

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CROWN INN, FOUR OAKS COMMON, SUTTON COLDFIELD



Old photograph, undated, of Four Oaks Common, featuring the Crown Inn

Sutton Coldfield Reference Library Collection



Old Crown Dental Surgery 2020

With thanks to Dr Eid

TRACING SOME OF THE OCCUPANTS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

INCLUDING

JOHN WALKER

This piece of research was inspired in part by the family tree for my husband, Peter Moore, namely his Stonehouse and Walker families.

John Walker (1832 -1890) married Mary Ann Fowell (1834 - 1911) and were his Great, Great Grandparents.

Their daughter May Emily Walker (1875 - 1933) married Thomas Stonehouse (1866 - 1950) May and Thomas were Peter's Great Grandparents. They met when Thomas Stonehouse lodged at the Crown Inn, Four Oaks, then the home of May.

Thomas and May's son, Norman (1901 - 1971) married Miriam Ann Tonks (1903 - 1994) and were his grandparents.

Norman and Miriam had a daughter Brenda Miriam Stonehouse (1927 - 2018). Brenda married John Kenneth Moore (1927 - 2008) and they were Peter's parents, along with his three siblings.

John Kenneth Moore was known to residents in Sutton Coldfield as Ken. Ken owned the shop known as J H Moore & Co., 118 Parade, Sutton Coldfield. Ken was born at the shop and inherited it from his father, John Henry Moore. They sold cycles, gramophones, records, and baby items for many decades.

John Walker featured in the local newspapers several times.

Newspaper articles from the British Newspaper Archive – Findmypast and subscription

THE LICHFIELD MERCURY FRIDAY APRIL 10 1885

“TRANSFER OF LICENSE

At the General License Transfer day on Tuesday, the following transfers were granted by the bench:- The Crown Inn, Four Oaks, from Mrs J Rymond to John Walker, late of the White Lion Inn, Hill; a temporary transfer to John Radnor for the White Lion Inn, Hill; the Plough and Harrow Inn, Muffin's Den, from James Newbold to William Wallin.”

WARWICKSHIRE HERALD SATURDAY APRIL 11 1885

“LICENSE TRANSFERS. – At the Sutton Coldfield Petty Sessions on Tuesday the following transfers of licenses were granted by the Bench: - Crown Inn, Four Oaks, from Mrs Sarah Rymond to John Walker: Plough and Harrow beer house, Muffin's Den, near Sutton Coldfield from Joseph Newbold to William Wallin; temporary transfer of the White Lion, Hill from John Walker to John Radnor.”

LICHFIELD MERCURY FRIDAY JULY 17 1885

“SUTTON COLDFIELD

Petty sessions – these sessions were held on Tuesday before the Warden (Mr H Duncalfe) and the Rev. M. Webster.

THEFT OF A BENCH

John Harrison, labourer, 3 Court, 5 House, New Street, Wednesbury, was summoned at the instance of Jno. Walker, licensed victualler, the Crown Inn, Four Oaks Common, for stealing from the premises of the Crown Inn, one wooden bench, value 3s, on the 30th ult., John Walker stated that two brakes loaded with pleasure seekers stopped on the day named, and the occupants alighted. They were proceeding in the direction of Sutton.

It was sometime after the brakes had left that he missed the bench, and from what someone told him, he gave the information to the police. On Thursday, the 9th inst., prisoner brought the bench back and said he was sorry it had happened.

Alfred Pointon, greengrocer, Hill Top, West Bromwich, stated he was driving one of the brakes, mentioned by the last witness. He saw the prisoner put the bench into the brake, and believed it was

put in to play cards on. He mentioned it to the prisoner, and he said, "I will take it back when one of the brakes go back that way".

Police-sergeant Smye said he received information from Mr Walker that a bench had been stolen from his premises, and from what complainant told him, he wrote to the Wednesbury police, and received a reply to say that prisoner denied all knowledge of the bench.

On the morning of the 9th inst., the prisoner came down to his station, accompanied by Mr Walker and P.C. Parry, and Mr Walker told him prisoner had brought the bench back. Prisoner stated to witness that two men had come to his house on the night of the 8th inst., and had told him where the bench could be found. They were strangers to him. On account of this statement witness did not lock him up, but a little later on he received a telegram from the Wednesbury police, and on reading this he went to Wednesbury and apprehended the prisoner, who admitted to taking the bench.

Prisoner stated that he was driving one of the brakes on the day named. He would have put the bench out but the horses required all his attention. When they arrived at Sutton, he would have returned that way but the party would not allow him, so he was compelled to take it on to Wednesbury but before they arrived there, he missed it. Two men, strangers to him, came and told him where the bench could be found, and he went with them, found it, and started to Sutton with it on his shoulder, walking every step of the way to Police-sergeant Smye's house.

The Bench, taking into consideration that complainant did not want to press charges, imposed a fine of £2, including costs."

A Victorian Horse Drawn Brake

At this time, a brake could have been a horse drawn carriage used to train or 'break in' young horses, either on their own, in pairs or in fours. Shooting brakes were used by blood sport parties.

It does seem that the brake in the case above was being used for 'pleasure activity'.

Sutton Park was much visited by people from the cities and towns as a resort to get away from the dirty air and to enjoy the many facilities on offer to tourists.

These activities do seem to have included visits to public houses.





