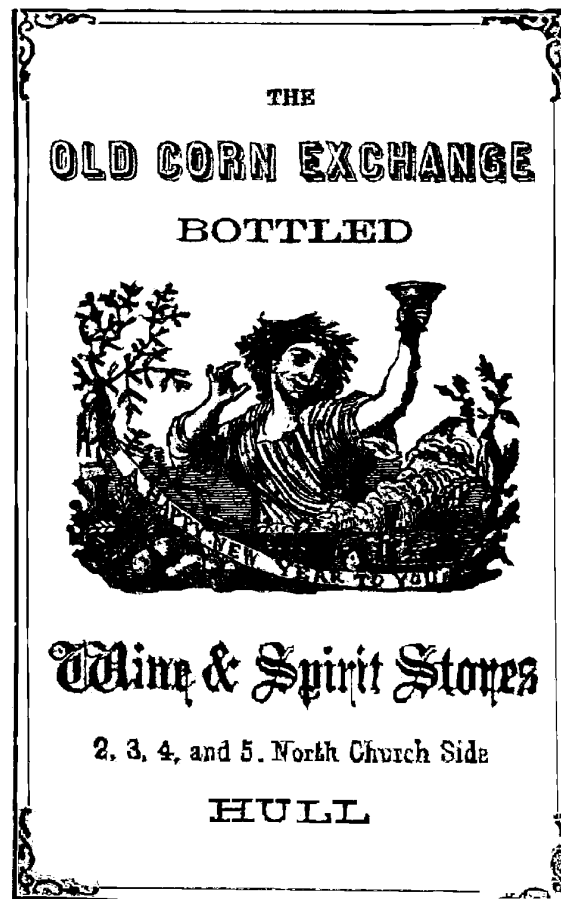


# THE OLD CORN EXCHANGE



**Robert Barnard**

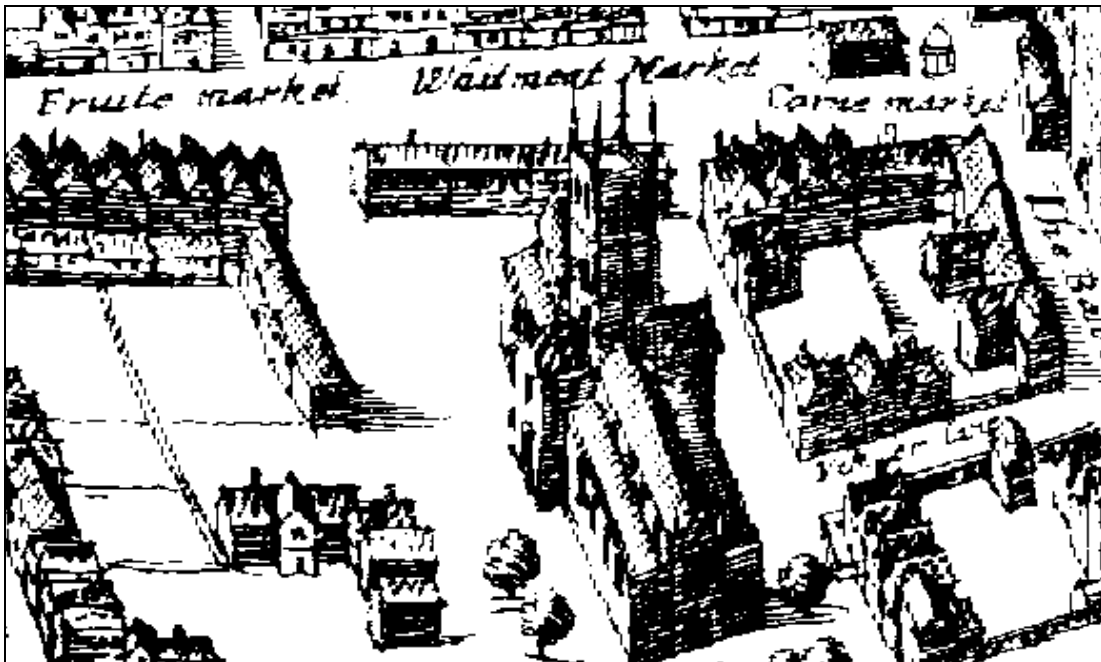
**Local History Unit**

**Hull College, Park Street**

# The Old Corn Exchange

## ***The Site***

The Old Corn Exchange is situated in Horrox Plot 84 ('Changing Plan of Hull 1290 - 1650'), which stretched from Market Place to Trinity House Lane. From 1347 the plot was divided with a tenement at the Market Place end and land fronting Trinity House Lane. The Market Place tenement was further sub-divided into three tenements running horizontally from Market Place by 1520. Goads insurance plan of 1886 still shows three number 50s for Market Place reflecting the medieval divisions and boundaries. As the early rentals treat buildings on North Church Side and Market Place as the same it is impossible to determine which buildings were used for what purpose. Hollar's plan of 1640 shows North Church Side as built-up on half its length from Market Place