

## Woking Gateway

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 10th June, 2010)

I have been leading guided walks around the Woking area on a regular basis for almost twenty years and have given talks, mounted displays, and written numerous books and booklets on Woking's past for over three decades. Now I hope to bring you a regular column in this newspaper looking at the history of places in the local news and (hopefully) answering some of your queries on the area's heritage.

To start with I suppose the largest item of news at the moment is the 'Woking Gateway Project' with the news that Willmott Dixons have been appointed by Carrisbrooke Investments and Woking Borough Council to build the £250m 'new town centre' between Commercial Way, Cawsey Way, the High Street and Albion House.

Of course this is not the first 'new' town centre that Woking has seen, and it seems that right from the start buildings have been redeveloped almost as soon as they have been built. Indeed part of the 'Gateway' area was one of the first, when a row of cottages in the High Street, built in the mid 1860's, were converted by 1870 into shops.

The shop on the corner with Church Path (where the Nat West bank is now) was originally the Post Office, with Mr Sparkes Comeleus Knight's drapery store, Mr Hunt's grocers and Mr Hart's butchers shop going down the road towards Chapel Street.

An aerial view from the mid 1920's showing the lower end of the High Street and Commercial Road. The buildings along the top left of the photograph have all been replaced by the Woking new town centre of the 1970's (Wolsey Place), those to the bottom and right, will go under the new, new town centre.



Some of those 1870's shops are still there, as you can see if you look above the modern shop fronts. They are locally listed buildings, being part of the Woking Town Centre Conservation Area, and are really good examples of small-town Victorian architecture. How much that will matter to the developers and the 'visionary council team' (as their press release calls them) is debateable.

Even the 1930's buildings further down the High Street have some character, but all will be swept away, no doubt, to be replaced by another massive nondescript block that could be anywhere in the country. Another piece of Woking's heritage lost forever.

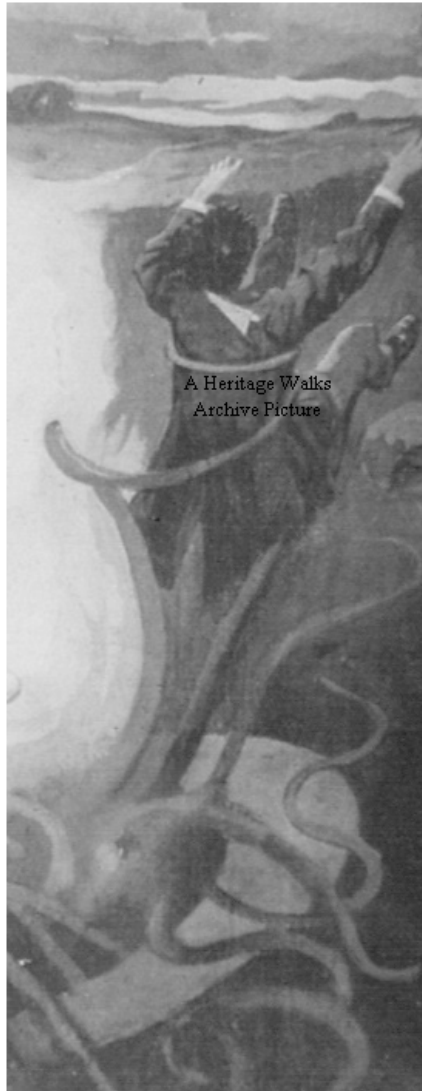


An aerial view of part of the 'Woking Gateway' site, with the buildings of Chapel Street along the bottom of the picture. The original Wesleyan Chapel, from which the road gets its name, is clearly visible on the corner with Commercial Road. Many older residents will remember the building as the Library (before the new one was built in Town Square). The WAVS building is now on the Chapel site.

