

STREET OF CHANGE. A HISTORY OF EDEN STREET, KINGSTON UPON THAMES.

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ABSTRACT

Today's Eden Street was once called "*Heathen Street*", a name that existed by 1315. Archaeological excavations in the area recovered Neolithic, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon material and it was indicated that between the 13th and 16th centuries it was a marshy edge of town place with slaughterhouses, tanning pits and pottery kilns. By 1854 the street was called "*Eden Street*" by some people and this was its official name in the 1861 Census. The change of name is discussed in the paper. Once there was a prison and militia barracks in the street, and in the 19th century it had private residences, places of worship, pubs and business premises, most of which have disappeared. As for the rest of Kingston, Census data evidences migration into the street, mainly from the British Isles. The population declined significantly after 1950 but this will change when development projects will bring with them a big increase in the number of homes.

Introduction

This article was based on research for a talk given to the Kingston upon Thames Society on 16 November 2016. It was prompted by recent building projects in Eden Street, Kingston upon Thames, with the promise of more to come. The research covered the following areas: archaeology and townscape history, the street's name, its population in the 19th century and their occupations. Finally, there is a discussion on what has survived from the past and what the future holds. The modern-day Eden Street area is shown on the map, **Figure 1**.

Archaeology

The Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society was involved in a number of excavations in the Eden Street area that were associated with building projects between 1965 and 1985.¹ Some of the finds can be seen in the Kingston Museum.² Excavations off Eden Street, when the Eden Walk shopping complex was being developed between 1965 and 1977, produced a number of Neolithic finds, including fragments of pottery, animal bones, burnt

flints, pieces of worked flint and antler. Importantly, the excavations indicated that about 5,000 years ago Kingston's town centre was then an island defined by river channels.³

In 1967, excavations at the corner of Wheatfield Way [formally Fairfield West] and Lady Booth Road [formally Fairfield Road] produced evidence of Iron Age activity and possibly evidence of Roman occupation. Excavation of a site between Lady Booth Road and Eden Street in 1989 revealed a silted-up ancient water channel once running east to west. This yielded a large amount of Roman material including 355 bronze coins, mostly of low value and mainly of the 4th century. Pieces of broken jewellery were also found. An interpretation of these findings was that they were votive offerings associated with a pagan shrine near a river crossing point.⁴ Kingston Museum has a small Roman altar with a Latin inscription which it has translated as "*To the goddess of Fortune and to the divine majesty of the Emperors*". In 1902, a local antiquary, Dr. Finny, reported that the altar was seen in a garden in Eden Street. Finny acquired the altar and gave it to Kingston Museum in 1907, unfortunately without stating from which garden in Eden Street it came. Shaan Butters discussed various theories about how the altar came to be in Eden Street including the possibility that it was once for sale in "*The Old Curiosity Shop*", kept by Mr C. Osborne, situated at number 9 Eden Street [below]. However, she did not dismiss the possibility that it may have been associated with the aforementioned shrine.⁵

The finding of some rough, chaff-tempered pottery, other artefacts and possibly a dwelling house of the type often referred-to as a "Grubenhaus", otherwise called a pit house, evidenced early Saxon activity in the area.⁶

14th century Surrey Whiteware pottery kilns were discovered off Eden Street and Eden Walk. Excavations revealed dumps of horse and cattle bones, horn cores and shallow pits probably used in the leather tanning process. Shaan Butters' interpretation of the archaeological evidence was that between the 13th and 16th centuries the Eden Street and Union Street area was a damp, marshy site on the edge of town with slaughterhouses and industries that produced much smoke, waste and mess, ideal for those that posed a fire risk.⁷

Townscape history

Eden Street once had a prison, The House of Correction [1761-1852], and a Militia Barracks [1853-1878]. A history, by the author, of the prison [**Figure 2**], is at www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk

After the prison closed in 1852, part of the site was used as a temporary house of detention for prisoners for trial at the Kingston Assizes and Quarter Sessions before being sold to the 3rd Royal Surrey Regiment of Militia for use as a barracks.⁸ Records from the 1871 Census showed that in the barracks [**Figure 3**] there were 105 occupants on the night of 2nd April and 23 households, mainly family groups, were identified. The heads of households were senior non-commissioned officers [NCOs], two sergeant majors and 21 sergeants, with a mean age of 44 [range 32-55]. **Figure 5** shows the birthplaces of the occupants. The data indicated that the barracks was the married quarters of experienced NCOs, some of whom had seen much service for the British Empire. The barracks was a recruiting and training centre for the Militia.⁹ It is reasonable to assume that the permanent living quarters of the NCOs were in the original prison buildings with frontage to Eden Street [**Figure 3, no. 153**] and that the large field to the east of the buildings [**Figure 3, no. 152**] was used for training purposes.

Kingston History Centre has a collection of photographs of buildings that once existed in Eden Street. These include Elm Lawn taken before its demolition in 1938-9, Eden House [around 1950], The Three Compasses pub with Mumford's cycle shop [1905], the Methodist Church [1906], houses on the corner of Eden Street and Brook Street [1890] and a house in Brook Street taken in 1897.¹⁰ Additionally, Audrey Giles' book on the history of Kingston and Surbiton Young Men's Christian Association shows, on the front cover, a picture of Warwick Lodge of about 1900.¹¹ The Friends Meeting House, dating from 1773, which is shown in **Figure 2**, was demolished in February 2016.¹² Still in Eden Street is the United Reformed Church, once the Congregational Church, dating from 1854, and what was once the Morning Star pub, now named "O'Neill's", which existed in 1861.¹³ Also still in existence is the terrace which incorporates today's numbers 48-60 Eden Street. An old photograph showed that this was in place in 1906 [**Figures 4 & 5**]. It was assumed that it was built after the Militia Barracks site was

developed after 1878.¹⁴ Eagle Chambers, which was identified in Phillipson's Directory of 1880, still can be seen at the corner of Eden Street and St James' Road.