and this could be the boundary between the western and eastern tenements of 1347. A room or house had been newly erected in 1438 opposite the north door of Holy Trinity, which could imply that as no new buildings appear to have been erected to its west for at least the next two hundred years this could be the tenement boundary.



**Figure 1 Hollar's Plan of Hull, 1640**

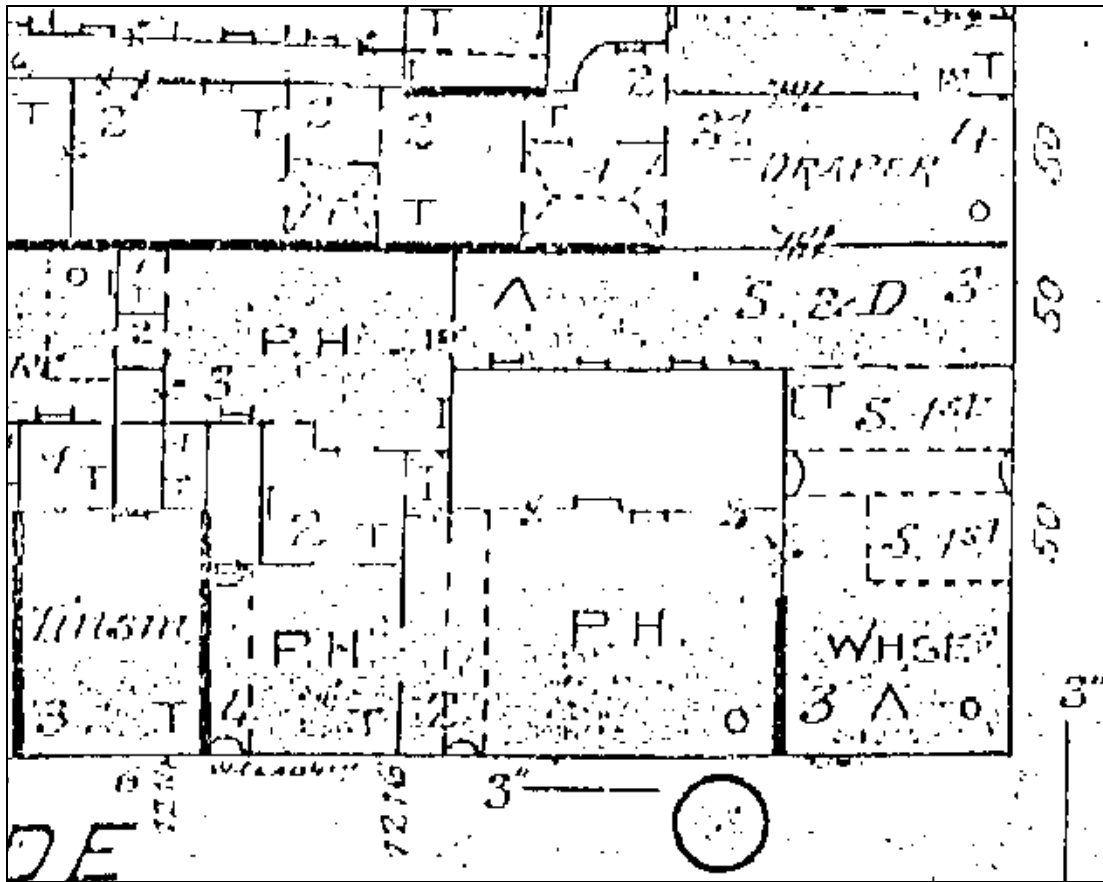
The Market Place tenement was leased to a draper from at least 1415. This section of the Market Place became the centre of Hull's cloth trade as in 1365 it was ordained that no drapers' shops should be anywhere in Hull but in the Dings. The Dings were a row of shops with rooms above fronting the east end of Holy Trinity. They are shown on illustrations until the early nineteenth century but Greenwood in 1835 only shows stalls not permanent buildings. The rules governing drapers must have been relaxed as in 1465 a new butchery and a forge appeared in the Dings.

