

The Rose & Crown

Evidence about the pubs at The Folly is patchy and ambiguous.

- Many of the records name the licensee but do not name the pub.
- The term 'The Folly' is sometimes used as the name of the area and sometimes as the name of a pub.
- The boundaries of the census districts changed from 1871 onwards with a consequent loss of continuity.

Bearing this in mind, there appear to have been two pubs at The Folly. The Hertford Mercury dated 27 August 1859 included an advertisement for an auction of 30 plots of land at The Folly 'very pleasantly situated on the Wheathampstead and Luton road, near the Folly and Rose and Crown public houses'. The pub later known as the *Royal Oak* was open at this date so this account is based on the conclusion that records that refer to a pub as *The Folly* relate to the *Royal Oak* while the *Rose & Crown* was usually called by name.



The Rose & Crown today – two private houses

The *Rose & Crown* was situated on the north side of the Lower Luton Road, opposite the open space that is now known as Melissa Field. Payne (2017)¹ shows that it was purpose-built in 1851 by Henry Pinks Arnold:

'... a brewer [who] would have anticipated trade both from the new hamlet planned at The Folly and from passing travellers on the main road. A sizeable beerhouse with a cellar and upstairs rooms to accommodate guests had considerable potential.'

Unusually among the pubs of Wheathampstead, the *Rose & Crown* was a freehold property; it changed hands several times in this period. The owner was sometimes

¹ Payne, D. (2017) *The Story of The Folly, Wheathampstead. A Celebration of Community*
Dianne Payne

also the licensee but some owners let the pub to a tenant. It seems also to have attracted unusual court cases, some of which are described below.

The 1851 census lists William Dellar, aged 49, as a shoemaker and beerseller living with his wife Louisa (44) in the right location. We cannot be certain that he was the first landlord of the *Rose & Crown* but there was no other licensed house on the north side of the Lower Luton Road at that date so it seems likely. He came from Cambridgeshire but Louisa was born at Aspenden in Hertfordshire.

The first record that we have in which the *Rose & Crown* is mentioned by name is this advertisement that appeared in the Luton Times dated 20 August 1859 and in the Hertford Mercury a week later.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD, HERTS.

VOTES FOR THE COUNTY.
To Builders, Investors, and Others.

30 Plots of Capital
FREEHOLD BUILDING LAND,

VERY pleasantly situate on the Wheathampstead and Luton Road, near the "Folly" and "Rose and **Crown**" public houses, and only half a mile from the intended Wheathampstead Station of the Hertford, Luton, and Dunstable Railway.

To be Sold by Auction, by
MR. JOHN CUMBERLAND,
At the Swan Inn, Wheathampstead,

On Thursday, September 1, 1859
At 3 for 4 o'clock in the Afternoon, by order of
Mr. Arnold.

The Lots will be staked out with frontages of about 28 feet each, and having a depth of about 100 feet, and are well adapted for the erection of Gentle Residences or good Cottages.

Plans of the Lots with Particulars and Conditions will be ready 10 days before the day of Sale, and may be had at the Swan, Wheathampstead; Cock, Harpenden; Wellington Arms, Welwyn; Red Lion, Codicote; Two Brewers, Kimpton; Mr. Arnold, Wheathampstead, of Mr. Bailey, Solicitor, & of the Auctioneer, both of Luton, Beds.

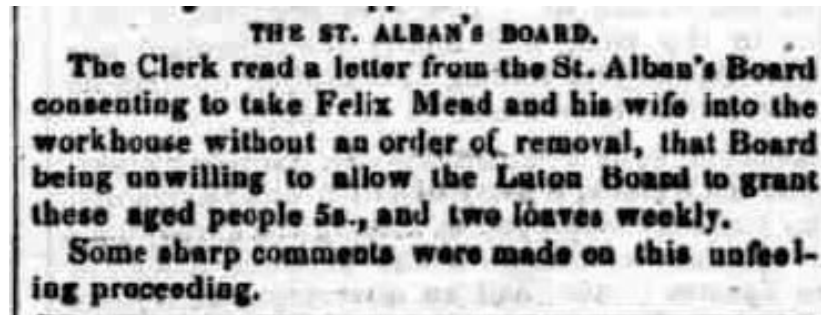
The advertisement shows that there were two pubs in the area at the time. We have concluded that the one named here as *The Folly* was what later became the *Royal Oak* on the other side of the road. Wheathampstead Station opened a year later in 1860.

