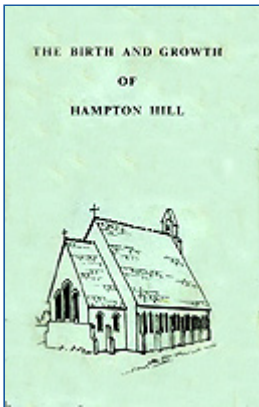


Chapter 2 - Village Amenities

Local Government:



In 1863 an Order in Council set up St. James's Chapelry and its parish, officially designated as Hampton Hill, although not called so until about twenty years later. Thus a Vestry separate from that of Hampton was established and this dealt with many affairs both secular and spiritual of the new parish, commonly known as The Common, or later, as New Hampton.

The Vicar was, and still is appointed by the Vicar of the mother parish of St. Mary's, Hampton. Hampton Hill was never an independent civil parish, but was always included with Hampton which came under the supervision of the Kingston Rural Sanitary Authority.

For more than two hundred years local Hampton government had consisted of Vestry, Churchwardens and Poor Law Guardians, supervised by the local Justice of Peace. It was the 1858 Act that was the real initiator of Local Government Boards. Hampton Hill, joining with Hampton, voluntarily adopted a Local Government Board in 1891 and separated themselves from Kingston Rural Sanitary Authority. From the time of New Hampton's original Vestry to this date there had been many grumbles and general dissatisfaction with the unsatisfactory nature of the attention accorded Hampton and New Hampton by the Kingston Authority and local governors were anxious to have their own more direct control over sanitary and allied matters.

The Local Government Board was in 1891 the first elected body. It had eight members and was largely made up of the same voluntary vestry members and churchwardens as had already been in office, but now with the backing of an electorate.

Through the National Act of 1894 the local Board became established as an Urban District Council in 1895 - a change in name only, although the membership was increased to fifteen, of whom, in spite of Hampton's larger population, seven were Hampton Hill men; this fact testifying to our village's interest in local affairs.

The U.D.C. controlled Hampton and Hampton Hill until they were compulsorily incorporated with Twickenham in 1937, becoming part of Twickenham Borough Council. Twickenham will in turn, in 1965, become part of the Greater London Borough of Richmond.

In June of 1890 a public meeting was convened by the vicar "in pursuance of a requisition by thirty-six tradesmen that the name Hampton Hill should be the accepted name for our village." The Rev. H. Bligh, in the chair, reminded those present that when their village was just a small hamlet it had been called "The Common" and a Post Office had been established. That hamlet increased and the name New Hampton attached itself to the then rapidly growing village. Twenty-six years before a parish giving its name as Hampton Hill had been formed by an Order in Council but this official name had not been generally adopted. The name Hampton Hill was later adopted by a great number of tradesmen, by the railway, by the local newspaper (The SURREY COMET in 1888) and the local directory (Makepeace's), and by most of the local institutions. The arguments in favour of Hampton Hill as the village name, were that it was by far more attractive than New Hampton and that it was, in fact, the legal name. "It was a great point to know that they stood a considerable height above their neighbours . . . this gave the place the character of being so healthy and had made it known more or less through the country." Moreover, Mr. Bligh remarked that the village had been new some fifty or sixty years ago and was so no longer. The meeting agreed to petition the Post Office to change the name to Hampton Hill. In mid July the Post Master General replied "to the memorial from nine tenths of the householders of Hampton Hill" and sanctioned the official change of designation.

From the beginning there seems to have been more than a little jealousy between the two

parishes. Hampton Hill inhabitants sometimes wrote of themselves as "a neglected minority" and one Hampton ratepayer referred scathingly to "a portion of the parish in Hampton glorified with the adjunct of 'Hill'". Local Government meetings in the '90's, were held in "Park House," a private house south of Beveree in Hampton High Street. The rates in 1894 were a shilling in the pound, but the sewerage scheme introduced in 1895 put the rates up to 1s. 11d. and by March, 1899, they were 2s. 3d. When reading about the insanitary conditions before the sewerage scheme it would seem that the increase in rates was more than justified!

This sewerage scheme was the outstanding achievement of the U.D.C. in its first ten years of office and will be discussed later. It was followed by improvements to roads as the council took them over from private owners; then in turn came general street lighting.

