

Emmbrook Place Street Names

Readers might be interested to know about the origin of some of the street names on the Matthewsgreen Farm development (Emmbrook Place). ERA was asked, at an early stage of the development, if it would like to suggest any names for the new streets, and it fell to our resident local historian, Peter Shilham, to come up with some ideas. Peter made numerous suggestions, based on Emmbrook families that were notable (for a variety of reasons), and many of these have been adopted. Please read on to find out which streets were named after these families, and learn some of the history behind them.

Eamer Crescent

This is named after Harry Eamer (1887 – 1916).

He was a Private 8532 'A' Company, 2nd Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment (Princess Charlotte of Wales Regiment). As with John Yalden MM, he was killed in action 1st July. He is commemorated at the Thriepval Memorial.

His parents were Aaron and Rosetta Eamer who had married at Hurst in 1872 and lived in Emmbrook before removing to an address given as Toutley Cottage near the boundary between Emmbrook and Winnersh. They died in 1928 and 1929 respectively and were buried at St Paul's Church, Wokingham. Aaron's parents were Charles and Mary Ann Eamer, he recorded as a Pedlar, born at Hurst about 1807 but by 1871 living with his family in Emmbrook at Toutley Roundabout this being the name given to the High Road through from The Dog and Duck, past the present Village Hall, Emmbrook Inn and out to Rifle Volunteer on the Reading Road.

The name Eamer has been known in Emmbrook since at least 1870 there being several family groups. The daughter of one group (George and Sarah {nee Hambleton}) died tragically from scalding. The inquest was held, 1892, at The Rifle Volunteer. Another of their children, Ernest, was a bricklayer and the old Police Station in Rectory Road is believed to be amongst his brickwork in Wokingham. He served St Paul's for 45 years and was known as "Old Eamer." Another child of George and Sarah was Albert. In 1893 at the age of 8 years, his leg was crushed in an accident involving Messrs Wescott's traction engine. This Albie later in life could be seen cycling from the Wheelwright Arms through the copse at the end of Commons Road, never colliding with the wooden post marking the start of the road. He died in 1969.

Such is the number of Eamer families in Emmbrook and their contribution to this hamlet or village, those interested would find the series of Emmbrook History booklets sold (price £4 each) at the Emmbrook {sic} Post Office, next to The Rifle Volunteer, most rewarding. Yalden Close



Forge Grove

Named after another of the Emmbrook war dead from World War 1, George FORGE 1889 – 1916, had been a prominent member of Emmbrook Cricket Club. Although he had been born at Ealing, Middlesex, by 1901 he was resident, with his brother John T FORGE, with George and Charlotte GARDINER in a house next to the KNAPP family (The Thatched Cottage, now known as The Emmbrook Inn) in Emmbrook Road. At that time the boys' widowed mother, Mary, was recorded as a cook for Courtney B WILSON at nearby Winnersh Grove. Both boys attended St Paul's School on the Wokingham Road, were members of the Church Lads' Brigade and sang in the choir at St Paul's Church.

George FORGE, who had been the Hon Secretary of Emmbrook Cricket Club, left the district in 1913 and enlisted in the 1st/4th Royal Berkshire Regiment. As a Sergeant, he was killed in action 18th August 1916 while leading a bombing party up a German trench. A very full account appears in "Yet More Unfinished History of Emmbrook" the fourth in the series and obtainable from the Chairman of the Emmbrook Residents Association.

Gamble Gardens

On the corner of Emmbrook Road opposite Corfield Green, on the site of the present Village Hall, a map of 1873 shows a school on grounds which, by a deed dated 6th July 1867, were conveyed to the Rector and Churchwardens of St Paul's Wokingham at a cost of £200. It was in the name of the Reverend Henry GAMBLE, an Irish Presbyterian Minister of Ballywalter, County Down, who, in 1865, had married Caroline Ann, the widow (of 16 months) of Arthur SALTMARSH of Bill Hill. However, the Reverend GAMBLE died in 1870. Caroline, who was well cared for by her first husband's will, removed to Devon and lived on until 1894. Her remains were interred at Saltmarsh in Yorkshire.

Grover Avenue

Alfred Henry GROVER is another Emmbrook man who gave his life for King and Country. He lived at Toutley Hall Bungalow. After originally being listed as missing, hopes were dashed – he died 7th September 1944, aged 21 years, in the Western Europe Campaign and he is buried at Lille Southern Cemetery. He was a Driver in the Royal Army Service Corps. His father Henry was a stalwart of the Emmbrook Cricket Club and was gardener at Toutley Hall, (Old) Forest Road and an ARP Warden in WW2. The family had moved here from Prestwood near Gt Missenden and living with them in Emmbrook was his widowed mother Christine. She lived on to 1949 age 78.

