more joy, as for the first time the pupils of that village no longer had to make the long trek to Byfleet, or Pyrford or New Haw for their education.

Meanwhile in St John's the wonderfully named Mrs Savage was running the junior and infant school in Church Road (built in 1870 as a



1913 saw the opening of Woking's first 'senior school' at St Johns.

church school and then taken over by Woking School Board), whilst her husband became the first master of a new 'Senior School' built in 1913 on land between Barrack Path and Hermitage Road. It cost £3,520 and had room for 200 children. At the time it was the only 'senior school' in the area!

Surrey County Council had by then established evening classes at the 'Woking Domestic and Handicraft Centre' in Commercial Road (the former Wesleyan Chapel on the corner with Chapel Street that in later life was to become Woking Library), and in 1909 purchased from

Mr W.C. Slocock (the nurseryman) a plot of land in Station Approach where the Woking Secondary School and Technical Institute was built in 1914 (to designs by Jarvis & Richards). It opened in September 1914 with Joshua Holden as its first head-master and just forty-eight boys on the roll.

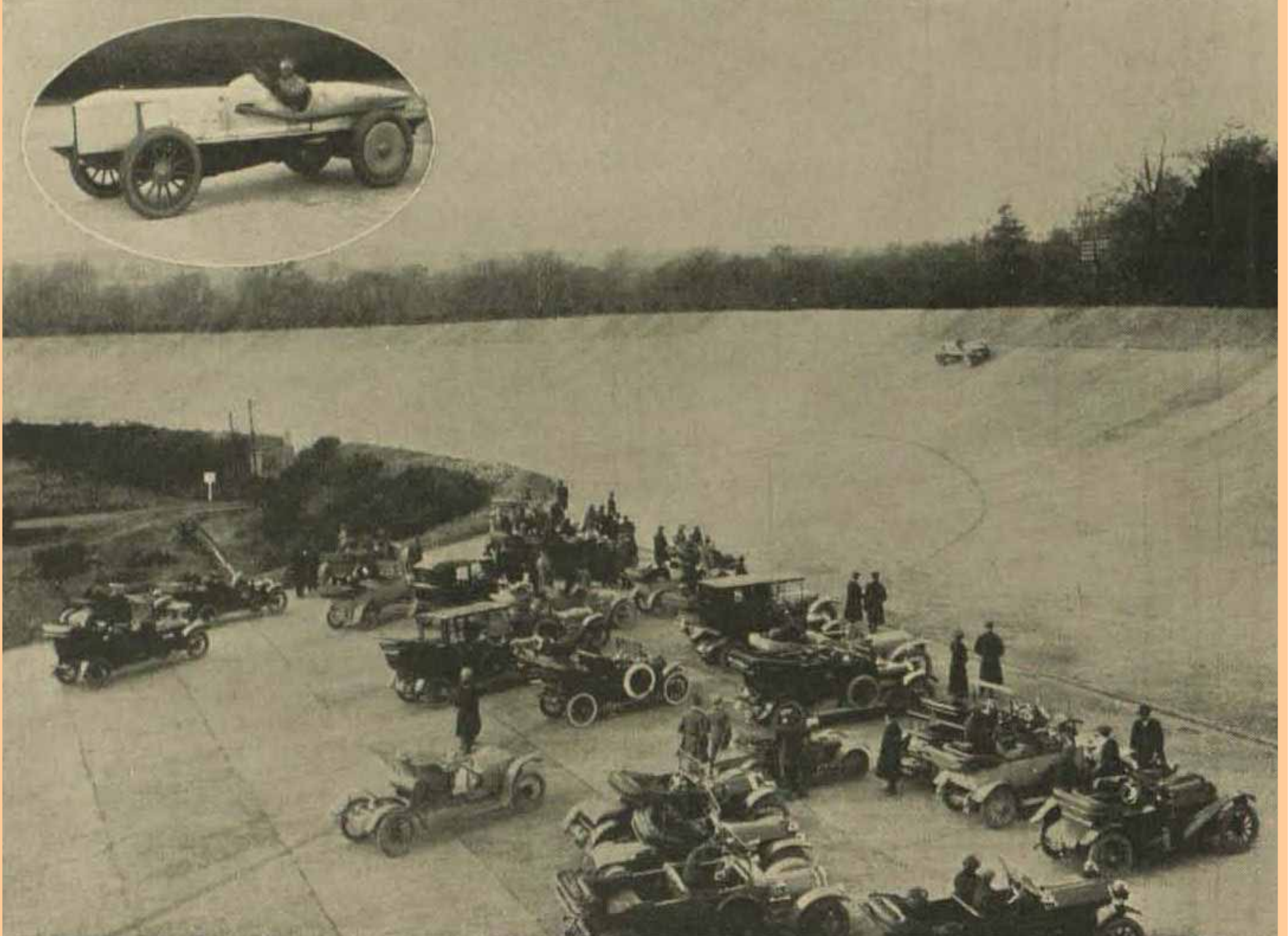
By the time of its opening the Great War was already upon us and no doubt some of the more senior boys were itching to get in on the action. Many thought it would all be over by Christmas, but as we know now it wasn't and no doubt some of those senior boys saw action over the coming years.



