

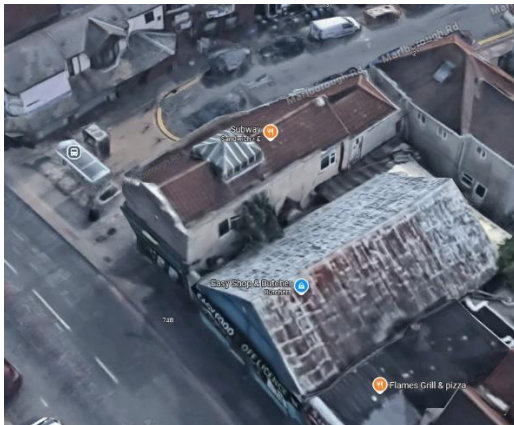
Aerial photograph adds weight to Stoke Chapel claim

LAST month's *Jabet's Ash* included an article about the history of Ball Hill's Stoke Congregational Chapel, which was widely thought to have been demolished long ago, either in 1907 or possibly later in 1929, when the congregation moved to a new building in Harefield Road. As far as we know, no evidence of demolition has ever been produced and the article argued that the old chapel building almost certainly still exists – much disguised – and is now operating as a Subway sandwich shop.



The original Stoke Congregational Chapel, first opened in 1836

Rob Orland, who runs the invaluable Historic Coventry website, says he was intrigued by the article and therefore decided to use the technology of Google to search for further clues. He came up with an amazing aerial view of the Subway shop which appears to prove – surely beyond doubt – that the current building is indeed the old chapel.



Roof of the current building. A rooflight has been added but the roofline still matches the old chapel building, with the 'temporary' chapel next door. Google aerial view

The aerial photograph (left) clearly shows the original roof of the building – no longer visible from street level because parapets around the roof have been added – and this is exactly the same as the chapel roof seen in earlier pictures. Moreover, the original side entrance to the chapel, with a small gabled roof above, is still just visible in the aerial picture, in the gap between the Subway building and its next-door neighbour, the former 'tin tabernacle' building.

The 'tin tabernacle' itself, supposedly a temporary building added in 1907 to create more space for chapel activities, has always been known to still exist, and these days is used as an all-purpose grocery store (pictured below). *Jabet's Ash* reader Martyn Lomas reminds us that this shop was used for many years as a motor cycle showroom, before it became a bed shop and later a hardware store.

New Year break

As usual, the history group will take a break during the Christmas/New Year holiday period. We will be back on Friday February 7th with a meeting and guest speaker at Stoke Library. Details will follow in the January issue of *Jabet's Ash*. Please add this date to your diary!



Pub to be sold in historic Bull's Head Lane

A LOCAL community pub in Stoke, thought to have been run by the same family for many years, is likely to change hands in the new year after being put up for sale.

The New Inn, situated in Bull's Head Lane, has long been a feature of this historic site, nestled in a lane beside the grounds of Coventry and North Warwickshire Cricket Club. The pub sits close to a small parade of shops in what is described as 'tight-knit community'. It has a beer garden, a car park, and substantial living quarters, according to Fleurets, the company handling the freehold sale.

Photo: Fleurets



The New Inn is known to have been run in the past by John Boulton, a shoemaker, between 1863 and 1888, and then by Charles Blockley who was licensee for over 40 years, from 1892 to 1936. Like the previous tenant, Charles Blockley also had a second occupation, as a builder.

An old photograph of Bull's Head Lane (above, courtesy of David Fry) shows the pub in the mid-distance during the Edwardian period, in what was once a rural lane. Houses occupied the west side of the lane, opposite the cricket ground, during the nineteenth century and some of these were probably inhabited by poor farm labourers or weavers. Newer houses, seen here in the distance, were built closer to Binley Road. Other developments in the immediate vicinity included Coombe Street, where speculative builders created a housing scheme in the mid-nineteenth century, although declining economic conditions meant that only a few houses were built at the time. More houses were added later, in the early twentieth century.

Litten Tree Building set to close

THE former Litten Tree pub building is finally set to close in January 2025, to make way for the City Centre South development. The building, originally a Rover showroom in 1911, has been a community arts venue for over three years and will end its run with a closing party on Saturday December 28th, featuring local bands, DJs, solo acts and food. Eventbrite has full details. See *Jabet's Ash*, January 2024, for a summary of LTB's history.