

The Mysterious Malthouse in Coleshill Street, Sutton Coldfield

by Janet Jordan

♫Midnight, one more night without sleeping
Watching till the morning comes creeping
Green door, what's that secret you're keeping?♫



Lobby entrance in Coleshill Street (above 1995, below 2017)

In 1985, I was working in an office in Coleshill Street overlooking the wall which surrounded the Vesey Memorial Gardens and Holy Trinity Churchyard. It always intrigued me as to what went on behind the green door set into that wall which seemed to lead directly into the raised ground behind it. On many occasions I watched gardeners leaving their tools there and assumed it was simply a small room used for storage.

In later years, as a member of Sutton Coldfield Local History Research Group, I came across some conjectural plans in the Library suggesting that this room had been used in the 1860s as a 'lock up', with a police constable's house just to the north of it. I also came across the possibility that it was the entrance in the early 1900s to a Working Men's Club and also that it was the access way to a public air raid shelter in World War II.

However, it was not until 2017, when the green door was removed, that its early history became much clearer. This came about as a result of a couple of exploratory visits through the exposed doorway with some willing accomplices, Roger Lea and Eileen Donohoe, fellow members of the Sutton Coldfield Local History Research Group.

Each time we entered the dark hole with some trepidation, armed with torches and cameras! What met us was something of a surprise! We had not realised that there was more to see than the initial 'room'. In fact, it turned out to be a small brick-lined lobby, from which a short flight of steps led down, covered on our first visit by a wooden ramp. At the bottom, a sharp right turn led into a large cavernous underground structure with a vaulted ceiling, about 12ft high. There were two caverns, running parallel to one another away from the street, both of which were divided in half again by a more modern wall. It was obvious that there had been other recent visitors, as a lot of rubbish was deposited there.

In addition, there were a few puzzling features. One of these was a small 3ft square chamber positioned beneath the pavement in Coleshill Street. It had a metal manhole cover set into the roof, visible from the pavement above, and was no doubt used for the delivery of items. One wonders if it had been specifically built to receive, say, barrels or coal?

There were also a couple of large blocked openings in the vaulted ceiling, possibly the site of old stairwells. Planning Applications by a Working Men's Club for a Billiard Room did show stairwells leading downward from a

dwellinghouse immediately above. Smaller openings in the ceilings and walls were probably air vents or drainage channels. Another interesting feature was a small area of large tiles on the floor of the first cavern.

Based on what was visible, Roger Lea suggested that we were in a former malthouse. Little evidence remained of any former use, but the shape and position of the whole structure accorded with other malthouses known to have been in the area. With that in mind, I wondered whether I would be able to find proof.

The Census Returns, of course, gave the various owners and occupiers of the site, but it was the local history archives held by Sutton Coldfield Library that confirmed Roger's suspicion. In fact, not only evidence of the malthouse turned up but also of a dwellinghouse above it.

Sadly, I could never find the exact date when any of the aforesaid structures were built and many questions remain unanswered as to their day to day use. The history of the entrance lobby is particularly intriguing and its odd shape is difficult to explain. It makes one wonder how the access way that can now be seen in the roof of the lobby was used? It seems likely this was blocked off when the Vesey Memorial Gardens were built.

I hope, by collating all the facts available, that the following Timeline will go some way to show what may have taken place on the site during the past three centuries or more.

(See Appendix for photographs taken when we visited the site in 2017/8)

Timeline relating to the Lobby, Malthouse and Dwellinghouse situated at No. 10 Coleshill Street, Sutton Coldfield

SOURCES

*Sutton Coldfield Library §Birmingham Library, Wolfson Centre
 #www.Ancestry.co.uk. †www.British Newspaper Archive.

1646: Possible erection of the Malthouse and a Lobby giving access to it.
 Deeds referring back to 30 December 1646 show that William Hall conveyed the 'Old Sun Inn' in Coleshill Street, Sutton Coldfield. to William Penne, William Wiley and others. Originally, this Inn was the width of two houses away from the malthouse. Deeds relating to the malthouse are with those of the 'Old Sun Inn', indicating their close connection.

*Two Boxes of legal papers issued between 1751 and 1899 relating to the 'Old Sun Inn' (Ref:QSH34.4)

1751: Malthouse/Dwellinghouse?

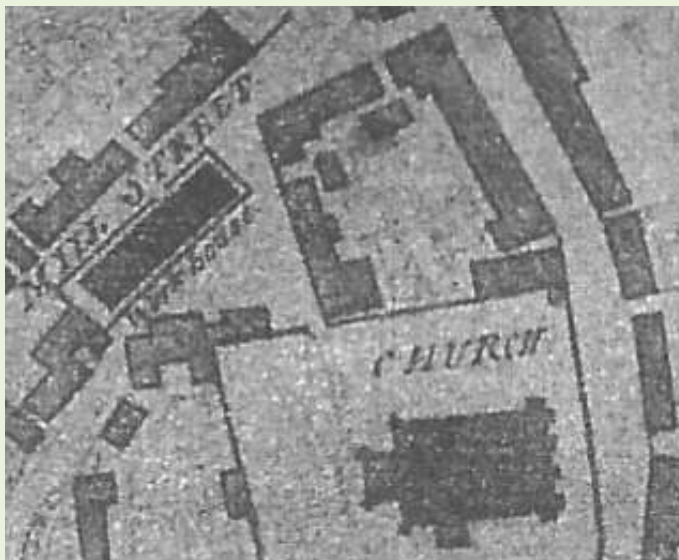
Conveyance of 2nd November 1751: Thomas Cockersall & Ann Outon selling to Abraham Outon in respect of property attached to and adjoining the churchyard, suggesting a structure above ground.

*Two Boxes of legal papers issued between 1751 and 1899 relating to the 'Old Sun Inn' (Ref:QSH34.4)

1763: Malthouse/Dwellinghouse and Lobby?

Plan showing the lobby placed within the north east corner of the church yard and the churchyard boundary wall in place.