Herd Drive

Major Thomas Astley HERD was a resident at Toutley Hall (Old Forest Road) 1951. He appears as the President of the Emmbrook Sports Club in 1957 which position he held until 1963. On leaving the district he asked the Emmbrook Sports Club to take over the Lowther Road/Commons Road ground at a rent of 30/- (£1.50) per year. He owned Wokingham Plastics which in 1959 was situated in Denton Road when it suffered one of the worst fires in living memory at that time according to the Wokingham Times of 12th December: "five of the seven blocks were gutted including the office block adjacent to the Ritz cinema". During the war the firm made parts for Hurricanes and Spitfires. Between his first and third marriages, he wed Sophia de KATCHALOFF, a Russian Princess, in 1939.

Langman Close

This is named after Frederick George Langman who was born in Crazies Hill in 1862 and baptised



26th January 1863 at the church of St Mary Wargrave – this was burnt down in 1914 reputedly by the Suffragettes.

He first worked as a stable assistant at Rotherfield Greys but after marriage to Margaret Johnson in 1882 he went first to Hurley and then by about 1895 was living at The Dog and Duck in Emmbrook. Here he was the landlord as well as being a carpenter. Charges against him of being drunk and disorderly in July 1901 (when he was fined £1 and 10s.6d costs) were later dismissed on the grounds of insufficient evidence – Charlotte Eamer spoke in his defence. Mrs Murdock from Buckhurst declared that he had been working on a rustic seat there all day. In the evening two foremen from Huntley and Palmers Biscuit Factory with a party found him sober. It was stated that there had been ill feeling between him and some Emmbrook people. Interestingly Frederick's youngest daughter later married a member of the troublesome family which must have made Christmas celebrations interesting.

There was the custom of holding "cherry feasts" at the Dog and Duck on Sundays when there was dancing and music, cherries being sold during the proceedings. Often there were complaints about bad behaviour and it was not uncommon for landlords to be summonsed for opening their premises during prohibited hours (such as during the times of Divine Service) and such cases against Frederick Langman (and William Knapp at the nearby Thatched Cottage {now The Emmbrook Inn}) were dismissed in August 1901.

In 1903 the Langman family moved to 6 Benning's Cottages (Seaford Road) and by 1911 they were resident at 4 Station Road. Frederick's wife Margaret died in 1922 aged 59.

Lee Court

Harold LEE was a Master Printer with his shop at 17 Peach Street. His wife Elsie was an assistant in the shop. Harold was one of the children of Walter and Alice LEE, the family living at 36 Emmbrook Road (2 Rose Villas) where they had been for some time after moving from Barkham Road. Harold's next youngest brother Edward showed great promise as a member of the Wokingham Junior Athletic Club. He had attended St Paul's School in the town, was a member of the church choir and belonged to the 1st Troop, Emmbrook Boy Scouts. In 1919 Edward LEE was awarded Archbishop LAUD's apprenticeship premium of £21. Unhappily he developed meningitis and died in the Royal Berkshire Hospital in 1920. Another brother Fred LEE was elected Vice-Chairman of the Emmbrook Cricket Club in 1938. The LEEs were represented in Emmbrook until 1961 when Walter died at the age of 82. He and his wife Alice were buried in the churchyard at St Paul's.

Miles Way

Walter & Jemima Lizzie MILES came to Matthews Green in Emmbrook from Hurst between 1905 and 1907. He was a Foreman on the Railway and, like his eldest son Charles William, worked on the permanent way. Charles progressed and having worked in the Tramways Department with the LCC he enlisted in the Royal Engineers as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers Railway Company in Salonika where he contracted malaria. He was the first of many from the MILES family who fought for King and Country.

Charles' younger brother was George Henry MILES. He had been a carter boy on a farm but served in the First World War as a Private in the Royal Marines Light Infantry. After the war he worked on the railways as a Goods Porter at Wokingham for the South East and Chatham Railway being admitted

to the NUR 31st March 1919. After his marriage to Selina HARMAR he was to be found, still in Emmbrook, at a place called "The Nook".

Walter and Jemima's next son, Frederick Walter MILES, from employment with the Matthews Green Salvage Co., joined the Colours as a gunner with the Machine Gun Corps. He was wounded in the right arm. After returning to Matthews Green he married Florence May MAYNARD. The last son Leslie, born 1905, served in with the Royal Berkshire Regiment and was de-mobbed 19th December 1946 giving his address as 3 Wellington Road.

