



The living sign you didn't know Grantham was hiding

By Charlotte Miller

There are plenty of pubs in England, many of which have strange names dating all the way back to the Middle Ages often reflecting history, heritage and local culture. However in Grantham, The Beehive Inn points to something entirely unique. Established during the sixteenth century, the traditional pub's most exceptional feature exists just outside the door.

The easiest way to find this pub may, in fact, be to follow the unmistakable buzz of bees as it is believed to have England's only living pub sign in the form of an active beehive. This beehive, sitting in the branches of a tree just outside the door, is complete with a queen and hundreds of workers flying in and out during summer since at least the 1700s. This sign may be the only one of its kind now but unusual pub signs were common before the 17th-18th century when inns relied on distinctive visual signs easily recognisable to illiterate travellers. A real buzzing beehive would certainly catch the eye of those passing by, making the inn easy to identify and impossible to forget.

The hive is accompanied by a sign encouraging travellers to stop, explore the living sign and observe the bees that inhabit it. It proudly proclaims itself as one of Grantham's rare sights: "a lofty steeple and a living sign." The "lofty steeple" refers to nearby St Wulfram's Church with its incredible spire that is among the tallest in England. Together, the hive and spire rising behind it form an iconic image, appearing repeatedly in pictures displayed throughout the pub's interior. Over time, the hive has become inseparable from the inn's identity and one of Grantham's most distinctive sights. This deep-rooted identity is made clear the moment you walk through the doors, with bee themed decorations and old photographs of the tree and its impressive hive, showing just how essential this unique sign has become. With bees for a sign, The Beehive Inn offers a rare glimpse at the past, remaining one of Grantham's most unusual secrets.



Beehive sign: The Beehive pub

Main colour image:

TripAdviser (Yogi)

Black and white image:

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