

Charlton Village – North Side

Preface: Back in 2018 or before, the idea was born to update the publication 'The Village, Old Charlton' written by Sally Jenkinson in 1984 and published by the Gordon Teacher's Centre or possibly John Smith's 'History of Charlton'.

Opting to update the Jenkinson publication work was undertaken using information and photographs lodged in the Greenwich Heritage Centre and information gleaned through the Charlton Parks Reminiscence Project completed in 2011, Charlton Society members Liz Green, Pauline Langley and Carol Kenna undertook research and gathered photos. The unexpected closure and relocation of Greenwich Heritage Centre to their current Anchor & Hope site interrupted this. Add to this Liz's move to Hastings and then the Covid pandemic, work in situ came to a halt. The two talks: Charlton Village – South side and North side have been produced to take this work further using online information in addition to the sources set out at the end of this document. Perhaps one day to be produced as a publication ?



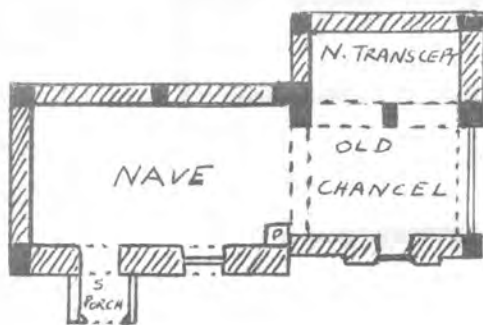
Charlton Village 1795, St Luke's Church on the left

Charlton is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 records as a medium-sized village of 15 households with farmland amounting to 1 sulung (notionally equivalent to 240 acres) and valued at 7 pounds. The medieval parish of Charlton, part of the ancient hundred of Blackheath in the county of Kent, stretched all the way from Woolwich Common in the east to what is now Blackheath Village in the west; it was formerly known as Charlton-next-Woolwich to distinguish it from its east Kent namesake Charlton-by-Dover.

FLOOR PLAN of ST. LUKE'S parish church CHARLTON

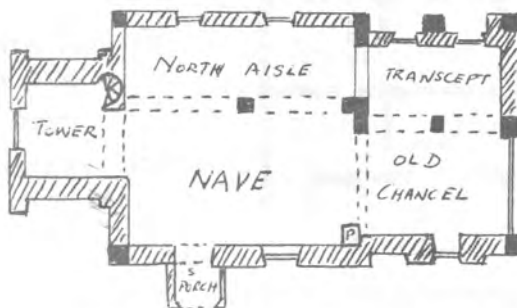


DEMOLISHED
c 1631/2
"STONELESS", CHALK & FLINT



RE-BUILT
c. 1633
BRICK / STONE DRESSINGS
TILED ROOF

11th century church was demolished 1631 and rebuilt 1633

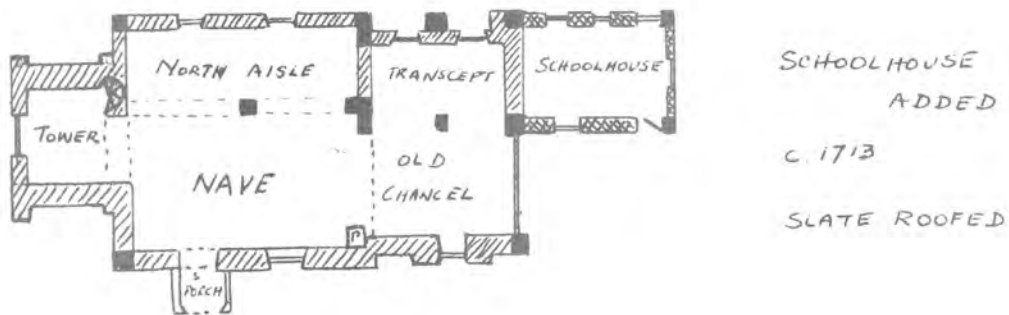


NORTH AISLE ADDED
TOWER COMPLETE
c. 1639/40

North aisle and tower added by 1639 / 1640

St Luke's: Records suggest that a church dedicated to St Luke existed on the site around 1077. It was rebuilt in 1630 with funds provided by Sir Adam Newton, of Charlton House. The 1630's work, constructed of Kentish red brick, forms the core of the present building, which is Grade II* listed. It was modified in the 17th century, again in 1840 and finally in 1956.

