

NEWSLETTER

Updating Hampshire's History

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VICTORIA
COUNTY
HISTORY



Hampshire

VCH at the Family & Local History Day
Basingstoke Discovery Centre, 13 October 2013



In his will of 1610, husbandman Thomas Yonge of Up Nately left nothing to chance when he specified that his grave should be dug by William Groyn for a fee of 10s. He also named six men who were to carry him to the church. They received 6s 8d each for their pains. **Wills Reading Group**

John Renouf's Watch

There were two dates in the Basingstoke calendar where mayhem and mischief could generally be guaranteed. One was Bonfire Night when unpopular, or simply unfortunate, citizens were likely to have a live firework thrown into their houses or shops. The other was the Michaelmas Fair, part hiring fair, part funfair, which attracted people for miles around, including pickpockets and other ne'er-do-wells.

After the Michaelmas Fair in 1831, there was a disturbance between, 'a desperate gang of gypsies, under the command of the noted Sam Ayres' and some country carters at the **Horse and Jockey** in Hackwood Road. The landlord sent for the constables, and in attempting to break up the fight, Mr Renouf, one of the constables, 'was knocked down and beat in a most shameful manner and had his watch stolen from him.'

Some five years later, in March 1836 John Aslett from Ashe visited Gregory's watchmaker's shop in Winchester Street and said he had a watch for sale. When Mr Gregory examined the watch he noticed it had his own mark on it, so he consulted his ledger, and discovered that it was the watch he had repaired for Mr Renouf some six years ago. Mr Gregory asked his son to call for a constable, and Aslett was charged with receiving stolen goods. When the case came to court, Aslett said he bought the watch from a pedlar at Winchester Fair about four years before. After retiring for about 20 minutes to consider the evidence, the jury returned a not guilty verdict.

Bob Clarke

Chamber Pots, Bibles and Violin Strings

The Group has recently posted onto the Hampshire section of the VCH website a brief history of fairs, markets and shops in Basingstoke from 1700 to 2014. The document is at www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire/work-in-progress/basingstoke-retail-1700-2014

Wills and inventories show that the shopkeepers in Basingstoke were some of the wealthiest people in the town. Many of the shops stayed in the same family for generations. The Herne family were shopkeepers in Basingstoke from the 17th to the early 19th century. The inventory of the grocer Oliver Herne, dated 1747, shows the variety of goods he sold in his shop, ranging from candles, soap and sugar, to chamber pots (12 small at 3d each and 16 large at 5d each), bibles, and violin strings.



It was from Basingstoke that Jane Austen's father bought her the little writing desk on which she wrote all her novels, and where two important chains of shops were started, one by Thomas Burberry, who opened his first shop in Basingstoke in 1856, and another by Alfred Milward, who started selling boots and shoes from a handcart the following year.

By the early 20th century Basingstoke and the surrounding villages were served by a mixture of locally-owned shops and national chains. By 1911 the Home and Colonial, International Stores, Liptons and Timothy Whites had opened branches in the town, and Woolworths arrived in 1921. They were joined by Marks & Spencer and W H Smith in 1934.

This pattern largely continued until the 1960s when many local businesses were displaced by the town centre development and never re-opened. Despite this, there were complaints that the shopping centre was too small to cater for the area, that there was a lack of upmarket shops, and that it was seen as a convenience shopping centre with little to attract visitors.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the 1960s shopping centre was extended and rebranded as Festival Place.

Festival Place opened in October 2002 with 165 stores, mainly national chains, 28 restaurants, bars and cafés, a sports centre, library, and a multi-screen cinema. Basingstoke was also being served by out-of-town stores, including those in retail parks at Chineham and Brighton Hill, grocery superstores on Worting Road and at Hatch Warren, and convenience stores and mini-supermarkets on the housing estates.

Bob Clarke

Research continues into the rural parishes surrounding Basingstoke. Read recently published draft text on Newnham at: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire/work-in-progress/newnham-introduction>

Hampshire VCH group is currently researching the history of Basingstoke and its surrounding rural parishes. When a rural chapter or urban section is completed, it is published on the Hampshire section of the national VCH website: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire> Transcriptions of documents used for research and short articles about interesting local people, places and themes are published on the Explore section of the same national VCH website: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/>

SOME BASINGSTOKE INNS

The Fallen Angel

Before the railway came to Basingstoke in 1839, the **Angel** was one of the biggest coaching inns in the town, serving travellers using the busy Western Road. The **Angel** had stabling for 80 horses and the landlord, Richard Curtis, kept 500 horses for coaching and posting purposes. He spent £1,000 a year in shoeing horses and farmed 900 acres of land, most of which was his own property. He was worth £43,000.

