

SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND TO CHARLES JOHN GALLARD AND THE ALMSHOUSES

Precis version - GJC Sept '23

1. A Brief History of Almshouses

- a) **10th Century** - first ones opened in York (described as Hospitals)
- b) **1500s** – there were 800 across England
- c) **Present day** – 1,700 Almshouse Charities (most over 400 years old; over 30% occupying listed buildings)

2. CJ Gallard. *(Photo 1)*

- a) **1600s** – His family came from E Sussex via Leigh and Bidborough.
- b) **1850** – Born - 26th March in Southborough.
- c) **1884** - Married Marion Charlwood (no children)
- d) **1906** – Died - 8th January, in Bournemouth
- e) **1906** – Buried – 12th Jan in St Peters' churchyard, Southborough.

3. Residences and Trades

- a) CJ Gallard owned a number of houses in Southborough and Tunbridge Wells.
- b) He was a Master Builder (like his father), having started as a carpenter.
- c) His workshop was in Pennington Rd., opposite St. Thomas' Church ("employed 18 men and 2 boys"). *(Photo 2).*

4. Local positions held by CJG

- a) **1897-1899** - Well-known figure in Southborough. Chair of Southborough Urban District Council and a JP.
- b) Had a substantial property portfolio in TW and S'boro' (17 freehold and 6 leasehold properties by his death - consisting of: 5 properties in Pennington Road; 6 in Lime Hill Road in TW, and 12 in Boyne Park Estate.)

5. CJG's Will

- a) To his wife – "All goods and chattels". In Trust – His entire real estate was sold and the proceeds invested for his wife's benefit. When she died it would be passed on to The Charity Trustees, who were to buy a suitable piece of land and build Almshouses (not more than £7,000).
- b) Trustees – The 2 Vicars of St Peter's and St Thomas'; The Chair and Vice Chair of Southborough Urban District Council.
- c) The Almshouses: 2 Blocks: – 1 of 4 dwellings for married couples; and 1 of 10 dwellings for single men and, separately in the same block, 10 for single women.
- d) The Trustees had complete discretion in selecting occupants but his wish was for "only persons in poor or distressed circumstances of good life and character and not under the age of 55 years", and they should have resided in Southborough for not less than 10 years.
- e) Additional provisions for the remaining funds were:
 - 1) Upkeep / insurance of the Almshouses; 2) Pay weekly sums to the "Inmates" of 20/- for married couples, 15/- single men and 12/- single women; 3) Premiums for apprenticing boys; 4) Grants to non-resident poor, distressed persons.
- f) **May 1905.** Due to falling property prices only £5,000 was available for the Almshouses.
- g) **Oct 1905.** CJG added a further codicil: "The objects of the Trust should be used as far as funds permit, with the number of dwellings being reduced to 'the proportions of 1 for single women, 2 for single men to every 1 for married couples.'"
- h) **1908** - CJG's widow died, and in **1911** the Will Trustees handed over the estate to The Charity Trustees.

6. The Buildings and Land

- a) **1911**, a site was purchased for £1,500 after his properties in Pennington Road and others in TW were sold. The location was on the junction of London Road / Yew Tree Road, which was part of the Southfield Estate. *(Photo 3)*
- b) The plot was larger than today's site (included Lloyd's Bank and Yew Tree Car Park, plus land at the front).
- c) W Harmer was the architect and the Goodwin Brothers were the builders. The total cost was £4,185, and 20 flats were built. *(Photos 6a & 6b – depicting the original drawings of the flats. NB no bathrooms!)*
- d) Three blocks to be: 4 slightly larger flats in the middle for married couples; a separate block on either side for single men and women (8 flats in each).
- e) **May 1912** an "unclimbable" iron fence was erected at the front and side with two double gateways opening on to London Road. *(1921 Photo 4 – showing the iron fence and gateways, seen from London Rd.)*
- f) **Feb 1913** the surplus land to the North was sold for £350.00 to Lloyd's Bank.
- g) The Trustees received 67 applications for places at the Almshouses and so the selections were made.
- h) **1925** – Gallard's from the air: showing allotments and market garden behind the Almshouses. *(Photo 5)*

9. The Opening of Gallard's Almshouses on 23rd October 1912

- a) Attended by Mrs Charles Gallard aged 86. It is thought that this lady was Charles Gallard's stepmother, as his father had married a second time to Esther Ann Martin.