*Snape's Plan, (1763), Drawer 13, No. 5



1764: Malthouse/Dwellinghouse and Lobby?

Plan showing the lobby area. Is it simply an open area, perhaps with a door set into the churchyard boundary wall giving access to the malthouse? Two sets of steps appear to lead down into it, one from Coleshill Street and one from the higher ground of the churchyard. In later years, a path led from this point to Church Hill.

*Snape's survey (1764) for the Sale of the Old Rectory in Coleshill St, (Norman Evans Collection)



N.B. The arrangement of the front wall of the malthouse/dwellinghouse is unclear. What is clear are the steps leading into the lobby from two sides. It also looks as if the lobby is just an open space and not a building with an overhead roof.

1798: Malthouse

Abstract of Title (page 5) referring to an Indenture of 1798, July 5th and 6th, relating to the 'Old Sun' Inn and two of its adjacent properties, as follows: "All That new erected dwellinghouse or tenement situate and being in the Town of Sutton Coldfield aforesaid sometime then since standing void and untenanted then in the several tenures or occupations of Wm Bayliss and Ann Colson and adjoining on the one side thereof to a malthouse then late in the occupation of said John Alldridge but then of William Hurdman."

*(Ref: QSH34.4)

1841: Dwellinghouse

Hester Bradnock, occupier of property in Coleshill Street, thought to be a dwellinghouse built above the malthouse.

#1841 Census

1844: Malthouse/and Dwellinghouse built above it?

Abstract of Title showing Deed of 21 Dec 1844, Devisees in Trust for the sale Under the Will of the late Edward D Sadler (Spirit Merchant) of a malthouse, dwellinghouse & premises by Indenture of the late Thomas Studholme Wilkins (Maltster), George Wilkins (Butcher) John Aldridge (Innkeeper) and Edward Sadler (Spirit Merchant).

*(Ref: QSH34.4)

1851: Dwelling House
Peggy Sanders (occupier).

#1851 Census

1855: Malthouse and Dwellinghouse

Newspaper Article relating to Auction of 'The Old Sun' as follows:-

Lot 1. All that the above named well accustomed FREEHOLD PUBLIC HOUSE called 'The Old Sun,' with a capital club-room, sitting-room, parlour, convenient bed-rooms, Brewhouse, Stable, and other Out-offices, with garden behind the same, situated in Coleshill street in the town of Sutton Coldfield, now and for many years past in the occupation of Mr John Alldridge, the Proprietor.

+Aris's
Birmingham
Gazette, Monday,
05 November 1855

Lot 4. A convenient Nine-quarter MALTHOUSE, adjoining to Lot 1, in the occupation of the said John Alldridge, together with the DWELLING HOUSE attached, fronting to the street, and in the occupation of Robert Wilson.

1856: Malthouse/Dwellinghouse/Lobby

Valuation Map Schedule:

No. 1646a Site of Old Hearse House (i.e. the Lobby)

Pt No. 1646: Site of Malthouse

(used as Ale Stores) Buildings:

Malthouse (house above)

Ditto

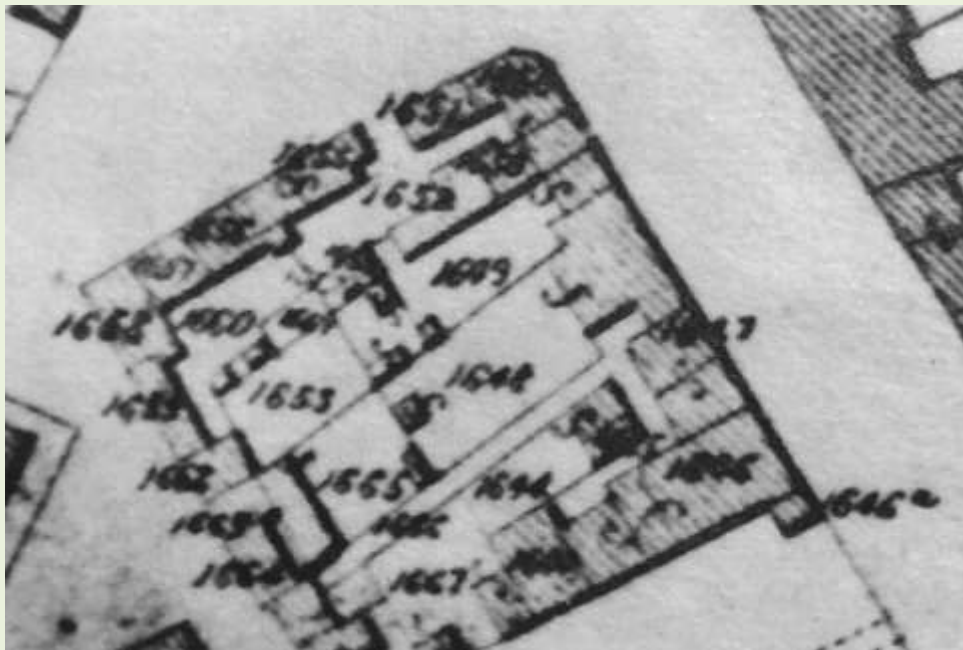
Ditto

Pt No. 1646 Site of House

Buildings

House (Malthouse underneath)

*Parochial
Valuation
1856



1861: Dwellinghouse

George Commander (police officer), occupier.

#Census 1861.

1861: Dwellinghouse

Richard Holbeche calls this the 'White House' and that 'Commander' was the surname of the one and only policeman in the town at that time.

*The Holbeche
Diary
(Q726.50942496
HOL)

1864: Malthouse and Dwellinghouse Yard

Conveyance 4 Oct 1864 between Robert Honeyborne Rochford (Farmer) and James Turner, Caleb Foden (Farmer) and Thomas Hackett, referring to a malthouse and dwellinghouse yard bounded in front by Coleshill Street, at the other end or back of a stable, the property of Thomas Vincent Holbeche (Solicitor). In the occupation of William Betts and George Betts.

