



The King & Queen public house at Longcott

The history known so far

By Neil B. Maw



The King and Queen Inn, Longcott circa 1925. Photo courtesy of Paul Williams

We are fortunate in that we know the beginnings of the Public House that is the King and Queen at Longcott, near Shrivenham, in what used to be the county of Berkshire, but now Oxfordshire. The Steward of the Beckett Estate called George Merryweather provided the following information in one of his many letters to George Lord Viscount Barrington (5<sup>th</sup>).

Shrivenham Heritage Society have recently transcribed the letters that are contained within the Barrington Collection at the British Library, and can be accessed on the SHS online catalogue at <http://www.shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk/listing.asp?listID=1549>. The following extract comes from Letter No 63, Page 184, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1818;

*'Mr Heath of Faringdon, a Brewer, the owner of the publick (sic) house at Longcott, is building a new publick house there, which is [estimation] of £400 to £600 cost. He has built the greater part of it near your Lordship's domain. I say nothing against that for he is an audacious man. The field called, "Apple Tree Piece," No 249 1a.0r.16p annual rent £2.15 lies close to this new public house which he is building. To his new house he has not an inch of land or stabling. This field to him must be invaluable. If I have your Lordship's authority for so doing, I should like to sell Mr Heath this field. It is quite detached from all your Lordship's other land. Mr King's bad management has not left one inch of fence around it, and all the fence belongs to your Lordship. I dread to think of the expense of enclosing it. If your Lordship will empower me, I will sell this field.'*



A cut from the Barrington Estate map of 1815. Field number 249 clearly out on its own. SHS N703

Unfortunately, we don't have any further information as to whether the field was sold to James Heath, but it seems highly likely that he bought it. He had very little space and the field would have given him the opportunity to erect stables and storehouses. James Heath

was an entrepreneur of his time and when he decided to sell up all his assets and retire, the Reading Mercury newspaper of 12<sup>th</sup> February 1848 carried a large advertisement listing what he was selling; a Brewery & Plant in Faringdon and either freehold or leasehold, nine pubs and many houses, shops, workshops etc. The King and Queen Inn was on his list but was classed as Copyhold; historically held by a tenant who inherited it from the lord of the manor, it being listed on a Court Roll. We know that there was already a cottage at the location by information from much later, when it was offered for sale as, '*a stone built and thatched cottage with a large garden, adjoining the King and Queen Inn.*' (Reading Mercury 14/10/1893). James Heath must have agreed a deal with the Copyholder and built the pub at his own cost (£400 - £600). It was that he was offering for sale, but don't know who bought it.



George Merryweather's letter provided the information of when the pub was built, but it was a newspaper advertisement that gave us the information about its name. The Oxford Journal dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1828, carried an announcement of an auction that would take place on the 5<sup>th</sup> August at the King and Queen public house at Longcott. The goods were various crops. So just ten years after it was built, we have proof of the pub's name, making it highly likely that it carried that name from the day it was built. Unfortunately, we don't know yet who was the first landlord.

**FINE CROPS OF CORN, &c.**  
*Now growing on the Farm in the occupation of Mr. T. Goddard,  
 at LONGCOTT, near Faringdon, Berks;*  
 COMPRISING ABOUT

60 ACRES of WHEAT,	10 ACRES of RYE,
10 ACRES of BARLEY,	2 ACRES of VETCHES,
38 ACRES of OATS,	And 9 ACRES of CLOVER;

**WHICH WILL BE SOLD BY AUCTION,  
 By Messrs. HARRIS and BELCHER,**  
 (Without the least reserve) at the King and Queen public house  
 at Longcott, on Tuesday next the 5th of August, precisely at  
 Three o'clock in the afternoon, under conditions of sale then to  
 be produced.  
 May be viewed on application to Mr. G. Goddard, on the pre-  
 mises, who will appoint a person to shew the lots.—Catalogues  
 may be had at the principal Inns at Faringdon and the neigh-  
 bourhood; place of sale; and of the auctioneers, Abingdon.  
 The Wheat Straw, with a small exception, may be removed  
 off the farm, and two months' credit given, on approved security.

