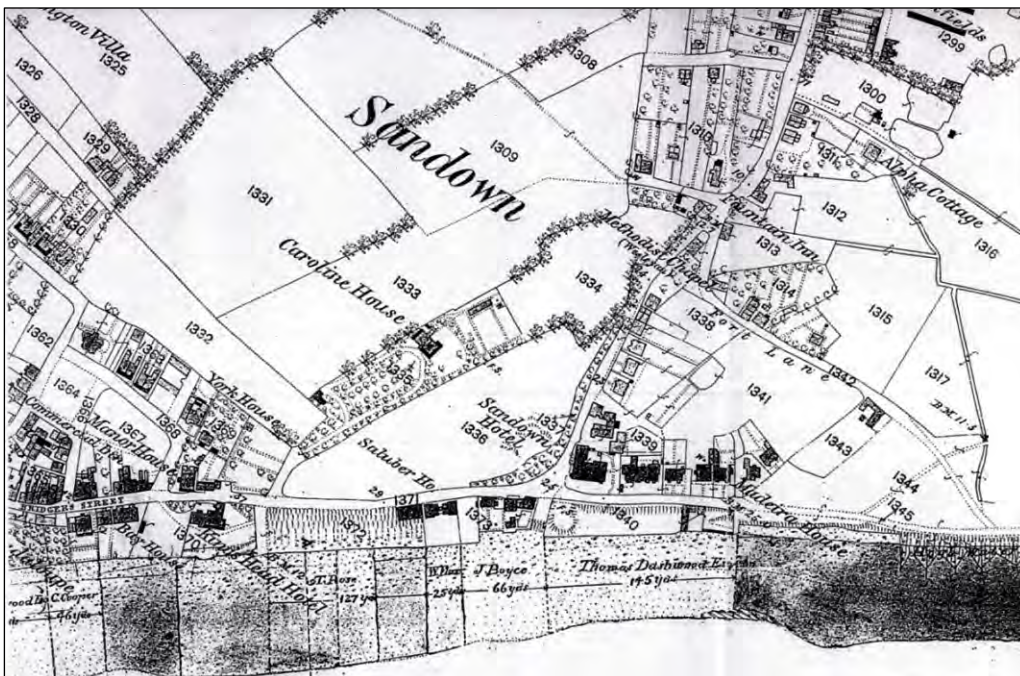


SANDOWN'S ROADS AND EARLY PUBLIC HOUSES

By David Bambrough 2007 (part one)

From the cluster of fisherman's cottages in the mid 19th century, Sandown's development to its present size was a case of two separate communities gradually growing together with the building of houses, shops and roads for with which to accommodate and supply the expanding areas. The arrival of the Railway in 1864 was a major contributor in expediting the expansion of all aspects of the town. A census taken in 1871 gave the population of the town as 2,350 persons. The two areas were referred to as, Upper and Lower Sandown, with only one road connecting them, this single road prior to being renamed the High Street, was entitled Bridger's Street. For a few years after Bridger's Street had been renamed, the name High Street ran the whole length from Broadlane (later Broadway) to the Sandown Hotel. When the lower area began to develop with hotels and shops it retained the more appropriate name, whilst the original High Street was renamed Beachfield Road during 1884, much to the chagrin of many locals. It had not been a shopping area, probably so called due to it being the highest point in Sandown. The controlling body that made these decisions and collected the taxes were "The Local Board", formed under the local Government act of 1858. The title changed in December 1894 to the Sandown Urban District Council and at times the Chronicle would headline the council reports, perhaps sarcastically, with "Our Local Parliament".

