

AN OLD FAVOURITE HAUNT

Nobody could embody the spirit of rebelliousness which characterised the Old Angel for so many years better than local literary legend Alan Sillitoe; no wonder really, considering he was once a regular. The punk spirit intensified when the old chapel was converted into the infamous gig space, and the Old Angel evolved into the well loved, rough around the edges rock and roll venue we all knew. Alternative in both style and attitude, complete with peeling band posters for wallpaper, a blaring jukebox and a floor stickier than fly paper.

Proud to be preserving their rich history, live music will very much remain at the heart of the Angel, but after 400 years of hosting the folk of Nottingham for quiet afternoon pints, rowdy all-nighters and raucous rock and roll gigs, the grade II listed building was well overdue a little TLC. Having completed extensive renovation works to restore the building's former glory, the smart yet simple decor retains the character of its former incarnations with a clean, relaxed style... and much better toilets.

The grot and grime may be a thing of the past, but the spirit of defiance most definitely remains. A proper Nottingham pub amidst a sea of trendy bars and big brand, bog standard boozers, the team behind the relaunch aren't out to line their pockets, they want to give the people of Nottingham the kind of independent venue it deserves. Committed to keeping everything as locally sourced as possible, there are hopes to set up a micro-garden on the premises, and in true D.I.Y, artisan style they'll be brewing up their own delicious drinks in the brand new microbrewery. Keep your eyes peeled for their first brew, arriving later this year.



The Old Angel pub has been the stuff of local legend for centuries past. Struck aghast at news of its closure, we are thrilled that such a venerable pub has evaded the greasy palms of big chain cheap pint peddlers and property developers. A pub close to our hearts for both its rich history and fond memories of many a merry time there we thought it right to celebrate the relaunch here on our backside.

It's always tinged with sadness when one era draws to an end, but luckily for the folk of Nottingham, this historic venue couldn't be in safer hands. With the team behind the brilliant Alley Cafe Bar at the helm, this exciting new chapter in the Angel's long legacy is sure to bring a new gem to Nottingham's thriving independent scene.

The Old Angel is no more. Long live the Angel!

A HISTORICAL JAUNT

Situated on Stoney Street, by the Saxon settlement around which our city would grow, The Old Angel has stood stalwart through the passing years. Observing five centuries of Nottingham's transformations, from pleasant garden city to industrial powerhouse and on to vibrant metropolis, there is no doubt she has many a tale to tell. Due to The Angel's location on the original north/south route connecting London and York, it is rumoured that one of the earliest regulars was none other than Dick Turpin, infamous highwayman of the Midlands.

Setting aside the speculative for the salacious, when it comes to titillating titbits the grade II listed building is well-experienced in the highs and lows of Nottingham locals. Located but a stone's throw from the rather bluntly titled Hore lane, later changed to the more euphemistic Fairemayden lane, it may come as little surprise that the Old Angel was once a house of ill repute frequented by ladies of the night. (The ghostly apparition of one such fair maiden it is said, still remains.)

From the debauched to the divine, in a pleasing ironic twist, a Victorian lace manufacturer concerned for the salvation of his workers installed a chapel upstairs. This long, lofty space later provided the perfect spot for grand celebrations and a meeting space for many a curious organisation. From covert luddite gangs to the Ancient Order of Druids and the Royal and Ancient Order of Buffaloes (who lined the chapel walls with grand portraits of the royal family) the Old Angel was a magnet for those desiring a clandestine rendezvous as well as a hard earned post-work pint or two.

