

THE COACHING INNS OF COLNBROOK

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Colnbrook, in south Buckinghamshire, retains a notable number of coaching inns for its size. This article examines the history and development of the six surviving coaching inns, and the reasons for their survival into the modern age [Editor]

Colnbrook, in the extreme south east of Buckinghamshire, was one of the busiest thoroughfares in the country, much-frequented by well-to-do travellers on the Bath Road. It had at least six coaching inns, one of which is still a public house, another is a restaurant and four more survive as private houses or flats. In the 19th century, one of the former inns became known as 'King John's Palace', a name harking back to the time of Magna Carta, which was signed at Runnymede, just three miles south of Colnbrook. With the end of the coaching era, Colnbrook declined from a thriving town to a mere village. The construction of the Colnbrook bypass in 1928 and the opening of the M4 motorway in 1974 led to the total isolation of the village, and there are now more aeroplanes taking off from nearby Heathrow airport than there are cars squeezing through Colnbrook's narrow High Street.

Like Stony Stratford, in the north of the county, Colnbrook is not in Domesday Book. Both towns grew up on either side of a great road which formed the boundary of two ancient parishes. At Stony Stratford, the town was promoted by the lord of the manor of Calverton on the west side of Watling Street and the lord of Wolverton on the east side. In the case of Colnbrook, it was the lord of the manor of Langley Marish who owned the houses on the north side of the Bath Road, and the lord of Horton who was the proprietor on the south side. Just as Stony Stratford spilled over the river Ouse into Northamptonshire, so Colnbrook extended over the River Colne into Middlesex. Thus a further part of Colnbrook, including 'King John's Palace', was over the bridge in the Middlesex parish of Stanwell. These three components became an ecclesiastical parish in 1853, but the inhabitants failed to establish a civil parish in 1894, when the Buckinghamshire parts of Colnbrook were absorbed into the parish of Iver. Further ill-judged boundary changes in 1965 saw the Middlesex side of the town moved with the parish of Stanwell into

the county of Surrey. It was not until 1995, that the whole of the settlement became a civil parish within the district of Slough, which of course is nominally part of Berkshire!

The residents of Colnbrook had many ways of persuading travellers to part with their money. The town is often listed in the Household Book of Sir Edward Don of Horsenden,¹ who regularly broke his journey to London with an overnight stay at Colnbrook. His expenses on 20 September 1518 included 'for my dyner at Colbroke xviid.,' and on the following morning, for 'horssemete and shoynge xd.' On subsequent visits to Colnbrook he mentions the priest officiating at Colnbrook Chapel, which stood in the middle of the Bath Road, adjacent to the *George Inn*. No doubt the priest wished the traveller well in return for a donation to the chapel. On 18 November 1530, Edward Don's payments comprised 'soper at Colbroke xxid., shambyr iid., item for hormete xxd.' On the following day he paid 'to the preeste iiiid., item brkefast xixd.' Unfortunately, Sir Edward Don does not mention which of the several inns of Colnbrook which he patronised.

An early list of Colnbrook inns is provided by a survey of the halfpenny tokens issued by traders in the town during the 17th century. One of the tokens is that of a tallow chandler, John Guy, but all the others are issued by innkeepers.² These are John Hosey at the *Angel* in Colnbrook; Widow Homes at the *Ball* in Colnbrook; Alice Goad at the *Bell* in Colnbrook; Samuel Mills in Colnbrook, whose token depicts an ostrich with a horseshoe in its mouth; Edmund Slocombe in Colnbrook, whose token shows three stags; and Thomas Burcombe in Colnbrook, whose token features a hart. Of these inns, only the *Ostrich* can be securely linked with an existing building, for many inns changed their names, as was the case of the *Lamb*, the imposing inn on the Middlesex side of the bridge, which was renamed the *White Hart* in the late 18th century.

Colnbrook appears in the survey of beds and stabling at English inns compiled in 1686 for the beleaguered James II.³ There were then 58 beds at the inns and stabling for 79 horses. This list puts Colnbrook in the middle rank of Buckinghamshire towns, well behind Stony Stratford, which had 100 beds and stabling for 127 horses. During the 18th century, as roads were turnpiked and coach design improved, coaches travelled further from London before the passengers needed a bed for the night. Colnbrook's position on the Bath Road was taken over by the growing thoroughfare of Slough. Some large inns like the *Angel*, opposite the *George Inn*, and the *Cross Keys*, on the Stanwell side of Colnbrook Bridge, were forced out of business by the 1760s, whilst others managed to survive until the coming of the railways.

