

*How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom; and then, after enquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to 'take one's ease at one's inn!'*

William Hazlitt - On Going on a Journey

## Nelson

St Leonard

Hythe Hill

see **Lord Nelson**

## Nelson's Head

St Martin

51 West Stockwell Street

1799 to 1959 (map 106)

a public house

now private house

The name of this pub is another one of nautical origin, despite its location being away from the normal area of Colchester associated with seafaring folk. The derivation of the name is the same as that discussed under the Lord Nelson. The first reference to this pub is dated 1799, which fits perfectly with Admiral Nelson's career. His name would have been a good choice for a landlord wishing to name his inn after a national hero of the time.

It was situated at the lower end of West Stockwell Street, directly opposite the present day Stockwell Arms. The two hostelrys would have vied for the same customers and one must wonder at whether the same customers would have used both pubs and how the landlords might have viewed this.

A sensational incident occurred here in September 1840<sup>1</sup>. Duelling was frowned upon by authority and viewed with disfavour by the upper classes. Despite this, the impetuous Lord Cardigan, in defiance of public opinion, exchanged pistol shots with Captain Harvey Tucker on Wimbledon Common. Fired by this example, a Colchester colt-breaker, labouring under a grievance, despatched the following letter to John Bacon, innkeeper of the Nelson's Head, within a few weeks of the nobleman's encounter.

*"I, William Hamblion, forward this challenge to John Bacon, to meet him any time or place, with sword or with any other weapon that John Bacon may think fit to appoint. An immediate answer is required. To John Bacon. Nelson's Head."*

The magistrates took a lenient view of the offence and bound over the pugnacious law-breaker to keep the peace: but he, not producing the sureties demanded, was consigned to the lock-up to cool his heels and ire. Trade directories of that period revealed that the business of H and J Hamblion were licensed to let horses, gigs, etc. from the King's Head Yard and moved premises to Sir Isaac's Walk in 1842. Coincidentally, there is still a firm by the name of Hamblion in Colchester today, in a similar line of business.

Further mention of this pub was made when a certain James Clements made a daring escape from the debtor's prison behind the town hall in February 1858<sup>2</sup>. He was recaptured in April at the Nelson's Head. He had not wandered very far it seems - only to the nearest pub!

A 1926 newspaper<sup>3</sup> gave a brief account of a fire whereby it was the night of the first winter snowfall. The firemen's hose froze and could not be rolled up. They had to drag it to the station behind the Town Hall. They rescued the pub's ancient sign, which was reputedly 'a quaint picture of the old naval hero.'

The pub was owned by Osborne in the 1870's, who sold it to Cobbold in 1876, who sold it back to Osborne in 1884, who then sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1886. It later passed to Ind Coope who closed it down in 1959. The various census entries show the following:

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 20<sup>th</sup> Mar 1959

<sup>2</sup> Essex Standard – 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 1858, 23<sup>rd</sup> Apr 1858

<sup>3</sup> ECT – 10<sup>th</sup> Apr 1926

1851 - George Jackson,		age 42,	victualler
1861 - Sarah Halles?,	widow,	age 55,	inn keeper
1871 - George Trull,		age 63,	inn keeper
1881 - Thomas William Huff,		age 48,	manager of public house

The local newspapers recorded a case of drinking after the permitted hours in October 1940 (wartime). Alleged drinking after hours in this public-house led to the licensee and two of his customers having to appear before the Colchester Bench. The licensee was George Edward Wagstaffe and he was summoned on two summonses for supplying beer during prohibited hours. He pleaded not guilty. The Bench fined Wagstaffe £2 10s in each case.

It is now used as private residential housing and you might well think that the external appearance still has the look of a public house.

Previously the **Admiral Nelson's Head**

1799 only

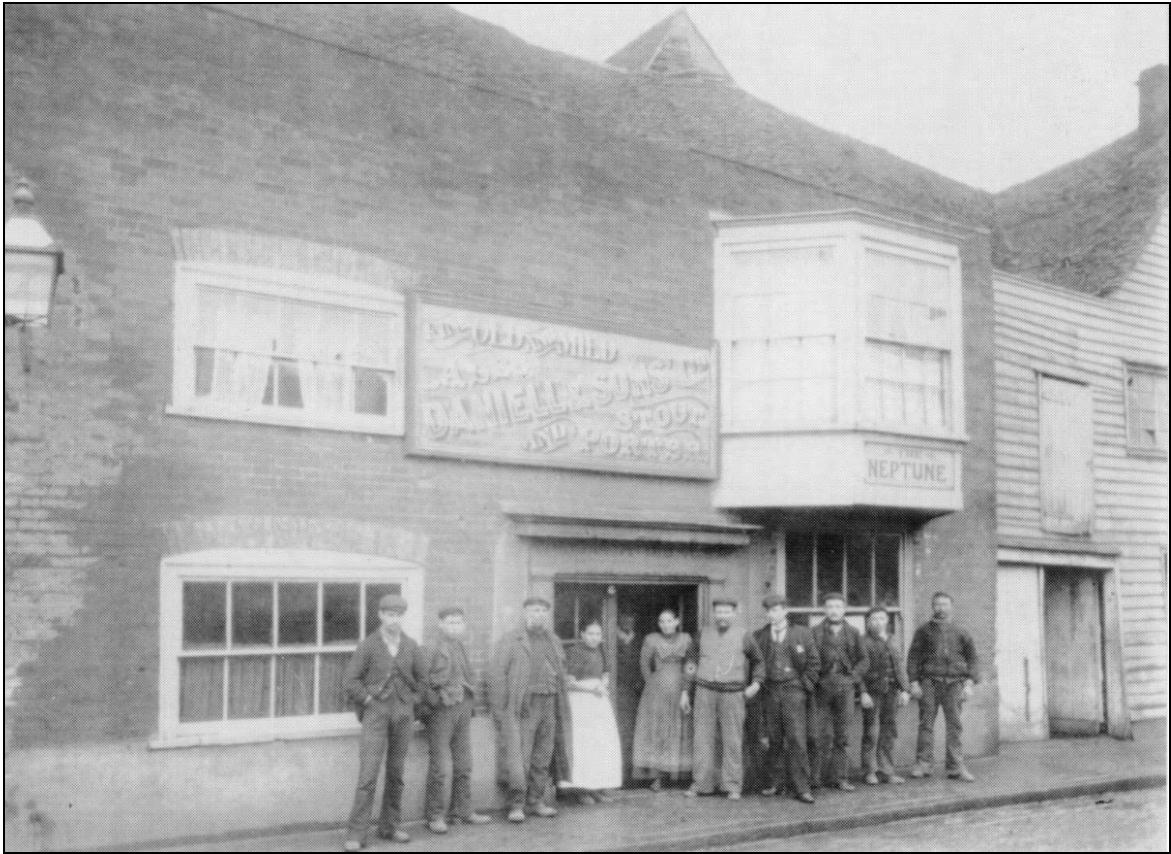
It was only listed by this name in the alehouse recognisances for 1799. After that date it was shortened to the Nelson's Head.

originally known as the **Admiral Nelson's Head**

---

<b>Neptune</b>	St Leonard	14 Hythe Quay
1818 to 1935 (map 125)	a public house	demolished

The name of this pub is another one of nautical origin, Neptune being the Roman god of the sea and the brother of Jupiter. The pub's sign would probably have shown Neptune himself with his flowing locks and trident. The pub was located on the waterfront and would have enjoyed much custom from sailors and dock workers.



A photograph of c1910.

It first appears by name in the alehouse recognisances of 1818 and was later owned by Daniells until its licence was refused in 1935, when it closed down. The 1851 census gave the occupant as 41 year old George Leggett, a ratcatcher. Where was the licence holder one wonders? Was ratcatching a spare time activity? The 1901 census shows the publican as having been Thomas Youngs, aged 41. The oil mills were next door.

A newspaper article of 1905<sup>1</sup> mentioned some fine 15th century carvings being discovered in the building's fabric during restoration work then being carried out. The building was therefore an ancient one and it is possible that it was once an inn by another name.

The pub stood close to the present day Spinnaker pub and was demolished shortly after it closed in 1935. Contemporary photographs show that it was of brick construction and in a poor condition. The original 15th century building would have been of a timber framed construction.

---

### New Cattle Market Inn

Middlesborough

see the **Market Tavern**

---

### New Dock Inn

St Botolph

New Quay

The name of this pub is a reference to its location being where a new dock was built at the Hythe, now known as King Edward Quay.

see the **Waterside Inn**

---

### New Inn

St Giles

36 Chapel Street South

c1843 to date (map 112)

a public house

The name of this pub is an unimaginative name for a new inn, a name which has stayed with it for over a century, some of the newness now having worn off.

A plan of this house was made by a surveyor, W A Bowler, on behalf of owners, Messrs. Cobbold, in 1843. This may be seen at the Essex Records Office. The pub is first mentioned in an 1848 trade directory, a time when there was much newly built housing in that general area, as well as the fast expanding garrison close by. The 1851 census gave John Cross, age 45, as the inn keeper. That of 1871 gives George Tunell, age 66, although by 1881 it gives Charlotte Tunell, a widow, as the beer house keeper (it was not a beer house). A newspaper article of 1891<sup>2</sup> gave an account of what was described as a cowardly attack on the publican by soldiers from an Irish regiment. the 1901 census gives Thomas H Wade, aged 48, as the publican and a musician.

In 1843 it was owned by Cobbold, followed by the Colchester Brewing Company in 1883. It later passed to Ind Coope.

This pub has the distinction of being the highest pub (not the tallest) in the town, at 109 feet above sea level. It is closely followed by the British Grenadier and Cambridge Arms at 107 feet. Whether or not such high altitude is sufficient to add an intoxicating effect to that of its beer is however in some doubt. (The lowest pubs would have to be the Maltsters Arms and the Spinnaker at around 15 feet above sea level.)

It has the added distinction of being the only Colchester pub to temporarily close during the years of the Second World War, as a result of the damage caused by a German bomb. The landlord, Joe Girling, watched from an upstairs bedroom, a bomb land in the gutter outside the pub on September 28th 1942 and recalled that it took a couple of seconds to explode, whereupon all that he could next remember was being in the cellar in a dazed condition. Another recollection of the event came from an old'un [Derek from the Brit] who was then 13 years of age and had watched the German plane from St Helena School, where he was at school, dropping a stick of bombs near to where he lived in South Street. It was not until he got home later that day that he discovered the extent of the damage and learned

---

<sup>1</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep 1905

<sup>2</sup> CG – 13<sup>th</sup> May 1891

that eight people had been killed. Indeed, some of the pub's older customers still reckon that there is an unexploded bomb around somewhere. The pub was re-built to the same general plan and eventually re-opened again in 1948<sup>1</sup> after alterations had been carried out. The New Inn therefore became the new New Inn!

The pub has the old style lounge bar and separate public bar, the former for a quiet drink and a chat and the latter for a game of pool, darts or to watch sport on the television. Behind the bar in the lounge, is an old notice board taken from the Railway Tavern, probably the one at North Station.

In the 1990's, landlady Mrs Lesley Thompson ensured a nice friendly atmosphere, drawing custom from the local area and further afield. The appearance of the pub was transformed in the summer with extensive floral displays, winning several awards in the annual 'Colchester in Bloom' competition, the latest award being commended in 2006.

The Saloon Bar was transformed with the theme of a Whisky Bar, at one time offering around 70 different whiskies from all over the world, including over 60 malt whiskies, specialising in the whiskies that the writer Michael Jackson wrote about. In 2007, the New Inn was home to various local groups, particularly the Pagans, the Green Party, the Royal Ancient Order of the Buffaloes and some ex members of the Devon and Dorset Regiment. There were also strong pool, darts and cricket teams. Lesley Thompson, by 2007, had held the licence for 18 years. Previously a Pubmaster house, it was then operated by Punch Taverns.

---

### New Market Inn

St Peter

Middleborough

see **Market Tavern**

---

### Noah's Ark

Head Street

The name of this pub is considered to originally have been a religious sign, having come from the Old Testament story of the deluge which purified the Earth. A story associated with the name involved a temperance minister preaching against the evils of drink. The story goes that the minister:

*'delighted in water, being himself a baptist, and he hated the publican, in as much as he sold that which comforteth more than water. And seeing that men went after that which hath more comfort than water, the preacher cried out against it, saying unto the publican and unto men at street corners, 'Wherefore seek ye delusion in the glass that is offered unto you by this publican. Know ye not that strong drink is poison?' So certain of those gathered there said unto him, 'What then shall we drink, if these things that the Publican offers unto us be of evil and bringeth death even as thou sayest?' And he answered them, saying 'Drink ye water, for that hath done injury unto none.' But one of the crowd, even a rude boy, mocked him, asking 'Sayest thou water injured none. What price the flood?'*

This item is part of a larger piece and was directed at the same Thomas Jephcott who kept the Fountain but who later kept a public house in Ramsgate, Kent.

see the **Duncan's Head**

---

### Norfolk Hotel

Lexden

60 North Station Road

c1872 to date (map 88)

a public house

The name of this pub may or may not have come from a battleship, which is the subject of its sign. The iron ship depicted appears to be of First World War vintage, but there is also a coat of arms which requires identification and which might refer to one of the Dukes of Norfolk or some other armigerous family with Norfolk connections. The ship is certainly of a more recent date than the 1870's when this pub is first mentioned in our records.

The pub first appears in records for 1872, when the Norfolk firm of Steward and Patterson owned it. Indeed, this is probably the real reason for how the pub got its name - the Norfolk connection. It was sold to Greene King in 1894,

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS - 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 1948, 28<sup>th</sup> Apr 1995 and  
EG - 26<sup>th</sup> Mar 2007

who still own it to this day. A photograph dated around 1935 shows a coat of arms as the pub sign, rather than the battleship of its modern day sign.

The older Colchester boys say that this was the only pub where you could see the town hall clock from its bar windows. There is a reference to this story under the Artillery Man.

---

*What's drinking?  
A mere pause from thinking!*

Lord Byron



*The Landlord's Prayer*

*Our Bitter,  
Which art in barrels,  
Hallowed be when drunk,  
I will be drunk, at home as I am in the pub.  
Give us this day our foamy head,  
And forgive us our spillages,  
As we forgive those who spill against us.  
And lead us not into incarceration,  
But deliver us from hangovers,  
For thine is the beer, the Bitter and the Lager,  
BARMEN*

---

**Oddfellows Arms**

St Martin

Moor Place (later  
14 Northgate Street)

c1850 to c1900 (map 123)

a beerhouse

demolished

The name of this pub is not uncommon and comes from an organisation known as the Independent Order of Oddfellows, which was a social and benevolent society with branches throughout the country and overseas. The order was founded in 1810, the name said to have derived from a remark made about the founding members. One might nowadays think of a pub sign depicting such odd fellows as Rowan Atkinson's 'Mr Bean' or Mr Basil Fawlty, 'the hotelier from hell'.



A watercolour by Major Bale.

The pub does not appear in the licensing records by name so would have been a beerhouse. The census of 1851 gives the occupant as Thomas Childs, age 49, a beer shop keeper and again in 1861 but ten years older. The 1891 census shows Susannah Childs, age 62, singlewoman, beerhouse keeper, in occupation. It was located in Northgate Street but was later demolished, an open space now marking the site, close by the Ryegate entrance to the Lower Castle Park.

The 1876 map shows how the building lay on the boundary of the town's famous Roman wall, no sign of it now in evidence at this point. The map also confirms the appearance of the building as shown in the two illustrations.

Major Bale painted the preceeding picture, around 1900, although it depicts a much earlier period of perhaps the 1820's. Note the old boys sitting on the bench, passing the time of day with a fellow who is standing. The following photograph of the pub is from the 1880's, showing one of the jettied walls removed, the written sign over the entrance door, a sign which states 'Thos Daniell & Sons Old and Mild Ales' and various other newspaper advertisements. Railings belonging to the Castle Park are shown in the foreground, later removed to make way for the splendid new gateway that we enjoy today.

Whether the Oddfellows actually met at the Oddfellows' Arms is unknown. What is known is that:

the Loyal Victoria Lodge was founded c1840 and met at the Anchor Inn, Magdalen Street (in 1856).

the Loyal Fountain of Friendship Lodge was founded in 1843 and met at the Swan Inn, High Street (in 1856).

the Loyal Albert Edward Lodge was founded in 1874 and met at the Cross Keys Inn, Wyre Street in 1897.

the Loyal Earl Roberts Lodge was founded in 1901 and met at the Britannia Inn, Berechurch Road from that time, although it also met occasionally in Colchester Barracks.

Friendly societies of this type were numerous in the 19th century and most of them seem to have had their headquarters in public houses. It was estimated that, in 1816, they had 700,000 members nationwide.



The Oddfellow's Arms c1880.

The Oddfellows' Hall wall opened in George Street in December 1909, the hall still in use in 1945. This occurrence could have been the reason the this pub's closure.

The process of members making regular financial contributions, to be used in times of hardship, seems to have come to an end with most of these societies with the introduction of National Insurance in 1945, which took away much of the need for such organisations. Colchester still has strong contingents of Freemasons, the Royal Ancient Order of Buffaloes, the Foresters, etc. with their ancient observations of the ritual, mysteries and observances of their fraternities - and long may they continue!

The friendly societies in Colchester (from 1793 to 1847), their meeting places and their secretaries were as follows:

All Saints	Sea Horse	John Adams
St Botolph	Greyhound	Henry Vincent
St Botolph	Plough	John Green
St Botolph	Plough	Thomas Inman
St Botolph	Taylor's Arms	Samuel Bedford
St Botolph	Taylor's Arms	Thomas Beswick
St Botolph (Gate)	Yorkshire Grey	Charles Manning
St Giles	Bell	James Purkiss
St Giles	Red Cross	S Daniell, Gent.
St Martin	Royal Oak	James Carter
	(later removed to Swan, St Nicholas)	
St Mary	Bull	John Betts
St Mary at the Walls	Sailor and Ball	Argt. Simmons
St Mary at the Walls	Peter Dodd's house	William Robertson
St Nicholas	Cross Keys	John Smith
St Peter	Waggon and Horses	James Spooner
St Runwald	Angel	James Brightwell
St Runwald	Blue Boar	Thomas Harden
St Runwald	Blue Boar	Thomas Wittey
St Runwald	Griffin	Argt. Simmons

(This list does not include the Oddfellows' lodges.)

---

### Odd One Out

28 Mersea Road

1985 to date (map 97)

a public house



The name of this pub is probably the only example in the country and came from it being sold as a freehouse and the new owner deciding to offer a variety of what have become known as 'Real Ales'. For this reason alone, the pub was an oddity as, overnight, it doubled the number of real ales that were available in the town.

After a period of closure, the pub re-opened with its new identity in February 1985. Mr John Parrick was the new landlord, the premises being owned by himself and his family. Mr Parrick considered his pub to be 'The Drinkers Pub of Colchester' and he offered a range of traditionally served beers from a variety of regional brewers and some fifty Scotch and Irish whiskies. He was pleased to offer no cooked food, as he considered restaurant type smells spoiled the taste of his beer.

A sign which appeared in this pub in 1999, one of several hand written 'gems', laid down certain conditions for the edification of its customers, and along the following lines:

-----

Mobile Phones - May only be used in the:

- a. fruit machine bar
- b. in the toilet corridor
- c. outside

Dogs - Are only welcome on the wooden floored area, secure and must be kept on a lead.

Feet and Legs - May not be placed on the furniture, walls, radiators, etc. in the front bar

TL

-----

The first item covered the fast growing industry of communications which led to the inevitable irritation of fellow drinkers being subjected firstly to a shrill noise in close proximity, followed by being forced to listen to the one sided (and often banal) conversation of the owner of the said item of modern technology.

First time visitors to the pub might have considered that they were entering a time warp. Comfortably furnished in something reminiscent of a pub from the 1950's, mainly older customers who all knew the landlord as 'John', unobtrusive background music from a bygone age, open fires, formica table tops, dominoes, the occasional friendly dog, dog chews for sale at the bar, old bottles and ephemera displayed as if they had been there for years, plenty of beer engines along the bar, the pressurised lager pumps tucked out of sight so as not to upset the CAMRA boys (and girls), low prices, friendly atmosphere, etc.

In 1999, and not for the first time, this pub was voted 'Colchester Pub of the Year' by CAMRA. The author of this book could not have agreed more!

previously named the **Mermaid** (the second)

1937 to 1984

The Mermaid was shown in licensing records from 1907, when it was owned by the Colchester Brewing Company as a beerhouse. However, it did not occupy the same building. In 1937, there was a dispute between the owners and the licensee and the latter refused to quit the premises or to sell the former's beer. The owners acquired the Georgian styled private house next door, had the licence transferred and commenced trading as the second Mermaid in Mersea Road. The front half of the building was built in the 1790's and the back half in the 1890's.

It is said that the pub was much used by theatrical types and that it was visited by both Houdini, the great escapologist and Charlie Chaplin the silent movie star. A past landlady recalls that there was a ghost, a cavalier, who was allegedly shot against a mulberry tree in the garden of the property during the Civil War. He has been seen at the top of the stairs. [Don't believe a word of it!]

In 1949, the pub was granted a full licence and thereafter became a public house under the ownership of Ind Coope.

The original premises are now a private house, with no outward indication that it was ever a pub. The later and present premises were renamed the Odd One Out in the 1980's.

for more details see the **Mermaid**.

---

### Old Ben Johnson

56 North Hill

The name of this pub would have been in memory of the 16th century English dramatist and poet who was a friend of Shakespeare and Bacon. North Hill was an area of affluence and the name of the pub was in keeping with the interests of its more well to do customers. Perhaps the 'old' refers to a desire to make the place seem older than it was.

see **Cock and Pie**

---

### Old Chequers

Bergholt Road

see the **Chequers**

---

### Old King Cole

Ipswich Road

1994 to 2004

a public house

destined for demolition in 2007

The name of this pub has come full circle on its original name which was simply the King Coel. As the nursery rhyme goes, 'Old King Coel was a merry old soul and a merry old soul was he, he called for his pipe and he called for his bowl and he called for his fiddlers three.' King Coel was of course a nickname for King Cunobelin, who once ruled the local area at the time of the Roman invasion in AD43 and the principal reason why the Romans came first to Colchester rather than anywhere else.

The pub underwent many changes over the years. Newly refurbished in 1994<sup>1</sup>, nearly 2000 years after its namesake ruled this land, it became a 'Hungry Horse' restaurant, although a drink at the bar was still a great attraction to the local population. It finally closed its doors in 2004 and the ever hungry property speculators homed in on its potential for demolition and the cramming of many multi-storey dwellings onto its site. The Salisbury Hotel went that way and the same consortium will, no doubt, have made their indelible mark here too by the time this book is produced.

Previously named the **Squires Table**

c1990 to 1994

During this period the landlord displayed a magnificent collection of all types of clocks in the bar area.

Previously known as **Hoofers**<sup>2</sup>

c1984 to c1990

It became a very popular pub with 18 to 30 year olds, being then owned by Tolly Cobbold.

previously known as the **King Coel**

1966 to c1984

Dilbridge Hall on the Ipswich Road, was purchased by Trumans in 1962 when a new licence was granted<sup>3</sup>. At first, Trumans intended to convert the house into a pub, but eventually it was pulled down to make way for the new King Coel. The pub was built to serve customers from the nearby newly built houses on the St Johns and Ipswich Road estates and its sign was taken from an early 19th century sketch of the king. It opened on 13th December 1966.

---

### Old Royal Oak

St Martin

Maidenburgh Street

see the **Royal Oak**

---

### Old Tavern

St Peter

?

18th Century

a tavern

location uncertain

This name of this tavern is plain and simple. It was an old rather than new tavern.

The only reference found to it is from court records from 1735, in connection with a boundary dispute. Sam Holditch was fined five shillings for encroachment by palisades. Nothing more is known about it but perhaps it had another name that is mentioned elsewhere.

