

Woking History Society

e-journal



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Issue No. EJ-4
September 2020

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Thoughts of Chairman Gristwood

Welcome to the 4th edition of the WHS e-journal. This one is devoted entirely to Jenny Mukerji's work on Midhope Road during the 2nd World War. Anyone involved in research will know how long it takes to produce an article like this, so thank you very much Jenny.

We won't be holding any meetings in the Maybury Centre in the foreseeable future so, in common with many other societies, we will be having meetings on Zoom until further notice. These meetings will take place on our normal dates – the first Monday of each month, with a Zoom AGM in December and an additional meeting in January.

I sent an email in July asking you to let me know if you would like to take part in these meetings, and so far 41 people have signed up. If there is anyone else who would like to join us, please let me know via the usual email address. In order to spare members from unnecessary emails, invitations to join the meeting will only go to those who have registered their interest. For those of you who haven't used Zoom before, all you have to do is click on the meeting ID that I will send you and that will take you to the meeting. There is no need to download anything. How many of us had heard of Zoom back in March!

I asked for people's experience of surviving lockdown and Covid-19, but so far have only received one contribution. I'll hold it over until the next edition in the hope that I might have a few more by then! Please just take a few moments to write a paragraph and email it to historywoking@gmail.com

Send and Ripley History Society have made another of their older journals available on line. The link to their website:

www.sendandripleyhistorysociety.co.uk

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Printing the e-journal

This has been prepared so that it can be printed out in exactly the same format as the traditional WHS Newsletter. Your printer must be able to print double sided. With this proviso you should open the pdf file with Adobe Acrobat. Select File: Print: or the printer icon, and the Print window opens. In Page Sizing & Handling select Booklet. The illustration alongside it should show the outside cover of the booklet. Press Print to print the whole journal.

Zoom Meetings for 2020 – 2021

The 'waiting room' for meetings will open at 7.50pm. The talks should begin at about 8pm

September 7th Woking Prisons: 4 lives, 4 crimes by Dan Shepherd and Gemma Minter

October 5th Aspects of Byfleet in the 19th century by Jim Allen

November 2nd A talk by Anthony Saunders

December 7th AGM

January 11th Plant nurseries in Woking by David Rose

February 1st Ghosts of Hampton Court by Sarah Slater

March 1st The aristocrat, the able seaman and the tragic sinking of RMS Titanic by Angela Young

April 12th The golden age of postcards by Michael Miller

Midhope Road During the Second World War

Many members of the society may remember two of the displays that I had arranged at The Lightbox about demolished houses in Woking. The second display had a section on the 18 original houses in Midhope Road. These houses were built in the late 1890s on land sold to speculative builders and were family homes large enough to accommodate live-in servants. The development was a part of West Hill Park and was taking shape at the same time as H G WELLS was imagining his Martians happily destroying Woking!¹

The houses with odd numbers were on the western side of the road with the even numbers on the eastern side. During their histories, these houses had been given various names, depending upon the tastes of their new owners and, at times, this proved to be both a challenge to identify them and interesting to understand the reasons behind the newly adopted names. I had carried out extensive research, in the limited time available, on the occupants of these houses; from where they had come and to where they went after leaving the road. The following is a look at those who were there during the Second World War. It will also include two other properties which, in the 1939 Register² also have

Midhope Road as an address but were situated in Guildford Road.

Strangely, in 1939 there does not appear to be any unredacted children in the road other than Moira (Barbara) WINDEBANK, at Cassiobury, who was born in Wandsworth in 1924. As her parents were still living at 49 Swaffield Road in Wandsworth, it is very likely that Moira was one of the over 5,000 children evacuated through Woking Station on 1 September 1939. She later married John S BUSHALL in Westminster in 1963 and died in 1990.

One of the eldest people in Midhope Road in 1939 was Henry Douglas KING (1853-1940), at number 7. He was born in Ipswich and had been an auctioneer's accountant in 1911. He was staying with his eldest daughter, Alice Edith (1878-1958) who had married the Eton schoolmaster, Christopher Thomas WADDAMS (1879-1958). Alice was listed along with her brother-in-law, William Henry WADDAMS CBE (1886-1975) and his wife Ruby (1887-1966). When Henry KING died on 31 January 1940 his address was given as 28 Aldbourne Road, Shepherds Bush which raises the possibility that he had come down to his daughter's home, as an evacuee by choice, once war was declared. The house had been called Montalt and owned by Miss Kathleen May MORTIMER (1903-1984). It was leased from her

by William WADDAMS, who was the Assistant Commissioner of Prisons. The Prison Commission evacuated from the Home Office, to Baker Street and then to Oriel College, Oxford and eventually back to London. He retired at the end of the war. Also living with the WADDAMS were Lucy EMMERSON (1899-1989) who was a higher grade officer at the Home Office, and Ruby I POLLARD (1892-1982).

