Some Early History of Victoria Park Cambridge

A short History of the origins of Victoria Park, together with copies of Maps, Street Directories and Photographs, produced to mark the Park’s Centenary in 1996.

SIMON WATKINS
The material in this booklet was originally prepared for an exhibition that formed part of the splendid celebrations that were organised by residents of Victoria Park on 22nd June 1996 to mark the centenary of the building of most of the houses in the Park.

My sources of information stem mostly from the Cambridgeshire Collection at Lion Yard Library, whose staff were very helpful to me.

In particular, I have drawn on two books:

"The Victoria History of the County of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely Vol.IX", and

"New Chesterton, Cambridgeshire: A Study in Suburban Expansion" by David Blackmore, Pembroke College, April 1981.

All copies of maps, street directories, and press cuttings and most of the photographs have come from the Cambridgeshire Collection, and I am very grateful for their permission to reproduce them.

Other photographs and bits of information are courtesy of various residents to whom I am grateful for their help. I am not a professional historian, and this was put together very rapidly in my own time. If anyone has more information that they would care to pass on, that would be much appreciated.

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Autumn 1998
HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

Prior to Land Enclosure in 1840

In the early 1800s, there were very few buildings at all north of the river except in the old Chesterton village to the east. There were some brickworks along Chesterton Road by the river, including one on what is now Alexandra Gardens.

Chesterton was the name of an unenclosed area of land north of the river and stretching from the Huntingdon Road over to the area of the present Science Park/Sewage Works. The land was basically 3 big open fields, probably cultivated on a triennial rotation from the Middle Ages till enclosure.

The biggest landowners were the Benson family - more to the east of our area - and then the Wragg family, who owned a swathe of land immediately north of Victoria Park and stretching from well to the west of Histon Road over to Milton Road (see Maps below).

Most land in England had been ‘enclosed’ much earlier, mostly well back into the 1700s. Enclosure required the passing of a Private Act by Parliament.

It was done to rationalise land holdings, to acquire common land, and to introduce new methods of agriculture.

Usually enclosure was promoted by the main landowners, but in Chesterton the latter did not seem keen on it, probably for fear it would encourage the rapid development of suburbs of Cambridge north of the river. Thus, the initiative for enclosure seems to have come more from small landowners to the North and South of Victoria Road who probably saw the scope for suburbs for an expanding Cambridge - which could not take place without enclosure.

Parliament was petitioned for an Enclosure Bill in 1837, and final approval was obtained in 1840.

Map No.1 shows the pattern of land ownership in 1840 with the Wragg family land shaded in single lines (the Wraggs were at least indifferent to enclosure) and the land of the enclosure proposers shaded in criss-crossing lines (mostly north of Victoria Road). Note that this is actually superimposed on a map dated around 1900.

Map No.2 shows in more detail the names of those who owned the different plots of land in 1840. The area of Garden Walk and Victoria Park is shown as belonging to Richard Smales, but I have found no further information about who he was e.g.in town/street directories. Note again that this is superimposed on a map of much later date - of at least 1930s vintage since Chesterton Community College is shown.
HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

1840 To 1895

Following Enclosure, development north of the river started. Map No.3 shows the early areas to be developed, including some western parts of Victoria Road, along Chesterton Road towards Mitchams Corner, including Albert Street and the bottom of Carlyle Road etc. The original Portland Arms pub was built in 1839 (since rebuilt).

However, development was not all that rapid, and despite the fact that the owner of the area destined to become Victoria Park seems to have petitioned for enclosure, it took over 50 years before the Park was built.

Trinity and Magdalene Colleges, fearing the growth of “a low suburb” with beerhouses and poor cottages, demanded at enclosure the creation of a tree lined road 60 feet wide with a walk by the river as far as Milton Road i.e. Chesterton Road opposite Jesus Green.

People moved out of Cambridge attracted by low rents and rates - the area was not part of the Borough of Cambridge until 1912. The area was known as “New Chesterton”, and most residents worked in Cambridge.
HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

1840 To 1895 (cont)

Victoria Road had some 60 houses by the 1850s and 180 in 1881. St.Luke’s Church was begun in 1873, and its’ Schools shortly after (part still exists as David Kindersley’s workshop on Victoria Rd.). Milton Road School was not built by the County Council until the early 1900s, when St Luke’s School had 600 pupils, a much larger number than it has ever had since, an indication of the number of children being generated by the growth of New Chesterton.

