



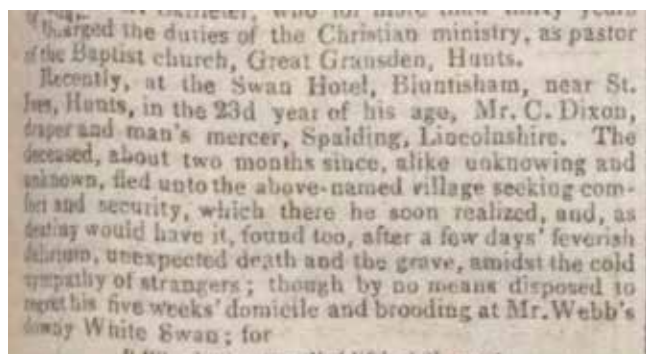
The White Swan High Street

Known as both the White Swan and the Swan Inn, the pub has been open since at least 1795, where like a few others is listed in the 1795 Pigots Directory of Huntingdonshire.

In the 1830 Pigots Directory the landlord is listed as John Webb.



The Swan makes its first appearance in the local press in September 1831, when a Mr Dixon passed away in the pub:

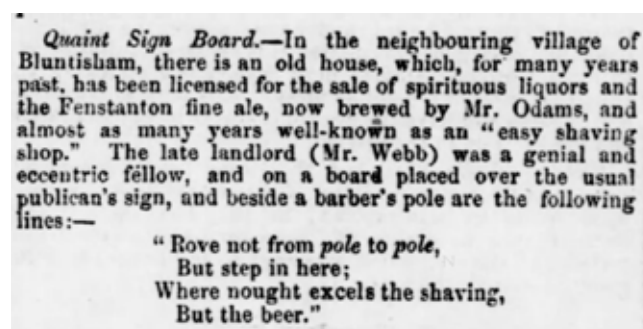


The pub makes another appearance, this time as the venue for an auction for the windmill and surrounding land, in March 1837:

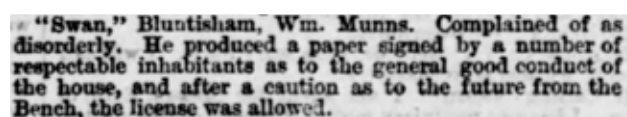


In the 1841 census, John Webb (44) is listed as an Innkeeper, he was listed in the 1839 Pigots Directory as the same. So he was still in the pub at the time of the census. He is there with his wife Sara (35) and son John (15).

Again in 1851 John and Sarah Webb are listed with John still being described as an Innkeeper. In the 1854 Huntingdon gazetteer and directory, John is listed as a hairdresser and Innkeeper. The records suggest that John passed away in 1855. In March 1861 there is an article in the Cambridge chronicle about the late John Webb and the sign that he had up in the pub;



The 1861 census lists John's widow; Sarah Webb (57) as the publican. How long she remained there is hard to know. As in the 1869 Post Office directory, it now lists William Munns as the landlord and this is further confirmed when he renewed the licence in September 1869 after what can only have been a little local difficulty:





The White Swan is mentioned again in the news in April 1870, this time as the location for the Ecclesiastical Spring Courts. This court dealt with the clergy and governance of the local churches in the area. It would have been a big event at the time. Attended by the Steward of the Dean and Chapter for the manor of Bluntisham Stockings and his clerk. They would have arrived in a horse drawn carriage from Ely and it would have been an occasion when a large proportion of the village turned out.

attend.

THE SPRING COURTS

OF the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England will be holden at the times and places under mentioned, viz.:-

IN THE ISLE OF ELY,

For the Manor of Mepal, at the Manor House, in Mepal, on **MONDAY**, the 25th day of April instant, at the hour of Eleven in the forenoon.

For the Manor of Sutton, at Sutton Burystead, on **TUESDAY**, the 26th day of April instant, at Eleven o'clock in the forenoon.

For the Manor of Witchford, at the "Shoulder of Mutton" Public House, in Witchford, on **FRIDAY**, the 29th day of April instant, at the hour of Ten in the Forenoon.