---

### Old Whalebone

St James

East Hill

The name of this pub is another with seafaring links, with perhaps an actual whalebone being on show in its bar. Boats would reach as far as East Bridge nearby, to unload or take on new cargoes and many a thirsty sailor would have been tempted by this sign.

see the **Whalebone**

---

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 1994, ECS – 17<sup>th</sup> Jun 2005

<sup>2</sup> EG – 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 1985

<sup>3</sup> ECS – 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 1956, CG – 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 1966

## Oliver Twist

St Giles

Military Road

1983 to date (map 94)

a public house

currently a music venue



The name of this pub was taken from one of Charles Dickens characters and when it opened, was decorated and furnished in Victorian style, even down to all gas lighting. A designer name to fit a 1980's style which was then popular. The owner, Mr John Acton, bought the freehold from Ind Coope and looked out to him that there were then only three other Oliver Twists in the country and that all of them did good business. He also went on a trip to Gibraltar and noted that amongst the many bars over there, there was one which was doing better than the others - the Oliver Twist. That decided the name for him. He had some difficulty from local residents over the re-opening of the pub, which was to be a free house, but he won his case and the effect that he created made it a very popular watering hole. The pub sign pictured is from 1991.

The pub started to put on live music events which made it even more popular. Mr Acton sold the freehold to Greene King in 1986<sup>1</sup> and, following this change in ownership, the pub started to carve out a niche for itself by staging rock and heavy metal bands.

It was closed down for a short while in 1993<sup>2</sup>, due to the discovery of a structural weakness, when it was rebuilt internally and re-opened later in that year. It gained its first pub sign in a 'heavy metal' style.

This pub was purchased by the brewing concern, Greene King, and specialised in live music performances, usually for six nights a week. It was considered to be the live music pub in Colchester, with no pool or darts - just music and more music. Long hair, jeans, tattoos and Judge Dread 'T' shirts were recommended - but not compulsory. The author rarely missed an appearance of Dumpy's Rusty Nuts and their unique rendition of 'Cow S--t under me Wheels,' although they were just one of the many excellent bands that have appeared there.

It's not really a pub any more, but worthy of mention nevertheless.

Known for a short while around 2003 as the **Soundhouse**.

Already of great concern to the neighbours due to the activities of the house, somebody in their infinite wisdom decided to change its name from the benign Oliver Twist (or simply 'The Twist'), to a name guaranteed to inflame the tender sensibilities of the neighbours who, predictably, complained to the authorities about noise, slamming doors, yobbish behaviour, etc. It survived and the name reverted<sup>3</sup>.

previously the **Globe**

1865 to 1980

The licensing magistrates in 1865<sup>4</sup> received an application for a new licence for this house. The tenant was Henry Hempsted. It had then been used for the past seven or eight years as a beerhouse and this application was an application for the transfer of the licence formerly granted to the Red, White and Blue (a short distance away), which had been converted into a private house. Both houses were the property of Messrs. Nicholl. The application was refused and the house remained a beerhouse.

Until around 1920 the pub was owned by Nicholls, then by the Colchester Brewing Company and then by Ind Coope who closed it down in 1980, together with the the Caledonian and the Welcome Sailor.

The census of 1871 gives Thomas Webb, age 31, as the publican, followed in 1881 by William Baynham, age 58, licensed victualler, followed in 1891 by Charles Edward Scott, age 35, a brewer's agent. He was presumably not the landlord but minding the house on the night of the census.

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 1986

<sup>2</sup> EG – 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 1993

<sup>3</sup> ECS – 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2003

<sup>4</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 8<sup>th</sup> Sep 1865

After the pub was closed in 1980<sup>1</sup>, it was refurbished and re-opened as the Oliver Twist.



These two photographs were kindly donated by Mr and Mrs Horspool of Barnhall and were both taken at the Globe, Military Road.

The picture on the left shows: far left - Harold Charles Percival Morgan (Mrs Horspool's father and one time landlord of the Robin Hood), seated - Mr Clark (we think), with back showing - Harry Trott (we think). The other gentleman - unknown.

The right hand picture is of Mason's darts team, c1950 with: standing, from left - Jack Rand, all others unknown. seated, from left - Frank Horspool, Ken Harvey (later to become landlord of the Dog and Pheasant at Mile End), Harry Trott, Cecil Allen, Bill Wray.

The Globe was the HQ for a branch of the Royal Antideluvian Order of the Buffaloes (RAOB, or simply 'The Buffs').

**O'Neills**

St Peter

North Hill

2000 to date

a public house

currently a pub

In keeping with popular trends, this old pub became an Irish theme pub.

previously known as the **Waggon and Horses**

before 1745 to 2000 (map 78)

The naming of this pub would have been an obvious one to use, bearing in mind how regularly waggons and horses would have passed by its doors, making their way in to, or out of, town.

It appears in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 through until 1819, as might have been expected. After that it appears in trade directories and then in licensing records from 1872. The pub was owned by Osborne after 1872, who sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1886, later to be taken over by Ind Coope in the 1930's.

The various census entries give the following information:

1851 - Edward Dubbins,	age 28,	inn keeper
1861 - Thomas Watson,	age 43,	inn keeper and coachbuilder
1871 - Thomas W Watson,	age 52,	licensed victualler
1881 - Alfred Norman,	age 28,	licensed victualler
1891 - John L Brown,	age 52,	hotel keeper (manager)

Here follows an article written by Gerald Rickword in 1938<sup>1</sup> in response to the demolition of the ancient inn's timber framed building.

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 13<sup>th</sup> Mar 1981, 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 1982, 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 1983

One by one the old familiar landmarks of Colchester disappear before the ruthless onslaught of the housebreaker. Many will miss the picturesque Waggon and Horses on North Hill which is now making way for a new building designed to meet present day requirements.

Of the early history of the house, nothing is known, but from the year 1745 its story, quiet and uneventful as it is, can be traced from decade to decade. In that year the house bore the name of the Coach and Horses and was occupied by Thomas Cock, partner with William Cant in running the Harwich coach, which made its laborious way to London twice weekly, and was due back at the Essex seaport before the Holland packets sailed. Three years later, in advertising the removal of the Old Colchester stage coach from the Three Crowns to the White Hart, it was announced that 'Places are taken and Goods taken in at Mr Cant's own house at the Sign of the Coach and Horses at Colchester, next door but one to the Old Three Crowns.'

Mr Thomas Cant did not long retain the tenancy for, in June 1749, a reward of 5s was offered for the return of a black greyhound bitch which had been lost from Mr Thomas Stevens' at the Coach and Horses on North Hill. The advent of Mr Stevens marked an important stage in the history of the inn. Five years after taking over the lease he purchased the freehold, and at about the same time renamed the house the Waggon and Horses, he carrying on the business of a carrier or road waggoner to London, in addition to that of an inn keeper.

In November 1763, it was made known that, on December 5th a complete peal of eight new bells were 'to be rung for the first time' at the parish church of St Peter, which had been re-opened for public worship after rebuilding some years before. The following announcement concluded the notice. 'NB A Dinner will be provided at the Waggon and Horses, for all who please to dine, at Two of the Clock on the same Day, by their humble Servant, Thomas Stevens.'

Stevens, who lived a happy married life judging by the baptismal entries in the parish register, died in November 1768, and by his will bequeathed the inn, stable and granary to his wife Elizabeth, the property being valued at £600. In 1772, wedding bells rang out at St Peter's church when William Lee, of St Botolph's, was united to Ann Stevens, and hence stepped into his late father-in-law's shoes. The joys of the honeymoon over, it was announced that 'WILLIAM LEE, lately married to Miss STEVENS at the Waggon and Horses .... begs Leave to inform his Friends, that he has laid in a new Stock of all Sorts of Liquors, etc., and hopes for the Favours of all Friends who used the House in the late Mrs STEVENS' time.'

Although the ancient sport of cockfighting does not appear to have been viewed with favour by the civic authorities in Colchester during Lee's occupancy of the inn, fights were staged, and the following notice inserted in the Ipswich Journal of February 2nd, 1777, was read with much interest by the votaries of the cruel sport.

*COCKING. At the Waggon and Horses in Colchester, on Wednesday, March 5, will be fought a Main of Cocks, the Gentlemen of Suffolk against the Gentlemen of Essex, shewing 21 mains, for Five Guineas a battle and Ten the odd battle.*

*Feeders                SWAN for Suffolk  
                             FOLKARD for Essex*

*A good ordinary will be provided, where all Gentlemen will meet with a hearty welcome.*

*From their humble Servant,  
WILLIAM LEE.*

Later in the year a further day's pleasure was planned, and the announcement in the same periodical gives very full details of the arrangements.

*COCKING. To be fought for at the Waggon and Horses in Colchester, in a Welch main of 16 cocks on the 10th December. A dark brown filly 3 years old; a very good watch and 3 guineas. Each cock to pay One Guinea entrance, and have his door free; the best cock to have the horse; the second cock to have the watch, and the two cocks that win two battles each to have £1 11s 6d, and the losing cocks to have the door money between them. No cock to exceed 4lb 10oz and fight in fair reputed silver spurs. Any gentleman chusing to put in a cock to pay 10s 6d to the landlord; the rest at the time of weighing at Nine o'clock on Wednesday morning the 10th of Decbr.; to fight immediately after Weighing. Dinner at Two O'clock. A good Spangle Pudding for Dinner.*

Death robbed William Lee of his wife in 1779, and the inn was offered for sale with immediate possession, it being described thus, 'That good-accustomed Freehold Inn .... consisting of a hall, 3 parlours, a kitchen, a dining room, 4 bed chambers with garrets over them, two large cellars, commodious stabling for 30 horses, with granary and hay

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 16<sup>th</sup> Jul 1938

lofts, all in excellent repair. The premises, being at an old rate, are very moderately assessed to the land tax and poor rates, and are exceedingly eligible to convert into a private house, either for a gentleman or tradesman.'

James Stevens, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth, who succeeded to the property, entered into the management of the inn, while Lee appears to have devoted his energies to the carrying business of his late father in law, in conjunction with one John Brown. After over twenty years, 43 year old James Stevens died in 1801 and was buried in St Peter's churchyard. His will directed that the inn should be sold for the benefit of his widow Martha and their children. Martha carried on the business until 1811, when the inn was conveyed to Francis Smythies, Esq. and John Lay. Lay occupied the inn until 1815 when he was succeeded by William Bond.

This new landlord was an enterprising man and in 1818, built additional stabling for 100 horses. In 1819, he lost his wife after a long illness, 'who left an industrious husband and 5 children to lament her loss.' He continued for a few years being followed by George Knight around 1826. He in turn was followed around the year 1839 by Mrs Jemima Godden. In 1841, James Jarmen announced his taking of the Waggon and Horses Commercial Inn and asked for 'that distinguished support bestowed upon his worthy predecessor Mrs Godden,' and added the following useful information, 'NB. The Market Ordinary as usual on Saturdays, at the former reasonable charges. Well aired beds, good stabling, and a careful ostler. Bottled Porter, Cyder, etc.' Jarmen was succeeded in the 1850's by Thomas Ward Watson who stayed at the Waggon and Horses for some twenty years.

At the end of the 19th century the host was William Walsh, at a time when London volunteers of the famous Grey Brigade were quartered at this and other Colchester inns. A popular host in the early years of the present century was Thomas Adamson, a former Garrison-Major.

The Waggon was a typical market-town inn of its day, and no sensational occurrences seem to have disturbed the even tenor of its days. Its energies were devoted to the entertainment of coach and waggon passengers, bagmen, billeted soldiers and yeomen farmers from the country around.

One untoward incident in its story is recorded in the Common-Place Book of Benjamin Page, a substantial farmer of Fingringhoe, who noted on April 12th, 1800, that a son age 15 of Mr Daniel Dyer of Stanway, after spending the evening with his father at the inn, left at 8 o'clock to walk home, and was not heard of again, although a most diligent search was made and rewards offered for his discovery. However a few days later the diarist was able to add that the prodigal son had been 'found in a state of profligacy on the 15th inst., or more properly speaking, he returned home in that state'. In the previous year, Page recorded on December 14th, the purchase of eight Welch runts at Colchester for £32 and treating a man from Wivenhoe who selected the beasts for him, to two shillings worth of punch at the Waggon.

The inn's landlords appear to have escaped the fate which attended so many of its larger rivals and steered clear of insolvency although, among the bankrupts who were called upon to surrender to their creditors at the Waggon, was Mary Stevens, a milliner and probably sister of Thomas Stevens, the former host. The unfortunate debtor appeared for examination in June 1775.

Coachmasters and Innkeepers were informed in March 1792 that Messrs. Barlow and Bunnell would sell by auction in the Corn Market '11 capital seasoned coach horses, in high condition' belonging to the Colchester New Machine, a stage coach which was at that time running from the George to London three times weekly. The horses were on view at the Waggon, previous to the sale.

One who deserved well of his fellowmen in days when the streets of the town were paved with cobbles, made the inn his headquarters in the autumn of 1789, and among his many clients was one sufficiently grateful to insert the following appreciation in a newspaper.

*An Uncommon Discovery.*

*To the Public.*

*Having been attended by Mr SMITH, Chiropodist, of North Hill, Colchester, for the cure of an inveterate corn, declare myself perfectly cured. I with many others in London, judge Mr SMITH's abilities as great as any in the profession. I am with respect, GEORGE COATES, King's Messenger, Whitehall.*

*Orders directed to Mr SMITH, Waggon and Horses, Colchester, will be attended to.*

Mr Smith, whose celebrity in his profession permitted him to ignore the use of a Christian name necessary to lesser mortals, was also of a philanthropic nature and announced that 'Poor working people pay what they please.'

The pub's sign appears in a picture dated 1770, entitled 'King Coel's Pump,' showing that part of the High Street that has changed so much since.

In 1856<sup>1</sup> the newspapers recorded an extraordinary event. James Hall, late sergeant in the Essex Rifles and a native of Colchester, undertook to perform the following feat:

'to start from the Waggon and Horses at 6.00 am and proceed to the Angel Inn, Kelvedon, and return to the Waggon and Horses Inn three times per day for six successive days, trundling a hoop the whole of the distance, being 60 miles per day, or 360 miles within the week. The exact time of departure and arrival at each of the above places will be duly registered.'

Charles Smith, a Coggeshall estate agent, appears to have been incensed and wrote in reply:

'It seems a great pity that this man's time and bodily powers are not devoted to a better purpose than trundling a hoop 60 miles a day. If he is an industrious and trustworthy man I would have him apply to the General Post Office, for a situation as a walking country letter carrier, so that he might get an honest living and make a rational use of the powers which Providence has given him. If he is an idle man, who likes to live by other people's labours, the public should know it.'



The Waggon and Horses c1900, before demolition and rebuilding.

A 1907 newspaper article noted that the inn had been restored by its owners, the Colchester Brewing Company, who had converted it into a wine store. It was a three gabled and three storeyed timber frame building of great age. In 1938 the old pub was demolished and rebuilt in its present form.

An anonymous commentator had it that the pub was allowed to go to wrack and ruin during most of the 1930's by one Hills who used to go insane at the full moon. Apparently, he never made any effort to do any trade, having much personal wealth, and retired to 'The Chalet' in Sussex Road.

The pub has undergone a number of facelifts over the years and was, and still is, a favourite 'soldier's pub.' In 1994, it underwent another facelift, the lovely old sign that depicted a fine old waggon and horses, disappearing and being replaced with a sign of a very obscure appearance. A sign of the times perhaps! The pub has a ghost named Fred, an elderly gentleman with a peaked cap, who seems to enjoy turning things off in the cellar. He never ventures upstairs although he has been known to disappear through the odd wall or two.

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS? – 13<sup>th</sup> Apr 1956

In June 1999<sup>1</sup>, this pub was the centre of much discussion and letter writing to local newspapers concerning a televised programme called 'Soldier Town'. The programme makers wanted to show how soldiers and civilians co-existed in the town, especially when 'off-duty'. The main concern was over the lewd and sordid behaviour of young Colchester women. Colchester girls, it portrayed, were game for anything! It, soon after, changed its name to O'Neills.

---

### Ordnance Arms

St Leonard

3 Hythe Quay

1804 to 1959 (map 45)

a public house

demolished

The name of this pub is a probable reference to the nearby ammunition store on the quayside, the contents of which would eventually make its way to the army garrison. Was it a safe place to have a drink, one must wonder? It seems so as there were no explosions recorded.



The Ordnance Arms - c1932 (licensee Sidney Davie)  
(and Trumans Ale and Porter Store, later the Pico! Padre and later still, the Millenium bar)

---

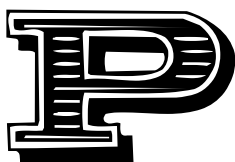
<sup>1</sup> EG – 1<sup>st</sup> Jun 1999

In the census of 1861, the landlord was shown to be James Martin, age 30, who described himself as a clerk and inn keeper. The 1871 census showed it in the occupation of Robert Shead, age 39, and described as an inn keeper and through twenty years to 1891, age 59, and described as a barge owner and licensed victualler. Up until 1899 it was owned by Grimston and then by Trumans until its closure in 1959. The building was later sold to Thomas Moy Limited. It was located next to an ale and porter store that later became the Picolo Padre wine bar. It was later demolished and replaced with a carbuncle of an office building known as Bridge House. What price progress?

---

*A woman drove me to drink and I didn't  
even have the decency to thank her.*

W C Fields



*For on this my heart is set:  
When the hour is nigh me,  
Let me in the tavern die,  
With a tankard by me,  
While the angels looking down,  
Joyously sing o'er me,  
Deus sit propitius,  
Huic potatori.*

An extract of verses of a poem  
written in 1163, possibly by  
Walter Map

*(Deus sit propitius,  
Huic potatori.  
Loosely translated as  
"May God be propitious  
to this drunkard!")*

---

### Packet - 1

St James

East Street

before 1764 to c1850

a tavern

location uncertain

The name of this pub is another one of nautical origin, it being a type of vessel that carried mail, goods and passengers at regular intervals. The river Colne was at that time navigable up to East Bridge and perhaps packet boats were within sight of this house.

The premises first appears in the licensing records for 1764 but was probably much older than this date. The last reference to it was in a trade directory of 1848. Its precise location is unknown.

---

### Packet - 2

St Leonard

131 Hythe Hill

1780 to c1860 (map 40)

a tavern

location uncertain

The 1851 census showed this pub to be six households up from the Dolphin, towards the Barley Mow. The building is shown next to St Leonard's church on the picture on the front cover of this book and in the Dolphin Inn section. The building was demolished around 1890 and two houses built on the site.

It first appears in the licensing records for 1780 with regular entries in trade directories up to 1859. The 1851 census shows George Page, age 51, Taylor (no mention of licence), at the address and much later in 1891, in the occupation of Thomas Bloomfield, age 49, described as a beer house keeper.

---

### Paddy's Goose

Vineyard Street

c1869

a tavern

precise location uncertain

The reason for the naming of this tavern is now lost with time.

The earliest record found to its existence is in the licensing sessions of 1869<sup>1</sup> when one James Francis was the licensee. Constable Knott of the Metropolitan Police, appointed to control prostitution in the town, stated that the house was 'a common brothel and a resort of prostitutes'. The applicant challenged the allegation, admitting that the constable had seen women drinking there - but he did not harbour them and that they merely went there for a drink. When pressed, he said he had no women living in the house but there were several living in rooms adjoining, and which he rented to them. The magistrates refused to grant a licence.

An article written by Joseph Phillips in 1906 and reproduced in chapter 4 mentioned that it was in the same vicinity as the Rose and Crown in Vineyard Street, but that it had then 'flown.' Could it have been that which later became the Scotch Ale Stores - shown on the 1909 map?

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 10<sup>th</sup> Sep 1869,  
Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 1869

### Perseverance

St Leonard

Hythe Hill

1833 to 1877 (map 43)

a beerhouse

demolished

One can only guess at the reason for the naming of this beerhouse. The building was demolished in 1910 and stood next to the Swan at the foot of Hythe Hill. The space that it occupied is now a car park belonging to a tool hire firm.

There was a flurry of articles about the building in the local newspapers of 1914<sup>1</sup>. It was reputed to have been inhabited by Catherine Parr, widow of Henry VIII. In the book, 'Cedar Court' by Julie M Roberts, it states that it was a beerhouse from 1833 until 1877, when it ceased to be a tavern, was converted into tenements and later became a furniture store. She states that, in 1910<sup>2</sup> it was demolished, the timbers marked, the parts taken to Ipswich and then to Surrey where it was rebuilt. The house at Kingston, Surrey, was later occupied by a Spanish order of nuns.

Built originally as a private house, it passed through many hands before it became an inn in the 1800's. In about 1880 it was bought by Mr Last who used it as a tenement building. Later it could no longer be used for accommodation purposes and was turned into a furniture store. Later still it was bought as a store by the Colchester Brewing Company.

This is said to be the house which was re-erected at Kingston Hill, although not to exactly the same design. Stained glass windows which contained the arms of Catherine Parr and the Howard family, are thought by some to have come from this house, thereby fuelling a theory that this was once her house. These were saved some years previously and are now safely preserved in the windows of the Siege House, East Street.

It was shown in the 1861 census with the landlord being one Charles Joslin, age 30, a beer house keeper. The plot that it once occupied later became parking space for cars.

---

### Piccolo Padre

Hythe

see the section covering 'Bars' at the end of the chapter.

---

### Pig

North Street

see the **Tramway Tavern**

---

### Pigg

St Botolph

?

18th century

a tavern

location uncertain

The name of this pub strikes me as a bit of 18th century fun. However, a scholarly view says that the name came from the Saxon 'piggen', a type of milking pail. When the pails were used for serving beer, customers would have dipped their mugs (known as piggs) in and served themselves.

It first appears in the licensing records for 1764 but was probably much older than this date. The last reference to it was in 1780. Its precise location is unknown.

---

### Pinnacles

St Giles

?

18th century

a tavern

location uncertain

The name of this pub may have been a reference to the pinnacles on top of the building or perhaps referred to the view of the pinnacles on top of St Johns Abbey Gate.

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 4<sup>th</sup> Apr 1914, 18<sup>th</sup> Apr 1914, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1956, 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 1962, 14<sup>th</sup> May 1965

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 19<sup>th</sup> Mar 1910

It only appears in the licensing records for 1764 but was probably much older than this date. William Wire referred to it in his diary in 1842<sup>1</sup>. Its precise location is unknown.

---

### The **Playhouse**

St John's Street

1994 to date

a modern alehouse

currently a pub

The name of this modern day alehouse (as it is termed by its owners), was taken from the fact that this was the original name of the building that was started life in 1929 as a theatre and later became the ABC cinema. To quote from Nicholas Butler's book 'Theatre in Colchester', 'this was a large commercial undertaking by a firm which already controlled the Norwich and Ipswich Hippodromes. It seated 1000 people on three levels and was built in a pseudo classical style that contained a good deal of Egyptiana. On 18th March 1929, it opened with a musical comedy, 'So This is Love'. Unfortunately, it was at about this time that the talkies appeared. In August 1930, the Playhouse became a cinema.'

The building was used as a bingo hall when the ABC closed, but that became redundant with the building of the new bingo hall in Osborne Street around 1990. It was purchased by J D Weatherspoon and a new licence granted in 1994<sup>2</sup>, against strong opposition from local licensees. There was mention at the time of it taking the name J J Moons, but it eventually opted for the Playhouse.

It soon became a popular place for all ages of clientele, attracted by the low priced beer and smart new decor. It has a large central bar with computerised tills and camera surveillance to dissuade any 'nere-do-wells.' The overall theme concentrates on its former use as a theatre/cinema, with old posters that had been discovered adorning the walls announcing the many acts that appeared there at one time - with names like Max Miller, Winifred Attwell, Wilson, Keppel and Betty, Michael Bentine, etc. The old picture house cameras are placed by the entrance doors. The stage area has a theatrical painted backdrop, with a false fireplace, that area being set aside for its non-smoking customers. The balcony is unused, with dummies scattered around in the seats, set as if they were watching a performance. The centrepiece is the roof dome which has a crescent moon and face hanging down and surrounded by gold painted mouldings. When it opened, it was selling beer at 79p a pint, as opposed to more than double that at most other pubs in the town. Another feature is that this is the only pub in town that does not have music.

originally known as **J J Moons**

The initial granting of a licence for this house in October 1994, was in this name.

---

### **Plough - 1**

St Mary at the Walls

Crouch Street

pre 1764 to c1770

an alehouse

location uncertain

The name of this pub is another typical of the period, whereby it refers to a common agricultural implement which would be recognised easily on a sign hanging outside the pub.

This house is shown in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 until 1770. Morant mentions the Plough Alehouse as being on the north side of Crouch Street, by which passed Plough Alley. This would place it in the area of where the present day King's Arms is situated. Its precise location or any other details remain unknown.

