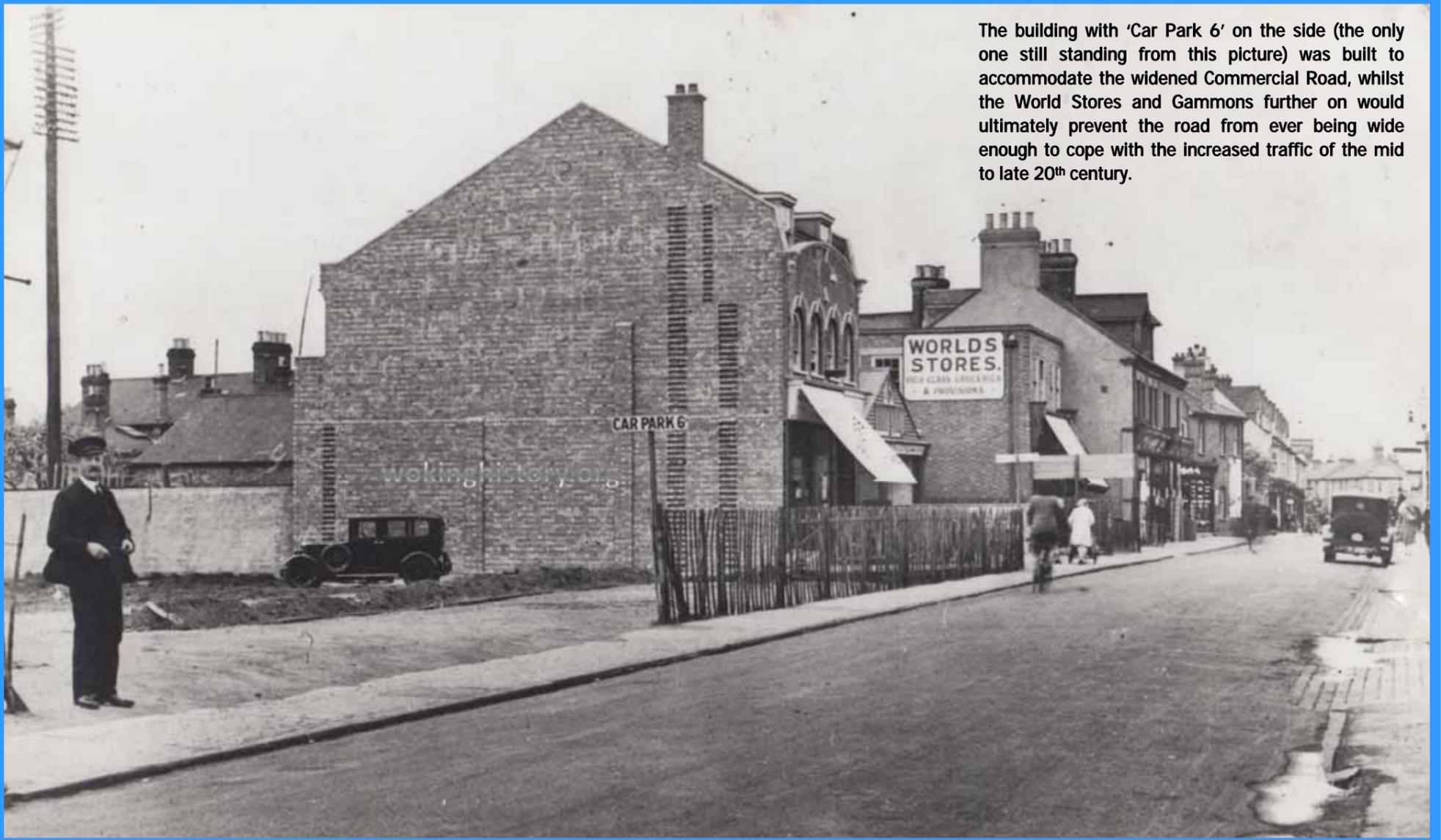


CARK PARKING & COMMERCIAL ROAD

Iain Wakeford 2016



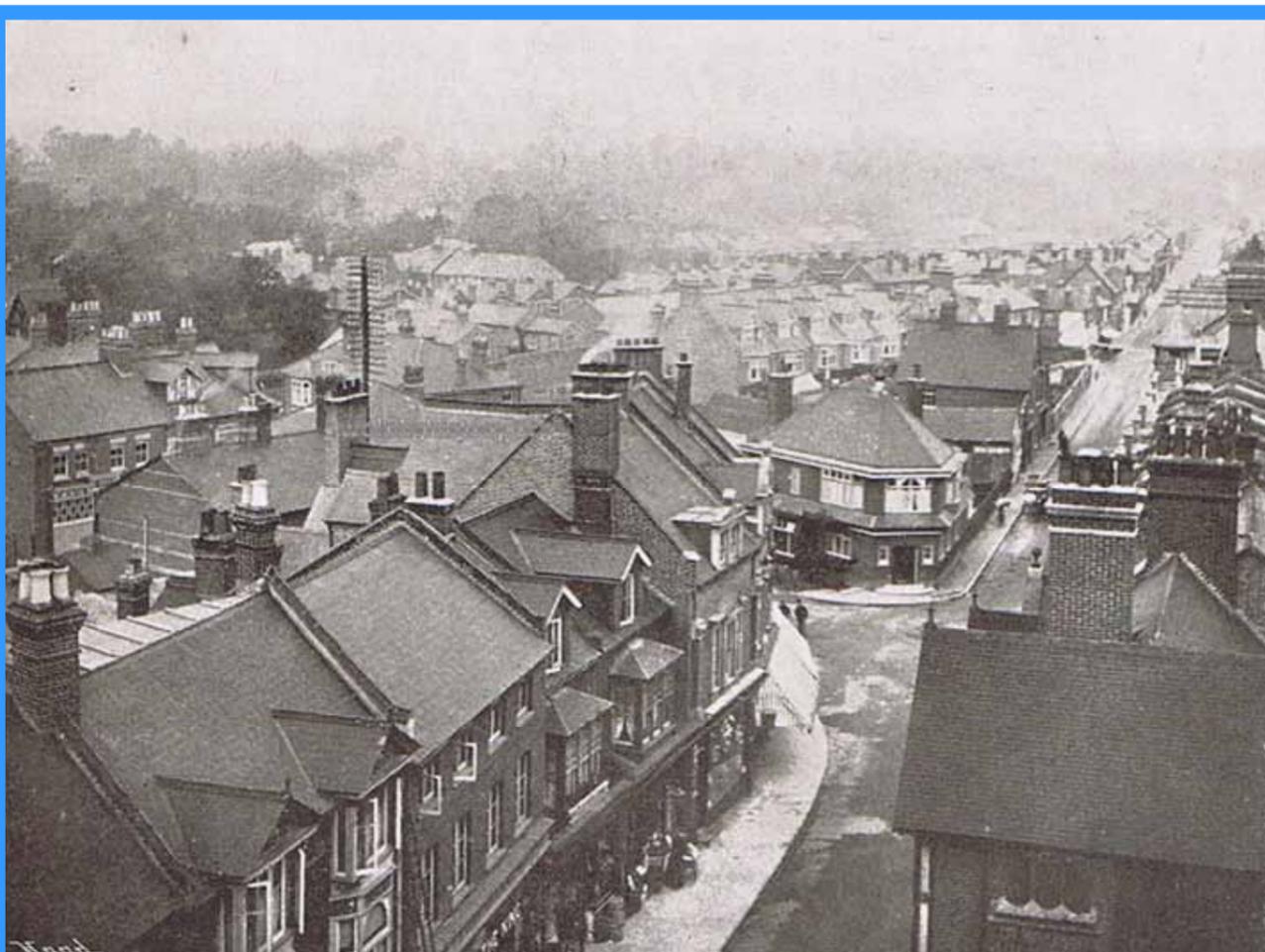
The building with 'Car Park 6' on the side (the only one still standing from this picture) was built to accommodate the widened Commercial Road, whilst the World Stores and Gammons further on would ultimately prevent the road from ever being wide enough to cope with the increased traffic of the mid to late 20th century.

As we have seen in recent weeks, there were numerous schemes in the 1920's and early 30's for 'road improvements' in Woking, including a scheme to widen Commercial Road (and ultimately make it live up to its name as the commercial centre of the town) - although how successful that would be wouldn't be evident for quite some time.

In June 1933 one observer noted that 'in some places it is difficult to discern the co-ordinate plan behind all these isolated improvements', and pointed out the 'peculiar and sudden changes in the width of Commercial Road', which they assumed would mean that 'we shall eventually have here a wide and sweeping thoroughfare' - although 'the scheme for widening Commercial Road cannot have been

in existence very many years because the World's Stores, when it was built, was set back a good way beyond Gammons, but not sufficiently for the new road'.

We saw last week how the council came to erect traffic signals at 'Gammons Corner' where Commercial Road was crossed by Chobham Road, but any attempt to widen this junction was lost first when Wearing's re-modelled their store on one corner, and then the new Red House (now O'Neills) was built on the opposite side of the road.



