

6.4 HISTORY AROUND US: ODIHAM

Assignment

Historians disagree about how little the medieval parts of Odiham have changed. The visitor's information leaflet, published in 1986, quotes Michael Hughes who says:

“Odiham is unique in Hampshire.....a number of its late medieval and post-medieval buildings appear to have remained almost unchanged for three or four hundred years.”

HOW FAR DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS VIEW?

You will include in your answer evidence from the following sources:

- site visits
- oral history
- local historians
- general histories of the period/area/buildings
- guide books.

Mark Scheme

This assignment should be marked out of 25 using the mark scheme below. The assignment assesses Objectives 2 and 3.

Level 1 Answers agree with the view given, perhaps listing a number of medieval buildings but giving no detailed descriptions of medieval aspects of architecture. Answers see the viewpoint as being unproblematic.

OR

Answers completely disagree with the view given. This disagreement is based on superficial observation or attempts to rubbish accounts without substantiating evidence. (1–5 marks)

Level 2 Answers describe some aspects of the medieval buildings as being unchanged, giving detailed descriptions of the various features of medieval architecture. Answers suggest a degree of change in other buildings, providing supporting evidence. Candidates begin to see the viewpoint offered by the visitors' guide in terms of its intended audience. (6–12 marks)

Level 3 Answers describe evidence of medieval Odiham and evidence of change within the past four hundred years. They recognise the tendency of visitors' guides to suggest things are older/less changed, drawing evidence from the more scholarly texts. (13–18 marks)

Level 4 Level 3 answers that additionally consider the question of 'uniqueness'. Answers suggest reasons for this interpretation and attempt to assess the claim through evaluation of the hypothesis. (19–25 marks)

History Around Us – Additional Resources

General Odiham Resource Packs

Packs include the following:

Odiham Visitors' Trail and information. (Included in sample resources, as the hypothesis for the assignment was developed from this.)

Articles from the Odiham Society Journal:

The development of small houses in the Odiham area 1300–1650

Tree-ring dating project in Odiham

Notes on all Odiham buildings prior to 1650. (*Obtained from the Odiham Society.*)

Extracts from '*A pictorial album of Odiham & North Warnborough*' by Anne Pitcher (1987)

Extracts from '*The Visitor's Guide to Hampshire and the Isle of White*' by John Barton (1990)

A chapter on Odiham from '*A journey down the Whitewater*' By Anne Pitcher (1982)

Extracts from '*Hampshire Treasures Vol. 3*', Hampshire County Council.

Resource packs on individual buildings:

Containing various pieces of information on the following:

- All Saints Church
- Monks Cottage
- Old Church House
- The George Hotel (*included in the sample resources*)
- No. 1 King St
- Lodge Farm
- Manisty Cottage
- The Priory

The official Guide Book to Odiham *published by the Odiham society.*

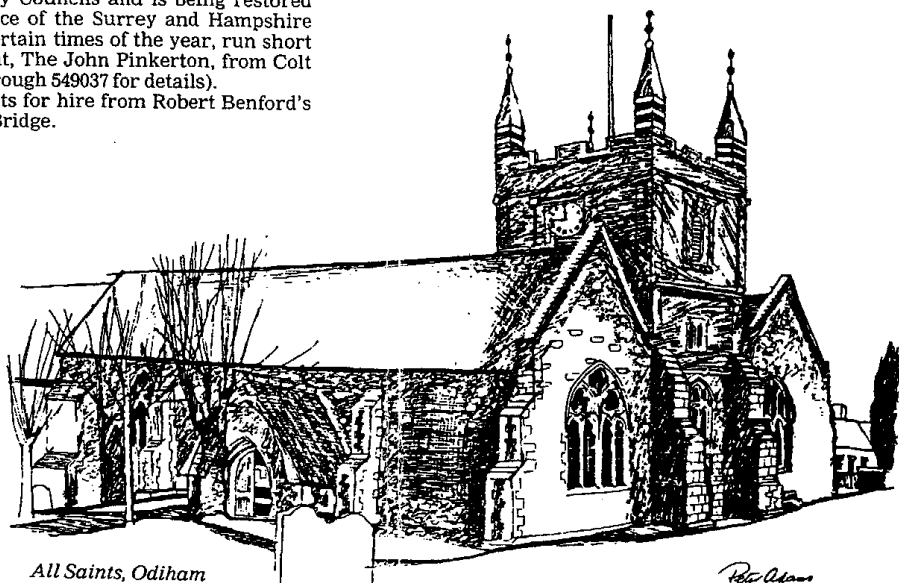
Colour slides and photos of the early buildings, features of the architecture and other aspects of the medieval evidence.

GENERAL INFORMATION. Early Closing Day: Wednesday. Much of Odiham is in one of only six Outstanding Conservation Areas in Hampshire. North Warnborough Street is also a Conservation Area.

