

STREETWISE

The history of the streets of Strawberry Hill

2. STRAWBERRY HILL ROAD



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Streetwise – Strawberry Hill Road

Streetwise is a history of the streets of Strawberry Hill. Strawberry Hill Residents' Association is publishing, via its website, a series of street histories (www.shra.org.uk). They are based on research undertaken by members of SHRA, using commercially available genealogical websites, and the Local Studies branch of Richmond-upon-Thames Museum. This is the second in the series following on from Upper Grotto Road.

Strawberry Hill Road is a street with one of the finest collections of large Victorian detached mansions in the area. Strawberry Hill Road was initially the current road, plus the whole of Pope's Avenue, as far as Twickenham Green. In 1907, the renaming was done and the current arrangements were put in place. For the purpose of this paper we are restricting the research to the current footprint of Strawberry Hill Road.

Victorian period 1839-1901

In the 1846 Warren¹ map of Twickenham the area currently occupied by Strawberry Hill Road is shown as a series of small fields divided by a footpath. This footpath followed the route of what is now the road. On the west (evens side) of the footpath there were two large plots (Nos. 593 & 597) of arable land belonging to J. Wright Nokes. On the east (odds side) of the footpath there were seven plots, the first three (602-604) were meadow and arable land belonging to John Ivatt Briscoe Esq, and the rest belonged to: Thomas Long (601 – arable & garden); Trustees of the School Lands of Twickenham (599); Mrs Francis (598); and Trustees of the Poor Twickenham (597a).

At some point the fields were incorporated into the Waldegrave Park Estate by the Earl of Waldegrave. Then by 1882, some of the large Victorian houses were being built to individual designs. The exception to the prevailing style was No.3 (*Wesley Lodge*) which can be dated to 1881. It is smaller than the rest of the properties and it is of 'ecclesiastical appearance'. It initially appeared within the grounds of *The Elms*², a larger property in extensive land on the corner of Tower Road and Strawberry Hill Road. Next to *Wesley Lodge* was No.5 *Rozel* and then a further 13 detached houses (odd numbers) up to No.31. On the west side of the street there were initially two houses, numbers 40 and 42, and 13 vacant lots. These lots (along with 11 lots in Waldegrave Road) were put up for sale by auction in the mid-1880s by Messrs Ventom, Bull & Cooper of 35 Old Jewry in the east end of London.

There were further houses built during the 1880s and 1890s, for example, nos.26, 28 and 32 can all be dated to 1889. Plots 18 and 20 were vacant in 1898. An 8-bedroom house was for sale in Strawberry Hill Road for £995 (St James's Gazette, 19 October, 1899, p.16). By 1891, 28 houses were occupied – odds: nos. 1-35 (except 27); evens: nos. 10-16, 36-44, 48-50).

¹ Warren, W.T. (1846) *Plan of the Parish of Twickenham*, Richmond Local Studies Centre

² *The Elms* is a house history written and researched by David Cornwell which can be downloaded from the SHRA website.



In the 1891 Census, there were 154 people living in the street, of whom 54 were servants. As expected in such handsome properties, they were owned and occupied by gentlemen of the middle classes and wealthy widows. The exceptions were two houses where there were only servants, presumably as the head of household was absent, and no.38 where William Pickett, a police constable, lived with his wife and son. The aged Charles Stromeyer, a retired metal broker, who was born in Germany and his wife, Louise, four children and two German servants lived at no.35. The table below compares the occupations of the heads of household in the three Census years of 1891, 1901 and 1911.

