

THE PUBLIC HOUSES OF SAWBRIDGEWORTH, GILSTON AND HIGH WYCH. PAST AND PRESENT

- A BRIEF INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW.

The following article is not intended to be a comprehensive history of every public house, but merely to give a flavour (pun intended) of what is still to be found locally, and what has unfortunately been lost.

The public houses are given in alphabetical order. Cross references are given where the public house has been known by more than one name.

For the purposes of this essay, the term 'public house' is also taken to mean beerhouse/alehouse, there is nonetheless a legal distinction.

The public houses of Spellbrook are not in Sawbridgeworth/Gilston/High Wych, and are therefore not included.

Although not included, extent photographs exist of almost all the public houses mentioned.

THE BAKERS ARMS.

Burnt Mill Corner. Gilston. – See THE DUSTY MILLER.

This public house burnt down in the 1870s and was re-built by McMullens of Hertford as the 'Dusty Miller'.

Interestingly, the first known publican named in 1855 is a 37 years old Joseph Elliot, who was listed as not just a 'Beer Seller', but also a 'Baker'. Joseph's stepson, George Littlechild is likewise listed as a 'Baker'. Presumably the premises were therefore used as a bakery **and** a pub, which may account for both the name and the fire.

THE BELL AND BULLOCK.

3/4 The Square. – See THE BELL AND FEATHERS.

THE BELL AND CANDLESTICK.

3/4 The Square. – See THE BELL AND FEATHERS.

THE BELL AND FEATHERS (Hotel).

3/4 The Square. (50/52 Cock Street/Bell Street).

Closed. Now a restaurant and hairdressers.

It seems that at various times, this hotel has also been known as the 'Bell and Bullock', 'Bell and Candle' and 'Bell and Lion', although I can find nothing more on this.

In 1806, Hertford Quarter Sessions give the name as 'Bull and Feathers'. The licensee is a John Pryor. (See also 'Half Moon' and 'King of Prussia').

This is a Grade II listed building dating to the late 16th century. There is an extent picture showing it existed as an hotel (Bell and Feathers) from at least 1834. This was a Hawkes Brewery pub.

In 1851 the licensee is Joseph Silcock. The Latin motto on the sign read 'Intactum Sileo', (Totally Silent).

The hotel closed in 1946 to become a furniture store.

THE BELL AND LION.

3/4 The Square. See THE BELL AND FEATHERS.

THE BULL INN.

89 Cambridge Road/Bull Road/North End/116 Cambridge Road..

A Grade II listed building and a former coaching inn, dating from the 18th century or earlier. English Heritage ID 160754.

The earliest known licensee in 1851 was James Gillett.

A former Hawkes Brewery/Benskins pub.

THE BULL AND FEATHERS.

3/4 The Square. See THE BELL AND FEATHERS.

THE CROWN.

London Road. See THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

THE DUSTY MILLER.

Burnt Mill Corner. Gilston.

Built on the site of the former 'Bakers Arms' by McMullens brewery, this public house dates to c1875. It remains a McMullens pub.

THE KATHERINE WHEEL.

High Wych?

Current status obscure. Possibly the 'Catherine Wheel' at Ware?

Donald Brett reported in 2014 (see references), that his ancestors owned a pub in the locality of Sawbridgeworth/High Wych bearing this name. A title was paid for this property in 1686 by the 'Widow Brett'.

I can find no other mention of this pub at this location. However, both the 'Hand and Crown', and the 'White Horse' (the other 2 Brett family pubs), were purchased by Hawkes Brewery c1861. This implies that the pub in question is actually the 'Catherine Wheel' at Albury, Ware. This pub was totally destroyed by fire in 2004, re-built, and re-opened 2007. It was however of the correct age and importantly was purchased by Hawkes Brewery at the right time.

THE FEATHERS.

Pye Corner. Gilston. See THE PLUME OF FEATHERS.

THE FEATHERS.

53 Knight Street.

Closed. Now commercial premises for small business.

Originally known as the 'Rose and Crown', according to an external plaque this was an inn and was already called the 'Feathers' by c1699. Nothing much is known of this pub. However, it must have had a short life as it does not appear in a portrait of 1834, being residential properties, nor in the 1841 census, nor in a photograph of 1900. It is not mentioned in the Hertford Quarter Sessions 1806 implying an earlier date for closure.

THE FOX.

94 Station Road/Mill Hill.

Closed 1995. Outbuildings demolished. Now a collection of modern houses.

