

MILL ROAD HISTORY PROJECT
BUILDING REPORT

124–134 Mill Road, Cambridge (‘Railway Cottages’)

Accommodation for Railway Workers (c.1850–1966)

Temporary Housing (1966–84)

CHS Group Flats and Hostel (1984–present)



Caro Wilson

The Mill Road History Project was officially launched in 2013 under the umbrella of Mill Road Bridges¹ to study the heritage of Mill Road, Cambridge, its buildings (residential, commercial and industrial), institutions and community. It was supported by a two-year grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Third Edition – January 2016

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Cover picture: 126–134 Mill Road (photograph by Abdi Osman, Railway House resident, 2015)

¹ 'Mill Road Bridges seeks to grow and maintain the community spirit, heritage and rich cultural diversity of the Mill Road area by improving the flow of information between and about individuals, businesses, voluntary organisations and local stakeholders.'

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|---|
| CA: | Cambridgeshire County Archives (Shire Hall) |
| CC: | Cambridgeshire Collection (Central Library) |
| <i>CEN</i> | <i>Cambridge Evening News</i> |
| CHS | Cambridge Housing Society |
| <i>CIP</i> | <i>Cambridge Independent Press</i> |
| <i>CN</i> | <i>Cambridge News</i> |
| <i>CWN</i> | <i>Cambridge Weekly News</i> |
| GER | Great Eastern Railway |
| LNER | London & North Eastern Railway |

NOTE

This report was produced by Caro Wilson, a resident of Petersfield, Cambridge, and volunteer for, and member of the Steering Group of the Mill Road History Project, together with staff and residents of Railway House. The help of Alison Booth of the Cambridge Housing Society, and also of Ian Bent, Jo Costin and Shelley Lockwood, and of all those who allowed themselves to be interviewed is gratefully acknowledged.

Location

124–134 Mill Road, Cambridge, CB1 2BQ. The building is situated on the Petersfield side of the railway bridge, on the south side of the street. It is classified as a 'building of local interest' by the local planning authority (Cambridge City Council 2014).

National Grid reference (central point: Nos. 126|128)

TL 463577

546358, 257773

Latitude: 52.1988 Longitude: 0.1401

52° 11' 56" N 0° 8' 24" E

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1 – Exterior from railway bridge (photograph by Abdi Osman, resident of Railway House, 2015)

These buildings were selected for research for the Mill Road History Project for several reasons. The striking appearance and central position of Nos. 126–134 add to the visual diversity of the road. Their very existence highlights the importance of the railway to the development of Mill Road, in that they provided accommodation for railway workers from the earliest years of its development.

A central aim of the Mill Road History Project has been to work with the communities who use or live in some of its buildings to involve them with the research, and to increase their awareness of the heritage of the property and of the road. The central portion of the main building (Nos. 128–130) is currently managed by Cambridge Housing Society as accommodation for single homeless young people. Staff and residents have been involved in many aspects of this report, as has the head office of the Cambridge Housing Society. In conjunction with the Mill Road History Project and the Romsey Garden Club, Railway House is undertaking a project to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Armistice by transforming a patch of the back gardens of these buildings into an allotment, and by holding a 1940s-style tea party with an exhibition celebrating their research. The Mill Road History Project is very grateful to everyone involved.

Early History of the Site and its Buildings

Description

The property comprising Nos 126–134 Mill Road was formerly known as ‘Railway Cottages’. The cottages were used as accommodation for workers on the railway, and for many years were the property of the Great Eastern Railway,² as was the detached house previously to be found on the west side of the property, usually called Morcombe House, or 124 Mill Road, which is now a block of flats. This report will consider both sites as well as the site of the ‘Gatekeeper’s House’ or ‘Signal Man’s House’, which originally lay to the east near the railway tracks themselves.

The photographs that show Railway Cottages most clearly in their totality, Figures 2 and 3 below, have so far proved impossible to date or reference, as they are unknown to the Cambridgeshire Collection, or to the County Archives:



Figure 2 – Front of Railway Cottages (date and provenance unknown)



Figure 3 – Back of Railway Cottages (date and provenance unknown)

² This is confirmed by The Town surveyor, Mr George Stephenson, in the evidence he gave to the House of Commons Enquiry of April 1875. He is explaining to the ‘examiner’ Mr Wilberforce, that his plans for a carriage bridge would not involve the compulsory purchase of any property: ‘...There are some cottages belonging to the Railway Company. I propose to take a piece of the garden but to leave the cottages intact- there is no compensation for the property taken/ It would be entirely Railway Property?/Yes/To whom do the cottages belong?/To the Railway Company.

The front view does however seem to show the bridge parapet, so the photographs are likely to date from after 1889, when the first bridge was built.

The property is described as follows in the 2014 Pevsner's *Guide to Cambridgeshire*:³

On the S side here, Nos. 129-130, an ambitious neo-Tudor terrace composition of yellow brick, c.1850, built as railway housing.

The Mill Road Conservation Area Appraisal Document of June 2011 gives a fuller description:⁴

This group of terraced two storey Gothic houses were built as railway workers' accommodation, and are shown on the 1859 map. They were constructed using a yellow brick with slate roofs and small and larger gables. The windows are timber casements, although most have been changed, and the front doors face the adjoining road bridge with elliptical brick arches over the openings. The window and door openings are defined by brick quoins in matching brickwork. The roofs are a particular feature of the group, being at almost eye level from the adjoining road bridge, with tall brick chimneys set at an angle to the ridge with red clay pots.

To modern ears 'cottage' may sound an inappropriate description for such a comparatively grand building, but the following illustration from John Claudius Loudon's 1833 *Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* shows something very similar (Figure 4 below):⁵

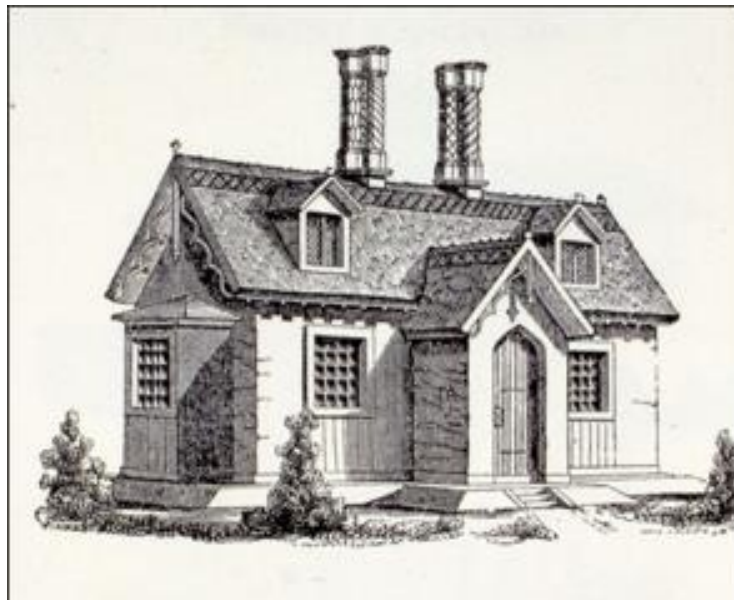


Figure 4 – Cottages in the Gothic Style (Loudon, 1833)

Putative Dates of Signal Man's House, the Cottages and Morcombe House

It has not so far (January 2016) been possible to see the deeds of the property and thus to establish the date of the building or the name of any architect or builder. However in October 1845, some time after considerable public concern about the safety of the Mill Road crossing had been expressed by the local paper, as the final sentence indicates,⁶ and a few months after the Railway itself was open, the *Cambridge Independent Press* reported an an-

³ Bradley and Pevsner (2014), p. 326.

⁴ *Mill Road Area* (June 2011), p. 24.

⁵ Loudon, *Encyclopaedia* (1833), p. 96.

⁶ *CIP* Saturday 11 October 1845.

nouncement from the Directors of the Great Eastern Railway that level crossing gates would be fitted and a Gatekeeper's lodge built. This announcement reads:

The Mill Road. In compliance with the request of the Paving Board, the directors [of the Great Eastern Railway] have agreed to erect gates and a lodge on the Mill-road leading to Cherry Hinton. We have on former occasion directed public attention to the danger of this particular spot as hundreds of people frequently congregate there to see the trains pass.

It is likely that the work to install the gates and build the 'lodge' was undertaken very soon after this report but the exact date is unknown.⁷ It is possible that the cottages were erected at the same time, or soon after but the first definitive evidence of their existence is in the coloured survey map of the Borough of Cambridge with Parish Boundaries, drawn up in 1858 by Richard Reynolds Rowe, the then Town Surveyor.

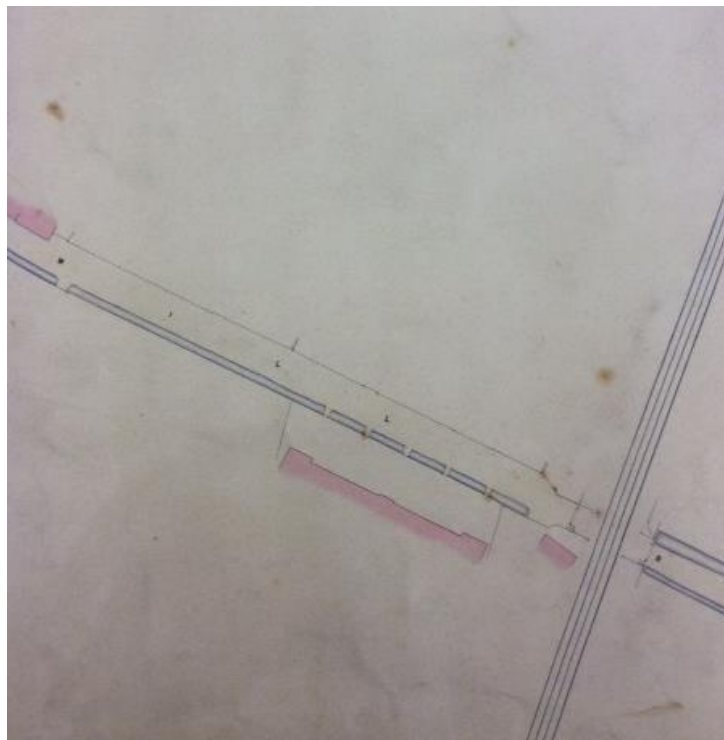


Figure 5 – R R Rowe Survey, 1858 (CA: R CB4/19 1/XIX)

The land to the west of the cottages is undeveloped; there is no sign of Morcombe House or of any other buildings in the vicinity.

The Rowe map shows a detached building very close to the railway tracks, which is likely to have been the Gate Keeper's house or the Signal Man's house. Both names are given to this building. Nothing is known of its exterior or interior, and it likely that it was demolished about the same time as the first road or carriage bridge was built in 1889. More information can be found in the next section, Living in 124-134 Mill Road.

As mentioned in the Conservation Appraisal above, five cottages are also shown on the 1859 Monson map but the Gatekeeper's House near the tracks is less clear:

⁷ For more information about the background to the Crossing, the Crossing itself and the various Mill Road bridges over the railway see the Mill Road History Project report on The Railway Bridge (www.capturingcambridge.org.uk).



Figure 6 – 1859 Map of Cambridge, E. Monson (CC: CC B.K.6 2000)



Figure 7 – detail of 1859 Map of Cambridge, E. Monson (CA: CC B.K.6 2000)

This map, together with that of R R Rowe, establish that Railway Cottages were *in situ* in 1858, but by that date they might already have been in existence for some seven years, or maybe more. With reference to the 1851 census, Allan Brigham has written:⁸

- Beyond Union Terrace it is unclear where houses have been built, but it is likely that the group of households recorded with railway staff as head of household were the 'Railway Cottages' still standing today near Mill Road bridge (Enumeration No: 123-132/133).
- If the four properties listed after Mr Ward (Enumeration No: 114-117) were those built adjoining his property this leaves five properties in 1851 unaccounted for. They were either in Union Terrace, or on Mill Road between Union Terrace and 'Swiss Cottage'
- The census records a house occupied by the 'Railway Gate Keeper', which marks the railway line (Enumeration No 133). This was either part of, or immediately after, 'Railway Cottages'.

Census reports and street directories from 1851 to 1891 give a somewhat confused account of the numbering of the cottages, and of the date when Morcombe House (No. 124) was built and when the Signal Man's house was, presumably, demolished.

⁸ Allan Brigham (2014), p. 36.

The various anomalies are best illustrated in the table below:

| Source | What was on Site? | Notes |
|---------------|--|--|
| 1851 Census | 11 dwellings? | According to Brigham numbering |
| R. Rowe map | 'Block' of cottages plus clear separate building near track. | |
| 1859 map | 5 Cottages plus separate building nearer track? | Unclear |
| 1861 Census | No mention of cottages or of names from 1851 but an occupied signal box and a signalman, Morrell, living at 50 Mill Road. | |
| 1871 Census | Five Cottages plus a Railway Gate House lived in by Morrell, signalman. | |
| 1874 Kelly | First mention of Morcombe House, after Inverness Terrace, but with no obvious railway connections. No mention of cottages or Gate House. | Mr G Kimm, Station Master 1873–84, never lived in Morcombe House |
| 1878 Spalding | Morcombe House listed as part of Inverness Terrace but with no obvious railway connections. 5 cottages : Morrell living in No. 29, nearest the track with other residents or lodgers. | Morrell still listed as signalman |
| 1881 Spalding | Morcombe House listed as part of Inverness Terrace, now a school for young ladies. 5 Cottages; Worrell living in No. 29 nearest track. | Worrell, clearly error for Morrell, listed as signalman |
| 1884 | Morcombe House listed as separate building and now as lived in by GER Station Master. 6 Cottages. Morrell living in No. 30 nearest track. | Morrell listed as 'Railway Servant' |
| 1887 | Morcombe House listed as part of Inverness Terrace again though still lived in by Station Master. 6 Cottages. No. 30, nearest track, lived in by Covill. | Covill listed as signalman; could this be an error for Morrell? |
| 1886 Map | Morcombe House shown as substantial detached house. Five Cottages as one block (as today) with handsome gardens. Clear separate building by the track. | |
| 1891 | Morcombe House listed as part of Inverness Terrace again, No. 78, though still lived in by Station Master. 5 Cottages, no signalman listed. | |

1886

Despite these anomalies, we can be certain that by 1886 the site was fully occupied with a signal man's house near the tracks, the cottages with much the same outline that we know today, and with a substantial detached house beside them separate from Inverness Terrace

and named as Morcombe House, a fitting dwelling for the important GER Station Master, then William Bright.

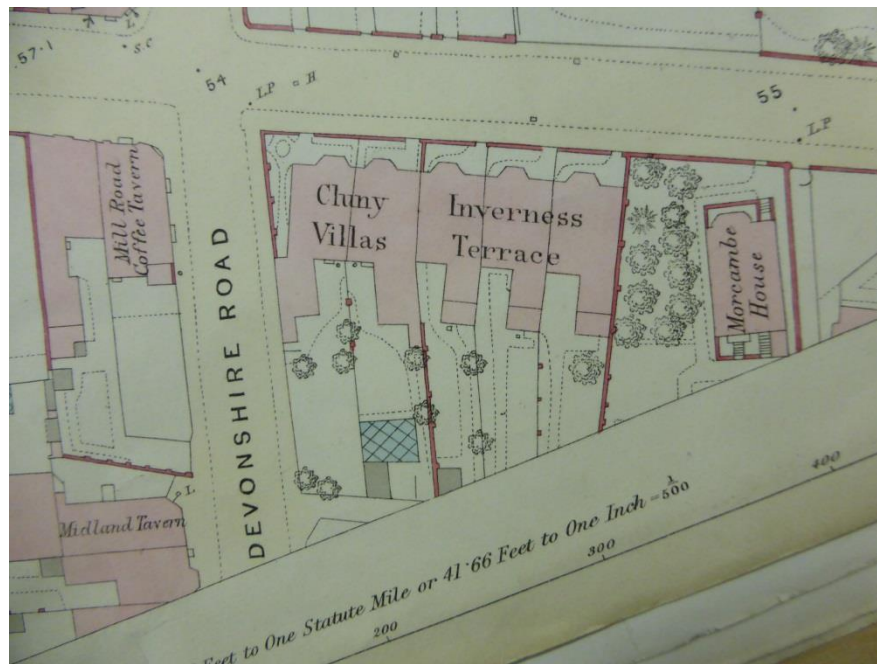


Figure 8 – 1886 O/S map Mill Road, Covent Garden to Railway (CA: croc.ma.OS.XLVII)



Figure 9 – 1886 O/S map Mill Road, Covent Garden to Railway (detail) (CA: croc.ma.OS.XLVII)

The details of these maps allow us to tell a great deal.

Morcombe House

Morcombe House is shown as a large detached house (the 1911 census lists it as having eleven rooms.) It is shown in its own garden with something of a small orchard beside it and a path leading from the property to the rear. This may well be the 'Passage leading to the GER Station' mentioned in the Spalding street directory of 1884 which can thus be seen as a putative date for the building

Only two photographs exist which show Morcombe House at all clearly.



Figure 10 – Funeral procession on the bridge (CA: VS K0 18402)

Figure 10 clearly shows a funeral procession but neither the date nor the occasion have been identified. Morcombe House with its three stories stands tall above both Railway Cottages and Inverness Terrace. The bay window (visible in the 1886 map) extends to the first floor; the windows and doorway are very handsome.



Figure 11 – Boys Brigade march on bridge, c.1900 (CA: RA.Boys.K0.36514)

Figure 11, from a similar standpoint but likely to be of a somewhat later date, shows the Boys Brigade band marching by on a wet and chilly morning. Again the house's details are clear. The 1889 bridge is much less oppressive than its present-day equivalent and there appears to be a path directly in front of the front door, giving the Station Master and his family their own private entrance. Perhaps tradesmen had access from Devonshire Road.

The bridge parapet, visible above the lady in the white hat and scarf is still visible in 2015.



Figure 12 – Bridge parapet (Caro Wilson, 2015)

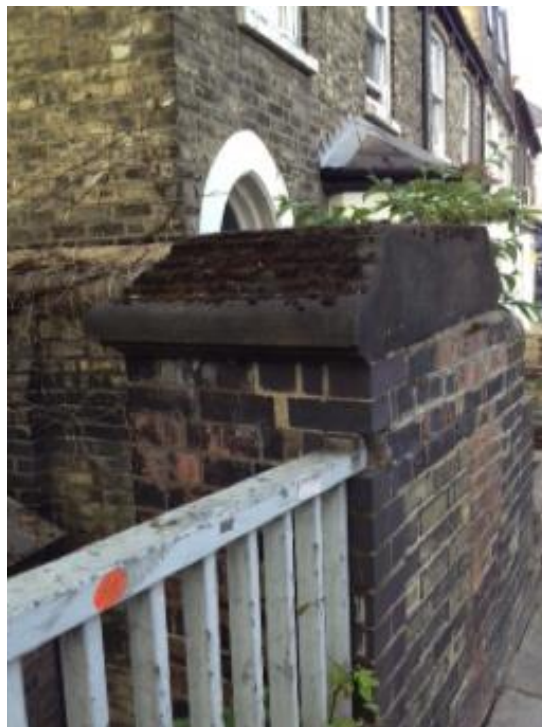


Figure 13 – Bridge parapet (Caro Wilson, 2015)

Morcombe House is identified as the Station Master's House in street directories and census reports from 1884 to 1939. Neither the reason for nor the date of its demolition are known.

124-134 Mill Road. The Cottages

In the 1886 map the cottages are shown with handsome front gardens with topiary hedges, uniform in style, each with its own front path to the main road. Each garden appears to be fenced into two separate parts, no doubt reflecting the fact that at various times two different families lived in each cottage. At the back there are again substantial gardens with several outbuildings in each (presumably one a privy) and some mature trees.

If we can believe that no substantial internal changes took place before the Second World War, each cottage would have had four ground-floor and four first-floor rooms, two on each side of a central passage and staircase, each household having two rooms down and two rooms up. Victor Challis, retired signalman, born 1919 (see Appendix III(a)), remembers visiting his Uncle Alf and Aunt Elizabeth there in the 1930s and recalls the front door opening to face the staircase. He says: 'You see the doors are wider than usual. It seemed there were two homes through one front door, each with an upstairs and downstairs.'

Roger Simpkins (Appendix III(c)) confirms this:

There was a funny arrangement because the front door served two houses – you went down the middle both sides. You come into a passage, it was like a bit connecting the two inside the house.

This is also confirmed by the 1911 census, which lists each household as having four rooms.

The 1886 map shows each cottage having its own path on to Mill Road (probably through low hedging: see Figure 9) and thus reminds us that before 1889 the road in front of the property was level; there was no restriction of access as there is today because of the current steep bridge. Instead there was a gated level crossing across the road manned by the Gate Keeper. The buildings would not have been hidden from view as they are today; indeed they would have marked the railway in a very striking and impressive way, as no doubt the Great Eastern Railway Company intended. The interior would also have been much lighter.

The fact that the cottages would be adversely affected by a bridge was used as an argument against the first proposed road or carriage bridge. Writing a letter to the *Cambridge Independent Press* on 8 May 1875, Alderman Jasper Lyon who, it should be noted, owned a house near the crossing, writes in opposition to the proposals supported by Councillor Wetenhall, who had development interests in Romsey.

I still maintain I am right as to a carriage bridge and the land to be purchased. I wonder what Mr Wetenhall would ask for the frontage required were it his property. No doubt it would be exceedingly valuable in this case. And as to the five double and one single, cottages,[presumably the Gatekeeper's House] even could they remain, light and air would be excluded so as to make them mere dungeons such as Mr Wetenhall would not like to live in, and in which it would be cruel to expect the present occupants to remain.

Largely for cost reasons only a footbridge was built, probably in the late 1870's but by 1889 the case for a road bridge could no longer be resisted. No doubt the noise and disruption for the then residents caused by its building, was as bad as it was for Cindy Atkinson nearly 100 years later when an even higher bridge was built. (see Section 4. Post War 1945-Present day.)

The Cottages and Measham Terrace

A question still occurs about the comparative grandeur of the cottages in comparison to other accommodation built for railway workers within the same fifty years.

An intriguing photograph shows a row of cottages on the Romsey side of the bridge, which are variously described in census and street directories as 'Lodge Cottages' in 1878, 'Walter Cottages' in 1881, 'Measham Terrace' in 1887 and thereafter; but which, like those in Petersfield, were used as housing for railway workers. (These cottages are also shown on the map of properties acquired from the Railway Board by the City Council in 1966, presumably thereafter demolished to widen the road and make room for the Argyle Street Housing Co-operative.) Like Figures 2 and 3 this photograph has proved impossible to source.



Figure 14 – Measham Terrace (date unknown)

Note the bell turret of the Baptist Church in the background. As with Figures 2 and 3, the photograph must date from after the building of the first bridge in 1889 (see the flight of steps down from the bridge), but it does allow us to wonder about the very different style of housing provided for workers of seemingly identical status on either side of the bridge. Mrs Sheila Simpkins (daughter-in-law of former resident and wife of a railway guard), when asked about this in conversation with Caro Wilson, commented: 'The railway did things properly; you should see the Station Master's house at Hinxley.' It is perhaps possible that our Railway Cottages, built maybe within five or ten years of the railway coming to Cambridge, were built as something of a flagship for the Eastern Counties Railway Company. A company that could build such high-status housing for its employees was a company to take seriously. However it has also been suggested that thereafter the company could not afford

to build more accommodation for its workers. Other railway houses in the area were all built by private developers.

‘The Works’

Though not strictly speaking on the site of the Cottages, mention should be made of a building which would have been familiar to many of its residents, and whose dilapidated state gives rise to concern that it may face demolition in the future. The date of its construction is unknown.



Figure 15 – ‘The Works’ (Caro Wilson, 2015)

These buildings, next to the railway track, are clearly visible from the Petersfield side of the railway bridge and were identified by Victor Challis, local resident and former signalman (see Appendix III(a)) as ‘The Works’:

That was what we called The Works; that’s where they could make anything. Level crossing gates, metal work, anything. They came down to the tracks from the other side of the road and walked under the bridge to get there.

Alan Brown says of Figure 16, below, that:

by the 1970s Mill Road Junction signal box had long since been abolished and was latterly used as a store. Mill Road was originally crossed via a level crossing (as was Coldham’s Lane), and the crossing was replaced by the bridge in the 1880s. The box sits on what was once the road and was built at roughly the same time as the bridge (most likely immediately after the bridge was opened). It replaced an earlier box located on the up side and south of the former level crossing.

Brown’s remarkable photograph shows the signal box with the Railway Cottages chimneys visible in the background shows the path under the bridge leading to The Works.⁹

⁹ Alan Brown (1970).



Figure 16 – Mill Road signal box (Alan Brown)

Roger Simpkins, local resident and former Railway employee (see Appendix III(c)) started his working life there as an apprentice carpenter:

I was apprenticed there in 1953 when I was 15; there was a road under the bridge and I think there was a water tower. There was a blacksmith's shop and all sorts. There was a sheet metal shop, a machine shop, an office, a blacksmiths with four anvils, gas fitters, a store room, all sorts. Nevie Haglen was the blacksmith. I did my five years working there.

In the following photograph of some part of The Works, probably dating from the late 1950s or early 1960s , Roger Simpkins is shown on the left, with Terry, a carpenter, Richard, a painter, and Peter Dykes, a carpenter. The chimneys of the Railway Cottages can again be seen in the background.



Figure 17 – Roger Simpkins with Terry, Richard and Peter Dykes (Roger Simpkins, early 1960s)

Not surprisingly, the site was something of an attraction for children. Eric Leeke (MRHP interviewee) spent his childhood in Great Eastern Street and remembers:

As children we used to sidle up by the cottages to get under the bridge, to see what they had down there, and to see where all the engines were in the engine sheds.

Living in 124–134 Mill Road

A Residents' list from 1851 to 1975 is to be found as Appendix I, but should not be considered as necessarily a complete record.

124 Mill Road: Morcombe House

Morcombe House, as we have seen was established as a detached building by 1886, but it is listed as an inhabited dwelling east of No. 1 Inverness Terrace from 1874. The resident in 1874 is given as a Mary Scudamore. By 1878 it is listed as No. 1 Inverness Terrace, and Mrs. Scudamore shares the house with a John Chandler; but the name Morcombe House follows her name only. By 1881 John Chandler has moved out and the other tenant of No. 1 Inverness Terrace is a William Giffen, joiner. Again the title Morcombe House follows only the name of Mrs. Mary A. Scudamore and is described as a 'School for Young Ladies'. The 1881 census shows Mrs Scudamore's profession as 'Governess' and shows she had four children to support. She was presumably taking in other children to teach as well.

By 1884 Morcombe House is clearly the designated dwelling for the Station Masters of Cambridge and at that date is listed as having 'a passage leading to GER station.' We may speculate that this was for the use of the Station Master only; it seems not to have joined a path which leads from the back of the cottages themselves.

Station Masters had been in post since the coming of the railway in 1845. Those in the earliest company, Eastern Counties Railway, seem to have had a somewhat chequered record in that out of the eight listed from 1845 to 1861 one was transferred to the Goods Department, one demoted, one discharged because of fraud, and one removed on grounds of ill-health.

GER had five Station Masters (dating from 1860 to 1884) before William Bright, first recorded resident of Morcombe House, was appointed in 1884.

What little is known of him, and his successors is best shown in tabular form as follows:

Cambridge Station Masters resident in Morcombe House

| Company | Name | Dates of Office | Notes |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| GER | William Bright | 1884–94 | Retired |
| GER | Frederik Holdich | 1894–1911 | Retired; wife Marianne is buried in Mill Road Cemetery |
| GER | J. Ablitt | 1911–15 | Died in service |
| GER | F G Randall | 1915–16 | Promoted(see below) |
| LNER | Alfred Peacocke | 1916–34 | Decorated MBE-RVO (see below) |
| British Railways | Stanley N. Wright | 1934–48 | Retired |

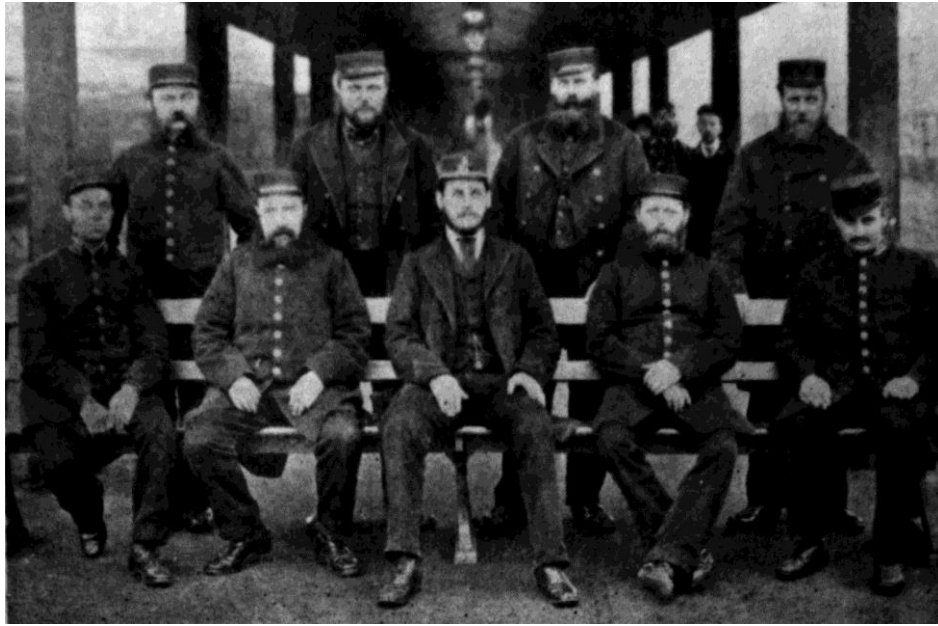


Figure 18 – Stationmaster, inspectors and ticket collectors in 1877 (CC: RA.rai.J70.5213)

The handsome photograph above is headed 'Bygone Days' and reads:¹⁰

Stationmaster, inspectors and ticket collectors engaged at Cambridge Railway station, fifty years ago. Mr. G Kimm the then station master is the only survivor. Those standing (left to right) are Mr Stamp, a ticket collector, and three inspectors, Mssrs. Rings, Squires and Leacock. Seated are Mr. Osbourne, Mr Moody, (two collectors) then Mr G Kimm, and on the right Mr Barrell and Mr Stone.

