

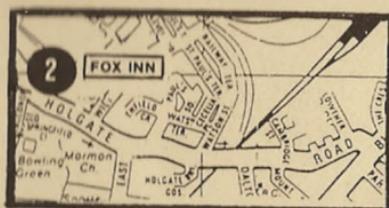
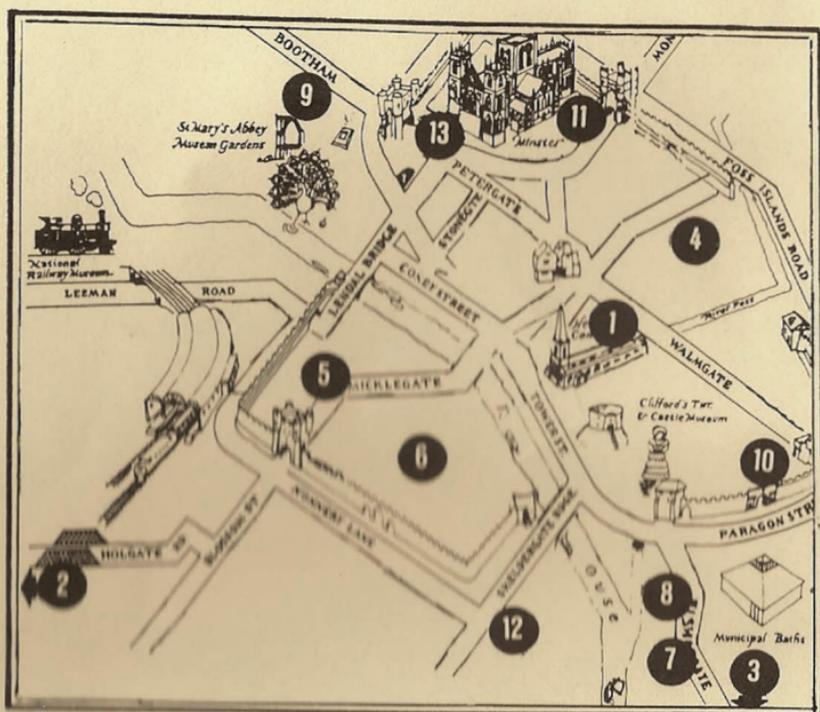


£1.00

# HISTORIC PUBS IN YORK



PUBLISHED BY THE  
YORK PUB CONSERVATION GROUP



## MAP

(Map numbers refer to page numbers)

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 Blue Bell   | 7 Lighthorseman |
| 2 Fox         | 8 Mason's Arms  |
| 3 Wellington  | 9 Minster Inn   |
| 4 Black Swan  | 10 Phoenix      |
| 5 Falcon      | 11 Royal Oak    |
| 6 Golden Ball | 12 Swan         |
| 13 York Arms  |                 |

This guide was written and produced by David Gamston, Geoffrey Henman and David Sampson, acknowledging the past contributions of all members of York Pub Conservation Group and with special thanks to Andrew Davison, Peter Fisher and Michael Mackintosh for their particular help and advice. Other acknowledgements to: David Brown (for original map artwork); Andrew Davison (for sketch plans on pp 1,5); Simon Fletcher (for photos on pp 3,7); Chris Bell (for photos on pp 2,6,8,10); Dave Smith (for photo on p11).

## PUB HERITAGE IN YORK - THE REAL TRUTH

The plain and sad truth about the historic pub heritage - in York as elsewhere - is that there is so little of it remaining. It is also true that very little of genuine pub interest survives in York from before the mid 19th Century, though this should really be no surprise. For the Pub as we know it today - essentially a shop with counter service and provision for standing-up drinking - was a 19th Century, mainly Victorian, creation. True, the Pub had some antecedents in older inns and taverns but the modern-day visitor to York, exploring its rich Mediaeval and Georgian past, will find hardly a trace of the city's foremost coaching, posting and market hostelrys of those times.

As for the Victorian period itself, whose final decade witnessed one of the high points of pub design in Britain, this coincided with a decline in York's economic fortunes (outflanked as it was by the burgeoning growth of the industrial West Riding). Reduced to being a smallish and, in many respects, isolated city, the grander examples of the late Victorian 'gin palace' style were well outside York's repertoire and arrived here only in diluted form. For much the same reason, the pubs that most characterise York are of the 'small town' and 'back street' variety.

