

Time Travel Tuesday: The Local

Tuesday 2 June 2020

Welcome to Time Travel Tuesday: The Local – sharing our heritage from Bruce Castle Museum & Archive.

Popping down to your Local again may still be a while off yet. In the meantime, we thought we would look at a brief history of a local pub that, until it closed in 2009/10, had been pulling and serving pints for almost 240 years. [The Queen's Head](#) on the corner of [Frobisher Road at 677 Green Lanes](#) by Duckett's Common, Turnpike Lane has been a great landmark along Green Lanes – and the [old pub building](#) still survives today, most recently used as the Dogtaş furniture store.

There are many Queen's Head pubs around the country, usually acknowledging particular queens. Indeed, the use of the word 'Queen' can be found in the naming of other locations or sites in our borough – in the names of a street (N17), a road (N11), an avenue (N10), a lane (N10), a parade (N8), a former college (N22 – private school), an opera house (N8), a beautiful wood (N10) and, of course, another pub – [The Queen's](#) in Crouch End ([Grade II* listed](#) and formerly the Queen's Hotel). Whilst we know that [Queen's Wood](#) was named in 1898 by Hornsey Urban District Council in honour of Queen Victoria, and very likely many of the other locations were too, the Queen's Head on Green Lanes has had that name on a licence for the pub since at least 1773 or 1774, with the first landlord Samuel Wilkinson. But which queen does it refer to?

The year 1773 saw [Queen Charlotte](#) as the consort to George III on the throne - maybe it refers to Charlotte? Unless there are any other records earlier than 1773/4 that show the pub's existence, it would seem possible that this roadside country inn was the first in that part of Green Lanes back then, with its name glorifying an 18th century queen.

The route it served was a main thoroughfare out of London of course – but we can look forward to hearing more about that in tomorrow's post.....



From the collections and © Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

The photograph above is one of the earliest known images of the Queen's Head. Taken by the pioneering Victorian photographer [George Shadbolt](#) who lived in Crouch End (and has a [Haringey Green Plaque](#) set up in his name), this shows the pub as it would have looked in c.1860. Shadbolt was mostly interested in the processes of photography, not always the composition of the image. Photographs by Shadbolt form part of the collections at the Museum of London and even The Getty Museum, but we also have a significant collection of his work at Bruce Castle. Amongst these, this photograph stands out as one of his best in terms of composition. The building here looks like a large country inn standing on the side of Green Lanes.

It has a livery stables alongside it, indicating the number of horse-drawn vehicles that would have stopped here. We know from local historian Albert Pinching that from 1856 the then proprietor of the pub, John Palmer, ran an [omnibus service](#) into London and up to Winchmore Hill from this spot. He used these stables for

his horses and also those for the local fire brigade. We also learn that there were tea gardens in the pub grounds. It also looks as though the wooden fencing in the foreground could have been used for animals that were grazed on Duckett's Common at that time.

The watercolour below is by the artist J. May and depicts the Queen's Head another 20 years later in 1882. Not much seems to have changed since Shadbolt had taken his photograph, it is still a rural view. We know very little about this artist, but they are probably an amateur artist. They painted eight watercolour views of scenes in and around the Haringey area, between 1881 and 1882. Of these paintings seven are stamped with a collector's mark on the reverse – 'HB'. Local historian John Hinshelwood has undertaken extensive research into the identity of the collector 'HB'. Of these paintings by J. May, it suggests that all these paintings were collected by the same person, quite probably a Henry Blackwell, whose collection was sold by the Fine Art Society in 1904.



From the collections and © Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)
The Queen's Head underwent a complete change at the end of the 19th century, transformed from this country setting into its more familiar urban landscape in the 20th and 21st centuries. It was whilst the old building was pulled down and the

new pub built that the amazing discovery in the photographs below was unearthed.



These images show a beautiful 14th century gold and emerald finger-ring which is now in the collection of the British Museum. From the lower black and white image, you can see that the ring has legend engraved in black, running round the ring. Curators at the British Museum (BM) have transcribed it as follows:

+ QUI PLUS DESPENT QUA LI NAFIERT / SANS COLP FERIR A MORT SE FIERT
He who spends more than belongs to him / Kills himself without striking a blow.

The British Museum bought the ring in 1899. Finds such as these would be deemed [treasure trove](#), and would become part of the collections of the BM (nowadays covered by the [Treasure Act](#)). There are a number of finger-rings that date from this period in the BM collections, but it has been pointed out that there has only been one occasion that this actual ring has been on show. It was exhibited during the *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400* at the Royal Academy of Arts between November 1987 and March 1988. The author of the accompanying catalogue to the exhibition (1987) said about the ring: *'It is unusual to find such an elaborate inscription on a ring. The use of French rather than English raises the possibility that this ring is a French import, but French was still widely used in England among the nobility.'* Its discovery conjures up more questions than answers - how did the ring come to be on this site? We might never know, but what a stunning and rare find.



Courtesy and © Albert Pinching (author of *Wood Green Past*, published by Phillimore in 2000)

This view of the pub (above), shows it c.1916 when it was known as the Queen's Head Hotel. In the image below (taken in the late 1940s) we can only see the 'Bar and Restaurant' side door to the pub on the west side of the building and the car lot next-door in Queen's Parade (a car lot is still there today, selling second-hand cars, but not of this vintage).



From the collections and © Bruce Castle Museum (Haringey Archive and Museum Service)

And that ends today's post taking a quick dip into a local (former) pub's history. If you have any photographs of the Queen's Head that might reveal more of its interesting past, then we would like to see them. Do get in touch.

Tomorrow, we will share more about this area ...

Until then – stay safe, keep well

Best wishes from us all at Bruce Castle

Deborah Hedgecock
Curator

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