

The Old Grocers, Bakers & Shoe Shop

Now Tudor House, High Street, Shrivenham - By Neil B. Maw



The Shrivenham census of 1841 provided the information that Jeremy Cox was operating a grocery shop in the village. He was aged 55 and listed with his family are Harriot age 50, son Edwin 25, daughters Charlotte and Harriot who appear to be twins both age 20, and Abraham 14. But from this we cannot pinpoint the location of their shop. The Tithe Survey of 1843/4 provides more accuracy when we see young Edwin Cox occupying the property immediately next door to the Barrington Arms.



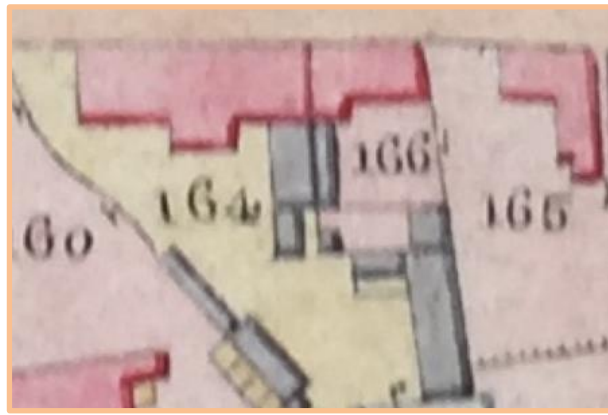
Tithe map 1844. 194 = Barrington Arms. 195 = Owner: William Addison. Occupier: Edwin Cox

The census for 1851 provided more confirmation of the location, when shown next to the entry for George Canfield, Landlord of the Barrington Arms, is Edwin Cox, 10 years older and a Grocer, with his wife Elizabeth. But a newspaper article of that year, showed that he was in trouble – Bankrupt.

IMPORTANT SALE.—FOR THE BENEFIT OF CREDITORS.
SHRIVENHAM, BERKS.
MESSRS. BARNARD, THOMAS, & CO.
have received instructions from the Trustees to
SELL by AUCTION, without the least reserve, on WEDNESDAY
Next, the 12th of February, and following days,
The whole of the extensive and valuable STOCK-IN-TRADE,
HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, FIXTURES, and EFFECTS of Mr.
Edwin Cox, Draper, Grocer, and General Shopkeeper, Shrivenham,
Berks.
The Stock consists of calico, 7-8 and 5-4 prints, print dresses,
delains, cobourgs and orleans, printed muslins, ginghams, wool plaids,
flannels and coatings, sheetings, ducks, dowlases, Irishes, Hollands,
lawns, damasks, diapers, table cloths, checks, stripes, plain and
figured muslins, ticks, moleskins, cords, cheese cloths, jeans, nan-
keens, shawls, turnovers, silk and cotton handkerchiefs, quillings, lace
and edgings, ribands, plain and figured nets, gimps, fringes, braids,
hosiery, gloves, haberdashery, hats, caps, umbrellas, stays, iron-
mongery, earthenware, grocery, drugs, &c.
The Furniture and Fixtures comprise the usual articles of a re-
spectable tradesman.
The Sale will commence each day at Eleven o'clock to the minute.
Bills with approved security at two months' date will be taken for
purchases above £50.

Bristol Mercury 8th February 1851. Note the
variety of goods that Edwin Cox was selling

But by the following census of 1861, there is a change of proprietor with Robert Fitten Green age 37 and his wife Eliza 42, and it stated specifically that the premises is a, '*Grocer's Shop.*' The Barrington Estate Map dated 1866, confirmed that Robert was still there.



Barrington Estate Map 1866. 164 = The Barrington Arms.
166 = Owner: James Burchall. Occupier: Robert Green -
house and premises

Robert Green died just before the next census and was buried in Shrivenham churchyard on 12th May 1868, aged 46. The 1871 census showed that his widow Eliza continued to run the business which is described as, '*Grocer/Baker*' and she had two assistants, Mary Ellis age 21 and Martha Bridges 14, and also listed was James Furness 25 who was a Baker. This confirmed that they were baking bread on the premises. The part of the premises that was adjoining the wall of the Barrington Arms pub is likely to have been a separate cottage because the census commissioner had listed it as, '*Dehoused.*' Eliza Green died four years later and the parish records noted that she was buried in Shrivenham churchyard on 18th November 1875, aged 58.

We can only assume that George Baker took over the business after Eliza died. He and his wife Sarah were listed as proprietors in the 1881 census, but they were not youngsters, being 62 and 66 respectively. However, a newspaper article covering a charity enquiry at Highworth mentioned George. He was listed as a surviving trustee of a particular charity and described as a, '*retired baker,*' of Shrivenham. (Wilts & Glos Standard 19/7/1890). It was their son William, listed with them on the census and described as a, '*Grocer & Baker,*' age 25 who was running the business. They also had a 20year-old assistant called Jane Evans. George was mentioned in an earlier newspaper article whereby he had been assaulted by George Morse of Shrivenham, who was also a baker. He was heavily drunk when he assaulted George Baker and was also drunk when he appeared in court and fined 10shillings (Oxford Journal 7/7/1877). Then sadly, another mention in the newspaper when Sarah his wife died on 30th August 1884, aged 70. (Witney Express 11/9/1884).