Names of streets

Hornor's map of 1813 showed the line of modern-day Eden Street and Brook Street [Figure 2] as Heathen Street, a name that Butters said existed by 1315.¹⁵ Figure 2 names the southwest end of Heathen Street as "*Gig Hill*". This is a strange name because no hill is evident. The names "*Hethenstrete*" and "*Gikshalle*" appeared about 1427, and possibly "*Gig Hill*" is derived from the latter; the "*halle*" part, at some time, being converted to "*hill*".¹⁶ So far, research has not shed any definitive light on the origin of the name "*Gikshalle*".¹⁷

Butters discussed the origin of the name "*Heathen Street*" and concluded that the "*heathens*" who lived there were probably the country folk who lived in hovels in the fields, heathland and marshes beyond the town, perhaps supplying the labour for Kingston's dirty industries [above]. However, she did not exclude the possibility of a Jewish [heathen] presence in the eleventh century in the eastern part of Heathen Street, near to pottery kilns.¹⁸ In 1769, Stephen Marks, a builder whose yard and stable were adjacent to the House of Correction [above], chose to name it "*Christian Street*", possibly to indicate that if the street's inhabitants at the time were regarded as "*heathens*", he was not one of them.¹⁹ The Census of 1851 used the name "*Heathen Street*" for the modern-day Eden Street and for what is Brook Street today. The 1/2500 Ordnance Survey map, of 1868, identified the southern end of Eden Street as Brook Street, a name that first appeared in the Census of 1861. It was assumed that Brook Street referred to the River Hogsmill at the end of the street.

When did Heathen Street become Eden Street, and why did this happen? Eden Street appeared in an advertisement in the first edition of the Surrey Comet on 5 August 1854 placed by Robert F. Bartrop, Clerk to the Guardians of Kingston Union. On 23 September 1854, in the Surrey Comet, an advertisement was placed by Lowe's Emporium of *Heathen Street* and one was placed by J. Macrostitie, a builder and glass merchant [below], of *Eden Street*, thus indicating mixed views on what the street's name should be. On

24 July 1858, a letter from “*Senex*” of Heathen Street, claiming to be one of the oldest residents of Kingston, appeared in the Surrey Comet. “*Senex*” was puzzled by recent advertisers from Eden Street which referred to a “*newly-christened Heathen Street*”.²⁰ Moreover, “*Senex*” wished to learn what legal authority had altered this long known designation. To investigate this, a search of the minutes in Kingston Council’s Court of Assembly Book for 1834-1859 was carried out. Nothing was found to indicate that the change of name was the result of a Council decision.²¹ It was concluded that the change of name was the consequence of unofficial action to remove from the minds of outsiders the idea that the residents of the street in the mid-nineteenth century were “*heathens*”, whatever the term connoted at the time.

It was assumed that the present Lady Booth Road was named in connection with the Salvation Army Citadel that was demolished in 2000.²² When the House of Correction existed the street was known as Bridewell Alley; thereafter, the name changed to Fairfield Alley, Fairfield Passage, then Fairfield Road.²³ Ashdown Road was named after John Ashdown the late secretary of the Conservative Land Society which purchased the old Militia Barracks site probably sometime in 1878.²⁴

Population in 1851-1891

Figure 7, based on data from the Censuses of 1851-1891, shows that Kingston’s total population rose dramatically in the 19th century because of migration into the town, according to stated birthplaces. It will be noted that the line of those born in Kingston is much less steep. **Figure 8**, based on the 1881 Census, shows the stated birthplaces, mainly from the British Isles, of the whole population of Kingston. **Figure 9**, based on the 1881 Census, shows the stated birthplaces of heads of households in Eden Street. This reflects the situation in the whole of the Kingston population in 1881. **Figure 10** shows the total population of Eden Street and the number of households in the Censuses of 1851-1901. The population line shows the additional effects of the enumeration of the occupants of the prison in 1851 and the occupants of the barracks in 1861 and 1871. The number of households shows little variation.

Electoral Rolls in 1950-51 to 2000-01

Figure 11, based on the Electoral Rolls held by Kingston History Centre, shows the number of persons registered to vote from 1950-51 to 2000-01 in Ashdown Road, Brook Street, Eden Street and Fairfield Road. A significant decline in the population of the area is indicated.

Some past residents of Eden Street and their occupations

Figure 12 shows the Eden Street Mural currently on the wall of what was the British Home Stores. The bottom row features some people who once lived in Eden Street. It was possible to compile short biographies of the following residents from digitised Census data and other information.

John Slawson, baker. He was born in Brigstock, Northamptonshire in 1805 and was a baker in Heathen Street in 1841. From 1841-1843 he supplied bread to the House of Correction in Heathen Street. From 1851-1882 he was a baker in Eden Street. In 1882, aged 77, he remarried and was still a baker in Eden Street. He died, aged 85, in Kingston. **John Rowles, chimney sweep.** In 1841 he was living with his father, a chimney sweep, in Heathen Street. He was a chimney sweep in Heathen Street in 1851 with five assistant sweeps working for him. One was were born in Buckinghamshire, one in Hampshire, one in Surrey and two in Dorset. From 1861-1871, he was a chimney sweep in Eden Street with young assistant sweeps and a domestic servant. He died in Kingston, aged 51.

Additionally, it was possible to compile short biographies of the following past residents. **Edward Cowper Tamplin, Chemist and Druggist.** He was born in Lewes, Sussex, in 1822 and was located in Manchester in 1855, working as a chemist and druggist. In 1858 he was established in Eden Street as a chemist and druggist. He was a chemist and druggist in in the same shop in Eden Street in 1861-1891 and had a domestic servant. In 1901 he died, aged 79, in Eden Street and left an estate of £2,176. **James Macrostitie, builder and horticultural apparatus maker, etc.** He was born in Scotland in 1820 and in 1841 was a carpenter and joiner in Methven, Perthshire. In 1851 he was living in Fairfield West, Kingston, and had five children, all born in Kingston. All five children were baptised at the same time in the Congregational Church, Heathen Street, in 1855. From 1861-1881, he had premises in Eden Street and had employees and domestic servants.²⁵

Discussion

The research showed that Eden Street always was a street of change, including a change of name. **Figure 13**, abstracted from Phillipson's Directory of Kingston, shows residents in 1880. It can be seen that there were four pubs: "*Prince of Wales*", "*Three Compasses*", "*Three Horseshoes*" and "*Morning Star*". There were also three places of worship, Congregational Church, Wesleyan Church and Friends Meeting House, and six private residences. Additionally, there were numerous business premises in which, as the Census of 1881 indicates, many people were "living above the shop". One of the effects of migration into the street would have been the experience of a wide range of British regional accents. For example, Slawson the baker, Tamplin the chemist and druggist and Macrostitie, the builder [above], were first generation migrants, respectively from Northamptonshire, Sussex and Scotland.

