

1 Brief history of inns

This is based on a presentation given by Paul Jennings of the University of Bradford to the Great Ayton Community Archaeology Project on 14 May 2008, and his two published books on the subject.

1a) Coaching inns

By the end of the seventeenth century it is estimated that there were 60,000 inns in England and Wales. This number rose to a peak of 119,000 licensed premises in England and Wales in 1869. Today there are about 50,000, and the number is declining daily.

Inns had several roles. Coaching inns were the largest inns, and formed a vital part of the transport system, functioning rather like railway stations in later years. Passengers could join and leave the coach, might eat and stay overnight. Inns provided stables and fresh horses. Consequently, towns on major routes had a great many inns; Daniel Defoe commented that Doncaster was 'full of great inns', and Wetherby had eight or nine coaching inns. However, quality inevitably varied; the frequent traveller John Bing kept a journal and commented on being served greasy stout at Knaresborough and being kept awake by mice at Settle.

As soon as the railways arrived the stage coaches were doomed, since they could not possibly compete on speed and convenience. The journey from Leeds to London, which had taken 24 hours by fast mail coach, was cut to only 10 hours by the new railway. Making the best of the changes, some of the existing coaching inns near the railway became Station Hotels, while new inns were built specifically near stations.

Inns were centres of business activities. They served as despatch and delivery points for the carriage of goods, especially on market days. Trade Directories listed the carriers who were based at inns. Trading was done at inns, hence the term 'commercial' which featured on inn signs. Often there was a specific room for traders to set out their wares and transact their business. And of course deals could be sealed with a drink.

Until well into the nineteenth century, inns were the main venue for all manner of meetings, both public and private. They had meeting rooms of varying sizes, and auctions, job interviews, club and society meetings were held there. Because of their central location, and available space, they were very commonly used for local government purposes, for example excise duties could be paid to a travelling collector who would lodge at the inn. Parish officials often met at the local inn, especially in rural areas, well into the nineteenth century. Coroner's inquests were held there, with the body being taken to a back room where the court met, although this practice was made illegal in 1907. Magistrates' Petty Sessions were held in inns.

Inns were the social centres for all classes of people, with assemblies, balls, concerts, sing-songs, games, etc. There were many different rooms for each purpose.

Inns were important in electioneering. Many had balconies from which speeches could be made. Potential voters could be treated to drinks, and party political meetings were held.

In rural areas it was common for a publican to have a second job, hence pub names such as 'The Jolly Farmer' and 'The Blacksmith's Arms' suggesting a second occupation.

1b) Ale houses

In the eighteenth century the smallest local drinking place was the ale house, with one or two rooms. It was predominantly a male establishment. As the century progressed, the ale house was upgraded or disappeared, along with the term 'ale house' which was replaced by 'public house'. A description of pubs in Pudsey shows them as ale

houses in 1820, mainly patronised by men in order to drink and play games such as skittles and puff and dart (blowing darts down a tube). There was also communal singing.

1c) North Riding licensing records

The first Licensing Act was in 1552. Licences were issued by local magistrates. There are good records for the 18th century in Northallerton.

Numbers of Licensed Premises		
	1778	1822
Whole North Riding	1324	983
Guisborough	23	17
Whitby	85	57
Langbaugh West	122	86

The Duke of Wellington's Beer Act of 1830 was designed to reduce the consumption of evil gin and to promote beer as a healthy drink. There were also some free trade motives behind the Act, which removed the tax on beer and allowed anyone to sell it without the need for a licence. By the 1820s magistrates were not keen to grant new licences for new pubs, and local landlords were often in collusion with magistrates to restrict the opening of new pubs. This was common in urban areas, where there were relatively few long-established pubs. Within three years of the Act coming onto the Statute Books, 24,000 new beer shops had opened. In towns and cities there might be a beer house on every other street.

In the face of this change, some established inns tended to move upmarket and called themselves hotels.

1d) Brewing

Outside London (where there were common brewers from the end of the seventeenth century) and some big cities, publicans brewed their own beer on the premises. Brewing was predominantly a female occupation, hence the term 'brewster'. Brewing was usually in a brew-house situated in a yard behind the pub. One aim of the Beer Act was to encourage a new breed of small brewers, but by the 1820s and 1830s big companies began to dominate the market. Joshua Tetley started brewing in Leeds in 1822. The tied-house system developed in the nineteenth century.

1e) Changing times

After 1869 Beer Houses came under the control of the magistrates and started to decline in numbers, for a variety of reasons. From being the only source of recreation for many in the early 19th century, towards the end of the century the pub became less central to social life as day trips to the seaside, cinemas, a wider variety of leisure activities and, not least, more comfortable homes, became more common. The rising Temperance Movement also played a part.