It is interesting to note that Hampton Hill Vestry set up schools twenty-seven years before free elementary education was provided by the State. The early church schools were paid for by public subscriptions, thus saving an expense to the rates and they will be dealt with fully in a later chapter.

There was an attempt to get shops to close early on Wednesdays - early being 5 p.m. - and a letter to the SURREY COMET in 1891 complains that people were seen knocking on shop doors after 5 p.m. "In the interests of assistants we appeal to the inhabitants for their sympathy and help by asking them to shop before five o'clock, and eight o'clock other evenings, so as to give the assistants of Hampton Hill the privileges enjoyed by so many in adjoining districts." Evidently the residents did sympathise, for in the COMET of 1899 appears a notice, "Ladies! Please help the assistants by not shopping after two o'clock on Wednesdays."

It was just about this period that the Labour political party was being formed, and a little more thought and consideration was being shown for the "working man" and a beginning was being made nationally to introduce shorter hours of work.

Among the seven Hampton Hill members of the first U.D.C. in 1895, two of the most prominent were Mr. W. Austin, of Oxford Villa, Uxbridge Road, and Mr. A. F. Storey, local baker. Both had been on the Vestry as long ago as 1870 when these two enthusiastic members had volunteered to survey the roads regularly and to report to the Kingston Authority with a view to getting the thoroughfares of the village in better condition, which appears to have been a thankless and unrewarding task!

The one-time "feeling" between the two villages is again seen in a SURREY COMET report of U.D.C. meeting of 1899, when a Mr. Bloxham asked what the Rev. C. R. Job, Vicar of St. James's, meant by saying that the council were always prepared to do anything that was wanted at the Hampton end of the parish, whilst Hampton Hill always had to wait. He suggested that the assistant overseer (Mr. W. Austin) should prepare a statement on the rateable value of Hampton Hill, to show what they paid, and that the surveyor should prepare a return showing the amount spent on Hampton Hill, because he had a belief that much of the Hampton money went "in that direction." A Mr. Tagg accused the Vicar of interfering in what was not his business and stated it was his opinion that "if he looked after his flock it would be far better."

Since the early days of the U.D.C. to the amalgamation with Twickenham on April 1st, 1937, public services have gradually and continually improved - roads, drainage, sewerage, libraries, together with more widely administered services such as public transport, water, police services, postal services, hospitals, telephones, gas, electricity and others - but the amalgamation meant the inevitable loss of local interest to the larger controlling organisations. The most Hampton Hill can do to retain its interests under present conditions is to elect three borough councillors, since Hampton Hill is now only one of the ten wards in Twickenham Borough and it will be a very small piece indeed of the Greater London Borough of Richmond.

Roads:

The district which is now Hampton Hill was, in Cardinal Wolsey's time, a part of Hampton Court Manor, and roads of the district were no more than cart tracks and rough lanes between the farmsteads and larger houses. As long ago as 1670 at the Quarter Sessions the king was

indicted for not maintaining the "King's Bridge" (now known as the Pantile Bridge) and causing flooding of the main London Road. The charge was not pressed, somewhat understandably, and there are many subsequent mentions of the flooding of the main thoroughfare due to the same cause.

In 1789 the Chertsey coach returning from London, was overturned in the ford for wheeled traffic alongside the narrow Pantile bridge. One woman was drowned and several were bruised and in addition a woman and a boy were crushed as the coach fell on them.

Eighty years later the roads were so bad that the Metropolitan Street Act required the horse-drawn buses to draw as near as possible to the left side of the road to pick up and set down their passengers in order to save them from having to walk through the mire. At this time the roads were still very poor and ill-defined with no hard surfacing, no surface drainage, a kerbed footpath only in parts of the main street, and of course no lighting. In many cases there were doubts as to which were private or which belonged to the parish, and encroachments by the public were frequent. Even at the beginning of the 90's many roads had no officially recognised names and houses had no definite numbers, but often merely a name (often duplicated elsewhere) with no indication of the road to which it belonged. In the earlier parish days matters were even worse.

