

**PUBLIC HOUSES IN HEATH END  
THE SARACEN'S HEAD, THE BIRD IN HAND  
AND THE ELM TREE**



**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - 2017**

## **FRONT PAGE PHOTOGRAPH**

This is a photograph of the Saracen's Head Public house c.1960.

## **COMPLIMENTARY READING**

**"Ley's Farm Earthenware Pottery at Heath End". This is free to down load and read on the author's website [samuelstewart.com](http://samuelstewart.com) under subsection "Other Industries"**

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## THE SARACEN'S HEAD, ELM TREE AND BIRD IN HAND PUBLIC HOUSES

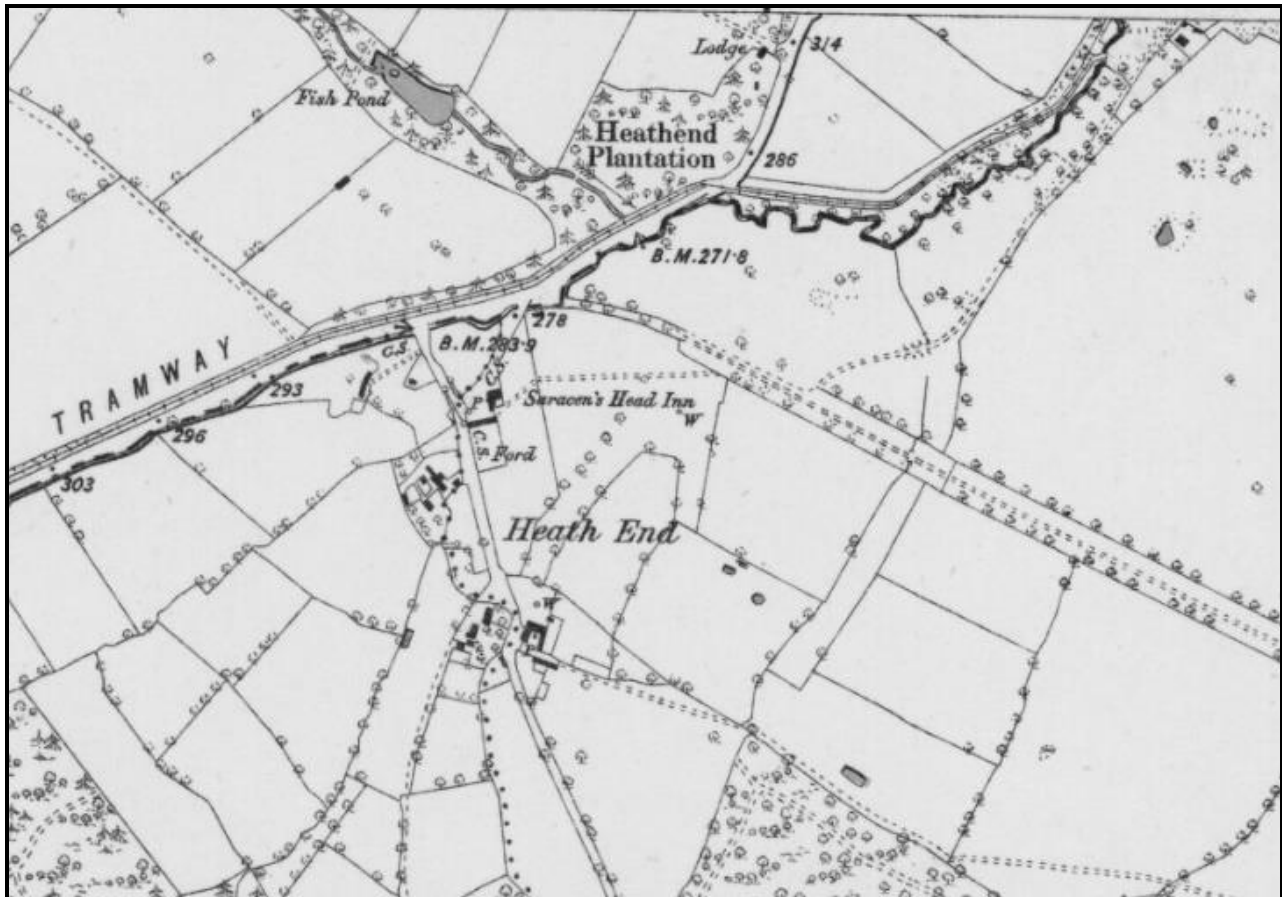
### THE SARACEN'S HEAD

The following advertisement referring to a contract to build new properties is of some interest, as the author believes that the details include a reference to a farmhouse which initially incorporated the **Saracen's Head**. The advert refers to 4 new buildings, with 3 of these on the Ferrer's "Chartley Estate", Staffs and the remaining one, a farmhouse on the Ferrer's Staunton Harold estate. As the earliest reference found for the Saracen's Head being opened is 1865, this would support that theory:-

#### Leicester Journal – March 4<sup>th</sup> 1864

Persons desirous of contracting for the erection of any of the following buildings, for the Right Hon. the Earl Ferrers may inspect the plans etc.....

- On Staunton Harold Estate, Leics - New Farmhouse, Heath End.....



**The 1885 issued O/S Map showing the location of the "Saracen's Head" (opened in 1865) on the east side of Callan's Lane, which is just west of the rear entrance to Staunton Harold Hall and Garden Centre**

Heath End was at one time a small hamlet divided east and west by Callan's Lane between the parishes of Staunton and Ashby de la Zouch in NW Leicestershire. The Saracen's Head was therefore in the parish of Staunton.



The above photograph of the Saracen's Head Inn / farm house, was thought to have been taken in the mid 1900's, and shows the farm buildings at the side. Above the right hand side upper floor window can be seen the pole from which a sign has previously been hung or was ready for a sign to be hung in the future. Below this same window is a sign which incorporates "Trumans", who were a large UK brewery, and the name "The Saracen's Head".



