

Dedham's Lost Pubs

Some of Dedham's many former inns are recorded in the names of streets such as Anchor Lane, Crown Street and Gun Hill or houses like the Compasses in the High Street. There were already several inns in the late sixteenth century when Dedham was a prosperous market town and until the twentieth century there would have been one nearby, wherever one lived in the parish. Many publicans had other sources of income as well. In 1855 *Kelly's Directory* tells us that Samuel Osborne at the Sun was a poulterer, Nathaniel Saunders at the Crown a builder and farmer, George Sowter at the Sun a harness maker and Henry White at the Marlborough Head a livery stable-keeper.

Some lost pubs have left no trace that I can discover. The Shiers, described in the *Ipswich Journal* in 1830 as "a well accustomed inn on Dedham Hill for upwards of 40 years", was near the Stratford Turnpike Gate at the bottom of Gun Hill. It is said to have opened c.1690. The Admiral Vernon (named after the national hero who captured Portobello from the Spanish in 1739) is recorded in 1743 and 1762. In 1754 there is a mention of a traveler lodging at "the Admiral's Head in Dedham" but I have found no further indication as to its locality.

The other six pubs listed as trading in the mid eighteenth century were the Marlborough Head, the Sun, the Three Compasses, the Rose and Crown, the Anchor and the Gun.

Dedham farmer Roger Freeman (1928-2005) who grew up in the village remembered that there were still eleven pubs in the parish at the beginning of the twentieth century. Around a hundred years later there were just three, the Rose and Crown in Crown Street, (the only one he called a "local") and our two remaining pubs in the High Street, the Sun Inn and the Marlborough Head.

In 1947 A.S. Waller reminisced about two pubs on Dedham Heath. I have been unable to discover anything about the Beehive but the Anchor at the top of Castle Hill was recorded as an alehouse as early as 1759, when it was kept by a victualler named Launcelot Feather. Mr Waller said that that the original pub stood well back from the road but that it had been rebuilt c.1858-60 using recycled material from the Weeley Barracks (put up during the Napoleonic Wars), when they were pulled down. Many residents will still remember this partly weatherboarded pub, which survived throughout the twentieth century. It was refurbished by a new owner in 1997 but closed down in 2004, when it was sold to a property company and then left empty, prey to vandalism. It was demolished in 2007 and the present Blackmore House and Pentworth House were built on the site.

Near the corner of Cooper's Lane at the bottom of Castle Hill was the Prince of Wales, whose name reflects the enormous popularity of Queen Victoria's eldest son Albert (Bertie) during the period of almost sixty years before he became King Edward VII in



The Anchor on Dedham Heath in the 1950s. It was demolished in 2007.



The Prince of Wales on the corner of Cooper's Lane in the 1930s. Peggy Bullet is the child on the right. The pub was demolished in 1954.



A scene at the old Rose and Crown in the early twentieth century.



The Rose and Crown as rebuilt in the 1930s. It closed down in 2009 and was demolished.

1901. It occupied a fifteenth century house with a central hall and a cross wing with a projecting upper storey at the west end and it had its original moulded ceiling beams and king post roof trusses. The pub had closed by the time Peggy Bullett was born there in 1926, when her parents were living with her grandparents Charlie and Emily Eleanor Plumber who occupied the building until 1933. They had moved to Dedham from Ipswich and her grandfather who was a wheelwright had a builder's yard near the Rose and Crown in Crown Street. The former pub, which belonged to Mr Bird next door, was empty by then but it still had its skittle alley at a higher level behind the house. The inn was pulled down in 1954 and made way for new houses.

