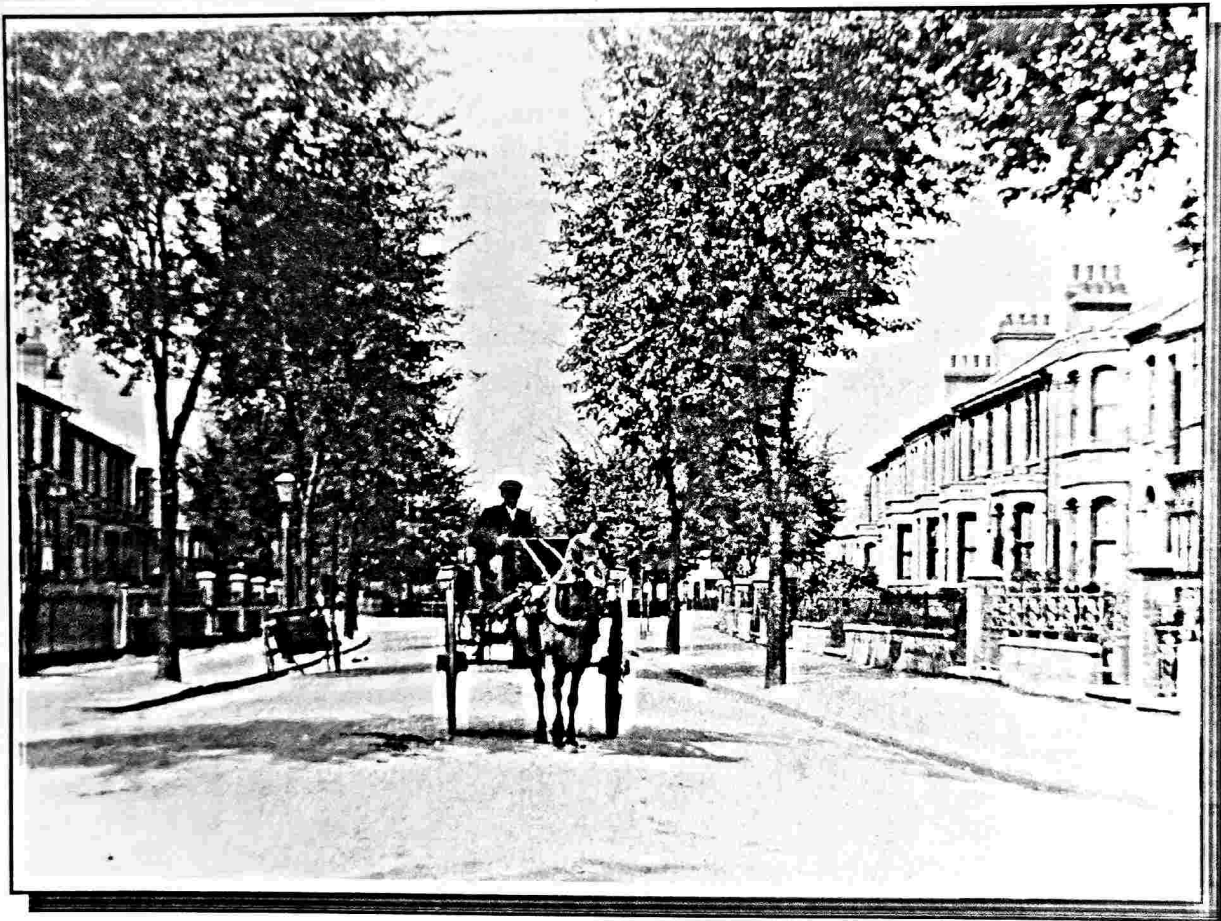


Some Early History of Victoria Park Cambridge



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

INTRODUCTION

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.

Simon Watkins
49 Victoria Park
Telephone: Cambridge 526157
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.

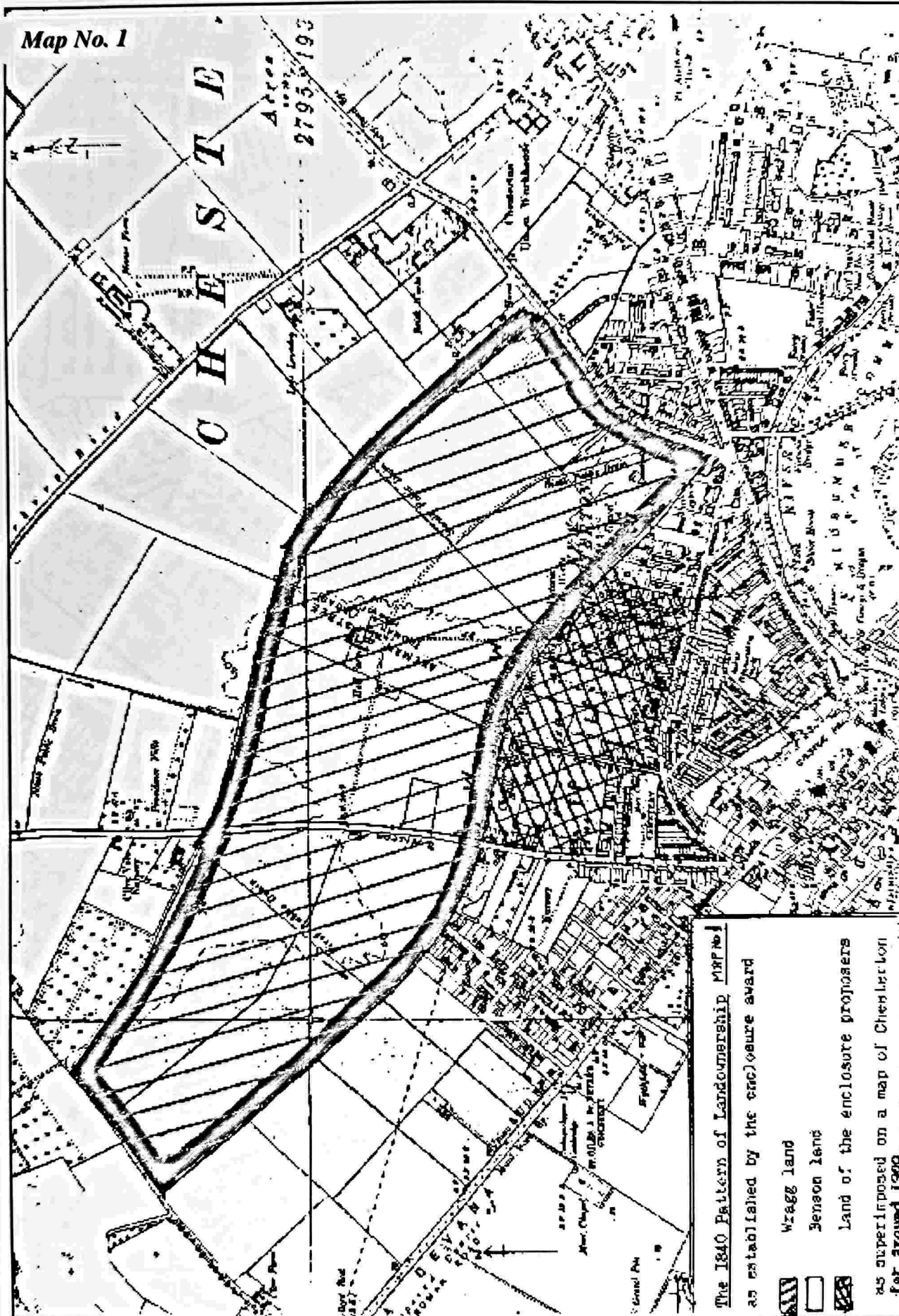
Usually enclosure was promoted by the main landowners, but in Chesterton the latter did not seem keen on it, probably for fear it would encourage the rapid development of suburbs of Cambridge north of the river. Thus, the initiative for enclosure seems to have come more from small landowners to the North 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.

