

“CHATSWORTH” FIRST CLASS BOARDING ESTABLISHMENT & RESIDENTIAL HOTEL aka SAVOY HOTEL

By Dave Bambrough 2010



Chatsworth Hotel pictured in 1905.



The newly constructed steps leading to the Lounge Bar and eventually the way to the Dive Bar.

This fine hotel no longer welcomes visitors, or boasts of three bars open to residents and non-residents. The doors are now closed, the bars are shut, parts are boarded up and it has a shabby, if not derelict look about it. A far cry from the halcyon days when it boasted of being one of Sandown's premier hotels. The first advert for this establishment appeared in The Isle of Wight Chronicle on April 5th 1900 as "Chatsworth Hotel".

The person responsible for the erection of "Chatsworth Hotel" was Mr. Alexander Keller who had previously presented the corner site to the town on which Sandown Library is built. Whether the hotel name was influenced by the renowned "Chatsworth Country House" and its historical connections in Derbyshire, is a matter for conjecture, but very possibly.

There was an opinion, that due to his investment and generosity the rather degrading title of "Lower Sandown" that this part of the town had always been known as, disappeared. (As compared to the rather more glamorous title of "Upper Sandown", afforded to the Landed Gentry of The Broadway and surrounding area). The class of person that this glamorous building attracted gradually helped introduce the overall term of "Sandown" to cover the whole area and begin the eradication of the snobbery that existed between the two parts of town.

His nephew, Sydney Pryce, was the proprietor of the similarly named and no doubt family connected, "Chatsworth Laundry", which was situated at the bottom of Avenue Road. The introductory picture taken in 1905 would without doubt have been a very pleasing sight to the owner with much credit to his architect's design, neither contemplating future alterations that would come to pass.

Lets have a look at some of the changes. The first was to rename it "Savoy Hotel". In early 1917 "Chatsworth Private Hotel" was still listed under the telephone number, Sandown 191. By September 1919 the same number was listed against "Savoy Hotel" with adverts for dances appearing in the local paper under the heading of "Savoy Hotel Sandown". (The telephone number later changing to Sandown 279).

PLEASE NOTE

ALTERATION OF DATE

Savoy Hotel
SANDOWN.

W. G. Mitchell & Co.
will sell by Auction on
Wednesday & Thursday
May 23rd and 24th
FURNITURE AND EFFECTS.

Local auctions, commonly held in public houses in these times, were soon appearing in the Savoy Dance Hall with further diversifications soon to follow for additional financial gain. The first, by opening up the front of the hotel with steps leading to a Lounge Bar, open to residents and non-residents.

Next, the Avenue Road Bar, which opened its doors on Saturday July 17th 1948 at 6p.m. Never a financial success, this rather pleasant bar had a short-lived existence. In March 1951 plans were approved for conversion of part of the hotel into nine self-contained flats. A few of the flats are still occupied, now the only human activity that exists within this large building.

In June 1951 an advert appeared in the Chronicle announcing "The New Popular Lounge Bar". This proved to be the case and was well patronised by many locals not opposed to paying slightly higher prices for a modicum of comfort, as opposed to some of the town's bars and even lounge bars.

The earliest mention of a Dive Bar was advertised in the Chronicle on June 16th 1949. This would not have been difficult to construct, bearing in mind that a basement area was part of the initial design, albeit for storage and staff residential purposes rather than licensed premises.

Whilst another advert in June 1953 spoke of "The New Dive Bar", refurbishment had taken place with the introduction of ballroom dancing. By the late 1950's a Juke Box had been installed, an attraction for the younger customer who by now had in the main lost interest in Ballroom Dancing,

preferring to jive to Rock and Roll music. During 1962 the adverts for the Dive Bar had progressed technically, the advert reading, "Savoy Dive Bar each evening for the best in music. The Latest STEREOPHONOGRAPH from America for your entertainment and dancing".

Have you visited
 the new
Popular Lounge Bar
 at the
SAVOY HOTEL, SANDOWN

Popular Prices — Fully Licensed — Usual Hours

Tel: 279 Lew Orrock (Proprietor)

A major transformation occurred in 1968 when the Dive Bar was transformed from a teenage bar into a bar selling German Beer and renamed "The Beer Keller". (Ironically "Keller" being the name of the original proprietor).

The accompanying rather unglamorous present day picture of the steps that led to the basement area exposes a labyrinth of passages and rooms where staff once lived. I personally experienced this somewhat frightening situation when delivering the Portsmouth Football Mail on Saturday nights in the 1950's. The paper round was a private one, which had a clientele of about 15 people. The grateful customers saw to it that the

rewards for delivery were substantial enough to make it well worthwhile for the paperboy.



One of the recipients "Tom Creasey" (the hotel caretaker) lived in one of these basement rooms. Delivery necessitated negotiating the narrow steps, then turning immediately left and a walk along a scantily lit passageway. On arriving at Tom's living quarters a knock on the door brought an extended arm with a generous amount of money in the hand to cover the cost of the paper and a little extra for the paper boy. Scary stuff at times.

In later years the Avenue Road bar was temporarily leased to private business for a short period and the Dive Bar became a Steak House. This once popular location for rich holidaymakers,

dancers and social drinkers has now become an eyesore within the town; hopefully redemption will one day restore "The Savoy" to some of its former glory. I have not included a current picture, as I am sure that most people are only too aware of the decline of this once iconic Sandown Hotel.

I.W. CONSERVATIVE & UNIONIST ASSOCIATION
 (Sandown Branch)
 COME AND MEET YOUR
 MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
Sir Peter Macdonald, K.B.E., M.P.
BUFFET-PARTY
Savoy Hotel, Sandown
 (By kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. L. Orrock)
FRIDAY, JANUARY 27th
 7.30 — 12.
 LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT
 OLD TYME AND MODERN DANCING TO
BOBBIE REGAN AND HIS MUSIC
 (Licensed Bar extension until 12)
 TICKETS 4/6 (including Buffet) obtainable from
 Mrs. E. A. E. Kingham, Rose Bank, High Street,
 and all Committee Members.
 GET YOUR TICKET NOW AND AVOID
 DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE DOOR.
 1956

THE SAVOY Tel. 279
SANDOWN
THE NEW DIVE BAR
 will be open from
 To-morrow, Friday, June 26th
 evening onwards from 6 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.
 BASS and WHITBREAD on DRAUGHT
 BOTTLED BEERS — SPIRITS, etc. — AT POPULAR PRICES

* **BOBBIE REGAN** and his music
 will play nightly for your entertainment *

The New Dive Bar of 1953.

The Beer Keller SAVOY BARS
SANDOWN

Lowenbrau Munchen The world's most exclusive and expensive beer. Brewed and bottled at the oldest brewery in Bavaria.

Asbach Uralt ***** The great five star Brandy of the Rhine. One of the finest brandies in Europe.

Schlichte Steinbager The very best of German gin.

Traditional German Food, Wines, Costumes and Music.
 Try them all the BEER KELLER.
 KELLERMEISTER — HERR GORDON MAY. Telefon: Sandown 2679.

The first advert for the Beer Keller in 1968.

SAVOY DIVE BARS
 :: SANDOWN ::
 GRAND OPENING FOR EASTER — FOR THE SEASON
EASTER SATURDAY & MONDAY
DANCE
 to the Top Rhythm & Blues Group
The Midnight Creepers
 8 p.m. until 11.45 p.m.
SUNDAY
 on the VERY LATEST SEEBERG JUKE-BOX
 from AMERICA — The TOP 200 RECORDS.
 Admission: Saturday & Monday 2/6 — Sunday FREE

1964



The Avenue Road Bar.