Working Men's Clubs appeared, at first as temperance establishments, but then later selling beer due to customer demand. This also provided extra income. Some pubs became less respectable in the eyes of many. Gin Palaces appeared with fine woodwork, mirrors, engraved glass and brass ornamentation.

By the start of the First World War pubs and drinking had fallen to a low point. Lloyd George declared that there were three enemies: the Germans, the Austrians and drink. Opening hours were reduced and late-night opening stopped. Beer strength was reduced and the cost of beer increased by a factor of four. Matters were a bit different in the Second World War, when the pub was seen a spart of the war effort.

Changes since the 1950s have seen a continuing decline in numbers, especially in rural areas. Pubs are now worth more as private houses. There are around 50,000 pubs today. There is competition from wine-bars, restaurants, night clubs,

and a growth in home drinking with sales from off-licences and supermarkets. Beer represents only 40% of the alcoholic drinks consumed nowadays.

1f) Some important dates

- 1552 Alehouses Act
- 1743 Spirits Act, confined retail sale of spirits to persons licensed by the justices (in response to the huge rise in the consumption of gin).
- 1828 Alehouses Act rationalised legislation. Now a licence was required from the justices for any person wishing to sell excisable liquor.
- 1830 The Beerhouse Act created beerhouses, outside the control of the justices. Such outlets proliferated.
- 1848 Legislation restricting sales on Sundays.
- 1869 Wine and Beerhouse Act required a justices' certificate for all on- and off-licence sales of beer. This effectively ended the beerhouses.
- 1872 Licensing Act. Drunkenness in public now an offence. Prohibition of spirits sales to children under 16.
- 1886 Prohibition of sale of any alcohol for consumption on the premises to children under 13.
- 1901 Prohibition of sales for consumption on or off the premises by children under 14.
- 1902 Licensing Act extended control of magistrates over licensing.
- 1921 Licensing Act confirmed many of the restrictions imposed during the First World War.
- 1923 Prohibition of sales to children under 18.
- 1960 Fruit machines permitted.
- 1961 Late night drinking in restaurants and clubs.
- 1995 Sunday and Good Friday opening allowed, also off-licence sales throughout Sundays.

2 Inns in Great Ayton

There have always been fewer inns in Great Ayton than in some other habitations of similar size. There are three main reasons for this: the village was not situated at an important junction for travellers, it did not have a market and, more recently, the Non-Conformists and Quakers formed a powerful teetotal influence.

The *Buck*, *Royal Oak* and *Tile Sheds* still exist, although the latter changed its name to the *Newton Rose* in the early 21st century. Changing names of local inns is not new; the *Royal Oak* was previously known as the *Oak Tree* and the *Green Tree*.

The *Old Crown* was between the present Conservative Club and the cottages facing the entrance to Marwood School. It had been demolished prior to the building of the school in 1851.

The *Red Lion* was on Race Terrace, possibly associated with the Carlen Brewery at Langton House on Bridge Street, now converted into apartments.

Legend has it that there were two more inns, or more probably simple ale houses. The *Guinea Pig* was between Mill Terrace and the Stokesley Road, with the tail-race from the mill passing underneath part of the building. The building on the corner of Skitterbeck and the High Street, now known as the Traveller's Rest, was also reputed to serve beer in the past.

There was briefly a *Temperance Hotel*, in the building known as Wynford House on the Guisborough Road.

3 Brewing in the village

Before the nineteenth century, most inns would have brewed their own beer, as indeed would the larger estates. The only records we have are for the Carlen Brewery on Bridge Street, which operated from the late eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century.

4 Extracts from records of licences

The Licensing Act, 1902 (2Edw.VII.c.28) called for a register of the landlords of licensed premises. There are some records in the North Yorkshire County Record Office under the title "Register of Licences Form of Entry of Conviction of Licensed Person, prescribed by the Secretary of State under Section 9 (1) of the Licensing Act 1902".

4a) The Royal Oak

Name of Licensee: John Watson
Address of Premises and Sign: Great Ayton "Royal Oak"

Name and Address of Owner: Mr Foster, Bishop Middleham Brewery Company, Ferryhill, County of Durham.

Date of Licence (grant or transfer): 1903 14th February
Description of Licence: Fully Licensed House
Conditions of Licence (if any):
Date of Conviction:
Offence of which convicted:
Sentence or Order made:

Name and Address of Owner: Newcastle Brewery Company, Newcastle
Date of Licence (grant or transfer):
1904 April 23rd Licence transferred to Jas Whitfield
1907 September 21st Licence transferred to J O'Neill
1917 June 13th Licence transferred to Stanley Harris Mitford
1942
1943
1944
1945
1945 September 12th Licence transferred to Tom Hopperton
1946 September 11th Licence transferred to Richard Beilby Kirkup
1947

Note that Stan Mitford was followed at the Royal Oak by his daughter Rene, who married Tom Hopperton.

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