

CALLING TIME ON THE STAR INN: A REASSESSMENT OF THE ORIGINS OF ROMFORD BREWERY

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Numerous histories of Romford Brewery describe how the business began in 1799, when Edward Ind and John Grosvenor purchased the Star Inn in the High Street.¹ Although Ind and his successive partners eventually built a large brewery on the site, the business was founded on the Star's existing reputation as a high quality 'home' or proto-industrial brewery. In the earliest published account of the Brewery's origins, written in 1889, Alfred Barnard recorded that

About the middle of the eighteenth century, there lived at the Star Inn - the most famous hostelry in the town, a landlord who, as was the custom in those days, brewed his own beer, and was so famous for the good tippie he supplied to his customers, that, in time, it acquired such a reputation, that he began to sell it in casks to customers outside the boundaries of [the Liberty of] Havering-atte-Bower, and kept a horse and dray to deliver it at a distance.²

This story is well known and has been repeated in print for over 100 years, with some variations and additions over time. It is a story which countless researchers have accepted as fact and there seems to have been little attempt to investigate the origins of the Brewery in detail. This article considers the historiography of the Star to date, before drawing on a range of original sources, including some never previously referenced in the existing literature, to examine how far the established story stands up to scrutiny and what contemporary evidence survives to corroborate it.

A star is born

Unlike many of Romford's ancient pubs - the Golden Lion, the Swan and the White Hart (now the Bitter End),

to name a few - the Star is poorly documented in the historical record. There are no contemporary images of it, and it is not marked on any maps. Considering that the inn was described by Barnard as the 'most famous' in Romford, and was supposedly the genesis of an international brewing empire, this is unusual.

The only depiction of the Star (fig. 1) is a drawing made 100 years after the inn's supposed purchase in 1799. However, the Star had been demolished half a century before the drawing was made so its accuracy is doubtful. The image was first published in the Brewery's *Centenary Souvenir* in 1899, where its function seems to be more decorative than illustrative.³ It is possible that the artist sketched the Star from memory, but it is equally likely that it is just an impression, rendered deliberately quaint and rustic in order to emphasise how far the modern industrial Brewery had developed in the intervening 100 years.

Where was the Star?

The existing literature is confused over the Star's precise location in the High Street. The *Centenary Souvenir* claims that the Star was 'hard by the bridge' over the Rom, and that 'at the rear of the inn was a small brew-house'.⁴ Similarly, Ian Webster, in his 2015 book on the Ind Coope and Samuel Allsopp breweries in Burton, states that the Star was 'at the foot of the bridge', citing an article in the Ind Coope magazine, *The Red Hand*, but does not specify which side.⁵ It would make sense for the Star to be located near a water source such as the Rom, as this would ensure a constant supply of brewing liquor. However Arthur Cornell, writing around 1908/9, says 'the Star stood just west of the Brewery entrance



Figure 1. Drawing of the Star Inn, 1899. Source: *Havering Libraries - Local Studies*.

gates on the High Street', which is slightly further down from the bridge.⁶ Cornell's account is the earliest, but it was still written nearly 50 years after the Star had been demolished, so this is important to try and verify.

Although the Star is not marked on any maps, other sources help to pinpoint its location. The 1851 Poor Rate Book reveals that the 'Star Tap', as it was known, stood directly beside the Brewery, one of five properties owned by Ind Coope.⁷ This row of five properties and their adjoining outbuildings are visible on an 1849 map of the High Street (fig. 2), immediately west of the Brewery gateway (ringed).⁸ This supports Cornell's account and proves that the Star was not directly beside the bridge over the Rom; in fact the river actually flows under the Brewery next door, following the line of its eastern wall (dotted line).

Although it is not marked as such, this is the only identified depiction of the original Star Inn on a map.

The inn appears to be a rectangular structure fronting the street while the odd-shaped extension at the rear is probably guest accommodation, or could even be the original brewhouse, which Barnard says was located at the rear. It is also possible that the long building in the Brewery grounds behind this row might have been stables serving the Star, and that the Brewery gateway was originally a carriageway to the stables.

The shape of this building is confusing. The eastern wall of the Star extension is built at an approximately 20° angle from the inn, to save blocking the passageway between it and the western wall of the Brewery, which is built at the same angle from the street. Yet if this extension had been the original brewhouse, pre-dating the Brewery next door, why would it have been built in such an odd shape? This map suggests that the Star extension was built after the Brewery next door, and had adapted its shape to fit the much larger angular wall of the Brewery. If this is the case, this casts doubt on



Fig. 2: Annotated map of the High Street, 1849. Source: *Havering Libraries - Local Studies*.

the established story of the Brewery developing from a brewhouse behind the Star.