The church operated under the aegis of Bermondsey Abbey until the Dissolution of the Monasteries; thereafter in 1607, the lands upon which it stood passed to Newton. The church is entitled to fly the ensign that was in use prior to the 1800 Acts of Union. It can do so on the saint's days of St Luke and St George, in recognition of its' past role as a navigational landmark for ships on the Thames.



St Luke's in 1713, with the added schoolhouse



St Luke's in 1714, showing the Village punishment cage and stocks to the right of the tree, at the head of what is now called Charlton Church Lane.
Below the same view, closer and showing the Thames but no stocks.





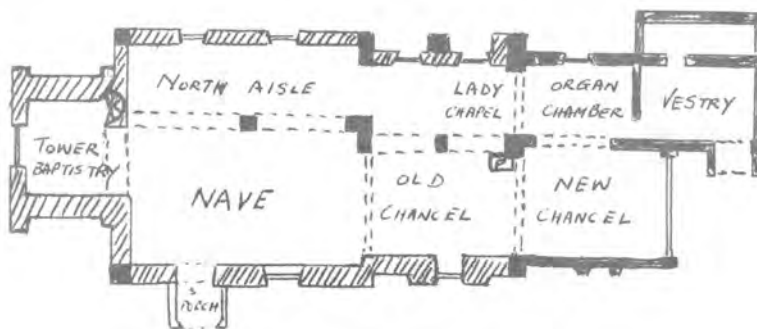
2021: view of the head of Charlton Church Lane, approximate site of the stocks.



1787: St Luke's from the Village Green, before enclosure.



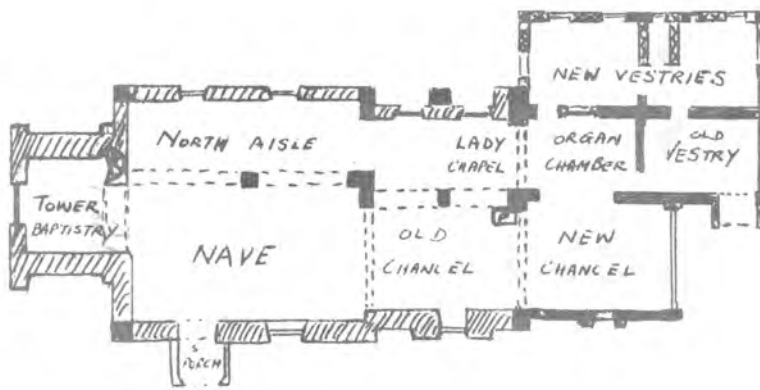
1790: St Luke's looking south, the horseman is possibly on his way to Woolwich!



SCHOOLHOUSE
DEMOLISHED
NEW CHANCEL
BUILT
ORGAN CHAMBER
& VESTRY
BUILT
C. 1840

1840's changes, without the schoolhouse, but a new organ chamber & vestry.
Below the cottages prior to demolition.





IMPROVED INTERNALLY
1873/74
1925
NEW VESTRIES
ADDED
1956

St Luke's in 1956, showing the new vestries north of the organ chamber.

A story - St Luke's sundial: In the 1970s it was found that the sundial was three hours out! Laurie Cole, deputy church organist, was repainting the sundial as part of the Charlton Village Improvement Scheme, organised by The Charlton Society. He found a plaque on the back of the sundial that told the story that the original sundial had fallen to bits and was replaced in 1935 by Edwin Monk, church organist, as an exact replica of its predecessor



However Mr Cole had moved it from its original position resulting in the sundial running 3 hours slow. One presumes that Laurie Cole corrected the location. Repairs to the sundial are featured in a current programme of St Luke's refurbishments and hopefully accurate to GMT.



Charlton Church Lane showing the boundary walls of the now demolished Dutch Almshouses.

I was told a story – unknown source – that probably in the late 1880s the top of the Lane was reduced in order to make the slope less steep, as the horses drawing the coal wagons were finding it too steep to get to the top of the hill.



Dutch Almshouses erected in 1885 / 86, on the site of an earlier almshouse erected 1868 /69.

