

WOKING'S PUBLIC HOUSES - LOST & FOUND

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In Woking Town Centre more 'bars' and places selling alcohol seem to have opened up in the last twenty years than have closed, with Chertsey Road in particular attracting many such establishments, after many of the traditional shops on the street moved out (or closed) when the Peacocks opened in the early 1990s.



For ages I had tried to find a picture of the Farm Hotel in Triggs Lane, before an eagle-eyed reader of an article I did for the Woking Informer sent me this picture a couple of years ago.

In other streets, wine bars and restaurants have slotted in amongst the shops notably on the outskirts of the town centre in Guildford Road and Goldsworth Road. Hotels too seem to have suddenly started to increase, after a couple of losses such as the Northfleet Hotel in Claremont Avenue and the Cotteridge (later Litten Tree) on the corner of Guildford Road and Constitution Hill (below). Long before that the Crosslee Hotel (Heathside Crescent), Redlands Hotel (Guildford Road) and Heathside

Hotel (Coley Avenue) closed down, although they were mainly 'residential' rather than 'commercial' hotels. The only significant loss in that area was in Park Road in the late 19th century when the Castle Ramwick Inn was turned into a cottage having lost a lot of its trade when the illegal prize fights were stopped on Woking Common.

A recent loss in that area, however, is the Collage Arms in College Road (named in

commemoration of the Royal Dramatic College that stood on the site now occupied by the Lion Retail Park), whilst in Goldsworth Road the Goldsworth Arms is awaiting a similar fate.

There was once a beer house called the Red Lion (and probably the Royal Oak) in College Lane, off Triggs Lane, now turned into a house, whilst just around the corner the Farm Hotel closed in the 1960's to be replaced by the houses of Triggs Close.



Plans in recent years for the site of the Goldsworth Arms have included a drive through take-away, but all have so far been rejected by planners



Moving on to St Johns the Black Horse public house (in Blackhorse Road) is now a house known as the Old Garden, with new houses replacing the site of the Prince of Wales (above during demolition) near Kiln Bridge in the centre of the village.

The Brookwood Hotel, opened in 1864 beside the new Brookwood Station, is now offices, and

in Knaphill new houses have replaced the Queens Head in Robin Hood Road and a beer house called the 'Royal Standard' on Anchor Hill. The Royal Standard actually closed in the early 1920's when the Barley Mow in Barley Mow Lane also shut its doors for the last time and was turned into a private house.

The Barley Mow was actually in the village of

Horsell, which remarkably has managed to retain all of its old public houses, although its brewery (at Old Malt Farm, Brewery Road) closed down at the start of the First World War.

The Barley Mow on the corner of Barley Mow Lane and Chobham Road dates back to the 16th century, when it is claimed it was a hunting lodge for Windsor Forest.

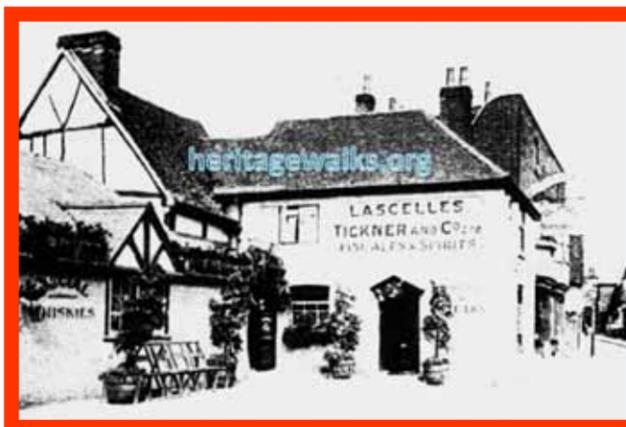




The Brewery at Byfleet closed in the late 19th century and at least one public house has been lost there - The Kings Head in Chertsey Road – the Royston Hotel on the corner of Oyster Lane and the High Road apparently being residential and probably not having a licence to sell alcohol.

There was a public house known as the Sun Inn in Pyrford Road at what became West Byfleet, but when the station opened nearby in 1887 its licence was transferred to the Byfleet Hotel (also known as the Station Hotel, later as The Claremont and now the Catherine of Aragon).

Pyrford's one pub (the Anchor) has survived, but in Old Woking a number of public houses have disappeared including recently the White Hart (which dated back to 1700 at least), and before that the Queens Head (below - almost opposite Gloster Road). In the early 20th century the White Horse Hotel (above central) closed, opposite the Old Brew House, which itself closed in 1890 at about the same time as the Hand & Spear beer house (where the car park is



now opposite the turning to Send). Another public house called the Red Lion used to be on part of the site now occupied by the petrol station in the High Street.

The public house at Westfield – the Cricketers – used to be in the house behind before a new one was built in the 1930's, but that has now closed and is an Oriental restaurant.

Finally on the other side of Westfield, by Lower Westfield Farm on Robin Hood Lane, was a pub

In anywhere else the riverside location of the White Hart would have been exploited by the owners of the site to the full, with seating by the River Wey and a family-orientated menu attracting people from miles around - but not in Old Woking. Here the brewery decided that the best policy was to run the pub into the ground; to spend no money on repairs and up-grading; and to make certain that the pub was as 'un-viable' as possible.

The riverside setting that could have made the pub one of the best in the area was also attractive to developers, who despite the fact that the garden is subject to flooding, want to cram as many houses in as possible and 'convert' the existing building into apartments.

The developers, yet again, have won the day, and Old Woking has lost yet another amenity. That's progress!

called the Bold Robin Hood. This closed in the early 20th century and is now a private house called Sackleford (below).

I hope I haven't missed any of the former public houses of the area, but if I have I am sure someone will soon let me know.



A NEW(ISH) PUB IN A BUILDING FULL OF HISTORY

Whilst several old public houses have closed in the Woking area in recent years, another old building received a new life in the 1980's when it was turned into a Beefeater Restaurant.

Bridge Barn, as the name suggests, was once a farm building dating in parts to the 16th century. Fortunately most of the old building has been preserved, although whether it will retain its Grade II listing is uncertain as it has now been swamped by later additions.

The site was at one time a small nursery (run independently from the larger Goldsworth Nursery upon which most of Goldsworth Park was built), and in the mid 20th century a riding school was established on the site.

The road it is on was originally part of Arthurs Bridge Road, but with the building of Lockfield Drive the old Arthurs Bridge became redundant and the stretch of road on the Goldsworth side of the new by-pass was re-named Bridge Barn Lane. That no doubt helps people looking for the entrance to the public house, although ironically Arthurs Bridge itself is now cut off from the road that bears its name.



A NEW(ISH) BUILDING WITH A PUB FULL OF HISTORY

In Chertsey Road a number of bars and places selling alcohol have opened in recent years, such as Weatherspoon's that took over the old Woolworth's store (and Barrenger's on the corner with Duke Street), when the former moved to The Peacocks in 1992.

The public house has a wealth of old photographs on the walls (many supplied from my own collection when the pub first

opened), so that it is possible to work your way around the rooms (with pint in hand) and learn a little about the history of the area.

Old Pictures of Old Woking can be found by the seats on the right as you look towards the bar, the local connections of famous personalities such as Lady Margaret Beaufort and John Donne can be found on the pillars by the bar, and in the room where Barrenger's shop used

to be the story of the Royal Dramatic College and its various successors can be found. And on the ceiling in the main bar area you can spot the *Time Machine* (a clock whose hands move backwards) with quotes from H.G. Wells' famous novel *The War of the Worlds*, and in the window a representation of the *Invisible Man* - all commemorating that Wells lived nearby when all three great science-fiction books were being published.