*(Ref:QSH34.40)

1868: Dwellinghouse

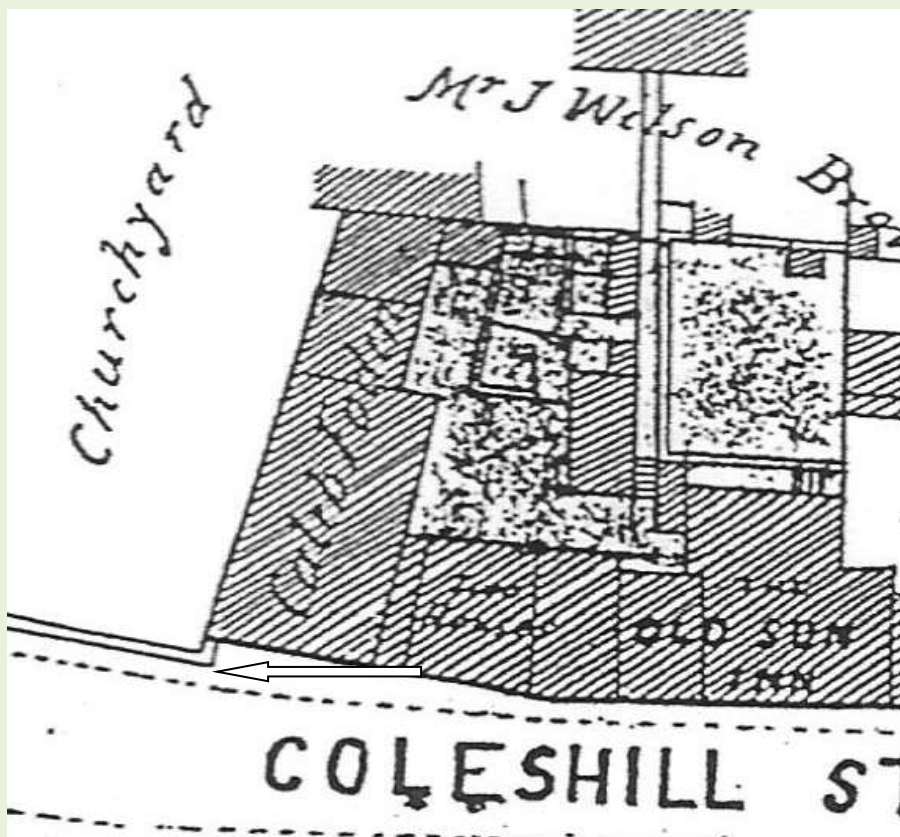
Possibly being used as a Police Station in Coleshill Street.
Joseph Bailey, Officer.

*Kelly's Directory,
1868

1875: Malthouse and Dwellinghouse

Plan included in a Conveyance 23 April 1875, Goodwin to Thomas Vincent Holbeche. In that Conveyance, the site is owned by Caleb Foden. N.B. Front wall does not appear to be aligned with churchyard wall.

*'The Old Sun
Public House' by
Kate Kendall in
'Proceedings'
Volume 2, Summer
1993.
(QSH97.SUT)



1878: Malthouse and Dwellinghouse

Conveyance: 26th February 1878 between Caleb Foden (Farmer) and Thomas Vincent Holbeche (Solicitor) referring to malthouse and dwellinghouse, previously in the occupation of William Betts, but now occupied by Charles Kent.

* (Ref: QSH34.4)

1878 Dwellinghouse with void rooms (formerly a Malthouse)

Fire Insurance Policy: 17 August 1878. Issued by the Lancashire Insurance Company for the sum insured of £300 in the name of Thomas Vincent Holbeche (Solicitor) in respect of the building being a private dwellinghouse with void rooms (formerly a malthouse) in the tenure of G. Betts.

* (Ref: QSH34.4)

1881: Dwellinghouse

Henry Woakes occupier.

#Census 1881

1886: Lobby

Footpath leading from Church Hill to the lobby.

*First Edition 1886
OS Map



1887: Coleshill Street, 1887

The 'Old Sun' Inn with its sign on the right hand side of Coleshill Street.



Postcard (No. 371,
Keith Jordan's
Collection)

1891: Lobby, Uninhabited Building/Dwellinghouse

Margaret MacNought/or MacNight, occupier (Dealer, Second Hand General).

#Census 1891

1896: Malthouse/Dwellinghouse

Establishment of the Trinity Working Men's Club in 1894.
John Charles Skelton was the instigator.

*Newscutting from
the Sutton Coldfield
and Erdington
Chronicle,
Volume 11
(SH08.2)
[www.ebay/Sutton
Coldfield postcards](http://www.ebay.com/SuttonColdfieldpostcards)

1900 circa: Dwellinghouse

Postcard showing the roof of the dwellinghouse to the north of the churchyard (beyond the lychgate).



1900: Malthouse/Dwellinghouse



*Planning Application (No. 1025) submitted by Trinity Working Mens Club for erecting a Billiard Room in Colleshill Street 1.8.1900

Planning Application by Trinity Working Men's Club for erecting a proposed new Billiard Room to be inserted on the 1st Floor of the dwellinghouse with Stables underneath it on the Ground Floor.

(See Plan 1, 1a and 1b) Currently existing, on the ground floor is a side entry passageway between the dwellinghouse and its northerly next door neighbour leading from Colleshill Street to a Party Yard at the rear.

Entry to this ground floor is via a doorway from Colleshill Street with access to a Hall which almost immediately divides into two Reading Rooms with fireplaces. From the rear of the left hand Reading Room, stairs lead down to an underground Bowling Alley (the old malthouse). This stairwell leads to the first room of the first cavern.

