

MOTOR MECHANICS & PETROL PUMPS

Iain Wakeford 2016



Byfleet Automobile Engineering in Rosemount Parade.

By the mid 1920's it is clear that the motor car had well and truly arrived in Woking. According to a report to the General Purposes Committee of Woking Council no fewer than twenty-nine 'swing-arm' petrol pumps had been allowed to be erected across public footpaths and pavements in 1926. A further fifteen pumps were approved in 1927, not to mention the number of premises that already had permission for such apparatus or had petrol that could be 'supplied without obstructing either the footway or roadway'.

Before then fuel would have been provided in cans, petrol probably being supplied to the local agents by the Anglo-American Oil Co Ltd or British Petroleum, both of which had depots at Woking Station (Railway Approach – down side).

I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that Henry Quartermaine, one of Edwardian Woking's greatest entrepreneurs, is often credited with opening Woking's first motor garages in Chobham Road, but if he did, he very quickly had to cope with competition, as the Woking Cycle and Motor Works (managed by Frederick Tyler) was in operation on the corner of Goldsworth Road and Percy Street by at least 1909, along with Pierce J Quinn, who in the same year is recorded as a motor engineer in Duke Street.

By then, perhaps not surprisingly, there were also a couple of garages on the edge of Hook Heath (probably one of the few areas where the residents could afford the new vehicles), with George Tippling at the Wych Hill Garage and John Doran Macdonald's 'Hook Heath Garage' on Hook Heath Avenue.

Byfleet too had more than its fair share of

motor engineers, attracted no doubt by the opening of Brooklands and later the development of the St George's Hill Estate (and probably Dartnell Park).

Arthur Sharpe is recorded in 1909 as running a 'motor garage' at West Byfleet, with the Byfleet Automobile Engineering Company opening their garage at Rosemount Buildings in 1910/1.

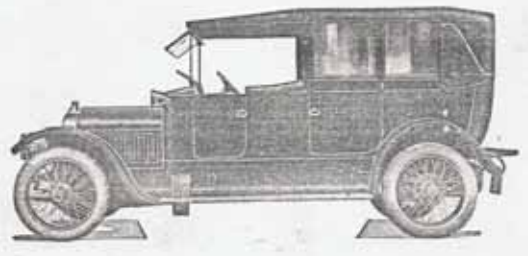


Tyler's 'Woking Cycle and Motor Works' was on the corner of Percy Street and Goldsworth Road, whilst Quinn's garage was in Duke Street - advertised here in 1914.

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Duke Street, WOKING.

Conway West Motors new showroom on the corner of Guildford Road and Station Approach in 1927



By 1913 at Byfleet, Thomas Henry Freeland & Sons were moving with the times, for as well as being smiths and ironmongers, they were also now listed as 'motor engineers'.

As well as engineers and garages offering repairs, there were also showrooms, such as the West Surrey Cycle and Motor Company 'cycle and motor agents' at Knapp Hill (listed in 1909), and vehicle makers (or at least people able to construct one from parts).

By far the largest petrol station by the late 1920's, with a tank capable of holding 6,600 gallons, was Conway West Motors' garage on the corner of Guildford Road and Station Approach, where seven pumps (six on the road and one with an arm) were allowed in 1927.

Conway West had previously been at Old Woking on the site that had been an old coaching inn called the White Horse Hotel. The council had bought the site (and other properties around the junction of the High Street and Broadmead Road) for road-widening,

Conway West's opened their garage opposite in 1927 – the site later being taken over by L F Dove (who rebuilt it in the 1970's with the shops and offices now called Southern House).

but had subsequently leased the property first to Conway West and later to Mr A C Fleming. He stored 300 gallons in four tanks, two of which supplied cars with a hose across the footpath as they parked in the street (presumably negating any benefit that the road widening was supposed to achieve)!

Conway West's garage in Old Woking was later taken over by Flemings (and later still was Leigh's Garage).