In October 2016 there was only one pub in the street. This was "*O'Neill's*", once the "*Morning Star*" and the only place of worship that was left was the United Reformed Church, formally the Congregational Church. The Census showed that the population of Eden Street in 1881 was 318 persons and there were 80 households. A significant declining population trend between 1950 and 2000 is shown in **Figure 11** and it is the author's observation that this has not been arrested. Therefore, the population of Eden Street today is likely to be a very small fraction of what it was in 1881. But this is all set to change. Development projects on the old Post Office and Eden Walk sites will bring with them a big increase in population because 319 new homes are planned for the former site and 385 new home planned for the latter.²⁶

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank the staff of Kingston Museum and Kingston History Centre for their expert help in this research.

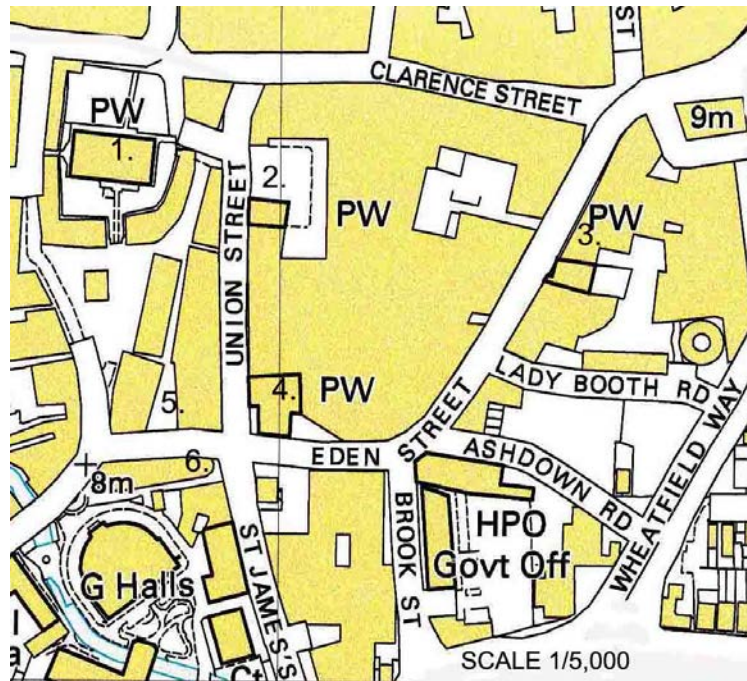


Figure 1. Eden Street area, 1/5,000, section of Ordnance Survey map, 2015, annotated by David A. Kennedy. Legend: 1. All Saints' Church, 2. Everyday Church, 3. Friends' Meeting House, 4. United Reformed Church, 5. Apple Market, 6. Eagle Chambers. "O'Neill's" pub, formally the "Morning Star" is on the right hand corner of the Apple Market.

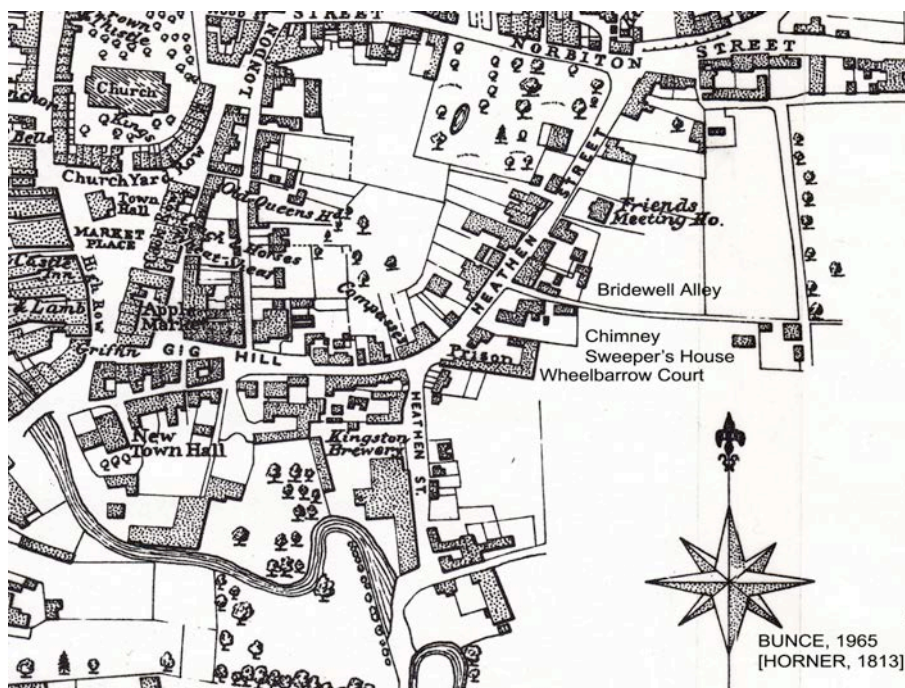


Figure 2. Eden Street area, 1813, section of Fred Bunce's redrawing of Hornor's map of 1813, annotated by David A. Kennedy.

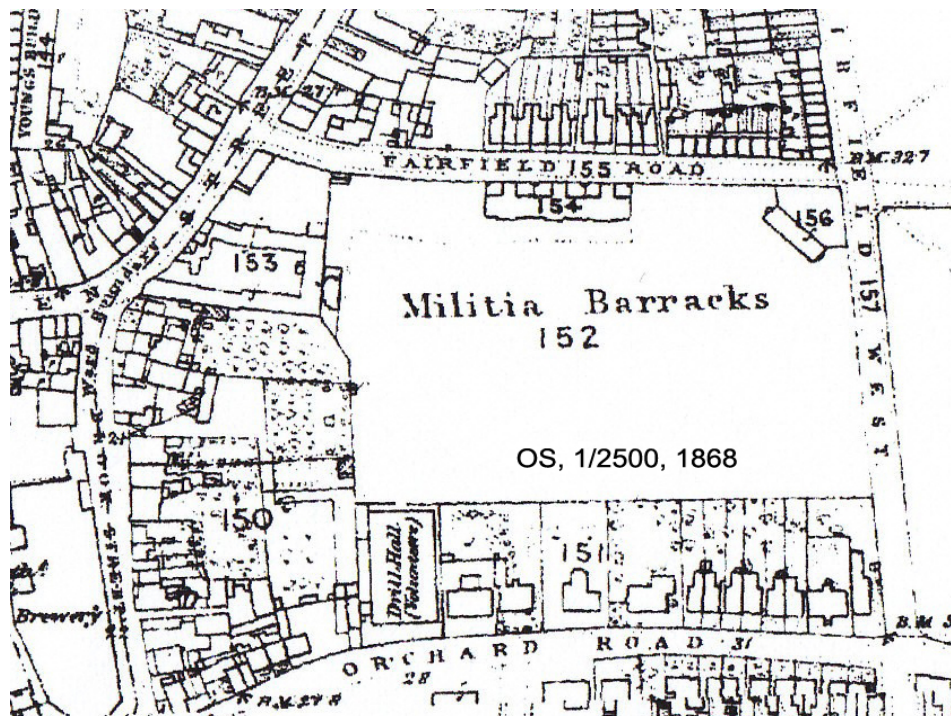


Figure 3. Militia Barracks, 1/ 2,500, section of Ordnance Survey Map, 1868, annotated by David A. Kennedy.

