

Rats Castle Bistro, 1 Bromsgrove, SN7 7JF, formerly Goddards drapers shop.



From Jim Brown Collection



October 2011

This beautiful Victorian building was built as a drapers shop in the 19th century (c 1850s). It remained a draper until the mid 1970s.

In the 1920s and 1930s there was a manager, a trainee manager and at least 3 shop assistants. The trainee assistant around 1936 earned 6 shillings a week (30p).

There was a long counter to the back of the shop on the left side, this was the womens' department. Similarly the counter on the right, extending beyond the stairs, was the men's department. (What is now the kitchen was open space)

The shop was a gentleman's outfitters and sold millinery (women's hats, trimmings and dresses, knitwear), fabrics for furnishing and clothes, wool, hosiery (stockings, socks) and haberdashery (small items for sewing – needles, tape, buttons, zips), bedding as well as (upstairs) furniture, carpet and lino. In this time when clothes were more often made at home than bought 'off the shelf', the shelves and drawers were packed with fabrics, wool, patterns and anything else one needed for making garments and furnishings.

There was a cash desk near the foot of the stairs. The money and sale ticket was put in a container at the sales counter and transported along wires to the cash desk, where the cashier would receipt the sale ticket, and put it and the change into the container and pull a lever to transport it back to the sales counter. This type of 'Cash carrier' was common place in department stores of the time.

The shop was open Monday to Saturday midday with early closing on a Thursday afternoon. It provided a van local delivery service for large items. The shop also provided a 'tally' service. Amounts of money were collected from local people and recorded. When they had saved enough money they could buy their goods. Those who were trusted would be allowed to take their goods before they'd saved the full cost. The shop also sold newspapers in the 1940s.

In 1891 a Faringdon directory lists William Sell as a Linen, Woollen draper, Silk mercer (merchant), hatter and hosier, and agent for sewing machines.

Jonathan Goddard (1835 - c1911) later owned the business. His daughter Tryphena (born 1870) married a Reverend Fish in 1895 who carried on the business. After the first world war their son Albert (1896- 1992) was asked to take over the business, providing he looked after Jonathan's widow, Maria (which he did). Albert's wife Nancy (nee Lee, m 1923) also helped in the shop. At some time Albert went into partnership with a Mr Gough.

The shop, called Goddards, was referred to locally as either 'Top Goddards' or 'Fish and Goughs'. This was one of a few such shops in Faringdon. There was also Golding Goddards, Wilkes, Absolems, Pcocks, Levertons and Jameson a breeches maker. The shop closed in the 1970s and later in this decade was turned into a restaurant.

There was a plan to convert the building for other uses. Apparently John Betjeman fought this and managed to get the building listed. It became a Grade II listed building in 1969, and therefore the interior and exterior are unable to be substantially altered.

The Fish family, living in Faringdon, were stalwart chapel goers. It was Albert and Nancy's son Derek who, on leaving the RAF after World War II, worked at the garage then owned by Ernie Sell. It is this business that is now part of Fish Brothers, based in Swindon.

The photograph, thought to be taken in the 1880s, shows William Sell in the carriage.

The first restaurant, called 'Mistinguet' was one of the first nouvelle cuisine restaurants in the area. A later restaurateur named it 'Rats Castle' after the Swan, Radcot, nicknamed Rats Castle, where he had been the publican.

The extensive renovation and refurbishment by new owners in 2011 has preserved this beautiful historic building for years to come.

Mid to late C19 former draper's shop.

Grade II Listing

GREAT FARINGDON BROMSGROVE, SN7 7JF

Date Listed: 15 August 1969

English Heritage Building ID: 249351

SU 2895

3/70 No 1 15.8.69

Stucco fronted brick. 2-storey with gable end to street.

Slate roof.

3-window front range with openings set in full-height recessed panels. Moulded strings across at 1st floor.

1st floor large casements in heavily moulded surrounds with flat cornices to outer windows and central segmental pediment. Sills on brackets with inset panels beneath.

Ground floor flanking plate glass shop-windows and central glazed double doors. Interior former shop, galleried with oblong top-light over coved ceiling.

Ornamental cast iron railings to gallery front and curving staircase.

Moulded mahogany handrails. Along sides of ground floor original mahogany shelving with banks of pigeon-holes and drawers alternating with open shelves.

Mahogany counters.

Listing NGR: SU2876495424

Useful websites:

English Heritage **List entry Number:** 1368509

<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/>

1881 census

William C Sell	William Collins?		
Age:		37	
Gender:		Male	
Birth Year:	68 on 1911 census	1844	
Birthplace:		Faringdon, Berkshire, England	
Relationship to Head of Household:		Head	
Marital Condition:		Married	
Profession/Occupation:		Draper Employing 3 Assistants & 3 Apprentices	
Address:		Marlborough St	
Census Place:		Great Faringdon, Berkshire, England	
Disability:			
Record Type:		Household	
Family History Library Film:		1341311	
The National Archives		RG11	
Reference:			
Piece/Folio:		1278 / 54	
Page Number:		39	
		Household	GenderAge
		William C Sell	M 37
Spouse		Sophia Sell	F 38
Child		Maud M Sell	F 9
Child		Arthur E Sell	M 8
Child		Edgar C Sell	M 6
Child		William J Sell	M 3
Child		Florence E Sell	F 1
Parent		Emma Sell	F 79
		Emily Busby	F 20
		Annie E Margetts	F 17
		Clara Deacon	F 17
		Blanche Rock	F 20
		Margaret A Turner	F 21

1881 census

Jonathan Goddard

Age:	76 on 1911 census	46		
Gender:		Male		
Birth Year:		1835		
Birthplace:		Stanford, Berkshire, England		
Relationship to Head of Household:		Head		
Marital Condition:		Married		
Profession/Occupation:		Shoemaker		
Address:		Glouster St		
Census Place:		Great Faringdon, Berkshire, England		
Disability:				
Record Type:		Household		
Family History Library Film:		1341311		
The National Archives Reference:		RG11		
Piece/Folio:		1278 / 78		
Page Number:		32		
		Household	Gender	Age
		Jonathan Goddard (76 in 1911)	M	46
Spouse	From Cricklade 1864	Maria Goddard 1832	F	49
Child	drapers asst	Albert Goddard	M	17
Child		John Goddard	M	12
Child		Tryphena Goddard 1871	F	10
		Thomas Horrocks	M	46
		Susannah Horrocks	F	50