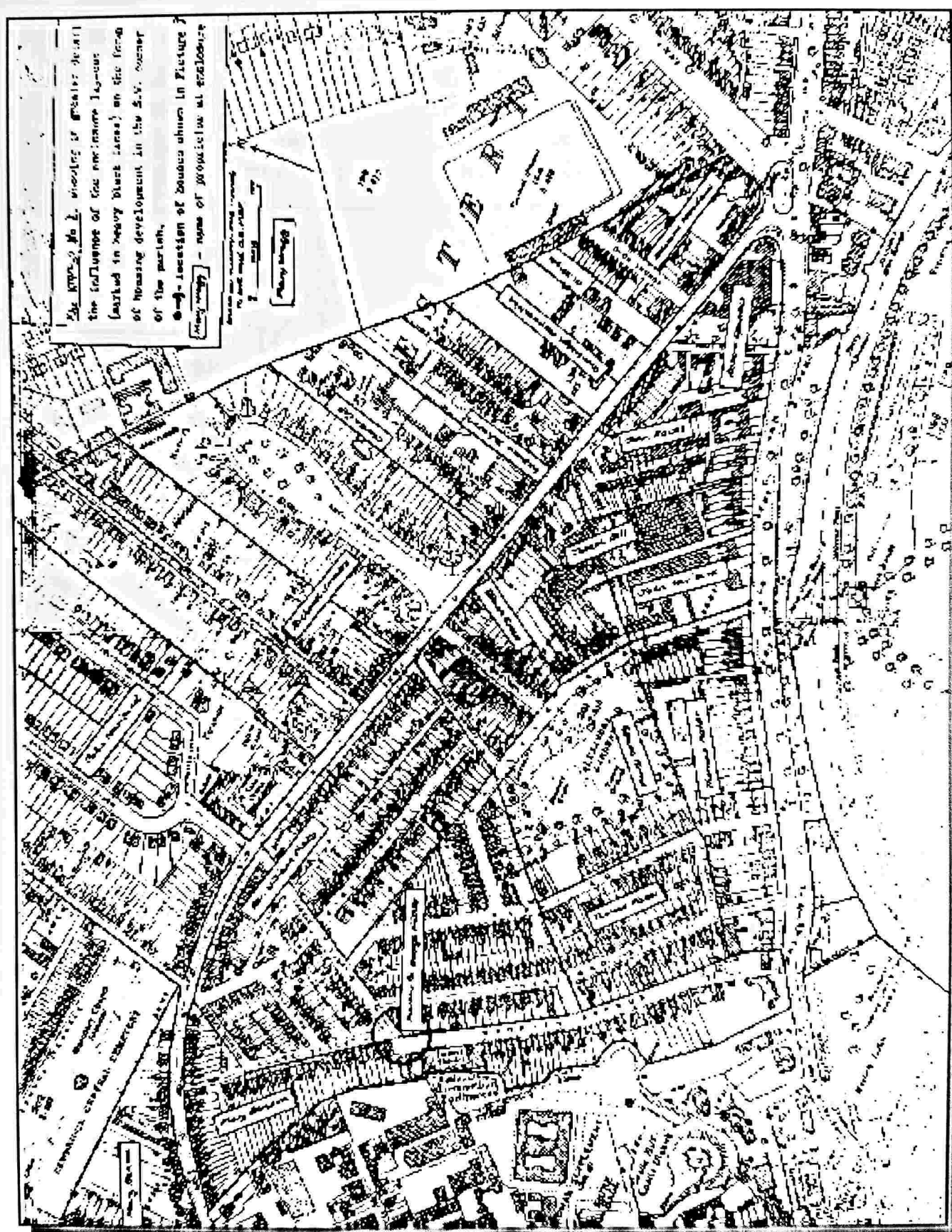
Map No.1 shows the pattern of land ownership in 1840 with the Wragg family land shaded in single lines (the Wraggs were at least indifferent to enclosure) and the land of the enclosure proposers shaded in criss-crossing lines (mostly north of Victoria Road). Note that this is actually superimposed on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