Examples of horse drawn brakes in Victorian England

Source: Wikipedia creative commons usage

BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 22 1886

“SUTTON COLDFIELD PETTY SESSIONS

YESTERDAY

BEFORE THE Rector (the Rev. W. K. R Bedford), Mr H Duncalfe, and Mr E Harold Carter.

LICENSING PROSECUTION. – John Walker, licensed victualler, Crown Inn, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, was summoned for selling intoxicating liquors during prohibited hours on Sunday, the 5th inst, Mr. Joseph Ansell defended. – Police-constable Bracebridge stated that on the morning in question he saw three girls with a basket knock at defendant’s door, and heard them ask for a bottle of stout, which was handed to them. After leaving Bracebridge examined the basket, when one of the girls admitted that she had obtained the bottle of stout for her mother, Mrs Goldsby, who was ill. Witness returned to defendant’s house, when Mrs Walker acknowledged that she had given the stout to Mrs Goldsby, who was ill: but being dubious about the matter she had told the girl not to call again. – Mr Ansell admitted that a technical offence had been committed, explaining that Mrs Goldsby, who was poorly, was of the impression, too prevalent amongst large numbers of people – even among licensed victuallers – that she was entitled as a matter of right to be served with what she required. Her medical attendant had advised her to drink stout, and hence a bottle of stout had been fetched from the defendants. Mr Ansell further alluded to the unblemished character of the defendant, extending over a period of years, and under the circumstances, submitted that the justice of this case would be met with the dismissal of the summons on payment of costs. – The Bench imposed what they termed the nominal fine of 1s and costs.”

The same story was reported in the County Express on 25 September 1886 and the Warwickshire Herald on 30 September 1886.

In 1881, George Goldsby, aged 52, an agricultural labourer, and his wife Harriet, aged 50, did live at Four Oaks Common.

This Harriet seems to be a likely match to the Mrs Goldsby, who needed stout on a Sunday. George Goldsby was a farmer at Hill Hook.

In 1891, Joseph Ansell lived at The Oaklands, Lichfield Road and worked as a solicitor and Justice of the Peace.

Joseph Ansell was one of the Ansell’s Brewery family.

"IMPORTANT TO LICENSED VICTUALLERS

An important case, and one interesting to licensed victuallers, was heard at Sutton Coldfield Petty sessions on Wednesday before the Rector (Rev. W. K. H Bedford) and Messrs H Duncalfe and K Harold Carter.

John Walker. Landlord of the Crown Inn, Four Oaks Common, was summoned for supplying intoxicating liquors during prohibited hours on Sunday, the 5th inst. — Mr Joseph Ansell appeared for the defendant. — The evidence was that on the 5th inst., Police-constable Bracebridge saw three girls with a basket go to defendant's front door and ask for a bottle of stout, which was supplied them. As they were leaving, he accounted the girls, and one of them told him the stout was for her mother, who was ill. -Mr Ansell admitted that a technical offence had been committed. Mr Walker being under the impression too prevalent among people, and especially licensed victuallers, that he could supply anything to a person who was ill. Mrs Goldsby was ill, and had been ordered stout by her medical attendant, and it was for that reason the bottle of stout had been procured. He submitted that under the circumstance, and considering the good character of the defendant, who had been many years in Sutton Coldfield, justice would be met by the dismissal of the case on payment of costs. - A fine of 1s and costs was imposed."

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County Express on 25 September 1886

Birmingham Suburban Times on Saturday 25 September 1886

WARWICKSHIRE HERALD SEPTEMBER 30 1886

"SUTTON COLDFIELD ADJOURNED LICENSING SESSIONS

The adjourned Licensing Sessions were held on Tuesday at Sutton Coldfield, the magistrates on the bench being Mr. Henry Duncalfe (chairman) and Mr. E. Harold Carter. The only two cases before the court were Daniel Tilley, the holder of an out-door beer house license at Wylde Green, who had thrice previously been before the Court, being fined 40 s. and costs in one, and ordered to pay the costs in the other two charges; and John Walker, Crown Inn, Four Oaks Common, who was fined 1s and costs last week for selling during prohibited hours. Both licenses were renewed, Tilley being warned that if any further complaint were made against him, the license would not again be renewed."

WARWICKSHIRE HERALD THURSDAY DECEMBER 13 1888

“AN OCCASIONAL LICENCE

John Walker of the Crown Inn, Sutton Coldfield, was granted an occasional licence for the 19th Inst.”

The 19th of December was a Wednesday. This was an extension to the license for Christmas.

This was also reported by the Birmingham Suburban Times on Saturday December 19 1888

THE WARWICKSHIRE HERALD THURSDAY JANUARY 30 1890

“THE REPRESENTATION OF HILL WARD, SUTTON COLDFIELD

RETURN OF MR. T. HAYWARD

Monday was the day fixed for the nominations of a candidate to fill the vacant seat in this ward, caused by the lamented death of the late Councillor R. Kendrick, and two ex-councillors were nominated, one being the former representative of the ward (Mr. Goodwin), and the other the old representative of Maney Ward (Mr. Hayward). The latter gentleman was nominated twice, while the former was only nominated once, and he handed in his paper about a quarter of an hour before the close of the time fixed for the receipt of nominations. The nomination papers were filled in as follows:-

Hayward, Thomas, Manor Hill, Sutton Coldfield, gentleman. Proposer, John T Glover; seconder William Perryman; and supporters, William James, William Henry Wood, Walter Fletcher, C Arnold, W. H. Allport, Jacob Dale jnr., Henry Norgrove, Harry Dale, and W. Norcup.