Occupation of head of household	1891	1901	1911
Private means	6	6	2
Merchant	4	2	2
Finance	4	1	2
Stockbroker	3	2	1
Cleric	3	0	1
Solicitor/barrister	1	2	4
Civil servant	1	2	2
Hotel proprietor	1	1	0
School teacher/principal	1	1	1
Manufacturing	1	5	0
Journalist/editor	0	2	2
Surgeon/doctor/medical	0	2	2
Military	0	1	1
Engineer	0	0	1
Master mariner	0	0	1

Railway official	0	0	1
Shipping manager	0	0	1
Advertising executive	0	0	1

In 1901, 31 houses were occupied housing 153 people including 49 servants. As in 1891, there were a number of widows living on private means and a range of middle-class occupations (see table). No.32 was being looked after by Henry Waites (1871-) a caretaker and gardener, and in two other cases only servants were recorded on the Census. The Lawrence sisters lived in no.7 from 1891 through to 1911. They were all school mistresses and by 1901 Alicia (born in the West Indies in 1844) was Principal of a school. No.12 was the home of Frank M Boyd (1864-) an Edinburgh-born, journalist and newspaper editor. At No.33, Henry Wintle (1844-) was a surgeon and all his four sons were all medical students.

Benjamin Bickley Rogers (1828-1919), an English classical scholar, lived at no.17. He was educated at Wadham College, Oxford, and became President of the Oxford Union in 1853. He was called to the Bar in 1856 and had a successful practice before being forced to retire on account of becoming deaf. His decision to live in Twickenham may have been influenced by the fact that Alexander Pope lived here and gained fame and fortune through his translations of the *Iliad*. Benjamin then devoted himself exclusively to translating Greek drama. He published works from 1852 until 1910. He was especially known for translating all the works of Aristophanes which can still be purchased on Amazon. He lived at No.17 until his death in 1919.

Domestic service

Large detached properties in Victorian and Edwardian times were invariably owned by comparatively wealthy inhabitants who could afford to house and pay for servants.

- 1891 – there were 54 servants in 27 houses. Only one house did not have a servant, no. 38 where William Pickett, a police constable lived with his wife and child.
- 1901 – there were 49 servants in 30 houses. Two houses had no servant, no.22 where Henry Churchhouse, a dyer, lived and no.32 where Henry Waites was the caretaker (perhaps the inhabitants were abroad).
- 1911 – there were 53 servants in 31 houses. Four houses had no servants: no.13 where Galloway Fraser, a journalist/editor lived; no.35 where Howard Wreford-Glanvill, an insurance company official, and his family lived; no.22 where William Hufford lived with his family and a German watchmaker who boarded with the family; and no.26 where William Warley, a bricklayer, lived.
- 1939 – there were 13 servants in 30 houses. A minority of houses (9) had servants.

The servants were all female and there were between one and four per household. The decline in domestic service after the Great War is reflected in the greatly reduced number of servants by the time of the 1939 Register.

Edwardian, Great War and Inter-War Years, 1902-1938

In the 1911 Census there were 167 people living on Strawberry Hill Road including 53 servants. There were surprisingly few young men (seven) in the street who were eligible to fight in the First World War. This was probably because while young men tended to move away from their parents, whereas daughters in middle-class homes tended to remain at home until they were married.

In 1915, there was a massive explosion at the powder works belonging to Messrs. Curtis and Harvey of Hanworth. Even houses in Strawberry Hill Road, some distance from the centre of the explosion, did not escape damage from falling debris (Birmingham Mail, 10 July 1915, p.5).

In 1916, Lieutenant Wyndham John Coventry of the 7th Hariana Lancers, son of the Coventry family of 30 Strawberry Hill Road, died of his wounds in Mesopotamia on 1 January 1916 (Newcastle Journal, 7 January 1916, p.5).

No.29 was the home of the Mosse family where Herbert Ryding Mosse was a doctor. His son Philip Godfrey Mosse (1891-1916) was a 2nd Lieutenant in the 13th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He fought initially went to Egypt and was killed in action in Mesopotamia on 18 April 1916. He was buried at the Allied War Graves site at Al Basrah, Iraq, and his father was sent the three main War medals.