## The War of the Worlds

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 18th June, 2010)

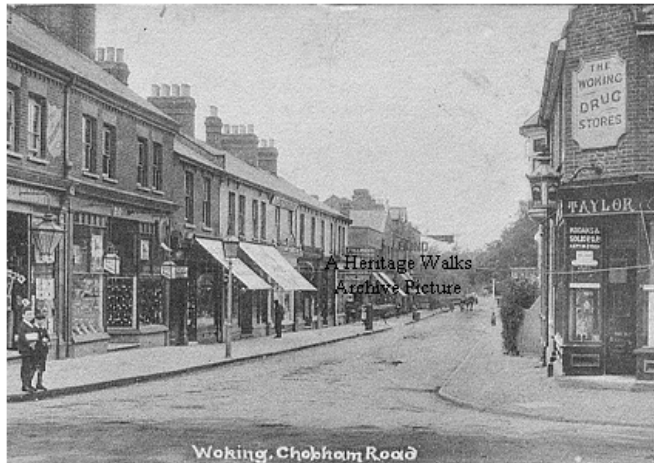
Last Saturday I was standing in Town Square helping 'Cycle Woking' launch their 'War of the Worlds' family cycle ride around Horsell Common & Maybury, when my mind starting wondering and I began thinking of who or what H.G. Wells would get his Martians to destroy if he was writing the book today! It is quite a fun exercise and strangely therapeutic.



The War of the Worlds was originally published as a series of articles in Pearson's Magazine (before it was published as a book in 1898). This illustration from the magazine shows the shopman (Henry Flowerday's son) being grabbed by the tentacles of the Martian after they emerge from the cylinder in the sandpits.

I have researched the history behind his famous science-fiction story, and found the names of real people who I am convinced must have upset the author in some way for them to be included in the book.

Henry Flowerday was the only 'sweetstuff dealer' in Chobham Road when Wells was living in Woking, so his son must have been the lad Wells records in chapter three ('On Horsell Common') when he states that 'an enterprising sweetstuff dealer in the Chobham Road had sent up his son with a barrow-load of green apples and ginger beer' to serve the crowd gathered to watch the opening of the Martian's cylinder. The lad was one of the first to be killed by the Martians. Had Wells bought some apples from Henry Flowerday's shop and found a maggot inside, or was his ginger-beer flat when he opened the bottle? We will never know.



Woking, Chobham Road

Chobham Road in Woking looks very different from when H. G. Wells knew it. Where Taylor's chemist shop was is now the site of the Royal Bank of Scotland, and Henry Flowerday's shop (perhaps appropriately), would now be watched over by the sculpture of 'The Martian Tripod'.

I wonder too about William Brown, the landlord in the mid 1890's of The Princess public house in Maybury, which appears in Wells book as 'The Spotted Dog'. The Narrator in the story borrows the landlord's horse and dogcart (so he could take his wife to safety in Leatherhead), but promises to return it as soon as possible. On his way back to Maybury Hill he stumbles upon the publican's body, killed by the Martian's in a most horrific manner. I hate to think what was wrong with Wells' pint to have prompted that reaction in print.

Which brings me back to my musings last Saturday. My nominations for present day people who could be killed by the Martians are... oh dear, we appear to have run out of space.

## Knaphill's Lost Pubs

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 25th June, 2010)



Although this postcard clearly says 'Barley Mow, Bisley', the public house was, in fact, in the parish of Horsell (although most now think of the area as being part of Knaphill).

A couple of weeks ago I led one of my Heritage Walks around the Knaphill area. We stopped outside Barley Mow House (at the junction of Barley Mow Lane and Chobham Road) and I spoke about its history, in particular the time when it used to be a public house. It struck me afterwards how many public houses we have 'lost' over the years, and made me wonder how many more we are likely to lose over the coming years.

It is said the Barley Mow was originally a hunting lodge for Windsor Forest (although that claim is made, often without any foundation, for many old buildings in this area) and appears to have been converted into a public house in the early 19th century. At that stage it was apparently valued, together with the Sun Inn at Chobham and 340 acres of land, at just £350! The pub closed down in 1921 and the property was converted back into a private residence.

Knaphill has not fared too badly in the public house stakes with just the Royal Standard on Anchor Hill closing at about the same time as the Barley Mow, and the Queen's Head in Robin Hood Road being the only other casualty (in the 1980's).

St John's lost the Prince of Wales at the other end of Robin Hood Road in the early 1980's, with the Black Horse in Blackhorse Road closing some time in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It probably started life as a 'beer-house' serving the navvies that built either the Basingstoke Canal or the railway, and closed soon after that clientele moved away.



The Prince of Wales at St Johns was demolished in the early 1980's and replaced by the Capstans Wharf development.

