

# Providence Street, Earlsdon 1861 to 1921

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Providence Street is the shortest street of the original eight streets of the Earlsdon estate, with approximately 20 houses and flats of varying ages and styles, flanked by a much newer complex called Regency Court constructed in the early 1990s, itself comprising a further 32 apartments. The street has a history going back over 170 years, stretching back to the very beginning of Earlsdon.

This paper examines the early development of Providence Street – or Provident Street, as it was sometimes known during the nineteenth century. It looks at the origins of the street and, using the earliest and the most recent personal census material available for Earlsdon between 1861 and 1921, describes who lived there, where they came from and what they did.

## **THE GROWTH OF COVENTRY**

Like any city, Coventry's history has passed through different phases, from being an important medieval centre, through industrialisation, to the development of a modern city. Its period as a major industrial centre has also depended on a variety of crafts and businesses. By the end of the 18th century, silk and ribbon weaving were the basis of the city's economy. During the nineteenth century, it became a centre of watch and clock manufacturing. In the later decades of that century there was growth in cycle manufacturing, later replaced by engineering and motor industries during the 20th century.

Present-day Earlsdon is one of the more diverse and affluent suburbs of Coventry. Its core area was laid out in the 1850s. It was one of a number of areas that were developed on the outskirts of the city, allowing better-off working people, especially watchmakers, to move their families and businesses away from poor conditions inside the city. Providence Street was part of that core area.

As noted above, silk and ribbon-weaving were the basis of Coventry's economy at the start of the nineteenth century. Around 1820, 10,000 people were employed in the industry rising to a peak of 25,000 around 1857, at which time the total population of the city was approximately 40,000.<sup>i</sup> The industry faced a decline in the 1860s, following a national treaty with France which allowed the importation of foreign ribbons and other products,

duty-free. However, in Coventry, watch and clock making were well-placed to take over as main employers. The city was already one of the three major centres of the trade in the United Kingdom, the others being Clerkenwell in London and Prescott in Lancashire. In 1860 there were 90 watch and clock manufacturers in the city, employing 2,100 people. <sup>ii</sup>

Coventry's early industries were home-based, rather than factory-based: many watch and clock makers worked in their own homes around the Spon End and Chapelfields areas of south-west Coventry. <sup>iii</sup> These were the high-earners of the day, said to see themselves above the likes of weavers. <sup>iv</sup>

Unfortunately, their industry was eventually hampered by a certain reluctance to innovate as well as by the impact of trade policies in the second half of the nineteenth century -- such as happened when the United States placed a tariff on imported English watches -- thus increasing their cost and leading to a decline in watchmaking in England. However, the skilled pool of workers was vital in assisting the growth of cycle manufacturing and machine tools, which became major industries. It also later helped the growth of car manufacturing, following the establishment of the first car manufacturer in the country at the Motor Mill, Sandy Lane, Radford in 1896. <sup>v</sup>

Against this background, Earlsdon was one of a number of small communities originally established outside the urban area of Coventry, which is notable in that new building had tended to take place either within the city or beyond the "Lammas" and "Michaelmas" lands, where Freeman had the grazing rights <sup>vi</sup> (a situation similar to the modern-day Green Belt).

A local farmer and butcher, John Moore, had built a farmhouse (called "Six Fields") in 1830 off what is now Moor Street. The 31 acre estate was sold to the Coventry Freehold Land Society in 1852. Many of the better-off working people wanted to move their families and businesses out of the city and away from the over-crowded housing and associated public health hazards. Membership of a Freehold Land Society offered such people an opportunity to move into their own house, perhaps with a workshop attached. This was one of six such sites developed by the Coventry Freehold Land Society during the middle years of the nineteenth century.

The Society laid out eight streets - Earlsdon Street, Moor Street, Cromwell Street, Arden Street, Warwick Street, Clarendon Street, Providence Street and Earlsdon Terrace, alongside Earlsdon Lane (see Appendix Map 1). The resultant estate comprised 250 self-build plots, each being supplied with water, as well as drainage for waste and rainwater. The Society hoped to sell the plots to members, who would then take out a mortgage and commission a builder to design and erect a house.

John Flinn, a watch manufacturer originally from Prescott and a member of the Society, built the first house, Earlsdon House, in what is now Earlsdon Street. Attached to it was a workshop where 14 men and 5 boys were employed in watchmaking.<sup>vii</sup> For Earlsdon as a whole, in 1861, out of 146 males in fulltime employment, 100 were employed in the watch trade<sup>viii</sup>.

The initial development of Earlsdon was slow and uneven, reflecting the cycles of the city's economic fortunes during the second half of the nineteenth century. Some of the plots remained unsold for years, whilst others were sold but not developed. There were 10 houses in 1854, 107 in 1861, 114 in 1871 and 187 in 1884. Map 3 shows that less than half of the potential area had been developed by the 1880s. Indeed, a walk through the initial core area of Earlsdon will show that there are only short stretches of similar houses in any street -- an indication of this gradual growth. Census figures also show that Earlsdon experienced considerable population change in its early years: about 60% of households listed in the 1861 Census had left by 1871; about 70% of households listed in the 1871 Census had left by 1881; and about 50% of households listed in the 1881 Census had left by 1891.<sup>ix</sup> Nonetheless, despite this pattern of piecemeal change, Earlsdon continued to establish itself during this period, with Frederick Smith describing the new community as "a kind of garden suburb, established mainly by Coventry watchmakers, but it was up-to-date and had a School Board of its own and a small sewage farm."<sup>x</sup>

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this pattern of incremental change gave way to a period of dramatic growth, thanks in large part to the incorporation of Earlsdon within the municipal boundary of Coventry in 1890, and towards the end of 1898 the opening of Albany Road which provided direct and convenient access to the city, at the very time when the population of the city was beginning to increase significantly – see Appendix Table 1<sup>xi</sup> -- thanks in large part to the advent of the new cycle and motor manufacturing industries. In

the period to the start of the First World War, these new developments saw the laying out of nearly forty streets and the building of over 2,000 houses on estates surrounding the original, mid-Victorian Earlsdon.<sup>xii</sup> Owing to the city's industrial contribution to the war effort, by 1918 the growth in the city's population had reached a peak of approximately 142,000.<sup>xiii</sup> Although there was a good deal of economic dislocation after the war as companies readjusted from wartime to peacetime production, giving rise to unemployment and even a slump by 1920, the fact remains that by the time of the 1921 Census Earlsdon was no longer a small, semi-rural settlement outside the city but instead a well-developed, integrated suburb of Coventry. As the Coventry Graphic on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1912 put it:

Everybody here knows what Earlsdon is like – a thriving, active, progressive suburb with its fine schools (another one is being built), golf links, well-equipped clubs, wide roads, up to date shops, motor works, picturedromes and tram service .... There is no finer site within easy reach of the centre of the City.<sup>xiv</sup>

## **THE GROWTH OF PROVIDENCE STREET**

As with other streets on the Earlsdon estate, the development of Providence Street and the details of those who lived there can shed light on the social and economic trends which affected the inhabitants and those living in the wider area.