G Kimm was Station Master from 1874 to 1884 when he was apparently promoted to Peterborough. He seems never to have lived in Morcombe House, but we can feel fairly confident that the uniform would not have changed greatly whilst GER was still in business and that the sense of the importance of the senior roles these men held would also be unchanging.

William Bright

William Bright, first resident of Morcombe House, who served as Station Master from 1884 to 1894, is described as 'a good staff man' in the booklet *Cambridge Station: A Tribute*. It was in his time that the Cambridge Railway Band was formed. This was the popular band, later known as The Cambridge Silver Prize Band, for which Victor Challis's uncle was secretary in the 1930s (see Appendix III(a)). William Bright also helped promote the St John's Ambulance Brigade, Cambridge Division, and, as the booklet records: 'In 1893 he presided over demonstrations of ambulance work in the Railway Mission Hall when 59 candidates were presented with badges and certificates.' The hall would have been in very easy walking distance of Morcombe House.¹¹

F.G Randall

Mr F.G Randall seems only to have served as Station Master for a year. In his book *Along the Line*, David Occamore quotes from the *The Great Eastern Magazine* for April 1915:¹²

¹⁰ CCh 30 March 1927, p. 9.

¹¹ Warren and Phillips (1987), p. 23.

¹² Quoted from *The Great Eastern Magazine* April 1915 in Occamore (2012), p. 6.

Cambridge- Mr F G Randall, late Station Master at Ely, has been appointed to a senior position at Cambridge. His career dates back to January 1887, when he was appointed probationary clerk at Ipswich. He was afterwards transferred to the district superintendent's office there, and for a number of years held the position of chief clerk. He was appointed station master at Haughley in 1901, Aylsham, 1904, Wymondham 1908, and Ely 1911. Mr Randall has been succeeded at Ely by Mr Everson late station master at Wymondham

Alfred Peacock (or Peacocke)

In contrast, Alfred Peacock was Station Master and resident in Morcombe House for nearly twenty years. His appointment was welcomed by the *Cambridge Independent Press* of 28 July 1916:

His Majesty the King, has graciously conferred upon Mr Peacock, the new station master at Cambridge Station, the Royal Victorian Medal, in recognition of his long and faithful services rendered during the time he was travelling inspector in charge of the Royal Train on the GER Company's system. The medal, with ribbon attached and enclosed in a neat case, was presented to Mr Peacock at Buckingham Palace yesterday (Friday) It was accompanied by a certificate bearing the Royal Arms and dated from Buckingham Palace July 21st 1916.. His Majesty received Mr Peacock very cordially and chatted with him for some moments thanking him for past services, congratulating him on his new appointment and indulging in some reminiscences, in the course of which he recalled the time when Mr Bright was Station Master at Cambridge. Mr Peacock was in charge of the royal Train for 17 years during which he travelled with all the European monarchs except the Czar of Russia. He travelled with the Kaiser on several occasions , including visits to Shorncliffe, Sandringham and Carlisle. The new Station Master has only just relinquished his position upon the Royal train having taken up his duties as station master at the beginning of the present month. He is a native of Wisbech and began his associations with the G.E.R. at that town 31 years ago. For 15 years he resided in Cambridge as the Superintendent Inspector for the Western District. During the last 17 years he had been in charge of the Royal Train.

It appears that two sons of the Peacock family served in the First World War with the elder Aungier Ernest dying at the young age of 16: Further information can be found at:

<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/146686/PEACOCKE,%20AUNGIER%20ERNEST>

According to Royal Naval Division records another son, Walter George (born 1 June 1897) served in The Royal Naval Division and survived the war.¹³

Stanley Wright

We do know from the 1911 census that Morcombe House had eleven rooms: certainly the principal rooms would have had open fireplaces (as would the Cottages). Thanks to Victor Challis, we do know that one of the porters from Railway Cottages would go up there to chop firewood. The Station Master was probably Alfred Peacocke (1916–34).

I remember when I was a boy, one of the porters used to go to chop the wood up for the Station Master's wife to light the fire with. It was his right as the station master to do what he wanted with his own staff.

Mr Challis has a moving story about Stanley Wright and his own family:

Stanley Wright was Station Master for years and years and I was called Victor Stanley. My dad was gassed in the First World War and came home to be a light-weight guard because of his breathing. He was forever ill. Stanley Wright was the Station Master who saw him come home from the army from there, and my father said 'I've got a baby son and I'm going to call him after you', so I was called Victor (because we won the war) Stanley Challis. He was the

¹³ Information from local WW1 historian Jo Costin.

Station Master when I got appointed fourteen years later [...] He certainly gave me my job because I came on in 1935.

Railway Cottages in the 19th Century



Figure 19 – Aerial view of station area (Suzy Oakes Collection: 191-jh-railway-aerial copy)

This striking aerial image, showing so clearly the back of Railway Cottages, must date some-time before the demolition of the Cambridge North signal box in about 1982.

It is reproduced here to give an idea of how close the Cottages are to the railway tracks and how the trains must have dominated the lives of their residents. Days and nights would have been punctuated by the noise and whistle of the trains, and Cyril Stannard, local resident and retired engine driver, reminds us of the constant sooty dirt that steam trains produced:¹⁴

As we went under the bridge and let off a whole lot of steam you'd see the washing hanging there in Argyle Street and think 'Oh dear ...'

Until after the Second World War, all the residents of the cottages were employed by the railway, initially by Eastern Counties Railway (the company that may well have commissioned the building), later by GER and LNER. It is assumed that, as elsewhere in the district, the Cottages were available to rent to all railway staff, but we should note that most if not all of the residents were of a status that would have been *waged* rather than salaried. Such distinctions were very important within the railway hierarchy. We do not know whether Railway Cottages were perceived as being particularly desirable; we do know from Victor Challis that his aunt and uncle moved from there to 144 Measham Terrace, which offered more room for their family. Accommodation in Railway Cottages must indeed at times have been very cramped. The 1881 census shows us that the double dwelling of what was then No. 28 was home to nine members of the Linsey family (three of them earning; the rest under 15) and five members of the Butler family (all over 16, and all of them earning). On the other hand, there is evidence from the 1911 census that the Tyler family occupied all eight rooms that made up No. 126. The household consisted of Charles Tyler (who worked as a Permanent Way Inspector), Charlotte his wife, Millicent their daughter 'working at home'

¹⁴ In conversation with Caro Wilson and Ian Bent, 2015.

and George, their son, working as an apprentice chemist. They employed Lucy Herbert as a 'general servant'. Perhaps the salary of a Permanent Way Inspector was a handsome one.

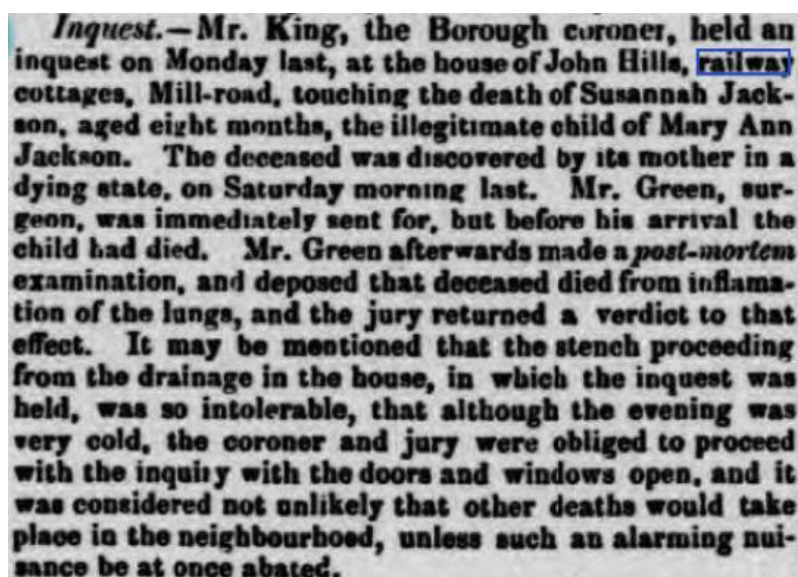
Presumably, as with jobs, weekly vacancies were listed and could be applied for. It tends to be Romsey which is called 'Railway Town'; it does indeed have many more houses built as railway accommodation than does Petersfield. We can only speculate about whether there was a perceived difference between these two wards in the early days, or whether that came later in their history.

As Allan Brigham notes,¹⁵ the census report of 1851 shows that 29% of the then population of Mill Road was in some way employed by the railway – a great change from the previous decade. Of those believed to have been living in the Cottages at that time, three heads of household came from Cambridgeshire, whilst nine came from further afield, several from Essex, but some from as far away as Liverpool or Hampshire. Perhaps Thomas Unsworth, described as a labourer, came down from Liverpool as a navvy building the very first railway tracks. His wife was from Buckinghamshire so he may well have travelled round the country following the work; he does not appear in the 1861 census.

The following short accounts of some of the residents is in chronological order.

John Hall and Mary Ann Jackson

John Hall and Mary Ann Jackson are listed as probable residents of 126 Railway Cottages by Brigham as cited above. John Hall, like Unsworth was also born out of Cambridge, in Wolverhampton in 1806. He is listed in the 1851 census as a widower, living with his unmarried daughter, Mary Ann Jackson, a housekeeper by occupation, who was born in Brunton, Northamptonshire in 1833. Mary's different surname may have been her mother's maiden name as was customary or she may have been a stepdaughter. They both feature sadly at an inquest in 1854. Though 'Hall' is transcribed as 'Hills', it is clear that it refers to the same family.



Inquest.—Mr. King, the Borough coroner, held an inquest on Monday last, at the house of John Hills, railway cottages, Mill-road, touching the death of Susannah Jackson, aged eight months, the illegitimate child of Mary Ann Jackson. The deceased was discovered by its mother in a dying state, on Saturday morning last. Mr. Green, surgeon, was immediately sent for, but before his arrival the child had died. Mr. Green afterwards made a *post-mortem* examination, and deposed that deceased died from inflammation of the lungs, and the jury returned a verdict to that effect. It may be mentioned that the stench proceeding from the drainage in the house, in which the inquest was held, was so intolerable, that although the evening was very cold, the coroner and jury were obliged to proceed with the inquiry with the doors and windows open, and it was considered not unlikely that other deaths would take place in the neighbourhood, unless such an alarming nuisance be at once abated.

Figure 20 – Death of child (CIP 11 February 1854)

¹⁵ Brigham (2014), p. 43.

It was not to be the last time that drainage in the Cottages was to be a problem. On 11 July 1891 the *Cambridge Independent Press* quoted the report of the Chief Medical Officer. He declared that Cambridge's 'general health is good', but drew attention to two specific instances, one of which was:

I again inspected the Great Eastern premises, and found the cause of the nuisance complained of to arise from the outlet of sewage from the railway cottages and station-master's house. I have instructed your Inspector as to what should be done.

The exterior grandeur of both buildings was clearly not matched by their plumbing; the word 'again' is telling. It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the one planning permission document extant for the Railway Cottages is for an outside WC and coal shed at what may well be the same house as that occupied by John Hall and Mary Ann Jackson (No. 126, the most easterly of the terrace) in 1930.¹⁶

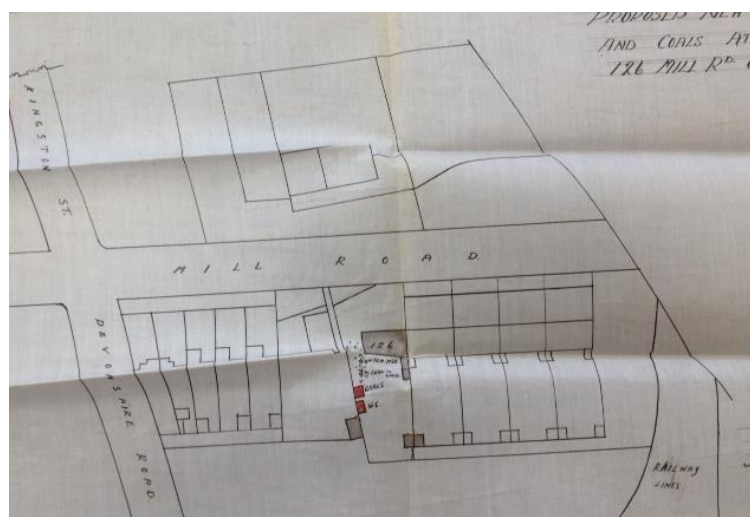
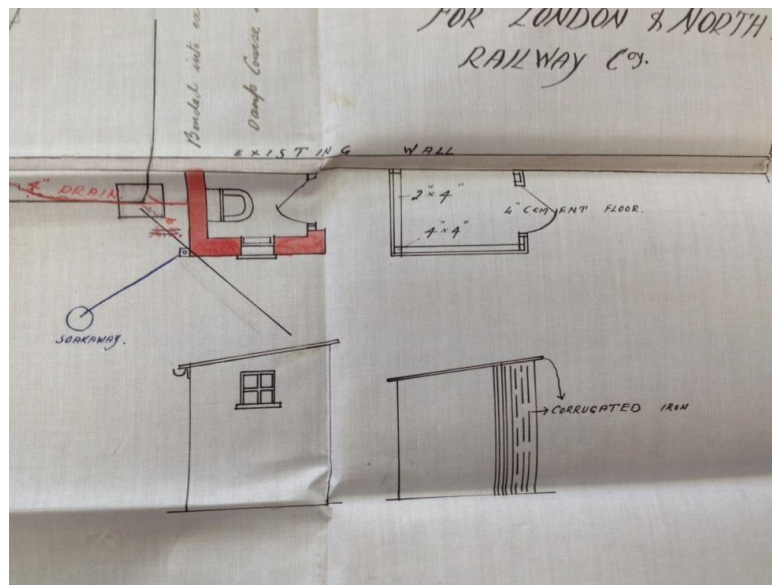


Figure 21 – Building and byelaw plan for WC and coal shed

We shall see that residents of the property after the second world war still only had outside toilet facilities.

¹⁶ CA: 795/Item / 7597/Building byelaw plan and approval for WC and coal shed 126 Mill Road /23 Jan 1930/ Fit/A001779/1 item/ London and North East Railway Company/ R111/096/ Municipal Corporation of Cambridge.

George Barrell

Figure 22 – George Barrell (detail from Figure 18)

This is the only known photograph of a 19th-century resident of Railway Cottages. It is extracted from Figure 18 (above), and according to the article shows George Barrell. The 1871 census gives his age as 39, and lists him as a ticket collector with GER, who lived in No. 29 (probably the later 128 Railway Cottages) with his wife Ann and their four children, George, Charlotte, John and Charles.

Walter Mansfield and family

No. 126 seems not always to have been an unhappy house. It was home to Walter Mansfield, for some twenty years. In 1861, aged 39, he lived in 37 Mill Road, with his wife Mary and son Walter. By the time of the 1871 census he had moved to what was then known as 25 Railway Cottages (now No. 126) and had a second son, George. His career shows that promotion within the company was always possible. In 1861 he was listed as a carpenter. This was still the case in 1871 when his son Walter, then aged 15, was listed as a 'carpenter's labourer'. He then became in 1878 an Inspector on the Line, and though in the 1881 census he is again listed as a carpenter, by 1884 he is a 'mechanical foreman', and in 1887 a 'senior GER mechanical foreman'.

Walter Mansfield junior is listed in 1907 as living in 194 Mill Road (Vernon House) working as a 'railway inspector'. He stayed there until 1930. Harry Mansfield, possibly a younger son, lived in 156 Mill Road from 1919 to 1939.

Victor Challis, interviewed by Caro Wilson in 2015 (Appendix III(a)), spoke about promotion in the 1930s and 1940s: 'You watched the vacancy list every week and applied for promotion, but it was really length of service that counted'.

Edward Morrell and the Signal Man's/Gate Keeper's House

As stated above, it seems certain that there was a separate Signal Man's House from probably 1845 until 1889 when it no longer appears on a map or in listings.

Edward Morrell, living with his wife and one son in No. 50 Mill Road in 1861, moved some time thereafter into the Signal Man's House. By the time of the 1871 census he had two more sons and a daughter, and the older son, James, was working as a 'railway goods deliverer'. The house is there listed as the 'Railway Gatehouse'.

On September 1st 1877 Morrell's house is mentioned in the report of the *Cambridge Independent Press* of the inquest of Mrs Elizabeth Farrant, a laundress from Cherry Hinton, who was struck by the Norwich train as she crossed the tracks with a perambulator full of laundry. Despite warning cries from her husband and others she was able somehow to bypass the main gates.

Two witnesses refer to 'Morrell's gate or house':

[Charles Bewley:] 'I knew the deceased by sight. On Saturday about eighteen minutes past seven deceased came along the side of the line from Morrell's private gate and crossed the railroad [...] There is no lock on the gate [that the] deceased came through, as she came through Morrell's gate.

[George Tunwell:] 'I was on this side of the Mill-road gates. [...] I did not notice whether the train whistled. The ordinary crossing was about half-a-dozen yards from Morrell's house.'

The Coroner in this case, H. Gotobed Esq., asked whether the Company were going to erect a bridge over the crossing. He was told it was a question for the Company and the Town and the Commissioners to settle: 'The Coroner said he thought a bridge ought to be erected'. A footbridge was built shortly thereafter (which would not have helped Mrs Farrant with her laden perambulator. The eventual building of a road bridge in 1889 is the probable cause of the demolition of the house. An Edward Covill is listed as living in the Gate House in 1887; thereafter there is no further mention of it

It is possible that, like Victor Challis in the 1930s and thereafter, Morrell worked in Signal Box North, now demolished but at one time clearly visible from Mill Road Bridge.



Figure 23 – Cambridge Signal Box North (CC)

It is also possible Edward Morrell's job and working conditions did not differ greatly from those of Victor Challis, who remembers starting work:

as what they called a 'train register lad' in North Central Signal box, I learnt from the signal man quite a lot about railway rules and regulations. We were there to answer the telephone and register the passage of all trains but not to touch any working parts. The Signal boxes were all classified. Special Class, Class 1, Class 2. Cambridge North was Special A, Cambridge South was Special B.

Mr. Morrell would undoubtedly have been as affected as was Victor Challis by the total disappearance of all such signal boxes when the railway was electrified in 1982.

The change that affected me most was to see all the signal boxes which seemed such an important part of the safety of the railway all put under one roof in what I called the 'Tabernacle', which was what it looked like. All that lot from Ely to Bishops Stortford, Cambridge to Royston, Cambridge to Dullingham, all under one roof.

Mrs. Sarah Daldrey

Next door to the Mansfield family during part of their occupancy in No. 25 (now 128) was a widow, Mrs. Sarah Ann Daldrey, the first female head of household to be listed (there are only two others till after the Second World War). She lived at No. 128 for some thirty-three years till she was last listed in the 1911 census aged 72. When she is first listed in 1878 no occupation is recorded for her. By then she was widowed; her husband James had been a 'railway servant' (1861 census), hence her entitlement to rent the cottage. The 1881 census records that she was a 'railway waiting room attendant' living with her son James, working as a railway porter, and two daughters, Sarah and Louisa, working as dressmakers. By 1884 she has been promoted to 'Manageress of the Ladies Waiting Room'. The existence of such a job is itself interesting as it implies that women were by this date travelling on their own. At times she clearly worked with her daughters (who lived at home till the elder was 30); by 1895 her employment listing had changed to that of a dressmaker; in the 1901 census a Mrs Dalding, widow (clearly a misspelling), is described as a 'GER ladies attendant'; thereafter she is described as a dressmaker or as 'attending GER station'. In considering the status of women, it is interesting to note that Mrs Pomfret, the widow of Charles Pomfret (railway crossing keeper), whose family shared No. 128 with Mrs Daldrey from 1907, was able to stay in the property, with no occupation listed, until 1924, her husband being unrecorded after 1911.

John Ince and Charles Lindsey

No. 132 also had two families, the Inces and the Lindseys, who lived there for more than thirty years. John Ince, born in 1858, is first mentioned in 1887 with Charles Lindsey, born in 1865, moving in in 1891. The 1901 census lists Ince living with a wife, two sons and a daughter, and Lindsey with a wife and four sons, the second of whom, Frederick Charles Linsey (*sic*) served as Sergeant in the A company Cambridgeshire Regiment and received the Military Medal on the 26th of September 1917.¹⁷ Both men were still listed there in 1917. There is no mention of Ince thereafter, but Lindsey is still listed in the same house until 1930. Both men worked throughout their lives as platelayers – a job described by Victor Challis (Appendix III(a)) as follows: 'That was track work, upkeep of the railway track, knocking things that had to be knocked in. It dates from Victorian days when plates were used to lay the tracks. Very hard work.'

Two photographs exist of Cambridge platelayers; they clearly date from different eras as reflected in the uniforms, but the job is obviously much the same.¹⁸

¹⁷ Information from Jo Costin, local WW1 historian.

¹⁸ CC: rarai.J93.2123 and RA.rai.K3**50326.



Figure 24 – Cambridge railway track layers, 1893



Figure 25 – Cambridge railway workers posing by track, 1930s

Additional information about the Ince family is supplied by Victor Challis (Appendix III(a)), who identifies John's grandson as the fourth man in the front row of a photograph of railway staff taken in front of Cambridge Station in about 1930. He was Walter Ince who worked for the railway as a motor mechanic.



Figure 26 – Railway staff outside Cambridge station c.1910 (Jean Turner: private collection)



Figure 27 – Walter Ince (detail from Figure 26)

John Ruffles, Platelayer

A 'John Ruffnell' is listed in the Spalding's Street Directories of 1913 living in 134 Mill Road and working as a Platelayer. He is listed at the same address in 1914 and 1915 as John Ruffles with the same occupation. On the 11th November 1914 a John Rufflers of 134 Mill Road appears to have enlisted in the 11th Suffolks , but on May 18th 1917 he is mentioned in the *Cambridge Independent Press* in quite a different context. The newspaper article is worth quoting at some length:

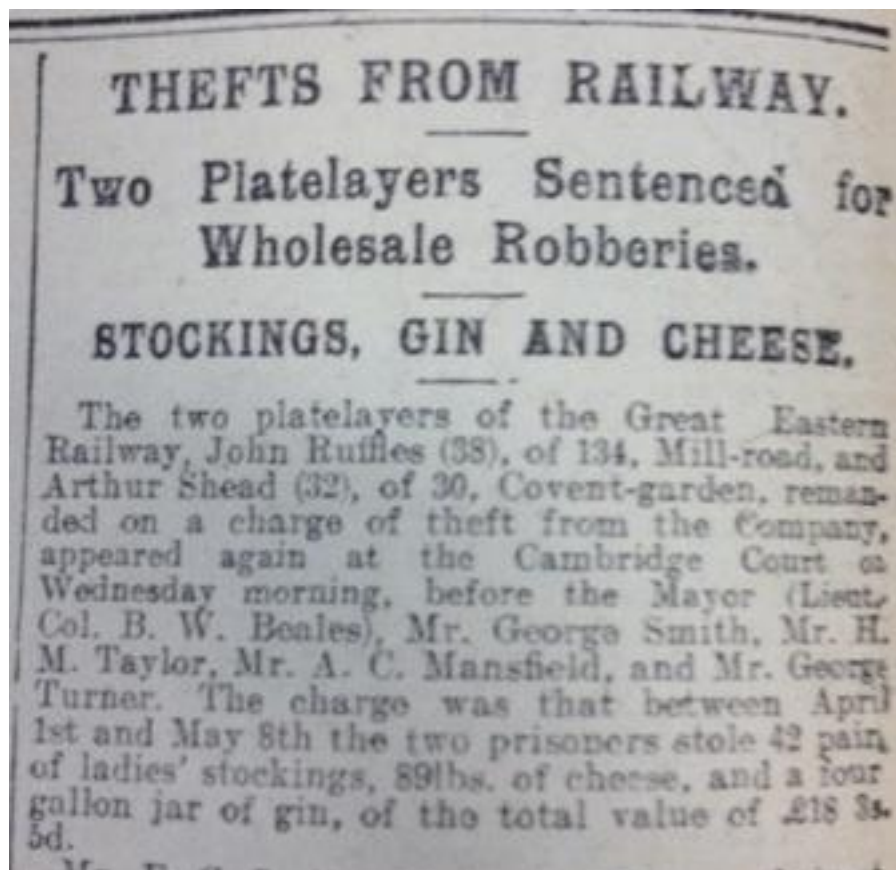


Figure 28 – Railway thefts (CIP 18 May 1917)

**THEFTS FROM RAILWAY.
Two Platelayers Sentenced for Wholesale Robberies.
STOCKINGS, GIN AND CHEESE.**

The two platelayers of the Great Eastern Railway, John Ruffles (35) of 134 Mill Road, and Arthur Shead (32) of 30 Covent Garden remanded on a charge of theft from the Company appeared again at the Cambridge Court on Wednesday morning.The charge was that between April 1st and May 8th the two prisoners stole 42 pairs of ladies stockings, 89lbs of cheese and a four gallon jar of gin, of the total value of £18 3s 5d. [...]

The evidence of Det-Sergt Marsh taken at the previous hearing was read and confirmed. It was to the effect that while Det Sergt Marsh with P.C Squires and P.C Brooks were watching Prisoner Shead's house on the night of May 8th. Prisoner Ruffles came out. PC Squires and PC Brooks followed him and later all three returned and PC Squires handed him [Marsh] a parcel containing some stockings. Witness, with the other officers and prisoner Ruffles, went into prisoner Shead's house and there they found five packets containing ladies' stockings and two pieces of cheese. Prisoner Shead said he found the goods on the line and the two prisoners were then taken into custody. Det-Sergt Marsh and Inspector Buck then searched their houses.

Det-Sergt March continuing his evidence said that when they searched Shead's house in a cupboard in the sitting room they found ten more pairs of new socks in a parcel and another piece of cheese in the cupboard similar to that already produced. It weighed 1¼lbs. They then went to prisoner Ruffles house and there they found pieces of cheese weighing 4 lbs similar to the other exhibits. Witness asked prisoner Ruffles about the cheese and he said it was a bit off the cheese in Shead's house. That (Wednesday) morning at the police station witness asked prisoner Shead how he accounted for two bottles of gin, each containing a pint and a half which he had sold to a man named John Toates 48, Catharine-street about five or six weeks ago. Witness said he suspected the gin was stolen on or about April 5th from the Great Eastern Railway. Shead said he had it from Ruffles. Witness said he understood Prisoner Shead had six bottles and he washed them out and took them to Ruffles house. Prisoner admitted it. Witness later saw Ruffles and asked him how he accounted for the gin as he

suspected it was stolen on or about April 5th Ruffles said he found it in some straw in a siding near Coldham's Lane.

Defendants elected to be dealt with summarily and pleaded not guilty. [...]

PC Squires said that on May 8th he was with P.C. Brooks in Covent Garden, outside Shead's house at 10.55 pm. He saw prisoner Ruffles leave the house. Witness and PC Brooks followed him and stopped him in Mawson Road. Witness said he believed Ruffles had some stolen property on him. He then felt in the prisoners right hand pocket and found the parcel produced, containing five pairs of stockings. Witness cautioned prisoner and asked him to give an account of them and he made no reply. Witness then said he would take him into custody and took him to Det Sergt Marsh.

Witness had been working on the case for the past three months and it was only on May 8th that he could get any evidence. Witness gave information to Det Sergt Marsh about the cheese in Shead's house, before the search was made, and about the gin who bought it and who sold it. [...]

Prisoner Ruffles, addressing the Bench, said as regards the gin he found it near Coldham's Lane sidings in a jar lying in some straw. It was by the signal box. There were about 16 bottles in the jar. He took the jar home. He knew he had done wrong, but it was a temptation and he took it. He never stole it out of a truck or anything of that sort. He only received it.

Prisoner Shead said he found the bag containing the stockings and cheese as he came off the allotments ground with some rabbits food Monday evening. He did not report it and took the goods home as he could do with them. He knew he was doing wrong.

Mr Scott said that Ruffles had been in the service of the Railway Company for five years and Shead for three. The magistrates appreciated the difficulty of running the railway at the present time and how robbery or any dishonesty tended to add to these difficulties. The Company thought it was a case to be dealt with in such a way that it would be a warning to other people. The magistrates retired to consider the case and on returning the Mayor said that this is a very bad case indeed, and they have decided to convict both of you, and impose a penalty of six months imprisonment with hard labour on each of you. [...]