The same fate may have happened to what is now 'The Old Cottage' in College Lane, Goldsworth, which was apparently an inn from at least the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, possibly being called the Royal Oak (hence the nearby Royal Oak Road) but later being known as the Red Lion.

Of course there are many more pubs that have been lost in other parts of our area – notably in Old Woking, which has lost at least four public houses and a brewery over the years - but their story will have to wait for another week.



The Queens Head in Robin Hood Road shortly before it was demolished to make way for The Withies.

## Woking Local Board

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 2nd July, 2010)



A Heritage Walks  
Archive Picture

Courtenay Road and Board School Road before being made up by Woking U.D.C in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chimney on the left was part of the Woking Electric Supply Company's works in North Road.

The other day I was reading an interview that was published in 1914 with Woking's first rate-collector, Mr Peter Macdonald. He was talking about the work that the Urban District Council had to undertake when it was first formed in the mid 1890's.

In those days there were only three made-up roads in the area, the others were just 'partly formed roads' with mud and pot-holes everywhere (little change there then), but by 1914 he was able to report that 'there remains only two or three roads to be completed, when Woking will be in the position of having all its roads made up in first class order'.

Woking Council's first offices were in the chambers above Ashby's Bank (later Barclays) on the corner of Chertsey Road and The Broadway. This postcard, taken in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century clearly shows one of the town's first electric street lamps on the corner outside the bank.

He also mentioned the improvements to street lighting and sanitation, which were non-existent in 1893 when the Woking Local Board was formed (the predecessor to the UDC), but which by 1914 had improved to such an extent that most of the main streets in the town were lit by electric lights and refuse collections were made in most of the urban parts of the district. In that same period the town's sewage works had been built, most of the bridges over the canal had been rebuilt, and the town's fire brigade was formed.

Two things struck me. First was how much work the council undertook in its early days to drag the town from the medieval into the modern, but secondly how much we could learn from our Victorian and Edwardian forefathers (especially when you consider that they only had a handful of staff and the rates were just 1s1d. (5½p) in the £.

In those days it seems Woking was a real 'community', where everyone knew what needed to be done and got on with it, without complaint, for the benefit of all. Probably the most telling part of the whole interview was where Mr Macdonald said 'although there is a natural reluctance to pay rates, the sense of efficiency in public health matters, and the knowledge that the authority works as a body for the general welfare of the ratepayers has engendered a feeling of confidence, and people are more willing to pay the price for civilised comforts'.



A Heritage Walks  
Archive Picture

## Byfleet & Knaphill Shows

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 16th July, 2010)



Last weekend saw two village fetes take place in the Woking area. One, at Byfleet, has been going for 145 years. The other, at Mizen's Railway in Knaphill, was brand new – although it should be pointed out that it is not the first 'village show' to be held in the Knaphill area. Indeed over twenty years ago Knaphill was well known for its annual 'Brookwood Hospital Show' with people coming from miles around to enjoy the festivities. This year's show, which it is hoped will become a new annual event, was organised by the Knaphill Residents Association (together with the miniature railway society), included a vegetable and flower show, live music, a BBQ, beer tent and several stalls organised by various groups and organisations from around the village. A true 'community' event.

Byfleet's Parish Day was first held in 1865 to celebrate the re-opening of St Mary's Church. In 1864 the South Aisle (which was originally built in 1841) was extended, and Mr R.H. Murray, who lived at West Hall, offered his lawn for a 'Dedication Festival', to take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> June that year. It was such a success that 'Dedication Day' was repeated the following year and the year after that, until twenty years later the name 'Parish Day' was added and the day was firmly established in the village calendar.

Originally it consisted of a procession followed by a tea for the schoolchildren and parishioners over sixty years of age, but in 1888 it was

One of the early Byfleet Parish Days, although date and location are unknown (unless anyone can recognise the trees!)

extended to include a flower show, sports, dancing, a fair and a band.

The annual village flower show had previously been a separate event held each August at Petersham Place, so the new 'Parish Day' was moved to the middle of July, where it has been held ever since (with break during the two World Wars).