One family which serves as a model in this regard is the Brooks, generations of which lived in Providence Street between at least 1871 and 1945. The first member of the family for the purposes of our survey was Thomas Brook, who in 1851 at the age of 37 was living in Sherbourne Street on the west side of Coventry together with his wife Elizabeth and three children, the youngest among them their son Thomas Walter [Elisha] Brook. Like so many of his peers, Thomas Brook was a watch maker who decided to move to Earlsdon, and by 1861 he was living on Earlsdon Street with two of his children, his eldest daughter now married. The 1871 Census shows the family next living on Providence Street with only the son still at home, acting as an assistant to his father. It seems clear, however, that Thomas Brook did not prosper in Earlsdon, as after his death on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1879 the probate records show that the estate he left to his wife Elizabeth was valued at under £20. Nonetheless, unlike other

families at this time who left Earlsdon and returned to other accommodation in Coventry when times were hard, the Brook family remained in Providence Street, and by 1881 Thomas Walter Elisha Brook -- now a watchmaker in his own right -- is recorded as living with his widowed mother as well as his wife and their four sons. The following census in 1891 reveals yet more change, with Thomas now the father of six sons in total but also a widower and by now no longer a watchmaker but rather a cycle machinist; as with many of his neighbours, Thomas had clearly decided to join the burgeoning and more lucrative cycle industry, in addition to which three of his sons were now also engaged in the same trade.

From the details given in the 1901 Census it is clear that Thomas enjoyed better fortunes than his father, as by now he was retired and living on his means, with a domestic servant also living on the premises. Looking to 1911, Thomas was still living at number 22 Providence Street as before, with the occupations of the three sons still living at home again reflecting the changes which Earlsdon was undergoing at this time; one was working in the cycle trade, another was a painter working in the growing house construction sector, while a third was employed in the relatively new field of motor manufacture. As for the head of the household, Thomas himself died on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1916. Just a few years older than his father when he died, Thomas Brook's circumstances were clearly very different as in his will he left to members of his family an extensive portfolio of properties which he had accumulated during his time in Earlsdon, among them a house at 21 Moor Street, two houses and shops at 32 and 34 Earlsdon Street, another two houses on the north-east side of Providence Street at numbers 11 and 13, and finally on the south-west side of the same street a further four houses at numbers 18, 20, 22 and 24, with number 22 remaining the residence of his son Sydney Brook right up until his death in 1945.

As with his work in the watch and then the cycle industries, the involvement of Thomas Walter Elisha Brook in the acquisition of properties demonstrates a common pattern of property speculation involving other residents of Earlsdon and indeed Providence Street itself. As one example of this trend, a near neighbour of the Brooks was Edward Hyde, who by 1897 had commissioned the building of a house called Portslade Villa at number 36.<sup>xv</sup> The 1901 Census shows him living there as an army pensioner with his wife and six children, four of whom had been born in India no doubt while he was serving in the country, but Edward Hyde was clearly not a man for a quiet retirement as he seemed more interested in

property development, as evidenced by the fact that in 1897 he had also applied to build nine more houses this time on Earlsdon Street, at numbers 30 to 46. <sup>xvi</sup>

Given that the Brook family lived on the street for over 70 years, it is unsurprising that during their residence Providence Street changed considerably. Turning to Tables 2 and 3 below, it is clear that growth in the number of households was slow during the street's early years. The 1861 Census suggests that there were only five households, with no houses at all fronting the north-east side of the street shown on Map 2 around 1860, and indeed the number of households on the street remained constant at only ten between 1871 and 1881, before nearly doubling to 19 households by 1891. This pattern is consistent with Earlsdon as a whole at this time when a slump in the watchmaking trade coincided with a slight fall in the estate's overall population from 492 to 472 individuals between 1861 and 1871, after which time numbers started to rise again. <sup>xvii</sup> In tandem with these changes, although the numbers of residents themselves are small, approximately one-third of the household heads living on the street in 1871 were still resident there ten years later, and while this figure dipped somewhat by 1891 the proportions of those remaining on Providence Street were higher than those on adjoining streets at this time.

Looking ahead to the period from 1891 onwards, while the deteriorating fortunes of the watchmaking trade would have been problematic for the 13 residents of the street recorded as working in the industry in the census of that year, the number of households in Providence Street rose to 30 by 1911, three times the figure for 1881. Much of this growth can be attributed to the opening of Albany Road in 1898, which allowed easy access to the centre of Coventry, as well as the arrival of the cycle and associated motor industry, which offered new opportunities for employment. Indeed, the local residents would clearly have witnessed these changes at first hand, when for example the extension from Providence Street into Osborne Road in 1899 was followed within the year by the opening of the new Rex factory to produce motorcycles and cars, on the site occupied today by the Aylesdene Court retirement complex. <sup>xviii</sup> Whatever the cause, the proportion of inhabitants of Providence Street continuing to live on the street remained relatively high with nearly 40% of the 1901 residents still recorded as living here in 1911, the lowest level of turnover for the period of our survey. In addition to the Brooks mentioned earlier, three households

who remained at the same address throughout the period between 1891 and 1911 were the Johnsons at number 11, the Rowleys at number 19, and the Worsleys at number 52.

For the final period between 1911 and 1921, however, there was a marked change in the composition of Providence Street. Although the number of households recorded increased slightly – not the result of more housebuilding but rather because two of the existing houses were each now being occupied by two families – the total number of residents actually fell noticeably from 147 to 123, with the average household size falling also by implication. In addition, there was a noticeable reduction in the number of families continuing to live on the street, with only 28% appearing in both 1911 and 1921. By way of comparison, in the case of Berkeley Road South and Moor Street, the proportion of families still living at the same address in 1921 was much higher at 40% <sup>xix</sup> and 42% <sup>xx</sup> respectively.

Why there was such a relatively high turnover of residents on Providence Street as well as a significant decline in the overall number of residents at a time when the population of Coventry was still growing -- as shown in Table 1 in the appendix below -- is something of a mystery. It is true of course that the First World War took place in the intervening years, but no records have been found of any men in the street dying in active service. Another possibility might be the impact of Spanish flu, which is generally accepted to have reached its peak in the latter half of 1918, but there is no evidence to indicate why this devastating disease might have had a greater impact on the residents of Providence Street than on those living in neighbouring streets. The one statistical finding which might have some as yet unknown bearing on the matter is the change in population in terms of gender balance, which reveals that while the number of females fell by only seven from 63 to 57 between 1911 and 1921, the number of men dropped by as many as 18 from 84 to 66 at this time.

Returning to the issue of the houses themselves on Providence Street, mention has already been made of the relatively slow start to the number of houses here in the early years of the estate but nonetheless some of the earliest houses are of considerable interest. To help with this, the first photograph in the appendix below was taken in about 1907. To the immediate right is a then brand-new confectionery shop called Colletts, but -- although they are no longer in existence today -- of more interest perhaps for our survey of Providence Street is the row of five cottages on the immediate left which were at least fifty years older and appear on the bottom of the 1860 map below, at what was then the very southern edge



of the estate. They were built for William East, the publican at the Craven Arms on the High Street at the time, who was clearly interested in the commercial possibilities which Earlsdon might offer as he had also bought John Moore's farmhouse and converted it into the Bowling Green Inn on what was then called Moore Street.<sup>xxi</sup> The five cottages themselves were built as an investment and so were rented to a mix of weavers, watchmakers and agricultural labourers. In 1862 East died and, after being advertised for sale<sup>xxii</sup> with the promise of an aggregate rental income of £40 and six shillings, the cottages were bought by a headmaster called John Baker, who was himself living in Earlsdon at the time. He rented out four of the cottages but in number 56 at what was then the end of the street he installed his elderly watch engraver father, as well as his mother and sister, where the latter -- Eleanor Eliza Baker -- was recorded operating as an independent beer retailer in 1891 until her demise in 1900. Given the size of the cottages, it might be added that Miss Baker had the advantage of living alone, unlike her neighbour Walter Lever who in 1901 was living next door with his wife and ten children in what must have been very different circumstances. Looking ahead, under the ownership of what became the Acme Motor Company next door from 1917 onwards, these five houses continued to be let out until the Second World War, during which some of them were badly damaged, with all of the houses finally being demolished in 1960.<sup>xxiii</sup>