Since a pub is, first and foremost, an interior, and many pubs occupy much older buildings erected for other purposes, certain important distinctions need to be made. For instance, 30 of York's 100 public houses are in **pre-Victorian buildings** (all of these buildings being statutorily listed, though for reasons other than the pub interiors they contain), but only three of the pubs themselves are of any great interest, and even then as examples of later refurbishment - Edwardian, in the case of the *Blue Bell*, and Interwar at the *Black Swan* and the *Royal Oak*.

Of the 52 York pubs that occupy **Victorian and Edwardian buildings** (many of which were actually purpose-built as public houses) only six have very much left of their original interiors: - the *Falcon*, *Fox*, *Lighthorseman*, *Minster Inn*, *Wellington* and *York Arms*. The *Phoenix* is a late-Victorian refit of an 1830s pub while the *Golden Ball* and the *Swan* are important as intact Interwar refurbishments.

York's legacy of pubs purpose-built in the **Interwar period** and still standing is modest in number (14) and very disappointing in terms of surviving internal fabric. The last complete example, the John Bull in Layerthorpe, was cruelly demolished in 1994, now leaving only the less intact *Masons Arms* to represent the genre.

This booklet is concerned with York's historic pubs solely from the standpoint of their **interior quality**. In these terms, and in summary, the historic pub heritage that survives in York consists mainly of six Victorian interiors (four of them purpose-built and two remodellings of older premises); two Edwardian interiors (one purpose-built and one a refurbishment); and five interiors from the Interwar period (one purpose-built and four refurbishments). The defining characteristics are a high degree of 'intactness', particularly of original plan form, or substantial retention of other old fabric or features of interest.

## THREATS AND SAFEGUARDS

Historic pubs, like all pubs, have to exist in an uncertain world of market forces and under a wide variety of masters. With ignorance and philistinism rife among owners and operators, with widespread public apathy, and with ambivalent and weakly-applied official safeguards (in the licensing and town planning systems), it is small wonder that Britain's pub heritage has suffered the most terrible depletion in recent decades, mainly through insensitive alteration to interiors.

York Pub Conservation Group (YPCG) was formed in 1978 as an offshoot of the York Branch of CAMRA. The Group was early in recognising blind spots towards pubs, and especially pub interiors, in a statutory system ('listing' and listed building control) whose roots lay in 'Architecture' and town planning. YPCG produced CAMRA's original 'Manifesto for Pub Preservation' which was later adopted nationally, and, in 1987, the first-ever inventory of historically-important pub interiors in York, breaking completely new ground.

YPCG's local lead was followed up for the whole UK in 1994 with CAMRA's publication of a National Inventory of 'outstanding' pub interiors, while a remarkable breakthrough came that same year from a source that seemed unthinkable in the early 1980s - English Heritage, the Government agency responsible for safeguarding all aspects of our built heritage. In their new listing guidelines for public houses\* - actually developed in consultation with CAMRA, and with York used as one of the key 'pilot' studies - pubs can be listed in their own right and with some emphasis at last on their internal qualities. Though a major step forward, the guidelines are still partial and selective, and offer no instant lifeline to many important pubs of the Interwar period or to pubs with no architectural pretensions (whatever their historical intactness or scarcity value).

As a direct result of the York pilot study with English Heritage, three York pubs were newly listed in 1994 by the Department of National Heritage; the Fox, Lighthorseman and Wellington.

\* *Pubs: Understanding Listing (English Heritage, 1994)*

### THE CATEGORIES

YPCG operate their own grading system for pub interiors, which is not unlike the gradings for statutory listing. The categories, as used in this booklet, are defined as follows:-

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>CATEGORY A :</b>      | Interior of <u>outstanding</u> architectural/historic importance; of major national interest               |
| <b>CATEGORY B PLUS :</b> | Interior of <u>very special</u> interest; old layout substantially intact and high-quality elements remain |
| <b>CATEGORY B :</b>      | Interior of <u>special</u> interest; old layout largely intact or high quality elements remain             |

