

Other Woking Furnishers

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 6th July, 2012)

Hugh Butcher's furniture shop, featured in last week's paper, was not the only furnishers in the town in the past. Further along the road was Robertson Brothers, who sold 'antique' and second hand furniture, whilst in the other direction Colman's (later Courts) sold new furniture in their High Street shop. As you can see from the advertisement, by April 1934 they also had a shop in Goldsworth Road, taking over the old Baptist Chapel and converting it into a store.

I have here at work a dining table and six chairs that were originally bought from Colman's in the 1920's (when they were in Chertsey Road – later the site of Woolworths and later still Weatherspoons). The sideboard that matches them is at home, together with a dressing table, wardrobe and bed that were all bought at the same time. They are all solid wood and very well made. We bought them over twenty-five years ago (just before we were married) from an old friend from Knaphill who was moving into a smaller flat in town. She had apparently bought them with some prize money she had received soon after she had set up home and had obviously looked after them very well.

Also in town in the 1920's and 30's were W.G. Trendell's in Church Street (who mainly sold second-hand furniture), the Woking Co-operative Society, on the corner of Church Street and Percy Street and just around the corner in Goldsworth Road, S.C. Knight's, who was later taken over by John Perring's.



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As well as selling second-hand and antique furniture, Robertson's also carried out removals and storage from this shop in Maybury Road, their other shop in Commercial Road and a storeroom in Walton Road.

In the 1940's Cambell & Allen took over London House on the corner of Duke Street and Chertsey Road, selling 'utility furniture' to newly-weds and those who had been 'bombed out' during the war, so that by the 1950's (when restrictions were finally lifted) there were at least half a dozen places where furniture could be bought in the town centre.

Nowadays it is mainly 'out-of-town' that you find furniture shops although furniture is still being sold from the old Hugh Butcher's shop site in The Broadway – one survivor in an ever-changing retail world.

WOKING'S BEST BEDSTEAD VALUE

SPECIAL OFFER OF
DOUBLE-SIZE
JACOBAN OAK
BEDSTEADS
as illustrated, complete
with SPIRAL SPRING
MATTRESS,
SANITARY OVERLAY
BOLSTER and TWO
FEATHER PILLOWS.
REMARKABLE VALUE
75/- complete.

Have you seen our—
Oak Bedroom Suites,
£4 19s. 6d.
Oak Sideboards, 39/6
Oak Tea Wagons, 9/11
Oak Gate-Leg Tables,
19/11
Oak Bedside Tables,
6/11

COLMAN'S
9, GOLDSWORTH RD., WOKING

This advertisement, from April 1934, includes an almost identical bed to ours. If only we could get a new mattress for the same price today!



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The site of Hugh Butcher's shop in The Broadway is still a furniture shop.

John Perring

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 13th July, 2012)



This advertisement from the Sheerwater Pylon of January 1954 emphasises the importance of the new 'homemakers' to the store.

Continuing our recent theme of local furniture stores, I want to look this week at John Perring's, who as I mentioned last week took over the shop of Mr S.C. Knight in Goldsworth Road.

Sparks Cornelius Knight appears to have been quite an entrepreneur opening his first shop in the High Street in the 1870's, before taking over other shops in Chertsey Road and Goldsworth Road where he sold not only furniture, but china, footwear and clothing. He was also a local councillor and chairman of the Woking Urban District Council in 1909/10.

The history of John Perrings is interesting, as although they were not originally from Woking the firm were one of the first national (or at least 'regional') firms to open in the town.



An artists impression of their new store in Church Street/Chertsey Road opened in September 1985.

Their 'aggressive' advertising policy obviously meant that their name could be prominently found in many local newspapers and publications, including, in the early 1950's, the back page of the Sheerwater Pylon, a monthly magazine that was produced by the local resident's association for the new London County Council Estate being developed at that time. As one of a number of post-war estates (along with Maybury, Elmbridge, Barnsbury and others) the store obviously sought to harness the spending power of the new households of that period.