However, to look back at the history of the estate purely from the perspective of increasing numbers of houses is perhaps to miss an important aspect of the early years of Earlsdon involving the quite widespread use of plots for gardening, including for commercial purposes.<sup>1</sup> As one example of this, it is revealing to examine an estate plan drawn up in 1886 concerning 29 acres of land abutting the south-western part of the original estate which were acquired five years later by Joseph White. He subsequently used this land to set out the six streets we know today as Palmerston Road, Radcliffe Road, Rochester Road, Shaftesbury Road, St Andrews Road and Stanley Road, the road called Whor Lane as identified on the plan being given what was taken to be the more salubrious name of Beechwood Avenue at a later date.<sup>xxiv</sup> Highlighted in red in Map 3, the plan makes reference almost as a footnote to a "garden in the occupation of Mr T. Pond", located in what seems like a continuation of Cromwell Street (now Berkeley Road South) just next to

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to David Fry for first making me aware of this practice.

the plot containing the five cottages mentioned above. Turning to the evidence from the census returns, we find that in 1871 a Thomas Pond was living on Providence Street, and since his occupation was listed as 'market gardener' it is evident that he was the individual referred to on the 1886 plan. He was clearly not without experience in this type of work as in 1861 he was shown working in the gardens in Whitley Abbey, while in 1881 Thomas was recorded as living in what was known then as Providence House – now 38 Providence Street – working as a florist until his death on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1887.

A near neighbour who also made extensive use of plots in Providence Street for gardening was George Buckingham, who from 1883 lived at number 28, as can be seen from Image 5. Not a professional gardener like Thomas, George had instead been a regimental bandmaster who we know from an article in The Coventry Herald had served in the bands of the Life Guards and the Grenadier Guards before spending a further twenty years with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment. <sup>xxv</sup> Intriguingly, as detailed in a local 1884 directory <sup>xxvi</sup> he even found time to serve as an "attendance officer to the Rural School attendance committee" responsible for the setting up of Earlsdon's first school, which was located behind the house he was living in at the time of the 1881 Census on what is now known as Berkeley Road South. <sup>2</sup> More strikingly, from details of the sale of his estate published again by The Coventry Herald after his death in 1910, in addition to his portfolio of neighbouring houses at 26, 32 and 34 Providence Street George's own house at number 28 is described as possessing a "capital greenhouse [measuring] 22 feet by 9 feet 6 inches". The advertisement also mentioned a "large orchard containing about 1,270 square yards which could very easily be utilised for manufacturing or any other business purposes". <sup>xxviii</sup> Interestingly, in Map 5 below from 1889, on the south-western side of the street the greenhouse in question can clearly be seen marked in blue, while the large orchard is shown in the plot of land to the south-west of this. It might be added that whoever was responsible for drafting the advertisement concerning the sale of George's estate was quite prescient: between the wars a motor dealer and garage business was built here known as

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<sup>2</sup> It seems little coincidence that the 1891 Census shows George's daughter Louisa working as a schoolteacher. In 1895, records for the new Earlsdon School show Louisa employed as an assistant teacher with 200 children on the school roll while by 1920 she was one of ten staff with 540 children on the roll, her own class with a mere 60 pupils. <sup>xxvii</sup>

Orchard Garage, and more recently it is this same area which is now occupied by the Regency Court complex.

Looking at the population of the street as a whole over the sixty years in our survey, just as in other parts of Earlsdon it is clear that considerable numbers of people moved into the street from other parts of the country throughout this period. As shown in Table 4, in 1861 80% of heads of household were born in Coventry, Birmingham or Warwickshire but by 1921 this proportion had dropped to well under two-thirds. Turning to patterns discernible from the figures in Table 5, the proportion of all residents born locally decreased albeit to a lesser extent over this period. In both cases, the fact that in 1921 over a quarter of residents were born outside Coventry, Birmingham and Warwickshire points to the pull exercised by the opportunities for work in the city's rapidly developing industries, fuelled in the later years of this period by the significant involvement of such industries in the production of equipment needed for the First World War.

Other findings emerge from an analysis of the age distribution of the Providence Street residents. From the figures in Table 6, taking 41 to 50 as the mid-point in the age range it is interesting to note that in the 1861 Census almost half of household heads appear in this band, which proportion fell and then fluctuated until 1921 when it dropped again to under 30%. This pattern stands in marked contrast to that seen in Moor Street, for example, where this figure rose by 1921 to over 40%. More broadly, the average age for Providence Street household heads in 1861 stood at a relatively young 38, which figure rose to 47 in 1881 only to fall back to 44 in 1911 and then to 43 in 1921. Again, this pattern is at odds with that in Moor Street for example, where the average age for household heads rose from 45 in 1911 to reach 48 by 1921. As for the patterns revealed in Table 7 for all residents, in overall terms the average age rose as might be expected during the period of this survey, from 22 in 1861 to 30 in 1921, much the same as obtained for Moor Street. In the case of the youngest residents, it is interesting to note that while the proportion of children aged 12 and under fell consistently in Moor Street from the turn of the twentieth century to stand at under 18% by 1921, in Providence Street the proportion of youngsters grew slightly after 1911 to reach almost one quarter in 1921. However, for reasons which are not at all clear, there was a pronounced fall in the proportion of teenagers from 18% in 1911 to only 7% in 1921.

Taken in conjunction with the findings from Table 2 discussed above, these figures point in the early years to a street population characterised by a slightly ageing profile as elsewhere on the estate. However, in contrast to other streets surveyed this trend appeared to stop between 1911 and 1921 with little change among adults in terms of average age, a higher proportion of children, a much-reduced proportion of teenagers, and a noticeably smaller population overall with a more significant drop in the number of men than women as mentioned earlier.

Concerning the occupations of Providence Street's residents, the patterns of employment shown in Table 8 can again be seen as an index of changes in Earlsdon and Coventry as a whole. One very clear if perhaps unsurprising trend from this data is the growth and increasing predominance of watchmaking from 1861 to 1881, by which time it accounted for more than half of the occupations recorded for those living in the street.

By 1891, although in absolute terms the numbers employed in the watch trade had continued to rise, the relative proportion of those engaged in this trade had fallen, reflecting the reversal of fortunes in the watchmaking industry experienced across the city. In contrast to this decline, the newly established cycle trade was clearly growing in importance and had started to employ greater numbers of the street's residents.

From the turn of the century onwards, employment patterns provide further evidence of changes in the local economy. In 1901, one fifth of those with an occupation recorded in the census were working in various roles on the railway, and while the watchmaking trade and cycle manufacture still employed significant numbers of residents, the presence of carpenters and painters is a reflection of the growing importance of house construction in Earlsdon at this time. On one small point of detail, the inclusion of three chimneysweeps in the census is attributable to the presence of the Poole family at number 50, where Richard Poole and his two sons Albert and Richard were all engaged in this trade.

The most significant development of all at this time was the growth of the motor industry which in many ways grew out of the cycle industry, with 22 residents engaged in this new line of work according to the 1911 Census. As has already been described above, about ten years beforehand the new Rex motorcycle and car factory had just opened on Osborne Road, and it seems reasonable to suppose that a number of Providence Street residents

were employed there. Another industry which was also growing in importance at this time in Coventry was toolmaking, with seven residents recorded as working in this trade in 1911.