By 1417 the Market Place tenement was owned by John Petticlerk, a vintner of York, but leased to a draper, John Bilton. A lease of 1426 mentions two shops in Marketgate on either side of the entry. This entry is now the way-in to the Old Corn Exchange and the two shops can still be seen as late as the 1853 Ordnance Survey plan. By 1438 the property had passed to William Saunderson, and others, and in 1445 Saunderson sold it to the Mayor and burgesses, i.e. it became Corporation property.



**Figure 2 Ordnance Survey Plan, 1853**

The most southern of the three tenements, which later contained the Old Corn Exchange, was leased to a tailor, John Scoles, by the late 1500s and in 1611 the lease was taken up by another tailor, Henry Casse. By 1635 it had passed to Katherine Moore. These leases are likely to refer to properties fronting Market Place but there is another lease in Hull Record Office dated 1611 when William Gerard, vintner, took over from the heirs of John Worlington, mariner, a moiety of two messuages on the north side of Trinity Church. Where on North Church Side these properties were is unknown or if, like Petticlerk, Gerard sub-let them.



**Figure 3 Goad's Plan, 1886**

### ***The Corn Market***

The name Corn Exchange implies there was a corn market nearby and indeed this was the case. The 'official' corn market had been at the southern end of Market Place from at least 1640 and it remained nearby until the new corn exchange was built in High Street in 1856. However there was a rival corn market at 50 Market Place on the corner of North Church Side. When this market started has been difficult to determine as deeds only exist for the upper and middle of the three tenements (TLA 27268 [1698-1798]). In 1700 these mention butchers shambles to the south, but no corn market, there was a "great garden" behind the house fronting Market Place and this probably became the yard of the Old Corn Exchange, which was only filled-in when the present toilets were built in 1969. A ground plan dated 1785 in the deeds

shows “new shambles” to the south on what would be the corner of Market Place and North Church Side with the corn market a little to the west. So far this is the earliest reference to a market or exchange on the site. The market was definitely there a few years later as the Baptist congregation split in 1794 with some remaining at the Salthouse Lane chapel but nineteen members left and met in the Corn Exchange, North Church Side, until 1799 when the George Street chapel was opened.

