

THE ROYAL OAK, by K. M. KENDALL.

The "Royal Oak" stood in Mill Street, being referred to in the 1839 Rate Book, when the owner was Henry Hope and the occupier Thomas Glover; however, there is no indication that it was used as an Inn at that date. Although listed in the 1856 Parochial Valuation, the building was unoccupied at the time.

In 1869, according to the Rate Book, Thomas Archer held the property as executor of the late Henry Hope, and he was also the first licensee, presumably having converted the building to a public house in that year. His wife succeeded him: -

Date	Tenant	Rateable value
1881	Elizabeth Archer	£14 - 10 - 0
1889	Elizabeth Archer	£42 - 10 - 0

The increase in rateable value was due to improvements to the property, the Royal Oak having been demolished and rebuilt, according to an article in the Sutton Coldfield News for Saturday 17th April 1937.

Date	Tenant	Rateable value
1890	John Deakin	£42 - 10 - 0
1891	Emily Adams	£42 - 10 - 0
1892	Robert Hill	£42 - 10 - 0
1893	William Webster	£42 - 10 - 0
1894	William Webster	£46 - 15 - 0
1895	Thomas Robinson	£55 - 15 - 0
1900	Thomas Robinson	£85 - 0 - 0
1902	James Garland	£85 - 0 - 0
1907	George Emmanuel Johnson	£85 - 0 - 0
1908	Not recorded	
1909	Frederick Pullen	£72 - 15 - 0
1910	Not recorded	
1911	Alfred Smith	£58 - 15 - 0 (1915)
1916-8	Not recorded	
1919-1937	James and Clara Stanier followed by their son George Edward.	

placem—preferably a sick pilgrim—will be able to be sent each year to Lourdes.

The announcement was made at St. Nicholas' Church, on Sunday last, by the Rev. Father John Clegg, D.D., Ph.D., Priest-in-Charge, who spoke of the generosity of this local Catholic "in these hard mercenary days."

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Lourdes, which is situated in the Hautes-Pyrenees, France, is one of the chief places of Catholic pilgrimages. Its fame dates from 1858 when Our Lady is said to have appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, a girl of thirteen. The famous spring rising from the spot is credited with miraculous powers, and a church was built on one of the banks of the river Gave de Pau in 1880 for the accommodation of pilgrims, hundreds of thousands of whom visit the place annually.

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"ROYAL OAK" GOING.

At ten o'clock on Tuesday night Mr. George Edward Stanier, tenant of the Royal Oak Hotel, called "Time, gentlemen, please," and never again will the phrase be echoed within its walls—for the next day the full licence of the house was transferred to New Oscott Tavern, Chester Road.

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The "Royal Oak" is one of a number of properties adjoining the Parish Church and having frontages to Coleshill Street, Mill Street, and Church Hill which the Corporation intend to remove in order (as the Mayor expressed it at a meeting of the Town Council, in July last,) "to transform what now seemed an eyesore into a beautiful picture."

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The "Royal Oak" originated nearly a hundred years ago when the licence of the Dun Cow (situated in High Street), which was held by a Mrs. Weldon, was removed to premises, recently occupied by Mr. Wilkins, butcher and chandler.

At that time there stood in front of the house the Moot

Coronation Babies will be Lucky :: A Cricketer Looks Back :: A Parishioner's Gift of Faith :: The Last "Time" :: Sentiment and a Table

Hall which was removed by order of the Warden about 1860—when a Town Hall, now the Masonic Hall, was completed in Mill Street—and was replaced by a weighing machine and house.

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Nearly fifty years ago the "Royal Oak" was demolished and rebuilt, and at the same time a great change was effected at the corner of Coleshill Street and Mill Street.

Two cottages in Coleshill Street were pulled down. The one nearest Mill Street, at which a business was also conducted, was tenanted by Mr. and Mrs. S. Weaver; in it four or five generations of the Perkins family had resided.

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In the reconstruction scheme, provision was made for a shop on the site of the old cottages, and a green grocery business was carried on there for many years. To-day it is still a shop.

The slaughter-house at the rear of the "Royal Oak" remained until 40 years ago, when it was pulled down to make room for stables which were then in demand.

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The first licensee of the Royal Oak was Mr. Thomas Archer, who was followed by his wife, and the joint tenancy of the two of them was nearly half-a-century.

