

From 1904-1918, 18 High Street, Sutton, South London (then Surrey) was occupied by David Knights-Whittome; ‘Photographer to the King’. From this small shop, named ‘The Studio, Sutton’, and another premises at 24 Station Road, Epsom, Knights-Whittome produced thousands of photographs of local people, places, events and institutions as well as images of country houses, aristocratic events and the Royal Family during a seminal period in British history. In 1918, Knights-Whittome abandoned professional photography and moved away from Sutton altogether, eventually taking up a career in local politics in Hertfordshire. The vast collection of glass plate negatives he had produced during this period were left behind in the cellar of the shop and over time were largely forgotten.

In 1988, the building housing 18 High Street – later occupied by Linwood Strong optician – was demolished, but not before the photographic legacy of this remarkable man was discovered by a member of the public and removed to the Sutton archive service. The collection, of over 10,000 glass plate negatives, has remained undocumented and unseen by the public for close to 100 years. In 2014, a Heritage Lottery Fund grant enabled work on this important and endangered archive to begin and around half of the collection has been conserved, digitised and catalogued. A second award was granted in the summer of 2016 which over a two year period saw the completion of this vital work. Now complete, over 10,700 images appear on our dedicated [Flickr site](#) which represent a lost generation of men, women and children with connection to Sutton, Epsom and the surrounding areas.