Anderson’s plan of 1814 and Cragg’s plan of 1815 both show the corn exchange on the corner of Market Place and North Church Side although this seems to be an error. Sheahan in his ‘History of Hull’, 1866, says that the corn business of Hull was transacted for a long time in a confined space behind the houses at the corner of the North Church Side and the Market Place. The Ordnance Survey plan of 1853 clearly shows the corn exchange behind the coffee house, 5 North Church Side, but with the main entrance from Market Place. In 1812 the victualler of the coffee house, William Soulby, rented two rooms above the corn exchange at £24 per annum. When Ambrose Melson took over the coffee house from Soulby the corn exchange continued to function as Soulby placed an advert in the Hull Advertiser informing farmers, cornfactors, etc., that the Old Corn Exchange would continue open for business every Tuesday and Friday from 11a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Gawtress’s ‘Report .... into the Corporation of Hull’, 1834, stated there was an ‘opposition’ corn market, presumably North Church Side, to the one at the southern end of the Market Place but unfortunately discussion of the tolls was postponed and not referred to anymore in the Report. The North Church Side market continued after the new High Street corn exchange opened as in 1893 an English Corn Market was still held in a large room over the wine and spirit stores every Tuesday. When the present covered market hall was erected in 1904 a corn market was incorporated into the North Church Side section and the Corn Exchange market

presumably finally closed. In 1945 the corn market moved to the cattle market and the disused premises on North Church Side were used as Corporation offices.

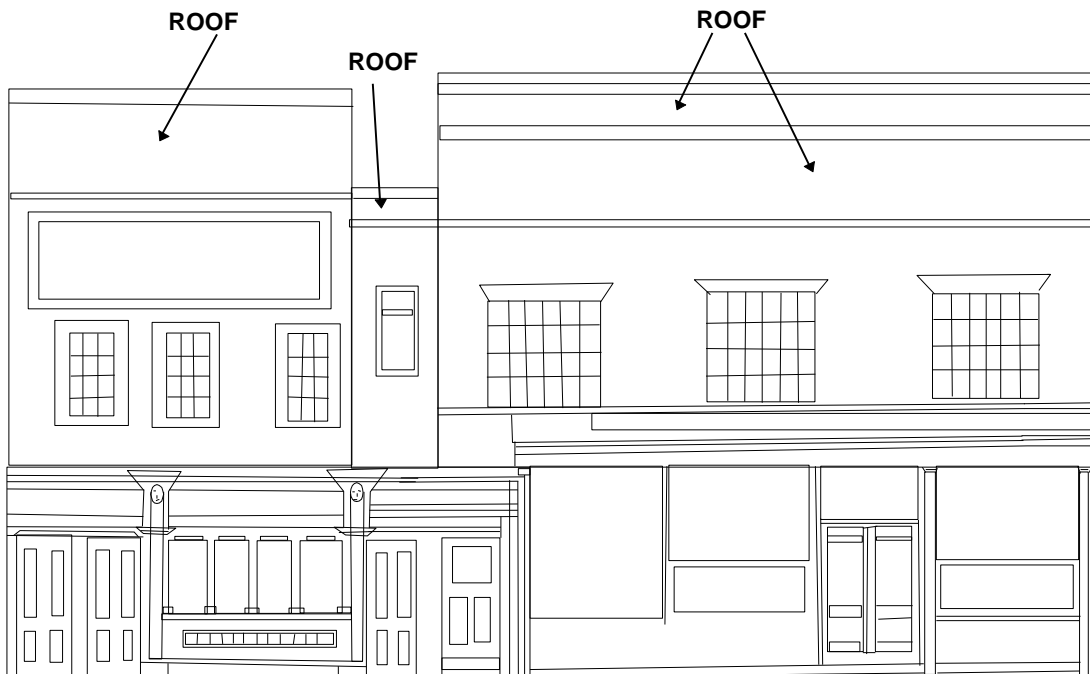
### ***The Pub***

The Old Corn Exchange was originally called the Excise Coffee House and in 1788 was leased from the Corporation by John Meggitt, a local brewer, for £15 per annum. The coffee house had formerly been in the occupation of Thomas Atkinson but as no leases have survived earlier than 1788 it is impossible to state when it was first licensed. A year later it was leased to William Davis, victualler, and John Newmarch, brandy merchant. In 1797 a surprising tenant was William Brown, bookseller and stationer, who paid a rent of £13-16s. Another local brewer, John Richardson, took over the lease in 1799 at a rent of £51. Hull Record Office has no more rentals for the coffee house after this date and the corporation had probably sold it by the time William Soulby became victualler in 1801.