The van in the photograph suggests that this picture was probably taken c.1960, and could be earlier or later than the previous one. Note the sign now hanging from the pole extending from the farm house / Inn in this picture, and a smaller plaque above the right hand ground floor window, next to the entrance.



The above photograph was taken not long before the Saracen's head closed c.2000, although the landlord Norman Grey and his wife Ann lived there for a while after the pub closed. It was renowned in their time for its Bass beer and cheese and onion cobs. Norman Grey was preceded by Ray Thorley, who was his father-in-law. Even though they had beer on tap, they also used to serve a particular type of Bass beer via an enamel jug filled from a wooden barrel. A pint of Bass and a cheese and onion cob at the Saracens' was never to be forgotten by all who were fortunate enough to experience it. The author has fond memories of sitting on the grass with family and friends in the summer sunshine at the Saracen's Head in the 1980's.

The Inn sign reflects the head in the Shirley family crest shown in the following photograph. This is also cast into the Staunton Harold Estate, Ashby Lodge entrance gate posts. Saracen's Head is a common pub name in England, and "Saracen", *in this context*, means a Muslim at the time of the Crusades. (The word predates the origin of Islam, and hence the Crusades). A Saracen's Head appears as a heraldic device in the coats of arms of some families (as with the Shirleys' of Staunton Harold) that fought in the Crusades, and it has transferred from there to pub names.

In "Stemmata Shirleina by E. P. Shirley, he tells us the following:-  
I have not found any deed in which Sir Thomas is mentioned before the 31<sup>st</sup> of King Edward III, at which time he was married. Although his seal, engraved in "Dugdale's Warwickshire, is taken from a deed of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of that reign. Above the coat of Shirley, on this seal, is engraved the "Saracen's Head", perhaps assumed from some memory of some encounter with the infidels, **the first instance of bearing what has ever since continued on the family crest.**



**On the Ashby Lodge gate posts**



**From the Ferrer's Family Crest**

The Ashby Lodge and iron railings at the southern entrance of the Estate were built over two hundred years ago at the end of the Georgian era. The lodge-keeper's job was to keep the entrance gates closed, and open them when a visitor approached.