The Rose and Crown as a pub name dates from the end of the Wars of the Roses, after King Henry VII married Elizabeth of York in 1486 to reconcile the long-feuding houses of Lancaster and York. Its inn sign would show a red and white rose, combining their colours, and a crown to symbolise their union under the Tudor Dynasty. Writing in 1951 the painter Sir Alfred Munnings who lived at Castle House remembered the former Rose and Crown in Crown Street as "*an old thatched inn like a George Morland picture*" but said "*it has long been superseded by a building which is an insult to its predecessor.*" This larger pub must have been built in response to the considerable increase in the population of Crown Street when the Crownfields and Kiln Cottages council houses were built between the Wars. It became one

of the centres of social life in the village; so it was a sad loss when it closed down in 2009 and was subsequently demolished. Its place was taken by three new homes, Malt House, Porter House and Barley House, built in 2013.

The building in the High Street which became the Three Compasses dates from the late sixteenth century with a seventeenth century addition at the back. Its name presumably derives from the three compasses depicted on the Arms of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters, a livery company of the City of London. This pub seems to have attracted bad company in the mid nineteenth century. The *Essex Standard* reported in 1855 that "*two men armed with loaded pistols, passers of forged bank notes were captured in bed at the Compasses*" and the following year it described the "*seizure of contraband tobacco in the Compasses yard*". There were double gates across the entrance to the pub yard to the right of the building where carts were driven in from the High Street. Ted Eley told me that the horses at the pub were pastured on Bridges Farm.

After the inn closed in 1912 it was bought by the shopkeeper Major Charles Ray who owned all the buildings on the east side of Princel Lane down as far as Little Netherhall. The yard gates were removed and replaced by an attached single-storey building, which I remember in the 1940s as Mr Jarvis's barber's shop. A photograph taken in 1921 shows his striped barber's pole displayed at the front.

The elaborate and beautiful wrought-iron frame of the pub's early eighteenth century inn sign survived into the twentieth century. It was recorded by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in 1926 but by the time Canon Rendall wrote his book *Dedham Described and Deciphered* in 1937 he was lamenting its loss. "It was an ornament to the village street", he wrote "but at a level inconvenient to the two-decker motor bus". The pub later became the Compasses Bookshop started by Veronica Webber in the 1970s and then owned by Pat and Shaun Arnold until it closed in 2007.

One of the earliest buildings in the parish which later became a tavern is the thatched Lamb Inn (now Lamb House) which dates from the Tudor period. It is recorded as a pub before 1841. The Lamb is a symbol of Christ, the Redeemer and in this case the pub's name is thought to derive from the Lamb and Banner or Flag, emblem of John the Baptist the patron saint of the guilds of weavers and clothiers. The innkeeper in 1851 was Robert Osborne who was also a cattle dealer. In the 1930s the small bar with its ancient beams still had the rack above the fire which was used for curing hams. The Lamb closed in 1998 and became a private house.

The Live and Let Live was on the Ardleigh Road not far from Lamb Corner, beyond the junction with Long Road West. A widow aged 59 named Sarah Death is recorded as the Beer House Keeper at this inn in the 1871 Census and in 1881 it was kept by 38-

year-old Thomas White who lived here with his wife, three sons and two daughters. I have been unable to find a photograph of this building while it was still a pub. It closed in 1920 and is now in residential use as The Old Ale House.

The earliest mention of the Gun in the Dedham Church records is in 1697/8 when "John Harvey at the Gun was buried". The baptism of Thomas Elliot or Elliot "born at ye Gun" appears in 1756. The site of the "Dedham Gun", which belonged to the Manor of Overhall and Netherhall, is shown on Chapman and André's Map of 1777, by which time it was an established posting inn. Hamilton's new Post Coach from Halesworth to London called at the Gun daily in 1785 when William Weatherby was host. After motor traffic replaced horses in the twentieth century the importance of such taverns was drastically reduced. The ancient inn was partially rebuilt in the early 1900s and it finally closed down in 1967.

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Next time:
The Marlborough Head and the Sun



The Three Compasses in the early twentieth century. Note the inn sign and the gate into the pub yard. This pub ceased trading in 1912.



The Lamb c. 1900. It closed in 1998.



The Gun in the early twentieth century. It closed in 1967.



A nineteenth century picture showing the Gun as a coaching inn.