The site of the new Perrings had previously been a furniture store and warehouse run by Robertson Brothers.

Perring's were probably one of the last of the 'big' named stores to sell furniture in the town centre, moving to the former Tesco's shop between Chertsey Road and Church Street in 1985 (later taken over by the Rat & Parrot public house). Coincidentally the Tesco's shop had been built on the site of another old furniture store – Robertson Brothers – whose Maybury Road department we featured the other week.

Whilst Perrings were attempting to buck the trend in the 1980's by bringing their store closer to the town centre, others were moving out, with Courts, formerly in the High Street, opening at the Lion Retail Park at Maybury in the early 1990's.



Perrings didn't last long at their new site and neither did its successor. One wonders how long it will be before the whole site is redeveloped!

More Furnishers

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 20th July, 2012)



I thought I had covered most, if not all, of Woking town centres furnishers over the past few weeks, but obviously not, judging by the number of emails I have had on the subject.

“What about Maples” was the theme of a couple of letters, to which I must admit that I had almost forgotten about that particular shop. It opened in the mid 1960’s in what was then known as ‘Premier House’ in Commercial Road - on the site of the old Grand Theatre and Woking Water Company Offices (next door to the ‘new’ Post Office), but when it closed, I am afraid I have not been able to find out. Unfortunately despite the building obviously being quite a landmark, this is the only photograph I can find of the shop, if anybody has any others, I would love to hear from them.

Commercial Road is now Commercial Way. Percy Street is now called Victoria Way. And Premier House has been revamped as ‘Globe House’.

I also now remember, having been reminded by several people, of Lucketts shop that was in Goldsworth Road (taking over the site of the old Coleman’s store that I recorded a couple of weeks ago). They were originally in Walton Road until the council decided to extend Stanley Road through the area, but again when they closed has not been recorded.

Then there are the ancillary shops for the new home-makers of Woking – places such as ‘Take Stock Furnishers’ in Guildford Road and ‘Home Design’ in Chobham Road (both of which apparently sold some furniture). There you could get all your curtains, lighting and carpets, the latter of which you could also find at ‘Farnham Carpets’ who were once in the High Street, but later moved to the new shopping centre when it opened in the 1970’s.

And I haven’t even started on the shops in the various villages around the town – I may continue with those next week.



Before moving to Goldsworth Road, Lucketts were one of the ‘victims’ of the town centre reorganisation when Stanley Road was extended through Walton Road to join a new roundabout at the junction of Chertsey Road and Church Street.

The home-makers of Woking had plenty of choice not just for their furniture, but for their furnishings also.



Knaphill Homemakers

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 27th July, 2012)



As promised, we now turn our attention to the furniture and furnishing retailers outside of Woking Town Centre, starting in Knaphill where you could (and to a certain extent still can) find almost everything you need to set up home.

There were the banks (and at least one building society) where the money could be borrowed to buy your home, and plenty of estate agents (then as now) from which to choose your new property – there were even a number of local builders willing and able to construct your house from scratch if you wanted – but when it came to furnishing your new abode, the village could provide what was needed then too.

Before I was given this photograph, I had completely forgotten that the carpet shop was on the corner.

I wonder how many pieces of new 1970's & 80's from Home Furnishing have ended up as second-hand pieces at the hospice shop down the road.

Crescent development; opened in the spring of 1969 on the site of what had once been the garden and barns of the Anchor Hotel.

Now, of course, the village is one down on its banks and the number of 'local' builders are few and far between, but the solicitor handling your move can be found where you once bought your carpets; your carpets (if not the lino) can be bought where you once bought your dining room suite; and if you don't mind second hand furniture, that too can be found – either in the charity shop where you once bought your curtains (they probably have some of those too), or across the road at the wonderful Woking Hospice Furniture Store, where it seems everything from a 'nearly new three piece suite' to a 'Welsh Dresser' can be bought - at prices that the home-makers of the past would not be surprised by.

Knaphill really does still have all that you need.



