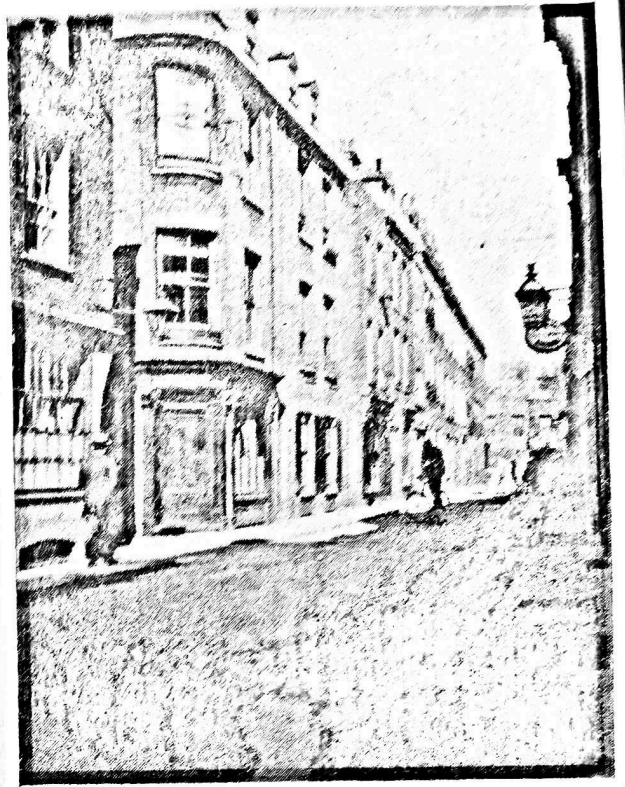


# GREEN STREET CAMBRIDGE

by  
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*Green Street in 1910 (right). On the left, the old entrance to Gifford Place—the man is passing the property now replaced by Trinity College Hostel. Beyond, towards Sidney Street, was Stittle's Chapel. On the right, the hanging sign shows the site of the chapel of 1819, later used by the Union Society and the Reform Club. In the right foreground is the entrance to the old Angel Inn yard.*



Few people, today, who use Green Street as a short cut to get from Trinity Street to Sidney Street, or vice versa, have time or opportunity to give thought to the past history of this narrow thoroughfare. Yet once it was a street with several interesting and important buildings in it.

The street takes its name from Dr. Oliver Green of Caius College, on whose estate it was laid out in 1614. Originally, at its Sidney Street end, by Bodger's outfitter's shop, two houses projected some way beyond the present building line, leaving only a very narrow passage, some ten yards long, through which pedestrians could gain entry to the street. In 1819, however, these houses were pulled down and Green Street acquired its present width at this end. In 1876, it was widened by five feet at the Trinity Street end, when old property on the Whim Café corner, then occupied by the printing works of the "Cambridge Express" newspaper, were demolished.

This corner of Green Street was the site, in medieval times, of Borden's Hostel for students of civil and canon law. This faced on to Trinity Street, where the Whim Café and the adjoining Westminster Bank, at the corner of Rose Crescent, now stand.

The Hostel was, in fact, two buildings. The one on the site of the

Bank was, in the 13th century, the property of an Archdeacon of Ely and came to be used by the students of Peterhouse. The adjoining premises, on the Green Street corner, were originally known as Spalding's Inn, from the name of its principal who was one of the first Fellows of Clare Hall. In the 14th century, the house was sold to the Prior of Ely and was used by student monks studying in Cambridge. Later, it passed again into the hands of Clare Hall and from then on, the two buildings, generally known as Borden's Hostel, housed both Clare and Peterhouse members until 1539, when the property was sold to a Cambridge alderman who converted it to an inn called the White Swan.

## Nonconformist chapels

Green Street once had two Nonconformist chapels in it. The earlier, occupying the sites of Nos. 3, 4 and 5 (now occupied by W. P. Spalding, stationer, Haslop & Co., estate agents, and D. Carter, hairdresser,) was built in 1688. Its history, however, goes back to 1662 when Thomas Holcroft was deprived of his Fellowship of Clare College and of his living at Bassingbourn, on account of his Puritan principles. He gathered together many of his for-

mer Bassingbourn congregation and held meetings for them, and for others from nearby villages, in the woods at Great Eversden. From these assemblies others developed, under the leadership of Holcroft's disciples. Private houses provided meeting places, and one of these was the home of a Mrs. Petit in St. Michael's parish, possibly in Green Street on the site of the meeting house which was to be built in 1688. The narrow passage which then existed at this end of the street would have provided a sheltered and inconspicuous way to the house.

By 1689, when dissenters were accorded a greater degree of freedom, the Green Street meeting house was built as a Congregational chapel. A few years later, some of the members of the Presbyterian meeting place which had been built, in 1867, on St. Andrew's Hill, detached themselves when their minister, Joseph Hussey, was persuaded to adopt the Congregational form of church government. They joined the Green Street congregation and persuaded the minister there to make a converse change and to become Presbyterian! Such changes, however, were very slight ones in those days.

