

Discover the Dartmoor Story



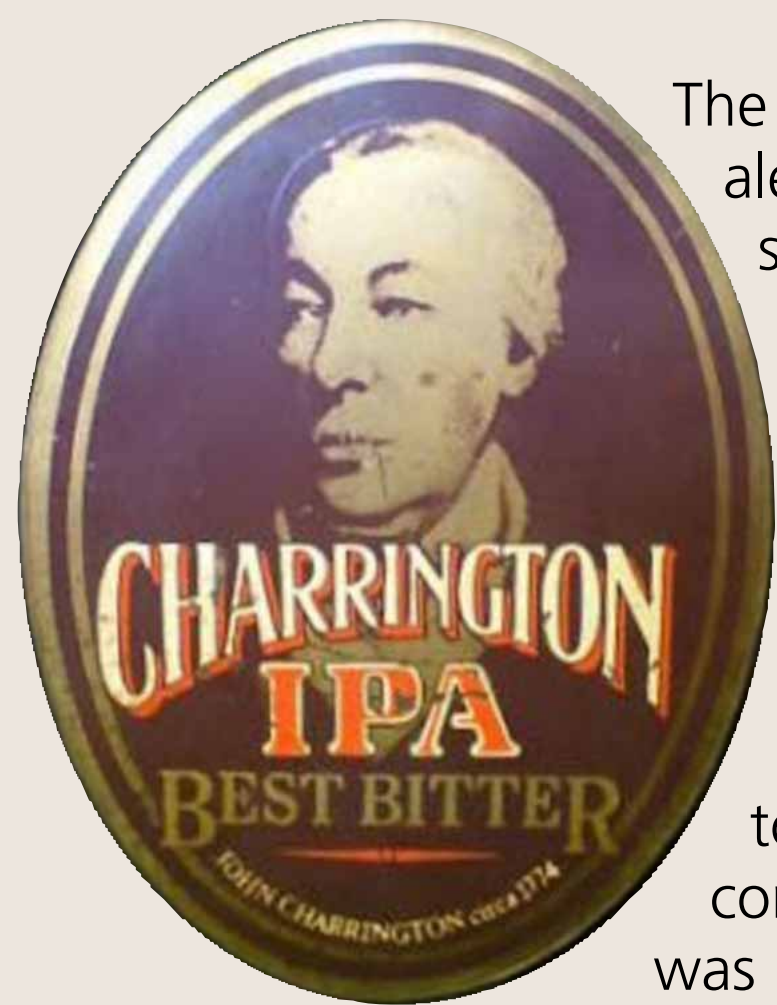
From Farm to Firkins

WELCOME TO WIDECOMBE

THE RUGGLESTONE INN

In 1740, when this building was a farmhouse, a pub stood on the top road between White Gate and Cold East Cross. It was a popular place for tin miners and farmworkers to partake of a drink after a day's work, but it seems that the wives grew tired of their menfolk frittering away their hard-earned money. One night in 1823 the women, allegedly, burnt the pub to the ground. Rather than rebuilding it the licence was transferred to the farm that is now known as the Rugglestone inn.

Largely unchanged over the next 170 years, the inn was owned and run by the Lamb family until 1992, when Audrey Lamb retired. At that time, it was listed as one of the smallest pubs in England.



