

# **Building Record**

## **The Swan, Vicar Street, Kidderminster**

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### **Historic Kidderminster Project Ref: 743**

#### **Introduction**

This report was undertaken as part of the Historic Kidderminster Project. The Swan is of considerable interest, being one of the town's oldest surviving pubs. The Swan started life as 'The Junction', and the first known reference to this pub is in 1849. (p233, Tomkinson and Hall, 1975) It is likely to have been built shortly before that time. Resources of both Kidderminster Library and Worcester Record Office have been used. We have benefited also by an interview with the present landlady Amy Evans.



**The Swan c1960**

#### **History**

There is no building shown on the site in the Broadfield map of the town in 1835. It is possible, therefore, that it was built as a pub. The first landlord is believed to have

been James Gardener, who was also the postmaster. Gardener is known to have been buying land off Comberton Hill in 1837 when he was described as a ‘publican’. (Deeds of 7 Yew Tree Road) There is no evidence to suggest that he was running the Junction or any other pub in Vicar Street at this time. Indeed, the Bentley’s Directory of 1841 has him as a ‘fly and omnibus proprietor’ at Trinity Lane. In 1843 he purchased land at Chester Road North, when he was described as an ‘omnibus proprietor’. (HKP Report 487)

The 1851 census had James Gardner ‘post master’ at Oxford Road, and his son, also James, was listed as a coachman. It is likely that this and other entries should more correctly have been listed under Vicar Street. The poor rate lists have no entries for Gardener until January 1852, when he is listed as owning and occupying a house stable and yard in Vicar Street of substantial size, valued at £42. (WRO BA10470/186)

Trade Directories confirm the link between the pub and a coaching service. In his Guide to Kidderminster of 1889, Broadfield refers to the 1840s when Gardner’s Bus went from Kidderminster to Birmingham and Kidderminster to Worcester. The 1855 Billings Directory lists James Gardener, victualler and horse and fly proprietor, Junction, Vicar Street.

Gardener died in 1858. Around 1872 the pub’s name was changed to the Swan, probably named after the Swan in Swan Street which had recently closed. By 1876 the premises were certainly known as the Swan Hotel with the address 11 Vicar Street. The proprietor was Thomas Aston Phillpot, who was listed also as a maltster in the Post Office Directory of that year. Anthony Titley was the landlord in 1880. He died in 1884 and his wife Catherine took over the licence. She is listed there in Broadfield’s Guide to Kidderminster published in 1889. She opened the Swan Concert Hall which featured music hall acts.

GUIDE TO KIDDERMINSTER. 27

**Omnibus Time Tables.**

BETWEEN KIDDERMINSTER & BEWDLEY.

<i>Leaving "Swan Hotel," Kidderminster.</i>			<i>Leaving Bewdley.</i>		
MONDAY .....	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	
TUESDAY ...	11.15	2.15	9.30	12.45	5.30
WEDNESDAY					
FRIDAY .....					
THURSDAY	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	
	9.30	11.15	9.0	9.30	12.30 12.45
	2.15	4.30		5.30	5.30
SATURDAY	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	
	9.15	2.15	9.30	12.45	5.30 8.0
SUNDAY..				p.m.	
				2.0	7.0

Extract from Broadfield's Guide to Kidderminster 1889

The Swan Hotel was starting post for a daily horse drawn coach ‘ The British Queen’ travelled to Birmingham and charged 2/6 on the outside and 4/s( 20p} for the comfort of riding inside.

During the 1960’s when there were regular pop concerts at the Town Hall lots of the audience used to pop over to The Swan for a swift drink or two. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was bought by Mitchell& Butlers the brewers and later taken over by Punch Taverns. The current landlord Andrew Evans spent two years renovating the inside turning the two small bars into one open bar which still retains the pub’s character. The exterior is the same as it always has been apart from fresh paint.

### **Bibliography**

Kidderminster since 1800, Ken Tomkinson & George Hall, 1975.  
John Richards (Document displayed on wall of the Swan)



The Swan Vicar Street 1902 - OS Ref 832766