One of the first attempts to improve things for the villagers was to consider the costly business of lighting, not at all a popular suggestion amongst some residents who feared for their pockets. In 1866 a public meeting was held in New Hampton to decide whether some at least of the streets should be lit with gas. The Rev. F. J. Fitz Wygram, in the chair, reported that the road from the Pantile Bridge to the Wellington Inn was, at that time, the only piece of unlit highway between Hampton and London. A Mr. Broome, in objecting to the lighting proposals, said that when he came home in the dark, tired, he went to bed to save light, and that "if everyone else did the same, no streetlights would be necessary." Whether the naive logic of this remark swayed public opinion or not, the Vestry resolved "that there was at present no reason for increased lighting in this parish . . . as it tended to greater immorality; " - a very strange argument for "keeping matters dark"! - and no general street lighting was in fact established until 1891 when the first contract was placed with the Gas Company on January 17th to install lamps at a cost of seventy shillings a lamp, the Company to clean and repair the lamps when necessary. As late as 1894 reference is made to "the lamp in Park Road" so presumably this thoroughfare even then boasted the one solitary one.

At a Hampton Vestry meeting Mr. Fitz Wygram reported that Mill Lane (Windmill Road) was in a particularly bad state, and the highways generally were bad. The road from the Wellington public house to Pantile Bridge was reported as being so muddy that women were obliged to give coppers to boys to cross the road to post letters for them. Twenty years later things had not much improved as Mr. Bailey and Mr. Embleton complained to the Local Board in 1891 of "the disgraceful condition of paths in High Street, Hampton Hill which made the Board a laughing stock and inflicted loss on the local tradesmen and shopkeepers." The Surveyor agreed that the tar paving of the greater portion of paths in Hampton Hill "required urgent attention."

The dreadful state of the roads at this time was partly because some of the road surfaces had been opened to put in the new water mains - later, in 1898 and 1899 they were opened again to put in pipes for main and surface drainage.

It is interesting to note - though not immediately in our own parish - that the present Thames bridge at Hampton Court, built in 1935 and designed by Sir Edward Lutyens, replaced an iron bridge of five spans. This iron bridge, built in 1865 by private enterprise, was a toll-bridge until 1876 when the Metropolitan Board of Works bought it for £50,000 and declared it toll-free. This showed a handsome profit to the builder as it had cost him £11,000! During the building of the iron bridge a ferry was used to transport passengers and freight over the water, and to expedite matters a £30 per day fine was imposed on the contractors for every day they took in excess of the arranged time limit.

Many roads were not adopted by the Local Board, and had to be maintained by their private owners. Wolsey Road was a private road and in 1894 the SURREY CoMET reports that the owners were requested to put it in order. Also Park Road, owned by St. James's, was in need of

repair at this time although pressure was being exerted to make the Board adopt it, as it was being increasingly used by all and sundry. As we have heard, the gravel roadway curved over the wooden railway bridge. So narrow was this bridge that the following amusing incident occurred. Mr. Milne, nurseryman (for whom Lindsay Lodge was built), was approaching the bridge on a newly acquired bicycle when he perceived the Rev, and Hon. Henry Bligh coming towards him across the bridge accompanied by a lady attired in a wide skirt. Torn between the instincts of discretion and those of courtesy, he mistakenly chose the latter and doffed his hat to the lady. In so doing he lost control of his bicycle and drove the front wheel between the Vicar's legs, causing him to stumble against his companion, and all three bit the - literal - dust!

Road watering was initially the responsibility of the Kingston Rural Authority, but a glimpse of their attitude was shown when Mr. Austin, one of the two voluntary road surveyors for Hampton, had complained that the roads there were not being watered according to contract, and was told "it was impossible for the Sanitary Authority to come to Hampton to look after the watering and that the Hampton Board of Guardians must do it themselves." In 1875 the New Hampton residents had been so incensed by the dust that at a public meeting presided over by Mr. Fitz Wygram, they decided to take matters into their own hands, and by means of public subscriptions inaugurated their own local road watering system. They had to wait until 1894 before this service was undertaken by the Local Board. In that year it is reported that the Board had accepted a tender by a contractor to water the roads, "the contractor to supply harness and a man for 8s. 9d. per day." There is no doubt that this service was important as horses and carriages would raise clouds of dust in the untarred, mostly gravel or dirt roads of those days. These same roads, by nature of their constitution, became quagmires after heavy rain and one gets a good idea of the sort of road conditions that obtained when reading a report that a furniture van stuck in Hanworth Lane in deep mud and had ultimately to be unloaded before progress could be made. This resulted in a claim being sent to the Local Board for damages amounting to £10 and a threat of legal proceedings. A less serious note on road watering occurs when Mr. Bailey "hoped that the youths who did this work would not go round with pipes in their mouths as it looked very unbusinesslike." - A Mr. Gold-worthy interjected, "No objection to a pinch of snuff, I suppose?" Mr. Bailey, "Oh, dear me no! They can chew if they like." (Laughter.)

