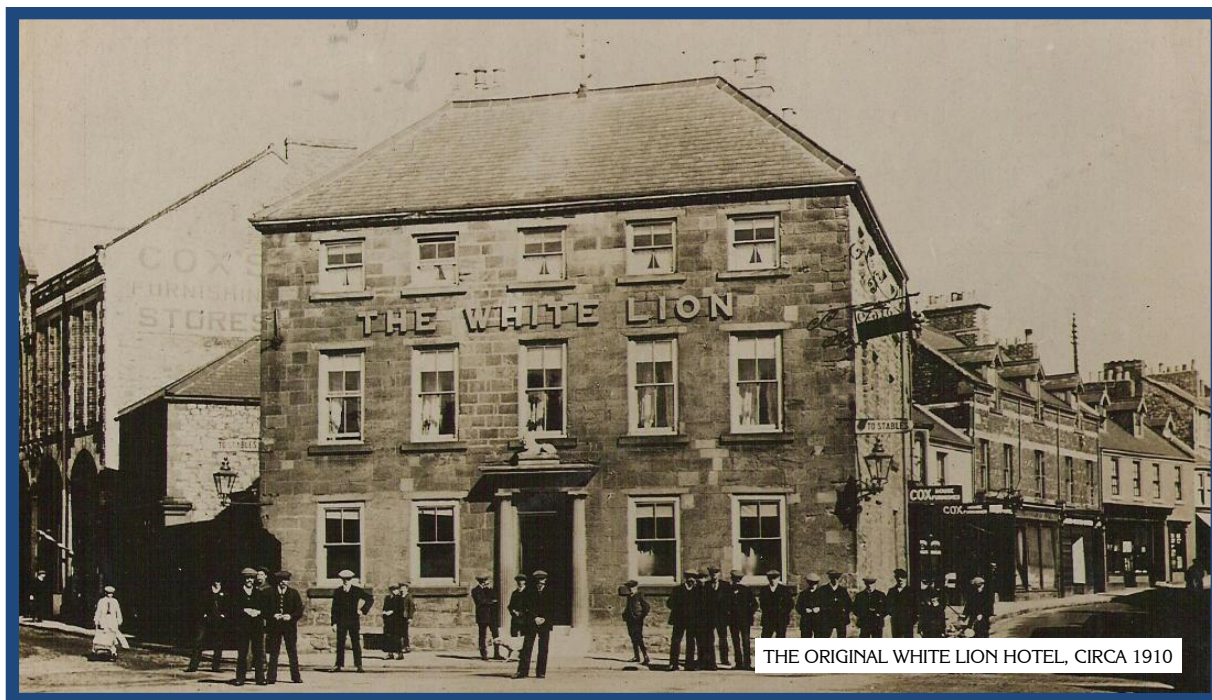




# PUBLIC HOUSES

## THE WHITE LION

The White Lion Hotel once stood proud and tall on the junction between Newbottle and Sunderland Streets before it was demolished and rebuilt as a less grand building in the 1960s. In the early 19th century, Houghton's Magistrates were based on the top floor of the White Lion. You could get drunk on the ground floor, be sentenced upstairs and sent down (literally) to the two cells in the basement. The petty sessions were held there until 1853 when a new police station, with a justice room, was built (this was then later replaced by the police station and court on Dairy Lane).



Noteworthy occurrences (and proprietors) include:

**1827 & 1829** – George Livingston

**1834** – Petty sessions held at the White Lion on alternate Thursdays.



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# PUBLIC HOUSES

**1835** – January 28th – Houghton was first lit with gas “on which occasion the proprietors dined together at the White Lion”

**1836 & 1846** – Auction notices – Mr Robert Binks, White Lion Inn, Houghton-le-Spring.

**1841** – Jane Binks.

**1850** – November 21st – An inquest was held at the White Lion into the Houghton Colliery disaster of November 11th, which left at least 26 men and boys dead.

**1851 & 1855** – Arthur Binks (was also recorded as innkeeper of Ram’s Head in 1861)

**1854** – June – Mr George Humble ‘entered’ the White Lion Hotel. According to an auction notice he was still there in November 1854.

**1855** – Arthur Binks placed a couple of adverts in the Newcastle Courant in November 1855 stating that the White Lion Inn was to let and could be occupied from the next February.

**1857** – An advertisement for an auction of a large amount of furniture and miscellaneous effects appeared in the Newcastle Courant of May 1st 1857: “J.C Farrow has received instructions from Mr Middlemass, who is leaving the White Lion Inn, Houghton-le-Spring...”

**1858 & 1861** - Mrs Mary Harrison

**1865** – Auction notice – Mr Harston’s, White Lion Inn, Houghton-le-Spring.

**1869** – Auction notice – Mr Bowey’s, White Lion Inn, Houghton-le-Spring.

**1883** – In August 1883, Mr Smyth of the White Lion Inn wrote to the Home Secretary asking for mitigation in the sentence passed for a Dr James O’Flanagan. The Home Secretary declined, however Dr O’Flanagan was released on December 12th and was collected from Durham by Mr Smyth and brought back to Houghton.

**1884** – At the October Houghton Feast Races, Mr Smyth detonated sixteen charges of dynamite which two boys had discovered under the grandstand at the racecourse!

**1885** – Mr Smyth still present at the White Lion.

**1890** – Mrs Isabella Smyth (buried at Houghton Hillside Cemetery)

**1894 & 1895 & 1901** – James Turnbull Dixon

**1911** – Robert Dixon Marshall, inn keeper.

**1914** – Jonathan Herbert Walton

**1938** – White Lion Commercial Hotel – Albert Barron, proprietor

**1950s** – Jim & Beet Davison (Uncle and Aunt to Houghton librarian Carol Bell, they were previously in the nearby Lamb Inn then went to the Prospect, Penshaw, until their retirement in 1971)

**1969** – The rebuilt White Lion pub was opened, taking up some of the land previously occupied by the old Town Hall.

**1977** – The White Lion was the Sunday morning rehearsal venue for the North East Concert Band.



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# PUBLIC HOUSES



THE WHITE LION, 2011

The present building is considered by many to be a shadow of its former self, however in recent years the frontage has been smartened up with wooden panelling and makes an attractive view of what is a ghastly 1960s building.

*Paul Lanagan*

PAUL LANAGAN BA HONS  
LOCAL HISTORIAN  
H-L-S HERITAGE SOCIETY



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1835 reference from 'Historical Register of Remarkable Events', 1832-1837. As with all the Houghton pub articles, thanks are extended to Ron Lawson, pub historian. Many census extracts provided by Dr Jack Morley.

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