

THE FOX AND PELICAN

IN GRAYSHOTT

120 years of trading



INTRODUCTION

On August 23rd 2019 the Fox and Pelican celebrated 120 years of trading. In 1898, the threat of an ordinary 'beer house' appearing on the site of our Village Green brought together prominent local residents, and, in a spirit of 'who you know' rather than 'what you know' an alternative venture which became 'The Fox and the Pelican' was proposed.

What follows is the story of this venture; the people involved both of local and national acclaim; a brush with politics and temperance, and correspondence in national newspapers.



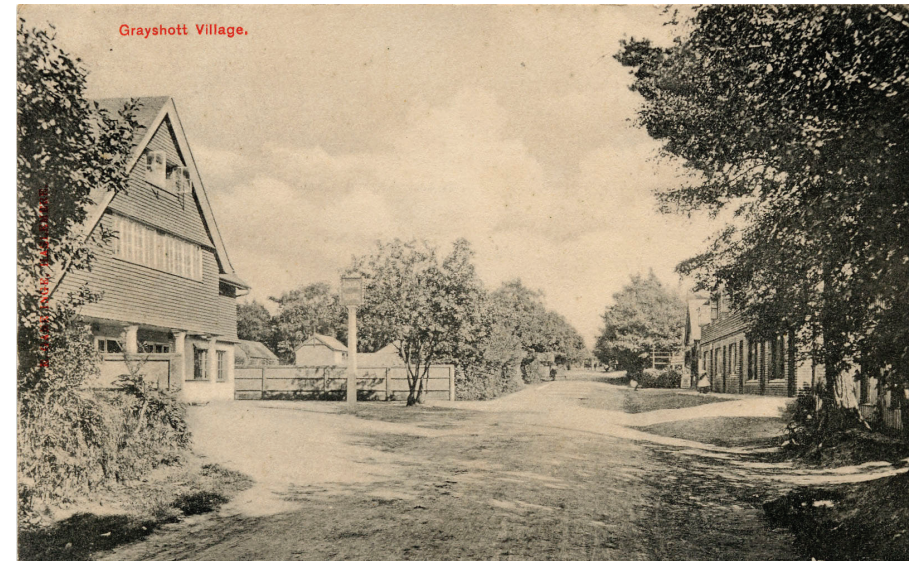
The Fox and Pelican around 1900.

Grayshott Heritage considers this to be an important landmark in local history and has produced this booklet to record the history of the establishment.

Richard Peskett.
Chairman.

Grayshott Heritage.
December 2019.

FORMATION OF THE GRAYSHOTT AND DISTRICT REFRESHMENT ASSOCIATION LTD



The rapid expansion of tourism at Hindhead in the 1890s, predominately brought about by Professor John Tyndall's claim that the air on Hindhead was as good as that in the Swiss Alps, brought many new opportunities to Grayshott in respect of business and employment.

Alton brewer Gerald Hall was one who saw the chance to open a commercial public house to satisfy demand from the many labourers and others who were by then engaged in building work. In May 1898, Hall purchased a plot of land with frontage extending on Headley Road and Whitmore Vale from John Ward for £750, with the intention of obtaining a licence and building upon it.

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respected the need for a refreshment house and accommodation, but also wished to protect the well being of the rapidly expanding village. Prompt action by such leading residents as the Rev. JM Jeakes (later to become the first vicar of Grayshott), Mr GV Cox and Mrs Charlotte Lyndon led to a scheme for a public house for the sale of beer and other refreshments under a 'reformed methods' scheme. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury approved the formation of a joint stock company to provide capital for establishing and running such a business, with the principal being it was to be run by a salaried manager

who received a commission on sales except that of beer. In view of this it was hoped that the manager would not press the sale of beer!

The Grayshott and District Magazine for July 1898 reported that the refreshment house would supply alcoholic drinks of good reliable quality whilst a villager or passer-by would be able to procure a good and cheap cup of tea or coffee, a plate of meat, bread and cheese etc. With land secured, neighbours Mr and Mrs Nettleship generously offered adjoining land to the site for use as a tea-garden and tennis court.

