

FULFORD'S PUB AND POST OFFICE

THE SHOULDER OF MUTTON PUBLIC HOUSE

Just how long there has been an inn in Fulford is not clear, though there may have been one since as far back as 1577 when it was said that then there was an inn or tavern for every 95 of the population in England. The present inn, The Shoulder of Mutton on the north side of the village green, was probably built at the beginning of the 1800's, at about the time that a new Alehouses Act regulating the granting of licences to sell beer, wine, and spirits, was introduced, and may well have been built on the site of an earlier tavern as the cellar is hewn out of the rock and is said to have a naturally controlled temperature of 55 degrees.

The Shoulder of Mutton was originally a simple rectangular two-story brick farm and ale house with a slate roof, though the front and back of the building have been much modified over the years. Originally there were two rooms open to the public, a small snug where the men sat and played cards, and a larger room that was often used for dances. Both rooms have oak beams across low ceilings. Overnight accommodation was provided for travellers.



The Shoulder of Mutton with the stable and cow shed to the left – *photograph from Nola Ward of Fulford*

It used to be the custom at Christmas for a 'round' of beef to be roasted and served to the customers for a few days which was always a good excuse for a party, and dancing would take place in the room on the right. 'Middle Lent', now known as 'Mothering Sunday', was another occasion for a party. Large numbers of fig pies would be made by the lady of the inn and served in the parlour. The recipe for the fig pies was as follows:-

- 1 pint of water
- ½ pound of figs
- ½ teaspoon of spice
- ½ teaspoon of ginger
- a pinch of nutmeg
- 1 level tablespoon of black treacle
- 1 tablespoons of golden syrup

The figs are cut into small pieces and simmered in water for twenty minutes, and the treacle, syrup, spice, nutmeg and ginger are then added. The mixture is then thickened with a little cornflower and put into pastry cases, which must be cooked already.

Another holiday that was celebrated was 'Fulford Wakes' which was held in November. 'All the fun of the fair' visited Fulford at this time and encamped on a plot of land near to the Shoulder of Mutton, and dancing was held in the big parlour.

In the early 1900's the beer to the pub was bought from Charles Bunting in Uttoxeter and is said to have been supplied on gas-powered vehicles. Opening hours were 7-30pm until 10-00pm each day and they were strictly adhered to. Nine-pin bowling was played in the alleyway that ran between the public house and the adjacent stable and barn.

Among the past landlords of the Shoulder of Mutton were:-

William Bentley	1818 to 1850
Richard S.Beard (owner)	1834 to 1889
Samuel Thomas	1849 to 1851
James Beard	1861 to 1881
Ellis Davis	1884
Rebecca Titley (Mrs.)	1887 to 1888
A. Startin	1888
I.Gotham	1889 to 1896
Thomas Gotham	1892 to 1904
John W.Caperwell	1908
Fred Johnson	1912
Walter Poole	1916
John Henry Kent	1921 to 1940
Elizabeth Ellen Kent nee Gotham	1940 to 1951
Jim and Ethel Sutton	1951 to 1973
Sampson and May Oakes	1973
Kath and Ken Brayford	1998 to 2004
Tracy Spooner and Paul Turner	2004 to present



Ellen Kent with son Harry



Sampson and May Oakes

(Photographs courtesy of Staffordshire Sentinel Newspapers)

On occasions the Shoulder of Mutton was used as the meeting place for the Court Leet. On 21st March 1836 for example a notice was posted which gave details of one such meeting. *“Notice is hereby given that the Court Leet View of Frank Pledge and the Court Baron of Thomas Allen Esq. Lord of the said manor will be held at the House of Richard Beard known by the sign of the Shoulder of Mutton in Fulford in the County of Stafford upon Thursday the twnty first day of April next at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon for the perambulations of the Boundary of the said Manor”*.



The Shoulder of Mutton and neighbouring cottages, which were demolished after the 2nd World War
(Photograph courtesy of Nola Ward of Fulford)

The Mother's Union also held their meetings in the Shoulder of Mutton in the 1950's, in the large room on the right-hand side of the building. High Tea was also taken.



The Shoulder of Mutton in 2000 *

Although the Shoulder of Mutton seems to have been the only pub in Fulford, there were plenty of other pubs and beerhouses in the area in the 19th and 20th centuries. A beerhouse was even recorded at Mossgate in 1834 which was run by Thomas Batkin. At Meir Heath two miles north-west of Fulford there was the 'Windmill Inn', the 'Seven Stars', the 'Star and Garter', and the 'Dusty Miller' beerhouse, though the 'Seven Stars' and the 'Star and Garter' seem to have ceased trading in the 1840's and the 'Dusty Miller' in the 1880's. At Blacklake between Fulford and Meir Heath there was the 'Wheatsheaf' public house which has been there for at least 150 years.

At Saverley Green to the north-east of Fulford there were two pubs, the 'Hare and Hounds', now known as the 'Greyhound' and the 'New Inn', now known as 'The Hunter', and both have been in existence since at least the early 1800's, and the 'Isaac Walton' public house at Cresswell just beyond Saverley Green has been open since the mid-1800's.

At Spot Acre, just outside Fulford, the 'Spotgate' has been serving beer since the early 1800's and at Hilderstone three miles south of Fulford there were once four pubs, the 'New Inn', 'The Horse Shoe' (previously known as the Black Horse), the 'Bird in Hand', and 'The Roe Buck'. Of these only the 'Bird in Hand' and the 'Roebuck' still exist, the 'New Inn' having closed its doors in about 1850 and 'The Horseshoe' in about 1915.

