

## Local History

### JUBILEE SQUARE - 135 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT

#### Early beginnings - farmland

Before this area was mapped in 1768, little is known about the land that now holds Jubilee Square. Earlier maps suggest that farmland lay to the east and west. The farmland to the east was known as 'Blacden Farm' and would later become 'Black Dene Farm', followed by 'Blagdon Farm' - providing the nearby Blagdon Road with its name.

The land that we know today as the junction between Kingston Road and the High Street was also made up of enclosed farmland and land known as 'Norbeton Common'.



#### Plucky little Malden

By 1871, Blagdon Farm and its estate totalled 224 acres - an area equivalent to 150 football pitches, which covered all of the land from Blagdon Road to the Kingston Bypass, stretching back to the railway line from West Barnes to Motspur Park. When Richmond Vestry (later Richmond Council) tried to buy the farm to use to dispose of their sewage, a public enquiry was made, and the scheme was rejected. Having fought off a nearby giant, the Village earned the name "Plucky little Malden"

## **An innovating pottery-works**

By 1876, innovative pottery owner Benjamin Looker acquired 14 acres of land from Blagdon Farm to relocate his pottery, tile and brickworks from Kingston Hill, where local clay had been exhausted. Looker died in 1892 but the pottery, tile and brickworks continued, served by a 115 ft chimney, dominating the local skyline. This continued through the two world wars, receiving a fresh source of clay in the 1930s as the Northern Line extended to Morden. During the war the ovens were used to dry Canadian grain saturated as the convoys of the Merchant navy crossed the Atlantic. The chimney was demolished in 1946.





### **The Malden Wanderers find a home**

Malden Victoria Cricket Club was founded in 1879 but, due to frequent floods in New Malden, the team had to use several fields around the village. This earned the club a new name in 1886: The Malden Wanderers.

They finally settled on a permanent ground behind the old police station and next to the smoky Norbiton Pottery in Blagdon Road. The Club quickly became one of the centres of New Malden village life, attracting large crowds to its matches. In 1914, the team included Surrey and England batsman, Jack Hobbs, known as 'The Master' and regarded widely, for many years, as the world's best batsman.

### **Serving the community**

During the war the fields served the community as allotments, before returning to an open space.

In 1974-1975, a community centre (later the Crescent Resource Centre and the Causeway Centre) was built on the site and provided for people with learning and physical disabilities.

The centre was closed in 2011 and the buildings, along with an ambulance station, were demolished the following year.

Jubilee square is the latest use for this much-loved part of our town, continuing its 135- year heritage of serving the Community of New Malden.



(Text and Photos from The Maldens and Coombe Heritage Society)

## STREET PARTIES



K2-1858 Queens Road Street party

Many local streets held parties to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June 1953. This party was in Queens Road, just off Burlington Road. Sadly, just after the photo was taken, the heavens opened and everyone had to take shelter in St. James Church hall in Burlington Road where the party continued.



K2-1856