

# MEXIS

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**The Prince of Wales PH, 69 Market Street.**

**Where Ma Goulding was to live, as Assistant and Landlady for approx. 70 years.**

**Taken by Walter Ashby c1968 just prior to demolition. Showing the extension made to the property in 1896.**

## **Ma Goulding, a Victorian Landlady.**

Ma Goulding was certainly a character of note in Mexborough and ran the Prince of Wales Public House, Market Street, with a rod of iron for approx. 70 years. Dressed as Queen Victoria herself did, in black taffeta with black beads and Jet jewellery, despite her diminutive stature she was known to take bargees, colliers and railwaymen by the scruff of their necks and throw them out of her pub if they used foul language or bad behaviour.

She was a strict disciplinarian and one of the stipulations she made, was that on receipt of his wages a customer was firstly to go home, where he was to give his wife her housekeeping. His second visit of the day was then to the Prince of Wales to pay his Union and Friendly Society account, to insure himself and his family, against the effects of being: placed on short time; unemployment; illness; but mostly, injury, hospitalisation and his inability to work following an industrial accident. If she discovered, to her displeasure, that a man did not stick to these rules then he was banned from her pub.

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Another of her stipulations was that no women were allowed through the door of the Prince of Wales unless accompanied by their husband, and then only into the best room in the house, the Snug.

But despite her strictness the pub was always extremely popular, as a man was guaranteed a quiet drink after the heavy work of the day. He could also take his wife into the Prince of Wales and know that they could pass a pleasant evening, chatting to friends or having the customary sing-along, and that it would be warm, clean and comfortable.

But, in the story of Ma Goulding, let us start at the beginning. In c1858 Sarah Shaw married Richard Brunt, a Pottery Dealer, and the couple obtained a small, stone built, terraced cottage in Brewery Yard, close to the canal. Sarah was the daughter of John Shaw, who was a property owner, farmer and owner of barges and ships and as a consequence was a man of influence in the town and leased, from the Earl of Mexborough, a property of substance, the Old Farm, 51 Market Street, Mex. The cottage Sarah occupied was small and therefore her confinement took place in the large west bedroom of the Old Farm. Also, in the autumn of 1859, when she went into labour with her first child, her father was able to afford the luxury of a doctor to aid Sarah with the birth, and therefore it was, in the large west bedroom that, like many of her forebears, Elizabeth Brunt, later to be known to the world as Ma Goulding, was brought into the world by the local doctor, assisted by Mary Gillott.

By the mid 1800's, thanks to the sinking of the pits, Mexborough was becoming a centre for mass industry and therefore a wealthy town. Its inhabitants now had enough disposable income to indulge themselves in luxuries, such as entertainment, and one of these was a visit to the local beerhouse or pub. These trades were becoming quite lucrative and John Shaw expanded his empire, through his family, into the licensing trade. His daughter, Elizabeth & her husband Enoch Jackson, ran the Hope & Anchor, Brewery Yard, off Market Street, whereas another daughter and her husband Thomas Williams, had the 'old' Miners Arms, Doncaster Road. It was also at this time that, the Prince of Wales, Beerhouse, Market Street, came into the family's possession. George

Shaw, John's son, had for many years worked in the family canal and shipping business, but in 1865 we find he leaves this occupation to take over the running of this large beerhouse, with his wife Ann.

Elizabeth's father, Richard Brunt, being a dealer in pottery, necessitated him travelling away on business, and it was at these times that both her mother Sarah, and Elizabeth's older illegitimate sister Emma Shaw, worked for Enoch & Elizabeth Jackson at the Hope & Anchor. As soon as she was able, Elizabeth followed them, and in 1871, we find she has moved out of the family home and is now living, nextdoor to her parents, with her uncle and aunt, George & Rachel Harrison, and at the ripe old age of eleven years is believe to be working, full time, at the Hope & Anchor Beerhouse.

In 1872 Elizabeth's grandfather, the head of the family, John Shaw, died aged 84yrs. His grandson Amos took over the running of the family business and as the Old Farm had long been too small for their needs, moved the business headquarters to Adwick-le-Street, Doncaster and sublet the Old Farm.

