

THE BENETT ARMS

A Newspaper Timeline



1915



2015

Compared to the picturesque architecture of the inns in neighbouring East Knoyle and Tisbury, the Benett Arms has little to commend it. Sitting on the edge of Church Green beside the village pond, the origins of this quirky three storey listed building are generally acknowledged to lie in the 17th century.

The earliest mention of an Inn in Semley found so far is in the Quarter Sessions Great Roll Trinity 1716 "One Bartlett, at the sign of the Hatt and Feather in Stock Lane, parish of Semley, was presented for keeping a disorderly house". Over 150 years later in 1849, a licence was granted by Hindon Petty Sessions to Mr Norton, a plumber, for an Inn in Semley.

The name of the Inn is revealed in Kelly's Directory 1855 - it's the New Inn and William Norton is still the landlord. Archival evidence shows a building west of the old crossroads (near Church Farm) was rebuilt in the mid 1800's - this was, without doubt, the New Inn. By the time of the 1861 Census, the pub had been renamed the Benett Arms.

The Benett has always been at the heart of the community. It was a regular meeting point for the South and West Wilts Hounds through the 1800's and into the 20th century, and hosted the village Slate Club from its inception in 1893 through to 1928.

1849 At Hindon Petty Sessions, Mr Chitty applied, on behalf of Mr Norton, of Hindon, plumber, for a licence to a house at Semley. Granted.
Salisbury and Winchester Journal 08 September 1849

1851

<i>Inn</i>	<i>William Norton</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Innkeeper</i>
	<i>Martha do</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>36</i>	
	<i>Henry do</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>"</i>	
	<i>Sarah do</i>	<i>Daugh</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>7m</i>	

Semley Census 1851

1867 An inquest was held by Mr R M Wilson at the Tisbury Union Workhouse on the 7th instant, on the body of Samuel Furnell, aged 55 years, a marine store dealer at Tisbury, who was found drowned in the river Nadder, near Pty House Park.

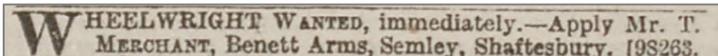
Mr Harding, of Semley, innkeeper, stated that deceased was at his house on Tuesday till three o'clock and he then went away, but returned again about half past four and stayed till after seven, when he left, driving his own horse and cart. The next morning, the horse and cart were found in the water at Bulridge, about a mile from Mr Harding's residence, the horse being dead and, on dragging the water, the body of the deceased was found. He was quite dead and had apparently been in the water several hours. It was a dark and stormy night, and the deceased must have turned off the road thinking he had come to the bridge, when in fact he was a short distance from it, as was evident by the tracks of the wheels. Verdict: Accidental Death
Salisbury & Winchester Journal 09 February 1867

1869 Local Bankrupt. There was a first sitting for proof of debts and choice of assignees in the case of John Thomas Harding, late of Semley, Wilts, licensed victualler. His debts amount to between £600 and £700, and assignees having been chosen, the 26th of July was fixed for the examination and order of discharge sitting.
Hampshire Advertiser June 26 1869

1873 Hindon Petty Sessions. The license of the Benett Arms Inn, Semley, kept by Mr Robert William White, was transferred to his mother, Mrs Mary White.
Western Gazette 21 November 1873

1880 On Saturday evening, Mr Charles Anderson, Superintendent of Lodges, attended at the Benett Arms Inn, to open a branch lodge in connection with the Independent Mutual Brethren Friendly Society. After a few introductory remarks, the business was proceeded with and 25 members were enrolled. Mr G P Broadway was appointed secretary and Mr H T Marchant treasurer.
Western Gazette 14 May 1880

1882 Hindon Petty Sessions. Mr Marchant, Benett Arms, Semley, granted one hour's extension of time for the Whitsuntide club festivities. Western Gazette 19 May 1882

