WPPRG Exhibition no. 13

 The Whippendell Road factory stood derelict for thirteen years; from 1990 until demolition in 2003. The factory is commemorated by the mosaic plaque salvaged from the demolition and incorporated in the new housing development, by the name of a pre-school based there

Kidsunlimited, and by the name of the public house-----'THE RISING SUN'

PICTURES HERE OF MOSAIC PLAQUE, KIDSUNLIMITED,

'THE RISING SUN' AND SUN'S WELL-HEAD BUILDING

The Present Day

 As far as we can ascertain, there are only five working printers in the town in 2016.

They are;

* Mirror Colour Print; producing the DAILY MIRROR, SUNDAY MIRROR,

SUNDAY PEOPLE and local newspapers for the Trinity Mirror Group.

* Woodmansterne on the Watford Business park, specialist greetings cards printers.
* Hill and Garwood in Tolpits Lane; general printers.
* Metro Commercial Printing in Sandown Road; general printers.
* Herts. and Beds. Printing ltd., general printers on Shakespeare Street industrial estate.

Alpine Press, formerly near Watford Fields, is now in Kings Langley. This does not pretend to be a comprehensive list and deliberately does not include purely digital print shops, such as Kall Kwik.

What brought about the dramatic decline of the town's largest industry?

 The surprisingly rapid development of electronic systems for colour separation & correction, page assembly and plate & cylinder production, coupled to highly automated bindery and warehouse machinery. These advances had the potential to render surplus many skilled and semi-skilled workers, whose trade unions were extremely reluctant to see their members made redundant, and insisted on uneconomical over-manning and sometimes refusing absolutely to accept such new techniques into the workplace.

 It became more economical for employers to set up new factories utilising the new technology from the outset, in conjunction with appropriate levels of manpower, rather than attempt to modernise existing factories in the face of union opposition.