

A HISTORY OF THE CHERRY GARDENS PUB,

by CLARE KENYON, AUGUST 2020



When I first started my research into the history of the Cherry Gardens pub, I thought it would be good to put it into some kind of context, by first looking at the history of British pubs in general and how they developed over the years into what we see today.



My research took me to very useful website: Historic UK which describes itself as the first website of its kind dedicated to the history and heritage of Britain and also claims to

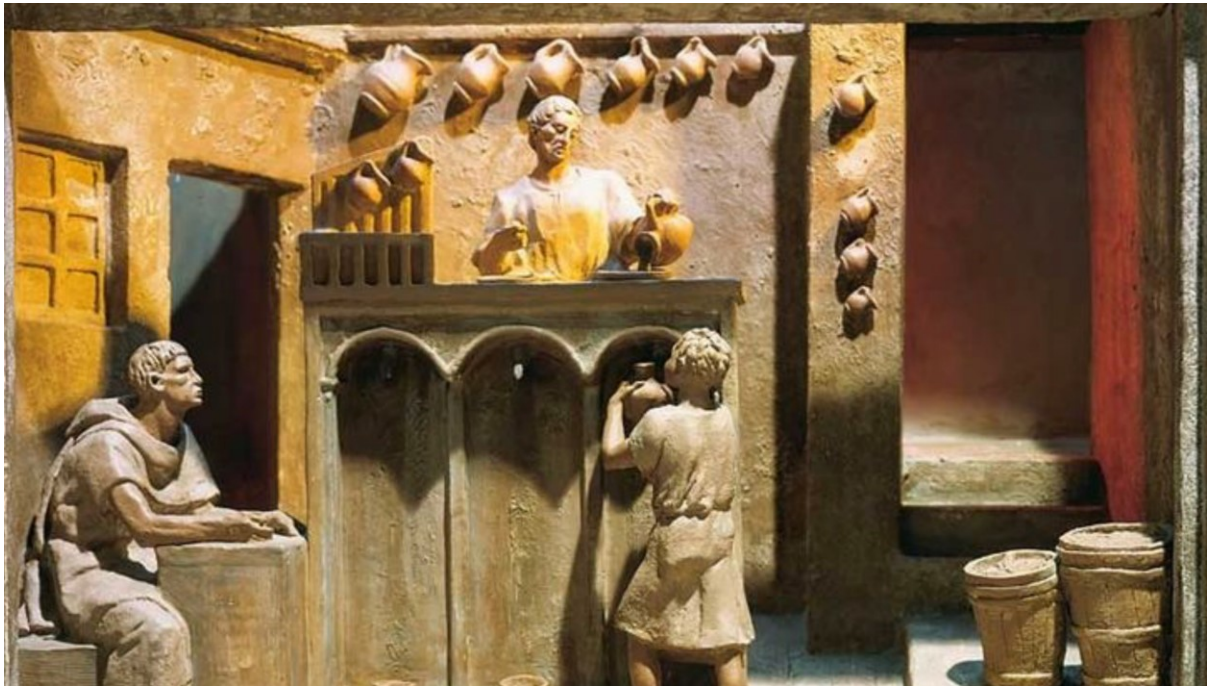
have the largest online history magazine in the UK. This where I found some really interesting facts on the history of British Pubs.



British Pubs are renowned the world over, and until recently they weren't just a place to stop off for a drink, but also unique social hubs and very often the focus of community life the length and breadth of the country, often reflecting the day to day life of the Communities they served. There are many soap operas on TV where the pub is used as the centre for different storylines, for example the Rovers Return in Corrie, the Woolpack in Emmerdale, the Vic in Eastenders, and not forgetting the Bull in the long-standing radio soap the Archers.



So, when did pubs actually start? Well it appears that British pubs, although not as we now know them, actually started life as Italian wine bars and date back almost 2000 years.



It was an invading Roman army that first brought Roman Roads, Roman Towns and Roman Pubs, known as Tabernae to British shores in 43AD. Such Tabernae or shops that sold wine were quickly built alongside Roman Roads to help to quench the thirst of the legionary troops. The Tabernae would hang vine leaves outside to show that they sold wine. But in Britain as vine leaves are rare (due to the climate) small evergreen bushes were substituted instead. One of the first Roman tavern signs was the Bush.