The residents formed themselves into the Grayshott and District Refreshment Association Ltd, with a philanthropic committee led by Sir Frederick Pollock as Chairman and Mrs Lyndon as Secretary. A prospectus was issued with £2,500 maximum capital, and shares to the value of £2,035 were very soon sold to 68 shareholders.

£1,465 was accepted for the construction of the premises, with a total cost of £2,000

Hall made an application for a full licence at the September 1898 Licensing sessions, but it was refused in favour of that made by the Grayshott and District. They had support from the Bishop of Winchester Dr Randall Davidson (who in 1903 became the Archbishop of Canterbury) and Major Crauford of the People's Refreshment House Association, which was patronised by the Bishop of Chester.

With capital raised and licence granted, a tender from Messrs Chapman and Puttick for £1,465 was accepted for the construction of the premises, with a total cost of £2,000 when fitted out being allowed for.

Hall sold the land back to John Ward for £410 in June 1913. In September of that year Ward sold it to Dr Arnold Lyndon and Thomas Cook, who in July of 1914 conveyed it to the Parish Council for establishing a village green, which remains a focal point today.



Dr Randall Thomas Davidson, 1st Baron Davidson of Lambeth, GVC, PC. Bishop of Winchester at the time of his support to the Fox and Pelican, of whom it was said 'a man of remarkable balance of judgment, intellectual humility, sense of responsibility and capacity for work... His great sense of public moral responsibility gave him an influence and a position which were remarkable'.

THE NAME AND THE SIGN BOARD

The Grayshott and District was now faced with the problem of choosing a name for their new establishment. This was resolved by the Chairman, who was attached to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. The founder of the college in the 16th century was Bishop Fox of Winchester, and the Pelican 'in her piety' was his device. As Grayshott was then within Fox's diocese and the ancient estate of his See this became the choice – The Fox and The Pelican. Before too long the second 'The' became left out of the name, henceforth to become more simply the Fox and Pelican.



Walter Crane, (here, shown dressed for a costume party) one of the most famous illustrators of his day. With The Fox and Pelican he added pub signs to his repertoire.

Mrs. Winkworth gave the signboard, designed and painted by the notable Victorian artist Walter Crane. A description of the sign was published in The Herald in April 1900. The design incorporated on one side a white pelican with wings outstretched guarding its nest from a fox. The reverse has a red background with oak branch and leaves with a blue and white scroll with the name. A post with ornamental iron frame was erected at the front with a temporary sign for the opening; Walter Crane's board followed a few weeks later.

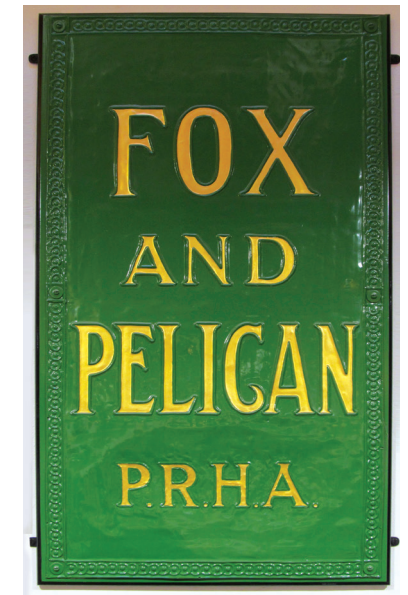
Walter Crane was principal of the Royal College of Art and well established as an artist, illustrator of books, greetings cards, textiles wallpapers and ceramic tiles. Born at Liverpool in 1845 he became a student of John Ruskin, studied Italian Renaissance and much admired the Elgin Marbles. His

talent also developed from the study of Japanese colour prints. A prominent member of the Socialist League and the Arts and Crafts Movement, he was well acquainted with GF Watts and William Morris. He devoted much time to the Art Workers Guild and in 1887 he became the founding president of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. He became a most prolific illustrator of children's books and his talents were used to promote the Socialist cause, with cartoons and contributions to 'Justice' and 'The Clarion'. He died at Horsham, West Sussex in March 1915.

