

HOUSING THE COMMUTERS OF THE LATE 1930's

Iain Wakeford 2016



The developers of Cavendish Road benefitted from the council extending the surface water sewer in the Goldsworth area - as no doubt did those of The Dell.

We have seen in previous articles how in the early and mid 1930's local builders such as Evelyn Ricks built numerous little estates on former farmland in both Westfield and Horsell, and how Thomas Higgs developed his estate on the land once occupied by Woodham Hall. With the electrification of the railway through Woking in 1936-7 the incentives for developers to find more local land for housing increased, and soon little nurseries and farmers close to town were receiving offers they couldn't refuse.

The Jackman family had started out as farmers in the St Johns area, but by the end of the 18th century had turned their fields into nursery-grounds. George Jackman II, however, realised the potential of their elevated grounds on St Johns Hill for housing, so when he died in 1889 he insisted that the land be sold for development and the nursery had to move.

His successors chose a site on the lower slopes of Wych Hill at 'Bedford's Farm' for the new nursery, but by the late 1930's the temptation was too great to resist redevelopment here too – and more land was purchased at the other end of Egley Road at Mayford (surely far enough

The Dell Estate W O K I N G

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away from any pressure of future redevelopment)!

By 1937 the fledgling Wych Hill Way had started to be built (with just four houses listed in the Woking Street Directory of that year), although other houses had been given planning permission. One of the developers was Mr R.O. Garrard, who in September 1937 offered to donate a strip of land at his 'Turnoak Estate' to the council if they extended the surface water sewer to take water from his land. The council accepted, possibly releasing the flood-gates (if you will pardon the pun) on other developers requesting similar help to drain their land.

One of these was a company called Banstead Estates who at that time were developing what became known as Cavendish Road, off Triggs Lane. They at first wanted to drain the water into a culvert running along the main London to Southampton line, but when the Southern Railway refused to authorise this, they turned to Woking Urban District Council to enlarge and extend the drainage in the Goldsworth area for the detached houses they were then seeking permission to build. At first, with estimates of between £1,210 and £1,540, the council



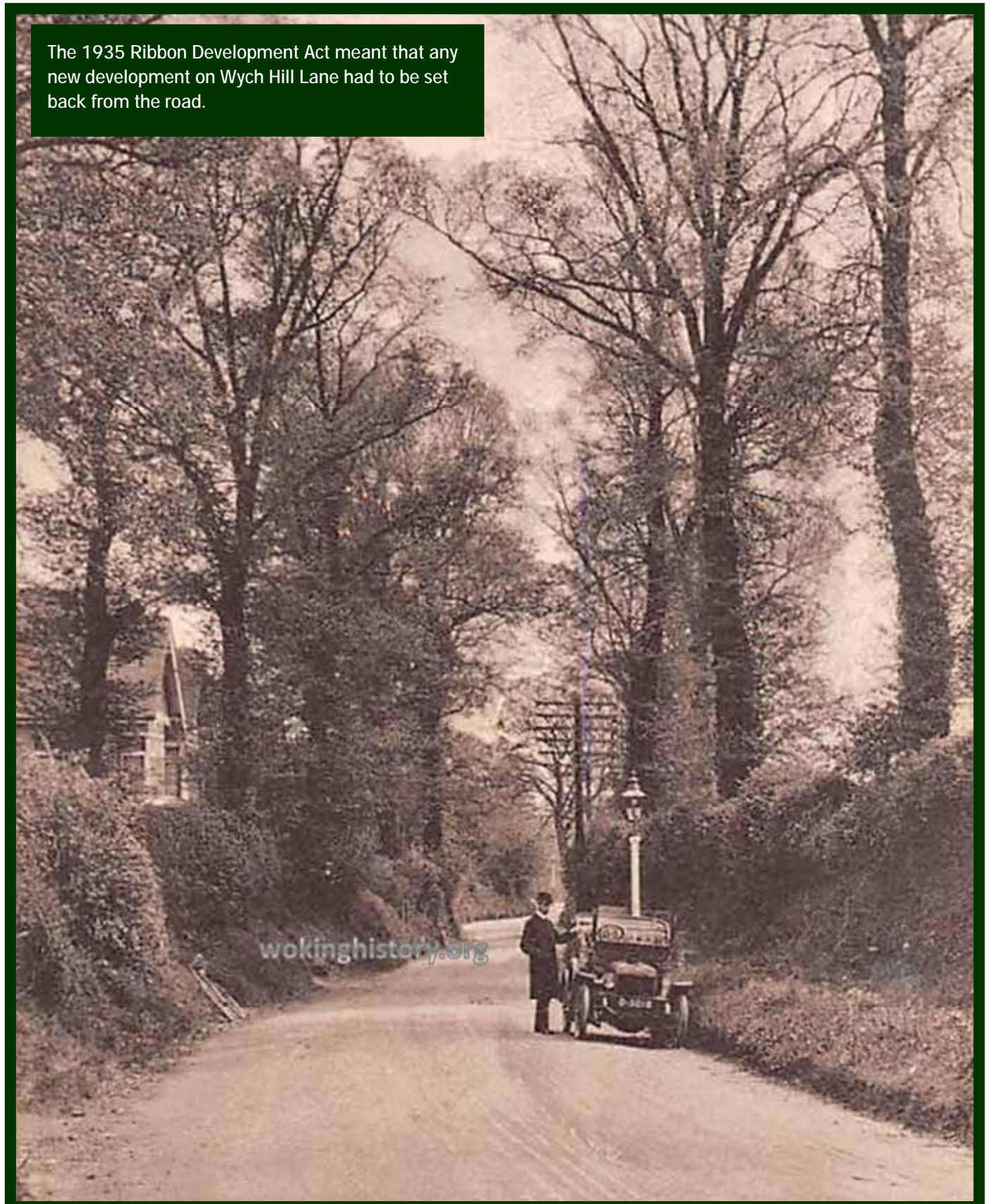
Wych Hill Lane at Turnoak was transformed as houses were built on the fields to the right.