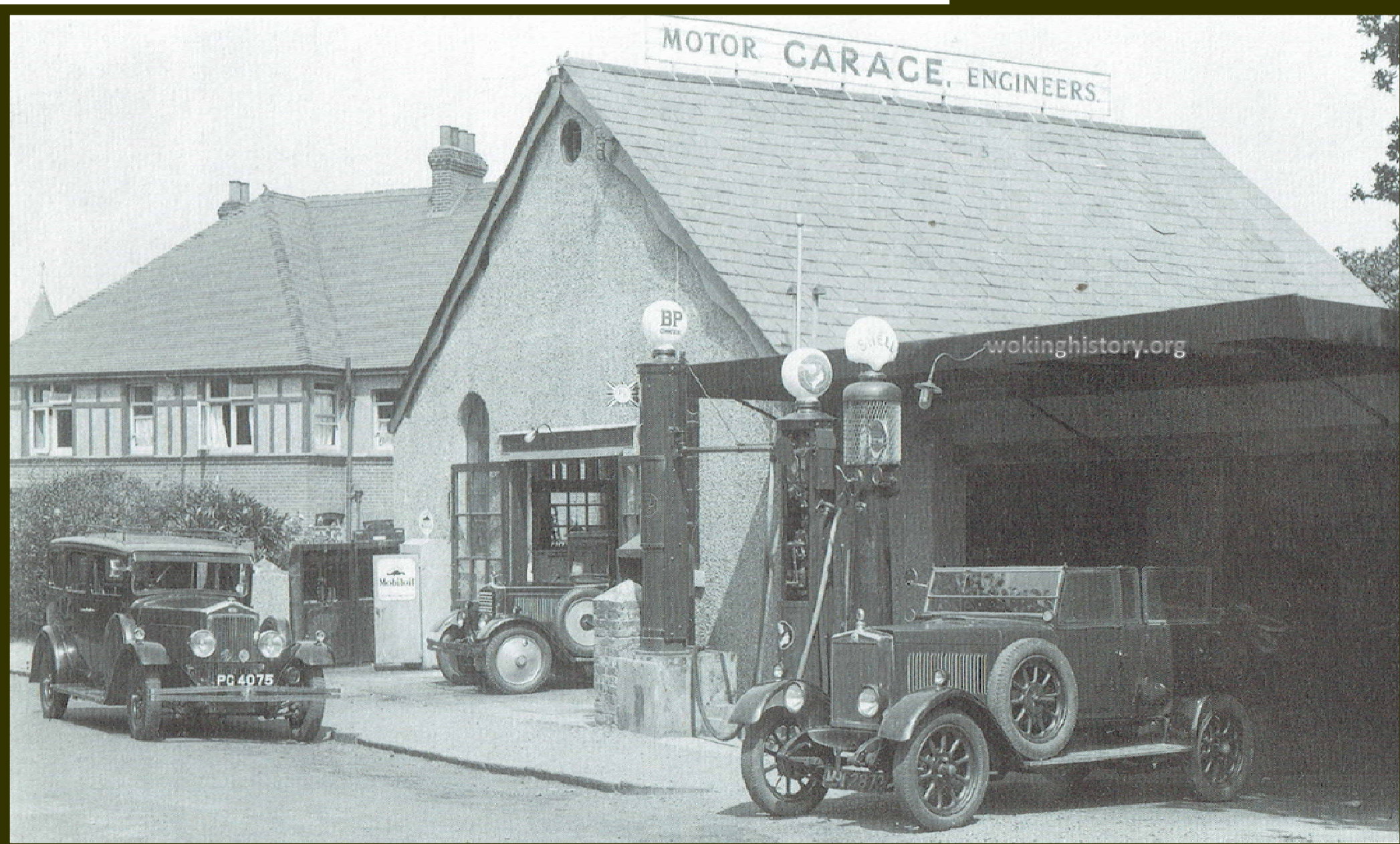
Frank Mills' Garage in Hermitage Road, St Johns, where Kiln Bridge House now stands.

in St Johns, capable of storing 1,500 gallons.