The area south of Victoria Road was developed in the 1870/80s. Primrose Street next to the Park was begun in 1872, and Garden Walk had 10 houses in 1881. However the latter was mostly gardens, hence perhaps the origin of its name, and it still had only 30 houses by 1910.

David Blackmore’s study suggests that it is clear that there were a series of long narrow plots to the north of Victoria Road which were not fully developed until early this century, due to their restricted width and individual streets at right angles to Victoria Road, which “meant they had a low level of connectivity frustrating development.”

The 1887 Street Directory for Victoria Road (see Appendix 1) shows a gap between Numbers 90 and 128 described as “cowsheds and field of John Read”. A copy of the 1886 Ordnance Survey Map (see Map No.4) shows Victoria Park undeveloped, but a Victoria Brewery sticking out into the Park.
HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

1840 To 1895 (cont)

John Read is recorded as owning the Victoria Brewery in 1878, and in 1895 is listed as a brewer and carter of 82 Victoria Road. He was probably related (? a brother) to George Read, butcher and dairymen, of 84 Victoria Road, who ran the Victoria Dairy. One of the photographs shows the Victoria Stores at 82-84 Victoria Road early this century. This was until recently the handy off-licence owned by Peatling & Cawdrons, and which is now a kitchen shop.

The 1886 Map also shows a Victoria Soap and Candle Works at the North-west corner of the Park in Garden Walk. That factory was established by Brimley, Whibley & Company in 1874. It was taken over in 1904 by W.Pollard & Co. who made confectionery there till about 1940. It was then a chemicals works in the 1950s and then used for manufacturing machine tools around 1970, before redevelopment in the 1980s for social housing.

The Development of Victoria Park

The first 3 houses are thought to have been built by the grandfather of a present resident and this seems to be the only continuous family connection from the origins of the Park to the present day. That builder was Samuel Ginn, listed as carpenter and joiner in the 1895 Street Directory for Victoria Road (see Appendix 2), and perhaps the same person listed at No.10 Primrose Terrace (now Street) in 1887, and then as a builder at No.13 Victoria Park in the 1913 Street Directory (see Appendix 3).

The 1895 Directory refers to the “building ground of Victoria Park”, and lists six houses which appear (according to the next available Directory for 1913) to be No.9 (Harry Williams, listed as a carpenter in 1895, but also as an undertaker and builder in 1913), No.13 (Samuel Ginn - see above), No.17 (Ellis Buck), No.? (Robert Eyres), plus Nos.58 and 60 (Milton and Ely Cottages). A number of the early residents seem to have been in the building/decorating trades, perhaps helping to develop the Park.

David Blackmore describes the 19th century development of New Chesterton as being “more formal and spacious in layout, catering for middle class tastes”. He refers then to Picture No.3 (see Appendix 4) of a pair of houses in Victoria Park (Nos.39 and 41) and comments “that Victoria Park shows the characteristic solid late Victorian semi-detached villa that was beginning to change the overall atmosphere of much of the suburbs”.

It is not really clear to me who was instrumental in the development of the Park, or who really owned the land, but there are some common names and features in the two houses whose deeds I have seen.

The owners of No.5 have acquired a really splendid collection of deeds. Its title starts with land which was bequeathed by Richard Day Linton, College Cook (no references found in Directories) in 1870, whose executors (sons-in-laws not living in Cambridge) sold on in 1893 (for £2,500) to Charles Henry Payne and Frederick Charles Martin, both architects of Post Office Terrace, Cambridge.
The Development of Victoria Park (cont)

This £2,500 might have been for the whole of the Park as building plots, and suggests that John Read only rented the area as a field. They sold on in April 1894 to William John Payne, builder and contractor of Kettering in Northamptonshire (was he related to Charles Payne, perhaps a brother?) for £983 part of the Victoria Park Estate (except Plots 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 43 & 44). In June 1894 the two Paynes and FC Martin sold the plot of No.5 to H. Ward, builder, for £64, and he in turn sold in December 1895 to John Start of 133 Victoria Rd. for £325 for possession in 1896.

