

The Horse and Jockey Inn – Andy Ball

Since at least the 18th century, and probably for considerably longer, The Horse and Jockey Inn and its many incarnations under a variety of names, has been a feature of Colwall life. Originally starting its business life as an inn it has, at various times, also been a public house and hotel, and it is now a popular restaurant – the Thai Rama IV. This article seeks to identify some of the key points of its history during that time.

The first known written reference to The Horse and Jockey Inn was in the Hereford Journal in 1784 to an upcoming property auction '*...at the dwelling houfe of Thomas Gilding known by the fign of the Horfe and Jockey, in the Parifh of Colwall...*'ⁱ

The inn is shown on a map of the Bright estate in Colwall dated 1806. The property was strategically placed by the roadside on Walwyn Road between the scattered hamlets then present around Colwall Stone and at Colwall Green, with the junction to Mill Lane nearby. Mill Lane was the route through to the corn mills at Upper Mill and Lugg's Mill and hence, via a circuitous route, onto the church of St. James the Great. This changed during the 20th century when Mill Lane was adapted to the more direct route evident today.

It is likely that the inn building predated the eighteenth century and may well have existed from the 17th century or earlier. Originally it was of timber frame construction, of two storeys plus a cellar, and had a thatched roof. Operating as an inn meant that the business would have potentially provided food, drink, lodging and possibly stabling for horses. The unattributed image below gives an idea of how the premises once looked.



On the Colwall Tithe map, produced in the early 1840s, The Horse and Jockey was shown as The Horse and Groom Inn with an apportionment reference number of 503 which was for

'The Horse and Groom Inn, garden and building'. The landowner at the time was Henry Bright Esquire from Brockbury Hall.

The 1841 national census has the occupants of The Horse and Groom as being John Hartland King, aged 25, Publican together with Mary Ann King, also aged 25.

In the Post Office Directory for Herefordshire dated 1856 the property had the listing of *'King Henry, 'Horse & Groom', farmer & shopkeeper'* ⁱⁱ

That suggests that the inn may have had a dual function as a retail outlet of both alcohol and possibly other goods, together with presumably still providing meals and accommodation.

During much of the 19th century The Horse and Groom played a big part in communal life in Colwall. At the time - well before the advent of other later public buildings like the Workmen's Hall in Stone Drive and the Village Hall in Mill Lane - there were few other alternatives.

The Horse and Groom hosted regular auctions of produce and property. From the Hereford Times in 1867 – *'HORSE AND GROOM INN, COLWALL MR J. HARTLAND having been solicited by Agriculturists of the neighbourhood to hold Quarterly Sale for the DISPOSAL of LIVE STOCK above place, begs to announce that the first Sale will take place The Second, or Third Week in SEPTEMBER next. Further particulars will appear.'* ⁱⁱⁱ

From the Hereford Times in 1882 – *'COLWALL. THE ANNUAL SALE of COPPICING, the property of B Bright, Esq, will take place at the Horse and Groom Inn, Colwall, On TUESDAY, the day of DECEMBER, 1882. G. H. SHEPHERD, Auctioneer.'* ^{iv}

There were also regular annual ploughing matches held on fields nearby with the attendees usually retiring to The Horse and Groom Inn for refreshments. *'COLWALL. Ploughing Match. —On Tuesday week the annual ploughing match took place at Colwall, in a field occupied by Mr. Izard, near the Horse and Groom Inn, but was not so successful as on some former occasions The judges were Mr. Dutson, of the Verzons, and Mr Caldwell, of Ashperton. The competitors were divided into three classes, the first being the Champion's Class " or those who had taken a prize before ; second class, those who had not before taken a prize ; and the third class, O.O's. There were nine entries, four being in the first class, two in the second, and three in the third. The terms of the competition were to plough half an acre each five hours. The day was beautifully fine. ... The company, numbering about 25, then adjourned to the Horse and Groom, where Mr and Mrs. King, the worthy host and hostess, had laid out an excellent dinner: Rev. Prebendary Custance was voted to the chair, under whose presidency most convivial evening was spent, the vice-chair being filled by Mr. Brown, of the Cummins.'* ^v