In the second nomination, Mr. Hayward was proposed by **John Walker**; seconded by George Francis Johnson; and supported by Henry Allen, Richard Colley, John Storer, Jacob Wright, William Baker, William Smith, Charles Lebon, and Percy Scott.

Goodwin, Henry, Hill, nurseryman, proposed by William Loyne; seconded by Thomas Loyne senr.; and supported by George Toy, John Genders, William Greatrix, Joseph Smith, Samuel Edward Matthews, James Pickerill, Isaac Pickerill, and William Bonell.

On Tuesday Mr Goodwin retired in favour of Mr. Hayward, who has therefore been elected unopposed, and the cost of a contested election avoided.”

BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST 6 NOVEMBER 1890

“INQUEST AT SUTTON COLDFIELD

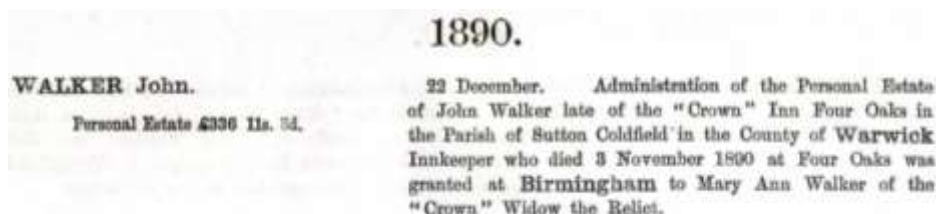
Dr Iliffe, coroner for North Warwickshire, held an inquest yesterday at the Crown Inn, Four Oaks, touching the death of the landlord, John Walker. It was stated that deceased had a slight fit on Sunday evening, and he went out for a walk at the request of his wife to witness the military manoeuvres on Monday morning. At Watford Gap he spoke to one or two friends and immediately afterwards, with a groan, fell to the ground dead. Dr Brown expressed the opinion that death had ensued through the rupture of a large artery. The jury returned a verdict of “Death from the visitation of God.” The foreman adding that the jury wished to pass a vote of condolences with the widow and family in their sudden bereavement.”

WARWICKSHIRE HERALD THURSDAY JANUARY 8 1891

“SUTTON COLDFIELD PETTY SESSIONS

TRANSFER OF LICENSES.- The license of the Museum Tavern, Parade was transferred from John Matthews to John Toy; and that of the “Crown,” Four Oaks from John Walker, deceased, to his widow, Elizabeth (sic) Walker.”

Probate entry for John Walker of the Crown Inn, Four Oaks



England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations) 1858 – 1995

The National Archives, Ancestry.co.uk.

Burial

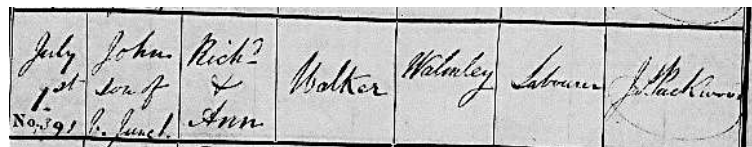
John Walker was buried at St James Church, Hill, Sutton Coldfield.

Source: the late Brenda Moore

John Walker was the Great Grandfather of Brenda Moore, formerly Stonehouse.

More about John Walker

Baptism at Holy Trinity, Sutton Coldfield



John Walker was baptised on 1 July 1832 at Holy Trinity, Sutton Coldfield.

His parents were Richard and Ann Walker of Walmley. His father was a labourer.

England C of E Births and Baptisms, Findmypast

Warwickshire C of E Baptisms 1813 – 1910 PG 2973 DR(B) 2/14

1841 and 1851 censuses

On the 1841 and 1851 censuses, John Walker lived with his parents at Walmley Ash, Sutton Coldfield.

In 1851, John worked as an agricultural labourer.

His father Richard worked as a road labourer. Richard was from the Walmley Ash area and Ann was from Middleton.

Marriage – from the certificate

John Walker married Mary Ann Fowell on 23 January 1856 at Curdworth Parish Church.

After their marriage, John and Mary Walker were found on the 1861 census living at Doe Bank, Sutton Coldfield.

The census route suggests that Doe Bank was the area where the High Street ended at Four Oaks and on modern maps accounts for the land close to Four Oaks Railway Station and towards Belwell Lane and Four Oaks Road.

In 1861, John Walker worked as a garden labourer.

In 1871, the family were still at Doe Bank, but by that time John Walker had become a farmer of thirty-seven acres.

By 1881, the family had moved to School Farm, No 2, Whitehouse Common, Sutton Coldfield.

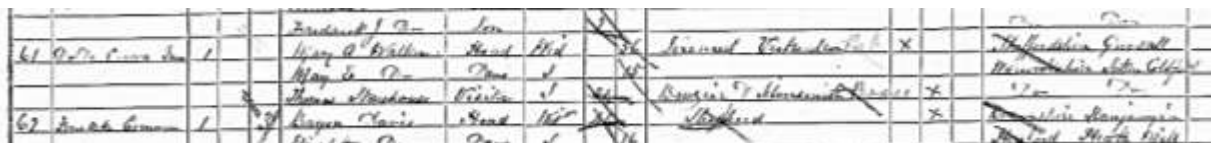
John Walker farmed twenty-four acres here.