The Abstract of Title to my own house, No.49, seems to start in July 1896 with a sale by the same William John Payne, builder of Kettering, to Samuel Kettle of Garden Walk, Head Cook at Jesus College (listed in the 1887 Street Directory in very bold type - evidently a man of some importance or paying for such an entry - and living at No.2 Victoria Villas, Garden Walk, probably the big house behind Nos.45-49, now owned by the Granta Housing Society) for £192 the land forming Lots 27-30 (probably relating to Nos.43/45/47/49) on the plan of the freehold building estate known as Victoria Park and having a frontage of 64 feet.

There are some covenants that are exactly the same for Nos. 5 & 49 viz:

(1) No houses to be erected within 20 feet of the road (this is why we all have the same length front gardens).
(2) Only private dwellings to be erected with no less than a gross value of £200 (this is presumably why nearly all of the houses are fairly similar, though by no means uniform - a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraces of 3 houses)
(3) No hotel tavern beerhouse or wine shop or any building for the sale of intoxicating liquors to be erected nor should any noisome trade or business be carried out on any part of the premises.

I think my house was probably rented initially, and sold on in 1908 for £330 to other landlords.

So, William John Payne and Charles H. Payne (perhaps related) and FC Martin may have been prime instigators of the development. The common covenants may have been their work? However, this is not clear. Any original deeds possessed by others could throw light on this.

The general view is that most of the houses were built in 1896. The 1901 Ordnance Survey Map (see Map No.5) indicates a few gaps - Nos. 66 & 68, and 4 other houses I have marked as being missing.

Were Nos. 66 & 68 not initially developed in case it was possible to get through into the land beyond? In fact they were built in the early 1900s and there was no possibility of development beyond for over 25 years after 1896. The Wragg family, who had been at least lukewarm towards enclosure, died out in 1921, and their land passed to St John’s College.
This eventually led to the development in the 1930s of Gilbert Road and of Council housing around the top of Garden Walk/Akeman Street etc. In 1947, the City Council acquired the unused northern part of the Hall Farm Wragg Estate from St John’s College, and from 1957, the South and North Arbury Council estates were developed.

I think it is clear that the Park’s status as a cul-de-sac and having a green is due to the pattern of land ownership before and after enclosure. The Park could not go further north because the Wragg family farm prevented this. The Victoria Park field was wider than other surrounding plots of land (Garden Walk, Primrose Street) which were developed earlier, and therefore a Green in the middle was possible. Also, since houses were built right around the Green, there was no scope for extending the Park, as in the case of Garden Walk, once further development was possible in the 1930s.
Was There a Tennis Court(s) on the Green?

My house’s Abstract Of Title has a plan attached to it showing two tennis courts and a fountain at the southern end of the Green. This may have been an aspiration rather than a reality. I understand from the Misses Feakes that there may have been one tennis court early this century. Does anyone have any further information?

As to the Green itself, the City Council have informed me that the land was vested in the care of the Council’s Commons and Cemeteries Committee by an Elizabeth Thompson in 1910. I am not sure who she was or why she owned the Green. The 1900 Town Directory lists a Mrs Elizabeth Thompson, a dressmaker living at 86 Castle Street, but I have not been able to find other references to her. An Arnold Thompson lived at 132 Victoria Road in 1887, but not in 1895, but he may have had nothing at all to do with Elizabeth Thompson.

Other Points

A particularly interesting photograph amongst those included at the end of this booklet is one showing Field Gun Carriages stationed on the Green during the 1914-18 War. Other photographs show the appearance and disappearance of railings and trees. The railings on front gardens were I understand removed during the 1939-45 War to be used for the war effort, though I have also heard that they did not get used for that purpose.

A resident (Jean Dann) who grew up in the Park before the Second World War has commented that the Green was not to be played on - it was “hallowed” ground. That was still the case until the 1950s. This may be because many of the original residents had grown older and there were less children around than in the early years of the Park. The photograph of the Victoria Park Army about 1910 shows children on the Green. Newer residents over the last 30 years have brought up children who have made full use of the Green, something special that we are very lucky to enjoy.