It would seem that the roads received much criticism but little attention until after 1899, that is, after the new drainage and sewerage and lighting were completed in the more important thoroughfares. Also the private roads were gradually taken over by the U.D.C. and were then not dependent upon private resources for upkeep. It was in 1897 that the U.D.C. listed the roads it would take over and make up at the owners' expense - these, as stated in the previous chapter, were Albert Road, Edward, Wolsey, Holly, Myrtle, School Avenue, Park Place, Westbank, Cross Street, Eastbank, St. James's Road, Seymour Road and Park Road - this last in two parts. In 1899 there was difficulty in the complete making up of Park Road as the railway bridge was wooden and in a poor state of repair. There was friction between the Railway Company and the U.D.C., who wanted the Company to repair the bridge so that the road could be straightened and completed. The Company eventually did this although the road over the bridge is uncomfortably narrow to this day.

As has been said, the Pantile Bridge in the main road was originally a footbridge with a ford or watersplash for wheeled traffic alongside it. The introduction of trams on rails, starting from Twickenham in 1901, and the desire to extend the journey to Hampton Court necessitated rebuilding the bridge to its present width in 1910.

Water:

Prior to 1864 there were no Water Works, and piped water to the parish was not available. Each of the larger houses relied on its well for supplies, and communal wells served the smaller cottages. Some of the wells still exist; several were found recently during demolition of old houses in the High Street before the building of the new garage and block of luxury flats and shops backing on to Bushy Park - a development which may well point the style of the future village High Street.

Before the general availability of piped water there were many complaints to the Local Board

and to the Kingston Sanitary Authority that the well water was polluted by sewage and surface water for lack of effective drainage. In May, 1875, a typical report in the SURREY COMET says, "that there is not in Hampton one house in twenty supplied with water, which, putting absolute purity out of the question, is not loaded with impurities of the most poisonous and filthy description." In one instance a pump was seven or eight yards from a privy and a dung heap and "a reeking public urinal." "It exhibited a composition almost unique in the history of well waters representing as it did a contamination equivalent of nine gallons of sewage to ten gallons of water"!

The Water Works, built by Vauxhall Water Company in 1864, was the first one to take its water from the Thames above Teddington Lock. The water in this reach of the Thames was purer than that in the lower reaches. In addition, the Vauxhall Water Company was one of the first to have filter beds to purify its water and the health of the people using the Company's water showed a marked improvement. It was in 1903 that the several water companies taking water from the south side of the Thames were brought together under one control as the Metropolitan Water Board.

It may be of interest to note that in the more closely built up area of London, water was piped along the streets to standpipes at several points so that water could be used communally by the nearest inhabitants. This meant much carrying of water, and restricted its use considerably; also as the mains were turned on for only three hours a day, and only three to six days a week, it meant that water had to be carried home and stored in all types of receptacles; not, especially in those days, the most hygienic way to live!

The constant supply of water became generally available in 1901.

Main Drainage:

In the early days of New Hampton's history there was no drainage of any kind - the only way to dispose of sewage was to empty a bucket into a hole in the garden and cover it. The lack of running water was very important in this instance. The "bucket" method was not at all hygienic even when done thoroughly, and very unsatisfactory indeed when the sewage was not buried at all, merely thrown down a ditch or sometimes out on to the roadway. These practices also caused the well water to become polluted by seepage. An idea of conditions before main sewerage drainage was introduced can be gained from the Rev. F. J. Fitz Wygram's letter for the attention of the Kingston Rural Sanitary Authority and published in the SURREY COMET.