**BLUE BELL**

53 Fossgate

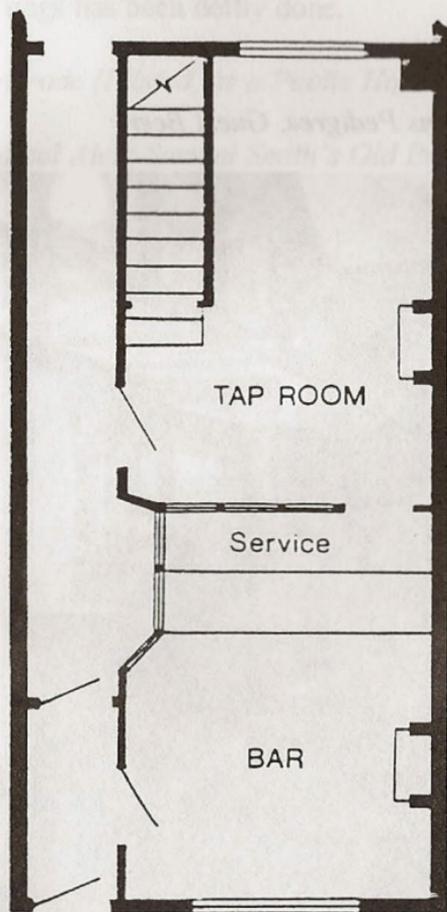
Edwardian refurbishment

The last perfectly-surviving Edwardian pub interior in York, and the city's only pub of truly national historic importance. The Blue Bell is York's only representative in CAMRA's National Inventory of 'outstanding' pub interiors. Compact and intimate, it preserves its original two-room layout as well as all the fittings and panelling from a 1903 refurbishment when it was in the hands of C J Melrose, of St Sampsons Square (then owners of a small chain of five York pubs). What makes the Blue Bell special is the intactness and quality of its fittings:- varnished and polished matchboarding to the walls and ceilings, glazed screens with opening panels to the back room and passageway, and engraved and frosted glass in doors and windows. The Blue Bell's survival has had much to do with the

licence staying in the same family - father and daughter - for most of this century. When the redoubtable Mrs Edith Pinder finally retired in 1992, there were very serious worries about the pub's future. However, now owned by Vaux and still run on a traditional tenancy, the Blue Bell appears to remain in caring hands.

*Grade II listed*

*Real Ales: Vaux Bitter, ESB, Samson, Waggedance, Wards Bitter*



Planform of Blue Bell - simple and effective both then and now.

## CATEGORY B PLUS INTERIOR; VERY SPECIAL INTEREST

### FOX INN

168 Holgate Road

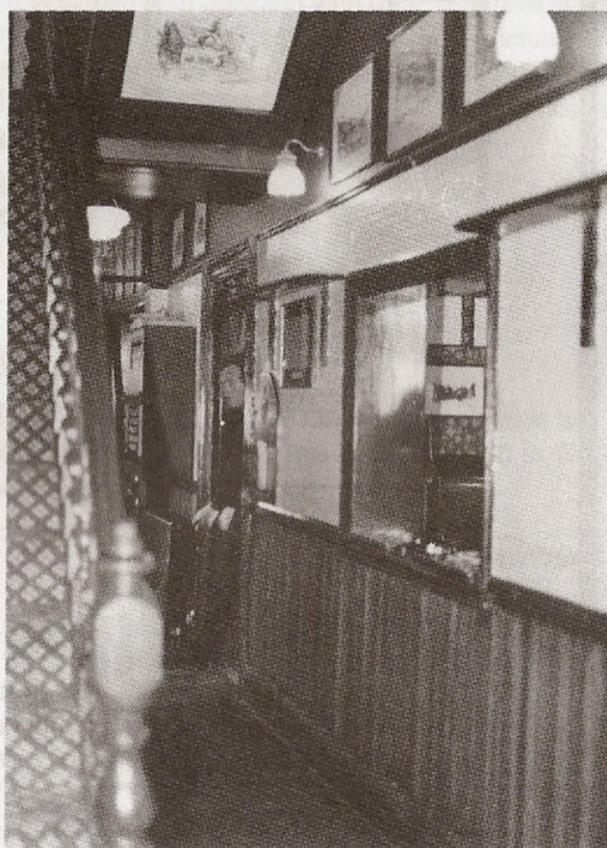
Victorian purpose-built

York's best example of a purpose-built Victorian public house of its time (1878) and also of positive pub conservation - Tetley's 1985 restoration having successfully preserved and enhanced the pub's original character. Improvements have been achieved, and drinking areas extended into former private quarters, without compromising the old pub's compartmented layout. Retention of hatch service to the corridor and to the back rooms (instead of introducing extra barcounters) has been a key factor, in particular enabling the delightful little 'Tramcar Room' to be substantially preserved. The Fox was designated a "Joshua Tetley Heritage Inn" in 1984, one of only 19 in the company's large estate east of the Pennines, and statutorily listed in 1994 under new listing guidelines for pubs (following CAMRA's York 'pilot' study for English Heritage).

