

Queen Victoria Shalford – History

The Queen Victoria is on the way to its 170th anniversary. Its history as a beer house¹ goes back to around 1850. The pub started off as two cottages in Station Row, one of which was converted to a beer house around 1850. It became a public house with a full license in 1864, and was substantially enlarged with a new frontage in 1887. For three-quarters of its life the Queen Victoria was closely associated with just two families: James Edwards, father and son, who first created and ran it, then from 1888 with landlord Edward Warr and his descendants.

Background

In the late seventeenth century a cottage plot was created in the corner of a field bordering the main road. Plots like this for a cottage and garden were originally intended to keep a poor family off the parish rates. But by 1810 this plot was divided in two and was in the hands of two builders, Brickwood and Richardson.



From an 1810 map of the Austen estate (©Surrey History Service and Lt Col RH Godwin-Austen. (The red lines are a later addition, marking the path of the railway. Note how before the railway the road forked just in front of the cottages – this was the original route of Chinthurst Lane, the road to Wonersh.)

Mark Sturley, in his book ‘The Breweries and Public Houses of Guildford Part Two, 1995, p145, says that in 1814 Charles Richardson sold two messuages that he had recently built to William Francis Abery Jennings, a Wimbledon builder

¹ Beer houses could sell only beer and cider. Anyone could sell beer in their house by paying a license fee to Customs and Excise. In 1869 beer houses were brought under the same licensing system as public houses and were subject to control by local magistrates.

These builders were in the business of erecting small workmen's cottages. By 1842 there were fifteen houses and cottages on the plot, later known as Station Row. The 1842 Tithe Map of Shalford shows the two cottages that became the Queen Victoria in the centre, marked 183 - two tenements and gardens belonging to WF Jennings and occupied by tenants.



From 1842 Tithe Map

(note the two ponds in front of the cottages)

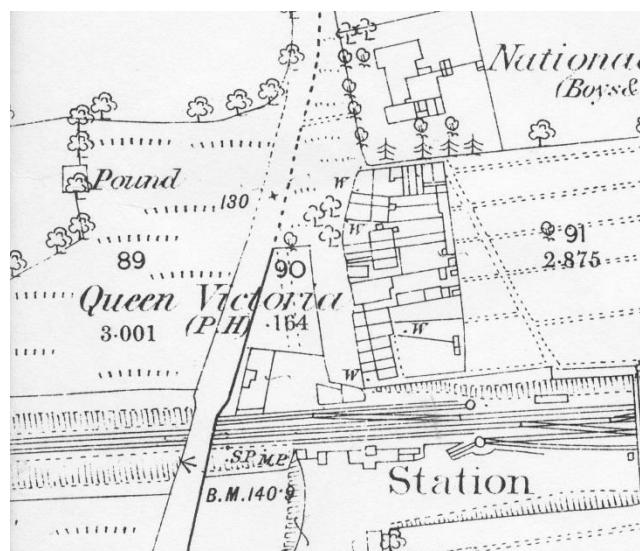
Sturley says that WFA Jennings (the son of the earlier owner) sold the properties in 1848 to James and William Edwards, and that James Edwards converted one to the Queen Victoria (although the present pub seems to occupy both cottages). The rate books, available from 1851, show that James Edwards owned a beer house, occupied until 1857 by Charles Attwood and after 1857 by Edwards' son, also James Edwards who was himself a builder. The beer house became a public house in 1864, which must be when it gained a full license. The local directory for 1867 lists James Edwards as 'Queen Victoria and builder'. So it is to James Edwards that we owe the Queen Victoria. James Edwards was a Shalford man, born in 1828 to James Edwards senior and his wife Charlotte, who lived in a house by the Common on the road to Wonersh. Interestingly James Edwards junior's first job, aged 12, was as a servant at the Seahorse, which may have given him the desire to run a pub of his own one day.

The Seahorse was the oldest pub in Shalford, dating from the eighteenth century. There were also the Parrot at Broadford, and the Cricketers overlooking the cricket

pitch on the Common. Both began as beer houses a few years before the Queen Victoria. It was probably the arrival of the railway in 1849 stimulating trade in the area near the station that encouraged James Edwards senior to open his beer house there. At around the same time yet another beer house, the Railway Arms, appeared at Richmond House at the northern end of Station Row, although Sturley suggests that this may previously have existed as the Surrey Yeoman.