Around the time of Edward VI (1537 – 1553) Flemish speaking religious refugees settled in Southwark. In 1550 it was agreed to give them part of the Church of the dissolved Monastery of the Augustine Friars in London. Despite continued persecution, plague and accusations that they had started the Great Fire of London they retained their religious pursuits and many stayed in London when others returned to the Netherlands in the 1660s. Also benefiting from the accession to the throne of William of Orange and Mary. Eventually an almshouse was built in Moorfields in London for the elderly poor but in 1866 the London & North Western Railway purchased the land the almshouses stood on. £7,000 in compensation was obtained and in 1867 a sanction of the court of Chancery allowed the almshouse to be built in Charlton. These were built just north of St Luke's church, on Charlton Church Lane. In early 20th century the houses were retitled The Dutch Almshouses & Convalescent Home and Training School for Girls. In 1940 the current residents – twenty elderly couples and their matrons - were evacuated to Hertfordshire and soon after the premises were requisitioned by Greenwich Borough Council to house residents bombed out by WWII air raids. Subsequently in 1960 the Council purchased the property, following which they were used as a halfway house until in 1968 when the buildings were demolished.

The site was abandoned for about 5 years and the Council proposed a scheme to build a road through from the east end of the Village at the rear of the shops to meet Charlton Church Lane. One of a number of proposed schemes, which in fact led to the birth of The Charlton Society. Only the service roads were built. By 1976 an estate of 90 flats of varying sizes had been built.



Today a new estate has been built and interestingly this new scheme has inserted a pedestrian route through from Fletching Road to Charlton Church Lane.



The heart of the Village sometime after 1902 and before 1920 when the Memorial cross was built to commemorate Charlton men who had died in the two World Wars. Note the railings around the triangle and the Church boundary.



The same view in 2021 – little has changed although the Memorial Cross can be seen and the fountain has had some adventures in between.

May 1980: The results of a car crashing into the fountain. The fountain, owned by Metropolitan Water Fountains would be assessed before a decision being made as to whether it would be rebuilt. Given the motorist had been uninsured it was concluded that restoration plans would need fund raising to achieve the necessary £3,000. The Charlton Society set about raising funds through donation but found this did not go apace. Applications to charities were not successful, but then the GLC provided £500 and Greenwich Borough Council £1,100. The major breakthrough came when The Charlton Society who had submitted plans for the fountains restoration to the David Knightley Charity 'Pride of Place' competition received the second prize of £1,000. Add to that a grant of £250 from Shell. The restoration was ready to go.



The actual repairs were undertaken in just two days following a couple of years of fundraising and preparation.



1983: The opening ceremony. Officially opened by schoolboy Jason Pocock (11).



Charlton Village 1920: Showing No 1 The Village in the centre of the photo and paling fencing along the boundary of Charlton House, now a low brick wall



Charlton Village, 1970s.



The Cottages that were demolished to make way for 1 The Village in 1881.

2021: No 1 The Village was newly built in 1881 for a Mr Robert Martin and replaced the three cottages and a yard, seen in the previous slide. Sally Jenkinson states that ten years previously he was living elsewhere in the Village. The 1871 census indicates that Robert Martin and his family were to be found at no. 32 on the south side of the Village, his occupation a Mechanical Tool maker employing 5 men and 7 boys. The house is an elegant one with a belvedere at the rear of the house, off Fletching Road, giving splendid views across the Thames and London.



By 1881 the census records Robert Martin still as a Mechanical Tool & Horse Clipping Manufacturer, employing 12 men and 5 boys. His family included Emily his wife, 5 children – Arthur 22, Emily 20, Louise 10, Robert 7 and Ida 2. The household also included a nurse, 2 domestic female servants and a retired nurse aged 62, plus a retired army officer as boarder. Robert Martin was born in Devon in 1821 and died in 1906.

Today 1 The Village houses a number of flats, a dry cleaners and estate agent on the ground floor.



Charlton Express Dry Cleaners 1970s above and 2021 right. Between years it was a Tailors. Note the new bollard installed after a car rammed the shop in 2019.





Charlton Village north, about 1915.



1948: photo provided by Peter Saunders



2020



In 1881 Nos. 3, 5 and 7 The Village were built at the same time as No 1.

No. 3 was occupied by Mr Harding the fruiterer, 5 - Mr Parson the fishmonger and 7 - Mr Potter the cabinet maker. Between 1893 and 1923 No 7 – the grey painted shop housed a musical instrument maker, tobacconist, boot maker, umbrella maker, confectioner and tailor. Today the traders are 3 - Inihaw – Filipino take-away, 5 - Shayona News and 7 - the once metal worker, recently sold.

In 1984 Harding's name was still above the greengrocer's shop having stayed in the same family's ownership for near on 100 years.

