

LEAVESDEN ROAD, WATFORD, 1901

Leavesden Road is in Callowland, North Watford, and stretches from St Albans Road in the south to Gammons Lane in the north. Housing development took place along Leavesden Road and its side roads in the 1890s on what was previously farm land. In 1894, improvements, including sewerage and lighting, were made to the then private Leavesden Road, and two side roads, Copeswood Street on the west side and Lowestoft Road on the east, and they were declared public, with Victoria Road to follow. Work also began on the construction of new side roads – Parker Street, Garfield Street, Shakespeare Street and Milton Street on the west side and Cecil Street and Judge Street on the east. Callowland schools were also erected in Leavesden Road in the 1890s. By 1901, all the present Leavesden Road side roads were in existence with the exception of Callowland Close.

A revealing picture of this neighbourhood at the start of its existence can be derived from the 1901 census.

WHERE DID THE NEW RESIDENTS COME FROM

Table 1 shows the places of birth of the 1901 Leavesden Road heads of household. Only 10% were born in Watford itself, but a total of 24.5% were born somewhere in Hertfordshire. The other most frequent places of birth were Buckinghamshire (20%), followed by London (14.5%) and then Bedfordshire (12%). Only 4 heads of household were born outside England, 2 in Ireland, 1 in Scotland and 1 in Wales.

Table 1: Places of Birth of Heads of Household, Leavesden Road, Watford, 1901

Place of Birth	No	%
Watford	15	10
Elsewhere in Hertfordshire	22	14.5
Buckinghamshire	30	20
London	22	14.5
Bedfordshire	18	12
Elsewhere in England	38	25.1
Other Country	4	2.6
Not known or illegible	2	1.3
	151	100

WORK

Heads of Household

Table 2 shows the occupations of Leavesden Road heads of household. The largest source of employment was building and allied trades, such as bricklaying, carpentry, house painting, plumbing and glazing, in which 27% of heads of household were employed. The second largest occupational group was shopkeepers and salesmen and their assistants, accounting for 20% of heads of household. The railway was also an important source of work, employing 10% of heads of household, two thirds in manual work and one third as clerks. Another 10% of heads of household were described in the census as general labourers.

Unemployment did not seem to be a problem, as those heads of household who were not in employment were probably not seeking work. Of the 9 heads of household not in employment, 3 (2 men and 1 widow) were recorded as living on their own means. The others were 4 widows and 1 retired man, all of whom had working children living at home, and one married woman whose husband was not at home, who had 2 boarders.

Table 2: Occupations of Heads of Household, Leavesden Road, Watford, 1901

Occupations	No	%
Railway manual	10	6.6
Railway clerks	5	3.3
Clerks (excluding railway), accountants, insurance agents	4	2.6
Brewing manual eg brewer's labourers, draymen	2	1.3
Printing & photography	4	2.6
Cocoa and trifle making factories	2	1.3
Stone and marble masons & assistants	3	2
Engineers & engine fitters & their labourers	4	2.6
Building & allied trades eg bricklayers, carpenters, joiners, painters, decorators, plumbers, glaziers, & their assistants/ labourers	41	27.3
Occupations involving animals eg dairymen, stablemen, blacksmiths	7	4.6
General labourers not otherwise specified	16	10.6
Shopkeepers making their own products eg bakers, shoe makers, drapers & outfitters, and their assistants	15	10
Shopkeepers and salesmen not making the products they sell	16	10.6
School teachers and caretakers	4	2.6
Laundresses & charwomen	3	2
Gardeners	3	2
Other	3	2
Not employed	9	6
	151	100

Women

Only 12 out of 151 heads of household were women. Of these, 6 were in paid employment, 2 as laundresses, 1 as a charwoman, 1 as a cook at a coffee shop, 1 as a confectioner, and 1 who let lodgings.

Only 3 out of 137 wives of heads of households were in paid employment, 1 as a grocer, 1 as an assistant to a greengrocer (her husband) and 1 at a medicinal herb store.

Children

There were only 2 children under the age of 13 who were recorded in the 1901 census as being in paid employment. These were 11 year old Edith Cutler at number 63, who was a sweet packer, and 12 year old James Lake at number 107, who was a newspaper boy.

53% of 13-15 year olds and 83% of 16-19 year olds were in employment. Table 3 shows their occupations. The most common occupation for the younger age group was domestic service, particularly, but not exclusively, for girls. Domestic service was also an important occupation for the older age group, but was matched by two other occupations – building and allied trades, and printing and photography. Of those not in paid employment, 69% of 13-15 year olds and 100% of 16-19 year olds were female. It is probable that many were involved in domestic tasks in the home.

