



Ticehurst 1695

Local history

Ticehurst derives its name from the Saxon *ticcenes*, meaning young goats and the Saxon *hyrst*, meaning wooded hill, hence a wooded hill where goats are kept. In 1248 it was known as Tycheherst and by the fourteenth century it appears as Tysehurst.

Ticehurst is situated in the ancient Rape of Hastings. The Domesday Survey of 1085 lists the Count of Eu as landholder of the area known as Hasting Rape. A Rape is a land or territory division and is named after a fortified centre; there were six Rapes (or baronies) in Sussex. The Rape was placed under a magnate, a relative or trusted friend of King William, who held all the lay land in each Rape. Every Rape also had its own Sheriff. They were not entirely a Norman innovation, as the district divisions evidently existed before the 1066 invasion. Though the origin and original purpose of the Rapes is not known, their function after 1066 is clear. With its own Lord and Sheriff, each was an administrative and fiscal unit. The Rape of Hastings was now governed and taxed through the Count of Eu.

Ticehurst is also situated in the Weald. The Weald takes its name from the vast oak wood that once covered the hinterlands of the Downs. In AD 893 it was described as being 30 miles wide and over 120 miles long, stretching from the marshes of Kent to the New Forest in Hampshire. The word 'weald' came into use as early as 1290, appearing as *welde*.

Smuggling (Owling as it was originally termed) developed around the year 1300 in response to the introduction of customs duty on the export of wool, where previously all export and import trading had been free. Although initially the duties were quite small, as the hundred-years war progressed, tax increased, and in 1614 with the introduction of a ban on the export of wool, smuggling really took off. Incidences of smuggling increased dramatically following

the end of the Napoleonic wars (1797-1815), and as levies on tea, tobacco and spirits were increased these goods were also smuggled.

As traditional Sussex industries declined, such as fishing, weaving and iron production, men sought other ways of supplementing a meagre income. Tub carriers could earn up to 10/- a night carrying tubs from the beach up to local hiding places, which compared favourably to a labourers weekly salary. However, although smuggling could be highly lucrative it could also be exceptionally dangerous and although it was generally only the gang leaders that were convicted, these men risked their lives and their livelihoods. Sea smugglers faced naval service on a man-of-war and land smugglers risked transportation and possibly even death if convicted.

The Sussex coast was ideally placed as a drop off point for contraband and the beaches of Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne experienced many incidences of smuggling. Residents of Ticehurst were involved with smuggling of spirits mainly in the nineteenth century. Kegs of spirit being transported through the village *found* their way into the inns of Ticehurst. There are no recorded incidences of the Bell Inn being in receipt of illegal goods, this was probably due to careful management and safe storage.

St Mary the Virgin is the Ticehurst Parish Church. The earliest written evidence of a church at Ticehurst is in a document dated 1180. Nothing definite remains from that period, the present structure is almost all of the late 14th century. The church was probably built by Sir William de Etchingham after he completed Etchingham church in 1360. Although most of the building is therefore 600 years old, there has been some restoration, especially the windows, and much of the chancel has been rebuilt. The surviving Parish Records date from 1559.

The Bell Inn Architecture.

The Archaeological Interpretative Survey by David Martin gives a very detailed explanation of the building structure and development. In which he states “the initial build dates from c.1560 +/- 25 years (period A). It was a three-cell structure having a centrally-placed floored-over hall with services to the east and a small parlour bay to the west. The house was fully floored on the upper storey, but the three chambers at this level were probably open to the roof. There was a simple one-flue chimney stack, with the cross passage behind the ground-floor fireplace. The front was continuously jettied and the external walls were close studded.

In the late 16th century or early 17th century (period B) a heated, single-bay range was constructed at the eastern end of the period A house, enlarging the service area. The ground floor room was entered from the cross passage.

