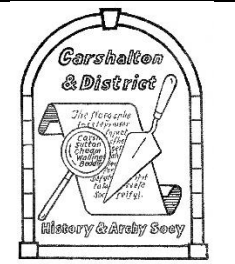


Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society

Local History Note 17



Thomas Hogg and Son Ltd, florists, of Sutton

March 2023, revised January 2024

Clive Orton

Many will remember the florist's shop of Thomas Hogg and Son, which stood in Mulgrave Road, opposite Sutton Station, from about 1992 to 2011. They had a nursery at Buckland, on the A25 near Reigate, whose website today claims that they are 6th-generation Hoggs. Following the generations from the 19th to the 21st century could open up little-known aspects of Sutton's history.

Thomas was born on 24 May 1834 in the small town of Dollar near Stirling in Scotland.¹ He was brought up there, and by the age of 16 he was a gardener's apprentice, about to set out on a successful career.² At the age of 21 he was working as a gardener in Tynemouth, Northumberland.³ 1859 was a big year in his life; on 15 May he married Mary Louisa Roake, a year his junior, in Shoreditch, north-east London.⁴ Mary was from Ottershaw (a small village near Chertsey),⁵ so how they met, and why they were married in Shoreditch, is a puzzle. Perhaps they had both been in service in the same house in that area, he as a gardener and she as a housemaid, and had met there and decided to marry. What is clear is that their first child, Thomas Adam, was born later that year, in the Chertsey district,⁶ presumably in Ottershaw where Mary's parents lived. A large family followed: Richard John (b. 1861),⁷ Robert Henry (b. 1862),⁸ Eva (b. 1863),⁹ Janet (b. 1866),¹⁰ Andrew (b. 1870),¹¹ Ellen (b. 1875),¹² and John (b. 1878).¹³ In 1861 Thomas, Mary, and the first two children were living in Main Road, Sutton (presumably the High Street, as it included Sutton station), and Thomas was working as a gardener.¹⁴ In 1865 Thomas founded the firm of Thomas Hogg & Son (rather optimistically, as his oldest son was only 6!).¹⁵ In 1869 Thomas worked as a gardener to John Ruck of *Sutton Court* in Carshalton Road.¹⁶ John Ruck was a wine merchant from London, who came to Sutton before 1851,¹⁷ retired in 1875, 'leaving the neighbourhood',¹⁸ probably moving to Cornwall,¹⁹ and died in 1888.²⁰ His grave can be seen in St Nicholas' churchyard.



The grave of John Ruck in St Nicholas churchyard (photo by the author).

Thomas later went to work for Henry Potter's nursery in Benhill Street (which occupied the eastern end of the south side of the street), where by 1876 he was manager of the nursery, known as Mid-Surrey Nurseries, with a staff of about 20 men, and lived at *Flint Cottage*, the last house on this side of Benhill Street.²¹

He was still there when Henry died in January 1884,²² and appears to have taken over both the nursery and a retail outlet in Sutton High Street, next to the station.²³ Soon after, Mid-Surrey Nurseries moved to a nearby site, south of Manor Lane and occupying the block between Warwick and Myrtle Roads,²⁴ where it remained until at least 1955.²⁵ Henry had suffered a long illness before he died,²⁶ and may have been planning the move. Thomas lived at Mid-Surrey Nurseries, Manor Lane, until he died in 1907.²⁷

To follow the line of descent, one has to follow the careers of Thomas' and Mary's children. Thomas Adam followed his father's footsteps to become a gardener.²⁸ He married Fanny Emmett in Carshalton in March 1876,²⁹ living first in Warwick Road³⁰ and then Morland Road,³¹ before moving away to Oxfordshire by 1894.³² This raises the question of 'why Carshalton?' when Thomas Adam was from Sutton and Fanny was last recorded in the Cookham district. Perhaps, like Mary, she had moved away to seek employment. Another question comes from their marriage certificate, which gives her age as 21 and his as 20 – as he was born in 1859, he must have been aged 16. They had

ADVERTISEMENTS.

HENRY POTTER
Seedsman, Florist & Nurseryman
MID-SURREY NURSERIES,
Benhill Street and Adjoining the Railway Station
SUTTON, SURREY.

Gentlemen Planting are invited to inspect the fine Stock at the above Nurseries. Large quantities of Specimen FOREST TREES, CONIFERÆ, and ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS. A Splendid Collection of ROSES, Standard and Dwarf, of the very best kinds. FRUIT TREES: Standard, Pyramid, and Dwarf Trained, of various sorts, in first-rate condition.

BEDDING PLANTS:

An immense Assortment ready in the Spring.

Choice Ferns. Stove and Greenhouse Plants.

FINE DECORATIVE PLANTS for WEDDINGS, BALLS

&c. FOR SALE OR HIRE.

