

# Amoeba

CRAFT BEERS  
& COCKTAILS

## A Brief & Historically Inaccurate History of Amoeba

Although Amoeba Lounge Bar is just over a decade old in its current format, there has been a bar, pub or tavern under that name for nearly two hundred and fifty years. Dating back to the German entomologist August Johann Rösel von Rosenhof's discovery of what he referred to as a 'Proteus Animalcule' in 1757, the bar was wittily entitled 'Amibe' in reference to Bory Saint-Vincent's renaming of said discovery, finally changing to Amoeba Tavern in 1763. The Amoeba Tavern had a long and important history chequered with setbacks and scourged by personal feuds; In 1802, whilst being used to host a dinner commemorating the founding of Clifton Village, it was burnt to the ground by an emaciated and enraged von Rosenhof after he had been informed that his wife, Lisbeth Taudry von Rosenhof had been conducting an illicit affair with the taverns owner John Standish. Although Messrs von Rosenhof both died in the fire it was reputedly claimed that those who witnessed the great inferno saw August casually walk to the bar and serve himself a tankard of ale before disappearing in a shroud of smoke.

Following Clifton's now historic ground-breaking ceremony, a bridge was commissioned to link greater Clifton with Abbots Leigh to support the trade route from Bristol docks which were a central operating base for the East India Company Fleet which set sail weekly to develop new trade routes to the Americas. The first meetings for the newly appointed Bridge Commission were held regularly in the Amoeba Tavern, and Brunel's final proposal in 1830 (after many failed attempts to win over the Commission) was presented in what is now the rear room. Bridge construction began in 1831 and was completed four years after Brunel's death in 1864.

In 1890, the Amoeba Taverns lease was bought by Sir Lawrence Watford and converted into a brothel in all but name, serving the wealthy gentry of the area carnal delights not found throughout the city of Bristol. De Tavern, as Amoeba was briefly known as at this time, was blamed for falling property prices in Greater Clifton and, for the second time, was burned to the ground by the newly formed Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society. Luckily Sir Watford stepped in and, after apologising to the Society by way of buying a property in their name in nearby Victoria Square, had Amoeba Tavern rebuilt and renamed, eventually selling the lease shortly before the outbreak of war in 1914. The tavern served as a drinking hole for military personnel sent to Bristol to recover from wounds they had suffered during the Great War and even provided a writing space for Siegfried Sassoon while he was recuperating from a shot to the head, inflicted upon him by a fellow British soldier who had mistaken him for a German whilst on patrol. Sassoon returned to the tavern many times after the war and wrote a number of his famous works in the main room, accompanied at all times by his traditional German beer tankard which is still situated behind the bar. Between the Wars Amoeba Tavern hosted many charity events, balls and banquets in the now sealed off Caverns, situated below what is now the back room.

Although showered by vegetal matter by a bomb blast which destroyed a nearby famous fruit merchant, in true British spirit Amoeba battled on and survived the Second World War with barely a scratch, despite buildings on either side of the property being flattened. Used as a meeting place for off-duty Hawker Hurricane Pilots of 286 Squadron United States Air force who were based at RAF Lulsgate Bottom (now known as Bristol Airport) the tavern changed from its traditional values to a more Americanised Cocktail format to accommodate the high standards sought by Pilot Officers. Over the next fifty years the ownership of Amoeba Bar changed hands many times, finally settling in the hands of its current owner in 2003. The concept was transferred abroad in late 2005 under the guise of 'Bar Pseudopod' (in reference to name of an Amoebas appendages, or 'arms'). After success in New York, Naples, Barcelona, Norwich and North Wales, the company continues to expand and exceed global expectations.