These trends were still very much in evidence ten years later with the 1921 Census showing that motor manufacture was again the most significant employer at this time, with 10 of the 14 residents engaged in this work at the new Standard factory at Canley, and a further three based at what was now called the Acme Motor Company, which enterprise replaced the Rex Motor Company following its collapse during the First World War. A further 12 residents were working as toolmakers at various companies across the city such as the three individuals employed by Alfred Herbert in Spon End and two more who worked more locally at the newly-formed Coventry Gauge and Small Tool located between Earlsdon Street and Warwick Street, which company would go on to employ 6,000 at its new premises on Fletchamstead Way by the end of the Second World War.<sup>xxix</sup> In 1921, however, it is notable that many companies were struggling to recover from the effects of the war and to readjust to peacetime conditions, as indicated by the fact that in the returns for Providence Street eight of the 55 residents for whom an occupation was recorded were identified as being out of work at the time.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the early years of the Earlsdon estate, the pace of change on Providence Street was slow but the growth in the number of watchmakers in the street were significant factors in its subsequent development. In spite of the watchmaking industry's later decline, the number of households Providence Street almost doubled between 1881 and 1891, with many of the residents quick to benefit from new industries such as cycle manufacture. With the opening of Albany Road in 1898 and the development of other new industries such as motor manufacture and toolmaking, the number of residents continued to grow, reaching a peak of 147 by the time of the 1911 Census. Although the First World War saw a marked increase in population and economic activity across Coventry, during the final ten years covered in our survey Providence Street saw something of a decline, however, during which time the total number of residents fell appreciably for reasons which are not fully clear and perhaps warrant further research.

## **NOTES ON METHODOLOGY**

The principal source of information has been the censuses from 1861 and 1921. These generally provide information on the following: numbers of people in dwellings, household composition, names, relationships, age, occupation, place of birth and employment status. The censuses provide consistent information, enabling the analysis of trends over time. This has been supplemented by information from probate records, newspaper entries, directories and maps.

A specific problem was that the 1861 Census treated Earlsdon as one area and did not give street names and house numbers. Using local history sources, maps and the 1871 Census, a deduction has been made as to which section of the 1861 Census lists the households living in Providence Street.

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## APPENDIX 1 -- TABLES

Table 1: Population of Coventry 1901 to 1921

	1901	1911	1921	Increase 1901-1911	Increase 1911-1921
Population	69,978	106,349	128,157	52.0%	20.5%

Table 2: Heads of Household Living in Providence Street Also Listed in Preceding Census \*

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Number of Heads	5	10	10	19	28	30	32
Preceding census	N/A	1	3	3	5	11	9
Percentage	N/A	10%	30%	16%	18%	37%	28%

\* In the 1911 Census, the house and shop on the corner of Providence Street and Berkeley Road South (then Cromwell Street) was regarded as being in Providence Street but in 1921 it was assigned instead to Berkeley Road South. For this reason, the total of 30 households shown here for 1911 does not include the Collett household living in the house in question at that time.

Table 3: Total Residents and Average Household size 1861 to 1921 (Providence Street)

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Households	5	10	10	19	28	30	32
People	25	37	41	80	119	147	123
Ave H'hold size	5	3.7	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.9	3.8

Table 4: Place of Birth of Heads of Household 1861 to 1921 (Providence Street)

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Coventry	2	5	5	9	10	9	12
Adj Coventry*				1		1	
Birmingham					1	3	1
Warwickshire**	2	2		3	5	6	6
Buckinghamshire		1	1				
Cambridgeshire							1
Durham						1	1
Lancashire			2	2	1	1	2
Leicestershire		1	1	1	1	1	
Lincolnshire					1		
London	1				1		1
Northamptonshire					3	4	1
Oxfordshire				1		1	1
Shropshire				1			1
Somerset							1

Table 4 continued: Place of Birth of Heads of Household 1861 to 1921 (Providence Street)

Staffordshire				1	3		1
Surrey		1	1				
Sussex					1		
Worcestershire						2	2
Yorkshire					1		1
Germany						1	
Total	5	10	10	19	28	30	32

\* Adj Coventry refers to parishes then outside, but later absorbed into, Coventry

\*\* Warwickshire refers to the county without Coventry and Birmingham

Table 5: Place of Birth of All Residents 1861 to 1921 (Providence Street)

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Coventry	16	29	24	50	66	76	65
Adj Coventry*			1	1	1	3	
Birmingham				2	5	13	13
Warwickshire**	3	5	3	11	16	24	21
Buckinghamshire		1	1				
Cambridgeshire							3
Cheshire						1	
Cornwall					1		
Derbyshire				3			
Devon						1	
Durham						3	
Gloucestershire						1	
Hampshire				2	1	1	
Kent					1		
Lancashire			5	2	1	3	
Leicestershire		1	5	1	2	2	
Lincolnshire					2		
London	6			1	1	2	1
Northamptonshire					6	7	2
Oxfordshire				1		1	3
Shropshire							1
Somerset							2
Staffordshire				4	8	2	4
Surrey		1	1				
Sussex				2	2	1	
Worcestershire					1	3	5

Table 5 continued: Place of Birth of All Residents 1861 to 1921 (Providence Street)

Yorkshire					1	2	2
Ireland							1
Wales			1				
Germany						1	
India					4		
Total	25	37	41	80	119	147	123

Table 6: Age Distribution of Heads of Households 1861 to 1921 (Providence Street)

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
< 21	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
21-30	2	2	1	5	7	3	4
31-40	0	3	2	5	10	8	11
41-50	2	1	3	4	4	11	9
51-60	1	2	2	4	3	6	7
61-70	0	1	2	0	0	2	1
> 70	0	1	0	1	3	0	0
Total	5	10	10	19	28	30	32
Average	38	47	47	41	42	44	43

