

CHAPTER SIX

THE RISE OF SLOUGH

Although Slough is mentioned in records as early as 1196, and again in a lay subsidy of the reign of Henry III, (1) there is nothing to show how or when Slough originated, but its existence is almost certainly due to the old London Road (now the A.4), and the presence of brick-earth in the neighbourhood.

The Roman road from London to the west crossed the Thames at Staines, but another road was in existence by the 11th century, and possibly earlier. When the royal residence was removed by William I from Old Windsor to his new fortress at Windsor — which was completed in 1070 — a road was made connecting Windsor with 'the London and Henley Road at Slough', (2) which followed much the same route as the A.4 until it reached Stoke Poges Lane. From there it ran slightly to the north of the present Bath Road to Burnham (then a market town), over Taplow Common and through Cliveden Woods to Cookham (also a market town), crossing the Thames by a ford at Babham End. The first bridge across the river at Maidenhead was built about 1280, and the traffic was then diverted through the hamlet of South Ellington, which developed into present-day Maidenhead. (3)

There was also a ford across the Chalvey Brook, on the road between Eton and Slough, until 1253, when Walter le Teb of Eton, with the aid of voluntary gifts collected from merchants and others, built a wooden bridge, half of which was in the parish of Eton, and the other half in the parish of Upton.

In wet seasons the Chalvey Brook became so flooded that no-one on foot, or even on horseback, could pass over it, and by 1303 the bridge was in such a dilapidated state that a jury was appointed to ascertain the extent of the damage, and whose duty it was to repair it. They found there was no obligation upon anyone to rebuild or sustain it, and the only method of raising money for the purpose was by voluntary gifts. It is probably from this fact that the bridge is known as 'Beggar's Bridge'. (4)

Slough was among the 'vills and hamlets of Upton' enumerated in 1336, (5) and by 1359, Slough had apparently grown considerably, for when Edward III appointed a commission to enclose or lease lands in the neighbourhood of Windsor, and to pull down or sell all unnecessary houses and buildings, some houses at Slough were among those sold. (6)

It is not known when bricks were first made in Slough, but a special kiln was set up here on 23 April, 1442, by order of Henry VI, to supply bricks for building Eton College, but presumably a kiln was in existence already, for by 28 May 66,000 bricks had been delivered. The flow of bricks continued unabated until the college was completed, no less than 2,469,000 bricks being delivered between 1442 and 1551, at 10d. a 1,000. (7)

A new stone bridge was built over the Chalvey Brook to carry this traffic, (8) and in 1443-44 William Slotte was paid 6s. 8d. 'for digging of ye hyewaysyde betwixt Slough and Eton for the carriage of brike', (9) and in 1437 a grant was made to John Eyston 'groom of the King's picherhous' of 'a certain wage for the keeping of the way between le Slowe and Eton'. (10)

Apart from these brief references, nothing is known of early Slough, but it is easy enough to imagine life here in those days. Although Slough, as part of a country parish, was not itself the scene of any historical events, some of the most colourful episodes of these earlier centuries took place in the immediate neighbourhood. It is a safe conjecture that some at least of the villagers went sight-seeing on such occasions as the signing of the Magna Charter at Runnymede; the tournaments held at Windsor; the founding of Burnham Abbey; and royal 'progresses', whether by barge upon the Thames, or through Slough and along the road to Eton. Two memorable processions certainly passed through Slough in the 16th century. In 1519, Henry VIII celebrated the festival of St. George with great pomp, travelling from Richmond '... to Hounslow, where he was met by the Knights of the Garter and their suites, each Duke bringing with him 60 horses, each marquess 50, and so on in proportion. The gorgeous cavalcade passed through Slough, and then through Eton . . .' (11) On 24 October, 1537, the funeral of Queen Jane Seymour passed through Slough, with the hearse 'drawn by six horses draped with black velvet'. (12)

The chief means of livelihood were agriculture and brick-making, and the women most probably earned a little extra by lace-making in their spare time. The making of thread-lace was introduced into Buckinghamshire as early as 1463, and bone-lace (the original name for pillow-lace) was mentioned in 1577. The industry was very flourishing in the 17th and succeeding centuries.

'Slowe Farm' is mentioned for the first time in 1609, when its owner 'Thomas Duk, sergeant of the Kings maiest Seller esquier' was buried at Upton (13). The farm was on the land later occupied by The Cedars. (see Note 36).

The 'Slowe Field' is first mentioned at the beginning of the 17th century. (14) It was one of the large Open Fields of the parish composed of acre and half-acre strips, and the Award map of 1819 shows it was bounded by the Bath Road on the north, Ragstone Road on the south, Windsor Road on the east, and Ledgers Road on the west – land later occupied by Chalvey Park and the Crescent.

In 1657 the Court, or perhaps a jury chosen for the purpose, made a presentment about 'the Posts and Rails on the Lord's Wast(e) in Slow Street'. A 'Street' was probably a paved road, and the jury decided they needed 'Time to enquire whether they were set up with the Lord's license'. The same jury complains of 'An antient footway stopt up by a Berne (? Barn), long since built at the east end of Slow'.

A reference to Legh in the reign of Edward III is only conjecturally a reference to present day Upton Lea, but there can be no doubt about the half-yearly rents for 1663:

James Chapman for a house and land in Upton called Lee ffarme	£2. 0s. 6d.
Isaac Nocket for another house and land in Upton called the Lee	8s. 6d. (15)

THE COACHING ERA

It was the introduction of coaches, and the ceremony of the Eton Montem, which first gave Slough a more than local importance.

Although Mary Tudor rode in a coach to her Coronation in 1553, it was not until 1580 that coaches came into general use. Stow, writing in 1598, says '... of late years the use of coaches is taken up and made so common that there is neither distinction of time nor difference of people observed; for the world runs on wheels with many whose parents were glad to go on foot'.

Like most innovations, coach travel aroused violent opposition from the die-hards, and in 1601, an Act of Parliament was passed 'to prevent the effeminacy of men riding in coaches', but by 1625, coach travel had become so popular the Act had to be repealed. (16)

With the necessity of stabling large numbers of horses at definite stages on regular coach routes, Slough soon became established as the second stage from London on the road to the West. An echo of the increasing travel is given in the Parish Registers, which record the death of travellers on the Bath Road. In 1572 'Richard Pygott of the pyshe of S.Marie at the Hill in London as he was travelling to Bath for the recovery of his health died and was buried'. In 1587, 'Helen a strange mayden who died at Slowe at one Winterton's house' was buried at Upton. There were beggars on the road, too, for in 1594 there is an entry 'Aboute that tyme were buried the poore folks wch were strangers and wente about for their lyvinge two men and two women'.

Even private coaches were springless and far from comfortable on the execrable roads, but the earliest public transport by long covered waggons was even worse. Fynes Moryson, Gent., who published an Itinerary in 1617, describes this method of transport as '... so tedious, by reason they must take waggon very early, and come very late to their Innes, as none but women and people of inferiour condition, or strangers (as Flemmings with their wives and servants) use to travell in this sort'.

The stage coaches, which began to supplement the long waggons about 1640, were also far from comfortable although hailed with enthusiasm by a contemporary writer as allowing everyone to be 'transported to any place sheltered from foul weather and foul ways, free from endamaging

one's health and one's body by hard jogging or over-violent motion on horse back, and this not only at the low price of about a shilling for every five miles, but with such velocity and speed in one hour as the foreign post can but make in one day'. As the stage coaches then had no springs or windows, and carried four, six or eight passengers inside, those who travelled by them must have been more remarkable for stoicism than for effeminacy, of which they were still being accused. (17)

In spite of the discomfort, coach travel was luxury itself, compared with the methods of travel which preceded it, and promoted travelling for social purposes, and not solely from necessity. With this development, many new inns were built at the 'stages', and by the 17th century there were a number of inns at Slough and Salt Hill, and one at Upton, and in the 18th century this number had been considerably augmented.

The earliest map giving any idea of Slough is Camden's, dated 1675, (18) which shows the Bath Road, crossed by the Tetsworth Brook on the east, and the Chalvey Brook on the west, and with turnings to Ditton, Langley, Wexham, Upton, Windsor, Stoke and Farnham, corresponding with the principal roads of the present day, but with buildings only around the Crown crossroads and at Upton and Salt Hill, and approximately on the site of the modern Ivy Parade (Nos. 278 to 285, High Street) — a plan shown almost unaltered on successive maps for nearly a century and a half afterwards.

Although a considerable number of coaches must have passed through Slough in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the great days of coaching date from 1667, when a coach was advertised under the heading 'Flying-Machine', to perform the whole journey from London to Bath in three days. The coach was scheduled to run three days weekly, and was regarded as the 'last word' in perilous speeding. Even the proprietor appears to have had his doubts about the wisdom of travelling so fast, for he added the words "if God permit" to his advertisement. (19)

Turnpike Roads were inaugurated by Act of Parliament in 1663, but they were by no means general even at the beginning of the 18th century. The Colnbrook Turnpike Trust was brought into being by Act of Parliament in 1727, and was responsible for the road from Cranford Bridge to Maidenhead Bridge, and set up toll-gates, (20) but even 25 years later, the state of the roads in Slough may be gauged from the fact that as late as November, 1752, a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* laments that the roads from London to the West were still 'What God left them after the flood.' No writer of the period could find language harsh enough to describe the conditions on the lanes leading off the highways, which were frequently so bad that coaches were either immovably bogged in the winter, or overturned through the deep ruts in the summer.