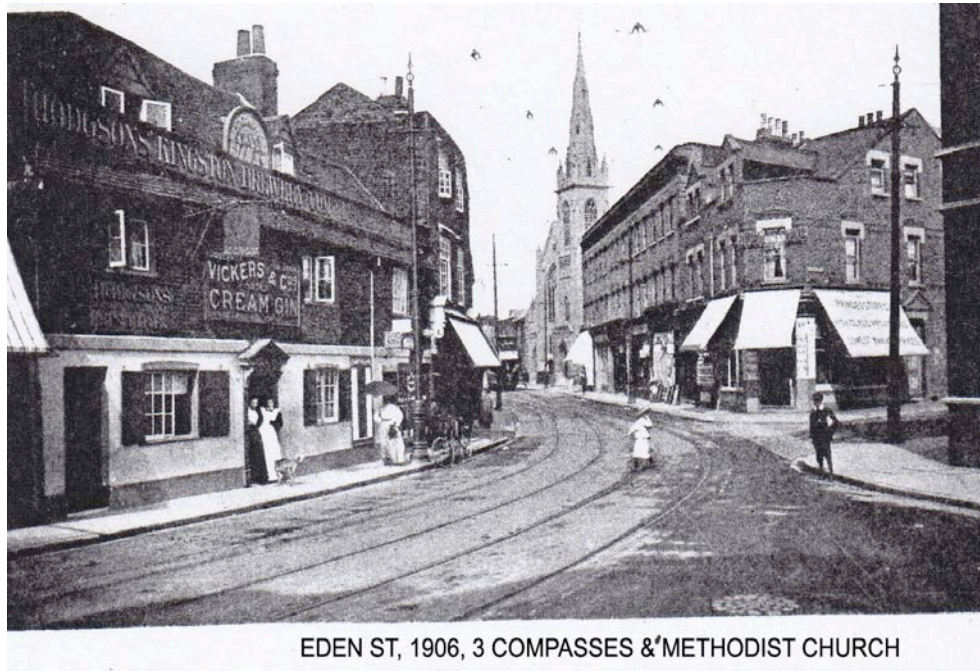


Figure 4. Three Compasses, Methodist Church and 48-68 Eden Street, 1906, photograph from collection of Kingston Local History Centre, edited by David. A. Kennedy. Tramlines can be seen in the road in the foreground and a tram can just be seen in the centre of the photograph.

At the top of the photograph can be seen overhead electrical supply cables, which are connected to poles in the street.

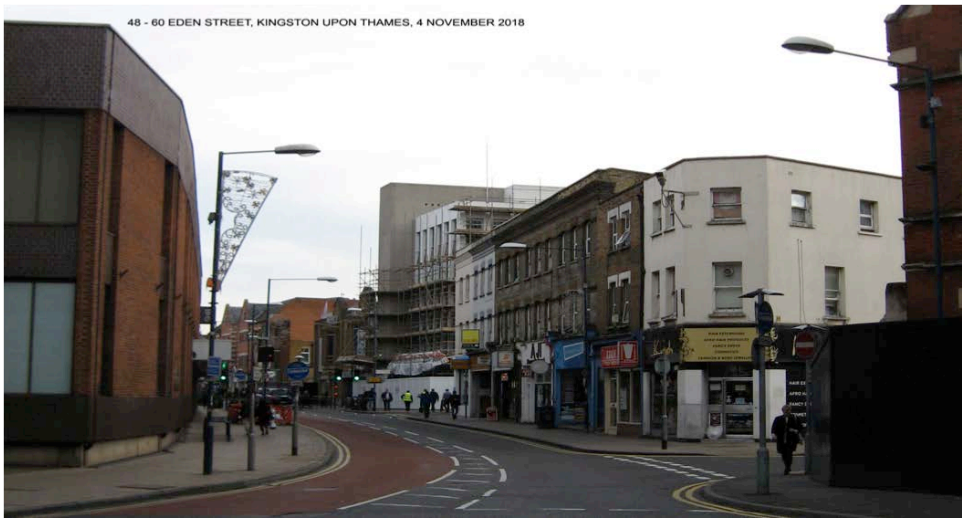


Figure 5. 48-60 Eden Street, 4 November 2016, photograph by David. A. Kennedy.