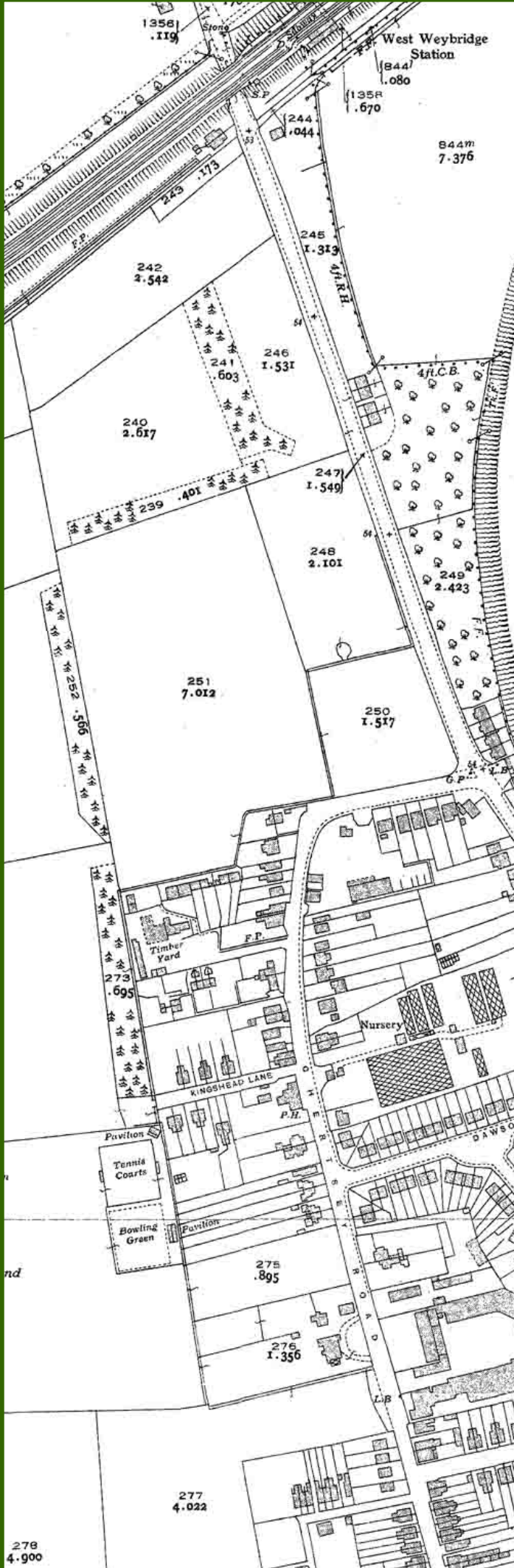
By the late twenties petrol stations were opening all over the district with former blacksmiths, workshops and even disused chapels being converted into garages or motor showrooms. The motor car had arrived, and the

streets of Woking would never be the same again!

Maybury Motors Ltd, in College Road, started out in the former Primitive Methodist Chapel, whilst at St Johns what is now Phipps Motors was originally the site of another Methodist Church.



WEST WEYBRIDGE STATION & THE CONCERNS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL



Byfleet Parish Council had other matters of concern in 1926-7 with some of the houses in Oyster Lane. Apparently there were complaints that some of the new council houses were being let 'in one of two cases to people who had been in the village for a very short time'. The Clerk was forced to write to Chertsey Rural District Council complaining that 'this meeting strongly disapproves of the action of the RDC in letting council houses to outsiders'!

