

The Pubs

It is a strange phenomenon that in Talke all the pubs seem to come in twos. Not only is there the Swan and Queen's Head, but the King William used to have the Workman's Inn next to it, which was previously called the Miners Arms. Although long gone, the Spout House and the Stumps used to be next to each other. Why would this be the case, were they for different classes?

Most of the pubs were built to give refreshment to the huge amount of passing traffic on the Great North Road. The village was still quite small and centered around the church and central farms. The Golden Lyon was probably the first, right next to the chapel, and was owned in 1583 by the Shaw family. It later changed its

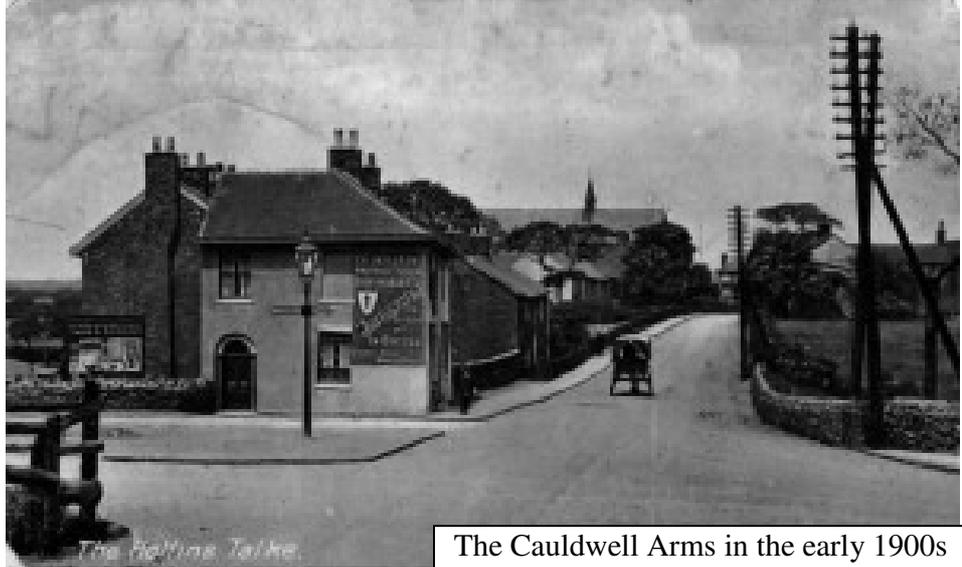


The Swan Hotel after the farm buildings were destroyed but before the older living quarters were knocked down

name to the Plume of Feathers. It was also an Inn offering a few rooms of accommodation. The newer Swan Pub later replaced the old one (see picture), although this was before the 18th century (1700s). Mine investigations were publicly held here. It too was an Inn and had stabling for horses behind it, and became almost a tourist attraction after the Coalpit hill explosion.

Next door was the Old Queen's head, another very old pub but I'm not quite sure yet when it was built.

Across the road was the Red Lyon Inn, built possibly in 1690, just behind where the market cross is. This was the pub where the troops of Bonnie Prince Charlie made his raucous yet brief stay at Talke.



The Cauldwell Arms in the early 1900s

Very little is known about the Virgins, owned by Robert Bourne

in 1633, but it was probably where there are now fields between St. Martins road and red street. Even more mysterious is the Bull's head, mentioned in a 1795 record of Rigby, Rowley and Cooper, solicitors of Newcastle.

There was also the Crown Inn just across the border of Red Street that Crown Bank was named after.

The King William was probably added during the reign of William IV, and was built because of Talke's vast expansion in the 1830s thanks to the mines.

Our most recent pub is the Skylark built in 1957, a new location for the old workman's inn. Its nickname in the 1950s used to be the Rock because of the Rock'n'Roll music played there, and it has also been called Noah's ark. Where there are now shutters, there used to be stained glass showing miners lamps and picks.

Down the hill is the Caldwell Tavern, originally the Cauldwell Arms and named after the local squires the Caldwell family, who lived at the mansion house in Lindley wood. It was part of the Linley Wood estate up until 1919 when it was sold by Maj Gen Frederick Crofton Heath-Caldwell to Mr W Wainwright together with Pear Tree Farm for a total sum a little over £2,650. Mr Wainwright also owned a café nest door, nicknamed Wainwright's doss house. The pub was rebuilt in a mock Tudor style in 1939. It has had many other names such as the White

Drunken Barnaby and Staffordshire

Drunken Barnaby Harrington's epic bar crawl through Staffordshire was recorded in witty verses of both Latin and English. These were hard drinking times and the 'one aim and object of his travels was to get to that tavern where the best liquor was obtainable'

*"Thence to Tauk-a-Hill resort I,
An hill steepy, slippery, durty,
(Black) Smith with me being well acquainted
Drank with me till brains were tainted"*

Line, and in the 1980s it was painted pink and called the Oasis to try and attract a younger clientele.

Talke's pubs reached further fame in the 1920s when the national story broke in the Sunday Express of :

'The perfect murder at the village pub'

The victim was the 56 year old landlord of the Swan pub and hotel. He was in bed with his wife Mary, on a cold night in December 1921. Mary felt something brush her hand but she thought it was a mouse-houses were a lot less hygienic back then. Then she heard her husband call out who's there. Then two shots rang out. The first hit the wall, but the other hit Walton between the eyes, killing him instantly. Mrs. Hulse, who was unhurt, then heard

someone fleeing down the stairs and closing the door. Meanwhile, the couple's two children summoned the police.

The police knew that murder was the person's only intention, as the cash box on the bar top containing £52 had not been snatched. They initially accused a man name Linney, but he was found not guilty, although many in the village had their own theories on who 'dunnit.'

Walter was buried with his family in St. Martin's church yard.

Many of our pubs have been lost along with many more beershops-private houses that opened after an 1840s Beer shop act, which could now for a much cheaper license sell beer that they brewed themselves which drinkers could them to take away, a cross between a pub and an off license. One of these was the Gleaner's Arms on what is now the A34, which had its own skittle alley. It had been disused since the 1930s and was knocked down in 1970s urban renewal. An unnamed beer house sat on the corner of Arbour road and St. Martins.

There was also the Colliers Arms on the corner of Coalpit hill, perhaps so-called as the workers of Bunkers Hill were paid here. It also had a skittle alley, and despite its sawdust floors it began offering lodgings in the 1960s. It was later known as 'Wainwright's doss house' and in the 1930s was owned by the same family as the Caldwell Arms. It later became Dean's Fish and Chip shop- does anyone know when this closed? Opposite this, where there has been a petrol station and now a JCB site, there was a café known as Pace's.