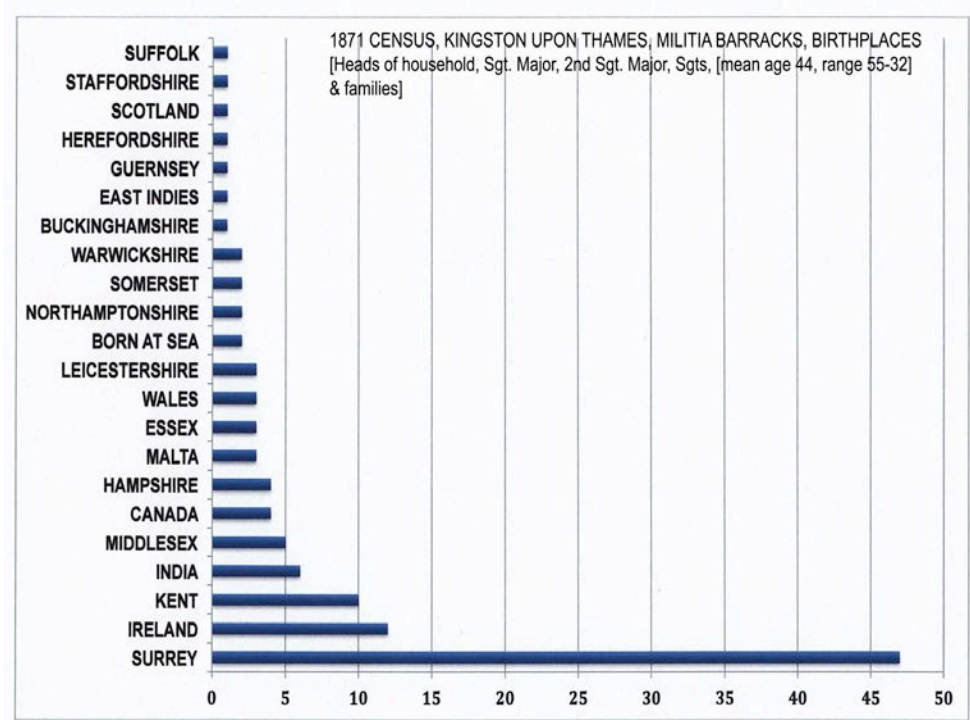


Figure 6. Occupants of the Militia Barracks, 1871, showing places of birth.

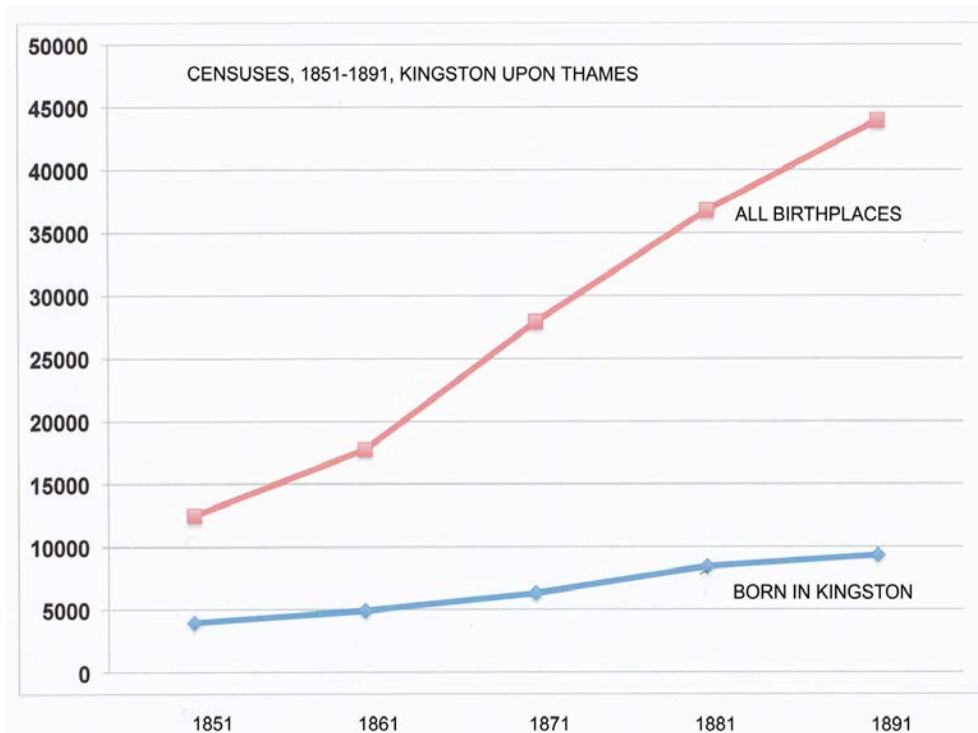


Figure 7. Population of Kingston, from Census data, 1851-1891, showing effects of migration to the town.

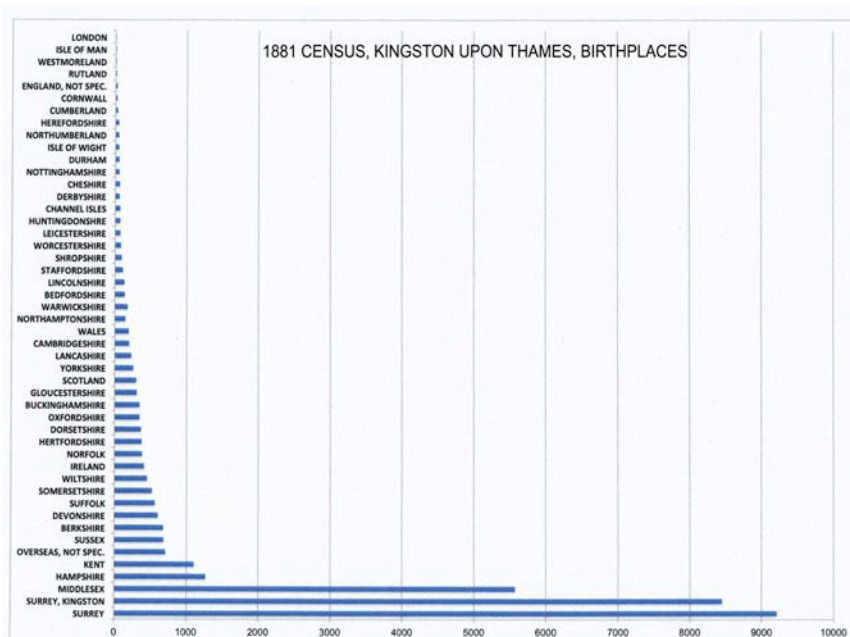


Figure 8. Birthplaces of Kingston's population in the Census of 1881.