WEDDING & OTHER BOUQUETS SUPPLIED

NEW FLOWER, VEGETABLE & AGRICULTURAL SEEDS

Insecticides, Tobacco Paper, Garden Manures, and all Horticultural Requisites.

Gardens Laid Out, Planted, and Attended to by Day or by Contract.

An advertisement for Henry Potter's nursery and shop (from Church's Directory for 1880)



Map showing the locations of the old (light green) and new (dark green) nurseries
(Based on the OS six-inch map of 1914)

three children: Mary A. (or Annie) (b. 1876),³³ Thomas Richard (b. 1878)³⁴ and Albert Edward (b. 1889).³⁵ They were back in Croydon by 1901,³⁶ where Thomas Adam ran his own nursery and died in 1934.³⁷ Richard John stayed in Sutton (Myrtle Road, next door to the nursery) as a carpenter and joiner.³⁸ He married Ann Elizabeth Potton in Sutton in 1885.³⁹ They had four children: Richard (b. 1886),⁴⁰ Frederic (b. 1888),⁴¹ Elsie (b.1890),⁴² and Frank (b. 1892).⁴³ He died in 1915, still at Myrtle Road.⁴⁴ Robert also remained in Sutton, starting and ending as a butcher, but with a long interlude as a commercial traveller.⁴⁵ He married Hannah May Farrow in 1883.⁴⁶ They had four children: Walter (b. 1885),⁴⁷ Marion Elizabeth (b. 1888,⁴⁸ who died in 1896),⁴⁹ Evelyn (or Eva) (b. 1892),⁵⁰ and Jeanie Marguerite (b.1895).⁵¹ Eva married a cousin (Henry Roake) in 1898⁵² and went to live in Ottershaw,⁵³ but died back at *The Nursery*, Manor Lane, in 1928.⁵⁴ Janet lived with her parents until at least 1911,⁵⁵ never married, and died at *The Nursery* in 1935.⁵⁶ Andrew married Lilian Rolfe in 1897;⁵⁷ they appear to have had only one child: Gordon Andrew (b. 1898).⁵⁸ They lived at 7 (and later at 5) The Promenade, Sutton High Street (between St Nicholas Road and Church Street) until 1925.⁵⁹ Andrew died at Camborne Road in 1932.⁶⁰ Helen Frances (baptised Ellen)⁶¹ never married, and lived all her life at *The Nursery*, 56 Manor Lane,⁶² although in 1939 she was living with her brother John and his wife Isabella (see below) at 66 Warwick Road.⁶³ Her career varied within the business: in 1911 she was a book-keeper at the nurseries,⁶⁴ while in 1939 she was manageress of a florist's shop, presumably in the High Street.⁶⁵ She died in 1968.⁶⁶ Finally, John, who started his working life as a plumber,⁶⁷ and married Isabella Sarah Dyer in Sutton in 1905, when he was living at 117 Sutton High Street.⁶⁸ A change of career saw him as chauffeur to the Holman family at *Benfleet Hall* (living in *The Lodge* there)⁶⁹ and by 1939 he described himself as a retired motor engineer.⁷⁰ They too appear to have had only one child: Marie Louise (b. 1910),⁷¹ who was living with Helen, John and Isabella in 1939, working as a ledger clerk under the married name of Nicholson.⁷²



56 Manor Lane as it stands in 2023 (photo by the author)

After the move to Manor Lane in about 1886,⁷³ Mid-Surrey Nurseries flourished under management of first Thomas and then Mary until she died in 1915.⁷⁴ Their daughter Helen Frances ran it until at least 1933,⁷⁵ but by 1939 she was living nearby in Warwick Road and managing the florist's shop.⁷⁶ Their son Andrew ran 'Mid-Surrey Nurseries and Hogg, Thos and Son, nurserymen, seedsmen and florists' until about 1927, when his son Gordon Andrew took over.⁷⁷ When Sutton High Street was renumbered around 1928, the shop became known as 91 High Street.⁷⁸ Andrew died in Camborne Road in 1932.⁷⁹ Gordon Andrew died in 1987 (aged 99!) near Worthing,⁸⁰ having been succeeded by his son Michael Gordon (b. 1929)⁸¹ who was still a major shareholder in 2022,⁸² although probably long since retired. He had married Janet Moore in 1955,⁸³ and their son David (b. 1962), who is also a major shareholder, appears to have taken over from him.⁸⁴ From 1931 to 1954 Hogg, T. & Son had advertised their premises as '91 High Street and The Nurseries, Manor Lane', adding 'and landscape gardener' to their title from 1939.⁸⁵

The old nursery site in Benhill Avenue/Street had been built over by 1910 or earlier;⁸⁶ the new nursery in Manor Lane is still shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1955, but is now part of the playing fields for Manor Park Primary School (later Manor Park Primary Academy).⁸⁷ The florist's shop relocated to the Times Square (later Times 2, then Times Square again) shopping centre on the High Street from at least 1986 to 1992, when it moved to 22 Mulgrave Road.⁸⁸ There is remained until 2011, when it re-joined the nursery side of the company, which by then had relocated to become the Buckland Nursery in Reigate Road, Buckland (better known as the A25) near Reigate, where it remains to this day.⁸⁹ We can see the family tree running from father to son (with one exception) through the generations: Thomas, Mary (his widow), Andrew, Gordon, Michael and David.