How old was the Star?

There are different foundation dates for the Star in the existing literature. Some sources, such as Richmond and Turton, give a date of 1708, but do not cite any primary evidence.⁹ The name Benjamin Wilson sometimes crops up in relation to this date, however an Ind Coope & Allsopp company publication from c.1955 states that the establishment Benjamin Wilson founded in 1708 was actually a brewery in Burton upon Trent, not the Star.¹⁰ It is very unlikely that the same man founded brewing establishments in two towns 150 miles from each other in the same year.

Ian Webster explains how this confusion came about: 1708 was the year in which Benjamin Printon founded a brewery in Burton; Printon's name was later misspelled as Prilson, and he was then mistaken for a different man named Benjamin Wilson who, in 1742, took over the Burton inn (the Blue Stoops) which would later become Samuel Allsopp's brewery.¹¹ When Ind Coope and Samuel Allsopp merged in 1934, these dates became confused, and the 1708 date was later erroneously applied to the Star. The fact that the Blue Stoops was on the High Street in Burton added to the confusion with the Star on the High Street in Romford. Both *The Red Hand* and *The Romford Star* later perpetuated this mistake. This lack of accuracy in the Brewery's own publications increases doubt about the Star Inn story.

Another foundation date for the Star often recorded is 1750. This seems to have originated in the 1980s from a misinterpretation of earlier secondary sources such as Barnard, which claim that the landlord of the Star began brewing 'about the middle of the eighteenth century' (see note 2). Jim Duvall, writing in 1981, seems to have mistaken this approximation for the exact year 1750.¹² An article in *Essex Countryside* magazine the same year also makes this mistake.¹³ In 1983, the Romford Brewery Company itself claimed that the Star was actually *founded* in 1750 in its Open Day Souvenir booklet.¹⁴ This point emphasises how an inadvertent mistake can be recycled over time and then misinterpreted to obscure the true picture even more.

Further investigation reveals that the Star was actually founded much later than either of the dates above. In the 18th and 19th centuries, local public houses were licensed by the Liberty of Havering Petty Sessions court. Publicans had to renew their licenses at the Sessions every September, and the court minute book lists the names of every person granted a license each year, along with the name or 'sign' of their establishment. The surviving licensing records date back to 1770, but it wasn't until 12 September 1808 that one John Morphew (or Morphey) was granted the first license for the Star. Although the Star is alleged to have existed since the 18th century, there is no mention of it in contemporary licensing records until 1808.¹⁵ Harold Smith, in his 1925 history of Havering-atte-Bower, noted this date, yet later writers appear to have overlooked it completely.¹⁶

Another possibility is that the Star may have previously existed under a different name, which would explain its absence in earlier licensing records. A potential clue lies in the notebooks of local councillor and amateur historian Thomas Bird (1817-1900), who collected information about Romford's historic pubs in the 1890s. The Star is missing from his notes but he mentions a pub called the Seven Stars which he claims was 'on the west side of the Brewery gateway', the same location as the Star.¹⁷ Bird notes a reference to the Seven Stars in the Romford parish registers from 1678 and must have assumed that this was an earlier name for the Star.¹⁸ If Bird's assumption was true however, we would expect to find the Seven Stars in the licensing records before 1808, but there is no mention of it since the records begin in 1770. Furthermore, 21 Romford pubs were licensed in 1808, while in preceding years there were only 20; this proves that the Star was a new establishment, and not an existing pub that had changed its name.¹⁹

The Star and the Brewery

The evidence above has obvious implications for the established history of the Brewery; if the Star did not exist until 1808, Edward Ind could not possibly have bought it in 1799. There appears to be no contemporary records revealing exactly when or how Ind started his brewery, but we do know that he was living in Romford by 1802²⁰ and brewing here by 1805.²¹ Nevertheless

this was still three years before the Star was founded, which implies strongly that the established story of the Brewery developing out of the Star is wrong. How, then, did industrial brewing begin in Romford? Although the traditional story has been disproved, one detail of it may still provide a clue to Brewery's origins - the name of the landlord, George Cardon.

