

UNUSUAL PUBS AMAZING STORIES

120 remarkable licensed premises to visit around Britain

Bob Barton

If they could talk, what stories would pubs tell about themselves? Here is a compendium of tales, making a unique 'crawl' of Unusual Pubs around Britain. Delve into stories from history and folklore, of notoriety and celebrity, at hostelrys where events actually occurred. These are remarkable licensed premises that are far more than places of refreshment.

Drink in John Lennon's student local, and the inn where the Brontë sisters' sibling Branwell caroused. See where navy press gangs were outsmarted; the discovery of DNA was heralded; sup where smugglers schemed and Lancashire witches drank their last.

Bob goes in search of 'puppy-dog pie', the 'pub with no name' and a boozer once owned by the Kray twins. There's an inn where Henry VIII courted, one from which Charles II fled--and another where a Russian czar breakfasted on quarts of brandy. Enjoy establishments linked to writers and musicians – from Bob Dylan and the Stranglers to Shakespeare, Burns and Dickens.

Traditional tales of boggarts and dragons come to life; discover where Jack-in-the-Green and the Straw Bear are still pubgoers. Where the Maldon Mud Race and World Marbles Championships originated. All locations have been selected and visited by the author. Practical information includes contact details, ales served and nearby attractions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

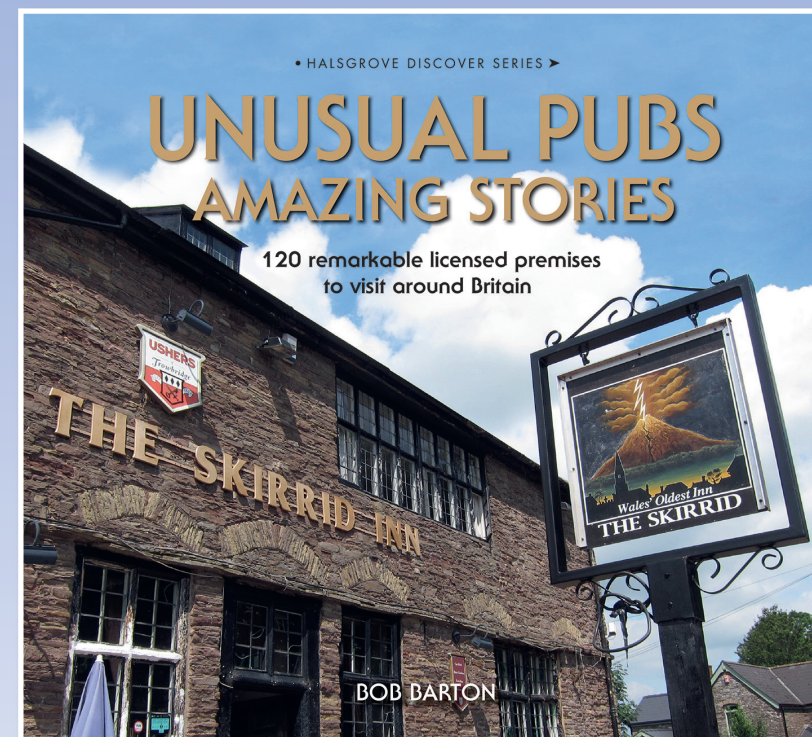


Bob Barton is a travel writer, columnist for nostalgia magazine Best of British and a member of the Pub History Society. His other titles for Halsgrove are *Unusual Railway Pubs*, *Refreshment Rooms and Ale Trains* and *Unusual Pubs by Boot, Bike and Boat*.

**For a full listing of all Halsgrove titles,
please visit our website at www.halsgrove.com**

The Halsgrove Group includes DAA Halsgrove Ltd., Halsgrove Ltd. & Halstar Ltd.
Registered in England & Wales Nos. 4136732, 6029724 & 6472636 at Halsgrove House, Wellington TA21 9PZ.
Imprints: Halsgrove, Ryelands, Halstar, PiXZ Books & Halswood Journals. Halsgrove® is a registered trademark. Copyright© 2016

HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



Format: *Hardback with full colour cover, 144pp, 230x214mm, profusely illustrated in colour*

Price: *£16.99*

ISBN: *978 0 85704 347 4*

Imprint: *Halsgrove*

Published: *October 2020, Reprinted June 2025*



Halsgrove Publishing, Halsgrove House, Ryelands Business Park, Bagley Road,
Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796
www.halsgrove.com e-mail: sales@halsgrove.com

UNUSUAL PUBS AMAZING STORIES

120 remarkable licensed premises to visit around Britain



Left: Salisbury's Haunch of Venison is six hundred years old and is known for its 'mummified hand'. Its owner was reputedly caught cheating at a game of cards.