In 1861 The Horse and Groom was the venue for a celebratory dinner for the workmen who had helped to bring the recently completed Worcester and Hereford railway to Colwall. *'On Monday evening last, Mr. Knowles, the contractor for the Malvern and Ledbury Tunnels entertained his men to the number of 80 and upwards, to a dinner of roast beef and plum-pudding, at the Horse and Groom inn, Colwall, the men being afterwards at his expense*

supplied with beer, ad libitum. The company enjoyed themselves till late period of the evening, and then separated in peaceable manner, after giving several lusty cheers for their kind master and entertainer, Mr. Knowles, who it may be stated tho' rigid in his discipline, manages to secure the good wishes of those in his employ.'^{vi}

During the latter half of the 19th century The Horse and Groom Inn was regularly used by The Loyal Perseverance Lodge of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Union, established locally in 1876. This Colwall-based lodge grew from 28 members with assets of £57 in 1876, to 201 by 1911 when the Lodge's total assets were valued at £2,065.^{vii}

The 'Hereford Journal' reported upon the annual Oddfellows Fete in Colwall in 1878. The proceedings for the day included a walk round the village in full regalia, a service at Colwall St James the Great church, and a dinner at The Horse and Groom Inn provided by Mr and Mrs Nash.^{viii}

By the late 19th century, the Workmen's Hall in Stone Drive was also being used as a venue for fundraising concerts for the Colwall Oddfellows.^{ix} That venue also became the meeting place of a women's branch of the Oddfellows – the Loyal Bright Female Lodge that was created in 1902.^x

The Horse and Groom played its part in the sporting life of the village and the owners of the inn provided refreshments in a tent at the nearby venue of a cricket match played between Colwall and Bishop's Frome in 1859.^{xi}

The premises also found occasional use for the far more serious side of village life. In 1899 it was used as the venue for the inquest of the suicide of a local man, with the proceedings being led by the deputy coroner for Herefordshire.^{xii}

Competition in Colwall during the first half of the 19th century included the businesses that now continue to exist in different guises as the Wellington Inn, The Malvern Hills Hotel, and the Chase and the Yew Tree public houses.

The Horse and Groom continued to have some sort of a retail function into the late 19th century is evidenced from this entry from Jakeman and Carver's Directory for 1892. '*Nash, Edmund, Horse and Groom Inn, shopkeeper and miller, Upper Mill*'^{xiii}

In 1895 Kelly's Directory carried the following listing '*Nash Edmund, Horse & Groom P.H., stabling & shopkeeper & miller (water).*' The same directory carried the following entry for Martin James Powell who was soon to become the new landlord of the Horse and Groom. He was listed as '*Powell Martin Jas, draper, Colwall grn.*'^{xiv}



It is probable that Martin Powell took over the running of The Horse and Groom in around 1895. He played a pivotal part in the history of the business. The Colwall local historian

Winifred Clay Stringer made a record of Martin Powell's life shortly before Martin died in 1956 and this has yielded some very helpful information. ^{xv}

Martin Powell was a local man born in Colwall on 14th June 1862. When he took on the tenancy of The Horse and Groom in around the mid-1890s the building was in a very poor state. It was *'getting in a very dilapidated condition, with no locks on any of the doors, and the windows had outside shutters which were fastened inside, when they were closed, with an iron pin to secure them, and the cellar was full of water up to the neck whenever there was continued rain, for the brook which runs under the road from Brook House on the opposite side of the road, is the lowest spot on the roads in Colwall'*.

It seems that Martin Powell helped to persuade the then owners of The Horse and Groom Inn (the Brights) to consider redeveloping the site. In doing so he was in an advantageous position. As a local he would have had good connections, especially with the Oddfellows. He had been initiated as a member of the Perseverance Lodge on July 29th 1880, holding official positions, and by July 1898 he was rewarded for his work with the presentation of a French ormolu clock. As a keen and talented sportsman he also had associations with the Colwall amateur football club. As a slight aside the land at Martin's Orchard in Colwall was once apparently owned by him – hence the name.

The Horse and Groom Inn was improved just before the turn of the 20th century with two new buildings being added to the rear of the then existing inn building. A description of the first ever meeting at the new Colwall Park Racecourse, detailed in a piece from the Herefordshire Journal dated Saturday May 12, 1900, described the work recently done at the inn.

'Needless to say, the visitors on Saturday were highly pleased with their inspection of the course, and they were afterwards most hospitably entertained by Mr. Cave at the ancient hostelrie of the Horse and Groom. The inn is on the Barton Court estate, and it is intended to rebuild it to suit modern requirements. The outer premises are new and of commodious character. When the hotel itself is rebuilt it will go by the name of the Horse and Jockey. Mr. Cave has had a new sign painted by a well-known artist. It is a capital oil-painting duplicated—of his well-known steeplechaser Triton, led by a groom, with a jockey ready to mount. The latter is in Mr. Cave's colours, white and blue. The visitors heartily pledged the health of Mr. and Mrs. Brown-Cave, and wished every success to the Colwell race meeting.'