Early sources such as Barnard (1889) and Ind Coope's *Centenary Souvenir* (1899) do not name the man who allegedly began brewing at the Star; the Brewery's 150th anniversary souvenir (1949) was the first publication to name him as 'Mr Cardon'.²² By 1981, Mr Cardon had acquired the first name 'George', and the name 'George Cardon' is then repeated by several later sources.²³ None of these sources cite any primary evidence for their claims, so it is not possible to authenticate them.

Consequently, without a single piece of contemporary evidence for a George Cardon living in Romford at the time, it is therefore reasonable to conclude that the established story of Romford Brewery's origins is at best inaccurate and quite possibly contrived.

A new theory

Although there seems to be no record of a George Cardon, a man with a similar surname is listed as a Romford brewer in two trade directories from 1790²⁴ and 1794.²⁵ His name was Edward Thomas Carder, and these references show that he was active in the same decade that Edward Ind is said to have taken over an established brewing business in Romford. There is a compelling case for the argument that Carder's brewery was the forerunner of Edward Ind's famous Romford Brewery.

Edward Thomas Carder was baptised in Woodham Walter, Essex, on 29 May 1751, the eldest son of Thomas Carder and his wife Ann.²⁶ The earliest reference placing the Carders in Romford is on 8 October 1763, when Thomas sat on the jury at the Liberty of Havering Quarter Sessions.²⁷ The family had spent some of the intervening 12 years in Winchester, where two other children were born: Elizabeth (baptised 9 April 1760), and Charles (baptised 13 December 1761).²⁸ A fourth child, Sarah, was baptised in Romford on 19 May 1765.²⁹ The family's return to Essex seems

to have coincided with a downturn in their fortunes; in 1764 the *London Gazette* reported that Thomas Carder, 'formerly of the City of Winchester in the County of Southampton but now of Rumford in the County of Essex' had been declared bankrupt.³⁰ The most interesting aspect of this report, however, is that Thomas is recorded as a 'victualler', so there is already a family connection to the alcohol industry. Unfortunately the surviving licensing records only begin six years later, so we do not know which pub Thomas ran. Edward Carder's name appears frequently in local records, but interestingly not in the licensing lists. Carder might have produced beer but he was never licensed to run a public house. He must therefore have been a wholesale brewer, rather than a publican brewer who managed a pub and made his own beer onsite.

The first wholesale breweries in Essex were probably established in the 18th century. Some of these developed as a result of publican brewers expanding production to supply other pubs (this was believed to have been the case with the Star, although we now know that wholesale brewing in Romford predates this pub).³¹ One early wholesale brewery was established at nearby Hornchurch by John Woodfine in 1789. Whilst Woodfine was not formerly a publican brewer, he seems to have been a relative of 'Squire Woodfine' who was landlord of the Royal Oak at Havering-atte-Bower from 1772 to 1791.³² The improvements to Essex's main roads in the same century, funded by new turnpike tolls, allowed beer deliveries to be made more easily over a wider area. Romford's position on the Great Essex Road between London and the eastern ports was particularly advantageous; the increase in road traffic helped the town to prosper, and new pubs opened up along the road to cater for travellers, increasing the market for wholesale beer.³³ It was a favourable climate for an enterprising individual to take advantage of, and the Carders did just that.

The Carder brewery

It was Thomas Carder who actually established the brewery that his son Edward would later run for nearly 30 years. Thomas recovered from his bankruptcy within a few years; he had been a founder member of a Masonic lodge back in Winchester in 1761, so his fellow Masons might have given him some financial

help.³⁴ Instead of returning to selling beer, he started making it, and his occupation was recorded as 'brewer' when he gave evidence in an assault case at the Quarter Sessions on 28 April 1770.³⁵ Thomas' name does not appear in the licensing records, which confirms that he was operating a wholesale brewery, but nothing else is known about his business. When Thomas died on 30 September 1773, the brewery passed to his only surviving son Edward.³⁶ Edward Carder is first recorded as a brewer upon his marriage to Penelope Arnold (1760-1823) of Great Warley on 8 April 1777.³⁷

Unfortunately there is almost no surviving evidence of Carder's brewery. We have only tiny scraps of information, most of it circumstantial, from which to try and assemble a picture of the business. The following advert from an Essex newspaper in 1787 is one such snippet:

PUBLIC HOUSE.
To be SOLD,

THE Unexpired Term of Fourteen Years from Christmaslast, of a *PUBLIC HOUSE*, present rent Twelve Guineas, land tax deducted; the landlord to do the repairs. Paid to the brewer for beer delivered from September 14, 1785, to September 2, 1786, Two Hundred and Ten Pounds, which will appear by the brewer's books, exclusive of a large quantity of home brewed, for which the house is noted:- an eight hogshead cask of which is constantly emptied at Christmas in nine or ten days. For further particulars enquire of Mr. John Bourn, carpenter and land-surveyor, Romford..³⁸

A 1991 article in the *Romford Record* suggested that this pub could be the Star, no doubt because of the 'noted' home brew, which chimes with the traditional story.³⁹ We now know that the Star did not exist in 1787, but that does not necessarily make this source irrelevant to our investigation. Although it does not tell us the name or location of the pub (though the contact details suggest it was probably in Romford), we can still gain some useful information about its position within the brewing industry. Firstly, it is not the pub itself which is for sale, but the remainder of a fourteen-year lease, for which the buyer would pay rent to the landlord. Secondly, although the pub was noted for its home-brew, it was also supplied with beer from a wholesale brewery. As the notice makes a distinction between the

landlord and the brewer, we can deduce that this pub was a 'free house', and not a 'tied house' owned by that brewery. A tied house is required to purchase a certain quantity of its beer from its owner-brewery, however this pub was also able to sell 'a large quantity' of its own home-brew. If this was a Romford pub, Carder would almost certainly have been the brewer in question, and we can see that he received £210 worth of orders in a year from this one pub. We cannot judge the size and success of the business based on the gross profits from a single client, but if he had many more clients providing similar returns, this brewer would certainly have prospered.

Carder seems to have done just that, for he became a prominent figure in the life of the town. On 27 April 1778 he was made an overseer of the poor for Romford Town ward, an official appointed by the parish vestry and approved by the Petty Sessions.⁴⁰ This position required him to assess and administer poor relief claims from destitute locals, and to raise the necessary funds to support them by levying a tax known as the 'poor rate' on local householders. We can only speculate how much the childhood memory of his own father's bankruptcy might have influenced Carder's disposition towards the poor. Despite being in a position of great responsibility, an overseer received no salary or compensation for loss of earnings, so Carder's business must have been sufficiently successful to allow him to support himself.

Carder only had to serve one year as an overseer but in 1786 he was appointed as one of the 30 directors or guardians of the new Romford parish workhouse. The directors were chosen from local men who owned property with a rateable value of £10 or over, and included the likes of Humphry Repton, the renowned landscape gardener, and Richard Neave of Dagnam Park, who had recently served as Governor of the Bank of England.⁴¹ Carder was clearly doing very well for himself as a businessman, and, like his father, he also became a Freemason, joining the Lodge of Friendship in Ilford in 1778.⁴² The lodge usually met at the Green Man Inn at Great Ilford, but between 1784-86, meetings were held at the Golden Lion in Romford, perhaps upon Carder's influence.⁴³ A Masonic magazine from 1795 notes that he was at one time Master of his lodge.⁴⁴

It has already been mentioned how the improvements to local roads would have benefited Carder's business,

however the resultant increase in traffic also caused a rise in highway crime, as Carder himself discovered on no less than three occasions. On the night of 8 May 1781, he and his wife Penelope were returning home from London when they were stopped by an armed highwayman on the road near Ilford. Penelope, who was 'so much frightened', urged her husband to surrender his gold watch and money to the thief, who in true romantic fashion, then shook his hand, bade him good-night and rode off.⁴⁵ Three years later, Carder was making the same journey alone in his chaise when he was accosted by four footpads. He whipped his horse to try and escape, but the footpads overcame him and threw him out onto the road. Carder sought assistance at a nearby farmhouse, but the footpads must have been disturbed as 'they made off' without their booty'.⁴⁶ There are no follow up reports to these incidents in the newspapers so it is likely that the perpetrators were never caught, but Carder was prepared in case it happened again. Sure enough, when he and Penelope were stopped in their chaise at Ilford by three footpads on 14 May 1787, they immediately raised the alarm, and the criminals were captured at the scene.⁴⁷ Perhaps Carder finally felt justice had been done when the footpads were hanged at Chelmsford on 10 August.⁴⁸