Table 3: Occupations of Teenagers*, Leavesden Road, Watford, 1901

Occupations	13-15 yrs	16-19 yrs
Railway manual	3	1
Railway clerks	1	
Clerks (excluding railway), accountants, insurance agents	4	2
Printing & photography		8
Cocoa and trifle making factories	3	2
Stone and marble masons & assistants		1
Building & allied trades eg bricklayers, carpenters, joiners, painters, decorators, plumbers, glaziers, & their assistants/ labourers	2	9
Occupations involving animals eg dairymen, stablemen, blacksmiths		1
Shopkeepers making their own products eg bakers, shoe makers, drapers & outfitters, and their assistants	2	1
Shopkeepers and salesmen not making the products they sell	2	2
Servants	10	8
Gardeners		1
Tailors & dressmakers	1	2
Other	2	2
Not employed	26	8
	56	48

*excludes Gisburne House

HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND STRUCTURE

The houses in Leavesden Road were mostly small terraced houses and all but 4 houses contained only one household. Households varied in size, primarily because of differences in the number of children. 54% of households contained 2 or fewer children, 33% had 3-5 children, and 13% had 6 or more. In addition, 15% of households had extended family members living with them, and 12.6% had one or two boarders.

Table 4: Household Size and Structure, Leavesden Road, Watford, 1901

	Number (out of 150*)	%
Households with 2 children or less	81	54%
Households with 3-5 children	50	33%
Households with 6 or more children	19	12.6%
Households with extended family members eg head of household's parents or parents in law, brothers & sisters, nephews & nieces, grandchildren	28 of which: 11 - brothers & sisters (or in law) 6 - nephews & nieces 4 - parents (or in law) 4 - grandchildren	15.3%
Households with boarders	19	12.6%

*excludes Gisburne House

SHOPS AND BUSINESSES IN LEAVESDEN ROAD

There was a wide variety of shops in Leavesden Road at this time, as can be seen in table 5. These included a butcher, a fishmonger, 2 bakers, 2 greengrocers, 5 grocers, 5 confectioners, 3 bootmakers, 3 drapers/outfitters, a hairdresser, 3 dairymen, a picture frame maker, an ironmonger and a wheelwright. There was also a post office, pub and 2 refreshment rooms. This creates a picture of a vibrant community.

The shops and businesses were also a source of employment for local residents. Bracey and Clark, builders and contractors, at number 129 Leavesden Road, was run by Thomas Clark, who is described as an employer in the 1901 census. James Timms, dairyman, at number 110, is also recorded as an employer, as is Sidney Ludlow, baker, at number 64.

Table 5: Shops & Businesses, Leavesden Road, Watford, Kelly's Directory 1902

Number	Name	Business
East side		
34	TOMS Jane (Mrs)	Confectioner
36	COX Hannah & Kezia (Misses)	Stationers
38	CHALKER Edward	Grocer
40	WHEATLEY Maria (Mrs)	Confectioner
52	HOARE Joseph	Bootmaker
56	ARBER George Benjamin	Grocer
58	HOTSON Jonathan	Tobacconist
60	SMITHIES Fred	Dairyman
62	KING Charles	Bootmaker
64	LUDLOW Sidney	Baker & confectioner
66 & 68	CAMPBELL & NAYLOR	Drapers
70	WARREN Jesse Charles	Dairyman
72	HAYES Herbert	Greengrocer
74	MAYNE Charles	Painter & decorator
76	PHILLIPS Sarah (Mrs)	Refreshment rooms
78	IMPEY Amos Frederick	Outfitters
80	HABBIJAM George	Fishmonger
82	DUNN Albert	Wardrobe dealer
84	HATCH William George	Fancy repository
86	KINGABY Walter James	House furnisher
88	POWELL Edwin	Grocer
92	WHITE Henry Edward	Confectioner
98	AUSTIN John Willis	Beer retailer
110	TIMMS James	Dairyman
112	CLARK Herbert	Bootmaker
114	BARROW Joseph	Seedsman
116	GREEN George	Refreshment rooms
120	POOLER George Henry	China & glass dealer
122	EBBORN William	Butcher
122	POTTEN Ellen (Mrs)	Greengrocer
126	ALSFORD Francis Thomas	Grocer
West side		
109	OWEN Charles	Confectioner
111	WOOD Frederick Lewis	Hairdresser & tobacconist
125	SAYER Walter Charles	Picture frame maker
129	BRACEY & CLARK	Builders & contractors
159	KEEBLE John Thomas	Grocer
161	BRYAN & CO	Drapers
163	Ditto	Ironmongers
Un-numbered	CHAPMAN William	Wheelwright
Ditto	CHURCH Robert	Baker
Ditto	WRIGHT William Henry B.A.	Preparatory School, Gisburne House