It is worth taking a look at the moulded console brackets, which support the awnings and the original arched window frames.



Left: The Chemist in 2020 at the time The Charlton Society Street Exhibition was being installed.

No 9 The Village Pharmacy, has been a chemists since 1880 then run by George Fox. The current owners have been in situ at least since the 1970s, if not longer. Although some census have it located at no. 9. However if you look at the windows above the shop, see the illustration above it would now be no. 11.

In 1905, 9A was occupied by R Tanner & Co – Dental material manufacturers, this profession is then recorded with a variety of owners until 1923.



This photo taken in 1970 shows the chemist in its current position at no 11. I believe in this photo T Jones & son was a photographers shop? Am I right? In 1881 it was occupied by Henry George Potter, Cabinet maker and still there in 1901.



Charlton Stories Facebook page:

“ The Village Post Office was where I used to purchase coach tickets for Lewis coaches to take us to away games: We met the coach outside Charlton House.”

The post office was at the back of the shop. The Post office had been on the south side of the Village in 1893 and then sported a Royal Coat of Arms above the door.



11, 13, 15 The Village: No 11 was a confectioner between 1881 and 1923, 13, 15 and 17 are older than Nos 9 – the chemist and 11- Sol Property Services. In 1881 No 13 was a boot makers, and by 1893 a boot and shoemaker until 1913 and by 1915 a florists.



Nos. 17, 19, 21, 23 The Village

2021: The Co-op, 19 - 23; the photo below includes Lansdowne Place to the right, formerly Lansdowne Lane with direct vehicle access onto the High Street. In 1881 there would have been 3 shops on the Co-op site, a baker, a china dealer and an ironmonger. In 1893/1896 No 19 (Grove Pharmacy) would have been the watchmakers E G Denman & Son until 1922 and Camillus Rodstved; No 21 would have been William Taylor the china dealer and 23 an ironmongers, in 1893 - Alfred Joshua Holmes, 1894/5 - James Henry Griffiths, from 1896 to 1905 - S H Kipps. It continues as an ironmongers until 1916, adds an oilman William Hodgkinson from 1921 to 1923 and the Woolwich & District Window Cleaning Co. in 1923.



By 1881 Thomas Taylor, and his son William Taylor, are living with his daughter Lydia, son-in-law Albert Saunders a sergeant in the Royal Horse Artillery and grandson Albert. Thomas had been born and had lived his whole life in Charlton. Starting off as the village blacksmith (1851), by 1871 he was also selling ironmongery and many items a blacksmith would have forged – hinges, nails, tools, baths, coal, scuttles, pans, buckets and bowls. In 1881, a widower of 68, he is working with his son. In 1881 there is no blacksmith in the Village high street.



No 23 The Co-op Laundry, 1970s.