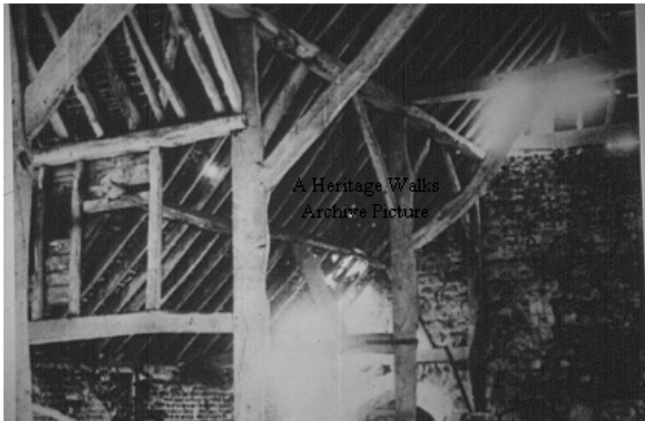
Both events were a great success, with work now starting on organising next year's events – the 146<sup>th</sup> anniversary Byfleet Parish Day, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Knaphill Village Show. Long may they both continue.



Knaphill have held numerous fetes and fairs in the past. This picture is believed to have been taken in Highclere Road and shows the line up for a processions for a fair, although again the date is unknown

## Woking Palace

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 23rd July, 2010)



Inside the Tudor brick building, at one time thought to be the King's Privy Chamber. This photograph was taken in the 1940's when the building was still being used as a barn for the nearby Woking Park Farm.

This Sunday (1<sup>st</sup> August 2010) I shall be at the Woking Palace Open Day, with a display on my 'Heritage Walks around Woking and North-West Surrey'. There will be several local history and archaeological groups there, but the main point of interest will undoubtedly be the chance for members of the public to view this seasons finds from the excavations that have taken place over the last few weeks.

Tony Robinson and his 'Time Team' may not be on hand to show you around, but a group of



The stone building (next to what was once the barn), is thought to date from the time of Lady Margaret Beaufort - Henry VII's mother - who was Lord of the Manor of Woking at the time of the War of the Roses.

It is hoped that the excavations at the palace will reveal more of the buildings dating from her time (and earlier), as well as reveal the additions to the site made by her son and grandson (Henry VIII).

enthusiastic 'Friends of Woking Palace' will be, with their intimate knowledge of the site and the most up-to-date interpretation of the various 'lumps and bumps'.

The vaulted stone building and the ruined walls of the Tudor Palace will obviously be on show, but it will be the bits of foundation, the robbed out walls and the trays of new finds that will be centre stage.

The problem with Woking Palace is that although it was regularly visited by both Henry VII and Henry VIII, there are no contemporary drawings or paintings of the buildings. A 17<sup>th</sup> century map gives an impression of what the site was like then, but by that stage the Palace was already abandoned. The site was excavated in the early



The palace complex from the gate to the fishpond area, which will be open to the public this weekend.

20<sup>th</sup> century, but although a plan of their excavations survive, any report of what was found is missing (if it was ever compiled).

Hopefully the new excavations will fill in some of the gaps and answer some of the many questions we have about the complex, although inevitably they may through up more questions in the process.

One question that now needs an answer is 'where was the King's Privy Hall'? A few years ago we all thought we knew - the Tudor brick walls beside the stone vaulted building were part of Henry VIII's private apartments, but in recent years archaeologists and experts have thrown doubt on that theory. They think it may have been by the river, where according to documentary evidence the Queens Privy Chamber was positioned. The truth is we may never know for certain - but at least we can have fun trying to find out.

## West Byfleet

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 30th July, 2010)

My Heritage Walk this Sunday is around the West Byfleet area, starting at 2pm outside the Library at Sheer House car park - which prompted one local resident to suggest (rather unkindly) that if it is to be a 'heritage' walk then it must be a short one!

It is true that there are few nationally listed buildings on the walk, but it will touch upon a couple of conservation areas, a bit of 'prehistory', and hopefully reveal to some of my walkers at least, some interesting facts about an area that is sometimes thought of as a 'concrete jungle'. In fact part of the walk is quite 'rural' (although unfortunately the noise of the M25 can never be too far away).

