

1 5 0 Y E A R A N N I V E R S A R Y

Reynolds

150 Year Anniversary

1867-2017



Samuel Reynolds

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Holds more clothes but takes less room **YET**

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BOGNOR REGIS

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£15.0

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27/29 HIGH STREET, BOGNOR REGIS



CORONATION
FLAGS and DECORATIONS

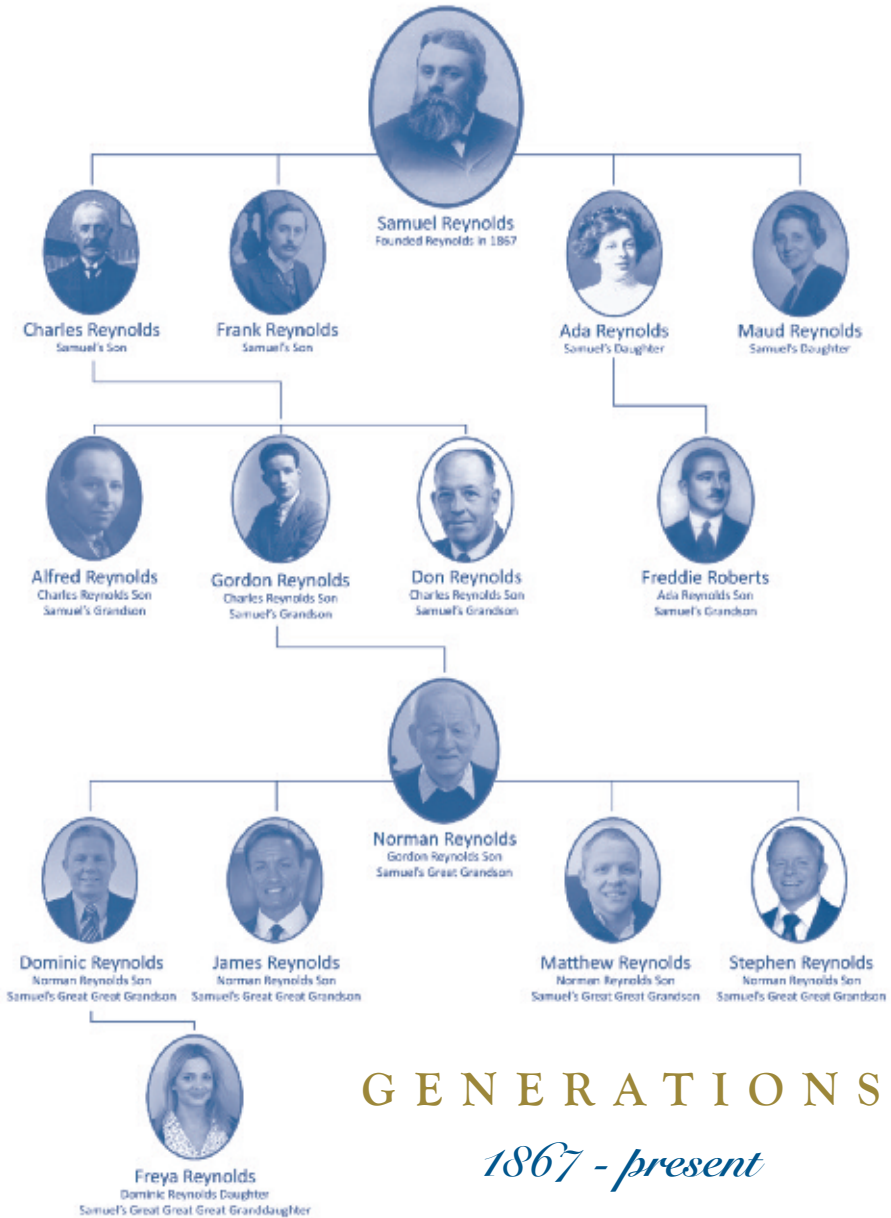
for the Coronation of Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth

REYNOLDS & CO

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27 & 29, High St., BOGNOR REGIS.





GENERATIONS

1867 - present

I N T R O D U C T I O N

In this year 2017 Reynolds is celebrating 150 years of serving the community and are the longest standing family business in Bognor Regis.

The business is currently run by the 4th generation Norman Reynolds, 5th generation Dominic, James, Matthew and Stephen Reynolds and 6th generation Freya Reynolds, all direct descendants of Samuel Reynolds the founder. Similar to all the previous directors they are each responsible for specific areas of the Company. Norman is Chairman, Dominic and Freya manage the furniture store, James and Stephen run the Funeral Department and Matthew is financial director.

Since 1867 Reynolds has grown from a small shop to the largest furniture store in Sussex, with over 30,000 sq ft on four floors

The Funeral Service now has three offices in Bognor Regis, Chichester and Littlehampton and the purpose built storage facility in Canada Grove continues to thrive.