Lower Sandown was built largely at the back of Sandham Fort, which was situated in the present Sandham Grounds Recreation Park and the local roads named appropriately after it. This lower dwelling area of Sandown consisted of very few roads by the middle 1900's, the named roads that did exist, were as follows: Fort Street, (re-named Avenue Road) Fort Lane, (re-named Fort Street) Fort Place, an area within Fort Street, Fort Mews, Culver Road, North Street and Carter Street, which went as far up as Cross Street, which had not been built at this time. Other roads that followed, such as Albert Road, Victoria Road, Albion Road, St. Johns Road, the lower end of Pell Street (Station Avenue), St. Johns Crescent, Parsonage Road, Queen's Road and Carter Street beyond Cross Street etc. simply did not exist, nature reigned. This end of town was certainly the poorer of the two developing areas there being very few visitors listed in the local paper as coming to Lower Sandown, most went to Upper Sandown. The Sandown Hotel being the major tourist accommodation at the lower end of town attracted many quality visitors through its doors, as there were relatively few alternatives. There were one or two more hotel/boarding houses along Culver road and in time at the sea end of Fort Street (Avenue Road) but bed and board was yet to take off in Lower Sandown on a comparable scale to that of the upper region. The High Street, (Beachfield Road), Broadlane (Broadway), Leed Street, New Street, Royal Street East, Royal Street West tended to house the landed gentry of the town, i.e. Colonels, Majors, Doctors the Webster family and many of the towns businessmen.



Bridger's Street, Fort Street, Fort Lane, North Street, part of Carter Street and a short length of Culver Road can be clearly defined on this map of Sandown, circa 1862.

Upper Sandown Church of England worshippers had Christ Church, built in 1846 and whilst there were small places for prayer in Lower Sandown, a building of this stature was not forthcoming until Thursday June 2nd 1881 when St. Johns Church opened. Social entertainment in Sandown during the mid to late 1900's was in short supply, that available, light entertainment and talks were performed at the Sandown Hall in Bridger Street (now Learn Direct in St. Johns Road) and on a larger scale when the current Town Hall opened in May 1869. This probably did not interest the working classes who doubtless could not have afforded it in any case.

However, with the proliferation of public houses at this time the social scene took on a new lease of life, for the male population at least. There was a clutch of public houses in Lower Sandown all in close proximity, and all bar two, in Fort Street (Avenue Road). Why so many in the same road? the simple answer to that is, there was little scope to erect them elsewhere and it was central to the local inhabitants of Lower Sandown.

Fort Street at this period ran from the Sandown Hotel (now listed in Culver Road) to the Brading Road (Morton Common). At the bottom of Fort Street, there were three farms in the vicinity, Parsonage Farm, Vinney's Farm and Sandown Farm, in general however the area was poor in contrast to Upper Sandown. Soup kitchens were an annual event in Lower Sandown during the 1860's and tickets when available were snapped up very quickly. A list of donators to this cause would be published in the Chronicle and the biggest proportion of donors came from Upper Sandown. By 1869 there were seven public houses, beerhouses, beershops, taverns or inns, depending on their status in the lower area busily plying their trade. The Prince of Wales (beerhouse only), The Fort Tavern, The Fountain Inn, Hotel Tap, The Star Inn (beerhouse), The Barleycorn Inn (beerhouse), The Marine Inn and even a Temperance Inn that sold refreshments and non alcoholic drinks.

The Star Inn was a beer house (no sale of spirits or lodging facilities) of ill repute in Fort Lane. (Fort Lane would become Fort Street in time when Fort Street was re-named Avenue Road). The Star appeared all too frequently in court cases for drunkenness and selling alcohol out of permitted hours. A typical instance involving The Star was headlined under "The Breach of Beer Act". The court case took place during July 1866, the landlord was fined 2/6d plus costs for selling alcohol outside of the permitted hours, whilst Jacob Smith the customer arrested on the highway outside of the Inn was fined 20/-shillings for having in his possession (on the highway) three gins (traps) and two rabbits. (20/-shillings equates approximately to a fine of between £70 and £90 in today's currency). The last landlord, William Smith, dropped dead from a heart attack in the house at 3.0am on March 20th 1869 and the worthless pub never re-opened its doors. The other six drinking establishments were all in business by at least 1869 and almost certainly a year or two prior to this date. The Barleycorn Inn was also a beerhouse in Fort Street (Avenue Road) without reports of any trouble. The Marine Inn existed somewhere between The Sandringham and Seagrove Hotels'. The downfall of this small Inn came about when a pavement was built on the east side of the High Street. The landlord lost his verandah, the area used for storing the beer and the compensation he received was never adequate enough to overcome the difficulties sustained by the loss of this part of his premises. There are no available pictures of the Star Inn, Marine Inn or the Barleycorn Inn and the exact location of the Star Inn is uncertain other than it was in Fort Lane (Fort Street). The Barleycorn Inn was situated at No.6 Blandcourt Terrace, Fort Street (Avenue Road). In March 1885 the license was transferred from one Frederick Southcott to Joseph Carkett, it still existed in 1899 but closed within 5 years of this date, then becoming a sweet shop run by George Meguyer. Next door at No. 7 Blandcourt Terrace stood The Temperance Inn, for those who did not partake in the drinking of alcohol. The