In 1781, the Reverend Joseph Stittle came to the Green Street meeting house which came to be

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known as Stittle's Chapel. Born in Madingley in 1727, Stittle never learned to write, though he was able to read. His sermons, long and colourful, were preached extempore. He was often ridiculed by the undergraduates of his day, both in the chapel and outside in the streets, but he had a large following of believers. Indeed, after his death in 1813, attendance at the chapel dropped considerably, and in 1819, as the lease of the meeting house was nearing its end, the congregation converted a room over livery stables, on the other side of the street, into a chapel. This lay behind the old Stag's Head Inn, now part of Eaden Lilley's goods entrance. The old meeting place was then taken over by the Strict Baptists who used it until 1826, when they moved to their newly-built Eden Chapel at the corner of Fitzroy Street and Burleigh Street. The meeting house was then demolished, and Stittle's body, which had been buried there, was transferred to Eden Chapel.

The new chapel behind 30 and 31 Green Street continued to be used by the Congregationalists until 1829 when the Wesleyans, who had been worshipping in Barnwell since 1815, took it over until 1850, when they moved to a new and larger building in Hobson Street, on the site of the County Hall. On their departure, the Green Street premises were used by the University Union Society until 1866, when their new premises in Bridge Street were erected. The next occupants of the former chapel were the members of the Cambridge Youths' Club which had been founded in 1865.

## Sunday School origin

This club owed its origin to the successful Jesus Lane Sunday School which had been started, in 1827, by a group of undergraduates in the Friends' meeting house. The school was attended by over 200 boys and girls from the Barnwell area.

In 1833, the school moved to King Street and then, in 1867, to new buildings in Paradise Street, part of which were let, in 1871, to the new Higher Grade Boys' School. It was the superintendent of the Sunday School who decided to hold two evening classes a week for members of the Bible class, and so estab-

lished the Cambridge Youths' Club. When the Paradise Street buildings were completed, the club moved into them from Green Street and, in 1876, changed its name to the Albert Institute.

The institute, which moved, in 1878, to new premises in Grafton Street, flourished until the first World War. With the co-operation of university dons and undergraduates, classes were held, debates and lectures were arranged, cricket and football teams were formed, and two boats were entered in the town races.

The Green Street premises, vacated by the Youths' Club in 1867, were occupied, four years later, by the Reform Club which opened on December 20, 1871. The Liberal newspaper, the "**Cambridge Independent Press**", reporting the event, declared that the opening of the club would "prove a puzzle to our Conservative friends, but it is an organisation they will have good cause to fear. Its promoters do not look to popular favour by the hackneyed aid of amateur theatricals . . . but they appeal to the members of their party to uphold the club as an institution for political organisation and political discussion." Many such discussions were, indeed, held in Green Street in the old chapel premises which later, in the 1880's, were occupied briefly by the Junior Liberal Club.

Eventually, the original chapel was absorbed by the firm of W. Eaden Lilley & Co. It formed the galleried room at the back of their furniture shop which, until recently, was entered from Sidney Street. Changes, however, have led to the absorption of the shop into the main Market Street store, but the chapel still exists in the furniture department.

No. 24, Green Street, now the Coffee Pot Café, was occupied, early in the last century, by the Post Office until it moved, in 1833, to 44, Sidney Street. The Cambridge Savings Bank, founded in 1816, carried on business at this address, too, until, in the 1850s, it was transferred to larger premises in Sidney Street, by Holy Trinity Church.

Next door but one to the Coffee Pot was once the entrance to the yard of the Angel Inn, which had an imposing frontage on to Market Street. Many people will recall W. Macintosh & Sons' large ironmongery shop in Market Street, which closed in 1962 and has since been replaced by the modern Barratt

buildings. The Angel had, by then, shrunk to the small public house, of the same name, on the site of the present Barratt's shoe shop, its former yard having been used by Macintosh for an extension to the shop premises, and as a delivery yard approached from Green Street. In the course of the erection of the extensions, some fine panelled rooms and fireplaces of the old inn were revealed.

## From bakery to pub

On the opposite side of Green Street to the Coffee Pot, the Volunteer public house, at No. 8, closed a year or so ago. It had absorbed, in the 1940s, the adjoining 18th century building, No. 9, once the bakery shop of Mr. Christmas, which some people may recall, with its bakehouse at the back extending into the now closed Wray's Court, leading off Sidney Street.

Nearby, No. 11 used to be the Highland Piper public house, close to the entrance to Gifford Place which now gives access to the Blue Boar Hotel garages. In the 18th century, Alderman James Gifford's house lay at the further end of the Place, while near the street entrance of the latter stood St. Michael's parish workhouse, with its entrance in the Place. Later, five cottages occupied its site.

The modern buildings of Trinity College Hostel now take up the rest of this side of Green Street, from Gifford Place to the back of Deighton & Bell's bookshop on the Trinity Street corner. This hostel has replaced the row of houses and shops which once stood there, among them, earlier in this century, the bakery owned by Mr. Matthew, whose Trinity Street grocery store has recently been rebuilt as Heffer's new bookshop.

Green Street was largely rebuilt in the mid 19th century, but No. 10, the attractive book binding shop of J. P. Gray & Son, remains as it was when it was erected in c. 1700, although the shop front is of the late 19th century. The adjoining property—the former Volunteer public house—also belongs to the 18th century. Nos. 3 to 5, on the site of the old meeting house, add elegance to the street with their round-headed doorways and arched shop windows.