THE REYNOLDS STORY

THE FAMILY



13 West Street, where it all began.

Samuel Reynolds started the business in 1867 aged 19 at 13 West Street. Bognor was rapidly expanding at this time with the arrival of the railway in 1864 and the construction of the pier in 1865. Samuel, the son of a farmer, was a cabinet maker and as the town expanded his skills were much in demand. In this year he married Eliza Screeder, a shepherdess, in the Hanover Congregational Church in the High Street, opposite the site of today's furniture store. Samuel had many 'strings to his bow' and in addition to his retail shop advertisements of the time describe the business as 'auctioneers, appraisers, house agents, cabinetmakers, upholsterers and undertakers'.

Although the business was diverse one service was linked to another. If you made cabinets you made coffins and so had horses to pull the hearse and do removals. If you bought a house through the estate office you would use the removal services and if you had cause to use the funeral department it would figure you would do probate valuations and auction off the deceased property.

Samuel and his wife had 11 children, 4 of whom died in childhood. Several became involved in the family business. Samuel died in Queen Victoria's Diamond



1895 The Reynolds Family. *Back Row* Master Sutton, Maud Reynolds, *Centre Row* Samuel Reynolds, Emma Reynolds, Sidney Reynolds (infant), Charles Reynolds, Edith Ladd, Polly Reynolds, *Bottom Row* Beatrice Reynolds, Bert Knowles, Eliza Reynolds, Ada Reynolds, John Roberts.

The picture was taken by Frank Reynolds.

Jubilee year 1897, aged only 49, after a long and painful illness. His wife Eliza took over the business until her death in 1912 when the running of the business passed to her children Charles, Frank and Maud.

Charles' son Gordon remembered being taken to pay his last respects to his grandmother. She

was laid to rest on the dining table at her home 8 Belmont Street as was the custom of the time and a plumber was required to seal her lead coffin.

Beatrice, another of Samuel's daughters, was involved in the business until 1900 when she left to marry a competitor Herbert Knowles, who had a rival furniture and funeral business in the town which burnt down in 1902. As you can see from the picture overleaf the Knowles family were in direct competition to Reynolds and were based adjacent to the railway station.



Knowles Furniture Store and Depository pictured from the Railway station after being damaged by a gale in 1897

On 29th September 1912 a partnership Reynolds and Co was formed the partners being Charles Reynolds undertaker, Frank Reynolds auctioneer and Maud Reynolds whose occupation was bizarrely described as spinster!

Charles, the eldest son, born in 1871, was involved in the funeral side of the business and when he was instructed to direct a funeral he would whistle, which may seem strange today, but was probably due to nerves. He was a very keen gardener and had an allotment in Devonshire Road, where he could be found if missing from the company premises. He exhibited at the Chelsea Flower show where he won bronze medals for his gladioli and dahlias. Charles even had a large flowered yellow dahlia named after him.



Charles Reynolds

Charles was once called to a house in West Street. He had forgotten the number of the house and with no street lights he went up to one of two houses with lights on and asked 'does anybody dead live here?'

Waste was something he hated and as all packages came tied with string he would ensure the knots were untied and the string and packaging reused. One of his sayings was 'if small things were loved you would learn to look after bigger things'

Charles' son Sidney died only five years old in 1898. Charles

was devastated and suffered a nervous break down as a result. He had three other sons Alfred, Gordon and Don who followed him into the business.

With the arrival of the telephone came the switchboard which Charles attempted to master but never did. Frank and Charles would argue over this as Frank was always trying to get Charles to hurry up when putting calls through. Charles would retort that it was better than playing with a ball all day, a reference to Frank's involvement at Bognor Golf Club.

Charles ran the funeral department and although suffering from asthma he insisted on officiating at the funeral of a friend.

He got soaked, contracted bronchitis and died 17th November 1935 aged 64. Charles believed that everybody should have a decent funeral regardless of wealth and often did funerals for nothing.

The next in line Frank, born in 1873, was originally apprenticed to a photographer in Coventry, where he met his wife. His interest in photography resulted in a studio being built at the back of the High Street shop. Frank entered the business in 1897 when his father left him £30 in his will on the condition that he gave up his photographic business at the back of the shop 'to carry on any business or businesses in which I (Samuel) may be engaged at the time of my decease.'



Frank Reynolds

However his interest in photography continued and he joined the newly formed Bognor Photographic Society in 1900 and exhibited in 1901. Frank was also a keen collector of old prints of Bognor and it is to him we have to be very grateful for the commencement of the Reynolds Collection of prints, sketches, and photographs, which shows the development of Bognor Regis in great detail.

During the early 1900's the town continued to develop and this led to the foundation and growth of numerous Groups and Societies many of which exist today.



Delivering the King's personal effects to Windsor Castle

Frank was a founder of the Bognor Regis Rotary Club, Chairman of Bognor Regis Council, an active member of the Chamber of Trade, a member of the Bognor Regis Mutual Building Society, and founder of the Bognor Golf Club. The involvement of men and women from 'trade' was vital over the years in the growth of our town as well as the social life of the area. Sadly today there seem to be so many pressures on people that they are no longer able to be so involved in the town's public life.

