

A
HISTORY
of the
HOSPICE & PRIORY CHAPEL
In the Hamlet of
WHITTLESFORD-BRIDGE

In the parish of Duxford St. John, Cambridge

Written and compiled
by
T. F. TEVERSHAM
B.Sc. LOND.

The History of the
RED LION HOTEL

WHITTLESFORD-BRIDGE

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Whittlesford-Bridge is a hamlet, comprising the Red Lion Hotel and Chapel, and other buildings and houses lying in the Parish of Duxford, together with a row of cottages and other buildings on the opposite side of the London Road, which are in the parish of Whittlesford.

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FOUNDATION IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

The story begins over 700 years ago in the reign of Henry III, when ecclesiastical and monastic architecture reached a high level of excellence. About the year 1235, Sir William de Colville, one of the Knights Templar, a semi-monastic religious Order, founded a Priory or Preceptory at Whittlesford Bridge, in the Parish of St. John's Duxford, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, VI, 756. He also bequeathed to the Priory, 30 acres of arable land in Duxford, with some meadows, a water-mill, a free chapel and a fair. *Hist of Cambridgeshire*, 1808, *Lysons*. In 1236, the Priory held 30 acres of land of William de Colville owing suit at Colville's manor court and pontage (toll charges at the bridge). *Liber de Berneville* (Barnwell), 256.

In 1279 the Prior of Whittlesford Bridge held 45 acres of Land etc. by the gift of the Bishop of Ely, in whose gift it was by the grant of William de Colville. *Hundred Rolls* (Cambs.).

This is clear evidence of authoritative character to confirm the early 13th century origin of the Priory and the chapel nearby.

"The buildings consisted of a hall and chamber with buttery and bakehouse", . . . extract from the *Victoria County History*, which gives many other details of the house and its management at the beginning of the 14th century, and also of the books and ornaments of the chapel.



DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

By the beginning of the century the Templars were immensely wealthy, and this no doubt was mainly responsible for the wholesale confiscation of their lands and properties by the Crown in 1307. The Crown benefited considerably by retaining the income of the estates for some years—eventually the properties including the Priory at Whittlesford and the Priory and Templar lands and properties in Duxford were granted to another monastic society, the Knights of St. John, the Knights Hospitallers, and hence the name of “Hospital” so often used since those days to describe the building. The first Hospitaller to be appointed Prior by the Bishop of Ely was William de Sauston, in 1313, probably the lord of a Sawston manor—his manor house is now known as “The Brook”. The house is separated from the highway by a high wall and lies immediately opposite the ancient tannery of Thomas Evans & Sons. There is a local tradition that the house was a monastic house in ancient times, and was probably a “cell” of the Priory at Whittlesford Bridge.

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES.

In 1538 and the years following, the monasteries, including all the Hospitaller houses throughout the country were dissolved and their properties confiscated and later sold to the highest bidder, in most instances by Crown Commissioners. In 1547 the Priory

at Whittlesford Bridge and other Hospitaller (formerly Templar) lands and properties in Duxford, Sawston and elsewhere, were granted to Sir Richard Long, whose grand-daughter married William Lord Russell, father of the 4th Earl of Bedford, and afterwards in the Webb Family.

These Duxford lands now comprise the lands of Temple Manor, and includes Temple Mill and Temple Farm. The name perpetuates the former association with the Templars. Many changes of ownership of the Priory building and lands have taken place since the 17th century.

In 1758 the lands were sold by James Barry to Richard Crop, including the Priory house at the Bridge. In 1808 the property belonged to Mrs. Crop, his widow, with the remainder to his nephew, Charles Long.

EXTRACTS FROM THE RECORDS.

1260. John de Hasing sought sanctuary, placing himself in the church of the hospital on the bridge at Duxford and abjured the realm. (*Cambridge Assize Roll.*)

1348. Robert the Carpenter was taking down the eaves of an outbuilding of the Priory, when six of the eaves fell on him and crushed him, inflicting fatal injuries. (*Cambridge Coroners' Roll.*)

1381. On Saturday, June 15th. The Priory was one of several monastic houses in the country which were attacked by the rebels during the "Peasants Revolt", brought about mainly in protest against the hated Poll Tax. The local leaders in the rebellion were John Hanchach of Shudy Camps, a lord of the manor, and John Webbe of Pampisford. The revolt was quickly suppressed and both Hanchach and Webbe were executed on July 6th at Royston. (MSS. W. M. Palmer and H. W. Saunders.)