On the following census of 1891, it listed that Thomas Fuller had taken over the business. He was described as aged 40 and a Baker and Grocer. He had a big family with him consisting of his wife Louisa E aged 33, and seven children ranging from 1 - 13 years. But also, with this listing was George Baker and he was described as a widower and, '*caretaker of a shoe shop.*' So, it would appear that there were two business' at this point of time and if the photo below is expanded, it clearly shows that shoes are being displayed in the window. Therefore, the Bakery and Grocery must have been at the eastern end of the building.



The Shoe Shop end of the premises with window display clearly displaying shoes and the name 'Fuller' above, circa 1915. From the SHS Les Judd Collection

We don't know when Thomas Fuller acquired the nickname, '*Crusty.*' It's an appropriate name for a Baker, and one that stuck with him for the rest of his life. He seems to have been a colourful character and would stand his ground in times of trouble. He got into a legal dispute with Charles Perkins, a Printer of Marlborough and Collens Bros, Millers of Chippenham. As the defendant, he failed to appear at a court hearing, claiming that he had sent in a health certificate confirming he was not fit to travel. But as he had not informed the plaintiffs, their travel costs were ordered to be paid by Fuller. (Faringdon Advertiser 22/3/1890). The following year he was fined for not having an appropriate dog licence. His tactics of being ill in bed and not having money on him to pay his fine at court, are notable of his emerging character. (Faringdon Advertiser 23/5/1891). But he seems to have been a shrewd and

successful businessman. When the owner of the property that Crusty Fuller rented died, James Burchall, the Trustees of his Will put it up for auction. (a notable village builder - see SHS N230). The sale was held next door at the Barrington Arms and Crusty started bidding at £150 but had to go to £340 to get it. (NW Herald 30/7/1897).



The premises that was the Bakery used by Crusty Fuller, 1900 - 1922, now skilfully renovated by the current owners

Even though he owned the property there was clearly a problem with space and soon after 1901 he rented the property, now known as 7 High Street, Shrivenham, next door to the Crown Pub. (Shown above). The previous occupier was George Woodbridge, a Sadler & Harness Maker, who died and was buried in Shrivenham churchyard on 13th October 1899, age 75. The Fullers moved in and fitted a large oven to the back of the house and the bakery business continued from there for just over 20 years. He seems to have done something of a swap, because the premises he owned next to the Barrington Arms pub, on the 1911 census, was occupied by William Woodbridge and Charles Woodbridge, sons of the late Saddle and Harness Maker, George.

By 1901, Crusty Fuller appeared to be an active, local businessman. At the Parish Council Election held at the Schoolroom in March he was elected as a Councillor. (Faringdon Advertiser 9/3/1901). And at the Inquest held at the Barrington Arms on the death of a village girl, he was the Foreman of the Jury. (Faringdon Advertiser 31/8/1901). But we know very little about him

after the turn of the century. We know by the memories of Bill Hammond that the bakery at 7 High Street had finished by 1923, but whether it continued up at his other premises we have yet to discover. Thomas (Crusty) Fuller lived until he was age 75 and was buried at Shrivvenham churchyard on 13th May 1926.



Taken on the other side of the archway, Crusty Fuller with his dog and his family, circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Peter Fuller

We have some more information from the memories of Bill Knapp (Albert William Knapp) SHS N661. In an interview he refers to this premises next to the Barrington Arms as the first Vicarage, but we don't know on what evidence he based this upon. It may simply be the arches of the upper window casements giving a chapel-like appearance. The information that we have so far on the Vicarage would refute this. But interestingly, he also noted that in the 1930s it was occupied by Mr Harris who was a Butcher. He then described the following – *'I was asked to repair the roof some years ago after a gale. When I put up the ladders and got on the roof I had the biggest shock of my life. Underneath the slate roof was a thatched roof. I called up the man who was with me to have a look. He couldn't believe it but that's a fact.'* After Butcher Harris was an Estate Agent, Bishop & Edgington.



As an Estate Agents in 1976. Photo courtesy of John Clements

We also have information that it was operating for a short period in the early 1980s as a café/tea room known as, '*The Boffin*.' It was run initially by Vi Gibbons and then by her son and daughter-in-law.

At the moment this is as far as we can go on the history of the premises that was the old Grocers, Bakers and Shoe shop, today known as Tudor House. If any reader can add more facts to this, please contact us on info@shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk



The premises that was the old Grocers, Bakers and Shoe Shop in the distance, circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Paul Williams