---

### **Plough - 2**

St Botolph

Magdalen Street

pre 1764 to 1969 (map 19)

an alehouse

demolished

This house is shown in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 until 1819 and then in trade directories for subsequent years. In 1872 it was owned by Osborne who sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1885, it having been

---

<sup>1</sup> Wire Diary 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 1842

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 1994, 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 1994,  
16<sup>th</sup> Dec 1994, 10<sup>th</sup> Mar 1995

entirely rebuilt in 1882. In 1925 it was shown to be owned by Daniells. However, it had passed in to the hands of Ind Coope by 1940.



Plough Corner c1783  
(a painting by Eyre?)

A painting believed to be by Eyre, also copied by Major Bale, is reproduced above and is also shown on the rear cover of this book. The sign of the plough is distinguishable on the far left of the picture, and the attire of the sergeant standing outside the old inn has enabled an expert to date the picture to c1783. The building had a typical Georgian style frontage, probably built onto a timber framed structure of much greater age. It is thought that the building on the right was the Woolpack. The picture below is from Edwardian times and shows a long gone view of this part of the town.



The Eyre picture shows that the Plough stood at the corner of the street, hence the area was historically known as Plough Corner. Joseph Phillips tells us, in his 1906 article (in Chapter 2), that the pub was rebuilt in 1882, a few houses along. The following picture shows this later building. The 1876 map shows its original position, hence the disparity in the shape of the buildings.



A book about Essex brewers claims that beer was brewed on these premises from as early as 1732, although no more details are known. The 1881 census gave the landlord as Thomas Pitt, age 52, inn keeper.

In 1900<sup>1</sup>, it was reported that three inn keepers were summoned for permitting drunkenness, namely the Fountain, the Plough and the Railway Tavern (a beer house), all close to each other. Full accounts were given of instances and the conclusion was that it was mainly due to reservists and not Colchester residents.

A newspaper article of 1952 stated that the pub's sign which was then affixed to the wall of the building, was thought to once have been a working plough, but of some considerable age. Whatever happened to that rusty old agricultural implement is unknown. In 1986<sup>2</sup>, there was an article about Freddie Bird, colourful landlord of this pub in the early 1920's, who was also a comedian and comic singer. He used to run a beer tent at local events such as the Colchester Rose Show.

Bacchus visited in 1963<sup>3</sup> when the licensees were Eric and Arlette Newton. He gave a snapshot of life in the pub on that particular day. The pub was closed in 1969 as a result of compulsory purchase for the St Botolph's

roundabout development. The photograph shows the building in 1967, shortly before it was demolished.

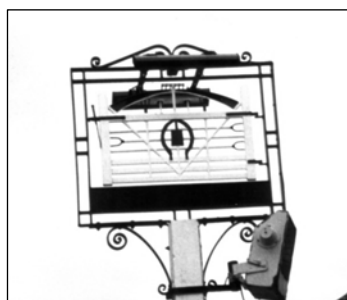
---

### Prettygate

### The Commons

1960 to date

a public house



The name for this pub was taken from the area of Colchester that is known as Prettygate. The pub's sign is a copy of the original gate, considered to have been a pretty gate, that belonged to the old farmhouse known as Prettygate Farm, which was knocked down to make way for this pub. The original gate is now all that remains, being safely preserved in the pub's garden (in 2000). Farmer William Baines<sup>4</sup> is believed to have made the original gate in the 1800's and would not then have known that a housing estate, a road and a pub would all be named after the product of his handiwork.

The pub was granted its first licence in 1960, it being built to serve the thirsty inhabitants of housing that was being built in the general area.

The Winkle Club once thrived at this pub, costing members a fine if they could not show their winkle when challenged so to do. (The winkle, of course, being the shell of a sea creature by that name - what else?) One of the pub's regulars indulged in a bit of one-upmanship and commissioned a winkle to be made from silver, which he would proudly display when challenged.

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar 1900

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 1986

<sup>3</sup> CE – 19<sup>th</sup> Sep 1963

<sup>4</sup> ECS – 17<sup>th</sup> Mar 1995

### Prince of Wales

Military Road

The name of this pub would have been taken from one of the many Princes of Wales, the title usually being given to the eldest son of the King or Queen of England. A very loyalist name for a pub.

see **Adnan's Jazz Bar**

---

### Priory Arms

St Botolph's Priory

1990's

a historical monument

not a pub at all

This reference is to a non-conformist non-licensed premises. It was a nickname used for St Botolph's Priory, an important clerical building founded by the Augustinian Priors (indeed the first in Britain) in the 12th century and much damaged by Cromwellian cannon ball shot during the siege of the town in 1648. This was the place where the 'have you got any spare change' brigade got together to drink their cans of 'Special Brew', having being banned from just about every pub in the town. Their presence was so strong that this important historical monument was left out of the official guided tour, for fear of upsetting the image of historic Colchester.

A recollection of this meeting place came from a member of the local constabulary who, with a colleague, was patrolling the hallowed grounds. The players were gathered around Mr Hawkins' tomb, as was the norm. The constable made comment to the gathering to the effect, 'I hope you're not doing any damage.' To which the quick reply was, 'Not as much as Henry the 8th!'

---

### Purple Dog

Holy Trinity

Trinity Street/Scheregate

2006 to date

a pub

This pub was given its name in 2006 when it opened for business in September of that year. It was previously known as the Clarence.

Previously known as the **Clarence**

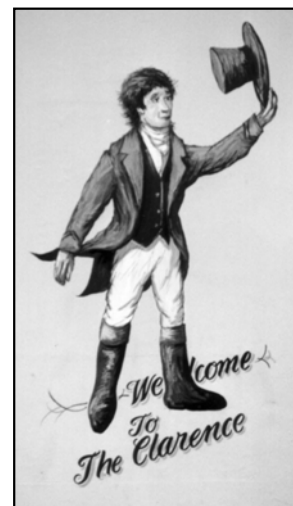
c1848 to 2006 (map 8)

The name of the pub could, like the Waggon and Horses, have been taken from a popular type of horse drawn carriage of the day, a Clarence being a roomy town family conveyance seating four people and drawn by two horses. It was described as being midway between a brougham and a coach. However, it is more likely to have been a simple reference to the Duke of Clarence who later became King William IV. William, Duke of Clarence (1765 - 1837), became King William IV and was succeeded by his niece, Queen Victoria.

The Clarence is one of the oldest pubs in the town. It is sited facing Scheregate Steps, originally a hole which was 'bashed' through the town's unique and famous Roman wall in the medieval period, to provide passage for people travelling to and fro from nearby St John's Abbey. This access point has since become one of the major tourist sights of the town, the Clarence being perfectly framed by its portals.

To say something of the pub's history, you would have to start by looking at its timber framed construction, of a style typical of the 17th century - when the best of the plenteous English oak went to build our fighting ships and what was left, our dwellings. Over the years, this one time tavern has grown in size, now taking up what were once at least four separate buildings.

The earliest reference to the name 'The Clarence' is in a trade directory of 1848, although it probably dates from a few year's earlier. The building fabric is much older than the pub, with its timber frame construction of the 17th century era.



An illustration on the pub's wall in the 1990's

The pub first appears by name in a trade directory of 1848 but not in 1845 or 1839. In the 1861 census it was run by William Minter, age 46, and described as an inn keeper. Local newspapers<sup>1</sup> in 1857 recorded that the said William Minter was refused a renewal of the licence of the Clarence, Trinity Street, 'it being a most notorious house'.

That did not seem to have impeded its business as it continued to be mentioned in each subsequent trade directory after that date. In 1872 it was owned by Osborne who sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1886.

The two census years of 1881 and 1891 shows it in the occupation of Charles Frost, age 26 and 36 respectively. By 1940 it was owned by Ind Coope. Memories of this house from the 1960's came in a book by George Pluckwell, who recalled:

*'the old widowed landlady, a plumpish lady who wore rows of shiny beads. She supervised her staff and lively inn like a sentry, pacing up and down behind the heavy wooden bar counters. On a Saturday night, the bar rung to the sound of rather boozy voices singing all the old songs, and the sounds of the ancient joanna could be heard streets away.'*

*'Pat was an attractive barmaid with hair like a raven's wing. She generally spoke to us in the modest snug. Often she sported a black eye. 'Been fighting with me boyfriend again' she explained. Sometimes she donned him with the frying pan. Today the pub has been tarted up like an old ship and even has a garden room. But I prefer that old-time character, now vanished with the distant sixties.'*



The Clarence c1920

---

<sup>1</sup> ES – 4<sup>th</sup> Sep 1857,  
Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 11<sup>th</sup> Sep 1857

This pub is one of the busiest of the town centre pubs and, in the 1990's, was owned by Carlsberg Tetley. In 2006 it was linked with the Ha-Ha concern in the High Street.

previously named the **Joiner's Arms**

c1776 to c1847

From around 1776 to 1847, the pub was known as the Joiner's Arms, perhaps a reference to the type of tradesmen that lived in the general area at that time. Previous to that it is believed to have been known as the Cock but, although the tavern appears in the alehouse recognisances by this name from 1764 until 1775, it would probably have dated from well before this period.

previously named the **Cock**

pre 1764 to 1775

Although the tavern appears in the alehouse recognisances by this name from 1764 until 1775, it would probably have dated from before this period.

John Bawtree owned St Botolphs Brewery, and this pub was amongst those in his possession. He bought the brewery from Benjamin Cock at some time between 1764 and 1814, and later sold it to Osborne.

---

*Drink today, and drown all sorrow:  
You shall perhaps not do it tomorrow.*

John Fletcher



*A man goes into a pub with a giraffe.  
They drink pint for pint all night and at the end of the evening,  
the giraffe falls over drunk and incapacitated.  
The man gets up and goes to walk out. The barman shouts after him,  
'You're not going to leave that lying there are you?'  
The man replied, 'That isn't a lion - it's a giraffe.'*

---

### Queen Elizabeth's Head

St Runwald

High Street

c1558 to c1760

an ancient inn

demolished

This inn would have taken its name from Queen Elizabeth I of England. The adoption of this name was not lightly undertaken, for such signboards that did not do full justice to 'hir Majesties person, favour, or grace' were by the imperious lady's own order 'knocked in pieces, and cast into the fire,' and she further directed that all subsequent artistic efforts were to be 'licensed by the head officers of the place,' and were to conform strictly to a portrait she caused to be painted 'for the satisfaction of her loving subjects.' Her reign is perhaps the most colourful and splendid in England's history, with the foundation of the British Empire, the power of Spain challenged on the seas and finally broken by the defeat of the Armada, the flowering of the Renaissance, the work of William Shakespeare, and so much more.

The following is based on an article written by Gerald Rickword around 1934<sup>1</sup>.

On the north side of High Street, where the parishes of St Runwald and St Peter meet, at 'The Queen's Head Gateway,' a point known to all in times past when the good old custom of bumping small boys at parochial boundaries was still observed, there stood a 'large and commodious inn' of which, although carrying on in business for some 300 years, but little record exists.

Standing in the centre of the town, overlooking the stocks, where some of its patrons may have repented of indiscretions in the cold and the rain, the inn witnessed all the pageantry of Colchester's history. Here met men who had fought at Agincourt, others who marched to Tilbury Fort under Gloriana's banner, or sailed down the Colne to face Spain's vaunted Armada, cavaliers and Roundheads, merchants and men of affairs, who would have gravely discussed a strange project advanced by William Mott in 1662, that all the inns in the town be purchased by the Council and put under their own management, the profits arising from this early attempt at municipal trading being devoted to the relief of the poor.

Some twenty years later when the landlord was one of the great Smith clan, a yearly rent of 1s was payable to the town, with an additional 2d for an encroachment, and a still further charge of 1s for 'Ye standing of ye signe poste in ye street.' Its proximity to the Moot Hall made it a convenient meeting place for committees drawn from the Council, whose deliberations took place in a secluded room undisturbed, but for the occasional entry of the drawer or barman in response to demands for refreshments - later paid for from the funds of the borough. Such a bill incurred here in 1735 reads: '2 pints of Red 1s 8d, 3 pints of Wite 3s, 2 mugg of Ale 4d, for Welsh Rabbit 4d, for backer 1d - Total 5s 5d.'

The best known of a long line of landlords was Byatt Walker, a member of an old Colchester family. He was a typical inn-keeper of his day, 'an honest plain man' of respectable family and moderate education, a sound judge of horse flesh and of wine, he possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge of the roads, their inns and stages, and of the farms and their occupiers for miles around. He was proud of his town, of which he was a free burgess and had some knowledge of its antiquities, on which he was pleased to expound to any enquiring traveller. In the conduct of his house he was ably assisted by his wife, Ann Sparrow, whom he had married in 1724, a woman who took a pride in her home cured hams and preserves, welcomed her road weary guests with a smile as she busied herself attending to their needs, ruled her maids with a firm but kind hand, and who when the labours of the day were over, enjoyed a game of cards and a gossip with her neighbours.

In 1748, a London coach was running on alternate mornings from the Queen's Head, and its next door neighbour the Three Cups, to the Black Bull in Leadenhall Street. On Tuesdays, the coach returned to Colchester, and after a night's repose, continued its journey to Harwich. On Thursdays it went no further than the Queen's Head, but on Saturdays it was advertised to 'fly' to Harwich in one day to be in time for the Holland packet boats, a start being made from the London inn at 1 am.

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 11<sup>th</sup> Aug 1934

Again in 1748, during a visit to the Moot Hall by the Norwich Company, tickets were to be obtained here and at the Bear and the Three Cups Inns, the season's plays including 'The Concious Lovers' bespoke by Isaac Martin Rebow, Esq., and described by Fielding's Parson Adam's as containing 'some things solemn enough for a sermon;' Shakespeare's 'Measure for Measure' by desire of Nicholas Corsellis, Esq. and his lady; and 'The Provok'd Husband, or, a Journey to London,' at the request of the Gentlemen Foxhunters.

During the parliamentary elections in 1754, the Queen's Head was one of the inns opened in the interest of John Olmius, Esq. of New Hall, Boreham, who, possibly in a large measure due to the unlimited quantities of meat and drink provided for his supporters, was returned top of the poll.

In 1749, Walker, in addition to the Queen's Head, took 'the Old Three Crowns Inn ... fronting the grand high Street in the high Town,' but possibly this undertaking was too great a strain on his capital, or the responsibility of running both inns was too great for him, for he advertised in 1751, the remaining portion of his lease of the former inn for disposal. No satisfactory offers being made, he remained at the Queen's Head but again advertised in 1755 as 'an Antient and old-accustom'd Inn ... containing above thirty Good Rooms, with large Wine Vaults and Cellars, and good Stables for one hundred Horses; with a Brewing Office, and all Manner of Outhouses, Yards, and other Conveniences,' with the proposition that a tenant might let off warehouses and granaries to the value of £10 a year without any inconvenience to his business.

Paul Potter became the next tenant, but in 1757 he retired and his furniture offered for sale. The old inn was doomed it seems (its nearby rival the Three Cups was building up a good custom) and a few years later, in 1763 it was privately occupied by Mr Barnard, surgeon.

It was demolished at some point, becoming the site of the much enlarged Cups Hotel, which stood until it too was demolished in the 1960's.

In 1763 a Roman mosaic was found in what was then described as the garden of the Falcon and Queens Head, on the north side of the High Street.

also known as the **Queen's Head** - 1

previously known as the **Falcon** or **Fawcon**

c1420 to c1588

Morant wrote, 'This Chantry was founded in pursuance of the Will of Edmund Haverland of this Town, which was enrolled in 1431. He therein bequeathed to the keeper, brothers and sisters of the Holy Hospital of the Holy Cross in Colchester, and their successors forever, all his Inn, called the Fawcon, with all the rentaries thereto annexed, and their appurtenances, situated in the market place of this town, and in the parishes of St Peter and St Runwald.' This and other property included were presumably granted with the other possessions of the hospital to Lord Chancellor Audley at the dissolution of the monastic establishments.

What significance the sign had when first displayed it is impossible to determine. It may have represented the 'falcon belled' - fawcon being another form of the spelling - of the noble sport of hawking, or the falcon in his proper natural colour, of Edward III (1327 to 1377), the hero of Crecy, who committed to the care of the bailiffs of Colchester some of the prisoners captured at that decisive battle, possibly in acknowledgement of the town having furnished him with five ships and nearly 200 mariners for the blockade of Calais in 1347. A later re-painting may have shown the 'Faucon argent and the Fetterlock' of the commercially minded king, Henry VII, which remained until the accession of Elizabeth I of England in 1558, who visited Colchester within twelve months of coming to the throne, and which would have brought about a further change in the sign. Mine host of the day, who could with the aid of a little paint, have altered his signboard to the 'white falcon crowned, holding a sceptre,' the badge of Anne Boleyn and of the new queen, her daughter, in the way that tavern lions have frequently changed their hue, and white boars became blue after Bosworth Field, preferred, regardless of cost, to display a new sign representing the Virgin Queen. The inn then became the Queen Elizabeth's Head, later shortened to the Queen's Head, although Morant speaks of it with its full title.

---

### Queen Elizabeth's Head

?

c1776

a tavern

location uncertain

see the **White Hart**

### Queen's Arms

St Runwald

43 Pelhams Lane

c1840 to c1894 (map 51)

a beerhouse or inn

demolished

The name of this pub, together with those that follow, are probably the most common of names of pubs in England. They are a simple demonstration of loyalty to the Crown, and of special relevance to a town such as Colchester where the armed forces have played such an important part since Queen Victoria's reign.

It was an old timber framed building which stood at the south west corner of Pelhams Lane, overlooking Trinity churchyard.

It was listed as a beerhouse and, as such, does not appear in the alehouse recognisances by name. It is first mentioned in trade directories in 1848, apparently closing some time after 1894<sup>1</sup> when it appeared in a list of houses owned by the Colchester Brewing Company. It is mentioned in an 1869<sup>2</sup> newspaper reporting on Licensing Day proceedings, being cautioned about its conduct. It was then described by a policeman as a 'perfect brothel' but that a new landlord, a Mr Benjamin Firmin, had brought the house back into good order. The renewal application in 1870 referred to the house as being called the Green Dragon, presumably with a full licence. There is now no trace of the original building.

Some indication of its disreputable character was recorded in an 1865<sup>3</sup> newspaper when George Pettican, a pig jobber and landlord of the Whalebone Inn at Fingringhoe was robbed of £75 in notes, gold and silver. He admitted that he was the worse for drink at the time when he first picked up with two women, Mary Tiesenger and Emma Vaughan and went into the Queens Arms. Most of the money was recovered and the landlord, John Buckingham, was called to give evidence.

previously known as the **Green Dragon** or **Griffin**

c1823 to c1840

The names Green Dragon and Griffin would refer to the same mythical beast, the Griffin returning some years later as the emblem of the Midland Bank.

William Wire's diary of 1846 mentioned the removal of the corner of the building and its jetty which would have jutted out across Pelham's Lane with other buildings of its time.

---

### Queen's Head - 2

80 Hythe Hill

c1760 to 1982 (map 42)

a public house

in other use

A newspaper article in 1982<sup>4</sup> announced the closing of this pub, together with the Waterloo in Magdalen Street. It stated that they were the latest to be axed by owners Ind Coope, with this pub being affected by the run-down of the Hythe as an industrial and commercial centre. Efforts were made to re-open it in 1990, but the authorities turned the application down because of lack of parking and protests from local residents.

The Queen's Head was an ancient pub dating, at least, from 1764 and probably well before that. It was sold by Osborne to Colchester Brewing Company in 1886 and later passed to Ind Coope. It is mentioned in 1901 census when John Somers, aged 56, was the publican.

The building was heavily restored some years ago but still retains its ancient timber framework internally. After it closed as a public house it became shop premises.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Essex Telegraph - 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1894

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 10<sup>th</sup> Sep 1869, Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 27<sup>th</sup> Aug 1869, 10<sup>th</sup> Sep 1869, 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 1869

<sup>3</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 8<sup>th</sup> Sep 1865

<sup>4</sup> ECS – 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 1982

**Queen's Head - 3**

St Giles

?

c1764 to c1770

a tavern

location uncertain

This tavern is mentioned in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 to about 1770. Nothing else is known of it.

---

**Queen's Hotel**

Berechurch Road

1894 to date

a public house

This pub was built as a hotel although it never seems to have functioned as such. An odd place to build a hotel one might think but its owners may have thought it would take trade from the Britannia, some short distance towards the town. It was then the first pub that a traveller would come upon when journeying into town by that road. It would also have enjoyed the custom of soldiers from adjacent barracks that were being built for an ever expanding garrison. To this day there has always been a rivalry with the Britannia.



The Queen's Hotel c1900

It was built in 1894 having a new licence, by its owners Nicholls who later sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company and who subsequently sold it to Ind Coope. The 1901 census shows the licensed victualler as George Shurley[?], age 51, born in India but a British subject.

A postcard photograph dating from around 1900, is shown below. It gives the licensee as a Mr Ernest Warner, and the picture shows a large group of people standing outside. Presumably, Mr Warner is pictured amongst the crowd, together with several military personnel and a young girl on a pony. What could the occasion have been?

---

*When I read about the evils of drinking, I gave up reading.*

Henny Youngman



*When you have lost your inns down your empty selves,  
for you will have lost the last of England.*

Hillaire Belloc

---

### Railway Refreshment Rooms

Railway Station

c1865

public house

precise location unknown

This is not really a pub but is worthy of mention surely, if only for the tale that follows.

The licensing sessions in 1865<sup>1</sup> heard from Mr Downes (Head Constable?) that, 'a number of persons, he did not mean to say at any one time; were in the habit of going to the refreshment rooms at the Railway Station at the time the trains were running on Sunday to be served with beer, etc. at a time when the ordinary public houses were not opened. On the previous day he took the opportunity of going down to see if this was the case, and in the refreshment rooms he found two notorious characters well known to this Bench, being supplied with refreshment, after partaking of which they left the station. This, of course, beside being contrary to the Act of Parliament, was unfair to other publicans. and he mentioned it that Mr Mills, the occupier of the rooms, might take care the like might not occur again'. The Bench agreed and a warning was given.

Was this at North Station or St Botolphs? The latter is more likely, don't you think?

---

### Railway Tavern - 1

Mile End

Bergholt Road

The name of this pub and the others of the same name, would have been taken from the railway that came to Colchester in the 1840's, first at the station now known as North Station and then later at St Botolphs, more recently renamed Colchester Town.

see the **Colchester Arms**

see also the **Chequers**

---

### Railway Tavern - 2

Lexden Road

c1848 to c1863

unknown

now a private house

The only references found to this public house or beerhouse is in trade directories from 1848 through to 1863. The shape of the plot was identified by Bowler's plans of 1843, which were commissioned by its owners Cobbold brewers. It was a bow-fronted building facing north, with a small pond to its north west, suggesting that it was near to Spring Lane, which fits perfectly with the old timber framed building that now stands opposite to Lexden church.

---

### Railway Tavern - 3

St Giles

Magdalen Street

19th century to 1909 (map 22)

a beerhouse

partly demolished

This particular Railway Tavern was situated on the eastern corner of Magdalen Street and Military Road. An old photograph showed the main bar in a position that is now simply a section of pavement with a billboard proffering ever changing products. The road must have been widened at some point after the pub finally closed its doors.

---

<sup>1</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 8<sup>th</sup> Sep 1865



The Railway Tavern c1900

This pub was close to other pubs, with a short stroll across the road to the Inkerman or the Prince of Wales and, of course, was directly opposite the railway station – hence its name! Indeed, the newspapers reported in 1867<sup>1</sup> that it was kept by Mr John Brown, jun., and that it applied for a full licence on the grounds that, directly opposite, was about to be erected new goods sheds. The application was refused and it remained a beerhouse.

The pub is shown in the 1871 census when John Bloomfield, age 24, described himself as a beerhouse keeper. He was still there in 1881, age 34, described as a publican. It was owned by Grimston up until he sold it to Trumans in 1899 and was closed down in 1909. It was one of three inns fined for permitting drunkenness in 1900<sup>2</sup> and seemed to have been a favoured watering hole for soldiers.

## Rainbow

St Botolph

21 Long Wyre Street

c1860 to 1922 (map 11)

a public house

demolished

The name of the pub is a popular one throughout the country and its sign would have been easily recognised. The story goes that a crock of gold could be found at the end of a rainbow. Perhaps a few people thought that they would find their fortune in this pub.