1883  Western Gazette 01 June 1883

1884 Hindon Petty Sessions. Thomas Ovens, of East Knoyle, and William Arnold, of Shaftesbury, were charged with fighting near the Benett Arms Inn, Semley, on club day, the 4th inst. PS Evans proved the case and spoke of the great disturbance caused. Defendants were bound over to keep the peach for three months, and to pay costs.
Western Gazette 20 June 1884

1887 Hindon Petty Sessions. The license of the Benett Arms was transferred from Thos Marchant to John Clements
Western Gazette March 04 1887

Local Bankrupt. The first meeting of the creditors of Henry Thomas Marchant, of the Benett Arms, Semley, was held on Tuesday afternoon, at the Official Receiver's Office, Salisbury unsecured liabilities amounting to £232 9s 3d which seem to have come about as much through his failing wheelwright's business as being landlord of the Benett Arms ... debtor stated he was an innkeeper, carpenter and wheelwright, and commenced business at Semley about 1878. (part article only)
Western Gazette 25 March 1887

1891 Tisbury Petty Sessions. Extension granted to Mr John Clements, of the Benett Arms, Semley, for a Foresters' supper and a supper to bell ringers on the 15th January.
Western Gazette 16 January 1891

Bell Ringers Supper
The annual supper of the bell ringers was held at the Benett Arms Hotel on Monday. The ringers met in the school-room at 6.30pm, and, after settling accounts for the past year, repaired to the Club-room at the inn, where a substantial supper was provided by Mr Clements.
Western Gazette January 23 1891

Tisbury Petty Sessions. The Bench granted an extension of one hour to Mr John Clements, Benett Arms, Semley, for a club festival on May 19th.
Western Gazette 15 May 1891

The Semley Sick Benefit Society held their annual feast on Wednesday. After meeting at the Benett Arms, they marched to church, headed by the Wardour Band, where the Rev L K Hilton preached an appropriate sermon. Afterwards they repaired to a marquee near the Benett Arms where a good dinner had been provided by Host Clements. Dinner over, all marched to Broad Oak, the lawn being thrown open for dancing.
Western Gazette 22 May 1891

1895 Tisbury Petty Sessions. Mr Scammell of the Benett Arms Inn, Semley, applied for an occasional license to sell in a tent on the occasion of a fete there on 14th August, and also for an extension from 10 to 11 pm on the same day.
Western Gazette 19 July 1895

The members of the Benett Arms Slate Club held their annual fete on Wednesday, August 14th. The members met at the Benett Arms at 11am and afterwards attended service, conducted by the Rector, Rev L K Hilton. After the service the members marched to the Rectory where music was discoursed by the Gillingham Town Band. A move was then made to the field where dinner was provided by Host Scammell. (part article only)
Western Gazette August 23 1895

1896 Tisbury Petty Sessions . The Bench transferred absolutely the license of the Benett Arms Inn, Semley, from James Scammell to James King.
Western Gazette January 17 1896

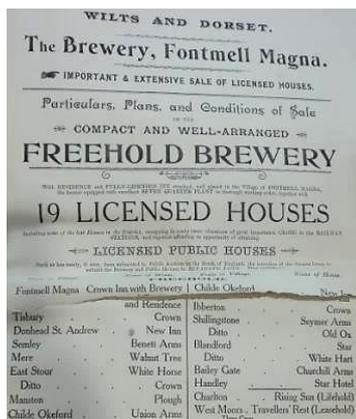
1896 Tisbury Petty Sessions. One hour's extension on time on occasion of the club festival was granted to Mr James King, Benett Arms, Semley, for 27th May.
Western Gazette 15 May 1896

The Benett Arms Slate Club, established in 1893, held its annual fete on Wednesday in beautiful weather. Members assembled at their headquarters at 11 o'clock and, forming into procession, marched, headed by the Gillingham Town Band, to the Rectory Here in a marquee, dinner, well purveyed by Mr King, of the Benett Arms, was enjoyed, the company numbering upwards of 60. (part article only). Western Gazette July 17 1896

