

Historic Pubs

in the city of
gloucester



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Gloucester is a city with a long and distinguished history and it retains a surprising number of interesting historic buildings. Many of these were either built as pubs, or have since been converted into pubs, and still retain a great deal of character. Here we explore some of the best of them: join us for a drink!

Information taken from 'The Story of Gloucester's Pubs' by Darrel Kirby (The History Press, 2010)



Café Rene

31 Southgate Street

Although its address is Southgate Street, the Café Rene is actually accessed from St Mary's lane, alongside St Mary de Crypt churchyard. It is in a medieval building and originally most of

the pub was an open courtyard, belonging to another pub, the Golden Heart, in the eighteenth century. This goes some way to explain the authentic Roman Well in the bar. This may have been used by the Fransiscan Friars who founded the nearby Greyfriars monastery in 1231. There are extensive cellars underneath the pub, which have many stories attached to them and are said to be haunted. The building became a wine bar called The Inner Court in the 1970s. The courtyard was covered over and it re-opened as Greyfriars in 1987, becoming the Café Rene in 1998. It stocks a good range of real ales and cider and has regular live music.

Cross Keys Inn

Cross Keys Lane (off Southgate St)



The Cross Keys Inn is in an early to mid-sixteenth century Grade II listed timber-framed building which was originally three cottages. It appears in licensing records by 1720, but the name suggests possible older origins: in medieval times, the sign of the

cross keys meant that the inn was supplied by a nearby

monastic house. It is also the emblem of St Peter, to whom Gloucester Abbey, now the Cathedral, was dedicated. The pub has recently been reduced in size, with half of it converted into an antiques shop. Now probably the smallest pub in Gloucester, it has a cosy atmosphere and stocks real ale.

The Dick Whittington

100 Westgate Street



The Dick Whittington occupies a magnificent Grade I listed fifteenth century building known as St Nicholas House. It was built by Richard Whittington, Lord of Staunton and nephew of Dick Whittington of pantomime fame. Elizabeth I stayed here during a visit

to the city in 1574. During the seventeenth century it was leased by John Taylor, who got into trouble for having the mayor and aldermen around whilst he had servants dying of the plague in the house. One of these is still said to haunt the Black Cat Bar downstairs. The impressive brick façade was added in the eighteenth century. It became a pub after restoration in 1980. It is owned by the Chapman Group and stocks a good range of real ales and cider.

Dr Fosters

Kimberley Warehouse, The Docks

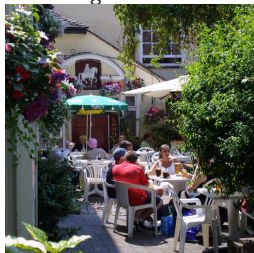


Named after the famous nursery rhyme, Dr Fosters opened in the early 1990s in the converted Kimberley Warehouse. This is the middle of three warehouses built on the east side of the main docks basin. Flanked by the Herbert and Phillpotts Warehouse, they were

built for the corn trade in 1846. Dr Fosters has a large single bar downstairs and a restaurant upstairs. It is a freehouse with a number of real ales, many from the nearby Gloucester Brewery.

The Fountain Inn

53 Westgate Street



The Fountain claims to be one of the oldest known sites connected with the brewing trade in Gloucester. It was owned by Peter Poitevin in the time of Henry III, who was probably the bishop who crowned the young king at St Peter's Abbey (now the Cathedral) in 1216. It was

almost certainly an inn by the early fourteenth century. The name dates from around 1672, named for Trinity Well, the water source located nearby in Westgate Street. A plaque in the attractive courtyard is said to commemorate another royal connection: a visit by William III who allegedly rode his horse up the stairs to show his contempt for Jacobite rebels meeting there. The Fountain is a traditional pub with a good range of real ales.

The Imperial

59 Northgate Street



Originally called the Plough, this appeared in licensing records in 1722, but was probably much older. It was purchased by Mitchells and Butler in 1898, who rebuilt it with their typical elaborately moulded, glazed tile exterior. It was probably at this time that it became the

Imperial. It is Grade II listed. Inside the bar has a traditional feel and stocks real ale.