THE OSTRICH INN

The *Ostrich Inn* (Fig. 1) is a very fine 16th century timber-framed building, standing to the south of the Bath Road in that part of the town which was

in the parish of Horton. It retains the large doors to its central coach entrance, and has a large assembly room on the first floor with elegantly-carved timbers rising to the apex of the roof. The corkscrew balusters of the staircase are matched by similar pieces of timber at the rear, which may be remnants of a first-floor walkway giving access to the bedrooms around the coach and stable yard. The earliest known landlord of the *Ostrich Inn* is Samuel Mills, who is mentioned in the Court Rolls of Horton as obstructing the highway at Colnbrook in 1648.⁴ Samuel Mills of Colnbrook, innholder, died in 1672.⁵ The *Ostrich* seems to have suffered from the reduction of trade earlier than some of its competitors for, by the time of the 1851 census, at least part of the inn had become a common lodging house. The landlord, Benjamin Hopkins, described himself as a 'victualler and lodging house keeper'. He had ten lodgers, amongst whom were a paper maker, two agricultural labourers, three hawkers and four beggars. Today the *Ostrich* is a well-appointed restaurant, attracting businessmen and women from firms located near to Heathrow Airport.



FIGURE 1 The *Ostrich Inn*, 2013

THE GEORGE INN

Almost opposite the *Ostrich* is the *George Inn*, a timber-framed building with a late 18th-century brick facade and lofty coach entrance (Fig. 2). The *George Inn* stands in that part of the town which formed a detached part of the parish of Langley Marish, and was held as copyhold of the Manor of Langley. One of the earliest references to the inn is in 1691, when George Anderson of Colnbrook was accused of stealing a piece of raw beef from the proprietor, Isaac Holmes. Evidence was given by ‘George, the horskeeper, and Francis, the hosteler, att Mr Isaac Holms att George, Colnbrooke.’⁶

When the section of the Bath Road from Cranford Bridge to Maidenhead Bridge was turnpiked in 1727⁷, the turnpike commissioners chose to hold their meetings at the *George Inn*, Colnbrook. By 1735, however, more coach services stopped at Slough than at Colnbrook, and the turnpike trustees removed to the *Crown Inn*, Slough.

In 1788, the *George Inn* was advertised for sale by auction:

All that compact and old-established inn, the George at Colnbrook, in the County of Bucks, now in full trade, together with all offices, stabling for forty horses, coach houses, granary, yards, garden and a rich meadow; the premises are part freehold and part copyhold, late in the occupation of Mr Bishop, now of his son in law, Mr Benham, tenant at will at a low rent. The estate has been much improved by a modern brick and sashed front. The stables and lofts are very convenient and mostly new built, and other repairs to the amount of near fifteen hundred pounds.⁸

The proprietors of the *George Inn* evidently had a contract to supply horses for coaches on the Bath Road. In 1792, the Reading coaching firm of Henry Whittle and Jonathan Elderfield insured their utensils and stock at various inns on the Bath Road, including the *Angel Inn*, Reading, the *Queens Arms*, Maidenhead and the *George Inn* at Colnbrook.⁹

Until 1794, the front of the *George Inn* was partially concealed by the chapel and market house



FIGURE 2 The *George Inn*, 2015

which stood in the centre of the Bath Road, at the junction of the lane which leads to Colnbrook Mill. In that year, the owners, William Thurbin of Harmondsworth and Joseph Packer of Uxbridge, gentlemen, bought a piece of land near the *Ostrich Inn* on which to build a new chapel for Colnbrook.¹⁰ When the new building was completed, the old chapel and market house was demolished, thus removing a major obstacle to traffic in the Bath Road.