**Figure 4 Holy Trinity and The Corn Exchange, 1860**

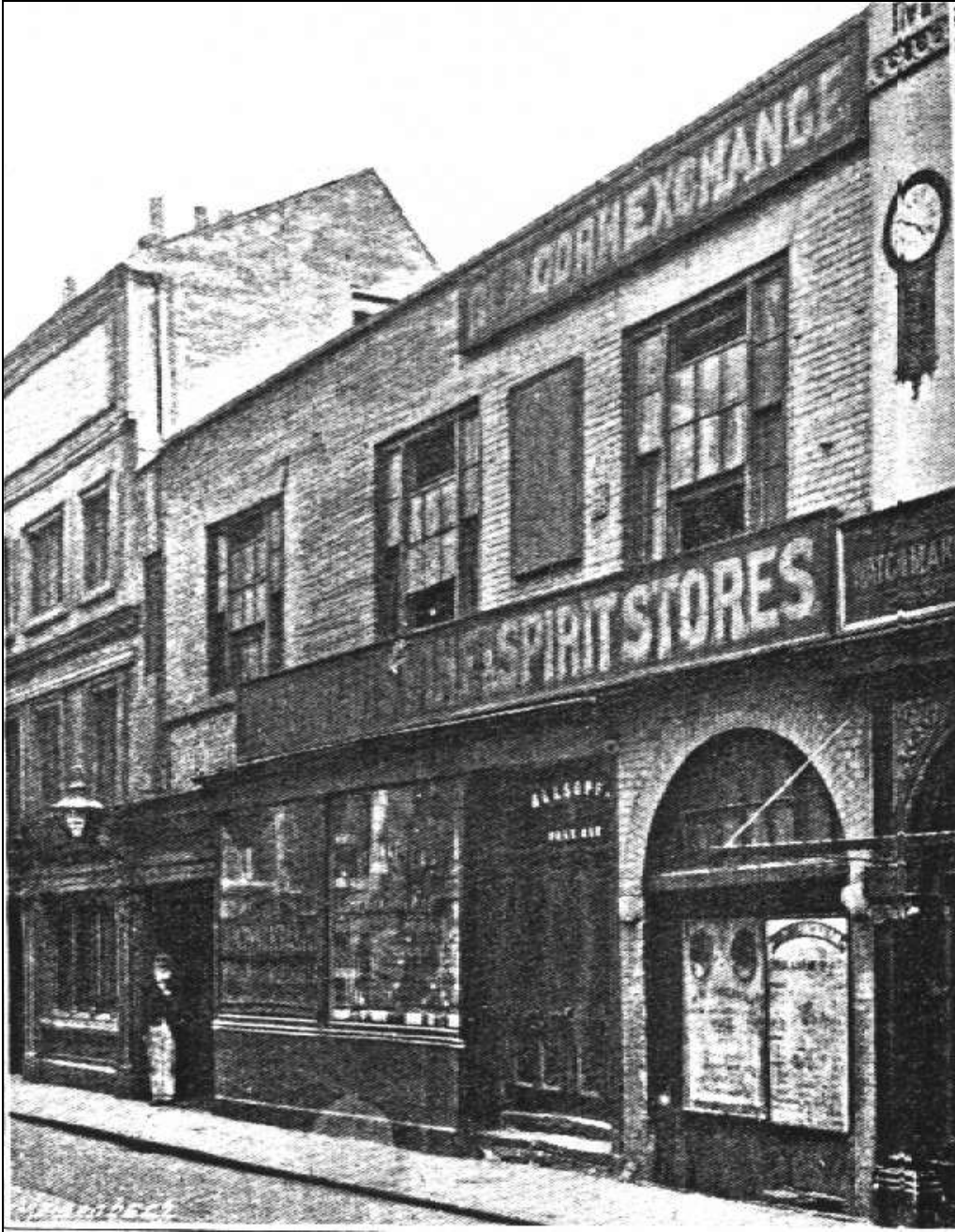
Why was the coffee house named Excise rather than Corn Exchange? The coffee house may predate the corn market and could refer to duty on coffee or perhaps it was a place where excise was collected. The first recorded excise office was in the Land of Green Ginger, erected sometime in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The coffee house changed its name to the Corn Exchange between 1807 and 1823, which coincides with the opening of the Excise Office. It is possible the corn market doubled as the excise office but there is no evidence for this apart from the name of the coffee house. Perhaps the two rooms above the corn market that Soulby rented in 1812 were formerly used to collect excise duty and this does seem to be a likely date for the coffee house changing name and the opening of the Excise Office. In 1803 the Collector of Excise lived in Story St., the two Export Excise Officers lived in West St. and Paradise Place. The address for the excise changed whenever new officers were appointed.