At No.35, Howard Wreford-Glanvill, an insurance company official, near neighbour of the Mosse family, had two sons who joined up. Heyman (1885-) joined the Royal Army Service Corps serving in France as 2nd Lieutenant and later he became a Captain. Alured John (1890-) became Assistant Paymaster in the Royal Navy serving on the battleship *Swiftsure* and the *Fox*. *HMS Swiftsure* was the lead ship of pre-Dreadnought battleships serving in the Mediterranean during the War. *HMS Fox* was an Astraea-class second class cruiser. Howard was awarded the three main War medals.

No.36 was the home of Thomas Joseph Messom, a builder, and his wife, Edith³. Ruth Charlotte Holland (1885-) and her elder sister, Helen, worked as servants for the family. Ruth married Charles Alfred Ladd Heal (1885-1918), a blacksmith operating from Cross Deep, at St Mary's Church, Twickenham, in January 1913. He served in France, first as a shoeing smith, then as a driver in the Royal Horse Artillery 7th Brigade Ammunition Column. He survived until the end of the War when he was wounded and moved to the 1st Casualty Clearing Station in Mons. He died of his wounds on Christmas Eve 1918. His name is on the War Memorial at St Mary's Church which was constructed by the builder, Thomas Messom.

In 1911 until 1939, number 32 Strawberry Hill Road was occupied by Sir Conrad James Naef (1872-) who was for many years the Deputy and, then, from 1923, the Accountant General of the Navy (until the department was abolished in 1932).

³ The story of Ruth and Charles first appeared in the *SHRA Bulletin No.167 Summer 2018* as part of the *Hunt for Heroes* series researched by Peter Lamb.

In 1928, Joan Celia, 'Comedienne, Soubrette and Dancer', lived at 13 Strawberry Hill Road. In 1928, she was Principal Girl at the New Theatre, Retford⁴.

In 1929, Albert Victor Alexander, 1st Earl Alexander of Hillsborough, KG CH PC (1885-1965), Co-operative and Labour MP for Sheffield Hillsborough, lived at 42 Strawberry Hill Road (Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 8 May 1929, p.6)⁵. First elected in 1922, he continued to serve as an MP until 1950 (with one break). He was an opponent of appeasement. He was three times First Lord of the Admiralty, including during WW2, and he was Minister of Defence under Clement Attlee in the post-War Labour Government. He became leader of Labour Lords until 1964. In his later years, he was Vice-President of Chelsea FC and role that was taken on by Richard Attenborough.

World War 2 to the present, 1939-2019

The 1939 Register provides some insights into the social composition of the residents of Strawberry Hill Road at the start of the Second World War. There were 121 residents in 30 houses, including just 13 servants. The decline in the road's population is mainly accounted for by the reduction in the number of servants in the period since the Great War. The table below shows that the street continued to be populated by people from the upper two tiers of the Registrar General's index of social classes.

Occupations at the time of the 1939 Register	Number
Teachers/examiner	8
Barrister/solicitor	5
Minister of Religion	3
Financial services	4
Publishing	3
Company directors	3
Railways transport clerks	3
MERCHANTS	2
Shipping manager/Master mariner	2
Mechanical engineer	1
Stockbroker	1
Medical supplies representative	1
Civil servant – Ministry of Warfare	1
Accountant General the Navy	1
Surveyor and valuer	1
Army captain	1
Accountant	1
Advertising executive	1
Chiropodist	1
Shop assistant	1

⁴ British Newspaper Archive, *The Stage*, 28 December 1928, p.15.

⁵ Details of his life are adapted from Wikipedia.