Two of the properties were not occupied by people in the 1939 Register. Kemendine (4) and Estella (12). However, Estella had been the home of Col. Henry JAMESON-DAVIS (1854-1936), cousin and business manager of Guglielmo MARCONI (1874-1937), and an heir to the Jameson Whiskey business. The Colonel had a very interesting and chequered life but after his death, Estella was offered for sale by auction at the Albion Hotel, Woking on 7 May 1937. *The Times* newspaper announced, on 16 October 1939, that the solicitors Hays, Roughton & Dunn of 110 Cannon Street, London EC4 were transferring the bulk of their business to Estella. In 1941 they were joined by Whadcoat, Galbraith & Company who also retained a part of their offices at 110 Cannon Street. There must have been a flat at the top of the premises for a solicitor's managing clerk where Frederick and Hilda Olive BARRETT lived. Their daughter Christine Ann, (born in

November 1943) was baptised on 23 January 1944 at St Mary Bethany, Woking with Estella as their address. In 1963 the BARRETTs were still living in the top flat and a residential lower flat had replaced the solicitors' offices by 1952.

Kemendine had been the home of Rosina Minnie STEDMAN (1867-1938) of the Stedman Brewery in Horsell. Janet DYER (1895-1977) and her "Help", Ethel GETHING (1887-1971), are both listed as electors at Kemendine from 1936 until 1939, but had moved to Winton, Egley Road by the time of the 1939 Register.

Number 1 Midhope Road was called Braeside in 1939 and had been, until 1938, the home of Rev James Mellor EVANS (1857-1939) and his wife, Zoe. By 1939 the property was already being shared. In both the Electoral listings and the 1939 Register Albert Edward MILLER (1881-1958), his wife, Catherine Emma, née BOYDEN (1882-1958), his mother Mary A MILLER (1855-1942), and his sister Florrie Northcott MILLER (1885-1943) were living in one part of the house. The MILLER family came from the Camberwell area and Albert was a bricklayer's labourer. When Mary and Florrie died they had returned to East Dulwich and Florrie was living at 29 Archdale Road when she died at St Francis Hospital in Dulwich on 7 January 1943. Albert and Catherine remained at Braeside until 1949.

The other part of Braeside was occupied by Bertram St George PARFITT (1886-1961), his wife Phoebe Ellen Margaret, née LECKENBY (1891-1985) and his father-in-law, William Edward Adolphus LECKENBY (1851-1945). Bertram was a bank official and William had been a solicitor's managing clerk. William probably died when his home was at Braeside as his death was registered in the Surrey North West District (which covers Woking) in the March Quarter of 1945. The PARFITTS and the MILLERS left Braeside in 1949 and, remaining close, all moved to Totland Bay on the Isle of Wight.

Number 2 Midhope Road was called Westacre in 1939 and was the home of Henry Cave FIDGEON (1876-1948), his wife Winifred Gertrude, née DURHAM (1888-1971) and their daughter Yvonne Mary who was born on 2 September 1919 (whose name was one of two redacted from Westacre). She was baptised at St Mary Bethany on 15 November. In 1945, she married Derek S BYRNE. Henry was a chartered accountant, but had served in the Honourable Artillery Company in the First World War, was commissioned in the Army Service Corps and served in France, being mentioned in despatches in 1917. He was, with his brothers, well known as a rifle shot and a member of the NRA at Bisley.

When the 1945 Electoral listing was compiled, the FIDGEONS and their maid (Frieda) Alice DUREN had left Westacre. It was occupied by four ladies: Stella Margaret BOYD (1912-1972), who, in 1939 was living at Milford House, Horsell; Emily G JOHNSTONE; Leila M SHOWELL, who was living at 15 Purley Hill, Purley in 1939; and Jennie M SMITHERS who came from Suffolk. All of these ladies had left Westacre before the 1946 list was compiled.

Number 3 Midhope Road was called Lansdowne in 1939. It had been the home of Major Hugh Ripley KERR MC (1890-1965) and his wife Frances Dorothy, née HOLLAND (1892-1956) since 1928. They had two sons: Hugh William, who was born on 29 March 1929 and baptised at St Mary Bethany, and Alan Ripley (1919-1991). Neither of the boys were listed at Midhope Road in 1939. Alan later became an airline pilot. Major KERR was an engineer and served in the 179 Tunneling Company, Royal Engineers during the First World War.³ It was he who detonated one of the huge mines at the start of first day of the Battle of the Somme (1st July 1916). He returned to the Army during the Second World War as a Staff Captain in the Royal Engineers at the War Office, (R.M.I.S.?)⁴. Frances was an Air Raid Precautions (A.R.P.) Warden with Woking Council. They remained at Lansdowne

throughout the war and moved to Chiddingfold in 1948.

