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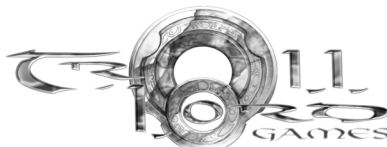
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First Printing January, 2004. ISBN 1-931275-56-4. Printed in the USA.

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# INNS AND TAVERNS

Public houses in various forms are common to all civilised societies, providing places for relaxed social gatherings, refreshment in the form of food and drink, and often lodgings as well. The terms inn and tavern became confused at an early stage, but initially, inns received guests, and so were open all hours, and taverns were places for drinking and casual refreshment, and were closed for some part of the day or night. The terms are used synonymously here, but you may want to differentiate them. At any rate, inns and taverns should be numerous in most fantasy campaign worlds: rather than the current ratio of one per 1000 people, perhaps one per 200-500, with a minimum of one per village. The campaign will determine the clientele and atmosphere of the places, now you just need to name them.

## HISTORY

In Roman times, taverns might simply be marked by a wine-jar painted on the wall, or a bunch of evergreens tied to a pole in reference to Bacchus, god of wine. In medieval cities, trades began to congregate on specific streets, so the taverns needed individual signs: these were pictorial, since illiteracy was common at all levels of society, and displaying a name would have been useless. When few could read, a dog or a bent piece of wood painted on a board identified the inn as the Sign of the Hound or the Crooked Billet. The inn sign thus came first and the name was derived from it. The paintings could be quite sophisticated, but were sometimes poor enough that an intended Black Swan might be called a Mucky Duck. These local descriptions could result in the sign being changed to match.

Aristocrats often owned taverns or the lands on which they stood, so their coats of arms or emblems from them were used as signs, giving rise to the King's Arms, Sir Malcolm's Arms, and so

on, and more commonly to heraldic devices such as the Red Lion or Blue Boar. Such signs might also express an owner's allegiance to the throne or a local lord. Signs such as the Gardener's Arms are usually a modern conceit, but some city taverns were owned by chartered guilds or otherwise catered to professions. Weavers might dine at the Weavers' Arms or the Loom, farriers drink at the Forge. Some inns started life as hospices or hostelries established by religious orders, and so were identified by religious symbols such as the Angel or Cross Keys. The crests and names of popular heroes were also used: there was a Robin Hood Inn as early as 1292, and signs featuring Saint George were and are frequent. Publicans in 15th century England were required by law to show signs outside their inns. As signs multiplied, stranger combinations were used, likely for distinctiveness, but perhaps also in imitation of heraldic differencing.

**Popular Pubs:** Anchor, Angel, Bell, Bull, Coach and Horses, Crown, George, George and Dragon, King's Head, New Inn, Plough, Red Lion, Rose and Crown, Royal Oak, Swan, White Hart, White Horse

## 'INN DEX' OF TAVERN TITLES

To generate a fantasy-medieval tavern sign, roll d%, consult the Base Tavern Titles Table, and choose one or more parts from the indicated list or lists. The sign description is the base name of the tavern. If it sounds better, you can append Inn or Tavern (or Alehouse, Cellar, Meadhall, Nook, Rest, Resthouse, Retreat, and so on), or precede the name with 'Sign of the' or 'Inn of the' - this will indicate local practice or any caption. For instance, a d% roll of 11 means a creature: we get a Dolphin, so the tavern is the Dolphin, the Dolphin Inn, the Dolphin Tavern, or the Sign of the Dolphin, as you like. (see table below)

### Base Tavern Titles

D%	Result	Examples
01-13	Creature	Griffin, Wolf
14-20	Person	Jester, Goose Girl
21-30	Item	Harp, Moon, Oak
31-33	Coat of Arms	King's Arms, Weavers' Arms
34-36	Location	Lakeshore, Old Bridge
37-38	Owner	Slorg's Cellar
39-40	Feature (roll d20 on this table)	Dragon's Head
41-70	Description + roll d30 on this table	Green Star, Three Stags
71-00	Roll d30 + and + roll d30	Bear and Barrel, Lion & Unicorn

For ease of use, some of the following lists are divided into named groups, with common examples noted. A few synonyms or related terms in parentheses may follow an example, so you can alliterate (Golden Goblet, Fox & Firkin) and so on.

## Creature

**Common:** Beast: bear, boar, bull, fox, hart, hind, horse, lamb, lion, ram, roebuck, wolf. Bird: cock, crane, duck, eagle, falcon, goose, peacock, pelican, pheasant, raven, swallow, swan. Fish: dolphin, eel, lamprey, minnow, pike, trout. Magical: angel, cockatrice, dragon, griffin, mermaid, pegasus, phoenix, salamander, sea-lion, sea-serpent, unicorn, wyvern.