In 1825, the *George Inn* was purchased by John Sullivan of Richings Park, the big house in Iver parish, immediately to the north of Colnbrook. The inn was described as:

All that customary message or tenement with the appurtenances situate and being in Colnbrook within the said manor called or known by the name of the George Inn together with the customary or copyhold lands thereto belonging formerly in the occupation of Joseph Bishop his undertenants or assigns and late in the occupation of Richard Thompson.¹¹

By 1830, only eight coaches were advertised as stopping at the *George Inn*. These were the *Royal Mail* from Gloucester to London at 4.30am; Horne's coach from London to Stroudwater at 9.30am; Kent's coach from London to Abingdon at 11.15am; Clark's coach from Marlow to London at 11.30am; Kent's coach from Abingdon to London at 1.00pm; Clark's coach from London to Marlow at 2.00pm; Horne's coach from Stroudwater to London at 5.00pm and the *Royal Mail* from London to Gloucester at 10.15pm.¹² In 1842, John Sullivan sold Richings Park and the *George Inn* to Charles Meeking, a highly successful London shopkeeper.¹³ By 1841, that part of the *George Inn* to the west of the coach entrance was occupied by George Adams, surgeon; by 1861 the house was a boarding school, run by Harriet Tollit.

Today the George Inn is still in business as a public house. The gates to the coach entrance remain, and the rear of the rear of the building still resembled an old inn yard.

'KING JOHN'S PALACE'

Over the bridge in Stanwell parish is 'King John's Palace' (Fig. 3), an ironic name given to the building in the 19th century, when it was divided

into several run-down cottages. It stands on the south side of the Bath Road and is a timber-framed building, once jettied. The building has four sets of bay windows, rising from ground-floor to first-floor level, with a central coach entrance reaching the full height of the building. Local folklore has it that this was once a hunting palace, then a hospital and even a school, but none of these stories stands up to historical enquiry. 'King John's Palace' looks like an inn, and had been an inn for many centuries.

The earliest documentary reference to 'King John's Palace' is in the will of Felix Wilson of New Windsor, Berks, gentleman, dated 1 February 1662. He was the then owner of Poyle Mills in the parish of Stanwell. He left the following complex of buildings to his second son Felix:

all that my message or tenement adjoining to the Bridge Foot in Colebrooke heretofore in the occupation of George Buckingham And also all that my message or tenement now in the occupation of William Broughton and Thomas Larking And all that message or alehouse known by the name of The Rose now in the occupation of one Knight with the leases thereunto belonging all situate lying and being in Colebrooke in the parish of Stanwell in the County of Middlesex to have and to hold to him for the term of four score years if he shall live so long¹⁴

Clearly by 1662, only part of 'King John's Palace' was an alehouse called the *Rose*, whilst the bulk of it was occupied by Broughton and Larking. We shall see that the premises occupied by George Buckingham 'adjoining the bridge foot' was actually on the opposite side of the road. Felix Wilson soon sold his inheritance to Thomas Woollhouse of Halstead Essex gentleman.¹⁵ In 1673, 'Kings John's Palace' was part of the sale of Poyle Mills by Woollhouse to William Wavell of London, leather seller, and Francis Willshaw of Deptford, Kent, mariner. Here 'King John's Palace' is described as:

And all that Message or Tenement with the appurtenances situate and being at the Bridge foot in Colebrooke in the parish of Stanwell aforesaid heretofore in the occupation of George Buckingham and now or late in the occupation



FIGURE 3 'King John's Palace', now the *Star & Garter*, 2013

of John Tomson sadler or his assigns And all that Messuage or Tenement with the appurtenances situate and being in the parish of Stanwell aforesaid heretofore in the occupation of William Broughton and Thomas Larking their assignee or assigns and now or late in the occupation of John Tomson smith his assignee or assigns And also all that other Messuage or Alehouse with all and singular the appurtenances situate and being in Stanwell aforesaid called or known by the name of the Rose now or late in the occupation of one [blank] Knight or his assigns and now or late in the occupation of the widow Goodchilde or her assigns¹⁶

Poyle Mills, and extensive property including 'King John's Palace', remained in the Willshaw family until 1742. In that year Clerke Willshaw of Marlowes in the parish of Hemel Hempstead, doctor of physic, sold the whole estate to the sitting tenant of Poyle Mills, Henry Bullock, leather dresser, for £2,398 19s. 'King John's Palace' was described as:

All those six several messuages cottages or tenements situate standing and being at Colebrooke and Poyle in the parish of Stanwell aforesaid in the said County of Middlesex now or late in the several tenures or occupations of Thomas Slater Robert Davison John Passingham Alice Morgan Widow Scotcher and the said Henry Bullock or his undertenant