Having had a number of different names, number 5 Midhope Road was called The Firs from 1935. In 1939 it was the home of widower Charles Fairlam le Seilleur GODFREY (1859-1944) and his three unmarried daughters. Charles was a director of a publishing firm. His daughters were Winifred (1887-1952), Dorothy (1893-1985) and Nora (1894-1965) and they were all teachers of young children having studied as art students. Dorothy specialised in teaching music and along with Nora, was a member of the British Red Cross Society. Charles died at The Firs on 16 May 1944 after a long illness and he was privately cremated. Winifred died at the house on 5 October 1952 and by 1957 Nora and Dorothy had moved away. The Firs was, in the 1960s, a small independent school for children who later attended Allen House School. It was run by Alice M GARDINER.

In 1939 number 6 Midhope Road was called Ellan Vannin (Isle of Man) and was occupied by a couple from the Isle of Man, William Henry KNEEN, (born in 1890) and wife Helen Gillard, née CHURCHER, who was born in 1892. Also listed at the address were Margaret CHURCHER (1886-1945), her husband Dr Thomas Gillard CHURCHER (1856-1947) and Constance CHURCHER (1893-1988).

William KNEEN was an inspector of taxes and after marrying Helen in Marylebone in 1926 they immediately made their home at Ellan Vannin where they remained until at least 1948. Although William and Helen had two sons, David Gillard (1930-2010) and Andrew Germain Robertson (born in 1932) neither of their names appear in the 1939 Register. However, they were both baptised at the Woking Methodist Church⁵. William himself was baptised at Wesleyan Methodist Peel Circuit on the Isle of Man on 26 March 1890, having been born on 22 January.⁶ His father, William, was a farmer and married to Evangeline.

Dr CHURCHER was a retired medical missionary and his daughter Constance was a registered nurse who, during the Second World War was registered for civil nursing. When Margaret CHURCHER died on 28 April 1945 at Ellan Vannin, her home was at 15 Loxley Road, Wandsworth Common. Her husband died at that address on 21 May 1947 which indicates that in 1939 Dr and Mrs CHURCHER had probably gone to live with their daughter in Woking as evacuees, whilst still maintaining their home in Wandsworth.

In 1939 number 8 was called Waveney and the home of Harry Montagu John WARDE (1873-1947) and his wife Louisa Katherine, née

MILLS (1875-1962). In 1911 Harry was the assistant head of the Office of Crown Agents for the Colonies, but by 1939 he had retired. The couple, who had two married sons, John Mills WARDE (1904-1980) and Robert Henry WARDE (1907-1990), had lived in Waveney since 1920 and remained there until Harry's death on 11 December 1947 at The Old Hall, Medbourne, Market Harborough, Leicester. Louisa died on 14 August 1962 in the Tammerton Nursing Home, Brooklyn Road, Woking. In 1939 John Mills WARDE, who was a farmer, lived at Frog Lane Farm in Woking with his wife Kathleen Mary Amy (nee SEALEY-BELL) and daughter Elizabeth. Also at Waveney in 1939 was Ethel Mary FARTHING (1893-1972) a paid domestic servant who was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 13 September 1972. Below Ethel's name in the 1939 Register there was a redacted entry.

The previously mentioned Cassiobury was number 9 Midhope Road. The house had been purchased, as Belmont, in 1937 by Randal John LEWIS, a civil servant who is listed to vote in both 1939 and 1945, but does not appear in the 1939 Register. Randal and his wife Marjorie Pauline, née CHASTON (1904-1998) had two sons born in Essex: Brian John (1929-2002) and David W. (in 1932) and a daughter, Audrey Pauline (?), born in Watford in 1935; none of whom are listed in the 1939 Register. However,

in 1961 Brian was an American engineer living in Washington, USA. In 1946 Randal and Marjorie are in the Electoral listings for 7 Midhope Road and in 1946 Randal purchased the property from Miss MORTIMER. In 1952 he sold the property to Gerald FOX, a chartered surveyor of Guildford.

In 1939, as mentioned above, Cassiobury was occupied by Moira Barbara BUSHHELL. With her was Mary LANGLEY (born 1898) who was a school helper and a redacted name, possibly another child who was accompanying Moira.