#### **LICENSEES OF THE "SARACEN'S HEAD, 1865 - c.2000**

The 6 day license refers to **no Sunday opening**. Up to Frederick William Lewin, information is taken from a combination of the Leicestershire Licensing Law lists, trade directory information, and other sources.

**Joseph Burton** – 1865 to 1887?? (**New License**)

He was the last licensee of the **Elm Tree** which had closed in 1864, but continued to work the farm which the Elm Tree was incorporated into till at least 1881.

**William Harris** – 1888 to 1898

**Charlotte Harris** – 1898 to 1905 (Wife of William Harris)

**William Thomas Harris** – 1905 to 1922 (six day license)

**Thomas Lovatt** – 1922 to 1923

**Alfred Hutchinson** – 1923 to 1930

**Christopher Thomas Hutchinson** – 1930 to 1934 (six day license)

**Frederick William Lewin** – 1935 to 1936

**Ernest Roland Thesley** – 1937 to 1939 and 1940 to 1946

**Ray Thorley and Norman Grey** were the last two landlords before closure c.2000.

## TRADE DIRECTORY INFORMATION

In “**Harrod and Co Directory of Derbys / Leics**” **1870**, we find that a Joseph Burton is the licensee at the **Saracen’s Head**. This is the first mention of the “**Saracen’s Head**” we have found in trade directories

In “**Wright’s Directory of South Derbys**” **1874**, Joseph Burton is listed as Victualler, **Saracen’s Head** still.

In the “**History, Gazeteer and Directory of Leics & Rutland**” **1877**, Joseph Burton is given as the Victualler, **Saracen’s Head**, Heath End.

In “**Wright’s Directory of Leics**” dated **1887 – 1888**, William Harris is listed as farmer, grazier and Victualler, **Saracen’s Head**.

In “**Kelly’s Directory of Derby’s, Leics**” **1891** (Pt 2; Leics & Rutland), William Harris is now listed as – **Saracen’s Head Public House**, farmer & bailiff to Earl Ferrers, Heath End.

In “**Wright’s Directory of Leicestershire**” **1892**, we have William Harris, farmer, grazier, and victualler, **Saracen’s Head**.

In “**Kelly’s Directory of Leics & Rutland 1895**”, William Harris is given as **Saracen’s Head Public House** and farmer, Heath End.

In “**Kelly’s Directory of Leics & Rutland**” **1899**, we now have William Harris (Mrs), **Saracen’s Head Public House**, and farmer, Heath End.

In “**Kelly’s Directory of Leics & Rutland**” **1908**, we have William Harris, **Saracen’s Head Public House**, farmer, Heath End

In “**Kelly’s Diectory of Leics & Rutland**” **1916**, we have William Harris, **Saracen’s Head Public House**, Heath End.

## THE BIRD IN HAND ALE HOUSE



The above extract from the 1885 issued O/S Map shows the location of the "Saracen's Head" (opened in 1865) on the east side of Callan's Lane which is just west of the rear entrance to Staunton Harold Hall. To the south of the Saracen's Head and on the west side of Callan's Lane was Ley's Farm House into which the "Bird in Hand Ale House" was incorporated

Heath End was at one time a small hamlet divided east and west by Callan's Lane between the parishes of Staunton and Ashby de la Zouch in NW Leicestershire.

In the Heath End conservation and appraisal study carried out by NWLDC in 2002, "Ley Farmhouse" **on the west side of Callan's Lane**, is listed as being a sixteenth century timber framed house with stone plinth, within the parish of Ashby de la Zouch.