Craven's Directory of 1854 shows Felix Meade (*sic*) as a beer retailer in Wheathampstead and the 1861 census lists him, aged 73, as a beer retailer living with his wife Sarah (62) at this location; they were almost certainly at the *Rose & Crown*.

An item in the Herts Ad in February 1863 described the *Rose & Crown* as having four bedrooms, a parlour and tap room with four windows, and a bar, kitchen and cellar.

Behind the building were a two-stall stable, a wood house and a good garden². It was a substantial establishment.

The next record we have of Felix and Sarah Mead is from the Luton Times dated 27 October 1866, reporting on a meeting of the Luton Board of Guardians.



It appears that the Luton Board were prepared to keep the Meads in the Luton workhouse if St Albans would grant them five shillings and two loaves weekly but the St Albans Board would not make this grant so the Meads would be moved to St Albans. The Luton Board disapproved.

Felix Mead died aged 82 in 1870 and Sarah in 1875 aged 77. Both deaths were registered in Luton so perhaps they stayed there after all.

The Meads had, obviously, given up the *Rose & Crown* by 1866 so it is no surprise that an application for a new licence was lodged at the Great Berkhamsted Licensing Sessions later that year. The Herts Ad. of 8 September reported that Daniel Adams' application stated that the nearest public house was about a mile away and that, in cases of cholera, local people had to run a mile to get brandy. This suggests that Adams was applying for a full licence so that he could sell spirits. The application further stated that the *Rose & Crown* had 10 rooms and stabling for five or six horses.

Daniel Adams was the son of an agricultural labourer. In 1841, aged 11, he was living in the village and, like his father, working as an agricultural labourer. He was ambitious; the 1851 census describes him as a carter employing one man, married and living in Gustard Wood with his wife Ruth and two infant daughters. By 1861, he lived on 'the road to Gustard Wood' from the village and employed three men in his business as a hay-dealer. There were six children and the household was completed by his mother-in-law and a lodger.

His application for a licence for the *Rose & Crown* in September 1866 was refused.

The next piece of evidence we have is from the London Gazette dated 6 November 1866 which reported that 'Daniel Adams, Carrier, Dealer in Soot, Hay, and Straw, and also Beer-House Keeper, in Wheathampstead, in the county of Hertford, having been adjudged bankrupt' would apply for his discharge from bankruptcy on 13 December. It is apparent that Adams' business had failed; he was going to try his hand as a licensee.

He may have been somewhat presumptuous in describing himself as a beerhouse keeper at the bankruptcy hearing. He applied again for a licence at the *Rose &*

² Source: Payne, D. (2017)

Crown in September 1867 and was successful. His solicitor described him as a respectable man of sober habits and produced a 'memorial signed by most of the respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood'. There were between 50 and 60 houses around and several others were in the course of construction; a licensed house was much needed. The Bench granted the licence.

Adams was soon in trouble with the magistrates. The Herts Ad dated 21 March 1868 reported that he had been charged with having his house open at an unlawful hour on a Sunday. The magistrates' court hearing started in some confusion; Adams 'admitted the truth of the information' but pleaded Not Guilty. The Chairman had to check the plea before the first witness, PC Hill, gave his evidence. He stated that he had been admitted to the *Rose & Crown* at a quarter to four in the afternoon and had found four young men with two glasses and a jug three parts full of beer on the table. The men were not lodgers or travellers. Adams' solicitor, Mr Annesley, argued that 'it is hardly within the province of the magistrates to find the defendant guilty of this offence'. He argued that the pub was a mile from Wheathampstead and one of the men was a Londoner. Although there were five persons in the house there was only one jug and two glasses, one for the landlord and one for the person with whom he had some business and whom 'he treated to a little drink'. He went on to point out that the Lord Chief Justice 'is rather kind to licensed victuallers and has said that a certain latitude should be allowed them because they are bound by their licences to supply refreshments to every traveller who applies for them, and they are liable to be fined if they do not do so'. He asked the magistrates to take into account that this was Adams' first appearance in court and hoped that they would let him off with as small a fine as possible. Adams was convicted, fined 12s. 6d. with 17s. 6d. costs, and allowed a week for payment.

