

# The Barrington Arms Shrivenham

A general history 17<sup>th</sup> century - 1950

By Neil B. Maw

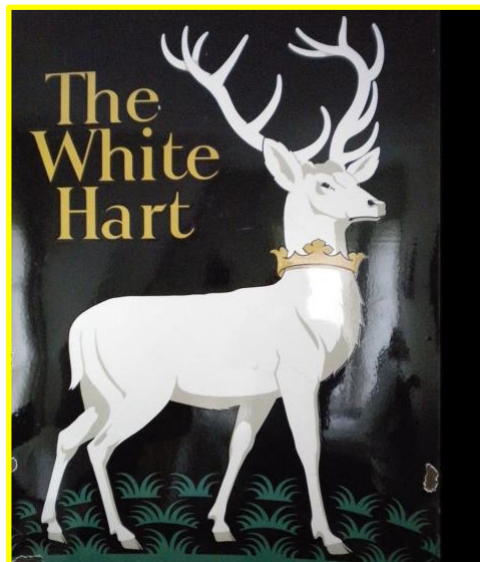
The earliest evidence we have for a Public House within Shrivenham is from the Hundred Court records. The meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1619, mentions that Richard Eloie kept a Tavern/Alehouse and sold bread, beer and victuals. By 1623 William Eloie is recorded as the Tavern Keeper. At the Hundred Court meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> October 1625, William Eloie and Thomas Gover kept the Alehouse in Shrivenham with a licence, and Thomas Davyes kept an Alehouse without a licence. The Shrivenham Salop Manor Court Rolls of 15<sup>th</sup> April 1629 inform that William Eloie kept a Tavern in Shrivenham with a licence and George Sandell and Thomas Gover kept common Taverns in Shrivenham that had been recently suppressed by the Justice of the Peace, and yet after suppression, they continued to sell beer, so they were fined two shillings. Thomas Davys kept a common Tavern in Shrivenham for two years without a licence and allowed, *'wicked consort in his house and often drunkenness against the law.'*



A view from the Cross Trees circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Paul Williams

We can be fairly certain that Shrivenham had a Tavern or Beer House for centuries, and although we have documentary evidence of the 17<sup>th</sup> century ones above, we cannot be certain where they were located. It's a common problem with historical research. We know of the existence of the King's Arms in Shrivenham, and from various documentary evidence,

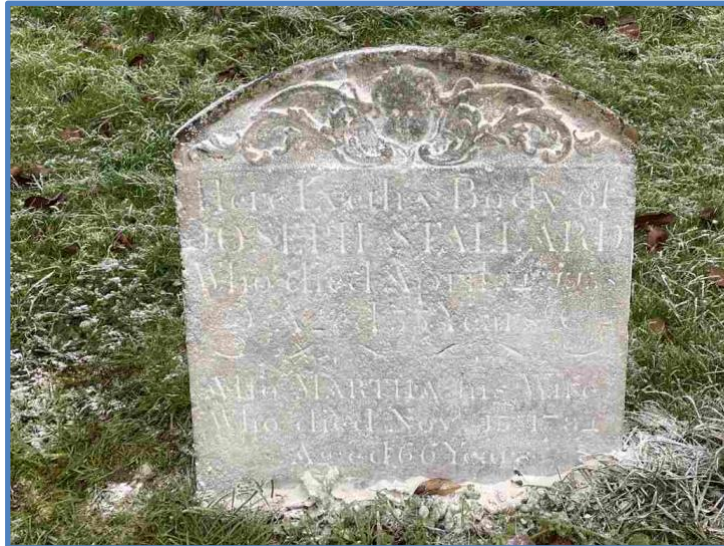
we were able to conclude that it came into existence in 1738 and was located in Church Walk. (See SHS Catalogue N1025 for a full explanation). From the documents contained within the Barrington Collection held at the British Library, we have recently learned more of the public house known today as the Barrington Arms. In a list of Deeds held by the Barrington Estate, there is one dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 1727. The Indenture is for the purchase of property between the first Viscount and Francis Lewis, Butcher, 'All that messuage or tenement and Inn called the White Hart in Shrivenham.' (BL ADD MS 73763). This explains how the pub today, known as the Barrington Arms, came into the Barrington Estate, the only pub that did so. It is also new information in that it was formerly called the White Hart.