The Furniture could come from 'Home Furnishing' (next to Barclays Bank), with the material to make your curtains from Broadway Fabrics (next to Lloyds), and in the late 1960's and early 70's the discerning home-makers of Knaphill could get their carpets and vinyl flooring from one of the new shops in the Anchor



It was not just curtain material, of course, that could be found at Broadway Fabrics – you could also re-upholster you furniture if you so wished.

West Byfleet & Byfleet Furnishers (Part 1)

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 3rd August, 2012)



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The Letterheadings of A.W. Stollery (at Rosemount Parade, above) and R.H. Taft's (at Byfleet Corner, below) show the difference in the style of stationary from the 1930's to the 1950's

Last week we looked at the furniture and furnishing retailers of the Knaphill area. This week I want to turn my attention to the Byfleet and West Byfleet areas, where R & S. Colman (whose dining room and bedroom furniture from Woking started off this recent series), apparently had a small shop in the 1920's in Rosemount Parade.

I must admit I don't know exactly where in the parade they were, but that street (and Byfleet Corner) appear to have always been 'the place' in West Byfleet to equip you home.



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For soft furnishings at that time there was A.W. Stollery in Rosemount Parade (a stalwart of many local organisations in the area, as well as an experienced upholsterer), and R. H. Taft, 'Cabinet Maker Upholsterer and French Polisher' at Byfleet Corner.

Later in the 1960's with the development of Sheer House, West Byfleet's homemakers found more new and exciting shops to re-vamp their 'pads', with the latest fashion in furniture available from places such as Cunningham Furnishers (in the little shop that is now a boutique, but which once was the bookshop – next to Costa).

LOOK-NO LEGS!

— nor any other visible means of support. Nothing to clutter this straightforward, superbly elegant, and really well made Teak finished furniture. Each piece of Tapley SL is fixed *individually* to the wall, allowing complete freedom of position — *you* choose the layout that suits *your* room, *your* requirements, and *your* taste. And with no legs to pay for, Tapley SL is surprisingly inexpensive.

Tapley SL
WALL FURNITURE

See the full display at:

CUNNINGHAM FURNISHERS LIMITED
SHEER HOUSE, STATION APPROACH,
WEST BYFLEET
Telephone Byfleet 46273
Adjacent to Woolworths

This Cunningham's advertisement from September 1968 shows the difference in style of furniture by the end of the 1960's.

West Byfleet & Byfleet Furnishers (Part 2)

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 3rd August, 2012)



Bondford's shop helped you 'keep up with the Jones' at Byfleet

At 'old' Byfleet, the 1960's saw the slightly smaller scale development of Royston Parade and the opening by Mr Bond and Mr Holford of 'Byfleet's new carpet and soft furnishing centre' (in 1967). An advert from October that year encouraged the ladies of the area to be 'the envy of Mrs. Jones' by making their home 'the most luxurious in your road - with carpets and



The street may have changed (and the price of petrol increased), but at least The Bedroom Centre, on the right, has remained.

Co-op verses the rest of the World

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e10th August, 2012)

Writing about the Bedroom Centre in Byfleet last week, prompted me to think about the rise and fall of the small local supermarket, as the shop was originally a branch of the Addlestone Co-operative Society.

I say 'rise and fall', but I wonder whether it should be the other way round as the number of small 'convenience stores' seems to be on the increase.

Byfleet is a perfect example with the recent refurbishment of Vanners Parade and the opening of the new Budgen's store there. The village has, of course, a Co-op (as well as the Sanway Stores) but the area's previous small supermarket at Royston Parade closed down many years ago, in response to the competition (or perceived competition) from the Tesco superstore at Brooklands.



Byfleet's old supermarket (facing the 'Village Green'), once a branch of Liptons, has been demolished and replaced by a block of flats.



Now being refurbished with Budgen's opening their new convenience store on the site.

Tesco, of course, have recently opened their own small shop in Guildford Road, Woking (opposite the Co-op there), but the rumour that the supermarket giant has their eye on a site opposite Horsell's Co-op is apparently untrue. That is not to say that some other supermarket might not take up the idea, with Sainsbury's soon to be offering Knaphill's Co-op competition just down (and across) the road.