It was ale however, not wine that was the native British brew, and it appears that these Tabernae quickly adapted to provide the locals with their favourite tippale with the word Tabernae eventually being corrupted to tavern. Early pubs hung long poles or ale stakes

which might have been used to stir the ale, outside their doors. If both wine and ale were sold then both bush and pole would be hung outside.



These taverns or ale houses not only survived but continued to adapt to an ever-changing clientele through all the different invaders ranging from the Angles, Saxons, Jutes through to the Vikings. The native British brew of Ale was originally made without hops and the Anglo Saxons established Ale houses that may have grown out of domestic dwellings. In around 970AD, one Anglo Saxon King Edgar, even attempted to limit the number of ale houses in any one village. He is also said to have been responsible for introducing a drinking measure known as the pegs as a means of controlling the amount of alcohol an individual could consume, hence the expression 'to take someone down a peg or two' Taverns and ale houses were actually private houses which provided food and drink to their guests whilst inns offered accommodation for weary travellers.



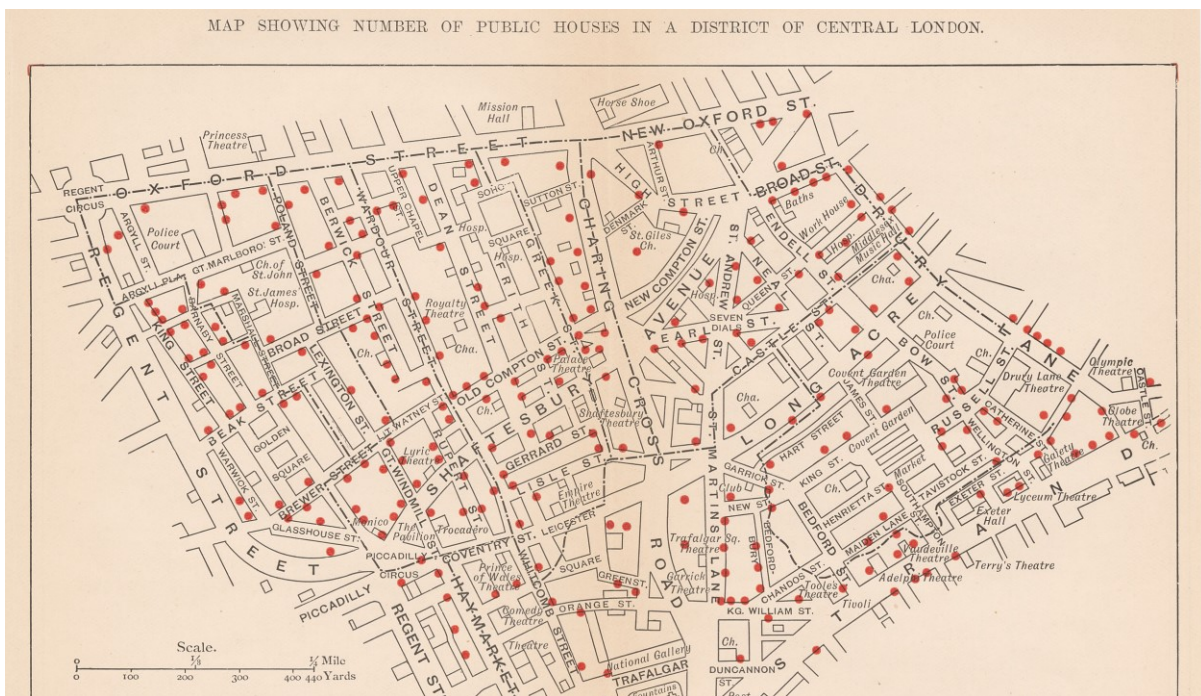
Inns also served military purposes and one of the oldest dating back from 1189 is Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem in Nottingham. It is said to have acted as a recruitment centre for volunteers to King Richard 1st The Lion Heart on his crusade to the holy lands. The naming of inns and pubs became common by the 12th century and with pub names became pub signs, as the majority of people could not read or write. In 1393 King Richard 11 passed an act making it compulsory for all pubs and inns to have a sign in order to identify them to the official Ale taster. Ale brewed with hops was gradually introduced in the 14th and 15th centuries and became known as beer. Ever since then Inn names and signs have reflected and followed British life at the time.



