

CAR PARKING CHAOS & COMMON COMPENSATION

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The introduction of one-way streets in Woking is nothing new and has often been seen as the panacea of all parking problems - but as you can probably guess in reality it didn't always work out that way and in the early 1960's other 'road improvements' often negated the good that such schemes sought to solve.

Take Duke Street for instance – an almost insignificant road between the Broadway and Chertsey Road. After the war, for reasons that are not entirely clear, it was decided that the road should be widened. In the late 1950's that decision was reversed, and a scheme to make it a one-way street introduced. The fact that later that decision would be almost literally reversed (with the one-way traffic going in the opposite direction) only added to the confusion, but one result of all these council manoeuvrings was that parking restrictions had to be introduced into the road – cutting down the number of places where visitors (and traders) could park.

Before the Second World War the council had provided a few car parks in the town centre at Goldsworth Road, Percy Street and in Commercial Road – but parking closer to what



The one-way Duke Street in the early 1960's.

In March 1960 Woking Council agreed to spend £300 on demolishing the properties at 25-28 The Broadway and £550 on laying out a new car park.

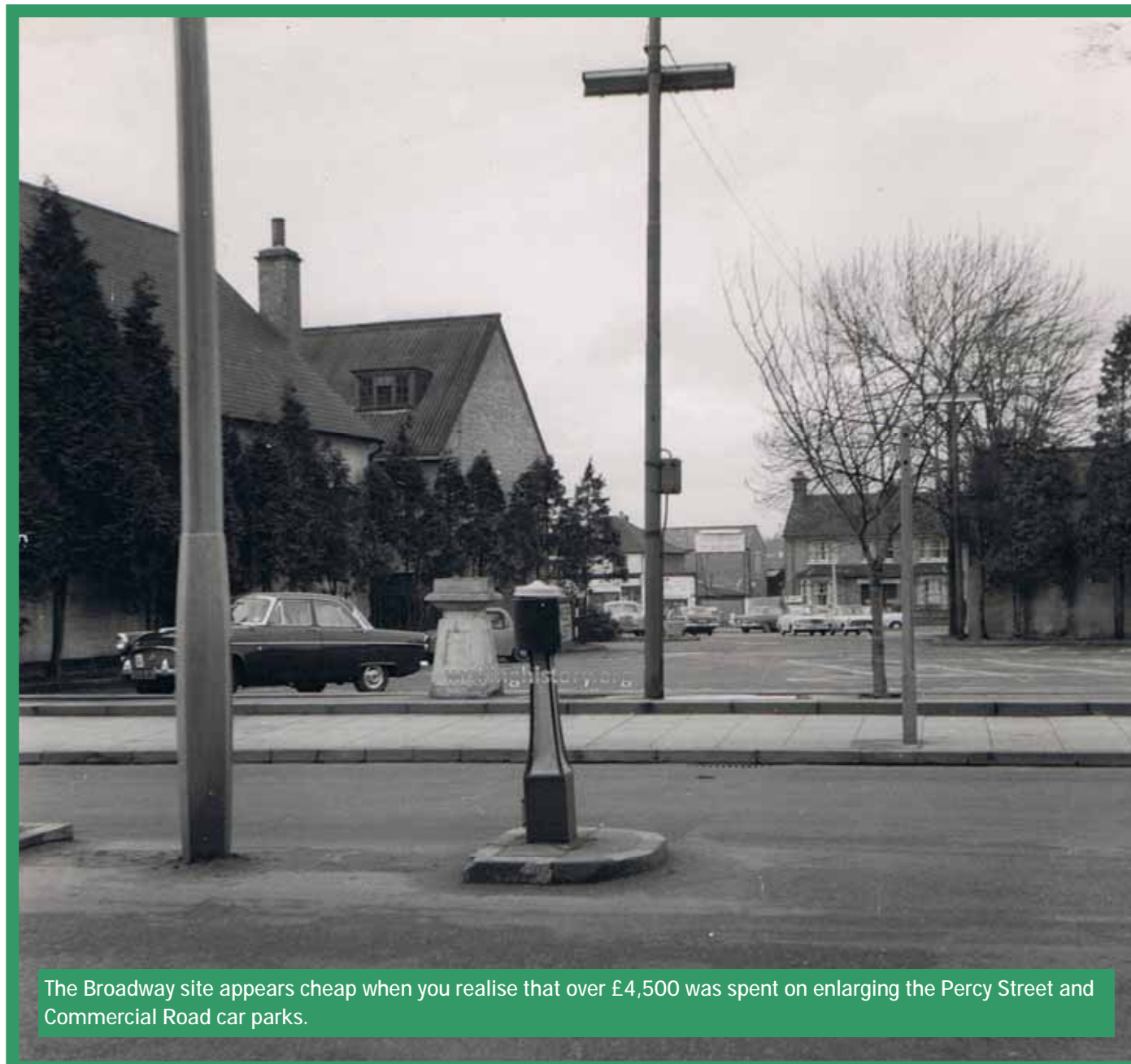


was then Woking's main shopping street (Chertsey Road) was severely restricted. Properties in the Broadway had been bought in order to provide a bus station for the town, but with that idea on hold it was decided instead to utilise the space as a temporary car park – offering some relief for the hassled motorists of the late 1950's and early 60's.

Both the car parks in Percy Street and Commercial Road were extended in 1957 (Ebenezer Mears of Byfleet gaining the £4,500 contracts for the resurfacing work), and other sites sought, such as the recreation ground at Boundary Road. In the end, however, the council appear to have settled on the former allotment site in Brewery Road as their preferred site for a new 'town centre' car park – even though it was across the canal in Horsell – quite a long walk from the shops in town!

Before the allotments were created (as part of the war effort to grow more food locally), the site had been part of Horsell Common, which meant that other land elsewhere in the village had to be found in compensation for the loss of the open ground. That fact appears to have been forgotten by the council (with the Common Society and others conveniently suffering from collective amnesia as well), when the council sought to redevelop the car park many years later – offering more replacement land as compensation!

Incidentally the name 'Brewery Road' was under attack at this time as some residents wished to get it changed - partly because there was no longer such a building in the road, but mainly because they simply didn't like the name and all that was associated with such buildings!



The Broadway site appears cheap when you realise that over £4,500 was spent on enlarging the Percy Street and Commercial Road car parks.

Mrs G.S. Thursfield of Alwyne Cottage set up a petition for the name to be changed, but apparently she moved away before it was finished and somehow 'forgot to sign it' before she left!

In January 1960 a Mr Brown began a second petition (which received 35 signatures) 'because Mrs Thursfield asked him to', although he had to confess that even though he would like to see the name changed he was 'not really

worried about it'. Others, however, were furious at the suggestion of changing the name, including local councillor Archie Benstead, so the residents' request was firmly turned down.

History, on this occasion at least, appears to have won the day and the recollection of Stedman's Brewery in the road (near the entrance to Old Malt Way) was revived and celebrated – much to Mrs Thursfield's (if not Mr Brown's) disgust.

The provision of a new car park on what had once been part of Horsell Common meant that exchange land needed to be found.