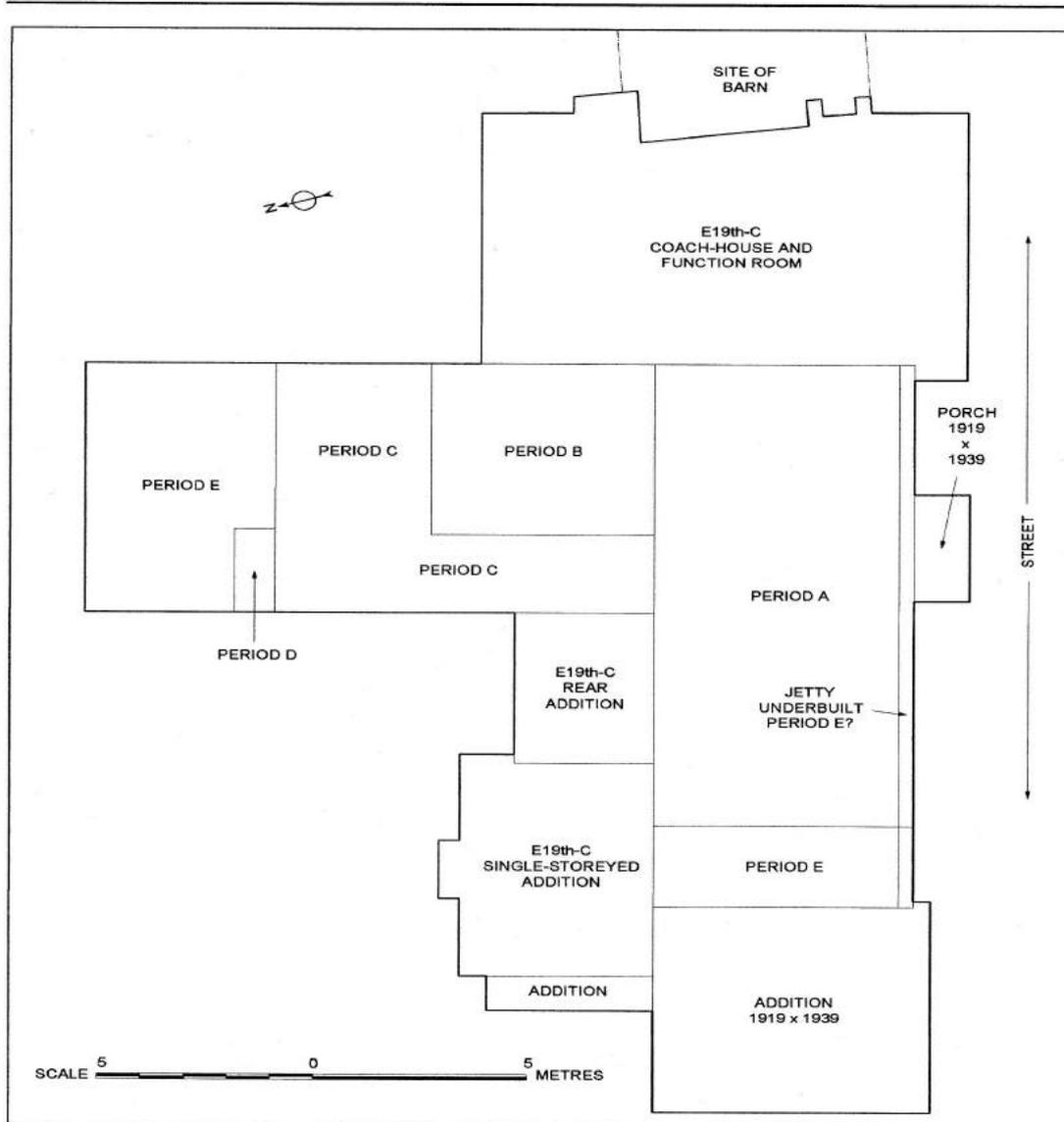
Alterations undertaken during the mid/late 17th century (period C) were extensive. A new, four-flue chimney was constructed on the site of the old fireplace. The service rooms became high status accommodation and the service area was moved to the rear which had been extended. A staircase was inserted at the south-western end and a cellar dug underneath the new parlour.

Minor modifications can be attributed to the early/mid 18th century (period D).

In the mid 18th century (period E) the rear range was extended by yet another bay, and the remaining ground floor rear walls were rebuilt in brick. In the main range, the roof was completely rebuilt, with higher wallplates and dormer windows in the front slope.

In the 1820/30s a large two-storeyed range was built onto the eastern end of the house, with a function room on the first floor and a coach house on the ground floor. This range was attached to a barn which was demolished post 1919 and before 1939”.

Archaeology South-East
 The Bell Hotel, Ticehurst, East Sussex
 Archive Ref. ESRO HBR1/1690. Site Ref P42/49
 Interpretative Historic Building Survey Rev 00 / Aug 08



THE BELL HOTEL, TICEHURST, EAST SUSSEX OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN				Site Ref	P42/49
Drawn By	J Clubb	Revision No	-	Drawing No.	1690/1
Date of original survey	2008	Date of this revision	2008		

The Bell Inn History

Given the prominence of the Bell Inn location within Ticehurst there may have been a smaller earlier property on the site but there is no written or archaeological evidence to support this.