ODIHAM

THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL is now owned by Hampshire and Surrey County Councils and is being restored with the active assistance of the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society who, at certain times of the year, run short cruises in their long boat, The John Pinkerton, from Colt Hill. (Telephone Farnborough 549037 for details).

Rowing boats and punts for hire from Robert Benford's Boatyard near Colt Hill Bridge.



All Saints, Odiham

Peter Adams



Visitors Trail & Information

*Prepared and published by The Odiham Society, 1986.
Printed by Bird Brothers, Basingstoke.*

25p

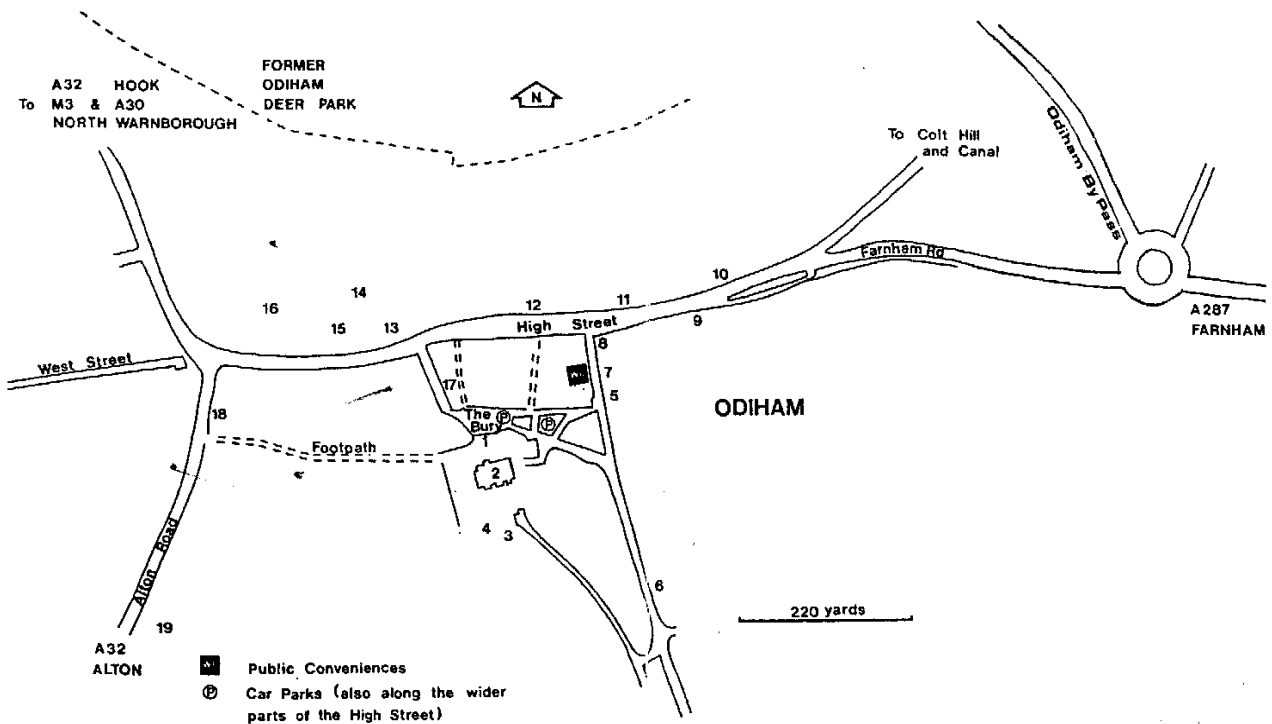
A Roman villa site has been excavated in North Warnborough but the present settlements of Odiham and North Warnborough date from Saxon times. Odiham was listed as a large royal manor in the Domesday Book. It thrived under royal patronage in mediaeval times although it never received a charter conferring borough status. Michael Hughes in "The Small Towns of Hampshire" says: "Odiham is almost unique in Hampshire, in that the mediaeval street plan, its extent, and a number of its late mediaeval and post-mediaeval buildings appear to have remained almost unchanged for three or four hundred years." The town enjoyed another period of prosperity in the 18th century but has been spared intrusive 19th/20th century development. The major development in the parish this century has been the creation of RAF Odiham one mile to the south of Odiham High Street. The bypass opened in 1979 has relieved Odiham of a great deal of through traffic. Today most residents do not work in Odiham, some commuting to London.

The Bury 1 in front of the church was probably the site of earliest settlement. Note the stocks and whipping post against the churchyard wall. All Saints Church 2 is built mainly of flint on the site of a Saxon church. Parts of the chancel and lower tower date from the 13th century, the aisles are 16th century and the brick tower is Tudor. The tower is unusual in that it is flanked by the aisles. Inside, the 15th century font is carved from a block of chalk. Several brasses of the same date can be found.