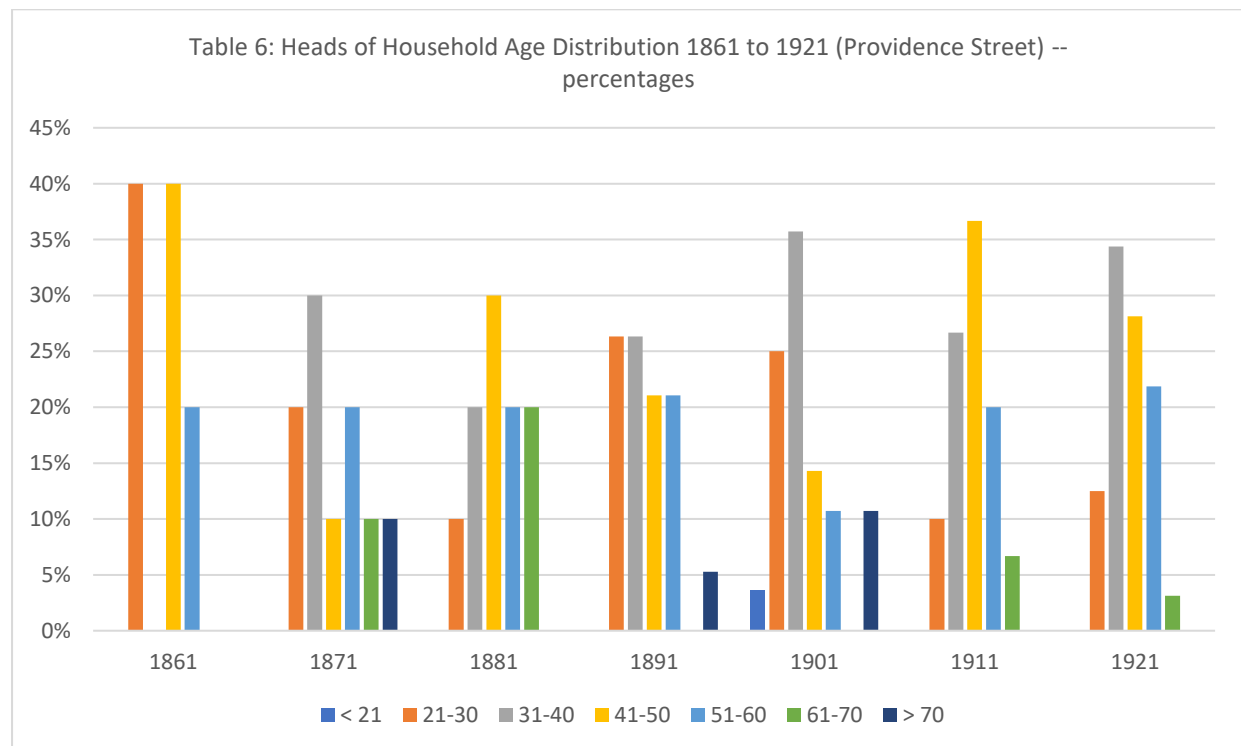


Table 7: Age Distribution of All Residents 1861 to 1921 (Providence Street)

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
< 13	8	12	15	25	29	31	29
13-20	7	2	6	12	23	26	9
21-30	4	6	5	18	28	32	25
31-40	0	6	5	8	21	18	21
41-50	5	2	3	9	6	23	20
51-60	1	5	3	5	6	8	14
61-70		2	3	0	4	4	2
> 70		2	1	3	2	5	3
Total	25	37	41	80	119	147	123
Average	22	27	23	25	26	29	30

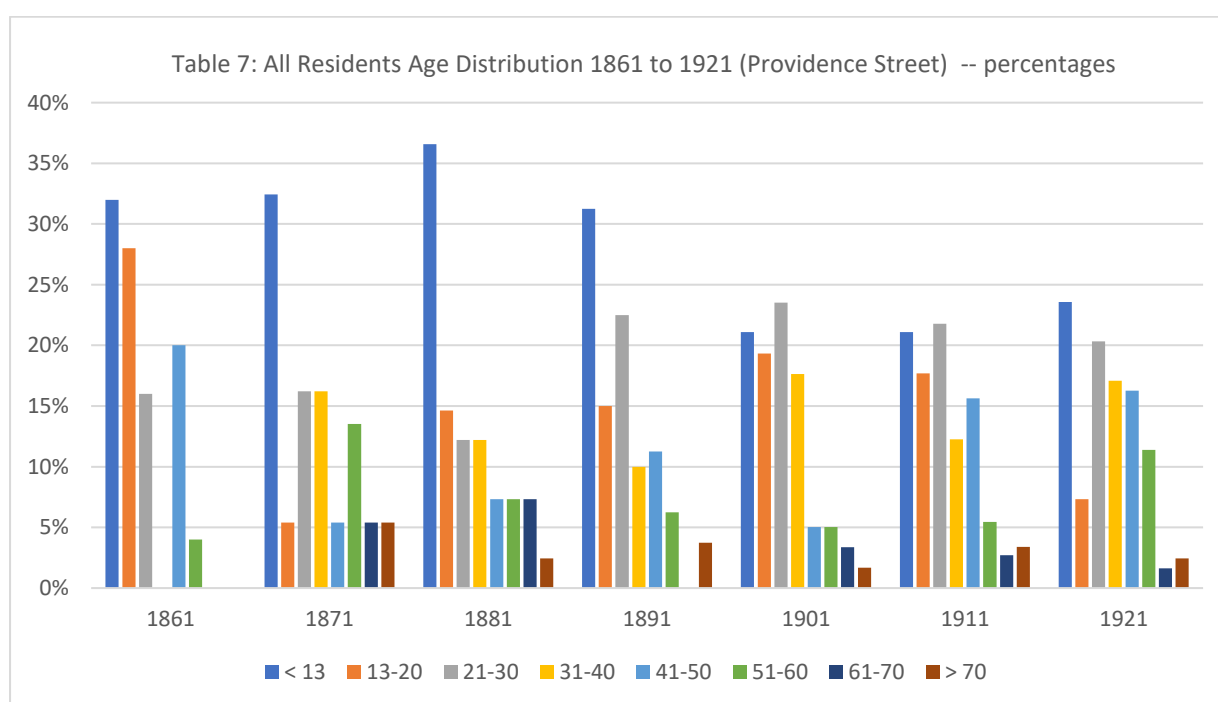


Table 8: Occupations Listed in Censuses for Working People 1861 to 1911 (Providence Street)

1861	
Watch making trades (with apprentices) 5 Silk winder 4 Agricultural labourer 3 Domestic servant 1 Laundress 1 Pensioner 1	

1871	
Watch making trades 11 Labourer 1 Market gardener 1 Railway work 1	
1881	
Watch making trades 8 Annuitant 1 Florist 1 Laundress 1 Milkman 1 Ribbon weaver 1 Shop assistant 1 Solicitor's clerk 1	
1891	
Watch making trades 13 Cycle manufacture 6 Machinist 3 Railway work 3 Dressmaker 2 Bandmaster 1 Carpenter 1 Commission agent 1 Gardener 1 Grocer and gardener 1 Independent beer retailer 1 Independent means 1 Teacher 1	
1901	
Railway work 12 Cycle manufacture 10 Watch making trade 8 Carpenter/Painter 4 Chimneysweep 3 Living on own means 3 Toolmaking 3 Carpenter 2 Dressmaker 2 Motor manufacture 2 Gardener 2 Servant 2 Teacher 2 Army pensioner 1	

1901 continued	
Bandmaster -- retired 1 Cigar maker 1 Groom 1 Steam engine maker 1 Typist 1 Weights & measures assistant 1	
1911	
Motor manufacture 22 Toolmaking 7 Watch making trade 6 Bricklayer/Carpenter/Painter 4 Cycle manufacture 3 Railway work 3 Chemist/Chemist assistant 2 Clerk 2 Farmer/Farm labourer 2 Grocer & Greengrocer/Assistant Grocer 2 Assistant groundsman 1 Assistant librarian 1 Baker 1 Boarding housekeeper 1 Butcher 1 Coal merchant 1 Dressmaker 1 Gardener 1 Groom 1 Labourer 1 Merchant seamen 1 Musician 1 Paviour 1 Printer's machinist 1 Shop assistant -- drapers 1 Stoker at refuse destructor 1 Teacher 1 Tinsmith 1	
1921	
Motor manufacture 14 Toolmaking 12 Railway work 5 Grocers/Greengrocers 4 Typist 4 Bricklayer/Painter & decorator/labourer 3 Cycle manufacture 2 Dressmaker 2	



1921 continued	
Artificial silk spinner 1 Bookkeeper 1 Cashier 1 Clerk 1 Corn and poultry dealer 1 Furniture salesman 1 Servant 1 Watchmaker 1	

