

HULL'S OLD TOWN PUBS (well most of them are!)

This is about some of the fascinating pubs around the area of the Walking Guide and not the quality of the ales and food, excellent though this may be, but about the buildings themselves.

This web site will take you to an alternative guide to some of the old town pubs.

Fairly logically then, we start with stage 1: Pubs that are in the immediate vicinity of stage 1 – the Victoria Square stage. Remember however that the two pubs were very close to Queens Dock when it was a working dock, and not a public garden as it is now.



The first pub on the list is the **Punch Tavern**

It is in the bottom right hand corner of Victoria Square as you face out from the City Hall. It is an elaborate and ornate Victorian building of 1896, in stark contrast to the austere lines of the nearby Ferens Art Gallery built in the 1930's. It is a fine Victorian Pub, both externally and internally and is large and imposing. It has existed here throughout two world wars and countless changes, and not surprisingly has built up a long history; fact or fiction for ghosts, sightings etc. I have not detailed them since they may be fiction, but on the other hand.....



Just beyond the Monument Bridge sign is the **Empress Tavern**.

This is a fine looking former Dockside Pub looking towards Queens Gardens, formerly the Queens Dock. It really has the look and appearance of a dockside watering house. It was originally known as the Dockside Tavern and it initially served those working on the nearby Queens Dock. It is flowery and ornate in finish and its tall narrow shape really suits a dockside pub.

Another reason for its shape however was that it started off life as a dockside warehouse, with toilets in the next door building for those needing same. It would hardly get a liquor licence today without toilets, which of course it has now.



Following the tour guide into stage 2 and having turned into Posterngate, on the right you will come to a pub called the "**Mission**"

This large pub has with what appears to be a stained glass window in the west wall. It was in fact a seaman's mission founded in 1926 and until recently was used as an overflow service called "full mission" from the nearby Holy Trinity Church. Vicars used to preach here and somehow despite it being a large pub, there is still a feeling of the need to speak in hushed tones.



By now you are at stage 3 of the walk and further down Posterngate, at the junction with Trinity House Lane (note it is opposite Trinity House on the corner) is a traditional Victorian Pub called the **Kingston**.

Like many Victorian Pubs it is built around one room, and a room with a purpose – to dispense ale. It has a very fine, typical Victorian bar surround.



On the right up Trinity House Lane, is a similar age pub called the **Bonny Boat**, and like so many in the area it has a name with nautical connections. This pub was trading in 1791 from this site and the road it is in, now called Trinity House Lane, was originally called old Beverley Street.

Again it is a single room serving ale. There are a lot of objects reflecting Hull's nautical past here including three barometers. There is a sign saying "Porthole to be closed when ship is at sea" and a large bell from the Tug Brahman, a tug that featured in the rescue of a Naval Ship struck by a torpedo in World War 2.

On now into stage 4 of the walk and on the north hand side of the Marina is:



The **Green Bricks** was built before the construction of the dock opposite (now the Marina) it became a dockside watering hole and the pub is thus named because it is partly constructed of green bricks. These can best be seen to the right of the building. These are not green fronted tiles but complete bricks. It was originally built in 1806. The road outside covers former rail lines – see Hull’s Railways



We now get to stage 5 of the Walk which is the Victoria Pier Area. The first pub in this stage is the wonderful “**Minerva**” right on the end of the street, and almost into the Humber. What a situation for a pub. The pub’s details and fascinating history can be found at <http://www.rbarnard.karoo.net/Minerva.pdf> (Control and click should take you to this site.)

If all this history was reproduced on this site you would need to refresh both yourself and your phone battery. For yourself I can think of no better place (not so sure about your phone).

The Minerva is built on land reclaimed from the estuary when the nearby Humber Dock (now Marina) and Junction Dock (now Princess Dock) were dug out and the created land was conveyed to the owners of the pub between 1813 and 1817 for £3190 and the Minerva opened in January 1829, mainly to service the nearby ferry and steamers.

It promised; accommodation, good fires and attendance on customers for “early tides”. It has been in existence since, and at one time had its own microbrewery. It is a fascinating place, with one tiny room (the snug) able to accommodate only 3 people. Fortunately it has many other rooms. The walls are adorned with interesting photos of the area as it used to be, including the famous “Oss Wash” – an area used mainly for transferring cargoes from cart to steamer, but also used to clean horses in the estuary water.

The name Minerva is taken from the Roman Goddess of Poetry, Medicine, Wisdom, Commerce, Weaving, Crafts and Magic and just about all these can be found in this fascinating building.

Stage 7 of the Tour takes you into the Market Place area up to the High Street.



The Market Place is the southern end of a wide road called Lowgate and there are three pubs to mention on the left hand side of Lowgate as you face North. The first pub is called the **King Billy**. It is opposite the statue of **King Billy (King William III)**. One of its claims to fame is the legend that says King Billy got down from his horse every night at midnight and went in here for a drink. This is almost certainly a rumour especially as the drink’s licence for the pub did not extend until this time! It was first licensed in 1834, having earlier been a linen shop and then an ironmonger.

Firstly then the **Corn Exchange**.



This pub fronts Lowgate but runs down North Church Side, beside Holy Trinity Church. The full title is **Ye Olde Corn Exchange**, and this pub does indeed sit upon the former site of a corn exchange which took place in an open yard from the late 17th century. From the late 1800s a wine and spirits merchant occupied this frontage but it closed in 1913 and a food bar opened and today the pub sells ale and food. Recent alterations revealed something of the earlier buildings dating back to the late 1600’s. The name Ye Old Corn Exchange has been retained throughout for the pub.



