

# Public Houses in Eastbourne

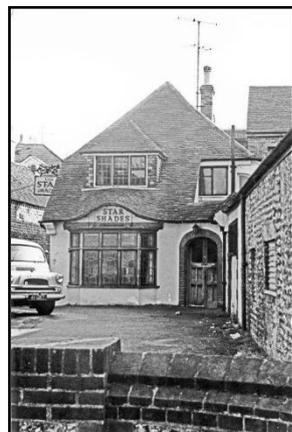
by Alan Smith



The history of many of Eastbourne's older buildings, especially those visited by the public, has been written about in one way or another. The general exception is the humble, or in some cases not so humble, public house. Most people are aware of Eastbourne's oldest inn, the Lamb, but there is a wide and varied history in these public buildings that many people have visited at one time or another, many as their particular 'local'. Many groups met in separate meeting rooms or simply in the corner of the lounge; these included early meetings of the Freemasons and the Buffaloes. Groups of regulars had savings club or slate clubs where, on an almost annual basis, reports of their

share outs appeared in the local papers. Others ran football and darts teams; even bonfire societies met in one local or another.

A new book, *Public Houses in Eastbourne* by Alan Smith, which tells the brief histories of those pubs that existed in 1986 or before, fills this gap. Details include that the Buskers Bar, Kings Arms and Victoria Hotel are the last three pubs outlining a small triangular area that 140 years ago had around ten public houses or beer houses (the later not being unable to sell wines and spirits). Of these, when built in 1857 and for



The Star Shades

around twenty years, the Victoria had a wide sea view and advertised this in guide books of the time. The Kings Arms originally stood on the corner of Redoubt Road; Buskers Bar is the fourth name for this local, the first being the Forester's Arms. From St Aubyns Road to the Crown and Anchor, only three of eight remain and around the corner the Coda Bar, formerly the Rose and Crown, is the only building in the area known as Hell Fire Corner to survive the Second World War, even though it was damaged by a bomb landing nearby in 1940.

In Old Town, the Crown beershop was the last pub to obtain a full licence (enabling it to sell wines and spirits as well as beer), but this was the second pub of this name. The original stood in Borough Lane and was demolished to make way for what is now the Gildredge Manor House. The Star Inn is all that remains of what was the Star Brewery site that included the Star Brewery and the Star Shades. The present Prince Albert was built in the 1930s, behind the original pub of that name, so that the High Street could be widened. The new pub had to be completed before the old one was demolished in order to retain its license. Even here there were at least two other pubs in the 1800s, the Windmill Beer Shop and the Wheatsheaf.

Hampden Park has lost the three of its locals that were built in the early 1900s to serve the new development. Here the oldest was the Hampden Park Hotel which was built in 1906 by the Sussex Public



The Hampden Park Hotel

House Trust (the forerunner of Trust House Forte) whose aims were 'To transform licensed houses from mere drinking places into houses of genuine refreshment for people of every class'.

Meads has lost only one, a short lived pub, The Blacksmiths Arms, that stood in Meads Road opposite the junction of Meads Street. It has been suggested that it was bought by a neighbour and demolished because he didn't want to live next to a pub!



The Town Centre has many 'pubs' but very few of them existed in 1986 (and so are not included). With the loss of the Gildredge Hotel, only Bills and the Duke of Devonshire (both recent names for buildings that date back to the late 1800s) remain in Terminus Road although South Street still has four out of five pubs that existed at the turn of the twentieth century (including the New Inn, new in c1790, rebuilt 1880 and now Bibendum). Although the Garibaldi Arms closed in 1909 leaving four public houses, the opening of Bilbo Baggins, now Maxims, in 1974 meant that in 1986 it was the only street to have the same number as in 1883.

At the east end of town there were four pubs from the Archery to the Lodge, both of which have now gone, leaving the Arlington and Alexandra Arms facing each other.

Included in the short histories of several pubs are some examples of the court cases involving the pub. These include drunkenness and offences against the licensing laws as well as cases of disgruntled clients breaking panes of glass. Sometimes it is the description of the offender that makes interesting reading, such as 'a short, sturdy, respectable looking man, who was dressed in a seafaring suit of blue...', 'a tall sturdy looking man', 'a miserable looking old woman' and a 'Buxom Young Woman'

Another section of the book covers the breweries that once existed, At one time there were five although one only seems to have lasted a year. The oldest brewery was in South Street adjoining the New Inn, although this moved to Junction Road before closing in the 1870s. Many of the buildings of the Lion Brewery, between Pevensey Road and Langney Road still stand. Another, the Crown Brewery, stood behind the Rose and Crown in Duke Street, the site now being part of the school playground.



Alan Smith, the author of this book:

Alan was born in Eastbourne and educated at Motcombe Infants, St Mary's Boys' School and Ratton. Following a year designing central heating systems at Louis G Ford's, he began work in the Borough Surveyor's Department in 1970 where, among many different projects, including sea defences and highway works, he surveyed the old bridge at the Redoubt. After five years he moved to South Wales, first at Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council, then Taff Ely Borough Council. After forty years in local government Alan took early retirement in 2010.

It was the research into the history of the Redoubt that sparked his interest in local history, there being numerous records within the surveyor's department to help with research. Joining

the Local History Society in the early 1970s he remains a member to this day. Following a break while dealing with a family of four boys, early retirement led to a renewed interest in completing his research on public houses, resulting in the publication of this book. Membership of the Local History Society has led to further research on several subjects, resulting in a variety of articles published in the society's quarterly journal.

Alan's 330 page book, soft bound and extensively illustrated, can be purchased from the Local History Society via Liz Moloney at [moloneybooks@outlook.com](mailto:moloneybooks@outlook.com) for £10 plus £2.50 P&P, or, shortly, from Waterstones in Terminus Road.