Daniel Adams' career as a licensee was cut short when he died, aged only 39, late in the summer of 1869. Kelly's Directory for 1870 shows that his widow, Ruth, had taken over the licence.

A report in the Herts Ad dated 1 January 1870 is clearly about the *Rose & Crown* but names the licensee as Ruth Janes rather than Ruth Adams. This may be an error by the reporter or she may have reverted to her maiden name; there is no record of a Ruth Adams marrying in the last months of 1869. The report is about James Clarke, 'a respectable-looking man' appearing at the Petty Sessions charged with stealing a bottle of gin from Mrs Ruth Janes of the *Rose & Crown*, Folly, Wheathampstead. PC Thomson said he had gone to the house where Clarke was lodging and asked him where was the bottle of gin he had taken from Mrs Janes. Clarke said he had not seen any bottle but, when PC Thomson searched his bedroom, he found a bottle of gin hidden in a boot. In his defence, Clarke claimed that he had bought the bottle from a man who said he had won it in a raffle at the *Rose & Crown*. The Bench decided that there was some room for doubt and discharged the prisoner.

Mrs Adams/Janes soon gave up the pub; an advertisement in the Herts Ad of 11 June 1870 offered the *Rose & Crown* to let at a rent of £12. It was described as being 'in an improving locality and doing a good trade'. Application should be made to the Harpenden Brewery or at the *Rose & Crown*.

We do not know who applied for the tenancy but, as shown by this advertisement which appeared in the Herts Ad dated 12 November 1870, James Arnold, owner of the freehold of the pub, had decided to sell it together with 10 'good cottages' all let to tenants.

WHEATHAMSTEAD, HERTS.
TO CAPITALISTS AND OTHERS.
MR. CUMBERLAND

Has received instructions from the proprietor, Mr. James Arnold, to sell by public auction, at the Swan Inn, Wheathamstead, on **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH, 1870**, at four for five o'clock punctually, in the afternoon, in six lots,

THAT well-known roadside **FREEHOLD PUBLIC HOUSE**, known by the sign of "the Rose and Crown," together with **TEN GOOD COTTAGES**, with large Gardens, situate at the Folly, on the Luton-road, about half-a-mile from the Wheathamstead Railway Station, and the whole let to good tenants, at rents amounting together to **£81 10s. 0d. per annum.**

The several properties may be viewed on application to the respective tenants, and printed particulars and conditions of sale will be ready shortly, and may be had of Mr. J. Arnold, at Wheathamstead; of Mr. Bailey, solicitor, Union-street; and of the Auctioneer, both of Luton, Beds.

The 1871 census shows that Charles Hoy, aged 37, was licensee at the *Rose & Crown*; perhaps he was the successful applicant for the tenancy in June 1870. He came from Enfield, Middlesex, but his wife Ellen was born in Wheathampstead. Their three children, Emily (11), Harry (6) and Alfred (1) were all born in Luton. Hoy had been a warehouseman in Luton in 1861 and the census shows the family had a live-in servant. In 1881, he was back in Luton as a warehouseman and in 1891 as a "Straw work manufacturer".

It seems that there were no takers for the *Rose & Crown* in response to James Arnold's advertisement above, or perhaps that sale fell through. This appeared in the Herts Ad on 18 February 1871.

Sales by Auction.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD, HERTS.
TO INVESTORS, SPECULATORS, AND OTHERS.
For Absolute Sale.
MR. J. CUMBERLAND

Is instructed by Mr. James Arnold, to Sell by Auction, at the Swan Inn, Wheathampstead, on **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd, 1871**, at Five for Six o'clock in the Afternoon punctually, in four lots,

THAT well Established Roadside Freehold **PUBLIC HOUSE**, known by the sign of the "Rose and Crown," situate at the "Folly," on the Luton road, about half a mile from the Wheathampstead Station; also six Freehold Brick-built and Slated Cottages, fronting the highroad, and adjoining or near to the last described property, in the several occupations of George Jackson, James French, William Warren, — Wheeler, — Leckford, and — Lake. Annual rental of the whole **£57 4s.**

The purchaser will have to pay a deposit of **£20 per cent.** at the time of sale, and the remainder of the purchase money can be paid on or before the 29th day of September next, at the convenience of the purchaser.