The first daily coaches between London and Bath were instituted in 1716 by Thomas Baldwin who, although a Londoner, has a local interest, as he was also landlord of The Crown Inn, Slough. These coaches did the journey in 38 hours, and they held the road for many years against all rivals. (21)

HIGHWAYMEN

The inauguration of the daily coaches also heralded the most flourishing days of the highwaymen who frequented Hounslow Heath and Maidenhead Thicket. Even the authorities came to regard them as an unavoidable evil. Horace Walpole, writing in 1774, says 'Our roads are so infested by highwaymen that it is dangerous stirring out almost by day'. In the middle of the century, the road beyond Hounslow was lined with gibbets, on which were in irons the carcasses of malefactors blackening in the sun.

'Flying Hawkes' terrorised this district for years. He was one of the most celebrated highwaymen of George III's reign, and was noted for his clever disguises, and the rapidity with which he moved from place to place. Harper says that his most notable exploit was at Salt Hill. He was partaking of some refreshment, disguised as a Quaker, when a traveller came into the inn, and boasted that not even six highwaymen should avail to deprive him of a single sixpence. Hawkes quietly left the inn, and after the boaster had driven on about a mile, his chaise was stopped by Hawkes, who told him that the powder had been blown out of the pan of his pistols almost under his nose. He was forced to deliver all his valuables, and the highwayman flung him half-a-crown, saying it would be enough to pay for his turnpikes, and advised him not to brag so much in future. It turned out to be Hawkes's last exploit, for that very evening, when he went to an inn about

20 miles away, he interfered in a fight between two yokels, only to find his wrists seized and handcuffed, and to realise he had been tricked by Bow Street runners. He was duly hanged at Tyburn. (22)

In June, 1757, John Mason, of Cippenham Court Farm, returning home from Windsor Market, was way-laid by two footpads, who robbed him of 25 guineas, and shot him in the stomach, wounding him fatally. (23)

There is a local belief that Dick Turpin (1706–1739) frequented the 'Crooked Billet' at Black Park, and the 'Black Boy' Inn at Slough, but it seems unlikely, as his exploits appear to have been confined to his native country, Essex, and the North. (24)

More plausible is the tradition that Claude Duval (1643–1670) frequented the Black Boy Inn at Slough (see p. 57).

Trouble with footpads continued well into the 19th century. The Windsor Express of 8 October, 1815, reported a particularly daring robbery, when 'Mr. Peckham, returning from Windsor to Slough about 8 p.m., was assaulted by a man near Dr. Herschel's A man was arrested on suspicion, but could not be identified, and was released'.

THE BATH ROAD IN 1782

An account of the Bath Road in 1782 is given by the young German, Pastor Moritz, (25) an Anglophile who travelled on foot, and found himself much despised by waiters and the common people for not going by coach.

' . . . I was now on the road to Oxford. It is a charming fine broad road, and I met on it carriages without number, which, however, on account of the heat, occasioned a dust that was extremely troublesome and disagreeable. The fine green hedges, which border the roads in England, contribute greatly to render them pleasant. This was the case in the road I now travelled, for when I was tired I sat down in the shade under one of the hedges and read Milton. But this relief was soon rendered disagreeable to me, for those who rode or drove past me stared at me with astonishment, and made many significant gestures as if they thought my head deranged; so singular must it have appeared to them to see a man sitting along the side of a public road and reading. I therefore found myself obliged, when I wished to rest myself and read, to look out for a retired spot in some by-lane or cross road

'I had now got over the common, and was once more in a country rich and well cultivated beyond all conception. This continued to be the case as far as Slough, which is twenty miles and a half from London, on the way to Oxford, and from which to the left there is a road leading to Windsor, whose high white castle I have already seen at a distance.

'I made no stay here, but went directly to the right, along a very pleasant high road, between meadows and green hedges, towards Windsor, where I arrived about noon.' (26)

MAIL COACHES

Slough saw the first Mail Coach ever run in England, when a service was instituted between London and Bristol in August, 1784, (27) These coaches were timed to do the journey in 16 hours, and it was the urgent need for the improvement of roads to ensure the maintenance of this speed that led to the development of more durable road surfaces, but it was not until John McAdam (28) became surveyor-general of the Bristol roads in 1815, and was able to put his theories into practice, that a really lasting surface was achieved. The success of macadamization of the highways was generally recognised by 1823, and has remained in use until our own day. (29)

With the introduction of the Mail Coaches, services increased in number and importance in the early years of the 19th century. In the winter of 1800, Thomas de Quincey had a run down to Slough on a fast Bristol mail coach, on his way to Eton. He describes how he fell asleep on the journey, and went further than he intended, and 'found we had reached some place six or seven miles west of Salt Hill'. Although it was then nearly 11 at night, and he was in a very weak state after an illness, he walked back to Slough, but so slowly that he heard a clock in a cottage strike

four as he turned down the road from Slough to Eton. It has been said that he fell asleep in the roadside by the Crown Inn corner (he had no money to spend on a night's lodging), but in his own account he says 'In the road between Slough and Eton', and describes how he was awakened at dawn by a passer-by who was 'apparently studying my physics', (30) and went on his way to Eton, where he hoped to borrow money from a friend.

In the first half of the 19th century mails and post-chaises passed to and from London every half-hour daily from 4 a.m. to 6 p.m. The names of the principal coaches running through Slough in 1830 were:

The Royal Mail to Gloucester and Stroud; also Herne's for Stroud.

The Monarch, Triumph and White Hart for Bath and Bristol.

The Defiance for Oxford.

Clark's and Wyatt's for Marlow.

Bishop's for Wantage.

Kent's for Abingdon.

Tolett's for Burnham.

Dixon's for Henley (31)

The names of the local innholders in the same year were:

The White Hart:	Charles Luff
The Black Boy:	Thomas Ball
The Crown:	Catherine Hazell
The Red Lion:	Thomas Northcroft
The Reindeer:	James Townsend
The Pied Horse:	John Pitt
The Dolphin:	Sarah Davies
The Windmill:	Thomas Botham
The Swan:	William Smith
The Castle:	John Cecil
The Three Tuns:	William Garraway (32)

A WALK ROUND SLOUGH IN THE 1830'S

Slough is fortunate in having recollections of the early 1830's, written in 1896, by Miss M. Mason (who lived at 18, Hencroft Street, Slough) and privately printed (33) in the same year.

The title page reads **A WALK ROUND SLOUGH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT REIGN**, which would mean 1837, but the text is headed Slough as it was about 1830, that is, the beginning of the reign of William IV. As there is no mention of St. Mary's Church, except in the 'additional matter' Miss Mason gives in the preface, dated 3 March, 1896, the earlier date seems to be the correct one.

Miss Mason does not mention Uxbridge Road, or Wexham Road, although Wexham Road is shown on Camden's map of 1675, and Uxbridge Road on John Andrew's map (34) of 1777. Her account is given below as printed, with the 'additional matter' in heavy type in brackets, and notes on the approximate sites to-day.

Stoke Lane, now William Street (35) and Stoke Road

EAST SIDE

The entrance to Slough Farmhouse, now The Cedars, (36) was by gates and a little lodge, where the harness-maker has a house and business; after the house, stables, barns, etc., and corn-

rick yard, extending to about where the Somerset Beerhouse (37) is; beyond that a brickfield, then fields all belonging to the farm. No house until Mr. Howard Vyse's, Stoke Farm.

WEST SIDE

A scrubby elm-tree, where the cottagers living in two little old cottages facing the main road, now High Street, used to beat their mats; behind them, a smithy, black and noisy; then the brick building, which was a bakery, where Cornish now has a shop, was a baker's; then four old cottages, with gardens facing south, ends facing Stoke Lane; after them the hayrick-yard and meadow behind; two cottages occupied by two carters working on the farm; then Great and Little Stoke Fields, since converted into brickfields, and now nearly built over. (38)

WINDSOR ROAD

Next to the Crown corner a little old shop, then Herschels; after that, fields until Arbour Vale Cottages; nothing more until Dutchman's Farm. (The Observatory, called many years ago, Ivy House, was entirely covered with ivy and shrubs. It has been enlarged and altered several times — a story added, porch, etc. The field next, where the houses are now built, used to belong to the Duke of Leeds. When St. Mary's Church was built, he let the parish have sufficient land for a path to the church, and many trees were cut down; the late Mr. Charsley some time since purchased the land. He took in the path next the Observatory, and made the present way to the church.) Opposite to that (i.e., Dutchman's Farm), (39) Willowbrooke, then the turnpike; the old toll house is still in existence. At the top of Arbour Hill (40) there was a three-cornered pond, where the coach-horses used to be taken to be washed; then came Belle Vue, now Beechwood, (41) a little old cottage; (As to Arbour Hill pond, I thought, when writing it, that it seemed an anomaly for it to be on the top of the hill; but it appears not to be such a very unusual occurrence, being dependent upon where there is a spring. It was situated in a sort of angle turning to Chalvey, where the garden to Denmark house is; Chalvey Park was originally all glebe land. The late Mr. Bonsey exchanged about ten acres of meadowland at Upton for part of the field opposite Belle Vue with Mr. Champnes, the then Vicar. Some years afterwards Mr. Bonsey had the pond taken into his land, and sold it to the late Mr. Nixey, who built the four houses now on it.) then long rambling coach-building premises, occupied by Creffield, which were afterwards purchased by the trustees of the turnpike road for the purpose of widening it; a yard at the corner called Bear Yard, in which were some wretched cottages.