The modern east windows were made by Patrick Reyntiens who is well known for windows in Coventry



15th century Font

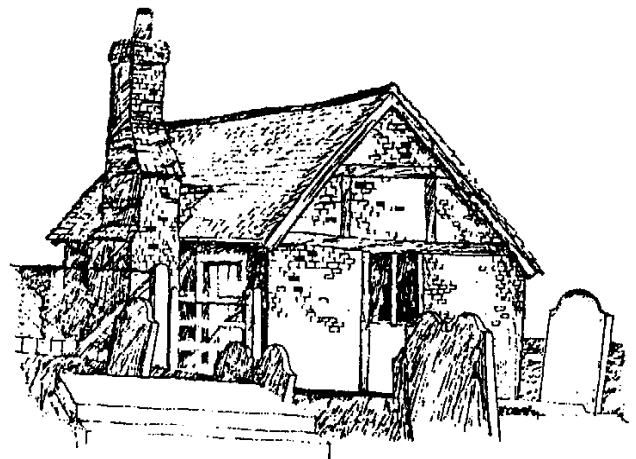


Cathedral. The church Registers date from 1538 and is one of the most complete sets in Hampshire. Further details are found in the church guide.

The Almshouses 3 behind the churchyard date from 1625. The Pest House 4, one of the few remaining in the country, was in effect an isolation hospital for sufferers of the plague in the early seventeenth century.

Leaving the churchyard, on your right, at the entrance to the school, the Public Library now occupies part of the 18th century Bridewell, a House of Correction, this being the Police Station in the 19th century. You will notice some very attractive cottages on the way to King Street where the oast house 5 bears witness to the former importance of hop growing in the parish. By looking up the hill, you may be able to see a picturesque row of restored jettied Tudor cottages 6 and next to the garage the 19th century Assembly Rooms 7.

Before local brick came into general use by the 18th century most houses were built of timber framing infilled by lath and plaster, and only the large buildings (church, Priory 16 and castle) of flint and stone. Although many houses in the High Street were refaced with brick fronts in



The Pest House



The Bury

the prosperous 18th century a stroll along the High Street offers glimpses of timber framing in side walls.

Turn right from King Street, passing the Kings Restaurant 8, Marycourt 9, a Grade I listed building, is early 18th century and has a fine shell hood above the doorway.

The White House 10 (opposite) and Orchard House 11 must have caused quite a stir in the early 1800's by using Welsh slates brought in by the Basingstoke Canal (opened 1793). Return along the High Street past the George Hotel 12 (first licensed in 1540). The Georgian facade conceals a much older building. The Tudor panelling in the dining-room is thought to have come from Basing House. The original Odiham (Agricultural) Society, the progenitor of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, met here in the 1780's.

The modern Palace Gate 13 and neighbouring Palace Gate Farm 14 mark the site of a royal mansion shown on a map of 1739. It was probably here that two Privy Council meetings were held by Elizabeth in 1576 and 1591. Beyond is the 15th/16th century Vicarage 15 and the Priory 16 which was never a priory but belonged to the Rectors of Odiham. Following the road to the right three main parts of the Priory can be seen: a good Queen Anne front, the Tudor Porch (c. 1530), and part of the 15th century hall, built of flint. Neither the house nor the grounds are open to the public.

Walking to the end of the flint wall opposite the garage look across fields which 500 years ago were part of the royal deer park. Return to the Bury either by the High Street and Church Street past one of the oldest houses 17 in Odiham, which probably had a smoke hole in the roof before a chimney was built, or by the footpath beyond the Crown Inn 18. Alternatively make a detour to see the impressive chalkpit 19.

NORTH WARNBOROUGH

North Warnborough lies three quarters of a mile north of Odiham on the way to the M3. The Street runs west from the small roundabout and contains many interesting brick houses and timber-framed cottages. The 15th/16th century Cruck Cottage is an example of a building method common in Central and Northern England and Wales. This example is close to the south-eastern limit of this building type.

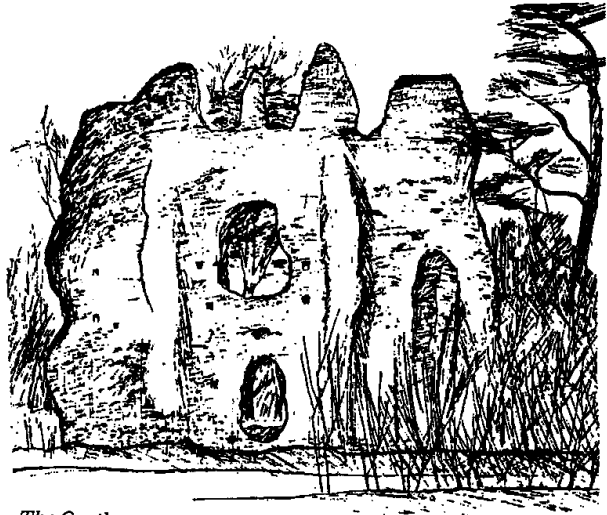
The ruin of the Castle is reached via a small lane (first turning on the right along The Street after the roundabout). After crossing the bridge over the canal, turn left along the towpath for 400 yards. The Keep is octagonal and was one of only four castles built in England by Angevin kings. It was used as a base for hunting and as a half-way house on the King's trips between Winchester and Windsor; indeed King John stayed in Odiham on his way from Winchester to Runnymede to sign Magna Carta in 1215.