This sale seems to have been successful but yet another advertisement appeared in the Herts Ad dated 8 November 1873, nearly three years later.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD, HERTS.
MR. J. CUMBERLAND
 Has received instructions from the Mortgagee, to sell by auction, at the Swan Inn, Wheathampstead, on **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH, 1873**, at Five for Six o'clock in the evening punctually,
THE following **FREEHOLD PROPERTIES**, situate at "**THE FOLLY**," on the Luton Road, and within half-a-mile of the Wheathampstead Railway Station.
 That well-established **ROADSIDE PUBLIC HOUSE**, known by the sign of the Rose and Crown, with Stable, Cart Shed, Yard, and Garden at the rear, as let on lease to Mr. Bennett at the yearly rent of £25.
 A Brick-built and Slated **COTTAGE**, (adjoining the Rose and Crown), with Plot of Ground at rear, and Shed at side of cottage, as now occupied by James Arnold, at the rent of £6. per annum.

The reference to a 'mortgagee' suggests that the buyer at the auction in February 1871 had failed to make a success of the business. The sale included nine more cottages at The Folly. It is highly unlikely that the James Arnold referred to in the adjoining cottage is the James Arnold who sold the *Rose & Crown* in 1871.

There may well be a link between this reference to a mortgagee and the listing in the London Gazette of 23 January 1874 of the bankruptcy of 'William Porter of the Rose and Crown, Wheathampstead, in the County of Hertford, Publican', with a call to all his debtors and creditors to come forward. It seems likely that he was the mortgagee in question. Very little is known about him but the 1871 census lists a bricklayer called William Porter, aged 33, living in Wheathampstead with his wife Fanny, also 33. She was born in Wheathampstead but he came from Lincolnshire.

At about this time, a certain George Brown was licensee at the *Rose & Crown* but we know this only because there is a record (Herts Ad 14 April 1877) of the licence being transferred from him to John Williams who is then listed in Kelly's Directory 1878 as licensee of the *Rose & Crown*.

The 1881 census lists only Elizabeth Williams at the pub but she is described as 'Innkeeper's Wife' so it is reasonable to assume that John was simply away from home on census night. Elizabeth came from Surrey. There was also a lodger, Henry French. James Arnold, now aged 71 and described as a widowed grocer, still lived next door.

On 27 August 1881, at the County Petty Sessions, the police objected to the renewal of the licence. The constable, PC Chandler, gave evidence that he had seen a boy leaving the pub at a quarter to eleven on a Sunday carrying what appeared to be beer in a bottle. The landlady said that 'the servant drew the beer without her knowledge and she was sorry it had occurred'. When the magistrates asked why proceedings had not been taken at the time, Inspector Hummerstone said that the constable had neglected to taste the liquor to see if it was beer; 'it might have been

vinegar or anything else'. Despite the Chairman expressing doubt that anyone would have been buying three pints of vinegar on a Sunday morning and the Inspector agreeing that common sense said that the liquor was beer, the licence was renewed. Kelly's Directory (1882) lists John Williams as licensee at the *Rose & Crown*.

The freehold of the *Rose & Crown* was offered for sale by auction yet again in 1886 (Herts Ad, 12 June).

Mr A Rumball, land agent and surveyor, St Albans

Sale by Auction valuable Freehold Public House and Cottage at The Folly

At The Peahen Hotel St Albans on Thursday 17 June 1886 at 5 o'clock by the direction of the Executors of the late Mr G Brown

The valuable FREEHOLD PUBLIC HOUSE known as the Rose and Crown, situated at The Folly near Wheathampstead, containing 4 bedrooms, parlour and taproom, with bay windows, bar, kitchen and cellar; also 6 stall stable, open shed, wood house and good garden let on lease to Mr B Bennett for a term of 21 years from Christmas 1869 at the low rental of £25 0s 0d per annum

Also the brick and slated FREEHOLD COTTAGE adjoining, containing 2 up and 2 downstairs rooms, with shop at side and gardens, in the occupation of E Harding, as weekly tenant at a rental of £7 16s 0d per annum

The 'late Mr G. Brown' is presumably the same G. Brown who had held the licence in 1877 (see above).

The Williamses must still have been tenants at the time of the sale; Kelly's Directory (1890) lists Elizabeth at the *Rose & Crown*, as does the 1891 census which describes her as a widow. John Williams had died in 1888.

The 1891 census describes Elizabeth Williams as a 'beer and spirit retailer' which confirms that she held a full licence. Her lodger was another member of the French family – William aged 18 who was an agricultural labourer.