The 1618 Hammerden Survey and map (ref: East Sussex Records Office ESRO Co/b/157) states the dwelling, now the Bell Inn was owned by Philip Daniell, *a house, barn and 4½ acres of land*. It was a private dwelling and not an Inn. The only Inns in the Hammerden Survey were The Anchor (later Duke of York) and The Vine. Unfortunately, the name of the house is not given.



1618 Hammerden Map (Copyright ESRO)

Philip was the son of Richard Danyell (the earlier spelling of *Daniell*). Richard, the son of Thomas was born in 1525 in Framfield and married Margaret Amerye on the 21st October 1560 at St Mary's Church, Ticehurst. Margaret (maiden name unknown) was the widow of Richard Amerye who had died in 1559. Richard's will (ref: ESRO A4 p338) states he bequeathed his Ticehurst property to his wife, Margaret. The marriage was without issue and Margaret became a wealthy widow. The building construction date of the Bell Inn fits in well with the marriage of Richard Amerye to Margaret.

Richard Danyell and Margaret had two known children: Philip and Elizabeth in 1594 (who later married one Robert Pilbeam *of Ticehurst* in 1614).

Margaret Danyell died in February 1599 and was buried at St Mary's Church, Ticehurst.

Richard Danyell died, age 74, in March 1599 and was buried at St Mary's Church, Ticehurst. The property passed to his son, Philip who resided there with his wife, Mary.

Mary, *wife of Philip Daniell*, died in October 1619 was buried at St Mary's Church, Ticehurst.

Philip Daniell died in April 1635 and was buried at St Mary's Church, Ticehurst. There is no record of a will nor are there records relating to any Daniells owning property in Ticehurst after this date. It may have passed to the Pilbeam family via Philip's daughter Elizabeth's marriage. Without a definite surname or house name the next few years are unknown.

The Ticehurst Land Tax (ESRO XA31 27-28) Records start in 1693. Between 1693-1714 there is no mention of the Bell Inn (the other known Inns are named) so it can be assumed the property was still a private dwelling.

In 1714, the Ticehurst Land Tax states *The Bell* was owned and occupied by one William Watson. This is the first mention of The Bell and the origin of the name is unknown (but it was within the sound of the church bells). William was the son of Isaac and Merrye and was born in Ticehurst. William and his wife, Mary, had one son, William and following William senior's death The Bell passed to his son.

In 1741, *The Bell* was still owned and occupied by William Watson, junior.

In 1743, *The Bell* was purchased by one Stephen Fuller.

The Fuller family were local landowners and ironmasters. The family fortune had been built on the production of iron and the manufacture of iron goods, notably cannons and similar equipment for the British Royal Navy. There was also a substantial income from sugar plantations in Jamaica.

Stephen Fuller was the son of John and Elizabeth (nee Rose) of Brightling and was born 17th November 1716. Stephen's nephew, John Fuller ("Mad Jack Fuller") became a well known Sussex eccentric and famous for building follies.

Stephen attended Trinity College, Cambridge and married Elizabeth Noakes on the 8th July 1744 in Brightling. They had five known children: Phillipa in 1745 (who married William Dickinson) and died, age 60, in 1806. Elizabeth in 1746 and died, age 30, in 1776, unmarried. Ann in 1747 and died, age 17, in 1764, unmarried. Sarah in 1748 (who married Hans Sloane) and died, age 35, in 1783. Mary in 1752, who died in infancy in the same year. Elizabeth, Stephen's wife, died, age 31, in March 1753.

The Bell became part of the large estate of Sussex properties owned by Stephen and was occupied by one William Hood. William was the son of William and Agnetta and was born in Ticehurst and married one Constance Birch on the 18th May 1758 at St Mary's, Ticehurst.

The 1749 Ticehurst Land Tax states: *William Hood of The Bell and Clayhams.*

The 1752 Ticehurst Land Tax states The Bell was owned by Stephen Fuller and occupied by William Hood.

The 1759 Ticehurst Land Tax states The Bell was owned by Stephen Fuller and occupied by William Hood.

The 1766 Ticehurst Land Tax states The Bell was occupied by one John Lowles.

John Lowles was the son of William and Frances (nee Eaton) and born on the 30th April 1730 in Ashburnham, Sussex. John married Lucy Coleman on the 12th October 1761 at St Mary's Church, Ninfield. Following Lucy's death he married Jemima Hood (nee Batcheller) on the 14th September 1764 at St Mary's Church, Ticehurst (Jemima was a widow and had previously married George Hood on the 17th April 1759 at St Mary's Church, Ticehurst). John and Jemima had five known children; John in September 1765, Thomas in September 1767, William in December 1769, Rebecca in January 1775 (died in infancy) and Sarah in December 1777.

