

# THE DEATH OF FREDERICK CORNELIUS STOOP IN 1933 (OR 1934)

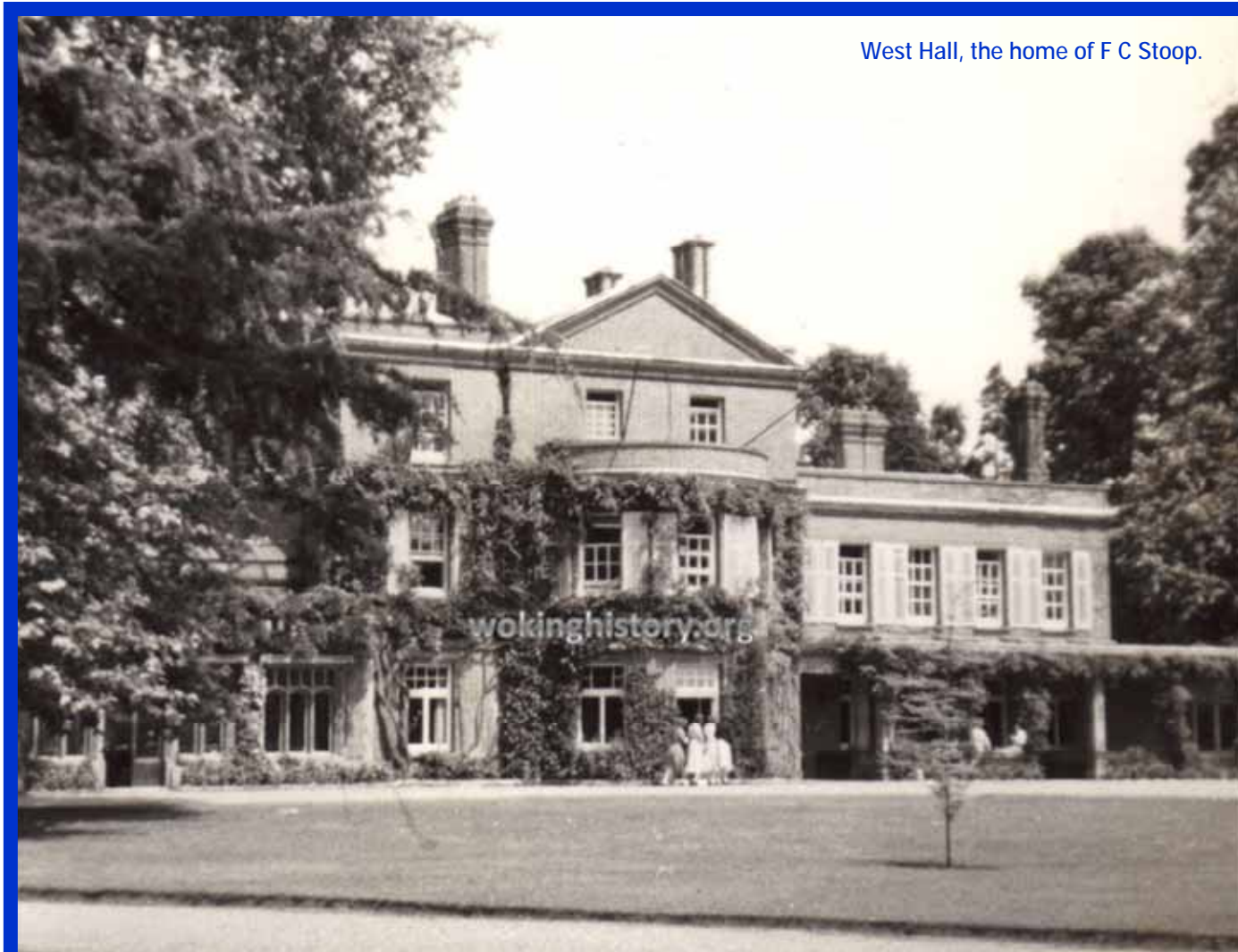
Iain Wakeford 2016

**F**rederick Cornelius Stoop was born in Dordrecht, Netherlands in 1854, the son of Adriaan Stoop and Cornelia Deking Dura. His family were heavily involved in the oil industry and he was a leading light in the newly merged Shell and Royal Dutch Oil Company.