Prince of Wales started out in life as a grocer shop run by one Thomas Stone and his sister who would both soon raise their sights by taking over as landlords of The Fort Tavern, combining both businesses. It was converted to a beerhouse (no sale of spirits) in Fort Street (Avenue Road) by at least 1869 with the relatively populated Fort Place just below it. On May 16th 1872 the original premises were auctioned off for £160 and remained the same until late 1932 when the pub was demolished. The landlord at the time, Mr. R. Meguyer continued to trade in a temporary bar whilst rebuilding took place. This was paid for by the owners, Messrs. Long & Co., well known Portsmouth brewers of the

time. The resplendent new building was set back in line with the neighbouring houses and so created the small car park seen in the accompanying picture. The new building comprised a Public Bar, Lounge Bar, Ladies Room and Off License, all with wood block flooring and with eight expected bedrooms.

The new public house was built by Messrs. W. J. Simmonds & Sons of Brading. The new "Prince of Wales Hotel" was opened to the public on Tuesday April 11th 1933 with a company of nearly 100 attending. The builder Mr. Simmonds did not attend the opening but sent a supply of smokes for the occasion. The evening

was spent happily in music and song during which the healths of the brewers and of the tenant were drunk, light refreshments were served. Music for the evening was provided by an accordion band comprising Messrs. Jones (accordion) O.R. Addley (piano) and W.C. Oxford (drums).

This magnificent public house was again demolished in the late 1990's but on this occasion replaced by residential housing and all that remains today is the post that

once bore the house name. Having bought out Long & Co., Brickwoods Brewery of Portsmouth owned it until they in turn were bought out by Whitbread's in 1971.



SANDOWN'S ROADS AND EARLY PUBLIC HOUSES

By David Bambrough 2007 (part two)

The enterprising Arthur Lee who became landlord in 1960 produced his own way of advertising the establishment by sticking labels on the back of match boxes prior to selling them to the public.



Less than 150 yards east of the Prince of Wales stood two more hostleries, The Fort Tavern at No. 42 Avenue Road and the Fountain Inn, No.2 Carter Street. Both survive today and both have undergone major refurbishment during their existence. The Fort Tavern was remodelled and renamed “Ye Fort Tavern” whilst the Fountain Inn had planning permission and tenders approved for rebuilding in September 1900, which turned the small Inn into the large building that survives today. The brewery owning the Fountain in the early 1900’s were Messrs Crowley & Co. of Alton, whilst over the road at Ye Fort Tavern, Burtons Ales were sold until Mew Langtons of Newport took over and delivered their ale.

The Fountain has suffered further alterations throughout the years with the loss of two chimneys and two of the doors along with other modifications. The door on the right of this 1908 photograph was the original entrance to the public bar but has now been bricked in, whilst the door on the far left led to “Refreshment Room”, (later the lounge bar) this has made way for a fourth window. The small garden wall and hedge are also victims of improvements. Note the ancient gas street lamp, which many an inebriated gent probably walked into on leaving late at night after a heavy session. (Thanks to Keith Shotter of Newport for the loan of this postcard).

The Fort Tavern in its early days (1860’s) was managed by the very enterprising Thomas Stone, a dealer in British and Foreign Spirits. The house sold draught ale, bottled Burton Ales and Stouts etc. he also advertised the selling of coal, wood, vegetables and poultry, horses stabled and carthorses with a van for hire. The premises also contained a reading room for which local auctions of land and buildings would be held, whilst board and lodging were available with private sitting rooms and well aired beds. Another more unseemly event held on October 24th 1867 was advertised as a sporting affair by way of, “A Sparrow match for a Pig”. Mr.W.Colenutt of Shanklin won the pig having managed to shoot all five of his Sparrows dead in four sweeps. Most partaking shot well with a tie for second prize, the spread did credit to the house and the whole day went off “trippingly” the report said. Competition for business in the poverty stricken area of Lower Sandown was never better advertised and carried out by the re-doubtable Thomas Stone. Mr. Stone had one other claim to fame in that he was noted as the heaviest man on the Island and when he died it was noticeable that his coffin seemed almost as wide as it was long.



