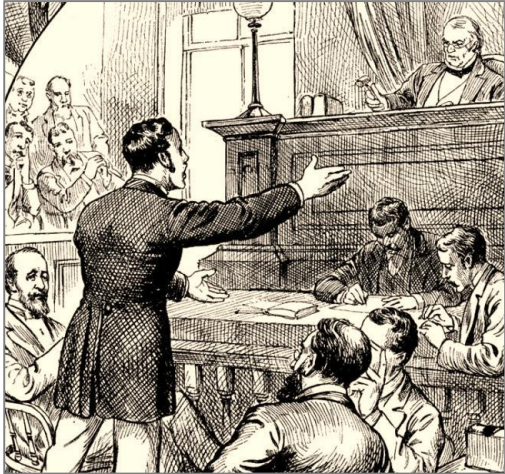


Applications for Hotel Licences 1900



At the annual brewster session of the Pewsey Petty Sessional Division on Saturday considerable interest was attached to the proceedings in consequence of two applications for hotel licences for Ludgershall, the centre of the new military camps on Salisbury Plain.

The first application was by Mr Henry Norris Berry, maltster, of Ludgershall (a member of the Wilts County Council), and the second by Mr Sidney Bell, of Andover.

Mr Berry conducted his own application. Mr Bell was represented by Mr W Powning, solicitor, of Salisbury.

The War Office opposed the licences and was represented by Mr A Llewellyn Davies, barrister-at-law, instructed by the Treasury solicitors. Mr H Bevis, solicitor, of Wootton Bassett, also opposed, on behalf of Messrs Strong and Co., owners of the Prince of Wales Inn, Ludgershall. Mr E Godding, solicitor, of Andover, opposed on behalf of Mr T W Hussey, brewer, of Netheravon, and on behalf of the Crown Inn, Ludgershall.

Mr Berry said he wished to convert his own house into a large hotel, having been urged to do so by many persons in consequence of the great and pressing want of additional hotel accommodation at Ludgershall. Mr Berry said the War Office brought thousands of soldiers on to the Plain, and expected to find everything at a moment's notice, but some people had to go as far as 20 miles before they could get a place to creep into. He had seen people walking the village begging the publicans to take them in, but all to no purpose because they have not got sufficient accommodation. Sometimes there were as many as from 3,000 to 5,000 troops on the streets of the village, and pedestrians could not pass down the street without edging their way through a tremendous crowd. It was a difficult matter for the villagers to get their supper beer, and often they had to go without. He presented a largely signed memorial in favour of his application. Many of the officers' wives came to the camp, but in consequence of there being no hotel accommodation, they had to return to London.

Mr Bell stated that he proposed to erect a hotel at a cost of about £2,000. He had four cottages erected near the proposed site and intended to erect 30 more there. He intended his hotel accommodation principally for the contractors and others who went to and from the camp.

Mr J B Warr, a local farmer, gave evidence as to the necessity for further hotel accommodation.

Col R M Barklie, who represented the Adjutant-General, strongly opposed the licences being granted. There were at present three spirit licences in the village, and they did not wish for any more. It was in the interests of the discipline of the soldiers, who had their own canteens and messes, and three licensed houses were quite sufficient for the civilians in Ludgershall. Any increase would be an additional temptation to soldiers to drink in the village, and they wished to avoid this, at least for the present.

The soldiers, both regulars and volunteers, had excellent canteens. What the War Office really wanted was to prevent Ludgershall becoming what Aldershot was a few years after the camp was established there. Col Barklie added, in reply to a question as to whether the War Office had any scheme in view for the erection of a hotel for the accommodation of officers and officers' wives, that the matter had been mooted; they hoped to have an hotel at Tedworth some day. That would be more convenient than one at Ludgershall.

The Colonel admitted, in cross-examination, that the military occupation had caused a great influx of civilians, for whom there had been no extra accommodation provided. Anyone going to the camp could not be accommodated by the military.

Mr George Conway, landlord of the Crown Inn, denied that he had had to refuse accommodation because his house was so full. There had been no apparent increase of the population this year, and there was a diminution in the number of excursionists visiting the place. These latter only numbered 40, as against 60 last year, and it had only been necessary to open the licensed houses on three Sundays. The bench decided to refuse both the applications.

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