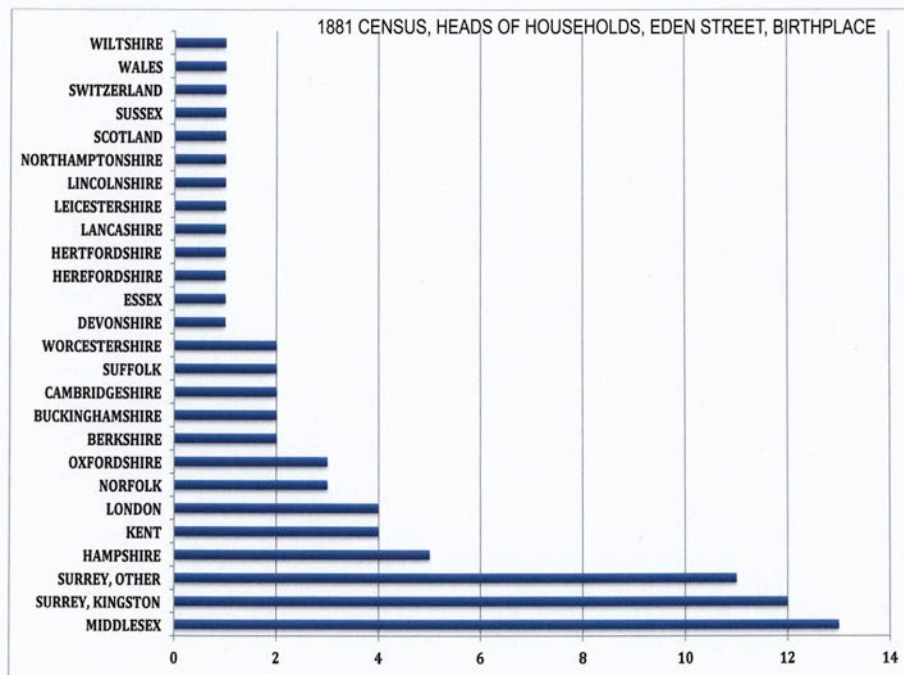


Figure 9. Birthplaces of heads of household in Eden Street, in Census of 1881.

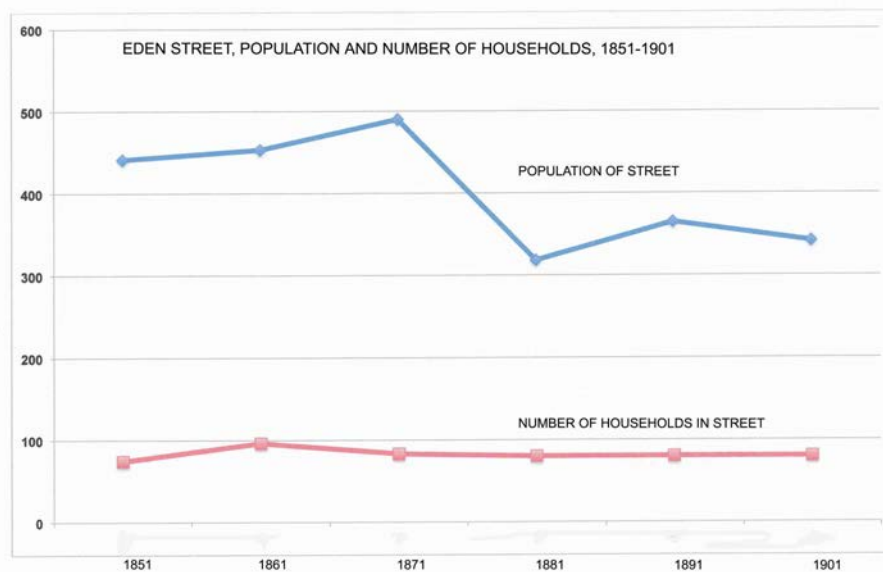


Figure 10. Eden Street: total population and number of households, from Censuses of 1851-1891.

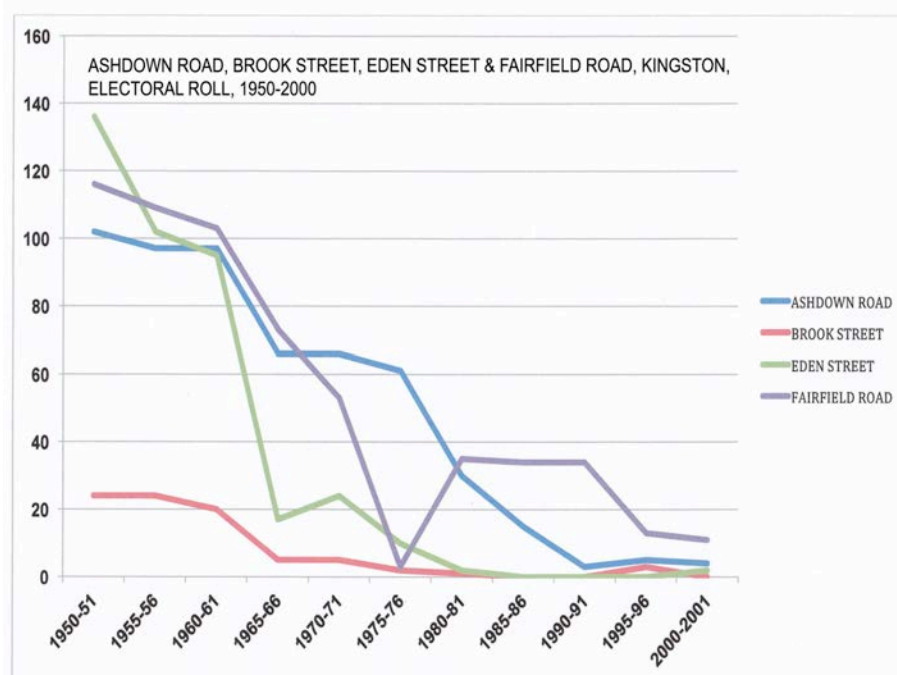


Figure 11. Electoral Rolls, 1950-2000: numbers registered in Ashdown Road, Brook Street, Eden Street and Fairfield Road.



Figure 12. The Eden Street Mural.