I think our relatively quiet cul-de-sac position has made it possible for residents to be more sociable than might otherwise be the case. This has led to various social events in the past, and the 1996 Centenary celebrations were a particular success. It is to be hoped that this tradition can be continued - not least at the forthcoming Millennium.
66 to 72 Victoria Park in the early 1900's

The Victoria Park "Army", about 1910

Original photograph taken and enlarged by "Billy" Williams, eldest son of Harry Williams, founder of Harry Williams and Sons, Funeral Directors, 9 Victoria Park

From right to left:
"Freddy" Snelling (standard bearer)
Laurie "Pop" Hornsby (bugler)
(probably lived at No. 32)
Frank Westley (drummer)
(probably lived at No. 68)
Harold Smith (with flag)
(probably lived at No. 37 or 39)
Reg Smith (arm in sling) as above
Harold Pigott
(probably lived at No. 22)
Ralph "Monkey" Webb
(probably lived at either No. 15 or 54)
"Georgie" Jolly
(probably lived at either No. 27 or 29)
Unknown (third right)
Frankie Pigott
(probably lived at No. 22)
Leslie Hornsby (waving flag in skirt)
(probably lived at No. 32)
Field gun carriages on Victoria Park during 1914-18 war
HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

Photographs 1895 - 1939

[Images of the street scene from 1895 and 1939]
HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

Photographs 1895 - 1939

A bride leaving 31 or 33 Victoria Park in about 1930(?)

[Images of photographs]
Photographs from the 22nd June 1996 Centenary Celebrations
Appendix 1 ~ 1887 Street Directory for Victoria Road

Appendix 2 ~ 1895 Street Directory for Victoria Road
Appendix 3 ~ 1913 Street Directory for Victoria Park

**VICARAGE TERRACE.**

- **VICTORIA AVENUE.**

- **VICTORIA PARK.**

- **VICTORIA ROAD.**


“Plan of Victoria Park - spacious and formal in design”

“Solid late Victorian semi-detached villas of Victoria Park”
How enclosure helped to shape ‘Backside Road’

C.W.N. 10.6.1982
DOWN YOUR STREET
Sara Payne visits Victoria Road

VICTORIA ROAD, which scythes down to Mitcham’s Corner from Huntingdon Road, sending traffic juddering through a densely populated enclave of Victorian houses, shops and businesses, was fashioned out of open fields in the late 1830s.

The Enclosure Map of 1840 shows strip fields in private ownership, one of the principal landowners being Mary Bason, lady of the manor, along each side of what then called New Huntingdon Road, originally known as “Backside Road.” The decision to resign Victoria Road got its bend.

At the time of the enclosure and development of what became New Chesterton there was some dispute about the exact route of Backside Road. The minutes of the “Chesterton Enclosure Commissioners” for August 6, 1833 included a decision to alter the course of the Backside Road to join Histon Road on a curving line. That’s how Victoria Road got its bend.

Up on that bend on the north side of the road, partially obscured by parked cars, roadworks and passing traffic which forces intrepid pedestrians to block ears and hold noses, there is an old white-washed brick wall on land used by King Street Garage whose office is at 208 Victoria Road.

The interesting thing about this wall which I had been encouraged to go and find after reading an article in a local history publication by Miss Helen Larka, are the pieces of 13th century sculptured stone which are set in it. It was a thrill to find them in such an unpromising setting.

I’ll let Miss Larka, who lives in Huntingdon Road, take up the story.

“Where did these stone come from? Another member of the Local History Council gave her opinion that they came from Barmwell Priory, the building of which began at the end of the 11th century, the first canons moving in in 1112. Building went on for several centuries, chiefly in clunch and Barnack stone, until the whole met its doom in 1538 in the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

“It is known that the monasteries covered a large area, probably from Walnut Tree Lane to River Lane, and that the lands held by the foundation stretched far beyond the enclosures. It is known, also, that the buildings were plundered by all and sundry as material for new buildings over a large area for several centuries. What was left of the foundations was dug up and the whole levelled and covered in 1812.”

Where’s the link with Victoria Road? Well, by 1870 the area was being developed for housing.

“In 1874,” writes Miss Larka, “a certain James Wisbej moved from the Priory Brewery near the Abbey, between Parsonage Lane and Walnut Tree Lane in Newmarket Road, and appears as the inhabitant of the Eagle Brewery in Victoria Road which became No. 212-14. The directory of 1884 lists Charles V. Lawrence as running the Eagle and Anne.”

“It’s Miss Larka’s inspired guess that James Wisbej, being a soul above that of ordinary mortals, was used to seeing fragments of the old priory lying about his premises in Newmarket Road. They had been there all his lifetime and long before that, and he thought he would miss them when he burned his boats, and ventured into the new building area of Victoria Road.” So, she suggests, he picked them up and carried them with him, and fixed them into his new brick wall at the Eagle Tavern.

