

\* The Red Lion \*

This inn known by the name and sign of the Red Lion was built in the 35th year of Elizabeth I, in 1593. Though the original structure of the building has undergone alteration down through the years, particularly during the reign of George III, when the structure was refaced and that of Victoria when other alterations were carried out.

When first built the property consisted of a main dwelling house or tenement with stables, outbuildings and a large tract of land. It was owned at this early date by Francis Bryce, yeoman of Patricbourne. By 1632 he had disposed of the house by sale and in that year one Jacob Jarvis, victualler of Canterbury was granted a licence to sell ales from it. He called the house and registered it under the title of the 'Red Lion'. By 1640, it had become a registered inn offering lodging and stabling facilities and because of its situation on the London to Dover High Road, it became an inn of some prominence.

Jacob Jarvis' family had for many years been vintners of Canterbury and were among the first to be called so outside the City of London. He kept the 'Red Lion' until his death in 1661, whereafter it and all it contained passed with another dwelling in Bridge to his widow Arabella. She kept the house until 1672, when in that year she sold it and its wine licence, to Martyn Bradstowe, a victualler of Canterbury, who for many years had kept an inn there called the 'Black Griffin' in St. Peters Street, (the present one was built in 1887). Bradstowe's wife, Sarah was a harness maker by trade and it would appear that she conducted this trade from the 'Red Lion' during the time she was here.

Most of the trade in the parish of Bridge at this date, because of its situation, seemed to be centred around travel. There were three wheelwrights in the village, two blacksmiths and two saddlers. This was apart from the trades conducted from the 'Red Lion' which by 1700 could boast commodious livery and bait, stables and a harness maker. In 1708, the Bradstowes sold the inn to Richard Knight, victualler, who kept it until his death in 1741 whereafter it passed to his daughter Jane, a milliner of Bridge and together they kept the house until 1768, selling in that year to Thomas Fagge. The Fagge's were a prominent family of Bridge. There was at this date a baker called Fagge, a miller, blacksmith and carpenter.

The improvement of the London to Dover highway in the 1760's meant faster and more regular coaches. The 'Red Lion' was never a main stage, but a resting place between stages. Private coaches would wait here for the through coaches to pick up passengers transferring to local transport. It was during this period that the stables were extended to accommodate more horses and a coach-house was built. By 1800 Naomi Fagge, widow of Thomas was keeping the 'Red Lion'. She sold it in 1804, to Joseph Moss, victualler and equine dealer, who by the year 1810, was licenced to let horses from the inn, a tradition that remained for many years to follow.

Moss sold the 'Red Lion' in 1818 to Thomas Hawkins, who like his predecessor obtained a licence to let horses. By the time he sold the inn in 1832, wagonettes and carriages could also be hired here. In that year one Joseph Eyre purchased the house. By 1850, he was advertising the 'Red Lion' as a fine lodging inn, with carriage and stabling facilities. By 1860 he had become a fly proprietor of the 'Red Lion and livery stables'. A fly was a small one horse carriage, first introduced at Brighton in 1816. It was originally pushed or pulled by two men, but later the term was given to any one horse carriage of the hansom type.

Joseph Eyre kept the 'Red Lion' until his death in 1871, whereafter it passed to his son Robert. In 1886, he sold the house to the Frederick Flint Brewery of St. Dunstan's Canterbury. They installed one Thomas Fisher Hinds into the house as a tenant. He kept it until 1898, being succeeded in that year by Samuel Dommatt and he in 1902 by Frederick Anderson. It was whilst in his hands that the Flint Brewery sold out to the Beer and Rigden Brewery of Canterbury. In 1904, Anderson was succeeded by Frank Clayson, he in 1911 by John Friend, who was here for the duration of World War I, and on until 1921, when he was succeeded by Joshua Golder, he in 1926 by John Thomas Watson, he in 1928 by Richard S. Ansell and he in 1933 by George Burton, who was here for many years to follow. In the 1940's the Beer and Rigden Brewery sold out to the Whitbread Brewery and they eventually sold the 'Red Lion' to the Bass Charington Brewery.

Today, the inn is no longer brewery-owned and is kept by Andrew Paice Hill and Penelope Cavill.