refused, but in October 1937 having received an offer of £400 towards the scheme from Banstead Estates, the council gave in and agreed to fund the rest of the scheme (surely a bargain for the developers who could then proceed to seek permission for more houses and bungalows in the road).

Another small estate that no doubt benefitted from the surface water sewer extension was The Dell off Goldsworth Road, where a number of local builders submitted plans for various plots, including 'West Surrey Building Estates', Mr Vernon Davies, and Smith Brothers of Byfleet (who in 1936-7 were also building a few houses in Salisbury Road, off Guildford Road).

Meanwhile back at Turnoak the fields by the Hoe Stream at Elmbridges were also being developed. My copy of the 1937 street directory (which can be found on the 'Archive' section of my www.wokinghistory.org website) records a 'Mr L H Palmer (Peramber Builders)' as the occupier of 'Ecclesbourne' in Turnoak Avenue, at that time one of only five houses in the new road.

As well as Turnoak Avenue, Peramber, were also building the houses along Wych Hill Lane backing onto the Avenue, but here the new 'Ribbon Development Act of 1935 meant that they had to set them back from the road – hence the wide greens in front of the houses from Elmbridge to the Turnoak Roundabout. It might seem small compensation for the loss of what had once been a wonderful rural scene, but Wych Hill Lane at that time was designated to be part of the Woking Western By-pass, a scheme that only finally seems to have been abandoned when the speed humps were installed in the upper part of Wych Hill Lane late in the last century.



The 1935 Ribbon Development Act meant that any new development on Wych Hill Lane had to be set back from the road.

MORE BUILDING IN BYFLEET



The new improved Southern Electric train service didn't just 'electrify' the housing market in Woking, it had an impact on the development around West Byfleet and 'West Weybridge' stations too. In New Haw the new improved service to London brought large-scale development along both sides of Woodham Road and in Byfleet local builders were putting in applications to Woking Urban District Council for little estates such as Queens and Kings Avenues (Tarrant), Studland Road (W Pleece & Son), the Clock House Estate (E Clarke & Sons) and twenty-five houses in Church Road by W F Summers.

Rectory Lane saw a number of schemes submitted including the Glebelands Estate by E P Griffin -where the initial plan for ninety-three bungalows and houses were approved (subject to drainage) by the council in April 1937; and at Rectory Close, where developer Thomas Higgs offered in February 1937 the council a 15ft strip of land adjoining his new estate to the council as an extension of the Recreation Ground.

Finally Smith Brothers, of Station Road, West Byfleet (who as we have seen were also developing parts of The Dell & Salisbury Road in Woking), were responsible for a number of shops and houses around Byfleet and West Byfleet, including the houses of Mowbray Avenue in Byfleet, a block of eight shops in The High Road (granted permission by the council in May 1936); and five shops in Station Approach, West Byfleet (granted permission in September 1937).

The eight shops in the High Road are shown here – the one on the corner with Hopfield Avenue (now the China Garden takeaway) having recently featured in The Woking

Advertiser (9th September 2016) following the rediscovery of the original shop sign for T.H Edmonds, Tobacconist, Confectioner and evidently lending library.



THE CORONATION OF ~~EDWARD VIII~~ GEORGE VI



In May 1935 the country was celebrating the Silver Jubilee of George V. The following January they were in mourning his death, but thought soon turned to organising parties again for the Coronation of his son, Edward VIII - although as we all know

now some commemorations were a little premature!

With Edward's abdication in December 1936 plans were quickly adjusted to celebrate instead the coronation of his brother Albert as

George VI in May 1937, and the people of Woking (always eager to organise a good knees up), didn't just attend the local council's official celebrations but organised their own - such as this street party in Hipley Street, Old Woking.



Chobham Road, decked out with flags for the coronation celebrations in May 1937.