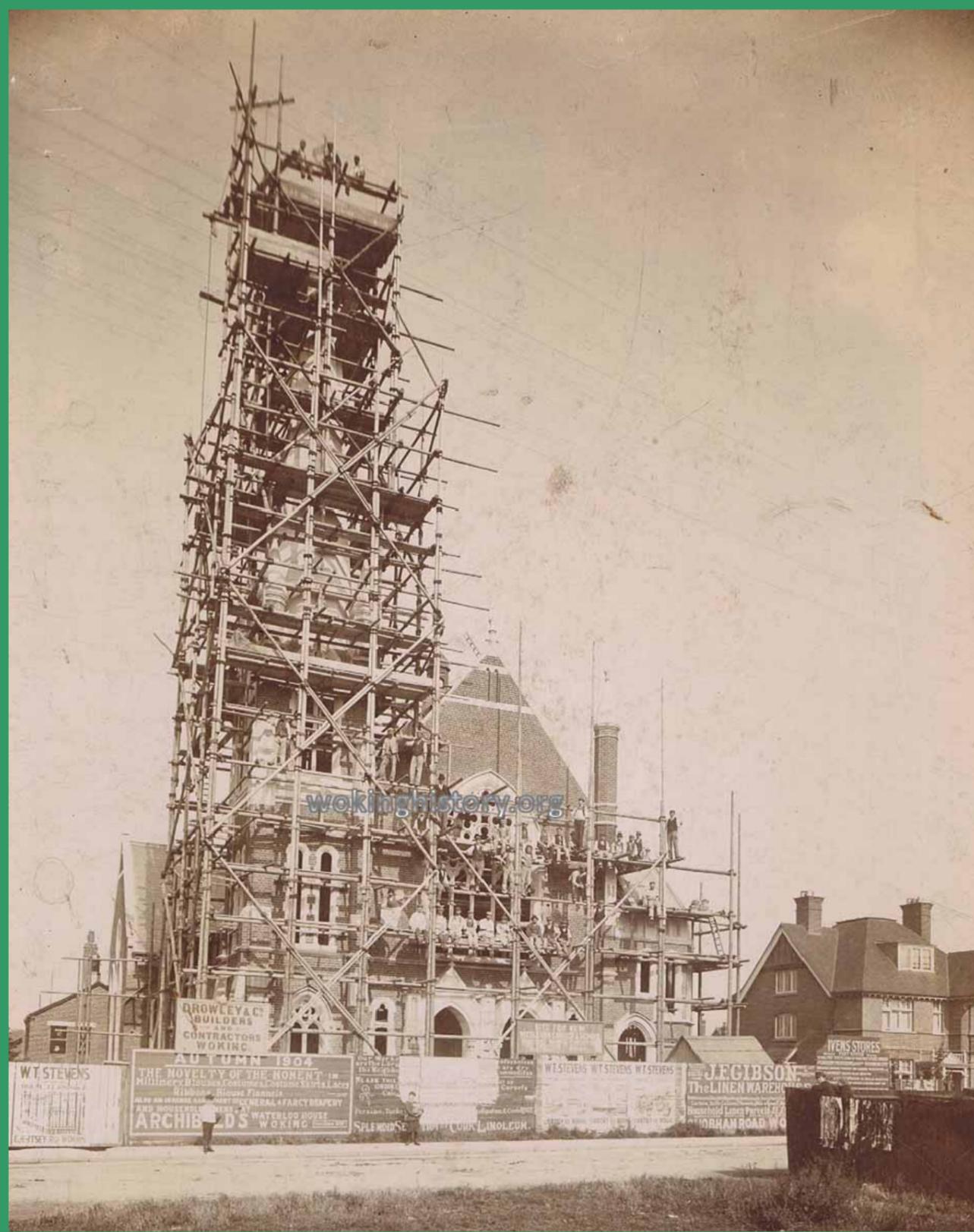


TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

Iain Wakeford 2018

The mid 1960's, as we have seen in these articles in recent weeks and months, was a time of great change in Woking. Old buildings were being pulled down and replaced by new structures – often many stories high, over-shadowing their older neighbours. In Commercial Road new shops with offices over had been built along most of the southern side of the street, and to the north the modest new two-storey, General Post Office (1960) was soon dwarfed by the massive seven-storey Premier House, completed in 1964 (later re-clad and renamed Globe House).

In March 1963 the trustees of the Methodist Church sold their site in Commercial Road to the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society Ltd, having acquired the site of Alwyne House in Brewery Road, Horsell, away from the hustle and bustle of Woking Town Centre. The site was bought 'for well over £10,000' from local



The Methodist Church, built in 1904 in Commercial Road, was one of a number of public buildings where the Victoria Square development is currently taking place.

On the corner with Percy Street (Victoria Way) was the offices of the Woking Water Company, which together with the Grand Theatre was replaced in the early 1960's by Premier House (later renamed Globe House). Next to the Grand was the old Woking Urban District Council Offices, demolished in the late 1950's to make way for the Post Office, with the Constitutional Club and Methodist Church being later replaced (in the 1970's) by Cawsey Way and Boots respectively

builder Walter Deakin, whose previous plans for flats on the site had been turned down by the council on numerous occasions.

The new site was dedicated on Palm Sunday (22nd April) 1964, with the congregation of the church walking from the old building in Commercial Road led by the Sheerwater Boys Brigade Band and the Trinity Boy Scouts troupe.

The architect of the new church, Edward D Mills, clearly did not care for its Victorian designed predecessor as he wrote in the official souvenir of the new building's dedication in 1965 that he endeavoured 'to keep alive the tradition of architectural quality which was lost in the Victorian times when churches became meaningless imitations of past styles unrelated to the world in which they were built'.

The new church was to be octagonal (a shape that John Wesley had apparently decreed all Methodist churches should be) so that the congregation could 'gather around the Communion Table and the pulpit in a family meeting' – with the shape of the ceiling and lantern light increasing 'the light intensity over the sanctuary area'.

'The building has not been conceived as a series of separate units but as one complete

The New Trinity Methodist Church

Woking, Surrey

Dedication 12th June 1965

Official Souvenir

entity where the place of worship and the other spaces are all equally important and are all carefully related to one another', and indeed it appears that the comfort of the entire congregation was thought of.

'To complete the Worship unit a Crying Room is planned in an adjacent position with its own toilet and cloakroom, separated from the main congregation by a large sound proof window and equipped with a loudspeaker so that the

service can be relayed to mothers and children' This, it was claimed would 'allows small babies to cry as they wish without disturbing the rest of the congregation'.

The foundation stone for the new church was laid on the 23rd May 1964, and by the following year was ready to be opened, the dedication service taking place on the 12th June 1965.

I believe the 'Crying Room' is now called a 'creche', where fathers as well as mothers can

enjoy the sound of their little ones hollering, content (or maybe not) in the knowledge that they are not disturbing anyone on the other side of the sound-proof wall.