The Surrey Advertiser in 1867 has a few references to the Queen Victoria: on 6 July Mr Edwards of the 'Queen Victoria Hotel' provided the drinks for the Shalford Institute Picnic. On 28 September the Queen Victoria hosted the annual Cricket Club dinner, after which Mr Edwards' health was drunk as 'one who had done so much for the club.' A week later a dinner was held at the Queen Victoria for 17 workmen from Gosden Tannery.

The 1871 census return has the name as the Victoria Tavern. The first large scale Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1870 shows the two tenements or cottages combined into one with a range of buildings in the yard at the back. This yard, originally the cottage gardens, could well have been used as a builder's yard, with a useful side access.



1872 edition OS map

James Edwards senior died in 1871 but his son James remained at the Queen Victoria until the late 1870s. By 1880 he had a tenant, Charles Lewis, in charge of the 'Victoria Inn.' Edwards then leased the property to Thomas Bosville Boteler Baverstock (owner of the Sun Brewery in Godalming) who put a tenant in - Edward Woods at the time of the 1881 census, occupation 'carpenter' again.

Development

In 1887 James Edwards sold the Queen Victoria to Guildford brewers Lascelles Tickner for £1400. They also had the Railway Arms and the Cricketers in Shalford as well as other pubs in the Guildford area. In 1887 they substantially enlarged the pub, commissioning Guildford architect Henry Peak to design 'a new front with bay windows and other alterations at the Victoria Inn Shalford' (quote from Henry Peak's diary). Henry Peak was very well-respected: he held the post of Borough Surveyor, and was Guildford's Mayor in 1899. He laid out the Castle Grounds in Guildford, and the Charlotteville area of the town. In Shalford he was also the architect of Summersbury Hall in Summersbury Drive and the Queen's Hall in Station Road. His partner Edward Lunn designed the Cemetery Chapel opposite the Queen Victoria.

In 1888, following the alterations, Lascelles Tickner installed Edward Warr as licensee. He had run the Railway Arms beer house in Station Row since 1877. Dorset-born, he originally came to Shalford to work as coachman at Beech House in The Street.

Edward Warr died in 1892 and his widow Ellen took over the tenancy of the Queen Victoria. She remarried in 1900 to former police inspector Turner Edgeler who became the licensee. She and her first husband Edward Warr had lived in The Street near to, or even next door to, Turner Edgeler and his wife for a few years in the 1870s when he was the village policeman. After Turner Edgeler's death in 1911, and with the help of her daughter Lilian, Ellen ran the pub until her death in 1925. Lilian and her husband Jack Stilwell then took over the license.

Jack Stilwell died in 1944 but his widow Lilian remained until her own death in 1971 aged 88. Her daughter Constance (known to family and customers as Con) then ran the pub with her husband Dick Holmes. They gave up the license when they retired around 1975 to a house Constance owned on the Broadford side of the Common. They had no children to take over the Queen Victoria, so the family connection that had lasted nearly ninety years was broken.

Elizabeth Donald's Reminiscences

Born in Shalford in 1945 Elizabeth has known the Queen Victoria all her life. Her father, Fred Barnes, was the grandson of Edward and Ellen Warr and was brought up at the Queen Victoria with his cousin Constance Stilwell. Elizabeth and her brother David, with their parents Fred and Eileen Barnes, lived on the Broadford side of the Common in another house owned by Con.

Elizabeth shares her memories of the Queen Victoria:

Externally nothing seems to have changed much since I was a child. The entrance was very similar but on opening the door you could go either left or right. Left to the public bar and right to the private bar.

There were three bars – the Public Bar (for all comers), the Private Bar (for more discriminating or well-to-do customers, and the Saloon (for very quiet, sedate patrons). The whole atmosphere was rather spartan – wooden floors, two large wooden tables, built-in window seats and also seats all around the walls. There weren't many chairs except at the tables for playing cribbage, cards etc. There was also a dart board. It was a 'local' pub, with no bright lights. Shelves behind the bar housed glasses and bottles. Glasses had to be washed at the sink when business was brisk. Con was very fussy about polishing glasses until they gleamed.

Very little food was on offer, just one small glass case set on the counter containing boxes of chocolates, packets of biscuits, nuts, etc., but Con would make sandwiches to order. I remember the large silver box under the counter in which the crisps were kept – Smiths, with the little blue bag of salt.