On 17<sup>th</sup> July 1874 George Shaw, John's son and landlord of the Prince of Wales, also died. This left his widow, Ann, to run the beerhouse alone, and as she needed added help to run the beerhouse, it may have been at this point that Elizabeth, at the age of 15 years, now fully experience in the licensing trade and therefore capable of helping to run the larger premises, went to live and work there. And it was here that she was to live for approx. 70 years.

By the time of the next census return, in 1881, the repercussions of the deaths of John & George Shaw on their families, and particularly the female side, are revealed. Mary, John's widow, who had been one of the first licensees of the Hope & Anchor, Brewery Yard, at 86 years old returned to work in the licensing trade, and moved from the Old Farm, when it was sublet, to live and work, as joint landlady of the Prince of Wales, and Ann, George's widow, aged 61 years, ran the Prince of Wales with her. Whereas Elizabeth, now aged 21years, seems to be the only full-time employee. This must have been both hard and heavy work for her to do, as besides serving and taking care of all the customers' needs at the bar, she had to keep

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the establishment clean and tidy, and ensure that deliveries, such as crates of bottled specialised ales, and barrels of ale and beer, delivered by the Bolsover Brewery, were received and carried down to cavernous cellars beneath the pub to be stored correctly.

For Elizabeth, to date, life had been difficult, but this was to take a happy turn when Arthur Goulding walked into her life. The Prince of Wales was one of the many 'railway pubs' to be found in Mexborough. Originally frequented by the employees of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway until c1870, and then by those of the Great Central Railway. It was where they met after a day's work to relax and chat and where they would also pay their friendly society and union dues. One of these men was Arthur Goulding and it may have been on one of these visits that Elizabeth and Arthur met. Arthur was born at Quarry House, Old Denaby (close to Manor Farm) in 1853 and began his working life at what became known locally as the 'Plant', as an engine cleaner but, by the time he met Elizabeth, he had reached the heady heights of Railway Engine Driver.

They were married on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1886 at St. John the Baptist Parish Church, Mexborough by the Vicar of Mexborough, Henry Ellershaw M.A. But when we examine the marriage certificate, we find a surprize. The signature of Edwin, Elizabeth's brother, is that of a well-educated man, which contrasted strongly with that of Elizabeth's as it is revealed that she could barely sign her own name. From this we deduct that her parents did not think it necessary to pay for an education for Elizabeth. Following the wedding Elizabeth and Arthur set up home together on Regent Terrace, off Dolcliffe Road, where many employed by the railways had obtained new homes.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1883 her grandmother aged 88 years died and three years later Ann Shaw, who had run the pub with Elizabeth, from Mary's death, also died. Seeing a business opportunity, and with Elizabeth's extensive experience in the licensing trade, in 1888, our couple took over the running of the Prince of Wales, and it was here, in 1889, that their only child, Catherine Elizabeth Goulding was born.

Under the couple's tenancy the Prince of Wales thrived, so much so that in 1896 the need was

felt to extend it. Thus enabling them to have eight rooms in all. Success begets success and by 1902 Elizabeth was running a thriving pub, Catherine was undergoing training as a dressmaker, like both her grandmothers before her, and Arthur was elected as a member of Mexborough Urban District Council. In 1905 he became Chairman of M.U.D.C. and from 1902 to 1915 he worked tirelessly for Mexborough to have better: roads; a library; water & sewage treatment; fire brigade; electric light and Gas Board. He also tried to help the poor as he was an Overseer and a Guardian of the Poor, he was also one of the first to hold a post on the Pensions Committee. On the outbreak of the 1<sup>st</sup> WW Arthur retired from the council and began war work. He became: a Canvasser for the National Registration Scheme, to identify those eligible for military service; he was also on Mexborough Recruiting Tribunals; also under the Chairmanship of William Winstanley, Mexborough Military Service Tribunal. He worked so hard but never got to see the end of the war as on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1918 he died leaving Elizabeth, once again, on her own.

