



**This is one
of twenty
“Tales from
the
Commons.”**

All the Fun of the Fair



The Whitsun Fair of 1850, held on the common near the Tiger’s Head, included, among other races, sports and amusements, a Wheelbarrow Race, in which blindfolded competitors were challenged to push a wheelbarrow to a point near Prickend Pond.

They were guided by friends until they reached Pricking inlet – *“an awkward gully filled with stagnant soap suds”* – and were then left to steer their own course.

The Maidstone Advertiser reported that one of the 6 entrants, after capsizing in the gully, *“found his way to the centre of that noble fish-pond called ‘The Pricken’”* which was *“full of gold and silver fish”*, some of which he was allowed to keep. One of the others went completely off-course, but it was rumoured that he ended up inside the Tiger’s Head.

There was no island to aim for then. The island was man-made as a refuge for the water birds in 1930, largely from building rubble.

**The Act that protects the Commons
made no provision for funding.**

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