The advertisement in the Oxford Journal of 28/8/1828

By examining the Longcot census for 1841, reading an account of an inquest that took place at the pub in 1840, and use of parish records, it's very likely we can name the licensee. The Berkshire Chronicle dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 1840, carried the enquiry into the death of James Lark (alias Williams). It was an unusually lengthy inquest that lasted two days. The victim was a mason working on the new railway line close by (The new Great Western Railway). It was late in the evening and the deceased with his friends got into an altercation with other men who wanted a drink. It was stated that, '*the landlady*,' refused to serve them as it was past closing time, but they persisted and a fight ensued with those already inside. The deceased took a bad blow to the nose with a stone and subsequently died from his injuries. There are two other occasions within the article that refer specifically to the Landlady, but don't name her, with no mention of a Landlord. On page 15 of the 1841 census there is listed a 40-year-old Hannah Whiteman, '*Inn Keeper*,' and what we assume is her daughter Jane, aged 15. There is also recorded in parish records for Faringdon, the death of a William Whiteman in 1839. Whereas this evidence is not 100% conclusive, it's strong enough to assume that Hannah Whiteman was very likely the Landlady in 1840.

The next name of a landlord comes from the advertisement mentioned above in 1848, when the sale of the pub included that it was in the occupation of William Hickman. This is also confirmed by the same name being listed in the Kelly's Directory for 1848. We learn of the next landlord in a newspaper a few years later. At a Faringdon Court Petty Session it is

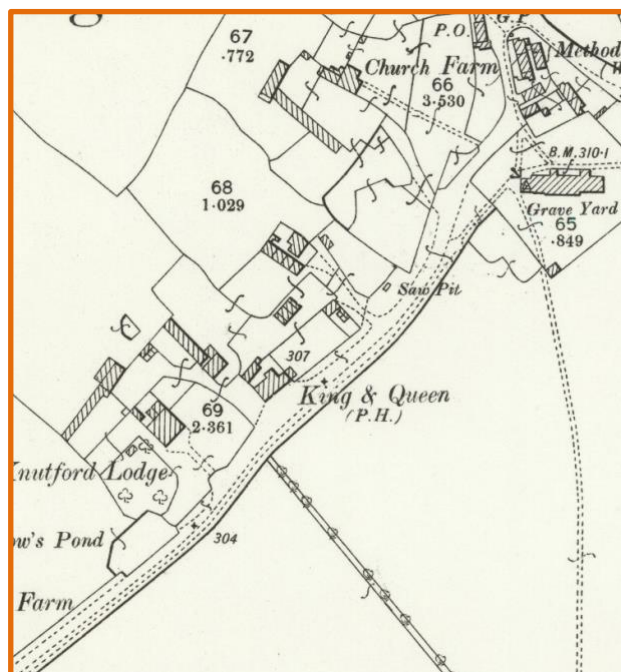
noted, *'Mr Thomas Patience, landlord of the King and Queen Inn, Longcott, applied for a renewal of his licence, which in consequence of information which had reached their worships, had been suspended for a fortnight. Licence granted after a severe admonition'* (Reading Mercury 22/9/1855). Whereas we don't know yet exactly what the misdemeanour was, we get some further idea of Tom Patient's character by the following. The Reading Mercury for 5<sup>th</sup> December 1857 describes the hound pack hunting that took place a few days earlier and noted that they met at the King and Queen Inn, Longcott. It also describes that, *'Luncheon was provided by (mine worthy host) Mr Tom Patients, in his well-known characteristic style.'* Then he appeared in court again when, *'Thomas Patient, the landlord of the King and Queen Inn, Longcot, and William Wake, the younger, his Ostler, were summoned by Henry Smith for an assault. It appeared that complainant was in Patient's house when some words ensued between him and Wake, upon which the latter knocked him down, and the landlord then assisted Wake in removing complainant from the house. This constituted the assault and the defendants were each convicted in a penalty of 1shilling and 11shillings and 6pence costs, which they paid'* (Berks Chronicle 5/3/1859). In May of the same year, Tom Patient was in court again for serving beer out of hours on a Sunday. Apparently, there were some extenuating circumstances and he was only fined 1shilling with 13shillings costs (Wilts & Glos Standard 14/5/1859).

It was some short time after this that Tom Patient left the King and Queen Inn and the licence was taken over by James Spindloe. We don't know much about him because he didn't stay very long. He appeared on the Longcott census of 1861 aged 23 with his wife Sarah age 22. His occupation is strangely listed as, *'Landlord House,'* and there is no indication that he's at a public house. But we know the information is accurate as the Reading Mercury for 30<sup>th</sup> November 1861 printed, *'The licence of the King and Queen Inn, Longcott, lately occupied by Mr James Spindloe, was transferred to Mr John Carter of Watchfield, farmer and dealer, the future landlord.'* He seems to have behaved himself as there are no court appearances and there is no newspaper recording of the transfer of the licence to the next landlord. We learn that information from the details of an auction that was advertised in the Reading Mercury newspaper.

