NEWS IN BRIEF

Early licensees

THROUGH the pages of the Wells Journal it has been possible to work out a timeline of the early licensees of the City Arms from 1841 and its instigation as a public house until 1949 when Mr Gould, the longest incumbent, died and Ushers Brewery took it over.

■ 1841 John and Ann Derham

Sudden death. July 1846

An inquest was held at the City Arms in Wells on the body of Ann Derham who was found lying at the door of the house insensible. She was put to bed by neighbours but expired a short time after.

Verdict. "Died by the visitation of God."

Bristol Times and Mirror Deaths. July 1846

■ 1853 Mrs Tripp. Died 1897 in Wells Asylum

■ 1856 Elizabeth Cardwell. Elizabeth married George Curry of Wookey February 1857.

■ 1857 George and Elizabeth Curry

■ 1863 John Henry Peach and his sister Mary Peach

■ 1867 Mr D Stevens

■ 1869 Edwin Henry Joseph who was declared bankrupt in May 1870

■ 1871 Mr Halliday

■ 1883 Mrs Evans

■ 1896 to 1949 Mr and Mrs Alfred Gould

Obscenity case

Wells Journal
July 16, 1896
CITY POLICE COURT
Monday
MAN SWORE AT AND THREATENED POLICE.

John Webb of Yarley was summoned for using obscene language in the High Street.

Webb did not appear at court.

PS Knight said he saw the defendant at the City Arms. He had an old cob with knees badly broken, the injuries being concealed with black grease.

He called Webb's attention to this and told him that the horse was unfit for work and if he persisted in working it he should summon him. Upon being told this Webb used disgraceful language and threatened him.

The case was adjourned and a warrant issued for the apprehension of the defendant whose mother in law subsequently appeared and promised that he would attend court the following morning.

Tuesday

John Webb of Yarley appeared and denied using bad language towards PS Knight but said he might as well plead guilty.

He had just bought the pony at North Wootton and it had the misfortune to fall down and injure its knees on his way into Wells. He never swore and made use of no bad language on the occasion mentioned.

Fined 15s including costs.

Sizzling Sixties: trendy steak bar city's best new meating place

IN 1965 the City Arms was renovated by Ushers Brewery and it became a steak bar which was for its time right on trend.

Wells Journal
February 12, 1965
NEW LOOK FOR THE CITY ARMS

At the annual licensing meeting at Wells plans were passed for alterations and improvements at the City Arms.

A representative of Ushers Brewery said that the object of the application was to make use of this old property and to give Wells further catering facilities namely a steak bar.

This bar would be approached by a wide open staircase and on the ground floor would be a small sherry bar. Adequate facilities would be provided for ladies and gentlemen.

On the other side of the courtyard there would be facilities for off sales. A shop premises would be provided over which would be a self-catering flat.

Plans passed.

The City Arms at Wells, which used to be the City Jail during the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth, has been most admirably restored by Ushers Brewery and was opened, on Wednesday as a steak bar with beautifully appointed drinking bars. Report on Page 11.

The manager, Mr. W. E. Paton, passes a bottle of wine to Mrs. Paton in the Sherry Lounge which leads into the Steak Bar at the City Arms, Wells, which has been completely restored

Wells Journal
May 14, 1965

Wanted: Part time barmaid required for weekend trade. Permanent appointment and good wage for right applicant. Apply City Arms.

Wells Journal
May 21, 1965

Wanted: Part time and or fulltime staff required. Chef, waitresses, barmaids, kitchen hand, cleaners. Excellent congenial working conditions. Apply City Arms.

Wells Journal
August 6, 1965
OLD CITY JAIL TRANSFORMED
Transformation at the ancient City Arms

Transformed from an ordinary public house into what must surely rank as one of the west country's most attractive venues for eating out or drinking in pleasant surroundings the historic City Arms at Wells has begun a new lease of life.

The premises which used to be the City jail during the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1 were opened as a steak house with ancillary drinking bars and nowhere can more care and attention have been lavished upon a project aimed at preserving and beautifying buildings of such considerable character and interest.

For a very complete and satisfying programme of restoration the directors of Ushers Brewery have undoubtedly earned the gratitude of all who have a feeling for the charm and enchantment of the wonderful old buildings of wells.