1897 The Old Friendly Society and the Semley Slate Club held a combined festival on Wednesday ... The members met at the Benett Arms Hotel at half past 10 in the morningThe weather improving a little in the evening, dancing was indulged in on the Common and was maintained until 10 o'clock when the proceedings ended. (part article only)
Western Gazette June 11 1897

- 1898 Semley Friendly Society and the Benett Arms Slate Club held their annual feast on the Green at Semley ... dinner was partaken of in front of the Benett Arms, the Rector presiding. The bells rang at intervals during the day. (part article only)
Western Gazette June 03 1898
- 1899 The members of the Club held their annual feast on Whit Wednesday. At one pm a dinner was provided beneath a tent erected on the Green. The bells rang at intervals during the day. (part article only)
Western Gazette May 26 1899
- 1901 Slate Club Feast. The members of the Benett Arms Slate Club held their annual feast on Wednesday. The members, headed by the Gillingham Town Band, escorted the Rector to the church, where a sermon was preached. Dinner was provided in a tent near the Benett Arms Inn, the Rev L K Hilton presiding. (part article only)
Western Gazette May 31 1901

1904



In December 1904 Fontmell Brewery sold to Gibbs Mew. The sale brochure describes the Benett Arms:

“Occupying an important and commanding position on the High Road, 1 mile from Semley Station and 4½ from Tisbury with southern frontage to the Church Green, Semley Common, and now and for many years in the occupation of Mr. James King”.

There are 6 bedrooms, a front club room, serving bar and smoking room, capital sitting room and kitchen. Outside a lean-to wash house, two piggeries, a double privy, a range of stables, trap house and tiled store.

“A constant supply of excellent water is now connected by pipes to the house and premises. An annual rent of £3 is made by half-yearly payments in April and October to Mr. F. Pike, the originator and owner of the scheme, by which a much needed water supply has become available in the locality”.

Important Sale of Licensed Property

Messrs Waters & Rawlence, of Salisbury, acting under the instructions of Messrs Sibbeth Bros submitted for sale by auction on Wednesday in last week, in 21 lots, the residence, brewery premises, and licensed houses forming the Fontmell Magna Brewery. The sale resulted as follows Lot 7 consisted of the Benett Arms, Semley, with stabling, buildings, and garden. Biddings starting at £1,000, and briskly rose to £1,550 at which figure Messrs Gibbs Mew & Co became the purchasers. (part article only)

Western Gazette 16 December 1904

- 1914 The annual festival in connection with the Benett Arms Slate Club was celebrated on Wednesday, pleasant weather favouring the proceedings. The village was subsequently paraded, and the company then returned to the Benett Arms for dinner, which had been nicely laid by Mrs King.
Western Gazette Friday 05 June 1914
- 1917 Death: Frederick Wm Randolph died of wounds age 19 on 29 Sept 1917. Son of Mr Frederick Randolph of the Benett Arms Semley and Mrs Louisa Randolph
- 1923 One of the chief annual celebrations in the village of Semley is the annual Club day and the event was held on Wednesday. Unfortunately, shortly before the dinner, rain commenced and poured heavily for some time, considerably marring the success of the day. Later, however, the weather improved Mr E G Coward proposed the toast of “The Caterers” and heartily thanked Mr and Mrs Mallett for stepping into the breach when Mrs Randolph, with whom they deeply sympathised, was unable, through illness, to cater for them. Mr and Mrs Mallett had provided a really excellent meal (applause). (part article only)
Western Gazette 25 May 1923
- 1924 The annual fete of the Benett Arms Slate Club is an occasion when all the time-honoured features associated with these rural events are pleasantly observed. There is the parade of the members, the Church service, the dancing on the green, and the feast, which is perhaps the happiest gathering of the day. There is always a bountiful provision of good things. After dinner there are songs and ditties, and, of course, Steve Rogers is always there with his amusing and witty toasts, which remind one of the old folklore of the countryside, and his customary song, an old melody which always tickles the humour of his audience. Mr Gray proposed the toast of “The Caterer” and Mr Randolph suitably replied. (part article only)
Western Gazette Friday June 13, 1924
- 1925 Death: At the Benett Arms, Semley, March 3. Louisa Jane, the beloved wife of ex P.S. Randolph
Western Gazette Friday March 13 1925