MAIN ROAD, NOW HIGH STREET

NORTH SIDE, EAST END

The old Dolphin Inn was where Aldin House now stands, a few cottages and small houses. Sussex Place must have been built about 1830, on land belonging to Slough Farm; then came Brown's, now Turner's Nursery (42) next the house now called The Lawn. Then a public-house, The Crown and Anchor; after that a red house, now Marlborough House, where the one Slough doctor lived, Mr. Robert Mason; then some very old houses, Abbey's Buildings, a path from the road sloping down to them, pulled down some little time since, (43) and Butler and Bowden's shop occupies the site. (44) A little shop at the end of Abbey's Buildings, formerly a butchers, from which, tradition says, a baron of beef was sent to Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, to the field of Waterloo; after that came a lot of rickety old buildings and cottages called Abbey's Yard; then came what is now the Bricklayers' Arms; Liddiard, the builder, lived there. From there, up to where the post-office now is, was a brickfield; neither Chandos nor Wellington Streets were in existence. Then came a corndealer's, owned by Mr. Tilly, who also owned the brickfield, on a portion of which the gas-works are now erected; two small private houses, where Mr. Elliman's house now stands, (45) was the only school in Slough, kept by a Mr. Wade, irreverently called by the Eton boys Slough Aca-de-my. Then, as far as Messrs. Andrew's and others, was a kitchen-garden, belonging to Mr. Wilcox, whose house, recently called The Limes, occupied the ground upon which the shops of Messrs. Andrews (46) and others now stand; then came the Reindeer and premises. (47) No Mackenzie Street, all garden ground from Reindeer to Red Lion, (48) Stoke Lane; then the scrubby elm-tree and two old cottages previously mentioned, afterwards purchased for widening Stoke Lane, now William Street; then a baker's and a grocer's shop, the only one in Slough, kept by a quaint old man, Nicholas Woods; then the White Hart (49) and extensive premises; next a private house, now a beer-house (50); then stables and piggeries belonging to the butcher's shop opposite, also a meadow. Lonsdale Villas (51) are

now built on it; next came St. Leonard's Place, (52) which had not been built long; after that Dodd's brick field, upon which Oakley House (53) now stands. Mr. Dodd lived in the house (54) that stands back. (55)

HIGH STREET SOUTH SIDE, EAST END

No houses of any kind east of Upton Lane, now Upton Road. Upton Lodge (56) came first, then Regent's Place (57); after that the Pied Horse (58), then Baxter and Deverill's paint shops, Mr. Nixey's wheelwright works, then Ivy Cottage, (59) next nursery-grounds, belonging to the Browns, opposite; the Grove and Alpha Street were included in the nursery; they did not exist then. (60) Four cottages came next, standing back, afterwards shops built in front of them by Butler and Bowden, which were burnt, but shops have been erected since (61); then came Messrs. Gundry's cheese warehouse, where Holland and Barrett's shop now stands (62); two or three small houses and Lovegrove's extensive chair manufactory (63); afterwards fields belonging to Mr. Pocock's, Upton Farm, opposite the Reindeer; they were called the Reindeer Fields, where there was a foot-path across to church; they continued beyond where Church Street now is, two or three small houses where Hatch and Miller (NOTE: this is a misprint for Millea) have a shop, and beyond; then came Judd the Harness-maker's premises – where the shop and house now stand was a very old picturesque shop and house, a painting (64) of which I believe the family have. Next came a baker's on the site of Graveney's shop (65), then three or four old cottages, the barber occupying one, the Crown Tap (66) premises, and Crown Hotel (67); after the Windsor Road (68) came the Bear Yard and Traveller's Friend, a beerhouse – sold sweets and cooked meat – then two very old houses, where the grocers Holland and Barrett (69) now are. After them the Black Boy, (70) next a little shop occupied by the shoemaker Cliloerd (NOTE: this is a misprint for Clilverd), the entrance to Slough Court, then old Mrs. Shepherd's, who sold cabbages, onions, sweets, etc., and a barber next; a butcher's shop where a baker now is, then a private house and another butcher's; after that four cottages, then the house which Elston now has as a dairy, which terminated Slough.' (71)

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Mr. Bonsey, who had owned and farmed the Slough Farm at the corner of Stoke Lane and the main road, died in 1830, and Edmund Mason, of Britwell, Burnham, became the tenant. He was its last farming occupier. (72)

THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY

The topographical dictionary of Samuel Lewis, published in 1835, says 'Slough, a village partly in the parish of Stoke Poges and partly in that of Upton, hundred of Stoke, County of Buckingham, 41 miles from Buckingham and 21 from London A cattle market is held on Tuesdays . . .' The population of Upton-cum-Chalvey at the 1831 census was 1,502, less than that of Langley Marish (1,797), and only slightly higher than that of Stoke Poges (1,252) and Datchet (1,169).

Within ten years, the picture had begun to change. In 1841, Slough had a population of 2,405, Langley (1,844); Stoke Poges (1,319) and Datchet (1,264) and from then onwards the population of Upton-cum-Chalvey soared by leaps and bounds, due to the opening of the Great Western Railway. (73)

The rejoicings at the dinner held at the Windmill Hotel in July, 1834, over the defeat of the Parliamentary Bill for the projected Great Western Railway, were soon proved premature, for the Bill was passed through Parliament in the following year, and received the Royal Assent on 31 August, 1835. (74)

The first proposal for a railway (75) to be worked by locomotives between London and Bristol had been made in the autumn of 1824, nearly a year before the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. It was to have been called 'The London and Bristol Rail-Road Company'. Other projects, in which the course of the proposed railroad varied from a route rather south of Slough to routes considerably to the north, were also canvassed in 1825. In 1829, Sir Goldsworthy Gurney's steam omnibus passed through Slough on its way from London to Bath and back, at 15 miles an hour. It was the first long journey at a maintained speed ever made by any locomotive

on road or rail, and must have made the possibilities of railway locomotion more easily realized by the residents of Slough and other places through which it passed.

The Great Western Railway had its inception in the autumn of 1832, when four influential business men of Bristol held a meeting, and resolved to press the matter forward. They carried out their resolution with such success that a Committee was formed, and held its first meeting on 21 January, 1833. Isambard Kingdom Brunel was appointed engineer on 7 March of the same year, and at once set about surveying the country between Bristol and London. Meetings, appointments of officers, and momentous decisions followed in rapid succession during the following years, and the present route through Slough was chosen from three different routes submitted. Meetings for and against the project were organized everywhere, and excitement ran high. There must have been a good deal of ill-feeling between the people of Windsor and Eton, who opposed the Bill, and those more progressive spirits in Slough who foresaw the advantages of the new form of transport.

Work commenced immediately after the passing of the Bill, and trial trips were made by the Premier and Vulcan engines, which were constructed to the orders of Brunel, and by the famous North Star, designed by Stephenson. On 12 May, 1838, George Henry Gibbs of the G.W.R., travelled backwards and forwards from Slough to Paddington on Harrison's engine 'The Thunderer'. Two days later, the Directors travelled from Hayes to Maidenhead, and on 31 May the line was opened, and the Directors and their guests went by train to Maidenhead. After visiting the works, they returned to Salt Hill 'where a cold luncheon for about 300 people was laid under a tent.' After the usual complement of toasts 'they returned to the line and 'reached Paddington (19 miles) in 34 minutes, or 33½ miles an hour'. The engine on this train was the North Star, and one of the Directors distinguished himself by walking along the tops of the carriages from one end of the train to the other, whilst it was going at full speed — presumably on the return journey, after the luncheon! The incident was chronicled in *The Times* on 2 June, 1838. The public opening was fixed for 4 June, 1838, and advertised in the London and Bristol newspapers.

1838 – 1850

The figures for the daily main road traffic immediately prior to the opening of the G.W.R. were: 77 stage coaches, 105 post chaises, and 80 stage wagons. There were 27 stage coaches to Bath and Bristol making daily journeys in both directions. On 13 August, 1838, only two months after the opening of the railway, the Emerald Stage Coach to Bath and Bristol was taken off the road and put on the G.W.R. to Maidenhead. A fortnight later, two other coaches adopted the same railway assistance. (76)

The turnpike tolls on the road declined rapidly within a few months of the opening of the railway, but the coaching inns of Slough and Salt Hill found their business considerably increased at first, owing to the number of summer visitors, sightseers and workmen brought by the railway.

The last of the old Bath Road coaches, the 'Old Henley', was taken off the road on 8 October, 1850. It had been running for 45 years. (77)

Although the Eton College authorities had so strenuously opposed the building of the railway, and secured an injunction prohibiting the building of a station at Slough, the trains invariably 'happened' to be held up there by signals, on their journeys up and down the line. Tickets were sold at the Crown Inn until September, 1838, and afterwards at the newly-built North Star Inn, nearer the railway line. The Eton College authorities applied to the Court of Chancery for an immediate injunction to stop the evasion of the spirit of the Act, but on 1 June this application was dismissed with costs. They lodged an appeal — but whilst it was pending asked the Company for a special train to take the boys up to London for the coronation of Queen Victoria on 28 June! The train was provided, and the appeal was dismissed. Towards the end of the following year, the Provost and Fellows gave way, and consented to the erection of a station and the repeal of the forbidding clauses. The station was built on the 'Long Field' of Slough Farm, and was opened in June, 1840. It consisted of two separate buildings, some distance apart, for Down and Up traffic respectively. Both were on the south side of the line, the Up station being on the east of the Down. The Windsor Branch Line was opened on 8 October, 1849.

Prince Albert made his first journey by the railway on 14 November, 1839, accompanied by his elder brother, Prince Ernest, on a train from Slough to Paddington.