Map No. 1



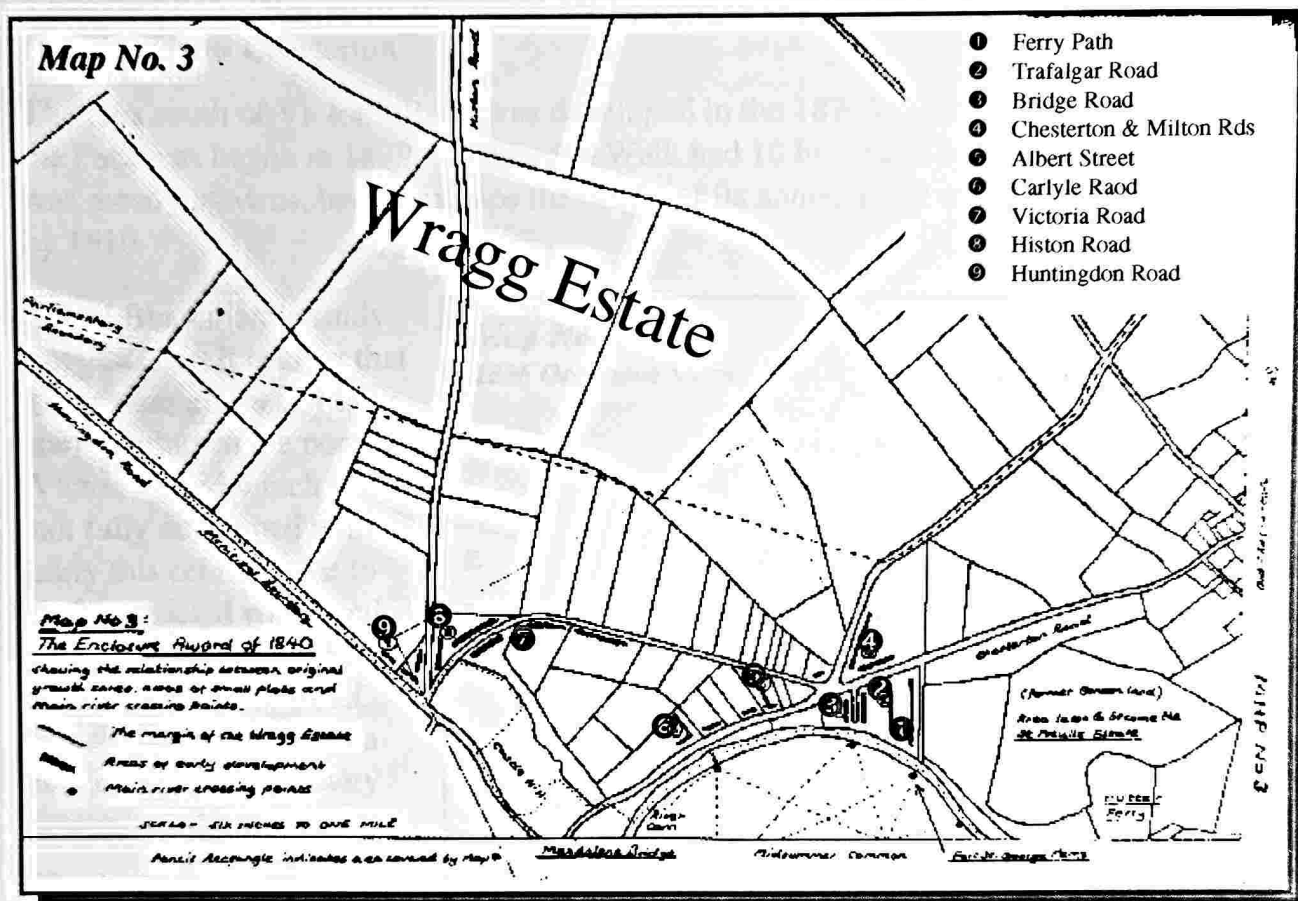
Map No. 2



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

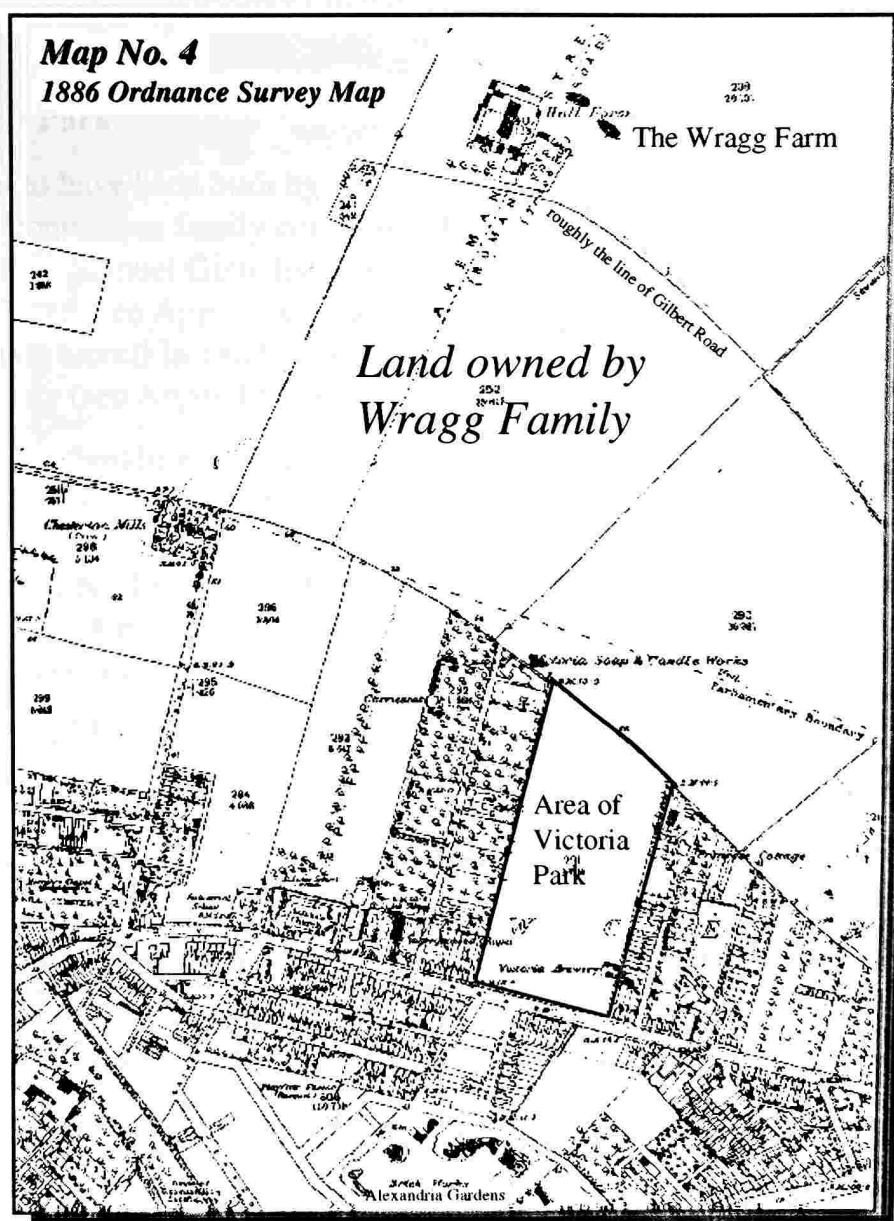
1840 To 1895 (cont)

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 dairyman, 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 Lenton, 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.

HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

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 of all 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.

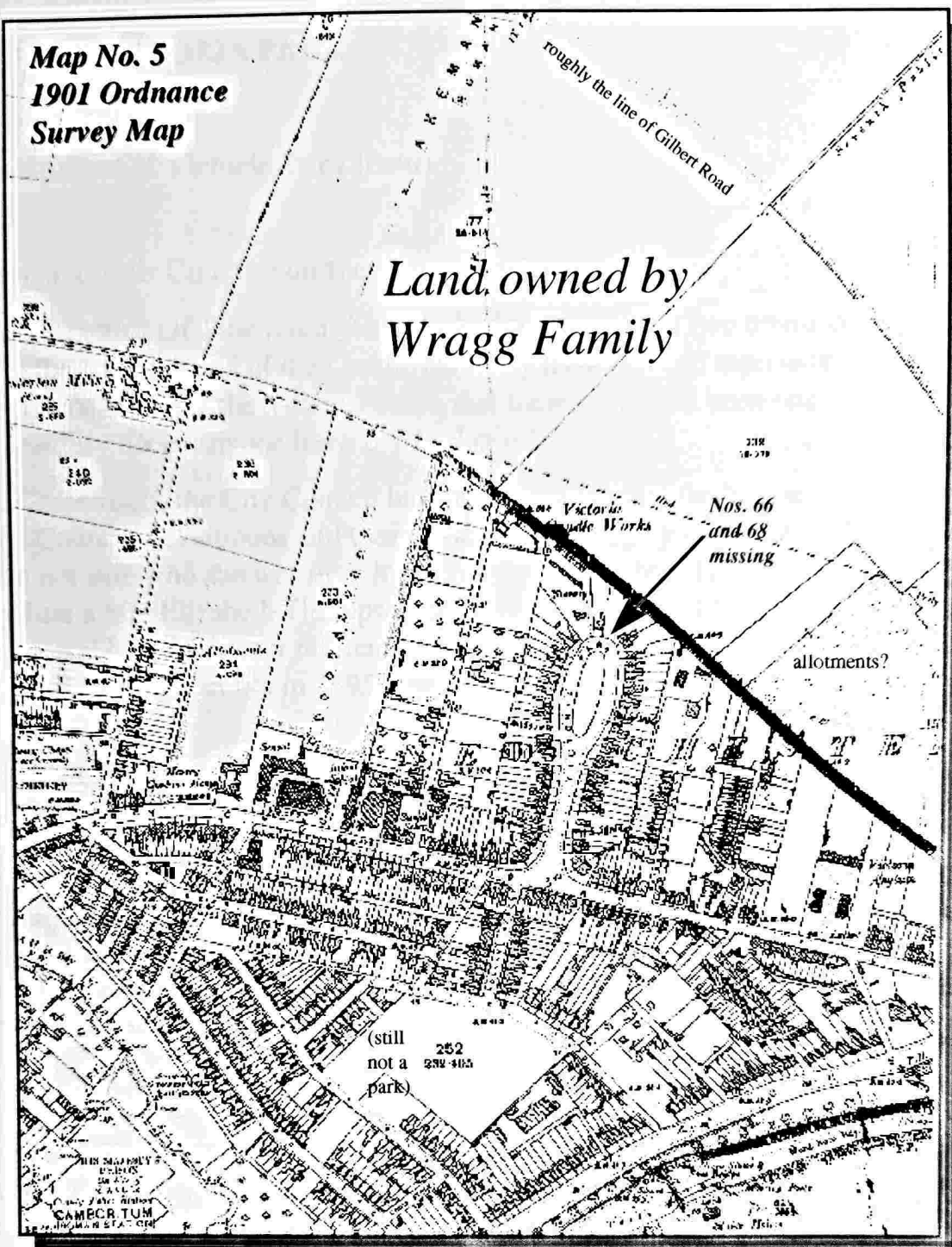
So, William John Payne and Charles H. Payne (perhaps related) and FC Martin may have been prime instigators of the development. The common covenants may have been their work? However, this is not clear. Any original deeds possessed by others could throw light on this.