The Sandown Tap was originally listed and opened as Hotel Tap in 1857, John Hyde was the victualler at this time. It is listed in Craven & Co’s Hampshire directory for 1857 but does not appear in the 1855 version therefore the former date seems the likely year of construction. There are no adverse reports concerning the house which appears to have lived a reasonably quiet life in the early days unlike some of its aforementioned rivals. Sunshine Hotels Ltd/Brickwoods Brewery took over The Sandown Hotel and Hotel Tap during 1935 also buying up the corner property of No. 4 Avenue Road at the same time. Within a year Brickwoods had redecorated the Sandown Hotel and built a new extension by way of a Lounge Bar on the side of the Tap, this opened

in June 1936. Extensive structural alterations were needed with new cellars and a new pumping system required to supply the new lounge. Oak panelling with green inlays toned harmoniously with the sunshine shade coloured leathered walls and green leather upholstery. Completing the decor the lounge was fitted with modern electric and gas lighting fittings in green and white and a novel electric clock of golden-sun design, appropriately marking the connection with “Sunshine Hotels”. The landlord of the time was Mr.C.A. Smith

(Charlie). The original ale sold is not documented but like the Prince of Wales, Brickwoods Brewery owned the house for the majority of its life until Whitbreads eventually took over the sales.

The corner room of No. 4 Avenue Road had been converted to a Bootmakers shop run by Thomas Hayden, circa 1894. Later changing to a grocers run by the well known Sandown business man George Meguyer, who also ran a garage further along Crescent Road.

Having acquainted ourselves with the original purveyors of alcohol in Lower Sandown it is time to wend our way to Upper Sandown, taking in the more central watering holes on our way.



The first ever-public alcoholic drinking house in Sandown was the Kings Head Inn, an integral part of the Kings Head Hotel. The Hotel was situated next to the Kings Head slipway (now Esplanade Road), then in the parish of Brading. The Inn was granted a license for which to serve ale in 1832 by the Registrar of Licenses at the Petty Sessional Division in the Isle of Wight.

The Hotel, with land fronting down to the shore (prior to the esplanade being built) had a Tap Bar in the High Street. This constituted one long bar divided into a public bar, a private bar and a billiards room. The entrance to it was opposite the present Somerfield's Store, previously The International Stores. The bars were open all year round with Regatta day

always the most profitable day of the year. The Kings Head became one of Sandown's premier hotels of the period, certainly the most well known.

Change is inevitable and this took place when a London businessman, Mr Henry Lowenfeld, the proprietor of the Prince of Wales Theatre in London at the time, received permission in June 1897 to incorporate the Kings Head Hotel along with four other adjacent properties he had purchased. They were Beachton Terrace, Wave House, Bella Vista and Beach House, all adjacent westward to the Kings Head Hotel in the High Street, for which to create the finest hotel on the Island, The Ocean Hotel.

Modification and construction of the new hotel duly began in 1898 with the loss of a town urinal situated in the path of the extension. On the 24th September 1898 at the annual Brewster sessions held at Newport, Mr W.H. Wooldridge (local solicitor) applied for the renewal of the license of the Kings Head Hotel in the new name of Henry Lowenfeld. Only two of the four properties purchased were incorporated into the "New Ocean Hotel" but the extension had created 90 rooms, of which 51 were bed and dressing rooms and the hotel was ready for business by November 1889.

An odd occurrence took place during February 1926, continuous rain was so heavy that the original mural decorations were quite discernable, with the result that promenaders could easily read the former name of the Hotel, "The Kings Head" which had re-appeared in bold letters.