In 1939 number 10 was called Livilands and was the home of the RIND family. Walter Lockhart RIND OBE JP (1876-1942) was born in Calcutta, India and became the Assistant Registrar General in Great Britain. He had two sisters, Adelaide and Kathleen, who were soprano singers. Walter died at Livilands on 3 June 1942 and was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 6 June. His wife was Maria Donalda HOLLIER-GRIFFITHS (1872-1967) whom he married on 27 April 1904 in Mahé, Seychelles.⁷ Walter and Maria had four children: Malcolm Hollier McNeill (1907-1947), Gilbert McNeill (born in 1905), Myrtle Enid McNeill (1909-1993) and Doris (Wendy) (1915-2004). Malcolm married Diana Mary STEVENS in 1936 and they had two daughters, Rozanne McNeill who was born in 1937 and was one of the

names redacted in the 1939 Register under Livilands; the other daughter was Gillian, who was born in 1941. Although Malcolm was not listed in the 1939 Register, his wife Diana's name is there. Myrtle was also listed and although she carried out unpaid domestic duties in the home, she was also an ARP warden with Woking Council. Doris, not listed in 1939 as being at Livilands, was a section officer in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) when she became engaged to Flight Lieutenant John Foster Lyon BOWES, RAFVR in March 1945. However, this marriage does not appear to have taken place and she later married Mervyn Hugh RHYS in 1947. When the 1947 Electoral listing was compiled, Gilbert was living in Livilands with his wife Emily Shaw, née BUTTAR whom he had married in India in 1940. Sadly, they had lost two young children, Elizabeth McNeill (1940-1943) and three month old Francis McNeill in 1945. Elizabeth had been born and died in India but Francis was born and died in London. Myrtle and her mother were also in Livilands in 1947 and Malcolm and his family were living in West Hill Lodge, 13/15⁸ Midhope Road.

Rossmore was the name of 11 Midhope Road in 1939. It was occupied by Kenneth BOORMAN (1899-1966) and his wife, Kathleen (Fanny), née CARPENTER (1904-1997). Their three children's names

are redacted in the 1939 Register. They were Doreen (born in 1927), Wendy (born in 1928) and David (born in 1937). Kenneth was the managing director of the motor engineering company which is well remembered in the Woking area.⁹ Kenneth BOORMAN was listed in the Woking Directory for 1938 and the couple were in the electoral listings in 1937 and 1939 but had left Rossmore by the time the electoral listing was compiled in 1945 when the name of Mariam BENDIX, née FIELD, (1907-2005) appeared along with that of Abel ROSEN (1899-1973), Dora H ROSEN (1870-1949) and Sadie ROSEN, née FIELD (1905-1991) These were the family of Carole ROSEN (1934-2000), the singer and broadcaster.¹⁰

Abel's parents, Morris and Dora H ROSEN were from Russia and his father was a tailor in Whitechapel, London. Mariam and Sadie were sisters from Nottingham whose parents came from Romania. Their father, Charles was a lace manufacturer. Sadie married Abel in 1931 and they were living in Sidmouth Road, Honiton, Devon in the 1939 Register with Carole and Dora. Unmarried Mariam was living at 18 Wykeham Road, Hendon at the time.

It is possible that Mariam was not a British subject, but Romanian and this would have given her the problem of being an alien at the time of war.

Aliens had to frequently report to their local police stations and faced the possibility of internment in a camp. When she was issued with the naturalisation certificate DZ279 on 5 November 1939,¹¹ in the name of Mariam BENDIX, she was said to be from Germany and living in London. Later using her maiden name of Mariam FIELD she married Walter BENDIX (1909-2000) in the Hendon area in 1940.

Although Mariam's name only appears in the Electoral listings at Rossmore in 1945, Walter's name appears from 1946 to 1948. Like Mariam, he said to have come from Germany and was a resident in London when his naturalisation certificate AZ27236 was issued on 9 June 1947.¹² Walter would have been through the war as an alien with all its inconveniences. It is possible that Mariam and Walter divorced as a Walter BENDIX married Betty STUTMAN in Chelsea in 1955.

West Hill Lodge was the name of number 13/15¹³ Midhope Road. In 1939 Mrs Jeanne Crystal FRAME (1876-1953) was living there with her companion housekeeper Alice Eliza GOODMAN (1892-1977). According to the Electoral listings in 1937, Mrs Frame had been living at West Hill Lodge with her son Walter Murray FRAME (1906-1961) and Amy Dorothy BUMSTEAD. By 1938, Amy had been replaced by Alice, who was

born in Ripley, Surrey. Alice's mother, Eliza was a private school teacher from Stamford in Lincolnshire and in 1911 Alice was a clerk in a rate and tax office. When she died on 12 June 1977, her home was at 13 Georgelands, High Street, Ripley and, despite spending some of her childhood in Stamford, she remained near her birthplace.

Mrs FRAME was the widow of Walter Murray FRAME (born in 1861) of Glasgow and was living at Oban, Villiers Avenue in Surbiton in 1932 when her elder son William's engagement to Ursula Alfreda VAUGHAN was announced in *The Times*. Her son Walter's engagement to Mary Alice SHOPPEE was announced in *The Times* on 15 September 1936. The marriage did not take place and she married someone else in 1939. Walter had been elected as a member of the Baltic Mercantile and Shipping Exchange in 1937 and his sister Jessie Wright, who had also lived at West Hill Lodge, married Arthur Edward BAKER later that year.