The original signboard was later taken down for safe keeping about 1912, as its historic value had by then been recognised. It was placed on show inside the village hall. With the hall being used for army billeting upon the outbreak of the Great War it was returned to the pub and for many years hung inside. Later consigned to an outbuilding along with the pressed copper 'Fox and Pelican P.R.H.A.' sign from the front of the building, it disappeared. Following national publicity in 2009 about the



The board and pressed copper sign shortly after their re-discovery and purchase.



The enamel sign, fully restored

The opening was over-shadowed that day in the eyes of local people by heavy rain, the first for several months!

missing sign in the antiques trade press, an Essex auction house called with the news: 'We believe we have been consigned your missing signboard'.

As little time was available to bid and secure the sign it was bought privately. Subsequently ownership was taken over by Grayshott Parish Council. The board and pressed copper sign were restored and are now on show at Grayshott Pottery.

THE OPENING, THE BUILDING AND EARLY YEARS OF TRADING

The opening on 23rd August 1899 by Mrs Randall Davidson, wife of the Bishop of Winchester, received widespread publicity. Interest was

created by a list of the notable people involved and the idea of the different ideals for trading, with many looking on to await success or failure of the venture. The opening was over-shadowed that day in the eyes of local people by heavy rain, the first for several months!

A small library of books including such titles as Actors of the Century, Kipling's Day's Work and Temperance Problems & Social Reform were given by George Bernard Shaw who, with his wife, held shares in the venture.



George Bernard Shaw, playwright, critic and political activist, was a well known figure around the village. He donated books to the pub, which became the village's first public library.

London papers including the Daily Telegraph, Morning Leader and The Star carried the story of the opening.

One London reporter wrote

'I embarked on this perilous journey to a public house far from my base'. Arriving by train at Haslemere, he gave a graphic description of the countryside and various encounters on his walk from the station via Hindhead, and was much in need of refreshment upon arrival!

These reports gave an interesting insight into what the place may have looked like, with rooms furnished under the supervision of Mrs Macmillan, widow of the publisher.

'A large airy room with a tiled floor, comfortable chairs and tables, all looks bright and pleasant.'

The bar was in a side passage, neat and plain, the little three-handle beer engine was hidden modestly behind a curtain, and shelving with ginger beer and other non-alcoholic refreshments neatly arranged.

'Vertical match-boarding to dado level painted dark green, varnished, and with distemper above, tables and chairs finished in green to match. A coffee room and a library. Six bedrooms all with hand wash-stand and dressing tables. A small sitting room for visitors and a bathroom soon to be provided with a bath.'

Windows divided into small panes were framed in dark green and had red curtains. Doors were also dark green.

A palatable mild was on offer at 2 1/2d, bitter and stout at 3d, and a lighter beer was available than that sold in other houses in the area. Working class dinners were 6d, comprising meat and two veg and a slice of bread; some days as many

'I embarked on this perilous journey to a public house far from my base.'

as twenty were sold. A single bed was 2s 6d, plain breakfast 1s, dinner 2s and afternoon tea 6d. In Heatherley, Flora Thompson's fictionalised account of her time in Grayshott, she wrote of her character Laura's nine-penny dinners as '*a thick cut off the joint, two or more vegetables, and a wedge of fruit tart or round of roly-poly*'.

Outside were stables and a bicycle shed. No doubt the stables became a 'motor house' in later years to cater for the new era of motoring tourism. Weekends were popular with large numbers of cyclists and 'carriage folk' calling in for afternoon tea.



The first manager was a Mr Wallace, a former steward on HMS 'Sanspareil', with his wife to assist him. Problems soon arose: as early as September 12th a person was allowed to become drunk and subsequently the manager was fined 10s by local magistrates. Another manager was fined 10s for watering down whisky. One report quoted 'an unusual proportion of lawless spirits in its population'. Sales of alcohol were well in excess of expectations! Sunday closing at 8 pm was not popular and soon abolished. Between 1899 and 1904 no fewer than six different managers were employed.



