

## Freemasonry

**Wells Journal**  
July 1910

Freemasonry In Wells – The earliest records go back to May 1785. The Lodge of Unanimity No 473 was opened at the Swan Hotel in July 1785 with seven members present, three of whom were initiated that evening, two of these also being passed to the second degree. The next day another lodge meeting was held at the Swan Hotel with three brethren being raised to the degree of Master.

The lodge continued to meet until 1809 and it was revived in 1837 when it reformed at the Swan Hotel.

## Paternity denied

**Wells Journal**  
October 12, 1899

At the City Police Court Eustace Cory, stable hand at the Lawn Stables Swindon, was summoned by Maude Baker, waitress at the Swan Hotel Wells to show cause.

The defendant denied paternity.

The complainant said she had met the defendant at Swindon fair and that they had become intimate with the result that a child was born in July.

Cory denied being the father and said he had heard about her character and that they had never been intimate. The bench decided that there was a lack of corroborative evidence and the case was dismissed.

## Marriage

**Wells Journal**  
July 5, 1888

On Thursday morning the marriage of Miss Blanch Amy George, 2nd daughter of the late Mr F C George of the Swan Hotel and Mr J Ebbelwhite of South Hackney, was solemnised at St.Cuthbert's Church.

The bride was attired in a white silk dress with long train trimmed with lace and orange blossom with a wreath and veil. The bride carried a magnificent bouquet and wore a gold brooch set with pearls the gift of the bridegroom.

The wedding breakfast was served in the large dining room at the Swan Hotel at which about 30 sat down.

## Civility

**Wells Journal**  
May 28, 1870

Sir – To many men bent on pleasures a good hotel is as grateful as a fine cathedral: for I do not remember ever to have fallen upon a nicer appointed hotel than the Swan.

Cleanliness, civility and economy and all that makes home of a strange place is found at the Swan and this fact contributed not a little to the enjoyment of my visit.

**A gentleman visitor to Wells**

## Seats for ladies

**Wells Journal**  
February 26, 1870

We would just remind our readers of the Billiard Match between the champion (Mr Cook) and Mr Digges at the Swan Hotel on the 28th inst.

We understand that arrangements have been made for a certain number of seats for ladies.

# NO FINER EXHIBITION OF BILLIARDS EVER SEEN

## CHAMPION WAS LOUDLY APPLAUDED

**Wells Journal**

January 19, 1878

The great billiard match at Mr George's Swan Hotel between Mr William Cook, the champion, and Mr Digges came off on Monday and terminated in easy victory for the champion and is the most interesting event which we record this week in connection with our city.

The match had been looked forward to with the greatest interest by large numbers of gentlemen not only in Wells but in Shepton Mallet and Glastonbury and there were many visitors from far more distant places.

The arrangements of Mr George were everything that could be desired and the whole affair was eminently successful. All the seats were occupied and immediately after 8.00 o'clock the competition commenced.

Pyramids, four games of which were played, was won three games to the champion, one to Mr Digges.

At a quarter past nine the billiard match commenced. In the course of a quarter of an hour Cook made a good break of 73. Digges followed with pretty breaks but no good score. At this point the assembled company was treated to one of the champion's splendid breaks making his score 24 in advance of his opponent. The champion was loudly applauded and naturally for probably no one in the room had ever seen a finer exhibition of play. The precision with which after every stroke he placed his own ball in the exact position for the next stroke was truly wonderful.

After supper Digges again



Mr William Cook, the champion

failed to make a long break and Mr Cook emerged the winner. Mr Cook was warmly applauded at the conclusion.

He afterwards showed some amusing and astonishing feats with the balls which he twisted between his fingers and thumb making them traverse the table in all kinds of unlooked for ways.

We have already intimated that there was a break for sup-

per and must not omit to add that Mr George had provided a very nice cold repast at a low figure of which the majority took advantage.

In conclusion may we say that great credit is due to our worthy and enterprising townsmen for securing us such a rare treat and still greater for the competent manner in which the arrangements were carried out.

## Thorough repair

**Wells Journal**  
August 7, 1852

Edward Mead most respectfully begs to inform the Nobility, Clergy, Families and Commercial friends that during the last two years the Swan Hotel has undergone a thorough repair and new stabling etc has been erected. The house is now replete with every comfort and convenience.

## Inquest: Died through exhaustion, in child-birth

Inquests were heard at the Swan Hotel from the 1850s to the 1860s.

**Wells Journal**  
April 4 1863

Inquest – An Inquest was held by B. Fry, Esq, Coroner, at the Swan Hotel in this city on Wednesday last on the body of Christianna Simmons who died in child-birth.

Charles Simmons said, I am a mason living at Portway. The deceased, who was my wife, was 41 years of age. She died in child-birth on Saturday last. Mrs Noise, mid-wife, attended her, and likewise Dr. Livett's assistant.

She was taken ill at half-past one and died at half-past eight o'clock the same morning. I have no reason to complain of carelessness or neglect. She never complained of pain in her heart, or side. It was her ninth child. Mrs Noise said she had attended deceased on a similar occasion in 1861. Then all went well. She was sent for on Saturday morning at two o'clock. She left nature to take its course all was doing well. But after a while faintness came on and on asking the deceased when she had last taken anything she replied not since tea which was eleven hours before.

Witness gave her toast and tea and she rallied but the faintness returned.