^{xvi}

This is confirmed by a contemporary postcard from the period which shows the original old, thatched building fronting the roadside with two new buildings added to the rear. The new buildings provided generous sized meeting room accommodation and coach house/stabling. The frontage of the coach house building facing the road was painted up with advertising declaring, to the right, 'GOOD STABLING' and, to the left, the presence of the 'ODDFELLOWS' HALL'.

It was around this time that the name 'Inn' was changed to 'Hotel', probably as part of Roland Cave-Brown-Cave's aspirations to make the establishment more up-market for the

Colwall Park racecourse clientele. However, the establishment continued to trade as The Horse and Groom and not The Horse and Jockey.



A short time after the construction of the new buildings to the rear (shown above) the old inn building was being demolished, and work started on a new link building (the single-storey section shown on the left-hand side of the image) as shown below. Whilst the main building was being re-built the new meeting hall to the rear was used to take on many functions such as hosting dances and drew many people in from the surrounding villages.



The image below, understood to date from 1904, shows the re-built building to the roadside together with the other recently added structures to the rear.



It seems that all of the work on the new buildings was completed by 1903. The menu for a public luncheon at The Horse and Groom Hotel supplied by Martin Powell on Monday 11th May 1903 included a roast dinner with pudding meal for 2s 6d and Champagne for 10/- a bottle.

After the death of Benjamin Bright in 1900 the Barton Court estate, including The Horse and Groom Inn, had been inherited by his daughter Honora, who had married Roland-Cave-Brown Cave in 1895. With the added money and status Cave-Brown-Cave continued with a series of Colwall business ventures that had been initiated a short time earlier and that subsequently led to disastrous consequences. Cave-Brown-Cave led the Barton Court estate into financial crisis, and in 1905 it was put up for sale by auction.

In this first, of what were eventually a series of Barton Court estate auction sales over several years, The Horse and Groom Hotel was described as a *'Half-Timbered building. Recently altered, added to and rebuilt at great expense.'*

It contained *'Bar, Bar Parlour, Tap Room, Store Room, Larder, Magnificent Oddfellows' Hall with two ante rooms, Scullery with range, Kitchen, Private Sitting Room, Large Cellarage, whilst on the UPPER FLOOR are Six Bed Rooms, Private Sitting Room, Club Room, Bath Room with hot and cold supplies, Lavatory and two w.c.s.'*

Outside, across the yard there was *'Brick and Tiled Stabling'* that comprised *'Six Stalls, Harness and Saddle Room, Large Coach-house, Lofts and Outhouses. Convenient Meadow and excellent Garden, in all about Half-an Acre.'*

The property was tenanted, and at the time of the auction sale in 1905 was let on a term of 21 years to Martin Powell from 24th June 1903, determinable by the Lessee at the end of the 7th or 14th years, at £200 per annum. The property also benefitted from having the sole right to provide refreshments to the recently constructed Colwall Park racecourse, which must have provided great financial opportunity and competitive advantage to the business.

The 1905 Barton Court auction sale included a large proportion of Colwall's land and property assets including Barton Court itself, not only The Horse and Groom Hotel, but also the Colwall Park racecourse, 10 farms and 1,636a of land. It is hardly surprising that much failed to sell, as the local property market must have been swamped, and there were repeat auctions in 1913, 1915 and 1919.

The Horse and Groom Hotel continued as an important social venue for the village in Edwardian Times. The account of a fundraising whist drive with dance for the Amateur Football Club in 1910 refers to it being held at the '*Oddfellows' Hall, Horse and Groom Hotel*'.^{xvii}

In the 1913 edition of Kelly's Directory of Herefordshire there were entries for '*Powell Martin Jas Horse & Groom P.H.*', '*Oddfellows' Club (Harry Allen, sec)*', '*Oddfellows' Hall (Martin J. Powell, prpr)*', and '*The Oddfellows' Hall here will seat about 350 persons, and has a good stage and dressing rooms;*'^{xviii}

In the 1913 Barton Court sale The Horse and Groom Hotel was little-changed and the business was offered as lot 43 a '*Fully Licensed Hotel*' still occupied by Mr. Martin Powell. An image taken from the postcard below was used in the sales particulars.



"HORSE AND GROOM HOTEL."

