

Bricklayers' Arms

With a strategic position on the main road and opposite the village green - the centre of the village before the 20th century development of the Furlongs – it is not surprising that there was a 'pub' on the site of the Bricklayers Arms as early as 1841 when the census records that Philip Greathurst (born in East Horsley in 1789) was the resident 'beer seller'.

He was still there in 1851 as an 'ale house keeper' but following his death in 1858 his widow Susanna Greathurst (born in Wotton née Boxall in 1794) took over as the 'beer retailer' at what was described in the 1861 census as the Butcher's Arms. This name no doubt reflected the fact that the adjacent premises were occupied by James Greathurst, most probably Susanna's son, who was trading as the village butcher.

In the 1871 and 1881 census returns, following Susanna's death in February 1868, it is James Greathurst who appears as 'butcher and beer retailer' at the Bricklayers' Arms (1871) and at the Beer House described as 'formerly Stone's Entire' in 1881.

The choice of name no doubt reflected the fact that bricklayers and bricklayer's labourers represented a significant proportion of the Westcott workforce (there were 20 in the 1861 census; a small number in comparison with agricultural and general labourers (150) and domestic servants but the largest single category of artisans.)

James died in 1885 but the Bricklayers' Arms remained a Greathurst establishment insofar as James's eldest daughter Rebecca took over the license and remained in charge until 1898.

Rebecca moved to Brook Farm, Logmore, where she appears as a 'Farmer' in the 1901 census, but the license to sell beer at the Bricklayers' Arms remained in the family insofar as it was transferred to Rebecca's brother-in-law Mr John Johnson.

The Johnson family originated from Norfolk where Chaplin Johnson (1797-1886) was a farmer at Elmham but his son John (1817-1897) moved to Westcott where he was employed as butler at The Rookery before setting up his own business as a grocer and baker at Westcott Green. With premises adjacent to butcher Philip Greathurst (who had himself started out as a butler at Juniper Hall) it was clearly an advantageous match when John's son, also John (1852 – 1938) married Philip's daughter, Mary (1849-1933).

The two families certainly left their mark on the village insofar as John was one of the first children to be baptised in the newly consecrated Holy Trinity Church in 1852 and throughout his life played a significant part in village activities, whilst the Greathurst's retail influence was recognised by referring to Parsonage Lane, as we know it today, as Grist's Lane – presumably shorthand for Greathurst – in the 1861 census, and Ann Greathurst (1860-1940) was a long-serving teacher at the village school.

In the absence of census returns, the pub's 20th century history is less well documented but it is known that all did not fare well for the Johnson family. In May 1913 John Chaplin Johnson aged 5 was killed in one of the first fatal road accidents on the main road in Westcott and less than a year later his father died in a tragic hunting accident.

When John Johnson Junior, the 35 year old licensee of the Bricklayers' Arms failed to return from an early morning outing to shoot rabbits, a search found his body on the extreme edge of the common near the sandpit. He was lying on his back, quite

dead. He had one rabbit in his overcoat pocket and another lay nearby. It was evident that he had been reaching out for this when his breech loading rifle was accidentally triggered and the full charge entered his side in the region of the heart.

But the Greathurst / Johnson interest in the Main Road shops was to remain very evident for most of the century as a result of various marriages, including:

Edith Johnson (b 1872) to John T Parton in December 1902.

Mary Johnson (b 1882) to William J Canter in December 1910 with daughter Norah Cnter continuing to manage her haberdashery shop until ***

Children from The Cricketers at the village school

			Date of birth			Parent	Previous School		
1914	Overington	Frank Sharp	2	7	1901	Daniel S	Abinger Upper	1914	Left the village
1914	Overington	Albert Arthur	13	5	1903	Daniel S	Abinger Upper	1914	Left the village
1914	Overington	George Daniel	13	11	1906	Daniel S	Abinger Upper	1914	Left the village
1914	Hopkins	Ellen Frances	5	8	1905	Daniel	Cranleigh	1919	Age
1928	Collins	Richard	28	1	1916	George		1931	Age
1936	Shepherd	Edward Joseph Christopher	25	12	1928	Joseph	Sheerness C.E.	1936	Removed to Redhill
1937	Shepherd	Anthony	5	11	1931	Joseph	Kenley C.E	1939	Removed to Thornton Heath

1951 Directory Bricklayers' Arms Morgan, Frank Harold

1972 Directory Bricklayers' Arms Court, J C

The Bricklayer's Arms closed in November 1967. It reopened on 13 Jun 1969 as an Antique Shop and subsequently as a Dog Grooming Centre. It is now Nirvana Cycles.