Behind the bar, and above the shelves of glasses, were brightly polished horse brasses. Could they have come from Edward Warr's time at Beech House? I was fascinated by them. There was also a rack of bells left over from the days of servants, but very interesting as a decoration. There was also a large panel on the wall of maybe 48 light switches. If you needed the Ladies' toilet you had to ask Con or Dick to switch on the light from the panel, and inform them when you returned! Gents had to go outside to the wooden attachment at the front.

Downstairs there was also a living room where the family sat, with a table, wireless, (fairly) comfortable chairs, but no carpet, just a rug. There was a fireplace which brought some comfort in the winter, and a massive floor-to-ceiling cupboard.

The kitchen had stone flags on the floor, a huge sink for washing up, a washing drier which could be raised or lowered, earthenware tubs of salt, soda etc., stored under the sink. There was also a very hefty wooden table.

Upstairs was another story. The long, lino-covered staircase had a grandfather clock right at the top. There were (probably) four bedrooms and a very plush bathroom. There was a very large 'boardroom' for meetings (and my birthday parties), containing a well-polished leaf table and probably 20-25 chairs.

Next to that was my favourite room – the sitting room, where the family liked to retire when the pub was closed in the afternoons. I loved the piano,

the chaise longue, the other very comfortable chairs, bookcases full of assorted books and rugs - sumptuous rugs – on the floor. Also the bell-pull attached to the bells downstairs. The large window looked out at the front towards the cemetery gates and the road of course, which was far less busy than nowadays. I loved that room.

There was no garden, just a yard at the back. There were two, or maybe four, stables, also a very cavernous carriage house with a large hayloft above, reached by, in my day, very rickety wooden steps. I remember my brother defying Con's instructions not to go up there – of course, he did! It was the only time that I remember Con being cross with us. In my father's day they had two horses, Razor and Mary who pulled the trap.

The cellar led down from the hallway (or passage, as they called it), a dark, damp flight of cobwebby steps, with barrels and flagons at the bottom. I was a little bit scared down there, but I wouldn't admit it! Tuesday was the day the draymen came to change the barrels. There was a metal cover just outside the living room window. I loved watching the men rolling the barrels down the slope that led to the cellar.

My memories of the place are very happy. I/we were always welcomed. The opening hours were less than now – something like 11.45 am to 2.00pm, then 6.00pm to ?, so we knew when the family were free to talk to us.

My father, Fred Barnes, was eternally appreciative and grateful for the loving care he received from his grandmother Ellen (Warr/Edgeler) and his aunt 'Lil'. He and Con were treated as equals. He found his grandmother very strict, eg table manners, behaviour etc, but also very fair. He obviously adored her as she was kind and extremely generous. She would never turn away the 'gentlemen of the road' who called frequently, and would always

provide a hot drink, and in some cases a cooked meal, to send them on their way.

My own memories of ‘Auntie Lily’ (Lilian Stilwell), my great-aunt, were very similar – warm, kind, loving, unbelievably generous. She was the grandmother I never had. I feel honoured to have been given her name.

Afterthought: – there was always a resident dog and cat. The dog was a cocker spaniel, the cat a black one. When one died it was immediately replaced by a very similar one. They were always called ‘Jimmy’ (cat) and ‘Spot’ (the dog)... original names?!!!

Elizabeth Lilian Donald, née Barnes

Trivia:

In the village the Queen Victoria always had the reputation of being a real ‘local’ pub, frequented by those, mainly men, who lived and worked nearby.

Lascelles Tickner were bought out by Friary Holroyd and Healy’s brewery in 1927 (later Friary Meux).

In 1994 some mischievous persons took the opportunity of the landlord’s absence on holiday to rearrange the large letters in the Queen Victoria’s name outside to read Quiet Erotic Haven.

Teams of Morris dancers used to perform outside the pub from time to time



Taken in ?1952. Copyright unknown

Margaret Dierden

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Sources

Mark Sturley, *The Breweries and Public Houses of Guildford, Part Two*, 1995

Shalford Rate Books, available at Surrey History Centre

Surrey Directories, census returns, parish registers, Tithe Map and Ordnance Survey Maps, available on microfilm at Surrey History Centre

Henry Peak's Diaries Vol E also at Surrey History Centre

Elizabeth Donald's reminiscences