And also all those several closes pieces and parcels of arable land meadow and pasture ground to them or any of them belonging lying and being in the parish of Stanwell aforesaid in the said County of Middlesex and in the parish of Horton in the County of Bucks containing together by estimation thirty acres be the same more or less now or late also in the tenure or occupation of the said Henry Bullock and Thomas Slater their undertenants or assigns¹⁷

Here is a description of the meadow land to the south of and appurtenant to 'King John's Palace', which was essential for pasturing the horses required by a coaching inn. Henry Bullock died in 1762 leaving 'King John's Palace' to his son John

Bullock.¹⁸ In 1782, John Bullock of Poyle in the parish of Stanwell died, leaving it to his brother Henry Bullock.¹⁹

From 1791, Henry Bullock's possessions in Stanwell parish are itemised in the Land Tax. Part of 'King John's Palace' appears first as:

Henry Bullock Esq: John & William Passingham
Two Tenements Wheelwrights Shop and Gardens
16s 8d

Another part appears as:

Henry Bullock Esq: Widow Austin
Star Public House 13s 4d

It appears that the portion of 'King John's Palace' which was an alehouse called the *Rose* had changed its name to the *Star*. The Austins can be traced back in the Stanwell alehouse recognizances to 1759, when George Austin was the licensee. In 1776 it was Richard Austin and from 1780 it is Mary Austin.²⁰

In 1793, Henry Bullock sold that part of 'King John's Palace' comprising the *Star Inn* to John Ramsbottom and Richard Ramsbottom of Aldersgate Street, City of London, distillers for £600. It was described as:

All that Messuage Cottage or Tenement with the appurtenances situate and being near Colnbrook Bridge in the parish of Stanwell in the County of Middlesex called or known by the name or sign of the Star but which hath heretofore been described as a Cottage or Tenement with the appurtenances situate and being in the parish of Stanwell adjoining to a certain Capital Messuage or Tenement and being formerly part thereof and late in the occupation of Thomas Slater and since of Thomas Wood but which premises are now in the tenure or occupation of the Widow Asten her undertenants or assigns and as the same are described and delineated in a certain plan or plot thereof drawn in the margin of the said indenture²¹

This deed was copied into a volume at the Middlesex Registry of Deeds in 1793. Unfortunately, the plan referred to was not copied into the volume, but a version of it was to appear on a later deed to 'King John's Palace'. From 1794, 'King John's Palace' appeared in the land tax as:

Henry Bullock Esq: John & William Passingham
Two Tenements and a Wheelwrights shop 15s 0d

The land tax was thus shared equally between the two properties, with the *Star Inn* appearing as:

Baverstock & Ramsbottom: Widow Austin Star
Public House 15s 0d

In 1830, the publican, Edward Savage, was able to advertise that four coaches stopped at the *Star & Garter*. These were *Royal Mail* from Stroudwater to London, at 4.30am; the *Monarch* from Bath and Bristol to London, at 7.00am; the *Monarch* from London to Bath and Bristol, at 8.00pm; and the *Royal Mail* from London to Stroudwater, at 10.20pm.²² In 1891, James Henry McKay of the *Star Inn* advertised 'good accommodation for small parties & anglers; the quarters of the C.T.C.; good stabling.'²³

'King John's Palace' remained in the ownership of the Bullock family until the death of Henry Bullock of Poyle, who died in 1840. Henry Bullock's trustees finally sold it to Charles Meeking of Richings Park in 1862. The lawyers obviously had difficulty describing the property:

Firstly all that Capital Mansion house Messuage or Tenement with the yard gardens orchard and barn and also fifteen acres of meadow land adjoining thereto heretofore in the occupation of John Hitherington and afterwards of William Miller

And also all that Messuage or Tenement with the yard garden and wheelwrights shop thereunto adjoining heretofore in the tenure or occupation of William Passingham and afterwards of William Miller

And also all that Messuage or Tenement outhouse yard and garden adjoining to the Colnbrook Bridge heretofore in the tenure or occupation of Mary Lawrence then of George Buckingham afterwards of Alice Morgan spinster and then of William Miller his assigns or undertenants

And also all that Messuage or Tenement outhouse garden and blacksmith's shop heretofore in the tenure or occupation of Henry Hickman and afterwards of the said William Miller his assigns or undertenants with their and every of their right members and appurtenances²⁴

The plan on the conveyance shows ‘King John’s Palace’ surrounding the *Star and Garter*, with the wheelwright’s shop to the east and the smithy to the west, by the bridge. Successive blacksmiths actually lived in the two houses opposite, which are evidently the ‘messuage or tenement adjoining to the bridge foot’ mentioned in 1662. This juxtaposition of wheelwright’s shop, inn and smithy, had been eminently useful for hundreds of years, until the railway took away all the travellers and the motor lorry all the merchandise. The *Star and Garter* continued as a public house right up until 2015. It is soon to be a Costa Coffee shop.