"Hanchach's followers attacked the manor of the Prior of St. John on the night of Saturday after Corpus Christi and stole goods and chattels to the value of £30 belonging to Richard Masterman the farmer". (*Cal. of Patent Rolls, etc.*)

1401. Indulgence for *Whittlesfordbrigge Chapel* and Jo. Lucas, hermit there. *Baker MSS. fo. 193.*

1619. King James I stayed at the hotel when taken ill on a journey from Newmarket. In 1631 he granted a special licence for the sale of wines.

1869. Extract from the *Post Office Directory*.

“An Inn in this parish, called the “Red Lion”, is an object of great curiosity, in consequence of its having formerly been a Priory; the rafters of the ceiling are very fancifully carved; a table is also exhibited, of great weight, with carved work about it. A Chapel belonging to the Priory is now used as a barn.” The landlord was Thomas Jackson, coal merchant at the Railway Station.



Reliable sources inform that this religious house was formerly under the government of a prior, subject to the bishops of Ely, and that it possessed an estate of upwards of thirty acres of land, and the water-mill at Duxford, besides the right of holding a fair, which was kept in the reign of Edward I.

Post Office Directory of Cambridge 1875

RED LION FAMILY AND COMMERCIAL HOTEL

WHITTLESFORD-BRIDGE STATION G.E. RY.

This hotel is beautifully situated about eight miles from Cambridge, offering good facilities for private and pleasure parties. The House and Chapel adjoining are both worthy of notice, for their Ancient Architecture: the carved oak ceilings and other portions of the house are greatly admired, and offer endless amusement to the Antiquarian and Photographer.

Excellent quoit and croquet grounds, good fishing.

THOMAS JACKSON,

coal & gravel merchant

proprietor

SIXTY YEARS AGO.

During the 'nineties and the first decade of the 20th century the old inn, then of modest size, attracted gentlemen from the City, who arrived by train to spend a quiet and restful week-end, and to enjoy first class trout fishing and other amenities of the countryside. Local shooting parties organised by Capt. Tickell of Whittlesford Lodge, assisted by "brushers" under "Keeper" Shore from Sawston Hall, adjourned to the hotel for refreshments and a substantial lunch. Excellent sport was provided for the guns on Bridgemoor

and the arable lands around Highlands and beyond, along the Royston Road and towards Duxford and the ancient water-mill, where lived Arthur Cullum, a sportsman of rare quality.

A great day in the year was Tithe Rent day, when the Rector of Duxford sat in state in the hotel to receive his tithe rents from the local farmers, and provided roast turkey and other food for dinner at his own expense.

THE RED LION HOTEL, 1904.

As advertised in Crampton's Almanack, which had a wide circulation in Cambridgeshire and Essex.

“ RED LION ” HOTEL, WHITTLESFORD, CAMBS.

FREE HOUSE.

Family and commercial hotel.

Wines and spirits of the finest quality.

GOOD ACCOMMODATION FOR SPORTING GENTLEMEN.

HORSE AND TRAP ON HIRE.

GOOD FISHING.

P. A. DAVINIÈRE

H. Von BUHLER, Proprietor.

In 1908, a similar advertisement appeared under F. FIVEASEL, Proprietor.



THE RED LION HOTEL—WHITTLESFORD-BRIDGE 1946
 R.A.C. A.A.

A Famous Inn by the infamously unlevel level crossing

FULLY LICENSED

BREAKFASTS—LUNCHEONS—DINNERS

We take a great deal of trouble with our menu to ensure satisfaction
 and our list of quality wines is the most reasonably priced in the
 County.

Accommodation
 (14 Rooms)

Tel. Sawston 3344

A.A.

R.A.C.

EDWARD MARSHALL
 MABEL MARSHALL
 HILDA LIZZIE SEALE

} *Proprietors*

THE RED LION OF 1959

Between the two World Wars and due largely to the foresight and industry of the then owners, Mr. & Mrs. Ted Marshall and Mrs. Hilda Seale, and their nephew, Bill Webb, the present owner, the building was enlarged by the addition of the southern extension of the western wing facing the railway station. The work is in the Tudor style of the 16th century, and replaces temporary structures of no particular interest or period. Heavy plaster was removed from the ancient beams in the north wing, and the thirteenth century woodwork exposed, revealing the hand of an artist and master-craftsman. In the public bar and in the Little Lounge work of an inspired character is seen—magnificent figured carving, the finest of its period in East Anglia, massive oaken beams, moulded, shaped and decorated with matchless skill.