This is a painting by artist Henry Singleton in 1790 entitled The Ale House Door and it gives us a glimpse of what went on inside the ale houses. Ale houses, inns and taverns collectively became known as public houses and then simply as pubs around the reign of King Henry V11. By 1550 most brewing included hops and the expression Ale house and Beer house became synonymous. A little later in 1552 an Act was passed that required innkeepers to have a license in order to run a pub. Before King Henry V11 and the reformation many pubs had a religious themed name, for example the Crossed Keys, the emblem of St Peter. When Henry split with the Catholic Church names were changed from religious themes to the Kings Head, or the Rose and Crown etc.



The Red Lion is probably the most common name for a pub and originates from the time of James 1st England and V1 of Scotland who came to the throne in 1603. James ordered that the heraldic red lion of Scotland be displayed on all buildings of importance, including pubs. Many signs have royal links, for instance most White Lion inns date back from the time of Edward 1V and the White Boar was the emblem of Richard 111



In 1557 it is estimated that there were some 17000 ale houses, 2000 inns and 400 taverns throughout England and Wales. Taking account of the population of the period that would equate to around one pub for every 200 persons. This map shows the number of pubs in a small district of central London in 1899. I think a map of all the pubs in Wigan would have looked similar ... a pub on every corner.



Coffee and tea were introduced into Britain around the mid-1600s and tea houses and coffee houses began to spring up but their prohibitive prices ensured that they remained the preserve of the rich and famous, leaving the pubs for the working classes.



Just a couple of decades later however, things changed dramatically following the accession of William of Orange in 1688 when cheap spirits such as brandy from France and gin from Holland hit the shelves of the pubs. The social problems caused by the gin era of 1720 to 1750 are recorded in the William Hogarth engravings Beer Street and Gin Lane. No licenses were required to make spirits and thousands of gin shops sprung up all over England. Because of its cheapness gin became popular with the poor, eventually leading to the Gin craze. The drunkenness and lawlessness created by gin was seen to

lead to ruination and degradation of the working classes. Gin was even referred to as mothers ruin. The gin acts of 1736 and 1751 reduced gin consumption to a quarter of its previous level and returned some semblance of order back to its pubs, and forced gin makers to sell only to licensed premises and to put drinking establishments under the control of local magistrates.



The age of the stagecoach heralded yet another new era for the pubs of the time as coaching inns were established on strategic routes up and down the country. Here we can see the Boars Head, on Wigan Road. The pub sits on a very old crossroads between Wigan, Chorley and Standish. This 13th Century coaching inn, is one of the oldest in England, and has been a way station both for medieval pilgrims and for criminals travelling to execution. Such inns provided food, drink and accommodation for passengers and crew alike, as well as changes of fresh horses for their continued journey. The passengers themselves generally consisted of two distinct groups, the more affluent who could afford the relative luxury of travelling inside the coach and the others who would be left clinging on to the outside for dear life. The insiders would of course receive the warmest greetings and be welcomed into the inn keeper's private parlour or salon (saloon) the outsiders meanwhile would get no further than the inns bar room. The Boars Head until a quite recent refurbishment had retained all of its small rooms and little nooks and crannies, but unfortunately these have since been removed to better reflect the times we live in. We can still see this in some of our more traditional pubs today such as The Bowling Green Pub also on Wigan Lane with a lounge bar at the front and a vault at the back which are indicative of the times when the better dressed would expect to be separated from the scruffier dressed workers.



The age of the stagecoach although relatively short-lived, did establish the precedent for the class distinctions that was continued in rail travel from the 1840s onwards. Like the railways that operated a first, second and even a third-class service, the pubs evolved in a similar manner. Pubs of that time, even relatively small ones would typically be split into several rooms and bars in order to cater for differing types and classes of customer. Here is a recent photograph of the Railway pub in Ramsbotham which was built in 1848 reflecting the growth of the railways.



This slide shows 2 wigan pubs which are still standing and used today, reflecting the success and influence of the railways in the area, the Swan and Railway pub and the Victoria Hotel just by Wallgate station. Both were established in 1898 and each of the buildings has a grade 2 listing status.



Cherry Gardens Hotel ... Why did I choose to look at the history of this pub, when we have one of the oldest pubs in England, the Boars Head just further up Wigan Lane, which must have lots more history to tell? So why the cherries? Well it is a local iconic landmark ... I think everyone in Wigan must know the Cherries roundabout ... Or has frequented the pub at some stage in their life ... some of you may have enjoyed, what was known as 'Doing the Lane' on a Friday or Saturday night with friends ... Doing 'The Lane' was once a wigan tradition, it started with a drink at the Cherry Gardens pub, then a walk on down the lane to the Bellingham, onto the Saracens Head or the Millstone, and if you were roughing it it may have included the Fox and Goose, but it usually ended at the bottom of the Lane at the Royal Oak for last orders. Whether it was just to meet up with the locals for a chat and a drink, or to take part in the pub quiz, back in the day The Cherries was renowned as the place to go ...