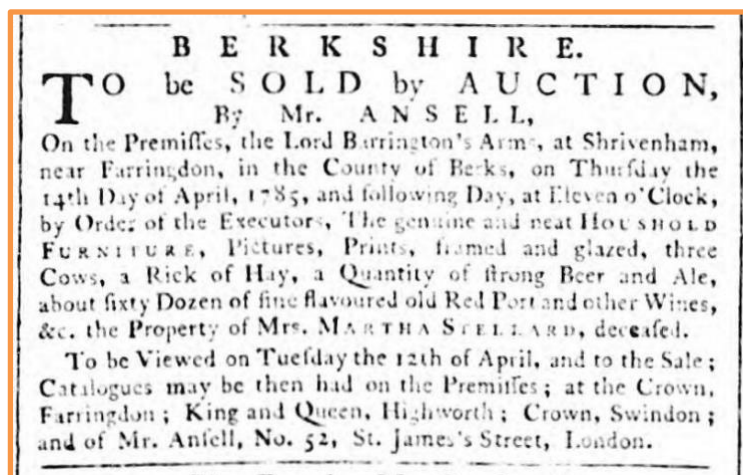
The sign of the White Hart may have looked something like this. Photo from Wikipedia

From the tax collections of the Overseers of the Poor the pub is named as, 'The Lords Arms,' in 1754, and the Landlord was Joseph Stallard. He died at the young age of 33 and we know from the Barrington Disbursement Book, (SHS N1429) that his wife Martha took over as the proprietor and regularly provided the Court Baron Meeting dinners. From an advertisement placed in the Oxford Journal dated 29<sup>th</sup> February 1772, she is described as 'widow' Stallard. The name of the pub at that time was 'Lord Barrington's Arms.' Another advertisement dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 1785, explains that her goods and chattels were being

auctioned as she was deceased. Joseph and Martha lie together in St Andrew's churchyard on the south side marked by a single stone (see below).



Their son Philip Stallard ran the pub for about a year and continued to service the Court meetings with dinners, but the following year, the landlord was William Lucas.



The tenure of William Lucas was a long one and it was he who started the business of keeping horses for stud. In 1796 he placed a large advertisement in the Oxford Journal offering his Stallion called, 'Countryman.' There were large stable buildings to the rear of the

premises and a big yard. By this time the pub was generally referred to as the, 'Barrington Arms.'

To COVER this SEASON, 1796,  
At Mr. Lucas's, at Shrivenham, near Faringdon, Berks;  
At two Guineas a Mare, and Half-a-Crown the Groom,  
That fine large well-bred HORSE  
**COUNTRYMAN.**  
Late the PROPERTY of HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS the  
PRINCE of WALES.  
**COUNTRYMAN** was bred by Mr.  
Douglas, and bought by his Royal Highness at 700  
Guineas at three Years old. He was got by Bourdeaux,  
Son of King Herod, and out of Bell's Dam by Old Marsk;  
Grand Dam, Susan by Bajazet; Great Grand Dam, by  
Regulus; Great Great Grand Dam, out of Lord Ched-  
worth's Mitbury Mare.—Any Mare having won, or bred  
a Winner of a 50l. Plate, will be covered gratis.  
COUNTRYMAN is a beautiful grey Horse, full fifteen



William Lucas died in 1815 aged 62 and was buried at St Andrew's churchyard on 17<sup>th</sup> March. His wife Susanna took over running the pub. We have confirmation of this from the letters of the Barrington Estate Steward, George Merryweather. She was still there in 1818 and is likely to have directly preceded John Pusey. They came to rest together in St Andrew's churchyard on the south side marked by a double stone (see above). We have in the SHS archive a letter from John Pusey addressed to Crowdy Solicitor in Highworth, dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 1821, saying that he has taken on the Barrington Arms. (SHS N805). It would have been under John Pusey's tenure when Thomas Bliss was served with ale on the night of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 1829. The next morning Bliss was found dead in Watchfield high street. Henry Pocock was suspected and charged, but crude reporting by the press prejudiced the trial and Pocock was acquitted. The case remained unsolved.