Throughout the centuries, the boundaries of the property and the environs have been the high road on the north and the river Granta on the east and south, with a meadow in between. It was the railway engine in 1845, and sixty years later, the motorcar, which brought a disturbing note into the uneventful routine of rural life.



Before the 1st World War saw a large field in Duxford adjacent to the A505 being used for flying machines and the R.F.C.

The young fliers were a great asset to the business at the Red Lion, and later in the 1914/18 war, filled the premises with wives, sweethearts and the usual camp followers.

The family car brought regular and increased custom to the hotel and yet the original purposes for its inception was not forgotten by providing hospitality and sustenance to the traveller. With the 2nd World War the need for these necessary domestic arrangements increased manifold.

The area regularly suffered from floods and snowdrifts, and the sufferers from which were sustained and comforted, usually free of charge, by the staff, some members having been here their entire working lives.

In 1960 the new road by passed south of the building taking 2/3rds of the garden, closing the level crossing and altering the course of the river eliminating the flood risk.

This enabled the traveller to see the rear of the premises consequently the South face revealed the heavy wooden construction, artisanship of great quality and architectural beauty.

About this time Bill Webb formed a Company with his solicitors as directors. In 1971 he invited his nephew Ian Andersen to accept part ownership and together the business flourished with two dining rooms one of which is equipped for dancing and serves as a room for weddings, parties, conferences and auctions. etc.

With Bill Webb's failing health and increasing age the heavy burden of conducting affairs falls more and more on Mr. Andersen.

1980

RESIDENTIAL

Breakfasts—Lunches—Dinners

Daily including Sundays

A la Carte Menu

Conference Centre

Wedding Receptions

Dinner and Dance every Saturday

Anniversaries a pleasure

Bridal Suite

Past Owners:

Order of the Carmelites
Knights Hospitaler
Knights Templar
Peers of the Realm
Local Squires
Commoners

Your Present Host and Owners:

BILL WEBB

IAN ANDERSEN

*Think of this as your home from home
Voicing your desires in mellow tone
For we will do our best to please
And tender welcome, service and ease.
But; command, demand or antagonise
You'll be just as welcome contrariwise.*

The Red Lion is now an up-to-date hostelry, fully equipped with modern requirements in every respect, proud of its ancient inheritance and providing the traveller with warm hospitality and good English fare.

THE PRIORY CHAPEL

The building has features typical of a church of the early 13th century, in the *Early English* style of architecture, consisting of an aisleless nave and chancel—23 yards long and 6 yards wide. Four windows on either side—those on the north are narrow and deeply splayed; the single shafts of the arches and the capitals are characteristic of the period, and still in sound condition.



The interior hood-mouldings of the windows are 4-centred and were probably 15th century additions.

On the southeast of the chancel are two *piscinas*, both *c.* 1230. On one of the capitals, between the upper and lower mouldings, there is a trace of ornament. In the northwest corner of the chancel, an *aumbry*, recently heavily and unworthily restored.

In the north wall of the nave near the chancel, a recess with cinquefoil arch, probably for Reservation of the Sacrement or as chrismatory for Holy Oil.

When the Chapel was taken over in 1954 by the Ministry of Works for preservation as a building of historic interest, it was more or less ruinous, especially the thatched roof and the woodwork. A new floor was laid and the pebbled walls repaired inside and out. The ruinous east window was boarded up. A substantial tiled roof now covers the chapel, which is open for public inspection.



COATS OF ARMS OF THE COLVILLES (Several are given in the records).

1. The coat of Sir Henry de Colville, 1230. *Argent*, a Cross *Gules*, *i.e.* A red cross on a white ground. The Templar Knights wore over the armour, a white mantle with a red cross.
2. The Colville coat recorded by Cole the antiquary in the 18th century, 1744, etc. in the churches of Weston Colville, Leverington and Newton-in-the-Isle. *Azure* a Lion Rampant *Argent* over it a label of 3 points *Gules*, *i.e.* A white lion on a blue ground, etc.
3. Another Colville coat at Newton-in-the-Isle is given "with his lion as before and quartering three chess rooks *Gules*."

It would appear that the Colville coat of arms includes a white lion on a blue ground, but not a red lion.

The shield on the carved woodwork of the mantel-piece in the little lounge was probably the coat of a De la Haye, an important family in the 13th century, one of whom was in charge of the Templar estates. *Azure a bend Argent between three cinquefoils Or.*