FULFORD POST OFFICE AND VILLAGE STORE

Until 1840 it was the responsibility of the postmaster in Stone to decide how much must be paid by the recipient when a letter was delivered to them, the payment being determined by the distance that the letter would travel, 4d. for up to 15 miles, 5d. for 15 to 20 miles, 6d. for 20 to 30 miles, etc., and this charge was for a single piece of paper, with the charge being doubled if two pieces of paper were used. In order to get as much information as possible onto a single piece of paper people would first write horizontally across the page, and then write vertically across that writing, and after that sometimes even write diagonally! Many people thought the charges too high, and so a code was often invented amongst family and friends whereby the sender marked the outside of a blank piece of paper with one of a number of pre-agreed marks which could mean such things as '*I am well*' or '*I am coming home*'. The recipient would glance at the code when the letter arrived but then refuse to pay!

What happened in 1840 was the introduction of Rowland Hill's 'Penny Post' on Friday 10th January. From then onwards the sender paid 1d. when he handed the letter in irrespective of the size of the letter or where it was going. A 1d. stamp, or label as it was called, was then introduced on Wednesday 6th May that year, and this meant that the recipient need no longer be there to take the letter and so it eventually led to the introduction of letter boxes.

As far as we can tell Fulford didn't have it's own Post Office until some time after 1840, maybe not even until the beginning of the 20th century. Fulford Post Office and General Store was situated at Cottage No.4 in a row of four 19th century cottages in what is now called Post Office

Terrace in the Townend area of Fulford. Post Office Terrace is a relatively new name for what was once known as Long Lane End. Before that it was known as Summer Street Lane and legend has it that Dick Turpin rode here in 1739 as he fled from London to try to escape capture. The building at the Fulford Road end of the cottages was one of the two smithies in the village and belonged to blacksmith Edwin Fenton between 1860 and 1896.



Post Office Terrace with the Post Office sign to be seen above the Post Office door. The low, dark building at the end of the row of buildings was the smithy and the white building across the road was Fulford House Farm.
(*Photograph courtesy of Blythe Bridge & Forsbrook Local History Society*)



Post Office Terrace from the opposite end in 2006. *

Among the past post-masters and post-mistresses at this post office were:-

William Jenkinson	1904 to 1912 (<i>William was also a shoemaker</i>)
Ellen Jenkinson (Mrs.)	1936 to 1940
Mary Rowley (Mrs.)	?
Nan and Ray Hodgkinson	1971 to 1973



Nan and Ray Hodgkinson
(*Photograph courtesy of Staffordshire Sentinel Newspapers*)

Ray Hodgkinson had been in business in Stone before moving to Fulford to run the Post Office with his wife Nan. When the Post Office in Post Office Terrace closed, a new Post Office and Village Store was opened at the property now known as 'Hunter's Moon' at the corner of Cockeshall Lane and Fulford Road and Nan and Ray ran this new Post Office for a few years. This Post Office and Village Store, which also served Saverley Green, Moss Gate, Cross Gate, and Stallington, closed in the spring of 2001 and so sadly Fulford no longer has a Post Office or a village store.



Fulford's Post Office and Village Stores in 2000 – now a private dwelling place. *

FULFORD VILLAGE HALL

With the demise of Fulford Institute in the old school building on the village green, Fulford Young People's Club suggested that a new Village Hall was required and so a board of trustees was formed in 1946 to put the project into motion. The Department of Education approved provisional plans and agreed a grant, as did Staffordshire County Council, and Fulford Village Hall Management Committee was formed. They raised £3,000 from various fund-raising events, such as a fete at Moddershall Cricket Club, but an economic freeze in 1954 meant that the money then remained in the kitty for years until the plan was revitalised in 1964. Work didn't start on the building until February 1969 however, but after a few weeks the builder went bankrupt and so the Hall didn't officially open until 6th October 1973 at a cost of over £19,000, £7,000 of which was raised in the village. It was built for the benefit of the local people on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Hughes who were farmers in the Fulford area for many years. The original building comprised the main hall which could accommodate up to 200 dancers, a small kitchen, a committee room, a toilet, and an entrance hall, and this was later extended over the years by the addition of a small meeting room, store facilities, a larger kitchen and bar, and an enlarged entrance hall. A stage and dressing room was also built in the main hall.



Fulford Village Hall in 2006. *



Fulford Women's Institute – From left to right the ladies are:-

Back row – Mrs.Thomas, Mrs.Eaton, ? , Mrs.Hargreaves, Mrs.Harvey, Mrs.Leese

Middle row – Mrs.Hughes, Mrs. Bowers, Phylis Leese, Margaret Redman, Eileen Shelley, Mrs. Leese, Mrs. Shelley, Mrs. Croft

Front row - ? , Amy Bedson, Mrs. Redman, Miss Goodwin, Phyllis Caresto, Mrs. Sandham*, Lilian Bedson.

(Mrs.Sandham* was a teacher at Fulford School)

(*Photograph courtesy of Kath Tooth of Fulford*)

At the beginning of the 21st century Fulford Village Hall is used by various local groups such as Tumbletots (mother and toddler), badminton, ju-jitsu, yoga, dancing, bridge, bowls and senior residents, as well as being used by the youth club and for weddings, dances, and other private functions. A village residents coffee morning is also held on the third Thursday of every month.