

MAYFORD & HORSELL REFUSE REFUSE

Iain Wakeford 2018

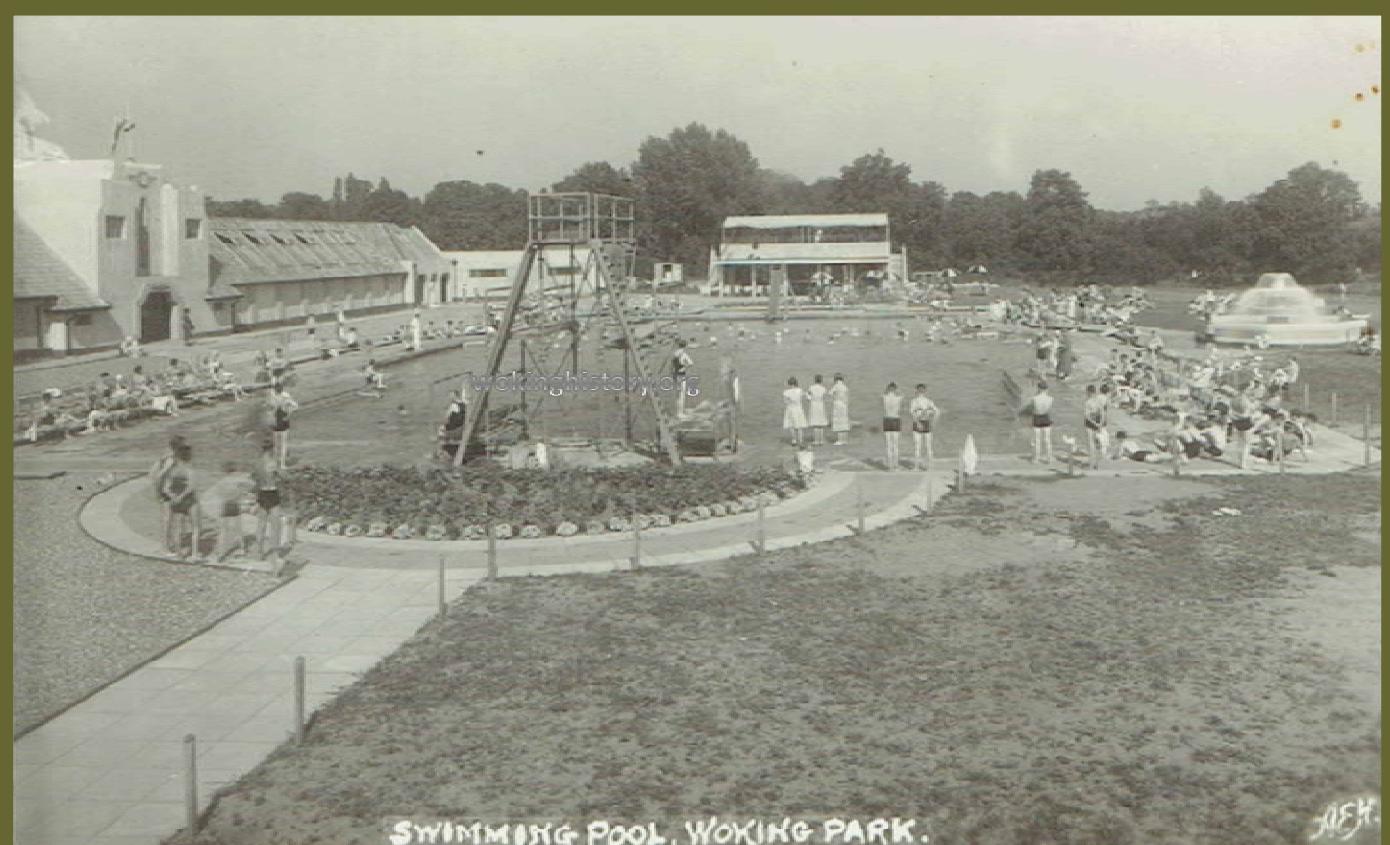
Last week I noted how the residents of Mayford benefitted from the construction of a new main sewer through the village in the early 1960's - only to discover that both the council and private developers then cited the pipe's extra capacity as a reason to build on the nurseries and fields of the neighbourhood. But that was not the only threat that the village faced in this period, as Woking Council also had its eyes on parts of the Bourne Valley in the village as a potential site for 'controlled tipping' of refuse.

The meadows beside The Bourne (or Hoe Stream as it is known further downstream) had long been used by Woking as a site to dispose of its domestic waste, with the area where the Pool in the Park is today being one of the first council 'tips' in the early 20th century. By the early 1930's that site was full, and another tip was started slightly upstream near the Elmbridges (where the apartments and houses of Willow Reach are now). The original site was then grassed over and a new open-air swimming pool 'floated' on the rubbish, but before long the Elmbridge dump was also full to capacity and other sites sought for the fast-growing district's rubbish.

At West Byfleet the area between the railway and canal to the east of Scotland Bridge was used after the Second World War as a tip, but by the early 1960's this too was nearing capacity, and in January 1961 the Chief Public Health Inspector to the Health Committee of Woking Council reported that 'several sites that might be suitable for controlled tipping' were being considered, as well as 'alternative methods of disposal, such as incineration and composting'.

Unfortunately the 'alternative methods' were much more expensive than simply dumping the refuse onto low-lying meadows or in some disused hole in the ground – so the committee preferred to concentrate their efforts on the 'several sites' that the Inspector had in mind.