1676 - Reputed date of buildings first erected in Stoney Street.	1801 - Chapel established as meeting point of National Ancient Imperial Union of Odd Fellows.	1831 - Patron Robert Pearson drunkenly falls down the main stairs to his death.	1871 - Grand party hosted in The Chapel for the Ancient Order of Druids.	1878 - Alterations made to building including an outer facade and billiards room to replace the stables.	1911 - Bartender Harry Shears arrested for stealing 5 bottles of whiskey, 2 gins and a bottle of sherry with his accomplice Lizzie Stag.	2016 - Extensive renovations made throughout and microbrewery launched by new landlord Ben Rose.
600AD - Anglo Saxon settlers arrive in site now known as The Lace Market.	1744 - The Old Angel Inn first documented on a Badder & Peats map of Nottingham Inns.	1862 - 24 year old lace maker Edward Hulse, the landlady's nephew, mysteriously falls from a third floor courtyard window to his death.	1871 - Robert Byron - arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct at the Angel having earlier been forcibly ejected from a local musical hall for attempting to perform on the tightrope.	1885 - Windows smashed during a violent riot which erupted after a local election.	1891 - Landlady Sarah Ann Bell summoned before court just 3 months into her tenancy for flaunting the law with a raucous knees up until the wee hours.	1980/90s - Chapel converted into gig room and notorious Nottingham rock n' roll haunt is born with gigs from Oasis, Kasabian and Arctic Monkeys.

FOOD & BREWS

Strange historical tales have their place, but how could we give a proper run down of The Angel without mentioning the delectable range of food and drink served? After sixteen years running The Alley Cafe - hands down best veggie eatery for miles around - it comes as no surprise that the menu boasts an array of delicious and creative dishes. Serving up the best locally sourced, organic ingredients, there is an equal array of appetising choice for both herbivores and those with a more carnivorous tooth.

...But The Angel is revealing her gifts with time, and since reopening she has certainly been teasing us with the promise of fine ales. Yes in true Nottingham style The Angel will over the next few months be bubbling up brews in the pub's very own microbrewery located in the Tap Bar, allowing you to wet your whistle, learn about the process and have a proper local pint all at the same time. In the mean time there are plenty other tipples to try, alongside local favourites from the likes of Black Iris Brewery, there are organic wines and of course plenty more liquors to liven your spirit.

OLD NEWS

As we welcome the new proprietors of The Angel it seems only fitting to spare a thought for those who have gone before. Ebenezer Stevenson, a much loved landlord in the 1800's was renowned for his easy charm, wit and commitment to Nottingham culture; having previously worked with various travelling circus' he was instrumental in revitalising Nottingham's entertainment scene. It was his son however who won local favour through a rather bizarre yet highly imaginative enterprise to entertain his clientele. Experimenting with canary rearing he devised a glass case which was placed in the bar and through which folk could watch as a pair of Norwich Bull Canaries made a nest and raised their chicks. Indeed, it would seem birds were not the only animal attractions at the Angel, in 1883 he placed a notice in the Evening Post advertising the sale of a monkey.

Yet it was not always plain sailing for the Angel staff. In 1835 a deep rivalry developed between two local young men, each vying for the affection of a beautiful barmaid. With the police having intervened in at least one of their bar brawls, the young lady proposed the matter be settled once and for all with a duel for her heart. But alas, neither would emerge victorious to claim their prize lady; one of them having been killed in the fight, leaving the other to flee town in order to save himself from gaol.

MUSIC & EVENTS

The musical legacy of The Angel not only lies in the last 30 years of rock and roll and sweaty punk gigs - it's foundations have been shook by many a type of musical vibration for well over 150 years. Performances during the 19th century ranged from subdued choral meetings in the chapel to jaunty pianists tinkling away on the keys down in the Vaults bar. Regular 'Smoking Concerts' were also held; reserved for men only to retreat and talk about politics and other serious matters of the day over cigarettes, ale and a live musical act.

The musical thrills will of course be continuing. Local promoters I'm Not From London are already luring Nottingham's finest troubadours in for a regular open mic while upstairs the lofty Chapel room is being tarted up and fitted with its very own antique pulpit to serve as a DJ booth. Set to launch on September 30th, they're throwing a grand old party, with Portishead DJ Andy Smith headlining for the last night of his tour and plenty of booze flowing. Tickets will be available from either The Angel or The Alleycafe, price tbc.

Snap them up quick, it's sure to be a good 'un.