Local man George Canfield took on the pub around 1835. He was born in Shrivenham, his father being William Canfield who owned Fern House in Manor Lane. An unfortunate accident confirms that George was there in 1838. In the Berkshire Chronicle dated 15<sup>th</sup> December of that year, there is a report of an inquest being held at Shrivenham, before Mr Cowcher, Coroner, on the body of William Sealy. Whilst carrying out the brewing process the poor fellow had slipped and fallen into the boiling mash tub. He was so badly scalded that he didn't survive.

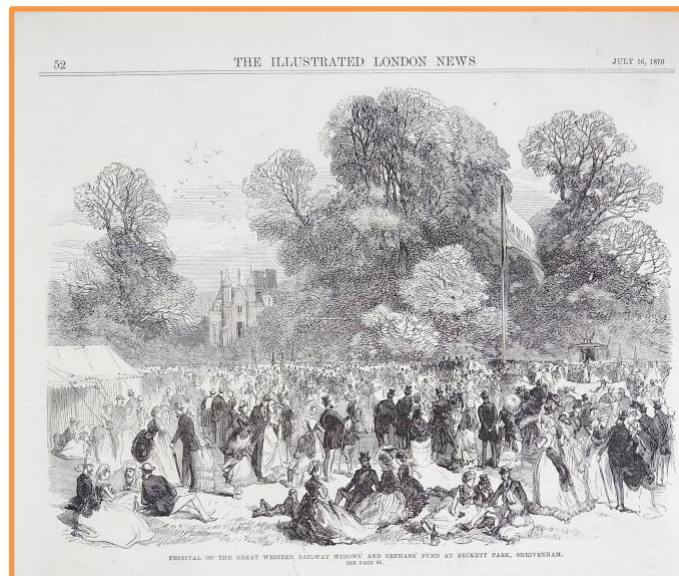
By 1840, George Canfield and the Barrington Arms seemed to be doing well with the addition of his Posting House. This was similar to our modern-day Taxi/Courier. He placed an advertisement in the Reading Mercury on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1840 where he announced, '*George Canfield begs most respectfully to acquaint the Nobility, Gentry and Public at large, that in consequence of the increased travelling through Shrivenham since the opening of the Great Western Railway to the Faringdon Road Station, he has been induced, for their better accommodation, to have Post Horses always ready.*' It was that business of taking people to and from the Station that gave him another idea. With the opening of Shrivenham Railway Station, George built a hotel. The Reading Mercury newspaper of 17<sup>th</sup> September 1842 gave the information that, '*the Justices of the Faringdon Division conferred on Mr George Canfield of the Barrington Arms Inn, a licence for the house he has recently erected at this station which will open shortly as a hotel.*' The Victoria Tavern would go on as a pub for 170 years, being converted to a domestic dwelling in 2015.



Victoria Tavern in the 1970s built by George Canfield in 1842. Photo by the late Roy Selwood

The business was taken over by his son Charles when George died in September 1865. He decided to advertise the fact by public announcement two years later when on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1867, the article in the Swindon Advertiser stated, '*Charles Canfield begs to inform Noblemen, Gentlemen and the Public that he will continue the business of the (Barrington Arms Hotel and Victoria Tavern) which have been carried on for the last 31 years by his late father.*' At the bottom he stated that there will be a conveyance at the Station at Shrivenham, to meet every train. In the same year he held a, '*House Warming Dinner*' and that was to be held on 31<sup>st</sup> October and tickets for the event would cost three shillings and sixpence (today 35pence) and would include Dinner and a Dessert. He added that Dinner would be, '*on the table precisely at Five o'clock.*' Business was obviously good for Charles but sadly his health was not as he died in April 1870 aged 30. It must have been a sad time for his wife Sarah, as in May of the same year she lost baby, Charles Newman Canfield who was 10 months old.