During October 1931 the hotel was the subject of much debate when the owners wanted to sell it, after a vote within the Town Council, the Council agreed to purchase it, for the town at the princely sum of £12,500. This proposal omitted those properties at the Western end of the building, which had not become an integral part of the hotel by this time. The proposal after purchase by the Council was to demolish part of the hotel and build a concert hall.

Without wishing to digress too much from public houses, an application by the Council to the Ministry of Health for which to borrow money to purchase the Ocean and construct the new Concert Hall, was refused by letter at the Town Hall on November 21st 1931, due, they stated, to the present economic situation within the town. Whilst many local people supported the scheme there were many more against the proposition. (ratepayers were far more vociferous in these days and often showed their displeasure toward council schemes in large gatherings).

Three years hence, the opening of the Pier Pavilion would compromise the failure to convert the Ocean area into a public entertainment site.

(The above picture still has the Ocean Hotel name over the door in 1955 of the now converted public house. The hotels' wall and pillars left only sufficient walking space

for a single person).

The present Kings House (formerly Kings Head) public house (having dropped the title "Inn" after metamorphosing into the "Ocean Hotel") was originally a lodging house re-named "St Monica", leased out by Henry Lowenfeld. The building had been in the ownership of the proprietors since the hotels conception.

SANDOWN'S ROADS AND EARLY PUBLIC HOUSES

By David Bambrough 2007 (part three)

During the early 1900's the license granted to the Ocean for the consumption of alcohol had always been listed under the old term "Alehouse", which suggests there was a separate building rather than a license for the hotel resident's bar. Although it has proved impossible to discover where it existed, planning permission for alterations to the then Kings Head Bar were granted by the Council in March 1953. Supposition suggests that the bar location was on the ground floor of the present building with entrance from the Esplanade, opening in the summer months only. There are no reports of Thrift Club payouts (which all the local public houses documented annually in the Chronicle at Christmas) or advertising of the house, as the only business would have been casual trade from visitors during the summer.

The first recognition of the present site appears in the 1957 Sandown directory, which lists it as "Kings Head" P.H. in the High Street, also a "Kings Head Bar" with its entrance from the Esplanade, which did not survive for long.

Footnote. Henry Lowenfeld the original proprietor celebrated the opening of the Ocean Hotel sitting in an arm



chair in the middle of the High Street with his feet on a similar one, a hat perched on the back of his head, smoking a huge cigar, shouting orders to the men unloading the large quantity of furniture being delivered through the door. Shortly after this, a buffet was given to celebrate the opening, with one reporter pouring scorn on the people of Lower Sandown who made short work of consuming everything on offer at a buffet. Henry's demise came about in Paris during November 1931, aged 72.

A short walk along Wilkes Road brings us to the York Hotel, listed as being in business by at least 1867. This was one of Sandown's premier hostelries at this time. It was advertised as a Family and Commercial Hotel, note the caption on the photograph reads "The only real Commercial Hotel in Sandown", despite an Inn with the very name "Commercial" less than 50 yards away. The Stout and Ale served in the house at the time of this picture was imported from brewers at Southsea. Later bought out by Brickwoods, inevitably it ended up in the hands of Whitbread Wessex who closed it, along with many more public houses throughout the

Island. Planning permission for an extension in July 1977 by Whitbread Wessex to extend the bar into No. 7 Wilkes Road and create a self-contained flat above was granted but never taken up. A further planning application sought in 1989 to convert the disused public house into six self-contained flats was also rejected. 1994 brought an application to re-open it as a public house, this too was rejected, and finally in 1996 the planning decision upheld was for conversion into 3 self-contained flats.



The building on the left side of the adjacent picture was the original Sandown Town Hall, a building that has served the community of Sandown in many different ways during its long history. It originally provided the town with entertainment, meetings and lectures until superseded by the present Town Hall in 1869. A typical lecture presented on October 5th 1866 by Mons. Emile Smith and Mr.G.B. Ingman was entitled "The Cries of London and Paris contrasted, and French and English Street Humbugs", with illustrations in French and English. The cost of the evenings entertainment was as follows: front seats 2/-, second seats 1/-, family tickets to admit six to front seats 10/-, schools half price. The object of this meeting was to form a committee to consider the best means of promoting social amusement, recreation and enjoyment for the inhabitants of Sandown during the winter months.