Carder might have been plagued by highwaymen, but he was not above causing trouble on the roads himself. While out on a delivery in July 1797, Carder's draymen refused to give way to a passing chaise, although there was 'abundant room to have done so'. The chaise swerved, overturned and broke into pieces, much to the consternation of its passenger, the Reverend Leith of South Ockendon. Carder was summoned to the Essex Assizes at Chelmsford to account for his staff, and ordered to pay damages to the irate clergyman. It seems that draymen had a reputation for such behaviour, with wreckless driving being described as 'a very reprehensible custom of these Knights of the Cask'.⁴⁹ Their life was not an easy one, however; brewery labourers were often seconded from agricultural work, and in the summer draymen might set off on their rounds in the evening after a full day in the fields. A contemporary drayman in Norfolk is estimated to have travelled 555 miles in a month on deliveries.⁵⁰ Neither was it unknown for draymen to 'refresh' themselves at each pub they stopped at, and with multiple deliveries to make in a round, they might well be in the mood for making mischief on the way home!

Where was Carder's brewery?

Edward Ind's brewery was established where the River Rom flows under the High Street, ensuring a plentiful and easily accessible supply of water for brewing. The Star's location to the west of the Rom on the south side of the High Street perhaps helped to propagate the view that brewing started there. However, we now know that brewing did not begin at the Star, and that Carder's brewery had been established at least 30 years before this pub was founded. But where exactly was it located? There are no sufficiently detailed maps of Romford dating from Carder's time, but clues may be found in other sources.

On 4 October 1785, Carder was presented at the Quarter Sessions for erecting 'a slank⁵¹ or dam' across the River Rom which prevented people from watering their cattle and restricted the flow of the common drains emptying into the river.⁵² This dam was described as extending from Carder's property to an adjoining property *across the Rom* that he also owned. We therefore discover that Carder owned the land on both banks of the river, although it does not specify upon which side of the road. Nevertheless, we know that Ind's brewery was established in this exact spot on the south side, and if Ind's brewery was indeed the successor of Carder's, it would make sense if they were on the same site. If Carder's brewery was on one of these plots of land to the south, was this dam therefore an attempt to divert water from the river for brewing, or turn a waterwheel as a power source? The case does not appear in the court records again, so we can only assume that Carder was obliged to remove his construction. Nevertheless, this reference provides compelling evidence to suggest that Ind's brewery developed out of Carder's on the same site.

Another small snippet seems to support this theory. Just over a century later, Alfred Barnard was on a tour of Romford Brewery gathering information for his forthcoming book (see note 2). After visiting the new engine house, labelled on this 1873 map (fig. 3), he passed down 'a stone passage, built over the River Rom'.⁵³ This passage is marked by a dotted line on an earlier map of the Brewery dating from 1853 (fig. 4), which also shows the course of the River Rom under the building. If we compare the features marked on the two maps, we can see that the passage leads straight from the new engine house in the south to



Figure 3 (left) 1873 Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Romford, showing the location of the new engine house. Figure 4 (right). 1853 Gotto map of Romford, with the stone passage and course of the River Rom marked by dotted lines. Sources. Havering Libraries - Local Studies.

the High Street end of the building. At the end of the passage, Barnard

came to the old engine rooms, one of which was formerly used as a horse-wheel house, then the only power in the brewery; later it contained an engine with a copper boiler; this was replaced in the year 1846 by a sixteen horse-power beam engine, now out of date and left there ... through the glazed partition we obtained a view of the ancient tun room of the Star Brewery days, still used for the same purpose and containing ten vats ...⁵⁴

As this 'ancient tun room' could be viewed through a glazed partition in the old engine rooms, it must have been located in the same part of the Brewery building - the northern end fronting the High Street. The small extension on the eastern side of the Rom, shown in Figure 4, was not built until c1851, and we can see from Figure 2 that there was just an open yard here in 1849. This means that the old engine room containing the 1846 beam engine, along with the 'ancient tun room of the Star Brewery days' must have been on the western side of the Rom, at the northern end of the large building. We now know that the original brewery did not develop from the Star, but this appellation nevertheless suggests that the tun room predates Edward Ind. Although we cannot be sure of its age, the 'ancient' tun

room is located directly beside the River Rom, where we know Carder owned property. Was Barnard therefore looking at the remains of Carder's brewery?