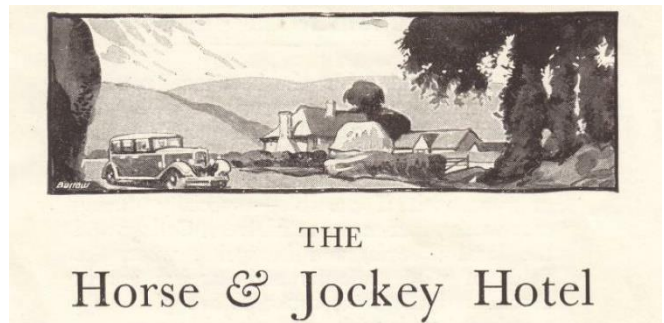
It would seem that again the Hotel failed to find a buyer.

In 1915 at the next Barton Court auction it was again listed for sale. The sales details bundled together the hotel, stabling, garden, meadow and adjoining pasture – in all the land totaling 3.362 acres. By this time the whole of the property comprising this lot was let to the Royal Well Brewery Company Limited on a yearly tenancy for the sum of £115 per annum.

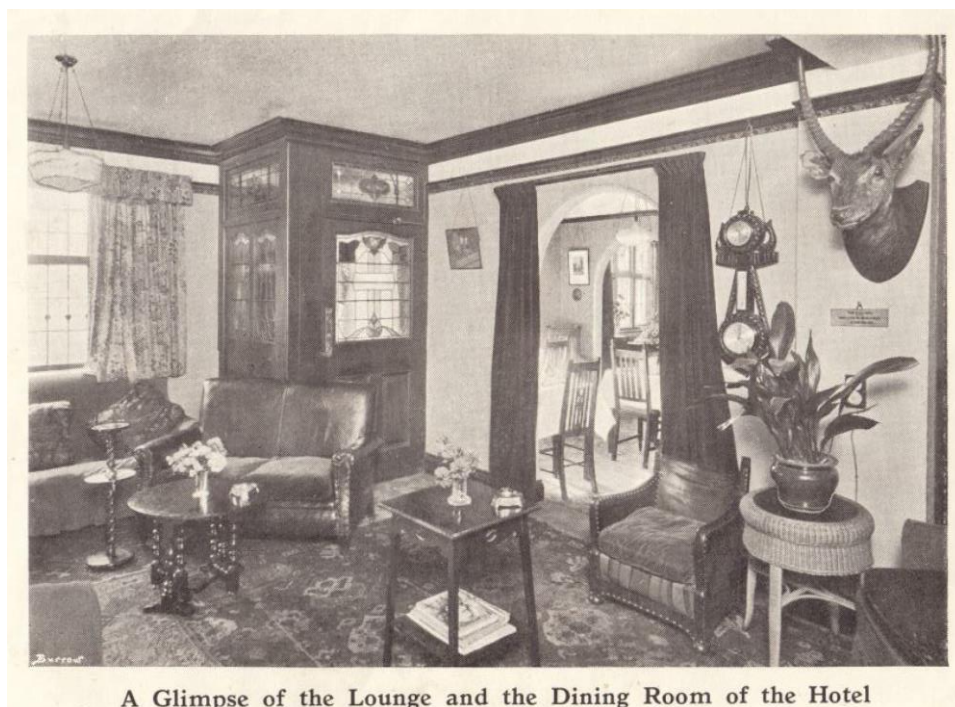
The Royal Well Brewery Company, located in West Malvern, developed an extensive property portfolio spread over quite a wide area in the first three decades of the twentieth century before many of these were put up for sale by auction in 1930, and the company went into voluntary liquidation in 1931. Locally other public houses in their ownership included The Wellington Inn, Chances Pitch near Colwall; The Railway Inn on the Wells Road, Malvern Wells, and The Old Country Inn at Bosbury.

In 1934 the establishment was listed as The Horse and Jockey Hotel with a proprietor called Capt. Phillip D. Wynter who was also listed as the proprietor of the Oddfellows' Hall. ^{xix}

During the period between the two world wars the Horse and Jockey Hotel was marketed as a destination to be visited by tourists using motor vehicles as their mode of transport. An undated ten-page advertising leaflet, likely to date from the 1920s or 1930s promoted the hotel as '*The HORSE & JOCKEY HOTEL – COLWALL, near MALVERN – APPOINTED R.A.C & A.A. – An ideal retreat for rest and recreation – WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE PROPRIETOR CHAS. A. HEIMS*'.



