

7 - 9 High Street, Shrivenham

A history so far - by Neil B. Maw



The premises that is 7-9 High Street, Shrivenham is something of a curiosity in that it's not known exactly when the main house was built. Stylistically, there are clues that can point towards a likely period. The steepness of the roof takes it away from the early Victorian period, but the sash windows with multiple panes tends to push it back there. The brick arches over the windows keep it from going into the later Victorian when lintels were more common. This would suggest that it's somewhere in the middle and it's also likely that it was built to suit the purpose for which it was to be used. The large window on the east end was for a shop and the archway suggest busy access for carts caused by commercial as well as domestic activity. Thanks go to Mike & Susan Ross, who purchased the property in 2013, have renovated it superbly and have kindly allowed their deed documents to be studied.

An Assignment in the Ross Papers dated 6th July 1866, referred to an Indenture made earlier on the 27th March 1821. It described a loan received by Thomas Wilson, School

Master, of £150 for a 'Cottage or Tenement and pieces or parcels of land.' A map commissioned by George Merryweather, the Steward of the Beckett Estate, showed a single building that is likely to represent the cottage. (Below - extract from the map).



But just over 20 years later a tithe map dated to 1838 showed more details, but unfortunately the key to the numbers has yet to be discovered. (Below. Clip from SHS N1172).



The 1821 Indenture mentioned above, stated that John Wells, Gent, (a man who had money and did not need to work) loaned £150 to Thomas Wilson the Schoolmaster, to buy the cottage and piece of land. However, Thomas Wilson defaulted on the repayment

which began what seemed to be 40 years of the debt being sold from one money lender to another. The earliest document in the Ross Papers of 1864 refers to two Indentures of 1849 and 1851 that confirm the passing of debt and explain the reason for the sentence in the 1866 Assignment document, '*and after divers mesne assignments and other acts in the law in the year 1863*' the property (and debt) became vested in Frederick Finch.

The primary intent of the 1864 Indenture and the 1866 Assignment was to hand the property over to Henry Tucker of Bourton, which would clear all the debts and leave the property open for possible redevelopment. Henry Tucker was a successful, and very wealthy businessman, his family having built up their fortune within the Silk industry (See SHS Listing No N147). It's unlikely that Henry Tucker would have been looking for any business opportunity, he was at that point in his life very accomplished, but more likely to be helping a friend by the name of John Cook Salmon, of Highworth; a man whose principles and beliefs were completely in unison with his own. The result of all this was that Henry Tucker paid in total £275 and whilst the solicitors sorted out the legalities the payment would be, '*kept on foot for the benefit of Henry Tucker as described below, at the request of John Cook Salmon.*'

Previous to all of this, there seemed to be various business' carrying on at times, for example the Grocer Jeremy Cox who was an undertenant of Jonathan Baldwin (himself a dealer in Saddlery), who was declared Bankrupt in 1842. (Below - Oxford Journal 23rd April 1842). Jeremy appeared on the 1841 Census with his family and also Schoolmaster Thomas Wilson, aged 60, who would go on to live to age 93. (Died in 1862, buried at St Andrew's 26th August). On the census of 1851 he was listed as a retired schoolmaster and '*Blind*' aged 80. Thomas would have taught the children of the school located behind No 13 High Street. (See SHS Listing N1550).

NOTICE is hereby given, that **JEREMY COX**, of Shrivenham, in the county of Berks, grocer, draper, and general dealer, by Indenture of Assignment, bearing date the 12th day of April, 1842, hath assigned all his personal Estate and Effects to John Lamb, of Highworth, in the county of Wilts, draper, and Thomas Thorman, of Maiden-lane, College-hill, London, tea dealer, upon trust, for the benefit of all his Creditors who shall execute the said Indenture of Assignment within two calendar months from the date thereof; and which said Indenture of Assignment was executed by the said Jeremy Cox and by the said John Lamb, on the said 12th day of April instant, in the presence of and attested by George Frederick Crowdy, of Faringdon, Berks, solicitor, and by the said Thomas Thorman, on the 16th day of April instant, in the presence of and attested by John Roberts Chanter, of Barnstaple, Devon, solicitor; and the said Indenture now lies at the office of Messrs. Crowdy and Son, in Faringdon aforesaid, for execution by the other Creditors of the said Jeremy Cox.—Dated this 18th day of April, 1842.
CROWDY and SON, Solicitors.

