

The Pubs of King's Lynn

Lynn Museum has a collection of items relating to the pubs of King's Lynn. Contact the Museum for details on 01553 775001.

King's Lynn has a long association with the brewing and drinking of ale. Over the years there have been over 700 pubs and breweries in the town.



Blue Lion pub, 69 Norfolk St.



The Norwich Arms, 104 Norfolk St.

Of the many pubs that once dominated the streets of King's Lynn there are some which can still be seen or visited today. Amongst these are the 'Duke's Head Hotel', the 'Globe Hotel', 'Hob in the Well', 'Greenland Fishery' and 'Bentinck Arms'.

The 'Duke's Head Hotel' in Tuesday Market Place stands on the site of the 'Griffin Inn'. The Hotel was named for the then Duke of York, who later became King James II. It was built by Sir John Turner and designed by the architect Henry Bell, who was also responsible for designing the Custom House. The Tuesday Market Place also contains the 'Globe Hotel' which dates to 1650 and is easily recognisable for its sign, which represents the god Atlas carrying the world on his shoulders.

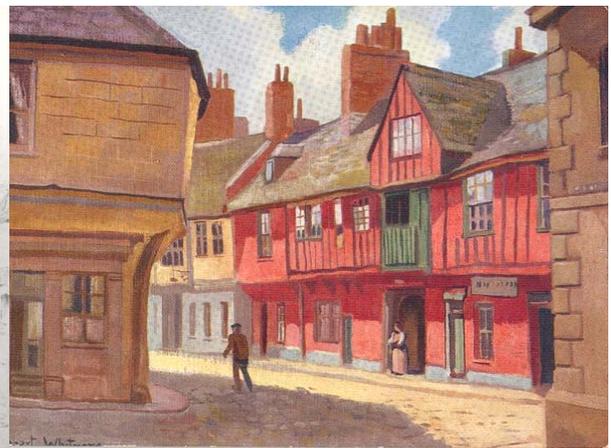
The 'Greenland Fishery' at 29 Bridge Street, was once known as the 'Waterman's Arms'. Originally the residence of John Akin, Mayor of Lynn in 1607, the pub was named after the local Greenland whale fishing industry. The building was later a folk museum and partly destroyed in June 1941 by enemy action.



The Greenland Fishery.

The 'Bentinck Arms', 21 Loke Road, was opened in 1883. It was named after the Bentinck Dock which was opened in the same year. Meanwhile the 'Hob in the Well', Littleport Street, is probably the only sign of this name in the country.

The 'Valiant Sailor', 2 Nelson Street, takes its name from the actions of Jack Crawford during the Battle of Camperdown against the Dutch in 1797. When the main mast of the flagship HMS Venerable was destroyed, Jack climbed another mast and nailed up the ship's colours to raise the crew's spirits. A painting by Henry Baines depicting this scene can be seen in Lynn Museum. The pub itself is made distinctive by the wooden beam, apparently from the prow of a ship, which is incorporated into the building. The pub was also the residence of the famous local artist Walter Dexter.



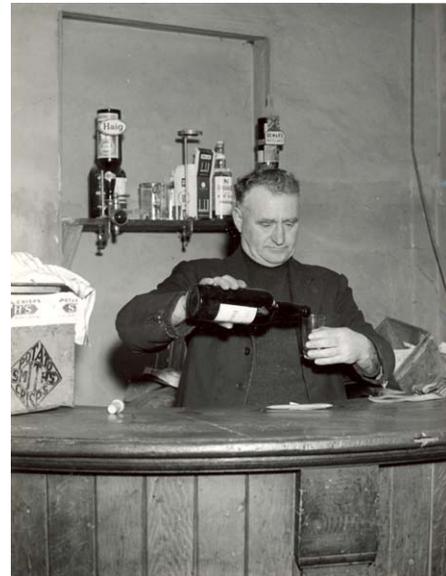
The Valiant Sailor Pub, on the corner of Priory Lane and Nelson Street.

There are, however, many more pubs which have now vanished from the streets of Lynn. Amongst them are the 'Angel Inn', 20 Tuesday Market Place, one of at least four pubs to bear this name, which was demolished in 1830 to be eventually replaced by the Corn Exchange in 1854. Other popular pub names included: the 'Spread Eagle', the 'Ship', the 'Swan', the 'Rose Inn' and the 'White Horse'.

There was also the 'Greyfriars' Tavern' on Blackfriars' Road, which, as the road name suggests, was built on land that had once belonged to the Blackfriars, not the Greyfriars. The 'Queen's Head' on the High Street was the scene of a murder in 1730, when Ann Wright was killed by a serving maid called Mary Taylor, and her accomplice George Smith. Smith was hung and Mary Taylor was burnt at the stake in the Tuesday Market Place.



Inside Fiddaman's Pub, 11 Norfolk Street.



Inside an unknown pub, King's Lynn

The high number of pubs in Lynn is perhaps not surprising, as ale was once a staple of most people's diet. In 1688 it is estimated that for a population of five million, twelve million barrels of beer were brewed. In 1892 the '*Map of the Borough of King's Lynn, Shewing the Places Licensed for the Sale of Intoxicating Drinks*' was published. This map was intended to shock upright citizens into forcing the authorities to reduce the number of pubs. The drink map shows there to have been 180 licensed houses in 1892. The 1891 census shows King's Lynn to have a population of 18,265, living in 4,161 houses. This means there was one pub for every 100 inhabitants, and one in every 22 houses was licensed to sell alcohol.