According to an "Illustrated History of Pubs and Ale Houses in Ashby De La Zouch" by Robert Jones, the "Ley Farmhouse" building was described as being timbered and thatched and included a stable and wood house. All were apparently in a bad state of repair when it was surveyed in 1802. The half timbered building was later incorporated into the property now known as "Ley Farm" which is still in existence



today, and is still within the Parish of Ashby De La Zouch. The building was awarded grade II listing on 29th September 1977. The report states - Some red brick and some plastered infill. Tiled roof. One and a half storeys with two gabled dormers. Inside some close studding exposed in rear, on north-eastern wall. Massive chamfered ceiling beams. Curved wooden lintel to off centre fireplace. Moulded architraves to plank doors. Modern casement windows. Red brick north eastern cross wing.

Members of the wealthy Tetley farming family are thought to have occupied "Ley Farm" for at least 125 years, and they were the licensees of an ale house called the "Bird in Hand" for at least 50 years, and also worked a pottery adjacent to it. The Bird in Hand was incorporated into part of "Ley Farm". It was quite common for Ale Houses to be in one room in a farm house. The "Leicestershire Alehouse Recognizance Book" 1753 to 1819 which is held at the L&RRO gives the earliest record of the Tetleys' running an Alehouse as 1759 when Ann Tetley is listed as being the licensee. Her husband Joseph Tetley stood surety for her. From 1760 to 1804, Joseph Tetley is listed as the licensee, followed by Elizabeth Tetley from 1805 to 1809.

Members of the Tetley family are thought to have occupied the premises for at least 125 years and were licensees of the "Bird in Hand" for at least 50 years. The "Leicestershire Alehouse Recognizance Book" 1753 to 1819 which is held at the L&RRO gives the earliest record of the Tetleys' running an Alehouse as 1759 when Ann Tetley is listed as being the licensee. Her husband Joseph Tetley stood surety for her.

From 1760 to 1804, Joseph Tetley is listed as the licensee, followed by Elizabeth Tetley from 1805 to 1809 . No further record of "The Bird In Hand" has been found.



**A 2002 photograph of Lee's Farm House**

## THE ELM TREE



**An extract from the 1859 Staunton Harold Estate map to show the location of the "Elm Tree Inn" on plot 56**

Various fragmented and confusing information have been written about the Elm Tree and Saracen's Head Inns at Heath End, so the author has carried out his own independent research into them, and hopefully the following will add some clarity to their history.

The above extract from the 1859 Staunton Harold estate map proves that there were two separate Inns, and the "Saracen's Head", which features later, was not built on the foundations of the Elm Tree! The schedule which goes with the map, tells us that the plot marked 56 adjacent to the rear entrance to Staunton Harold Hall housed the Elm Tree Inn (coloured red) and the surrounding buildings suggest that it was probably part of a farm, as was often the case in those times. No.53 was a croft, No.54 was an orchard, No.55 was a garden and No.57 was a garden also. The Saracen's Head had not been built in 1859, hence it not being shown on the map.

John Nichol's, the Leicestershire Antiquarian comments that there were two Inns at Heath End in 1804. It is not unreasonable to assume that the later named "Elm Tree" was in use as an Alehouse at that time, along with the older "Bird in Hand Inn" described earlier.

### LICENCEES OF THE "ELM TREE", 1790 - 1842

We now know from "The Alehouse Recognizance Books" held at the R&LRO that William Palmer was the licensee at what was later named the Elm Tree from 1790 to 1827. We have no further records till 1842, when the licensee was still showing as William Palmer. The license was transferred from William to Miss Elizabeth Palmer

(his daughter) in 1842, and she held it till 1858 when it was then transferred to Joseph Burton who subsequently held it till 1864. It seems likely that the Elm Tree closed for the selling of beer in 1864, the year before the "Saracen's Head" opened its doors (see the following), However, it continued on as a farm till at least 1881 and was still being referred to as The Elm Tree at that time. The Alehouse started to be recorded as the Elm Tree in 1825, as it was in 1825 that a new licensing Act required Alehouses to be named and/or have a hanging sign displayed.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE "ELM TREE"**

Newspaper advertisements show the Elm Tree as being used for wood sales from the Staunton Estate in 1826, 1827, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1835, 1838 and 1839. There was also similar sales recorded at Mr. Palmers, Heath End, in 1810 & 1817 but they do not mention the Elm Tree Inn as it was just an Alehouse with no name at that time, and would have been mostly frequented by the local miners. It is probable that the Elm Tree Inn / Farm would have served as the Staunton Harold estate office at some point, based on the fact that the estate wood sales were held there for at least 30 years. Due to the intense industrial activity which took place in the locality, including Dimminsdale, Heath End, Lount and Coleorton it is possible that this was the central point where men who worked in the mines gathered to be paid by their charter masters in money and ale for their work, bearing in mind the reference to a "Reckoning House" being located on the Staunton estate.

