

The George bygone – June 2018

This month the focus is on the 1841 Census, which was taken on the 6th of June of that year. For the first time, rather than just being a headcount, names, ages (usually rounded to nearest 5 years), occupations and other details were recorded. The information on Wickham's inns and public houses and landlords was as follows:

[E side of High Street/Hill, heading S]

George Inn: Francis Richardson (Upper Street)

White Hart Inn: Edward Tice (On the Hill)

Crown Inn: Jeremiah Woods (Upper Street)

[W side of High Street/Hill, heading N]

[Chequers]: **William Nichols** (Lower Street)

[Chaise & Pair]: **James Foreman** (Lower Street)

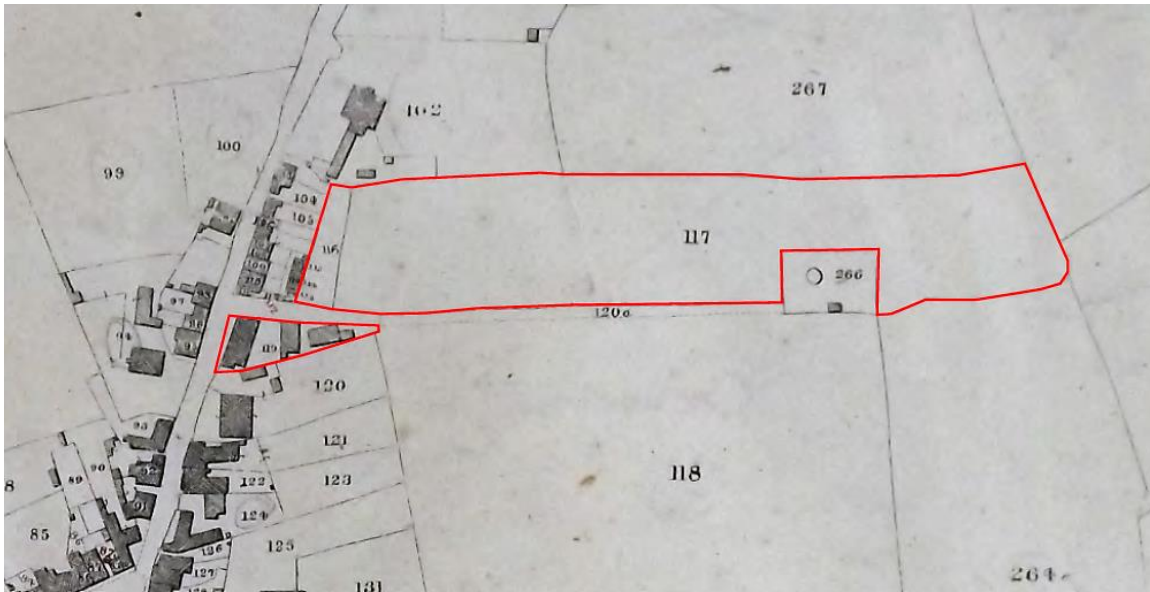
It is interesting to see how the street locations were recorded at the time and, indeed, how they change in later census returns.

Turning to the George, the landlord at the time was Francis Richardson (born at Hasketon in 1818), who had taken over very recently, having married Mary Anne Girling on the 4th May. Mary Anne was the 37-year old widow of James Girling, who had run the inn for a year or less after the retirement of long-time landlady Sarah Good, in 1839 at the age of 77 or 78. After James's sudden death on the 16th of July 1840 aged only 27 (though reported to be 30 in obituaries), Mary Anne presumably ran the George until her re-marriage to Francis Richardson, then aged only 23, less than a year later. Newspaper reports of the wedding describe Richardson as a miller.

At the time of the census, Francis's 15-year old sister, Eliza is also recorded at the George, perhaps working as a barmaid along with two guests or lodgers. These were Henry Hall, a journeyman carpenter not from Suffolk, and Robert Brightwell, an apprentice coachmaker, aged 15, originally from Woodbridge. Brightwell may have been apprenticed to Robert Oxborrow, listed as Wickham's only coach builder in Pigott's Trade Directory of 1839.

Name	Age	Occupation	Notes
Francis Richardson	25	Publican	
Mary do	35		
Eliza do	15		
Henry Hall	50	Carpenter	J ✓
Robert Brightwell	15	Coachmaker	W ✓

The value of the first 'detailed' census as an historical source is also matched by that of the Tithe Commutation surveys resulting from an Act of Parliament in 1836. The Act's purpose was to convert tithes in kind (one-tenth of the produce of the land) formerly paid to the church, but after the Dissolution, in the 16th century, to the landowner, systematically into cash payments. The Act required the production of detailed maps of each tithe district affected, accompanied by a tithe apportionment schedule, listing each piece of land or tenement, the occupier and the landowner.



The Wickham map (surveyed between February and August 1841) and schedule show Francis Richardson not only as owning and occupying The George (119 on the map) but also two other pieces of land; a garden (116) and an arable field (117). It would be interesting to know exactly when he bought the property, as we know that in December 1838 it had been bought by an S. Piggins when the Woodbridge Brewery estate was sold (see Bygones - December 2017). It is possible, however, that James and Mary Anne Girling were Richardson's tenants prior to the former's death and that was how he knew and, subsequently, married her.

From newspaper reports and a trade directory, we know that Richardson ran The George until at least 1844, but had given this up before early 1848, when the landlord was Benoni Kemp. It was probably Richardson who was the seller when The George was put up for auction in March of that year and, possibly, then bought by the Stonham Brewery (Bygones – November & December 2017).

Richardson, seems to have been a fairly restless type, as the 1851 census lists him as "Beerhouse Keeper" at the Buck's Head, Ufford, but also as a farmer of 80 acres employing 2 men (land which he may have taken on from his father) but, by the following year, he was reported as attending a meeting of Agriculturalists at the Maid's Head Inn in Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex. Richardson died in December the following year at Thorpe, aged only 35. Mary Anne is recorded as the, again, widowed landlady of the Maid's Head (today called The Olive Branch) in the 1861 census, running it until her death in 1865.