THE CROSS KEYS

These days, the ‘messuage or tenement adjoining to the bridge foot’, now called ‘Toad Hall’, still stands on the north side of the Bath Road next to the bridge. Next to it stand three old coaching inns in a row, each with a frontage to the Bath Road of over 100ft. The first of these was the *Cross Keys*. The building has an 18th-century cement-rendered facade and a central coach entrance leading to a large yard. In 1657, George Buckingham of Stanwell, Middlesex, innholder, left the *Cross Keys* and several pieces of meadow land to his son George. It was described as:

... my freehold house commonly known or called by the name of the Cross Keys situate and being at Colbrooke and within the parish of Stanwell aforesaid together with the yards backsides barns stables and other outhousing thereunto belonging and with it now used And also all those my four closes commonly called the Cross Keys Pieces and that my meadow called Broad Mead and also that my parcel of meadow called Long Mead all which lie and are within the parish of Stanwell aforesaid²⁵

When the *Cross Keys* was mortgaged for £900 in 1728, it was ‘heretofore in the tenures or occupations of Samuel Saxon the father and Samuel Saxon the son or their assigns and are now in the tenure or occupation of John Brown or his assigns or undertenants.’²⁶

The last known landlord of the *Cross Keys* was Thomas Gadsden in 1759.²⁷ By 1791, the former inn had been divided into four dwellings:

All those four messuages and premises lately one messuage or tenement and commonly called or known by the name of the Cross Keys Inn lying and being in Colnbrook in the parish of Stanwell in the County of Middlesex ... now or late in the several tenures of Mr Langton Mr Giles Mr Green and Mr [blank]²⁸

By 1841, that part of the *Cross Keys* to the west of the coach entrance had become a brewery, operated by James Lawrence of Colnbrook, brewer. The eastern end of the building was the British School, with Ebenezer Teulon as the master.²⁹ The brewery was sold to Charles Meeking of Richings Park in 1859.³⁰ Today the building is called ‘Freestone’ and the Post Office occupies the premises to the east of the central coach entrance.

THE CATHERINE WHEEL

An inn named the *Catherine Wheel* at Colnbrook is mentioned in the will of Thomas Windsor Esq, lord of the manor of Stanwell, made 13 August 1479:

Also I will that the Kat[he]ryn Whele in Colbrok and the croft that is now called [blank] with iij acres of meddowe lying in Galow Mede and all other my tenements in the Hun[dre]d of Bukks be sold by myn executors to content the King as far as it will extend that is to say v^c mark³¹

The valuation at 500 marks suggests a substantial property. The Windsor family had been constables of Windsor Castle since the conquest, although their estates were mostly in Stanwell. Thomas Windsor’s son, Andrew Lord Windsor, was forced to give up the Stanwell estate to Henry VIII in 1542 in return for former monastic land, including Bordesley Abbey, near Birmingham.³²

The *Catherine Wheel* was occupied from 1765–76 by William Benham, and then by his widow Jane Benham until 1785. It is one of three Colnbrook inns listed in the Universal British Directory in 1792, the others being the *George* and the *White Hart*. According to an advert of 1792, the *Catherine Wheel* had stabling for 100 horses:

All those extensive freehold premises and well-known good-accustomed Inn, the place of sale, now in full trade, with good brick stabling

for upwards of one hundred horses, large yard, dung yard, and good garden, in the occupation of Mrs Benham, tenant at will³³

The *Catherine Wheel* went out of business in the 1850s. The building was advertised for sale at the *Crown Inn*, Slough, 29 July 1854:

An eligible freehold property in Colnbrook, Middlesex, known as the Catherine Wheel Inn. This property possesses a frontage to the high road of 100ft. and comprises a very roomy and commodious house, a long range of stables and buildings round the yard, in the rear, substantially built, which are capable of being converted into good cottages or for other purposes. Also a large and productive kitchen garden, and a small meadow called the Eyott, adjoining, containing about one acre and a quarter.