The 1785 Ticehurst Land Tax states The Bell was owned by Stephen Fuller *esq* and occupied by John Lowles. Tax £15 per annum. John Lowles owned Clayhams.

John Lowles, junior, married Catherine Brabon on the 24th July 1787 in Rye. They had four daughters: Kitty, Jemima, Jane and Susanna. Kitty, being the only child to survive infancy.

John Lowles died, age 63, on the 3rd March 1793 in Ticehurst and was buried at St Mary's Church, Ninfield, Sussex. John's will (ref: ESRO A66 p700) states:

I John Lowles give my son's Thomas and William 10 acres of land called Riders in Herstmonceux. I give my son James my houses with land called Clayhams in Ticehurst. I give all my household goods and chattels of all kinds, ready money to be divided equally between my beloved wife, Jemima and children Thomas, William, James and Sarah. I give £20 to my son John.

John's eldest son, John appears to have been *out of favour* with his father. This may have been because he was named as the father of three known illegitimate children, all born to local Ticehurst women (two of whom gave birth within weeks of each other).

The 1793 Ticehurst Land Tax states the Bell Inn was owned by Stephen Fuller and occupied by the *late John Lowles*.

In 1798, Stephen Fuller sold The Bell to one John Hutchings.

Stephen Fuller died, age 83, on the 8th September 1799 in Hampshire and his estates passed to his grandchildren.

The 1801 Ticehurst Census states: *Bell Inn Jemima Lowles, age 61, living with 2 males and 4 females.*

James Lowles died in 1803. William Lowles died in 1806.

Jemima Lowles died in 1819 and her will (ref: ESRO A73 p452) states:

I give my son Thomas all my houses. I give my son John £20. I give my daughter Sarah Webb £40 and all my clothes. I give Kitty Lowles who lives with me £100, my bureau, my watch and 1 dozen silver tea spoons. I give my son Thomas all my cows. I give to my son Thomas and daughter Sarah Webb all my furniture and linen to be divided equally.

In 1824, The Bell was occupied by one John Sivyer. John and his wife, Sarah, had one child, John in October 1799. John, junior, married Jane Boorman on the 28th October 1820 in Lamberhurst. John and Jane's marriage was without issue but John was named as the father of the *bastard child* Fanny Wallis in 1828 (he was also later named as her father on her marriage certificate in 1855).

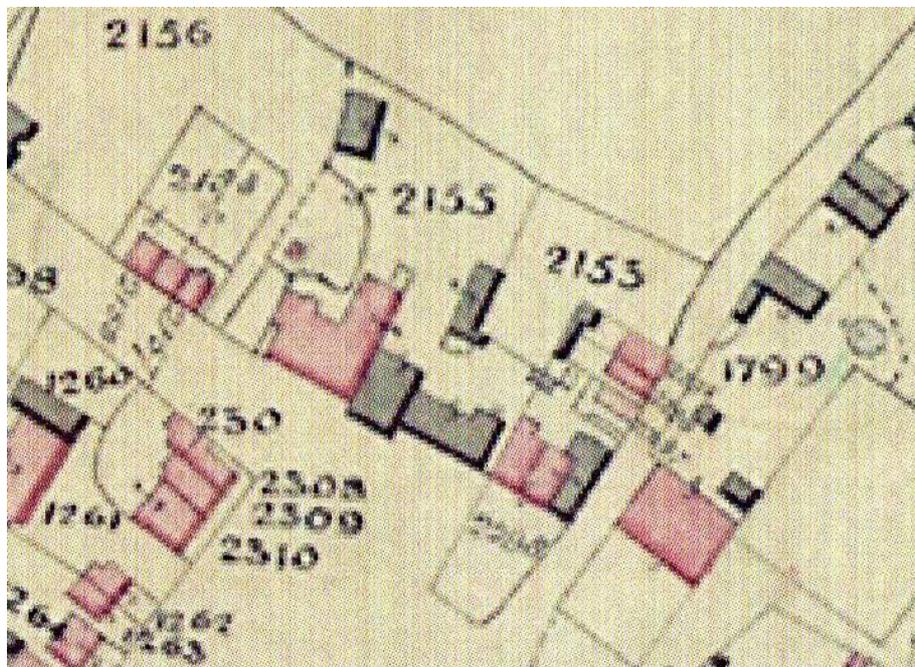
The 1826 Ticehurst Land Tax states The Bell was owned and occupied by John Sivyer.

