

The Duke of Wellington in Woodside Green

By Henny Shotter

The Duke of Wellington's claim to fame (not the field marshal's, but the public house) is that it was featured in a television programme in October 2011. It was part of a programme called 'Original Features', presented by Nick Knowles. Newspaper reports¹ from that time make the point that Nick Knowles was not impressed by the original features that he found. This could be due to the fact that the building is actually not that old. The efforts of the then owners Simon Mallett and Lesley Whittle to preserve the identity of the building as a 'public house' are past. The pub sign which for many years adorned the building and told a tale of merriment is gone today.



Like many other pubs, the Duke of Wellington started off as a place where locals could get a pint at the door, as shown in this photo² from ca. 1890. The lady at the door was quite possibly Mrs Turner.

¹ KentOnline 16.10.2011

² Photos courtesy of <http://www.dover-kent.com/2019-Project/Duke-of-Wellington-Lenham.html>



The Bull, the Chequers, the Red Lion, The White Horse Inn in Sandway, and the Harrow Inn are all listed as Public Houses in Melville's 1858 Directory of Kent, but the Duke of Wellington does not feature there yet. In the 1939 Tithe Awards a James Turner rents two properties in Woodside Green but he is not identified either as a shop owner or a pub owner.

The first documented owner of the pub³ so far is William Turner whose pewter tankard (engraved W. Turner, Lenham) found its way to an auction on ebay.⁴

The 1891 Census shows William as the son of Henry Turner and Mary Ann Hughes. His birth date is given as about 1860 in Lenham.

By the 1950ties the pub certainly had made itself a name, as the local hunt used to meet there.

³ The current building was possibly built around 1880

⁴ See: <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/victorian-pewter-pub-pot-loftus-309350447>



The beer on sale came at that time from the Rigden's Brewery, which was based in Faversham and operated, after the takeover of the Star Brewery in Canterbury, as 'George Beer and Rigden Ales and Stouts'.

More recent are the memories of Gerald Neaves of Lenham who remembers the amateur boxer Turner as the landlord of the Duke of Wellington.⁵ In the 1930s, his son Patrick Turner took over the pub and the steak and kidney pie of his wife Pat became something to write home about. After the war the Green in Woodside Green was used for cricket matches and the players quenched their thirst at the Duke of Wellington. The pub closed down in 1999.

⁵ These memories are absolutely charming and can be read up here: <http://www.dover-kent.com/2019-Project/Duke-of-Wellington-Lenham.html>