

## A Brief History of the St. Kew Inn

# St. Kew Inn

*The history of the St Kew Inn is difficult to trace as early records have long since been destroyed, however, it is widely thought that the earliest part of the Inn (now the Lounge Bar) was built to house the skilled masons who came to build the church.*

Church records indicate that a stained glass window was purchased in 1469; therefore it may be assumed that the building that became the Inn was in existence prior to this date. The church would have taken about 10 years to build and it is likely that during that time the masons would have set up their own brewery as beer was a staple part of their diet. It is thought that the current cellar (below the Stable Bar) was the site of this original brewing house. After the Church was finished and the masons departed, the building became an Inn, probably licensed in 1495, when the licensing system began.

Little is known from this time until 1709 when the Inn is mentioned amongst title deeds held by Nicholas Moore Bart. Several mentions of the Inn are also made in the papers of Sir John Molesworth including a 1778 lease to one William Clode and another lease in 1779 to Mr Abram Brown. The latter was a popular Innkeeper who held the lease for 36 years, and whose gravestone can be found at the northern end of the south aisle of the Church:

*Sacred to the memory of  
Abram Brown, Innkeeper  
In this TOWN, who departed this  
Life the 31st day of Janry 1815 aged 69 years  
Full thirty and six years he at his business spent  
In constant care with comfort and content  
a pattern for all others for sobriety  
Reader this is a rule and guide for thee  
a tender husband and faithful partner here  
lamented by his spouse and children dear*

From the 1840's details regarding the Inn are more easily available. In the 1841 census the Landlord was Samuel Derrent and the tithe map from this time shows a field near the Inn named 'Hop Gardens',

which was probably where hops were grown to make the beer. By 1851 William Bligh and his wife Ann had taken over. The 1861 census shows us that Thomas Chapman was in charge and by 1871 William Bassett is described as Bucher & Landlord. Hooks and rings that were used to hang meat can still be seen on the ceiling of the Public Bar. By 1881 Nicholas Hawken and his wife Elizabeth are shown as the Innkeepers but by 1891 they had been replaced by John Bassett and his wife Jane. From 1902 to 1926 Irwin Hawken (nephew of Nicholas Hawken) and his family successfully ran the Inn.

In 1895 brothers William Henry and William John Coombes, Wine and Spirit Merchants from Wadebridge, bought the Inn and it remained in their family until 1922 when the Estate was sold to Walter Hicks & Co which was later to become St Austell Brewery who still owns the freehold of the Inn today.

The Inn has always formed a major part in public life of the area, being the venue for auctions, political meetings, wedding celebrations and wakes. During Victorian times an annual fair was held on the first Tuesday of April and up to the 1960's Cornish Wrestling contests were held in the meadow, which is now the car park.