Carder and Ind

When Edward Carder made his will on 2 November 1801, he does not describe himself as retired, so we can only assume that he was still working as a brewer.⁵⁵ This date is two years after Edward Ind is traditionally said to have established his brewery, but still four years before the first contemporary record of him as a brewer of Romford (see note 21). Neither Ind nor Carder are listed in Holden's directory for 1799, however no Romford traders are included, so this is certainly not conclusive evidence.⁵⁶ There appears to be no records of Carder's brewery being sold, either by auction or private contract, nor of Ind's brewery being established. Does this mean that Ind's brewery was not actually founded in 1799? Not necessarily. The lack of evidence is frustrating and makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions on this matter. We cannot be sure that Ind's brewery was established in 1799, but likewise we cannot be sure that it wasn't.

Perhaps we have to consider another possibility - that Carder did sell the business to Ind in 1799, but remained involved with it afterwards. Ind was, after all, just 20 years old at the time, and Carder's experience would have been of great benefit to the young man starting out in his career. Carder does not give any specific details about his property in his will, or mention a brewery, which suggests that there was no formal partnership between him and Ind. The dearth of records prevent us knowing exactly what, if any, arrangement existed between the two men, but it is possible that Carder looked upon the young Ind as his heir, as he had no surviving children of his own, so stayed on to help him in the early years.

If any kind of partnership did exist between Carder and Ind, it did not last long. Carder died on 4 January 1802, 29 years after taking over his father's brewery. He was buried in his family vault in St. Edward's Churchyard, Romford, near the south-east buttress of the tower. His gravestone is either lost or illegible now, but fortunately local artist A.B. Bamford recorded its location and inscription while it was still visible in the late 19th century:

Also the Body of
Mr Edward Thomas Carder
who departed this life
the 4th day of January 1802 aged 53[sic] years
He lived Respected and Died Lamented

Also buried in the family vault were Carder's father, Thomas (d. 1773), siblings Charles (d. 1765) and Elizabeth (d. 1771), wife, Penelope (d. 1823) and a Sarah Carder (d. 1793) who is recorded as a granddaughter of Thomas.⁵⁷ The baptism record for Sarah does not seem to have survived, but she was almost certainly Edward and Penelope's daughter.

Following her husband's death, Penelope Carder married one Richard Newton and returned to her home parish of Great Warley. Newton died five years later after what was clearly an unsuccessful marriage - he bequeathed all his property to his relatives, leaving his wife just one shilling and, rather interestingly, 'exhort[ing] her to repentance for her numerous sins'.⁵⁸ Despite being disinherited by her second husband, Penelope prospered; a land survey of 1812 records that she owned over 1¼ acres in Hornchurch including, interestingly, the Harrow public house.⁵⁹ Undoubtedly wary of being disinherited again, Penelope took steps to safeguard her assets in future, entering into a settlement with her third husband Samuel Hardman - a soldier whom she married in 1815⁶⁰ - which allowed her to retain control of her property after marriage. At the time of her death in 1823 she held several estates in Romford, Collier Row, Hornchurch and Great Warley as well as £5,000 in stocks, which she was able to dispose of as she wished. Penelope's final wish however, was to be reunited with her first husband, and she was accordingly buried in the Carder family vault at Romford.⁶¹

What of the Star?

So much that we thought we knew about the Star has now been disproved, that it would be appropriate to finish this article with a brief summary of the actual documented history of this pub.

The licensees of the Star until 1832, as recorded in the Petty Sessions registers were:

1808	John Morphew (or Morphey)
1810	Anthony Tyler
1820	Thomas Hammond
1823	Samuel Lunner
1824	John Amery
1825	Frederick Belsey
1831	George Guillen

Frederick Belsey did not have the most promising start to his innkeeping career. He was granted his license at the Petty Sessions on 6 September 1825, in time for the licensing year to begin on 10 October. Yet on 12 October, just two days after his license came into effect, Belsey was hauled before the same magistrates and reprimanded for 'permitting gaming with cards and keeping a disorderly house'. Despite this transgression he was allowed to keep his license and remained the landlord of the Star for six years. George Guillen replaced him in 1831, but Belsey relocated to the Sun in London Road.⁶² Belsey was not the only bad landlord, however, as the Star was 'presented as a nuisance' at the Havering Court Leet in 1836, due to its 'present mismanagement'. This must have been an embarrassment to Edward Ind, who was sitting on the bench as Deputy Steward.⁶³

An unusual incident occurred at the Star one day in 1837, as the Chelmsford Chronicle reports:

On Saturday evening a hawking fisherman, well-known in Romford as "Suffolk Jemmy", nearly forfeited his life by an act of folly, committed when in a state of intoxication. A man was exhibiting snakes and adders at the Star Tap, in that town, when a question arose as to whether one of these reptiles was an adder, and knowing that an adder would attack anything red, the fisherman put out his tongue to decide the dispute. The adder instantly bit him under the tongue. The poor fellow has since been in a dreadful state: his body was amazingly swollen, his tongue protruded from his mouth, and the medicine administered to him was obliged to be forced down his throat with the syringe. Through the skill and indefatigable exertions of Mr. Charles Butler, surgeon, hopes are now entertained of his recovery.⁶⁴

In 1839, the landlord was Thomas Read,⁶⁵ and by 1841 it was George Sears.⁶⁶ The 1841 Census also gives us some indication of the size of the 'Star Tap', as it was then known. It seems to have been a fairly large property - as well as Sears, his wife and three daughters, it was also home to ten servants and lodgers. By 1851,

the landlord was William Suckling, who also worked as a bricklayer.⁶⁷ The last reference to the Star Tap is in the Romford Poor Rate Book for January 1851.⁶⁸ By 30 March 1851, when that year's census was taken, Suckling is living in a residential house further down the High Street, working only as a bricklayer, and the Star is not recorded.⁶⁹

A newspaper article from October 1851 reveals that the Star and the four other Ind Coope properties next to it had been demolished to allow for the extension of the Brewery premises along the High Street, the work of the company's architect Charles Dyson (see fig. 5). Ind Coope had built a replacement public house (the new Star) by Romford railway station on the understanding that they could simply transfer the license from the old one. However, the landlord of the Rising Sun, another pub near the station, objected to this potential competitor, and the magistrates refused the license. Ind Coope took the case to the Appeal Court at the Essex Quarter Sessions, where they explained that they

had pulled down the old house and erected property there at a cost of £5,000 or £6,000, making a great improvement ... Mr. Dyson produced a plan of the premises, and proved the pulling down of the old Star, and enlarging the brewery ...⁷⁰

The appeal was dismissed, however the license must have come through eventually as the new Star was

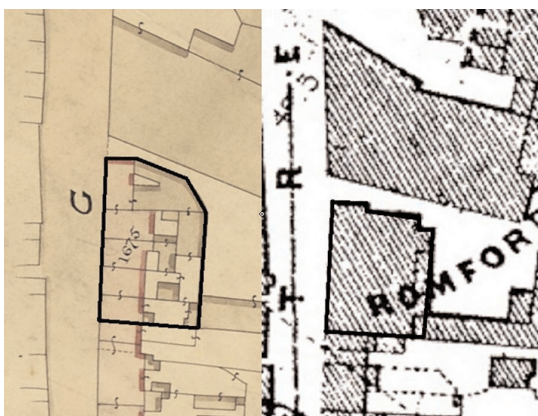


Figure 5. Comparison between 1849 (left) and 1853 (right) maps of the High Street showing the new Brewery extension in place of the five properties. Source. Havering Libraries - Local Studies.



Figure 6. Detail from an 1867 engraving of the northern view from the Romford railway embankment, showing the new Star (centre) and Brewery (background, left). Source. Havering Libraries - Local Studies.

operational by 1855, with one James Edward Wisedell installed as landlord.⁷¹ An unnamed public house on the site of the new Star is marked on a map of 1853, although it is not clear if it was operational at this time.⁷² Several images of the new Star exist, including this 1867 lithograph (fig. 6) which also shows the Brewery in the background. As traffic through Romford Station increased, the Star developed into a busy hotel with its own fleet of horse-drawn, and later motorised, taxicabs. It was refurbished in the 1930s and closed sometime afterwards.

Conclusion

The story of the Star Inn has often been relegated to a footnote in the much longer history of Romford Brewery. However, we now know that this story is a foundation myth, and that Romford Brewery did not evolve from the Star. We also know that the Carder family operated a wholesale brewery in Romford in the three decades before Edward Ind arrived, and there is compelling evidence to suggest that it was located on the same site where Ind later built his brewery. Furthermore, the 'Mr Cardon' of the Star story is almost certainly a corruption of Carder. The scarcity of the surviving evidence, however, prevents us from offering any definitive conclusions on how the Brewery was established. We cannot be certain that Carder's brewery was indeed the predecessor of Ind's, but this seems to

be the most likely alternative explanation based on the little evidence that has come to light. There are still many questions to be answered though, and it is hoped that future research may be able to throw more light on this significant aspect of Romford's history.

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