A series of archaeological excavations has revealed an earlier building on the site and has cast doubt on the long held belief that the present ruined Keep was built by King John between 1207 and 1212. Some now suggest that it was built as late as 1230. In 1265 Eleanor, wife of Simon de Montfort held the Castle and entertained her husband and sons together with 340 horsemen in Odiham for Easter. A detailed account of the expenses of this visit are preserved on a parchment roll. Between 1346 and 1356 David Bruce, King of Scotland and son of Robert the Bruce, was imprisoned in Odiham Castle until a ransom was paid. By about 1500 however, the Castle had probably fallen into decay.

Returning to the A32 leading to the M3 the road crosses the Basingstoke Canal over Swan Bridge. On the left The Cat, a former public house, has a Georgian front on a timber framed building. Further along, on the right, Castle

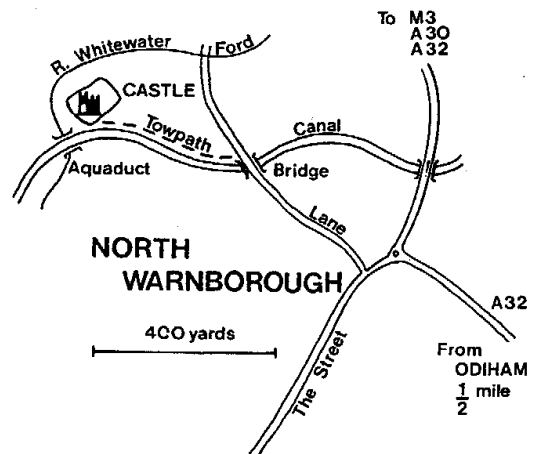


Cruck Cottage

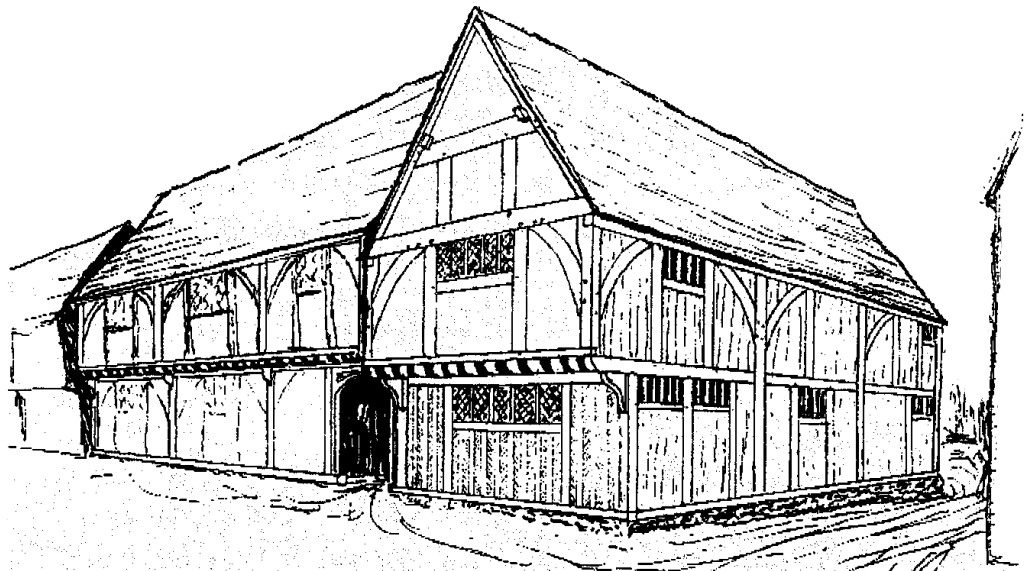


The Castle

Bridge Cottages is a fine example of timber framed buildings with jetties or overhangs. On the other side of the main road there was once a tannery and the nearby Mill House Restaurant on the River Whitewater was once a fulling mill — one of a series of mills along this stream.