But it was none of those ... what actually sparked my interest in the history of the Cherry Gardens Pub was when a lady named Helen approached me asking if she could pay to erect a memorial bench in The Cherries Community Garden looking over to the pub, in respect of two generations of her family, her grandfather, her father and her uncle ...

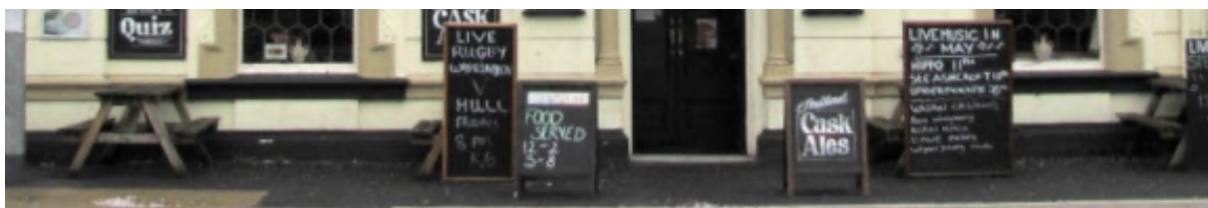


The bench was finally put in place in the Cherries Community Garden last month. I asked Helen what she knew about the history of the pub and the life and times of her grandfather James Norris when he moved there in 1902 and became the longest serving landlord of the pub from 1902 until his death at the grand old age of 80 in 1948. Helen then sent me some notes about her memories, and like most of us she wished that she had asked more questions when her family members whilst they were still alive.



This is what Helen had to say: “My grandfather James Norris became the licensee of the Cherry Gardens Hotel in 1902 and remained there until his death in 1948. The building looked completely different then. It had a plain brick frontage and was set well back from the road. Originally, its title was The Cherry Garden Hotel, the ‘s’ was added later, possibly when the building was updated. There was a bowling green on the site and food and refreshments were available for customers. Occasional concerts with afternoon tea were also held. In 1904 James married a lady from Blackpool named Frances Johnson Smith. He was 36 and she was 19. (I wonder if the figures standing at the door in the photograph are James and Frances?) They lived together at the Hotel and Frances gave birth to my Uncle Charles Kaye in 1906 and my dad Arthur in 1911. Four years later in 1915 they were divorced due to her adultery, committed on various occasions in Haigh Plantations. The marriage was dissolved and my grandfather gained sole custody of his two sons. My grandmother returned to Blackpool after a short stay at The Temperance Hotel, and was estranged from her sons for many years. Neither Frances or James remarried. A housekeeper was appointed to help with the family and there were two servants to work in the pub. My uncle was sent to boarding school and my dad eventually attended Wigan Grammar School as a private pupil. The brothers were never close to their mother, although we as a family, my mum, dad and my 2 sisters visited her during our annual holidays in Blackpool. The hotel had new licensees after 1948, who also stayed there for many years. It’s possible that for close to 100 years the Cherry Gardens Hotel had only two resident tenants.

This is a brief explanation of why there are only three names mentioned on the memorial bench in the Community Garden.” After reading Helens notes I was immediately motivated to try to find out more about the history of this small pub on Wigan Lane, I wondered what other stories it may tell about life in Wigan at the time ... almost like a window on the world looking at the social history of the times.