Frank and his nephew Alfred were responsible for the most prestigious of all the Reynolds contracts. In 1929 Reynolds were asked to help make Craigweil House ready for the arrival of a convalescing King George V and on his recuperation they were asked to convey King George's personal effects back to Windsor. Reynolds' has photos of the King's rooms at Craigweil House and also the removal vans outside Windsor Castle which were used to convey the King's luggage.



Maud Reynolds

Maud, one of Samuel's daughters, was involved as a partner, director and chairman of the business until her death in 1969, when she was aged 89. She made her mark in the shop in the High Street and was seen as quite a matriarch, sitting on a high stool near the stairs to ensure she saw all that was going on. She did not like drinking or smoking and banned bottles from the shop as she believed it encouraged people to drink. She would not allow pictures of bull fighting in the shop as she considered it cruel. Even in her 80's she was dusting the china from the top of a stepladder. Her main interest in the business involved the china and haberdashery departments.



Alfred Reynolds

In 1918 Charles Reynolds' three sons, Alfred, Gordon and Donald joined the business along with a cousin Frederick Roberts in 1919. Each one of them was responsible for various areas of the business, Alfred was in charge of Storage and Removals, Gordon worked in Furniture, Don drove the Removal vans and Frederick managed Soft Furnishings. Although their roles were to change in later life with Don running the shop, Gordon managing the auctioneering and removals and Freddie Roberts looking after the funerals.

Alfred, who was described as Frank Reynolds right hand man, died in 1933 aged 34 from throat cancer. Gordon Reynolds said that the radium treatment which was in it's infancy at the time killed him. Gordon used to carry him to bed every night and Father Arthur, a catholic priest, used to stay with him even though he was a protestant. Alfred had been a special constable during WW1 and was apprenticed to Whiteheads, a local Estate Agent. He did the valuations and later took charge of the Removal and Storage Department. A good business man with foresight it was said Reynolds would have been a different place had he lived.

Another character, Lewis Glasspool worked in Reynolds for 36 years becoming manager of the shop. Whenever Frank Reynolds told him off he would wait until he could see Gordon and Don and give them a cuff round the ear so he could get his own back on the family. There was no favouritism in those days. When they were young boys Gordon and Don used to tease the old men who came to Bognor to recuperate and were often fighting with boys from other schools on the land where Butlins is today. The parade inspector Mr Fry used to send them home even if they had done nothing wrong.



Gordon Reynolds

Gordon Reynolds started his career in the shop and later moved onto auctioneering. He loved being an auctioneer and thrived on the banter with the people who attended the auctions, many of them he knew by name. A devout catholic convert, he was a Knight of St Columba and a church warden at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Clarence Road. He arranged whist drives, dances and bazaars to raise money for the church. He received the Papal Medal for services to the church. During WW2 he served in the RAF as a military policeman attached to the Canadian Forces.

Freddie Roberts another one of Samuel's grandsons appears in many archive pictures of Funerals past. His first job was as an apprentice photographer to Donald Massey. He joined Reynolds in 1919 having served in WW1 in the 4th Battalion 'Lowther's Lambs' Royal Sussex Regiment and saw action in the Battle of the Somme and Passchendaele, being wounded twice. He reached the rank of Sergeant and a notebook recording his men's training with machine guns is in the Company's archives. His first job at Reynolds was window dressing and working in the Soft Furnishing Department.



Freddie Roberts

Freddie then assisted Charles Reynolds in the Funeral Department taking over completely in 1934. He was a member of the National Association of Funeral Directors since 1927 and was President of the Brighton and Worthing Association, President of the Southern Area and a conference delegate for several years. He was also active in the British Legion, was a Freemason and a Frontiersman.

Freddie was a worrier and if anything was going wrong he would say his leg was hurting from his war wound and would limp. After a few minutes he would forget to limp causing the staff to laugh.

The business became a limited company in 1948 with Frank and Maud Reynolds as directors. Gordon, Don and Freddie Roberts were made directors in 1952. Frank Reynolds for some reason was unwilling to make them directors until before his death that year. The business was in debt and the new directors were unable to make the improvements needed for many years.



Back row: James, Freya, Dominic Reynolds Middle row: Matthew and Stephen Reynolds Seated: Norman Reynolds

Norman Reynolds joined the firm in 1953 as a junior clerk in the auctioneering department having completed his national service in Egypt. His first job was to collect bad debts and told the debtor that his name was Mr Norman and that he would be in trouble if he didn't collect some monies. He and his father Gordon ran the auctioneering and estate office and Norman liked nothing more than making a discovery of a valuable item to auction.

He was made a director and company secretary in 1963, managing director in 1973 and became chairman in 1978. He is still Chairman and although not involved in the day to day running of the business takes an active interest in the company. Norman ensured his four children Dominic, James, Stephen and Matthew worked elsewhere to add a new perspective and insight into the running of the firm.

Dominic Reynolds joined the firm in 1981 after working for Perrings Furnishers in Brent Cross and managing the carpet department at their Hemel Hempstead branch. He obtained a NARF (National Association of Retail Furnishers) diploma with distinction and a City and Guilds diploma in retail management at the College for Distributive Trades. He was awarded the Childs Cup for excellence in floor coverings. When Mr Sharp retired after 53 years in 1982 having become a director of the company in 1973 Dominic took over the running of the shop at the tender age of 22, a role he still has today.

