



History of the Nelson Inn

Lord Horatio Nelson

Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson (29 September 1758 - 21 October 1805) was an English Admiral and one of Britain's greatest naval heroes. Nelson commanded the British fleet during the Napoleonic Wars, fighting against the French and Spanish and securing a series of decisive naval victories.

Nelson was shot by a French sniper during the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805. He was struck while pacing the quarterdeck of his flagship, HMS Victory, with Captain Thomas Hardy, at about 1.15pm.

According to accounts of his death, the musket shot struck Nelson down through his left shoulder, with a force that threw him to his knees. It smashed two ribs and tore through his left lung, severing a major artery on the way. The bullet lodged beneath his right shoulder blade. (Sorry, hope you haven't started eating your lunch yet!).



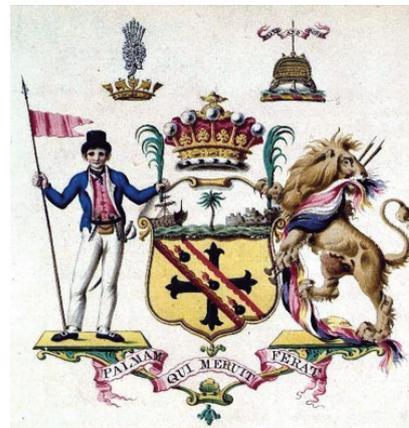
Nelson was carried below deck to receive medical attention but nothing could be done. He survived for three hours, long enough to hear from Hardy that the British had achieved a great victory. With Chaplain Alexander Scott, Surgeon William Beatty and Purser Walter Burke attending, Nelson gave Hardy final directions for the fleet and left affectionate messages for his lover Emma Hamilton and their child, Horatia.

Nelson died at 4.30pm on 21 October 1805. He was 47 years old.

Nelson's death became the central event of the Battle of Trafalgar. Even at the time, it overshadowed the triumph of the great victory.

Ordinary seamen broke down crying when the news spread through the fleet and when the news reached Britain, the nation went into mourning (and renamed their pubs after him!)

Our pub sign proudly depicts his family crest.



Our Surrounding Area

Hampsthwaite is a large village and civil parish located in Nidderdale in the Harrogate district of North Yorkshire. It lies on the south bank of the River Nidd some 5 miles north west of Harrogate. In the 2011 census the parish had a population of 1,083 whilst Killinghall, our other neighboring village, recorded a population of 4,132.

Both villages have existed for centuries. Killinghall can be traced back to Celtic times. In the Domesday Book the village is called Chenihalle. Whilst Hampsthwaite's name is of Old Norse origin, meaning "clearing (thwaite) of a man named Hamal".

In 1304, Edward I granted a charter to Hampsthwaite to hold an annual market and fair on the Feast of St Thomas the Martyr.

Killinghall is noted as 'being the place where Cromwell's Norwich Troop quartered their horses after the Battle of Marston Moor in July 1644 during the English Civil War.

Close to Killinghall you will find Fountains Abbey, one of the largest and best-preserved ruined Cistercian monasteries in England. Founded in 1132, the abbey operated for 407 years, becoming one of the wealthiest monasteries in England until its dissolution, by order of Henry VIII, in 1539.

In 1983, Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey was purchased by the National Trust; it is open for visitors and a great place to visit.



The ruins of Fountains Abbey

The Nelson Inn

The Hampsthwaite Village Society took possession of a collection of typewritten essays, apparently written between 1921 and 1958, and believed to be the work of Charles Frederick Thompson Walker who lived in nearby Birstwith. Within its pages there are references to the Nelson Inn including one declaring “it received its name when Nelson's great victory at Trafalgar thrilled the whole country”.

We do know that it was probably built around 1776 as a private house becoming an inn early in the 19th century. A John Goodall was recorded as landlord in 1822. It then passed into the hands of the Long family who continued to own it when Charles Walker was writing his essays.

It seems that the Inn was originally to be found further down the hill towards Dyke Bottom where one of its original walls with windows still serves as part of a farm outbuilding there.

When Geoff Howard, who lives locally and helped us with this information, first visited the pub in the 1970's, Richard Wood was the landlord. He recounted how the pub used to be more or less a farm with a “sack over the door” where locals came in for a drink.

He thinks it was Richard who did much of the development to the pub, turning it into what we found when we came along in 2021. He even brewed his own beer ‘Oliver John Bitter’, named after his son. Before his time the Nelson served beer straight from the barrel in a relatively small room parallel to the main road. This was very unusual even 50 years ago!

For a brief spell from 2019 it was renamed “Chez La Vie”. However in 2020 the pub was put up for sale again and the new owners restored the original Nelson Inn name. This was their first pub venture but, sadly, they became overwhelmed with the effects of Covid and hospitality staff shortages and did not reopen after ‘lock down’.... Enter us!

This, apart from a story involving a bull fight in the pub which we haven't quite got to the bottom of, is all that we can find out about the Nelson Inn. It's proving to be a bit of an enigma, with not even a photograph dating back more than around 20 years. If you know more – we would love to hear from you!



The Nelson as it was 'before'.



Our most historic pub photo.