**Figure 5 Frontage showing alterations of 1913. Redrawn from 1894m 7098**



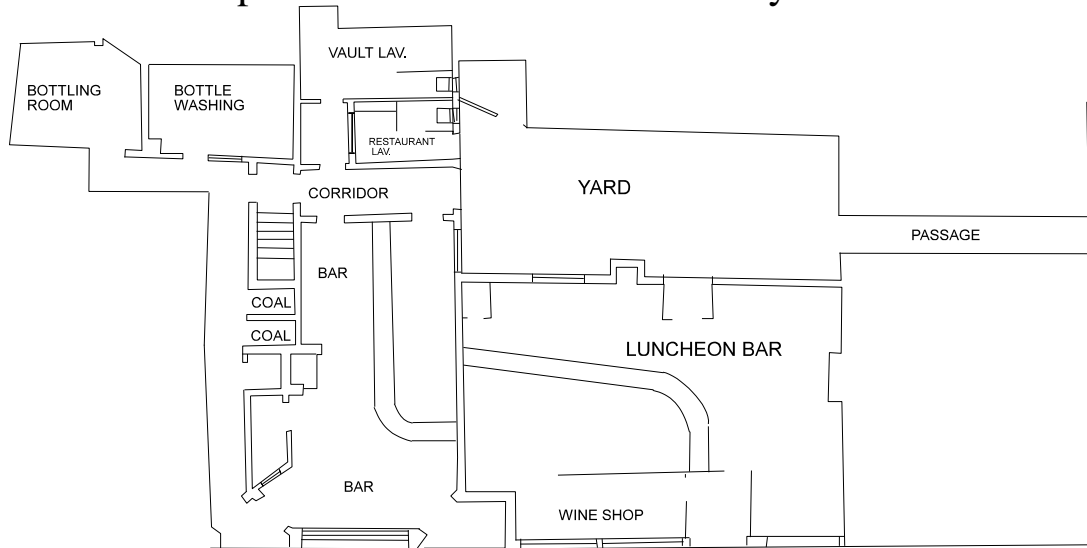
The original coffee house was at 5 North Church Side, the section between the carved wooden heads in the current pub, with the corn exchange probably adjoining to the rear. By 1863 the pub had expanded to occupy 2, 3, 4 & 5 North Church Side and included the wine and spirit business. There are plenty of illustrations of the east end of Holy Trinity but few of them depict any buildings in North Church Side apart from the corner, which has never been part of the Corn Exchange. Tickell's 'History of Hull', 1796, shows 2 and 3 North Church Side and an excellent view of the Dings, which seem to be mainly butchers shops. An illustration in the 1860 edition of the 'Old Corn Exchange Almanack' shows numbers 5 and 4.



**Figure 6 The Corn Exchange, 1893**

The early trade directories do not mention a wine and spirit business at the Corn Exchange but by 1823 William Soulby is listed at 50 Market Place as a wine and spirit merchant. After 1827, when Ambrose Melson took over as victualler, Soulby formed a partnership with Mr. Dobson and they continued to trade from 50 Market Place, i.e. 2 North Church Side, as wine and spirit

merchants until c 1860. Their 'newly built' warehouse was destroyed by fire in March 1860 and Soulby & Dobson ceased trading. William Browne took over the pub and wine business by 1860 and started to issue the Old Corn Exchange Presentation Almanack, which appeared annually at Christmas until at least 1907. By the early 1870s W W Thackrah had taken over as victualler and spirit merchant to be followed by J W Thackrah.