George Woodbridge was also at this site by 1860. Confirmation comes from advertisements he placed in local newspapers, requiring Saddle and Harness Makers in 1860/1. The Barrington Estate Map of 1866 described him in No190 as a 'House, Shop and Garden.' But it's not been possible to determine if it's referring to earlier buildings or the one that is present today. (Below). For the reason already discussed above, it may be prudent to suggest that the building that fronts the High Street today was built at this point or soon after.





Henry Tucker died in January 1875 and his interest in the property that had been kept 'on foot' was passed via his Will to his Executors and Trustees. An Indenture in the Ross Papers dated 19th December 1894 set out how the property was then passed from the Tucker Estate to George Woodbridge for £500 (sitting tenant for at least 35 years). There were two schedules attached to the Indenture. The first described *'All that Messuage or Tenement situate in the High Street, Shrivenham with the Yard and garden behind the same formerly in the possession or occupation of Jonathan Baldwin, Saddler and Harness Maker and his undertenants and since in the occupation of George Woodbridge.'* The second *'All that Cottage or Tenement situated in Shrivenham formerly in the occupation of Thomas Wilson and afterwards Thomas Lewis together with the little plot adjoining 36ft X 34ft and another plot called 'Lower Piece' adjoining the Cottage 34ft X 50ft.'*

Elizabeth Woodbridge, George's wife, died in August 1896 and there was a very complimentary article in the local newspaper (Faringdon Adver 15th Aug 1896). George died three years later on 9th October 1899 who also received a short article in the North Wilts Herald on 20th October.

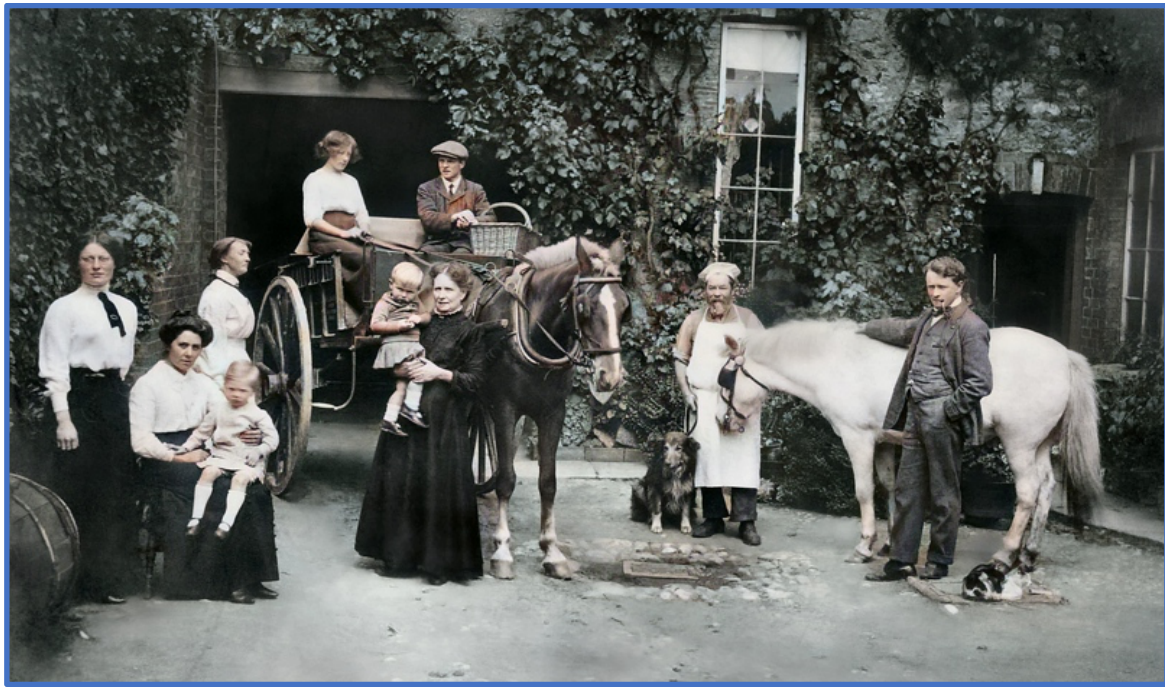
SHRIVENHAM.

