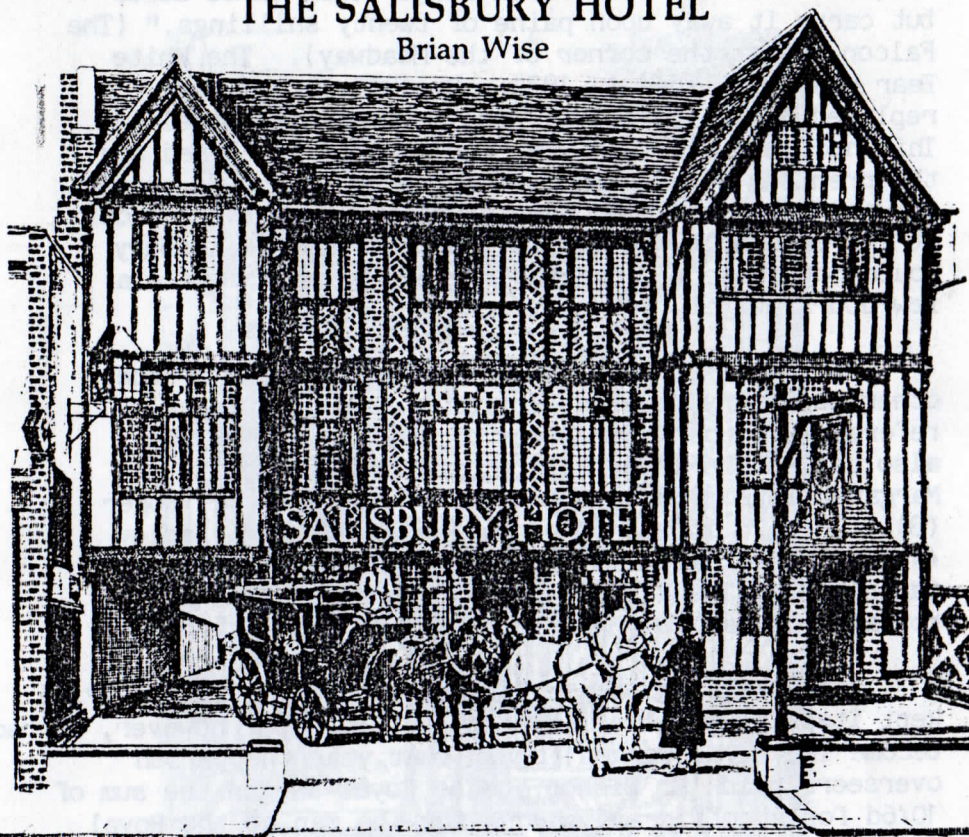


## THE SALISBURY HOTEL

Brian Wise



The Salisbury Hotel was demolished this year (1988) and now is an appropriate time to record its long history, and that of previous inns on the High Street site.

It should be explained that two Salisbury signs stood, in rivalry, close to one another. Until recent times the premises of Boot's the Chemist were known as Boundary House and marked the division between the parishes of Chipping Barnet and Hadley. Here stood an inn called The White Bear acquired in 1576 by Alderman William Kimpton (1). The Boundary House appears in the Manor Court Rolls when, in 1613 it was enacted "That no man shall laie any dong in the street

from The Beare to The Falcon longer than three daies but carry it away upon paine of twenty shillings." (The Falcon was at the corner of the Meadway). The White Bear was demolished in 1831. By 1833 it had been replaced by The Salisbury Arms & Commercial Hotel (1). This had only a brief life, for in 1865 it closed and the premises were taken over by Henry Holman, a chemist (2) and have continued ever since as a chemist's shop. It is reasonable to assume that the "new" Salisbury could not compete with its long established rival, a few doors away.

The first evidence of an inn on the site of the other Salisbury, the subject of this paper, is a reference in the Manor Rolls of 1557 when The Taber, also called The Tabor & Pipe, was transferred to Margaret Taylor, upon the death of her husband, Roger (3). In 1628 it was owned by Thomas Biggs of Hadley (4). In 1692 Richard Flint paid a rent of one farthing for The Tabor & Pipe, with an adjoining cottage and barn.

Petty session transcripts show that The Tabor & Pipe kept its sign until at least 1753. By 1769, however, it had become The Royal Waggon for in that year the parish overseers paid 'Mr Bishop at The Royal Waggon the sum of 10/6d for a coffin and shroud for the man at the Royal Waggon and 3/6d to Jane Harding for nursing him' (5). The man was evidently a nameless pauper chargeable to the parish.

When the Napoleonic Wars began in 1793, the War Office made a survey of billeting facilities for men and horses. This measure was unpopular with local innkeepers and Issac Newton, who kept The Royal Waggon, sent a protest to the War Office. He complained that he had lost 8 pence a day for 183 days for each military horse he had stabled; as had the other 27 Barnet innkeepers. The War Office were later more generous, having come to the extraordinary conclusion that "It is wrong to expose troops to the lowest dregs of society..." (6). The inference is unclear but reflects Wellington's ideas.