Walter was Gazetted on 6 January 1941 whilst serving in The Gordons.¹⁴ All members of the FRAME family had left West Hill Lodge by 1945 and Mrs FRAME's home was at Pinehurst, Worplesdon Hill, Woking when she died on 29 January 1953; she was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 31 January. When her son Walter died

on 4 April 1961 his home was also at Pinehurst and he was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 10 April.

When the Electoral listing was compiled for 1945 Clarence BALL (1873-1946) and his wife Amy Ellen, née COTTON (1874-1964) were living at West Hill Lodge. The couple were both born in Lambeth and had married in 1925. In 1939 they were living in The Bungalow, Chertsey Bridge, Staines. Clarence was a civil servant and he died in Guildford Road, Woking on 12 March 1946 when his home was still at West Hill Lodge. He was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 16 March. Interestingly, when Amy BALL died on 8 August 1964 her home was at 2 Palmerston Buildings, The Broadway, Totland Bay, Isle of Wight and Phoebe Ellen Margaret PARFITT, widow (formerly at Braeside, 1 Midhope Road) was one of her executors. After the BALLs had left West Hill Lodge, the RIND family moved into it.

In 1939 14 Midhope Road was called Beechdene and it was occupied by Lt. Col. Charles Edward PIERSON (1884-1969), DSO, Royal Field Artillery, and his wife Ulla PIERSON, née PHILLIPS (1886-1974). They had married at St Peter's Church, Cranley Gardens in London on 20 December 1918. The colonel was born in Le Havre, France and had served in France in the First World War. He rejoined the Army for

the Second World War reverting to the rank of captain.¹⁵

The couple had at least three children, Major John Stuart (born in 1918); Ruth M. ("Judy") (born in 1923) and Mary Edwina A. (born in 1924). There are two names redacted in 1939 and they are probably belong to the two daughters, with the son away at school.

Number 16 Midhope Road was called Laurel Bank and it was the home of Frederick Anthony MENDES (1877-1947) and his wife Dorothy Isabella, née EDWARDS (1901-1987). In the 1939 Register the names of their two children have been redacted; they were probably John M (born in 1931) and Elizabeth (born in 1932). Frederick, was a retired railway auditor and had lived at Laurel Bank since 1930 but had left by 1945. When he died on 11 October 1947, his home was at 8 Raverston Terrace, Edinburgh. Dorothy was living at 66 Northcourt Avenue, Reading when she died on 3 December 1987.

In 1945 Laurel Bank was occupied, according to the Electoral listing, by the PLATT family. Harry L PLATT had married Annie Lilian EMBERSON (born 1897) in the Romford area in 1915. Annie, in 1911 was a blouse maker and living in Romford with her widowed father. In the 1939 Register she was living at 37 Brunswick Avenue, East Barnet, probably with

her children. Her son Derek L PLATT (born in 1922) was at Laurel Bank with his wife Margaret E, née HURRY, whom he married in 1944. They had a daughter, Jacqueline, born in the North West Surrey area in 1946 and had returned to Romford when their son Christopher was born in 1949. Also at Laurel Bank with Annie and Harry was their daughter Pamela E (born in 1923) who married Cecil J BUSH in 1961. Being too young to be included on the Electoral listing, it is not known whether Annie and Harry's twin sons Malcolm and Michael (born in 1928) were at Laurel Bank in 1945. By 1952 the PLATTs had left Laurel Bank and it was divided into two homes.

St Hilary's was the name of 18 Midhope Road in 1939. In the 1939 Electoral listing Elizabeth Annie HILLS, Leonard George BURLEIGH, Dorothy Amy BURLEIGH and Marie MOORE are named. Elizabeth HILLS (?1887-?1972) had been at Laurel Bank in 1938 and may have been listed in the 1939 Register as living at 62 Granville Road, Woking.

Leonard George BURLEIGH (1893-1963) had served in the Highland Light Infantry as a captain and the 157th Machine Gun Battalion as a Second Lieutenant during the First World War.¹⁶ The London Gazette quoted in *The Times* 18 January 1939 listed him in the Reserve of Officers as a captain for the Regular Army.

The 1939 Register describes him as a department manager in transport as well as being a Regular Army pensioner and captain of the ARP. In 1962 he was awarded the CBE for services on the Transport Users' Consultative Committee.