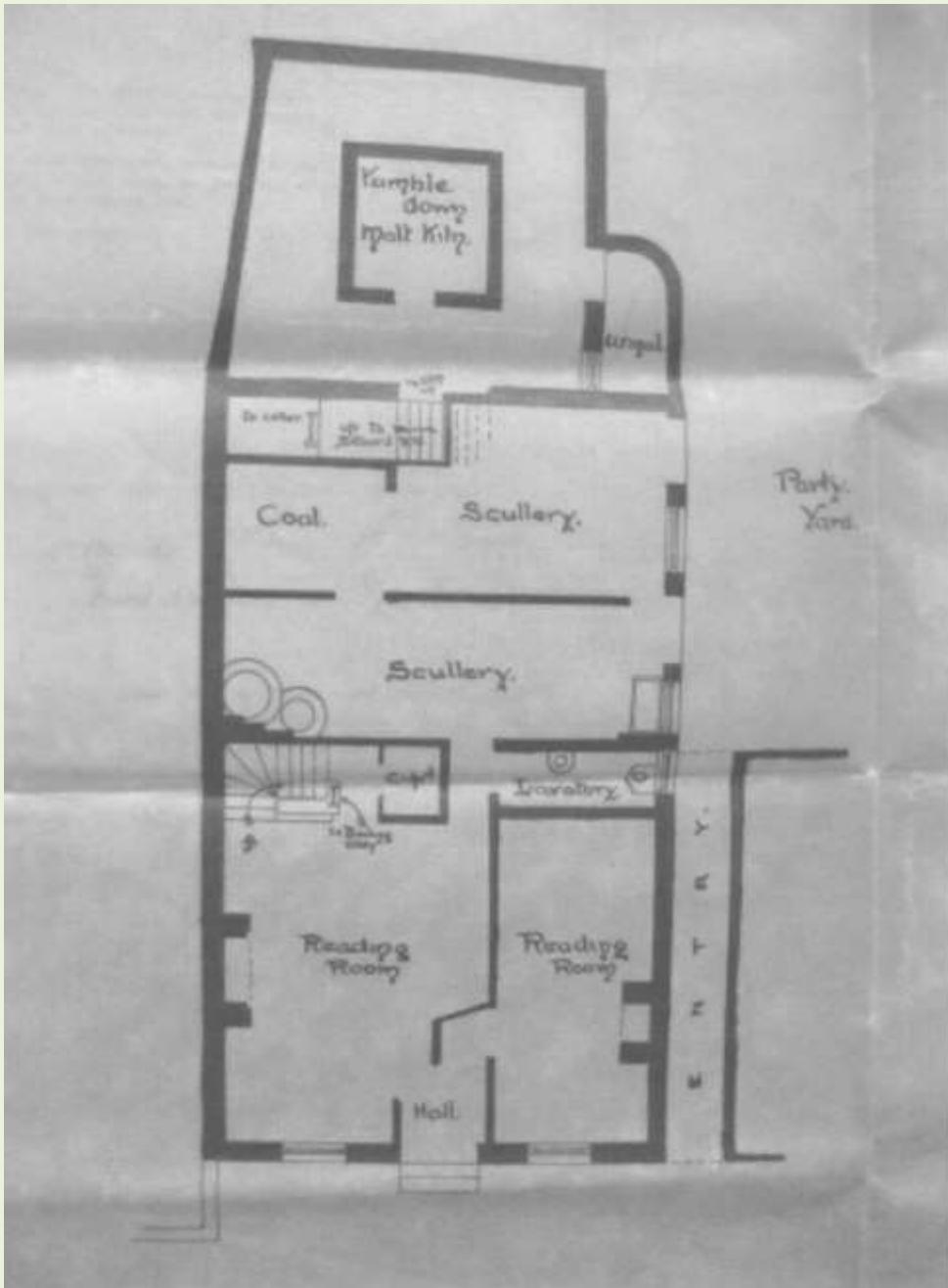
Continuing to the rear of the ground floor, one passes a lavatory on the right, then through two sculleries and a coal store. At the back of this area, a stairwell appears to lead downwards to a cellar and upwards to a Billiard Room on the First Floor. This stairwell lead to the rear room of the first cavern.

Beyond that, a rear room houses a 'Tumble down Malt Kiln' and a Urinal.

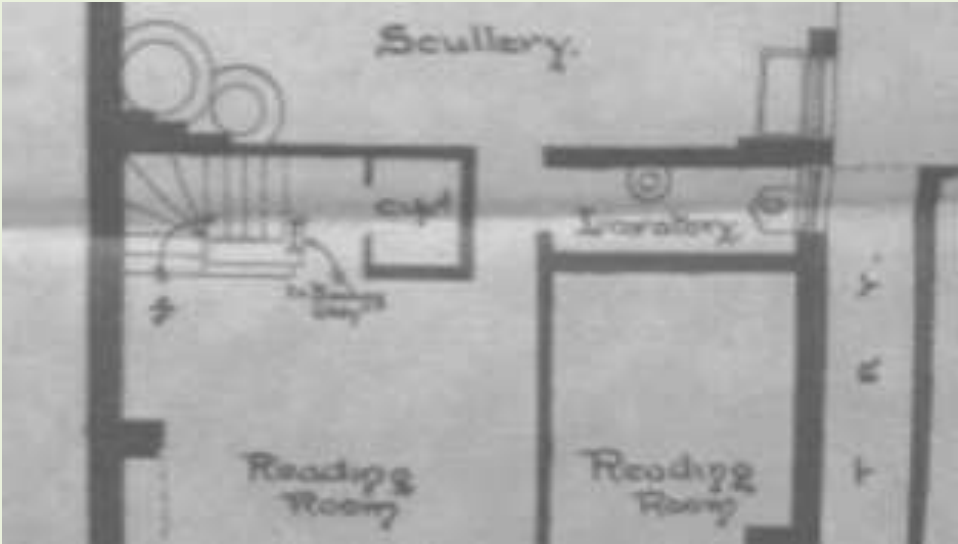
(See Plan 2) The intention seems to be to erect stabling on the ground floor to replace the 'Tumble down Malt Kiln' and Urinal.