“In 1900, when the Eagle Tavern was sold by auction, the building being paid to the Rev. William Smith, deeds dating back to 1870 were offered. It was described as of brick and slate, with a frontage of 19ft 6in, having premises of brick and timber at the rear, described as slaughter houses. The house was run as a bar and a pork butcher’s shop.

“In 1964,” writes Miss Larka, “the building was there as the Eagle public house, with extensive premises in the rear, but was pulled down soon afterwards, when an artesian well was found beneath the floor.” Next door to the Eagle was a public house called the Horse and Gate.

Building in Victoria Road was well under way by the late 1870s, although the majority of the houses on the south side were built generally later than those on the north.

The street directory for 1878 lists in Victoria Road a small population of working people with Dickensian-sounding occupations.

William Green, the turnkey at the nearby jail on Castle Hill, lived next to Charles Foreman, the bricklayer, and James Dear, the gardener in Briggs’ Yard, near the Victoria Road junction with Histon Road. Nearby were James Wilderspin, the baker, Robert Austin, the bootmaker, and a porter called John Mortlock (any relation, I wonder, of the illustrious family of bankers?).

In the stretch of road between the Horse and Gate pub and the Cambridge General Cemetery (and refer to Histon Road, French’s Road and Victoria Road, there lived in 1878 two college servants, a whipman, a coachman, a carpenter, bookseller’s assistant, a compositor and a tailor.

The next stretch, known as St Peter’s Terrace, ran from the Carpenter’s Arms pub down to what used to be the Cambridge Industrial School. The Industrial School, built in 1849, was, according to the promotional literature of the time, intended for the reception of boys between the ages of 13 and 19 years of age — “a time of life at which a vast number of boys wandered about the street in idleness, or become inmates of the

Continued on next page.
Boys paid according to their skill and industry

Continued from previous page.

gagol.” See what I mean about Dickens in Victoria Road?
The committee of the industrial school said they hoped that “much good might be done for boys of this age, by giving them the opportunity of instruction in manual labour, such as gardening and some of the commoner kinds of handicraft, combined with mental discipline and religious teaching.”

To begin with, the school had places for 50 boys. It was under the direction of a headmaster (in 1878 he was called R. Boning, and lived next to the school) assisted by a gardener, and teachers of various trades. Between six and seven acres of land were under cultivation. The committee said that they “intended to allow wages to such boys as shall appear by their industry and skill to be fairly entitled to remuneration.”

We continue in 1878 down past St Luke’s Church, built in 1874, and the site of the United Reformed Church, built in 1884, of which there will be more detail in Part II next week, past the terraces and cottages which led down to the Victoria Asylum, later the Cambridge Victoria Homes at the bottom of the street. These were Grafton Terrace, Luard Cottages, Charter’s Terrace (named after the carpenter James Charter who lived at No. 31), Primrose Terrace and Wesleyan Terrace. The little houses were home to several carpenters, cooks, tailors, bootmakers, brickmakers and bricklayers, and one photographer called John Deller who lived in Grafton Terrace.

On May 9, 1837, 20 men concerned about the plight of the sick and the elderly held a meeting at the Wrestlers Inn in Petty Cury. This resulted in the Victoria Homes. Two cottages in James Street, Barnwell, were hired at a rent of £10 each, to house four elderly members of local friendly societies. Candidates were elected by subscribers and this method of entry is still in use today.

On February 20, 1838, a subscription list was opened and Town and Gown gave generously. With the money raised, land was purchased and on March 16, 1841 the foundation stone of the original building in Victoria Road was laid. To mark the occasion, a procession headed by two bands, including the mayor and corporation, many senior members of the University and various free-mason lodges and friendly societies, proceeded to a service at Great St Mary’s Church.

Further buildings went up in 1887 and 1889, and in 1906. With the building of the two bungalows facing Victoria Road it became possible to have a nurse permanently on the staff. Today the nurse or warden is Mrs E. Watson who every day visits the 26 men and women who live in the homes and who cultivate their gardens.

In 1878 on the opposite side of the road there were only about 30 homes. Between Crotholme Lane and Albert Street lived two tailors, a draper, a sawyer, a stonemason, a college servant and a carter. A Miss Lochart lived at Oakleigh Villa. A laundress called Mrs Sandfield and a blacksmith appropriately called Smith worked in the stretch between Albert Street and St James Terrace.

