

DICK TURPIN WAS BORN HERE

THE NOTORIOUS 17th century highwayman Dick Turpin is reputed to have been born at The Bluebell at Hemsted, a picturesque 17th century village inn midway between Saffron Walden and Haverhill.

According to church records Dick's father was landlord of the inn during the early 1700's. Dick, who terrorised travellers on the roads between London and York, was finally captured, tried and executed at York on

April 7 1739. Plaques in the inn record his birth and death and a photograph of the headstone on his grave is on display together with a letter he is supposed to have written.

A more distinguished inhabitant of the village who is buried in the nearby churchyard is William Harvey. He is considered by many to be the founder of modern medicine through his pioneering work on the discovery of the blood circulation system.



EATING OUT ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

by Paul Simpson,
commercial director

UNTIL RECENTLY your choice would probably have been limited to a motorway service station or a fast food restaurant.

Now its different. Starting with the introduction of Sunday trading and followed by the relaxation of licensing hours, the British Sunday is undergoing a dramatic transformation. Pubs can now open from 12 noon to 10.30 pm.

The immediate impact felt by the Company has been a significant increase in our Sunday food business, led primarily by the growth in Sunday evening eating-out.

The traditional Sunday lunchtime does not appear to have changed dramatically, with locals popping out for a couple of pints before lunch and families dining out in our restaurants. The 3 o'clock exodus has not abated.

What we are finding is people who have been out during the day and don't wish to cook, looking for that early evening roast to save the hassle of cooking, to say nothing of the washing up afterwards.

After a hard day's shopping or working in the garden there can be few things more enjoyable than a hearty traditional Sunday roast set in the character surroundings of an old English pub.

FOUR HORSESHOES GETS NEW THATCH

THE OLDEST INN in the Company's portfolio, the Four Horseshoes at Thornham Magna, is being rethatched. The four month long project on the inn, which was built in 1150 AD, is being undertaken by master thatcher, Richard Clarke, from Eye in Suffolk, two miles away, using traditional wheat straw.

The building which has the typical oak beams and low ceilings of the period has eight bedrooms. These are picturesquely furnished and fully equipped with en-suite facilities despite sloping floors in places.

A feature of the restaurant is a 20 ft deep well, complete with rope and bucket. Visitors often throw coins

into the water, which are collected from time to time by a diver and donated to charities such as Children in Need.

The pub is a favourite stopping-off place for those travelling the Thornham walks who enjoy the bar snacks and cask-conditioned ales such as Adnams Southwold bitter.

This is the third of the Company's pubs to be rethatched by master thatcher, Richard Clarke. When he did the first, the Old Swan at Astwood, near Newport Pagnell, to save travelling from Suffolk every day he built himself a straw hut in the garden, which he furnished with a camp bed and cooking stove.



SEE US IN LES ROUTIERS, EGON RONAY AND THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

THE QUALITY OF our service and the food and drink we offer is of paramount importance in maintaining the reputation of the Old English Pub Company.

For this reason we endeavour to obtain recognised third party endorsements such as the Les Routiers accreditation which now applies to the majority of our pubs.

A number of our pubs are listed in Egon Ronay, and Good Food guide, eight in the East Anglian publication Hidden Places, and several in the CAMRA Good Pub Guide.