The Knaphill shop has, of course, managed to survive despite the fears that the larger Brookwood Hospital Sainsbury's would have sounded its death knell, but the Co-op in Knaphill has seen off other competition in the past, from Budgen's, previously Seeward's, previously Tesco's (on the site now used by Knaphill Library).

Perhaps it is a complement to the success of the Co-op that wherever they go others seem to want to follow.

At Chobham they no sooner got permission to open a shop in the village (in Bagshot Road) than



The Co-op in Knaphill has seen many competitors come and go over the years – will they also see off Sainsbury's?

West Byfleet's Supermarkets

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 17th August, 2012)



The International were one of the first 'national' (or should that be international), non-family owned stores to open in most towns, closely followed by the Home & Colonial Stores and, in this area, Sainsbury's.

Mention of some of the old supermarket names in Knaphill and Byfleet last week has prompted more memories of supermarkets long gone.

The first that springs to my mind, although sadly I have no photographic evidence, is Robindales Stores in Goldsworth Road – opposite the Goldsworth Arms. My mother used to shop there when we lived in Cherry Street - there or else in the old Sainsbury's in Woking High Street and then Tesco's 'Self-Service' Supermarket when they opened in Commercial Road.

I mentioned last week about the present number of the local Co-operative shops, and although I



have photographs of most of the old ones, I haven't found one yet of the Old Woking branch that was on the corner of the High Street and Gloster Road. If anyone can help, I would love to see one.

Another local supermarket that I remarkably do not have photos of is Kibby's in Commercial Road, Woking, that was later taken over by the International (before the International took over MacMarket in Wolsey Walk/Mercia Walk, where they were later taken over by Gateway). Of course Gateway also took over Fine Fare (where the Big Apple is today), before they were taken over by Asda – but I think I have covered that in a previous column!

Moving on to West Byfleet and the three photographs I have here. I must admit I had forgotten that the supermarket in the Sheer House development was at one time called 'Betta', although I can (strangely) remember the older name of 'Bishop's'. Part of the site is now the Londis store (and Post Office), with Boots occupying the other half and Lloyds Pharmacy and Costa taking over the old Woolworth's site next door.



It seems that as time moves on the size of the local grocery store has to get larger and larger. By the early 1960's Sainsbury's and the International in Rosemount Parade were not large enough for the shoppers of West Byfleet, just as in the late 80's Bishops (or Betta as it was then known), was rivalled by the new larger Waitrose.

Before Sheer House was built West Byfleet had their International in Rosemount Parade and further down the street was Sainsbury's, but I guess they both eventually succumbed to progress when the new larger supermarket opened nearby – just as Betta eventually did when Waitrose arrived.

And so progress goes on.

Sheerwater Supermarkets

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 24th August, 2012)

Following on from last week's look at the local supermarkets in West Byfleet, I thought I would put in my two-pennies-worth on the Asda proposal for the Wandsworth Electrical site at Sheerwater.

I don't want to get into the argument over the problems of access to the Sheerwater Estate that a popular supermarket would add to, nor to the impact that it may have on the couple of small convenience stores currently operating in Dartmouth Parade (although looking at the parade, without them, there is not too much to tempt the shoppers of the area).



How will the opening of a large new supermarket affect the few shops left in Dartmouth Avenue?

My objection is to the loss of what must surely be one of the last purpose-built factory units of that era still surviving in this area. I have thought for some time that the old Wandsworth building on the corner of Albert Drive and Forsyth Road should be locally listed - would it be too much to hope that Asda could somehow incorporate part of the old building into their new site?



And when I say 'incorporate' I don't mean the type of incorporation that Linden Homes are achieving at the old Unwin Brother's Mill in Old Woking, whereby the vandals have virtually demolished the whole of the old site, despite what their advertising literature shows.



Should the 1890's (and earlier) architecture of Unwins have been cared for much better?

