

The Old Portland Arms, Market Street (Now Dymchurch Road).



The Old Portland Arms (or, before 1875, just The Portland Arms) was a beer house, or, more accurately, a lodging house which also had a licence to sell beer.

In 1871, the licensee was Thomas Lukehurst who lived there with his wife, two daughters and 11 lodgers. Soon afterwards he left to become a milkman, not long after a violent skirmish between two of his women lodgers. Richard Knott was the next licensee, from about 1876. He employed one of the lodgers, 'an old woman of trampish appearance' to serve the customers. Unfortunately, she stole from them as well. The woman, who called herself Lavinia Griffiths, shared a small room at the beer house with four other people.

The landlord from 1881 was Hodges Swain, who had just returned from eight years spent with his growing family in the USA and Canada, where he had worked as a labourer. He died in 1896. During his tenure, the criminality and violence continued. In 1885, one lodger stabbed another in the face. Others were found guilty of burglary or theft. Sadly, at least one, who had not told anyone his name, was found dead in his bed. Another, an ex-serviceman who had fought in the Crimean War, was found, also dead, by the canal, where he had died of exposure.

Mrs Swain carried on with the licence for a while after her husband's death, but William Thomas Gordon took it on in 1902 before moving to The Star Inn in 1903, when there had been a little difficulty there.

The next licensee was a Mr Boorman, possibly the same man who had the licence of the nearby Red Lion. By 1905, he was accommodating thirty people, who all slept in one room measuring 30 feet by 15 feet. (9 metres x 4.5 metres). Men and women were not segregated. They were described by the press and courts as 'tramps', but they were for the most part not vagrants who

existed by begging, but unskilled workers, 'tramping' from one casual job to the next. Unfortunately, there were frequent disturbances and an extra police constable had to be deployed nearby to deal with them.

At the Borough Council's licencing meeting of 1905, this point was raised, as were the statistics: in the Borough of Hythe there were 22 fully-licensed houses, 3 beer houses and four other wine and spirit licences (probably hotels). In the High Street alone there were nine public houses and there were four, including the Old Portland Arms, in Market Street. The magistrates agreed that from now on, there would be only three in Market Street, and Mr Boorman's licence was not renewed. He got £115 compensation and Mackeson's brewery £1,000.

In 1906, the premises were put up for sale by auction.

HYTHE, KENT

Valuable Freehold Property, with possession.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale
OF THE
VALUABLE FREEHOLD
PROPERTY

Very suitable for CONVERSION INTO
SHOPS OR BUSINESS PREMISES,
Occupying a PROMINENT CORNER POSITION in
Market Street, Hythe,
Near **RED LION SQUARE,**
Until recently used as Licensed Premises, and known as
The Old Portland Arms
To be SOLD BY AUCTION, by

COBAY BROTHERS
Limited

AT THE
SESSIONS HALL, HYTHE,
ON
MONDAY, January 22, 1906,
At 3 o'clock precisely, in One Lot.

The Premises may be Viewed on application to the Auctioneers.

Messrs. MOWLL & MOWLL,
Solicitors, DOVER.

W. S. PAINE, Printer, Hythe.