

A HISTORY OF MY HOME - INTRODUCTION

This section grew out of my research into the history of our house. When we bought it in June 1987, we understood that it was about eighty years old.

The property (and the other four houses in the terrace) were originally called 'Butts Cottages' - named after the builder Alfred Butt - although within a few years (judging by the Electoral Registers) that name was quietly dropped in favour of the street numbers we still use.

For some reason my suggestion that we re-instate the old name fell on death ears!

It might seem strange that it has taken me so long to write about the history of my own home, given my interest in local history. The reason is similar to my aversion to studying my family tree - I know how time-consuming such a search can be - so I stuck to easier local history research, for my walks, talks, displays and publications (much of which can be found elsewhere on this site).

Then, in 2020 (for reasons we need not go into here), I stopped doing my walks, talks and displays, and found I had the time to properly put together the history of my little corner of Old Woking.

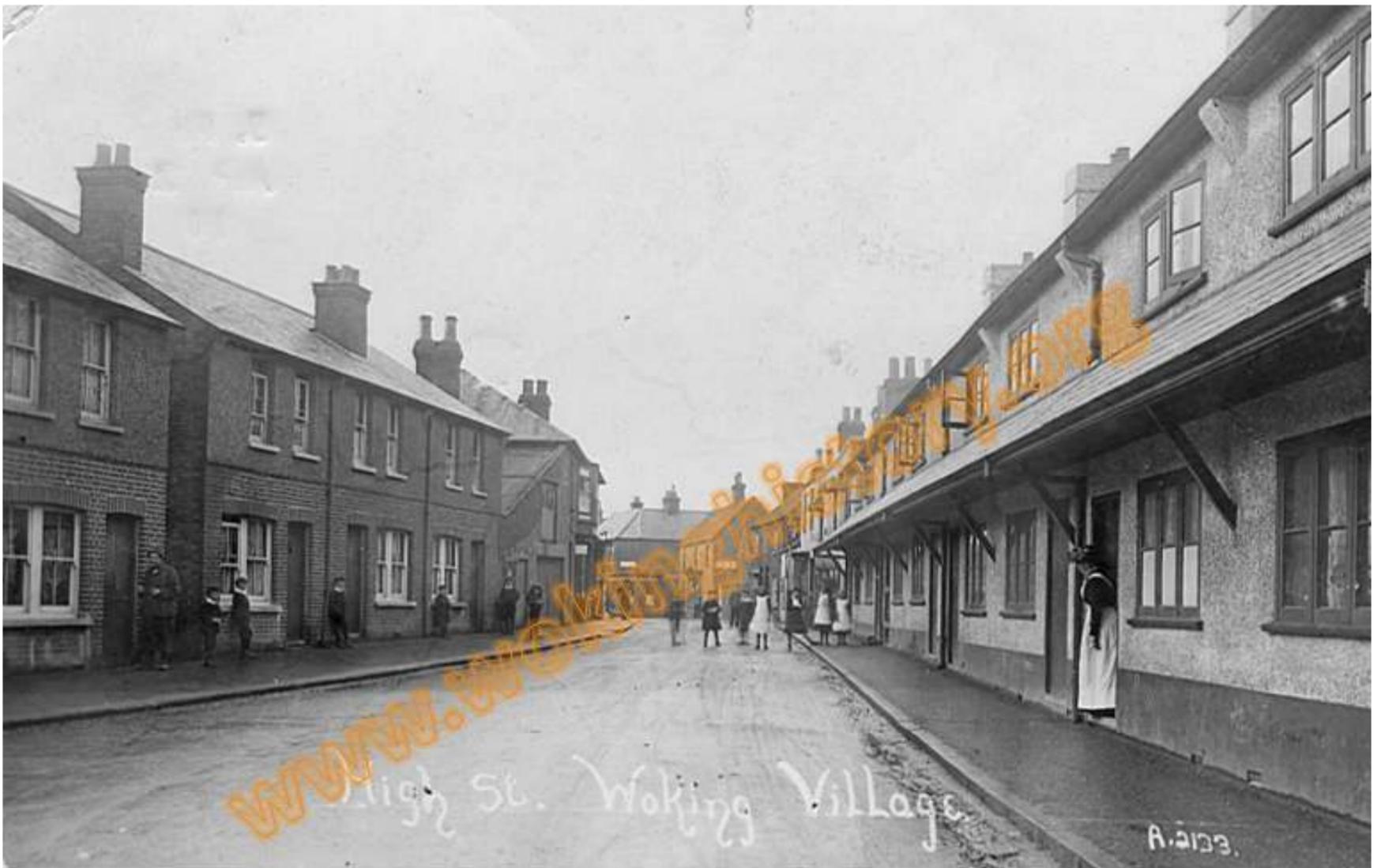


The corner of the High Street and Church Street, showing Clamps Cottages (above) before demolition, and their replacement by Butts Cottages (below).

Even before we moved here, I had in my collection a few photographs of this part of the High Street - some showing the old cottages that originally stood on the corner with Church Street (left), and others showing our house and its neighbours soon after they were constructed (below).

I had other items of memorabilia relating to the area (such as the street directories and maps), but I didn't go out of my way to find anything else, although over the years small pieces of the jigsaw did start to come together. There are still many pieces missing, but as I find more information I will try to slot it into place (and hopefully not find that I have mistakenly put some pieces in the wrong order, or worse, mixed up parts of a completely different puzzle)!

There are so many aspects to the story (or stories, as one piece of research often leads you off in a completely unexpected direction), that I have had to split it up into what I hope are logical and manageable sections.



The first involves the construction of the property by Alfred Butt, the builder, followed by the story of the original owner (the Ogden-Smith's), the early occupiers (the Russell's), and the story of their neighbours. There is also a section on the cottages that were here before Butts Cottages were built (Clamps Cottages) and their owners and occupiers, before I really go off on a tangent and look at the history of other properties in the High Street, Church Street and eventually the rest of the village of Old Woking!