The advertisement was headlined, *'Highworth, Wilts. Important sale of Freehold Brewery and Malt House, with several Inns, Public houses and Land, in consequence of the death of one of the Partners.'* This was also known as, *'The Sun Brewery.'* The auction was to take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1866 at the Goddard Arms, Swindon. Included within the list of pubs was, *'the King*



and Queen at Longcot, Berks, with stabling and garden, in the occupation of Sylvanus Miller.' (Reading Mercury 8/9/1866). A search of the newspapers revealed no details of the outcome of the auction and we learn nothing more of landlord Sylvanus Miller. He wasn't at the pub for long because a newspaper article informs that, 'George Hazell, of Longcot, Innkeeper, was charged with permitting a pony to stray on the highway, and was discharged on paying 5shillings costs.' (Reading Mercury 19/9/1868). We get proof of which pub from the Longcote census of 1871 that shows George Hazell (b.1824) was landlord of the King and Queen. He had a large family; George was 47 and his wife Susan was considerably younger at 28. They had living with them two daughters and five sons, ages ranging from 1 to 15. But tragedy hit the family when George died. He was buried on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1880 at St Andrew's churchyard in Shrivenham, leaving Susan to look after the pub and the family. However, she had neglected to have the licence transferred into her own name and that was brought up at the annual licensing day in September of that year. Although the magistrates agreed to adjourn her application whilst she got her affairs in order, it seems not to have worked. (North Wilts Herald 6/9/1880).



Located on a road that would attract passing traffic was a shrewd choice by James Heath in 1818

The Census of 1881 was carried out in April and the landlord of the King and Queen was shown as John Pocock, aged 50 with his wife Elizabeth aged 49, and Emily Fowler an 18-year-old servant. Susan Hazell was listed as still residing in Longcott and labelled an, *'Innkeeper Out of Business,'* and she still had six children with her. The Pocock family had strong connections with Watchfield. It was a David Pocock who was landlord of the Royal Oak at Watchfield at this time, although we have no confirmation that he and John were related. But it seems very likely as John owned property there and it was that property that was to cause trouble for him.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1886, John Pocock claimed that he was beaten up by Thomas Carter and Thomas Miles, both labourers of Watchfield. At the subsequent court case it was explained that John Pocock, who owned some cottages in Watchfield, went to visit them in company with a builder. When he tried to access the rear of his cottages he was assaulted by Miles and Carter. It was subsequently explained that there had been a dispute over access for some time. The lawyers for the complainant and the defence quoted several examples of previous cases, that led the magistrates into dismissing the case and advising John Pocock to take his plight to the Quarter Sessions. But this trouble probably paled to insignificance for John Pocock when, two months later, his wife Elizabeth died on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1886, age 54 (b.1832). (Faringdon Adver 4/9/1886).

Just under two years later John Pocock decided to give up the tenancy of the pub and the licence was transferred to William Thomas Brown. (Wilts & Glos Standard 7/7/1888). A year later saw him again using the law when he sued William Hollyoak, a Blacksmith of Longcott, for 18shillings and 9pence, which he alleged was owed for pints of gin and other spirits that he supplied whilst he was the landlord of the King and Queen. Before we leave the tenure of John Pocock, mention must be made of the man responsible for what became known as the, *'Watchfield Horror.'* This was brought about by John Carter of Watchfield who not only murdered his third wife but had also murdered his second wife some years previously. At the subsequent trial, it emerged that third wife Rhoda had worked at the King and Queen, and John Pocock had many conversations with John Carter about his second wife, Elizabeth, who Carter claimed had run off with another man. It was just a few hours before his execution at Reading Gaol that John Carter confessed to killing Elizabeth and explained

where to find her body at Broadleaze Farm, just down the road a little from the King and Queen. (Faringdon Adver 9/12/1893).



John Carter of Watchfield – a regular at the King & Queen.  
Executed at Reading Gaol for murder in December 1893

Something must have happened to cause William Brown to quit the pub so quickly when in April the following year, a holdover licence was granted to Frederick Griffin. (Faringdon Adver 13/4/1889). As yet, we don't know what the reason was. Fred Griffin's full licence was granted in July of that year. (Faringdon Adver 6/7/1889). The census for 1901 provided more information on Fred Griffin who was listed as age 42 with his wife Mary age 49, and two lodgers. But the Griffins seem to have taken time-out for some reason, when the Faringdon Advertiser for 27<sup>th</sup> September 1902, printed that a holdover licence for the pub had been granted to Frederick Tucker.

