

MID-CENTURY SHOPPING IN AMERSHAM

In the 1930s, Amersham old town had 56 different retailers and Amersham-on-the-Hill around 100. They served a population of around 6,000 people. There were more shops in relation to people than today, reflecting how people shopped locally, thereby enabling local retailers to thrive. More affluent members of the local community might supplement local options with special orders from Fortnum & Mason or the Army and Navy Stores in London, which could be delivered on the Metropolitan Railway.

Shopping could be delivered to people's homes by errand boys on their bicycles. Local dairies would deliver milk too.

The personal relationship between retailer and customer began to change with the introduction of self-service shops in Amersham. Maypole was the first large self-service supermarket in Amersham, opening in 1962 on the site of the old Regent cinema in Sycamore Road. Self-service stores had more space for stock and therefore a wider range, often offered at lower prices.

At this time many of the shops in town sold foodstuffs and practical goods and there were far fewer cafes and restaurants than we have today.



Sycamore Road, 1960s

Amersham's Shopkeepers: Harry Plummer (1877-1965)



Harry Plummer was born in Kensington, London in 1877, son of a 'green fruiterer'. As Harry grew up, he assisted his father in the shop. In 1911, Harry had moved to Amersham and

had his own fruiterer business at 2, Station Parade. His first wife died in 1926 and he later married Eda Miller who helped him in the shop when it moved to Sycamore Road (where Collins & Jervie is today). Harry was also a coal merchant and chief officer of the local fire brigade.



Maypole, Amersham's first self-service supermarket, which opened in 1962