The Odiham Society Journal



Impression
of The George from Odiham High Street c1550

ER 93

Spring 1994

£2

THE GEORGE

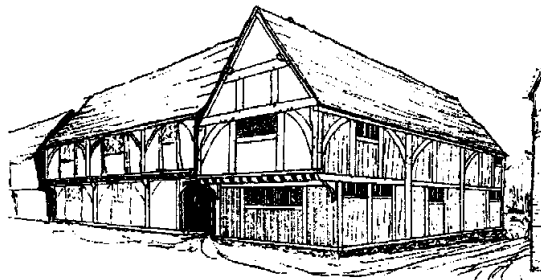
Samples were taken from the cross wing, the hall and various rafters. Many of the timbers had complete sapwood which made the task easier, and cross matching was good. The cross wing of The George has been dated as being constructed in 1474, and the hall in 1486/7.



After his talk, David answered several questions from members of the audience, and many people enjoyed examining the core samples of timber which he had brought along as examples. We were left feeling that a couple of hours had only allowed us a glimpse into this fascinating subject. We can only hope that David will make 'forays' to carry out further dendrochronological investigations in Odiham, and then there may be opportunities to hear more about his work.

The George

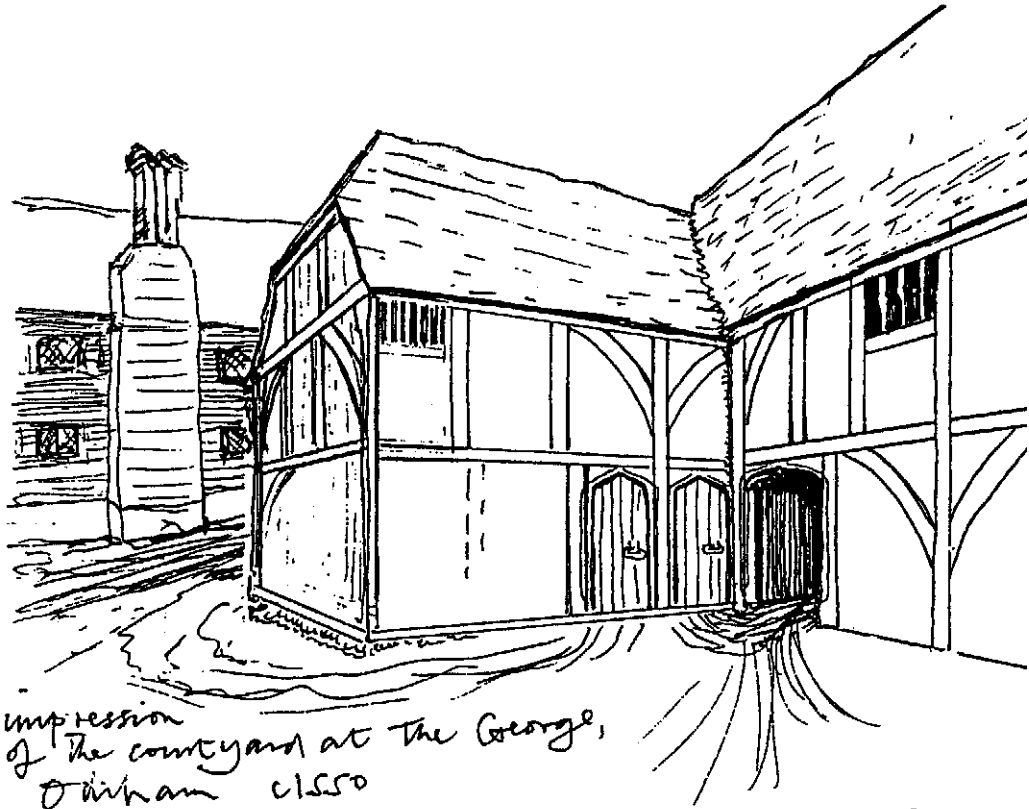
High Street - dated 1474 and 1486/7



Probable appearance in 1486/7

This is Odiham's largest timber-framed building, with moulded beams of the finest quality. It was originally jettied on to the High Street and occupied a prime site beside the former Market House. Three wings survive from this former courtyard house, which may or may not have been built as an inn; it was called The George in the mid-16th century. Sample cores taken from the crosswing (to the east) were dated 1474, and those taken from the main

hall block were dated 1486/7. The latter building was always floored throughout and although the timber chimney (between the present entrance hall and dining room) cuts across a moulded spine beam the chimney is also dated 1486/7.



en 90



SPRINT
COLLECTOR

Odiham, George Hotel, 1924

75277

medieval carved Head - The George



medieval life-size male face carved from Celtic limestone - found behind paralling at The George
27cms in height - has a beard depicted in concentric circles (incised) & horiz. lines
- may have originally been a decoration for a capital or projection, perhaps in a doorway
- considerable weathering on the face side suggests it was only partially protected from the elements.