John Sivyer, senior, was a respected figure within Ticehurst and 1831 was the *overseer of the poor* for the parish.

John Sivyer, senior, died, age 75, on the 3rd May 1833 and was buried at St Mary's Church, Lamberhurst. John's will (ref: ESRO A78 p337) states:

I John Sivyer, the elder, Innkeeper of the Bell Inn Ticehurst, give and bequeath all my property, household furniture, land and all my property whatsoever to my son John Sivyer the younger who resides with me at the Bell Inn. I request my son John gives my dear wife Sarah Sivyer a yearly annuity of £35 to be paid in half yearly for the rest of her natural life.

The 1839 Ticehurst Tithe Survey and Map (ref: ESRO TDE2) state The Bell was owned and occupied by John Sivyer.



1839 Tithe Map (Copyright ESRO)

The 1841 Ticehurst Census Returns state:

Bell Inn

John Sivyver, head, age 41, Licensed Victualler

Jane, wife, age 40

Sarah Sivyver, mother, age 82

Thomas Barcombe, age 28, servant

James Friend, age 30, servant

John Allard, age 70, servant

Charlotte Davis, age 25, servant

Mary Vidler, age 70, servant

Bakehouse

Peter Powell, age 48, baker

Sarah Sivyver died, age 83, on the 15th May 1842 and was buried at St Mary's Church, Lamberhurst.

From the early to late Victorian period the Bell Inn was a highly respected establishment and at the centre of village life. The field to the rear held annual agricultural shows, cricket matches, tug-of-war contests, ploughing contests and pigeon shoots. Auctions of local farming stock, properties and bankrupt processions and goods were held within the Inn. The Coroner for The Rape of Hastings held inquests into unexplained deaths. The function rooms were used by many organizations including the Ticehurst Union (Overseers of the Poor and Workhouse), the Ticehurst Agricultural Association, the Friendly Society and the Licensed Victualler Association. Musical entertainments with *professional vocalists* were popular.

The 1847 Sussex Advertiser states: *On the 6th October 1847. Ticehurst Agricultural Association Exhibition of Sussex Breeds and Ploughing Match in field near the Bell Inn. Members of the Association and Judges are invited to dine at 3.00 o'clock at the Bell Inn. Tickets for dinner 4s.*

John Sivyver died, age 50, on the 6th October 1849 and was buried at St Mary's Church, Lamberhurst. The Bell Inn passed to his widow, Jane.

The 1851 Ticehurst Census Returns state:

Bell Inn

John Adams, head, age 61, Innkeeper and Brewer

Mary, wife, age 59

John, son, age 26, wine and spirit merchant

Ellen, daughter, age 19

Thomas, son, age 16

Joseph Mitten, age 24, brewers assistant

Mary Burgess, age 19, domestic servant

Harriet Palmer, age 28, domestic servant

James Barber, age 43, labourer and deaf

Bake House

Peter Powell, age 57, baker and employs 2 men

The 1855 Sussex Directory states: *John Adams and Son. Bell Inn and posting house, whole sale and retail wine and spirit merchant and brewers.*

The 1857 Sussex Directory states: *Francis Davis. Bell Inn Licensed Victualler and Common Brewer.*

Jane Sivyver died, age 60, on the 26th January 1857 in Ticehurst. In February 1857, the Bell Inn was sold at auction: *Under the will of the late John Sivyver. Bell Inn, old established commercial inn, brewhouse, with good stabling, coach-house, field and gardens. The premises are commodious and suitable for carrying on an excellent business.*

In 1859, Francis Davis transferred his Victualler Licence to one John Clapson.

The 1861 Ticehurst Census Returns state:

Bell Inn

John Clapson, head, age 49, Innkeeper

Caroline, wife, age 33

Anne L, daughter, age 13

Arthur J, son, age 11

Jane Harris, age 21, housemaid

Thomas Baker, age 19, Ostler

No lodgers on night

Bakehouse

Thomas Balcolme, age 49, bread maker

The 1867 Sussex Directory states: *Peter Barnes. Bell Inn and Commercial Hotel, licensed to let post horses, carriages etc, wines, spirits and ales of superior quality.*

The Sussex Advertiser 1867 states: *On Saturday 18th May 1867: Marionette and Musical Entertainment by Messrs. T Lewis and J Crocket at The Bell Inn, Ticehurst for the inmates and children of the Union Workhouse.*

The 1871 Ticehurst Census Returns state:

Bell Inn

Peter Baines, head, age 46, Innkeeper

Annie E, wife, age 41

Charles G, son, age 10

Peter C, son, age 8

Agnes, daughter, age 5

Minia, daughter, age 3

Alberta E, daughter, age 2

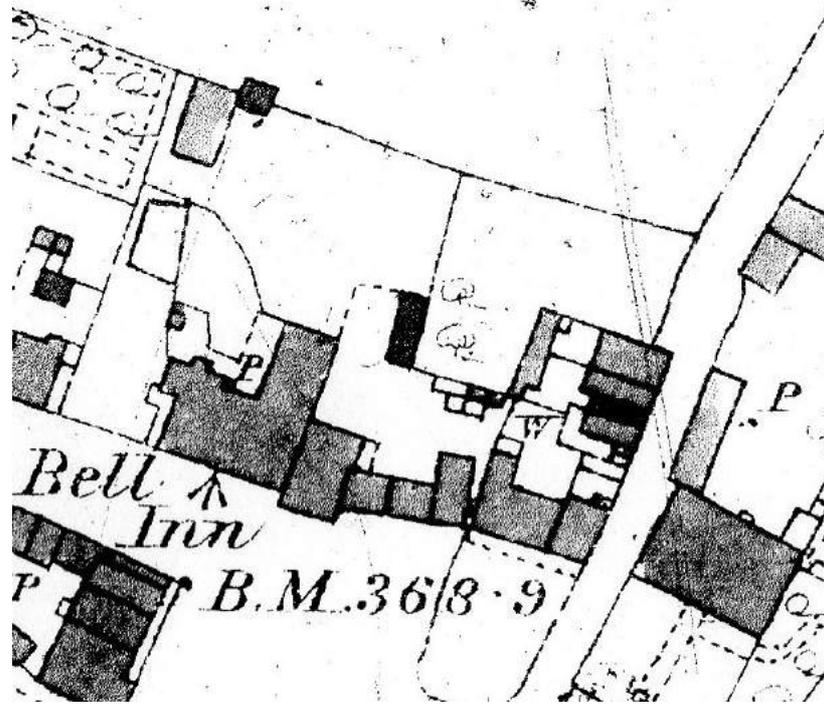
Louisa Clark, age 18, servant

Harriet Clark, age 16, Nurse Maid

John Ford, age 20, Ostler

Richard Hollows, age 63, labourer

Thomas Foster, age 53, Coachman
Thomas Newington, age 39, labourer
Henry Hadge, age 48, lodger and bricklayer
Anne Pett, age 19, visitor
Bakers House
William Wright, age 51, baker



OS Map 1875 (Copyright ESRO)

The 1881 Ticehurst Census Returns state:

Bell Inn

Peter Baines, head, age 56, widower and Innkeeper
Charles G, son, age 21, Solicitor and articled clerk
Agnes, daughter, age 15
Alberta E, daughter, age 12
Ann Maynard, mother-in-law, age 77, housekeeper
Charlotte Hosgood, age 55, housekeeper
Thomas Croft, age 20, Ostler
James Samuel Weekes, age 30, gardener
John Wilson, age 66, lodger

Bake House

Thomas Tipper, age 57, coachman
Caroline, wife, age 51, baker

In 1889, the Bell Inn was occupied by one Daniel Balcombe and became known as the Bell Hotel.

The 1891 Ticehurst Census Returns state:

Bell Hotel

Daniel Balcombe, head, age 55, Hotel Keeper

Annie, wife, age 30

Nellie Maud, daughter, age 4

Edith Annie, daughter, age 3

Rupert William, son, age 2

Frederick Daniel, son, age 2 months

Emma Plater, sister-in-law, age 31, mother's help

William Dewey, age 19, house boy

Esther Kemp, age 20, domestic servant

Rose Wilson, age 17, domestic servant

Bakers shop

Michael Murrell, age 33, baker

Fanny, wife, age 35

Charles George, son, age 5

Alfred John, son, age 3

Frank, son, age 2

Charles Maryan, age 24, baker

In 1894, the Bell Hotel was occupied by one Frederick Richard Skerrett, Frederick had previously been the coachman at Wadhurst Park and married Elizabeth Denley in 1871 in Worcestershire. Frederick and Elizabeth had two children: Frederick William in 1873 and Francis George in 1875.

The 1901 Ticehurst Census Returns state:

Bell Hotel

Frederick Skerrett, head, age 54, Licensed Victualler

Elizabeth, wife, age 49

Francis George, son, age 26, barman

The Bakery

Michael Murrell, age 42, baker and shopkeeper

Frederick's eldest son, Frederick was landlord of the Hare and Hounds Inn at Flimwell.

In 1905, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Thomas Henry Hards.

