

Alfred Fennings

Alfred Fennings (1816-1900) was a chemist who established **Fennings Pharmaceuticals** in 1840 when he opened a pharmacy in Hammersmith Broadway, London.

Highly adept at advertising and marketing, he went on to create a very successful business producing a range of products which became popular 'over the counter' medicines bought by generations of shoppers. Several Fennings' products are still sold today.

In 1850 the general management of the business, including advertising, book-keeping, manufacturing and publishing moved to Cowes.

In 1948, nearly 50 years after his death and after nearly a century in Cowes, the main office moved to Horsham in West Sussex. The company ceased trading in 1996.

Fennings

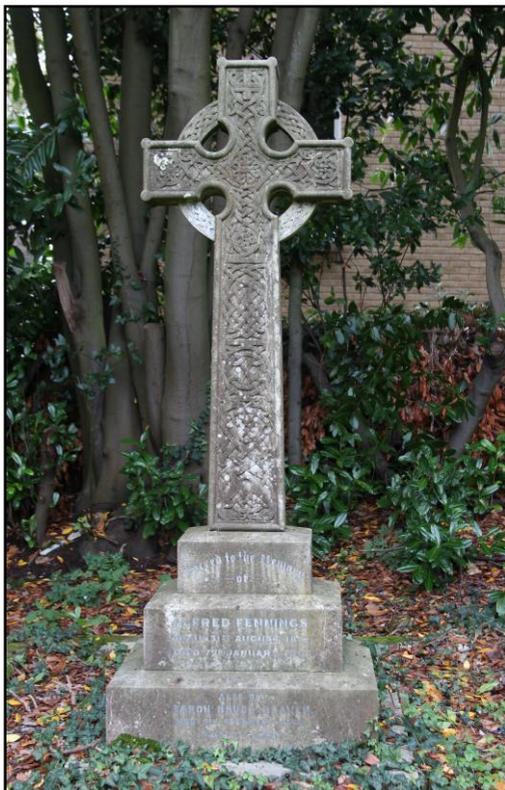
Pharmaceuticals sold medicines for the treatment of typhoid and cholera as well as for more minor ailments such as coughs and colds. One wineglassful of the clear *Fennings' Fever Mixture* was recommended to be drunk by adults to help ease fevers; a bottle originally cost one shilling and sixpence (but the tax from the label opposite is one shilling and thrupence!). Fennings' indigestion tablets were taken to ease hiccoughs, excessive gases in the gut and intestines, heartburn and nausea.



Alfred Fennings was a great philanthropist and the *Isle of Wight County Press* records that one charity, the *National Refugees for Homeless and Destitute Children* benefited by over £86,000 from his 19th Century generosity. What would that be now?

After his death in 1900 **Fennings Pharmaceuticals** became a Trust, with all profits going to *Shaftesbury Homes*, a children's charity (now known as *Shaftesbury Young People*).

Alfred Fennings also compiled a publication entitled "*Every Mother's Book*" (also known as "*The Child's Best Doctor*"). This was a fascinating mid-Victorian booklet, measuring approximately 14cm by 21cm containing 20 pages and filled with advice upon the treatment of various children's ailments. A page of testimonials in praise of Fennings' Cooling Powders and Lung Healers is included, nearly all dating from 1857; it is thus likely that the booklet dates from around this period. Copies are still available to purchase on *eBay*.



His elaborate memorial is in plot 8, close to the entrance from the Cowes Medical Centre, and is included in the proposed Heritage Trail.

Barry Sowerby