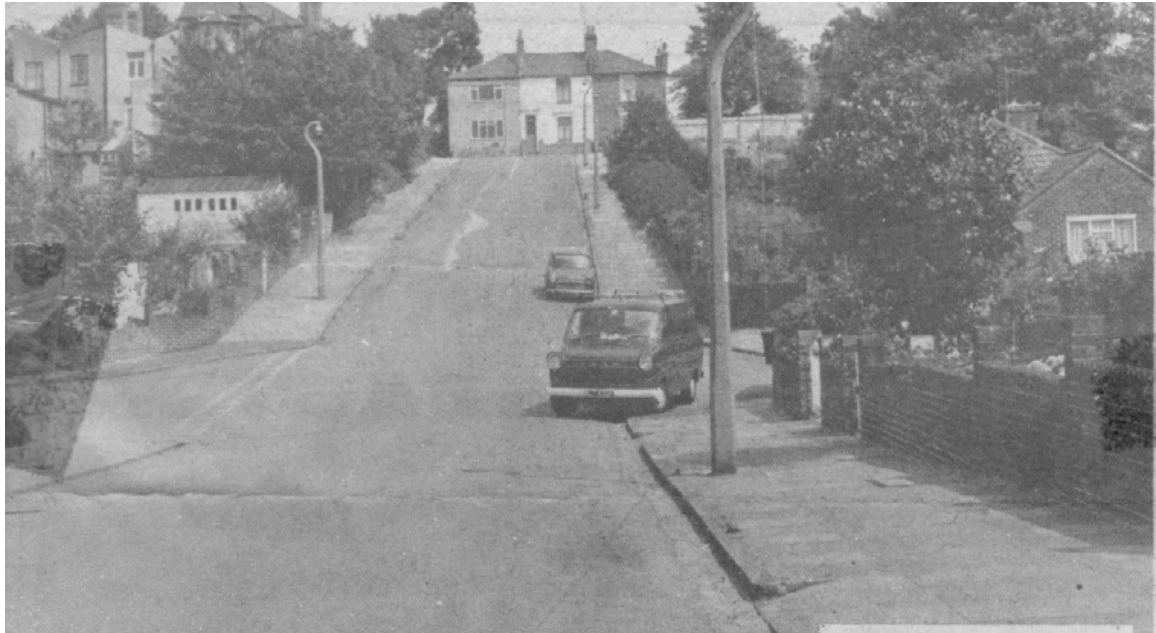


2021: Lansdowne Lane.

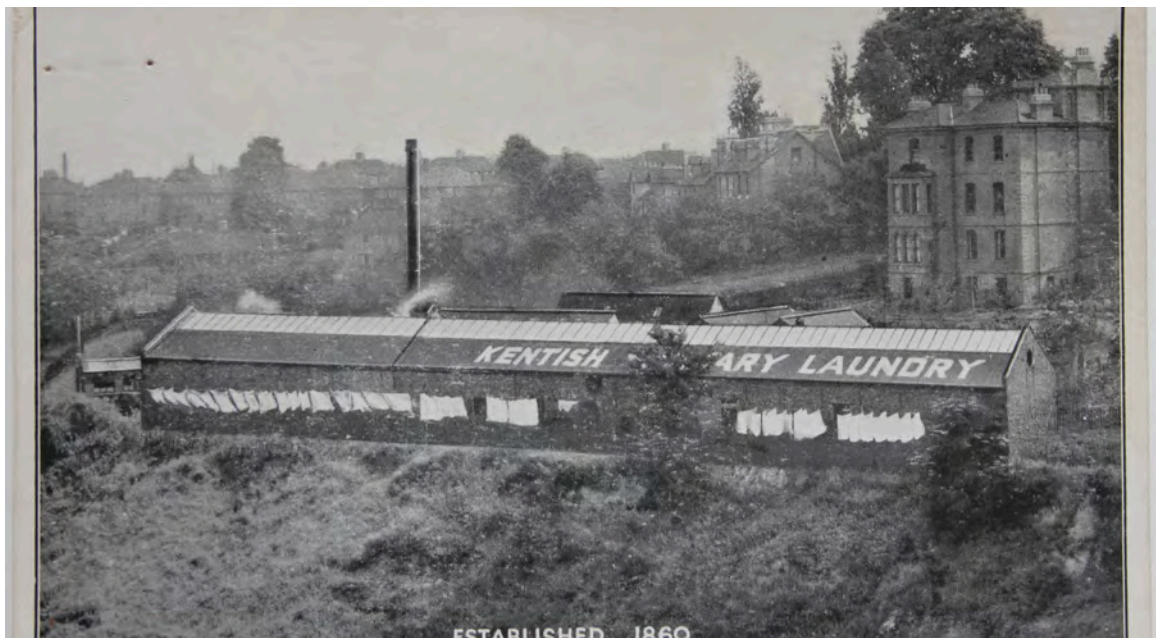


A short digression down Lansdowne Lane to The Heights. In 1910 the pond surrounded an island that supported a number of rabbits and was used for boating. There were extensive market gardens, a huge dip surrounded by sand cliffs, at the bottom of which was a tennis court. – Kentish Independent





1973: The same area taken from Charlton Heights



The laundry stood slightly further north. The large house is still there today.

Corner of Landsdown Lane to Fairfield Grove:

No 25 was once The George Tavern, which had ceased trading by 1880. Established in 1820 it was a one-room tavern managed initially by Joseph Bradbeer, who combined it with his fishmonger business and afterwards his son Charles, a tailor. It became a confectioner, later a newsagent, the International Supermarket and now The International Food Store opened in 2020. By the 1890s No 27 was a boot maker, No 29 Mary Emms ran a corn store and was still there in 1893. In 1881 No 33 Charles Fitt ran a watchmakers, but then John Bowes shoemaker had taken over the shop and was there until 2015, but probably not the same John Bowes.



1870s



1970s



2021.