For the Ma or of Witcham, at the "White Horse" Public House, in Witcham, on the same day, at the hour of Twelve at Noon.

For the Manor of Wentworth, at the Manor House, in Wentworth, on the same day, at the hour of Two in the afternoon.

For the Manor of Ely Porta, in Ely, at the Chorister's School, in the Cathedral Precincts, on **WEDNESDAY**, the 11th day of May next, at the hour of Eleven in the forenoon.

IN THE COUNTY OF HUNTINGDON,

For the Manor of Bluntisham Stockings, at the "Swan" Public House, in Bluntisham, on **WEDNESDAY**, the 27th day of April instant, at the hour of One in the afternoon.

IN THE COUNTY OF CAMBRIDGE

In the 1871 census, William Munns (42) is listed as the landlord, with his wife Elizabeth (35) and their daughter Elinor aged 19. In August 1874 a fire breaks out in the pub causing extensive damage to the White Swan and other nearby buildings:

BLUNTISHAM.—Fire.—About nine o'clock on the night of Thursday week the village was alarmed by the cry of "Fire." It was soon seen that the Swan Inn was in flames. The building was thatched and blazed away most furiously, and the flames soon spread to some stacks in Mr. David Goode's yard, and from thence to his outbuildings. South and east of the burning mass were a large number of thatched cottages, and had there not fortunately been a strong south wind these must have gone; as it was, the White Horse publichouse caught fire several times, but by the exertions of those present the flames were beaten out. The fire commenced in a stable adjoining the back of the Swan, but how it originated cannot be discovered. The Swan and its outbuildings are completely destroyed, and Mr. Goode has lost two stacks and some outplaces. We understand that all the sufferers are insured. Bluntisham will soon have a bad name amongst Insurance Societies, as this makes the seventh fire within five years.

By 1881, Robert Beldam (45) is listed a Publican and general dealer. Living in the White Swan with his wife Malvina and six children. In 1890 the licence is transferred, from a Mr Galloway to George Stanion

ST. IVES PETTY SESSIONS, October 20.
(Before Thos. Coote, Esq., Chairman, C. P. Tebbutt and Thos. Knights, Esqs.)

LICENSE TRANSFERS.—The following transfers were made:—"Durham Ox," Somersham, from A. W. Marshall to George Smith; "King William," Fenstanton, from A. K. Galloway to John M. Hewson; "White Swan," Bluntisham, from A. K. Galloway to George Stanion. Temporary transfers: "The Cock," Hemmingford Grey, from Francis Saunders to Harry Saunders; "White Horse," Hilton, from George Harradine to William Lewin; "The Bull," Broughton, from Wm. Ashby to Jas. Papworth.

CARRYING A GUN WITHOUT A LICENSE.—Harry Harper, of Earith, was charged with carrying a gun without a license, on August 31, at Earith. Mr. Mackay, Supervisor of Inland Revenue, conducted the prosecution. For the defence it was stated that the gun was out of repair and he was carrying it to Earith to be mended. The case was dismissed. The Bench thought it a suspicious case, and the prosecution did quite right in bringing it forward.

George Stanion is listed as being the landlord in the 1891 census. Aged 46, he is there with his wife Sophia and their six children. The licence appears to have moved around a lot in the 1890's. In October 1893, after a stint of three years the licence is transferred to Fred Cole:

ST. IVES PETTY SESSIONS.
MONDAY.—Before Messrs. H. C. Geldart, B. Brown, H. Goodman, C. P. Tebbutt, T. Knights, E. G. Bevan, and R. J. Lindsell.

A TEMPORARY TRANSFER of the White Swan, Bluntisham, from George Stanion to F. Cole was granted.

Then in 1894, the licence is transferred from Fred Cole to a William Hill:

ST. IVES PETTY SESSIONS.
MONDAY.—Before Messrs. H. C. Geldart, B. Brown, H. Goodman, C. P. Tebbutt, T. Knights, E. G. Bevan, and R. J. Lindsell.