## APPENDIX 2 -- MAPS

Map 1: Earlsdon 1852/53



Provided by Earlsdon Research Group

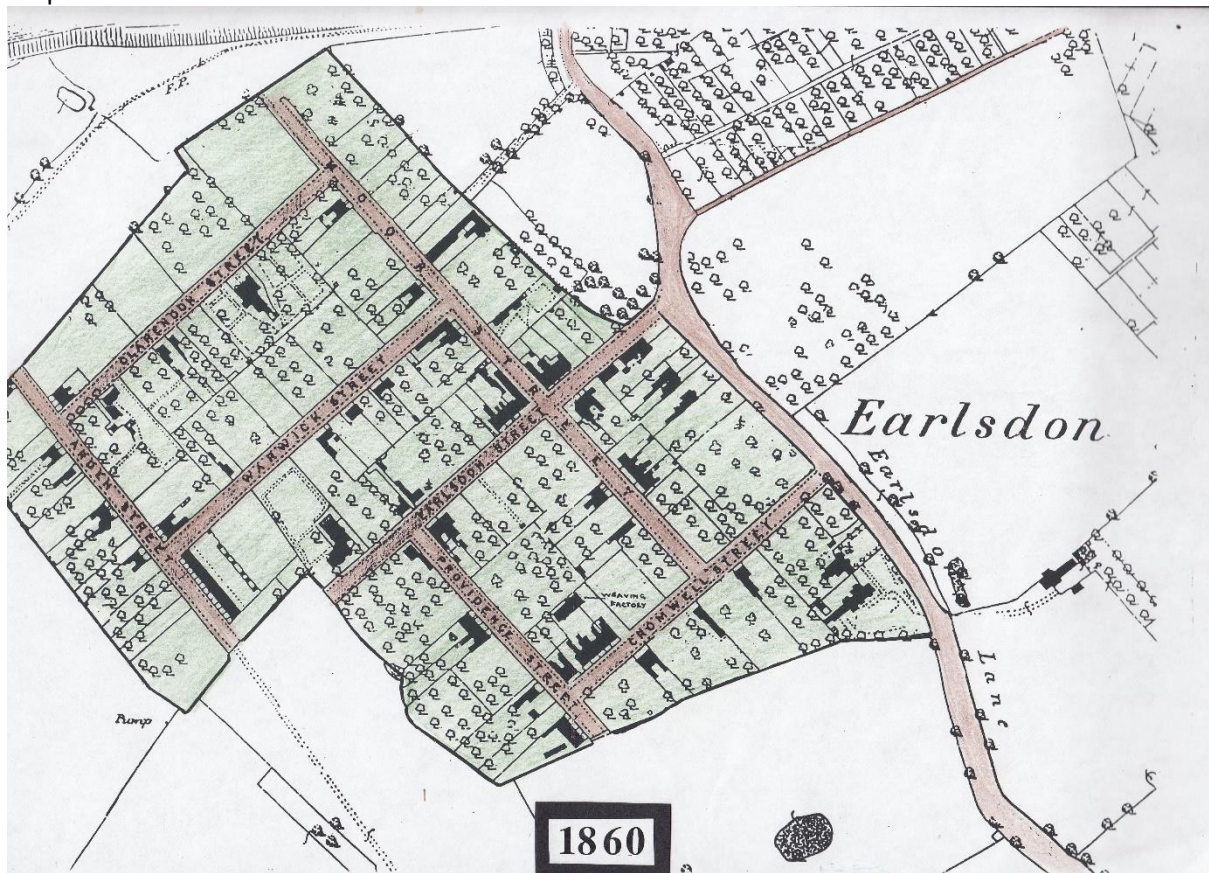
Providence Street, Earlsdon 1861 to 1921