The former inn was eventually purchased by Charles Meeking of Richings Park in 1859.³⁴ Today the west part of the building is called 'Fairmead'. It has a brick facade with sash windows. That part to the east of the central coach entrance is called 'Abington'. It has a cement-rendered facade with a portico over the door and moulded hoods over the ground-floor windows.

THE WHITE HART

The *White Hart Inn* was on the eastern end of the row of three coaching inns on the north side of the Bath Road. The building (Fig. 4) has a cement-rendered 18th-century facade and a central coach entrance. When it was mortgaged in 1767 by Sir John Gibbons Bart., the lord of the manor of Stanwell, it was known by its earlier name of the *Lamb Inn*:

All that Capital Messuage Tenement or Inn with its appurtenances commonly called and known by the name or sign of the Lamb situate lying and being at the East End of Colnbrook

And also all that close of pasture or meadow ground to the said Capital Messuage belonging containing by estimation two acres be the same more or less called the Home Close

And one other close of meadow ground containing by estimation two acres be the same more or less And also one other close called

Heartmead containing one acre and an half be the same more or less And also one parcel of ground containing by estimation one rood lying in a certain meadow called Tainter Meadow All which said premises are now situate lying and being in Ridgeworth End or Colnbrook End in the parish of Stanwell in the County of Middlesex late in the tenure or occupation of Edmund Holderness and George Wooley deceased³⁵

When the *White Hart* was put up for sale in 1791, it was described as:

All that old and well-established Inn, the place of sale, now in full trade, with commodious and roomy stabling and other offices, gardens, pleasure grounds and meadows adjoining containing 5a 1r 23p most desirably situated at the East end of Colnbrook, on the great Bath Road, 17 miles from London, the whole built new within twenty years, and now in complete repair, in the occupation of Mr William Cox, tenant at will, at an old and very low rent of £55 per annum, capable of great improvement.³⁶

The *White Hart* was purchased by Samuel Swinnerton for £1,550.³⁷ He must have had a contract to supply horses to William Mountain of the *Saracens Head*, Snow Hill, innholder, who in 1816 insured his goods at several inns on the Bath Road, including the *Kings Head* and *Queens Head* at Hounslow and the *White Hart* at Colnbrook.³⁸ In 1830, the following coaches stopped at the *White Hart*: the *Triumph* from Bath and Bristol to London, at 5.00am; Dixon & Co.'s coach from Henley to London, at 10.am; Bishop & Co.'s coach from London to Wantage, at 10.30am; the *White Hart* from London to Bath and Bristol, at 10.30am; Bishop & Co.'s coach from Wantage to London, at 2.30pm; Dixon & Co.'s coach from London to Henley, at 4.00pm; the *White Hart* from Bath and Bristol to London, at 5.00pm; and the *Triumph* from London to Bath and Bristol, at 6.00pm.

In 1837, just as the railway from London to Bristol was nearing completion, the *White Hart* was to let, the tenant, James Newey, was bankrupt and there was a sale of his furniture and stock in trade, including:

FIGURE 4 The *White Hart Inn*, 2013

... lofty four-post and tent bedsteads with dimity and other furnitures, seasoned goose feather beds and bedding, mahogany press bedsteads, and chest of drawers, japanned dressing tables, bason stands, night tables, swing glasses, bedside carpets, mahogany dining, Pembroke, card, and claw tables, sofas, Brussels and Kidderminster carpets, pier and chimney glasses, morine window curtains, mahogany, japanned and Windsor chairs, eight-day clocks, linen, china, glass, beer engine, pots, kitchen requisites, a mangle, nine seasoned post horses, five sets of harness, two post chaises, a chariot, milch cow, pigs, poultry &c.³⁹

In 1845, the descendants of Samuel Swinnerton, some of them living in the USA, sold the *White Hart* to James Lawrence of Colnbrook, brewer. By 1851, the east end of the building had become a private house called 'Colne Cottage', occupied by William Pole Bennett, curate of Colnbrook Church.⁴⁰ In 1859, James Lawrence sold the

premises to Charles Meeking of Richings Park.⁴¹ The Meekings had therefore snapped up the *George Inn*, the *Cross Keys*, the *Catherine Wheel* and the *White Hart*. The *White Hart* remained in business as a hotel well into the 20th century, but is now converted into flats.