The family moved from Whitehouse Common to the Crown Inn between 1881 and 1885.

After the death of John Walker in 1890, Mary Ann Walker took over as Licensed Victualler at the Crown Inn.

1891 census The Crown Inn, Four Oaks Common, Sutton Coldfield

Mary A Walker	W	56	Licensed victualler	b Gnosall
May E Walker		15		b Sutton Coldfield
Thomas Stonehouse	U	26	Visitor Brazier/silversmith	b Sutton Coldfield



The image shows a handwritten census document from 1891. It contains entries for Mary A Walker (W, 56, Licensed victualler, b Gnosall), May E Walker (15, b Sutton Coldfield), and Thomas Stonehouse (U, 26, Visitor Brazier/silversmith, b Sutton Coldfield). The document is written in cursive and includes other names and details that are partially obscured or crossed out.

Census abbreviations

U = unmarried. M = married. W = widow or widower. B = where born

On the 1901 census, Mary Walker had gone to live with her daughter, Annie, at Western Road, Sutton Coldfield. She was 66 and lived on her own means.

By 1911, Mary and Annie had moved to 20 Cecil Road, Erdington. Mary was 76 and living on her own means,

Mary Walker died in 1911. Her death was registered December quarter Aston volume 6d page 253, aged 76.

Probate was not found for Mary Walker.

May Emily Walker

May Emily Walker was baptised on 2 January 1876 at Holy Trinity, Sutton Coldfield.

Her parents were John and Mary Ann of School Farm, Whitehouse Common. John was a farmer.

Warwickshire C of E Baptisms 1813 – 1910 PG 2973 DR(B) 2/16

Thomas Stonehouse

Thomas Stonehouse was born on 20 July 1866 and baptised on 19 August 1866 at Holy Trinity, Sutton Coldfield to parents James and Ann Stonehouse.

England, Select Births & Christenings 1538 – 1975

James Stonehouse (1834 – 1876) married Marianne Lakin (1840 – 1872) on 17 February 1859 at Holy Trinity, Sutton Coldfield.

At the time of her death on 8 July 1872 from Phthisis, (pulmonary tuberculosis) Marianne and James lived at Fawdry's Buildings, Hackett Street, near Mill Street, Sutton Coldfield.

James died on 10 February 1876, also at Fawdry's Buildings, Hackett Street, also from Phthisis. He had been a day labourer in the town.

These deaths left three young children as orphans. It appears that Ellen, born in 1864, went over to Canada as a home child. She married and raised a family in Canada.

The youngest two children, Thomas, and his brother William, were, it seems, sent to the Josiah Mason Orphanage in Erdington.

From there, Thomas went on to become an apprentice silversmith at Elkington & Co Ltd., at Newhall Street in Birmingham. Elkington's were an especially important producer of silver plated pieces, which remain very valuable and collectable.

In 1881, Thomas was living in the household of an aunt and uncle in Sutton Coldfield.

In 1891, Thomas Stonehouse was a visitor or lodger at the Crown Inn. Brenda Moore believed he was a lodger there and he met and fell in love with May.

Stonehouse family tree records.

Marriage

May Emily Walker married Thomas Stonehouse on 27 December 1893 at Holy Trinity Church, Sutton Coldfield.

Thomas Stonehouse was 27, a bachelor of Sutton Coldfield. He was a silversmith. His father was James Stonehouse, deceased.

May Emily Walker was 19, a spinster of Hill. Her father was John Walker, deceased.

The witnesses were John James and Mary Jane Stonehouse.

Warwickshire Anglican Registers Roll Engl 09000/92 DR(B) 52/3

According to family oral history, May and Thomas Stonehouse lived at the Crown Inn until just before the 1901 census.

By 1901, the family had moved to a cottage near to the Crown Inn, called Sunnyside.

Their sons, Jack, Thomas, William and Norman were born at the Crown Inn.

Thomas and May Stonehouse had ten children.

Jack Stonehouse was born in 1894, and Norman Stonehouse was born in February 1901.

The birth certificate for Norman Stonehouse just states Four Oaks as his place of birth.

Norman Stonehouse (1901- 1971) married Miriam Ann Tonks (1903- 1994).

Their daughter was Brenda Moore (1927- 2018).

Brenda Moore was the mother of my husband, Peter Moore.

Source: the late Brenda Moore, daughter of Norman James Stonehouse.

MORE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CROWN

Firstly, we must look at the history of Four Oaks Common.

Roger Lea wrote an article on 18 January 2013 which can be found online at www.sclhrg.org.uk - Sutton Coldfield Local History Research Group. Article 241-280/2107-fouroakscommon.

Roger describes Four Oaks Common as a wedge shaped piece of land, roughly 180 acres, between Walsall Road and Streetly Lane. This area would have been sparsely populated until the extensive common land was enclosed during the 1820's. The common was converted to farmland by the new owners. The population increased a little and a few dwellings were built.

By the time of the 1851 census, just thirteen households were recorded.

Thomas Edge purchased a large tract of land with the intention of setting himself up as a gentleman farmer. He built a large mansion known as Edge Hill House. In 1851, he farmed 100 acres.

Other notable owners of land at that time were the Rectors of Sutton Coldfield and the Hartopp family of Four Oaks Hall.

A farmhouse was also built on the corner of Streetly Lane and Bennett Road.