A TEMPORARY TRANSFER of the White Swan, Bluntisham, from Fred Cole to Mr. Hill, and the Anchor, Hemmingford Grey, from Mrs. Adams to John Matthews.

In 1895 the pub is up for again for let

TO LET, the SWAN INN, Bluntisham. In-going and Rent small. Large garden and yard.—Apply, the Brewery, Fenstanton, St. Ives, Hunts.



In the 1901 census there is no trace of William Hill being at the White Swan. In fact there is no mention at all of the White Swan, so we have to presume that it was empty at the time of the census. However in 1902, the landlord of the White Swan is listed as James Green and he is in trouble with the authorities for allowing gambling on the premises. He is charged with the offence in November 1902.

Here is a transcription of the article that appeared in the Peterborough Standard on November 8th 1902.

Police Pay a Surprise Visit

James Green, publican was charged with allowing gambling to be carried out at the White Swan .

Mr JP Mall of Huntingdon appeared for the prosecution and Mr Lyons of Cambridge for the defendant.

PC Page stated that at 10 pm he visited Swan and saw five young men from Bluntisham with the defendant, the man came out in the street at the request of PC Page who was in company with PC Wright At 10:15 and they went together to the back part of the premises, as prior to this the five young men had walked off in another direction.

At 11:43 four young men out of the five went into the backyard and then returned to the house. It was impossible for the men to see either officer About a minute later the officers entered the house then immediately they then went to the room with a rush and when they saw three young men sitting at the table; William Chapman , Arthur Setchfield and Thomas Merryweather. Setchfield lived at Chatteris and the others were Bluntisham men. The two other men Arthur Chapman and Thomas Chapman were standing by the table with the defendant. There were cards on the table in five lots and two penny pieces on two lots. PC Wright took the money and the Page took the cards and asked the defendant 'Why are these men here ?' and he replied they are my guests. PC Wright told the man to clear out of the house and Arthur Chapman replied we are lodgers and commenced to take off his boots. Green then said they were all lodges and also said they had been watching them for four

months but had still no evidence. The constables kept observation of the house until 1 o'clock on Sunday morning but no one left the house. PC Page stated that It was not true that the constables had watched the house for four months, that they saw no plates on the table nor any remains of a supper in the room.

Mr Lyons stated that here was no beer on the table by Mr lines the house have been properly conducted up to this date. Thomas Chapman of Bluntisham said he was at the Swan and left the house shortly before 10 o'clock. He returned at 10:45 with Arthur and William Chapman. He returned because Mr Green asked them to go back to supper the defendant laid and supplied the supper which lasted a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes they all sat there doing nothing but 2 pints of beer were supplied which William Chapman paid four pennies for. Supper consisted of bread and cheese he had never been a guest before. After supper cards were produced but he could not say whom, nor anyone handle them. He saw when the constables came in that the cards were in 3 heaps, but he couldn't say if the money was laid on the card or on the table . Wright came in and asked what they were doing and spoke to Green the men did not go to bed but sat up all night talking and all left by the back door in the morning when they left they went up the back garden across the fields but when it could not say why they went that way no what time it was. Mr Lyons said It was feast week he thought he had a right to be on licensed premises after hours as long as he was asked by Mr Green when the money for pennies was paid for the beer the man who paid it said if Green would not take it, he should leave it for the children. That Chapman expected the kitchen was a private room and the home of the defendant and his family. He knew nothing about cards there was no card playing in the house that evening . James Green the defendant was called and he said the four men had been in the house that feast night. Setchfield came up about 1015 and said he was hungry and he invited him in and the other defendants into supper and they all had



some, the man laying down four pennies for 2 pints of beer, Green said he could not take the money after drawing time and it was left there for his children in the morning. His children had been playing cards in the evening and they were left on the table in three lots he had never touched the cards that evening when the police came he had no opportunity of making an explanation. The police watched his house all the time I've lived in Bluntisham.

