

# WOKING'S ONE-WAY THE WRONG WAY (ONCE MORE)!

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**A**t the end of March 1969 a new one-way system was introduced to the streets of Woking upon the completion of the Stanley Road 'link road', across Walton Road to Chertsey Road, and in anticipation of work starting on Woking's new town centre. The end of Walton Road, nearest the town, was closed off along with Chertsey Road at its junction with Church Street and the traffic directed in a clockwise direction around the town - up Stanley Road and then around into the Broadway, where traffic from inside the town centre would join from both Duke Street and Chertsey Road.

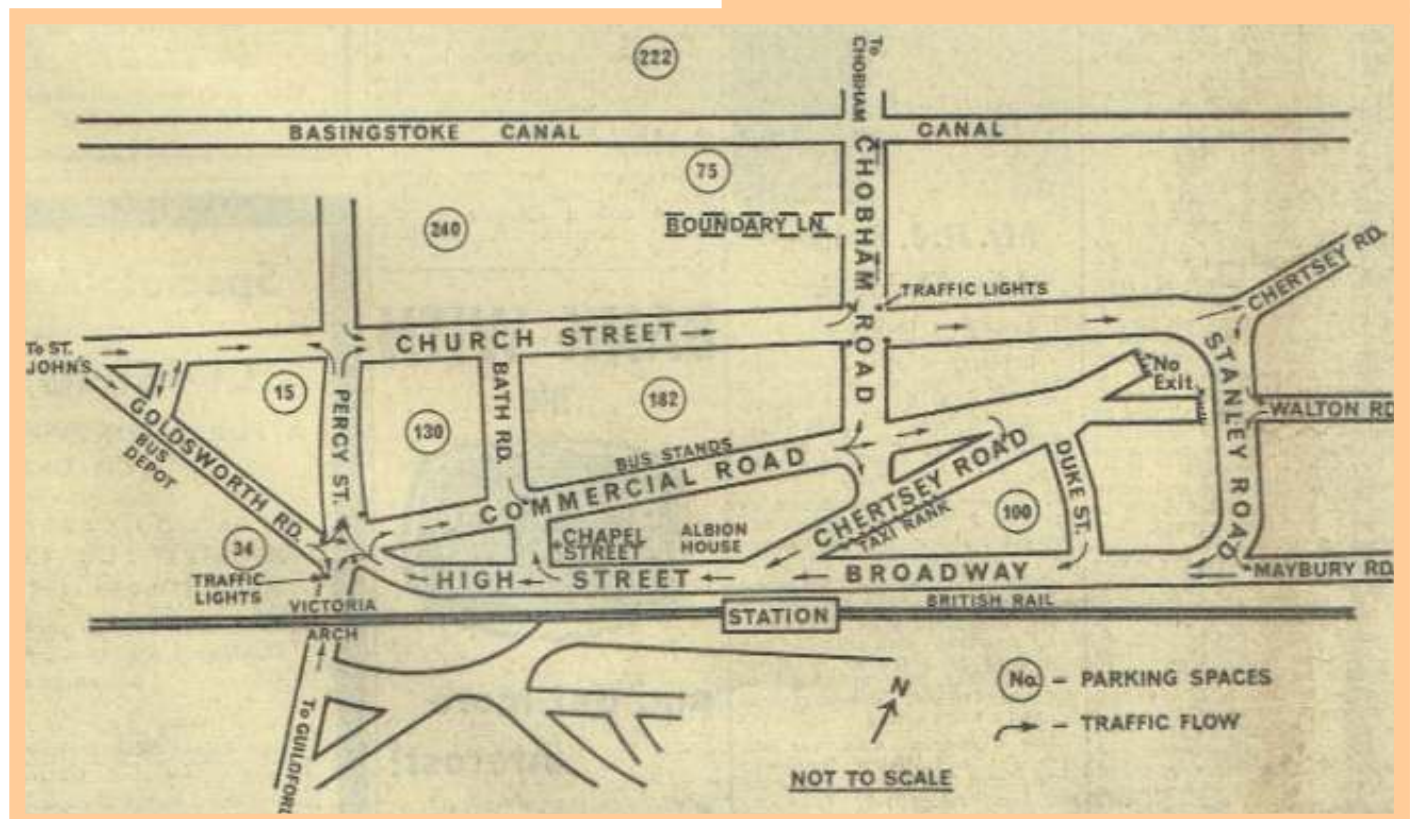
At the station commuters and other visitors to the town would be confronted with up to four lanes of traffic, all trying to merge with each other into two lanes (and not necessarily concentrating on the poor pedestrians), whilst further down the High Street the motorist had to negotiate the new traffic signals installed to control the complicated junction with Commercial Road, Percy Street, Goldsworth Road, and Guildford Road emerging from Victoria Arch.

