

## The George bygone – December 2017

Last month we reported that The George had been sold by the Stonham Brewery when the brewery closed down in 1866. It is not certain when the brewery acquired the pub, but it had been previously put up for auction in December 1838, when the Woodbridge Brewery (in Stone Street, which is now Church Street) and its pub estate were sold following the death of its owner, Samuel Alexander, in May of that year. The results of the sale were reported in Suffolk Chronicle on December 8th.

**SALE OF PUBLIC HOUSES.**—On Thursday last, the sale of the Woodbridge Brewery and public houses belonging to the trade, were offered for sale at the Bull Inn, Woodbridge, by Mr. W.W. Simpson. The competition was spirited, and each lot was knocked down at the following sums:—Lot 1, being the Brewery Buildings, Woodbridge, but not including the plant and utensils, was bought in at 1,600*l.* Lot 2, the residence at Woodbridge, sold for 930*l.* The public houses were all sold, and brought the following prices:—In Woodbridge, Lot 3, the Anchor, 1,420*l.*; Lot 4, the White Horse, 1,020*l.*; Lot 5, the King's Arms, 930*l.*; Lot 6, the Tankard, 760*l.*; Lot 7, the Wellington, 680*l.* In Ipswich, Lot 8, the Sea Horse, 1,610*l.*; Lot 9, the Bull's Head, 860*l.*; Lot 10, the Queen's Head, 1,110*l.*; Lot 11, the Salutation, 710*l.*; Lot 12, the Royal William, 1,420*l.* Country Houses, Lot 13, the Castle, Bredfield, 560*l.*; Lot 14, the George, Wickham Market, 700*l.*; Lot 15, the Crown, North Glemham, 720*l.*; Lot 16, the Butcher's Arms, Bruisyard, 560*l.*; Lot 17, the Oyster, Butley, 820*l.*; Lot 18, the Nelson, Ashbocking, 800*l.*; Lot 19, the Cock, Bramford, 680*l.*; Lot 20, the Dog, Grundisburgh, 910*l.*

Alexander was a member of a prominent family of ship owners in the corn and iron trades who had also opened a bank, Alexander & Co., in 1744 at Needham Market. The Ipswich branch became the Head Office in 1804. Samuel had been an Alderman of Ipswich and Commissioner on the Ipswich Pilot Commission and, when his body was taken to Needham Market for burial in The Friends Burial Ground, the Suffolk Chronicle reported that, his "... hearse was preceded by about 80 gentlemen of Ipswich, headed by the Mayor and Magistrates, who walked two and two from the churchyard of St. Mary Stoke, through St. Peter's, St. Nicholas' and St. Matthew's Street until they arrived at the extremity of the town, when they filed off on each side of the road so as form an avenue ...".

The Alexanders, like many important commercial families were members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker prisoner reformer (who until recently featured on the back of the £5 note), actually spoke at his funeral. The Quakers although much concerned with the scourge of cheap spirits considered brewing ale as an acceptable trade.

The George, described as, "an excellent road-side house" was, at the time, being rented to Mrs Sarah Good for £12 a year. It was bought by a "Mr S. Piggens". The £700 paid was much more than the £350 the inn sold for nearly thirty years later, but is likely that the other buildings and land which traditionally had formed part of the property had been sold separately in the intervening period. The most likely candidate for the new owner was Stephen Piggins Jnr., originally from Wisbech, who ran a brewery in Regent Street, Cambridge and who, as advertised that May, lived and had an outlet for his products in Brook Street, Ipswich.

**T**HE Heads of Families are respectfully informed  
that  
**STEPHEN PIGGINS**  
Has received a fresh supply of this much-approved Article,  
which may be had at his Residence, in **BROOK-STREET**,  
at the following Prices, viz. :—  
 Draught .....4d., 5d., and 6d. per quart.  
 Bottled.....6s. per dozen.  
 In Casks from 6 Gallons to 36 Gallons.  
 Mild Ale .....1s. 0d. per gallon.  
 XX.....1s. 4d. ditto.  
 XXX.....1s. 8d. ditto.  
 N. B.—Private Casks of all sizes, filled to Order.  
 Brook-street, Ipswich, May 1st, 1838.

Sarah Good, tenant landlady since – at least - 1828 remained until the following year, when at the age of 77 she retired to Woodbridge, dying in 1842.

*If you have any historical facts, memories, photographs of The George, characters associated with the pub or groups that used it you wish to share, contact us by e-mail at [heritage.wmgeorge@btconnect.com](mailto:heritage.wmgeorge@btconnect.com).*