

A Glastonbury Pub Crawl

Whether your favourite tipple is a pint of beer, a glass of wine or a glass of cider, Glastonbury has a good choice of pubs and bars in which to enjoy it. In this article I give you a quick fly-through of Glastonbury pubs and bars, where they are and what they offer – enjoy!

• The George & Pilgrims

Built in the late 15th Century to accommodate visitors to Glastonbury Abbey, the Pilgrims' Inn, as it was known, is claimed to be the oldest public house in the South West of England. By the mid-19th Century the building was known as the George Hotel. The current name preserves both the earlier names and is known locally as simply the 'G & P'. This Grade I listed building maintains many of its original features including oak beams, mullion windows and a panelled stone frontage. Above the arched front door are three carved panels bearing the coats of arms of Glastonbury Abbey and of King Edward IV (1442-1483). The shield on one of the panels has no coat of arms and it has been said that the inn, built in the reign of Edward IV originally displayed a white rose carved on the shield but it was removed when Henry VII came to the throne. The vaulted cellars beneath the G & P have an opening for what was an underground passage to the Abbey.

Three Glastonbury pubs feature in John Cowper Powys's powerful 1932 novel *A Glastonbury Romance*. One of the main characters, Tom Barter, has rooms in Glastonbury High Street next to the George & Pilgrims and enjoys spending time in this very special old inn. *"Tom very rarely had a chance to enjoy any tea. His diurnal relaxation was his mid-day dinner at the Pilgrims', which he relished with the appetite of a fox-hunter. The waitresses there, with every*

one of whom, especially with a girl called Clarissa Smith, he had a separate and complete understanding, rivalled each other in catering to his taste. Tom's taste was all for freshly cooked meats and substantial puddings. Any petticoat fluttering about these solid viands was sauce enough for him; and when he blew off the froth from the top from his pewter flagon of brown Taunton ale and followed with his eyes these buxom attendants, passing in and out of the old red-baize swing-door into the mediaeval kitchen".

In a town known for ghosts and the supernatural, and dubbed the occult capital of England, the G & P is thought to be one of the most haunted hotels in the county, if not the country. Awaiting you here are tales of night-time visitations by a spectral monk, a floating apparition of an ethereal maiden, ghostly lights in the most unexpected places and an ever-present silent watcher. The G & P has been the subject of much media attention over the years and SKY TV filmed here in spring 2016.

Enjoy a cider under creaking Medieval wooden beams in a room warmed by a Tudor fireplace in the company of the many spirits said to be living in the building and walk in the footsteps of the many famous people who have visited the G & P including Charlie Chaplin and Henry VIII. Legend has it that Henry VIII watched from the G & P while the Abbey was ransacked and burned under his orders. It seems unlikely this is factually correct but still ... it is a good story.

The G & P offers a selection of real ales including Otter Bitter, St Austell Tribute and two changing beers typically Bristol Beer Factory and Quantock. Local ciders on offer include our favourite, Hecks and also Harry's.

Facilities and features include lunchtime and evening meals, family friendly, live music, newspapers, pub garden (patio courtyard), real fire, smoking area, Wi-Fi.

Google Rating 4.2 from 517 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'George and pilgrims inn Glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 3.5 from 632 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#)).

W3W: [took.goofy.curtail](#) – A: 1 High Street, BA6 9DP – WWW: [RedCat Pub Company – George & Pilgrims Inn](#) – T: 01458 831146

▪ **The King William Inn**

In the heart of the town centre the Billy has a long bar with a raised dining area to the left and pool and skittles to the right.

Facilities and features include lunchtime and evening meals (popular for Sunday lunch), dog and family friendly, karaoke, live music (weekends and occasional other days), pub garden, real fire, traditional pub games (pool and skittles), Wi-Fi.

Regular beers served include Butcombe and one changing beer typically Otter or Wychwood. Cask Marque Accredited.

Google Rating 4.2 from 218 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'the King William inn Glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 4.0 from 83 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#)).

W3W: [skirting.dean.attending](#) – A: 19 Market Place, BA6 9HL – Facebook: [The King William Inn](#) – T: 01458 831473

▪ **The Who'd a Thought It**

The Who'd a Thought It is a quirky traditional pub (18th Century drovers inn) filled with oddments and memorabilia including enamel signs and old photographs, even a red phone box (complete with mannequin) and a bicycle chained to the ceiling. The Who'd a Thought It offers a great

ploughman's lunch, Somerset sausages and steak and ale pies.

Facilities and features include disabled access, lunchtime and evening meals, dog and family friendly, parking, pub garden, parking, real fire, Wi-Fi.

Regular beers served include Palmers 200, Palmers Dorset Gold, Palmers IPA. Cask Marque Accredited.