In 1852, Richard Genders was a tenant farmer of 68 acres and Thomas Beeston held a tiny plot of a quarter of an acre at the top of Four Oaks Common Road. This plot was too small to be economical as a farm and eleven dwellings were built to be rented out as labourers cottages. These cottages were to form the corner of Four Oaks Common Road and Walsall Road, the site that later became the Crown Inn.

By 1861, Thomas Edge was 33 and married. He was a farmer of 98 acres and employed 3 labourers and 2 boys. He was from Birmingham. His wife, Elizabeth, was 42 and from Halesowen. They had a son, Thomas, aged five, who was born at Four Oaks. They employed 15 year old Mary Genders from Four Oaks as a nurse and Mary Bloomer, 16, from Halesowen, as a general servant.

The Crown Inn does not feature on the 1861 census and so far, it has not been possible to date exactly when it was built.

At cottage number 40 lived Richard Genders and Thomas Genders, farmers. At number 41 lived Charles Nicholas, a tailor. Thomas Meeson, a bessom maker lived at number 42. Thomas Thornton, a stone mason lived at number 43. At number 44 was Joseph Stevens, a coal dealer. William Enzor lived at 45 and he was an agricultural labourer. Thomas Beston was also an agricultural labourer, and he lived at number 46.

Richard Genders held 65 acres and employed one labourer and one boy. Henry Hollyoak, aged 12 lived in the household as a servant. He was from Tamworth.

By 1871, the Crown Inn existed, occupying number 42, previously occupied, we assume, a decade earlier by Thomas Meeson.

The public house was, it seems, converted from a labourer's cottage or cottages.

With thanks to the late Roger Lea and Sutton Coldfield Local History Research Group.

The first census appearance of the Crown Inn was 1871

1871 census No 42 Crown Inn, Four Oaks

John Rymond (sic)	M	48	Licensed Victualler	b Barford, Warks
Sarah Rymond	M	38		b Rowley, Staffs
Joshua Rymond		16	Butcher	b Birmingham
Lizey (sic) Rainbow		6	Visitor	b Coventry

In 1871, neighbour Richard Genders was at number 43 Four Oaks Common Road. He was a widower, aged eighty-nine and farmed 25 acres. He employed one labourer.

Richard was from Little Sutton and was blind from old age. He lived with a daughter Jane and a granddaughter, Louisa.

1872 Kelly's Directory for Warwickshire

John Frederick Ryman was the landlord of The Crown, Four Oaks.

1880 Kelly's Directory for Warwickshire

William Granger was the landlord of the Crown Inn, Four Oaks.

1881 census Crown Inn, Four Oaks Common, Sutton Coldfield

William Granger	M	56	Licenced Victualler	b Netherton, Staffs
Hannah Granger	M	56		b Cradley, Staffs
Martha Granger	U	22		b Church Eaton, Derbyshire
Alice Granger		13		b West Bromwich
Mary Bell	U	17	Barmaid	b Bilston, Staffs
Elizabeth Bell		15		b Bilston
Florence Granger			4 months old grand - daughter	b West Bromwich

Mary and Elizabeth Bell were the stepdaughters of William Granger.

Nothing further was found online for William Granger after the 1881 census.

1884 Kelly's Directory for Warwickshire

John Patrick was the landlord of the Crown Inn, Four Oaks.

Nothing further is known about John Patrick.

On the 1884 Kelly's Directory for Warwickshire, JOHN WALKER was the landlord of the White Lion at Hill.

It seems possible that John Walker was diversifying and farming along with running public houses.

1888 Kelly's Directory for Warwickshire

John Walker was the landlord of the Crown Inn, Four Oaks.

1901 Census

In 1901, the landlord at the Crown Inn was Sidney Nicholls.

Sidney Nicholls, aged 24 and Gertrude, aged 23, both from Sutton Coldfield were resident at the Crown. Sidney Nicholls was a Licensed Victualler (Pub) and an employer. Sidney and Emily had two children.

His parents were William Nicholls, a file manufacturer from Wolverhampton and his wife Mary, from Birmingham.

In 1891, the family lived at 'The Coldfield', Sutton Coldfield, now mainly known as Wylde Green. Sidney was 14 and worked as a steel roller. He had a brother, William who was 19 from Aston.

Marriage

Sidney Gruby Nicholls married Emily Gertrude Ingram on 9 May 1898 at St Michael, Boldmere.

In 1911, though still stating he was married, Sidney was a boarder at 60 Summer Hill in Birmingham.

He was a file cutter of his own account. He was possibly estranged from his family.

Military

Sidney Gruby Nicholls enlisted with the 10th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment as Private 42204, later becoming an acting sergeant.

Death

Sidney Gruby Nicholls died in Birmingham in 1919 at the age of 42.

Source: Ancestry.co.uk - family trees

1904 Kelly's Directory for Warwickshire

Charles Godfrey was listed as the landlord of the Crown Inn, Four Oaks.

There were several men called Charles Godfrey in the Greater Birmingham area in 1901.

However, one man was a promising match for the Charles Godfrey seen at the Crown Inn.

1901 Birmingham Rates Book

Occupier and Owner, Charles Godfrey, Licensed Publican. ‘

Shakespeare's Head,’ Constitution Hill, Birmingham.

Nothing further can be added about Charles Godfrey at this time.