(See Plan 3) On the First Floor, the intention is to erect a small billiard room to house a billiard table with a lantern light over. Bench seats against the wall surround the table and a fireplace is provided.

N.B. At this stage, no windows appear to overlook the churchyard from the dwellinghouse nor are there any entrances into the first floor upon the Churchyard side. (See 1914, October, which thus reveals another mystery regarding the construction of this building).

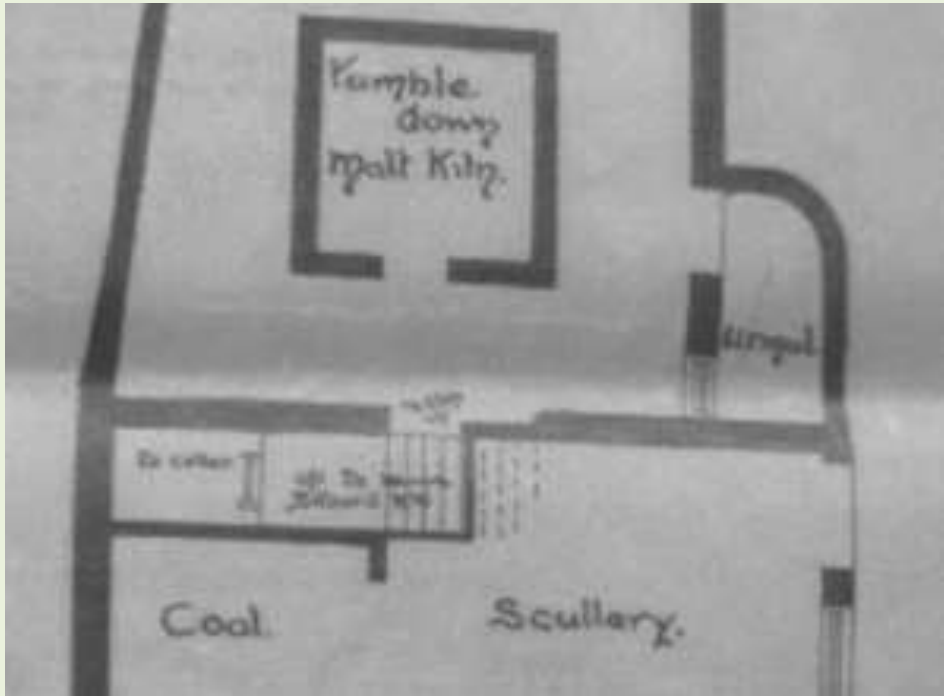


Plan 1



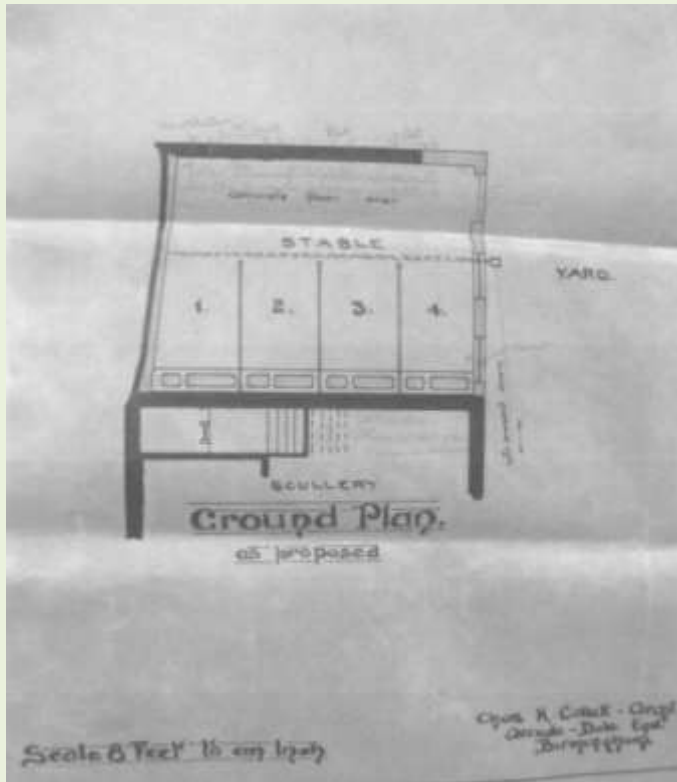
Plan 1a

Expanded portion of Plan 1 showing stairwell from Reading Room leading down to the first cavern, first room.

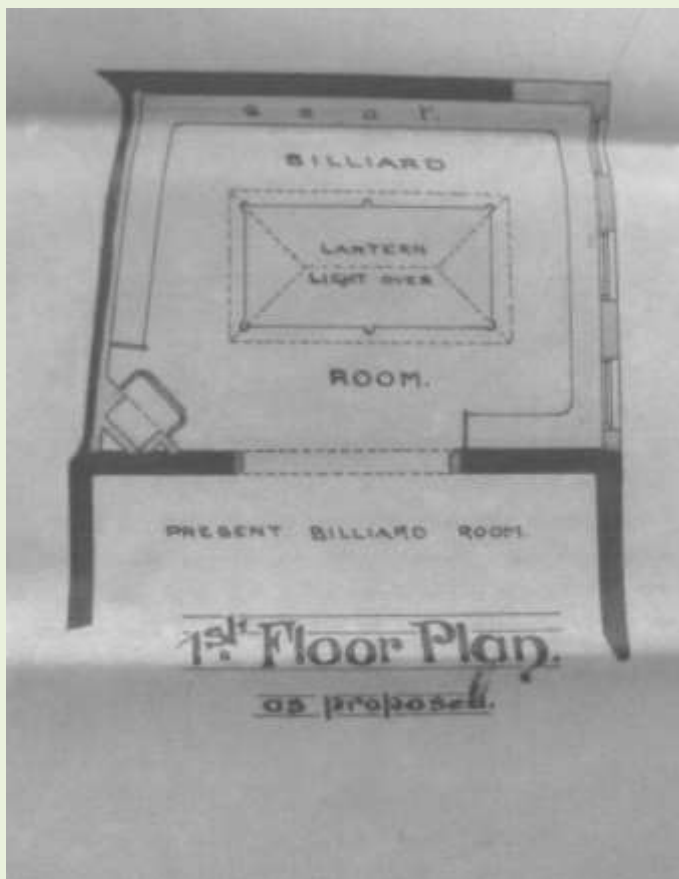


Plan 1b

Expanded portion of Plan 1 showing stairwell from Scullery leading down to the first cavern, rear room.



