

SWINGING SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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Any Ricardian at large in York, crossing Ouse Bridge and glancing down at the left bank of the river might well be forgiven for registering a noticeable "double take." Richard III's associations with York are always of interest to Ricardians. To Yorkshire Ricardians they are naturally a matter of pride. How gratifying therefore, to find a new acknowledgement of his closeness to our most historic city; not a medieval one, hidden away in archives where only the dedicated can reach it, but a recent one, very much in the public eye. Admittedly, not everyone recognises Richard when they see him, but his portrait must by now be one of the more familiar royal visages, and thanks to Samuel Smith's Old Brewery, Tadcaster, it bids fair to become even more so.

Not so long ago, the inn was known, appropriately enough, as the "Ouse Bridge," but as the brewery was carrying out alterations and endeavouring to imbue the inn with an atmosphere more suited to its age, it decided also to look for a more compatible name. It is not sur-

Photograph by Pauline E. Routh.

prising that, as the building is situated on King's Staith, right on the Ouse water-front, research revealed that originally the house was called the "King's Arms." Unfortunately the arms displayed cannot be ascertained, nor can the exact date of the change to the "Ouse Bridge," but it was at some time in the 19th century. The "King's Arms" therefore was re-adopted, and it only remained to decide *whose* arms should be depicted. Richard was chosen as the last of the Yorkist monarchs, and because of his associations with the area. The treatment of the King is more than generous; not only does his portrait grace both sides of the sign at the front of the inn, but his arms and supporters are similarly displayed on a second one over the side entrance in King Street, which runs from (I hesitate to pen the perfidious name!) Clifford Street down to the river.

The brewery tells me that they have records of a hostelry on the site in 1795, but feels that more than likely, one existed for two hundred or more years before that.

The interior of the inn apparently is a mixture of architectural styles, making it difficult to fix any original dates of building. The front bar area retains most of its original wood and stonework however, and the exterior is 16th century in style. The rather fine "Smoke Room" glass of three lights, incorporating the former name and the arms of York, and presumably put in at the time of the 19th-century changes, remains in situ, but now illumines not the Smoke Room, but the ladies' *garderobe*!

Although the building of the lock a few miles downstream at Naburn in 1757 resulted in the Ouse's being no longer tidal at York, the waterside buildings are still at times prone to flooding. For this reason the flagged floor of the "King's Arms" is uncarpeted, and easily removed pallet seating is in use. Most of all, the beer cellar is upstairs! The "King's Arms" is worth a visit; to slake the sight-seeing dust, to assuage hunger, or merely to see Richard being himself again in a neighbourhood where he must have set foot on many occasions. The working barges, the tourist pleasure launches, the cruisers, the rowing boats—all pass and re-pass the spot. Many moor at the Staith while their crews go ashore. Some of the latter perhaps, will salute the familiar face.