After his marriage, Prince Albert travelled frequently by rail, although Queen Victoria would not at first venture by train. The Directors, anticipating that she must be converted shortly to the new mode of travel, built their first Royal Saloon, which was ready in July, 1840. It was first used not by Queen Victoria, but by the Dowager Queen Adelaide, who came down to Slough on 14 August, 1840, and by King Frederick William IV of Prussia on 24 January, 1842, when he went up to London for a day's sightseeing, after attending the christening of the Prince of Wales at Windsor.

At last, four years after the opening of the line, Queen Victoria suddenly made up her mind, and travelled up to London with Prince Albert and their suite, on 13 June, 1842. She was met by cheering crowds at Paddington, and afterwards used the railway constantly.

When Princess Alexandra of Denmark landed in England on 7 March, 1863, three days before her marriage to the Prince of Wales, the royal pair travelled by train from Paddington to Slough, and drove from Slough Station to Windsor. The royal waiting room at Slough Station was filled by Charles Turner with masses of fragrant flowers, and the whole of the Station Approach, from the east end to the North Star, was lavishly decorated with greenery, flags, and coloured lights. A triumphal arch bore the welcome 'God Bless our hopes in both' in Danish and English, and there were two more triumphal arches at the Crown Corner. Unfortunately, as the Windsor Express reported on 14 March, 1863, there was heavy rain, and although it 'did not damp the ardour' of the crowds, closed carriages had to be used, and hardly anyone along the route could catch even a glimpse of the Prince and Princess.

Among other distinguished travellers to and from Slough in the 19th century were Garibaldi, and the Empress of Austria.

The Italian hero, Garibaldi, arrived at Slough on 25 April, 1864, after visiting Eton College, and had an enthusiastic reception. Lord and Lady Taunton, the Earl of Harrowby, the Marchioness of Kildare, the Hon. Misses Labouchere, and others, were among the cheering crowds at Slough. The railway authorities stopped an up express especially to convey the famous General to London, and the applause lasted until the train was well on its way to Langley. (78)

The Empress of Austria arrived at Slough Station about 2 o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday, 12 March, 1876, on her return from a visit to Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. A heavy fall of snow had brought down telegraph posts and wires between Slough and West Drayton, and the train was delayed. As the Empress had not stayed for luncheon at the Castle, a small table was put in the royal saloon, and a lunch of cold beef was brought on trays from the Station Master's house. The Empress's suite took lunch in the Station Master's house, the ladies being wheeled across the sloppy platform on luggage trolleys. It was two hours before the line was cleared, but the Empress, who had borrowed a copy of the *Ingoldsby Legends* (79) from the Station Master, appeared to enjoy herself and afterwards sent a handsome present to him. (80)

Brunel's broad-gauge trains, which attained high speeds, were eventually replaced by narrow-gauge, to facilitate the operation of through services over other railway lines. The last broad-gauge trains passed through Slough on Friday, 28 May, 1892. Saturday and Sunday were devoted to the last stages of the conversion to narrow-gauge, and services were resumed on Monday. (81)

The present railway station, which is the fifth at Slough, was built in 1882, when the lines were quadrupled. (82)

THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH

The first Electric Magnetic Telegraph (83) was installed between Paddington and Hanwell in 1839, and was extended to Slough in 1843. It was the first long distance public electric telegraph in daily use. Both the Paddington and the Slough telegraph became the 'sights' of the day. (84) The Paddington instrument of 1843 is now in the Science Museum, South Kensington. The Slough Telegraph Cottage (85) stood on a small hillock just north of the North Star Inn. (86) The hillock was levelled between 1880 and 1885, when additional lines were laid.

The Telegraph was at first privately rented by Mr. Home who, to overcome all doubts, offered to order luncheons and conveyances at Dotesio's Royal Hotel at Slough to be ready for passengers on arrival of the train — an offer which was naturally accepted generally, as it cost nothing.

On 6 August, 1844, the telegraph acquired considerable fame by its speedy announcement of the birth of the Queen's second son, at Windsor, known later as the Duke of Edinburgh.



23. *The Electric Telegraph Cottage*

A few months later, the telegraph achieved still greater fame by effecting the arrest of a murderer.

On New Year's Day, 1845, John Tawell travelled down to Slough with a bottle of cyanide of potassium in his pocket, intending to poison his discarded mistress, Sarah Hart, who was then living in a cottage at Salt Hill. He administered the poison to her in a glass of stout, but, to his horror, immediately after drinking it, his victim gave a piercing scream, which alarmed the neighbours. As he walked down the path leading to the main road, a woman asked him what was the matter with her neighbour, but he made no reply, and hurried off to the station at Slough. He caught the evening train, and arrived safely at Paddington, where he took a 'bus to the Bank, and, after visiting a couple of coffee-houses, strolled home to his lodgings in Scott's Yard, Cannon Street. The next morning, to his astonishment, he was arrested.

His train had not left Slough many minutes when news of the murder was brought from Salt Hill, and the murderer's appearance described by one who had seen him leave the cottage. A message for Paddington was immediately handed in at the telegraph office — it is said, on the suggestion of Dr. Hawtrey, then Headmaster of Eton. The message told of the murder, and that 'a man in the garb of a Quaker', wearing a long brown greatcoat, in a specified compartment of the train, was the suspected murderer. The telegraphic code of the day did not include the letter 'Q', but the clerk spelled the word 'Kwaker', and his colleague at Paddington fortunately understood. The train was met by a sergeant of the Railway Company's Police in plain clothes, and the Quaker found. Presumably the delay in his arrest was due to the fact that the telegraphic message was not thought sufficient ground for arresting him, but the sergeant shadowed Tawell until he returned at night to his lodgings and then went back to Paddington to meet an emissary from Slough, with whom he made the arrest the following morning.

Tawell had formerly belonged to the Society of Friends, but had been transported for 21 years for forgery on an Uxbridge Bank. After serving seven years, he was granted a ticket of leave. He set up as a chemist and amassed considerable wealth. At the period of the murder, he was living at Berkhamstead, where he was held in high respect. When Sarah Hart, who had had two children by him, applied for support, he resolved to poison her lest it should come to his wife's ears. He was tried and convicted at Aylesbury, and was the last person to be hanged from the upper window of the Court House there, and the first murderer in the world to be arrested through a telegraphic message. (87)

Sarah Hart was buried in Farnham churchyard, and exhumed later to be identified by her mother as Sarah Laurence, aged 39, a fresh entry being made in the Register accordingly. (88)

Sir Francis Head (89) says: 'A few months afterwards, we happened to be travelling by rail from Paddington to Slough in a carriage filled with people all strangers to one another. Like English travellers they were all mute. For nearly fifteen miles, no one had uttered a single word, until a short-bodied, short-necked, short-nosed, exceedingly respectable-looking man in the corner, fixing his eyes on the apparently fleeting posts and wires of the electric telegraph, significantly nodded to us as he muttered aloud 'Them's the cords that hung John Tawell'.

This dramatic use of the telegraph was, of course, a great advertisement, and many more people flocked to inspect the invention, to the great profit of the patentees, but by June, 1849, the telegraph had been removed as it was not paying.

A general installation all over the railway line was made in 1851, and C.R. Spagnoletti, a former employee of the Electric Telegraph Company, was appointed the Railway Telegraph Superintendent in 1855, at £100 a year. He soon distinguished himself by patenting the Disc Block Telegraph Instrument, which was first introduced on the Metropolitan railway at its opening in January, 1863, and was still in use in 1938 on practically all the double lines of the Great Western Railway, but has since been superseded by more modern equipment. Spagnoletti, who also patented the undemagnetizable needle in 1871, lived in Sussex Place for many years. He retired about the time the main Great Western Railway line was converted from broad to narrow gauge in 1892. He died on 28 June, 1915, at the age of 83. His house was demolished to make way for the extension of Wellington Street eastwards.

THE CANAL

Slough missed the great 18th century canal boom, although maps in the British Museum show the line of projected canals which never materialized, one of which would have been carried through Chalvey and Upton.

An Act of Parliament was obtained in 1794 for the construction of the Grand Union Canal — and before a single sod was cut, as much as 355 guineas premium was being paid for 10 shares (90) — but the Slough branch was not constructed until 1879.

The five mile canal between Slough and Cowley Peachy was one of the last to be dug in Britain. It is carried over the River Colne by an aqueduct, but has no locks or tunnels. (91) It is to be hoped that recent attempts to develop it as a boating and cruising centre will bear fruit, as it gives access to all the 2,000 odd miles of inland waterways in Great Britain.

MOTOR BUS SERVICES

The first Great Western Railway motor-bus service was run from Slough Station in 1904 — one of the earliest of the Company's bus services to be established. It ran between the station and Beaconsfield. There were two routes. The fare for the first, via Salt Hill and Farnham Royal (7½ miles) was 1/-; and for the other, via Stoke Poges and Hedgerley (8½ miles) the fare was 1s. 1d. (92)

Miss C.E. Morten, in her *Recollections of Slough*, says: '... about 1908, the G.W.R. had one of the first buses to run from Slough Station to Windsor, via Wellington Street, Wexham Road and High Street. Fare 3d., but only 2d. from the Crown'. (93) but they apparently started earlier than 1908, for Murray's *Handbook to Buckinghamshire*, 1905, says: 'Omnibuses run regularly to Eton and Windsor, also to Burnham Beeches and Farnham Royal'.

THE OLD COACHING INNS

The Red Cow at Upton is the only survival of Slough's many fine old inns, although one is commemorated in the name of 'Crown Corner', and two (the Pied Horse and the Royal Hotel) by buildings which are not even on the original sites.