The Herts Ad of 2 January 1892 included a long report on an inquest that had taken place at the *Rose & Crown*. The deceased, William Edmunds ('known to fame and his neighbours as Nickey') had been taken home on 21 December by a man called Wright, who had found him 'very ill' in the road. The doctor was called and made several visits in the next two days but by the Wednesday evening Edmunds was dead. The doctor issued a death certificate giving the cause of death as apoplexy and the funeral was arranged for the following Monday. However, rumours had begun to circulate that the death was caused by foul play. Moreover, on the Monday morning, after the deceased had been placed in the coffin and before the lid had been screwed down, Edmunds' aunt began to doubt that he was really dead and declared he was 'warm in the mouth'. 'The funeral preparations were stopped, the bellringer abstained from tolling and a hurried message was sent to the doctor'. He called the policeman and together they went to ascertain whether the man was dead. They soon concluded that he was 'as dead as he could be' but, together with the

rumours of foul play, decided that there should be an inquest; the burial certificate was withdrawn. The coroner first took evidence from Mr Edmunds' daughter who described his condition when Wright brought him home. She and other witnesses gave evidence that Edmunds had been complaining of giddiness for several weeks and of paralysis in his left arm. James Wright then gave evidence that he had been walking home from the Railway Hotel with Edmunds when the latter had fallen and struck his head. Dr Chittenden confirmed that Edmunds was dead on the Monday morning and that a cut on his forehead could have been caused in the fall rather than 'a blow from a blunt instrument'. On examining the deceased's brain, he had found a large clot of blood which confirmed his original diagnosis that the cause of death was apoplexy. The coroner told the jury that there was no doubt that the cause of death was apoplexy and they returned a verdict that death was due to natural causes.

The 1895 Kelly's Directory lists Elizabeth Williams as licensee but she died aged 49 in September 1896. The licence must have been transferred, perhaps under a Protection Order, to Elias Dunn; the Herts Ad dated 6 November 1897 records it being transferred from him to Amos Smart. Born in Redbourn, the 1891 census shows him living with his wife Clara in Lower Cravells Road, Harpenden and working as a hay binder.

On 28 February 1899, Amos Smart was assaulted by a customer, Reuben Pearce. Appearing in court a few days later, Pearce was charged with refusing to quit licensed premises and assaulting the landlord. Smart gave evidence that Pearce had insulted a customer, refused to leave, and struck him in the eye. A witness corroborated the evidence and said that Pearce was not drunk. The defendant had nothing to say and was fined 5s. for refusing to quit and 2s. 6d. for the assault. He was allowed a week to pay.

A year later, the Herts Ad reported that Amos Smart had appeared in court charged with permitting drunkenness at the *Rose & Crown* on 29 January. He pleaded not guilty. A witness gave evidence that a customer called Mooring was in the pub and had 'had enough'. Another witness said that he had seen Mooring in the tap room and that, when Mrs Smart told him to leave, he did so. The landlady had refused to serve him as he had 'had enough'. PC Bowyer said he had seen Mooring leave the pub shortly before 8 o'clock and drive off in his cart; Mooring had later been found 'helplessly drunk'. PC Bowyer had questioned Amos Smart on the following evening; he had said that Mooring had 'had a good drop' but that this was before he arrived at the *Rose & Crown*. Mrs Smart had served him but he had not. Giving evidence, Mrs Smart said she had sold Mooring a candle for his cart and a bottle of ginger beer and a biscuit 'for the boy outside'. She did not remember Mooring asking to be served with beer. After hearing one more witness, the case was dismissed.

The very next column in the same page of the Herts Ad included another report of trouble at the *Rose & Crown*; George Bozier was charged with being drunk and disorderly. PC Martin said he had seen several men come out of the pub at closing time on 23 February and one of them (Bozier) fell down the steps into the road. He was staggering and stumbling about the road and, when he fell down again, PC Martin took him home and 'put him inside his gate'. Bozier had used bad language all the way home but his conduct was not bad enough to necessitate him being taken into custody. Three witnesses said that Bozier was not drunk and did not use bad language; one said that the steps outside the pub 'were very nasty to come down and wanted altering'. The Bench gave Bozier the benefit of the doubt and dismissed the case. As a direct result, a charge against Amos Smart for permitting drunkenness was withdrawn.

