

## **PUBLIC HOUSES IN BRIZE NORTON**

Whilst carrying out research for our emerging Neighbourhood Plan, our Steering Group discover many interesting historical facets of Brize Norton. One of these facets relates to public houses in our Parish.

We currently have three buildings in the village that are, or were, public houses. These are: -



<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

1)The Chequers c1900. This pub dates from 1774 (the oldest).



2) The Axe and Compass c1905. This pub dates from 1782. In 1846 it became known as The Carpenters Arms and in 1991 it became a B&B. (Note the pub sign showing an axe and compass)



3) The Mason's Arms c1900. This building was converted into a pub in 1881 (the newest!). Frances Silman, the Great, Great, Grandmother of one of our village residents, bought what is now the Masons Arms in 1862. They were bakers by trade and the oven still exists today.

However, according to 'British History Online', in 1774, there were three recorded and named public houses in the village. These were: -

- 1) The Crown (1772 – 1782).
- 2) The Orange Tree (mentioned only in 1774)
- 3) The Chequers (1774 [but possibly from 1758] to present).

The Chequers still stands in the village today but unfortunately, the location of The Orange Tree is unknown. Up until now, the location of the Crown was also unknown, but what was known, is that it was located in the north of the village at the south end of Ting Tang Lane.

Today, the south end of Ting Tang Lane is located at the roundabout where Minster Road, Brize Norton Road and Monahan Way meet up.

Referring to the 'Ordnance Survey Civil Parish Boundary Map' dated 1911, it can be seen that Ting Tang Lane actually ran further south to Chapel Hill. A lane then ran eastwards towards Astrop Farm and south east down Abingdon Lane. All of these lanes were part of a drover's trail between Worsham Mill and Abingdon.

Whilst researching the deeds of 'The Cottage', a building which stands on the east side of Chapel Hill, the owner discovered that this converted malthouse was at one time, a public house. From this data, it can be deduced that this is the location of The Crown PH. When looking at this building, note the very high-pitched roof which gives a clue as to its original purpose.

Turning to the other public house for which there is no known location, it is interesting to note that an archaeologist has mentioned that usually, public houses named The Orange Tree were normally built adjacent to a large manor house, possibly because they had an orangery? (I wonder how many people knew what an orange was in the 1700's even though they were first recorded as being brought into England from Spain in the year 1290?)

Does this give us a clue as to where the building may have been?

We do have evidence that a public house in Stonelands (more of this infamous 'no-man's land' on Burford Road in a future article) was granted an Inn Licence in 1753 and it was 'renamed' The Lamb and run by Ann and John Packer. If it was renamed The Lamb, what was its original name when it was first recorded in 1748?

What is very unusual, is that it changed its name a further four times over the next 38 years, why did this happen? In 1760 it was renamed The White Horse, in 1782 it became The George, in 17883/4 The Fox, and finally in 1791, the Shakespeare's Head. This name continued until 1795 which is the last known record of a PH in Stonelands. However, this area was not part of Brize Norton until 1932 so would it be safe to assume that at no time was this known as the Orange Tree?

We also have another clue to follow! Inside the Grade II listed building Leys Court (c16th century) which is situated on Station Road, there is a clear outline of where a dart board was once hung on a pair of cupboard doors. Interestingly, as part of the listing, the ring of holes made by the darts cannot be filled in! The flag stone floor is very worn in one area where it is said the barmaid stood and there is a small round hole in the floor where the swing door into the bar servery was fitted. A further clue to this building's past is that there is one piece of Cotswold stone wall near to the oche, which is completely worn away because it is said that this is where darts players would rub their darts to sharpen up the points. This feature has been seen in in other old public houses. However, there are no records of a large country house nearby!

On a final note, you will see that the pictures of the three public houses date back about 120 years and the pubs themselves date back between 150 and 250 years. To put this into context with our village history, there are references to ancient Roman roads in the area but no definitive evidence of dwellings in the village during the first millennium. However, in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century (1086) Brize Norton village was first recorded in the Domesday Book as a 'stable and settled village' (rather like today?).

I hope you enjoy this brief glimpse into our past.

Les Goble (10/12/2020)