

The Bell, High Street, Great Woking.

I was interested to see the reference to the "Bell" pub in Great Woking High Street in "Small Beginnings".

Whilst researching my family history, I found that I had a connection with some of the people who ran the "Bell" in the 1800's.

Susan Holmes married Daniel Bradley in 1848 and they took over the pub in about 1861. Susan was the younger sister of my 2x-great-grandmother, Sarah Holmes.

When Daniel died, Susan's father, widower Robert Holmes, a retired waterman, took over as publican.

My great grandfather, William Robert Holmes (Sarah's son), was orphaned in 1849 and spent some of his young life at the "Bell". He is shown there as an 11 year-old in the 1861 Census. He later married Caroline French and moved to the cottages that used to be just to the east of the new Great Woking School entrance where they produced a family of eleven children.

The "Bell" was converted to private houses and then eventually demolished in 1973 for the sheltered accommodation block on the corner of Crouchman's Avenue which now carries its name.

Here are copies of a few pix I have managed to copy

The Village, Gt. Wakering



An old postcard c 1930 – sorry it’s a bit of a “soot-and-whitewash job”– but the “Bell” pub sign shows up O. K.



This is an artist's impression of the "Bell".



This is a snap-shot somebody gave me. It shows the "Bell" as dwelling houses and was taken in 1971.

I would like to hear from anyone who has any pictures of the local area or information on the Holmes and French families.

I am looking, in particular, for a picture of the old cottages that were demolished for the new school entrance and the houses to the east of it.

There have been some rumours around that a "Heritage Centre" may be set up before we lose all the old features of our villages. The "landmark" brickfield chimneys are gone and so has Daisy Webb's bungalow. This seems a good idea – is there any truth in these rumours?

Best regards

Mick Prior

michael.prior@btinternet.com