Anyone for Tennis? Patrons can now enjoy the pleasant garden upon the former tennis lawn.

Throughout these early years the venture returned reasonable profits; for the first year it was £213, the following year £300 was set aside to install gas lighting, and from thereon despite the management problems the establishment continued to prosper.

The Peoples Refreshment House Association had taken an interest from the very beginning, helping to obtain the first licence. An offer to purchase was made in 1903 but turned down, and PRHA had to wait

'in view of efforts needed to break what has become a dangerous and tyrannous national habit, the association of games and other recreations with the sale of intoxicants is surely to be depreciated and discouraged'.

until 1913 before the management was transferred to their national chain of 126 establishments.

THE 'REFORMED' PUBLIC HOUSE, TEMPERANCE AND POLITICS

Long forgotten about now, but a very strong Liberal movement was prevalent at the time, to promote temperance and social reform, to a point where some were advocating a total ban on the sale of alcohol. Opposed to this

'I had deliberately opened a centre of crime and demoralization in Grayshott'

were those who claimed the public house to be 'the working man's parliament'. As prominent people were involved in the Fox and Pelican using a 'reformed method' which was somewhat

less extreme than a complete ban, considerable interest and criticism appeared in the national press. The fact that games such as draughts and dominoes could be played brought about a statement that *'in view of efforts needed to break what has become a dangerous and tyrannous national habit, the association of games and other recreations with the sale of intoxicants is surely to be depreciated and discouraged'*.



The Fox and Pelican today, still externally much as it was when opened 120 years ago.

The Fox and Pelican winter of 1905

The 'reformed method', often referred to as the Gothenburg System, originated from there as a result of the Swedish Municipal Reform Act of 1863, wherein excess profits from the sale of spirits was handed over to the public purse of the city.

With the temperance controversy raging, George Bernard Shaw seems to have feared that the Fox and Pelican would become the subject of attack by extreme reformers. He felt they might pick on the point that influential local inhabitants had actually started a public house where there had been none before, and those concerned find themselves in the limelight of blazing publicity. In 1903 he wrote to Mr Alexander Ingram Whitaker JP of Grayshott Hall, warning of nearby residents at Barford – Gilbert and Lady Murray, protagonists of the extreme temperance position – who had previously spoken that 'I had deliberately opened a centre of crime and demoralization in Grayshott'. In the event, nothing came of this and soon the extreme temperance movement faded into the background and vanished from the scene.

THE LATER YEARS

In 1914 the landlord was James Holme, whose wife had survived the sinking of the Titanic. Soon after the PHRA took over, the outbreak of war brought about great changes to all, but the arrival of troops to the district brought more prosperity. Portsmouth football club trainer Jack Warner brought his squad of 14 players to stay at the pub in January 1923 to train locally for a few days.

In 1914 the landlord was James Holme, whose wife had survived the sinking of the Titanic.

One room contained a large collection of autographed photographs of notables of the day including politicians, actors and writers.

Throughout the 1920s and 30s trade was good with many visitors to the area – the accommodation was well patronised. World War Two brought even more troops to the district, the height being the build up to D-Day in 1944. The provision of public toilets in the village had been subject to debate for many years but during the 1920s and 30s the PHRA provided such for ladies only. During WW2 the problem became more acute with the great influx of military personnel and because of damage the landlord kept them locked except during opening hours. It was not to be until 1955 that the provision of public toilets came into being.

George Gale and Sons, brewers of Horndean, took over the premises in the late 1950s and more recently they in turn have been taken over by Fullers.



A delivery of vital supplies from Gales, 1930. The lorry is a Dennis, made in Guildford, driven by F. Belcher, and the aproned drayman is Frank Tilbury. All were in need of refreshment, having made the arduous journey on the Portsmouth Road over the South Downs from Horndean.