Grade U

Cherry Garden Hotel

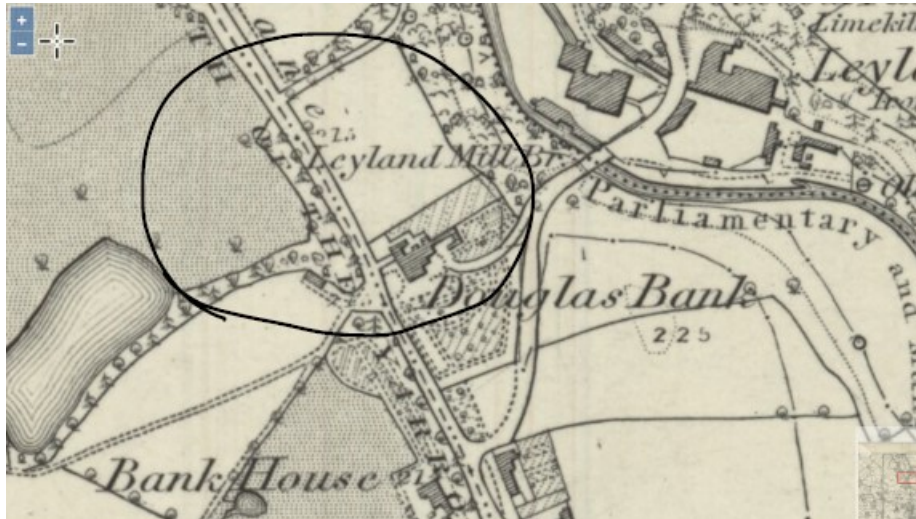
263 Wigan Lane, Wigan

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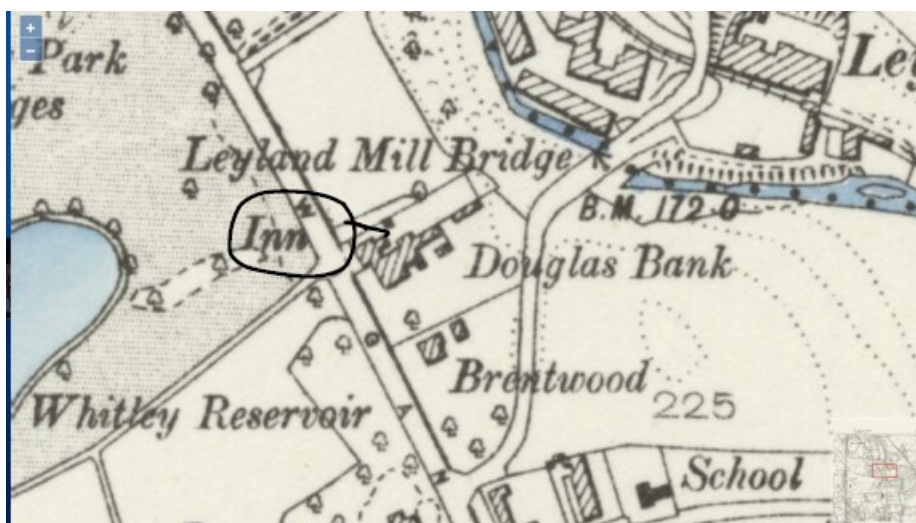
Part of Group:

At Risk: **No**

My first port of call was to look on Wigan Buildings.co.uk, where I found the pub listed as a building of local interest. However, I was puzzled by the date of the building 1880, and it says it was re-fronted in 1905 as I'd always believed it to be much older. I set out to try to find more information.



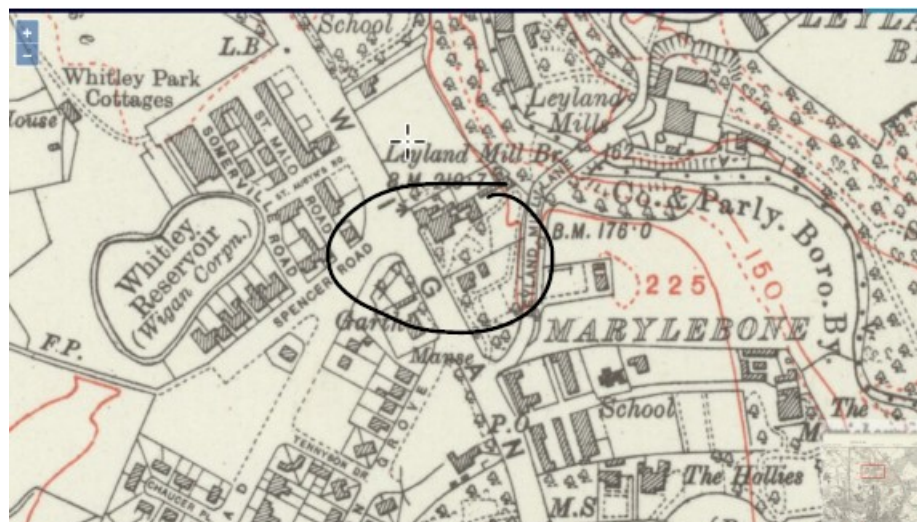
I thought a good place to start would be with early maps, and the earliest I could find of the area was surveyed in 1841. This part of Wigan Lane was well away from the smoke filled, industrialised, grimy town centre of Wigan. Wigan Lane escaped the worst ravages of the industrial activities and during this period it was quite rural in character providing a welcome airway for the town rising gently as it does towards the high ground north of Wigan. The land on which the Cherry Gardens pub was built lies directly between Leyland Mill Lane and Brock Mill Lane and was just a stone's throw from Brock Mill Foundry, Haigh Foundry and the stone cottages which housed the mill and Haigh estate workers. There were also a few very grand houses and villas built along Wigan Lane. The circled area clearly shows one of those grand houses, Douglas Bank House and grounds, but there is no mention of a pub, and if you focus on the far-left side of the building it appears to have a completely straight side.