Cross examined by Mr Moore. The beer was not paid for it was his gift. The reason why the young man kept in the house because they were afraid if they would have been summoned. He had heard one of the men say I am a lodger but he was he was not a regular lodger he didn't want to tell the police this. He left the men downstairs and then went to sleep and afterwards they left by the back door. The chairman said he could not say which of the men returned first. He was certain they all came together to have supper after all. Arthur Chapman of Wood farm, Bluntisham said he went to the Swan on the night question because he was asked to supper. he corroborated the evidence as to the money and the cards. He did not play because he knew nothing about cards and it was absolutely untrue to say that either the men played cards that night. In cross examination the witness admitted taking a shoe off and putting it under the table but he did not say he was a lodger. This is the first time he had stopped at the house and he left by the back door but he did not say which way he went afterwards. He knew he was in the house after hours but he did not think any trouble would arise as they were invited. William Chapman also of Wood farm corroborated the evidence when he said he never touch cards that evening nor did the others. He stayed at the house because it was too late to go home. They went out the back door and up the garden through Mr Tebbutt's field and then onto the road This concluded the case and after a short consultation with the chairman The bench were not satisfied there had been card playing so they gave the defendant the benefit of the doubt and dismissed the case.

In 1906, the landlord appears to be Frank Munns, the reason that we know this is that his wife was found dead in tragic circumstances.

This is a transcription from the Cambridge Evening News of 27 December 1906.

Woman Found Dead A Quarrel and What Followed Sad Story at Inquest

On Monday afternoon an enquiry was held before Mr Coroner Margetts at the White Swan Inn, Bluntisham, on the body of Mrs Georgina Munns, 33, (wife of Frank Munns, landlord of the inn), who was found dead in a field near the river at the New Staunch, Bluntisham on Saturday morning. The Rev Sayers (rector of the parish), was foreman of the jury.

Dr H Cecil Burlow of Somersham, said that by direction of the coroner he made a post mortem examination of deceased's body and found two bruises on the front of the chest, two bruises on the right arm, and a large bruise by the left hip. The bruises did not appear recent, but looked as though they had been produced three or four days previous to death. There were several slight scratches on the face, which looked quite recent. He examined the organs of the body and found them all healthy. There was a strong smell of alcohol in the stomach. Deceased had been already laid out when he began the post mortem examination. There were no sign of any irritant poison in the stomach or intestines. There was no food in the stomach, but there was mucus mixed with a dark greenish fluid which smelt strongly of alcohol.

Frank Munns, the husband, said he kept the White Swan Inn at Bluntisham. He thought that he had been married 13 years last November. The coroner : There were bruises found on the chest and arm of the deceased. Do you know how they came there ?

Witness ; I do not know how they came there. We have had several disagreeing's. On Friday afternoon last, witness continued, he was talking to Mr Joseph Miller in the taproom of the house. His wife was present. They were talking amicably together when all of a sudden his wife began to abuse witness. There was an altercation between



them, and he said 'Have you had an extra glass of beer?'

The Coroner; What was the altercation about; you surely know ?

Witness said he could not remember what deceased began abusing him about, but it was over some trivial matter. She then came and hit at him – a thing which she had often done. He could honestly say he had never struck deceased, although he had shoved her away many a time'. He told her to go in the kitchen and get on with her work, as she had had too much to drink. He put her into the kitchen and shut the door. Witness understood his wife to say "I will see about it" and he thought it was about their dispute. Witness heard the front door open at about 4.45 pm, and he supposed his wife going out. At 10pm she had not returned, and he searched the outdoor premises. Not finding her, he supposed she had gone to his sister's at St Ives, whose name was Mrs Poulter. His wife several times left the house in a similar manner. On Saturday morning about 7.30 he received a message that his wife had been found dead, and at 9 she was brought home in a cart by the police.