The Benett Arms Slate Club was favoured with glorious weather for its Whit-Wednesday festival The toast of “The Host” was given by Mr P Bartlett and acknowledged by Mr Randolph The Ansty Band, conducted by Mr J Lever, played selections suitable to the respective toasts, and Mr Rogers contributed a song and gave a number of old fashioned toasts. A pleasant hour was spent on the Rectory lawn, and in the evening, dancing and various amusements were kept up till dusk. (part article only)

Western Gazette 05 June 1925

- 1927 In delightful weather, with the countryside freshened by welcome rains, the Bennet Arms Slate Club held its annual festival on Wednesday. The programme was restricted to half a day and the proceedings opened with the assembling of the members and supporters of the Club at dinner, which was served in a marquee erected in Mr Randolph's field. (part article only)
Western Gazette Friday 10 June 1927
- Tisbury Petty Sessions. Fred Toogood, of Semley, Army pensioner, was summoned for being drunk and disorderly at Semley on Whit Wednesday. Supt Barrett said the disorderly conduct consisted in pointing a gun at Mr Randolph and using disgraceful language ...
- Fred Randolph, licensee of the Benett Arms, states that Toogood went away from the field after a row in the refreshment tent, and returned with a gun He had refused to serve Toogood at the Benett Arms for the last two years, but the man continually came there and caused trouble. (part article only)
Western Gazette Friday 17 June 1927
- 1930 The Salisbury Branch of the Diocesan Guild of Ringers held their quarterly meeting at the Benett Arms Inn, Semley, on Saturday The company took tea at the Benett Arms Inn and later Grandsire trebles were rung in the Semley tower, the visitors being much impressed by the fine tone of the bells. (part article only)
Western Gazette 29 August 1930
- 1930 A high degree of success attended Semley's first horticultural show which was held on Saturday in a field at the rear of the Benett Arms Inn, very kindly lent by Mr J Randolph. (part article only)
Western Gazette Friday 01 August 1930
- 1931 Benett Arms Inn. John Jeffery & Son have been favoured with instructions from Mr F Randolph (who is quitting) to sell by auction, on the premises on Wednesday, 11th March 1931, at two o'clock, the live and dead farming stock comprising five head of cattle viz 2 in-calf heifers and 3 yearlings, 9 store pigs, in-farrow sow, 50 head poultry (part article only)
Western Gazette 17 February 1931
- 1932 At Tisbury Sessions yesterday Samuel Chapman, woodman, of Semley Lodge, West Tisbury, was summoned for assaulting Sydney Langford at Semley on August 18; also for refusing to quit the Benett Arms Semley and for maliciously damaging a pane of glass in the front door, the damage amounting to 10s. He pleaded guilty to all the charges.
- The facts were that at 9pm on August 18th, Chapman started a song. The landlord, Sydney Langford, objected to the singing, but Chapman persisted in it. A second remonstrance led to defendant inviting the landlord to "come outside" and he also gave Mr Langford a smack on the face. Chapman was told to leave the premises, but he refused to go out and after he had given Mr Langford another smack on the face, he was put out. The house closed at 10pm. Defendant returned after the door was closed and broke a pane of glass, apparently by means of his fist. Defendant was fined 10s in each case, ordered to pay costs, and was bound over to be of good behaviour for twelve months.
Western Gazette September 16 1932
- 1935 Tisbury Magistrates Court. Ernest Langford, the Benett Arms, Semley, fined 4s for riding a cycle without front lights.
Western Gazette 11 January 1935
- 1938 The Shaftesbury Fire Brigade was called to a fire at 1am on Monday morning, at the Benett Arms Hotel, Semley. The occupants, Mr and Mrs Langford, who were sleeping immediately over the bar, and their family, were fortunate that the fire should have been discovered by the village blacksmith who was passing the hotel. The public bar, floor, ceiling and cellar, were considerably damaged. Had the brigade not been called when they were, there was every prospect of more serious consequences. Apparently the fire started in the cellar under the public bar. The brigade did not consider it safe to leave until 5.30am owing to the heat and the house being largely constructed of wood.
Western Gazette 11 November 1938
- 1939 For Sale. 8-Strand Brass Rabbit Snares, 7/6 gross, post-paid. Langford, Benett Arms, Semley
Western Gazette 22 September 1939
- 1941 Tisbury Petty Sessions. Pt Hugo Cohn, of Fonthill Gifford, was summoned for having stolen a pedal cycle, the property of William Tom Hull, from outside the Benett Arms Semley. PC Beard said defendant told him he took the cycle to get back to camp; he intended to return the cycle but the next day he was sent on weekend leave. Accused discharged (part article only).
Western Gazette 21 November 1941
- 1949 A unanimous decision that a football club be formed to be known as the Semley United F.C. was taken at a meeting on Wednesday. Players desirous of being placed on the list should communicate with Mr Jaxon, Benett Arms Hotel.
Western Gazette 01 July 1949
- 1976 Joe Duthie became Mine Host and proved to be the longest standing of all landlords - 30 years - quite an achievement. He recalls some of the great and the good who supped an ale or two at the Benett during his time - HRH Princess Ann and her family (her children were at nearby Port Regis School), Edward Heath MP, a veritable 'pub crawler' (always accompanied by his chauffeur and bodyguard), David Coleman (BBC Sports presenter), Stirling Moss (Champion Racing Driver) and Semley's own actor/raconteur Robert Morley.