2015/2016: Nos 33- John Bowes, shoemaker & 35 – Fernbank Cottage in 1881 until 1907 home of Thomas Weeks, carpenter. Bowes closed Christmas 2015.

A memoire from 'Growing Up in Charlton' - " Mum would take me to Clarkes in Woolwich, measure my feet, then back to Bowes for shoes to fit the budget."



1970s: Showing Nos 35 - Fernbank Cottage, a Gentleman's Hairdresser until it became Stafforce, No 37 Seppings – the butchers, No 39, the Fish & chip shop, No 41 – watchmaker and No 43 Ladies Hairdresser, the cottages have been demolished.

In 1881 No 37 had housed Thomas Earney – toolmaker and No 39 William Tamsett a builder. Mr Tamsett arrived in the Village in 1850s starting up as a plumber and gasfitter, employing seven men and three boys. However he doesn't appear in 1893 Kelly's directory and Thomas Earney is listed as a grocer. By the 1960s the shop was a butchers and next door a fish and chip shop.

Between 1898 and 1920 No 39 the Fish and chip shop was home to Charlton Cycle Works, who also occupied No 18 on the south side, probably their display shop, and 3 Deans Terrace on Charlton Road. There is some evidence that might indicate that while one premise may have been workshops or sales rooms, the head of house was recorded by their occupation when in fact the property may have been their home residence – living over the shop. There is also evidence that traders moved around the Village, changing size of property according to the expansion of their occupation or gradually stopping trading due to age.



No 43 Park Cottage is a typical Regency / early Victorian house. In 1881 Mrs Ward and her three children lived here and she was sufficiently wealthy not to have to work for her living.

Next door at No 45 – Cambridge House - were the Hoeltzer family, all German. Carl Hoeltzer, a telegraph engineer, had been brought to England by Siemens the German engineering company who ran the factory near the Thames. His full name was Carl Hannibal Hoeltzer and he was born in Gotha, Saxony. His family included his wife Anna, children Clara, Ernest, Bertha and Wilhelm; Frederika Pfluques a general servant and Catherine Zimmerman nurse.

Sometime before 2020 the porch and front door were removed to left-hand side of the house and replaced by a window, which has sadly destroyed the grandeur of the property, something that would not be possible had the Conservation Management Strategy been in place instead of just a map. The Strategy was completed in 2017.



Siemens Works: where Carl Hoeltzer: Telegraph Engineer worked

The coal hole outside No 45 The Village: Jim Marrett says: “Lloyd’s shop was in Wellington St, the building is still there (see below). The building will be restored under the regeneration changes to the old Woolwich Poly island site. The only part of the island site to be demolished will be the 1960’s building on the corner of Wellington St and Polytechnic St, which are the buildings to the left of Lloyd’s in the photo below.



Cottages Nos. 47, 49 and 51, Edwin Light - grocer was in No 47.
In 1881 seven cottages stood between the hairdressers house and the corner of
Fairfield Grove. No 51's shop name is H Quilter – possibly a tailors.



This photo probably dates from around 1970 as it shows that H.D.Nicholson & Sons – a grocer on the corner of Fairfield Grove has already been demolished.

In 1968 the Kentish Independent records that 8 cottages possibly 200 hundred years old, had been condemned by Greenwich Council as unfit to live in. 7 of the 8 were derelict except for No 61 where Edwin Stikells, 92 year old verger of St Luke's lived. Mr Stikells disagreed with the council's assessment, saying he had lived in the cottage for 40 years, and that he had many happy memories but now found it very lonely his neighbours having either died or moved away.

The Ministry of Public Buildings and Works as buildings of historical and architectural importance had listed the cottages, while Nicholas Pevsner refers to them being "unusually complete".

Mr Stikell's story continues as in 1970 he and his wife Lilian are still living in their cottage and have been assured by Lord Gough, owner of the cottages, that they can stay until 'the land is needed'. The estate agents Fairbrother and Ellis said there were no development plans for the land... as yet. According to the Kentish Independent 16th July 1970 – an earlier tenant was Sir John Franklin, the well-known Arctic Explorer, who left for an exploration in 1845, never to return.

However despite interest in preserving the buildings the cottages were eventually replaced with the modern cottages that can be seen today.

In October 1970 The Charlton Society and Lewisham Natural History Society undertook an archaeological dig on the site of the cottages as they were being demolished.

