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4. The pubs of the village centre

The corner of the Bull is shown on the left of this early photograph. Note also the White Hart just before the white house.

The eleven pubs shown in Figures 1 and 2 fall into three groups; three were open in 1830, six opened following the 1830 Beerhouse Act and two opened in 1861 following the arrival of the railway in 1860.

The three pubs that were open in 1830 (the *Bell & Crown*, the *Bull* and the *Swan*) were all long-established inns. The *Swan* was originally a hall house built in about 1500, the timber frame of the *Bull* is 16th century and

	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
Bell & Crown	1617								
Bull	1617								
Swan	1617								
Bricklayers Arms		1835							1908
Ship		1837							1910
White Hart		1837					c. 1896		
Two Brewers		1843							1906
Red Lion			1851						
Walnut Tree				1871					
Railway Hotel				1861					
Locomotive				1861	1873				

Fig. 1: The eleven pubs in the village centre between 1830 and 1914, with the dates that they were first recorded and when they closed. The dotted lines show that the pub was open but not yet named. Six of these pubs remained open after 1914.

William Collins of the *Railway Hotel* had an ingenious way of concealing his transgression. The story was told that William would cross the yard on a Sunday morning with a bucket in each hand, each of which contained six pints of beer, ostensibly to water the horses in the stable. There he would meet up with a group of men to whom he sold the beer.

Defective measures

There are several examples of licensees being convicted of selling beer in jugs that held less beer than they should.

The inspectors were busy in 1868; the Herts Ad. dated 5 December reported a hearing at the Liberty Petty Sessions when five local licensees were fined for selling beer in short measures. One of these was James Archer at the *King William* (later the *Park Hotel*) who was found to have five quart and seven pint pots deficient in measure. He was fined £2, 10s. with 12s. 6d. costs. Another of the defendants argued that many of his customers asked for a jug of beer rather than a quart but to no avail – he too was convicted.

John Thompson of the *First & Last* was summoned in December 1869 for "having four quart jugs deficient in capacity". The jugs were tested in court and nearly all were about "three-fourths of a gill short" (about 9%). Thompson offered the same defence about customers asking for jugs not quarts but he was convicted and fined 5s. for each measure, i.e. £1, with 10s. costs.

Some customers of the Royal Oak.

Drunkenness

At the *Royal Oak* in 1886 George Elmore was fined 10s. and 21s. costs for permitting drunkenness on the premises; when applying for the renewal of his licence in 1889, he received a caution.

William Walker of the *Walnut Tree*, who had been in court before, was charged in 1888 with permitting drunkenness and gambling. His wife, appearing on his behalf, accepted that two customers had been playing dominoes but there was no evidence that money had been passed. Walker was acquitted of the gambling charge and the police withdrew the charge of permitting drunkenness. Nevertheless, when applying for a new licence in 1889, he was cautioned about how he "conducted his house"; there was a new licence in 1890.

Eliza Hooper, landlady at the *Bull*, when convicted in November 1872 of selling beer out of hours, was, at the same hearing, fined £2 for permitting drunkenness on the premises and her licence was endorsed again.

ness, minor assaults and thefts, as well as a disproportionate number of cases of licensees selling beer 'out of hours'. Press reports show that the same individuals and family names are repeated in case after case (see Section 11). A more serious offence took place in August 1838 when the curate of St Helen's Church in Wheathampstead, Mr Doughton, was stabbed when he intervened in a family quarrel; he recovered from his injuries.

Three troublesome pubs

The *Woodman*, the *First & Last* and the *Tin Pot* appear comparatively often in press reports of selling beer out of hours, allowing drunkenness, and assault.

The *Woodman* was first licensed in the early 1830s and had several licensees before its first appearance in the local press in 1858; the Herts Ad. told the story of a violent fight involving three poachers and two gamekeepers in Priors Wood in the middle of the night. The police called at the *Woodman* at 4.00 am next morning and found two of the poachers in bed showing a 'sanguinary appearance'. Licensee James Archer was fined 10s. with 17s.6d. costs later in the same year for selling beer out of hours (see page 56) and a suspected poacher was arrested in the bar in March 1863. In August 1864, Ellen Swallow was convicted of assaulting Emma Crawley in the pub; she had a previous conviction and went to prison for 14 days. Emma was the daughter of Samuel Crawley who took over the pub in 1865. In that year and again in 1867 he was fined for selling beer out of hours and in 1868 for refusing to admit the police. He lost the licence in 1869 and there is no evidence that the pub ever reopened.

The *First & Last* was another comparatively small and short-lived business. It is likely that it had been licensed for some years before 1868 when licensee John Thompson appeared in court charged with selling beer out of hours. Despite Thompson's plea that the five men found in the taproom on a Sunday afternoon had entered his house uninvited, he was convicted and fined £1 with 12s. 6d. costs. In January 1870, he was convicted of selling beer in short measures and in 1871 of selling beer on Good Friday afternoon. On this occasion,

Fig. 4: The pubs of Gustard Wood

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