Plan 2



Plan 3

1901: Dwellinghouse, known as No. 10 Coleshill Street

Margaret McKnight is the occupier. At No. 8 Coleshill Street, Clara Woodcroft is 'Caretaker of the Working Men's Club'. This is the only time No. 8 Coleshill Street is mentioned and it may be that the building was divided for some reason into Nos 8 and 10.

#Census 1901

1901-2: Dwellinghouse:

Occupied by Trinity Working Men's Club.

*Erdington & District Directory 1901-2 (Ref:SH06SUT)

1910 ?: Dwellinghouse

Photo (undated) of Parish Church, taken from Masonic Hall Tower showing footpath from Lobby across the Church Yard.

*Unknown reference. Speight Photo



1909-10: Dwellinghouse

James Bradford (occupier).

*Electoral Register

1911: Dwellinghouse, 10 Coleshill Street

John Bradford (ex Sergeant), Army Pensioner, Club Steward.
N.B. No 12 Working Men's Club.

#Census 1911

1913-14: Dwellinghouse, 10 Coleshill Street

John Bradford (Occupier).

*Electoral Register

1914, January: Dwellinghouse (Trinity Working men's Club)

Report of 19th Annual Meeting of Trinity Working Men's Club.

+ Walsall Observer and South Staffordshire Chronicle, 31.01.14

SUTTON COLDFIELD

WORKINGMEN'S CLUB.—The 19th annual meeting of the Trinity Working Men's Club was held on Wednesday evening, the President, Mr. J. C. Skelton J.P., occupying the chair. In his report the secretary (Mr. C. R. Homer) stated that the popularity of the club was still maintained, and that there were 115 ordinary members. The statement of accounts showed that the receipts were £137, the payments £149, there being a deficit of £30. Mr. J. C. Skelton was re-elected president of the club, Mr. A. H. Adcock treasurer, Mr. C. R. Homer hon. secretary, and Mr. E. Langley assistant treasurer. The Mayor (Mr. J. H. Parkes) distributed the prizes won by the members in the various winter competitions.

1914, September: Dwellingshouse

16th September 1914, Auction of Trinity Working Men's Club Furniture.

+ Birmingham
Daily Post dated
10 September 1914

ON WEDNESDAY NEXT, SEPTEMBER 16.

TRINITY WORKING MEN'S CLUB, COLESHILL STREET,
SUTTON COLDFIELD.

WILLIAM FOWLER & BEWLAY will Sell by Auction, without reserve, at the above address, on WEDNESDAY NEXT, September 16, commencing punctually at Twelve o'clock—the Whole of the

CLUB FURNITURE AND EFFECTS,

comprising Three Oak-framed BILLIARD TABLES, by Orme and Sons Ltd. (in excellent condition), Two BAGATELLE BOARDS, 13ft. by 4ft. 8in., by Burroughes and Watts Ltd., eight complete Sets of Billiard, Snooker, and Bagatelle Balls, Cues, and Markers, Self-registering Automatic Target, 7ft. painted Bookcase, 7ft. 6in. deal Counter, a number of Billiard Seats, strong deal Tables, a quantity of Books, and numerous Miscellaneous Effects.

Catalogues may be obtained from the Auctioneers' Offices, 59, Temple Row, Birmingham, and 24, High Street, Sutton Coldfield.

1914, October: Dwellingshouse

Memo dated 6th October 1914 from Holt Brewery Co. Ltd, the owners of property, to Canon Barnard of Holy Trinity Church as follows:-

With reference to the premises lately known as The "Trinity Working Men's Club" Colehill Street Sutton Coldfield and the two entrances into

*Document No.
41 (Ref:QSH34.4)

the first floor upon the Churchyard side and the window overlooking the Churchyard.

We acknowledge that the above two entrances with the approach and steps and such window now used by us and our tenants of the late Club are used by us and by them not as of right, but by your permission.

We do not intend to claim any right to such entrance, approach or steps or right of light to such window against you or your successors and are prepared to pay to you on the 29th day of September in each year a nominal annual acknowledgment of 1/- (one shilling) in respect thereof if desired or demanded by you.

Letter dated 20th February 1920 from Holt Brewery Co. Ltd to Pinsent & Co. Solicitors, Birmingham, as follows:-

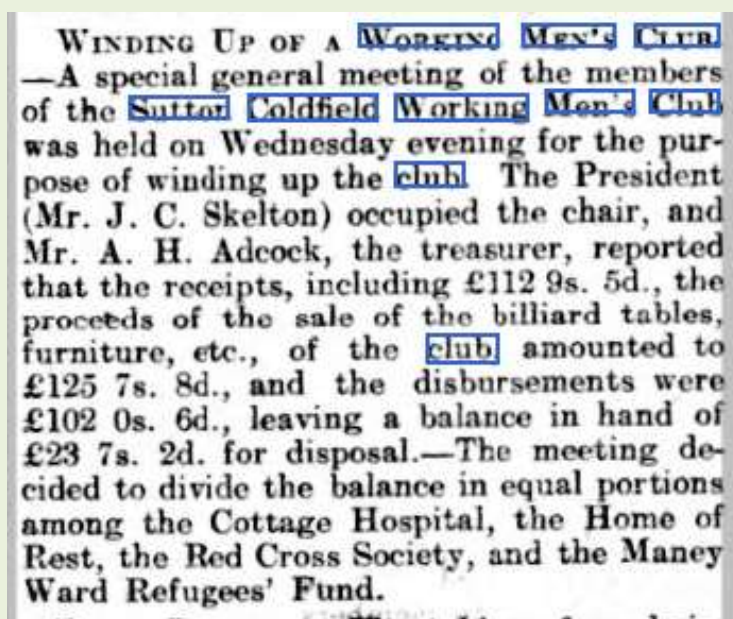
We have for some time been paying 1/- a year to the Church adjoining, for right of light, now the Churchwardens are claiming for right of way, and asking £5 a year instead of 1/-.