Porters

The job of a signalman has changed greatly over the last 150 years; a job that has completely disappeared is that of porter, yet in 1851 it was the job of three of the heads of households, and is sometimes listed as the first job of a son of 16 or 17. It became an increasingly less common role; perhaps the rent level was set too high for a comparatively unskilled job.¹⁹



Figure 29 – Young porter

¹⁹ Figure 28, from Warren and Phillips (1987).

First World War

The service of two of the sons of the Station Master Alfred Peacock have been mentioned above as has that of Frederick Linsey, son of Charles Lindsey of 134 Mill Road. The following have also been identified as dying on active service:²⁰

130: Sam Lea, age 25 (Kitchen Porter, Sidney Sussex); and Bertram Lea, age 19 (<http://www.cwgc.org> for more details)

132 and 275: Walter Kerry, age 24; and Robert Buttress, age 27 (No. 132 only - Draper)

Thomas George Lea, a Railway Signal Fitter and Harry Edwards Lea are listed as living in 130 Mill Road in the Spalding's Street Directory of 1907, however the surnames of Kerry and Buttress have not yet been positively associated with 132.

The Strike of 1919 and the General Strike 1926

It is certain that all the residents would have been aware of, and may well have participated in, the industrial unrest after the First World War, which culminated in the General Strike of 1926.

Strikes were widespread throughout the United Kingdom immediately after the 1914–18 War, with strike days in Britain reaching 35 million in 1919. On strike at various times were the army and the police, but above all the great industrial unions of miners, railwaymen and transport workers. Cambridge newspapers report widespread disruption on the railways affecting not only passenger travel but also to the transport of goods. A photograph from the *Cambridge Chronicle*, unfortunately impossible to reproduce, shows milk churns being emptied in the Market Square because there was no way of taking the milk to market. Another photograph shows strikers marching up Devonshire Road alongside Railway Cottages. No doubt some of the residents of the Cottages and their families witnessed or took part in this.



Figure 30 – Strikers marching along Devonshire Road (CC: B.DEV.K19)

The title given to this photograph is: 'Parade of men along Devonshire Road, passing the

²⁰ Thanks to research by Jo Costin, local WW1 historian, and Emma Easterbrook, local family history volunteer, for this information.

'Midland Tavern' led by band and banner and probably striking railwaymen in 1919'.

The 1926 General Strike in the United Kingdom was called by the Trade Union Council (TUC) in support of the miners. Fearing that an all-out strike might prove hard to control, the TUC limited participation to certain industries of which the railway was one. It is unlikely that the Station Master, then Alfred Peacocke, would have gone on strike but participation in Romsey (and presumably also in Petersfield's Railway Cottages) was nearly universal.



Figure 31 – Cambridge railway strikers in 1926 (CC: S.1926 186330001.strikers)

The strike lasted only nine days, from 4 to 13 May 1926, but Tom Brown, in an article written in the early 1940s entitled '1926: The Social General Strike – Why 1926 Failed', stated: 'About one per cent, of normal train services were running, but only nine days of that caused chaos on the railways for months afterwards.'²¹

One of the most potent factors in the long-running tensions between town and gown in Cambridge was the fact that many undergraduates were keen to 'join up' as strike breakers and try their hand at manual labour, which they would normally have considered beneath them. Chris Elliott writes:²²

Daily carloads of strikebreakers set off from the Backs to strike-bound areas all over the country. Most students found the work hard but good fun. They did not always do a good job. On one occasion a train driven by students came off the rails near Mill Road Bridge, and hundreds of strikers turned out to mock the inexperienced young drivers.

The story is first reported in the *Cambridge Chronicle* of 12 May 1926 after a large spread about the volunteer undergraduates who were referred to as 'The gallant six hundred'. An article headed 'Fatal Accident' reads:

An engine off the road at Mill Road Bridge near the Mill Road Bridge drew hundreds of strikers to the spot and whilst they were smiling and chaffing, a fatal accident occurred at Bishop's Stortford owing to the collision of two trains, passenger and goods, from Cambridge.

It is noteworthy that nowhere is it recognized that incompetence on the part of the volunteer undergraduate drivers must have caused both accidents, and there is an implication

²¹ See <https://libcom.org/library/social-general-strike-1926-failed-brown>.

²² Elliott (2001), pp. 120–21.

that it was callous of the strikers to smile and chaff as if they should somehow have known that some thirty miles away a fatal accident was occurring.

Life in the 1930s would have been hard for everyone living on Mill Road. Elliott comments: 'In 1932 there were more than 1,600 men out of work in Cambridge alone'.

Those with skilled labour jobs on the railway like most of the residents in Railway Cottages would have been fortunate. Victor Challis's Uncle Alf was a goods guard, his cousin Charles a motor mechanic. The street directories show Charles resident in No. 128 from 1936. Victor remembers his uncle and aunt living there too before they moved to Measham Terrace. His account of Uncle Alf reminds us of some of the happier times in the 1930s.

Alfred and Kate Challis (see Appendix III(a))

Uncle Alf and Aunt Kate lived here somewhere in the middle. — Uncle Alf was Secretary of the Cambridge Railway Silver Prize Band. They once won a prize at the Crystal Palace. They practised every Sunday morning in a specially built building called the Band Room down by the tracks and played at weddings and everywhere. When Cambridge was playing at Cambridge United they marched up and down and I used to feel very sorry for Uncle Alf when it was muddy and the mud went all over his shiny boots. Sometimes they used to play standing still when it was very busy. He played not the biggest instrument, the one that went over your head, but the second biggest. — They moved to 144 on the other side of the bridge because that had more space.

All was to change when war broke out, and in particular on 30 January 1941.

1941 Bombing

To judge from the Spalding's street directory of 1939/40, the occupant of Morcombe House in January 1941 was probably a Mr. F Ayres, whose occupation is unlisted; it is unclear where the then Station Master, still Stanley Wright, was living. The residents in the Railway Cottages were.

| | | |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|
| 126 | WINCH, H G L | LNER servant |
| | PAIGE, D V | LNER clerk |
| 128 | CHALLIS, C | Motor mechanic |
| | CURTISS, Percy | LNER servant |
| 130 | SAUNDERS, A W | LNER platelayer |
| | SIMKIN, H | LNER servant |
| 132 | GARNER, H L | LNER servant |
| | PIGDEN, B | LNER servant |
| 134 | DARLEY, George | Platelayer LNER |
| | ALLSOP, J E | hairdresser |

Regrettably no street directories seem to have been published during the war years, but presumably many of these jobs carried the status of reserved occupations so the men were not conscripted. Robin Simpkins (local resident and son of misspelt 'H Simkin' 130 above: Appendix III(d)) confirms that his father, a goods guard, was deemed essential for the war effort: 'Passenger guards got recruited into the army, but goods guards were kept on'.

Cambridge was not a major target for German bombers, but 1940–41 saw it suffer its worst attacks as the Luftwaffe launched its strategic campaign against British cities. In spring 1940 there were several attacks, luckily with no casualties. Air raid precautions were taken with shelters built on Parker's Piece and, close to Railway Cottages, in Gwydir Street. Blackout of buildings and road lights would have been total. In June 1940 a Heinkel 111 plane was reported flying low over Gwydir Street and minutes later two high-explosive bombs were dropped on Vicarage Terrace causing the loss of ten lives and serious injuries and damage. This is believed to have been one of the earliest attacks focused on England. It would have been known to authorities, and to the public at large, that the railway and railway station would be likely targets, especially as they were known to be a major means of supplying the British airfields and anti-aircraft batteries in East Anglia.

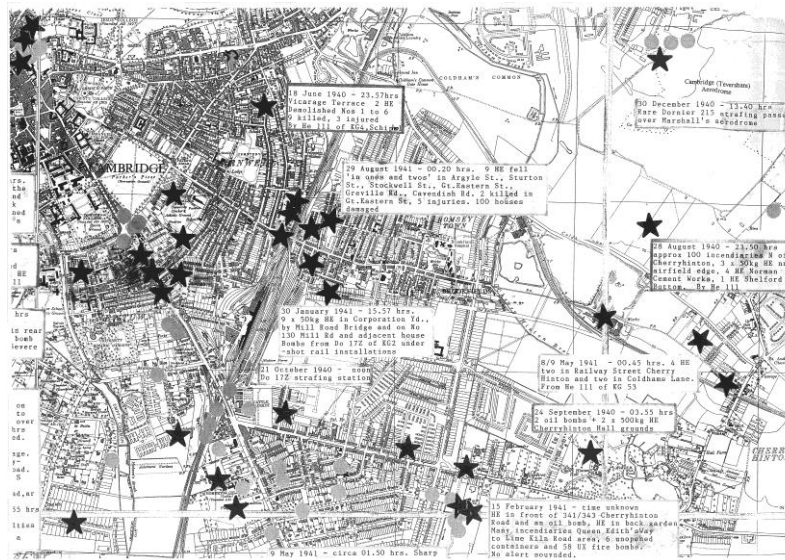


Figure 32 – Map of Cambridge with air raids marked (CC: loan exhibit)

During the early months of 1941, under cover of low cloud, lone German raiders increased their raids into East Anglia during daylight, looking for targets to bomb or strafe. On 16 January 1941, 200 incendiary bombs were dropped near the Perse School and Regent Street, and then on 30 January about 4 p.m. a low flying Dornier followed the railway line and released a stick of bombs aiming at Cambridge Station or the track.



Figure 33 – Dornier aircraft

An anonymous author watched the plane fly overhead:²³

On the 30th January 1941, while waiting in the train due to leave Cambridge station at ten-past four on a murky afternoon, a series of explosions rapidly grew louder. A low flying Dornier had followed the railway line in from the north and it raced past at less than 500 feet, almost overhead. Luckily for me, and many others returning after an ordinary day at school, the stick of bombs landed in the railway sidings near Mill Road bridge, a few hundred yards away. It gave you a strange feeling to know that people up there could kill you without ever being tried for murder, even if caught. Such is war!

Another report, by Frank Dixon, also recalls the Dornier's dive.²⁴

I was 10 years old when the war broke out and went to St George's School on Hills [*recte* East] Road; one afternoon the siren went and we were crossing the playground to get the air

²³ Article appearing on <http://www.woodditton.org.uk/from> which Figure 33 is taken.

²⁴ 'Frank Dixon WW2 People's War': this is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar.

raid shelter when a Dornier came over in a low dive and released 5 bombs near to the railway bridge in Mill Road.

After the war finished I was plumbing and we did work on the houses in Mill Road that were damaged.

Eric Leeke (see Appendix III), whose childhood was spent in Great Eastern Street, was aged 7 in 1941. With his brother, he saw the plane and watched the bombs drop:

On the day of the Mill Road bombing we came out of school in Ross Street – my brother Tony and I. We ran all the way home and on the way the air raid siren went. We looked down the railway track and there was a German plane, and he came up the line dropping bombs. We ran in the house and hid under the stairs with our Mum as you did in those days.

The *Cambridge Daily News* must have sent a photographer early the following morning (a January afternoon would have been dark by 4 p.m.) as the following remarkable photographs and commentary appeared in the newspaper of 31 January:



Figure 34 – Mill Road bridge bombing (CC: S.1941 26845)

The caption reads:

BOMBS NEXT DOOR — BUT SHE CARRIES ON!

Bombs dropped by a “tip and run” raider in an East Anglian town yesterday afternoon fell between two houses and caused local damage. Windows were also broken in the streets around. These pictures show scenes where the bombs fell. A housewife is calmly brushing from her window debris blown from the house next door, and Civil Defence workers are taking refreshment after their duties have been completed. It was learned to-day that the fatal casualties were only two, and not three, as was first believed.

The report is carefully written so as not to give any information to the Germans (the town is un-named, and the proximity of the cottages to the railway line is not mentioned). The civil defence workers are shown smiling and calm and it is perfectly possible that the woman in, presumably, No. 128 (perhaps Mrs Curtiss or Mrs Challis?) has been deliberately posed. It was of crucial importance to avoid any sort of panic about the bombing: the message ‘Keep calm and carry on’ was a vital one.

Nevertheless the photographs are striking, and appalling. It was the middle section of the Cottages (130 and 132) that were hit, homes to four families: the Saunders and Simpkins in No. 130, and the Garners and Pigdens in No. 132.

Roger Simpkins (Appendix III(c)) was born in Railway Cottages on 6 May 1938, when his mother was 28 and his father 26. His mother recalled lying in bed and watching the snow come down, an unusual occurrence in May. He was thus three-and-a-half years old at the time of the bombing, too young to have any memories himself, but his father and mother would both recount their stories of what happened.



Figure 35 – Herbert and Edith Simpkins on their wedding day (courtesy of Simpkins family)

Dad was a messenger boy when he first started with the railway, but when they were bombed out he was a guard, a goods guard during the war. Ours was actually knocked down because me and mum were in it. I can't remember it because I was too young but mum went under the stairs, we got under the stairs and I suppose it all come down on us. They must have dug us out. I know she got a cut, I didn't get nothing, me, but Mum had a cut on her head. I suppose that was quite serious. I never heard anyone else was injured.

His younger brother, Robin Simpkins, born just a year after the bombing, takes up the story, which both brothers used to hear their father tell (see Appendix III(d)):

The old chap, my dad, used to say he came back from a work shift early in the morning about 3 or 4 a.m. and walked over the bridge from the Argyle Street side. He met a policeman who said 'So where are you going?' and he said 'I'm just going home; I live just over the other side of the bridge'. The policeman said 'I'm afraid your home isn't there any more.'

Apparently he always used to say to Mum 'If anything drops out of the sky get under that staircase'.



Figure 36 – Mrs Simpkins in later life (courtesy of Roger Simpkins)

Mr and Mrs Simpkins never spoke about the bombing except to tell those stories.

Roger Simpkins was never told where he and his mum went after they were dug out; it might have been to the air raid shelter in Gwydir Street, or somewhere else where his mother could have her head bandaged. They were taken in by an aunt who lived in Coldham's Lane, where presumably his father eventually caught up with them. Robin Simpkins recalls (Appendix III(d)) that:

Mum was very friendly with Mrs Saunders next door; she was unharmed and went to live in Glebe Road after the bombing. The Pigdens went somewhere near Hobart Road.

Nothing is known about the other residents of the cottages (though a newspaper after the war – see below– tells of ten injured), but it is known that there was one fatality in the road.

Accurate reporting is difficult in war time. The *Cambridge Daily News* of 31 January 1941 (see above) records that 'the fatal casualties were only two, and not three, as was first believed.' In an 'Aftermath' article in 1945 they repeated the assertion of two dead:²⁵

The next year, 1941, the worst year for bombing, was not far advanced when more trouble occurred [...] Just a fortnight later [from 16 January] the raiders returned with explosive bombs. At 4 o'clock on the afternoon of January 30th the reporters' room at "C.D.N." echoed to a series of thuds. Mill Road Bridge was obviously the target for the attack, but the bombs hit nothing more "military" than two small cottages by the side of the bridge. Two people, however, lost their lives and ten others were injured.

²⁵ 'Some Remarkable Escapes: Bombs which Failed to Explode', *CIP* 14 Sept 1945.

However, the well-known Cambridge diarist, Jack Overhill, wrote on the Thursday of the bombing:²⁶

Thursday 30th January. There was an Alert this afternoon at 3:45 pm. Immediately, there were explosions. ... the bombs were on Mill Road, near the railway bridge. One man, a crane driver, was killed and several people injured.

To judge from the official records available, what Underhill had heard was accurate. The records of civilian deaths, issued by the Imperial War Graves Commission, has the following entry:²⁷

Lake: John Horatio, age 43. Son of the late Robert and Sarah Lake of Exning, Suffolk, husband of 48 Thoday Street. 30 January 1941, at Cambridge.

The funeral took place five days later, as the *Cambridge Daily News* recorded:²⁸

The funeral of Mr John Horatio Lake of 48 Thoday Street, Cambridge, who died on Thursday, took place at St Philip's Church on Monday. The service was conducted by the Rev A.G.L. Hunt assisted by the Rev. E.C. Essex (Vicar of Great St Mary's Church).

John Lake's grave is to be found in the parish area of St Michael's (CFHS 4) in Mill Road Cemetery, its headstone sadly broken and badly eroded.



Figure 37 – Grave of John Lake in Mill Road Cemetery (Caro Wilson, 2015)

The inscription reads:

To the beloved memory of / John H Lake / suddenly called to rest / Jan 30th 1941 aged 43 /
Ada Maud Lake / died 1982 aged 85

Apparently, the word 'suddenly' used in this way on wartime monumental inscriptions is a euphemism for deaths by bombing.

Reports and Interviews about the Bombing

Testimony from other Cambridge residents is detailed and worth full quotation:

When war broke out Arthur Eastwell and his family:²⁹

came back to live with grandfather and grandmother, they were tailors and tai-

²⁶ Jack Overhill (2010), p. 76.

²⁷ CC: F10.1002. Imperial War Graves Commission Civilian War dead.1939–45.

²⁸ 'Local funerals: Mr J H Lake', *CDN* 5 Feb 1941. The funeral report is transcribed in full as Appendix III(c).

²⁹ Arthur Eastwell in conversation with Shelley Lockwood, Museum of Cambridge.

loresses for Ryder and Amies, that used to be, and they had a shop. You know before you go to Mill Road bridge, the Devonshire Road corner, there used to be a butcher's on the corner, but just coming round this way, now there is a shop does gold and things like that. That was our old house. So we go there, you see. We go in sometimes to visit them. There would be grandfather in the back room, on the table, cross legs, in a straw hat, (inaudible) . . . grandmother doing the stitching and sewing and all that.

As you go over Mill Road bridge to the other side there's a row of houses. Now during the second World War I had a friend who lived over Mill Road itself and after school I'd go over there, before I'd go back to grandmother's, to have an afternoon and come back, you see, homework and so. But, one particular time, I went over to see my friend. I got over the other side and the air warden [sic] went. Now I come to run back. I got on top of the bridge and as I got on top of the bridge I could see this German bomber coming along and he dropped some on the last two houses on the bridge. Nobody was there but they did. Knocked them all down. On that bit of bridge.

During the war Brenda Ward was one of six children living in Sleaford Street.³⁰

... Another time, the siren sounded at St George's School on East Road. The teachers said 'Hurry up girls', and we had to run to the shelter across the boy's playground, gas masks on our shoulders.

We all saw this German plane, and as he went along he was dropping bombs. Only some of us had got to the shelter when this happened but fortunately the bombs missed the school and fell at the side of Mill Road Bridge.

Barbara Law was an 11-year-old at school in what is now Parkside School.³¹

'I was in school at the time – at the 'Central'. Normally when the air raid sirens sounded, the teachers directed us into the air-raid shelters. But on this occasion, since it was so close to the end of the school day, our teacher told us to hurry home as quickly as possible, and on no account to stop on the way or dawdle.

I lived on Hooper Street. I remember walking down Parkside, crossing East Road, and setting off down Mill Road. I'd only got level with the first shops when there was a terrific bang coming from the direction of the bridge. I don't remember anything more – just that I hurried down Mill Road in the direction of the bang, turned left on Gwydir Street, right on Hooper Street, and got home safely.'

Monica Smith, a local resident who was at school in Union Road, recalled:³²

Donkey's Common in wartime had huts on that was built for — I think it was the ATS [Auxiliary Territorial Service] but I wouldn't be 100% sure, it was certainly some of the Army personnel. But also they had a shelter on the green – on the Common – which was for when the air raids went – you could go into them. And unfortunately I did have to use those shelters one day, and that was when the bomb dropped on the Mill Road Bridge. I was on the way home from [St Alban's Catholic] School [on Union Road], [aged 11,] and I had to run into the shelter – I'm not even sure if the sirens had gone, but however, I had run into the shelter.

My mother had started off up Gwydir Street to meet me, and she'd got to the top of Gwydir Street actually when the bomb dropped. But she heard the aeroplane so low, looked up in the air, and thought it was – "Oh! There was milk bottles coming out that plane! Whatever is it?" – not realizing obviously that they were bombs. And of course when they hit the ground she was – I don't know if she was knocked to the ground, but she ended up in the gutter.

³⁰ Quoted in 'WWII 70 years on', *Cambridge News Supplement* 3 Sept 2009. Brenda Ward can be heard speaking about her war time experience on <http://metisarts.co.uk/thebunkerproject/pages/profiles/brendaward.htm>.

³¹ Barbara Law, local resident (died 2014, aged 85), interviewed and transcribed by Ian Bent.

³² Monica Smith, interviewed by Shelley Lockwood, 7 Feb 2014, transcribed by Ian Bent.

And of course she was very frightened to think what had happened, and what was happening where I was; she panicked and got all the way down to Mill Road, couldn't find me, and I was actually safe in the shelter, and we were both relieved that we had caught up with each other.

Pam Seaber's father, Charles Langley, anxious that his daughter had not turned up at Mawson Road when expected, was allowed over the bridge to look for her. At some point in the afternoon he picked up a piece of the bomb which the family have kept ever since. Mrs Seaber tells the story:

I was 13 in 1941 and went to Central school. January 30th was the day of my grandmother's funeral. She lived in Mawson Road so after the funeral the family apparently collected back at Mawson Road. And as I was thought to be young to attend the funeral I was staying with a neighbour at 37 Ross Street. And of course the-bomb fell. As far as I can remember I was expected back at the house about four o'clock or half past three, but I thought they said leave at four o'clock and of course my parents panicked because when the bomb dropped I could possibly have been on the bridge.

My father walked as far as the bridge and he had quite a job getting over because they were stopping people coming over at the time, but when he explained that his daughter could have been on the bridge they let him through to check I was still at Ross Street. I remember him arriving at Ross Street, great great relief. And of course then we had to go back and they let us back over the bridge. I can't remember what it looked like at all. They must have been holding people back; there was very little traffic in those days; it was mainly pedestrians. I've no idea when he picked up the bit of bomb.... this is completely guess work.. I would have said when he was asking permission to go over the bridge, when he was standing there. I don't recall him stopping when we were together but I really don't remember.

I remember the gap in the bridge, about half way up where the bomb caught the railing. They didn't start mending that for a long long time, till after the war I think.

Somehow we've kept that bit of the bomb all the time, through all the house moves.



Figure 38 – Two views of the fragment of bomb picked up by Charles Langley on 30 January 1941
(Reproduced by kind permission of Pam Seaber. Photograph Caro Wilson)

Post-war History : 1945–Present Day



Figure 39 – Aerial map of Mill Road from 1945 (Google Earth)

The above image shows Mill Road Bridge in the centre, and the 'gap' caused by the 1941 bombing is just visible to its left.

Aftermath of the Bombing

Catherine Green, resident of Mill Road and interviewee for the Mill Road History Project says:

The blast from the bomb travelled like a wave down Mill Road. It seemed to affect every other building, so while one house had all its windows blown out the neighbouring house was left untouched. So afterwards lots of houses were boarded up, and Mill Road looked very much the worse for wear.

Roger Simpkins and Eric Leeke both remember the damage to the bridge:

[RS:] The houses were left derelict a long time, and where the bomb went through the bridge – where there was all the railings all up the side – there was this big old cast-iron metal plate bolted over it – to stop the people going through it, I suppose. It was there for ages. I wasn't very old at the time. I don't know how many years they left it like that.

[EL:] One of the bombs blew a great big hole on the side of the bridge. It took out several uprights, and there was a large iron piece put in the gap that had been left to stop people jumping down on to the cottages, which were very badly damaged.

The bomb blast certainly reached as far as Great Eastern Street, as Eric Leeke recalls:

The bomb blew out the windows in our house. We'd just had the decorators in to repair the damage caused and then the Great Eastern Street bomb [29 August 1941] took Nos 31, 33 and 35 and blew them all out again. I remember our ceiling fell in and God knows what else happened. We found the gas stove on the railway track.

The Mill Road History Project has also been told that the bomb blast caused several houses in the road and the side streets to be rocked off their foundations, after which they settled back with various degrees of damage. Clearly Railway Cottages had been very seriously damaged. Was Morcombe House also affected by the blast?

Morcombe House

Morcombe House is last named as such in Spalding's street directory of 1939/40 with F Ayres as its occupant; nothing is known of him.³³ It appears that no Station Master lived there after S N Wright, who was last listed in 1936/37 some years before his retirement.

Kelly's street directory of 1948 lists an Albert Stalley as resident in No. 124, a number associated with Morcombe House. This is at a time when there is no listing of any kind for Railway Cottages, which were clearly still uninhabitable. Stalley may have worked on the railway (others of that surname are listed as engine drivers in the 19th century), but it is by no means certain. A British Railways Plan for the Cambridge Station area, dated 1957 shows the outline of Morcombe House looking much as it did in 1886.

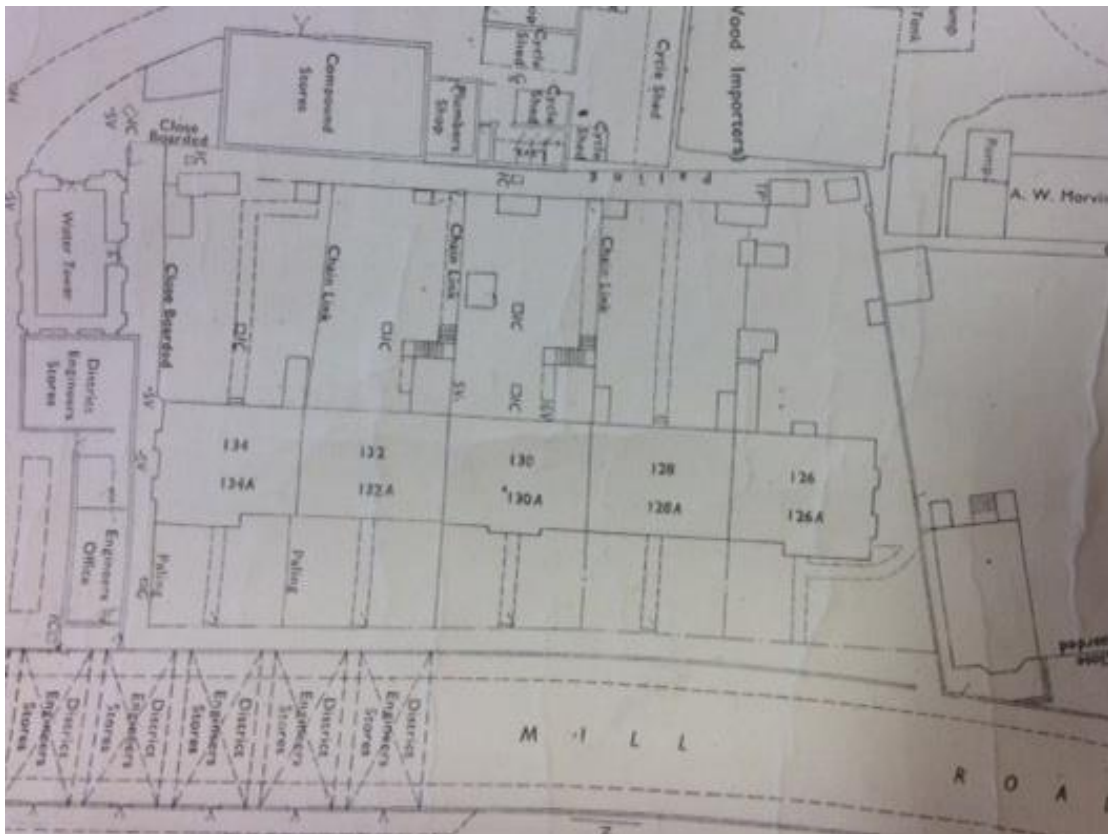


Figure 40 – British Railways Plan Cambridge Station area, sheet 2 (1957) (CC)

Albert Stalley is last listed in No. 124 in 1960. The building is listed as unoccupied in 1962 and 1964 and thereafter not mentioned again. Why or when it was demolished remains unknown. In 1966 the site was certainly empty. In 1982 when the whole site was up for sale, the District Valuer and Valuation Officer (Cambridge) wrote: 'There is a parcel of undeveloped land known as the site of 124 Mill Road which at present is covered with scrub' (see Appendix IV, document 4).

³³ No directories seem to have been produced during the war years, and when Kelly's directories resumed publication after the war house names were no longer given.



Figure 41 – Railway Cottages (Photography Survey, 1978, CC)

Figure 41 shows a corner of the plot in just such a condition.

Railway Cottages

In the 1948 directory there is no reference after No. 124 to any building on the west side of the bridge. Presumably the Cottages were unsafe for habitation? There is however evidence that at some point in the 1940s there were extensive repairs at least to Nos 130 and 132. In 1982 the District Valuer wrote: 'Nos 130 and 132 were rebuilt about 40 years ago, following war damage' (Appendix IV, document 4).

Frank Dixon, whose account of the bombing was quoted in the previous section, says: 'After the war finished I was plumbing and we did work on the houses in Mill Road that were damaged.'³⁴

The context implies that this was work on the Cottages. — These post-war renovations were clearly not to the same standard as the original build, as the letter quoted in the next section implies.

126–134 Mill Road

A letter dated 16 August 1964 from architects Cambridge Design to the CHS states:

We consider the advice of a structural engineer is necessary for the above project. This is because the two houses reconstructed in 1948 after the War Bomb damage were rebuilt using 'Strammit' straw board type partitions on either side of the stairs enclosure in the middle of each house. The effect of using this material is that these partitions are no longer load bearing – unlike the three older houses, which have load bearing walls in the same positions. (CHS papers).