DEATH OF A WELL-KNOWN TRADESMAN'S WIFE.—We regret to announce the death of Mrs **Woodbridge**, wife of Mr **George Woodbridge** who for many years has carried on the business of saddler and farmer in this village. Deceased, who was 65 years of age, will be remembered by most of the older inhabitants of the village for her many acts of kindness to them. She enjoyed fairly good health up to Monday previous to death, which occurred on Friday last from apoplexy. The funeral took place on Monday when a large number of relatives and friends testified their esteem by following the remains to their last resting place. The Revs, E. F. Hill and J. Footman officiated. Many beautiful wreaths and other floral tributes were deposited on the grave. Mr R. Kent, of **Shrivenham** carried out the funeral arrangements in a satisfactory manner,

The Executor of George Woodbridge's Will was James George of Longcote who placed the property for Auction on the 22nd November 1899. It was purchased by William Redwood Hole of Little Coxwell for £450. We don't have the contents of George's Will so have no idea of what his intentions were for the business. An article in the local newspaper in 1901 provided the information that a Mr Burgess, a Sadler and Harness Maker from Faringdon was working out of the premises in Shrivenham, but unfortunately had an accident and badly damaged his knee which incapacitated him for a considerable time. (Faringdon Adver 12th October 1901). Meanwhile, George's son William, who had been working separately from his father since 1875, was eager to make it clear that whereas he was taking on his father's business, he was operating from another premises. It was further up the High Street next to the Barrington Arms Hotel (See SHS Listing No N2552).

It's not certain why Thomas Fuller moved his bakery business from the property that he owned, the one mentioned above next to the Barrington Arms, and in to 7-9 High Street. But after fitting two ovens into the rear of the premises he successfully operated

his bakery there for 20 years. He became well known for the nick name Crusty Fuller and was of a strong character. (Below. Crusty Fuller with his dog and all his family in the Yard at 7-9 High St circa 1910 - photo courtesy of Peter Fuller).



In 1906 William Hole sold the premises to John Spittle of Galleyherns Farm for £550. Crusty Fuller was still in occupation and continuing with his business as a Baker until 1923.

John Spittle died on the 9th January 1924 and his Will was proved on the 26th April of the same year. This allowed his Executors to carry out the directions within it. On the very last day of that year, William Hammond, Baker, signed the Indenture with the New Swindon Permanent Building Society to loan £500 for the purchase of the premises at 7 - 9 High Street. By this time the schedule described, '*All that piece of land with the dwellinghouse and shop and outbuildings thereon or on part thereof and the yard or garden thereto belonging situate in the High Street, Shrivenham in the County of Berks in the occupation of the Mortgager.*'

William Hammond had worked as a Baker for Robert Pound who owned what became known as Pound Stores, located on the corner of Church Lane and High Street, Shrivenham, by the Cross Trees. (See SHS No N1025). Robert died in August 1920 and his business was purchased by a Colonel William Ames who brought in George Benford to run the Grocery side of the business. It's likely that he didn't have a Baker to hand for the Church Lane site as he agreed a deal with William Hammond who had then recently purchased No 7 - 9 High St. (Apparently, it used to be No17 but had been re-numbered according to the memoires of Bill Hammond Jnr). The Agreement within the Ross Papers dated 28th January 1925 (so almost immediately after he purchased it) let *'All that Shop and Bakehouse being a portion of the premises owned and occupied by the Landlord (William Hammond) in the High Street, Shrivenham, together with the right for the Tenant at all times to pass through the yard doors ...'* In his Memoires, (SHS N1068) Bill Hammond stated that the ovens that were put in by Crusty Fuller were worn out and useless, but this is likely not completely the case. Bill was not born until 7th May 1928, so he was relying on relayed information that he has confused. (There are other facts in his memoires that are also not accurate).

It's not certain how long the arrangement went on for. The agreement was worded to be re-newed annually, but it's likely that the ovens were still being used into the 1930s. Jane Hammond was William's wife and Bill's mother (William junior) and was busy running the shop selling bread and groceries right through the war period. There was also a period as mentioned by Len Knapp in his memoires (SHS N1239) that Lloyds Bank used the shop there once a week. This is confirmed by a newspaper advertisement. (Below. North Wilts Herald 3rd March 1939. The old shop door access bricked up). It's likely that this arrangement carried on into the 1940's and maybe until the Lloyd's branch was opened further up the high street by the Baptist Church.



William Hammond died on 13th March 1966. His Will was dated 4th April 1938 and he left everything to Jane his wife and made her sole Executor. Jane died on 21st May 1977 and left everything to her son Bill (Full name William Henry John Hammond).

Bill stayed at the property until his death in 2013 when Mike & Susan Ross purchased it and began the interesting renovation work that takes the story up to the present day.