By Inspector Storey ; His wife had lots of times said she would do away with herself. She had been addicted to drink for some time, but not so much as she had lately. She had been the worse for drink constantly for the past six weeks. She had had a sister in the house who had been dangerously ill for the past six weeks and during that time his wife had had her rest broken and been up a good many nights. He could not account for the bruises, but they might be caused when he had put her in the kitchen, for she bruised very easily. For instance, he had known when she had been dancing a bruise would be caused where her partner had taken hold of her. He had never known his wife to take any drugs. Joseph Miller, a retired platelayer, said he lived at Bluntisham. On Friday afternoon just about 4.30 he was in the White Swan public house talking to the landlord Frank Munns. Mrs Munns opened the door and came in from the kitchen and began to abuse Munns. He did not know what for. He noticed she had had drink. Munns

advised her to go into the kitchen and get on with her work, and told her she had had a glass or two too much or she would not talk like that to him. She struck at Munns with both hands clenched and hit him hard, but her husband did not attempt to strike her back, neither did he get angry at all with her. Munns took hold of his wife's arm and waist and sort of walked and carried her into the kitchen and shut the door. She came back into the taproom again and said "I'll go drown myself".

By a juror ; He had never seen Mrs Munns the worse for drink before that Friday. The quarrel lasted about 20 minutes. He could not say what it was about. She used very bad language, and seemed like a wild woman.

Augustus Fox, Labourer, of Bluntisham, said that on Friday afternoon last, he was coming from work about 5.15 with Arthur Purchas, on Mr Tebbutt's farm, along the roadway leading from Bluntisham road to the river, when they met a short woman dressed in dark clothes near the railway crossing. They bid her goodnight and she replied goodnight. He did not recognise her then, and had not the slightest idea of who she was, as it was rather dark. On the following morning about 7am witness was going to work with Purchas down the same road, and when they were one field away from the river near the brook they saw the body of the woman lying on the roadway face downwards. Witness struck a light to see who it was, and then saw it was Mrs Munns, and that it was the same woman who they had met the previous afternoon. He went to Earith and reported the matter to the police.

By inspector Storey: He noticed that the lower part of her clothes were wet. He lifted her head up to see who it was, and the hat was damp with the rime frost, but her hair was dry. It had been a very cold night. There was no sign of a struggle. Arthur Purchas corroborated the evidence of the last witness.

PC Edward Hodson, stationed at Earith, said that on Saturday morning last, about 7.20, he received information that a woman had been found dead in the roadway on Mr Godfrey's farm leading to the river. One field from the river and about 20 yards from the brook adjoining he found the body of a woman lying dead,



face downwards. She was cold and stiff, and her clothes all white rime. Fox was with witness. Her clothes were dirty and frozen stiff about 8" from the bottom, as if they had been wet. He turned the body over and examined the face and hands, and there was a very slight scratch on the left cheek and the left side of the cheek was discoloured from lying on the ground. The tongue was between the teeth. He examined the ground, but there were no marks of a struggle. He could trace her footprints down the roadway where she had walked. He concluded she had had a fit, or had poisoned herself. He got a cart and took the body home, as he could see it was Mrs Munns. The hands were clenched and very dirty. Later in the afternoon in company with Inspector Storey, they visited the place and searched about. They went to the brook nearby about 20 yards off. Witness could see marks where someone had got down into the brook, and walked along 3 yards, and then got out. She had apparently taken hold of an elder bush to get out. The footprints at the bottom of the bank corresponded with the boots worn by the deceased. It appeared that she was making her way home again. One place appeared as though she had tried to get out, and had to go further down to do so. The brook bank showed that she had made considerable endeavours to get out again, and had failed until she had got hold of the elder bush. They were some barbed wire along one side of the brook. The doctor was then recalled, and in reply to Inspector Storey said the scratches on the face might have been caused by the barbed wire spoken of by PC Hodson. If she was a long time in the water endeavouring to climb out of this very deep brook she would be very much exhausted, and if she had had a good deal of alcohol she would be more liable to get into a comatose condition more quickly. There were 14 degrees of frost that night. The coroner said there was no doubt that the woman was exhausted, lay down to sleep, and died from exposure. He would suggest, therefore, that the jury should return a verdict of "found dead". The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the coroners suggestion.