Above: Shepherd Neame's Jack-in-the-Green ale is brewed for the eponymous festival held in Hastings.



Above: Star bar: the Troubadour (Earl's Court, London) is decorated with a variety of ephemera. Paul Simon, Jimi Hendrix and Bob Dylan are among those who performed there.

Below: Beer is served from the cask at the Boat Inn, near Monmouth, which once piped its spring water across the river to the local brewery.

EDINBURGH, LOTHIAN (3)

Where Burns dreamed and Duke and Hare strolled

White Hart Inn

Situated on the cobbled Grassmarket, beneath Edinburgh Castle, this is said to be the city's oldest inn. It dates from 1516, though only the refectory survives from that date. Above ground, the building dates from 1740-1755. Anthony Cordle, *A History of Drinking in Scottish Pubs since 1700*. Executions would be held just to the east and these public events kept generations of publicans busy. A wealth of stories emanate from the inn but I will quote two favourites. Robert Burns, the national poet, spent a week here in 1791, when visiting his lover Nancy Mackintosh for the last time. Suitably inspired, he wrote: *Ye Auld Inn*. Famous lines from his poetry are painted along the ceiling rafters, in the wood-beamed bar. The White Hart was the prison's demolition. Five different ales are served.

The White Hart Inn, 34 Grassmarket, EH1 2JU. Tel: 0131 226 2006. whitehart-edinburgh.co.uk

FLASH, STAFFORDSHIRE

The highest village pub

New Inn

I needed a pint after reaching this lofty pub (Flash is claimed as the country's highest village - 1518 feet above sea level). I'd cycled there on my Brompton, across miles of wild moorland. As my knees discovered, this folding bicycle isn't designed for hills. New Inn is a misnomer, as the hotel's fashioned from local millstone girt, has a 250-year heritage. Away from the law's prying eyes and close to the borders of three counties, the village once had a reputation for lawbreaking. It was the haunt of highwaymen and cock-fighting and coin counterfeiting took place. It is said to be the source of the expression 'flash money'.

The pub has been modernized, though in a way that has maintained the atmosphere of a modest country house. A new pub sign, announcing 'Britain's highest village pub' in giant letters, sits on the stone floor awaiting execution outside. I preferred the old one hanging outside, soon to be replaced, bearing the peddling portrait of a market brigand who once 'worked' the area. My first pint, Bosley Cloud (ABV 4.1% from Mackintosh's Neave Brewing, was enjoyed in the company of two friendly dogs and a few regulars. The pub became busier and livelier as the evening wore on - this is a place the locals enjoy, clearly encouraged by another sign, hanging above the bar: 'Diane welcomes you to the small house'. Ambient music, dog-friendly, outside seating.

New Inn, High Street, SK17 0SW. Tel: 01206 22911.

GLOUCESTER, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Home of the Sunday School pioneer

Robert Raikes' House (formerly Golden Cross)

Journalists, once known as heavy drinkers, will no doubt raise a smile at the fact that this early newspaper office (the *Gloucester Journal* occupied it from 1758) is a pub. The restored, timber-framed building dates from 1560 and was home to newspaper proprietor Robert Raikes (1736-1811). Also a philanthropist, he is best known as founder of the Sunday School movement, which began in Gloucester and has since spread to a pioneer of Sunday schools in the 1700s and has been superbly restored.

Robert Raikes' House in Gloucester was home to a pioneer of Sunday schools in the 1700s and has been superbly restored.

The New Inn, Flash, with its old inn sign showing the head of a head brigand. It was once a lawless village.

Example of a double-page spread.