St James Terrace and Victoria Terrace, which included the Blackmoor’s Head — the landlord was then Frederick Hinson — were the only part of the western end of the south side to have been built by the late 1870s. It was still a partially rural area.

Next week: Victoria Road, Part 2.
A painting of the Victoria Homes in Victoria Road, and below a photograph showing both the old building and the newer bungalows.
School for 197, and two teachers

Continued from previous page.

the material in this article, said of the public luncheon: “It is difficult to see how many of the unfortunate parishioners were able to be present at 11 am on a working day. It is most unlikely that they would have been given a morning off, and even if they had, very few could have afforded even 2s 6d for luncheon on the wages of day.”

In 1981 St Luke’s was constituted a parish, and in May of that year, George Hale was instituted as first vicar by the Bishop of Ely. The first part of the Church had cost £4,707 19s 7d, of which the parishioners subscribed £288 8s 6d, the clergy £366 6s 0d, and the University and other friends £4,005 4s 10d.

The completed Church was consecrated on February 3, 1888, while the spire, generously paid for by a gift of £500 from the Rev. E. W. Biore, Vice-Master of Trinity, was completed nine months later. That little ceremony was to take place at 9 pm, but as Canon Tibbatts writes, “unfortunately one of the rockets to illuminate the scene was dropped by a workman near the top of the ladder. However, no one was hurt and the fixing of the weathercock duly carried out by Mr Hale.” In 1887 the Church was declared free of debt. The total cost of the fabric was £10,272, 18s 2d and of the three schools then existing £3,371 18s 10d.

As Canon Tibbatts says, the building of the church was a remarkable achievement in such a district, and shows the zeal and dedication of the clergy, and the goodwill of the university, whose members had contributed most of the cash.

A few days before the consecration of the first part of the permanent church, a mixed school for boys, girls, and infants was opened under Miss Betts in the schoolroom of the Industrial School on October 1, 1874.

There were 25 children on the roll, but by the end of the end of
IN 1851, the Bishop of Ely gave a licence to the Vicar of Chesterton for services to be held in the schoolroom of the Industrial School on the corner of Victoria Road and Harvey Goodwin Avenue, although the avenue itself was not created for many years.

The Committee of the Industrial School lent the school for religious services and for Sunday school until 1882.

But as the population of what had come to be known as New Chesterton increased, better accommodation for worship than the schoolroom of the Industrial School was required. A Conventional District of St Luke’s was established before the end of 1862 with a population of 1,200.

A temporary wooden church was built, partly from the materials of an old circus, and opened for services on May 28, 1863, in the opening service the preacher, a Mr Emery, expressed the pious hope that “such was the desire manifested among the people of that neighbourhood to hear the Gospel that the committee did not wait to be able to build a permanent structure, but were content to be present to have a temporary erection, feeling confident that if they first obtained a church of living souls, the material fabric would soon follow.

The temporary wooden church with its 300 chairs was soon too small. By 1872 the population of St Luke’s District had grown to 2,750 and was increasing at the rate of 250 a year. It was time for a building appeal to be launched.

At a public meeting held in the Guildhall on December 8, 1872, it was proposed by Mr Beresford Hope, MP for the University, and seconded by Prof Westcott, “that this meeting heartily responds to the urgent appeal of the inhabitants of St Luke’s District for assistance in the effort they are making to build a Church.”

A committee was appointed and held its first meeting in George Hale’s rooms in Sidney Sussex College on December 9. George Hale, after whom the local Hale Street is named, had become curate of St Luke’s in 1871. The building fund was launched.

The appeal made the case for a new church. “There is urgent need of a church large and permanent; at least a thousand sittings should be provided. Owing to the increased price of land and materials, a suitable site for a new church, even plain in design and simple in character, could not be built for less than £7,000 exclu-
School for 197, and two teachers

Continued from previous page.

the material in this article, said of the public luncheon: "it is difficult to see how many of the unfortunate parishioners were able to be present at 11 a.m. on a working day. It is most unlikely that they would have been given a morning off, and even if they had, very few could have afforded even 2s 6d for luncheon on the wages of day."

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There were 25 children on the roll, but by the end of the end of
One of the many delightful corner shops which used to be a feature of Victoria Road.

Church built by public appeal

CWN 17.6.1982
Bakers who made 600 calls a day...