Mrs Noise sent for Dr. Livett. Mr Bonnor, assistant to Dr. Livett, said he went to deceased at about half-past seven o'clock on Saturday morning. He administered brandy to her. The death was very sudden. He believed it arose from internal haemorrhage. He did not believe there was the slightest blame attaching to the mid-wife, and his opinion no medical man could have saved the woman. The Jury returned a verdict of Died through exhaustion, in child-birth.

The Husband is now in decline and has been out of work through ill health for several months.

## Gold watch thefts

**Wells Journal**  
March 20, 1859

On Wednesday morning it was discovered that Mr Taylor Esq and Mr Miller who were staying at the Swan Hotel had been robbed, the former of a gold watch and the latter of a gold watch and chain and several sovereigns which must have been taken from their bedrooms before they awoke.

Suspicion soon fell on a genteel young man who had been staying at the hotel since Sunday and who went out about 6.00 in the morning leaving a bill of 32 undischarged stating that he would shortly

return for breakfast but he did not. In conversation with persons at the Swan he represented himself as an officer in the service of the Queen of Spain and he had travelled nearly all through England and he was to return to Madrid in two weeks and was shortly to be taking a steamer to Cadiz. He is wanted by the city police.

## Inquest: The body when found was quite naked

**Wells Journal**  
August 30 1862

Coroner's Inquest – An inquest was held on Thursday last, at 'the Swan Inn, before J. Wybrants, Esq. coroner; on the body of a male infant, which had been found under the following circumstances. It appears that on Monday evening, a young man whilst in the act of dipping water from a stream in the Mill Lane saw the body floating on the surface of the water. The Jury having viewed the body, the following witness was called. George Yendell, sworn said, "I am an assistant at Mr. Tyte, grocer, in this city. I found the body on Monday evening about half past seven o'clock. I was dipping water at the hatch, in the Mill Pond, Mill Lane. The body was laying about two yards on the right hand side of the hatch floating on the top of the water against the wall. I called Mrs Harris who lives the Mill to come and look at it, we procured a piece of wood to try to get it, but at last succeeded in getting it out with rake, and had it taken to the Police station. The body when found was quite naked, with a piece of string around it."

The Jury returned open verdict of "Found Drowned."

## R.I.P.

**Wells Journal**  
May 23, 1919



Death of Mr. Brand George – Much regret will be felt at the death of Mr. F. Brand George, landlord the Swan Hotel, Wells, which occurred Tuesday evening. The deceased gentleman, who was 57 years of age, had been laid aside for over a month, but his final collapse and death occurred somewhat suddenly.

The late Mr. Brand George had lived for just 50 years at the Swan Hotel, a very old house which has been in the family for a considerable time, and he took over the management of it at the death of his father. His control of the establishment has been such as to keep the house in a premier place among the best hotels in the city, his own kindly good nature well as his business ability having much effect in assuring the success of the business.

He was at one time a member of the City Council, and one of the oldest and most prominent Freemasons in Wells. He was most highly esteemed by all who became acquainted with him in any way, his death keenly felt by his many friends. His wife died about three years ago, and leaves an only son who will carry on the business.

## Swan Hotel guide and tariff

A mention in the Wells Journal of November 1893 of the "Revised Guide of the Swan Hotel Visitor's Guide to Wells" published by William Lewis and Son, Bath led to an internet search and the finding of a replica copy of the guide.

It contains "a guide to assist the visitor who has neither the time nor the opportunity to study the larger and more comprehensive works on the city and neighbourhood.

The proprietress of the Swan Hotel has published this small book, the purpose of which is to point out the principal objects of interest in or near Wells.

Mrs George believes that the "Swan Hotel Guide" supplies a want previously felt by tourists in Wells."

The guide also contains a tariff for the hotel.

## Swan Hotel Tariff 1893

Families and Gentlemen Boarded in the Coffee Room, including:

**Breakfast:** Cold Meat, or bacon and Eggs

**Luncheon:** Cold meat or one Chop and Potatoes

**Dinner:** Soup, Joint, Sweet, or Fish Entrée and Sweets

Tea, Sweets

All the above £3 3s per week

**Bed and Attendants Apartments (Per Day)**

Sitting Room ..... 7s 6d

Bedroom ..... 2 6

Ditto Two persons ..... 4 0

Double bedded Room ..... 5 0

Dressing Room ..... 1 6

Servant's Bedroom ..... 1 6

**Breakfasts and Teas**

Plain ..... 1 6

With Eggs or Cold Meat .... 2 0

With Chop, Steak, or bacon and Eggs ..... 2 6

With Two Chops or Fish ... 3 0

**Luncheons**

Basin Soup ..... 1 0

Sandwiches ..... 0 6

Bread and Cheese ..... 1 0

Cold Meat, or Chop and Vegetables with Bread and Cheese ..... 2 0

Ditto with Pastry ..... 2 6

Cut from Hot Joint, or Two Chops and Vegetables, with Bread and Cheese ..... 2 6

Ditto with Pastry ..... 3 0

**Dinners**

Joint and Vegetables ..... 3 0

Soup or Fish, Joint and Vegetables ..... 3 6

Soup and Fish and ditto .... 4 0

Ditto, Poultry, Entrée, Game, Sweets ..... 5 0

Table d'Hote (during season) ..... 3 6

**Visitors' Servants**

Board per day ..... 5 0

Bed ..... 1 6