



# HOLY COW! BLACK BULL INN WAS ONCE A CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## Pub in north Wales still features classic ecclesiastical architecture

**F**irst opened as a Wetherspoon pub on 17 January 2001, The Black Bull Inn is housed in a former church and presbytery.

The popular High Street pub, in Bangor (north Wales), is a former Roman Catholic church.

It was built in c1844 on the site of the old Black Bull Inn – remembered in the name of our pub.

The earlier public house stood on the site in the early 19th century.

The first Black Bull was demolished between 1838 and 1844, making way for the building which now houses our pub.

This was built as a Roman Catholic church (or perhaps as a Methodist chapel and later converted).

It was much used by the Irish labourers who came to Bangor to build the railway and its bridge.

Uncertainty about the early history of the church stems partly from the burning of its records in 1856, after its priest had died of the plague.

However, it was only in the early 1980s that the next-door building, also now part of this pub, was turned into a presbytery (accommodation for the priest).

### Stables

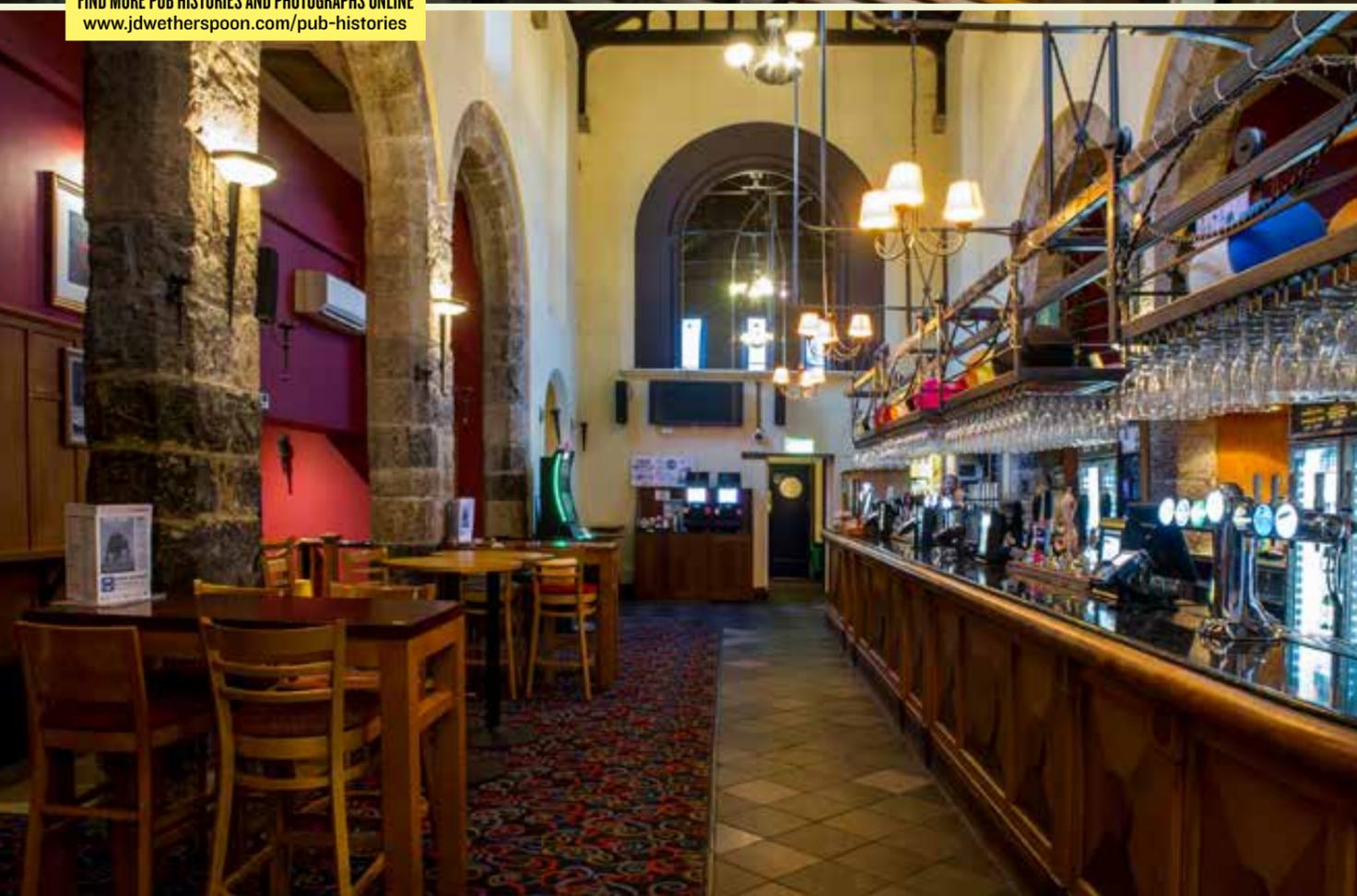
From around 1895 until the 1930s, the building housed the Queen's Livery Stables.

It was here that Henry Butler hired out 'open and closed carriages, private omnibuses, brakes, landaus, wagonettes, dogcarts, governess carts and hansom cabs'. Butler claimed that his business was 'patronised by the nobility and gentry'.

The Catholic Church of Our Lady relocated to a former Anglican church (in Upper Bangor), and Wetherspoon developed the pub during 2000, reviving and restoring the classic ecclesiastical architecture of the building.

The main bar area occupies the narrow former church space, with two large rooms to the left, as you enter the pub from High Street.

Running almost the full length of the room, the wooden bar is surrounded by tiling and there are high-top tables and stools on a carpeted area.





### Arches

Commanding stone arches run either side of the stunning room, each with uplighters to softly illuminate the exposed large stonework pillars.

The walls above are topped with a row of arched windows, allowing natural light to further illuminate the double-height space above.

The red-painted restored wooden-boarded roof space, with imposing black beams, provides a striking ceiling hovering way up above the customer area.

Above the entrance door, the former choir loft overlooks the bar, with narrow floor-to-ceiling windows allowing further light to pour into the space.

On the far-end opposite wall, a huge arch-shaped mirror reflects that light below.

Further customer area and dining are situated below the ground level of the original church, now the bar area.

Accessed by a few steps, this is the low-ceiling space of the former presbytery building.

Decorated in bold heritage colours of blues and reds, this area is filled with a mixture of low-level dining tables and chairs, as well as high-top tables.

### Cavernous

Bench seating, with plush red covers and wooden panelling, perpetuates the church-theme feel throughout this more contemporarily designed area, contrasting with the more cavernous bar area.

Two summers ago, Wetherspoon spent more than £300,000 upgrading and extending the outside area at the rear of the pub.

The then Deputy Mayor of Bangor, now Mayor, Cllr John Wynn Jones, officially opened the new-look beer garden in July 2017, with pub manager Ian Warren.

The garden is four times the size of the previous one, built when the pub first opened in 2001, and now boasts outdoor seating for 120 customers.

The upper level of the garden has wooden decking, while the lower level is paved, with a mixture of free-standing garden dining furniture and covered booth seating.

The outdoor space has lighting, including decorative lamp-posts and a full complement of potted shrubs and plants, now becoming well established in the beautiful beer garden.

● 107 High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 1NS