A later map of the same area dated 1889 shows a slight extension from the straight line indicating the addition of another room/building, and it's listed on the map as an Inn. A part of the field to the left of it has been divided off from the rest of the field. It is still semi-rural,



Here it is again in 1907 showing more residential properties in the area. The tramway built along Wigan Lane probably facilitated increased development interest along the Lane Douglas Bank House is showing the same outline as the 1889 which clearly shows the adjoined pub building. It is curious as to why the owners of Douglas Bank House would have agreed to a pub being attached to the side of their house.



Same area in 1927.



Again in 1948, where it can clearly be seen that Wigan Lane has had a relatively intense phase of development between 1875 and 1939 with the majority of the properties being mid to late Victorian, Edwardian or inter war. The maps show that the pub wasn't there in 1845, however it shows it is clearly there by 1889. So, this fits with the Wigan Buildings date of 1880. The field to the left of the pub has also had houses built on it, leaving just the space where the Cherries Community Garden is today. I wanted to find out what was there between the period of the first map in 1841 and the 1889 map, but I couldn't find any Ordnance Survey maps for this missing time period. My next point in my research was the Find My Past site to search the census records for the address Cherry Gardens, Wigan Lane, and I'm delighted to say I had some success.

4 results

Schedule	House	Street	Parish	Registration District	County
6	—	Cherry Gardens	Wigan	Wigan	Lancashire
	—	Cherry Gardens	Wigan	Wigan	Lancashire
	—	Cherry Gardens	Wigan	Wigan	Lancashire
	Wood Field	Cherry Gardens	Wigan	Wigan	Lancashire

The 1861 census under the street name Cherry Gardens lists 4 properties: The first one lists a family named Hubard and the head of the family is listed as a licensed victualler. Two of the other properties list families and the fourth property is listed as Woodfield House, Cherry Gardens. This was the next big house along the Lane from Douglas Bank House. I assumed from this vital piece of evidence that there was indeed a pub of some kind on the same site or very close to where the existing pub was eventually built in 1880.

CHERRY GARDENS, WIGAN LANE.

Mr. Peace appeared on behalf of James Topping, who applied for a spirit licence at Cherry Gardens beerhouse, Wigan-lane. He dared say it was within the cognizance of their worships that a beerhouse licence at this house had been held by the applicant for eight years, and that Mr. and Mrs. Topping bore a very good character. The house was situated in a very convenient position, having a garden and a large cherry orchard at the back. It had been said that it would be a great advantage to the people of this country if they were more in the habit of taking their refreshments in the open air, and here there was an opportunity for those

I then looked at the 1871 census to check out my theory that a pub had existed at the Cherry Gardens before 1880 and sure enough I found an entry listed as the Cherry Garden Inn and listed as living there were a Mr James Topping aged 50 born in Orrell in 1821, along with his wife Mary. His occupation, a beer seller. I then did further searches on James Topping and came up with this from the British Newspaper Archive. It was reported in the Wigan Observer and District Advertiser on Saturday the 29th August 1874 that an application for a spirit license at the Cherry Garden Beer house, Wigan Lane had been requested. It read: 'Mr Peace appeared on behalf of James Topping who applied for a spirit license at Cherry Gardens Beer House, Wigan Lane. He dared say it was within the cognizance of their worships that a beer house license at this house had been held by the applicant for 8 years and that Mr and Mrs Topping bore a very good character. The house was situated in a very convenient position having a garden and a large cherry orchard at the back. It had been said that it would be a great advantage to the people of this country if they were more in the open air, and here there was an opportunity for those in this neighbourhood to do so if the application were granted. The application was not made on behalf of any large brewery, but on behalf of a man who had by his activity become possessed of a little property, and who with his wife lived together in a thrifty manner and as an example to their neighbours. He might state that the house had been occupied as a beer house by members of the applicant's family for 43 years, and a spirit license was applied for about 7 years ago and was not granted. The population in the locality was rapidly increasing and a licensed house was much needed. He, Mr Peace, submitted a memorial in favour of the granting of the license, signed by the most respectable people in the neighbourhood' This is such an important piece of evidence because when Mr Peace states: 'That the house had been occupied as a beer house by members of the applicants family for 43 years' It is proof that the Cherry Gardens Beer House existed from at least 1831 ... almost 200 years ago.