THE CROWN

The Crown was a large and very comfortable old hostelry which was always the leading posting house of Slough, although it seems to have been rather overshadowed in the 18th and early 19th centuries by the fame of the Castle and Botham's Windmill Hotel at Salt Hill.

Many inaccurate or unsubstantiated statements have been made about The Crown. Brochures advertising The Crown, issued in 1928 and 1933 (before and after it was rebuilt) boldly claim it was 'Established 1315'. The 1933 brochure says merely 'though, apparently, it was not the first inn to occupy the site', but the 1928 brochure says:

'It was erected in the reign of Edward II (1315) on the site of a structure dating from the Roman occupation. The Romans were great road builders, and along with their trunk roads, of which the Bath Road is an example, they placed Post Houses where horses could be changed, and other buildings were erected to provide refreshment for travellers'.

As it is now accepted that the Roman road to Bath crosses the Thames at Staines, and ran via Silchester, and the more direct road to Bath through Slough almost certainly did not come into being before the late Saxon period, the claim that The Crown was on a Roman site cannot be substantiated.

It is possible there was an inn on the site in the reign of Edward II. The specific date of 1315 quoted suggests some evidence of this may have been in existence once, but if so, it appears to have been lost. The earliest record which can be traced now is an entry in the Parish Registers under the date 1635: 'William Davis, the sonne of one Mrs. Davis, a stranger born at the Crowne at Slough and baptised.'

The Upton Court Rolls state that in 1663 'The Crown was in the possession of Sir Philip Palmer, Knight, together with a house at Chalvey, 'and land in the severall fields of Upton'. Burne says: 'My lady Castlemaine' was a Palmer. Is it possible that "The Crown" was once Crown property and formed part of the gifts which Charles II showered upon his mistress' ? (95). This tentative query appears to be the sole foundation for later claims that The Crown was Crown property, and took its name from this fact, and that it was bestowed on one of the Ladies of the Court of Charles II; sometimes unnamed, but sometimes definitely stated to be Lady Castlemaine.

The detailed account of the ownership and the tenants of The Crown before the 18th century is too complicated, and contradictory to be of interest to anyone but a specialist, and is made more difficult to unravel through the absence of important documents. (96) Briefly, The Crown and adjoining land was certainly in the possession of the Earl of Castlemaine early in the latter half of the 17th century, but he appears to have been a joint owner with Sir Marmaduke Darrell and 'John Robinson, Gent.' Sir Philip Palmer (elder half-brother of the Earl of Castlemaine) and Sir Charles Doe agreed to buy The Crown and various lands in Upton and Chalvey, and they paid £600 each to the Earl and Sir Marmaduke Darrell, and 5s. to Robinson.

There is nothing whatever to indicate who owned the property before this date, and the fact that the Earl was not the sole owner suggests that he or his wife did not receive it from the King, although equally, there is nothing to disprove this. (97)

In 1666, Sir Charles Doe, with the concurrence of Sir Philip Palmer, mortgaged the property to John Lane 'citizen and mercer of London', for £700, but with the proviso that if Sir Philip paid off this sum, plus £42 interest, by a certain date, Sir Philip could resume possession. Sir Philip failed to pay, and John Lane foreclosed in 1669. Subsequently, the ownership of The Crown passed through a number of hands until 29 August, 1701, when William Baldwin of Reading, 'an innholder', was given a lease for a term of 640 years, and began the association between the Baldwin family and The Crown which lasted nearly a century.

William Baldwin was succeeded by his son Thomas, 'A Citizen and Freeman of the City of London', who seems to have taken over the lease on 24 June, 1703. It was this Thomas Baldwin who instituted the first daily coach between London and Bath, and it was during his time that The Crown was re-fronted, and given a semi-circular porch on the north front, assuming the appearance it retained until 1932. It also had an extensive range of stabling and outbuildings, with

gardens of at least three acres, running down to the wall of Mr. Papendiek's Grove House, later Observatory House, the home of the Herschels.

Thomas Baldwin's son, Adee, who lived in Upton, left The Crown to his wife Elizabeth 'a rather redoubtable old lady, judging by her portrait', (98) and after her death, to his daughter Mary, wife of John Pitt of Upton House, after whose death she married Dr. William Herschel (afterwards Sir William), in 1788.

Some time during the Baldwin tenure, The Crown, originally only leased to them, seems to have become their property. On the death of Elizabeth Baldwin in 1798, Dr. and Mrs. Herschel came into full possession of The Crown, which remained the property of the Herschel family until sold in 1886 by Col. John Herschel to the brewers, Deacon and Melville. It subsequently changed hands several times before its final demolition.

A photograph of The Crown taken in 1929, showing firemen playing their hoses on a fire in the Crown Hotel, has given rise to a belief that it was then burned down, but actually, the fire was only a small one, and was extinguished before it could do much damage.

The 'Old Crown Hotel and Posting House', with its gracious Queen Anne front and attractive brown-tiled roof, was deliberately demolished in 1932 (99) 'to cope with the post-war development of Slough'. (100) The new hotel, in red brick 'Brewers' Georgian' was built some 40 ft. farther back from the Bath Road than its predecessor. It was re-opened on 2 February, 1933. It was bought by the Slough Borough Council from Noakes Brewery, Windsor (a subsidiary of Courage & Co.) on 16 July, 1959, and demolished in 1966 to make way for the shops and offices of Crown Corner.

Among the distinguished people who, it is claimed, visited The Crown, one of the earliest known and authenticated was Joseph Wilcox, of Lady Place, Hurley, son of the Bishop of Gloucester (1673-1756). Unfortunately, he was seized by an apoplectic stroke whilst giving a dinner to some local tenants at The Crown, and died there 23 December, 1791, aged 67. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and devoted his time to study and philanthropy. Whilst in Rome, his piety won the admiration of Pope Clement XII, who styled him 'the blessed heretick'. He is buried in Westminster Abbey. (101)

Caroline Herschel, who changed her residence several times after her brother's marriage, made her home in The Crown Hotel Cottage from 16 June, 1810 until 1814. (102) It is not clear whether this was in the Annexe, facing Slough High Street, as is sometimes stated, or in the old cottage facing Windsor Road, on part of the site where her nephew, Sir John Herschel, afterwards built the Leopold Coffee House, which was always quite separate from The Crown, and leased to a different tenant. (103)

The 1928 brochure has a drawing of 'The Wellington Room', with the caption 'occupied by the Victor of Waterloo, October 1815'. Unfortunately, no room was known by this name before 1916 at the earliest, and no such claim was then made. (104) If the Duke ever visited The Crown, it was almost certainly not in October, 1815, for he seems to have remained in Paris for the whole of that month. Bentley says he was one of the important guests who stayed at The Crown, but gives no date. (105)

It has also been claimed that Prince Albert (106) stayed the night at The Crown, before he went to Windsor Castle to become engaged to Queen Victoria, (107) but he and his brother landed at The Tower, London, on 10 October, 1839, and drove to Windsor Castle in carriages sent by the Queen. (108) Prince Albert stayed at the Castle until 14 November, when 'shortly after 9 a.m. the Princes left in the Royal pony phaetons for Slough and caught the train to Paddington', on their way to Dover. (109)

Bentley has a more circumstantial story:

'The Prince Consort, too, spent a couple of nights at The Crown (arriving in mufti "with very little luggage") in January, 1840, only a few weeks later becoming the husband of Queen Victoria. Lieutenant Bradford (afterwards General), whose regiment was then billeted at Slough, happened to be staying in the hotel, and fortunately proved of service, as he spoke German fluently'. (110)

Such a wealth of detail presupposes some definite basis for this story, but unfortunately, Mr. Bentley did not live long enough to annotate his account of Slough inns (see p. vii). Here, again, the date given is impossible. From the time Prince Albert left England in November, 1839, until his return in February, 1840, the Prince was on the Continent, preparing to leave Coburg for ever, and bidding farewell to his many relatives. Accompanied by his father and brother, he landed in England and drove straight to Buckingham Palace, where he arrived at '4.30 on Saturday afternoon', 8 February, and was married on Monday, 10 February, 1840. (111)

It is a matter for great regret that the Visitors' Books were destroyed when The Crown was demolished (112); they might have established the true facts about this and other royal visits, said to have been made by George III, and by Edward VII when Prince of Wales.

After the opening of the Great Western Railway, tickets were issued at The Crown. Wyld's Railway Guide for 1829 says: 'At the Crown Inn is the office of the Railway Co.', (113) but when the North Star Inn was built, nearer the railway, the ticket office was transferred there.

An advertisement of the Crown Hotel in 1843, inserted by J.S. Watts 'late of the Horse and Groom, Streatham, Surrey' says:

'Quite detached from the Inn, and as private as any gentleman's pleasure grounds, is an excellent Garden with Bowling Green, Tea Houses, etc., which to parties desirous of retirement after the pleasures of the day in connection with the contiguity to the Railroad, will, it is presumed, be found desirable'. (114)

The advertisement adds, in large type, 'Well-aired Beds', and also mentions that a special range of stabling and loose boxes 'has been appropriated exclusively for the use of Gentlemen following the Queen's Royal Buckhounds'.

Some landlords of The Crown took an active part in local affairs, notably William Ford, (115) who was among the original members of the Slough Local Board of Health in 1863, and in later years was frequently elected the Chairman. (116)

Herbert George Wilson, who was landlord from about 1903 or 1904 to 1916, opened the first Cinema in Slough, at the back of The Crown (see p. 125). During the period when he was the landlord, The Crown Tap, which had been partitioned off, and the Annexe, east of the Tap, and separated from it by the inn yard, were modernized. (117) Later, the Annexe was demolished, and the North Thames Gas Board offices now occupy the site.