The New Inn

16 Northgate Street



The New Inn has been described as the finest example of a medieval galleried inn to be found in Britain today. It was built between 1430 and 1450 by St Peter's Abbey (now Gloucester Cathedral). It is one of three Great Inns of the Abbey allegedly built to house pilgrims to the tomb of Edward II, who was buried in the Abbey in

1327. There are rumours of a tunnel running from the inn to the abbey. The New Inn was one of only three places in the country where Lady Jane Grey's succession to the throne was publicly proclaimed and it is speculated that Shakespeare may have performed at the inn in the sixteenth century. By the eighteenth Century the New Inn was an important venue on the Gloucester to London stagecoach route. It was bought by Bernie Inns in 1954, when it had thirteen separate bars. Now owned by the Chapman Group it has a real ale bar, a restaurant and a hotel.

The Old Bell

9a Southgate Street



The Old Bell is on the upper floors of a Grade I listed building with a magnificent Jacobean timbered façade. It was built around 1665 for Thomas Yate, apothecary and Mayor of Gloucester. It is believed that it may have been constructed using timber from the Mayflower,

the ship used for the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage to America. These upper floors were leased by the Bell Hotel, which stood next door and was closed in 1967 and demolished to make way for the Eastgate Shopping Centre. The main feature in the small timber-panelled bar is a magnificent fire place commemorating Yates' first marriage in 1650. Alongside the well stocked bar is the Tigers Eye Fusion Restaurant.

The Old Crown

81-83 Westgate Street



A much more extensive inn known as The Crown existed on this site, with origins back to the thirteenth century. It was probably the centre of operations for Colonel Edward Massey during the Siege of Gloucester in 1643. It became the Old Crown by 1680, but ceased

trading in 1760. All that remains of this original inn is the building now known as Hyett House at 91 Westgate Street. The Victorian buildings which now make up the Old Crown were home to Woods Army & Navy Stores for some

time, but were renovated by Samuel Smiths Brewery and 're-established' as a pub in 1990. The bar has a traditional Victorian feel and stocks a wide range of keg and bottled Samuel Smith's beers and ciders.



The Pelican Inn

4 St Mary's Street

The Pelican is just outside the Cathedral precinct and opposite the ruins of St Oswald's Priory. It appears in licensing records by 1679 and claims to be constructed using timbers from Sir Francis

Drake's ship the Golden Hind. This claim is given some credence by the fact that the Golden Hind was originally called the Pelican before being renamed mid-voyage. The pub was taken over by Wye Valley Brewery in 2012. It is a small, traditional pub with a good range of Wye Valley beers plus guests and real ciders.



Robert Raikes' House

36-38 Southgate Street

Robert Raikes' House occupies a magnificent timber-framed merchants-house dating from 1560. The pub takes its name from Robert Raikes, founder of the Sunday School movement and one

of Gloucester's most famous sons. He took over ownership of the Gloucester Journal, which was started by his father, and in 1758 he moved it into this building. In 1772 he moved into the building with his family. It reverted to a merchant's house and shop, becoming the Dirty Duck Restaurant in 1973, then later the Golden Cross pub. It was bought by Samuel Smiths who restored it at a reported cost of £4.5m, and opened as Robert Raikes' House in November 2008. The restoration is exceptional, inside and out, and it stocks a wide range of keg and bottled Samuel Smith's beers and ciders.

The Tall Ship

134 Southgate St

The Tall Ship is located at the entrance to the Docks on Southgate Street. Originally called the British Flag it dates



The Union

43-45 Westgate Street



back to at least 1870 and probably earlier. It was built specifically as a pub and is Grade II listed. The name changed to the Tall Ship in the 1980s. Owned by Wadworth's it sells a wide range of their beers and is known for its seafood.

Only the left-hand building currently occupied by The Union was originally a pub, known as The Sword by 1680. It became The Union by 1847 and probably refers to the Acts of Union with Ireland. The pub was extended into the next door building in 1990. This building was once the workshop of a tailor called John Pritchard, who inspired Beatrix Potter's story The Tailor of Gloucester. She was visiting the area in 1897 and heard the tale of a waistcoat that was mysteriously completed over the weekend. The pub was therefore re-named the Tailor's House for a time, but reverted in 2003. The bar has a traditional feel and stocks real ale.

The Whitesmiths Arms

81 Southgate Street



Located opposite the entrance to the Docks, the Whitesmiths was a beer house by 1871. It was extended into the adjacent building in 1996, which was found to date from the fifteenth century. This makes it a rare survivor as all of the buildings outside the South

Gate, in the area known a Littleworth, were thought to have been demolished during the Siege of Gloucester in 1643. You can still see the original fifteenth century roof beams in the small room to the right of the bar. The Whitesmiths is a traditional pub selling Arkell's beers.



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