The council did briefly entertain the thought of acquiring the Red House site when in February 1934 the Friary Holroyd & Healy Breweries Ltd asked for a licence for a 'temporary building to be used as a Saloon and Public Bar whilst the existing 'Red House' Hotel was being demolished and rebuilt'. The council even considered buying the whole triangle of land between Chertsey Road, Chobham Road and Commercial Road and using it as a car park, but it wasn't long before that idea was thrown out and in July 1934 it was reported in the press that the council had instead purchased a site in Goldsworth Road for a new 'central car park' - even though at that time Goldsworth Road was far from central.

The triangle formed by Chertsey Road, Chobham Road and Commercial Road would have been 'central', but it would have ripped a huge hole in the heart of Woking's Shopping area at that time.

The site, between the Aldershot & District Traction Co's office and Victoria Arch was offered by the Anglo-American Oil Company for £1,000, with £150 being approved to level and make up the site. A disabled ex-serviceman was to be appointed (at a wage not exceeding thirty shillings a week) as a car park attendant, with vehicles being charged 3d (1½p) for up to four hours between eight in the morning and four at night on weekdays only (free of charge on Saturdays and Sundays). At the same time the car park that had been created in Percy Street was to be made available free of charge to

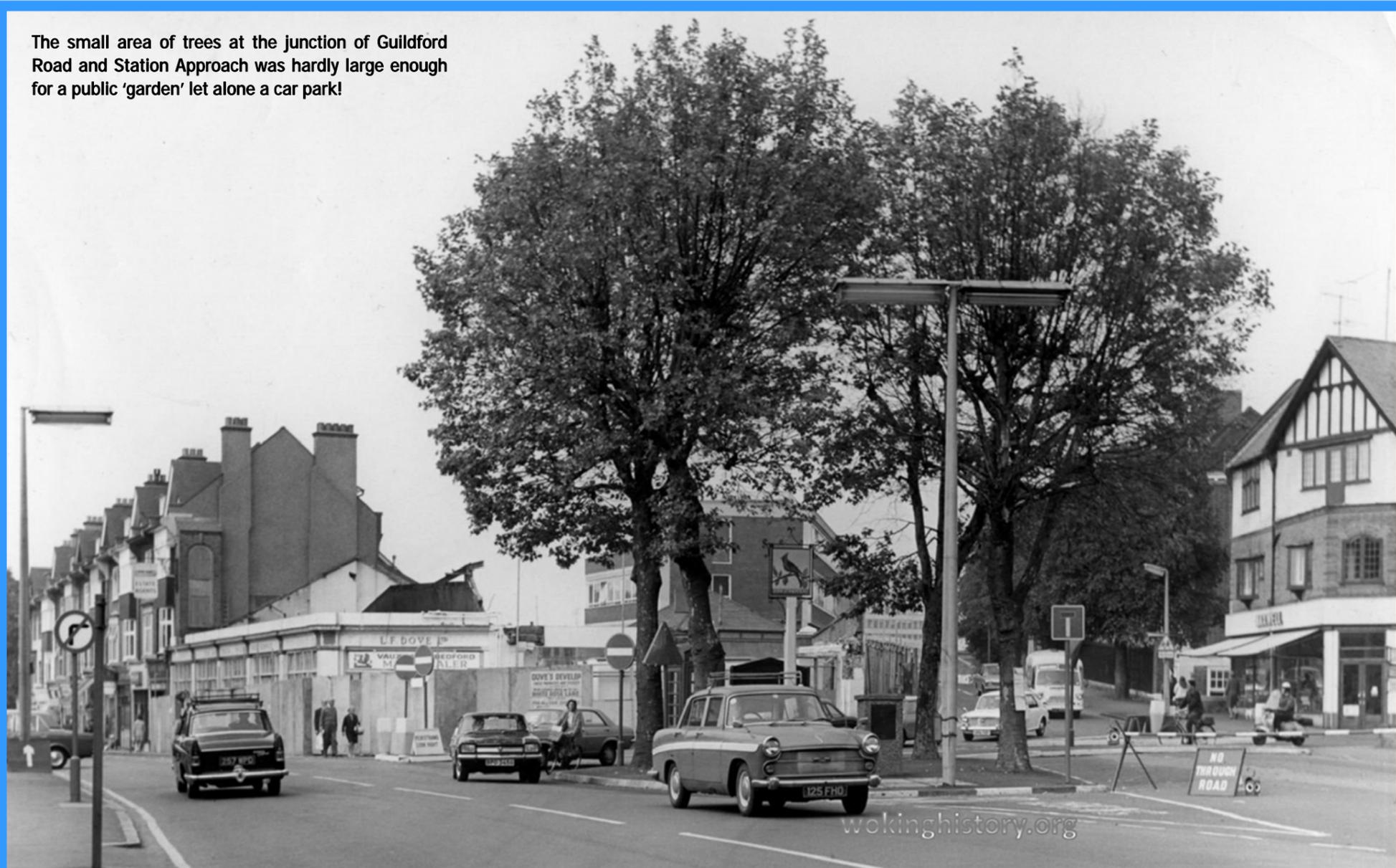
'omnibuses and charabancs visiting the town'. Mr J Kurn of 1 Corrie Road in Old Woking was subsequently appointed as the attendant from 1st October 1934.

