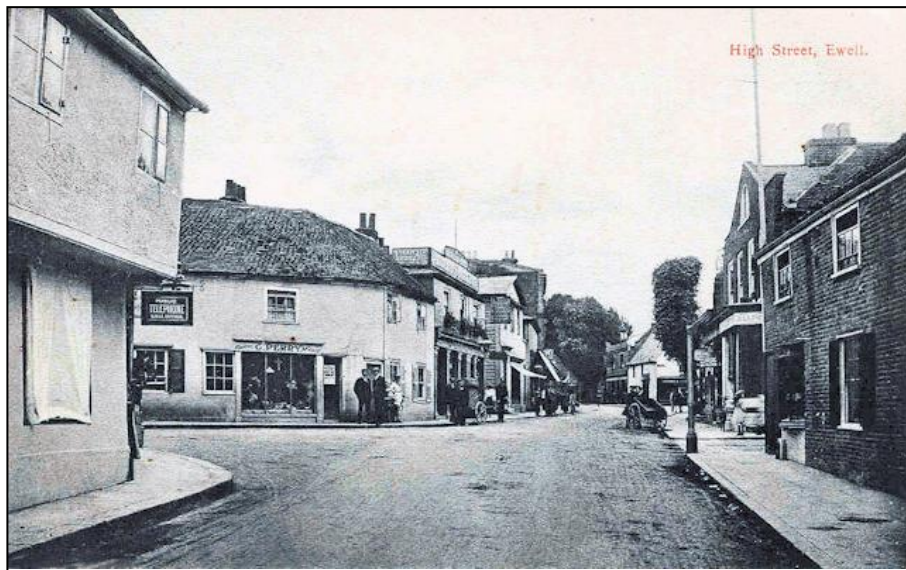


Reminiscences of Cicely Fausset

The High Street, from St. Mary's Church to the Village

This is Ewell as I remember it pre 1914 and into the early 20s. After St. Mary's, a high wall, behind which was the Rectory grounds and a little pond with ducks. The path is made higher and you can now see over the wall; as children we were lifted up to see the ducks. Then the tall green gates of the back entrance to the Rectory. Mr. Elliott's bakery (later Carpenter's), Mr. Willis's yard up to the blacksmiths [9 High Street]. This had a chalk floor and walls; the anvils and fire were in a large workshop beside it. Mr. W. Beams, and later his son, rented the small sheds for his builders and decorators. The blacksmith was an old soldier and left to rejoin the army the day after war was declared, and the farriers was closed for good. Mr. Willis's ironmongers shop and his house, which was separate from the shop, were next. Here every night the maid shut the shutters at the front sitting room windows.

Mr. Lansbury lived in the next house, he had the station cab and also hired his carriage and took you for drives. Mr. Bardrick had the grocer's shop at the corner [15 High Street]; here you could choose a ham and they would cook it and send it.



Church Street, from the High Street

Mr. Scriven the Verger lived next to the grocer's. Sir Gervas Glyn, the squire and owner of most of the village, lived at the Rectory, now Glyn House. His brother and heir, Arthur, lived opposite in the Well House, with his sister Margaret who inherited the property from him and left no will. All the property was sold at her death and many tenants bought their houses. My mother bought no. 9 High Street, and no deeds of the house could be found. Our family had rented the house, shop and yard, for nearly 200 years and Sir Arthur considered us his oldest tenants.

Mr. Green, our carrier, lived in Church Street, also an old tarred wooden house next to the vicarage. Lover's Lane led up to the brick fields and kilns, now the London Brick Company I think. Ewell Castle was occupied by a German, Capt. Weiner, who made the beautiful gardens. Next came Ox Alley, so called because an ox was said to have escaped up it and, though cornered, could not be turned as it was too large for the narrow alley. Then Well House.

Mr. Frank Charman had a butchers in Church Street next to his sister's house. the old hand fire engine was kept in the little building with a grill in it. This was later, and in my time, replaced by a horse drawn engine, the horses provided by the various shop keepers. The vans were often left in the road until their horses were returned. A fire was a great excitement in our quiet village. The Lord Nelson public house in the High Street had one, and the whole village ran to see it. Unfortunately there was a large hole in the hose and the onlookers were drenched. I don't know how the water eventually got to the fire. The men of the village were the firemen.

Back to the High Street

Mrs. Perry had a greengrocers shop opposite Bardrecks, later moved to higher up the High Street. Her shop became a chemist [*17 High Street*]. Mr. Cole, known as King Cole, kept the William IV; a fine man with red hair and a splendid beard. Vanderbilt's four-horse stagecoach on its way to Brighton changed horses there for a while; this was a private coach owned by a rich American with his friends on board. The horn was sounded on entering and leaving the village. Mr. Pigden had his tailors shop next, the International for a short time, Baldwins the butcher, Shaplands bicycles, Jones the draper, the Cave Tea Rooms, the Post Office.

Cheam Road, from the High Street

After the Post Office, a garden in which was the Parochial Hall [*Glyn Hall*], Radford & Clarke's grocer and wine merchant, Dr. Rycart. A large ivy covered house owned by a Mr. Wilkinson, a race horse owner by repute. Further on, the old station opposite the Glyn Hotel [*Ewell East*]. It was the South Coast railway and ran from Victoria and London Bridge via Sutton to Brighton from Ewell East. You could go on Sunday afternoon to Brighton for 2/6 return, run by the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Excursion. There were no houses between the station and Banstead Road, only large cornfields on either side.

On the other side of Cheam Road a German family lived with some bad tempered chows; later Mr. Martin and his daughter lived there, a gentleman farmer. The house that was later the Library [*Staneway House*] was owned by Mr. Potts and his daughter. Sir David Evans lived in the house at the corner of Mongers Lane. Next to Martins, Dr. Rayner, then the Star Public House.