James and Stephen also gained a NARF diploma. James worked for Harrods and later for the Great Southern Group where he trained to be a funeral director and learnt the art of embalming. He joined the firm in 1985 and started in sales and marketing before taking over the running of the funeral department.

Stephen worked for Perrings in Worthing to learn about the Furniture side to the business and then for the Great Southern Group in Lewisham to learn the funeral trade. He joined the firm in 1990 and now runs the funeral department with his brother James.

Matthew Reynolds, financial director, joined the company in 2004. He obtained a degree in accountancy at Middlesex University and worked in private practice where he qualified as a chartered accountant. He then worked for BACS in London as financial controller before taking over the company's finances.

Freya Reynolds, Dominic's daughter has just been awarded a first class BA Honours Degree in Business Management at Chichester University. She assists Dominic in the running of the Furniture Store.

THE REYNOLDS STORY

THE FURNITURE STORE



27 High Street 1870 Alfred Reynolds

Samuel started the business at 13 West Street in 1867 and as business improved he moved to 27 High Street in 1870. An early picture shows that Reynolds sold anything, they actually claimed that their range was 'from a hat pin to a house'. They generally dealt in furniture but one of their specialities was baths, as can be seen in early pictures with them hanging outside the store.

They were making furniture on the premises at a time when retail and customer services were becoming more important. Consequently when No. 29, next door

became empty they moved in, letting No. 27 to a grocer until 1900. In 1900 they reclaimed No. 27 and combined it with 29 the High Street, making it the largest shop in the town. In 1905 the shop fronts were renovated in a new white Edwardian frontage and then in 1908 another floor was added to No. 29.



27-29 High Street 1905

At the rear of the store in Belmont Street there were a number of cottages of which number 13 was previously occupied by Samuel and Eliza. Subsequently Nos 13, 15 and 17 were converted into workshops and stores with No. 13 still having a flat above the store. The workshops were used

for re upholstery, cabinet making, stuffing mattresses and coffin making. During

the 1970's these properties were compulsorily purchased and subsequently converted into part of the site of Mountbatten Court.

ARTISTIC HOUSE FURNISHING

The Best Selection in the Town

Telephone - "REYNOLDS, AUCTIONEERS, Bognor." Telephone No. 142.

Reynolds & Co.
Complete House Furnishers
27 & 29 High Street
Bognor

Repository - Bognor, Brighton, Sussex
Specially Built Repository for the Warehousing of Furniture
Strong Room for Valuables

Advert c1912

The business continued to grow and in the 1920s various improvements were made, an electric passenger lift and central heating system were installed. In 1939 the tall sweeping deco style was added to the front of the store.



First floor 1930's

TELEGRAMS: REYNOLDS, AUCTIONEERS, BOGNOR. NAT. TELEPHONE: 2X BOGNOR.

COMPLETE HOUSE FURNISHERS.

AUCTIONEERS, HOUSE AND ESTATE AGENTS.

Auction Room, VICTORIA HALL, LONDON ROAD.

27 & 29, HIGH STREET, BOGNOR.

Reynolds advert c1920 showing the added floor



Furnished Room 1939



Furnished Room 1939

One of the new features was the setting up of 10 furnished rooms which would provide customers with ideas of room layout in ordinary surroundings. These rooms were removed during the major refurbishment in 2005 to provide the contemporary, light and spacious open plan show floors we know today.



27-29 High Street 1939

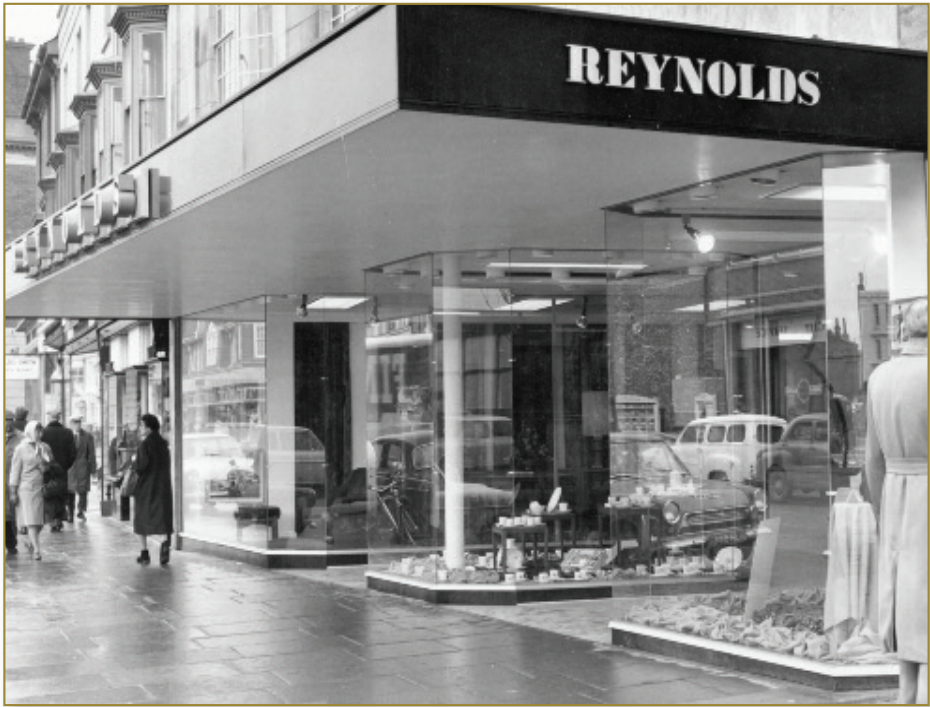
During the war in 1940 the cottages and rear area of the store were classified as being in a defence area and there was no access to the premises from Belmont Street during this period. Consequently it was difficult to run the business fully and a request was made for a rate- revaluation. The war placed a great burden on the business during the war years but the company was able to survive due to the Funeral, Auctioneering and Storage sides of the business.