- b) The event was reported in the paper (an extract is on file):
 The report concluded with *“The inmates will take formal possession of the flats next Monday. The trustees have provided a substantial bedstead for each tenement, and kind friends have also stocked each with a supply of coal. The singularly beautiful collection of trees and shrubs in front of the Almshouses were supplied and planted by Hollamby’s Nurseries, Groombridge.”*

10. The Almshouses’ Residents, Staff and Trustees

- a) **23rd October 1912** – First occupied by 4 married couples, 8 single men and 8 single women. They received a small pension and some coal twice a week during the winter. *Nowadays the Almshouses receive income from residents through a “Weekly Maintenance Contribution”.*
- b) **July 1928** – Resident nurse appointed (salary of £1 1s 0d per week plus an Almshouse flat). However, the Trustees’ minutes recorded: she was discharged on 28th August, ‘being unsuitable for the position of Nurse at the Almshouses’.
- c) **1945** - “the gift of coal” ceased.
- d) **1947** – The pensions stopped but resumed again in **1962** (when the Trust’s finances had improved, but not for long.)
- e) **1963** – Trustees again appointed a nurse to live in a flat ‘for the care and attention of the alms persons’. Some years later this role was called ‘Warden’ and a Deputy Warden was also employed.
- f) **1965** – The land at the front was acquired by the council for road widening.
- g) **1967** – The residents’ allotments were lost to the council for a car park.
- h) **1969** The WMC was introduced, initially at the rate of 10/- per week.
- i) **1969** – A new Charity Scheme, the Trust’s Governing Document, was adopted. The trustee body was increased to 7: instead of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Southborough Council, there would be 3 people, not necessarily Councillors, nominated by the Council, plus two so-called Co-optative trustees residing or carrying on business in Southborough and appointed by other trustees, as well as the two vicars as before.
- j) **2006** – Trustees decided that they could no longer provide full time warden cover, so a manager was appointed instead, to work Monday to Friday. An emergency telephone call system covered the evenings and week-ends.
- k) **2019** -The number of co-optative trustees was increased to 3, then in **2022** to 4 (totalling 9).

11. Upkeep and Improvement of the Almshouses

- a) **1926** – new ranges in all living rooms.
- b) **1945** – A weather screen was erected at the South end of the married block against No12.
- c) **1951** - Renovation of 3 empty tenements and installation a several new ranges.
- d) **1955** – Electric power and light to all Almshouses, paid for by the Southborough Toc H Women’s Assoc.
- e) **1957/58** – Bathrooms created.
- f) **1973/74** - Night storage heaters installed.
- g) **1993** – One flat was enlarged to provide a two-bedroom flat with a small office for the Warden.
- h) **1998** – The Communal Function Room of timber construction, was added, funded by Nat. Lottery Charities. (It rained heavily when it was erected, so it was nicknamed “The Ark”, and is still so called).
- i) **1996-2000** - The Clerk, John Woodhouse, secured funding to make improvements to the flats. However, the flats still remained basically in their original format (small kitchens, outdated bathrooms, old night storage heaters etc.). Better homes could be found elsewhere and so vacancies occurred.
- j) Therefore in **2004** the trustees decided to update the flats to suit the 21st century.

12. The Re-development Project

- a) **2006 -2008** to mark the centenary of Rotary International and the start of the Almshouses, The Rotary Club of Southborough and Pembury donated the Lych-Gate - opened by our MP (Greg Clark). *(Photo 7).*
- b) **2009** The Redevelopment project started with fund raising; then in **2011** - building work started. *(Photo 8)*
- c) **2012** - Building finished – in time for the Gallard’s centenary year. *(Photo 9 – the new West Front with “Infills”).*
- d) The existing 19 flats were completely renovated, resulting in enlarged, reconfigured rooms fitted out to modern standards. Rear extensions allowed a new bedroom, creating a larger living space with a kitchen.
- e) 6 additional flats and two communal rooms were built in the gaps between the original 3 blocks.
- f) For various reasons, the project was done in 3 phases, and some residents lived off-site for a few months.
- g) The gardens were then re-instated.
- h) **12th June 2013** - Her Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of Kent, unveiled a commemorative stone on the building.
- i) The whole project cost just over £2,300,000.