Of course before the coming of the railway, West Byfleet was (like Woking Town Centre), open heathland - in this case part of commonland for the village of Byfleet to the east. It was separated from the old village by the Wey Navigation, built in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the Basingstoke Canal being built in the 1790's to the north. These

two waterways had some impact on local development, but it was the enclosure of the manor of Byfleet in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that really allowed the development of the new 'town' some eighty years later - after the railway station was opened in 1887.

When the new town of Woking was built, the commercial centre ended up being developed on the 'wrong' side of the railway (to the north, when the main station entrance was to the south). So it was logical perhaps, when West Byfleet Station opened, that the main entrance this time should be placed to the north. The first new building after the opening of the station was indeed to the north - the Byfleet or Station Hotel (later called The Claremont and now the Catherine of Aragon), but of course most of the later commercial development was to the south - on the wrong side of the tracks again.



I don't know exactly when the postcard of Sheer House was published (some car buffs could probably tell), but it couldn't have been too many years after the development opened. The unusual round library was opened in 1965 and is, in my opinion, actually quite a nice looking building - certainly one of the best libraries I can think of in the area.

The much older view of West Byfleet shows some of the original shops that were built at 'Byfleet Corner' soon after the Byfleet & Woodham Station (as it was originally called) opened in 1887. The bank on the corner with Pyrford Road and the shops of Rosemount Parade were not built until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Hoe Valley Floods

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 6th August, 2010)



The 1930's Outdoor Swimming Pool in Woking Park was said to 'float' on the refuse of the former dump on the site.

There has been a lot of controversy recently about the development of the 'Westfield Tip' site and the cutting down of trees around the Elmbridge entrance to Woking Park. I don't want to add to the controversy, but I thought it would be interesting to add a few comments to the debate.

Did you know that the name 'Elmbridge' comes from the Old English 'Thelbrycg', meaning 'plank bridge' and was first recorded in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. A wooden bridge was still in use until 1891-2 when the present double brick bridges were built at a cost of £670. I suspect their replacement will cost a little more.

In the 1880's there were plans to build a gasworks on the land where the Leisure Centre is now, and in the 1890's the Guildford Rural Sanitary Authority proposed building Woking's sewage works on what would now be the car park for Woking Park. Perhaps local residents should think themselves lucky that the council haven't decided to resurrect those bright ideas!

Part of the park is actually built on an old council refuse tip and in the 1930's the new outdoor swimming pool was said to 'float' on top of the waste. Of course the later 'Westfield Tip' site was a replacement for the old 'Woking Park' site, with proposals in the 1930's to extend the tip even further up the valley towards Mayford.

In the end the tip was closed in about 1950 and for many years part was used as allotments, until it was found that the soil was 'contaminated' and the plot-holders were moved off in 1994. There appears to have been some scepticism with some thinking it was just a way of making the site ripe for development – as if the council would do such a thing.

Since then there have indeed been several attempts to develop the site with either housing, light industry, a supermarket or parking for the football club, but now it has been decided not to develop the site at all – just use it for flood alleviation (with a little bit of housing thrown in to help pay for it).

And this is the bit that I cannot quite understand. Just how does cutting down 400 mature trees (that I thought would suck up water from the soil), help to alleviate flooding? How does cutting out all obstacles to the flood waters at Woking Park, help the people further down-stream on the Elmbridge Estate or White Rose Lane? And how is building 150 new houses (with the associated roads and pavements and parking places), any better than the few community huts and buildings that currently occupy the site?





## Prehistoric Goldsworth

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 13th August, 2010)



This photograph shows the Grade II listed 'Bridge Barn' before it was restored and converted into the restaurant.

I gave a talk recently on the history of Goldsworth Park – sub-titled 'from Prehistory to the present day'. Now I realise that there must be some of you that are doubtful Goldsworth Park has any 'history' let alone 'prehistory', but I hope that like my audience the other day, you too will be pleasantly surprised!

It could be said that Goldsworth Park is Woking's oldest 'housing estate'. In the 1920's, on the fields that are now the football and hockey pitches off Littlewick Road, thousands upon thousands of flint tools and chippings were found dating back to at least the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age (6,000 to 10,000 years ago). Some reports say there was evidence of burning and it seems clear that the site must have been a temporary encampment, with the tools being

Brookwood Farm, off Robin Hood Road, dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when all of what is now Goldsworth Park was fields. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the land started to be developed with nursery grounds.

manufactured on site (hence the chippings) using nodules of flint found in the local soil.