It is addressed to a meeting of the Board of Guardians on August 8th, 1865, and reads as follows: "The Rev. F. J. Fitz Wygram presents his compliments to the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, and would feel much obliged if he would call the attention of the Board to the sanitary conditions of New Hampton. Even in passing along the principal street the smells are most offensive, and at the back of the houses and close to the back doors or under the windows are large heaps of manure or refuse. Drains hardly exist at all, and cesspools are full to overflowing. One child died of scarlet fever this week at Mr. Absalom's in the High Street, and there are four cases of smallpox in a family named Chipperfield in the Mill Lane, and Mr. Fitz Wygram is much afraid that these epidemic diseases will spread rapidly through the village unless steps are taken immediately to enforce greater cleanliness. About ten days ago Mr. Fitz Wygram made a formal written complaint to Mr. Stopford (who is said to be Inspector of Nuisances) with regard to heaps of manure which had been placed by a certain person within a few feet of the window of a cottage belonging to Mr. Fitz Wygram, but no notice has been taken of this complaint, and the nuisance, so far from being diminished, has increased since the complaint was made. Mr. Fitz Wygram is not aware that any nuisance in the parish has yet been removed or abated, or any inspection of premises made since the inspector was appointed.

"Mr. Fitz Wygram is sorry to be obliged to make any complaint, but it would be very lamentable if valuable lives were lost for want of attention to the simplest sanitary laws."

Rev. J. Burrows told the Board that the Committee had under consideration steps to abate the nuisances referred to.

There are several instances quoted in the SURREY COMET between 1865 and 1891 of the dissatisfaction of the Vestry Board of Hampton Hill with the Rural Authority of the Kingston Union.

In 1870 a Mr. Kent mentions a unanimous decision that drainage should be provided by every inhabitant by means of cesspools. Mr. Stopford, the nuisance officer, was so infuriated by criticism that he shouted that the originator of the proposal would "end up in Colney Hatch where the mad came from!" To help the infuriated Mr. Stopford, Mr. Broome (of anti-parish-lighting renown) was elected an assistant nuisance officer but affairs did not mend and it was reported that his appointment had not resulted in "the new Broom sweeping clean."

The SURREY COMET of June 25th, 1873, reports a letter to Hampton Board of Guardians and Local Government Board, "I desire to bring to your notice the state of the water supply and drainage of the house I now occupy, Alma Cottage, High Street, New Hampton, the landlord lives in the adjoining cottage. The water obtained from the well (no other provided) gives many indications of being contaminated with sewage and other deleterious organic matter, frequently emitting a foul smell when boiled, and imparting an inky colour to tea, coffee or other beverages for which it is used. House drainage from the pair of cottages passes into a small cesspool, but the overflow is so badly arranged that a bad effluvia pervades the whole house. That the water is injurious to health I have no doubt..... Mr. Broome, the Sanitary Inspector, says this matter is not his business!"

Following this letter the Rev. J. Burrows said, "he was as good a judge of pure water as any" and there was nothing wrong with the water supply at Alma Cottage. However on analysis at St. George's Hospital it turned out that it contained "a considerable amount of urine and floating sewage." When piped running water at last became available from the new reservoirs of the Vauxhall Water Company it became possible to flush sewage to cesspools. Cesspools were dug for each of the larger houses, and in other places a cesspool was shared by several cottages. At first it was the responsibility of the occupier to have these emptied. (Later, in 1897, the Council took on this task.) To minimise the unpleasantness to the public, this work had to be carried out at night after 11.30 or not after four in the morning and cesspools had to be emptied at least once every three months. Affairs were still not satisfactory and a letter from a disgruntled New Hampton ratepayer reads, "The long disorganised state of this parish, particularly that part of it known as New Hampton, is notorious."

When main drainage was proposed, Mr. G. Sanders, churchwarden of St. James's, was one of its most active advocates and urged the ratepayers to "take matters out of the inefficient hands of Kingston Union Sanitary Authority." In an exceedingly earnest and telling address at a public meeting of long-suffering parishioners, Mr. Sanders said of the Authority "I suppose there is not a ratepayer in this room who knows even the name of one of the men who compose the Authority and they do not know us. Some of them do not even know where Hampton is! They are not elected by us, do not pay any of the rates they are busy loading on our shoulders. They are not a Board in whom the ratepayers of Hampton can have any confidence. In Hampton it would be easy to show that their management is neither efficient or economical."

Shortly after this the Local Board was formed and one of its first actions was to push ahead with the provision of a sewerage works, which the Vestry had been considering since 1886, and the implementation of the final scheme, which was an ambitious one, fell to the Urban District Council.