**Beast:** ant (emmet), ape, badger (brock), bat, bear, beaver, bee, beetle, boar (hog, pig, sow), bull (cow, calf), camel, cat, centipede, coney (rabbit), crocodile, deer (brockett, buck, doe, fawn, hart, hind, roe, roebuck, stag), donkey (ass), elephant, ferret, fitch (fitchet, polecat), fly, fox (vixen), frog, glow-worm, goat, grasshopper, hare, hedgehog, horse (mare, stallion, charger, courser, destrier, palfrey), hound (dog, talbot), leopard, lion, lizard, mole, mouse, newt, otter, ox, panther, pony, porcupine, rat, scorpion, seal, sheep (ewe, lamb, ram), snake (adder, serpent, viper), spider, squirrel, stoat, tiger, toad, tortoise, vole, weasel, wolf

**Bird:** bird, cock (hen, pullet), coot, cormorant, crane, crow (raven, rook, corbie), cuckoo, dove, duck (drake, sheldrake), eagle, finch, goose (gander), grouse, gull, hawk (falcon, goshawk, merlin), heron, jay, kingfisher, lark, nightingale, osprey, ostrich, owl, parrot, partridge, peacock, pelican, pheasant, pie (magpie), pigeon, plover, quail, rail, robin, sparrow, starling, stork, swallow (martlet), swan, swift, thrush, woodcock, woodpecker, wren

**Fish:** barbel, barnacle, burbot, carp, cockle, crab, crayfish, dolphin, eel, fish, flounder, herring, lamprey, lobster, minnow, mussel, octopus, oyster, pike (luce, lacy), plaice, porpoise, roach, salmon, shark, sprat, sturgeon, trout, whale

**Magical:** angel, basilisk, camelopard, centaur, chimera, cockatrice, cyclops, devil, dragon (drake), dwarf, elf, enfield, gargoyle, giant, gnome, goblin, golem, griffin (gryphon), harpy, hydra, ibex, manticore, mermaid, merman, nymph, ogre, opinicus, panther, pegasus, phoenix, salamander, satyr, sea-lion, sea-serpent, siren, sphinx, sylph, triton, troll, tyger, unicorn, wyvern

Most of the magical creatures should be well-known. Of the other heraldic ones: The enfield has a fox's head, a wolf's body, hind legs, and tail, and an eagle's forelegs and talons. The opinicus has a griffin's head, neck, and wings, a lion's body, and a bear's tail. The tyger looks like lion with down-curving tusk on its nose. The ibex has a tyger's body, serrated horns, and deer legs. The heraldic panther is 'incensed', that is, fire-breathing. The camelopard is a giraffe (presumed mythical by heralds).

## Person

**Common:** hero, hunter, king, knight, maid, man, queen, sailor, shepherd, traveller

**Noble:** baron, count, duke, earl, king, lady, lord, marquess, prince, princess, queen

**Military:** archer (bowman), crusader, hero, heroine, knight, pikeman, soldier (fighter, warrior), squire, swordsman

**Rural:** hunter, herder, drover, fisher, forester (woodward), fowler, goat boy, goose girl, dairyman (day, cow-herd), ploughman, shepherd, swineherd

**Official:** bailiff, champion, constable, executioner, guard (ward), judge (justice), reeve, sheriff

**Crafts:** blacksmith (farrier), bowyer, carpenter (wright), cobbler, cooper, fletcher, mason, potter, tailor, turner, weaver

**Learned:** doctor (sawbones), sage, scholar, scribe (clerk), wizard (enchantress)

**Religious:** abbot, bishop, druid, friar, monk, nun, pilgrim, pope, priest, prior, saint

**Diversions:** dancer, fiddler, harper, jester (buffoon, fool, harlequin), minstrel (jongleur), piper, player, singer

**Lowlife:** bandit, beggar, harlot, highwayman, knave, pirate, rogue, strumpet, thief

**Various:** amazon, baker, barbarian, brewer, cook, couple, crone, ferryman, fishwife, gardener, greybeard, gypsy, maid (girl, lass, maiden, virgin, wench), man, merchant (mercator, monger), miller, miner, nomad, sailor (tar, seaman, mariner, salt), savage, tinker, traveller, vintner, wanderer, woman, youth (boy, child, lad)

Those in this list should be identifiable by conventional appearance, context, or accoutrements (crown, armour, potter's wheel). A hero or saint, and often a royal personage, will be a famous, recognisably portrayed individual, whether dead or alive (Robin Hood, Merlin, and so on). Name to suit your campaign.