The other three houses are described as 'older'; no mention is made of their condition. It is impressive, and fortunate, that at this date – around 1948–50 – the Railway Board, which

³⁴ 'Frank Dixon WW2 People's War': this is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar.

still owned the property, did go to the trouble and expense of this reconstruction work instead of merely demolishing the damaged part, or indeed the whole of the building.



Figure 42 – Corner by butcher's shop and Inverness Terrace (Photography Survey, 1978, CC)
Morcombe House has been demolished by this time

In Kelly's Directory for 1953 all the Cottages are occupied:

| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 126 | WINCH, Ronald L |
| 126 | JAMES, Alfd |
| 128 | LORD, Jas. Rt |
| 128 | CURTIS, Percy R |
| 130a | CARRINGTON, Percy |
| 130 | DAY, Hy. Geo |
| 132a | CLAYTON, Wright |
| 132 | BULLARD, Hubert S |
| 134 | BARRETT, Milton A |
| 134a | LANE, Wm Harry |

Names to note are Winch and Curtiss. An H G L Winch was living in No. 126 in 1940, and Percy Curtiss was living in No. 128 at the same date. These are the cottages furthest from the track and the bomb damage. Maybe the directories had been in error, and some of the cottages had indeed been in occupation throughout the period from 1940. Both the older

Winch and Percy Curtiss had been listed as LNER servants before the war; after the war occupations are no longer listed.



Figure 43 – Inverness Terrace and Railway Cottages, 1960s? (Photography Survey, 1978, CC)

City Council Acquisition 1966

By the early 1960s, Cambridge City Council had ambitious plans to widen Mill Road Bridge and the road itself, and to make a new road link to the Newmarket Road. To further this aim the Council bought up much of the property on either side of the bridge. The proposed electrification of the railway also required a higher bridge to allow for the electric cables.

The map shown in Figure 44, which presumably accompanied the Conveyance Schedule of the sale of the Cottages, shows the now empty site of Morcombe House, the five Railway Cottages, two cottages in Inverness Terrace, the terrace of cottages on the Romsey side of the bridge (Measham Terrace) and a row of houses on the west side of Great Eastern Street, where the car park is now. The map is dated 18 October 1965.

The conveyance document (see Appendix IV, document 1) mentions a sum of £21, 420 which seems to have been the total price for all these parcels of land.

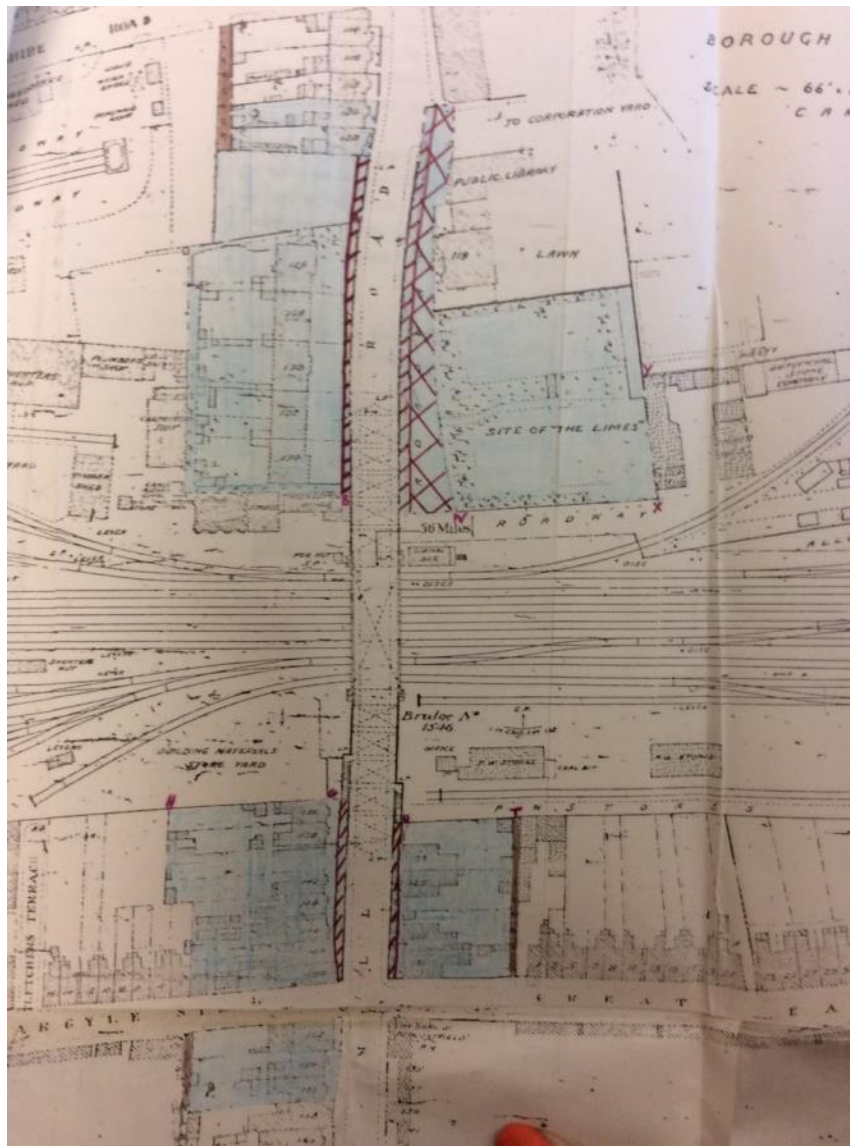


Figure 44 – Schedule map for development of bridge, 1965 (CHS papers)

Whilst, presumably, these negotiations were taking place, Muriel Halliday moved into No. 134. It is clear from what she says that until the City Council took over as landlords the cottages were still tied accommodation for the Railway.

When Bill Halliday came down to Cambridge following the closure of the Edinburgh–Carlisle rail line in 1964, he came to live next door to me at my aunt & uncle’s house. This was because my father worked as a train driver in Cambridge and Bill was a fireman.

When we got engaged in July 1965, we started looking for somewhere to live in Cambridge and my husband-to-be was offered 134 Mill Road in November of that year. It had been empty for a time and we were allowed access to decorate and furnish prior to our wedding on 26 March 1966. However, the Council took over the running of the parade of houses on 25 March 1966, so we paid rent to the Railway Board as from the beginning of March to ensure we could continue in the tenancy!

Basically, it was half a house, sharing the front & back doors, hall, stairs and landing with No. 134a. Entering the front door, there was a door into the front room, stairs to the right of the hall leading to the upper floor, and towards the rear a door leading into the kitchen/dining room. Upstairs, two doors led off the landing. No. 134a mirrored the location of the rooms.

The front room was a nice size (probably about 12ft x 12ft) with a tall leaded-pane window overlooking the small front garden. Floor-to-ceiling cupboards filled the chimney breast gaps either side of the open fire – the only heating in the house. The room was large enough for

our three-piece suite and a sideboard, and had a carpet on the floor. A door in the middle of the back wall led into the kitchen/diner with a blocked-up fireplace, butler sink on the wall with a cold water tap. Hot water was provided by a geyser over the sink. My parents bought us a Hotpoint twintub washing machine as a wedding present (a compromise for only having thirty-two guests at our wedding!), and the fridge was purchased with my first month's salary after the wedding. We had a dining table and four chairs and one of those cupboard units with sliding doors and a pull-down table!! Linoleum covered the floor.

I seem to think the hall, stairs and landing were plain wood, and my neighbour, Hazel King, and I shared the cleaning of those areas. Upstairs the front bedroom was furnished with a double bed and three-piece bedroom suite and a blue carpet on the floor. We couldn't afford to furnish the back bedroom to start with, but eventually had twin beds in there and turned it into a nursery when our elder son was born in February 1967. As the front doors were never locked, we had Yale locks on all the internal doors!

Outside, the garden was used as a vegetable patch with the toilet at the bottom – very cold in the winter! My husband ran an electric cable down to provide light. I hated using that toilet as rats used to run around the garden – the King boys used to chase them (and sometimes kill them!) with a spade! There was no bathroom in the property, and we used to either go to the Public Baths on Gwydir Street, to my parents in Ely, or the *White Swan* on Mill Road to have a bath. We were great friends with George and Kay Gilbey, the landlords there, who were godparents to our second child. We used to work behind the bar, which was good training for our next home/job – *The Rose and Crown* on Newmarket Road.

Although none of the windows were double-glazed, the traffic never bothered us as there were many fewer cars, buses and lorries on the road then. As I had always lived near the railway line in Ely the trains going past in Cambridge didn't bother me – a goods train would rattle through about 1.30 every morning but I would only hear it if my husband had just come in from a shift or my son was screaming for his feed!! Mind you, I sometimes had to do the washing twice as smuts from the steam trains could mucky them up depending on the wind direction – diesels were coming in by then, but there were still some steam engines, particularly in the shunting yards.

When we first got the house all the neighbours worked on the railway. Terry & Hazel King and their 3 children lived at 134A and I think the older couple in the ground floor flat on the other side (one of those rebuilt after the bomb destroyed the old houses) were called Durham or Dunham but I may be wrong. I have little memory of other people who lived in the row, other than a lady named Ann who moved into the first house from the entrance path with her family after the Council took the houses over. Her daughter and my son were of a similar age.

With the house no longer being tied to my husband's employment, he left the railway in May 1967 and we moved into *The Rose & Crown* on 8 October.

My cousins Derrick and Aileen Woodroffe had also lived at 134a Mill Road (they are both my first cousins – one from my father's side and the other from my mother's!). I spoke to Aileen and she seems to remember they moved into that house in late 1962 and moved to Ely in early 1964. Derrick was working in the shunting yard in Cambridge at that time. She remembers that the Kings lived at 134a even then, but I seem to think they moved to Mowbray Road sometime after we left as with two boys and a girl they needed a bigger house.

Mill Road was a lovely place to live at that time with such a variety of shops that you need never go into the city centre if you didn't want to. Although most births were at home at that time my elder son was born in Mill Road Maternity Hospital because we had no bathroom at 134a.



Figure 45 – Muriel Halliday in front room of No. 134a
(photograph courtesy of Muriel Halliday)

Muriel Halliday is shown in Figures 45 and 46 with son Ross and dog Dinky in the interior front room of No. 134a with the 1889 bridge railings just visible through the window.



Figure 46 – Interior view of No. 134a front room showing fireplace
and built in cupboards (photograph courtesy of Muriel Halliday)

The cottages remained tenanted with at least one resident, Cyril Gotobed, housed there from 1964 to 1972; it is not known whether he or any of the other tenants were still employed by the railway. From 1968 to 1975 (after which there are no more records) No. 128 is formally listed with one of its occupants living in 'flats'. Previously, though there were clearly at times at least two families living in the same cottage, the word 'flat' was never used.

After their acquisition, the City Council used the Cottages for temporary emergency housing, and there followed, because of the planning blight the road scheme engendered, a period of gradual but serious decline and neglect, though the property continued to be legally inhabited until some time in the late 1970s or early '80s. A letter of 9 September from the Chief Executive and Town Clerk of Cambridge, G G Datson, to Rhodes James MP states (Appendix IV, document 6):

The Council acquired the properties, which were Railway Cottages, many years ago as part of a proposed widening scheme for Mill Road Bridge. The properties were used as temporary accommodation over a number of years. Gradually over the years the properties became unfit, and the Council felt constrained from spending money on the properties in view of the blight which existed.

Cindy Atkinson was a tenant who shared her memories of this period on the Mill Road History Project's Facebook page in June 2015. It is interesting to note that the original internal structure of each cottage was the same as it always was, and that there is still no internal toilet. Her brave testimony shows the poor conditions she and presumably all other tenants had to endure:

I lived at 125 [sic] my friend Janet Bacon lived nxt door they were temp council according to the council, but turned into 4 yrs. I had a new born and we had to put up with noise from the bridge being rebuilt!! so got ringside beds!!

Inside I had a 2 up 2 down, another couple had the other half of the house communal staircase to upstairs bedrooms we were told when we moved in it was only for 3-4 months max 4yrs later we got moved.

Rooms were large with built-in cupboards in wall nxt to chimney a tall 4/5 shelf then a smaller one underneath with 3 shelves on each side of fireplace.

Windows were a pain to wash as they were leaded and very tall.

Push door through to kitchen big butler type sink under the window with only cold tap and a 3-pint ascot water heater for the only hot water in the house no bathrooms or inside toilets, the toilets were at the bottom of the gardens which froze every winter and were non flushing, so had to fill the bucket of water to flush, great. also at the bottom of the garden was a woodyard, so at night you couldnt sleep because of the rats and mice under the floorboards.



Figure 47 – Demolition of Mill Road bridge (CC: CEN 3 March.1984 retrospective article)

The above photograph showing the demolition of the bridge (with the chimneys of Railway Cottages visible over the bridge on the left) gives some idea of the disruption Cindy Atkinson describes.

Sale of 126–134 : Acquisition by the Cambridge Housing Society

When the new bridge was completed in 1982, the Council was anxious to bring the property back into use as housing again despite the fact that at some point in 1981 squatters (see below) had already moved into Nos 126, 130 and 134 and considerable damage had been caused. This was the period when The Kite district in Cambridge was being redeveloped and there was a recognition that very many people would be in need of rehousing. It was also the period when the Argyle Street Housing Co-operative was in development. The Council did not have the resources needed to undertake the necessary improvements, so in September 1982 the properties were offered for sale on the open market with a view to their being converted into accommodation for low-income groups.

The properties were offered as '126–134 Mill Road and the site of 124 Mill Road' (Appendix IV, document 3), and were described as:

A terrace of five Victorian houses with considerable potential.

Numbers 126, 128 and 134:

Each house has four ground floor and four first floor rooms, except for No. 134 where a partition wall at first floor level has been removed.

Numbers 130 and 132:

Each property is currently divided horizontally into two self-contained flats, each comprising kitchen, living room, two bedrooms and bathroom.

The property was valued at £80, 000. The letter from the District Valuer dated 20 October 1982 quoted in previous sections (Appendix IV, document 4) is worth quoting extensively again, as it describes something of the exterior and interior of the houses at this point in their history:

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION:

... The ground level of the land is below street level at all points where it fronts Mill Road and the boundary is marked by heavy iron railings on a concrete plinth, thus excluding any vehicular access.

ACCOMMODATION:

The houses originally provided 5 separate units which have been adapted into several flats and maisonettes. Because of present circumstances attaching to the property it is not possible for this accommodation to be defined but generally each house contains 4 rooms on the ground floor and 4 rooms on the first floor with limited plumbing facilities.

REPAIR:

The property has been allowed to fall into disrepair and it is observed that two or three of the substantial chimney stacks are leaning, roof slates are broken and missing, original window frames have been replaced and panes of glass are broken. Generally, there is much damp penetration and consequential damage to internal finishes.

OCCUPATION:

The property is offered with vacant possession, although at the date of my inspection, one property is occupied by tenant of the Council and the remaining properties are occupied by squatters.

PLANNING:

... With regard to the undeveloped plot at 124 Mill Road Cambridge, [...] I understand that the Council would prefer this land to be left as open space.

In the context of the limited green space in Petersfield in 2015 this last sentence is an interesting one. It is also interesting to note the euphemism in the second paragraph: 'Because of present circumstances attaching to the property it is not possible for this accommodation to be defined ...'.

In 1982 the CHS entered into what were to be extensive and often frustrating negotiations to purchase the property and convert them into accommodation for single young homeless. Some relevant documents from among the CHS papers are to be found in Appendix IV.

What is worth noting here is that at one point the Cottages again came under threat of demolition when the Department of the Environment argued repeatedly that the proposed rehabilitation scheme by the CHS did not represent 'value for money' and that a new build on the site would be preferable. Had this been accepted, Railway Cottages as they are today would have been demolished. A new building might have looked something like the block of flats at No 124. Luckily a change of opinion reprieved the building again.

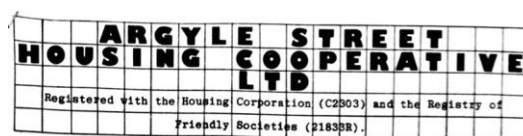
The negotiations were of course private but the issue of the squatters was very much in the public eye.

Squatting in Railway Cottages: 1981–84

Squatting was not uncommon in Cambridge and in other British cities in the 1980s; in Cambridge it was certainly exacerbated by the redevelopment of the Kite district. There are differing opinions about the squat in Railway Cottages, but the most probable scenario is that those who initially lived there were, as was the case for many squatters in the Kite, in need of, and actively searching for, legal tenancy, but that as time went on less responsible people moved in and took over.

There was certainly a move by the occupants to try to persuade the Council to consider their case to take over the property themselves, either as a Housing Co-operative or by becoming part of a CHS scheme. They sought alliance with the London-based headquarters of the Co-operative Housing Society, and with the nearby Argyle Street Housing Co-operative whose letterhead they used. Their case was that the CHS planned to use the property for accommodation for young single people and they were precisely such people themselves. In a letter of 4 December 1982 (Figure 48, below), they stated that they also had the willingness and expertise to renovate the property themselves.

Currently the pool of building experience amongst us includes plastering, rendering, wiring, carpentry, roofing, brickwork and plumbing. One of us also holds a BA in architecture.... The limited nature of the work undertaken so far, on our own initiative is due to lack of material resources, not willpower or ability. (CHS papers)



F-8 DEC 1982

Re: The Railway Cottages.

4th December 1982

STATEMENT BY THE OCCUPANTS OF 126, 128, 134 MILL RD, CAMBRIDGE:

1. We understand that the Cambridge Housing Society are planning to renovate the above mentioned houses in order to provide accommodation for young single people. We are just such young single people and, as the present occupiers, will be made homeless if our houses are renovated according to standard practice.
2. We are inhabiting these houses as fixed homes, not as temporary lodgings. The fact that we have inhabited them for over a year has almost certainly saved them from total dereliction. As a community we are all involved and feel a committed interest in the future of our homes. We would like to see these houses run on a co-operative basis, and feel certain we have sufficient energy to rehabilitate them to suit our needs as a collective and as individuals.
3. As a group we have a large repertoire of building skills which we are eager to make use of in order to satisfy our needs for a proper standard of housing. The Argyle Street Housing Co-operative is committed to supporting us, and willing to give organisational aid when needed. The Society for Co-operative Dwellings (SCOD) is also aware of our aims and have shown interest in helping to finance such a scheme. Many Co-operative renovation schemes are currently working in London boroughs such as Camden, Lambeth, Lewisham, and in other areas.
4. We understand that Cambridge Design Group (architects) are now preparing a scheme for the C.H.S. Their intentions appear to coincide with our current use of the buildings as residential accommodation, i.e. individual rooms with shared facilities for washing and cooking.

IN CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE POINTS WE WOULD LIKE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A METHOD BY WHICH THE TENANCY CAN BE SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED. THE PRESENT OCCUPANTS OBTAINING FULL TENANCY RIGHTS IN THE PROCESS, CONTINUING IN RESIDENCE WHILE HELPING SUBSTANTIALLY WITH WORK IN PROGRESS.

Figure 48 – Letter of 4 December 1982

This correspondence and other papers about the squat can be found in Appendix V.

Their case was not successful, but even though notice to quit had first been issued in December 1982 matters were protracted, and the situation and the state of the property declined.

'City's Sin Bucket'

A notice to quit must clearly have been re-issued sometime in February 1984, as a letter from the City Secretary and Solicitor dated 1 March 1984 states: 'I understand from those instructing me that within the last week steps have been taken to put into effect the necessary temporary repairs to the property including bricking up all points of entry to prevent access by squatters.' However at a hearing, presumably on 21 March, to confirm the eviction order Judge Garfitt 'put the plight of seven squatters above a city council scheme and [gave] Cambridge planners a headache'.

Squatters come first, says judge

Figure 49 – Judge Garfitt's comments (CEN 22 March 1984)

Judge Garfitt, surprised at the way things had been handled, unexpectedly granted the squatters a period of reprieve in which to seek alternative accommodation. The report is intriguing in that the Council's Solicitor Mrs Katherine Davy who found the judge's action 'shocking' claimed that 'the Council had not known that the squatters were living there for the last eight months.' Judge Garfitt

expressed great surprise and said there was no way he could grant the Council an immediate possession order in the light of this. 'The Council employ workers to maintain this property and public safety. What were they doing to discover these people?' Defence Solicitor Mr

Richard Hurst who told the court he was not being paid for his services said the situation was ironical. 'These homeless people are being thrown out so that this building can be turned into a home for the homeless.'

Mr Hurst was here making the same point that the squatters had made themselves some two years earlier. A photograph of some of the squatters was included together with a comment piece in which a social worker dramatically rechristened the Cottages as the 'City's Sin Bucket'.



Three of the squatters . . . Annie Zimmermann, Russell Spall and Vaughan Ingham.

Figure 50 – Squatters (CN 22 March 1984)

The comment piece is ambivalent in tone but is worth quoting at some length:

The row of Cottages by Mill Road Bridge, described by a Cambridge social worker as the 'city's sin bucket', were once attractive homes.

The terrace was made up of pleasant red [*sic!*] brick houses with gabled roofs and large windows, bordered by well kept gardens.

Now the windows are bricked up, the garden is a wilderness of weeds and tin cans, and the walls show only the attentions of local spray paint artists.

Inside the story is worse. Candles light the damp rooms, fires made up of wood found around the city give some heat, and empty bottles and baked beans congealing in half opened cans are the remains of countless unappetizing suppers.

THE ROW of Railway Cottages by Mill Road Bridge, described by a Cambridge social worker as the "city's sin bucket," were once attractive homes.

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This is "home" for six or seven people who have no jobs, no family ties and nowhere else to live.

By Carmel Fitzsimons

The cottages are the centre of a raging debate which involves the city council, social services and many other "help" agencies.

The city council, which owns the buildings, has not used them for two years.

In that time the damage of wind and rain and lack of maintenance has made the terrace virtually uninhabitable.

Pay day

This week the county court gave permission for the city council to remove these people so that the buildings can be sold.

The figure quoted for the property is in the region of £80,000 and the buyer, The Cambridge Housing Society, intend to create accommodation for homeless single people.

In the meantime the homeless people who live there will have to

collect their few personal belongings and move back onto the streets.

The nuns in Bateman Street give them sandwiches every morning, and rubbish bins at supermarkets provide out-of-date food which can make supper.

Thursday is "pay day" from the Social Security and some of the squatters buy drinks, while others buy books. Some of them are well educated — one of the tenants of the Railway Cottages was a chartered accountant, another a Merchant Navy officer.

The city council is concerned to complete the sale of the houses in this financial year for interest and tax reasons.

They do not have any obligations to the squatters and will not be re-housing them.

When the squatters approached the housing department they were told there was a two-year waiting list. By then the new home for the homeless on the site of their former squat should be ready.

Figure 51 – Squatter comment piece (CN 22 March 1984)

Memories of the Squat

The article is written to give a lurid picture; other testimony gives evidence of extensive damage to the property. Jon Coe (Appendix III(e)) remembers that every other beam was taken out of the ceiling to burn in the fireplaces, which were then open and the only source of heating. Rocco of Rocco's Bikes in conversation with Caro Wilson in June 2015 remembered 'visiting friends in one house when there were no staircases and to get from one part to another you had to climb out onto the roof and then back in again.'

Posts on the Mill Road History Project Facebook are mainly positive:

[Susan Toft:] I remember when a brilliant artist known as Xenia painted the doors just after people left when the council paid thugs to smash windows to get squatters out & before they did them up. Early 80s.

[Frazer Hogg:] I remember going to 'blues parties' there in the early eighties. 81 or 82.

[Derek Smiley:] went to some great all night parties there in 74–76.

[Harvey:] I remember a few friends staying up there early 80's/late 70's. Was all a bit druggy, used to go there after the Midland Tavern (Winston) turfed us out at 11pm. The end house had a huge cable reel as a table.

What is certainly true is that when the CHS finally took possession of the vacant property in late 1984 there was much work to be done. Letters in the CHS papers attest to damage further than that recorded by the District Valuer two years before. One from John Fawcett of Cambridge Design, dated 15 August 1984, states:

I would also draw attention to the fact that additional works have become necessary since Project Approval stage due to the effects of flooding, vandalism and fire damage.

Another from the CHS to the City Council, dated 2 September 1984, remarks:

Additional works required are directly due to the period when the properties were vacant and/or squatted with the resulting damage caused by vandalism the fires on the upper floors and the fact that three of the properties suffered from weather penetration during most of last winter.

CHS Renovations

Quite late in the day, in January 1983 a letter from the then Director of Social Services expresses anxiety about the proposals, an anxiety likely to have been fuelled by memories of the squat (Appendix IV, document 7):

Some concern was expressed about the concentration of young people with problems in Mill Road and I should be grateful if you would confirm that the places in the flats which you propose to provide in the remaining portion of the premises, and in a possible new build scheme on the site of 124 Mill Road, will be allocated from your 'general' waiting list and will not include a disproportionate number of very young people. It would be unfortunate if the area became 'overloaded' with rootless youngsters.

There was also an intriguing proposal from perhaps another department of the City Council's Social Services Department, before the building work began, to make a temporary City Farm on the site, presumably making maximum use of the empty ground on the Morcombe House site, but nothing came of the plan and building work began in April 1985, nearly three years after the properties had first been put up for sale.

Figure 52 shows the map of the properties that had been purchased, and shows the empty site of 124 Mill Road, the old Morcombe House site.

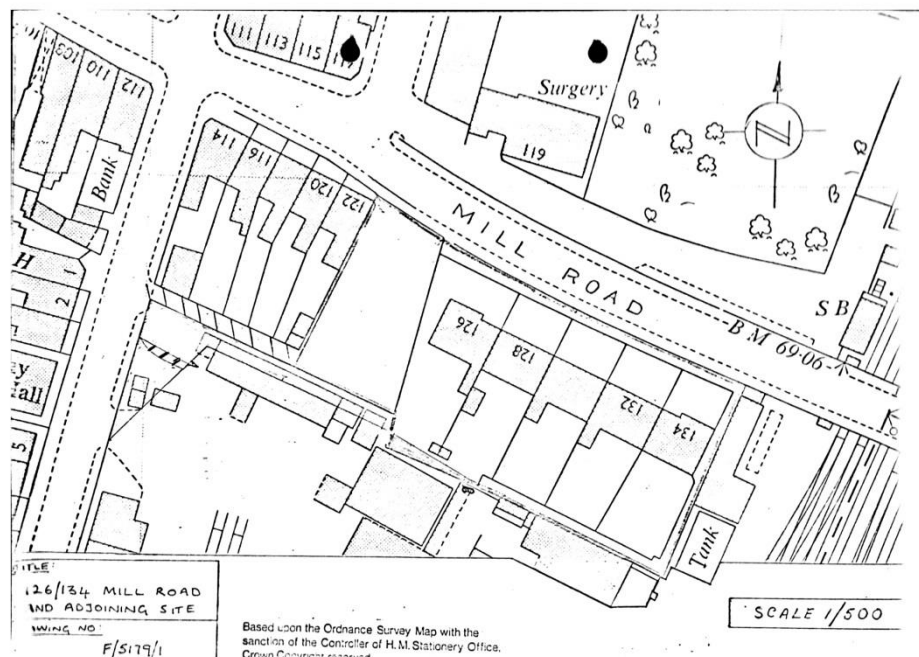


Figure 52 – Site map (CHS papers)

Plans for eight flats at No. 124 had already been drawn up by the architects Cambridge Design for that site:

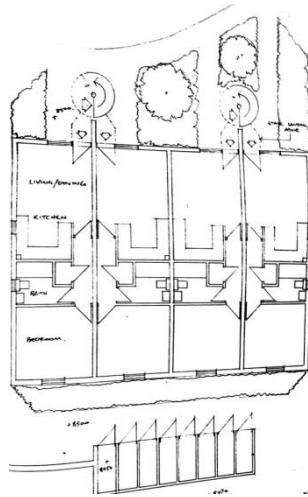


Figure 53 – Cambridge Design plans for No. 124 (CHS papers)

Further plans amongst the CHS papers show the renovations planned for Nos 126–134, the old Railway Cottages, though the drawing is not clear.

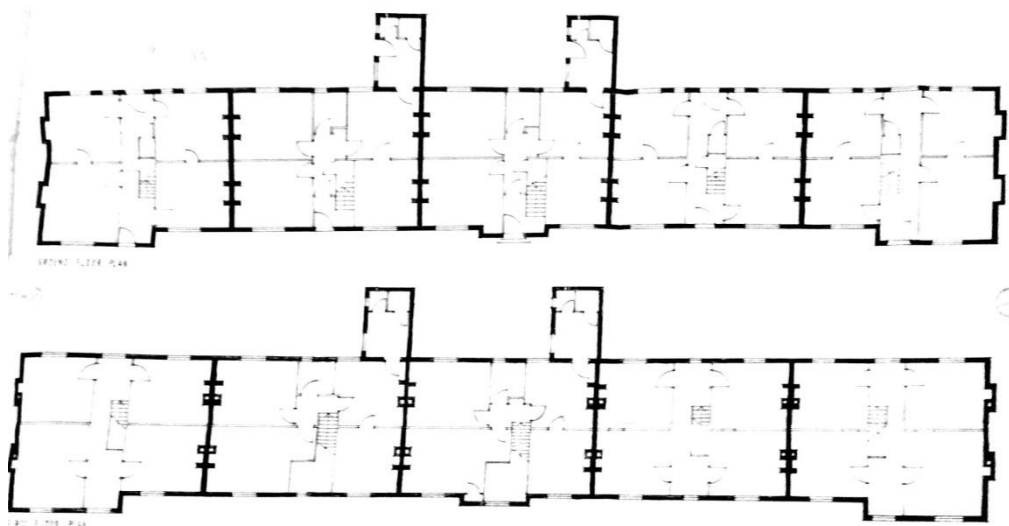


Figure 54 – Cambridge Design plans for Nos 126–134 (CHS papers)

The *Cambridge Evening News* welcomed the restoration:

Derelict houses being Rebuilt

RENOVATION work costing £250,000 is under way on a row of derelict houses at 126 to 134 Mill Road Cambridge.

