

# The Prancing Pony by Barliman Butterbur

As described by JRR Tolkien : The Lord of the Rings

Professor JRR Tolkien wrote and revised the passages “At the Sign of the Prancing Pony” from The Lord of the Rings, in his study at Northmoor Road, Oxford between 1939 and 1940.

Some of his inspirations for the Town of Bree and The Prancing Pony and similarities are listed:

“The Village of Bree had some hundred stone houses of the Big Folk,...”

*Moreton in Marsh houses are typically stone built.*

“The gates were closed at nightfall; but just inside them were small lodges for the gatekeepers.”

*Moreton in Marsh is a curfew town and still retains its curfew tower.*

“For Bree stood at an old meeting of ways; another ancient road crossed the East Road just outside the dike at the western end of the village,...”

*Moreton in Marsh stands on the ancient Fosse-way Roman Road running from east to west (or west south west to east north east). This also meets the North to South ancient Road from Oxford to Worcester at Moreton in Marsh.*



Many other similarities exist with the description in “The Lord of the Rings”. Internally the Bell Inn has changed slightly since Tolkien visits however it still retains a common-room and parlour as described in “The Lord of the Rings”.

JRR Tolkien visited Moreton in Marsh many times on his regular trips from Oxford to the area, also to see his brother in Evesham, and would have been familiar with The Bell Inn.

His own drawings and illustrations have copied buildings and architecture from Moreton in Marsh. The Four Shire Stone (Three Farthing Stone), The Rollright Stones (Barrow Downs) and Broadway Tower (Amon Hen) are only a few miles from Moreton and on the route to Evesham.



“If you weren’t hobbits, I doubt if we could house you. But we’ve got a room or two in the north wing that were made special for hobbits, when this place was built. On the ground floor as they usually prefer...”

*The wing to the north in the courtyard is single storey.*

“The Inn at Bree was still there, however, and the innkeeper was an important person. His house was a meeting place for the idle, talkative, and inquisitive among the inhabitants, large and small, of the four villages;”

*Moreton in Marsh is where four shires meet and inhabitants from these four areas meet.*

“The houses looked large and strange to them. Sam stared up at the inn with its three stories and many windows, ....”

*The Bell Inn in Moreton in Marsh is stone built and on three stories with many windows.*

“Even from the outside the inn looked a pleasant house to familiar eyes. It had a front on the Road, and two wings running back....” “There was a wide arch leading to a courtyard between the two wings, and on the left under the arch there was a large doorway reached by a few broad steps.”

*The Bell Inn fronts the high street (Fosse-way) and has a wide arch running back into a courtyard between two wings. These wings are now accommodation and some low single storey buildings, also The Bell Inn used to have stables and was a coaching Inn. The large entrance door is today at the front of the Inn. 20 years ago the entrance was on the left under the arch with a few broad steps.*

*This has now been bricked-up.*

For additional information on JRR Tolkien and his association with the area please contact [www.adcbooks.co.uk](http://www.adcbooks.co.uk) or phone 01608-674620 (Three Farthing Stone Smial)

For further references on the association of

JRR Tolkien and the Lord of the Rings to Moreton in Marsh see:

The Hobbit by JRR Tolkien, published by George Allen & Unwin 1937

The Road to Middle-earth by Tom A. Shippey, published by Allen & Unwin 1982

JRR Tolkien- A Biography by Humphrey Carpenter, published by George Allen & Unwin 1977

The Lord of The Rings by JRR Tolkien, published by George Allen & Unwin 1954-1955

The Treason of Isengard by JRR Tolkien, published by Unwin Hyman 1989