- j) Gallard's received a generous grant of £1,250,000 from The Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust. The Southborough and High Brooms Age Concern also gave substantial help along with grants from the Homes and Communities Agency and support from other donors.
- k) Charity Bank enabled us to complete the project with some long-term loan finance.

13. The Gallard's Trustees' Aim:

- a) To help elderly people live independently as long as possible within their own community.
- b) To offer homes in a setting that allows residents to move freely.
- c) To encourage residents to make friends by sharing in a social life through use of the communal facilities.
- d) To provide an on-site manager to oversee the facilities and for urgent short-term support for residents.

14. Current Facilities

- a) 25 self-contained flats for beneficiary residents plus one flat for the Manager.
- b) Each flat comprises a living room with a fully fitted kitchen area (Photo 10), one bedroom, a fitted shower room + toilet (level-entrance wet rooms in the 6 new flats), gas-fired boilers for central heating / hot water.
- c) The flats are unfurnished, although new ovens, hobs and refrigerators were provided in 2011/12 and their maintenance and eventual replacement are the responsibility of the residents.
- d) A meeting room and a "guest bedroom" to cater for residents' visitors, particularly during times of illness or when a relative needs to support for a short period (Photo 11).
- e) "The Ark" is also available for the local community to use.
- f) Lift access is also available to 8 first floor flats, to assist the less mobile.
- g) Washing machines and tumble driers are available in the small laundry for use without charge.

15. To be considered for a flat:

- a) Applicants must be not be less than 55 years old;
- b) Must have resided in Southborough (including High Brooms) – Trustees may, in exceptional circumstances, consider an applicant who lives outside the area but is otherwise qualified;
- c) They must be of limited means – Trustees enquire closely into applicants' financial situation to assess this.

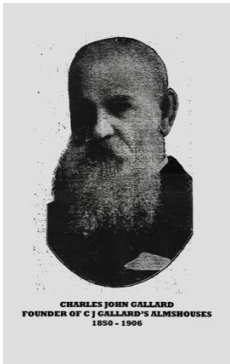
Other information:

- d) Residents are not tenants, but are granted a licence to occupy a flat and pay a Weekly Maintenance Contribution (WMC), towards running costs. Housing Benefit may be claimed for those whose financial situation makes them eligible. WMC covers Water and service charges.
- e) Residents are responsible for their own Council Tax, electricity, gas and telephone costs.
- f) Residents may be required to pay for internal re-decoration for reasons other than fair wear and tear.

16. Current Almshouses' Expenditure and Workings:

- a) External repairs, decoration to the flats, insurances and expenses for the estate are met by the Trust.
- b) The gardens are generally maintained by an employed gardener; however, some residents also have their own "plots" to grow vegetables and flowers etc.
- c) 9 Trustees work voluntarily and are responsible for administering the charity and the appointment of residents as necessary.
- d) An employed Clerk supports the Trust with the Manager, enabling residents to live safely and comfortably.

Photographs relevant to the origins of the CJ Gallard's Almshouses and improvements of the site and facilities.



1). CJ Gallard



2). Workshop in Pennington Rd



3). Map - original site of Gallard's



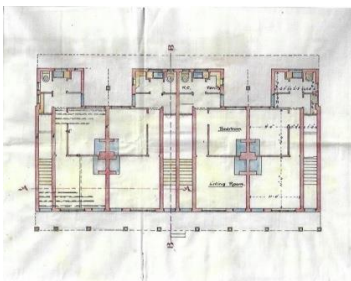
4). Iron fence from London rd



5). Gallard's from the air (1925)



6a). Original drawings of the flats



6b). Original drawings of the flats.



7). Greg Clark / Lych Gate (2008)



8). Gaps between the blocks (2011)



9). 2012 - New West Front



10). Kitchen area of a new flat



11). Meeting / Guest Room