The leaflet includes a tantalising view of the interior of the hotel.



The hotel attracted wealthy clientele and at the time of the England and Wales Register in 1939 one of the guests was Lord Strabolgi, a Peer of the Realm. ^{xx}At the time he was the opposition chief whip in the House of Lords. ^{xxi}



The image above most likely dates from the middle of the 20th century. The proprietor of The Horse and Jockey Hotel was then Horace Janes. Mr. Janes was a renowned ballroom dancer and owner of Tony's Ballroom in Birmingham between the two World Wars. He ran The Horse and Jockey up until the early 1950s when he became the proprietor and licensee of The Golden Cross Hotel in Henley-in-Arden which he ran for 20 years before his death in early 1974. ^{xxii} An article about Colwall in the Birmingham Weekly Mercury from 1952 mentioned him. *'One of the village's colourful characters is Mr Horace Janes now licensee of the Horse and Jockey Hotel. Well-known in entertainment and catering circles in the Midlands...'* ^{xxiii} At this time the hotel was a part of the Ansells brewery chain and in the photograph above their name is visible on the lower half of the hotel sign above the parked car.

An advert for The Horse and Jockey Hotel, understood to also date from the 1950s, had the proprietor listed as Paul S. R. Horsley. It proudly advertised *'H. & C. WATER & SLUMBERLAND MATTRESSES IN ALL BEDROOMS.'* ^{xxiv}

Jayne and Arthur Martin ran the Horse and Jockey between about 1977 and 1984. In 2024 Jayne met with a member of the Colwall Village Society and gave her recollections of her time there, from which the following details come.

At that time the pub was still an Ansells tied pub. When the Martin's arrived the pub had fire damage upstairs and there was sewage in the cellars. The previous landlord had not been there for long and had left it in a bit of a state.

The Martins extended the pub downstairs to include some toilets. Entering by the front door the lounge bar was on the right and on the left was the "Wicker Lounge". The Wicker lounge was merged with the office behind it to form a restaurant. Upstairs was a private lounge and 6 bedrooms. 3 of the bedrooms were used by the family and the others let out. They had 2 regulars staying who were working at the Royal Signals and Radar Establishment in Malvern. The hall at the back was used as a skittle alley and for wedding receptions, visiting coach parties, etc. The back hall had problems with damp and had structural issues. Glass "tell-tale" vials were fixed to the beams to keep an eye on structural movement. The building in the car park area was in a bad state and used as a bottle store.

The strip of land immediately behind the pub was a large vegetable plot which provided veg for the kitchen, along with ducks and hens. The brook had been dammed to form a slightly deeper area, near the weir and some-one put young trout in there.

The nearby field was used for a variety of uses including as Camping and Caravan Club site; as an annual women's cricket festival campsite; as a site for a travelling fair and as a venue for the local hunt.

Various promotions took place. There was a pram race; Guinness provided a camera for photo of drinkers for a £1000 prize; the Martins advertised for coach parties and events were held to help raise money for the hospital.

In the 1980s advertisements were run in the West Midlands press trying to attract custom *'THE HORSE AND JOCKEY HOTEL, Colwall, Malvern. Organise a party to our skittle alley! Chicken and chips, scampi and chips £1-50 each, no room hire.'*^{xxv}

It was in the period after Jayne and Arthur Martyn left that the Horse and Jockey Hotel seems to have deteriorated. In 1985 there was an episode of mass disorder when on 7th May there a violent pitched battle between punks and skinheads at a punk concert by the band 'Decadence Within'. Local punks fought with a coachload of 24 skinheads from Merthyr Tydfil in Wales. 11 people were injured and 6 needed treatment at Worcester Royal Infirmary. All of the skinheads were arrested.^{xxvi}

The following year the publican of The Horse and Jockey Hotel – Desmond Keith Hutchinson - had a bankruptcy order served against him.^{xxvii}

At some stage in its more recent history there was a time when the Horse and Jockey changed its name again – becoming the Oddfellows Arms.^{xxviii} According to an account in *The Pubs of The Malverns, Upton & Nearby Villages* by Tony Hobbs this was in 1993. The curate of Colwall, the Rev. Ellen Clark-King, blessed the pub with holy water. The new landlady was Mrs Fiona Evans. The Oddfellows Arms was the first pub that she and her husband Keith had run as licensees, and they undertook a refurbishment of the premises to include new features such as a children's room.^{xxix}

After their stint running the pub, for a brief while it was taken over by the rock band AC/DC who again made internal alterations - opening up the ground floor.^{xxx}

The hostelry became the base for the Silurian Border and Old Meg Morris sides but continued to struggle until by the end of 2001 it closed, and all the ground floor windows were boarded up.^{xxxii}

It was subsequently converted to a Thai restaurant which opened in 2003.^{xxxiii} The business traded initially as the Beau Thai and then subsequently as the Thai Rama IV. It is currently a well-established and popular part of village life continuing a long-term tradition for the site.