- with The Hampshire County Museum Service

The George Inn

by Edward Roberts

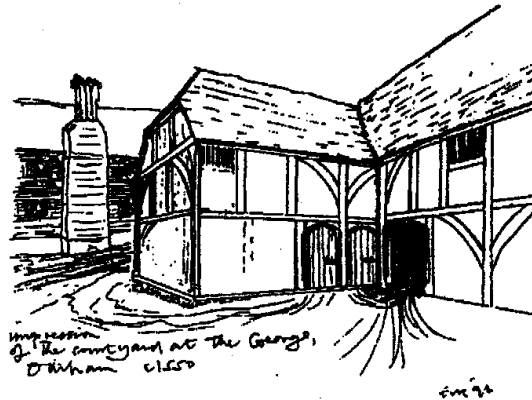
Several public houses in Hampshire display a sign which proclaims that the building is a medieval inn. This is generally a smart piece of advertising and not to be taken too seriously. In the first place, few Hampshire pubs are housed in medieval buildings, although quite a number have fragments of 17th century timber framing. To be authentically medieval, they would need to date from about 1500 or earlier. Secondly, the great majority of public houses were taverns, and not inns. Taverns were essentially alehouses for ordinary folk and did not provide lodging. Inns provided high-class lodgings for travelling gentry, rough lodging for their servants and stabling for their horses.

Consequently inns had to be very large buildings with some expensively-decorated rooms for the wealthy guests. Such buildings were an economic proposition only when they could be sited in a central position in a town which was crossed by busy roads. Such key sites and large buildings could generally only be afforded and built by wealthy institutions. Thus Gloucester Abbey built the New Inn at Gloucester which is still largely intact, and Winchester College built splendid inns at Alresford and Andover.

The George Inn, underneath its Georgian brick facing, is a very well-preserved, late medieval structure. It is not only the largest timber-framed building in Odiham but also has the finest quality moulded beams. It is just possible that it was originally a large house built around a courtyard for a private individual. A document of 1584 which calls it a "capital messuage of Odiham now called an inn" lends some weight to the view that its function was originally domestic and not commercial. The deeds dating from 1544 are now unfortunately lost. However the building itself has all the features of an inn of about 1500. It is situated in a central position in Odiham's main street, occupies a very large plot and has suites of rooms which were clearly intended for gentry. But who built it? Who paid for the expensive plot and the great, richly-moulded timbers? This remains a mystery.

The main entrance still survives but originally led to an inner courtyard (see sketch) which has now been converted to a bar. From this courtyard, two doorways (both of which survive) led to two self-contained suites of rooms. One suite, (now occupied by an office and the ground-floor, front room of the

east wing) may have been the innkeeper's lodgings. They would certainly have been a convenient place from which to note approaching customers and to control the main entrance. The second suite may well have been intended for visiting gentry. It was reached by stairs from the present bar and occupied the entire upper floor of the east wing.



The main block fronting the High Street was originally jettied along its entire length (see front cover). It has some magnificently-moulded oak beams on both floors. It is unclear whether it originally contained one large assembly room on the ground floor or whether there was a partition. The same problem applies to the first floor. In either case, assembly rooms were typical of important inns which fulfilled many social and civic functions.

The west wing (now a kitchen and private rooms) was perhaps at first intended for poorer guests or for the servants of the gentry who occupied the more sumptuous east wing. There must have been a stable wing too, no doubt at the back and reached from the side entrance which now runs down to The George car park. All in all, a building of which Odiham can be proud.

Thanks are due to Mr & Mrs Kelsey who kindly allowed me to inspect The George on numerous occasions and to enjoy a delicious meal afterwards!

Some of the History of The George

by Sheila Millard

Centrally placed in Odiham's wide, gently curving High Street, and with several large public rooms, The George has been a focal point of the community for nearly 500 years.

In the early 18th century this was Market Street and a map of 1739 depicts a large Market House outside The George with open arcades where licensed traders could set up their stalls. Here the street is crossed by an ancient footpath from Long Sutton, which still exists from Love Lane, continuing through The George yard and connecting to others leading around and through the former royal deer park. The Market House, The Shambles and other buildings in the street between The George and King Street were probably demolished late in the 18th century when the Turnpike Acts came into force.

A weekly market existed from medieval times and Henry VI, in the 15th century, granted two fairs a year for Odiham. Henry VIII, in 1545, granted Lord Chideock Paulet the office of Steward and Bailiff of his Manor of Odiham and he was also *Clarke of the Markett* (sic).