There was also a Bronze Age axe (2,500 to 5,000 years ago) found on the other side of Goldsworth Park near the Basingstoke Canal at Langmans, and the name 'Goldsworth' itself is a corruption of the name 'la goldhord' first recorded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when presumably a hoard of gold (possibly Roman coins) was found somewhere in the area. Who knows, there might be more to find?

Of course in historic times the Saxon Tithing of 'Goldings' covered not just Goldsworth Park, but also Knaphill, Brookwood and St. Johns, and the basin that is now Goldsworth Park was farm land. Some of the old Tudor farm houses still survive on the edge of the estate – Long Lane Cottage (Clifton Way), Brookwood Farm House (between Lockfield Drive and Robin Hood Road), Langmans (by the canal at Langmans Bridge – itself a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and of course Bridge Barn, by Arthurs Bridge. All date from the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century and are Grade II nationally listed buildings. All were at one time connected to the nursery businesses that grew up in the area from the late 1790's onwards, such as Robert Donald's 'Goldsworth Nursery', later owned by Walter Slocock's, whose grandson, Martin, sold off the land in the mid 1970's for the development of the estate.

And as the audience at St Andrews Church found out at my talk, even the 'history' of the building of the estate is quite interesting, but that will have to wait for another week.



## Mr Collyer

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 20th August, 2010)

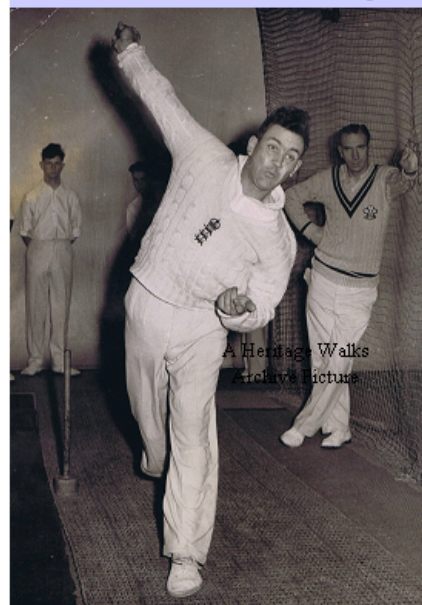
A few weeks ago I wrote an article on the lost public houses of the Knaphill and St John's areas. One reader, a Mr Michael Collyer, contacted me with more details on the Barley Mow public house, where his grandparents first met in the 1920's. He showed me some of his family photographs and the notes he uses to give talks to local schoolchildren about the 'olden-days'. It prompted me to wonder just how many other people have stories and old pictures that they too could use to instil a 'community spirit' into the younger generations.

Mr Collyer grew up in the Maybury area in the 1930's and remembers how much more friendly people were in those days. Everyone would say 'good morning' and stop for a chat when they met, and people never needed to bother to lock their doors if they went out. Children were taught to share their toys (what few they had), and most were so carefully looked after, that (like their clothes) they were handed down through the family. Of course in those days children of all ages played in the street, there were so few cars, with football in the winter, cricket in the summer and 'Cowboys and Indians' being the favourite games in his street. Mr Collyer was obviously a good sportsman (as his family photo-album shows), although he didn't reveal whether he was an equally good 'cowboy' (or Indian)!



A Heritage Walks  
Archive Picture

Mr Collyer was a keen sportsman, involved in both the school's football team and cricket. Below, he is at cricket practice, standing in the background admiring the bowling action of some unknown contemporary by the name of Bedser in the foreground!



A Heritage Walks  
Archive Picture



A Heritage Walks  
Archive Picture

Michael Collyer in the back garden of his family home in Maybury

I am sure I am not using 'rose-tinted glasses' when I too look back on my own childhood in Goldsworth in the 1960's (very similar to Mr Collyer's - despite being thirty years later). Everyone really did know everyone else in our street, and we were able to spend all day playing out in the summer, without our parents having to worry what we were up to, or whether anything bad would happen to us.

Wouldn't it be good if we could recapture just a part of that 'community spirit' today!