There is some uncertainty about the ownership of the Bricklayers' Arms.

1903 The Bricklayers Arms was a beerhouse owned by Messrs Saville & Co. of Guildford and tenanted by J Johnson.

A submission to the Lord of the Manor dated 26 February 1908 stated that:
"The property until recently was a public house known as the Bricklayers' Arms. The license has been surrendered, Mrs Nash receiving £162 and the Lessee £324 as compensation. There is a lease upon the premises which runs to the 25th December 1935 at the rent of £30 so that Mrs Nash for that period is secured. Mrs Nash is 73 years old, and was admitted to the property on 28th November 1867, so that in the ordinary course of nature a fine would soon be payable to the Lord. This fine is arbitrary, and the Lord is entitled to 2 years rental. The property is also subject to a heriot of best beast on death, seizable either within or without the Manor. The quit rent is 3d."



The Johnson Family



Johnson's Supply Stores (before the new building)



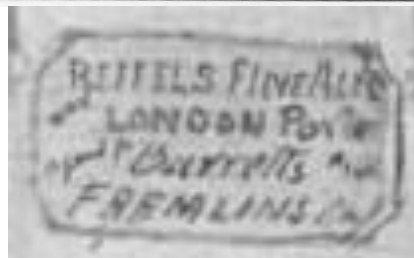
Dorking Hospital Saturday Flag day outside Johnson's Stores and Post Office (July 1899)



For most of the 19th century the 'Bricklayers' Arms' was simply a cottage, set back from the Main Road as indicated in this old photograph.



The details of the notice on the wall are too indistinct to read but a painting of the same scene identifies a reference to Reffels Fine Ale – along with London Porter and Barretts and Fremlins products.



Before moving to Redhill, the original Reffel Brewery at Gomshall was located in what is today the Black Horse Inn with the hop drying house established in Shere in the building that now houses the village museum.

In 1900 or thereabouts the original pub was rebuilt to provide the four storey building and adjacent shop that survive today. The houses on the right were built at about the same time



The appearance of the parade of shops has not altered significantly during the past 100 years but the products sold and the names of the retailers have changed. These are the subject of a separate note.



When John Johnson retired he had a house built on his land at the rear of the Bricklayers' Arms. He named it Sancrest but is today Sandcrest.

Dorking Advertiser references to the Bricklayers' Arms

In 1901 James Elms was given one months' hard labour for stealing 15/6 from the Bricklayers' Arms.

In 1918 a sentence of two months hard labour was meted out to Tom Harrison, alias Tom Raymond, when he was convicted of stealing a box of matches, a hair brush and a clock from Holy Trinity Church. Evidence was given by Alfred Gibbs, the sexton, that the items were missing after Mr Harrison had attended the 11am service. He was arrested early the following morning at the Bricklayers Arms and the missing articles were found in a barn at West Lees Farm

In October 1935 William F Collins of the Bricklayers' Arms was fined 2/6 for not having a rear light on his motor cycle.

In 1944 when making the tight turn from the main road into Parsonage Lane on his recently purchased motor bike, Arthur Nash age 17 of Vine Cottage, 21 Furlong Road misjudged his speed and drove straight into the door of the Bricklayers Arms and ended up in the middle of the bar. He was fined £5 for driving without due care and attention, having no Road Fund Licence nor 3rd party insurance.

Mrs Doris Read lived in Sancrest during the war and recalls that the Stable Block (now called The Coach House) remained in the ownership of 'old Mr Johnson' who lived further up Parsonage Lane and was used as a workshop but she never knew what work was carried out. It was used later by a furniture restorer from West Street Dorking but has been left untouched for the past ten years or so.