

The White Horse Inn

by Joan Liggett

The White Horse Inn is one of the town's oldest residences dating from 1365. It was built during the reign of Edward III as a dwelling for the Churchwarden of St James Church which stood next door. With the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, the church gave up the house. In 1574 it became home to Dover's "ale taster" and for the next 55 years was the home of successive post holders whose duties included checking on the quality of ale and on unlawful measures. He also had the responsibility of reporting anyone who kept a disorderly house. There were various owners and tenants most of whom were involved in checking or making ales and ciders.

In 1635 a Nicholas Ramsey was granted permission to call the premises *City of Edinburgh*, after an American ship that sank in the Dover Straits. Later in 1652 he was presented to two magistrates at Dover and granted a licence to sell ales and cider from premises adjoining St James Church. Old papers show a line of successive owners and in the 18th century the *City of Edinburgh* became the meeting place of actors and players of the Dover Theatre. Alterations to the pub in 1952 uncovered a programme for the Dover Theatre dated 1809 advertising *Harlequin and Mother Goose*; this programme is still displayed in the pub today.

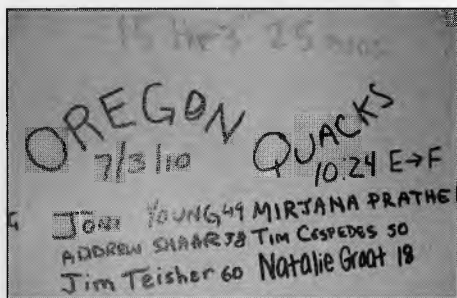


In 1818 the name of the inn was changed to *The White Horse* and it was about this time that inquests were held there, mainly on bodies washed up from the sea. These are said to have been stored in what is

now the dining area to the rear of the property.

From 1890, until the early part of the twentieth century, coaches ran from St Margaret's-at-Cliffe to the *White Horse* every day except Sunday. It was also in 1890, until well into the twentieth century, that the inn opened at 5am for Dockers and others working different shifts. Today the *White Horse* still is a local pub dispensing various beverages including, nowadays, coffee. It also records on its walls, ceiling and doors details of many Channel Swimmers from all over the world.

(References: Charles Willett/Dover Express)



Section of interior walls