THE OLD SALISBURY

The Royal Waggon is listed in Holden's Commercial and Professional Directory for 1808. In 1821 James Pepper, the licensee, competing for trade against The Red Lion and The Green Man, offered Lord Salisbury a post hire service at threepence a mile less than the going rate. His lordship, described as "a frugal man", was pleased to accept and presumably gave his approval to Pepper's change of sign to The Salisbury Arms. Pepper's house became known as The Old Salisbury (7) to distinguish it from its upstart neighbour. "Nearly all the London coaches and omnibuses call" at The Salisbury according to Pigot's Directory of 1839; the first arrived at 5am from Glasgow. The 1861 census showed that The Salisbury was a well-known stop for coaches; the population of Chipping Barnet was then 4095 and lived in 800 dwellings.

A number of tenants succeeded the enterprising Pepper, among them one with the formidable name of Noah Rippingill, who, according to the local press, "conducts the house in its proper character as a well appointed commercial inn. There seems to be an extensive and pleasant garden to the rear, which is very attractive to summer visitors" (8). Noah's father, John Rippengill, paid £57.15.0 highway rate in 1847; a substantial assessment for the time (9).

An exclusive club was founded at The Salisbury in 1780: The Amicable Society, with a membership limited to a few professional and tradesmen in the parish. This semi-secret society (see Bulletin No.20, The Red Lion) seems to have had few, if any, objectives other than that of discreet conviviality. After some 120 years of eating and drinking at The Salisbury the Amicable Society transferred its patronage to The Red Lion in 1901.

The Salisbury's catering became in great demand when towards the end of the century the cycling craze hit the town. Encouraged by the hosts, George and Minnie Toone, "The Old Sal." as it was affectionately known by the wheelers, became a favourite meeting place for cyclists. The Cyclist's Touring Club Guide for 1902 quoted breakfast or tea at 1/6d to 2/3d per head, lunch or supper for 2/0d and dinner for 2/6d. An observer standing by Barnet Church one Sunday in 1898, counted 1000 cyclists pedalling

northwards, before giving up counting (10). George Toone was succeeded by his son Percy George, who died in 1943, leaving an estate of £47,093 (11); having long retired from The Salisbury.

The original Barnet Football Club was founded at The Salisbury in 1888, where it had its headquarters. More convenient dressing rooms were taken at The Black Horse in Wood Street and games were played on a field by Queen's Road (12).

By 1922 plans were afoot to rebuild and extend The Salisbury. It was offered for sale at The London Auction Mart in Queen Victoria Street on 5th April, 1922. The sale notice gives a detailed description. On the first floor, beneath the attic, there were five bedchambers, a sitting room, dressing room, a large club room etc. The ground floor included two private sitting rooms, spacious billiard saloon, servery, lounge, public coffee and dining room, kitchens and offices. At the rear of the building there were stables, a harness room and a pleasure garden, well removed, one supposes, from the manure pit. A large auction and club room could be used, when required, as a concert hall. The lease was for 50 years at a rent of £100 per annum.

The property was purchased by the Regent Catering Company Limited. There was some delay before rebuilding commenced. The Barnet Press of 10th March, 1928 reported that the local magistrates had approved the venture and that work was due to start on 19th March. Meanwhile the Regent Catering Company had issued an attractive illustrated booklet about The Salisbury and the delights of its environs (13). A frontispiece shows the inn as it stood then, flush with the pavement of the High Street, pierced by an archway leading through to the stables at the rear. It had elegant shuttered windows. Meals were served at all hours and a double bedroom cost 10/-, with en pension terms of 15/- per day. There was no charge for electricity but a hot bath cost 1/6d; a cold one could be suffered for 1/-. After a bath fires were from 2/6d extra. Special catering was offered for masonic banquets, dances and private parties, motoring and golfing parties.

By 1930, a new Salisbury had been built, set well back from the road, in a style which offended many Barnetonians. There for was provided for the motor car. There was one long bar and more snug retreats. Upstairs there was dining accommodation with provision for private occasions, weddings, reception club meetings and such like. A branch of the Rotary movement, representing Chipping and East Barnet was founded shortly after the rebuilding and for many years Rotarians lunched weekly at The Salisbury. During the last war the Salby was a popular rendez-vous for servicemen on leave. The Salisbury was under the efficient management of Art Fisher, who retired in 1968 after more than thirty years' vice. Mr Fisher often had difficulty to clear the crowded bar during the war; but not on one occasion when a fight broke out between a large Bull Terrier and a Kerry Blue. This was ultimately ended by the leather-aproned cellarmanger hitting both animals with the mallet of his trade. The war has allowed a personal reminiscence to intrude, for is with a sense of regret, doubtless shared by others, that a historic landmark, so long associated with community life of Barnet has now disappeared without trace.

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Sources:

- 1) Wm. Mc B. Marcham. Notes on Hadley Parish. Hyde Library.
- 2) Middlesex Land Registry. PRO.
- 3) Manor Court Rolls of East Barnet and Chipping Barnet. Barnet Museum.
- 4) Guildhall MS. 760.
- 5) Chipping Barnet Overseer's Accounts. Barnet Museum.
- 6) Herts. County Mag. Spring 1957.
- 7) Chas. G. Harper. The Great North Road. 1901.
- 8) The Barnet Gazette. 27 Feb. 1850.
- 9) Chipping Barnet Rate Book. Barnet Museum.
- 10) F. Brittain. Notes on the History of Potters Bar & South Mimms.
- 11) Barnet Press. 14 Aug. 1943.
- 12) Whiddun. Finchley Football Club. 1975.
- 13) Family papers held by the writer.

Additional. Minute book of The Amicable Society. Barnet Museum.