Fred Tucker seemed to be a man in trouble right from the start. The following month after moving in he was summoned for the illegal removal of pigs. There were rules in place to prevent the spread of Swine Fever, but it was alleged that Fred Tucker moved some pigs to Swindon without the correct licence. He was fined. In December of the same year he was also in court for allowing drunkenness in his pub and the police had called on an occasion because of serving alcohol after the permitted time.



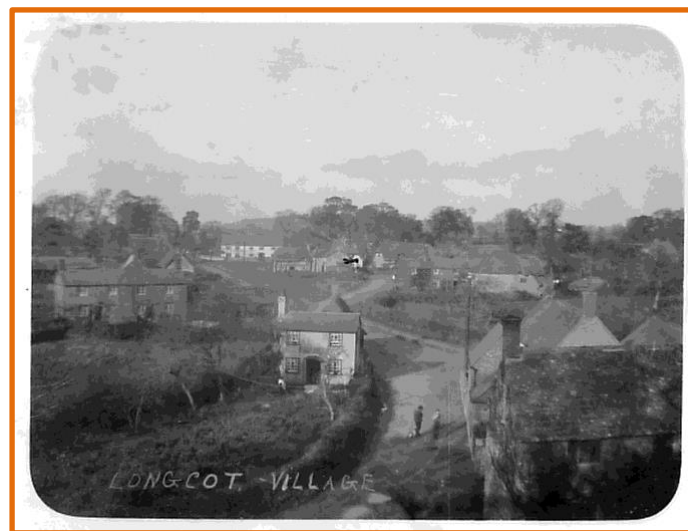
Like other pubs, this particular time in the history of the King and Queen experienced a lot of disruption with the regular change of landlords. The cause of it seems to be the fluidity with which one brewery was bought out by another, taking the pubs that they held with them. It was clear from his behaviour that Fred Tucker was not going to last long and he was there only on a holdover, or temporary licence. But then we have a curious listing that was printed in the Reading Mercury on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1903, whereby a holdover licence was granted from Thomas Hazell back to Frederick Griffin. Where did Thomas Hazell come from? It may be that it's a mistake on the part of the newspaper, but the Faringdon Advertiser of 20<sup>th</sup> August 1904, makes it clear that Fred Griffin was indeed the licensee again when he appeared at the Police Court in Faringdon to give a statement on railway navvy John Broadhurst being drunk and disorderly. The census of 1911 also confirmed that Fred Griffin was still running the pub along with his wife Mary.

The Sun Brewery at Highworth became J. Wadley & Co who inherited the pubs that were with the administration previous to the sale in 1866, and the King and Queen was one of them. Messrs Wadley, brewers, were noted in a newspaper item saying that they would be carrying out certain repairs at the pub shortly. (Faringdon Advertiser 24/2/1906). Wadley was purchased by Ushers in 1918 and again the King and Queen Inn went with them.

Fred Griffin died in 1913 aged 54, (b.1859) and his wife, Mary Ann died in 1926 aged 75 (b.1852). She was buried in St Mary's churchyard at Longcott (see below). The Electoral Registers for Longcott for the years following suggested that there was either nobody at the pub, or that for a period it was not trading. The Electoral Register of 1936 listed that Charles Francis Bint was landlord of the pub. We also have a newspaper article from then, with news of a wedding. *'Mr & Mrs C.F. Bint, who are the proprietors of the King and Queen, were happy that their only daughter Hilda, was to marry Arthur Harvey from Watchfield.'* The wedding took place at Longcott Parish Church and was conducted by the Rev B.M Hawes. (North Wilts Herald 18<sup>th</sup> September 1936).



The Electoral Register for 1952 listed that Arthur E. Harvey had taken over as the landlord. He was still there in 1965 and we don't know when the next change occurred. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed the newspapers printed less and less of the magistrates licensing sessions making it more difficult to discover who were the landlords. Also, the licensing records, especially for Berkshire have not survived. So other sources of information will need to be found to trace the more modern landlords. We will update this history in the light of new information. We would also welcome information from readers who may have memories, letters, stories that involved the pub or its proprietors.



The village of Longcot circa 1905 – a much slower pace of life. Photo courtesy of Paul Williams. Below – as it is in 2020. Photo by Neil B. Maw