The tenuous connection with public houses and the old Town Hall is that Sandown at this time was politically inclined towards Conservatism. The local Conservatives had been threatening to open a club in Sandown since

1868 and finally decided on the Old Hall ten years later in 1878. A fast growing membership necessitated a move after just three years, and by 1882 a brand new Conservative Club had been built on the corner of St. Johns Road and Leed Street. When the Conservatives vacated the Old Hall, an application for a license for which to open yet another public house in Sandown was declined by the Local Board, as it was felt that Sandown was already well provided for in this social undertaking. With The York Hotel so close and The Commercial Inn immediately opposite this had to be a sensible decision in order that the existing public houses would maintain the necessary trade to keep them solvent. By 1887 it was in use as a mineral water factory, the

Salvation Army enjoyed a period there with later conversion to shops on the ground floor and living accommodation above. The Old Hall has one of the most enduring and diverse stories in Sandown business history.

The Commercial Hotel and former Coach House was in business by 1867, initially with its address being 15 Bridger Street. This was prior to the road being renamed St. John's Road, to commemorate the existence of the newly built St. Johns Church. The actual opening date has not been verified, although the following advert inserted in the Isle of Wight Chronicle of 1867 by the then proprietor, Albert W. Morris, suggests it was probably this year.



It stated that his public house had been especially adapted for visitors. It was within five minutes walk of the Railway and where any patrons would be supplied, on short notice, with the most moderate terms. Also that they could partake of L.Lake's celebrated Isle of Wight Ales, Draught & Bottled Stout, Wines and Spirits at moderate prices and early Sunday papers could be purchased.

(A gathering of the Royal Antediluvian order of The Buffaloes outside The Commercial Inn).

Pastimes advertised were: Bagatelle and Skittles, Carriages for hire, Livery and Bait (food) Stables, with every accommodation. The original owners of the Commercial had had enough by 1888 and decided to put the house up for auction. The advert for the auction gave the following description, "Sale of The Commercial Hotel by auction, on the premises, complete freehold, fully licensed hotel, with leasehold cottage and a coach house immediately adjoining the site of the hotel". The auction was held on Tuesday October 16th 1888. The bidding opened at £1000, gradually rising to a final price of £2000. The successful bidder was Messrs Gale & Co., brewers of Horndean, who owned the house for most of the 20th century. The Commercial Hotel was renamed in 1996 "The Cask and Codpiece" and within a year this had changed to "The Cask and Old Comical". A protest from regulars at the gross stupidity of renaming this long standing public house with such crass appellations was quickly compromised, with the rather endearing name of "The Old Comical", which still stands today. (The Brewery at Horndean closed after 160 years on the 7th April 2006).

Situated within a terrace block in Fitzroy Street is "The Castle Inn" which attracted the least publicity of all the



Victorian drinking premises in Sandown in its early days, but has since grown steadfastly over the years into its present size. The earliest recorded date of its existence is 1872 when described as a brewery, a later advert in 1900 refers to it as a beerhouse, therefore only selling ale and perhaps wine, with no license for spirits. The original beerhouse, depicted in the photograph was demolished and reconstructed in the early months of 1934, a temporary bar provided customers with a pint during reconstruction. Within a year intruders broke into the rear of the Inn and must have been very disappointed with their night's work, they left with a quantity of cigarettes and money amounting to 5/-. A case of very little trade or shrewd housekeeping by the landlord of the

time, Mr D. Duncan. (Could this be Mr Duncan in this pre 1934 picture?)

In 1941 Ted Barber took over the management of the house, which was still only licensed to sell beer and wine. During the war years he slowly but surely built up the trade and was granted a full license immediately after hostilities ceased in 1945. By 1954 under the auspices of Watney Combe Reid, the public bar and cellar were extended into the cottage (No.14) next door, with the first floor of the cottage altered for use as a flat for the tenant of the premises.

SANDOWN'S ROADS AND EARLY PUBLIC HOUSES

By David Bambrough 2007 (part four)

With a growing trade the spacious area at the rear of the house was the next to attract attention for furthering the business. On Whit Saturday, May 19th 1956 a Chateau bar (country house) and an illuminated beer garden was opened, drawing even more custom to the expanding premises.