In May 1900, Charles Henry Godwin was granted a temporary licence for the *Rose & Crown*, transferred from Amos Smart. The 1901 census lists him, aged 33, as licensed victualler at the *Rose & Crown*, living with his wife Kate (31), daughter Kate (3) and niece Jenny (16). He came from Leicestershire and in 1891 had been employed as 2nd coachman and groom at a house in Hanover Square, London.

Mrs Godwin appeared in court in February 1901 to give evidence against George Chennells of Wheathampstead who was charged with being drunk and disorderly. PC Hagger had seen Chennells entering the *Rose & Crown* when he was obviously drunk. He had warned Mrs Godwin not to serve him; she said she had already refused. Chennells had left the pub, used very bad language and offered to fight the officer. 'He was afterwards taken away by his brother'. Mrs Godwin corroborated this evidence and Chennells was fined 10s. with costs. Curiously, there is no record of a George Chennells in the 1911 census of Wheathampstead.

Kelly's Directory for 1902 lists Bertram Arnold as a beer retailer at The Folly but without naming his pub. However, both Kelly's Directory and a court case in 1906 (see below) confirm that he was at the *Rose & Crown* then so we can assume that he was there in 1902.

The minutes of the County Licensing Committee in 1904 show that the pub was owned by Benjamin Bennett and had a full licence.

The 1906 case against Bertram Arnold was reported in the Herts Ad dated 13 October. In what the paper described as an 'interesting case', he was charged with having his pub open in prohibited hours and four men were summoned for being on the premises during prohibited hours. The prosecution said that, on Sunday 9 September, two police officers had had the *Rose & Crown* under observation from 4.00 am until 9.10 am. The landlord had opened the door at 7.20 and one of the defendants had been seen to enter the house at 8.30 and drink a pint of beer which he had presumably paid for. Three more men had gone into the house by 9.00 am when the police entered. They saw marks on the counter, quite wet, showing the imprints of glasses that had been set there. The landlord denied that beer had been drawn. PC Hughes gave detailed evidence of what he and his colleague had seen, including the landlady's father being given beer at 7.25, followed by one of the defendants who was 'heard jinking money in his hand'. When PC Hughes entered the pub and asked one of the defendants 'what is your business here?', the landlord had responded 'He has come to see if I want any vegetables'. He said that people often came into his yard on a Sunday 'to walk round and see if he wanted any vegetables'. At that moment, another man arrived and asked the landlord for some brandy for his wife. The constable advised the landlord not to serve him. After hearing more evidence from PC Lovell, the defence solicitor, Mr Beal, conferred with the defendants outside the courtroom. On returning, he told the Bench that 'though they were prepared to deny the story, they realized it would be useless against the evidence of the constables and, with two exceptions, would plead guilty.' After some confusion about who was or was not pleading guilty, Bertram Arnold was fined £5 and £2 11s. 6d. costs and the other defendants each had to pay 16s. 6d.

Some six weeks later, the licence of the *Rose & Crown* was transferred to Daniel Burrows. When he applied for the licence to be renewed in March 1907, the Divisional justices decided to renew it but 'as there was a conviction against the house – though not in the present tenant's time – they advised him to be particularly careful in managing the house'.

Kelly's Directory for 1908 lists Daniel Burrows at the *Rose & Crown* but in 1909 Amos Smart was back. After leaving the pub in 1900, he had returned to his work as a hay binder living in Harpenden but in 1902 had taken the licence of the *Bricklayers Arms* in High Street, Wheathampstead. When that pub was closed by the authorities in 1908 on the grounds of redundancy, Smart raised no objection and moved back to the *Rose & Crown*. The 1911 census lists him (now aged 34) as a 'Licence Publican' at the *Rose & Crown* and living with his wife Sarah, who helped in the business, and their 17-year-old nephew John Mayling, a straw hat machinist. A straw hat factory was open at The Folly at this time so it is possible that John worked there. There is no record of Amos and Clara having any children so perhaps they had effectively adopted young John, who had been their visitor in 1901.

Kelly's Directory (1914) confirms that Amos Smart was still at the *Rose & Crown*.

Postscript

The *Rose & Crown* closed in the 1950s and was converted into two homes, Rose Cottage and Crown Cottage. The inn sign on the opposite side of the road in Melissa Field stood empty for many years until it was replaced in about 2003 by this sign, painted by local resident Mary Cheale.