It had been assumed that the cottages were Victorian but the excavations proved they were Georgian dating from 1740. Finds included a clay floor indicating occupation around 1500 and a large house dating back to 1650. Other finds in what would have been the garden of the house were medieval, possibly as early as 1350.



HD Nicholson & Son: A story by Robert Meadows in 'Growing up in Charlton':
 "1950s, Us kids would pop our head in the door and ask for 'specks' (apples that were OK to eat but bruised or marked). He would give us some for nothing! The floor of the shop was a couple of steps lower than pavement!
 Spearmint gum machines were on the wall.... the machine held PK remember the song?....

PK penny a packet

First you lick it

Then you crack it

Then you stick it up your jacket.

PK penny a packet..

Got to admit my naughtiness. I broke open that machine....nicked all the gum and the pennies... girls used to play ball up the wall."



Guides and Scouts congregate before marching to St Luke's



Fairfield was a four-acre field at the eastern end of the Village bordering Charlton Road and originally part of the Maryon Wilson Estate. It derived its name from the Horn Fair held annually from 1819 (when it was banished from the Village Green – then enclosed by the Maryon Wilsons into their manor house gardens) until 1871 when the Fair, was suppressed by an Act of Parliament. The field was let for grazing purposes until in 1872 Mr Charles Curtoys leased the field and allowed cricket matches, lawn tennis and other sports to be played there.



In 1921 Greenwich Borough Council purchased the field from the Maryon Wilson Estate for municipal housing. The development of which was recounted in a talk by Dr Michael Passmore earlier this year and which can be read on the Charlton Society website: <https://charltonsociety.org>



Charlton Almshouses opposite, were rebuilt in 1706 by Sir Richard Raynes (who had purchased the Bateman Estate in Charlton including some dilapidated almshouses) providing four one-roomed ground-floor homes and a parish hall.

In 1839 an upper room was added to the original building as a schoolroom for about thirty girls, Mrs Susan Owen was appointed the first headmistress. In addition two extra tenements were constructed either side of the original almshouse by Charlton Vestry Officers. A boy's school was erected about ten yards from the junction of Fairfield Grove and operated for twenty-three years. Its 24 year lease from Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson 8th Bart coming to an end a new National School for both boys & girls was erected on Woolwich Road, serving the children of the families housed in the terrace house erected on the marshland near the river.

In 1973 the almshouses were given Grade II Listed Building status (see pg. 12 John Smith – History of Charlton vol.3)

By 1974 the building had been empty for ten years and was in need of refurbishment. The refurbishment provided four bed-sitting rooms at a cost of £17,000 provided by the Department of the Environment and a loan from Greenwich Council.

St Paul's, Fairfield Grove, Charlton bombed in 1940 – “The story as far as Charlton was concerned actually began before what is now viewed as the official start of the Blitz. On the 4th September 1940, St. Paul's Church, which was located at the junction of Charlton Lane and Fairfield Grove, received a direct hit from a high explosive bomb, which entered through the roof of the main building,

completely destroying it. This was something of a landmark, as it was the first church in London to be destroyed in the War and the day following the incident, many thousands of people came to view the ruins. Sadly, the novelty value of this occasion was to wear off very quickly indeed. The gutted shell of the building remained until after the war, but was then demolished and the land sold to the local council for housing purposes. Today, the only clue to the existence of this landmark is an unremarkable block of local authority flats, which bears the name of the church which once stood on the site.” Steve Hunnisett, Blitzwalkers Blog



St Paul's, Fairfield Grove, Charlton built in 1867.



1940

Sources: Sally Jenkinson – ‘The Village Old Charlton’; John Smith – ‘History of Charlton’ 3 Vols.; The Charlton Society archives; Facebook – ‘Growing up in Charlton’; Greenwich Heritage Centre; Kelly’s Directories; London Metropolitan Archives; Blitzwalkers Blog; Gerald Dodds; Jim Free; Carol Kenna; Kentish Independent; The London Picture Archive; Jim Marrett.



There has long been debate concerning whether there were ever cows kept on the fields that lay behind Little Heath, now occupied by Charlton Park Care Home. This postcard found on the Growing Up in Charlton Facebook site proves there was. One entrance to the dairy was on Cemetery Lane, a second entrance and dairy shop was at 74 / 76 Littleheath.

J. Buckingham was dairyman

The slogan reads “cows kept on the premises, Littleheath Dairy, Old Charlton.

Carol Kenna, December 2021.