The houses were bought by the Cambridge Housing Society after lying derelict and used by squatters for the last three years.

Emergency

The cost of the work, which is expected to be completed by December, is being met by Cambridge City Council which previously used the Victorian railway workers' cottages to provide emergency housing for young homeless families.



Figure 55 – CEN 27 April 1985

In September of the same year, the new renovation was celebrated as part of Mill Road in a special Mill Road supplement: *Down Mill Road: The Cosmopolitan Street with Variety and Style*.

For example gone is the unsightly graffiti on the railway bridge. Now bright imaginative murals provide an amusing landscape for passers by. And as shoppers cross the bridge, instead of derelict buildings they can see the attractive development for Cambridge Housing Society that is creating eight flats and 13 bedsits out of a fine restoration project. [...] The mellowed brickwork of these buildings being restored for Cambridge Building Society [sic] now provides a pleasing view from the railway bridge.



Figure 56 – CEN Supplement 18 Sept 1985

Launch and Early History of Railway House

Earlier in the year, the CHS was making plans for the management of what would now be known as 'Railway House', the central portion of the old railway cottages. Nos 126, 132 and 134 are used as CHS flats as are the eight flats on the 124 site; they are all managed differently.



Figure 57 – Railway House Association launch (*CEN* 6 June 1985)

Railway House was opened by Rhodes James MP on 3 April 1986. It was completed and occupied in May 1986.



Figure 58 – Plaque over door of Railway House (Caro Wilson, 2015)



Figure 59 – Rhodes James and CHS staff (CHS papers)

The *Cambridge Evening News* welcomed this new facility in an article of 15 March 1986

shortly before the opening ceremony. The article tells the stories of some of the residents and also clarifies the status of the 'end' cottages:

The Society is retaining two blocks at either end of the row of cottages which are being converted into four one-bedroom flats for young couples at a £17-a-week rent and four bedsits for single people at £15 a week.

One resident said: It's a bit posy isn't it? It's all Habitat stuff but we're getting some stuff up on the walls. It's a bit better than I thought.

The then manager, Mr Grainger, said: We have taken a long time and done a lot of talking to get this place accepted as a community asset – because I believe these people have a lot to offer the community.



Figure 60 – CEN 15 March 1986

Things did not go altogether smoothly. There was a minor fire on 15 February 1987, which still warranted an article in the *Cambridge Evening News* the next day:

A hostel for young homeless people in Cambridge was evacuated in the early hours of the morning when fire broke out. [...] it was confined to a downstairs common room in Railway House in Mill Road where a section of flooring and skirting board were destroyed. The alarm was raised by a resident, who smelt smoke, woke the others, and called 999.

A spokesman for the Fire Brigade said 'There were one or two blue lips by the time we got them back inside.'

There were somewhat more serious problems with management, but these were quickly resolved as Jon Coe (part-time manager in the late 1980s) explained:

When CHS bought the property in 1986 it was first run by an independent trust: the Railway House Trust. Things went well for about a year but then ran into serious difficulties with a bad manager and trustees who, though well intentioned, had little or no experience of managing a hostel for teenagers. It reached a stage where there were only three residents and one member of staff, who was finding it impossible to cope. 'Things were getting a bit out of hand.'

Jon, who had worked with Rev Allan Dupuy at Winston House, was approached and asked to help out and take over as manager. He was living at the Argyle Street Co-op at the time. He said 'I'll do it for three months but I don't want to do it long term as I want to run my own business'. He ended up staying for many years on a part-time basis.

There was a complete change of staff, and the number of residents was quickly built up again as the referrals were constant. Residents at this stage had complex needs, but responded well to Jon and the staff running the place as a therapeutic community along the lines he'd found effective in previous settings, with regular community meetings to sort out all issues and discuss personal problems. Residents were aware of the regime before they were admitted. 'We have a meeting every Monday evening; if you can't agree to make a meeting every Monday don't move in.' The age range was 16–18 and there was a time limit for residents of about twelve or eighteen months after which they moved on to other residential settings. Things quickly got back to an even keel with lively residents and committed staff who all embraced the ethos of looking after each other.

Jon has happy memories of the place and his time there. 'It was lively and fun and running well' (See Appendix III(e).)

Present Day (2016)

124A–H Mill Road



Figure 61 – Front of No. 124 (Caro Wilson, 2015)

Figures 61 and 62 show the Mill Road frontage to the flats at 124 Mill Road, the site of Morcombe House. Doors can be reached by flights of steps; storage sheds are provided.



Figure 62 – No. 124: entrance to some of the flats (Abdi Osman, 2014)

The 'back' is accessed through Devonshire Road through the car park that services the flats and Railway House.



Figure 63 – No. 124: rear of flats (Caro Wilson, 2015)

Each flat has a living room at the back overlooking the car park and small garden, a bedroom on the Mill Road side, and a kitchen and bathroom in the middle section.

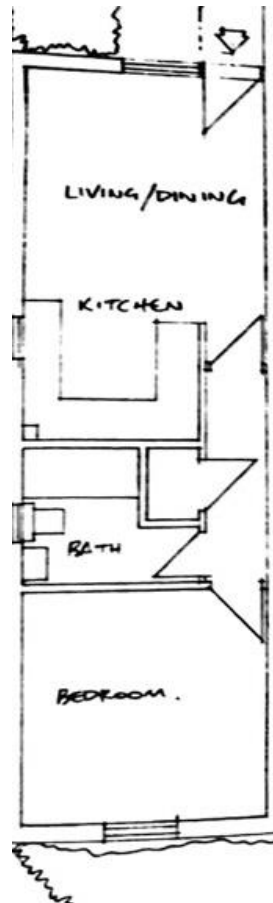


Figure 64 – Plan of typical flat, No. 124 (CHS papers)

Linda Ridgeway, current resident of the flats and part time employee at Railway House, says:

I love living here because I've got everything near me I need, shops, pubs everything, and the job's just a walk away and that's the same for my partner. I've lived here for at least seven years, and I've no intentions of moving any time soon.

Linda has been active in helping with the garden restoration project (see below) and other areas of community engagement.



Figure 65 – Linda Ridgeway, current resident of a flat at 124 Mill Road, outside her garden door
(Caro Wilson, July 2015)

126, 132 and 134 Mill Road

These sections of what was Railway Cottages have also been converted into flats and bedsits. The old 'two-up-two-down' arrangement with a central staircase has gone, and there are a variety of different kinds of accommodation provided.

TF, now (2015) aged 80, lives in a flat in one of the end sections with a kitchen/living room, a bedroom and bathroom. He came over from Dublin with his family as a child and remembers his father showing the children Railway Cottages in about 1948 when the bomb damage had been made good and they were still accommodation for railway workers. He recalls them as very smart. TF has led a life full of travel, mainly with the army, and since his return to Cambridge has lived in various parts of the city, working as a welder for some time in Newnham Mill. He has lived in the flat for some fifteen years and seen many changes in Mill Road.



Figure 66 – TF, resident of a flat at 126 Mill Road
(Caro Wilson, August 2015)

Graham Main, a former resident of Railway House, now lives in a flat at the other end section of the Cottages.



Figure 67 – Graham outside his front door, 130 Mill Road
(Caro Wilson, August 2015)

Graham commented as follows:

I moved in to Railway House in summer 2010 and I lived there until winter 2011 when I moved over to 120 Mill Road while it was still being run by Railway House and I lived there until June 2013. I moved into my current home in June 2013. I've lived in the area for five years now. The reason I like the area is because everything I need is close or easy to get to: shops, pubs, my work and if I need to go further afield then I'm close to both the bus station and the train station.

Graham described his present flat as consisting of a bed room *cum* sitting room, a kitchen and bathroom, with hallway.

128 Mill Road : Railway House

Figure 68 shows the current floor plans, which differ somewhat from initial plans of 1984.

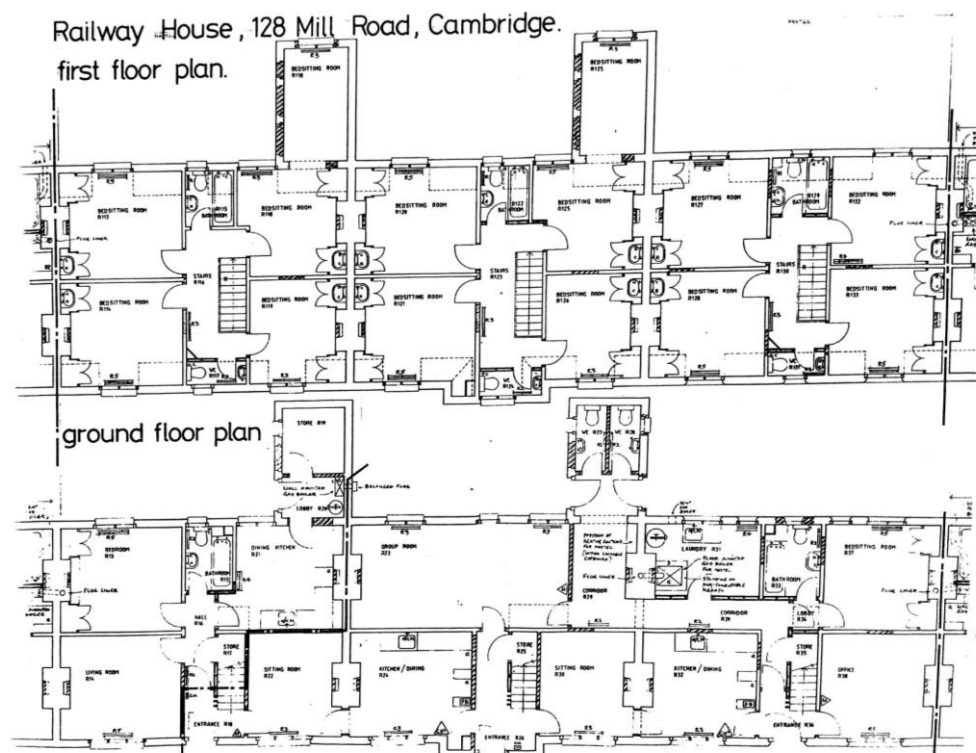


Figure 68 – No. 128: current first-floor plan (CHS papers)

Railway House provides accommodation for young single homeless people aged 16–21 with low-to-medium support needs around independent living. It has twelve bed-sitting rooms and sleeping quarters for a member of staff.

Figure 69 shows the present back with extensions dating from the 1984 renovations:



Figure 69 – Nos 124–134 rear with post-1984 extension (Caro Wilson, 2015)



Figure 70 – Nos 124–134: office and kitchen (Caro Wilson, 2015)

There is testimony to the good work done by Railway House and its staff from the 1990s. The anonymous correspondent quoted here found life tough to begin with, but concludes by paying eloquent tribute to the community there:

Life has been a real struggle but finally things are going well and I have found peace and moderate happiness. I don't know where I would be today without the help and support of living at Railway. It taught me independence and self-worth. I have kept in touch with a few people who also lived there at the same time which is nice as they are like my second family. I am immensely proud of the history of the house and have lots of good and bad memories there, but it was a huge part of me accepting my past and preparing me for the big world. [...] It still feels like yesterday. (Reproduced with permission from the correspondent.)

James, a more recent resident, now living in one of the end flats, shared his experience by writing for the summer 2015 issue of the *Mill Road Bridges Newsletter*:

Before I lived at Railway I was registered homeless; bouncing around hostels and B&Bs on Job Seeker's Allowance and on bail from court. Staff helped me update my CV and fix relationships with my family. I got a job as a kitchen porter in a local pub that just opened. Staff at Railway helped me get involved and take charge of resident activities and trips, which also grew my confidence. It also helped me make new friends and make the place feel more like home. Since then I have settled into a flat, got a promotion at work and am still getting in-

volved with lending a helping hand at projects run by Railway House. I am also paying for myself to go back to college with dreams of setting up my own business.

James has been an active participant in the Dig for Victory Garden Scheme of 2015 (see below) and has also, with Louise Chilvers, member of staff at Railway House, taken the lead in creating a community garden in what was a neglected and rubbish -strewn area of the car park.



Figure 71 – Corner of car park before restoration. (photographs courtesy of CHS)



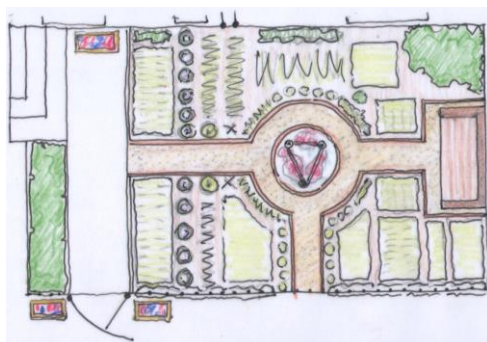
Figure 72 – Louise Chilvers in community garden between railway track and Travis Perkins border (Caro Wilson, July 2015)

Community Project 2015

In January 2015, with support from the Mill Road History Project and other Mill Road community organisations, staff, led by Louise Chilvers, and residents, applied for a County Council grant to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Armistice. The project for which they sought funding, in commemoration of the building's history, was to turn a section of back garden into a recreation of a 1940s 'Dig for Victory' garden and they began to work with the Mill Road History Project, with Keith Jordan of the Romsey Gardens Society and with local landscape garden designer Kate Collins.

Railway House Victory Garden

Inspired by the 'Dig for Victory' theme, this decorative allotment garden will be a focus for Railway House residents - for growing, making, meeting and relaxing.



The garden has a flexible, functional design, with the essential ingredients of a sunny corner, a bench, some pretty pots, flowers and earth to dig.

The simple structure will be attractive throughout the seasons and could be adapted to suit the ideas and needs of future Railway House residents.

Like the original Victory Gardens, the Railway House garden will have a domestic, 'homemade' character. The paths are compacted earth with brick dust and timber edging; the bench is made by friends of the group and the plants are donated by Romsey Garden Club.

The residents have so many ideas - sweet peas growing up and along the fence; french beans on a tripod in the centre, an archway entrance, retro signs .. this will be an inspirational and therapeutic project for years to come.



Figure 73 – Design for Railway House Victory Garden (Kate Collins, January 2015)

(The thumbnail photographs bottom left show a resident and member of staff in the garden plot before work began.)

Thanks to staff efforts more funds were raised and help given by a team of volunteers from Lloyds bank. Residents and staff worked energetically with the unflagging assistance of Keith Jordan.



Figure 74 – Initial Victory Garden dig with Karen Howes on left (Caro Wilson, May 2015)

The project received some coverage from the press:



Figure 75 – CN 23 May 2015: Abdi Osman, resident, Caro Wilson, Keith Jordan , Laurence Hobson , staff

Enthusiasm grew and more sections of the neglected perimeter of the car park were cared for and developed.



Figure 76 – Linda Ridgeway, resident of flat at No. 124, in wildlife garden, July 2015 (Caro Wilson)

Meanwhile residents and staff were helping Caro Wilson of the Mill Road History Project to research the building's rich history with generous help from the head office at CHS.

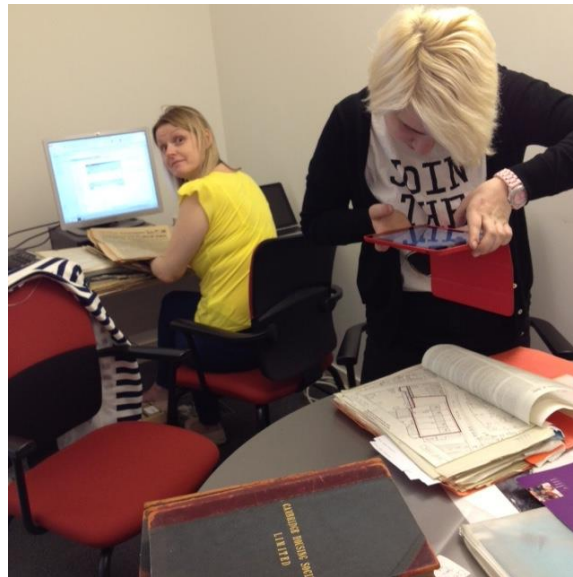


Figure 77 – Research at CHS office (Caro Wilson, April 2015)

This report could not have been produced without their participation and support.

Event at Railway House 28 August 2015

A 1940's themed tea party was held behind the building on 28 August 2015 to celebrate completion of the Dig for Victory Garden and to bring together all who currently live in 124-134 with the wider Mill Road Community.



Figure 78 – Invitation : Designed by Jon Foster

Residents, staff and Mill Road volunteers were engaged in all the planning and preparation for the event, putting the finishing touches to the gardens, and making the cakes for the tea.

Residents also helped set up a small exhibition which told the history of 124–134 Mill Road. Additional material was loaned by the Cambridge Collection and the Museum of Cambridge.



Figure 79 – Nicola getting the tables ready (Caro Wilson)



Figure 80 – Keith, Ashley and James at the 'Dig for Victory' garden

The 'Dig for Victory' Garden was looking at its best and was much admired by everyone.



Figure 81 – 'Dig for Victory' Garden (Becky Proctor)



Figure 82 – ‘Dig for Victory’ (Simon Middleton)



Figure 83 – Keith Jordan with book (Becky Proctor)

Figure 83 shows Keith Jordan, Romsey Gardens Club, with *Make your Garden Feed You* by E T Brown, the book bought from a Mill Road charity shop which inspired the project.

A central aim for the event was to welcome back to the building all who had shared their memories with the Mill Road History Project. We were delighted to welcome back the Simpkins family (Appendix III(c) and (d)) the Challis family (Appendix III(a)) and Muriel Halliday (see Post War section) who had lived at No. 134 in the 1960s and was delighted to meet the current resident James.



Figure 84 – Roger and Robin Simpkins with the Lord Mayor, Cllr Dryden (Becky Proctor)



Figure 85 – Muriel Halliday at back door of No. 134 with current resident, James (Caro Wilson)

Tea was served by local social enterprise group Turtledove and 1940s music was provided by the group Freddie and Friends. Keith Jordan led community singing, and members of the Lindy Hoppers dance group entertained the attendees and taught at least some of them to dance.



Figure 86(a), (b), (c) and (d) – photographs of the event
(Simon Middleton and Becky Proctor)

More photos of the event, taken by Simon Middleton, can be found on:

<https://www.flickr.com/gp/sjm/Mb827t>

Comments received after the event included the following:

Very nice to see so many young people interested in the wartime activities and involved in making a lovely exhibition. (Monica Smith, local resident and Mill Road History Project interviewee.)

I had a really amazing time setting the displays up making it look interesting. I loved speaking to the people that was in the war. I enjoyed everything. (Danielle F, friend of resident)

Community spirit brought back happy memories for Dad (C S) of the enjoyment of working a lifetime on the railway. A pleasure to meet old (literally) friends who also had plenty of stories to reminisce upon. A very enjoyable and lovely afternoon. (A S, whose father Cyril is a MRHP interviewee)

I've enjoyed the event today. It was a great experience for me. I have lived at 124c Mill Road since 1999 and have been a cleaner at RH for 8 years and met some lovely people. Thanks for a great time. (LW)

I enjoyed today was an experience for me. The set up was amazing and loads of pictures and leaflets to look and read about. Thanks for a really amazing day. (SS, RH resident)

Dear friends, We did not know what to expect at 128 when we received the invite. It surpassed our expectations. Good company, great hospitality and found new friends, Love (Vic, Muriel and Linda Challis)

The event received full page coverage in the *Cambridge News* of 2 September 2015.



Figure 87 – CN 2 September 2015 : report of the event

In Conclusion

On 8 June 2015 an evening session was held with staff, residents, members of the Romsey Garden Club and the Mill Road History Project. The session was led by Dean Parkin, poet working with the Mill Road History Project. Historical material was shared and by the end of the evening the following group poem had been composed:

Poem for Railway House

Still Here
 She's chilled, she's calm
 She's bricks and mortar
 She's steam, she's diesel
 She's electric
She's still here.

The bombs, the blitz,
 With the baby in the cupboard
They're alive!
 She's noise, she's quiet
 She's never clean
 She's stressed, a headache
 But 'cos it's interesting
She's still here.

She's neglected, she's a shattered slate
 She's a chimney in the distance
 She's family, she's support
 She's hide and seek
She's still here.

A sin bucket, a ruin
 A squat
 She's getting back on her feet
 She carries on, moving on
 Sanctuary in a busy street.
She's still here.

*Engine cleaner, Railway Servant, Train Shunter, Railway Porter
 Platelayer, Bricklayer, Signaller, Engine Fitter's Foreman*

All Lived Here

Workshop with staff, residents and friends, led by Dean Parkin, poet with Mill Road History Project, 8 June 2015

Figure 88 – Roofscape at dusk
 (Abdi Osman, January 2015)



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APPENDIX I**124-134 Mill Road. Occupants 1851–1901**

| SOURCE | NUMBER | NAMES | OCCUPATION | NOTES |
|--------------------|------------|--|---|---|
| Census 1851 | 123? | HILL, <i>John</i> , 45 (widower) Jackson, <i>Mary Ann</i> 18 (daughter) | Railway porter Housekeeper | They appear in court case of 1854 as living in Railway Cottages |
| | 124? | SPILLMAN, <i>Herbert</i> 32, <i>Eliza</i> 22 (wife), <i>John</i> , <i>Sarah</i> (children) SAUNDERS <i>Charles</i> 18 | Railway Porter Shoemaker (visiting) | |
| | 125? | PATMAN, <i>James</i> , 25 <i>Alice</i> , 30 (wife), <i>William</i> , (son) WATSON <i>Ann</i> 10 | Engine cleaner Visitor | |
| | 126? | MARTIN , <i>William</i> , 46 <i>Elizabeth</i> 37 MARTIN, <i>James</i> 25 (son) CHANT, <i>Charles</i> 26 (lodger) HALL <i>John</i> 26 | Railway Porter Millwright Millwright Railway Guard | |
| | 127? | LOW, <i>Thomas</i> 25 LOW <i>Jane</i> 23, <i>Jane</i> (daughter) | Fireman Laundress | |
| | 128? | UNSWORTH, <i>Thomas</i> 26 <i>Margaret</i> (wife) 21, <i>Mary Ann</i> (visitor), <i>Charlotte</i> , (sister) TRIPLOW, <i>Jane</i> 24 | Labourer Housekeeper | AB's Railway Cottages |
| | 129? | WARD <i>Benjamin</i> 29, <i>Esther</i> (wife), <i>George Frederick</i> , (children) CANNUM, <i>Frederic</i> 22, <i>Elizabeth</i> (wife) Visiting | Railway Porter Cambs Police | AB's Railway Cottages |
| | 130? | EDWARDS , <i>Henry</i> 31, <i>Frances</i> (wife) 29, <i>William</i> , <i>Alfred</i> (children) GILLYGOOD, <i>William</i> , 27 (lodger) <i>Frances</i> (wife), <i>Charles</i> (son) | Railway Porter Bricklayer | AB's Railway Cottages |
| | 131? | OXLEY, <i>Jeremiah</i> 39, <i>Sarah</i> (wife) 40 | Railway Porter | AB's Railway Cottages |
| | 132? | COTTER, <i>John</i> 37, <i>Sabina</i> (wife) 36, <i>Charles</i> , <i>Valentine</i> , <i>Sidney</i> (children) | Railway Inspector | AB's Railway Cottages |
| | 133? | KILLERN, <i>William</i> 25, <i>Sophia</i> (wife) 26 <i>Walton</i> (son) | Railway Gatekeeper | AB's Railway Cottages |
| | | | | |
| Craven 1855 | | <i>No mention of property or names above</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Cen1861 | | <i>No mention of property or names above</i> | | |
| | 37 MR | MANSFIELD <i>Walter</i> 31, <i>Mary</i> (wife) 29, <i>Walter</i> (son) | Carpenter | Folio 61A p. 85 see 1871 |
| | Signal Box | BURGESS , <i>Joseph</i> | | Folio 61B p. 85 |
| | 50 MR | MORRELL , <i>Edward</i> , <i>Elizabeth</i> , <i>Frederick</i> , <i>William</i> , <i>Joseph</i> , <i>James</i> , <i>Thomas</i> , <i>Sarah</i> , <i>Henry</i> | ECR Signal man | Folio 25A p. 444 ECR signal man See 1871 |
| | | | | |
| Morgan | | <i>No entry</i> | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--|---|---|
| 1865 | | | | |
| Mathieson 1866/7 | | <i>No entry</i> | | |
| Census 1871 | | Named as Railway Cottages | | |
| | 25 RC | MANSFIELD, <i>Walter</i> 40, <i>Mary</i> (wife) 39 MANSFIELD, <i>Walter</i> (son) 15, <i>George</i> (son) | Carpenter Carpenter's labourer | |
| | 26 | DONALD, <i>Joseph</i> 31, <i>Elizabeth</i> (wife) 25 DIMOND, <i>Thomas</i> 35, <i>Elizabeth</i> (wife) , <i>Anne E . Oliver</i> (children) | Railway servant Railway ticket collector | |
| | 27 | WATKINS , <i>George</i> 40 , <i>Sarah</i> (wife) 44, <i>Jane, George, Charles</i> (children) WILSON, <i>William</i> (nephew) 13 WILSON, <i>Samuel</i> (nephew) 16 | Railway Goods Guard Railway telegraph messenger Railway telegraph clerk | |
| | 28 | ELMES, <i>William</i> 46, <i>Eliza</i> (wife) 45, <i>Jane, Arthur</i> (children) BLACKETT. <i>Edmund</i> 41, <i>Adelaide</i> (wife) 30 , <i>Edward, Arthur</i> (children) | Labourer on railway goods shed Locomotive foreman railway | Elmes in 1861 lived in Coronation St Listed as separate dwellings but with same number |
| | 29 RC | BARRELL, <i>George</i> 39, <i>Ann</i> (wife) 44, <i>George, Charlotte, John, Charles</i> (children) FOUNTAIN, <i>William</i> 42, <i>Ann</i> (wife) | Ticket collector GER Railway Servant | Listed as separate dwellings but with same number |
| | Railway Gate House | MORRELL , <i>Edward</i> , 58, <i>Elizabeth</i> (wife) 56, <i>Thomas, Sarah, Henry</i> (children) MORRELL, <i>James</i> (son) 19 | Railway signalman Railway Goods deliverer | Edward Morrell and family lived in 50 Mill Road in 1861 Was this a separate building: how? |
| Spalding's 1874 | | No mention. None of the above names listed. | | |
| | Morcombe House | SCUDAMORE, <i>Mary</i> | | |
| Spalding's 1878 | | Building not names (just after Cluny Villas and Inverness Terrace) | | |
| | Morcomb House | CHANDLER, <i>John</i> SCUDAMORE, <i>Mrs</i> | | |
| | 25 | MANSFIELD , <i>Walter</i> | Inspector on line | |
| | 26 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs</i> DARNELL, <i>Joseph</i> | | |
| | 27 | WESTWOOD J and FARROW Edwd | | |
| | 28 | LINDSEY, and BULLER, J | | |
| | 29 | FOINTAIN, <i>William</i> BLACKETT, <i>George</i> MORRELL, A | Locomotive foreman Signalman | Morrells (but not A) were living in MR 50 in 1871 |
| | | | | |