There has been a bakery near the corner of Victoria Road and Mitton Road since the turn of the century. The business was started by Charles J. Dant at 18-20 Victoria Road, next door to John Haslop, the butcher.

Today the Victoria Bakery, run by the Maskell brothers, Len and John, is one of the most popular small bakeries in Cambridge. Maskells supplies 12 colleges with their daily bread; bakes wholemeal loaves for Arjuna, the Mill Road wholefood shop; prepares gluten-free bread for people who can’t eat ordinary bread; and makes special birthday cakes for children.

Retired

If your six-year-old wants a cake that reflects a current obsession with spaceships or the Task Force, Maskells will come up with a concoction decorated with spacemen or ships.

Len Maskell told me the story of his business. “The place was built as a bakery by the Dant brothers, for whom my father Albert Maskell worked. When they retired they offered the business to my father. “Dad said he would take the business if I came in with him. At that time I was working in a men’s outfitters in Sussex Street. I left to join the bakery.”

When Len Maskell first joined the bakery they used to deliver the bread. “When I started we had one horse and cart and a London barrow. We used to make 600 calls a day.”

After the war deliveries became uneconomic and they concentrated on the wholesale side of the business.

Mr Maskell and his team of bakers start work at 5 am Monday to Friday and 4 am on Saturday.

Mr Maskell gets there an hour earlier to heat the ovens. There are two — the original brick one for the bread and another for confectionery which was installed in the old stables.

Cows

The older inhabitants of Victoria Road remember the cows being driven up to be milked at the dairy that used to be at number 62. In 1904 the cowkeeper and dairyman was Charles Enderby. Mrs E. M. Vinsen the cowkeeper from 1907-1912.

In 1913 J. P. Arnold and Sons took over and ran the Scotland Dairy there until 1934. Charles Arnold was the dairyman from 1934-1936, when the dairy closed down.

In 1938 it became a ladies’ hairdresser’s. A Mrs Hancock was in charge. Latterly it has been an insurance broker’s and an electrical shop.

Kidman and Sons of 62 Victoria Road is a family business started more than 100 years ago by Charles Kidman. The firm moved to Victoria Road in 1943.

There has been an off-licence at 82-84 Victoria Road since 1904, when A. H. Grief, grocer and bottled ale and stout merchant, ran the Victoria Store. It continued to be an off-licence and “jug and bottle” shop until 1948, when Ivor Mattick took
over and ran it for Greene King
as an off-licence. He retired in
1975.
The shop is now owned by
Peasling and Cawtron and man-
aged by Mr. G. Finn.
When H. S. Hibbitt and Sons,
the monumental masons, moved
to 128-130 Victoria Road in 1925
from Alpha Road, where the
family business was started in
1890, there were orchards at the
back of the houses on the north
side of the street and trees at
the bottom of the gardens. It
was still a comparatively rural
area.

Chimneys

Mr. John Hibbitt got out the
family Bible to find out when his
great-grandfather, Albert David
Hibbitt, who started the busi-
ness, was born.
"Yes, it was in 1844. He was
one of three brothers who were
journeymen masons. They came
from Exton in Rutland."

Albert, Leeland and Josiah
Hibbitt did work on the War Of-
ice building in London before
coming to Cambridge to under-
take commissions for Jesus Col-
lege. They settled in Cambridge,
where Albert died in 1888.
John Hibbitt, whose son
Leeland is in the business with
him, recently supervised the
restoration of the chimneys of
the Master's Lodge of St John's
College. He and his team of
skilled and apprentice masons
are now restoring some of the
carved stonework of a church in
Roxton.
Memorial carving is an impor-
tant part of their work. Fashions
in gravestones change. "Nowa-
days people prefer granite to
marble — they are better off," he
said.
The older residents remember
the two little shops that used to
stand on the opposite sides of
Garden Walk at the junction
with Victoria Road.

Miss S. E. Stanley ran the
grocer's at number 146 from
1929-1963 and Mr. Adams the
sweet shop at number 146 from
1922-1939. Many years ago Mr.
M. Brookman was the grocer at
146, a house called The Limes.

At Boyton and Wright, the
haberdasher's (now E. J. Pigott)
at 154 Victoria Road, if your
purchases came to, say, 9s
11 1/2d your change would be a
packet of pins instead of a far-
thing. Your money and your
change, if you did have any,
would be stowed into one of
those pulleys and shoot contrap-
tions, now a thing of the past.