We think there is an agreement in existence, and shall be glad if you will send this on to us, so that we can go into the matter.

This correspondence indicates that the first floor of the dwellinghouse above the Malthouse was accessible from the churchyard, perhaps from the footpath shown on the First Edition 1886 Map above.

1914, November: Dwellinghouse

7th November 1914, Winding Up of Trinity Working Men's Club.



WINDING UP OF A WORKING MEN'S CLUB
—A special general meeting of the members of the Sutton Coldfield Working Men's Club was held on Wednesday evening for the purpose of winding up the club. The President (Mr. J. C. Skelton) occupied the chair, and Mr. A. H. Adcock, the treasurer, reported that the receipts, including £112 9s. 5d., the proceeds of the sale of the billiard tables, furniture, etc., of the club amounted to £125 7s. 8d., and the disbursements were £102 0s. 6d., leaving a balance in hand of £23 7s. 2d. for disposal.—The meeting decided to divide the balance in equal portions among the Cottage Hospital, the Home of Rest, the Red Cross Society, and the Maney Ward Refugees' Fund.

\$Walsall Observer and South Staffordshire Chronicle of 7th November 1914

1914, December: Dwellinghouse

Holt Brewery Registers, December 31, 1914, Expiration of Lease to Trinity Working Men's Club . re Dilapidations £15 accepted.

\$ MS/61 Holt Brewery Co. Ltd 1885-1962 Minutes, Registers, Accounts

1917: Dwellinghouse, Trinity Working Men's Club
Holt Brewery Registers mentions Trinity Club premises, Sutton, Tenancy 3 years from 29/9/17 @ £35.

\$ MS/61 Holt
Brewery Co. Ltd
1885-1962
Minutes, Registers,
Accounts

1924: Dwellinghouse, 10 Coleshill Street
John Bradford (Occupier).

*Electoral Register

1927: Dwellinghouse, Trinity Works, Sutton Coldfield
Holt Brewery Registers: Lease to Bird & Raine Ltd. This Company are mentioned in the 1934 Kelly's Directory for Sutton Coldfield as being House Furnishers and decorators of Mill Street. It is suggested that they may have used the premises to store merchandise.

\$ MS/61 Holt
Brewery Co. Ltd
1885-1962
Minutes, Registers,
Accounts

1929: Dwellinghouse, Trinity Works, Sutton Coldfield
Holt Brewery Registers: Sale to Bird & Raine Ltd.

\$ MS/61 Holt
Brewery Co. Ltd
1885-1962
Minutes, Registers,
Accounts

1931: Dwellinghouse, 10 Coleshill Street
John Bradford (Occupier).

*Electoral Register

1931
Holt Brewery Registers, 28 August 1931: 'Old Sun', Sutton, offer of cottages adjoining.

\$ MS/61 Holt
Brewery Co. Ltd
1885-1962
Minutes, Registers,
Accounts

1936/1937: Creation of Vesey Memorial Gardens
Quarterly Meeting of the Council held at the Council House on Wednesday 28th April 1937

*Borough of Sutton
Coldfield Council
Minutes 1936/37
(Ref: SH34.3)

The General Purpose Committee reported that they had instructed the Borough Surveyor to take steps to demolish the various buildings on the site, recently agreed to be purchased by the Council, bounded by Coleshill Street, Mill Street and Church Hill. As and when the Council obtain possession, it is hoped to make an early start in clearing the whole of the site.

1937/1938: Creation of Vesey Memorial Gardens
Report by the General Purposes Committee on the 11th April 1938

*Borough of Sutton
Coldfield Council
Minutes 1937/38
(Ref: SH34.3)

On an examination of the properties situated in Coleshill Street, an underground cellar was discovered, which it is proposed to incorporate in the general scheme for use as a bomb proof shelter.

1938
Holt Brewery Registers, August 1938: 'Old Sun' and 'Royal Oak' - Removal of Licences and Sale of Property to Sutton Corporation.

\$ MS/61 Holt
Brewery Co. Ltd
1885-1962
Minutes, Registers,
Accounts

1938-9: Dwellinghouse knocked down (Malthouse and Lobby remaining)

Vesey Memorial Gardens built, leaving the malthouse as an underground structure.

*Newscuttings
Birmingham Mail
19.08.1938



1940: Malthouse and Lobby

Used as a Public Air Raid Shelter during WWII.

+ Newspaper
Cuttings Vol.23
1938-40,
06.01.1940
(QSH71.061)

... The senior boys and girls were engaged in Nature study rambles, educational visits, woodwork, gardening, sewing, and physical training. The distribution of milk to the scholars was continued. The cost of A.R.P. precautions at the schools was approximately £8,050.

Ten public shelters exist in the town — beneath the Vesey Memorial Garden; in Monmouth Drive; Sutton Park; Chester Road (near Tram Terminus); College Road; Kings Road (New Oscott); Sheffield Road; Mere Green Road; Streetly Lane and Thornhill Road; and near Beeches Walk.

The chief business at a special meeting of the Town Council on September 4th was the appointment of a Food Control Committee, to consist of representatives of the traders and consumers. When the committee held their first meeting three weeks later,

Post War (date unknown): Vesey Memorial Garden

The site of the underground malthouse is indicated on the following postcard.