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.

**Map No. 5
1901 Ordnance
Survey Map**

*Land owned by
Wragg Family*



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.

HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

The Development of Victoria Park (cont)

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.

HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

Photographs 1895 - 1939



66 to 72 Victoria Park in the early 1900's



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)

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

HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

Photographs 1895 - 1939

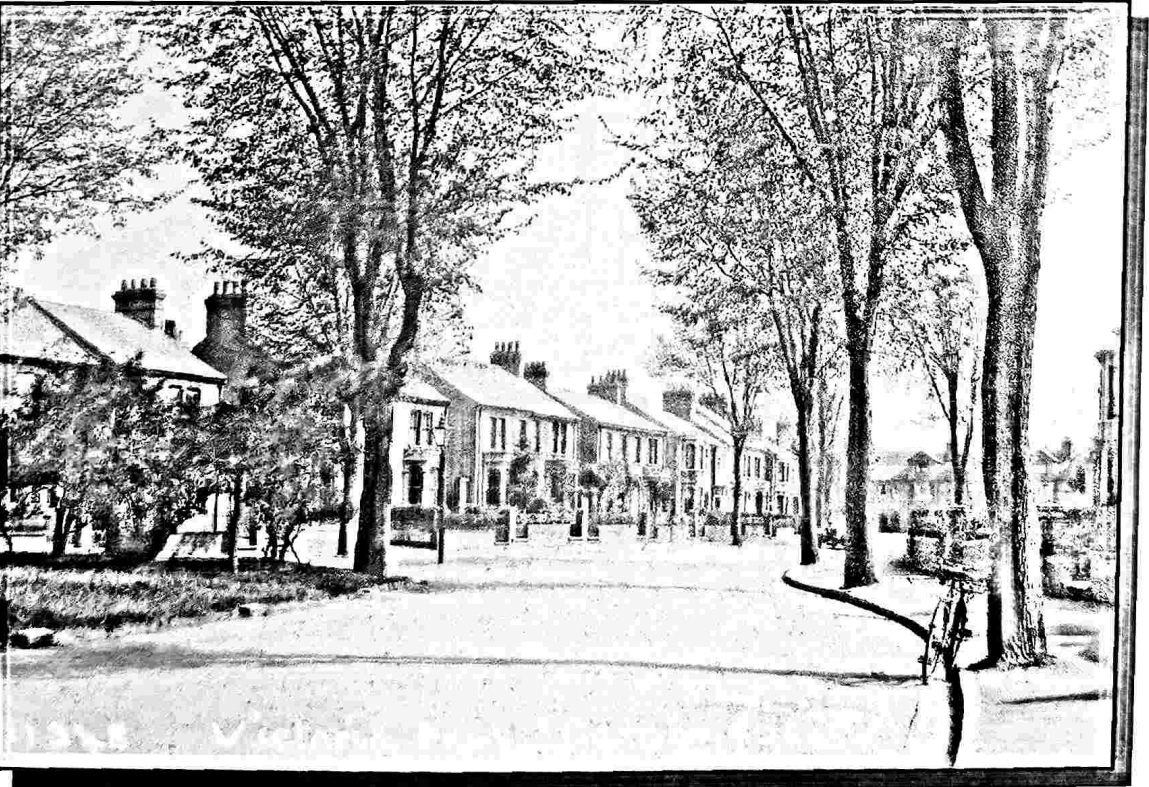


Field gun carriages on Victoria Park during 1914-18 war



HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

Photographs 1895 - 1939

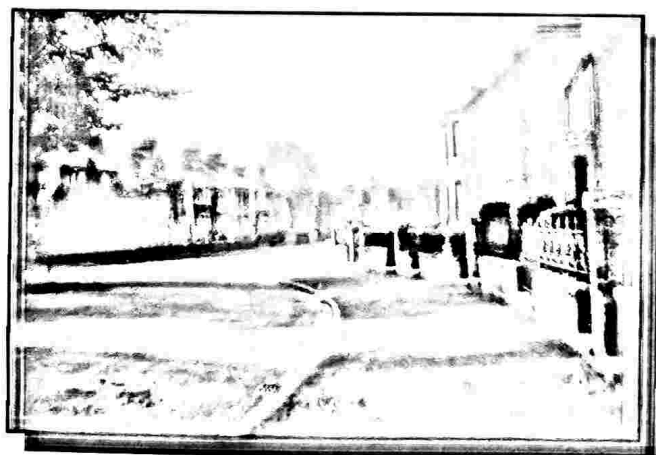
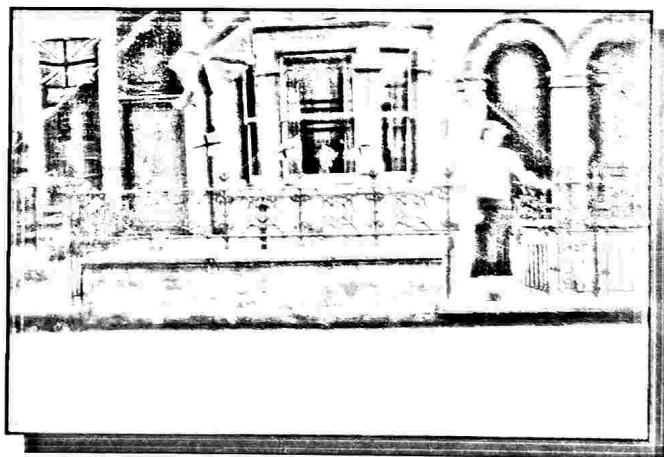