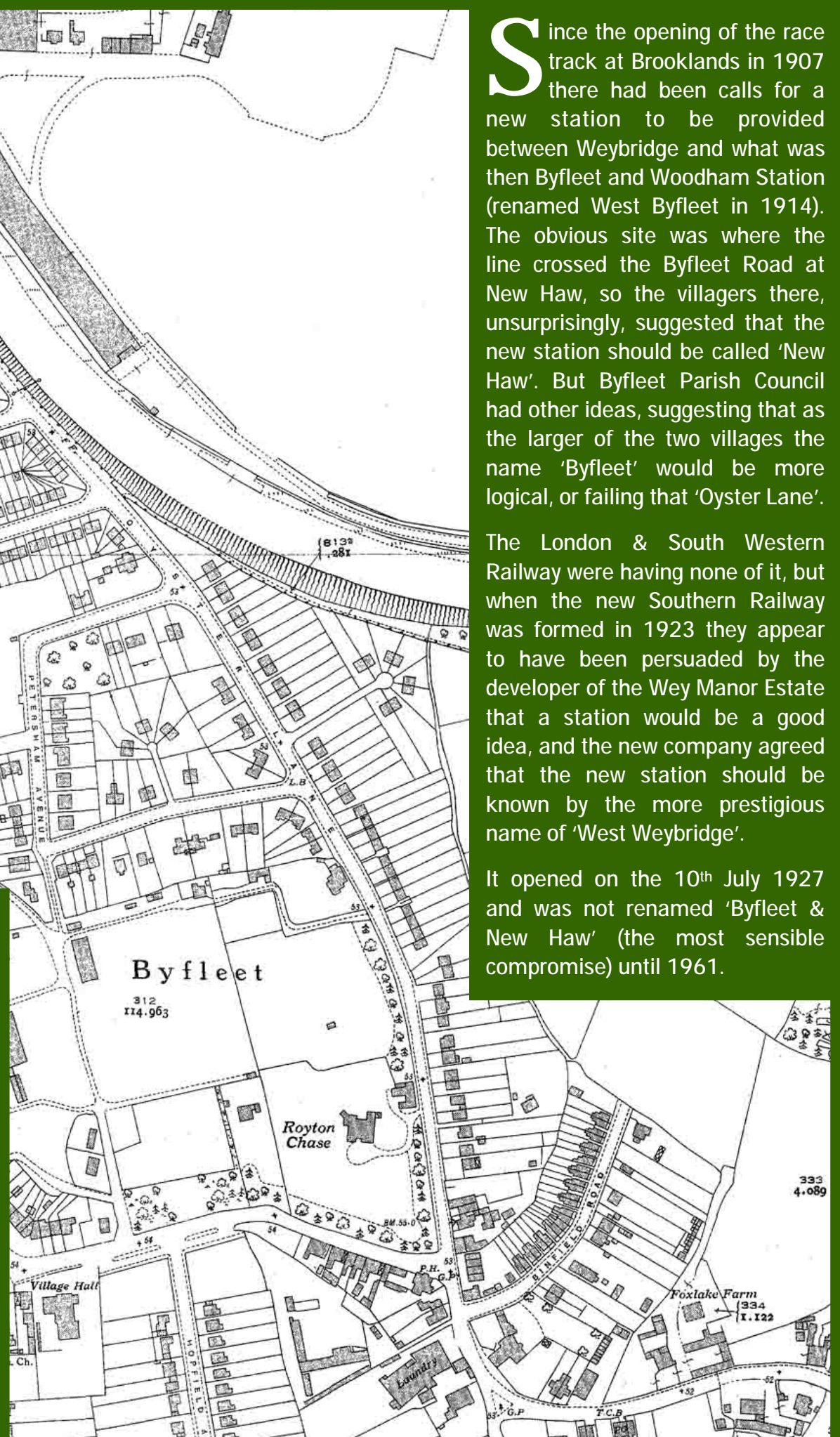
Residents were complaining too about the children 'congregating at the end of Petersham Avenue every evening until a late hour and making such noise to render it impossible for children to sleep who were put to bed on time' and at the same meeting, others were annoyed that 'since the advent of the motor dustcarts, the period between visits of the dustmen had been prolonged' and the dustbins were no longer emptied once a week!

I wonder whether anyone listened to the complaints.

Since the opening of the race track at Brooklands in 1907 there had been calls for a new station to be provided between Weybridge and what was then Byfleet and Woodham Station (renamed West Byfleet in 1914). The obvious site was where the line crossed the Byfleet Road at New Haw, so the villagers there, unsurprisingly, suggested that the new station should be called 'New Haw'. But Byfleet Parish Council had other ideas, suggesting that as the larger of the two villages the name 'Byfleet' would be more logical, or failing that 'Oyster Lane'.

The London & South Western Railway were having none of it, but when the new Southern Railway was formed in 1923 they appear to have been persuaded by the developer of the Wey Manor Estate that a station would be a good idea, and the new company agreed that the new station should be known by the more prestigious name of 'West Weybridge'.

It opened on the 10th July 1927 and was not renamed 'Byfleet & New Haw' (the most sensible compromise) until 1961.



THE NEW MAYFORD BRIDGE



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With more traffic on Woking's roads came the need for more road works and bridge repairs. We have already seen in recent weeks the widening of roads at Goldsworth & St Johns in the early 1920's, and the culvetting of the watersplash in Saunders Lane (1922-23), now it was the turn of the old cart bridge at Mayford to be replaced.

Exactly when the first bridge was built to replace (or should I say compliment) the original ford at Mayford, I do not know,

although we do know that one was in place by 1486 when an 'Adam Ryley of Woking' left 20d (10p) in his will for the 'fabric of the bridge at Mayford' - together with money to repair the bridges at Woking and 'Howe'.

The latter would have been what we now call Hoebridge, across the 'Hoe Stream', whilst at Mayford the bridge crosses the 'Bourne' – the same body of water, but for some reason a different name. Just to add to the confusion further upstream, beyond Kemishford Bridge, the 'Bourne' is called the 'Stanford Brook',

whilst downstream of Hoebridge, where the stream joins the River Wey near Newark, it is marked on most maps as the 'Bourne' again!

Whatever the river is called, all of the bridges over it downstream of Mayford have been rebuilt in recent years, but at Mayford the bridge was last replaced in 1926-7, replacing an old brick arch bridge, the foundations of which can apparently still be seen underneath the 1920's carriageway.