It would also appear that Mr Topping either inherited the property or bought it from a family member: 'by his activity he became possessed of a little property' Or maybe he

could have won it over a game of cards ... who knows? I can only assume that the application to grant a spirit's license was successful because just 6 years later in 1880 a brand-new Cherry Gardens Inn opened on or near the site.



On June 30th 1880 an advert was placed in the Wigan Observer and District Advertiser offering for sale, 'The Cherry Gardens Public House' described as 'having a frontage of 58 feet onto Wigan Lane and it possesses an area of about 1880 superficial square yards and is subject to an annual chief rent of £6 and 6 shillings. The bids did not reach the reserve and the lot was withdrawn' It was advertised again on 30th July 1880 for sale by private treaty, and I can only assume that this time it was successful. The 1881 census shows - Samuel Hutchinson as the Inn Keeper. Probably the first licensee ... I do wonder if this was a temporary arrangement because interestingly enough on the 1871 census it actually shows the same Samuel Hutchinson then aged 33yrs as living at 179 Wigan Lane with his wife and 2 children and his job an excavator. The 1881 census also shows James Topping also living in Wigan Lane now as a retired licensee. In 1883 it shows a transfer of license from Samuel Hutchinson to John Whaley and then shortly after it is transferred to brothers John William, and Peter Polding, who were then licensees at the pub for 19 years until Helens Grandfather, James Norris took it over in 1902 There are many interesting articles which describes very well the social history during this 19 year period of the Polding brothers. In 1881 there was an accident outside the pub involving a horse and gig which had mounted the pavement and killed a man who had been standing outside the pub chatting with a group of men. In 1889 there was what was described as a fracas outside the pub on Wigan Lane between a coal dealer and a fish merchant. In 1893 it was reported that 'an extra ordinary case at Wigan involving singular police evidence when the licensee Peter Polding was charged with unlawfully selling intoxicating liquor to two men who were already drunk' The case was dismissed. In 1894 Peter Polding who was described as a gentleman and a licensed

victualler of the Cherry Gardens Hotel Wigan Lane, was sworn onto the Grand Jury at the Wigan Assize Court. 'it was a light calendar the number of cases being only five. Four of the prisoners could neither read or write and the other could only read and write imperfectly.

Four of the prisoners pleaded guilty: A charwoman aged 46 pleaded guilty to stealing a pair of boots which were hanging outside a shop, she took hold of them, looked around, then cut them down and walked away to the yard of the Black Horse yard where she was followed and arrested. She was sent to gaol for a month with hard labour. The second case was another charwoman who also pleaded guilty to stealing a shawl, a knife, a fork and a spoon from a house she worked at, she was sent to gaol for 2 months with hard labour. The next case involved 2 colliers indicted for stealing £2.10 shillings from a man from Kearsley who came to Wigan to sell a pony. He sold it and was in a flush of money. At 7pm he went into a pub on Miry Lane and stood drinks all round, he then left but the two accused followed him, stole his money and ran off. They denied it but the jury found them guilty and sent one to prison for 6 months and the other with no previous convictions to prison for 4 months. The fourth case involved 5 men charged with stealing 11 hens and 1 cock sent to gaol for 3 months. The last case involved a painter aged 25 who was indicted for passing himself off as a policeman and obtaining a suit of clothes by false pretences, he was also sent to gaol for 3 months. In 1902, in the Wigan Observer is an article announcing a Decree Nisi between licensee John William Polding and his wife of 17 years on the grounds of her adultery.



CHERRY GARDEN HOTEL, WIGAN LANE, WIGAN.
MONDAY, MAY 14th, 1901.
WILLIAM ASHTON
will SELL BY AUCTION, for Messrs. J. and P. Polding, as above (in consequence of the expiration of their tenancy), the **OUT-DOOR EFFECTS**, nine well-bred Store Pigs, Float, and a portion of the Household Furniture.
Further particulars will be given in posters and next week's papers, and may be had in the meantime from the Auctioneer, 35, New Market-street, Wigan.