The big problem was, that owing to the contours of the parish, the low lying Hampton sewage would have to be raised one hundred feet to purifying works which were to be erected at Dean Road, Hampton Hill.

The system adopted was to run sewers to seven different ejector stations, which by automatic air pressure would raise the sewage when the station was filled, to a higher level. This process was repeated at the next ejector station until it was finally raised to the level of the purification works - rather like a system of locks in an underground river. One of the ventilator pipes from an ejector station may be seen - and heard - in Windmill Road, not far from the railway bridge. This novel system has proved to be very efficient and is still operating, although now Dean Road purification works are not used, and all sewage is pumped to Mogden, Isleworth.

The purified effluent from Dean Road was discharged into the Thames downstream of Kingston Bridge by a pipe running across Bushy Park. By 1896 more than seven and a half miles of sewer had been laid and the scheme finally came into operation on December 8th, 1898, proving an even greater success than had been anticipated by its originators.

This whole main drainage scheme with the ejector stations was of great interest to sanitary engineers for many miles around, and at the official opening of the works by Sir Frederick Hartland, M.P., Chairman of Thames Conservancy, on October 14th, 1899, many municipal boroughs and rural districts sent representatives. The initial cost for the sewerage scheme was £62,000.

While trenches for sewage pipes were dug in the roads, surface drainage was installed at the same time. Although these schemes took about nine years to complete, it did mean that not only was there practically no further nuisance from overflowing cesspools, but also rainwater could be drained off the roads with a consequent improving of winter conditions. It was immediately after the pipe-laying period that the U.D.C. took over the roads and made them up properly.

Transport:

Before the Thames Valley railway was built the only method of transport for the general public in the parish was by horse drawn coaches which would ply regularly from London to surrounding towns. There are pictures in Twickenham Library of the "knifeboard buses" that offered a regular service from Teddington to Hampton Court through Bushy Park.

There were also regular excursions from Hampton to Lyne Hill, Chertsey, and from Hampton to Kingston Market - sixpence return fare. As horse riding was also a usual way to travel, and horses in everyday use, so farriers were established, and hostleries where coaches or horses could be hired. There is record of several in the village, a Mr. Dobson, farrier, at the Mill, Uxbridge Road; Mr. Bright, "flymaster," of Park Road (probably the present Park Place); and Mr. Branchett, "Cabby," Windmill Road, where the primary school now is.

The Thames Valley Line, a branch of the London and South Western Railway, was a seven and a half mile extension of line from Twickenham, and its laying down included the building of Fulwell and Hampton Stations. There was a considerable amount of dissatisfaction for many years with the position chosen for Fulwell Station, many different sites being suggested, one being in Edward Road and one just past the Pantile Bridge on the main road. The extension was of great use in transporting the produce of the growing nursery trade which was such a feature of the district, and served the growing population which had up until then been forced to use the distant Teddington Station, and before that, the still more distant Hampton Court Station. Before the latter was opened the nearest station to our village was at Esher!

The contractors for the laying down of the Thames Valley Line were Messrs. J. Aird and Company and the extension was opened in November, 1864, "to provide communication for a large and wealthy district between Twickenham and Shepperton, the line running through some very picturesque country." There was at first a single line with loop lines at the stations and initially there were fourteen trains a day - seven up to London and seven down.

The Fulwell Station was named from the farm belonging to Sir William Clay, on whose property it stood and in 1890 it was improved by the addition of a new booking office, parcels office and waiting room. The two first stationmasters are buried in St. James's Churchyard - S. B. Wright, 1883, and J. Veysey, 1896.

In 1887 Hampton Hill Vestry moved a resolution "that the slowness and infrequency of the trains are extremely detrimental to the Parish, by keeping many houses empty, whereby the rates of the remainder are increased and all local institutions crippled." From the church magazine it can be seen that the trains were the popular means of transport for Sunday School, Choir and other outings. In 1901 an outing numbering two hundred and fifty-four persons went by train to the Crystal Palace and in 1907 two hundred and fifty-two people travelled to

Portsmouth on a parish outing, starting from Fulwell at 6.30 a.m. and returning at 7.45 p.m. The adult fare was four shillings and it was half-price for children!

Most of the work in the construction of the line appears to have been done by imported labourers; many at this time were also working on the building of the new waterworks. The men lived in encampments near the works' site, probably finding it convenient to move their encampment as the work proceeded. Reports of rowdiness and lively clashes between villagers and labourers are commented on elsewhere.