Then there is the **Blue Bell** pub, accessible via an alley from Lowgate (under the sign of the large Blue Bell).

This is a traditional Victorian pub, with an wonderful ambience to match its character – it could be 1850 inside. The photo is of the Blue Bell and Alley – go down this alleyway and turn left to find this splendid pub.

Stage 6 runs up the right hand side of Lowgate, and the only road to cross (be careful) is called Liberty Lane – ironic in a way since eventually that lane runs into the High Street and down to the Magistrates Court. The first turning right is Scale Lane but before you go down it there are former Banks and an old Customs House, which used to be exactly that but which are now mainly restaurants. One still has the word Bank engraved on it - it was the Midland Bank opened in 1890 and the others Lloyds and the National Provincial both from around 1900. Turn into Scale Lane and towards the bottom of this short road are two pubs worthy of mention:



The first I will mention is called the **William Hawkes**. It is a relatively newly restored pub, but brilliantly done. William Hawkes was a gunmaker (and dentist!) hopefully he did not confuse the two professions! He manufactured guns and rifles here from 1810, taking over from a previous gunsmith called Bottomley. It has one main room, like many Victorian Pubs, and contains many mementos of the past occupation.



Opposite is the **Manchester Arms**, another fine Victorian pub in traditional style. It has rejoiced in splendid former names such as the Blade Bone, then the Slaw Bone The Earl Grey and the Black Bull Inn before becoming the Manchester Arms in 1876

On to the junction of Scale Lane and High Street, just metres down the lane from the Manchester Arms.



From here you can see a pub called the **Lion and Key**

The name comes from the Lion (being Wellington) following his victory over Rodrigo of Spain in the Peninsular War and the Key is the key to Spain. The pub is well worth a visit, note the ceilings adorned with beer mats and the retro advertising signs. The pub was built in 1812 on the site of a former coffee house called the Britannia



Next, on High Street we come to the, politically incorrect in modern parlance, **Ye Olde Black Boy**. This is the oldest pub in Hull and dates to around 1720. The original use of the premises was for a tobacco merchant who traded from the River Hull, and the name is said to come from a carved model of an American Indian who symbolised the trade. The pub is a “must visit” – it is long and narrow in a mediaeval way with much smaller rooms than would be found in its Victorian equivalent. The Black Boy is mentioned in stage 7 of the Tour Guide.



Up the High Street towards the Museum Quarter and on the left is the **Sailmakers Arms**, approached through an archway and across a yard. A fine, one roomed Victorian Pub (further rooms upstairs). The photograph depicts the entry through an archway.



Stage 8 will take you to Hull’s Guildhall. En route take particular note of another fine pub on the right hand side of the main road which is Alfred Gelder Street. This is the **White Hart Hotel** (not to be confused with an even more famous pub called Ye Olde White Hart).

Incidentally the name White Hart is an old name for a mature stag, the Badge of Richard II who in a rare portrait wore a jewel of a white hart in gold and enamel.

The hotel has a magnificent Mock Tudor façade and inside is a superb example of a Victorian Ceramic bar. Built in 1904 as a hotel and bar, it must have the finest and most detailed frontage of any pub around.



At the junction of Alfred Gelder Street and Lowgate - on the left as you face the junction is the **Three John Scotts** pub, built into the original main post office and named after three successive rectors of the nearby St Mary's, all called John Scott. This is an ancient building site, being where Suffolk Palace was sited (home of the wealthy local Merchant family, the De la Poles) until seized by Henry VII and bequeathed to his son, the infamous Henry VIII.

Turning left into Lowgate and taking the first right into Bowlalley Lane (a name it is believed came from King Henry VIII playing bowls when he stayed at Suffolk Palace) and then left down an alleyway to



Ye Olde White Hart, you will find upstairs the so called "Plotting Parlour". A discussion and statement on the origins of this room can be found in detail for the Civil War so I will not repeat it here. The pub also houses a child's skull – part of its claim to fame. The skull is to be found in a small corner in a Perspex case to your left on entering the pub.

This pub is a must-see for visitors. It is a fine building with a great atmosphere.

It is approached and exited via an alley on Silver Street.

We are now entering the penultimate stage of the tour. Down Silver Street to the right at its first junction, is the Land of Green Ginger (another fine name reflecting a traded cargo of the 1800's or maybe from the name of a Dutch Family the Lindgreens who lived in the area sometime in the 1800's.



Here is the "**George Hotel**", a former coaching house built in 1683 originally One of its claims to fame is that it has the smallest window in England, which is on the side of the coach entrance. Through here, it is said that the porter would watch for approaching coaches so that customers could then be met with a fine welcome and care, since it was known they were arriving.



Proceed beyond the George to Alfred Gelder Street via Manor Street and you will come across the **Burlington Tavern**, a finely restored Victorian Pub once known as the Witnesses Arms because of its links to what used to be the Magistrate's Courts in the Guildhall opposite. Prisoners were known to have their last drink here before sentencing. Different clientele now though.

And now back to Whitefriargate, having almost completed the walk and heading back to Victoria Square. This was the short road that in 1900 contained no less than 8 pubs or hotels.



One huge hotel was called the **Neptune Inn**, built in 1797 as Hulls Premier Hotel and also its original Custom's House. The building now hosts small businesses but above the shop fronts you can see the lines of this hotel with its maritime connections. It was built as a traveller stop en route from Queens Dock (via Parliament Street) to almost anywhere in the Country.

I hope this short introduction has encouraged you take the walk and perhaps enjoy some of the delights on offer