

Reminiscences of James Cracknell



*Cracknell's butcher's shop, Ewell. c1900
Image courtesy of Bourne Hall Museum.*

My grandfather James Cracknell married Ellen Killick. He died young; she became a butcher and carried on the business [at 2 High Street], which passed to her son c.1906. Cattle used to be bought at Dorking Market and driven home to Ewell. The Glyn butchery order was divided between Cracknell's and Charman's – six months each.

The whole space now occupied by the frontage of the modern shops up to the antique shop [Market Parade] used to be taken up by the kitchen garden wall of Chessington House. So, after Cracknell came George Stone, corn & coal merchant (later Moger, coal merchant) [24 High Street]. On the corner of West Street and High Street was Picknell the baker, afterwards by Wilkins, baker. On the other side of West Street Alder, the butcher, had layerage, slaughterhouse etc. The fire engine was kept under big gates next to Williams the stationers and Powley the bootmaker [34 High Street]. Jack Perry used to drive the fire engine; Cracknell's horse drew it. There was a library above. Then came Savage the fishmonger, Spencer the grocer, and the Westminster Bank.

There were four villas above Goodship & Saunders' yard. The first was occupied by the District Nurse, the second by Charman. A bit further up the street was Ewell Working Men's Club, then weather-boarded cottages and then the Lord Nelson [72 High Street]. Earle's shop was in the front room of their cottage. The dairy (later United Dairies) belonged to Ewell Court Farm.

There has long been a chemist on the corner of Church Street [17 High Street]. Howlett was there, then Loxton Grinstead, then Best, then Miles. Before that it was Killick's. Next came the King William IV; Pegden the tailor; International Stores; and Baldwin, grocer & butcher [25 High Street]. In Cheam Road there was Shapland's motor place; Harris, draper; the Cave Tea Rooms; the Post Office; Nuttall's; and Glyn Hall.

Next up the High Street was Perry's, a florist and fruiterer: Jack Coppinger was the son by an earlier marriage of the second Mrs. Perry. After the first Mrs. Perry died, Jack Perry married her sister who was previously married to Mr. Coppinger. Perry's started in Killick's.



Cracknell's 'new' shop front which is thought to have been fitted in 1926

Image courtesy of [Surrey Libraries](#) and is held in the [Epsom & Ewell Local And Family History Centre](#) Collection

Then the Congregational Church and lecture hall, where village dances were held. Further up was Dunsford's the baker, later Winsborough's. Bradley & Arthur's premises used to be two businesses: Mr. Williams, clock & watch repairer, and Miss Pritchard, milliner. Mr. Cracknell's wife took over the latter.

Derby Day was a time to remember. Lord Lonsdale had a yellow Rolls Royce, but traffic used to come to a halt, and near Willis the ironmonger's he would have to get out and walk.

Mary Wallis had a pretty cottage with roses round the door, on the right hand side of West Street [Vine Cottage]. It belonged to Mr. Stone.

W.G. Grace, the famous cricketer, was friendly with the Killicks and often visited them. The house is in Church Street; there are two staircases in the house.

Pit House was occupied by Currie; Ewell House by the Jacombe family. Father, mother and seven daughters used to process to church each Sunday.

A.M. & P.M. Walters, solicitors, played for Surrey. In 1906 Crawford played for England.

It was in 1914 or thereabouts that Vanderbilt's coach changed horses every Saturday at the King William on its way to Brighton. Two more horses were waiting at the Drift Bridge to get it up Nork Hill. He ran this coach service himself.

Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary at the beginning of the Great War, lived at The Grove.

Sir Edward Hulton, publisher, lived in Chessington House. Every Sunday morning he used the Cracknell's telephone to phone his trainer in Ireland.

John Charman, at 4 Grove Villas, was secretary of Ewell Lawn Tennis Club in the 1920s.

When Miss Margaret Glyn went on holiday, she walked to the station accompanied, six feet to the rear, by her man, Pearce, carrying her wicker basket and other impediments. She frequently called out 'Pearce, come along!'. Her brother Arthur walked everywhere, including London.

Mr. Jeff Williams, son of E.H.J. Williams, used to live at Cromwell Lodge. There was a sitting room, bedroom and kitchen, a porch, but no door.

[Recorded in conversation with Nita Yardley, 1977]