Google Rating 4.2 from 421 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'who'd a thought it glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 4.0 from 858 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#)).

W3W: [clock.slick.suitably](#) – A: 17 Northload Street, BA6 9JJ
– WWW: [The Who'd a Thought It](#) – T: 01458 834460

▪ **The Market House**

Situated in the heart of the town, The Market House stands opposite Glastonbury Abbey.

Facilities and features include lunchtime and evening meals, family friendly, parking, pub garden, televised sports, Wi-Fi.

Regular beers served include Butcombe Original and Sharp's Doom Bar.

Google Rating 3.5 from 83 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'the market house glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 4.0 from 152 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#)).

W3W: [magnum.take.myths](#) – A: 12-14 Magdalene Street, BA6 9EH
– WWW: [The Market House](#) – T: 01458 832220

▪ **The Mitre Inn**

Built in 1680 although local legend has it that a tavern

has been sited here since the 6th Century. The Mitre is home to 6 skittles teams which play regularly throughout the week.

Facilities and features include disabled access, lunchtime and evening meals, dog and family friendly, live music, parking, pub garden, real fire, traditional pub games (darts and pool).

Google Rating 3.9 from 52 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'the mitre inn glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 4.0 from 23 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#)).

W3W: [gazed.passenger.juggled](#) – A: 27 Benedict Street, BA6 9NE – T: 01458 831203

▪ The King Arthur

Lively free house hidden in a street just off High Street. The pub concentrates on beer, a good range of ciders and music. An interesting mix of people support the pub. There is a garden and music venue room with regular live music most nights.

Facilities and features include disabled access, lunchtime meals (Sunday roast), dog friendly, live music, pub garden, real fire, smoking area, Wi-Fi.

Three changing beers served typically Bristol Beer Factory, Parkway, Yeovil Ales and ciders served include Hecks and Wilkins. LocAle Accredited. Also serves a selection of Glastonbury Ales.

Google Rating 4.4 from 452 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'the King Arthur glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 4.5 from 165 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#)).

W3W: [reworked.binders.swim](#) – A: 31-33 Benedict Street, BA6

9NB – WWW: [The King Arthur](#) – T: 01458 830338

▪ **Beckets Inn**

This former doctor's surgery is now an old fashioned pub with three separate bar areas including a private snug. No food available, but customers are welcome to bring takeaways (plates & cutlery provided) to eat in or have a picnic in the garden! House dog Buster does not welcome canine visitors.

Facilities and features include family friendly (children welcome until 5pm), juke box, pub garden, real fire, smoking area, traditional pub games (darts and pool).

Regular beers served include Wadworth 6X and Henry's IPA with one changing beer and ciders served include Weston's Cider Old Rosie. Cask Marque Accredited.

Google Rating 4.3 from 74 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'beckets inn glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 3.5 from 39 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#)).

W3W: [written.whimpered.albums](#) – A: 43 High Street, BA6 9DS
– WWW: [Beckets Inn](#) – T: 01458 832928

▪ **The Riflemans Arms**

Known locally as the Rifes, this 16th Century pub has oodles of character (and interesting characters!) with dim lighting, low ceilings, stone mullioned window frames, old wooden tables and roaring log fires in Winter. Entering through the front door, the original two small rooms on either side have been combined to form the main bar – the area on the left is known affectionately as the 'old farts area'. A portholed archway leads to a small parlour with a brick fireplace with a kitchen range where younger drinkers congregate. The Rifes comes complete with a rear

terrace and sun-trap patio. The Rifles has many a story to tell including that David Bowie stopped off at the Rifles before attending the first Glastonbury Festival.

Three Glastonbury pubs feature in John Cowper Powys's powerful 1932 novel *A Glastonbury Romance*. 'St Michael's Inn' can be identified as The Rifleman's Arms at number 4 Chilkwell Street, where licensing laws were liberally interpreted: *"The present dictators of Glastonbury would of a surety never have dared officially to interfere with the national regulations about the closing hours of public houses, but once the local police-force had received a hint in favour of greater laxity from the mayor of the town, it became easy for the smaller taverns, like St. Michael's on Chilkwell Street, and Dickery's at the Cattle Market, to admit a group of habitual customers, while keeping their blinds down and shutters closed"*.

Facilities and features include lunchtime and evening meals, dog friendly, live music, parking, pub garden, real fire, smoking area, traditional pub games (pool).

Regular beers served include Butcombe Adam Henson's Rare Breed and Cheddar Bitter Bully and many changing beers. Cask Marque Accredited.

Google Rating 4.4 from 336 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'the riflemans arms glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 4.0 from 124 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#)).