#### **EXAMPLES OF WOOD SALE ADVERTISEMENTS:-**

##### **Leicester Journal – January 5<sup>th</sup> 1810**

The annual sale of spring wood, belonging to the R.H. Earl Ferrers at Staunton Harold, will be this year, a part of Spring Wood, a part of Lount Wood, and a part in The Wilderness, which will be sold in lots, as usual, on Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 1810, at **W. Palmers**, Heath End.

##### **Leicester Chronicle – January 21<sup>st</sup> 1826**

###### **Wood Sale In the Manor of Staunton Harold By Benjamin Cheatle**

Thursday January 24<sup>th</sup> 1826 at **Mr. Palmer's the Elm Tree Inn**, Heath End  
Upwards of thirty lots of Spring Wood growing in the Rough Heath and Staunton Estate.

Twelve months credit on approved joint security  
Dinner on the table at one o'clock  
To view the timber, apply to Joseph Fairbrother of Staunton Harold

##### **Leicester Chronicle – November 14<sup>th</sup> 1829**

###### **Wood Sale In the manor of Staunton Harold To be sold by auction By B. Cheatle**

**At the Elm Tree Inn, Heath End, in the County of Leicester,  
on Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> 1829**

Forty lots of Oak, Ash, elm and Birch, now fallen and lying in Lount Wood, and the Rough Heath. – Dinner on the table at one o'clock. – Credit on approved joint security. – Description particulars may be had at the place of sale, and of the Auctioneer, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.- Joseph Fairbrother of Staunton will show the lots.

**Leicester Chronicle - December 4<sup>th</sup> 1830**

**To be sold by auction**

**By B. Cheatle,**

**At the Elm Tree Inn, Heath End, the third week of the present month**

Upwards of 40 lots of GROWING TIMBER –

Day of sale in next weeks paper

Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Dec 1<sup>st</sup> 1830

In the **History Gazetteer & Directory of Leics & Rutland 1846**, and **White's Directory 1846** we find that Eliz. (Elizabeth) Palmer is listed as Victualler, at the **Elm Tree**, Heath End.

In "**Melville & Co Directory and Gazetteer of Leics**" dated **1854**, she is given as Elizabeth Palmer, Elm Tree, Heath End and in the "**Post office Directory of Leics & Rutland**" dated **1855**, she is recorded as Miss Elizabeth Palmer, farmer and beer retailer.

In **Drakes 1861**, Joseph Burton, Heath End is listed as a victualler.

In the "**Post office Directory of Leics & Rutland**" dated **1876**, we now find Joseph Burton, **Elm Tree** and farmer, Heath End. The mention of the Elm Tree here must be just a reference to the farm as we know that the alehouse had closed in 1864.

In trade directories dated 1876, 1880 and 1881 we have Joseph Burton still being listed at the Elm Tree as a farmer (and in one case a victualler). Trade directories are notorious for giving mis-leading information, and the author would suggest that the Elm Tree was still being run purely as a farm after it ceased trading as an alehouse in 1864, but still continued to be referred to as the Elm Tree.

We now return to the **Elm Tree** in "**Wright's Directory of Leics & Rutland**" dated **1880**, where Joseph Burton is given as a farmer and Victualler, **Elm Tree**, Heath End. Again, the Elm Tree would have been just a reference to the farm

In "**Kelly's Directory of Leics & Rutland**" dated **1881**, Joseph Burton is given as **Elm Tree**, and farmer, Heath End.