THE BEAR

A little farther to the west of The Crown, close to the site now occupied by The Grapes, 92-94, High Street, stood the Bear Inn, referred to in some documents as 'The Boar'. It is known to have been in existence in 1738, and was almost certainly built much earlier, (118) but was demolished some time before 1830. (119)

THE BLACK BOY

Next door but one westward was The Black Boy Inn, mentioned in the Upton Court Rolls in 1679. It may have taken its name from the celebrated black boy at Swakeleys, near Uxbridge, referred to by Samuel Pepys in his Diary, under the date 7 September, 1665. There is a tradition that the highwayman, Claude Duval, frequented the Black Boy, which is quite possible, as he carried out some of his most famous exploits at Maidenhead Thicket. Duval was born in France in 1643, and came to England at the Restoration, in the service of the Duke of Richmond. Shortly afterwards, he became a highwayman. He was a terror to travellers, but was famous for his gallantry to ladies. It was Duval who was credited with dancing a coranto with a lady whose coach he stopped. He was hanged at Tyburn in 1670, and is buried in the centre aisle of Covent Garden Church, under a stone with the inscription:

'Here lies Du Vall: Reader, if male thou art, look to thy purse; if female, to thy heart'. (120)

The Black Boy Inn was a delightfully picturesque two-storied building of brick and timber, with a red-tiled roof. During the later years of its existence, the walls were whitewashed, and the entrance was a step down from the pavement, owing to the re-levelling of the Bath Road. The Inn was demolished in 1910, and its bricks and mortar were carted to The Mere, Richard Bentley's house at Upton, for use in making garden paths. (121)

William Redworth (see p. 136) painted an attractive picture of the Black Boy Inn. (122) The inn is also depicted in Alfred Rimmer's *Rambles Round Eton and Harrow*. (123)

THE WHITE HART

The White Hart stood on the north side of the High Street, nearly opposite the Black Boy Inn, and can be seen in the sketch in Alfred Rimmer's book, mentioned above.

The earliest reference to the White Hart is in 1640. (124) It was re-built in the 18th century, and became a great resort of commercial travellers. Members of the Luff family were landlords for 43 years in the first half of the 19th century, and successively held the office of Post Master for Slough (125) (see p. 115), but in 1843, the advertisement appeared 'W. Sharp (late Luff) The White Hart Commercial Inn'. (126)

In 1829, when coaching was at its height, the great range of stabling at the White Hart caught fire, and was totally destroyed. Fifty of the stage coach and posting horses in the stables were rescued, but the remainder were burned to death. (127)

The White Hart has been demolished, and at the time of writing, the new Public Library is being built on part of the site.

THE RED LION

The 'Red Lion', mentioned in the Upton Court Rolls in 1653, faced The Crown. It is said to have been a favourite haunt of the brick-makers who, when work became slack between seasons, repaired there 'remaining day and night on week-days and Sundays alike (licensing laws being non-existent then), smoking, talking and drinking, and watching the coaches go by'. Cock-fights were held there in earlier days. (128)



24. *The Red Lion Inn ½d. token, showing the original inn*



A half-penny token (129) issued by 'W. Till, wine and spirit merchant', landlord of the Red Lion in 1794 (130) in the County Museum at Aylesbury, is of special interest, as it depicts the original Red Lion, which was replaced by a red-brick building with a slate roof, which in its turn was demolished about 1935, together with its neighbour on the north-west, the original Walton's Clock House, to make way for the present Prudential Buildings, 95-111, High Street. They lie farther back from the roadway than the Red Lion, but the A.B.C., 105, High Street, is approximately on the site of the Red Lion.

THE REINDEER

East of the Red Lion, open fields reached to the Reindeer Inn, which is mentioned as the 'Rain Deare' in 1663, (131) and as the 'Raynedeer' in 1676. (132) It was also called the 'Running Deer' in 1761, when an Easter Vestry was held there. (133)

The Reindeer was re-constructed in the mid-eighteenth century, into a typically snug and picturesque Georgian Inn.

It is said that, in 1852, the owners, Neville Reid & Co., issued their own banknotes for the benefit of customers, (134) and it became popular as a rendez-vous for local societies. When it was re-built in 1934, it was reported that The Foresters had held their meetings there for over 80 years; the Slough Racing Pigeon Club for more than 40 years, and among others who made it their meeting place were the R.A.O.B., the Slough Football Club, the Slough Wednesday Football Club, the Slough Town Club, the Rugby Club, and the Junior League. (135)

When the old Reindeer was rebuilt in 1934, the inn yard, where customers used to sit out on warm evenings, and which was a familiar short-cut from the High Street to Mackenzie Street, even for those who did not patronize the inn, had disappeared, and Montague Burton's shop, 145, High Street, stood on the site. This new Reindeer, in its turn, was demolished in 1967 to make way for an extension of Marks and Spencers, 147, High Street,

THE PIED HORSE

The Pied Horse was first mentioned in 1704. (136) The Reading Mercury of 6 September, 1740, reports that the body of a highwayman, who was shot dead by a servant of the man he was attempting to rob, was carried to the Pied Horse to await the coroner's inquest. The original Pied Horse stood on a site a few yards west of the present Pied Horse, 300, High Street.

THE DOLPHIN

The old Dolphin Inn stood on the north-east of the watersplash formed across the Bath Road by the Tetsworth Brook, on the eastern boundary of the parish, and was the first building along the Bath Road as travellers approached Slough from London, with open fields reaching westward to the Pied Horse.

Just when it was first built is difficult to decide. No building is shown on the site in Emanuel Bowen's Large English Atlas, 1765, but as this does not show the Pied Horse or the Crown Hotel, which were certainly in existence then, it cannot be regarded as reliable evidence. It is marked clearly on a Survey of Highroads in 1817, and on the Ordnance Survey of 1822. It was demolished in 1869, and the present Dolphin Hotel was built about a quarter of a mile away, on the Uxbridge Road.

The Dolphin Hotel achieved considerable fame under George Bennett, who took over there on 5 May, 1914. He established a Greyhound racing track in 1928 (taken over in 1936 by the present Company) and in 1932 established a boxer's training camp (see p. 125). The camp closed towards the end of 1937, but the Dolphin Hotel remains a centre for local sportsmen under George Bennett's son, Mr. G.E. Bennett. (137)

THE NORTH STAR

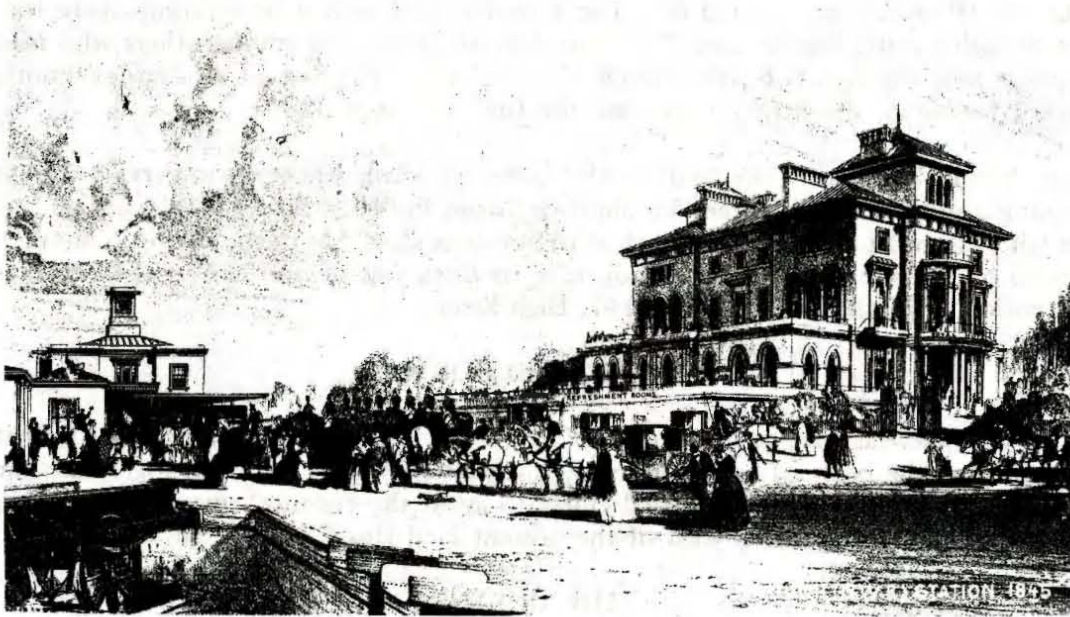
This was advertised by W. Bragg, the landlord, in 1843, as 'The North Star Tavern and Coffee House, adjoining the Great Western Railway'. (138) Until the building of Slough station, tickets were issued to intending passengers at the North Star Inn.

The North Star, which was on the eastern side of William Street, and the south side of Station Approach (near the railway bridge) was demolished during the road widening when William Street became the B.416.