W3W: [inherit.spices.swarm](#) – A: 4 Chilkwell Street, BA6 8DB – Facebook: [The Riflemans Arms](#) – T: 01458 831023

▪ Waggon & Horses

Large roadside free house with a large garden. Small public bar and a large lounge area. A regular meeting place for local groups. Rolls available throughout the day.

Facilities and features include disabled access, family friendly, parking, pub garden, real fire, traditional pub games.

Changing beers served. Also serves a selection of Glastonbury Ales.

Google Rating 4.3 from 27 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'waggon & horses inn glastonbury').

W3W: [includes.earlobes.screamed](#) – A: 113 Wells Road, BA6 9AJ – T: 01458 831614

▪ The Old Tannery

In 1870, John Morland bought a tannery in Glastonbury particularly attracted by the water (essential to the tanning process), which he described as being “of unusual purity”.

In the following years, Morland's of Glastonbury became renowned for outstanding sheepskin products including coats, car mats, rugs, boots and slippers. During World War II, production switched to jackets and boots for pilots of the Royal Air Force. In 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary took Morland's boots on his successful Mount Everest expedition. A decline in the sheepskin industry lead to the closure of the tannery in 1982. In 1925 Morland's produced a document titled Centenary Notes & Reminiscences which makes an interesting read for anyone who wants to know more about the history of the site.

Today the former tannery is home to The Old Tannery. Trading as the Bocabar until March 2020, this venue reopened in July 2020 with a new name and a new owner (the former Head Chef of the award-winning Bocabar) but retained a similar formula that won the Bocabar so many awards including the same staff and ethos.

The Old Tannery is a relaxed, informal restaurant and bar that prides itself on supporting and championing as many local producers and suppliers as they can in delivering fresh and seasonal menus across breakfast, lunch and dinner. The constantly changing menus cater to all tastes and accommodate all dietary requirements as well as staying seasonal and creative.

As the Bocabar, this venue was voted best bar in Somerset in 2019 (boasting 22 different gins) with this hip hang-out offering live bands several times a week and a terrace garden is a great place to enjoy the cocktail hour. We are sure that The Old Tannery will enjoy the success of its predecessor.

Beers served include Bath Ales Gem and changing beer served typically Tapstone Cascade. Also serves a selection of Glastonbury Ales.

Google Rating 4.0 from 2 reviews (for latest rating and reviews Google 'the old tannery glastonbury'), Tripadvisor bubble rating 4.5 from 24 reviews (latest rating and reviews [here](#))

W3W: [upper.hits.proclaims](#) – A: The Red Brick Building, Morland Road, Morlands Enterprise Park, BA6 9FT – WWW: [The Old Tannery](#) – T: 01458 440558

Which Pub is Best?

You would need to embark on your own pub crawl to find out which pub is best for you but here are a few pointers:

Best for Real Ale

Visit a Cask Marque accredited pub and you are guaranteed to receive a great pint of cask ale. The following pubs are Cask Marque Accredited:

- **The Riflemans Arms** (3+ real ales)

- **Beckets Inn** (3 real ales)
- **The Who'd a Thought It** (3 real ales)
- **The King William Inn** (2 real ales)
- **The King Arthur** is LocAle Accredited (3 real ales)

If real local cider is more your thing, **The King Arthur** serves both Hecks and Wilkins.

Best for Food

Sunday roast = **The King Arthur**, **The King William Inn** or away from the town centre **The Old Tannery**; Ploughman's lunch = **The Who'd a Thought It**. Alternatively if you want to eat a take-away try the **Beckets Inn**.

See also Tripadvisor popularity index below.

Best for Live Music

In the town centre – **The King Arthur** and **The King William Inn** and away from the town centre, **The Riflemans Arms** or **The Old Tannery** (usually ticket only music events) are good for a jig.

Highest Rated on Tripadvisor

The former Bocabar (new name **The Old Tannery**, new ownership, same menu, same staff) had a popularity index of 3. The latest Tripadvisor popularity indices can be found [here](#)

With a bubble rating of 4.5 from 165 reviews **The King Arthur** has the highest rating on Tripadvisor. Away from the town centre **The Old Tannery** has a bubble rating of 4.5 from 24 reviews.

Highest Rated on Google

With a Google Rating of from reviews, has a higher Google Rating than any other pub.

Highest Rated on Facebook

Not all the pubs and bars featured in this article have a Facebook presence but of those that do **The King Arthur** has the highest rating – 4.8 from 76 reviews. **The King William Inn** also has a rating of 4.8 but from less reviews.

Cheers!

Which is your favourite Glastonbury pub and why?

To book holiday accommodation in the Glastonbury area visit [here](#)