He had married Dorothy Amy GIDDINGS (1905-1979) in the Lewes area in 1930 and their two children's names have been redacted from the 1939 Register. They were Major Peter Richard of the Royal Engineers, (born in 1931) and Jane B (born in 1933) who were both born in Kingston. Also at St Hilary's was Belle Black BURLEIGH (1864-1949), Leonard's mother and the widow of railway hotel manager Samuel Walter BURLEIGH (1864-1933). Constance P GIDDINGS (born in 1913, probably in Aldershot) was Dorothy's sister. Their parents were Major William Henry GIDDINGS of the Royal Army Medical Corps¹⁷ and Ida Alice, née GOODHALL (1874-1960) who were married in Edmonton in 1898. Constance was a State Registered Nurse and a theatre sister in 1939. There are more two names that are redacted under St Hilary's. The Electoral listing for 1939 also included Marie MOORE who was not named in the 1939 Register.

The BURLEIGHs had arrived at St Hilary's in time for the 1938 Electoral listing to be included, but had left before the Electoral listing of 1945. Leonard BURLEIGH died in the

Cottage Hospital, Thames Ditton near his home on 9 November 1963. When Dorothy died her home was in Winchester.

In 1945 St Hilary's was occupied by Charles BENNETT (born in 1875), his wife Florence Lily (1871-1951) and Winifred Gertrude DARKE (1902-1985).

Florence was born in Battersea in 1871, the daughter of Henry and Florence ELFORD. In 1890 she married the printers' compositor Arthur Keyte WILCOCKSON in Wandsworth. The couple went to live in three unfurnished rooms at 13 Kathleen Road, Lavender Hill where they had at least three sons, Arthur Henry Charles (1891-1964), Albert Harold (1898-1950) and Ernest Edward (born in 1900). The couple are still together in the 1901 census. Florence's children, Winifred Gertrude WILCOCKSON (born on 1 February 1902) and Cyril WILCOCKSON (born in Brixton in 1903) were followed by Eileen Beatrice WILCOCKSON and Kathleen WILCOCKSON, who were both born in Clapham, in 1905 and 1907 respectively. How many of these children mothered by Florence after 1901 were fathered by Arthur WILCOCKSON cannot be confirmed without ordering their birth and marriage certificates (and they may not necessarily tell the truth!), but by 1911 Florence was living as Mrs

Charles BENNETT in Wandsworth. Six of her children were living with Florence and Charles, who was a dentist. She did not, however marry Charles until 1935. What happened to Arthur Keyte WILCOCKSON?

In 1901 Charles, whose father was also a dental professional, was unmarried and living in Lambeth as the manager of George DAVIS's dental business. In the 1939 Register Charles and Florence were living at 20 Stanley Road, Wimbledon with five of her children, including Winifred who had married John DARKE in 1921, with the surname of BENNETT. She was widowed in 1938 when John died in the Wandsworth area, aged 45. Winifred and John had two daughters who later appear in the Electoral listings for St Hilary's. They were Joan Y DARKE (born in 1927) who married Thomas A GOODCHILD in 1951 and June DARKE (born in 1930) who married Victor BEDDOE in 1960. They also had a son, David J DARKE born in 1933. Winifred's sisters Eileen and Kathleen both used the surname of BENNETT when they married.

Florence Lily BENNETT was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 19 July 1951 and Charles remained at St Hilary's until 1961 with Winifred. She died in the Abingdon area in September 1985, but Charles BENNETT's death has proven to be somewhat elusive.

Coval and Corner House had the addresses of Midhope Road in the 1939 Register. The Corner House faces Guildford Road and at the time was occupied by Margaret F CLARKE (born 1886) and Emma R CLARKE (born 1884; James CRAIG (1880-1958) and Henrietta CRAIG (1885-1981); Lt Col Owen Glyndwr DIGBY-JONES MC (1880-1950) and Gwenllian Cecil DIGBY-JONES (1884-1947).

Lt Col DIGBY-JONES was born in Midlothian, the son of Charles Digby JONES and Anee Susanna, née CHRISTIE ¹⁸ and the brother of Lt Robert James Thomas DIGBY-JONES RE VC (1876-1900) who died in the South African Wars. Another brother was Captain Charles Kenelin DIGBY-JONES RE (1873-1918) who died on a special mission when attached to the Czecho Slav forces at Chelyabinsk, Siberia and was buried at Vladivostok with full military honours.¹⁹

The colonel was retired from the Royal Engineers on account of his health in the 1939 Register. He had married Gwenllian Cecil PHILIPPS in Bath in 1907 and they were living in Gravesend in 1911. They had one daughter, Gwladys Aimee (1910-1976) who married William J THOMPSON in 1932 and was in Dorking in 1939. Gwenllian, known as "Cecil" was acting as clerk to the No 1 First Aid Post in Woking during the Second World War. Cecil died on 20 November 1947 and was buried in

the Woking Ground of Brookwood Cemetery on 25 November. When the colonel died in The Royal Gwent Hospital, Newport on 25 June 1950 his address was still given as The Corner House. He was buried with Cecil on 18 August 1950.