*Grade II listed, as a Public House*

*Real Ales: Tetley Bitter, Marstons Pedigree, Guest Beer*

The Fox -  
Hatch service  
and corridor



**CATEGORY B PLUS INTERIOR; VERY SPECIAL INTEREST**

**THE WELLINGTON**

47 Alma Terrace

Victorian purpose-built

A classic back-street local, formerly a beerhouse, and dating back to the mid-19th Century. The Wellington's layout is utterly traditional, with a central through corridor flanked on one side by the public bar (with servery) and a private back room, and on the other by two small public lounges. Its intactness, inside and out, its social and townscape value in its immediate surroundings, and its survival as one of the city's oldest purpose-built pubs gives the Wellington unquestionable historical importance in York. Moreover, it was statutorily listed in 1994 under new listing guidelines for pubs (following CAMRA's York 'pilot' study for English Heritage). Refurbishments by Samuel Smiths in 1986 and in 1994 have been admirably low-key, improving comfort conditions without compromising the pub's essential character, and the renewal of barfittings has been deftly done.

*Grade II listed, as a Public House*

*Real Ales: Samuel Smith's Old Brewery Bitter, Museum Ale*



## CATEGORY B INTERIOR; SPECIAL INTEREST

### **BLACK SWAN**

23 Peasholme Green

Interwar refurbishment

A mediaeval timber-framed house (reputedly the birthplace of General Wolfe) which, in its later life as a public house, received major 'restoration' in the 1930s by the Tadcaster Tower Brewery Company and refurbishment in the 1970s by their successors, the present owners Bass. The Black Swan preserves many elements of the original domestic interior - a 17th century staircase, doorways, fireplaces and decorated oak panelling - and these help account for the building's important, II\* listed, status. Moreover, the Thirties remodelling by Tadcaster Tower was conceived as a prestige project with 'historical character' very consciously in mind (see 'The Masons Arms') and, even though considerable internal alterations may have been made, the result handed down is a pub interior of very distinctive character.

*Grade II\* listed*

*Real Ales: Draught Bass, Stones Best Bitter; Taylors Landlord*



Front lounge, showing oak panelling and service hatch

## CATEGORY B INTERIOR; SPECIAL INTEREST

### THE FALCON

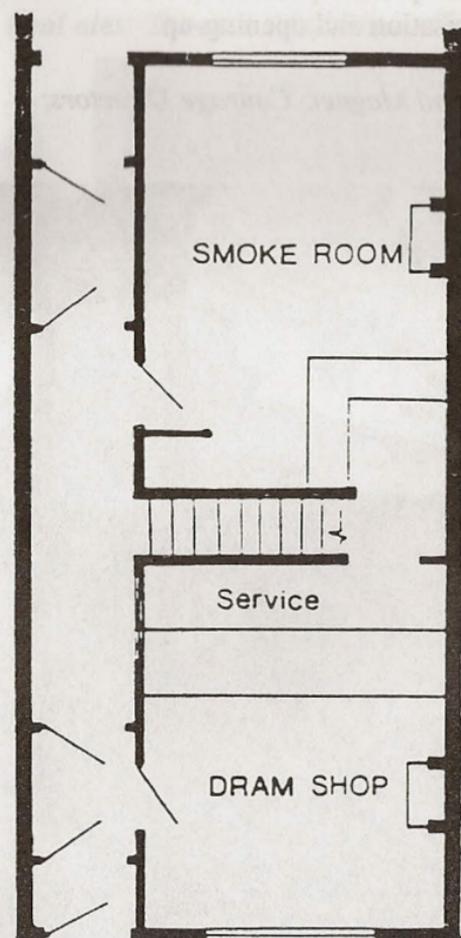
94, Micklegate

Victorian remodelling

These premises, forming part of the redevelopment of the old Falcon (one of York's numerous coaching inns) were fitted out in 1846 as a 'dram shop' - the pub style that pioneered counter-service and stand-up beer drinking and which had taken hold in London more than 40 years previously. Today's Falcon is important as an early example of the style in York and substantially preserves its original layout of two public rooms off a side passage, the front section (now the public bar) being the original dram shop.