THE ROYAL HOTEL

During the earlier years of the Great Western Railway, the hotels and refreshment rooms were built and managed by private enterprise. One of the most famous of these hotels and refreshment rooms was the Royal Hotel at Slough, which was built by Monsieur Charles Dotesio, who was reputed to be of Corsican extraction, and to have seen military service in Italy. According to the Gentleman's Magazine, he was at one time chef, or steward to the sixth Earl of Chesterfield. He managed to obtain ample financial backing for his projected Hotel, and purchased meadows which

lay on the south side of the original shallow railway cutting between Wexham Road and Stoke Lane (now William Street (B.416)). (139) He then applied for the licence from the Castle Inn (which had been converted into a private house) as a transfer, and not an increase in existing licences, and was granted this on 1 September, 1841. (140)



25. *The Great Western Railway station, Royal Hotel and Refreshment Rooms in 1841*

The hotel he built was second in size only to Baylis House of all Slough's contemporary buildings, and was constructed of yellow brick, with many bow windows, and refreshment rooms on the north side, facing the railway. It stood in beautiful grounds, with an entrance from the new station approach road, and a long winding drive from Wexham Road. The furnishing was magnificent in the extreme, for Mons. Dotesio had secured some of the priceless furniture from the royal palace at Versailles, which had passed into the hands of dealers after the French Revolution. He also secured some valuable Gobelin tapestries, and when the furnishing was completed, the Hotel was inspected by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The principal room in the hotel was often used by the Queen on her journeys to and from Paddington, before the opening of the line to Windsor, and was known as 'Queen Victoria's Room' long after the building ceased to be a hotel. (141)

A capacious Mews was built also by Mons. Dotesio to accommodate the many horses and carriages in daily use at that time, and to provide also loose boxes for the convenience of those regularly hunting with the Royal Staghounds.

The hotel prospered from the first, and private families stayed there for a week or two, enjoying the summer drives to Stoke Poges, the Chalfonts, Windsor and Eton, or to the races at Ascot, whilst passengers for Windsor found the Royal Hotel chaises waiting for them at the station, to convey them to their destination. In 1843, Dotesio advertised in the *Royal Windsor Guide*:

'Charles Dotesio, Postmaster to Her Majesty, has the honour to return his grateful acknowledgments to his Patrons and Friends, the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and the public, for the extensive patronage which has been conferred upon him since the opening of his 'Establishment'.

Two years later, Mons. and Mme. Dotesio gave generous and efficient succour to some 40 people injured in a railway accident at Langley, (142) but when the branch railway to Windsor was opened in 1849, the Royal Hotel fell upon hard times. Dotesio was deprived not only of passengers staying overnight, but also of the Royal Posting between Windsor and Slough.

Dotesio gave up the hotel in 1852, and a twelve days' sale of the splendid furniture took place, starting on 3 May, 1852. After a short period of hotel management at Hull, Dotesio bought the Royal Hotel in Paris, where he died just before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. (143)

The Royal Hotel building remained empty for eleven years, but on Wednesday, 26 May, 1858, a historic political dinner, known to fame as 'The Slough Banquet', took place in the grounds. An enormous marquee, supplied by Brownie of Uxbridge, was put up to accommodate 500 people, and 100 attendants. The dinner was catered for by Mr. Bragg, landlord of the North Star Inn. Colonel Howard-Vyse, of Stoke Place was in the Chair, supported by the Duke of Buckingham, who responded for the House of Lords; General (Sir) George Powell Higginson (d. 1861) of Gyldenscroft, Marlow; Viscount Curzon and the Earl of Orkney. Speeches to the Conservative electors of South Bucks were made by Colonel Caledon George Du Pré, M.P., of Wilton Park, Beaconsfield, and by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt. Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, M.P., (afterwards Earl of Beaconsfield). Disraeli was enthusiastically received, and spoke on foreign affairs. His caustic speech filled three columns of *The Times* on the following morning, and was a great party event. It was criticised afterwards in the House of Lords by the Earl of Clarendon, and led to a full dress debate in that House on 'The Brink of War with France'. (144)

The derelict Royal Hotel, with part of the surrounding grounds, was purchased in 1863, through the generosity of Major Edward Mackenzie, (145) of Fawley Court, near Henley, who was a partner of the great railway contractor, Thomas Brassey. Major Mackenzie gave £12,000, afterwards increased by another £2,000, for the purchase of the estate and its adaptation to the needs of the British Orphan Asylum, which had been founded at Kingston Green in 1827, and was at that time at Clapham Common.

On 24 June, 1863, the recently married Prince and Princess of Wales opened the reconstructed building. The *Windsor Express* gave over four columns to the event in its issue of 27 June, 1863, and reported that 'The town of Slough was in a state of considerable bustle and gaiety at an early hour'. The Prince declared the building was dedicated 'for ever' to the purposes of the British Orphan Asylum, and Their Royal Highnesses each planted a tree as a memento of their visit. The trees were *Wellingtonia Gigantea* (now better known as *Sequoia Gigantea*), (146) presented by Charles Turner. The Lord Mayor of London presided at a banquet in the evening. (147)

When the British Orphan Asylum removed to Watford in 1920, the building was purchased by the Licensed Victuallers' Orphanage. It was pulled down at the beginning of 1938, after the construction of the present Licensed Victuallers' School.

The present Royal Hotel, on the opposite side of Mackenzie Street (which had been named in honour of Major Edward Mackenzie), was built on to the nucleus of Dotesio's handsome and well-designed coach-building. The south side of the mews was demolished in 1972.

The hotel is listed in Kelly's Directory of 1864 as the 'Royal Hotel Tavern, Thomas Young'. It seems to have been closed for a period, for in 1872 it was re-opened by Sam Vallis. 'After a run with the Royal Staghounds in 1877 the Prince of Wales took luncheon at the Royal Hotel, kept by Mr. Sam Vallis'. (148) Sam Vallis was succeeded by his sons, Sam and Harry, but they sold it shortly afterwards. (149)

The present attractive hotel was taken over by Trust Houses, Ltd., in 1920.

NOTES

1. V.C.H., Vol. III, p. 301.
2. T. & D., Vol. I, p. 106.
3. J. Wesley Walker, *A History of Maidenhead* (2nd Edition, 1931), p. 7; and V.C.H., Vol. I, p. 376.
4. T. & D., Vol. I, p. 106-7. NOTE: This is the bridge over the Chalvey Brook, immediately south of Pocock's Lane to Datchet, and should not be confused with the more conspicuous Fifteen-arch Bridge just before reaching Eton College.
5. Burne, p. 42. See also Heale, p. 239, footnotes 1 and 2.
6. T. & D., Vol. I, p. 189.
7. Account Books of the Clerk of the Works, preserved at Eton College.
8. V.C.H., Vol. III, p. 262.
9. Burne, p. 38.
10. V.C.H., Vol. III, p. 301.
11. Maxwell Lyte, p. 103.

12. *ibid.* p. 108-9.
13. Parish Registers.
14. Burne, p. 59.
15. *ibid.* p. 60.
16. Edwin A. Pratt: *A History of Inland Transport and Communications in England* (1912) p. 38.
17. *ibid.* p. 78.
18. William Camden (1551-1623) *Britannia*, Vol. I (1675).
19. Harper, Bath Road, p. 5.
20. M.J. Dumbleton, *N.B.M.T.*, Vol. I. No. 9, Spring 1967, p. 2.
21. Harper, Bath Road, p. 6-9, — but he says The Crown, Salt Hill, which is incorrect.
22. *ibid.* p. 77-78.
23. Luff.
24. D.N.B.
25. Pastor Karl Philip Moritz (1757-1793)
26. Several translations have been made of Pastor Moritz's account of his travels (ranging in date from 1785 to 1965). This account is taken from *Travels in England in 1782* by C.P. Moritz Cassell's National Library, General Editor; Professor Henry Morley (1881), pp. 93-95.
27. Pratt, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
28. John Loudon McAdam (1756-1836).
29. D.N.B.
30. Thomas de Quincey: *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* Dent's Everyman Edition, No. 223 (1930) p. 168.
31. Pigot's Directory of Maidenhead, 1830.
32. Bentley, Inns., p. 41.
33. Almost certainly by Richard Bentley.
34. John Andrews: *25 Miles Round London* (1777).
35. Stoke Lane was re-named in honour of William IV, (1765-1837) who ascended the throne in 1830. It is now the B.416.
36. The Cedars was bought in 1904 by the Slough Urban District Council for use as Council Offices, and survived until 1938, when the first Public Library in Slough was built.
37. Later the Somerset Arms. Demolished.
38. All these buildings disappeared long ago, and the sites are occupied by the new building for the Public Library, the round-a-bout of the A.4, and the College of Further Education.
39. Dutchman's Farm is marked as 'Dutchman's Garden' on John Andrews' map (1777). W.H. Fussell thought this was originally laid out as a Dutch Garden, hence its name. Another suggestion is that the farm was at one time the property of William III, popularly known as 'Dutch William'.
40. Arbour Hill was formerly much steeper than it is now.
41. The site of the house and large garden is now occupied by the Granada Cinema and Beechwood Gardens.
42. Now Grove Parade, Nos. 283 to 319a, High Street.
43. Demolished about 1890.
44. Now John Colliers and Ashley Russell (Nos. 221-229, High Street).
45. Later Central Buildings (Nos. 181-187, High Street), which was demolished during the building of Queensmere.
46. Now Suters (Nos. 155-161, High Street).
47. Now 141-147, High Street. (See p. 58-59).
48. The Red Lion was rebuilt shortly before the 1914-1918 war, and demolished about 1935. (see p. 58). It is curious Miss Mason does not mention the Clock House, next to the Red Lion (see p. 58).
49. Demolished. Part of the site will be occupied by the new Public Library.
50. The Forresters's Arms. Demolished.
51. Lonsdale Villas. Demolished.
52. St. Leonard's Place. Demolished.
53. Oakley House was first a private house, later the Conservative Club and afterwards a Police Station. It also housed the Y.M.C.A. for many years. The site is now occupied by the A.4 and part of the grounds of the College of Further Education.
54. Montem Lodge. Demolished.