HISTORY OF VICTORIA PARK

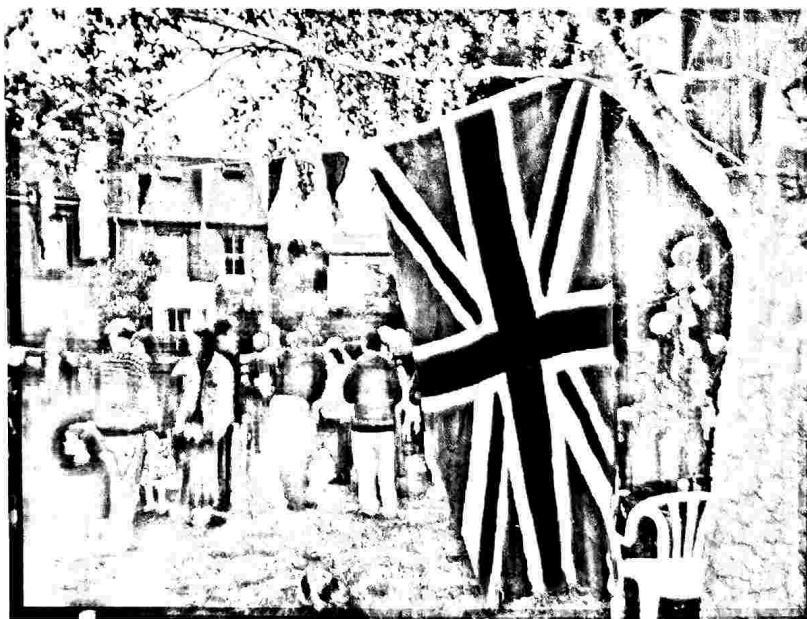
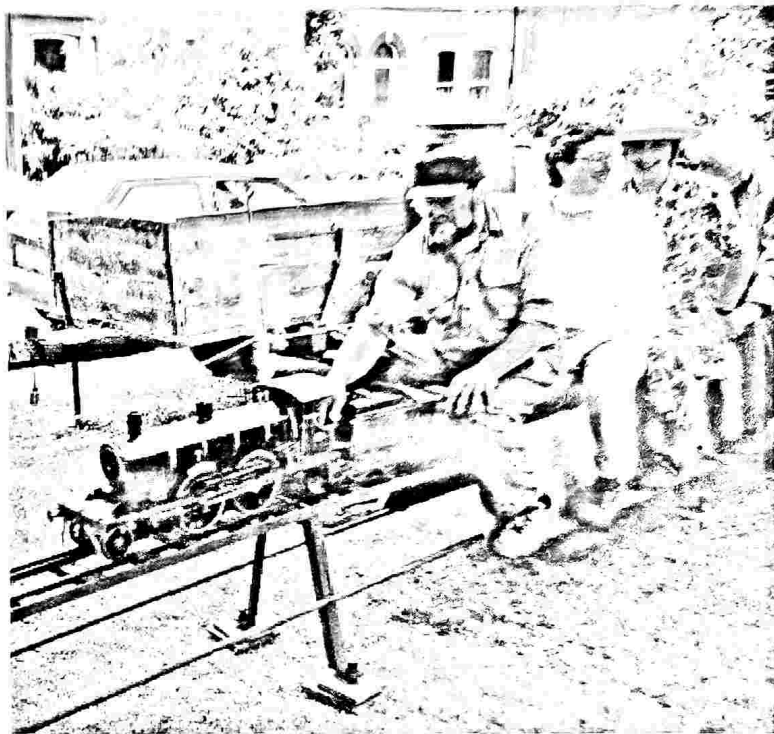
Photographs 1895 - 1939



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



Photographs from the 22nd June 1996 Centenary Celebrations



Appendix 3 ~ 1913 Street Directory for Victoria Park

214 V

CAMBRIDGE DIRECTORY.

[F

V]

CAMBRIDGE DIRECTORY.

[V 215

VICARAGE TERRACE.

Here is S. Matthew's Street.

NORTH SIDE.

May, Rev. F. Harvey, M.A., S.
Matthew's Vicarage

10 Dean, Mrs.
11 Lobb, George, labourer
12 Dean, David, labourer
13 Miles, George, labourer
14 Asplin, Robert, labourer

Here is Sharon Street.

SOUTH SIDE.

1 Longley, Arthur Henry, labourer
2 Langley, William, joiner
3 Brown, Thomas, painter
4 Fitzpatrick, Charles, labourer
5 Nathan, Joe, labourer
6 Palmer, Alfred B., printer
7 Davis, Charles, mill hand
8 Savage, Henry, college servant
9 Chapman, John
10 Asher, John, coalheaver
11 Turner, Eliza, waitress
12 Curran, Ernest, collars servant
13 Gales, William, hotel porter
14 Green, Mrs.
15 Aldridge, Charles, labourer
16 Wilson, Alfred, labourer
17 Kippen, Wm., dealer
18 O'Neil, Mrs.
19 Crowley, Thomas, bootmaker
20 Peters, Andrew Thomas K. bookbinder
21 Langan, Frederick
22 O'neil, Mrs., grocer
23 Peck, John
24 Gales, Frederick
25 Russell, John Robert, labourer

Here is Sharon Street.

VICTORIA AVENUE.

Here is Chesterton Road.

WEST SIDE.

Mitcham, James, butcher
Smith, George, fruiterer
King, Fred, hairdresser and tobacconist
Bosworth, A. C., tailor and outfitter L. & N.W. & Mid. Railway Goods and Parcel Receiving Office
1 Conway, Mrs. E., stationer, tobacconist and newsagent
2 Finch, E., confectioner and fruiterer
3 Stewart, Mrs. Sarah Ann, milliner, dress and mantle maker
Stewart and Pynn, printers
Here is Twifield Street.
4 Hill, Charles, greengrocer and florist
5 Harvey, G., tailor
Pynn, John, tailor, Overgreen House
Pynn, Mrs., teacher of dancing

(Victoria Avenue continued).

Victoria Bridge.

MIDSUMMER COMMON AND BUTT GREEN.

Here is Maid's Causeway.

WEST SIDE.

BUTT GREEN AND MIDSUMMER COMMON.

Victoria Bridge.

Dunn, William, River View
Dunn, William, painter, glazier, iron-
monger, etc.
Co-operative Society Confectionery
Branch No. 10
Lawrence, Miss, *managers*
Sturt, John, cabinet maker
Barron, Arthur, stables, furniture
remover, etc.

Here is Chesterton Road.

VICTORIA PARK.

Here is Victoria Road.

1 Key, V. C., Holmleigh
4 Markham T. L., Westgate
6 Wade, Frank
8 Brown, William R., clerk, Cubbon House
10 Watts, Arthur G.
12 Bockham, William H., Colville House
14 Young, John, Maryn House
16 Blackwell, Thomas Samuel, Wodehouse
18 Watts, Mrs., Everdale
20 Emmerson, Alfred, bricklayer, Pine-wood
22 Pigott, Christopher W., carpenter, Cromwell House
24 Cornwell, William, Oakwood
26 Baaham, Arthur, clerk, West View
28 Duxbury, Alfred, builder
30 Dixon, Joseph, plasterer
Dixon, Miss C., dressmaker
32 Hornsby, Mrs., Denmark
34 Parish, William, Lilac Cottage
36 Brittain, Arthur, Sandy Hook
38 Wilson, Charles William, assistant overseer for the Borough, Myrtle House
40 Day, A. J., Eastfield
42 Longley, Ernest Albert, sergt.-major R.E., C.U.O.T.C., Holbrook House
44 Eyres, Arthur, hosiery manufacturer
46 Graves, Clement, photographer, Clarence Villa
48 Wright, Mrs., Ravenstone
50 Marshall, Mrs., Sunnydene

Victoria Park (continued).

52 Reed, A. H. H., Mannamund
54 Webb, Walter, Kremlin
56 Hunt, Mrs. Malross
58 Glover, Harry, Milton Cottage
60 Williams, Reginald Edwin, Ely Cottage
62 Canham, Joseph, publisher's manager, Brighton House
Canham, Charles F.
64 Sadler, Enoch, The Bungalow
66 Mallett, Thomas J., Bloemfontein
68 Westley, William D., Councillor of the Borough, Pretoria
70 Clarry, George R., Lynton Villa
Lawrence, J., Victoria Park Nursery
61 Lane, George
59 Green, Arthur William, Llanfair
57 Jacob, William, Elm Leigh
55 Edwards, Mrs. Everton
53 Stevens, Harry Louis, Normanhurst
51 Collins, William, Mount Prospect
49 Redgwell, Clifford Henry, Watersfield
47 Inglis, William Dickson, head master Milton Road Council School, York House
45 Denney, E. G., houlder, Nilton House
43 Gray, Charles E., assistant Sedgwick Museum, Nilton House
Kippen, Miss
39 Smith, Charles, engineer, Holmfield
37 Smith, Alfred, Haydon Villa
35 Layton, Charles Richard, Rochdale
33 Mason, George Prohmick, Dewey House
31 Jolley, George Robert, Cottenham Villa
29 Jolley, G. J., cab proprietor, Cilton Villa
27 Gaddy, John, college servant, Glencoe Villa
25 Taylor, Alfred, joiner, Alma Cottage
23 Warrington, Charles, Palm House
21 Hough, John Harry, compositor, May Cottage
19 Buck, Ellis Grant, compositor
17 Webb, Arthur Thomas, commercial traveller, Sunny Side
15 Ginn, Samuel, builder
13 ———, Frankhurst
9 Williams, Harry, joiner, undertaker and builder
7 Snelson, Joseph W., pawnbroker's manager, Barton Cottage
5 Thompson, George W.
3 Vail, William Robert, Winhurst
1 Taverner, H., Ashville
Here is Victoria Road.