*Grade II listed*

*Real ales: John Smith's Bitter, Magnet. Pub temporarily closed at the time of going to press*



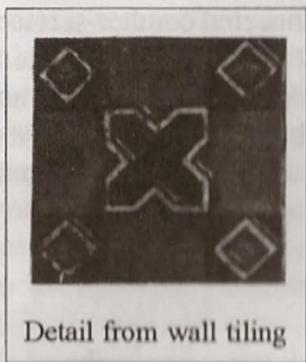
Surviving layout of The Falcon (not to scale). The original Falcon coaching house also occupied the premises to the west of the present site.

**GOLDEN BALL**

2 Cromwell Road, Bishophill

Interwar refurbishment

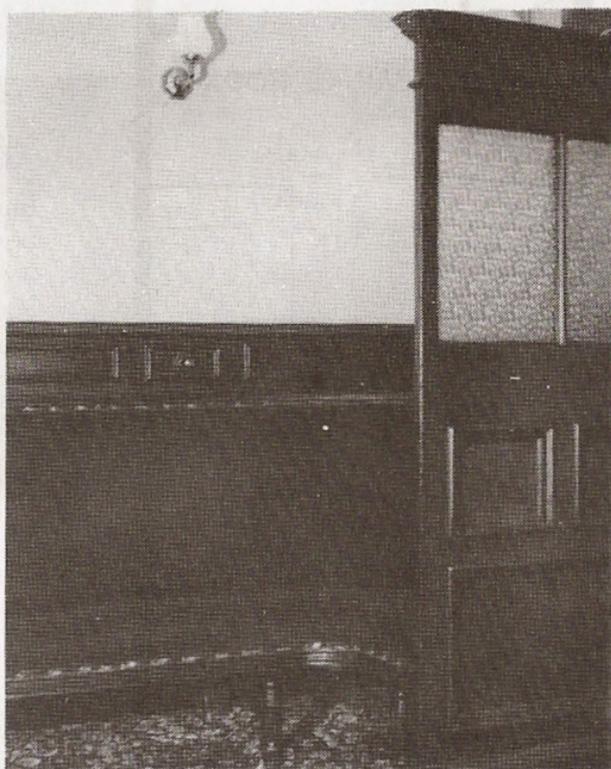
A Victorian street corner pub which was extensively refurbished by John Smiths' Tadcaster Brewery in 1929 in an unusually conservative style (much more reminiscent of late Victorian fashions than the contemporary canons of the 'improved public house'). Only the back lounge appears to have been left unaffected by the Twenties remodelling which otherwise altered access and circulation to produce a quite unusual layout, including a bar-side 'alcove' and outsales (now defunct). The Golden Ball works as a community local in the city centre residential district of Bishophill and is one of the very few small prosaic pubs now left in York to have escaped post-war modernisation and opening-up.



Detail from wall tiling

*Real ales: John Smiths Bitter and Magnet; Courage Directors; Marston's Pedigree*

Screen, seating and service bell



**LIGHTHORSEMAN**

124 Fulford Road

Victorian purpose-built

This establishment, probably purpose-built as a pub/hotel in the 1870s, survives as a multi-roomed public house despite some remodelling in the 1930s which removed partitioning from the main bar. What stands out most about this pub is the quality of its elements, in particular the stylish and impressive bar backfitting and barcounter, and the original window designs and door detailing with flashed glass panels. The main bar has a certain grandeur that is now unique in York (and was possibly always York's nearest approximation to a big city 'gin palace'). The Lighthorseman was statutorily listed in 1994 under new listing guidelines for pubs (following CAMRA's York 'pilot' study for English Heritage).

*Grade II listed, as a Public House*

*Real ales: Thwaites Mild, Bitter, Craftsman, Connoisseurs Choice*



## MASON'S ARMS

6 Fishergate

Interwar purpose-built

The 1935 rebuilding of the Mason's as a set-piece in Tudor style was one of three flagship projects by the local Tadcaster Tower Brewery during the 1930s, all with a conscious emphasis on "historical character" (the others being major refurbishments at the mediaeval Black Swan and at the Punch Bowl, Stonegate). The interior of the Mason's provides a setting for some genuine 'Gothick' features - oak panelling from York Castle and the fireplace from the old Castle gatehouse - and it is the high quality of these that contributes most to the pub's special character. Unfortunately, a post-war amalgamation of two of the original three rooms has marred the original design concept, though not irreversibly perhaps. At a time when vast sums are squandered on unwanted refurbishments, it would take relatively little to restore this important pub to something like the form intended by its Thirties designers. Great credit would reflect on whoever took up such a worthwhile challenge.