CONCLUSION

The fact that six of Colnbrook's coaching inns survive to this day is partly due to the building of the Colnbrook bypass in 1928.⁴² This took the pressure of traffic off the town at a critical time and reduced the need to demolish property for road widening. Colnbrook, however, had lost much of its trade fully 200 years earlier. In 1728 a petition was submitted to the County Justices seeking permission to make a general appeal for funds to rebuild the chapel in the High Street, outside the *George Inn*. The reasons why the inhabitants of Colnbrook could not repair the chapel themselves were as follows:

[Colnbrook] had been an ancient market town and a great thoroughfare situate on the Western Road of England, but the market is lost, the river being no longer navigable, the trade at their inns is greatly diminished by reasons of coaches and passengers removing to Slough, which is reputed a more convenient distance from London.⁴³

NOTES

- 1 *The Household Book of Sir Edward Don 1510–1551*, ed. Ralph A. Griffiths, Bucks Record Soc 2004
- 2 *RB 12* (1927–33), 324–9
- 3 The National Archives WO 30/48
- 4 *RB 12* (1927–33), 327
- 5 Will of Samuel Mills of Colnbrook innholder, proved PCC 13 March 1673
- 6 Bucks Sessions Records vol. I, 388, 392, 397. Justicing Notebook of Sir Roger Hill, 18 June 1691, Bucks Record Soc (forthcoming)
- 7 ‘An Act for repairing the road from Cranford Bridge in the County of Middlesex to that end of Maidenhead Bridge which lies in the County of Bucks’, 13 George I Ch. 31
- 8 *Reading Mercury*, 13 October 1788
- 9 Sun Fire Insurance, 29 November 1792 London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) MS 11936/390/608531
- 10 Indenture, 29 March 1794 Centre for Bucks Studies (CBS) D 72/20
- 11 ‘Surrender and Admission’, 12 October 1825 CBS D-SY/10
- 12 Pigot’s Directory, 1830
- 13 *Bucks Herald*, 23 July 1842
- 14 Will of Felix Wilson of New Windsor gentleman, proved PCC 5 March 1662
- 15 LMA ACC/0132/164
- 16 LMA ACC/0132/174
- 17 LMA ACC/0132/191
- 18 Will of Henry Bullock of Poyle in the parish of Stanwell leather dresser, proved PCC 23 Nov 1762
- 19 Will of John Bullock of Poyle Esq, proved PCC 7 Feb 1782
- 20 LMA Middlesex Alehouse Recognizances
- 21 LMA MDR 1793/007/149
- 22 Pigot’s Directory, 1830
- 23 Kelly’s Directory of Buckinghamshire, 1891
- 24 Conveyance, 3 May 1862 CBS D-SY/47
- 25 Will of George Buckingham of Stanwell, Middlesex, innholder, proved PCC 24 December 1657
- 26 Mortgage, 11 July 1728 CBS D/SY/41
- 27 LMA Middlesex Alehouse Recognizances
- 28 Conveyance, 9 May 1791 CBS D/SY/41
- 29 1841 Census, Stanwell
- 30 Conveyance, 19 September 1859 CBS D/SY/41
- 31 Will of Thomas Wyndesore of Stanwell Co Middlesex Esq, proved PCC 15 February 1486
- 32 Victoria History of the County of Worcester, vol. 3, 225, 1913
- 33 *Oxford Journal*, 28 April 1792
- 34 Conveyance, 20 September 1859 CBS D/SY 41
- 35 Conveyance, 19 June 1767 CBS D/SY/11/3
- 36 *Reading Mercury*, 22 August 1791
- 37 Conveyance, 1791 CBS D/SY/11/3
- 38 LMA Sun Fire Insurance MS 11936/473/925211
- 39 *Reading Mercury*, 13 May 1837
- 40 1851 Census, Stanwell
- 41 Conveyance, 19 September 1859 CBS D/SY/41
- 42 *Bucks Herald*, 15 June 1928
- 43 Bucks County Council (1980): Calendar of Quarter Sessions Records, vol. 7, 1724–1730, 150