VICTORIA ROAD.

Here is Milton Road.

NORTH SIDE.

Side entrance to Portland Arms.
4 Nix, E. W.

Victoria Road (continued).

6 Bryant, Harry Joseph Spragg, Alfred
8 Simper, James, bricklayer
10 Howitt, James, painter
MILLIGAN'S BUILDINGS.
1 Barker, George
2 Jackson, Joseph
3 Turner, Henry
4 Wisner, A. A.
12 Reynolds, George, bricklayer, Ely Cottage
14 Ginn, A.
Ginn and Sons, builders and under-takers
Dant, Pros. bakers
20 Dant, Charles, baker
POPIAR VILLAS.
22 Smith, Robert John, Prudential superintendent
24 Thorp, John
Thorp, Percy P.
Thorp, Harold James
Here is Gwona Road.

18 Meadows, A. E., coal merchant 396
30 Garbham, George H., clerk
12 Taylor, Robert, Herndale
14 Newbery, W. E., Southlands

Victoria Friendly Societies' Asylum.

INMATES AND DATE OF DEATHS.

1 Long, William, 71 November, 1912
2 Lord, Sarah, 21 November, 1912
3 Stephens, Catherine, 28 August, 1906
4 Gould, James, 24 April, 1902
Gould, Eric
5 Peck, Francis, 20 October, 1904
6 O'Connell, William, 28 May, 1903
7 McDowell, Elizabeth, 24 June, 1904
8 Longman, Mary Anne, 18 March, 1906
9 Webster, John, 31 November, 1910
10 Webster, Mary, 21 November, 1910
11 Webster, William, 21 November, 1910
12 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910
13 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910
14 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910
15 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910
16 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910
17 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910
18 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910
19 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910
20 Webster, James, 21 November, 1910

MILLER'S ALMSHOUSES.

1 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
2 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
3 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
4 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
5 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
6 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
7 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
8 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
9 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907
10 Ellis, George, 24 April, 1907

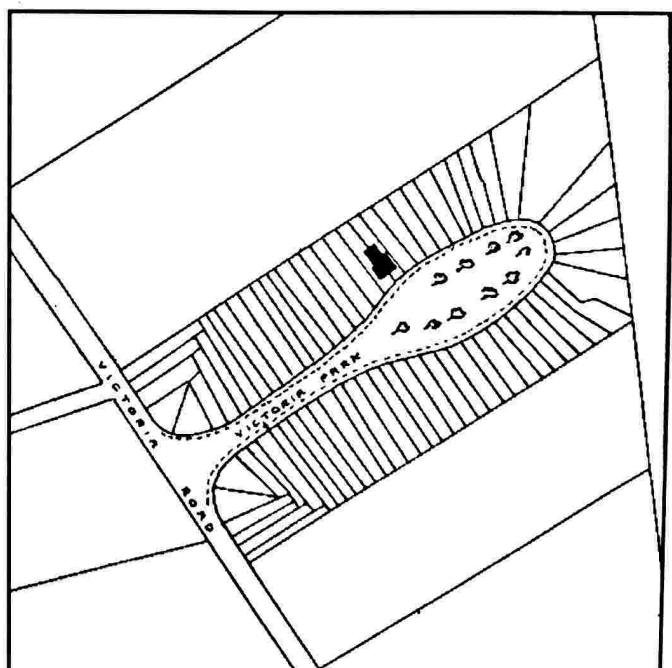
Appendix 4



“Solid late Victorian semi-detached villas of Victoria Park”

from: “New Chesterton, Cambridgeshire: A Study in Suburban Expansion” – David Balckmore, Pembroke College, April 1981

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



How enclosure helped to shape 'Backside 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 Benson, lady of the manor, along each side of what they then called New Huntingdon Road, originally known as "Backside Road". The decision to rename it Victoria Road was a patriotic gesture that came later.

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 Inclosure Commissioners" for August 6, 1838 included a decision to alter the course of the Backside Road to join Histon Road in 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 Larke, 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 Larke, who lives in Huntingdon Road, take up the story.

"Where did these stones come from? Another member of the Local History Council gave it as her opinion that they came from

C.W.N. 10.6.1982

DOWN YOUR STREET

Sara Payne visits
Victoria Road



Barnwell 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 monastery 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 Larke, "a certain James Wisbey 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 Nos 212-14. The directory of 1884 lists Charles V. Lawrence as running the Eagle Kennels and the Eagle Tavern."

It's Miss Larke's inspired guess that James Wisbey, "being a soul above that or 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 1909, when the Eagle Tavern was sold by auction, the being paid to the Rev William Smith, deeds dating back to 1878 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 Larke, "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 Brigg's Yard, near the Victoria Road junction with Histon Road. Nearby were James Wilderspin, the baker, Robert Austen, the bootclosser, 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 that lies between Histon Road, French's Road and Victoria Road, there lived in 1878 two college servants, a whitesmith, 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 wander 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.

gaol." 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 3), 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 freemason lodges and friendly societies, proceeded to a service at Great St Mary's Church.

Further buildings went up in 1887 and 1897, 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.

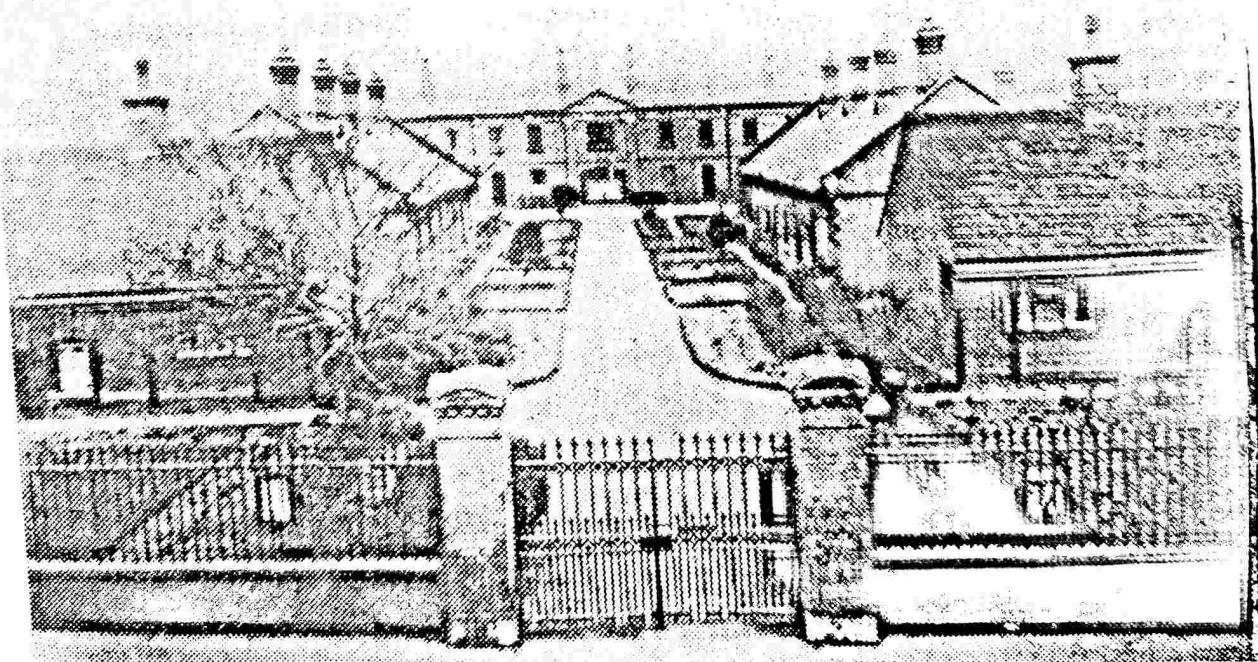
In 1878 on the opposite side of the road there were only about 30 homes. Between Croftholme Lane and Albert Street lived two tailors, a draper, a sawyer, a stonemason, a college servant and a carter. A Miss Lochart lived at Oakleigh Villa. A laundress called Mrs Sandfield and a blacksmith appropriately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