## Old Woking Floods

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 27th August, 2010)



A Heritage Walks  
Archive Picture

The Floods, Woking Village

The petrol station would now be on the left, where the Melrose Poultry Farm sign is in this view of the floods in Old Woking High Street in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A couple of weeks ago I wrote an article about the history of the Hoe Valley around the Elmbridges area, where I mentioned that I couldn't understand why the trees had been cut down and how the building of 150 houses would help relieve flooding downstream. A very kind local councillor telephoned me early the following Sunday morning to point out the 'errors' in my thinking. Apparently the tree-cutting and houses all had something to do with

The lorry ploughing through the floods near the bridge to Woking Mill and the entrance to Hipley Street shows how deep the water was in the floods of 1928.



A Heritage Walks  
Archive Picture

Floods 1928 Old Woking

'bunds' – at least I think that's what he said, it could have been a 'g' rather than a 'd'!

Anyway whilst talking about the recent flooding problems of the Hoe Stream it struck me that if we go back fifty years or more, it used to be only the River Wey that flooded in our area – not the Hoe valley. I wouldn't want to speculate as to why that should be (in case I get another 'wake-up' call), but it is interesting to note that on an aerial view I have seen of the floods in the 1960's, the three 'islands' above the flood waters were the three places mentioned in Woking's 'Domesday Book' entry – the mill, the manor site and the church – the Saxon's certainly knew where to build and not to build!

In the 1670's a number of local landowners made claims against the builders of the Wey Navigation because of flooding to their fields, and in the 1930's as part of an unemployment relief scheme, the 'Broadmead Cut' (and other work) was carried out to try to prevent flooding in the Wey Valley. It hasn't always worked, of course, but I guess that the amount of flood-water expected in the 1930's could be quite different from the amount that now flows downstream from Guildford and beyond. I just hope that the council 'bunds' work for the poor people of the Hoe Valley.

## Old Woking Lost Pubs

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 3rd September, 2010)

A while back I wrote about the lost public houses of 'West Woking', which prompted a fair amount of interest. This week I am looking at the public houses that have been lost in Old Woking.

I suppose the most recent to 'disappear' is the Queens Head in Old Woking that until recently was in Old Woking High Street, almost opposite the entrance to Gloster Road. It was probably one of the village's newest public houses (the property was not marked on the 1841 tithe map) and appears to have opened some time in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in what had originally been a couple of labourers cottages.

Further up, and on the other side of the road, it is thought there was an earlier public house (or possibly just a 'beer house') known as the Red Lion (where the petrol station is now), but that appears to have closed before the Queens Head opened.



The Queens Head not long before it closed and subsequently demolished



The Hand & Spear (left) was a small 'beer house' from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, before being demolished for road widening in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Two other establishments disappeared in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of 'road improvements' at the junction of the High Street and Broadmead Road. One was the 'Hand & Spear', a small beer house on the site of what is now the Greenfield Surgery, and the other was the White Horse Hotel, a much grander building opposite the Old Brew House.

Indeed the Hotel was linked with the history of the brewery at Old Woking being one of the tied houses acquired by Thomas Newman, 'common brewer' of Woking in 1838. The building dated back to the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and was one of the town's coaching inns. Part survived as a

workshop to the garage (in its later years Leigh's Garage) before being demolished to make way for the houses that are now on the site.

The Brewery in Old Woking was on the site of Riverside Gardens, off the High Street, with the 'Old Brew House' being all that is left of the original buildings. The first record appears to be from 1694 when James Zouch (the lord of the manor) leased it to William Harvest Junior. It is clear that the brewery had been in operation for some time, but in 1715 William Harvest rebuilt it and carved his initials and the date into brick above the door. Later occupiers of the brewery included members of the Strong and Charrington families – both well-known in the brewing world – but in the early 1890's the Brewery was sold to Messrs Lascelles Tickner, who closed down the Woking brewery and transferred all production to Guildford.



Fleming's Garage (later Conway West's and then Leigh's) occupied some of the old buildings in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the White Horse Hotel closed.