Formerly a McMullens pub, it was often frequented by bargemen from the nearby canal, who would stable their horses in the adjoining stable block. The earliest recorded licensee is a William Page in 1866.

THE GATE.

81 London Road.

This public house was probably named from a gate in the road nearby which was marked on T. Kitchen's 'Map of Coach Roads Within 6 Miles of Harlow' dated 1761.

The building dates to 1843, replacing an earlier building on the site. The 'Gate' was opened in 1843/4 as a beerhouse by its owner Samuel Legerton. In 1845 Samuel dies and the pub is sold to E.K and O Fordham brewers of Ashwell. The first licensee was probably Ann Westwood of Manuden. In 1954, Fordham's became 'Flowers', and in 1961, Flowers were acquired by 'Whitbread'. The present licensee, Thomas Barnett has been at the Gate since 1988 and was formerly a professional footballer, playing for Crystal Palace FC.

Attached to the pub is a microbrewery known as Sawbridgeworth Brewery. It produces a range of beers including one named after Thomas Barnett and called the 'Selhurst Park Flyer' which was Thomas' nickname when a player.

THE GOOD INTENT.

16 Station Road/Barkers Lane.

Closed 2013. Now converted to a pair of private residential houses.

Grade II listed dating from early 19th century, English Heritage ID 160863.

Opened as a public house c1865. The first known licensee is an Edward Lawrence of 1871.

THE GREEN MAN.

Sheering Mill Lane.

Closed. Now a private residential property.

The property is Grade II listed, English Heritage ID 160851, and dates from the 17th century or earlier. There is a possible reference to this public house dated 1801 in a travel guide by George Kearsley (it may however be referring to the 'Green Man', Old Harlow). There is no reference in the Hertford Quarter Sessions 1806. Apart from its name, little else is known of this former public house.

THE HALF MOON.

High Wych.

Closed in 2013. Now the 'Chandini' Indian Restaurant.

A Grade II listed building, English Heritage ID 394246, this building dates to the 17th century or earlier. Its first confirmed usage as a public house dates to 1805, (see the King of Prussia and Bell and Feathers entries). However, the building has been known as the 'Half Moon' since at least 1702, and its use as public house almost certainly dates back at least that far.

There is an excellent article about this public house by Theo van de Bilt of the High Wych History Group dated March 2014. See references.

THE HAND.

17 High Wych Road.

See THE HAND AND CROWN.

THE HAND AND CROWN.

17 High Wych Road.

Formerly the 'Hand', since c1800 it has been known by its present name.

A 16th century Grade II listed building. English Heritage ID 160782, together with an associated 18th century Grade II listed Coach House, English Heritage ID 160783. Claims to be the oldest inn in Hertfordshire.

Earliest accounts show the building existed as an inn by 1721, being mentioned in Manor Court Rolls. Further accounts give circumstantial evidence of the inn in use going back to 1672 and earlier, with its owner Stephen Brett mentioned in baptismal records.

Queen Anne supposedly stayed here once.

There is an excellent article about this public house by Theo van de Bilt of the High Wych History Group dated January 2015. See references.

THE KING GEORGE THE FOURTH.

Knight Street.

A Grade II listed building dating to the 17th century. English Heritage ID 160787.

In 1851 the licensee is given as John Gray.

A McMullens pub.

THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

London Road.

Closed c1970. Demolished. Now a small block of apartments (Kings Head Court).

Named as the 'Kings Head' in 1741. Between then and 1754 it was apparently called 'The Crown'. However, by 1754 in the ownership of Edward Mansford, it was finally given the name of 'King of Prussia'.

In 1806 Hertford Quarter Sessions, John and William Pryor were recognised as licensed victuallers for the 'King of Prussia', the 'Bull and Feathers' and the 'Half Moon' at High Wych.

In 1851 this was now known as the 'Old King of Prussia', the licensee was given as Gabriel Brace.

By 1861 the pub had lost the 'Old' from its name. This was a Hawkes Brewery pub. (Hawkes Brewery were later acquired by Benskins).

In 1914, with anti-German sentiment running high, the pub was forced to change its name to the 'Kings Head', reverting back to 'King of Prussia' after hostilities ceased.

THE KING'S HEAD.

London Road. – See THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

THE KING WILLIAM IV.

7 Vantorts Road.

A Grade II listed building dating back to the 17th century or earlier. English Heritage ID 160879.