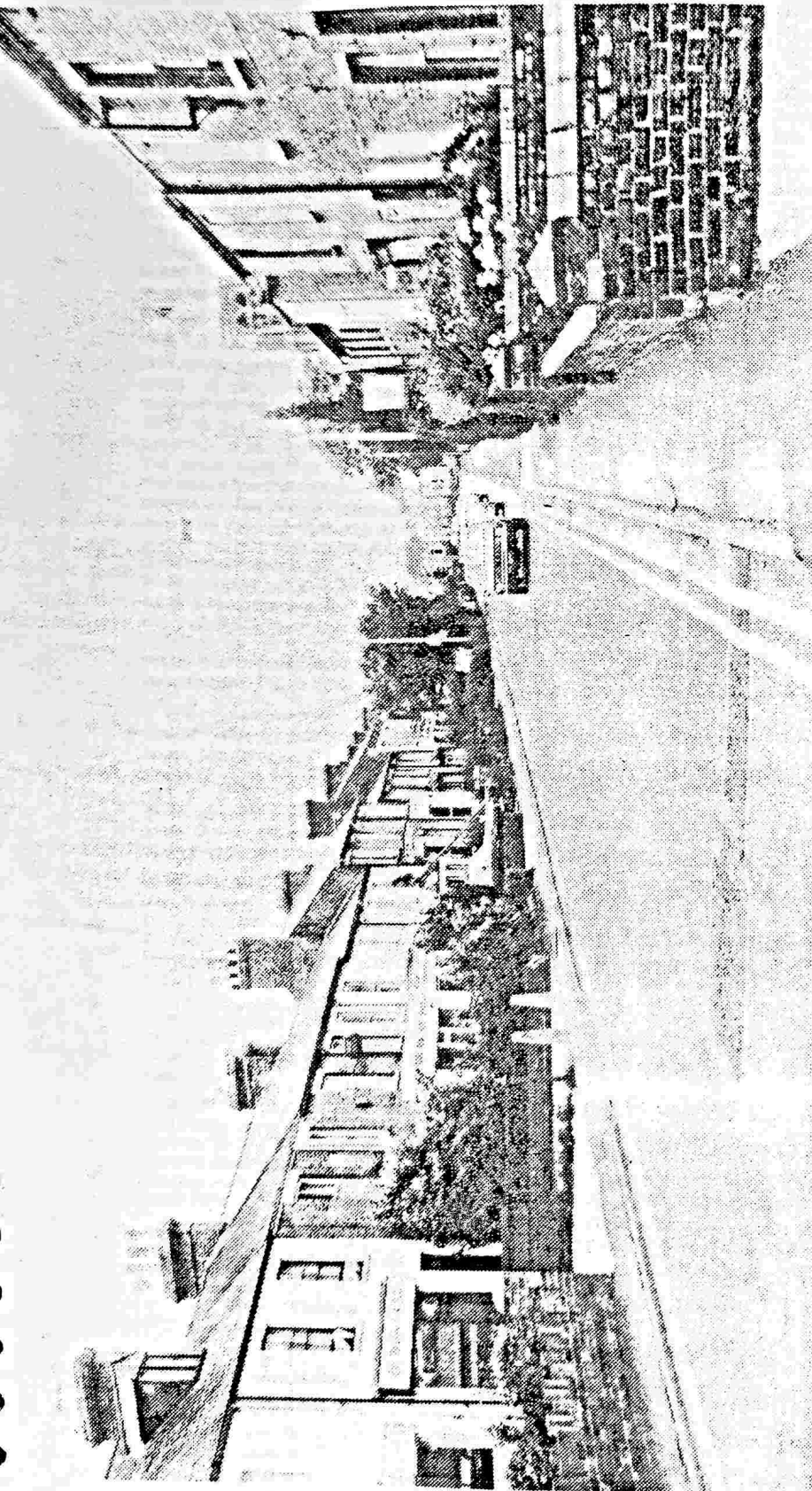
St James Terrace and Victoria Terrace, which included the Blackamoor's Head — the landlord was then Frederick Hinson — were the only part of the western end of the south side to have been built by the late 1870s. It was still a partially rural area.

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.





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 £356 6s 0d, and the University and other friends £4,605 4s 10d.

School for 197,^{CWN 17.6.1982} and two teachers

● Victoria Road.

Next week:
Victoria Road,
Final part

The completed Church was consecrated on February 3, 1885, while the spire, generously paid for by a gift of £500 from the Rev E. W. Blore, 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 £3,311 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 1200.

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 for the 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 5, 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 labour and materials, a suitable church, even plain in design and simple in character, could not be built for less than £7,000 exclu-

sive of tower and spire."

It made the point that the district of St Luke's had strong claims upon the university and town of Cambridge. "More than one-seventh of the houses are occupied by college servants; nearly four-fifths of the householders work for the town or university; all the college boat-houses are in this district."

Local residents contributed to the appeal. Some of them gave 1d or 2d a week, some 1s a quarter, or even 5s. Tenders for building the first portion of the church were received from eight builders; Thoday's was accepted because it was the lowest estimate at £2,888.

A clerk of the works was appointed at a salary of £1 1s 0d a week, and building started in June, 1873. On Saturday, October 18, 1873, St Luke's Day, the

Bishop of Ely came to lay a memorial stone.

The consecration of the first portion of the permanent church was an occasion for much celebration. The consecration service taken by the Bishop was held at 11 am, a children's service with an address by the Rev E. T. Leeke, Fellow of Trinity College and Vicar of St Andrew the Less was held at 4.30 after a public lunch with speeches at the Industrial School at 1.30. Tickets for the lunch cost 4s 6d including wine, 2s 6d without wine.

Canon George Tibbatts, a former vicar of St Luke's who wrote the history of St Luke's — "A Hundred Years in a Cambridge Parish," which I acknowledge as the source for much of

Continued on next page.