An even more unsuitable plot for car parking was proposed in September 1934 when it was suggested that the triangle opposite the Police Station in Guildford Road should be used for a car park. Fortunately this hare-brained scheme was quickly abandoned and instead it was proposed to turn it into a garden – 'a sort of resting place for foot worn travellers, who will

rest amid flowers and shrubs' (according to one local newspaper).

By then the council had decided to purchase numbers 27 to 31 Commercial Road for road widening, with the added bonus that the surplus land to the rear could be used as a car park – although it seems that the 'planners' at Woking Council may have been looking even more ahead with the idea of ultimately building a new shopping centre on the site – although that would not happen until long into the future.

The small area of trees at the junction of Guildford Road and Station Approach was hardly large enough for a public 'garden' let alone a car park!



THE FIRST SURREY POLICE SPORTS DAY

Saturday 22nd July 1933 saw the first ever 'Surrey Constabulary Sports Club' meeting, organised by Inspector J White of the Woking Division with the assistance of the experienced athletic meeting organiser, Mr W H Somerfield of the Woking Railwaymen's Athletics Club.

The event took place at the Woking Football and Sports Ground with a 'monster programme' which was 'carried out without a hitch, the last event being started dead on time', with the prizes being awarded by the World Land-Speed record holder, Sir Malcolm Campbell.

The event was apparently attended by over 10,000 people, who after the presentation by Sir Malcolm were entertained by members of the Weybridge Motor Sports Club with a 'motor cycle gymkhana' and music to dance to in the evening by the band of the Queen's Own Hussars.



CLEARING OR CAUSING CONFUSION WITH THE NEW NAMING OF ROADS IN 1933



Guildford Road, Knaphill

The Highways Committee on the 28th February 1933 were busy naming roads in the area. They resolved that the road by Worplesdon Golf Club (between Heath House Lane and Bagshot Road) could be called 'The Crescent', whilst the 'Cul-de-sac by Clodhouse Hill off Heath House Lane' should be 'Clodhouse Road'. Now I think 'The Crescent' goes by the more descriptive name of 'Rough Road', whilst the cul-de-sac 'by Clod House Hill' is 'Clodhouse Hill'.

Meanwhile at Brookwood, the road 'going North opposite Brookwood Station to Benwell Road' should be called 'Sheets Heath Lane' instead of Heath Road as is currently the practice, whilst (perhaps confusingly) Heath Road should be the name of the portion of Elm Road running in a northerly direction and terminating in Woodham Road' at Horsell. The other part of Elm Road was to remain unchanged, but elsewhere in Horsell they caused controversy by suggesting that Horsell Park 'from Brewery Road to Fletcher Road' should also be known as Fletcher Road.

Fletcher Road was part of the Church Hill Estate built in the early 20th century by the Horsell Land Company, but it appears that not even the residents of Fletcher Road liked the name (let alone those of Horsell Park), and at the first meeting of the new Highways Committee in April 1933 they gave in to a petition from the residents and retained the name 'Horsell Park', whilst simultaneously re-naming Fletcher Road the more picturesque

'Horsell Vale'! Park Close off Horsell Park, suggested in February 1933, was also accepted.

In May the committee had a request from Dr A S Percivall to change the name of 'The Drive' at Hook Heath to 'The Lane', but that 'was not entertained', although they did rename Mile Road, Mile Path.

Meanwhile back in February in Knaphill the councils proposals to officially name roads (some of which had been unofficially know by those names for years) met with no opposition and Romany Road (a rough track off Chobham

Road), Trinity Road, Wood Lane and Inkerman Road were all officially named, whilst the 'road through Highclere Estate was, perhaps not surprisingly, to be known as Highclere Road'. The main change was in the official adoption of the name 'Lower Guildford Road' as for some time there had been confusion with both that road and the 'Bagshot Road'(A322) being referred to as 'Guildford Road' (the name of course the A322 just over the border in Bisley).

In Old Woking, Carters Lane, and Bonsey Lane in Westfield were also officially named in February 1933.



Lower Guildford Road, Knaphill