Clearing blast damage in WW2

The shop windows were blown out when a bomb landed nearby and Peggy Reynolds, Norman's mother, was pulled under a lorry when a German airplane strafed the street. Norman lay in the gutter as you were told to do but his brother not wanting to get dirty stayed standing.

Two of the specimen rooms were converted into bedrooms for fire fighters and there was also a snooker table and dart board to provide relaxation for them. Norman Reynolds (the current chairman) and his brother Patrick enjoyed many hours there. Staff were expected to engage in fire fighting training a number of times per week and there were Bren guns mounted on the roof to combat enemy aircraft.



27-31 High Street 1966

Norman Reynolds can remember collecting the spent bullet casings after a night raid. A room was also used by the War Office as an emergency food store, with stiff penalties for theft printed on the packaging. Graffiti done by the French Canadian soldiers manning the Bren guns can still be seen on the door accessing the roof today.

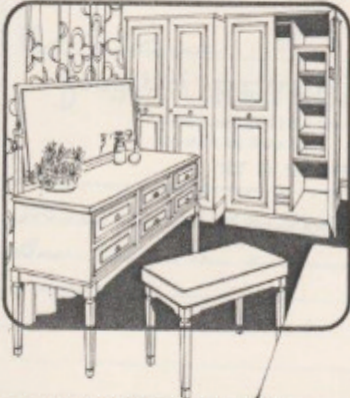
In 1966 under Gordon, Don and Norman's supervision major improvements were made. These included an arcade, electronic doors (the second to be installed in the county) and a concave window with mirrors at each end which many people will remember fondly from childhood. The old oak china display cabinets were replaced with metal and glass ones and gold heuga carpet tiles were laid on the ground, first and second floor.

BROWSE ROUND OUR SPACIOUS SHOWROOMS
AND SEE FOR YOURSELF
THE LATEST IN FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS

REYNOLDS
& Co.(Furnishers) Ltd.

27-31 HIGH STREET
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Telephone
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GROUND FLOOR
China
Glass
Pictures & Furnishings Departments

1st FLOOR
Dining Room & Lounge Furniture Extensive Soft Furnishing & Linen Department

2nd FLOOR
Bedroom Furniture and Bedding Departments

3rd FLOOR
Carpets
Linoleum
Kitchen & Garden Furniture Departments

OLYMPUS

1970's Advert for Olympus Furniture

In 1992 Reynolds joined AIS or the Association Independent Stores the largest non food buying group in the UK enabling them to buy furniture and services at prices only multiples would be able to obtain, giving them a great advantage over their competitors. Dominic Reynolds served as a director on the AIS board from 2011 to 2014.



27-31 High Street 1994

selling making it the largest furniture store in Sussex.

Another complete refurbishment came in 2004. The old shop front with the island window and concave window was replaced with the one you see today. All the floors were re carpeted and walkways introduced to make it easier to navigate the floors. The columns and lifts were re clad in birds eye maple and the store was redecorated in a contemporary fashion.

1994 saw a major refurbishment of the store, new lighting was installed along with false ceilings. Oak cladding and down lighters were applied to the columns and lifts and the ground floor was re carpeted. The store was completely redecorated in the colours of the day A new logo was produced and new signage introduced. The offices were relocated on the 3rd floor.

