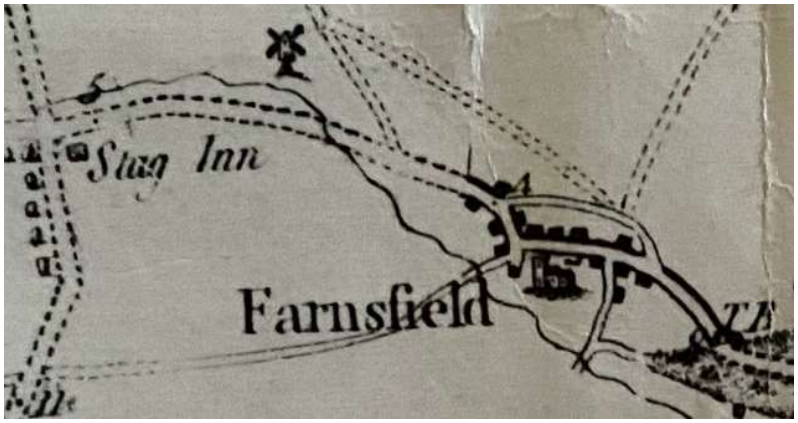
Inns at the White Post.



The White Post pub stands at a staging post on an important coaching route to the north. In the Middle Ages Farnsfield lay at the intersection of the Mansfield to Southwell route and a road to the north from Nottingham which went up New Hill and along Broomfield Lane. In around 1765 the north-south road was rerouted west to the line of the modern A614 to enable a faster route. The staging posts on major routes had white painted posts signalling that travellers could find a place to rest. The establishment at the White Post was just such a place on this important route.

Farnsfield is just a small cluster of buildings around the main street and its back lane (now Chapel Lane) on John Chapman's map of Nottinghamshire dated 1774. The old church is shown with its original Norman tower and the Good Intent windmill along the Mansfield Road. The toll bar (TB) is at the eastern end of the village and at the western end is the Stag Inn at White Post. As a staging post it is very likely that there would have been several inns here where travellers could rest their horses or hire fresh ones. Two other inns are mentioned in 19th century commercial directories, the Reindeer or Rein Deer and White Post Inn. On the west side of the Old Rufford Road (A614) was Hill House Farm, a former coaching inn.

Hill House Farm

According to research in the FLHS archives, pub licences were granted in 1823 to Nathaniel Wright for the Stag Inn and Jonathan Camm for the Reindeer Inn. Commercial directory listings of publicans from 1828 to 1841 present a rather confusing picture of who was licensee at which particular inn. Nathaniel Wright is listed as landlord of 'White Post' in 1828 although he had died in 1826. His wife Grace continued as publican, appearing to run White Post Inn in 1832, Rein Deer in 1835 and Stag, White Post in 1841. The Camms were also farmers at White Post. Jonathan (senior) was licensee at the Stag in 1828, White Post in 1832 and Stag in 1835. Jonathan (junior) was licensee of White Post Inn in 1841 although in the census that year, his mother Elizabeth is the publican. There is one more listing of the Rein Deer in the 1864 White's directory following which only the White Post Inn is recorded.

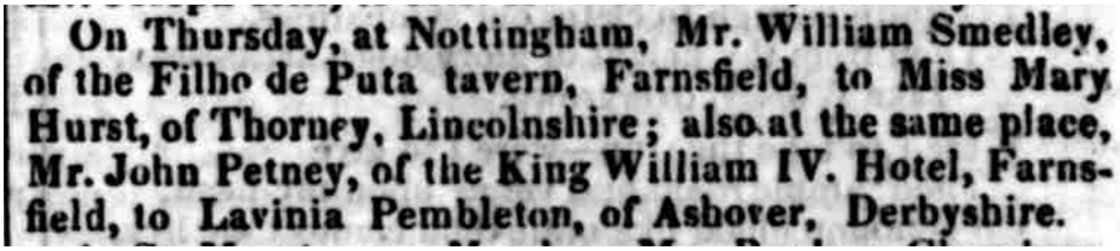
Although there is no mention of an Inn called Hill House, the Camms lived and farmed there so it seems likely that it was an inn as it would have had considerable stabling capacity. Perhaps it was known under one of the other recorded names?

White Post Inn

……and other long forgotten drinking establishments

Here are a few more intriguing references to inns in Farnsfield.
In a legal land sale document of 1825 there is reference to 'Cottage (formerly public house called The Raven) and homestead: Pudding Poke Close, and Well Close (on the common forest) all in Farnsfield (1st Mar 1729 – 5th May 1805)'

Two marriages are recorded in the Nottinghamshire & Newark Mercury in November 1831



On Thursday, at Nottingham, Mr. William Smedley, of the Filho de Puta tavern, Farnsfield, to Miss Mary Hurst, of Thorney, Lincolnshire; also at the same place, Mr. John Petney, of the King William IV. Hotel, Farnsfield, to Lavinia Pembleton, of Asbover, Derbyshire.

We can find no other reference to the King William IV Hotel in Farnsfield, but Filho de Puta does have an interesting connection. The name means 'Son of a whore' in Portuguese and I thought at first it was a joke or coded message! However, the marriage of William Smedley and Mary Hurst did take place. William was an agricultural labourer and Mary was a house servant, possibly both worked for the Houldsworth family at The Hall. Filho de Puta was a champion racehorse bought by Thomas Houldsworth in 1815. The horse went on to win the St Leger Stakes and Doncaster Gold Cup before retiring to the Houldsworth's stud at The Hall. His unusual name was given to him by his breeder Sir William Barnett, who lived in Portugal and knew the language well. Having discovered that his wife had been unfaithful, he bestowed the name in a fit of anger. The horse became the leading sire in Great Britain in 1828 and it seems that in 1831, somewhere in Farnsfield, the locals were still drinking to his health!