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- ¹ Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564-1950.
- ² 1851 Scotland Census.
- ³ *Whellan's Directory of Northumberland*, p.488.
- ⁴ England, Select Marriages, 1538-1973.
- ⁵ 1911 Census.
- ⁶ England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915.
- ⁷ Sutton, Surrey, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1915.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ *Ibid.*; Ancestry family tree.
- ¹⁰ London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1923.
- ¹¹ *Op cit* note 7.
- ¹² 1881 Census; 1939 Registration.
- ¹³ 1939 Registration.
- ¹⁴ 1861 Census.
- ¹⁵ Bucklandnurseries.co.uk.
- ¹⁶ Morgan's Directory, 1869.
- ¹⁷ 1851 Census.
- ¹⁸ *Croydon Advertiser and East Surrey Reporter*, 8 May 1875, p.1.
- ¹⁹ 1891 Census.
- ²⁰ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995.
- ²¹ Church's Directory, 1876.
- ²² *Croydon Advertiser and East Surrey Reporter*, 30 Jan 1886, p.4.
- ²³ *Croydon Advertiser and East Surrey Reporter*, 8 May, p.7; 15 May 1886, p.6.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ OS 25in map, TQ 2664 (1955 revision).
- ²⁶ *Op cit* note 20.
- ²⁷ *Op cit* note 18.
- ²⁸ 1881 Census.
- ²⁹ *Op cit* note 7.
- ³⁰ 1881 Census.
- ³¹ Sutton Poor Rates, LG/18/2/28.
- ³² Electoral Register.
- ³³ 1911 Census; 1939 Registration.
- ³⁴ *Op cit* note 7.
- ³⁵ *Op cit* note 31.
- ³⁶ 1901 Census.
- ³⁷ *Op cit* note 18.
- ³⁸ 1891 Census; 1901 Census; 1911 Census.
- ³⁹ Sutton, Surrey, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1930.
- ⁴⁰ 1939 Registration.
- ⁴¹ *Op cit* note 7; 1939 Registration.
- ⁴² *Op cit* note 7; FreeBMD.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *Op cit* note 18.
- ⁴⁵ 1881 Census; 1891 Census; 1901 Census; 1911 Census.
- ⁴⁶ England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915.
- ⁴⁷ 1939 Registration.
- ⁴⁸ England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975.
- ⁴⁹ England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915.
- ⁵⁰ 1939 Registration.
- ⁵¹ Ancestry family tree.
- ⁵² *Op cit* note 7.
- ⁵³ 1901 Census.
- ⁵⁴ *Op cit* note 18.
- ⁵⁵ 1911 Census.
- ⁵⁶ *Op cit* note 18.

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- ⁵⁷ *Op cit* note 44.
- ⁵⁸ 1939 Registration.
- ⁵⁹ *Pile's Directories*, 1910 to 1924/5.
- ⁶⁰ *Op cit* note 18.
- ⁶¹ *Op cit* note 7.
- ⁶² 1911 Census; *Pile's Directories*, 1919 to 1932.
- ⁶³ 1939 Registration.
- ⁶⁴ 1911 Census.
- ⁶⁵ 1939 Registration.
- ⁶⁶ *Op cit* note 18.
- ⁶⁷ 1901 Census.
- ⁶⁸ *Op cit* note 37.
- ⁶⁹ 1911 Census.
- ⁷⁰ 1939 Registration.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Op cit* note 21.
- ⁷⁴ *Op cit* note 18.
- ⁷⁵ *Pile's Directories*, 1919-1933.
- ⁷⁶ 1939 Registration.
- ⁷⁷ *Pile's Directories*, 1910-1927.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁹ *Op cit* note 18.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁸¹ [Find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/00669180/filing-history](https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/00669180/filing-history).
- ⁸² *Ibid.*
- ⁸³ FreeBMD.
- ⁸⁴ *Op cit* note 79.
- ⁸⁵ *Borough of Sutton and Cheam. Official Guide.*
- ⁸⁶ OS 6-inch map, 1910 revision, published 1914.
- ⁸⁷ *Op cit* note 23.
- ⁸⁸ *Op cit* note 79.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*