David Porter, Earlsdon Research Group

May 2023

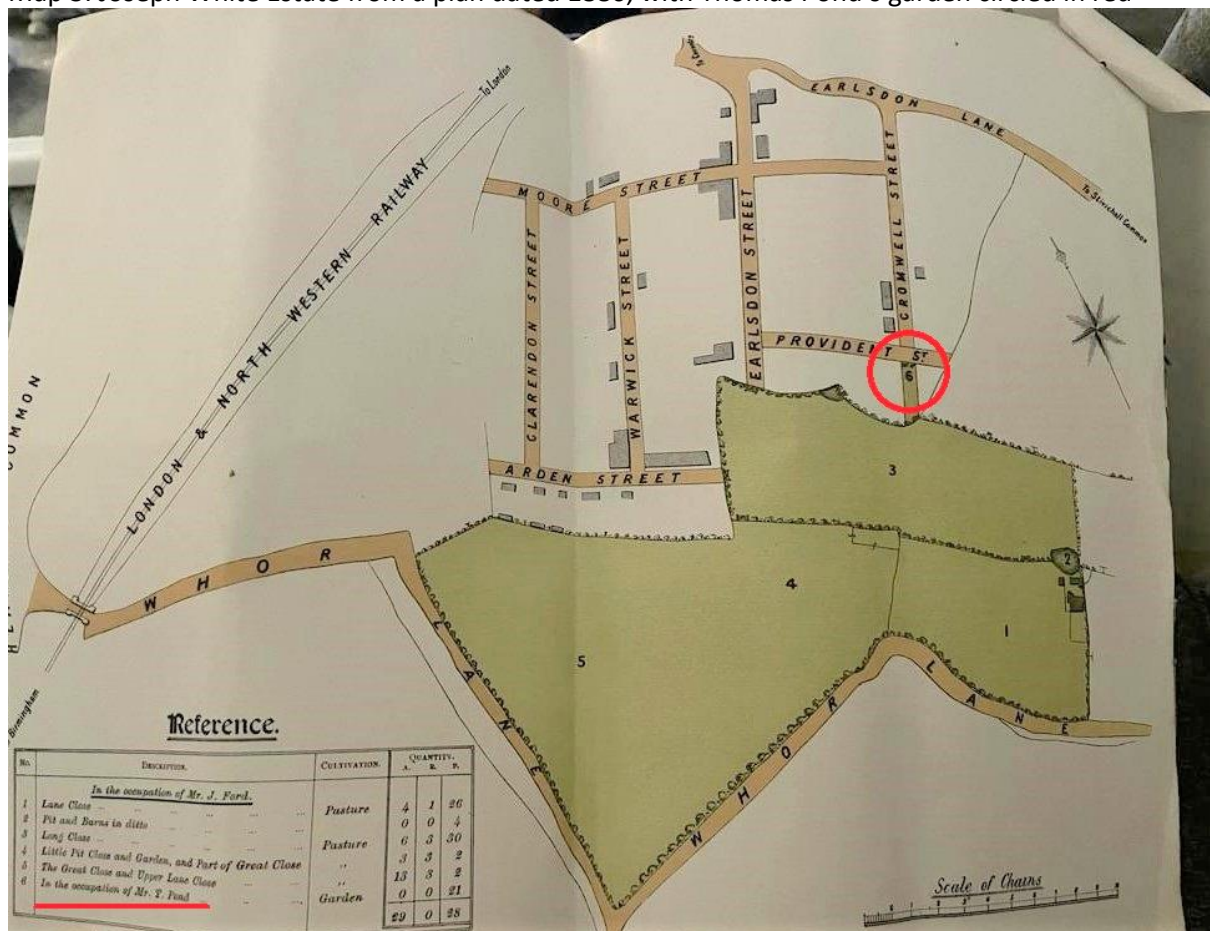


Map 2: Earlsdon 1860



Provided by Earlsdon Research Group

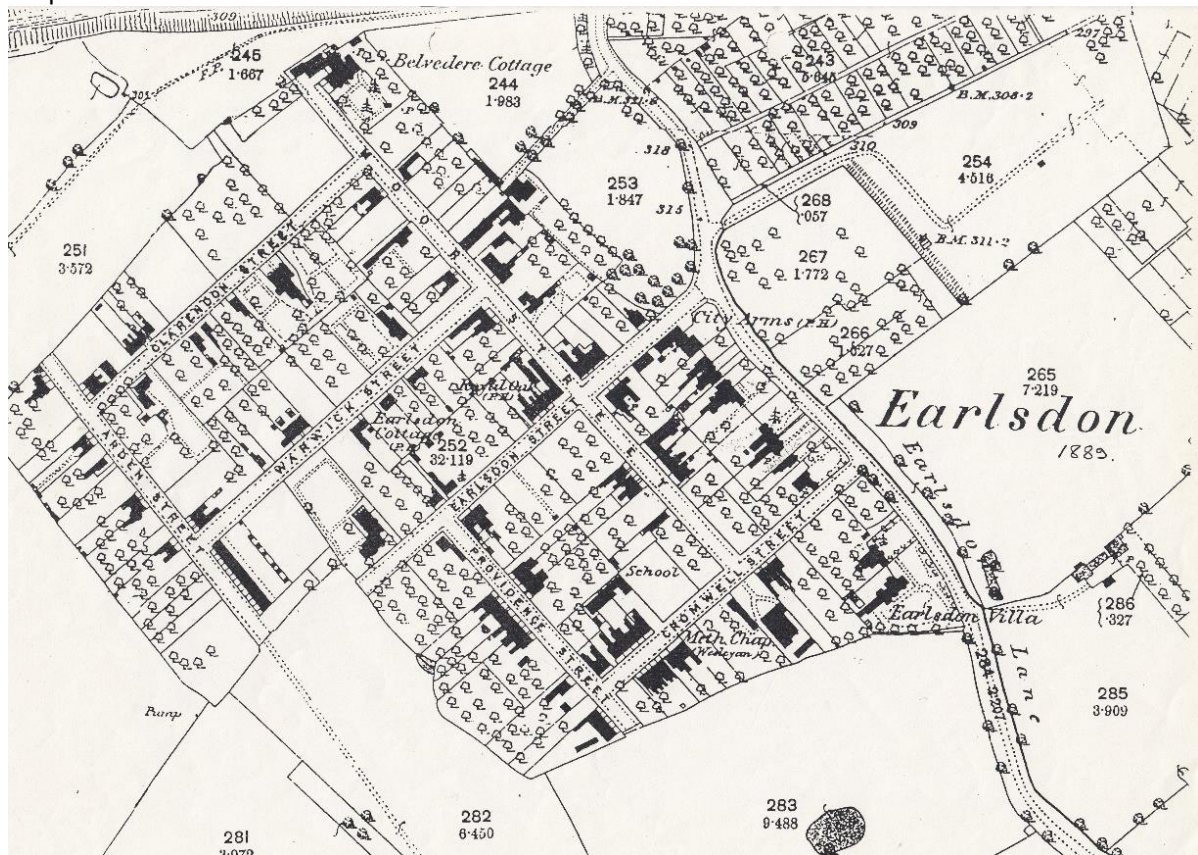
Map 3: Joseph White Estate from a plan dated 1886, with Thomas Pond's garden circled in red



Kindly provided by Robert Davies, from private papers

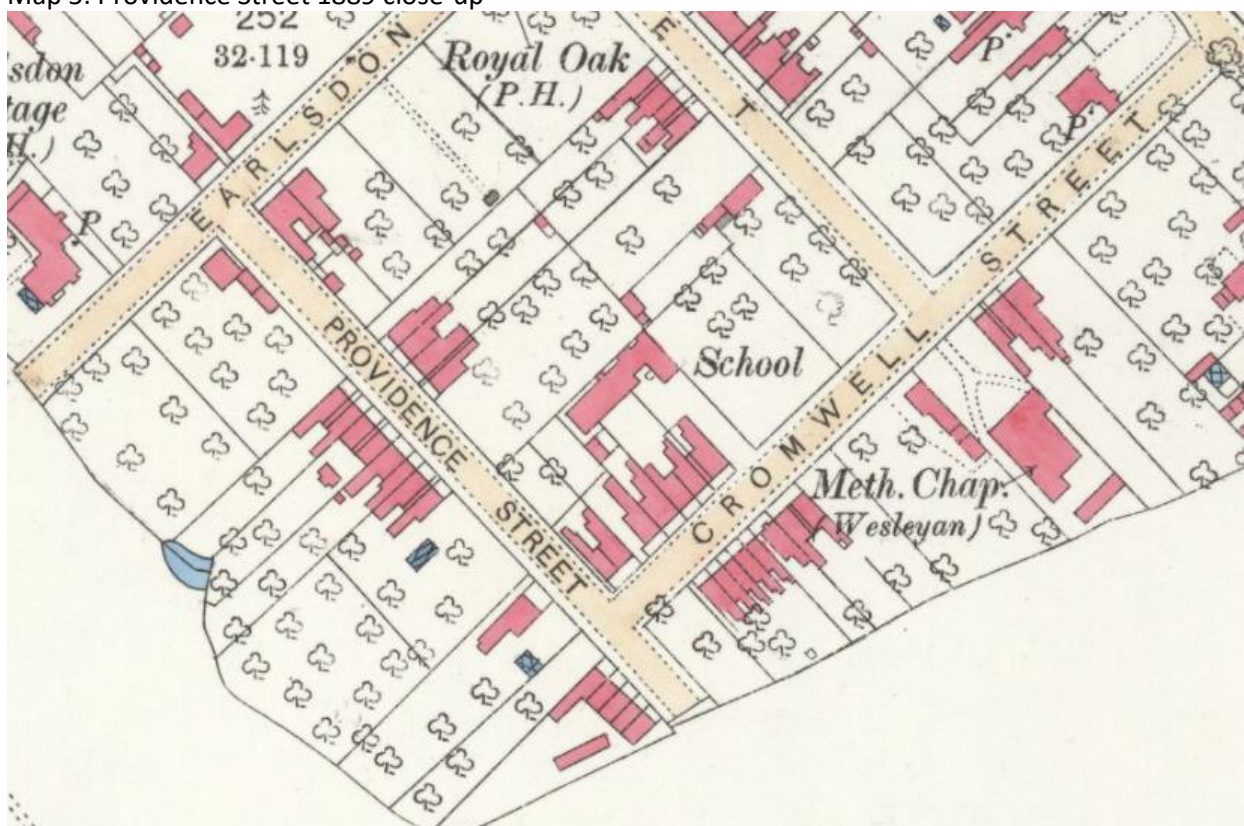


Map 4: Earlsdon 1889



Provided by Earlsdon Research Group

Map 5: Providence Street 1889 close-up



Provided by Earlsdon Research Group



Map 6: Coventry 1911



Reproduced from Dormer Harris, Mary (1911) *Story of Coventry*. London: J M Dent & Co

