

Extract from:

Buckingham The Loyal and Ancient Borough

by Douglas J Elliot (1975)

The Prebend End of Buckingham, once liberally sprinkled with Public Houses can now boast but three (1975) – The Britannia, The New Inn and The Mitre, of these The Mitre is by far the oldest. Situated in Mitre Street, this old hostelry is described by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (1913) as built probably in the late 17th century. Despite this, a building is shown on the site both on Speed's map of 1610 and Rutger Hermanides' abridgement of Camden's Britannica of 1661, but neither relates what the building is.

It is uncommon to find an inn owned by a clergyman, at least not since the reformation, but this odd fact The Mitre can boast. In 1740 William Dradge, a local tanner, left these premises to his daughter Mary and her husband, the Rev. Richard Carter of Little Munden, Hertfordshire; the tenant at the time being John Smith. The Rev. and his wife retained The Mitre for 25 years. In 1766 it was sold to William Goode, grocer of Buckingham; Thomas Salisbury was licensee in that year. On Goode's death his son James Goode inherited the premises. James sold the property to Bartholemew Kelly, a butcher, in 1806.

Kelly married Mary Burnell, as sister of William Burnell who had been the licensee of The Mitre from 1782 until his death in 1803. So Kelly's mother-in-law, Mary, who had succeeded her late husband William, became Kelly's tenant. After 20 years Mary Burnell handed over the licence to her son George Burnell who was still listed as licensee in 1842. Several Manorial Courts are mentioned as having been held at The Mitre around 1800. Bartholemew Kelly died in 1820, intestate, and the property went to his eldest son, also Bartholemew. However this son died shortly afterwards and he left the Inn to his mother for life, and after her decease to his brother John and his two sisters Mary and Elizabeth as tenants in common.

Elizabeth held the licence for a number of years and was succeeded by her brother John Kelly, who was also a butcher like his father. John Kelly as licensee in 1876 made an agreement with his sister Mary, a widow, to pay her 2/6 every Saturday for the rest of her life, for a purchase of her third share in the premises. After 91 years of ownership The Mitre was sold by the Kelly Family in 1897 for the sum of £558 to Messrs, Hopcrafts, the brewers of Brackley. In this year the premises were enfranchised by the manor of the Prebend End and Gawcott. Previously they had been copyhold of the Manor.

Thomas Frewins appears as licensee in 1887, and his widow, Mary Ann Frewins in 1895. The Nicholls family held the licence for some 40 years, from at least 1899 until 1939, when George Alexander last started what was to become a 20 year taks of attending to his customers' thirsts. He was succeeded by Frank Lockett in 1959.