One of those was the meadows near Ellis Farm at Mayford, but others it turned out were not even in Woking at all – such Wanborough Chalk Pits and Send Hill (both in Guildford RDC) and

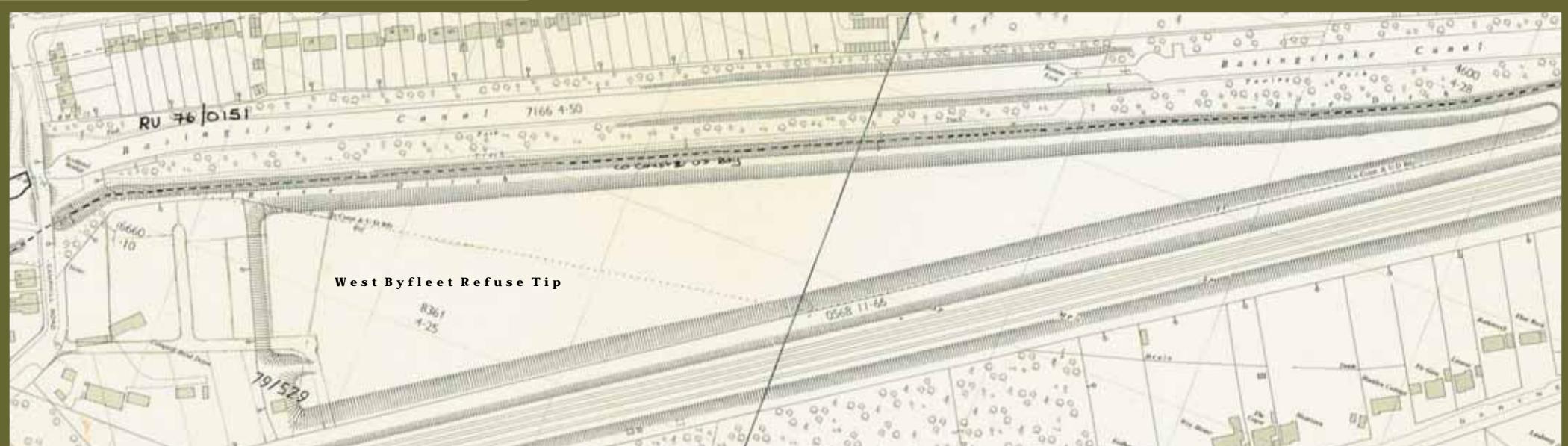


In the 1930's the open-air pool was 'floated' on the site of the town's original refuse dump.



The 1930's 'tip' at Westfield Avenue was eventually filled up to become allotments and the site of various community groups huts – before the site was 'decontaminated' and Willow Reach built.

In February 1962 Woking Council approached British Transport for permission to extend the tip at West Byfleet up to the railway embankment, but the compensation required to move the fence and telephone wires was considered too much. The extra capacity would have lasted only an extra three or four years, however, so other sites were desperately required.





In the early 1960's Woking Council proposed using the meadows at Ellis Farm as a dump.

the 'clay quarries' at Chobham (partially within Bagshot RDC). Unsurprisingly both council's were not keen on accepting Woking's waste (they had their own to get rid of), and indeed at the time Woking were fending off both Bagshot and Chertsey council's, who had ideas to tip some of their refuse onto sites within the Woking area!

Border Farm at Mimbridge had been offered to Woking Council as a potential caravan site, but in May 1962 the Health Committee considered it as a suitable site for a new dump. The Thames Conservancy and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food disagreed and at Mayford a large petition was arranged in the summer of 1962 to protest at the use of the meadows at Ellis Farm, with Cllr Mrs McGaw (who had been in favour of building council

houses north of Saunders Lane) coming to the defence of the village and seconding a proposal that the Ellis Farm site should be dropped.

Woking Council's attention then settled on the Sandpits on Horsell Common – a site that 'was not situated near dwelling houses and should accordingly eliminate complaints in this connection'. How wrong can you be? Apart from the houses nearby at Anthony's, the powerful

The Sandpits at Horsell Common was another idea – vigorously opposed by the Horsell Common Preservation Society.





SMARTS HEATH

In the end a number of small sites were chosen, including land on the edge of Smarts Heath at Mayford, where the 'Martlands' estate was at first thought to contain enough land for just six-month's worth of waste.

Horsell Common Preservation Society (owners of the land) were not going to give in that easily and in the local press fought a ferocious battle to stop any part of the common from becoming a dump (controlled or otherwise). Sadly the council's response seems to be that if the Common Society would not allow 'controlled tipping' on the common, then the council will no longer help the Society with 'uncontrolled tipping' – insisting that from then on they pay for the Council to take away waste illegally dumped on the land!

Many more sites were then investigated including land off Smarts Heath in Mayford; part of the disused railway cutting at Bisley; Martyrs Lane at Woodham, and the Sewage Works extension land at Old Woking.

These would only be short-term solutions however, with the Smarts Heath site (Martlands) only expected to last about six months, and Martyrs Lane pit just a couple of years. They (and other small sites about the district) did manage to last much longer than expected, but even in the mid 1960's Woking still hadn't really come up with a solution to the problem of refuse.

Eventually composting and pulverisation would be considered, but for now they were, to a certain extent, burying their heads (if not their waste) in the sand!

The people of Horsell did not entirely escape the Council's refuse team, with the pits at Martyr's Lane being chosen as another site for the town's controlled tipping.