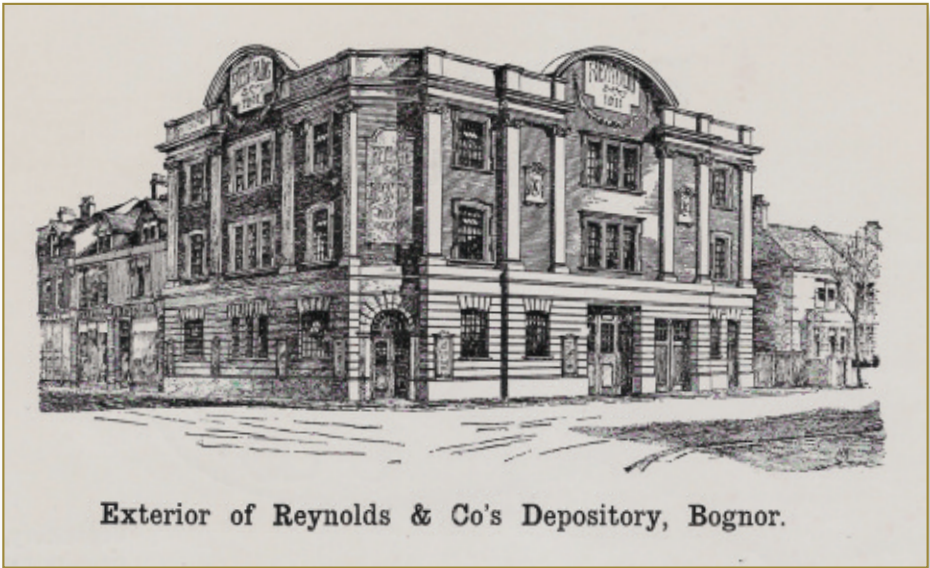
In 1998 two floors were added above 31 High Street. This enabled the funeral department to increase office space and the furniture store to have another 6,000 sq ft of

The last major refurbishment was in 2013 where the store was completely re decorated, re carpeted and new walkways introduced. The major brands such as G Plan, Parker Knoll, Stressless and Ercol were given their own branded areas. A new open plan office was installed on the top floor. The store is continually being modernised with new openings being introduced on the 1st Floor this year.

T H E R E Y N O L D S S T O R Y

R E M O V A L S , S T O R A G E , A U C T I O N E E R I N G & E S T A T E O F F I C E

At the turn of the century the town was continuing to expand and the need for storage became increasingly important and in 1911 the Depository in Canada Grove was built at a cost £2,618 by M H Navell & Son. The Depository had an auction room and strong room and was so successful that within four years it was necessary for another floor to be added, making the imposing building we have today. It was interesting to note that the addition of the top floor cost as much as the original building in 1911. A report at the time of the initial construction records 'the business of this firm, one of the largest and most enterprising in Bognor has increased enormously during the past years.' As can be seen today it is an ornate building and was described as an 'architectural addition to the town.' The architect was Mr. W. Tillott of the Arcade Chambers here in Bognor and the design was based on the Harrods depository in Barnes, London. The Depository is presently undergoing a £130,000 refurbishment.



In 1911 the Depository advertised its storage prices for a grand piano at 4 shillings and 6 pence (22.5p today) per month and a Large Pantechnicon Van Load at 10 shillings (50p today) per month. This service is still available today albeit self storage. The auction rooms now house the Railway Club.

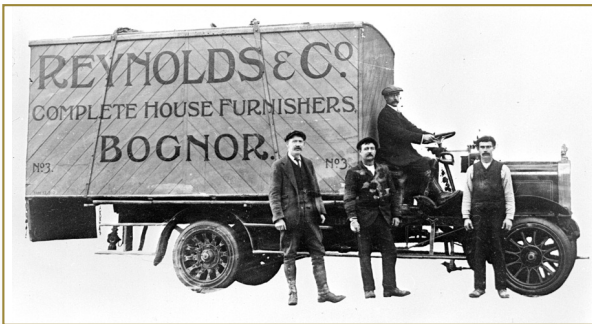
Pantechnicon pulled by Foden Engine 1910 with Mr Jordan, Mr Warren and Driver Mr Webb





Auction Room Depository

Many people will be familiar with the early views of the Reynolds' vans which were used to move furniture and people around the locality. One of these vehicles was



1910 Van. 'Old man' Jenkins at the wheel.

on loan from Mr. F.W. Jenkins and Sons Contractors of Longford Road and this Foden engine was commandeered during the 1st World War and left abandoned in Horsham after it broke down.

SIDLESHAM.

MR. S. REYNOLDS,

Has received instructions from the Executors of the late
Mr. Walker, TO SELL BY AUCTION, at the

"ANCHOR" INN,
SIDLESHAM,
ON FRIDAY, THE 8th DAY OF JUNE, 1877,
AT TWO for THREE O'CLOCK Precisely, subject to Conditions to be then produced,
FIVE SUBSTANTIALLY BRICK BUILT AND TILED