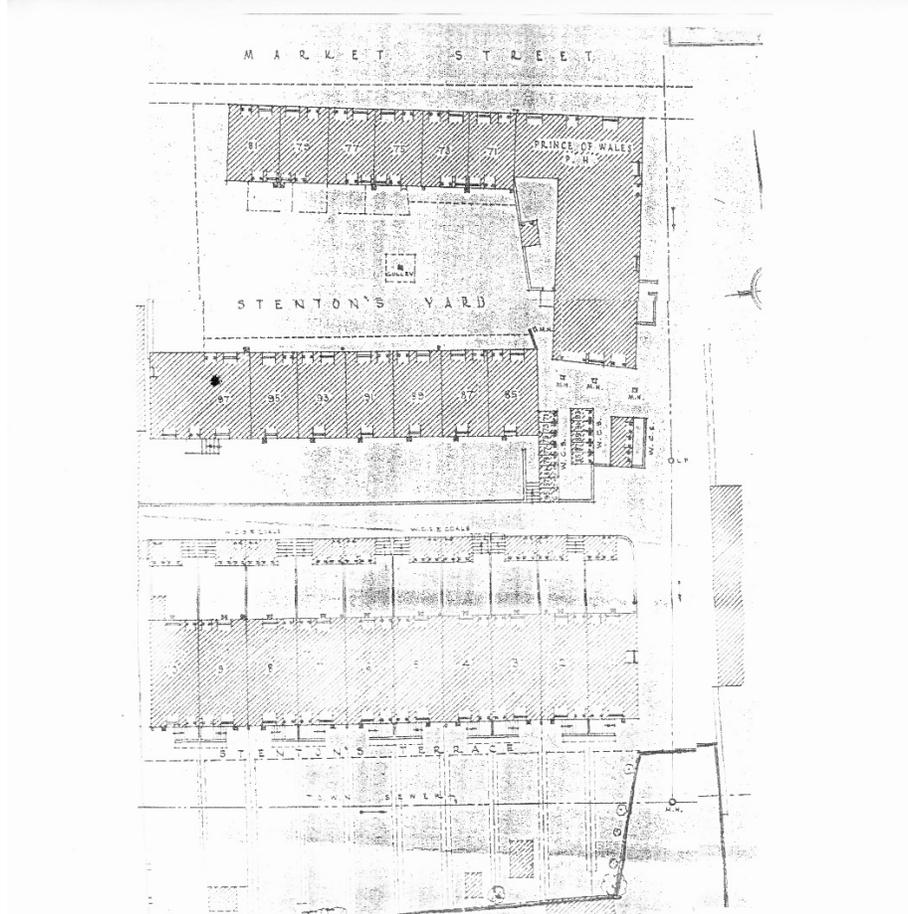
Catherine, Elizabeth's daughter, known to everyone as Kate, was now a qualified dressmaker and, from 1912 had run her own business at 20, Bank St., gave up the shop to return to the Prince of Wales to assist her mother.

By now, known widely as 'Ma Goulding' Elizabeth and her daughter Kate, went on to be tenants of the pub for another 27yrs. In her long life she'd take the Prince of Wales from being a small two roomed beerhouse into a thriving eight room public house. She'd seen Mexborough grow from a small insignificant town, into one of the largest industrial towns in South Yorkshire. There was clean drinking water, sanitation, a police force and fire brigade, plus roads which were fit to walk down. There were also schools for all, a library, Market Hall and Council Chambers. Women were no longer 'the little woman', kept in the background, as she had been, without a say in their future, as the emancipation of women had begun. Women now, not only had a right to free education, which she didn't, they also had a say in the running of the country, as they could now vote. She'd seen the deprivations brought by Miners' Strikes such as the Bag Muck Strike, the strike of 1921 and the General Strike of 1926, where miners, and their families, were literally starving

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to death. She had also lived through two world wars and just a month before her death celebrated with the best of them, in her pub, on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 as Germany surrendered and victory over Europe was announced. In June 1945 at the age of 85yrs she slipped away

leaving her daughter Kate to run the pub until 1949. Albert Edward Sleight then took over the tenancy until 29<sup>th</sup> October 1966 when it closed and a couple of years later it was demolished to make way for the construction of Mexborough By-Pass.

**Plans for the Prince of Wales drawn up in 1963, depicting its location.**



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**Information obtained from:**

Census Returns 1841-1911

Mexborough Trade Directories

Doncaster Library Services Local History Dept. Lists of Landlords

Sheffield Archives List of vessel and barge owners

Parish Records Baptisms, Marriages, burials.

Oral History from: Joe Raybould and Mrs Gillott (Sister-in-Law of Mary Gillott), Leslie Evans.

Mexborough Trade Directories.

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