That modern facilities are available within the original walls in an atmosphere in keeping with days gone by will doubtless be a source of gratification to countless citizens and visitors in the years ahead.

It is known that part of the premises which have now been converted into a most attractive wine shop became a public house in 1841 but the remainder of the buildings across the yard had been derelict for years although the first floor had been used for certain social functions.

Some months ago the directors of Ushers Brewery Ltd decided that the site with its historical interests was worth restoring and in conjunction with and the assistance of the local authorities plans were agreed whereby the restoration could be undertaken.

The courtyard has been made most attractive and gives entry to a splendidly appointed Lounge Bar with some interesting old gothic panelling which originally came from a castle in Herefordshire.

Interconnected with the Lounge Bar is the Prison Bar which is of much interest with the reminders of days gone by.

Out of this bar is a handsome staircase which leads to a Sherry Lounge which in turn opens into a Steak Bar with seating accommodation for more than 40 persons.

The rest is also panelled and the whole room is open to the roof and has considerable character.

The catering facilities are of extremely modern design and the method for dispensing beer is the very latest.

The whole scheme was carried out under the direct supervision of Ushers own building department.

The premises have a warm welcoming air and it is pleasing that the old walls and the wonderful old roof has been retained.

Adorning the interior walls of the bars are a number of old farm implements of the kind which are fast disappearing.

A saddle rack, the wheel brake of a cart, a smith's tongs, a roller for leather work, thatching tools and a device for cutting horses' tails and other items reminiscent of rural life.

Relics from the days of when wrongdoers found themselves within the substantial walls of the building can be seen in the Prison Bar.

The old stocks are incorporated into the front of the bar counter and there are chains and handcuffs and outside the old prison's barred window is a ball and chain.

Managing the City Arms are Mr and Mrs W Paton. Mr Paton has considerable experience in the trade previously managing the bars at the Imperial Hotel Weston-super-Mare.

In charge of the wine shop on the other side of the courtyard is Mr Raymond Cook the previously landlord of the City Arms.

BROTHER ASSAULTS BROTHER

Startling report from Wells City Police Court

March 4, 1921
FREDERICK York a farmer of Coxley was accused with assaulting his brother, George York, a cattle dealer of Wookey.

Mr Chubb in outlining the case said it was an unhappy one in that it was alleged that one brother had assaulted another. The brothers had been in a strained relationship for some five or six years.

On January 26 George York was at the City Arms in the city talking to some young men. Frederick York entered the premises and asked what his brother had been saying about him.

George York said that he had not mentioned his brother and asked to be left alone.

Frederick York thereupon said;

"I can buy thee and I can buy more ground than thee can'st."

George retorted; "I can't help that." And asked one of his drinking companions to go for the police as his brother was constantly interfering with him.

Frederick commenced pushing his brother and subsequently had to be pulled off and the parties pulled apart.

George then went into the yard at the City Arms where he had left his trap and asked the ostler for his pony.

Frederick followed him out and said;

"I'll give you pony you b--------," and without the slightest provocation knocked his brother down and while he was on the ground pulled his coat off.

Frederick then threatened to kill his brother and acted in a very rough manner.

George was seriously assaulted and was unconscious for a few moments. Eventually George was driven to Dr Mullen's house to be attended to.

George gave evidence as to the result of the blows inflicted upon him and said he still felt the effects and felt stiff.

Frederick eventually pleaded guilty.

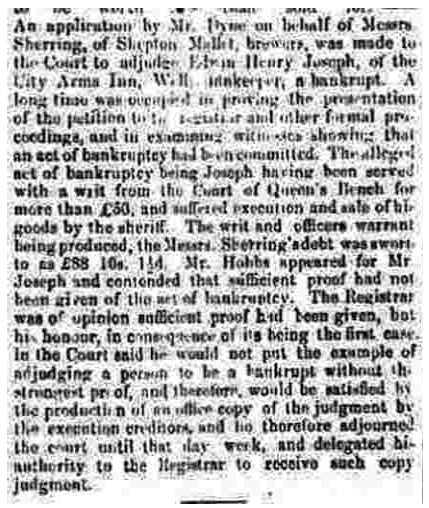
Mr Mawer appearing for Frederick York said:

"There is very bad blood between these brothers and this fact combined with a drop of drink being taken explains the fact that Frederick York lost his head and assaulted his brother. I hope that out of evil good might come and that in the future brotherly feeling might prevail."