## Item

**Common:** anchor, bell, cask, castle, crown, cup, harp, oak, plough, rose, sun, vine

**Drink:** cask (barrel, butt, firkin, hogshead, keg, kilderkin, pipe, tun), cup (beaker, glass, goblet, horn, jack, mug, pot, tankard), jug (bottle, demijohn, flagon, flask, pitcher, wineskin)

**Food:** apple, apricot, bacon, berries, board, bowl, cheese, cherry, eggs, fig, grapes, loaf, mushroom, nuts, olive, orange, peach, pear, pie, platter, plum, pomegranate, quince, roast

**Plant:** acorn, apple tree, apricot tree, ash tree, barley, birch, branch, briar, broom, bulrush, bush, cherry tree, crab-apple tree, elm, fern, fig tree, flower (bluebell, lily, rose, fleur-de-lis, trefoil, quatrefoil, cinquefoil), garland, hawthorn, hazel, holly, hops, ivy, lotus, mallow, mandrake, mushroom, nut, oak, olive, orange tree, palm tree, peach tree, pear tree, plum tree, quince tree, root, rowan, rushes, sheaf, stump, thistle, toadstool, tree, vine, wheat, willow, yew

**Musical:** drum, fiddle, fife, flute, harp, horn, lute, lyre, mandolin, pipe, rebec, sackbut, shawm, tabor, trumpet (clarion), whistle

**Weapon:** arrow, axe, bill (bill-hook), bow, crossbow, cudgel (billet), dagger, dart, flail, halberd, hammer, javelin, lance, mace, morning star, pike, sling, spear, staff, sword (cutlass, rapier, scimitar, sabre), trident

**Worn:** armour, boot, buckle, cloak (mantle), coronet, crown, gauntlet, glove, hat (cap), hood (cowl), hose, helm, mask, quiver, ring, robe, sleeve (maunch), snood, spur, tabard (doublet, jerkin), wig

**Celestial:** cloud, moon, rainbow, star, sun, thunderbolt, zodiac

**Various:** anchor, anvil, arrowhead, awl, ball, banner, beacon, beehive, bell, bellows, boat, book, boulder, brazier, bridge, bridle, brook, broom, bucket, caltrap, candle, candlestick, cart (wagon, wain), castle, cauldron, chain, chest, chisel, circle, cleaver, coach, coin, crescent, crook, cross, crystal ball, fireball, flag, fleece, fountain, gate, gateway, gem, hammer (mallet), hand (fist, palm), harpoon, harrow, hook, horseshoe, inkhorn, kettle, key, knife, lamp, lantern (lanthorn), lock, loom, needle, nest, net, pentacle, plough, portcullis, pouch, quill, rope, saddle, sail, saw, sceptre, scroll, scythe, shears, shell, shield, ship, shuttle, sickle, snuffer, spike, staff, stone, talisman, tinderbox, tongs, torch (flambeau), tower, trident, trivet, wand, well, wheel, whip, whirlpool, windmill

The list of items can be extended to suit. See, for instance, *World Builder* (vol. II in this series), which also tells you the capacity of all those casks and more!

## TAVERNS AND THE COAT OF ARMS

A coat of arms will usually be that of royalty (King's Arms), local nobility (Duke's Arms, Sir Crispian's Arms), or a noble hero or heroine (Gilrain's Arms). It may denote ownership, fealty, or praise. People will recognise coats of arms just as we recognise trademarks today. In cities and large towns, chartered guilds (that is, those granted arms) may own or frequent taverns, in which case their coats of arms may also be used (the Arms of the Worshipful Company of Weavers, est. 1155, and so on). A list of possible guilds is given in *The Canting Crew* (vol. I in this series), along with a selection of ready-made inn and tavern names.

**Location:** arbour (bower), archway, baths, blasted oak, boundary stone, bridge, brook (stream, river), castle, cave, cellar, church, cliff, crag, crossroads (cross), dock, dungeon, dyke, ferry, forge, fork, gallows, gardens, gate, grotto, grove, hill, house, island, lake, lakeshore, market, mill, pier, pillar, pool, post, pump, quarry, ravine, riverside, ruins, sea, ship, shore, shoreline, spire, spring, stables, standing stone, stocks, tollgate, tower, wall, waterfall, waterside, wayside, weir, well, wood

### OWNER

This will have a portrait or visage, and perhaps a caption, identifying the owner of the establishment (Mother Merla's, and so on). Use the lists of names elsewhere in this book to name the taverner. Owning an inn seems to be the done thing for many retired adventurers, so past characters from a campaign can always turn up.