A left turn took you out of the chaos to the relative sanctuary of the south side of the

station, whilst a sharp right would take you into Commercial Road and the centre of town. Here, on the corner by the Atalanta and Library, traffic merged from both the left and right - Bath Road on the left and Chapel Street on the right - before splitting into three possible directions at Gammons' Corner, where you could either turn immediately right into

Two lanes of cars from The Broadway met two lanes of cars from Chertsey Road, to merge into just two lanes down the High Street, whilst pedestrians tried desperately to cross to and from the station.

Woking Council helpfully published a map showing the new one-way system - although some of the details were incorrect.





Percy Street (which would eventually become part of the town's by-pass and renamed Victoria Way), only allowed traffic to head north to Co-op corner.

Chobham Road and then Chertsey Road (and so back to the station); go straight on and turn into Chertsey Road (or Duke Street) to once more enter the affray; or turn left to a new set of traffic lights at the junction with Church Street.

The latter was apparently the worst junction of the new system, with buses from Commercial Road having great difficulty negotiating the left turn into Chobham Road and then the right turn into Church Street.

Church Street was, in effect, the temporary town centre by-pass, with most of the vehicles travelling from the west (Goldsworth Road) direction being directed eastwards, and only those heading south of the railway being allowed to break off down Goldsworth Road to the Victoria Arch junction.

Those from the south (Guildford Road), were directed up Percy Street to the Co-op corner, where a right turn would again take the motorist east, to either escape north to Horsell via Chobham Road or Chertsey Road, or join the one-way system at Stanley Road.

Although the map produced at the time confusingly seemed to suggest that traffic from Horsell could not travel down Chobham Road to the Church Street junction, they were in fact allowed to do so, as were cars wishing to head west along the section from Percy Street to Goldsworth Road.

Not surprisingly the whole new system was slammed by local traders and shoppers alike, who never keen on change, could not see the point in yet more parking restrictions and altered junctions.

'Sometimes, especially on Fridays at tea-time, it took up to ten minutes to get from Duke Street to the Post Office in White Rose Lane', wrote one reporter in May 1969. 'It still does' he went on, before detailing how Woking had come to this.

'Woking's traffic problems caused the planners and highways authorities to take a long, hard look at the road patterns and with the aid of maps, plans, census figures and so on, they produced a town merry-go-round. Property was torn down, a link road made, hundreds of signs erected, new white lines laid down, one-way streets instituted, double lanes marked out, oil drums and expanding barriers dotted around,

and policemen and wardens used to initiate everyone.

The steam-hammer, it seems, went to work to crack a nut, which, it would appear to me, to have remained un-dented'.

The main gripe, however, was undoubtedly at the station where now all north-south through traffic had to pass. The provision of a pedestrian crossing would eventually ease the pressure for pedestrians – at the cost to motorist who were then even more held up by the pedestrian controlled lights.

In the end the 'experiment' was 'tweaked' and the poor motorist had to get used to a new set of one-ways and regulations. Indeed, you could say that the tweaking is still going on in our modern-day merry-go-round that is Woking Town Centre's 'temporary' road system.

The worst section was Chobham Road between Commercial Road and Church Street, where buses had to turn left and then right within a relatively short length of road.

