

CARDINAL RED

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What connects the Sovereigns Public House, Woking Station, the Football Club and Woking Palace?



The Sovereigns was originally called the Railway Hotel, the first place to be built on the edge of Woking Common after the Railway Station opened in 1838. The railway was built across Woking Common as the area was virtually uninhabited and therefore cheaper to buy. The town of Woking

Now called the Sovereign, the pub was originally called the Railway Hotel, opened in 1840, five years before the branch line to Guildford was constructed.

was then what we call Old Woking, with heath all around the station where the current town centre is today.

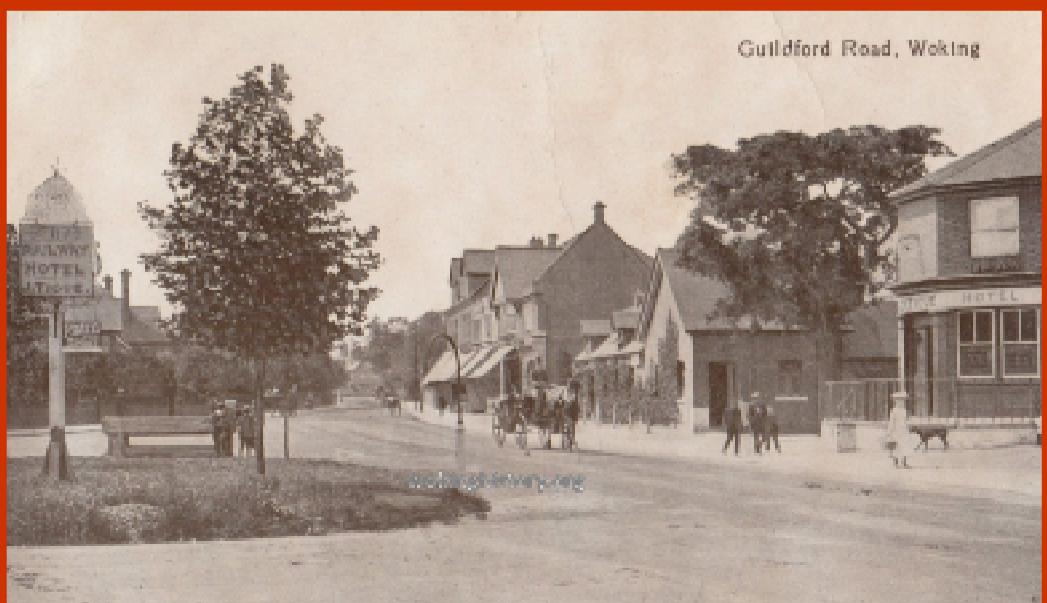
As the heath was part of Woking Common (with locals holding certain 'common rights, to graze sheep and cattle and take turves and gorse for their fires), it was impossible to develop without parliamentary approval.

As a result, the enterprising local businessman, Edward Woods, apparently purchased a part of

a field on the edge of the common, where the ancient Guildford to Chertsey Road crossed another old track from Heathside (the side of the heath) towards Goldsworth.

That was in 1840, five years before the branch line to Guildford was opened, so that stage coaches from that town heading to Woking Station could drop off their passengers to take

The hotel was the first place to be built on the common after the opening of Woking Station in 1838.





refreshments before transferring to the train to take them up to London (with the horses no doubt taking advantage of the trough on the green opposite).

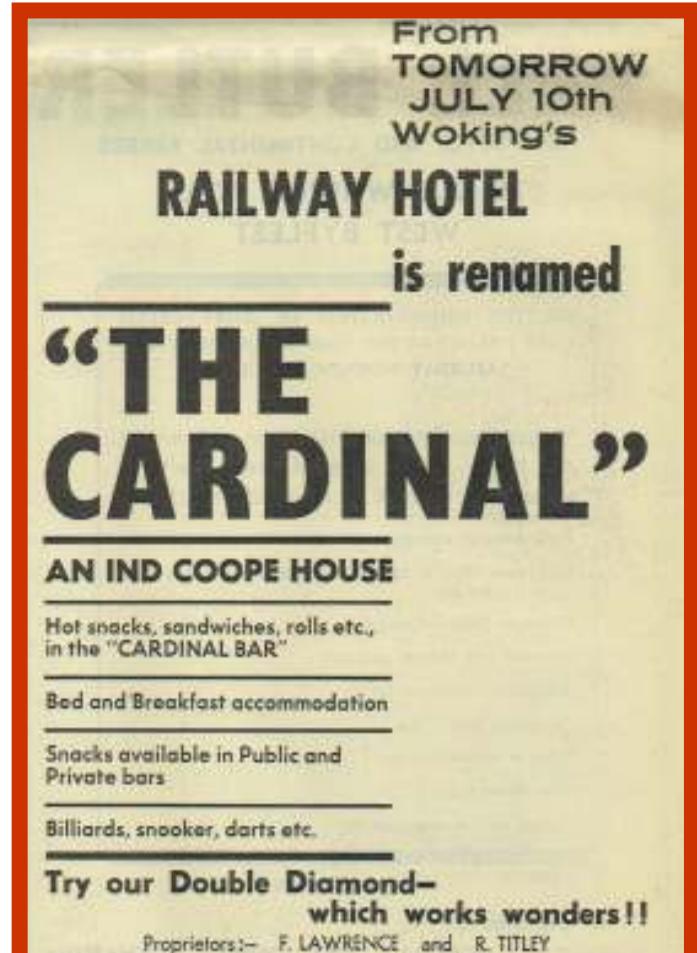
Woking Football Club was founded in 1889 (or possibly slightly earlier depending on which story you believe) with the club first playing their matches not in Woking, but in Horsell. The West Surrey Times of the 14th September 1889 reported that 'this year Woking F.C. enters upon its third season', but the earliest record of a game appears to be in January 1888 when Woking lost 15-0 to a side from Weybridge. In the early part of the 20th century the club moved to a field in Heathside (where Hockering Gardens are now), and the Railway Hotel being the closest public house, no doubt benefitted from the new trade (much as the Kingfield

Arms has done since Woking F.C. moved in 1923 to that part of town).

In 1970 Ind Coope Brewery decided that the Railway Hotel should be renamed 'The Cardinal' - I assume in a move that was intended to attract back the supporters of Woking Football Club, as that is the nickname of the club (often corrupted to 'The Cards').

The nickname originally played on the fact that the club's kit was 'cardinal red' – after Cardinal Wolsey (he of Shopping Centre fame), who often visited Henry VIII whilst he was staying at Woking Palace.

The story goes that it was whilst he was at Woking that he received the letter from the Pope making him a Cardinal. Arthur Locke in his series of articles later published as Woking



The pub was renamed 'The Cardinal' in 1970 presumably

Past noted 'the crafty Wolsey showed the Pope's letter to Henry, and pretended to be doubtful whether he ought to accept; but 'the Kyng did encourage him and willed him to take the order and so called him My Lord Cardinal'.

As indicated above the good Cardinal later went on to give his name to one of the pedestrian walkways of Woking's new shopping centre (and later the whole centre itself), but back in 1970, when the Cardinal Pub was being officially opened, that was still very much 'in the future'.

Nowadays the Kingfield Arms is the main watering hole for fans.