The earliest reference found to this pub was in the newspapers of 1860<sup>3</sup>, when it applied for a licence for the Rainbow beerhouse on Licensing Day. Mr Church applied for the licence, kept by T B Rampling and the property of Mr Salmon. He compared this house to the nearby Tailor's Arms, a house of so very indifferent a character. Mr Philbrick opposed the application on behalf of Messrs. Osborns, the proprietors of the Tailors Arms. The application was refused.

The 1861 census showed one Thomas Ramplin, age 37, describing himself as carpenter and inn keeper. In the censuses of 1871 and 1881, it was in the occupation of James London. In 1891, it was being run by Florence McInmon, age 31, a widow and described as an inn keeper. By the time of the 1901 census, Charles Dawes, aged 52, was the 'inn keeper'. It was owned by Bridges until it was sold to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1884.

<sup>1</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 30<sup>th</sup> Aug 1867

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar 1900

<sup>3</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 7<sup>th</sup> Sep 1860

At the licensing sessions in 1922<sup>1</sup>, it was stated that there were 31 licensed houses within 400 yards of this house and that its conduct had not been very good. Owners, the Colchester Brewing Company, said the trouble had been through soldiers. The landlord had refused a soldier a drink and other soldiers had created a disturbance. Their general put the house out of bounds, but the committee decided to close it down.

---

### Recreation Hotel

Military Road

The name of this pub would have come from its location, overlooking the recreation field.

see **Vito's**

---

### Red Bull

St Botolph

?

date unknown

a tavern

location uncertain

The only reference found to this establishment was in the St Botolph's Church chest. More research is clearly necessary to discover its location, presumably in that parish.

---

### Red Cow - 1

North Street

The name of this pub is perhaps a variation of that popular pub name of the Bull. Its location on North Street would have meant it seeing many a red cow go past the windows, both to and from market.

see **Chaise and Pair**

---

### Red Cow - 2

St James

Harwich Road

1792 to c1845

a tavern

location uncertain

This tavern is shown in the alehouse recognisances from 1792 and in trade directories for 1823 and 1827. There is a reference in the Tithe Map of 1845 to the Cow Inn, which is probably the same house. Its location was in the same general position as the present day Flying Fox, so perhaps this was that pub's previous name before it was demolished in the 1920's for a total rebuild. Nothing else is known of its history.

It is possible, if not probable, that it later became known as the Spotted Cow, although the reason why a red cow would change its markings is now lost with time. Perhaps it was the pub sign makers mistake or little joke by a new landlord.

see also the **Spotted Cow**

---

### Red Cow - 3

St Peter

?

19th century

a tavern

location uncertain

All that is known of this Red Cow is from a mention in the Museum Collection referring to Mr Laver's notes, stating that it later became the Railway Tavern. Could this be the Railway Tavern (later the Colchester Arms) at North Station? There are also property deeds dating from 1682 to 1843, which include land where the Ipswich Arms, Dukes Head and the Red Cow once stood. Are these two references about one and the same property?

---

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 17<sup>th</sup> Jun 1922

### Red Cross

St Giles

Magdalen Street

c1820 to 1907

a public house

precise location uncertain

The reason for the name of this pub is now lost with time. One might think that it would have come from that organisation which began in Switzerland as a result of the Geneva Convention in 1862 and took this name and symbol to indicate the neutrality of ambulances and hospitals in time of war - and which would have had special relevance to Colchester's military connections. However, this public house is much older than that date and the name is therefore probably a patriotic one, taken from the red cross of England, now incorporated in the British Union Jack flag, which derived from England's patron saint George who slew that nasty old fire breathing dragon. The question is, were Scots, Welsh and Irishmen made welcome here?

The pub first appears in the trade directories in 1823 and was later mentioned in a murder case in the newspapers, in 1827, when Thomas Patrick of the nearby Yorkshire Grey was struck down and killed. In 1872, it was owned by Osborne who sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1886. It gets a mention in the 1871 census when Christopher Johnson, age 44, is described as a horse dealer and publican and later in the 1891 census when George Hawkins, age 42, was described as a beer house keeper, along with his wife and eight children and 6 lodgers. The pub closed in 1907.

---

### Red Lion Hotel - 1

St Nicholas

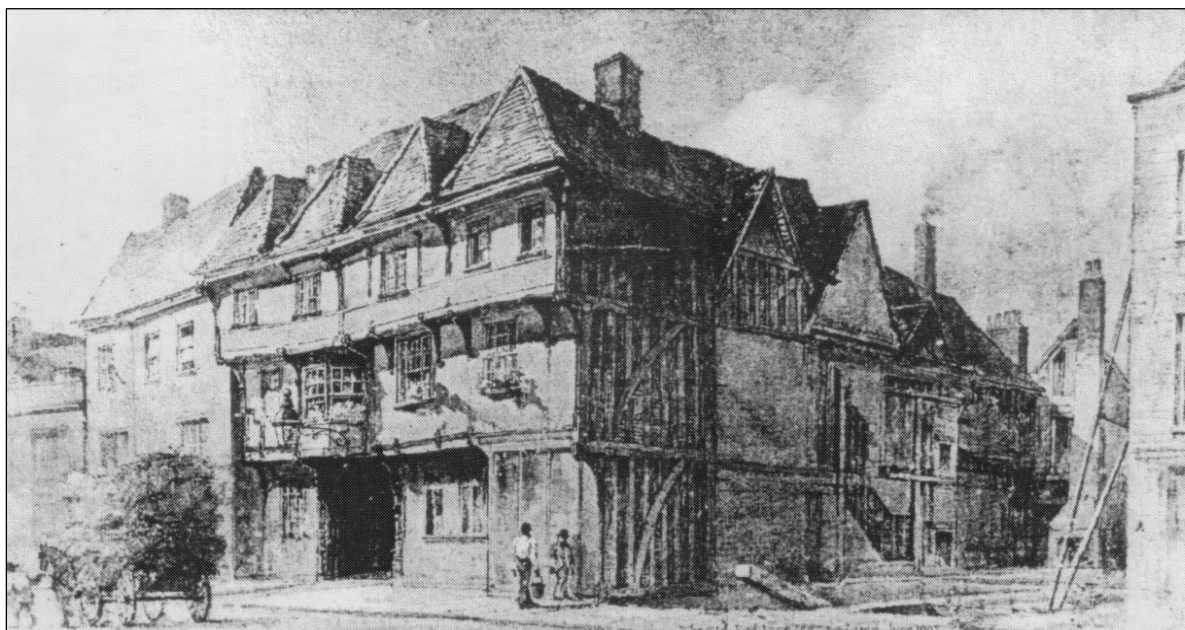
44 High Street

15th century to date (map 53)

an ancient inn

now a hotel

The name of this ancient hostelry is another popular one throughout the country, it being a symbol of England. The red lion is depicted on many heraldic shields, perhaps the most famous being that of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster who died in 1399.



A watercolour painting by Major Bale giving an unusual view of c1810.

The age of this building might just fit the period. However, archaeologists uncovered a splendid lion mosaic in Lion Walk, dating from Colchester's Roman period. Is it possible that the name could have been passed down through so many centuries, making this the site of the oldest pub in Britain? Archaeologists discount this as pure coincidence, saying that Lion Walk was once known as Cat Lane. But what was a lion if not a cat?

What later became the famous inn is known to have once been the private residence of the Howard family, whose arms displayed the White Lion and which is believed to have been the earlier name of this ancient house. One of the family, Sir John Howard, (c1430 to 1485), was appointed Constable of Colchester Castle in 1461 and later in 1483 was created Duke of Norfolk. He fell at Bosworth, fighting for Richard III. It was his grandson, the third duke, Thomas (1473 to 1554), who then as the Earl of Surrey, was named in a deed as the owner of the White Lion. It underwent a

change in colour to the Red Lion, although the date at which this happened is uncertain, the inn being, in antiquity, generally referred to as the Lion.

A magnificently carved wooden panel has survived the passing of the centuries, facing onto the High Street, forming the archway leading into the yard. It depicts what appears to be England's patron saint, St George and the Dragon. Much discussion has taken place in recent years as to why the Red Lion should have such a subject carved into its facade when, just across the road, stands another ancient hostelry, the George, also once known as the George and Dragon. The most likely explanation for the carving is that Sir John Howard held the Order of the Garter, (an order of chivalry founded by Edward III, in St George's name, in 1350). Bearers of the order were and still are, entitled to display St George and the dragon as part of their heraldic identities.

Alternative theories revolve around it simply being a means of warding off evil spirits, or that the carving once belonged to the inn of the same name. What do you think?

The court rolls of the town record that in 1527, 'wellys at the lyon for ingratying of the market' was fined 3s 4d. In 1603, records show that the Lyon, the Angel and the White Hart were appointed the only three wine taverns in the town, being ancient inns and taverns. The Angel stood at the corner of West Stockwell Street and the High Street, but only exists in a later form as council offices. The White Hart used to stand in High Street, where Bank Passage passed through it. The 'Lyon' is therefore the only one of these three to still stand in anything like the form it would have taken in 1603.

By 1625, it had definitely become the Red Lion, possibly in recognition of the accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne in 1604, an act which added the red lion to the royal coat of arms.

The building's oldest features are the 14th century stone doorway and some of the masonry in the vaulted cellars, where a Roman pavement was uncovered. The building is mainly of 15th century origin with extensive exposed timbers.

Apparently, the hotel has a ghost, said to be that of Alice Miller who was 'fouly done to death' in 1633. In 1741 the following statement was made before an Ipswich justice and reveals a long forgotten intrigue.



'Whereas it has been falsely and scandalously reported that some Company who were met together at the Red Lion Inn at Colchester on Admiral Vernon's birthday, did there burn the Effigy of the said Admiral Jonathan May, the Master of the said Inn, Maketh Oath that he does believe the said Report to be entirely false and groundless: and that he does not know that any Company met at the said House, either then or at any other Time, did any Thing in Derision of the said Admiral or his Proceedings, Ipswich, May 1, 1741. Jonathan May. Sworn before me, John Sparrowe.'

The foregoing came from a newspaper article by Mr Gerald Rickword<sup>1</sup> in reference to maritime pub signs and in which he noted that Colchester did not have an Admiral Vernon or a Portobello amongst its inns and taverns.

One of the inn's 18th century personalities was one Bobby Wass. He was a waiter at the Red Lion and is the subject of this etching by James Dunthorne, which was reproduced on much locally used pottery and china, though none appears to have survived. Wass was recalled in the notebooks of E B Strutt as follows:

*"This eccentric little man, who wore a wig with a long queue, blue coat and waistcoat, dark breeches, white stockings and large buckles on his shoes, was very angry whenever, in the various houses, he met with his effigies (which were exactly like him), so that he always contrived to break the vessel or basin upon which it was represented, till they argued with him, saying, 'Why Mr Wass, are you so offended seeing that the King and Queen have had their portraits drawn?' This appeal somewhat reconciled him, so in future the work of spoliation was dispensed with."*

The Red Lion was amongst the first inns to be used by the London coaches with evidence of this as far back as 1756. It is shown in the alhouse recognisances from 1764 to 1819. In 1843, William Wire recorded in his diary that an

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 22<sup>nd</sup> Aug 1947

omnibus ran to and from the Red Lion to the newly opened railway station and at a cost of 6d per person. The various census entries show the following:

1851 - Fanny Heard,	age 54,	inn keeper
1861 - William Fletcher,	age 49,	hotel keeper and post master
1871 - William Fletcher,	age 58,	licensed victualler
1881 - Martha A Black,	age 40,	hotel proprietor
1891 - Henry E Heath,	age 36,	hotel keeper, plus 14 staff
1901 - Fred Rees,	age 45,	proprietor, with his wife and 15 others, mainly staff

The reference in 1861 refers to the fact that the Red Lion at one time acted as the Post Office, the innkeeper cum post master providing horses to ride post. With the increase in post business he found he could not devote enough time to it and had to delegate to servants, with inevitable irregularities creeping in.



The Red Lion c1920  
(possibly the most photographed pub in town!)



Red Lion Yard c1920

The licensing records which start in 1872 show that it was then owned by Fletcher who sold it to Daniells in 1884. In 1925 it was owned by Trust Houses. It underwent ownership by several bodies, being purchased in 1987 by Cordwell Properties who had plans to restore it. It was offered for sale in 1991 with 24 'en suite' bedrooms, etc. and at a price tag of approximately £750,000. The three star hotel was offered for sale again in 1994, by owners Restoration Inns of Surrey.

The photograph above is dated c1920 and shows Red Lion Yard as it then was and some of the staff of the hotel, complete with cat. The picture is in the possession of Mr Jack Swainston whose father, John Bassett Swainston, pictured seated second from the left with his arms folded, was head waiter at the hotel. Others in the picture are Captain Oswald Bradbrook Hill and his wife Mrs Dorothy Alice Hill, managers of the hotel.

A memory of the 1960's was passed down in a book by George Pluckwell when 'it had a Gentleman's Only Bar for, I suppose, husbands to get away from their wives or mothers-in-law. Strange though, for I noticed a middle-aged woman serving in there, so you can never really escape them!'

What was once a fine old coaching inn has now been fragmented into tiny shops crammed-in along its frontage and throughout its ancient yard. It no longer offers a pint of beer to a customer off the street as it once did, although a drink at the upstairs bar, a viewing of the beamed ceilings and a chat about the ghost, is to be recommended.

---

<b>Red Lion - 2</b>	Holy Trinity	?
1770	a tavern	location uncertain

This Red Lion is probably a tavern that took the name as a result of some incident or ill feeling that has long since been forgotten. It only appears in the alehouse recognisances in 1770 and presumably closed shortly afterwards or took another name. The nearby Fleur de Lys and the Three Crowns at the top of North Hill appear to have suffered in the same way and around the same period.

---

<b>Red Lion Tap</b>	St Nicholas	32 Culver Street
c1850 to c1902	a tap	demolished

Like the Angel, the Cups and the George, the Red Lion had a taproom with its own customers. It was located in Culver Street, later demolished to make way for the building of the Lion Walk precinct.

The 1851 census shows it in the occupation of Mark Springett, age 41, described as a victualler. By 1871, his widow, Susannah, age 66, was described as 'in charge of tap.' In 1891, Arthur J Mole, age 30, was its manager. It is mentioned in the trade directories in 1902 but not in the licensing records by name. It therefore probably had a beerhouse licence only.

---

<b>Red Roan</b>	?	Middleborough
c1900	a beerhouse	now a shop

The name of this house would appear to be taken from a type of horse, perhaps a favoured animal of the owner, again maybe purchased from the livestock market across the road from this house.

All that is known of this tavern or beerhouse is in the Museum Collection which refers to a report by Stephen Woodroffe, a baker, who lived in the house which was formerly the Red Roan. It was said to have been located in Middleborough, close to the north east corner of St Peter's Street. Laver states that it later became Woodroffe the baker around 1918.

## Red Umbrella

town centre?

c1945

a bar

location unknown

A Dutch gentleman by the name of Hendrick Westerouin contacted the author in September 1997, looking for a pub by this name. He used to frequent it when he was stationed here during the war, working on a ship being built in Wivenhoe, and after some 50 or so years, returning to the town for a nostalgia trip to find it again - and perhaps enjoy a drink or two. The author had never heard of a pub by such a name but promised the Dutchman that he would make enquiries of the 'Good Old Boys.' He didn't have to enquire very far as his neighbour, Frank Jones, remembered well that there was a large red umbrella that hung outside Kendall's shop, to the right of the Red Lion. Harry Cheshire was the landlord at that time, Frank recalled. On reporting this to Hendrick, he was sure that this was not the pub that he knew.

Can anyone answer this mystery?

## Red, White and Blue

Military Road

see the **Alma**

## Rifleman

St James

29 Ipswich Road

c1863 to 1953 (map 71)

a public house

demolished

The name of this pub is of military origin, despite being located well away from where the modern day barracks are situated. It was named after the Essex Rifles, whose barracks were within a short distance.

At the licensing sessions in 1863<sup>1</sup>, a full licence was applied for by Messrs. Bridges, the tenant being Samuel Howe. The 1871 census shows Samuel Miller, age 60, who was described as a publican. Close by, and for at least 20 households, were living a Staff Sergeant, a Sergeant Major, a Colour Sergeant, a Bugle Major, a Hospital Sergeant, a Paymaster Sergeant, a Master Sergeant and a Sergeant Instructor, as well as their families and other ranks and personnel, all connected with the Essex Rifles. These houses or barrack blocks have all disappeared now and the site is occupied by two large DIY stores. Colchester's prison also stood on the site at one time, which would also have dated back to the 1870's period. The 1901 census shows Frederick J Bines, aged 41, as carpenter and publican.

The Rifleman dates from around 1860, appearing in the 1872 licensing records under the ownership of Bridges. George Bruce, the landlord, in 1878, also ran the smithy close by in East Street. The pub was sold to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1888 and passed to Ind Coope in the 1930's.

We are fortunate to have received information about this pub from the Rayner family who held the licence from 1905 until its closure. In the following picture (date 1908 approx.) are, from left to right: Arthur William Rayner (born 1894 and emigrated to Canada), Alice Mary Rayner (née Suttle, born 1869 in Suffolk), George Rayner (licensee born 1861 in Suffolk), Alice Ruby Rayner (born 1899 in Kent), Frederick Robert Rayner (born 1903 in Colchester), George Henry Rayner (born 1895 in Hornchurch and killed in 1916).

George Henry Rayner retired from the Suffolk Regiment in 1905 having served over 22 years the East Indies, Malta and South Africa. He took the licence of the Rifleman, with his wife Alice Mary. He died in 1928 at the age of 68, as a result of cirrhosis of the liver and the licence was transferred to Alice. She died in 1938 and the licence passed to her son Fred who, with his wife Eva, ran the pub until it was closed at 10pm on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 1954. He was offered the Lion and Lamb on Ipswich Road, but he decided to retire instead. He bought the building and the family lived there for many years afterwards. The licence was transferred to the Maypole which opened the following day. Fred was offered the licence of the Lion and Lamb on Ipswich Road but decided instead to retire and live in the property. It was demolished a few years later, the site becoming overgrown with vegetation until a new residential building was erected in 1997<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 4<sup>th</sup> Sep 1863

<sup>2</sup> With thanks to Fred Rayner (junior) and his daughter Kirsty McCrave for the photograph and other information.



.....and in the following picture, a group of Rifleman locals (date unknown).



The two gents in back row, from left to right:- Bill Humphreys – used to own Humphreys Vegetable Shop in Short Wyre Street, unknown. Middle row:- unknown, Mr James, unknown, Bill Strutt, Bill Scrutton, Frederick Rayner. Front row:- Walter Wilkins (Wilkie), unknown, Mr Hyam.

---

## Ring of Feathers

?

?

?

?

?

A certain gentleman, who shall remain nameless, insisted that there was a pub in the town by this name. When pressed as to the whereabouts of the Ring of Feathers, he calmly declared it to be around a duck's bum! Enough said!

This encounter reminded the author not to take this work too seriously.

## Rising Sun - 1

St Botolph

Hythe Station

1789 to 1995

a public house

closed



The name of this pub is another with a common heraldic sign and is said to have had its origin from the badge of King Edward III. It is often shortened to simply the Sun.

This pub first appears in the alehouse recognisances in 1789 and in trade directories thereafter. The census of 1871 gives the occupant as one Edward G Harrington, age 37, inn keeper and in 1891 it was in the hands of Daniel Southgate, age 83. The 1901 census shows the publican as Charles Johnson, aged 41, with his wife and son and two boarders. In 1872 it was owned by Osborne and then by the Colchester Brewing Company in 1886. It was taken over by Ind Coope in the 1930's. Ind Coope became Allied Breweries, who sold the pub to Greene King in 1990.

The photograph that follows shows a gentleman, presumably the landlord, with white shirt and braces, hand in pocket. The sign reads, 'Famous Colchester Oyster Feast Stout Old King Coal Strong Ale.' This therefore shows it to be a Colchester Brewing Company house.



The Rising Sun c1920

The pub was closed in September 1995, following poor trade and uncertainty over the future of the Hythe. Whether it will open its doors again, remains to be seen, but the poor condition of the building at the time of writing makes it hard to believe that it will. In 2007 the building was virtually derelict.

also known as the **Sun**

A trade directory dated 1793 gave three houses named the Sun with victuallers named as John Cock, John Sadler and James Ward. It also appears by this name in 1848 in the occupancy of Joseph Fincham.

The 1881 census gives Thomas Harrington, age 41, as a horse dealer and inn keeper.

---

### **Rising Sun - 2**

?

Lexden

see the **Sun**

---

### **Robin Hood**

45 Osborne Street

c1870 to date (map 16)

a beerhouse

now a public house

The name of the pub was a reference to the legendary outlaw of medieval England who was an unofficial and unconventional taxman, robbing the rich to help the poor. The name may have been chosen in this instance because of the Ancient Order of Foresters who had a strong membership in Colchester.

This pub is mentioned in the 1901 census as a beerhouse, but with no licensee on the premises. It first appeared in the licensing records, by name, in 1907 as a beerhouse owned by the Colchester Brewing Company. Mrs Pam Horspool, (née Morgan) lived there from 1933 when her father Harold Morgan became landlord. She recalls the large accommodation of the upstairs rooms, some ten large rooms, making it ideal for lodgers or boarders. By 1940 it was in the hands of Ind Coope who still owned it when it was granted its full publican's licence in 1952. It is not certain exactly when the Robin Hood first opened its doors to the drinking public but the un-marked building is shown on the 1876 map series (at the rear of this book) and it is quite probable that it was built to replace one of the several pubs in the general area that were closed down by the authorities in 1869 due to alleged brothel keeping (see chapter 4).

Phil and Nora Clarke held the licence in the 1950's before moving to the Kings Arms in Crouch Street. They were followed by Norman and Dorothy Cowell in 1963, when Bacchus<sup>1</sup> paid them a visit. At that time, one of the regulars was a character named 'Nutty Curran', a former professional boxer who had fought Randolph Turpin and Freddie Mills in his day.

There is a story from a book by Mr Wesley Downes recalling an incident in the 1930's, which tells of the time when a mother sent her eight year old daughter to the pub to fetch her father home, before the dinner was entirely ruined. Reaching Stanwell Street, she found herself face to face with a strange thing, the like of which she had never seen before. It was an animal form, with the body of a fat Alsatian dog, but the head of a goat with horns. She stopped dead with fright, the creature seeming quite oblivious to her, waddled its way towards the pub. As soon as the girl had regained her senses, she ran back to tell her mother what had happened. Her mother's immediate reaction was to say 'Oh my God, its the Devil, he's come for your father!' With that, she ran as fast as she could to the pub.

Reaching the door she heard the uproar within, voices were raised and the house was in turmoil. It was obvious that something had happened. Pushing her way through the bar, she demanded to know where her husband was and what all the commotion was about. The harassed barman said that as far as he knew her husband had gone out to the toilet but that the trouble was with one of the customers who had had a fit and had jumped up screaming, 'No, no, not me.' He had then fallen down dead! Whether this is a true story is left to you to decide.

What is known for sure is that a violent death occurred here. One particular day in 1979<sup>2</sup>, there was a lot of trouble in the pub, mainly from soldiers, who often frequented the establishment. The landlord felt under considerable pressure and had cause to load a shotgun and discharge it into the ceiling as a warning and to stop the fighting and damage that was being done in the bar area. In the confusion that followed, he jumped over the bar with the gun and it went off accidentally, fatally wounding a man named Hughes who was standing close by. An attempt was made to stem the blood pouring out of the wound, but he died later. The landlord was charged with murder and held on remand until his trial in May the following year, where he was acquitted of murder and was set free with a two year suspended

---

<sup>1</sup> CE - 11<sup>th</sup> Jul 1963

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 7<sup>th</sup> Sep 1979, 21<sup>st</sup> Sep 1979, 19<sup>th</sup> Oct 1979,  
8<sup>th</sup> Dec 1979, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1980, 16<sup>th</sup> May 1980

sentence for involuntary manslaughter. Great emphasis was put on his good character and work with raising money for charitable causes.

As if prophetically, the licensing records show that the licensee of this pub in the 1970's was a man by the name of Deadman!

In 1998 this pub was owned by Pubmaster with Cath and Brian Caminski the tenants. They were followed by Mick and Jackie Burke (previously at the Britannia) taking over in April 1999. These thoroughly decent people decided to move on in 2004, after an unfortunate incident with a trusted employee. It was in the news in 2007<sup>1</sup> when it was shut down for the second time in twelve months when it was found to be flouting its licensing conditions; operating without a Designated Premises Supervisor (once known as a licensee).