The Woking Secondary School and Technical Institute became the Woking Boys Grammar School, before being converted into Woking's Police Station in the 1980's.

SECONDARY SCHOOL AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTE. WOKING.

THE TRAGIC PERCY LAMBERT IN 1913



1913 was supposed to be a good year for Percy Lambert. In November he was to marry his fiancé, but first his other great love, motor racing, was to take centre stage when he became the first person in the world to cover over 100 miles in an hour at Brooklands. Others had briefly travelled at over 100mph, but he was the first to do so over an hour-long period. In fact he covered 103 miles and 1,470 yards as he drove his Talbot over the sixty-minute period around the famous Byfleet track on the 15th February that year.

Unfortunately his record didn't last long, so when his fiancé asked him to give up his dangerous sport he did so on the condition that she would let him have 'one last attempt' to regain the world speed title.

In a sense he kept up to his promise, as on the 21st October (just a couple of weeks before the planned wedding), Percy Lambert travelled around Brooklands for the last time, this time at over 110 miles per hour. Sadly, on the last lap, one of his tyres burst and Percy was killed as the car crashed over the curved embankment.

There are some people who swear that late at night at Brooklands they can hear his car revving its engine and driving off at high speed,

but as I don't believe in ghosts I suspect it is more likely to be some night-shift employee or customer of Tesco's desperate to get home –

rather than the ghost of the tragic Percy Lambert.



WOKING'S CANAL BRIDGES OF 1913-14



In earlier articles I recorded the problems Woking had with the canal company and the bridges that by the early 20th century were inadequate for the modern motor car. Woking Council replaced some (such as Hermitage Bridge and Chertsey Road Bridge) with temporary wooden structures, but at Wheatsheaf Bridge, Stumps Bridge (right) and Pirbright Bridge (above) in Brookwood, the council demolished the old 11ft wide, single carriageway, brick-arched bridges and replaced them with modern reinforced ones 40ft wide. The costs of reconstruction by early 1914 had reached £1,337, although a further £1,412 had been expended on the costs of obtaining the Act of Parliament that allowed them to carry out the work!

Roads had been widened too, such as the Chobham Road in Horsell at Kettlewell Farm where a barn had previously jugged out into the middle of the road, whilst at Kingfield 'Gongers Lane' (now called Loop Road) was widened and 'through the generosity of Lady Bristol, the council were able to widen Westfield Road from 14ft to 40ft.' Up to April 1913 it was estimated that £6,000 had been spent on paving, £3,900 on widening the railway arches, and £4,517 on private street works and the improvement of Woking High Street.



Whilst the onset of war obviously didn't completely stop improvements from being made locally, it did curtail many projects and it would not be until after the war that the land

Woking Council had set aside for council houses at Old Woking would be built upon – the 'hero homes' of Corrie Road.