

The Earl of Beaconsfield - History research by *Stephen Thompson 1978

(edited by Mary Naylor daughter of the above - 2012)

First mentioned as a beer house in 1882 this public house was owned and occupied in 1884 by Joseph Turner Bailey who was something of a local character. *He owned a large number of houses in the Mill Road area and his “uniform” for rent collecting consisted of an old tweed jacket, well worn brown corduroys and a fish basket, giving him a somewhat down at heel appearance. Doubtless these were the same clothes that he wore when he went to the Motor Show in London and where he accepted a tip of sixpence for minding the carriage horses of a “gent” who wished to take his groom into the exhibition to inspect the cars. When he had earned his 6d he went into the exhibition himself and bought a new Aldays and Onions car for cash, the sovereigns being carried in the faithful fish basket. Having a natural poker face he would have enjoyed to the full such an episode.

The original pub differed considerably from the present building. It was very much smaller with somewhat spartan accommodation for the customers. +The original cellar remains albeit with a new entrance. As built, access to the cellar was by a door near the rear of the bar and down a flight of stone steps. There were no beer pumps so every pint had to be drawn from the barrels into enamel jugs. During busy periods the “pot man” certainly earned his keep.

When Mill Road Bridge was built, to replace the level crossing, in 1889, the view of the E of B was obscured. *It is said that Joe Bailey thought this would have an adverse effect on his trade and he appealed to the railway authorities for compensation. He was offered a sum greater than he had hoped. Once again his poker face stood him in good stead and he expressed dissatisfaction with the offer, the authorities increased the offer by a considerable amount!

* Steve Thompson was the nephew of Stephen (Stiv) Thompson. These are stories that he would have heard from his Uncle Stiv who was a great friend of Joe Bailey.

+This would have been from Steve’s own memory.

Stephen Thompson Sn inherited the E of B and other properties from Joe Bailey in 1917 on condition that they would go to Addenbrooke’s Hospital on his death. The law changed and Stephen Thompson was allowed to keep everything. He did however honour the terms of Joe Bailey’s will and the hospital got the money when the properties were sold.

The author age 6, c1916, playing in the back yard of the Earl of Beaconsfield with Bob the parrot and “friends”. His uncle Stephen (Stiv) Thompson is on the far right.