EDEN STREET, PHILLIPSON, 1880	
STARTING FROM CLARENCE STREET	
RIGHT HAND SIDE	LEFT HAND SIDE
SOLICITOR, COPPING, EDEN LODGE	AUCTIONEER, HERRICK
OFFICES, LIBERAL, EDEN LODGE	PLUMBER, DOLLING
MEDICAL PRACTITIONER, BIDDLE, GOUGH HOUSE	UPHOLSTERER, HALLS, WARWICK LODGE
DENTIST'S RESIDENCE & PRACTICE, VAN DER PANT, ELM LAWN	RESIDENCE, PALMER
RESIDENCE, BENNETT, EDEN PLACE	RESIDENCE, GOLDRING, WOODBINE COTTAGE
RESIDENCE, RANYARD, EDEN PLACE	FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE
RESIDENCE, DIXON, EDEN PLACE	SCHOOL FOR LADIES, GREATORIX
MALTSTER, PAICE	BUILDER, MACROSTIE
FISH EATING HOUSE, MICHELE	WESLEYAN CHURCH
FARRIER, EDWARDS	FAIRFIELD ROAD ENTRANCE
VACANT	TAILOR & OUTFITTER, ELCOMBE
BUILDER & CONTACTOR, WELLS	DAIRYMAN, LININGTON
"PRINCE OF WALES" PUB.	"ROSE COFFEE TAVERN"
WATCHMAKER, MILES	STATIONER & NEWSAGENT, BYDON
YOUNG'S BUILDINGS ENTRANCE	PICTURE FRAME MAKER, CLARKE
"THREE COMPASSES" PUB.	GROCER, PLATT
HARDWARE DEALER, IRELAND	ASHDOWN ROAD ENTRANCE
BUILDER & UNDERTAKER, BROWN	POST OFFICE
BUTCHER, WOODHOUSE	BROOK STREET ENTRANCE
IRONMONGER, JOHNSON & GILKS	GREENGROCER, HOBBS
CHEMIST, TAMPLIN	BAKER, SLAWSON
TOBACCONIST, BRYDON	BASKET WAREHOUSE, PAGE
BUILDER & CONTRACTOR, HAVELL	BOOTMAKER, GARRATT
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH	BIRD FANCIER, WELLER
GROCER, BARROWS	AUCTIONEER, WRIGHT
UNION STREET ENTRANCE	RESIDENCE, PRINCE
"OLD CURIOSITY SHOP" OSBOURNE	ACCOUNTANT, EVANS
TAILOR, LEWIS	PHOTOGRAPHER, FREWING
IRONMONGER, KERSHAW	CORN MERCHANT, BOWRY
"MORNING STAR" PUB.	"THREE HORSESHOES" PUB.
APPLE MARKET ENTRANCE	ST JAMES' ROAD ENTRANCE
COSTUMIER & MILLINER, GATES	CANDLE MAKER, SMITH
HAIRDRESSER, SMITH	EAGLE CHAMBERS , ESTATE AGENT, AUCTIONEER, TRADE ASSOCIATION, ACCOUNTANT
	CHINA WAREHOUSE, IMBER
	BOOTMAKER, FREEMAN, HARDY & WILLIS
	CLOTHIER & DRAPER, GATES
	BUTCHER, WELLS
	POULTERER, JAMES
	"CASH SUPPLY STORES"
FINISHING AT HIGH STREET/MARKET PLACE	

Figure 13. Residents of Eden Street and their occupations, from Phillipson's Directory, Kingston Local History Centre.

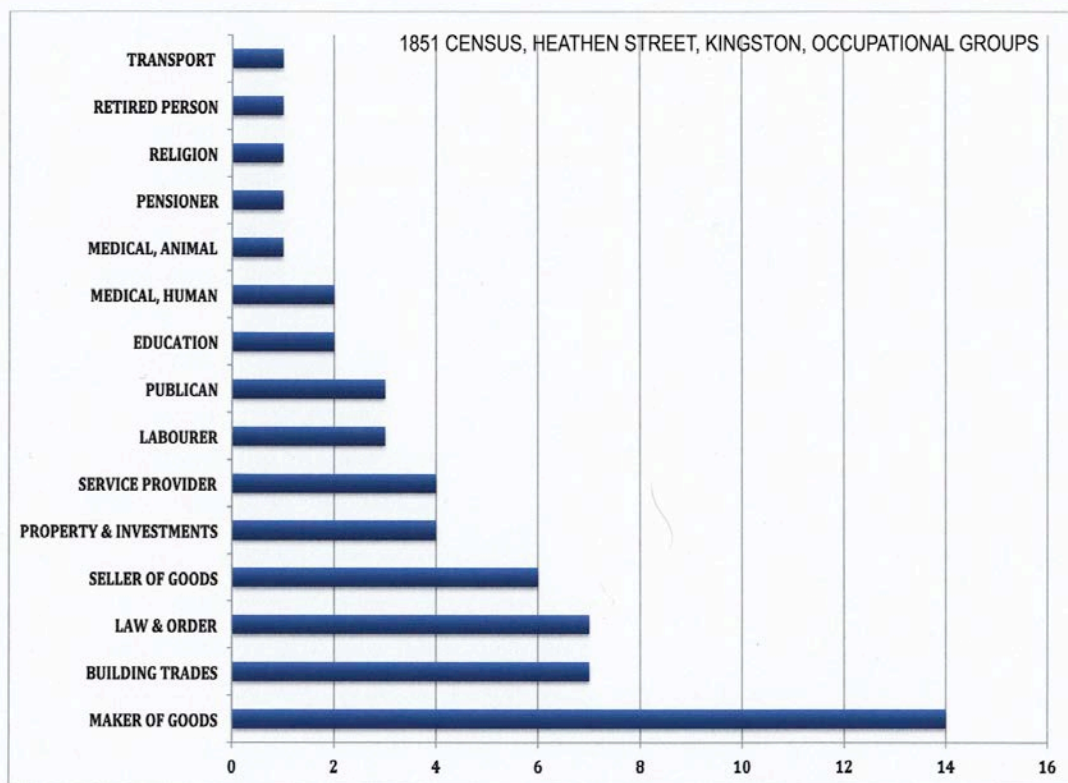


Figure 14. Occupational groups of residents of Heathen Street, 1851, from Census data.