*Real ales: John Smith's Bitter; Stones; Guest Beer*



1930s Brewer's Tudor frontage

## CATEGORY B INTERIOR; SPECIAL INTEREST

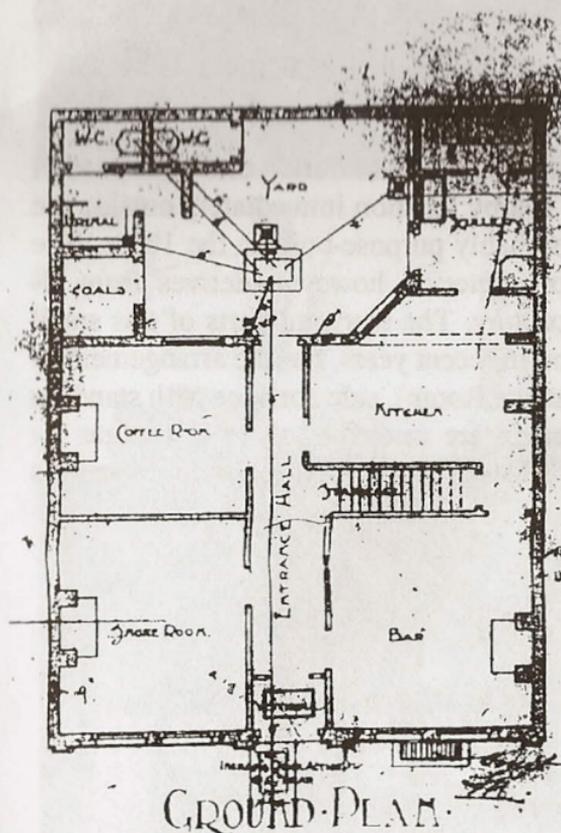
### MINSTER INN

24 Marygate

Edwardian purpose-built

Designed in 1903 for the Tadcaster Tower Brewery by local architect Samuel Needham (a leading influence on early 20th Century pub design in York), the Minster is York's only example of a small purpose-built Edwardian pub with its original planform still intact. That plan is simple, regular and utterly traditional with public bar and private back room to one side of a central through corridor, and smoke room and back lounge (originally planned as a 'Coffee Room') to the other. The Minster Inn is a rare period document, with all three rooms preserving their bench seating and the bar its stylish backfitting, and English Heritage may reconsider its claims for statutory listing once greater experience has been gained with the new national listing criteria for pubs.

*Real ales: John Smiths Bitter; Worthington Best Bitter; Stones; Ruddles Best Bitter*



Approved architects' layout drawing for the proposed rebuilding of the Minster Inn, 1903 (courtesy of York City Council). Apart from improved toilet facilities - including provision for women (!) - the most conspicuous modern change has been enlargement of the servery opening to the Entrance Hall where once a 'hatch' sufficed - for waiter service to the better rooms.

**PHOENIX**

75 George Street

Late Victorian remodelling



The Phoenix: just inside the Bar Walls

The Phoenix, like a number of pubs near York's old cattle market (which was relocated to a nearby location immediately outside the Bar Walls in 1826), was probably purpose-built in the 1830s. The historic character of its pub interior, however, derives from alterations in the late 19th century. The rearward parts of this small pub have been much altered in recent years, but the arrangement of front bar (formerly Best Smoke Room), side corridor with stand-up lobby, and intervening screen are remnants of 1897 designs by Bromet and Thorman, a Tadcaster firm working for John Smith's Brewery.

*Real ales: John Smith's Bitter, Magnet*

CATEGORY B INTERIOR; SPECIAL INTEREST

**ROYAL OAK**

18 Goodramgate

Interwar refurbishment

A small, stylish town pub - the result of a 1934 'Tudor' revamp by former owners, John J Hunt (whose brewery, the last to survive in York, was located in nearby Aldwark). Hunts' building energies between the wars went mainly into York's handful of large, suburban 'Improved' pubs and the Royal Oak was their only essay in city centre reconstruction. It blends a consistency of interior design with cosy, intimate pub character, and comprises three separate drinking rooms off a narrow, staggered, central corridor with a small confined central servery. This is now one of only three, intact,

Interwar layouts left in York (see 'The Swan').

