

## Sign of the Pole Axe 1760s

There were three types of licensed premises in Georgian times, inns, alehouses and taverns. Inns were generally purpose-built to accommodate travellers and their horses, while alehouses could be little more than ordinary dwellings. Taverns were up-market, and sold wine.

Inns and alehouses advertised their premises with a sign hanging outside. An alehouse was signified by a pole above the door, garlanded with foliage, although as with inns this was subsequently superseded by a pictorial sign, which would be readily intelligible to the illiterate.

Three advertisements in the 1760s suggest that there may have been an alehouse in Deddington called the Pole Axe, although this is also a common symbol for a butcher's business.

A notice on 6 December 1760 by a Banbury currier states that he will be at the Sign of the Pole Axe every market day [Saturday], and that he will leave a stock of goods to be sold by the Landlord all other days.

A description of the premises themselves appeared on 12 March 1768 in a notice of the sale by auction of a house in Deddington "known by the Sign of the Pole-Axes", and "very convenient for the Bufinefs of a Butcher". The premises contained 2 rooms per floor, slaughter-house, brew-house, stabling, yard etc.

Two years later, on 24 March 1770, a notice of an auction to be held at the Sign of the Pole Axe appeared, an event more suited to a public house than a butcher's shop.

Since publicans, like other tradesmen, often had more than one trade (e.g. blacksmith), it seems likely that Charles Pain, the tenant in 1768, carried on business as both publican and butcher.

It is conjectured that the Pole Axe may subsequently have become the Butcher's Arms, described as a beer house kept by W. Whetton in the Risley Diaries on 16 May 1841.<sup>(1)</sup> The Butcher's Arms is recorded as having been in Church Lane.<sup>(2)</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Diaries of William Cotton Risley, Vicar of Deddington, Part One 1835-1848, Banbury Historical Society, Vol. 29, 2007, edited by Geoffrey Smedley-Stevenson.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Story of Deddington' by Mary Vane Turner, 1933:

<http://www.deddingtonhistory.uk/publishedhistories/mvt/7.innsandcoachingdays>

6 December 1760

**Banbury carrier at the Sign of the Pole Axe in Deddington every market day [Saturday]. He will leave a stock of goods to be sold by the Landlord all other days.**

ALL Perfons indebted to the Effects of Mr. William Overton, Currier, of Banbury deceafed, are defired by his Executors, to pay their refpective Debts to Robert Rymill, of Banbury aforefaid, who has purchafed Mr. Overton's Stock in Trade, and will endeavour to merit the Favours of fuch of Mr. Overton's Cufomers, as fhall think fit to employ him; by fupplying them with the beft Goods, upon the moft reafonable Terms.

N.B. He purpofes being at Deddington every Market-Day, at the Sign of the Pole Axe, and will always have a Stock of Goods there, to be Sold by the Landlord all the other Days.

Repeated 13 December 1760.

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000073/17601206/006/0003>

12 March 1768

**Auction, at the King's Arms, of a house in Deddington, 2 rooms per floor, slaughter-house, brew-house, stabling &c., known by the Sign of the Pole-Axes, in the occupation of Charles Pain. Very convenient for the business of a butcher.**

To be Sold by AUCTION by G. KING, on Saturday the 26th Day of March, 1768, at the King's Arms in Deddington, in the County of Oxford, between the Hours of Two and Five in the Afternoon, A Well-built Houfe, with two Rooms on a Floor, besides good Garrets, together with a good Slaughter-houfe, Brew-houfe, Stabling, and other convenient Out-houfes, all in good Repair; and with a good Yard and Garden adjoining; known by the Sign of the Pole-Axes, in the Occupation of Charles Pain, in Deddington aforefaid; very convenient for the Bufinefs of a Butcher. Yearly Rent £4.

For farther Particulars enquire of Mr. William Tanner, of Middle-Afton, in the County aforefaid; or of George King, Auctioneer.

N.B. G. King has to difpofe of, by private Contract, a fmall Farm, lett at near £30 per Annum, confifting of a good Houfe and all other Conveniences, with a Quantity of very good Arable and Pafuture ground in the Common Field, capable of

great Improvement. It is Free Land. Farther Particulars may be had of the said G. King, Auctioneer, in Bicefter.

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000073/17680312/005/0002>

**24 March 1770**

**Auction, at the sign of the Pole-Axe in Deddington, of a house, malthouse &c. in Deddington, in the occupation of William Cross.**

TO be Sold to the Best Bidder, on Saturday the 7th Day of April next, between the Hours of Three and Six o'Clock in the Afternoon, at the sign of the Pole-Axe in Deddington, Oxfordshire by Mr. JOHN DEAN, - A Freehold Dwelling House, Malthouse, and Out-buildings thereto adjoining, in good Repair; together with a Clofe adjoining and belonging thereto, situate in Deddington aforesaid, now in the Occupation of William Cross. Enquire of the said Mr. Dean; or Mr. Churchill, Attorney, in Deddington aforesaid.

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000073/17700324/004/0003>