

Village Public Houses

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At one time Ewelme folk had four public houses in which to '*wet their whistle*' – The Lamb, The Greyhound, The London Road Inn and the surviving Shepherds Hut.

The Lamb was a handsome Georgian building on the Benson Road, architecturally similar to The Greyhound (now a house on The Street). Thomas Dymond bought it from James Handscomb on June 23rd 1927 for £400 including the blacksmiths forge, portable carpenters shop, henhouse, pigsty, orchards and vegetable garden. The whole business brought in profit of about £4 a week. Mr Dymond's son in law, Les Miners took over the blacksmiths forge and the family ran the pub until forced to vacate in 1942, when it was demolished to make way for the extended runway.



The Lamb Inn



***Left: Wallace Miners age 3 outside The Lamb with his dog Biddy and
Right: The Sign for the Blacksmith's Forge, the original is still a treasured possession of
the Miners family.***

The Greyhound was a popular hostelry, historically run by members of the Garlick family who also had an abattoir in the rear garden. In the 20th century landlady Nellie Webb was remembered as a great character. She had a deformity in that she could not raise her head, so with her chin on her chest she had to physically raise her head to look at her customers. Consequently, when she brought the beer up from the cellar on a tray she often slipped and fell and had to be 'rescued' by the customers. It was sold by Brakspears Brewery in the late 1980s.



The Greyhound Inn



The London Road Inn on Beggarsbush Hill was run by Cecil Gardner. Later, when the Parkers were landlords there in 1943 a serious fire destroyed the thatched roof, but it was restored with a flat roof. It was popular with the RAF personnel and known as the 'Air pub'. Sold by Brakspears in the 1990s and now a house.



The London Road Inn



London Road Inn

The only remaining pub is The Shepherds Hut (for decades only a beer house) was taken over in August 1923 from Mr and Mrs Leather by teetotal Joe Strevens, who had moved with his family from Hastings. In 1923 it was very dirty and basic with oil lamps, earth water closets, and a stable for two

horses on the right hand side and a coach house for grooms on the left. (George Keen, who ran the bakery next door, used to keep his horses in the stables).



The Shepherds Hut

As there was no licence for wine and spirits, Joe would often have to walk over the bridge to The Lamb and buy what he required to last the evening. The Shepherds Hut became a 'proper' pub and beer was delivered from Diamall Brown & Sons, Reading. (The wine and spirit licence was transferred from The Lamb, when it was demolished in 1942).

In 1930 the Hut charged 4d for a pint of beer, twenty Players cigarettes cost 11½d and Woodbines were 5d for ten. As a versatile village 'house' the Club room has been a tailor's shop, a fish and chip shop and a tea room! In the men-only Public Bar dominoes, darts and shove-halfpenny were played. However, the dart board was obviously taken over by ladies on some occasions, and Joe complained of having to empty the earth closets more frequently during Ladies Darts Matches. (Proper sewage disposal was not connected until 1957). The Hut served Speciality Watercress Teas to parties brought in by Smith's Coaches and there were annual suppers of ham boiled in the copper, with the broad beans and potatoes cooked in the liquid in sacks. The obligatory sing-song always followed.

The late Amy Strevens Reeves, Joe's daughter ran the Hut with her mother after he died. In her memoir she recounted the raucous visits of the students of St Edmond's Hall Cricket Team (The Teddy's) from Oxford who used to come and play Ewelme CC on the pitch then located on Prospect Farm's field in the Pightles. Afterwards they would repair to the Shepherds Hut and (apparently) members had to drink 8 pints of beer to qualify for the 'Teddy's Tie' – which was red and with a teddy bear motif. One student would ask Amy's father to unlock the piano so he could play – he was Dudley Moore, a gifted concert pianist, who became a famous actor /comedian. In their high spirits the boys would climb up onto the roof, but things went too far when they 'liberated' two stone lions set atop gateposts at Bill Edwards' Berrick farm – fortunately they were returned.

At certain periods the Hut was regarded by locals as 'an old mans pub'. The late Harry Keene's father, who had lost an arm in the Great War and thereafter had the job of herding the cows from the Common to the pond, had a favourite chair beside the fire. His resting heels eventually wore two indents in the wooden floor! However, during the last War there was a dramatic change of clientele,

the Hut being a handy hostelry for the lively young airmen and women of RAF Benson. One WAAF called Blossom used to drink pints in the bar. She became Mrs Max Bygraves. Being close to the airfield had its disadvantages. A Wellington bomber, attempting to land, was fatally 'bounced' by a sneak enemy raider and the resulting explosion blew out the Hut's windows.

The pubs were the social hubs especially for the male villagers, and to those ale drinkers of 1923 it would have been unthinkable that their four 'locals' would be reduced to a single one later in the century.

Ewelme Village Archive