The outgoing tenant (Mr. G. E. Stanier) was preceded by his late father and his mother, and together they were licensee for seventeen or eighteen years.

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I have this week seen a photograph showing the old hexagonal weighing house (which was removed by the Corporation quite 36 years ago) in front of the "Royal Oak"; but what interested me just as much was

a clock face on the north side of the Parish Church tower.

I am told that the clock was removed from the tower in 1884, in order to instal a set of eight bells.

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CRICKET

REMINISCENCES.

Mr. R. S. Walters, of Norfolk Lodge, Doe Bank, who at the annual meeting of the Sutton Coldfield Cricket Club was elected a life member, has had an association of 45 years with the club. No wonder he was able to indulge in reminiscences when thanking the gathering for this token of appreciation of his services.

* * *

After modestly admitting his abilities as a wicket-keeper, Mr. Walters mentioned that the offices of both honorary groundsman and treasurer were thrust upon him; and following increased support and membership, the laying down of the second pitch situated on the south-west side of the main ground, in the Rectory Park, was his responsibility.

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The outfield in those days (Mr. Walters continued) was mown only once a year—and, even then, by Canon Bedford and other members—so that the Trinity Monday sports could be held. Many batsmen obtained useful 6's by hitting the ball lustily into the long grass where, as often as not, it landed in a rabbit-hole.

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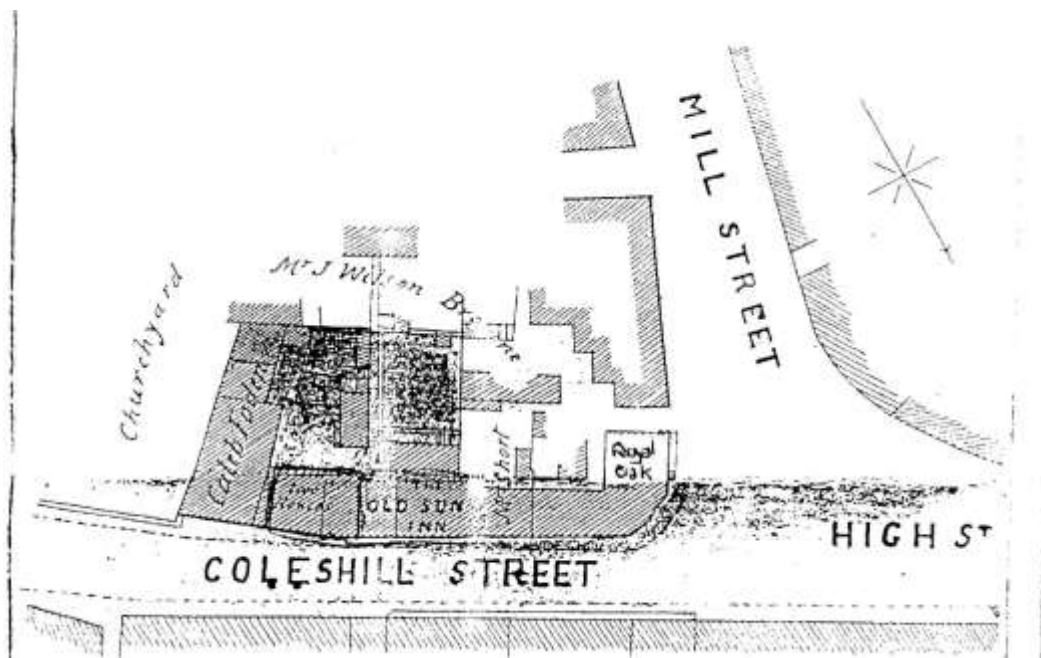
Another amusing recollection of Mr. Walters was that between the two grounds there existed a deep ravine into which water drained from the 1st XI pitch, following a heavy storm, and it was a regular occurrence

The decrease in the value from 1909 indicates that the area was in decline. In 1987 the site was cleared - see the author's booklet "From Church Hill to Vesey Gardens", 1989.

Records of the Royal Oak are scarce - it is not listed in the census enumerators books, and the first reference to it by name in the rate books is not until 1897. When it closed, it was owned by the Lichfield Brewery, but when they came into ownership has not been ascertained



Coleshill Street and the Royal Oak, 1887 (Birmingham Library Services)



Site of the Royal Oak