There was more trouble in 1907 when there was a theft at the pub that resulted in two men being charged:

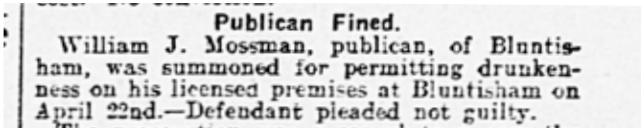
THEFT AT A PUBLHOUSE.
Thomas Aspinall and Henry Barthorp, labourers, of Somersham, were charged with stealing about 4s. from the "White Swan," Bluntisham.
Eugene Allen said she was housekeeper to her brother-in-law, who was landlord of the "White Swan." On Friday defendants twice came to the house for beer. When they paid they could see her put the money in the till. On the second occasion she went into the kitchen, and one of defendants came to the door to speak to her. She heard a glass fall, but when she went to see what it was the men were gone. She went into the bar and missed the money out of the till. She found sixpence there and a shilling on the floor. She thought there would be about 4s. or 5s. in the till, including a 2s. piece.
Mrs. Oliver gave corroborative evidence. Walter Henry Newton, grocer, of Colne, said on Friday Barthorp came to his shop for some tobacco, etc., and paid with a 2s. piece.
John Wallis, groom, of Bluntisham, said he saw defendants about 3 o'clock. He followed them till he met the policeman. He was sure they were the two men.
P.C. Hodson said on receiving information he went in search of defendants, and found them in the "Waggon and Horses." He took them to Somersham Police Station, where they were

Frank Munns was still the landlord when there was more trouble in 1908:

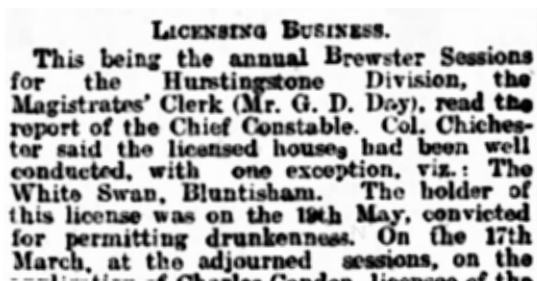
pleaded guilty.—Fined 10s.
AFTER CLOSING TIME: AN INCIDENT AT BLUNTISHAM.
Harry Purchase, Herbert Hudson, William Walker, James Allgood, John Benton, and Arthur Purchase, all of Bluntisham, were charged with being on licensed premises during prohibited hours on 31st ult.—Defendants pleaded guilty.
P.C. Hodson said at about 10.20 p.m. he saw the back gate of the "White Swan," Bluntisham, open. He went in and saw a light in the kitchen, and, the blind not being fully down, he could see into the room. The defendants were all there, and on the table there were glasses of beer and gingerbeer. He watched the house for three-quarters of an hour, and saw that the glasses were refilled. He went into the house, and defendants said they had been to Cambridge, and, on getting to the house, the landlord asked them in to have a drink.
The Bench fined defendants 5s. each.
Frank Munns, landlord of the "White Swan" Inn, Bluntisham, was summoned for permitting persons to be on his licensed premises during prohibited hours on 31st May, and he pleaded not guilty. The evidence of the police in the previous case was repeated, and, on the landlord being spoken to, he said the parties named had been to Cambridge, and he had asked them to come into the house and have a drink. He thought he had a right to do so.—Defendant was fined £2 and costs.



In the 1911 census, Frank Munns (39) is still the landlord but appears to have a new wife Louisa Ann Munns aged 26 and their daughter Violet aged two. How long they stayed here after the census is hard to know, but in 1913 the licence holder was William Joseph Mossman. He in turn got in to some difficulty with the law:



This event and perhaps others led to Mr Mossman having trouble in renewing his licence. In 1914 he wasn't granted a renewal:



In the 1921 census, George Prime is listed as living at the pub with his occupation being that of Farmer. With his wife Elizabeth and two children, there is no reference to them running a pub or holding a licence. In 1939, Lily Leek is listed at the pub and is described as a licensed victualler. How long she was there is impossible to know as there are no records in her name and that are linked to the pub. In 1947 tragedy once again struck the pub, when

the Landlord's wife, Mrs Pryke was killed during a storm. A legend that is still retold in the pub today;



The Swan is still in operation today in 2026, with a new landlord in place.