

End of an Era at the Lion



For more than 70 years the Pyke family has served beer to a succession of Wherwell residents. But now the White Lion connection has come to an end with Vic Pyke deciding to retire and the local Licensed Victuallers' Association joined with the brewers, Whitbreads, to mark the occasion on Thursday.

Vic's father took over the pub licence in 1907 in the days-before licensing hours. One relic from those days—a visitors' book bearing the date 1914—echoes the past with beer costing a couple of pennies and a room 1s 6d. Mr. Pyke, senior, ran the pub until 1947. Seven years before that Vic had met and married his wife Mary, another local, and she helped out in the pub while Vic was in the Forces. Pub life suited Vic and Mary and they have been landlord and landlady for 31 years, certainly among the longest-serving hosts for miles around.

On Thursday, Mr. L. G. Pickles, tenanted trade director for Whitbread (Wessex) Ltd., presented Vic and Mary with a set of garden furniture as a token of thanks, and Mr. Joe Nash, chairman of the local LVA, handed over a gift token and thanked Vic for his work for the association over the years.

"It has been a very pleasant life, and I have really enjoyed it," said Vic of the years at Wherwell, "but I think I am going at the right time." But the couple will not be far away from their old pub. They are moving to a bungalow just down the road.