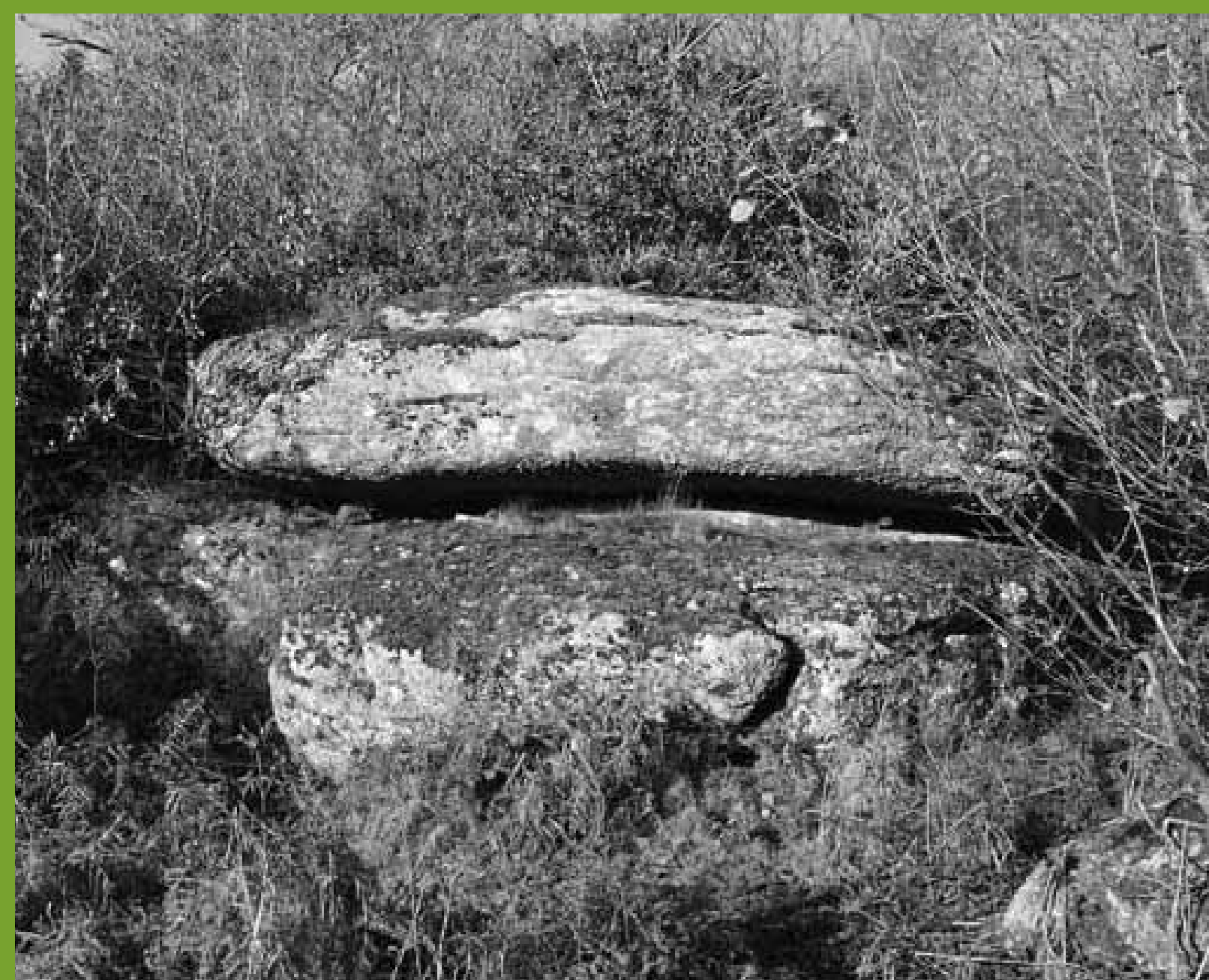
The Rugglestone was then still a traditional ale house, offering a basic drinks selection, and was renowned for its Bass, widely reported as the best you could get anywhere because it was served straight from the barrel. What few realised was that the beer being served was Charrington IPA – a beer brewed by Bass but with a completely different taste. Audrey was not trying to defraud anyone; so far as she was concerned she bought it from Bass so it was Bass!

Following Audrey's retirement, The Rugglestone was 'modernised'. Previously, the front room (now the bar) was rarely opened to customers but served as a base for the "Widecombe Sick Club". Prior to the establishment of the NHS, the local community formed its own type of private medical service. Local farmers and businesses contributed to a village fund that was run from the inn: if anyone from the community was in need, funds would be allocated from the Club to meet the cost of their medical or social care.

The committee held monthly meetings in the front room and all administrative documents were locked in the Club chest, kept here to this day. The chest had 3 locks and three individual keyholders had to be present for a meeting to take place.



The Rugglestone maintains its traditional roots, with an ever-changing selection of cask beers and an atmosphere of rural welcome. It even makes a nod to its 18th century beginnings as a farmhouse; for visitors are greeted by pigs, goats, ducks, chickens and a turkey.



The Rugglestone derives its name from a nearby logan stone - a large piece of granite naturally balanced on a larger piece of granite, allowing it to rock. There were many such natural formations on Dartmoor that were once considered sacred and they became important meeting places for village elders in medieval times. This stone has ceased to rock since it was vandalised by youths in the early 1800s.

Panel design by www.platform-one.co.uk

Photo of the Poor box: Richard Palmer ©