EDWIN FINCH

1911 census Crown Inn, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

Edwin Finch	M	37	Publican	b England
Alice Finch	M	34		b Blank
Emily Finch		11		b Handsworth
Ethel Finch		7		b Handsworth

From previous census records, when the family lived in Handsworth, Edwin was from Kenilworth and Alice was from Earlswood.

EVENING DESPATCH 10 MARCH 1915

“The Sutton Coldfield magistrates yesterday had before them Albert Henry Higham (18) a groom of Walsall Road, Four Oaks, who was charged with stealing 1lb of hair from the tail of a horse in a field in Walsall Road, the property of Edwin Finch, of the Crown Inn, Four Oaks; 7 oz of hair from the tail and mane of a horse in a stable in Hill Village Road, the property of Mr L H Wodhams, grocer, Four Oaks; and 4 oz of hair from the tail of a pony in a field in Clarence Road, Four Oaks, the property of Mr Elliott Cooper, greengrocer. The offences were committed on the 5th and 6th inst. and were admitted by the defendant. In each case the value of the animal had been lessened.

The Bench ordered defendant to pay 20s compensation to Mr Finch and 10s to each of the other owners and to put him on probation for twelve months.”

1921 census Crown, Walsall Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

Edwin Finch, aged 50, from Chester. Married. Publican and farmer, own account.
Alice Finch, aged 50, from Yardley Wood. Home duties.
Emily Finch, aged 22, from Handsworth. Daughter. Home duties.
Ethel Finch, aged 18, from Handsworth. Daughter. Home duties.
May Finch, aged 10, from Four Oaks. Daughter. School.
Norman Finch, aged 9, from Four Oaks. Son. School.
Maurice Finch, aged 2, from Four Oaks. Son (?).

1939 Register One Oak, Crown Lane, Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

Alice Finch, widow, born on 18 July 1872. Retired publican.
Emily Finch, single, born on 1 August 1894. Domestic duties.

Probate

Edwin Finch of One Oak, Crown Lane, Four Oaks, died on 14 September 1939 at Wiston Nursing Home, Chester Road, Wylde Green.

Probate on 8 December 1939 to Alice Finch, widow. Effects £13,503 1s 11d

England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations) 1858 – 1995

BIRMINGHAM MAIL 16 SEPTEMBER 1939

“DEATHS

Edwin Finch, the beloved husband of Alice Finch, One Oak, Crown Lane, Four Oaks, (late Crown Inn) on 14th inst., at Wiston Nursing Home passed peacefully away age 66. Interment at the family grave at Little Aston on Monday September 18th at 2.30.

Deeply mourned by wife and son.”

Probate

Alice Finch of One Oak, Crown Lane, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, widow, died 1 February 1957 at 315 Birmingham Road, Sutton Coldfield. Probate Birmingham 19 March to Emily Jewson (wife of Clifford Jewson). Effects £606 9s 2d.

England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations) 1858 – 1995

According to the newspaper cutting below, Mr Edwin Finch owned and kept the Crown Inn between 1906 and 1938. His name was painted on the side of the public house.

After his death, his widow Alice and daughter Emily appear to have sold the pub and possibly some of the land. It has been suggested that they sold out to Ansells Brewery, but possibly Rushton's Brewery already had a stake in the public house. Ansells Brewery acquired Rushton's Brewery in 1920.

I have looked for Ansells Brewery Archives and it seems that only some minutes of meetings survived. These are stored in Birmingham Reference Library, but I was advised that they were not in a good condition.

I have also searched online for public house history. The Brewery History Society website lists some of Ansells public houses and include the Duke Inn, Four Oaks Hotel, Fox and Dogs, New Inns, Penns Hall Hotel and Three Tuns as owned by Ansells. Nothing in Sutton Coldfield was listed for Rushton's Brewery. The Old Crown and the new Crown are not mentioned at all.

The British Newspaper Archive did not locate anything about the new Crown Inn, opened circa 1938 or 1939.

It does appear that after the Finch family left the pub, it was used as a residential dwelling.

Here is a possible lead about who may have purchased the building.

1939 Register 'Arosa', Walsall Road, Four Oaks – this is what should be number 89, also known as the Old Crown House

Archibald W Yardley, born on 21 October 1874. Widower. Managing Director of Brewery.
Lily Percival, single, born on 1 April 1900. Nurse.

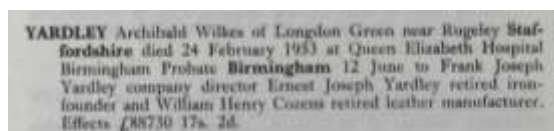
1921 census Little Aston, Sutton Coldfield

Archibald Wilkes Yardley, 46, born in Darlaston. Brewer, employer at 155 High Street, Bloxwich.
Bertha Yardley, 42, born in Walsall.
Elizabeth Anne Yardley, 14, born in Great Barr.
Hilda Reid, 41, born in Birkenhead. General domestic servant.
Elizabeth Reid, 16, born in Wolverhampton. General domestic servant.

1911 "Hotrenfib"(as transcribed) , Streetly, Sutton Coldfield

Archibald Wilkes Yardley	M	36	Brewer – employer	b Darlaston
Bertha Yardley	M	32	Married 6 years, 2 children	b Walsall
Elizabeth Yardley		4		b Streetly
Frank Yardley		1		b Streetly
Plus, three servants				

Probate



England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations) 1858 – 1995

Bloxwich Brewery Co. Ltd.