In 1901 the Polding brother's tenancy was nearing an end and adverts started to appear in the local press. Here is an advert announcing that there will be forthcoming sales of furnishings and outdoor items such as 9 well-bred store pigs etc.

BEQUEST TO WIGAN POOR.

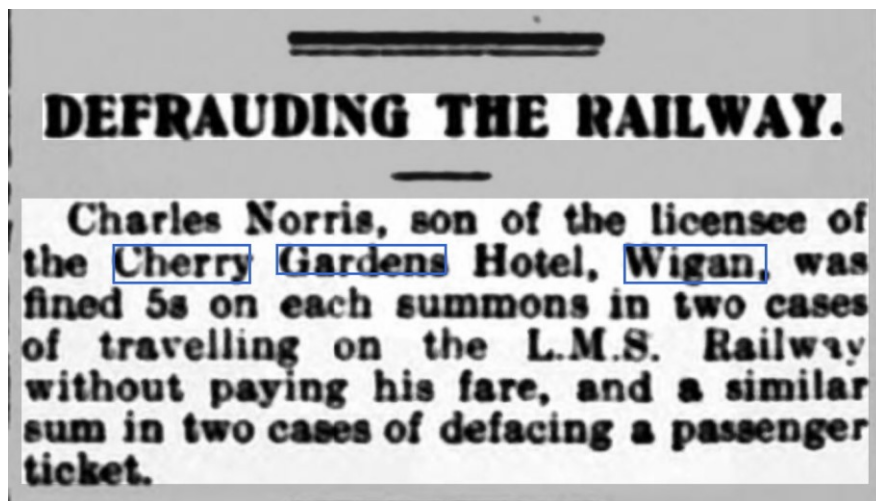
Mr. Peter Polding, of Heaton-street, Wigan, retired licensed victualler, left £7,019, of which £6,632 is net personalty. Testator bequeathed £1,000 for a "Peter Polding charity," of which the income is to be applied in the purchase of clothing for forty poor families in Wigan, the amount to be divided as nearly as possible in equal shares, and directing his trustees to consult the Chief Constable of Wigan as to the most deserving cases.

Peter Polding eventually retired to Heaton Street Wigan and in his will he left a sum of £7,019 and he bequeathed £1000 to set up a Peter Polding Charity to provide clothing for 40 poor families, in Wigan and the trustees were to consult the Chief Constable of Wigan to the most deserving cases.



In 1902 Helen's Grandfather James Norris took over the tenancy of the pub, and as told previously by Helen he married a barmaid and it also ended in divorce under similar circumstances to that of the previous tenant John William Polding. In December 1903 there was a report of a 'Wigan Corporation, Street Department Employees Gathering at the pub. The employees were involved in the widening of the road. They enjoyed a knife

and fork tea and after which they retired to the parlour where the rest of the evening was spent in conviviality. Later a vote of thanks was given to the host Mr Norris and the hostess Mrs Green and the evening closed just before 11pm with the singing of the national anthem.' There are lots of articles for this period showing the results of many bowling matches, and lots of adverts for domestic servants In 1907 there's an advert for a nurse girl ... presumably to look after the baby Charles Norris In 1908 there was a tramway fatality on Wigan Lane involving a horse and cart and a tram which was travelling from the Boars Head pub to Wigan, it was going too fast and failed to sound an alarm as it travelled around a bend in the road. The case was heard at the Assize Court and was against Wigan Corporation.



In 1929 there was an article in the Wigan Observer where Charles Norris was fined 5 shillings for defrauding the railway.



In 1939 on the evening before the start of World War 2 a register was made to show where everyone was living at the time. The Norris's were listed at the Cherry Gardens Hotel and Charles Norris is listed as Manager to the licensee, it also lists him as a Special Constable, so his earlier misdemeanour cannot have been taken that seriously. His brother Arthur Norris was listed as a motor engineer and also ARP volunteer at Chorley. ARP stands for Air RAID Precautions. The slide shows an ARP officer on duty in a London street advising people what to do and where to go for assistance the morning after a heavy German bombing raid. Hopefully Arthur never had to do this.



And to finish off my research into the history of the Cherry Gardens pub here is a photograph courtesy of Wigan world showing the pub in 1972. I will continue with my research of the pub to include the period from 1948 when James Norris died through to the present day,