It is good to hear that Wandsworth Electrical will still be staying locally as we have lost so many 'big local names' in recent years. There are not too many large local employers left for those not inclined to work in an office or a shop.

And off course that is one of the 'pros' that is being argued against so many of the 'cons' when it comes to opening new supermarkets in any area – it will provide local people with local jobs. I just wonder how many of those jobs will then be lost at the Lion Retail Park branch of Asda, which although they say will be unaffected, must surely see a drop in custom as people from Sheerwater, at least, no longer travel to shop there.

Still, it could always become a D.I.Y store again.

Should the 1950's architecture of the Sheerwater Estate be preserved?

Town Square

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 31st August, 2012)

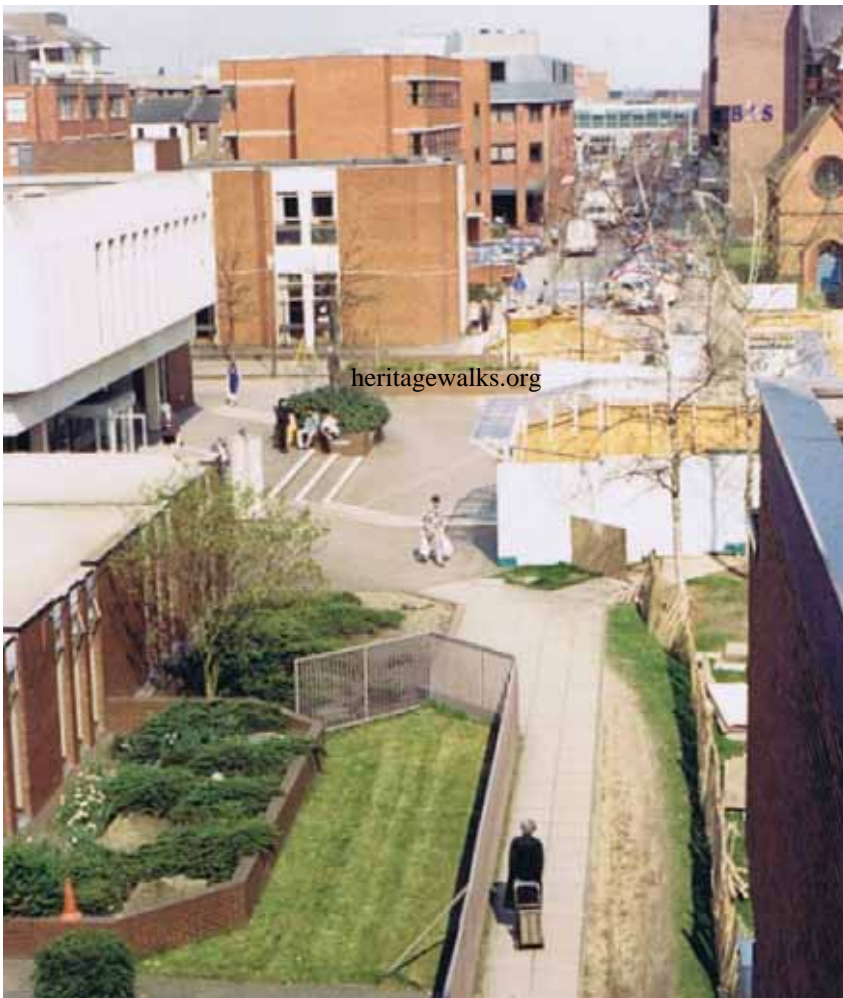


The Library, opened in 1974

There have been a lot of changes to Town Square recently, but it wasn't until I was looking back through my collection of photographs that I realised just how many times this relatively recent addition to Woking's landscape has changed.

The square was originally laid out in the mid 1970's with the creation of Woking's new town centre. Church Street was cut-off to traffic between Christ Church (the only constant feature of the area) and the 'new' Christ Church Hall with a pedestrian walkway leading from the square to the exit road of the new 'Sainsbury's Car Park' (along the line of the old Church Street and out to Cawsey Way).