ⁱ Unknown (1784) 'To be Fold to the Best Bidder...' *Hereford Journal* 12 February

ⁱⁱ Post Office Directory of Herefordshire, 1856 P.20

ⁱⁱⁱ Hereford Times - Saturday 10 August 1867 P.1

^{iv} Hereford Times - Saturday 25 November 1882 P.1

^v Hereford Journal - Wednesday 11 December 1861 P.8

^{vi} Unknown (1861) 'Ledbury' *The Hereford Times*, Saturday 21st September P.8

^{vii} Bowen J P, and Craven A, with Comber J (2020) *The Victoria History of Herefordshire – Colwall*. London: University of London Press.

^{viii} Unknown (1878) 'Oddfellows' Fete at Colwall' *The Hereford Journal*, Saturday June 8th, P.5

^{ix} Unknown (1899) 'Colwall – Concert' *The Worcestershire Chronicle*, Saturday 22nd April, P.5

^x Bowen J P, and Craven A, with Comber J (2020) *The Victoria History of Herefordshire – Colwall*. London: University of London Press.

^{xi} Unknown (1859) 'CRICKET – Bishops Frome v Colwall' *The Hereford Times*, Saturday August 13th P.4

^{xii} Unknown (1899) 'Distressing Suicide at Colwall' *Hereford Times*, Saturday June 3rd P.11

^{xiii} Jakeman & Carvers Directory of Herefordshire, 1890 P. 172

^{xiv} Kelly's Directory of Herefordshire, 1895, P.40

^{xv} Stringer, W C (1954) *History of Colwall*. Colwall: Colwall and Malvern Libraries 1998 reprint

^{xvi} Unknown (1900) 'New Racecourse at Colwall' *The Herefordshire Journal*, Saturday 12th May, P.5

^{xvii} Unknown (1910) 'Colwall – Whist Drive' *The Hereford Journal*, Saturday November 26th

^{xviii} Kelly's Directory of Herefordshire ,1913 P.47

^{xix} Kelly's Directory of Herefordshire, 1934 P.

^{xx} 1939 England and Wales Register

^{xxi} Wikipedia (2024) *Joseph Kenworthy, 10th Baron Strabolgi*. Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Kenworthy,_10th_Baron_Strabolgi (Accessed 19 June 2024).

^{xxii} Unknown (1974) 'Obituary Mr. H. Janes' *Birmingham Daily Post* Tuesday 5th February P.19.

^{xxiii} Unknown (1952) 'Small Home of a Great Sporting Tradition' *Birmingham Weekly Mercury* Sunday 5th October P.10.

^{xxiv} Eisel J and Shoesmith R (2003) *The Pubs of Bromyard, Ledbury and East Herefordshire*. Logaston Press.

^{xxv} Unknown (1983) 'HORSE AND JOCKEY HOTEL' *Birmingham Mail*, Saturday 7th May, P.19.

^{xxvi} Unknown (2014) Internet Archive - Decadence Within - Live @ The Horse And Jockey, Colwall, England 7 May 1985. Available at https://archive.org/details/Decadence-Within_Live--The-Horse-And-Jockey-Colwall-England-7-May-1985 (Accessed: 09 December 2023)

^{xxvii} Unknown (1993) 'THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986' *Birmingham Post*, Friday 3rd December P.20

^{xxviii} Eisel J and Shoesmith R (2003) *The Pubs of Bromyard, Ledbury and East Herefordshire*. Logaston Press.

^{xxix} Hobbs, T (2012) *The Pubs of The Malverns, Upton & Nearby Villages*. Logaston Press.

^{xxx} Hobbs, T (2012) *The Pubs of The Malverns, Upton & Nearby Villages*. Logaston Press.

^{xxxi} Eisel J and Shoesmith R (2003) *The Pubs of Bromyard, Ledbury and East Herefordshire*. Logaston Press.

^{xxxii} Bowen J P, and Craven A, with Comber J (2020) *The Victoria History of Herefordshire – Colwall*. London: University of London Press.