Sarah continued to run the business, but the Faringdon Advertiser of 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1870, informs that she was prosecuted for obstructing the highway on the occasion of the Great Western Fete in Beckett Park. She had placed a drinking booth on the road and was reported by a zealous local policeman. She was fined £1 including costs. The following year Sarah married Percy Morley at St Andrew's Church, Shrivenham and he took over the licence for the pub. In March of 1872 Sarah gave birth to a son. In November of that year Percy Morley advertised for a, '*respectable woman to manage a Railway Tavern.*' He's referring to the Victoria at Shrivenham Station. By 1874, Percy and Sarah decided to transfer both licences for the Barrington Arms and the Victoria Tavern, when at the Court Sessions at Faringdon in April 1874, John Wentworth became the new Landlord.



The Great Western Railway Fetes held at Beckett Park were hugely popular

John Wentworth's speciality seemed to be his food catering. The Swindon Advertiser for 18<sup>th</sup> October 1875 reported on the Shrivenham Cricket Club traditional match of Married versus Single. In the evening they sat down to a, *'First-class dinner, provided by Mr Wentworth of the Barrington Arms Hotel. Mr Wentworth fairly surpassed himself in the excellence of his catering on this occasion.'* He also provided the refreshments for the Horticultural Show in Beckett Park in 1877. The Swindon Advertiser of 14<sup>th</sup> November 1881 reported that, *'a number of Tradesmen and others met at the Barrington Arms and partook of a substantial supper provided by host Wentworth.'* But by 1889 it was time to move on when the licence was transferred to Thomas Phipps.

Like his predecessor the new Landlord continued to cater for the Cricket Club annual dinner. The Faringdon Advertiser for 5<sup>th</sup> October 1889 that, *'In the evening a substantial supper was provided by host Phipps at the Barrington Arms.'* It was during the Phipps' tenure that the awful Watchfield Horror took place, when John Carter murdered his third wife Rhoda and attempted to dispose of her in a most brutal manner. As he awaited his sentence of death at Reading Gaol, he admitted that he had also killed his second wife Elizabeth and identified where her body would be found at Broadleaze Farm. Subsequently, the inquest on the remains of Elizabeth was held at the Barrington Arms in December 1893. But then more sadness for the Phipps' when Faringdon Advertiser of 11<sup>th</sup> August 1894, reported the news, *'We regret to announce the death of Mrs Phipps, wife of Mr Thomas Phipps, of the Barrington Arms*

*Hotel, which took place on Friday last, August 3<sup>rd</sup> after about a fortnight's painful illness.'* She was a popular person in Shrivenham and despite rainy weather, a large number of people gathered at her funeral at St Andrew's Church, Shrivenham. At the Coronation of Edward VII, the Faringdon Advertiser noted that, *'The Barrington Arms Hotel looked brilliant with fairy lamps forming the device E.R. with a crown on one side and a star on the other.'* But it also added that, *'A great drawback to the proceedings was the absence of the energetic Hon, Secretary of the Coronation Committee (Mr Thomas Phipps) who was unable to be present owing to a serious illness.'* But fortunately, he recovered and in 1912, the licence for the business was transferred to Albert Yates. Thomas Phipps reached the age of 86 and died in Swindon, but was buried in St Andrew's Churchyard, Shrivenham on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1926.