This could well be the brewery owned by Archibald Yardley. The brewery had 35 public houses within the greater Walsall area.

The brewery was established in 1898 and acquired by W Butler & Co. Ltd., Springfield Brewery, Wolverhampton in 1933. W Butler had 42 tied houses at that time.

William Butler & Co. Ltd. was acquired by Mitchells & Butlers Ltd., in 1960.

Is it possible that Archibald Wilkes Yardley took a fancy to the Old Crown and moved there?

The only way to solve this conundrum is by acquiring a copy of the deeds for the building. It is not proposed to do so currently.

BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER 1945

"FOUR OAKS, WALSALL ROAD, CROWN LANE.

Lot 6. – A Valuable and Important FREEHOLD CORNER PROPERTY, being the de-licensed Premises formerly THE CROWN INN, with Land and Two Cottages, corner of Walsall Lane and Four Oaks Common Road. Area 3,066 square yards and forming a Valuable possible main road Site for Service Garage, Public Hall, Shops; etc. frontage 37 and 80 yards. Possession except for cottages."

MY DAD - NORMAN - WAS BORN HERE ON
15th FEB. 1901

Bid to trace pub's past

by
Charlotte Evans

A Sutton man is hoping to trace the history of his old pub home in a bid to restore it to its original state.

Dave Belk, featured in last week's *Observer* when a car smashed into his home after a collision, is appealing to readers for old photographs and drawings of his home, formerly the Crown Inn.

He said: "I have tried to make my home look as much like it did as a pub as possible but I have only got photographs of the front of it.

Home Guard

"I am also interested in speaking to people who used to use the pub before it became a private residence."

The Crown Inn, at the junction of Four Oaks Common Road and Walsall Road, was built in 1832.

It ceased to be a public house in 1938 when the Crown was built on the opposite side of the road - at the junction of Walsall Road and Crown Lane.

When the Second World War started in 1939, the building became the living quarters for the



The Crown Inn before it became a private residence. This picture was taken in 1900. (SSJ 2159)



Left: How the building looks today. The old pub is now the home of Dave Belk. (SSJ 2372)

Home Guard. After that, it was turned into a private house. Local legend is that a local dignitary Lady Crump often used it as a resting place.

Mr Belk bought the pub in a

derelict state six years ago and turned it into his home, now called Old Crown House.

He said: "I want to make the building look as original as possible but I am short of photographs. I am particularly interested in the side of the building."

Anyone who can help Mr Belk investigate the history of his home can contact him through the *Observer* on 0121 355 6061.

Sutton Coldfield Observer - date not known

Note

This article implies that the Crown Inn was built in about 1832, but this does not appear to be correct according to available research.



The edge of this cutting was damaged. Again, the implication was that the building dated back to 1832 as a coaching inn, also that there had been an inn on this site for 'many' centuries.

There is no evidence, so far, that these claims are true!

Sutton Coldfield News 6 October 1989

From the archive collection of the late Brenda Moore



Modern Photographs showing the Crown as it is now – Crown House Dental Practice

89 Walsall Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

With thanks to Dr Eid 2020

The Crown House Dental Practice took over the property in 2008 and partially converted it to a dental practice.

The property had been a private residence to that time and that a Lady Crump, a local dignitary, had used the property at some time.

Dr F Eid was the owner of the practice in 2020. He was very keen to learn about the history of the premises and contacted Sutton Coldfield Library.

His email states that the property was converted from a working farm to the Crown Inn in 1912, according to a copy of the planning permission dated 1912.

Whilst this does not concur with the information gained about the Crown Inn prior to 1912, it seems likely that the farm was sold off for buildings and work was done on the pub.

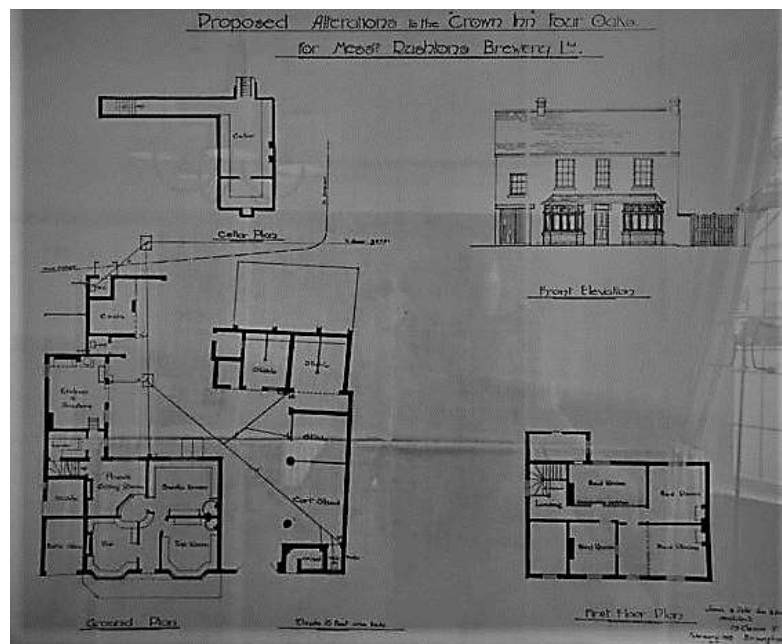
A photograph by Dr Eid shows the plans that were drawn up in 1912 for the Rushton Brewery.