---

### Roman Arms

Roman Road

There would have been places in Roman Colchester that might now be called 'pubs.' We know nothing of these earliest houses, but this pub would have been so named because of its location in Roman Road which runs alongside a much appallingly neglected section of Colchester's magnificent Roman Wall.

see the **Roman Urn**

---

### Roman Urn

24 Roman Road

c1870 to 1899 (map 61)

a public house

now private house

The name of this pub is a variation on the previous example. There may have been a Roman looking vase or urn on the premises, to which the name alluded. The Roman Road area was a Victorian housing development for more 'well to do' citizens and this pub would have been their 'local.'

From 1872 it was owned by Crabb who sold it to Nicholls in 1876. The 1871 census shows David Gooding, age 25, as the inn keeper followed in 1881 by Albert Johnson, age 30, publican. It did not seem to do very well as it was closed in 1899 and its licence surrendered, together with that of the Horseshoes on Hythe Quay, both in consideration of the newly opened Recreation Hotel.

It is now a private house with no outward appearance that it was ever a public house.

also known as the **Roman Arms**

---

### Rose

?

c1793

an inn or tavern

location uncertain

The name of the pub is probably a shortened version of the Rose and Crown, two of them appearing by this name in a trade directory of 1793 in the occupancy of either James Brooker or Widow Thornton. We know that the widow Thornton kept the Rose in East Hill and so this one was probably the one in Vineyard Street.

---

### Rose and Crown Hotel - 1

St James

51 East Street

17th century (map 70)

an ancient inn

now a hotel

The name of the pub symbolised the end of the Wars of the Roses (1455 to 1485), when the houses of York and Lancaster fought and divided the country. It is therefore a name demonstrating loyalty to the crown and is a very common pub sign throughout the country.

---

<sup>1</sup> EG - 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007

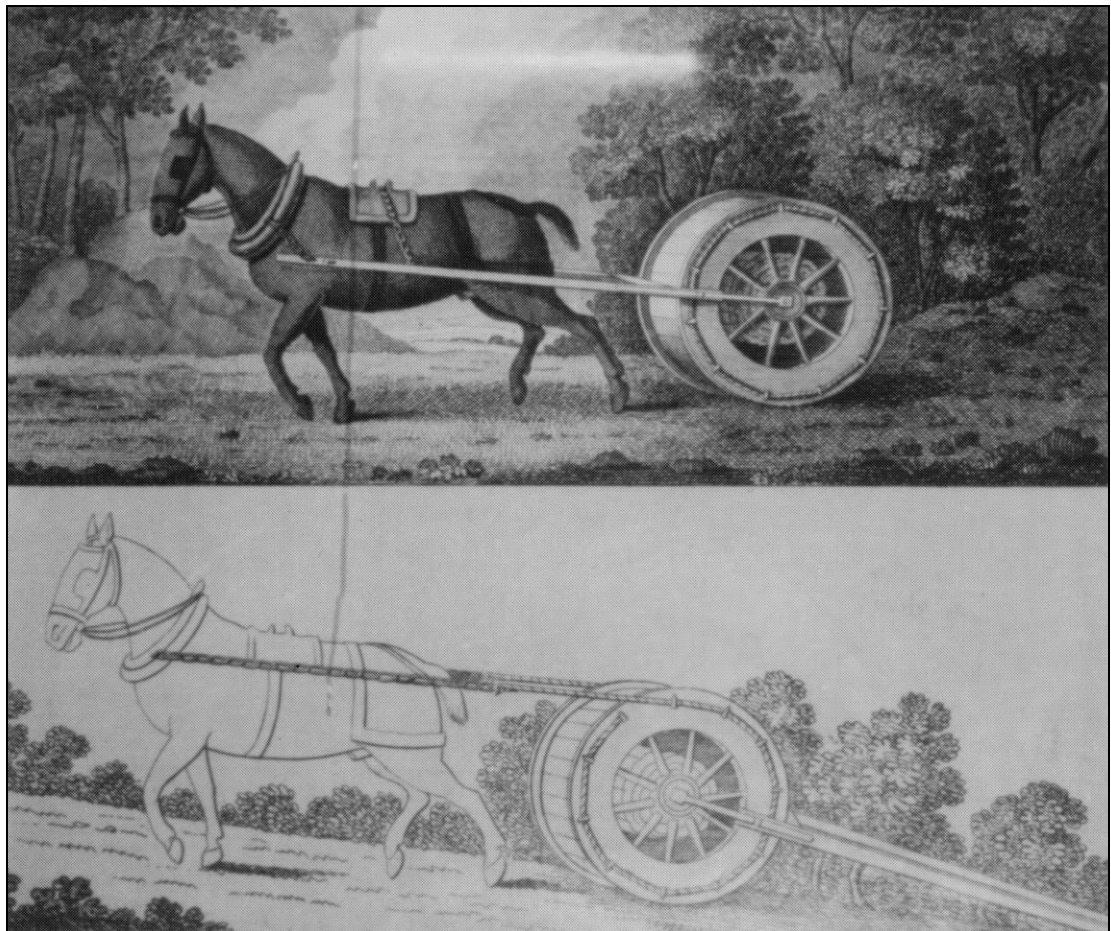
This pub claims to be 'the oldest inn in the oldest recorded town of England,' although the Bull in Crouch Street probably holds a better claim to this honour. The building itself is very old with some 14th century building features, believed by experts to have been an aisled medieval structure due to certain joint features. It has been well preserved (but much modified) over the years and is now renowned for its high standard of cuisine and accommodation.

Here follows an extract from an article written by Gerald Rickword in 1937<sup>1</sup>.

It is of great interest to all lovers of old buildings that Mrs Faithfull Roper, well known for her many other successful restorations, is undertaking similar work on the 15th century house in East Street, formerly known as the Rose and Crown Inn. The inn, the subject of one of the late Major Bale's delightful sketches now in the Albert Hall, standing at the corner of the old Ipswich Road, the present road not being opened until the early years of the 19th century, was the first house to attract the custom of travellers entering Colchester by the Suffolk road, dusty or muddy according to the season of the year, but in either case in need of refreshment.

The sign recalls the great days of the Tudors, whose badge it was, and it may well have been an inn in those days, although reference to it has not been found. The earliest mention of the house as an inn is not met with until centuries later, when a big fire occurred at the millwright's premises of Christopher Gilson at the rear of the Rose and Crown, in November 1741. This fire was extinguished by Mr Salmon with his engine.

A sporting event centred around the inn to the great benefit of its hostess, and led to many aching heads on the morrow. In that 'merry month,' one Abraham Sherman, a butcher, wagered that a horse belonging to an Ipswich merchant, Mr John Moore, could not draw a two ton weight from the Falcon in that town to the Rose and crown in Colchester, a distance of seventeen miles, in sixteen hours, stakes of forty guineas a side being laid.



Dragon

The feat was accomplished in fifteen hours, thirty six minutes 'to the astonishment of a vast concours of spectators' - and of the sporting son of the cleaver. 'What renders the above performance the more remarkable is, that the road the horse went over is the heaviest between this place [Ipswich] and London.' Prints of the four footed hero of the

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 30<sup>th</sup> Oct 1937

exploit, 'the famous horse Dragon,' were soon on sale and no doubt decorated the snug parlours of many Suffolk and Essex inns, and formed a subject of conversation for years to come.

The death of Mine Hostess for upwards of fifty years, Mrs Thornton, a widow, age 86, is recorded in February 1789; and of Mr Robert Thornton, probably her son, Master of the Rose and Crown, in April 1792. The widow Thorpe followed in the management of the house and in April 1800, late of the Rose and Crown, she too joined the great majority.

The inn primarily drew its custom, apart from satisfying the wants of its immediate neighbours, from the drovers, who in those days were always on the road with large herds of cattle, making their way to the London markets, raising great clouds of dust in their passage and leaving the aroma of the farmyard behind them. An advertisement in 1819 informed farmers and cattle dealers that Edward Wade, junior, was 'drawing in Beasts, Sheep and Pigs' for Romford and Stratford markets at several locations, including the Rose and Crown in Colchester. Every fortnight during the season did Mr Wade or his underlings make this journey and the price of beasts and the state of the markets formed the staple of talk round the fireside at his inns on the road.

The house was at that time described as an 'old established, roomy and commodious Inn or Public House ... adjoining the great road from Colchester to Ipswich,' and contained a bar, taproom, kitchen, large cellar, scullery, dairy, two parlours, six sleeping rooms and two attics. In addition to stabling for thirty horses, with hay lofts and granary oven, there were cowhouses, sheds, piggeries, and several acres of garden and pasture.



A painting by Major Bale, said to be of the Rose and Crown and seemingly copied from another painting of a date perhaps dating from c1750.  
The building today is quite unrecognisable, although certain features do tally.

In the early years of the 19th century William Rowland occupied the inn, and on Monday July 23 1809, being Cattle Fair Day - New Fair, granted by William and Mary in 1693 - provided 'a good Dinner' with the additional inducement of 'Good Wines and Beers as usual' for his friends and customers, hungry and thirsty from their chattering and bargaining on the New Fair Field near by. George Hill or Hills was landlord in the 1820's, Benjamin Smith in 1839 and Minerva Smith, probably his widow, some nine or ten years later. The railroad opened to London in 1848, drawing the traffic off the roads, sealed the fate of this inn and many others, and it sank in status, finally closing its doors about twenty years ago.

(When writing this piece, Gerald Rickword little knew then that the inn would re-open as a hotel some fifty years later.)

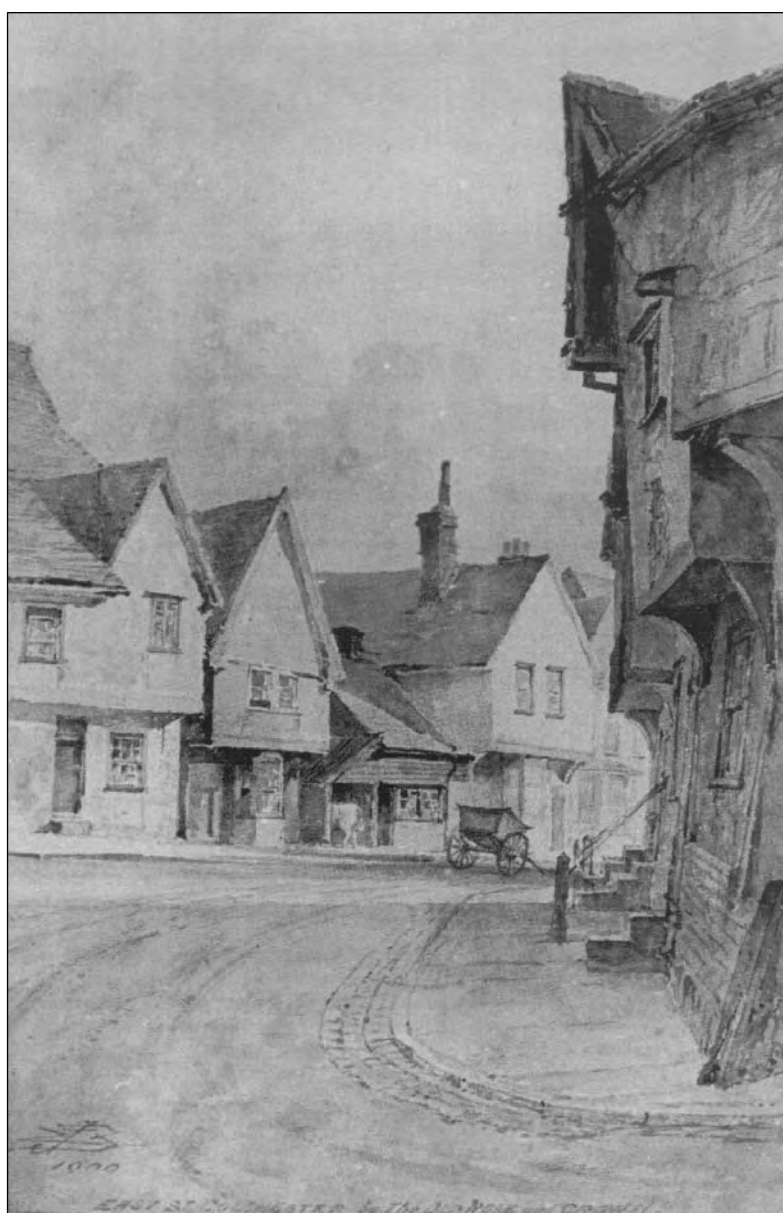
The illustration shown on the following page is from a watercolour painting by Major Bale. It is dated 1900 and, whilst it does not show the ancient inn in its full glory, it is a delightful study of the area which is little changed today. Note the horse in the smithy across the road, no doubt patiently waiting for a new shoe. The smith was at one time the landlord of the nearby Rifleman public house.

The inn is shown in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 through to 1819 and then throughout the trade directory series. The census entries give:

1851 - Minerva Smith,	widow,	age 38,	inn keeper
1861 - James Harrington,		age 50,	victualler
1871 - Mary Ann Harrington,	widow,	age 54,	inn keeper
1901 - Alfred J Bones,		age 40,	publican

Abraham Garling, the then landlord, was summoned in 1858<sup>1</sup> for allowing bad characters to assemble in his house. Sergeant Stewart said that, ‘about half-past 11 o’clock on Wednesday night he visited defendant’s house and found five prostitutes and six soldiers’. He detailed the circumstances under which the parties were discovered, which left no doubt as to the purpose for which they had visited the house. Police Constable .... proved seeing the defendant light two couples up to bed .... This was not the first time that there had been complaints against the defendant. The Mayor told him that it was a most disgraceful case and that he was quite unfit to keep a house of this sort. The Star and Garter was similarly in trouble with the Bench, so they were not alone. Prostitution was indeed rife in Colchester at that time!

In 1872 the pub was owned by Daniells who sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company around 1903. The licensing records then show it back in the hands of Daniells in 1911 but that its licence was refused in 1913.



A painting by Major Bale

---

<sup>1</sup> Essex Standard – 14<sup>th</sup> May 1858

The Essex Review, of October 1937, published a sketch of the building made by Miss Ethne Payne, together with the comment; 'It was lately occupied as three tenements, but was condemned for demolition by the Colchester Town Council as unfit for habitation. It has been purchased by Mrs Faithfull Roper, of Le Talbooth, Gun Hill, Dedham, for renovation and restoration.'

The photograph below, dates from c1910, offering accommodation for cyclists and the 'Parlour and Jug Entrance' to the rear. It shows the Daniell and Sons sign affixed to its plastered facade, with the main entrance being on the left hand side of the building, rather than how it is today. The pub was then much smaller in size and did not have the exposed timber beams that it has today, a fashionable trend but one which serves to hasten the decline of its centuries old timbers.



The Rose and Crown c1910

In 1962, it was granted a licence as a private club and later, in 1969, a new licence as a public house was granted to owner George Hudson, so that, some 56 years later, it opened its doors once again to the general public. A newspaper article in the 1980's recalls the work of Grace Faithfull Roper who died in 1968.

She had left her mark on lovingly restored ancient buildings all over north-east Essex, transforming this rather tumble down old building into an attractive half timbered hotel - and one of her finest memorials.

Also known simply as the **Rose**

### Rose and Crown - 2

St Botolph

Vineyard Street  
(previously Black Boy Lane)

pre 1764 to 1962 (map 14)

a tavern

demolished

The name of this pub was chosen much later than the date of the Wars of the Roses, but perhaps was chosen as it is a popular name and has a comfortable sound.

It is shown in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 through to 1819 and then throughout the trade directory series.

The census records show the following:

1851 - Richard Norden,	age 58,	inn keeper
(Black Boy lane - pub name not given but assumed to be this one.)		
1861 - James Pitt,	age 28,	inn keeper
1891 - William Papworth,	age 34,	publican and lodging house keeper
together with 19 lodgers ranging in age from		
a girl of 14 years to a man of 71 years		

In 1872 it was owned by Osborne who sold the house to the Colchester Brewing Company around 1886. Joseph Phillips, writing in 1906, commented that 'The Black Boy, in a lane of that name, now boasts the emblems of sweetness and power, the Rose and Crown, the throughfare itself has changed to Vineyard Street.' Could it be that Mr Phillips was mistaken in his recollection as the British Lion in Stanwell Street was once named the Black Boy? No, it is thought that he was correct and that there were two Black Boys in the vicinity although both not at the same time.

The house passed to Ind Coope in 1939 who had it until it was closed in 1962<sup>1</sup>, its licensees Mr and Mrs Oliver removing to the Dragoon. It was demolished soon after as part of a redevelopment scheme.

Recollections of this house and the general area came from Mr and Mrs Horspool in 2007<sup>2</sup>. Mrs Horspool grew up in the nearby Robin Hood in the 1920's and could testify to the inadvisability of persons walking along Vineyard Street. It seems to have been a 'no-go' area at that time, with violence being given out to any stranger. Mrs Horspool spoke of the 'Doss-House' that existed there, known as the Rose. The 1911 map towards the back of this book clearly shows the extent of the lodgings in the general area.

---

### Rose and Crown - 3

Lexden

18th century

a tavern

location uncertain

All that is known of this house is from a record left by Morant dating it to the reign of James I (1603 - 1625). Its precise location is unknown.

---

### Roundabout

Magdalen Street

see **Molly Malones**

---

### Roundhouse

Shrub End Road

The name of this house was a nickname, being a reference to the shape of the original building, which can only now be seen from the rear.

see the **Huntsman Tavern**

---

<sup>1</sup> CE – 26<sup>th</sup> Apr 1962

<sup>2</sup> March 2007 - video interview given to J Jephcott

### Rover's Tye

Highwoods

1983 to date

a public house

The name of the pub was simply a copy of the name of the farm, whose farmhouse was converted to a pub. It was opened in August 1983, the 17th century listed farmhouse and its barn having been extensively restored and extended to make it an up to date and very attractive new pub to serve the thirsty inhabitants of the newly constructed Highwoods housing development. The original building probably started its life as a farmhouse and was, for a time, a butchers. Traditionally furnished inside, it has flagstones and authentic oak floors, low beamed ceilings and pictures around the place depicting how the local area once looked.

The pub hit the news in 1993<sup>1</sup> when the 'big brother' local authority decided that the children's play equipment set up in the pub's garden, was not in keeping with planning requirements, and ordered its removal. So, what had become a good family pub atmosphere, popular with parents and children alike, was forced to remove one of its main attractions. It seemed that some people didn't like to see others enjoying themselves!

---

### Rowers and Beaters

Black Boy Lane  
(later Vineyard Street)

Rowers and Beaters were two activities associated with the weaving trade and the name probably came about because of the many weavers in the general area.

see the **Cooper's Arms**

---

### Royal

65 Butt Road

see the **Fat Cat**

---

### Royal Artillery

65 Butt Road

The name of the pub is a reference to a regiment that would have been stationed at Colchester around the time of its naming.

see the **Fat Cat**

---

### Royal Mortar - 1

Donyland Road, later Military Road

c1850 to 1869 (map 89)

a public house

demolished

The name of this pub may have been taken from the field opposite (land on which Winchester and Canterbury Roads now stand) that had the name Mortar Field before it was built upon. Conversely, the field may have taken its name from the pub. Whichever the case, it is assumed that mortars were once associated with the area, a mortar being a type of cannon having a short barrel, a large bore and an exploding shell which could wreak much damage upon an enemy. The knack in the early days was to get the shell to explode at the point of impact - so life in the general area at that time could have been quite dangerous.

This is the first Royal Mortar which later became the Trinity House School, later to be demolished and the Recreation Hotel built on the site. It then stood next to what was known as the Home Drill Field, or the Royal Mortar Field, later to become the Recreation Field as it is today.

It seems as if the pub may have had two periods in business as a record exists dated 10th September 1858 stating that it was a new licence, but that it had been a public house a long time ago, when the old barracks were in existence, but for many years it had been used as a private house. The date of that earlier licence is unknown although there is a

---

<sup>1</sup> EG – 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 1993, 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar 1993

reference found to it in a doctor's account book of 1850 referring to a Mr Castle. It was later occupied by a London firm of silk manufacturers and then in 1856, converted into a private dwelling known as Parade House. The trade directories show it as a public house in 1863 and 1866, which fits in with the 1858 new licence record. The pub probably closed in for good in 1869<sup>1</sup> when a local newspaper report records its licence being refused in connection with its suspected activities as a brothel. An application was made in 1870 for a new licence, the house having been shut-up for the past year, the proposal being to install William Clark, previously of the Ardleigh Crown. The application was refused. The house is not shown in a trade directory of 1870. There was clear evidence in the newspaper article of the local authority's determination to clean up the act of public houses and beerhouses, this house being one of many others similarly discussed. Various well known solicitors of the day appeared in court on the day, with Mr Jones appearing on behalf of Samuel Howe (the owner?). The reporter's account is quite entertaining. Joseph Phillips' epic article of 1906 stated that 'the Recreation Hotel has recently been erected on the site of the original Royal Mortar .....'. The OS map of 1876 shows the site occupied by the Trinity House School.



This photograph is probably the same building as the Royal Mortar, but of a later date and when it was Trinity House School.

---

### Royal Mortar - 2

115 Military Road

1885 to date

a public house

This is the second Royal Mortar which was built around 100 yards away from the first, a short while after the demolition of the original.

It first appears in licensing records of 1885 when the owners the Colchester Brewing Company were granted a new licence. The census of 1891 gave the occupant as Isaac Leech, age 30, described as a brewer's foreman and publican. In the 1901 census is shown Sarah Leech, a widow, aged 37, the publican, with her three children and visitors. The house passed into the ownership of Ind Coope in 1939.

What might seem a little strange in health conscious Britain today is an article in a 1913 newspaper<sup>2</sup> which reported a Smoking Concert that was held at the pub by the Colchester Wanderers' Cycling Club. One can only imagine what a smoking concert might have entailed and where the ash tray might have been placed on their bicycles!

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 10<sup>th</sup> Sep 1869, Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 1869

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 1993

The 'Mortar' was in the news in August 1995 when, following comments about peeling paintwork, the landlords, Peter and Clare Dillon, decided to paint the outside of the pub with brightly coloured giraffes, rabbits, caterpillars and other creatures, with designs by their seven year old daughter and from other sources. Owners, Sycamore Taverns took the licensee to court in December 1995 and the pub closed shortly afterwards. After extensive refurbishment, the house re-opened to once again, enjoy good trade from its loyal 'regulars.'

---

### Royal Oak - 1

St Martin

East Stockwell Street

18th century to 1901 (map 109)

a public house

now a private dwelling

The name of this pub has been taken from that popular story about King Charles II hiding from his pursuers in an oak tree, after his army had been defeated at Worcester in 1651. Charles became a fugitive with a price of £1000 being offered for his capture. It became a popular name for a pub thereafter.

The pub appears in the althouse recognisances for the full period from 1764 until 1819 and then in trade directories throughout the 19th century.

A newspaper report in 1858<sup>1</sup> dealt with a case of violent assault against the landlord, James Binks. Mr Henry Goody appeared for the complainant. A sordid story unfolds of how John Hurst, private of the 34<sup>th</sup> Regiment, was brought up under warrant. It was claimed that he had threatened the life of the landlord and kicked him in the mouth, the defendant attempting to show how the landlord had encouraged him and his comrade into the house while, 'their bounty money lasted, and when it was finished wanted to prevent them coming in'. A neighbour stated that he was very annoyed by the conduct of soldiers and girls at the complainant's house, where continual disturbances were taking place. Addressing the complainant the Chairman said that this was the second time that that his house had been mentioned in Court as the resort of prostitutes and the Bench had no doubt of the truth of the statement, and if it was not put a stop to he would be made to feel the effects of it.

It was taken over from Cobbold in 1884 by Daniells. The census of 1851 showed Joseph Poulton, age 48, licensed victualler and clerk living on the premises, it being referred to as the Old Royal Oak. In the census of 1861, James Binks, age 72, was shown as the inn keeper. By 1871, it was in the occupation of Emma Binks, a widow, age 42, shown as inn keeper and with eight boarders. It was closed down in 1901 following the conviction of James Burnby, the licence holder, for allowing his house to be used as a brothel.