Postcard (No. 806
Keith Jordan's
Collection)



To sum up, first of all regarding the lobby, it was definitely there in 1763 in the corner of the churchyard. Had it been built for the Church or for the Old Sun Inn? In the Parochial Valuation of 1856, it was recorded as the site of an old hearse house, perhaps used by the church for funerals. It appears that the malthouse itself had now become redundant. In the 1860s, when the dwellinghouse above it was used as a police station, some records suggest that the lobby was a lock up, but maybe it was the old malthouse cavern, accessed through the lobby, that was the 'lock up'? Unfortunately, no records have been found to clarify this. When the Trinity Working Men's Club took over the dwellinghouse, access to their premises appears to have been through a front door in Coleshill Street, so did they use the lobby at this time?

Where the dwellinghouse is concerned, Snapes' various surveys indicate that the upper end of Coleshill Street was developed at least by the 1760s and probably even earlier. It may be that the lobby, malthouse and dwellinghouse were built at the same time. It does appear that the dwellinghouse was used as a residential property before becoming a police station around 1861 and then

as a working men's club in the late 1890s. It reverted back to residential use in 1914 before being demolished in 1938/9.

Finally, regarding the malthouse, it is unlikely that we will ever be sure how this old Sutton building functioned. Its use as a place where malt was brewed seems to have ceased by 1856, when it became simply an ale store. By 1878, it was referred to as 'void rooms' and remained so until 1900 when the Trinity Working Men's Club took over its use. They used it as a bowling alley and cellar. Its 'Tumble Down Malt Kiln' was still to be found on the Ground Floor of the dwellinghouse when the Club applied for planning permission to erect a new Billiard Room on its First Floor, with Stables underneath on the Ground Floor.

Since then, it appears to have been used as a storage facility for a variety of different people until the advent of World War II, when it proved a timely discovery. Realising that it could be used as an air raid shelter, Sutton Coldfield Borough Council incorporated it in their plans for the new Vesey Memorial Gardens. It has been suggested that after the War it reverted to storage use and, presumably, the green door was added for safety at some stage. In 1974 Birmingham City Council, as its new owner, became responsible for the upkeep of the site and one wonders if, bearing in mind the current poor financial position, the accumulated rubbish will ever get removed!

So, this mysterious site leaves plenty of scope for future historians to fill in the gaps!

APPENDIX

Photographs taken in 2017/2018 by Janet Jordan ("JJ") and
Eileen Donohoe ("ED")



Lobby entrance in Coleshill Street. (ED)



Photo taken of the lobby entrance, showing the overhead access way, the wooden ramp over the stairs leading downwards and the underground doorway leading to the right into the caverns. (JJ)



A closer view of wooden ramp leading downwards and the overhead access way into the lobby. (JJ)



Entrance into the lobby seen from inside the caverns, showing ramp propped up against the wall at the foot of the stairs. The facing wall seems to be the Churchyard boundary. The rubbish appears to be recent (probably accumulated after the green door was removed). (JJ)



Straight ahead view from lobby entrance into the caverns. Coleshill Street to the right. The plastered wall seems to follow the Vesey Memorial Garden wall above it, fronting Coleshill Street. At the top left of the photo is a row of reinforcing rods in the ceiling of the first cavern, first room, which leads off from the left of the photo. (ED)



Metal reinforcing rods inserted in roof of first cavern, first room. (JJ)



First cavern, first room. Note the blocked off stairwell entry from the roof. (ED)



Blocked up entry in roof of first cavern, first room, the stairwell leading downwards from the former dwellinghouse above. (ED)



First cavern, looking into rear room with old pipe in rear wall. (ED)



First cavern, rear room, showing a rather short interconnecting doorway to a second cavern, a former entrance into the cavern from the roof on the left hand side and the stairwell from the former dwellinghouse above. (ED)



First cavern, rear room, entrance from the roof, probably a stairwell, showing whitewashed ceiling (for light). (JJ)



Interconnecting doorway between rear rooms of first and second caverns. Wooden lintel is possibly on the floor (ED)



Large tiles on the floor in front of the interconnecting doorway. (ED)



Junction of wall and vaulted ceiling, showing two sizes of brick. The grey wall bricks are thinner, leading one to think the vaulted ceiling was built much later (perhaps when the Vesey Memorial Gardens were built). (ED)



Second cavern, rear room. (JJ)



Second cavern, looking towards the rear room with dividing wall (perhaps a strengthening wall inserted at the time Vesey Memorial Gardens were made?) (JJ)



Second cavern, looking towards inner wall in Coleshill Street(ED)



Second cavern. A pile of ash, or broken breeze blocks?(ED)



Second cavern, looking towards Coleshill Street.

The wall in front is plastered and in line with the wall of the Vesey Memorial Garden above it. The chamber in the middle of the plastered wall shows a further wall, which is beneath the pavement. Within this chamber, looking up, one can see a manhole cover that appears to be the one visible in the pavement above. (JJ)



Pavement in Coleshill Street showing manhole cover above chamber. (Google Earth)



Corroded lintel supporting chamber wall. (JJ)



The metal manhole cover in the pavement, seen from below. (JJ)



Plastered wall fronting onto Coleshill Street.
To the right but out of the picture is the lobby.(JJ)



View from second cavern looking towards the lobby with ramp propped up at the foot of
the stairs leading to the street above (ED)



Roof of Lobby, showing a boarded up overhead entrance, possibly a former access from the dwellinghouse above. (JJ)



Vaulted roof of lobby, with the boarded up overhead entrance. This structure sits under the grassed over churchyard. The lobby entrance is to the left of the photo. (JJ)



Left hand view from the lobby entrance with down steps to the right and ramp against the bottom wall. (JJ)



View from inside lobby looking into Coleshill Street (JJ)



Stone archway above entrance to lobby, looking towards Coleshill Street (JJ)



Lobby dooway, showing a variety of brick surrounds
and the grassed area above the roof, 2018 (JJ)

Janet Jordan
Member of Sutton Coldfield Local History Research Group
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