He married Agnes MacFarlane Clark, a local heiress whose family property apparently included the Dartnell Park estate and in 1890 they took over West Hall an 18<sup>th</sup> century property once the home of Richard West and rebuilt it.

Stoop is perhaps best remembered as the benefactor of Byfleet Village Hall (below). In May 1897 a public meeting was held to decide how to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Stoop offered to build a hall, club and parish room at his own expense (£2,200) for the benefit of the people of Byfleet providing that they found a site and paid for the furnishing. Byfleet's other great land-owner H.F. Locke King agreed to provide the land, leaving the village to find just £300-£400 to complete the project.

West Hall, the home of F C Stoop.







The hall (above) was opened in 1899 but in 1906, to celebrate his silver wedding anniversary, Stoop added an improved stage, three dressing rooms and toilets, extending the hall in 1914 with the doubling of the committee room's floor-space and the club's billiard room and then in 1929 buying and donating land to the east and south (the land now used as the Village Hall car park).

The Stoop's should also be remembered for

their generosity to the Church of England Waif's & Strays Society. In the early 1890's the society had established a couple of children's homes in West Byfleet – one a 'Receiving Home' where children could be assessed and another known as the St Nicholas Home, mainly for destitute and crippled girls. In 1906 (again possibly to help celebrate their silver wedding) the Stoop's provided land at Pyrford where a new, up-to-date and larger home could be built.

Meanwhile, whilst developing Dartnell Park, they built a boat house to the north and west of Parvis Bridge for the exclusive use of the residence and in 1911 or 12 acquired the land on the opposite bank from Mr Locke-King so that a store for punts could be built. After the First World War, as a mark of gratitude to those who fought for his native and adopted countries, Stoop converted this into the village boat club run by a committee of trustees for the

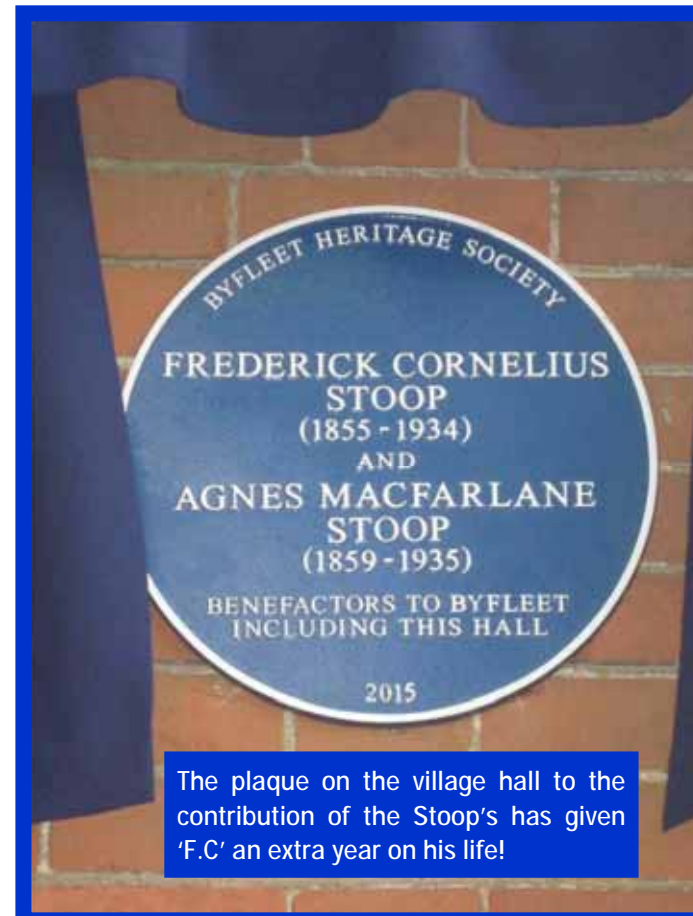


The land at Pyrford for the St Nicholas' Home was given by the Stoops.