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|------------------------|---------------------|--|--|-------------------------|
| Spalding's 1881 | 1 Morcombe House | GIFFEN, William Robert SCUDAMORE, Mrs Mary A | Joiner School for young ladies | |
| | 25 | MANSFIELD, Walter | Carpenter | |
| | 26. | PRESTON, John DALDREY, Mrs Sarah Ann | Railway servant | |
| | 27 | BARKER, Alfred J SIMPSON, George | Railway porter Railway porter | |
| | 28 | BUTLER, William LINSEY, Thomas | Labourer Platelayer | |
| | 29 | BLACKETT, Edmund P FOUNTAIN, William WORRELL Edward | Engine fitter's foreman Engine fitter's foreman Railway signalman | Misspelling of Morrell? |
| | | | | |
| Census 1881 | Morcombe House | SCUDAMORE, <i>Mary Ann 47, Edith Mary 15, John Walter 13, Claude Hamilton 11, Sidney Frank 9</i> | Governess | |
| | 25 | MANSFIELD, <i>Walter 50, Mary 45 (wife)</i> MANSFIELD, <i>George (son) 17</i> | Carpenter Engine fitter's assistant | |
| | 24 | PRESTON, <i>John 53, Jane (wife) 60</i> WALKER, <i>Charles 20</i> | Railway servant Railway engine cleaner | |
| | 26 | DALDREY, <i>Sarah Ann (Head) 43</i> DALDREY, <i>James William (son) 21</i> DALDREY, <i>Sarah Ann (daughter) 20</i> DALDREY, <i>Louisa Agnes (daughter) 18</i> | Railway waiting room attendant Railway porter Dressmaker Dressmaker | |
| | 27 | BARKER, <i>Alfred John (head) 26, Caroline Ann (wife) 25, Eliza Susan 5, John Robert 3, Alfred 1</i> SIMPSON, <i>George (head) 28, Esther (wife) 24</i> | Railway porter | |
| | 28 | BUTLER, <i>William (head) 62</i> BUTLER, <i>Elizabeth (sister in law) 61</i> BUTLER, <i>Emma (daughter) 23</i> BUTLER, <i>Alice Mary (daughter) 20</i> BUTLER, <i>Ellen (grand-daughter) 16</i> LINSEY, <i>Thomas (head) 46</i> LINSEY, <i>Harriet (wife) 45, Rosa, 24, George, 13, Arthur 10, Albert 8, Lydia 5, Florence 5 months</i> LINSEY, <i>Herbert John</i> | General labourer Laundress Laundress Laundress Dressmaker Railway porter Laundress Railway labourer | |
| | 29 | BLACKETT, <i>Edmund P (head) 51, Adelaide (wife) 40, Ada Mary, 15</i> BLACKETT, <i>Edward (son) 19</i> MEADOWS, <i>Emma (cousin) 24</i> STEVENS, <i>Eva Mary (niece) 5</i> FOUNTAIN, <i>Ann (head ?) 59</i> | Engine fitter's foreman Engine fitter Railway signalman | |
| | Mill Rd Railway | MORRELL, <i>Edward (head) 68, Elizabeth (wife) 66</i> | Railway signalman | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| | Crossing | MORRELL, <i>James</i> (son) 29 MORRELL, <i>Henry</i> (son) 19 BURLOW, <i>Ellen</i> (grand-daughter) 4 | Engine cleaner Railway porter | |
| Spalding's 1884 | | | | Six cottages? |
| | Morcombe House | BRIGHT, <i>William Richard</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 25 | MANSFIELD <i>Walter</i> | Mechanical foreman | |
| | 26 | PRESTON, <i>John</i> Daldrey, <i>Mrs</i> | Railway servant Manageress ladies' waiting room | |
| | 27 | BARKER, <i>Alfred</i> BAVESTER, <i>Reuben</i> | Guard Shunter | |
| | 28 | BUTLER, <i>William</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Railway servant Platelayer | |
| | 29 | BLACKETT, <i>Edmund</i> | Locomotive inspector | |
| | 30 ? | MORRELL <i>Edward</i> | Railway servant | |
| Spalding's 1887 | | | | Six Cottages? |
| | Morcombe House | BRIGHT, <i>Wm</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 25 | MANSFIELD, <i>Walter</i> | Senr. GER railway mechanical foreman | |
| | 26 | DALDREY <i>Mrs Sarah</i> PRESTON <i>John</i> | Manageress ladies' waiting room GER Railway servant | |
| | 27 | BAVESTER, <i>Reuben</i> BARKER, <i>Alfred</i> | Train shunter Railway guard | |
| | 28 | INCE, <i>John</i> BUTLER, <i>William</i> | Platelayer Railway servant | |
| | 29 | BLACKETT, <i>Edmund</i> | Locomotive inspector | |
| | 30 Gate House | COVILL. <i>Edward</i> | Signalman | |
| Census 1891 | Morcombe House | BRIGHT, <i>William</i> 30, <i>Ellen E</i> (wife) 30, <i>Arthur M</i> 10, <i>Sidney W</i> 8, <i>Mary E.</i> 6, <i>Victor. T</i> (Son) 3 RICHES, <i>Maria.</i> (mother in law) 78 CHAPMAN, <i>Eliza</i> 63 | Railway Station Master Living on her own means Living on her own means | Change of numbers again. |
| | 80 | MANSFIELD. <i>Walter</i> 60, <i>Hannah</i> 48 | | No children at home now |
| | 82 | DALDREY, <i>Sarah Ann</i> DALDREY, <i>Sarah A</i> 30 DALDREY, <i>Louisa</i> 28 | Attending GER station Dressmaker Dressmaker | Contrast Spalding's below |
| | 83 | PRESTON, <i>John</i> 63 PRESTON, <i>Jane</i> (wife) 70 | Railway shunter Railway shunter | Is this an error? |
| | 84 | NORTHFIELD, <i>Charles</i> 30, <i>Ellen</i> (wife) 28, <i>Charles W.</i> 9, <i>Herbert G</i> 7, <i>Ellen E</i> 5, <i>Frederick</i> 1 HOLM, <i>Arthur</i> (boarder) 23 | Railway Cleaner GER | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| | 84 | HORWOOD, <i>William 31, Rebecca (wife) 26, William E 2, J. Henry, 8 months</i> | Railway Engine fitters assistant | |
| | 86 86 | LINSEY, <i>Charles 26, Fanny (wife) 23, William 3</i> INCE, <i>John 32, Sarah (wife) 30, Ada 8, Frederick 6, Albert 3</i> INCE, <i>Albert (boarder) 18, Florence (daughter) 10</i> | Railway platelayer Railway engine cleaner | Presumably Florence is John's daughter. |
| | 88 | PEAKE, <i>Thomas 28, Ada (wife) 25, Stanley 1, Cyril 2 months</i> BLACKETT, <i>Adelaide (mother in law) 50</i> | Telegraph linesman GER Living on her own means | |
| Spalding's 1891 | | | | NB change of numbers, only 5 cottages again |
| | Morcombe House | BRIGHT, <i>Wm.</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 80 | MANSFIELD, <i>Walter</i> | Sen railway mechanical foreman | Cottages not named as such. |
| | 82 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs</i> | Manageress ladies' waiting room | |
| | 84 | NORTHFIELD, <i>Charles</i> HORWOOD, <i>William</i> | Engine fitter's assistant | |
| | 86 | LINSEY <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Railway platelayer Railway platelayer | |
| | 88 | REAKE, <i>Thomas</i> | Telegraph linesman, GER Extension Grounds | |
| Spalding's 1895 | | | | |
| | 124 Morcombe House | HOLDICH, <i>Frederick</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER, <i>James</i> | Inspector Permanent Way GER | Named Railway Cottages |
| | 128 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs S</i> | Dressmaker | |
| | 130 | HORWOOD, <i>William</i> NORTHFIELD, <i>Charles</i> | Engine fitter | |
| | 132 | LINDSEY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelayer Platelayer | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs E</i> MILLS, <i>Mrs Emma</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| | 7 | MABSFIELD, <i>Walter</i> | Carpenter | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1898 | 124 Morcombe House | HOLDICH, <i>Frederick</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER. <i>James</i> | Inspector Permanent Way GER | Cottages not named as such |
| | 128 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs S</i> | Dressmaker | |
| | 130 | PETTIT, <i>Leo</i> NORTHFIELD, <i>Charles</i> | Cleaner | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|
| | 132 | LINDSEY, <i>Charles</i> INCE <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> TUCK, <i>George</i> | Fireman | |
| | | | | |
| | 148 | MANSFIELD, <i>Walter</i> | Permanent Way carpenter | Romsey side of the Bridge |
| | | | | |
| Census 1901 | 124 | HOLDICK, <i>Fredk</i> , (widower), <i>Ada M</i> , <i>Florence</i> , <i>Lillian</i> (daughters) <i>Percy</i> (son) | Station Master GER | Misspelling of Holdich? |
| | 126 | TYLER, <i>James</i> (married), <i>Charlotte E</i> (wife), <i>Millicent G</i> (daughter) <i>Victor G</i> (son) TYLER, <i>William Jas T</i> (son) DALLEN, <i>Rebecca</i> | Permanent Way Inspector Assistant time keeper General domestic servant | |
| | 128 | DALDING (widow) | GER ladies' attendant | Misspelling Daldrey |
| | 128 | SAVILL, <i>Stanley</i> (married), <i>Martha</i> (wife), <i>Jessie</i> (daughter) | Railway porter | |
| | 130 | FRENCH, <i>Charles</i> (married), <i>Annie</i> (wife), <i>Hilda</i> (daughter), <i>Ernest</i> (son), <i>Mannie</i> , <i>Eva</i> , <i>Mable</i> , <i>Edith</i> , <i>Agatha</i> (daughters) SNELLING, <i>May</i> (visitor) | Shunter | |
| | 130 | NORTHFIELD, <i>Charles</i> (married) <i>Elling</i> (wife), <i>Nellie</i> (daughter), <i>Fred</i> , <i>Alfred</i> , <i>Wilfred</i> , <i>Hubert</i> , <i>Arthur</i> (sons) | Railway guard | |
| | 132 | INCE, <i>John</i> (married), <i>Sarah</i> (wife), <i>Fredk J</i> (son), <i>Albert</i> (son), <i>Edith</i> (daughter) | Platelay's labourer | |
| | 132 | LINDSEAY, <i>Charles</i> (married), <i>Fanny</i> (wife), <i>William</i> , <i>Fredk. C</i> , <i>Ernest</i> , <i>Arthur</i> (sons) | Platelay's labourer | |
| | 134 | RIGG, E H G (married), <i>Rachel</i> (wife), <i>Dorris E</i> (daughter) | GER telegraph wireman | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Eliza</i> (widow), <i>Edith</i> (daughter), <i>Harry</i> (son) CHAPMAN, <i>Francis</i> (son) CHAPMAN, <i>Alice</i> CHAPMAN, <i>Arthur</i> | Engine driver Nurse domestic Railway telegraphist | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1901 | | | | |
| | 124 Morcombe House | HOLDICH, <i>Frederick</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER. <i>James</i> | Inspector Permanent Way GER | Cottages not named as such |
| | 128 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs S</i> SAVILLE, <i>S</i> | Dressmaker GER porter | |
| | 130 | FRENCH, <i>S</i> | Shunter | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |

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|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> RIGG, E H J | Wireman | |
| | | | | |
| | 148 | MANSFIELD, Walter | Permanent Way carpenter | Romsey side of the Bridge |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1904 | 124 Morcombe House | HOLDICH, <i>Frederick</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER, <i>James</i> | Inspector Permanent Way GER | |
| | 128 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs S</i> SAVILLE, <i>S</i> | Dressmaker GER porter | |
| | 130 | <i>Unoccupied</i> | | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> RIGG, E H J | Wireman | |
| | | | | |
| | 148 | MANSFIELD, <i>Walter</i> | Permanent Way carpenter | Romsey side of the Bridge |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1907 | 124 Morcombe House | HOLDICH, <i>Frederick</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER, <i>James</i> | Inspector Permanent Way GER | |
| | 128 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs S</i> POMFRET, <i>Charles</i> | Dressmaker Railway crossing keeper | |
| | 130 | LEA, <i>Thomas George</i> LEA, <i>Harry Edwards</i> | Railway signal fitter Clerk | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> WARNER, <i>Walter</i> | Platelay | |
| | | | | |
| Dale's 1909- 10 | | Names as above all listed | | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1910 | 124 Morcombe House | HOLDICH, <i>Frederick</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER, <i>James</i> | Inspector Permanent Way GER | |
| | 128 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs S</i> | | |
| | 130 | | | |
| | 132 | | | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs E</i> WARNER, <i>Walter</i> | Platelay | |
| | | | | |
| 1911 Census | 124 Mill Rd Morcombe House | HOLDICH, <i>Frederick</i> (widower) 64 HOLDICH, <i>Devon</i> (son) 31 HOLDICH, <i>Lilian</i> (daughter) | Railway Station Master Railway clerk Housekeeper | 11 rooms |
| | 126 | TYLER, <i>James 60, Charlotte Ethel</i> (wife) 56 | Permanent Way Inspector | 8 rooms |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| | | TYLER, <i>Millicent Gladys</i> 20 TYLER. <i>George Victor</i> 18 HOWARD, <i>Lucy</i> | Worker at home Apprentice p chemist General servant domestic | |
| | 128 | POMFRET, <i>Charles</i> 63, <i>Mary Ann</i> 58 | Railway crossing keeper Railway Company | 4 rooms. ? Which railway crossing? |
| | 128 | EASTEN, <i>Alfred</i> 51 DALDREY, <i>Sarah Ann</i> 72 | Bricklayer Railway Co. | 4 rooms |
| | 130 | BROWN, <i>Edward</i> 28, <i>Annie M J</i> (wife), 29, <i>Russell</i> 5, <i>William</i> 3, <i>Winifred</i> 1. | Platelayer Railway Co. | 4 rooms |
| | 130 | CHAPMAN, <i>Ernest Frederick</i> 23 CHAPMAN <i>Lucy Grace</i> (wife) 25, <i>Ruth Elizabeth</i> 1. | Railway lampman At home | 4 rooms |
| | 132 | LINSEAY (<i>sic</i>) <i>Charles</i> 46, <i>Fanny</i> (wife) 43, <i>Ernest</i> 16, <i>Arthur</i> 13 LINSEAY, <i>Frederick Charles</i> (oldest son) 19 | Foreman Pplatelayer Railway Co. Mechanic's labourer Railway Co. | 4 rooms |
| | 132 | INCE, <i>John</i> 55, <i>Sarah</i> (wife) 52 INCE, <i>Albert</i> (son) 23 INCE, <i>Edith</i> (son) 18 | Platelayer GER Railway Engine Cleaner Dressmaker | 4 rooms |
| | 134 | WARNER, <i>Walter</i> 56, <i>Anglena (sic)</i> (wife) 51 WARNER, <i>Herbert</i> (son) 22 | Railway labourer GER Rlwy Shop porter | 4 rooms |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Eliza</i> (widow) 66 NORFIELD, <i>Elizabeth</i> (sister in law) (widow) 70 | None None | 4 rooms |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1911 | 124 Morcombe House | ABLITT, <i>J</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER. <i>James</i> | Inspector Permanent Way GER | |
| | 128 | DALDREY, <i>Mrs S</i> POMFRET, <i>Charles</i> | Railway crossing keeper | |
| | 130 | BROWN, <i>Edward</i> CHAPMAN, <i>Ernest</i> | Railway signal fitter Clerk | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelayer Platelayer | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> WARNER, <i>Walter</i> | Platelayer | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1912 | 124 Morcombe House | ABLITT, <i>J</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER. <i>James</i> | Permanent Way GER | |
| | 128 | Smith, <i>Charles</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | Acting fireman | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
| | 130 | BROWN, <i>Edward</i> JORDAN, <i>William</i> | Platelay Acting fireman | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> WARNER, <i>Walter</i> | Platelay | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1913 | 124 Morcombe House | ABLITT, <i>J</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER, <i>James</i> | Permanent Way GER | |
| | 128 | SALISBURY <i>John</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | Cleaner GER | |
| | 130 | BROWN, <i>Edward</i> JORDAN, <i>William</i> | Platelay Acting fireman | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> RUFNELL, <i>John</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1914 | 124 Morcombe House | ABLITT, <i>J</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | TYLER, <i>James</i> | Inspector Permanent Way GER | |
| | 128 | SALISBURY <i>John</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | Cleaner GER | |
| | 130 | BROWN, <i>Edward</i> HOUCHIN, <i>Frederick</i> | Platelay | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> RUFFLES <i>John</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1915 | 124 Morcombe House | RANDALL, <i>F G</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T.M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | SALISBURY <i>John</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | Cleaner GER | |
| | 130 | BROWN, <i>Edward</i> COOK, <i>Mrs</i> | Platelay | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> RUFFLES <i>John</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1916-17 | 124 Morcombe House | RANDALL, <i>F G</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | GER employee | |
| | 130 | RICHMOND, <i>Frank</i> BADCOCK, <i>Henry</i> | Driver Platelay | |

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| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> INCE, <i>John</i> | Platelay Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> RUFFLES <i>John</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1919-20 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | GER employee | |
| | 130 | KIRKBY, <i>Horace</i> BADCOCK, <i>Henry</i> | GER Platelay | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> | Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1920-21 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | GER employee | |
| | 130 | KIRKBY, <i>Horace</i> BADCOCK, <i>Henry</i> | GER Platelay | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> | Platelay | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1922-23 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | GER employee | |
| | 130 | HARRIS, <i>Percy</i> BADCOCK, <i>Henry</i> | | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> CHALLICE, <i>Geo</i> | Platelay Platelay GER | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1923-24 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | GER employee | |
| | 130 | HARRIS, <i>Percy</i> BADCOCK, <i>H C</i> | | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> CHALLICE, <i>Geo</i> | Platelay Platelay GER | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's | 124 | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master GER | |

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| 1924-25 | Morcombe House | | | |
| | 126 | POHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> POMFRET, <i>Mrs</i> | GER Employee | |
| | 130 | HARRIS, <i>Percy</i> BADCOCK, <i>Henry</i> | Wheeltapper | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> CHALLICE, <i>Geo</i> | Platelay Platelay GER | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1925-26 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> CHARLES, <i>A H T</i> | GER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | HARRIS, <i>Percy</i> BADCOCK, <i>Henry</i> | Wheeltapper | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> CHALLICE, <i>Geo</i> | Platelay Platelay GER | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1926-27 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> CHARLES, <i>A H T</i> | GER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | HARRIS, <i>Percy</i> BADCOCK, <i>Henry</i> | Wheeltapper | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> CHALLICE, <i>Geo</i> | Platelay Platelay GER | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1927-28 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master GER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk GER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> CHARLES, <i>A H T</i> | GER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | HARRIS, <i>Percy</i> BADCOCK, <i>Henry</i> | Wheeltapper | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> WARD, <i>Wm C</i> | Platelay Clerk LNER | |
| | 134 | CHAPMAN, <i>Mrs Emma</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelay GER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1929-30 | 124 MH | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master LNER | |
| | 126 | PHILLIPS, <i>T M</i> | Clerk LNER | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> CHARLES, <i>A H T</i> | LNER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | KEEN, <i>William</i> | LNER servant | |

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| | | BADCOCK, <i>H C</i> | | |
| | 132 | LINDSAY, <i>Charles</i> | Platelayer | |
| | 134 | GOODMAN, <i>F P</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | Platelayer LNER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1930-31 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master LNER | |
| | 126 | CHALLIS, <i>A E</i> GRIMSHAW, <i>H</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> CHARLES, <i>A H T</i> | LNER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | KEEN, <i>William</i> SAUNDERS, <i>A W</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 132 | WARD, <i>Wm C</i> HAWES, <i>H W</i> | Clerk LNER LNER servant | |
| | 134 | SMITH, <i>A</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | LNER fireman Platelayer LNER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1932-32 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master LNER | |
| | 126 | CHALLIS, <i>A E</i> GRIMSHAW, <i>H</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> CHARLES, <i>A H T</i> | LNER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | KEEN, <i>William</i> SAUNDERS, <i>A W</i> | LNER servant Platelayer | |
| | 132 | WARD, <i>Wm C</i> HAWES, <i>H W</i> | Clerk LNER LNER servant | |
| | 134 | SMITH, <i>A</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | LNER fireman Platelayer LNER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1932-33 | 124 Morcombe House | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master LNER | |
| | 126 | CHALLIS, <i>A E</i> GRIMSHAW, <i>H</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> CHARLES, <i>A H T</i> | LNER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | DAWSON, <i>F W</i> SAUNDERS, <i>A.W.</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 132 | PENDLE HAWES, <i>H W</i> | Clerk LNER LNER servant | |
| | 134 | SMITH, <i>A</i> DARLING, <i>George</i> | LNER fireman Platelayer LNER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1933-34 | 124 MH | PEACOCKE, <i>A</i> | Station Master LNER | |
| | 126 | CHALLIS, <i>A E</i> GRIMSHAW, <i>H</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, <i>Sidney</i> CURTIS, <i>Percy</i> | LNER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | DAWSON, <i>F W</i> | LNER Servant | |

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| | | SAUNDERS, A W | Platelay | |
| | 132 | PENDLE HAWES, H W | Clerk LNER LNER servant | |
| | 134 | SMITH, A DARLING, George | LNER fireman Platelay LNER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1934-35 | 124 MH | PEACOCKE, A | Station Master LNER | |
| | 126 | CHALLIS, A E GRIMSHAW, H | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, Sidney CURTIS, Percy | LNER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | WILSON, Harry SAUNDERS, A W | LNER servant Platelay | |
| | 132 | PARKER, Cyril HAWES, H W | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 134 | BROWN, F DARLING, George | LNER servant Platelay LNER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1935-36 | 124. MH | WRIGHT, S N | Stationmaster. LNER | |
| | 126 | WINCH, H G L HOLDERNESS, R | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | THOMPSON, Sidney CURTISS, Percy | LNER employee LNER servant | |
| | 130 | WILSON, Harry SAUNDERS, A W | LNER servant Platelay LNER | |
| | 132 | PARKER, Cyril PIGDEN, B | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 134 | BEAUMONT, P A DARLING, George | LNER servant Platelay LNER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1936-37 | 124. Morcombe House | WRIGHT, S N | Stationmaster. LNER | |
| | 126 | WINCH, H G L HOLDERNESS, R | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | CHALLIS, C CURTISS, Percy | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 130 | SAUNDERS, A W | Platelay LNER | |
| | 132 | ANDREWS, W N PIGDEN, B | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 134 | DARLEY, George | Platelay LNER | |
| | | | | |
| Spalding's 1937-38 | 124. Morcombe House | Vacant | | |
| | 126 | WINCH, H G L DARLEY, R | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | CHALLIS, C CURTISS, Percy | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 130 | SAUNDERS, A W GODDARD, R H | Platelay LNER LNER servant | |
| | 132 | ANDREWS, W N PIGDEN, B | LNER servant LNER servant | |

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| | 134 | DARLEY, <i>George</i> ALLSOP, <i>J E</i> | Platelayer LNER Musician | |
| Spalding's 1938-39 | 124. MH | DUNCAN, <i>J J</i> | | <i>Occupation not listed Morcombe House still named</i> |
| | 126 | WINCH, <i>H G L</i> DARLEY, <i>R</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 128 | CHALLIS, <i>C</i> CURTISS, <i>Percy</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 130 | SAUNDERS, <i>A W</i> SIMKIN, <i>H</i> | Platelayer LNER LNER servant | |
| | 132 | GARNER, <i>H L</i> PIGDEN, <i>B.</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 134 | DARLEY, <i>George</i> ALLSOP, <i>J E</i> | Platelayer LNER Hairdresser | |
| Spalding's 1939-40 | 124. Morcombe House | AYERS, <i>F</i> | <i>Occupation not listed.</i> | |
| | 126 | WINCH, <i>H G L</i> PAIGE, <i>D V</i> | LNER servant LNER clerk | |
| | 128 | CHALLIS, <i>C</i> CURTISS, <i>Percy</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 130 | SAUNDERS, <i>A W</i> SIMKIN, <i>H</i> | Platelayer LNER LNER servant | |
| | 132 | GARNER, <i>H L</i> PIGDEN, <i>B</i> | LNER servant LNER servant | |
| | 134 | DARLEY, <i>George</i> ALLSOP, <i>J E</i> | Platelayer LNER Hairdresser | |
| Kelly's 1948 | | | | <i>No mention</i> |
| | 124 | STALLEY, <i>Albt</i> | | |
| Kelly's 1951 | 124 | STALLEY, <i>Albt</i> | | |
| | 126 | WINCH, <i>Ronald L</i> | | |
| | 126 | JAMES, <i>Alfd</i> | | |
| | 128 | CHALLIS, <i>Chas A</i> | | |
| | 128 | CURTIS, <i>Percy R</i> | | |
| | 130 | <i>no mention</i> | | |
| | 132 | <i>no menton</i> | | |
| | 134 | SIMPSON, <i>Herbt S</i> | | |
| Kelly's 1953 | 124 | STALLEY, <i>Albt</i> | | |
| | 126 | WINCH, <i>Ronald L</i> | | |
| | 126 | JAMES, <i>Alfd</i> | | |
| | 128 | LORD, <i>Jas Rt</i> | | |
| | 128 | CURTIS, <i>Percy R</i> | | |
| | 130a | CARRINGTON, <i>Percy</i> | | |
| | 130 | DAY, <i>Hy, Geo</i> | | |
| | 132a | CLAYTON, <i>Wright</i> | | |
| | 132 | BULLARD, <i>Hubert S</i> | | |
| | 134 | BARRETT, <i>Milton A</i> | | |
| | 134a | LANE, <i>Wm Harry</i> | | |

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| Kelly's 1955 | 124 | STALLEY, <i>Albt</i> | | |
| | 126 | TABOR, <i>Regnld</i> | | |
| | 126 | JAMES, <i>Alfd</i> | | |
| | 128 | LORD, <i>Jas Rt</i> | | |
| | 128 | CURTIS, <i>Percy R</i> | | |
| | 130a | CARRINGTON, <i>Percy</i> | | |
| | 130 | DAY, <i>Hy Geo</i> | | |
| | 132a | CLAYTON, <i>Wright</i> | | |
| | 132 | HALL, <i>Regnld</i> | | |
| | 134 | NORMAN, <i>Albt A</i> | | |
| | 134a | LANE, <i>Wm Harry</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1957 | 124 | STALLEY, <i>Albt</i> | | |
| | 126 | TABOR, <i>Regnld</i> | | |
| | 126 | JAMES, <i>Alfd</i> | | |
| | 128 | LORD, <i>Jas Rt</i> | | |
| | 128 | CURTIS, <i>Percy R</i> | | |
| | 130a | HORNER, <i>Bernard</i> | | |
| | 130 | DAY, <i>Hy Geo</i> | | |
| | 132a | CLAYTON, <i>Wright</i> | | |
| | 132 | SAMUEL, <i>Harry</i> | | |
| | 134 | NORMANS, <i>Albt A</i> | | |
| | 134a | LANE, <i>Wm Harry</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1960 | 124 | STALLEY, <i>Albt</i> | | |
| | 126 | TABOR, <i>Regnld</i> | | |
| | 126 | JAMES, <i>Alfd</i> | | |
| | 128 | MOORE, <i>Stanley</i> | | |
| | 128 | KING, <i>Derek A</i> | | |
| | 130a | HORNER, <i>Bernard</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132a | CLAYTON, <i>Wright</i> | | |
| | 132 | MCMURDIE, <i>Rt</i> | | |
| | 134 | NORMANS, <i>Albt A</i> | | |
| | 134a | KING, <i>Terence</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1962 | 124 | <i>Listed, but unoccupied</i> | | |
| | 126a | CRAWLEY, <i>Samuel</i> | | |
| | 126 | JAMES, <i>Alfd</i> | | |
| | 128 | KING, <i>Derek A</i> | | |
| | 128 | CURTIS, <i>Percy R</i> | | |
| | 130a | HORNER, <i>Bernard</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132a | CLAYTON, <i>Wright</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 134 | NORMANS, <i>Albt A</i> | | |
| | 134a | KING, <i>Terence</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1964 | 124 | <i>Listed, but unoccupied</i> | | |
| | 126a | CRAWLEY, <i>Samuel</i> | | |
| | 126 | JAMES, <i>Alfd</i> | | |
| | 128 | KING, <i>Derek A</i> | | |
| | 128 | CURTIS, <i>Percy R</i> | | |
| | 130a | HORNER, <i>Bernard</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132a | CLAYTON, <i>Wright</i> | | |

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| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 134 | NORMANS, <i>Albt A</i> | | |
| | 134a | KING, <i>Terrence</i> | | |
| | 134a | KING, <i>Terrence</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1965-66 | | | | <i>No mention of 124</i> |
| | 126a | MARSHALL, <i>Herbt</i> | | |
| | 126 | GARCIA, <i>Camaen</i> | | |
| | 128 | WARD, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 128 | GOTOBED, <i>Cyril</i> | | |
| | 130a | HORNER, <i>Bernard</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132a | CLAYTON, <i>Wright</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 134 | WOODRUFFE, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 134a | KING, <i>Terrence</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1967 | 126a | CHIVERS, <i>Fras</i> | | |
| | 126 | GARCIA, <i>Carmen</i> | | |
| | 128 | WARD, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 128 | GOTOBED, <i>Cyril</i> | | |
| | 130a | HORNER, <i>Bernard</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132a | CLAYTON, <i>Wright</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 134 | WOODRUFFE, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 134a | KING, <i>Terrence</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1968 | 126a | RAVEN, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 126 | GARCIA, <i>Carmen</i> | | |
| | 128 FLAT 2 | WILKINSON, <i>Ronald</i> | | |
| | 128 | GOTOBED, <i>Cyril</i> | | |
| | 130a | HORNER, <i>Bernard</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 132 | JARROLD, <i>M</i> | | |
| | 134 | HALLIDAY, <i>Wm</i> | | |
| | 134a | KING, <i>Terrence</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1969 | 126a | RAVEN, <i>DERRICK</i> | | |
| | 126 | GARCIA, <i>Carmen</i> | | |
| | 128 FLAT 2 | WILKINSON, <i>RONALD</i> | | |
| | 128 | GOTOBED, <i>Cyril</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 132 | JARROLD, <i>M</i> | | |
| | 134 | | | <i>Listed but unoccupied</i> |
| | 134a | | | <i>Listed but unoccupied</i> |
| Kelly's 1970 | | | | |

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| | 126a | RAVEN, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 126 | GARCIA, <i>Carmen</i> | | |
| | 128 FLAT 2 | WILKINSON, <i>Ronald</i> | | |
| | 128 | GOTOBED, <i>Cyril</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 132 | JARROLD, <i>M</i> | | |
| | 134 | | | <i>Listed but unoccupied</i> |
| | 134a | ASHLEY, <i>Kenneth</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1971 | 126a | RAVEN, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 126 | GARCIA, <i>Carmen</i> | | |
| | 128 FLAT 2 | HARBEN, <i>Terence</i> | | |
| | 128 | GOTOBED, <i>Cyril</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 132 | JARROLD, <i>M</i> | | |
| | 134a | ASHLEY, <i>Kenneth</i> | | |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1972 | 126a | RAVEN, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 126 | GARCIA, <i>Carmen</i> | | |
| | 128 FLAT 2 | HARBEN, <i>Terence</i> | | |
| | 128 | GOTOBED, <i>Cyril</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 132 | JARROLD, <i>M</i> | | |
| | 134a | | | <i>Listed but unoccupied</i> |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1973 | 126a | RAVEN, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 126 | GARCIA, <i>Carmen</i> | | |
| | 128 FLAT 2 | HARBEN, <i>Terence</i> | | |
| | 128 | GOTOBED, <i>Cyril</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 132 | JARROLD, <i>M</i> | | |
| | 134 | | | <i>Not mentioned at all</i> |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1974 | 126 | GINLEY, <i>John</i> | | |
| | 126 a | RAVEN, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 128 Flat 1 | WILKIN, <i>J</i> | | |
| | 128 Flat 2 | WILKS, <i>J</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 132 | JARROLD, <i>M</i> | | |
| | 134 | | | <i>Not mentioned at all</i> |
| | | | | |
| Kelly's 1975 | 126 | GINLEY, <i>John</i> | | |

| | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| | 126 a | RAVEN, <i>Derrick</i> | | |
| | 128 Flat 1 | MOULE, <i>Graham</i> | | |
| | 128 Flat 2 | BRISTOW, <i>S</i> | | |
| | 130 | BOND, <i>Fred</i> | | |
| | 130 | MARTIN, <i>Frank</i> | | |
| | 132 | DUNHAM, <i>Willis</i> | | |
| | 132 | JARROLD, <i>M</i> | | |
| | 134 | | | <i>Not mentioned at all</i> |

APPENDIX II

Report of the funeral of John Lake

(‘Local funerals: Mr J H Lake’, *Cambridge Daily News*, 5 February 1941, p. 2)

The funeral of Mr John Horatio Lake of 48 Thoday Street, Cambridge, who died on Thursday, took place at St Philip’s Church on Monday. The service was conducted by the Rev A.G.L. Hunt assisted by the Rev. E.C. Essex (Vicar of Great St Mary’s Church).

