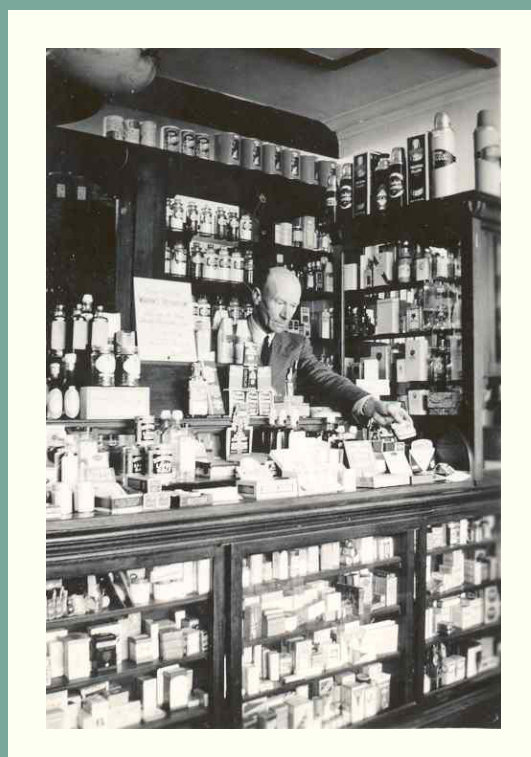


AMERSHAM BEFORE PLASTIC



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Chiltern Parade, 1937, with J Sainsbury in the middle.



Kennard's, the chemist on Oakfield Corner, in the early 20th century



Sycamore Road

Local people have been shopping in Amersham for centuries. The way people shop and what they buy has changed dramatically, especially in the last 50 years. Today, more than ever before we're concerned about the levels of single use plastic and the creation of vast amounts of waste. What can the people of Amersham, who lived and worked here before us, teach us about sustainable consumption?

Post-war Amersham had an established number of mostly independent retailers. Each specialised in a particular type of product, and there was a variety of shops, including butchers, bakers, fishmongers, grocers, greengrocers, haberdashers and ironmongers. There were a few larger companies with a presence in the town; an International Tea Co. and Stores arrived in the early 20th century and a Sainsbury's in the mid 1930s.

Traditionally, customers were served by shop staff, from behind a counter. Customers were often known by name and were treated with great courtesy and respect. Goods were packed when purchased, ready to use when taken home. There was little refrigeration before the 1960s, so perishable items had to be consumed as soon as they were bought.

Plastic, a new product, was rarely used for packaging. It was only with the introduction of self-service shops and the first supermarkets in the late 1950s that products required more packaging, to protect them and to maintain hygiene.