The newspapers reported the charge against James Burnby in some detail<sup>2</sup>, it presumably being a nice bit of gossip for the local people. He was charged with 'permitting his premises to be used as a house of ill fame on eight different dates in the past two months.' The police had mounted a surveillance at the rear of the premises, where the ladies in question were entertaining their soldier customers. The owners, Messrs Daniells Breweries, made an application to have the licence endorsed, as the present licensee was 72 years old, had held this licence for seven years and a charge was pending against him. They held that they wished to put a younger man into the premises in his place. Their application was bound over until the case had been heard against the present licensee. Burnby was convicted and the maximum fine of £20 was imposed - as well as a custodial sentence.

At the Brewster Sessions at Colchester<sup>3</sup>, it was reported that all the licences in the borough, bar one, would be renewed. It gave a detailed explanation of the case for rejecting the re-licensing of the Royal Oak and the comment was made that the general tone of the neighbourhood had been a lot better since the pub had been closed.

It is known to have been a clothing factory in the 1920's as is borne out by an insurance map of the period. The solid brick building that occupies the spot today can be dated to around 1880 and is now a private dwelling, located in the middle of the historic area of Colchester known as the 'Dutch Quarter.'

Previously known as the **Bird in Hand**

19th century

The only references found to the tavern by this name are for 1839 in the Castle Museum records and then in a set of maps commissioned by its owners, the Cobbold brewing family, in 1848. These can be seen at the Essex Record Office. The plot was shown empty on the 1876 map series, indicating that the house had been demolished prior to

---

<sup>1</sup> Essex Standard – 7<sup>th</sup> May 1858

<sup>2</sup> CG – 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1901

<sup>3</sup> CG – 28<sup>th</sup> Aug 1901

that date. There is an element of confusion arising from this as the site appears to be the same as for the Royal Oak. The question therefore is, was the Royal Oak renamed as the Bird in Hand around 1830, the building then demolished around 1870, to be replaced with another Royal Oak after 1876?

---

### Royal Oak - 2

Harwich Road

c1900 to 1997

a beerhouse

now a shop

The second Royal Oak was originally a beerhouse and first appears by name in licensing records of 1907 when it was owned by Nicholls. The 1901 census shows it in the occupancy of George Bensly, aged 56, a publican. Building plans exist from 1904. By 1925 it was in the hands of the Colchester Brewing Company who still had it when its full publican's licence was granted in 1940 in consideration of the closing of the Vine in Long Wyre Street. It then passed to Ind Coope. There is some confusion in the records in 1952 as it shows that its full licence was granted in that year too.

In 1991<sup>1</sup> the newspapers announced proposals to knock the pub down and build a new improved house. There followed an article about the pub's regulars and their concern over what they considered to be the last 'spit and sawdust' pub in town. The final nail in the coffin came in 1996<sup>2</sup> when a murder was committed in close proximity to the pub. This led to the final closing of its doors.



The Royal Oak in February 1935

This pub housed the 'Domino School' painting, a remarkable work of art that was removed from the Clarendon when that pub was sold to Greene King. At the time of writing (2007), the building was a takeaway food shop.

Mr Harvey, son of Les Harvey, who is shown in the picture, recalled that the painting was done by the landlord of the Clarendon, John Roy, and was unveiled in December 1961, having taken six months to complete. He was able to give the following names and details from memory, without having a copy of the picture in front of him.

Les Harvey - round shouldered with scarf; Derek Moat on the left, dark hair; Tom Marshall - lived 5 Dilbridge Road, tall, long features; Fred? - balding, handlebar moustache; Harry Cook - playing dominos, cloth cap; Dick Willingham - in middle sitting down; George Carter - seated right, pipe, hat, double chin; Jack Frost - white hair, seated next to George; Graham Bowton - young, standing, quiff, dark hair; 'Turk' - little man, peaked cap, sharp features; Bill Gear - next to John Roy?; John Roy - seated with back on view, far right.

---

<sup>1</sup> EADT - 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 1991, EG - 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 1991

<sup>2</sup> ECS - 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 1996, 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 1996



The Domino School

The author also contacted Mr Derek Moat, another of the subjects depicted, who kindly provided the photograph of the original painting. He had a different recollection of the subjects as follows:

Graham Bowton - standing, moved to Epping; Jack Frost - top row, hat; Inspector Pearson - standing, an ex-boxer; Freddy Thorpe? - big moustache; Les Harvey - standing; himself - standing; Mick Dougherty - standing; Harry Smith? - standing, hat (or was it Patch Eye Cole?); unknown - standing; George Cole - standing; Bob Starling - standing, hat (Reg Starling, his son lives in Greenstead); George Sadler - standing, hat; Seven people seated around the table he did not know.

Apparently, John Roy removed to the Cock Inn at Beesley End and took the painting with him. John Crogan went and saw him, bought it for £500 and returned it to the pub.

The painting has gone, its fate unknown. The present owner (an oriental gentleman) appears to have some inflated idea of its financial value and, hopefully, because of that belief, will ensure that it will be well cared for. Who knows, the painting may once again be put on view for the general public to see, a priceless record of a piece of Colchester's history.

---

### Royal Standard

St Botolph

34 Mersea Road

1863 to 1994 (map 96)

a public house

now private dwellings

The name of this pub is decidedly of military origin. It is located next door to the barracks and would have been the first pub that a thirsty soldier encountered when commencing his off duty tour of the town. The Royal Standard is the flag that symbolised all that is sacred to a soldier in battle and is the very essence of loyalty to Queen (or King) and country.

It first appears by name in an 1863 trade directory, being owned by Grimston who in turn sold it to Truman in 1899. Its opening was around the same time as the building of the barracks and its name therefore particularly appropriate.

In 1863 William Wire, in his diary, recorded that whilst the German Legion was here, Mr Ellisden, the licensee, had it open night and day, he taking night turn, his wife day turn. Afterwards he retired and lived in one of the little houses at end of Sussex Road. The German Legion moved out of Colchester and took many Colchester brides with them, there being some panic setting in over whether the Garrison Church could keep up with all the marriage ceremonies and indeed whether the marriages that had been performed were in fact legally binding.

The 1871 census shows it in the occupation of Richard Hart, age 49, a licensed victualler and in 1881, William Pitt, age 45, licensed victualler.

The pub became very run down in the 1980's and was no longer a house of call, the soldiers from the adjacent barracks preferring to walk into town to 'wet their whistles'. In 1994, the pub was taken over by the proprietor of the adjacent Indian food shop, who subsequently closed it down and converted it into private accommodation.



The Royal Standard - c1932

---

## Rumpole's

East Street

See the section covering 'Bars' at the end of the chapter..

---

*You're not drunk if you can lie on the floor without holding on.*

Dean Martin



*A man goes in to a pub with his unusual looking pet.  
The landlord looks over the bar at this creature  
and enquires as to what sort of animal it is.  
'Tis a long nosed, smooth haired, Irish wolf-hound',  
came the reply, adding that it was 'a fighting animal'.  
The landlord, being a man who liked a bet, thought about this  
and then suggested a fight between his two prize Rotweilers  
and this interesting fighting animal.  
Between the two of them, a wager of £100 was agreed,  
the Irish wolf-hound against the two Rotweilers, the winner to take the purse.  
So out to the back yard went the interested parties,  
together with their animals.  
Amazingly, the Rotweilers were killed within 30 seconds  
from commencement of battle and the man claimed his winnings.  
The landlord conceded that this strange looking creature was indeed the winner,  
and handed over the money.  
Walking back to the bar he enquired again as to the  
name of the creature that had beaten his dogs.  
'Tis a long nosed, smooth haired, Irish wolf-hound',  
came the reply again - 'but some people call it a crocodile!'*

Mr Patrick Kilgannon – once the landlord of the Little Crown

## Sailor and Ball

Maldon Road or  
Crouch Street

The name of this pub might refer to a sailor of the Royal Navy with a cannon ball as a symbol of the fighting spirit required at that time, there having been so many enemies at our shores in past times.

see **White Hart**

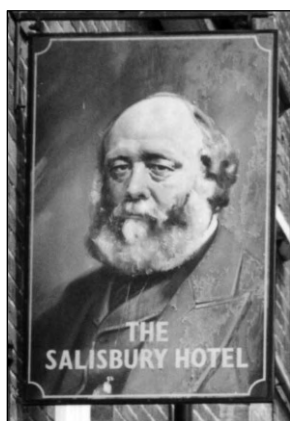
## Salisbury Hotel

Butt Road

1885 to 2004

a public house

demolished September 2005



The name of this pub would have been taken from the road on which it is located and which, in turn, would have taken its name from a prominent politician of the time. The pub's sign depicts Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, 3rd Marquis of Salisbury (1830 to 1903). The pub sign pictured is dated 1991. Lord Salisbury was an English Conservative statesman who became prime minister in 1885, coincidentally the same year as the pub's licence was granted. He was Prime Minister during the Crimean War which would have made him an especially important personality to the military personnel from the nearby army barracks.

There was a stone set into the high level brickwork which gave the date of 1886, and which therefore indicated when the building was finished. The original building plans show a Smoking Room, a Parlour, Bar and Tap Room on the ground floor. Upstairs there were four bedrooms and a 41 foot long Assembly Room. It was owned by Henry Jones until 1893 when it passed to Thorn and Company who in turn sold it to Daniels in 1912. It then passed to Trumans in 1959 and later still to Grand Metropolitan in the 1980's.

The 1891 census shows it in the occupation of John William Shiers, age 35, and described as a hotel proprietor. An advertisement of 1900 stated it to be, 'One minute from Cavalry Barracks. For Families, Officers and Gentlemen. Every Home Comfort. Moderate and Inclusive Charges. Newly Decorated and Refurnished. Mr Charles Thorne, Proprietor. Miss Crick, Manageress.'



The Salisbury Hotel c1964

In 1991<sup>1</sup> the pub was purchased by John Higgins, also the owner of the Globe Hotel and various other establishments in the town, who carried out extensive refurbishment works.

In 1905, the newspapers reported a mysterious explosion had ripped through the building, together with a photograph showing a side of the hotel wall missing. This was recalled in a newspaper article in 1972<sup>2</sup>. On talking with Mr Higgins in 1995, he was greatly amused by the newspaper article, as it was his mother in law had sent the picture in. She once kept another house in the town and was ‘a bit of a boozier’ in her day. She was advised on medical grounds to give up drinking when she was 80 and had to resort to subterfuge in order to enjoy her favourite tippie, whisky. She kept it in a urine specimen bottle on full view on the sideboard and nobody seems to have suspected or discovered her little ruse.

By 2005, the premises had been allowed to run down, was closed and in a decaying state, the subject of consternation by neighbours who objected to the building being demolished or converted to make way for several dwellings. As with so many other fine establishments, the land that it stood on was more valuable for development than it was for the sole use as a public house. History will judge the self interested ‘get rich quick’ property speculators of this period in our history. Thus ended the life of this once fine establishment.

**Saracen's Head - 1**

Holy Trinity

?

15th century

an ancient inn

presumed demolished

The name of this pub would be in memory of the time of the crusades. Richard the Lionheart fought the saracens, who were moslems or infidels, who threatened christianity in the holy land. Many of his knights wore the emblem of a saracen on their shields and this would have become a popular sign after their return.

This appears to be an ancient inn. The earliest reference, dated 1457, records that John Facoun of Nayland stopped a water course opposite this inn which was written as 'la Sarazynshed.' This same entry was repeated each year until 1461. In 1748, Morant mentions it as a tenement being situated opposite Holy Cross church in the time of Henry VIII.

Nothing more is known of its history or precise location.

<sup>1</sup> EG – 31<sup>st</sup> Aug 1992

<sup>2</sup> EG – 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 1972

### Saracen's Head - 2

St Mary at the Walls

Head Gate

16th century

an ancient tavern

location uncertain

This ancient tavern is mentioned in an article by Mr L C Sier, published in 1938. A deed recorded the sale in 1540, by Richard Sylles, wheelwright, and his wife Margaret, daughter of Alderman William Cowbrege deceased, for £8 6s 8d, of two tenements and a stable and two gardens near Head Gate and the Town Wall, in the Parish of St Mary at the Walls. One of the gardens is said to be bounded on the east side by the tenement called le Swanne, 'now in the tenure of Robert Lambe, carpenter' and on the west side by the tenement called le Saresons hede. On the north side was the street called 'Hedegatestrete.' It would seem that this would have been the east end of what is now Crouch Street. The property had come to Margaret Sylles under the will of her father and was sold on 7th November 1540 to 'John Lucas, Esquire.'

The precise location is unknown and it is assumed that the Swan and the Saracen's Head were both taverns. Sier suggests that they were located near to where the Bull, another ancient house, now stands.

---

### Saracen's Head - 3

137 High Street

c1850

a beerhouse

now offices

This beerhouse is shown in a trade directory of 1848 when Jonathan Smith was the victualler. The census of 1851 showed it in the occupation of Richard Hart, age 29, a beer house keeper. It survives as the old timber framed building next to Angel Court in High Street.

---

### Sawyer's Arms

Magdalen Street

The name of this pub is a simple reference to the trade of a sawyer, or the two sawyers that were necessary to cut logs into planks and other more manageable pieces. The head sawyer would be on top at one end of the bow saw and the other would be below in a pit at the other end, covered in saw dust. The mechanical saw powered by steam led to the decline of this practice.

see the **Two Sawyers**

---

### Scotch Ale Stores

Short Wyre Street

19th century (map 120)

a beerhouse?

now a shop

The correct description of this house is unknown. It may have been an 'off' licence, although various references have been found, mainly from concerns by the police, indicating that this house was used like a beer house.

---

### Sea Horse - 1

St Giles

?

The name of this pub is of nautical origin, the sea horse being an unusual type of marine fish. It was depicted as being the horse that carried Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, thus leading to this house having the nickname of 'Neptune's Nag.'

see the **Falcon**

---

### Sea Horse - 2

All Saints

61 High Street

c1736 to 1935 (map 58)

a public house

demolished

The following is based on articles<sup>1</sup> written by Gerald Rickword and in his usual eloquent style.

You may search the streets of Colchester in vain for the sign of the Neptune's Nag, the name that an unknown 18th century wit bestowed upon the Sea Horse. For the house was silenced some nine years ago, and now the honest housebreaker in the lawful pursuit of his calling is as effectively levelling the building to the ground as any Nazi bomb.

For over 200 years the sign of the Sea Horse was displayed over the front door in High Street and marked the boundary of All Saints parish from that of St Nicholas, and even before that (from a deed of 1736) went under the name of the Valiant or North Country Sailor, while still further back it was known as the Chequers.



A photograph of 1887

The Sea Horse did not stand in the front rank of Colchester's inns - it was no place for the quality. But was a homely inn to which the carriers' carts came on their regular journeys to the town, and solid yeomen farmers on their stout cobs on Market Day. At nights, the nearby shopkeepers and tradesmen foregathered in its snug parlour, and with churchwarden pipes of real Brosely ware or those made in the town by Stephen Chamberlain 'talked with looks profound and news much older than their ale went round'.

At the time of the parliamentary election in 1768, a free-burgess, James Green, who divided his votes between Mr Isaac Martin Rebow, Whig, and Mr Charles Gray, Tory, was the landlord, and continued to hold the licence for some twenty years.

In August 1806, when the town was becoming an important military centre, the waggon warehouse of Mr Bunner, in the inn-yard, was broken into early one morning, and two military trucks containing bedding, table linen and wearing apparel were stolen. The inn was an important carrier's house. Pigot's Directory of 1826 gave the Dedham carrier as calling twice per week, the Ipswich carrier three times, the Manningtree and Mistley three times, and the Wivenhoe carrier four times a week.

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 16<sup>th</sup> Jun 1944

The only dramatic incident in the history of the Sea Horse that has come to light occurred in November 1840, when late in the afternoon of the 18th, two smart young men drove up to the inn in a gig, their horse showing signs of great distress. After arranging for their accommodation, they went out for a short time, and on their return, immediately retired to their room. This with their general appearance, the nature of their luggage and the prominence of a pistol, aroused the suspicions of landlord Benjamin Turpin, who communicated with the police.

