



SURREY WINE VAULTS

BAR, WINE VENUE, PARTY VENUE

HISTORY

Surrey Wine Vaults (SWV) of Surrey Street has always kept the same name. Named not after the county of Surrey – but a cart! A 'surrey' is the name of a particular type of cart, of which many rumbled through this street towards what was once a major fruit market and distribution port on the far side of Portland Square. The oldest deed (framed in the conservatory) shows the land was sold for a few hundred pounds in 1776.

SWV was originally a tiny local Inn. Unusually, it focussed on wines from the nearby docks which came right up to 51 O2. Little is known of how it looked over the years but our recent £1/4 million restoration project unearthed one picture which survives today (at the top of the iron staircase).

SWV enjoys a vibrant history. Miraculously, it survived the burning Bristol riots of 1831, the Industrial Revolution of the 19th Century, the massive Nazi bombardments of 1941, the concrete urban renewal and demolitions of the 1960's, the destructive St. Paul's riots in 1980 and the over enthusiastic office block developments of the late 1980's and 1990's. SWV, continually served, developed and adapted to the ever changing community and needs of shifting customers over the years.

Post-war SWV joined the ranks of unsightly city centre bomb sites. The impoverished parish became known for cheap warehousing and light manufacturing. However, under the good management of 'Peggy', for many years SWV flourished serving local workers. For a time it became a popular scrumpy house. During office block developments SWV became a popular lunch time venue for contractors, but as the white collar workers moved in slowly languished under uncaring, profit conscious brewery's. SWV is a Freehouse once again. It is the past five years which has witnessed the greatest regeneration of this most impressive and forgotten area in which SWV survives. Built in 1794, St Peter & St Paul's Church in Portland Square, famously known as 'The Wedding Cake' recently benefited from a £2million, 3 year restoration. Over 90% of buildings in Brunswick and Portland Squares and the streets radiating from them have now been sympathetically renovated.

Such prosperity continues with the huge £500million Broadmead expansion scheme carving its way towards us, soon to encompass the area's Georgian splendour. At last, SWV can once again delight in a new lease of life!