For over 70 years the destination on the local Aldershot and District buses was 'Grayshott Fox and Pelican', the time-table board being mounted on the inn sign post. Today the general appearance of the building still looks much the same as on opening day 120 years ago, and it is still a focal point of village life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

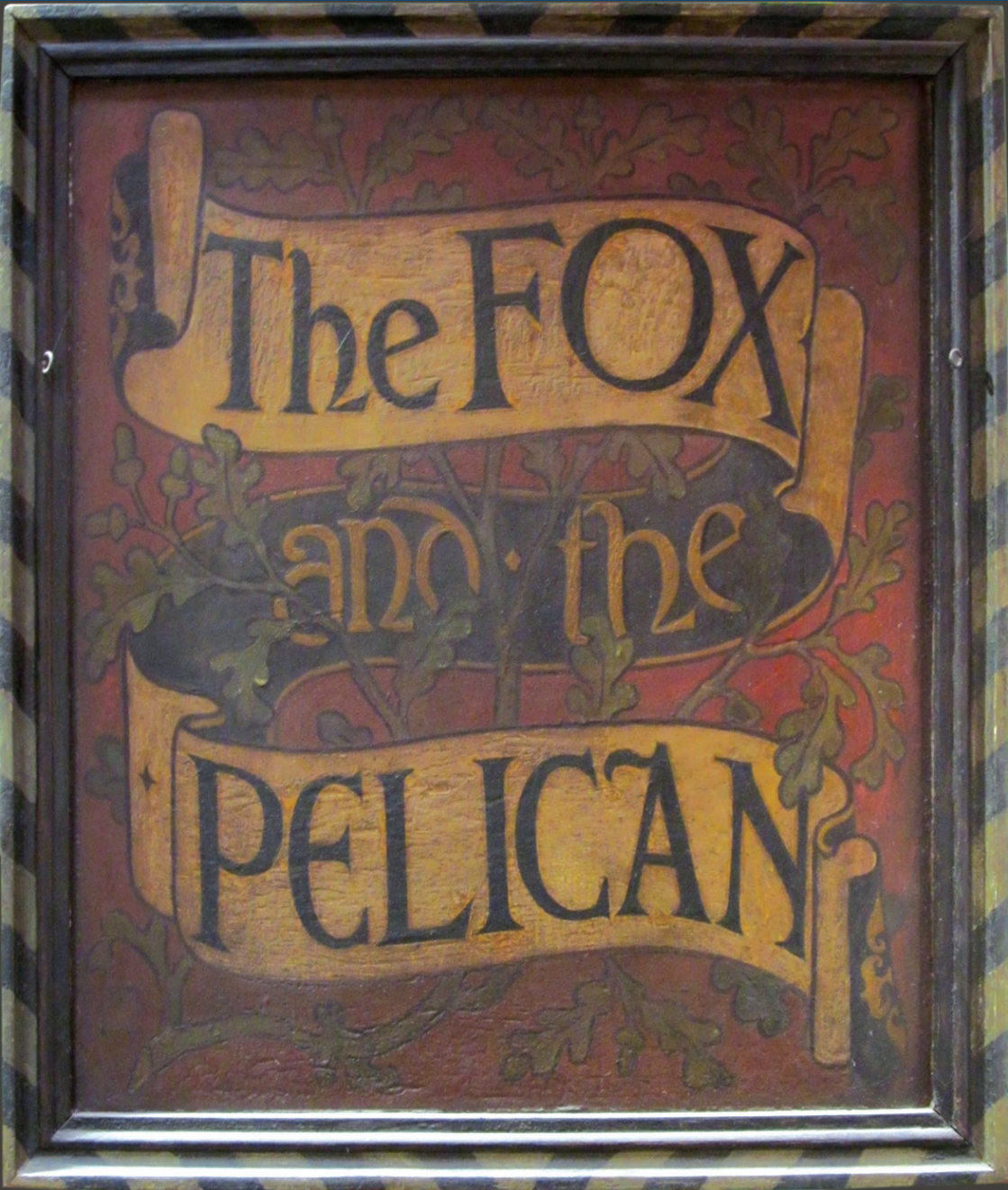
All local photographs are from the Grayshott Heritage Archive.

Grayshott - A Hampshire Village, by JH Smith 1978, republished by John Owen Smith 2002.

Various national newspaper archives.

Front and back cover illustrations are of the original signboard.





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