TENEMENTS

WITH GARDENS ATTACHED,

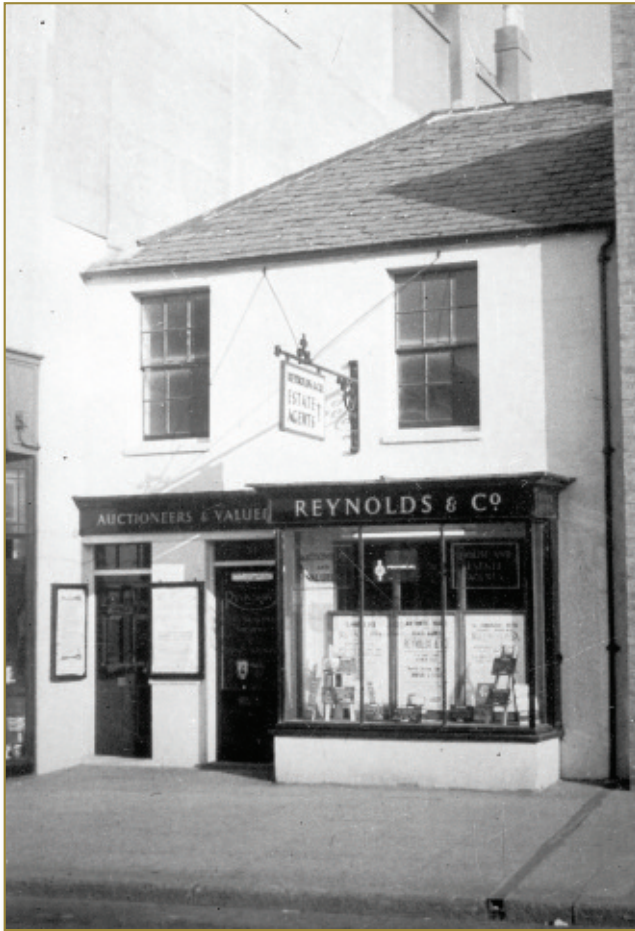
And in the respective occupations of Messrs. Prior, Holden, Fowler, Wakeford and Fosbery,
at rentals amounting in the whole to £20 17s. 6d. per annum.

For further particulars apply to Thos. Jenman, Esq., Solicitor, Chichester; or to the Auctioneer, High Street, Bognor

PERRELL PRINTERS, POST OFFICE, BOGNOR.

The estate agents started in 1867. An original poster advertising the sale of five cottages by auction in Sidlesham by Samuel Reynolds in 1877 is on show in the store. This part of the business continued to such an extent that

they established an Estate Office which continued until 1989 when, due to the recession and the retirement of Mr Jennings the manager, it was decided to close this part of the business. Reynolds also offered insurance and had a plaque on the wall from the Phoenix Assurance Company to note their connection. Reynolds were presented with a bronze plaque to celebrate their 100 years association with the Insurance Company.



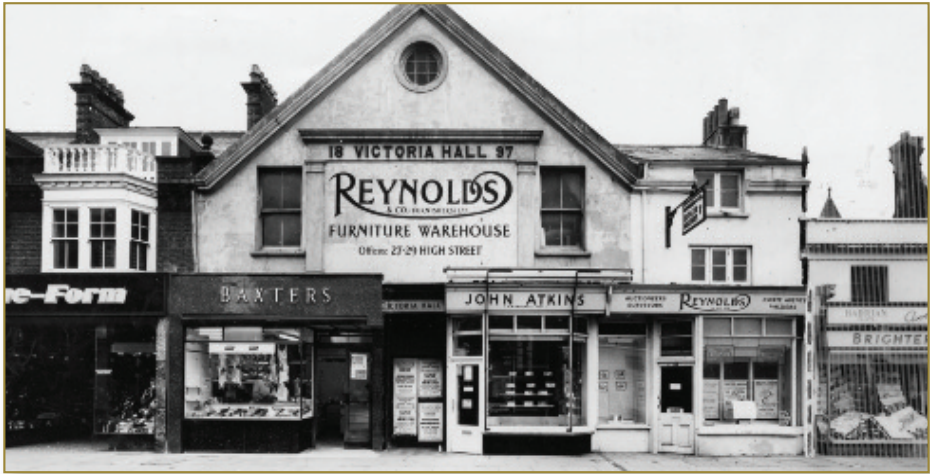
Estate Office 1953

By 1953 with continued expansion Reynolds purchased another property 31 High Street for £6,000 and was used to house the estate office. This building had once been Bognor's first Town Hall. These premises were rebuilt in 1962 at a cost of £30,000 to provide a new Estate Office and Funeral Office with chapels of rest. Later when the Estate Office closed the Funeral Department took over the ground floor.



Victoria Hall prior to it's first auction sale 1920

Another of Reynolds premises was at 38 and 40 London Road. This comprised a sale room and furniture warehouse and was known as Victoria Hall. It was formerly a theatre and previous to that a Congregational Church. Purchased in 1920 it was located opposite St. John's Church which today is the location of Boots. The Victoria Hall had a two day sale every month and was used to auction the least valuable goods whereas the Depository had a 3 day sale every month for more expensive items.



Victoria Hall

The Victoria Hall was sold by auction on 15th July 1964 by Reynolds and Tregears when Reynolds ceased to have a need for the property and to provide funds for store improvements.

THE REYNOLDS STORY

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

The other well known service that Reynolds have provided since the days of Samuel Reynolds is funerals. In Victorian times people who were involved with cabinet making would almost naturally become involved in the community as funeral service providers. If you made cabinets you would also make coffins and many furniture stores founded in Victorian times still have a Funeral Service side to their business.