No action was taken that night, but next morning Mr Whitehead of the White Hart in West Bergholt, accompanied by two constables, came in search of the travellers, who he accused of passing a counterfeit shilling at his house the previous day, and also with stealing a cloak and a hunting whip. They were secured and taken before the magistrates and fifteen counterfeit shilling pieces, some quite new, being found on them, they were remanded for further enquiries. There later transpired a catalogue of offences that they had committed, for which they were given terms of 21 years and 14 years transportation.

~~~~~

Among a collection of water colour portraits painted by one of the famous Dunthornes, is one of William Green, landlord of the Sea Horse for many years, when the 18th century was old and the new century but young. He died in 1819 at the age of 73 and Dunthorne's delightful sketch shows host Green with a humorous twinkle in his eye, carrying two tankards of good home brewed 'Old October' to his cronies.



William Green - mine host of the Sea Horse

He wears his own grey hair and is dressed in long brown coat of good broad cloth, with pewter buttons, a dull red waistcoat decorated with three rows of buttons, drab 'small clothing' buckled at knee, grey stockings and square toed shoes as would become any Quaker.



Mr Charles Shillitis - store keeper to the garrison

Another of Dunthorne's portraits is of one Mr Charles Shillitis, a tankard of foaming ale at his side, store keeper to the garrison. He was painted by Dunthorne around 1810 and would have been a key figure in the lives of inn keepers of the time. He was also probably a good customer of host Greene. His portrait is shown below.

Another article featuring this old inn was researched by Mr John Bensusan-Butt and delivered as a lecture in the 1990's, on the subject of All Saints parish. Details from it are detailed below and refer to a comic episode in the inn's history in the year 1785.

The Sea Horse had as landlords, a long succession of Greens. There was a political rumpus over who was to stand in Colchester and the following was taken from the Ipswich Journal of 26th February 1785. It is an advert which reads:

The Committee for collecting evidence in support of the petition against the Colchester election give this public notice, that they will continue to sit at the house of Shining Jemmy known by the sign of Neptune's Nag, every evening next week, in order to receive information. As facts will be difficult to obtain, any probable circumstances, or even a plausible pretext will be admitted.

Any person who has anything in this way to communicate, or any person of a quick invention, who is a good hand at EVIDENCE COINING, will meet with every possible encouragement, by applying either to:

COUNSELLOR STAYTAPE Chairman, or to  
BEN VELLUM, or  
NED LEATHER, or  
TOM SKYLIGHT

Members of the said committee.

Of the aliases given, Shining Jemmy was the landlord of the Sea Horse, James Green. Ben Vellum was Benjamin Strutt, scrivener. Ned Leather was Edward Capstack, currier or tanner. Tom Skylight was Thomas Andrews, a brewer and owner of five pubs (skylight was the gap between the beer and the rim of the glass.) Counsellor Staytape was election candidate Samuel Tyssen - a staytape ties in!

-----

The inn first appears in the alehouse recognisances by this name in 1770. The various censuses gave the following details:

|                                  |         |                           |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| 1851 - Thomas Brown,             | age 49, | inn keeper                |
| 1861 - Sarah Brown, widow,       | age 54, | inn keeper                |
| 1871 - Robert B Porter, widower, | age 54, | inn keeper and 4 servants |
| 1881 - Robert B Porter,          | age 64, | licensed victualler       |
| 1891 - Robert B Porter,          | age 74, | innkeeper                 |
| 1901 - Harry E Wagstaff,         | age 46, | licensed victualler       |

In 1872 the inn was owned by Osborne and was acquired by the Colchester Brewing Company in 1886 who had it until its licence was refused in 1935. The building was sold to Mr Gadson of Adams Motors Ltd, situated next door, for £2600, and was later demolished.

A comical item has survived in the form of a 'Free Pass' that was issued to customers by a one time landlord, Walter Haskings, who had the licence from 1916 until 1926. It is a clever piece of advertising and the dog-eared survivor that was kindly given to the author by Mr N J Bailey of Brightlingsea, must have been carried about in his pocket for a long time to get in such a state. It is of too poor quality to reproduce here, so a transcript is shown on the following page.

One might conclude from the foregoing that Wal Haskins was quite a character!

This house was nicknamed the Neptune's Nag for the obvious reason. It was also, reputedly, previously known as the Valiant, the North Country Sailor and before that, the Chequers, although no evidence has been found to substantiate this.

---

### Shaftsbury Hotel

St Nicholas

32 Culver Street

c1890

a temperance hotel

now a shop

This house was a temperance hotel and not a pub and therefore only shown here as a reference. It exists now as Shaftsbury House.

---

\*\*\*\*\*

**FREE PASS**

\*\*\*\*\*

**This Pass is good on all  
Railroads provided that the  
bearer walks, carries his own  
luggage, swims all rivers, and  
stops for all Drinks and  
Smokes at the:**

**'SEA HORSE' HOTEL**  
High Street, COLCHESTER

WAL. HASKINGS, Proprietor  
(Late of Ramsgate and Wingham)

**Wines, Spirits and Beers of the  
Finest Quality.**

This Pass is not transferable except  
to another man with money.

*A few That's that are interesting:*

Tennyson could take a piece of paper,  
write a poem on it worth £1000  
*That's GENIUS*

Rothschild can write a few words on paper  
and make it worth £1.000.000  
*That's CAPITAL*

A Mechanic can take a piece of steel worth £1  
and make into watchsprings worth £200  
*That's SKILL*

A man can run a business for a time  
and not advertise  
*That's FOOLISHNESS*

Some tradesmen do not study  
their customers  
*That's A MISTAKE*

All Licensed Victuallers should belong  
to their Protection Association  
*That's WISDOM*

W.H. is waiting to supply his customers  
with the very best Wines, Spirits and Beers  
*That's BUSINESS*

WAL. HASKINGS'

**TEN COMMANDMENTS**

++++

1<sup>st</sup> - When thirsty, thou shalt come  
to my house and drink, but not to  
excess; that thou may'st live long in  
the land and enjoy thyself for ever.

2<sup>nd</sup> - Thou shalt not take anything  
from me, that is unjust, for I need all  
I have and more too.

3<sup>rd</sup> - Thou shalt not expect too large  
glasses, nor filled too full, for we  
must pay our rent.

4<sup>th</sup> - Thou shalt not sing or dance,  
only when thy spirit moveth thee to  
do thy best.

5<sup>th</sup> - Thou shalt honour me and  
mine, that thou may'st live long and  
see me again.

6<sup>th</sup> - Thou shalt not destroy or break  
anything on my premises, else thou  
shalt pay for double the value, Thou  
shalt not care to pay me in bad  
money, nor even say "Chalk" or  
"Slate."

7<sup>th</sup> - Thou shalt call at my place  
daily, if unable to come we shall feel  
it an insult unless you send a  
substitute or an apology.

8<sup>th</sup> - Thou shalt not abuse thy fellow  
beings nor cast base insinuations  
upon their characters by hinting that  
they can't drink too much.

9<sup>th</sup> - Neither shalt thou take the  
name of my goods in vain by calling  
my beer "slops," for I always keep  
best brewed ales, and am always at  
home to my friends.

10<sup>th</sup> - Thou shalt not so far forget  
thy honourable position and high  
standing in the community as to ask  
the Hotel keeper to treat.

Walter Haskings' Free Pass to the Seahorse Inn

---

### Ship - 1

St James

5 East Hill

pre 1764 to 1980 (map 63)

an alehouse

now a shop (2007)

The name of this pub is another of obvious nautical origin, its sign being simple and therefore easily recognised. Perhaps its original owner was a sailor who retired from the seafaring life and settled down to running a pub.

It appears in the alehouse recognisances for the full period from 1764 until 1819 and then in trade directories throughout the 19th century. For a period up to 1788 it had a rival of the same name located in the nearby East Bay area, which makes identification of the two houses somewhat difficult. One can only guess at why there should be two houses with the same name situated so close to each other, but then this same thing happened with the Three Crowns, the Fleur de Lys and the King's Head.

In 1872 it was owned by Osborne who sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1885. The census of 1851 gave James Folkard, age 35, as the inn keeper, followed in 1891 by Charles Aylett, age 53, also describing himself as an inn keeper. The 1901 census again showed Charles Aylett, aged 61, the inn keeper. It was transferred to Ind Coope in 1939. The old timber framed house was of the 17th century, with a large cellar area. It suffered badly from a lack of trade in the 1980's and closed soon after, the owners Allied Breweries leaving it to deteriorate<sup>1</sup>. In 1992<sup>2</sup>, the newspapers announced that the Mayor's son, Mr Frank, bought it and took the licence, with no intention of ever pulling a pint. He converted it into a private dwelling - but a private dwelling with a history!

---

### Ship Inn - 2

Headgate

see the **Fox and Fiddler**

---

### Ship Inn - 3

Lexden

1709 to 1825

a tavern

precise location uncertain

All that is known of this old tavern is from building deeds held at the Essex Record Office. No more is known of its history or where it was situated in the Lexden parish.

---

### Ship - 4

St James

East Bay

pre 1764 to 1788

an alehouse

precise location uncertain

This alehouse appears in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 until 1788 and would have been close to the other Ship on East Hill. Nothing else is known of its history or precise location.

---

### Ship - 5

St Leonard

Hythe

1763 to 1797

an alehouse

location uncertain

The existence of a pub by the name of the Ship at the Hythe is only known from deeds of the dates given, held at the Essex Record Office. Nothing else is known about its history or precise location. Could it be a mistaken reference to the previous house?

---

<sup>1</sup> EG – 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 1991

<sup>2</sup> EG – 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 1992

### Shoulder of Mutton - 1

High Street

The name of this pub may originally have come from the landlord of the pub having had a second source of income, that of a butcher. However, its location near to the Dutch Quarter of the town and its links with the wool trade, may have led to its naming. Whatever the answer, the reason has been lost with time and the name remains one of the most popular in the country.

see the **Lamb**

---

### Shoulder of Mutton - 2

Lexden

c1837

All that is known of this old tavern is that it is referred to on a tithe map of 1837. It is not referred-to in trade directories of that period.

---

### Shoulder of Mutton - 3

St Botolph

?

c1838

a tavern

location uncertain

All that is known of this old tavern is that it is referred to on a tithe map of 1838. It is not referred to in trade directories of that period.

---

### Siege House

East Hill

1980 to date (map 68)

a pub restaurant

closed up

The Siege House was so named after the Siege of Colchester in 1648 when Royalist supporters took over and held the town while it was besieged for eleven weeks by Parliamentary forces. On 5th July 1648, the Siege House being outside the town walls, was siezed by a Royalist sortie, led by Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle. They charged out of the Town Gate, down East Hill and dislodged the Roundheads in the building and the surrounding streets. It was held for only a few hours before being counter attacked by Colonel Whalley's Roundhead Cavalry and troops.

The building was peppered with bullets and the holes can be seen to this day, picked out in red by various owners, to mark their position. After great hardship, the Royalists accepted defeat and surrendered on 27th August. Lucas and Lisle were held at the King's Head in Head Street and were later led to the Castle grounds to be shot. The building was constructed in the early 16th century and has many other points of historical interest.

There is some evidence to suggest that medallions of arms in the upstairs windows came from the Perseverance alehouse, once located at the bottom of Hythe Hill. During the 19th century the house fell into disrepair and was restored in 1905. The premises was acquired by Whitbread and in 1980 the upper floor was converted into a Beefeater steak house, with the ground floor made in to a public bar.

---

### Silver Oyster

Queen Elizabeth Way, Monkwick

1959 to date

a public house

The name of the pub is a reference to Colchester's famous oyster trade, which probably dates from before Roman times. The house was originally to have been known simply as 'the Monkwick' but it took its eventual name from the silver oyster that is an exact copy of the brass one used by Colchester's water bailiff, who is responsible for checking the size and quality of oysters.

This measurement standard is about 54 millimetres at its largest diameter and is engraved with the borough arms. It was given to the borough in 1905 by the wife of Alderman Horace Egerton-Green, Mayor of Colchester in 1886/7 and 1896/7 and bears a hallmark of 1804/5, with the maker by the name of Bateman. The object is believed to be

unique. The annual Colchester Oyster Feast has been held for many years and has attracted many famous personalities.

The pub was opened in 1959 by its owners Ind Coope. It was built to serve the inhabitants of the 1950's built Monkwick housing estate. Bacchus checked it out in 1963 and 1964<sup>1</sup> when the licence was held by Sheila and Neville Stanton. In 1998, it was purchased by Ridley's.

---

**Sir Colin Campbell**

Mersea Road

The name of the pub would have referred to Sir Colin Campbell (1792 - 1863) who became Lord Clyde, created a baron after his success in suppressing the Indian Mutiny. He was the son of a Glasgow carpenter and had a distinguished career serving in the Peninsular War and Crimean War. A very fitting name for a pub in such close proximity to the Army garrison.

see the **Gaiety**

---

**Six Bells**

Greenstead

289 Greenstead Road

c1850 to 1991

a beerhouse

demolished

The name of this pub is a variation on that of the Bell, six bells perhaps signifying opening time at the pub. It would have been within earshot of St Leonard's Church bells. However, the naming of the pub may have had a connection with the bell ringers themselves, perhaps six of them.



The Six Bells - c1932

---

<sup>1</sup> CE – 8<sup>th</sup> Nov 1963, 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 1964



The earliest reference found to this beer house comes from the Essex Standard which recorded that one Edgar Chapman, age 27 years, a butcher, was charged with stealing two brass candlesticks from John Adams of the Six Bells, Greenstead. He was found guilty and given three months hard labour.

The census of 1871 shows Ann Tildersley, unmarried, age 39, described as a beer house keeper. Building plans dated 1884 indicate that Miss Tildersley's premises were rebuilt around that time when it was then owned by W E Grimston. The plans show it to have been a small building with a bar in the centre opposite the front entrance door, a 10' x 14' parlour on the left, and the same sized tap room on the right. There were three bedrooms upstairs. In 1899, it was sold by Grimston to Truman, with the deed stating it to have formerly been two messuages, and once called the Black Boy. It is shown in the 1901 census but with no licensee on the premises on that day. What this first building looked like can only be guessed at.

The beer house was to be completely rebuilt around 1924 in a style typical of the day and had some interesting moulding work on the exterior facade, with a date of 1924 inscribed. The picture shows this in some detail, as it was, just prior to its demolition in 1991. What price progress?

The house first appears by name in the licensing records in 1907, when it was a beerhouse owned by Truman. In 1949, it was granted a full publican's licence.

In 1991, plans were submitted by Tesco, the supermarket chain, for a new store to be built. Within a short space of time, they had bought this pub and in 1992 demolished it, together with a row of houses, to allow the scheme to go ahead<sup>1</sup>.

previously the **Black Boy**

19th century?

The pub is mentioned as once having had this name in a deed dated 1899. Exactly when it was thus named is unknown.

---

## Slipstream

St Botolph's

See **Molly Malones**

---

## Smith's Beer House

Parson's Heath

c1894

a beerhouse

location uncertain

The name of this beerhouse was probably taken from the name of its original owner.

All that is known of this house is from a disapproved building plan application dated 1894, by its owners Daniells.

---

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 20<sup>th</sup> Sep 1991, EG – 24<sup>th</sup> Jun 1992, 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 1992

### Smiths

Church Street

See the section covering 'Bars' at the end of the chapter..

---

### Spinnaker

Hythe Quay

1989 to date (map 119)

a public house

The name of this pub is another with seafaring connotations, particularly fitting with its location along the Hythe Quay. A spinnaker is a type of sail fitted to a boat or ship to give it more speed. The name was chosen with the changing of the licensee who wished to change the pub's previous poor image.

The old anchor that used to hang as the pub's sign, resides in the garden, perhaps waiting to be displayed again some day.

Painted bright pink, it is said to be the smallest pub in Colchester with its single bar. An indenture dated 1871 is hung on the wall of the bar which records the sale of the property by Thomas Moy, to Walter Edward Grimston.

This pub's future was uncertain in 1992, when the newspapers reported that new road plans for the Hythe were likely to cut it off from its customers, with an expected severe loss of trade. The owner, Mr David John Clayton (one of life's 'characters' and with one of the few private freehold licences), who ran it as a freehouse, looked forward to the long awaited re-development of the Hythe area, which would place his pub in an ideal position for trade. In 2005, the building work was well under way and the pub dwarfed by all the new buildings. Mr Clayton retired in 2006 and it became one of Punch Taverns' houses.

previously known as the **Anchor**

c1763 to 1989

There were several Anchor pubs in Colchester, it being a coastal town with many sailors around and about who might be attracted to a pub because of such a name. This one is shown in a trade directory of 1848 but may date from well before that date. The census of 1851 gave the landlord as one Charles G Fuller, age 30, licensed victualler.

The record office holds deposited deeds referring to the Ship in St Leonard's parish from 1763 to 1797, but it is not known whether this is the same house. The current building style and materials are early Victorian with it possibly having replaced an earlier building. The pub is shown on the 1876 map series and is detailed in the map section of this book.



The Anchor - c1932

It is known that the pub was sold by Thomas Moy in 1871 to local businessman, Walter Edward Grimston who, in 1899, sold it to the London brewers Truman, Hanbury and Buxton. The indenture covering that sale in 1899 records the sale of 22 licensed premises (not all in Colchester) in total, raised the grand sum of £64000. The Colchester premises mentioned are; the Albert, the Anchor beerhouse, the Blue Boar, the Cambridge Arms, the Duke of York Inn, the Fencers, the Gardeners Arms beerhouse, the Hospital Arms beerhouse, the Marlborough Head, the Marquis of Granby, the Nelson's Head beerhouse, the Ordnance Arms, the Railway Tavern beerhouse, the Royal Standard, the Six Bells and the Spotted Cow beerhouse.

In the 50's and 60's the pub was renowned for being a rough house and taxi drivers were known to refuse fares from this location. Trumans held it until it was gutted by a fire in 1972. It re-opened in November 1972.

Just prior to it changing its name to the Spinnaker in 1989, the pub was wrecked by persons unknown, the landlord tied up and money strewn all over the place. The motive was certainly not theft and the landlord was reluctant to discuss the matter. He must have known what it was all about but probably knew better than to talk to the police. New landlord and owner, Mr David Clayton, opened the refurbished pub on 17th April 1989, making it one of the few, licensee owned, free houses in town.

---

### Spotted Cow - 1

St James

Harwich Road

c1850 to 1909

a beerhouse

demolished

The name of this beerhouse is a variation on the bovine theme of the Bull, the Black Bull, the Cow, the Red Cow, etc. The animal was an important commodity in those days before the coming of the motor car and this sign would have been an easy one to recognise.

The earliest reference to this beerhouse comes from a record in the Essex Standard of 23rd August 1852, when a drunken customer was prosecuted for his disorderly conduct. The census of 1861 shows John Bloice as a beer and cow keeper. Presumably this is the reason behind the original naming of the pub. The 1901 census gives it in the occupation of Walter Totham, , aged 55, a coal merchant and publican. It was owned by Grimston who sold it to Trumans in 1899, who subsequently closed it in 1909. A personal recollection of Dr Laver said that it had a pictorial sign, and that it stood at the corner of Greenstead and Harwich Roads, facing East Street. He recalled that the building was later demolished.

It is possible that this house dates from a much earlier period and under the name of the Red Cow although there is some confusion on this point as a tithe map dated 1845 shows a Cow Inn in the general location of the present day Flying Fox on Harwich Road.

see also the **Red Cow**

---

### Spotted Cow - 2

Harsnett Road

c1886

a beerhouse

location uncertain

All that is known of this house is from an entry in the Museum Collection. No more is known of it, although the date given of 1886 would have been around the time of the building of Harsnett Road as we know it today.

---

### Spread Eagle - 1

Mile End

The name of this pub may be a reference to Colchester's Roman heritage, where the spread eagle was the symbol of the Roman legion. It is a sign of power.

see the **Dog and Pheasant**

---

### Spread Eagle - 2

St Peter

11 Middleborough

1844 to 1910 (map 84)

a public house

demolished

The name of this public house is a common one throughout the country, probably dating from Roman times when the spread eagle (an eagle with outstretched wings) was their national emblem. With Colchester's Roman connections, this would have been a fitting name.

The pub by this name existed from 1844 and is shown as such in subsequent trade directories. It is shown in licensing records in 1872 as being owned by Osborne, who sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1884. The 1901 census shows William J Bruce, aged 39, as the innkeeper, wheelwright and blacksmith, together with his wife, six children and a boarder, who was also a blacksmith. It was closed in 1910. The building was later used as a market stores and then Last's garage stood on the spot in the 1970's.

A newspaper article by Andrew Phillips in 1995, recalled this house and, in particular, one Charles Hayward, who was its landlord. Charles was also turnkey for the water works and Jumbo and a member of the local fire service. Fire was a very real hazard in the town and it was believed that, with the building of Jumbo, serious fires could be more readily controlled. However, following the outbreak of a serious fire in the High Street in 1883, Mr Hayward could not be found to operate the water works turncock on Balkerne Hill, so there was no water pressure to get the hoses working. It appeared that Mr Hayward and a Mr Balls were later found in the Eagle pub, considerably the worse for drink. This incident was enough to convince the Town Clerk of the time, to take the water works into public ownership.



The Spread Eagle – date unknown

There is no evidence of the pub now, the site being occupied by modern offices.

previously the **Weaver's Arms**

1799 to 1844

Deeds to this house indicate that the building dated from 1720, although whether it was a tavern (by another name) at that time is unknown. It is shown in the alehouse recognisance from 1799 until 1819 and then in trade directories up until 1832.

An anonymous commentator in 1856 writing his recollections of some Colchester taverns stated that this house was, 'probably a house of call for persons engaged in that trade as historical evidence proves that there were more weavers residing in St Peters parish than in any other in the town. And some of the barbarous amusements that delight the lower class were followed when I was young having seen many a badger baited there. It was done as follows; a wheel barrow with a piece of sack fastened in front was turned topsy turvy to represent a burrow, the badger was put in and the dog which drew it out was considered the best and his master entitled to the prize. It became the Spread Eagle but has not entirely lost its character for cruel pastimes, as a 'Ratting Club' is held there at this time. In the back room a pit is made of sufficient height to prevent the rats from getting over, yet low enough for persons to look into it. A number of rats are put in and that dog which kills the greatest number in the shortest time is considered to win the wager.'

The Museum Collection noted that on licensing day in 1844, it changed its name to the Spread Eagle.

see also the **Half Moon Inn**

---

### Squire's Table

Ipswich Road

see the **Old King Cole**

---

### Stag's Head

Magdalen Street

The name of this pub is probably of heraldic origin although the reason for its use in this instance is not known.

see the **Unicorn**

---

### Star - 1

St Runwald

?

15th century

a tavern

location uncertain

The name of the pub was a religious sign in medieval days which referred to the star of Bethlehem.

The Museum Collection gives a reference to this ancient house from the time of Henry VI. In 1426, borough records mention Richard Hikeman who was host of the inn called the 'Sterre'. In 1446, there is a record that Robert Cok, Henry Wygore and others were released to Ralph Bole, of a tenement called 'le Sterre' in the parish of St Runwald.

Could this be the same as the Star in Head Street which in the 19th century was in the parish of St Mary at the Wall?

---

### Star - 2

St Giles

?

18th century

an alehouse

location uncertain

All that is known of this ancient alehouse is from a reference in Dr Morant's epic history where he speaks of St Giles' parish, saying "many houses have been pulled down in this parish, particularly a large range called the Star Yard, from an ale house there having this sign."

No more is known of it.

---

### Star - 3

East Bridge

c1827

a tavern

location uncertain

All that is known of this house is from a reference in a trade directory of 1827, where its address was given as being situated at East Bridge.

### Star Inn - 4

St Mary at the Walls

13 Head Street

c1860 to 1909

a beerhouse

demolished

This beerhouse is first mentioned in the 1861 census when one Thomas Hills, age 63, was the beer house keeper. In James Cater, beer house licence holder, applied to the magistrates for a full licence in 1869<sup>1</sup>. In 1871 the house was described as the Star Inn and in the occupation of Joseph Watson, described as a bootmaker and publican. It was mentioned in 1881 but on the night of the census was shown as being uninhabited. Then in 1891, the occupant was Herbert Beckwith, age 36. The 1901 census shows Frank Bensley, aged 27, a butcher and licensed victualler. It first appears by name in the licensing records in 1907, when it was owned by Adams. It closed in 1909 and a note in the Museum Collection says that it was Olley's greengrocer's in 1923. Another reference found in 1994 was that a man named Turner had the sign away when it closed. If you are out there Mr Turner, have you still got it?

The pub stood in Head Street at the corner with Culver Street, and in view of the Fleece Hotel. It is not known when it was finally demolished to make way for modern shop buildings that occupy the spot today.

---

### Star - 5

Lexden Straight Road

see **Brights**

---

### Star and Anchor Inn

Stanwell Street

1770 to c1840

an alehouse

location uncertain

The name of the pub could possibly have been a combination of two religious signs. The star as in the Star of Bethlehem and the anchor which kept men safe from the storms of life.

It first appears in the alehouse recognisances in 1770 and is shown in trade directories up to 1839 when it appears to have either ceased in business or changed its name. A trade directory dated 1823 gives its address as St John's Green. Its precise location is uncertain.

It is understood that Charles Cobbold, of the North Hill Brewery, owned this house.

---

### Star and Garter Inn

East Hill or East Bay

1789 to c1865

an alehouse

location uncertain

The name of the pub is a reference to the Most Noble Order of the Garter, the highest order of knighthood in Britain. It was instituted by Edward III around 1348 when, according to tradition, he had picked up a garter which had accidentally slipped from the leg of the Countess of Salisbury. When he was seen with the garter by those around him, he slipped it around his own leg saying as he did so, 'honi soit qui mal y pense,' which translates as 'evil be to him who evil thinks.' The order is limited to members of the royal family and twenty five knights. The star forms part of the insignia and the sign would have made a very fine sight hung up outside a tavern.

It first appears in the alehouse recognisances in 1789 and is shown in trade directories up to 1863 when it appears to have either ceased in business or changed its name. Jeremiah Welch was the tenant in 1863<sup>2</sup> when one of his intoxicated customers stole from him. Its precise location is uncertain, although it was most probably located at the bottom of East Hill as its address is also shown as being at East Bay, from time when ships were able to navigate that far and a bay existed.

It was briefly mentioned in the newspapers of 1858<sup>3</sup> when John Barker, the landlord, was summoned by the Bench for allowing prostitution to take place on the premises. The police stated that this was the first offence and the defendant promised that this was the first and the last offence of this nature.

---

<sup>1</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 10<sup>th</sup> Sep 1869

<sup>2</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 4<sup>th</sup> Sep 1863

<sup>3</sup> Essex Standard - 14<sup>th</sup> May 1858

### Stars and Key

St Peter

?

1764 to 1767

an alehouse

location uncertain

The name of this alehouse is another one which combines two subjects, and may well have been of heraldic origin.

It appears in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 until 1767 when it either ceased in business or changed its name. Its precise location is uncertain and no more is known about its history.

An advertisement appeared in the newspapers in July 1767<sup>1</sup> informing his fellow townsmen that he, 'Henry Davis, Wine Cooper, etc. hath taken a Publick-House known as the Stars and Key, near the North-Gate,' and that 'Good Stable Room for Horses' was obtainable. Possibly in the course of time this house became known as the Lancer in c1884, but no proof of this has been found.

---

### Stockwell Arms

West Stockwell Street

c1870 to date (map 105)

a beerhouse originally

The name of the pub refers to the area of the town in which it is located. The stock well was the name of a spring that rose in that area and was used as a common well by the people for their supply of water.



The Stockwell Arms c1950

