



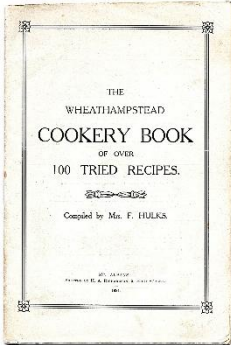
Wheathampstead History Society

Bulletin no. 85, October 2025

News and events

- Highlights of **The Knebworth House Archives** will be on display at HALS on Thursday 6 November at 7.00 pm, with a talk about Edward Bulwer Lytton by his 3Xgreatgrandson Henry Lytton Cobbold. Details at <https://events.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hals/the-knebworth-house-archives>
- Our **next meeting** will be on **Wednesday 19 November** when Elizabeth Eastwood will recount some of the **Ghostly tales of Hertfordshire**.

Lily Hulks



This little booklet in the History Society archive has prompted some research.

First question: who was Mrs F. Hulks? A gravestone in the churchyard provides part of the answer; she was Lily, wife of Frederick Hulks.

Lily was born Lily Jackson in Wintringham, Huntingdonshire on 19 July 1895. Her father was a farm labourer. She was working as a domestic servant in Cambridge in 1911 and 1921 and married Frederick Hulks on 3 February 1923 in Girton, Cambridgeshire. He was born in 1895, one of nine children, in Roe Green, Hatfield, where his father



Joseph was a baker. In 1911 and 1921 he was working as a grocer's assistant at Tingey & Sons, grocer and provisions merchants with shops in Hatfield and Wheathampstead.

Kelly's Directory lists three grocers in Wheathampstead in 1928: Chennells, Tingey & Sons, and Woodley. The 1929, 1930 and 1931 Directories list Chennells, Woodley and F.J.Hulks (in bold). He must have taken over Tingey's shop; the telephone number, Wheathampstead 22, on this document is the same as Tingey's in an advertisement in the recipe book.



So, by 1929, Frederick Hulks aged 34 was the proprietor of a "Family Grocer and Provision Merchants" in the High Street. Father of two children, Pamela (born 1925) and Maurice (1928), he and Lily were a successful young couple. Another daughter, Pearl, was born late in 1930.

Second question: why did Lily Hulks publish The Wheathampstead Cookery Book in 1924?

Perhaps the newly-married young woman, eager to support her husband, suggested to Mr Tingey that such a publication would promote his business? This idea is supported by the fact that the first page of the booklet is a full-page advertisement for Tingey's store. Other advertisements are for The Swan, The Bull, and various bakers and butchers, but not for Chennells or Woodley.

Most of the 100 recipes are aimed at the working class, with simple, affordable ingredients. They include familiar dishes such as potato and leek soup and apple crumble, and "hearty dishes" such as stews and casseroles. Macaroni cheese, meat loaf, and faggots were great fillers. A more unusual recipe is "A restorative for invalids" which involves four new-laid eggs (including their shells), half a pint of brandy, three lemons, sugar, and fresh milk. Strained and bottled, it will keep for three months. One wineglassful to be drunk three times a day.

Many pages in the booklet have a motto. "Men seldom repent of eating too little." "A good temper is the chief ingredient to happiness." "A good wife and health are a man's best wealth." "Muddles at home make husbands roam."

Sadly, Lily Hulks' story does not end well. Frederick died aged 36 on 29 October 1931, leaving Lily with three children under six years old. She gave up the shop: it is not listed in the 1932 Kelly's Directory. In 1939, she was a lodging-housekeeper in Cambridge.

Lily died in Maidenhead on 2 October 1961. The executor was her son Maurice, a solicitor – a remarkable achievement for the grandson of a farm labourer.

Did Frederick and Lily actually live in Wheathampstead? The fact that he was buried here in 1931 and that she was brought back to join him in the churchyard in 1961 suggests that they did, albeit for only a few years.