COMPANIES NEAR LEAVESDEN ROAD

Sources of employment for Leavesden Road residents came not only from Leavesden Road, of course, but also the surrounding area. Table 6 shows companies in roads adjoining Leavesden Road. Acme Tone Engraving Co was a photo engravers and printers in Acme Road. Bemrose and Sons was a printers and stationers in Shakespeare Street, which later became Bemrose and Dalziel, and then Waterlow's. One of their employees was David Greenhill, who later became a director and general manager of the Sun Engraving Company.

Paget Prize Plate Co was next to (left or north of) the Police Station in St Albans Road, opposite the junction with Leavesden Road. It was a photographic dry plate and photographic paper manufacturer employing mostly girls. It later became part of Ilford Ltd, photographic works.

Next door to Paget's was Wells Brewery, also known as Lion Brewery. It was started in 1890 by Ralph Thorpe, an important figure in the town. He became an Alderman and Mayor and was responsible for persuading the Council to buy part of the Cassiobury estate in 1909 to keep as a park. His brewery was eventually bought by Benskins.

Table 6: Companies in Roads adjoining Leavesden Road, Watford, 1902

Name of Company	Business	Location
Acme Tone Engraving Co Ltd	Photo engravers & printers	Acme Road
Bemrose & Sons Ltd	Printers & stationers	Shakespeare St
Paget Prize Plate Co Ltd	Photographic dry plate & paper manufacturer	St Albans Rd, Callowland
Wells & Co Brewers, Lion Brewery	Brewery	St Albans Rd Callowland

From Kelly's Directory 1902

As previously shown, some 1901 residents of Leavesden Road worked in cocoa manufacturing. This would have been at Dr Tibbles Vi-Cocoa Ltd. Although Dr Tibbles advertised the health-enhancing properties of Vi-Cocoa, he neither owned nor ran the company. It was managed by Henri Boisselier, and owned by a group, which later became Watford Manufacturing Company. In 1899 they bought 50 acres of land bounded by St Albans Road, Bushey Mill Lane, and the railway line from Watford to St Albans. The Cocoa factory was built in what later became Sandown Road. By 1903 it employed 550 people, two thirds of whom were girls.

Watford Manufacturing Company also developed other businesses on the site. Table 7 shows those listed for 1908. During the First World War, Watford Manufacturing Company also ran munitions factories in the area.

Table 7: Victoria Works, Watford, 1908

Name of Company	Business	Location
Watford Manufacturing Co Ltd	Cocoa & chocolate manufacturers	Victoria Works, Callowland
Freeman & Hildyard (Proprietors = Watford Manufacturing Co Ltd)	Table specialities; jellies, baking & blancmange powder manufacturers	Victoria Works, Callowland
Boisselier's Chocolates	Chocolate manufacturers	Victoria Works, Callowland

From Kelly's Directory 1908

SCHOOLS IN LEAVESDEN ROAD

Callowland Schools

Callowland Schools were built in Leavesden Road in the 1890s – one for girls and infants, south of Lowestoft Road, and one for boys, between Shakespeare Street and Acme Road. School attendance of girls was significantly lower than that of boys, even though by this time, school attendance until the age of 12 was both compulsory and free. Kelly's Directory 1902 reports that average attendance at the boys' school was 480, while average attendance at the other school was 280 girls and 380 infants. The school master and mistresses were Edwin Ashby (boys), Miss AM Gardner (girls), and Miss Fowler (infants).

Gisburne House

In 1901, Gisburne House is described as being in Leavesden Road, although the address later became Gammons Lane. At this time, Gisburne House was a private preparatory school, run by William Wright. William's father was a vicar in Gisburne, Yorkshire, which explains the name of the school. In 1901 there were 16 pupils, who were boarders, ranging in age from 7 to 15. Places of birth of the pupils included India, Australia, Ireland and Scotland, as well as a variety of locations in England. William Wright was a schoolmaster himself and also resident were another tutor, a matron, cook, kitchen maid, housemaid, and parlour maid.

In 1912, Gisburne House was bought by the London County Council, and became first an industrial school, then an approved school, and finally a children's home, before being demolished for housing development.

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