In 1939 the DIGBY-JONESes had a cook by the name of Henrietta CRAIG whose husband, James, also worked as a domestic servant for them. When James died on 16 October 1958, his address was 1A Guildford Road, Woking, which was The Corner House.

Margaret and Emma CLARKE have been difficult to research. Emma, born 16 January 1884 was an elementary school teacher and Margaret, born 24 March 1884 did not usually have an occupation, but in September 1939 she was a helper for evacuated school children. These ladies probably came down with the over 5,000 evacuees who came to Woking on 1 September and had been billeted with the DIGBY-JONESes and their origins are unclear.

Coval in 1939 was listed as being in Midhope Road. It had been the home of Thomas Charles MILLS (1845-1921) and Sarah Louisa, née PIERCY (1854-1939) who, in 1881 were living in Coval Lodge, Mortlake where he was a solicitor. By 1930, when their daughter Hester died of meningitis in Switzerland²⁰ they were already in

Midhope Road having moved from 11 Cambridge Square, London W1. As a widow, Sarah died on 12 February 1939 and was buried in Brookwood Cemetery on 15 February. As a result, Coval was not occupied when the 1939 Register was compiled.

At the outbreak of the Second World War Midhope Road was considered to be a safe refuge from any aerial attack upon London and evacuees were welcomed. However, this was not totally the situation as it was surrounded by bombs and incendiaries falling from enemy aircraft in the Woking area. Fortunately, it remained unscathed.

Throughout the war Midhope Road saw many carrying on with their daily jobs, some of them even commuting to London. There were those who served as volunteers in the ARP and at First Aid Posts. Some came with the evacuated children and cared for them. Others served in the forces and came home on leave. Parts of life carried on much as it would have in peacetime with births, weddings and funerals.

We do not know whether when peace came to Europe on 8 May 1945 there was a street party in Midhope Road, perhaps somewhere there is an almost forgotten photograph?

Jenny Makerji

Additional Sources

Websites:

<https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/search.pl>
<https://www.familysearch.org/en/>
<https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk/#wills>
<https://www.google.com/>
<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
Times Digital Archive on line via
<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/learnin-g-and-research/adult-online-reference-shelf#newspapers>
1939 Register on findmypast.co.uk

Surrey History Centre Resources:

Electoral Listings

Woking Directories

SHC 6221/2 Regarding 7 and 9 Midhope Road

SHC 6198/8/21 Plans for York Road, Midhope Road and West Hill Estate (1896-1898)

1 *The War of the Worlds* appeared as a serial in *Pearson's Magazine* and *Cosmopolitan* between April & December 1897 – See Peter J BECK - *The War of the Worlds – from H G Wells to Orson Welles, Jeff Wayne, Steven Spielberg and beyond*, Bloomsbury, London, 2016.

2 In September 1939, at the outbreak of the Second World War a form of census was taken of the population. It served a number of purposes. The issuing of identity cards with their individual numbers were recorded from the register. These numbers were transferred on to ration books and later on to medical cards in 1948 with the establishment of the National Health Service. By collecting the names, ages and occupations of the population, authorities were able to establish who would be able to join the armed forces, as well as who would need additional rations when time came. Men employed in heavy work were entitled to extra rations and this was written beside their names in the Register.

3 Simon Jones *Underground Warfare 1914-1918*, Pen & Sword Military, Great Britain, 2010

4 Unclear but from the final column on the 1939 Register

5 SHC 6061/2/2 pages 30 (entry 101) and 31 (entry 107)

6 FamilySearch.org

7 From Cercle de Généalogie Maurice-Rodrigues

8 For superstitious reasons, what should have been 13 Midhope Road was often referred to as number 15.

9 David Boorman was very helpful when the display featuring Midhope Road was shown at The Lightbox.

10 Carole ROSEN was the daughter of Abel and Sadie and her obituary appeared in the *Guardian* newspaper on 27 November 2000. She also wrote the *Dictionary of National Biography* entry for Jenny Lind.

11 The National Archives, Kew HO334/239/279

12 The National Archives, Kew HO334/180/272236

13 See footnote 8

14 *The London Gazette* (supplement) 6 January 1941 gives his military number as 160592.

15 Information about his ranks and pay grades can be found in *The London Gazette* (which gives his number as 46413) by using Google.