Town Square and Christ Church Hall during the creation of 'Wolsey Place' in 1988.

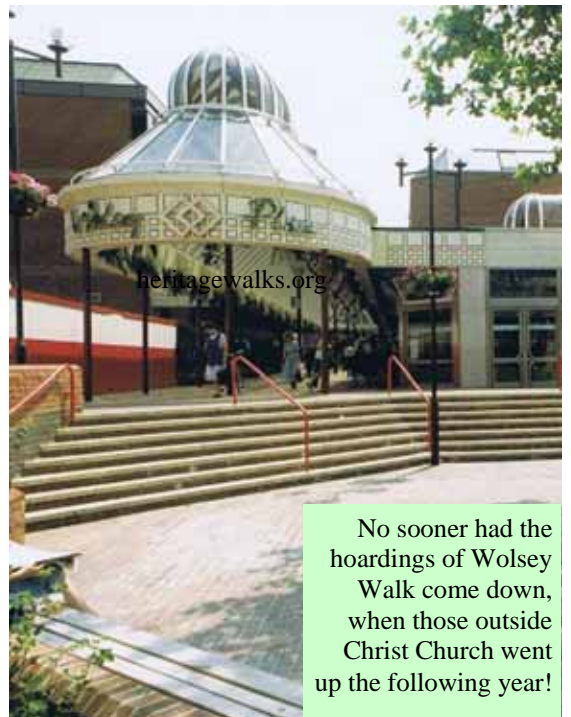


The steps to Christ Church and Mercia Walk (which was then open to the elements), were flanked by brick borders of flowers and trees, and the covered Wolsey Walk began at the corner by the 'Chelsea Coffee House'.

To the north was the Library, not the one that has recently been replaced by Café Rouge, but the two storey, concrete one, where a teenager 'bunking off' school could hide and discover the large collection of local history books!

In the centre was the War Memorial, moved here from 'Sparrow Park' at the junction of Commercial Road and High Street. You might think that this too has been 'constant', but as the planners have nibbled away at the square over the years it has been moved on at least one occasion to make it 'central' once more.

The first of the major changes came in the late 1980s with the covering of the old 1970's shopping centre and its re-naming as 'Wolsey Place'. A new shop unit was added to Wolsey Walk and a roof put over the top of Mercia Walk where the new entrance to Christ Church was also made (when the Church Hall was sold off to Barclays) and new meeting rooms and a cafe created inside the church.



No sooner had the hoardings of Wolsey Walk come down, when those outside Christ Church went up the following year!

With Barclays came Town Gate and more re-modelling of the flowerbeds and paving, and so we come to the building of The Peacocks in the early 1990's.

Next week we will see that even then the Square had not finished changing, as the entrance to The Peacocks is not what it used to be (or might have been).

Title

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e , 2012)

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Town Square & The Peacocks

(copy sent to the Woking Informer for print w/e 7th September, 2012)



The Peacock's as originally planned. It is recognisably 'The Peacocks', but with a few slight changes!

Last week we looked at how Town Square had changed since it was first laid out in the mid 1970's up to the end of the 1980's with the addition of a roof and new units at the re-vamped 'Wolsey Place; the new-look entrance (and halls) at Christ Church with the 1970's Hall being replaced by Barclay's; and of course the War Memorial with the 'original' Central Woking Library.



The 'new' entrance to the Peacocks

constructed. There is only enough space here to show a few, and even the most recent picture, although only just over a year old, is well and truly out of date!



The Peacocks soon after opening in 1992

By the end of the 1980's anybody not in the know might have expected all the disruption to the area to be a thing of the past, but in truth the next phase of disruption was just around the corner.

Looking now at some of the original plans for 'The Peacocks' you cannot help but admire the courage with which Woking Council admitted some of the mistakes of the (very recent) past and came up with a radical plan to change things. Of course some aspects of their plans did not quite work out (the conference centre and nightclub for instance), but overall The Peacocks has proved to



The new new entrance