



The Hammer and Anvil

Wood End

The records for this pub are a little sketchy. It appears that over time its been a pub and a shop but it rarely gets called The Hammer and Anvil in the census entries. The name also gets reversed to the Anvil and Hammer.

Nora Crick, a current resident of the village, is able to confirm that the pub was opposite to the Manor and close to what is now 52 Wood End.

In the 1841 census, William Freeman (45) and family are living in Wood End. His son James is described as a Miller. There is no mention of the house being a pub. However in the 1851 census, William now 56 is still described as a Miller. His son James (36) and his wife Jane (22) are living at the same house and James is described as a Miller and the house a Beerhouse.

This mill was photographed in 1926 and was pulled down before the 1939-45 War.



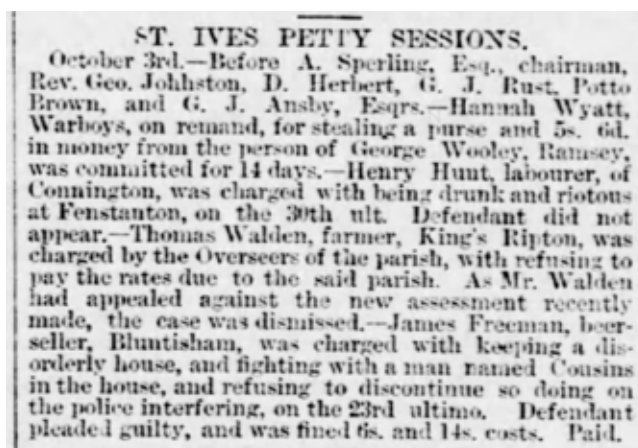
In the 1854, History, Gazetteer and Directory of Huntingdon, James Freeman is listed as a miller and beer retailer.

In 1861, the name Anvil and Hammer makes its debut in the census. James and Jane are still in residence along with Charles Webb, described as a servant with his occupation listed as Miller. So we can assume that he

worked for James and lodged with him and his family. James is listed again as a miller and this time publican.

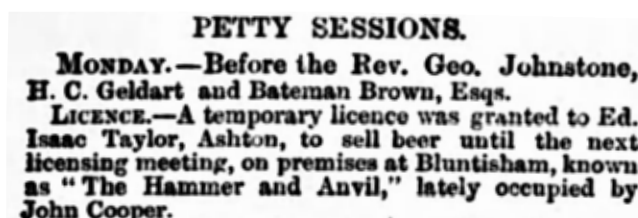
In the 1869 Post office Directory, James Freeman is listed as a Beer Retailer.

In the October 8th 1870 edition of the Cambridge weekly news, James Freeman makes an appearance at the petty sessions. It would appear that James had a bust up with one of his customers.



James and Jane are not put off by this trouble and are listed in the 1871 census with James now described as being a Labourer and Publican.

In 1881 James and Jane have moved on and John Cooper (63) and his wife Ann (64) are listed as living at the Hammer and Anvil. John is described as a Publican and Agricultural labourer. The licence is transferred to Edward Ashton in 1883.

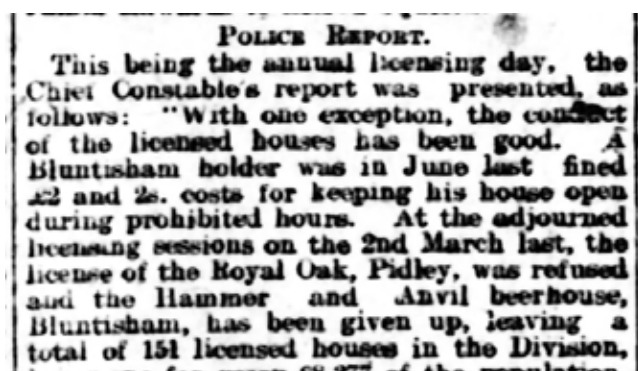




In the 1891 census Edward Ashton is living in the same address, and he is listed as Beer Retailer and Dairyman. In the 1901 census Edward Ashton and his wife Susan are again listed as living in the pub.

He is described as Inn Keeper and Tripe dealer. In the book Keeping Time By the Crows, Tony Rowell, in his article 'Walk around Bluntisham in the 1930's' writes "opposite the Manor is a guesthouse owned by a Mr Ashton (known by his nickname of "Tripey" Ashton). So, its safe to assume that this guesthouse was once the Hammer and Anvil pub.

The last reference to the Hammer and Anvil is 1909, when the licence was not renewed.



So although no longer a licensed premises, Edward Ashton and Susan are still living there, Edward is described as being retired. Their son William is living with them along with his sister Fanny. William is described as a Wholesale Grocer.

In 1921, Edward is now 80 and a widower, Fanny is living with him and he is now described as a retired butcher. Living with them are two young girls who are described as being boarders:

Edward Ashton	Head	81	1	M	Widower	Huntingdon	SE	Free
Fanny Ashton	Daughter	43	5	F	Single	Huntingdon	SE	Free
Elizabeth Ashton	Boarder	14	7	F	Board	London	East	Board
William Ashton	Boarder	10	10	F	Board	London	East	Board

Again in his walk around Bluntisham article Tony Rowell mentions Fanny, again living at the top of Wood End "Another lady lives here by the name of Ashton who befriends Dr Barnado's boys". On the Heritage website there is an article by Alec Moore entitled "Boys from Bluntisham" he talks about how he came to live in the village with Fanny Ashton as a Barnardo's Boy and describes the house in some detail. <https://bhp-pc-org-uk.stacktemp.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Boys-from-Bluntisham-Alec-Moore.pdf>

Nora Crick, also recalls Fanny living at the same location, and playing with some of the Barnardo's boys that stayed with her. Everyone referred to her as Nanny.

It's clear that Edward began to take in less fortunate children back in 1921 and this was continued by Fanny at the Hammer and Anvil up until the start of the Second World War. Fanny passed away in 1942.