16 National Archives, Kew WO372/3/184394

17 National Archives, Kew WO372/8/6376

18

<https://gw.geneanet.org/clifjade?lang=en&pz=charles+pierre&nz=berthon&p=owen+glynwr+digby&n=jones>

19

<https://www.nmrs.org.uk/resources/obituaries-of-members/obituaries-of-members-names-beginning-with-j/charles-kenelm-digby-jones/>

20 *The Times* newspaper 5 February 1930

Snippets

This month's snippets are Midhope Road based! It is a very different road today from that of 1939, being composed almost entirely of flats. Statistics, mostly from the census of 2011 tell us that:

-o O o-

There are 104 flats. 21 detached houses and 15 terraced house

-o O o-

54 people live on their own and 52 are occupied by 2 people

-o O o-

65% of the occupants were born in England. 21% were born in the EU

-o O o-

Most occupants are in full time employment with jobs in the scientific and technical professions, retail and information and communications

-o O o-

67% of residents are aged between 25 and 49 with the 30 – 44 age group being the largest

-o O o-

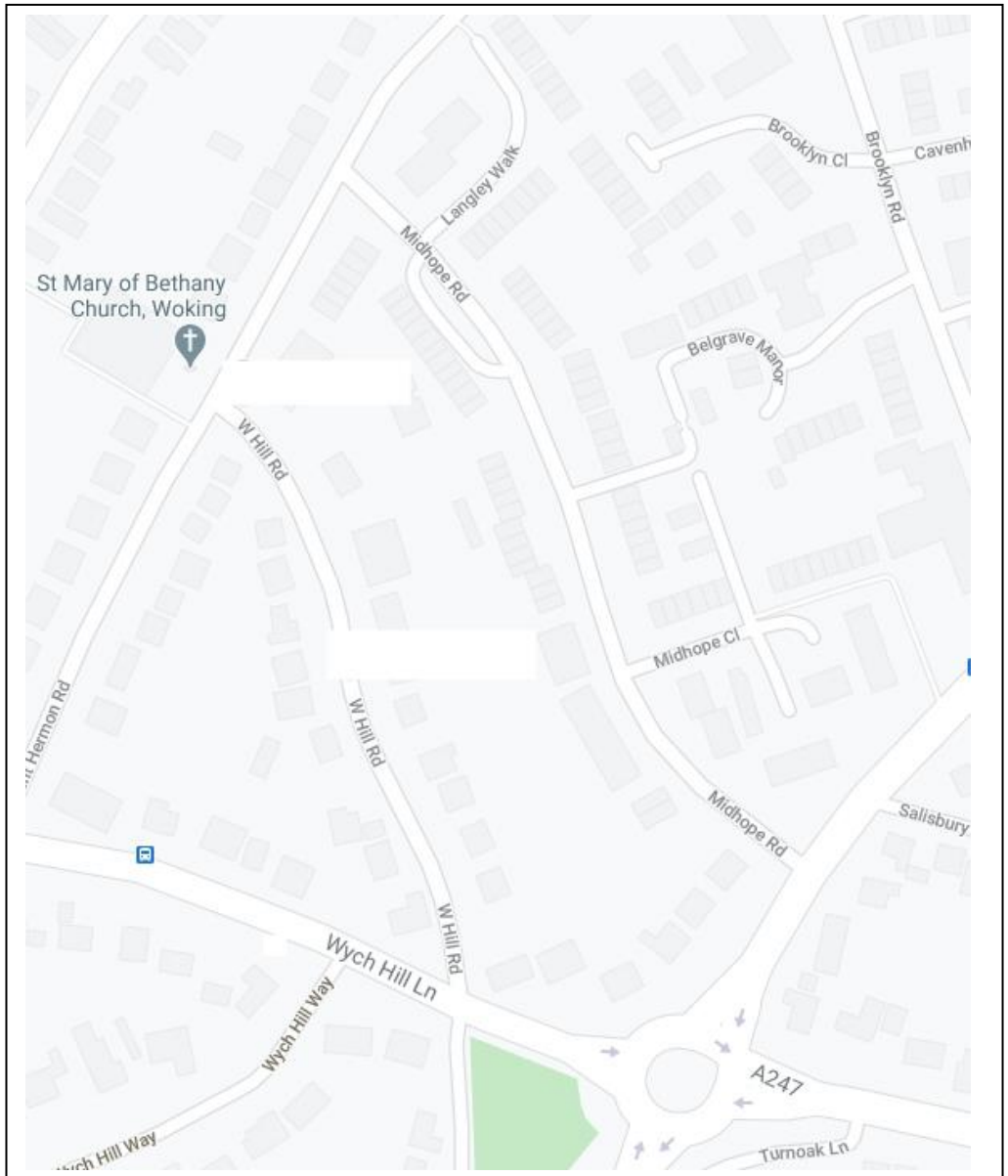
The collage on the back cover shows Midhope road as it is now, and the maps on pages 18 and 19 show how the buildings have changed.



House typical of the period



OS map 1937 – 6 inch to mile Surrey XV1.SE





Midhope Road now