

## **SHENANIGANS IN THE WHITE SWAN**

The White Swan which stands by the Old Bridge was originally called the Bridge End and is considered to be one of the oldest establishments in the town centre. It was built in the 1770's and until the early 1900's was famous for hosting a rather peculiar spectacle whereby every August bank holiday, as light relief from their gruelling daily grind, machinists were invited to run down from the Mayroyd Mill, along the Burnley Rd and into the White Swan absolutely starkers! On arriving at the pub the male winner would be awarded a new hat and the female a new chemise!

A slightly more sinister story concerning the pub is that on 11th September 1896, an alarming explosion of gas occurred in the snug, after a serving girl, Elizabeth Bowden of Manchester, lit a match in her search for a gas leak. She and Samuel Dawson, the landlord, were badly burnt in the incident. For some time afterwards their disfigured apparitions were said to haunt the town centre and particularly around the water where they no doubt sought relief. As late as 1911 customers continued to report sightings of a white lady floating along Bridge-Gate and of faint cries emanating from inside the White Swan. However, the Temperance Society dismissed the reports as being 'alcohol influenced ramblings' and maintained that the sightings were most likely nothing more than an abundance of cotton fluff and the noises a side effect of working in a mill environment.