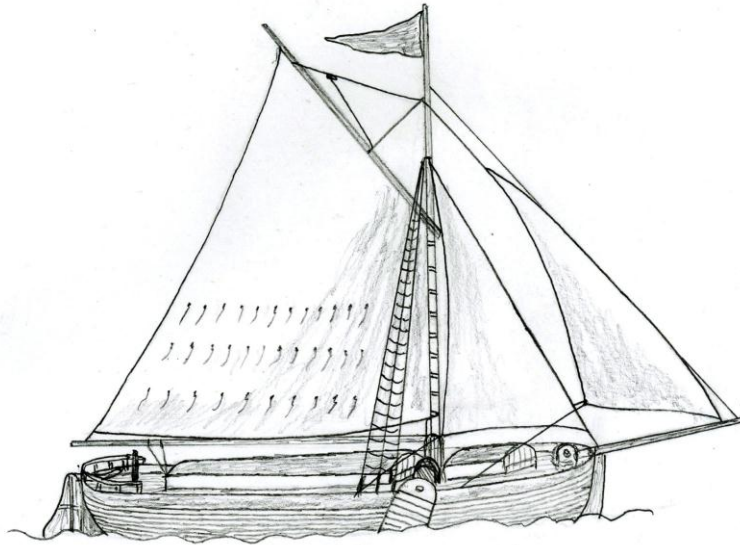


The “Ship Albion”

The Public House over the Chain Bridge from the Forge.

The “Ship Albion” Public house in Albion Street was possibly named after the vessel “Albion” registered at Boston in December 1827. This Sloop of clinker construction with a topping up bowsprit was 53’2” long from stem to stern with a beam at gunwales of 14’1” and calculated under the measurement rules in force at the time to be 46 tons. It was built at Richardsons boatyard in Boston.



Sketch of Sloop rigged vessel (KJS)

The “Albion” was owned by James Markille of Spalding, and the first Master was Thomas Wilkinson, of Spalding. In 1833 John Pakey was Master, also of Spalding. In this year it is recorded in the register that the registration certificate was lost with the vessel. I assume that this means the vessel was lost at sea.

Albion Street was once known as Bark Row, I have not found out when it was changed to Albion Street, was it because of the Albion Public house or after the Albion Brewery that was built on that side of the river upstream from the Chain bridge in 1824 by John Carter. The “Ship Albion” was not the only Public house frequented by the crews of vessels when in port with a name reflecting the maritime trade on the river. In the 1828/9 directory among the 40 Public houses, Taverns & Inns in Spalding, also in Albion Street was the “Ship Active”, in Double Street the “Jolly Sailor” and the “Ship”, the “Anchor” on Holbeach Road, now Commercial Road which was recently burnt out, and in 1872 the “Barge” 96, Commercial Road, now demolished and houses built near the site in and named Barge Close.

Down the river at Cowhirne near to Wykeham Abbey was the “Ship Tavern” that was situated in the area where many vessels tied up to wait for a high tide to enable them to sail up into Spalding. Landlord of this one was Michael Chatterton and his wife Louisa who was a sister of Matthew Southwell Vine, Master Mariner (my Great Great Grandfather)

The "Ship Albion" Public House, part of it dating from the early 1800's was from its formation in 1844 the headquarters of the Spalding Shipwreck Society. This society for mutual relief in case of shipwreck was one of 33 similar organisations throughout the country but today only two remain, Spalding being one of them but they no longer hold their meetings there. I remember when the meeting room at the back still had photographs of groups and individual members hanging on the walls. The landlord was Thomas Draper Jnr, who as well as being landlord of the "Ship Albion" was also a Owner and Master Mariner owning the Sloop "Industry" registered at Boston in November 1824, length overall, 55'8", beam, 14', 47tons and also the Sloop "Glen" registered at Boston in 1826, length overall 59'4", Beam, 16'4", 72 tons.

Thomas Draper Jnr was the President of the Shipwreck Society in 1850 and also the father in law to my Great Grandfather John Henry Vine, Master Mariner who married his 2nd daughter Rebecca Ann on the 12th May 1870.

A 3rd daughter Ellen married Robert Hutchinson, a ships engineer, a benefit member of the Shipwreck Society. In 1882 Sarah Hannah Draper a 4th daughter married Captain John Richard Grassam of Albert Street, Spalding, who in 1889 became the Master of the clipper ship "Blackadder" one of the last clippers to be designed and built for the China Tea trade for the owner John Willis of London the owner of two of the most famous clippers of them all, namely "Tweed" and "Cutty Sark". However she could never match their prowess but under Captain Grassam she did some fast voyages from Brisban, (Australia) to London with cargoes of wool. In 1890 in 91 days, 1893 in 100 days and in 1894 in 123 days. Eventually sold to Norwegian owners she was lost in 1890 en route from Barry, (South Wales) to Bahia, (Brazil) with a full cargo of coal.

The Blacksmith at the Forge during 1850 to 1866 was Edward Fisher. In his day book work was done for the Sloop "Glen" Captain Thomas Draper Jnr in 1850 & 1851 and in 1852 for the Sloop "Sea" and also for the house (presumably the Ship Albion). The "Sea" Captain John Greenhall was lost at sea on 20th May 1860. From 1860 to 1866 there were more entries for all these years but the name of a vessel is not given.

In the 1885 Spalding directory Thomas Draper was still the landlord of the "Ship Albion" and then in the 1889 directory it was John William Plumpton. By 1919 when George Robert Dodd had been the Blacksmith at the Forge for 21 years the landlord was William Wain.

Keith J Seaton.