One year later Ted Barber retired from the business and Ted Barber junior took over the license.

Being the son of his father, Ted junior was a progressive landlord adding further improvements in June 1960 by way of an extended "L shaped" Lounge Bar. The work on the improvement scheme was undertaken by a local firm, Messrs A.W. Rose & Company who took three weeks to complete alterations, with customers suffering only a minimum of inconvenience.

Now attracting many local businessmen he soon branched out in the catering field, selling high class quality sandwiches from cuts of joints displayed behind the counter. In 1962 the house successfully applied to the council for registration under the Betting and Gaming act 1960, for which to install a fruit machine. This was not an automatic decision as other public houses in the area who applied at the same time were refused.



With sandwiches doing a roaring trade, knife and fork snacks soon followed, demand for these soon exceeded the limited facilities within the bars. To overcome this, the eating area was moved upstairs in May 1963 to a small and intimate restaurant called "The Turret Grillroom", which attracted people from all over the Island. On his retirement in 1966 the house was then managed by a Mr G.H. Pattison who had moved from Yelf's Hotel at Ryde. The Castle Inn was originally owned by Messrs Crowley & Co., brewers of Alton, eventually being taken over,

along with The Fountain Inn, by Watneys Brewery. In keeping with modern times many old public houses have forsaken the concept of segregation and the inner walls have been removed to create one large bar, the Castle is no exception.

Footnote. The word "Inn" appears to have been dropped by at least 1971 according to this advert, and I have a feeling that an ad. of this nature these days may well be a contentious issue.

The second ever hostelry to open its doors in Sandown was The Royal Standard, on the corner of Beachfield Road and the Broadway (then Broad Lane), listed in the directories by 1852. The soldiers stationed at the nearby Sandown Barracks would have sustained the trade for many years and consequently there are many reports of drunkenness and thieving, involving patrons of the Inn. One particular court case concerned a certain Fred Saunders of Shanklin who was charged with stealing a scarf from the porch of the Bible Christian Chapel (Formerly G. Deans & Co., wholesale stationers in The Broadway).

The accused was tracked to the Standard where the scarf was found under his arm. Saunders had been seen coming out of the church porch by a witness and pleaded guilty at the hearing, having previous convictions, a sentence of 14 days imprisonment was passed.

In answer to a request for a public urinal at this end of town in 1920, the council suggested that the Royal Standards urinal (which opened out to the Broadway) be kept open to the public throughout the day. Not suprisingly the request was rejected by the brewery. The Standard was owned and sold Ale brewed by Mew Langtons of Newport in its latter years and closed in the late 1980's. An original application to convert the public House into 8 flats was finally agreed in September 1989, the premises is now known as Broadbeach Court .



The picture shows The Royal Standard surrounded by trees with a horse drinking fountain in front of the largest tree. The area had been a very welcome watering hole not only for the patrons of the Inn, but also for the local horses after their long haul up Lake Hill. Boys will be boys and a further use was as the ceremonial ducking place for the probationer choir boys from Christ Church. The horse trough was initially proposed

for removal in 1902 along with the trees, which would then pave the way for widening of the Broadway. Nothing it seems moves very quickly in council circles and thirty six years later in April 1938 the removal took place. Footnote. This was not the only licensed drinking house in Upper Sandown. There is known to have been a beershop called The Rainbow Inn, circa 1864 at the top of Beachfield Road (then the High Street) next to the Parish Rooms. The last but not least of our look at Sandown's early public houses finds us just outside the soon to be built Station yard, just in time for a pint, as it is opening time at the Nottingham Castle Hotel. It is difficult to imagine why it was built at the time and if the end conclusion is, that foresight with the impending arrival of the railway was the reason, one must then wonder why it was called Nottingham Castle Hotel.