Frederick Skerrett died, age 59, on the 14th January 1906 at the Corner House, Flimwell and buried at Ticehurst. The probate states he left an estate valued at £899 15s 6d.

In 1906, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Mrs Gunson.

In 1908, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was John William Callow.

In 1910, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Walter William Taylor.



The 1911 Ticehurst Census Returns state:

Bell Hotel

Walter William Taylor, head, age 45, Publican

Sophia Adelaide, wife, age 47

Percy Walter, son, age 19

Stephen, son, age 17

Dorothy Ann, daughter, age 15

Leonard Ernest, son, age 10

Elsie Gurr, age 3, visitor

Edward Arthur Prevett, age 26, visitor, Engineer

Florence Anna, wife, age 25, visitor

Eva May, daughter, age 1, visitor

John Hasson, age 7, visitor

William Alfred Piper, age 30, visitor

Edgar William Evan, age 22, visitor

The Bakery

Arthur Henry Hewitt, head, age 37, Master Baker

Annie, wife, age 39

The 1912 Sussex Directory states: *Bell Hotel. Family, commercial and posting house. Tea and Luncheon provided.*

In 1914, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Mr A S Vidler.



The Bell Inn 1914 despatching horses to the First World War

In 1916, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Alfred T James.

In 1919, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was William Knight Tourle who resided there with his wife, Charlotte. The 1920 Sussex Directory states: *The Bell Hotel. William Tourle Licensed Victualler and Omnibus Proprietor.* In March 1924, William was declared bankrupt.

In 1924, the Bell Hotel was owned by Messrs Edward & Henry Kelsey, Culverden Brewery, Tunbridge Wells who owned 84 Licensed houses.



In 1925, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Frederick Samuel Batten. In 1928, Frederick moved and became the landlord of the Royal Oak, Whatlington.

In 1929, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was James Martin Robertson. James died, age 63, on the 29th January 1933 and was buried at Ticehurst. The Probate states he left an estate valued at £870 7s to his wife Sarah Grace Stamford Robertson.



In 1934, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Douglas Percy Parnell Hunter. Douglas married Kathleen Daisy Carter in 1934. The Bell Hotel had a telephone connected and the number being *Ticehurst 34*.

In 1938, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Reginald Fuller. The telephone number was now *Ticehurst 234*.

In 1939, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Robert Cyril Fletcher who resided there with his wife, Elsie.

In 1946, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Henry W Hunt who resided there with his wife Elsie.

In 1948, Messrs Edward & Henry Kelsey Brewery purchased by JW Green & Co. which was subsequently renamed following other acquisitions to Flowers Breweries Ltd.

In 1950, the Licensed Victualler of the Bell Hotel was Henry Godfrey Reeve who had purchased the property from Flowers Brewery.

Henry Reeve died, age 54, on the 20th January 1953. The Probate states he left an estate valued at £1185 16s 2d to his widow Elizabeth Esther Caroline Minnie Reeve (nee Brooks).

In 1953, Henry and Elizabeth's daughter, Pamela Dorothy, married Frederick Thomas Tate who became the landlord of the Bell Hotel.

Frederick Tate died, age 59, 1982 and wife Pamela became the landlord.

Elizabeth Reeve died, age 87, in May 1986.

Pamela Tate died, age 77, on the 28th January 2007.



In 2008, the Bell Inn was purchased by Richard and Roz Upton.

The Bell was built in the 24th year of Edward I, in 1296. Then it was a dwelling house connected to the church of St Mary the Virgin. The structure was made up of a main tenement (thatched) with a stable, outbuildings, barn and a tract of land. The house at this early date, because of its connection to the church of St Mary the Virgin, was probably inhabited by monks dedicated to that order. They may have been the first to brew ale here, for when the property was sold many years later, a brew-house was included in the inventory. However, by the turn of the 14th century, it had been given up to the parish clerk or sexton of St Mary the virgin. In 1422, one Ezekiel Worger was the parish clerk here. In 1448, William Faythfule was filling the same role, but was also described as a “sexton and coffynn mayker”. He lived here until his death in 1472, whereafter his son Reddyman took over. Among the duties of a parish clerk was to administer ale and bread to the poor of the parish. Ale may have even been sold here then, for it was lawful for anyone to keep an ale-house without licence. However, in 1495 a law was passed empowering justices to issue or refuse permission to sell ale. In that year of