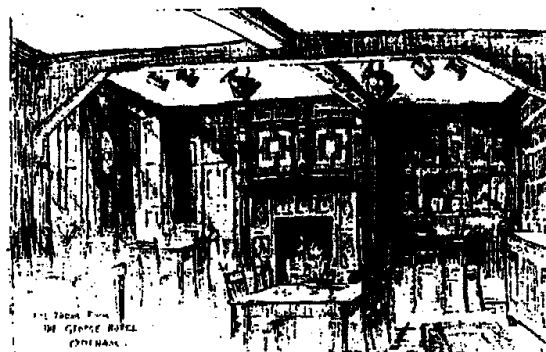
FURNISHINGS & FACILITIES

Prior to the opening in 1860 of the Market and Assembly Rooms in King Street (now Charlotte Terrace), The George was undoubtedly the only public venue for social occasions. A sale catalogue for 1854 describes upstairs "a large Assembly Room, fitted up with Orchestra Gallery", and downstairs, "a large Market Room and a Commercial Room."



On the chimney breast of this upstairs room a 16th century wall painting was found in 1979; one of the finest in the county, it was restored in 1986 by the Hampshire Historic Buildings Bureau. It depicts Chaucer's poem, *The Parliament of Fowls*, which used the symbolism of the squabbling amongst a gathering of various species of birds to describe the political and social unrest of the period. Another sale catalogue of 1905 describes this room as a large sitting room and the former Market Room as it is today - a dining room. But the 'carved oak overmantel', the magnificent fireplace and wall

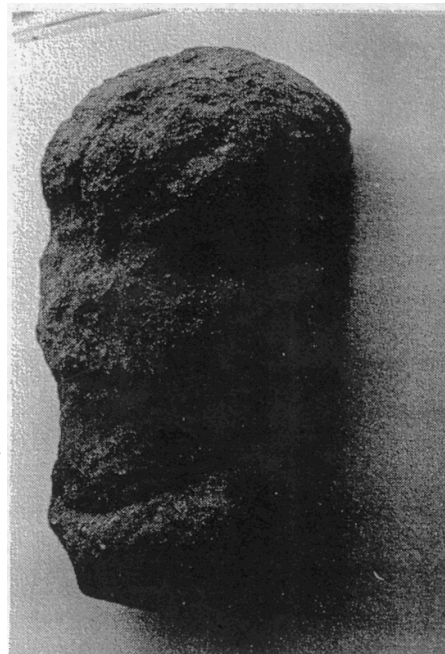
panelling, reputed to have come from Basing House, were not included in the sale of The George; they were available for purchase separately and fortunately remain to this day.



The Dining Room c.1930

Basing House was destroyed in 1645 during the Civil War and coincidentally, Sir Ralph Hopton, Field Marshall of His Majesty's Western Forces, is reputed to have stayed at The George two years earlier.

Some years ago a medieval life-size male face carved from a rectangular block of oolitic limestone was found behind panelling at The George.



Measuring 27cms in height, the hair and beard were depicted by incised concentric circles and horizontal lines. It may have originally been a decoration for a corbel or projection, perhaps in a doorway; considerable weathering on the face side suggests it was only partially protected from the elements.

A pre-Roman cult of carved stone heads has its roots with the pagan Celts. They displayed human heads to illustrate their military prowess and they also believed them to have evil averting



powers and that they would bring good luck and success to their fortresses and homes. The carved stone head custom has continued to modern times and heads were frequently built into the gables and outer walls of barns and dwelling houses. There is an example of three carved heads on the gable, adjacent to the High Street, of the office complex (a former malthouse) at Palace Gate. There is no evidence of stonework at The George and oolitic limestone is found well to the north-west of this area (in and around the Cotswolds). The limestone of Odiham Castle was quarried locally at Bentley so did this carved head originate from Palace Gate? The type of stone used for the carved heads there has yet to be identified; the carved head is with the Hampshire County Museum Service.

The entrance hall was described as stone-paved in 1854, but the stone flags in the present dining room were not laid until 1972; they are believed to have been removed from Bradford Cathedral.

Outside in 1854, in addition to stabling for 13 horses, there was a loose box stable, another thatched stable for eight horses, a coach-house, a granary, a garden and a paddock. By 1905 stabling for 20 horses was available, including a newly-built stable and also "a Capital Newly-built Carriage House 55ft x 16ft."

OWNERS & MINE HOSTS

In 1584 this "capital message of Odiham now called an inn" together with 21 acres of arable land was leased for 31 years at an annual rent of £4 and 10 shillings by Hughe Dervall the elder, a merchant of Southampton and Thomas his son to James Massam, alias Masham, gentleman of Odiham. By 1591 this property and land had been subleased by James Massam to James Searle and "the message called The George" and lands were sold in 1598 by James Wolveridge, of Lincolns Inn, gentleman to John Godson of Dogmersfield, gentleman for £180. Daniel Wyeth, a butcher, maltster and extensive land and property owner locally, in his will of 28th July 1774 directed his trustees "to sell and convey to the best purchasers my message or Inn commonly called or known by the Sign of The George Inn in Odiham, together with the Barn, Stables and Buildings, Garden Land and premises with their appurtenances, and out of the sale to discharge the several legacies hereinafter bequeathed the same to be within 12 months of my decease". Earlier in 1774 he had provided for the endowment of one of the almshouses.

