

A SLEEPING BEAUTY....THE HARROW INN in Warren Street

by Henny Shotter



The Harrow in Warren Street with the adjoining forge

When Prince Charming made his way to Sleeping Beauty, he will have had to pass peeling paint and cobwebs. The castle had lain asleep for 100 years. That, however, is not the case with the Harrow Inn in Warren Street. It is not that long ago that the Harrow was a thriving pub. People in their thirties have very fond memories of a lively pub and restaurant where they celebrated birthdays and weddings or went for Sunday Lunch. In 2022, residents in Warren Street and Otterden lost this place where they could vote, where Otterden Parish Council and the

local “Neighbourhood Watch” Group met. Sadly, unlike the case of the castle, no roses are growing up around the Harrow Inn and its future is uncertain. Waiting for Prince Charming.

Since the Harrow was sold in 2006,¹ the bar and restaurant side were often very quiet, but the many cars parked overnight indicated the need for tourist accommodation.

In these intervening years the Bowl on Charing Hill added bedrooms and extended its menu, as did the Plough in Stalisfield, and the former “White Horse” in Sandway awaits a grand opening with a new name and management in the autumn.

The Harrow has, however, fallen even deeper into its less than enchanted sleep.

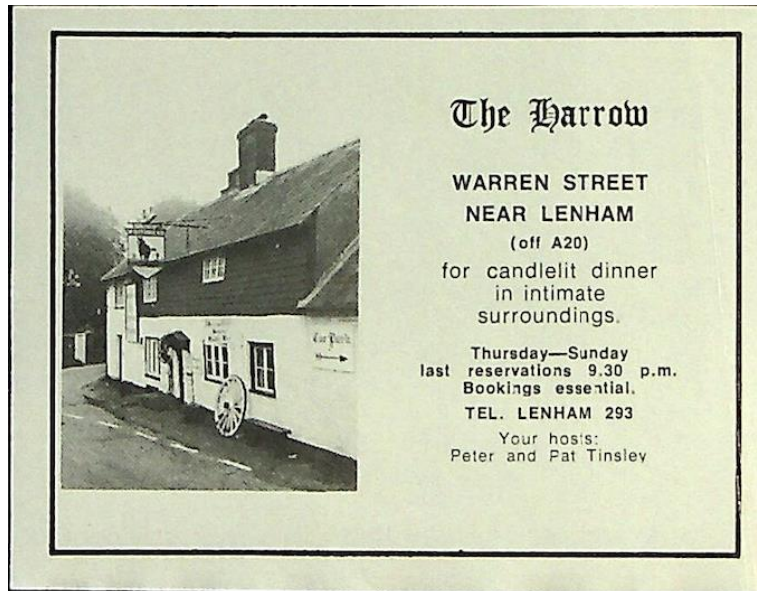
The Harrow Inn dates back to at least to the 17th century. It was originally a smithy, which was very convenient for the farming community in Otterden and Warren Street, and even travelers on the nearby Pilgrims Way might have found it more convenient to have their horses shod at the Harrow, away from the bustle of the busy market town of Lenham. What would the weary traveler want while his horse gets new shoes? A refreshing drink from a cool cellar is a good bet and we think that this is the way the licensed premises were added to the forge. The Harrow Inn is mentioned in a title deed by the Rigden Brewery² as “*that Messuage Tenement or Cottage (commonly called or known by the Name or Sign of the Harrow) and the smithes fforge Buildings...Gardens Land or premises thereunto belonging with the Appurtanances situate lying and being (in) a certain place called Warren Street in*

¹ Kent Online 27 September 2006

² Held at the Kent Archive under U2004/T3: Title Deeds 1759-1782

the Parish of Lenham in the said County of Kent and theretofore in the Tenure or occupation of John Taylor or the Assign late of Robert Smith and now of James Chapman his Assigns or undertenants'

The landlord in the 1881 Census was Edward Turk, whose profession is given as blacksmith. Perhaps the forge closed when his daughter Francis took over the pub³. At around the turn of the century, another forge (Forge House) opened at the other end of Warren Street.



When the Rigden Brewery was bought by Fremlins in 1948, the Harrow traded then, like the Red Lion in the Square, as a Fremlins pub. In the last 50 years, the pub was a free house.

The Harrow was the sort of place the farmers could call in after work in their wellies and working gear. In the late eighties the restaurant was extended and bedrooms added. There was increased trade from tourism and local companies

invited their customers for business lunches. The Harrow at that time was a destination not to be missed.



³ See: <http://www.dover-kent.com/2014-project-a/Harrow-Lenham.html>