

A Brief History of the White Horse, Stonesfield

In the mid-19th century there were three cottages on the Ridings, opposite the green triangle. They were at right angles to the road and were owned by Richard Collier. In one of the cottages lived John Lardner who was a shop keeper and beer retailer. John Lardner held the licence from 1847. In 1853 he was the licence holder at the White Lion. John Lardner died in September 1865 and was succeeded by his son Henry. The first mention of the White Horse was in October 1865 when the licence was transferred from John Lardner, deceased, to his son Henry Lardner.

The White Horse was for sale by auction on 28th October 1876, when it was described as "A Stone-built and Slated FREE PUBLIC HOUSE, called or known by the name of "The White Horse," situate in the village of Stonesfield, and containing 2 front rooms, tap room, pantry, scullery, cellar 3 bed rooms, and 1 attic; together with the 2 Cottages adjoining (but unoccupied). Detached are a Brew-house, large Shop with extensive cellarage underneath, Stable, Barn, Wagon Hovel, Cow Shed, Poultry Pen, Piggery, and Cattle Yard; together with capital Garden Ground at the back and in the front of the house. The Outgoings are Quit Rents amounting to 1s. yearly."

For the period of 1876 – 1907 the pub was run by a succession of landlords. Then the licence of the White Horse was taken on by the Oliver family, who ran it from 1907 (Edward Oliver) until 1962 (Minnie Oliver).

An article in the Witney Gazette in June 1977 describes the retirement from the White Horse of Vivian and Emily Miles: "A connection with the licenced trade in Stonesfield, which stretches back 60 years, has ended with the retirement of Mr Vivian Miles and his wife, Emily. Mr Miles has been the landlord of the White Horse Inn for the past 15 years and before that ran the Boot Inn, just along the road, for 10 years.

The couple took over the Boot Inn from Mr Miles's parents, Mr and Mrs Fred Griffin, who had been there since 1917.

"I've never lived anywhere else, other than in a pub. I'm quite looking forward to our retirement," said Mrs Miles. She and her husband are going to live at Yarnton.

Mr Miles, who was born in Woodstock, and was a glove cutter by trade before becoming a publican, said that in the last six months there had been a big fall in trade.

But the changing times did not deter a large number of people from visiting the White Horse Inn for a farewell party for Mr and Mrs Miles."

In the 1980s the landlord was Nigel Bishop and it was during this period that the White Horse became a 'Spud Pub,' along with Sturdy's Castle on the Banbury Road and the King's Head in Woodstock.

Sadly between 2001 and 2005 the pub was closed until it was bought by Richard Starowski, from London. Richard spent a lot of time and hard work restoring the pub before it finally reopened in 2006. In 2014 the current owner, John Lloyd, who had bought the pub from Richard in 2009, sought planning permission to convert the outbuilding, which contained a skittle alley, into a dwelling.

From 2017 until 2020 the licence was held by Marina Hughes, who then surrendered the licence.