Walter & Jemima's eldest daughter, Beatrice May (b. 1894) married Frank PENNELLS in 1914 in Wokingham. Although he was from Burwash in Sussex he enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment in 1914. Sadly he was killed in action in France, 29 April 1917 aged 32 years. The youngest daughter Margaret was born 17th December 1906, the only one of their children born in Wokingham. She ultimately made her home with her husband at 88 Matthews Green.

In the Second World War, Walter George MILES, like his father George Henry and his uncles, joined the Colours, first in the Royal Berkshire Regiment, next the Queen's Royal Regiment and finally transferred to the 1st London Scottish (Gordon Highlanders). He was officially reported wounded three times.

Walter and Jemima's grandson, Walter George, served in the Second World War, first in the Royal Berkshire Regiment, then the Queen's Royal Regiment and finally transferred to the 1st London Scottish (Gordon Highlanders).

Nicholson Drive

This is named after Edward Nicholson (1825 – 1885). He purchased the Matthews Green Estate in 1877 on retirement having made his fortune in linoleum, being one of the founding members and Director of the Linoleum Manufacturing Company. He and his wife Sophia took up residence at Matthews Green House, now known as Cantley House Hotel.

He was a great benefactor in Wokingham Town and in Emmbrook. He contributed to the new rooms of The Working Men's Club behind the coffee tavern in Peach Street, hosted the Palmer and Forest Road Schools for the annual School Treat and paid the expenses incurred in using the School Room at Emmbrook Village Hall as a Reading Room in the winter months. Sophia succeeded in financing these expenses after her husband's death and was active at the Mothers' Meetings in Emmbrook, as well as contributing to the expenses of the annual Christmas Tree (presents, etc for Emmbrook children in the Mission Room, as the Village Hall was then known). Garments made by members of the Emmbrook girls' sewing class were sent, with nosegays of flowers, by her to the Evelina Hospital for Children which was then in Southwark Bridge Road in London. She provided Bibles and hymn books for St Paul's Church and contributed towards new cassocks and surplices for the choir.

On Sophia's death in 1901 there was a very fulsome "In Memoriam" – the grave of Edward and Sophia Nicholson is to be seen in the Churchyard at St Paul's.



Their son Alfred sold Matthews Green. In 1890 Alfred and his wife, Letitia, had moved into a house he had built on land at High Close which he named Glebelands. He later renamed this Clare Court when he built a much larger house (1897) naming this Glebelands. Three of their sons Edward, Bruce and Victor were killed in the First World War. Another son, Walter, was awarded the Military Cross in the conflict and survived to join the RAF in the Second World War in which he, too, lost his life.

Potter Drive

The Potter family grew up in Emmbrook after their parents, born in Gt Bedwyn, married in Wiltshire in 1881. They lived in Emmbrook Cottage adjacent to Emmbrook House, the home of Charles Vials. Later they removed to Toutley Cottage. Charles and Fanny's youngest son was too young to serve in the First World War, but Frank, who was born in 1899, joined the Royal Navy and served as Boy 1st Class on board HMS Hampshire. The ship was carrying Lord Kitchener from Orkney on a diplomatic mission to Russia when it struck a mine laid by German submarine U-75, and rapidly sank, in stormy conditions, within two miles of Orkney's northwest shore. Frank was one of the 723 crew members who lost their lives – only 12 survived.

Of the six Potter sons who served in that war, three were killed: Frank, Thomas who was killed in action at Poelcappelle in 1917 (he was a Corporal in the 6th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment) and George who died in 1917, from enteric fever (he was a P.O. Stoker on HMS Liverpool) – he is buried at Brindisi Communal Cemetery, Italy. Another son Reginald (also in the RBR) was injured accidentally at the Front, so severely that his leg had to be amputated. Charles and Fanny's son Percy, serving with the Kings Royal Rifle Corps, was badly wounded and his name and that of his brother Reginald, both appear on the Roll of Honour at St Catherine's Church, Bearwood.

Another son, John William, who survived the war died at the Wokingham Armistice Day Parade in 1956. He had been a Boatswain in the Royal Navy, was a Master Dairyman and in 1939 served as a Special Constable. He had moved away from Emmbrook and lived in Barkham Road.

In January 1922 their mother, Fanny Potter, laid a laurel wreath beneath the war memorial tablet in St Paul's Church at the service of unveiling and dedication. Her boys had been pupils at St Paul's School and two of them had been in the Church Choir.

Skates Drive

William John Skates was a local man who worked for 36 years at Aldermaston at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment. He served in the RAF during World War 2 as a rear gunner. In 1985 he was awarded the British Empire Medal in the December New Year Honours.

The Skates family has been part of the Wokingham community going back generations, originally from the Waterloo road area then later in the Ashridge Road estate when it was built in the 1960s. The family has now lived in Emmbrook for 35 years.