DOWN YOUR STREET

Sara Payne
visits

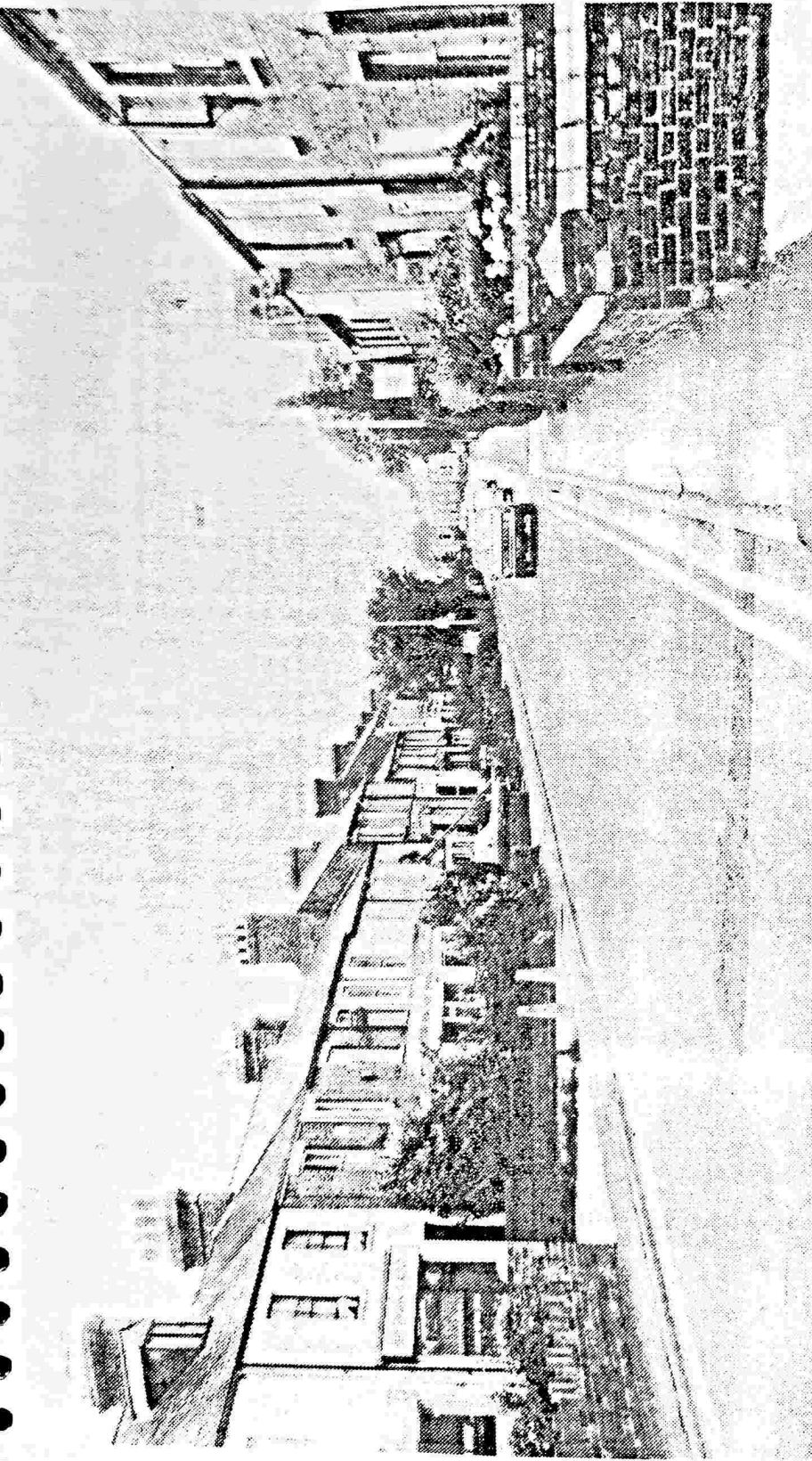
Victoria Road

CWN17-6 1982



● Some of the residents of the Victoria Homes in Victoria Road.

20368221



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 £356 6s 0d, and the University and other friends £4,605 4s 10d.

● *Victoria Road.*

School for 197,^{CWN 17.6.1982} and two teachers

Next week:

Victoria Road,

Final part

The completed Church was consecrated on February 3, 1886, while the spire, generously paid for by a gift of £500 from the Rev E. W. Blore, 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 £3,311 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



● One of the many delightful cornershops which used to be a feature of Victoria Road.

Church built by public appeal

CWN 17.6.1982



● There has been an off-licence here since 1904.

CW N 246. 1982

Bakers who made 600 calls a day . . .

There has been a bakery near the corner of Victoria Road and Milton 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 52. In 1904 the cowkeeper and dairyman was Charles Endersby. 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 Peating and Cawdron and managed by Mr G. Finn.

When H. S. Hibbitt and Sons, the monumental masons, moved to 126-130 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 grandfather, Albert David Hibbitt, who started the business, was born.

"Yes, it was in 1844. He was one of three brothers who were journeymen masons. They came from Exton in Rutland."

Albert, Lealand and Josiah Hibbitt did work on the War Office building in London before coming to Cambridge to undertake commissions for Jesus College. They settled in Cambridge, where Albert died in 1898.

John Hibbitt, whose son

Lealand 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 Royston.

Memorial carving is an important part of their work. Fashions in gravestones change. "Nowadays 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 148 from 1929-1953 and Miss 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 11½d your change would be a packet of pins instead of a farthing. Your money and your change, if you did have any, would be stowed into one of those pulley 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 page.

DOWN YOUR STREET Sara Payne concludes her visit to OWN 10.6.1982 Victoria Road



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

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

CWN 10.6.1982

Continued from previous page.

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 news-agent. 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.

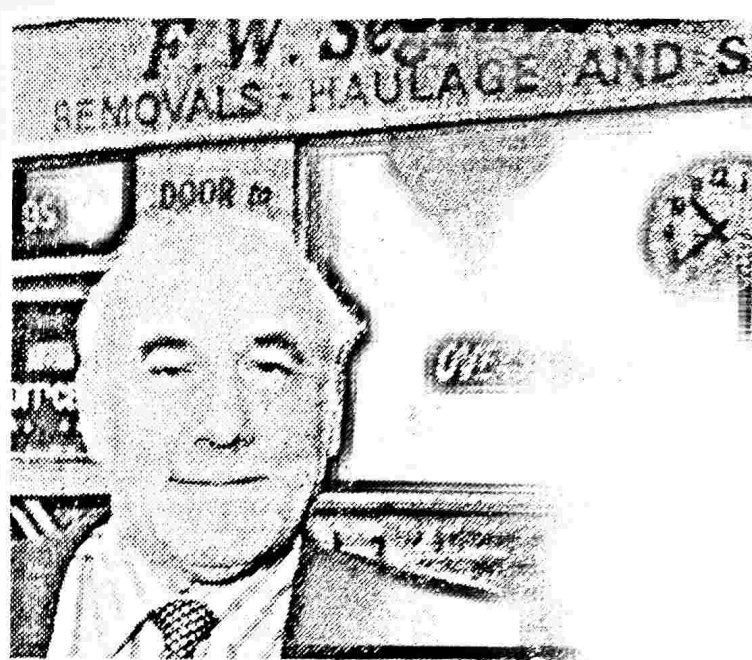
What is now the "Blow Out" Chinese take-away at 175 was many years ago a china shop run by J. C. Dorban. However, people living in the area remember it as Shorrocks Fish Shop, one of two fish shops in the street at one time.

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 Pilsworth'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.



● Mr Seagrave, who started business here

The butcher's is now an important chemist's, quite a lifeline to the many old people living nearby. The Co-op Stores 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. He was 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 101. Fisher Street, the "Town Co-op" formerly Cook's. H. F. Cook was former director of C. Football Club.

Freddie Seagrave removal business the day his account.

The son of Seagrave started as a cabinet-maker business in Victoria his firm does 800 year.

The son of a Seagrave started as a cabinet-maker business in Victoria his firm does 50 year.

One of the tricks ever done involved in Baitbite lock-knives couldn't get a very near the house so we load all the furniture on a bottomed reed boat and up the river."

John Hibbitt has fond memories of Frank Pigott, the grocer and general dealer who ran his popular business at 75 Victoria Road, at the corner of Holland Street. "He made me a cricket bat when I was a little boy," he told me.



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



Opposite

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

The new flats called Grasmere 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 49 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 head-rests. There were prints on display and big show cabinets with glass fronts."

The original owner, Mr Ambrose, ran the newsagent's as well as the barber's for there were connecting doors between the two shops. Later a Mr Rolph 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.