Whilst this pub's timber framed building is very old indeed, perhaps of the 14th century, the earliest reference found to it is from the census of 1871 when Frederick W Hyam, age 30, was shown as publican. It was shown again in 1891 when one George Andrews, age 39, was described as a bootmaker and beer retailer. It was shown in the licensing records from 1907 as a beerhouse and under the ownership of Daniells, who had it until it was granted its full publican's licence in 1958, then passing to Truman's at around the same time.

Joseph Phillips mentions, in Chapter 2, the belief that the 18th century author, Daniel Defoe, writer of such works as Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders, who also held leasehold land at Severalls Park at one time, once lived here. Indeed, it is possible that he was living here when he penned these lines:

'Whenever God erects a House of Prayer,  
The Devil's sure to build a chapel there,  
And 'twill be found upon examination,  
The latter has the larger congregation.'

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 3<sup>rd</sup> Jun 1938

Bacchus visited in 1963 and described what he found<sup>1</sup>. Perched on a stool at the bar with a pint of ale, puffing at his briar and wearing his familiar trilby hat, he noted that the landlord had discovered some old pewter tankards inscribed with the pub's name, and had put them on display. These mugs would have dated from an age before health regulations brought about the almost exclusive use of glass mugs and even perhaps from an age when the glass bottomed pewter mugs were said to have been designed so that a man could spot a coin surreptitiously placed there by a navy man, before taking a sip. By taking a drink, it was considered that you had accepted the King's shilling as pay and was sufficient to get you hauled off for naval service by the dreaded Press Gang. A more plausible explanation would be that it was simply to dissuade the drinker from banging the tankard on the table for fear of breaking the glass and spilling the contents. Alas, these mugs have disappeared over the years and probably decorate another pub now.

The photograph on the previous page, dated around 1900, shows the three gables of the building generally as it is today and shows how it must once have been more than one dwelling but which were amalgamated into one at some point. The bar area is full of the ancient timber beams, exposed to view as is the fashion nowadays and has a real old world charm and ambience.

In 1979, the newspapers reported an on-going saga between the licensee and the dart team<sup>2</sup>. The no-nonsense landlady had turned them out, saying that they were all a lot of 'half-pinters' who never spent any money in the pub. She added that the takings had trebled since they left and went to play for the Marquis of Granby.

The pub was hitting the headlines again in 1981 when it was reported that the landlord had discovered that the pub had been built on a section of a Roman wall, evidence of which could be seen in the cellar. The pub stands within the Roman walled area of the town and the likelihood of Roman foundations is very credible.

The licensees, Brian and Shirley Jerome, did much charitable work; their fund raising amounting to several thousands of pounds. In the summer months they would transform the outside of the building into a shower of colourful blooms, having won the coveted 'Colchester in Bloom' award on more than one occasion. By 2007, Shirley had left the business and Brian was looking to retire. The pub closed in April 2007, it's future uncertain.

---

### Sun Inn - 1

Lexden

Lexden Street

16th century to date

an ancient inn

The name of this pub is a very common one, easy to identify and of ancient origin.



The Sun c1910

---

<sup>1</sup> CE – 26<sup>th</sup> Sep 1963

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 1979

The pub first appears in the alehouse recognisances in 1764 but is known to be much older than that date. Property deeds exist dated 1542 to 1547, which include mention of the Sun ale house. It is shown in trade directories throughout the following century with three Suns for 1793 in the occupations of John Sadler, John Cock and James Ward. The other two would have been in Maidenburgh Street and at the Hythe, but who belonged to which takes some sorting out. In 1872 it was owned by Nicholls and taken over by Ind Coope in the 1930's.

The various census entries give the following information:

|                                 |         |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------------------|
| 1851 - Mark Leapingwill Munson, | age 44, | inn keeper          |
| 1861 - Isaac Beardwell Garrad,  | age 40, | inn keeper          |
| 1871 - Isaac B Garrad,          | age 50, | inn keeper          |
| 1881 - Isaac Garrad,            | age 61, | inn keeper          |
| 1891 - Rebecca Garrad,          | age 61, | licensed inn keeper |

The house is a timber frame building of great age and is said to have a 'priest's hole' leading to the church near by, where a persecuted cleric could make good his escape from his pursuers.

For many years it has been a favoured meeting place for young people of a local footballing persuasion and in the 1980's, was headquarters of Colchester's Spoof Club. That entailed a trial of daring, not for the faint of heart or those with short arms and deep pockets. The name of one Mr Chris Porter, being a participant, springs to the author's mind!

The Spoofer's guide was compiled in the 1980's and soon became a prized work of literary wit, its authors exposing the personal characteristics of the combatants in a unique no-holds barred manner. A copy was encased for posterity, together with other memorabilia, in the public bar only to be consulted on rare occasions. However, sadly, its current whereabouts is a mystery, probably removed by one of the spoofers who had risen to a level of respectability and might otherwise have been embarrassed by the contents of the said document, where it to have been open to a wider audience.

also known as the **Rising Sun**

This ancient hostelry is shown by this name in the alehouse recognisances from 1788 to 1790 and even in a trade directory of 1848. It must have been the appearance of the inn's sign that led to this alternative name being used.

---

### Sun - 2

7 Maidenburgh Street

pre 1764 to c1980 (map 102)

a public house

now a private dwelling

This house appears in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 but probably dated from well before that date. It was owned by Cobbold from at least 1843 as a plan of this house was made by a surveyor, W A Bowler, on behalf of Messrs Cobbold, in 1843. This can be seen at the Essex Record Office. It is shown in trade directories through to recent times. The 1851 census shows it in the occupation of Jeremiah Emmon, age 66, a victualler and, by 1901, John King, aged 61, was the landlord. An 1852<sup>1</sup> newspaper item noted that one Abraham Garland desired the transfer of the licence of this house to himself, which was granted, but with a caution as to his future conduct. It was owned by Cobbold who sold it to Stopes of the Colchester Brewing Company in 1883. It passed to Ind Coope in 1939.

One day, around 1980, the publican decided that he had had enough and closed its doors. It never traded as a pub again and later became a private house.

---

### Sun - 3

?

c1755

a tavern

location uncertain

All that is known of this supposed tavern is from a mention in the Essex Note Book, dated 1755, stating that the Colchester Market Cross was near the Sun. Was this a reference to the Sun in Maidenburgh Street?

---

---

<sup>1</sup> Essex and West Suffolk Gazette - 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 1852

## Sun

Hythe

see the **Rising Sun**

## Sun Alehouse

?

1720 to 1791

a tavern

location uncertain

All that is known of this tavern is from deeds dated 1720 to 1791. It will probably refer to one of the other Suns.

## Sun Inn

St Botolph

?

c1838

a tavern

location uncertain

This tavern is mentioned on a tithe map of 1838. Nothing else is known of it.

## Swan - 1

Helle Lane

15th century

a tavern

location uncertain

The name of this ancient tavern was an emblem of innocence in medieval times. It has been used extensively on heraldic crests, with a possible origin coming from the Order of the Swan, an order of knighthood instituted by Frederick II of Brandenburg in 1440.

In 1437 there is a record in the borough records of a fine against John Kebbull of the Swan and William Stanton of the Herte, both in Helle Lane, for depositing dung at the rear of their inns. This was a case of anti-social behaviour, where the powerful smells of the many trades in the town were nothing to that of the foul stench of raw sewage that permeated the atmosphere. The town's officers spent much of their time trying to keep the town clean and it was not until several centuries later that the flush toilet was introduced (since previously introduced in Roman times.)

This is the earliest reference found to a house by the name of the Swan. From the reference to the 'Herte' and 'Helle Lane,' it is assumed that this house was situated in Culver Street, close to the White Hart. The Museum collection also suggests that Helle Lane was an old name for Culver Street, thus fitting-in with the White Hart reference.

## Swan - 2

St James

Frere Street (later East Hill)

16th to 17th century

a tavern

demolished

Mr L C Sier wrote an article in 1938<sup>1</sup> concerning this ancient inn, from which the following is an extract. The Colchester Borough records contain this record:

On September 28th 1539, Nicholas Woode, of Colchester, Clothmaker, and Alice his wife (formerly wife of John Pakyngton) secured enrolment of a deed which set forth that, on 15th January 1536, William Mauncell, of Colchester (an Attorney) had demised to John Wayne, Clerk, a tenement with curtilage and garden adjoining in St James parish, Colchester, between St James Churchyard on the East side and the hospice 'le Swanne' on the West side, the distance or length being 2 perches 11 feet, more or less, between the Churchyard and the land and wall of the 'Swan' hospice, the North end (or frontage) of the property abutting on Frere Street and the other end on the field called Beryfield, the depth from the Street to the Beryfield being six perches. The demise to John Wayne by William Mauncell had been for John Wayne's lifetime, with remainder to John Pakyngton and Alice his wife (she being now wife of Nicholas Woode). John Wayne had died in 1536, before 23rd March, and the property had therefore descended to Alice Pakyngton, as Widow of John Pakyngton. Now, by deed dated 27th September 1539, Alice and her present husband, Nicholas Woode, sold the property to Richard Lorde, otherwise called Richard Burley, Gentleman, and Alice his wife,

<sup>1</sup> ER - 1938 Vol 47, October

they to pay an annual rent of three pence to St Botolph's Priory at Michaelmas in each year, for all other services, exactions and demands.

It is not often that such precise indications of the location of a property are found in ancient documents. This document shows that the frontage to Frere Street (now East Street) was 44 feet from St James's churchyard westward and that its depth from the street southward was 99 feet.

At a Hundred Court on 7th March, 1541, Robt. Stampe of Colchester, yeoman, and his wife Joan, enrolled a deed dated 4th February, 1541, whereby they sold to John Damsell (a baker) 'all that tenement or hospice called 'le swan,' with cottage adjoining it, in St James's parish, Colchester, in the street called ffreris-strete opposite le Greyfrerys.'

Situated within 44 yards of the East Gate, it was the first inn for travellers from Harwich, Ipswich and elsewhere coming in to the borough - and the last for those leaving. Its patronage was therefore probably considerable.

On 3rd February 1636, Martin Basil, Esq., sold the 'Swan' to John Beriffe, Gentleman, of Colchester, who made his will in 1661 by which he devised 'the House at Colchester where Mr William Talcott now lives, with the Beryfield,' to his eldest son Henry.

Prior to 1641, the building had ceased to be an inn and had been converted into private residences, one of which was occupied by William Talcott, another by Thomas Wade, gentleman, one of the Bailiffs of Colchester in 1630 to 1633, and Mayor of the Borough in 1641 (when he resided in the eastern half of the old inn) and others by Thomas Reynolds, gentleman, and Anne Gilbert, widow. This gives some indication of the size of the 'Swan Inn,' as each of these occupants was of social importance and substance.

In 1641, John Beriffe sold the Swan to the above mentioned Thomas Reynolds, who was successful as a baymaker, but whose methods were somewhat dubious. Two thousand weavers, represented by three of their number, petitioned the Privy Council in 1637, alleging that their masters compelled them to take commodities, instead of money, in payment of their wages. Thomas Reynolds was ordered by the Mayor and Justices to pay a certain sum of money and to give further satisfaction, but he refused to do so, even when the order was made a second time, on which occasion Reynolds did not appear but was represented by his lawyer who, the petitioners stated, was the 'only cause of all our trouble.' The lawyer asserted in open court that Reynolds would spend £100 in law before he would give them one penny. He employed 400 spinners, 52 weavers and 33 others, so that he was in a large way of business. The upshot of the matter was that Reynolds was forthwith committed to the Fleet prison until he should pay the petitioners twice the amount of the wages he had defrauded, withdraw all actions brought by him against them, and pay such reasonable charges as the poor men had been put to in appearing before the Privy Council. This caused Reynolds to come promptly to terms with his men and on 17th May the Warden of the Fleet was ordered to set him at liberty. In his defence, Thomas Reynolds stated a great part of his house had been burnt, being wilfully fired, with goods to the value of £500, so that he was living elsewhere in St James's parish before purchasing a portion of the 'Swan.'

Eventually, after various changes in ownership, the property was purchased in 1741 by George Wegg, an attorney, which by then included several small tenements at each side of the old inn. In 1744, Morant noted that George Wegg had since December 1744, 'pulled down nine tenements.' The present property known as East Hill House was built around 1750 and stands on the site of the ancient inn once known by the sign of the Swan.

In 1936<sup>1</sup>, Gerald Rickword wrote, 'In a contemporary engraving of the reception at East Gate in October 1638, of Maria of Medici, mother-in-law of King Charles I, a house, probably an inn, is shown on the north side of the street, with the towers of the Castle appearing in the background, which has a signboard displaying a swan, stretching some distance into the roadway. The upright which supports the cross piece, from which the sign is suspended, is capped by a carved figure of the royal bird.' It is probable that this sign belonged to this house although the reference to it being on the north side of the road is misleading.

---

### Swan - 3

St Mary at the Walls

Head Gate

16th century

an ancient tavern

location uncertain

This ancient tavern is also mentioned in the article by Mr L C Sier in 1938<sup>2</sup>. A deed recording the sale in 1540, by Richard Sylles, wheelwright, and his wife Margaret, daughter of Alderman William Cowbrege deceased, for £8 6s 8d, of two tenements and a stable and two gardens near Head Gate and the Town Wall, in the Parish of St Mary at the Walls. One of the gardens is said to be bounded on the east side by the tenement called le Swanne, 'now in the tenure

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 15<sup>th</sup> Aug 1936

<sup>2</sup> ER - 1938 Vol 47, October

of Robert Lambe, carpenter' and on the west side by the tenement called le Saresons hede. On the north side was the street called 'Hedegatestrete.' It would seem that this would have been the east end of what is now Crouch Street. The property had come to Margaret Sylles under the will of her father and was sold on 7th November 1540 to 'John Lucas, Esquire.'

The precise location is unknown and it is assumed that the Swan and the Saracen's Head were both taverns. Sier suggests that they were located near to where the Bull, another ancient house, now stands.

---

### Swan - 4

St Leonard

100 Hythe Hill

16th century to 1956 (map 44)

an alehouse

standing derelict

One can just imagine the thoughts going through the mind of the person who gave this ancient pub its name. What better choice of name could have been found, it being sited on the banks of the River Colne, with groups of beautiful white swans gliding gracefully by, as they must have done for centuries past and still do to this very day. If ever a pub's name was well chosen this is it!

The Swan is mentioned as early as 1515 in Manorial Records when it is described as an 'inn called le Swan juxta le Hethe.' Much later, in the St Leonards parish records of 1670 is recorded 'John Maynard from the Swann was buried the 26th day of November.' Twenty years later the Assembly Book of Thursday, August 14th, 1690, records that certain aldermen were 'to meet at the sign of the Swann at the Hythe' on the following Tuesday afternoon, to inspect the coalyard occupied by Maynard and Captain Driffield, and afterwards report to the Council.

'The Swan in the Hythe Parish, then kept by Mrs Cock' has passing mention in a rare pamphlet, published in 1702, by the Reverend William Smythies, jun., Rector of St Michaels, Mile End and Chaplain to the Earl of Sandwich, entitled 'Mr Smythies's Vindication from the Foul Calamnies of Dr Harison, and the Plain Perjuries of his Witnesses.' Mr Smythies was alleged to have been seen 'overcome with Drink' at the Swan and other houses; to which charge the indignant clergyman scathingly replies to his traducer, James Woodward, a needy butcher. 'Tis much this Butcher should see me in all these Taverns! I dare say I never saw him in any Tavern, nor does the Master of any Tavern in Town know him, I believe, so much as by Sight: When he can get Two or Three Pence, the Ale-house is sure on't; but he's no Guest for a Tavern.' (It is possible that this tale might have referred to the Swan in High Street.)



The Swan in the 1950's

John Bloyce held the house in 1753, and two years later 'A Hat of Half a Guinea Value,' was advertised to be run for by eight men at John Miller's at the Swan, each man paying in one shilling entrance fee which, with the liquor consumed on the premises on the day, probably amply repaid mine host for his venture. At Michaelmas 1757, William Summersum informed 'Gentlemen, Farmers and others' that he had removed from 'the Dolphin in the Hythe parish to the White Swan in the same parish,' where he had 'good Stabling for Teams.'

It is shown in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 through until 1819 and thereafter in trade directories up until recent times. Various entries in the census read as follows:

|                          |            |         |                            |
|--------------------------|------------|---------|----------------------------|
| 1851 - James Cooper,     |            | age 45, | victualler                 |
| 1861 - Martha Keeble,    | unmarried, | age 59, | inn keeper                 |
| 1871 - Charles Joslin,   |            | age 39, | inn keeper                 |
| 1881 - Elizabeth Joslin, | widow,     | age 51, | proprietress of beer house |
| 1891 - Mark Joslin,      |            | age 36, | clerk coal office          |

It was owned by Cobbold from at least 1843 as a plan of this house was made by a surveyor, W A Bowler, on behalf of Messrs Cobbold, in 1843. This can be seen at the Essex Record Office. Cobbold sold it to the Colchester Brewing Company in 1883. It passed to Ind Coope in 1939 who had it until it was closed in 1956 and its licence transferred to the Baker's Arms.

Gerald Rickword wrote an articles in 1956 and 1957<sup>1</sup> and discussed the initials that he had seen carved into the brickwork. The earliest decipherable being E C 1821, S C 1821, J F 1825, Atkins 1858, W E 1872, J J 1876, H C '87, Mark York, W Corder hung Aug 11th 1828. The latter being a grim reminder of an atrocious crime committed 130 years ago. The inscription was probably the work of one of the crowd that gathered at the George Inn door in High Street when that diabolical murderer, closely guarded by a Bow Street runner, alighted from the London coach late one evening in April 1828. He included more information about the murder and other Corders in town, some who saw fit to change their name it seems. He also noted in 1963 that all the lettering on the wall was replaced by new bricks and that the house was then taken over by a bookmaker. This is not completely true as some lettering did survive as is mentioned below. The building today is brick built and of a Georgian style, although internal features would appear to be much older.

A debate raged in 1991<sup>2</sup> over whether the building should be demolished to make way for a new road development. Local historian, Mr Andrew Phillips wrote a splendid article in the local newspaper entitled 'The Case for Saving the Swan'. With his kind permission it is repeated here.

'The bottom of Hythe Hill is the latest Dunkirk in Colchester's attempt to live in the present and retain the past. No-one can argue with the need for an eastern approach road but all of us should care for the feel of this part of our town. Good Heavens, we have an unspoiled tidal river, a cluster of ancient buildings - perhaps the oldest in Colchester, St Leonard's Church, an 800 year old port and a beautiful riverside walk to Wivenhoe or Rowhedge. And, thanks to the decline of the port, a lot of open space which could be used to enhance the setting.

The appearance of Hythe Hill has changed little this century, as surviving Victorian photographs make clear. The area was once celebrated for its character and its characters. Real poverty was cushioned by a real sense of community - the area was full of 'good auld booys.' As the brown sailed barges slid in on high water, thirsty barges and dockers made for the Neptune, the Queen's Head, the Anchor, the Dolphin or the Swan. If they had the money, they could proceed up Hythe Hill via the Rising Sun, the Lord Nelson and some 22 pubs (some say more) until they reached St Botolph's corner. Not many of those pubs are now in business. At the Hythe itself, only the Swan is still there.

Look closely at the betting shop which English Heritage wants to preserve - in peeling letters it still says 'The Swan, Wines and Spirits'. There was a Swan Inn somewhere here in 1514, owned by that Duke of Norfolk whose son built the Red Lion in High Street. In the 19th century the Swan was much frequented by the men who worked the coal yards on the quay. Colchester knew the value of keeping the railway guessing by bringing coal from Newcastle in coastal barges. The largest yard was owned by Tommy Moy, whose coal depots could once be seen at every railway station in East Anglia. Twice mayor of Colchester, Moy was a leading Conservative and his coal haulers were loyal Conservative voters - hardly surprising in the days when voting took place in public. Across the road stood Moy's office. It is still there today, painted bright red - not a colour poor Moy would approve of.

---

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 1956, 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 1957

<sup>2</sup> ECS – 27<sup>th</sup> Sep 1991, 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 1991, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 1991,  
EG – 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 1992

Before every General Election, Moy's foreman would stroll into the Swan and buy a few drinks - often a lot of drinks - as he recruited Moy's 'lambs' for the forthcoming contest. Voting in public enabled political parties to secure votes in two ways. One was to offer free beer to likely voters; the other was to threaten to re-arrange the faces of anyone supporting the other side. This is where Moy's Lambs came in. No-one re-arranged faces more effectively than Hythe coal heavers.

To this day you can see carved on a brick in the wall of the Swan: "William Corder hung August 11th 1828". Nearby are other initials carved in the 1820's. In his time Corder, who was hung for the murder of Maria Martin in the famous Red Barn at Polstead, was a minor celebrity to the point where a fashionable peaked cap he wore was called a Corder Cap. Corder's old aunt lived on Hythe Hill and children recalled the thrill of being chased by this bearded old lady.

Please don't conclude that I want to preserve the Swan because it once housed bouncers or celebrates a murder. Rather I say we should listen to English Heritage. Given that open spaces around Hythe Quay are bound to be developed, we need to be preserved every historic building or infilling will overwhelm ambience. When I consider what they have made of their rivers at Exeter and Bristol, I would put money on the fact that Colcestrians in 2091 would want us to preserve the Swan.'

Shortly afterwards, the plans for the new road were revised and the old Swan was reprieved. Let us hope that it stays with us for many years to come and that Andrew Phillips' closing words will be proven to be true!

### Swan - 5

St Nicholas

110 High Street

pre 1764 to c1934 (map 56)

an inn

demolished



The picture shown records the visit to Colchester by Mary de Medici in 1637. Jutting into the High Street is the sign of the Swan, in perfect position for where we new the house to be. The view is looking west, with the observer being somewhere like the tower of All Saints church. This is perhaps therefore our earliest depiction of a pub in Colchester. Also shown, tantalising is a sign, on the opposite side of the road, which looks like a crescent. Could that have been another pub that we do not know? We should not take too much notice of the accuracy of the drawing, as there is probably considerable artistic licence taken by the unknown artist.

Mr Gerald Rickword wrote about this old inn<sup>1</sup> saying that in 1747, whilst its customers were busy discussing the passage of the 'butcher' Duke of Cumberland through the town, Mr John Cooke, the landlord, advertised for sale cheap, 'A very good French Billiard Table, with new Sticks, Balls, and a Cue, the Room being wanted for another Use.' The game was then very popular and few towns in England are said to have been without a public table, although grey beards warned young men, as their sires had cautioned them against, 'those spunging Caterpillars, which swarm where any Billiard Tables are set up, who make that single room their Shop, Kitching and Bed Chamber.'

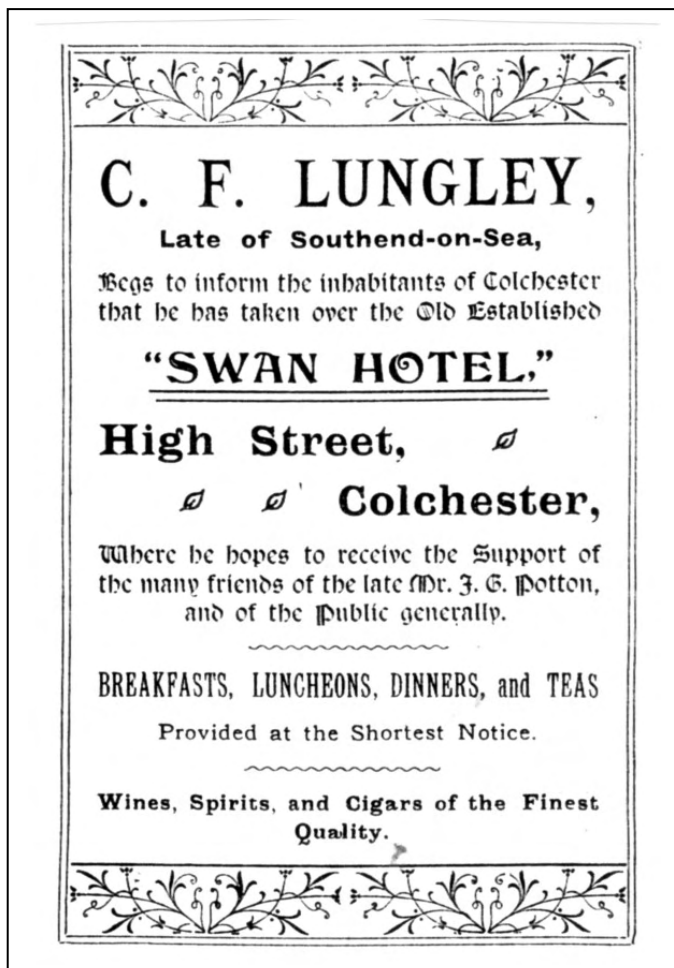
During the much looked forward to visit of the Norwich Comedians to the town in 1761, one of the company, Mrs Pearson, whose yearly benefit was held on November 27th, stayed at the Swan, whither dashing young bloods flocked to purchase tickets and engage in brief flirtations with this enchanting siren of the boards.

John Cooke appears to have been succeeded by James Fisin, and after his death in 1766, his widow Sarah, obsequiously informed the public that she proposed to carry on the business, and in returning 'Thanks to all her former Friends, hopes for a Continuance of their Favours and Recommendations, which will double the Obligations conferred on their very humble Servant to Command.' Mrs Fisin was a woman of mettle and to draw custom to her house, in August 1772, announced: 'To the Gentlemen Cricketers ... that there will be Eleven neat fashionable Hats, at

<sup>1</sup> ECS – 15<sup>th</sup> Aug 1936

the real Value of Ten Shillings and Sixpence each, to be played for on Monday, the Thirty-first Instant, at Mrs Fisin's at the Swan. Every Man to put in Five Shillings and Three-pence; to enter by Twelve o'Clock, and the stumps to be pitched at One. NB. A Dinner will be provided.'

At the close of the century, Joseph Baines was the landlord, and trade was good owing to the number of soldiers quartered in the town. Linesmen, militia-men and fencible-cavalrymen all met at the Swan and drank confusion to Old England's enemies.



An advertisement dated 1912

The inn's accommodations were described very fully when it was offered for sale in April 1836. 'That Old-Established, Popular and truly Valuable Property, the Swan Inn, and eating House, most Advantageously situated in the High Street and possessing every accommodation for carrying on a first rate business, comprising capital Sitting Rooms, Bar Parlour and convenient Kitchens, Scullery and Store Rooms; comfortable Sleeping Rooms and Attics; capital Brewhouse, Cellarage and Stabling for upwards of 40 Horses, with loose Boxes, and all requisite Out-offices, and with Back Entrances leading from George Street and Maidenburgh Street.'

The property, which was freehold, and let at a yearly rent of £85, was knocked down at the reserved bid of £1300.

In 1839, the Swan, with Mr Roper as landlord, was included in Pigot's Directory among the 'ten superior inns and hotels' in Colchester.

The one time licensee of this pub, John Bromley, was mentioned in an article by Mr Gerald Rickword in reference to a case of counterfeit money in 1854. See the Two Sawyers for more detail.

A directory dated 1870 gave a list of carriers who all left from this pub for destinations of various local towns.

An anonymous commentator (who was perhaps an ex-customer) has left us with the following recollection. 'This pub had the misfortune to have two bad tenants. One Wally Walstow, a most foul

mouthed and ignorant fellow, boasting a great reputation as a sportsman, and employed by other publicans as a valuer - to their great loss. He was followed by a dissolute fool, with a vixen of a wife, and after trouble with the authorities, the licence was removed. The house was old and dilapidated and was still standing in 1941.' With customers like that, who needs enemies?

The inn is shown in the alehouse recognisances from 1764 through until 1819 and thereafter in trade directories. In 1872 it was owned by Shepherd, then taken over by Daniells in 1884, who had it until its closure. The various censuses give the following occupants:

|                         |        |         |                                       |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| 1851 - John Bromley,    |        | age 37, | inn keeper                            |
| 1871 - Rose Ann Godwin, | widow, | age 44, | licensed victualler                   |
| 1891 - James Potton,    |        | age 46, | licensed victualler                   |
| 1901 - James G Potten,  |        | age 57, | licensed victualler                   |
|                         |        |         | (a single man living with his mother) |

The hotel was offered for sale in 1934<sup>1</sup> by its owners, Daniell and Sons, and closed its doors for the last time in that year. Argos store stood, until 1999, in the position that this pub once occupied, that store removing to Long Wyre Street that same year.

<sup>1</sup> ECS - 12<sup>th</sup> May 1934

also known as the **White Swan**

---

### Swan with Two Necks

Head Street

The origin of the name of this pub is another which is much debated. The author likes to believe that it was once named the Swan, but that on one occasion, a customer who had perhaps been ejected for being 'in his cups', glanced up at the sign and thought he saw a swan with, not one, but two necks. A more scholarly explanation varies with this theory in that it should read nicks rather than necks, thus referring to the nicks made on a swan's beak to determine ownership. Queen Elizabeth I granted the privilege of owning swans to both the Dyers Company and to the Worshipful Company of Vintners. The latter's mark was that of two nicks on the upper mandible.

see the **Duncan's Head**

---

*One afternoon at Cheers, Cliff Clavin was explaining the Buffalo Theory to his buddy Norm. Here's how it went:*

*"Well ya see, Norm, it's like this... A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members.*

*In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Excessive intake of alcohol, as we know, kills brain cells. But naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine. That's why you always feel smarter after a few beers."*