

The White Swan in Platts Heath

by Henny Shotter

The earliest record we have of the White Swan which once occupied the corner between Headcorn Road and Lenham Road in Platts Heath, is from 1861 when the licence was transferred from W.B. Fenner to Thomas Powell.¹ In 1891² the pub was then run by a woman, Mrs. Elizabeth Roberts, who was possibly a widow and made her living by selling her home brew from a tiny, 3 feet-wide bar.

Later on, this area was used as a take-away for some snacks... but mainly beer. Off-licences and supermarkets were not around in those days to serve the thirsty, and most beer lovers will in any case prefer a pint pulled straight from a well-kept barrel.



Snowed in...in the early 70's

¹ See: <http://www.dover-kent.com/2018-Project/Swan-Lenham.html>

² Kelly's Directory of Kent, Surrey and Sussex, 1891. Part 1. Kent: County & Localities

The beer was certainly well-kept during the 22 years that Albert and Pat Wickison were the landlords of the White Swan between 1969 and 1991³.



Pat and Albert Wickison having a dance

and drinking venue but also very sociable: the other bar was a traditional public bar where the patrons played darts, board games, dominos, cribbage or cards. When Pat and Albert left, the White Swan changed ownership a few times and became a Free House, but its heyday was over and it closed in 1999. Today the former “White Swan” is a private house.

Christmas party at the White Swan

At first the White Swan served beer from the Style and Winch Brewery in St Peter’s Street, Maidstone. However, when Pat and Albert became the landlords they served Courage beer on draft.

By that time, there were two new bars which were well-frequented by locals. In the saloon bar, the Wickisons served food as well as beer. Pat’s cooking was very popular, not only with locals but also with people from the Medway Towns, who visited the rural area around Lenham and would call in for a refreshing beer and a pub meal. During the summer months, the large beer garden (where a house now stands) was an additional attraction. The White Swan was not only a good eating



³ Thank you to Lee Wickison for providing us with information and photos