Map 7: Earlsdon 1913



Provided by Earlsdon Research Group

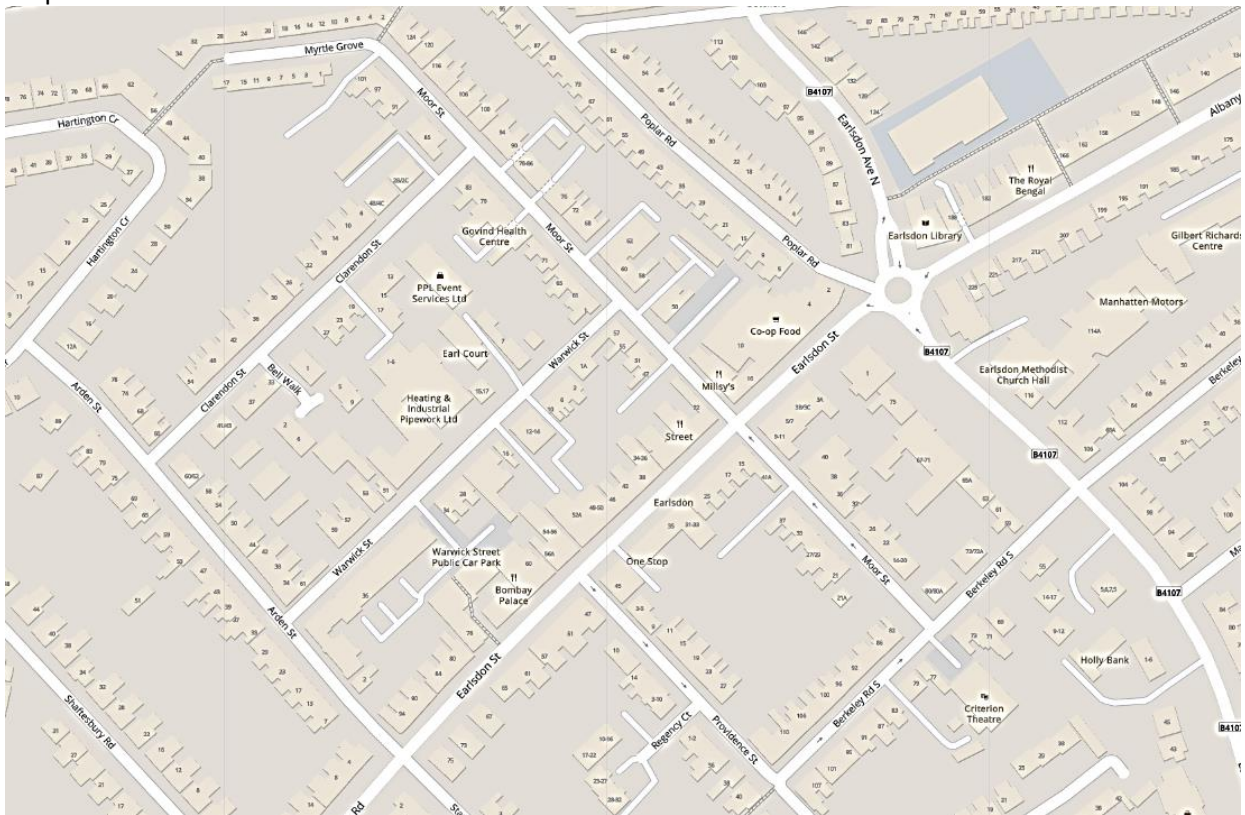


Map 8: Earlsdon 2010



Extract from 1:1250 OS Map

Map 9: Earlsdon 2022



Extract from [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)

Published by [earlsdonresearchgroup.org](http://earlsdonresearchgroup.org)



## APPENDIX 3 -- IMAGES

Image 1



Providence Street looking north-west with William East's five cottages to the immediate left and Berkeley Road South (formerly Cromwell Street) to the right, circa 1907, provided by Earlsdon Research Group

Providence Street, Earlsdon 1861 to 1921

David Porter, Earlsdon Research Group

May 2023





Image 2



Providence Street looking north-west, April 2023

Image 3



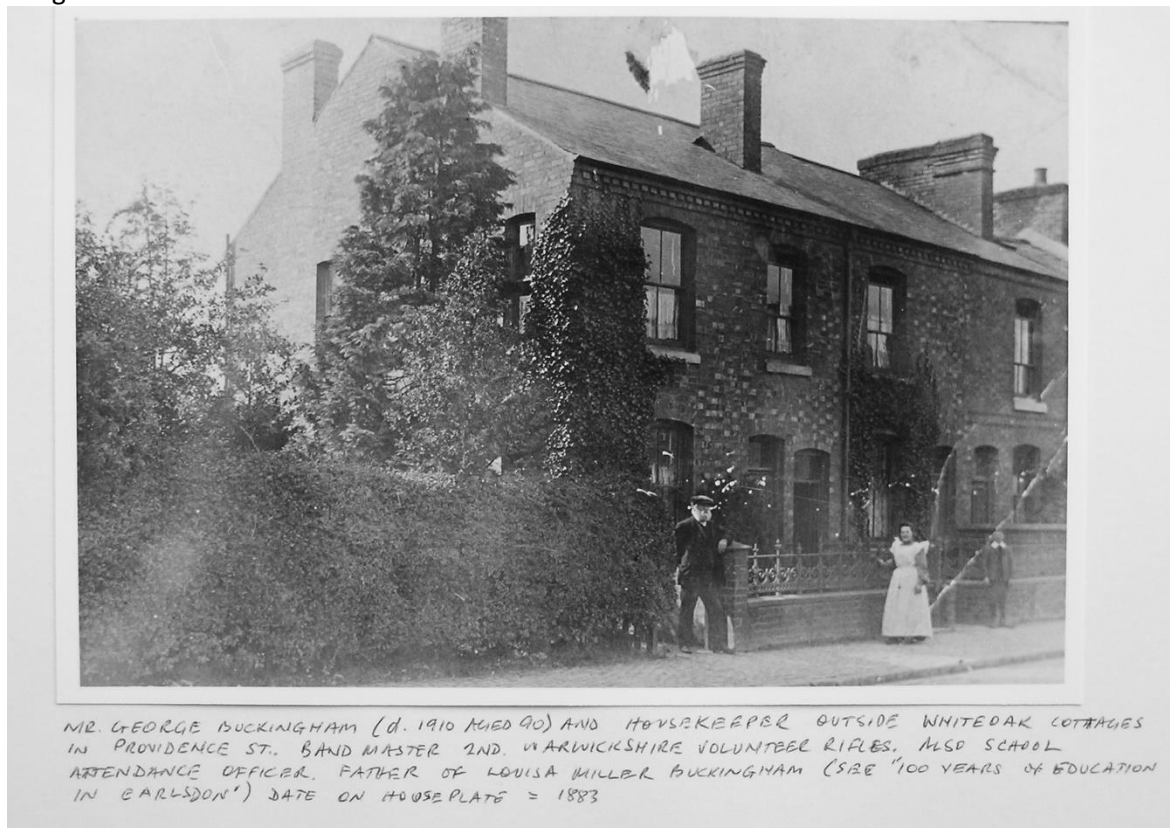
Providence Street looking south-east with Osborne Road in the distance circa 1912, kindly provided by David Fry

Image 4



Providence Street looking south-east, April 2023

Image 5



Provided by Earlsdon Research Group, a photograph of George Buckingham outside 28 Providence Street, date unknown. 26 Providence Street to the right was badly damaged in the Second World War and so both cottages were subsequently demolished, the land and the garden to the left now given over to the Regency Court complex



Image 6



The approximate location of George Buckingham's house and garden today, April 2023



Image 7



Provided by Earlsdon Research Group, a photograph taken outside what was then the Earlsdon Stores on the corner of Providence Street and Berkeley Road South (formerly Cromwell Street), presumed to be circa 1908

Image 8



On the corner of Providence Street and Berkeley Road South (formerly Cromwell Street), Collett's confectionery shop circa 1907, the photograph provided by Earlsdon Research Group



Image 9



Reproduced with kind permission of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, this landscape was painted by Herbert John Rylance in about 1890, eight years before the opening of Albany Road. Earlsdon Street can be seen leading off to the right with Earlsdon Lane (now Earlsdon Avenue South) straight ahead, snaking up the hill into open country beyond the houses on Earlsdon Terrace. At the time, Herbert was living with his widowed father at 18 Providence Street, both listed as watch movement polishers in the 1891 Census.