In 1939, Horace Wallick (1869-1956), and his wife Lillie (1870-), lived in an apartment at 21 Strawberry Hill Road⁶. His grandfather, a botanist, was born in Copenhagen and his father, a surgeon, was born in India. In the 1939 Register his occupation is given as 'painter' but this does not reveal the whole story. The author, Vanora Bennett, has included her great-great-uncle Horace as one of three main characters in a novel about Russia before the 1917 Revolution, *Midnight in St Petersburg*. He forms one point of a love triangle in the romantic, historical novel, but it is based on the true story of his life. In 1910, he went to Russia and worked for Faberge. His specialism was painting miniatures for portraits, the top of jewellery boxes or for the insides of lockets. He lived through the final years of the Tsar, and through the revolutionary upheavals of 1917, only a few streets away from Faberge's shop. He escaped during the Civil War which followed the Bolshevik victory and, along with many other White Russia supporters, he ended up in Yalta. From there he was lucky to catch a British ship, the *Princess Ena*, back to Malta and then to Blighty. Vanora tried in vain to gain more detail about his life in Russia, but she does know that his life drifted when he got back to England. He spent his time doing art jobs for friends and relatives, and making ends meet. He eventually went to a retirement home in Richmond where he died in 1956.

In 1939, no.25 was the home of Sir George Lewis French Bolton (1900-1982), an expert in foreign exchange. He was a leading figure in the rebirth of the London markets after the Second World War. From 1946-1952 he was executive director of the International Monetary Fund. In 1948, he was named executive director of the Bank of England. In 1957, he became chairman of the Bank of London and South America. He was twice appointed High Sheriff of the County of London.

In 1939, Harry Thomas Alfred Becker (1892-1980), former MP for Richmond, lived at 12 Strawberry Hill Road (*Middlesex Chronicle*, 25 February 1939, p.4). In the 1922 General Election he was elected as an independent Conservative backed by the Anti-Waste League (a party formed by Lord Rothermere which wanted to shrink the state). In the 1923 General Election he was re-elected as the official Conservative Party candidate standing down the following year. He married four times and his last wife, Mary Beth Crowder, was from Tennessee – Harry became an American citizen in 1955.

In February 1940, a stag had escaped from Bushey Park and ran into Strawberry Hill Road where it became excited by a group of boys and started jumping about. It was cornered and shot by park keepers (*Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 12 February 1940, p.3).

The Borough Local Studies Library has produced a map showing where the bombs landed during and after the Blitz. This shows that there were three high explosive shells which detonated: one on Tower Road at the top of Strawberry Hill Road; one at the junction with Waldegrave Road; and one near numbers 27 and 29. There was also an incendiary bomb which exploded near number 3 and 5. There appears to be an unexploded device which landed near to number 16.

⁶ Adapted from *Horace, my long-lost relative* by Vanora Bennett – www.vanorabennettauthor.com

- No.42 was knocked down into to create the entrance to Strawberry Hill Close.
- In 1970, Nos. 21 and 23 were knocked down to create two blocks of flats called Mulberry Court (Nos.1-13).
- The plot for no.34 was never built upon.
- The land for 24 was absorbed by 22.
- There was also infilling between 8 and 10, and in the rear of gardens 3, 15 and 17.
- In 2002, four new homes were built on the west side of the road, Nos. 50, 52, 54 and 56.
- In 2008, No.11 was converted from 13 bedsitting rooms into 6 self-contained flats.

In 1972, Ms Anne Woodward, an actress aged 52, living at 2 Downside Strawberry Hill Road, collapsed and died on stage while performing in the Coventry production of *Abelard and Heloise*⁷.

After they married in Richmond in 2004, actors Keeley Hawes and Matthew Macfadyen lived for a number of years in Strawberry Hill Road. They were both in the original cast of *Spooks*. Keeley Hawes went on to have a stellar career in a series of popular TV programmes including: *Tipping the Velvet*, *Life on Mars*, *The Durrells*, *The Bodyguard* and *Line of Duty*. Matthew Macfadyen also has had success on TV (e.g. *Ripper Street*) and he also been in movies such as *Enigma*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Frost/Nixon*. They moved to another address in East Twickenham during the mid-2010s.

⁷ British Newspaper Archive, *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 11 March 1972, p.6.