At the time it was built there were few roads or people living in the immediate vicinity. A look at a map of 1862 shows virtually no development at all on the west side of Broadway (nee Broad Lane). Nunwell Street, Grove Road, Station Avenue (nee Station Road) and Winchester Park Road etc. were yet to be developed. The building of railways on the Island had been rumoured since 1845 with the first opening between Cowes and Newport in 1862. The Isle of Wight (Eastern Section) Railway, Ryde St. Johns –

Shanklin later renamed the Isle of Wight Railway became law on July 23rd 1860, which also included a Pier, (not built by the Railway) with commencement in late December 1862. The Isle of Wight Railway opened for passenger traffic on the August 23rd 1864, no doubt increasing the patronage of The Nottingham Castle Hotel. Sensibly three years later in 1867 the name was changed to the more appropriate “Railway Hotel”. There was local competition for the consumption of alcohol by way of the Railway refreshment rooms, which advertised the sale of best quality wines and spirits at moderate prices. Disaster however was not far away, in the early part of 1879 the hotel caught fire and was completely gutted. Rebuilding commenced during August of that year and the present building opened to the public in early 1880. One drawback, until it was completely refurbished in 1967, was access to the gentlemen's toilet. On leaving the bar where the group are standing, the journey went past the weighing machine, immediately turning right a further 10/15 yards found the toilet in the far left hand corner of the original stabling yard. Not so bad during the daylight, but everything had to be accomplished by moonlight, when the sun had gone down!!

A very popular drinking house with the locals during the 1930's and 1940's the Railway had a reputation for winning the pastimes of the day. In 1931 they retained the local Shove Ha'penny League by winning the first division championship whilst their reserve team won the second division title. This proved to be the last ever Shove Ha'penny competition in Sandown, as the league was abandoned the following year at a meeting of the AGM, darts was proving a more exciting evening pastime with many of the top Shove Ha'penny players. The Railway continued in the same vein turning out strong dart teams over the years.

The name most associated with running the Railway Hotel was Capel. John Milton Capel took over the license in 1906 and died of a heart attack aged 51 in 1914. He was succeeded by his widow but when she died in 1922 one of his sons, Harry, left the Metropolitan police to manage the house. Harry also died of a heart attack on the premises on May 8th 1942. His widow in turn succeeded him until she died when their daughter and son-in-law took over the license in 1965. Joe Ross, a Geordie by birth and a very keen dart player, helped revive the Sandown Dart League in 1971 continuing in the same competitive way that his predecessors had done until his retirement in 1984 which ended the long standing reign of the Capel family.

The house, then under various ownerships, never regained the popularity it had always been accustomed to. It remained as a conventional public house for a few years, finally changing hands for the last time with a new name “The Open Arms”, closing permanently in the 1990's. Following the same fate as many other closed public houses, planning permission was granted in March 2001 to convert this long standing social amenity into four flats and a pair of semi-detached houses within the grounds. This ends our look at the Victorian public houses of Sandown.

Footnote. The renaming of Fort Street to Avenue Road, Fort Lane to Fort Street and Broad Lane to The Broadway, was proposed and implemented in July 1889. At the same meeting it was also proposed to re-number Fitzroy Street, Bridger Street, (now St. Johns Road) York Road, Wilkes Road, George Street and Station Road (now Station Avenue). The entire council run streets/roads were to be fitted with new nameplates, 69 in total, at a probable cost of £8 10 shillings. The names of Leed Street, Fitzroy Street and Grafton Street were connected to the Oglander family, the owners of much of the land that the town was built on. Lady Oglander was the daughter of George W. Leeds, omitting the final letter when naming the street, possibly for convenience. Sir Henry Oglander's mother (wife of the 6th baronet) was Lady Maria Fitzroy, daughter of the 4th Duke of Grafton and this appears to be the reason for the naming of the aforementioned streets. The Commercial Inn was named after a strip of land opposite the Old Town Hall known as the Commercial Green. The Prince of Wales originally had its own Well but this was filled in on the grounds of health and safety by The Local Board pre 1900.



From the left. Peter Hayden, Larry Brown, Adge Rodgers Roger Gustar, Peter Broome Tich Pardey and Charlie Smith. At The Prince of Wales Sandown August 1964



Back row. Dave Bambrough, Joe Ross (landlord), Charlie Betts, Joe Brabon, John Church. Front row. Jock Simpson Stan Rose, Bill Cook, Peter Ross and Doreen Ross.