How many people remember
old Mr. Driver, who had a
barber's shop in a shed in his
garden up at the top of the road
at the junction of Histon Road
Continued on next

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Mr. John Hibbitt, whose father was a journeyman mason.

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...when the good old Co-op was still young

Continued from previous page.

The Co-op, established as such in the early 1900s.

and Huntingdon Road? The land is now a car park.

The south side has always had its share of small businesses and shops in this road where there has traditionally been a mixture of residential and commercial interests.

In 1904 the Blackamoor’s Head public house was also a shop. Mrs F. Hinson ran it as a grocer’s, tea dealer’s and newsagent. Nearby at number 197 lived James Kidd, the bird-stuffer.

Past the junction with Arthur Street and Searle Street — where the other day fragile wild poppies in full bloom were the object of veneration by an amateur photographer oblivious to the passing traffic — we come to a stretch of Victoria Road where most of the local shops are concentrated.

What is now the “Blow Out” Chinese take-away at 175 was many years ago a china shop run by J. C. Dorban. However, people living in the area remember it as Shorrock’s Fish Shop, one of two fish shops in the street at one time.

Appearance

Jack Hutt’s the greengrocer’s at 169, was originally a butcher’s and sausage maker’s run by William Mitchell.

Next door Tony’s butcher’s shop, formerly Pileworth’s, started life as a linen draper’s. All these little shops have changed hands often.

One shop that has not changed, except in appearance, is the good old Co-op at 143-144. It was established there in the early 1900s as the Co-operative Butcher Department and the Co-operative Stores, No 2 Branch.

The butcher’s is now an important chemist’s, quite a lifeline to the many old people living nearby. The Co-op Store has been refurbished over the years and is now an unpretentious little supermarket where residents find companionship and swap tales. It is the equivalent of a market place for the people of the north end of Victoria Road.

Among the people living in the next stretch of the road in the early years of the century was the clerk and schoolmaster at HM Prison, presumably the prison at Castle Hill.

Mr Segrave, who started business

Charles Coxall and he lived in Victoria Road in 1904.

Chemist

What is now the Victoria Road Post Office at number 101, run by Mr and Mrs Steve Murphy, was originally a private house called Bleak House.

The post office was called the

Postal and when, it was number 107.

Fisher Street, the “Town Cup” and the “Town Cup” and the

removal business the day his ancestors.

The son of Segrave started as a cabinet-maker’s business in Victoria his firm does 50 years.

The son of Segrave started as a cabinet-maker’s business in Victoria his firm does 50 years.

One of the tricks ever done involved a Barbirolli lock-keeper couldn’t get a was near the house so we load all the furniture, our bit, bottomed red boat up the river.

John Hibblitt has fond memories of Frank Piggot, the grocer and general dealer who ran his popular business at 76 Victoria Road, at the corner of Holland Street. “He made me a cricket bat when I was a little boy,” he told me.
Opposite

Mr Pigott’s daughter, Miss May Pigott, lives across the road opposite her father’s old shop.

The new flats called Grassmere Gardens — why the fetching allusion to beautiful Cumbria? — have blended well into the street line at the Mitcham’s Corner end of Victoria Road.

John Hibbitt told me that Birch’s Garage used to occupy the site, and I see from the 1904 Street Directory that Henry Birch used to live at 48 in a house called Bolton Cottage. He must have started his garage there.

While Henry Birch was living in Victoria Road a Miss Williams was running a mixture preparatory school called Bittern House four doors down at 41.

The shops at the corner of Albert Street and Victoria Road — M. and S. Orbell, the newsagent, and Alibaba, the hairdresser, have been on the site for many years under different ownership.

Mr Alan David, who owns Alibaba, believes there has been a hair salon on the site for the best part of the century.

Dickens

“When I moved in 10 years ago it looked like something out of Dickens with little round basins sunk in marble and big Sweeney Todd-type barber’s chairs with long shaving headrests. There were prints on display and big show cabinets with glass fronts.”

The original owner, Mr Ambrose, ran the newspaper’s as well as the barber’s for there were connecting doors between the two shops. Later Mr Ralph ran the barber’s shop. He used to box the ears of children who fidgeted.

So Victoria Road has not changed much over the years. It is still a street of small businesses, local shops and solid terrace houses. The community feeling continues to be strong.