William John Skates, who sadly passed away in June 2014, was a local man who worked for almost 40 years at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment in Aldermaston where he dedicated much of his working life to the safety of employees and residents in the immediate area.



In 1985 he was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours, in recognition of his work at Aldermaston. His son has a signed letter from the Queen apologising that she would not be able to present his award to him in person but that the recognition was truly deserved.

Skinner Drive

Edmund Becher SKINNER lived at Toutley Hall (in what is now Old Forest Road) in the first half of the twentieth century. He was recorded as a Lieutenant with the Royal Garrison Artillery 1914-22 and later had been General Manager or Chairman of various Rubber Companies. It was during his time at Toutley Hall before the Second World War that anybody who had fallen ill in the village of Emmbrook was offered fruit and vegetables from the garden there. Some years on a Sunday he opened the gardens to the public (admission 6d {2½p}) in aid of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing. Before the war he was President of "Embrook Cricket Club" and in 1957 he was elected Life President of what was then "Embrook Sports Club". While still living in Wokingham in 1949 he gave the Sports Ground at Lowther Road to Wokingham Borough Council by Deed with a restrictive Covenant that it be used only for amateur sports and recreational purposes. He died in 1959 at the age of 85 years.

Trinder Road

The TRINDER family came to Emmbrook during the first decade of the C20th from Nuffield in Oxfordshire. Henry and his family lived in Emmbrook Road to the south of the Emmbrook Inn (Thatched Cottage as it then was) in a house which has since been demolished for development. He kept racing pigeons and being a supporter of Reading Football Club he would take two with him releasing them in turn with the half and full time scores. He possessed a "cat's whisker" wireless set and people in the village were able to keep up to date with current news by calling in on him. One of the sons, Frederick, played for the Emmbrook Cricket team (in 1938 he was appointed umpire) and Fred was still living with his family at 47 Emmbrook Road in 1939. Another member of the family, Charles Henry, moved to Matthews Green Road and after his death his widow lived on until 1972.

Turnbrook Close

In an indenture of 1786, seven acres of ground adjoining a heath called Toutley Heath is referred to as "Emmbrook Ground (otherwise Turnbrook Ground)". It was rented by Thomas MATTINGLEY to William DOUGLAS at a pepper corn rent. While Turnbrook might be the early reference to the area, Emmbrook was termed Embrook in various documents dating from about 1785 and this spelling predominated through the C19th and then into the C20th. The two spellings then appeared, Turnbrook Ground becoming redundant. On a map of 1790 Embroke House appears. In the mid C19th the settlement is referred to Toutley Roundabout. After the Second World War the spelling settled on Emmbrook.

Whitlock House

Whitlock house derives its name from the WHITLOCK family important in Wokingham from the fifteenth century. The family held the Manor of Beches which was part of the Holt Estate.

"John WHITLOCK of Hoult" was buried at Wokingham in 1589. On the sale of the estate in 1687 it ended at least 100 years the family had been associated with The Holt House. This included, as well, the Manor House of Beches, and fifty acres of land. In addition there were four closes of land



containing 16 acres in the tenure of John RANCE of Wokingham. The Beches Manor House was destroyed by fire in 1960. The Holt House survives as a girls' school.

Yalden Close

This is named after Leonard John Yalden, M.M. (1892 to 1916). He was a Private in the 2nd Battalion of the South Wales Borderers and formerly in the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was a Doctor's Messenger and was killed in action 1st July 1916. His name appears on the Memorial Y Ravine Cemetery Beaumont-Hamel. His medal was presented posthumously to his father William Yalden (next of kin) at a ceremony in the Market Place, Reading, on 16th August 1917. His father was a gardener and Army Pensioner who was resident in 1911 at an address given as Oak Lodge, Matthews Green, near Matthews Green Farm. This is where Leonard was to be found in 1911, his place of birth recorded as Gibraltar where he was baptised 1st March 1893. The Yalden family then moved to 1 Rose Villas – 34 Emmbrook Road.

Leonard's parents were both born in Hampshire, William at Eversley in 1864.

Leonard's father William had served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps for over 21 years having been attested 13th August 1883, initially for 12 years. He was appointed Lance-Corporal in 1884, Corporal later that year and Sergeant in 1887. Typically, his wife Henrietta Emma accompanied him and their other children were born in Dublin (Herbert George), Wynberg Cape Colony, South Africa (Alice Louisa Gladys) and Winchester – the KRR's Depot (Frederick Walter). There were two other children who did not survive. William died in 1933 after 44 years of marriage. His widow moved from Emmbrook Road to the Chipping Norton area of Oxfordshire where she died in 1958 at the age of 91 years.
