
RESEARCH

PROBLEMS SOLVED

Mystery cottages

In our last newsletter we asked for your help in identifying the content of a couple of pictures which had recently come into our possession. We received various suggestions, and one unequivocal “Yes, It’s my house!” from Kay Sanderson. One of the reasons that the buildings had not been initially recognised was that two of them are no longer there, having been demolished some time ago, and the fact that this is a view of the rear of the properties. The present-day view from the same point is now obscured to a large extent by an old apple tree. The buildings were collectively known as Meadow View Cottages, and stood in Cow Lane adjacent to the Old School.

Originally they were a row of five cottages, each with one room up and one room down, but only the demolished cottage shows how they would have looked back then. Latterly it was used as a single dwelling, but retained its two staircases and both external doors until its demolition circa 1970.

(right) On the extreme left of the picture the end of the Old School building is just visible. Next to that is the cottage (now gone), while the right hand side of the picture is dominated by ‘Meadow View’ cottages. This picture is one by the famous photographer Henry Taunt, and must date from the early part of the 20th Century.



(above) A Front view of the same buildings, taken in 1957, which shows the Old School filling the right hand side of the picture, next to that the cottage (now gone) and the visible end of Meadow View Cottages.



Meadow View, present day

Local Bus

There was a suggestion that the bus in the other picture was possibly outside Reading Station. This would be a logical stop on a route from Stratfield Saye to East Ilsley.

I decided to follow this up and found pictures of the station façade which accurately compared with the visible part of the building in the background of the bus picture.



So the place was identified, what about the date? The clue to this centred on the bus itself. I 'googled' the registration number plate (HMO 860) and to my surprise all the information was immediately on screen, including the chassis number, body number, and fleet number (714), which can be seen above the offside headlight on the front of the vehicle.

It seems this bus was brought into service with the Thames Valley Traction Company in February 1954. In 1956 it was converted and in 1969 the fleet number was changed to 120. Therefore the picture dates between 1954 and 1969, though the bus looks relatively new, suggesting it is earlier, rather than later, in that timespan. The vehicle was taken out of service in 1970. Between these dates the vehicle was also used on other routes. I found another picture of the same bus with the same fleet number (714), but with the destination display showing it was the 75 for Guilford via Bracknell, Bagshot, and Bisley. In this second picture it is set against an unknown background, possibly somewhere on its other route.

The saloon car in the background is identified as a Standard Vanguard (Phase 1), a model manufactured between 1947 and 1963, and so does not help in dating the picture more accurately.