Back to the High Street

At the corner going up the High Street, Barclays Bank – you went down a step into it [*31 High Street*]. Then Jack Perry's fruit and vegetable shop and flowers. He was very skilled with flowers. The Congregational Hall, a Church house, then lying back, a row of small shops – drapers, sweets and cigarettes, shoemakers, a fish shop the last; Frank Crockford, who married a Miss Perry and went to Australia. Next were a pair of tiny shops with bow windows, a watch and clock maker and a ladies' underwear and baby clothes, kept by Miss Pritchard [*53 and 55 High Street*]. Two cottages, then Mr. Hodges, linen drapers and a bakers shop. A little covered passage between this and a fancy needlework and wool shop where the horse walked to his stable. A bicycle shop, the Green Man Inn, some cottages with garden in front. That part was called Green Man Street.

Then came Reigate Road, which like Cheam Road was fields and farmland from the railway to Tom Walls, the actor's, house by the Drift Bridge. In these fields between Reigate and Cheam roads were old railway carriages which housed the casual labourers for the farm. Back in the village, in Epsom Road, two brothers had large houses: Mrs. Radcliffe Walters lived at Persfield, Mr. Melmoth Walters lived opposite. He had two sons. Clara Butt visited Mrs. Radcliffe Walters and married a connection, whose name escapes me.

The High Street, from Tayles Hill to the Village

Sir Edward Coates of the cotton manufacturers lived next, and Mr. Jacombs next, then the lane leading to West Street [*the Grove*]. Miss Packman's dairy, milk was delivered twice a day from large churns dipped out. Early milk was contained in small cans with the name of the dairy in a brass plate. Later it was Curtis' dairy. A shop next was taken by Mr. Earle, who I believe has a supermarket. Some cottages with gardens were next, then the Nelson Inn, cottages on to the pavement, the Working Men's Club, some Victorian villas;

in one my old great aunt lived with her cat and housekeeper. There was a fine walnut tree in her garden [52 and 54 High Street].



Next to the villa, "Grove" by name, was Goodship & Saunders, the builders; they had a very clever carpenter and cabinet maker, Frank Weaver. The Westminster Bank, Stevens the grocer (later Spencers), George Savage, fishmonger, killed in 1914. The fire station and council office. Mr. Powley, a very superior bootmaker and shoe shop, his two sons were killed in the war. All three sang in the church choir. Williams, newsagent and sweet and fancy goods. Coakes the grocer, Alder, butcher, on the corner of West Street [28 High Street]. In West Street the barber with his red and white pole; hair cut for men threepence. Mr. Ayling the cobbler and his son Roger, a great favourite of Sir Arthur's. He entertained the district with comic songs. Mr. Wilkins lived at the other corner; they were bakers [26 High Street]. You went down a step into the shop, and there was a slot in the counter to put your pennies into the till. Then a private house. Moger had a corn chandlers shop next, and coal office. He had fine horses and, as children will, we used to watch them go in and out from our window. They had a large red brick granary on to the street. Then there was a high wall behind which was a garden of a house in Spring Street. Mr. Cracknell's butcher shop ended the village shops.



Spring Street, Chessington Road and London Road

Bourne Hall was Garbrand Hall, the home of a Mr. Willis. The dog on the gate has a cow's horn for a tail. Beyond this was the way to the Station [*Ewell West*]; the road to West Ewell from the South Western Station was all farmland to the village of West Ewell, which had a church, but only one tiny shop. The fare from the S.W. station to Epsom was three halfpennies single and 1/6 return to Waterloo. A Workman's ticket to Waterloo by any train before 8 a.m. was eightpence.

Back in the village, the Spring Hotel, some gardens and Church Hall, then Mill Lane, a large house, Major Perkins, the recreation ground. A fine row of elms bordered London Road. The Organ Inn, two wooden houses on a bank, the Stoneleigh estate, a large house owned by Miss Stevens was the first large house to be pulled down.

The rest of London Road consisted of Victorian and Edwardian villas. A farm called Sparrow Farm was on that side of the road. Just inside Nonsuch Park gates was Cherry Orchard Farm. Mark and Alfred Lester, the actors, lived in this road. Also Mr. and Mrs. Lord, a bungalow, the first in Ewell. Then Woodgate, the old Toll Fields, where the new churchyard is now.

Life in Ewell

Lord Rosebery used to drive in his postillion carriage and most of the gentry had carriages. Sir Gervas Glyn was often seen and the Misses Pearce in their donkey cart. Most shops had delivery vans or delivery boys on bicycles. Large houses would employ three or four maids and a woman once or twice a week; also there would be a gardener and at least a garden boy. Many of the men had cottages provided. There was plenty of employment on the farms. It was a very happy little village. Our great day was the Flower Show in the rectory grounds, with swings and races and the Ewell and Epsom Brass Band, with dancing in the evening. My mother got up some concerts and plays. There

was the Guild of Arts and Crafts and the Girls' Friendly Society. Tennis club with a dancing class in winter. Earlier there was a very good little dramatic club, people joining from Epsom. Every year Sangers Circus came to the Half Mile Bush, a field half way to Epsom. The elephants were brought down to our horse pond in the evening to wash and drink. There was a school outing to Littlehampton by train and Mrs. Elliot gave a hay party. These sound simple, but to the village it was exciting.

[These notes were written by Cicely G. Fausset, daughter of Mr John O Willis and the niece of Cloudsley S Willis FSA, on 25th January 1983; she was then living at Fairlawn in Weston Road, Bath BA1 2XX. Phyllis Davies of the Epsom & Ewell History & Archaeology Society (then Nonsuch Antiquarian Society) made contact and kept the record, which has now been typed by Sheila Ross]