

History of Hertford Hall, Kine Ice & Cambridge Ice Cream

Hertford Hall in Hertford Street Cambridge was a local family ice cream business for at least 3 decades before the early 1970s. The factory produced Kine Ice up until about 1955 when the name changed to Cambridge Ice Cream. Hertford Hall was probably built before the 1930s. I believe the building was originally intended for a garage business as a petrol tank had been installed under the forecourt, this was never used and also a turntable had been installed in what became the factory floor, again this was not used.

In the 1950s my father, Jack Pointer was Managing Director of Cambridge Ice Cream Co. Ltd., he took me to see several Kine Ice vans parked in a yard off Gwydir Street, near the back of the Kinema (in Mill Road) which my grandfather A J Pointer held the lease of from 1916, Kine Ice would have been on sale there. An Ice Cream pedal tricycle was also stored at the Hertford Hall factory but I am not sure what happened to that.

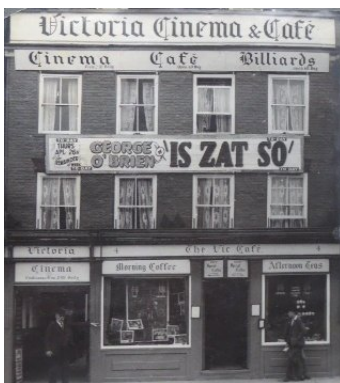


Kine Ice Vans outside Hertford Hall.



Kine Ice Trailer Outside Hertford Hall

The origins of Kine Ice go back to at least as early as 1915 when my grandparents Mr & Mrs A J Pointer ran the old Victoria Cinema, Cafe & Billiard Hall in Market street Cambridge. They started making ice cream soda to sell to customers and at some stage A J Pointer & Sons ran a catering business, which for example sold Teas and Ices at the Lawns alongside the Cam during May Bumps races week, probably at Fen Ditton. My grandfather also ran a milk and billiards bar called The Dugout in Guildhall Street.



< The old Victoria Cinema & Cafe



A J Pointer & Sons Teas & Ices by the Cam

Kine Ice would have been sold to customers in the interval and also before or after performances at the new Victoria Cinema when it opened in 1931. The Managing Director of the new Victoria Cinema was Eric Pointer, my uncle.



The new Victoria Cinema

Kine Ice & Cambridge Ice cream from Hertford Hall was delivered to Cinemas, Theatres (including the Arts Theatre), Cambridge College kitchens, Cafes, Pubs, Restaurants, Hotels and Catering companies across East Anglia and sometimes wider afield. Cambridge Ice Cream banners were displayed at many of these customers sites, with both Kine Ice then Cambridge Ice Cream advertised in local newspapers using the slogan "Birds of a feather flock together for Cambridge Ice Cream"



Special varieties and creations of Cambridge Ice Cream were supplied to a number of Colleges for the May Balls each year. One year a College chef wanted special Praline ice cream for the May Ball, he used my mother's kitchen at Humberstone Road to cook caramelised sugar for the ice cream, the caramelised sugar was then used at the factory to create special Praline ice cream; my mother had to clear crunchy caramelised sugar from her kitchen floor. Vanilla Cambridge Ice cream mix was also supplied from Hertford Hall to a number of the local soft ice cream vans which toured the area and attended special events.

The factory included an essence room where the flavourings were stored and precisely mixed for the different varieties of ice cream. Although Vanilla remained the biggest seller other flavours included Strawberry, Chocolate & Coffee. Special flavours such as Maple Walnut, Pecan, Truti-Fruti, Hawaiian Glow, Rum Rasen & Bordeaux Cherry were also produced at Hertford Hall. Some orders for special flavours were moulded into dome shaped bombes for parties and events. Most of the ingredients for ice cream were produced in the UK but some ingredients such as maple syrup were imported. The special made in December in the 1960s was Christmas Pudding Ice Cream and a small batch of one variety not put on sale was Ovaltine ice cream which was once especially made for me.

Choc Ices were produced on a special machine which coated briquettes of ice cream with a layer of chocolate, my sister Maureen's favourite trick was to pass a choc ice through the machine twice creating an extra thick layer of chocolate. Vanilla briquettes were wrapped ready to be eaten between wafers and ice lollies were also produced at the factory. Chocolate flakes, wafers & cornets were also sold alongside the ice cream.

The ice cream production was virtually automated, overseen by 2 members of factory staff. The ingredients were mixed in a large homogeniser then pasteurised in a 200 gallon steam heated pasteuriser before being aged and cooled, then when ready pumped into cartons or containers ready for freezing. After the day's ice cream production was complete all the equipment had to be steam cleaned.

In the early 1950s my father used a green 1947/48 Austin 8 van to deliver ice cream or to go to look after customers freezers. This Austin 8 van was the first vehicle I actually drove in the 1960s. My father took me with him to Birmingham in the 1950's to collect a new olive green Ford e83W 10 cwt delivery van for the factory, this was probably to replace the smaller of the Kine Ice vans, or to replace the Austin 8 van which my father then used daily until it was replaced by a 1950s Escort 100E Estate car. The Ford 10 cwt van was later replaced by a 1967 5 cwt goods van registration OMC 324E, by that time I was then old enough to be able to drive this van myself. In the 1960s if my father was away or unable to go to Hertford Hall in the evening I would sometimes go to the factory for him to check the building was secure &

everything was alright. Walking around the factory at night could be eerie if a refrigeration compressor started up behind or next to you.

As a qualified engineer my father maintained most of the factory equipment and some customer's freezers. In the late 1950s & early 1960s I occasionally helped my father carry out repairs on factory equipment and refrigeration equipment sometimes late into the night. The factory had a well equipped workshop with a large work bench a Wolf pedestal drill, grinding wheel and pipe work tools for refrigeration repairs. In the 1960s I was able to use a lock up garage & workshop at the rear of the Hertford Hall factory to take the cylinder head, sump and crank shaft off my 1954 Austin A30 and then reassemble the engine with new pistons & rings after the cylinder block had been rebored at a workshop just off Histon Road. My father & I towed the car to the workshop & back after the work to be carried out.

Some consignments of Cambridge Ice Cream were packed in insulated containers with dry ice and frozen ice packs at the Hertford Hall factory then delivered to Cambridge railway station for shipment by rail. An article was published in the Cambridge Evening News on 19th August 1966 "How a City firm kept the Sheiks cool", about a shipment of Cambridge Ice Cream exported to a catering company in Bahrain and describing the ice cream production process.

In 1969 Hertford Hall was on the proposed route of the City of Cambridge Inner Relief Road. The Inner Relief Road would have run from Jesus Lane across Jesus Green over the river, across Chesterton Road finally ending up at the junction of Histon Road and Huntingdon Road. Potentially Hertford Hall would have been compulsory purchased and demolished to make way for the proposed road. The Cambridge Ice Cream factory at Hertford Hall closed down in 1972 and although the proposed Inner Relief Road did not go ahead Hertford Hall was acquired by the city Council in the 1970s and eventually sold then demolished to make way for the building of student accommodation.

Mr C Pointer I would like to dedicate this article to my sister Maureen who sadly passed away in 2025.