On December 1st, 1883, a two-horse omnibus service was started to run between the Buckingham Estate, Tangle Park and Fulwell Station, meeting all trains. The fare from the station to Poole's Place, Buckingham Estate was 6d.; to the Female Orphanage 4d.; and to Suffolk House, High Street (the home of Mr. Embleton, the estate agent and surveyor) 3d. We are told that children under twelve were half price and that parcels would be conveyed for 3d. Makepeace's Miniature Railway Guide supplied the village with a monthly timetable.

Road transport became more organised when tram lines were laid and horse-drawn trams provided a regular service from London, through Twickenham to the Pantile Bridge which was so narrow that they could not at first continue past it. Electric trams were started in 1901 by the London United Tramway Company which was formed in 1894 - the first route being from Shepherd's Bush to Acton in 1901. There was at first a single-line track through Hampton Hill and then the High Road was widened to accommodate a dual track. By 1910 the road widening reached the Pantile Bridge with subsequent extension of the dual track to Hampton Court. A large depot was built at Fulwell shortly after the turn of the century. Trolleybuses took the place of trams on this route in 1931 and these in their turn gave way to diesel buses in 1962. These events caused much local interest. Thousands gathered at Fulwell depot, now doomed to closure - and along the route to cheer the last of London's trolleybuses off the streets in the early hours of May 9th, 1962. It was described as being "a remarkable demonstration of affection for the veteran vehicles which had served the public since the thirties." The warmth of farewell surpassed anything envisaged by London Transport and was reminiscent of the great farewell given to the trams ten years previously. The scenes at Fulwell were the culmination of the Company's fourteenth and final stage of trolley-to-diesel conversion and a crowd of close on a thousand packed the approach to Fulwell depot to welcome the last trolley of all. They sang Auld Lang Syne and Now is the Hour and cheered for minutes on end as it drove slowly over the last quarter of a mile, led by a band and a procession of a hundred busmen and women bearing lighted torches. The trolley itself was decorated with flags and bunting and balloons streamed from the twin trolley booms.

Earlier on the memorable day in transport history there had been a ceremonial run by "Diddler" No. I, one of London's first 1931 trolleybuses, brought from retirement at the British Transport Commission's museum at Clapham specially to make the journey. On board was the Transport Company's Chairman and fifty guests, including the M.P. for Twickenham, mayors and civic dignitaries. Behind the "Diddler" ran a standard trolley-bus with more guests. The two vehicles set out from Fulwell at three o'clock on a cloudlessly sunny day and began their nostalgic journey over the route on which the first trolley had run thirty-one years earlier. Ronald Hadland who had been the first trolleybus's conductor issued souvenir tickets. Escorted by police motor-cyclists the vehicles ran from Fulwell to Twickenham, round the terminal circle and back towards Kingston, cheered all the way - scenes reminiscent of the older village in terms of community participation and doubtless of as much interest to readers in a hundred years' time from now as similar scenes from the Victorian era have been to us.

Fire Services:

Fire-fighting a hundred years ago was a very different matter without today's modern appliances and water supplies. The firemen were a voluntary body who, when the alarm sounded, would leave their work, or their homes if at night, and rush to the fire station - or at first, the shed where the appliance was kept, and harness, probably a pair of horses to the fire engine, having first of all borrowed them from a local tradesman. The appliance at first was nothing more than a manually operated pump, allowing as many as a dozen firemen to pump at once, being relieved by volunteers when they were tired. The reward was payment by the insurance

companies, or owner or occupier of the property, in proportion to the value of their services.

The local Press reports various attempts to form a Hampton Hill brigade. In 1876 a meeting resulted in the forming of a volunteer brigade of thirty men captained by Captain Ball, of Willowbank, St. James's Road. Again, in February, 1888, a meeting held at the Working Men's Club resulted in a new Hampton Hill Brigade of eleven tradesmen being formed and we learn that the village already possessed an engine and several other appliances. We are told that they were housed in a red brick building with large double red doors, near the Star public house on a site that is now occupied by a public convenience.