## Horsell

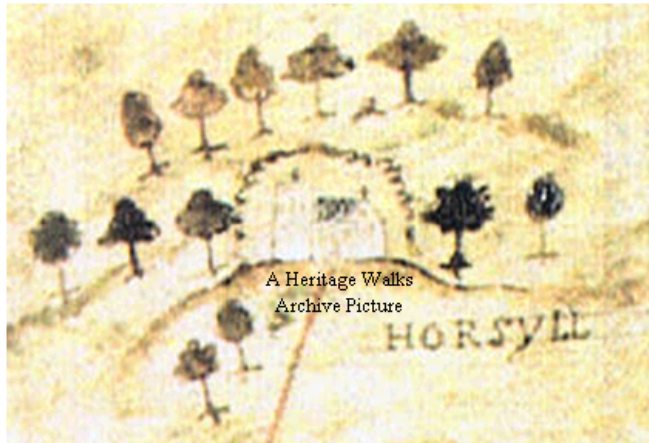
(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 17th September, 2010)

My walk last weekend was entitled 'Horrible Horsell's Heritage', which prompted at least one 'Horsellite' to turn up and point out that Horsell is not at all horrible – a sentiment which I wholeheartedly agreed with. As I quickly explained to my walkers, the title referred not to the present, but to the past when the name 'Horsell' was first recorded in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century.

We cannot be certain (as by the 13<sup>th</sup> century the name could have been corrupted beyond recognition), but it is thought the name originally came from the Old English words 'horh' and 'scylf' – meaning horrid (dirty or muddy) and shelf (ridge or hill). Before Church Hill was made up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, you can imagine that it may not have been the nicest of roads to use when heavy rain turned the winding track to mud.



One of the oldest houses in Horsell is Esgairs on Horsell High Street. It dates back to the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century and is a grade II listed building.



Horsell (or Horsyll) from a mid 17th century map of the Manor of Pyrford.

The first reference to Horsell records a chapel built there by the monks of Westminster Abbey, who up until the dissolution of the monasteries were the owners of the manor. It is interesting to note that that 'manor' was the manor of Pyrford and that there never was a 'Manor of Horsell'.



Although the earliest part of Horsell Church dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, although during Victorian times the church was extensively 'restored'.

When the Domesday Survey was carried out in 1086 Horsell was not mentioned – all its land was counted with that of Pyrford. An earlier document recording the bounds of the manor of Pyrford mentions places on Horsell's present northern border – Durnford, Mimbridge and Millbrook (to name just a few).

Horsell was very much a scattered community until the late Victorian period when the local farmers and nurserymen of the area realised that one of the best 'crops' they could have on their fields was houses! Odd fields were sold off in a piecemeal way, creating the network of roads and cul-de-sacs that make Horsell such a nice area to live. Horsell really isn't 'horrible' at all.



Before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Horsell was a scattered community, with just a few shops and public houses and no real village centre.

## Woking's Moved Pubs

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I will continue with my look at 'lost' public houses another week, but this week I thought I would go off at a slight tangent and look at public houses that have 'moved'!

The Wheatsheaf Hotel in Horsell with The White House to the left.

The Wheatsheaf Hotel at Horsell also apparently moved 'next door' in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when the original establishment returned to its former use as a cottage – now known as White Cottage.

The first that springs to mind is the Plough at Byfleet, which was originally the name of a public house next to Plough Bridge (I assume the pub gave its name to the bridge and not the other way around). Apparently the building was flooded so often that in the 1840's the landlord decided to up sticks and move to a new building in the High Road.

Most pubs that have 'moved' have not travelled quite so far. What is now O'Neil's in Woking Town Centre, was originally known as 'The Red House', but the original pub of that name was actually next door on the site now occupied by Ladbrook's. The old pub was demolished in the early 1930's for a new 'Burton's' store (the foundation stones can still be seen on the corners), with the new pub being built on its garden on the corner of Chobham Road and Commercial Road.



The Mayford Arms moved to its present site in 1905, from the house next door.

White Cottage is a Grade II listed building as is 'Friars' in Mayford that was at one time the Mayford Arms, before it too moved to a new building next door in 1905. The name of the house takes its name from the brewery that used to own the property – the Friary Holroyd & Healy brewery.



The original 'Cricketers' public house at Westfield

The final pub this week is The Cricketers at Westfield (which looks like it could soon fall into the 'lost pubs' category). The original bar was in the front room of the old house next door (also a Grade II listed building), which for a few years served as a village store, after the new pub was built on the corner of Westfield Road and the common.