

Photographs of Villages near Effingham – Bookham High Street – Supplement

RICHARD BRACKENBURY

This supplementary article provides additional insights into the Brackenbury business in Bookham High Street and presents some interesting new images. It also corrects a detail in the primary article (Volume 5, No 40) concerning the lean-to at the side of the main building.

Brackenbury's in Bookham High Street

I grew up in the High Street in the 1950s and 1960s at No 15/17, then called Panton House. I would be interested to know if there is any evidence that it was called this before my paternal grandfather Herbert Henry Brackenbury moved there. My grandmother Florence Gertrude (née Sayers) always said he chose this name because he had worked at Panton House in London (in Haymarket). In the 1930s part of the building was occupied by Alexander Charles Annetts, presumably as Emily Balchin's tenant, running a builders, decorators and undertakers business jointly with A H Hutchins, who lived elsewhere; their advertisements appear in *The Bookhams Bulletin* in the early 1930s (Figure 1). Florence remembered that when my grandfather took over the builders and decorators business from Annetts in the late 1930s she insisted that they would not continue the village undertakers side of the business.

For the first few years of my life my maternal grandparents, Wilfred Henry Jarratt and his wife Margaret Mary (née Casey), lived at Old Forge Cottage next door. I remember a large inglenook fireplace, and a very long yard and garden that extended back to East Street.

The primary article [Volume 5, Article 40] asserted that the lean-to where Brackenbury's sold hardware was that which adjoined Old Forge Cottage, being part of Wyatt's smithy. However, this is not the case. Brackenbury's lean-to was a separate structure built onto the side of Panton House for use as an office for the building firm. It must predate my grandfather taking over as it is visible on the 1935 OS map. I can remember a very old desk, brass letter scales and a candlestick telephone.

Figure 18 in the primary article probably captures the moment when No 11 was being converted from a hairdressers to a bank. The lower parts of the windows are whitewashed and the small signboard under the curved windows is that of 'H. Brackenbury and Son, Builders and Decorators'. Figure 2 shows a photograph of this sign whilst Figure 3 shows that of 'A. C. Annetts', both these signs having survived for many years in my late mother's garage.

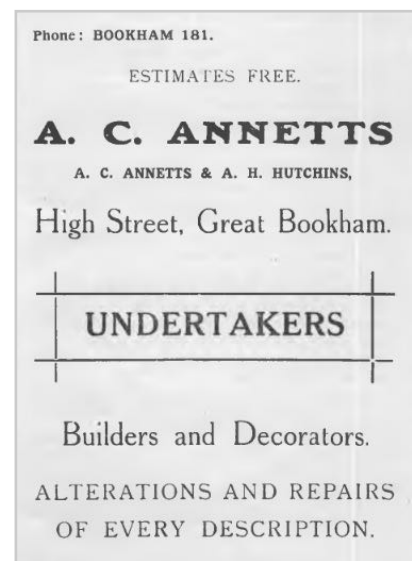


Figure 1 Annetts in *The Bookhams Bulletin*, No 2, Dec 1933.



Figure 2 Sign for Brackenbury & Son.



Figure 3 Sign for A C Annetts.

Figure 4 is a photograph of Panton House probably dating from autumn 1954, judging by the window boxes. It shows my mother Veronica Susan Brackenbury with myself and my sister Anne Brackenbury. I would have been nearly four and my sister looks nearly two.



Figure 4 Panton House, probably about autumn 1954.

The primary article's discussion of the numbering at Panton House is interesting. My memory is that in the early 1950s the National Westminster Bank was at No 11. Above the bank was No 13, a flat occupied by Mrs Wallace – access was through a narrow arch between No 11 and No 15, now bricked up. Strictly, Panton House was the name assigned to just No 15, not to the entire building, whilst No 17 was the office and builders yard. When the house was converted into two shops in the mid-1950s the left-hand shop became No 15 and the right-hand shop, Brackenbury's, No 17. No 15's first tenant was a shoe shop called Valli.

What is now No 17A, Brackenbury's shop, was built in about 1961 as an extension to the earlier shop. The upstairs was originally used a showroom for gas cookers; we also had an office upstairs and a sitting room at the back. When my parents moved in 1972 they sold No 15 and No 17 to the National Westminster Bank. The connecting doors between Nos 17 and 17A were blocked, although my parents continued to rent the yard and storage sheds at the back of Nos 15 and 17.

My mother sold the business in 1998 when she turned 70, but she continued to work there part-time until her late 80s.

The remainder of this article presents some external and internal views of Brackenbury's in the later 1950s and early 1960s.



Figures 5, 6 Brackenbury's, about 1957-59.



Figures 7, 8 Brackenbury's as photographed by local photographer Edwin John Mullis, then living in Bookham at 2, Loxley Cottages in Manor House Lane, 1962.



Figure 9 View from Brackenbury's across the High Street towards Harry Edward Drake's grocers shop, perhaps mid-1950s. The occasion or reason for the pipes and drums parade is unknown.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures 1: from the archives of the Leatherhead & District Local History Society

Figures 2-9: from Richard Brackenbury