An early bill head from 1904 shows that alongside house furnishing, upholsterers, auctioneers, appraisers and house agents they were also involved with funerals completely furnished. The account for this particular funeral cost £4.10s.0d (£4.50 today).



Horse drawn funeral outside Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Clarence Road

In the days of Samuel Reynolds you would be taken to the funeral in a horse drawn carriage with glass sides and despite all the changes, this service is still available today.

It was during the 1870's the glass sided hearse made its appearance. It was consequently much lighter and far less sombre than the closed variety used previously. It became an overnight success. The mourners and passers by were able to see the coffin and the undertaker's handiwork and craft.

Reynolds own glass sided hearse is on display at their premises in Longford Road and this was the type of hearse that had been used in the time of Samuel and had been stored in their Depository for a number of years before it was renovated and now returned for use.

Two fine black groomed horses pulled the glass hearse and these horses had black shiny hooves whereas most working horses had dirty hooves. This was because the horse's hooves were painted with Archangel tar.



A present day horse drawn funeral John Regan directing

The man in charge of the hearse had a seat high up on the front. He was dressed in black and wore a top hat. A black scarf or ribbon was tied around the top hat and a long piece of ribbon floated behind him.

Reynolds kept its own horses which were imported from Belgium. The breed was known as Belgian Blacks and were all supplied as geldings as the vendors did not want Reynolds or any other funeral director breeding its own supply! The horses were stabled in the workshop yard in Belmont Street.

In the 1920's it began to be evident that a motor hearse was essential for the success of the business. Reynolds started using motor cars around 1927 and continues to update its fleet as time goes by. The Company invested over £300,000 in a new Mercedes fleet in 2005, and is in the process of investing £600,000 in a new fleet of Jaguar hearses and limousines. Today there is much more customer choice and Reynolds have carried the deceased to their final resting place on a motor bike and side car and on the back of a fire engine in accordance with their wishes.



Funeral Outside St Johns Church, London Road

Many of the old funeral customs common in those days have died out. The bereaved family would stop all the clocks and the mirrors would be turned towards the wall. A wake was held because the people wanted to call at the house to sympathise. There were certain customs peculiar to Bognor. When anybody died all the shops in the street would place a single shutter in the shop window. Neighbours would pull a couple of blinds half way. When a funeral was about to pass the blinds on every house would be pulled down. In some cases straw was laid on the roadway outside the deceased's house to deaden the sound of horses and carts passing by.



Fire Brigade Funeral Freddie Roberts directing

Reynolds made all their coffins by hand up to 1973. As you can imagine this was a laborious process particularly with regard to bending the wood into a coffin shape. In the early days most coffins were made in Elm, today it is Oak. As the world changes and we become more aware of global changes, people now consider the environment and as such coffins can now be made in card board, wicker, sea grass, or bamboo. You can be buried in a woodland area or have a tree planted in your name.

Obituaries of the day make interesting reading. As well as recording the key events of the deceased life all the mourners at the funeral service were listed individually and their relationship with the deceased noted. When Alfred Reynolds died in 1933 his wife Vi was not expected to attend the funeral service as she was entrusted to provide the food and drink for the mourners on their return from the service.



Funeral Station Road Freddie Roberts directing

Today Funerals have taken on a new perspective for many people. Services now include well known songs, sung by choirs or pop groups. Readings are from the bible, well known songs or muses. Family members and friends tell their own stories and memories of the deceased during the service, which may or may not be of a religious nature. All of this is a long way from the austere and sombre services of the past.

In 1986 Reynolds opened a funeral office in Littlehampton and in 2008 they opened another branch in Chichester. Reynolds still belongs to the National Association of Funeral Directors who uphold funeral standards. There can't be many businesses of 150 years who still have members of the family taking the deceased on their final journey.

Many people are now taking out funeral plans, which allows you to pre-pay for your funeral and record your wishes. Taking out a funeral plan not only secures the funeral directors charges at today's rates, but it also reduces the burden on the family to make key decisions when arranging the funeral.

THE REYNOLDS STORY

CONCLUSION


Today the Company is run by Dominic, James, Stephen, Matthew and Freya Reynolds, all direct descendants of Samuel Reynolds and similar to all the previous directors they are each responsible for specific areas of the Company.

The family believe their provision of a personal and individual service with integrity to all their clients is the reason for the longevity of the Company. The involvement of Directors in the town and the forward thinking of each generation have also helped. With Freya joining the business it is hoped the business will continue for another 150 years.

The directors are particularly proud of and grateful to the staff and business associates they have made over the years for their support and hard work. Special mention should be made of those staff with particularly long service, David Fluter 43 years, Vernon Parker 39 years, Malcom Vernone 31 years, Michael Wileman 28 years, Charlie Bunker 27 years, Gill Bayley 27 years, Pete Edwards 25 years, Joy Fluter 24 years and Michael Marland 21 years service.

A special thanks to Sylvia Endacott for her help in preparing this publication which is based on a three week article written by her for the Bognor Regis Observer in 2007 for Reynolds 140th Anniversary.

Reynolds would also like to thank James Halson of Top Level Designs for typesetting and producing this publication.



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