The immediate mourners were Mrs. Lake (widow), Mr. T.E. Lake and Mr. [?]. Lake (brothers), Mrs. M. Baldwin and Mrs. Bert Pugh (sisters) and Mr. T.E. Lake (sisters in law) Mr. and Mrs. J. Newman (brother and sister in law), Mr. and Mrs. S.G.J. Thompson (brother and sister in law), Mrs. A Hart, Mr. Bert Holden. There was also a large congregation of friends and neighbours in the church, amongst whom were Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Board, Spr. Board, Mrs. H. Fromantle, Mr. Garraway, Mrs. Hodge, Mrs. G. Richardson, Mr. A. Smith, Mrs. C. Smith, Mrs. Gathrop, Mrs. Gauston, Mrs. Darnell, Mrs. Patten, Mr. and Mrs. Hodge, Mrs. Miller, Mr. B. Hobbs, Mrs. Clements. Mrs. Haines, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Collen, Mrs. F. Petton, Mrs. Walker, Mr. Harding (Churchwarden), Mrs. Few (representing Alderman Few), Mr. and Mrs. Livermore, Mrs. Barringer, Mrs. Reynolds, Mrs Cowell, Mrs. Stepwood, Mr. Algar, Cpl. Clenshaw (representing March Loco), Mrs. Simpson, Mrs. Naylor, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. G. Clements, Inspector Docking LNER (representing 5th Suffolk Regiment), Mr. Rawlinson, Mr. A Clark, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Ridgewell, Mrs. Charge, Mrs. Wharton, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. S.V. Barton, Mrs. T.J Ellis. Mrs. Foremen, Mrs. Jakes, Mr. B. Parker, Mr. B. Adamson, Mrs. Fletcher, Mr. A. H. Wright, Mr. H. Dean, Mr. Adamson (representing Shed Staff LNER).

Beautiful wreaths and floral tributes were received from the following: To the dearest of husbands and daddies from his heart broken wife and family: Adrian and Ivor, Ted, Louie and Sonnie; Jim, wife and family, Maggie, Joe and family, May, Albert and family, Sis, Laura, Morrice and Gladys, Maud’s sister; Annie, Sid, Norman and Victor, Nellie, Bert, Bill and children Ronnie and Norman; Joan, Bert, Sheila and Brian (Scotland) and Grand-dad (Cambridge); Phyllis, Roy and Josephine (Downham Market), Kate and Angy, Bert, Violet and Raymond; All at Houghton: Edie , Bob and children; Mr. and Mrs. C. Bord, and Basil; Mrs. Reynolds and family; 30, 34, 36, 40 and 41, Thoday Street, Mr. and Mrs. L. Smith, 174 Ross Street; the NUR, Mr. and Mrs. Cowell and Elsie.

The internment took place in the family grave in Mill Road Cemetery. The funeral arrangements were carried out by the Cambridge and District Co-operative Society Ltd.

Mrs Lake and family tender sincere thanks for all the kind enquiries, messages of sympathy and for the beautiful flowers.

APPENDIX III : INTERVIEW NOTES:

(a) Conversation with Victor Challis (1919–)

[interviewed informally by Caro Wilson, 18 May 2015]



Figure 89 – Victor Challis (Caro Wilson, 2015)

Early Life and Employment

Born in 91 Burnside on 19 October 1919, at home I was one of ten children – there was a break in the middle because Dad was away in the war.

Went to Romsey Junior School, then passed to the Central School after the 11-plus. And if you were good enough you stayed an extra year. The leaving age was 14 for most, but for us it was 15. And it was in Parkside, and our football and sports were all on Parker's Piece.

Stanley Wright was Station Master for years and years and I was called Victor Stanley. My dad was gassed in the First World War and came home to be a light-weight guard because of his breathing. He was forever ill. Stanley Wright was the Station Master who saw him come home from the army from there, and my father said 'I've got a baby son and I'm going to call him after

you', so I was called Victor (because we won the war) Stanley Challis. He was the Station Master when I got appointed 14 years later. [...] He certainly gave me my job because I came on in 1935.

You had a written exam. One of the questions was 'What is the Capital of Norway?'. The youngsters who went for jobs on the railway used to say 'That's Oslo, That's Oslo'. Name the county town of Essex – and then there were sums to do as well, arithmetic and you had to show some signs of intelligence to be appointed. County town of Essex isn't in everyone's knowledge. You went up to the District Superintendent's office in the corner of the station yard, and you sat in a little room and had this paper to fill in.

In 1935, aged 15 on November 9th (I remember the date well) I got a job on LNER as what they called a Train Register Lad in North Signal box. I learned from the signalman quite a lot about railway rules and regulations. We were there to answer the telephone and register the passage of all trains, but not to touch any working parts.

I got paid 15 shillings for a 48 hour week: 10 bob for mum, five bob for me, and you could buy a tailor-made suit for 4 quid in those days. So when I saved my five bobs up I got a nice suit. Money was bad.

A guard's wage was 65 shillings, driver's wages were 90 shillings in those fa-off days. Signalman's classification determined what wage he would be on. He'd be on 75 shillings in North box, something like that.

When I was 20, I was conscripted into the Royal Engineers to a place called Martinique Barracks. I became a sergeant and was posted overseas at the beginning of 1944 to Naples (Napoli). And we de-mobbed in Austria in February 1946 having served exactly six years.

Back to the railway, signalman at Coldham Lane for four years, signal at Chesterton Junction for six years, appointed to a controller position in about 1960 in the controller office at Cambridge Station, and rose through the ranks to become a Deputy Chief Controller when I retired in 1982.

Six or seven controllers sat with headphones and you could map the passage of all trains, dealt with all incidents like level crossings being smashed or trains derailed. It was the central point for the boss.

I enjoyed the controller job most but I also spent time on union service, so for a period of six years I was often away from work with boss's permission as you were elected. I used to love that.

Signal Boxes

Signal Box North was roughly over there [*pointing*]. Times I've stood in that end window and looked at the girls on Mill Road Bridge when I was about 16!

That [building by Railway Cottages] was what we called 'The Works'. That's where they could make anything: level-crossing gates, metal work, anything. They came down to the tracks from the other side of the road and walked under the bridge to get there.

Signal boxes were all classified. Special Class, Class 1, Class 2. Cambridge North was Special A, Cambridge South was Special B. You watched the vacancy list every week and applied for promotion, but it was really length of service that counted.

The change that affected me most was to see all the signal boxes which seemed such an important part of the safety of the railway all put under one roof in what I called the 'Tabernacle', which was what it looked like. All that lot from Ely to Bishops Stortford, Cambridge to Royston, Cambridge to Dullingham, all under one roof. — I loved the job.

Railway Cottages

Railway Servants could rent accommodation. And Romsey Town was a real Railway town. — You see the doors are wider than usual. It seemed there were two homes through one front door, each with an upstairs and downstairs.

Uncle Alf and Aunt Kate lived here somewhere in the middle. [*No. 128 has an A E Challis in 1930-*]. Uncle Alf was Secretary of the Cambridge Railway Silver Prize Band. They once won a prize at the Crystal Palace. They practised every Sunday morning in a specially built building called the Band Room down by the tracks and played at weddings and everywhere. When Cambridge was playing at Cambridge Town they marched up and down, and I used to feel very sorry for Uncle Alf when it was muddy and the mud went all over his shiny boots. Sometimes they used to play standing still when it was very busy. He played not the biggest instrument, the one that went over your head, but the second biggest.

They moved to 144 on the other side of the bridge because that had more space. [Alfred John Challis Goods Guard lived in 144 Measham Terrace from 1929 to 1957.] Charlie Challis was my cousin, Alf's son. He was a motor mechanic with the railway [C. Challis, LNER servant, lived in No. 128 from 1936 to 1940.]

I knew George Darley. He was a platelayer – that was track work, upkeep of the railway track, knocking things that had to be knocked in. It dates from Victorian days when plates were used to lay the tracks.

I knew Arthur Saunders, they called him Punch Saunders. I also knew Herbert Simpkins. His son Robin told me he was a baby in arms when the bridge was bombed and his mother sat with him in her arms in a cupboard under the stairs. [This story was later amended after VC had spoken to Robin Simpkins; Mrs Simpkins was in the house that got bombed and had a three-year-old son. She was expecting Robin and they hid in the cupboard under the stairs. Mr Simpkins came home from a night shift at 4 a.m. and met a policeman who asked where he was going. He said 'I'm going home.' The policeman said 'There is no home.' Roger Simpkins, brother of Robin has now spoken to Caro Wilson of MRHP.]

I knew Harry and Ruby Day.

Morcombe House

The Station Master's house was in that patch there. God knows what happened to it, but it was there when I got out of the army I'm certain it was. Mr Peacock lived there and various other Station Masters. Stanley Wright lived there and was the last Station Master there.

It was a bit bigger than the others. Seem to think it had its own garden. I remember when I was a boy, one of the porters used to go to chop the wood up for the Station Master's wife to light the fire with. It was his right as the station master to do what he wanted with his own staff. I don't think it was damaged in the war. They must just have knocked it down.

Bombing

I came home on leave in the war and saw it then. What a mess it was! Yet Cambridge got off fairly well compared to Coventry and other places.

I knew a man who lost an arm in the Hills Road bomb, but he still worked as a butcher and did all the butchering with just the one arm.

My wife worked at Chivers and once she and another girl were on a balcony and there was this German plane coming straight at them. They hadn't got the sense to get inside.

[*Later from Muriel:*] No, it didn't shoot, but it came straight past us down this sort of entrance heading for the canteen, and I could see the pilot ever so clearly. We were scared but the siren had gone; if anything had happened that would have been our fault.

Marriage

I married a Cambridge girl; we grew up together. They lived in Hobart Road and then Green End Road, and when I was eight or nine I played there. I knew her as a little dark-eyed girl

and I think it was her eyes that first attracted me. She wrote to me during the war. We became engaged and got married in 1943 in St George's Church in Milton Road.

Bath House

Eddie or Ted Ray was in my class at school. His mother ran the Bath House for years and years. His father was wounded in the head in the First World War; he used to come out sometimes in his apron; probably all he could do then. One of my brothers went there once a week and she'd give us soap and towels; only cost about a tanner.

(b) Conversation with Eric Leeke

Date of birth : 3 March 1934

[Interviewed informally by Caro Wilson. September 3rd 2015]



Figure 90 – Eric Leeke (Caro Wilson, 2015)

Eric Leeke lived in 37 Great Eastern Street until he moved out when he got married. His parents lived there for some years afterwards until they moved to Cherry Hinton. He worked in the Accounts office with the railway and remembers the Station Master, then R A Taylor [Station Master 1948–54, who seems never to have lived in Morcombe House]. At a later date he worked as a clerk with Whitbreads in Dales Brewery.

'We moved to Gt Eastern St, No. 37, when I was two or three. On the day of the Mill Road bombing, we came out of school in Ross Street, my brother Tony and I. We ran all the way home and on the way the air raid siren went. We looked down the railway track and there was a German plane, and he came up the line dropping bombs. We ran into the house and hid under the stair with our mum as you did in those days.

One of the bombs blew a great big hole on the side of the bridge, it took out several up-rights, and there was a large iron piece put in the gap that had been left to stop people jumping down on to the cottages which were very badly damaged. One man was killed who was on the bridge. I heard it was a soldier.

You didn't think much about it. We almost took it for granted: The siren went, you hid and hoped for the best and it was all part of life.

The bomb blew out the windows in our house. We'd just had the decorators in to repair the damage caused by the previous bombing and then the Great Eastern Street bomb [29 August 1941] took Nos 31, 33 and 35 and blew them all out again. I remember the ceiling fell

in and God knows what else happened . We found the gas stove on the railway track. There were two people killed from No. 33 – a young lad and his grandmother. We had to move out then and went to live with my grandmother in Hope Street. I don't know who paid for it all to get repaired; I don't know where the money to live on came from.

Dad had been called up by then. We were playing in the street when he finally came home and we didn't recognize him; Mum had to call us in to meet him.'

[On being shown some photographs:]

[Photograph 1:] I was in the Boys Brigade. We practised in the Covent Garden Hall and the boss was George Mansfield. We were the St Barnabas First Cambridge Company.

[Photograph 2:] As children we used to sidle up by the cottages to get under the bridge to see what they had down there and to see where all the engines were in the engine sheds. I knew Barry Challis whose mum and dad lived there but never went in. I knew a painting foreman who worked there, Frank Drake: he had a painting workshop.

Mill Road was wonderful in those days. The Broadway was still fields and bits and pieces; so was Rustat Road.

(c) Conversation with Roger Simpkins

Date of birth: 6 May 1938

[interviewed informally together with his wife, Christine, by Caro Wilson on 26 June 2015]

My dad was Herbert Harold and my Mum's name was Edith Ann. Dad worked on the railway and that's how Dad got the house, I suppose, because they were railway houses. [According to the Spaldings Directory, the Simkin family – spelt without a 'p' or final 's' – lived in No. 130 Railway Cottages from 1938 to 1941, sharing the house with the Saunders family.]



Figure 91 – Roger Simpkins (Caro Wilson, 2015)

I was actually born in the cottages. I'm not sure which one. You know the middle bit that was rebuilt that was one of them. They was both bombed out. There was a funny arrangement because the front door served two houses – you went down the middle both sides. You come into a passage, it was like a bit connecting the two inside the house. I'm not sure which side we were. I was born in May. I remember Mum saying – she was lying in bed watching the snow come down – 'Now May: that is unusual'.

Dad was a messenger boy when he first started with the railway, but when they were bombed out he was a guard, a goods guard, during the war. Ours was actually knocked down because me and mum were

in it. I can't remember it because I was too young, but mum went under the stairs, we got under the stairs, and I suppose it all come down on us. They must have dug us out. I know she got a cut, I didn't get nothing, me, but Mum had a cut on her head. I suppose that was quite serious. I never heard anyone else was injured.

My dad come home – I dunno what time he come home – but he come home and there was this policeman standing I suppose where you go in, and this policeman said 'Where are you going?' and Dad said 'Well I'm going home'. This is what Dad told us, and the policeman said 'Well your house has been bombed'. What he said I dunno, but you can imagine I suppose!

I don't know where we was taken when we were dug out, but I know we went to live with an aunty who lived in Coldham's Lane, down by the bridge. Robin was born in February, most probably in Coldham's Lane with Aunty. There's four years between us. I don't know how long we lived there but the Council found us a house, 131 Hobart Road.

Mum used to talk about it a bit 'when I lived down there in the old house'. I should imagine it was a friendly place; she used to talk about Mrs Pigden; well if you shared the same front door you would talk to the woman next door, wouldn't you. I remember Mr Pigden, but I don't know what happened to them. And Mrs Saunders, that's a name I remember.

The houses were left derelict a long time, and where the bomb went through the bridge, where there was all the railings all up the side, there was this big old cast-iron metal plate bolted over it – to stop the people going through it I suppose. It was there for ages. I wasn't very old at the time. I don't know how many years they left it like that.

I went on to work with the railway. I went to the Engineers Department; I was a carpenter in the Engineers department. Uncle Charlie was chief works inspector, and he got me the job. He lived with us for some time in Hobart Road. There were several brothers and sisters. There was an Aunty who was oldest and then there was Uncle Charlie, and then there was Dad, and then Uncle Walter and Uncle Ted.

Dad liked gardening. I don't know if he had a garden in Railway Cottages but when we went to Hobart Road there was a darned great garden – that's why he had that one. He had a choice of houses and picked that one because of the garden.

I didn't stay with the railway all my life: I got made redundant with Dr Beeching. And then I went to the Council. That was a terrible job. I was only there not six months; that was carpentering round all the premises. And then this job came up in Belfast Linen and I applied for it and got it, and I was there ever since, thirty-six years there. Shop was down the town, St Andrews Street; I was down the wholesale, down the side of the bridge, that was where I worked. Met Christine there and bought this house when we got married, and we've been living here ever since, forty-five years we've been living here.

When the Cottages became a place for homeless people I used to deliver there. I worked for Belfast Linen and I used to deliver quite a bit there. I did several loads of stuff there. You used to go down the back and in through Devonshire Road.

We've always lived round this little bit. You could buy anything here: You didn't have to go down the town for anything – my mum never did. We used to have outings and parties from here and go round collecting the money for football and things. That was organised by a Catharine Street man, Willis, who's died now. I think it all carried on from the war when they had street parties and we had two outings a year. We used to go round and collect the

money. Mostly we used to go to Yarmouth once, and then it would be Hunstanton, and then it would be Hunstanton and Yarmouth.

Dad's mum used to live down Gwydir Street; that's the only bay window, not too far down there on the right, and Uncle Charlie built that.

[In later conversation:]

About 'The Works'

I was apprenticed there in 1953 when I was fifteen. There was a road under the bridge and I think there was a water tower. There was a blacksmith's shop and all sorts. There was a sheet metal shop, a machine shop, an office, a blacksmith's with four anvils, gas fitters, a store room, all sorts. Nevie Haglen was the blacksmith. I did my five years working there. I did my five years and then spent two years in the army; I joined as a cook and spent the last six months in Germany.

(d) Conversation with Robin Simpkins

Date of birth: 25 February 1942

[interviewed informally together with his wife, Sheila, by Caro Wilson on 9 July 2015]



Figure 92 – Robin Simpkins (Caro Wilson, 2015)

1. Railway Cottages

1 i. Passenger guards got recruited into the army, but goods guards were kept on. The old chap, my dad, used to say he came back from a work shift early in the morning about 3 or 4 a.m. and walked over the bridge from the Argyle Street side. He met a policeman who said 'So where are you going?', and he said 'I'm just going home – I live just over the other side of the bridge'. The policeman, said: 'I'm afraid your home isn't there any more'.

Apparently he always used to say to Mum 'If anything drops out of the sky get under that staircase'. Mum was very friendly with Mrs Saunders next door; she was unharmed and went to live in Glebe Road after the bombing.

The Pigdens went somewhere near Hobart Road. [Neither of his parents ever spoke about the bombing except for that.]

1 ii. Mum was born in 1910 and died in 1993 aged 83, and Dad was born in 1912 and died in 1978 aged 64. They met when Mum lived at Manea, and Dad would stop at Wimblington Station nearby, and they started to speak to each other. Grandad, Walter, was a platelayer who lived in Gwydir Street where Uncle Charlie made the bay window. There were six brothers and sisters: Beryl (who had three husbands), Charlie, Florence, Walter, Herbert and Ralph.

1 iii. Sheila [in response to Caro Wilson's comment that the design of Railway Cottages is rather grand]: 'The Railway did things properly; you should see the Station Master's house at Hinxley'.

1 iv. Sheila [on being asked about the squat]: There was a *Cambridge News* reporter posing as a down-and-out to find out what people on Mill Road thought about them. He stopped her [Mrs Simpkins senior] on her bike at the Broadway and said 'Where's the place for people like me', and she said 'Over there, young man,' pointing over the bridge to Railway Cottages.

2. Robin's Employment

2.i Worked with a building firm, G Cook & Sons, as a plasterer, working on the new hospital, and in most of the colleges including Wolfson College and the Engineering labs.

[Queens' College story:] Robin and a mate were told by the then Bursar to re-plaster a corridor ceiling, stripping off the old lath and plaster first. His mate was up the ladder, knocking off the old ceiling, and his hammer went right through into a space. He poked his head through and called down to Robin, 'Come and see this'. Robin went up and saw a small room with old paintings hanging on every wall. They went and told the Bursar, who at first didn't believe them. And then when he saw it he just said 'Oh, Oh, Oh'. He told them to strip off enough plaster to make a better access and then stop work for the day. They brewed some tea and as they were drinking it the Bursar brought Professor Someone who climbed up and said 'Well that one's a so-and-so, and that one's a who-do-you-think' (naming different artists), and told them they'd made the College many millions, and there were no records at all about this.

2.ii. The plastering job strained his arm irrevocably, and the doctor told him to give it up. So he changed his job, aged 48, and saw a man he knew up the railway. He had to do 'the idiot's test' and then go to Euston for a medical. He was accepted and did six months training as a guard. He worked as a guard and then as a revenue inspector and then again as a guard, going mainly from Stansted to Birmingham, though sometimes to Norwich and Peterborough.

Family Photos:



Figure 93 – Roger and Robin Simpkins as children (photograph courtesy of Robin Simpkins)



Figure 94 – Mr and Mrs Simpkins in Hunstanton with Robin (photograph courtesy of Robin Simpkins)



Figure 95 – Mr and Mrs Simpkins (detail from Figure 94)

(e) Conversation with John Coe

Part time Manager of Railway House

Date of birth: 29 October 1950

[Email material and discussion with Caro Wilson]



Figure 96 – Jon Coe (Caro Wilson, 2015)

During negotiations about the sale of Railway House it was taken over by squatters. Jon saw inside once at that time, and remembers that every other beam was taken out of the ceiling to burn in the fireplaces, which were then open and the only source of heating.

When CHS bought the property in 1986 [*sic*] it was first run by an independent trust: the Railway House Trust. Things went well for about a year but then ran into very serious difficulties with a bad manager and trustees who, though well intentioned, had little or no experience of managing a hostel for teenagers. It reached a stage where there were only three residents and one member

of staff, who was finding it impossible to cope: ‘Things were getting a bit out of hand.’

Jon, who had worked with Rev Allan Dupuy at Winston House, was approached and asked to help out and take over as manager. He was living at the Argyle Street Co-op at the time. He said ‘I’ll do it for three months, but I don’t want to do it long term as I want to run my own business’. He ended up staying for many years on a part time basis. The Railway House Trust handed over the management to the CHS and Jon moved into No. 128a, which had been designed as the manager’s flat. [That part of the building now has a different use.] He has happy memories of this flat and the building.

It was lovely having my own place and we also enjoyed the whole building. There was a garden with hanging baskets which was a great place for parties, and we had a four-seater red velvet sofa which I bought from Cheffins for £2 for the hostel because no one else had room for such a large bit of furniture.

There was a complete change of staff, and the number of residents was quickly built up again as the referrals were constant. Residents at this stage had complex needs, but responded well to Jon and the staff running the place as a therapeutic community along the lines he’d found effective in previous settings, with regular community meetings to sort out all issues and discuss personal problems. Residents were aware of the regime before they were admitted: ‘We have a meeting every Monday evening; if you can’t agree to make a meeting every Monday don’t move in’. The age range was 16–18 and there was a time limit for residents of about twelve or eighteen months after which they moved on to other residential settings. Things quickly got back on an even keel with lively residents and committed staff who all embraced the ethos of looking after each other.

Jon has happy memories of the place and his time there. ‘It was lively and fun and running well’. He spoke warmly of the support he got from members of the CHS staff. Once he was sure things were back on track he decided to go back to his original plan of starting a removals business, but stayed on as deputy part-time manager and part-time removals con-

tractor, still living at No. 128a. He remembers a resident at that time who was in constant trouble for small-scale theft. Jon took this boy to work with him and paid him with a handful of notes from his pocket saying 'Look, that's what you can get if you actually work without any of the hassle of thieving and getting caught'. It had a real impact on the resident, who turned his life round from that time.

When Jon handed over the management to Maggie, the regime was changed to one of developing skills for independent living and was no longer run as a therapeutic community. It went very well and CHS were happy with how things worked.

APPENDIX IV

CHS papers : Acquisition by the CHS Group

The Mill Road History Project is grateful to the CHS for their permission to reproduce these documents.

1. Conveyance from Railway Board to City Council : ?13 April 1965

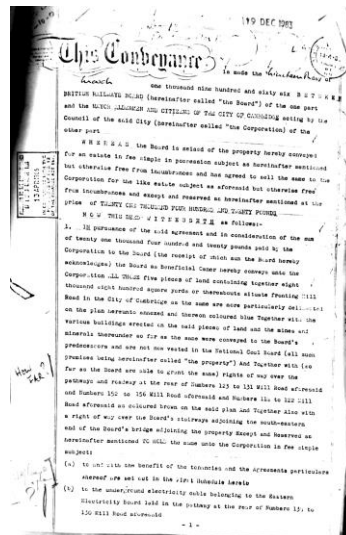


Figure 97 – Conveyance

2. Why Not? Handwritten note, presumably to R. Newcombe, Director of CHS, mentioning possibility of a Housing Association acquiring Railway House.

His handwritten 'Why not!!' at the end of the note starts off the whole process of acquisition.

To SEAN PLAIN
Jan 4/6

At a meeting with Housing
Dept. yesterday - they mentioned
to me that they were
considering approaching a
H. Assoc. to what.

128-134 Mill Rd. I asked
them to send me details,
saying we would be interested.
Shall I register
with H. Corp. before someone
else gets there ?? Why not!!

Figure 98 – Note from CHS

3. Sale Notice of 124-134 Mill Road (undated)

TO BE SOLD OR LET BY TENDERS

An opportunity for renovation and refurbishment. A terrace of five Victorian houses with considerable potential.

124-134 MILL ROAD
AND THE SITE OF 124 MILL ROAD

The properties comprise a terrace of substantial brick built houses under slate roofs built around the turn of the century. Numbers 130 and 132 were reconstructed about forty years ago and each now constitutes two flats.

They are situated just on the City side of the Mill Road railway bridge, approximately one mile to the south-west of the City Centre.

The Council has expressed a preference for a scheme involving the rehabilitation and improvement of the properties for low-cost housing or to meet the special housing needs of single young persons or the homeless.

Adjacent to the houses is a vacant site of approximately 490 sq. yds. (about one-tenth of an acre) for which no planning permission currently exists but which may be suitable for car parking and/or one dwelling. Included in the sale are rights of access over the narrow strip of land linking the site to Devonshire Road which may be capable of serving the site and 124-134 Mill Road with vehicular access.

THE ACCOMMODATION

Numbers 126, 128 and 134:

Each house has four ground floor and four first floor rooms, except for No. 134 where a partition wall at first floor level has been removed.

Numbers 130 and 132:

Each property is currently divided horizontally into two self-contained flats, each comprising kitchen, living room, two bedrooms and bathroom.

A floor plan is provided.

SERVICE: All main services are available.

TENDERS: Interested parties are invited to submit tenders for either the freehold interest or a lease for a term of twenty to one hundred and twenty-five years - please refer to the appropriate tender form for details. The tender form makes provision for offers for the entirety of the premises or for any combination of the individual properties.

Tenders to be sent in a plain sealed envelope clearly marked: "OFFER FOR THE PURCHASE/LEASE OF 124-134 MILL ROAD" addressed to the CITY SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR, THE GUILDHALL, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 3JZ to reach his not later than 3.00 p.m. on 2nd September 1982, the envelope to bear no mark which might identify the offeror.