When the railway came, his coaching and posting business collapsed. He had to mortgage his property, and was nearly £6,000 in debt to the Basingstoke Bank. In 1849 he was unable to repay part of his loan and had to transfer all his property to trustees for the benefit of his creditors. In July 1850 the trustees auctioned his property. The lots included the **Angel**, the **Black Boy** in Church Street, the **Pheasant** in Bunnian Place, the **Crown and Anchor** in Chapel Street, the **Jolly Farmer** at Cliddesden, the **New Inn** at Monk Sherborne, the **New Inn** at Tadley, and the premises formerly occupied by the **Crown** in Winchester Street. His property also included the Lickpit Estate in Basing, comprising 231 acres, Chapel Farm in Basingstoke comprising 206 acres, Old Castle Field near the centre of town comprising 15 acres, and other buildings and land in Basingstoke and surrounding villages as far afield as Bagshot in Surrey.

After the **Angel** was sold, Curtis and his family were given notice to quit, which he ignored, and in February 1851 they were forcibly evicted. In January 1852 Curtis went to prison for debt, came out around 23 March, and went back in again on 9 September 1852. He paid his creditors 1s 10d in the pound on 23 August 1858.

To add insult to injury, the **Angel** later became the **Old Angel Café**, a temperance house. *Bob Clarke*



The **Angel Inn** in Winchester Street, 1862. The former **Crown** is the tall building on the right further down the street.

The Broken Crown

The **Crown** was another victim of the railways. The landlady, Eliza King, was made bankrupt, and one of her ostlers committed suicide for fear of being sent to the workhouse. The **Crown** and its yard were put up for sale by order of the Sheriff of Hampshire, but such was the lack of demand that Charles Paice, the Auctioneer, had to hold three separate auctions in May 1840.

The importance of the **Crown** in its glory days can be seen from those auction notices. The items to be sold included 21 post horses, four mules, two cows in calf, 15 pigs, post chaises, flies, mourning coaches, 170 dozen bottles of port and sherry wines, 300 ounces of plate, brewing plant, 2,000 gallons of beer, the furniture of 30 rooms, 27 bedsteads, 27 feather beds, mattresses and bedding, mahogany furniture, linen, carpets, china and glass. The **Crown** ceased to be an inn. *Bob Clarke*

Read more about the impact of the railways in the Basingstoke area:

<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire/work-in-progress/basingstoke-and-railways>



The **Fleur de Lys**, London Street, Basingstoke in 1868

An 18th Century Brewer

Brewer William Downes died in 1770 leaving considerable assets in his brewhouse - 47 pounds of hops and equipment including a horse mill for grinding malt, an apple mill and a cider press in his yard. In his storehouses he had 305 barrels of strong beer valued at £457 10s, 330 empty barrels, 29 pipes and other equipment as well as another 89 barrels and five wine pipes in a 'sundry place'. Pipes were large barrels of wine or ale holding 126 gallons. Having his own mill suggests that he may have been selecting his own grain to blend rather than buying ready prepared malt.

Public houses selling strong beer of a porter type (up to 4-5% alcohol), at this time were competing with the gin houses. Beer was best brewed during the colder months of the year to minimise infection of yeast. Strong beer was very suitable for storing as it contained a high proportion of sugar and being black, any unpleasant cloudiness was masked.

Downes held leases on four Basingstoke public houses, namely the **Shepherd and Shepherdess**, **Goat**, **Fleur de Lys** and **Royal Oak**, the latter from the Duke of Bolton, all of which he rented out. He also had an interest in four more houses - the **Rose** at 'Kersleys', a location not identified, the **Wheatsheaf** in Tunworth, the **Tun Tub** and **Blue Anchor** in Basingstoke. By owning an interest in the pubs the tenants were in effect tied and obliged to supply his beer which he could also protect from contamination and dilution. The **Fleur de Lys** contained a 20 gallon copper in the brewhouse, indicating possible in-house brewing.

This substantial operation must have been one of the main commercial brewing businesses in Basingstoke and outlines an 18th century specialisation with a move away from small scale production. Downes was evidently a wealthy man as can be seen from the furnishings, books and other items listed in his inventory.

Jennie Butler / Gavin Bowie

Basingstoke Pubs, 1868 - 1912

Year	Public Houses	Beer Houses	TOTAL	Pop. Census	Pop. /Pub
1868	35	19	54	4,645	86
1871	35	21	56	5,574	100
1876	36	18	54	5,574	103
1881	36	18	54	6,681	124
1888	37	17	54	6,681	124
1892	-	-	54	7,960	147
1902	38	16	54	9,510	176
1912	32	11	43	11,259	262

Of the 43 pubs in 1912, 24 were owned by, or leased to, May's Brewery, and 11 were owned by, or leased to, Farnham United Breweries.