The boat club at Byfleet, given to the village by F C Stoop



The plaque on the village hall to the contribution of the Stoop's has given 'F.C' an extra year on his life!

benefit of the parishioners of the village.

Their connection with the local church was emphasised in 1910 when Mrs Stoop laid the foundation stone for the new St John the Baptist Church in West Byfleet (below). Before then the worshippers of West Byfleet had to make do with a small iron chapel in the grounds of Broadoaks, but by 1900 this was considered too small and the architect W.D. Caroe was appointed to design a new church for the area. The history of the church can be found elsewhere on this site, but basically without the help and enthusiasm of the Stoop's the new church may never have been built (or at least its construction would have been delayed even longer).

Also at this time Frederick Stoop was involved in providing recreation grounds for both Byfleet and West Byfleet. Together with Charles Charrington at Broadoaks he offered to lease twelve acres of the Byfleet Poor Law Lands (at £30 per annum) for use as a recreation ground in West Byfleet, providing that the Parish Council maintained it. But the Charity Commission insisted the land be bought on a 21 year lease meaning an initial layout of £630 for the two gentleman, which they evidently agreed to do. Unfortunately the First World War intervened and it was not until 1921 that the ground could be properly laid out, but in the meantime the two gentleman also agreed to finance the extension of the recreation ground in Byfleet village and on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1926 F C

Stoop (as President of the Byfleet Bowls Club) bowled the first jack on the green there.

It should also be noted that he was President of the Byfleet Cricket Club from 1896 until 1932, relinquishing that particular post due to ill-health just a year before he died in 1933 (leaving £130 to the club to wipe out their deficit in the process).

Strangely, perhaps, he appears to have had no connection with the local Rugby Club even though two of his sons played the sport for this country with his eldest son, Adrian Dura Stoop eventually becoming President of the Harlequins club (1920-49) – their ground at Twickenham being named 'The Stoop' in his memory.





# MORE HOMES FOR KINGFIELD

In recent weeks we have looked at the building of new estates in the early 1930's at Horsell, Woodham, West Byfleet and Pyrford, but now I want to return to south Woking where a couple of months ago I recalled how Woking Council started to build new houses in the 1920's and 30's in Old Woking and Westfield at sites such as Gloster Road, Granville Road and the houses off Balfour Avenue.



There is a story that a couple of brothers who lost some of their land as a result of the compulsory purchases of their land for housing decided to set up their own building firm. They were Albert & Jack Simmons, with their company (A & J Simmons) going on to develop what is now Shackleford Road and the estates off Rydens Way (more of which in a few week's time).

It is claimed that the 'Road House' estate at the junction of Kingfield Road and Old Woking High Street was one of their first developments

– the houses being advertised in June 1935 as 'Sixteen super modern houses in the most charming position in the district', sold by Messrs Giles, Giles, Warwick at a starting price of £555.

It is perhaps debatable exactly how 'charming' the position was in 1935, but the current charms include fine views of the Sainsbury Local and a soon to be opened food bank at the New Life Church!





# WESTFIELD WAY HOUSING

Whilst A & J Simmons were starting their business of building homes in Old Woking, the Council were continuing their program of house construction with the completion of their estates in the area at Westfield Farm.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1934 the Housing Committee recommended building forty

homes on the land that at that stage was being farmed by Mr H Bonner, with a further recommendation in June that year that the tenant be given enough time to clear his crops, paid £25 in compensation for his loss and 'be moved to a council house after the demolition of the cottage in which he at present resides'.

The Ministry of Housing were eventually asked to sanction the construction of forty-four houses at an estimated cost of £20,407, the final scheme being named Westfield Way – a little oasis of housing surrounded by fields (until the new estate was built on them in the last couple of years).