VIEWS: By arrangement with:
The Estates Department,
City Engineer and Surveyor,
The Guildhall, Cambridge, CB2 3JZ
Telephone: Cambridge 359977 ext. 461 or 321

These particulars are believed to be correct, but their accuracy is in no way guaranteed, nor do they form part of any contract or offer.

CONDITIONS OF SALE/LEASE

- The Council does not bind itself to accept the highest or any tender.
- The acceptance of any offer shall be subject to:
 - The approval of the City Council.
 - The execution, within a reasonable period, of a contract in the form prepared by the City Secretary and Solicitor.
- Applicants shall be deemed to have made their offer with notice of all defects existing at the time of inspection.
- The execution of works to the properties may require planning permission or Building Regulation approval. The acceptance of any tender or the entry into a contract for sale or lease does not imply that all or any of the consents, permissions or approvals will be forthcoming.

Figure 99 – Sale notice

4. Valuation Document, dated 20 October 1982

21 OCT 1982

District Valuer and Valuation Officer Cambridge
Block A Government Offices Brooklands Avenue Cambridge CB2 2DU
Telephone 0223 888946 x 350911 Ext 2409

The Director and Secretary
The Cambridge Housing Society Ltd
100 Tavistock Road
CAMBRIDGE
CB1 2HF

Your reference: **124/82**
Our reference: **124/82/005 07558**
Please ask to: **Mr Coggins**
Date: **20 October 1982**

IN CONFIDENCE

Dear Sir

PROPOSED SALE BY CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
SITE OF 124 AND NOS 126-134 (EVEN NUMBERS) MILL ROAD, CAMBRIDGE

I refer to your letter of 13 October 1982 requesting my valuation of the above property to be converted into accommodation for young single people and let at "Fair" Rents. The property has been inspected and I have to report as follows:-

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

The property is situated next to the bridge in Mill Road over the railway line. It is situated in the Mill Road shopping centre which is secondary to and about one mile distant from the Cambridge City Town Centre. There is some residential development in Mill Road otherwise the surrounding area is composed mainly of dwellings of a mixed type and age.

The property (as shown edged red on the attached plan) comprises a block of 5 terraced houses of brick and slate construction being about 80 years of age. It is known as 126-134 (even numbers) Mill Road, Cambridge and Nos 130 and 132 were rebuilt about 40 years ago, following war damage. There is a parcel of undeveloped land known as the site of 124 Mill Road which is at present covered with scrub.

Pedestrian access to the property is gained from Mill Road and there is limited vehicular access off Devonshire Road to the plot. The ground level of the land is below street level at all points where it fronts Mill Road and the boundary is marked by heavy iron railings on a concrete plinth, thus excluding any vehicular access.

ACCOMMODATION:

The houses originally provided 5 separate units which have been adapted into several flats and maisonettes. Because of the present circumstances attaching to the property it is not possible for this accommodation to be defined but generally each house contains 4 rooms on the ground floor and 4 rooms on the first floor with limited plumbing facilities.

AREA:

The area of the land coupled by this property including the undeveloped plot is about 0.205 hectares.

/s/sgpr

District Valuer

REPAIR: The property has been allowed to fall into disrepair and it is observed that two or three of the substantial chimney stacks are leaning, roof slates are broken and missing, original window frames have been replaced and panes of glass are broken. Generally, there is much damp penetration and consequential damage to internal finishes.

STRUCTURAL: The structural walls appear to be reasonably sound but extensive renewals and repairs are required to the remainder.

OCCUPATION: The property is offered with vacant possession although at the date of my inspection, one property is occupied by a tenant of the Council and the remaining properties are occupied by squatters.

SERVICE: All main services are connected or are available.

PLANNING: Entries in the Valuation List for general rates refer to a total of ten flats or maisonettes at varying values.

I understand that the Cambridge City Council are both the owners of the property and the Planning Authority. Particularly in the capacity of the latter a preference has been expressed for any properties for low cost housing to meet the special housing needs of single young persons or the homeless. Therefore, I do not anticipate any difficulty in planning permission being given for this type of development.

With regard to the undeveloped plot at 124 Mill Road Cambridge, no planning permission exists but I am informed it may be suitable for one dwelling. Even so, I understand that the Council would prefer this land to be left as open space.

OPINION OF VALUE: I understand that the particular scheme you have in mind for this property involves the conversion of two houses into a hostel with accommodation. In preparing my valuation of the property, I have considered it to be available for rehabilitation to a high density providing small residential units for sale or to let.

On this basis I am of the opinion that the open market value is in the sum of £50,000 (fifty thousand pounds), freehold with vacant possession.

This report should not be regarded as valid for more than four months from the date hereof in the event of altered circumstances.

Yours faithfully
WWS
District Valuer

Figure 100 – Valuation document

5. Contract of sale

CONTRACT OF SALE
The National Conditions of Sale, Twentieth Edition

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL acting by Michael Ball its City Secretary and Solicitor and duly authorised agent

THE CAMBRIDGE HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED whose registered office is situated at 162 Tenison Road, Cambridge

| | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------|
| Registered Land | Purchase price | £ 99,250 00 |
| Ind Registry: | Deposit | £ |
| ber: | Balance payable | £ |
| ie of interest: | Price fixed for chattels or valuation money (if any) | £ |
| Special Condition D | Total | £ 99,250 00 |

nd interest therein sold **freehold**

rtly all that piece of land with the buildings erected thereon or some part thereof and known as 124-134 (even) Mill Road, Cambridge the same is more particularly delineated on the plan annexed hereto and thereon edged red (hereinafter called "the Red Land") and all that piece of land to the rear of 114-124 (even) Mill Road, Cambridge as the same is for the purpose of identification only edged blue on the plan annexed hereto (hereinafter called "the Blue Land")

GENERAL VITH:-

the right for the Purchaser and its successors at all times and for all purposes in common with all others so authorised to pass and pass over the land to the rear of 114-122 (even) Mill Road, Cambridge

1.81 **Beneficial Owner** Completion date:

at the Vendor sells and the Purchaser buys as above, subject to the Special Conditions and to the National Conditions of Sale Twentieth Edition so far as the latter Conditions consistent with the Special Conditions.

Date 19

© 1981
Oyez
THE SOLICITORS' LAW PRACTITIONERS SOCIETY, Ltd
One Horse, 237 Long Lane, London SE1 4PU
Printed on 14-point special conditions

Figure 101 – Contract of Sale

6. Letter, to Rhodes James MP from the chief Executive and Town Clerk of Cambridge City Council, dated 9 September 1983. This letter gives useful background information and requests his help dealing with the Department of the Environment, whose approval was needed to allow the City Council to allocate money to the scheme

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

G. G. Danson, LL.B.,
Chief Executive and Town Clerk

Michael Ball, LL.B.,
City Secretary and Solicitor

The matter is being dealt with by: Mr. Craig
My reference: CA/CB
H/893

The Guildhall
Cambridge
CB1 9UJ
Telephone (0432) 339077
Ext: 328

9th September 1983

Dear Mr. Rhodes James,

Site of 124 and Numbers 126-134 Mill Road, Cambridge

I am writing to enlist your help in trying to speed up the consideration by the Department of the Environment of an outstanding application which has been submitted by the Council on behalf of the Cambridge housing society limited for the rehabilitation of 124-134 Mill Road to provide a thirteen-bed space hostel for young people coming out of care and eight one-bedroom flats for single people or young couples.

Unfortunately, this application has a long and sad history. The Council acquired the properties, which were Railway Cottages, many years ago as part of a proposed widening scheme for Mill Road Bridge. The properties were used as temporary accommodation over a number of years. Gradually over the years the properties became unfit, and the Council felt constrained from spending money on the properties in view of the blight which existed. However, following the recent modification which has been undertaken to Mill Road Bridge, the blight on the properties was lifted and the Council, therefore, was anxious that the properties should be brought back into housing use as quickly as possible. Unfortunately the Council had not, because of its limited resources, sufficient funds to undertake an improvement scheme itself and it, therefore, in September 1982, offered the properties for sale on the open market with a view to them being converted into accommodation for low income groups. At the same time discussions were held with local housing associations to see whether they would be interested in acquiring the properties for conversion. The Housing Services Committee subsequently considered the offers which were made for the accommodation but it felt that the highest tenderer was unlikely to meet the Council's expectations regarding a suitable scheme and, therefore, it was decided that further discussions should be held with the local housing associations in Cambridge to see whether any would be prepared to undertake a scheme on the site.

Please address all correspondence to the

2

In October 1982, the Housing Services Committee again considered a report on the properties and came to the conclusion that a proposal submitted by the Cambridge housing society limited for the conversion of the properties into one-bedroom flats for single people and young couples and a group home for young people coming out of care would be suitable and agreed, in principle and subject to the consent of the Department of the Environment, to make a loan to the housing society for the purchase and improvement of the properties.

The society immediately started work on preparing a scheme in order that an application could be made to the Department of the Environment at the earliest date. The society also had initial discussions with representatives of the Eastern Region of the Department of the Environment in January 1983 on the best method of approach, as it became obvious, from an early date, that the cost of the scheme was likely to be higher than the existing 'delegated cost limits' for the acquisition and improvement of properties in Cambridge. The Council had already been making representations to the Department of the Environment for a number of years about the delegated cost limits as they related to Cambridge, because they tended to militate against housing associations undertaking redevelopment schemes because of the high cost of acquisition of even unfit properties in the City.

On the advice of the Regional Office of the Department of the Environment, the housing society submitted, in February 1983, an informal application on two bases, the first to establish the equivalent 'yardstick' figures for a new build scheme of a similar type and the second under the housing association 'Total Indicative Cost' levels for a rehabilitation project. At about the same time the Council was successful in obtaining an additional allocation from the Department of the Environment for the loan to the housing society for the acquisition of the properties. I was also pressing the Department of the Environment for an early resolution of the application.

On 22nd March 1983, the housing society forwarded to the Council a formal submission for project approval for the rehabilitation of the properties and after scrutiny of the application by the Council this was forwarded to the Department of the Environment on 31st March. On 27th April a reply was received acknowledging receipt of the letter and indicating that the Regional Officer's professional staff were considering the details of the calls, a formal reply was not received until 11th May when the Department indicated that because of the changes which were being brought about through Circular 14/83 (Local Authorities and Housing Associations) which effectively changed the methods of 'yardstick' to the new housing corporation 'Total Indicative Cost' levels, the Department was unable to consider the application and requested that it should be re-submitted on revised forms. Naturally, this caused some delay to both the Council and

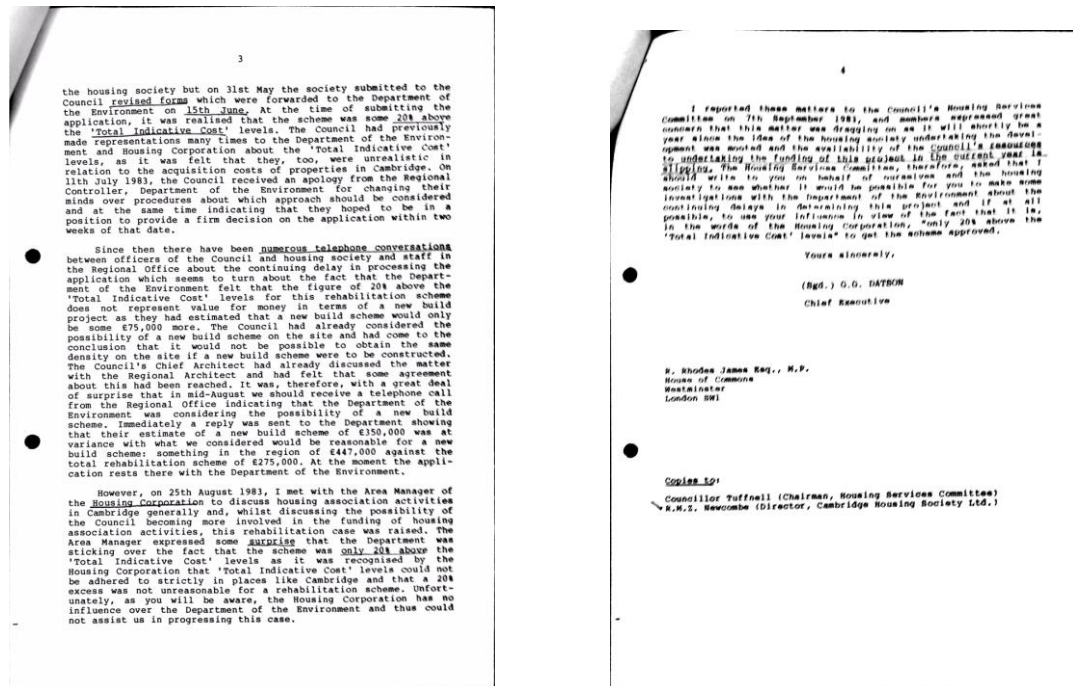


Figure 102 – Letter to Rhodes James from City Council

7. Letter from Social Services, dated 10 January 1983, showing anxiety about proposed residents for 124 Mill Road (p. 1 only)

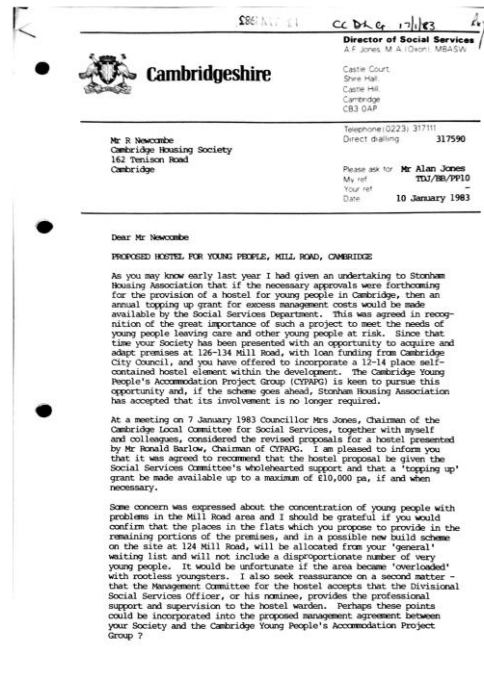


Figure 103 – Letter from Social Services to CHS

8. City Farm Proposal, dated 17 February and 14 April 1984

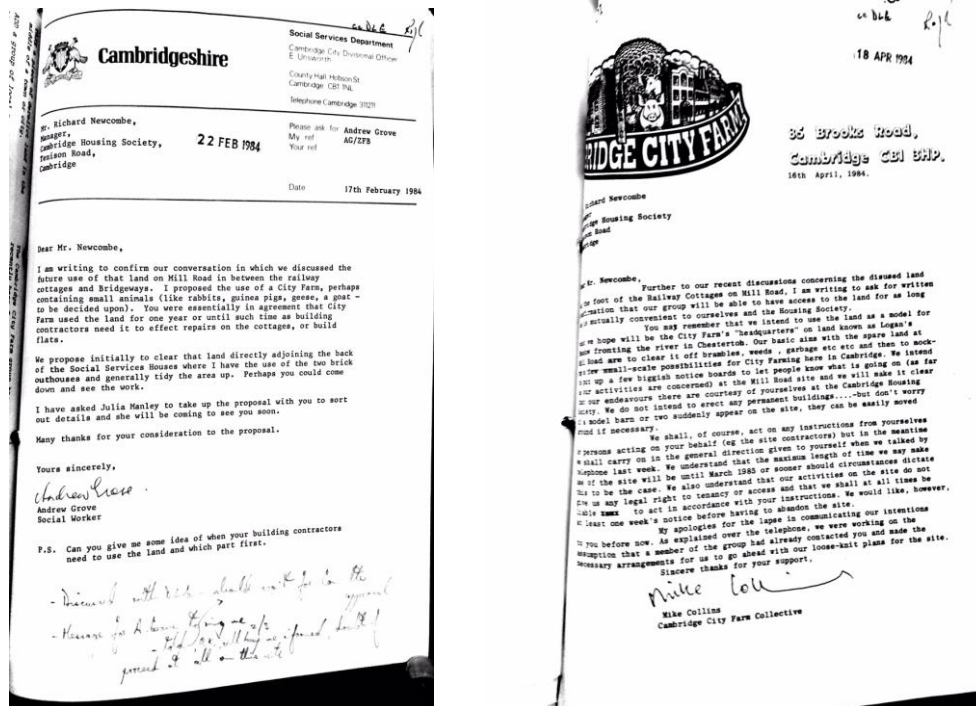


Figure 104 – City Farm Proposal

APPENDIX V

CHS Papers : The Squat

Mill Road History Project is grateful to the Cambridge Housing Society for their permission to reproduce these papers. — There is some confusion about dates; the papers are reproduced in the order in which they were filed.

1. Letter from 'Licencees' to Society of Co-operative Dwellings (SCD), dated 22 October 1982, expressing wish to become a Co-op

RAILWAY HOUSES 126 MILL ROAD
20 DEC 1982
22 October 1982

Dear SCD

We have been living in Cambridge at some railway houses close to the housing Co-op in Angley Street. We have come to think of the railway houses as our homes and as such feel responsible for the properties. It is how our concern to secure our positions and actively involve ourselves in the development of the houses.

As far as we know the situation is that the houses will be sold to the highest tender, unless this tender does not meet the requirements of the Housing Corporation for Low - Cost Housing. In this event, we are told that the houses will be dealt with by the Cambridge Housing Society with funds from the Central Government Housing Body in London.

It seems likely from our information that the Cambridge Housing Association would evict the occupants, of the houses before starting development.

The eleven people who are permanently in residence at the houses, have decided unanimously to form a Co-op. We have discussed the steps to be taken with your affiliates in Angley Street and written to Local Councillors informing them of our situation and asking for further information.


Could we formulate a new scheme with you, to be presented to the Housing Corporation? Do you have any interest in the properties? If so we would be grateful for a reply, as our situation urgently requires a positive solution, which considers all interests.

Yours

Licencees

Figure 105 – Letter from Licensees to SCD

2. Reply from Society for Co-operative Dwellings (SCD), dated 27 October 1982

 a secondary housing co-operative
registered with the housing corporation

SOCIETY FOR CO-OPERATIVE DWELLINGS

27 October 1982

The Licencees
Railway Cottages
126 Mill Road
Cambridge

Dear Friends

Thank you very much indeed for your letter of 22nd October, asking about the possibility of forming a co-op from amongst yourselves, to get forward development proposals for the railway cottages. We would certainly be very keen indeed to assist you, if you were interested in pursuing the proposal.

We have, in fact, already had some correspondence with Cambridge City about the cottages, and I am enclosing copies for your information.


There are four major problems to be overcome, in putting forward any proposals:

1. Obtaining Housing Corporation registration for the co-op, without which no funds can be advanced from either the Corporation or the local authority.
2. The City Council would have to decide that they preferred a co-operative development, rather than a scheme granted by the Cambridge Housing Society.
3. The Housing Corporation would have to be willing to provide an allocation of funds, probably within financial year 1983/4.
4. The Department of the Environment would have to give its consent to dispose of the properties to the City, and from our recent experience, this is quite actually difficult to achieve!

In order to overcome these various obstacles, the first - and most important - task is to get the City Council on your side, rather than Cambridge Housing Society's. I gather from Angley Street that you have had some initial discussions with Frank Gestrup, who he reasonably enthusiastic when you spoke to him?

I'd be very happy to discuss these various questions further with you, if you think it might be helpful. Please let me know, if I can be of assistance. With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely


Chris Smith
Development Co-ordinator

PTD: PB
208 CLAPHAM ROAD LONDON SW9 0QH tel 01 737 2077

Figure 106 – Letter from SCD

3. Letter to Cllr Gawthrop presumably from SCD, dated 15 September 1982



Figure 107 – Letter to Cllr Gawthrop

4. Letter to Argyle St Housing Co-operative from SCD about a possible 'secondary Co-op', dated 15 September 1982

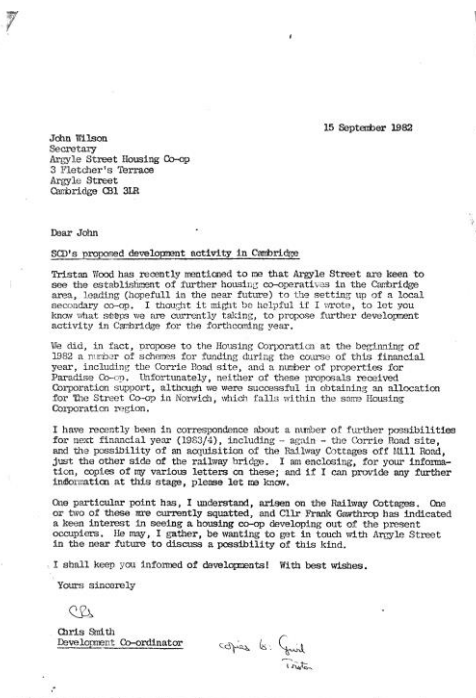


Figure 108 – Letter from SCD to Argyle Street Co-op

5. Letter to Cambridge City Council from SCD, dated 13 August 1982

Mr Crosswell
City Surveyor
Cambridge City Council
The Guildhall
Cambridge CB2 3QJ

13 August 1982

Dear Mr Crosswell

Railway Cottages, off Mill Road, Cambridge

As you will probably know, SCD has been involved in the development of a number of co-operative housing schemes in Cambridge, including the Argyle Street Housing Co-operative (which is now complete, and occupied) and the Paradise Housing Co-operative (which has just completed its first purchase, of a property in Kingston Street). We are certainly keen to continue our work in Cambridge, and to assist with the provision of further co-operative housing schemes, where they might assist the City's housing strategy.

I understand that the row of five railway cottages, just off Mill Road beside the railway bridge, are now available for consideration by housing associations and co-operatives, for purchase for a housing scheme. I am writing to indicate a keen interest on our part in pursuing this possibility.

We would wish to seek funding from either the Housing Corporation, or the City's Housing Committee, for a scheme of this kind. Although the Housing Corporation have provided us with an allocation of funds for the East Midlands Region in the current financial year, it does not at present relate to Cambridge, and as a result we would need to seek funds from any "slippage" towards the end of the year, or alternatively to aim for a purchase early in financial year 1983/4. If you felt that this might be a possibility acceptable to the City, we would be very happy to work up some feasibility proposals, and to seek the necessary preliminary consents, in this connection.

Alternatively, we could seek support from the City itself, and I have today written to Mr Foster to outline our interest, and seek an indication of the viability of such a proposal.

I should be very grateful for your consideration of whether a purchase by the Co-operative might be possible, and if I can provide any further information at this stage, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely

CDs
Chris Smith
Development Co-ordinator

cc: Mr. Smith
Mr. Tuffnell
Richard Robinson
Mr. Foster

Figure 109 – Letter from SCD to City Council

6. Statement by 'Occupants', dated 4 December 1982

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| ARGYLE STREET | | | | | | | | | |
| HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE | | | | | | | | | |
| LTD | | | | | | | | | |
| Registered with the Housing Corporation (C2803) and the Registry of | | | | | | | | | |
| Friendly Societies (21838R). | | | | | | | | | |

F-8 DEC 1982

re: The Railway Cottages. 4th December 1982

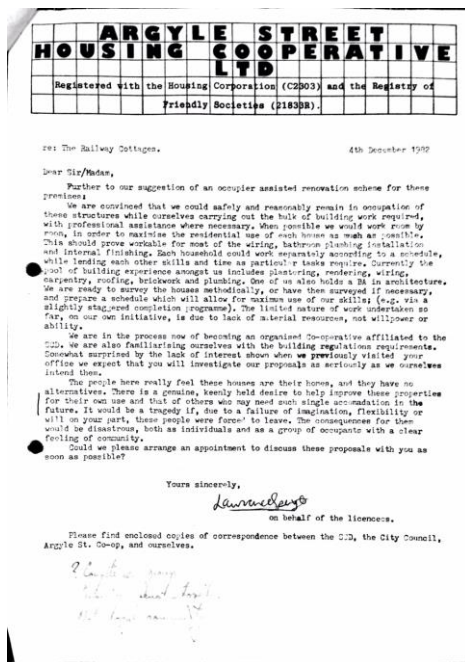
STATEMENT BY THE OCCUPANTS OF 126, 130, 134 MILL RD. CAMBRIDGE:

1. We understand that the Cambridge Housing Society are planning to renovate the above mentioned houses in order to provide accommodation for young single people. We are just such young single people and, as the present occupiers, will be made homeless if our houses are renovated according to standard practice.
2. We are inhabiting these houses as fixed homes, not as temporary lodgings. The fact that we have inhabited them for over a year has almost certainly saved them from total dereliction. As a community we are all involved and feel a committed interest in the future of our homes. We would like to see these houses run on a co-operative basis, and feel certain we have sufficient energy to rehabilitate them to suit our needs as a collective and as individuals.
3. As a group we have a large repertoire of building skills which we are eager to make use of in order to satisfy our needs for a proper standard of housing. The Argyle Street Housing Co-operative is committed to supporting us, and willing to give organisational aid when needed. The Society for Co-operative Dwellings (SCD) is also aware of our aims and have shown interest in helping to finance such a scheme. Many Co-operative renovation schemes are currently working in London boroughs such as Camden, Lambeth, Lewisham, and in other areas.
4. We understand that Cambridge Design Group (architects) are now preparing a scheme for the C.H.S. Their intentions appear to coincide with our current use of the buildings as residential accommodation, i.e. individual rooms with shared facilities for washing and cooking.

IN CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE POINTS WE WOULD LIKE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A METHOD BY WHICH THE TENEMENTS CAN BE SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED; THE PRESENT OCCUPANTS OPINING FULL TENANCY/LICENSES RIGHTS IN THE PROCESS, CONTINUING IN RESIDENCE WHILE HELPING SUBSTANTIALLY WITH WORK IN PROGRESS.

Figure 110 – Statement by 'Occupants'

7. Letter from 'licensees', again dated 4 December 1982



The undersigned live at 126, 130 and 134 Mill Road and want to participate in a renovation scheme as suggested in the above letter:

M. J. Hutcheon
Lawrence Perry
K. A. Anderson
N. HARRIS
P. B. B. B.
S. W.
Chris Harris
Nick Hague
A. B. B. B.
Donna Jones
Nigel Woodrow
J. B. B. B.
K. B. B. B.
J. B. B. B.

Figure 111 – Letter from 'licensees'

8. Letter from City Engineer and Surveyor to the 'Occupiers', dated 9 November 1982. The last paragraph clarifies the Council's position that they have no legal tenancy.

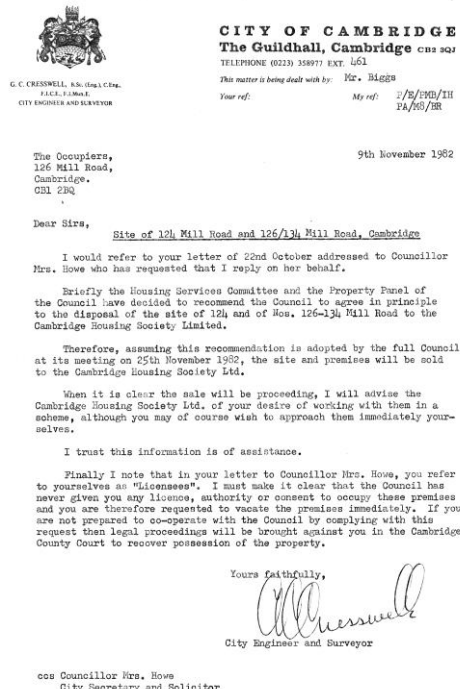


Figure 112 – Letter from City Council to 'Occupiers'

9. Letter to R. Newcombe Challis, Director of CHS from City Secretary and Solicitor, dated 1 March 1984, from City Solicitor asserting that all points of entry have been bricked up 'to prevent access by squatters.'

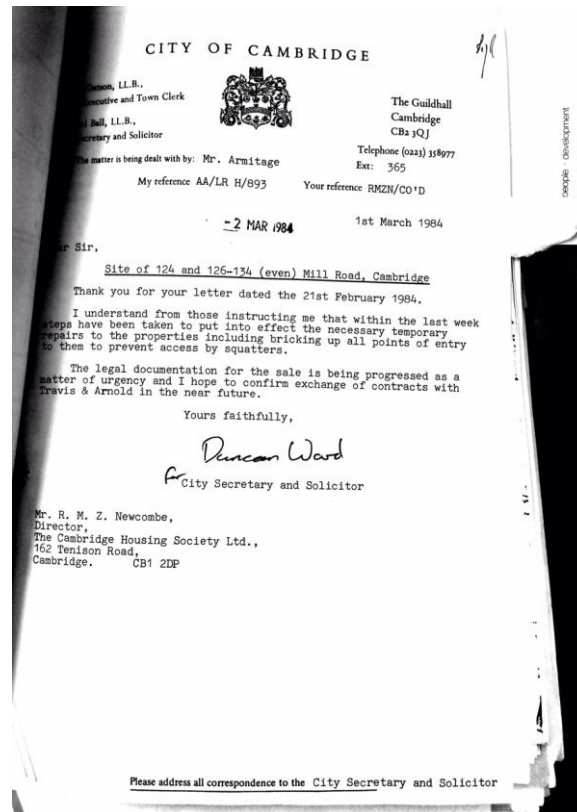


Figure 113 – Letter from City Council to CHS