55. The Slough Urban District Boundary was just east of the Windsor Branch of the G.W.R. (now British Rail, W.R.), until 1900.
56. Demolished 1964. The site is now occupied by Upton Lodge 2A, Yew Tree Road. See p. 26, Note 28.
57. Regent's Place named in honour of George IV (1762-1830), who was Prince Regent 1811-1820.
58. The Pied Horse was demolished in 1962, and rebuilt on a site a few yards to the east; now 300, High Street.
59. The name is preserved in Ivy Parade, Nos. 278-286, High Street.
60. The Nursery extended to the Church Path, which partially survives as the passage running south to Herschel Street from between Nos. 224 and 226, High Street.
61. Now Sainsbury's, Nos. 208-16, High Street.
62. Holland and Barrett's shop, see *infra*, Note 69.
63. Lovegrove's was approximately on the site of 198, High Street.
64. The painting was photographed by the late Mr. Kipping.
65. An article in the *Slough Observer*, 22 March, 1924, says:
 'It was about 1860 that Mr. Froud's bakehouse on the corner of Buckingham Gardens road was demolished and an up-to-date ironmongery store built by Mr. Henry Graveney in a very substantial manner, and now occupied by Lipton's Stores'. It is now No. 114, High Street.
66. Miss Mason does not mention the Annexe, east of The Crown Yard and the Crown Tap. The site is now occupied by the offices and showroom of the North Thames Gas Board.
67. The site is now known as 'Crown Corner'.
68. Windsor Road, A.332.
69. The Rate Books confirm that Miss Mason was quite correct in stating Holland & Barrett had two shops in the High Street, unlikely as it seems in a town as small as Slough was in 1896.
70. Demolished 1910. Fulbrook's Garage was built on the site, occupied until 1973 by the Fine Fare Supermarket (No. 56, High Street).
71. See the *Slough Observer*, 23 March, 1924, 'A Bit of High Street' for recollections of changes in the High Street between 1850 and 1924.
72. Luff.
73. *ibid.*
74. For an account of the local opposition, see Part II of Mrs. Sheila Goldsmith's article, *N.B.M.T.*, Vol. I, No. 8, Autumn, 1966, p. 2-8. (The first part of this article, in Vol. I, No. 7, deals with general opposition to the building of a railway from London to Bristol).
75. All the following account of the Great Western Railway is taken from E.T. MacDermot's *History of the Great Western (1922)* Vol. I, parts 1 and 2, unless otherwise stated.
76. Luff.
77. *ibid.*
78. *ibid.*
79. The Rev. Richard Harris Barham (1788-1845), *Ingoldsbury Legends*, (published first in Bentley's *Miscellany*, and afterwards collectively, 1840-7).
80. Luff.
81. *ibid.*
82. Bentley, Notes, p. 22.
83. This account of the Electric Telegraph is based on MacDermot, *op. cit.*, pp. 618-625, supplemented by information supplied by the Secretary of the G.W.R., the Divisional Manager of British Rail, W.R., Reading; and the Archivist of British Rail (now the British Transport Historical Records, P.R.O.)
84. An advertisement stating that the Telegraph Office, Paddington and Telegraph Cottage, Slough, could be seen in operation daily (except Sundays) from 9 till 8, Admission 1s., is reproduced in MacDermot, *op. cit.*, p. 623.
85. An engraving of Telegraph Cottage Slough, on its hillock, is reproduced in MacDermot, *op. cit.*, p. 624, and Bentley, Notes, p. 18.
86. The North Star Inn. Demolished.
87. There was a full report of the murder, and of his execution, in the *Windsor Express*, 15 March and 29 March, 1845.
88. This additional information is given by Carr-Gomm, p. 24.
89. Sir Francis Head: *Stokers and Pokers (1849)* quoted by MacDermot, *op. cit.*, p. 621, and Carr-Gomm.

90. Pratt, op. cit., p. 183.
91. Canals Book, 1971, edited by Dennis Dalton (Published by the Link House Group), p. 27.
92. The Bystander, 20 April, 1904. A cutting of this page, showing pictures of the motor-bus, is in my possession.
93. Miss C.E. Morten (born 13 July, 1893, in Wellington Street), *My Recollections of Slough*, N.B.M.T., Vol. II, No. 11, Spring, 1968, pp. 2-5.
94. I have in my possession these and other brochures and price lists of the old Crown Hotel.
95. Burne, p. 60.
96. All surviving documents relating to The Crown, as far as can be ascertained, are now preserved at the Town Hall, Slough.
97. I made a prolonged search at the P.R.O., but could find no reference whatever to Lord or Lady Castlemaine holding any Crown property in Upton, Chalvey or Slough, or any reference to The Crown Inn.
98. The Herschel Chronicle, edited by Constance A. Lubbock, (1933) p. 176.
99. I have a page from the Auction Sale Catalogue, dated 25 February, 1932, listing the vintage wines, and the cigars included in the Sale.
100. 1933 brochure.
101. D.N.B.
102. Herschel Chronicle, supra, p. 330.
103. There are several documents relating to the Leopold Coffee House and its tenants at the Town Hall, Slough. It should not be confused with the Leopold Coffee House in Stoke Road, built by Frederick Charsley in 1882, next door to the Bricklayers' Arms (now The Printers' Devil) as a counter-attraction to the public house.
104. Information kindly given to me by Mr. George Wilson, whose father, H.G. Wilson, was at one time landlord of The Crown.
105. Bentley, Inns, p. 23.
106. The title of Prince Consort was not conferred on Prince Albert until 25 June, 1857.
107. Owing to her higher rank, the Queen had to propose to Prince Albert. See Queen Victoria's letter to Leopold, King of the Belgians, 15 October, 1839.
108. Windsor Express, 12 October, 1839; and Queen Victoria's Letters.
109. ibid. 16 November, 1839.
110. Bentley, Inns, pp. 23-4.
111. Windsor Express, 15 February, 1840; and Queen Victoria's Letters.
112. They are not at the Town Hall, and Messrs. Courage & Co. informed me that they were not in their possession, and had probably been destroyed.
113. Wyld's Great Western Railway Guide, published by James Wyld, (1839) p. 20-21.
114. J.B. Brown's Royal Windsor Guide, (1843).
115. He is given as the landlord of The Crown in Kelly's Directory, 1864.
116. Luff.
117. Information kindly furnished by Mr. George Wilson, whose father was landlord of The Dolphin from about 1898 to 1903 or 1904. Mr. Wilson was not sure of the date on which the transfer was made, but H.W. Wilson is shown as landlord of The Crown in Kelly's Directory, 1907.
118. Burne, p. 59. Mr. Burne saw a document then in the possession of E.L. Reynolds, but this appears to have been lost since he saw it.
119. See p. 50 Miss Mason's Walk Round Slough.
120. D.N.B.
121. Bentley, Inns, p. 20.
122. Reproduced in the Slough Observer, 17 November, 1961.
123. Alfred Rimmer, *Rambles Round Eton and Harrow* (1882) p. 7.
124. Burne, p. 59. Mr. Burne saw a document then in possession of J.J. Sprigge. By the kind permission of Mr. J.W.S. Sprigge, of Iver, and Mr. Walker Jones, of Messrs. Charsley & Leonard, & Co., Slough, I made a search through such of J.J. Sprigge's documents as are in their possession without finding any trace of any of the documents Mr. Burne saw in 1913.
125. Luff.
126. J.R. Brown, op. cit.
127. Luff.
128. H. James Daw, J.P., Article in Slough Observer, 13 November, 1925. Unfortunately all the records in Mr. Daw's possession seem to have been lost or destroyed.

129. Mrs. Maud Jervis, in *Trade Tokens, N.B.M.T.*, Vol. III, No. 17, December, 1972, p. 121, describes a spurious copy of this token, but there were also numerous genuine specimens: See Dalton & Hamer *Provincial Token Coinage of the 18th Century* (standard work on this subject reprinted in 1967), p. 4.
130. The Bucks County Museum also has a half-penny token issued in 1785 by John Peckham, 'Chemist and Druggist' of Slough. (See p. 110).
131. Upton Court Rolls.
132. *ibid.*
133. Churchwarden's Accounts.
134. An undated cutting in Slough Library.
135. *Windsor Express*, 24 August, 1934.
136. Burne, p. 78. See Note 124 *supra*.
137. Information kindly supplied by Mr. G.E. Bennett.
138. J.H. Brown, *op. cit.*
139. Mackenzie Street appears to have been built in 1863, or later.
140. Luff.
141. *Bentley, Inns*, p. 28.
142. *Bentley, Notes*, p. 23; and *Inns*, p. 30. The *Illustrated London News*, 21 June, 1845, has an account of the accident.
143. *Bentley, Inns*, p. 31.
144. *Windsor Express*, 28 May, 1858; and Luff.
145. There is an account of the Mackenzie family in Buckinghamshire, a *Short History with Genealogical & Current Biographies*, edited by John Grant, 2 Vols., (published privately for subscribers, 1911) Vol. I, p. 271. Major Edward Mackenzie was born in 1811 and died in 1880.
146. The trees are no longer in the grounds of the Licensed Victuallers' School. It is believed they died, and were removed about 1924. I am indebted to the Headmaster, Mr. Bland, and the gardener, Mr. Bond, for this information.
147. Luff.
148. Unidentified newspaper cutting headed '40 years ago'.
149. I am indebted to Mr. Walter Lewis, who is related to the Vallis family, for this information.



26. *The Great Western Railway Motor bus, Slough to Burnham Beeches, in 1904*