Ten years later, and the year when mail coaches were introduced, Thomas Webb was Postmaster. Advertisements record that letters left The George for London on "Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings about nine o'clock and returns on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday about Noon".

Robert Madgwick was the Innkeeper by 1841. A former stage-coach driver, he subsequently took over The Swan in Alton and from there, prior to the opening of the railway line to Alton, collected passengers (and potential customers) from Winchfield.

The George now was owned by the Eversley Brewery and in 1847, William Heath was in residence. He too was quick to recognise the potential of the newly-opened railway line and the station at Winchfield. The George in 1847 is described in advertisements as a "Commercial Inn and Posting House, Railway Booking Office and Excise Office". Mr Heath was also offering the services of an omnibus (a four-wheeled public

vehicle, usually covered and with seats on top) six times a day to Winchfield to meet trains from London, Gosport, Portsmouth and Southampton.

Auctions were frequently held at The George and when various public houses and beerhouses owned by Eversley Brewery were sold in 1854, William Heath purchased Lot 33 - The George. The Heath family were to remain here for nearly 60 years and after the death of Charles in 1905, "The Very Old Established Family and Commercial Hotel and Posting House" was once again put up for sale, this time at Mason's Hall Tavern, Basinghall Street, London. The purchaser and its ownership over the next twenty years has still to be established but in 1925 it was purchased by Courage, the Reading brewers, for £3250, and by 1932 the landlord was proudly advertising "Central Heating throughout".

W. G. H. A. P. H.,
George Hotel,
COMMERCIAL INN, & POSTING HOUSE
ODIHAM.

CHOICE WINES AND PURE SPIRITS.
WELL-AIRED BEDS.
Excellent Stabling and Lock-up Coach Boxes.

An Omnibus to and from Winchfield station.

MEETINGS, FUNCTIONS & OCCASIONS.

The earliest known meeting to be held at The George was in 1655 and the Churchwardens Accounts record a payment of five shillings for charges upon "a meeting of The Parish". This was probably convened to elect from among the parishioners a "Surveyor of the highway". An Act of Parliament the previous year had decreed that each parish annually elect a "Surveyor" (an unpaid post) to be responsible for surveying and assessing the roads of the parish. He also had to organise their repair with labour supplied by the owner of the land through which the road passed. A thankless task, and perhaps not so surprising that the charges for the meeting amounted to five shillings!

In 1772 the future of the Red Lyon (now Martin's, the newsagent) appeared uncertain. It was "order'd that the meeting for the future of the Gentlemen Trustees (of Robert May's school) be held at The George". An advertisement in the Reading Mercury in December 1788, by the Proprietors of the Basingstoke Canal, requested that landowners or their agents on the line of the proposed canal "attend a meeting at The George - to treat with

them about a proper mode of purchasing their several lands".

These are just three examples and there were the innumerable local organisations, societies and clubs who have gathered here for some 450 years to discuss their various businesses and hold their annual dinners. The Hampshire Hunt who used to meet outside, also held their annual dinner here.

Perhaps the most notable event was in 1783 when the inaugural meeting of the Odiham Society of Agriculture and Industry was held in the fine oak panelled room. By 1791, one of their objectives was "to induce those, whom it may concern, to provide for the Health of Horses, Cows and Sheep, better than has hitherto been done". Their last meeting here was in 1796 but a London Committee had already been formed. The initiative shown by this local society led to the formation of the Royal Veterinary College.

The Manorial Courts were also held at The George. The Court Leet, a Crown Court which every male over the age of twelve was bound to attend, heard all the petty common law offences. It also appointed local law and order officials who were responsible to the County Justices. This was replaced by the Petty Sessions and the Odiham Division was held here on alternate Tuesdays until a Court House was added to the Bridewell in 1880.

I have only covered the public events which took place at The George. There are of course the many private occasions which have also added to its history. Today we are privileged to be able to continue to enjoy the convenience of the facilities offered by The George and to perhaps add to its long and varied history.

MISSING DEEDS

Unfortunately, the deeds of The George, dating from 1544 were sold separately from the building in 1905 and their whereabouts is not known. These historic documents could provide information about previous owners and also, perhaps, give the name of the person whose wealth and social standing enabled the construction of such a high-quality building. The date of the deeds postdates the construction of the building: its proximity to the reformation raises the question of whether there are possible monastic connections. If anyone has any theories as to the whereabouts of these deeds I should be most grateful to know.

Photographs and details of the stone head kindly supplied by David Allen of the County Museum Service.

THE ODIHAM SOCIETY JOURNAL



THE GEORGE HOTEL, ODHAM.

Peter Adams 1986.

AUTUMN 1986