Rushton's Brewery, Lion Brewery, 69 Aston Road North, was registered as a business in 1898 by William Thomas Russell, an old schoolfriend of Joseph Ansell.

Joseph Ansell, the younger, was the son of the elder and was indeed a solicitor at Aston and Birmingham. He died in Sutton Coldfield on 12 October 1923. He defended John Walker on 22 September 1886.

Rushton's Brewery had about one hundred tied houses and several off - licences before the brewery was taken over by Ansell's Brewery Ltd. in 1923.

Brewery History Society website



1912 plans for Messrs Rushton's Brewery Ltd.

With thanks to Dr Eid of the Crown Dental Practice 2020

A NEW CROWN PUBLIC HOUSE WAS BUILT

The new Crown Inn was built on the other side of the road to the old Crown Inn.

This Crown Inn will have been the new public house that had opened in 1938 by Ansell's Brewery.

In 1939, the landlord was Bertie E Macey, born on 11 January 1893. He was also recorded as an ARP warden.

His wife was Ena, and they had one child, Barbara G Macey, who was born on 13 January 1920.

SUTTON COLDFIELD TRADE DIRECTORY

I am in possession of a trade directory that is not dated by is estimated to be around 1955, judging by roads that are not featured but were built by 1957.

Amongst the listed residents are M. C. Adam at Old Crown House and The Crown Inn (PH), G. H. Sandy.

WHO WAS MARGUERITE ISABEL CRUMP?

A few records were found for Marguerite Crump.

Marguerite Isabel Greatrex was the daughter of Arthur Whitehouse Greatrex (1852 - 1926) and Mary Louisa Jobson (1854 - 1925). Marguerite was born on 21 February 1884 at Walsall.

Arthur Whitehouse Greatrex was a Tanner & Currier and owned his own business.

Marriage

The marriage between Eldon Annesley Crump and Marguerite Isabel Greatrex was registered in the September quarter of 1905 Walsall 6b 1184

Eldon Annesley Crump

Eldon Annesley Crump was born in Walsall in 1875. He was the son of John Farrington Crump.

John Farrington Crump was a solicitor from Walsall, who lived at 4 Victoria Terrace, Rushall for many years.

In 1891, Eldon A Crump was a boarder at a male college in Malvern.

In 1901, he was working as a solicitor and living at 4 Victoria Terrace, Rushall, in his father's household.

Following his marriage in 1905, Eldon and Marguerite Crump lived at Parkhurst, Buchanan Road, Walsall.

This is where the couple lived in 1911. Eldon A Crump was 35 and worked as a solicitor.

Living with the couple was a daughter, Margaret Elizabeth Crump, who was three and from Walsall. The couple employed a nurse and a cook.

Nothing further was discovered about Margaret Elizabeth Crump after the 1911 census.

Eldon had inherited from his father's estate that went through probate on 5 September 1908.

Part of the inheritance involved Great Western Railway Shares, worth £243.

Eldon and Marguerite Crump seem to have moved in elite circles as they were invited to a society wedding.

From the Gloucestershire Echo on 11 September 1906

"Fashionable Cheltenham Wedding Burr – Cox

The bride was Miss Mabel Charlotte Cox of Thirleston Hall (sic) and the groom was the Rev. E Godfrey Burr, Vicar of Rushall.

Bridegroom's presents - Mr & Mrs Eldon A Crump - Silver mounted jam jar."

There were many dignitaries included in the guest list!

The London Gazette for 1914 and 1915

Eldon A Crump had been promoted to the rank of Major with the 5th Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment.

Electoral Rolls for 1926 to 1931

Coombe Cottage, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield

Eldon Crump
Marguerite Isabel Crump

1939 Register 58 Four Oaks Common Road, Sutton Coldfield

Marguerite I Crump was residing with a housemaid and a cook plus a widow called Orsettich Doro born in 1886.

Birth

The birth of Eldon Annesley Crump was registered in 1874 in Walsall.

Death

The death of Eldon Annesley Crump was registered in the March quarter of 1938 in Sutton Coldfield. He was aged 63.

Probate

CRUMP Eldon Annesley of Coombe Cottage Four Oaks Sutton Coldfield **Warwickshire** died 22 February 1938 Probate **Birmingham** 14 May to Marguerite Isabel Crump widow. Effects £16026 16s. 2d. Resworn £16368 7s. 5d.

England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations) 1858 - 1995

Death

The death of Marguerite Isabel Crump was registered in December 1970 Sutton Coldfield 9c 2756

Probate

CRUMP Marguerite Isabel of The Old Crown House Walsall Rd Four Oaks Sutton Coldfield died 18 December 1970 Probate **Birmingham** 18 February. £108324.

England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills & Administrations) 1858 - 1995

According to the Birmingham Daily Post, dated 10 March 1971, duty of £71,629 was paid on the estate.

Sources

The archive of the late Brenda Moore, formerly Stonehouse and the family trees relating to her family
– researcher Yvonne Moore

Sutton Coldfield Local History Research Group

Sutton Coldfield Reference Library

Ancestry.co.uk

Findmypast

FreeBMD

The British Newspaper Archive – Yvonne Moore subscription

Dr Eid from the Old Crown Dental Practice

Google Maps

Sutton Coldfield News cuttings

Brewery History Society

The National Archives

Wikipedia