

# HISTORIC PUBS

## HEADINGLEY



The Three Horse Shoes Inn, c1905

### THE THREE HORSE SHOES INN

Headingley Moor lay north of Headingley village, until the early nineteenth century, and on its northern edge was the hamlet of Headingley Moor Side. Then in 1829, Lord Cardigan, owner of the Moor, successfully petitioned Parliament to have it enclosed – and land which had been commonly accessible was divided into plots and sold to private owners. One of these was blacksmith John Askey, who bought ‘a parcel of land on Headingley Moor’ by the hamlet, with frontages to the ‘Leeds and Otley Turnpike and Addle Road’ (now Weetwood Lane), on 5 July 1832. He paid £136.10s.

Very soon John Askey was established as a blacksmith and inn-keeper. John was only 26, as was his wife Elizabeth, and they had two small children, Hannah and Sarah (they were to have two more, John and Elizabeth). His inn, The Three Horse Shoes, occupied a strategic position, at an important fork in the road, directly facing traffic travelling along the road from Headingley. At the rear of the inn, was the forge off Weetwood Lane (then Addle Road). It was a combination of businesses that could hardly fail with many customers no doubt taking a draught of ale while Mr Askey repaired a broken wheel or re-shoed a horse.

And such was the rapid growth of Headingley Moor village that his local customers must have been multiplying by the years. Within the decade, in the growing hamlet, there were now two schools, two large villas, Mr Askey’s inn and several houses. To cap it all, in 1838 Mr Askey’s neighbour John Wood of Headingley Moor began plying a conveyance between The Upperhead Row in Leeds and the inn at Headingley Moor. The inn had become the terminus for the omnibus to Leeds and the road was becoming heavily trafficked.



The Three Horse Shoes Inn, 1926

The Three Horse Shoes is a popular name for an inn attached to a blacksmiths. The superstition that the devil rides on horseback (or is himself cloven hooved) and might come for shoes gave ground to the custom of keeping shoes in sets of three. In this instance, of course, the name is doubly appropriate in that the inn was the terminus for Mr Wood's three-horse omnibus.

The Three Horse Shoes appears in local directories as an "Inn" from the 1830s, whereas the New Inn and The Woodman (Hotel) nearby are not named, merely referred to by address and occupier – "beer" or "beer and spirit" retailer. A true inn provided lodgings for travellers and stabling. It would be a respectable establishment with set-aside accommodation for gentlemen and their ladies.

Twenty years later the 1861 directories indicate that Elizabeth Askey is the proprietor, presumably running the business after John's early death, but after a few years the directories once again note John Askey as the inn-keeper. This is the son who was five at the time of the 1841 census and whose home was to be the Three Horse Shoes Inn for his whole life. In 1972, 93-year-old George Merry remembered the younger John Askey: "There was The Woodman, The New Inn and The Three Horse Shoes. They all used to brew their own beer. ... I used to go with a big jug and a penny from my father, and I would say, 'a gill of beer Mr Askey' and he used to give me what they called a long pull. He'd fill it for a penny ..." John Askey died there in 1892, aged fifty seven. His widow Ann Askey kept the inn for a further eleven years, but on her death in April 1903, at the age of sixty four, arrangements were made to sell the property and pay off creditors.

A ground floor plan, taken from a surveyor's report at the time, shows that within the triangular site, the Inn was central, with Spare Ground (a forecourt) to the front. Through the Porch, the Bar Room was to the left and the Tap Room to the right; down the passage were Stairs to the first-floor bedrooms, and the Snug and the Kitchen, with the Brewhouse beyond. At the back was a Yard with Stables for ten horses, entered from Otley Road (left of the inn), between a Coach House and a Cottage. To the right of the inn, along Weetwood Lane were a Hairdressers Shop, a Dwelling House [now no3; initially the innkeeper's private house, later tied to the separate forge business] and the Blacksmiths Shop.

The purchaser was Joshua Tetley & Son and the price paid £11,100. The ground floor plan shows the arrangement of the bar rooms, brewhouse, stabling and yard. The blacksmith's house and workshop were independent of the inn (although included in the sale) as was the small cottage on Otley Road. A photograph at the time shows that Tetley's decided to make the most of the advertising potential offered by the building's strategic site; and a barber's pole [set at an angle] indicates that the hairdresser was still in

business. A few years later, a public telephone arrived, housed in an early telephone booth standing by the gas lamp. The cottage on Otley Road became a shop, then a surgery and was finally absorbed into the main building during major alterations in 1992 retaining the old shop front. The 'hairstresser's shop' next to the Tap Room, and the thin garden wedge with coachhouse on the Otley Road side, are all now part of the enlarged public house. The Three Horse Shoes originally had a simple frontage, with an arched front entrance; the new owners squared the entrance and added the bays.



The Three Horse Shoes Inn, 1988 © Leeds Library & Information Service

The first tenant manager was Richard Scott, and in 1905 parking on the forecourt was becoming an issue: "the Chief Constable had instructed him not to allow traps to stand any length of time on the space in front of the house."

From 1903 to 1999, the Three Horse Shoes was a Tetley house. Towards the end of the twentieth century however, company mergers, which included Tetley's, had produced a giant international brewing conglomerate. The decision was taken to shed the public houses and in 1999 many Tetley houses, including The Three Horse Shoes were acquired by Punch Inns Ltd of Burton upon Trent. By the end of 1999 the building had undergone another major refit. The pub is currently owned by Your Friendly Local Ltd.



Weetwood Lane Forge, c1956 © Leeds Library & Information Service

### **Weetwood Lane Forge**

John Askey was a blacksmith, and that's how The Three Horse Shoes Inn got its name - so he built a forge on the site that he bought in 1832. Initially, perhaps he worked the forge himself. But in due course, it was leased and Richard Dalton, for many years proprietor of Mr Askey's old smithy in Weetwood Lane, moved his business to new premises in Moor Road during the 1880s. At the end of the old century trade directories



tell us William Whitwell had taken over at the Weetwood Lane Forge. By the late 1920s the Whitwell family remained in business at Weetwood Lane, and now also owned Mr Dalton's former premises at Moor Road. James Whitwell meanwhile had gone into partnership at the Weetwood Lane forge with his former apprentice Arthur Hartley. James Whitwell lived at No 3 Weetwood Lane next to the old forge and 'made wheel hoops with Arthur Hartley who continued the business after Mr Whitwell's death'. By the late 1950s the business was being conducted in the style of 'WA Hartley, blacksmith'. He retired about 1960. Weetwood Lane forge had been a feature of Far Headingley for over 125 years serving a transport industry that relied on well shod horses. It was swept away in the early 1960s, ironically to form a car park.



Weetwood Lane Forge, c1956 © Leeds Library & Information Service

### David Hall

Local Historian, 2022

Extracted from David Hall, *Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park* (2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 2001)

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