*Grade II listed*

*Real ales: Tetley Bitter, Ind Coope Burton Ale; Castle Eden Ale*



## CATEGORY B INTERIOR; SPECIAL INTEREST

### SWAN

16 Bishopgate Street

Interwar refurbishment

An intact 1930s refurbishment of an old street corner local by the Leeds architectural practice of Kitson, Parish and Ledgard, who did much to create and establish Tetley's distinctive house style between the wars. The Swan features a central, room-sized "standing-up lobby", more typical of the West Riding than of York, with separate bar and lounge at either end served by hatch from a central servery. This Interwar layout is one of only three that have substantially survived in York (along with the Golden Ball and the Royal Oak). The Swan was the second York pub to be designated a 'Joshua Tetley Heritage Inn' in the mid 1980s (see 'The Fox'), though Tetleys nowadays lease the pub to an independent retailing company.

*Real ales: Tetley Bitter; John Smith's Bitter*



Standing-up lobby

**YORK ARMS**

26 High Petergate

Victorian purpose-built

The York Arms occupies part of a terrace designed by JP Pritchett in 1838 and was probably purpose-built as a licensed house (succeeding the Chapter Coffee House at these premises). It escaped wholesale remodelling in the open-plan idiom in 1978 thanks to the licensee, then and now, Barry Grayson, and enlargement was in-



stead achieved by the creation of a completely separate modern lounge in the next-door property. A small front bar, now entered through a sliding door, and a corridor with hatch service form the old core of the pub which, until 1938, consisted only of this front section and one small back smoke room.

*Grade II listed*

*Real ales: Samuel Smith's Old Brewery Bitter, Museum Ale*

## FRAGMENTS

Our emphasis on 'intactness' means that a number of pubs with only **partial or fragmentary interest** internally do not find a place in our main categories. Some of these parts and fragments are irreplaceable in themselves or valuable evidence of past pub styles, and noteworthy examples are described below. They demand mention; and at the very least deserve to be the starting point for intelligent thought in any future refurbishment schemes.

### VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN INTEREST

Some of the finest Victorian pub craftsmanship in York can still be seen at *Ye Olde Starre Inne*, Stonegate, in the last remnants of an 1890s revamp by former local brewers, Brett Brothers, the principal jewel being decorative glasswork from the one-time Stonegate workshops of JW Knowles & Co, most notably a splendid leaded 'barscreen'. Original window glass is one feature often spared by the pub modernisers and there are good surviving examples at the *Ackhorne*, *Beeswing*, *King's Arms* and *Tam o'Shanter*. Much like the *Olde Starre*, the *Red Lion* in Merchantgate occupies buildings of great antiquity and has been repeatedly remodelled (the last time in 1977), but there is an authentic enough feel to the panelled areas adjoining the servery. The former Anglers Arms in Goodramgate, now renamed the *Snickelways Inn*, is not without interest too, though it is arguable whether this derives more from the traces of its older interior or from the 1920s, and later, opening-up which restructured their setting. The same might be said of the *Bay Horse*, Blossom Street, where original fixtures and fittings were re-used, but radically rearranged, in John Smith's quite conscientious 1969 attempt 'to return the pub to the Victorian era'. Time alone will decide whether this is a legitimate enough recasting of Victorian fabric, a worthy 1960s refurbishment in its own right, or a regrettable early example of the current mania for fake Victorian pubs.