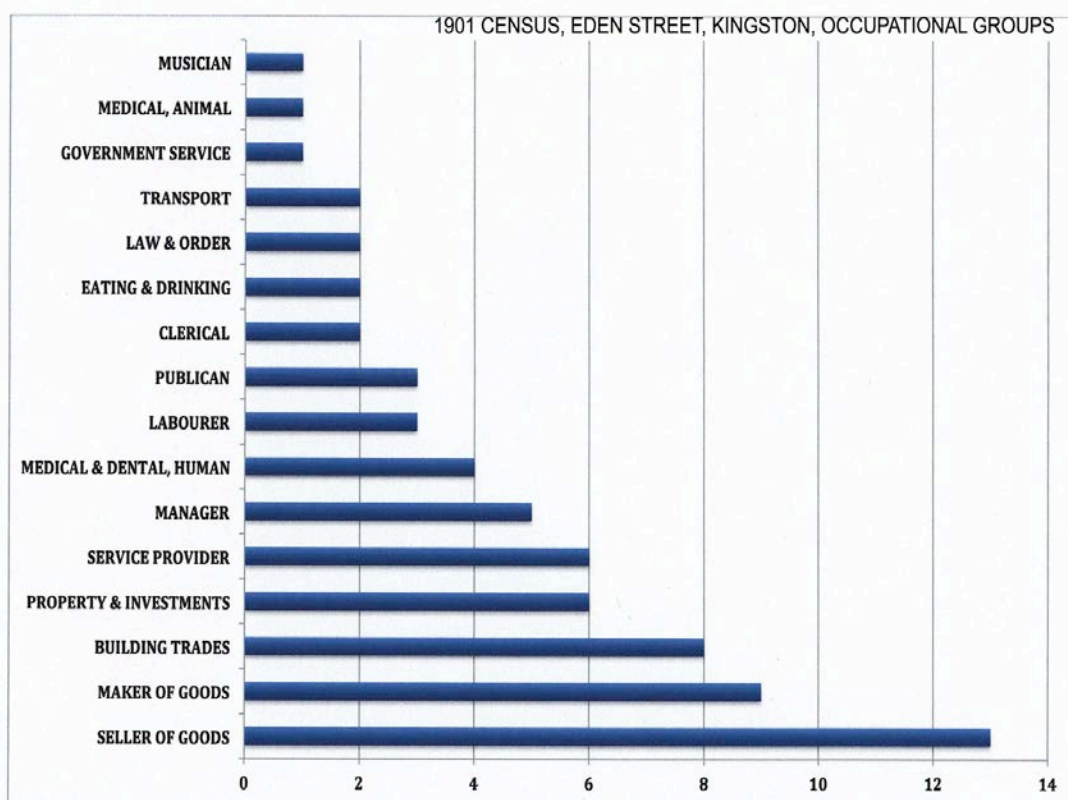


Figure 15. Occupational groups of residents of Eden Street, 1901, from Census data.

¹ Jo Jones, personal communication, October, 2013.

² www.gov.uk/museum

³ Shaan Butters, 2013, That famous place. A history of Kingston upon Thames, Kingston, Kingston University Press, pp.6-9.

⁴ Shaan Butters, 2013, pp. 31-33.

⁵ Shaan Butters, 2013, 33-34. Dr. William Evelyn St. Lawrence Finny was an antiquary and former Mayor of Kingston. The Old Curiosity Shop was listed in Eden Street, in Phillipson's Directory of Kingston for 1880. See also, Figure 13.

⁶ Shaan Butters, 2013, p.46.

⁷ Shaan Butters, 2013, p.85.

⁸ See David A. Kennedy, 2016, A local prison for the poor. A study of the Kingston House of Correction & Notes on the House of Detention, 1852-1890.

www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk

⁹ See Lamorock Flower, 1869, Historical record of the 3rd Royal Surrey Regiment of Militia, No. 118, London, W. Mitchell & Co.

¹⁰ http://www.kingston.gov.uk/.../visit_kingston_history_centre

The Methodist Church site in Eden Street was sold in 1963 [Shaan Butters, 2013, p.420].

¹¹ Audrey C. Giles, 2015, It started with coffee in the vestry. The history of Kingston and Surbiton Young Men's Christian Association, 1858-1908, Kingston, Kingston University Press.

¹² Shaan Butters, 2013, p.203. The author observed that the building was in place in January 2016 and by 19 February 2016, it had been demolished.

¹³ Celia Mannings, 2001, Then & Now. Kingston upon Thames, Stroud, Tempus Publishing Limited, p. 49. Richard F. Holmes, Pubs, inns and taverns of Kingston, Fairford, Wildhorn Press, p.37.

¹⁴ A new barracks in Kingston was cited in the Surrey Comet of 15 June 1878 which indicated that the old barracks in Eden Street was no longer in use by this date. Advertisements for building materials and fittings in the newspaper, between 21 December 1878 and 11 January 1879, indicated that the old barracks had been demolished beforehand. Freehold building plots on the site of the Militia Barracks were advertised in the Surrey Comet on 1 March 1879 and 18 October 1879.

¹⁵ Shaan Butters, 2013, p.85.

¹⁶ Guide to the Borough Archives, 1971, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, rentals [c. 1427], KD4/3.

¹⁷ The forum of Thames Ditton and Weston Green Residents' Association has some discussion on this. <https://residents-association.com/forumarchives/15-forum-archive-general-discussion/69-local-history-thread> See post by Keith, 28 January 2012, *et seq*, which suggests, among other things, that Gig Hill in Kingston might have been a place where prostitutes worked. John Field, 1989, [English field names. A dictionary, Gloucester, Alan Sutton, p.88] says that Gig Field, Gig Hole and Gig Hole Field, all in Cheshire, originated from "land containing pools in which flax was retted", from the Middle English word *gigge*. Perhaps there was a connection with processing of flax.

¹⁸ Shaan Butters, 2013, pp. 85-86. She notes that medieval Jewish settlements were often found near pottery kilns, because Jewish law required new cooking pots and crockery every year at Passover.

¹⁹ See David A Kennedy, 2016, A local prison for the poor. A study of the Kingston House of Correction, p.11 & Figure 3 www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk

²⁰ In the letter to the Surrey Comet "Senex" gave Heathen Street as their address, claimed to have been one of the oldest residents of Kingston and implied that they were born in Kingston. The Census of 1861 records Elizabeth Ranyard, aged 84, a house proprietor, born in Kingston, living in Eden Street. Possibly she was "Senex".

²¹ Kingston Local History Centre, Court of Assembly Book, 1834-1859, KB1/6.

²² Shaan Butters, 2013, p.474.

²³ George W. Ayliffe, 1914, Old Kingston: Recollections of an octogenarian, from 1830 and onwards, with reminiscences of Hampton Wick, Kingston, Knapp Drewett & Sons Ltd., p. 20. Census, 1841 & 1851.

²⁴ The origin of the name stems from a letter to the Surrey Comet on 19 April 1879 from Mr. W. Chapman. The probably date of acquisition of the Militia Barracks was based on an advertisement in the Surrey Comet on 28 December 1878 of the auction sale of various lots of building materials from the barracks in Eden Street and an advertisement in the newspaper

on 1 March 1879 of the sale of freehold building plots on the site of the Militia Barracks that had frontages to Fairfield Road and the new road leading to Eden Street.

²⁵ The biographies were compiled from digitised census, newspaper, probate and parish records. Details of sources can be found on www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk. The Censuses of 1851-1901 showed that, respectively, 19%, 23%, 31%, 36%, 33% & 23% of households in Eden Street had servants, but it was not always clear whether these were domestic servants, shop assistants or other servants.

²⁶ www.theoldpostofficekingston.com & www.edenwalkregeneration.com both accessed on 21 November 2016.