Deeds show that this has been a beerhouse (pub) since at least 1770. In 1855 the licensee was Samuel Rochester.

THE MARKET HOUSE (Hotel).

42 Knight Street.

A Grade II* listed building dating back to the 16th century. English Heritage ID 160801.

No longer a pub, but a block of luxury apartments having closed in 2010 and converted 2014/5.

The 'Market House' did not have a long history of pulling pints. Its main use has mostly been commercial. c1860-1916 the building was owned by the Barnard family and was used as offices to maltings at the rear. In 1916 it became briefly a small hospital before becoming at some time later a carpet store.

In 1937 it became a private hotel. In the 1980s it became an inn selling Adnams ales.

THE MILL STREAM.

Mill Hill/Mill Lane.

Closed. Now a private residential property.

Opened sometime after 1861, in 1871 the licensee is given as Charles Pavely. This pub appears to have had a short life, being closed by 1911.

THE OLD BELL.

39 Bell Street.

A Grade II listed, former coaching inn dating to the 16th century. English Heritage ID 160746.

Formerly a Hawkes Brewery/Benskins public house.

THE OLD KING OF PRUSSIA.

London Road.

See – THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

THE ORANGE TREE.

166 West Road.

A McMullens pub first opened in 1901. In 2012 the name was changed to the 'Orange Tree' to avoid the considerable confusion arising from the 'Three Horseshoes' at nearby Spellbrook.

THE PLUME OF FEATHERS.

Pye Corner. Gilston.

Originally a private residence dating to the 17th century, together with 18th century outbuildings such as a cow shed, this is Grade II listed. English Heritage IDs 159898 and 159899. The date 1350 is inscribed on the north-east gable, but this is not considered factual.

This is recorded as a pub as early as 1661 when the landlady was brought to court for running a disorderly house. Some old photographs name it as just the 'Feathers', but this may simply be a typographical error. An apocryphal story is that prior to 1850 it may have been known for a short time as the Plumer-Ward's Arms after a local estate owner.

In 1866 the licensee is given as W. Foster.

THE PRINCE OF WALES.

18 Station Road/Barkers Lane.

Closed 1981. Now converted to a pair of private residential houses.

Building is unlisted and dates to the early 19th century.

First used as a public house c1894, the first known licensee was J. Woodley in 1901.

THE QUEEN'S HEAD.

26 Knight Street.

A Grade II listed building of the early 19th century. English Heritage ID 160795.

THE RAILWAY INN.

Hatfield Heath Road.

Closed 2015. Now a development of luxury apartments.

Formerly a McMullens pub, this was built c1864. The first licensee is given as Ann Bruce in 1866.

Contrary to some sources, this was **not** formerly the 'Bakers Arms'.

In past times, this road was the main A414 St. Albans-Chelmsford road. Hence, this pub also sold BP/Shell petrol!

THE RISING SUN.

High Wych.

Until 1834 this was known as just The Sun.

There is an excellent article about this public house by Theo van de Bilt of the High Wych History Group dated January 2014. See references.

THE ROSE AND CROWN.

53 Knight Street. – See THE FEATHERS.

THE SUN.

High Wych. – See THE RISING SUN.

THE THREE HORSESHOES.

166 West Road. – See THE ORANGE TREE.

Dating to 1901, in 2012 the name was changed to the ‘Orange Tree’.

THE WHITE HORSE.

High Wych?

Closed. Probably demolished. Now probably the site of a private residential house.

Mentioned in the Hertford Quarter Session of 1806 as being in Sawbridgeworth. The licensee being a William Cuffley. Other names mentioned indicate it was a Hawkes Brewery pub. In 2014, a Donald Brett (descendant of Stephen Brett of the ‘Hand and Crown’ c1680), when referring to his family history, mentioned 2 other family pubs in the locality. One of which was the ‘White Horse’. A tithe paid by a Thomas Brett is reported in 1686.

Nothing more is known about this pub. It must have closed a long time ago and its former location is obscure although almost certainly in High Wych.

THE WHITE LION.

28 London Road.

A Grade II listed building dating to the late 16th century with additions. There is also an associated 18th century Assembly Room which is likewise Grade II listed. English Heritage IDs 160802 and 160803. A Greene King pub. In 1851 the licensee is given as C Turner.

Every effort has been taken to include all known public houses. If an omission has been made, please contact the Sawbridgeworth Local History Society with details.

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