### LOCATION

The location from which the tavern takes its sign and name will be a current or former building, feature, or landmark on site or nearby (rarely, the name of its street or village or shire). Past features may be prefixed by 'old' (Old Forge, Old Well, Old Ferryboat). Names of people associated with the feature may be added (Offa's Dyke, Hadrian's Wall, the Wizard's Tower, King's Cross). You may want to consider local legends under this heading as well.

### FEATURE

A feature is a part of a creature or person, almost always a head - not severed, just a partial depiction! The d20 roll will indicate a creature (Boar's Head, Bull's Head, Lion's Head) or person (King's Head, Maiden's Head, Child's Head). Occasionally (1 in 6), you may wish to vary this with another prominent feature: Stag's Antlers, Cat's Paw, Eagle's Talon, Fox's Tail, Giant's Foot, Mailed Fist (for a knight's hand), or Harlot's Leg (perhaps in downmarket districts).

## Description

**Common:** black, blue, golden, green, jolly, red, royal, three, two, white

**Colour:** black, blue, brown, chequered, green, grey, orange, pied, pink, purple, red, spotted, white, yellow

**Substance:** brass (brazen), bronze, copper, crystal, glass, golden, granite, iron, ivory, jade, leather, marble, silver, steel, stone, wooden

**Numbers:** Roll d20: (1-5) two, (6-9) three, (10-12) four, (13-15) five, (16) six, (17-18) seven, (19) eight, (20) nine

**Various:** angry, bad, barking, big, bitten, blind, blithe, bonny, brimming, broken, buxom, capering, cloven, cosy, crazy, crooked, crossed, crying, dancing, dark, dour (grumpy), drinking (quaffing), drunken, falling, fat (stout), feasting, fiery (flaming), fighting, fishing, flying, frosty (hoary, icy), glowing, good, growling, hearty, hooded, holy, howling, hungry, hunting, jolly (cheery, grinning), happy, laughing, merry, smiling), jousting, kicking, kissing, lazy, leaping, little (tiny), lone, lucky, mad (crazy), mossy, mucky (dirty, muddy), new, nodding, odd, pale, prancing, ragged, rising, roaring, royal, rugged, running, sad, savage, shining, singing, sleepy, sorry, surprised, swimming, timid, toasting, wanton, waving, wild, windy, wise

Colours and substances can be applied generally (Blue Sun, Iron Ox, Pied Piper). Usually an adjective applies to an item and an activity to a creature or person, but use, and add, anything for which you can imagine a picture (Bitten Quince, Cloven Viscount, Drowned Rat, Mossy Tortoise, Winsome Wench). Sticklers may wish to note that ‘orange’ wasn’t used as a term for the colour until the late Renaissance (‘golden’ was used instead), although the fruit was known much earlier.

Numbers can be interpreted reasonably freely. Use synonyms for variety, such as brace, twin, pair, or double for two (Brace of Pheasants). Two weapons would usually be crossed (Crossed Pikes). Two creatures may be a mated pair (Fox & Vixen, Hart & Hind). More than two may be a mother and young (Fox & Cubs, Hen & Chickens) or a collection (Flock of Birds, Herd of Oxen). The number could also refer to a part of a creature (Swan with Two Necks, Six-legged Dog, Double-headed Lion).

## COMBINATION

Any combination can be used, in whatever order seems best. Alter the result a little if the items and creatures seem to lend themselves to it: make Coach & Horse, say, into Coach & Horses. A hammer and hand might be Hammer in Hand. A knight and horse would likely be the Mounted Knight. A raven and nest would be Raven’s Nest (or Crow’s Nest for a seaside inn, with a ‘sea change’ in the picture, naturally). For another creature, you might change nest to lair, burrow, and so on (Bear’s Den, Badger’s Sett). When the item with a creature is apparel, it is

usually worn, so a combination of armour and hog or dog and doublet would be Hog in Armour or Dog in a Doublet (both real pubs, by the way). More frequent line-ups tend to be heraldic or refer to well-known phrases and fables (Fox & Grapes, Hare & Tortoise, Bird in the Hand, Puss in Boots).

## POSSIBLE THEMES

These lists of thematic elements in signs should help you quickly generate inns to suit certain settings.

**Rural:** badger, boar, bull, bush, cock, drover, fox, goose, harrow, hart, hind, horse, oak, plough, scythe, shears, sheep, shepherd, stump, wheatsheaf

**Urban:** bell, cask, castle, crown, cup, gate, portcullis, torch, tower, weapon [+ guild arms and trade symbols]

**Maritime:** anchor, dolphin, eel, fisher, herring, lamprey, mermaid, net, pelican, sea-lion, shell, ship

**Magical:** book, circle, crystal ball, mandrake, pentacle, robe, scroll, staff, talisman, wand, wizard, zodiac

**Religious:** animals, servitors, and symbols of campaign deities.