### INTERWAR INTEREST

The 1920s and 1930s were times of great activity and investment by the brewers who were striving to upgrade their old pubs or build new ones in keeping with the required new fashions of the 'Improved Public House'. Accomplished design and quality craftsmanship were hallmarks of much of this work which makes its near-extinction so much the sadder. In the (unfortunately altered) front Tap Room of the *Punch Bowl*, Stonegate, are remains of the prestige 1930 'restoration' undertaken by Tadcaster Tower Brewery, whilst at the *Five Lions*, Walmgate, also reconstructed by Tadcaster Tower in 1930, the original wood panelling and decorative window detail can still be seen. The *Rose and Crown*, Lawrence Street, is one of York's better survivors, still preserving leaded windows, tilework and fittings from its 1928 remodelling by Tetleys, particularly in the front bar. Of the pubs newly-built between the Wars, most have been stripped of their original fittings and plan forms. The *Frog Hall*, Layerthorpe, though, rebuilt in 1926 by Tadcaster Tower, is one which keeps a little of its original planning, but better preserved perhaps (albeit in a fragmentary way) is the *Knavesmire Hotel*, Albemarle Road, built by local brewers John J Hunt. Parts of the 1932 plan form still survive here and the bar backfitting in the 'Gents Smoke Room' is a good original feature. Just outside the city boundary but worthy of mention is the *Magnet Hotel*, Osbaldwick Lane, built by John Smiths and still preserving some of its Thirties form and fittings, including panelling and tiling. Given that a pub as heavily altered as the *Winning Post*, Bishophorpe Road, still boasts fine Thirties windows and joinery, there is now a potent case for careful assessment of all these fragments, wherever they occur.

## LOST CAUSES

Nearly half the pubs that were standing in York in the 1950s, including some historic gems, have been closed down, converted to other uses or demolished. The process continues and monstrous pressure for modern-day 'refurbishments' hovers over an ever-shrinking pub stock, with little discrimination or clear vision about which pubs should be spared from change. In the last twelve years alone York has lost the following historic pub interiors which, had they survived, would unquestionably have had a full listing in this booklet:-

Golden Slipper      Goodramgate      (Altered 1983)

An untouched, mainly Victorian, survival with some idiosyncratic spaces and a deep 4 room-and-corridor layout served from a compact, sunken front bar. The modernised interior leaves only token reminders of former character.

*Perpetrators: John Smiths*

Cattle Market      Fawcett Street      (Closed 1984)

A distinctive little two-room pub with surviving Victorian features, which was closed and sold off, ostensibly for 'structural reasons'. The building, now a restaurant, is still standing.

*Perpetrators: Samuel Smith's*

Cross Keys      Goodramgate      (Altered 1987)

JW Melrose's 1903 interior, carefully planned for this important corner site with 'Coffee Room', Smoke Room and Bar off a central Hall, was completely swept away (despite CAMRA's pleading) by 1987 open-planning in the fake Victorian idiom.

*Perpetrators: Bass*

Acorn (now 'Ackhome')      St Martin's Lane      (Altered 1992)

Despite a 1950s amalgamation of the former Vaults and Smoke Room, the surviving layout of two separate rooms and central servery retained much of its historical integrity. The 1992 alterations (opposed by CAMRA as mostly unnecessary) have produced an altogether different interior.

*Perpetrators: Pubmaster*

John Bull      Layerthorpe      (Closed and demolished 1994)

This was the last purpose-built 1930s pub to survive intact in York and almost certainly the last complete example of pre-War work by John Smith's brewery under their long-serving chief architect, Sir Bertram Wilson. Denied the protection of statutory listing, the John Bull finally fell victim to the business mentality of its cardealer owner, Peter Turnbull, who brazened out the protests of 3,600 petitioners, a customer 'Action Group', the M.P. for York, York City Council, CAMRA, and a tide of public opinion.

*Perpetrator: Peter Turnbull, of Turnbull's Mazda*



The John Bull Inn: R.I.P.

## HISTORIC PUBS IN ~~YORK~~ *Danger*

Genuine historic quality has been lost forever from most of Britain's public houses. The survival of what little remains is a serious conservation issue.

In the whole United Kingdom with its 70,000 or so pubs, the number of pub interiors of major heritage importance has been allowed to dwindle to fewer than 300.

In York, a city otherwise noted for its enlightened care of old buildings, many of the pubs now passed off as 'historic' to the visitor and tourist are little more than pretty, preserved façades with gutted, modernised interiors. Of more than 100 working public houses in the city, only 13 now retain internal fabric or features of any substantial historical interest.

For a pub is, first and foremost, its interior, while 'the genuine article' - a pub interior of real historical interest - is nowadays likely to be an assuming back-street local, or an intact brewery refurbishment of the 1930s, rather than anything from the ancient, ingle-nooky world of tourism mythology.

This booklet celebrates the genuine pub heritage in York and warns of the forces that have brought about its steady erosion.

For more information about CAMRA's work on pubs, or comments on any of the contents of this publication (which will be greatly welcome), please contact:-



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