

Duke of Cornwall, 5 Post Office Passage.

These premises were built in 1768, rebuilt in 1816 and partly rebuilt again in 1899, due to the house sinking during drainage work. The pub was located in a poor district of Old Town, which had many pubs and beer houses. At one count there were eighteen within 300 yards. Landlord William James Wenham applied for a full licence in 1850 and again in 1853 when he told the magistrates he “had occupied the house for thirteen years”. Post Office Passage was badly lit and it was difficult to see from one end to the other. The beer house was described by the police as “uncomfortable and uninviting” and if there were no customers, the landlord would turn the gaslights off in the passage to save fuel.

William Wenham was the owner by 1872, so it seems he had done well, and Charlotte and Walter Wenham were the tenants until 1881. Thus it was in the hands of the Wenham family for at least forty years. A large Wenham family of nine is listed in the 1881 census.

The Duke had a wide customer base and, it seems, some large rooms. In the mid nineteenth century the Cinque Ports Band practised here for twenty-five years, and in 1924 forty Old Town washerwomen held a dinner here. The long bar was especially decorated for them and the women arrived dressed in bonnets and shawls. They ate beef pudding and joints of beef and mutton washed down with *Duke of Cornwall Ale* brewed by the landlord. They sang old time songs ‘and the refrains were taken up with rare gusto. The washerwomen came forward one after the other to give their turn.’

Michael Rose remembers the pub in the early 1950s as the Silver Dollar and thought it might have been so nick-named because it was a favourite with American troops stationed in Hastings in the Second World War. However, it is more likely to have been named after the popular song '*One Silver Dollar*' by Marylyn Monro. The pub sign, he thought, “was double sided, a silver dollar was shown on one side, the Duke of Cornwall on the other”.

By 1966 this pub was feeling the pinch and stopped functioning in December of that year. The police, the magistrates and the brewers all agreed its redundancy and the pub closed in 1967. In 1976 Watney’s applied for permission to use the site for storage. However, it was within a conservation area and the application was probably refused. Post Office Passage is still badly lit.