**Figure 7 Ground Plan showing pub before alterations of 1918. Redrawn from 1916m 334.**

By the late 1880s Keyworth, Walker & Co., wine and spirit merchants of King Street, had acquired Thackrah's business and continued to trade from the Old Corn Exchange as J W Thackrah & Co. The main partners were H J Walker and J G Atkin. Keyworth, Walker & Co. had been formed in 1885, previously the firm had been T Keyworth & Co. and before that Freshney & Keyworth. In 1897 two wine and spirit firms, Keyworth, Walker & Co. and Hodgson, Gibson & Brown, combined and were incorporated as Brown, Walker & Atkin, Ltd. The headquarters of Brown, Walker & Atkin were 7-8 North Church Side. The firm continued till 1936 when they were taken over by William Younger & Co.

## OLD CORN EXCHANGE STORES,

2, 3, 4, and 5, NORTH CHURCH SIDE,

HULL.

LICENSEE—MR. W. G. BROWNE.

The following are amongst the many advantages to be derived from purchasing Wines and Spirits from these Stores:—

The whole of the Wines and Spirits bought at these Stores are *warranted Genuine*.

The *Strength* of the Spirits, no matter whether sent out in Gallons or Bottles, is the *same*.

The *Quality* of the articles sold is *First-class*. This will be clearly proved by comparing them with the Wines and Spirits bought at other places.

*Every* variety of Wines and Spirits may be had at these Stores, no less than *One Hundred and Fifty* varieties being kept in stock.—(See Price List.)

No *Extra* Charge is made for Bottles or Jugs,—the value of them being calculated in the Prices charged in the Price List. Purchasers have no trouble, therefore, with bottle accounts.

These Stores being conducted on Cash principles only, the lowest possible remunerative profit is charged.

Small Families, and Gentlemen in lodgings, need not make larger purchases than convenient, as they can obtain *Single Bottles* of any variety of Wines or Spirits at the Wholesale Price.

All Spirits sent out from the Stores, are sealed and labelled. Accuracy in the delivery of Orders is therefore secured.

The Old Corn Exchange Stores is the *only* place at which all the various kinds of Foreign Liqueurs can be obtained.

No quantity *less than One Bottle* is sold at these Stores; they, consequently, possess all the respectability of Wholesale Houses.

The next company to own the Old Corn Exchange was William Wheatley & Co., ale and porter merchants of Mytongate. Brown, Walker & Atkin appear to have mortgaged the property to Wheatley in 1898 but continued to occupy the pub and spirit warehouse until 1912. The wine and spirit business probably closed in 1913 when Wheatley converted the warehouse into a luncheon bar and reopen it as The Corn Exchange Buffet. The luncheon bar is now the main bar of the pub. In 1913 W Wheatley & Co., i.e. Walter Wheatley, William R Wheatley and Arthur H Cowley, mortgaged the Corn Exchange, along with most of their other properties, to Bass, Ratcliffe & Gretton, who, as Bass, Ltd., are still the owners today. The name W Wheatley & Co. continued to be used at least until 1918. The 1913 conveyance contained a description of the property, which had a frontage of 62 ft. 11 in. and included a large shop licensed and used for retail and off sales of wine, spirits and ales with warehouse room and cellarage below known as the Old Corn Exchange Bottle Stores. Also a yard and

fully licensed inn or dram shop with warehouse room, market room and cellarge below and outbuildings known as the Old Corn Exchange Inn. Although the conveyance is dated 1913 the description probably dates from 1898.

