

## CROWN & SCEPTRE

The Crown and Sceptre Inn began life as two brick-built farm buildings in c. 1660. There was a small slaughterhouse beside these two buildings for quite some time. The cellars show two large open fireplaces as well as the remains of a 17<sup>th</sup> century bakehouse. The property, part of a smallholding, had belonged to the Holloway family since the reign of Charles II. In 1738 Anne Holloway sold the business to Lazarus Haywood. It remained in his family until in the 1820s, his daughter Amelia French (listed as 'Brewer') sold it, along with the 'Jolly Farmer' at Manston, the 'Queen's Head' at Birchington, the 'Sportsman' at Cliffsend and the 'Pear Tree' at Pegwell Bay to Francis Cobb & Sons, Brewers of King Street, Margate.

Like many hostelries, it appears to have developed as a sideline to the owner's main occupation, be it Cooper, Farmer or Wheelwright at the time. As was so often the case, the owner's wife was put in charge of the family's brew-house, selling small beer in either the front parlour or on an ale bench outside the front of what had become the farmhouse.

It would appear that by 1770, the 'sideline' had become a major source of income, when the property was sold to John Friend of Birchington Hall in Birchington. It was still occupied as two dwellings at this date, one of which was designated 'a beer house'.

The great era of the horse-drawn coaches helped shape the Crown and Sceptre at Acol. In its early days it stood on the main route between Margate and Canterbury, because the 'summer road' (through Birchington) was impassable for coach and horses in wintertime. This was due to the steepness of Brooksend Hill in the snow and ice – a regular feature in those much colder winters. The main road through Acol was a turnpike road, so was kept in fairly good repair, unlike so many of the other roads in Thanet.

By the mid 1800s it appears in some plans from Cobb's Brewery. In 1852, Cobb had these plans drawn up for 'modernising' just over 50 of his Inns, among them the 'Crown and Sceptre' at Acol, and also the 'Powell Arms' and the 'Queen's Head' at Birchington. The plans used to be held at the East Kent Archives at Whitfield, but I presume have now been taken over to the new Maidstone archive centre.

Since Cobb's 1852 'facelift', which was very similar that done by Cobb on his other properties, the 'Crown & Sceptre' has had its barn and stables converted into a games room.