In November, 1891, the Hampton and Hampton Hill Brigades were called out suddenly and unexpectedly as a test of their efficiency. The Hampton engine was fully equipped, manned and harnessed in six minutes but Hampton Hill took twenty-seven minutes and their tardiness was explained by the fact that "the call boy had to run considerably over a mile to call the brigade." (Not to mention the fact that perhaps Mr. Wilson, the corn chandler, was probably using his horse! We are given to understand that it was usually his horses which were borrowed at this time.)

Hampton established a fire brigade in 1886 under the enthusiastic captaincy of Captain Graham. He continually pressed the Council for suitable accommodation and eventually, in 1898, Hampton's first fire station was built in Thames Street where it stands today; the "Manual" up to that date having been housed behind the Bell public house. The alarm was conveyed by message from the police station until 1896 when an electric bell circuit was installed between the station and Captain Graham's house. By the end of the century the telephone had arrived and fire brigade communications were given priority. In 1899 a steam driven pump was borrowed from the Vauxhall Water Company and this so impressed the U.D.C. that in 1899 they bought the Brigade its own "steamer."

A new fire station was also built for Hampton Hill, in Windmill Road, on the site of what is now the public library. Presumably the old one in the High Street had been demolished as we are informed that the appliances were temporarily housed in a yard behind the Crown and Anchor. Unfortunately, the arch over this new fire station collapsed, but as the fire brigade foreman was also the builder he did not register a complaint! However, we are informed that the council wanted to know about "the collapse of the whole of the front of the new Hampton Hill fire station" and the Surveyor was forced to admit that "there was a slight defect in the arch."

The fire station was opened by Captain Graham as a No. 2 to Hampton's No. 1 and ignoring any unfortunate contretemps in its erection he tactfully stressed the fact that he did not think better kept engines could be found anywhere in Britain and he congratulated Mr. Kemp on the handsome design of the building. The gallant captain also led the Hampton Hill brigade and a high standard of efficiency was reached and the brigade did well in various local competitions. Rather oddly, it was the Lighting Inspectors who seemed to have jurisdiction over the fire brigades and we read of both brigades and their fire appliances and hose reels being taken over to Molesey Hurst "to test same in the presence of the Inspectors." Several smart evolutions were gone through but proceedings being doused by heavy rain they were forced to make their way home again and content themselves by practising the efficiency of their pumps at the watersplash as was their usual habit.

The brigade won first prize in the "steamer" and "manual" competitions and on this occasion the combined brigade was welcomed back with a public ceremony, bands playing, flags flying. Unfortunately it was found afterwards that the prize cheque was not honoured and the silver trophy was not silver!

Hampton and Teddington fire brigades were amalgamated with Twickenham in 1938 and were then administered by the Twickenham Borough Council until at the Fire Services Act of 1947, the Middlesex Fire Brigade was formed. The main fire station was at first located just off Twickenham Junction until the erection of the very modern station at Fulwell.

Postal Services and Telephone:

In spite of inquiries at the main District Post Office at Richmond there is no information available as to when the first post office opened in the village, although it was probably in the first part of the 1840's. There were two sub-offices in the High Road, the first in all probability where it stands today, and the other in the newsagent's shop near the Park Road traffic lights - which latter office became known as Fulwell Post Office.

In 1882 we read that postal arrangements were improved by the placing of a letter box in the wall close to the new entrance to Bushy Park opposite the Congregational Church. There were sundry complaints about tardy delivery of letters and this was improved in 1892 by making the Hampton Hill branch its own sorting office. A typical incident is reported in 1895 when a postman died suddenly. A subscription was immediately taken out by the villagers on behalf of his wife and children who were left totally unprovided for.

By 1899 Makepeace's at the main post office were advertising "Postal Telegraph on the Premises" but we have not been able to find out when the first telephones were installed. We know that a few lines were connected in the late 90's, one of them being connected to the fire station. The SURREY COMET of January 15th, 1908, tells us that one or two Hampton telephone subscribers were joined to the Kingston Exchange and that there were plans on foot for an exchange at Hampton. We could not trace one having been built near this date in Hampton but are told that one was, in fact, built at Molesey - hence the explanation of the name of our local exchange in present times. In 1911, Molesey 9 was the number of an old established Hampton family, which substantiates this information. Enquiries at the present "Molesey" Exchange, just off Hampton High Street, elicit the fact that it was built in 1933 and serves, at present, five thousand, eight hundred and one subscribers.