Some alterations were done in 1913 including altering the upper story windows in No.5 and matching the lower story of No.2 with No.'s 3 & 4. The room above the spirit vaults that had been used for the corn market had already been converted into a living room and two bedrooms.

Further relatively minor alterations took place in 1918 including removing the bar counter in the coffee house and rebuilding the entrances. Unfortunately there are no more plans available until 1969 when major building work was done. Before 1969 the toilets had been moved from the rear of the eastern bar, the old coffee house, to a small area north of the yard and the old bottle washing room had also been converted into male toilets with female toilets occupying what had been the coal store. The space created by the removal of the toilets was converted into a bar with a restaurant in front. In 1969 the yard was built over and the toilets moved there. Two of the doors on North Church Side were also blocked-up in 1969. The bay windows on the first floor and the mock timber framing on the frontage had been added before 1969. The old spirit stores had been rendered and the M-shaped roof replaced with a mansard. Support pillars and beams had also been put in the main bar before 1969.

The Old Corn Exchange has not altered much since 1969 although bar counters have been put back in what used to be the coffee house.

### ***Licensees***

1789-1791      William Davis.

1801-1827 William Soulby. Soulby had been a waiter at the Cross Keys, Market Place, and took over the Excise Coffee House from Mr. Lane. Soulby continued as a wine and spirit dealer from 2 North Church Side in partnership with Dobson after 1827. Their warehouse was destroyed by fire in March 1860, it was described as newly built with 4 stories. In 1813 Soulby was the owner of a 65 ton ship, the Jane.

1827-1858 Ambrose Melson. Ambrose moved from the Ship Tavern, Lowgate to the Old Corn Exchange in 1827. In October 1854 he was 20s and costs when four men were seen coming out of the pub at 10:45 pm, a Sunday. Melson died in 1867 aged 82 and is buried in Holy Trinity. Ambrose's wife, Sarah, had died in 1839 and his son, John, a chemist in Nile St., died in 1858 aged 34.

1858 Oct. Ambrose Melson and William Gill Browne

1862 March William Gill Browne.

PRICE LIST  
FOR  
ALES AND PORTER.  
1863.

	Quarts.	Pints.
Guinness's Extra Double Stout .....	7s 6d	4s 0d
Reid's Extra London Stout .....	7s 6d	4s 0d
Barclay's ditto ditto .....	7s 6d	4s 0d
*Reid's Stout .....	7s 0d	3s 6d
*London Porter .....	5s 0d	2s 6d
Bass' India Pale Ale .....	7s 0d	3s 6d
Allsopp's ditto .....	7s 0d	3s 6d
Finest Old Burton Ale .....	7s 6d	4s 0d
Ditto Edinbro' Ale .....	6s 0d	3s 0d
Fine Table Beer .....	5s 0d	3s 0d

\* May be had in Imperial HALF PINTS.

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*All the above may be had in Casks—Prices on application.*  
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OLD CORN EXCHANGE STORES,

2, 3, 4, and 5, North Church Side,

HULL.

1868-1889 William Wood Thackrah.  
1892-1897 John William Thackrah & Co. Spirit merchants &  
victuallers. (Walker & Atkin continued to trade as Thackrah & Co.  
after they took over the company.)  
1895 John George Atkin.  
1908-1912 Henry Joseph Walker.  
1913-1914 Joseph Rodgers  
1915 William Maxwell George Wittingham, The Corn  
Exchange Buffet.  
1916-1918 Frederick C Fulcher  
1921 Joseph Lister Sullivan. Cook to Scott's first Arctic  
expedition.  
1922-1925 William Swan. Also had an interest in a local circus.  
1926 Ephraim Streatfield  
1929 John Belbin Simmons  
1935-36 Ephraim Streatfield  
1938-39 George Gray  
1945-1957 Arthur Milner  
1958 Jonas Braithwaite. Previously a water analyst.  
1959-60 Henry Gomersall  
1961-68 Frederick Bell  
1969-1977 James Mayes  
1978-88 Percy Johnson  
1991- 98 Eric Barker