Former hosts of the Benett Arms:
L to R: Emily King (in white apron), Norman Jaxon, Sydney Langford, Archibald Nutt, Madelaine Moseley

Year	Landlord	Source
1849	William Norton	S & W Journal 08 September 1849
1855	William Norton	Kelly's Directory 1855
1861	John Harding	Semley Census 1861
1867	John Harding	Kelly's Directory 1867
1871	Robert White	Semley Census 1871
1873	Robert White	License Transfer W Gazette 21 November 1873
1873	Maria White	License Transfer W Gazette 21 November 1873
1875	Maria White	Kelly's Directory 1875
1880	Henry T Marchant	Kelly's Directory 1880
1887	Henry T Marchant	License Transfer W Gazette March 04 1887
1887	John Clements	License Transfer W Gazette March 04 1887
1891	John Clements	Semley Census 1891
1893	Charles Windsor	Semley Rate Book 1893
1895	Edward Scammell	Western Gazette August 23 1895
1896	Edward Scammell	License Transfer W Gazette January 17 1896
1896	James King	License Transfer W Gazette January 17 1896
1911	James King	Semley Census 1911
1915	Emily L King	Kelly's Directory 1915
1918-1931	Fred Randolph	
1932-1949	Sidney Langford	
1949	Norman V Jaxon	Western Gazette 01 July 1949
1952	Norman V Jaxon	Semley Electoral Register 1951
1954	Cecil Robert Jones	Semley Electoral Register 1954
1956	Reginald C Fry	Semley Electoral Register 1956
1956-1965	Archibald William Nutt	
1967	Harold Stager-Lewis	Semley Electoral Register 1967
1969	John & Jenny Hynd	Semley Electoral Register 1969
1976-2006	Joe Duthie	
2006-2011	Madelaine Mary Moseley	
2011-	Amy Lanchester	