



JACKSON FOSTER
HISTORIC SIGN PAINTER & MAKER
*Hand-crafted signs in the style of
18th and 19th century artisans*

Sun & Fan, the Corner of St. Paul's Church Yard, London

During the reign of Charles I, London received a charter making it lawful to affix signboards to shops. After the “Great Fire” in 1666, many signs were carved into stone panels built into shop fronts. Yet most still favored signs hung from an iron bracket or set up on a post.

Signs grew larger and more elaborate until they became a nuisance by blocking the sun and air from the narrow streets. And because many posts and brackets fell into disrepair, signs became a menace to public safety. In 1718, one enormous sign fell, bringing down the front of the house and killing four persons. In 1762 a proclamation was issued ordering the removal of hanging signs in the city, and be fixed against the walls of houses projecting out not more than four inches.

At the time when addresses were indicated by the street name and sign of the shop, it was not unusual to add a phrase for clarification of the shopkeeper's location, such as Mr. Brooker's (a fanmaker) shop: “the corner of St. Paul's Church Yard, near Cheapside”.

Often London shop signs contained indiscriminate combinations of names, such as the Bull & Bedpost, Three Nuns and Hare, or the Wheatsheaf & Speaking Trumpet. The best explanation was a tradesman may have taken over a trade different from his own, and being a well known sign and wanting to preserve it, he simply added an image more appropriate to his own calling. —Adapted from *Sign Boards of Old London Shops*.

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