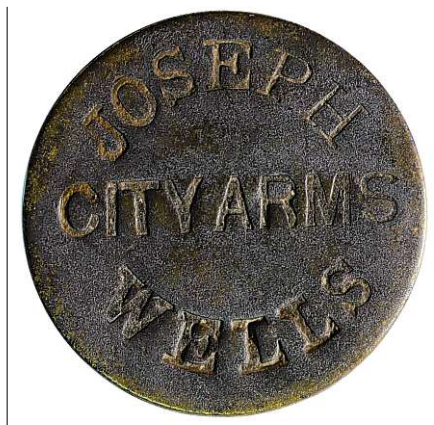
The Mayor fined Frederick York 12s and the expenses of the witnesses and expressed the hope that the brothers would once again look kindly upon one another.

At the Mayor's reception at the City Arms, Wells, on Monday (left to right): the Mayor of Glastonbury (Councillor Mrs. M. E. Morland), the Chairman of Shepton Mallet Urban Council (Mr. C. A. G. Manning), the Chairman Wells Rural Council (Mr. G. Spearing), the Mayor of Wells (Councillor H. Teagle), the Town Clerk of Wells (Mr. H. J. Dodd), Mrs. Teagle and the Bishop of Bath and Wells (Right Rev. Dr. E. Henderson).

Edwin Henry Joseph, landlord of the City Arms, was declared a bankrupt in April 1860



An application by Mr. Dyne on behalf of Messrs Sherring, of Shepton Mallet, brewers, was made to the Court to adjudge Edwin Henry Joseph, of the City Arms Inn, Wells, innkeeper, a bankrupt. A long time was occupied in proving the presentation of the petition to the registrar and other formal proceedings, and in examining witnesses showing that an act of bankruptcy had been committed. The alleged act of bankruptcy being Joseph having been served with a writ from the Court of Queen's Bench for more than £50, and suffered execution and sale of his goods by the sheriff. The writ and officers warrant being produced, the Messrs. Sherring's debt was sworn to as £88 10s. 11d. Mr. Hobbs appeared for Mr Joseph and contended that sufficient proof had not been given of the act of bankruptcy. The Registrar was of opinion sufficient proof had been given, but his honour, in consequence of its being the first case in the Court said he would not put the example of adjudging a person to be a bankrupt without the strongest proof, and therefore, would be satisfied by the production of an office copy of the judgment by the execution creditors, and he therefore adjourned the court until that day week, and delegated his authority to the Registrar to receive such copy judgment.



This is a picture of a Victorian trade token. This one is specific to the City Arms and was issued by Edwin Henry Joseph who was declared bankrupt in April 1860. Its value is 3d and the tokens were usually issued in times of coin shortages

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14 days with hard labour for stealing an umbrella

BOROUGH PETTY SESSIONS,
Town hall, Monday, January 2nd, 1860.
Present:—W. C. Berryman, (mayor), W. I. Welsh, J. B. Plowman, J. G. Everett, Jas. Garrod, and A. Andrews, Esqs.

STEALING AN UMBRELLA.—Catherine Jackson (the wife of a soldier recently on recruiting service in Wells, though the military are not cognizant of the marriage,) remanded from the 27th ult., was again brought up charged with stealing an umbrella, valued at 1s. 6d., belonging to a farm servant, named George Thorne, and in the employ of Mr. Vincent, of Burcott, near Wells. From the evidence it would appear that prosecutor, on the day above mentioned, went to refresh the "inner man" at the City Arms Inn, in the High street, Wells, and placed the umbrella behind where he was sitting in the kitchen. After a little while the prisoner was observed to remove it, but was immediately pursued, and the umbrella taken from her and restored to its owner. The prisoner also returned to the inn and said she had taken it in a joke. Again the umbrella was missing. Inquiries were made for the prisoner, and at her lodgings the umbrella was found. This time she stated it had been given to her by a man out of the window, who advised her to take it home. Thus the umbrella was "taken and retaken" twice in one day. An attempt was made to compromise the matter, but it failed, and prisoner was ultimately given into the custody of P.C. Brown, (42) to whom, when charged with the theft, she denied all knowledge of it. Having now pleaded guilty, she was sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment, with hard labour, in the Shepton Mallet house of correction.