It was in this period of time we learn that the premises was in the ownership of a large Brewery, when an item appeared in the Faringdon Advertiser newspaper on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1910. It offered the business up for let and describes it as a *'good class Roadside and Commercial Inn, doing an excellent trade – apply to Hall's Oxford Brewery Ltd, Oxford.'* It's quite likely that when this pub was sold to them, so too was the Victoria at the Station. The Faringdon Advertiser dated 18<sup>th</sup> March 1911, carried a note on transfers and records a *'Holdover'* licence being transferred to Charles James. Could he have been an employee of Hall's Brewery? The census of 1911 confirms this and lists Charles James age 34, with his wife Ellen Elizabeth 40, daughter Katherine 7, and son Charles 4.

It was probably Albert Yates who replied to the advertisement as by June 1912 he was licensee. As well as being a pub and hotel, he seems to have kept up the traditional business that was established over a century earlier. His advertisement in the North Wilts Herald dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 1912, describes his business as, *'Family, Commercial and Posting House. Excellent Stabling with a large Yard and Capital Loose boxes with every accommodation for Hunters.'* The horse was still very much the main mode of transport – but not for much longer. He carried out the catering for a meeting of the Conservative Association in a local barn in 1913, but from 1914 things become very quiet on account of World War I.

The next change comes in February 1917 when the licence was transferred to Albert Edwards. In November 1919 he hosted a Soldier's Supper which was for demobilised soldiers, and 44 of them sat down to dinner at the Barrington Arms, *'Host Edwards providing*



*an excellent spread.'* The next we hear of him he was prosecuted for selling whisky above price. The charge read that he sold, '*one-fifth of a gill of whisky for 7pence, being one penny more than the maximum price on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March.*' He pleaded guilty.

By 1921 there was another landlord a Mr Albert Cecil Wheeler. He hosted a Cricket Supper in September of that year when about 40 people sat down to eat, and a pleasant time was had by all. He hosted another one the following year. But in October 1924, the licence was transferred to Ernest Hugh Fred Taylor.



The Barrington Arms circa 1920. From the Les Judd Collection of Shrivenham Heritage Society

In November 1924, Ernest Taylor hosted a British Legion War Veteran's dinner, when about 50 people attended. He advertised in the North Wilts Herald dated 10<sup>th</sup> October 1924, that the Hotel was under new management for the usual services, but he also offered Touring Cars for hire at 3pence per mile and Saloon Cars at 10pence per mile. The reign of the horse was by now over. In October 1926 the licence passed to Edward Henry Chambers.

Edward Chambers, or Ted as he was known, was the father of Alec Chambers, who is a sprightly 97year-old and still lives in Shrivenham (Jan 2022). Ted Chambers continued to as his predecessors had done in that he operated a bar at the Fetes held at Beckett Park in 1928

and 1929. He also applied for occasional licences to run bars at the Memorial Hall. We are reliably informed by Alec that his father continued to be the Landlord until he sadly passed away 1954. The Electoral Register for 1955 listed that Ted's widow Mabel was still at the hotel.

The Electoral Register for 1958/9 confirmed that the next licensees were Edgar Nicholas Barnes and his wife Penelope Betty Barnes. The Register also confirmed that they were still there in 1965. We don't know anything about them to date and brings us to the end of the documentary sources.

From living memory there was a man called Dennis who was the landlord for several years circa 1965 to 1973. The Parish Magazine collection at the Heritage Centre, Memorial Hall, Shrivenham, confirmed that Len and Wendy Collum were there, probably taking over from Dennis circa 1973 and were certainly there until at least 1976. The magazines confirmed that in November 1978 the proprietors were Sue and Dave but we have no family name for them. In the mid 1980s a man with the surname Treadaway was the proprietor for a short period, related to George Treadaway the landlord of the Victoria at Shrivenham Station. He was followed by Vic Sedgwick circa 1987 to the early part of new millennium.

If any reader can help with names and dates, or have any stories concerning the pub, then please get in touch with us at, [info@shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk](mailto:info@shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk)