1495, Reddyman Faythfule stood before justices and offered two sureties of his good character to keep an orderly house and at the hearing became Reddyman Faythfule, parish clerk and tippler and this house the "Bell". The origin of the sign dates back to the 11th century when ale-houses stood within the precincts of parish churches and however many bells a church contained determined the number given to the title of the house. At this point in time the church of St Mary the Virgin held a single bell. Reddyman Faythfule kept the "Bell" and continued with his duties as parish clerk until his death in 1511. His son Nigel took over both positions, but in 1552, when the "Bell" was re-licenced under the licencing legislation act of that year, Clarence Fayfule was keeper here. In that same year, the "Bell" was purchased by Henry Sawkins, gent of Hawkhurst. At this date, the property consisted of a "messuage or tenement with all its land theretoe, belonging known by the name and sygn of the Bell with its brew-house, staybles and gardens, situate and being at Tycehurst in the County of Sussex". Henry Sawkins leased the house to Richard Wyndham, an innkeeper of Wadhurst, who under the terms of his lease was directed to pay certain monies from the profits of ale as well as rent and issues. In 1553, because no profit of ales were received, Wyndham's lease became void and the "Bell" was re-leased to Robert Reynoldes. He kept the house until his death in 1585, whereafter his widow Naomi, a clothier of Ticehurst, was granted the lease and kept it until her own death in 1602. The "Bell" was then leased to Thomas Teynoldes nephew of Naomi.

He was a saddler by trade and was almost certain to have conducted that trade from this house, since he is recorded as an innkeeper and saddler throughout his time.

He died in 1638 and the "Bell" was leased to Thomas Chilvers, a harness-maker of Lamberhurst. By 1645, the "Bell" was a registered inn, licensed to lodge travellers at a nightly tariff of 1 penny per bed, which included the use of plate and linen, food and stabling was extra. The house at this date contained a hall, parlour and tap room with six chambers above. By 1663, it was kept by Henry Pyper and by 1675 by William Slaney. It was owned at this date by Jeffrey Sawkins, having been passed down through his family. William Slaney was still here in 1718 but died the following year, whereafter his daughter Susannah took over the lease. In 1727, whilst still in her hands, the "Bell" was purchased by Alexander Smith, brewer of Lamberhurst. Susannah Slaney carried on here as a tenant for the Lamberhurst Brewery until her death in 1766; she had kept the "Bell" for 49 years. Between 1766 and 1800, there followed five more tenants of the "Bell". 1766, Isaac Woollgar; 1781, James Monk; 1788, Peter Napper; 1793 Frederick Beeney and in 1798, the house was leased to Richard May, a tallow chandler of Lamberhurst who, during his time here, made and sold candles at the "Bell". He died in 1823 and the "Bell" was taken over by his widow Ruth. In 1836, she gave it up to Jacob Puttick, a wine and spirit merchant of Lamberhurst who was here until 1852, during which time he supplied not only the "Bell" with wines and spirits but many other inns in the area. In that year of 1852 the "Bell" was purchased by Edward and Henry Kelsey, brewers and coal merchants of the Culverden Brewery, Tunbridge Wells. They leased it to Peter Barnes who, throughout his time

here, advertised the inn as a commercial inn and boarding house. He gave up the lease in 1889 and was succeeded by Daniel Balcombe. He left in 1902 and was succeeded by Frederick R Skerrett and whilst in his hands, the “Bell” became a registered hotel. In 1904, Thomas Hards took over to be succeeded in 1908 by John William Callow and in 1914 by Albert T Jones. In 1920, the Culverden Brewery was taken over by Philips & Co of West Malling but continued to trade under the name of E & H Kelsey Ltd. In that year, William Knight Tourle took over the “Bell”. He was an omnibus proprietor and ran a service between Hawkhurst and Tunbridge Well throughout his time here. He gave up the “Bell” in 1932 to Douglas Percy Hunter and he in 1940 to Cyril Fletcher. In that year, Philips of West Malling were taken over by the Flowers Brewery but again, although part of that merger, Kelsey’s still traded under their own name and brewed on their own premises. In 1946, Harold Hunt took over the “Bell” and stayed until 1950 when he was succeeded by Henry Reeve. He died in 1953, whereupon his widow Elizabeth took over. In June 1955, the last ale was brewed at Kelsey’s and in 1961 as part of Flowers Brewery, they were taken over by the Whitbread Brewery. Elizabeth Reeve kept the “Bell” until her death in 1970 when her son-in-law Frederick Tate took over, until his death in 1982 when his widow Pamela took over.

We come up to date. Following Pam’s death Richard and Roz Upton of Stonegate bought The Bell in 2008. A year in planning and a further two years restoring and re-invigorating the building take us to November 2011, when the doors of The Bell were once again opened to welcome locals and travellers alike.

